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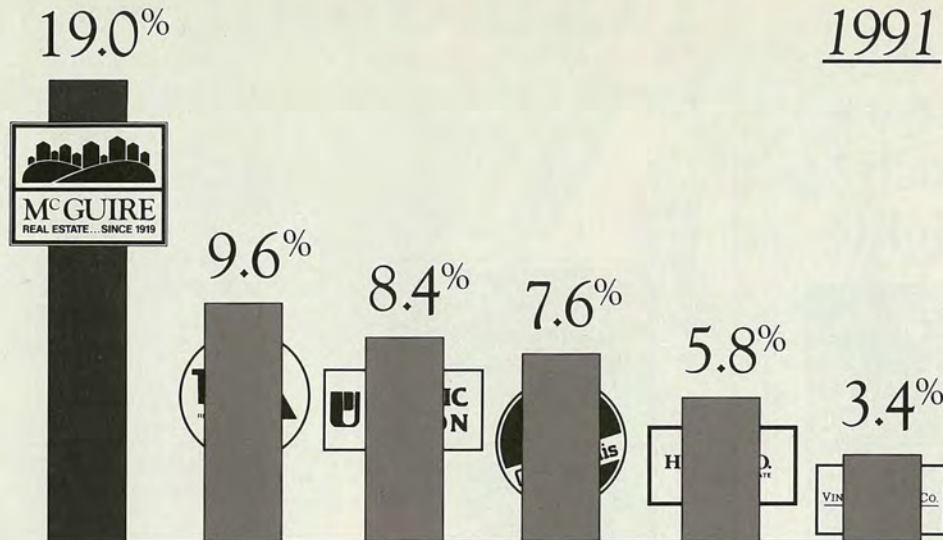
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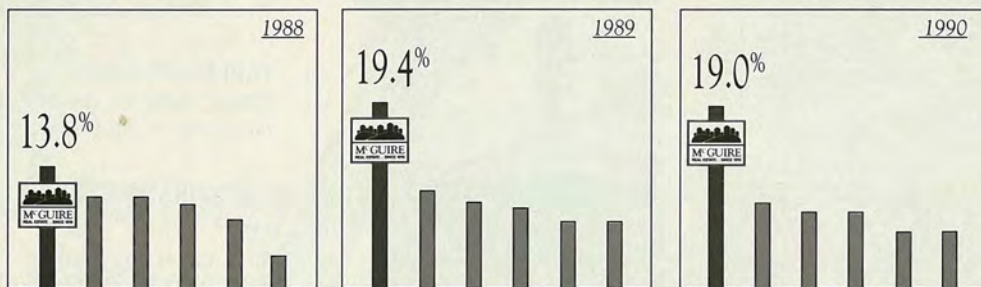
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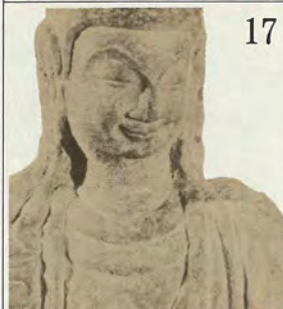
PERFORMING ARTS

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PERFORMING ARTS magazine is published monthly by Performing Arts Network, Inc. to serve musical and theatrical attractions in Los Angeles, Orange County, San Francisco and San Diego. *Performing Arts* magazine is published at 3539 Motor Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90034-4800. Telephone (310) 839-8000. Fax (310) 839-5651. All rights reserved, © 1992 by Performing Arts Network, Inc. Reproduction from these magazines without written permission is prohibited.

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Unrest, Murder and the Blood of a Poet

Events not to miss in May

"Since the age of fifteen, I haven't stopped for a minute," Jean Cocteau once remarked, half in complaint and half boasting. Certainly he was one of the most prolific and wide-ranging artists of the twentieth century, working his own indelible way through ballet, cinema, poetry, sculpture, painting, the design of fashion, stage sets and costumes, and book illustration. "Jean Cocteau and the Performing Arts", an exhibition coming to the San Francisco Performing Arts Library and Museum (SF PALM), will feature approximately ninety works of art tracing the full spectrum of his career.

A precocious youth who grew up quickly in the heady atmosphere of turn-of-the-century Paris, Cocteau was only twenty-two when he first met Serge Diaghilev of the Ballets Russes. *Parade*, that Cubistic masterpiece that changed the look of dance forever, came about in 1917, a collaboration between the composer Erik Satie, the artist Pablo Picasso, the choreographer Leonide Massine and Cocteau, who created the enigmatic scenario. In its fascination with commonplace modern wonders, seen in a surreally skewed and slightly melancholy way, *Parade* was a precursor of Cocteau's works to come. His

artistic manifesto, published in the newspaper *Paris Excelsior* in 1917, was to create "work which conceals poetry beneath the coarse outer skin of slapstick."

Among his most lasting works are the

rin Wunderman Museum in Irvine, will display many rarely seen drawings, pastels, lithographs and posters from this effervescent *enfant terrible* who can still, as Diaghilev once urged him to do, astonish us. *May 12-June 27, San Francisco Performing Arts Library and Museum, 399 Grove Street. (415) 255-4800.*

RAUSCHENBERG AT MOMA

Robert Rauschenberg, too, is always concerned with transforming the ordinary, and there is a distinct affinity between his early works, made in the 1950s, and the surrealist/dadaist approaches of Cocteau and Marcel Duchamp. The novelist Donald Barthelme once wrote that "Rauschenberg's problem (one of Rauschenberg's problems) is how to be bad for thirty years or more . . . Rauschenberg has tried as hard as anyone to be nonacceptable but early (and rather cheerfully) discovered that nothing is nonacceptable."

"Robert Rauschenberg: The Early 1950s" brings

films *Blood of a Poet*, *Orpheus* and the ravishing *Beauty and the Beast*. Cocteau worked as extensively in the visual arts, as well, both in the design of sets and costumes for theater and ballet, and in his delicate line drawings for books. The current exhibition, organized by the Seve

together one hundred or so paintings, sculptures, collages and some peculiarly wonderful little assemblages, all made between 1949 and 1954, often while he was wandering around Europe or living in adventurous poverty in New York. Perhaps he was consciously trying to "be



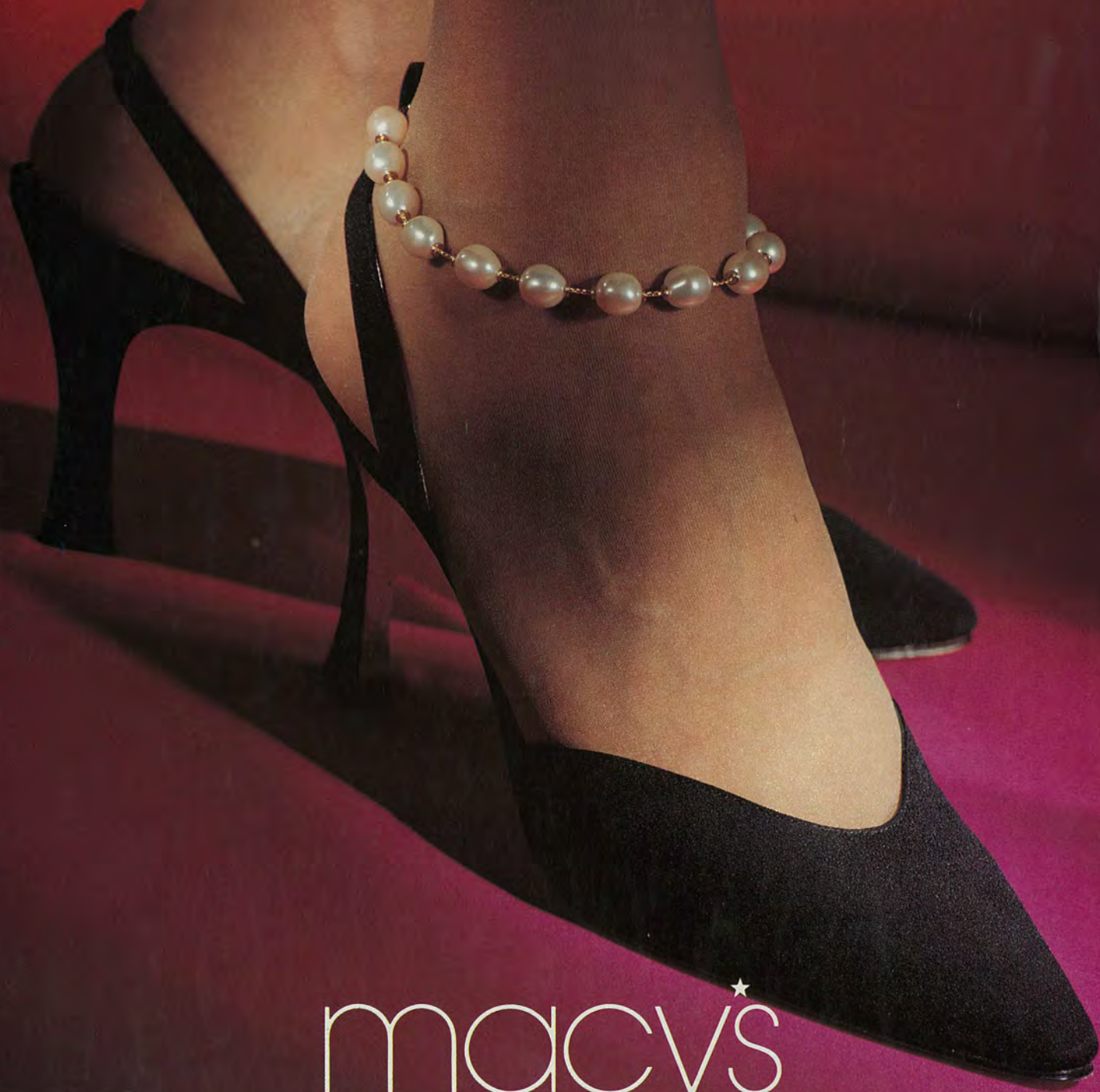
Above: Rauschenberg's *Untitled (Mona Lisa)*, 1952, is part of the "Robert Rauschenberg: The Early 1950's" exhibit at the Museum of Modern Art opening May 14 and running through August 2.

by Kate Regan Eaton

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bad," perhaps not. What was clear when we saw the show last summer at the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, where it opened, is that he was already at this time an artist of enormous perception, maturity and control of his materials. From the tarry blacks or subtly modulated whites of his monochromatic paintings to the eerily compelling little collections of found things he put together in matchbox containers, Rauschenberg's art of this period is still furiously fresh, mischievously hypnotic and buoyant with secrets shared. *May 14-August 2, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 401 Van Ness Avenue. (415) 252-4000.*

HAVE MERCE-Y

Merce Cunningham is the wizard of modern dance and, like many a wise man before him, he has worked in ways that once seemed alarmingly opaque to some of his audiences. While he has never intended to mystify, having little use for secrecy or rarefied meanings, it took a while for the inherent classicism of his dances to emerge.

Cunningham himself has summed up quite clearly what interests him in making dances: "For me, it seems enough that dancing is a spiritual exercise in physical form, that what is seen is what it is." So might Balanchine have explained his ballets: *Spiritual exercises in physical form*. And indeed Cunningham, for all the apparent differences between his works and those of Balanchine, holds Balanchine's place in modern dance. He



has the same regard for the inherent order and connectedness of physical events, a similar way of using highly trained dancers whose characters emerge solely through their movements. Both Balanchine and Cunningham have abjured stories and the mask assumed when a dancer takes on a theatrical role. "Don't think, just dance," Balanchine famously said; meaning, I think, that his dances were not to be interpreted. It is the dancer who embodies both the movement and its intensity.

In imposing his "just the facts" approach on his dancers, in giving them nothing with which to caress their personal vanities, Cunningham in fact stretches each performer to extend her or his range. It's true that in the last

decade more of his dancers are ballet trained and thus technically more advanced with perhaps a resultant loss of individuality. Yet the energizing focus of each dancer exhilarates. One has the sense of watching a real human being doing something sacred and transforming. Cunningham dances, in all their varied and unmistakable atmospheric force fields, uncover self-evident truths that we needed to see before we could comprehend their existence. *Merce Cunningham Dance Company, May 1-2 at Zellerbach Hall, University of California at Berkeley. (510) 642-9988.*

AGE OF JENKINS

Margaret Jenkins, one of Cunningham's longtime associates, found his work so liberating that she eventually founded the Margaret Jenkins Dance Company, now in its nineteenth year and planning a two-week San Francisco season to be followed by performances throughout the Bay Area later in May and June.

"Merce is a special person in my life," Jenkins said in a recent interview at her 17th Street headquarters that her company shares with ODC San Francisco. "I think, however, that my work bears no resemblance to his. He encourage so many people of diverse talents and interests to follow their passion. That's his great mark. I wouldn't be surprised, in fact, if he didn't like my work; it's in an entirely different direction."

Jenkins's interest is in "character, in making work that reflects the character of a dancer at that time. The work comes



Above: Merce Cunningham, "The wizard of modern dance," brings his company to Zellerbach Hall on May 1-2. Top: "Jean Cocteau and the Performing Arts" is a must-see exhibit at the Performing Arts Library and Museum beginning May 12. Portrait of Cocteau by Léon Bakst.

from my perception of them, so that one group of people makes different work than another. Each work has a different language, so to speak."

Her dancers tend to be older than those found in some companies; many are in their mid-thirties, and Jenkins herself, in her mid-forties, is dancing as actively as ever. "I like working with people who've had a bit of a life before they get to me, who are clear about why they're dancing and don't need me to make it up for them. The dancers in my company have backgrounds in both modern dance and ballet and usually they've worked in companies where they couldn't participate in the work. They come here because they know they'll play major roles in developing a piece."

Last year, Jenkins choreographed her first piece for a ballet company, the Oak-

land Ballet. *Sightings*, which will be repeated this season by members of the Oakland Ballet, is the result of Jenkins's fascination with the lore of angels. Set to a score by the Australian composer Peter Sculthorpe, *Sightings*, Jenkins says, "deals with our susceptibility to the presence of things we cannot control. Angels, like poetic signs, have many meanings. This piece suggests we'd best be on guard, for we're all susceptible to the presence of angels."

Even though Jenkins initially feared that in working with ballet dancers, "I wouldn't give them enough tricks," she

found the experience gratifying. "It became clear that they were excited in working that way and in having a say in what was going on. They had wonderful ideas, ideas that I wouldn't have had, because I don't know their vocabulary in the way they do. And every single person couldn't wait for rehearsals, so I couldn't wait to be there."

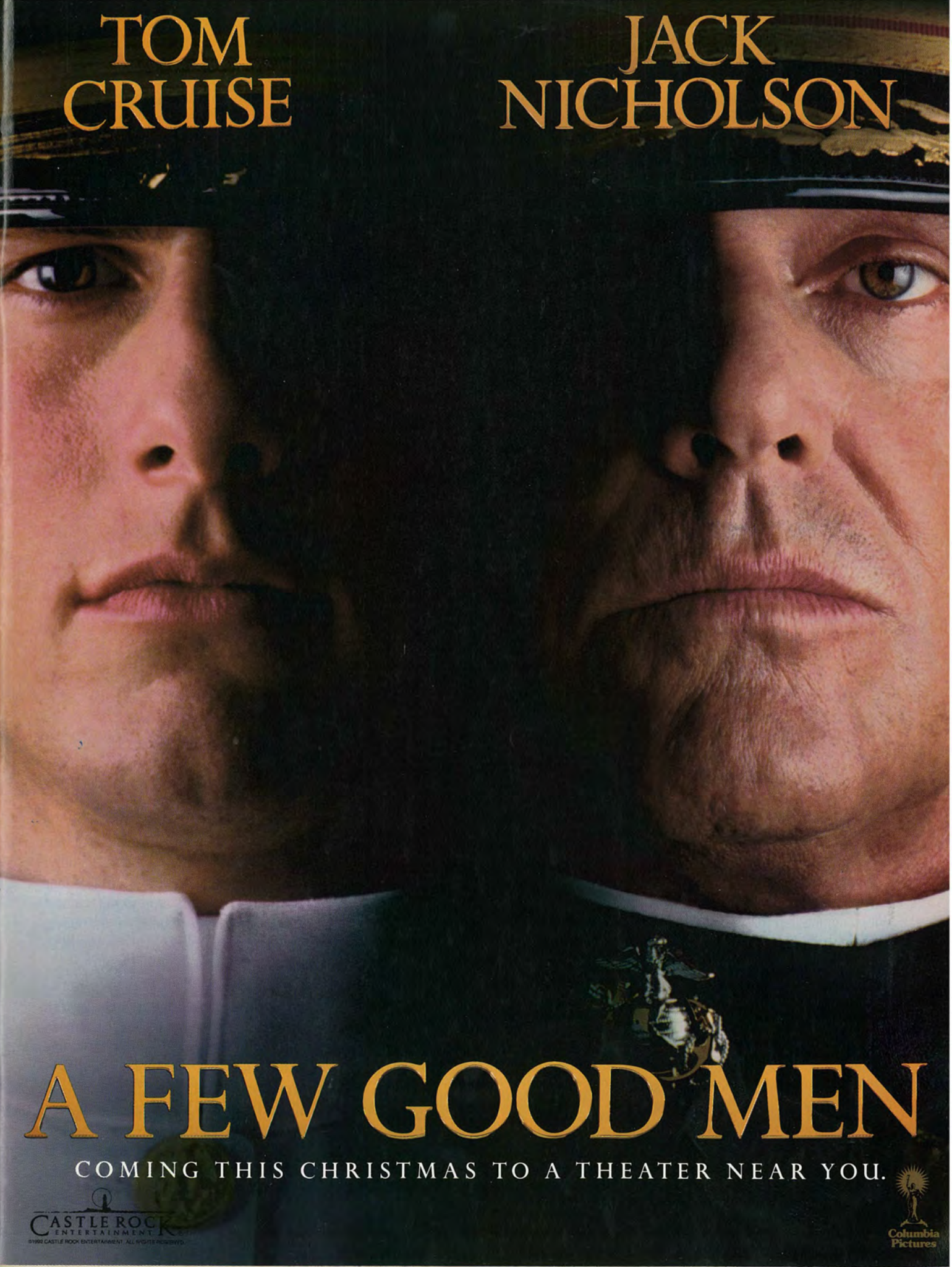
Age of Unrest, performed by Jenkins's own dancers, is a piece in which some viewers have found connections with *Sightings*. "It's the most recent piece I've made with my company and it deals with questions I've asked myself a lot lately: Where do lasting values come from? What are they and how do we develop them? What's the organizing force of our reality?"

The questions may sound abstract when so baldly posed. *Age of Unrest*, however, is a powerful and disturbing



CHRISTINE ALICINO

Above: Ellie Klopp, James Arons, and Stephanie Mahler of the Margaret Jenkins Dance Company will perform *Woman Window Square* during the company's 1992 Bayside season from May 8 through June 20 in a number of Bay Area venues. Inset: Robert Rauschenberg photo of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company in Aeon, 1961.



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dance theater piece, with nothing pedantic in its demonic vignettes.

Additional repertory will include the new *Strange Attractors* and *Woman Window Square*. May 8-16 at Theater Artaud, then May 29-31 at Walnut Creek's Regional Center for the Arts; June 5-6, Mountain View Center for the Arts; June 11-13, Julia Morgan Theater in Berkeley; and June 19-20, Spreckels Theater in Rohnert Park. (415) 863-1173.

DRAMA, MITCHELL-STYLE

In February 1991, porn king Jim Mitchell shot and killed his brother Artie, and the event immediately developed mythic qualities. The Mitchell Brothers, after all, had made the show business of sex into something almost chic. Their downtown palace of porn featured a clean if not well-lighted opportunity to ogle nudity, either in the flesh or in films (*Behind the Green Door*) notable for a certain degree of wit and good technical values. San Francisco socialites and members of the press enjoyed the naughty cachet of attending the Mitchells's parties: it was cool, even glamorous, to be part of their crowd.

The death of one brother by the other aroused almost manic interest in the media; already half a dozen books and a couple of movies are in the works, all purporting to examine the Mitchells in the context of their times.

Now the young playwright Cintra Wilson is taking up the subject in *XXX Love Act*, a play loosely based on the case. Magic Theatre will produce it as the concluding production of its Springfest of new plays.

Talking about the play, which was still in the process of rewriting in February, Wilson emphasized that she has no interest in attracting lawsuits and purposely will avoid resemblances between her fictional characters and the real Mitchells.

"I'm interested in the Biblical and/or psychological aspects of their story. It has echoes of Cain and Abel, Icarus, Prometheus. It's a tale of hubris.

"I've always thought there was a story in that lifestyle, in the kind of collective mania of everyone in the sex industry. They become desensitized to many things that shock most of us. It's alien to many of us — and maybe that's why it fascinates."

