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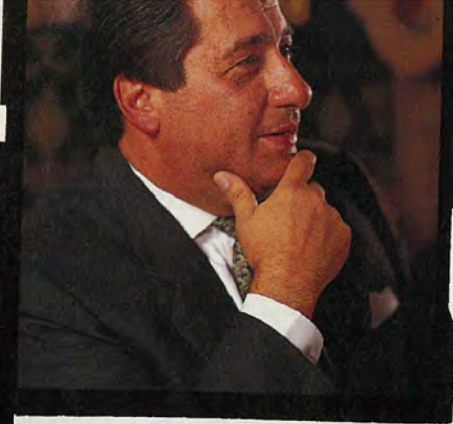


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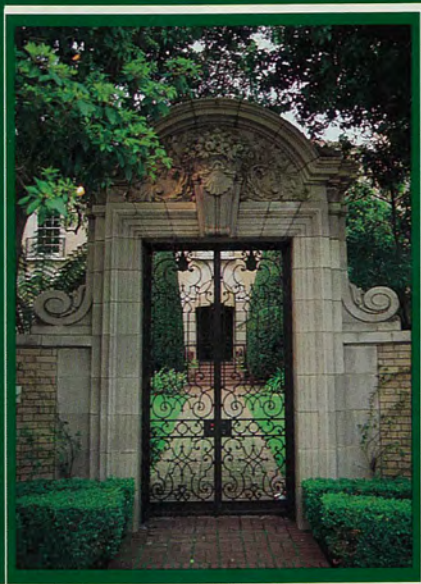


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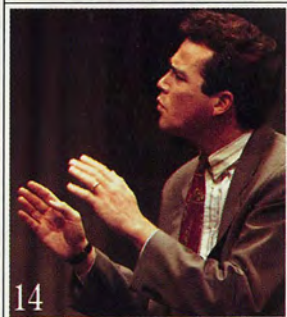
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# March Madness

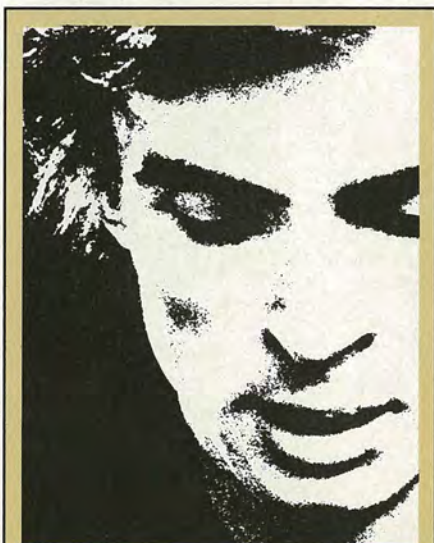
Spring into These Cultural Events

Reading *Private Domain*, Paul Taylor's engagingly eccentric autobiography, won't by any means explain this choreographer's most ambiguous work. But it does offer insights into the mind of our most unpredictable modern dance maker. It is, besides, a wonderfully teasing, elliptical and toughly poetic record of a hectic life. (The paperback edition, published in 1988 by North Point Press, is available locally.)

Taylor stopped dancing in 1974, at the age of forty-four, after a dramatic and near-fatal collapse on stage at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. His company, and the dances he has made for them since leaving the stage, continue to offer theatrical experiences unlike anything else in the dance world. In its March season at the Palace of Fine Arts, the Paul Taylor Dance Company will bring two programs offering the range of Taylor's work from hellish to rhapsodic. With the exception of *Esplanade* (1975) and his 1991 *Company B*, all are repertory works from the 1980s.

Program 1 opens with *Esplanade*, which has always seemed to us a view of heaven: a peculiarly busy heaven for dancers who never tire and never have to worry about learning steps: Taylor transforms walking, running, falling and catching into a dance as extravagant and precise as its baroque score, from Bach's *Concertos in E Major and D Minor: Lost, Found and Lost* one of Taylor's collaborations with designer Alex Katz, is a bleaker but equally inventive use of ordinary movement transformed into something ritualistic and mysterious. The evening ends with *Company B*, performed only the month before by San

Francisco Ballet. Using music by the Andrew Sisters, Taylor brings us the exhilarations and deep sadnesses of life during World War II. These were the



When Rudolph Nureyev died on Wednesday, January 7, 1993 the world lost yet another artistic genius. All the arts have been hard hit by the spectre of AIDS, but dance perhaps most of all.

Nureyev helped to redefine dance in America and throughout the world since his defection in 1961. He is probably best remembered for his cat-like leaps and his legendary pairing with Dame Margot Fonteyn. Nureyev danced into his fifties, and when dance proved too difficult he turned to conducting and choreography.

The man who wrote, "When someone has devoted his life to the stage, I think that as an artist he should be given the right to die on stage too" seems to have fulfilled that desire, at least.

songs of Taylor's youth — not at all a happy time, according to his autobiography — and Taylor's evocations of the 1940s are not at all nostalgic.

The three works on Program 2 are all from the mid-1980s and each is radically different from the other. *Roses*, set to music of Wagner and H. J. Baermann, is as unabashedly and innocently romantic as Taylor can ever be. There is an edge, of course, in all his work and *Roses* seems to embody not only romance but the loss of romance from our loves.

In *Last Look*, also choreographed in 1985, Taylor goes straight to hell and shows us what he sees there. It's a nightmarishly claustrophobic piece in which the entire cluster of nine dancers never leaves the stage and yet never breaks the profound spiritual isolation that encloses each of them.

*A Musical Offering*, which will end the evening, is a pure dance vision on the origins and evolution of modern dance. Taylor is never one to forget, however, that dance is inherently a dramatic form — that every posture has an emotional weight and pull. Set to the *Ricercata* from Bach's *A Musical Offering*, this piece has a rich muscularity that reminds us of the range of Taylor terrain, of life's possibilities for horror and unexpected benedictions. *March 23-27, Palace of Fine Arts, 3601 Lyon Street. (415) 398-6449.*

## JUMP INTO LAKE

San Francisco Ballet's *Swan Lake*, first presented in 1988 and back for its third viewing in mid-March, was always a success where it mattered: to the audiences and to the dancers. We have certain reservations about Helgi Tomasson's ver-

by Kate Regan Eaton





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sion of this old beauty, but very few about the dancers who have grown through it, in ways that only this classical tragedy can elicit. Four ballerinas now have performed the dual role of Odette/Odile — Muriel Maffre, Sabina Allemann, Evelyn Cisneros and Elizabeth Loscavio — and each has discernibly connected with the ballet's singular dark longing.

gone dancers and production — and for promises unfulfilled. It is a measure of the ballet's power that it leaves us always wanting more. In the case of SFB's *Swan Lake*, we would like to see both more passion and a more organic sense of the music's profound foreboding. "Each step has a reason," Tomasson once told Elizabeth Loscavio in rehearsal, and yet we don't always feel

offers George Balanchine's *Rubies*, that sexy, swaggering 1967 masterpiece first performed by SFB 1987; Tomasson's 1991 *Le Quattro Stagioni*, set to Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* and using the baroque score as a foil for more contemporary movement; and Jerome Robbins' *The Concert*, his dead-accurate comedy of a concert audience's errors, attitudes and inanities. Subtitled *The Perils of Everybody*, it's foolproof fun, and you can't have too much of that. *San Francisco Ballet repertory season at the War Memorial Opera House. (415) 703-9400.*

### STILL CRAZY

Back in the 1940s when he was haunting around the California School of Fine Arts (now the San Francisco Art Institute), as teacher as resident seer, **Clyfford Still** seemed to epitomize the artist as ascetic monk. His paintings of the late 1940s burst upon the local art world with an impact hard to imagine now. The poet Kenneth Rexroth wrote about the canvases in his 1947 show at the Legion of Honor, "People came up to his vast pictures very quietly, and toppled over into them without a murmur, and came out with nothing to say... Still's works were marked by a violence, a rawness which few of us... were prepared to recognize as art... Here was painting that instructed even as it destroyed." Still, in fact, was reinventing abstract painting, turning from the European influences of Cubism and Surrealism to great washes of color that evoked transcendent meditative states. He was never so well known nationally as his sometime friend and colleague Mark Rothko, but Still's strict devotion to the development of his personal vision had a profound resonance among Bay Area artists. As Thomas Albright pointed out in his posthumously published 1985 history, *Art in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1945-1980*, "Perhaps Still's most important contribution was his continual emphasis on the freedom and integrity of the artist, and on the inseparability of 'attitude' and 'content' in art."

The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, which owns some thirty of Still's works, twenty-eight given by the artist, will present the first big exhibition of his



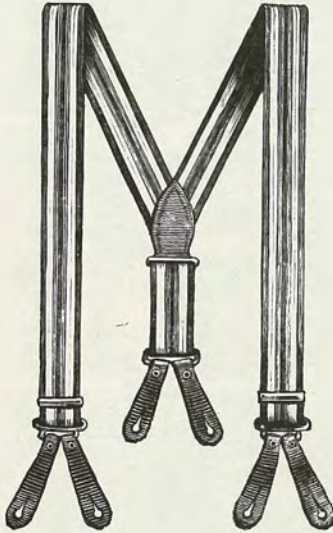
Top: *The Paul Taylor Dance Company in Company B at the Palace of Fine Arts, March 23-27.* Above: *San Francisco Ballet's Evelyn Cisneros and Anthony Randazzo in Tomasson's Swan Lake.*

Only someone seeing the ballet for the first time ever can watch this *Swan Lake* without cavils; to the rest of us, all *Swan Lakes* are a compendium of what we've seen so many times. In actuality, there is no perfect *Swan Lake*; the ballet, like its story, carries within each performance regrets for what has been lost — for long

that every dancer in this drama knows why he or she is there. Still, this is a ballet that enfolds its dancers, nourishing them with a choreography so rich and yet austere that some very wonderful and strange flowerings may result. We look forward to this growth.

Program IV, also opening in March,





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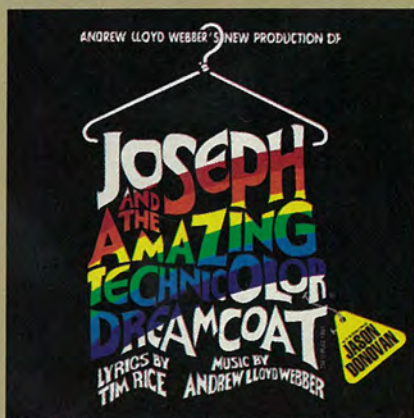
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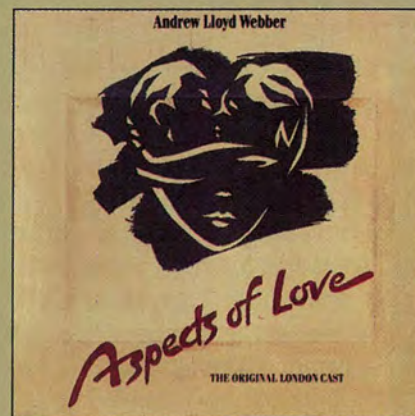


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Clifford Still's *Untitled, 1957*. Part of the Museum of Modern Art's exhibition of Still's paintings — the largest since the Metropolitan Museum of Art's 1975 show.

paintings since the Metropolitan Museum of Art's show in 1975. Although a selection from the museum's holdings is nearly always on display here, this traveling exhibition, organized by the Kunsthalle Basel, Switzerland, will give us a larger view of Still's expressionist paintings. Our guess is that these canvases will hold up; that the passage of time will reinforce their ferocity and controlled, declamatory thrust. *March 25 - June 13, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 401 Van Ness Avenue. (415) 863-8800.*

#### FIND SALVATION

Theatre Rhinoceros, the nation's oldest lesbian/gay theater company, opened its 15th season with several local and world premieres and in March revives Terry Garner's astonishing 1985 play, *Living on Salvation Street*. At its first performances in Rhinoceros' basement studio theater, critic Steven Winn called it "The most assured and captivating premiere staged here in memory."

Born in the Appalachians, in east Tennessee, Garner came to San Francisco in 1981 at the age of 26. She had been writing seriously since she was 16, and *Salvation Street* has the individual voice and confident humor of a writer not afraid to look at her world. Set in Kentucky in 1958, the play goes far beyond

predictable Southern eccentricities in its story of three women and a confused teenage boy, whose memories of his father's savagery have not killed his desire for human connection. *March 25-May 1 at Theatre Rhinoceros, 2926 16th Street, San Francisco. (415) 861-5079.*

**IN BRIEF:** *Theater: The Media Project: Women Saving Their Own Lives*, Idris Ackamoor and Rhodessa Jones' co-production of stories created and performed by women of color in prison; *March 24-April 11, Lorraine Hansberry Theatre, 500 Sutter Street. (415) 433-9115...* American Conservatory Theater presents George S. Kaufman and Edna Ferber's Depression-era black comedy, *Dinner at Eight*; *Marines Memorial Theatre, 609 Sutter Street. (415) 429-2ACT...* *Dance:* Oakland Ballet performs *Coppelia* for the first time since 1985; *March 12 and 13, Regional Center for the Arts, Walnut Creek. (510) 465-6400...* *The Bay Area Dance Series*, the region's largest modern dance festival, presents works by Robert Henry Johnson, Richard Shen See and Neil Marcus; *March 12-14; and Della Davidson Dance Company* in the premieres of *Monsters Dolls* and *Shrine*; *March 19-21, both at Laney College Theatre, 900 Fallon Street, Oakland. (510) 889-9500. □*

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# The Sum and Substance

*Baitz Returns to Los Angeles Triumphant*

One would think Jon Robin Baitz might feel uncomfortable walking back into the Mark Taper Forum. The prestigious Los Angeles theater was, after all, the site of the thirty-two-year-old playwright's only real failure, a drama called *Dutch Landscape* that proved to be something less than a treat for everyone concerned.

For Baitz, however, it's a happy homecoming. Not to Los Angeles, his onetime home, which he complains has become homogenized ("All of the idiosyncratic architectural and spiritual oddness



CHRIS GILKER

seems diminished, slightly flattened out.") But he finds it "very gratifying" to be back at the Taper itself, no doubt because that 1989 failure led directly to the success of his next play. That work, *The Substance of Fire* is having its Southern California premiere at the Taper this month.

"I felt so distraught after *Dutch Landscape*," he recalled in a recent interview. "I was filled with a personal feeling of dread and desolation. *The Substance of Fire* came out of that so specifically."

Specifically – and immediately. Soon after the unanimously negative reviews of



TERRANCE LARK

Above: Playwright Robin Baitz and the Los Angeles Music Center's Mark Taper Forum, site of Baitz's only failure and now host to the Southern California premiere of his major success, *The Substance of Fire*.

by Tom Jacobs



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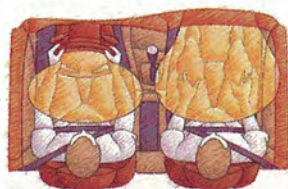
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*Dutch Landscape* appeared in the local press – “I’d read them and think ‘That’s right.’ And the more vicious they were, the more right they were” – Baitz was taken aside by Taper artistic director Gordon Davidson, who gave him a little fatherly advice. “Write,” he told Baitz. “Start writing right now.”

Agreeing, Baitz borrowed a small office above the West Hollywood bookstore Book Soup, which is owned by a friend. As he sat in a room surrounded by books, his negative feelings began to crystallize, and he penned the play’s first line: “Look at all these books.”

“The play started with the thought: I have lived a life surrounded by books, surrounded by ideas, and they had done me no good,” he recalled. Then a character emerged who embodied that quandry, “an amalgamation of myself and certain people I’ve been very close to.

“I had watched two dear friends, older people I loved, utterly self-destruct and sabotage themselves – slowly in one case, and rather quickly in another. I watched that in fascination and despair. At the same time, I was going through this minor existential crisis in the face of *Dutch Landscape’s* failure. I felt a kind of empathy for them. I needed to understand that. I also needed to write.”

And so he wrote, finishing the first draft of the first act in three days. A little more than two years later, *The Substance of Fire* was running off Broadway, and the reviews had a somewhat different tone. Howard Kissel of the *New York Daily News* concluded his glowing notice by declaring, “Nothing makes me more hopeful for the American theater than the writing of Jon Robin Baitz.”

Reviewing Baitz’s most recent play, *The End of the Day*, this past April, *New York Times* critic Frank Rich expressed a strikingly similar thought. “It is simply impossible to subscribe to a play’s utter hopelessness,” he wrote, “when its author offers so much hope for the American theater.”

Perhaps all those books have done the playwright some good after all.

Baitz is a somewhat different person

---

*Veteran arts writer Tom Jacobs is program book editor for the Los Angeles Music Center Opera.*

---





than he was three years ago, when he last met the Los Angeles media. His probing mind is still apparent, but his youthful cockiness is gone. He is soft-spoken; he answers even the most personal questions, but he chooses words carefully. One can sense he's been hurt.

"I'm fascinated by life slipping away from people, in increments or suddenly," he said. "The incredible fragility of the sort of life one leads, and the delicacy of its connection to the world, is endlessly interesting to me."

That fragility is far more than an intellectual concept for Baitz, who experiences recurring bouts of depression that sometimes leave him unable to write. The second act of *The Substance of Fire*, which he began ten months after the aforementioned three-day spurt, "is very much about the nature of depression, because I was experiencing it firsthand," he said.



Top: Ron Rifkin and Gena Rowlands in the Mark Taper Forum production of Baitz's *The Substance of Fire*. Inset: Kelly Wolf and Jon Tenney in the current production.

"There can be nothing more debilitating than the kind of depression in which you're simply unable to think," Baitz said in a matter-of-fact, emotionless monotone which suggests he has come to accept this condition. "It's as if all the sugar has left your blood. That is a very interesting state to me, because you are terribly sensitive and fragile.

"I used to fight it," he added. "Now I think of it as a big wave, and I let myself go with it. The play, in some ways, is an attempt to understand it."

It's an understanding he feels he could not receive from psychotherapy, which he called "a detestable industry, a big business filled with cant and dogma.

"I believe most therapists are psychiatric bureaucrats, bureaucrats of the soul, who shuffle people into compartments," he said. "I've met so many of them who are so startlingly indifferent. I also think therapy has a tendency to infantilize. I feel the 'inner child' is a vulgarity.

"Maybe we're not supposed to feel so marvelous about ourselves," he said. "Maybe [the current self-esteem craze] is a mistake. After all, the world is quite possibly dying. Depression is a very appropriate response.

"So I think of my depressed state as



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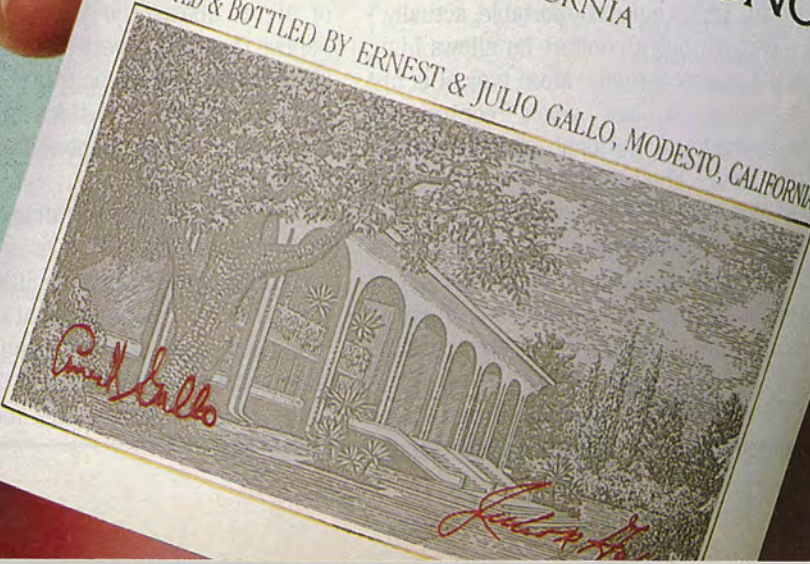
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being a given. But I would say that, given my basic nature, I'm happier than I ever thought possible in my wildest dreams."

Because of success? "Not at all. It's being able to love and be loved in return. It's my work – not the success, but being able to work, and being proud of the work itself."

