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The Theatre & Music Magazine for California & Texas

MAY 1987

COVER: *A devilish sextet from A.C.T.'s West Coast premiere production of* Faustus in Hell *by Nagle Jackson. (clockwise, from top) Sydney Walker, Hope Alexander-Willis, Peter Donat, Robin Goodr Nordli and Drew Eshelman. (center) William Paters Photo by Larry Merkle.*

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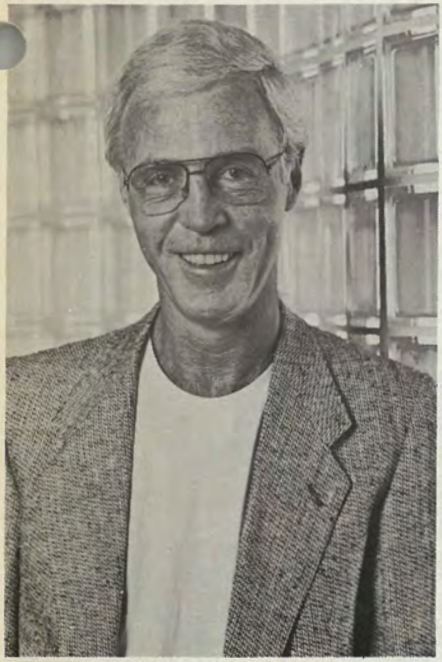
Man in Motion: Robert J. Fitzpatrick

by Eric Wilson

A conversation with the ebullient, versatile, peripatetic and decidedly in-demand director of the forthcoming Los Angeles Festival.



Robert J. Fitzpatrick

LIKE many of the theatre pieces he is bringing to Los Angeles this September, Robert J. Fitzpatrick — president of the California Institute of the Arts, director of the 1984 Olympic Arts Festival and now director of the upcoming 1987 Los Angeles Festival — does not fit into any easily definable category.*

Born in Toronto in 1940 — Canadian tones still permeate his speech in words like "out" and "about" — Fitzpatrick moved to the U.S. when he was twelve. After finishing high school in Amarillo, Texas, and majoring in French, Latin and philosophy at a small college in Mobile, Alabama, Fitzpatrick went on to Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore to study Romance languages. After a few stints of teaching French and minor forays into politics, Fitzpatrick returned to Johns Hopkins as dean of students from 1972 to 1975.

Yet all the while, just outside the walls of academe, beyond the hustings, there was the festival.

The festival had begun, it seems, back in the summer of 1965. Fitzpatrick had received a grant from the French government to study in Avignon: "And what you have to understand is: Avignon is a sleepy, provincial town . . . "

Then, three weeks after he arrived, "Banners and flags and billboards and posters started going up all over the city.

"And when the thing began, there were about 100,000 people who had descended on Avignon from all over Europe for this festival. There was this whole sense of

*Even less so, as time goes on. Just as this article was being completed, it was announced that as soon as the 1987 festival has ended, Fitzpatrick would be leaving L.A. for France: he has been named president of the new Euro Disneyland, a lavish resort and entertainment complex that will open just east of Paris in the early 1990s.

exhilaration and excitement and people staying up in the main square, Place de l'Horloge, until three and four in the morning after performances, drinking and talking about what they had seen and what was coming . . .

"I remember . . . going to see the doctor in Avignon. I asked him, did I have the flu or what? He said: 'You've eaten too well, drunk too well, and lived too well the life of the festival.'"

"It was the first experience where I was almost violently forced to change my own tastes and perceptions — because I got *dragged* along to see things that I would normally never have bothered with."

As a result, Fitzpatrick explains, "I found that within two days I was a complete festival junkie. I was going to two or three performances a day, including some things that were absolutely wretched.

"The net result was, when the festival ended, after 27 or 28 days, I remember being violently ill and going to see the doctor in Avignon. I asked him, did I have the flu or what? He said: *Vous avez trop bien bu, trop bien mangé et trop bien vécu la vie du festival*. You've eaten too well, drunk too well, and lived too well the life of the festival." The doctor's prescriptions, he recalls, were harsh: "Vichy water, a week's rest, and *no performances*."

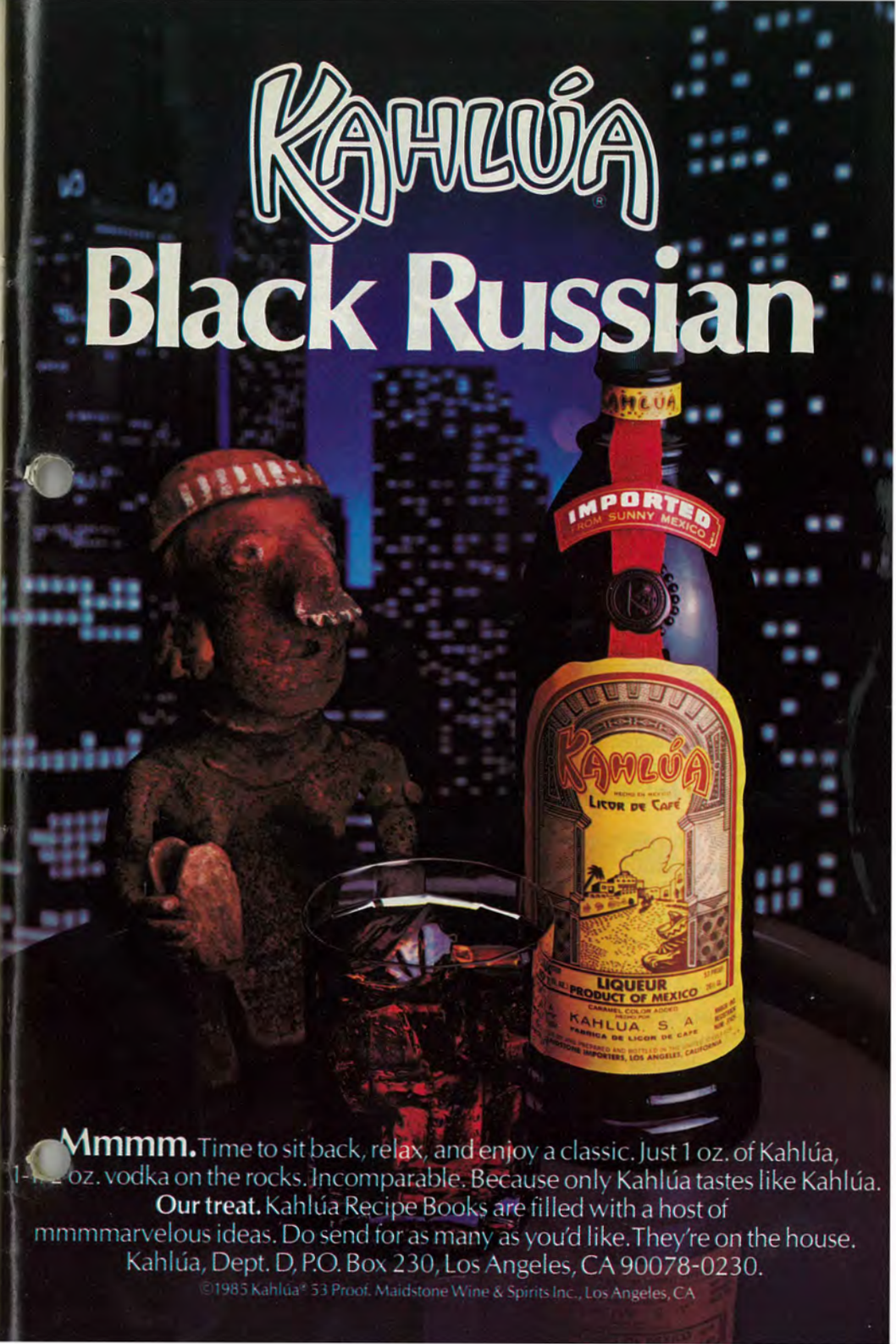
Although Fitzpatrick heeded the doctor's advice temporarily — "and his recommendations actually did cure me" — nevertheless the next 22 years of his life have been what he describes as a "riotous intermix" of performances.

Last summer the intermix became almost *too* riotous, even for the adventurous impresario. In the midst of an intense 35-day trip across Europe to track down over 100 plays — if you're putting together a festival, he explains, "you don't just buy from a catalogue" — Fitzpatrick encountered a work he will *not* be bringing to Los Angeles. Wistfully he tells me: "There was a Yugoslav company that did a piece . . .

"We were summoned at midnight on a

BENGT WANSELIUS

Peter Stormare and Marie Goranzon in the Swedish Royal Dramatic Theatre's production of Miss Julie, *directed by Ingmar Bergman.*



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MICHEL DIEUZAIDE

A scene from The Mahabharata, *Peter Brook's nine-hour-long version of the Indian epic and centerpiece of the forthcoming Los Angeles Festival.*

rainy, wind-swept hill in Edinburgh — they could only take 20 people at a time. A member of the company came, grabbed you at the top of the hill, one by one, at random. They put a black cloak over your head and then dragged you at full run down the hill, blindfolded. Then you were led into a *tent*, as you discovered afterwards.

"Inside the tent you were put underneath the stage, with only your head appearing — in what turned out to be a gigantic, 20-seat privy. They whipped the blindfold off your head and the quote 'performance' began. And it was — dancers in heavy leather boots who sort of tromped just in front of your nose, and at one point they put huge lobsters — *live* lobsters — on the floor, that came toward your nose and you couldn't do anything to protect yourself. And you had visions of your nose about to be bitten off by these pincers — and *just* as the thing was about to strike you, from behind would come a hand and a knife that stabbed and killed the lobsters."

