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Cover: Marrian Walters and Peter Donat in *Opéra Comique*.
Photo: Larry Merkle

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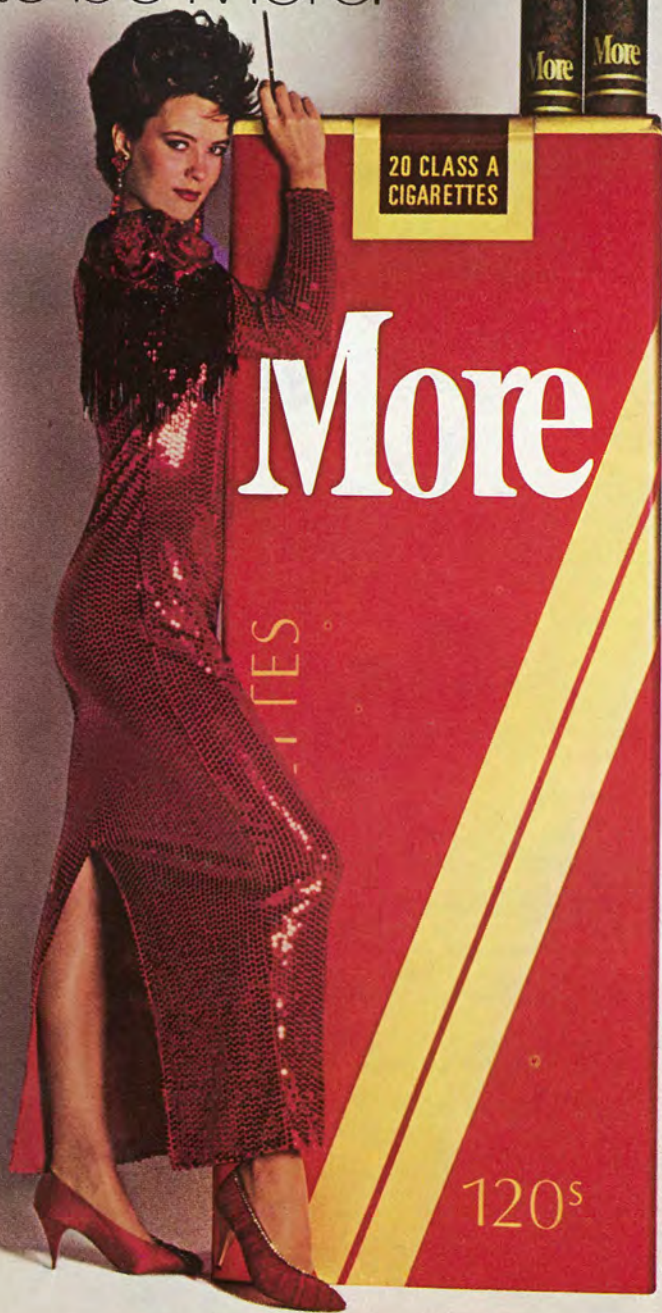
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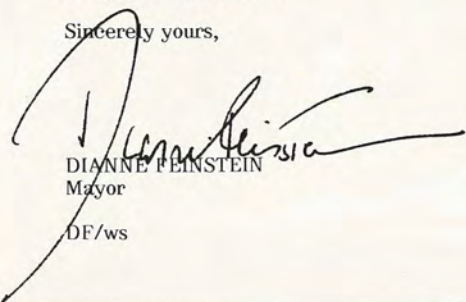
I am very pleased to learn that A.C.T. is celebrating its 20th Anniversary season this year and send you my warm congratulations!

San Franciscans love live theater and A.C.T. has done a marvelous job for the past two decades in providing performances that are among the best in the West. Your actors and theater training workshops are justifiably acclaimed, and the City is delighted to commend everyone involved for their demonstrated professionalism and commitment to excellence.

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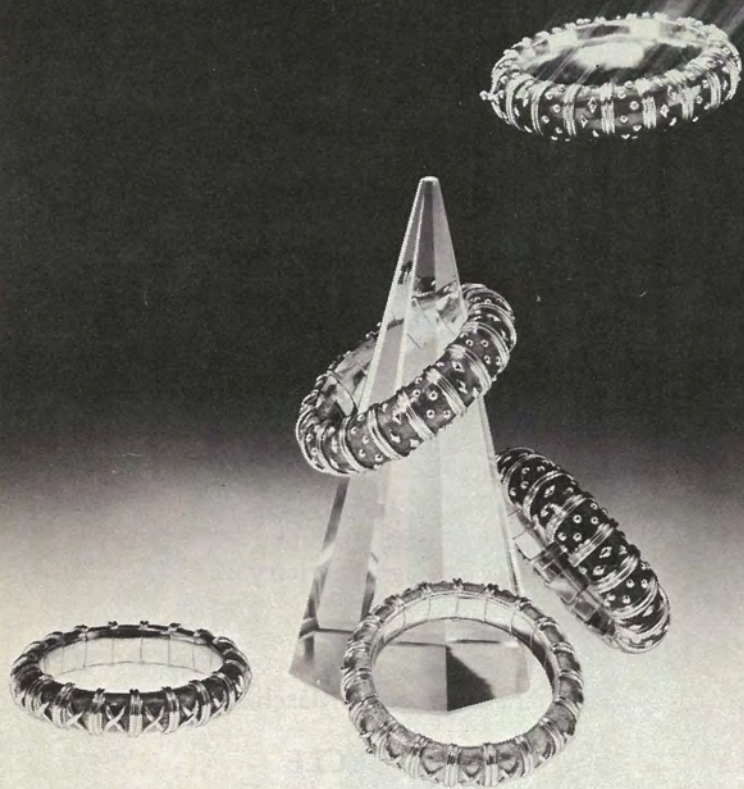


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TO THE AUDIENCE

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Window Sales—Visit A.C.T.'s Geary Theatre Box Office at Geary and Mason Streets.

Box Office Hours: 10 a.m. through the first intermission of the evening performance.

For information call 673-6440.

Mail Orders—Write A.C.T. at 450 Geary Street, San Francisco 94102, or sign up for A.C.T.'s mailing list in the Geary Theatre lobby.

Ticket Agencies—Most ticket agencies handle tickets for A.C.T. (service charges vary). If you buy through your local agency, you'll get either tickets (BASS or Ticketron) or a receipt to present prior to the performance at the Geary Theatre in exchange for your tickets. NOTE: If tickets are held for you at the box office, it is best to pick them up at least one half hour prior to the performance.

