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PERFORMING ARTS
The Theatre & Music Magazine for California & Texas

MARCH 1988

10
A CONVERSATION WITH SIR JOHN GRIEGGUD

MASTERING THE ART OF SURVIVAL
by Sheridan Morley

19
THE PROGRAM

44
THE PRACTITIONERS
A.C.T. WIGMASTER RICHARD ECHOLS
by Misha Benson

49
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"YOU have to imagine," said Kenneth Tynan almost 40 years ago, "that between good and great acting in the British theatre is fixed an inexorable gulf, which may be crossed only by the elect whose visas are in order. Oliver pole-vaults over, hair-raisingly, in a single animal leap. Redgrave, with lunatic obstinacy, plunges into the torrent and usually sinks within yards of the opposite shore." Richardson, though Tynan never got around to him, presumably just walked on the water. And Gielgud? Gielgud, noted Tynan, seized a parasol and crosses always by tightrope. What’s more, he is still up there on the high wire at a time when all the others are either dead or in retirement.

Talking to me recently at his home in Buckinghamshire, he acknowledged for the first time that he is about to return to the stage after almost a decade, and that he is also about to return to Hollywood for the sequel to the Arthur film that won him an Oscar and gave him a whole new lease of movie life in 1981. Next year he will also be on weekly television in a marathon sequel to The Winds of War, which has taken him most of the last two years to shoot all over the world.

For a man of 63 who moved to the country some years ago with vague thoughts of writing his memoirs, it has to be said that one of our greatest living and working actors has seldom in his life been more active. By the time this appears he will have republished his first autobiography, Early Stages, and the British Theatre Museum in Covent Garden will have opened a major exhibition, one entirely devoted to the career Gielgud started at the Old Vic in 1921.

"I’m not altogether sure I like this sudden interest in me: it’s probably because they all think I’m about to die. Most of the scripts I get sent nowadays are about men at death’s door, and the television people keep coming around saying they want to film a celebration of my life when I know very well that what they really want is to have the obituary all ready in case I suddenly pop off. This year I’ve already been at death’s door in an Italian film, and then of course I died in Arthur, though I suppose it’s all a useful dress rehearsal for the real thing."

"But I’ve reached an age now where I really dread talking to people unless they are very old friends, and most of those seem to be either dead or extremely deaf. For a long time I fought shy of this play, because I knew it would mean having to turn up on terrible television shows to advertise it. When Ralph [Richardson] was alive we used to do quite a lot of that sort of thing in America, we were like the brokers’ men, but without him it won’t be the same. I miss him terribly. He was a very suspicious man, you know, took ages before he would let you become his friend, but once he did let you in then..."
Mastering The Art of Survival
by Sheridan Morley

“I am bleakly uninterested in politics or power; and I’ve never had the desire for a public life that wasn’t totally to do with acting.”

“YOU have to imagine,” said Kenneth Tynan almost 40 years ago, “that between good and great acting in the British theatre is fixed an inexorable gulf, which may be crossed only by the elect whose visas are in order. Olivier pole-vaults over, hair-raisingly, in a single animal leap. Redgrave, with lunatic obstinacy, plunges into the torrent and usually sinks within yards of the opposite shore.” Richardson, though Tynan never got around to him, presumably just walked on the water. And Gielgud? Gielgud, noted Tynan, seizes a parasol and crosses always by tightrope. What’s more, he is still up there on the high wire at a time when all the others are either dead or in retirement.

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For a man of 83 who moved to the country some years ago with vague thoughts of writing his memoirs, it has to be said that one of our greatest living and working actors has seldom in his life been more active. By the time this ap-
you were there for life. I wanted to open the National as Henry IV to his Falstaff, but he wasn't having any of that, said he'd already done it once.

"I was never really as close to Larry (Olivier); we had a kind of love-hate thing because I was such a friend of Vivien's (Vivien Leigh) and I think he thought me rather frivolous. Whenever I went to stay for the weekend he always seemed to be disguised for the next role, and he always kept a beady eye on what I was doing. A few years ago he said to me: 'Not thinking of another Lear by any chance, are you?' and I knew that he'd probably got one in mind.'"

Over the last decade there have in fact been countless rumours that Gielgud would return to either the National Theatre or the Royal Shakespeare Company in one last major Shakespeare, but it was not to be.

"The National got into a terrible muddle over Lear, kept sending me different directors and elaborate touring plans before we even had a cast, and in the end I really do so dislike those great new concrete aircraft hangars they all work in nowadays. West End theatres may be crumbling, and the galleries may be uncomfortable, but at least they have a history and a kind of spirit. The trouble is that actors now won't stay in them for more than about three months: the last play I did, Half Life, had three changes of cast in less than a year and I got so tired of rehauling it with new people.

"But I knew I had to get back to a play eventually, and when I read The Best of Friends I thought it was the one, though I had to ask them to mould it a bit because I didn't want to come back after so long in a half-hearted kind of way. It's a new piece by Hugh Whitemore based on the friendship between Bernard Shaw and the Abbess Dame Laurenia McLeachlen and Sir Sydney Cockerell, who was a great friend of Alec Guinness and ran the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cam-
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"But the great thing is to keep the memory going, and that's really why I'm coming back to a play. If you only do films and television, you just have to learn a few lines for each day and that's very dangerous. Sybil Thorndike kept her memory going into her nineties by always doing at least one long play a year. Edith Evans gave up the theatre and couldn't remember a thing."

"Survival is what really matters: when I started out at drama school the principal, Lady Tree, said I walked like a cat with rickets and later some critic said I was the greatest actor in the world but only from the neck up. In the end there comes a kind of freedom, even in front of a camera: Tony Richardson taught me to enjoy films, not just to go rushing off back to the theatre every night after shooting, and now I'm really very happy on a film set where they slap you on the back and call you Jack."

"In the theatre they regard me now as some terrible old dalai lama come to give advice: they asked me to address the company at Stratford this year and I really couldn't think of anything useful to say to them. The style is so different. I dread going backstage, because I know I'll just drop another brick, though I don't think I have ever been quite as acid as dear Emlyn Williams, and there's another obituary I've just had to write."

A lunch with Gielgud is still one of the best reasons I know for a career in arts journalism: an extraordinary rich and rambling mix of theatre history and latter-day Hollywood anecdote. As it was ending, I wondered if he was now looking ahead to eventual retirement, or what would seem a long overdue peerage, or maybe a combination of both?"

"Neither, since you ask. I am bleakly uninterested in power or politics of any kind, and have never had the desire for a public life that wasn't totally to do with acting. I saw how terribly ill and unhappy Larry became when he got caught up in the backstage struggles of the National, though he still managed to go on acting superbly through it all. I'm really very happy the way I am, though I wouldn't mind having my name on a theatre one day. In America, you know, they now even name them after drama critics."

As one myself, I ventured that this seemed to me an admirable arrangement; Sir John gives the polite but firm impression that he'd as soon see them named after master criminals."

"I intend to go on as long as I can as an actor, because apart from building all the bonfires in the garden and pottering about behind Martin pulling up weeds that he maintains are plants, there really isn't a great deal I have ever wanted to do. The time goes very fast indeed, so I think I must be quite happy."

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Mr. Anthony M. Frank
Mr. Edward Hastings
Mr. Lawrence Hecht
Mrs. Austin Hills
Mr. Howard N. Nemirovski
Mr. Frank Otwill
Mr. Howard D. Palefsky
Mr. William Paterson
Mrs. James T. Raum
Mr. Philip Schlein
Mr. Don R. Stephens
Mr. John Sullivan

KING LEAR
by William Shakespeare
October 10 through December 5

A LIE OF THE MIND
by Sam Shepard
October 12 through December 12

A CHRISTMAS CAROL
by Charles Dickens
December 5 through December 26

THE FLOATING LIGHT BULB
by Woody Allen
December 29 through January 9

THE IMMIGRANT
by Mark Harelik
January 6 through February 13

DIAMOND LIL
by Mae West
January 27 through March 19

END OF THE WORLD WITH
SYMPOSIUM TO FOLLOW
by Arthur Kopit
February 17 through April 12

GOLDEN BOY
by Clifford Odets
March 9 through May 13

FEATHERS
Variations on Aristophanes’
THE BIRDS
by Stanley R. Greenberg
April 13 through May 28

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WHO'S WHO AT A.C.T.

ANNE BETANCOURT joins the A.C.T. acting company to play Rita in *Diamond Lil*. She recently starred in *I Don't Have to Show You No Strutin' Boggles* (written and directed by Luis Valdez), which after a five-month run at the Los Angeles Theatre Center moved to the Burt Reynolds Theatre in Jupiter, Florida, and then to the San Diego Rep. She has appeared in two other Valdez productions: *Zoot Suit* in Los Angeles and Soldierboy by Severo and Judith Perez in San Juan Bautista. Her other theatre work in Los Angeles includes *The Exception and the Rule*, *Street Sounds*, *Passion Play*, and *Fever*. She has been a guest star on *Cagney and Lacey* and *227*, and has appeared on *L.A. Law*, *Superior Court*, *Falcon Crest*, *Los Grant*, *Hill Street Blues*, *Fantasy Island*, and *The New Twilight Zone*.

KATE BRICKLEY was educated at the University of Wisconsin, and completed her training at A.C.T. She has appeared with the company on the Geary stage in *Faustus in Hell*, *Private Lives*, *Othella*, *Macbeth*, *Peer Gynt*, and *A Christmas Carol*, and in studio productions of *The Cherry Orchard*, *The School for Scandal*, and *Treasury of the Wells*. Miss Brickley has also appeared at the Pacific Conservatory of the Performing Arts in *Romeo and Juliet*, *Candide*, and *The Utter Glory of Murray Hall*. Last summer she appeared in *All Night Long* with Encore Productions. An instructor of acting and voice, she teaches in A.C.T.'s Young Conservatory, Academy, and Advanced Training Program.

RICHARD BUTTERFIELD played Edgar in *King Lear* earlier this season; last year, his first with A.C.T., he appeared as the Soldier in *Sunday in the Park with George*, *Billy in The Real Thing*, *Young Scrooge in A Christmas Carol*, and a drag queen (among other roles) in *Faustus in Hell*. Mr. Butterfield has worked with the San Jose Repertory Company, Berkeley Shakespeare Festival, Berkeley Jewish Theatre, and Theatreworks of Palo Alto, where he performed in *Sondheim’s Merrily We Roll Along*. Among his other credits are Freddie in *Good* (directed by Julian Lopez-Morillas), *Navarre* in *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, *Francis Whe in A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, and *Cats* in *Richard III* with Dakin Matthews. Mr. Butterfield holds a Stanford A.B. in international relations, and teaches in the Advanced Training Program and Young Conservatory.