This work proved to be too riotous even for Edinburgh, and Fitzpatrick explains that it was closed down by the City Council the very next day.

Things proved to be a bit calmer in Stockholm, where Fitzpatrick visited Sweden's 200 year-old Royal Dramatic Theatre — the famed Dramaten — for Ingmar Bergman's production of the classic Strindberg play, *Miss Julie*.

Fitzpatrick does not speak Swedish, so he explains:

"Three minutes into it, I was so mesmerized by the performance of Peter Stormare, the lead actor, that I *forgot* I didn't speak the language. You are just carried away by the intensity of the performance."

In wondering whether an American audience would share his enthusiasm, however, Fitzpatrick had initial doubts:

"My first reaction was that it was too quiet. That it really wouldn't work. And yet," he adds, "I found myself constantly remembering . . ."

Reliving the experience, Fitzpatrick describes for me the set — a single 19th-century Swedish farmhouse kitchen: the wonderful big copper pot that they draw water from; the smell of chicken livers

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actually being cooked on stage; the window that looks out into the garden, and the changing light from that window that is so subtle and so intense . . .

"And once, in effect, I had tuned *down* from the roar and battle of the *Mahabharata*" — Peter Brook's lavish, nine-hour Indian epic — "once I had cleared that away from the brain, I realized: I was still remembering details from *Miss Julie* I hadn't really noticed thoroughly when I saw the production. So I went back and looked at it a second time and I thought: If it wears that well — if I continued to think about it that long — then maybe it's *not* too quiet."

Left to right, Aubrey Radebe, Sidney Khumalo, Aubrey Moalosi — members of South Africa's Market Theatre Players Company, in Percy Mtwa's Bopha!

To indicate, however, that he didn't always have to go abroad to find what he was looking for, Fitzpatrick points out that two of the festival participants live right here in Los Angeles, performance artists Rudy Perez and Rachel Rosenthal:

"I think both of them — Rosenthal and Perez — are brilliant performers. Neither one of them fits an easy, standard definition of: Well, this is what I think dance is — or, this is what I think even performance art is."

Of Rosenthal's new work, *Rachel's Brain*, Fitzpatrick says happily:

"I have not the *faintest* idea what it's going to be like. Although I think it will be one of the best pieces in the festival, it will probably irritate the hell out of some people. Because it will not follow, necessarily, the sequential patterns that most of us grow up with. The notion of beginning, middle and end — that we go from point A to point B to point C."

Fitzpatrick mentions that associate festival director Tom Schumacher had lobbied strongly in favor of including Rosenthal, explaining: "Because she makes me angry. The work makes me angry at times. I'm irritated and intrigued, simultaneously. And then startled by beauty in what I thought should have been ugly."

Once again Fitzpatrick stresses a major criterion for including a work:

"Does it *stay*? Does it continue to haunt you? Does it make you ask questions? Does it have some kind of afterlife, when you leave the theatre? I have real trepidation, a horror, even, of a work that has no afterlife. That will satisfy you or please you only while you're there. And then the thing is just gone, it had no substance to it."

* * *

From South Africa, the Market Theatre Company will be bringing a piece called *Bopha!* Fitzpatrick describes them as "quite an extraordinary company — some of whom have literally lost their lives because of South African government brutality, trying to stop their performances."

Bopha!, he explains, "is the story of a black policeman who has taken that job, in the white South African regime, as a way of trying to provide economic stability and get an education for his kids — an education that he himself was never able to get.

"And the irony, of course, is that in

taking that particular job, which is enforcing the rules of a racist regime, he *loses* his family. And — without ever trying to deliver a *political* discourse — what you have in that single family, and in its dilemma, is all the pain of apartheid in that whole country."

Although it's only a three-person play, Fitzpatrick tells me that "there's such *physical* energy on stage, and they each play so many different characters, that you're convinced this is a cast of 30."

Is energy, then, another common denominator to the works being presented?

Although Fitzpatrick agrees, he adds: "But energy is not always manifested just in physical *motion*. There is just as much energy in Bergman's production of *Miss Julie*. The energy *there*, much of it — for example, Miss Julie's part — is *erotic* energy. Suppressed energy. But physical, palpable, tangible energy, nonetheless."

* * *

The second day of the festival will be the 75th birthday of avant-garde composer John Cage, and Cage himself will be on hand to take part in the celebration. But as Fitzpatrick observes: "At this point, Cage will have been *celebrated* widely enough — but his work isn't actually performed that much. He's had such a phenomenal impact on everybody else who's making art, and yet he's almost a sort of totemic presence."

To rectify this, in the course of a week the festival will present a range of performances of Cage's works: "One of them will even be done at the Children's Museum on the Plaza, by *kids*." Fitzpatrick feels that people tend to regard contemporary music as "such difficult territory. Serious. Abstract. Impossible." After a beat he adds: "It's also great fun. Cage has such enormous *wit*. I think that's one of the things that'll come out in some of the performances we're doing."

Building upon the idea of having *fun*, Fitzpatrick is excited that the festival will open with a circus: Canada's Cirque du Soleil — the "circus of the sun" — to be presented in Little Tokyo.

"A circus," Fitzpatrick feels, "is the *one* group that would appeal to every single one of the 80 or 90 languages and cultures that live in Los Angeles. It is also something that works for any age group. And it is the least highbrow, the least socially *chic* kind of event that one could do. Opening with a circus sends a very clear message that this is not something that you have to dress up for, this is not entering a *temple* of culture. This is a festival that's about fun."

Members of the Cirque du Soleil, he tells me, come from Cambodia, North Korea, South America and France, as well as Canada: "They have all of the skills that wowed people in '84 with the Chengdu acrobats from China. And indeed, they've worked closely with a number of Chinese acrobats.

"*Plus*," he adds, "they have this sort of rough humor that the Circus Oz had. It's not your standard circus with animals and dumb acts."

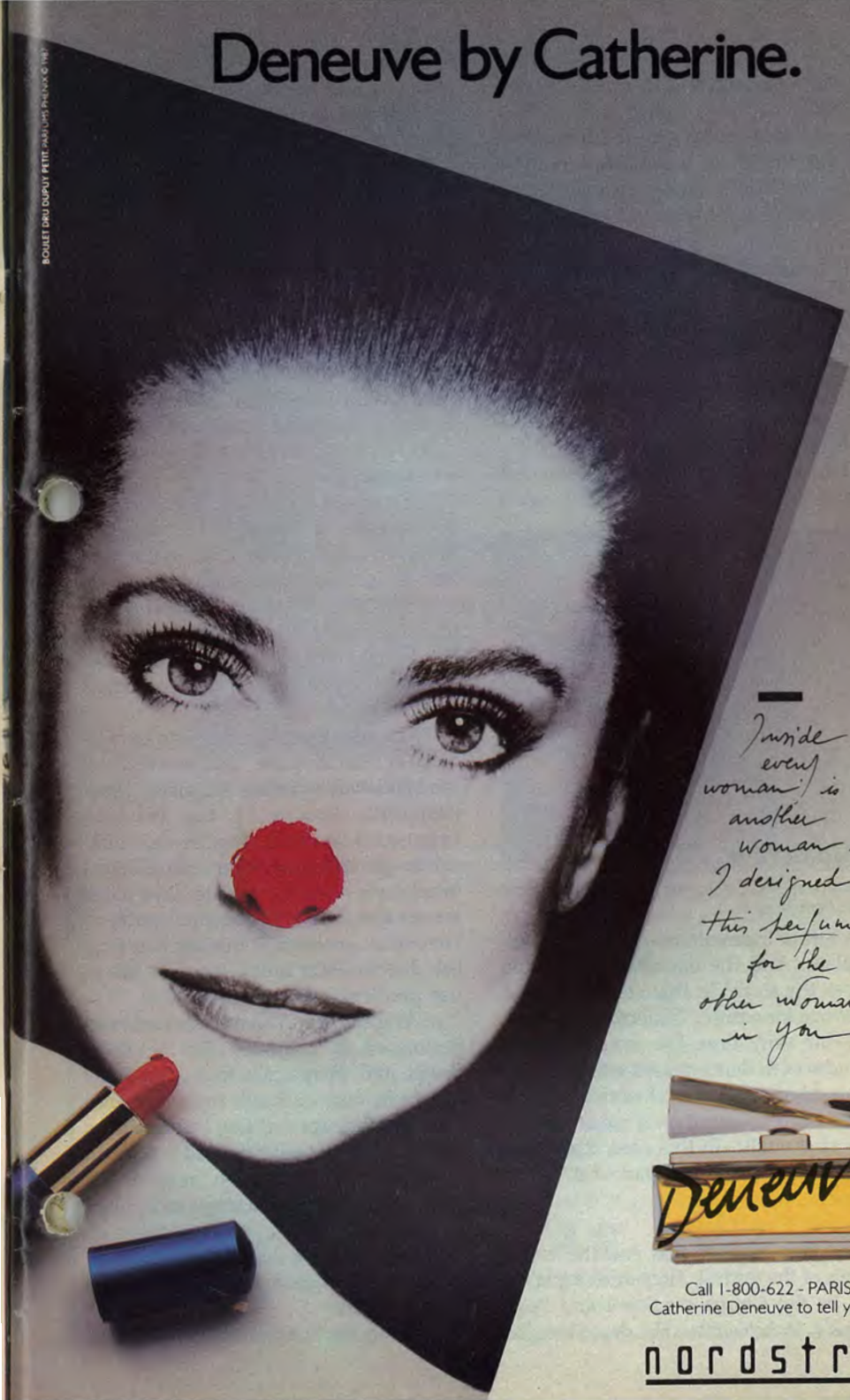
And then there's Rah Rah Zoo . . . Fitzpatrick searches for the right words to define them:

"It's a three- or four-person . . . cabaret . . . circus . . . comedy . . . chaotic juggling . . . *something*. One of the people who started it pulled away from the Circus Oz in Australia.

