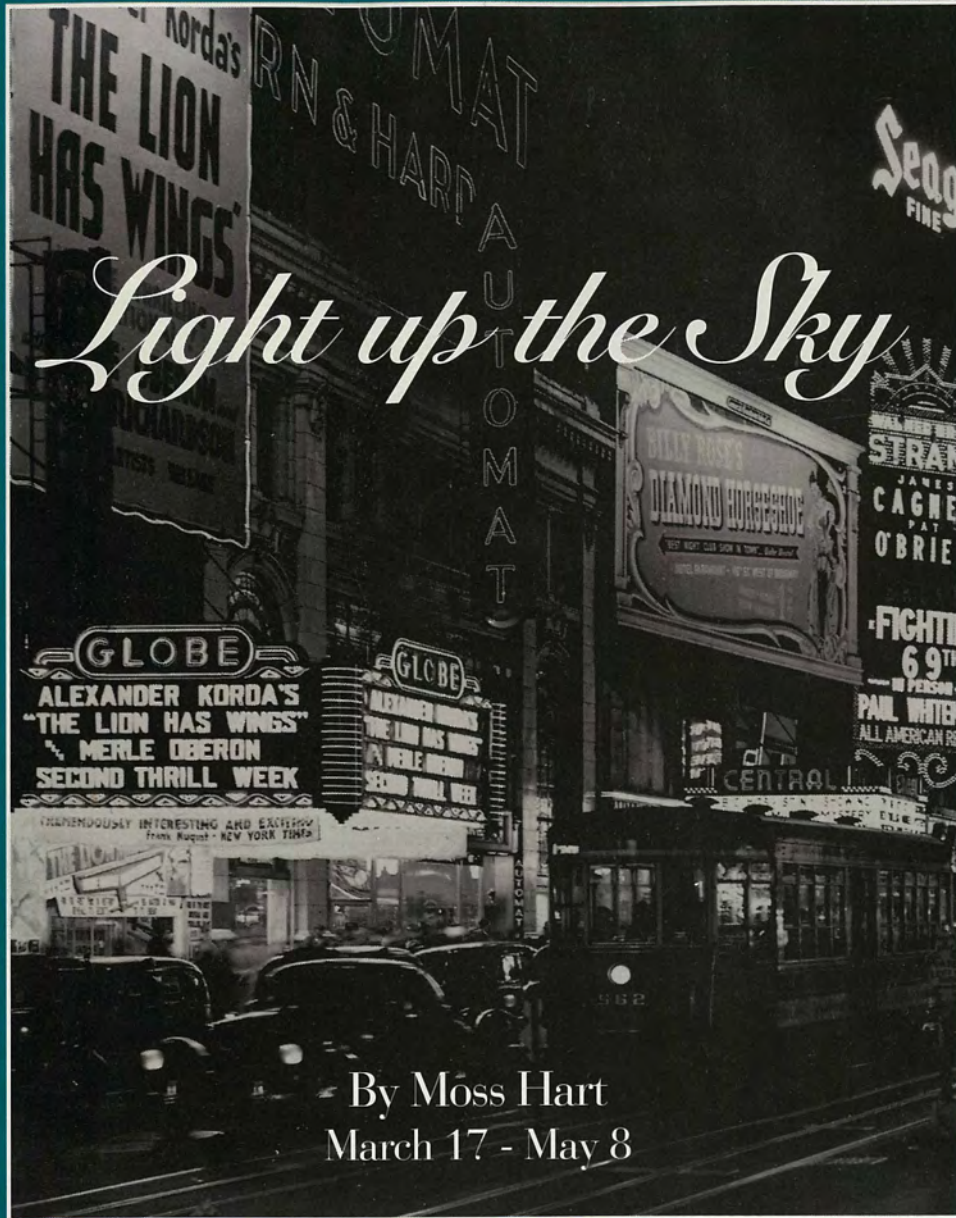


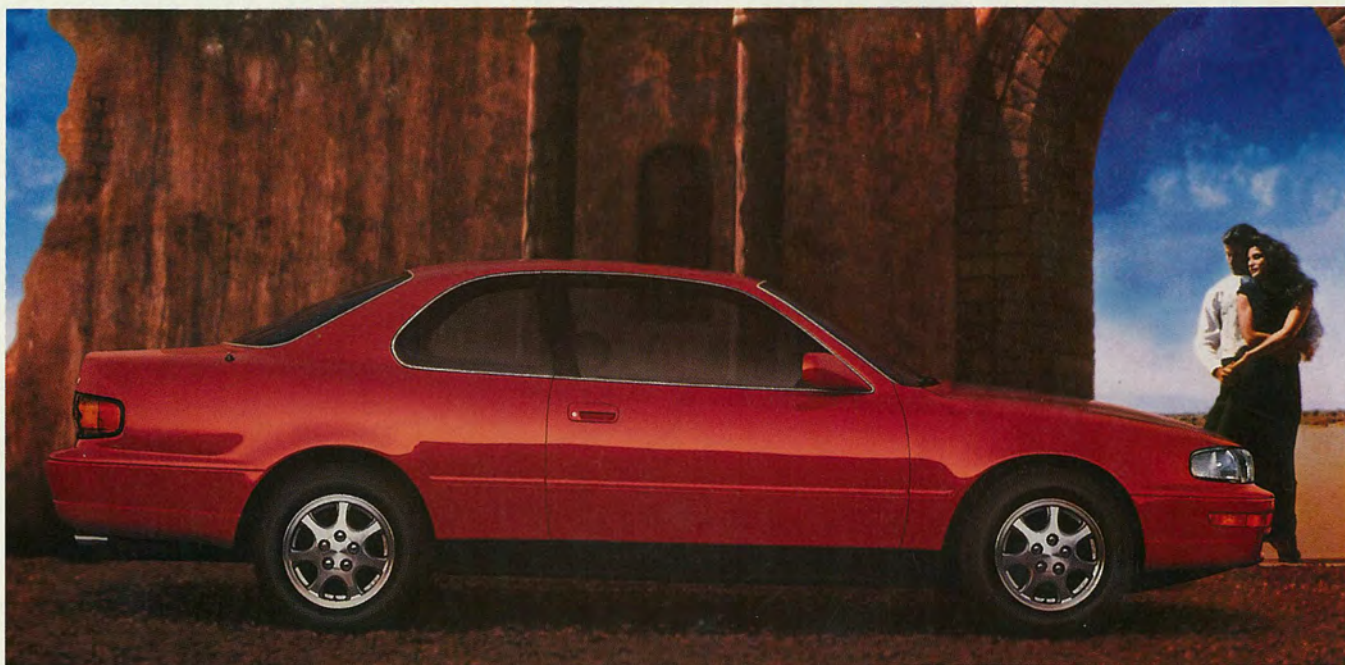
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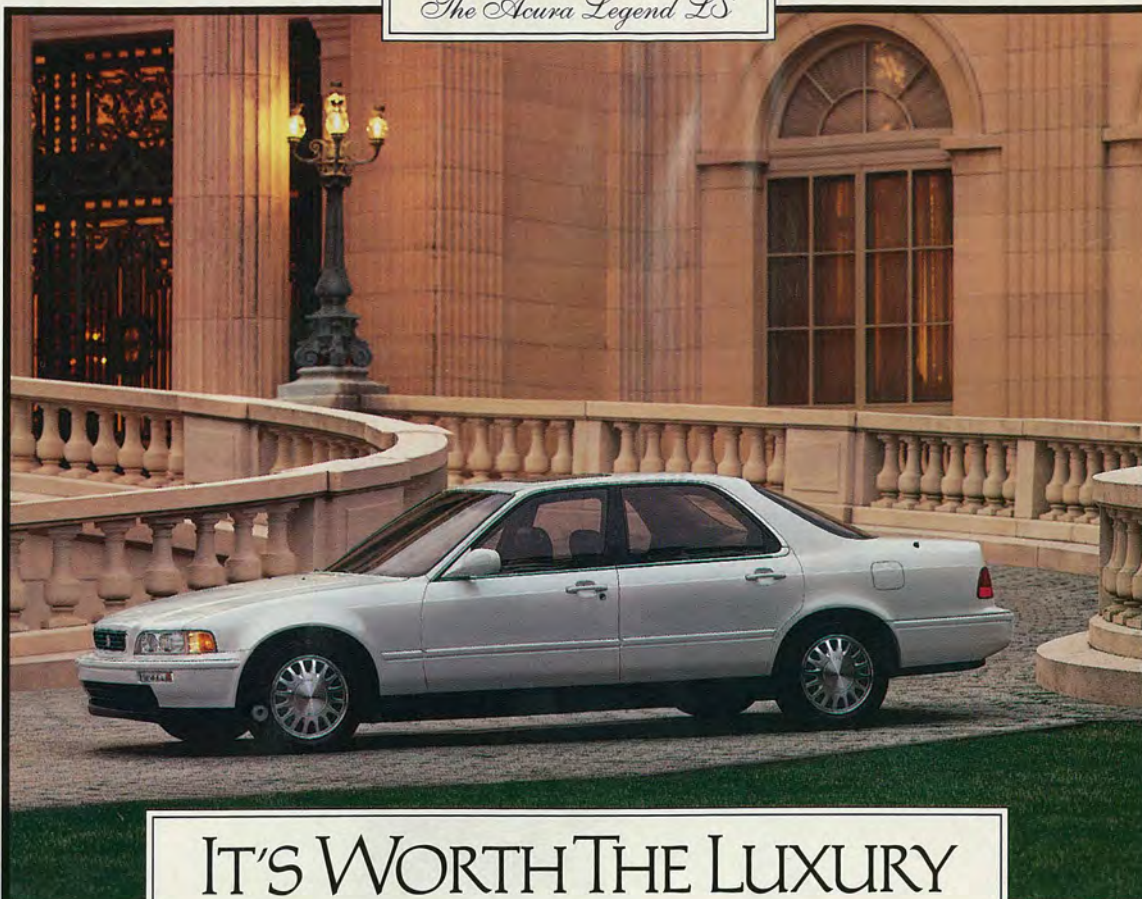
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PAGE 8

## CONTENTS

### 8 / The Arts of The State

May in California — A guide to upcoming cultural events

by David H. Bowman

### 32 / Traveling to Yerba Buena Gardens

San Francisco's new Center for the Arts

by Jean Schiffman

### P-I / PROGRAM INFORMATION

### 36 / Beauty and the Beast

A new musical comes to Broadway

by Tom Jacobs

### THE ART OF DINING

### 40 / California Cuisine

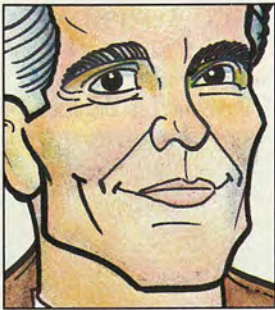
by Norm Chandler Fox

### 42 / From the Desk of ...

by Helgi Tomasson



PAGE 36



PAGE 42

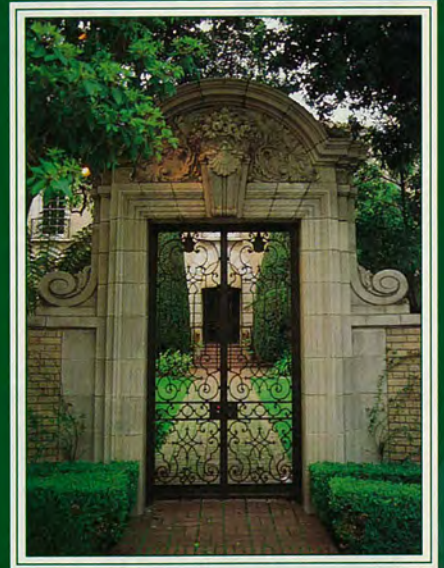
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# THE ARTS OF THE STATE

## A GUIDE TO UPCOMING CULTURAL EVENTS

by David H. Bowman

### May

#### MUSIC

**LOS ANGELES PHILHARMONIC.** Music director Esa-Pekka Salonen returns next month to share the month's conducting duties with Roger Norrington. Salonen leads Elliott Carter's *Symphony No. 1* on a program with the Beethoven Fifth and then pairs Mozart and Bruckner. Norrington, who made his name with these works as performed by the London Classical Players, leads the Philharmonic in Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique* and Beethoven's Second. He ends the season with performances of Haydn's *The Seasons* (with the Los Angeles Master Chorale). *Throughout May, Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, Los Angeles (213) 850-2000.*



**SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY.** May is Blomstedt month at the Symphony, with the music director in residence. Andras Schiff is soloist in Bartók's Piano Concerto No. 1 on a program with Rachmaninoff's luscious *Symphonic Dances*. Finnish pianist Olli Mustonen plays the Grieg Piano Concerto and Chopin's First, and Christian Tetzlaff plays the Brahms Violin Concerto. The month ends with Mahler's Ninth Symphony. In the midst of these riches is a concert by the acclaimed SFS Chorus. *Throughout May, Davies Symphony Hall, San Francisco (415) 431-4500.*



TOM CAPRAGLIA

**Above:** The Women's Philharmonic in San Francisco presents the unforgettable sound of the women's ensemble KITKA May 21, (415) 543-2297. **Left:** Esa-Pekka Salonen returns to the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion throughout May. **Above:** Phillip Glass gives a rare performance May 7 at the Wadsworth Theatre.

**SAN DIEGO SYMPHONY.** Yoav Talmi, San Diego's music director, concludes the season with three beloved works: Mahler's *Songs of a Wayfarer* (May 5, 7); Fauré's *Pavane* for Choir and Orchestra (May 13, 14); and Holst's *The Planets* (May 20, 21). *Copley Symphony Hall, San Diego (619) 699-4205*

**LIN/SCHUB.** Violinist Cho-Liang Lin and pianist André-Michel Schub give a recital in Orange County next month. Lin



has just finished a fourteen-city American tour with Philippe Entremont and the Dresden Philharmonic; Schub won the 1974 Naumberg Competition, the 1977 Avery Fisher Recital Award, and the 1991 Van Cliburn Competition. These two masters have been collaborating since 1991 with a tour of the Far East. *May 7, Irvine Barclay Theatre, Irvine (714) 553-2422.*

**KRONOS QUARTET.** The famed Kronos Quartet performs with special guest, The Theatre of Voices. The latter, under the direction of Paul Hillier, is a group of singers with a wide-ranging repertoire, including early and contemporary music. This collaboration has earned accolades for its performances of the music of Arvo Pärt. *May 6, Westwood United Methodist Church, Los Angeles (310) 825-2101.*

**PHILIP GLASS.** One of our most important contemporary composers, Philip Glass, gives a rare solo piano recital including a transcription from his opera *Satyagraha*. *May 7, Wadsworth Theatre, UCLA (310) 825-2101.*

## T H E A T E R

**THE WOMAN WARRIOR.** "When we Chinese girls listened to the adults talking-story, we learned that we failed if we grew up to be but wives or slaves. We could be heroines, swordswomen.... Night after night my mother would talk-story until we fell asleep. I couldn't tell where the stories left off and the dreams began, her voice the voice of the heroines in my

sleep." Published in 1976, *The Woman Warrior* was Maxine Hong Kingston's first book. Berkeley Rep presents the world premiere of Deborah Rogin's dramatization of *Woman Warrior* and its follow-up, *China Men*. *May 18 (prev. 5/13)-July 3, Zellerbach Playhouse, UC Berkeley (510) 845-4700.*

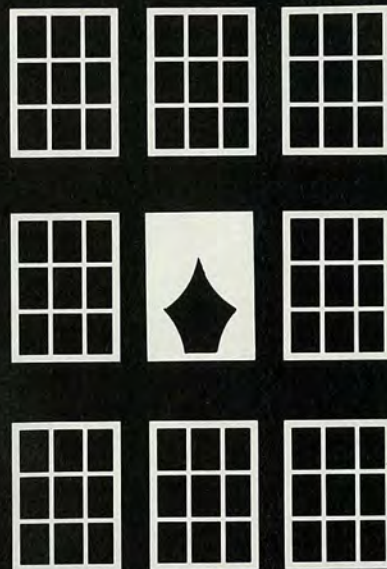
**MADAME MAO.** Kim Miyori presents her one-woman tour-de-force titled *Madame Mao's Memories*. Written by Henry Ong, the work examines the life of Jiang Qing, the 24-year-old actress from Shanghai who transformed herself into the most hated and feared women in modern history. *May 14 (prev. 5/11)-June 26, Old Globe Theatre, San Diego (619) 239-2255.*