Baitz's background is already well-known to Los Angeles theatergoers. The son of a Carnation Company executive, he lived in Brazil from age seven to ten and South Africa from age ten to sixteen. His family then returned to Los Angeles, where he hooked up with the Padua Hills Playwrights Festival and began writing for the stage. His first major success, *The Film Society*, had its premiere at the Los Angeles Theatre Center in 1986; it then moved on to New York and London.

Baitz considers his experience growing up overseas as perfect training for a potential playwright.

"I used to watch people very intently [in Brazil and South Africa]," he recalled. "I was trying to ascertain what the particular rules of the local game were. So I found myself interpreting and extrapolating and finding the meanings beneath the surface. That's very much the realm of a foreigner.

"That kind of basic confusion about life under the surface never went away for me. And in fact, there's no better way to deal with that than becoming a playwright."

Baitz did not go to college ("I feel much the same way about higher education as I feel about therapy – they're intellectual bureaucrats") and, with the exception of several summers at the Padua Hills Playwrights Festival he has never taken a writing workshop or class. "It can't be taught," he said. "It just can't be." Can it be honed? "It hones itself."

"I spend a summer occasionally, at Vassar, because I like being upstate and I have friends who run the summer program there," he said. "So I'll teach. But I really don't. Talented writers are just there because they're lonely. But they're writing and more importantly, they're reading. As Saul Bellow said, 'a writer is simply a reader moved to emulation.' You feel the necessity of being a part of this exchange."

Baitz said that is very much true of himself (his "big, long list" of influences

include Bellow, Evelyn Waugh, Graham Greene, and Jack London). But beyond simple emulation, he believes that "a writer or an artist is someone who has experienced something and is moved to emulate, to respond."

In *The Substance of Fire*, as in most of his plays, Baitz is responding to what he considers an amoral, unreflective and ravenous society. The drama that began life above Book Soup centers around an elderly book publisher whose refusal to compromise his high standards has brought the family business to the brink of financial ruin. A suggestion from his three grown children that he consider publishing contemporary fiction becomes the catalyst for a debate over values, aesthetics, and the necessity of compromise.

"If you're reflective, you're out of synch with the modern sensibility," he said. "So people like Isaac (the publisher) and

*The theater is a place  
where ideas are spoken,  
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where that happens.*

— ROBIN BAITZ

Marge (a social worker hired to determine Isaac's mental competency) are out of synch. They have no place in the modern world."

Baitz identifies with them "most of the time. When I'm behaving badly, when I'm behaving thoughtlessly, of wishing ill upon others, I feel in synch with the world. That's quite comfortable, actually."

But it's not a comfort he allows himself for long periods. More typical is his response to last year's controversy regarding the National Endowment for the Arts. The playwright – who had received a \$15,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts – made a personal donation of \$7,500 apiece to two universities whose grant applications were denied because the material was considered too risqué.

"I could not, in good conscience, sit by quietly while the cultural life of the country

is sacked," he said. "I would not be in complicity with psychosexual hysteria. I could not participate in that without protest."

He does participate in the film industry, although he finds the idea of constantly schmoozing with agents and producers extremely unappealing. (That's one reason he prefers living in New York.) He recently finished two screenplays – a new adaptation of Sinclair Lewis's *Dodsworth*, and an adaptation of an Evelyn Waugh short story for Sydney Pollack – and director Agnieszka Holland recently expressed interest in turning his *Substance of Fire* into a film.

Baitz said he could conceivably write an original screenplay "if it's the best way to tell the story," but added the theater remains his chosen art form.

"The theater is a place where ideas are spoken, and there is no other place in American life where that happens," he said. "It is almost not possible for movies or television to be meditative or reflective. More often they're not, they're self-referential. (In contrast,) the theater is a place of potentially incalculable intellectual rigor."

He is currently writing a new play, which he plans to workshop in Seattle this spring with director Daniel Sullivan. He called it "a very black-humored, black-hearted play about the destruction of a small city in Mexico."

No doubt it will be eagerly awaited by critics, many of whom are convinced Baitz will someday write a masterpiece. But the playwright, who was not paralyzed by bad reviews in Los Angeles, is equally unfazed by the positive press he has received in New York.

"You have to really separate yourself from that kind of praise," he said. "First of all, it doesn't do you any good to believe that. Life is very cyclical. There is failure, and sometimes things work out. I'm acutely aware of that right now. I know the things I don't know, and they're legion.

"This is an extraordinary time in American theater. This is a time of incredible revitalization, political thinking, structural pushing. That's far more important and relevant and truthful than any kind of personal status I may have achieved. It humbles me to be a part of that." □



# American Conservatory Theater

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*Managing Director*

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# American Conservatory Theater

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

**CAREY PERLOFF** (*Artistic Director*) was appointed Artistic Director Designee of A.C.T. in November 1991 and assumed artistic leadership of the company in June 1992. She served as Artistic Director of New York's CSC Repertory Ltd.-The Classic Stage Company, from 1986 to 1992. Under Perloff's direction, CSC won the 1988 Obie Award for artistic excellence, as well as numerous Obies for acting, design, and production. While at CSC, she directed numerous innovative productions of classics and new works adapted from or inspired by classical works and themes, including the acclaimed world premiere of Ezra Pound's version of Sophocles' *Elektra* (with Pamela Reed and Nancy Marchand), the American premiere of Harold Pinter's *Mountain Language* (with Jean Stapleton and Peter Riegert) on a double bill with his *The Birthday Party*, Tony Harrison's *Phaedra Britannica*, Thornton Wilder's *The Skin of Our Teeth*, Lynne Alvarez's translation of Tirso de Molina's *Don Juan of Seville*, Michael Feingold's version of Alexandre Dumas' *The Tower of Evil*, Beckett's *Happy Days* (with Charlotte Rae), Brecht's *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* (with John Turturro), August Strindberg's *Creditors*, and Len Jenkins' *Candide*. Perloff has also directed plays in a wide variety of venues in New York, Los Angeles, and England. Her other New York credits include Kilburg Reedy's *Second Lady*; Terri Wagener's *The Man Who Could See Through Time*; *Leverage*, a musical theater/dance work created in collaboration with Max Rapkin and Ara Fitzgerald; Paula Cizmar's *Candy and Shelley Go to the Desert*; Sean O'Casey's *The Silver Tassie*; Brecht's *St. Joan of the Stockyards*; the New York premiere of David Allen's Australian play *Cheapside*; and many other new works for the theater. Her Lincoln Center Institute production of *Charlotte's Web* premiered at the Juilliard Opera Theatre and completed a highly successful six-month tour of New York public schools. In Los Angeles, she staged Pinter's *The Collection* at the Mark Taper Forum, winning a Drama-Logue Award for outstanding direction, and was Associate Director of Steven Berkoff's *Greek*, which won the Los Angeles Drama Critics' Circle Award for the best production of 1983. Perloff's production of Ingebor Bachman's *The Good God of Manhattan* for Voices International (featuring Elizabeth McGovern) was broadcast on National Public Radio last winter. In Eng-

land, she directed Mrozek's *Out at Sea*, David Edgar's *Mary Barnes*, and the British premiere of Mayakovsky's *The Bed Bug* for the Edinburgh Festival of 1983. This season Perloff directs Strindberg's *Creditors* and Sophocles' *Antigone* at A.C.T., and in the summer of 1993 she will direct *The Cave*, a new video opera by world-renowned composer Steve Reich and video artist Beryl Korot. *The Cave* will premiere in Vienna at the Theater an der Wien before touring to the Paris Opera, the Brooklyn Academy of Music, Royce Hall at U.C.L.A., and the Holland Festival. Perloff was educated at Stanford University, receiving her B.A. (Phi Beta Kappa) in Classics and Comparative Literature, and as a Fulbright Fellow at Oxford University. She has served on the faculty of the Dramatic Writing Program at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts and taught acting and directing at NYU and at the Conservatory at CSC. Perloff has lectured and published widely on issues ranging from Harold Pinter's rehearsal process to the potential of radio drama in America. She served from 1985 to 1988 as an evaluator for the New York State Council on the Arts and from 1989 to 1991 as an on-site auditor for the National Endowment for the Arts. In 1990, Perloff initiated the National Theatre Translation Fund, with support from the Pew Charitable Trusts, to encourage new American translations of foreign plays. In 1987, the National Theatre Conference named her the "Theatrician with Outstanding Career Promise." She is the proud mother of Alexandra Perloff-Giles.

**JOHN SULLIVAN** (*Managing Director*) joined A.C.T. as its chief administrative and financial officer in 1986. A native San Franciscan, 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, Sullivan has served on the boards of Theatre Bay Area and the San Francisco New Vaudeville Fest-

tival. He currently serves on the National Executive Committee of The League of Resident Theaters. After completing his graduate work at the University of Southern California's School of Cinema, Sullivan wrote and directed numerous short films for the educational and entertainment markets, including three that 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 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.

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

**RICHARD SEYD** (*Associate Artistic Director*) was appointed Associate Artistic Director of A.C.T. in 1992. He is a native of England, where he co-founded the Red Ladder Theatre, England's first professional political theater collective, for which he acted, directed, and produced for seven years. In San Francisco, Seyd worked first with the Asian American Theatre Workshop and the Moving Men Theatre Company. He has received Drama-Logue and Bay Area Theater Critics' Circle Awards for his productions of *Cloud 9*, *About Face*, and *Noises Off*. Seyd was Associate Producing Director at the Eureka Theatre Company and directed many productions there, including *Threepenny Opera*, *The Island*, and *The Wash*. Elsewhere he has directed the Pickle Family Circus in London; *Three High* with Geoff Hoyle, Bill Irwin, and Larry Pisoni at the Marines Memorial Theatre; *A View from the Bridge* and *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* for Berkeley Repertory Theatre; *As You Like It* for the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival; and *Unfinished Stories* for the Mark Taper Forum's New Play Series. He directed *The Learned Ladies* with Jean Stapleton for CSC Repertory Ltd. in New York during the 1991-92 season, and was invited to direct *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as the opening production for the California Shakespeare Festival's new outdoor Amphitheater in 1991. Last season he directed *Sarah's Story* at the Los Angeles Theatre Center; *Born Yesterday* at Marin Theatre Company; and *King Lear* with Sydney Walker at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in Portland. This season he directs *The Learned Ladies* and the American premiere of Dario Fo's *The Pope and the Witch* at A.C.T.

**SUSAN STAUTER** (*Conservatory Director*) came to A.C.T. five 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 four hundred productions), actress (Cabaret Repertory Theatre), and educator. She earned her M.A. from California State University Fullerton, taught in Southern California for fourteen years (earn-

ing 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 and the Advisory Board of Young Audiences of the Bay Area. Stauter is Artistic Consultant for the Holocaust Oral History Project of Northern California and has been a creative consultant at Disneyland and toured to Alaska as Playwright-in-Residence with the Oregon Shakespeare Festival's Educational Outreach Program. In the summer of 1991 she was the keynote speaker for the Educational Theatre Association of America's National Conference in St. Louis.

**KATHLEEN DIMMICK** (*Resident Dramaturg*) joins A.C.T. this season after two years as Associate Dramaturg at the Mark Taper Forum, where she served as Production Dramaturg for Heiner Muller's *The Task*, Ariel Dorfman's *Widows*, and for the Taper's New Work Festival. Her production dramaturgy credits also include *The Johnstown Vindicator* at the Harold Clurman Theatre, *The Year of the Baby* at New York's Home for Contemporary Theatre and Art, and *Lonce and Lena*, *What the Butler Saw*, and *Chopin in Space* at Yale Repertory Theatre. She also served as dramaturg for the operas *Riders to the Sea* and *Dialogues of the Carmelites* at the Yale School of Music. Her translations and adaptations include *LEtoile au Front*, by Raymond Roussel, *Mansfield Park*, by Jane Austen, and *The Princess*, by Anton Chekov, and her articles have appeared in *Theater* and *American Theatre* magazines. Also a director, Dimmick directed *The Adventures of Por Quinly* at the Skirball-Kenis Theatre in Los Angeles, *The Combat Poets*, part of the political platform at the Los Angeles Theatre Center, *Shaker Heights* at Home for Contemporary Theatre, *A Premonition* and *Instructions to the Phantom of the Opera* at New York's BACA DOWNTOWN, *Something About Baseball* at the Atlantic Theatre Company, and *Susan Schneider: Characters* at Manhattan Punch Line. She also directed workshop productions of *Yokohama Duty* at the Ensemble Studio Theater and the Los Angeles Theatre Center, as well as staged readings of other plays at Playwrights Horizons,

New Dramatists, the Mark Taper Forum, and the Matrix Theatre. As an actor Dimmick has been a member of the New York Art Theatre, Odyssey Theatre Ensemble, and Scorpio Rising Theatre in Los Angeles, and was a founding member of Oakland's Alternate Theatre. For two years she was a Program Associate in Theater for the New York State Council on the Arts. Dimmick received an M.F.A. in Dramaturgy and Dramatic Criticism from the Yale School of Drama, where she was awarded the Kenneth Tynan Prize for Dramaturgy, and has taught in the English and Theatre Studies departments at Yale University.

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

**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 Chailot* with Le Gallienne, Sylvia Sydney, and Leora Dana, *The Rivals*, *John Brown's Body*, *A Touch of the Poet* with Denholm Elliot, and *The Comedy of Errors*. 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

*Continued on page P-31*



American Conservatory Theater

presents

# The Duchess of Malfi

by John Webster  
(1613)

*Directed by* Robert Woodruff  
*Scenery by* George Tsy-pin  
*Costumes by* Sandra Woodall  
*Lighting by* James F. Ingalls  
*Composer/Sound Design by* Bruce Odland  
*Movement Consultant* Della Davidson  
*Fight Director* Michael Cawelti  
*Assistant Director* Chris Salter  
*Dramaturgs* Kathleen Dimmick, Lance Barry Miller  
*Casting Consultant* Ellen Novack, C.S.A.

## The Cast

*Ferdinand, Duke of Calabria* Sam Tsoutsouvas  
*The Cardinal, His Brother* Lawrence Hecht  
*Antonio, Steward of the Household of the Duchess* Victor Mack  
*Delio, His Friend* Luis Oropeza  
*Daniel de Bosola, Gentleman of the Horse to the Duchess* Mario Arrambide  
*Malatesta, a Count* Lane Nishikawa  
*Castruchio, a Lord* Victor Talmadge  
*Marquis of Pescara* Michael McFall  
*Grisolan, a Lord* John Reynolds  
*Silvio, a Lord/The Doctor* David Maier  
*Duchess of Malfi* Randy Danson  
*Cariola, Her Woman* Sharon Omi  
*Julia, Castruchio's Wife and the Cardinal's Mistress* Gloria Weinstock  
*Old Woman* Roberta Callahan  
*Ensemble of Bureaucrats, Workers, and Madmen* J. Todd Adams, Charla Cabot, Andrea Carvajal\*, Tracey Huffman, Zachary Barton\*, Karen Garvey\*, Dan Johnson\*, Tom Lenoci\*, Brian Russell\*, Chanelle Schaffer\*, Sharr White\*, Jenny Woo\*

*There will be one intermission.*

## Understudies

*Duchess*—Lynne Soffer; *Antonio*—Michael McFall; *Cardinal*—Richard Butterfield;  
*Ferdinand, Castruchio, Malatesta*—Eric Zivot; *Bosola, Pescara*—Brian Lohmann; *Julia*—Tracey Huffman;  
*Cariola, Ensemble*—Cynthia Lynch; *Old Woman*—Charla Cabot; *Delio*—John Reynolds;  
*Grisolan, Silvio/Doctor, Ensemble*—Andrew DeAngelo

\*Students in the A.C.T. Conservatory

## Stage Management Staff

Bruce Elsperger and Kathleen J. Parsons  
Intern—Raelle Myrick Hodges

## Musicians

Will Bernard  
Mark McCoin

This production is made possible in part by the generosity of the Pan Pacific Hotel San Francisco.

*Original cover illustration by Cicero DeGuzman, Jr.*





## Touching the Limit: Contexts for *The Duchess of Malfi*

By Lance Barry Miller



*Terrified by profound feelings of aloneness and fear in contemporary mass society, human beings often seek to escape their isolation by controlling others or having others exert control over them.*

—Lynn S. Chancer,  
Sadomasochism in Everyday Life

The Latin form of James is *Jacobus*, so the plays written during the reign of England's King James I are known as Jacobean. But the term is usually reserved for the distinctively sinister and bloody tragedies by Shakespeare's successors in the Jacobean years from 1604 to 1625. *The Duchess of Malfi* is widely regarded as the finest of these, a vividly theatrical and richly poetic study of power, intrigue, and obsessive desire. As a case history of characters in extreme situations, it has an almost palpable contemporary feel, but it is also very much of its own time. How the Jacobean view of the world is expressed in *The Duchess of Malfi*, and why we can still see our world reflected in the play, is a story full of ironies and contradictions.

### Politics and Plagues

James' reign was part of the longest period of domestic peace which England had ever enjoyed. The country was relatively stable, both economically and politically, so much so that, as historian John Morrill observed, "no peer and probably no gentleman was tried for treason between 1605 and 1641," a stark contrast to the seemingly endless religious and political battles of the previous century.

James himself was the son of Mary, Queen of Scots, the Catholic claimant to the throne whom Elizabeth I had beheaded. The increasingly powerful Parliament insisted on a Protestant king, and James obliged. Among his lasting monuments is the *King James Bible* of 1611, a testament to his wide-ranging intellectual

---

Death and a Woman, by Baldung-Grien, Öffentliche Kunstsammlung, Basel.



interests. His name also survives in American history books as the namesake for the first permanent English settlement in the New World, Jamestown, Virginia. But James was also something of an eccentric. Fussy and superstitious, he wrote tracts against that profitable Virginia crop, tobacco, and against witchcraft, which he perceived as a growing threat to civilized life. (Shakespeare's *Macbeth* may have been written to gratify the Scots king's preoccupation with the supernatural.) These traits, and his hair-splitting debates with Parliament, prompted King Henry IV of France to dub James "the wisest fool in Christendom."

Yet there was a grimmer side to Jacobean England, including plague. After seven years of relief from outbreaks in the 1590s, epidemics forced the closing of theaters during the summer or fall of every year from 1603, the year of James' coronation, to 1610. The corruption of human flesh was an unavoidable sight in cities like London. And the fiscal corruption of the aristocracy was evident as well. The English state was still in transition as it moved toward a constitutional monarchy (as it still is, perhaps), and while James believed in his absolute power, he no longer controlled the purse strings. As a result, the king was dependent on the wealth of lordly barons and often embroiled in intrigues that led to a series of scandals. In 1619, for example, "a former Lord Chamberlain, a former Lord Treasurer, a former Secretary of State, and a former Captain of the Gentlemen Pensioners all languished in the Tower."

By far the most volatile instability in English life was religious conflict. For the Elizabethans and Jacobean, religion and statecraft were inseparable issues. Even as England's political and imperial fortunes rose, and its cultural life flowered under the influence of the Italian Renaissance, the after-shocks of the Protestant Reformation and Catholic Counter-Reformation rocked the country. In 1554, Queen Mary's violently imposed Catholic Restoration earned her the popular nickname "Bloody Mary." By 1558, Elizabeth brought the country back to her father's Church of England, but the con-



*A basilisk — a mythical creature, generally considered the king of the serpents, which killed with its glance — from Lycosthenus, Prodigiorum (1557).*

stant threat of Catholic uprising provoked almost constant skirmishes in Ireland and Scotland. At the same time, Bloody Mary's husband, Philip of Spain, pressed the pope and the Holy Roman Emperor to support a reconquest of England. When Mary, Queen of Scots (niece of Bloody Mary) was executed, Pope Sixtus V declared a holy crusade, and a Spanish Armada was launched in 1588, only to be humiliated by the English navy. The rest is history: England replaced Spain as the world's hungriest imperial power.

Stubborn Catholics were not the only religious fault line in Jacobean England. As on the continent, protestantism took many forms. "High Church" Anglicanism

*A wolfman, from Lycosthenus, Prodigiorum (1557).*



retained much of Rome's ritual and some of its dogma. But other sects preached a more radical break with the old beliefs. By the 1600s, Puritanism had claimed many adherents. By the 1640s, they were a

political and military force powerful enough, under Oliver Cromwell, to defeat the monarchy and its allies, including aristocratic Catholic families. In 1642, Puritans closed the London theaters for impiety. In 1649, they beheaded Charles I, son of James I.