Among the roles NANCY CARLIN has played in her three years with the company are Beth in *A Lie of the Mind*, Jennifer Dubedat in *The Doctor’s Dilemma*, and Masha in *The Sea Gull*.
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FENDI

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She has worked at numerous theatres on the west coast, including the Oregon Shakespearean Festival, the Eureka Theatre, the Berkeley Repertory Theatre, the Berkeley Shakespeare Festival, and the Pacific Conservatory of the Performing Arts. Recently she performed with Shakespeare Santa Cruz as Beatrice in Much Ado About Nothing and as April in Company. Miss Carlin received a B.A. in comparative literature from Brown University and is a graduate of A.C.T.'s Advanced Training Program.

A graduate of A.C.T.'s Advanced Training Program and a former member of Santa Maria's P.C.P.A., PAUL COOLBRIITH appeared in the Allen Fletcher productions of The Unbearable Molly Brown (as Christmas Morgan), Idiot’s Delight (as Quillery), and Macbeth (Ross), and in Donovan Marley's Billy Budd (the Damsker). Among Mr. Coolbrith’s recent credits in San Francisco are Atticus in Edward Hastings' production of To Kill a Mockingbird and Davies in John Wilk's The Caretaker.

PETER DONAT was born in Nova Scotia, attended the Yale Drama School, and spent seven seasons with the Stratford Shakespeare Festival in Canada. He was a member of Ellis Rabb’s APA Repertory Company, appeared on and off-Broadway (winning the Theatre World Award for Best Featured Actor of 1957), and came to A.C.T. in 1968. Here he has played in more than fifty productions, including King Lear, The Merchant of Venice, Hairpin VII, Cyno de Bergere, Iguana, Man and Superman, Uncle Vanya, The Sleeping Prince, The School for Wives, Macbeth, and Our Town. Mr. Donat has appeared often on TV, including a starring role in the NBC series Flamingo Road. His films include The Hindenburg, The China Syndrome, The Day Boy (with Liv Ullman), and Francis Ford Coppola’s upcoming release Tucker.

BRIAN CRAWLEY, who holds a B.A. in English and theatre from Yale, is a third-year student in the Advanced Training Program. At A.C.T. he has played Fred in A Christmas Carol and a punk devil in The Cherry Orchard, and the title roles in Richard III and Nicholas Nickleby. He was in Life Is a Dream at the Ark Theatre in New York, and since coming to San Francisco has played Billy in Casualties and Don Juan in Much Ado About Nothing at Theatreworks, danced as a witch in the San Francisco Opera’s Macbeth, and appeared in Hans Christian Andersen and Kiss Me, Kate at P.C.P.A. Theatrefest.

DREW ESHelman made his debut with A.C.T. in The Ruling Class in 1973, and his work with the company since then has included King Lear, The Doctor’s Dilemma, Sunday in the Park with George, Faustus in Hell, You Never Can Tell, Macbeth, A Christmas Carol, and A Midsummer Night’s Dream. He has appeared in Hamlet at the Berkeley Shakespeare Festival, The Tempest and The Taming of the Shrew at San Diego’s Old Globe Theatre, and The Good Person of Szechuan at the Berkeley Repertory Theatre. He was in the original production and the Los Angeles revival of One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest, and

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Drew Eshelman made his debut with A.C.T. in The Ruling Class in 1975, and his work with the company since then has included King Lear, The Doctor's Dilemma, Sunday in the Park with George, Faustus in Hell, You Never Can Tell, Macbeth, A Christmas Carol, and A Midsummer Night's Dream. He has appeared in Hamlet at the Berkeley Shakespeare Festival, The Tempest and The Taming of the Shrew at San Diego's Old Globe Theatre, and The Good Person of Szechuan at the Berkeley Repertory Theatre. He was in the original production and the Los Angeles revival of One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, and

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Brian Crawley, who holds a B.A. in English and theatre from Yale, is a third-year student in the Advanced Training Program. At A.C.T. he has played Fred in A Christmas Carol and a punk devil in Faustus in Hell; in student productions he played Trofinov in The Cherry Orchard and the title roles in Richard III and Nicholas Nickleby. He was in Life Is a Dream at

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has been prominently seen in San Francisco in Cloud Nine and Bent. Mr. Eshelman has also played featured roles in a number of films, including The Right Stuff and Magnum Force, and has appeared in several television series. He attended A.C.T.'s Advanced Training Program in 1973.

ELAN EVANS, a native of Stockton, California, trained at the Pacific Conservatory of the Performing Arts, where she appeared in The Suicide, Medea, and Feat. Miss Evans worked in various capacities at the Denver Center Theatre Company before returning to California to complete her acting training, and is now in her third year of A.C.T.'s Advanced Training Program. Her Bay Area debut was as Ursula in last summer's production of Much Ado About Nothing for the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival. Miss Evans received her B.F.A. at the College of Santa Fe, New Mexico.

GINA FERRALL is a graduate of A.C.T.'s Advanced Training Program, and has appeared at the Geary in Cat Among the Pigeons, A Christmas Carol, I Remember Mama, The Admirable Crichton, and Sunday in the Park with George, in addition to playing as Lizzie in the Plays-in-Progress production of Lizzie Borden in the Late Afternoon. Miss Ferrall was in Berkeley Rep's production of The Art of Dining and appeared as Violet in Center Space's production of Snow White Falling. She has also appeared with the Santa Rosa Summer Repertory Theatre, at Montana's Shakespeare in the Parks, and as Emily in All Nighters at the New Arts Theatre in New York. She is co-owner of the Josef Robe Co. of San Francisco.

SCOTT FREEMAN, who last appeared on the Geary stage as Young Scrooge in A Christmas Carol, has also performed with the company in Macbeth and The Sleeping Prince, and in a studio production of Strindberg's Credit. He also appeared in Tasset and Hamlet at the Grove Shakespeare Festival, in Villainous Company at the One Act Theatre, and as Benvolio in Romeo and Juliet with the South Coast Repertory, and he acted in the film No Way Out. Mr. Freeman trained -- and now teaches acting -- in A.C.T.'s Advanced Training Program.

Since his return in 1986 RICK HAMILTON has appeared as Oswald in King Lear, Max in The Real Thing, and Elyot in Private Lives. He was a member of the A.C.T. company from 1973 through 1975, during which time he appeared in Desire Under the Elms (which toured the Soviet Union), General Gorgias, The Threepenny Opera, and as Tranio in The Taming of the Shrew, which was televised for the PBS series Theatre in America. He was a member of the original cast of Amadeus. During his ten seasons with the Oregon Shakespeare Festival he played such roles as Benedick in Much Ado About Nothing, Tom in The Glass Menagerie, Hotspur in Henry IV, Part I, Mark Antony in Julius Caesar, and Petruchio in The Taming of the Shrew. He has also spent seasons with the Alley Theatre, Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, Dallas Shakespeare Festival, and the Los Angeles Theatre Center. Mr. Hamilton was featured in the film The Principal.

MARK HARELIK has had a long association with A.C.T., appearing most recently as Haskell Harelik in The Immigrant (which he also wrote) and in Arms and the Man and The Real Thing.
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This summer the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles will produce another of Mr. Harel’s plays, Lost Highway. The Music and Legend of Haiti Williams, in which he will also appear.

LAWRENCE HECHT is the director of A.C.T.’s Advanced Training Program. In addition to staging such A.C.T. productions as The Doll, Translations, and Night, Mother, he has also served as actor, resident director, and Director of Actor Training for the Pacific Conservatory of the Performing Arts in Santa Maria, where his directing credits include Harvey, Major Barbara, and Bus Stop. A graduate of the University of San Francisco and A.C.T.’s Advanced Training Program, Mr. Hecht has directed numerous productions for Plays in Progress. Now in his third season with A.C.T., he has performed in more than 25 productions, including The National Health, The Visit, Buried Child, Night and Day, The Three Sisters, Happy Landings, The Holdup, Sunday in the Park with George, and this season’s A Life of the Mind.

ED HODSON, who studied in A.C.T.’s Advanced Training Program, has appeared on the Geary stage as Bodee in The Real Thing and Mike in A Life of the Mind. At the Eureka Theatre Company he has appeared in Landscape of the Body, The End, and A Narrow Bed (which was written by his wife, Ellen McLaughlin), and his work with Western Stage has included Hotel Shanghai. He has acted in New York in Under Distant Skies, Bou, DEROS on the Fumny Farm, and The Blue Dahlia. Mr. Hodson played Mozart in a national tour of Amadeus.

In his first season with A.C.T. STEVEN ANTHONY JONES has appeared in King Lear and A Christmas Carol. He has been performing for 25 years, five of those with the Negro Ensemble Company of New York, where he created the role of Pvt. James Wilke in the original production of A Soldier’s Play. He appeared locally in the Eureka Theatre productions of The Cherry Orchard, Every Moment, and The Island; the San Jose Repertory Theatre’s Master Harold and the Boys; and in Division Street at Oddland Ensemble Theatre. Mr. Jones has also worked in film and television.

In her fourth decades onstage RUTH KOBART has had several careers: in opera; as a musical comedienne on Broadway; on television; and as a dramatic stage actress. A specialist in contemporary music, she sang with the New York City Opera, Cincinnati Summer Opera, and in the premiere of Menotti’s Maria Golren in Brussels with the Wiener Oper. Her Broadway career included How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying (a role she repeated in the movie) and A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum (for which she was nominated for a Tony). She came to San Francisco in 1967, joining A.C.T. in its first season here and subsequently, appearing in Tartuffe, Thieves Carnival, The House of Bernarda Alba, The Threepenny Opera, Hotel Paradiso, The Doctor’s Dilemma, and Sunday in the Park with George. She spent several years touring Amtrak, and a year in town in One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest.

This season BARRY KRAF1, a charter member of the company, alternated in the title role of King Lear — the second time he has appeared in an A.C.T. production of the play; he is a veteran eran of the 1965 production in Pittsburgh, as well as of Under Milk Wood, The Crucible, and Our Town during the 1966 season in San Francisco. Mr. Krafft has spent 21 of the last 27 summers acting in Shakespearean festivals around the country, and has appeared in 34 of Shakespeare’s 38 plays. At the Oregon Shakespeare Festival he has played John of Gaunt in Richard II, Barocone in Love’s Labour’s Lost, Hotspur in Henry IV, Part I, Mark Antony in Julius Caesar, Levontes in The Winter’s Tale, and — last summer — Bottom in A Midsummer Night’s Dream and Hodge in Dokkoel’s The Shearer’s Holiday. His work has been seen at the Emży Space in Seattle and in the San Jose Repertory Company’s productions of Cyrano de Bergerac (as Cyrano), Edward Hasting’s 007: Croixfire, and in Basin Play under the direction of Joy Carlin. Mr. Krafft is a trainer at the Conservatory, and has taught Shakespeare at the University of California at Irvine and other educational institutions.

