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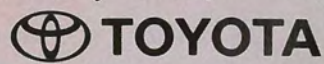
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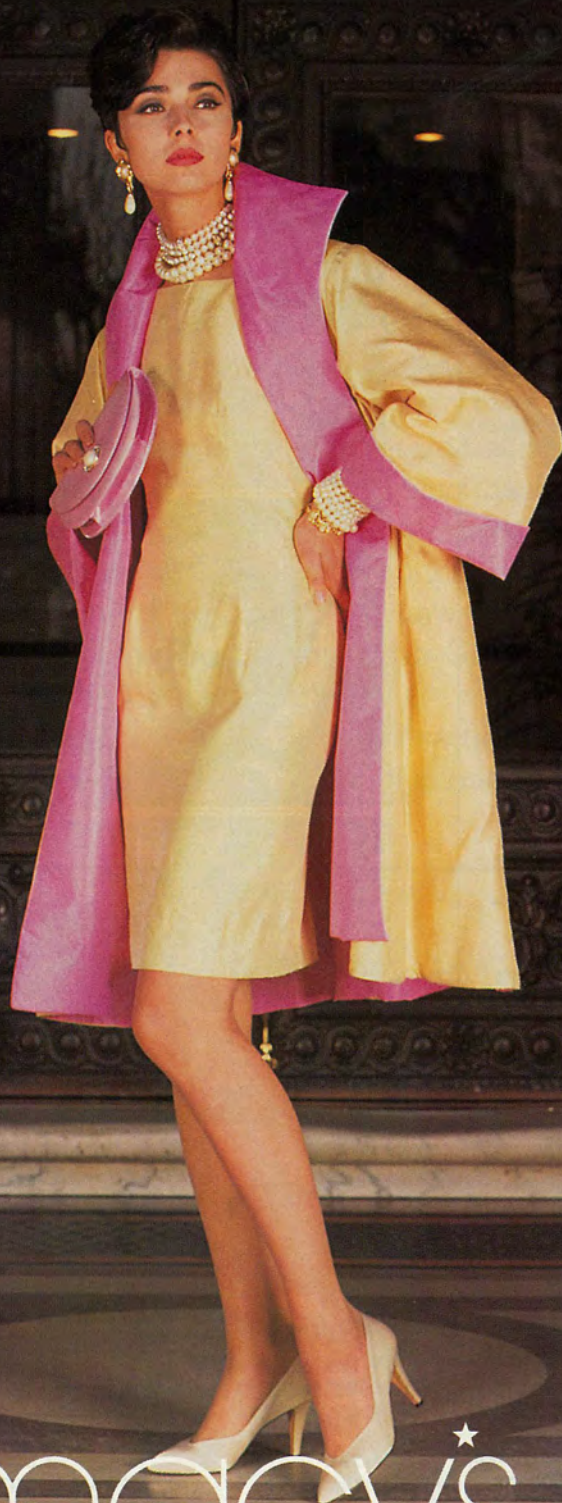
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CONTENTS



8 GREAT EXPECTATIONS
 MARCHING ALONG
by Kate Regan



14 COWARD, WITH A SPLASH
 The terror induced by World War I gave rise to the need for oblivion . . . for a style that kept the terror at bay. Noël Coward supplied just such a style in *The Vortex* (1924)
by Gary Marmorstein

P-1 PROGRAM INFORMATION



41 PROPERTIES IN DEVELOPMENT
 SEASON UPDATE
by Barbara Miller

47 RESTAURANT GUIDE

49 THE LAST WORD
 IN ALL DIRECTIONS
by Peter Hay

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Marching Along

Events not to be missed next month

DANCING INTO SPRING

In hard times, one often looks for comfort in familiar fantasies, and maybe that's a reason for the lavish revivals of old story ballets in so many companies these days. In 1991, we will see versions of the same ballets known to St. Petersburg audiences one hundred years ago. American Ballet Theatre will revive its splendid, full-length production of *La Bayadere* during its annual two-week visit, along with a new but traditional view of *Coppelia*. In March San Francisco Ballet will repeat Helgi Tomasson's *The Sleeping Beauty*, several years after his equally authoritative *Swan Lake*, and also presents Val Caniparoli's first story ballet, *Pulcinella*, based on the commedia dell'arte love comedy.

ABT has long favored Russian repertory, but its 1991 season denotes a marked return to conservation of the classics. Of the sixteen performances in the Opera House, eleven are devoted to *Coppelia* or

La Bayadere, and the five mixed repertory programs offer only one new work. Gone are the experimental pieces by Mark Morris or David Gordon, and Twyla Tharp's glorious association with ABT's

former director, Mikhail Baryshnikov, is indicated only by the return of last year's *Brief Fling*.

ABT's apparent reversion to the safety of classics need not be a regrettable retrenchment. *Coppelia*, the sunny and psychologically astute response to the lovelorn figures of *Giselle* and *La Sylphide*, is a ballet staple that has been neglected of late. George Balanchine called it "the first dance drama of really uniform excellence," and its theatrically coherent score, by Leo Delibes, was an inspiration for Tchaikovsky's later ballets. First produced in Paris in 1870, *Coppelia* takes a fresh and humorous look at magic and the romantic illusion that the best love is a lost love.

The eponymous Coppelia is a beautiful, lifeless doll, attainable only in dreams; but unlike the noble heroes of *Giselle* or *La Sylphide*, her would-be lover is a small



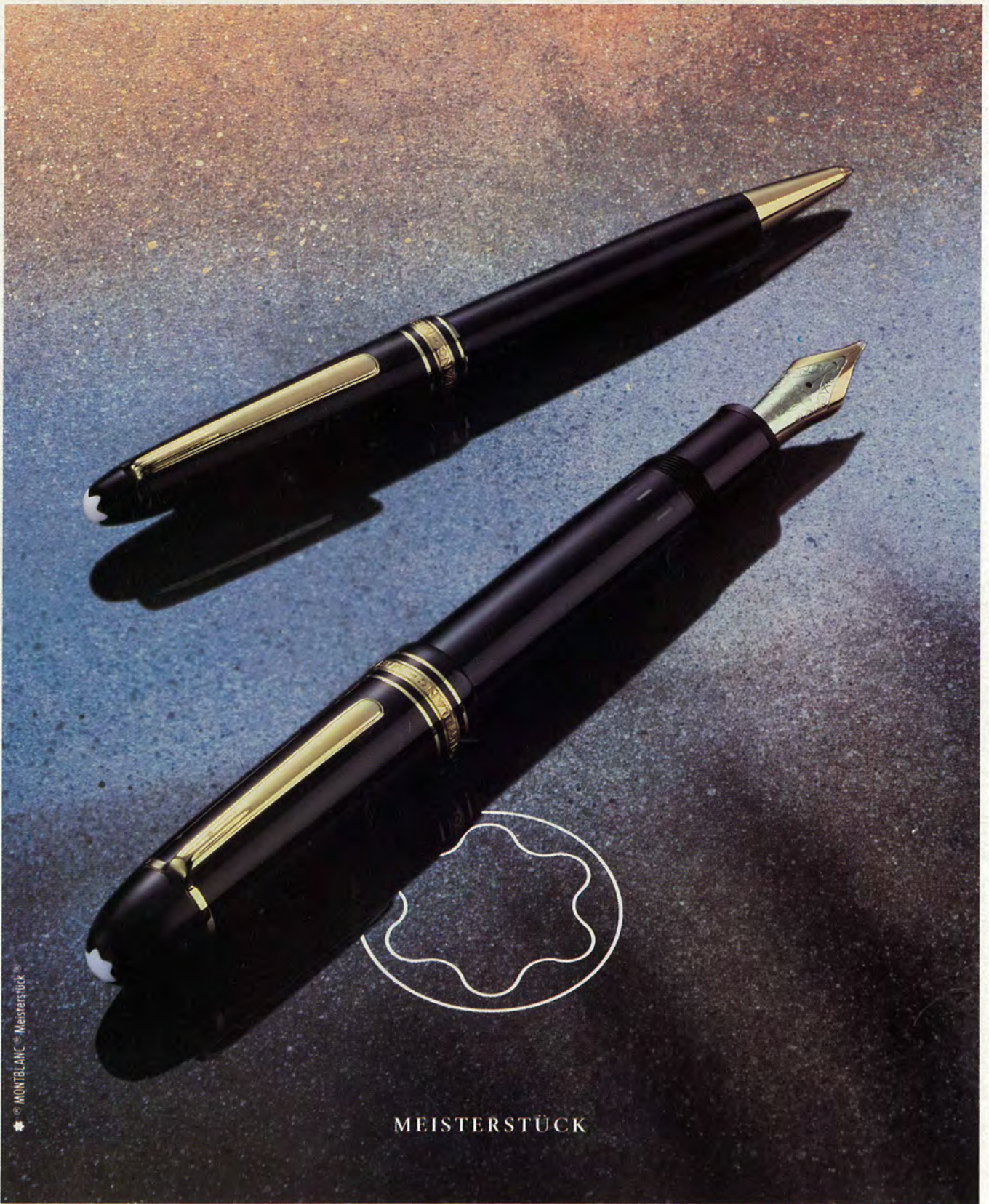
MARCY SOHL



MARTHA SWOPE

Above: American Ballet Theatre's production of *Ballet Imperial*. The Company will be at the Opera House from March 26 to April 7. Inset: San Francisco Ballet's Sabina Alleman in Helgi Tomasson's *Sleeping Beauty* which opens March 12 at the Opera House.

by Kate Regan



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town boy who learns from his mistake. Romance for him becomes real, in the beguiling wit and courage of Swanilda, a warm-blooded young woman who successfully breaks the dead doll's spell and confounds Coppelia's wizardly creator, the sinister Dr. Coppelius.

Enrique Martinez, who staged ABT's 1968 revival of *Coppelia*, will restage this production after the original choreography by Arthur Saint-Leon. In addition to the story's basic attractions, *Coppelia* offers a deliciously spooky second act, in which all the Dr. Coppelius's mechanized creatures come to "eerie" life. Only the mischievous vitality of Swanilda can defeat Coppelius's robotic enchantments and prove that flesh and blood hold greater charms than the inhuman perfections of a mannequin.

La Bayadere, choreographed by Marius Petipa in 1877 for the Maryinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg, is a tragedy in the grand Russian manner, full of exotic visions and hopelessly elusive love. Its reintroduction to the Western repertory, through Natalia Makarova's 1974 production for ABT, transformed the company's *corps* into a band of tirelessly energized angels; the ballet's spectacular success owed as much to the eloquence and clarity of the *corps* as to any soloist's prowess.

The famous "Kingdom of the Shades" scene in Act IV is Petipa's purest view of immortality as an eternal moment of harmonic dancing. One by one, thirty-six Shades, heavenly maidens dressed in white, descend upon the stage, find their pose in arabesque and hold it. The seemingly endless repetition, and the lucid simplicity of the steps, create an impression of inexhaustible bounty, a purposeful flowing of strength and beauty. If the current ABT *corps* can achieve the elastic clarity of Makarova's company, we will see again the striking modernity of Petipa's timeless ritual. *March 26 to April 7, San Francisco War Memorial Opera House. (415) 861-1177.*

San Francisco Ballet continues to dance merrily along a trajectory from old to new, and its 1991 season combines important company premieres and revivals of Balanchine masterworks with contemporary pieces such as Val Caniparoli's twentieth century version of *Pulcinella*

and William Forsythe's sardonic *New Sleep*.

Some skeptics wondered if San Francisco's *corps* and soloists were up to the demands of *Beauty's* choreography, but as *La Bayadere* did for ABT, *Sleeping Beauty* awakened both spirituality and technical strength in the dancers. Jens-Jacob Worsaae's sets and costumes, especially the ravishing first act vision of Old Russia, were unexpectedly poetic. Barring a few lackluster solos and the unflattering wigs for the eighteenth century courtiers of Prince Florimund, it was an altogether fresh and evocative presentation of a classic. The ballet is a portrait of love triumphant, climaxing in the infectious happiness of Aurora's final duet with her prince. *Opening night, March 12, continuing in repertory through March at the War Memorial Opera House. (415) 861-1177.*

MUTTER THE MARVELOUS

Anne-Sophie Mutter, the German violinist who was a child prodigy and is now a very young woman (twenty-seven) of prodigious talent, has achieved some notoriety apart from her musical gifts. She has been known for the unabashed glamor of the strapless evening dresses she likes to wear for concerts, and once claimed that the direct contact between her skin and the violin increases the instrument's resonance and her ability to communicate with the music. She wears them well, and the sight of that firm, white flesh pressed so commandingly



Polish composer/conductor Witold Lutoslawski.

against a Stradivarius may have kept a few wandering minds in the audience on the matter at hand.

While the bonus of Mutter's physical attractiveness is clear, her best offerings are the force and vibrancy of her music-making. She seems to be one of those early bloomers, making her professional debut at the age of thirteen, who has continued to flower. Her March recital will be her fourth San Francisco appearance in three years; Mutter's marriage last year to a corporate lawyer and president of a film company has not noticeably reduced her touring schedule.

Mutter grew up in a town outside the Black Forest and at the age of five decided she was in love with the idea of playing the violin. At the age of six she entered Germany's Young Musicians contest and won first prize with distinction. By the time she was thirteen, she was playing recitals with her brother and attracted the attention of Herbert von Karajan, late director of the Berlin Philharmonic, who invited her to play in Berlin. She still considers him the most important influence in her playing.