#### Webster's Imaginary History

*Italy became important to English dramatists only when Italy was revealed as an aspect of England.*

—G.K. Hunter

**T***he Duchess of Malfi* is based on actual historical events from early sixteenth-century Italy. Like many of his contemporaries, Webster was fascinated by the period of the Italian wars, the Italy of Machiavellian intrigue, decadent popes, and tragic family romance. But Webster's history is far removed from the official chronicles of the time, transformed by culture and imagination, by England's view of Italy and Webster's unique poetic vision.

The real Duchess of Malfi was the victim in a true-life crime story. Giovanna of Amalfi, a small Duchy near Naples, was a member of the powerful House of Aragon, the Spanish family then dominating the heel of Italy. At twelve years of age, Giovanna was married off to Alfonso Piccolomini, who became the Duke of Amalfi three years later, in 1493. The Duke died in 1498, leaving a pregnant twenty-year-old Duchess in charge of the family holdings. In about 1504, Giovanna hired Antonio Bologna, an impoverished nobleman, to manage her affairs. They soon became lovers, were secretly married, and would have three children together.

Giovanna's father, Enrico, was the illegitimate son of King Ferrante of Naples. Her marriage helped legitimize Enrico's dynastic claims. Giovanna's brothers, Lodovico and Carlo,





*Cesare Borgia. Woodcut from the Elogia Virorum Bellica Virtute Illustrium, by Paola Giovio (1577).*

also rose in the world. Lodovico was appointed Cardinal of Aragon by Pope Alexander VI, the notorious Roderigo Borgia. Carlo took the title Marquis of Gerace, a small town in the Calabrian area of southern Italy. In about 1510, these powerful brothers got wind of their sister's humble liaison. By 1512, they were threatening to bring the union of the Duchess and her Antonio to an end. Antonio and his eldest son fled to Milan, where in October of 1513 they were murdered by a band of thugs led by a desperado named Daniele da Bozola. The fate of the Duchess was never officially confirmed, but, as literary historian Charles Forker recounts the tale, "the duchess, with their two other children, was conducted back to Amalfi and never seen again."

Giovanna, Lodovico, and Carlo became the Duchess, the Cardinal, and Ferdinand, Duke of Calabria, in Webster's play, while Daniele da Bozola becomes the cynical Bosola. But Webster's dramatic transformation of these historical figures wasn't the first — it had been prefigured in earlier literary works. The playwright's source for the story was William Painter's *Palace of Pleasure* (1567); Painter's source was Francois Belleforest's *Histoire Tragique* (1565); and Belleforest's source was the fictionalized memoir of Matteo Bandello's *Le Nouvelle* (1554). The story is only one example of the wealth of Italian literature and history translated into English during Elizabeth's reign. As critic Langton Douglas wrote, "volumes of Italian love stories were to be found in every shop in London." These novellas shared shelf space with translations of such works as Guiccardini's *History of Italy*; Pico della Mirandola's *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, one of the seminal texts of Renaissance humanism's emphasis on individuality; and Machiavelli's *The Prince*, which initiated the modern study



of power politics. Castiglione's elegant guide to civilized behavior, *The Book of the Courtier*, was there, too. In a word, the Renaissance had come to England.

England's response to Italian influences was ambivalent, however, as was its attitude toward the humanism of the Renaissance. The rebirth of learning was accompanied by its own shadow, a "Counter-Renaissance." Individual human life was cause for both optimism and pessimism. Where Castiglione saw courteous manners, Machiavelli saw ruthless manipulation. And if Mirandola's rediscovery of classical Greek culture was cause for optimism, the gruesome Stoicism of Seneca's Roman tragedies, newly translated from Latin, was cause for despair. Machiavelli's model for *The Prince* had been Cesare Borgia, the illegitimate son of Pope Alexander VI. Cesare's sister Lucrezia was married early and often, in order to increase Borgia dynastic power. Pope Alexander may have poisoned his predecessor. Cesare probably did poison one of Lucrezia's husbands. And whispers of both father-daughter and brother-sister incest added to England's image of Italy as a passionate and degen-

erate hothouse of sinful intrigue.

With one hand, writers and scholars welcomed Italian culture as the source and model of the new learning; with the other, they damned its decadence. In the English imagination, Italy became a mythical landscape, simultaneously a place of previously inconceivable human possibilities and a kind of hell. Roger Ascham, tutor to the young Queen Elizabeth, heartily disapproved of "that Godless Renaissance below the Alps," but the imaginary Italy held Webster in its grip, imparting a morbid fascination with the excesses and extremes of being human.

### The Thirst for Annihilation

The lingering question of why Jacobean tragedy was so grimly pessimistic has long preoccupied literary scholars. Hiram Haydn suggests that the collision between Medieval and Renaissance views of the world shaped Elizabethan theater and drama. Renaissance learning contributed a wealth of literary allusions to the plays, as well as a deeper exploration of individual character and motive. In Jacobean drama, however, an enduring Medieval view of human deprecation is reasserted, as in John Marston's *The Malcontent* (1604):

Think this:—this earth is the only grave and Golgotha wherein all things that live must rot; 'tis but the draught wherein the heavenly bodies discharge their corruption; the very muck-hill on which the sub-lunary orbs cast their excrements; man is the slime of the dung-pit, and princes are the governors of these men.

In the Medieval cosmos, humanity was both the center of God's creation and the eternally imperfectible cesspit beneath the crystalline perfection of the heavens, the "music of the spheres." In the Renaissance, the perfectibility of humankind seemed possible, even as the new science of Copernicus, Galileo, and Francis Bacon



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demonstrated that the heavens themselves are as mutable and corruptible as we are. Invariably, one view of what it is to be human seems to provoke its opposite.

The Roman playwright Terence is credited with the saying, "Nothing human is alien to me." One way to look at Western history is as a constant renegotiation of what it means to be human. The traditional middle ground, that we are somewhere between angel and beast, has been challenged again and again, as we persist in our need to test the limits and explore the boundaries of being human, a need that is both a gift and a curse. The gift of aspiration has always informed the idea of human perfectibility—the humanistic rebirth of learning in the Renaissance, the optimistic belief in reason of the Enlightenment, and the faith in political emancipation in the progressivism of our own century. But this aspiration seems inextricable from the curse of bestiality, the point at which the blurred boundaries of being human give way to the horrors of becoming monstrous.

The Enlightenment's aspiration to freedom also produced the bloodshed of the French Revolution. The Romantic infatuation with excess and extremity pervades the work of the Marquis de Sade, the libertine whose ideas were based on liberty. In his *The Philosophy of the Bedroom* (1795), a young woman is initiated into orgiastic rites that push past all limits to a state of freedom beyond the human: "Turn your entire imagination to the most extreme deviations of libertinism; consider that you are going to see the most beautiful mysteries unfold before your eyes; crush any inhibitions under your feet." Freedom and excess are here united in the power of desire. But the extremity of desire often finds its end in an unrestrained liberation that one critic has called a "thirst for annihilation."

In late Medieval art, the symbolism of desire linked with annihilation was often depicted by juxtaposing attractive and worldly young lovers with skeletons and skulls. The skulls, along with images of

clocks, shrivelling fruit, and wilting flowers, were *memento mori*, reminders of death. Another motif was the juxtaposition of an attractive couple with the image of the same couple nude, decrepit with advancing age and disease, with creeping beasts emerging from every orifice. This is sometimes called *delectatio morosa*, the desire for death, or the desire of death. The imagery points not only to a belief in the bestiality and corruption of humankind, but also to the merging of sex and death.

In modern psychoanalytic theory, sex and death, or *eros* and *thanatos*, are the two most powerful sources of psychic energy. In extremity, both carry us beyond the boundaries of "normal" human life. When they become identified with one another, the combination is frighteningly powerful. In Renaissance poetry, sexual climax was often referred to as "dying." But in extreme form, this desire is monstrous—at least in the imagination. And yet that imaginative power is compelling. In *The Annotated Dracula*, Leonard Wolf diagnoses our continuing fascination with the bestial,

blood-drinking, undead creatures of the night, suggesting that the vampire's exchange of blood symbolizes unrestrained desire and its power to dissolve ordinary human boundaries. It "stands for every conceivable union" of sexuality, every "permutation, normal, subnormal, hypernormal, or supernatural."

#### What It Is To Be Human

*The Duchess of Malfi* has its own bestial creature of the night. Ferdinand, obsessed with his twin, the Duchess, cannot get sex off his mind. His obsessive desire takes Ferdinand to the boundaries of what it is to be human, and beyond. His lycanthropy—"werewolf syndrome"—brings him to a tragic end. The Duchess, too, is motivated by desire, a desire for Antonio that violates the social conventions of her world. She acts on those desires, claiming a freedom that finally brings her, too, to a tragic end. But perhaps her fate differs in its humanity. With her world falling away, she is able to assert, "I am Duchess of Malfi still."

Living as we do in a time some theorists describe as "post-humanist," the old question of "what is it to be human" assumes a new dimension. Harold Bloom describes the character of Bosola this way:

The Jacobean hero-villain, at the end, touches the limits of manipulative self-knowledge, and in touching that limit gives birth to a High Romantic self-consciousness which

we cannot evade, and which remains the affliction of our post-Modernism.

Afflicted though we are, self-consciously touching the boundaries of what it is to be human, the theater continues to grapple with the very idea of humanity. Perhaps this is part of the little bit of hope that one fusty old Victorian scholar, Thomas B. Shaw, saw in *The Duchess of Malfi*: "the effect of a daisy springing up amid the festering mold of a graveyard."

*Performing an animal sacrifice, from Lycosthenus, Prodigiorum (1557).*

Ferdinand: "You are all of you like beasts for sacrifice: there's nothing left of you but tongue and belly, flattery and lechery." (The Duchess of Malfi, Act V, scene ii.)







## About the Playwright

John Webster is one of the most enigmatic of the Jacobean playwrights. Little is known about his life, and he was not a prolific writer. In 1617, Henry Fitzroy satirized the “crabbed Websterio” for being so laborious:

Was ever man so mangled with a poem?  
See how he draws his mouth awry of late,  
How he scrubs, wrings his wrists, scratches his pate.  
A midwife, help! By his brain's coitus  
Some centaur strange, some huge Bucephalus,  
Or Pallas, sure, engendered in his brain....

Fitzroy's lines give some clue to the reasons for the slow pace of Webster's labor. He was a painstakingly learned writer, although his classical allusions are not as plentiful as they might have been if he had known Greek; most of the many sources traced in Webster's work were written in English. But Fitzroy's lines contain other clues. They hint at the “strange” originality of Webster's creative literary theft. And Fitzroy's hyphenated subtitle, “playwright-cartwright,” is one of the very few facts



Skull, by Albrecht Dürer (1521).

known about Webster's life.

He was probably born in 1580 and raised in London, the son of a cartwright — or carriage maker — from the parish of St. Sepulchre-without-Newgate, a bit of information that speaks volumes. “Sepulchre” is a latinized word for tomb, and Newgate was the prison from which many inmates were dispatched for execution on Tyburn hill. In fact, this practice provided much of the elder Webster's business, along with the need for carts to remove victims of the plague, wagons to carry cuts of beef and horse from the slaughtering yards near Smithfield, and vehicles used by strolling theatrical players.

Webster was a member of the Merchant Taylors' guild. There was a close connection in Webster's England between tailors — who made trappings for funerals, plays, and pageants — and carriage makers, who provided hearses for coffins and vehicles that served as transportation for entertainers' baggage as well as platforms for outdoor performances. Death, ever-present in Renaissance London, sometimes wore an almost festive face, but it is little wonder that, as T.S. Eliot wrote:

Webster was much possessed by death  
And saw the skull beneath the skin;  
And breathless creatures underground  
Leaned backward with lipless grin.

Webster's father was quite prosperous by trade standards, serving as a councilman at St. Sepulchre's, known locally as “St. Pulcher's.” He was on the council when it approved the funding of a “common bellman” to ring out calls for the condemned of Newgate to repent; just such a bellman is referred to in *The Duchess of Malfi*. As a member of the guild, Webster was able to send his son to the Merchant Taylors' School. Founded by noted scholar William

## Synopsis of the Play

The young, widowed Duchess of Malfi is forbidden by her two brothers—Ferdinand, her twin, and the Cardinal—to remarry. They hire the malcontent Bosola to spy on her. The Duchess secretly woos and weds Antonio, her household steward, and succeeds in keeping the marriage a secret through the birth of two children. Bosola discovers the children, but remains unaware of their father's identity. Following the birth of a third child, the marriage is revealed to Ferdinand, but the Duchess protects Antonio's identity by accusing him of embezzlement and banishing him from her service. Disarmed by Bosola's apparent praise of Antonio, however, she reveals their marriage to him, and Bosola immediately passes the information on to her brothers. He suggests that the Duchess feign a pilgrimage to the shrine of Loretto to meet Antonio.

Meanwhile, the Cardinal also travels to Loretto and formally resigns his ecclesiastical office to arm for war. In dumb show he banishes Antonio, the Duchess, and their children. She

counsels Antonio to flee with their eldest son, and no sooner has he escaped than a disguised Bosola takes the Duchess prisoner. Confined to her palace, she undergoes a series of grotesque tortures devised by Ferdinand to break her spirit. Finally she is strangled by Bosola's executioners, facing death with dignity and resignation. Her two youngest children and serving maid, Cariola, are also killed.

As the influence of the Duchess's character and passion survives her death, Ferdinand descends into madness, and the Cardinal, fearing discovery, kills his mistress Julia after telling her about the murder. Bosola, affected by the Duchess' fate and weary of his role as henchman of Ferdinand and the Cardinal, plans to save Antonio and take revenge on the brothers. He mistakes Antonio for the Cardinal, however, and accidentally kills him. He then stabs the Cardinal and the raving Ferdinand, who fatally wounds Bosola in the struggle. The sole survivor of the family, Antonio's son, is led in by Delio, his father's friend and confidant, as the play ends.



Mulcaster, the school was one of the best, offering a curriculum that emphasized English, rather than Greek and Latin, literature. The school also organized a boys' troupe to perform both classical and vernacular plays. Young John Webster's education was good enough to gain him admission, in 1598, to the Middle Temple, one of the London law schools known as the Inns of Court. A good number of his fellow law students had been to Oxford or Cambridge, and many of them had ambitions that were literary and theatrical as well as legal. Webster learned some law — as his play, *The Devil's Lawcase* (1616) amply demonstrates — but he seems to have been caught up in the enthusiasms of colleagues like John Marston, who became an accomplished playwright and shared Webster's fascination with Italianate themes.

By 1602, Webster's name appears in the diary of theater manager Philip Henslowe among a group of collaborators that included Thomas Dekker, Thomas Middleton, and Thomas Heywood. Webster worked with one or more of these writers throughout the decade, and also wrote the "Induction" to John Marston's *The Malcontent* in 1604. Eight years later *The White Devil*, Webster's first known solo effort, was produced. Like *The Duchess of Malfi*, which he wrote in 1613 and 1614, the play was set in Italy and based on a true story. After 1623, when he prepared his plays for publication, very little is recorded of Webster's life. In 1634, an elegiac poem by Thomas Heywood, "The hierarchy of the blessed angels," refers to Webster in the past tense. It is thought that he died about 1630.

Webster's work is distinguished by several traits. His two major plays both feature a strong female character in the title role and are set in the "Italian lascivious palace." Webster used an impressive array of sources, drawing heavily on the skepticism of the recently translated French essayist Montaigne, for one. He wove these many borrowings into a singularly original fabric of character and motive, a dramatic world with an atmospheric malevolence all its own. His description of Ferdinand's lycanthropy ("werewolf syndrome"), to cite another example, comes not from his primary sources for the story of the Duchess, but from Simon Goulart's *Admirable and Memorable Histories* of 1607, which reports the case of an Italian werewolf. Yet it is Webster's



Illustration of an open-air performance by strolling players on a platform stage typical of the 17th century. From the title page of William Haithorne's English translation of *Roman Comique*, by Paul Scarron.

penetrating vision into the extremes of desire that dominates these plays. The effects of Webster's dramaturgy are well described by the critic Alvin Kernan:

Webster's style creates and keeps constantly before us the deep perverse energies of the mind...the dream is struggling for release and realization: breaking through the metre in quick, nervous offbeat rhythms; racing outward in a rush of ideas which disrupt logic and grammar; exploding in expletives and brief, fragmented sentences; carrying to the surface a flood of images so

strange that they could only come from the depths of a mind concerned scarcely at all with aptness of comparison but obsessed with the odd shapes forming within....Entrances and exits are abrupt, unexpected actions explode in the midst of moments of quiet, life flares up in brief intense spasms, there seems little continuity between events, and the speed of passage is breathtaking.

As T.S. Eliot's verse on Webster concludes: "He knew that thought clings round dead limbs/Tightening its lusts and luxuries."







**T**he Professor of Gynaecology: He began his course of lectures as follows: Gentlemen, woman is an animal that micturates once a day, defecates once a week, menstruates once a month, parturates once a year and copulates whenever she has an opportunity.

I thought it a prettily balanced sentence.

—*Somerset Maugham's  
medical school diary*

**I**wanted to swim in the fullness of life, In the estuaries that were most open to the world,  
And when people slowly withdrew from me,  
Closing paths and doors, preventing  
My hands, born of springs, from touching  
Their painful nonexistences,  
I went from street to street and river to river,  
From place to place and bed to bed,  
And the salty mask of my countenance crossed the wasteland,  
And in the last humble houses, without  
Lamps, without fires,  
Without bread, without bricks, without peace, *alone*,  
I wrapped myself, dying, in my own death.

—*Pablo Neruda, Collected Poems*

**D**own from the waist they are Centaurs,  
Though women all above:  
But to the girdle do the gods inherit,  
Beneath is all the fiend's.  
There's hell, there's darkness, there is the sulphurous pit,  
Burning, scalding, stench, consumption; fie, fie, fie!

—*from King Lear, Act IV, Scene 6*

**I**f a woman insists she can and does love and her living isn't loveless or dead, she dies. So either a woman is dead or she dies.

—*Kathy Acker*

**T**urning "Yogurt Eaters" into "Wild Men"

It is a massive  
masculine shadow,  
fifty males sitting together

in hall or crowded room,  
lifting something indistinct  
up into the resonating night.

—*Robert Bly,  
"Fifty Males Sitting Together"*

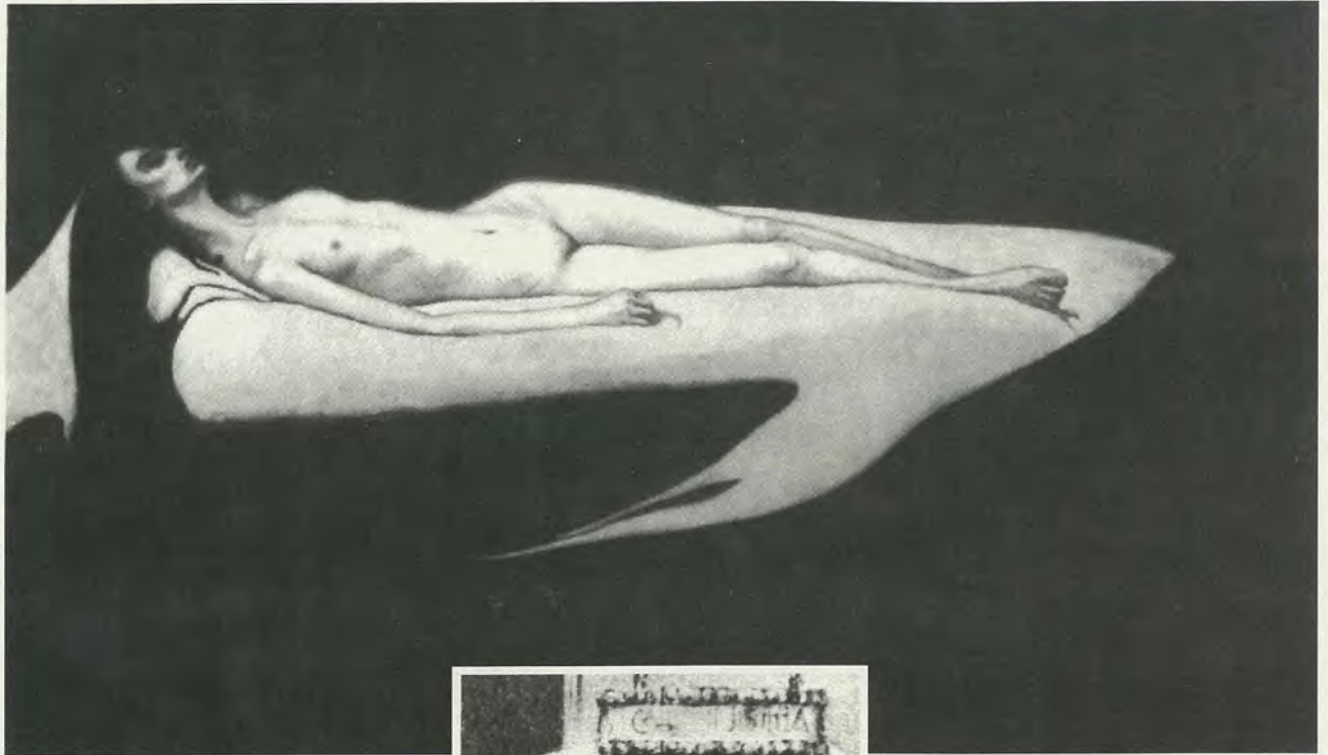
**H**e who fights with monsters might take care lest he become a monster. And if you gaze for long into an abyss, the abyss gazes also into you.

