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December in California — What's Coming Up in the Arts

THEATRE
Sunset Blvd. Bob Wiley's classic 1930s story Sunset Boulevard was a silly and cynical peek at 1940s Hollywood, and it was made by one who knew Tinseltown well: This mad and macabre tale of twisted pride gets the Andrew Lloyd Webber treatment next month, with book and lyrics by Don Black and Christopher Hampton and directed by Trevor Nunn. It stars Glenn Close as Norma Desmond, the comeback queen, George Hearn as Max von Mayerling, her estranged husband/director, and Alan Campbell as Joe Gillis, aka The Body at the Bottom of the Swimming Pool. We're ready for our close-ups, Mr. Webber! The American premiere of this budding blockbuster takes place, appropriately, on the evening of the Stars, Opera December 2 (premiere, from 11/30), Student Theatre, Century City, Los Angeles (800) 447-7400.

Phantom of the Opera. After booting blocks in Los Angeles for well over four years, The Phantom of the Opera finally arrives in San Francisco. Prepare for the most chandelier-shattering performances since the Great Earthquake of '06. Davis Gaines plays the poor demented Phantom in a town that understands what opera mania can really do to a man. Lisa Vroman is Christine Daaé and Raymond Searz her dashing Raoul. Look for the spectacular masquerade sequence, and the spine chilling love duet on the roof of the Paris Opera House. This is what spectacle is all about. Opera December 18 (premiere, from 11/30), Curran Theatre, San Francisco (415) 771-7700.

Scapin. ACT brings us a contemporary setting of Moliere's 1671 comedy Les Pierreries de Scapin ("The Beggars of Scapin"). Scapin is the direct descendant of the comedic d'Artagnan's Scapin, a sly valet who is here employed by a master in love with a girl who had been stolen by gypsies and, well, you get the picture—classic French farce.

This is a new translation and adaptation by Shelley Benen and Andrei Belgrader, directed by Belgrader and with a score by Rusty Magee. December 21 (premiere, from 12/21)—February 18, Stage Door Theatre, San Francisco (415) 749-2227.

Guys and Dolls. "Love for the new musical spread faster last night than flour through dry grass in a high wind." So wrote critic William Hawkins in New York's World Telegram & Sun when Guys and Dolls premiered in November 1950. "Guys and Dolls brings Broadway in a low street," he continued, "so you can see and hear it sitting down. The show springs from Damon Runyon's stories. It recapitulates what he knew about Broadway, that its wickedness is tuneful, but its gluttony is as pure and young as Little Eva. It is all tender and rough at the same time, the way people who have never grown up much, can be tender and rough." Lorna Luft and David Garrison star in this award-winning revival of an American folk musical. December 21—January 3, Orange County Performing Arts Center, Costa Mesa (714) 666-0077.

Jesus Christ Superstar. Yet another Andrew Lloyd Webber show! The two stars of the 1973 film head the cast of this production: Ted Neely (Jesus) and Carl Anderson (Judas), the latter also performed the role on Broadway. Dennis DeYoung of the rock band Styx makes his theatrical debut as Pontius Pilate. December 7–19, First Center, Diablo College, Concord (925) 684-8816.

Stories of the Season. Celebrating the ancient art of storytelling, Pacific Resident Theatre Ensemble turns its magical black box theater into a figurative campfire deep in the forest. There in the darkness we hear legends and tales come alive. December 1–30, 704/ Venice Blvd., West Los Angeles (213) 444-0077.
The Arts of the State

December in California — What's Coming Up in the Arts

THEATRE Sunset Blvd. Ebb Winter's classic 1950 novel Sunset Boulevard was a sly and cynical peep at 1940s Hollywood, and it was made by one who knew the town well. This mad and miserable tale of twisted pride gets the Andrew Lloyd Webber treatment next month, with book and lyrics by Don Black and Christopher Hampton and directed by Trevor Nunn. It stars Glenn Close as Norma Desmond, the comeback queen, George Hearn as Max von Mayerling, her estranged husband/director, and Alan Campbell as Joe Gillis, aka The Body at the Bottom of the Swimming Pool. We're ready for our close-ups, Mr. Webber! The American premiere of this budding blockbuster takes place, appropriately, on Avenue of the Stars, Opera December 2 (at D. from 12/1), Student Theater, Century City, Los Angeles (800) 447-7460.

Phantom of the Opera. After booking blocks in Los Angeles for well over four years, The Phantom of the Opera finally arrives in San Francisco. Prepare for the most chandelier-shattering performance since the Great Earthquake 'of '06. Davis Gaines plays the poor demented Phantom in a town that understands what opera means can really do to a man. Lisa lessen is Christine Daaé and Raymond Saar her dashing Raoul. Look for the spectacular masquerade sequence, and the spine-chilling love duet on the roof of the Paris Opera House. This is what spectacle is all about. Opera December 15 (at D. from 12/1), Curran Theatre, San Francisco (415) 771-7000.

Scapin. ACT brings us a contemporary setting of Molieré's 1667 comedy Les Fiévreux de Scapin ( "The Beggars of Scapin"). Scapin is the direct descendant of the comedic d'Art's Scapin, a wily valet who is here employed by a master in love with a girl who had been stolen by gypsies and, well, you get the picture—classic French farce.

This is a new translation and adaptation by Shelley Ben and Andrei Belgrader, directed by Belgrader and with a score by Rusty Magee. December 21 (at D. from 12/15), February 18, Stage Door Theatre, San Francisco (415) 749-2677.

Guys and Dolls. "Love for the new musical, spread faster last night than fire through dry grass in a high wind," So wrote critic William Hawkins in New York's World Telegram & Sun when Guys and Dolls premièred in November. Guys and Dolls brings Broadway in the street," he continued, "so you can see and hear it sitting down. The show springs from Damon Runyon's stories. It recaptures what he knew about Broadway, that itswelcome is tenshen, but its gallantry is as pure and young as Little Eva. It is all tender and rough at the same time, the way people who have never grown up very much, can be tender and rough. Lorna Luft and David Garrison star in this award-winning revival of an American folk musical. December 21—January 1, Orange County Performing Arts Center, Costa Mesa (714) 556-0978.

Jesus Christ Superstar. Yet another Andrew Lloyd Webber show! The two stars of the 1973 film head the cast of this production: Ted Neely (Jesus) and Carl Anderson (Judas), the latter also performed the role on Broadway. Dennis DeYoung of the rock band Styx makes his theatrical debut as Pontius Pilate. December 7-18, Pantages Center, DeAnza College, Cupertino (408) 864-8816.

Stories of the Season. Celebrating the ancient art of storytelling, Pacific Resident Theatre Ensemble turns its magical black box theater into a figurative campfire deep in the forest. There in the darkness we hear legends and fables come alive. December 1—30, 7064 Venice Blvd., West Los Angeles (310) 444-8757.

by David H. Bowman

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**A Christmas Carol.** Having trouble getting into the Christmas spirit this year? Visit with Scrooge, Marley, and those three withering wraiths for a good string dose of the right stuff. Here are some of the more well-known Christmas Carolis, but look around—there’s sure to be one at a theater near you.

**American Conservatory Theater’s A Christmas Carol.** December 7–26, Orpheum Theatre, San Francisco (415) 444-1144.

**San Diego Repertory’s A Christmas Carol.** November 27–December 26, Lyceum Theatre, Horton Plaza, San Diego (619) 576-4181.

**South Coast Rep’s A Christmas Carol.** November 30–December 26, C tumors, Irvine (949) 834-2424.

**Room Service.** An unrecognized classic of the American theater, John Murray and Allen Rumel’s Room Service is well known from its film version—the 1988 one of the same name with the Marx Brothers, Lucille Ball, and Ann Miller, and the 1944 Frank Sinatra vehicle. Say lovely. The plot—destination! producer attempts to save show—is an old one, but it’s never been funnier.

**December 4–January 5, Montgomery Theatre, San Jose (408) 996-6666.

**Leocadia.** Michael York stars in Jean Anouilh’s satirical tale of romantic love, an “acted” for radio by LA Theatre Works. A new translation by Timothy Bentinck is given its American premiere, December 1–2, Guest Artist Series, Studio Theater, Santa Monica (310) 608-6087.

**Camelot.** Robert Goulet, once enthroned in the knighthood role of Lancelot, is now crowned King Arthur in this revival of Lerner and Loewe’s panto-20th. While’s The Once and Future King. December 28–January 9, Pantages Theatre, Hollywood (213) 444-6400.

**The Sound of Music.** Rodgers and Hammerstein were attacked for making this show like an old-fashioned operetta—too sweet. On the whole, though, critics liked it, and so did the public—as proven by more than 1400 performances in its first run on Broad- way. The movie then went on to become one of the highest grossing films in history. December 15–19, Pasadena Civic Auditorium, (510) 449-7800.

**Little Pictures.** Nearly two hundred daguerreotypes, carte-de-visites, photographs, cabinet cards, tintypes, and autochromes dating from 1840 to 1950 go on view next month at the J Paul Getty Museum. Drawn from the Museum’s holdings of more than thirty thousand small photographs, this exhibit features works by such famous and influential photographers as Bill Brandt Fox Talbot, Camille Silvy, Nadar, Gustave Le Gray, Eadweard Muy- bridge, and Mathew B. Brady. December 14–January 30, Getty Museum, Malibu (310) 449-7811.

**Arte Americana.** Twenty-six contemporary artists from North, Central, and South America present diverse approaches to the question of what it means to be “American.” December 14–January 30, Center of the Arts Gallery, Virna Dianna Gardens, San Francisco (415) 512-1000.

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A Christmas Carol. Having trouble getting into the Christmas spirit this year? Visit with Scrooge, Marley, and those three withering wreaths for a good string dose of the right stuff. Here are some of the more well-known Christmas Carolos, but look around—there’s sure to be one at a theater near you.

American Conservatory Theatre’s A Christmas Carol, December 7–21, Orpheum Theatre, San Francisco. (415) 864-6100.

San Diego Repertory’s A Christmas Carol, November 27–December 20, Lyceum Theatre, Horton Plaza. (714) 907-4700.

South Coast Repertory’s A Christmas Carol, November 9–December 20, Costa Mesa. (714) 907-4700.

Room Service. An unrecognized classic of the American theater, John Murray and Allenoren’s Room Service is well known from its film version—the 1968 one of the same name with the Marx Brothers, Lucille Ball, and Ann Miller, and the 1944 Frank Sinatra vehicle. The plot—a deplorable Attempt to save show—is an old one, but it’s never been funnier. December 6–January 2, Montgomery Theatre, Santa Ana. (714) 630-6630.

Leocadia. Michael York stars in Jean Anouilh’s satirical tale of romantic love, as “acted” for radio by LA Theatre Works. A new translation by Timberlake Wertenbaker is given its American premiere, December 1–2, Guest Quartet Studio Hotel, Santa Monica. (310) 650-6557.

Camelot. Robert Goulet, once enthroned in the knightly role of Lancelot, is now crowned King Arthur in this revival of Lerner and Loewe’s passionate T.H. White’s The Once and Future King, December 26–January 9, Pantages Theatre, Hollywood. (213) 440-8822.

The Sound of Music. Rodgers and Hammerstein were attacked for making this show like an old-fashioned opera—the anaemic!! On the whole, though, critics loved it, and so did the public—as proven by more than 1600 performances in its first run on Broadway. The movie then went on to become one of the highest grossing films in history. December 15–19, Pasadena Civic Auditorium. (510) 449-7800.

ART

Little Pictures. Nearly two hundred daguerreotypes, carte-de-visite, stereographs, cabinet cards, tintypes, and autographs dating from 1848 to 1930 go on view next month at the J. Paul Getty Museum. Drawn from the Museum’s holdings of more than thirty thousand small photographs, this exhibit features works by such famous and founding photographers as William Henry Fox Talbot, Camille Silvy, Nadar, Gustave Le Gray, Edward Muybridge, and Mathew B. Brady. December 1–March 30, Getty Museum, Malibu. (310) 445-3100.

Arte America. Twenty-six contemporary artists from North, Central, and South America present diverse approaches to the question of what it means to be “American.” December 14–January 30, Center for the Arts Gallery, Mirko Businaro Gardens, San Francisco. (415) 512-1000.

We Put Our Passengers In The Driver’s Seat.

Most luxury cars give the driver a sophisticated seat that adjusts to the body for maximum comfort and support. Passenger comfort, however, tends to take a back seat.

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To accommodate your friends more, you’d have to give them the wheel. But you don’t want them to have all the fun, do you?
DANCE: Nutcrackers. Fifty years ago, Americans rediscovered this delightful ballet and made it a standard Christmas fare. Now it seems there isn’t a ballet company in the world that doesn’t have a version on the boards or hasn’t at least taken aim. From deconstructed to "Carrie-and-boss-em", Nutcracker productions continue to enthrall us. This year, The Nutcracker comes at us from the silver screen, too. Three powerful majors are at work here: Christmas, childhood, and, most important, the dance. Who can resist the spell?

American Ballet Theatre gives us a world premiere of Kevin McKenzie’s new production and premiere of a new ending. December 3–18, Orange County Performing Arts Center, Costa Mesa (714) 666-6000. December 21–31, Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, Los Angeles (213) 484-6200. George Balanchine’s production for New York City Ballet has been turned into a feature-length motion picture starring Macaulay Culkin (formerly a student at the American School of Ballet). Check newspaper listings for a convenient theater.

California Ballet Company will perform choreography by company director Mauise Mahon, December 10–24, Freudenberg Center for the Arts and San Diego Civic Theater (619) 598-4341. Moscow Classical Ballet returns to Los Angeles for the first time in over a decade with a new production, December 21–26, Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, Los Angeles (213) 976-6500.

San Francisco Ballet’s beloved staging of the direct descendant of America’s first full-length Nutcracker, December 14–31, War Memorial Opera House (415) 367-2167.

San Jose Cleveland Ballet presents Artistic Director Dennis Nahat’s acclaimed interpretation, November 26–December 5, San Jose Center for the Performing Arts (408) 368-2277.

DanceTime! Dance Through Time is a theatrical dance company that specializes in researching, preserving, and authentically presenting Western dances of the past five hundred years. Featuring period costumes, and music and dance appropriate to the time. Dance Through Time’s newly expanded signature program, DanceTime!, now also focuses on contemporary social dance as a barometer for dynamic and independent self-expression. December 3–4, Julie Morgan Theater, Berkeley (510) 285-4499.

MUSIC: SF Symphony. The Symphony welcomes its new music director designate next month, Michael Tilson Thomas, currently principal conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra. He leads a program that includes his own composition From the Diary of Anne Frank, along with Puccini’s Turandot and Mahler’s First Symphony. Also next month, conductor Kent Nagano leads violinist Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg in Mozart’s Concerto No. 5, K.219. December 1–31, Davies Symphony Hall, San Francisco (415) 864-6000.

L.A. Philharmonic. Conductor Stéphane Denève returns after her spectacular 1983 debut with the orchestra. Her program features Janacek’s Taras Bulba and Mozart’s Piano Concerto in E flat, K.271, Stephen Hough soloist.
DANCE Nutcrackers. Fifty years ago, Americans rediscovered this delightful ballet and made it a standard Christmas fare. Now it seems there’s a ballet company in the world that doesn’t have a version on their boards or hasn’t at least taken aim. From deconstructed to "Carrie-belle ed," Nutcracker productions continue to enthrall us. This year, the Nutcracker comes at us from the silver screen, too. Three powerful images are at work here: Christmas, childhood, and, most important, the dance. Who can resist the spell?

American Ballet Theatre gives us a world premiere of Kevin McKenzie’s new production and premieres a new ending. December 3–18, Orange County Performing Arts Center, Costa Mesa. (714) 660-1011. December 21–31, Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, Los Angeles. (213) 485-6166. George Balanchine’s production for the New York City Ballet has been turned into a feature-length musical picture starring Meryl Streep (formerly a student at the American School of Ballet). Check newspaper listings for a convenient theater.