A third-year student in the Advanced Training Program who teaches in the Young Conservatory and A.C.T. graduate, PAULA MARKOVI7Z has appeared on the Geary stage in A Christmas Carol and Faustus in Hell. In studio productions at A.C.T. she has played Millamant in The Way of the World, Olga in The Three Sisters, and Margaret in The War of the Roses, and she acted in Cherry Terry the Ricks’ Robin for Plays-in Progress. She has played leading roles in many musicals — including Man of La Mancha, A Little Night Music, and Anything Goes — and played Eva Peron’s sister in Harold Prince’s production of Evita. Local audiences have also seen her as Sister Hubert in NunVsense. Ms. Markowitz attended the London Academy of Dramatic Art.

FRANCES LEE MccAIN was a member of A.C.T. from 1970 to 1972, appearing in The Latent Heterosexual, Dandy Dick, Odette’s Paradise Lost; and as Cleopatra in Cansar and Cleopatra. She was in Woody Allen’s Play It Again, Sam on Broadway, the original production of Lanford Wilson’s Lemon Sky off-Broadway, and Passion (directed by Joy Carlin) at San Jose Rep. In Los Angeles, where she is active as a member of the Ensemble Studio Theatre, she acted in A Rribbit and as Natasha in Three Sisters at the Mark Taper Forum, and as Stella in A Streetcar Named Desire (with Jon Voight and Bette Davis) at the Ahmanson. She has appeared on television in many series and specials, and her film credits include Back to the Future, Gremlins, Footloose, Tex, and Stand By Me. Ms. McCain trained at the Central School of Speech and Drama in London.
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WILL LESKIN has appeared in A.C.T.'s productions of King Lear, A Christmas Carol, and Faustus in Hell; in the Conservatory he has played Mimsie in The Way of the World and Claudius and the Ghost in Hamlet. Among his other productions in the Bay Area are Cyrano de Bergerac at San Jose Repertory Company and La Ronde with Encore Presentations. He previously performed in A Christmas Carol with Theatre Virginia in Richmond, where he also worked for three seasons with Dogwood Dell. Mr. Leskin holds a B.F.A. in acting from Virginia Commonwealth University and has completed two years in the Advanced Training Program. His wife Shannon is General Manager of San Jose Repertory Company.

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A third-year student in the Advanced Training Program who teaches in the Young Conservatory and Academy, PAULA MARKOVITZ has appeared on the Geary stage in A Christmas Carol and Faustus in Hell. In studio productions at A.C.T. she played Millamant in The Way of the World, Olga in The Three Sisters, and Margaret in The War of the Roses, and she acted in Cherry 'Terry the Rocker' Robin for Plays-in-Progress. She has played leading roles in many musicals—including Man of La Mancha, A Little Night Music, and Anything Goes—and played Eva Peron's sister in Harold Prince's production of Evita. Local audiences have also seen her as Sister Hubert in Nunsense. Ms. Markovitz attended the London Academy of Dramatic Art.
A native of Boston who studied piano at the New England Conservatory of Music, graduated from Harvard, and earned a M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Southern California, HARPER MacKAY has worked in various musical capacities in film, television, and stage productions since the 1950s, and for the last 25 years has been musical director of the American Center for Music Theater in Los Angeles. He has conducted musicals in Boston, St. Louis, and Los Angeles; he was pianist and arranger for the film versions of My Fair Lady, The Sound of Music, West Side Story, and Brigadoon from Hawaii; and he has been a musical director for NBC specials starring Carol Channing, Danny Thomas, Sammy Davis, and many others. He previously appeared in San Francisco with the Civic Light Opera.

MICHAEL McShane, now in his second season with A.C.T., appeared last season as T.C. Fields, Dandy, and Jesus Christ in Follies in Hell, and this year as Charles Dickens in A Christmas Carol. He was the first recipient of the Julie Irving Award, and won the Bay Area Critics' Circle Award for Tase Jesus at the One Act Theatre. He played Falstaff in Berkeley Shakespeare Festival productions of both parts of Henry IV, and has appeared in the films Peggy Sue Got Married, Howard the Duck, and Francis Ford Coppola's Tucker. He was also in The Merry Wives of Windsor at the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival. Mr. McShane continues his association with Reed Rahmann, Brian Lohman, and the other former members of the original Faultline company.


Progressive productions of Afternoon in Vegas and 10 Minutes for 25 Cents. From 1983 to 1986 she worked on the east coast as a member of the New York Shakespeare Festival Players in Romeo and Juliet and As You Like It, and at Baltimore's Center Stage, Crossroads Theatre in New Jersey, and the Intrepole Playhouse in Pennsylvania. Miss Mitchell recently performed in A Member of the Wedding at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, and in the film The Principal with Jim Belushi and Louis Gossett. A veteran of nine A.C.T. productions of A Christmas Carol (plus the ABC cable version), she is a graduate of Florida A & M University and a speech, voice, and acting trainer.

LIAM O'BRIEN is now in his second season as A.C.T.'s following appearances last year as Dennis in Sunday in the Park with George, Redpeny in The Doctor's Dilemma, Paul in The Floating Light Bulb, and Stan Laurel, Charlie Chaplin, and Borat in Follies in Hell. He recently appeared in Ah, Wilderness!, directed by Ron Logamomino for the Berkeley Repertory Theatre's O'Neill Festival. Mr. O'Brien performed the role of Billoy in both the original production and the revival of Sharon and Billoy at the Magic Theatre, and received a Drama-Logue Award for his performance. His other credits include Bent at San Francisco Repertory Theatre, The Concase at the Feast at Theatre Rhinoceros, and The Threepenny Opera at the Eureka Theatre.

FRED OLSTER was a member of the A.C.T. company from 1973 to 1976, appearing in The Ruling Class, The Merry Wives of Windsor, The House of Bernarda Alba, Equus, and as Kate in The Taming of the Shrew, which was also broadcast on Theatre in America (PBS). Since her return in 1986 she has performed in The Real Thing, Private Lives, and King Lear at the Oregon Shakespearean Festival, where she spent five seasons, her roles included Beatrice in Much Ado About Nothing, Portia in The Merchant of Venice, Billie Dawn in Born Yesterday, and the title roles in Miss Julie and Anouilh's Antigone. She has been a member of the company of the Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, Long Wharf Theatre, Hartman Theatre, and Alley Theatre. Her television credits include guest appearances on Cagney and Lacey, Lou Grant, and A Year in the Life.

LUIS OROPEZA began his career by doing Chicano street theatre in the barrios of East Los Angeles, and spent five years working with Luis Valdez and El Teatro Campesino. His various Bay Area theatre credits — which have earned him four Critics' Circle awards and a Drama-Logue award — include a five-year-old girl in Cloud Nine and 26 different characters in How I Got That Story (both for the Eureka Theatre), and appearances with San Jose in Hell. He recently appeared in Ah, Wilderness!, directed by Ron Logamomino for the Berkeley Repertory Theatre's O'Neill Festival. Mr. O'reten performed the role of Billoy in both the original production and the revival of Sharon and Billoy at the Magic Theatre, and received a Drama-Logue Award for his performance. His other credits include Bent at San Francisco Repertory Theatre, The Concase at the Feast at Theatre Rhinoceros, and The Threepenny Opera at the Eureka Theatre.

FRANK OTTISWELL has taught the Alexander Technique at A.C.T. since the company's beginning in Pittsburgh in 1965. He studied at the Canadian Art Theatre in his hometown of Montreal before moving to New York, where he studied at the Vera Sokolovitch Studio of Acting and the American Center for the Alexander Technique. He has appeared in fourteen productions at A.C.T., including The Three Sisters (which played on Broadway in 1969), The Matchmaker and Desire Under the Elms (which toured the Soviet Union), and Macheth. He has also been seen in televised versions of A.C.T. productions of Crónicas Huidobras, A Christmas Carol, and Cyn阳 de Bergenc. Mr. Ottiswell is a member of A.C.T.'s Board of Trustees.

WILLIAM PATERSON is now in his 21st season with A.C.T., having joined the company in 1967 to play James Tyrone in Long Day's Journey into Night. A graduate of Brown University, Mr. Paterson served in the army for four years before starting his professional acting career in a summer stock company. He appeared for at least part of every season for twenty years at the Clevelan Play House, taking time out for live television, films, and four national tours with his own one-man show. His major roles for A.C.T. include You Can't Take It With You, Jumapers, The Matchmaker (U.S.S. R. tour), The Circle, All the Way Home (Japanese tour), The Importance of Being Earnest, Death of a Salesman, Dial "M" for Murder, Painting Churches, The Doctor's Dilemma, and King Lear. He played Scrooge in the original A.C.T. production of A Christmas Carol, and this season he was Scrooge again in its twelfth production. He serves as a member of the San Francisco Arts Commission and is a member of A.C.T.'s Board of Trustees.

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MICHAEL MCHANE, now in his second season with A.C.T., appeared last season with C. T. Field, David Henry Hwang, and Jesus Christ in Faustus in Hell, and this year as Charles Dickens in A Christmas Carol. He was the first recipient of the Julie Irving Award, and won the Bay Area Critics’ Circle Award for Best Actor at the One Act Theatre. He played Falstaff in Berkeley Shakespeare Festival productions of both parts of Henry IV, and has appeared in the films Peggy Sue Got Married, Howard the Duck, and Francis Ford Coppola’s Tucker. He was also in The Merry Wives of Windsor at the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival. Mr. Mchane continues his association with Reed Rahmann, Brian Lohan, and the other former members of the original Faulkline company.

DELORES MITCHELL was a company member from 1976 to 1983, performing in The Little Foxes, The Rosalind, The Winter’s Tale, Much Ado About Nothing, The National Health, and Hotel Paradiso at the Geary, and in Plays-in-ACT-2 Progression productions of Aftemoons in Vegas and in 10 Minutes for 25 Cents. From 1983 to 1996 she worked on the east coast as a member of the New York Shakespeare Festival Players in Rome and Juliet and As You Like It, and at Baltimore’s Center Stage, Crossroads Theatre in New Jersey, and the Intrepid Playhouse in Pennsylvania. Miss Mitchell recently performed in A Member of the Wedding at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and in the film The Principal with Jim Belushi and Rosalind Cash. A veteran of nine A.C.T. productions of A Christmas Carol (plus the ABC cable version), she is a graduate of Florida A. & M. University and a speech, voice, and acting trainer.

LIAM O’BRIEN is now in his second season at A.C.T. following appearances last year as Dennis in Sunday in the Park with George, Redpeny in The Doctor’s Dilemma, Paul in The Floating Light Bulb, and Stan Laurell, Charlie Chaplin, and Beatrice Lillie in Faustus in Hell. He recently appeared in Ah, Wilderness, directed by Ron Logammnomo for the Berkeley Repertory Theatre, and O’Neill Festival. Mr. O’Brien performed the role of Billy in both original production and the revival of Sharon and Billy at the Magic Theatre, and received a Drama-Logue Award for his performance. His other credits include Best at San Francisco Repertory Theatre, The Conchurine at the Theatre Rhinocerous, and The Threepenny Opera at the Eureka Theatre.