—*from Beyond Good and Evil,  
by Friedrich Nietzsche*

Opposite page: Death and the Young Woman, by Nicolas Manuel Deutsch (1517). Kunstmuseum, Basel.  
Right: Original drawing by costume designer Sandra Woodall.







Above: *Le Trajet (Dead Woman)*, by Romaine Brooks (ca. 1911).

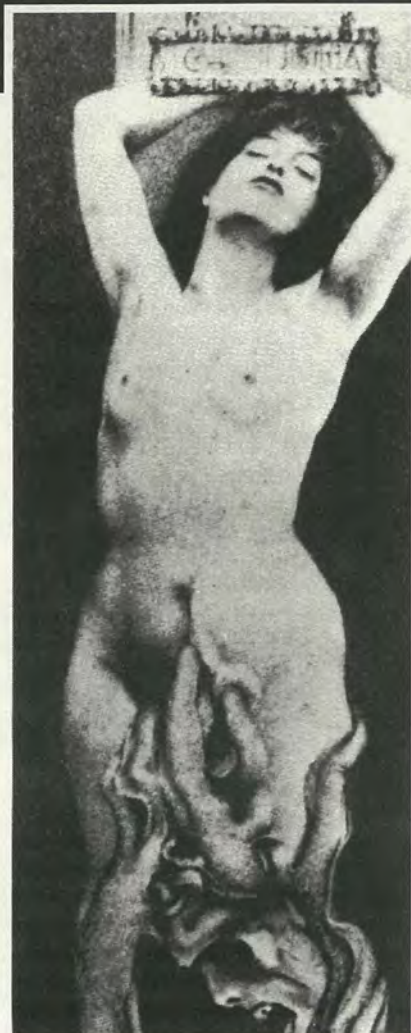
The trouble with being a woman,  
Skeezix,  
Is being a little girl in the first place.  
Not all the books of the world will change  
that.  
I have swallowed an orange, being a  
woman.  
You have swallowed a ruler, being a man.  
Yet waiting to die we are the same  
thing....

Say the woman is forty-four  
Say she is five seven-and-a-half.  
Say her hair is stick color.  
Say her eyes are chameleon.  
Would you put her in a sack and bury her,  
suck her down into the dumb dirt?  
Some would.  
If not, time will.

—Anne Sexton,  
*"Hurry Up Please, It's Time"*

You don't need me. What you really  
need is a mirror. Because any stranger  
is for you simply a mirror in which to  
reflect yourself. I don't ever again want to  
return to such a desert of mirrors.

—from *Woman in the Dunes*,  
by Kobo Abe



Left: *Istar*, lithograph by Fernand Khnopff (1888).

Painters have presented to us with  
some horror the skeleton, the frame  
of the bones of a man's body; but the  
state of a man's body, in the dissolution  
of the grave, no pencil can present to  
us. Between that excremental jelly that  
the body is made of at first, and that  
jelly which thy body dissolves to at last;  
there is not so noisome, so putrid a  
thing in nature. This skin (this outward  
beauty) this body (this whole constitu-  
tion) must be destroyed, says Job, in the  
next place.

—from Sermon XIV,  
by John Donne (c. 1630)

Pleasure is so close to ruinous waste  
that we refer to the moment of cli-  
max as "little death." Consequently, any-  
thing that suggests erotic excess always  
implies disorder.

—from *Visions of Excess*,  
by George Bataille (1985)

What then remains, but that we still  
should cry,  
Not to be born, or being born, to die?

—from *Of Truth*,  
by Francis Bacon



## 'A Kind of Ghastly Wit'

After the success of *The Duchess of Malfi* in its initial 1613-14 production, which featured Richard Burbage as Ferdinand and Henry Condell—who helped compile Shakespeare's First Folio—as the Cardinal, the play was periodically revived; but for much of its history, *The Duchess* has been subjected to moral "improvement."

In 1735, Lewis Theobald rewrote the play to make it conform with the Neoclassical rules of unity: the action should be singular, avoiding subplots; there should be a single place where the action occurs; and it should all happen within twenty-four hours. Theobald's friend Philip Frowde wrote the preface to this Neoclassic bore, retitled *The Fatal Secret*:

The rude old bard, if critics' laws he knew,  
From too warm imagination drew,  
And scorning rule should his free soul confine,  
Nor Time nor Place observed in his design.  
This wild luxuriance our chaste Muse restrains,  
Binds him indeed, but 'tis with friendly chains.

The production was not successful. It should be noted that the pedantic Theobald served as the model for the King of the Dunces in Alexander Pope's mock epic, *The Dunciad* (1728).

Samuel Phelps' 1850 production at Sadler's Wells Theatre used an "expurgated and melodramatised" *Duchess of Malfi* by R.H. Horne. The rules of melodrama were quite different from those of Neoclassicism, catering to the nineteenth-century audience's taste for spectacular stagecraft, multiple settings, special effects, and lots of animals and children. Playgoers of the time also had a taste for sentimentality, as the lofty moral tone of Horne's florid preface attests:

...Tonight, we bring you the inspiring themes  
Of great, old Webster—clad in whose strong beams  
We venture forth on the uplifted sea  
On his invention's high-wrought poesy,  
Steering to reach the storm-rent beacon tower,  
Trusting his faith—and with full faith in power.

a celerity which is somewhat disagreeable to witness." Back in London, George Henry Lewes wrote in *The Leader*: "Instead of 'holding up the mirror to nature', this drama holds up the mirror to Madame Tussaud's and emulates her 'chamber of horrors'. The *Times* described the play as "a brilliant scintillation of a kind of ghastly wit." Later, George Bernard Shaw, who had a general contempt for all things Elizabethan—especially his arch-rival for literary immortality, Will Shakespeare—borrowed Lewes' image, describing Webster as the "Tussaud laureate."

In 1892, William Poel inaugurated the modern period of *Duchess of Malfi* productions by using an only slightly altered version of Webster's script. A champion of Elizabethan staging, Poel emphasized the visceral imagery of Webster's language. He defended the play against critics of its violence, who included William Archer, the champion of Ibsen and modern realism. Poel asserted that Webster had intended "to give vital embodiment to the manners and morals of the Italian Renaissance, as they appeared to the imagination of Englishmen." Archer condemned Webster's aesthetic sense as unrefined and perverted, yet could not resist a grudging respect for the complexity of Webster's characters. While one commentator characterized Bosola as "a kind of human gangrene infecting the body of the play... [whose] putrid fancy is ingeniously loathsome, and leaves a trace of slime upon all objects which it traverses," Archer stated: "I am inclined to think that Webster came very near to creating in

Bosola one of the most complex and most human villains in the drama." Even for Archer, the "realism" of Webster's acute psychological sensibility in his characterization of Bosola took precedence over the bloody violence that so disturbed Victorian reviewers.

### THE TRAGEDY OF THE DVITCHESSE Of Malfy.

*As it was Presented priuately, at the Black-Friers; and publicly at the Globe, By the Kings Maiefties Seruants.*

The perfect and exact Coppy, with diuerse things Printed, that the length of the Play would not beare in the Preface.

Written by John Webster.

Hoc. — Si quid —  
— Candidae Imperfectionis non sit vera metum.

LONDON

Printed by NICHOLAS ORES, for IOHN WATSON, and are to be sold at the Gate of the Crowne, in Pauls Church-yard, 1623.

*The title page of The Duchess of Malfi, published in 1623.*

Horne's version of *The Duchess* proved immensely popular as a star vehicle, especially for Isabella Glyn, Alice Marriot, and Emma Waller, all of whom toured it extensively. Even so, reviews were mixed. The *New York Herald* commented that "all the villains are dispatched in a heap, and with





In 1850 *The Duchess of Malfi* ran for almost a month at Sadler's Wells Theatre in London (shown above as it appeared during the 1840s), due to the popularity of the wolf-madness scene by Samuel Phelps as Ferdinand.

## A Sea of Sweat

As the horrors of our century unfolded, defenses of the play shifted from its merit as poetry, and even its realism, to a darker sort of Romanticism that valued *The Duchess of Malfi* precisely because of its horror. Rupert Brooke, who was to die on the battlefield in the First World War, wrote in his graduate thesis: "A play of Webster's is full of the feverish and ghastly turmoil of a nest of maggots . . . Human beings are writhing grubs in an immense night. And the night is without stars or moon. But it has sometimes a certain quietude in its darkness; but not very much." Almost a half-century later, in the England of angry young men, Kenneth Tynan came home from the Royal Shakespeare Company's 1960 production of *The Duchess of Malfi* and wrote, "Webster is the poet of bile and brain-storm, the sweet singer of apoplexy; ideally, one feels, he would have had all his characters drown in a sea of sweat."

In the production reviewed by Tynan, Peggy Ashcroft played the Duchess, and

over the past thirty years the play has been staged many times, with many notable performances. Elisabeth Bergner, Helen Mirren, and Eleanor Bron have all played the Duchess. John Gielgud created a particularly tortured Ferdinand. And Bosola has been played by, among others, Ian McKellen and Canada Lee, one of America's most distinguished black actors.

*The Duchess of Malfi* still provokes strong responses; it is strong stuff. In Webster's hands, the collision of sex and violence is not mere sensationalism; it is also the blurring of the line that separates desire and cruelty. Webster's penetrating, evocative language and theatrically powerful treatment of duplicity, manipulation, obsession, and repugnance still reflect the horrors of our century. Now, however, we recognize that those horrors have their roots in the turmoil of our own inner lives. As R.D. Laing wrote of the twentieth-century *Politics of Experience*, "We are effectively destroying ourselves by violence masquerading as love."

—Lance Barry Miller

## SPEAKING OUT:

### A.C.T. Announces Sunday Symposium on *The Duchess of Malfi*

On February 28, 1993, A.C.T. will present a symposium on the dramatic strategies and contemporary issues raised by Robert Woodruff's production of *The Duchess of Malfi*. The program will feature distinguished professionals from the fields of Jacobean theater and contemporary social theory who will explore the continuing relevance of John Webster's disturbing drama.

The symposium will begin at approximately 6 p.m., after the Sunday matinee. There is no additional admission charge for the symposium, so please feel free to come back and join us, even if you've already seen the play on another day. See you there!





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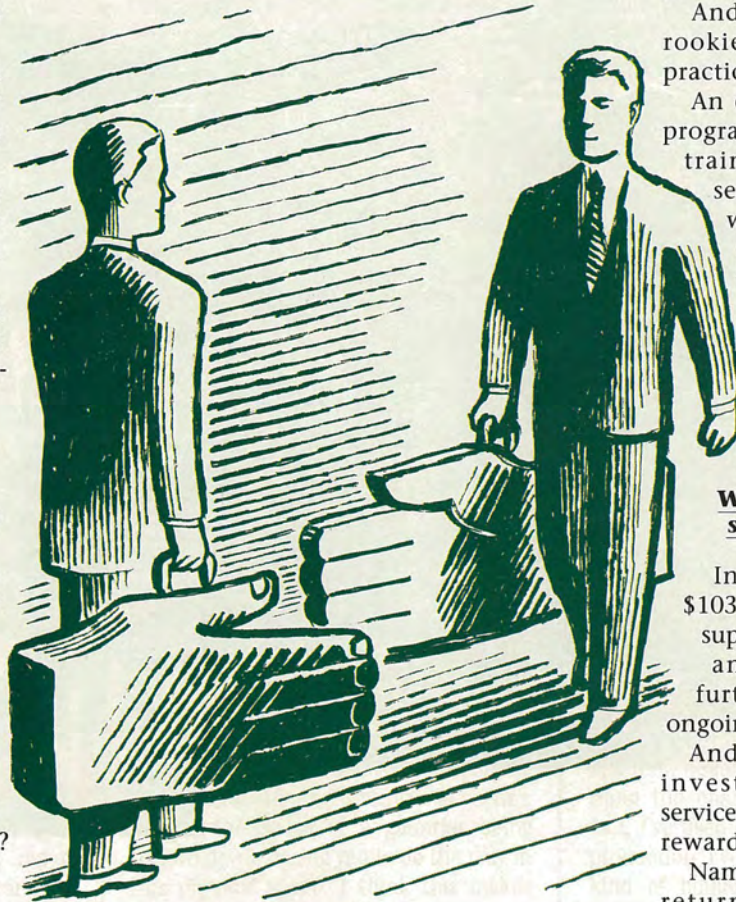
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# Robert Woodruff and George Tsypin: A Passionate Collaboration

As rehearsals were about to begin for *The Duchess of Malfi*, A.C.T. Resident Dramaturg Kathleen Dimmick spoke with director Robert Woodruff about working with scenic designer George Tsypin.

**KD:** The last time you worked with George Tsypin was here at A.C.T. on *Nothing Sacred* in 1988. How do the two of you begin to talk about a play?

**RW:** Basically, I communicate in very small fragments, not in big ideas at all. It really just involves small thoughts that I have about the play, because it's very early in the process, when you first start bringing in the designs—well before you know what's going to emerge as a performance, or as a statement, or as a collection of ideas. Mostly we have a dialogue—something that occurred to George, when he read the play, something that occurred to me—but it's usually something very banal, something very small. When we were first talking about *Nothing Sacred*, George said, "Well, I think it's elegant. But it's Russian elegant." Now, when George uses the term "Russian elegant," what he really means is trashy, synthetic greens. Because basically the word "Russian" for him is often very pejorative, I think. [*Tsypin, Russian-born, has lived in the United States for fifteen years.*] So at first I didn't quite understand what he meant by "Russian elegant" until I saw the colors.

For *Nothing Sacred*, the only major idea I talked to George about early on was that I wanted the serfs to live on the stage—I wanted them constantly present. Ultimately, he devised a design in which they lived under a transparent platform on the stage, so that the play happened with people walking on the serfs, which I think was a great solution to the only legitimate information I gave him. And I think the set contained a kind of violence that we both saw in the play, in which pieces of farm machinery became agents of destruction.

With *The Duchess of Malfi*, I think I said two things: that it's the idea of the last five minutes of a civilization—a civilization in

nova—and of a basic male fear of and discomfort with womanness and fluidity. And then George talked about when Gorbachev was leaving power, and how we got to go inside the Kremlin with Ted Koppel. What did we see? We saw desks, and men at desks, in a kind of vacuum. We saw bureaucrats pushing papers around, even in the last minutes of this "thing," as this government was ending, and we saw a kind of vacuousness there. For him, that was an image of a civilization in its death throes. And then, because the basis for a lot of his visualization is architectural, he constructed this other piece, this large structure, a kind of female form, which represented the sexual and gender idea. So in one sense he took the two ideas, put them both on the stage, and banged them into each other. Then he found some way of loosely wedding them. And I think that's a great solution to the problem of presenting the two ideas.

In terms of the set, I think the word "landscape" is common in working with George. You want a landscape in which to operate, and hopefully it's a dangerous landscape. And then you hope to be given tools in this landscape that you can manipulate, and crash up against, and finesse: order and disorder, re-use and release. I think George is also good at creating obstacles, as opposed to "serving the actors" in the traditional sense. There's the sense of a gauntlet being thrown down, daring you to do the play in this physical space. I think this makes the work more alive physically, and also makes it like life—to get from point A to point B is not always the easiest journey, but it's the journey that makes the event of theater. In the second act of *Nothing Sacred*, for instance, George moved two platform units apart. So to go from one side of the stage to the other you had to take a huge step. This generated a specific kind of behavior and created a gulf, or a splitting of a world—whatever kind of metaphor you want—but it wasn't about creating a metaphor. He just took two pieces and moved them apart and said, "OK, now do the second act on this."

It's a little like musical chairs—you take the second of three chairs away, and it's harder to get from one to three. I think that was kind of brilliant.

Being forced to do *Malfi* in the environment we've created might seem limiting in a way. But you're forced to press the physical environment into Webster's structure, and where they meet—that becomes the event. The environment gets you out of the literal and creates its own metaphors, but without plotting them—they existed, they were there, and were uncovered—they were not "put" there. The whole idea of "concept" becomes like a dead end, because it doesn't have any edges to it. If you're imposing a concept on the play, then you might as well not even do it; just move on, because you've already solved it, and everything you're going to think has to fit into that world. So you have nothing to push against, to stretch out against. I think it's in the nature of a good designer to create a kind of poetics for the play to move in that is open-ended, not finished.

**KD:** What about George's colors? The green and yellow?

**RW:** He seems to like green. He used a lot of green in the set for *Nothing Sacred*, and then he made all the liquids—everything the characters drank—green. In fact, I've used only green liquid in every production I've done since then. It's a kind of homage to George. You don't know what they're drinking, but the fact that it's green makes the world a bit more insular, with its own rules, in a kind of self-referential way that I like. In my mind it's absinthe they're drinking, which I think is a much more interesting thing for people to drink than anything else.

**KD:** Is that because of absinthe's relation to decay and death? You seem to be drawn to these dark associations.

**RW:** I think it's more that I'm attracted to dark civilizations, where actions and

*Continued on page P-28*





## WHO'S WHO



**J. TODD ADAMS** just completed a season at the Utah Shakespearean Festival, where he performed in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *King Lear*. A Professional Theater Intern and a 1992 graduate of A.C.T.'s Advanced Training Program, he appeared this season as Young Scrooge in A.C.T.'s *A Christmas Carol* and last season in *Cyrano de Bergerac*. His studio work at A.C.T. includes Hotspur in *Henry IV, Part I*, Cherkoon in *Barbarians*, Matthew in *The Threepenny Opera*, Mr. Morse in *Hot l Baltimore*, and Frederic in *The Pirates of Penzance*. He has also worked at the Actor's Repertory Theater Ensemble and the Park City Shakespeare Festival.



**MARIO ARRAMBIDE** was trained at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London, where he performed for Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh. His resident theater work includes the title role in *Baal* at Trinity Repertory Company and Mr. Antrobus in *The Skin of Our Teeth* at The Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis, both directed by Robert Woodruff; Brutus in

*Julius Caesar* at the Seattle Repertory Theatre; and Azdak in *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, Cornwall in *King Lear*, and Ulfheim in Robert Wilson's production of *When We Dead Awaken* at the American Repertory Theatre in Cambridge, Massachusetts. His New York credits include George Garga in *In the Jungle of Cities*, directed by Anne Bogart, *Hamlet*, *The Golem*, *The Death of Garcia Lorca*, and *Aunt Dan and Lemon* at the New York Shakespeare Festival. Arrambide also appeared in *Aunt Dan and Lemon* in its London premiere at the Royal Court. His television and film credits include "Law and Order," "Crime Story," "As the World Turns," "All My Children," and "The Milagro Beanfield War," directed by Robert Redford.