Wilson's own involvement with the industry started when "I became a pornographer. It was one of the ways I put myself through college, by writing scripts for phone sex. I had many encounters in that subculture. It's an acquired taste for some, with its own morality and speed

Carnival San Francisco, the City's festival of abandon takes place May 22-24 in the Mission District.



The San Jose Repertory Company will present Henrik Ibsen's *The Master Builder* at the Montgomery Theater from May 17 through June 13.

— many people in that work live in a kind of frenzy."

Wilson however, never knew the Mitchell brothers. "This play is a complete flight of fancy," she emphasizes. "I'm most interested in the amount of time people in the sex business spend ration-

alizing their work. They explain it to themselves and to you, as if confronting a collective unconscious taboo. For the women, it's as if they are selling a temporal aspect of themselves; they're disengaged from it, or so they think."

Jim Mitchell was recently convicted of manslaughter, after a trial that attracted immense interest in the media. In the end however, poets and playwrights may best interpret what really happened between the two brothers. To Wilson, "It's a love story really, death as a beautiful, perverse act of love." May 13-30 at the Magic Theatre, Building D, Fort Mason Center. (415) 441-8001.

IN BRIEF

Theater: The San Jose Repertory Company presents Henrik Ibsen's still-haunting tragedy of overweening pride, *The Master Builder*; May 17-June 13 in the Montgomery Theater. (408) 294-2255

... **Dance:** Carol Teten's *Dance Through Time* goes back to the costumed pageantry of Renaissance Italy, in two programs featuring a Renaissance dance band led by violinist Shira Kammen; May 16 at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and May 17 at St. John's Presbyterian Church, Berkeley. Tickets through San Francisco Early Music Society, (415) 843-2119

... **Music:** The Women's Philharmonic completes its 1992 season with the U.S. premiere of Fanny Mendelssohn's Overture and works of Lili Boulanger, Amy Beach and Germaine Tailleferre; May 9 at the First Congregational Church, San Francisco. (415) 543-2297 ... **Art:** "Oddly: Four Los Angeles Artists" presents four contemporary artists using found objects to make richly metaphoric assemblage sculptures; May 16-August 9, Oakland Museum. (510) 273-3401

... **Events:** Carnival San Francisco wends its exhilarating way through the city with a grand parade, three balls, a Caribbean Ball block party and a free, two-day outdoor festival; participants and performers come from the cultures of Asia, Africa, Polynesia, Europe, the Caribbean, and Central, South, and North America; May 22-24 in various San Francisco locations, mostly south of Market Street; call Carnival Hotline, (415) 824-8999. □



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Beyond the Wall

A look at theater in China today

Despite the opening up of China during the past twenty years, it remains a deeply isolated and mysterious country. We know relatively little about its ethnic and cultural diversity, which has been disappearing under the long dominance of a central

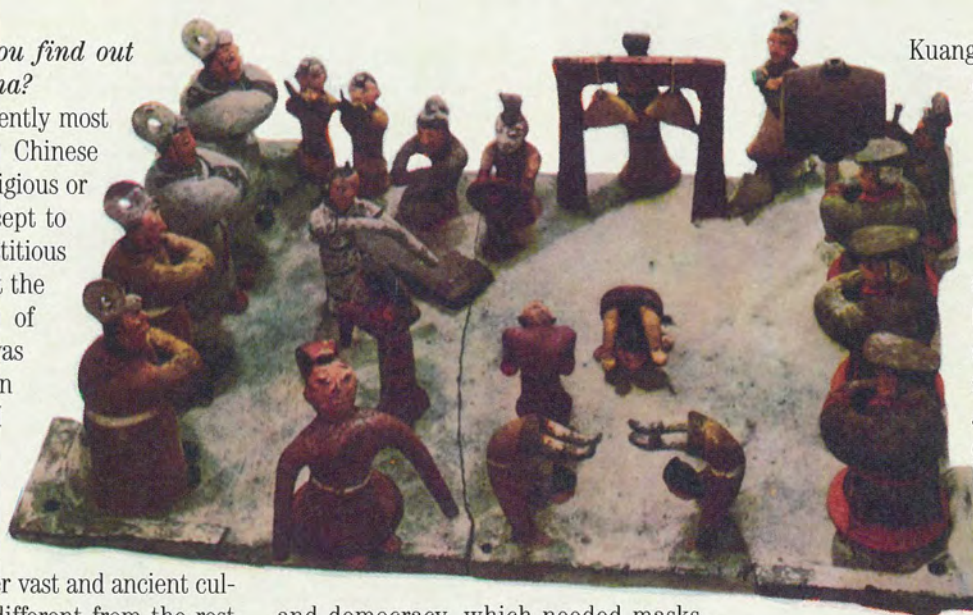
government in Beijing. In the summer of 1990, playwright Carol Fisher Sorgenfrei, a UCLA professor and expert in Asian drama, visited remote areas of China to investigate the survival of ritual drama among China's ethnic minority groups. She was accompanied by Kuang-Sheng Shih, a student from Taiwan, who is writ-

ing his doctoral dissertation on Chinese drama. In China, he was researching the connections between ancient forms of ritual and the classical theater of the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368). Peter Hay, a contributing editor of *Performing Arts* magazine, interviewed Sorgenfrei and Shih upon their return to Los Angeles.

PH: What did you find out by going to China?

CS: Until very recently most experts felt that Chinese theater had no religious or ritual purpose except to make fun of superstitious folk elements, that the primary function of Chinese theater was mainly to entertain and enlighten. I always had trouble with this, because I could not quite believe that China, with her vast and ancient cultures, should be different from the rest of the world, where the origins of theater have usually revolved around fertility rites, masking and religious rituals. I suspected that Chinese theater, too, must have had such roots, yet I could find little substantive research on it. Then in 1989 I was directing a Brechtian, rather abstract play about freedom

*Peter Hay's latest book, *Movie Anecdotes*, has just been published by Oxford University Press, with a new paperback edition of his *Broadway Anecdotes*.*



Kuang also wanted to come to do his own research, which meant we could talk to people directly, without an official interpreter always present.

PH: Why is knowledge of such rituals not more widespread?

CS: Chinese policy, before and after communism, has been to deny any artistic validity to what was

and democracy, which needed masks. Because of the massacre of pro-democracy students on Tiananmen Square, I wanted to give the play a Chinese look. I mentioned this to Kuang, who brought me some Chinese magazines with pictures of a masked form of exorcistic drama called *nuoxi*, or ghost theater, which employed ritual performance to scare away harmful spirits. This was the connection with ritual origins I had been searching for, so I decided to spend my sabbatical in China researching this form of theater. Fortunately,

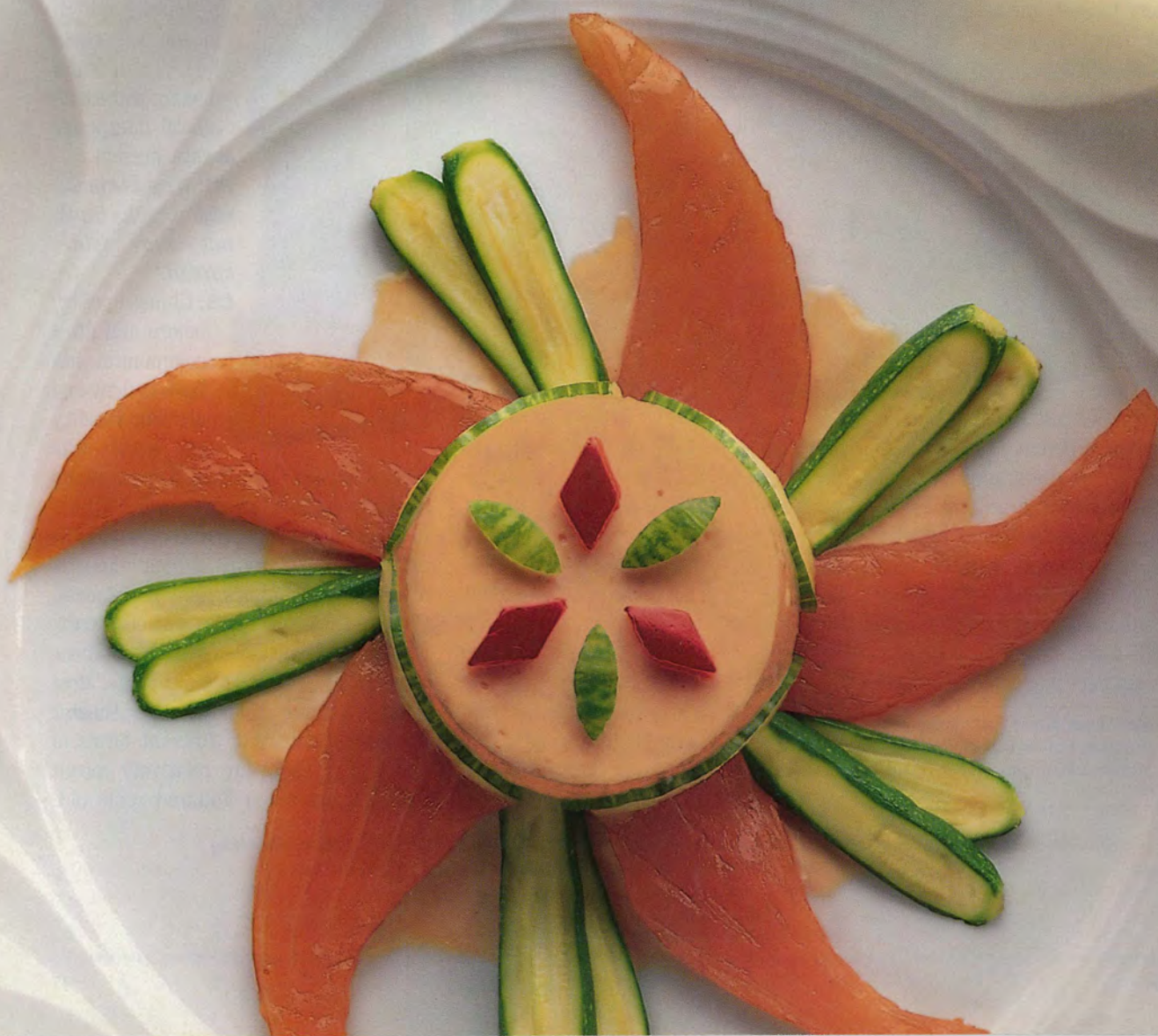
termed superstition. It tried to put down or stamp out folk beliefs, especially those held by minorities, some fifty-five nationalities or ethnic groups, which comprise about 6% of China's total population. Chinese theatrical history has been written by imperialists — either by Chinese imperialists or Western imperialists. Most people assume that Chinese theater consists primarily of different forms of opera. But these are relatively recent forms, about seven hundred years old.

Above: Tray with figures of acrobats, dancers, musicians, and spectators, from a tomb at Tsinan, Shantung. Western Han period, second to first century BC.

by Peter Hay

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And the best-known style, the imperial Beijing opera, is just two centuries old. There were many other styles developed in various regions, such as *Kun* opera, which was seen at the 1990 Los Angeles festival.

KS: One should note that the Han people, the ethnic majority in China, also have folk traditions which have been suppressed. All folk theater has been considered irrelevant compared with "high art," such as the opera.

CS: Until recently, only a few Chinese scholars bothered with *nuoxi*. Some have attempted to preserve these ancient forms from encroaching civilization, using some extraordinary means. In Guizhou province they recruited a company of professional actors to go into the villages, live with the people, and learn their art. They then reproduced these performances in the city, both for scholars and for former villagers who now live in the city, so that they can enjoy a part of their own heritage. The purpose is solely preservation: they have kept the performance style as raw, rough, and unprofessional as the original.

PH: *How long have Western scholars been aware of this field of study?*

CS: About ten years ago the current revival of interest in anthropology began among theater scholars; in China this took even longer. But several years ago the government was put under pressure from the international community because of their neglect or mistreatment of ethnic minorities. After that, the Ministries of Culture, on both the national and provincial level, began to pay attention to folk art. *Nuoxi* and other forms of folk culture suddenly became legitimate fields for study. The government assigned scholars to document them, and they visited very remote villages, high up in the mountains, which have been isolated literally for thousands of years, sometimes before there was any Han influence. Some

of these cultures seem to have more connection with southeast Asia, India, and Tibet than with China.

PH: *How old are these dramatic rituals?*

CS: The exact age is still unknown, but at least one is among the earliest forms of theater I have ever seen. Some of it reminded me of aboriginal ritual, such as I witnessed in Australia, which goes back three thousand years. In one par-

described as monkey-like sounds. They identify these sounds as the common language of their ancestors and of monkeys.

PH: *So it's almost like an early evolutionary theory?*

CS: In a way. The drama itself is highly ritualistic: it seems to depict human evolution from going naked, being unable to make fire or plant seeds, or even have sex, to gradually learning all this from the shaman. And then having learned,

they all go off, led by an actor who is dressed as a bull — an obvious fertility symbol — to put it into practice. One purpose of the drama seems to be simply to demonstrate how to have sex. So various positions are shown, with animals getting on each other's backs, trying to figure out how to do it. We watched an actor reverting into the role of an infant, and then being suckled by another one. The mainstream social mores are quite antithetical to this; the Chinese always tended to be decorous, and under communism became quite puritanical.

PH: *Does the "play" tell a mythological story of a god or ancient hero?*

KS: It is about their ancestors, the story of how the people learned to live in the world. But it is not like the Greek myths, which often tell about the eponymous hero or founder of the race.

PH: *But the sexual bits sound rather like Aristophanes and Attic comedy?*

CS: In our theater these primitive origins are left behind; playwrights such as

Aristophanes poke fun at them. *Nuoxi* is only mildly comic.

PH: *Are the seasons involved?*

CS: Yes. This particular play is usually performed at the beginning of the New Year, in February, accompanied by a fifteen-day festival during which many agricultural and fertility rituals are held. The purpose is to drive out the bad spirits and welcome in the good ones.

PH: *And who is "Nuoxi" performed*



Peasant theater during the Qing dynasty, 1875.

ticular ritual, called *bienjenxi*, which is the most ancient form, they wrap their bodies in black and gray and white cloth. They wear primitive wooden masks with white painted stripes on them.

KS: These colors have symbolic meaning. When actors wear white, for instance, that means that they are supposed to be naked.

CS: They also wore pointed caps, and made vocalizations which can only be

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McCutchen, Doyle, Brown & Enersen is one of the oldest and largest law firms in the Bay Area. Founded in 1883, the firm now employs nearly 300 attorneys in Los Angeles, San Jose, Walnut Creek, Washington, D.C., Taipei, and Bangkok. McCutchen is a full-service firm, with expertise in a panoply of legal specialties. The counsel of McCutchen's attorneys is sought worldwide — members of its San Francisco, Washington, and Taipei offices are currently working together to write the environmental laws for the Republic of China.

McCutchen has a long-running relationship with A.C.T. through former Managing Partner Albert Moorman, who has been a Trustee for 18 years. The firm donated very generously to A.C.T. in 1991 and again this year. "We think it is important to fund the City's cultural institutions," says estate planning partner Susan Briggs. "We are always trying to recruit people to San Francisco, and the City's cultural life is a major part of the attraction here. We decided two years ago to start giving to local organizations, and A.C.T. was high on our list." Mrs. Briggs emphasizes the fact that McCutchen employees, too, benefit from the relationship between the firm and A.C.T. "A.C.T. events are extremely popular with our employees. I like to think that we play a part in building A.C.T. audiences, as well as providing financial support."



A.C.T. Trustee Albert J. Moorman with partner Susan Briggs.



Lynn Odland (right) with his wife Larri-Lynn.

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THE SILVER SEASON

A Quarter Century of Plays and Players

On January 21, 1967, the opening of *Tartuffe* at the Geary Theater, two stars were born together: an audacious new repertory theater company called the American Conservatory Theater, and a formidable actress named Ruth Kobart. With almost 20 years of success as a singer in opera and musical theater already behind her, Ms. Kobart accepted A.C.T. founder William Ball's invitation to leave New York and embark on a thrilling new career as a dramatic actress.

Ms. Kobart is known for her gutsy willingness to take creative risks. After graduating from the American Conservatory of Music with a degree in vocal performance as a mezzo soprano, she debuted off-Broadway in 1947 with an experimental cooperative group called the Lemonade Opera. The group's members had each donated \$25 to finance four productions, including *Hansel & Gretel*, in which Ms. Kobart appeared as the Witch. Her investment paid off — after understudying Helen Traubel in Rodgers & Hammerstein's *Pipe Dreams*, Ms. Kobart was discovered by Broadway. Then in 1957 she was signed by the New York City Opera, and nothing could stop her.

Ms. Kobart's most popular roles include Miss Jones in the stage and film versions of *How to Succeed in Business without Really Trying* and Domina in Broadway's *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, for which she garnered a Tony nomination. After appearing as Madame Pernelle in *Tartuffe*, Ms. Kobart stayed with A.C.T. for two seasons before venturing out to pursue various dramatic interests. In 1970 and 1971 she toured with Milton Berle in *Last of the Red Hot Lovers*, Eleanor Parker in *Forty Carats*, and Van Johnson in *Boeing-Boeing*, and appeared as a terrified school bus driver



Actress Ruth Kobart

in the film *Dirty Harry*. She played Nurse Ratched in the Sankowich/Golyn stage production of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* in 1972-73, and later appeared as Miss Hannigan in the first national company tour of *Annie*. On television, she has guest-starred and co-starred in such popular series as "Remington Steele," "St. Elsewhere," "One Day at a Time," "Archie Bunker's Place," "Trapper John, M.D.," and "Midnight Caller." In 1991 she was busy filming a television pilot, "Acting Sheriff," and a movie with Whoopi Goldberg and Maggie Smith called *Sister Act*.

While making forays into the theatrical world outside of San Francisco, Ms. Kobart has remained a part of the A.C.T. family and has returned again and again to delight its audiences. In her many seasons with the Company, she has appeared in such A.C.T. productions as *Broadway*, *The Torchbearers*, *Arsenic and Old Lace*, *Thieves' Carnival*, *The American Dream*, *The House of Bernarda Alba*, *Hotel Paradiso*, *Sunday in the Park with*

George, *When We Are Married*, *Saturday*, *Sunday and Monday*, and a reprise of her role in *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*.

Ms. Kobart remembers what it was like to give birth to a second career during the days of A.C.T.'s infancy:

"My background was in music — everything from Broadway musical theater to opera. In fact, I had just come off quite a little hot streak. I'd done *How to Succeed in Business without Really Trying* with Bobby Morse, Rudy Vallee, and Sammy Smith, and *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* with Zero Mostel, Jack Gilford, David Burns, and John Carradine. I was so high from the combination that I thought: I'll never be hungry again, I'll always work. Work? I couldn't get arrested!

"I had worked with Bill Ball at the New York City Opera where he directed contemporary American operas during his two years there in the late 50's. He directed me in *Six Characters in Search of an Author* and *The Inspector General*, and I loved working with him. In 1966 I was finishing up my Master's degree in music history at Hunter College, writing my thesis — I thought then that I needed it for insurance! But when Bill invited me to San Francisco, I accepted with alacrity and came without so much as an audition. On a Tuesday, I defended my thesis before a committee in New York, and on the following Saturday, I arrived in San Francisco.

"Bill had decided — he just decided — that I could do straight theater. Now, I had always wanted to act, but I had never really had the chance. No

one in New York — except Bill — had enough faith in people to help them try to do things they hadn't really done before. I did do one experimental piece at Hunter as a favor to a friend, but nothing that prepared me for the rigors of life and learning at A.C.T. If I had thought twice about it, I probably wouldn't have come, out of sheer terror. But suddenly I found that I had accepted Bill's offer and moved to an apartment on O'Farrell Street in San Francisco, where I knew no one. The Friends of A.C.T. literally had to lead me there by the hand! Fortunately, it was close to the theater so I could walk to work.

"I came largely because I was eager to learn to act *away* from the spotlight. Of course, those hopes were dashed, because Bill cast me as Madame Pernelle in *Tartuffe*. I was swept instead into a giddy whirlwind. The production had already been successful elsewhere, and the spotlight followed us out here. I found myself in the middle of a tremendously exciting production, with the glare as bright as it had ever been on Broadway.

"I had a big voice and a big body. That was a good start for Madame Pernelle. I came out on stage and shouted my head off, and believe it or not, I found my way. Then everything just took off on opening night. What a night it was! The house was electric, and the whole thing was a big love affair between us and the audience. The more they loved it, the better we got. We really took off with a *whoosh*!

"By the end of the run, I had truly grown. I continued to grow with each role I played at A.C.T. I flew into my assignments with the contagious excitement the whole Company shared. I learned as I went along, picking up whatever I could, however I could. There was some formal training, but I really learned my craft onstage.