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Tickets may be exchanged at the A.C.T. Box Office at least 24 hours prior to show time.

If, as an A.C.T. ticketholder, you are unable to attend a performance, you may make a tax-deductible contribution to the theatre by turning in your tickets at the box office prior to the curtain. Donations are accepted by telephone only on the day of the performance. A receipt for tax purposes will be issued in exchange for the tickets.



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TO THE AUDIENCE

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NOTICES

Please observe the no smoking regulations. The use of cameras or tape recorders is not permitted. Kindly refrain from carrying in refreshments. In respect for the health of our performers it is the policy of this company not to actually light cigarettes during the play. The management reserves the right to change the attraction without prior notice to the patrons.

WHEELCHAIR ACCESS

Boxes are available for wheelchairs the week of the performance at \$5 a ticket. A wheelchair accessible restroom is available on the main floor.

A.S.L. AT A.C.T.

A.C.T. has a special series of plays interpreted in American Sign Language for the hearing-impaired. For information call TTY (415) 771-0338 or 771-3880 (Voice). Special thanks to Steven Fritsch Rudser for his hard work and excellent performances in the interpreting of each show.

CHILDREN

Patrons are discouraged from bringing very young children or infants to regular performances. Every person, regardless of age, must have a ticket.

CREDITS

Larry Merkle for A.C.T. photography; special thanks to Herbert Bernard and staff of Herbert's Furs Inc. for fur storage and services.

SPECIAL DISCOUNT RATES

Group discounts are available to groups of 15 or more attending A.C.T. productions. Information on all group discounts may be obtained by calling or writing Joe Duffy at A.C.T., 771-3880.

GIFT IDEAS

Gifts available from A.C.T.: *The A.C.T. of Cooking* is a collection of recipes from the kitchens of the A.C.T. family, available by mail for \$6.00 including postage and handling. The tote bag and apron, specially designed for A.C.T., are off-white with burgundy lettering. The tote bags are \$15.75 each and the aprons are \$16.75 each; prices include postage and handling. Make checks payable to A.C.T.

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This is what Conservatory students coming to A.C.T. from other parts of the country say they miss the most. Please... if you would like to welcome one or two young actors into your home this season for an evening meal, put your name on the Hospitality List now. Telephone Emilyya or Rebecca at the Conservatory office, 771-3880.

ANY DISCARDS?

The A.C.T. props department welcomes the donation of any useable furniture, clothing, books and other household items. Please call the production office, 771-3880.

WHO'S WHO AT A.C.T.



SCOT BISHOP returns to A.C.T. having debuted with the company last season as George Gibbs in *Our Town*. Following two years as a business major, Mr. Bishop left San Francisco State University to enroll in A.C.T.'s Advanced Training Program, where he is currently a third year student. In A.C.T. workshop productions, he has performed the title role in *Hamlet*, Treplev in *The Seagull* and Richard Miller in *Ah, Wilderness!* In addition to his work at A.C.T., Mr. Bishop appeared as Clive in *Five Finger Exercise* and Cliff in *The Woolgatherer* for the Sunnyvale Summer Repertory Theatre. This season he appears as Aaron in *The Majestic Kid*, Young Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol*, Philip in *You Never Can Tell*, the Nazarean in *Passion Cycle* and Cliff in *The Woolgatherer*.



JOY CARLIN happily returns to A.C.T. to appear as Odile in *Opéra Comique*. A director, trainer and actress with the A.C.T. company for 12 years, Miss Carlin appeared in twenty-six productions,

including the roles of Miss Prism in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Kitty Duval in *The Time of Your Life*, Bananas in *The House of Blue Leaves*, Ose in *Peer Gynt*, Aunt Sally in *All The Way Home*, and Birdie in *The Little Foxes*. For the past five years, she has been Resident Director and the Acting Artistic Director of the Berkeley Repertory Theatre, where she directed *Awake and Sing!*, *Too True to Be Good*, *Beyond Therapy* and *The Diary of Anne Frank*, in addition to performing such roles as Lady Wishfort in *The Way of the World*, Amanda in *The Glass Menagerie*, Gladys in *A Lesson From Aloys*, Mme. Ranevskaya in *The Cherry Orchard*, Emily Dickinson in *The Belle of Amherst* and Margaret Fuller in the premiere of Carole Braverman's *The Margaret Ghost*. She has also appeared as Pope Joan in the Eureka Theatre's production of *Top Girls* at the Marines Memorial Theatre. Her directing credits include work at the Berkeley Stage Company, Seattle's A Contemporary Theatre, the Oregon Shakespearean Festival, and the San Jose Repertory Company, where this season she will direct Peter Nichol's *Passion*. She is currently Interim Artistic Director of the Berkeley Jewish Theatre, where her production of *Cold Storage* is now playing.



MICHELLE CASEY joins the company this season as a journeyman following two years of study in A.C.T.'s Advanced Training Program. While a student, she



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performed roles in *Hamlet*, *The Seagull*, *Heartbreak House* and *Ah, Wilderness!* For other resident theatres, Miss Casey played Helena in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Grove Shakespeare Festival, Paula in *End of Summer* at the Odyssey Theatre in Los Angeles and Rose in *The Woolgatherer* at Sunnyvale Summer Repertory Theatre. In addition to theatre, her credits include the role of Zoe Johnson on NBC's *Days of Our Lives*. Miss Casey holds a B.A. (cum laude) from Pomona College and is a recipient this year of a generous grant from the Princess Grace Foundation.



JOHN CASTELLANOS is a graduate of A.C.T.'s Advanced Training Program and returns to the Bay Area following two seasons at the Oregon Shakespearean Festival, where he played Edmund in *King Lear*, Philip in *King John* and Brick in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. He has appeared as Macduff in *Macbeth* and Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet* for the Berkeley Shakespeare Festival and Tom in *The Glass Menagerie* and Leo in *Chapter Two* for the Sunnyvale Summer Repertory. He has also performed at the Pacific Conservatory of the Performing Arts, the La Jolla Stage Company and at the Old Globe Theatre in his home town of San Diego. He has worked under the direction of A.C.T. company members Dakin Matthews, Janice Hutchins and the late Allen Fletcher and toured through Oregon in *Mass Appeal*, which he co-produced with Wayne Ballantyne. A drama major at San Diego State University, Mr. Castellanos also trained at the National Theatre of England and appeared in the PBS film *Prelude to the Fall*.