Mutter's performance of Witold Lutoslawski's *Chain 2* so inspired the composer that he revised and orchestrated his *Partita* for her. For her 1991 recital, however, she will return to the romantic repertory; the program consists of the three Brahms violin sonatas, works that in the past have called forth her greatest eloquence. *March 11 in Davies Symphony Hall, San Francisco Performances. (415) 552-3656.*

LUTOSLAWSKI

Anne-Sophie Mutter performed the violin solo in Lutoslawski's *Chain 2* in her second appearance with the San Francisco Symphony, last year in Davies Hall. Next month, the Polish maestro himself will conduct a program devoted to his music, including a repeat of *Chain 2* (Raymond Kobler, soloist), *Livre pour Orchestre*, and *Concerto for Orchestra*. Now seventy-eight, Lutoslawski last performed here with the symphony in 1986.

Lutoslawski's dramatic understanding of form, which *Grove's Dictionary of Music* traces "back at least as far as Plato," produces a wonderfully balanced



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tension from contrasts and conflicts within the music's development. He understands both the beauty of logical structure and the vitality of struggle. His output has been relatively small, but the expressive power of his composition is quite grand.

Chain 2, like much of Lutoslawski's work, contains sections in which the performers are free — within strict limitations — to play independently, producing chance webs of sound. In general, however, Lutoslawski has reservations on the use of open form: "I have no wish to surrender even the smallest part of my claim to authorship of even the shortest passage of the music which I have written," he has stated. His reasoning is similar to that of the choreographer Merce Cunningham, another artist who has used chance, but only sparingly, in his work. Cunningham believes that if he left it to his dancers to improvise, they would tend to do the easiest or most obvious things, thus never attaining their full potential as performers. Lutoslawski also, has spoken of his wish to use the "abundance of potentialities concealed within the psyche of each performer;" and so he gives them a shimmering challenge. *March 6-9 at Davies Symphony Hall (415) 864-6000.*

NEW AT THE BERKELEY REP

Berkeley Repertory Theatre will follow its season opener, Edward Albee's ferocious *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, with two new plays by local writers: John O'Keefe's *Vid* and Philip Kan Gotanda's *Fish Head Soup*. Both have their share of fireworks.

Gotanda, one of our most angry and confident exponents of the Japanese-American experience in California, brings up the lasting cruelty of the past in *Fish Head Soup*, an elliptical domestic drama. Each of the four characters in the Iwasaki family has been marked by the World War II detention camps, and their pain binds them in unexpected ways.

Mat, who escaped his family by feigning his own death, returns to find his father in a catatonic state brought on by watching his son drown. Victor, the older, is a tour guide pandering to Japanese clients seeking sex. Dorothy, the mother, is sublimating her despair in a love affair

Mat sees himself as the family's healer, but their wounds are not so easily erased by a prodigal's return. One by one their illusions and secret shames come to light, only to be blown apart. The emotional damage of the past becomes the menace of the present, and only the clean wind

Playwright and performer John O'Keefe. His Vid premieres at the Berkeley Repertory Theatre beginning March 13.



DONA ANN McADAMS



JEFF DAI

The Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Company's Last Supper at Uncle Tom's Cabin at Zellerbach Hall, UC Berkeley, March 8-9.

of rage can purge this family's terror. Opening March 6, playing in rotating repertory through April 14.

Vid, a wildly expressionistic monologue written and performed by O'Keefe, combines surreal riffs on the hypnotic violence of video games with an autobiographical account of mid-seventies life

in Berkeley/San Francisco. It's pretty certain that no one but O'Keefe could make a coherency of this funny, fierce surge of words that encompasses the dislocated traumas and inadvertent comedies of life in a free-floating zone. In his own peculiar way, O'Keefe drags vitality from the doped-up aimlessness of his earlier existence. *Opening March 13, rotating with Fish Head Soup through April 14. Berkeley Repertory Theatre, 2205 Addison Street, Berkeley (415) 845-4700.*

IN BRIEF

Music: The Oakland East Bay Symphony, conducted by Michael Morgan, offers another provocative program in March, featuring Benjamin Britten's *Variation on a Theme of Frank Bridge*, David Dzubay's *Siren-Song* (a West Coast premiere), Massenet's *Meditation from Thais* and Rachmaninoff's *Rhapsody on a Theme by Paganini*, with pianist Marcantonio Berone as the soloist. March 15 at Calvins Theatre, Oakland (415) 465-6400 . . . Sinfonia San Francisco presents the world premiere of Lori McKelvey's new, as yet untitled opera, written specifically for mezzo soprano Dolora Zajick, who will also perform the United States premiere of Schoenberg's version of Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*. March 3-4 in Herbst Theatre, 401 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco (415) 495-2919 . . . San Francisco Contemporary Music Players will present music of the Estonian composer Lepo Sumera, John Thow's new song cycle and the Charles piano trio. March 4 at the San Francisco Exploratorium, 3601 Lyon Street (415) 558-0447 . . . **Dance:** Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Company, carrying on triumphantly after the death last year of co-founder Arnie Zane, will present a selection of the troupe's eccentric and excitingly physical dance, including *The Cabin*, a section of Jones's evening-length *Last Supper at Uncle Tom's Cabin*; with the Julius Hemphill Sextet. March 8-9 at Zellerbach Hall, UC Berkeley (415) 642-9988 . . . **Contraband**, San Francisco's very own group of thoroughly engaging rowdies, will perform with customary gusto in *Mandala* and *Mira*. March 21-23 at Theater Artaud, 401 Florida Street (415) 621-7797. □

Coward, With A Splash

*The terror induced by World War I gave rise to the need for oblivion . . . for a style that kept the terror at bay. Noël Coward supplied just such a style in *The Vortex* (1924)*



“**M**y original motive in *The Vortex*,” Noël Coward explained in the introduction to a 1933 selection of his plays, “was to write a good play with a whacking good part in it for myself, and I am thankful to say, with a few modest reservations, that I succeeded.” When *The Vortex* opened in Hampstead in November 1924, Coward was just shy of twenty-five. He’d been on the London theatrical scene as a child,

a produced playwright at twenty, and a popular contributor of songs and sketches to various revues, most recently *London Calling*. But it was with *The Vortex* that Coward made a splash, both as an actor and a playwright.

“With this success,” Coward continued in the same introduction, “came many pleasurable trappings. A car. New suits. Silk shirts. An extravagant amount of publicity.” Coward’s list of trappings

wasn’t meant to be entirely ironic; silk shirts and suits, to say nothing of publicity, were as much a part of his presentation as safari suits and fishing gear were of Hemingway’s.

But Coward displayed a keen self-awareness when he acknowledged that “for many years I was seldom mentioned in the press without allusions to ‘cocktails,’ ‘post-war hysteria,’ and ‘decadence.’” Such allusions can be forgiven, for these

*Above: Suzanne Bertish, Ian Abercrombie, Babbie Green, and Erica Rogers in Noël Coward’s 1924 hit, *The Vortex*, now at the Doolittle Theatre. Opposite: The playwright appeared as the piano-playing protagonist in the original production.*

by Gary Marmorstein

PRODUCTION PHOTOS BY SCHWARTZ / THOMPSON

were a few of the ingredients poured into the Jazz Age, the decade or so following the First World War. *The Vortex*, with Coward appearing as his own boyish, piano-playing protagonist, was first produced in the center of the whirlpool of that era.

By now only a tiny fraction of active theatergoers remembers the First World War. The cultural effects of that war — the bloodiest, deadliest, most horrific conflict the world had seen, with half a dozen nations engaged and casualties numbering more than eight million — hurled English-speaking people headlong out of the Victorian experience.

Irrevocable changes in behavior and dress were seen everywhere. The British, who in the previous century had adapted khaki uniforms from the Hindus for soldiers posted in the tropics, made khaki standard for all army personnel. Soldiers smoked manufactured cigarettes; civilians picked up the habit in greater numbers, and soon women were daring to smoke in public. (In 1910, Alice Roosevelt Longworth had scandalized Washington society by openly smoking a single cigarette.) The cigarette case and lighter followed as essential accoutrements. The tuxedo, which had been strictly a stag garment, worn only at occasions where women were absent, became the formal garment of choice, replacing the full dress coat. The word "cocktail" had been around for half a century, but the cocktail party, where people gathered for drink and conversation, evolved around this time. The mass-marketed gramophone brought recorded music into private residences. The loudspeaker, the wireless news photo, and the "repeater" (or amplifier) that made possible the long-distance telephone call all served to shrink the world. So, in a different way, did the Thompson sub-machine gun. The 19th Amendment to the Constitution, ratified in 1920, gave American women the right to vote, while British suffrage ran along a parallel track.

The terror induced by the World War gave rise to the need for oblivion — for wild dancing and lovemaking, hard drink and drugs, for a style that kept the terror at bay. The Jazz Age had arrived.

This is the climate that lent Coward his pigment. By 1920, when his first play,

I'll Leave It To You, was produced, he had already served a long apprenticeship in the theater. He'd been a child actor in the repertory company run by one of the last great actor-managers, Charles Hawtrey. Professionally weaned from a stage mother during his adolescence, Coward traveled easily in London's theater circles. He had known Gertrude Lawrence since they were teenagers, and now he met Beatrice Lillie, Jack Buchanan, Constance Collier, and perhaps most sig-



nificantly, Ivor Novello, the actor-playwright-songwriter, often called "the English Valentino," who had gained fame during the war, at twenty-one, by writing "Keep the Home Fires Burning."

Coward first sailed to New York in 1922. Ocean liner travel was then at its peak — more passengers, more luxury than ever. It provided, and would continue to provide, Coward not only with time to write (most Atlantic crossings took between ten days and two weeks) but a laboratory where he could reinvent himself. In a stateroom, at the captain's table, or at the ballroom piano, cigarette jammed between his reptilian lips, Cow-

ard honed his persona as exemplar of "smart society."

Coward's initial stay in New York was at once trying and invigorating. He peddled his plays and an idea for a book of satirical sketches (eventually published in America as *Terribly Intimate Portraits*, with wry caricatures drawn by Coward's secretary, Lorn MacNaughton). A couple of brief entries from the book show that Coward was already mixing his prose extra dry:

Met the Theater Guild this morning and played hide and seek with them in the park — such a merry set of rascals! Teresa [sic] Helburn invented a new prank — she took all my MSS. and hid them in a tin box for two months — how we laughed!

Such a busy day! Had plays refused by Edgar Selwyn and William Harris, and this book turned down by Scribner's. I also fell off a bus, being unused to getting out on the right-hand side. I just love America.

Discouraged by his failure to place any of his plays, Coward still found New York "hard and clear . . . like a diamond, unsmudged as a memory by sentimental glamour, but sharp with efficiency, strenuous ambition and achievement." With a score of New York friendships established, he returned to London and wrote *Easy Virtue*, a play he regarded as a personal breakthrough. (It was produced in 1925.) While giving eight performances a week in *London Calling*, Coward, always a speedy, unbothered writer ("If I type easily then I know the stuff is good!" he once told Cecil Beaton), dashed off two more full-length plays, *Fallen Angels* and *The Vortex*. These two voyaged "disconsolately in and out of most of the London theater managers' offices," Coward conceded.

The Vortex found harbor with Norman Macdermott, manager of the Everyman Theater in Hampstead. Coward was delighted, insisting only that he himself play Nicky, the leading male role. Well, why not? *He is extremely well dressed in traveling clothes, goes Nicky's description. He is tall and pale, with thin, nervous hands.* Who better suited to a stage direction like *Nicky goes to the*

piano and plays jazz? Macdermott agreed. Coward's friend Kate Cutler was engaged to play Nicky's mother Florence. There was just one hitch: the producers were two hundred pounds short.

Scrambling for money, Coward thought of his acquaintance Michael Arlen, who had just scored a smashing success with his novel *The Green Hat*. Careening out of the midnight of the Jazz Age, the novel tells the story of Iris March, a very modern young woman "of bad stock," whose wildness brings despair to the men who love her. Except for her selfless, violent suicide, Iris March could be a Coward heroine — beautiful, clever, self-absorbed, and "fast." Published earlier in the year (1924), the book had made its Armenian-born author instantly famous.

As Coward recalled in *Present Indicative*, the first installment of his memoirs, composed at the advanced age of thirty-seven:

Success was still new to him [Arlen] and the odour of recent shabbiness must still be lingering in his nostrils. I telephoned him straight away and he asked me to dine with him that night at the Embassy. It was such a smart evening at the beginning of the winter season. We had cocktails in the newly decorated bar and smiled with affable contempt upon the newly decorated clientele. Halfway through dinner I blurted out my troubles, and without ever questioning me about the play or making any cautious stipulations about repayment, he called for a cheque form and wrote out a cheque for two hundred pounds immediately.

Four years Coward's senior, Arlen worked without the garrulous support that London's theater community provided Coward. Despite wealth and fame, Arlen seemed to lose his way after service in the Second World War, and he ended his days writing screenplays in Hollywood.