"Bill's approach was to coax our best work out of us by tiring us with long hours of teaching and intensive rehearsal, with repetition after repetition — he seemed to feel that the more exhausted you were, the more you let down your guard, and therefore the more you grew. Exhausted does not describe it! As a singer, I wasn't used to that — I can't sing when I'm exhausted. But it was invigorating, and we did push ourselves. For me, espe-



Ruth Kobart, as a vaudeville piano player in A.C.T.'s 1974 production of *Broadway*.

cially, much of it was new. I was constantly stretching my ability — stretching, if you will, my theater muscles.

"I remember that time quite fondly now. I loved working in the Geary Theater, because it felt very intimate and comfortable, and the raked stage was a challenge.

"One of my favorite roles was that of La Poncia, the maid, in Garcia Lorca's *The House of Bernarda Alba*, directed by Joy Carlin. The character had such wisdom . . . the unfortunate daughters of that house all leaned on her. That role demanded from me a great outpouring of everything, of my very being. I also loved doing *Hotel Paradiso* with Tom Moore, and *When We Are Married* with Ed Hastings. And of course I had a special feeling for the musical productions like *Sunday in the Park with George* and *Forum*.

"It was all terribly grandly conceived. When you think about it, A.C.T. was very ambitious. The whole Company was to take classes, to teach and learn simultaneously. People would be trained in our school and then go on to join the Company. What's more amazing is that 25 years later, the Conservatory is stronger than ever. A.C.T. is still doing it, still living up to that glorious dream. Perhaps that's what most sets this theater apart.

"I'm very proud of the work I did during those first two seasons as an actress. A.C.T. is still the only repertory theater I've ever worked with. I've come back to work here again and again over the years — at last count, a total of ten seasons — just to check in and work with some of the talented friends I made so long ago. Can it really have been 25 years?"



LARRY WEIKLE

American Conservatory Theater

presents

THE COCKTAIL HOUR

by A.R. Gurney
(1988)

Directed by Albert Takazauckas
Scenery by Steven Rubin
Costumes by David Draper
Lighting by Derek Duarte
Hair by Rick Echols

The Cast

Bradley William Paterson
Ann, his wife Anne Lawder
John, their son Mark Bramhall
Nina, their daughter Frances Lee McCain

The play takes place during early evening in early fall
in the mid-seventies, in a city in upstate New York.

There will be one intermission.

Understudies

Bradley — William McKereghan; Ann — Kathryn Crosby;
John — Eric Zivot; Nina — Kathryn Crosby

Stage Management: Alice Elliott Smith

Theatre on the Square is under the direction of Jonathan Reinis

World premiere at the Old Globe Theatre, San Diego, California, Jack O'Brien, Artistic Director, Thomas Hall, Managing Director.
The play was first produced in New York by Roger L. Stevens, Thomas Viental, Steven Baruch, and Richard Frankel.

This production is made possible in part through
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Special thanks to the Warwick Regis Hotel for their generous assistance.

A.R. Gurney Talks About Playwriting and *The Cocktail Hour*

with Elizabeth Brodersen

Playwright A.R. "Pete" Gurney is the author of *The Snow Ball*, *The Old Boy*, *The Dining Room*, *Another Antigone*, and the wildly popular *Love Letters*. He has also written a number of plays that have been performed off-Broadway, at a score of regional theaters, and in many countries abroad, including *Scenes from American Life*, *Children*, *Richard Cory*, *The Middle Ages*, *The Golden Age*, *What I Did Last Summer*, *Sweet Sue*, and *The Perfect Party*. He won a Drama Desk Award in 1971, a Rockefeller Award in 1977, a National Endowment Award in 1982, and a Lucille Lortel Award in 1989. In 1987 he won the Award of Merit from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters. He is on the faculty of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he taught literature for 25 years. Mr. Gurney is also an Associate Artist of the Old Globe Theatre in San Diego.

Mr. Gurney, a highly skilled wordsmith, shares with us his thoughts on the art of playwriting and his witty masterwork, *The Cocktail Hour*:

EB: Someone once said after a performance of *The Cocktail Hour* that theaters "should sell T-shirts that say, 'A.R. Gurney knows my family'." Most people do seem to have that reaction to the play, regardless of their race. Why do you think the play's appeal is so universal, despite its specific setting in a WASP family?

ARG: Well, I'm sure some people don't think it's like their family at all. But I suppose the universality comes out of the details. There's a kind of odd irony in writing — the more concrete and specific you get about a particular family and its rituals, or about people, then maybe the more general the effect can be. While every detail in my play might not be like your family or somebody else's, I hope that the truths



Playwright A.R. Gurney

I tell have a kind of general appeal. Also, it may look familiar because not too many people have been writing about that particular world in a while, and so the people I write about seem familiar to those members of the audience who haven't seen their types on the stage.

EB: Perhaps some of the characteristics of that world have been assimilated by the rest of us.

ARG: Yes, that's true, though oddly enough the whole ritual of the cocktail hour has pretty well gone. Alcohol is much more suspect now than it was for that older generation.

EB: What rituals do you think have taken the place of the cocktail hour?

ARG: I've noticed that people like to drink a little champagne or wine before a meal. That's a different version of the cocktail hour. And a lot of people, of course, drink bottled water. People carry it around and drink it! You see a lot of young people carrying bottles around. And I've noticed a lot of people in New

York, when they're invited to someplace for dinner at, say, 7:30, get there at quarter to nine. A lot of people who don't want to drink just avoid the whole period of the cocktail hour and hope they arrive just in time to sit down for dinner.

EB: People don't really set aside a time of day any more.

ARG: No, because women work as much as men do now. As the play points out, for the cocktail hour to exist, somebody's got to be off in the kitchen doing *something* (even if incompetently)! I think the cocktail hour began as a ritual in this country in the twenties, when there were people in the kitchen handling the meal for the middle class.

EB: Do you have anything like the cocktail hour with your own family now?

ARG: No. No way. When I would visit my mother, she would certainly insist on it, but my wife and I don't, and my children certainly don't.

EB: *The Cocktail Hour*, of course, is very much about the play within the play. You have described this technique as "self-reflexive." Could you explain the concept and tell us why it appeals to you?

ARG: I think an awful lot of modern art is self-reflexive. Contemporary painting is in some ways about painting — it's about colors, about the shape and flatness of the canvas. Similarly, *The Cocktail Hour* and many other plays remind you constantly of the fact that they are plays, that what's happening on stage is not real. It's an attempt to hold the mirror up to nature, an attempt to show real people doing real things. At the same time, it's an attempt to celebrate the limitations of theater itself. This is a play about a play. One script is on the stage at all times, and the charac-



MARTHA SWOPE

Keene Curtis (standing), Bruce Davison, Holland Taylor, and Nancy Marchand (seated, left to right) in the original Old Globe Theatre production of A.R. Gurney's *The Cocktail Hour*, presented off-Broadway in 1988.

ters who are in the script are also in the performance taking place, talking about their roles. They even begin to act out onstage some of the things that John, the playwright on the stage, says they will. Nina reads in John's script that she exits huffily, and she immediately exits huffily. So the play asks the audience to collaborate with it in the process of its unfolding.

EB: You seem to like to experiment with form, for example using vignettes in *Scenes from American Life* and *The Dining Room*, and having characters read letters in *Love Letters*. Why is that?

ARG: The theater has always interested me because it is limited in so many ways, compared to what you can do with the movies or television,



T. CHARLES BRICKSON

From *The Snow Ball* by A.R. Gurney, co-produced by the Old Globe Theatre and the Hartford Stage Company in 1991.

or even radio. It's such a traditional, old-fashioned medium. You're asking people to pay quite a lot of money to sit there and watch actors perform in front of them in a rather limited space. That's exactly what I love about it, but I'm constantly aware when I'm working in the theater of its limitations. So I like to experiment with those limitations — either call attention to them or try to break down some of the barriers that go with the theater. Just to write a conventional, realistic play — I couldn't write more than two minutes of that, because it doesn't interest me. In some ways I have to work with and against the medium in order to make it exciting, at least for me, as the writer, and I hope for the

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audience, as well.

EB: In your introduction to the published version of *The Cocktail Hour*, you say: "Choosing to write a play is like choosing to buy a viola da gamba. Obsolete though it may be, once you've brought it home, you might as well try to get it to make its own particular kind of music. It makes no sense to force it to behave like a Moog synthesizer." Given the enduring popularity of the play as a form of entertainment, why do you think it's obsolete?

ARG: Only a limited group of people goes to plays. Theater is unfortunately not the heart of our culture. I wish it were, and I'll do everything I can to help, but I don't think it is. The vast majority of younger people don't go to the theater unless their parents pay for the tickets (laughing). In New York and in many of the resident theaters around me, the audiences tend to be older, and the younger generation doesn't go.

EB: Actually, younger people are very involved in the arts in San Francisco.

ARG: I did notice that the audiences at *Love Letters* were younger in San Francisco than in many places. I think San Francisco might be a rarity in some ways, because we are having a problem with audiences in New York and elsewhere. Now, I'm not talking about audiences for *Phantom of the Opera* or something like that, because I consider those extravaganzas to be more like the Ice Capades or the circus than serious theater. But for serious plays, there are not too many that open these days, or that run very long.

EB: What is a play's "own particular kind of music?"

ARG: The theater is a medium that has particular things to say, and you can't ask it to do things it's not very good at doing. *Terminator 2* would not be very good on stage, right? Likewise, a film version of *Private Lives* might not be very good. So there are certain things that work well on stage because of the nature



PETER DONALDSON

A.C.T. favorite Peter Donat and Barbara Rush shared the correspondence of a lifetime in Theatre on the Square's production of A.R. Gurney's wildly popular *Love Letters*.

of the characters, the space in which they take place, and the writing. Plays are not necessarily immediately transferable to other media. Sometimes it works. Take *Driving Miss Daisy* — there's a play that made a very good movie. That's a rarity, though.

EB: You've also made interesting comparisons between writing novels and writing plays. John says he's never been able to write a novel.

Yet you've been successful at it.

ARG: I've written three, actually. While

I enjoyed writing them, I just don't enjoy writing novels half as much as I enjoy writing for the theater. John isn't exactly the same person as I am, remember, he's a stage character. He says, I can't write fiction. I say, I've tried, and I've had some small success with it, but I'm really much more at home with writing plays.

EB: What is it about a play that makes it feel like "home"?

ARG: I think the immediacy of the response, of the audience . . . you



MARC RYAN-BROWN

Richard Thomas with Swoosie Kurtz as the long-distance lovers in the New York production of *Love Letters*.

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can be *there*. You can't lean over your readers' shoulders as they're reading along, or be there when they finish a book and say, "That's a good book!" With a play you get the payoff — you know whether you're working or not with an audience. Also, the theater's a very collaborative medium. What I like about it is working with actors and directors. It's more of a team sport.

EB: People focus quite a bit on John's relationship with Bradley. What do you think Ann's role is in the family dynamics?

ARG: It's always hard to comment intel-

things in her life that we can be sure Bradley hasn't heard about, but I don't really know.

EB: Bradley does seem to feel threatened by John. He says "I'm the father" and calls John a troublemaker.

ARG: That's right. There's a kind of transfer of power during the course of the play, if the seat of power is who makes the drinks, who determines who drinks what, who stands at the bar.

EB: You mentioned once that a primary image in your plays is the "lack of responsibility for itself"

EB: Ann and Bradley both bemoan the passing of the civilized era of the cocktail hour. Yet even Bradley says, "There's nothing more dangerous than a lengthy cocktail hour." Do you think this way of life is pretty much gone?

ARG: I think it still goes on, there's no doubt about it, but I'm not sure that it will continue much longer. I did, I hope, deal with that family with some affection, but I don't think it's healthy. Not only in its dependence on alcohol, but I also think it's too self-involved. There are too many poor people in the world, too much suffering, too much injustice. I think that both children are calling their parents' attention to that.

EB: Are there aspects of this way of life, some of the values, you have incorporated into your own life and passed on to your children?

ARG: Certainly some of them. The father, for all his musty old-fashionedness, is an intelligent and well-read man, a civilized man, and a polite man. I mean, poor Cheryl Marie in the kitchen who's trying to get a meal together — he treats her with great respect. It's the civility of the man I respect and admire, and I've certainly tried to teach my kids that. There's also a kind of warmth and humor and generosity of spirit in the mother, and I hope my kids have that, too. John and Nina both have a sense that they have to do something more in life, that they have to say something, do something for others in the world. Nina says, we've taken an awful lot out of the world, now it's time to start putting things back. I think our kids have heard that from me.

EB: What was the genesis of *The Cocktail Hour*? Was it your parents' reaction to *Scenes from American Life*?

ARG: Well, that's certainly an element of the play, though not its genesis. When *Scenes from American Life* was done in Buffalo in 1970, my parents were kind of upset about it. They felt that I was revealing

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John Shea and Ann McDonough entertaining with the rest of the family in the 1983 off-Broadway production of A.R. Gurney's *The Dining Room*.

lectually on my plays, but I think she's a crucial element in the play, an essential figure. But I have never looked at the play quite in terms of just the father-son conflict. I feel it's really a quartet. How would she fit into the father-son conflict? I can say the obvious, that she's kind of a moderating figure . . .

EB: Yes, whenever things get tense she goes and gets food.

ARG: That's right (laughing). Or else has another drink herself. I don't know, I guess I'd have to leave that point to the critics, what her function is. Is she a Jocasta figure? Are the men competing for her attention? I'm not sure. John gets her to reveal

demonstrated by the social class portrayed in *The Cocktail Hour*. What did you mean by that?

ARG: I think in that play Nina is the voice of civic responsibility. Of course, she's just an amateur at the beginning — she's one of those "thousand points of light" President Bush talks about. But I guess the emphasis on alcohol, servants, and easy living that the family has indulged in for all these years — that's coming to an end. John says that the cocktail hour is over, it's time to wake up. The world is changing, and they have a responsibility to change with it and help it change in the right direction.

Conversation Piece

by A.R. Gurney

"An American cannot converse, but he can discuss, and his talk falls into a dissertation. He speaks to you as if he was addressing a meeting."

— Alexis de Tocqueville, "Democracy in America," 1835

It would seem that this canny Frenchman, who looked us over early in the last century, put his finger on something that has a certain validity today. I, for one, as I read his remarks, recall those many times when I've been cornered by some self-styled expert who harangues me with

his considered opinion on an interminable agenda of topics. Indeed it seems that lately I've become so accustomed to being barraged with information from people who know so much more about a subject than I do that even the idea of a discussion, much less a conversation, sounds

wonderfully civil and congenial.

To be clear about the difference between these two modes of discourse, we might look at their exaggerated forms. A discussion may escalate to an argument, a diatribe, and a fight. A conversation might dwindle to banter or chat. A good



Douglass Montgomery, Lynn Fontanne, Alfred Lunt, and Lily Cahill engaged in sophisticated conversation in *Caprice*.

discussion leads to a sigh of relief, a sense of accomplishment, a gain in knowledge, and possibly a gain in income. A good conversation doesn't have any particular shape. There's a kind of rhythm to it, and the reassuring assumption that we're all in this thing together. We take our cues from each other, like porpoises in a pool.

Certainly it would seem that we've created an environment in this country where a genuine conversation is hard to crank up and get going. Conversation requires quiet, and we're a noisy bunch, our music noisier still. Our cars, in which we spend a great deal of time, are hardly conducive to it, since we all face front, and who can really converse through side-long glances? In the 19th century, if we can believe our books and movies, stage coaches, Pullman cars, ocean liners and hotels all forced people to eye each other directly. Today, de Tocqueville could rent a car and travel from motel to motel without hearing more than "Have a good day."

One might think that good conversations happen at high-toned dinner parties in New York or along the university-lined banks of the Charles River, but no: there's where *discussions* run rampant. American conversations force their way up through our hard-topped way of life in more unexpected places. Black Americans, for example, seem to converse easily; at least when they're talking to each other. Possibly because they've long had to learn how to take their own sweet time, possibly because they've become skeptical of where discussions have led them, blacks seem able to toss the conversational ball around the court with admirable grace and ease. Women, too, claim that they converse well when they're not with men, and children, we know when we happen to overhear them, converse wonderfully when they're not with grown-ups. Theater people, who are children at heart, are pretty good at it when they're talking about theater, and academics are pretty terrible at it when they're talking about anything.

We've gotten very good at subtly seasoning our talk with those essential verbal signals that let others know what's important in our lives. People who went to Harvard, or whose children are on the waiting list there, manage to find ways of sharing their sense of salvation soon

after they've shaken hands. If someone has just read a book, seen a movie, or watched a good game, he usually tries to toss that into the ring, out of hope that a conversation might crystallize around it. We do what we can to get it to grow quickly, like winter wheat.

Certainly there are patterns for what seem to be good conversations in plays and books. For example, the bright romantic give and take in Shakespeare, Congreve, and Shaw. The trouble is, people who try to talk this way in life, who try to steer the talk toward their own clever bon mots, may simply irritate us in the end.

In my own life, I was both blessed and cursed to be born into a family that insisted that good conversation was one of the chief joys of life. Whether we were really good at it or not, I'm not sure, but there were times when we thought we were, and I remember them as being very pleasant. My father, particularly, took it all very seriously and passed on to his offspring a number of conversational rules that have proved to be helpful in these ruder times. He thought, for example, that it always helped to kick off a conversation by giving someone a compliment: "How well you look!" (even if they don't) . . . "What a lovely necklace!" (even if it isn't) . . . "Has anyone ever told you that you have a very distinguished nose?" He was also adept in including others in the game if they happened to wander by: "We were just talking about . . .", "Ah, here you are. Just the person to help us decide. . . ." And he was a master at what university professors call closure: "On that note, suppose we stroll over to the bar and refresh our glass . . .", "Ah, but I see that my wife is signalling through the flames." Like most good conversationalists, my father was a master of eliciting and responding enthusiastically to the views of others, though this resiliency didn't always extend to his children. Indeed, now I think about it, he spoke to us many times as if he were addressing a meeting. That's all right. It's the toughest thing in the world to get a good conversation going with one's kids. On the other hand, it's worth taking on, since I know from experience that it can be one of the best.

— From *Newsweek*, June 26, 1989
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A.R. GURNEY

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them or their friends in public, and they didn't like it. It particularly angered my father. It's true that Bradley senses John is somehow going to wash the family linen, whether dirty or not, in public. But it's hard to know what particular thing causes a play to be written. I think it was just my desire to square things away in my own head about my family.

EB: Are you maybe trying to shake us out of our state of "suspended animation," as John describes the cocktail hour?

ARG: The French have an expression, "épater les bourgeois" — shake up the middle class. I suppose there's an element of that in my plays. Certainly that's what John's trying to do. He's a troublemaker, trying to shake things up. I always tried to do that, and I always got into trouble, too.

EB: You have said that you have had a hard time taking yourself seriously as a writer. Do you take yourself seriously as a writer now that you're a "successful" playwright?

ARG: I do take myself seriously as a writer, which leads to problems sometimes, because I find myself competing with myself. I am constantly asking myself when I'm writing, is this play good or bad? Early on when people asked me if I was a writer it was sort of embarrassing to me, because I didn't have anything produced that I could point to. But a friend of mine kept saying that I've got to call myself a writer, or I'll never write anything good. But there's a danger in taking yourself too seriously, too.

EB: In early 1990 you said that you were through writing about WASPs. Is that still true?

ARG: I will always write about people I know. But I think I've said all I'm going to say about WASPs in a changing world. I just finished a play called *The Fourth Wall*. That gives you an idea of the kind of thing I'm working on now.

Spotlight on the Conservatory Faculty: Frances Lee McCain

"At A.C.T., those who *can* teach." That's what Jonathan Marks, Associate Director of the A.C.T. Conservatory, says about Frances Lee McCain. Ms. McCain, currently appearing as Nina in *The Cocktail Hour*, has joined the Conservatory faculty this year to teach acting to first-year students in the Advanced Training Program (A.T.P.).

The symbiosis of performance and training has been a fundamental part of A.C.T.'s identity from the very beginning, where "theatrical excellence achieves its fullest realization when repertory performance and professional training are *concurrent and inseparable*," as our statement of purpose expresses.

A Young Woman Goes West

Ms. McCain is an outstanding example of this tenet being put into practice. She brings to A.C.T.'s mainstage the benefits of a classical education and over two decades of experience acting on stage, screen, and television. She received a bachelor's degree in philosophy from Ripon College and spent three years at London's Central School of Speech and Drama. After appearing in Woody Allen's *Play It Again, Sam* on Broadway, Ms. McCain came west to join A.C.T. in the 1970 season. She reflects on her decision to join the Company: "When Allen Fletcher was in New York auditioning actors for A.C.T., I was delighted to be chosen, because a repertory company is where I wanted to be. I jumped at the chance."