"I saw Rah Rah Zoo at two in the morning in a tent in Edinburgh, at the Fringe Festival. You come and the first 20 minutes, you're convinced that what you're watching is a — a miniature circus. In point of fact, it's brilliant actors using circus techniques to accomplish something else. And there's that sense of surprise when you think: I'm being *had*. But in a *nice* way. As you realize: This is much more complex than you expected."

Is there any aspect of the festival, I ask, that he would categorize as being "solemn" or "hallowed"? But Fitzpatrick, pursuing his own train of thought, nods up at the wall, at a poster of English

Deneuve by Catherine.



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dancer Michael Clark:

"It is not an accident that he is wearing a tutu. What he is trying to do is challenge all those traditions and expectations of: Ah! *This* is the way *dance* should be done, or: This is what a man should do and this is what a *woman* dancer should do."

Although Fitzpatrick states openly that Michael Clark is "occasionally deliberately vulgar," for comparison he points to a leading choreographer and dance company from France:

"The work of Maguy Marin — there's some *stunning* images. *Babel Babel* opens with some wonderful music of Mahler, and the entire stage is" — as if seeing this clearly in front of him, Fitzpatrick evokes

COLETTE MASSON/KIPA

Members of the Campagnie Maguy Marin in a scene from May B.

as a sort of incantation — "one — grassy — plain. And the dancers move naked across the stage. In that case it's a kind of primal innocence." Reflecting, he adds: "It's the only time I've ever seen real nakedness in dancers used effectively, as opposed to a sort of — theatrical device: your kind of substitution of nakedness for lack of thought. In this case, it's a very integral and intelligent part of it."

* * *

The two "tracks" that run the entire length of the festival, Fitzpatrick explains, will be the Cirque du Soleil and Peter Brook's *Mahabharata*. He describes the *Mahabharata* as being "by far the most complex and expensive piece in the festival, and around which much of the other activity has really been built."

The most ambitious undertaking of the 1984 festival, Robert Wilson's ill-fated CIVIL warS, ultimately "collapsed of its own weight," as Fitzpatrick puts it. In happy contrast, the *Mahabharata* seems to be coming in on schedule and on budget. Nonetheless, Fitzpatrick observes that launching a nine-hour, 3,000-year-old Indian epic with a cast of 30 performers and five musicians from 18 countries "is no less complex than building a nuclear power plant — there are that many interrelated pieces.

"It's going to go from Paris to Zurich to Los Angeles to Brooklyn to Sydney to Adelaide — to India to Japan to London. And to keep all of that working, the coordination of these pieces — plus currency fluctuations and everything else — we have a set of tech books and manuals that are just slightly smaller than those for the Normandy invasion."

There were several problems to be overcome in mounting the "roar and battle of the *Mahabharata*" in Los Angeles: "One," Fitzpatrick explains, "is that the John Landis trial has made it extremely difficult to get all the necessary permissions in advance — to use fire, to have battle scenes and so on." The second problem, Fitzpatrick explains, is the fact that English director Peter Brook "does *not* like to use predictable theatre spaces."

In Avignon, the *Mahabharata* had been performed in a quarry. But although Brook and Fitzpatrick found an ideal quarry in Vasquez Rocks in Los Angeles County: "It turns out that because it's a state park, we would have had to have an environmental protection report. We could not have moved a single rock, plant or tree . . ."

Then Fitzpatrick discovered a location within Griffith Park that is sometimes used for films:

"The day we first walked into that can-

Launching The Mahabharata *"is no less complex than building a nuclear power plant — there are that many interrelated pieces . . . we have a set of tech books and manuals that are just slightly smaller than those for the Normandy invasion."*

yon, Peter saw it and said: This is absolutely wonderful! It's pristine, sacred space. Well, we sat down on a rock, and it turned out to be made of papier-mâché. It had been left by one of the previous occupants. Anyway, that one didn't work, because the noise would have interfered with the neighbors over the hill."

The final possible location was a stone quarry in Griffith Park used by the Park Service: one where there would be no environmental problems to deal with. "So we flew Peter over, and at midnight he had me standing on the face of the cliff, declaiming in French and in English everything I could remember, testing the acoustics . . ."

But Fitzpatrick's declaiming produced no "Clear! Ringing! Tones!," he explains, because the decomposed granite "sucked in the sound, making it muffled, swallowed and garbled."

The "final blow," as any Angeleno might suspect, was the fact that while they kept trying to find a way to make the quarry work, once the sun had gone down, Peter Brook found it too cold too continue.

Finally, the pair settled upon the Raleigh Studios in Hollywood, who by performance time, Fitzpatrick tells me, will have completed "two of the largest sound stages in the world."

* * *

At the time of our conversation, funding is still uncertain for a Japanese version of *Medea*. Nevertheless Fitzpatrick's

enthusiasm for the Toho production is infectious: "It's the closest you'll even come to Greek tragedy in your lifetime."

Vividly he recalls:

"I saw it in Edinburgh. It was done outdoors in a courtyard there, and I almost froze to death and got pneumonia. Most of the Scots were smart enough to bring blankets and a flask of whiskey. Single malt at that . . . I, like an idiot, had a Coca-Cola — and no blanket. It ends with a wonderful sort of *coup de théâtre*, where Medea, having killed her children, enters the palace, and at the end, the very next scene, up in the *sky* you see Medea — ascending into the clouds. And what they have is a gigantic crane.

"*If* we're able to bring the company," he continues, "we're going to do it here in the embassy . . ."

The embassy? But surely there's no Japanese embassy in Los Angeles. I am disoriented. Then slowly it occurs to me: I'm sitting with Robert J. Fitzpatrick in the Embassy Hotel and Theatre, at 9th and Figueroa in downtown Los Angeles. We're not sitting with or without blankets, sipping single malt whiskey or Coca-Cola; we're in a rather small, old-fashioned office, flanked by posters of a young man in a tutu and Le Cirque du Soleil — the circus of the sun . . .

"If you ask him [technical director John De Santis] what are Fitzpatrick's criteria for choosing things for the festival, he will tell you he is convinced I choose those productions hoping to find the one *that will kill him. The one that is technically so difficult . . . "*

Fitzpatrick is envisioning: "We're going to do it here in the Embassy, and we're going to knock out the back wall of the theatre, and a gigantic crane will come in through the back wall . . . " Hissing in

a fervent hydraulic simulation, Fitzpatrick raises the platform of his hands as he adds: "And float them up into the sky! And — "

Suddenly taking into account practical logistics, Fitzpatrick changes his train of thought:

"And — none of these productions, unfortunately, is simple. I mean, our technical director, John De Santis, if you ask him: What are Fitzpatrick's criteria for choosing things for the festival, he will tell you that he is convinced I choose those productions hoping to find the *one* that will kill him. The one that is technically so difficult . . .

"I mean, the idea of doing the

Composer John Cage: being performed, not merely celebrated, at the Los Angeles Festival.

Schaubühne production, which has this *lake*."

As we speak, it is virtually certain that because the dollar has declined 40% against the German Mark since the beginning of negotiations, the festival will have to forego Pierre Marivaux's *Triumph of Love* as performed by the Schaubühne of West Berlin.

Still and all, they had this lake. This *lake*. Through Fitzpatrick's eyes, I see:

" . . . this *lake* that has to be drained. First of all, it has to be perfectly heated so that the actors who go into it don't die of pneumonia; and it has to be drained incredibly rapidly between the first and

the second act, because when you walk in after the intermission . . . "

As his tone changes, so does the lake: " . . . when you walk in *after* the intermission, it's an empty lake with a few dead leaves — and there's such an overwhelming sense of loss and desolation and winter and *death*."

* * *

In Avignon last summer, at a café on the Place de l'Horloge, Fitzpatrick recalls sitting with a friend at two a.m., lamenting the fact that he had always just missed seeing the work of choreographer Maguy Marin. "And my friend said: Well, Maguy's arriving at three this morning, and she's on her way to Cagliari, if you want to sit down and talk with her." So at 3:30 that morning, Fitzpatrick caught up with her, in transit.

On the spot, she insisted he drop everything and follow her and her company to Cagliari — in Sardinia — so he could finally see *Babel Babel*. When Fitzparick protested that he had other plans, Maguy Marin was firm: "Either you're an impresario or you're not," she told him. "You gotta come!"

Needless to say, Fitzpatrick went. In the either-or category, the man *is*, without doubt, an impresario. But like Rachel Rosenthal, he is also a performance artist of sorts. For my benefit he has knocked out the Embassy wall to float Medea up into the clouds; he has filled his office with this *lake* — then drained it to leave behind an overwhelming sense of desolation. He has let live lobsters scuttle before my very nose . . . By the time I emerge from his office, it's hard to sort things out. For two full hours, Robert J. Fitzpatrick has been creating for me his "riotous intermix" of festivals.

Come September, he will be creating them all over Los Angeles.□

Eric Wilson, a frequent contributor to Performing Arts *magazine and the* Los Angeles Times, *is also a prize-winning author of short stories who teaches fiction writing at UCLA extension.*

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Government and the Arts: Uneasy Partnership

by David Stevens

"Two years from its presumed opening, the Opéra de la Bastille still has neither a project director nor an artistic director laying the groundwork for the new theatre — and two years in the opera business is no time at all."