**TOMMY.** Originally a song series written and performed by the rock group The Who in 1969, *Tommy* has been given dramatic form by La Jolla Playhouse artistic director Des McAnuff. After storming Broadway, the show is now on a national tour. *Tommy* reawakens the country's baby boomers to the issues and icons of the late sixties, to rebellion against authority and to what "rock operas" were supposed to be in the first place. *April 28-May 1, McCallum Theatre, Palm Desert (619) 340-2787; May 10-May 15, Orange County Performing Arts Center, Costa Mesa (714) 556-ARTS.*

**HARVEY.** The lovable drunk has been a stock character ever since revelers saluted the god Dionysus, thus inventing theatre. In her 1944, Pulitzer Prize-winning play, *Harvey*, Mary C. Chase created Elwood P Dowd, one such lovable inebriate whose



Playwright David Mamet



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best friend is an invisible, six-foot rabbit. Psychiatry comes in for a drubbing in this very funny play, along with anyone or thing that prevents us from living our dreams. *May 22 (prev. 5/17)–June 19, La Jolla Playhouse (619) 550-1010.*

**IRMA VEP.** The late, lamented Charles Ludlam had a sense of the theatrically absurd that is now legendary. His "Ridiculous Theatrical Company" was well known for high camp of the most hilarious and inventive kind. *The Mystery of Irma Vep* was his second play and is given its Los Angeles area premiere in a production directed by Jules Aaron and featuring Ron Campbell and Anthony Forkush. Prepare for an all-too-clever send-up of the Gothic melodrama/Hollywood horror film. *May 19–June 19, The Laguna Playhouse, Laguna Beach (714) 494-8021.*

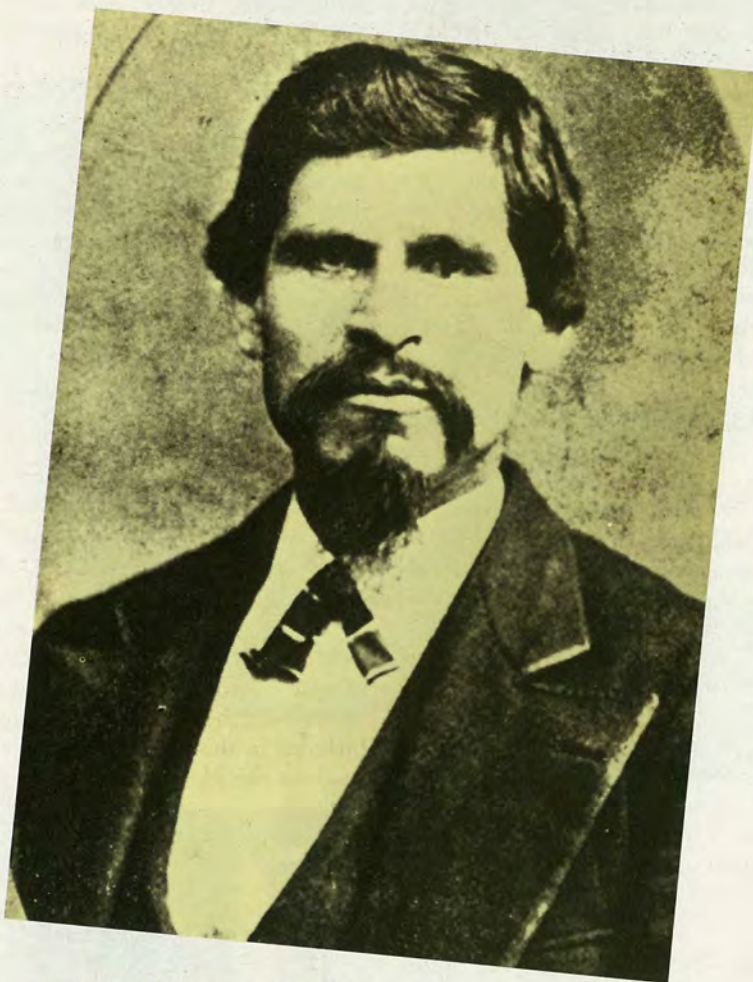
**OLEANNA.** The battle of the sexes took one of its ugliest turns when Clarence Thomas and Anita Hill lobbed anti-character grenades at each other in the august chambers of the United States Senate. The spectacle roiled playwright David Mamet to the point that he revisited a manuscript about sexual harassment that he had shelved some eight months before. The result is the 1992 two-person dogfight, *Oleanna*, in which a college professor and student face off in one of the most blistering and controversial plays to hit the American stage in many years. *May 19 (prev. 5/14)–June 26, Old Globe Theatre, San Diego (619) 239-2255; April 28–June 19, Stage Door Theatre, San Francisco (415) 749-2228.*

**SHOW BIZ.** The "topical revue" is a venerated show biz tradition, one that has, sadly, been on the wane in current years. In *And What, Give Up Show Biz?* this genre is brought back to life by producer Joseph Lillis. Using songs by such masters as Billy Barnes and Kander and Ebb, the show explores why it is that show folk couldn't possibly do anything else. *Show Biz* starts on a national tour next month. *Beginning May 19, Marines Memorial Theatre, San Francisco (415) 771-6900.*

**SOUTH PACIFIC.** In 1949, Rodgers and Hammerstein had the largest advance sale in the history of the Broadway stage when they opened their much-anticipated *South Pacific*. In its first production, *South Pacific* ran almost two thousand performances, as well as supporting a road company and a London run, too. The show has won more prizes, awards, and citations than almost any other musical



Thousands of revelers shed their inhibitions at *Carnival San Francisco* May 27-29, (415) 824-8999.



Above: The notorious California bandit, Tiburcio Vasquez. *Bandido!*, the world premiere of the American melodrama by Luis Valdez, appears on stage at the Mark Taper Forum May 29–July 24, 1994.

production in the history of New York theatre. It garnered the Pulitzer Prize as a drama, being only the second musical to do so. Long Beach Civic Light Opera presents Sandy Duncan and George Hearn in this landmark American musical. *May 5–May 22, Terrace Theater, Long Beach (310) 432-8713.*

**FUNNY FORUM.** With a book by Burt Shevelove and Larry Gelbart and music and lyrics by the young Stephen Sondheim, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* opened on Broadway in 1962. The show is a mad romp through a Caesar's Palace Rome complete with wise-cracking Jewish standup comedians and burlesque babes. The music is bouncy and catchy, and the show's theme song, "Comedy Tonight," provided a memorable tune, both pretty and galumphing, that sent you out of the theatre with a smile. *May 14 (prev. 5/5)–July 10, Colony Studio Theatre, Los Angeles (213) 665-3011.*

**CITY OF ANGELS.** This show oughta been a picture. On one hand, in colors bright as a clown's umbrella, struggling screenwriter battles mouthy mogul for the — whatchacallit? — integrity of his story. On the other hand, in black and white rich as Fred Astaire's tux, fictional alter-ego matches wits with shapely doll. It's a great show all about the gritty and not-so-grand years of the City of Angels. And it's a hit show that gotta lotta prizes from a guy name of Tony. *May 10–15, Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts (310) 916-8500.*

**THE DESTINY OF ME.** In 1985, Larry Kramer's play *The Normal Heart* was among the first artistic expressions to lash out at a complacent medical establishment that was willing to look away from AIDS. Eight years later, his *Destiny of Me* replaces bitterness with tenderness, as an AIDS patient looks back on his life and visits with his younger self. Wrote Kramer in relation to the play, "My generation has had special, if not unique, problems along this way. We were the generation psychoanalysts tried to change. This journey, from discovery through guilt to momentary joy and toward AIDS, has been my longest, most important journey." *May 13 (prev. 5/10)–June 19, International City*

**FIDDLER ON THE ROOF.** The 30th Anniversary production of this musicalization of the tales of Sholem Aleichem is the occasion for one more toast — *Lechaim!* *May 4–8, Pasadena Civic Auditorium (818) 449-7360.*

**URBAN REVISIONS.** It's no secret that our cities are in trouble. "Urban Revisions: Current Projects for the Public Realm" is an exhibition of approximately fifteen innovative urban planning and design projects developed over the past five years for a wide range of predominantly American cities and contexts. It touches on such themes as transportation, reclamation, and master plans. *May 15–July 24, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (213) 626-6828.*

**AIDS QUILT.** The NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt is one of the largest examples of modern folk art in America. Comprised of more than 23,000 individual fabric panels, each measuring three feet by six feet, the Quilt memorializes the hundreds of thousands of people who have died of AIDS in the United States and around the world. *May 5–June 26, Yerba Buena Gardens Center for the Arts, San Francisco (415) 978-ARTS.*

**MUSEUM OF TOLERANCE.** The Simon Wiesenthal Center's new Museum of Tolerance includes hands-on, interactive exhibits that focus on two central themes: the history of racism and prejudice in the American experience and the story of the most monumental example of man's inhumanity to man, the Nazi Holocaust. A Global Situation Room monitors contemporary human rights violations. *Museum of Tolerance, Los Angeles (310) 553-9036.*

**GOLD AND GRANDEUR.** Some 120 objects, including items classified as national treasures in Portugal, comprise "Gold and Grandeur: The Age of the Baroque in Portugal." Drawing on large deposits of gold, diamonds, and emeralds in Brazil, the eighteenth century Portuguese crown commissioned major artworks from the finest European masters. Included in this exhibit is the celebrated coach of the Marques de Fontes, created



The new Museum of Tolerance.

for an elaborate papal procession in Rome. *May 22–September 6, San Diego Museum of Art (619) 232-7931.*

## DANCE

**ROYAL BALLET.** On its second visit to Orange County in three years, Britain's Royal Ballet brings works by some of its master choreographers: Sir Kenneth MacMillan is represented by his three-act ballet *Mayerling* and his last completed work, *The Judas-Tree*. Works by Sir Frederick Ashton include the Royal Ballet's signature piece *The Dream*, based on *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *A Month in the Country*, based on the story by Turgenev. *May 3–8, Orange County Performing Arts Center, Costa Mesa (714) 646-OCPS.*

**CUNNINGHAM.** For over fifty years, Merce Cunningham has been one of the most important makers of dance in America. The Merce Cunningham Dance Company presents two new works as well as some important repertory pieces. *May 6–7, Zellerbach Hall, UC Berkeley (510) 642-9988.*

**MEHMET SANDER.** Born in Istanbul, Mehmet Sander has been a Southern California resident since 1987. As a dancer and choreographer he has produced work that is daring, dangerous, and absolutely "in-your-face." His dance company has performed at the Holland Dance Festival, and as a soloist, Sander has danced in Europe and throughout California. Next month he premieres new works titled *Controlled Space* and *Infinite Space*. *May 7–8, Schoenberg Hall, UCLA (310) 825-2101.*

**LINES.** Alonzo King's LINES Contemporary Ballet presents the world premiere of a new work in collaboration with jazz great Pharaoh Sanders. *May 5–May 15, Yerba Buena Gardens Center for the Arts, San Francisco (415) 978-ARTS.*

**DANCE PHOTOS.** Two extraordinary exhibitions of dance photography go on view next month: "Breaking Bounds: The Photography of Lois Greenfield" and "Dancers: Photographs by Philip Trager" prove that still photography can represent powerful motion in the most affecting way. *May 26–September 4, Museum of Photographic Arts, San Diego (619) 239-5262. □*

David H. Bowman is Arts and Entertainment Editor for *Performing Arts magazine*.



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## NEWS FROM THE AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER

### Sponsors Light up the Stage

A.C.T. gratefully recognizes a trio of Bay Area benefactors who have teamed up to co-sponsor *Light up the Sky*: the Fireman's Fund Foundation, BankAmerica Foundation, and Pan Pacific Hotel San Francisco.

*Light up the Sky* marks the twentieth year of continuous A.C.T. sponsorship for Fireman's Fund Foundation. A.C.T. patrons will recall their underwriting of last season's *Dinner at Eight*.

"We're delighted to play a sustained role in A.C.T.'s mission to bring the highest quality performing arts to Bay Area audiences," says Barbara Friede, Director of the Foundation. "We especially appreciate sponsoring productions that nurture and illuminate the human spirit, an objective that reflects our own efforts to help people achieve their potential."

Fireman's Fund Insurance Company earned its name more than a century ago when it provided a portion of its profits to the widows and orphans of San Francisco firefighters. Although that arrangement was later dissolved, the name continued as Fireman's Fund eventually became one of the top twenty property casualty insurers in America. The company is based in Marin County, where many of its employees live and work.

The Foundation was established in 1953 as the company's philanthropic arm and has donated more than \$25 million to nonprofit organizations nationwide. While its primary priority is to address human needs within the Marin County area, the Foundation also looks to assist Bay Area cultural and artistic groups as well.

The BankAmerica Foundation brings to A.C.T.'s roster one of the most illustrious financial institutions on the American corporate scene, the Bank of America. Through the Foundation's philanthropic endeavors, the San Francisco-based bank builds on a long tradition of service to the community.

The Foundation's support of A.C.T.'s *Light up the Sky* underscores more than a quarter century of interest in a wide



*The Pan Pacific Hotel San Francisco, located at 500 Post Street at Union Square.*

variety of categories. In addition to its strong commitment to the arts, which totalled more than \$1.5 million in 1992 alone, the Foundation makes grants in the areas of economic development and affordable housing, education, conservation and environment, and health and human services.

"The Foundation views all of its contributions as investments in the local community," says Sandra Cohen, Regional Program Manager. "Our broad involvement not only enriches the lives of the people in the community, it also benefits our shareholders, customers, and employees, many of whom are theatergoers. Our philanthropic activities rest on the belief

that businesses prosper only to the extent that the populations they serve prosper. A.C.T. is a major player in the cultural vitality of the Bay Area, and we believe that A.C.T. must prosper, as any business crucial to the quality of life should."

Beginning its sixth consecutive year as a valued sponsor, the Pan Pacific Hotel San Francisco adds *Light up the Sky* to the list of productions it has supported, which include the 1991-92 season's overwhelmingly popular *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. Last year's holiday revelers may also recall the Pan Pacific's exquisite black-tie dinner and dessert reception for the opening night gala benefit performance of *Bon Appétit*, which featured Jean Stapleton.



Famous for the complimentary Rolls Royce city transportation it provides for all guests, the Pan Pacific is a four-star luxury hotel located at the corner of Post and Mason Streets, a short stroll from the Stage Door and Marines Memorial theaters. A.C.T. patrons have for years enjoyed its amenities, as well as the comfort of its 311 rooms and 19 suites.

In January the Pan Pacific added luster to its coveted designation as one of the Leading Hotels of the World by naming Volker Ulrich, C.H.A., General Manager. Ulrich, educated at the famed Heidelberg School and at Cornell University, is well known for his years of distinguished service in the hospitality industry. "Our commitment to A.C.T. is also reflected in the individual attention we lavish on its patrons," he says. "Any pre- or post-theater experience they enjoy should equal the grandeur of a stay at the hotel."

Underscoring this commitment, the celebrated Pacific Grill is making some exciting changes. Patrons can still take advantage of the hotel's complimentary parking when they come in for a sumptuous three-course pre-theater dinner, from 5:30 to 9:30 p.m. nightly, all for only \$32 per person. Chef de Cuisine Peter Harvey has created some inspiring new dishes he describes as California Comfort Foods, using the finest local ingredients. "I want our food to stimulate great conversation," says Harvey, "and make people relaxed and ready to continue on for a night of great theater at A.C.T."

— Jeff Adams

## The King Stag: Theater in the Making

A.C.T.'s friends and family are invited to experience the unique adventure of theater in the making. At the Stage Door Theater on Friday, May 20 (at 1:00 p.m.) and on Saturday, May 21 (at 10:00 a.m.), A.C.T. presents free public workshop performances (thanks to the generosity of the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund) of a new adaptation of Carlo Gozzi's eighteenth-century fairy-tale-turned-classic, *The King Stag*, currently in development at A.C.T.

A magical fable based on two tales from *A Thousand and One Nights*, this project offers a rich sensory experience

for audiences of all ages. The performances will be staged readings — with costumes and music — representing the culmination of a two-week intensive workshop attended by A.C.T. company members, collaborators Andrei Belgrader, Shelley Berc, and Rusty Magee, and set designer Andrei Both. The actors may perform with script in hand and develop comic *lazzi* (physical bits) on the spot, and a representation of the set for an anticipated future mainstage production will also be on display.