Ms. McCain received much of her early professional acting experience at A.C.T. During the 1970-71 and 1971-72 seasons, she appeared in several A.C.T. productions, including *The Latent Heterosexual*, *Dandy Dick*, *Paradise Lost*, as Octavia in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, and as Cleopatra in Shaw's *Caesar and Cleopatra*. "Allen Fletcher and Bill Ball had a really profound influence on me," says Ms. McCain, looking back at her early days with the Company. A.C.T. is also



Frances Lee McCain with Ronmie Cox in the television series "Apple's Way," which ran during the 1973 and 1974 seasons. Created by Lorimar Productions.

where she began her teaching career, as an acting instructor at the Summer Training Congress in 1971. "I had no idea what I was doing!" she remembers, laughing. "But I had a ball, I enjoyed it tremendously. Warner Shook, who directed *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* this year, was one of my students!"

Hollywood Beckons

After leaving A.C.T. in 1972, Ms. McCain pursued a career in film and television in Los Angeles, appearing in starring roles in *Back to the Future*, *Gremlins*, *Footloose*, *Tex*, and *Stand by Me*. She also performed in several television specials and movies-of-the-week, and in numerous episodes of television series such as "Remington Steele," "Hunter," "St. Elsewhere," "Lou Grant," "The Rockford Files," "The Bob Newhart Show," and "Apple's Way" (as Barbara Apple). While in Los Angeles she also continued to pursue her first love, the theater, performing in *Babbitt*, at the Mark Taper Forum in *Three Sisters*, and as Stella in *A Streetcar Named Desire* (with Jon Voight and Faye Dunaway) at the Ahmanson Theatre.

A Blissful Return to A.C.T.

But Ms. McCain couldn't stay away from San Francisco for long. "Coming back to San Francisco was an inner compulsion," she says. "I was truly 'following my bliss,' I guess. It was time to be doing what I'm supposed to be doing. Actually, I credit [A.C.T. Associate Artistic Director] Joy Carlin with bringing me back. She invited me up to San Jose in 1986 to perform in *Passion*, which she was directing for San Jose Rep, and I had a wonderful time. But in the back of my mind the seeds were planted to return to San Francisco. I had close ties here from my early days at A.C.T., so I always felt that my future was here in some way."

Since returning to A.C.T., Ms. McCain has appeared in *A Tale of Two Cities*, in *Golden Boy*, as an ensemble actor in *Judevine* (receiving a Bay Area Critics Circle Award), in *Seven Gables* in the Plays-in-Progress program, and in *Enemies* for Encore Presentations. This season, in addition to appearing in *The Cocktail Hour*, she understudied the role of Donna Lucia in *Charley's Aunt*. She is also pursuing a master's degree in drama therapy at the California Institute for Integral Studies here in San Francisco.

As if that weren't enough, Ms. McCain has added teaching and directing at the Conservatory to her schedule. Last fall she instructed 32 first-year A.T.P. students in the fundamentals of acting, and this winter she co-directed (with Nino DeGennaro, an A.T.P. graduate) Sam Shepard's *A Lie of the Mind*, an A.T.P. studio project. "I've let the first-year students know that we are in our first year together, and that I'm working things out at the same time they are," she says about teaching. "It's an incredible process for me."

The Philosophical Approach

Asked to describe her teaching philosophy, Ms. McCain responds, "My approach is very much a developmental one, and

reflects my interest in ensemble work. I first like to create a group feeling of trust that can sustain the kind of difficult work that will come later. This is not an original approach — anyone who has studied at A.C.T. has benefitted from it. I then introduce ideas and exercises in a hierarchy of complexity, so the students begin on a very basic level and grow from there. I try to put an emphasis on creating a safe atmosphere in which to explore issues right from day one.

"I think I have a special feeling for the group process from my ensemble work. No actor works in a vacuum, and inexperienced actors very often don't really know what it means to work in a connected way. The fun of teaching for me is in facilitating that connection, in helping my students tell a story. When we as actors connect with the people who are telling a story with us, then send the story out there and really click with an audience, it is truly a wonderful experience. That powerful, cyclical energy is what makes life in theater unlike anything else, and I try to help my students have that experience.

"I'm also particularly interested in helping my students access not just their own emotions, but the emotions of the characters they are playing," Ms. McCain continues. "Very often less experienced actors feel that, as long as they can feel any emotion, they're doing the work. But beyond that comes the more precise and complex work of *becoming* someone else. This process ties in closely with my interest in drama therapy, in helping people access other roles in life.

"I learned a neat technique from director Richard Seyd when we did *A View from the Bridge* at Berkeley Rep. A student takes a memory from his or her childhood and meditates on it, letting it transform and evolve into a memory from the childhood of the character. It produces some wonderful results."

Teacher Receives an A+

How does Ms. McCain feel about being back at A.C.T.? "Great! All of the teachers are serious practitioners and care about what they're doing. They're good actors, or directors, or both, and they approach the work from a very altruistic point of

view. And they're also my pals, so I'm comfortable working with them."

Ms. McCain's colleagues at A.C.T. also give her high marks for teaching and performance. Says Richard Butterfield, Conservatory Dean, "The actor-teacher is an essential element of A.C.T. training. Last fall, ten repertory company members were also teaching classes at the same time. What goes on on the mainstage is a very important component of teaching — it *is* one of your teachers. An instruc-

teaching technique." Dr. Marks concurs. "Frances adds a different tonality — a woman's perspective — to the program."

Performance and Training: The Symbiotic Relationship

At A.C.T., actors teach, teachers act, and students learn professional techniques and discipline through the close association with experienced theater artists, like Ms. McCain, that A.C.T. provides. Conserva-



With co-director Nino DeGennaro, Frances Lee McCain instructs first-year Advanced Training Program students rehearsing an A.C.T. Conservatory studio production of Sam Shepard's *A Lie of the Mind*.

tor who is also a performer has to put her money where her mouth is — after teaching during the day, she has to act that night across the street.

"Not all actors are teachers, but Frances is a real force in both," he continues. "She is extremely generous and open to dialogue and the idea that she and the students take the journey, ask and answer the questions inherent in the process, together. Her approach is one that begins with 'tell me how it went for you.' She has a tremendous capacity for nurturing in her teaching style, while acknowledging that students need an aggressive

tory Director Susan Stauter honors that light and assures that it will continue to burn: "A.C.T. is both a theater and a conservatory, functioning together, concurrently, inseparably. The realization of this conservatory vision provides a continuum, in which the body of knowledge and experience of seasoned American actors is transferred to a younger generation — and in which the energy, curiosity, and new ideas of the young continually invigorate the Company and its productions."

— Elizabeth Brodersen

WHO'S WHO



MARK BRAMHALL made his debut in 1966 with the original company of A.C.T. playing leading roles in *Tartuffe*, *Under Milkwood*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Relapse*, *Little Murders*, *The Time of Your Life*, and *Our Town*, among others. Off-Broadway he reprised his role of George in *Our Town* with Henry Fonda, Robert Ryan, Estelle Parsons, and Jo Van Fleet. He starred with Barbara Colby in the Mark Taper Forum's world premiere of *Ten-Com-Zip-Com-Zip*, and recently portrayed Malvolio in Des McAnuff's critically acclaimed production of *Twelfth Night* at the La Jolla Playhouse and Claude Frollo in Ellen Geer's adaptation of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. His television credits include co-starring with David Dukes in the PBS production of *Glory! Hallelujah!* and appearing with William Shatner in John Kory's *The People* and with James Earl Jones in "Gabriel's Fire," as well as featured roles in "Growing Pains" and "General Hospital." On film, he has appeared in *They Call Me Mister Tibbs*, *Fools*, *One Is a Lonely Number*, the title role in Colin Higgins' *Young Goodman Brown*, and starred with Howard Hesseman in Bushnell's *The Prisoners*. A Harvard graduate, he was a Fulbright Scholar at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art, and is the author of two plays, a published poet, and a charter member of the Classical Theatre Lab, founded by the artistic associates of the Los Angeles Theatre Center. Mr. Bramhall is also the father of four daughters.



KATHRYN CROSBY, who joined A.C.T. in 1972 after studying in the Advanced Training Program for two years, returned to San Francisco to portray Donna Lucia d'Alvadorez in A.C.T.'s recent production of *Charley's Aunt*. Her previous work at A.C.T. includes roles in *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *The House of Blue Leaves*, *Broadway* and *Family Album*, and she embarked on and completed an 83-city tour in *Same Time, Next Year* in 1978. In addition to theatre work, she has made numerous film and television appearances, hosted a television talk show on KPIX TV, participated in three USO tours to the Far East and Europe, and has been active as a teacher and registered nurse. A Texas native and the mother of three, she is the widow of Bing Crosby, and now works on the Crosby Celebrity/Charity Golf Tournament held each June in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Hosted by *Sara Lee*, the tournament raises \$1.5 million each year to benefit drug education and organizations chosen by competing golfers.

ANNE LAWDER returns to A.C.T. for her 20th season. A graduate of Stanford University, she was an original member of the San Francisco Actor's Workshop. She has appeared with Seattle Repertory Theatre, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, the Pacific Conservatory of the Performing Arts, and the Denver Center Theatre Company, acting in such plays as *Our Town*, *The Threepenny Opera*, *Lysistrata*, *Ring Round the Moon*, *Show Boat*, and *Hamlet* (twice). At A.C.T., where her



husband, the late Allen Fletcher, was Conservatory Director, she has been seen in *Pillars of the Community*, *Equus*, *The Master Builder*, *All the Way Home*, *Ah, Wilderness!*, *Heartbreak House*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Ghosts*, *Another Part of the Forest*, *I Remember Mama*, *Mourning Becomes Electra*, *Morning's at Seven*, *When We Are Married*, *The Immigrant*, *Judevine*, and *1918*. In the summer she appeared in *Richard III* for the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival. Her films include the movies of the week *A Christmas without Snow* and *Eye on the Sparrow* (directed by John Kory) and Francis Ford Coppola's *Tucker*. She has taught speech at the University of Washington, Seattle Repertory Theatre, and A.C.T., and has coached for the San Francisco Opera. She appeared in Encore Theatre Company's world premiere of *Impatient Trains* which was written by her daughter-in-law, Ellen Moore. In 1982 Ms. Lawder received the Alumni of the Year Award for Life Achievement from Burlingame High School. She has two children, John C. and Julia Fletcher (both distinguished theater professionals) and three beautiful grandchildren.

FRANCES LEE MCCAIN was a member of A.C.T. from 1970 to 1972, appearing in *The Latent Heterosexual*, *Dandy Dick*, *Paradise Lost*, as Octavia in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, and as Cleopatra in Shaw's *Caesar and Cleopatra*. Ms. McCain now makes her home in the Bay Area, and since her return to A.C.T. she



has appeared as Madame Defarge in *A Tale of Two Cities*, Lottie in *When We Are Married*, Lorna in *Golden Boy*, an ensemble actor in *Judevine* (receiving a Bay Area Critics Circle Award), *Seven Gables* in the Plays in Progress program, and *Enemies* for Encore Presentations. She was in Woody Allen's *Play It Again, Sam* on Broadway, the original production of Lanford Wilson's *Lemon Sky* off-Broadway, (reappearing in the same play at the Marin Theatre Company last year), and *Passion* (directed by Joy Carlin) at San Jose Repertory Company. In Los Angeles she acted in *Babbitt* and as Natasha in *Three Sisters* at the Mark Taper Forum, and as Stella in *A Streetcar Named Desire* (with Jon Voight and Faye Dunaway) at the Ahmanson. She played Beatrice in Miller's *A View from the Bridge* at Berkeley Repertory Theatre, for which she received a Bay Area Theater Critics' Circle Award and Drama-Logue Award. She has appeared in leading roles in many films and television series and specials; her credits include starring roles in *Back to the Future*, *Gremlins*, *Footloose*, *Tex*, and *Stand by Me*. Ms. McCain trained at the Central School of Speech and Drama in London and teaches Acting in the A.C.T. Conservatory.

WILLIAM McKEREGHAN returns to A.C.T., where he was previously seen as Kulygin in *Three Sisters*, Casca in *Julius Caesar*, and Oscar Hubbard in *The Little Foxes*, among other roles during six seasons with A.C.T. Over the past 32 years his work has included performances in more than 150 productions at the Center Stage in Baltimore, the Milwaukee Repertory Theater, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, the Berkeley



Shakespeare Festival, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, San Jose Repertory Company, and the Court Theatre in Chicago. He has also directed 15 productions, including Anouilh's *The Rehearsal*, Sam Shepard's *True West*, and Noel Coward's *Hay Fever*. A graduate of the University of Minnesota, he is married with three children.



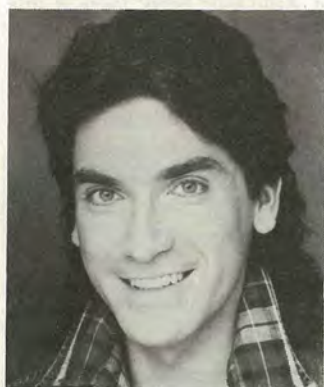
WILLIAM PATERSON is now in his 25th season with A.C.T., having joined the company in 1967 to play James Tyrone in *Long Day's Journey into Night*. A graduate of Brown University, Mr. Paterson served in the army for four years before starting his professional acting career in a summer stock company. He appeared for at least part of every season for twenty years at The Cleveland Play House, taking time out for live television, films, and four national tours with his own one-man shows. The A.C.T. productions in which he has appeared in major roles include *You Can't Take It With You*, *Jumpers*, *The Matchmaker* (U.S.S.R. tour), *All the Way Home* (Japan tour), *Buried Child*, *The Gin Game*, *Dial 'M' for Murder*, *Painting Churches*, *The Doctor's*

Dilemma, *King Lear*, *Saint Joan*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, and *Saturday, Sunday and Monday*, for which he received the Bay Area Critics Circle Award for Best Supporting Actor. Mr. Paterson played Scrooge in the original A.C.T. production of *A Christmas Carol*, and performed the role again in its sixteenth holiday production. He served for nine years on the San Francisco Arts Commission, and for two years as a Trustee of the A.C.T. Foundation.



ALICIA SEDWICK, who was most recently seen at A.C.T. as Mrs. Dilber in *A Christmas Carol* and as Sister Marthe and the Orange Girl in *Cyrano de Bergerac*, is a Professional Theater Intern and the recipient of the Mrs. Joan W. Sadler Fellowship. She is a graduate of A.C.T.'s Advanced Training Program, where her studio roles included Hesione Hushabye in *Heartbreak House*, Titania in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and Judith Bliss in *Hay Fever*. She was also seen on A.C.T.'s mainstage last season as a Player in *Hamlet*. This past summer at Theatre on the Square she understudied and performed both Kathy and Mo's roles in *The Kathy and Mo Show: Parallel Lives*. Ms. Sedwick has performed at the Old Globe Theatre in *Comedy of Errors*, and has, at the other end of the spectrum, worked in Hong Kong dubbing a kung fu film. Some of her favorite past performances include Lucienne in *A Flea in Her Ear*, Maire in *Translations* and Constanze in *Amadeus* at the Pacific Conservatory of the Performing Arts.

ERIC ZIVOT made his A.C.T. mainstage debut in last season's *Saturday, Sunday and Monday* and appeared as Guilden-



stern in *Hamlet*, in the annual holiday production of *A Christmas Carol*, and

most recently as the Marquis Cuiqui in *Cyrano de Bergerac*. In A.C.T.'s Plays in Progress series he was seen in *Raising Caen* and *Them That's Got*. Other Bay Area credits include playing Valmont in *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* for CitiArts and the title role in *Macbeth* for the Marin Shakespeare Company, and directing *Julius Caesar* for A.C.T.'s Academy Program. A native of Canada, he appeared in Michael Bogdonov's modern-dress *Measure for Measure*, Ronald Ayre's *Inspector General* and *King Lear*, directed by John Hirsh at the Stratford Festival in Canada, and Sebastian in *Twelfth Night* for the Festival's U.S. Tour. He was

also seen as Lord Fredrick Verisopht in the Canadian company of *Nicholas Nickleby*, and as Patrick in *Spanish Post Cards* at the Canadian New Play Festival. Mr. Zivot teaches Voice and Speech in A.C.T.'s Advanced Training Program, and has served as voice and dialect coach for A.C.T.'s *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Judevine*, and *1918*, as well as the Berkeley Shakespeare Festival's *Twelfth Night*, the Marin Shakespeare Company's *As You Like It*, San Francisco State University's *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, and the U.C. Santa Cruz production of *A Lie of the Mind*.

THE COCKTAIL HOUR DIRECTORS AND DESIGNERS

ALBERT TAKAZAUCKAS (Director) previously staged *Saturday, Sunday and Monday*, *Burn This*, *The Floating Light Bulb*, *A Lie of the Mind*, and *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* at A.C.T., where he is a Resident Director. He has worked extensively for other Bay Area theaters, directing such productions as *The Norman Conquests*, *Chekhov in Yalta*, *Geniuses*, *These Men*, *Sharon and Billy*, *Breaking the Code*, *Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune* and *Love Diatribe*. Mr. Takazauckas is a noted opera director, working throughout the United States for such institutions as the Seattle Opera, the Kennedy Center, and the San Francisco Opera. Following this production, Mr. Takazauckas will direct the premiere of Cherrie Moraga's *Heroes and Saints* for the Mission Cultural Center and Ellen Gavin, a new production of *La Nozze de Figaro* in Minneapolis, *Tosca* in Arkansas, and *Acis and Gaietea* for the Carmel Bach Festival.

STEVEN RUBIN (Scenic Design) designed the original and New York City productions of *The Cocktail Hour*. He has

designed scenery and costumes for several Broadway and off-Broadway productions, including *Romance Romance*, *On Golden Pond*, *The Perfect Party*, and *Another Antigone*, among others. His designs for regional theaters include productions at the Old Globe Theatre (*Emily, Romeo and Juliet*, *The Miser*); Long Wharf Theatre (*Ah, Wilderness!*, *Scenes from American Life*, *Paris Bound*); Spoleto Festival USA (Tennessee Williams' *Creve Coeur*); and Indiana Repertory Theatre (*Mousetrap*, *Henry's Project*, *Rain*). His opera design credits include *Werther* for the San Francisco Opera, as well as operas for the Kennedy Center, St. Louis Opera and Santa Fe Opera. He has also designed productions for San Francisco Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, Pennsylvania Ballet (the full-length *Nutcracker* and *Winter Dreams*), Chicago City Ballet (*Cinderella*), and New York City Ballet (*Fearful Symmetries* and *Calcium Night Light*). Mr. Rubin's academic honors include positions as Lecturer in Design at the Yale School of Drama and Resident Designer at the Yale Repertory Theatre.

DAVID F. DRAPER (Costume Designer) joined A.C.T. in 1988 after six years as Resident Designer for Theater and Dance at the Baltimore School for the Arts. He has designed productions for numerous theater and opera companies, including *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* and *The Nightingale* for The Children's Theatre Company in Minneapolis; *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Macbeth* for the Baltimore Actors' Theatre; *Rigoletto* and *Così Fan Tutte* for the Annapolis Opera; *Tartuffe* for the Peabody Opera Theatre; and *Waiting for Godot* for Shakespeare Santa Cruz. His costume design credits for summer stock shows include productions at the Cabrillo Summer Theatre in California and in New York at the Gateway Playhouse and Cider Mill Playhouse, where he was Resident Designer for three seasons. In San Francisco, his designs for *Babes in Arms* were cited by critics for Best Costume Design in 1976; this honor was shared with A.C.T.'s *A Christmas Carol*, which he re-mounts each year as Costume Shop Manager. At A.C.T., Mr. Draper has also re-worked *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, and coordinates the Christmas Treat each year.

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

EDWARD HASTINGS (Artistic Director) is a founding member of A.C.T., having joined the Company during its formation in Pittsburgh in 1965 and served as Execu-

tive Director under General Director William Ball. He was appointed Artistic Director by the Board of Trustees when Mr. Ball resigned his position in February,

1986. During A.C.T.'s 25 years in San Francisco, Mr. Hastings has directed 30 repertory productions, including *Our Town*, *A Delicate Balance*, *The Time of Your Life*,

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experience matched only by its sumptuous setting ... the 21-story atrium of The Pan Pacific Hotel. After dinner, theaters and Union Square are steps away. And of course, our valets will take care of the parking. After theater, why not return and spend the evening in the luxury of San Francisco's most romantic night spot.



