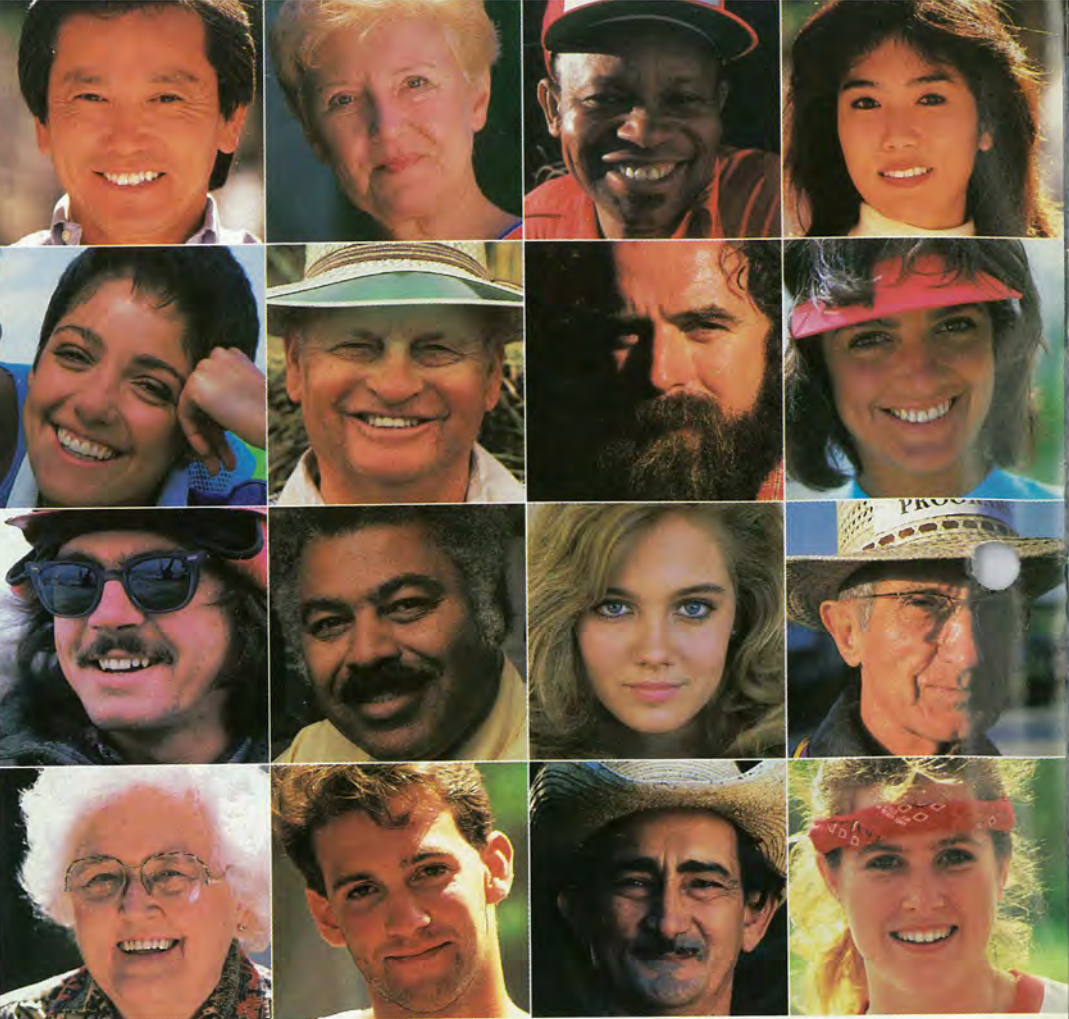


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JANUARY 1988



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Leslie Benzing
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Data Processing Manager

Loretta Taylor
Office Manager

Fran Gianaris
Account Executive

Opera Plaza — 601 Van Ness Avenue, #2052
San Francisco, CA 94102
(415) 673-3370

Performing Arts Network, Inc.

Network Headquarters

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(213) 839-8000

Regional Offices:

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(212) 242-1940

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Arts Preview

CALIFORNIA

by Jeffrey Hirsch

Events

MAD DOGS, ENGLISHMEN AND ANGELENOS

Item: There are now more Rolls Royce automobiles registered in Beverly Hills than in all of England. Item: Arguably the finest living interpreter of 20th-century British classical music, from Elgar to Vaughan Williams to Walton to Britten, was raised in Hollywood, for many years led the London Symphony, and is currently Music Director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic. Item: Joan Collins, star of the American television series *Dynasty*, is English.

Need we go on? Is it not clear that the United Kingdom and Southern California are inextricably tied to one another in all kinds of remarkable, even fateful, ways? Anyone can see that it's so, and cause for

celebration it is, too. So hey, UK and LA, what do you say? Let's get together and party! We'll do it at our place because the drive from Santa Monica to Stoke-on-Trent is crazy even if you go against the traffic. Come over anytime next month and plan to stay through April; there's lots to do. We'll go to museums, the symphony, the opera, the theatre, the movies, fancy restaurants — we'll do it all. And everywhere we go we'll recall the glory that is Britain and the burgeoning marketplace that is Los Angeles. Toppers and Ray-Bans off to two empires upon which the sun hardly ever sets! **UK/LA '88—A Celebration of British Arts.** February through April. *Los Angeles.*

Theatre

AUGUST AROUND THE GLOBE

Playwright August Wilson's success story is a familiar one: work in obscurity for a lifetime and then break through with one widely accepted piece of work to become celebrated overnight as the sensation of the season. Wilson added an unexpected but very welcome twist to the usual sequence of events, however, when he followed his 1984 attention-grabbing *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* with last season's

Fences, a play set in the late '50s about a father's hopes for the future of his son. *Ma Rainey* brought Wilson deserved recognition, but in turning the uncommonly difficult trick of producing a second play even better than the first, the playwright upgraded his position from "promising newcomer" to "established journeyman." The Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award Wilson received for *Fences* have

undoubtedly added weight to the growing belief that he may be *the* playwright of the '80s.

A third August Wilson play makes its West Coast debut next month at the **Old Globe Theatre**. **Joe Turner's Come and Gone**, with a title that echoes the one fixed to a great O'Neill drama, is set in a turn-of-the-century boarding house whose residents might also be right at home in the shadowy barroom of *The Iceman Cometh*. The latest installment in

YOU CAN BE HAD

Rife with sexual innuendo and all kinds of other delightful naughtiness, **Diamond Lil** is vintage Mae West, among the best vehicles the queen of camp ever appeared in and certainly her crowning achievement as a playwright. (Other efforts, including *Sex*, *Pleasure Man* and *Constant Sinner*, are, sadly, all but forgotten.) It is in *Diamond Lil* that Mae West, portraying the proprietor of a bowery saloon, attempts to entice a Salvation Army evangelist with the classic crack, "Why don't you come up and see me sometime?"

Mae's notorious play may now be better remembered for its 1933 film version, *She Done Him Wrong*, which is said to have saved Paramount Pictures from bankruptcy and inspired a rash of controversy that culminated in a Hearst newspapers editorial demanding, "Isn't it about time Congress did something about Mae West?" With our easily intimidated legislators still undecided on the issue, it remains for the **American Conservatory Theatre** to do what it can to tame the wild, wild West. So later this month, Ed Hastings and company will revive *Diamond Lil* and give the old girl another go-around. This second coming we assume would delight Miss West, who always maintained that it's better to be looked over than to be overlooked. Previews begin January 27. Plays through March 19. Geary Theatre, 450 Geary Street, (415) 673-6440. *San Francisco*.

EMIR FOR A DAY

Kismet, an Arabian musical fantasia on themes by Alexander Borodin, began life 35 years ago as a production of Edwin Lester's famed Los Angeles Civic Light Opera. Southern Californians (and all other interested parties) will be able to revisit old Bagdad next month when **Opera Pacific** brings the romantic folk tale to the Orange County Performing Arts Center for 19 enchanted evenings and a number of matinee performances.

This is one of those evergreen Broad-



EUGENE ROBERT RICHEL

Mae West — not only the legendary camp queen of sex, but also a playwright, whose *Diamond Lil* will be revived by A.C.T. beginning January 27.

Wilson's cycle of plays depicting 20th-century black life in America decade by decade, **Joe Turner** examines the special relationship between a father and daughter and the effect it has on a colorful houseful of strangers. Previews begin January 30. Plays through March 13. Old Globe Theatre, Balboa Park, (619) 239-2255. *San Diego*.

way shows whose story is best left untold for its simultaneous hokeyness and complexity. Suffice it to say that before every bauble, bangle and bead is accounted for, a wise beggar and his worthy daughter have a series of highly unlikely but engaging adventures. Life and death, love and marriage — all occur in *Kismet* and all in the course of a single day. And whether in bustling bazaar or moonlit garden, the strains of lovely Borodin melodies resound throughout, welcoming lover and stranger alike to an old-fashioned musical paradise. February 5 through 21. Orange County Performing Arts Center, 600 Town Center Drive, (714) 553-0699. *Costa Mesa.*

STAGE BRIEFS

Los Angeles: The West Coast premiere of Rupert Holmes' Tony Award winning music hall romp, **The Mystery of Edwin Drood**, will be presented February 18 through 28 by the California Music Theatre at the Pasadena Civic Auditorium. (818) 356-SHOW . . . The Ahmanson Theatre's proven knack with the plays of William Inge will again be exercised in **Bus Stop**, a classic drama of eight travelers stranded in a storm, February 19 through April 10. (213) 410-1062 . . . Tim Curry stars in **Me and My Girl** as the spirited show that singlehandedly revived interest in the Lambeth Walk makes its second sweep through town, playing at the Pantages Theatre, January 13 through March 5. (213) 871-2002. *San Diego:* Find out what hilarious things go on behind closed doors in Manhattan's best hostelries when the Lawrence Welk Village Theater performs Neil Simon's **Plaza Suite**, January 18 through February 27. (619) 749-3448. *Orange County:* South Coast Repertory's Second Stage will be home from January 24 through February 28 to **Marry Me A Little**, a contemporary fairy tale of singles life in the big city with songs by Stephen Sondheim. (714) 957-2602. *Bay Area:* The One Act Theatre Company reminds us what presidential *tsuris* really are in **Secret Honor: The Last**

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PRE-THEATER

plays

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Rupert Holmes' Tony Award-winning *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* will be seen in its West Coast premiere next month at the Pasadena Playhouse. Above, a scene from the original Broadway production.

