

Fielding's Guide 1959-60

..."maybe I'm getting old but it's Beat Generation atmosphere bored me stiff."

dear Mr Fielding,

it is certainly possible that you are getting old and equally your privilege to be bored, but there is neither figurative nor literal truth in your application of the term "beat" to the quality of performance, the kind of audience, or the prevailing atmosphere of the Abbaye. we all resent it--speaking for ourselves and our audiences.

the New York Times Magazine Section of ^{Apr 19 1959} ended its ^{two-} ~~three~~ page analysis of the "new Paris" saying that the Abbaye was typical of the ~~serious-mindedness~~ of the new American-in-Paris group and that its success ~~was due to the~~ and longevity were partly due to its preserving the song ~~culture~~ ^{form} of France for the French to hear freshly--hardly a Beat Generation activity.

Francois Maureic, Schiaparelli, Arthur Benjamin, Dean Dixon, Hugues Cuenod would be startled to find themselves grouped with the BG as would the chaperoned Smith, Vassar girls, the college men, the serious musicians and artists who make up the bulk of our audience. they are ~~neither unkempt~~ ^{nor} bohemian and ~~bring~~ ^{bring} a concert level of listening and appreciation to their patronage. the atmosphere of the Abbaye is devoted and dignified ("~~decorous~~" says the Times) and ^{sedate} worthy, we hope, of the music performed. if that's what Beat means to you, Jack Kerouac would be equally startled to learn it. what you call in your preface "the necessarily arbitrary structure of (this kind) of writing should not mean flat misrepresentation.

I would remind you that three years ago Fielding's Guide suggested the Abbaye as a great place for a bit of "piano-playing and a chat." since we never had a piano and "chatting" is an activity better carried on at a sidewalk cafe where the musical interruptions are fewer, we didnt feel you could really be talking about us. when you yourself came to the Abbaye you said to me "I goofed". I suggest you or your operatives have "goofed" again and whether you like us or not I hope you will find occasion to rephrase your gratuitous insult to us and our audiences.

(I notice on the same page that you devote space to describing the RINGSIDE club on the Right Bank. the "excellent Negro entertainment", the "spare ribs" ~~and~~ Dick Edwards and the Ringside have vanished from the Paris scene for at least three years. "Goofing", Mr Fielding?)

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