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The House of Blue Leaves, *Broadway*, *Street Scene*, *All the Way Home*, *Fifth of July*, *The Girl of the Golden West*, *The Real Thing*, and *King Lear*. This year, he directed the Silver Anniversary Season revival of his first San Francisco A.C.T. production, *Charley's Aunt*. Mr. Hastings' commitment to new writing and playwrights is evident in the many world premieres he has directed at A.C.T., including Lisette Lecat Ross' *Dark Sun*, David Budbill's *Judevine*, Michael McClure's *General Gorgeous*, William Hamilton's *Happy Landings*, and Marsha Norman's *The Holdup*. He served as resident director at the Eugene O'Neill Playwrights' Conference for three summers and taught acting in 1984 at the Shanghai Drama Institute as part of the Theater Bridge Program between A.C.T. and the Shanghai theater. He has been involved in the development of cultural exchange and is a member of the Arts International Committee of the Institute of International Education. In 1978, his production of *All the Way Home* was presented in Tokyo. He directed a national company of the London and Broadway musical hit *Oliver!*, staged the American production of *Shakespeare's People* starring Michael Redgrave, directed the Australian premiere of the *Hot l Baltimore*, and restaged his A.C.T. production of Sam Shepard's *Buried Child* in Serbo-Croatian at the Yugoslav Dramatic Theatre in Belgrade. Other productions have been presented on A.C.T. tours in the United States, including Hawaii, and he has been a guest director at major resident theaters throughout the country. A graduate of Yale College and the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, Mr. Hastings is also a teacher in the A.C.T. Conservatory.

JOHN SULLIVAN (Managing Director) joined A.C.T. as its chief administrative and financial officer in 1986. A native San Franciscan, Mr. Sullivan has been active in the theater since the mid-1970s, when he directed Harvey Perr's *Afternoon Tea* for the Circle Repertory Company in New York. In 1977 he joined the staff of the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles as a resident director and producer. As head of the Taper's Forum Laboratory he produced numerous new plays by such

writers as David Mamet, Susan Yankowitz, and A.R. Gurney. More recently he produced *The Detective*, a collaboration between Joseph Chaikin and Vaudeville Nouveau at San Francisco's Magic Theatre. A former deputy director of the California Arts Council, Mr. Sullivan has served on the boards of Theatre Bay Area and the San Francisco New Vaudeville Festival. After completing his graduate work at the University of Southern California's School of Cinema, Mr. Sullivan wrote and directed numerous short films for the educational and entertainment markets, including three which were featured on national Emmy Award broadcasts. For five years he was a consultant to the Rand Corporation, focusing his work on the process and societal impact of popular culture. As a communications consultant Mr. Sullivan has advised such diverse clients as the California Roundtable, Kansas City Power and Light, and Major League Rodeo. Among his writings is *The National Outdoor Leadership School's Wilderness Guide*, a manual for camping and mountaineering published by Simon and Schuster, and numerous articles for magazines and newspapers.

BENNY SATO AMBUSH (Associate Artistic Director) is a veteran theater professional with national and international experience as a director, educator, producer, and arts administrator. Before joining A.C.T. last season, he was the Artistic/Producing Director of the Oakland Ensemble Theatre (OET) for eight years, where his directing credits included *Division Street*, *A Night at the Apollo*, *O. Henry's Christmas*, *Tamer of Horses*, and *Alterations* (Drama-Logue Award, Best Direction). Last season he directed *Pigeon Egghead* in A.C.T.'s Plays in Progress series, which has helped inspire the creation of a Bay Area Native American theater company — Turtle Island Ensemble, now a project of A.C.T. He also directed *Letters from a New England Negro* for the 1991 National Black Theater Festival in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. This season he has directed *Fences* for the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Portland, and *Miss Evers' Boys* for the Alabama Shakespeare Festival. He has served as a National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Arts Management Fellow in its Special

Projects Program; as an Assistant Director-in-Residence at Washington, D.C.'s Arena Stage, as an NEA Directing Fellow at the Pittsburgh Public Theater; and as a United States Information Agency-sponsored lecturer to Kenyatta University in Nairobi, Kenya. He has served on the Board of Theatre Bay Area and chaired its Theater Services Committee, is a member of the Multi-Cultural Advisory Council for the California Arts Council, and has been active locally, regionally, and nationally in advocacy for cultural equity, non-traditional casting, and pluralism in American art. Mr. Ambush received his B.A. in theater arts and dramatic literature from Brown University, and his M.F.A. in stage directing from the University of California, San Diego.

JOY CARLIN is an Associate Artistic Director at A.C.T., and has been a member of the acting Company for many years. Among the roles she has played are Big Mama in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, Miss Pross in *A Tale of Two Cities*, Annie Parker in *When We Are Married*, Meg in *A Lie of the Mind*, Enid in *The Floating Light Bulb*, Miss Prism in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Kitty Duval in *The Time of Your Life*, Bananas in *The House of Blue Leaves*, Asa in *Peer Gynt*, Aunt Sally in *All the Way Home*, Birdie in *The Little Foxes*, and Odile in *Opéra Comique*. She has been Resident Director of Berkeley Repertory Theatre, and has served as its Acting Artistic Director. Among her directing credits are *The House of Bernarda Alba*, *The Lady's Not for Burning*, *The Doctor's Dilemma*, *Marco Millions*, *Golden Boy*, *Hapgood*, and last season's world premiere production of *Food and Shelter* at A.C.T., as well as productions at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, San Jose Repertory Company, A Contemporary Theatre of Seattle, and the Shanghai Youth Drama Troupe of China, where she directed *You Can't Take It With You*.

DENNIS POWERS (Associate Artistic Director) joined A.C.T. in 1967, during the company's first San Francisco season, after six years as an arts writer at the Oakland Tribune. Before being named to his present position in 1986 by Edward Hastings, he worked with William Ball as, succes-

Wild Should Wild Remain.

"Man always kills the thing he loves, and so we the pioneers have killed our wilderness. Some say we had to. Be that as it may, I am glad I shall never be young without wild country to be young in."

ALDO LEOPOLD

"We need wilderness preserved—as much of it as is still left, and as many kinds . . . It is important to us . . . simply because it is there—important, that is, simply as an idea."

WALLACE STEGNER

"The love of wilderness is more than a hunger for what is always beyond reach. It is also an expression of loyalty to the earth, (the earth which bore us and sustains us), the only home we shall ever know, the only paradise we ever need—if we had the eyes to see."

EDWARD ABBEY

"The clearest way into the Universe is through a forest wilderness."

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sively, Press Representative, Staff Writer, Dramaturge, and Artists and Repertory Director. The A.C.T. productions on which he has collaborated as dramaturge or adaptor include *Oedipus Rex*, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *The Bourgeois Gentleman*, *King Richard III*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Saint Joan*, and *Diamond Lil*. The most popular of his adaptations, the sixteen-year-old *A Christmas Carol*, was written with Laird Williamson, who was also his collaborator on *Christmas Miracles*, which premiered at the Denver Center Theatre in 1985 and was later published. Among the other theaters with which he has been associated are Long Wharf Theater in New Haven, Stanford Repertory Theater, the Pacific Conservatory of the Performing Arts, and San Francisco's Valencia Rose Cabaret Theater. Mr. Powers' reviews and articles have appeared in the *New York Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Saturday Review*, *Los Angeles Times*, *American Arts*, and *San Francisco Chronicle*.

SUSAN STAUTER (Conservatory Director) came to A.C.T. four years ago as Director of the Young Conservatory. She is a playwright (her *Miss Fairchild Sings* was produced at the Little Victory Theatre in Los Angeles), director (more than 400 productions), actress (Cabaret Repertory Theatre), and educator. She earned her M.A. from California State University Fullerton, taught in southern California for 14 years (earning a citation for outstanding teaching in 1986/87), and served as founding Chairman of the Theater Department of the Los Angeles County High School for the Arts. At the Conservatory she has created and directed *Find Me a Hero*, *The Wildest Storm of All* (*Teenage Voices Confront AIDS*), and *To Whom It May Concern*, directed *The Diary of Anne Frank* and *Angels Fall*, and co-directed *Who Are These People?* She serves on the Superintendent's Task Force for the San Francisco School of the Arts, the Board of Directors of Bay Area Theatre Sports, and as a member of the Advisory Board for Teens Kick-Off. Ms. Stauter has been a creative consultant at Disneyland, and toured to Alaska as Playwright-in-Residence with the Oregon Shakespeare Festival's Educational Outreach Program. Most recently she was

the keynote speaker for the Educational Theatre Association of America's National Conference in St. Louis.

JAMES HAIRE (Production Director) began his career on Broadway with Eva Le Gallienne's National Repertory Theater. Among the productions he stage-managed were *The Madwoman of Chaillot* with Miss Le Gallienne, Sylvia Sydney, and Leora Dana, *The Rivals*, *John Brown's Body*, *She Stoops to Conquer*, and *The Comedy of Errors*. Mr. Haire also stage-managed the Broadway productions of *Georgy* (a musical by Carole Bayer Sager), *And Miss Reardon Drinks a Little*, and the national tour of Woody Allen's *Don't Drink the Water*. Mr. Haire joined A.C.T. in 1971 as Production Stage Manager, and in that capacity managed more than 100 productions and took the Company on numerous regional, national, and international tours.

DEREK DUARTE (Lighting) returns to A.C.T. for a seventh season as resident lighting designer. Most recently his work was seen in *Charley's Aunt* and *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *A Christmas Carol*, and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. Last season, Mr. Duarte designed eight A.C.T. productions, including *The Gospel at Colonus*, *Dark Sun*, and *The Marriage of Figaro*. Past lighting designs for A.C.T. include the award-winning productions of *Sunday in the Park with George*, *King Lear*, *Saint Joan*, *Nothing Sacred*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, and *Judevine*. Recent projects include *Stardust* (sets and costumes designed by Erté) and an adaptation of Ray Bradbury's *Something Wicked This Way Comes*. His work has been represented at the American Festival Theatre in Stratford, Connecticut, the Marines Memorial Theater, Berkeley Repertory, Los Angeles Theatre Center, Milwaukee Repertory, San Jose Repertory, the Berkeley Shakespeare Festival, the Fringe Festival in Edinburgh, Scotland, and the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. In 1986 he was awarded a Theatre Communications Group grant to study lighting design in New York City. Mr. Duarte holds an M.F.A. in theater technology from UCLA and teaches at Chabot College.

RICK ECHOLS (Wigmaster) has designed hair and makeup for over 200 productions

at A.C.T. since 1971, including *Charley's Aunt*, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Dark Sun*, *Hamlet*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, and the company's touring productions to Connecticut, Hawaii, Russia, and Japan. He also created wigs and makeup for A.C.T.'s television productions of *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, and *A Christmas Carol*. Among his other television and film credits are *A View to a Kill*, *Birdy*, "Over Easy" with Hugh Downs, *A Life in the Theatre* with Peter Evans and Ellis Rabb, "The Kathryn Crosby Show," and over 100 commercials. Mr. Echols designed hair and makeup for the original production of *Cinderella* for San Francisco Ballet, *Hamlet* with Anne Baxter and Christopher Walken for the American Shakespeare Festival, and *A Life* with Roy Dotrice for the Citadel Theatre in Edmonton, Canada. He worked on the national tours of *42nd Street Charity* with Debbie Allen and toured to Las Vegas and London with Bing Crosby. Mr. Echols' other credits include doing wigs and makeup for Eureka Theatre's *Angels in America* last season, and Magic Theatre's *Bertha and Oscar* this season.

STEPHEN LeGRAND (Music and Sound) is now in his sixth season as sound designer and composer for A.C.T. His work with the Company has included musical compositions and sound design for *Charley's Aunt*, *Taking Steps*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *The Seagull*, and *Faustus in Hell*. He wrote the music for *A Lie of the Mind*, *Saint Joan*, and *Hapgood* with his collaborator Eric Drew Feldman, with whom he has received awards for their scores for *The Lady's Not for Burning* at A.C.T., *The Tooth of Crime* and *The Rivals* at Berkeley Rep., and *Fen* at the Eureka Theatre. Mr. LeGrand's recent work has included scores for *Yankee Dawg You Die* at Berkeley Rep. and Los Angeles Theatre Center, *Lulu* and *Fuente Ovejuna* for Berkeley Rep. Last season he composed music for *The Wash* at the Mark Taper Forum.

KAREN VAN ZANDT (Production Stage Manager) is now in her 13th season with A.C.T., where she has stage-managed

productions of *Taking Steps*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *The Gospel at Colonus*, *Burn This*, *Twelfth Night*, *Saint Joan*, *Sunday in the Park with George*, *Another Part of the Forest*, *Mourning Becomes Electra*, and *A Christmas Carol*. Other production credits in the Bay Area include *The Boys in Autumn* (with Kirk Douglas and Burt Lancaster), *Top Girls*, *Greater Tuna*, and *Love Letters*.

ALICE ELLIOTT SMITH (Stage Manager) is in her thirteenth season at A.C.T., where she has been the Company's master scheduler, production coordinator of Plays in Progress, director of staged readings, associate director of the Troubadour program, director of the studio production *Ah, Wilderness!*, and co-director of *Morning's at Seven*, *Picnic*, and the Plays in Progress production *Rio Seco*. In recent seasons she stage-managed *Private Lives*, *The Lady's Not for Burning*, *The Floating Light Bulb*, *Faustus in Hell*, *A Lie of the Mind*, *Diamond Lil*, *Golden Boy*,

Feathers, *Woman in Mind*, *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Judevine*, *Hapgood*, *Burn This*, *Food and Shelter*, *Dark Sun*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, *A Christmas Carol*, and *Cyrano de Bergerac*. Ms. Smith is also a consultant to the California Department of Arts-in-Corrections, producing the works of Samuel Beckett in maximum security prisons.

BRUCE ELSPERGER (Stage Manager), who is now in his fifth season with A.C.T., was in Seattle for the previous three years as Production Stage Manager at the Intiman Theatre and Production Manager with The Bathhouse Theatre. He directed the Intiman's acting intern production of *A Streetcar Named Desire*, and produced and directed various shows independently, including *A Breeze from the Gulf*, *Bag Lady*, and a touring production of his musical revue, *A Tribute to American Musical Theater*. Before moving to Seattle he had served as Production Stage Manager with the P.C.P.A. Theatrefest in Solvang and Santa Maria. Mr. Elsparger,

who studied in London and graduated from Drake University, was also an art therapist in the school systems of Iowa and Montana.

A.C.T. operates under an agreement between the League of Resident Theatres and Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States.

A.C.T. is a constituent of Theatre Communications Group, the national organization for the nonprofit professional theatre. A.C.T. is a member of the League of Resident Theatres, American Arts Alliance, California Theatre Council, Theatre Bay Area, Performing Arts Services, San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, and San Francisco Convention & Visitors Bureau.

A.C.T. logo designed by Landor Associates.

The Cocktail Hour, by A.R. Gurney, is presented by arrangement with Dramatists Play Service, Inc., in New York.

ssdc The Director is a member of the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers, Inc., an independent national labor union.

A.C.T. NEWS

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Rosa, and Fresno. Richard Fineberg, the partner in charge of accounting and auditing for Northern California and an A.C.T. Trustee, admits, "We're known for the company we keep. We have more than 1,000 professionals in Northern California, serving many of the Bay Area's most prominent companies, including McKesson Corp., The Charles Schwab Corporation, The Clorox Company, The Gap, Syntex Corporation, Safeway Inc., Homestake Mining Company, Nestle Beverage, Crowley Maritime, and Golden West Financial Corporation."

Deloitte & Touche has long been known for its commitment to non-profit arts organizations. Mr. Fineberg himself became an A.C.T. Trustee "because I've always been interested in theater and A.C.T. I knew A.C.T. would face some interesting challenges in the near future, and I felt that I could make a strong contribution with my financial and management expertise."

About Deloitte & Touche's support of A.C.T., Lynn Odland, the firm's Manag-

ing Partner for San Francisco and Northern California, says, "We enthusiastically support A.C.T., and we hope A.C.T.'s audience enjoys *The Cocktail Hour* as much as we have enjoyed bringing it to them." Mr. Odland is himself a long-time supporter of the arts. "My wife Larri-Lynn and I came to San Francisco after living in Minneapolis for twenty years. We are greatly impressed with the arts here — San Francisco is rich in the diversity it offers in that respect. We attend many theater events. I myself like to sit back, relax, and let the story appear before me, but my wife is more studious about it — she's an artist, a painter. She likes to study up on a production, and then she briefs me. I think we make a good team!"

A.C.T. and Deloitte & Touche make a pretty good team, too. The firm has shouldered the formidable task of helping A.C.T. develop and implement a long-range information systems plan. In the past six months, the firm has dedicated two professionals, Manager George Balmer and Consultant Charles Lehman, to analyzing A.C.T.'s information systems needs, investigating and choosing hard-

and software, researching vendors, and developing programs.

A.C.T. Managing Director John Sullivan remarks, "Deloitte & Touche has done phenomenal work helping us manage an extremely difficult and complex problem. They brought us invaluable expertise." While A.C.T. is responsible for a significant portion of the fees for this project, Deloitte & Touche has already donated an outstanding \$30,000 in services. The project will continue for another several months, and by next season the ticket you buy will be generated by a state-of-the-art computer system, thanks in part to Deloitte & Touche's generosity and know-how.

Many thanks to two powerhouse firms!

Come Fly With Us!

They say one picture is worth a thousand words. If that's true, then A.C.T. currently has the equivalent of 15,000 words on display at San Francisco International Airport through May 8. The exhibition, "On Stage: The 25th Anniver-

sary of the American Conservatory Theater," sponsored by the San Francisco Airports Commission, is on view in the Cultural Wall Gallery near Gate 62 in the North Terminal, which houses American Airlines.

"The exhibit includes wonderful pictures that recall major productions, special events, and backstage scenes, from *A Flea in Her Ear*, which opened in 1968, to this season's *Charley's Aunt*," says A.C.T.

Associate Artistic Director Dennis Powers, who worked with A.C.T. Trustees Marijke Donat and Joan Sadler in researching and selecting the photographs and writing the material that accompanies them. "There are terrific pictures capturing people and events that were milestones for A.C.T. and very dear to all of us — like Bill Ball teaching a Conservatory class. There are also great shots of the Geary Theater before and after the 1989 earthquake. The

exhibit gives a real sense of A.C.T.'s evolution as a company."

A.C.T. extends special thanks to the Airports Commission and to PG&E, whose generosity provided the underwriting for the production of the photographs in the exhibit.

Next time you fly from SFO, stop by the Gate 62 area and take a different kind of trip — a vivid journey back through a quarter century of A.C.T. history.

A.C.T. Acknowledges Conservatory Fellowships and Scholarships

A fundamental component of the A.C.T. mission is its commitment to providing high-caliber professional training to the young actors who attend the Conservatory, many of whom would not be able to attend without the financial assistance provided by A.C.T.'s patrons.

Indeed, much of A.C.T.'s fundraising efforts are directed at providing the resources necessary to support the education of Conservatory students. Last year, \$205,000 of A.C.T.'s total budget was committed to financing Conservatory scholarships and fellowships. Each year, hundreds of donors support the education of America's rising young actors by contributing to A.C.T. Last spring, the Conservatory received \$100,000 from The Bernard Osher Foundation — the largest single contribution ever received by the

Conservatory — and received \$67,790 from 920 donors in matching gifts. In addition, the Edna Reichmuth Fund makes substantial regular contributions to the Conservatory, as does the Transamerica Foundation.

A.C.T. is also fortunate to have several named fellowships that support third-year Professional Theater Interns (P.T.I.'s) in the Conservatory's Advanced Training Program (A.T.P.). Each year deserving graduates of the A.T.P. are selected to receive these fellowships.

The Mrs. Paul L. Wattis Fellowship was established in 1989 in honor of Mrs. Wattis, a long-time benefactress of the arts, to recognize her continued support of A.C.T. This year's Wattis Fellow is Adam Paul, who has performed in A.C.T.'s mainstage productions of *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *A Christmas Carol*, and *Hamlet*. He has also appeared in Conservatory studio productions of *Awake and Sing*, *Charley's Aunt*, *Philistines*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Major Barbara*. His work with Encore Theatre includes recent roles

in *Search and Destroy* and *Road to Nirvana*.

The Joan Sadler Fellowship was established last year in recognition of Mrs. Sadler's many years of service as a Trustee and unflinching support of the Conservatory. Alicia Sedwick, this year's Sadler Fellow, has also appeared on A.C.T.'s mainstage in *A Christmas Carol*, *Cyrano*, and *Hamlet*. She has appeared in Conservatory studio productions of *Heartbreak House*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Hay Fever*. Last summer she understudied and performed both Kathy and Mo's roles in *The Kathy and Mo Show: Parallel Lives*. Ms. Sedwick has also performed at the Old Globe Theater in *The Comedy of Errors*, worked in Hong Kong dubbing a kung fu film, and appeared in *A Flea in Her Ear*, *Translations*, and *Amadeus* at P.C.P.A.