Testament of Richard M. Nixon, Donald Freed's play that has its Northern California premiere, January 29 through February 28. (415) 421-5355 . . . Theatre Rhinoceros continues its 10th anniversary celebration with **Quisbies**, Leland Moss' comic look at the lives of a group of gay and lesbian hippies 20 years after the

Summer of Love, January 13 through February 20. (415) 861-5079 . . . Lyle Kessler's **Orphans**, the suspenseful saga of two dead-end kid brothers and the mysterious stranger whose arrival changes their lives, plays at the San Jose Repertory Company, January 28 through February 21. (408) 294-7572.

Music and Dance

BAYSIDE BALLET

A lot of dance watchers are interested in what the **San Francisco Ballet** will put onstage during its upcoming 1988 season and many of them live nowhere near the ever-inviting city by the bay. Word of artistic director Helgi Tomasson's achievement in building the company and expanding its repertory has traveled on the backs, so to speak, of its dancers as the troupe has recently made a number of

highly acclaimed appearances on tour to East Coast and international destinations.

But local audiences still get to see what the San Francisco Ballet has to offer, first, most and (we can't help but hope) best. The 1988 season's offerings range in scale from very grand (a new, full-length *Swan Lake* brought to you by the company that gave the work its American premiere in 1940) to arrestingly intimate (the memor-



Evelyn Cisneros in the San Francisco Ballet production of Jerome Robbins' *The Concert*, to the music of Chopin and designs of Edward Gorey.

able pas de deux from Fredrick Ashton's exquisite *The Dream*). Attention will be paid such established masters as Balanchine (*Ballo della Regina*, *Duo Concertant* and *The Four Temperaments*), Ashton (*La Fille mal gardée* and *Monotones I & II*), Paul Taylor (*Sunset*) and Jerome Robbins (*The Concert*) as well as such respectfully regarded, recently credentialed professors of the new classicism as David Bintley (*The Sons of Horus*), James Kudelka (*Dreams of Harmony*) and Helgi Tomasson, the company's hero in residence (*Ballet d'Isoline*). Altogether, a season of great variety and depth that is certain to interest balletomanes in the Bay Area and beyond. January 27 through May 3. War Memorial Opera House, 301 Van Ness Avenue, (415) 861-1177. *San Francisco*.

SPIRITS OF ANOTHER SORT

Of the nearly 200 operas based on plays by William Shakespeare, it seems to be

those drawn from the tragedies that are most firmly ensconced in the standard repertory. All opera lovers are familiar with Verdi's *Macbeth* and *Otello*, and Gounud's *Roméo et Juliette*. Perhaps less well known are lyric treatments of comedies like *Much Ado About Nothing* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, even in versions effected by such popular composers as Berlioz and Verdi, respectively.

What about **A Midsummer Night's Dream**, Shakespeare's most playful play? How many have seen *that* one done as opera? Not too many (and we can even count productions of Purcell's *The Fairy Queen*, which is very loosely adapted). Along comes the **Los Angeles Music Center Opera** to give Benjamin Britten's rendering of *Midsummer* an overdue boost in the ratings. Britten follows Shakespeare's text faithfully, adding only music to a world already teeming with harmonic convergences. The composer's



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one liberty keeps very much in the spirit of the play, transforming the tradesmen's performance of the *Pyramus and Thisbe* play-within-the play into a delicious send-up of bel canto opera conventions, complete with a mad scene for Flute, the bellows mender. The Mark Taper Forum's Gordon Davidson stages the piece and is a good bet to add theatrical magic to Britten's (and Shakespeare's) moonlit tale of young lovers, rustic clowns and mischievous fairies. Part of the UK/LA Festival. February 16, 17, 19, 20 and 21. Wiltern Theatre, Wilshire and Western, (213) 972-7211. *Los Angeles*.

ADDED MUSIC NOTES

San Diego: Violinist **Ruggiero Ricci** performs the Bruch *Scottish Fantasy* with the **San Diego Symphony**, February 5 and 6. (619) 699-4205 . . . **Dance Theatre of Harlem** brings its uniquely American style of

classical dance to Symphony Hall under the auspices of San Diego Performances, February 10 through 14. (619) 234-7944 . . . The devil will once again be given his due as the **San Diego Opera** performs Gounod's **Faust**, February 13, 16, 19 and 21. (619) 232-7636. *Los Angeles*: As part of the UK/LA Festival, the **Los Angeles Philharmonic** will play a mostly Benjamin Britten program February 18, 19 and 21, that includes the "Four Sea Interludes" from *Peter Grimes* and the song cycle *Our Hunting Fathers* with soprano **Elisabeth Söderström**. (213) 972-7211 . . . **Kodo**, the demon drummers from Japan that were a hit of the 1984 Olympic Arts Festival, will beat a path to UCLA's Royce Hall, February 5 and 7. (213) 825-9261 . . . **Christopher Parkening** joins the **Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra** in a performance of Vivaldi's *Guitar Concerto in D*, February 5, at the Wiltern Theatre, February 6 at



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Bay Area: On February 6, Today's Artists Concerts presents pianist **Ivan Moravec** in recital at the Masonic Auditorium. (415) 398-1324 . . . The **American Ballet Theatre** comes to town February 16 through 28 with repertory highlighted by two full-length works, *Sleeping Beauty* and *Giselle*. (415) 864-6696 . . . The **Australian Chamber Orchestra** makes its local debut with a program that features a piece by Aussie **Peter Sculthorpe** and a guest appearance by pianist **Jeffrey Kahane**, February 19. (415) 626-6596.

Art

AT HOME(S) WITH HOCKNEY

David Hockney is a one-man UK/LA Festival, a British-born artist who has for some time lived in Southern California. His work in a remarkable range of medi-

ums seems to happily reflect a sensibility that somehow combines the best of the Old and the New Worlds without misrepresenting either. Marking the opening of the actual UK/LA Festival, **David Hockney: A Retrospective** will bring together a large sampling of the artist's work in honor of his 50th birthday. This survey of the wonderful portraits, witty swimming pool pictures, perspective-bending polaroid photograph collages and ingeniously conceived projects for the theatre that Hockney has produced over the past quarter century will attest to the versatility, confirm the popularity and celebrate the unique double vision of an artist who is as much at home on Pacific Coast Highway as on Charing Cross Road. February 4 through April 24. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 5905 Wilshire Boulevard, (213) 857-6111. *Los Angeles.* □

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January 6 through February 13

DIAMOND LIL

by Mae West
January 27 through March 19

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IN THE A.C.T.

News of the American Conservatory Theatre



STAR TIME: Tim Curry, lead in the touring company of *Me and My Girl*, recently visited A.C.T. and spent an hour talking to Conservatory students about his life in the theatre.

A.C.T.'s DRAMATURGICAL WRITE STUFF

The American Conservatory Theatre has added two more staff members in its bid to reorganize. Now on board are Arthur Ballet, Literary Advisor, and Jonathan Marks, Director of Publications.

"With the addition of Arthur and Jonathan, we now have the team in place that can provide A.C.T. patrons with insightful dramatic analysis," Artistic Director Edward Hastings said.

Ballet, editor for volumes 1-13 of *Playwrights for Tomorrow*, will be a consultant on repertory selection and on new scripts for the Plays-in-Progress program. A recent Fulbright scholar in Denmark, Ballet was a professor of theatre arts at the University of Minnesota for many years after earning his Ph.D. there. He has served as a consultant with the Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the Guggenheim Foundation, and from 1979-82 was Theatre Program Director at the National Endowment for the Arts.


Formerly Literary Director and University

Liaison Officer of the American Repertory Theatre in Cambridge, Massachusetts, Marks will annotate and edit the house program and *A.C.T. Preview*, in addition to working on assorted communications projects for the company. He is the author of many articles for scholarly journals, has lectured widely, and was a member of the dramatic arts faculties at Harvard and Yale. He holds a D.F.A. from Yale University and studied in France on a Fulbright Fellowship.

DONOR SPOTLIGHT: THE KORET FOUNDATION

A.C.T. is pleased to extend its deepest thanks to the Koret Foundation for its recent grant of \$25,000 to support A.C.T.'s artistic endeavors.

Designed to promote the wellbeing of the general and Jewish communities of the Bay Area and to assist the people of Israel, the Koret Foundation is one of the fifty largest foundations in the United States. This year the foundation will award more than seven million dollars in grants to alleviate hunger and homelessness and to support youth



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education and employment; independent living for older people; higher education; and the performing and visual arts. Led by chairman Susan Koret, President Tad Taube, and a board of seven distinguished community leaders, the Foundation plays a leadership role in providing "social venture capital" to worthy organizations, and maintains a deep commitment to honoring the memory and values of its founding donors, Joseph and Stephanie Koret.

Like Haskell Harelik, the title character in Mark Harelik's *The Immigrant*, Joseph Koret left his Russian homeland to seek a better life in America. A native of Odessa, Koret came to America as a young child — and in the course of his lifetime succeeded in personifying the American dream. With his wife Stephanie, a Romanian immigrant, Koret founded a small manufacturing company that became the leading U.S. producer of coordinate fashions for women.

A.C.T. is delighted to spotlight the generosity of the Koret Foundation.

PIPS PROGRESS

Plays-in-Progress began its season in mid-December with a production of Dakin Matthews's *The Great Fugue*, directed by Christina Yao and featuring four actors from A.C.T.'s distinguished company.

The series will be continued in mid-March with *Piano* by Anna Deavere Smith, which will be directed by David Maier. A third play — title to be announced — will be produced in mid-April.

"We're very pleased with the response to *The Great Fugue*," says Associate Artistic Director Joy Carlin, "and we're going on to a very different kind of play — a period piece that will feature A.C.T. actress Delores Mitchell and two extraordinary children — ten years old — from our Young Conservatory.

"A large segment of our audience is interested in new, untried work. They want to be in on the ground floor, and that's why they're attracted to Plays-in-Progress."

Piano is a suspense drama of power and

intrigue between natives and colonists on a Cuban plantation in 1896. The story is told as it is heard by two gifted children.

It will have eight performances — between March 9 and 18 — at the Playroom, a 49-seat theatre at 450 Geary St., across from the Geary Theatre.

A.C.T.'s LONDON THEATRE TOUR

This year A.C.T.'s annual London Theatre Tour, led by Artistic Director Edward Hastings and sponsored by the Friends of A.C.T., will include eight memorable days in London (May 9-17) plus an optional five-day visit to Paris (May 17-22).