The production of *The Vortex*, meanwhile, was mounted. But then another, equally serious hitch occurred: Kate Cutler angrily departed because Coward, who tinkered with the script right up to

the last minute, had greatly enlarged his own part. Against Norman Macdermott's furious objections, Lilian Braithwaite, an actress of imposing physique, was brought in to play Florence, who was initially conceived of as petite. The play, which was dedicated to its designer Gladys Calthrop, was a hit and quickly moved into the Royalty Theater in London.

In hindsight of more than sixty-five years, the success of *The Vortex* isn't surprising. It described the cultural eddy created by the crosscurrents of Victorian and modern mores. Florence, a product



Rupert Everett and Stephanie Beacham.

of the Victorian era, and Nicky, more a product of postwar disillusionment, each clings to his own special isle of enchantment — illicit romance for Florence, drugs for Nicky. What saves the play from the upcoming or current century, are dramatic cousins.

Coward learned well from Pinero, England's premier dramatist until George Bernard Shaw took a long-term lease on an entire lane of English-speaking theater. There were other teachers, acknowledged or otherwise. Beginning with Thomas William Robertson's *Caste* (1867), which managed to fold overt criticism of the British class system into a melodrama, up through Henry Arthur

Jones's *The Liars* (1897), to the light-fantastic works of James M. Barrie, the bathos is the way Coward constructed their interplay. The carpentry appears to be modeled on Arthur Wing Pinero's *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* (1893), a hugely successful play in its time that, though it now reads as quaint, was built with a solid rectangular structure: father; daughter; father's new young wife; daughter's new lover, formerly young wife's lover. (At the curtain, the young wife commits suicide; *The Green Hat*'s Iris March is descended from this second Mrs. Tanqueray. So many young heroines of the era, unable to shade the glare of darker political plays of John Galsworthy, and the expert social comedies of his older friend Somerset Maugham (especially *The Circle*, 1921, and *Our Betters*, 1923), Coward soaked up the rudiments of play construction and learned how to aim his lines at an audience.

The Vortex was the most popular play to open in 1924, if not the most influential. (In America, that distinction might go to Sidney Howard's *They Knew What They Wanted*, or to the Maxwell Anderson-Laurence Stallings collaboration *What Price Glory?*; in England, to Sutton Vane's *Outward Bound*; an eerie, naturalistic play about an ocean liner carrying passengers toward some kind of hereafter.) *The Vortex* received its share of positive notices. The London *Sunday Times* said, "Brains must ultimately come by their own, even in the theater; and Mr. Coward has brains to spare."

But Coward also swilled in the more pervasive verdict that his play was "unwholesome" — which it was. Its popularity made him more visible than ever before. After each performance he liked to repair to one of the local supper clubs, as much to be seen as to eat. His favorite club was the Fifty-Fifty.

"It was then run by Constance Collier and Ivor Novello and catered exclusively to 'Us,'" Coward recalled. He and Novello had stepped out together as early as 1917, when Coward had just joined the British Army and the already famous Novello was serving in the Air Ministry. Through the twenties their careers intersected at

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NEWS FROM THE AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER

A.C.T.'s Advanced Training Program

Third Year Students Prepare for *New Faces of 1991*, April 18

Yes, A.C.T.'s Conservatory is unique in as many ways as there are lines in *Hamlet*. But perhaps the single most original program A.C.T. offers Advanced Training students is the invitation to train for a third year, working toward the Master of Fine Arts degree — and to experience their *first* year as company members. The culminating Advanced Training Program class is a small, select group admitted to third year training by invitation only, and those honored to be chosen negotiate a significant workload between their twin roles as professionals and students.

Sabin Epstein, Co-director of A.C.T.'s Conservatory, notes that the third year class, to some extent, chooses and forms itself. "When the first year class arrives, they come equipped with their individual personalities — thirty-two of them. Then there's something less tangible, but equally important, and that is the group personality. Usually the first year class is somewhat diffuse and very enthusiastic. They feel as if everything's before them. They're immortal."

"Next, something happens over the summer," observes Epstein. The class returns changed. "You might say they're more focused, more mature or chastened, or . . . terrified! Whatever you call it, they know that this is their moment. They no longer simply feel they're preparing for something unknown. This is their career. No more ten minutes to curtain. This is it. You're on!"

The class makes it, as a whole and as individuals, through the challenging second year curriculum. They appear in suitable roles on the mainstage as well as in numerous workshop productions. They study and rehearse, they hone established techniques and learn new skills. And then, for most Advanced Training Program students, the real world beckons. Many depart for the actor's life of auditions or for professional work on the stage or in commercial film and television. A few are



Sabin Epstein, Co-Conservatory Director (center front), and A.C.T.'s Advanced Training Program *New Faces of 1991*: (front row, left to right) Deborah Norton, Elizabeth Sampson, Marvin Greene, Gillian Marloth; (back row, left to right) James Patrick Kennedy, Jamie Lopez, Tim Lord, Eric Mills.

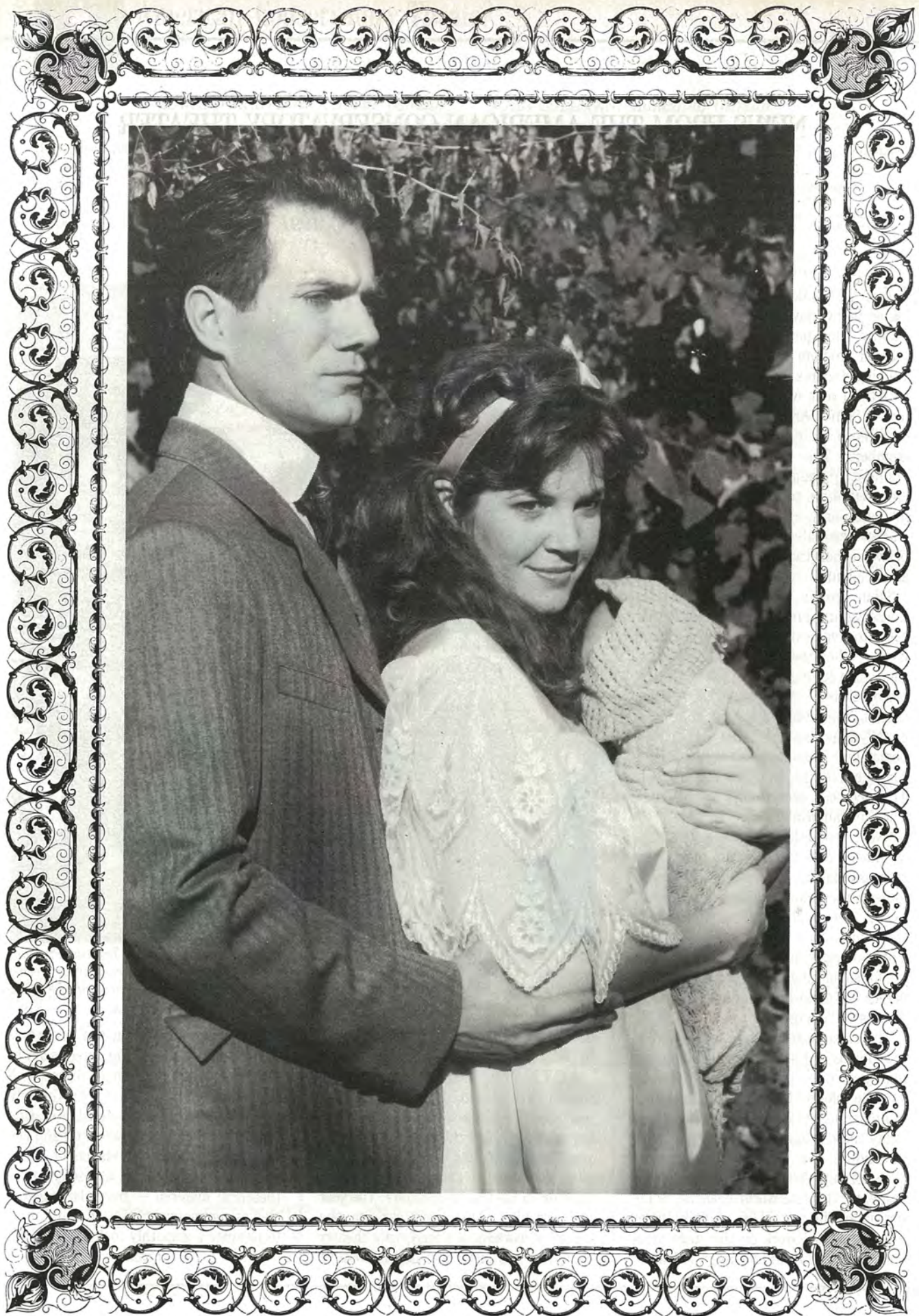
asked to stay on for a third year of training and participation in the company.

A.C.T.'s third year students receive special instruction from the master teachers of the Conservatory in a number of classes. But the heart of the final year experience lies in the professional work expected of the students by the directors of the mainstage shows. The year is a dizzying, heady exposure to the reality of working in a busy, vital theater company. It's also the finest possible

apprenticeship for life in the market.

The culmination of the three years in A.C.T.'s Advanced Training Program is a group audition presented to approximately 200 key entertainment industry casting agents and directors in New York and Los Angeles. Under the guidance of Sabin Epstein, the class rehearses a selection of theatrical material — from the stage as well as commercial television and film — to produce a smoothly melded showcase

Continued on page P-19



American Conservatory Theater

presents

1918

(1979)

by Horton Foote

Directed by Sabin Epstein

Scenery by Edward Burbridge

Costumes by Cathleen Edwards

Lighting by Derek Duarte

Sound by Stephen LeGrand

Hair by Rick Echols

Music Advisor Donald Eldon Wescoat

Dialect Coach Eric Zivot

Assistant to the Director John Furse

The Cast

<i>Horace Robedaux</i>	Tom O'Brien
<i>Sam Goldman</i>	Michael McFall
<i>Elizabeth Robedaux</i>	Elizabeth Sampson
<i>Brother Vaughn</i>	Jamie Lopez
<i>Bessie Stillman</i>	Deborah Norton
<i>Mr. Vaughn</i>	Sydney Walker
<i>Mrs. Vaughn</i>	Anne Lawder
<i>Gladys Maude</i>	Annie Gillin*
	Camille Winet*
<i>Irma Sue</i>	Heather Lueck*
	Maggy Krell*
<i>Dr. Greene</i>	Barry Kraft
<i>Mrs. Boone</i>	Cathy Thomas-Grant
<i>A Boy</i>	Jason Lueck

*alternating

The Place: Harrison, Texas 1918

There will be one intermission.

Understudies

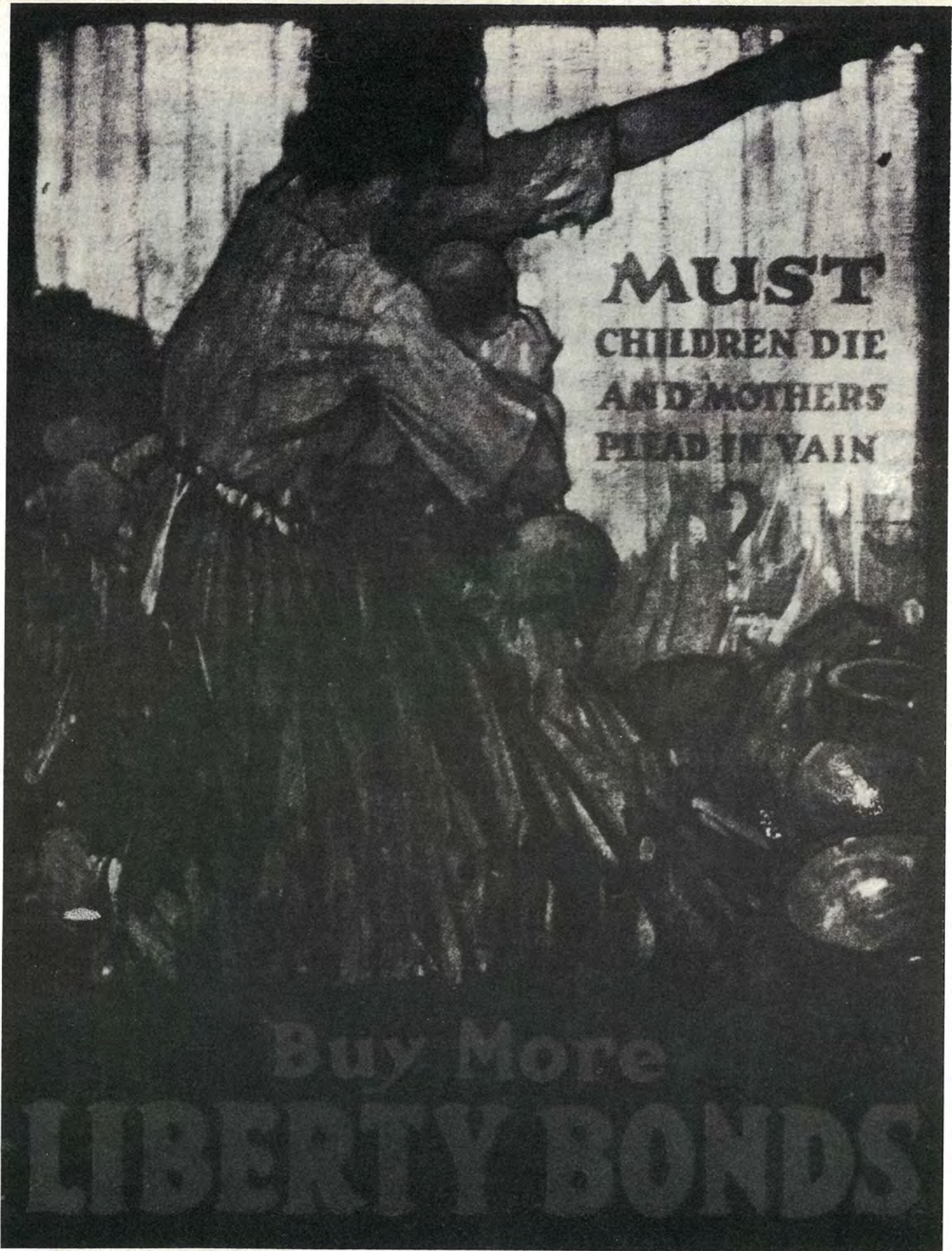
Horace Robedaux — James Patrick Kennedy; *Sam Goldman* — Luis Oropeza; *Elizabeth Robedaux* — Sharon Lockwood; *Brother Vaughn* — Eric Zivot; *Bessie Stillman* — Judith Moreland; *Mr. Vaughn, Dr. Greene* — William Paterson; *Mrs. Vaughn, Mrs. Boone* — Joy Carlin

Stage Management Bruce Elsperger, Eugene Barcone

The children in this production are students in A.C.T.'s Young Conservatory.