PETER DONAT joined A.C.T. in 1968. He was born in Nova Scotia, attended the Yale Drama School, toured extensively and recently completed his 7th season with Canada's Stratford Shakespeare Festival, playing the Mayor in Ronald Eyre's production of *The Government Inspector*. In New York, he has performed both off- and on Broadway, where he received the Theatre World Award for Best Featured Actor of 1957, and with Ellis Rabb's legendary APA Repertory Company. At A.C.T., he has appeared in many productions, including *The Merchant of Venice*, *Hadrian VII*, *A Doll's House*, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *Equus*, *Man and Superman*, *The Little Foxes*, *Uncle Vanya*, *The Sleeping Prince* and, last season, in *The School for Wives*, *Macbeth* and *Our Town*. Mr. Donat starred in the NBC-TV series, *Flamingo Road*. His film credits include *The Hindenburg*, *The China Syndrome*, *A Different Story*, *Godfather II* and *The Bay Boy*, opposite Liv Ullmann.



NIKE DOUKAS joins the company this season as a third year student in the Advanced Training Program. In addition to her study in the A.C.T. Conservatory, Miss Doukas received her B.A. in theatre

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from the University of Wisconsin at Madison and has trained in New York with Nikos Psacharopoulos. While a student at A.C.T., she appeared in *The Seagull*, *Heartbreak House*, *Ladyhouse Blues* and *Balm in Gilead*. A.C.T. audiences may recognize her as a townspeople from last season's production of *Our Town*. She has appeared for two seasons as a leading actress at the Berkeley Shakespeare Festival, playing Hermia in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Emelia in *The Two Noble Kinsmen* and Lady Anne in *Richard III* this summer. Miss Doukas has also performed for the Irish Theatre Company, Stanford University and the Madison Civic Repertory, in addition to appearing on *The Folk Tale Series* for PBS Television.



DAKIN MATTHEWS came to A.C.T. in 1981. He is an actor, director, playwright, translator, dramaturge and full Professor of English at California State University, Hayward. A founding member of John Houseman's Acting Company and a teacher in the Juilliard Drama Division, Mr. Matthews has also served as Artistic Director of the California Actors Theatre in Los Gatos and directed A.C.T.'s Conservatory Summer Training Congress in 1982. He has performed roles in sixteen A.C.T. productions, including Uncle Chris in *I Remember Mama*, George Bernard Shaw in *Dear Liar*, Sigmund Freud in the P.I.P. production of *Melanie in August*, Niles Harris in *Angels Fall*, Hugh in *Translations*, Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol*, and the title role in *Uncle Vanya*. In other theatres, he has performed Pat in *The*

Hostage and Sir Peter in *The School for Scandal* with The Acting Company; Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Fluellen in *Henry V* for San Diego's Old Globe; Azdak in *Caucasian Chalk Circle* and Finian in *Finian's Rainbow* for P.C.P.A.; Brutus in *Julius Caesar* and the title roles in *King John* and *Richard III* for the Berkeley Shakespeare Festival; Falstaff in *Henry IV, part 1* for both the Marin and the California Shakespeare Festivals; Dr. Watson in *Sherlock's Last Case* for Los Angeles Actors' Theatre; Henry Britt and Martin Blinder in *Execution of Justice* at Berkeley Rep and George in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolfe* and the title role in *Enrico IV* for the California Actors Theatre. Mr. Matthews appeared as a guest star on *Remington Steele* last season, performed in the Los Angeles Olympic Arts Festival and is currently Artistic Director of the Berkeley Shakespeare Festival.



MARK MURPHEY returns to A.C.T. following his appearances last season as Horace in *The School for Wives*, Lieutenant Yolland in *Translations* and Malcolm in *Macbeth*. He appeared last year at the Oregon Shakespearean Festival, in such roles as Hamlet, the clown in *The Winter's Tale*, Charles Courtley in *London Assurance*, and Cornelius in *The Matchmaker*. In his six previous seasons at A.C.T. he was seen as Ken Talley in *5th of July*, Benedick in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Simon in *Hay Fever* and Oscar in *Another Part of the Forest*. He has also appeared on the Geary stage as Tybalt in *Romeo and Juliet* and Frank in *The Browning Version*. Other theatre credits include the role of

Oswald in *Ghosts* for the Intiman Theatre, the role of John Grass in *Indians* for the Alley Theatre in Houston and the role of Romeo in *Romeo and Juliet* at the Oregon Shakespearean Festival. He is a native of Dallas, Texas and has a B.A. degree in theatre from Baylor University.

WILLIAM PATERSON is now in his 19th 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

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his professional acting career in a summer stock company. He appeared for at least part of every season for twenty years at the Cleveland Play House, taking time out for live television, films and four national tours with his own one-man shows which he has performed in 32 states of the Union and at the U.S. Embassy in London. His major roles for A.C.T. include *You Can't Take It With You*, *Jumpers*, *The Matchmaker* (U.S.S.R. tour), *The Circle*, *All the Way Home* (Japan tour), *Buried Child*, *Happy Landings*, *The Gin Game*, *Dial "M" For Murder* and *Painting Churches*. He presently serves as a member of the San Francisco Arts Commission.



MARCIA PIZZO joins the company as a journeyman this year. While a student in A.C.T.'s Advanced Training Program, she appeared in workshop productions as Hermione in *The Winter's Tale*, Arkadina in *The Seagull* and Catherine in *A View From the Bridge*. She has performed in a staged reading of *Caroline* at the Berkeley Repertory Theatre, in productions of *The Three Sisters*, *The Comedy of Errors* and the world premiere of *Family Matters* at U.C.L.A., where she graduated with a B.A. in Theatre, and in several productions at the College of Marin. Miss Pizzo has also performed on television in episodes of *Falcon Crest* and *Knight Rider* and in *Up and Coming* on PBS.

JOAN STUART-MORRIS joins the A.C.T. company this year following seven seasons at the Oregon Shakespearean Festival in Ashland, Oregon. San Fran-



cisco audiences may recognize her as Katharina in the OSF production of *The Taming of the Shrew* which toured California in 1984. While in Ashland, she performed leading roles in *Man and Superman*, *Dracula*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Crimes of the Heart* and earned Drama Logue Awards for her portrayals of Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing* and Maggie in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*.