LONDON BRIDGE: *The upcoming A.C.T. Theatre Tour will take in such West End shows as Phantom of the Opera, pictured above.*

Tour participants can look forward to a vast range of theatre productions encompassing London's West End, the Royal Shakespeare Company, the National Theatre, and British regional theatre. Included as strong possibilities are new plays by Peter Shaffer, Ronald Harwood, and Caryl Churchill, along with the hit London production of Stephen Sondheim's *Follies* and optional visits to the long-running *Les Misérables* and *Phantom of the Opera*. In addition, the travelers will hear the London Symphony Orchestra, talk with leading theatre people, journey to the beautiful city of Bath, visit backstage at a major London theatre, and explore the redeveloped East End, birthplace of colorful Cockney English.

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The Paris extension will offer visits to the Comédie Française production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the legendary *Folies Bergères* (with a much-sought-after backstage tour), and the Paris Opera Ballet in Delibes' *Sylvia*, choreographed by Nureyev. A fascinating Monet Day with a tour to Giverny, site of his famous paintings, will conclude with a visit to the newly-renovated Orangerie for a look at his greatest masterpieces. Also scheduled are a trip to the Pompidou Centre, a boat trip down the Seine, and visits to the Picasso Museum and the Musée d'Orsay.

Reservations are being accepted now by Tour Arts of San Francisco, (415) 864-8565.

BEFORE AND AFTER

A.C.T. can be more than just a good play.

The play's the main event, of course, but A.C.T. also offers programs before and after the play in which audience members can hear about and discuss the evening's offering with artists who are intimately involved with the works or with scholars who can offer a different sort of insight.

Before selected preview performances the Friends of A.C.T. and the Junior League of San Francisco offer **Prologues**, which are discussions between theatre artists and audience members at a time — not long before opening night — when the final touches are still being applied to the production. They offer an extraordinary opportunity to orient yourself to the production before you see it. All Prologues take place right in the theatre itself, beginning at 5:30, free of charge.

The schedule for the first Prologues of 1988:

- January 11 *The Immigrant*
- February 1 *Diamond Lil*
- February 22 *End of the World with Symposium to Follow*

After the show, also on selected Monday nights, A.C.T. offers **Conversations**, in which you can hear about the underpinnings of

the production you have just seen and discuss your responses. These lively, informal, thought-provoking Conversations take place immediately after the performance in Fred's Columbia Room, downstairs at the Geary Theatre. They are also free of charge.

Here is a list of the first Conversations of the year, with the names of their moderators:

- January 4 *The Floating Light Bulb* (Jonathan Marks, A.C.T.'s Director of Publications, newly arrived from Harvard and its A.R.T.)
- January 18 *The Immigrant* (Bill and Gloria Broder, Authors of *Remember This Time*, an autobiographical novel)
- January 25 *The Immigrant* (Mark Harelik, author of the play, who is also playing the leading role of his own grandfather)
- February 8 *The Immigrant* (Moses Rischin, professor of urban history, and author of *Promised City*)
- February 15 *Diamond Lil* (Dennis Powers, Associate Artistic Director of A.C.T.)

YOUNG CONSERVATORY UPDATE

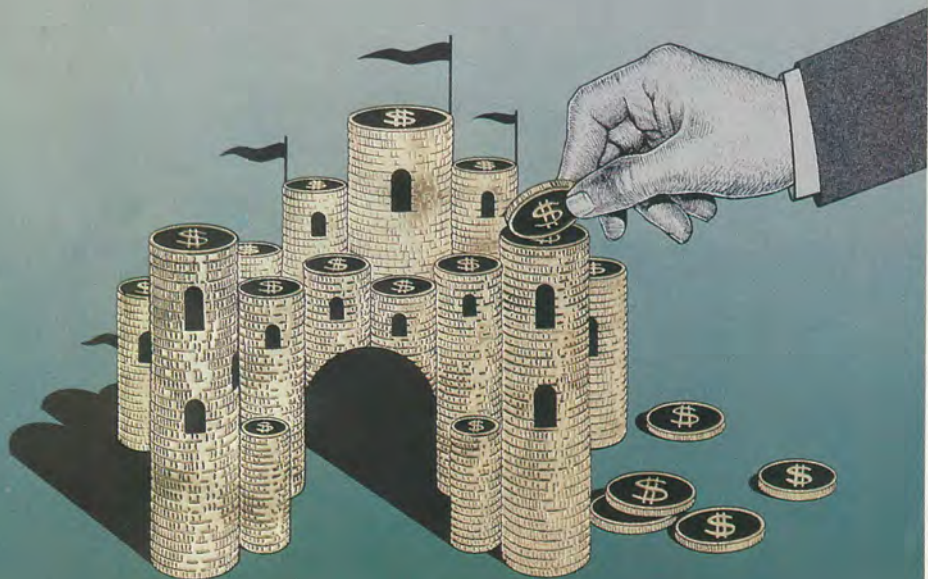
The Young Conservatory's second ten-week session will begin on February 8 and last through May 7, with a break from March 28 through April 2.

If you are between the ages of eight and eighteen, and would like to study acting through such courses as Shakespeare, Acting Techniques/Scene Study, Musical Theatre, Improvisation, Vocal Production, Saturday Workshop, and Ensemble and Performance, the Young Conservatory is the place for you.

Each course costs between \$250 and \$350. You are urged to register by February 1, as enrollments are limited.

Please contact the Young Conservatory at (415) 771-3880, ext. 244.

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WHO'S WHO AT A.C.T.



KATE BRICKLEY, a native of Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin, 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*, *Othello*, *Macbeth*, *Peer Gynt*, and *A Christmas Carol*, and in studio productions of *The Cherry Orchard*, *The School for Scandal*, and *Trelawny 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 Morrissey 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.

JOY CARLIN, who this year became an Associate Artistic Director of A.C.T., 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 Prism in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Kitty Duval in *The Time of Your Life*, Bananas in *The House of Blue Leaves*, Asa in *Peer Gynt*, Aunt Sally in *All the Way Home*, Birdie in *The Little Foxes*, and Odile in *Opéra Comique*. She has been Resident Director of the Berkeley Repertory Theatre, and served as its Acting Artistic Director. Among

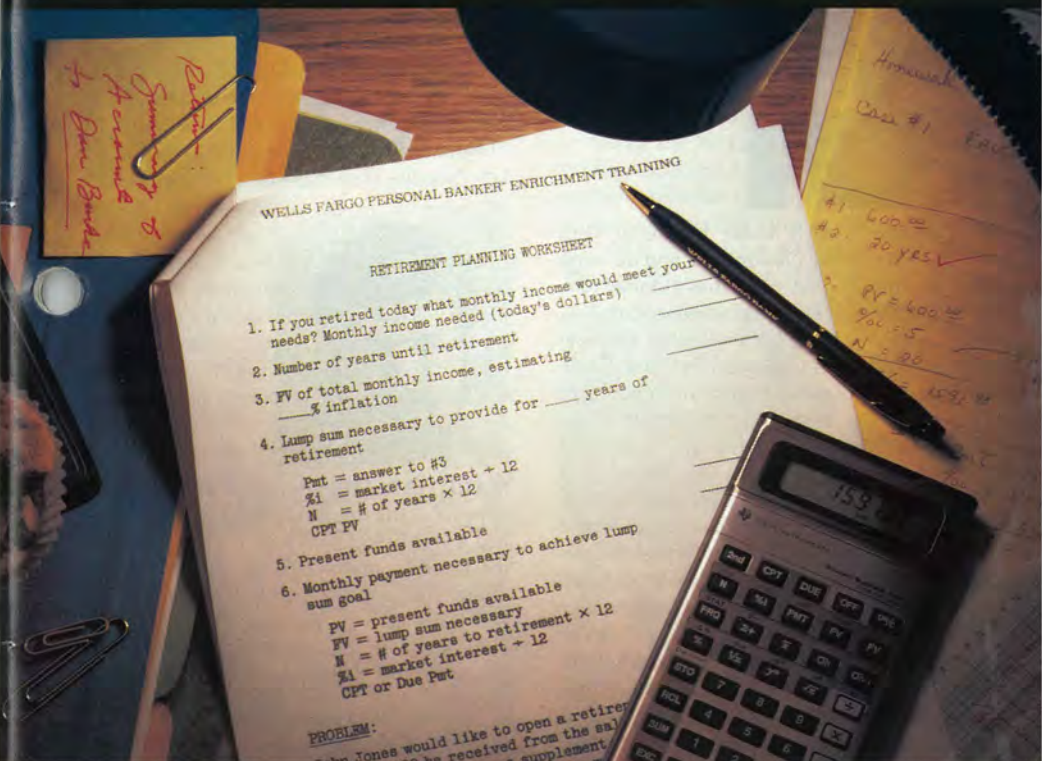


her other credits as a director are *The House of Bernarda Alba*, *The Lady's Not for Burning*, and *The Doctor's Dilemma* at A.C.T., and productions at the Oregon Shakespearean Festival, the San Jose Repertory Company, A Contemporary Theatre of Seattle, and the Shanghai Youth Drama Troupe of Shanghai, China, where she directed *You Can't Take It With You*. She is a trustee of the Berkeley Jewish Theatre.



Among the roles **NANCY CARLIN** has played since joining the company three years ago are Beth in *A Lie of the Mind*, Jennifer Dubedat in *The Doctor's Dilemma*, and Masha in *The Sea Gull*. 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

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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.



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*, *The Lady's Not for Burning*, *You Never Can Tell*, *Macbeth*, *A Christmas Carol*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Among his other stage work, 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 Szechwan* 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 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 1973-74.

RICK HAMILTON appeared this season as Oswald in *King Lear*, and last season as Max in *The Real Thing* and Trigorin in *The Seagull*. He was a member of the A.C.T. company from 1973 through 1976, during which time he appeared in *Desire Under the Elms* (which toured the Soviet Union), *General Gorgeous*, *The Threepenny Opera*, and as Tranio in the widely acclaimed production of *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 Shakespearean Festival he played such roles as Benedick in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Tom in *The Glass Menagerie*, Hotspur in *Henry IV, Part I*, Marc Antony in



Julius Caesar, and Petruchio in *The Taming of the Shrew*. He has also spent seasons performing with Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, the Alley Theatre, Dallas Shakespeare Festival, and the Los Angeles Theatre Center.



MARK HARELIK, who wrote *The Immigrant*, appears in the role of Haskell Harelik. He has had a long association with A.C.T., appearing most recently in *Arms and the Man* and *The Real Thing*. This summer the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles will produce another of Mr. Harelik's plays, *Lost Highway: The Music and Legend of Hank Williams*, in which he will also appear.