This production is made possible in part through a grant from the Louis R. Lurie Foundation.

Opposite: Tom O'Brien and Elizabeth Sampson as Horace and Elizabeth Robedaux in 1918.



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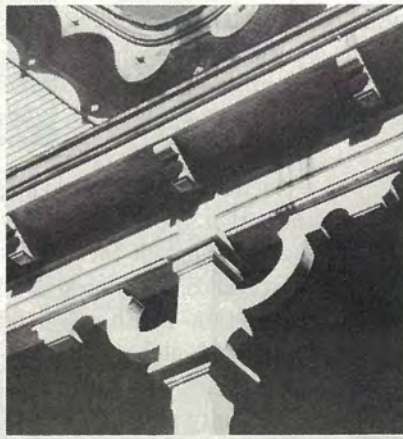


Director's Note

Horton Foote's *1918*

by Sabin Epstein

Horton Foote is surely one of our national treasures: fashions and fads come and go, but his chronicle of American life is unique in our theater and exquisite in touching our memories. *The Orphans' Home Cycle* — of which *1918* is the seventh in the nine-play series — is, in fact, a kind of massive diary of a family, mirror-



ing the chronology of his parents' life and the start of his own. The plays are inter-connected, inter-woven, and co-enriching, but each stands on its own as an entity.

Consider Shakespeare's magnificent history plays which give us a picture of England, a panorama of kings and peasants. But Shakespeare's history



Above: *New York's 69th Infantry bids the girls goodbye.* Inset: *From Wood Motifs in American Domestic Architecture* by Ben Karp.



was more art than fact, more myth than reality, more what he wanted the past to seem to be than what it was.

Similarly, Foote draws on a microcosm of small-town life, and from that world we extrapolate our national memory. War and pandemic fevers are echoed and re-echoed today in screaming headlines and dying friends. But Foote is not writing about "issues" or "problems," rather about people. We know those people and we hear, all too clearly, those echoes.

Horton Foote's *1918* is not about a war or a town or a pandemic. It's about ordinary life suffering extraordinary circumstances. It's about ordinary people in extraordinary times, people maintaining ordinary routine while all around them the extraordinary makes itself known in their lives.

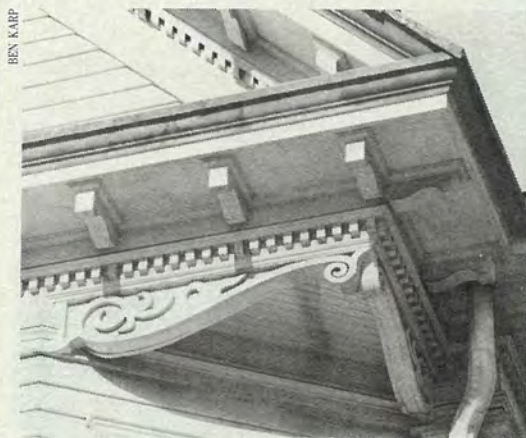
The influenza pandemic of 1918-19

loomed as large as World War I in the lives of Americans, and was, for the nation, the cause of many more deaths than the War. The two events together brought the world to a confrontation with the very meaning of existence, and nobody's life was the same after the crises collective destruction. Death was as much a part of daily life for average citizens around the globe as routine labor and housekeeping.

Uncertainty and loss have always been a part of life. Our response to difficulty and pain are, in Horton Foote's play, a measure of the surprising strength the plainest people can exhibit in adversity. *1918* was a plague year, and Foote's *1918* is a plague play. How we can live when pain and suffering are all around us, how we can go forth in the company of sorrow and loss, are the grand themes of *1918*.



BEN KARP



BEN KARP

Horton Foote's fifty-year writing career has produced a prodigious body of work which continues to enjoy television, stage and screen production. Born in Wharton, Texas on March 14, 1916, Foote studied elocution in Dallas and acting at the Pasadena Playhouse, where he became dedicated to the theater. His early plays were written for and produced by the American Actors Company in New York between 1939 and 1943, until his first Broadway production, *Only the Heart*, in 1944. During the 1950's Foote pursued an active writing schedule for television — which included "The Gabby Hayes Show" and numerous teleplays — and received three additional Broadway productions for *The Chase*, produced by Jose Ferrer in 1952; *The Trip to Bountiful* in 1953 with Lillian Gish, Jo Van Fleet, and Eva Marie Saint; and *Traveling Lady* in 1954. A successful transition to film scripting won Foote the Academy Award for Best Screenplay in 1962 for his adaptation of Harper Lee's

About the Playwright



TAD HERSHORN

To Kill a Mockingbird, and was closely followed by screenplays for *Baby*, *The Rain Must Fall* in 1964 (based on Foote's play *The Traveling Lady*) and *Hurry Sundown* in 1966. Between 1974 and 1977 he wrote the nine plays that comprise *The Orphans' Home Cycle* — the

body of work which traces Horace Robedaux's growth from a child of twelve to his own child's twelfth year, and in which *1918* appears as the seventh play. After a period of strict theater writing, Foote returned to television and film work, and in 1983 he garnered his second Oscar for Best Original Screenplay for *Tender Mercies* (the film for which Robert Duvall received the Academy Award for Best Actor); and in 1985 he was nominated again for Best Screenplay for *The Trip to Bountiful*, for which Geraldine Page received the Best Actress award.

On March 14th, Horton Foote celebrates his 75th birthday. One of the few writers who has been able to achieve his artistic vision through the changing media of the 20th century, Foote continues to assert his personal influence over the production process. Not merely content to actualize the filming of the nine chapters in *The Orphans' Home Cycle*, Foote has recently adapted Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* for a Roland Joffe HBO and BBC production.

From “Flu: Virus with a thousand faces”



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Above: During the 1918-1919 flu season, women sewed masks, which were required attire. Overleaf: At the 1918 Armistice Day parade in San Francisco, celebrating marchers covered their mouths and noses with flu masks. Photo courtesy of San Francisco Public Library.

“Influenza is something unique. It behaves epidemiologically in a way different from that of any other known infection,” declared Sir Christopher Andrewes, one of the two men responsible for first isolating the human

influenza virus 56 years ago. Sir Christopher, who died [in 1989], lived to see his discovery (the isolate was literally taken from his own throat during a flu attack and transferred into a ferret) become one of the best under-

stood, and still most confounding of viruses in medical science.

Hippocrates himself is credited with the first clinical description of influenza in 412 B.C. when it reportedly swept through the Athenian army.

by Jon Stewart



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The American Conservatory Theater's production of "The American" is a powerful statement on the state of our nation. It is a play that is both timely and timeless, and it is a play that is both thought-provoking and emotionally resonant. The play is a masterpiece of American theater, and it is a play that is both relevant and universal.

The play is a masterpiece of American theater, and it is a play that is both relevant and universal. The play is a masterpiece of American theater, and it is a play that is both relevant and universal. The play is a masterpiece of American theater, and it is a play that is both relevant and universal.

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Researchers suspect the disease has been around as long as man has lived in sufficiently dense populations to permit transmittal, and there is general agreement that the human virus evolved from an even more ancient animal or avian virus. In a very real sense, the viruses that send us to bed today are the direct descendants of the critters that visited Hippocrates and Livy nearly 2½ millennia ago.

The mis-named Spanish flu of 1918-1919 was unequalled in recorded history. Of all known pandemic diseases, it was probably rivaled only by the 6th century Plague of Justinian and the 14th century Bubonic Plague, which may have killed more than 60 million over a period of several years. Between September 1918 and June 1919, 500,000 to 675,000 deaths resulted in the United States alone, and at least 20 million worldwide, or about 1 percent of the world's population (some researchers claim that that many died just in India). One historian has calculated that had the epidemic continued its peak rate of acceleration, "humanity would have been eradicated in a matter of months."

Unlike previous pandemics and epidemics, which hit mostly the elderly or the very young, this one hit the healthy 20-to-40 year-old age group with special ferocity, and it devastated rural and small-town populations as indiscriminately as it did the confined masses fighting in Europe. In Samoa, one of every four people died. In some English public schools, as many as two-thirds of the children perished. In Washington, public gatherings were banned and bars were closed. In New York, coughing and sneezing without a handkerchief was punishable by jail sentences. In San Francisco, health authorities required the wearing of face masks. All across the nation, coffins were at a premium.

The great 1918-19 influenza pandemic hit San Francisco in the fall of



1918 with a ferocity that, within a matter of months, would double, triple, then quadruple the number of deaths caused in the great earthquake and fire of just a dozen years earlier. As bad as it was in San Francisco, other American regions fared even worse. In one two-week period, more than 300,000 cases and 10,000 deaths

were reported in Pennsylvania, the hardest hit state. Chicago saw death tolls reach as high as 400 to 500 a day. Nationally, the toll reached 548,452, about 10 times the number of Americans killed in World War I.

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Who's Who



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

A native San Franciscan, **JAMES PATRICK KENNEDY** first appeared on the stage while attending St. Ignatius College Preparatory. He is now a third-year M.F.A. candidate in A.C.T.'s Advanced Training Program, having played Solyony in *The Three Sisters*, York in *Henry VI, Parts 1-3*, Newman Noggs in *Nicholas Nickleby*, Horace Robedaux in *Courtship*, and Bert in *Marie and Bruce*. He has performed on



A.C.T.'s mainstage in *A Christmas Carol*, *A Tale of Two Cities* and *Food and Shelter*, in *Rushmore* for Plays in Progress, and at Theatre Rhinoceros in *Poppies*. Among his other roles, Mr. Kennedy played Joseph Brennen in *Winners*, Bullock in *The Recruiting Officer*, and Hamlet in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* at Stanford University, where he received a B.A. in psychology and an M.A. in Latin American studies.



BARRY KRAFT, a charter member of the company, has been seen in recent seasons in *The Doctor's Dilemma*, *A Christmas Carol*, *King Lear* (alternating in the title role), *End of the World . . .*, *Golden Boy*, as the Inquisitor in *Saint Joan*, as Evrémonde in *A Tale of Two Cities*, Kerner in *Hapgood*, and in the Plays in Progress production *Inside Technocult*. He is a veteran of A.C.T.'s 1965 production of *King Lear* in Pittsburgh, as well as of the 1968 season in San Francisco. Mr. Kraft has spent 24 of the last 30 summers

acting in Shakespeare festivals around the country, and has appeared in 34 of Shakespeare's 38 plays. Among the roles he has played at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival are Berowne in *Love's Labor's Lost*, Hotspur in *Henry IV, Part I*, Mark Antony in *Julius Caesar*, Leontes in *The Winter's Tale*, and Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. His work has been seen at the Empty Space in Seattle, the Utah Shakespearean Festival, the Berkeley Shakespeare Festival, Shakespeare/Santa Cruz, the Old Globe, and in the San Jose Repertory Company's productions of *Cyrano de Bergerac* (as Cyrano), Edward Hastings' 007: *Crossfire*, and *Passion* under the direction of Joy Carlin. Most recently he played Joseph Kerner in *Hapgood* for A Contemporary Theatre in Seattle. Mr. Kraft is a trainer at the Conservatory, and has taught Shakespeare at the Santa Cruz and Irvine campuses of the University of California and for the National Theatre Conservatory in Denver.



ANNE LAWDER returns to A.C.T. for her 19th season. A graduate of Stanford University, she was an original member of the San Francisco Actor's Workshop. She has appeared with the Seattle Repertory Theatre, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, P.C.P.A., and the Denver Center Theatre, acting in such plays as *Our Town*, *The Threepenny Opera*, *Lysistrata*, *Ring Round The Moon*, *Show Boat*, and *Hamlet* (twice). At A.C.T., where her husband, the late Allen Fletcher, was Conservatory Director, she has been seen in *Pillars of the Community*, *Equus*, *The*



Master Builder, All the Way Home, Ah, Wilderness!, Heartbreak House, Romeo and Juliet, Ghosts, Another Part of the Forest, Mourning Becomes Electra, Morning's at Seven, Faustus in Hell, The Immigrant, and Judevine. She recently appeared in the Plays in Progress production *Babylon Gardens*. This summer she appeared in *Richard III* for the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival. Her films include the Movies of the Week *A Christmas Without Snow* and *Eye on the Sparrow* (directed by John Korty) and Francis Ford Coppola's *Tucker*. She appeared in Encore Theatre Company's world premiere of *Impatient Trains*, which was written by her daughter-in-law, Ellen Moore. In 1982 Ms. Lawder received the Alumni of the Year Award for Life Achievement from Burlingame High School. She has two children, John C. and Julia Fletcher (both distinguished theater professionals) and three beautiful grandchildren.