California Ballet presents choreography by artistic director Jeanne Pieklo. December 10–24, Festival Center for the Arts and San Diego Civic Theater. (619) 595-0171.

MUSICAL... SF Symphony. The Symphony welcomes its new music director designate next month, Michael Tilson Thomas, currently principal conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra. He leads a program that includes his own composition Proms of Annie Forre, along with Puccini’s Madame Butterfly and Mahler’s First Symphony. Also next month, conductor Kent Nagano leads violist Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg in Mozart’s Concerto No. 4, K218. December 1–31, Davies Symphony Hall, San Francisco. (415) 501-5590.


San Jose Cleveland Ballet presents Artistic Director Dennis Nahat’s acclaimed interpretation. November 26–December 5, San Jose Center for the Performing Arts. (408) 298-2277.

DanceTime!: Dance Through Time is a theatrical dance company that specializes in research, preserving, and authentically presenting Western dances of the past five hundred years. Featuring period costumes and music and dialogue appropriate to the time, Dance Through Time’s newly expanded signature program, DanceTime!, now also focuses on contemporary social dance as a barometer for dynamic and independent self-expression. December 3–4, Julia Morgan Theatre, Berkeley. (510) 255-4490.
Holiday Concerts. From choral carols to sing-along Mendelssohn, Christmas has as many musical traditions as it does theoretical dance ones, if not more. Below is just a taste of the selection, so ask your friends—there’s holiday music being made everywhere.

A Baroque Christmas, with the LA Philharmonic, is led by harpsichordist Grant Germain and features countertenor Sidney Wes as soloist in Vivaldi’s “Winter.” Wes join LA Chamber Orchestra and Tola Brown, former director of LA CO, conducts and is a violin soloist in “An Evening of Vivaldi,” featuring concertos for flute, harp, and piccolo, as well as The Four Seasons. Christof Perick, the orchestra’s current director, leads an all-Mozart program, including the Jupiter Symphony, December 3-23, various locations around Los Angeles (213) 629-7601.

Later, Manhattan Transfer joins the orchestra for holiday concerts. December 16-19, Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, Los Angeles (213) 893-8200.

Gundlach Christmas, Handel’s Messiah, Christmas Pipe Dreams, and A Night in Old Vienna are the SF Symphony’s contributions to holiday music this year. December 9-31, Davies Symphony Hall, San Francisco (415) 441-5600.

A Holiday Celebration is the LA Master Chorale’s annual Christmas music program. It proceeds the ever-popular Mozart Requiem, December 13-16, Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, Los Angeles (213) 484-8786.

Little Lit Christmas is the SPF’s Gay Men’s Chorus’s Christmas celebration, marking the group’s fifth-anniversary December 16-19, Center for the Arts Theatre, Yerba Buena Gardens, San Francisco (415) 434-3500.

Winter Solstice Concerts feature Windham Hill recording artists Nightingale, Liz Story, and And DeGrace. December 18, Center for the Performing Arts (213) 916-8500.


FILM Six Degrees, John Guarino’s 1999 play Six Degrees of Separation opens in New York to rave reviews and then continued packing in audiences in London’s West End and around the US. Clearly it touches something in modern urbanites, who understand how little we know our neighbors and at the same time how little it takes to bridge that ignorance. McM’s film version stars Stockard Channing, re-creating the role she originated on Broadway, Donald Sutherland, and Will “Fresh Prince” Smith. Fred Schepisi directs John Guarino’s film adaptation of his own play. (Check newspaper listings for a convenient theater.)

Remains of the Day, Merchant Ivory Productions brings to the screen Ruth Prawer Jhabvala’s adaptation of the award-winning novel by Kazuo Ishiguro. Anthony Hopkins plays the English butler devoted to his master, portrayed by James Fox, Emma Thompson and Christopher Reeve also star. (Check newspaper listings for a convenient theater.)

LECTUREs Leverkus. Poet Denise Levertov reads from her works and then participates in a public conversation with Michael Silverblatt, host of the “Bookworm” show of Santa Monica’s public radio station KCRW. In "readings & conversations,” The Lannan Foundation has created one of the most interesting lecture series around. December 7, Center Green Theatre, Pacific Design Center, West Hollywood (310) 659-8587.

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The Original Canton...Delicate Ginger Liqueur.
Holiday Concerts. From choral carols to sing-along Mendelssohn, Christmas has as many musical traditions as it does televised or dance ones, if not more. Below is just a taste of the selection, so ask your friends—there’s holiday music being made everywhere.

A Baroque Christmas, with the LA Philharmonic, is led by harpsichordist Grant Gerstman, and features concertmaster Sidney Weis as soloist in Vivaldi’s Four Seasons to holiday music this year, December 3-31, Pasadena Symphony Hall, Sunday evenings (310) 444-5464.

A Holiday Celebration is the LA Master Chorale’s annual Christmas music program. It proceeds the ever-popular Mendelssohn’s Song Xang, December 11-19, Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, Los Angeles (213) 628-6810.

Big Hair Holiday is the SF Gay Men’s Chorus’s Christmas celebration, marking the group’s fifteenth anniversary, December 16-19, Center for the Arts Theatre, Yerba Buena Gardens, San Francisco (415) 626-1900.

Winter Solstice Concerts features Windham Hill recording artists Nightingale, Liz Story, and Alan DeGrussa, December 18, Corwin Center for the Performing Arts (310) 915-6550.

The Gay Men’s Chorus of LA presents A Holiday Celebration, featuring Rittenhouse’s Ceremony of Carols, December 18, Royce Hall, UCLA (310) 825-7301.

FILM Six Degrees, John Guadino’s 1999 play Six Degrees of Separation, opens in New York to rave reviews and then continued packing in audiences in London’s West End and around the US. Clearly it touches something in modern urbanites, who understand how little we know our neighbors and at the same time how little it takes to bridge that ignorance. MOCA’s film version stars Stockard Channing, re-creating the role she originated on Broadway, Donald Sutherland, and Will “Fresh Prince” Smith. Fred Schepisi directs John Guadino’s film adaptation of his own play. Check newspaper listings for a convenient theater.

Remains of the Day, Merchant Ivory Productions brings to the screen Ruth Prawer Jhabvala’s adaptation of the award-winning novel by Kazuo Ishiguro. Anthony Hopkins plays the English butler devoted to his master, portrayed by James Fox. Emma Thompson and Christopher Reeve also star. Check newspaper listings for a convenient theater.

LECTURES: Leverkus. Food. Denise Lefebvre’s article results from her experience of working in a public conversation with Michael Silverblatt, host of the “Bookworm” show on Santa Monica’s public radio station KCRW. In “readings & conversations,” The Lannan Foundation has created one of the most interesting lecture series around, December 7, Center Green Theatre, Pacific Design Center, West Hollywood (310) 660-3807.
Six hours that could save your life.

In the past, a stroke was seen as an inevitable medical condition; a fact of life that seemed practically unavoidable. Even today, strokes are the third-largest killer in the U.S. Many times, those who do manage to survive a stroke only recover after a long and difficult rehabilitation period. Now, though, after years of research, we can finally shed some positive light on the subject.

Today, there are a number of new treatments that have the potential to limit the damage a stroke can do.

Perhaps the most important concept in stroke treatment is the so-called “six-hour window.” The time after a stroke hits in which treatment may make all the difference in the world.

In Northern California, The Stanford Stroke Center has become a national pioneer in stroke treatment, with a new and unique approach to teamwork and a medical staff respected for its remarkably high degree of expertise. Led by neurologist Dr. Craig Albers, neurosurgeon Dr. Gary Steinberg, and neuroradiologist Dr. Michael Marks, the Stroke Center’s doctors offer a wide range of treatments and all work closely together in order to provide the best available options to every patient.

But in order for any new stroke treatments to work, we all have to start thinking about strokes in a completely different way. Not just doctors, but all of us. Perhaps the best way to think about a stroke is as a kind of opportunity to make a difference. We now know that if people react quickly enough to the signs of stroke, we have a chance to substantially reduce the risk of long-term damage.
Six hours that could save your life.

In the past, a stroke was seen as an inevitable medical condition; a fact of life that seemed practically unavoidable. Even today, strokes are the third-largest killer in the U.S. Many times, those who do manage to survive a stroke only recover after a long and difficult rehabilitation period.

Now, though, after years of research, we can finally shed some positive light on the subject. Today, there are a number of new treatments that have the potential to limit the damage a stroke can do.

Perhaps the most innovative concept in stroke treatment is the so-called "six hour window," the time after a stroke hits in which treatment may make all the difference in the world.

You might be asking yourself, "How soon is too soon?" Immediate care is critical. If you or someone you know experiences a stroke, you should immediately seek medical attention.

In northern California, the Stanford Stroke Center has become a national pioneer in stroke treatment, with a new and unique approach to teamwork and a medical staff respected for its remarkably high degree of expertise. Led by neurologist Dr. Craig Albers, neurosurgeon Dr. Gary Steinberg, and neuroradiologist Dr. Michael Markes, the Stroke Center's doctors offer a wide range of treatments and all work closely together in order to provide the best available options to every patient.

But in order for any new stroke treatments to work, we all have to start thinking about strokes in a completely different way. Not just doctors, but all of us. Probably the best way to think about a stroke is as a kind of...
**American Conservatory Theater**

**ARTISTIC STAFF**

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Mary Lou Beamer, Executive Director
Kathleen Troep, Managing Director

**ADMINISTRATION**

Thomas W. Fyfe, Director of Development
Karen Beamer, Director of Operations

**TECHNICAL STAFF**

Michael McRae, Technical Director
Mark McDonald, Scenic Designer

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**CONSERVATORY STAFF**

John Lumphine, Acting Director
Craig Beal, Managing Director

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**NEWS FROM THE AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER**

**Scrooge Is Back!**

This holiday season, A.C.T. presents the eighteenth annual production of Charles Dickens’s classic tale, *A Christmas Carol*, adapted by Joanna jeuin and Laird Williamson. The mountin begins on December 7 and runs through December 26 at the Orpheum Theater.

“Scrooge (Laurence Bieck) takes his audience in a virtuoso performance of Dickens’s classic, *A Christmas Carol*. “I’m looking forward to playing Scrooge again,” says, lawrence jeck of his role. “It’s a challenge to bring the character to life on stage. I’m excited to see how the audience reception is.”

---

**Making Pecunio’s Music!**

A native of the Bay Area’s musical history, Pecunio’s music is produced in collaboration with the city’s leading composers and performers. The latest production, *Scrooge*, features a score by Michael Patch, produced in conjunction with the City Center and the Central City Hospital.

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**PRESIDENT’S ADDRESS**

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**PERFORMING ARTS**

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Mary Lou Beamer, Executive Director
Kathleen Troep, Managing Director

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PECONG
by steve carter
(1988)

Directed by        Henry Sato Ambush
Semony by          Kate Edmunds
Costumes by        Richard W. Battle
Lighting by        Peter Maradudin
Musical Director and Composer Wayne Wallace
Pescung Composer    David Ruddler
Sound by           Stephen LeGrand
Dance Coordinator, Cultural Consultant Harold Osamure
Casting             Ellen Novack, C.S.A.
Local Casting       Meryl Lind Shaw

The Cast
(In Order of Appearance)

Granny Root         Barbara Montgomery
Metigah             Rosalyn Coleman
Cedric              Leland Garrit
Fatasha             Margaret Robinson
Potsie              Renee Joshua Porter
Crow Pundit          Graham Brown
Sweet Bella          Chantelle Schaffer
Jason Alcock         Michael Gene Sullivan

Townpeople, Dancers, Mindo Wood Creatures
Dolores Castro, Julia Dominguez, Nicol Foster, Jocelyn Jackson, Jermaine Johnson, Guissioppe Jones, Corrine Katz, Kendo, Raymond Kinnard, Michael McBride, R. Cicho Pardifman, Seyinka Rahim, Garrett J. Spooner, Selina Williams

Musicians
Carolyn Brandy (Percussion, Violin)
Guillermo Cepezides (Tuba, Guitar, Percussion)
David Frazier (Percussion)
Mored Ziko Nealy (Percussion)
Jackeline Rado (Cubano, Mandolin, Percussion)
Dolore M. Arguelles (Tuba, Guitar, Cuatro, Percussion)

In Georgetown,
Kentucky, a tradition of
craftsmanship, a love of the
handmade runs deep.
It could be just about anything.
An antique jigsaw puzzle. A pearl-inlaid
guitar. Or, for that matter, a car.
Since 1989, the vast majority of Toyota
Camry Sedans sold here in America have been built
All assembled by a team of nearly
5,000 Americans so skilled and dedicated,
that in 1990 TMM in Georgetown received
the first ever J.D. Power and Associates Gold
Plant Quality Award,
recognizing it as the highest
ranking plant in initial quality in
North America.
And this year, they received it again.

Once We Started
Building The Camry
In The U.S., All The Pieces
Just Fell Into Place.

right here by Americans, at Toyota Motor
Manufacturing (TMM) in Georgetown, Kentucky.
Every Camry Wagon sold, anywhere in the world,
is built in Georgetown.
One hundred seventy-four suppliers from 32
different states across the U.S. provide parts that go
into the Camry.
To learn more about the craftsmanship
that goes into the 1994 Toyota Camry,
call 1-800-GOTOYOTA for a brochure
and location of your nearest dealer.
Maybe then all the pieces will fall into
place for you.

TOYOTA Camry
"I love what you do for me."

PECONG
by steve carter
(1990)

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Costumes by Richard W. Battle
Lighting by Peter Maraludin
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Sound by Stephen LeGrand
Dance Coordinator/Cultural Consultant Halifu Ousmane
Casting Ellen Novack, C.S.A.
Local Casting Meryl L. Shaw

The Cast
(In Order of Appearance)

Osario Barbara Montgomery
Metigah Rosalyn Coleman
Cedric Leland Garrit
Favashou Margarite Robinson
Porsie Renee Jordan Porter
Crew Sweet Bella
Paschal Graham Brown
Chantele Schaffer
Michael Gene Sullivan

Dolores Castro, Julia Dominguez, Nicol Foster, Jocelyn Jackson, Jermaine Johnson, Gullies Jones, Corrine Katz, Kendo, Raymond Kinnard, Michael McIlvaine, R. Chico Purdman, Suyinka Rahim, Garrett J. Spooner, Selina Williams

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Dulce M. Arguelles (Tuba, Guitar, Cucro, Percussion)

PEFORMING ARTS

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"I love what you do for me."

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phone 805-775-5992 from 10AM to 5PM daily.
Estate homesites from $500,000. Fairway homes
from $1.5 million. Broker Cooperation Invited.

Time: Well in the past.
Place: Tranquility Island (or Tranquility), an island of the mind in the Caribbean,
and Middle Island, a dark and mysterious place.

There will be one intermission.

Understudies
Mediagah—Renee-Joshua Porter; Jason Alcock, Cedric—Guislouppe Jones;
Groom—Margarette Robinson;
Sweat Bolle, Persia, Fustina—Lounah Lowe*, Susan Patterson**

Stage Management Staff
Alice Elliott Smith, Steven Lukens
Darcy Stephens—Intern

Ritual Consultant,
Spiritual Advisor
Luish Teisch

Dance Consultant
Wilfred Mark

Directing Associate
Abraham Celaya

Assistant Director
Meg Patterson

Assistant to the Director
Vickie Rozell

The director wishes to thank:
David Budker, Judith Betbeze, Andy Narrell, Les Bianco, Daniel J. Crowley,

This project is funded in part by a challenge grant from the California Arts Council. Any findings,
opinions, or conclusions contained herein are not necessarily those of the California Arts Council.
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Rental Consultant, Spiritual Advisor
Bob Zushi

Dance Consultant
Wilfred Mark

Assistant to the Director
Vickie Rozell

Assistant Director
Meg Patterson

Directing Associate
Abraham Celaya

Stage Management Staff
Alice Elliott Smith, Steven Laubens
Darcy Stephens — Intern

Understudies
Mediyah — Renee Joshua-Porter; Jason Alcock, Cedric — Guissippe Jones; Groung Root — Marguerite Robinson; Sweet Bella, Perisa, Faustina — Lounah Lowe*, Susan Patterson**

Time: Well in the past,
Place: Tranquility Island (Island of Quiet), an island of the mind in the Caribbean, and Miedo Wood Island, a dank and mysterious place.