Model of the entrance to the Opéra de la Bastille.

IN France, the biggest single supporter of the arts by far is the national government. This is true of other European countries, East and West, with variations for historical and ideological reasons, but in France the powerful centralizing tendency that dates from Louis XIV and has only recently begun to weaken, as well as the French penchant for cultural evangelism, gives the arts a high profile. For instance, the Louvre and most of the other major art museums in the country are *national* museums, supported primarily by the state. The recently opened Picasso Museum in Paris was created thanks to a French law that permits works of art to be turned over to the state in lieu of death duties — virtually the entire collection of the museum was chosen from works owned by Picasso when he died.

The Paris Opera, operator of the country's, and one of the world's, major opera and ballet companies, is a national theatre that last year got a state subsidy of more than 300 million francs (about $50 million at today's rate of exchange) — nearly three-quarters of its total budget.

Throughout France there are cultural institutions — theatres, museums, dance companies, orchestras and so forth — that are primarily regional or municipal, but even then some of the money comes from Paris and the Ministry of Culture and Communication (to give it its current name) has its word to say.

All of this is generally accepted. There is no real dispute over the preponderant role of government in support of culture and the arts, and such strife as there was tended to be a question of degree, financial haggling between Paris and the provinces, or trench warfare between labor unions (generally Communist-led or Socialist-led) and management (generally rightist-appointed). Partisan politics in the usual sense did not intrude much into the realm of culture during the relatively stable series of conservative governments from 1958 to 1981 under presidents Charles de Gaulle, Georges Pompidou and Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, nor when the Socialists came in in 1981 under President François Mitterrand — until the Socialists lost control of parliament a year ago, whereupon several major cultural public works projects became political footballs, notably the grandiose plan to build a new Paris Opera at the Place de la Bastille.

The Socialists' plans were extravagant, but they were not without precedent. André Malraux, de Gaulle's culture minister, did things like implant cultural centers and theatres around France in places where they had not existed, commission Marc Chagall to paint a new ceiling for the Paris Opera, clean the great public buildings of Paris of centuries of grime (and make the owners of most private buildings do the same). Pompidou, a devotee of contemporary art, took the initiative that led to the spectacular Georges Pompidou Center (not only the most visited museum but the most visited site of any kind in Paris) and its adjacent IRCAM, the subterranean music research center that was the lure to bring the composer-conductor Pierre Boulez back to work in France. (Pompidou also caused

An engraving of Charles Garnier's Paris Opera, published prior to the opening in 1875. Its exterior appearance has changed little over the years.

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Baltard's splendid pavilions of Les Halles, the central Paris market, to be torn down, but that is another story.)

In 1981, enter the Socialists, in a position to govern for the first time since the beginning of the Fifth Republic. Mitterrand, like his conservative predecessors a formidable politician, a broadly cultured man and anxious to further the prestige of French culture, was understandably ambitious for the Socialists to leave their mark. The culture minister through several changes of Socialist cabinets was Jack Lang, young, energetic, popular and one of the few in this post to actually come from the world of the arts — he was the founder of the university theatre festival in Nancy and later director of the theatre in the Palais de Chaillot in Paris.

With an eye on the approaching bicentenary of the French Revolution, grand gestures were in order, and they were not long in coming: the Opéra de la Bastille; the Grand Louvre, the expansion of the Louvre Museum, whose most striking feature is I.M. Pei's controversial transparent pyramid in the courtyard between the two wings, and the Cité de la Musique, a vast project in the former slaughterhouse and stockyards of La Villette on the northeast fringe of Paris, the salient part of which is a new home for the Paris Conservatoire de Musique, which long ago outgrew its grim abode near the Gare Saint-Lazare. Like the Pompidou Center, which had both created a new home for the National Museum of Modern Art and transformed a slum area, these were intended to solve problems of both cultural institutions and urban renewal.

Oddly enough, or naturally enough, the present Paris Opera served the same two purposes. Opened in 1875, Charles Garnier's eclectic palace of lyric art was part of Baron Haussmann's urban renewal plan for Napoleon III; an entire neighborhood of Paris was destroyed to make way for it, and the Avenue de l'Opéra built to create a vista to see it from afar. The problem is that it is a genuine monument, whose destruction is as unthinkable as the dismantling of the Eiffel Tower, yet it is hopeless as a modern factory for producing opera, outdated backstage and with less than 2,000 seats — of which almost 500 have little or no view of the stage. Great for people watching and state occasions, though, and with good acoustics.

The site chosen for the new home of the Paris Opera was an irregularly shaped piece of property on the east side of the Place de la Bastille, occupied mainly by the Gare de la Bastille, a disused suburban railway station. The west side of the Place de la Bastille is pretty much the eastern limit of what might be called central Paris. To the east of the new opera site is an area of former or still active furniture ateliers, old apartment houses and small businesses of all kinds. With the first word of the new Opera project, an influx began of art galleries, music stores, small restaurants and varied real estate speculation.

An international competition was held that attracted entries from 750 architects. The winner was a Canadian, Carlos Ott, whose project was a self-contained ensemble that included a large theatre seating 2,700 seats, none more than 50 meters from the stage; the most modern stage equipment, including a rear stage and generous rehearsal space; a *salle modulable*, a small theatre of adjustable dimensions and seating ranging from 400 to 1,300 for contemporary works, chamber opera or Baroque works whose scope is too small for the large theatre; and an ensemble of workshops capable of producing the sets and costumes for the new theatre's productions. The idea was that the Paris Opera would move to the Bastille and the Paris Opera Ballet would stay at the Palais Garnier. Further, that the number of performances and the number of available seats would increase by

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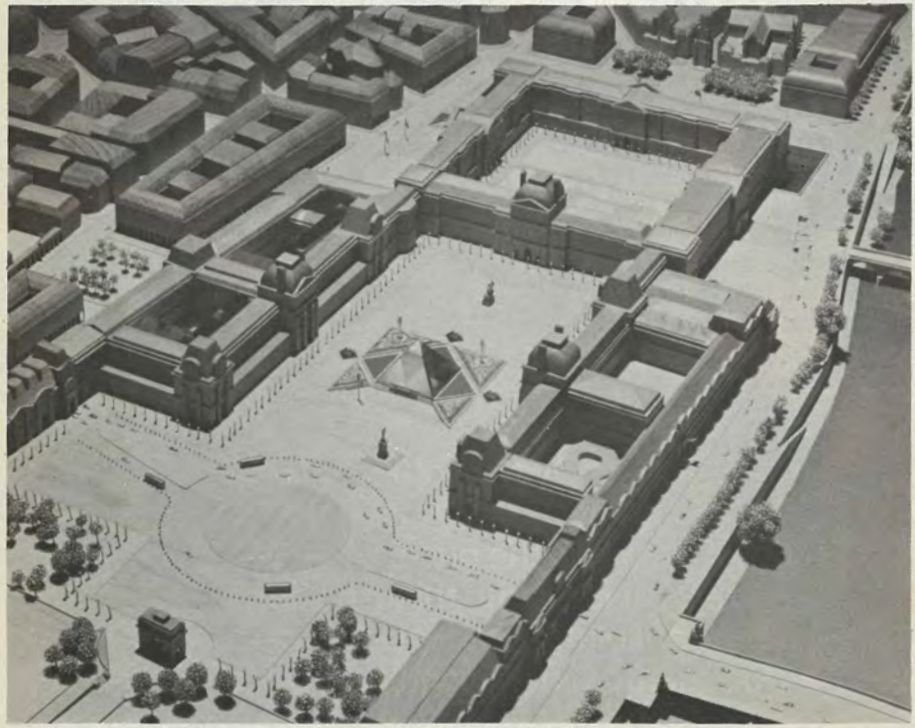
two and a half to three times those available at the Palais Garnier and the Salle Favart (Opéra Comique), the latter of which would no longer be used by the Paris Opera. And the prices would decrease, in theory by as much as half. At present, the normal top price at the Palais Garnier is 550 francs ($90) for opera and 300 francs for ballet.

For some it was an opera house for the 21st century, with modern equipment, more space and more cultural democracy. For others the proposed new theatre was already an anachronism, with a large auditorium of 2,700 seats too small to deal with an operatic audience that had grown fivefold since the opening of the Palais Garnier. For still others, all of these statistics seemed like guesswork.

Once the major decisions had been made, the existing buildings on the site were razed, the foundation dug, and the construction launched with an alacrity that was quite startling to anyone familiar with the leisurely practices of the French building industry. Even the most objective sidewalk superintendents thought it might have something to do with a desire to push the construction as far along as possible before the parliamentary elections due in the spring of 1986. The Socialists did not seem in a position to hold their parliamentary majority, and as it turned out, they didn't.

The elections of March 1986 brought a new combination of characters onto the cultural-political stage. Mitterrand was a holdover; his seven-year term as president does not run out until 1988. But the parliamentary elections brought a rightist coalition to power with Jacques Chirac, head of the neo-Gaullist group in parliament, as prime minister; furthermore, Chirac is simultaneously mayor of Paris and a very likely candidate for president of France in the 1988 election. The new



Model of the Louvre, with I.M. Pei's pyramid in the center.

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culture minister was François Léotard, who on the one hand is a member of the new coalition cabinet, but on the other is secretary general of the relatively small Republican Party and himself a possible candidate for the presidency next year. He also does not seem anxious to see himself labeled some kind of anti-culture vulture.