Newly established this year, the William & Flora Hewlett Foundation Fellowship is funded by the Foundation's generous donations. Adrian Roberts, selected as the first recipient, is a graduate of Chabot

Continued on page P-31



Laurie McDermott



Adrian Roberts



Adam Paul

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agencies. These donors make great theater possible. This list below reflects gifts received between February 1, 1991 and January 31, 1992.

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A.C.T. NEWS

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College. He has been seen at A.C.T. in *Cyrano*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, *A Christmas Carol*, and *Hamlet*. He has performed in Conservatory studio productions of *Heartbreak House*, *As You Like It*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *Tonight at 8:30*, and *The Diary of Anne Frank*.

Finally, each year a fundraising event is held to support the Friends of A.C.T. Fellowship. This year's recipient is Laurie McDermott, who appeared in *Charley's Aunt*, *Hamlet*, and *A Christmas Carol*, and understudied Mae in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. Her appearances in Conservatory studio productions include *Ways and Means*, *The Seagull*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Misalliance*. As a cabaret performer, she has appeared with Julie Oda in *At the Paradise Club*, staged in the A.C.T. Playroom, and in *Torch*, directed by Conservatory Director Susan Stauter at the Cannery on San Francisco's waterfront. She also appeared in *Cabaret* and *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* at the P.C.P.A. Theater-fest last summer. A graduate of UCLA, Ms. McDermott worked on "The Young and the Restless" and "The Gary Shandling Show" before moving to the Bay Area.

In addition to these continuing fellowships, A.C.T. welcomes each year donations from patrons willing to sponsor a named fellowship for one year. With the contribution of \$10,000, a fellowship will be established for the benefit of a deserving P.T.I. Last year, such a fellowship was established by Ada Glover Jackson, a longtime A.C.T. subscriber and donor. A first- or second-year student will be selected to benefit from a \$5,000 fellowship donation; and a \$1,000 donation will be used to establish a fellowship to assist a member of the Young Conservatory.

Through the continued commitment of individuals, foundations, corporations, and government agencies, the enduring success of arts education is guaranteed.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

A.C.T.'s Administrative and Conservatory offices are located at 450 Geary Street, San Francisco, CA 94102. (415) 749-2200.

BOX OFFICE INFORMATION

A.C.T.'s Central Box Office

Location: The lobby of the Geary Theater, located on Geary at Mason Street one block west of Union Square.

Box Office Hours: 10am-9pm Tuesday through Saturday; 10am-6pm Sunday and Monday.

Ticket Information/Charge By Phone: (415) 749-2ACT. Use your Visa, MasterCard, or American Express card.

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

BASS: A.C.T. tickets are available at all Bass/TM centers, including The Warehouse and Tower Records/Video. Charge by phone: (415/510) 762-BASS or (408) 998-BASS.

STAGE DOOR/ THEATRE ON THE SQUARE/ ORPHEUM THEATRE

Ticket Prices:

Previews:

Orchestra/Loge	\$22
Balcony	\$16
Gallery	\$10

Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday

Orchestra/Loge	\$26
Balcony	\$20
Gallery	\$10

Friday/Saturday

Orchestra/Loge	\$33
Balcony	\$24
Gallery	\$11

Group Discounts: For groups of 15 or more, call Linda Graham at (415) 346-7805 for special prices.

Latecomers: Latecomers will be seated at an appropriate interval.

Mailing List: Call 749-2228 to request advance notice of shows, events, and subscription information.

Gift Certificates: Give A.C.T. 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 performance at STBS on Union Square in San Francisco. Half-price Student and Senior Rush tickets are available at the theater box office 90 minutes prior to curtain. Matinee Senior Rush price is

\$5.00. 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 ticket exchange privileges or lost 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, Theatre on the Square, and the Orpheum are accessible to persons in wheelchairs.

The Sennheiser Listening System is designed to provide clear, amplified sound anywhere in 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.

Beepers! If you carry a pager, beeper, watch, or alarm, please make sure that it is set to the "off" position while you are in the theater to avoid disturbing the performance. Alternately, 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. Prologues are presented before the Tuesday evening Previews for all productions, except *A Christmas Carol*, from 5:30 pm to 6:30 pm. Doors open at 5:00 pm. Please check your tickets for the appropriate theater's location.

Tuesday Conversations: These after-show talks are informative discussions concerning issues and ideas surrounding the evening's play. Tuesday evening programs will have special inserts describing the speaker and topics for that evening. The Conversations, moderated by A.C.T. Associate Artistic Directors, are free-of-charge and are open to everyone.

School Matinees: 1:00 pm matinees are offered to elementary, secondary, and college groups. Thousands of students attend these performances each season. Tickets are specially priced at just \$8. For more information please call Katherine Spielmann, Student Matinee Coordinator at 749-2230.

Conservatory: A.C.T. offers classes, training, and advanced theater study. Its Young Conservatory program offers training for students between the ages of 8 and 18. Call 749-2230 for a free brochure.

Costume Rental: A large collection of costumes, ranging from hand-made period garments to modern sportswear, are available for rental by schools, theaters, production companies and individuals. Call (415) 749-2296 for more information.

A.C.T. Venues:

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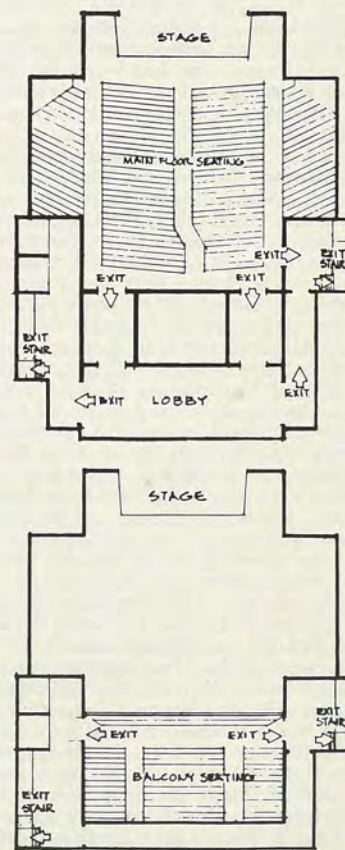
The Orpheum Theatre is located on Market Street at Eighth, near the Civic Center BART/MUNI Station.

THE STAGE DOOR THEATER

The Stage Door Theatre is located at 420 Mason Street at Geary, one block from Union Square.

THEATRE ON THE SQUARE

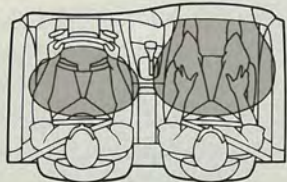
The 700-seat Theatre on the Square is located in the Kensington Park Hotel, at 450 Post Street between Mason and Powell. Conveniently located within short walking distance of the Stage Door Theater, Theatre on the Square is close to many fine restaurants along Post and Mason streets. Ask our Box Office for suggestions.



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Three Jewels

Tokyo, Kyoto and Okinawa for visitors to Japan

As befitting its rich historic background and tourist appeal, Japan has been defined, delineated and diagramed in a plethora of guidebooks.

But possibly the most comprehensive is an enjoyable and highly useful *Gateway to Japan*, (Kodansha) a thesaurus of the country written by June Kinoshita, a writer specializing in the Far East and Nicholas Palevsky, an American author who now lives in Thailand.

In its pages a reader will find an interesting set of notes on everything from a description of a *matsuri* to a one hour course in basic Japanese.

What is a *matsuri* one might ask? Say the authors, "No one can claim to have seen Japan who has not experienced the stirring rhythms of these Japanese festivals, a communion between the divine and the human.

"Villages celebrate the gods that make the land fertile. A Tohoku town event drives away many midsummer spirits of lethargy with a deafening bacchanal that lasts for a week. A mountain village in Kyushu, early home of the gods, celebrates its mythic past with ancient dances in the still of the night."

The one hour course in Japanese may

J. Herbert Silverman is travel editor of ARTnews and contributes regularly to Wine & Spirits. His travel writing appears in the Los Angeles Times and other newspapers.

not make you a master linguist, but it will teach you some useful travel terms: *Chikatetsu*, the word for subway, is an essential in Tokyo, and *densha* is the appellation for commuter train, along with *ban sen* the absolutely necessary word for track number if you are traveling around the country by train.

Even more important are money-related

One can learn from these pages that the lunar calendar was borrowed from the Chinese in 604 and remained Japan's official date-keeper until the 1870s when the Gregorian system was adopted. While Japan may operate its business life according to the Gregorian calendar, many festivals still follow the lunar timing.

To further confuse things, during one interval, a lunar month will be repeated as an *urizuki* causing lunar months to fall a cycle behind.

For Western visitors, pragmatically, the section on airports is extremely helpful.

The guide advises you to sell your yen before passing through security at Narita Airport — there are no moneychangers in the departure lounge. And remember, the exit tax is that magic number two thousand yen.

Tokyo

Tokyo is a monumental city — a world class colossus which will reach an expected population of well over twelve million by the year 2,000 — although one is prone to ask where will they all fit?

The California connection is hardly subtle. Japan is the second largest movie market in the world. This year, Tokyo's eight-year-old Disneyland which covers an incredible two hundred-four acres and is beautified by four hundred-thousand trees and shrubs, welcomed its one hundred-millionth visitor. *Continued*



Above: The traditional and the modern — Tokyo's Shinjuku Gyoen Garden.

by J. Herbert Silverman



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Something special to Japan.

Even in this land of Gekkeikan sake and Kirin beer, California wine labels like Mondavi, Domaine Chandon, Simi and Cakebread are being ordered in increasing quantities by Japanese gourmets who historically have tended to regard Bordeaux and Burgundy as the *sine qua non* for the fruit of the vine.

Tokyo works and entertains on a cosmic scale. One of Japan's largest hotels located in the historic Akasaka district is the New Otani. It has *thirty-seven* restaurants and bars including La Tour D'Argent (one of the country's most expensive) and a branch of Trader Vic's (with one hundred-fifty cocktails on the bar list), plus a ten-acre formal Japanese Garden complete with waterfall as well as a marble amphitheater, reminiscent of Epidaurus in Greece. This Oriental interpretation however, comes with electrically heated seats.

Japan has more than one thousand-four hundred museums, art galleries and concert halls, and their numbers are increasing every year.

The selection in Tokyo is eclectic and ranges from the Gotoh with its fine arts and crafts of ancient Japan to the National Museum of Fine Arts and the Tokyo National Museum.

The latter is the largest in Japan noted for its archeological and fine art collection from throughout Asia.

The Tokyo Metropolitan Festival Hall, which just celebrated its thirtieth birthday, is the finest concert facility in the city with a seating capacity of two thousand-three hundred twenty-seven in the main auditorium.

Distinguished museums pop up everywhere. The New Otani for instance, has a resident gallery which features exhibits by such artists as the Fauvist painter, Maurice de Vlaminck presented in association with the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Chartres.

A recent addition to the gallery scene is "Soko" which unveiled five "spaces" in Shin-Kiba last spring. Shin-Kiba (New Wood Place), once a lumber yard, is now an area of reclaimed land on Tokyo Bay. Tenants include three established galleries from the Ginza area — Nantenshi, Tokyo, and Yamaguchi.

As for opera, more than three hundred members of Italy's Arena di Verona com-

pany flew to Japan for five lavishly produced performances of Puccini's *Turandot* at the Yoyogi National Stadium this past December.

Gladiatorially speaking, the only NCAA football game played outside the United States, the Coca-Cola Superbowl recently brought the Clemson University Tigers and the Duke University Blue Devils to Tokyo at the same time.

While Tokyo has such theaters as the Globe and the Nissei which provide a showplace for contemporary drama, American visitors will be charmed by *Kabuki* at the National Theatre (*Kabu-*



Tokyo's historical Akasaka district.

kiza), while *Noh* plays are presented at the Kanze *Noh* and the National *Noh*.

For the uninitiated, *Kabuki* is one of three major classical theatrical expressions in Japan together with the *Noh* and *Bunraku* (puppet theater).

Kabuki started in the early seventeenth century as a kind of variety show given by troupes of itinerant entertainers and grew into an artistically mature theater.

The plots are high tragedy — a widow driven insane by the loss of her only son, a mistakenly-identified severed head, and a kidnapped geisha mistress formed the mournful themes in recent performances

at the National Theatre.

A fascinating extension of *kabuki* style was the recent Japanese language presentation *Jesus Christ Superstar*, where the cast was dressed in kimonos as well as string shirts and worn jeans with King Herod providing some comic relief.

Noh, on the other hand, is the oldest extant professional Japanese theater dating to the fourteenth century. Troupes originally performed under the patronage of Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples serving as religious fund-raisers.

The performers include actors, musicians (drums and flute) and a chorus of six to eight chanting narration, at times presenting the thoughts of the principal characters. Costumes are rich and heavy, movement, deliberate.

On a lighter side (forgive the pun), Sumo, traditional Japanese wrestling, is a spectacle of loin-clothed heavyweight wrestlers colliding with awesome power and grace in a formalized match.

Going to department stores is an alternate form of entertainment in Tokyo. Normally there's a playground on the roof; an arcade of international restaurants on the top floor, and in the basement, take-out food departments. Some even provide such intellectual pursuits as foreign language courses and tennis instruction.

Heart of Tokyo shopping is the Ginza created as a shopping center by a British architect for the Meiji government after a disastrous fire in 1872, in a drive to adopt western customs.

It sported Tokyo's first gaslights and in contrast, the country's first department store in which customers didn't have to remove their shoes. Elaborate window displays, now common to Tokyo, appeared and *ginbura* (window shopping) became a spectator sport at stores like Mitsukoshi, Takashimaya, and Matsuzaka.

A spritely airline publication, *JAL's Newsletter* has some interesting suggestions for new dimensions in Tokyo sightseeing.

Says the publication, "In the past two decades the science of 'quake-proofing' has continued to develop and Tokyo has become a city of skyscrapers."

Since there's little land and a lot of people it makes sense to stack them up in multi-floored structures.

"One byproduct of this high-rise

explosion is the opportunity to get a bird's-eye view of the city's grand urban sprawl," the newsletter comments.

A few suggestions: The sixtieth floor of the Sunshine Building in Ikebukuro has wonderful views aided by diagrams of reference points in English.

The newest and tallest of the city's high-rises is the Tokyo Metropolitan Building where there is an observation deck on the forty-fifth floor, although it's usually crowded.

The Sumitomo Building in the Shinjuku district has an observation deck on the fifty-first floor and reasonably priced



Kyoto's classical Daigoji Temple.

restaurants with fabulous views on the forty-ninth and fiftieth floors.

Granddaddy of all these structures is the venerable Tokyo Tower built in 1958, and at one thousand, one hundred feet high looks like a taller version of the Eiffel Tower. See-through elevators provide an awesome, constantly changing perspective of the city below.

The base is a favorite place for that Japanese outdoor sport — posing for group pictures at major tourist sites.

Western travelers have their choice of innumerable deluxe hotels such as the Imperial, the ANA Tokyo, with a view

of the Imperial Palace, and the Hiltons (two) in Tokyo which come complete with luxurious lobbies and European-style dining rooms.

Among the most skilled in that essential amenity, bilingual bell captain service is the concierge staff at the towering Akasaka Prince Hotel.

After answering hundreds of questions weekly, the young women at the hospitality desk in the gleaming white lobby produced their own detailed guide to the Akasaka District, one of the most historic areas in the capital — and to a foreigner possibly the most confusing.

Akasaka, once farming country produced tea and *akana*, a plant yielding a red dye; ergo the district name translates as "red slope."

Today, it's a *mélange* of shops, fast food emporia, coffee houses, ethnic dining rooms and high-rise office buildings mixed together with *ryotei* (restaurants normally off limits to foreigners), where business executives, in the company of geishas, discuss commercial affairs in the salubrious atmosphere of sake and supper.

The map, with its legible hand-printed legends, has recently been revised and enlarged (a Japanese gift to even the most myopic). It lists financial institutions by the score, even a Visa cash machine location. It will even lead you painlessly to the labyrinthian Akasaka Mitsui subway station, although once there you're on your own.

By contrast, it will also show you how to reach the nearby Suntory Whisky Building, of wine and whisky fame, which has a rooftop beer garden and an elite art gallery on the eleventh floor. A recent prize exhibition featured a collection of three-dimensional work produced by some of Japan's leading sculptors.

On a final note, the highly detailed map will point you in the direction of Toyota Rent-a-Car if you consider yourself courageous enough to brave the Tokyo traffic.

Kyoto

While the face of Kyoto, Japan's "museum city," is changing with a threatened invasion of high-rise buildings and a Buddhist monk boycott of guests staying at some major hotels, the situation has been making front page news in the



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The serenely beautiful gardens at Kyoto's Ryoanji Temple.

Japan Times and other newspapers throughout the world.

However, this lovely city still has one thousand, five hundred unspoiled Buddhist temples and two hundred Shinto shrines. One of the most heartwarming is the Jishu Shrine home of the country's Cupid, *Okuninushi no mikoto*, its resident deity and the God of love and matchmaking.

For a millenium, Japanese young people have looked on the Jishu Shrine as an inspiration, and possession of a Jishu Shrine charm promises "splendid love."

The vermilion-colored shrine is located on the grounds of the Kiyomizu Temple built by the third Tokugawa shogun, *Iemitsu*.

Its most noted artifacts consist of two stones set about thirty feet apart called *koi no uranai no ishi* (love-fortune telling stones). If you walk safely from one to the other with your eyes closed, perfect bliss will result.

It's a good idea to have a friend keep an eye on you, however; there is a precipitous slope at the very end of this path.

While Kyoto has a limitless trove of memorable temples and shrines, it also has one extraordinary gourmet restaurant. That's the exquisite dining room at the Ryoanji Shrine with incidentally, the best-known Zen Rock Garden in Japan.

The gardens are mobbed during the day with endless tides of blue and grey uniformed students on school trips (a Japanese standard at shrines), plus senior citizens and foreign tourists.

One can dine on *yudofu* (boiled tofu

with vegetables) while seated cross-legged on the floor and simultaneously enjoy the repose of the glimmering waters of the *Kyoyochi* pond, with its silently swimming giant carp who cluster just beyond the moss-covered bank in front of the pine-paneled *tatami* room.

After lunch, it's not uncommon to see Japanese stretch out on their tatami mats for a brief siesta — a practice that might seem eminently acceptable after a day of temple gazing.

Okinawa Revisited

When the Shuri Palace reopens next fall in Naha, capital of the island prefecture of Okinawa, it adds another gem to Japan's already gigantic diadem of historical shrines, temples, and museums.

And if the Japanese government has its way, after this three billion yen restoration it will be the cornerstone of future American tourism to this Asian destination.

Okinawa, situated between Japan and Taiwan is an archipelago of small islands, also known as the Ryukyus. Its *persona* is a combination of traits inherited from China and Japan, with later American influences from post WWII U.S. occupation.

Shuri, dating to the fourteenth century, is constructed in the style of a Chinese palace, and over the past four hundred years was destroyed four times by war.

It served as the seat of the Ryukyu ruling family which had close ties to China during the Ming Dynasty and functioned as a guesthouse for Chinese VIPs of the time.

The historic palace forms the core of

an extraordinary eleven-acre compound of four buildings, several of which will be turned into museums. The main structure is being meticulously restored by several hundred woodworkers, tilers and artists schooled in traditional handicrafts to recreate a past magnificence.

In the "central" apartment there is a black, gold and red lacquered throne, with wood from the local Deigo tree. The room itself is highlighted with yellow, blue and orange accents, surmounted by a great tiled double roof whose only modern touch is a series of steel anchor screws to make it typhoon-proof.

There are some tourist touches. At Shurei-no-mon, the gatehouse erected in 1428, hordes of Japanese tourists pose daily for their pictures taken with elaborately gowned Okinawan beauties for one thousand yen a shot.

Nearby street stands sell such delicacies as octopus snacks, ice cream cones and sweetened canned tea.

Now the prefecture, several thousand miles south of Tokyo is anxious to reintroduce its cultural treasures to Americans

who know Okinawa only as the scene of one of the longest and bloodiest battles of the Pacific during WWII.

For the literary minded an Okinawan village called Tobiki was the scene of John Patrick's 1953 award-winning *Tea House of the August Moon*.

The play produced by Maurice Evans celebrated American ingenuity in helping the island to post-war self-reliance, having the caring Captain Fisby inadvertently introduce the production of three-star *batata* (sweet potato) brandy, "guaranteed to be aged at least three days," to the island's economy. On an esoteric film note, *Karate Kid-Part II* was filmed on Okinawa.