MARRIAN WALTERS, a native of Montana, returns for her 11th season. A veteran of more than six hundred productions, she was seen most recently in last season's *Painting Churches*. She made her Broadway debut with Donald Cook in *Made in Heaven* and appeared on Broadway with Robert Preston in *The Tender Trap*. San Francisco audiences will remember her in *Under the Yum Yum Tree* at the On Broadway Theatre and *Private Lives* at the Little Fox Theatre. Miss Walters received two of Chicago's Joseph Jefferson Awards as best actress in *The Hot I Baltimore* and *Bus Stop*. The following year she joined A.C.T. where she has appeared in thirty-three productions, including *The Matchmaker* (U.S.S.R. tour), *The Circle*, *Hay Fever* and *Buried Child*.

With her husband, director Michael Ferrall, and daughter, Gina, she designs and manufactures luxurious terry cloth robes for exclusive hotels nationwide, as well as for their shop, Josef Robe, Ltd., on Pier 39.



HENRY WORONICZ joins A.C.T. for his second season after appearing last year in *Our Town*, *Macbeth* and *A Christmas Carol*. Most recently, he performed at the Berkeley Repertory Theatre in *The Playboy of the Western World*. Before coming to A.C.T., Mr. Woronicz spent a year at the Oregon Shakespearean Festival playing the title role in *Henry VIII* and Autolycus in *The Winter's Tale*. He spent six years acting and directing at the Boston Shakespeare Company, where his credits include title roles in *Hamlet*, *Richard III* and *Romeo and Juliet*, Petruchio in *The Taming of the Shrew*, Benedick in *Much Ado About Nothing* and roles in more than thirty-five other productions. In his final year at the Boston Shakespeare Company, he appeared, under the direction of Peter Sellars, in *Pericles*, a three person *Macbeth* and played Eilif to Linda Hunt's *Mother Courage*. Other credits include *Henry V* at the Utah Shakespeare Festival and Julian in *Toys in the Attic* and Leo in *Design for Living* for the Tufts University Arena Theatre. He directed the Boston premieres of Athol Fugard's *A Lesson From Aloes* and *The Island*. Active in A.C.T.'s Conservatory, Mr. Woronicz staged a studio production of *Lydie Breeze* last season and will direct *Sea Marks* at the Oregon Shakespearean Festival in 1986.



DANIEL ZIPPI appeared with A.C.T. in the 1975-76 season, participating in the bicentennial tour of the Soviet Union and the PBS taping of *The Taming of the Shrew*. Since then, he has appeared on Broadway, with various regional theatres and on television. Mr. Zippi, also known as Les Toulouse, has been seen about town in Los Angeles singing and playing guitar with the modern folk ensemble, Neutral Spirits.

DIRECTORS

WILLIAM BALL (General Director) founded the American Conservatory Theatre (A.C.T.) in 1965 and remains its general director. Beginning in the theatre as a designer, he turned to acting and appeared with regional companies and Shakespeare festivals across the country. He made his New York directorial debut with an Off-Broadway production of Chekov's *Ivanov* which won the Obie and Vernon Rice Drama Desk Awards for 1958. He subsequently directed at Houston's Alley Theatre; San Francisco's Actor's Workshop; Washington, D.C.'s Arena Stage; San Diego's Old Globe Theatre; and staged several New York City Opera productions. His 1959 Off-Broadway production of *Under Milk Wood* won both the Lola D'Annunzio and the Outer Circle Critics' Awards and in 1962 his *Six Characters in Search of an Author* proved another multiple-award winner and enjoyed an extended New York run. After directing at Canada's Stratford



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Festival, Mr. Ball returned to New York to write the libretto for an opera, *Natalya Petrovna*, with composer Lee Hoiby, based on *A Month in the Country*. In 1964 he directed *Tartuffe* and *Homage to Shakespeare* at Lincoln Center, and then traveled to London where he recreated his staging of *Six Characters*.

A native of New Rochelle and a graduate of Carnegie-Mellon University, Mr. Ball has been the recipient of a Fulbright scholarship, a Ford Foundation directorial grant, and an NBC-RCA director's fellowship. Among the first plays he directed for A.C.T. were *Tartuffe*, *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, *Under Milk Wood*, *Tiny Alice* and *King Lear*. They were followed by *Twelfth Night*, *The American Dream*, *Hamlet*, *Oedipus Rex*, *The Three Sisters*, *The Tempest*, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, *Caesar and Cleopatra*, *The Contractor*, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *The Crucible*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *Richard III*, *Jumpers*, *Equus*, *The Bourgeois Gentleman* and *The Winter's Tale*. Last season, Mr. Ball returned to directing after a five year hiatus, staging productions of *Old Times*, *Our Town* and *Mass Appeal*.

He has directed three of his productions for PBS television, including *The Taming of the Shrew*, for which he was nominated by the Television Critic's Circle as best director of the year. In June 1979, Mr. Ball accepted the Antoinette Perry ("Tony") Award voted to A.C.T. for its outstanding work in repertory performance and advanced theatre training. In the same year, Carnegie-Mellon University presented him with an honorary degree as Doctor of Fine Arts. He is active as a teacher and director in A.C.T.'s conservatory training programs. Mr. Ball's book, *A Sense of Direction: Some Observations on the Art of Directing*, was published in September 1984.

LAWRENCE HECHT (Conservatory Director) continues this year as head of

A.C.T.'s Advanced Training Program and as resident director. He has also served as resident director and Director of Actor Training for the Pacific Conservatory of the Performing Arts in Santa Maria, California, where his directing credits include *Harvey*, *Major Barbara* and *Bus Stop*. This will be Mr. Hecht's 14th season with A.C.T. A graduate of the University of San Francisco and A.C.T.'s Advanced Training Program, Mr. Hecht has directed numerous productions for the Plays-in-Progress Series, as well as last season's Geary Theatre production of *Translations*. Mr. Hecht is also a member of the acting company and has performed in more than 25 productions with A.C.T. including *The National Health*, *The Visit*, *Buried Child*, *Night and Day*, *The Three Sisters*, *Happy Landings* and *The Holdup*.

EUGENE BARCONE (Company Coordinator) is a charter member of A.C.T. who began his career as Stage Manager for the company. For the past 17 years, he has served as Associate Director on many of William Ball's productions, and has been largely responsible for revivals of *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Hay Fever*, *The Circle*, *Private Lives* and *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*. After receiving his Bachelor of Arts degree in music, he directed the famous Red Diamond Chorus in the Army, and since has assisted Gower Champion, Ellis Rabb and Francis Ford Coppola. Known to the company as "The Minister of Mirth," Mr. Barcone has directed the Plays-in-Progress program and worked on the televised adaptations of *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *The Taming of the Shrew* and *A Christmas Carol*. Recently he celebrated his 50th production with A.C.T.