The right came back to power in the wake of a campaign in which it had pledged numerous ideological readjustments, and in which one of its chief targets had been Jack Lang's ambitious cultural projects. But once back in power the new majority began piecemeal to accept what could not be changed except at great expense, although in the process Léotard and Chirac began to step on each other's toes. The Louvre project, which had been slowed up anyway by archaeological finds in medieval streets in the subsoil of the palace's courtyard, was given a go-ahead by Léotard, then a slowdown by Chirac. As it turned out, the construction of the new underground reception areas, including Pei's pyramid, is going ahead. The expansion of the museum into the wing of the Louvre now occupied by the Finance Ministry has been delayed, apparently because the Finance Ministry is in no hurry to move out and occupy its new ultramodern buildings near the Gare de Lyon.

Last July and August was a period of total confusion for the Opéra de la Bastille project. A new commission was named to restudy it and work was halted. One thing rapidly became clear: construction had proceeded too far to stop altogether. Of about two and a quarter billion francs earmarked for the Bastille project, about 1.6 billion was already committed. Léotard issued a preliminary decision that the Palais Garnier would retain its *vocation lyrique*, whatever that meant, the Bastille project would include a large theatre capable of staging opera, ballet and concerts, but the scenic workshops would not be built. A few days later, Chirac belittled the Bastille project and stressed that the Paris Opera would remain at the Palais Garnier. It began to be apparent that the prime minister was under opposing pressures from the Finance and Culture ministries.

Not heard from during most of this political infighting was the professional organization set up to develop the Bastille project, whose president was Gerard Mortier, the energetic and highly successful director since 1981 of the Théâtre de la Monnaie in Brussels, home of the Belgian National Opera, which he has made one of the most interesting in Europe. The vice president was Pierre Boulez. Early in 1986, this organization held a conference attended by theatre professionals from all over the world, most of them fascinated by the prospect of an integrated theatrical complex (i.e., including its own workshops and the experimental *salle modulable*). Mortier also insisted on the need for an entirely new set of labor contracts for the Opéra de la Bastille, distinct from the contracts that have made the Palais Garnier such an intractable place to do productive work. Mortier has since resigned his presidency.

During the confusion of the summer of 1986, much of which persists now, Boulez delivered a polemic declaration, parts of which are worth repeating. "The elimination of the *salle modulable* would be a major error: it is the principal innovation of the Bastille program . . . but the *salle modulable* stuck onto an auditorium without scenic workshops or a theatrical infrastructure cannot fulfill its mission." Or: "What is striking in this affair is the impossibility in France of carrying out artistic management in a professional manner." He protested against the secrecy (or at least the lack of public debate) surrounding the decisions being made after last year's election, as "methods worthy of the Inquisition."

Meanwhile, construction continues at

TO OUR AUDIENCE . . .

The 1986-87 season has been a time of renewal and regeneration for A.C.T. We rolled up our sleeves, plunged back into full-scale production, and presented a season of outstanding plays and performances supported by imaginative scenery, costumes and lighting. I'm proud of the achievements of our actors, directors, designers, craftspeople and stage crew; our production, administrative and house staffs; the men and women in our costume and scene shops. I hope their work has given you pleasure and satisfaction, too; most of all, I hope you've shared the excitement as A.C.T. resumed its place in the vanguard of the American theatre.

Financially, this has also been a banner year for us. Subscription sales soared from last year's 12,500 to 18,400 this season. Our opening production, *Sunday in the Park with George*, proved a huge box office success, playing to large houses nightly, including several complete sellouts. Woody Allen's *The Floating Light Bulb* saw the "Sold Out" sign in front of the Geary more often than for any other show, with a third of all its performances reaching total capacity and the rest hovering near that. This year's edition of *A Christmas Carol* had the largest box office receipts in its eleven years at A.C.T. and gave the season its biggest single week, when ticket sales climbed to $184,000 just before Christmas.

I want to thank you not only for being with us this season, but for helping to make it possible with your support. Now, as *Faustus in Hell* brings the season to a close, we're already at work planning our 1987-88 schedule. Our goal is to make it bolder, brighter, more adventurous and filled with even more surprises than this year's. Current subscribers have now received their renewal forms by mail. Please return them to us at your earliest convenience to guarantee your preferred seating and other benefits. If you will be subscribing for the first time, check the nearby pages in this program for information about joining the A.C.T. subscriber family.

We look forward to sharing next season with you and, with your help, making it the finest in our history.

Sincerely yours,

Ed Hastings

Edward Hastings
Artistic Director

A PREVIEW OF THE UPCOMING REPERTORY SEASON

A.C.T. '87-'88: THE ADV

At a recent news conference, Edward Hastings, Artistic Director of A.C.T., offered press and television reporters an advance look at the 1987-88 season. While a number of casting and directorial assignments are still up in the air, Hastings noted, the list of plays scheduled for presentation is now in place, with no changes anticipated at this time.

The new season will open in October with the play often regarded as Shakespeare's supreme tragic drama, *King Lear.* Hastings himself will direct and plans an unconventional production of the towering play about an aging monarch whose failing powers and self-absorption plunge him into a series of terrifying adventures that drive him to the brink of madness.

NEW FACES OF 1987-88 (top left) *Clifford Odets, author of* Golden Boy. (top right) *Mae West whose* Diamond Lil *will be revived at A.C.T. next season.* (bottom left) *Actor-turned-*Immigrant-*playwright Mark Harelik.* (bottom right) *Pulitzer Prize winner Sam Shepard. His new play,* A Lie of the Mind, *is the second attraction of A.C.T.'s upcoming season.*

ENTURE CONTINUES

The season's second attraction — scheduled to play in repertory with *King Lear* — will bring to A.C.T. audiences the West Coast premiere of Sam Shepard's critically acclaimed new play, *A Lie of the Mind*, a powerful exploration of the American Dream's dark underside as it is revealed in the lives of two Western families.

In *The Immigrant*, actor-playwright Mark Harelik looks deep into his own family's past to tell the story of a Russian Jew and his reluctant adaptation to American life in the flatlands of Texas near the turn of the century. Harelik, last seen on the Geary stage in Hastings' production of *The Real Thing*, will play the title role, a character based on his grandfather.

The work of another writer-performer will be on view as A.C.T. offers a rediscovered gem of American popular theatre by one of the true legends of our stage and screen. *Diamond Lil*, by Mae West, is a Gay Nineties comedy-melodrama with music set in a honky-tonk saloon where business is good and the funny business is even better. As Lil herself would say, come up and see her sometime.

Another West Coast premiere will take place at A.C.T. when Arthur Kopit's *End of the World with Symposium to Follow* joins the repertory. A hilarious comedy, with Strangelovian undertones, on the explosive topic of nuclear proliferation, the play has been substantially revised since its 1984 Broadway production. Kopit is also the author of *Indians*, *Wings* and *Oh Dad, Poor Dad, Mamma's Hung You in the Closet and I'm Feelin' So Sad*.

The arrival of Clifford Odets' *Golden Boy* will bring to the Geary stage a major work by a distinctive American dramatist. Using the raw native poetry that he created from the language of big-city streets, Odets tells the Depression-era story of a working-class boy determined to find fame and fortune in the prizefight ring.

The season finale will offer a new adaptation by a major American writer of the play that is usually called the first great comedy of Western literature, *The Birds*, by Aristophanes. The comic tale of a pair of stand-up Athenians who mobilize all winged creatures in open rebellion against the gods will also have an original score. The entire production promises to be one of the most original and adventurous in A.C.T. history.

Also on the 1987-88 schedule is a limited-engagement revival of the seasonal perennial, *A Christmas Carol*, by Charles Dickens.

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1. Subscribers get preferred seating, guaranteed locations all season long, and retain priority year after year.
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WHO'S WHO AT A.C.T.

HOPE ALEXANDER-WILLIS joins the company to play the role of Arkadina in *The Seagull*. A San Francisco native, she started her career in 1964 as a member of the Actor's Workshop. She has appeared previously at A.C.T. as Dottie in *Jumpers*, Anitra in *Peer Gynt*, Lucy Brown in *Threepenny Opera* and Miss Alice in *Tiny Alice*, among others, in addition to starring opposite Sir Michael Redgrave under Edward Hastings' direction in the national tour of *Shakespeare's People*. She has worked at the Actor's Theatre of Louisville, The Playmaker's Repertory Company, where she played Josie in *Moon for the Misbegotten*, and the Berkeley Repertory theatre where she appeared most recently as Maxine in *Night of the Iguana*, Lina in *Misalliance*, Rosalind in Gregory Boyd's *As You Like It* and Medea in *Kabuki Medea*, which won her a Bay Area Theatre Critics' Circle award in 1985. She has also had numerous guest star roles on network television and starred in the feature film *The Pack*. And most proudly, Ms. Alexander-Willis is the mother and friend of 17-year old Thorin Willis.

PETER BRADBURY joins the company this year as a third year student in the Advanced Training Program. While a student at A.C.T., he performed the roles of Lear in *King Lear*, Moe Axelrod in *Awake and Sing*, Andrei in *The Three Sisters*, Tartuffe in *Tartuffe*, Feste in *Twelfth Night* and Teach in *American Buffalo*. He appeared last summer in the Utah Shakespeare Festival productions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Julius Caesar*. In addition to training at A.C.T., Mr. Bradbury has received an A.B. in drama at Vassar College and has studied at the Eugene O'Neill Theatre Centre under Morris Carnovsky. He has appeared in *The Seagull*, *A Christmas Carol* and *The Doctor's Dilemma* earlier this season.