There will be one interruption.

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What Is a Peccon?

According to playwright Steve Carter, the “peccon” — derived from the words want payment, for “ropy,” or “spry” — is a kind of verbal jousting engaged in by men of Afro-dis- 
spotic cultures, particularly in the 
Caribbean. Competitors playfully insult each other about anything and every- 
ing, including such traditional topics as their families, women, and manhood. The more outrageous the insult, the better.

The catch is the insults must be known to be false. “If you accused some- 
body’s mother of being a prostitute in a pecon, and it were true,” says Carter, “you’ld probably be ostracized.” Today’s post-colonial peconos have a modern twist. “Where peconos do have some 
three to them,” adds Carter, “is when opponents insult each other — again, 
playfully — about their politics.

An outgrowth of the oral traditions of African cultures, the pecono is related to several forms of African-American music, 
passing rap, and in one form of the 
calypso, the traditional folk song of the 
Islands of Trinidad and Tobago. The 
ancestors of calypso — known in its 
early form variously as zouk (from the 
Hausa language, once spoken by the 
largest tribal group in Nigeria), caravan- 
sour (French), race (Creole), and ca- 
lypso (Creole) — were the 
praise and derision songs of the West 
African slaves brought to the islands in the late eighteenth century. The pecono 
grew out of the ribald colloquial (or 
believing) chants of stick-fighters, and 
became a popular fixture of calypso con-
tests traditionally held at Carnival time.

By the early part of this century, calypso battles became a standing event at 
formally organized Carnival competitions, and individual singer-contestants became folk heroes with loyal followings, honored for their sharp wit and repartee, expec-tation of performance, talent in dance and music, and participatory reaction to the 
and ceremonial accomplishment.

The Trinidadian police, afflicted by its 
collection of profane content and accompanying licentious dancing, repeatedly tried to 
ban the calypso — in the 1880s and again in the 1900s and 1920s — but the 
popularity prevailed. In response to the censorship attempt of the 1880s, 
Atilia da Silva (a calypsonian extra-
ordinary) retorted: “To sing these songs are sacrilegious, obscene or profane, is only a lie and a dirty shame.”

If the calypso is early enough it 
must at first, so is Shakespeare’s Venus and 
Adonis, Boccaccio’s tales, Valeria’s Carabine, the 
Martyrology of Man by Winwood 
Red. Yet over these authors they make no 
reflex, but want to take advantage of us. 
Carter, when he asked one instructive 
actress in Peccon “so proceed in a rap 
manner,” says, “It’s all very connected, it’s all 
the continent, from Africa. The 
peconos that I know best, though, are the ones the Caribbean people used 

The Musical Language of Peccon

By Meg Patterson

The world of Peccon is above all a 
world of language and music. Its best 
begin with a heartrend that resonates 
throughout the audience; its roots 
which run down into the earth, 
grounding each Trunkey Island so that the deep and 
beautiful rhythmic energy of the earth 
can rise up through each human trunk. 
Verbal dexterity is the most valuable com-
modity in this island. Story- 
telling and verbal jousting skill 
— the ability to have a quiet 
and strikingly accurate in the 
measures by which people are 
judged. Those who possess 
the gift see their status, reputa-
tion, and wealth rise; to be 
unable to speak is a curse in the 
most acute form.

The language of the play is 
intrinsically intertwined with 
movement — a thought does 
not exist without a movement, and a movement 
does not exist without a sound. The story 
and the song of telling the story are 
liberated from reality and set free in the 
realm of the imagination. Steve 
Carter’s poetic language links 
currently contemporary 
and hip-hop 
music and oral 
tales of the settlements.

Although Peccon is set in Trinidad, the 
Caribbean, the play is imbued with 
the feelings of Trinidad and Tobago because of the impor-
tance of the calypso rhythms, the 
pecon tradition, and the special sound of the language on those particular 
Islands. The calypso fuses the music 
and musical styles of all the national-
ities that comprise the islands, 
drawing from African rhythms, incorpo-
rating Latin American rhythm, and incorpo-
ating the lyrical language of French (Creole), English, and French colonialism 
to create a new international art form. 

Happily, Peccon also gives us a vivid display of the symbolic relationship between the 
musician and singer/speaking play is part of the calypso tradition. The pera-
tistic, calypso is an art form that springs 
from a community whose members all 
realize they are artists, without apology. Poetry here is not reserved for poets; 
everyone is a poet by birthright.

Carnival, by Melvin Price (1980)

This is the power of language in a 
free form, which feels us as Shakespeare’s 
language might have felt to his first audien-
ces. As in Shakespeare’s work, there is the 
sense that even the poorest poet has 
a silver tongue, and that criticism and 
tears are wrapped up in the pretentious 
rhyming packages to slip, undetected, 
by the victim. Many of Shakespeare’s funni-
est scenes are tongue lashings and verbal 

competitions filled with invective and 
soul. Peccon also reminds us of Shakespeare’s 
the use of rhythm and speech, and the utter com-
monplace nature of emotional states. Actors often say 
that Shakespeare’s intimate per- 
tation is based on a heartbeat, that every 
our normal line having five "dum-dum" 
tests, and that when working on a script, 
the first clue to a change in the action is 
the music. For example, the verse spoken by 
Carter’s father — in which he tells 
musical powers is almost never 
inhabits pentameter, and when any 
any reader feels "outside of her- 
self," her meter changes accord-
ingly. Carter is much freer with 
these forms (and creates new 
one as necessary), but uses the 
same strong connection of 
moon to action, with split-second 
shifts in meter to suit the 
surprising twists in the story.

The contemporary musicans 
and theater artists recognize 
the power of language used as a per-
sonal expression. In a sense, the 
Shakespeare’s Both of Clime, we see 
a rock-and-roll competition in 
which the basset player wins, 
and "speak-skill" is power. Win-
ning the "speak, play" is like win-
ing the poetic and the same 
subjectivity of the past. Shakespeare shows us many characters that 
believe in what they are simply by 
"saying themselves" out loud.

Rappers LL Cool J and Flavor Flav have 
an ongoing unfulfilled competition 
for years to "win" the status of best rapper. Their challenges and insults run 
back and forth. The next generation in the passionately 
loyal to their respective fol-
lowers, until they finally called a truce.

In Peccon we see a fantasy, based on 
the reality of the calypso link in the 
chain of human expression. Peccon’s celebratory 
phrases of the oral art forms — poetry and 
music — recapture theatrical expression 
by giving us a uniquely American- 
theater experience that breaks out of the conventions of 
European-inspired dramatic realism.
What Is a Pecong?

According to playwright Steve Carter, the 'pecong' — derived from the Polynesian word pectani, for 'tongue' or 'spicy' — is a kind of verbal jousting engaged in by men of Austronesian culture, particularly in the Caribbean. Competitors playfully insult each other about anything and everything, including such traditional topics as their families, women, and manhood, the more outrageous the insult, the better. The catch is the insults must be known to be false. "If you accused somebody's mother of being a prostitute in a pecong, and it were true," says Carter, "you'd probably be ostracized." Today's post-colonial pecongs have a modern twist. "Where pecongs do have some truth to them, adds Carter, "is when opponents insult each other — again, playfully — about their politics."

An outpost of the oral traditions of African culture, the pecong is related to several forms of African-American music, preaching rap, and is one form of the calypso, the traditional folk song of the islands of Trinidad and Tobago. The antecedents of calypso — known in its early forms variously as kono (from the Hausa language, once spoken by the largest tribal group in Nigeria), carriacouan (French), rose (Creole), and calypso — were the praise and derision songs of the West African slaves brought to the islands in the late eighteenth century. The pecong itself grew out of the ribald etunna (orialeou) chants of stickfighters, and became a popular fixture of calypso contests traditionally held at Carnival time. By the early part of this century, calypso battles became a standing event as formally organized Carnival competitions, and individual singer-combatants became folk heroes with loyal following, honored for their sharp wit and repartee, improvisational prowess, talent in dance and music, and public status, and not just in Trinidad, but in the U.S. and England as well. The Trinidadian polices, afflicted by its often profane content and accompanying licentious dancing, repeatedly tried to ban the calypso — in the 1960s and 1970s — but their public popularity prevailed. In response to the censorship attempt of the '50s, the Trinidad calypso (a calypso extravaganza) retorted: "To say these songs are sacrilegious, obscene or profane, is only a lie and a dirty shame. If the calypso is wicked then I must insist, So is Shakespeare's Venus and Adonis.

Bacarica's tales, Valianta's Caridol, The Martyrdom of Man by Winwood Reid, Yet over these authors they make fun, But want to take advantage of us. Carter, who was one point instructed the actors in Pecong "to proceed in a rap manner," says, "It's all very connected, it's all from the continent, from Africa. The pecongs that I know best, though, are the ones the Caribbean people used to hold at Carnival time in New York in the 1960s and '70s. The leading calypso singers — who had strange names like the Duke of Iron, Macbeth the Great, and Lord Irredar — would "comp" each other, that is, compete.

The pecongs are a kind of ritual dance that usually involves two, or more, people. The dance starts with one person saying a line, and the other person responding with a line that is related to the first. The dance continues until one person cannot think of a line that is related to the last line said by the other person. The dance is usually ended by one person saying "good night," and the other person responding with "good night, too."

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The Musical Language of Peccon

By Meg Patterson

The world of Pecong is above all a world of language and music. Its beat begins with a heartrending that resonates through the room. As the two voices reach their crescendo, its voice thrusts down into the earth, grounding each Trinidad Yorker so that the deep and beautiful rhythmic energy of the earth can rise up through each human trunk. Verbal density is the most valuable commodity in this island. Storytelling and verbal jousting skill — the ability to have a quiet and stinging wit — is the measure by which people are judged. Those who possess the gift are sought, reputation, and wealth rise; to be unable to speak is to speak the worst curse of all. The language of the play is intrinsically intertwined with movement — a thought does not exist without a movement, and a movement does not exist without a sound. The story and the song of telling the story are liberated from reality and set free in the realm of the imagination. Singer-songwriter and poet Meg Patterson’s poetic language links contemporary rap and hip-hop music to archetypal stories of the ancient world.

Although Pecong is set in Trinidad in the '50s, the play is imbued with a feeling of Trinidad and Tobago. Because of the importance of the calypso rhythms, the pecong tradition, and the special sound of language on those particular islands. The calypso uses the musical styles and languages of all the nations that have populated the islands. The calypso’s lyrics reflect the realities of life in the Caribbean, and the calypso’s music is the voice of the people. The calypso is a form of social protest, a way of expressing the people’s feelings about their lives and their society.

Peccon also gives us a vivid display of the symbiotic relationship between the musician and the audience. The audience is part of the calypso tradition. The performer's life of the drums and other instruments that “play” the musician (many musicians feel that the music is actually playing them) forms a circular relationship with the body, the spirit, and the words of the performers. In this way, so much of the music in the moment is more pronounced than in the typical Western theater experience. Most importantly, the musical language of Pecong is filled with immersive and intense experience.
The Tongue Can Be Mightier Than the Sword

Ventral provokum seems to have been honored in all cultures and all times. The following excerpts come from Love's Labor's Lost by William Shakespeare: “The Tongue of the Toilet by Sam Shepard, Pooch by Steve Carter, ‘I'm Bad’ by rapper LL Cool J, and ‘Suckers’ by his rival Kool Moe Dee — demonstrate men's unrelenting desire to wield a well-turned phrase in struggles for dominance.”

Love's Labor Lost

COSTARD: I Pompey am, —
PROVOST: You lie, you are not be.
COSTARD: I Pompey am,
PROVOST: With bibbitts head on back.
BURDON: What, old rogue, you must needs friend be with thee.
COSTARD: I Pompey am, Pompey surmamed the Friar, —
DAME: The Great.
COSTARD: It is, 'Great', sir Pompey surmamed the Great,
That o'f my fad, with turge and shield, did make my foe to sweat.
And travailing along this coast, I here am come by chance,
And lay my arms before the legs of this sweet lady of France.

The Tooth of Crime

HOS: I'm a cold killer Mama — I got blood on my jeans.
I get the fastest action in East LA.
I got the fastest action in East LA.
And if you don't believe it, I'mma shoot it to you.
Now watch me slide into power glide — supercharged down the line.
There ain't no way for you to hide from the killer's eye.
My silver studs, my black kid gloves, my eyes wide open.
But there ain't no way for you to know from the killer's eye.
I'm a cold killer Mama — and I've earned my tattoo.
I get a Pacocho cross tattooed on me.
I get a whirlpool mask and a rattlesnake tongue.
My John the Conqueror says I'm the cold gun.

Pooch

CECIL: I raise me sweet voice, loud and clear
And issue challenge to all who can hear.
I say to all assembly here
And for all more.
In melodious combat, come and meet me
And see if you be the man
Whose voice can reach his ear.
He has, he has, he has.
He has, he has.
He has, he has.
The voice most rise.

I'm Bad

LL COOL J: I'm bad, I cool, I cool, I cool.
I'm a soldier at war.
Making sure you don't try to battle me with more.
I get concrete rhymes, been rapping for 20 years.
And when I'm rappin' I've been sincere.
The best rapper you heard is L.L. J
Told Kamakaze, look at what I done.
I used to rock in my basement, now I'm Number One.
I'm the pinnacle.
That means I reign supreme.
And I'm notorious, I'll crush you like a jellybean.

Suckers

(In response to L.L. Cool J)

Kool Moe Dee: I can send the crowd into pandemonium
And make 'em sweat.
Other rappers aren't as good as me.
That's why they try to be me,
And what they become is a facsimile.
Suckers.
You'll never amount to what I am.
Cause I'm Kool Moe Dee, better known as The Man.
No matter how you suckers feel.
I am the best, 'cause I'm real.
Suckers! Suckers! Suckers!

* * *

These excerpts from Shakespeare's "The Taming of the Shrew, Pooch, and "I Got a Man" by rapper Positive K show that the tongue can be a potent weapon in love, as well as war.

The Taming of the Shrew

PETRUCHIO: Come, come, you wags, it is time you were angry.
KATHERINE: If you were angry, best became your stomach.
PETRUCHIO: My remedy is then, to pluck it out.
KATHERINE: Ky, if the fool could find where it lies.
PETRUCHIO: Who knows not where a wasp does wear his sting?
In his tail.
KATHERINE: In his tongue.
PETRUCHIO: Who's tongue?
The Tongue Can Be Mightier Than the Sword

Verbal prowess seems to have been honored in all cultures and all times. The following excerpts — from Love's Labor's Lost by William Shakespeare; The Tooth of Crime by Sam Shephard; Pecking by Steve Carter; "I'm Bad" by rapper LL Cool J; and "Suckers" by his rival Kool Moe Dee — demonstrate men's unbridled desire to wield a well-turned phrase in struggle for dominance.

Love's Labor's Lost

COSTARD: I Pompey am, —

FOREST: You lie, you are not be.

COSTARD: I Pompey am, —

FOREST: With bitts-born head on knee.

BIRON: Well said, old mooter: I must needs be friends with thee.

COSTARD: I Pompey am, Pompey sumanred the big, —

DOMAIN: The Great.

COSTARD: It is, 'Great', sir; Pompey sumanred the Great; That o'f fylf, with targe and shield, did make my foe to sweat;
And travailing along this coast, I here am come by chance,
And lay my arms before the logs of this sweet lae of France.

The Tooth of Crime

HOSS: I'm a cold killer Mama — I got blood on my jeans… I get the fastest action in East L.A.

I get the fastest action in East L.A.

And if you don't believe it, jemme shut it to you
Now watch me slide into power glide — supercharged down the line
There ain't no way for you to hide from the killer's eye
My silver studs, my black kid gloves make you cry inside
But there ain't no way for you to hide from the killer's eye
I'm a cold killer Mama — and I've earned my tattoo
I get a Peacock cross hatched over you
I get a批发市场 and a ratatatatatat tongue
My John the Conqueror says I'm the coldest gun.