SHARON LOCKWOOD made her A.C.T. debut in *Saturday, Sunday and Monday*. An actress with the San Francisco Mime Troupe since 1969, she has appeared in more than 20 of their productions, including Brecht's *The Mother*, *The Dragon Lady's Revenge*, *Ripped Van Winkle*, *We Can't Pay, We Won't Pay*; and *Secrets in the Sand*, for which she received the Bay Area Critics Circle Award (ensemble performance). She played at the Eureka Theatre in *About Face*, which travelled to New York, and in their downtown San Francisco run of *Cloud 9*. Ms. Lockwood has also performed in Marin Theatre Company's *Noises Off* at the Marines, and in Berkeley Rep's *Servant of Two Masters* and *Reckless*.



JAMIE LOPEZ is in his third year with A.C.T.'s Advanced Training Program, where he has played Suffolk and Richard III in *Henry VI, Parts 1-3*, Damis in *Tartuffe*, Mr. Mantalini in *Nicholas Nickleby*, Dwayne in *Terminal Bear*, and Tusenbach in *The Three Sisters*. He also has been seen as Chris in *Navy Brat* at the Seattle Repertory Theatre, Mimiko in *The Overgrown Path* at the Empty Space, Charlie in *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* at Seattle Children's Theatre, and Salvatore in *The Rose Tattoo* at the Intiman Theatre. He toured the United States, the Soviet Union, and Central America for the Peace Child Foundation, and has appeared in numerous films, television programs, and commercials. Mr. Lopez is a recipient of a Friends of A.C.T. Advanced Training Fellowship.



A graduate of A.C.T.'s Advanced Training Program, **MICHAEL McFALL** played the title role in *Richard III* in the Conservatory studio, where he also played Leo Whalen in *Days to Come*, Michael in *Impatient Trains*, Medley in *The Man of Mode*, Isham in *Another Part of the Forest*, and Sandy in *Hay Fever*. Mr.

McFall played Manchu in *Casualties* and Speed in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, among other roles, for TheatreWorks, and has appeared with the Utah Shakespearean Festival in *Macbeth*, *The Winter's Tale*, and as Sebastian in *The Tempest*. Last season Mr. McFall played the Ghost of Christmas Future in *A Christmas Carol*, Clay in *Dutchman* and Tierney in *Clara* in the A.C.T./Lorraine Hansberry Theatre co-production *2 Acts of Passion*, and Curio in *Twelfth Night*. He also has been seen in A.C.T.'s *Food and Shelter* and *The Imaginary Invalid*, and in the Plays in Progress productions *Them That's Got* and *Food and Shelter*. Last summer he appeared at Théâtre Des Amandiers De Paris in *Suspended Life*.



JUDITH MORELAND holds an M.F.A. in acting from A.C.T.'s Advanced Training Program, where she has appeared in studio productions of *Bus Stop* (Elma), *Coriolanus* (Valeria), and *The Three Sisters* (Irina), in the Plays in Progress productions *Babylon Gardens* (Opal) and *Them That's Got* (Sharon), and on the main stage in *Food and Shelter* (Librarian), *Macbeth* (Witch), and *A Christmas Carol* (Beth and Mrs. Dilber). She has also performed at the Eureka Theatre in *Ma Rose* (Rosa), and with the New York Shakespeare Festival in, among other plays, *Romeo and Juliet* (Lady Monatgue) and *As You Like It* (Phebe). Ms. Moreland teaches in A.C.T.'s Conservatory.

DEBORAH NORTON, a recipient of a Friends of A.C.T. Advanced Training Program Fellowship, is a third-year student in the Advanced Training Program, having played such roles as Annie Gayle Long in *Spring Dance*, Amy Beth in *Life Under Water*, Helena in *All's Well That Ends*



Well, and Madame Pernelle in *Tartuffe*. She has appeared on A.C.T.'s mainstage in *A Christmas Carol*, *Twelfth Night*, *Coming Attractions*, and *June 2nd* for Encore Theatre Company, in *Rushmore* and *Babylon Gardens* for Plays in Progress, and in numerous productions for P.C.P.A. Theatrefest, including *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Westwood Playhouse in Los Angeles.



TOM O'BRIEN was last seen at A.C.T. in such mainstage productions as *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Sleeping Prince*, *Mass Appeal*, *A Christmas Carol* and the premiere of Marsha Norman's *The Holdup*, directed by Edward Hastings. He has appeared on television in numerous shows, including "Storm and Sorrow," "Thirtysomething," "L.A. Law," "Call to Glory," "Moonlighting," "Young Riders," and "Men." Among his film credits are *The Big Easy*, *The Accused*, and this season's A.B.C. television feature, *Son of the Morning Star*. Mr. O'Brien trained in A.C.T.'s Young Conservatory and Summer Training Congress.

LUIS OROPEZA made his debut at A.C.T. in 1987 as the Fool in *King Lear*. Since



then he has played Tokio in *Golden Boy*, the Steward and DeCourcelles in *Saint Joan*, and roles in *Feathers*, *When We Are Married*, *Marco Millions*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Right Mind*, *The Imaginary Invalid*, and *Saturday, Sunday and Monday*. He began his career performing Chicano street theater in the barrios of East Los Angeles, and spent five years working with Luis Valdez and El Teatro Campesino. His various Bay Area theater credits — which have earned him four Critics Circle Awards and a Drama-Logue Award — include a five-year-old girl in *Cloud 9* and 21 different characters in *How I Got That Story* (both for the Eureka Theatre) and appearances with San Jose Repertory Theatre, Berkeley Shakespeare Festival, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, and Encore Theatre Company. Mr. Oropeza has also worked at San Diego Repertory Theatre, New Mexico Repertory Theatre, and the Denver Center Theatre Company. He has been featured on "Falcon Crest" and "Midnight Caller," in the film *Pacific Heights*, and has just completed four months as Dr. Bancroft in *Curse of the Werewolf* at Theatre on the Square.



WILLIAM PATERSON is now in his 24th season with A.C.T., having joined the

company in 1967 to play James Tyrone in *Long Day's Journey into Night*. A graduate of Brown University, Mr. Paterson served in the army for four years before starting his professional acting career in a summer stock company. He appeared for at least part of every season for twenty years at the Cleveland Play House, taking time out for live television, films, and four national tours with his own one-man shows. The list of A.C.T. productions in which he has appeared in major roles includes *You Can't Take It With You*, *Jumpers*, *The Matchmaker* (U.S.S.R. tour), *All the Way Home* (Japan tour), *Buried Child*, *The Gin Game*, *Dial "M" for Murder*, *Painting Churches*, *The Doctor's Dilemma*, *King Lear*, *Saint Joan*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, and *Saturday, Sunday and Monday*. Mr. Paterson played Scrooge in the original A.C.T. production of *A Christmas Carol*, and this season was Scrooge again in its fifteenth year. He served for nine years on the San Francisco Arts Commission, and for two years as a Trustee of the A.C.T. Foundation.



A third-year student in the Advanced Training Program, ELIZABETH SAMPSON has played in Conservatory studio productions of *The Three Sisters* (Masha), *Tartuffe* (Flipote), *All's Well That Ends Well* (the Countess), *Nicholas Nickleby* (Fanny Squeers and Miss Bravassa), *Courtship* (Elizabeth Vaughn), and *Marie and Bruce* (Bettina). She has been seen on A.C.T.'s mainstage in *A Christmas Carol* and *Twelfth Night*. In addition to training in theater, Ms. Sampson has studied dance with the Royal Ballet in London, the Stuttgart Ballet in Germany, and the Washington Ballet in Washington, D.C.



CATHY THOMAS-GRANT, a graduate of the Advanced Training Program, is now in her third season at A.C.T., where she has appeared in *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, *Saint Joan*, *Marco Millions*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Golden Boy*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Judevine*, *The Imaginary Invalid*, and *Food and Shelter* (on the main stage and for Plays in Progress). She has also acted with Encore Theatre Company in Edward Bond's *Saved*, and in *Currents* and *D.N.R.* in A.C.T.'s Plays in Progress series. Ms. Thomas-Grant directed the Bay Area premiere of David Beaird's *Scorchers* for Howler Productions at the Intersection for the Arts, and this past summer she played Lady Macbeth for America Players Theatre.

SYDNEY WALKER, a forty-five-year veteran of stage, film, and television, has performed in some 231 productions. A native of Philadelphia, he trained with Jasper



Deeter at the Hedgerow 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 1974 Mr. Walker joined A.C.T., and has since performed in 63 productions including *The Matchmaker* (U.S.S.R. tour), *Peer Gynt*, *The Circle*, *Diamond Lil*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Loot*, *Angels Fall*, *The School for Wives*, *Translations*, *When We Are Married*, *Nothing Sacred*, the remounting of *Saint Joan* at the American Festival Theatre in Stratford, Connecticut, the Lorraine Hansberry/A.C.T. co-production *2 Acts of Passion*, and *Judevine*. 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 *The Long Road Home*. Mr. Walker was narrator for the KQED-TV series "New York Master Chefs."



ERIC ZIVOT, who made his mainstage debut with the company in *Saturday, Sunday and Monday*, also appeared in this season's *A Christmas Carol*. Last season he was seen as Valmont in *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* for Citi Arts, and in *Them That's Got* for A.C.T.'s Plays in Progress. A native of Canada, he played the Rock 'n' Roll Master of Ceremonies in Michael Bogdonov's modern-dress *Measure for Measure* at the Stratford Festival in Canada and Sebastian in *Twelfth Night* for the Festival's U.S. Tour. He also appeared as Lord Fredrick Verisopht in the Canadian company of *Nicholas Nickleby*, and as Patrick in *Spanish Post Cards* at the Canadian New Play Festival. Mr. Zivot is a trainer in A.C.T.'s Advanced Training program, where he teaches voice and speech. He has also served as voice and dialect coach for A.C.T.'s *A Tale of Two Cities* and *Judevine*, Berkeley Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, and Marin Shakespeare Company's *As You Like It*.

DIRECTORS DESIGNERS, AND STAFF

EDWARD HASTINGS (Artistic Director), assumed the leadership of A.C.T. early in 1986. A founding member of the company, he directed *Charley's Aunt* and *Our Town* during its first two San Francisco seasons. Since then he has staged many A.C.T. productions, including *The Time of Your Life*, *The House of Blue Leaves*, *Street Scene*, *Fifth of July*, *The Real Thing*, *King Lear*, *When We Are Married*, and *Judevine*. In 1972 he founded the company's Plays in Progress program, which is devoted to the development and presen-

tation of new theater writing, and for which he recently directed Timothy Mason's *Babylon Gardens*. Mr. Hastings served as a resident director at the Eugene O'Neill Playwrights' Conference for three summers, and taught acting in 1984 at the Shanghai Drama Institute as part of the Theater Bridge Program between A.C.T. and the Shanghai theater. He has been involved in the development of cultural exchange and is a member of the Arts International Committee of the Institute of International Education. He directed a

national company of the London and Broadway musical *Oliver!*, staged the American production of *Shakespeare's People* (starring Michael Redgrave), directed the Australian premiere of *The Hot l Baltimore*, and restaged his A.C.T. production of Sam Shepard's *Buried Child* in Serbo-Croatian at the Yugoslav Dramatic Theatre in Belgrade. His A.C.T. productions have also been presented on tour in the United States, including Hawaii, and in Tokyo, and he has been a guest director at major resident theaters

throughout the country. A graduate of Yale College and the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, Mr. Hastings teaches in the A.C.T. Conservatory, and this season will direct the West Coast premiere of Lisette Lecat Ross's South African drama *Dark Sun*.

JOHN SULLIVAN (Managing Director) joined A.C.T. as its chief administrative officer in 1986. A native San Franciscan, Mr. Sullivan has been active in the theater since the mid-1970s, when he directed Harvey Perr's *Afternoon Tea* for the Circle Repertory Company in New York. In 1977 he joined the staff of the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles as a resident director and producer; as head of the Taper's Forum Laboratory he produced numerous new plays by such writers as David Mamet, Susan Yankowitz, and A.R. Gurney. More recently he produced *The Detective*, a collaboration between Joseph Chaikin and Vaudeville Nouveau at San Francisco's Magic Theatre. A former deputy director of the California Arts Council, Mr. Sullivan has served on the Boards of Theatre Bay Area and the San Francisco New Vaudeville Festival. After completing his graduate work at the University of Southern California's School of Cinema, Mr. Sullivan wrote and directed numerous short films for the educational and entertainment markets, including three which were featured on national Emmy Award broadcasts. For five years he was a consultant to the Rand Corporation, focusing his work on the process and societal impact of popular culture. As a communications consultant Mr. Sullivan has advised such diverse clients as the California Roundtable, Kansas City Power and Light, and Major League Rodeo. Among his writings is *The National Outdoor Leadership School's Wilderness Guide*, a manual for camping and mountaineering published by Simon and Schuster, and numerous articles for magazines and newspapers.