JAMES HAIRE (Production Manager) began his career on Broadway with the famed Eva Le Gallienne's National Repertory Theater. Among the productions he managed were *The Madwoman of Chailot*

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with Eva Le Gallienne, Sylvia Sydney and Leora Dana, *The Rivals*, *John Brown's Body*, *She Stoops to Conquer*, and *A Comedy of Errors*. Mr. Haire also stage managed the Broadway productions of *Georgy*, a new musical by Carol Bayer Sager at the Wintergarden Theater, *And Miss Reardon Drinks a Little* with Julie Harris and Estelle Parsons, and the national tour of Woody Allen's *Don't Drink the Water* with Sam Levene and Vivian Blaine. Mr. Haire joined the American Conservatory Theatre in 1971 as Production Stage Manager and in this capacity has managed over one hundred productions as well as taking the company on tour to many places in the United States, including Honolulu, Hawaii; Billings, Montana; Central City, Colorado; and Santa Fe, New Mexico. He also managed the A.C.T. tours to Japan and the Soviet Union. Mr. Haire holds a Master of Arts degree from Northwestern University and an honorary Master of Fine Arts from the American Conservatory Theater Foundation.

EDWARD HASTINGS (Director), a founding member of A.C.T. whose productions of *Charley's Aunt* and *Our Town* were seen during A.C.T.'s first two seasons, has staged numerous productions for the company since 1965 and founded the Plays-in-Progress program devoted to the production of new writing. Mr. Hastings served last summer as a resident director at the Eugene O'Neill Playwrights' Conference in Connecticut and taught acting last year at the Shanghai Drama Institute as part of the Art Bridge Program between A.C.T. and the Shanghai Theater. Off-Broadway, he co-produced *The Saintliness of Margery Kempe*, *Epitaph for George Dillion* and directed the national touring company of *Oliver*. He staged the American production of Sir Michael Redgrave in *Shakespeare's People*, directed the Australian premiere of *The Hot I Baltimore*, and restaged his A.C.T. production of Sam Shepard's *Buried Child* in Serbo-Croatia at the Yugoslavia

Dramatic Theatre in Belgrade. He has recently been guest director at the Guthrie Theatre, Seattle Repertory Theatre, the Denver Center, the San Francisco Opera Center and the Berkeley Repertory Theatre. This past summer he directed the professional premiere of *The Majestic Kid* for the Oregon Shakespearean Festival.

NAGLE JACKSON (Guest Director and Playwright) directed McCarter Theatre's productions of *St. Joan*, *Hamlet*, *A Christmas Carol*, *At This Evening's Performance*, *The Three Sisters*, *Just Between Ourselves*, *Keystone*, *The School for Wives* and *Faustus in Hell*. He was Artistic Director of the Milwaukee Repertory Theater from 1971-77, and during his tenure at the Milwaukee Rep, he founded the Court Street Theatre, now one of the major outlets for new playwrights in the Midwest. A resident director for three years at A.C.T., he has returned regularly to direct plays, including *The English Mystery Plays*, *Cat Among the Pigeons*, *Travesties* and *An Evening with Tom Stoppard*, which he devised with Mr. Stoppard's participation. He has directed on Broadway and at leading regional theatres including the Hartford Stage Company, the Old Globe Theatre in San Diego, the Seattle Repertory Theatre, the Washington, D.C. Summer Shakespeare Festival, the Oregon Shakespearean Festival and The Acting Company. Last season, Mr. Jackson directed A.C.T.'s *The School for Wives*.

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DESIGNERS

JEANNIE DAVIDSON (Costumes) has been Resident Costume Designer at the Oregon Shakespearean Festival in Ashland since 1969, where she has designed costumes for more than one hundred productions, including this season's *Lizzie Borden in the Late Afternoon* and *King Lear*. She received Dramalogue Awards for the Ashland productions of *'Tis a Pity She's A Whore*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet* and *The Revenger's Tragedy*. Some of her other Ashland credits include *Julius Caesar*, *Macbeth*, *The Father*, *The Matchmaker*, *Wild Oats*, *Dr. Faustus*, *Dracula* and *Translations*. Miss Davidson also designed *The Three Musketeers* for the Children's Theatre Company of Minneapolis and *The Taming of the Shrew* for the Colorado Shakespeare Festival. Her work can be seen in the current Berkeley Rep production of *Playboy of the Western World*.

DEREK DUARTE (Lighting) most recently designed lighting for *Execution of Justice* and *Playboy of the Western World* at Berkeley Repertory Theatre. Mr. Duarte's work has also been seen at the Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, Berkeley Shakespeare Festival, San Jose Repertory, California Repertory Theatre, the Fringe Festival in Edinburgh, Scotland and at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. Mr. Duarte holds an M.F.A. in Theater Technology from U.C.L.A.

JESSE HOLLIS (Scenery) joins A.C.T. for the first time this fall to design scenery for *The Majestic Kid* and *Opéra Comique*. Earlier this year he provided scenery for the production of *The Majestic Kid* seen at the Oregon Shakespearean Festival, where he has also designed *Crimes of the Heart*, *Death of a Salesman* and *Of Mice and*

Men. Last March, Mr. Hollis designed sets for Stephen Paulus' *The Postman Always Rings Twice* at the Fort Worth Opera. In recent seasons, he has designed *Cold Storage*, *Dreamhouse* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Sacramento Theatre Company, where he will be returning for four plays in the 1985-86 season. Locally, Mr. Hollis' credits include nine productions for the Berkeley Repertory Theatre, designs for The Lamplighters, including this fall's *Countess Maritza* and the original production of Sam Shepard's *True West* at the Magic Theater. He has created scenery for the San Francisco Ballet, San Francisco Opera Showcase and Merola Program, Civic Arts Repertory of Walnut Creek, Contra Costa Music Theater, West Bay Opera of Palo Alto, Opera Piccola of San Francisco and the Berkeley Shakespeare Festival.

FRITHA KNUDSEN (Costumes) continues a long association with A.C.T. After earning a B.A. in costume design from California State University/Hayward, she worked at A.C.T. as a scene painter on *Hay Fever* and *The Visit* and was Assistant Shop Supervisor for *Ah, Wilderness!*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *The Circle*. In addition to three seasons with A.C.T., she has also served on the staffs of Pacific Conservatory of the Performing Arts in Santa Maria, Seattle Repertory Theatre and the Oregon Shakespearean Festival, where she created costume props for *Timon of Athens*. In 1978 she left the theatre and opened The Costume Studio, a commercial design firm which thrived for six years supplying costumes for visiting entertainers and retailers and by fabricating large character pieces for advertising. Her achievements include a 6'6" Rémy Martin bottle, a tomato 5' in diameter and giant chickens for Lynden Farms. She has also designed period costumes for porcelain dolls, toys and masks.