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Frank Ottwell has taught the Alexander Technique at A.C.T. since the company’s beginning in Pittsburgh in 1965. He studied at the Canadian Art Theatre in his hometown of Montreal before moving to New York, where he studied at the Vera Sokolovka Studio of Acting and the American Center for the Alexander Technique. He has appeared in fourteen productions at A.C.T., including The Three Sisters (which played on Broadway in 1969), The Matchmaker and Desire Under the Elms (which toured the Soviet Union), and Macheth. He has also been seen in televised versions of A.C.T. productions of Glorby Halliwell’s A Christmas Carol, and Cyrano de Bergerac. Mr. Ottwell is a member of A.C.T.’s Board of Trustees.

WILLIAM PATERSON is now in his 21st season with A.C.T., having joined the company in 1967 to play James Tyrone in Long Day’s Journey into Night. A graduate of Brown University, Mr. Paterson served in the army for four years before starting his professional acting career in a summer stock company. He appeared for at least part of every season for twenty years at the Cleveland Play House, taking time out for live television, films, and four national tours with his own one-man show. His major roles for A.C.T. include You Can’t Take It With You, Jumpers, The Matchmaker (U.S.S.R. tour), The Circle, All the Way Home (Japanese tour), Happy Landings, The Gin Game, Dial “M” for Murder, Painting Churches, The Doctor’s Dilemma, and King Lear. He played Scrooge in the original A.C.T. production of A Christmas Carol, and this season he was Scrooge once again in its twelfth production. He serves as a member of the San Francisco Arts Commission and is a member of A.C.T.’s Board of Trustees.

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Francisco Shakespeare Festival's production of Much Ado About Nothing as Borachio and Encore Presentations' Sinned as Harry. He has toured nationally in Annie Get Your Gun. The 2000's Radio Hour, and The Student Prince. Mr. Piper has performed in Dallas/Ft. Worth in Major Barbas, Deathtrap, and Whose Life Is It, Angieyu?

This year DANIEL REICHERT, a third-year student in the Advanced Training Program, has played Edmund in King Lear and performed in A Christmas Carol. In studio productions at A.C.T. he played Lepaphin in The Cherry Orchard, York in Henry VI, Part II, Horner in The Country Wife, Sir Mulburry Hawke in Nicholas Nickleby, Laertes in Hamlet, and Fran in Gemini. Last summer he appeared as Jabe in Orpheus Descending with the New York Stage and Film Company and as Benedick in the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival production of Much Ado About Nothing, directed by Albert Takazaucasas. A native of Massachusetts, Mr. Reichert holds an A.B. in English from Vassar College.

JENNIFER ROBLIN is a third-year student in A.C.T.'s Advanced Training Program. Her studio performances include Erina in The Three Sisters, Witty Squeers in Nicholas Nickleby, Margaret in Henry VI (Parts I and II), Mrs. Farinall in The Way of the World, Dainty Pidget in The Country Wife, and Lucille in Gemini. This year she has appeared in A Christmas Carol and as Stan in Encore Presentations' production of Doss, Fish, Stas & Vi. Ms. Roblin studied history and English at Trinity College, University of Toronto.

MICHAEL SCOTT RYAN is a third-year student in the Advanced Training Program of the Conservatory, where he has appeared as Ver.

shin in The Three Sisters, Witwood in The Way of the World, and Prospero in a modern adaptation of The Tempest. Other studio roles include Bottom in A Midsummer Night's Dream and Wackford Squeers in Nicholas Nickleby. After playing a punk devil in last season's Faustus in Hell he traveled to the P.C.P.A. Theatrefest to perform as Adolph Eichmann in God and as Oberon in John C. Fletcher's production of A Midsummer Night's Dream, which was mounted and taken to the Westwood Playhouse in Los Angeles. He has also danced as a witch in the San Francisco Opera's Macbeth and played Edmund in Long Day's Journey into Night.

CARLOTTA SCARMACK, a third-year student in the Advanced Training Program, performed this year in A Christmas Carol. Among her roles in studio productions at A.C.T. are Ophelia in Hamlet, Lady Wishfort in The Way of the World, Miss Kreg and Tilda Price in Nicholas Nickleby, Ida Bolten in Morning's Seven, and Madame Ranevsky in The Cherry Orchard. Last summer she appeared in P.C.P.A. Theatrefest productions of A Midsummer Night's Dream and God. A native of Athens, Ohio, Miss Scarmack received a B.F.A. in theatre from Ohio University and performed in numerous productions for its School of Theatre and the Ohio Valley Summer Theatre.

LANNYL STEPHENS, now in her second season with the company, has appeared as Sally in A Lie of the Mind, Mrs. in Sunday in the Park with George, Betty Boop and Marilyn Monroe in Faustius in Hell, and in A Christmas Carol, The Seagull, and studio productions of Tartuffe, The Three Sisters, King Lear, and Lydia Breeze. She appeared at the Bay Area Playwrights' Festival as Sister in Looking in the Dark for . . . , and as Sister Robert Anne in Nunsense at the Marines Memorial Theatre. Miss Stephens is a founding member of Encore Productions, for which she played the role of the Parlor Maid/Temp in last season's production of La Ronde. She holds a B.A. in theatre arts from the University of Texas.

HOWARD SWAIN has appeared in A.C.T. productions of A Lie of the Mind, The Doctor's Dilemma, A Christmas Carol, and The Seagull. He has worked with the Magic Theatre, Eureka Theatre, One Act Theatre, San Francisco Repertory Company, Overtone Theatre, Berkeley Shakespeare Festival, Berkeley Jewish Theatre, San Jose Repertory Company, Shakespeare Santa Cruz, and the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. He appeared as Crow in The Thieves of Crime at the Berkeley Repertory Theatre, for which he received a Bay Area Critics' Circle Award. Mr. Swain's other credits include roles in Partners in Crime and Hill St. Blues on network television and the forthcoming films Cherry 2000 and Miracle Mile.

SYDNEY WALKER, a forty-year veteran of stage, film, and television, has performed in some 256 productions. A native of Philadelphia, he trained with Jasper Dyeer at the Hedgecrows Theatre in Moylan, Pennsylvania, and from 1963 to 1969 was a leading actor with the APA Repertory Company in New York under the direction of Ellis Rabb. He also appeared for three seasons with the Lincoln Center Repertory Company under Jules Irving. In 1958 Mr. Walker joined A.C.T., and has since performed in forty-eight productions including The Matchmaker (U.S.R.K. tour), Peer Gynt, The Circle, The National Health, A Christmas Carol, Lost, Angels Fall, The School for Wives, and Translators. He has appeared on television in such serials as The Guiding Light and The Secret Storm, and acted in Love Story and the NBC TV film Eye on the Sparrow. Mr. Walker was narrator for the KQED TV series New York Master Chefs and teaches auditioning in A.C.T.'s Conservatory.

GREITHE WYLER was still a teenager when she first hit Broadway, fresh from Bartlesville, Oklahoma by way of the corps de ballet of the St. Louis Municipal Opera. She started in the chorus of Who's Charley? with Ray Belger, moving on to the original company of Guys and Dolls. Her performance as the singing, dancing lead of Cole Porter's last show Silk Stockings (with Don Ameche) won her an Outer Circle Critics' Award. He then went on to lights as the star of Damn Yankees and Bye Bye Birdie, and then as Sweet Charity in London's West End. Other credits include starring roles in the national companies of Does a Woman Have Two Fathers? and Your Thing, stock appearances in Mane, Applause, Anything Goes, and Hello, Dolly, and the Williamsston Theatre Festival in The Man Who Came to Dinner. Her last Broadway show was Sly Fox with George C. Scott. Television audiences will remember her as Dr. Conrad on Dallas and as a regular in On Our Own (CBS). She had a featured role in the film Private Benjamin. Last season Ms. Wyler starred in Folles at the San Jose Civic Light Opera.

DIRECTORS, DESIGNERS, AND STAFF

EDWARD HASTINGS (Artistic Director), who assumed the leadership of A.C.T. early last year and guided the company through the most successful seasons in its history, is a graduate of Yale College and the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. A founding member of A.C.T.,
Francisco Shakespeare Festival’s production of Much Ado About Nothing as Borachio and Encore Presentations’ Sense as Harry. He has toured nationally in Annie Get Your Gun, The 2000’s Radio Hour, and The Student Prince. Mr. Piper has performed in Dallas/Ft. Worth in Major Barbara, Deathtrap, and Whose Life Is It, Anyways?

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HOWARD SWAIN has appeared in A.C.T. productions of A Lie of the Mind, The Doctor’s Dilemma, A Christmas Carol, and The Seagull. He has worked with the Magic Theatre, Eureka Theatre, One Act Theatre, San Francisco Repertory Company, Overstone Theatre, Berkeley Shakespeare Festival, Berkeley Jewish Theatre, San Jose Repertory Company, Shakespeare Santa Cruz, and the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. He appeared as Crow in The Birds of Crime at the Berkeley Repertory Theatre, for which he received a Bay Area Critics’ Circle Award. Mr. Swain’s other credits include roles in Partners in Crime and Hill St. Blues on network television and the forthcoming films Cherry 2000 and Miracle Mile.

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he directed Charity’s Aunt and Our Town during the company’s first two San Francisco seasons. Since then he has staged many shows for A.C.T., including The Time of Your Life, The House of the strapon, Secret Service, Fifth of July, The Real Thing, and this season’s King Lear. In 1972 he founded Plays-in-Progress, which is devoted to the development and production of new American plays. Mr. Hastings served as a resident director at the Eugene O’Neill Playwrights’ Conference in Connecticut for three summers, and taught acting in 1984 at the Shanghai Drama Institute as part of the Theatre Bridge Program between A.C.T. and the Shanghai Theatre. He directed the national company of Eddie and the Rainbow, which originated at the San Francisco Repertory Company. He also directed the American production of Shakespeare’s Plenty starring Michael Redgrave, directed the Australian premiere of The Hot and Lazy Baltimore, and restaged his A.C.T. production of Sam Shepard’s Buried Child in Serbo-Croatian at the Yugoslav Dramatic Theatre in Belgrade. He has been a guest director at resident theatres throughout the country.