BENNY SATO AMBUSH (Associate Artistic Director) is a veteran theater professional with national and international experience as a director, educator, producer, and arts administrator. Before joining A.C.T. this season, he was the Artistic/Producing Director of the Oakland Ensemble Theatre (OET) for eight years, where his directing credits included *Divi-*

sion Street, *Letters from a New England Negro*, *MLK: We Are the Dream*, *Tamer of Horses*, and *Alterations*. He also directed *Master Harold . . . and the Boys* for the California Conservatory Theatre. Before joining OET, he served as a National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Arts Management Fellow in its Special Projects Program, as an Assistant Director-in-Residence at Washington, D.C.'s Arena Stage, as an NEA Directing Fellow at the Pittsburgh Public Theatre, and as a United States Information Agency sponsored lecturer to Kenyatta University, Nairobi, Kenya. He has served on the Board of Theatre Bay Area and chaired its Theater Services Committee, is a member of the Multi-Cultural Advisory Council for the California Arts Council, and has been active locally, regionally, and nationally in advocacy for cultural equity, non-traditional casting, and pluralism in American art. Mr. Ambush received his B.A. in theater arts and dramatic literature from Brown University, and his M.F.A. in stage directing from the University of California, San Diego.

DENNIS POWERS (Associate Artistic Director) joined A.C.T. in 1967, during the company's first San Francisco season, after six years as an arts writer at the Oakland Tribune. Before being named to his present position in 1986 by Edward Hastings, he worked with William Ball as, successively, Press Representative, Staff Writer, Dramaturge, and Artists and Repertory Director. The A.C.T. productions on which he has collaborated as dramaturge or adaptor include *Oedipus Rex*, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *The Bourgeois Gentleman*, *King Richard III*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Saint Joan* and *Diamond Lil*. The most popular of his adaptations, the fifteen-year-old *A Christmas Carol*, was written with Laird Williamson, who was also his collaborator on *Christmas Miracles*, premiered at Denver Center Theater Company in 1985 and later published. Among the other theaters with which he has been associated are Long Wharf Theater in New Haven, Stanford Repertory Theater, Pacific Conservatory for the Performing Arts and San Francisco's Valencia Rose Cabaret Theater. Mr. Powers' reviews and articles have appeared in the *New York Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Satur-*

day Review, *Los Angeles Times*, *American Arts*, *Arts Review*, *Performing Arts* and *San Francisco Chronicle*.

The director of 1918, **SABIN EPSTEIN** (Conservatory Co-director), has been a member of A.C.T.'s training faculty since 1973, and has been a guest instructor at the New Zealand Drama School, Temple University, the University of California at Davis, and U.C. San Diego, where he directed *Guys and Dolls*. He has also directed productions as a guest artist at the University of Washington, California Institute of the Arts, and S.U.N.Y. Purchase; his recent studio productions for A.C.T.'s Advanced Training Program have included *Hay Fever*, *The Learned Ladies*, *Richard III*, *Cloud 9*, *The AIDS Show*, *Tartuffe*, *Heartbreak House*, and *Nicholas Nickleby*. For A.C.T.'s mainstage seasons he has directed *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Woman in Mind*, *The Immigrant*, and *Private Lives*. Mr. Epstein is an Artistic Associate at the Georgia Shakespeare Festival, and has also worked at the Oregon and Utah Shakespearean Festivals, and at San Diego Rep, where he directed *A Christmas Carol* and *Hard Times*. He is co-author, with John Harrop, of *Acting with Style* (published by Prentice-Hall).

SUSAN STAUTER (Conservatory Co-director) came to A.C.T. two years ago as Director of the Young Conservatory. She is a playwright (her *Miss Fairchild Sings* was produced at Little Victory Theatre in Los Angeles), director (more than 40 productions), actress (Cabaret Repertory Theatre), and educator. She earned her M.A. from the California State University at Fullerton, taught in southern California for 14 years (earning a citation for outstanding teaching in 1986/87), and served as founding Chairman of the Theatre Department of the Los Angeles County High School for the Arts. At the Conservatory she has created and directed *Find Me a Hero*, *The Wildest Storm of All (Teenage Voices Confront AIDS)*, and *To Whom It May Concern*, directed *The Diary of Anne Frank*, and co-directed *Who Are These People?*. Ms. Stauter served on the Superintendent's Task Force for the San Francisco School of the Arts, on the Board of Directors of Bay Area Theatre Sports, has been a creative consultant at Disneyland, and toured to Alaska as



playwright-in-residence with the Oregon Shakespeare Festival's Educational Outreach Program.

EDWARD BURBRIDGE (Scenery) has designed for Broadway *Absurd Person Singular*, *Jimmy Shine*, *Does a Tiger Wear a Necktie?*, *Marat/Sade*, *Big Time Buck White*, *The Visit*, *Our Town*, *The River Niger*, *The First Breeze of Summer*, and *Status Quo Vadis*. He has designed for the Negro Ensemble Company since its inception, the New York Shakespeare Company, the Mark Taper Forum, the Phoenix Repertory Company, and the Long Wharf Theatre. His designs for dance have been seen at the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and The Joffrey Ballet. He has reconstructed historical designs for The London Festival Ballet and The American Ballet Theatre. Art direction for television includes "Kojack," *Ceremonies in Dark Old Men*, *To Be Young, Gifted and Black*, *Six Plays from Cafe La MaMa Martin*, and *Langston Hughes*. His film credits include art direction for *Book of Numbers*. He began his designing in Sacramento for the Eaglet Theatre, the Sacramento Civic Repertory Theatre, and the Music Circus. His current project is *Mule Bone* for the Lincoln Center Theater Company. Mr. Burbridge, who has taught at UCLA and Pratt Institute, is a John Hay Whitney Fellowship recipient.

CATHLEEN EDWARDS (Costumes) has designed costumes for A.C.T.'s productions of *Desire Under the Elms*, *Valentin and Valentina*, *All the Way Home*, *The Dolly*, *The Immigrant*, and *Crucifer of Blood* (for which she won a Bay Area Critics Circle Award), and for more than twenty productions in the Plays in Progress series. Among the other theaters for which she has designed are: the Alaska Repertory Theatre, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, the Sherwood and Berkeley Shakespeare Festivals, and San Jose Civic Light Opera, where she received a Drama-Logue Award for her costumes for *Follies*. In addition to her theater work, Ms. Edwards has worked on numerous commercial, industrial and film projects.

DEREK DUARTE (Lighting) has served as resident lighting designer for A.C.T. for five seasons, most recently lighting productions

of *Twelfth Night*, *The Imaginary Invalid*, and *Burn This*. Past productions for A.C.T. include the award-winning *Sunday in the Park with George*, *Faustus in Hell*, and *King Lear*. Mr. Duarte's work has appeared at the American Festival Theatre, Stratford, Connecticut, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, the Los Angeles Theatre Center, Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, San Jose Rep, Western Stage, Berkeley Shakespeare Festival, The Fringe Festival in Edinburgh, Scotland, and the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. Currently on the faculty of Chabot College, Mr. Duarte holds an M.F.A. in theater technology from UCLA.

STEPHEN LeGRAND (Sound) is now in his fifth season as sound designer and composer for A.C.T. His work with the company has included musical compositions for *The Seagull* and *Faustus in Hell*, and he wrote the music for *A Lie of the Mind*, *Saint Joan*, and *Hapgood* with his collaborator Eric Drew Feldman. They have won awards for their scores for *The Lady's Not for Burning* at A.C.T., *The Tbooth of Crime* and *The Rivals* at Berkeley Rep, and *Fen* at the Eureka Theatre. Mr. LeGrand's recent work has included scores for *Yankee Dawg You Die* at Berkeley Rep and the Los Angeles Theatre Center, *Lulu*, and *Macbeth* at the La Jolla Playhouse, and *Fuente Ovejuna* for Berkeley Rep.

RICK ECHOLS (Wigmaster) has designed hair and makeup for over 200 productions at A.C.T. since 1971, including last season's *A Tale of Two Cities* and the company's tours to Connecticut, Hawaii, Russia, and Japan. He also created wigs and makeup for A.C.T.'s television productions of *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, and *A Christmas Carol*. Among his other television and film credits are *A View to Kill*, *Birdy*, "Over Easy" with Hugh Downs, *A Life in the Theatre* with Peter Evans and Ellis Rabb, "The Kathryn Crosby Show," and over 100 commercials. Mr. Echols also designed hair and makeup for the original production of *Cinderella* for the San Francisco Ballet, *Hamlet* with Anne Baxter and Christopher Walken for the American Shakespeare Festival, and *A Life* with Roy Dotrice for the Citadel Theatre in Edmonton, Canada. He worked on the national tours of *42nd Street*, *La Cage aux Folles* with Gene Barry, *Sweet*

Charity with Debbie Allen, and toured to Las Vegas and London with Bing Crosby.

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

BRUCE ELSPERGER (Stage Manager), who is now in his fourth season with A.C.T., was in Seattle for the previous three years as Production Stage Manager at the Intiman Theatre and Production Manager with the Bathhouse Theatre. He directed the Intiman's acting intern production of *A Streetcar Named Desire*, and produced and directed various shows independently, including *A Breeze from the Gulf*, *Bag Lady*, and a touring production of his musical revue, *A Tribute to American Musical Theater*. Before moving to Seattle he had served as Production Stage Manager with P.C.P.A. Theaterfest in Solvang and Santa Maria. Mr. Elspurger, who studied in London and graduated from Drake University, has also worked as an art therapist in the Des Moines schools.

EUGENE BARCONE (Stage Manager) is a charter member of A.C.T. He has worked on more than 125 productions for the company, plus the television adaptations of *A Christmas Carol*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, and *Cyrano de Bergerac*, and he has directed for Plays in Progress. As an associate director in the company he has been associated with Laird Williamson's annual production of *A Christmas Carol* for many years. This season marks Mr. Barcone's 26th year with A.C.T.

NEWS

continued from page P-13

of talent. The new professionals display their work in monologues, dialogues and group performance, and many receive their first professional offers as a direct result of the performance.

The Bay Area will be the first to see these talented artists in their premiere ensemble work. On April 18 the Friends of A.C.T. will present the Advanced Training Program third year group audition in *New Faces of 1991*, a black-tie fundraiser at the Westin St. Francis Hotel. This lively evening will include cocktail reception, dinner, dancing and the Conservatory showcase. Tickets for the event are \$150 per person and may be reserved through the A.C.T.'s Special Events Office at (415) 749-2249. Proceeds benefit the American Conservatory Theater.

Delta Dental Plan on the Boards Again

Delta Dental Plan of California has granted us a repeat performance of last year's generosity. This is Delta's second season as an A.C.T. sponsor. Last year the firm underwrote a week's performances of Molière's *The Imaginary Invalid*. This season Delta Dental Plan sponsored the opening week of Jane Anderson's new play, *Food and Shelter*.

Maureen Knoll, Director of Corporate Communications for Delta, says last year's decision to sponsor *The Imaginary Invalid* was an easy one. "In a strictly literal way, the play dealt with a medical subject. We're a medical plan. The choice was obvious. This year, I had to look closer to make a recommendation."

Knoll selected *Food and Shelter* as her company's commitment. "You just say the word 'homelessness' and people sigh. Some are tired of the issue, but it's not going to be resolved by itself and it's important. *Food and Shelter* didn't seem like a harangue; the play is uplifting and enjoyable, and we're proud to be associated with it. A.C.T. proved us right."

Delta Dental Plan sets money aside for grants purposes, reports Knoll. Many companies had to cut their funds this year, but Delta wasn't among them. "We didn't reduce our contributions, but rather honored our commitments. That's what we stand for. I hope Delta's support can continue to grow."

Where Are They Now?

1990 Conservatory Graduates Make Their Mark

Last season's third year Advanced Training Program class was a stellar one, and its actors have already achieved great early success. Here are the coordinates the class had called in as the program book went to press.

Lauren Lane has been cast as a featured co-star on the weekly television series "Hunter." In her recurring role as the male lead's significant other, Lauren should be visible all season on our television screens. Leslie Ishii had the honor of opening on Broadway in *Shogun*. Also on Broadway is Sam Fontana. Sam joins the chorus of *Les Misérables*, and frequently performs the role of the Innkeeper, for which he

serves as understudy.

Michael McFall signed on with the company at A.C.T., and appeared this season in the world premiere production *Food and Shelter*. He currently performs the role of Sam Goldman in *1918*. And Pippa Winslow has just been cast in the national tour of *M. Butterfly*, while Andrew Dolan completes a fruitful first season with the Arizona Repertory Company.

The remaining four members of the class — Richard Johnston, Nadine Mozon, Shari Simpson and Patrick Stretch — are working hard in New York as well. We look forward to a broadcast of their recent successes soon.

Lurie Foundation Supports 1918

The Lurie Foundation, a donor since 1967, continues its long-standing patronage of A.C.T. making this production of *1918* possible. Last year the Foundation helped underwrite A.C.T.'s Plays In Progress series, in concert with funds from the California Arts Council.