Peying

CEDIB: I raise me sweet voice, loud and clear
And issue challenge to all who can hear
I say to all assemble here
And see if you are
"In melodious combat, come and meet me
And see if you are who can lose his life,
he home, he wife,
he fork, he knife,
he stress, he strife.
The time most ripe,
me son,
for tyrants to defeat me.
Defeat me! Ha! Ha! Never!
I am the Mighty, Royal, Most Perfect,
Grand King Calashah…Forever!

"I'm Bad"


I'm like a soldier at war:
Making sure you don't try to battle me no more.
I get concrete rhymes, been rappin' for 10 years
And when I'm rappin' I've been sincere
The best rapper you heard in L.A. J
Hey Kamakaze, look at what I done
I used to rock in my basement, now I'm Number One.
I'm the pinnacle.
That means I reign supreme.
And I'm notorious. I'll crush you like a jellybean.

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Cause I'm Kool Moe Dee, better known as The Man
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I'm the best, 'cause I'm Kool.
Suckers! Suckers! Suckers!

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The Taming of the Shrew

PETRUCHIO: Come, come, you wench, I faith, you are too angry.
KATHERINE: If he waspish, best beware my sting.
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PETRUCHIO: Who knows not where a wasp does wear his sting?
In his tail.
KATHERINE: In his tongue.
PETRUCHIO: Whose tongue?
When the Spirit Moves
By Elizabeth Brodersen

"If the beginning God has led his woman into the bedroom together to consummate creation," writes Sura Dole in his 1910 Teutol Sera book, "teach your wife Voodoo and lead her into your Bedroom."

"That was the beginning of everything and Voodoo was just an old woman at that time. It was not neglected in the way to African forests."

That mysticism infuses the world of the people in the African traditions represented in Pongay in a spirit of authenticity and respect. Amubhak asked his Indian tribes to 'meditate on the spirits of the joyful women' (the Yoruba goddess of love) and author of Jambalaya: The National Women's Book of Personal Charms and Practical Rituals, to act as ritual consultant and spiritual advisor to the production. In Jambalaya, Tevah explains that as many as twenty million people were transported from West Africa to the Americas as slaves. As a result, language and customs of Yorubas were established in Brazil and Cuba. Dahomeans and Congos in Haiti; the Ackhant in the Dahomey Islands; Dahomans and Yorubas in Trinidad; and Fon, Wolof, and Congos in North America. While these groups spoke English and French differently, they shared similar gods and spiritual practices, with a common belief in spirit worship and ancestor reverence.

Once in the West, the African belief system was restructured to Christianity and merged with the practices of Indo-European peoples, as well as the pagan traditions of servant-class Europeans who made the voyage. In the Caribbean: the Spanish enslaved, French expeditions, and English witchcraft. This integration gave birth to powerful ritual systems critical to the daily life and freedom struggle of slaves all over the Americas. Macumba and Candomble in Brazil, Lacum in Cuba, Santee in Puerto Rico, and Voodoo in New Orleans.

American spirituality is holistic, rooted in a profound respect for nature. "As African spirituality is based on the principle of a single cell at the bottom of the ocean, the play is that what we know as "Graum Root" has left the body. Her emotions and actions are not lost, but not disappear, nor internalized in a spiritual manner. They are active still. In helping the Dahomean people prepare for the role of Medjah, I followed very closely behind her as she walked around the stage to that point where she needed to be to absorb sensitive to the presence of Graum Root. When one has spirit accompaniment, there is a feeling of not being alone."

The protection and guidance of the spirits is not automatic, but must be involved by the performance of appropriate rituals—offering ancestors proper burial, Crowley, and sacrifices—placement with sacrifice and food. It is each individual's responsibility to provide for her ancestors, and thereby replenish her personal power, or act. Failure to do so is an abuse of orthodoxy, and may incur the wrath of the ancestors, and of the gods. Also fundamental is the ritual worship of the gods, or orishas. While each locality in the Americas developed its own pantheon, all shared some commonalities. Irish, for example, describes certain cults from Mother Africa common to all cultures. Eliza, supreme god of the Yoruba pantheon, the Orishas, the orishas' creator, peacekeeper, and judge, Sera, the god of Father Earth, the god of mother of the sea, the sun, the moon, and the stars, the queen, with the power to hide the sun and moon and bring them from the quakes and wind; Osun, the earth goddess, god of love, art, and sexuality; Chang, the god of nature, and technology, the serpent deity, Danum, in certain cultures reigns as the supreme power, and in the West, Hark, the "father of all that is powerful and good," the great source, whom the other gods must first ask for permission and power to take action. In helping Ambush and the cast of Pongay explore a ritual system for the people of Trinidad and Mano Wood Islands, Tevah preferred not to follow the dictates of one particular deity. "When I read the script," she says, "I see traditions of Trinidad, Haiti; New Orleans, and even South Carolina. We make cultural rituals universal in principle, people all over the world have done ancestor reverence work. Now, in Africa's offering to the ancestors, among Native Americans with corn, and among the Chinese and Vietnamese with rice, but all the core they're all recognizing that who goes before us make us what we are."

"In so this production, where we have mythical islands, it's my preference to create generic rituals. Although we aren't adhering closely to cultural specifics, there are some characters in the play that are very close to certain archetypes. We don't have to call the num-bhut one "Chakura," but there are a lot of them that灯火 and lighting her here. I wouldn't necessarily ask Jwan to carry a double-headed axe, which would be associated with the Lord of Thunder in Nigeria, but he does have to display a fiery temperament. Our ancestors looked at the forces of nature and personalized them, so you are not going to find a mild-mannered god of thunder, or a mild-mannered volcano god. We all have an understanding, whether we articulate it or not, of these archetypes. They are real."

It was important to Ambush to keep the evil spirit "voodoo" propogated by Hollywood and popular media. "In its home state," says Tevah, "the very word connotes 'life principle.' Both life and death are part of the life principle, the good and the bad both come from the one. God created the Devil, right? The difference between sorcery and magic is situational. Under slavery, people had to go into deep war mode, and defensive magic became very strong and popular. That doesn't mean the healers went to sleep, but in the Haitian creole culture, the woman that would have spent her time making healing teas had to spend her time making weapons to kill the slave master. The fact that what appeared to be a group of unorganized, ignorant, supposedly inferior slaves, was in fact a force to be reckoned with, a force to be respected. Napoleon Bonaparte's army allows people to attribute to them a demonic power. When slaves started poni-norning and cutting the throats of slave masters and making jug to become impossible, their stories became the popular folklore, which the next generation believed and emulated, rewriting the original principles. Once these stories were translated and further popularized by the media, which, because it is difficult to find proportion. When you impose a foreign idea on the consciousness of another people, it can warp. Like the cocky god, the cult of the gray god in Haiti that Nova talks about, where people round the countryside enacting folk. Well. In pre-colonial Africa, there was a judicial body that dealt with people who committed crimes against society, and that judiciary had a body of essentialism, just like the Supreme Court. California has the gas chamber. You upset the culture of these people, transplant them to another place, and impose on them the Christian conviction, and suddenly you have them executing in Christ."

Tevah points out that concepts of good and evil are not cut and dried, and prefer the word dangerous. There are no absolutes, but the violation of law requires certain responses. Grant's Root intends to wipe out a blight against her family name, but Medjah goes off the deep end. Medjah violates her contract with cre- llin— which requires that she use her powers for good. She does not—giving her power up to Jason. If she had not done that, this would be a very, very different story. But given who she is and what she is supposed to do, once she makes that choice, the events that follow could only be grimens."

Above: "Gnawa Djsala," from "Gnawa: of courage and courage," author of many works on music and dance.
When the Spirit Moves
By Elizabeth Brodersen

"If the beginning God and His woman went into the bedroom together to commence creation," writes Omar Sosa in his "Hair and Life in Haiti and Jamaicas," "that was the beginning of everything and Vodoo as just as old as that. It is the old, old magics of the world to African forms."

That mysticism infuses the world of Pongom, which director Henry Selick Ambush describes as a place where "the sacred and secular imbibe the same spirit."

According to the script, the power of the word, or Awonno force, is a term used by the Dogon of Mali, a word that " DRAGS and lifters" and strengthens weak ones, according to the will of the speaker. Words uttered in a particular sequence, rhythm, and tone can bring a rock to life, cause rain to fall, or heal a sick person a hundred miles away. When properly played, the drums are also Awonno. They send messages to the Universal Intelligence and receive answers.

Paramount to these beliefs is the loving reverence of human ancestors (ojagoton or opo in Yoruba)—particularly maternal spirits and the spirits of their sons/crabs. There is no doubt as we understand it that the Yoruba in the African Islands, Dahomans and Yorubas in Trinidad; and Fon, Wolof, and Congos in North America. While these groups share a common culture, there are many nuances in their beliefs. Among them, they share similar gods and rituals, with a common belief in nature worship and ancestor reverence.

Once in the West, the African belief system was subordinated to Christianity and merged with the practices of Indigenous peoples, as well as the pagan traditions of servants-class European masters who made up their way in the Caribbean: the Spanish slit eye, French gypie's cabalist secret societies, and English witchcraft. This integration gave birth to powerful ritual systems critical to the daily life and freedom struggle of slaves and freedmen. As with the American Muscogee and Canoe people, the Spaniards and Indians became people of the Coastlands, and the freedmen became people of the Sea. In the New World, the African spirituality was rooted in a profound respect for nature. As African spirituality is holistic, rooted in the single cell at the bottom of the ocean, the play is that what we know as "Granny Root's" has left the body. Her communications with the earth and the rest of the universe are not lost, but do disappear, are not neutralized in a spiritual sense. They are active still. In order for the Doleman to prepare for the role of Medayah, she followed closely behind her as she walked around the altar, looking for the stone that needed to be cut off, and the stone that needed to be in place for the presence of Granny Root. When one has spirit accompaniment, there is a feeling in the way she moves, a feeling of being alive.

The protection and guidance of the spirits is not automatic, but must be invoked by the performance of appropriate rituals—offering ancestors proper burial, cloth, offerings, and prayer with sacrifice and food. It is each individual's responsibility to provide for her ancestors, and thereby replenish her personal power, or soul. Failure to do so is an abuse of power, and may incur the wrath of the ancestors, and of the gods.

Ancestors are divided into two groups: living ancestors, those who have died but continue to have an influence and control over the living; and spirit ancestors, those who have passed from the physical world and now dwell in the spiritual realm. Living ancestors are often referred to as "the living dead," or "the spirits." They are revered and honored by those who are still living, as they continue to watch over and protect the living. In the Yoruba tradition, ancestor veneration is a way of honoring and remembering those who have passed on, and of maintaining a connection to the spiritual world. The living are said to be connected to the ancestors through the act of remembering, and through the practice of offering sacrifices and prayers for their well-being. The ancestors, in turn, are said to provide guidance and protection for the living, and to intercede on their behalf with the gods.

In the American Conservatory Theater production of "When the Spirit Moves," the spiritual connection to the ancestors is a central theme. The play explores the relationship between the living and the ancestors, and the ways in which this connection is both a source of strength and a source of conflict. The play also examines the role of the ancestors in shaping the lives of the characters, and the ways in which their influence can be both positive and negative. Throughout the play, the characters are shown to be constantly in touch with the spiritual world, and to be guided and influenced by the ancestors. The ancestors are shown to be both benevolent and malevolent, and their influence is both sought after and feared. In the end, the characters are shown to be faced with a decision: to continue to honor and respect the ancestors, or to turn their back on the spiritual world. The play ends with the characters standing in front of a large, ornate altar, with candles burning and incense rising, as they offer their final prayers and sacrifices to the ancestors. The altar is a symbol of the spiritual connection between the living and the ancestors, and of the importance of this connection in shaping the lives of the characters. The play ends with the characters facing the altar, with a sense of strength and purpose, ready to move forward in their lives armed with the knowledge and guidance of the ancestors.
Mother/Word
Black Theater in the African Continuum: Word/Song as Method
By Paul Carter Harrison

When you go into any culture, I don’t care what the culture is, you have to go with some humility. You have to understand the language, and by that I do not mean what we speak, you got to understand the language, the interior language of the people. You’ve got to be able to enter their philosophy, their world view. You’ve got to speak both the spoken language and the meta-language of the people.

Ritual is the affective technique common to most theatrical exercises in the black world. Within these exercises, the word is not simply a mechanism of discourse. It is, rather, a creative elixir — Numinos force — that activates the dramatic mode (context of experience) and reveals the symbolic gesture of the mask (characterization). Embedded in this mode are references to a common experience, myths and significations that define the collective moral universe. The lessons of myth are secured in the inner world of experience, which often requires strong rituals to reconcile past knowledge to contemporary realities. (Cf., [Cf.]) Jay Wright notes, in traditional societies, ritual reveals the communal significance of experience. To understand what we mean by historical experience you must understand the necessity for desire, the usage of vision in Africa today. The word, then, must have the power to reach beyond objective reality, to touch the spirit and awaken the soul.

...Close inspection of language in the African diaspora — rare, perhaps, the hybrid form of nineteenth-century European speech retained in Liberia — reveals the common verbal impulse to make the word sing, irrespective of alien tongue or corruptions of original syntax. What is important here is that the resulting actions of language — spoken or garbled — have meaningful correspondences in both the physical and spiritual worlds. It is not uncommon, then, to discover in the art forms of the black world a language that is mythopoetic and intensified or amplified by an oratory sensibility. A word song, for example, is a rhythmic elaboration of language that, much like “talkin’ in tongues,” provokes the “numinous shadow” for light and the meaning of objective reality, and produces, as [cultural theorist] Wilson Harris has noted in The World of Space, “metaphoric imagery that increasingly conveys music in the shadow of vanished but visualized presences.”

To probe the metaphorical world for symbolic correspondences to objective reality, the contemporary black theater artist requires an unrelenting discipline, the rigor of the traditional African carver, whose apparently naturalistic forms are intensely potent expressions imparting, as [art historian] Iri Dowidoff says, “tangible meaning to those visible and spiritual presences which give context to daily life and thought” — in much the same way that the music of Ellington, Monk, and Mingus produces what the late poet Larry Neal called an “aesthetic iconography” transcending sociological explanation. Rather than the duplication of experience, which instills uncritical response to the mundane, we discover in their art forms a rigorous excavation of significant communal values and an illumination of hidden impasses.

...Until recently, black theater in the United States, unlike the culturally informed ritual exercises of Africa, was mainly the reproduction of material life, with little content beyond obvious protestation or objectification of the dominant culture for recognition — and even authentication — of the black experience. In “Black Theater in Search of a Source,” an introductory essay to the anthology Aesthetics, Drama, I sought to identify the formal/realistic style of the black church as a paradigm for Afric...Continued on page P-18.
American Conservatory Theater

Mother/Word
Black Theater in the African Continuum: Word/ Song as Method
By Paul Carter Harrison

When you go into any culture, I don’t care what the culture is, you have to go with some humility. You have to understand the language, and by that I do not mean what we speak, you’ve got to understand the language, the interior language of the people. You’ve got to be able to enter their philosophy, their world view. You’ve got to speak both the spoken language and the metaphysics of the people.

— Wole Soyinka (Nigerian playwright, poet, essayist, and Nobel laureate)

In the small hours of a Bahia night, a group of black American writers was summoned to the hotel room of [American journalist] Verta Mae Groover by the insistent persuasion of a young Bahian poet who zealously wished to share his poems with the American visitors. Verta Mae knew intuitively it wouldn’t work as the American listeners politely to the young Brazilian’s efforts to communicate the interior values of his poetry in halting, albeit passionate, English. Suddenly, with an alarming sense of insubstantiality, Verta Mae interrupted the proceedings and coaxed the young poet to render the poems in his native language. He hesitated at first, since no one in the room spoke Portuguese, particularly Afro-Brazilian Portuguese. However, prompted by the consensus of the American visitors, the poet began his narrative with the familiar word/song generic to storytelling in most black cultures, his incantations invoking images shaped by polymyth, rejection, and occasional vampiress that commonly awakened the spirit of conviviality, rejuvenating the American visitors along with willing participants in a ritualistic mode allowing access to the deeper significances of the poet’s experience. The very immunance of the poet’s words/声音 transcended the artificial barrier of alien tongues and gave the visitors a sense of having shared in a narrative ritual that had peeled away layers of cultural distances. In response to its beneficence, we smiled gratefully.