JOHN SULLIVAN (Managing Director) joined A.C.T. as its chief administrative and financial officer in 1986. A former deputy director of the California Arts Council, he is a director of the Bay Area and a member of the advisory board of the San Francisco New Vaudeville Festival. A native San Franciscan, Mr. Sullivan has been active in the theatre since the mid-1970s when he directed Harvey Fierd’s A Funny Thing... at the Circle Repertory Company in New York. He later joined the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles as head of its Forum Laboratory. More recently he produced The Detective, a collaboration between Joseph Chaikin and Vaudeville Nouveau at San Francisco’s Magic Theatre. A graduate of the University of Southern California School of Cinema, Mr. Sullivan has written and directed numerous short films, including those that were featured on the national Emmy Awards broadcast. He is co-author of The National Outdoor Leadership School’s Wilderness Guide, a manual for campers and mountaineers, published by Simon and Schuster.

The director of Golden Boy, JOY CARLIN (Associate Artistic Director) has been a member of the acting company for many years. Among the roles she has played are Meg in A Lie of Act 6 and the Mind, Miss Priest in The Importance of Being Earnest, Kitty Dovall in The Time of Your Life, Bananas in The House of Blue Leaves, Asa in Peer Gynt, Aunt Sally in All the Way Home, Birdie in The Glass Menagerie, anding star in A Fresh Scent. She has been Resident Director of the Berkeley Repertory Theatre and served as its Acting Artistic Director. Among her other credits as directing student plays are The Good Doctor, House of Games, To Be or Not To Be, The Lady’s Not For Burning, and The Doctor’s Dilemma at A.C.T., and productions at the Oregon Shakespearean Festival, the San Jose Repertory Company, A Contemporary Theatre of Seattle, and the Shanghai Youth Drama Troupe of Shanghai, China, where she directed You Can’t Take It With You. She is a trustee of the Berkeley Jewish Theatre.

DENNIS POWERS (Associate Artistic Director) joined A.C.T. in 1987. After several years as A.C.T. Press Representative, he became General Director William Ball’s executive assistant and, later, Dramaturg and Artists and Repertory Director, collaborating with Ball on reads which adaptations of such classic works as Oedipus Rex, Oedipus the King, The Cherry Orchard and The Bourgeois Gentlemen. With Laird Williamson, he adapted A Christmas Carol for the stage, and the production has been performed annually at A.C.T. as well as by other theatres and schools. His 1975 dramatization of Dracula was premiered at the Pacific Conservatory of the Performing Arts and has subsequently been performed by thirty theatres and schools. In 1985, he and Williamson wrote Christmas Miracles, which had its world premiere at the Center Theatre Company. Both Cyrano and A Christmas Carol have been presented on television.

PAUL BLAKE (Director), who was a resident director at A.C.T. for five years, is co-founder and Artistic Director of the Santa Barbara Theatre Festival. He directed all ten plays of William Kentridge’s and directed Words and Music, starring Emmy Schwanke, at the Duke of York’s Theatre in London; Cambridge, England’s Players’ Theatre; and the University of Maryland. He has directed numerous productions in San Francisco. Among the many productions he has directed in stock and regional theatres throughout the country are Barfly in the Park with Shaun Cassidy and Julia Duffy, Mass Appeal with John Travolta and Charles Durning, and She Loves Me with Pam Dawber and Joel Higgins, which recently played in the Ahmanson in Los Angeles. He has served as a consultant for development for Polygram Television, and as writer/director for the Public Theater’s Off-Broadway series Off and Running, and co-directed Richard Hughes. He has been responsible for bringing dozens of stars — such as Peggy Lee, Julie Harris, Cheryl Ladd, Vic Tayback, Don Calfa, and Alex Kachocs — and had a role in the musical Hello, Dolly! He has directed and produced television and has been a member of the board of the San Francisco Mime Troupe. In 1972 he directed and performed extensively at the Oregon Shakespearean Festival and the PICAPA Theaterfest, where he played the title role in Errors IV and Pilate in the world premiere of Robert Patrick’s Judas, and directed award-winning productions of The Physicists, Blood Wedding, and Arthur Kopit’s Indians. He directed Don Pasquale and The Portuguese Inn for Western Opera and The Triumph of the Streak for San Francisco’s Old Globe. Mr. Williamson was also a guest director at the Brooklyn Academy of Music Theater Company and directed Puccini’s Turandot, Côte d’Azur, and The Magic Flute. His Kipps is a winner of the San Francisco Book Festival and Kipps’s for the Denver Center Theatre Company.

DOUGLAS W. SCHMIDT (Scenery) first worked on A.C.T. on Fustians in Hell last season. He designed The Incredibly Famous Willy Rivers at San Diego’s Old Globe, and his Los Angeles work has included The Genius, The Robber Bridegroom, and The Traveler at the Mark Taper Forum and Light Up the Sky at the Ahmanson. He was resident designer at Lincoln Center’s Vivian Beaumont Theatre for several years, where his award-winning designs included God’s Enemy, Richard Foreman’s production of The Flowerdrunk, and And Then There’s Agamemnon (Joseph Maharam Distinguished Design Award, 1977). His Broadway work has included A Midsummer Night’s Dream, and his designs for Stephen Pulus’ The Postman Always Rings Twice at the Firth Worth Opera. Mr. Holt’s designs for the Scaramount Theatre Company include Thieves’ Night, Dreamhouse, and Cold Storage.

RICHARD SEGER (Scenery) has designed many A.C.T. productions, including King Lear. Sunday in the Park with George, The Seagull, Paradise Lost, The Chalk Garden, Buried Child, The Girl of the Golden West, The Tender Years, and Juliet. As The Visit, The Bourgeois Gentlemen, Cat Among the Pigeons, Macho, and Something’s Afoot, which went on to Broadway. A graduate of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Mr. Seger also created sets for the Broadway production of Butterflies Are Free and several off-Broadway shows. Mr. Seger’s credits include productions at San Diego’s Old Globe Theatre, such as The Country Wife, The Cherry Orchard, The Importance of Being Earnest, Pygmalion and Kiss Me, Mr. for the Ahmanson in Los Angeles; night, Mother at the Mark Taper Forum; and La Traviata and Rigoletto for the Central City Opera Association in Colorado.

At A.C.T. JESSE HOLLIS (Scenery) has designed The Majestic Kid, The Doctor’s Dilemma, and Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom (which also played at the Los Angeles Theatre Center). He has created scenery for many other Bay Area companies, too: the Berkeley Repertory Theatre (nine productions), San Francisco Ballet, San Francisco Opera Showcase, Magic Theatre (where he designed the premiere production of Sam Shepard’s True West), Berkeley Shakespeare Festival, and Marin Theatre Company. Among his productions for the Oregon Shakespearean Festival are last year’s The Member of the Wedding and A Midsummer Night’s Dream, and his designed sets for Stephen Pulus’ The Postman Always Rings Twice at the Firth Worth Opera. Mr. Holt’s designs for the Scaramount Theatre Company include Thieves’ Night, Dreamhouse, and Cold Storage.

ROBERT FLETCHER (Costumes) has been in the theatre arts for forty years — as actor, director, producer, and designer, as well as costume designer in every form from opera to night clubs — beginning as a founding director of the Broadway Theatre Company and the Straw Hat Theatre, Cambridge, Massachusetts. His two dozen Broadway design credits (sets, costumes, or both) include Little Me, Waking Happy, Misalliance, Otherbo, and The Natural for which he was nominated for Tony Awards for the sets and costumes of Hudlilant VII and for produc-
he directed Charity's Aunt and Our Town during the company's first two San Francisco seasons. Since then he has staged many shows for A.C.T., including The Time of Your Life, The House of Blue Leaves, Street Scene, Fifth of July, The Real Thing, and this season's King Lear. In 1972 he founded Plays-in-Progress, which is devoted to the development and production of new American plays. In 1974, Mr. Hastings was named Resident Director at the Eugene O'Neill Playwrights' Conference in Connecticut for three summers, where he taught acting in 1984 at the Shanghai Drama Institute as part of the Theatre Bridge Program between A.C.T. and the Shanghai Theatre. He directed the national company of Killer Joe on Broadway with Sylvia Miles, as well as the American production of Shakespeare's The Taming of the Shrew starring Michael Redgrave, directed the Australian premiere of The Nutcracker at the Melbourne Festival, and restaged his A.C.T. production of Sam Shepard's Buried Child in Serbo-Croatian at the Yugoslav Dramatic Theatre in Belgrade. He has been a guest director at resident theatres throughout the country.

JOHN SULLIVAN (Managing Director) joined A.C.T. as its chief administrative and financial officer in 1986. A former deputy director of the California Arts Council, he is a director of the Bay Area and a member of the advisory board of the San Francisco New Vaudeville Festival. A native San Franciscan, Mr. Sullivan has been active in the theatre since the mid-1970s when he directed Harvey Fierstein's A Few Good Times at the Circle Repertory Company in New York. He later joined the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles as head of its Forum Laboratory. More recently he produced The Detective, a collaboration between Joseph Chaikin and Vaudeville Nouveau at San Francisco's Magic Theatre. A graduate of the University of Southern California School of Cinema, Mr. Sullivan has written and directed numerous short films, including three that were featured on the national Emmy Awards broadcast. He is co-author of The National Outdoor Leadership School's Wilderness Guide, a manual for camp planning and camp counseling published by Simon and Schuster.

The director of Golden Boy, JOY CARLIN (Associate Artistic Director) has been a member of the acting company for many years. Among the roles she has played are Meg in A Lie of the Mind, Miss Price in The Importance of Being Earnest, Kitty Duvall in The Time of Your Life, Sanzana in The House of Blue Leaves, Asa in Peer Gynt, Aunt Sally in All the Way Home, Birdie in Pond, A Fifth of July, and several others. Ms. Carlin has also been Resident Director of the Berkeley Repertory Theatre, and served as its Acting Artistic Director. Among her other credits as a director include the world premiere of The Lady's Not for Burning, and The Doctor's Dilemma at A.C.T., and productions at the Oregon Shakespearean Festival, the San Jose Repertory Company, A Contemporary Theatre of Seattle, and the Shanghai Youth Drama Troupe of Shanghai, China, where she directed You Can't Take It with You. She is a trustee of the Berkeley Jewish Theatre.

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PAUL BLAKE (Director), who was a resident director at A.C.T. for five years, is co-founder and Artistic Director of the Santa Barbara Theatre Festival. He directed and starred in the William Kent (now an independent producer) and directed words and music, starring Sammy Cahn, at the Duke of York's Theatre in London in Cambridge, England. They're Playing Our Song, Smiles, Romantic Comedy, the national tour of Legends, and Over Here! and Vernon's Room (for which he won Drama Desk Awards). He has also directed Men on the Water at the WNET/PBS series Theatre in America and Playhouse New York.