**RICHARD BUTTERFIELD** came to A.C.T. in 1982 as a student in the Advanced Training Program, where he earned an M.F.A. in acting. Following two years of Bay Area theater work with the Berkeley Shakespeare Festival, Berkeley Jewish Theater, and Valley Institute of Theater Arts, he joined A.C.T. to play the Soldier in *Sunday in the Park with George*. His many A.C.T. credits include Billy in *The Real Thing*; Captain Cummings in *Diamond Lil*, with Gretchen Wyler; Edgar in *King Lear*, directed by Edward Hastings; Tony in *Woman in Mind*, with Michael Learned; Charles Darnay in *A Tale of Two Cities*; Pale in *Burn This*, with Lauren Lane; and Rosencrantz (or was that Guildenstern?) in John C. Fletcher's *Hamlet*. Last season he was seen as Bob Cratchit in *A Christmas Carol* and as Valvere in *Cyrano de Bergerac*. Butterfield serves as Dean of A.C.T.'s fully accredited graduate school in acting, where he also teaches and directs student productions.



**CHARLA CABOT**, a recent graduate of A.C.T.'s Advanced Training Program, joined the company this year as a Professional Theater Intern. She holds a B.A. in Theater Arts from the University of the Pacific and has studied in London with instructors from the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art and the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art. A Bay Area native, Cabot has performed with the San Jose Civic Light Opera, TheatreWorks, and Woodminster. Her A.C.T. studio production roles include Jenny Diver in *The Threepenny Opera*, Ruth in *The Pirates of Penzance*, and King Henry in *Henry IV, Part I*, and she appeared this year on A.C.T.'s mainstage in *A Christmas Carol* and last year in *Cyrano de Bergerac*. Cabot spent last summer performing with the Colorado Shakespeare Festival. She is a musical theater instructor for A.C.T.'s Young Conservatory and has directed numerous children's theater productions throughout the Bay Area.



**ROBERTA CALLAHAN** made her professional debut thirty years ago on this stage. Since then, she has worked in stock, off-



Broadway, Broadway, and regional theaters. She has also worked at many Bay Area theaters.



**RANDY DANSON** is happy to be making her first appearance at A.C.T. Most recently she was seen in the New York production of Caryl Churchill's *Mad Forest*. Other New York credits include *Blue Window* by Craig Lucas, *End of the Day* by Jon Robin Baitz, and *Ready for the River* by Neal Bell, as well as *Romeo & Juliet*, *Macbeth*, and *Midsummer Night's Dream*. Among her regional credits are *The Film Society*, *Ourselves Alone*, *Taming of the Shrew*, *Wild Duck*, *The Three Sisters*, *A Doll's House*, *Heartbreak House*, and *The Good Person of Szechuan*, for which she received the Helen Hayes Award. On television she has appeared on "The Equalizer," "Law and Order," and "Kojak," as well as several soap operas. On PBS she recreated her role in *Blue Window* and played opposite Frank Langella in *The Prince of Homburg*. Her film credits include several features for American filmmaker Mark Rappaport, including *The Scenic Route*, which won the British Film Institute's award for best film. She also appeared in Martin Scorsese's *The Last Temptation of Christ*. Last spring Danson received an Obie Award for sustained excellence of performance.

**ANDREW DeANGELO** is a Professional Theater Intern and a 1992 graduate of the Advanced Training Program. He also has extensive experience in avant garde theater, including the award-winning production of *Marat/Sade* at the Friends and Artist Theatre of Los Angeles. DeAngelo has also directed plays by Tom Eyen, Michael DeGhelderode, and William Saroyan. At A.C.T. he has appeared in mainstage productions of *Cyrano de Bergerac* and *The Pope and the Witch*. Other credits include



Mr. Zero in *The Adding Machine* and Jailor Smith in the A.C.T. studio production of Brecht's *The Threepenny Opera*.



**LAWRENCE HECHT** has performed in more than forty productions in his twenty years with A.C.T. A graduate of the University of San Francisco and A.C.T.'s Advanced Training Program, he studied with John Collins, Bill Ball, Allen Fletcher, and Ed Hastings. Hecht has also acted, directed, and served as Director of Actor Training for the Pacific Conservatory of the Performing Arts. He has performed with Berkeley Repertory Theatre, San Jose Repertory Theatre, Encore Theatre Company, and the San Francisco Theatre Project, where he teaches and recently directed Steven Berkoff's adaptation of Kafka's *Metamorphosis*.

**TRACEY HUFFMAN** is a Professional Theater Intern with A.C.T. and a 1992 graduate of the Advanced Training Program. She recently appeared as the wife of Christmas Past in this season's A.C.T. production of *A Christmas Carol*. Her Conservatory studio production roles included Lady Macbeth, Gwen in *Fifth of July*, Katisha in *The Mikado*, and Polly Peacham in *The Beggar's Opera*. She has toured extensively with var-



ious theater companies throughout the United States. Favorite roles include Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing*, the Countess in *A Little Night Music*, Abigail in *The Crucible*, and the title role in *The Arkansas Bear*, directed by Sydney Walker. Huffman has also studied with Anthony Taccone of Berkeley Repertory Theatre and Nicholas Pennel and Marti Mereden of the Stratford Shakespeare Festival.



**BRIAN LOHMANN** has been seen at A.C.T. as Ligniere in *Cyrano de Bergerac*, the Son in Ellen Moore's *Available Light* in A.C.T.'s Plays in Progress series, and in multiple roles in John C. Fletcher's production of *Search and Destroy* for Encore Theatre Company. Other Bay Area credits include appearing as Hal in Joe Orton's *Loot* at Marin Theatre Company and as Jay Arnold in Bill Talen's *Heatface*. Since the age of sixteen he has been improvising professionally, and he has worked with The Committee and with Faultline (which he directed from 1980-1982). He toured Northern Europe with the Pros from Dover and performed at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival as the tortured torch singer, Johnny Lonely. He currently teaches in A.C.T.'s Advanced Training Program and with Bay Area TheatreSports,





which he co-founded in 1986. He is the creator and producing director of Pulp Playhouse, an award-winning troupe of improvisational storytellers. Lohmann was selected by Francis Ford Coppola to serve as theater games consultant for the motion picture *Dracula*, and teaches improvisation in A.C.T.'s Advanced Training Program.



**CYNTHIA LYNCH**, a Professional Theater Intern, graduated from A.C.T.'s Advanced Training Program (ATP) in May 1992. While in the ATP, she performed in *The Beggar's Opera*, *Too Clever by Half*, *Candida*, *The Winter's Tale*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, *The Mound Builders*, and on the mainstage she has appeared in *A Christmas Carol* and *Cyrano de Bergerac*. She portrayed Miss Scoons in Sam Shepard's *Angel City* for the San Francisco Theatre Project at the Climate Theater. In Chicago she appeared in *Talking With* at the Chicago Cooperative Stage and in *State of Independence* for Discovery Productions. Lynch has studied with Barbara Gaines of Chicago's Shakespeare Repertory and spent a great summer at the National Shakespeare Conservatory studying with Mario Siletti, Jimmy Tripp, and Robert Perillo. She earned a B.A. in English from The Colorado College.

**VICTOR MACK** appears for the first time at A.C.T. in *The Duchess of Malfi*. His New York credits include the title role in *Candide* at CSC Repertory Ltd.—The Classic Stage Company, under Carey Perloff's direction, and *Spunk*, directed by George Wolfe at the New York Shakespeare Festival. Other theater credits include *My Children! My Africa!* at the Baltimore Center Stage; *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* for the Philadelphia Drama Guild; *The Heliotrope Bouquet* by Scott Joplin and *Louis Chauvin* at Baltimore Center Stage and the La Jolla Playhouse; *The Mojo and the Sayso* at



Crossroads Theatre; *Dreaming on the Tip-toe* at the East Coast Arts Theatre; *Food from Trash* at the Vintage Street Theatre; and *Twelfth Night* at the Agnes DeMille Theatre. On film and television, Mack has appeared in *Colored Museum* on PBS's "Great Performances," was featured in Juno Pictures' *Hanging Out with the Homeboys*, and appeared in *Back to Front* by Montross Pictures and the NBC movie of the week *Prime Target*.



**DAVID MAIER**, a graduate of the Advanced Training Program, is currently in his seventh year with A.C.T. He was most recently seen as Major Freddie in last season's production of John C. Fletcher's *Good*. He has acted in numerous roles throughout the Bay Area, including Christian in San Jose Repertory's production of *Cyrano de Bergerac* and Otto in *Curse of the Werewolf* at Theatre on the Square, in addition to appearances in the A.C.T. productions of *Hamlet*, *Judevine*, *Right Mind*, *Saint Joan*, *Nothing Sacred*, *Golden Boy*, *A Christmas Carol*, and many others. Last winter he directed *A Halfful of Rain* as American Inside Theatre's offering at the Milwaukee Theatre Festival. Maier is a founding member of Encore Theatre Company, where he

recently appeared in Anton Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya* and directed Arthur Kopit's *Road to Nirvana*; he has also served as a managing director of A.C.T.'s Plays in Progress program, where he directed Anthony Clarvoe's *Pick Up Ax* in 1989.



**MICHAEL MCFALL** returns to A.C.T. after a year working in film. He was featured in Taylor Hackford's *Blood in Blood Out*, Whoopi Goldberg's *Made in America*, and co-starred with Lavar Burton and Jill Clayburgh in the ABC movie of the week *Fire Storm*. A graduate of the A.C.T. Advanced Training Program, he has appeared in *The Marriage of Figaro*, *1918*, *Food and Shelter*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Imaginary Invalid*, and *Nothing Sacred*, directed by Robert Woodruff. He spent a season with the Utah Shakespearean Festival, appearing in *Macbeth*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *The Tempest*. McFall received a 1991 Drama-Logue Award for *Cobb*, directed by Lee Sankowich. Commissioned by the French Ministry of Culture, he went to Paris to help create and perform in *Suspended Life*, directed by Veronique Guillaud, and performed at Theatre des Amandiers de Paris. Most recently, he performed the role of Damba in the One World Network's 10th Anniversary Special, directed by Michael Keen and Johna Smit.

**LANE NISHIKAWA** wrote and performed the critically acclaimed one-man show *I'm on a Mission from Buddha*, which premiered at San Francisco's Asian American Theater Company (AATC) in 1990. After a twenty-one-week run in Northern California, the show toured East Coast campuses, and played in Seattle and at the Los Angeles Theatre Center. Adapted for television by Nishikawa and produced by KQED television, the show is airing across the country on PBS. Nishikawa's first one-man show, *Life in the Fast Lane*, premiered in AATC's





1981 season and was presented by Sansei Productions of San Francisco on a fifty-city, four-year tour of the United States, Canada, and Europe. After serving as AATC's Artistic Director from 1986-89, Nishikawa stepped down to pursue his acting, writing, and directing career, and remains Associate Artist Director. He has been involved with AATC as an actor, writer, director, and dramaturg in more than forty-five productions. Acting credits include *A Song for a Nisei Fisherman*, *The Avocado Kid*, *Yellow Is My Favorite Color*, *Lady Is Dying*, *Honeybucket*, *All I Asking for Is My Body*, *Jan Ken Po*, and *Rich Relations*. He co-starred in Hiroshima's *Sansei* at the Mark Taper Forum in 1989. He directed *Yellow Fever*, *Pay the Chinaman*, *Family Relations*, *Uncle Tadao*, *Rosie's Cafe*, and *Yankee Dawg You Die* for AATC. He has also directed for the Northwest Asian Theater in Seattle, Sansei North Productions in Toronto, San Francisco State University, and Chabot College. He co-authored *Once Is Never Enough* with playwright R.A. Shiomi and Marc Hayashi, and appeared in its premiere at AATC. Nishikawa's work has been published in numerous anthologies, including *Time Of Greece: Incantations from the Third World*, *Ayumi: The Japanese American Anthology*, *Bridge Magazine*, and *The 20th Anniversary Edition of Gidra*. He has taught creative writing at San Francisco State University and teaches acting at AATC. His film credits include Wayne Wang's *Eat a Bowl of Tea*, Steve Okazaki's *Living on Tokyo Time*, and Wim Wender's *Until the End of the World*.

**SHARON OMI** has worked in Bay Area theater for ten years. She has performed primarily with the Asian American Theatre Company (AATC), in *Webster Street Blues*, *Tea*, *Rosie's Cafe*, and *Uncle Tadao*, among others, and with the Eureka Theatre Com-



pany in *Top Girls*, *The Wash*, and *The Cherry Orchard*. Other shows include *The Good Person of Szechuan* at Berkeley Repertory Theatre, and *As You Like It* and *Much Ado About Nothing* with the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival. Her most recent performance was *Electra* for Thick Description Theatre. She recently appeared in a science fiction short film, *Something for Nothing*, as an alien creature with some pretty heavy makeup, and is looking forward to working with her husband Ken in a new film about Korean immigrants. Omi also runs the Training Program at AATC and serves as a panel reviewer for the California Arts Council.



**LUIS OROPEZA** made his debut at A.C.T. in 1987 as the Fool in *King Lear*. Last seen at A.C.T. as Mr. Fezziwig in this season's production of *A Christmas Carol*, he has played Brassett in *Charley's Aunt*, Tokio in *Golden Boy*, the Steward and DeCourcelles in *Saint Joan*, and roles in *Feathers*, *When We Are Married*, *Marco Millions*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Right Mind*, *The Imaginary Invalid*, and *The Marriage of Figaro*. He began his career performing Chicano street theater in the barrios of East Los Angeles, and spent five years working with Luis

Valdez and El Teatro Campesino. His various Bay Area theater credits include Cathy, the five-year-old girl in *Cloud Nine*, and twenty-one different characters in *How I Got That Story* (both for the Eureka Theatre Company), as well as appearances with San Jose Repertory Theatre, California Shakespeare Festival, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, and Encore Theatre Company, and he recently completed a run as Dr. Einstein in *Arsenic and Old Lace* at CitiArts in Concord. Oropeza has also worked at San Diego Repertory Theatre, New Mexico Repertory Theatre, and the Denver Center Theatre Company. He has appeared in Howard Barker's *No End of Blame* for Encore Theatre Company, on the television series "Falcon Crest" and "Midnight Caller," and in the film *Pacific Heights*. He has been featured by the San Francisco Opera in acting roles in *Carmen* and *The Barber of Seville* and has written and performed his one-man show, *The Assassination of Federico Garcia Lorca*.



**JOHN REYNOLDS**, a Professional Theater Intern and alumnus of A.C.T.'s Advanced Training Program, appeared on A.C.T.'s mainstage this season in *The Pope and the Witch*. He graduated from Colby College in Waterville, Maine with a B.A. in American Studies, and interned at Capital Repertory Company in Albany, New York with an original play, *AIDS: A Living Newspaper*. A.C.T. studio projects include Mr. Katz in *The Hot I Baltimore*, Grosvenor in Gilbert & Sullivan's *Patience*, directed by Scott Freeman, Redozubov and Drobyazgin in *Barbarians*, Tiger Brown in *The Threepenny Opera*, and Leontes in *The Winter's Tale*, directed by Jack Fletcher.

**LYNNE SOFFER** appeared last season in A.C.T.'s productions of *Good* and *Cyrano de Bergerac*. She made her mainstage debut at





# American Conservatory Theater



A.C.T. in the spring of 1991 when she assumed the leading role of Lydia de Jager in Lisette Lecat Ross's *Dark Sun*. Bay Area audiences have also seen her work in Encore Theatre Company productions of *Uncle Vanya*, *June 2d*, and *Women Beware Women*, and most recently in Victoria Rue's *Cancerbodies* at Brava. Soffer has performed with the Pacific Conservatory of the Performing Arts (PCPA), Alaska Repertory Theatre, Sherwood Shakespeare Festival, Acadia Repertory in Maine, and in New York City with Direct Theatre and the 29th Street Project. She has toured extensively throughout Alaska performing *Shakespeare's Women* and has taught and directed in the state's Artists-in-Schools program periodically for the past thirteen years. Soffer currently teaches Acting, Text, and Speech at A.C.T. and has served as a dialect coach for Berkeley Repertory Company, Theatre Artists of Marin, PCPA, and A.C.T.



VICTOR TALMADGE has appeared in numerous New York productions, as well as regionally at such theaters as the Actors Theatre of Louisville, the Court Theatre in Chicago, Indiana Repertory Theatre, Cincinnati Playhouse, and the O'Neill Theatre

Center. In the Bay Area he has worked at the Magic Theatre and Berkeley Repertory Theatre. His film and television credits include: *Class Action*, *Jacknife*, *Ted and Venus*, *Lost Paradise*, "Quantum Leap," "Midnight Caller," "The Equalizer," "Wolf," and a variety of soaps.



SAM TSOUTSOUVAS began his professional career while still a student at Juilliard, appearing with the New York Shakespeare Festival as Arviragus in *Cymbeline*. Upon graduation, he became a founding member of John Houseman's The Acting Company, where his roles included Bluntschli in *Arms and the Man*, Berowne in *Love's Labour's Lost*, and Satin in *The Lower Depths*. On Broadway, he played Renfield in *Dracula* and Salieri in the national tour of *Amadeus*. Other New York appearances include Petruccio in *The Taming of the Shrew* for Theatre for a New Audience, Gustave Mahler in *Gus and Al* at Playwrights Horizons, Gratiano in *The Merchant of Venice* for CSC Repertory, the title role in *The Puppetmaster of Lodz* at the American Jewish Repertory, and Mr. Martin in Joseph Chaikin's production of *The Bald Soprano* at the Open Space. Regionally, Tsoutsouvas has appeared as Estragon in Chaikin's *Waiting for Godot* at the Taper, Too in Los Angeles; Yank Smith in George Ferencz's production of *The Hairy Ape* for Berkeley Repertory Theatre; *Macbeth* at the Folger Theatre; Moliere in *The Comedians of the King* at the Actors Theatre of Louisville; the leading man in *Pops*, written and directed by Romulus Linney at the Whole Theatre; and Sideway/Collins in the Hartford Stage Company's *Our Country's Good*, which later went to Broadway. Most recently he was Dr. Stockman in the Long Wharf Theatre's *Enemy of the People* and Shannon in *Night of the Iguana* for the Chautauqua Institute. Tsoutsouvas' film and television appear-

ances include "The Guiding Light," "George Washington," *Ghost*, and the current PBS series "Renaissance."



GLORIA WEINSTOCK is originally from New Rochelle, New York. Weinstock currently lives in the San Francisco Bay Area and performs throughout the United States. She is the recipient of a Bay Area Theater Critics' Circle Award for the role of Roberta in *Sugar Mouth Sam Don't Dance No More* and a nomination for the Mother in *You Can Lead a Horse to Water*. Other theater credits include *Tamer of Horses*, *Three Sisters*, *Resurrection of Lady Lester*, *A Raisin in the Sun*, *Aria da Capo*, *Konvergence*, *Three Acts of Recognition-A Trilogy*, *Execution of Justice*, and the Alley Theatre's production of *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*. At A.C.T. she was an understudy in the touring production of August Wilson's *Piano Lesson*, and this season she appeared in *The Pope and the Witch*. Weinstock is on the teaching staff of San Francisco City College's Theater Department.



ERIC ZIVOT is in his fourth season at A.C.T., where his mainstage credits include Federico in *Saturday, Sunday, Monday*, Marquis Cuigy in *Cyrano de Bergerac*, and



Guildenstern in *Hamlet*, as well as appearances in *The Cocktail Hour* and *A Christmas Carol*. A.C.T. audiences have also seen him in *Them That's Got*, and, as Mr. San Francisco, in *Raising Caen*, in the Plays in Progress series. Other Bay Area credits include Jack Clitheroe in *The Plough and the Stars* for Tour de Force, Valmont in *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* for CitiArts, and the title role in *Macbeth* for the Marin Shake-

peare Company. Last summer he appeared with the Colorado Shakespeare Festival in *The Winter's Tale* and *Henry V*. A native of Canada, Zivot has performed with the Stratford Shakespeare Festival in *Measure for Measure*, *The Inspector General*, and *King Lear*, and he portrayed Sebastian in *Twelfth Night* for the Festival's U.S. tour. He was also seen as Lord Fredrick Verisopht in the original Canadian production of *Nicholas*

*Nickleby* and as Patrick in *Spanish Post Cards* at the Canadian New Play Festival. He 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*, *1918*, and *Judevine*, as well as the Berkeley Shakespeare Festival's *Twelfth Night*, Marin Shakespeare Company's *As You Like It*, and U.C. Santa Cruz's *A Lie of the Mind*.