THE AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATRE

presents

OPÉRA COMIQUE

(1985)

by Nagle Jackson

The Cast

| | |
|------------------------------|--------------------|
| <i>Odile</i> | Joy Carlin |
| <i>M. de la Corniche</i> | Dakin Matthews |
| <i>La Tartine</i> | Joan Stuart-Morris |
| <i>Madame de la Corniche</i> | Marrrian Walters |
| <i>Viviane</i> | Marcia Pizzo |
| <i>Georges Bizet</i> | Henry Woronicz |
| <i>Ernest Guiraud</i> | John Castellanos |
| <i>M. Paul Vigneron</i> | Peter Donat |
| <i>Hector Vigneron</i> | Daniel Zippi |
| <i>Charles Gounod</i> | William Paterson |

Directed by Nagle Jackson

| | |
|---------------------------|-------------------|
| <i>Scenery by</i> | Jesse Hollis |
| <i>Costumes by</i> | Friitha Knudsen |
| <i>Lighting by</i> | Derek Duarte |
| <i>Sound by</i> | Christopher Moore |
| <i>Wigs by</i> | Rick Echols |
| <i>Associate Director</i> | Kenn Watt |

Time: March 3, 1875

Place: A corridor in the lobby of the Opéra Comique, Paris.

There will be one twelve-minute intermission.

UNDERSTUDIES

Odile—Elizabeth Padilla; *Corniche*—Frank Ottiwell; *Tartine*—Nike Doukas;
Madame Corniche—Johanna Jackson; *Viviane*—Michelle Casey; *Bizet*—Mark Murphey;
Ernest—Kenn Watt; *Vigneron*—Drew Eshelman; *Hector*—Scot Bishop; *Gounod*—Joseph Bird

**This production is made possible by a generous gift
from The AT&T Foundation.**

A Night At The Opera:

Nagle Jackson on "Opéra Comique"



Nagle Jackson

A few years ago while rummaging through a San Francisco bookstore, during one of my many visits to this gracious city, the finger of fate, or pure accidental happenstance, directed my hand towards a copy of Mina Curtiss' splendid biography of Georges Bizet. As nineteenth century Paris and its artistic denizens are a sort of unofficial hobby with me, and as I realized that I knew next to nothing about the composer of *Carmen*, I plucked it from its shelf with more than passing interest. It made a delightful "read", after which I added it to my collection and thought no more about the matter. Or rather, my conscious self thought no more about the matter, but apparently curious things were going on backstage in my mind because nearly a year later, while going over the galleys of another play of mine

then in the throes of publication, the form of *Opéra Comique* began to emerge.

I had been tremendously moved by Bizet's difficult time with the Parisian public and press, and by the melancholy circumstances of his death. That he should die convinced that his towering masterpiece was a failure seemed to me the most tragic kind of leave-taking imaginable.

Since most of his trials and tribulations centered around the musical theater, and the Opéra Comique in particular, it was that house which seemed the necessary arena for whatever dramatic action might occur. The Opéra Comique, now technically the Salle Favart, was the lesser house in the subsidized world of French music, taking a second place to the Grand Opéra, newly installed in the Salle Garnier the same year as that of *Carmen's* debut: 1875. The Comique was a temple of lighter fare, good solid "family entertainment" and a perfect haven for the tired *homme d'affaires*—and indeed many *affaires* both mercantile and romantic were instigated there. It was a place where often what was going on onstage was the least important aspect of the evening. Into this dubious arena came Bizet with his revolutionary and fiery masterpiece. It would be rather as if someone were to exhibit an X-rated film at Radio City Music Hall.

Any serious criticism of the work was buried in the social outrage. How dared anyone put on something *real* at the Opéra Comique? How dared there be an ending not only unhappy but graphic in its violence. The leading lady is *stabbed* . . . in

the belly!

Bizet was not unaware of this atmosphere, indeed of the musical atmosphere in general in the Paris of the late 1800s. He once wrote to a friend: "In art (music, painting, sculpture particularly) as in literature, it is the *talent* and not the *idea* that makes success. The public (and I am speaking of the intelligent public, the others don't count; that is my own kind of democracy), the public does not understand the *idea* until later. To reach this later time, the artist's talent must, by means of attractive form, ease the way ..."

Certainly Bizet had mastered the "attractive form". He purposely opens *Carmen* with two delightful tunes, one of which—the "Toreador Song"—is probably the biggest pop hit in all of opera. This was done consciously to woo the lazy audiences to more intriguing depths. Bizet was a great fan of Wagner, and wanted to bring French music to those heights. It is frustrating in the extreme to think what might have been had he survived, emotionally and physically, the disappoint-

ment of *Carmen's* temporary failure.

But does one write a play about the misunderstood artist? Yes, many do and they are boring and, usually, dripping with self pity. I don't think artists are terribly good subjects for the dramatic scene; their conflicts are too specialized perhaps. (*Amadeus* is an interesting exception in that it deals with an artist suffering from unwarranted *success*). At any rate, I knew I did not want to write about "poor old Georges," but rather about the totally frivolous world which surrounded him at the Opéra Comique and, indeed, that term "*opéra comique*" became the key signature of the work and eventually its title.

The play deals literally with a night at the opera, with all the events and personages of that opening night, both real and imagined, and with the irrelevance of the social event to the artistic event. In fact the artistic event took on a smaller and smaller profile as the work progressed—art imitated reality. The play is partially a personal statement I suppose, for every playwright and director has gone through



Mark Murphey, Sydney Walker, Annette Bening and Ray Reinhardt in last season's "The School for Wives," directed by Nagle Jackson.

the astonishing and revelatory experience of "prowling the lobby" during intermission to see how the audience is responding, only to find that all anyone discusses



Lawrence Hecht and Janice Hutchins in Nagle Jackson's "At This Evening's Performance," performed at A.C.T. as a Play-in-Progress.

in a lobby is the parking problem or the restaurant situation. This is probably as it should be; the *event* exists within "the close and holy darkness" of the auditorium, not in the lobby, but of course for us so actively involved it would seem to exist everywhere.