First American arrival was Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry who made landfall here in 1853. He was *en route* to Tokyo on his mission to open Japan to the west after its two hundred-twenty-year, self-imposed seclusion from the rest of the world.

The Commodore and his crew were warmly received by the king and his amiable Okinawans, and some of the island's

proudest possessions are sketches of Perry's visit made by members of his crew.

By way of background, Okinawa with a subtropical climate, cobalt blue waters, coral reefs, fine sandy beaches and handsome contemporary hotels to match, is a favorite vacation spot for mainland Japanese who visit here in the thousands.

Resort hotels such as the waterfront Sun Marina with reflecting fish pools, transparent gilded elevators, scenic walkways, and high-tech marble lobby, complete with electronic musical performances, are a cross between Waikiki and Las Vegas.

Nota bene: English is definitely not a second language in shops and hotels on Okinawa although an American presence still exists.

The resorts, tourist attractions and Naha are indeed mint-condition Japanese including congested traffic akin to central Tokyo. Kokusai Street is reminiscent of the Ginza with open-fronted shops.

Although a synthesis of the past, Ryukyu Park near Kadena Air Base and Moon Beach, is a partial way to see how Okinawa was in its colonial days. A farm

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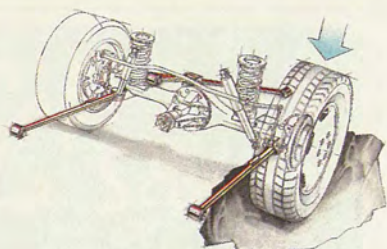
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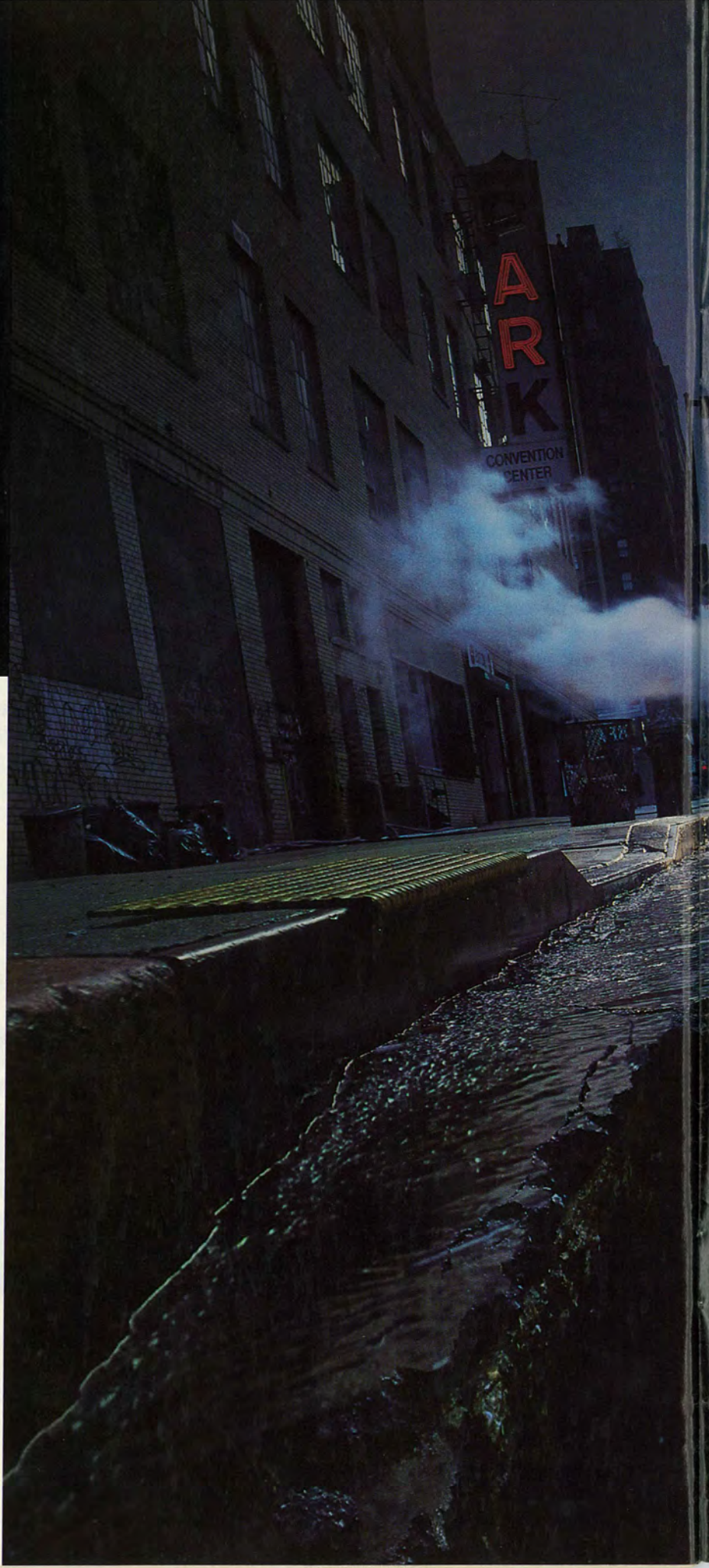
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home from Gima Yomitan with its ingenious shuttered air-conditioning system comes alive with a bullock tethered to a wooden fence and primitive rice-storage platforms as a reminder of Okinawa's agricultural past.

Nearby is the restoration's main attraction, a collection of snakes including the deadly *habu* which is unique to the Ryukyus and engages in deadly combat with a mongoose ten times a day.

Alas, the carefully planned site also includes an acre of souvenir shops selling everything from leather handbags to ginger candy and tea.

Contemporary Naha is proudest of its handicrafts, in this case potters whose

with the mouth opened, the female with her mouth closed.

Visitors with an interest in the arts can see and collect stunning fabrics, ceramics, and glassware. Musicologists will enjoy the vibrant sounds produced by the Okinawan *sanshin* and the huge *ad hoc* concerts of the many street festivals, the most exciting, the *bon* dance sending spirits on their way to the other world.

Timing of the festivals is complicated by the fact that Okinawans, like the Chinese (differing from the Japanese), follow the lunar calendar.

Naha has an enclosed market, (Heiwadōri) which is a cultural shock in its own right. Lined with cluttered shops, they

box. It's filled with seaweed, unique *soba* buckwheat noodles, fish cakes, pickled tofu and pork loin boiled for four hours. Sea snake is considered a delicacy here. Diners are entertained by dancers dressed in embroidered and brocaded *bingata* kimonos wearing elaborate headdress and clicking away with black castanets. Most formal dance was for a king, liveliest for commoners.

The Gyokusendo Cave, a limestone formation with more than three miles of its length open to the public is a remarkable spectacle. Discovered only about twenty-five years ago by student geologists on a "dig," it's the largest cave in the Orient with more than four hundred-thousand stalagmites, stalagmites and columns, along with underground streams inhabited by blind eels, bats and shrimp.

Most poignant monument to the devastating war years is the striking Peace Hall with a huge contemplative forty-foot high lacquered statue of Buddha in a park-like setting. Next to it is the Peace Bell rung five times a day to console the spirits of those who died in the war.

On an ironic note, the nearby tourist bus station is festooned with souvenir shops selling such artifacts as beer can openers and key chains fashioned from thirty-calibre rifle casings.

Equally sad is Himeyuri-no-To, the Cave of the Virgins, a monument to high school girls who volunteered as nurses to care for refugees or wounded soldiers in a cave and were killed or committed suicide during the war.

Another island destination linked to the war is Mabuni Hill, better known to Americans as Suicide Cliff where Japanese soldiers committed suicide after their defeat. The war dead are remembered by monuments placed here by the forty-eight prefectures of Japan.

The Okinawans are one up on the Spaniards. Bullfighting is very popular here with animals whose trainers control them with a rope halter. Happily for the bulls, the fight continues until one bull in defeat turns tail to run. Neither is ever killed.

For an authentic touch of the Orient a visit to the Miyako Islands which lie about two hundred-fifty miles southeast of Okinawa is a chance to see rural Japan



Okinawa's fifteenth century Shurei-no-mon Gate and a local beauty.

antecedents are traced to China and fourteen generations of skilled artisans who have lived and worked in the Tsuboya area. Kilns, sheltered by the gnarled *gagimaru* shade tree, are several hundred years old and operated on a communal basis. Some artists here have been declared "National Japanese Monuments," their work exquisite in technique and delicacy.

One of the most talented is Shimabukuro Tsuneo, a potter for fifty years, who produces the classic *shishi* (house lion) to ward off evil spirits. They sell in pairs for as much as four thousand dollars and take weeks to produce. The *shishi* come in a male and female version, the male

sell everything from dry tuna for soup, yellow radishes, and Brazilian *pasteles*, to coral jewelry (authentic and expensive) and a fish market glistening with red sea bream, mackerel and octopus.

The atmosphere is bewitching — old women with suntanned, wrinkled faces chat away all day and nap with a wax gourd as a pillow. A lovely phrase reflects that here can be found the Okinawan *chirudai* (sacred languor) a box of dreams which dwell in the depths of the merry market.

For a dining/theatrical treat, visit restaurants like Urashima which serves up traditional Okinawan food in a *jubako*, a lacquered, compartmentalized, wooden

at its bucolic best.

Miyako has some odd claims to fame. One is a recently mounted section of the Berlin Wall in a country byway provided by a German manufacturer who is going to locate a plant here.

Its presence, along with a monument, remembers the heroic island natives who rescued the crew of a German trading ship, the R. J. Robertson bound for Australia from China in the 1880s when it foundered off Miyako.

Miyakan looms weave Jofa cloth made from the *ramie* plant and a prime component of Japan's most expensive kimonos which can sell for one and one-fifth of a million yen, (about eightthousand U.S. dollars). The workshop in the capital, Ueno produces only two hundred-fifty a year mostly for royalty and distinguished Japanese figures. The intricate designs are woven on hand looms (one thousand, one hundred-twenty threads to the inch) then dyed with indigo, and take three months to produce. When a weaver finishes her cloth, she traditionally buys a dinner of tempura for the entire house.

Director of the plant is Takashi Taira, a genial sixty year-old executive who once managed a U.S. military laundry in Tokyo and was conscripted at thirteen to fight the Americans in WWII.

For a lasting memory of Miyako, visit Cape Henna, where the Pacific joins the East China Sea at the head of a rocky peninsula. The prevailing winds in this "typhoon alley" can reach sixty miles per hour. Here's a tragic monument to the memory of a beautiful young woman, Mamuya who was courted by a lordly lover and, unbeknownst to her, was married with children. Mamuya plunged to her death in the Pacific and is forever remembered by the wailing of the ocean winds.

The new Miyako museum located in the countryside is a state-of-the-art hands-on institution tracing the medieval world of the Miyakan populace along with a fascinating sky map of the Pacific/China Sea area. "Our history is different from the main island with the many typhoons and droughts we've experienced over the centuries. Our displays recall the abolition of clans, the repeal of the poll tax — and the bombings of WWII," says a spokesman. □

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The Germans have their *Ring* stories, the English their *Beowulf*, and the French *Le Roman de la Rose*, but for the Finns, there is nothing like *The Kalevala*. A compilation of ancient oral poetry, *The Kalevala* recounts the beginnings of the Finnish people, as well as some tall and tragic tales of heroes and supernatural beings. *The Kalevala* has inspired playwrights and composers and painters. And it is there we find the very first Finnish artist — Ilmarinen, forger of the Sampo, a magical “good fortune” machine. What the Sampo seems to have brought, however, is good fortune to Finnish artists. Finland is blessed by long, cold winter nights, nights that force people home and into their saunas. It must be there that their fervid brains create some of the best music and dance, theater, and design that the 1990s are likely to see.

In honor of Finland's seventy-fifth anniversary of independence this year, Los Angeles hosts the world premiere of a new representation from *The Kalevala*, Aulis Sallinen's opera *Kullervo* (opened February 25 at the Music Center). It was on a sparkling October morning in Helsinki that I found my way to the *Kullervo* recording sessions. Rain had threatened, and early morning fog was delivered. By ten o'clock, only white clouds flew across the clean, blue skies, as I walked through Alppiharju, a midtown Helsinki neighborhood. Crossed by broad, four-lane avenues with trams running down the center, its streets were lined with three- and four-story, simply decorated apart-

ment blocks painted in yellows, ochres, and pinks. Brightly colored maple leaves were everywhere underfoot, and their wet smell brought back mixed memories of childhood. I found the Finnish National Opera camped out at the Kulttuuritalo, or Culture House, a 1950s-style, red brick “community center” trimmed in green copper. It had been designed by the legendary Alvar Aalto and was built by



the Communist party; now it's up for sale.

Outside the Culture House, the path-breaking Finnish record company Ondine had set up a control center in a trailer, and thick, black cables snaked along the ground transferring composer Aulis Sallinen's magnificent sounds into digital bits. Inside the fan-shaped hall, the soloists, chorus, and orchestra had already begun. They faced the Opera's chief conductor, Ulf Söderblom, a tall,

dapper man whose long grey hair curled around his ears. The chorus was up on the stage, women standing and men sitting, microphones towering over them. Off to one side were the soloists. Jorma Hynninen sang the role of Kullervo, the tragic hero, as he will here. Hynninen is somewhat of a musical hero in Finland, having started out as a school teacher and having ended up as a professor, a leading baritone on the world scene, and artistic director of the Finnish National Opera.

In the overall scheme of *The Kalevala*, the story of Kullervo is relatively short — but it is potent. It centers on a feud between the families of two brothers — Untamo and Kalervo — a feud whose origins are barely known and practically irrelevant. Kalervo's son, Kullervo, takes revenge on his uncle for having slaughtered his family and for having sold him, Kullervo, into slavery. Out of hatred and spite he seduces his new master's young wife. When she mercilessly taunts him, he kills her. Later, he realizes that she was his sister. Escaping and finding some of his family still alive, Kullervo is overcome with guilt and self-hatred. He takes his revenge on Untamo's family by slaughtering them. “It was my tribe,” he says in the libretto penned by the composer himself, “and it was a tribe of predators . . . My tribe did not enrich this world; for that a new and better one is needed.” Horrified, Kullervo's family commits suicide, as does Kullervo himself.

Matching a story of such force, the music in *Kullervo* is strongly dramatic, grabbing the listener insistently by the lapels. The painstaking business of putting together a recording that day — piece by piece — only seemed to heighten the tension.

David H. Bowman is a freelance writer and editor. His “Great Expectations” column previewing upcoming events in the Southern California arts scene appears monthly in this magazine.

Above: Czar Alexander II, ruler of Finland after the Sweds lost it to the Russians, stands before Helsinki's Lutheran Cathedral. Opposite page: The Finnish National Theatre on Railway Square.

by David H. Bowman

PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE AUTHOR

"Komm," Söderblom commanded, reaching forward with a pincer-like gesture, and the ensemble began a complicated section in which the music picked up speed, slowed down, ambled to a halt, then built to a cymbal crash with clashing gongs and chimes — the murder of Kullervo's sister. Finally, a haunting flute, oboe, and bassoon melody rose and a men's chorus began a lament, almost a Gregorian chant, with chimes and gongs quietly counting off the hours. Then, in came the women. A snare drum beat time, and the strings gave out a hectoring scream, a call for revenge from beyond the grave. There was a long, withdrawing breath under a timpani roll, and then silence. Söderblom held the ensemble for a second in the trance-like silence, then relaxed his arms.

Suddenly people began to talk among themselves. Söderblom gathered himself, combed his disheveled hair, then stood with his arms at his sides. A deep voice came over the loudspeaker intoning instructions in Finnish. It was the composer, keeping tabs on the process from the trailer. Up went the arms, the bows, the instruments, the scores — we took it again. And again. Until everyone was smiling — even the voice on the microphone was smiling, and a break was called.

On the break I met the composer, Aulis Sallinen, a tall man with a kind, open face who was wonderfully friendly and outgoing. Now in his late fifties, Sallinen has been the most important Finnish composer of the past few decades. He has written five symphonies (the last one commissioned by the National Symphony Orchestra of Washington, D.C., in 1985), much chamber music, and a number of operas including *The King Goes Forth to France*, which was seen at Santa Fe Opera in 1986, and *The Red Line* (1978). He is excited about coming to L.A.

What is amazing about Sallinen and his music is the degree of acceptance they have received. Not only is his music modern, not only is it good, it is liked! Much to a North American's surprise, new music seems to be everywhere in Finland. Finnish television comes to cover the recording sessions. Everywhere I go, people know about *Kullervo*. In Finland, new music is news.

Here in Los Angeles, we can look forward to the residency of another Finnish composer, Esa-Pekka Salonen, who next fall becomes music director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic. One hopes that Salonen will introduce us to some of Finland's wonderful music. In an essay written for last March's Helsinki Biennale, Salonen remarked that new music seemed to be getting easier to listen to. The senses, he said, the ear, in fact, was "in" again. Simply put, "it's more fun to compose and play for full halls than empty ones." Finnish composers reflect a multiplicity of styles and languages that all seem to have caught the ears of the public. In Finland, I never saw an empty



hall; audiences were open-minded and willing to hear new works, and this observation was repeated to me by the Finns themselves.

For the music-loving visitor to Helsinki, the hall to see is Alvar Aalto's crowning achievement, Finlandia Hall, built inside and out by him in 1971. Rising on the edge of Töölö Bay, the hall is even more striking on the inside than the out. Scandinavian modernism is positively aggressive here — white, marble trapezoidal balconies practically leap off a striated, cobalt background, as if rushing headlong into the future. Even the orchestra sits on ultra-modern, black wooden chairs. The sound? Very live, very bright, very

loud. Both the Helsinki Philharmonic (led by Sergiu Comissiona) and the Helsinki Radio Symphony (Jukka-Pekka Saraste) play there, and both are exciting orchestras to hear.

The Finnish National Opera currently performs in a five-hundred-seat, reddish-brown landmark which began life in 1870 as the garrison theater for Russian officers stationed in Helsinki. A new theater on the banks of Töölö Bay has been in the works for almost thirty years. In 1993, this massive, gleaming white, ceramic tile, stone, and glass opera house — with a main hall seating 1385 and a 2-500 seat auditorium — will be inaugurated as the Opera's new home. *Kullervo* will certainly be one of the first works performed there.

Opera has undergone a boom in Finland, as new works are premiered almost every winter at the Finnish National Opera and almost every summer the Savonlinna Opera Festival, some two hundred miles northeast of Helsinki. Since 1912, Olavinlinna Castle, built in the fifteenth century on a rock outcropping surrounded by water, has served as the backdrop for world-class opera and musical performances. Finland is so opera-mad, says Pekka Hakko, executive director of the Finnish Music Information Center, that there are some twenty amateur opera companies throughout the country. This in a population of only five million. Aulis Sallinen is just one of many names soon to become well-known to opera lovers around the world—along with Joonas Kokkonen (*The Last Temptations*), Paavo Heininen (*The Damask Drum*), and Einojuhani Rautavaara (*Vincent*).

Over at the Finnish National Theatre, on Helsinki's Railway Square, next to Eliel Saarinen's stunning *art nouveau* train station, business is so good that since the original theater was built in 1902, three more stages have been added. Helsinki is in fact one of the largest theater centers in Europe. While the National Theatre serves some 300,000 patrons every year, the Helsinki City Theatre serves 200,000 (Helsinki's population is not quite 500,000). Both organizations run large, professional theater companies and full repertoires from fall through spring. And then there are all the little theaters, like the Lilla Teatern ("Little Swedish Theatre")

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— Finland has two official languages, Finnish and Swedish), where I saw a hilarious rendition of Neil Simon's *Rumors*. The Westchester setting played perfectly as translated to Nordic glass and steel. In Helsinki you're as likely to find works by Shakespeare as you are those by Aleksis Kivi, Finland's national writer.

The Finns are a theater-loving people, Pirjo Manninen, press director for the National Theatre, explains, "Finns are a very introverted people, but all over the country there are many, many amateur theater groups. That's where the Finns really express what they have inside." During the 1989-90 season, this small country produced 359 different plays in repertoire, of which sixty-three were world premieres of Finnish plays and forty-two were Finnish premieres of foreign plays. For theater-loving tourists, however, there is one *caveat*: The Finnish language is like nothing you have ever heard before — understanding a Finnish play will undoubtedly present a problem, even though the acting and production values are generally exemplary. Best contact Anneli Suur-Kujala at the International Theatre Institute (Meritullinkatu 33, Helsinki SF-00170; phone: 358-0-135-7887; fax 358-0-135-5522). The ITI not only publishes a fascinating, English-language magazine on the Finnish theater scene, it can arrange for special theatre programs and recommend performances that will be enjoyable to those who don't understand the language.