*The King Stag* blends traditional *commedia dell'arte* techniques and stock characters with exotic spectacle and aspects of new vaudeville and pop culture, all set to an original musical score. It brings to life on the contemporary stage the fabulous imagery of Gozzi's original: the hero's quest for true love; the journey out of the palace, into the forest and back again; the trials and betrayals, greed and revenge of young lovers and ambitious courtiers; the transformation of a king into a stag and a parrot into a magician; and a statue whose laughter helps the king choose the right bride.

*The King Stag* is the fourth collaboration by Berc, Belgrader, and Magee, whose adaptation of Molière's *Scapin* was presented by A.C.T. at the Stage Door Theater this season.

The Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund awarded A.C.T. a substantial grant to develop *The King Stag* under the auspices of its New Works for Young Audiences Program, which is designed to help theater companies develop new works that appeal to young people from a variety of backgrounds. The Fund is the largest private funder of arts and culture in the United States.

Admission to the workshop performances is open to invited school groups. For information, call (415) 749-2230.



You are invited to:

## A.C.T. PERSPECTIVES

A series of public symposia funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities Division of Public Programs. Admission is free, and everyone is welcome.

V

### Reinterpreting the Greeks: New Approaches to Ancient Drama

Martin Bernal, Professor, Dept. of Government, Cornell University;  
Author (*Black Athena*)

Helene Peet Foley, Olin Professor of Classics, Barnard College

Timberlake Wertenbaker,  
Playwright and Translator  
(*Oedipus Tyrannos*, *Oedipus at Colonus*, *Antigone*, *Hecuba*)

Olympia Dukakis, Academy Award-winning Film (*Moonstruck*), Stage, and Television ("Tales of the City") Actress

April 18, 1994

Marines Memorial Theater, 7 – 9 p.m.

VI

### Is There a Common Mythic Base in Contemporary American Culture and Theater?

Andrei Codrescu, Professor of Creative Writing, Louisiana State University; Poet, Essayist, Author, and NPR Commentator; Writer and Star of the film *Road Scholar*

Judith Malina, Director, Teacher, and Co-founder of The Living Theater Company; Actor (*Dog Day Afternoon*, *Awakenings*, *The Addams Family*)

Tony Kushner, Pulitzer Prize-winning Playwright (*Angels in America*, *The Illusion*)

May 9, 1994

Marines Memorial Theater, 7 – 9 p.m.

Panelists subject to change without notice.



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## A Comic Valentine to Show Biz

By Lance Barry Miller

**L**ight up the Sky, which opened at the Royale Theater in November of 1948, was the comedy hit of the season. Critic George Jean Nathan opined from on high that the play was "a comic valentine of the show business." And so it was, because Moss Hart had a lifelong love affair with Broadway, and *Light up the Sky* was his sly and affectionate homage to the theater. "Show biz" had not only made the impoverished Hart rich and famous; it probably saved his life.

In its first run, the play was much enjoyed as a theatrical in-joke, even by its "victims," including *Boston Post* critic Eliot Norton:

Mr. Hart's comedy was of special concern here, for was it not a play about a play in tryout in Boston, and did its action not transpire in the Ritz-Carlton Hotel? Of course. Moreover, did it not seem to be concerned with people of the theater, among them a lady star, all disguised only thinly? Yes. Did its story not turn on the reading of reviews by Boston reviewers, who were not even thinly disguised, but named and "quoted"? Yes. And didn't all this make it something of a family party? Natch.

Of course, one of the critics "quoted" in *Light up the Sky* is none other than Elliot Norton.

While the "true-life" identities of Hart's characters may have receded into memory, his passion for the theater life is as fresh as ever. It was his element; its ups-and-downs and ins-and-outs were his own. He thrived on the peculiar energy of the theater, and on the exchange of that energy with his own. Playwright George S. Kaufman, his longtime mentor, collaborator, and friend, had a name for this phenomenon:

Forked Lightning, I called him. Only I am not sure that it plays around his head. I think his head plays around with the lightning, deliberately. And



*"His head was always held high as if he were about to issue a command or answer a question or search out a truth. His eyebrows were always arched, sometimes as if in disbelief, at any sign of ineptitude or fraud or dishonesty. Other times, they gave him a look of amused interest. Sometimes, of imperial disdain."*

— Producer Dore Schary on Moss Hart.

that is one of the reasons, if you ask me, why he is a good playwright. The prodigality that marks the simplest moments of his life is matched by the prodigality of his mind. Ideas pour forth, and the simplest things in life are highlighted and made interesting. His is an instinctive sense of drama.... [His] life, like the plays, cuts itself into acts, with climaxes, second-act curtains, and interesting minor characters.

### "The Dark Brown Taste of Being Poor"

Hart was born into a Bronx tenement in 1904 and died, too soon, in 1961, a much-loved and much-lauded playwright, director, and screenwriter. Late in his life he wrote *Act One*, perhaps the most entertaining theater autobiography ever writ-

ten. "I grew up in an atmosphere of unrelieved poverty," it begins, "with what Ruth Gordon describes as 'the dark brown taste of being poor' forever in my mouth and the grim smell of actual want at the end of my nose.... The atmosphere was not improved by the family cast of characters." The principal players were a tyrannical grandfather — the black sheep of a well-to-do family of English Jews who had come to New York and become a cigar-maker, only to be put out of work by automation — and an eccentric aunt, who escaped the shabbiness of tenement life by reading books, putting on airs, and going to local theater.

Young Moss was bookish and bright, but could not finish school because his labor was needed to supplement the family's meager income. He conceived a passion for the bright lights of Broadway, but even his first visit to the Great White Way was ironic. Sent downtown on an errand, he emerged from the subway into a "swirling mob of happy, laughing people":

In that first breathless look, it seemed completely right, somehow, that the glittering Broadway of my fantasy should be as dazzling as this, even in broad daylight, but what I took to be an everyday occurrence was Broadway waiting to celebrate the election of... Woodrow Wilson as the next president.... It was the first of many disappointments inevitable to the stage-struck.

Hart's tenacity later brought him back to Broadway as a clerk in a theatrical booking office. There he anonymously wrote and submitted a play called *Beloved Bandit*. The play was accepted, Hart revealed himself as its author, and he was taken to Rochester for its tryout. ("I would sleep alone in a room that night for the first time in my life. I did not know until that moment how starved I had been for privacy.") But the play failed and cost him his job.

*Continued on Page P-8*

The American Conservatory Theater

presents

# LIGHT UP THE SKY

By Moss Hart (1948)

“Mad, sire? Ah, yes — mad indeed, but observe how they do light up the sky.”

— Old Skroob in *The Idle Jests*

*Directed by* Albert Takazaukas  
*Scenery by* Kent Dorsey  
*Costumes by* Sandra Woodall  
*Lighting by* Peter Maradudin  
*Sound by* Stephen LeGrand  
*Casting by* Meryl Lind Shaw

## The Cast

(In order of appearance)

<i>Miss Lowell</i>	Jamie Jones
<i>Carleton Fitzgerald</i>	Ken Ruta
<i>Frances Black</i>	Charla Cabot
<i>Owen Turner</i>	Bruce Williams
<i>Stella Livingston</i>	Joy Carlin
<i>Peter Sloan</i>	Hector Correa
<i>Sidney Black</i>	Will Marchetti
<i>Sven, Cop</i>	Guiesseppe Jones
<i>Irene Livingston</i>	Anne Swift
<i>Tyler Rayburn</i>	Dick Butterfield
<i>Shriner</i>	David Rasner
<i>William H. Gallegher</i>	Brian Keith Russell

## The Place

The living room of Irene Livingston's Ritz-Carlton Hotel suite in Boston, Massachusetts.

**The Time:** December 1948.

Act I: About 5:30 p.m.    Act II: About 11:45 that evening.    Act III: 3:30 a.m.

*There will be two intermissions.*

## Understudies

*Irene Livingston, Miss Lowell* — Beth Richmond; *Carleton Fitzgerald* — Hector Correa; *Frances Black* — Jamie Jones; *Owen Turner* — Dick Butterfield; *Stella Livingston* — Roberta Callahan; *Peter Sloan, Shriner* — Guiesseppe Jones; *Cop, Sidney Black* — Brian Keith Russell; *Sven, Gallegher, Tyler Rayburn* — David Rasner

## Stage Management Staff

Karen Van Zandt and Thom Benedict

This production is made possible in part by the generous support of Mr. & Mrs. William Hambrecht, the L.J. Skaggs and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation, Fireman's Fund Foundation, BankAmerica Foundation, and Pan Pacific Hotel San Francisco.

*Light up the Sky* is presented by arrangement with Samuel French, Inc.



SHUBERT ARCHIVE

The Shubert Theater in Boston, where Peter Sloan's masterpiece might have proved itself worthy of Broadway. From 1891, when the out-of-town tryout system was pioneered at the Boston Theater, until the late 1970s, new works had to make the grade in places like Boston, Philadelphia, and New Haven before gracing the Great White Way.

## King of the Borscht Belt

Ever resilient, Hart went on to do a little acting and some little-theater directing, eventually finding especial success as a summer-camp social director. The "Borscht Belt" resorts were in their heyday, and Hart's talents at organizing skits and masquerades — and at cribbing material from Broadway shows — were very much appreciated, as was his unflagging energy. Within five years he progressed from his first job, at Camp Utopia, to the Flagler Hotel, "the Fontainebleau of the Catskills," and had earned recognition as "the King of the Borscht Circuit." All the while, he spent as much time as he could at the beach, his pockets stuffed with candy bars, writing new plays on a yellow note pad.

After six failed dramas, Hart was inspired to write a comedy. *Once in a Lifetime* lampooned the excesses of a Hollywood he had never seen, but it was good enough to catch the attention of Kaufman, one of the most successful playwrights of the 1920s and 30s. Hart idolized Kaufman, and the older man was

indeed the senior partner in their collaboration. But it was again Hart's persistence that kept the show alive. After two failed out-of-town tryouts, and countless rewrites, Kaufman was ready to concede defeat, but Hart would not quit. *Once in a Lifetime* was the hit of 1930.

As Hart described it, he and Kaufman "married and had several beautiful children," including the Pulitzer Prize-winning *You Can't Take It with You* (1936) and *The Man Who Came to Dinner* (1939), which affectionately savaged their friend, critic and pundit Alexander Woollcott.

## Disasters into Joyrides

As soon as the reviews were in on *Once in a Lifetime*, Hart loaded his family into a cab, got a five-hundred dollar advance from the box office, and moved into Manhattan, leaving behind their dingy apartment and everything in it. As the critic Brooks Atkinson observed, "No one ever moved into sudden wealth with more gusto."

Hart himself described his prodigality as "a kind of mania." Everything about him was intensely energetic. Atkinson described him: "Tall and lean, affable and quick-witted, he could not hold himself back from anything or anybody. He had an unconquerable appetite for life." Indeed he could eat like Falstaff without putting on a single pound; but then again, he spent most opening nights in the men's room losing his most recent meal.

Although he happily married Kitty Carlisle at forty, Hart spent his thirties womanizing. When he escorted beautiful young actress Eileen Atwater to a dinner party, the pianist — and wit — Oscar Levant reportedly remarked, "Ah, here

comes Moss Hart and the future Miss Atwater."

He also had tremendous personal charisma. Writer Carl Van Doren said (somewhat awkwardly), "There is something about Moss Hart that makes everybody in a room a little bit nicer than they were, when he walks into it." And Bennet Cerf once observed that "disasters turn into joyrides under Moss's guidance."

He was a voluble and marvelous talker, very different from the usually reserved Kaufman. When asked if Hart always told the truth, Kaufman replied, "He does ... but I don't think he could stand a withering cross-examination." Danny Kaye reported that, like many self-educated men, Hart exhibited some idiosyncratic pronunciations: "chrysanthenums," and "orchester," for example. It was Moss Hart and Ira Gershwin, however, who wrote a lyric that became a popular part of Danny Kaye's stock in trade — singing the names of fifty-six Russian composers in thirty-eight seconds: "There's Malichevsky, Rubenstein, Arensky and Tchaikovsky, / Sapelnikoff, Dimitrieff, Tsherepnin, Kryjanovsky," to cite just two of fifteen breathless lines.

Hart's manic prodigality was most evident in the language of money. Unapologetic about this, he described his excesses as "gold garter periods." Edna Ferber noted that he was "monogrammed in the most improbable places;" Garson Kanin said Hart was "the only man I ever knew in my whole life who had a cigarette case shaped to fit his behind" (to which George Cukor rebutted, "So what's to fit?"). And it was Kaufman who said that being around Moss was "gelt by association."

Another Kaufman collaborator, Howard Teichman, recounts the story of Hart's visit to Kaufman while the latter was staying in Palm Springs:

Hart, out on the desert for the first time, decided to go western in a fashion that only Hart could pull off. Always the retailer's best friend, Hart showed up in a pair of frightfully expensive Texas boots, chaps, jeans, a beautifully hammered silver belt buckle, an elegant elkskin vest, and Stetson's best twenty-gallon hat. One glance was all Kaufman needed.

"Hi-yo, Platinum," he said.

## Toiler in the Vineyard

The dramaturgy of Hart's life and art was largely about overcoming adversity, and if his mania were intense, so were his depressions. Extravagance could never entirely salve the wounds of childhood deprivation. All his life he wrestled with periods of despair, "never secure enough against the picture of family dissolution I still carried within me."

It was the theater that saved Moss Hart. He would rouse himself from despondency by sheer acts of will, but always that will was expressed through the theater. In midlife, he underwent extensive psychoanalysis — which he transformed into the musical comedy *Lady in the Dark* (1941), with music and lyrics by Kurt Weill and Ira Gershwin, starring Gertrude Lawrence and Danny Kaye.

Hart's plays failed almost as often as they succeeded, but characteristically, he liked to fail extravagantly, "like the Titanic. That, at least, would make my labors as worthwhile and as exciting as the Theater should always be."

A sense of humor was handy, too. In 1937, a play of Hart's called *The Secret Room* was doing badly in Boston. He sent for Kaufman, who had just directed the famous production of Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*. When Kaufman entered Hart's hotel room, Moss looked up at him dolefully and said, "George, I done a baad thing."

But for a man of Hart's temperament, the rewards of theater were worth the risks:

Is success in any other profession as dazzling, as deeply satisfying as it is in the theater? I cannot pretend to know, but I doubt it.... Like everything else about the theater, its success is emphatic and immoderate ... a success that is anything but lonely — everyone seems to share in it ... the most intoxicating and beguiling time imaginable.... It roars and thumps and thunders through the blood.

Lyricist Alan Jay Lerner said of Hart, "He was not ashamed of being theater. He felt it was special and became special to live up to it. As troubled, uncertain, as tormented as any who toil in these vineyards, he always covered it all with a cloak of dignity."

## Apple Pie

There were many facets to Hart's career. In the thirties, he wrote the books for several musicals. In 1943, he wrote and staged *Winged Victory* (which featured real Air Corps soldiers) to support the war effort. In 1946, he came up with the idea of a film version of *Gentlemen's Agreement*, Laura Z. Hobson's novel about American anti-Semitism. The film, directed by Elia Kazan and starring Gregory Peck, won the 1947 Academy Award for best picture.

In the fifties, Hart became known as a play doctor and director. He had long since directed his own plays, including *Light up the Sky*, and his hard-won stage sensibilities were in demand. One anecdote has him going to see a show trying out in Baltimore: He sat down next to the producer, and the curtain opened on an arrangement of green flats. An actor dressed as a leprechaun swung on stage clinging to a rope, missed his spot, and bowled over flats like nine-pins. Panicked stage hands pulled down the curtain. Hart turned to the producer and said, "It's short, but I like it."

Hart's greatest moment as a director came in 1956, when he won a Tony Award for his work on Lerner and Loewe's *My Fair Lady*. Despite his insistence on

referring to the song "On the Street Where You Live" as "On the Street on Which You Live," and despite his working the young Julie Andrews until she was ready to drop, the cast came to respect him very much. He was known as an actor's director. "Actors are not acting machines," he wrote. "Rehearsals ... bring to the surface of each actor his own special insecurity about himself and the job he faces, and it is part of the director's task ... to make each actor secure in himself and his part." His sensitivity was sometimes expressed in humor, as when he soothed the exhausted Miss Andrews by remarking that she "had the kind of awful British strength that made you wonder why they lost India."

