

FOR RELEASE AFTER 6:30 P.M.  
TUESDAY, MAY 11, 1965

REMARKS BY MRS. LYNDON B. JOHNSON  
BARTER THEATER, ABINGDON, VIRGINIA  
MAY 11, 1965

They call this the Barter Theater, but who among us tonight brought more than he will take away? So it is with the live theater, which unfolds before us scenes to be amused by, to be saddened by, to give us excitement, melancholy, pleasure, to heighten our spirits and to make us think.

I remember so well the last time I was in this theater. It was too long ago -- in 1952 that I saw an excellent production of "Trial By Jury." It is with the great anticipation of another memorable evening that I return now.

Tonight, I have an added privilege which is heartwarming for me. And I cannot resist, on this particular occasion, these words:

"Friends -- Romans -- Countrymen -- Lend me your ears... We come to praise Roger Stevens, " because he is a man who deserves to be honored.

Mr. Stevens has been selected to receive the annual Barter Theater Award which has gone to many of the greatest artists in the theater through the years. Certainly, Mr. Stevens is a man worthy of the highest accolades of the living theater, for he has brought into production a variety of high moments which otherwise might never have thrilled a countless number of Americans in New York, on the road, in theaters like this, on the stages of college campuses and in little theaters everywhere. To name only a few of the stimulating plays he has produced, let me cite "A Man for All Season, " "West Side Story, " "Tea and Sympathy, " "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, " "Sabrina Fair, " "Ondine, " "Time Remembered" and the amusing "Mary, Mary."

As I think of the contribution Mr. Stevens has made to the perennial strength of the American stage, I recall the lines Shakespeare wrote in this play in Act 3, Scene 1. They are:

"How many ages hence  
"Shall this our lofty scene be acted o'er,  
"In states unborn and accents yet unknown!"

Mr. Stevens, your prizes with the award are most unusual, but you have won, according to this inscription...

A Virginia ham...  
A platter to eat it "off of"...  
Jobs in the theater for two actors to be selected by Mr. Stevens..  
And he has already chosen them both... We will see one in the play tonight...  
An acre of land on this mountain.

Mr. Stevens, we all congratulate you, and I thank you for the outstanding service you are rendering to the nation now as special assistant to my husband for cultural affairs.

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