## — THE DUCHESS OF MALFI DIRECTORS, DESIGNERS, AND STAFF —

ROBERT WOODRUFF (*Director*) directed George Walker's *Nothing Sacred* at A.C.T. As an Associate Artist of the Mark Taper Forum, Woodruff directed Sam Shepard's *A Lie of the Mind*, *In the Belly of the Beast*, *A Madrigal Opera* (music by Philip Glass, text by Len Jenkin), and *Struck Dumb* by Jean Claude van Itallie and Joseph Chaikin. At the La Jolla Playhouse he directed *A Man's a Man*, *Figaro Gets a Divorce*, *The Tempest*, and *Le Petomane*, which he created with The Flying Karamazov Brothers. Other productions include David Mamet's translation of Pierre L'Aville's *Red River* and *The Three Moscoviteers* with the Karamazovs at the Goodman Theatre; *A Comedy of Errors*, also with the Karamazovs, at Lincoln Center (later broadcast on PBS); *The Skin of Our Teeth* at Minneapolis' Guthrie Theater; *Julius Caesar* at Atlanta's Alliance Theatre; Bertolt Brecht's *Baal* at the Trinity Repertory Theatre in Providence; Michael Christofer's *Ice* at the Manhattan Theatre Club; and *Shout Across the River* by Stephen Poliakoff at New York's Phoenix Theatre. His work with Shepard also includes the premieres of *Curse of the Starving Class*, *Buried Child* (Pulitzer Prize, 1979), and *True West*, as well as the European tour of the Shepard/Chaikin collaboration of *Tongues* and *Savage Love*. His work has been seen at the Next Wave Festival at the Brooklyn Academy of Music (Stravinsky's *L'Histoire du Soldat*), Sydney Arts Festival, Spoleto Festival USA (*Pioneer*, a collaboration with the Paul Dresher Ensemble), and Olympic Arts Festival in Los Angeles. He has been honored by the Los Angeles Drama Critics' Circle, San Diego Theatre Critics' Circle, Bay Area Theatre Critics' Circle, and New York's *SoHo News*. Woodruff is a recipient of an NEA Associate Artist grant, a former member of the board of Theatre Communications Group, a co-founder of the Eureka Theatre

in San Francisco, and creator of the Bay Area Playwrights Festival. His last work in San Francisco was *Pioneer* with the Paul Dresher Ensemble. Woodruff is currently the Associate Artistic Director of the New York Shakespeare Festival, working with JoAnne Akalaitis.

GEORGE TSYPIN (*Scenery*) recently designed *St. François d'Assise* at the Salzburg Festival and Paris Bastille Opera, *Oedipus Rex* at the Saito Kinen Festival in Japan with Jessye Norman, and *Rigoletto* at the Canadian Opera Company. In San Francisco Tsypin's designs were seen in the San Francisco Opera's production of *The Death of Klinghoffer*—which had been previously produced in Brussels, Vienna, Lyon, and New York, as well as in *Nothing Sacred*, directed by Robert Woodruff, and Berkeley Repertory Theatre's production of *McTeague*. Tsypin designed *The Balcony*; *Leon, Lena & Lenz*; *The Screens*; *Cymbeline*; and *Henry IV, Parts I & II* for JoAnne Akalaitis. For Peter Sellars he designed the film *The Cabinet of Dr. Ramirez* and the stage productions of *Tannhaeuser* (at the Chicago Lyric Opera), *Don Giovanni*, *The Count of Monte Cristo*, *Ajax*, *Idiot's Delight*, *A Seagull*, and others. *Don Giovanni* was filmed in Vienna and shown internationally on television. Tsypin has won numerous awards for his work. Last spring, the Twining Gallery in New York exhibited his sculpture and drawings for opera and theater.

SANDRA WOODALL (*Costumes*), working in collaboration with diverse figures of the performing arts world, has designed costumes for numerous ballet, modern dance, theater, music, and performance art groups. Among them are the San Francisco Ballet, Margaret Jenkins Dance Company, ODC/San Francisco, Oakland Ballet, A.C.T.,

Eureka Theatre Company, California Shakespeare Festival, Magic Theatre, and the Kronos Quartet. Nationally and internationally, Woodall has designed costumes for the Joffrey Ballet, Ballet Metropolitan, Ballet West, Pacific Northwest Ballet, Washington, D.C. Ballet, Pittsburgh Ballet, and Hong Kong Ballet. She worked with designer Robert Israel in realizing the costumes for Philip Glass' *Akhenaten* and for Joseph Papp's New York Shakespeare Festival's presentation of *Miracolo d'Amore* by Martha Clark. Her designs have also been featured as part of PBS programming. Woodall has been honored with a Bay Area Theatre Critics' Circle Award for her costume designs for A.C.T.'s production of *Saint Joan*. DANCE Bay Area has awarded her the Isadora Duncan Award, "Izzie," for sustained achievement in design and for visual design of Margaret Jenkins' *Age of Unrest*. Recent credits include Tony Kushner's *Angels in America*, Irene Fornas' *Drowning* and *Oscar and Bertha*, as well as *Without Wax* for the Frankfurt Ballet.

JAMES F. INGALLS (*Lighting*) most recently designed *The Seven Deadly Sins* with Teresa Stratas at the Opera de Lyon and Olivier Messiaen's *St. François d'Assise* at the Paris Opera Bastille and the Salzburg Music Festival, both directed by Peter Sellars; *Northeast Local* by Tom Donaghy at Providence's Trinity Square Repertory, directed by David Petrarca; *The Hard Nut* at B.A.M.'s Next Wave Festival in New York and *Motorcade* for the London Contemporary Dance Company, both choreographed by Mark Morris; *The Sea Gull* for Garland Wright at Minneapolis' Guthrie Theater; and *The Lion in Winter* for Tom Gardner at Virginia Stage Company. Locally he has designed *The Death of Klinghoffer* for the San Francisco Opera, and *McTeague* and *The Revenger* for Berkeley Repertory The-





atre. Ingalls is the recipient of three Drama-Logue Awards, the Los Angeles Critics' Circle Award, two Helen Hayes Awards, the Joseph Jefferson Award, and the Obie Award for sustained excellence in lighting.

**BRUCE ODLAND** (*Composer/Sound Design*) is an artist who listens before he looks. He finds music in unexpected places—inside an ancient Roman amphora, on the Brooklyn Bridge, in ringing rocks, water tanks, traffic, and forest fires. He has become known for large-scale sound installations in historical public monuments: Trajan's Forum in Rome, a Japanese garden in Los Angeles, a secret police tunnel under East Berlin, a castle on the banks of the Danube. Recently he resonated the whole city of Salzburg for the 200th anniversary of Mozart's death. His goal is to tune the world.

**DELLA DAVIDSON** (*Movement Consultant*) is the 1990 recipient of the North American Choreographer Award, which included a commission to set a new work, *Judith*, for the Transitions Dance Company at the Laban Center in London. Her work has also been commissioned by Danceworks Northwest (Seattle), Repertory Dance Theatre (Salt Lake City), Territory Dance Theatre (Tucson), The Arizona Theatre Company, Mills College, Fresno State University, The Bay Area Fund for Dance, University of Utah, and the Sundance Institute. In 1989 she received the Isadora Duncan Award for outstanding achievement in choreography for *Tongues* and *Angels and Clay*. The Wallace Alexander Gerbode Foundation awarded her a major commissioning grant in 1991 to mount *The Ten P.M. Dream*, an evening-length work which premiered at Theater Artaud last spring. Most recently, she received a grant from Meet the Composer to create *Lineage* in 1994 with composer Richard Marriott and Club Foot Orchestra. Davidson began choreographing for her high school's synchronized-swimming team, evidence of which still exists in the fluid sensuality of her movement style. After training on scholarship to the Alvin Ailey American Dance Center, she studied at the University of Salt Lake City, where she founded Fairspace, a dance and theater company funded by the Salt Lake City Arts Council, and later received her masters degree in dance theater at the University of Arizona. Davidson is an NEA Dance Program panelist and has served on the Field Advisory Council of

DANCE Bay Area for two years. She teaches at the Margaret Jenkins Dance School at New Performance Gallery and is frequently an artist-in-residence at University of Arizona, University of Utah, and Stanford University. In 1993 she will complete two new works, *Monster Dolls* and *Shrine*, which will premiere in the Bay Area Dance Series.

**MICHAEL CAWELTI** (*Fight Director*) has designed and directed fights for more than 145 professional productions since 1979. He has been Fight Master for the California Shakespeare Festival since 1980, Berkeley Repertory Theatre since 1987, and currently for The Living History Centre (producers of the Renaissance Pleasure Faires). He has designed for The Old Globe Theater in San Diego, the Denver Center Theatre Company, and Yale Repertory Theatre, and recently worked for the Oregon Shakespeare Festival-Portland on Benny Sato Ambush's production of *Fences* and Richard Seyd's *King Lear*. Cawelti has taught stage combat at more than thirty theaters and schools and won five critical awards for his work. His previous work at A.C.T. includes Joy Carlin's production of *Food and Shelter*. He spends much of the year performing the role of William Shakespeare for the Renaissance Pleasure Faires, as well as teaching authentic Elizabethan swordplay and crafting historically accurate sword trappings out of his shop, New Albion Armouries.

**BRUCE ELSPERGER** (*Stage Manager*) is now in his sixth season with A.C.T., where his stage management credits include *Nothing Sacred*, *Golden Boy*, *Right Mind*, *A Christmas Carol*, and *Cyrano de Bergerac*. He was in Seattle for the previous three years as Production Stage Manager with the Intiman Theatre Company, The Bathhouse Theatre, and a Western U.S. tour of *The Big Broadcast*. Before that he was Production Stage Manager with the P.C.P.A. Theaterfest in Solvang and Santa Maria, California. His directing credits include *A Breeze from the Gulf*, *Bag Lady*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, and a touring production of his musical revue, *A Tribute to American Musical Theatre*. Elspurger has studied in London, is a graduate of Drake University, and has also worked as an art therapist in schools in Iowa and Montana.

**KATHLEEN J. PARSONS** (*Assistant Stage Manager*) was a stage management intern during A.C.T.'s 1988-89 season. Since then she has received her degree in theater from

San Francisco State University, and worked for A.C.T. on *Right Mind*, *Burn This*, and *A Christmas Carol*. Last season she stage-managed *The Fever* for the Marin Theatre Company, and she just returned from a tour of California and Wyoming with Access Theatre's production of *Listen for Wings*, a new comedy with just a slight hearing problem.

**CHRIS SALTER** (*Assistant Director*), working for the first time with Robert Woodruff and A.C.T., is a director, composer, and sound designer. He received a B.A. *magna cum laude* in economics and philosophy from Emory University in 1989. He has worked and studied with directors Geoffrey Reeves, Carl Weber, and Frank Galati. Directing credits include productions of *Saved*, *Conquest of the South Pole*, *Kaspar*, *Spring Awakening*, Seneca's *Oedipus*, *The Maids*, *Keep Your Pants On*, and others in Atlanta, Chicago, and Stanford. Salter's original music/sound design has been heard at Northwestern and Stanford Universities, Theatre Emory, Seven Stages, Links Hall-Chicago, Pegasus Players, and others. He is currently a graduate student of directing at Stanford, where he also works at CCRMA.

**LANCE BARRY MILLER** (*Associate Dramaturg*) is a doctoral candidate in drama and the humanities at Stanford University, where he has directed Shakespeare's *All's Well That Ends Well*, Seneca's *Oedipus*, Tom Stoppard's *Dog's Hamlet*, and Howard Brenton's *Gum and Goo*. As an actor at Stanford he has portrayed Macduff in *Macbeth*, Pridamant in *The Illusion*, and Shamyev in *The Seagull*. He has served as dramaturg for James Loehlin's productions of Ben Jonson's *The Alchemist* and Marivaux's *The Dispute*. At San Jose Repertory Theatre, he was dramaturg for Timothy Near's production of Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*. At A.C.T. Miller has worked in new script development since 1988. He was the dramaturg for Joy Carlin's production of Cherrie Moraga's *Shadow of a Man*, and a consulting dramaturg on Carlin's production of Stoppard's *Hapgood*. Last season he led post-show discussions of *Cyrano de Bergerac* and *Good*, served as Associate Director for the Conservatory studio production of *The Heidi Chronicles*, and directed staged readings of Michael Axinn's *Antonio Mundo* and Sherry Kramer's *What a Man Weighs*. He teaches at Stanford and DeAnza College, and serves as the Artistic Director of Stanford's Ram's Head Theatrical Society.



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## NEWS FROM THE AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER

### The Pan Pacific Hotel San Francisco: A Sophisticated Sponsor

As co-sponsor of A.C.T.'s production of *The Duchess of Malfi*, the Pan Pacific Hotel San Francisco continues its long-standing commitment to the performing arts. This season marks the Pan Pacific's fifth consecutive year as a generous A.C.T. supporter. Vice President and Managing Director Donald Dickhens and his staff are pleased to be partners in the 1992-93 Season of Discovery.

This four-star, 330-room luxury hotel has been a favorite of A.C.T. patrons since it opened its doors at the corner of Post and Mason Streets—within easy walking distance of the Stage Door and Marines Memorial theaters—in 1987. A.C.T. donors at the Benefactor level and above enjoy complimentary parking for all their subscription performances and are invited to sample artfully prepared hors d'oeuvres at pre-performance receptions. Devoted to the San Francisco theater community, the hotel provides several unique service packages to theatergoers, including the special-rate "Pampering Weekend" and pre-performance dinners at the renowned Pacific Grill restaurant. Chef de Cuisine Peter Harvey offers patrons their choice of a starter, an entree, and a dessert for \$25 per person from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. each night. "It's nice to treat yourself to an elegant meal before a performance," says Harvey, "and our pre-theater package offers A.C.T. patrons a complete evening of culinary and cultural excellence."

Designed by architect John Portman, the Pan Pacific Hotel San Francisco is one of seventeen first-class hotels operated by Pan Pacific Hotels and Resorts in thirteen countries throughout the Pacific Rim, including Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Bangladesh, China, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, the island of Vanuatu, Micronesia, and Canada, as well as The Mauna Lani Bay Hotel and Bungaloes on the Big Island of Hawaii and several properties in California.



*The Pan Pacific Hotel San Francisco.*

Recently, the San Francisco hotel was named one of the Leading Hotels of the World. Among its amenities are twenty-four hour personal valet and room service, complimentary Rolls Royce transportation within the city for all guests, luxury rooms and suites all boasting bathrooms of Portuguese Breccia marble with televisions and telephones, a spectacular twenty-one story atrium, a full-service executive business center and meeting rooms, and reciprocal health club facilities at the Press Club of San Francisco.



BOB ADLER

*Kathleen Dimmick, A.C.T.'s new Resident Dramaturg.*

A.C.T. salutes this landmark San Francisco institution for its continuing generosity.

### A.C.T. Applauds New Arrival

This season A.C.T. welcomes Kathleen Dimmick to the newly created position of Resident Dramaturg. As the in-house expert on "dramaturgy" — the art of the theater — Dimmick brings a broad range of dramatic skills to A.C.T.'s artistic staff.

A graduate of the Yale School of Drama with an M.F.A. in dramaturgy and dramatic criticism, Dimmick joins A.C.T. after two years as Associate Dramaturg at the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles. In addition to serving as production dramaturg on plays and operas throughout the country, Dimmick has directed productions and staged readings at theaters in Los Angeles and New York. As an actor, she has worked with the New York Art Theatre, Odyssey Theatre Ensemble, and Scorpio Rising Theatre in Los Angeles, and was a founding member of Oakland's Alternate Theatre. She has also translated and adapted several plays and published articles in *Theater* and *American Theatre* magazines.

Dimmick was on the brink of returning to New York from Los Angeles when she received a call from Carey Perloff, asking her to join A.C.T.'s artistic team. "When Carey described her vision of A.C.T.'s future — a theater devoted to brave explorations of major classical texts and highly theatrical new plays — I thought I'd like to be a part of this company," she says. "Carey offered me the chance to be an integral part of A.C.T.'s artistic staff, to develop an aesthetic mission for the company that meshed perfectly with my own personal mandate. This was an extremely attractive proposition."

As Resident Dramaturg, Dimmick wears many hats. She works closely with Perloff and Associate Artistic Directors Benny Sato Ambush and Richard Seyd on season planning, reviewing and suggesting plays for upcoming seasons, and con-





sults with them on overall artistic development, commissions of new work, and artist selection. She is also the literary manager, overseeing the intake and evaluation — by a staff of volunteer readers headed by Literary Associate Pam McDaniel — of dozens of new scripts submitted to A.C.T. each month. Ultimately, she plans to help A.C.T. develop a second stage, operating in tandem with mainstage work, where new plays or adaptations appropriate for a smaller venue will be produced. “We are waiting

for the right economic climate and available space to go ahead with this project, but it is something to which Carey, Benny, Richard, and I are very committed,” she comments. Dimmick will also work with the artistic staff to develop new play commissions, including Elizabeth Egloff’s *The Devils*, to be produced at A.C.T. next season under Robert Woodruff’s direction.

Dimmick will serve as Production Dramaturg on two or three plays each season. This year she is concentrating on *The Duchess of Malfi*, with the help of

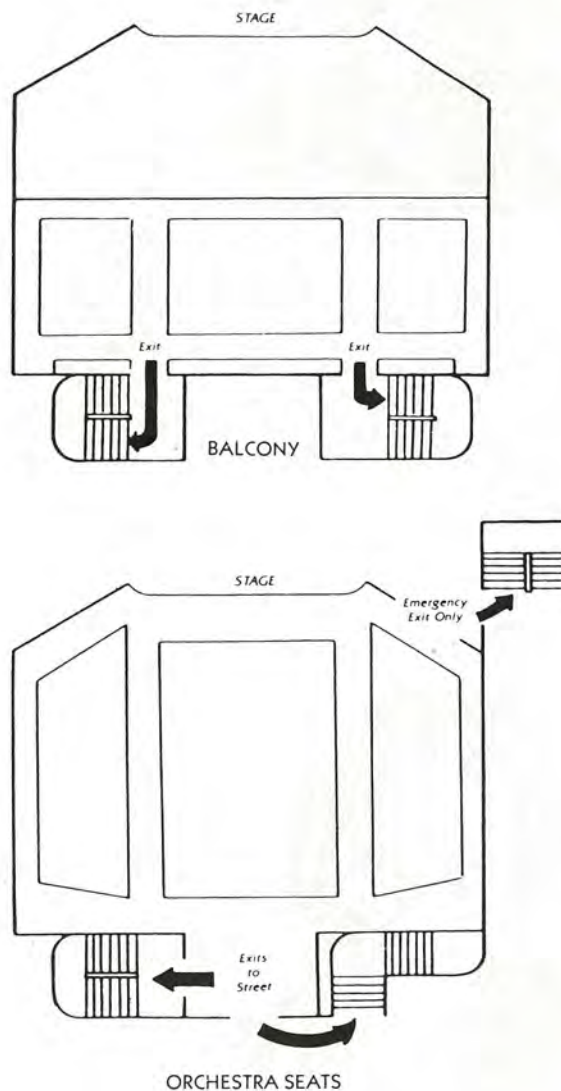
Associate Dramaturg Lance Barry Miller. A production dramaturg offers the director an extra set of eyes, helping to keep an often complicated rehearsal process responsive to the original concept developed by the director and the artistic team. She confers with the director and designers early in the process about all aspects of a play, including design, casting, and text development. “With a classic play,” says Dimmick, “one of the dramaturg’s most important tasks is cutting the text, a skill that requires great sensitivity. No dramatic work is frozen — every play needs to be adapted for a specific theater and audience. For a new play, the task is even more delicate, since you are working with a living playwright.”