Hart also directed Lerner and Loewe's *Camelot*. He had originally hoped that his friend the English actor Laurence Harvey would play the king ("You're a terrible fake, Larry. You're not Lithuanian and you're not Jewish. You were born in a castle in Yorkshire."), but Harvey had a movie conflict. Harvey was one of the last people to talk with Moss Hart, the night before his sudden death, at age 57, in 1961.

As they parted company, Harvey asked, "How are you feeling, Moss?"

Hart responded, "Everything is apple pie."



(l to r) George S. Kaufman, Kitty Carlisle Hart, and Moss Hart at the Stork Club. Affectionate collaborators, Hart and Kaufman "married and had several beautiful children," including *You Can't Take It with You* and *The Man Who Came to Dinner*.



## The Greatest Hits of 1948-49

Light up the Sky ran for 216 performances, from November 11, 1948 to May 21, 1949. After the exertions of World War II, the victorious United States entered a season of great prosperity and even greater expectations. Achievement-minded Americans were crazy about prizes and awards. Below is a collage of items evoking those halcyon days when Light up the Sky hit the stage.

### Theater

#### Pulitzer Prize

*A Streetcar Named Desire* (1948)

*Death of a Salesman* (1949)

#### Second Annual Tony Awards (1948)

Outstanding Play: *Mister Roberts*

Actress: Judith Anderson, Katherine Cornell, and Jessica Tandy

Actor: Henry Fonda, Paul Kelly, and Basil Rathbone

Musical Performance: Paul and Grace Hartman

Newcomers: June Lockhart and James Whitmore

Directing: Josh Logan

Musical Direction: Jerome Robbins

Outstanding Foreign Company: John Gielgud's production of *The Importance of Being Earnest*

#### Third Annual Tony Awards (1949)

Outstanding Play: *Death of a Salesman*

Outstanding Musical: *Kiss Me Kate*

Leading Performance: Martita Hunt and Rex Harrison

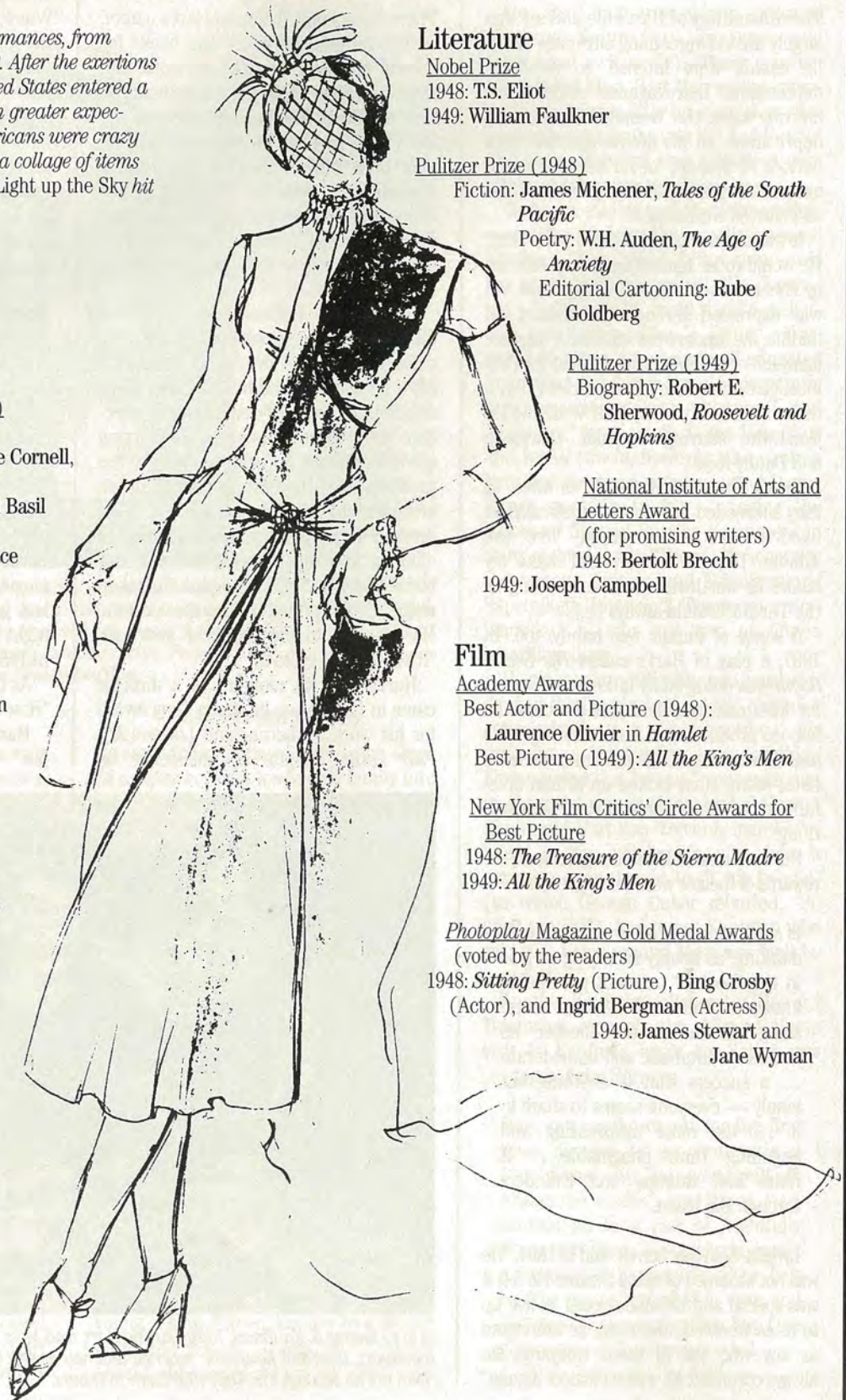
Supporting Performance: Shirley Booth and Arthur Kennedy

Musical Performance: Nanette Fabray and Ray Bolger

Director: Elia Kazan

In 1950 *South Pacific*, which opened in April of 1949, won Outstanding Musical. It was so enormously successful that the \$6.60 top ticket was being scalped for up to \$50.

*Fashion of the times. Original sketch by Costume Designer Sandra Woodall.*



### Literature

#### Nobel Prize

1948: T.S. Eliot

1949: William Faulkner

#### Pulitzer Prize (1948)

Fiction: James Michener, *Tales of the South Pacific*

Poetry: W.H. Auden, *The Age of Anxiety*

Editorial Cartooning: Rube Goldberg

#### Pulitzer Prize (1949)

Biography: Robert E.

Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*

#### National Institute of Arts and Letters Award

(for promising writers)

1948: Bertolt Brecht

1949: Joseph Campbell

### Film

#### Academy Awards

Best Actor and Picture (1948):

Laurence Olivier in *Hamlet*

Best Picture (1949): *All the King's Men*

#### New York Film Critics' Circle Awards for Best Picture

1948: *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*

1949: *All the King's Men*

#### Photoplay Magazine Gold Medal Awards (voted by the readers)

1948: *Sitting Pretty* (Picture), Bing Crosby (Actor), and Ingrid Bergman (Actress)

1949: James Stewart and Jane Wyman



### Screenwriters' Guild Awards

1948: *The Snake Pit* (Drama), *Easter Parade* (Musical)

1949: *The Yellow Sky* (Western), *On the Town* (Musical)

### Hollywood Women's Press Club Sour Apple Awards for

#### Most Uncooperative Stars

1948: Errol Flynn and Rita Hayworth

1949: Humphrey Bogart and Hedy Lamarr

## Television

### First Annual Emmy Awards (1948)

Most Outstanding Television Personality: Shirley Dinsdale and Her Puppet Judy Splinters

### Second Annual Emmy Awards (1949)

Best Live Show: "The Ed Wynn Show"

Most Outstanding Kinescope Personality: Milton Berle

### The Peabody Awards for Distinguished Broadcasting (1948)

Outstanding Entertainment: "The Groucho Marx Show"

Outstanding Children's Show: "Howdy Doody"

Outstanding Educational Program: "Communism—U.S. Style"

## Sports

Olympics: U.S. team, led by Bob Mathias in the decathlon, dominates the summer games.

In the winter games, skater Dick Button is the first American to win the men's competition.

Baseball: 1948 World Series goes to the Cleveland Indians; 1949 series to the "boys of summer," the New York Yankees.

Boxing: In 1948 Joe Louis retires as heavyweight champ.

Football: National League is dominated by the Philadelphia Eagles, champs in 1948 and 1949.

Tennis: Pancho Gonzales is 1948 U.S. singles champ.

Beauty: Miss America 1948 is Bebe Shopp of Hopkins, Minnesota.

Momdom: 1949 National Mother is Mrs. E.A. Gilliss of Texas, and the winner of the 1949 First Annual Pillsbury Bake-Off is Mrs. Ralph E. Smafield, of Rockford, Illinois, for "Water-Rising Twists, a Nut Sweet-roll."

## Popular Songs

1948: "Nature Boy," "All I Want for Christmas Is My Two Front Teeth," "Buttons and Bows."

1949: "Bali-Ha'i," "Some Enchanted Evening," "I'm in Love with a Wonderful Guy," "Riders in the Sky," "Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend," "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer."

## Headlines

Harry Truman elected President.

Congress passes Marshall Plan for economic aid to Europe.

U.S.S.R. seals off Berlin; allies begin Berlin airlift.

U.N. admits new nation of Israel.

French grant national sovereignty to Viet Nam.

Gandhi assassinated; India becomes Federal Republic under Nehru.

Republic of Eire proclaimed in Dublin; Britain recognizes independence of southern Ireland.

Princess Elizabeth gives birth to eldest son, Charles.

Mao Tse-tung proclaims People's Republic of China; Chiang Kai-shek withdraws Nationalist troops to Formosa.

North Atlantic Treaty signed; leads to NATO military pact.

Eleven U.S. Communists sentenced for conspiracy to overthrow government.

Apartheid established as official policy of South Africa.

World population surpasses two billion.



VANDAM

Special thanks to the Ritz-Carlton Hotel San Francisco for their help with this production, and to Jeffrey Lindbloom for the voice of J. J. the Parrot.

Gertrude Lawrence and Noel Coward in *Private Lives* (1931). Miss Lawrence, a star in the grand old tradition, was a close friend of Moss Hart (she called him "Mossyface"), and a likely prototype for Light up the Sky's Irene Livingston. In 1948 she appeared on Broadway in Coward's *Tonight* at 8:30.



## WHO'S WHO



**DICK BUTTERFIELD** (*Tyler Rayburn*), having graduated from Stanford University with honors in international relations, came to A.C.T. in 1982 to study in the Advanced Training Program. After two years of training with the likes of William Ball, James Edmondson, Janice Hutchins, Lawrence Hecht, Frank Ottiwell, and Dakin Matthews, he worked with the Berkeley Shakespeare Festival for two seasons in roles including Navarre in *Love's Labors Lost*, Flute in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and Catesby in *Richard III*. After two shows with the Berkeley Jewish Theater, where he appeared as Freddie in *Good* and Moses in *The Firstborn*, and work at San Jose Repertory Theater, he returned to A.C.T. at the invitation of former artistic director Edward Hastings. During eight seasons with A.C.T., his roles have included Billy in *The Real Thing*, Captain Cummings in *Diamond Lil* (with Gretchen Wyler), Edgar in *King Lear* (directed by Edward Hastings), Tony in *Woman in Mind* (with Michael Learned), Charles Darnay in *A Tale of Two Cities*, Pale in *Burn This*, Rosencrantz in John C. Fletcher's *Hamlet*, and Dr. Talbot in last season's *Dinner at Eight*, directed by Albert Takazaukas. Since returning to A.C.T., he has earned his M.F.A. and served as Dean of A.C.T.'s Conservatory, and is proud to have been an artist member of the A.C.T. Board of Trustees. Butterfield comes directly from the San Jose Civic Light Opera, where he played the Chauffeur in *Grand Hotel*. He has also joined the California Shakespeare Festival as Director of Educational Programs. Television and film credits include "Midnight Caller" and '68.



**CHARLA CABOT** (*Frances Black*), a graduate of A.C.T.'s Advanced Training Program, has appeared on the A.C.T. mainstage in *A Christmas Carol*, *The Duchess of Malfi*, and *Dinner at Eight*. Most recent credits include Anna in *Burn This* with Kudzu Theater, Agnes in *I Do! I Do!* with the Pacific Alliance Theater Company, and a season with the Colorado Shakespeare Festival. A Bay Area native, she has also performed with the San Jose Civic Light Opera, TheatreWorks, and Woodminster Theater. She holds a B.A. in theater arts from the University of the Pacific and has studied in London with instructors from the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art and the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art. Cabot is a musical theater instructor for A.C.T.'s Young Conservatory.



**JOY CARLIN** (*Stella Livingston*) is a former Associate Artistic Director of A.C.T. and has been a member of the acting company for many years. She has played Big Mama in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, Meg in *A Lie of the Mind*, Enid in *The Floating Light Bulb*, Miss Prism in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Kitty Duval in

*The Time of Your Life*, Bananas in *The House of Blue Leaves*, Asa in *Peer Gynt*, and Birdie in *The Little Foxes*. Last season she appeared as a member of the chorus in *Antigone* and as Belise in *The Learned Ladies*. Her directing credits at A.C.T. include *The House of Bernarda Alba*, *The Lady's Not for Burning*, *The Doctor's Dilemma*, *Marco Millions*, *Golden Boy*, *Hapgood*, and the world premiere of *Food and Shelter*. Carlin has also directed productions at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, San Jose Repertory Theatre (where her recent production of *Death of a Salesman* won six Drama-Logue Awards), Seattle's A Contemporary Theater, and the Shanghai Youth Drama Troupe (where she directed *You Can't Take It with You*). She has also been Resident Director and Acting Artistic Director of Berkeley Repertory Theater.



**HECTOR CORREA** (*Peter Sloan*) last appeared on the A.C.T. mainstage as Ragueneau in *Cyrano de Bergerac* and Atilio in *Saturday, Sunday and Monday*. Last year he played Max in *Lend Me a Tenor* with the Marin Theater Company and understudied Sterling in *Jeffrey* at Theater on the Square. His other Bay Area theater credits include Bonario in *Volpone* and Dubois in *The Misanthrope* at Berkeley Repertory Theater; Caliban in *The Tempest*, Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and Oliver in *As You Like It* at the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival; Orin in *Love Diatribe*, Drew in *Eastern Standard*, and Fernando in *Once Removed* at the Magic Theater; and Alberto in *Viva* and Molina in *Kiss of the Spider Woman* with the Eureka Theater Company. For BRAVA!

Correa created the role of Father Juan in the award-winning production of *Heroes and Saints* (which he will perform again in New York in the fall). He directed the premiere of *Real Women Have Curves*, wrote and directed *SAL* at the Climate Theater, and has assistant directed for the San Francisco Opera's Merola program. He has also acted off Broadway and at San Diego Repertory Theater. Film and television credits include "America's Most Wanted," Emil on "Wolf," and the soon-to-be-released John Landis film, *Beverly Hills Cop III*.



**GUIESSEPPE JONES** (*Sven, Cop*), recipient of the Colin Higgins Foundation Professional Theater Intern Fellowship, is a graduate of A.C.T.'s Advanced Training Program. While in the ATP his studio roles included Baylor in *A Lie of the Mind*, Orestes in *The Libation Bearers*, Kulygin in *The Three Sisters* (directed by John C. Fletcher), and Rodrigo Tellez Giron in *Fuente Ovejuna*. He was seen as Herakles in *A String of Pearls*, directed by Olan Jones and Mary Edith Burrell at the Marsh, and recently portrayed the Hired Man in A.C.T.'s *Uncle Vanya*, directed by Carey Perloff, and a villager in *Pecong*, directed by Benny Sato Ambush. His many opera credits include *Aida*, *Don Giovanni*, and *Il Trovatore* at the Sacramento Opera, and *The Magic Flute* at the North Bay Opera.