YURI LANE made his professional stage debut last year at A.C.T. in *The Floating Light Bulb*. He has had featured roles in the film *The Principal* (with Jim Belushi) and in the CBS Movie of the Week *Family Sins*. With the Young Performer's Theatre he has appeared in *Frankenstein the 13th*, *Mystery in the Mansion*, and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. Mr. Lane, who was born in Zierikzee, Holland sixteen years ago, has

been training at the Young Conservatory since 1985. He attends the School of the Arts at McAteer High School, where he is studying dance, and he is studying mime with Rusdi Lane.



ANNE LAWDER returns to A.C.T. for her sixteenth season. She was graduated from Stanford University and was an original member of the San Francisco Actor's Workshop. She appeared with Seattle Repertory Theatre, Denver Center Theatre Company, and as a resident artist with the Santa Maria-Solvang Theatrefest, where she played leading roles in *Show Boat*, *Hamlet*, *Mame*, and *Harvey*. At A.C.T., where her husband, the late Allen Fletcher, was Conservatory Director, she has been seen in *A Doll's House*, *You Can't Take It With You*, *Pillars of the Community*, *Man and Superman*, *Equus*, *The Master Builder*, *All the Way Home*, *Ah, Wilderness!*, *Heartbreak House*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Ghosts*, *Another Part of the Forest*, *Mourning Becomes Electra*, *Morning's at Seven*, and *Faustus in Hell*. While teaching and acting at A.C.T., she studied singing with Stuart Brady for twelve years. Her films include *A Christmas Without Snow* (CBS Movie of the Week), *The Music School* (PBS *American Short Story* series), *Eye on the Sparrow* (NBC Movie of the Week) and the forthcoming *Tucker*. In the summer of 1986 she performed in *Richard II*, directed by her son, John C. Fletcher. She is a charter member of the Pacific Theatre Ensemble in Los Angeles, of which her daughter, Julia Fletcher, is Artistic Director. She has three beautiful grandchildren.

LIAM O'BRIEN returns to A.C.T. for his second season, following appearances last year as Dennis in *Sunday in the Park with George*, Redpenny in *The Doctor's Dilemma*, Paul in *The Floating Light Bulb*, and Stan Laurel, Charlie Chaplin, and Pee Wee Herman in *Faustus in Hell*. His most recent appearance was in *Ah, Wilderness!*, directed by Ron Lagomarsino for



the Berkeley Repertory Theatre's O'Neill Festival. Mr. O'Brien performed the role of Billy in both the 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 *Bent* at San Francisco Repertory Theatre, *The Concubine at the Feast* at Theatre Rhinoceros, and *The Threepenny Opera* at the Eureka Theatre.



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 shows, which he has performed in thirty-two states of the Union and at the U.S. Embassy in London. 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* (Japan tour), *Buried Child*, *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 again in its twelfth production. He serves as a member of the San Francisco Arts Commission and is a member of the Board of Trustees of A.C.T.



KEN RUTA joined A.C.T. when it first arrived in San Francisco in 1967. He appeared with the company for the next six seasons, and returned in 1982 (to direct *Loot*) and again last season for *The Floating Light Bulb*. Since then he has performed with the Lyric Opera of Chicago in Yuri Lyubimov's production of Alban Berg's *Lulu*, and he has returned to another company with which he's had a long association: the Guthrie Theatre of Minneapolis. Mr. Ruta was an original member of its ensemble, selected by Sir Tyrone himself; he acted with them for 12 seasons, and served as Associate Director for two years under Michael Langham; and he has directed their productions of *La Ronde* (which he also adapted and translated), *Doctor Faustus*, and *A Streetcar Named Desire*. This year he returned to the Guthrie to appear in *The Piggy Bank* under the direction of its new Artistic Director, Garland Wright, and in Liviu Ciulei's production of *The Bacchae*. Among the resident theatres in which he has both acted and directed are the Old Globe in San Diego, the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles, and the Arizona Theatre Company, where he was Associate Artistic Director from 1984 to 1986. In New York he has worked with the Phoenix and Circle-in-the Square companies, and on Broadway in *Inherit the Wind*, *Separate Tables*, *Duel of Angels*, *Ross*, *The Three Sisters*, and *The Elephant Man*.



MICHAEL SCOTT RYAN is a third-year student in the Advanced Training Program. A Wisconsin native, Mr. Ryan came west to study ACT-2

in the Conservatory, where he has appeared as Vershinin in *The Three Sisters*, Witwoud 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 *Good* and as Oberon in John C. Fletcher's production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which was re-mounted and taken to the Westwood Playhouse in Los Angeles. Favorite roles include dancing as a witch in the San Francisco Opera's production of *Macbeth* and playing Edmund in *Long Day's Journey into Night*.



KEN SONKIN joined the company last year to appear in *A Christmas Carol* and as Wagner/Harpo Marx in *Faustus in Hell*, and to teach personal clown technique in the Advanced Training Program, from which he graduated in 1984 following studio performances as Luka in *The Lower Depths*, Ben Gant in *Look Homeward, Angel*, and Feste in *Twelfth Night*. At the Denver Center Theatre Company he appeared in Allen Fletcher's production of *Hamlet* and Laird Williamson's *Pericles*, as well as creating the role of Tommy in *Lahr and Mercedes* by James McClure. Last summer he acted in an A.C.T. workshop production of Strindberg's *Creditors*. Mr. Sonkin is the mime/magician who was voted best street performer of San Francisco, and has performed for the Queen of England. He has shared the bill with Red Skelton, Pat Paulsen, and Donny and Marie Osmond, and headlined at the Playboy Club in Los Angeles. This year he will direct Lillian Hellman's *Days to Come* as a first-year project at the Conservatory.

LANNYL STEPHENS is in her second season as a member of the company. She has appeared in *A Lie of the Mind*, *Sunday in the Park*



with *George*, *A Christmas Carol*, and *The Seagull*, and as Betty Boop and Marilyn Monroe in *Faustus in Hell*. 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. Her studio performances at A.C.T. include Dorine in *Tartuffe*, Olga in *The Three Sisters*, Goneril in *King Lear*, and Beaty in *Lydie Breeze*. 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.



DEBORAH SUSSEL received her B.F.A. from Carnegie-Mellon University and spent a year with the Theatre of the Living Arts in Philadelphia before coming to A.C.T. in 1967. She played leading roles with the company and taught at the Conservatory until 1972; among the productions in which she appeared were *Charlie's Aunt*, *Tartuffe*, *The Crucible*, *Twelfth Night*, *A Flea in Her Ear*, *Oh Dad, Poor Dad . . .*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Little Malcolm and His Struggle Against the Eunuchs*, *The Tavern*, *The Relapse*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Caesar and Cleopatra*, *Private Lives*, and *Paradise Lost*. In 1979 she returned as speech and scansion coach, and appeared at the Geary in *Hay Fever* and *I Remember Mama*. In recent years she has been working as a communications consultant with political and television personalities — and as a mother. She teaches acting at U.C./Berkeley and Mills College, and is scan-

sion teacher in the Conservatory and speech coach for the company. Ms. Sussel has also appeared in the films *Bullitt*, *June 19, 1953*, and *Tell Me a Riddle*.



In his fifteen seasons with the Oregon Shakespearean Festival **JOE VINCENT** has appeared in more than fifty productions. He appeared as Petruchio in *The Taming of the Shrew* at Marines Memorial Theatre in 1984 as part of their California tour, and audiences in Ashland have also seen him in *Jacques Brel Is Alive and Well and Living in Paris*, as Vershinin in *The Three Sisters*, and as Jack Tanner/Don Juan in *Man and Superman*. He has worked with two Bay Area companies, for two seasons each: the Berkeley Repertory Theatre and the California Shakespeare Festival of Visalia, where his portrayal of Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was honored with a Drama-Logue Award. Mr. Vincent has also spent seasons with the Arizona Theatre Company and San Diego's Old Globe. He has played Littlechop in *Stop the World, I Want to Get Off* and El Gallo in *The Fantasticks* for the Lyric Theatre in Ashland (a new not-for-profit musical theatre, of which he is Artistic Director), and recently he played Sky Masterson in *Guys and Dolls* in Phoenix.

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 season in its history, is a graduate of Yale College and the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. A founding member of A.C.T., he directed *Charlie's Aunt* and *Our Town* dur-

ing 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*, *All the Way Home*, *Fifth of July*, *The Real Thing*, and this season's *King Lear*. In 1972 he founded the A.C.T. Plays-in-Progress program, which is devoted to the development and production of new writing. 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 co-produced *The Saintliness of Margery Kempe* and *Epitaph for George Dillon* off-Broadway, and directed the national company of the Broadway musical *Oliver!* He staged the American production of *Shakespeare's People* starring Michael Redgrave, directed the Australian premiere of *The Hot I 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 the Guthrie Theatre, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Denver Center Theatre Company, San Francisco Opera Center, and Berkeley Repertory Theatre.

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 Theatre Bay Area and a member of the advisory board of the San Francisco New Vaudeville Festival. Mr. Sullivan has been active in the theatre since the mid-1970's when he directed Harvey Perr's *Afternoon Tea* at the Circle Repertory Company in New York. He later joined the staff of the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles, where as head of its Forum Laboratory he produced more than twenty new works by American playwrights. 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 camping and mountaineering published by Simon and Schuster. Mr. A.C.T-4

Sullivan is a native San Franciscan.

LAWRENCE HECHT (Conservatory Director) continues this year as head of A.C.T.'s Advanced Training Program. In addition to staging such A.C.T. productions as *The Dolly*, *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, California, 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 the Plays-in-Progress series. Now in his 16th 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 Lie of the Mind*, in which he played Jake.

DENNIS POWERS (Associate Artistic Director) joined A.C.T. in 1967, after six years at the *Oakland Tribune* as an arts writer and a season at Stanford Repertory Theatre as Associate Managing Director. 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 new translations or adaptations of such classic works as *Oedipus Rex*, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *The Cherry Orchard* and *The Bourgeois Gentleman*. With Laird Williamson, he adapted *A Christmas Carol* for the stage, and the production has been presented annually by A.C.T. since 1976, 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 produced by some thirty theatres and schools. In 1985, he and Williamson wrote *Christmas Miracles*, which had its world premiere at the Denver Center Theatre Company. Both *Cyrano* and *A Christmas Carol* have been presented on television. Mr. Powers is a member of the 1987 National Endowment for the Arts Theatre Panel and the Dramatists Guild.

