In praise of culture

One of the great pleasures inherent in editorial writing is the opportunity to praise a worthy enterprise whose merits have, perhaps, received all the acclaim that it should. Such an activity is the program sponsored by the Department of Humanities.

Two years ago, without much fanfare or publicity, the Department of Humanities, of its own initiative, undertook to provide an extremely valuable series of events, concerts, lectures, films, and readings. Since its inception many thousands have been able to attend performances of exceptional merit, most times free of charge.

Since October, under the direction of Prof. Richard M. Douglas, Head of the Dept. of Humanities; Prof. Klaus Lippmann, Director of Music; and Prof. Gregory Tucker, Professor of Humanities, the department has presented some 15 different events, at every level from concerts, the Humanities Series of Chamber Music Concerts, lectures—especially noteworthy were those of the renowned composer and conductor Professor Leonard Bernstein, who often plays (Marat/Sade), as well as films and dramatic readings.

Still to be presented in the program are the New York Chamber Solists and the Beaux Quintet, both of whom are to perform at the Humanities Series Chamber Music Concerts. In previous years we have been privileged to be able to attend the Metropolitan Opera in Production of Fidelio and Cosi Fan Tutti (last February), Waiting for Godot by the Boston Theatre Company (April, '65), and Maisie and Enny, Members of the New York City Ballet (Dec., '64).

From all this we see that the Humanities Department has been highly successful in bringing a tremendous variety of musical events to the Institute. The Instituto Committee, a clarification of the Junior Committee, a committee which has been cooperating with LSC in giving away tickets, has been presenting without cost to the students a limited number of seats.

The Humanities Department has sought donations and patronage funds to support the endeavor.

Unfortunately, functioning as it does on donated funds, the department can offer only a single performance though demand may far exceed the capacity of Kresge, as was most noticeably evident from the line queue for Marat/Sade. Recently, as far as this writer knew, it is possible, the Humanities Department has been cooperating with LSC in giving away the tickets. LSC has done a commendable job in the face of large crowds and a limited number of seats.

But seriously.

Once again the political woodwork on campus is teeming with activity. A week ago there were only students, now the members of the freshman class have added on. But here the light ends. There are important reasons to seriously consider the events of the next few weeks.

The student government at MIT is an autonomous structure as free from administration controls as could be found anywhere. And it is earned this right by being responsible, by taking its role seriously, and attracting the kind of people willing to devote the time and energy to govern well.

In the weeks to come candidates will be speaking to a great many of their fellow students. They will try to convince; they will answer questions; they will raise issues, and stand on some old ones. In addition, the candidates will spend a great deal of time away from their studies, often their campaign expenses exceed their campaign income.

But this is only half of it. The rest of the student body has an obligation to the candidates, and more importantly, to themselves. Unless there is a concern evident to the student candidates are eager to listen to issues and ask questions, then we can expect a dull campaign. But, far worse than the consequences of a dull election is the fact that it can ultimely be found on the government. All governments must be infused with fresh ideas and new approaches if they are to keep alive the system.

We can expect to hear the best of the candidates only if we demand their best. For this reason, we urge everyone to take the eclipse seriously and to consider every vote before it is cast.

The Innscomm meeting, on Feb. 15, will be the last meeting at which the candidates will be under the watchful eyes of the Department of Humanities. As the Innscomm Committee, we urge everyone to show their support for the Innscomm by voting on February 15th.