KATE BRICKLEY, a native of Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin, was educated at the University of Wisconsin before continuing her training at A.C.T. She is now a company member, a voice instructor in the Advanced Training Program, an acting instructor in the Academy and a voice instructor in the Young Conservatory. A.C.T. audiences have seen her on the Geary Theatre stage in productions of *Othello*, *Macbeth* and *Peer Gynt* and in studio productions of *The Cherry Orchard*, *The School for Scandal* and *Trelawny of the 'Wells'*. At the Pacific Conservatory of the Performing Arts, Miss Brickley appeared in *Romeo and Juliet*, *Candide* and *The Utter Glory of Morrissey Hall*. She was seen last season at A.C.T. in *A Christmas Carol* and *Private Lives*.

RICHARD BUTTERFIELD is a graduate of Stanford University; AB International Relations with honors. He attended the A.C.T. Advanced Training Program from 1982 through 1984. Mr. Butterfield returns this year to complete his M.F.A., teach vocal production in the Conservtory and act with the company. He was seen earlier this year as the Soldier in *Sunday in the*

Park with George, Young Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol* and Billy in *The Real Thing*. He has worked in the Bay Area with the Berkeley Shakespeare Festival, where he was seen as Navarre in *Love's Labour's Lost*, Thisby in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Catesby in *Richard III*, among other roles. Mr. Butterfield acted with the Berkeley Jewish Theatre in its productions of *Firstborn* and *Good*, performed the role of Franklin Shepard in Theatreworks' production of Sondheim's *Merrily We Roll Along* and recently worked with the San Jose Repertory Company in *Yup it Up*.

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, The School for Wives, Macbeth, Our Town*, and, last season, in *Opera Comique* and *The Lady's Not For Burning*. 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.

DREW ESHELMAN attended A.C.T.'s Advanced Training Program in 1973-74 and made his debut with the company in *The Ruling Class* at the Geary, after numerous student productions. He was seen in the extended San Francisco engagement of *Cloud Nine* at the Eureka, Marines' Memorial and Alcazar theatres, played featured roles in such films as *The Right Stuff* and *Magnum Force*, and made

television appearances on *Partners in Crime* and *Shannon*. Among the other major stage productions in which he has appeared are *Hamlet* at the Berkeley Shakespeare Festival and *The Tempest* and *The Taming of the Shrew* at San Diego's Old Globe Theatre. Mr. Eshelman was also a member of the original cast in the Los Angeles revival of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, and was recently featured in the San Francisco Repertory production of *Bent*. His previous A.C.T. credits include *A Midsummer Night's Dream, A Christmas Carol, Macbeth, You Never Can Tell, The Lady's Not for Burning, Sunday in the Park with George* and *The Doctor's Dilemma*.

TIMOTHY GREER appears in *Faustus in Hell* following his performances in *Sunday in the Park with George* and *A Christmas Carol*. A third-year student in the Advanced Training Program, his studio performances include the roles of Angelo in *Measure for Measure*, Friar Lawrence in *Romeo and Juliet*, Seton in *Holiday* and Jude Emerson in *Lydie Breeze*. While a member of the Texas-based Park Boulevard Players, he appeared in *Black Comedy, Godspell, Once Upon a Mattress* and *The Misanthrope*. Mr. Greer holds B.F.A. in acting from the University of Texas/Austin.

LAWRENCE HECHT (Conservatory Director) continues this year as head of A.C.T.'s Advanced Training Program. In addition to staging such A.C.T. productions as *The Dolly, Translations* and *'night, Mother*, he has also served as resident director and Director of Actor Training for the Pacific Conservatory of the Per-

forming Arts in Santa Maria, California, where his directing credits include *Harvey, Major Barbara* and *Bus Stop*. This will be Mr. Hecht's 15th 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 and is an instructor in the Advanced Training Program. He 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, The Holdup* and *Sunday in the Park With George*.

BILL KING began his sports broadcasting career in the late 1940s and is presently beginning his seventh season as the radio and television voice of the Oakland Athletics baseball club. He also recently completed his twenty-first consecutive season as the broadcast voice of the National Football League's Los Angeles Raiders, having started with the team in 1966 when they were the Oakland Raiders. Four years ago, he concluded a twenty-one-year run on radio and TV broadcasts of professional basketball's Golden Stage Warriors games. During the early 1960s, he was play-by-play broadcaster for University of California football and basketball games and a member of the San Francisco Giants' broadcast team. A two-time winner (in 1976 and 1981) of the Sportscaster of the Year award from the National Sports Broadcasters and Sportswriters Association, Mr. King's last appearance on the Geary Theatre stage was as the Narrator of the San Francisco Ballet's *Peter and the Wolf* in 1979.

KIMBERLEY LAMARQUE joins the company this season as a third-year student in the Advanced Training Program. Her studio work at A.C.T. includes the roles of Natasha in *Three Sisters*, Lady Macbeth in Macbeth, Bianca in *The Taming of the Shrew* and Sheila in *A Day in the Death of Joe Egg*, among others. She has appeared locally at A.C.T. in *The Passion Cycle*, as Maxine in *Spell #7* at the Lorraine Hansberry Theatre and as Calpurnia in Edward Hasting's production of *To Kill a Mockingbird* at the Academy of Media and Theatre Arts. Her other credits include New York City productions at the Mass Transit Street Theatre, South Bronx Community Action Theatre and several productions at Columbia University, from which she graduated with a B.A. in Theatre Arts. She has also done feature film and commercial work.

ANNE LAWDER returns to A.C.T. for her fifteenth season to appear in *Faustus in Hell*. An original member of the San Francisco Actor's Workshop, she was graduated from Stanford University and in New York studied movement with Katya Delakova and speech with Alice Hermes. Miss Lawder sang with the New York City Opera Chorus, appeared at Seattle Repertory Theatre and at Denver Center Theatre Company, where she was featured in *Hamlet* and *The Time of Your Life*. As a resident artist with the P.C.P.A. Theatrefest at Santa Maria and Solvang, she has played leading roles in *Ah, Wilderness!, Show Boat, Ring Around the Moon, Hamlet, Mame, My Fair Lady* and *Harvey*. At A.C.T., where her husband, the late Allen Fletcher, was Conservatory Director and a resi-

dent director for many years, she has been seen in *Cyrano de Bergerac, A Doll's House, Tonight at 8:30, You Can't Take It with You, Pillars of the Community, Peer Gynt, Man and Superman, Equus, The Master Builder, All the Way Home, Ah, Wilderness!, Heartbreak House, Romeo and Juliet, A History of the American Film, Ghosts, Another Part of the Forest, I Remember Mama, Mourning Becomes Electra, Morning's at Seven,* and *John Gabriel Borkman*. Her films include *A Christmas Without Snow* (CBS Movie of the Week) and *The Music School* (PBS *American Short Story* series). She acted in the recent P.C.P.A. production of *Richard II*, directed by her son, John Fletcher, and she is a member, with her daughter Julia Fletcher, of the Pacific Theatre Ensemble in Los Angeles.

MICHEAL McSHANE has worked with the Berkeley Shakespeare Festival and the One Act Theatre. He is the first recipient of the Jules Irving Award and won the Bay Area Critics' Award for *Taco Jesus*. He has appeared in the films *Peggy Sue Got Married* and *Howard the Duck* (you can win a prize if you can find him). His proudest achievement has been working with the original Faultline company and his association with the former members. He hopes you enjoy your visit to Hell; he's loving it.

ROBIN GOODRIN NORDLI is a third year student in the Advanced Training Program. She appears in *Faustus in Hell* following her performances in *A Christmas Carol* and *The Seagull*. Last summer she performed at the Berkeley Shakespeare Festival as Phoebe in *As You Like It*, Virgilia in *Coriolanus* and Ariel in *The Tempest*. Further Shakespearean experience came with her appearances at the Valley Shakespeare Festival as Helena in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Silvia in *Two Gentlemen of Verona*. While a student at A.C.T., she appeared in *Twelfth Night, King Lear, Hay Fever, Tartuffe* and *Three Sisters*. She has also worked at the Bowery Theatre and Lambs Theatre in California, and the Gaslight Dinner Theatre and Theatre Tulsa in Oklahoma. Miss Nordli holds a Bachelor of Music Education from the University of Tulsa.

LIAM O'BRIEN joins the cast of *Faustus in Hell* after appearing earlier this season as Paul in *The Floating Light Bulb*, Redpenny in *The Doctor's Dilemna* and Dennis in *Sunday in the Park with George*. He was recently honored with a Dramalogue Award for his performance as Billy in the acclaimed production of Alan Bowne's *Sharon and Billy*, the longest running show in the twenty-year history of the Magic Theatre. Bay area audiences have also seen him as Douglas in *The Concubine at the Feast* at Theatre Rhinoceros, Dwight in *The Singing Book* at the Berkeley Repertory Theatre and the male understudy in *The Threepenny Opera* at the Eureka Theatre. This spring he was featured as Rudy in the San Francisco Repertory production of *Bent*. In two summers at P.C.P.A. Theatrefest he was seen in *Fiddler on the Roof, Medea, The Suicide, Camelot* and the late Allen Fletcher's production of *Macbeth*. Other credits include Hero in *A Funny Thing Happened . . .* Andos in *Philemon*, and the title role in *Pippin*. Mr. O'Brien received his training at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles and the Drama Studio of London in Berkeley. He is pleased to have called A.C.T. home for most of this season.

WILLIAM PATERSON is now in his 20th 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, tak-

ing 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*. Last season he appeared in *Opera Comique*, the 10th anniversary of *A Christmas Carol*, a role he originated, *You Never Can Tell* and *The Lady's Not For Burning*. He presently serves as a member of the San Francisco Arts Commission and is a newly-elected member of the Board of Trustees of A.C.T.