Louis R. Lurie, the Foundation's namesake, came west to San Francisco from Chicago, where the Lurie Company still maintains its primary holdings. A grand old gentleman whose generosity rapidly became as well known in San Francisco as it had been in the Windy City, the multi-faceted Lurie always had an active interest in the theater. He never confined himself to real estate investment; in fact, during his lifetime Lurie repeated evidence of his faith in American theater. He backed a number of very successful shows, including the smash hit, *Hello, Dolly*.

Many of the finest buildings in the vibrant San Francisco theater district can trace their development back to Lurie. Present Lurie holdings include numerous downtown office buildings, as well as the Company's elegant flagship properties — the Curran Theater and the Mark Hopkins Hotel.



Lauren Lane



Leslie Ishii



Michael McFall



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

BOX OFFICE INFORMATION

A.C.T.'s Central Box Office is in the lobby of the Geary Theater, located on Geary at Mason Street one block west of Union Square in the heart of Theater Row.

Ticket Information: (415) 749-2228
Charge to Visa, MasterCard, American Express.

A.C.T.'s Central Box Office Hours:
10am-9pm Tuesday through Saturday;
10am-6pm Sunday and Monday.

Ticketron: A.C.T. tickets are available at all Ticketron Outlets including Rainbow Records, or by calling (415) 392-SHOW.

Box Office at the Stage Door and Palace of Fine Arts Theaters: When A.C.T. is performing at one of these locations, a full-service box office will open there 90 minutes before each performance.

Ticket Prices: STAGE DOOR/PALACE

Previews:	
Orchestra/Loge	\$20
Balcony	\$14
Gallery	\$10
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Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday	
Orchestra/Loge	\$24
Balcony	\$17
Gallery	\$10
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Balcony	\$22
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Group Discounts: For groups of 15 or more, call Linda Graham at (415) 346-7805 for special group prices up to 30% off single prices

Latecomers: Latecomers will only be seated at an appropriate time selected by the director of the play.

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

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

Discounts: Anyone can purchase half-

price tickets on the day of shows at STBS on Union Square or Embarcadero Center in San Francisco. Student and Senior Rush tickets at half-price are available beginning at 5pm for evening performances. Senior Rush tickets for matinees only are just \$5.

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

Wheelchair Access: The Stage Door and Palace of Fine Arts Theaters are fully accessible to persons in wheelchairs.

Sennheiser Listening System is designed to provide clear amplified sound anywhere in the auditorium. Headsets are available free-of-charge in the lobby before performance.

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

Bleepers! If you carry a pager, beeper, watch or alarm, please make sure that it is set to the "off" position while you are in the theater to avoid disturbing the performance.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

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

School Matinees: We offer 1pm matinees to elementary, secondary, and college students groups. Thousands of students attend these performances each season. Tickets are specially priced at just \$8. Exclusive corporate support has been provided by the Pacific Telesis Foundation. For more information please call Katherine Spielmann, Student Matinee Coordinator at 749-2230.

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regular intervals. Novello possessed one thing Coward conspicuously lacked: matinee idol handsomeness. With some reluctance Novello starred in Coward's *Sirocco* (1927), by all accounts one of the most disastrous first nights in theatrical history; post-curtain audience hostility hastened Novello's decision to abandon the stage for a while and concentrate on movies.

One of those movies was the film version of *The Vortex*. After many abortive drafts, a shootable script was approved by Coward and presented to the British Board of Film Censors. The distributor returned from a meeting with the Board to report the response to producer Michael Balcon, director Adrian Brunel,

tea. We have both worked hard all our lives, and are middle-aged, fortunate, talented, and successful. We are both reviled by the Press and respected by the Public."

Coward never quite escaped the halo of snobbery his critics perceived around him. But that snobbery arose less from class consciousness than from the pervasive exclusivity that sometimes separates theater people from practically everyone else. Moreover, Coward prized style above class or wealth (although wealth nourished style). It's what he meant when he sang, "Why do all the wrong people travel / While the right people stay at home?" Coward's homosexuality is

the shock of the purely theatrical, never the political. (Today, Madonna could be his female counterpart.)

"Attention was his fix," John Lahr has written of Coward. In the end, he had no agenda other than to ingratiate himself with his audience, who knew best. To this end, the performer wasn't permitted to tire, lest the mask of artifice crack before the public. "You're not in love with me — the real me," explains Garry Essendine, the protagonist closest to the playwright's bone, in *Present Laughter* (1943). "You're in love with an illusion, the illusion that I gave you when you saw me on the stage. Last night I ran the risk of breaking that dear young illusion forever." Earlier, Coward had made much the same point in the verse to what is probably his most famous song, "If Love Were All," from his musical play *Bitter-Sweet* (1929):

*Life is very rough and tumble,
For a humble
Disease,
One can betray one's troubles never,
Whatever
Occurs,
Night after night
Have to look bright,
Whether you're well or ill
People must laugh their fill.
You mustn't sleep
Till dawn comes creeping. . . .*

Not everyone was shocked or impressed by Coward's work, either *The Vortex* or his subsequent plays. Sean O'Casey, who entered the theater relatively late in life and was everything (radical, raised in poverty, heterosexual) that Coward was not, couldn't abide what he regarded as the emptiness in Coward's work. To his wife, the young beauty whose stage name was Eileen Carey, about to appear in *Bitter-Sweet*, O'Casey wrote: "I have tried hard to make myself send a telegram or a note to Noël Coward wishing him success, but I could not. How can I wish success to a thing I know not to be good or bad?" In his famous diary called *Ego*, the elegant critic James Agate wrote, "How comes it, then, that I can't laugh at [Coward's] *Blithe Spirit*? Because it is *common!*" Later in the same entry, Agate



Molly Hagan and Rupert Everett in Coward's The Vortex at the Doolittle Theatre.

and Novello: "It's okay, except that the mother must not have a lover, and, of course, the son must not take drugs!" None of the participants was pleased with the emasculated film version.

Novello and Coward were often mentioned together in print and in conversation. Although Novello was older by six years, he seemed eternally boyish, while Coward took on an Old Man air — Cecil Beaton referred to him as "a fat old turtle" — at an early age. In a biography of Novello, written by Peter Noble and published only weeks after the actor's death in 1951, Coward sniffed in the introduction: "[Ivor and I] have, of course, much in common. We were both boy-sopranos and we both drink a lot of

often mentioned as an undercurrent of his songs and plays (certainly *Design for Living* is more about the affection between two men than about their common love interest, another fast and clever Coward heroine). In fact he was more intimate with the theater, in its abstract sense, than with any man: he was married to it. And he's often mistakenly seen as descended from the Decadents, whose most notorious exponent was Oscar Wilde.

The evidence in *The Vortex* — and in most of his sixty produced plays, three hundred songs, and various screenplays and volumes of prose — is that Coward was less a rebel of any stripe than just a naughty boy in love with the theater. If occasionally he aimed to shock, it was



Butugychag, one of Stalin's gulags, outside Magadan.

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amended his verdict: "P.S. I am wrong to attribute commonness to Noël. This is uncritical. The proper thing to say is that the age is common, and that Noël's plays mirror the age." In *The Art of Dramatic Writing*, Lajos Egri passed the most damning judgment: "Noël Coward's extraordinary success arises from the fact that *his* horrors are much more pleasant: who will sleep with whom? Will he get her, will she get him? Remember that Coward came after the World War, with these wealthy English sophisticates, oh so eager to get everything they could from life. A war-weary audience, surfeited with blood and death, gobbled up his farces. The lines seemed witty because they helped the audience forget the battering the world had taken. Coward, and many like him, came and lulled the shocked audience into numbed relaxation. His reception today would be tepid."

Criticism like this didn't exactly roll off Coward's back. But if attention was his fix, public adoration was his opiate; an ovation or curtain call smoothed the rough edges and sent him jauntily out into the misty night air. So deeply did Coward inhale success that even the occasional lampoon — notably the character Eric Dare in the Cole Porter-Moss Hart musical *Jubilee* (1935) — only made him gloat: it affirmed his fame. And he dined well on the passing compliments he received from more "serious" men of letters. Graham Greene called Coward "the best craftsman since Barrie." Edmund Wilson wrote that he was "all there is left of the English theater."

It was only when his public turned against him — when rock 'n' roll announced it was here to stay; when so many of the young, post-Second World War critics and dramatists roundly scorned him and the old, imperial order he represented — that Coward bristled. "As a rule," snaps Garry Essendine, played on Broadway in 1946 by Clifton Webb (perhaps the one man who wore a tux as snugly as the playwright), "when insufferable young beginners have the impertinence to criticize me, I dismiss the whole thing lightly because I'm embarrassed for them and consider it not quite fair game to punctuate their inflated egos too sharply." But Kenneth Tynan and

John Osborne were hardly insufferable young beginners; if anything they were more intellectually rigorous than he — better read, more politically sophisticated, and at least as steeped in theater. Their criticism sent Coward sputtering into exile — first to lick his wounds among foreign royalty and jet-setters, then to avoid altogether the English tax system, which had tried even his own patriotism.

In the fifties, Coward took his act — himself — to Las Vegas, where his dry, craggy voice played to Americans in the ultimate prefab playland. His subject matter now, more often than not, was of the past, for the past had belonged to him like one long first night, while the present was baffling and more than a little hostile. He stepped up his film appearances — among them *Around the World in 80 Days* (1956), *Our Man in Havana* (1959), *Paris When It Sizzles* (1964), and *Boom!* (1966) — which paid handsomely and took him to congenial locales. (One needs only a glimpse of his lizard-like smirk, after the opening titles of *Paris When It Sizzles*, to see how self-satisfied he could seem.)

Near the end, Coward remained cocooned in exile. The horrors of the Vietnam War crawled across the continent, and no international smart set emerged to provide relief. In 1972 Cecil Beaton found him at his Montreux retreat “in a scarlet jacket hunched and crumpled in a chair, looking very old and resigned and fatter. . . . He has no time for amateurs, or people that tell lies or are phoneyes. But he is incredibly generous in his appreciation of most people, particularly those who have succeeded in the theater.” Coward died the following year, disenchanted with the world but never with his chosen calling.

Disenchantment is what *The Vortex* is about. If at times it seems too heavy in the playwright’s “thin, nervous hands,” its revival enables us to see some sources of twentieth-century disaffection. It also enables us to hear Noël Coward’s early crackling dialogue, tuned to a jazzy minor key. In an English-speaking theater marked by the ellipses and oblique word-play of Beckett, Pinter, and Sam Shepard, there’s been nothing like it since. □

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PROPERTIES IN DEVELOPMENT

Season Update

"Maybe if I'd own my own house, I'd feel like an adult."

— SPALDING GRAY



A notable sentiment, but one not many people are living up to these days. There may just have to be a few less adults in the world for awhile.

As springtime fast approaches, so usually does an upswing in the housing market. However, experts have predicted

Barbara Miller writes frequently about real estate for Performing Arts magazine.

the slump to continue for a possible two- to three-year period.

According to a report in the *Los Angeles Times*, this downturn in the market is most probably due to a crisis of consumer confidence in the economy due to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.

After all, there *are* homes available and rates have been low. But from August to September 1990, California home sales

Above: Across the Golden Gate Bridge is Marin Lagoon, Southwest Diversified's waterfront development in San Rafael, amid a salt water lagoon, home to fish and water fowl.

by Barbara Miller



were down 11%. No one can predict what the spring will bring, but one thing is for certain, there are homes to be bought, and sooner or later, there'll be someone to buy them.

Sales haven't slowed at Country Club Estates, where nineteen individual premier improved lots are being offered from \$169,000 to \$225,000. The lots range in size from 10,800 to 35,900 square feet.

Eleven custom homes are selling from \$380,000 to \$495,000, and homes were still closing escrow during the holidays.

Country Club Estates Unit 2 is a bulk sale of 27 proposed lots ranging in size from 15,000 to 44,000 square feet. The



asking price is \$2,700,000. This is expected to be Petaluma's most exclusive new neighborhood, with schools and

shopping within walking distance.

Petaluma is located along Highway 101 within commuting distance to San Francisco.

In the City, a 135,000-square-foot structure has been converted into 85 live-work lofts.

Located at the southeast corner of Fourth and Brannon streets, the Lofts consist of units ranging in size from 900 to 2,200 square feet and in price from \$165,000 to \$300,000.

Tricia Jones, executive director of the South of Market Business Association, says she's highly supportive of the project and thinks it's appropriate for the area.

Above: South of Market in San Francisco are the innovative Lofts at Fourth and Brannon streets, within walking distance of the financial district. The project offers an on-site support center with fax machines, computer and word processing services.

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The Lofts at 601 Fourth Street were conceived and developed by Rick Holliday in partnership with the Triangle Group. Holliday says their goal is to keep the units in the \$200,000 price range.

"I wanted to offer New York lofts . . . San Francisco style," Holliday says. "I did not believe Californians would accept East Coast inconveniences. I knew I needed to find a building with the proper zoning, with underground parking and at a location within walking distance of the financial district."

With underground parking, a rooftop observation deck, bonus rooms, washer/dryer hookups, and state-of-the-art lighting, the Lofts have proved to be a successful housing alternative for the San Francisco homebuyer. The project also offers optional amenities such as an on-site support center with fax machine, computer and word processing services, and separate resident storage in the basement.