ALBERT TAKAZAUCKAS (Director) made his A.C.T. debut last season with *The Floating Light Bulb*, and returned this year for *A Lie of the*

Mind. He has directed operas throughout the United States, and opened last year's Seattle Opera season with *Tosca*. He first drew the attention of theatre critics in his native Manhattan with Victor Hugo's landmark play *Hernani*, which had not been produced in America in a century. Ten years ago David Mamet's Obie Award-winning *Sexual Perversity in Chicago* brought him to San Francisco's Magic Theatre, where his work has included *These Men*, *Geniuses*, *Cutting Canvas* (which he co-authored with James Keller), and the Magic's longest-running play ever, *Sharon and Billy*. Mr. Takazaukas's other productions in the Bay Area have included *Tartuffe*, *Chekhov in Yalta*, *The Way of the World*, and *The Rocky Horror Show*. He continues to write with Mr. Keller; their comedy *An Hour for the Opera* toured for three years. His projects for this season include *Uncle Vanya* at the Marin Theatre Company, *What the Butler Saw* at the Berkeley Rep, *Albert Herring* for the Arkansas Opera, and a visiting professorship at the University of California at Santa Barbara.

SABIN EPSTEIN (Director) worked all over the country in 1987: *A Christmas Carol* and *Hard Times* (San Diego Repertory Theatre), *The AIDS Show* (A.C.T. studio production), *Much Ado About Nothing* (Georgia Shakespeare Festival), *Spring Awakening* (S.U.N.Y./Purchase), and *The Importance of Being Earnest* (Cal/Arts). His previous productions include *Private Lives* (A.C.T.), *Tartuffe* (Oregon Shakespearean Festival), *H.M.S. Pinafore* (Skylight Opera, Milwaukee), *Buried Child* (Theatre Memphis), *Nicholas Nickleby, Part I* and *Heartbreak House* (A.C.T. studio productions), *Love's Labour's Lost* (Valley Shakespeare Festival), *Sweet Dreams* (New Dramatists, New York), and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (Utah Shakespeare Festival). Mr. Epstein is a senior trainer on the acting faculty of A.C.T., and is co-author with John Harrop of *Acting with Style* (published by Prentice-Hall).

RALPH FUNICELLO (Scenery) has been associated with A.C.T. for 15 seasons, and has designed some 30 productions for the company; aside from *The Floating Light Bulb* and *The Immigrant*, they include *Another Part of the Forest*, *Peer Gynt*, *Pantagলেজে*, *Mourning Becomes Electra*, *Arms and the Man*, and *Translations*. He also recreated his designs for A.C.T.'s *The Tam-*

ing of the Shrew for PBS television. Mr. Funicello designed the sets for *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *The Glass Menagerie* for the Stratford Festival in Ontario, and for the New York City Opera's production of *La Rondine*. His work has been seen on and off-Broadway and at many resident theatres, including the Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Denver Center Theatre Company, Guthrie Theatre, Mark Taper Forum, McCarter Theatre, Pacific Conservatory of the Performing Arts, Sherwood Shakespeare Festival, Seattle Repertory Theatre, and the South Coast Repertory Theatre.

BEAVER D. BAUER (Costumes) designed costumes for this season's *A Lie of the Mind* as well as for *The Floating Light Bulb*. She has designed extensively at the Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Magic Theatre, Eureka Theatre, Lamplighters' Musical Theatre, and the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival. Since 1972 she has worked in all capacities for the Angels of Light, a troupe that specializes in fantastic, outrageous, and magical cabaret and theatre; she was responsible for their productions of *Holy Cow*, *Hotel of Follies*, and *True Tales of Hollywood Horror*. She has taught herself all aspects of the theatre.

CATHLEEN EDWARDS (Costumes) first designed for A.C.T.'s main stage in 1976, when she designed costumes for *Desire Under the Elms*. Her designs here since then have included *Valentin and Valentina*, *All the Way Home*, *The Dolly*, *The Crucifer of Blood* (which won the Bay Area Critics' Circle Award in 1980), and more than twenty productions for the Plays-in-Progress series. She has also worked at the Alaska Repertory Theatre, Berkeley Repertory Theatre (whose production of *Hard Times*, with her costumes, appeared at the Joyce Festival in New York City last summer), San Jose Civic Light Opera, the Sherwood and Berkeley Shakespeare Festivals, California Coast Opera, One Act Theatre Company, and California Coast Opera, as well as on a number of films and commercials. She earned a B.A. with Honors in theatrical design at San Diego State University.

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.

STEPHEN LEGRAND (Sound) rejoins A.C.T. for his second season as sound designer and composer. His work last year included sound for six shows and musical composition for *The Seagull* and *Faustus in Hell*. With collaborator Eric Drew Feldman, Mr. LeGrand has written award-winning scores for *The Lady's Not for Burning* at A.C.T., *The Tooth of Crime* at Berkeley Rep and *Fen* at the Eureka Theatre.

JAMES HAIRE (Production Director) began his career on Broadway with Eva Le Gallienne's National Repertory Theater. Among the productions he stage-managed were *The Madwoman of Chaillot* with Miss Le Gallienne, Sylvia Sydney, and Leora Dana, *The Rivals*, *John Brown's Body*, *She Stoops to Conquer*, and *A Comedy of Errors*. Mr. Haire also stage-managed the Broadway productions of *Georgy* (a musical by Carol Bayer Sager), *And Miss Reardon Drinks a Little* (with Julie Harris and Estelle Parsons), and the national tour of Woody Allen's *Don't Drink the Water* (with Sam Levene and Vivian Blaine). Mr. Haire joined the American Conservatory Theatre in 1971 as Production Stage Manager, and in this capacity has managed more than a hundred productions; he 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. Barcone has directed for the Plays-in-Progress program and worked on the televised adaptations of *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, and *A Christmas Carol*. He has worked on more than 70 productions at A.C.T.

KAREN VAN ZANDT (Production Stage Manager), now in her eighth season at A.C.T., has stage-managed company productions of *A Christmas Carol*, *The Sleeping Prince*, *Mourning Becomes Electra*, and *Another Part of the Forest*. She has also worked at the Marines Memorial Theatre as production stage manager for *The Boys in Autumn* (with Kirk Douglas and Bert Lancaster) and *Top Girls* by Caryl Churchill. Ms. Van Zandt was the production stage manager for *Greater Tuna* for a year.

ALICE ELLIOTT SMITH (Stage Manager) began her career at A.C.T. as a stage management intern. Now in her ninth season, she has been the company's master scheduler, production coordinator of Plays-in-Progress, director of staged readings, associate director of the Troubadour program, director of the studio production *Ah, Wilderness!*, and co-director of *Morning's at Seven* and *Picnic*. Last season she was co-director of the PIP production *Rio Seco*. During the past three seasons she stage-managed *Opéra Comique*, 'night, *Mother*, *Private Lives*, *The Lady's Not for Burning*, *The Floating Light Bulb*, and *Faustus in Hell*.

DUNCAN W. GRAHAM (Stage Manager) is now in his third season with A.C.T. He has also stage-managed for San Jose Repertory Company, Sunnyvale Summer Repertory, and the California Theatre Center, where he was Production Stage Manager and lighting designer. Last summer, Mr. Graham was Production Manager for the Performing Arts Alliance Festival at Foothill College.

BRUCE ELSPERGER (Stage Manager) was Production Stage Manager at the Intiman Theatre in Seattle for the past three years, in addition to serving as Production Manager with the Bathhouse Theatre in Seattle. He also directed the Intiman Theatre acting intern production of *A Streetcar Named Desire* last season, and independently produced and directed various productions in Seattle. Prior to moving to Seattle he served as stage manager and production stage manager with PCPA/Theatrefest in Solvang and Santa Maria. He studied in London, graduated from Drake University, and worked with disturbed children as an art therapist in the Des Moines, Iowa schools. This is Mr. Elsparger's first season with A.C.T.

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Joy Carlin & Will Marchetti in A.C.T.'s fall production of Sam Shepard's *A Lie of the Mind*. Photo: Larry Merkie

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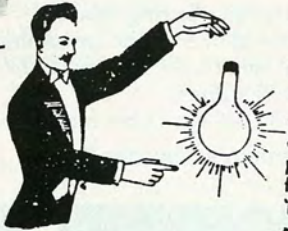
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No. 809