STEPHEN ROCKWELL joins the company this year as a third year student in the Advanced Training Program. For the past two years he has appeared in several A.C.T. studio productions, including *The Three Sisters* as Chebutykin, *King Lear* as Edgar, *Tartuffe* as Orgon, *Ah, Wilderness!* as Nat Miller and *Joe Egg* as Freddie. Last summer at the Valley Shakespeare Festival he performed the roles of Gratiano in *The Merchant of Venice* and the Duke in *Don Quixote*. A graduate of Vassar College with an A.B. in Drama, he has also worked for the Peterborough Players in New Hampshire, the Quaig Theatre in New York City, and at Playwright's Horizons, where he served as an assistant stage manager under director James Lapine in the first production of *March of the Falsettos*. Mr. Rockwell appeared in *The Seagull* earlier this season.

KEN SONKIN joins the company this year to appear in *A Christmas Carol* and *Faustus in Hell*, and to teach in the Advanced Training Program, from which he graduated in 1984 following studio performances as Luka in *The Lower Depths*, Ben Gant in *Look Homeward, Angel* and Feste in *Twelfth Night*. At Allen Fletcher's invitation, he traveled to the Denver Center Theatre Company, appearing in Fletcher's production of *Hamlet* and Laird Williamson's *Pericles*, as well as creating the role of Tommy in *Lahr and Mercedes* by James McClure. He has recently acted and directed for the Pacific Theatre Ensemble in Los Angeles, where his mime/magic act also headlined at the Playboy Club for three months. As a mime/magician, he has performed for the Queen of England, was voted best #1 street performer of San Francisco and has worked with such acts as Red Skelton, Pat Paulsen and Donny and Marie Osmond. He served as magic consultant for *The Floating Light Bulb*.

LANNYL STEPHENS is a new member of the company this year. She appeared earlier in the season in *Sunday in the Park with George, A Christmas Carol* and *The Seagull*. She recently appeared at the Bay Area Playwrights' Festival as Sister in Robert Woodruff's *Looking in the Dark For . . .* Her studio performances at A.C.T. include Dorine in *Tartuffe*, Olga in *The Three Sisters*, Goneril in *King Lear* and Beaty in *Lydie Breeze*. Miss Stephens is a founding member of Encore Productions, for which she played the role of the Parlor Maid/Temp in *La Ronde*.

She holds a B.A. in Theatre Arts from the University of Texas.

SYDNEY WALKER is a forty-year veteran of stage, film and television, having performed in some 216 productions since 1946. The Philadelphia native 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 City 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 fourty-eight productions including *The Matchmaker* (U.S.S.R. tour), *Peer Gynt*, *The Circle*, *The National Health*, *A Christmas Carol*, *The Chalk Garden*, *Loot*, *Angels Fall*, *The School for Wives* and *Translations*. He has appeared on television in such serials as *The Guiding Light* and *The Secret Storm*, acted in the film *Love Story*, and performed the voice of Papa Ewok in the television movie, *The Ewok Adventure*. Mr. Walker was narrator for the KQED-TV series *New York Master Chefs* and teaches Auditioning in A.C.T.'s Conservatory.

TAYLOR YOUNG is a 1985 graduate of the Advanced Training Program and a former teacher of dance in the Summer Training Congress. She has appeared most recently at the Denver Center Theatre Company as Miss McGregor in *South Pacific*. While a student at A.C.T., she appeared in productions of *The Cherry Orchard* as Madame Ranevskaya, *The Merchant of Venice* as Portia and *Liliom* as Julie. She has appeared in more than 20 productions at the Pacific Conservatory of the Performing Arts, including Daisy in *Rhinoceros*, Lucy in *You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown* and The Girl in *Hank Williams, the King of Country Music*. At the Valley Institute of the Theatrical Arts she performed the roles of Kate in *The Taming of the Shrew*, Titania in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and Julia in *Two Gentlemen of Verona*. Miss Young joins the company this season to appear in *Faustus in Hell*.

DIRECTORS, DESIGNERS AND STAFF

EDWARD HASTINGS (Artistic Director), a graduate of Yale College and the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art and a founding member of A.C.T. whose productions of *Charley's Aunt* and *Our Town* were seen during the company's first two San Francisco seasons, has staged many shows for A.C.T. since 1965, including *The Time of Your Life*, *The House of Blue Leaves*, *All the Way Home* and *Fifth of July*. In 1972, he founded the A.C.T. Plays-in-Progress program devoted to the development and production of new writing. During the summer of 1985, Mr. Hastings served as a resident director at the Eugene O'Neill Playwrights' Conference in Connecticut and taught acting in 1984 at the Shanghai Drama Institute as part of the Theatre Bridge Program between A.C.T. and the Shanghai Theatre. Off-Broadway, he co-produced *The Saintliness of Margery Kempe* and *Epitaph for George Dillon* and directed the national company of the Broadway musical *Oliver!* He staged the American production of *Shakespeare's People* starring Sir 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. He has recently been a guest director at the Guthrie Theatre, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Denver Center Theatre Company, San Francisco Opera Center and Berkeley Repertory Theatre. Earlier this year, he directed *The Tempest* for the Oregon Shakespearean Festival and *007 Crossfire* for San Jose Repertory Company.

JOHN SULLIVAN (Managing Director) joins A.C.T. as part of the new team that will lead the company into its third decade. With a background encompassing arts administration, fundraising, theatre production, directing, writing and extensive experience in the communications field, he is A.C.T.'s chief administrative and financial officer. Prior to his most recent position as senior advertising associate specializing in corporate communications at Winner/Wagner & Associates, he served for two years as a deputy director of programs at the California Arts Council, overseeing the awarding of $14 million in grants to more than 800 artists and arts institutions. From 1979 through 1983, he headed John Sullivan Communications in Lander, WY. In the late 1970s, he spent three seasons at Los Angeles' Mark Taper Forum, where he produced and directed plays in the theatre's Forum Laboratory and directed on its main stage. His work in films includes educational projects, three special films for national Emmy Award broadcasts and commercial features. He was a member of the Advisory Board for last June's San Francisco New Vaudeville Festival and, in association with the Magic Theatre, produced *The Detective*, a collaboration between Joseph Chaikin and Vaudeville Nouveau, in 1985. Among his writings are *The National Outdoor Leadership School's Wilderness Guide*, published by Simon and Schuster in 1983, and numerous articles for major magazines and newspapers. He is married to Monica Buchwald Sullivan, an attorney. They have two children.

MICHAEL SMUIN (Director) comes to A.C.T. with many honors and awards for his distinguished work as a director and choreographer in the worlds of ballet, theatre, film and television. Born in Montana, he joined San Francisco Ballet in the late 1950s and soon advanced to the positions of principal dancer, ballet master and resident choreographer. After taking a leave of absence to dance on Broadway, television and film and in a cabaret act with his wife Paula Tracy, he joined American Ballet Theatre, and from 1966 through 1973 earned wide recognition for his work as a dancer and choreographer. In 1968, his *Pulcinella Variations* became the first new ballet to premiere at the Metropolitan Opera House in Lincoln Center. Returning to San Francisco Ballet in 1973, he served as Director with Lew Christensen until May, 1985, during which time he choreographed more than twenty-five works for the company. He was also instrumental in promoting the company's appearances on national television, especially the PBS series *Dance in America*, including *A Song for Dead Warriors* (for which he won an Emmy Award as choreographer), *Cinderella* (co-choreographed with Lew Christensen), *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Tempest*. In 1982, Mr. Smuin directed and choreographed the Broadway musical hit *Sophisticated Ladies*, a tribute to Duke Ellington, winning an Outer Critics Circle Award and two Tony Award nominations for his work. He was principal choreographer of Francis Ford Coppola's film *Cotton Club*, choreographed the fight scenes for Coppola's *Rumble Fish* and collaborated again with the director on *Romanze*, a ballet with film.

J. STEVEN WHITE (*Associate Director*) has been with A.C.T. for ten seasons in a variety of capacities, excelling as an actor, teacher, choreographer, administrator and director. He traveled with A.C.T. to the Soviet Union in 1976 and to Japan in 1978, and spent last season at the Denver Center Theatre Company as Acting Conservatory Director. As an actor, he is a veteran of twenty-eight A.C.T. productions. As a teacher and administrator, he has long been active in A.C.T. Conservatory, recently as director of the 1984 Summer Training Congress and currently as Dean of Academic Affairs and stage combat teacher. Mr. White has served as fight choreographer for sixty-one productions, including the San Francisco Ballet's *Romeo and Juliet*, directed by Michael Smuin, and A.C.T.'s *Cyrano de Bergerac*. Among his directing credits are the Valley Shakespeare Festival production of *Count of Monte Cristo* at the Paul Masson Winery; six productions in A.C.T.'s Playroom, most recently *Uncle Vanya*; and the Western Stage Company's *The Hostage* in Salinas. He joined Michael Smuin to restage *Romeo and Juliet* for its recent revival and serves as associate director on Mr. Smuin's production of *Faustus in Hell*.