**JAMIE JONES** (*Miss Lowell*) appeared most recently in *Pygmalion* and *A Christmas Carol* at A.C.T. and in *Free Will and Wanton Lust* at the Cable Car Theater. She is a Professional Theater Intern and a 1993 graduate of A.C.T.'s Advanced Training Program, where she appeared as Bonnie in *Hurlyburly*, the title role in *Yerma*, Cornelia in *Cymbeline*, and Char-



lotta Ivanovna in *The Cherry Orchard*. Other credits include Nerissa in *The Merchant of Venice* and Edith in *Blithe Spirit* at the Utah Shakespearean Festival, and Lady Fidget in *The Country Wife* and Aerial in *Coastal Disturbances* at Western Stage. Jones has also performed with the Fantasy Theater in Sacramento. She is the recipient of the Shep Pollack & Paulette Long PTI Fellowship.



**WILL MARCHETTI** (*Sidney Black*) last appeared in *Room Service* at San Jose Repertory Theater. At A.C.T., he was last seen as Baylor in *A Lie of the Mind* and as Peppino in *Saturday, Sunday and Monday*. He has also performed in principal roles at the Marin Theater Company, Magic Theater, San Francisco Theater Project, Berkeley Repertory Theater, and Eureka Theater. He has many credits in feature films and television, and recently received a Drama-Logue Award for his performance in *Poetomachia* at the Magic Theater.

**DAVID RASNER** (*Shriner*), recipient of the Phyllis Wattis Professional Theater Intern Fellowship, has been seen this season at A.C.T. in *Pygmalion*, *A Christmas Carol*, and (as an understudy) in *Scapin*. His roles in A.C.T. Conservatory



productions include Scoop in *The Heidi Chronicles*, Brutus in *Julius Caesar*, Frondoso in *Fuente Ovejuna*, Chebutykin in *The Three Sisters*, and Pylades in *The Libation Bearers*. At Shakespeare Santa Cruz, he has appeared as Rocky in *Damn Yankees* and Captain Dumaine in Barbara Damashek's production of *All's Well That Ends Well*. Other regional credits include Mike in *A View from the Bridge* and Trevor in *Bedroom Farce* at Santa Rosa Summer Repertory Theater. Rasner attended C.S.U. Fresno, where he portrayed Horse in *Who's Happy Now*, Jerry in *Betrayal*, Gross in *The Memorandum*, Caliban in *The Tempest*, Tony in *Savage in Limbo*, and Banquo in *Macbeth*.



**BRIAN KEITH RUSSELL** (*William H. Gallagher*), a San Francisco native, is a 1993 graduate of the Advanced Training Program and recipient of the Mr. & Mrs. William Hambrecht PTI Scholarship. His studio work at A.C.T. included Jake in *A Lie of the Mind*, King Ferdinand in *Fuente Ovejuna*, Casca and Messala in *Julius Caesar*, and Lopakhin in *The Cherry Orchard*. This year he is pleased to return as a Professional Theater Intern, having appeared in *A Christmas Carol* and *Pygmalion*. Other San Francisco credits include Dan Henniman in



Encore Theater Company's production of *Down the Road*, as well as Len Jenkins' *Poor Folks Pleasure*, Crowsfoot in Mac Wellman's *Harm's Way*, Petruchio in Charles Marowitz's adaptation of *The Taming of the Shrew*, and Sycamore in Sam Shepard's *The Unseen Hand*, all for Diggin' Hole Productions of San Francisco. Last season at A.C.T. Russell took the stage as the executioner in Robert Woodruff's *The Duchess of Malfi*.



**KEN RUTA** (*Carleton Fitzgerald*), the Professor in Carey Perloff's production of *Uncle Vanya*, recently appeared in the world premiere of Mart (Boys in the Band) Crowley's *For Reasons That Remain Unclear*, productions of *Shadowlands* at Maryland's Olney Theater and the Arizona Theater Company, and last season's *Antigone* at A.C.T. and John C. Fletcher's Drama-Logue Award-winning Magic Theater production of *Substance of Fire*. After performing in *Tartuffe*, A.C.T.'s opening production at the Geary Theater, he remained with the company for six seasons, returning in 1982 to direct *Loot*. He has since appeared at A.C.T. in *The Floating Light Bulb*, *The Immigrant*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (winning Bay Area Theater Critics' Circle Awards for all three), and *Hapgood*. He was selected by Sir Tyrone Guthrie to be an original member of the Guthrie Theater of Minneapolis and acted in more than thirty productions in thirteen seasons there. He also served as Associate Director of the Guthrie for two years under Michael Langham, directing *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Doctor Faustus*, and *La Ronde* (which he also adapted and translated). He was Captain Hook in *Peter Pan* at Seattle's Intiman Theater and appeared in the premiere of Barbara Field's *Boundary Waters* at South Coast Repertory in Orange County. Other recent

credits include *King Lear* at Actor's Theater of Louisville and *Titus Andronicus* at the Utah Shakespearean Festival, as well as the American premiere of *Breaking the Silence* at the Pasadena Playhouse. An Associate Artist of San Diego's Old Globe Theater (where he has played roles from *King Lear* to *Bottom* and directed plays from Molière to Stoppard), he has also acted with the Seattle Repertory Theater in Dan Sullivan's production of *The Tempest* and Liviu Ciulei's *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, and has acted and directed with the Mark Taper Forum, Huntington Theater Company, and Arizona Theater Company (where he was Associate Artistic Director from 1984 to 1986). In New York he has worked with the Phoenix and Circle-in-the-Square companies and appeared in Broadway productions of *The Elephant Man*, *The Three Sisters*, *Ross, Separate Tables*, and *Inherit the Wind*. Ruta has appeared on radio, recordings, television, and film and has performed and directed with the opera companies of Dallas, Sacramento, and Minnesota, as well as the Chicago's Lyric Opera and the Minnesota Symphony Orchestra.



**ANNE SWIFT** (*Irene Livingston*) is delighted to be back in the Bay Area, having spent four years at Berkeley Repertory Theater in such roles as Amanda in *Private Lives*, Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, Ruth in Albert Takazaukas' production of *The Norman Conquests* (for which she won a Drama-Logue Award), and Josie in *A Moon for the Misbegotten* (for which she won a Bay Area Theater Critics' Circle Award). Her New York credits include *Present Laughter* and *Design for Living* on Broadway with George C. Scott, and the title role in *Tamara* off Broadway. Other regional

credits include A.R. Gurney's *The Dining Room* at the Pasadena Playhouse (for which she won a Drama-Logue Award), *Man of the Moment* at the Buffalo Studio Arena, *Paris Bound* at the Long Wharf Theater, *Bedroom Farce* at the Hartman Theater, *Isn't It Romantic?* at the Geva Theater, *The Learned Ladies* at South Coast Repertory, and *Noises Off* on the Westport Summer Circuit Tour. Television credits include "Walking Tall," "Kennedy," "As the World Turns," "One Life to Live," "The Guiding Light," "The Equalizer," and "Law and Order."



**BRUCE WILLIAMS** (*Owen Turner*) has appeared in more than forty productions at A.C.T. and has performed at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Eureka Theater Company, and Marin Theater Company. He was most recently seen in the roles of Macbeth, King John, and Polonius at the California Shakespeare Festival. With the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival, he appeared as Prospero in *The Tempest* and Oberon/Theseus in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Other Bay Area credits include the Marines Memorial Theater production of *Other People's Money* and appearances at the Magic Theater, where he portrayed Foustka in *Temptation*, the Master in *Jacques and His Master*, and Alan Turing in *Breaking the Code*. Williams has also performed at Berkeley Repertory Theater and appeared as the narrator with the Oberlin Dance Collective in *Secret House*, written by Rinde Eckert and directed by Brenda Way. Williams' television and radio credits include "Midnight Caller" and "A Fine Romance."

## UNDERSTUDIES

**ROBERTA CALLAHAN**, last seen at A.C.T. in *Uncle Vanya*, *The Duchess of Malfi*,



and *Dinner at Eight*, has appeared as Virginia in *Galileo* at Lincoln Center Repertory and as Blanche in *A Streetcar Named Desire* at San Jose Stage Company. She has worked at the San Francisco Actors' Workshop, Berkeley Repertory Theater, Marin Theater Company, Magic Theater, Eureka Theater Company, and

Westwood Playhouse in Los Angeles. Callahan recently received the Annual Actors' Achievement Award from the Marian Scott Memorial Fund for her performance as Madame Arcati in *Blithe Spirit*.



**BETH RICHMOND** graduated from the Advanced Training Program and is

pleased to join the company this season as a Professional Theater Intern and recipient of the Joan Sadler PTI Scholarship. Last seen on the mainstage in *A Christmas Carol*, her studio roles at A.C.T. included Troilus in *Troilus and Cressida*, Roma Avery in *August Snow*, Anfisa in *The Three Sisters*, and the title role in Sophocles' *Electra*. Last summer Richmond performed at the Magic Theater in *Why We Have a Body* and in the Bay Area Playwrights' Festival. Before coming to A.C.T., she appeared in the Sacramento Theater Company's production of *The Cherry Orchard* and the 24th Street Theater production of *Crimes of the Heart*. Richmond received a B.A. in drama from San Francisco State University, where she received the Jules Irving Scholarship for professional promise in the theater.

## LIGHT UP THE SKY DIRECTORS, DESIGNERS, AND STAFF

**ALBERT TAKAZAUCKAS** (*Director*) has created productions of theater and/or opera in London, Toronto, Newfoundland, New York City, Anchorage, Honolulu, Fort Worth, Minneapolis, Norfolk, Ashland, Sunnyvale, Cleveland, Seattle, San Jose, Salt Lake City, Los Angeles, Carmel-by-the-Sea, Little Rock, Princeton, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., and San Francisco (for the Magic Theater, Merola, Berkeley Repertory Theater, San Francisco Shakespeare Festival, California Shakespeare Festival, San Francisco Spring Opera, Fratelli Bologna, BRAVA!, San Francisco Opera, and A.C.T.). He is the recipient of numerous awards and a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. Recently he has returned from Europe, where he studied painting with Ferdinand Penker.

**SANDRA WOODALL** (*Costume Designer*) has recently designed costumes for Hartford Ballet's *Ballades* and *Glass*, *The Gates* for Margaret Jenkins' twentieth anniversary season, A.C.T.'s *The Duchess of Malfi*, and Tony Kushner's *Angels in America*. She worked with Robert Israel in realizing costumes for Philip Glass's *Akhenaten* and for Joseph Papp's New York Shakespeare Festival presentation of *Miracolo d'Amore* by Martha Clark. She has received a Bay Area Theater Crit-

ics' Circle Award for her costume designs for A.C.T.'s *Saint Joan* and Dance Bay Area's Isadora Duncan Award (the "Izzie") for sustained achievement in design and for visual design for Margaret Jenkins' *Age of Unrest*. For A.C.T. she has also designed *Faustus in Hell*, *Burn This*, *Saturday, Sunday and Monday*, and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. Other credits include Irene Fornes' *Drowning* and *Oscar and Bertha*, *Without Wax* for the Frankfurt Ballet, and the Magic Theater's presentation of *Talk to Me Like the Rain* and *Counting the Ways*, directed by Joseph Chaikin.

**KENT DORSEY** (*Scenic Designer*) returned to A.C.T. as scenic designer for the production of *Pygmalion* after designing the sets and lighting for *The Pope and the Witch* and *The Marriage of Figaro*. His New York set and design credits include *About Time*, *The Cocktail Hour*, *Yankee Dawg You Die*, *Suds*, and *Another Antigone*. He made his Washington, D.C., debut with the lighting for *The Cocktail Hour* at the Kennedy Center. He has worked as both scenic and/or lighting designer for directors Jerry Zaks, Jack O'Brien, Ellis Rabb, Adrian Hall, John Hirsch, John Tillinger, Ed Call, Luis Valdez, Charles Marowitz, and Sharon Ott. He has also designed scenery and/or lighting for more than seventy produc-

tions at the Old Globe Theater in San Diego, including *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Othello*, *Coriolanus*, and *Macbeth*. He has designed for many resident companies, including the La Jolla Playhouse, the Ahmanson at the Doolittle, Playwrights Horizons, Denver Center Theater Company, Shakespeare Theater at the Folger in Washington, D.C., Berkeley Repertory Theater, Studio Arena Theater in Buffalo, Philadelphia Drama Guild, South Coast Repertory, Los Angeles Theater Center, A Contemporary Theater in Seattle, San Jose Repertory Theater, El Teatro Campesino, San Diego Repertory Theater, and Eureka Theater Company. He also designed the sets and lighting for the West Coast premiere of *The Light-house* for the San Diego Opera.

**KAREN VAN ZANDT** (*Stage Manager*) is now in her fifteenth season with A.C.T., where she has stage-managed productions of *A Christmas Carol*, *Pygmalion*, *Miss Evers' Boys*, *Dinner at Eight*, *Good, Charley's Aunt*, *Taking Steps*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *The Gospel at Colonus*, *Burn This*, *Twelfth Night*, *Saint Joan*, *Sunday in the Park with George*, *Another Part of the Forest*, *Mourning Becomes Electra*, and *A Christmas Carol*. Other production credits in the Bay Area include *The Boys in Autumn*



(with Kirk Douglas and Burt Lancaster), *Top Girls*, *Greater Tuna*, and *Love Letters*.

**THOM BENEDICT** (*Assistant Stage Manager*) is now in his second season at A.C.T., where he has served as Assistant Stage Manager for *Scapin*, *Dinner at Eight*, and *Miss Evers' Boys*. Last summer he was Stage Manager for the California Shakespeare Festival's productions of *King John* and *Hamlet*. He first came to

San Francisco in 1991 as Assistant Stage Manager of the Eureka Theater Company's world premiere of Tony Kushner's *Angels in America*, and he later went on to serve as Production Manager for the company's 1991-92 season. Since then, he has stage-managed the Ellen Webb Dance Company, the Magic Theater's *XXX Love Act*, and the California Shakespeare Festival's 1992 production of *Two Gentlemen of Verona*. Before moving to the Bay Area,

Benedict lived on the Mendocino Coast, where he was the Production Stage Manager and Technical Director for an international touring dance show entitled *Men Dancing*, featuring solo performer Gregg Lizenbery. When not on tour, Benedict worked extensively as a lighting and scenic designer for the Mendocino Performing Arts Center and produced and directed in other venues with an independent company, *Caught in the Act*.

## A.C.T. DIRECTORS, DESIGNERS, AND STAFF

The AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER is a Tony Award-winning nonprofit theater in which professional training and production are inextricably linked to create work that aspires to the highest standards of American performance. Under the recent leadership of Artistic Director Carey Perloff, A.C.T. is committed to nurturing its rich legacy while expanding its reach into new communities and new areas of dramatic literature. Central to A.C.T.'s work is the interaction of original and classical work on our stages and at the heart of our Conservatory.

Founded in 1965 by William Ball, A.C.T. opened its first San Francisco season at the historic Geary Theater in 1967. During the theater's twenty-seven year history, more than two hundred productions have been performed to a combined audience of six million people in Japan, the U.S.S.R., and throughout the United States. In the 1970s A.C.T. solidified its national and international reputation as a leading theater and training company, winning a Tony Award for outstanding theater performance and training in 1979. Today, A.C.T. continues to fulfill the expectations of Bay Area audiences as a company of national and international recognition, with performance, education, and outreach programs that annually reach three hundred thousand people in the San Francisco Bay Area.

From the beginning, A.C.T.'s philosophy has called for the union of superior repertory performance and intensive actor training. Its Conservatory, now serving fifteen hundred students every year, was the first training program not affiliated with a college or university accredited to award a Master of Fine Arts Degree and is a model for the continued vitality of the art form. Danny Glover, Annette Bening, Denzel Washington, and Winona Ryder are among

its distinguished former students.

The eighty-year-old Geary Theater, which was damaged in the San Francisco earthquake of 1989, is about to undergo major renovation that will result in updated stagecraft, improved patron amenities — including improved seating and sightlines, greater accessibility for the physically disabled, and expanded lounge and restroom facilities — and a total seismic restructuring. To date, A.C.T.'s capital campaign has raised \$18.6 million of the \$24 million necessary to complete the reconstruction.



