

"WHAT DAY IS IT TODAY?"

Szakonyi is one of the most successful playwrights in Hungary. His newest play entitled BREAK IN TRANSMISSION is a success on several foreign stages; in Hungary it has run beyond its hundredth night. The popularity of Szakonyi's plays is mainly due to their life-like, realistic attitude. Szakonyi is a sharp-eyed observer and an excellent character-drawer who has the ability of creating powerful figures by a few strokes of his brush. "What Day is It Today?" serves a good example for that. The story is in fact rather uneventful - provided there can exist a day that may be called, in a noble sense, uneventful. Szakonyi shows us one day of a working-class family, an utterly insignificant day that could be mistaken for any other one, if it would not be made a sad exception by a sudden tragedy. The matter-of-factness and detachment of the play's attitude is a rare phenomenon even in Szakonyi's repertoire. The family gets up in the morning; everybody is sleepy, everybody is preoccupied with his or her own troubles; they live close together and yet miles apart. There is no way of getting nearer to each other; in fact they don't even try. In the meantime the children start out to school, the parents hurry to work; and for a few moments we have a glimpse at the working-place, the school, the nursery - each of them full of little misunderstandings, little excitements; everybody is nervous, selfish, indifferent, rough...all these are presented through the mosaic mirror of one very much carefully built day. The family is together

again in the evening...for a while they do not notice the absence of the ever fractious little boy. When they begin to worry it is too late already... A dull tragedy makes the day intolerable.

A laconic way of characterization makes this radio drama very much alarming. Its message is a very crude warning indeed : our personal relations are far from being sufficient. The play does not sermonize, just demonstrates, just shows us our grey, dull, nervous moments, and we must confess : we do not look too kind.

Szakonyi's radio plays are known and popular all over Europe. This play is due to a distinguished place even among Szakonyi's works ; being the newest and one of the most successful of a top quality playwright.