**MIRACLE
FLOATING LIGHT BULB**



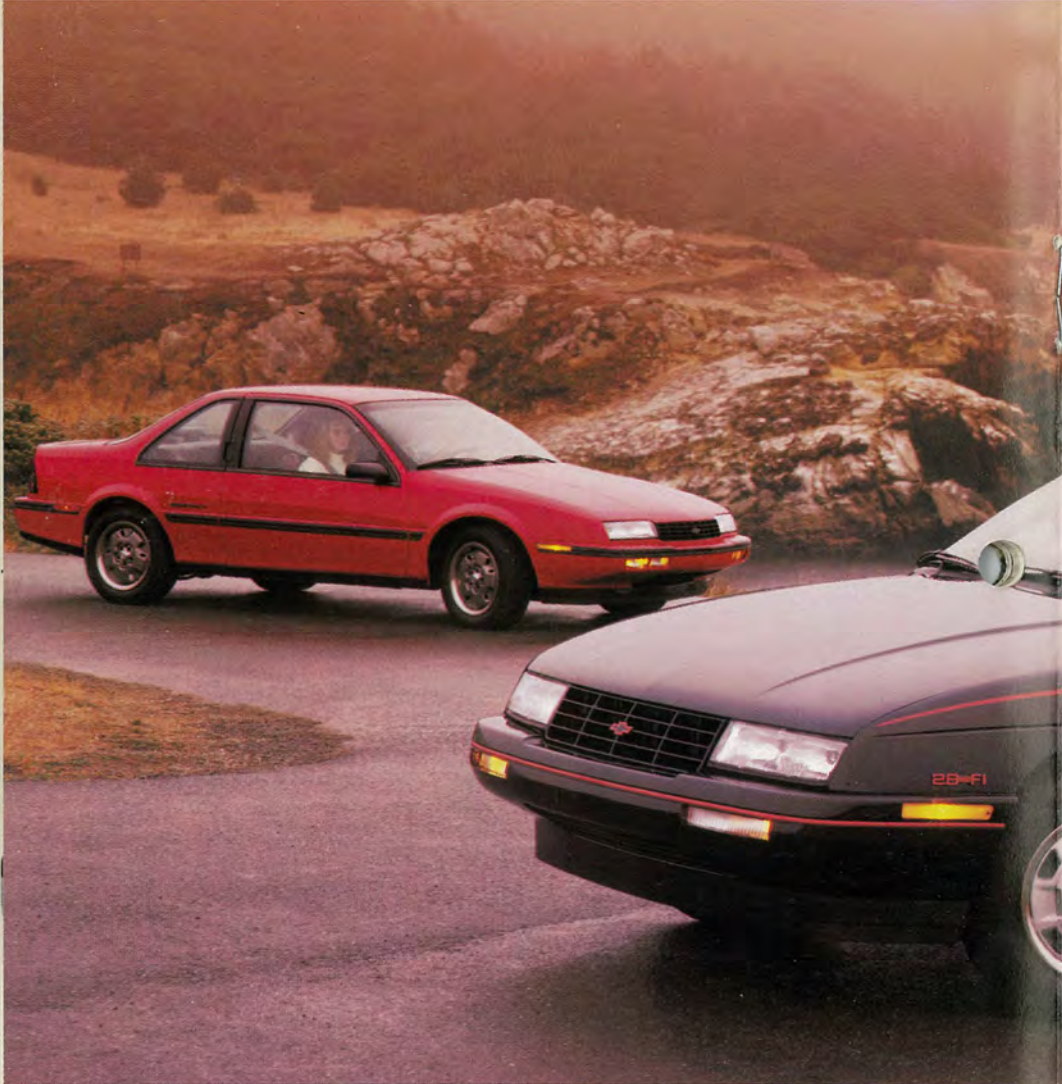
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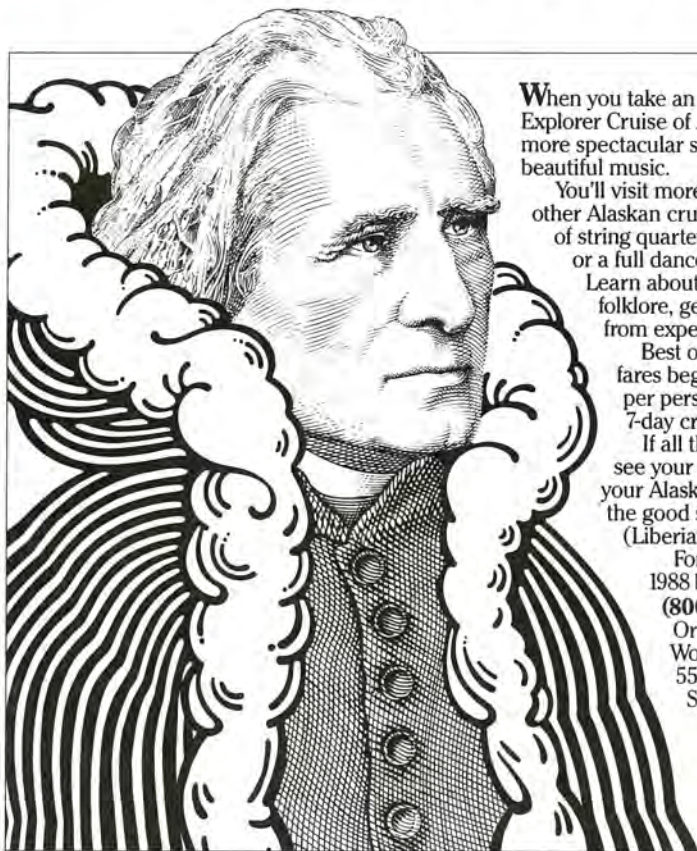
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presents

THE FLOATING LIGHT BULB

(1981)

by Woody Allen

Directed by Albert Takazauckas

Scenery by Ralph Funicello
Costumes by Beaver D. Bauer
Lighting by Derek Duarte
Sound by Stephen LeGrand
Wigs by Rick Echols
Magic Effects by Ken Sonkin

Cast

(in order of appearance)

Paul Liam O'Brien
Steve Yuri Lane
Enid Joy Carlin
Max Joe Vincent
Betty Nancy Carlin
Jerry Wexler Ken Ruta

The Scene: The Canarsie section of Brooklyn, 1945

ACT ONE: Scene One: Four-thirty in the afternoon.
Scene Two: Later that same day.
Scene Three: Around seven-thirty the following morning.
Scene Four: Late afternoon, the same day.
Scene Five: Three in the morning, the next day.
Scene Six: Midmorning, the same day.

ACT TWO: Scene One: Early evening, a few days later.
Scene Two: That same evening.

There will be an intermission between Acts I and II.

UNDERSTUDIES

Steve — Tom Parker; *Enid* — Kate Brickley; *Paul* — Ken Sonkin; *Max* — Rick Hamilton;
Betty — Lannyl Stephens; *Jerry Wexler* — Drew Eshelman.

Stage Management: Alice Elliott Smith and Eugene Barcone.

Magic in Flatbush

by Dennis Powers



CHILD OF FLATBUSH: *Woody Allen*

"What's toughest about writing a play," Woody Allen told *New York Times* reporter John Corry, "is going from nothing to first draft. But once you write a play, the hardest work is done, and you can get a wonderful production in six weeks. When you watch rehearsals for a play and you see something you don't like, you can make corrections. When you make corrections in a movie, you have to call in the actors from all over the world . . ."

In an extraordinary career studded with hit films like *Hannah and Her Sisters*, *Zelig*, *Manhattan*, *Sleeper*, *Love and Death*, *Bananas*, *Interiors*, *A Midsummer Night's Sex Comedy*, *The Purple Rose of Cairo*, *Broadway Danny Rose* and the Oscar-winning *Annie Hall*, the reclusive writer-director-actor has occasionally taken time out to write a play. His first was the 1966 hit Broadway comedy about Americans abroad, *Don't Drink the Water*. He followed it with

another Broadway success in 1969, the popular *Play It Again, Sam*, in which the typically timid, bumbling Allenesque hero has a vivid fantasy life revolving around a Humphrey Bogart-like guardian angel who advises him on how to succeed with women.

Some twelve years passed before Allen's third and — so far, at least — last play opened at Lincoln Center's Vivian Beaumont Theatre in April, 1981, for a limited engagement as part of a subscriptions series. *The Floating Light Bulb* represented a distinct departure from the first two plays, both of them relatively conventional Broadway comedies, as Allen laced his characteristic comedy with dramatic conflicts to tell the story of a troubled Brooklyn family facing problems both financial and emotional.

The result is a bittersweet comedy that unfolds in a tenement apartment in



SMALL POTATOES: Talent agent Jerry Wexler (played at A.C.T. by Ken Ruta, l.) is a precursor of the title character Allen (r.) performed in his film *Broadway Danny Rose*.

Brooklyn's Canarsie section in 1945, just after the end of World War II. Middle-aged Enid Pollack (played at A.C.T. by Joy Carlin) dreams up crackpot business schemes, trying to make ends meet while her philandering husband Max (Joe Vincent) gambles away his paycheck and dodges loan sharks to whom he's deeply in debt. To make matters worse for Enid, Max has a much younger girlfriend on the side, Betty (Nancy Carlin) with whom he makes vague plans to escape to Florida and begin a new life.

The Pollacks' sons only add to Enid's worries. Their smart-aleck younger boy Steve (Yuri Lane) is a thirteen-year-old whose grades in school are so bad that he even gets an "F" in personal hygiene. His older brother, the shy, stammering sixteen-year-old Paul (Liam O'Brien) retreats from the problems of adolescence and his fear of people into a private

dream world where he becomes a world-famous magician. An apparent ray of hope shines into their lives with the arrival of Jerry (Ken Ruta), a small-time talent agent. Enid is sure that Jerry can get Paul booked into night clubs and starts making plans for a big future.

Although Allen has said that *The Floating Light Bulb* — the title refers to one of Paul's favorite magic tricks — isn't really autobiographical, he admits that he was growing up in the Flatbush area of Brooklyn at the same time the play takes place, that his father, like Max, was a waiter, that his childhood wasn't very happy either, that he hated school as Paul does, and that he practiced magic tricks in his bedroom.

Some critics who reviewed the original production described the play as Allen's comic variation of Tennessee Williams's *The Glass Menagerie*. Albert Takazuckas,



CANARSIE COUPLE: Joe Vincent and Joy Carlin as Max and Enid Pollack in *The Floating Light Bulb*.

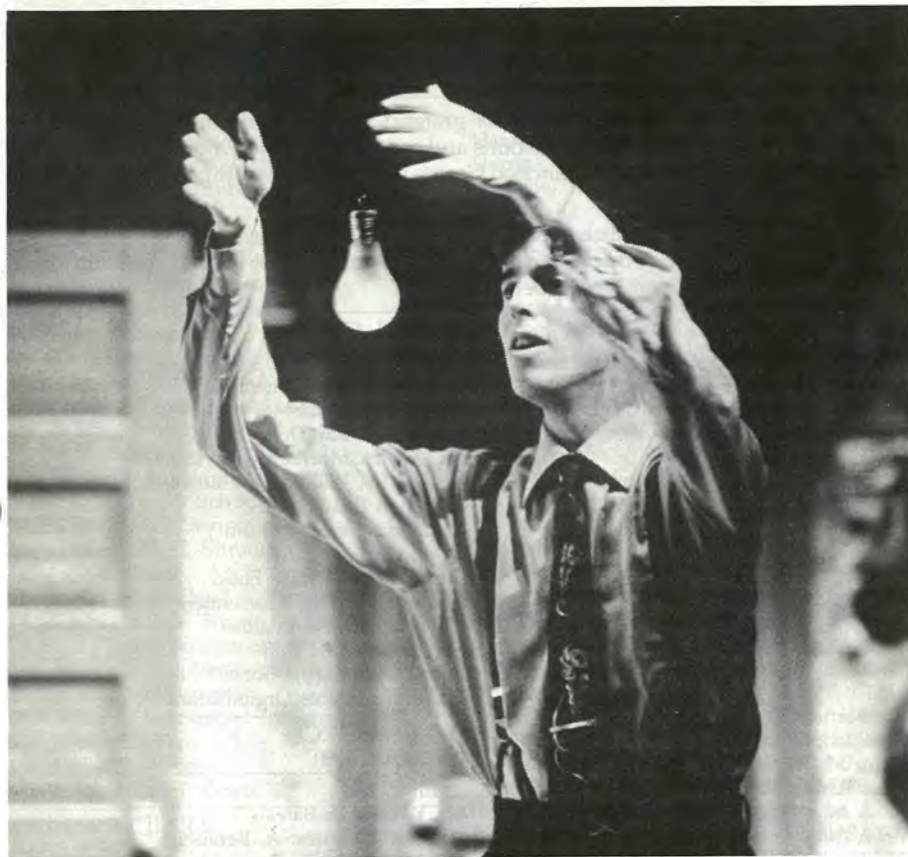
director of A.C.T.'s production, is more specific: "It's as if Clifford Odets had written *The Glass Menagerie*," he says, adding, "and the more I read the play, the less it reminded me of *The Glass Menagerie*."