**CAREY PERLOFF**

(*Artistic Director*) assumed artistic leadership of A.C.T. in June 1992. Known for directing innovative productions of classics and new works adapted from or inspired by classical works and themes, Perloff opened her first season at A.C.T. with August Strindberg's *Creditors*, followed by Timberlake Wertenbaker's new translation of *Antigone*, and this season she directs a new translation of Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya* by Paul Schmidt. Last May she staged the world premiere of Steve Reich and Beryl Korot's new music-theater-video opera *The Cave* at the Vienna Festival, Hebbel Theater in Berlin, and Royal Festival Hall in London; *The Cave* opened the Next Wave festival at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in October. Perloff served as Artistic Director of New York's CSC Repertory Ltd.-The Classic Stage Company from 1986 to 1992, where she directed the acclaimed world premiere of Ezra Pound's version of Sophocles' *Elektra* (with Pamela Reed and Nancy Marchand), the American premiere of Harold Pinter's *Mountain Lan-*

*guage* (with Jean Stapleton and Peter Riegert) on a double bill with his *The Birthday Party*, Tony Harrison's *Phaedra Britannica*, Thornton Wilder's *The Skin of Our Teeth*, Lynne Alvarez's translation of Tirso de Molina's *Don Juan of Seville*, Michael Feingold's version of Alexandre Dumas' *The Tower of Evil*, Beckett's *Happy Days* (with Charlotte Rae), Brecht's *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* (with John Turturro), and Len Jenkins' *Candide*. Under her direction, CSC won the 1988 Obie Award for artistic excellence, as well as numerous Obies for acting, design, and production. Other New York credits include Kilburg Reedy's *Second Lady*; Terri Wagener's *The Man Who Could See Through Time*; *Leverage*, a musical theater/dance work created in collaboration with Max Rapkin and Ara Fitzgerald; Paula Cizmar's *Candy and Shelley Go to the Desert*; Sean O'Casey's *The Silver Tassie*; Brecht's *St. Joan of the Stockyards*; and the New York premiere of David Allen's Australian play *Cheapside*. In Los Angeles, she staged Pinter's *The Collection* at the Mark Taper Forum, winning a Drama-Logue Award for outstanding direction, and was Associate Director of Steven Berkoff's *Greek*, which won the Los Angeles Drama Critics' Circle Award for the best production of 1983. Her production of Ingebor Bachman's *The Good God of Manhattan* for Voices International (featuring Elizabeth McGovern) was broadcast on National Public Radio. Perloff received her B.A. (Phi Beta Kappa) in classics and comparative literature from Stanford University and was a Fulbright Fellow at Oxford University. She served on the faculty of the dramatic writing program at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts for years and taught acting and directing at NYU and at the Conservatory at CSC. She is the proud mother of Alexandra Perloff-Giles.

**BENNY SATO**

*AMBUSH* (Associate Artistic Director) directed last season's *Miss Evers' Boys* at A.C.T., earning three Bay Area Theater Critics' Circle Awards, and this season

directs *Pecong* and *Full Moon*. Before joining A.C.T. in 1990, he was the Artistic/Producing Director of the Oakland Ensemble Theater for eight years, where his directing credits included *Division Street*, *A Night at the Apollo*, *O. Henry's Christmas*, *Tamer of Horses*, and *Alterations*, which won a Drama-Logue Award for best direction. In 1991 he directed *Pigeon Egghead* in A.C.T.'s Plays in Progress Series, which inspired the creation of a Bay Area Native American theater company—Turtle Island Ensemble, now an A.C.T. project. He directed *Letters from a New England Negro* for the 1991 National Black Theater Festival in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, and the 1992 International Theater Festival of Chicago, the only American entry. Recent credits include *Fences* for the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in Portland, *Miss Evers' Boys* for the Alabama Shakespeare Festival, and *Out of Purgatory* for The Old Globe Theater in San Diego. He is a board member of Theater Communications Group (TCG) and has served as a National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Management Fellow; an Assistant Director-in-Residence at Washington, D.C.'s Arena Stage; an NEA Directing Fellow at the Pittsburgh Public Theater; a U.S. Information Agency (USIA)-sponsored lecturer to Kenyatta University in Nairobi, Kenya in 1987; and a USIA theater delegate to the U.S.S.R. in 1990. He has also served on the board of Theater Bay Area. An alumnus of Brown University, he received his M.F.A. in stage directing from the University of California, San Diego.



**RICHARD SEYD** (Associate Artistic Director) was appointed Associate Artistic Director of A.C.T. in 1992. He is a native of England, where he co-founded the Red Ladder Theater, Eng-

land's first professional political theater collective, for which he acted, directed, and produced for seven years. In San Francisco,

Seyd worked first with the Asian American Theater Workshop and the Moving Men Theater Company. He has received Drama-Logue and Bay Area Theater Critics' Circle Awards for his productions of *Cloud 9*, *About Face*, and *Noises Off*. As Associate Producing Director of the Eureka Theater Company, he directed *The Threepenny Opera*, *The Island*, and *The Wash*. He has directed the Pickle Family Circus in London; *Three High* with Geoff Hoyle, Bill Irwin, and Larry Pisoni at the Marines Memorial Theater; *A View from the Bridge* and *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* for Berkeley Repertory Theater; *As You Like It* for the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival; and *Unfinished Stories* for the Mark Taper Forum's New Play Series. He directed *The Learned Ladies* (with Jean Stapleton) for CSC Repertory, Ltd. in New York during the 1991-92 season, and directed *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as the opening production for the California Shakespeare Festival's new outdoor amphitheater in 1991. That year he also directed *Sarah's Story* at the Los Angeles Theater Center; *Born Yesterday* at Marin Theater Company; and *King Lear* at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in Portland. Last season at A.C.T. he directed *The Learned Ladies* and the American premiere of Dario Fo's *The Pope and the Witch*; this season he directs Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion* and the Bay Area premiere of David Mamet's *Oleanna*.

**JAMES HAIRE** (Associate Producer) began his career on Broadway with Eva LeGallienne's National Repertory Theater. Among the productions he managed were *The Madwoman of Chaillot* (with LeGallienne, Sylvia Sydney, and Leora Dana), *A Touch of the Poet* (with Denholm Elliott), *The Seagull* (with Farley Granger), *The Rivals*, *John Brown's Body*, *She Stoops to Conquer*, and *The Comedy of Errors*. He also stage-managed the Broadway productions of *Georgy* (a musical by Carol Bayer Sager), *And Miss Reardon Drinks a Little* (with Julie Harris and Estelle Parsons), as well as the national tour of Woody Allen's *Don't Drink the Water*. Off Broadway he produced productions of Ibsen's *Little Eyolf* (directed by Marshall W. Mason) and Shaw's *Arms and the Man*. Haire joined A.C.T. in 1971 as Production Stage Manager. In 1985 he was appointed Production Director, and in 1993 he assumed his current position. In 1989 he and his department were awarded Theater

Crafts International's award for excellence in the theater. In 1992 Haire was awarded a lifetime achievement award by the Bay Area Theater Critics' Circle.

**JOHN LOSCHMANN** (Conservatory Executive Director) has been working at the American Conservatory Theater for fourteen years teaching ballet, musical theater, and acting and directing student projects. He has also taught at Northern Illinois University and San Jose State University, and for eight years he was a teacher and dancer with the Pacific Ballet. Loschmann won a Bay Area Theater Critics' Circle Award for his portrayal of Gregor Samsa in the San Francisco Theater Project's acclaimed production of Kafka's *Metamorphosis*, which went to the Edinburgh Theater Festival in Scotland last summer. He graduated from Antioch University with a degree in dance.

**DENNIS POWERS** (Senior Editor & Professional Advisor) joined A.C.T. in 1967, during the company's first San Francisco season, after six years as an arts writer at the *Oakland Tribune*. Before being named to his present position by Carey Perloff, he worked with William Ball and Edward Hastings as a writer, editor, and casting associate. The A.C.T. productions on which he has collaborated as dramaturg or adaptor include *Oedipus Rex*, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *The Bourgeois Gentleman*, *King Richard III*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Saint Joan*, and *Diamond Lil*. The most popular of his adaptations, the eighteen-year-old *A Christmas Carol*, was written with Laird Williamson, who was also his collaborator on *Christmas Miracles*, which premiered at the Denver Center Theater Company in 1985 and was later published. Among the other theaters with which he has been associated are the Long Wharf Theater in New Haven, Stanford Repertory Theater, Pacific Conservatory of the Performing Arts, and San Francisco's Valencia Rose Cabaret Theater. Powers' reviews and articles have appeared in the *New York Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Saturday Review*, *Los Angeles Times*, *American Arts*, and *San Francisco Chronicle*.

**STEPHEN LeGRAND** (Music and Sound) is now in his eighth season as sound designer and composer for A.C.T. His work with the company has included musical compositions and/or sound design for *Full*



*Moon, Uncle Vanya, Scapin, A Christmas Carol, Pecong, Pygmalion, Creditors, The Pope and the Witch, Miss Evers' Boys, Antigone, Dinner at Eight, Good, Charley's Aunt, Taking Steps, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, The Marriage of Figaro, The Seagull, and Faustus in Hell.* He wrote the music for *A Lie of the Mind, Saint Joan, and Hapgood* with his collaborator, Eric Drew Feldman, with whom he has received awards for their scores for *The Lady's Not for Burning* at A.C.T., *The Tooth of Crime* and *The Rivals* at Berkeley Repertory Theater, and *Fen* for the Eureka Theater Company. LeGrand's work has included scores for *Yankee Dawg You Die* at Berkeley Repertory Theater and the Los Angeles Theater Center, *Lulu* and *Fuente Ovejuna* for Berkeley Repertory Theater, and music for *The Wash* at the Mark Taper Forum.

**KATE EDMUNDS** (*Scenic Designer*) has designed *Full Moon, Scapin, Pecong, Antigone, and Hamlet* for A.C.T., and her design for Holly Near's *Fire in the Rain...Singer in the Storm* was seen at the Stage Door Theater. For Berkeley Repertory Theater, she has designed *Endgame, Private Lives, The Lady from the Sea, Dream of a Common Language, Major Barbara, The Winter's Tale, Fuente Ovejuna, and Twelfth Night*. For the past fifteen years she has designed throughout the United States at a wide range of major regional theaters. In New York, she has worked both on and off Broadway, designing the American premieres of Brian Friel's *Translations* and Christopher Hampton's *The Philanthropist*, as well as productions at the Manhattan Theater Club, Second Stage, Village Gate, and Roundabout. For three seasons she served as designer-in-residence at the O'Neill Playwriting Conference. Edmunds studied at Wayne State University and the Yale School of Drama and is a lecturer in scene design at U.C. Berkeley.

**PETER MARADUDIN** (*Lighting Designer*) has previously designed *Full Moon, Scapin, Uncle Vanya, Pecong, Pygmalion, The Learned Ladies, and Antigone* for A.C.T. He designed the lighting for the Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Kentucky Cycle* and *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* on Broadway, and lit the off-Broadway production of *Bouncers*. For regional theater he has designed over 130 productions in the last nine years for such companies as The Guthrie Theater,

Kennedy Center, Mark Taper Forum, La Jolla Playhouse, Seattle Repertory Theater, San Diego's Old Globe Theater, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, South Coast Repertory, Repertory Theater of St. Louis, Indiana Repertory Theater, and Denver Center Theater Company. Maradudin has designed frequently in the Bay Area, lighting *The Lady from the Sea, Mad Forest, Fuente Ovejuna, Serious Money, A View from the Bridge, and Long Day's Journey into Night* for Berkeley Repertory Theater, as well as *The Master Builder* and *Oedipus* for San Jose Repertory Theater. He has received three Los Angeles Drama Critics' Circle Awards, a San Diego Theater Critics' Circle Award, nineteen Drama-Logue Awards, and an Angstrom Award for lifetime achievement in lighting design.

**JENNY-KING TURKO** (*Wigmaster*) is proud to be part of a long tradition of wigmakers and makeup artists in the Bay Area, having apprenticed under the auspices of the San Francisco Opera. After receiving her training she went on to work for Theatrical Hair-goods Company, several regional theater and opera companies, the New York City Opera national company, and the international tour of *Einstein on the Beach*.

**MERYL LIND SHAW** (*Casting Director / Artistic Staff Associate*) joined the A.C.T. artistic staff in 1993 after sixteen years as a regular in the Bay Area theater community, where she has stage-managed more than sixty productions. Most recently, she stage-managed last season's *Bon Appétit!* and *Creditors* at A.C.T. She was Resident Stage Manager at Berkeley Repertory Theater for twelve years, Production Stage Manager at the Berkeley Shakespeare Festival for three seasons, and has stage-managed at the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival, Eureka Theater, Alcazar Theater, and Center Stage in Baltimore. She directed *Willa and Marie* at the Julia Morgan Theater, and Joy Carlin in *The Belle of Amherst* for the U.C. Berkeley library, and has served as assistant or co-director for *The Sea* at Berkeley Repertory Theater, *The Cherry Orchard* at the Eureka Theater, *Bonjour, La! Bonjour* at the Berkeley Stage Company, and Bill Talen's *Rock Fables* at Intersection Theater. She has been active with Actors' Equity Association for many years and served on the A.E.A. negotiating committee for the recently adopted L.O.R.T. contract.

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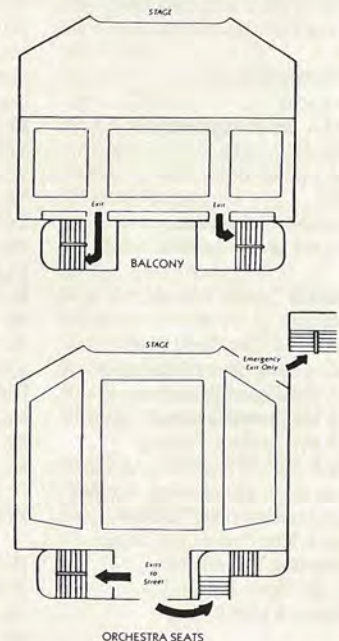
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# TRAVELING TO YERBA BUENA GARDENS

*Trotsky and Frida previews at the new Center for the Arts*

by Jean Schiffman

**T**hey say that a prophet is without honor in his own country, and that's often the case for small touring theater companies. Government agencies and foundations are willing to provide substantial support for touring, so, to remain financially stable, these small theaters must remain constantly on the move, packing up their make-up kits and striking the set for yet another leg of their cross-country odyssey. But while they may receive accolades at international festivals and are welcomed warmly when they arrive in small towns on the other side of the continent, they are unheralded, sometimes virtually unknown in their own hometown.

San Francisco's A Traveling Jewish Theatre is trying to change that. Although the four-person company, as befits their name, has been on the road many months out of the year both collectively with ensemble pieces as well as individually with solo shows — they're in residence this season at the Magic Theatre. Better yet, they finally

secured a permanent theater space within Project Artaud, which is a huge live/work/performance warehouse for artists in the Mission District/South of Market area. Remodeling is underway and the company expects to be able to rehearse in the space soon and eventually turn it into a 75-seat theater for performances as well.

Meanwhile, work continues apace. The ensemble has been creating and performing its own material since 1978 in Los Angeles (they moved to San Francisco in 1981), experimenting with myth, ritual, masks, puppets, music and storytelling — exploring universal concerns through the specifics of the Jewish experience. "None of our work has been linear," explains Albert Greenberg, who, along with Naomi Newman, Corey Fischer and Helen Stoltzfus, is a co-artistic director/writer/performer. "We work in an old-fashioned experimental way," he jokes. "Nobody does this anymore — they all want to be screenwriters so they write scripts. We still want to do theater. We speak directly to

the audience; our characters transform, moving in and out of time. All these elements are constant as we create a melange of improvisations and tapings and transcriptions to develop our work — in a sense, we are like architects."

Greenberg, who describes himself as an assimilated Jew from the south side of Chicago, was a musician and songwriter when he met actor Corey Fischer in Los Angeles. Fischer had already done film work in Hollywood, but what touched him most was live theater that has cultural roots. "I hadn't done anything Jewish," says Greenberg. "I'd done everybody else's culture but my own. So it seemed exotic to me." Joining forces with Fischer to tour a play on which they collaborated, Greenberg realized that he was "Jewish whether I like it or not and all this stuff started coming out."

With Naomi Newman, they formed a three-person team to create and perform new material, with themes ranging from ancient myths to Yiddish poetry to the



reclamation of women's wisdom. They were later joined by Helen Stoltzfus, a tall blonde whose upbringing as an East Coast Mennonite oddly enough made her feel right at home amongst this group of California-based Jews. Greenberg, thin, dark and curly-headed and Stoltzfus, a statuesque blonde with long shining hair, the quintessential Jew and Gentile, have since explored their own personal relationship on stage, both their "otherness" and their togetherness.