A production dramaturg also investigates a play’s historical setting, contextualizing it in time and place for the director and cast. For *The Duchess of Malfi*, for example, Dimmick and Miller did extensive research to help the cast understand the intricacies of Webster’s Jacobean English and the complicated politics of Machiavellian Italy. “We even researched post-traumatic stress syndrome in abused women to provide psychological and behavioral information to Randy Danson, who plays the Duchess, and the rest of the ensemble,” comments Dimmick.

Dimmick is also interested in enhancing A.C.T.’s audience outreach programs, “to enrich our audiences’ appreciation of our productions and help them participate in a more engaged way,” she says. She plans and moderates prologues, symposia, and other production-related educational programs, as well as writing and editing articles for programs and *Preview*, A.C.T.’s subscriber and donor magazine.

Artistic Director Carey Perloff is thrilled that Dimmick is part of A.C.T.’s new artistic team. “There is nothing more beautiful than the spoken word used well in live theatre,” says Perloff. “A dramaturg is, in a sense, the champion of that word. It is invaluable to have someone in rehearsal and on staff whose job it is to say: ‘Listen to the *language*. What is the writer actually saying, and why in that particular way?’ That’s how dramatic literature becomes live theatre. I think Dimmick’s presence at A.C.T. will help us serve that literature in the most theatrically exciting way possible.”

## MARINES MEMORIAL THEATRE EXITS



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*Eve Gorodsky (center), Volunteer Coordinator of the Friends of A.C.T., receives the Ruth Barton Volunteer Service Award at the Friends' annual membership luncheon. Presenting the award are Ruth Barton and Edward Hastings.*

## 'With a Little Help from Our Friends...'

It takes a lot of help from the Friends of A.C.T., the company's volunteer auxiliary, to keep things running smoothly at A.C.T. The Friends provide invaluable services by contributing their time and talent to A.C.T., in many cases on an almost-full-time basis. Some Friends help by ushering for our student matinees or organizing special events like the gala benefit performance of *Bon Appétit!* hosted by Jean Stapleton in December. Others lend a hand in the A.C.T. offices with mailings, special projects, and telephone answering.

The Friends got its start in 1967 when a newspaper ad solicited volunteers for a maverick new theater company in town. Volunteer Coordinator Eve Gorodsky remembers the multitude of people who

showed up at A.C.T. the first day: "In the beginning we all pitched in to find housing for the actors. Then, with our pails and scrub brushes in hand, we spruced up the Geary Theater." While the President of the Friends of A.C.T., Buffy Miller, joined only a few years ago, she echoes the feeling of many when she says, "Working with the Friends has been a profoundly rewarding experience."

Right now, the Friends of A.C.T. are on the lookout for volunteers interested in writing and producing the Friends' monthly newsletter, as well as someone who may enjoy organizing the new Sunday Symposium series. Every department of A.C.T. can use a helping hand—whatever your skill or interest, we'd love to count you among our Friends. If you are interested in joining or would simply like information, please call the Friends of A.C.T. office at (415) 749-2301.

## Set Your Sights on Ireland for A.C.T.'s 1993 International Theater Tour

The luck of the Irish will bless those who join former Artistic Director Edward Hastings on A.C.T.'s fourteenth annual pilgrimage to the British Isles for two weeks of theater, music, unique sightseeing, and special events. Departing San Francisco on May 28 and returning June 11, 1993, the tour will begin with nine days and eight nights in London attending the best current theatrical offerings at such renowned venues as the Royal National Theatre and the Royal Shakespeare Company at the Barbican Centre. Other highlights include a concert by the world-famous Vienna Philhar-





*The Haymarket Theatre, in London's West End.*

monic Orchestra under the baton of maestro Riccardo Muti at Royal Festival Hall; scheduled are a performance of the acclaimed new revival of Rodgers and Hammerstein's classic *Carousel*, directed by Nicholas Hytner, and Trevor Nunn's new production of *The Importance of Being Earnest*, featuring Dame Maggie

Smith. The tour also includes a tour of Spencer House, Princess Diana's ancestral home, and a delightful cruise "up river" from Henley-on-Thames, site of the annual regatta that is a mainstay of British social and sporting tradition.

The second week of the tour takes the group across the Irish Sea for a two-day

stay in the charming seaside town of Galway, on the western coast of the Emerald Isle, followed by a romp through the beautiful Irish countryside to the capital city of Dublin and performances at both the historic Abbey Theatre and its lesser-known—but equally great—rival, the Gate Theatre. As always, theater is the focus of the trip, and backstage tours and meetings with directors are planned in addition to performances.

Once again, this annual theatrical adventure and A.C.T. fundraising event is headed by Edward Hastings and will offer a myriad of experiences unavailable to the average traveler. Last year's tour to London and Scotland was a resounding success, and many tour members have expressed interest in a repeat performance. Included in the package are tickets and transportation to all events, sightseeing, first-class hotels, many delightful meals, and a tax-deductible donation to A.C.T.

Don't miss out on this exhilarating theatrical travel opportunity! For details and a complete itinerary, contact:

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## A PASSIONATE COLLABORATION *continued from page P-17*

emotions are at their most raw, and to the way people respond to extremes—which, by their nature, are much more theatrical. Also, we live in that kind of civilization. I think when you're inside it, you don't see that you're living at the end of it. But I have a feeling that, historically, this period of history will be viewed as the death throes of post-industrial society, and then something else will begin. I think that economically and politically there's a search for a new form. Now we're going back to a free market society; everybody's jumping on that band wagon, but it's not going to work, we already know that doesn't work. I think one of the great unfortunate moments at the end of the twentieth century happened in East Germany. There was about a month there—around the time the wall fell—when a unique system could have been created, and it



could have been a third way. But there was just this rush, a mindless rush to a free-market economy. I find that sad.

It seems that when things end there's

Left: *Fortune astride her wheel*, from Vincenzo Cartari, *Imagines deorum qui ab antiquis colebantur* (1581).

very little time for reflection—ends tend to explode—so that philosophies are bought wholesale, without much discrimination, without any adaptation to the uniqueness of specific cultures.

**KD:** Sometimes the way plays end reflects this also—certainly with a classic like *Malfi*, we wonder about how "new orders" are established at the end of things.

**RW:** In this play, Webster gives a very half-hearted turn at the end, one that seems like an homage to form, with the appearance of the child—who he's already damned in the text as star-crossed and doomed to a very brief life. So there's really no optimism in that image, or in the Jacobean language here.



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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 theater. A.C.T. is a member of The League of Resident Theaters, 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.

#### DIRECTORS, DESIGNERS, AND STAFF

*continued from page P-4*

*Don't Drink the Water.* Haire joined A.C.T. in 1971 as Production Stage Manager. In that capacity, he managed more than one hundred productions and took the company on numerous regional, national, and international tours. He assumed the position of Production Director in 1985.

**STEPHEN LeGRAND** (*Music and Sound*) is now in his seventh season as sound designer and composer for A.C.T. His work with the company has included musical compositions and sound design for *Good, Charley's Aunt, Taking Steps, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, The Marriage of Figaro, The Seagull, and Faustus in Hell.* He wrote the music for *A Lie of the Mind, Saint Joan, and Hapgood* with his collaborator Eric Drew Feldman, with whom he has received awards for their scores for *The Lady's Not for Burning* at A.C.T., *The Both of Crime* and *The Rivals* at Berkeley Repertory Theatre, and *Fen* for the Eureka Theatre Company. LeGrand's work has included scores for *Yankee Doodle You Die* at Berkeley Rep

and the Los Angeles Theatre Center, and *Lulu* and *Fuente Ovejuna* for Berkeley Rep. He also composed music for *The Wash* at the Mark Taper Forum.

**RICK ECHOLS** (*Wigmaster*) has designed hair and makeup for over two hundred 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, A Christmas Carol, and The Taming of the Shrew.* 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 one hundred commercials. Mr. Echols designed hair and makeup for the original production of *Cinderella* for the 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* and *Sweet Charity* with Debbie Allen and toured to Las Vegas and London with Bing Crosby. Echols' other credits include wigs and makeup for Eureka Theatre Company's *Angels in America.*

**ELLEN NOVACK** (*Casting Consultant*) affiliates with A.C.T. for the first time this season. She was the managing and/or casting director for CSC Repertory Ltd. for six years and received Artios Award nominations for three plays she cast there: *Elektra, The Birthday Party, and The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui.* She has also cast more than twenty productions for the New York Shakespeare Festival and has worked at eighteen regional theaters. Her television credits include serving as casting director for NBC's "Another World" and casting the pilot "NYPD Mounted" for CBS. She is currently the casting director for ABC's "One Life to Live."

**ssdc**

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





## 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:** 405 Geary Street at Mason, next to the Geary Theater, one block west of Union Square.

**Box Office Hours:** 10 a.m. - 9 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday; 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. 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, Marines Memorial Theatre, and 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.

Ticket Prices	STAGE DOOR/ MARINES MEMORIAL/ ORPHEUM THEATRES	
	Previews:	
Orchestra/Loge	\$23	
Balcony	\$18	
Gallery	\$10	
Sunday/Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday		
Orchestra/Loge	\$29	
Balcony	\$22	
Gallery	\$11	
Friday/Saturday		
Orchestra/Loge	\$36	
Balcony	\$27	
Gallery	\$12	

**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. 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, Marines Memorial Theatre, and the Orpheum Theatre 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.

**Beeper!** 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*, in the same theater as the evening's play, from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Doors open at 5:00 p.m.

**Post-performance Conversations:** Informative after-show discussions concerning issues and ideas surrounding the evening's play will occasionally be scheduled throughout the season. 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. For information about upcoming Conversations, call 749-2228.

**School Matinees:** Matinees are offered at 1:00 p.m. 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 Jane Tarver, Student Matinee Coordinator, at 749-2230.

**Conservatory:** The A.C.T. conservatory offers classes, training, and advanced theater study for adults. Its Young Conservatory program offers training for students between the ages of 8 and 18. Call 749-2250 for a free brochure.

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

### A.C.T. Venues:

#### ORPHEUM THEATRE:

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

#### THE STAGE DOOR THEATER

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

#### MARINES MEMORIAL THEATRE

The Marines Memorial Theatre is located at 609 Sutter Street at Mason. Conveniently located within short walking distance of the Stage Door Theater, the Marines' Memorial Theatre is close to many fine restaurants near Union Square. Ask our Box Office for suggestions.



# San Francisco Ballet— Sixty and Soaring

*Tomasson tackles the past and looks to the future*

When Helgi Tomasson became artistic director of San Francisco Ballet in 1985, one of the first works he selected for the repertory was George Balanchine's *Theme and Variations*. SFB has had a long association with Balanchine's ballets, but the company had never before danced this particular piece. It is an extremely difficult work to master — which is precisely the reason Tomasson wanted the dancers to tackle it.

"It's a beautiful ballet, but it's tech-

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*Sheryl Flatow is a New York-based writer on dance and theater.*

---

nically very demanding," Tomasson explains. "There's no hiding; either you deliver or you don't. I expect a very high

level from the dancers, and that was the statement I was making by setting this ballet when I came in."

His message was received loud and clear. SFB's extraordinary rise in the past seven-plus years has perhaps exceeded even Tomasson's expectations. "San Francisco Ballet is dancing more grandly, more incisively, more lyrically, more musically, and more heroically today than at any other time in the past fifteen years, and probably in the company's fifty-eight year history," Allan Ulrich wrote in the *San Francisco Examiner*. "The rebirth of the San Francisco Ballet under Helgi Tomasson's leadership is one of the spectacular success stories of the arts in America,"



MICKY PFELEGER



JACK MITCHELL

Above: Evelyn Cisneros and Anthony Randazzo in Helgi Tomasson's production of Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake*. Inset: Ashley Wheater and Jim Sohm in David Bintley's *Job* to the music of Ralph Vaughan Williams.

by Sheryl Flatow



proclaimed Anna Kisselgoff in the *New York Times*.

The oldest professional ballet company in America has much to celebrate during its sixtieth anniversary season. But Tomasson will not be marking the occasion by resurrecting highlights from the past. Nor is he content to sit back and revel in all that SFB has accomplished under his guidance, including a triumphant New York engagement in October 1991. For Tomasson, SFB's sixtieth anniversary is a time to take stock of where the company is and where it's headed.

"When the company celebrated its fiftieth anniversary, there was a lot of reflection about the first fifty years," says Tomasson. "So I think this time we should look ahead, go forward. I want to put the emphasis on how we dance, and



LLOYD ENGLETT

where the company is going in terms of our style and our repertory."

The diverse and carefully planned repertory, designed to inspire audiences

and dancers currently includes the company's own full-length classics such as *Swan Lake* and *The Sleeping Beauty*; ballets created on SFB by the likes of James Kudelka, David Bintley, and William Forsythe; master-works by Balanchine, August Bournonville, Antony Tudor, Jerome Robbins and Frederick Ashton; contemporary pieces by Jiri Kylian, Glen Tetley and Val Caniparoli; SFB standards by longtime artistic director Lew Christensen; and Tomasson's own increasingly impressive neoclassic ballets.

They are performed in a style that Tomasson says includes "a certain energy, a flow of movement, and a lot of joy." First and foremost however, SFB's style springs from its uncompromising classical training, which was instituted when Tomasson arrived on the scene. A visiting choreographer who watched ballet



LLOYD ENGLETT

Above: Helgi Tomasson and company in rehearsal for his *Le Quattro Stagioni* (The Four Seasons) to the music of Vivaldi. Top: Sabina Allemann and Ashley Wheeler in James Kudelka's *The End* to the music of Johannes Brahms.



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mistress Bonita Borne teach class recently remarked, "The company trains beautifully. The things they do in Bonny's classes are like compulsory figures. They are asked to do impossible, technical textbook kinds of things. You don't see training like that in company class anywhere else, certainly not in the companies I know."

Tomasson is fervent about the necessity of rigorous classical training, which provides the dancers with a strong foundation that enables them to rise to the demands of any ballet. "If you start to let go of classical technique, then there's nothing to fall back on," he explains. "There's nothing you can call your center,

cality, grandeur and incisiveness that critic Ulrich sees in the company were also characteristic of Tomasson's dancing. Beyond that were poetry and intelligence, a love of dancing, and the ability to intuitively grasp what lay beyond the steps of each ballet he appeared in, so that the choreography was enriched by his performance. These are qualities that are becoming more and more evident with SFB dancers as well.

"I constantly try to emphasize to them that there's more to dance than the physical part," Tomasson muses. "It also has to do with style. If you have a ballet that requires a certain way of dancing — be that a *czardas* or *mazurka* or, at the



*Christopher Stowell in William Forsythe's In the middle, somewhat elevated.*

your source of energy. I like to think that if you're chosen to become a dancer in a ballet company, there are certain standards that you have to have. It's a respect for your own art form. I don't mean that you can be absolutely glued to the old way of dancing. The way we move has changed. But it's all based on classical technique."

Tomasson was one of the supreme classicists during sixteen years with New York City Ballet, and many of the qualities that are now ascribed to SFB are a reflection of his gifts as a dancer and his continuing concerns as a teacher, coach and choreographer. The lyricism, musi-

other extreme, a piece by Billy Forsythe — there's a look that the choreographer wanted and it's important that it comes across. You don't just do a step. Everything shouldn't look the same. There are so many different ways of dancing, and that makes it challenging and fun. They know I expect a lot from them. But in doing so, they also come to realize they expect a lot from themselves. And that's how they grow."

SFB has traveled a long, exhilarating, and occasionally bumpy road since it was founded as the San Francisco Opera Ballet in 1933 (the same year in which Balanchine arrived in America). Its primary

LLOYD ENGLERT



purpose was to train dancers to appear in operas, although ballet master Adolph Bolm was also able to present occasional all-dance programs.

Bolm was replaced by Serge Oukrainsky in 1937. Far more significant was the appointment of Willam Christensen as director of SFOB's Oakland branch. Christensen took over as the company's ballet master in 1938, and in the next two years he was responsible for two milestones: He choreographed the company's first full-length production, *Coppe-  
lia* in 1939, and followed that in 1940 with the first full-length American production of *Swan Lake*. On Christmas Eve 1944, SFB premiered the first com-

Utah and also founded Ballet West.

"It was quite remarkable that these three brothers kept a school and a ballet company going all those years," says Tomasson. "I have no doubt it was difficult at times, particularly in those days. Anything outside New York just didn't exist. But I must say a lot of dancers from the school came to New York and became members of companies. So SFB had a reputation. The Christensen's legacy is that they kept that flame alive and never gave up. They persevered. If they had not, we would not have the company that we have now."

Lew Christensen, who died in 1984, would remain the bedrock of SFB for

LLOYD ENGLETT



Cynthia Drayer and Jennifer Karius in Tomasson's Handel—A Celebration.

plete version of *The Nutcracker* ever mounted in this country, thus launching a national holiday tradition.

The company became a totally separate entity from the opera in 1942, and was renamed San Francisco Ballet. The new director was Willam Christensen, and his brother Harold was appointed director of the SFB School, a position he retained for thirty-three years. The youngest Christensen brother, Lew, came on board in 1951, joining Willam as SFB's co-director. A year later Lew became sole director. Willam returned to the brothers's home state of Utah, where he created the ballet department at the University of

more than thirty years. During his dancing career he was recognized as this country's first home-grown premier *danseur*. He worked closely with Balanchine at New York City Ballet and its predecessors, Ballet Caravan and Ballet Society, and by the time he headed West he'd had considerable experience as a ballet master and choreographer. Lew had, on occasion, created works for SFB, but once he took over the company he was a constant source of new ballets. Another major source was Balanchine, whose works became a significant part of SFB's repertory in 1952 and remain so to this day.

The company prospered under Lew's



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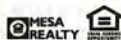


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guidance for twenty years. He choreographed a more elaborate and hugely successful *Nutcracker* in 1954, which was broadcast on national television a decade later. In 1956 the company made its East Coast debut at the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival in Lee, Massachusetts, and the following year SFB went on a State Department-sponsored, two-month tour of the Far East. The trip proved so successful that it prompted a four-month tour of South America in 1958, and a three-month tour of the Middle East in 1959.

During the 1960s there were national tours, a New York debut in 1965, and important grants from the Ford Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts. In spite of increasing visibility and recognition, SFB was on the verge of bankruptcy in September, 1974. The company and the school were saved by S.O.B. ("Save Our Ballet"), a massive grass roots campaign led by the dancers.

Throughout the remainder of the 1970s and into the 1980s, SFB's image was shaped by Michael Smuin, who was named associate artistic director in 1972 and co-director with Lew Christensen in 1976. He brought in new, audiences, attracted by his extravagant story ballets. Four of those works were televised by PBS during a seven-year period, earning numerous Emmy nominations and awards.

In spite of Smuin's popularity, his ballets were routinely attacked by a number of critics. SFB board members were divided in their feelings over his contributions to the company, and after a very public, heated battle, Smuin was dismissed. A search committee was formed to find a successor, and from a list of one hundred names, Tomasson was eventually chosen.

Tomasson put his mark on the company at once. He began teaching company class, and insisted that the women wear toe shoes. "Their *pointe* work was very much in need of improving," he explains. "At least ninety-five percent of our ballets are danced on *pointe*, so it just makes sense that by using toe shoes in class you develop and strengthen your technique. I almost had a riot on my hands when I told them they were to do this, but in a short time they accepted it. Now the



idea of not taking class in toe shoes is inconceivable to them."

The dancers responded so quickly to the discipline and demands put forth by Tomasson and his staff, that he felt the company was ready to meet the rigors of a new *Swan Lake* in 1988. The production, choreographed by Tomasson, proved to be a stunning achievement, prompting Kisselgoff to write that it "now puts the San Francisco Ballet on the international dance map."

For Tomasson, perhaps the most satisfying accomplishment thus far was the company's reception in New York. "Maybe because I danced there for so many years, it was very gratifying to have my feelings about the company confirmed by the public and the press," Tomasson reflects. "Everyone wants to succeed in New York, and not everyone does. It's an audience that has seen the best of everything, be it ballet or music or opera. They're very demanding. I think it gave the dancers added confidence in themselves. It was good for them to feel that overwhelming acceptance."

But that is in the past, and Tomasson is looking toward the future. He says he would like to see the company do more touring, and perform in New York on a regular basis. (SFB returns to New York this Spring for one week at the end of March.) He hopes that SFB will be more visible in other West Coast cities. Mostly, however, he is concerned with finding new artistic horizons for the company to conquer.