Takazauckas feels that "we can all identify with Paul's dreams, with his feelings of being an outsider. I have a lot of very personal feelings about the play. I understood it immediately and felt deeply attached to it. It evoked memories of my own family and my own childhood, and I think it captures archetypal moments of growing up. That kind of thing moves me a lot, so my response to the work is very strong. And we have to keep in mind that the poverty the family lives with is an ACT:12

important element in the story.

"As a title, *The Floating Light Bulb* suggests something fragile and lovely, something poetic. And the play attempts to get to that poetic level. It's not like Woody Allen's other plays or his movies. But it has wonderful humor. Some of it is very richly funny. And I think it's more deeply felt than anything of his — except maybe *Annie Hall*."

"It's by far the best of my three plays," Allen told *San Francisco Chronicle* writer Steven Winn in a telephone interview a year ago, on the eve of the opening of *The Floating Light Bulb* at A.C.T. Bay Area audiences turned out in droves to see the least known work of a major American



LOVELY LEGERDEMAIN: Paul (Liam O'Brien) practises magic tricks and dreams of making it big in show business.

writer.

Advance sales were heavy, and by the time the production was halfway through its run at the Geary, virtually all performances were playing to capacity houses. The production wound up being the biggest box-office hit of the 1986-87 season.

Because the repertory schedule doesn't allow for extensions of successful shows like *The Floating Light Bulb*, A.C.T. Artistic Director Edward Hastings decided to bring it back this year for an encore presentation. When he had made sure that the cast and director were available for the revival, the play was scheduled for a special run of 10 performances and one

Student Matinee, beginning December 29.

What are Allen's hopes for *The Floating Light Bulb*? "I can only hope that a certain amount of what I do . . . that some of it will make a contribution to the culture," he says. "This play could have been a short story, but then I got this call from Lincoln Center, and I live in New York, and I thought I'd like to try to make a contribution to the theatre . . . It's a modest little idea. When all is said and done, maybe it will be an entertaining two hours. My fondest wish is that the person buying a ticket has a good time. I really hope so."

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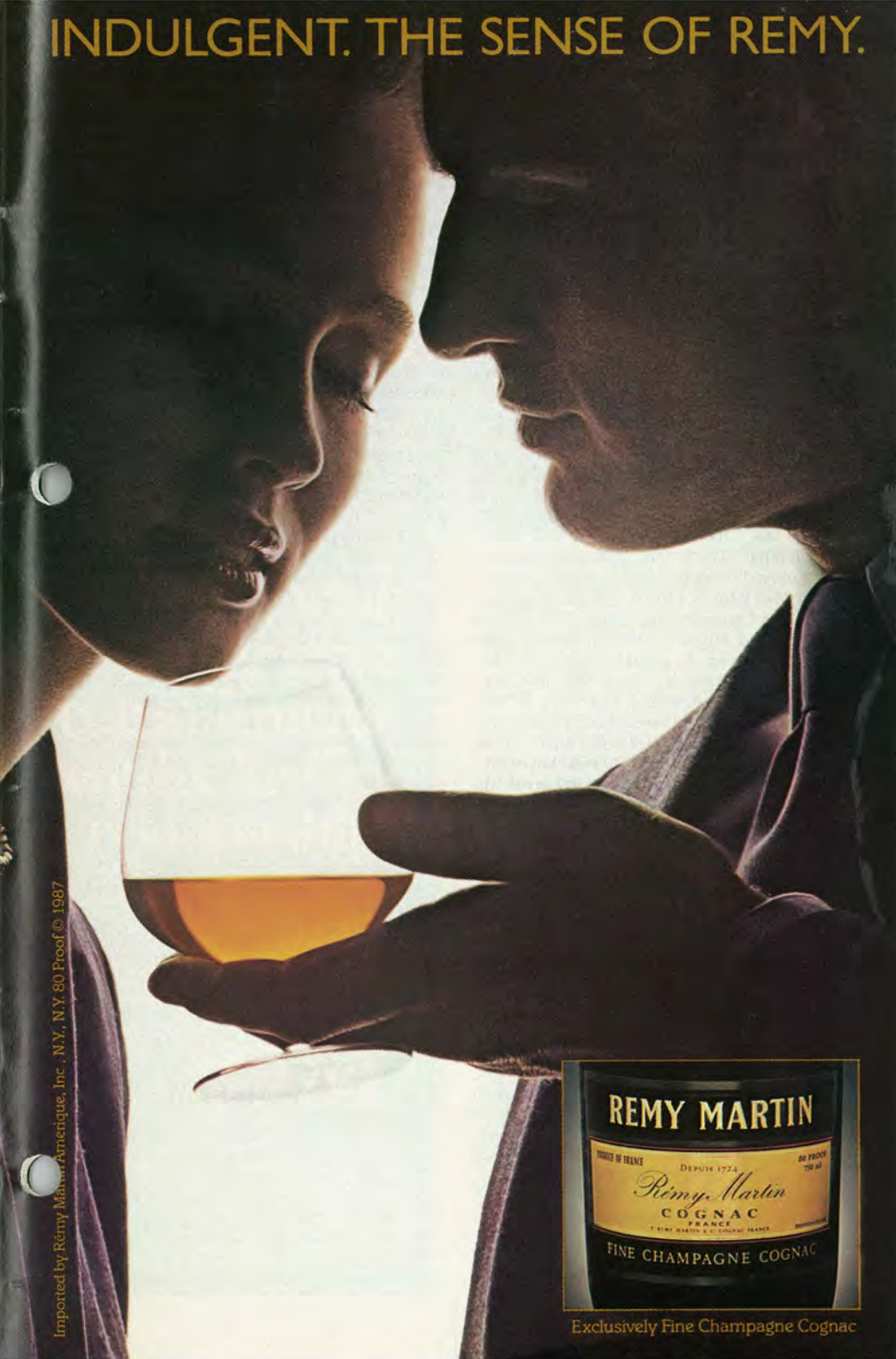
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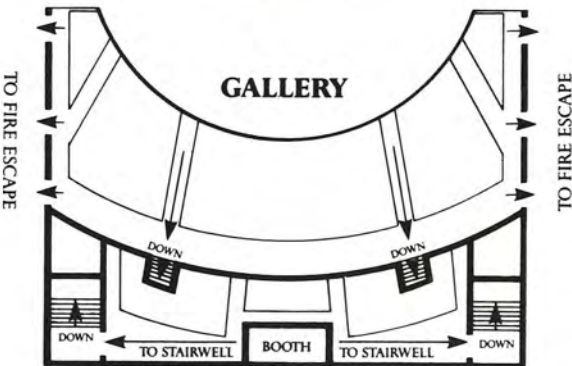
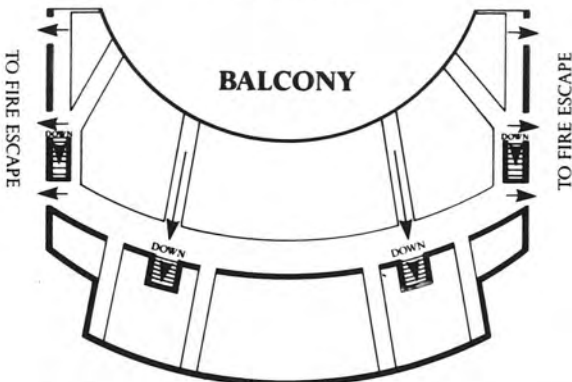
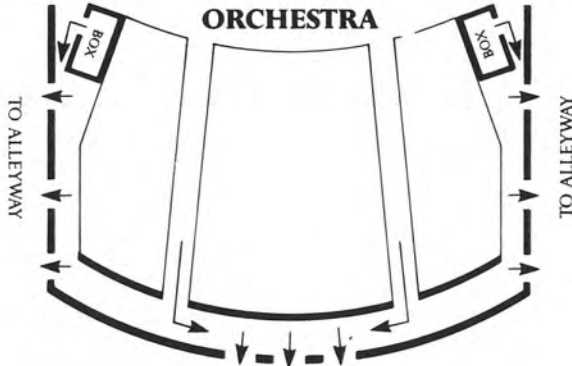
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GEARY THEATRE FIRE EXITS

The Practitioners

Performance Artist Rudy Perez

by Donna Perlmutter



KEN PAPALEO

The first in a series of conversation with men and women in the performing arts — performers, executives, offstage “workers” — whose names are not necessarily familiar to the general public but without whom the world of entertainment could not function.

SEVERAL months after the 1987 Los Angeles Festival has come to an end, Rudy Perez is still riding his new-energy wave. Right now, for example, the man who has been called “the conscience of local experimental dance” puts his four-member ensemble through an evening of choreographic spinoffs from his festival bill and explains to a crowd at MacArthur Park’s Photography Center the evolution of his art.