Which is exactly what A Traveling Jewish Theatre is all about. Far from being a theater for and about Jews, the company longs for a multicultural audience and focuses on multicultural themes. "Our time is one of cultural cross-fertilization," they say. They believe that as they deepen their exploration of the specific worlds of Jewish experience and its points of intersection with other cultures, their work becomes more accessible to all audiences. Greenberg bemoans the separation of cultures that he sees in present-day San Francisco: "This is not why we started a theater, to be balkanized, to just play to Jews," he says. "[But] I don't think we could get a black or a Chicano to see our work." He thinks the same is true for other local theaters: People stick to their own kind when it comes to theater-going and miss the opportunity to make those vital connections, the chance to understand the similarities and the differences among all cultures. In that sense, theater seems to reflect the problems of today's American society. With pieces in their repertory like *Crossing the Broken Bridge*, in which ensemble member Newman and African American theater artist John O'Neal explore issues of racism and anti-Semitism, A Traveling Jewish Theatre is committed to the coming-together, the healing of breaches between races and ethnic groups.

The latest work in development is *Trotsky and Frida*, in which Greenberg portrays the Russian communist leader who was exiled by Stalin and eventually assassinated by Stalin's men. Stoltzfus plays Frida Kahlo, the Mexican artist and wife of muralist Diego Rivera. It was with Kahlo and Rivera that Trotsky found refuge in Mexico in the early 1930s, and he had a brief, tempestuous affair with Kahlo. Corey Fischer appears as an interlocuter/jokester and director Mark Samuels, who worked most recently at the Bathhouse in Seattle, is the fourth member of the creative team (in Traveling Jewish Theatre pieces, the director participates fully in the creative process).

Greenberg, complete with goatee, is a good Trotsky lookalike, but Stoltzfus, with her sunny all-American appearance, is a far cry, physically, from the dark, tortured Frida. Nevertheless, Frida Kahlo was not what she seemed. With a Jewish/Hungarian father and a Mexican mother, and of aristocratic background (ironically, her family, communists, lived in a villa outside Mexico City with sixteen servants), Kahlo identified with the Mexican peasants and dressed accordingly. In fact, Kahlo was a mass of contradictions. A brilliant artist who spoke fluent German, in chronic pain due to a freak accident, bisexual, she had

an affair with Trotsky even while she was infatuated with his arch-enemy Stalin. When she died, in the 1950s, a picture of Stalin was found on her bed. "How could this bohemian free-thinking artist of Mexico who was defending European war refugees fall in love with such a monster?" wonders Stoltzfus as she and Greenberg attempt to understand these charismatic, larger-than-life 20th century figures. "She's from a completely different culture and that's exciting to me," continues Stoltzfus. "She's this wonderfully funny, warm, sexy, generous woman who also painted Stalin on her easel. What is that about?"



Albert Greenberg and Helen Stoltzfus as *Trotsky and Frida*.

For his part, Greenberg, despite the physical similarities, is finding it daunting to play Trotsky. "He was a world leader. He galvanized an entire country. To even begin to take on that kind of personality... I can't..."

"Yes you can," interrupts Stoltzfus.

Both actors use the techniques of experimental theater as they explore character and develop material, but find some Method acting techniques useful too. "We work in the space with language, with movement, with music to develop our characters," says Stoltzfus.

"But we also take traditional theater, the notion of a life transforming, a character going through something. It's not just about cool form, it's about that sloppy part of life," Greenberg adds.

Trotsky and Frida explores issues of betrayal and denial of personal identity — neither Kahlo nor Trotsky identified with being Jewish — using A Traveling Jewish Theatre's signature style: a combination of comedy, realism, surreal dream sequences, and music. Based on the actual writings of Trotsky, biographies of Kahlo and books about the Russian Revolution, the play's images will be a cultural blend: Audience members are likely to see graveyards, Day of the Dead icons, candles, a Trotsky trial scene. Greenberg is composing a similar cultural blend of music on his synthesizer; early experiments sounded like an intriguing mixture of klezmer/East European tunes with a touch of flamenco. The text will almost surely include some Spanish and Russian for a fully integrated cross-cultural flavor. It's even possible that Trotsky might speak a little Italian he was once in love with an Italian opera singer.

While the company takes a break from constant touring and eagerly awaits the completion of its new space, Trotsky and Frida will preview April 21-24 at a major venue — the new theater at the Center for the Arts at Yerba Buena Gardens. "We've played in major venues all around the world, but never in San Francisco," says Greenberg. So this will be a first, and it should get the company the kind of attention that Greenberg feels has eluded them during their many years on the road.

Indeed the Center for the Arts is the jewel in the crown of San Francisco's arts scene, an arts center to rival New York's Lincoln Center, and as such has been the focus of the arts community's and the public's attention since well before its opening in October of 1993. Yerba Buena Gardens — of which Center for the Arts with its theater and art galleries is a major element — is itself part of a huge 87-acre



## THE CENTER FOR THE ARTS IS THE JEWEL IN THE CROWN OF SAN FRANCISCO'S ARTS SCENE

urban renewal project in what was formerly a rundown section of San Francisco's South of Market area adjacent to busy downtown. The Moscone Convention Center, new and remodeled hotels, Center for the Arts and more — all this is part of a long-range redevelopment plan that began thirty years ago.

It's been a rocky thirty years, full of stops and starts, beginning with the tearing down of Skid Row, proceeding through a succession of law suits that challenged rehousing plans for the residents of the demolished low-rent hotels, changes of agenda, changes of personnel, lots of infighting in a city that's known for its fractious bureaucrats. By the time the Yerba Buena Gardens and its multiculturally-themed Center for the Arts was in its final planning stages, the performing arts community, both artists and critics, had joined the fray, and arguments abounded. Would the theater be too expensive for local groups? Too big? Too small? Would the emphasis really would be on local access,

as the organizers proclaimed, or would big-name out-of-town groups monopolize the space? Was the artistic mandate too multicultural, excluding mainstream arts? Would it would be a financial debacle like the notorious Festival 2000, a multicultural arts festival that bombed several years ago? Was entirely too much money being pumped into this slick downtown complex when small neighborhood arts groups are floundering? Who would actually come to this part of town at night to see theater? But when the Center for the Arts finally opened, the babble of voices was at least temporarily stilled and the community seemed to come together in joyous celebration. Covering a 3.3-acre section of the entire 8.8-acre Yerba Buena Gardens, the \$41 million Center for the Arts is comprised of a state-of-the-art theater and, in another building, a smaller multi-use "Forum," three art galleries, and a screening room. So far, the Gardens include a graceful esplanade for strolling; a waterfall named for Martin Luther King; and several gardens and cafes. A new building for the Museum of Modern Art is near completion and will open in January of 1995. The Mexican Museum is expected to move into the Center as well, and the Gardens will eventually include retail development, a cinema and restaurant complex, and a children's center with an ice rink and bowling alley. The San Francisco Redevelopment Agency funded construction of the buildings and will maintain the facilities through the lease of land parcels in the Yerba Buena district.

The theater, designed by James Stewart

Polshek, has few critics. With 755-seats including a balcony, the \$22 million space is said to be the best-equipped theater of its size in Northern California. It has a 45-foot deep sprung-wood floor, a 44-foot proscenium opening and a fly space nine stories high. The lobby is high-ceilinged, glass, gorgeous, with a view of the surrounding gardens. The ambience within the auditorium is cool, gray, blue and yellow, with excellent sightlines. Although its seating capacity is apparently too small to accommodate some of the larger touring dance and theater companies, the small and mid-sized local groups agree that, for their purposes, it's a classy showplace.

Not that it's cheap. But there's a sliding rent scale for nonprofit groups (\$800 to \$1,200 a night) and marketing director Jim Royce says that for the money, it's a better deal than some of the seemingly less expensive equivalent spaces in town, where not all the frills-like Center for the Arts' light and technical equipment, on-the-street loading dock, and tension grid in the ceiling — are included. It is, though, a union house, which necessitates high rents.

Who is booking gigs at the Center for the Arts? Everybody, from the smallest chamber orchestra to acclaimed international dance companies to fringe performance artists. The Center's highly-respected artistic director, Baraka Sele, is outspoken in her commitment to all forms of multicultural expression in the arts, and — notwithstanding worries on this score from some quarters — to plenty of access for every local group that can scrape together the rental fee. To that end, there are no long-running shows at the Center, nor any anchor tenants; a typical run is just a few nights.

Royce, who says that the Center receives about sixty calls a day from groups interested in theater rental, cautions inexperienced producers against taking the leap to the Center for the Arts too soon: "Small groups with little producing expertise may not do well here," he says. Which doesn't mean that small groups will necessarily fare poorly some of the smallest, like a recent coproduction between The Lab and SF CameraWork, sold out their run. It's the producing know-how that counts.

About thirty percent of the shows are not rentals, but are presented by the theater itself, in accordance with the artistic mission to "support cross-cultural, cross-generational, interdisciplinary work that addresses a wide range of human issues and reflects a full realm of cultural experience." Nor, clearly, does Baraka Sele see the

theater as merely an entertainment venue — dialogues, conferences and panel discussions on topics relating to the arts are an essential part of the programming. A Traveling Jewish Theatre's Trotsky and Frida, for example, is part of a Center-sponsored series called "Out of the Closet," exploring hidden identities — sexual, racial, cultural (Trotsky's and Frida's hidden identities were, of course, their Jewishness).

The theater is booked well in advance, and the choices are so eclectic that there's clearly something for everyone. To encourage a multicultural audience, the Center publishes press releases in Tagalog, Russian, Spanish, Japanese and Chinese as well as English, and the box office staff is multilingual. "Every culture in the City has been represented here in our first six months of operation," says Royce. Upcoming events at the theater include the premiere of Michael Smuin's new dance company; Pomo Homo Afros, a performance group of African-American gay actors; and Lines Contemporary Ballet.

The adjacent art galleries, directed by Renny Pritikin, keep up a hectic schedule of their own with a variety of contemporary exhibits. The galleries and Forum, are housed in a two-story building of glass, metal and stone designed by award-winning architect Fumihiko Maki. Like the theater, the galleries' artistic mission emphasizes local and regional artists but includes national works as well. And like Sele, Pritikin's choices focus on work that addresses a "wide range of social and cultural issues relevant to the diverse communities of the Bay Area and nation." Upcoming exhibits include conceptual sculpture by Belgian Wim Delvoye; contemporary subjects painted with Renaissance techniques; the AIDS quilt; a photo display by residents of a nearby Skid Row neighborhood.

"Yerba Buena is a vision, a good vision," says Traveling Jewish Theatre's Albert Greenberg. "I hope Kronos Quartet gets to play there right alongside El Teatro Campesino. That's what this city's all about." Helen Stoltzfus agrees: "The Center for the Arts is not just about doing theater, it's about nurturing a whole dialogue." Audience demographics aren't in yet, but San Francisco Bay Area arts-lovers and the feisty, argumentative arts community seem to be in agreement that the long-awaited Center for the Arts at Yerba Gardens is a very good thing indeed.

*Jean Schiffman is a freelance writer based in San Francisco.*



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# Beauty and the Beast

*Disney's New Musical Comes to Broadway*

By Tom Jacobs



JOAN MARCUS/MARC BRYAN-BROWN



Above: With technical wizardry and imaginative design, *Beauty and the Beast* will be transferred from screen to stage. Right: Tom Bosley as Belle's father.

**O**ddly enough, Linda Woolverton's epiphany came when she looked at her little girl's underwear. There, on her two-year-old's panties, were Mrs. Potts, Belle and the other characters from "Beauty and the Beast," the enormously popular and critically acclaimed Disney adaptation of the classic fairy tale.

Woolverton, who wrote the screenplay for the 1991 animated film, had been given another assignment: to adapt the work for the Broadway stage. She had been grappling with the idea of how to make the characters fresh, and asking herself how much she should change them.

Her underwear-inspired answer was: as little as possible.

"Seeing that really makes you say 'This does not belong to me,'" she said. "In translating it to the stage, I kept that always in mind. I didn't want kids in the audience saying 'That's not Mrs. Potts!' They've embraced these characters. They belong to them."

Not exclusively, of course. As Woolverton and her colleagues discovered, to their amazement, the film of "Beauty and the Beast" proved to be as popular with adults as it was with children. That cross-generational appeal, along with almost unheard-of acclaim that culminated in the first Best Picture Academy Award nomination for an animated film, made it a logical choice for Disney's first foray onto Broadway. (Previews begin March 9 at New York's Palace Theatre, with an opening scheduled for April 7.)

But the kids in the audience had to be convinced they were seeing the genuine article. And the creators unanimously felt that the obvious way to do that — having the actors wear huge styrofoam costumes that would turn them into six-foot-tall clocks, cups and candelabras — was aesthetically unworkable. Actors couldn't really act in such get-ups — let alone sing! — and people were not going to pay Broadway prices of \$65 a ticket to see an upscale version of Disney on Parade.

*Continued on page 40*

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## ...“Beauty and the Beast” should have no trouble finding a large and appreciative Broadway audience.

It was director Robert Jess Roth who came up with the simple yet elegant solution to the dilemma: Alter the subplot. Modify the spell the witch puts on the Beast, so that as time passes, the members of his staff are *gradually* transformed from human beings into household objects. Have them become more object-like as the play proceeds.

Thus, when we meet the Beast's housekeeper, Mrs. Potts, only the lower half of her body has metamorphosed into a teapot. She can still use her arms to perform her normal household duties. But by Act Two, she is virtually all pot from the neck down, and the only maneuver she can make is to tip herself to one side and pour.

This masterstroke not only made things easier on the actors; it added an additional level of tension to the drama. And it allowed the characters to be the same yet different; kids could recognize their friends, but adults wouldn't be put off by the potential kitchiness of talking teapots.

With that major problem solved, Woolverton, Ross and the rest of the Disney creative team turned their attention to the thousands of other details that went into the creation of this unique project. While Broadway musicals tend to be adaptations of other works, no one has ever before tried to take an animated film and make it work as a stage musical.

Thus no one was quite sure what to expect when the show opened its out-of-town tryout at Houston's Music Hall Theatre in December, under the auspices of Theatre Under the Stars. Would audiences respond? Would critics? The answers turned out to be Absolutely, and Yes — for the most part. The day tickets were put on sale for an added week of performances, 10,117 were sold — the second largest number of theater tickets sold in one day in the history of American theater. (The record belongs to the first day of sales for “The Phantom of the Opera” in New York.)

Although the Houston Chronicle critic complained that the play was “neither as

magical nor as ming as the original,” the Variety reviewer stated that Disney “is determined to get into legit in a lavish, serious way, and it has generally succeeded.” And the critic of the Houston Post raved that the piece is “dazzling spectacular, playfully whimsical, expensively glittery, shamelessly inflated — in short, embarrassing entertaining.”

According to Roth, it was Walt Disney Company chief Michael Eisner who instigated the project. Roth, designer Stan Meyer and choreographer Matt West — the nucleus of the Beast production team — had combined their talents to stage a number of Disney stage extravaganzas, including 30-minute musical shows at the California and Florida theme parks. Roth, who calls directing a Broadway musical his lifelong ambition, had been bugging Eisner for two years about backing such a show. His team had just begun work adapting a different Disney property for a possible Broadway production when “Beauty” opened in cinemas in November, 1991.

“Eisner called and said ‘Stop what you're doing, and start thinking about ‘Beauty,’” Roth recalled. Believing the problems of adaptation would be insurmountable, Roth talked his boss out of the idea — or so he thought. A week or two later — after New York Times theater critic Frank Rich noted in a column that the film contained the year's best Broadway-style score — Eisner called again, asking them to “really go back and think about it.”

“We locked ourselves in a hotel room, and came up with a structure that was pretty much the same as what we have today,” Ross recalled.

Next, Walt Disney Studios Chairman Jeffrey Katzenberg approached composer Alan Menken, who had also been urging Disney to back a stage musical. Menken's feelings about this project, however, were mixed. Since his collaborator, Howard Ashman, had died of AIDS, any new songs would have to be written with a new lyricist.

On the other hand, Menken loved the idea of letting the public hear “Human Again,” the one song that had been cut from the film.