Most of the lofts, which allow owners to customize their own live-work settings, have been sold, but Holliday has other similar projects lined up.

Across the Golden Gate Bridge, in Marin County on thirty-seven acres in San Rafael, is Smith Ranch, a 382-unit condominium home development geared toward people sixty-two years of age and older.

Phase one of the development consists of two hundred twenty-six condominiums ranging in size from 800 to 2,200 square feet, with up to two bedrooms. Prices begin at \$238,500.

Among the amenities offered to Smith Ranch residents are concierge and shuttle services, housekeeping, valet and 24-hour security, as well as a fitness center, beauty salon, spa, medical clinic, post office, general store, Olympic-sized pool, steam rooms, and a wellness pool.

And residents were recently treated to a performance of *Victorian Holiday* by the Marin Ballet.

Smith Ranch is a prototype development of Mediq, Inc. and Tishman Speyer Properties, which is planning to build this model in five other markets.

Set in the wine country of Sonoma Valley, the Gardens at Provence consist of single-family homes designed by the



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Amenities of Marin County living are offered by San Rafael's Smith Ranch, 382-unit condominium home development geared to those sixty-two and older.

award-winning architectural firm Bassenian/Lagoni.

With up to five bedrooms and three baths, the homes feature wood-burning fireplaces, breakfast nooks, spacious kitchen pantries, island counters, and walk-in closets. Some plans also feature skylights.

The surrounding area consists of the Landmark Vineyards, shopping centers, schools, Sonoma County Airport, Wikiup Golf Course, and the Sonoma County Fairgrounds.

Homes at the Gardens have sold well. Only two remain in this phase, both priced at \$180,000. Ten homes are expected to be released in the coming months.

Also on the Marin side is Marin Lagoon, Southwest Diversified's waterfront development in San Rafael. Many of the homes at Marin border the lagoons, which are directly linked to the tides of the San Francisco Bay.

The 134 single-family homes, priced from \$400,000 and ranging in size from 1,924 to 2,687 square feet have attracted small families and move-up buyers.

The multi-family villas seem to attract move-down buyers or empty nesters looking for a low maintenance lifestyle. The villas range in size from 1,037 to 1,932 square feet and are priced from \$235,000 to \$330,000. Fifty-eight of the 90 avail-

able units have been sold.

The development sits amidst a salt-water lagoon, home to fish and water fowl. Docks are also available for people with small boats.

A portion of the property has been set aside for wetlands to preserve some of the wildlife, including the red-breasted Harvest mouse and White Rail Clapper bird. And to further help protect the endangered species, residents are expected not to own cats.

Roads are currently being put in at Cypress Hollow in Mill Valley on the Tiburon Peninsula. Forty-two lots will be available for homes that will range in size from 2,400 to 4,000 square feet. Prices will begin around the \$700,000 mark.

The key aspect of Cypress Hollow is its secluded location, which offers some views of the San Francisco skyline and Bay.

According to Richard Dennis, marketing director of Southwest Diversified, they've noticed more people in the area being able to sell their homes. An encouraging sign in these times of uncertainty. But for those customers trying to sell their home before moving to Cypress Hollow, Southwest Diversified offers Bridge financing.

Maybe springtime has already arrived across the Bay. □

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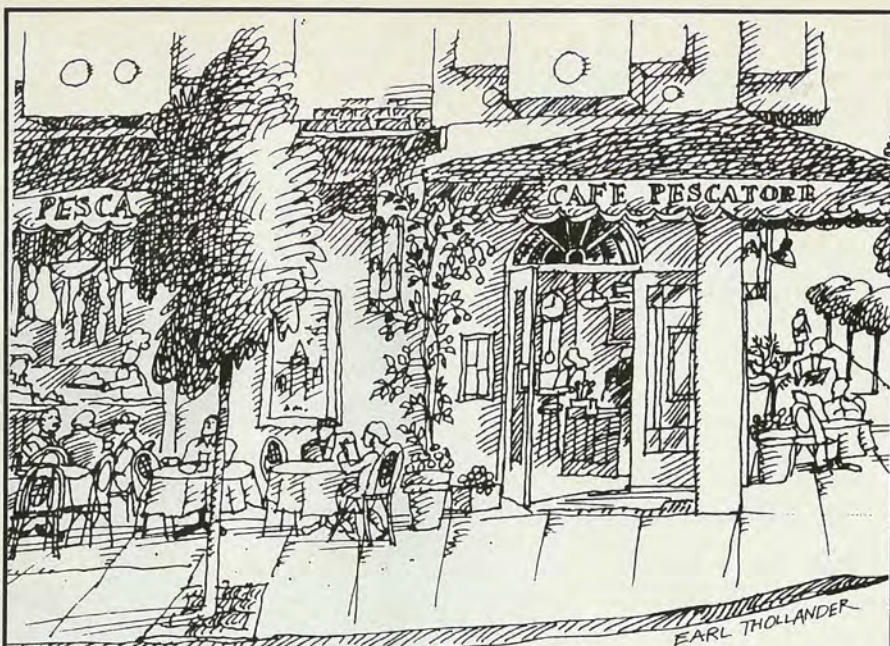
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In All Directions

A few years back there was a crop of T-shirts worn inside the theatrical profession which proclaimed: "What I Really Want To Do Is To Direct." The slogan played off a secret desire which is supposed to grip everybody in show business. No sooner do ordinary actors become movie stars than they insist upon directing as an affirmation of their new-found power. It is so much more blessed to give orders than to receive them, though most actors resent even more when they are not told what to do. "Come on, man," Jason Robards once taunted a director, "do you want the sad face, the glad face, the fast face, or the slow face?"

Sir Tyrone Guthrie, one of the most distinguished directors of our century, was probably mocking when he declared: "A director has but one task: to make each rehearsal so amusing that the actors will look forward to the next one."

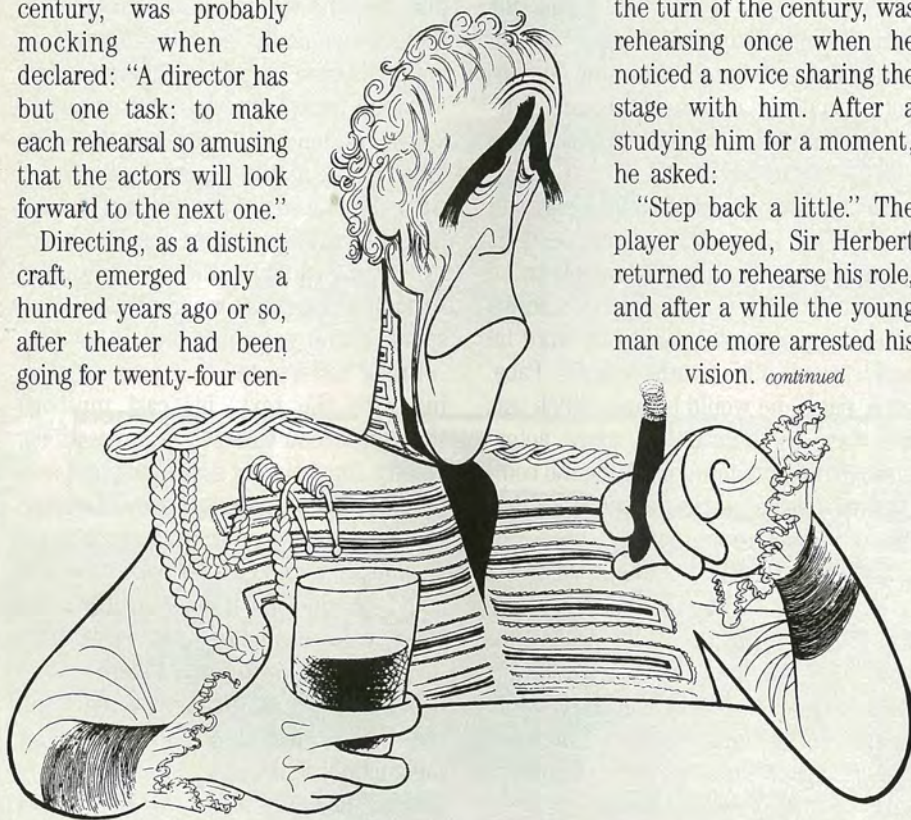
Directing, as a distinct craft, emerged only a hundred years ago or so, after theater had been going for twenty-four cen-

turies. Despite some early and widely admired practitioners in Europe — such as the Duke of Saxe-Meiningen, Max Reinhardt, and Konstantin Stanislavsky — acceptance of the new profession came grudgingly. The eminent English critic, James Agate, wrote in the thirties: "Theatre consists of two great arts: Acting and playwriting; and there is no third art necessary to co-ordinate them."

Actors and playwrights did most often perform the functions of the directors in the old days; sometimes they still do. Stars, who were then called actor-managers, hacked plays to pieces to enhance their own roles, and they chiefly directed the rest of the company to stay out of their way. Sir Herbert Tree, an archetypal actor-manager at the turn of the century, was rehearsing once when he noticed a novice sharing the stage with him. After a studying him for a moment, he asked:

"Step back a little." The player obeyed, Sir Herbert returned to rehearse his role, and after a while the young man once more arrested his

vision. *continued*



Above: Al Hirschfeld's drawing of Jason Robards in *A Touch of the Poet*.

by Peter Hay



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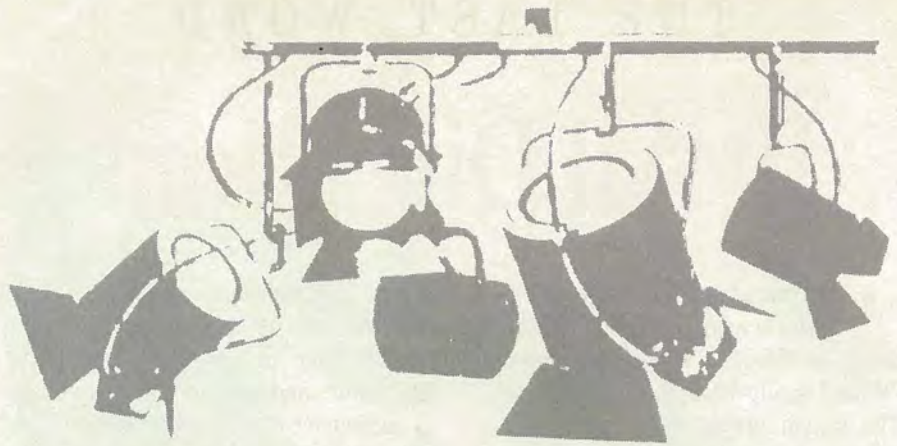
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THE LAST WORD *continued*

"A little further back," he instructed. Again, the actor moved out of the way. Tree resumed acting, but half an hour later he still found the young man in the wrong place.

"But if I step back again," the actor protested, "I should be right off the stage."

"Yes," Sir Herbert agreed, "that's right."

The last of the old-style English actor-managers, Sir Donald Wolfit, would typically cut the entire scene in *Twelfth Night* where Malvolio is visited in prison by Feste pretending to be Sir Topas. Sir Donald would simply maintain it was the work of an inferior collaborator. "I cannot learn it," he dismissed the scene loftily, "and if I cannot learn it, Shakespeare did not write it!"

Ronald Harwood, who wrote a play and film (*The Dresser*) based on his experience in Wolfit's employ, observed that Sir Donald's "chief direction to his company was contained in one word he had learned in his youth: 'PACE!' 'Pace, pace, pace!' he would bellow, which was his way, as it was so many actor-managers' before him, of getting the company to speak at unnatural speed, so that he could speak more slowly."

Sir John Gielgud is thought of today as a quiet, gentle soul, the model of English breeding. But the young Alec Guinness, who was directed by Gielgud in his 1934 production of *Hamlet* at the Old Vic, found him "a living monument of impatience." After the first week of rehearsals, he summoned Guinness:

Peter Hay is the author of seven books, including Movie Anecdotes and Broadway Anecdotes, published by Oxford University Press.

"What happened to you? I thought you were rather good. You're terrible. Oh, go away! I don't want to see you again!"

The shattered actor retreated in pieces. At the end of the day he picked up enough courage to ask:

"Excuse me, Mr. Gielgud, but am I fired?"

"No! Yes!" cried the director. "But go away. Come back in a week. Get someone to teach you how to act."

Despite his tactlessness, which actors might have found harder to forgive in a director who was not also a great actor, Gielgud generally adapted himself to being directed by others. There seemed to be an exception, when he agreed to appear in Seneca's *Oedipus* directed by Peter Brook at the National Theatre of Great Britain. This was in 1968, at the height of a fad known as the Theatre of Cruelty, based on the theories of Antonin Artaud, a French actor and poet who had spent several years in a lunatic asylum.

Brook had insisted that prior to dealing with the text, his cast must go through several weeks of improvisations, chiefly consisting of screaming and animal imitations. At one rehearsal he asked everybody to act out in front of the group the most terrifying experience he or she could imagine. Each actor readily complied with examples that were both inventive and horrifying. Finally it was Gielgud's turn, and the great actor did nothing. He just stood with a faraway, melancholy look, until Brook patiently asked if he could not think of anything that was really terrifying.

"Actually, Peter, I can," Sir John said gently but firmly. "I'm thinking that we open in two weeks." □

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