Word! Motherword!

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Continued on page P-14

King George IV was up here, back in 1822.
He would drink nothing but The Glenlivet.”

— Sandy Milne, our Resident Sage.

His Majesty was gracing Scotland with a state visit at the time. He brought with him a powerful thirst for The Glenlivet single malt Scotch. As his host’s daughter, Elizabeth Grant, recorded in her memoirs: "Lord Caringorm, the Chamberlain, was looking everywhere for the pure Glenlivet whisky; the King drank nothing else."

A bottle was swiftly brought up from the cellar and pressed into the king’s hands. "What is not recorded," says our own Sandy Milne, "is whether His Majesty gave anyone else a snuff of the stuff."

What is a single malt Scotch?

A single malt in Scotch is the way it was originally: one single whisky, from one single distillery. Not, like most Scotch today, a blend of many whiskies. The Glenlivet single malt Scotch whisky should therefore be compared to a château-bottled wine. Blended Scotch is more like a mixture of wines from different vineyards.

Sandy Milne and trusty companion, Ambrose.

The Glenlivet.
The Father of All Scotch.

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Sit inside and the E-Class is as comfortable as any car in its class. It's also exceedingly more comforting. Orthopedically-crafted front seats, for instance, are designed to withstand car-to-car rear impacts of up to 30 mph.

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Starting at $42,975.
American dramatic, an alternative to the reigning theatrical form. Exploring the sacred experience for aesthetic reference seemed more than reasonable, since most people of African descent are first and foremost responsive to spiritual values, even when they are not affiliated with organized religion. Few blacks in America are able to resist the groundswell of feeling and transport when the spirit is aroused in the formal exercises called church, irrespective of affiliation — Holiness, African Methodist, Episcopal, Baptist, Pentecostal in Puerto Rico, Candomble in Brazil, Mambo in Cuba, Poomania in Jamaica, even Catholic or conservative Presbyterian — profound spiritual feelings cannot be suppressed "when the Saints come marchin’ in!" And while the church experience may appear to be unchanged in form, the essence of the ritual is never static or otherwise predictable, largely due to the irresistible magical incantations of the preacher's performance style.

Secular rituals — even one as spiritually resonating as The Gospel of Colonus cannot generate as much power as the organized church experience, where worship becomes the force that brings order to the congregation's collective vision, inspiring a sense of transformation of mind/body that leads, potentially to productive action. Still, such an experience, at least in form, should be a natural source of inspiration for the secular rituals we call theater. In a recent interview, playwright Amiri Baraka... examined the cultural implications of a religiously or spiritually informed aesthetic:

...I think that what the Afro-American has always been trying to evolve is an art that comes out of the basically democratic, basic African spirit possession, because the Black church has always been about spirit possession. You know, they say the spirit will not descend without song. So you got to have music to make the spirit come down, and you gotta get the spirit, you gotta actually get the frenzy, you gotta get happy like they say, to actually have participated in that religious experience.

Further liberation from realism, with its static appreciation of the black experience.

Continued on page F20
American dramatic, an alternative to the reigning theatrical form. Exploring the sacred experience for aesthetic reference seemed more than reasonable, since most people of African descent are first and foremost responsive to spiritual values, even when they are not affiliated with organized religion. Few blacks in America are able to resist the groundswell of feeling and transport when the spirit is aroused in the formal exercises called church, irrespective of affiliation — Holiness, African Methodist, Episcopal, Baptism, Pentecostal in Puerto Rico, Congregational in Brazil, Macumba in Cuba, Pocomania in Jamaica, even Catholic or conservative Presbyterian — profound spiritual feelings cannot be suppressed "when the Saints come marchin' in!" And while the church experience may appear to be unchanged in form, the execution of the ritual is never static or otherwise predictable, largely due to the irrepressible magical incantations of the preacher's performance style.

Secular rituals — even one as spiritually resonant as The Gospel of Colonus — cannot generate as much power as the organized church experience, where working becomes the force that brings order to the congregation's collective vision, inspiring a sense of transformation of mind/body that leads, potentially, to prophetic action. Such an exercise, at least in form, should be a natural source of inspiration for the secular ritual we call theater. In a recent interview, playwright Amiri Baraka examined the cultural implications of a religiously or spiritually informed aesthetic:

...I think that what the Afro-American has always been trying to evolve is an art that comes out of the basically dissianic, basic African spirit possession, because the Black church has always been about spirit possession. You know, they say the spirit will not descend without song. So you got to have music to make the spirit come down, and you gotta get the spirit, you gotta actually get the frenzy, you gotta get happy like they say, to actually have participated in that religious experience.

Further liberation from realism, with its static appraisal of the black experience, Continued on page F20
A Passionate Playwright

Carter, sixty-three, describes himself as the "youngest of America's oldest living playwrights" and, having seen a play for the first time in 1932, is probably the youngest of America's oldest living playwrights. He has written some twenty-seven plays, including Eden, Nevis Mountain Dew, Donna Lorena, One Last Look, Eden, Nevis Mountain Dew, Donna Lorena, and The Final Curtain. Eden. Eden won an Outer Critics Circle award as the best play of the year. Carter has also received fellowships from the Rockefeller and Guggenheim Foundations of the National Endowment for the Arts. Born and raised in New York City, Carter's first play, which the theater began in 1937 with a trip to Broadway to see Angelina, was a success. When I told someone "I didn't know what the play was about, and I didn't know those people had been living for a long time," you'll recognize the effort of the production, the scenery coming together in the end..."I've known I wanted to be something in the theater since I was about ten. My mother's cousin worked backstage at the theater as a handyman, so he got a lot of tickets that he would just give to me, and he let me go to any play I wanted..."When I was about nine, I got caught playing hooky from school. My punishment was to spend two days at home after school for every day I had cut. The only thing I did was go home and take my mother's new car: to go to the theater. To me, it was something to do, really. I would run in and grab whatever was there, saying "Mama, I'm coming!"
A Passionate Playwright

Carter, sixty-three, describes himself as "the youngest of America's oldest living playwrights," and having seen a play for the first time in 1922, he is indeed the youngest of America's oldest living playwrights." He has written some twenty-seven plays, including Eden, Nevada Mountain Dew, Dime Lorraine, One Last Look, Eden, Nevada Mountain Dew, Dime Lorraine, and The Good News. Eden, a woman known as the "Usher of the East," received several awards, from the Rockefeller and Guggenheim Foundations to the National Endowment for the Arts. Born and raised in New York City, Carter's first love was theater, and he began in 1937 with a trip to Broadway to see Amahl and the Night Visitors. "I don't know what the play was about, and I didn't know those two were in the same thing," he remembers. "But I was intrigued by the magic of the production, the scenery coming down the aisles at me." "I've wanted to be something in the theater since I was about ten. My mother's cousin worked backstage at the New York Theater as a handyman, so he got a lot of tickets that he would just give to me, and I just used to go to the movies."

"When I was about nine, I got caught playing hooky from school. My punishment was to spend ten days at home after school for every day I had cut. The only thing I did was pass the way home was the library, the saving grace was, my mother let me stop there and get a book, so long as I was home seven and a half hours after the two-o'clock bell. Just because it was something to do, really, I would run in and grab whatever was there, saying "I want it!"

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WHOS WHO

GRAHAM BROWN, a native New Yorker, began his acting career at Howard University. He was the founding member of the American Theater Company in Minneapolis and the Negro Ensemble Company. On Broadway he has been seen in "The River Niger and The Man in the Glass Booth. Other recent credits include the King of France in Henry VI at the New Ambassadors, in The House of Blue Leaves at the Henry Miller Theater in New York and in "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf" at the Manhattan Theater Club. He recently read the roles of Mr. Sutter in Steve карter's Elmore and Judas in his New Generation Zoe, which won Best Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Award.

RONALD COLEMAN is happy to return to A.C.T. A member of Gallery Repertory and Circle Repertory Company, he was last seen on the beach in the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center work- ing feverishly on Viet Eddie's The Jeffersons. Winter months have been spent cross-country skiing. He is currently performing in "The Piano and the Moon" for the New York Regional theater credits include A Doll's House, Mary of Maine at the Pittsburgh Public Theatre, The Shakespeare Festival, and performances at the Yale Repertory Theater, American Stage Festival, Arena Stage, Shakespeare Theater at the Folger, and Studio Repertory Theater. He has also played the role of "The Fool" in The Merry Wives of Windsor and has directed their talents to the 112 Street Project as Mur the Cat, A Tree in Brooklyn, and Mother of Inventions. He has appeared in television frequently on the dramatic networks, "Looking," and has begun work on a film version of The Ecolips, a feature piece she wrote and performed at the Manhattan Glass Company and the Snoring Gallery.

LINDA GIGNTI lists among his film credits "Saturday Night Fever," "Fame," "Taxi," and "The Super." His television credits include "Law and Order," the NBC mini-series "Hooray for the Kennedys," "America's Most Wanted," and "One Life to Live." His Off-Broadway performance in Let Me Be Me at the Arena Stage earned him acclaim in both the Drama Desk and San Francisco Critics Circle awards. His recent regional credits include appearances with Scuolo Repertory Theater, Baltimore's Center Stage, Virginia Stage Company, Theatro Vittoria, Pittsburgh Public Theater, New Jersey Shakespeare Festival, and Grobevik's Great Lakes Theater Festival among his New York regional credits include The Moon for O'Neill, The Three Sisters, August Strindberg's Miss Julie, Othello, and A Midsummer Night's Dream. He has appeared in several Off Broadway shows, including "The Lorraine Hansberry Theatre." He has also appeared in the film "The Moon for O'Neill," and is currently performing in "The Moon for O'Neill" at the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival.

BARBARA MONTGOMERY's many stage credits include those in Off Broadway Theater and The Yale Playhouse in "The Life Full of Sugar" and "Secrets at the Farm." She also made a guest appearance in "The Life Full of Sugar" and "Secrets at the Farm." She is currently at work on several independent film and television projects.

MARGARETTE BROWN's Bay Area acting credits include Famous Five in The Happy Days on five networks. For Eligible for an Award in the Performance of a Drama or Comedy, she was nominated for an OBIE Award, and as Mrs. Anderson in Albert/Alimm's production of Love No- tribe at the Magic Theater, Big Mama in Shubert's the Pink Oleander and Nurse Madison in the world premiere of James Hia (Tgota) (directed by Anthony J. Harvey for TheaterWorks), and performances in the Oakland Ensemble, The Shakespeare Festival, and The New York Wayside in "(with her)." She has also performed in the films "The Moon for O'Neill," and is currently performing in "The Moon for O'Neill" at the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival.

GUILLERMO CORDELOS (Piero, Guitar, Per- roncito), is originally from Cuba. He is Musical Director of Guapo Corders, a twelve-piece Afro-Cuban ensemble. A multi-instrumentalist, Corders is a California Arts Council Artist in Residence at the California Arts Council. He teaches Afro-Cuban music in his country and in Spain.

DAVID FREER (Panchito, Arafina), a Bay Area professional, has performed in A.C.T.'s Latin American Festival, directed by George Coates, and in Coates' Album Show. The music mani- fested he has worked with include Leonard Bernstein, Martha Swig, Joe Henderson, Ida Mohrman, and the band in several times. Freer has recorded a self-titled album with Batum, his Latin fusion band. He is also a member of the faculty of the California Academy of Jazz and the San Francisco Conservatory of Music from the New College of California.

DELAUZ M. ARGELLES (Pier, Guero, Cory, Perroncito), a native of Havana, Cuba, is a multi-instrumentalist who has performed in several Latin American and Latin American music festivals. A recipient of a California Arts Council Folk Arts grant, he is a multi-instrumentalist who has designed soundtracks for award-winning productions. She is a founding member of the Bay Area Latin Music Ensemble and the Orquesta Salsa, and is also a member of the Los Angeles Aztecs.

CAMERON BRANNY (Perroncito, Violin) is a Bay Area composer, performer, and teacher. She has toured and recorded and performed three albums with Almond, her women's jazz group. In 1984, she worked with veteran artists such as Ed Kiley, Eddie Mitchell, Faye Carol, Floris Pernia and Aletto, and Paquita D'Ivone, among others. She was commissioned by the California Arts Council for her album with Women, performed at the Palace of Fine Arts in 1990, and was selected as a Finalist in the California Arts Council's Annual Award for Women. Faber, a Cuban musician, plays the fiddle and is a member of the all-women, Latin American, original music group, Los Angeles Aztecs. From 1950 to 1952 she was an artist-in- residence of the California Arts Council. At the California Arts Council in Berkeley. Among the awards for her music has been a grant from the California Arts Council and the Rockefeller Foundation and is a grant from the California Arts Council and the Rockefeller Foundation and is a grant from the California Arts Council.
PECONG DIRECTORS, DESIGNERS, AND STAFF

JUDITH ORLEANS (Artistic Director, Associate Artistic Director, and Managing Director) began her association with the company in 1991 as an Associate Director for the 1992 season. Since that time, she has served as the company's Artistic Director, overseeing all aspects of the company's artistic and administrative operations. Under her leadership, the company has grown to become one of the leading regional theaters in the country.

MICHAEL HARRIS (General Manager) joined the company in 2000 as General Manager, overseeing all business operations. He has been instrumental in the company's financial stability and growth, and is responsible for managing the company's budget, financial planning, and internal operations.

PATRICIA STEWART (Administrative Director) came on board in 2005 and has been instrumental in the company's administrative operations. She is responsible for overseeing the company's administrative staff and ensuring the smooth operation of the company's business processes.

JAYNE ABRAMS (Development & Marketing Director) joined the company in 2009 and has been instrumental in the company's fundraising and marketing efforts. She is responsible for overseeing the company's development and marketing teams, and for developing and executing strategies to increase the company's visibility and support.

AALISH ANAND-AHRENS (Education Director) joined the company in 2010 and has been instrumental in the company's educational programming. She is responsible for overseeing the company's education and community engagement initiatives, and for developing strategies to increase the company's engagement with the community.

PATRICK J. CURRAN (Technical Director) joined the company in 2011 and has been instrumental in the company's technical operations. He is responsible for overseeing the company's technical staff and ensuring the smooth operation of the company's technical processes.

KAY O'BRIEN (Executive Assistant) joined the company in 2012 and has been instrumental in assisting the company's leadership in various administrative tasks.

DANIEL WARD (Executive Producer) joined the company in 2013 and has been instrumental in the company's production efforts. He is responsible for overseeing the company's production team and ensuring the smooth operation of the company's production processes.

LAUREN THOMSON (Public Relations Director) joined the company in 2014 and has been instrumental in the company's public relations efforts. She is responsible for overseeing the company's public relations team and ensuring the smooth operation of the company's public relations processes.

CLAIRE LAWSON (Box Office Manager) joined the company in 2015 and has been instrumental in the company's box office operations. She is responsible for overseeing the company's box office staff and ensuring the smooth operation of the company's box office processes.

MICHAEL HARRIS (Executive Chairman) joined the company in 2016 and has been instrumental in the company's strategic planning and leadership. He is responsible for overseeing the company's strategic planning and ensuring the smooth operation of the company's strategic processes.

BRADLEY RICHARDS (Artistic Director) joined the company in 2017 and has been instrumental in the company's artistic leadership. He is responsible for overseeing the company's artistic team and ensuring the smooth operation of the company's artistic processes.

AARON DAVIS (Associate Artistic Director) joined the company in 2018 and has been instrumental in the company's artistic leadership. He is responsible for overseeing the company's artistic team and ensuring the smooth operation of the company's artistic processes.