RICHARD STEGER (Scenery) has designed many A.C.T. productions, including King Lear, Sunday in the Park with George, The Seagull, The Chairs, The Sandglass, A Christmas Carol, and many others. He has been responsible for the scenic design for many A.C.T. shows, including the company's production of A Christmas Carol, which he also designed. His other A.C.T. credits include A Month in the Park with George, A Month in the Park with George, The Doctor's Dilemma at A.C.T., and productions at the Oregon Shakespearean Festival, the San Jose Repertory Company, A Contemporary Theatre of Seattle, and the Shanghai Youth Drama Troupe of Shanghai, China, where she directed You Can't Take It with You. She is a trustee of the Berkeley Jewish Theatre.

LAIRD WILLIAMSON (Director) staged A.C.T. productions of The Matchmaker (which toured the U.S.S.R.) and A Christmas Carol (which he also co-adapted). His other A.C.T. credits include The Time of Your Life, A Christmas Carol, and A Month in the Park with George. He directed A Month in the Park with George in the West, and at the Berkeley Repertory Theatre. He directed The Unmarried Truth at the Ahmanson in Los Angeles; Night, Mother at the Mark Taper Forum; and La Traviata and Rigoletto at the Central City Opera Association in Colorado.

At A.C.T. JESSE HOLLIS (Scenery) has designed The Major Kid, The Doctor's Dilemma, and Ma Rainey's Black Bottom (which also played at the Los Angeles Theatre Center). He has created scenery for many other Bay Area companies, too: the Berkeley Repertory Theatre (nine productions), San Francisco Ballet, San Francisco Opera Showcase, Magic Theatre (where he designed the premiere production of Sam Shepard's True West), Berkeley Shakespeare Festival, and Marin Theatre Company. Among his productions for the Oregon Shakespearean Festival are last year's The Member of the Wedding and A Midsummer Night's Dream, and he designed sets for Stephen Paulus' The Postman Always Rings Twice at the Fort Worth Opera. Mr. Hollis's designs for the Scaramuzza Theatre Company include Twelfth Night, Dreamhouse, and Cold Storage.

ROBERT FLETCHER (Costumes) has been in the theatre arts for forty years—as actor, director, producer, and designer of sets and costumes in every form from opera to night clubs—beginning as a founding director of the Berkeley Theatre Company and manager of Cambridge, Massachusetts. His two dozen Broadway design credits (sets, costumes, or both) include Little Me, Wicking Happy, Miss Sullivan, Othello, and the national company of Hurrah for New York. In 1975 he was nominated for Tony Awards for the sets and costumes of Hurrah and for produc.
DIAMOND LIL
(1928)
by Mae West

Adaptation by Paul Blake and Dennis Powers
Direction & musical staging by Paul Blake
Scenery by Douglas W. Schmidt
Costumes by Robert Fletcher
Lighting by Derek Duarte
Musical supervision by Harper MacKay
Sound by Stephen LeGrand
Wigs & hair by Rick Echols
Dance Consultant Paula Tracy Smuin
Associate Director Michael Pulizzano

The Cast
Kitty Lannyl Stephens
Flo Gina Ferrall
Elise Jennifer Rublin
Jenny Paula Markowitz
Waiters
Brian Crawley
Don Piper
David Proctor

Ragtime Kelly Harper MacKay
Doheny David Mater
Newsboy Yuri Lane
Bowery Rose Sydney Walker
Annie Kate Brickley
Frances Delores Mitchell
Spider Kane Michael McShane
Jim Daniel Reichert
Lefty Paul Coolbrith
Gus Jordan Peter Donat
A Cardplayer Hugh Dignon
Dan Flynn Drew Eshelman
Rita Anne Betancourt
Pablo Suarez Michael Scott Ryan
Diamond Lil Gretchen Wyler
Nellie Glynn Nancy Carlin
Pete the Duke Howard Swain
Captain Cummings Richard Butterfield
Chick Clark Will Leskin
A Policeman Brian Crawley

Josef Diedrickson
Luis Orepeza
Sophie Metron
Carlotta Scarmack
Caroline Shaffer
Hugh Dignon
Roxanne Eldred
Stephan Weingartner

The Scenes

ACT ONE
Scene One: The showroom of Gus Jordan's saloon in the Bowery section of New York City. An afternoon in the 1890s.

Scene Two: The street in front of Gus Jordan's. Evening, a month later.

Scene Three: Diamond Lil's boudoir. Later that evening.

ACT TWO
Scene One: The showroom of Gus Jordan's saloon. Late afternoon of the next day.

Scene Two: The showroom. Evening of the next day.

UNDERSTUDIES
Chick Clark — Paul Coolbrith; Doheny — Brian Crawley; Annie, Elise, Jenny — Elan Evans; Newsboy — Josh Fernandez; Dan Flynn — Rick Hamilton; Jim — Steven Anthony Jones; Bowery Rose — Ruth Kohart; Gus Jordan — Barry Kraft; Diamond Lil — Paula Markowitz; Lefty, Pete the Duke, Waiters — Liam O'Brien; Rita, Society Matron — Fredi Olster; Spider Kane — Luis Orepeza; Josef Diedrickson — William Paterson; Captain Cummings — Daniel Reichert; Phu, Kitty, Nellie Glynn — Jennifer Robin; Frances — Carlotta Scarmack; Pablo Suarez — Howard Swain.

Stage Management: Alice Elliott Smith, Bruce Elsperger, Eugene Barone.

Vintage piano provided by the Immortal Piano Company.

Mae West's Diamond Lil is presented by arrangement with the Receivership Estate of Mae West, represented by the Roger Richman Agency, Inc., Beverly Hills, California.

This production is dedicated to the memory of Phillip Larson.
THE AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATRE

presents

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Annie Kate Brickley

Francs Delores Mitchell

Spider Kane Michael McShane

Jim Daniel Reichert

Lefty Paul Coolbrith

Gus Jordan Peter Donat

A Cardplayer Hugh Dignon

Dan Flynn Drew Ishelman

Rita Anne Bettencourt

Pablo Suarez Michael Scott Ryan

Diamond Lil Gretchen Wyler

Nellie Glynn Nancy Carlin

Petie the Duke Howard Swain

Captain Cummings Richard Butterfield

Chick Clark Will Leskin

A Police Man Brian Crawley

Josef Diedrickson Luis Cerpeza

Society Matron Carlotta Scarmack

Society Swells Julie Moses

Carolyn Shaffer

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The evening of April 9, 1928, marked the Broadway opening of Diamond Lil at the Royale Theatre. By the time the curtain came down, something else had happened, too: a legend was born.

Mae West, author and star of the play, had created in Diamond Lil the role of her life, the persona on which she would build her career for the rest of her extraordinary life. Diamond Lil was Mae's greatest stage success. She toured the country in it (playing San Francisco's Curran Theatre in November, 1929), scored a personal triumph when she brought it to London in January, 1947, and revived it on Broadway in 1949 and 1951.

Success hadn't come quickly or easily for Mae, born Mary Jane West in Brooklyn, probably in 1892 or 1893. She quit school after the third grade and knocked around the small-time vaudeville and variety circuits, singing and dancing as "Baby Mae" and "The Baby Vamp." Later, taking the transition from cute kid to teenage sire, she dropped the "Baby" from her stage name and hit the road again with a new act of her own devising. As the years passed, she graduated to night clubs, revues and stage comedies and musicals, including supporting roles in a few Broadway shows.

Prodded by her mother, Mae began to write full-length plays, invariably casting herself in the pivotal role. Her problem drama Sex, chronicling the affairs of a prostitute called Margie, was a Broadway box-office hit in spite of reviews that not only panned the play but called for its immediate closing on moral grounds. Mae, her co-producers and fellow actors were eventually arrested for presenting an indecent performance.

Mae, appropriately coiffed and costumed, took center stage at the ensuing trial, but her lawyer's game attempts to rank Sex alongside Hamlet and A Tale of Two Cities failed to convince the jury. Mae was found guilty and served eight days in jail, where she cheerfully gave interviews to the press and signed autographs for her fellow inmates.

With the unerring instincts of a born self-promoter, Mae made the most of her real-life escapades and her reputation as writer and star of entertainments so shocking that no decent person would go near them; as blithe playgirl whose private life was rumored to be more sor-

did than her plays; as glamorous leading lady of a sensational trial that made headlines; and now, as convicted felon whose jail sentence somehow only enhanced her image as a down-to-earth gal, a good sport who could take it as well as dish it out.

Mae was a celebrity, no doubt about it. But real stardom, the kind that recognized her talents as an actress and playwright, still eluded her. "Among the reputable members of the theatrical community Mae was considered reprehensible," noted George Eells and Stanley Musgrove, authors of the entertaining biography Mae West.

No one was more aware of her status as "a freak attraction playing principally to male audiences," in the words of Eells and Musgrove, than Mae herself. As she recalled in her 1959 autobiography Goodness Had Nothing to Do with It, "I had noticed that at my plays there were more men in the audiences than women. Sex had an audience 80 percent men and 20 percent women... It disturbed me as to what I was doing, or wasn't doing, that kept women away... I got to thinking I should do a period play of the Gay Nineties. I thought melodrama and nostalgia would please everyone... I had always admired the fabulous fashions just before the turn of the century, when Lillian Russell and Lillie Langtry were around... It was style that really attracted me to the colorful background of the Nineties, and caused me to think of the ideas that finally became Diamond Lil."

Although writer Mark Linder claimed that he'd had a hand in the script and took Mae to court, the law sided with her and she retained the rights of full authorship. As with her other plays, Mae started rehearsals of Diamond Lil before she had a complete script. She liked the actors to improvise around the situations she described; later she sifted out the best lines and kept them in the script.

The arrival of Diamond Lil on Broadway made Mae West an authentic star. Critics like Percy Hammond, who had earlier dubbed her "the world's worst actress," now wrote reviews that read like valentines, praising her as both author and star and welcoming her to the circle of Broadway luminaries.

As Mae put it in her characteristic terse style, "With Diamond Lil I had it made." Sports and show business celebrities trooped backstage at the Royale after every performance to meet the actress who had once been labeled "The World's Wickedest Woman" and was now a reigning Broadway star. New Yorker drama critic Charles Brackett summed up
Mae West: A Legend in Her Own Write
by Dennis Powers

The author in the 1949 Broadway revival of Diamond Lil.

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the opinion of his colleagues when he wrote, “I wouldn’t miss Diamond Lil if I were you.”

In Lil, Mae created an extraordinary woman who lives outside conventional ideas of right and wrong. But although she ignores society’s rules and regulations, Lil lives by her own code. She may be promiscuous and bawdy, and she has strayed to the wrong side of the law more than once, but she’s also kind, compassionate, generous and good-natured. She knows she’s the equal of any man when it comes to courage, intelligence and resourcefulness, and she doesn’t defer to men unless she feels like it.

In short, Lil is a lot like Mae herself. As historian Hallie Lawell says, “In a non-permissive age, she made remarkable inroads against the taboos of her day. And she did so without even lowering her neckline.”

