

(Letter from Sister Gregory, Sept. 24, 1959,
to Mr. and Mrs. Richard Halliday)

My dears,

Our Mr. "R" really delivered!!!! But, of course, there was never a doubt about it. Just couldn't wait to hear that music, so, certain that there were no "Main Stem" spies on the campus, eight of the Sisters (who have beautiful voices) and I (who possess a not-so-beautiful one) took the music into one of the studios and sang for almost two hours. Since we chant Office for a little over two hours each day and sing the Mass and other church music several times a week, singing is second nature to us.

After a few practice rounds, that ALLELUIA really orbited and soared all over the place. It was truly glorious! Since we "know our Palestrina" we had a perfectly wonderful time with MORNING HYMN. Without question, your professionals will do a better job on the music, but I assure you they will not have nearly as much fun. We concluded our song-fest with CLIMB EVERY MOUNTAIN and AN ORDINARY COUPLE. Six of the Sisters are Professors of Music, so we had a veritable "ball" playing around (harmony wise) with those two lovely songs.

Without question, AN ORDINARY COUPLE will be an immediate and smash hit - it has all the necessary ingredients. Although CLIMB EVERY MOUNTAIN may not have the same initial impact, like YOU'LL NEVER WALK ALONE, it will have great staying power and will be around a long, long time. In fact, I'll bet you have at least five solid hits in the show - any takers?

The news about Mr. Hammerstein was most disturbing. It is the worst possible time for him to be "benched" because he will not be able to keep from wondering and worrying a bit about THE SOUND OF MUSIC. So frequently it is the quiet, apparently relaxed person who seethes inside and finally erupts in some way or other. I hope and pray his recovery will be complete and rapid - he is quite a person!

However, I am also much concerned about the effect of his illness on the Hallidays! One of your most endearing qualities is your love for and devotion to your friends. It is quite obvious that your confidence in and affection for Mr. "H", the man, even surpasses your admiration and intense respect for him as an artist. Therefore, his illness is bound to increase your own emotional tension - and that disturbs me!

I wish there were some way to decrease the worry and strain under which you are operating. I hate to think of you two darlings working on a neat little ulcer or thrombosis of your own. So will you both please try to ride with the punches a bit and keep worry about Mr. "H" and the show at a minimum? Just remember that as persons (not as Broadway Bigwigs) you're pretty important to a goodly number of people, too.

In addition to praying, I've taken over the "worry" department of the show, as of now! So just take it easy in that respect, will you, huh? As always, my special love. God keep you.

Your devoted,

Sister Gregory

Dear Doc

Sister Gregory

*Is sensitive
and realistic
- among
other things -
sure you'll
agree with
Mary + Jim*