After assurances from Eisner and Katzenberg that the production would be first-class, Menken signed onto the project, bringing with him lyricist Tim Rice. Rice, who had collaborated on several of Andrew Lloyd Webber's biggest hits, had already stepped in for Ashman on a previous occasion; he wrote many of the lyrics for Disney's “Aladdin” (including the Academy Award-winning “A Whole New World”) after Menken's former partner became too ill to work.

The pair then went to work writing new songs: one for Belle, one for her father, two for Gaston (the work's macho-man villain), and, most importantly, a ballad for the Beast in which he expresses his fears and frustrations. In the film, the Beast never sang; on stage, his poignant number serves as a powerful first-act finale.

“For years, I've been giving interviews about how much writing for an animated film is the same as writing for the stage,” Menken noted wryly. “This is a case where the two are really different. Howard and I grappled with a song for the Beast (in the movie), but it never really felt right. The way the film was structured, we would have been at least halfway into it before the Beast sang, and I think that would have been a jolt. But in the theater, there's an act break, and it's appropriate to have a big number that closes Act One.”

There's an aura of familiarity to the Beast's song, although virtually everyone seeing the show will be hearing it for the first time. That's because Menken, quite deliberately, incorporated into it a theme from the film's prologue. “I wanted to have every song sound familiar,” the composer said. “For his song, I tried to use things that were associated with the Beast in the film, musically, thematically and harmonically. I wanted a feeling of fleshing out something that was already there.”

Meanwhile, writer Woolverton was trying to do much the same thing. She enlarged the characters of several of the servants. She gave Belle "a little bit more of an edge" than the character — already startling feisty by Disney heroine standards — had in the film. And, most importantly, she allowed the relationship between the two title characters to evolve more subtly and gradually. She is particularly proud of a new scene in the library of the Beast's castle, in which Belle reads him the story of another classic myth — King Arthur and the sword in the stone. "I liked using reading as a way to bring them together," she said. "I wish I could go back and put it in the movie new."

Woolverton was aware that the audience for the Broadway show would surely skew more heavily towards adults than did the audience for the animated film. She found herself "constantly keeping the adult audience in mind," but she ultimately threw away much of the material that came out of that thinking. "I put in a little risqué stuff, but every time we did a read-through, it would fall flat," she said. "It didn't belong there."

The task for director Roth and his team was perhaps the most challenging of all: To find a visual style for the show that would be as dazzling as that of the film, but to not let the spectacle overwhelm the story. Set designer Stan Meyer created a richly colored storybook world; experts on magic and pyrotechnics were brought in to provide the literal and figurative fireworks. But as of the Houston premiere, Roth and his cast were still struggling to find the balance between storytelling and razzle-dazzle.

"We tried to choose effects that helped tell the story, and that were story-related," he said, specifically noting the transformation of the old lady into the enchantress in the prologue, and the final-scene transformation of the Beast back into a prince. In that particularly magical scene, the Beast is lifted into the air, whirls around for a minute or so, and then returns to the ground in human form.

Amazed applause notwithstanding, the love story is the key to making the show work emotionally, and Roth realizes that keeping it from being eclipsed by such effects is his primary challenge. "I'm excited to have a chance to do that," he said. "I'm hoping this will be the fun part for me."

Menken and Woolverton have certainly been having fun — "This is just like college, when I was a theater major," the writer said with a smile — but for both of them, this heartfelt, decidedly uncynical material brings up a lot of pain. For Menken, memories of his late partner Ashman arise "every time I watch a performance. Every time I see a rehearsal. With few exceptions.

"Howard hated to lose 'Human Again' on the screen, but we couldn't find a way to make it work. Now, when it plays on the stage, I think a number of things to myself, including how much I miss him, how much the world misses him, and how he's not here to see how wonderful it is."

Woolverton's pain is that of a writer who exercises a troubling part of herself by personifying (or in this case, Beastonifying it) into a fictional character. When the film came out, it was widely — and correctly — assumed that much of her own character went into spunky Belle. But another side of her can be found in the other title role.

"I have been the Beast in my personal life," she said. "I have fought a lot of demons. With the help of my husband, I've been able to overcome them. Every time the Beast sings that song at the end of Act One, I weep. I'm gone. It's just so heartbreaking for me."

For Woolverton, the story is about redemption. "You can make horrendous mistakes and sink into the depths of despair," she said. "But with help, you can pull yourself out. I got a lot of letters after the movie came out from men who could relate to the Beast. They said this was the first time they had seen a character whose story paralleled what they had been through."

With themes that appeal to men, women and children, "Beauty and the Beast" should have no trouble finding a large and appreciative Broadway audience. Disney officials are confident enough in that assumption to have sunk a considerable amount of money into this project. Producer Robert McTyre refused to reveal the cost of the production, but the Houston Chronicle estimated it at \$8 to \$10 million.

The risk seems prudent; there is clearly more money to be made on this material, both from ticket sales and merchandizing (an astounding array of t-shirts, posters and other "Beauty and the Beast" souvenirs were on display in the lobby of the Houston theater). What's more, if this works, the company is ready to proceed with similar projects; McTyre mentioned stage adaptations of "Aladdin," "The Little Mermaid" and "Mary Poppins" as possibilities.

But if Disney will profit from the theater, the theater may also profit from an association with Disney. It's Woolverton's hope that the Disney name will make buying tickets to a play a little less intimidating for people who don't normally attend such events. And that could, potentially, introduce a new audience to the experience of live theater. "Who better than Disney," she asked, "to say 'C'mon into the theater, folks! It's a wonderful place!'" □

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# California Cuisine

by Norm Chandler Fox

## SAN FRANCISCO

**SPLENDIDO'S** — The contrast is incredible as I walk from the austere Embarcadero Center lobby into the gracious warmth of this spot which feels like a venerable inn on the sunny Algarve coast. Brilliant designer Pat Kuleto uses aged stone arches and columns, tiles, wrought-iron grillwork, and rough-hewn ceiling beams to create a dazzling rustic interior that sparks the senses. Our excellent server warns us not to fill up on the freshly baked white and dense whole-wheat breads as we ponder the large Mediterranean-oriented menu. The wine list has some of my favorite Italian reds at very sane prices.

Thirty-four-year-old Chef Christopher Majer has a talent for giving a modern spin to sunny European classics. I like starters such as the shrimp, clam and whitefish soup redolent of thyme and tarragon with a piquant rouille, the steamed mussels in an unusual sorrel and tomato sauce, and a beautiful looking and tasting napoleon composed of layers of smoked salmon, cucumber, caviar and crème fraîche. Another winning appetizer is the potato salad studded with fresh crab in a citrus vinaigrette. If you wish to share a small pizza, I recommend the combination of roasted and sun-dried tomatoes, leeks and olive tapenade.

Pastas are a strong suit here, and I give top honors to a rich risotto with asparagus and morels as well as the wide noodles crowned with lobster in a basil sauce. The penne with seared beef, eggplant, tomato and ricotta is disappointing because of too many disparate flavors.

For entrees, try the tender rabbit cacciatore with polenta-filled ravioli, juicy broiled swordfish atop almond cous cous, seared peppered tuna in a red wine sauce, or grilled lamb loin with a sweet garlic flan. I also enjoy perfect sautéed salmon in an oniony

dill sauce as well as a giant veal chop with a garlicky noodle pudding.

The desserts are all knockouts, so I'm hopeful that you'll have enough people in your party to try such delights as a warm walnut crêpe with poached pears, decadent chocolate soufflé cake with malted milk chocolate ganache, a banana, mascarpone and nougatine napoleon, a Grand Marnier tiramisu, and concord grape soup topped with muscat ice.

Afterwards, enjoy views of the Bay while indulging in one of the eleven grappas or thirteen cognacs offered on the menu. This restaurant is certainly well-named considering the absolutely splendid food and surroundings.

**SPLENDIDO'S, Embarcadero Center Four San Francisco, 415/986-3222. Open for lunch and dinner daily. Dinner for two without alcohol is about \$75.**

**WU KONG** — San Franciscans have always been spoiled because of our abundant supply of fine Chinese restaurants. Yet, certain regional cuisines of China have not been well represented until recently. This attractive place tempts our palates with the food of Shanghai and its surrounding Yangtze River valley. This is the wheat-growing region of northern China where hearty peasant food evolved into a refined cuisine influenced by the many Europeans who lived and traded in Shanghai. Seafood and noodles predominate as does garlic and rice wine in the rich preparations. Having owned a successful Shanghaiese restaurant in Hong Kong which reflected a lighter style of cooking without MSG, owner Francis Tsai has replicated this concept here with equal success.

The expansive dining area is brightly lit by crystal chandeliers, and the black-lacquered tables and chairs are well-spaced for dining comfort. Tuxedo-clad waiters are courteous and efficient, and although they may suggest white wine, I prefer icy beer and hot tea with

this food.

A house specialty appetizer is the vegetarian goose composed of fried bean curd layered with mushrooms. Even if you're not a tofu fan, you'll be converted by the beguiling taste and texture. I also recommend an order of crispy fried eel in dark soy sweet and sour sauce, baby dumplings filled with bok choy and bitter melon, and the light scallion and sesame cakes. Don't be put off by the name of "strange flavor chicken" as the cold chicken slices are topped with a phenomenally-flavored sauce of ginger, chili, garlic and vinegar.

The vast menu has so many delights, and among my favorites are the moist Beggar's chicken, flash-fried flounder in a coriander sauce, prawns in a wine-infused walnut sauce, stir-fried black mushrooms and Chinese greens, scallops in piquant garlic sauce, stir-fried delicate pea tendrils (the whole plant, pods and all), and aromatic five-spice marinated crispy duck with nary a drop of fat. The only disappointment is an ordinary dish of beef and broccoli which is too bland for my palate.

Most of us are satisfied with fresh fruit or lychees at the end of a Chinese meal, but I commend you to try the red bean paste soft balls which are feathery fried egg white puffs with a center of the sweet bean paste. Also, try the bean paste stuffed crêpes, and Seven Treasure rice which is cooked with dried mango and raisins. This restaurant is worth repeat visits just to keep trying unfamiliar dishes made with impeccable ingredients.

**WU KONG, One Rincon Center, 101 Spear Street, San Francisco, 415/957-9300. Open for lunch and dinner daily, brunch on weekends. Dinner for two without alcohol is about \$55.**

**MOOSE'S** — In this town, it always helps to have a built-in following, and genial Ed Moose and his charming wife, Mary Etta, garnered a huge fan club when they ran the



Washington Square Bar & Grill which is still affectionately called "The Washbag". For an encore, they've produced a lively spot across the square from their former digs where you can indulge in hearty food, big drinks, and nightly jazz at the baby grand piano which separates the dining room and bar.

With a wall of windows, this large place welcomes you with a bronze moose which leads to a commodious mirrored bar and large dining area. Chef Lance Dean Velasquez, who comes from the kitchens of Campton Place and the Ritz-Carlton, has created a whimsical menu which will please just about everyone. I start with chewy escargot-filled ravioli in a Pernod sauce, an al dente risotto with sweet corn and onions, and seared scallops with a great mango cucumber relish.

Sharing a wood-oven baked pizza is another nice way to begin, and I recommend the spicy chorizo, pasilla pepper, and Manchego cheese combo as well as the witty ham and cheese on a seeded rye pizza crust with sweet mustard. Calzone stuffed with ricotta, roasted tomatoes, and pine nuts is too heavy, but the pissaladiere, a provencal pizza of sweet onions, olives and anchovies is the best version I've tried outside of Nice.

Smaller appetites may opt for the all-beef Mooseburger topped with Gorgonzola, but I choose the wonderful grilled salmon with a stewed red pepper-onion ragout, garlicky roast chicken with herbed potatoes, a fine ribeye steak topped with wild mushrooms and an onion marmalata, and mouth-melting grilled corvina served with diced caraway potatoes. If you're very hungry, you might want to dive into the giant veal chop with a crunchy risotto cake.

The dapper waitpeople do a nice job, and the very reasonable wine list boasts some excellent California bottles from smaller wineries as well as eleven choices by the glass. Desserts focus on the down-home variety which is a welcome change from the tidal wave of tarte tatin and tiramisu. The green apple crisp topped with vanilla ice cream and a nutmeg sauce brings memories of holiday time as does the layers of gingerbread and ice cream in a rich caramel sauce. I also like the gelato topped with a white chocolate rum sauce. After your repast, sit back with some after-dinner libations and soak up the super jazz that permeates the night and makes Moose's jump.

**MOOSE'S**, 1652 Stockton Street, San Francisco, 415/989-7800. Open for lunch and dinner seven days, brunch on Sunday. Dinner for two without wine is about \$65. □

*Norm Chandler Fox is the restaurant critic for Performing Arts magazine.*



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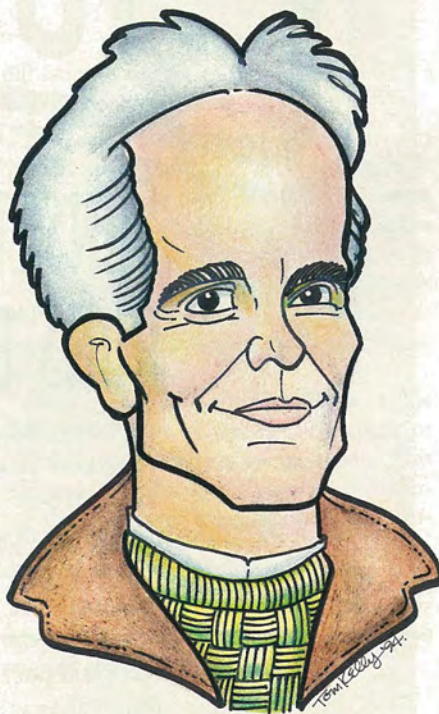
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ANDREW LLOYD WEBBER'S "SUNSET BOULEVARD" STARRING GLENN CLOSE.

# Helgi Tomasson

“As I began to write down ideas of what I wanted to address in this column, I realized that many people may not be aware of how we train our dancers and what types of dancers we look for at San Francisco Ballet. So instead of giving all of you my views on future trends of dance in America, allow me the opportunity to write about my favorite subject, the San Francisco Ballet.

When I started here in 1985, I began retraining the dancers, bringing in new teachers and choreographers and instilling a classical style that I believe is fundamental in any training program. Classicism in ballet does not mean just wearing pointe shoes and tights. It has to do with how clearly every foot is pointed, how a body line is placed in accord with an ideal silhouette, how the classical attributes of harmony and proportion are infused into an academic movement idiom learned in school and transmuted, as it is here, into energy that is truly contemporary. When I look for choreographers, I look for individuals who have the background or the knowledge of classical technique. What I mean is that even if their field of choreography is contemporary, they have to know how to apply their movement to a ballet company. The company's current strength is that we do so many styles and do them equally well. And that's because the training is so sound. If you don't have technique, what are you? You're not a modern dance company, and you're not a good ballet company. The infusion of modern dance can be beneficial to ballet.



We can take modern movements and combine them with ballet technique, and produce something very interesting and special.

Many people ask me, what type of dancer do you look for and what type of look do you want? Instead of going for a homogeneous look, I like to emphasize each dancer's special skills. I want the talent and the technique, but also the individuality. Some dancers have a wonderful jump. Others may not, but may bring something else. Some are tall, some short. I am interested in people, in individuals. Then, when I get them all together, the repertory allows them to express themselves. The technical ability of dancers today is incredible. But at the same

time, I sense that they're losing their own individuality as performers. I'm speaking of dancers everywhere. If that happens, you run the risk of isolating an audience. You have to move them; your humanity has to come across the stage lights. That's what gives a dancer individuality, and it's the first step in making a star. It's very important for an audience to identify someone that is special. Some dancers are obviously more gifted than others, and I try to make them aware of that. They have to work harder because I see their potential, and more is expected of them. I believe that you must raise the overall standard of dancing to such a degree of excellence that outside choreographers are anxious to work with the Company.

I believe that as a Company we are moving forward, thanks to the support of a strong Board of Trustees, administration and community. We are a professional ballet Company that performs contemporary works. But our premise is the basics of classicism without the concern that classical ballet is boring or passé. I hope these thoughts will enhance your understanding of Ballet in general and San Francisco Ballet in particular. □

*Helgi Tomasson is the Artistic Director of the San Francisco Ballet.*

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