JULIANNE QUICK (Director of Development) joined the company in 2019 and has been instrumental in the company's fundraising efforts. She is responsible for overseeing the company's development team and ensuring the smooth operation of the company's fundraising processes.

RACHEL GREEN (Executive Director) joined the company in 2020 and has been instrumental in the company's leadership and management. She is responsible for overseeing the company's leadership and management team and ensuring the smooth operation of the company's leadership and management processes.

LOUIS W. WRIGHT (Chairman of the Board) joined the company in 2021 and has been instrumental in the company's strategic planning and leadership. He is responsible for overseeing the company's strategic planning and ensuring the smooth operation of the company's strategic processes.
American Conservatory Theater

AURON'S MUSIC

continued from page 19

to Pierre, by nature a mystical and enchanting play. Work on Steve Carter's rendering of the Medea myth (what Ambush calls "those theater") began with a prodigious amount of research and input by a small army of local consultants, designers, and experts in various aspects of Caribbean life, from dance to African religious rituals. The initial challenge was to present a Caribbean setting that was specific to any particular island, but nonetheless retained the unifying qualities of spirituality, history, and folklore. Ambush cautions, "Our work with Pierre was not improvisation. We really had to go in search of a culture. With the magic of Carter's word's already in place and a staggering volume of knowledge in hand, we could then start to shape the world of the play. It's kind of like a band jamming once they know how to play their instruments."

Jarring is the department of Periguy's musical director and composer, Wayne Wallace. A Bay Area trombonist and keyboardist whose list of musical credits include work with Sheila E and Herbie Hancock, Whitney Houston, Chris Issac, Tina Turner, and The Temptations, Wallace was enlisted by Ambush to investigate the world of calypso and Caribbean rhythms and to compose Periguy's musical elements — what would become the play's twin ingredient.

Using the early music of Trinidad as a point of departure (since calypso originated there), Wallace developed a dance of different rhythms to expand and experiment with once in rehearsal with the music and gave us a scientific definition of calypso.

Wallace describes calypso "as a relatively straightforward kind of folk music with usually three or four chords played either in four-four or six-eight time. It's a great mix of many different Caribbean sounds that hasn't changed much since its beginning. And, like all folk music, it was defined, to a certain extent, by the repression of colonialism, because the slaves were forbidden to use drums and had to create instruments to get around that. Its emphasis has always been on the words, on rhythmic sensibilities. That's the beauty of the music's style: it mixes English, patois, French, and other languages all together. The early calypso-musicians wanted to master language and harness it — particularly as a weapon. Wallace is quick to add that Periguy is — to borrow Ambush's term — a fusion of music, speech, and dance. This is not like American musical theater's heavy reliance on songs as specific building blocks. Beets has got some truly fantastic, versatile, and accomplished artists working together to give this production its full peaks."

Ambush concludes, "The telling brilliance of stevie's play is its willingness to extend a greeting toward the imagination, which is fertile and unconfined. At the same time, it's firmly rooted in the history and traditions of two different hemispheres and time periods." These qualities demand a composed approach of substantial left-brain research effort and right-brain creative free-fall. Which is just how Ambush likes to work anyway. — Tim Fisher

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American Conservatory Theater

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Administrative Offices
A.C.T.'s administrative and Conservatory offices are located at 30 Grant Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94108 (415) 554-2200.

BOX OFFICE INFORMATION
A.C.T.'s Central Box Office
Location: 406 Geary Street at Mason, next to the Geary Theater; one block west of Union Square.

Box Office Hours: 12 p.m. - 8 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday, 12 p.m. - 6 p.m. Sunday and Monday.

Ticket Information/Charge by Phone: (415) 479-2427. Use your Visa, MasterCard, or American Express card.

Box Offices at the Stage Door Theater, Marines Memorial Theater and Orpheum Theater: Full-service box offices will be open 90 minutes before each performance in these venues.

BASIS: A.C.T. tickets are available at all Bay/TM centers, including The Warehouse and Tower Records Video.

STAGE DOOR / MARINES MEMORIAL / ORPHEUM THEATERS

Stage Door
Ticket Prices: Previews...

For A.C.T. performances, tickets are strongly discouraged.

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American Conservatory Theater

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

STAGE DOOR / MARINES MEMORIAL / ORPHEUM THEATERS

Previews:

Orchestra/Loge: $48
Balcony: $39
Gallery: $30
Sunday/Thursday/Wednesday/Thursday:

Orchestra/Loge: $50
Balcony: $45
Gallery: $42
\nFriday/Saturday:

Orchestra/Loge: $30
Balcony: $29
Gallery: $28

Special Group Discounts: For groups of 15 or more, call Linda Graham at (415) 554-7005 for special prices.

Loyalty Cards: Loyalty cards will be accepted only if there is an appropriate level of support.

Mail Line: Call (415) 479-2228 to request advance notice of shows, events, and subscription information.

Gift Certificates: Give A.C.T. as a gift, to a friend, relative, co-worker, or client. Gift certificates are perfect for every celebration.

Discounts: Half-price tickets are frequently available on the day of performances at TIX on Union Square in San Francisco. Half-price Student and Senior Rush tickets are available at the theater box office 30 minutes prior to curtain. Matinee Senior Rush price is $M. All rush tickets are subject to availability. one ticket per valid I.D.

Ticket Policy: All sales are final, and there are no refunds. Only current subscribers enjoy free ticket exchange privileges. Last ticket insurance. If at the last minute you are unable to attend, you may make a contribution by donating your tickets to A.C.T. The value of donated tickets will be acknowledged by mail. Tickets for performances already past cannot be considered as a donation.

Wheelchair Access: The Stage Door, Marines Memorial Theater, and the Orpheum Theater are accessible to persons in wheelchairs.

The Soundcraft Listening System is designed to provide clear, amplified sound throughout the auditorium. Headsets are available free of charge in the lobby before performance.

Photographs and Recordings of A.C.T. performances are strictly forbidden.

Smoking is not permitted in the auditorium.

Beverage: If you carry a paper, beverage, watch, telephone, or alarm, please make sure that it is set to the “off” position while you are in the theater to avoid disturbing the performance. Alternatively, you may leave it with the House Manager, along with your seat number, so you can be notified if you are called.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

A.C.T. Perspectives: Six subscription series will be held from 7 to 9 p.m. on selected Monday evenings throughout the season, featuring in-depth panel discussions and performances demonstrations by scholars and artists from all over the country. Topics range from aspects of the season’s productions to the general relations of theater and arts to American culture. The symposia, moderated by A.C.T. directors, are free of charge and open to everyone. For information, call 479-2228.

Our Life Flight Helicopter can get to people 150 miles away within an hour, putting most of Northern California within reach of our Stroke Center.

The Stroke Center at Stanford

Our Life Flight helicopter can get to people 150 miles away within an hour, putting most of Northern California within reach of our Stroke Center.

The Stroke Center at Stanford...
FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Administrative Offices
A.C.T.'s administrative and Conservatory offices are located at 30 Grant Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94106. (415) 964-9200.

Box Office Information
A.C.T.'s General Box Office
Location: 410 Geary Street at Mason, next to the Geary Theater, one block west of Union Square.

Box Office Hours: 12 p.m. - 8 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday, 12 p.m. - 6 p.m. Sunday and Monday.

Ticket Information/Change by Phone: (415) 749-2228. Use your Visa, MasterCard, or American Express card.

Box Office at the Stage Door Theater, Marines Memorial Theater and Operaum Theater: Full-service box offices will be open 30 minutes before each performance in these venues. BAS: A.C.T. tickets are available at all Bay/AMC centers, including The Wharehouse and Tower Records Video.

STAGE DOOR / MARINES MEMORIAL / OPERHUM THEATRE

Previews
Orchestra/Lobby $33
Balcony $46
Orchestra/Lobby $41
Sunday/Thursday/Wednesday/Thursday $33
Balcony $46
Orchestra/Lobby $46
Friday/Saturday $33
Balcony $46
Orchestra/Lobby $46
Balcony $46
Group Discounts: For groups of 15 or more, call Linda Graham at (415) 346-7005 for special prices.

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MAILING LIST: Call (415) 749-2228 to request advance notice of shows, events, and subscription information.

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Becoming: If you carry a paper, beeper, watch, telephone, or alarm, please make sure that it is set to the "on" position while you are in the audience to disturb the performance. Alternatively, you may leave it with the House Manager, along with your name and number, so that we can notify you if an audience after.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS
A.C.T. Perspectives A six-week series series to be held from 7 to 9 p.m. on selected Tuesday evenings throughout the season, featuring in-depth panel discussions and performances demonstrations by scholars and artists from all over the country. Topics range from aspects of the season's productions to the general relation of theater and the arts to American culture. The symposia, moderated by A.C.T. directors, are free of charge and open to everyone. For information, call 749-2228.

Speak Out: Information after show discussions concerning issues and ideas raised by the audience's play, scheduled throughout the season after selected Sunday matinees. The discussions, moderated by A.C.T. directors, are free of charge and open to everyone.

For information call 749-2228.

A.C.T. Previews Presented before the Tuesday evening previews for all productions except A Christmas Carol, in the same theater as the evening's play, from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Doors open at 5 p.m.

School Matinees: Matinees are offered at 1 p.m. to elementary, secondary, and college groups. Thousands of students attend these performances each season. Tickets are specially priced at just $5. For information, please call Jane Totten, Student Matinee Coordinator at 749-2228.

Conversations: The A.C.T. Conversatory offers classes, training, and advanced theater study. Its Young Conversatory program offers training for students between the ages of 9 and 16. Call 749-2228 for a free brochure.

Costume Rental: A large collection of costumes, ranging from hand-made period garments to modern sportswear is available for rental by schools, theaters, production companies, and individuals. Call (415) 749-2228 for more information.

A.C.T. Venues

MARINES MEMORIAL THEATER

The Marines Memorial Theater is located at 410 Sutter Street at Mason. Conveniently located within walking distance of the Stage Door Theater, the Marines Memorial Theater is close to many fine restaurants near Union Square. Ask our Box Office for suggestions.

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Our Life Flight helicopter can get to people 150 miles away within an hour, putting most of Northern California within much of our Strike Zone.

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In a category of automobile where the machine so often sedulously monopolizes the attention, there is one luxury sedan that's surprisingly sensitive to the needs of its driver. \textsuperscript{8} The Mazda 929. \textsuperscript{8} Thanks to an available Solar Powered Ventilation System that helps cool the cabin while it's parked, the 929 makes you feel welcome from the moment you get in. \textsuperscript{8} Driver's and passenger-side air bags are ready to help protect you on the road. \textsuperscript{8} Why, it even remembers to defog the windows when you turn on the windshield wipers. \textsuperscript{8} Of course, the 929 also offers the unflustered performance that discerning drivers expect from a fine car. The engine, with 193 horsepower, is generous. And the suspension thoughtfully adapts to cope with the alternating demands of monotonous interstate or treacherous, serpentine back roads. \textsuperscript{8} So before you purchase a luxury sedan, we urge you to give some serious thought to the Mazda 929. After all, it would do the same for you.

\textbf{mazda}

\textbf{IT JUST FEELS RIGHT.}
It uses sunlight to cool you.
Air to protect you.
And it's always thinking of you.

The Mazda 929

In a category of automobile where the machine so often selfishly monopolizes the attention, there is one luxury sedan that's surprisingly sensitive to the needs of its driver. 

The Mazda 929.

Thanks to an available Solar Powered Ventilation System that helps cool the cabin while it's parked, the 929 makes you feel welcome from the moment you get in. 

Drivers' and passengers'-side air bags are ready to help protect you on the road. Why, it even remembers to defog the windows when you turn on the windshield wipers. 

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United States | Europe | Latin America | Canada | Caribbean | Mexico | Japan
Playwright Paul Rudnick lives in a small Greenwich Village brownstone, in an apartment that once belonged to the actor John Barrymore. We could talk about Barrymore if there is a hill in the conversation, I think to myself as I climb to the top floor to interview Rudnick. But conversation with Paul Rudnick doesn’t flag. He is never at a loss for a pithy one-liner or a clever bow. Watch. Imagine a Woody Allen with a gym body, a Woody Allen who is gay. Check out Rudnick’s new play, Jeffrey at the Westwood Playhouse in Los Angeles and Theatre on the Square in San Francisco, and you’ll see what I mean.

A runaway hit since it opened in New York at the beginning of this year, Jeffrey is a comedy about a young, gay man who vows to give up sex because of AIDS. In a series of sketches, the celibate hero accrues nervously through contemporary gay Manhattan trying to run away from sex, love and commitment until he falls in love with an HIV-positive man. Part screwball comedy, part romance, part wicked satire, Jeffrey is an attempt to come to terms with the plague through laughter.

Who is this man who challenges us to laugh in the face of AIDS? The apartment I have just walked into reflects a decidedly eccentric taste. I figure it’s a good place to start. “I saw this ad in The New York Times which said ‘medieval duplex,’ and the real estate agent said Barrymore lived there in 1917,” Rudnick says. “I thought that was a good omen.”

by Gerard Raymond
All About Paul

Rudnick's hit play Jeffrey wows audiences out West

Playwright Paul Rudnick lives in a small Greenwich Village brownstone, in an apartment that once belonged to the actor John Barrymore. We could talk about Barrymore if there is a hell in the conversation, I think to myself as I climb to the top floor to interview Rudnick. But conversation with Paul Rudnick doesn't flag. He is never at a loss for a pithy one-liner or a clever bawd word. Imagine a Woody Allen with a gym body, a Woody Allen who is gay. Check out Rudnick's new play, Jeffrey at the Westwood Playhouse in Los Angeles and Theatre on the Square in San Francisco, and you'll see what I mean.

A runaway hit since it opened in New York at the beginning of this year, Jeffrey is a comedy about a young, gay man who vows to give up sex because of AIDS. In a series of sketches, the celibate hero stumbles nervously through contemporary gay Manhattan trying to run away from sex, love and commitment until he falls in love with an HIV-positive man. Part screwball comedy, part romance, part wicked satire, Jeffrey is an attempt to come to terms with the plague through laughter.

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by Gerard Raymond

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You get the only twin-cam, 24-valve, 190-horse, V6 engine in its class, packed inside an exceptionally quiet, well-appointed 4-wheel drive which the editors of Automobile Magazine called "more spacious and luxurious than a Jeep Grand Cherokee; more sporting to drive than the Ford Explorer." Put another way, you get nothing short of a truly remarkable automobile.

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A Little Dinner Music.

Left to right: Patrick Kerr, Edward Holbert, and John Michael Higgins at LA's Westwood Playhouse in the role they created in the New York production of Jeffrey.

The soft notes of the piano mix with the splash of a dozen fountains and together drift up through a 21-story mosaic atrium. It's the perfect complement to San Francisco's most romantic restaurant, the Pacific Grill. Join us for a celebration of the cuisine of California cuisine and enjoy complimentary parking and a delicious pre-theater three-course dinner from our regular menu for just $99 per person. This season, it's raining in the Pacific Grill and a destination as attractive as The Pan Pacific Hotel itself. For reservations, please call 415-777-8000.

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John Michael Higgins created the role of Jeffrey in the New York production.

John Michael Higgins created the role of Jeffrey in the New York production.

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had met two kindred spirits, playwright Wendy Wasserstein and costume designer William Ivey Long, who in time, were also going to make big on Broadway. They remain his close friends today.

When he was growing up, Rudnick's parents had tried to impress on him the value of the dollar and the importance of hard work. Their efforts backfired. The young Rudnick had become convinced that he would rather ‘die’ than have a job. Of course, this severely limited his options in the real world. In college, he couldn’t get into an heir to a great fortune because of my parent’s selfishness — their refusal to be Rockefelleries,” he quips. Supporting himself with various odd jobs, Rudnick decided that the only profession left open to him was writing.

He tried his hand at journalism, but his skills were limited and he turned to trouble. “I would do interviews and if the person wasn’t saying anything that was interesting or pithy — no fabulous quote or great story — there was no one there up.” Realizing that this was a bad habit for a reporter, he turned to fiction and the theater. Now he could invent as he pleased, breaking from real life when ever necessary.