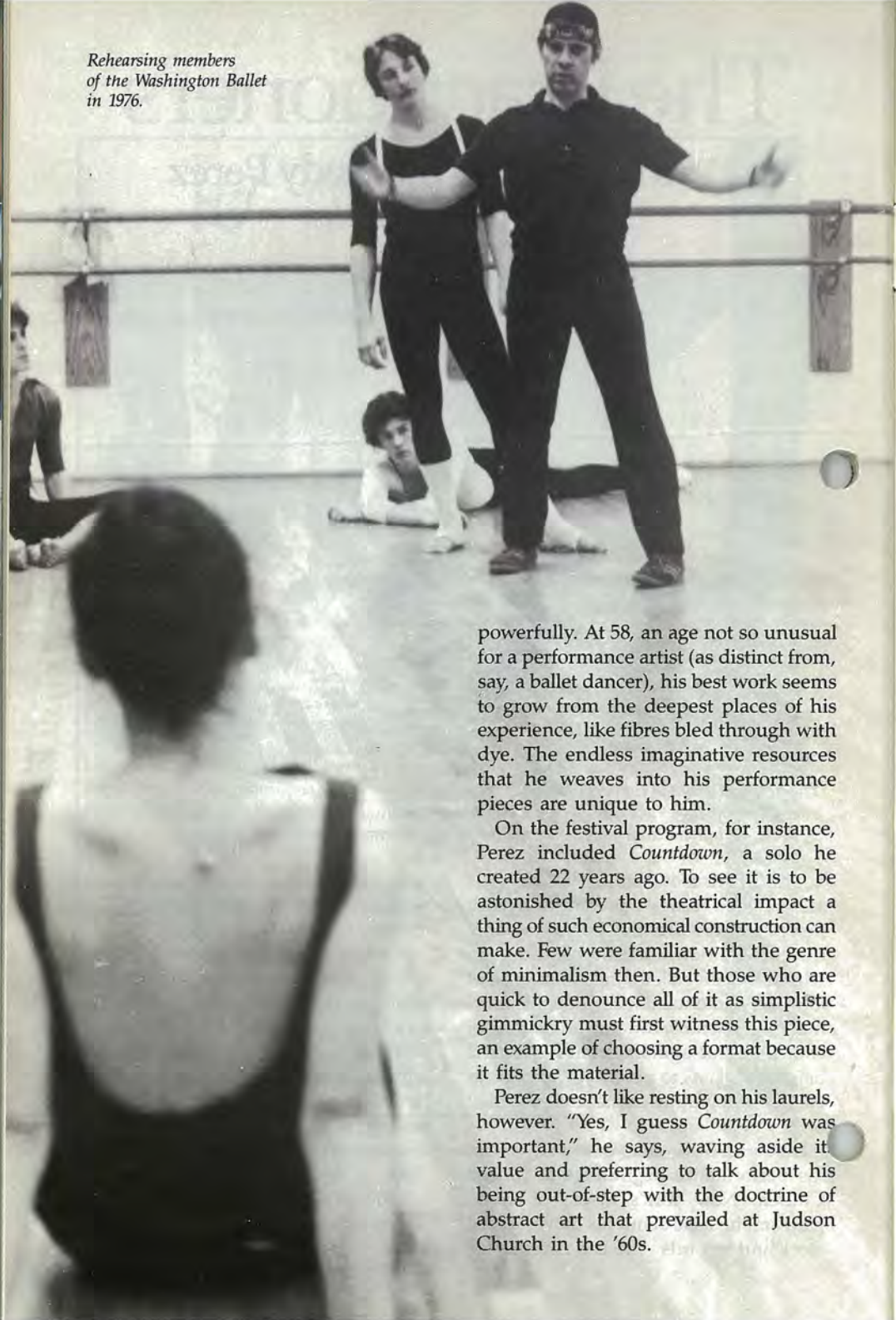
Exhilarated, he talks informally about his performance beginnings at Judson Church, New York’s mecca of avant-gardism; he talks about his move — lock, stock and leotards — to Los Angeles ten

years ago; and the environment he works with (and sometimes even against) in the city of the presumed Angels.

Minutes earlier he appeared with his quartet in a work-in-progress. Was this man on roller skates blind? Wearing opaque black glasses, he was pulled by the others who attached themselves to him with an industrial cord. And sometimes he led them. Either way, it became an essay in universe-groping, a theme that dominates Perez’s creative realm.

For a decade, ever since the this minimalist-with-a-message appeared in our midst, he has been expounding his point of view — eloquently and often

Rehearsing members
of the Washington Ballet
in 1976.



powerfully. At 58, an age not so unusual for a performance artist (as distinct from, say, a ballet dancer), his best work seems to grow from the deepest places of his experience, like fibres bled through with dye. The endless imaginative resources that he weaves into his performance pieces are unique to him.

On the festival program, for instance, Perez included *Countdown*, a solo he created 22 years ago. To see it is to be astonished by the theatrical impact a thing of such economical construction can make. Few were familiar with the genre of minimalism then. But those who are quick to denounce all of it as simplistic gimmickry must first witness this piece, an example of choosing a format because it fits the material.

Perez doesn't like resting on his laurels, however. "Yes, I guess *Countdown* was important," he says, waving aside its value and preferring to talk about his being out-of-step with the doctrine of abstract art that prevailed at Judson Church in the '60s.

"It was a piece they tolerated at the time," he explains, settling into a neatly nondescript couch in his apartment near the Los Angeles Farmers Market. "Considering its emotional drama, which was very much out of vogue then, I guess I'm lucky it even happened."

So are audiences now — straining for indelible images in this festival aftermath. *Countdown* is one: Bathed in an overhead spotlight that separates him from the surrounding darkness, Perez sits on a stool. He listens to a scratchy, old recording of Madeleine Grey singing Canteloube's *Songs of the Auvergne* — wistful ballads reaching to long ago and far away.

The smoke from his cigarette curls upwards, suggesting the only motion initially. Then slowly he lifts an arm and the shadows sculpting his face reveal myriad, almost imperceptible grades of expression. Longing, loneliness, nostalgia — it's impossible to separate one from another — have rarely been characterized so poignantly.

On the basis of works like these, some say that Perez's most significant gifts are as a soloist, not as a choreographer of ensemble works.

Indeed, the now-reluctant performer can trace the origins of his artistic pursuits as that of a solo dancer. "I didn't really fit in with the existing milieu," he says. "For one thing I started late, not setting foot to board as a soloist until age 33. Without the strong technique all the early bloomers had I couldn't really join them even if that was what I wanted."

A native New Yorker, Perez grew up in a Puerto Rican ghetto and, at seven, suffered the death of his mother. On the encouragement of a glee club teacher, he auditioned for and won acceptance to the High School of Music and Art. Following graduation he studied dance at night for ten years with Merce Cunningham, Martha Graham and Erick Hawkins while supporting himself with a mundane nine-to-five job. But it was not until he

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came to Judson Church that performance opportunities opened up.

Besides *Countdown* he had such pieces as *Highway*, in which he does a slow-motion trek to stage front. In the practice attire of someone in training (shorts over sweat pants), he appears as a subscriber to life, carrying his gear in a satchel.

Ahead of him, directly in his path, is a pair of shoes. But he never reaches them. As he begins this spiritually exhausting trek, this effortful journey to land's end, strains of Satie's *Trois Gymnopédies* can be heard, the sad and languid melody itself a counterpoint to the tape's random street noises, uttered



SUSANNA WHITMCK

Members of the Rudy Perez Performance
Ensemble in *Untitled* (1987).

profanities and fragments of a pop tune.

Somehow this lone figure, ostensibly cut off from and yet overwhelmed by his surroundings, evokes extraordinary sympathy. His mission is agonizingly deliberate, his path direct, his vulnerability unrecorded but ineffably known. He is the existential man.

In the face of what Perez was able to bring to the performance venue once he arrived there, one can hardly regret his delay. Moreover, the work he did following his full-time job — dance therapy with patients at Bellevue Hospital and creative dance for children at Adelphi University

and Friends Seminary — put him further in touch with his expressive sensibilities.

"I find it curious, though," he says, "that because of my limitations . . . my insecurity as a dancer . . . I was forced to develop myself in reaction to what wasn't comfortable. Maybe, in the process, I found a truer part of my creative self. One I could believe in. When I look back to the energy put into those years in New York, I can hardly recognize the person. Schleppling props around in the cold and snow. Bucking the elitism at Judson (referring to better established practitioners such as Steve Paxton, Lucinda Childs, Yvonne Rainer).

"The more I think about it the more amazing it seems that I made a platform for myself there — regardless of lacking the sophistication of the in-circle (senior Merce Cunningham exponents). Remember, I was just a novice."

But when other kinds of opportunity arose so did Perez's powers of innovation. It was in 1967 that he and Laura Dean were scheduled to share an evening at Judson, each taking half the program. Dean canceled and, on the spot, Perez recruited two other dancers in order to keep the date.

Thus was his first company born. Without planning, certainly without dreaming about it. Since then Perez has enjoyed a sense of community he had not previously known. The loneliness of the long-distance dancer has gradually dissipated. Even though personnel has changed over the years, to his regret, the director/choreographer always seems to make a solid connection to those company members he enlists.

And stimulate their sensibilities. But what Perez envisions in his ensemble works is quite removed from the deeply personalized solos. The dancers act both as reflector of and commentators on the society they are part of — always, however, with the performance artist's trademark: surreal detachment. Whether



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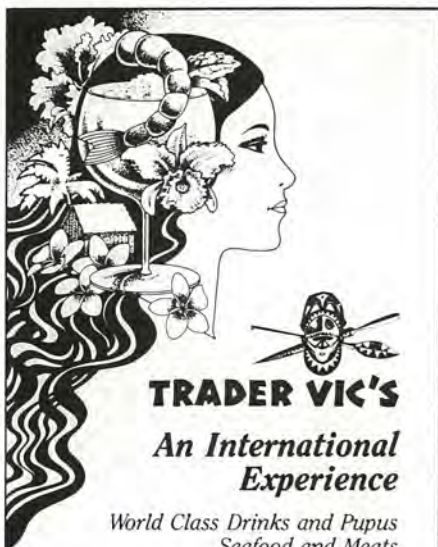
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tapping a slightly satiric vein of urban ennui or exploring otherworldly realms, Perez suggests that an observing ego is in charge.

His pieces, many of them redolent with underground chic, are never mere enactments; they also take enough distance from their subjects to make a statement. At the Los Angeles Photography Center his quartet — Linda Hinojos, Jeffrey Grimaldo, Anet Margot Ris and Robert Keane — give *Celestial Acrobats* a typically beatific look. In a trance-like adagio they form duets, interconnecting and separating while they gaze outward, their faces suffused with semi-blissful half-smiles.

In order to keep performing and rehearsing on a regular basis — the bottom line for maintaining a company — Perez uses this MacArthur Park venue as a supplement to Academy West (Santa Monica) and Plaza de la Raza (East Los Angeles). While he gets the occasional engagement at UCLA or comparably prestigious platforms, most local appearances take place in these studio settings.

"What we need here," says Perez, "is more high-calibre dance. Two companies (his and Bella Lewitzky's) are not enough for the second-largest city in the country. And, unfortunately, the universities don't help much. They're pretty fixated on imports for their presentations. They don't take it upon themselves to build audiences for local artists and thereby attract more resident companies."

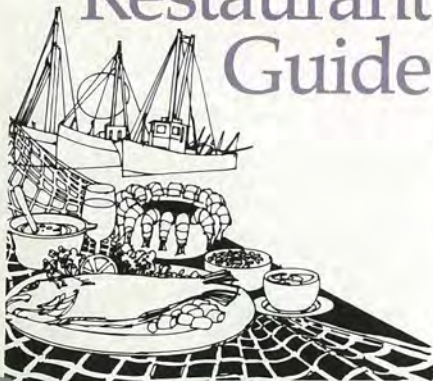
Much as he would like to find himself with an affluent sponsor or a well-funded base, Perez knows now what he's always known: "I've got to make it happen myself. It's never been otherwise. Every lesson I learn spells it out."

So far, the results of that ethos haven't been too bad. □

Donna Perlmutter is the Los Angeles correspondent for Dance Magazine and a frequent contributor to Opera News and the Los Angeles Times.

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