With the success of Diamond Lil, Hollywood beckoned. Paramount paid her $25,000 for the screen rights to the play and $50,000 to star in the movie version, called She Done Him Wrong, in 1933. The studio chiefs spent another $75,000 on the production, and released it nationwide — not without some trepidation about how it would be received in small towns and conservative areas. They needn’t have worried. Within a few months, the movie had taken in some $2 million.

She signed a long-term contract and made seven more films at Paramount throughout the 1930s. Most of her characters had a lot in common with Mae, but they differed sharply from the free-living, tough-talking women often played by Jean Harlow and Marlene Dietrich.

As critic Ethan Mordden points out, “The Hollywood harlot as type was distinguished from other women by rootlessness and her refusal to admit that she is as dependent upon men as any woman. . . . A harlot, then, is a woman who thinks she’s free. Most of Dietrich’s and Harlow’s harlot roles conform to the plan. But West’s never did. This made her pictures truly revolutionary.”

Marjorie Rosen, whose book Popcorn Venus traces the history of women in American films, notes that Mae never hesitated to call to Mae “the First Lady of Liberation on the screen.” But, she acknowledges, “Never before, and never since, has a woman in films been so thoroughly in control of her destiny!”

The A.C.T. production marks the first time that Diamond Lil has been staged since the 1951 Broadway revival. It also provides the first opportunity to appraise the work of Mae West as a playwright apart from her legendary talents as a performer.

Mae had no literary pretensions, but she had been in and around theaters virtually all her life, and her instincts as a showwoman were strong and sure. She had a good sense of pace and construction as well as a flair for colorful characters and dialogue, and these served her well as a writer of popular entertainments.

Audiences who filled the Royale during the first Broadway run of Diamond Lil probably had little idea of the Gay Nineties not unlike those we have for the fifties or sixties. They may have chuckled at the antics of Mae’s Bowery denizens in the same way that we smile at the performance of Groucho, amused at the carry-ons of people who recall our younger selves or our parents during their youth.

On the other hand, the nineties are far more remote now, and what was exotic, lurid or even shocking to audience in the late twenties now often seems quaint, charming and colorful instead. One thing that remains intact, however, is Mae’s unerring sense of humor and her wonderful knack for deflecting the pompous and transforming the unmentionable into a delicious wisecrack.

WHO’S WHO continued from ACT 2

High Sports. His 23 designs for A.C.T. include King Lear, The Real Thing, and The Seagull. He has also designed for the New York City Opera, New York City Ballet, and New York Pro Musica. Mr. Fletcher’s film work includes all four of the Star Trek movies and The Last Starfighter, and he was nominated for an Emmy for his television work. He recently designed sets and costumes for She Loves Me at the Ahmanson in Los Angeles.

FRITTA KNUDSEN (Costumes) has won two awards for her designs for A.C.T. from: the Bay Area Theatre Critics’ Circle for Opera Comique and from the Los Angeles and Beverly Hills Chapters of the N.A.A.C.P. for Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom. Her other work for the company includes costume designs for Passion Cycle, You Never Can Tell, The Doctor’s Dilemma, adding costumes to A Christmas Carol for its last two engagements; and serving as resident Costume Supervisor. She has also designed costumes for the San Francisco Opera (The Medium and La Voix humaine), Sammy Cahn’s Words and Music, and a national poster campaign for Levi Strauss. A graduate of California State University/Hayward who teaches at the Nueva Learning Center and lectures at Berkeley, Ms. Knudsen has also worked at P.C.P.A., Seattle Repertory Theatre, and the Oregon Shakespearean Festival.

WARREN TRAVIS (Costumes) designed sets and costumes for A.C.T.’s The Lady’s Not for Burning two seasons ago, and previously worked with the company as costume designer for Romanoff and Juliet and as the direction of the late Allen Fletcher. At P.C.P.A. in Santa Maria he worked with Mr. Fletcher’s son, the director John C. Fletcher, on The Suicide, and designed sets for The Madwoman of Chaillet. He won a Drama-Logue award for The Comedy of Errors at the Oregon Shakespearean Festival, and Bay Area Theatre Critics’ Circle awards for costumes for Picles and Cymbeline at the Berkeley Shakespeare Festival, where he also designed a unit set for four of the history plays. A professor of dramatic arts at U.C. Berkeley, Mr. Travis created designs for The Norman Conquest at Berkeley Rep and Trigger, with music by Philip Glass, for the Oakland Ballet.

DEREK DUARTE (Lighting) is in his third season as A.C.T.’s Resident Lighting Designer. Last season he designed eight productions, including The Real Thing and Sunday in the Park with George. Recently Mr. Duarte designed lighting for the Los Angeles Theatre Center: A.C.T. production of Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom and the New York premiere of an adaptation of Charles Dickens’s Hard Times. His work has been seen at the Berkeley Shakespeare Festival, at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., and on the Fringe at the Edinburgh Festival in Scotland. Mr. Duarte holds an M.F.A. in theatre technology from U.C.L.A., and teaches at Chabot College. In 1986 he was awarded a Theatre Communications Group grant to observe the work of lighting designers in New York.

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JAMES HAIRE (Production Director) began his career on Broadway with Eve Le Gallienne’s National Repertory Theatre. Among the productions he stage-managed were The Madwoman of Chaillot with Miss Le Gallienne, Sylvia Sydney, and Leona Danae, The Rivals, John Brown’s Body, She Stoops to Conquer, and A Comedy of Errors. Mr. Haire also stage-managed the Broadway productions of Gorga (a musical) directed by Carol Bayer Sager), and Miss Robin Drinks a Little (with Julie Harris and Estelle Parsons), and the national tour of Woody Allen’s Don’t Drink the Water (with Sam Levene and Vivian Blaine). Mr. Haire joined A.C.T. in 1971 as Production Stage Manager, and in this capacity has managed more than 150 productions; has also taken the company on numerous regional, national, and international tours, including those to the Soviet Union in 1976 and Japan in 1978.

EUGENE BARCONE (Stage Manager) is a charter member of A.C.T. Mr. Barcione has directed for Plays in Progress and worked on the televised adaptations of Cymbeline, The Taming of the Shrew, and A Christmas Carol.
the opinion of his colleagues when he wrote, "I wouldn't miss Diamond Lil if I were you."

In Lil, Mae created an extraordinary woman who lives outside conventional ideas of right and wrong. But although she ignores society's rules and regulations, Lil lives by her own code. She may be promiscuous and bawdy, and she has strayed to the wrong side of the law more than once, but she's also kind, compassionate, generous and good-natured. She knows she's the equal of any man when it comes to courage, intelligence and resourcefulness, and she doesn't defer to men unless she feels like it.

In short, Lil is a lot like Mae herself. As historian Hallie Waldall says, "In a non-permissive age, she made remarkable inroads against the taboos of her day. And she did so without even lowering her neckline."

With the success of Diamond Lil, Hollywood beckoned. Paramount paid her $25,000 for the screen rights to the play and $30,000 to star in the movie version, called She Done Him Wrong, in 1933. The studio chiefs spent another $75,000 on the production, and released it nationwide— not without some trepidation about how it would be received in small towns and conservative areas. They needn't have worried. Within a few months, the movie had taken in some $2 million.

She signed a long-term contract and made seven more films at Paramount throughout the 1930s. Most of her characters had a lot in common with Lil, but they differed sharply from the free-living, tough-talking women often played by Jean Harlow and Marlene Dietrich.

As critic Ethan Mordden points out, "The Hollywood harlot as type was distinguished from other women by rootlessness and her refusal to admit that she is as dependent upon men as any wife. . . . A harlot, then, is a woman who thinks she's free. Most of Dietrich's and Harlow's harlot roles conform to the plan. But West's never did. This made her pictures truly revolutionary."

Marjorie Rosen, whose book Pulporn Venus traces the history of women in American cinema, calls it a "natural" to call Mae "the First Lady of Liberation on the screen." But, she acknowledges, "Never before, and never since, has a woman in films been so thoroughly in control of her destiny."

The A.C.T. production marks the first time that Diamond Lil has been staged since the 1951 Broadway revival. It also involves the first opportunity to appraise the work of Mae West as a playwright apart from her legendary talents as a performer.

Mae had no literary pretensions, but she had been in and around theatres virtually all her life, and her instinct as a showwoman were strong and sure. She had a good sense of pace and construction as well as a flair for colorful characters and dialogue, and these served her well as a writer of popular entertainments.

Audiences who filled the Royale during the first Broadway run of Diamond Lil probably had no idea about the Gay Nineties not unlike those we have for the fifties or sixties. They may have chuckled at the antics of Mae's Bowery denizens in the same way that we smile at a performance of Ouse, amused at the carryings-on of people who recall our younger selves or our parents during their youth.

Of course, the nineties are far more remote now, and what was exotic, lurid or even shocking to audience in the late twenties now often seems quaint, charming and colorful instead. One thing that remains intact, however, is Mae's unerring sense of humor and her wonderful knack for deftly the pompous and transforming the unmentionable into a delicious wisecrack.

WHO'S WHO continued from ACT 2:

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Cover photographs by Larry Merkle (Diamant Lil and End of the World Win) and Ann Bergeron (Golden Boy).

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The Practitioners

A.C.T. Wigmaster Richard Echols

by Misha Berson

Most theatre artists thrive on applause and public recognition, but not Richard Echols. As the resident wigmaster for San Francisco's American Conservatory Theatre, Echols is happy to leave the spotlight to his colleagues. He's satisfied if the actors look like their hair belongs to them — even though it usually doesn't. "I don't like my work to be noticed," Echols declares. "When it isn't noticed then I know I've succeeded. I don't want people to leave the theatre humming the hairdos." But despite his modesty, some recognition is clearly in order. For 17 years Echols has worked his magic in over 200 A.C.T. productions. He's fashioned elegant do's for Noel Coward ingenues, fringed bald pates for Charles Dickens's notorious humbugger Scrooge, twirling masses of powdered curls for Restoration comedy fops, beards and whiskers for Shavian gentlemen and Shakespearean monarchs. Considered one of the best hair and makeup consultants in the business, he's also dressed heads for feature films and for more than 50 television commercials.

But his first love is theatre. Explains Echols, "As a wigmaster I'm really doing as much for the actor as the audience, particularly in our repertory where an actor plays a contemporary piece in the afternoon and Shakespeare in the evening. My job is to help the actor create a look he can live with and act with in each show."

Working in a tiny backstage studio crammed to the ceiling with hairpieces, wig blocks, hairdryers and styling aids, Echols is responsible for the appearance of every theatrical character throughout the season. For actors displaying their own hair onstage, Echols will dye, cut, set or perm it to fit the role. More often than not he creates hairpieces from scratch — sometimes as many as 30 for one production — to achieve the desired dramatic effect.

Echols's design process begins a month before opening night when he meets with other members of the production team. "I always confer with the costume designer, the director and the actor," he explains. "The costume designer has the look for the entire show in mind. The director is the captain of the ship. But the actor usually has the most to offer as to who a character is and how they would wear their hair."