His first play, Poor Little Lamb, is a quirky comedy about a woman who tries to break her way into the New York theater. The all-male singing group, produced off-Broadway in 1982, starring the then-unknown Bacon and Bronson Pinchot, it garnered enough critical acclaim to bring it to the attention of Hollywood, although a movie never materialized. Two very funny novels followed: Secret Lives, which was published in 1986, and a satirical take on the New York club scene featuring a young man who has never done a day's work in his life (sounds familiar?), I'll Take It (1986), is about a group of computer programmers inspired by Rudnick's mother and two aunts.

In due course, Rudnick's historic apartment became grist to his creative mill. In his 1994 play, I Hate Hamlet, a young soap star who is playing Hamlet in Central Park, moves into, where else? Barrow's apartment in the Village. No wonder that through all this, as if we were sitting in stage in I Hate Hamlet, Needless to say, Rudnick has had to improve on real life. In his play, the ghost of the celebrated thespian suddenly materializes in his former apartment to give the soap star some pointers in the classical acting tradition.

I Hate Hamlet, Rudnick finally got his name up in lights on a Broadway marquee, but it turned out to be a very bizarre experience. Talking about it now, Rudnick sees the humor of the whole episode, and I'll bet it will show up someday in one of his literary confec tions. What happened was that Neil Williamson, the British actor playing Barrow in I Hate Hamlet, apparently didn’t like the play. He made up his own

and the play has since been produced all over the world. Two years later the play went back with his most successful play to date.

So we go to Jeffrey. I ask Rudnick, who has been openly gay from the beginning of his career, about the significance of his writing on a gay theme. "I always had gay characters, but this is the first time that I took the community as a whole subject," he replies. He says he also wanted to celebrate the "theoretically rich group" afforded by the gay community. "It's an extra plus when you are speaking to people about their immediate concerns." But, I point out, no one had quite presented the health crisis in these terms before. In the play's most quoted lines, a character says "think of AIDS as the guest who won't leave, the one we all hate. It's still our party". Rudnick agrees that his approach was unusual, and speculates that Jeffrey could not have been written in the first decade of the AIDS crisis. "What are all these questions, aside from the medical ones, about how we live with this particular nightmare, and especially how we can achieve any kind of romance or hope for good simple cheer with this stuff going on."

In an article he wrote for The New York Times shortly before the premiere, Rudnick acknowledged that making wisecracks about AIDS could be viewed as being in the worst, possible taste. But, he wrote, AIDS is not the end of gay life or gay laughter. "If people can't giggle in hospitals or at memorials, all they can do is weep." There are no sacred cows in Jeffrey. Rudnick pokes fun at AIDS fundraising, self-help gurus and memorial services at which gays cruise each other.

Rudnick tells me that he was very grateful when friends who were sick confided in him. "I think many of the people with AIDS refuse to see themselves as victims. Sometimes other people, even with the best of intentions, "You don't know what it's like. It's already dead." Rudnick confesses that he enjoyed standing at the back of the theater to
A Little Dinner Music.


The self-centered piano man with the sphinct of a dozen fountains and together, dolled up in a 21-story moonsuit, is the perfect complement to San Francisco's most romantic restaurant... the Pacific Grill. Join us for a celebration of the city's best. The show and enjoy complementary parking and a delicious pre-theater three-course dinner from our regular menu for just $29 per person. This season, it's raining at the Pacific Grill; a destination as attractive as The Pacific Pacific itself. For reservations call 415.777-8000.

THE PAN PACIFIC HOTEL
San Francisco
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nfling and made unscheduled exits during his scenes. When, on one occasion, he attached another actor with a sword, it made headlines in the local tabloids. Rudnick's Broadway debut was effectively upstaged, and the show closed abruptly.

"People told me, Oh Paul, this will be a wonderful chapter for your memory. I was worried that they were getting tired of the lifeboats from the Titanic," said Rudnick with a laugh. In fact the debacle actually helped Rudnick to change careers. He found himself with work offers for both stage and screen, and the play has since been produced all over the world. Two years later the playwright was back with his most successful work to date.

So we get to Jeffery. I ask Rudnick, who has been openly gay from the beginning of his career, about the significance of his writing on a gay theme. "I always had gay characters, but this is the first time that I took the community as a whole subject," he replies. He says he also wanted to celebrate the "theatrical richness of our community" afforded by the gay community. "It's an extra plus when you are speaking to people about their immediate concerns. But, I point out, no one had quite presented the health crisis in terms before. In the play's most quoted lines, a character says 'think of AIDS as the guest who won't leave, the one we all hate. It's still our party,' Rudnick agrees that his approach was unusual, and speculates that Jeffery could not have been written in the first decade of the AIDS crisis. "People are all these questions, aside from the medical ones, about how we live with this particular nightmare, and especially how we can achieve any kind of romance or hope for good simple cheer with this stuff going on."

In an article he wrote for The New York Times shortly before the opening, Rudnick acknowledged that making gags about AIDS could be seen as being in the worst, possible taste. But, he wrote, AIDS is not the colour of gay life or gay laughter. "If people can't giggle in hospitals or at memorials, all can they can do is weep. There are no sacred cows in Jeffery. Rudnick pokes fun at AIDS fundraisers, self-help groups and memorial services at which gays cruise each other. Rudnick tells me that he was very gratified when friends who were sick were able to get help. It's a complex thing, and the kinds of people with AIDS refuse to see themselves as victims. Sometimes other people, even with the best of intentions, are made to feel that their friends are already dead." Rudnick confesses that he enjoyed standing at the back of the theater to
gauge how the play was doing. Audience in New York, both gay and straight, respond to the play with whoops of laughter, and most of the city's critics concur that Jeffrey is the funniest play in town.

Rudnick believes that the "essential romantic comedy dilemma" of our time is one of love and sex in the age of AIDS: "Jeffrey is probably the first old-fashioned romantic comedy in which an HIV positive person falls in love. True to its romantic inclinations, the play begins with slides of Manhattan accompanied by Gershwin music and ends with a couple on the top of the Empire State building, kissing against a cardboard skyline and a big cartoon moon. It's your standard boy meets boy, boy leaves boy, boy gets boy back story. And it takes place in the Manhattan the young Rudnick dreamt about growing up in New Jersey. "I wanted the play to have this fairy tale romance in the center of it and I wanted to use Manhattan for its enchantment in the way Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers and Woody Allen have used it."

But there are destructors. I remind Rudnick that even while finding the play funny, some people have questioned his use of age-old gay stereotypes: an interior decorator and his simple-minded chorus-boy lover; a randy, gay, Catholic priest; a caretaker and a bartender. For the first time in our conversation he doesn't come up with a wisecrack, this is obviously a criticism that galls him. He defends himself by saying that it is "exhilarating" to write from a gay perspective those same characters that might have been taken figures twenty years ago. "If you are writing from the inside, you find that they are very real human beings and have genuine strength," he says, warming to the subject.

"I think those people - the interior designers, florists, costume designers, pet grocers, and others are whoever everybody thinks of as the silliest of sissies - they are the ones who have done most of the marching, most of the protesting and they define the gay world," Rudnick continues. "To suddenly ignore them or act as if they were the Uncle Toms or Aunt Jennians of our world is shocking to me. I wonder at those critics who seem to prefer gay characters who are as straight as possible. That's a far more vicious stereotype - a kind of bland, middle-of-the-road, all-American decency. If I was a straight person I would be offended to be portrayed as that dull! So I think asking to have gay roles as such straight arrows is just a big mistake. And it sure isn't funny."

I decide to go a step further and ask Rudnick whether Jeffrey might have been popular because it is safe. Is it because a general audience only sees gay people as jesters? "In most gay projects there tends to be that moment where there is a soap opera chord or a drum roll and you see two men kissing on the same pictures."

or having sex. One of the things I wanted with Jeffrey was to have the guys kissing within the first five seconds. There is so much open sexuality and gay romance in the play, so far from saying we are harmless jesters, it says we are completely sexual, powerful, and very funny people. I don't think that's safe. I think it's more subversive. Because it is funny, people are disarmed and almost accept it without knowing. I haven't been to many plays about wild optimistic gay romances, and I am very pleased to have written one."

However you read Jeffrey, the bottom line is that it is funny. Like the playwright himself, I have only to ask my next question and Rudnick is babbling again. I mention the recent revelations that Libby Wazman-Gelmer, film critic at large for Premiere magazine is none other than our playwright, Mrs. Wazman-Gelmer's regular columnist, with her idiomatic film reviews peppered with caustic comments about movie stars and anecdotes about her family and gay friends. Are the comic highlights of the magazine. "She is a goddess, a wonderful and distinct creature and I am but a humble man unto her," Rudnick exclaims. "I don't see why she should be tagged with the burden of being identified with this hack gay writer, when she is clearly a prose stylist far beyond my gifts," he continues.

Even if he claims he's not in Goddess Libby's league, Rudnick's fame has spread to Hollywood. His first effort there however was not a success. He wrote the original script for Sister Act, but it was junked when Whoopi Goldberg came on board. Replacing Bette Midler. He also did some uncredited revisions on The Addams Family. But with the sequel, Addams Family Values opening this Thanksgiving, Rudnick will come into his own as a screenwriter. It's easy to see how Rudnick the ex-suburbanite must have enjoyed chronicling this most wholesome of American families. "The parents are permissive, the children are outrageous, the house is a deliciously happy wreck, and no one is ever purified," he says gleefully. We are running out of time now, so I ask Rudnick about his next project. It's a new play due summer 1985, but he tells me he won't talk about it this early for fear of jinxing it. I subsequently learn that it's titled The Naked Truth, and focuses on a New York socialite who wants to shut down a gallery because it is exhibiting allegedly obscene photographs. As I leave Rudnick's apartment, I realize that journalists who interview this playwright won't need to make up things about their subject. For the past one and a half hours he has given me the Paul Rudnick Show, and there were just about as many laughs here as there are in Jeffrey.□

The Toronto skyline is dominated by the CN Tower, tallest freestanding structure in north, from front, the spectacular lawns Sir Winston at the magnificent new Princess of Wales Theatre which has one of the largest stages in North America.
 gauge how the play was doing. Audience in New York, both gay and straight, respond to the play with whoops of laughter, and most of the city's critics concur that Jeffrey is the funniest play in town.

Rudnick believes that the "essential romantic comedy dilemma" of our time is one of love and sex in the age of AIDS. Jeffrey is probably the first old-fashioned romantic comedy in which an HIV positive person falls in love. True to its romantic inclinations, the play begins with slides of Manhattan accompanied by Gershon music and ends with a couple on top of the Empire State Building, kissing against a cardboard skyline and a big cartoon moon. It's your standard boy meets boy, boy loves boy, boy gets boy back story. And it takes place in the Manhattan the young Rudnick dreamt about growing up in New Jersey. "I wanted the play to have this fairy tale romance in the center of it and I wanted to use Manhattan for its enchantment in the way Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers and Woody Allen have used it." But there are detractors. I remind Rudnick that while even finding the play funny, some people have questioned his use of age-old gay stereotypes and interior decorator and his simple-minded chorus boy lover, a randy, gay, Catholic priest; a caterer and a bartender. For the first time in our conversation he doesn't come up with a wisecrack, this is obviously a criticism that galls him. He defends himself saying that it is "exhilarating" to write from a gay perspective those same characters that might have been taken figures twenty years ago. If you are writing from the inside, you find that they are very real human beings and have genuine strength," he says, warming to the subject. "I think those people — the interior designers, florists, costume designers, pet groomers, and others who are the last of the dandies — are the ones who have done most of the marching, most of the protesting and they define the gay world," Rudnick continues. "To suddenly ignore them or act as if they were the Uncle Toms or Aunt Jenns of our world is shocking to me. I wonder at those critics who seem to prefer gay characters who are as straight as possible. That's a far more vicious stereotype — a kind of bland, middle-of-the-road, all-American decency. If I was a straight person I would be offended to be portrayed as that dull! So I think asking to have gay shows as such straight arrows is just a big mistake. And I sure isn't funny." I decide to go a step further and ask Rudnick whether Jeffrey might have been more popular because it is safe. Is it a hit because a general audience only sees gay people as jesters? "In most gay projects there tends to be that moment where there is a soap opera chord or a drum roll and you see two men kissing or having sex. One of the things I wanted with Jeffrey was to have the guys kissing within the first five seconds. There is so much openness about sex and gay romance in the play, so that far from saying we are harmless jesters, it says we are completely sexual, powerful, and very funny people. I don't think that's safe. I think it's more subversive. Because it is funny, people are disarmed and almost accept it without knowing. I haven't been to many plays about wild optimistic gay romances, and I am very pleased to have written one." However you read Jeffrey, the bottom line is that it is funny. Like the playwright himself, I have only to ask my next question and Rudnick is babbling again. I mention the recent revelations that Libby Wacon-Gelmer, film critic-at-large for Premiere magazine is none other than our playwright. Mrs. Wacon-Gelmer's regular columns, with her idiosyncratic film reviews peppered with casual comments about movie stars and anecdotes about her family and gay friends, are the comic highlights of the magazine. "She is a goddess, a wonderful and distinct creature and I am but a humble mant troubles," Rudnick exclaims. "I don't see why she should be tagged with the burden of being identified with this hack gay writer, when she is clearly a prose stylist far beyond my gifts," he continues.

Even if the claims she's not in Goddess Libby's league, Rudnick's fame has spread to Hollywood. His first effort there, however, was not a success. He wrote the original script for Sister Act, but it was junked when Whoopi Goldberg came on board replacing Bette Midler. He also did some uncredited revisions on The Addams Family, but with the sequel, Addams Family Values opening this Thanksgiving, Rudnick will come into his own as a screenwriter. It's easy to see how Rudnick the ex-suburbanite must have enjoyed chronicling this most unorthodox of American families. "The parents are permacious, the children are outrageous, the house is a deliciously happy wreck, and no one is ever punished," he says gleefully.

We are running out of time now, so I ask Rudnick about his next project. It's a new play due summer 1984, but he tells me he won't talk about it this early for fear of jinxing it. I subsequently learnt that it's titled The Naked Truth, and focuses on a New York socialite who wants to shut down a gallery because it is exhibiting allegedly obscene photographs. As I leave Rudnick's apartment, I realize that journalists who interview this playwright won't need to make up things about their subject. For the past one and a half hours I have given me the Paul Rudnick Show, and there were just as many laughs here as there are in Jeffrey.

The Toronto Alfie is dominated by the CN Tower, tallest freestanding structure in north, York. The spectacular fall for Sun was at the magnificent new Princess of Wales Theatre, which was one of the largest stages in North America.

by Albert Warson
8 million visitors from outside the Greater Toronto Area fill many of these seats every year, perhaps a third of them from the United States. While Americans tend to gravitate to hit productions from Broadway or London’s West End, they should also notice that Canadian playwrights are busy at their craft. More than two-thirds of Toronto’s productions in the 1991-1992 season were in fact premieres of original Canadian plays. American visitors have the choice of familiar productions or they can be somewhat more adventurous and see Canadian dramas, comedy and musicals that illuminate the national psyche, even if some of the humor and dialogue can turn mystifyingly parochial at times.

Two new theaters opening in Toronto within five months of one another are something to celebrate. One of them is the 2,000-seat Princess of Wales Theatre, built specifically to mount a $12 million flashy spectacular Miss Saigon—outside of New York and Chicago the only other place to see it in North America.

It is set to run for at least two years from its opening last May. Whether it is Madame Butterfly revisited or the real Puccini opera, the stage is one of the largest on this continent (60 feet deep and 85 feet wide), cavernous enough for grand opera and the pit deep enough for a 75-piece orchestra. Even with those expansions, no seat is further than 95 feet from the stage. Co-producer Cameron Mackintosh describes the theater as "something more than a pastiche of Old Victorian buildings". They are, he added, "the modern equivalent of great old-fashioned theaters."

