

SUNDAY ♦ FEBRUARY 18 ♦ 2:30 PM

How Should a Person Be Seen? or, Charles Dickens' HARD TIMES

By Eli Siegel

*A Dramatic Presentation of Mr. Siegel's Great Lecture,
with Scenes from the Novel
& Songs—about Labor, Learning, & the Human Heart*

THIS MATINEE OF DRAMA AND SONG—of grand entertainment and kind, urgent knowledge—asks and answers, as only Aesthetic Realism can, the biggest question for our nation and for every individual self: *How should a person be seen?*

In his 1950 lecture on *Hard Times*, Eli Siegel, the founder of Aesthetic Realism and the greatest of critics, called this “one of the most important books” of Dickens, and showed its enormous meaning for us now.

How much feeling should we have? What is true care for a person, and what stops us from having it? And—On what basis should people have jobs, work, be paid? Why has economics been accompanied by so much cruelty? How should the earth be owned? All this, our presentation is about—and explains! “The world should be owned by the people living in it,” Mr. Siegel writes, and this matinee makes clear. “Every person should be seen as living in a world truly his. All persons should be seen as living in a world truly theirs” (*Self and World*, p. 270).

We will see, through Mr. Siegel's magnificent scholarship and warmth, that every one of Dickens' characters—in their good and evil, kindness and selfishness, strangeness and ordinariness—says something we need to know about ourselves. Through powerful, moving—also hilarious—scenes, we will meet, among others: Josiah Bounderby, brutally selfish businessman; Stephen Blackpool, a desperately poor “hand” in the Coketown factory, who can't make sense of what he and others are forced to endure; Thomas Gradgrind, who wants his children to learn nothing but “facts”; conniving, sinister Mrs. Sparsit; and Sissy Jupe, the daughter of a circus clown—who, in the midst of hardship, sees wonder in the world. Said Mr. Siegel:

Dickens had been born in the world of coaches, and yet he felt, “Coketown, economics, strikes, unions—they have something to do with the hearts of people, the deepest things in people.”...Bounderby is a representation of people who are afflicting and dirtying and lying about the world now: persons who make their own selfishness into a national achievement, who make their own lack of feeling into a world asset, who use all kinds of beautiful terms to hide their own grabbingness and hypocrisy....

The big thing about this book is its courage, along with the Dickens charm, and the subtlety. It shows so much of what Aesthetic Realism is interested in—the heart of man, the ethics of man in all times.

And, so surprisingly, accompanying Mr. Siegel's stirring lecture, and performed live, will be songs—songs that express your hopes and those of people everywhere!

CAST

ANNE FIELDING ♦ DEREK MALI ♦ CARRIE WILSON ♦ TIMOTHY LYNCH
BENNETT COOPERMAN ♦ ARNOLD PEREY ♦ CAROL McCLUER
BARBARA ALLEN, FLUTE ♦ EDWARD GREEN, PIANO

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