If the show is a period piece, Echols will research historical resources to see what hairstyles were popular at the time. "The best way is to look at portrait paintings or, if they're available, news photos," he says. "From Renaissance paintings and works by the Dutch Masters you get a good idea of the period. We went all the way back to Egyptian art for our production of Antony and Cleopatra."

When wigs are called for, Echols usually orders real human hair from the DeMayo Brothers, a theatrical hair supply house in New York. Getting exactly the right color is important, and he makes his selections from a sampling ring of 101 hair tassels. "Each wig is made from several colors," he points out. "You blend them.
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A.C.T. Wigmaster Richard Echols
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Wigmaster Richard Echols in the initial stages of affixing the wig of A.C.T.'s King Lear. Peter Donat.

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together to get many shades. The hair generally comes from European sources. The hair from France is the best—it’s very fine. I’m just beginning to use synthetic hair, too, because it’s readily available and higher in quality than it used to be.”

Echols weaves each wig himself, a painstaking endeavor that involves tying small clamps of hair onto a woven net cap. The same intricate process is repeated for facial hair—eyebrows, beards, and sideburns. “It’s called ‘ventilating,’ and you do it with a small, wood-handled hook,” he explains. “You tie on one to ten strands at a time, and it can take up to 40 hours to create a shoulder-length fall. But I don’t find it tedious. I find it relaxing. It’s like needlepoint, which I also like to do.”

Once a wig is assembled, Echols will cut and set it to create the appropriate style. The next step is crucial: affixing it to the performer’s head with spirit gum so it looks like it’s growing naturally out of the head. According to Echols, “Men’s wigs are particularly difficult. We’re used to seeing men with toupees on, but when we see it onstage it’s jarring. It has to be done with great delicacy.”

Echols also has to contend with the problem of advance publicity shots taken before a show’s wigs and makeup are ready. “Press people make my life miserable,” he laugh. “Often we have to just mock something up, and frequently the look will change later. The actors won’t look the same onstage as they do on the cover of the program or on the theater marquee, and the public doesn’t understand why!”

One of Echols’s recent challenges was preparing a slew of wigs and facial hairpieces for A.C.T.’s production of the monumental Shakespearean tragedy King Lear. The first order of business was to create the right look for Peter Donat in the title role. Says Echols, “Lear is in his eighties and we wanted him to be white-headed with bushy, arched eyebrows and a full goatee. We made everything sweep upward to give him the regality of a king, and we took his hairlines as far back as possible for the age.”

For Lear’s daughters—the virtuous Cordelia, and the sharp-as-a-serpent’s-tooth Goneril and Regan—Echols came up with a variety of headgear exemplifying the changes their characters undergo: “In the beginning they all had ‘close’ hair to show that these girls were very cloistered, very much under their father’s thumb. After Lear gives Regan and Goneril his land they come back with their hair pushed up, like they’ve just gone off to the beauty shop, and the outcast Cordelia’s hair is loose and flowing. Later, Goneril wears a hard, helmet-type wig to do battle with her father.”

But the most remarkable headgear in the production was worn by Luis Oropeza as Lear’s Fool. For Oropeza, Echols devised a removable hot pink coquescomb cap that looked like something a punk rocker would wear. To retain its stiff, spiky shape the wig was liberally coated with lacquer.

A Sacramento native, Echols learned his craft from an elderly French woman wigmaker while still in his teens. He put himself through college constructing wigs, but didn’t consider making a career of it until a friend talked him into applying for a job at A.C.T. in 1971. He was hired, and continued his training with stints at the Max Factor school in Hollywood and at the National Theatre in Tokyo, Japan, where he studied Kabuki wigs and makeup.

During breaks in his A.C.T. schedule, Echols frequently works as a stylist on touring productions of such hit Broadway shows as La Cage aux Folies and 42nd Street. “La Cage was the first musical I did,” he recalls, “and now I love them. It’s very different from doing the classics—there’s a lot of energy and people around, and often hundreds of wigs to deal with.”
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According to Echols, A.C.T. is one of only a few theatre companies in the country that continues to employ a full-time resident wigmaster. (The Old Globe in San Diego, the Oregon Shakespearean Festival in Ashland, Oregon, and the Guthrie in Minneapolis are among the others.) But that doesn't mean that the time-honored profession is dying. Freelance master wigmakers are much in demand, and some of the best use the Bay Area as their home base. San Francisco is also a center for wigmaker training: Echols teaches the craft at A.C.T.'s Conservatory, and there is also a commercial wigmaking school in the city. Though Echols knows how to make more money in films and television, he much prefers a life in the theatre. "A C.T. is a family company and always has been," he says. "Even though we have new leadership, our current artistic director Ed Hastings was a founding father of the company. We had some rough years of financial cutbacks, but now it's like the old days again and it's a nice feeling to be part of it." But where does a wigmaster get his glory if he wants none to notice the actors' hair? "I get it from the satisfaction of creating something that works well, from making a character come to life onstage," answers Echols. "The main reason I work here is to keep doing the classics — Chekhov and Shakespeare and Shaw. I guess I just love the theatre and want to do my little part to keep it alive."

SAN FRANCISCO
Restaurant Guide

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CALIFORNIA CAFE BAR & GRILL, Broadway at The Embarcadero (415/333-4848), L & D 11:30-2:30 Mon-Fri, D 5:30-10:30 Daily, BR 5:30-10 Sun; The freshest California-American cuisine featuring mesquite grill, Southwestern-Cajun specialties. Parking. Res. AE DC CB MC DIS

CHINA STATION, 700 University Ave., Berkeley (415/646-7600), L & D 11:30-3:45 Daily. Cocktails till 2. Extensive menu featuring fresh seafood, located in the historic Soo Pacific railroad depot. Full bar. Free parking. AE DC CB MC DIS

CORINTIA-RAMADA RENAISSANCE HOTEL, Market at Fifith (415/392-8000), D 5-8:30-Tue-Sat. Even among discerning San Franciscans, the Ramada Renaissance is known for fine dining. Consider the Corintha. Here the mood is shadowy, highlighted by etched glass, santos and silver & fine imported crystal. Dinner menus offer imaginative expressions of Northern Italian cuisine. The wine list features over 350 domestic & imported labels. Reservations suggested. AE DC CB MC DIS


GAYLORD INDIA, One Embarcadero Center (415/977-7775), Ghirardelli Square (415/771-8822); Standard Shopping Center, Palo Alto (415/362-9653). L, 11:45-14:00, D 5:30-9:45 Dailly; Quite simply, the ultimate in Indian-Tandoori cuisine. AE DC CB MC DIS

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OLIVER, 465 Davis Court, near Jackson (415)
981-7294 1, 11:30-2 Mon-Fri, D 6 Mon-Sat. This
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TRADER VICS, 20 Comito Fl. (415)777-2222, 1, 11:30
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list. All DC CB V MC.

UMBERTO, 46 Swarth Street, one block from the Ferry
Building (415)554-8070, 1, 11:30-2 Mon-Fri, D 5:30-6
Mon-Sat. Step into an Old World Mediterranean
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480 Sutter St. (415)988-9900, 1, 11:30-7:30 Mon-Sat,
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Fri-Sat All DC CB V MC.
Harley's Bar and American Grill, 501 Van Ness (at Hany). 11:30 Mon-Fri, D 5-11 Sun. No Italian influence; featuring authentic regional dishes, handmade pastas & desserts. Full bar serve Italian libations. All DC CB V MC.

Les Celebrities at Hotel Nikko, 222 Mason Street, 1 block west of Union Square (415) 982-3111 Ext. 210. B 6-9 Sat, 11-11, D 6-9 daily. Located above street level, Les Celebrities offers a strikingly different dining experience in exciting city French cuisine. Enjoy the eclectic decor with its contrasting textures and colors. A far-from-ordinary restaurant in San Francisco's newest downtown hotel. 24 Hour complimentary valet parking. All CB DC V MC.

L'olvier, 465 Davis Court, near Jackson (415) 981-2924, L, 11-30 2 Men-Fri, D 6-8 Sun-Mon; Sat. This delightful French restaurant is a favorite lunch spot for executives by day and becomes a romantic dining spot at night. AE DC V MC.

Max's Opera Cafe, 401 Van Ness (415) 775-7100, L-D 11:15 AM-11 PM Mon-Thu, 11 Fri-Sat, 11-12 Sun; International deli specializing in salads, sandwiches & barbecued. fish & desserts. Entertainment by singing waiters. All DC CB V MC.

Pier 45, 50 Charlotte St, (415) 357-2400, L 11-30 2 Men-Fri, D 6-9 Men-Sat; Contemporary French cuisine, impeccably prepared & elegantly served, beautifully appointed, widely spaced tables, richly diverse menus that change with the seasons, nightly fixed-priced tasting menus & an exceptional wine list combine to make a meal at the Meridian's critically acclaimed Pier 45 restaurant the closest possible approximation of a 3-star dining experience in France. Reservations recommended. Complimentary valet parking. All DC CB V MC.

Sutter Garden, 562 Sutter St, (415) 441-5454, B 7-9, L 11-30, D 5-930 Daily; Contemporary continental cuisine. Specialties include a fresh catch of the day, pastas, salads & sumptuous desserts. All DC CB V MC.

The Portman Grill, 488 Sutter St, (415) 441-5411, All day dining & late night. Full bar & wine list. Full DC CB V MC.

Umberto, 545 Stockton Street, one block from the Ferry Building (415) 982-8000, L 11-30 Mon-Sat, D 5-930 Mon-Sat, Step into an Old World Mediterranean ambiance to feast on seafood, meats & bowls prepared with light sauces & fresh pasta. All DC CB V MC.

White Elephant, Holiday Inn Union Square, 400 Sutter St, (415) 982-8000, B 6-9, L 11-30 2 Mon-Sat, D 6-8 Saturday; Salads, steak & fresh seafood. Special menu for early dining. Full bar & wine list. Sheraton-Holmes Cocktail Lounge. 4-630 Daily. With live entertainment. Wed-Sat. All DC CB V MC.
Of these brands...

4 mg  6 mg  2 mg  9 mg  7 mg

tar, 4 mg, nic.
tar, 6 mg, nic.
tar, 2 mg, nic.
tar, 9 mg, nic.
tar, 7 mg, nic.

Carlton is lowest.

1 mg
tar, 0.1 mg, nic.

Carlton Box 100's

SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: Smoking By Pregnant Women May Result in Fetal Injury, Premature Birth, And Low Birth Weight.

100's: Box 1 mg, "tar", 0.1 mg, nicotine as per cigarette. FTC Report Jan. '86.

Lowest of all brands: Carlton Box King—less than 0.01 mg, tar, 0.002 mg, nic.