A note should be made here concerning two historical personages who appear in this play: Guiraud and Gounod. Ernest Guiraud, Bizet's good friend to the death, is remembered only for the music he added to *Carmen* after Bizet's death, music to replace the spoken dialogue and thereby to elevate the work to Grand Opera. Interestingly, contemporary producers discard M. Guiraud's interpolations in favor of the original spoken words.

Charles Gounod, that marvelous old hypocrite, was considered by the public and by himself to be the god of French

music. His vaguely religious sentimentality and his wonderful melodic gift still hold the major operatic stages, but through one work only, *Faust*. Gounod spent a year in a monastery during his middle years, tended to sign his letters "l'Abbé Gounod", but managed to carry on extensive and highly publicized affairs while Madame Gounod sulked in their elegant Parisian apartment. Gounod believed the French aphorism which states that marriage is such a heavy responsibility it takes three people to fulfill it.

I should add on a personal note that I saw my first performance of *Carmen* at the age of fourteen at the Opéra Comique in Paris. This was also the time of the revival of interest in Feydeau. Perhaps during that year the combination of first operatic experience and first exposure to the king of Boulevard farce was to incubate all these many, many years and only now erupt in such bizarre juxtaposition on the stage.

I have many people to thank: firstly, of course, Bill Ball who heard the wonderful A.C.T. acting company read the play last fall (while I was here staging *The School for Wives*) and who had the courage or folly—or both—to schedule the work for this '85 season. Then, to those wonderful actors, for this play was truly written with this company, and only this company, in mind. I must also thank Michael Pratt, distinguished conductor and member of the faculty of music at Princeton for valuable technical assistance in things musical. I suppose my greatest "merci" should go to Mina Curtiss whose biography, *Bizet and His World* started the whole thing rolling in my ungovernable mind. Or perhaps I should thank the bookstore where I happened upon the book. But I can't remember where it was . . .

Mr. Jackson's biography appears in the "Who's Who" section, elsewhere in this program book.

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The First Night Of "Carmen"



Georges Bizet

Thanks to Nagle Jackson, our playwright and director, we have a farcial look at the social life of the evening of *Carmen's* premiere. But what of the artistic life born that evening? What went on on the other side of those luxury boxes? What of *Carmen*?

While history does not remember Bizet's now legendary opera as an instant success, it was also not the unmitigated disaster that night that popular lore now repates it to have been. True, the records show that the auditorium was never filled and that the box-office receipts did not pay the cost of the production, but *Carmen* was performed forty-eight times in the following six months—hardly a flash-in-the-pan.

In fact, what is recalled as a hostile opening night reception only became that as the evening wore on. Following the fifty-eight minute first act the applause was warm, the singers were recalled and the stage was crowded with people congratulating the composer.

It was only when the more shocking

themes—themes which incensed critics later called immoral and out of place at the bourgeois Opéra Comique—were trotted out that the audience turned against *Carmen*. Perhaps the empty house at the final curtain was more of a reaction to the unexpected than a negative statement, a reflection of astonishment rather than loathing.

Though history records the disfavor of the popular press and the first night's audience, *Carmen* was not universally panned. As sensitive and musically astute a critic as composer Camille Saint-Saëns, whom Bizet considered his peer, saw the production a week after opening and came out in favor of *Carmen*, hailing it "a great success."

It was also reported by Pierre Barton, a distinguished member of the Comédie-Française company and a friend of Bizet's, who attended a performance of *Carmen* following its premiere that "the whole audience vibrated in unison. Everything had been understood, appreciated, emphasized . . . This crowd with which I rubbed elbows in the corridors and lobbies, whose naive appreciation I overheard, seemed quite as enchanted as I was." It was the snobs, those who felt that Bizet and his "courtesans" would forever soil the reputation of an upstanding theatre, who were the loudest and most frequent criers of failure.

Whether or not the bad press was responsible for Bizet's despondency, which was said to have led, in turn, to his decline both physically and artistically, is another matter entirely. But perhaps the reputation *Carmen* has as a work of art unappreciated in its own time is unwarranted.

—Ralph Hoskins

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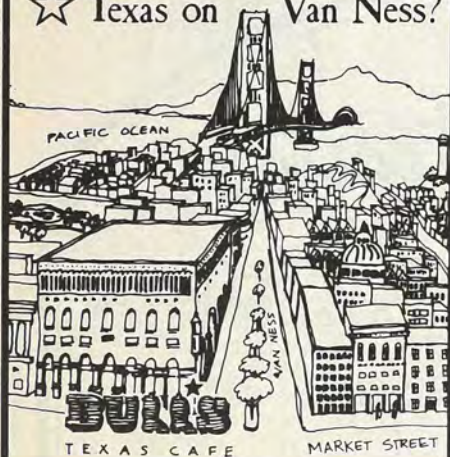