"I would like to bring another full-length work into the repertory," says Tomasson. "I'd also like to bring in more choreographers to work with the company. In addition to choreographers of very high standing, I'd like the luxury of giving a chance to some who are not so well known. It's very important to be able to experiment artistically, and to try to be allowed to fail. We're trying to explore the vocabulary of the classical technique. What more can be done with it? I don't want to be comfortable all the time. It's necessary to challenge yourself, and to try to expand the boundaries as a dancer, and as a choreographer. If you stand still, you're really moving backward." □



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# California Cuisine

## San Francisco

It seems as if the design of a restaurant is taking on almost as much importance as the food. Patrons are no longer putting up with physical and aesthetic discomfort just for the sake of a good dinner. Pat Kuleto has the artistic instincts for pleasing all of our senses. Having designed some of this city's most popular restaurants (Postrio, Corona Bar & Grill, and Splendido's to name a few), it's nice to see KULETO'S name on the marquee of one of his earlier works of art. Going into its seventh year of operation, Kuleto's is located in the Villa Florence Hotel near Union Square. You enter through a long room with antique high ceilings, black and white marble floors, and a huge mahogany bar festooned with garlands of garlic and peppers. I prefer eating here or in the next room with multileveled tables facing the open kitchen where I can watch the chefs choreographing my meal.

There's an adjacent room with glass walls that juts out into the hotel's lobby which is my least favorite as it lacks the other rooms' intimacy.

Executive chef Robert Helstrom offers some delightful Tuscan specialties in a place that feels like the trattorie of Arezzo or San Gimignano. Starters of choice include crisp fried calamari with a caper aioli, grilled radicchio with pancetta, or roasted giant garlic with Cambozola cheese to spread on just-from-the-oven pizza bread. There's a fine penne with lamb sausage, red chard and ricotta cheese as well as ravioli stuffed with sweet smoked salmon in a lemon



sauce. The seafood risotto is too soupy for my taste.

Try some of the super fish specials like grilled swordfish atop green lentils or baked salmon with a crust of pesto and pine nuts nestled on creamy polenta. Other unusual entrees are the roast duck with grappa soaked cherries, veal with artichokes and spinach, grilled chicken with red onions and tomatoes, and excellent charred lamb chops with eggplant risotto. Don't ignore sides of sautéed spinach with pancetta or the rosemary potatoes with garlicky aioli.

Servers are efficient, and the moderately-priced wine list is well-balanced between Italy and California. Desserts offer old favorites like cannoli with a chocolate shell filled with mascarpone cheese, tiramisu that has an added wallop of rum, and a three-rung cake filled with white, milk and dark chocolate. While the cuisine here may be familiar, it's prepared with a welcome new twist in

extremely pleasing surroundings at moderate prices.

*KULETO'S, 221 Powell Street, 415/397-7720. Open for breakfast, lunch and dinner daily. Dinner for two without wine averages \$60.*

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Part of the Phoenix Hotel, that funky ode to the fifties which is booked solid with filmmakers, recording stars, and PC politicians, Miss Pearl's looks out to the hotel's pool and sculpture garden. An irregularly-shaped room filled with West Indian art, revolving ceiling fans, and Philippine bamboo, it also sports a full service bar and occasional late night riffs on the steel drum.

Chef Larry Glazer's repertory includes specialties from Jamaica, Trinidad, Martinique and Barbados. Since most of the food is meant to be shared, there are lots of medium-sized plates (halfway between appetizers and entrees) on the menu to pass around the table. Order crisp black-eyed pea fritters, chicken and raisin-filled yucca turnovers, scallops in a thin potato crust, roasted red pepper flan with wild mushrooms, and a fine romaine salad with a coconut garlic dressing. Bright orange annatto-marinated prawns vie in flavor with smoked duck breast and

---

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

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*Above: Executive chef Robert Helstrom greets customers at San Francisco's Kuleto's on Powell Street.*

by Norm Chandler Fox



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Among the large-plated entrees are the aforementioned angry pork tenderloin slices in a very spicy sauce, chili-hot marinated lamb served with almond couscous, juicy salmon crab cakes in a banana-tamarind sauce, and smoky-flavored baby back ribs which are on the fatty side. The plantain-encrusted sea-bass is dried out while the side of noodle pancake is delicious.

Although there's a very modest wine list, I suggest ordering Red Stripe Jamaican beer with this flavorful food. The servers are casually pleasant and will give you their personal insights regarding the cuisine. Desserts like coconut cake and lime pie are okay, but it's much more fun to end your dinner with one of their loony drinks like a Pterodactyl (fruit juices and enough Limonaya Stoli to kick you back to pre-historic times) or a Land Shark (an adult slurpee made of juices, dark rum and blue curaçao). And of course, there's always that bouncing libation of vodka and cherry jello.

On a cautionary note, please drive or take a taxi to this restaurant as the immediate neighborhood would even make Vlad The Impaler nervous.

*MISS PEARL'S JAM HOUSE, 601 Eddy Street, 415/775-5267. Open for lunch Tuesday-Friday, dinner Tuesday-Sunday, brunch Sunday. Dinner for two without alcohol is about \$65.*

## Greater Los Angeles

Little Tokyo happens to be one of my favorite parts of Los Angeles. This self-contained neighborhood feels like a veritable prefecture of Japan especially when you walk through the exquisite gardens on the third level of the New Otani Hotel. Overlooking this oriental floral fantasy is A THOUSAND CRANES which is one of our city's most elegant Japanese restaurants.

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the Americas as Sixth Avenue, we will probably go on calling this spot by its English equivalent. The exciting news is that the hotel is currently bringing in chefs from its sister hostelrys in Tokyo and Osaka on a rotating basis throughout the year. This means that we'll be tasting dishes with more imported seasonal ingredients and seeing increased artistry in the preparation. A subtle combination of burished wood and lavender, the main room is highlighted by ikebana floral arrangements, discreet sushi and tempura bars, and adjoining tatami rooms which require reservations well in advance. Live koto music is played Friday and Saturday evenings and at the Sunday brunch.

While many customers begin with an assortment of sushi, I prefer other appetizers like teriyaki scallops, small skewers of chicken yakitori, broiled clams in a



New Otani Hotel's A Thousand Cranes.

ponzu sauce, or the seaweed and tofu salad. If you're disgruntled with past versions of doughy or oily tempura elsewhere, try an order here for the lightest example possible of deep fried and lightly coated asparagus, lotus root, sweet potato, green bean and shrimp. Among the entrees are chicken, steak and lobster — each served with a traditional teriyaki sauce as well as a daikon-flavored vinegar. Succulent salmon is prepared shioyaki style in a salt crust, and there's also shabu-shabu, the Japanese beef fondue, or sukiyaki — both made with paper-thin slices of prime sirloin.

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The serving women are as gracious as they are attractive in their opulent kimonos. Instead of ordering wine, ask for their list of unusual unblended sakes which are served warm or chilled and always compliment this delightful food.

*A THOUSAND CRANES, New Otani Hotel, 120 South Los Angeles Street, Los Angeles, 213/629-1200. Open for breakfast, lunch and dinner daily, brunch Sunday. Dinner for two without alcohol is \$90.*

#### IL MITO

This small, engaging spot is a very good example of why the San Fernando Valley is now becoming celebrated for its restaurants. Translated from the Italian, the name means "the myth", but it's slowly becoming a legend due to the culinary prowess of chef-owner, Michael Fekr. You enter a small room with a long concrete bar and a few tables before you arrive in a larger art deco room with a mural painted on the floor. This area serves as a theater for chef Fekr who's onstage in a small, open kitchen that doesn't hide behind unfriendly glass walls. This is his proscenium, ladies and gentlemen, and he makes the most of his ravenous captive audience out there. Right away, you're overwhelmed by the gutsy aromas of cooked garlic, searing meats, ripe cheese and pungent herbs. I find it positively sensual to be bombarded by so many heady scents when I'm hungry. Fekr, who comes here via lengthy stops at Chianti Cucina and Locanda Veneta, puts on an incredible show as he stays in perpetual motion, jumping, pivoting, and whirling between the leaping flames around his pots and in his pans.

Begin with a sprightly salad of calamari and smoked clams in a lemon caper dressing, a hill of eastern mussels in a saffron white wine sauce, or the addicting roasted garlic bread topped with porcini. Pasta is near perfection here with such

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bone coated with browned garlic and rose-  
mary. This is a macho hunk of tender,  
flavorsome veal that covers an entire  
plate. A special of halibut cooked in olive  
oil, basil and a hint of mint tastes almost  
as good as sea bass crisply grilled with  
fresh fennel. While accompanied by a nice  
apple honey sauce, the pork loin is too dry,  
but the juicy roast breast of duckling with  
a reduction of pomegranate is wonderful.The friendly serving staff will guide you  
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David Townsend oversees the discreet  
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innovative ideas like appetizers of snails with parmesan cheese in a crust of giant mushrooms, duck breast and foie gras sautéed with endive and apples, and large prawns in a tangy ginger sauce. A special of superb vichyssoise is annointed with a hefty dollop of caviar, but the lobster bisque is too salty despite the presence of a fine Armagnac.

I like the coriander seed-crusting salmon in red wine, lobster and shrimp atop fettuccine in an anise-spiked bouillabaisse sauce, and a simply roasted chicken breast on a nest of red peppers, mushrooms and pancetta. Carnivores will enjoy the black pepper and orange peel crusted filet mignon in a port wine sauce, sautéed medallions of tender veal with morels, or that old favorite of châteaubriand surrounded by jewel-like vegetables. I even like the somewhat complicated "Welling-ton" treatment of flavorful venison with foie gras in a flaky filo crust.

The wine list here is encyclopedic with over seven hundred labels available; naturally, the top end vintages cost a small fortune, but if you have patience, you'll find a few good bottles that are relatively reasonable. Desserts include buttery fruit tarts, homemade sorbets, and one of the best bittersweet chocolate soufflés extant.

This is the kind of place where I like to linger after the meal over some fine port or Cognac and contemplate what life would be like if we were all still living in the independent Republic of California.

*EL BIZCOCHO, Rancho Bernardo Inn, 17550 Bernardo Oaks Drive, San Diego, 619/487-1611. Open for dinner nightly, brunch on Sunday. Average dinner for two without wine is \$100.*

### TUTTO MARE

La Jolla's intimacy with the sea makes the town an appropriate setting for a restaurant that concentrates on provender from the ocean. Open only for five months, Tutto Mare is proving to be a popular hangout for lovers of Italian seafood because it is not only tasty but healthful as well. Since Italy has over four thousand miles of coastline and no town more than a few hundred miles from the sea, we expect the Italians to dream up some exciting preparations of fish and shellfish.

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Chef Antonio Altieri doesn't disappoint us with some of his fascinating dishes in an ambience reminiscent of Portofino.

The two-level curved dining room with its modern steel fixtures, giant windows and checkerboard marble floors focuses on a fifty foot long bas-relief mural of sea creatures above the exhibition kitchen. Service is informal and amiable, and the wine list, consisting entirely of "vini Italiani and Californiani", has some remarkable bargains especially in the vini rossi department.

I enjoy starting with the grappa-cured carpaccio of salmon, prawns and calamari in a piquant garlic tomato sauce, or grilled eggplant stuffed with artichokes and red peppers. The Caesar salad has shards of fresh parmesano and doesn't stint on garlic or anchovies which is my preference. There's also a wonderful smoked trout, endive and feta cheese salad tossed in a lemon vinaigrette.

The themes of shellfish with variations of pasta seems endless with special cheers going to vermicelli with scampi and clams in a brandied tomato sauce, pasta tossed with shrimp and radicchio with a soupçon of cream, wonderful ravioli filled with smoked salmon in a lemon-sorrel sauce, and a near-perfect risotto with scallops and shrimp. The pasta with lobster is spoiled by a much too watery Fra Diavolo sauce.

For entrees, I prefer the medallions of salmon cooked with green onions and capers, an eye-popping cioppino brimming with mussels, lobster, scallops, and shrimp in a zingy broth, and a simple lemon-doused mixed grill of calamari, prawns, and seabass. The lone meat eater at my table likes the thinly sliced New York steak with a balsamic vinegar sauce and canellini beans.

Among the desserts, the tiramisu is ordinary, so order the great chocolate espresso rolled cake, amaretto crème caramel, or lemon meringue tart. There is a large selection of after dinner libations with my favorites being the bone-dry pear or strawberry grappa which I understand is good for digestion.

*TUTTO MARE*, 4365 Executive Drive, La Jolla, 619/597-1188. Open for lunch Monday-Saturday, dinner nightly. Two for dinner without wine is about \$75. □

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# Fantastic Fans

Great actors have been objects of adulation since antiquity. Roscius was so celebrated in ancient Rome that his name became synonymous with each successor to his laurels: for example, David Garrick was called the English Roscius, and his first London appearance as Richard III in 1741 caused one of the earliest traffic jams on record.

But it was the mass media, beginning with the movies a hundred years ago, that magnified not only the image on the screen but spread the actor's image and fame into the farthest corners of the world. Charlie Chaplin at thirty — or at least his character of the poor tramp — was perhaps the most recognizable living figure on earth. With Hollywood in his pocket, the young actor took a vacation in Paris, where he wandered around the city of lights enjoying his anonymity. Somewhere around the Latin Quarter he suddenly felt the call of Nature. Chaplin knew no French, and as he began to mime his predicament to various vendors and passersby, a crowd gathered. One of the shopkeepers recognized the famous walk and screamed, "Charlot! Charlot!" as the French called Charlie.

The call roused a crowd and no sooner had Chaplin taken refuge in the restroom at the back of the shop, the mob employed a bench as a battering ram, destroying its four walls a lot quicker than the Bastille. As Chaplin tried to escape with his life, his French admirers began to scramble for any souvenirs of his visit:

A few years later a simple young immigrant by the name of Rodolpho

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*Peter Hay's recent books include Canned Laughter - The Best Stories from Radio and Television, and MGM: When the Lion Roars.*



Valentino became overnight the object of veneration and then the cause for mourning by millions; his death in 1926 at the age of thirty-one caused the worst rioting in New York since the English actor William Macready performed at Astor Place in 1849. H.L. Mencken called Valentino "catnip to women," many of whom committed suicide to follow the star to heaven.

Neither Valentino's employers at Paramount, nor the actor himself understood what had happened to him: why had fans singled him out from among thousands of others in pictures? But by then some of the new masters of the film factories, and especially at MGM which was created in 1924, saw the star system as one of its chief instruments of publicity and marketing. "It is the public who creates stars," Louis B. Mayer was fond of repeating; he and his young lieutenant, Irving Thalberg, believed that audiences ought to have the last word on everything. They introduced the testing of barely finished movies with audiences in suburban Pasadena or San Bernardino, and then re-shooting or re-cutting them.

Many of the stars kept their appeal by encouraging the temporary infatuation of fickle fans to develop into a lifelong love affair. Joan Crawford not only allowed her

fans to give her presents and perform small jobs for her, but fully reciprocated their devotion.

It was part chore, but it was also what fed and nurtured many a star during the ups and downs of their very public lives. Crawford, for instance, caught her second husband Franchot Tone in the act with a starlet and sent him packing. Then she decided to get away to New York, making sure that her fans would be informed, as always, of her trip. Despite a protective cordon of MGM press agents and New York's finest, the star was mobbed at Grand Central Station, and she arrived at her hotel suite with her dress in tatters. No sooner safe, she dreamily smiled at her entourage, and said: "Let's go back and do it again!"

Even as the contact between actor and audience became less physical with radio and television, the illusion of intimacy grew, because now the star seemed to be "invited" into the fan's home.

The late Michael Landon used to say that he preferred the company of little children, "because they don't know who I am." Most stars have stories about fans whose simpleness went beyond the childlike. Bob Hope was accosted once outside Antoine's, the famed restaurant in New Orleans, where he was taping a special.

"Bob Hope!" the fan exclaimed. "Is it really you?"

"No," said the comedian. "I'm on tape."

Years after the television series of Batman has dispersed into the ether, Adam West still runs into his female fans. One middle-aged woman offered herself at a shopping mall with the line: "God, you were my fantasy for years."

"Was I any good?" the actor wanted to know. □

*Valentino's death in 1926 caused the worst New York riots since actor William Macready (above) performed at Astor Place in 1849.*

by Peter Hay



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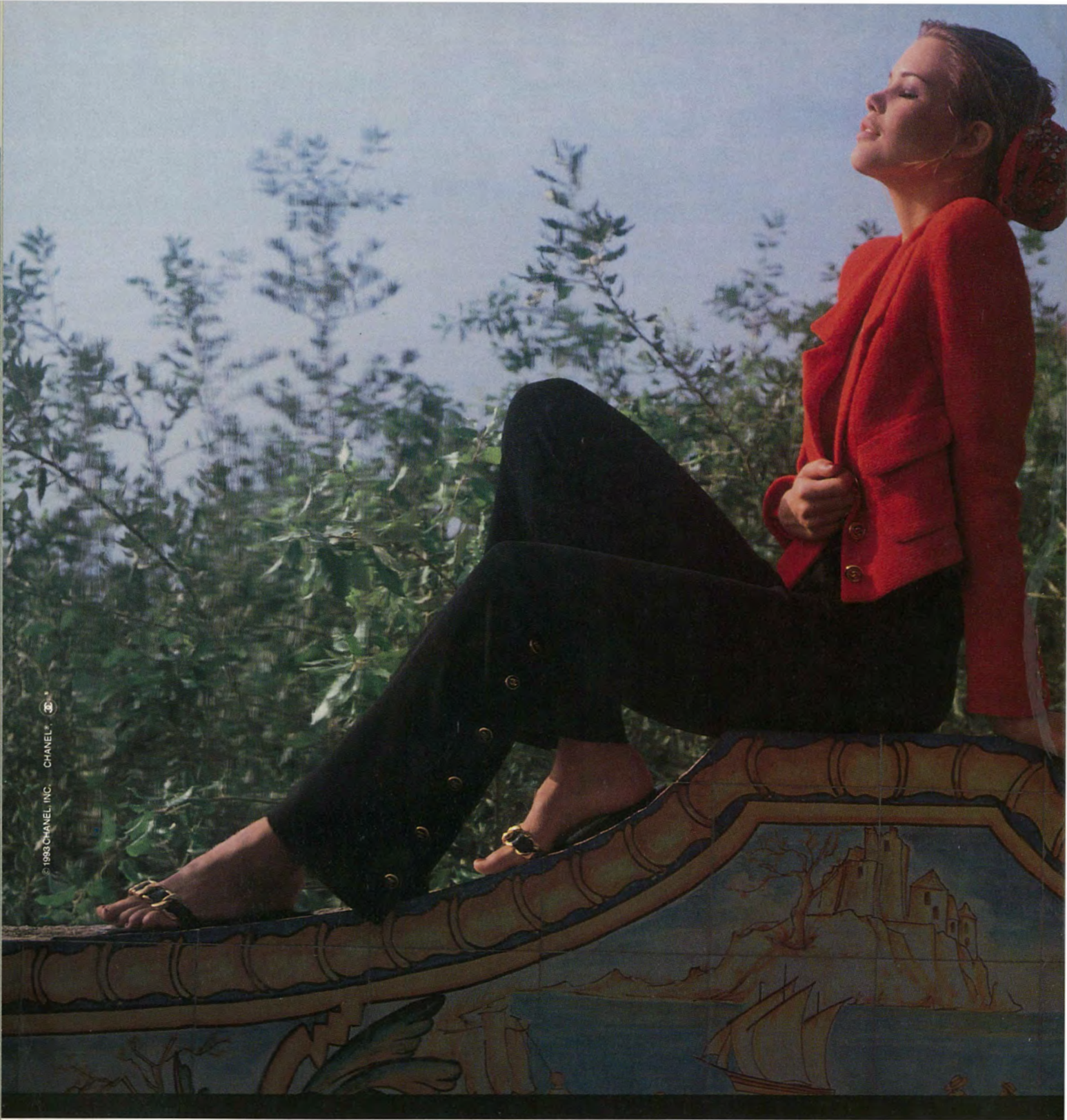
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