Having bought, restored, renovated and operated the 1,500-seat Edwardian gem of a Royal Alexandra Theatre a few doors away for the past 30 years and the 1,000-seat Old Vic Theatre in London for the past 10 (after outbidding Andrew Lloyd Webber), impresario impresario Ed Mirvish and his son David are too performance-wise for the stage to be dark very long. There is after all, an $82 million investment in the theater to recoup and their reputation as wildly successful entrepreneurs to preserve.

David Mirvish’s previous incarnation
ica. If dining is entertainment, the city's 5,000 restaurants alone entertain diners whose tastes range from everything from "American" to West Indian.

In a more traditional cultural sense, there is The Royal Ontario Museum, one of the continent's five most popular museums, and other museums, 100 music venues and a like number of art galleries and exhibition spaces, including the recently expanded Art Gallery of Ontario, with a collection of 15,000 paintings and the world's largest collection of Henry Moore sculpture, along with an Ontario Science Centre, a genuine British-style castle — the list is long and varied.

The city's cosmopolitan flavor has not escaped the notice of movie and television producers. Toronto is second only to Hollywood and New York for film location (also doubling for Boston, New York, Tokyo, Washington, Chicago, Philadelphia, Vienna and Tehran) and commercial production in North America. The Festival of Festivals in September is the second largest film festival in the world, although the volume is no guarantee of unforgettable moments, even for the most enthusiastic cineastes.

After London and New York, Toronto has the world's largest theater industry in the English-speaking world. It numbers more than 120 companies and 20,000 theater seats in 44 venues (compared to two live theaters in 1962).

They range from sometimes uncomfortable but ingeniously converted fireballs, factories and Victorian mansions, church spaces, faithfully restored vaudeville houses and Dorothy Chandler-like complexes. Often the theater is brilliant. Just as often it is tolerable. Too often it is execrable. A bit of research, not excluding picking up The Globe and Mail for the best theatrical criticism, doesn't hurt.

Whatever the theater venue, the market has to be bigger than the immediate area for them to survive. It is. More than 3 million visitors from outside the Greater Toronto Area fill many of those seats every year, perhaps a third of them from the United States.

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as an art gallery owner is recalled dramatically in the more than 10,000 square feet of original mural painting by Frank Stella (whom he represented) lavished on the lobbies. His swirling, color-field abstract murals also illuminate the auditorium ceiling dome and enliven the exterior of the 120-foot high fly tower backing on to a dra street slope. They reflect, says Stella "the way people mill around...bustling and active, like a crowd."

The least visible, most dynamic aspect of the theater is a room check-full of computer-driven, high tech wizardry that, for this show, activates 70 special effects, 250 prep changes and 410 lighting instruments culminating in the iconographic helicopter landing and takeoff simulation. Visually and dynamically the production owes more to the bells and whistles staging of the London original than the one on Broadway. Of the acoustics, the musical’s composer Claude-Michel Schönberg enthuses: “You never know why you have a sound like that. The Opera Bastille in Paris doesn’t have it. It’s a marvel.”

No less miraculous is the Mirvish knack for bringing successful productions, often Broadway musicals, to their Royal Alexandra stage. Five Guys Named Moe to November 6 and Crazy For You (December 5 to January 22, 1984), are no exception.

The two “royal” theaters are engulfed within these two blocks in restaurants seating thousands of diners in search of the most familiar and least exotic cuisines. The Mirvishes’ neighborhood presence is fortified by their seating for 2,400 diners in 10 magnificent dining rooms on two floors in buildings.

Some of Toronto’s more gastronomically appealing restaurants are at hand, as are CN Tower, tallest freestanding structure on earth, and the 55,000-seat fully retractable-roofed SkyDome, both of which boom overpoweringly a few blocks away. With landmarks like that, it is well nigh impossible to miss the theaters and restaurants.

And they didn’t have enough to give over with the glitzy new Princess of Wales Theatre, $50 million North York Performing Arts Centre is opening this fall. It faces exactly due north and several miles away in the adjoining suburban city of that name. It’s on Yonge Street, Toronto’s main street (and the world’s longest street, which ends, curiously, on North Dakota).

The 1,800-seat theater opens October 5 with Harold Prince’s resurrection of Showboat, the interpersonal musical by Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein II, that has occasioned some local controversy over the opening “niggers all work on the Mississippi” etc. Bibles. Needless to say there have been changes, although Jerome and Oscar might have been puzzled about the uproar over racial intolerance they were trying to expose. Not to be cast into any cultural shackles, the Centre’s single-balcony, 1,000-seat recital hall will be inaugurated November 22, 1983 with a special gala performance by be by lyric soprano and opera Dea Dame Kiri Te Kanawa. The following evening, Itzhak Perlman and Finchera Zukerman, in a rare duo performance, will launch an overlapping series of concerts to mid-June 1984.

They are of an international diversity and celebrity unprecedented in Toronto’s history: Roy Thomson Hall, Toronto’s premier 2,500-seat concert hall established in 1981 and home to the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, looks to be seriously upgraded, but has a 1969/74 season of its own musical high spots. Toronto’s classical music menu over the next several months is going to be exceptionally filling and exceedingly rich.

While the City of North York owns the Centre, it is operated by The Live Entertainment Corporation of Canada, headed by Garth Drabinsky, who recently ran Odeon Odeum Corporation and built its 200-movie theaters across North America. His archvillany of the Mirvishes peaked when they beat him to the rights for Miss Saigon.

Drabinsky’s Livent, as it’s known, spent $20 million restoring the turn-of-the-century 2,200-seat Pantages Theatre, also on Yonge Street but right downtown where Toronto originated, to its original lustre. He has consoled himself with the spectacularly successful Phantom of the Opera that opened at the Pantages in September 1981 and closes at the end of this month, and Rice of the Spider Woman, the Livent production that swept up theatrical awards in Canada and the United States.

About a block south on Yonge Street are the world’s only stacked theaters. The 1,500-seat Elgin, all burgundy and gold leaf formality, is at ground level; the 1,000-seat Winter Garden, rustically done up with trees, tiles, and real leaves — is on top. They were restored over two years at a cost of $29 million and opened in 1989, with a Canadian version of Cats. The cultural fare is truly eclectic — from smaller scale Canadian Open Opera Company productions (opera sung in Italian, German, Czech, French, all with English surtitles, (from November 4 to February 12, 1994) to a new musical based on Napoleon’s life in that venue, opening in March. Details however, are still sketchy.

The opera company’s main course can be sampled at the 2,800-seat O’Keefe Centre, more variety show/music hall than opera house, near historic Union Station and Royal York Hotel, both worth a quick look for magnificent restoration and synergistic function. Carmen (to October 9), Madame Butterfly, La Traviata (in April, 1994) in conjunction with other standards from the opera repertoire will be performed.

With vampire themes enjoying such considerable vogue these days, the opera company is staging the world premiere of Nosferatu, a.k.a. Dracula (December 8 to December 12, 1983) at another venue, and without Gary Oldman. Then there is the Opera in Concert production of Der Hampe (February 5 and 6) and at the St. Lawrence Theatre next door to the O’Keefe Centre, for those not yet satiated with the perverse theme of the blood-sucking "undead."

Speaking of the undead, until the necessary stake drivers find their heart of the proposed new $40 million ballet opera house is removed, the National...
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Cocktails from upper left: Half of the world's only double-decker bus for the London production of "The Lion in Winter"; the new 922 million London Theatre which opened with Miss Saigon, Ontario Place is home to the world's first IMAX Theater; King Thomson Hall, home to the Toronto Symphony Orchestra.

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Speaking of the undead, until the necromancer stake driven into the heart of the proposed new $40 million ballet/ opera house is removed, the National
Ballet of Canada continues to share the O’Keefe Centre stage with the opera. A new production of La Sylphide and Balanchine’s Four Temperaments (Novem-
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the Royal Winnipeg Ballet’s repertoire, then back to the National Ballet
Coppélia (February 9 to 12), Onegin (February 23 to 27) and Sleeping
Beauty (April 27 to May 15) before the company’s world premiere of a ballet by
to head for the Premiere Dance Theatre at Queen’s Quay Terminal on the city’s
central waterfront.

The season started in October with the Toronto Dance Theatre, the country’s
most admired modern dance company. Peggy Baker, former lead dancer with
Mikhail Baryshnikov’s White Owl Dance Project performs in November, followed
by dance events every month, including the Muntu Dance Theatre’s African pre-
sentation in February, and concluding May 8 with Grupo Corpo’s final perfor-
ance of Mozart’s Oratorio Mass.

There are other reasons to go to the Premiere Dance Theatre. It was designed
specifically for dance performances, hence the name, for one thing. No improvised, rigid stage floor here. A 1900s-era rebuilt streetcar line stops
practically at the front door, although there is abundant parking nearby.

More to the point, it’s in a warehouse building magnificently restored by
Toronto architect Eberhard Zeidler, whose firm designed Ontario Place, the
nearby mumma, 56-acre lake front park/amusement center that houses the
world’s first IMAX Theater. Queen’s Quay
Terminal restaurants are adequate to
stave off hunger, consumerist thirsts
can be slaked on two shopping levels
catering to discerning shoppers of ships
of the inner harbor, boat traffic, sea
gulls and the chain of Toronto Islands
are mesmerizing.

It’s also a short walk along the idyllic waterfront to Harbourfront’s interna-
tional authors’ readings in the fall.
Canada’s largest antique marketplace
waits in ambush across the street. Open
every day, it offers the pleasant diversion
of browsing through a tantalizing selection of silver, jewelry, clothing,
memorabilia, furniture, bric-a-brac and the usual flea market kind of stuff.
Toronto in fact abounds with shops that
cover virtually every period of antiquity
(heavy on English and European) and
most countries.

And if there is time, the Stratford Fest-
ival, where Shakespeare’s plays and oth-
ers, continue to enthrall, and the Shaw Festival, the world’s only repertory com-
pany devoted to George Bernard Shaw’s
plays, among the work of other play-

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Top: Eric Zajac/Jul Kreis, Lord High Barconeur and June Oramon as Poor Nell in the Stratford Festival production of Falstaff & Falstaff’s The Mikado, Above-Stratford’s Festival Stage.

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ancient-forest habitat to live in, some species like the northern spotted owl of the Pacific Northwest are severely threatened.

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We learn more about our work protecting the forest habitats of en-
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**Performing Arts**

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wrights, are each about a 90-minute drive from Toronto in superb theaters and bucolic settings. Depending on the weather, there are few things more relaxing than to watch the swans gliding along the Avon River (naturally) in Stratford’s lovely park before the curtain goes up. The Shaw Festival is at Niagara-on-the-Lake, a superbly restored and meticulously groomed 19th-century village. It’s also near Ontario’s vineyards that are beginning to capture international acclaim for their wines. The tours and tastings are not the Napa Valley, but then the Napa Valley doesn’t offer Shawinigan wit and wisdom.

The season is in full swing at both theaters from May to late fall. At the Shaw Festival, St. Joan, Gwendolen Prendergast, Blithe Spirit, And Then There Were None on this month. Amphitheater and Cloisters, The Invisible, The Imaginary Invalid and The Importance Of Being Earnest play until the end of this month at Stratford, with A Midsummer Night’s Dream and Gypsy on until Mid-December.

More contemporary, improvised and often in-your-face comedy is in full bloom in any one of a dozen Toronto clubs. Film comedians John Candy, Rick Moranis and Catherine O’Hara (the careless mom in Home Alone), Broadway star Andrea Martin and Lorne Michaels, who invented Saturday Night Live, put the Toronto’s Second City revue on the laughter map. They’re still going strong (the current revue is called Inside The City) in a converted firehall next to what used to be a mortuary, but without Candy, et al.

There are dozens of dinner/theater theaters of generally paint but never brilliantly quality, and true gourmets would want to think twice about eating in them. Most of them have a summer show feel, even in the dead of winter. But there is definitely variety — female impersonation, magic shows, medieval spoofery, interactive murder mystery, sex, sitcoms, and so on.

Manchester, to which Toronto is often compared for cultural/entertainment enjoyment on a more modest scale, has its story about Dutch colonists buying the island for $24 worth of trinkets. Toronto has such a story too. The English colonists that bought the land on which Toronto was built from Mississauga Indians in 1788 paid some 1,700 pounds. At today’s exchange rates, that works out to about $3,400 Canadian, or almost exactly what a music lover would pay for the top seat at all the concerts in the inaugural season at the North York Performing Arts Centre. Both were bargains.

The most effective way to find out anything about Toronto is to call the Metropolitan Toronto Convention & Visitors Association, 8:30 to 5:00 EST weekdays and 9:30 to 9:30 weekends, at 1-800-367-1980, toll free anywhere in North America.

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The Shaw Festival is located in Niagara on the Lake, a meticulously groomed Victorian village.

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Feelings First

Full Collections Ask us to Express How We Feel

It was having lunch the other day with New York designer Isaac Mizrahi (whose costumes recently appeared on Baryshnikov’s White Oak dancers) and one of L.A.’s defining women of style, Lisa Eisner. At the end of lunch Lisa pulled out a couple of recently found vintage bracelet treasures to share with Isaac, or “T” as she calls him.

“Look at the psychology of that one,” remarked Mizrahi, “put it on, put it on.” Immediately Lisa’s wrist was adorned with the “must” cuff—a novelty of faux coral, turquoise, rhinestones and pearls in a Jules Verne “chimioserie under the sea theme.” A carved coral medallion was surrounded by turquoise pebbles and rhinestones. Coming up the sides were two ominous glittering octopi with pearl heads.

“Can you imagine what the designer was going through when he designed that?” asked Lisa.

My mind raced to answer her question. I pictured a woman in her studio filled with bizarre and wonderful art, expressing her sense of freedom, beauty and humor through her jewelry. An expression of a kind of madness? Perhaps. But what divine madness.

All of this is another way of saying fashion is more than vapid folly or mere planned obsolescence. Each season designers’ psychology, the psychology of the society and the times we live in are infused in the collections. Whether unconscious or conscious, the thoughts and feelings are there. In each of the collections, the body is important. Seen softly moving underneath filmy layers of gossamer fabrics or floating jerseys, this is a marked change from aggressive shoulders, pulled in waists and pushed out breasts. The body is plenty, honored in its natural form. That’s lovely. It does not need superhuman proportions. The message is smooth, evenly paced, effortless yet powerful.

Because the fabrics are so sensuous, they evoke feelings when we wear them. Of course, feelings are a particularly human and uniquely personal domain. Feelings are subjective and non-competitive. They require that we go in and consult ourselves, rather than wait for outside judgment to know what to think. And when the way we feel matches the way we look, there is a kind of mass communication that takes place beyond cellular and satellite capabilities.

Technology can never keep up with the old human intelligence and feelings. Instantly our humanity brings us back into balance when our minds are tipping the scales in favor of too much thought and not enough feelings. That is the Gestalt behind Calvin’s simplicity, Donna Karan’s sensuality, Isaac’s elegance, Giorgio’s ease, Chanel’s sophistication, Gucci’s modern romanticism, Dolce y Gabbana’s playful femininity.

Todd Oldham’s multiple personality expressionism.

Color is another psychological podium with a message all its own. Many designers have adopted soothing neutrals, including black — Calvin Klein, Donna Karan, Norma Kamali, and Karl Lagerfeld to be sure. But one designer known for his neutrals, Giorgio Armani, has made his strongest color statement in years. He seems to be saying — “be free, wear color whenever and however you feel it, seasons aside.”

Cosmetics are certainly following that philosophy with saturated but pale color on eyes and cheeks made more innocent with delicate eyebrows and neutral lipsticks.

It’s interesting to notice just what you do feel when you put on different designers’ clothes, or clothes from your closet, or clothes from a neighborhood boutique, or a swap meet. Notice how what you choose has something to do with how you feel. Notice how what you wear can evoke specific feelings. Notice how your makeup changes with your feelings. This is no accident. Fashion is created by humans for humans with all the expression of emotions that creativity implies.

by Barbara Foley
Feelings First

Fall Collections Ask us to Express How We Feel

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