



15231 Burbank
Boulevard
Van Nuys
California
91411-3590
818 780 2240
Producing Directors
Laura Zucker
Allan Miller
Board of Directors
John Anderson
Robb Axton
Stuart Berton
Michael Bond
Tippy Conrad
William Conrad
Perry Cross
Pam Dixon Mickelson
Lee Ramer
Susan Schwarz
Leonard Stern

December 10, 1984

Dan Sullivan
Los Angeles Times
Times Mirror Square
Los Angeles, CA

RE: Thin Walls

Dear Dan:

I just wanted to pass along to you a few thoughts I've had about Phoebe Sutton's play THIN WALLS. (This is not a for-publication letter, just a letter-letter.) I saw the play again last night (it was the final performance) and had not seen it for three weeks or so, so I've been able to get some small measure of distance from the initial burst of production energy and activity.

I am absolutely convinced that, although not entirely successful, THIN WALLS represents a strain of theatre so distinctly new, it is too new for most people to recognize its new-ness. The current brand of theatre now called experimental has nothing "experimental" about it at all anymore; it is the same old experimental theatre, doing the same old experimental things.

I hope you will have an opportunity to see a recently released film, CHOOSE ME, written and directed by Alan Randolph. It is astonishingly similar in tone and style to THIN WALLS and is eliciting many of the same reactions: people are either mad at it because they don't get it, or swept away by the differentness. If I had to call THIN WALLS and CHOOSE ME by a stylistic name, I would probably call them neo-realistic. They are real and not-real at the same time. That is, real people are often placed in unnaturalistic places and situations, somewhat akin to expressionistic films, but with a lot more structure and a large dab of modern wit.

I really believe that THIN WALLS has suffered the fate of many artistic projects that were ahead of their time. Fortunately, one can take a Jackson Pollack painting out of storage, put a Stravinsky composition onto the record player, or run a film like CHOOSE ME through a projector twenty years after the fact. Unfortunately, plays live almost exclusively in the moment and cannot be exhumed at a later date for easy re-viewing.

*All best,
Laura*