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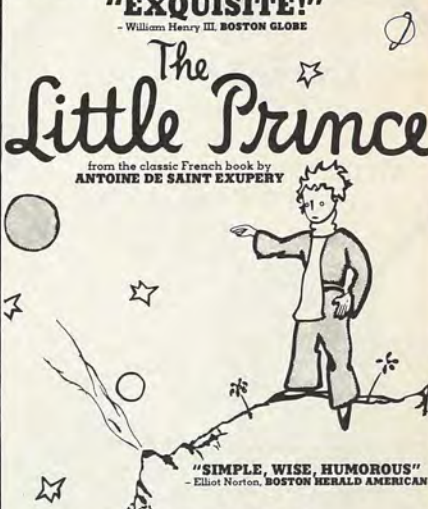
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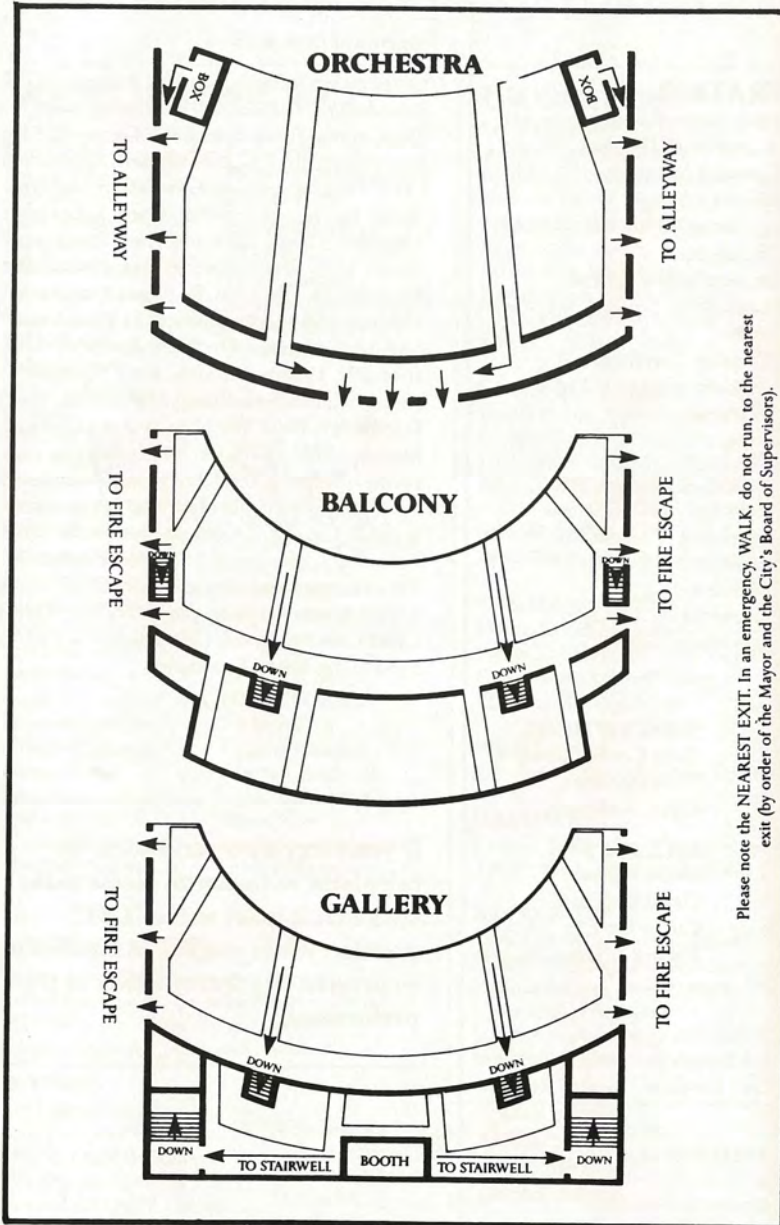
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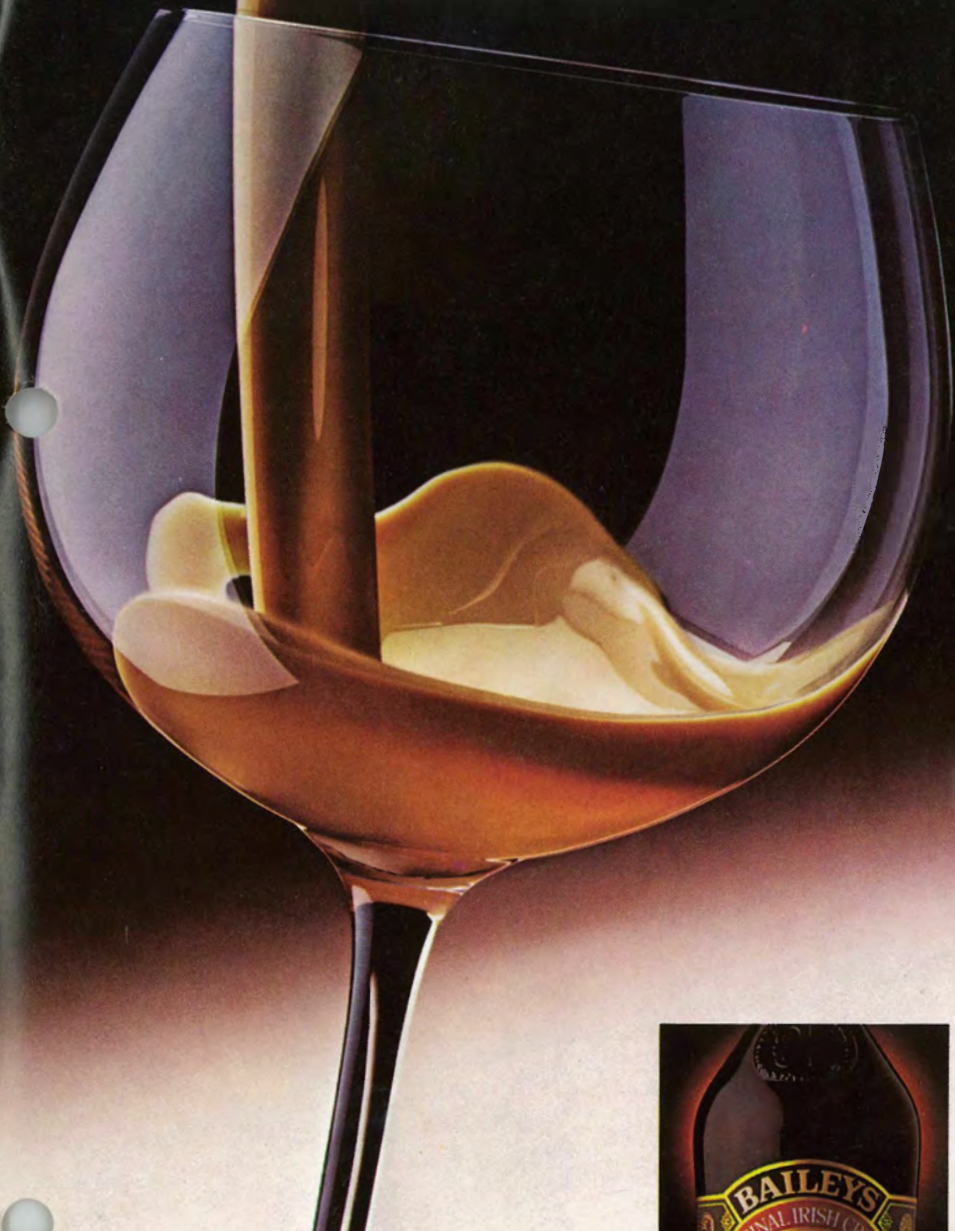
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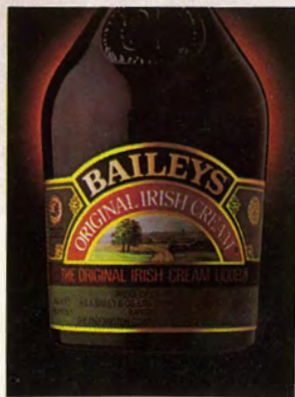
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