Dance is an international language, and Helsinki speaks this one perfectly. The internationally renowned Carolyn Carlson has just taken command of the Dance Group of the Helsinki City Theatre, while its ex-director, Jorma Uotinen, assumes the leadership of the National Ballet later this year. Mr. Uotinen is one of the revolutionaries of Finnish dance and was himself for many years a member of Carlson's company. Dance Theatre Raatikko is led by the vivacious Marja Korhola, who choreographs and performs with a style that delights and provokes. No one will have any trouble enjoying one of Raatikko's lively performances. During the summer, dance lovers gather at the annual Kuopio Dance and Music Festival — the only one of its kind in Scandina-

via — about 250 miles northeast of Helsinki. This summer the Festival premieres works by the aforementioned Dance Theatre Raatikko, as well as one by Jorma Uotinen. International dance is also featured, with visits from Ballet Folklórico de Mexico and the Peking Opera.

Finland fairly explodes every summer with arts festivals. But the major festivals are no joking matter—they are major stops for internationally renowned artists. The Helsinki Festival next summer boasts among its many guests the Leningrad Philharmonic, Vladimir Ashkenazy, and Kathleen Battle. At Tampere, there is an international theater festival; at Pori, it's



Two of the four lantern bearers on Eliel Saarinen's 1916 Railway Station.

jazz. From the Lahti Organ Festival to the Joensuu Song Festival, to Ruisrock, the world's oldest regular rock festival, held at Turku, there are some sixty-five full-blown, world-class festivals in Finland. Ondine, the company that recorded *Kullervo*, grew out of a need to record the Kuhmo Chamber Music Festival. Says Reijo Kiilunen, head of Ondine, "We believe in good music, not necessarily Finnish music. Our records—and our music—must build up a reputation as works of art. Only then, if all goes well, the arts-lover might look to see where they come from." And what goes for Ondine's art, certainly goes for Finland's.

As part of my introduction to Finland, I was taken to the thriving city of Oulu, a ninety-minute plane ride north of Helsinki and a ninety-minute car ride south of the Arctic Circle on the Gulf of Bothnia. There, some 100,000 thousand souls delight in a city that combines eighteenth-century wooden burgher's houses with a glass and cement theater-cum-library that rises up out of the bay itself. In Madetoja Hall, a beautiful new concert hall finished in waves of undulating, lightly dressed pine, I heard world-famous Finnish baritone Matti Salminen sing Mozart. And there was music of one of the young Finnish star-composers, Magnus Lindberg, a composition that lots of people I met already seemed to know about—*Marea*. It was the Oulu City Orchestra, the northernmost professional orchestra in the world, according to orchestra manager Jorma Kuosmanen. As we walked back to the hotel through this clearly provincial town, I asked Jorma what it was like there. He himself had given up a career as a violinist to become a Helsinki lawyer. A few years ago he moved back to Oulu to become his orchestra's manager. It is a full-time job, and he manages a full-time professional orchestra.

"A professional orchestra," I asked, "in a place like this?" Next to the concert hall, the community had just finished building a conservatory—complete with electronic music studios—and a small chamber hall that still smelled sweetly of roughly finished pine. "What next," I added somewhat sarcastically, "a resident professional theater troupe?"

"Well," said Jorma, "as a matter of fact, we *do* have a professional theater company. . ."

In Finland, art seems all. In a country where new music is news, where new operas seem to be written yearly—and produced — where everybody and his brother longs to get up on a stage — or at least to sit in an audience — we can be sure that *The Kalevala's* prophecies have come true. The Sampo — that magical good fortune machine — still works its spell. For artist and arts-lover alike, Finland is filled to overflowing with treasure. We can be thankful that these days, it's flowing our way. □

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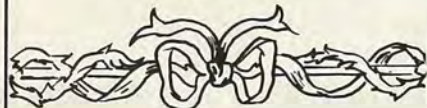
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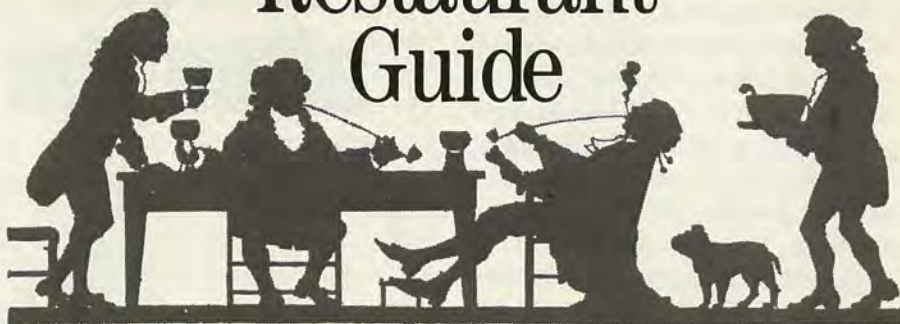
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for, and how is it received?

CS: It's part of a big festival, performed by villagers for themselves, all amateurs. Performers and audience are one, like in the medieval mystery plays. People grow up with this all their lives; little kids may start by mimicking their parents, and if they are thought talented then they are recruited into the troupe and get to perform every year.

PH: *How many are in the cast?*

KS: Maybe six or eight characters, depending on the play.

PH: *So it's not like the medieval epic cycles with a cast of hundreds, which sometimes took several days to perform?*

KS: Usually a single play, thirty to forty minutes long, is performed once daily during the festival. Similar plays and rituals are enacted all over China. We also saw some performances which combined ritual with the more stylized and sophisticated elements we associate with Chinese theater.

CS: A very dramatic example of this was performed by the Miao people, also in Guizhou province. It started out with a priest performing a ritual that combined elements of Taoism, Buddhism, and the Wu religion. Wu consists of a set of animistic beliefs and rituals that ordinary people incorporate into their daily life. The ritual grew intense when a live cock was thrown into the circle with its legs tied, so that it couldn't fly, and the priest grabbed it, wildly threw it about, and finally bit off its head. Blood was spurt- ing everywhere! I was not prepared for this, and since they were restaging this just for our benefit in a seminar room, I felt somehow responsible for the death of the animal. Apparently this performance is always preceded by a purification ritual, a sacrifice to the gods, calling them to witness, and expelling evil spirits from the area. This part of the ritual was quite long, lasting perhaps thirty minutes, and very intense, and done with tremendous commitment. It was followed immediately by a marvelous comedy, from a completely different world, with an all- male cast, coquettish young men made up as charming young women. The play had a conventional plot about infidelity — a silly old man with a young wife — such as you'd find in Chinese opera. But

there were differences: people dressed in folk costume, some wearing masks, which you don't have in opera. A mysterious mask from the preceding ritual reappeared as a main character in the comedy, but the connection seemed incongruous.

KS: However, it shows clearly that Chinese opera was not just a literary creation, but that it evolved from many older elements.

CS: And Kuang was particularly interested in finding these connections, because that's what his dissertation is about.

KS: Yes, I've been studying the theatrical conventions of Yuan drama, which is the golden age of Chinese theater, equivalent in the West to the Elizabethan period, or seventeenth-century Spain. It followed the Mongol invasion and the dis- integration of the Song dynasty in south-

base. Theater was connected with tem- ples, which we never knew before, and the scholar-playwrights had to appeal to ordinary people by including such forbid- den or unfashionable topics as superstition and other folk-religious elements.

CS: What is even more extraordinary, this connection still exists, and it is still forbidden. We saw a contemporary play based on the same exorcistic belief sys- tems as in the old rituals but applied to modern problems, such as the govern- ment's policy against having more than one child per family. This play had been banned after four performances, but we saw a videotape, and it appeared to be a very effective performance.

KS: Another of the transitional styles between ancient ritual and Chinese opera is called *divi*, or earth theater, which we



Teahouse-theater of the late 19th or early 20th century.

ern China. The Mongols dismantled the Mandarin civil service, plunging Confu- cian scholars from the top to near the bottom of the social ladder. Many of these literate bureaucrats, who dabbled in poetry, were now forced to earn a living. Some became playwrights, and to find an audience outside the court they had to learn about actors and stagecraft. They incorporated folktales and popular styles into their drama. In turn, the rather crude pieces performed by itinerant players were suddenly enriched by this infusion of literary talent.

PH: *Has this trip helped you with your research?*

KS: Visiting places where Yuan drama was originally performed, I discovered through the physical architecture that it must have had a religious and ritualistic

observed in a small village in Anshun county, another remote area of Guizhou province. This is folk opera which uses elaborate costumes and masks (as opposed to modern Chinese opera, where the paint is applied directly to the face) and is performed by farmers twice a year — at planting and at harvest time. But there are other elements we find in later Chinese drama: acrobatic feats and military themes, some based on real historical figures.

CS: This is the only form of Chinese ritual drama that has been seen outside China. These villagers were invited to France and Spain in 1987, but they told us that we were the first American schol- ars who have witnessed a performance in China.

PH: *Are the theater arts in China still*

completely state controlled?

CS: Financially, not any more. You can mount a private production if you raise the money yourself. However, the government will control the number of performances, and how widely it can be shown. That was one of the frustrating things for me as an artist, to see how censorship works. The government claims, of course, that everything is allowed. What they don't say is that if somebody breaks the rules, many of which are invisible, he must pay the consequences. For example, in Inner Mongolia we saw a play by a dissident playwright who belongs to one of the minorities, and his play reflected a certain ethnic pride. It wasn't calling for a revolution; it did not seem to be aimed against the Chinese. It simply depicted local traditions of a vanishing culture: memories about the writer's parents when they still lived a semi-nomadic lifestyle, consulting a shaman every time they or the children were sick. But when they moved to the city, there were no shamans living there, so they had to see a doctor, which isn't the same.

The play was allowed only at a univer-

sity. After four performances the director was fired, even though he was also the artistic director of the local theater company. Not because of the play, of course; they suddenly realized that he had always been incompetent. The timing made it very clear to everybody why he was fired. Because the author is a well-known movie star, relatively well-off, he was thinking of borrowing money to finance his own production. But he faced the possibility of not being given any more movie roles, in which case he could not repay his debt. I asked him how he was going to find another director and organization to produce his play. He didn't know, but he said he wanted to because audiences loved it so much. It made people feel proud, because as a minority they did not have many opportunities to see themselves depicted in that light.

When we were in Guizhou province, we saw an officially sanctioned play about another minority people. The story was about a woman who goes into the city, where she finds out that tourists like the embroidery made in her hometown, so she starts to manufacture merchandise on a larger scale. This causes controversy — she is accused of betraying her culture — but she bravely battles on and succeeds despite her father and lover opposing her. Eventually, by sticking to her principles, she wins everybody over and the whole town becomes involved in making ethnic costumes. The message to minorities is that they should turn their culture into a tourist industry for the greater glory of the state.

PH: *And thereby destroy it?*

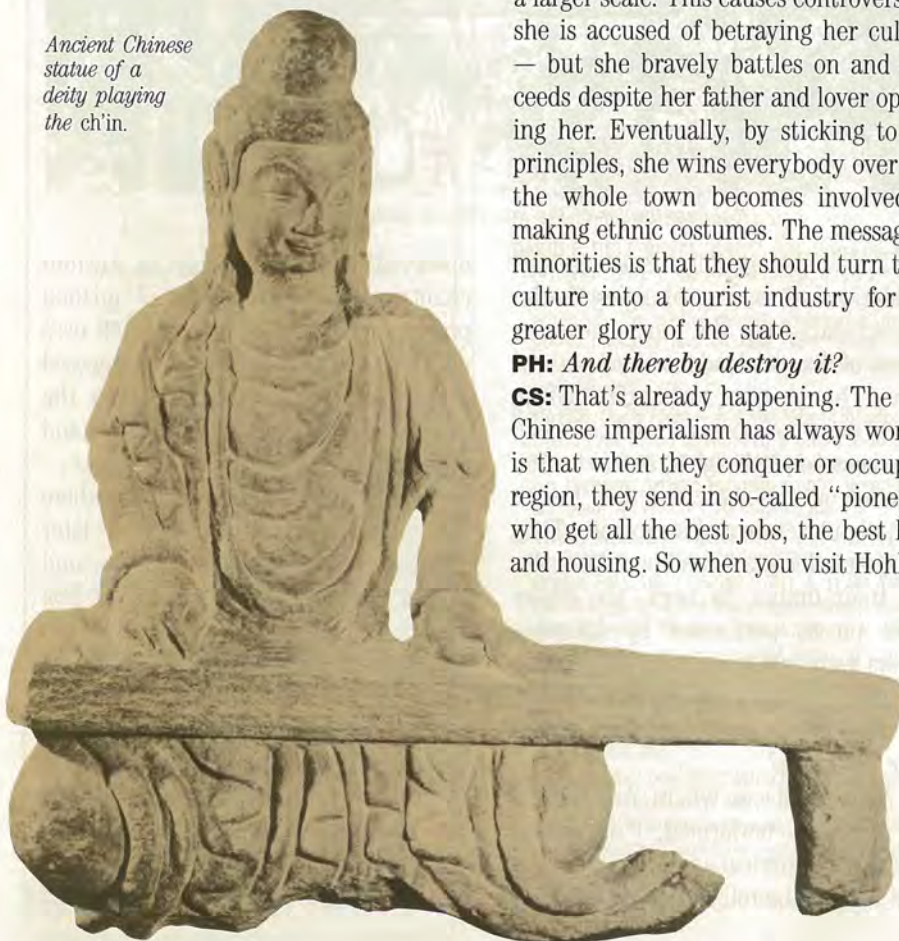
CS: That's already happening. The way Chinese imperialism has always worked is that when they conquer or occupy a region, they send in so-called "pioneers" who get all the best jobs, the best land and housing. So when you visit Hohhot,

the capital of Inner Mongolia, you will find it hard to meet any Mongolians because 90% of the population seems to be Chinese. The ethnic Mongolian culture, the nomadic way of life in the great open spaces, has been wiped out, not unlike that of our native American peoples on the prairies, to whom they are thought to be related. We met up with a Taiwanese student doing research which he called "In Search of the Mongolians." He had relatives there, but he had to go into very remote areas to find people who still pursue a traditional lifestyle. The culture is related to Tibetan — they are both Lamaist, and some aspects of visual imagery in masks as well as ritual forms of drama in Tibet seem to relate to Mongolian culture. But we couldn't find any traces of these traditions in Inner Mongolia — not even with official help, which wasn't much.

PH: *In conclusion, do you see any hope for the survival of these ethnic cultures?*

CS: The Chinese government, as we have said, has never shown much sympathy for minorities, and this attitude existed centuries before Communism. What has been going on in Tibet is probably the best example. On the other hand, the recent trend has been to preserve some of the ancient ritual forms as "cultural fossils." The authorities may hope, of course, that they are just fossils, without deeper meaning or connection to folk beliefs. But if that were so, there would be no need to ban performances or to suppress genuine ethnic self-expression. The Communist regime has always used the arts to promote its own goals, but the propagandistic approach acknowledges that there is something inherent in theater, dance, and art which affects people powerfully in the way they think and feel. China is simply too vast, some of her peoples too remote, for Beijing to exert central authority, especially in the long run. Ultimately, we might see a devolution of the Chinese empire, just as we are currently witnessing the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Ethnic groups, keeping their pride and traditions alive over the barrage of state-sponsored propaganda, will play a key part in that process. □

Ancient Chinese statue of a deity playing the ch'in.



The Dionysus Connection

Backstage at the Mercury Theatre, which launched the careers of Orson Welles, Joseph Cotten and John Houseman, there used to be a sign which read: "No drinking in the theatre — except during Shakespeare."

It recalls an oft-told theatrical story about a production of *Richard III* touring the English provinces. It was Saturday night, after the weekly pay packet had been distributed and before the troupe traveled to the next town. Several of the players had spent in the pub the money they owed to their landladies. The results showed up as soon as the actor in the title role staggered on stage. "Get off; y're drunk!" the shouts began almost immediately from the gallery. The Duke of Gloucester steadied himself, unintentionally straightening his crooked back, as he swayed towards the footlights. "What? Me drunk?" he addressed the house with tragic indignation. "Just wait 'til you see the Duke of Buckingham!"

Drinking has been the curse of the acting classes for centuries. Indeed, the bacchic connection reaches back to the beginning of what we call theater. Greek drama was born to honor Dionysus, among other good things the God of Wine, and far from the hushed occasions into which theatergoing has degenerated in our own days, those ancient audiences reveled under the warm Mediterranean sky. Thespis, the first known actor, is reported to have prepared his makeup from the lees of the wine.

Each era in the long and not always decorous annals of the stage has boasted

of at least one preeminent actor who was also a famous drunk. In the eighteenth century, the English comic Ned Shuter "delighted to exhibit his eccentricities among the lowest company in St. Giles's, where he has been known more than once to treat a dozen of the rabble with drams and strong beer." Shuter, accord-



ing to this chronicler, was the first to invent the old excuse for frequenting pubs that "it was necessary that he should know life from the prince to the beggar in order to represent them as occasion might require."

Edmund Kean (1789-1833) sometimes went on benders which made him miss performances. One afternoon he was carousing with some fellow Thespians a

few miles outside London when somebody remembered that Kean had to appear that evening at Drury Lane as Shylock. Since he was in no shape to act, the players dispatched Kean's driver with a story that the actor had suffered a dislocation of the shoulder, when the horses had shied and turned over the carriage. The manager told this story to a waiting and unruly audience, who swallowed it whole.

The next morning Kean realized what had happened, and his remorse only increased when he heard that various gentlemen were arriving at the inn, anxiously enquiring about the accident. There was nothing to be done but carry on with the lie. With the help of his boon companions and the village apothecary, Kean's shoulder was bandaged and white makeup was applied to heighten his pallor. In a scene worthy of Molière, he lay in a darkened room to receive his well-wishers.

"No one discovered the cheat," marveled one contemporary, "and to crown it completely, Kean appeared in an incredibly short time on the boards of old Drury again, the public being carefully informed that his respect and gratitude towards them urged him to risk the exertion, and to go through his arduous parts with his arm in a sling."

Long before liquor ravaged his life, it affected John Barrymore's performances. America watched on stage and screen as the Great Profile slowly drank himself to death. It began innocently enough. There had been a long-held tradition among members of the Barrymore clan to give each other a red apple on opening nights, which was to remain uneaten. John innovated by bringing a jug of apple cider into the theater, and insisted that he had to

Peter Hay's latest books are MGM — When the Lion Roars and Movie Anecdotes.

Above: Edmund Kean, a noted drunk, as Richard III in Cruikshank's famous cartoon (1814).

by Peter Hay

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drink it before and during the performance.

Towards the end, Barrymore could only perform in cameo film roles and on radio. Carroll Carroll, producing a Broadway hit, *The Jest*, on the air, recalls the audience gasped when the actor, swaying and trembling, stumbled into the studio. "His color was pale green and perspiration literally poured from his body . . . Everyone in the audience was sure John was about to die."

But, despite dropping some pages and making incoherent grunts and asides, the old troupier won an ovation for his twelve minute performance. And Carroll received a call from his boss, John Reber, that he had just heard the most sensational performance ever on radio. The producer, describing the difficult situation, asked whether he had not been bothered by Barrymore's heavy breathing and grunts. "It sounded like passion," Reber replied.

Barrymore's mantle fell on — among others — Richard Burton, who was more often drunk on stage than not. During one performance in John Gielgud's famous Broadway production of *Hamlet*, in 1964, Burton was booed several times. Much later that night, the wounded actor got back to his suite at the Regency Hotel, where he found his recent bride, Elizabeth Taylor, watching television. According to the late William Redfield, who acted in the production and wrote a book about it, Burton recounted the woeful performance. Taylor, not having

acted before live audiences up to that point, failed to grasp the enormity of the damage to her husband's ego, and continued to watch the late night movie. Thereupon Burton kicked in the television screen, shattering the picture tube and his foot with it. The next day he limped into the theater, his foot stitched and bandaged. "Some critics have said," he told his fellow players, "that I play Hamlet like Richard the Third anyway, so what the hell is the difference?"

"He drank and sank" — the pithy epitaph for a German comedian called Klager — could grace a number of famous actors' tombstones. People remembered Junius Brutus Booth (1796-1852), the father of Edwin and John Wilkes, before and after he took to drink. "His face, which had been beautiful and intellectual," recalled Sol Smith, an early theatrical manager in the South, "became almost disgusting to see; his voice, which had been of great power and sweetness, became harsh and nasal — he was completely changed. The present generation had not seen the Booth that I knew."

The change in voice had been partly due to the breaking of Booth's aquiline nose in a fight with fellow actor Tom Flynn. A female fan gazing at its ruins gushed once: "You're such a wonderful actor, Mr. Booth, but quite frankly I can't get over your nose." The tragedian looked at her dolefully and replied: "There's no wonder, madam: the bridge is gone." □



Drunks were common on both sides of the curtain, as another of Cruikshank's engravings (1808) attests.

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