DOUGLAS W. SCHMIDT (Scenery) has maintained long associations with the foremost producing organizations and stage directors in the country. His work has been seen at Los Angeles' Mark Taper Forum in *The Genius*, *The Robber Bridegroom* and *The Traveler*, next door

at the Ahmanson Theatre in the recent *Light Up the Sky*, and at San Diego's Old Globe Theatre in *The Incredibly Famous Willy Rivers*. His designs were seen in the national tour of *Legends* and on Broadway in the musical *Smile* earlier this season. His New York theatre work has also included many productions at Lincoln Center's Vivian Beaumont Theatre, where he was resident designer for several years, among them the award-winning designs for *Enemies*, by Maxim Gorky, Richard Foreman's New York Shakespeare Festival production of *The Threepenny Opera* and Adrei Serban's *Agamemnon* (for which he won a Joseph Maharam Distinguished Design Award in 1977). On Broadway, he won Drama Desk Awards for his designs for *Over Here!* and *Veronica's Room*, and also designed the original production of the long-running *Grease*, the spectacular *Frankenstein*, Neil Simon's *They're Playing Our Song* and Bernard Slade's *Romantic Comedy*. For television, he has designed extensively for the WNET/PBS *Theatre in America* and *Playhouse New York* series, including *Antigone, The Time of Your Life, The Rise and Rise of Daniel Rocket, Wings, The Skin of Our Teeth* and *Painting Churches*.

SANDRA WOODALL (Costumes) is a San Francisco designer who has enjoyed a long involvement with dance, theatre and performance art, as well as a loyal private clientele. She is a graduate of the San Francisco Art Institute, having taken her degree as a painter, and has operated her own costume and design house in San Francisco since 1972. Ms. Woodall's design work in the realm of theatre, dance and fashion has included productions for the San Francisco Ballet, Margaret Jenkins Dance Company, Kronos Quartet, Pacific Northwest Ballet in Seattle, and Martha Clark's Company in New York, as well as John Woodall performances.

DEREK DUARTE (Lighting) returns to A.C.T. for a second season as resident lighting designer after designing seven productions last season, including *Opera Comique* and *Passion Cycle*. Most recently Mr. Duarte designed lighting for *The Normal Heart* at Berkeley Repertory Theatre. His work has been seen at Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, San Jose Rep, Berkeley Shakespeare Festival, The Fringe Festival in Edinburgh, Scotland and at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. Mr. Duarte holds an M.F.A. in theatre technology from U.C.L.A.

STEPHEN LEGRAND (Sound and Music) is a composer, sound designer and actor with Eric Drew Feldman, his collaborator on theatre projects for two and one-half years, his work includes *The Tooth of Crime* at Berkeley Repertory Theatre, *The Lady's Not for Burning* at A.C.T. and *Fen, About Face, Boomer* and *A Narrow Bed* at the Eureka Theatre Company. Mr. LeGrand appeared as an actor in *The Revenger* at Berkeley Repertory Theatre.

EUGENE BARCONE (Stage Manager) is a charter member of A.C.T. After receiving his Bachelor of Arts degree in music, he directed the famous Red Diamond Chorus in Europe with the Army. Mr. Barcone has directed for the Plays-in-Progress program and worked on the televised adaptations of *Cyrano de Bergerac, The Taming of the Shrew* and *A Christmas Carol*. Recently he celebrated his 60th production with A.C.T.

DUNCAN W. GRAHAM (Stage Manager) is very happy to return to A.C.T. for his second season as an assistant stage manager. Prior to A.C.T. he stage managed for San Jose Repertory Company, Sunnyvale Summer Repertory and the California Theatre Center, where he was production stage manager and resident lighting designer for three seasons. Mr. Graham has degrees in Political Science and Theatre Arts from the University of Santa Clara.

ALICE ELLIOTT SMITH (Stage Manager) began her career at A.C.T. as a stage management intern. Now in her eighth season, she has been the company's master scheduler, production coordinator of Plays-in-Progress, director of staged readings, associate director of the Troubadour program and director of the studio production *Ah, Wilderness!* and co-director of *Mornings at Seven*. As a stage manager during the past two seasons she worked on *Opera Comique, 'night, Mother, Private Lives* and *The Lady's Not For Burning*. Her other credits include work at the American Shakespeare Festival in Stratford, Connecticut, The Living Theatre in New York City and the Summer Repertory Theatre in Santa Rosa as production stage manager.

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(continued on page 21)

THE AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATRE

presents

FAUSTUS IN HELL

(1984)

by Nagle Jackson

with

THE SHOW OF THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS

Envy by Edward Albee
Sloth by Christopher Durang
Greed by Amlin Gray
Gluttony by John Guare
Wrath by Romulus Linney
Lechery by Joyce Carol Oates
Pride by Jean-Claude van Itallie

Directed by	Michael Smuin
Associate Director	J. Steven White
Scenery by	Douglas W. Schmidt
Costumes by	Sandra Woodall
Lighting by	Derek Duarte
Magic and special effects conceived by	Marshall Magoon
Sound and music by	Stephen LeGrand
Wigs and hair by	Rick Echols
Singing Director	John Johnson
Magic effects constructed by	John Gaughan & Associates; The Wizard Works

The Cast
(In order of appearance)

Mephistophilis	Drew Eshelman
Faustus	Peter Donat
Voice of God	Bill King
Angel	Kate Brickley
Angel	Kimberley LaMarque
Angel	Lannyl Stephens
Good Angel	Taylor Young
Bad Angel	Richard Butterfield
Wagner	Ken Sonkin
Devils	Conservatory Ensemble
Lady of Delight	Taylor Young
Lilith	Hope Alexander-Willis
Gretchen	Robin Goodrin Nordli
Voice of Lucifer	William Paterson
Victorian Woman	Taylor Young
Victorian Man	Richard Butterfield
Man with Camera	Peter Bradbury
First Fop	Liam O'Brien
Second Fop	Timothy Greer
Dona Ana	Lannyl Stephens

Don Juan	Lawrence Hecht
Commendatore	Micheal McShane
Octavio	Peter Bradbury
Charlotte	Kate Brickley
Mathurine	Kimberley LaMarque
Pope	Sydney Walker
Archbishop	Micheal McShane
Cardinal	Richard Butterfield
Friar	Liam O'Brien
Friar	Ken Sonkin
Friar	Peter Bradbury
Friar	Timothy Greer
Marthe	Taylor Young
Emperor (Greed)	Micheal McShane
Steward (Greed)	Liam O'Brien
Centurion (Greed)	Richard Butterfield
Savonarola (Wrath)	Sydney Walker
Harpo (Wrath)	Ken Sonkin
Woman (Pride)	Anne Lawder
Young Man (Pride)	Timothy Greer
Doctor (Pride)	William Paterson
Envy	D. Butterfield
Man (Sloth)	Liam O'Brien
Mother (Sloth)	Anne Lawder
Angel Eyes (Lechery)	Hope Alexander-Willis
Dancer (Lechery)	Taylor Young
Dancer (Lechery)	Dawna Bailey
Dancer (Lechery)	Kate Brickley
Dancer (Lechery)	Lannyl Stephens
Angel (Gluttony)	Peter Bradbury
Messiah (Gluttony)	Micheal McShane
Helen	Lannyl Stephens
Lucifer	William Paterson

Voices of Diana Ross and the Supremes sung by Lannyl Stephens

CONSERVATORY ENSEMBLE

Dawna Bailey, Brian Crawley, Nino DeGennaro, Elan Evans, Rod Gnapp, Lisa Hambley, Julie Kuhns, Will Leskin, Paula Markovitz, Vince Melocchi, Peter Nolan, Peter Novak, Don Piper, Karen Pruis, Daniel Reichert, Jennifer Roblin, Michael Ryan, Carlotta Scarmack, David Schwartz, John Walker, Jo Yang, Grace Zandarski

There will be one intermission.

UNDERSTUDIES

Woman (Pride), Mother (Sloth), Lilith, Angel Eyes (Lechery) — Kate Brickley; *Man with Camera, Octavio, Second Fop, Young Man (Pride), Friar, Angel (Gluttony)* — Bernard Vash; *Charlotte, Dancer (Lechery)* — Lannyl Stephens; *Faustus, First Fop, Friar, Steward (Greed), Man (Sloth)* — Timothy Greer; *Mephistophilis* — Richard Butterfield; *Don Juan, Archbishop, Commendatore, Emperor (Greed), Man (Envy), Messiah (Gluttony)* — Stephen Rockwell; *Angel, Mathurine* — Hope Alexander-Willis; *Gretchen, Dona Ana, Angel, Dance (Lechery), Helen* — Taylor Young; *Lucifer, Doctor (Pride)* — Sydney Walker; *Pope, Savonarola (Wrath)* — William Paterson; *Good Angel, Lady of Delight, Victorian Woman, Marthe, Dancer (Lechery)* — Kimberley LaMarque; *Bad Angel, Victorian Man, Cardinal, Centurion (Greed), Wagner, Harpo (Wrath), Friar* — J. Steven White

Stage Management Staff: Alice Elliott Smith, Duncan W. Graham and Eugene Barcone

This production is made possible in part by generous grants from First Nationwide Bank and the Goethe Institute San Francisco, German Cultural Center.

A Word from the Director

"The crowd expects a feast in what we'll give" — Goethe

Michael Smuin

Question: How do you direct a play by at least ten writers — Marlowe, Goethe, Moliere, Edward Albee, Christopher Durang, Amlin Gray, John Guare, Romulus Linney, Joyce Carol Oates, Jean-Claude van Itallie — and one adaptor — Nagle Jackson?

Answer: (after a week of rehearsals) I don't know. But I'm learning some interesting things along the way.

The heart of *Faustus in Hell* is certainly Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832), whose name still commands a place on the list of the master poets of dramatic literature. Of this handful of immortals, Goethe is perhaps the least typical theatre artist. He remains a great writer who went *into* the theatre but was never really *of* it. Shakespeare and Moliere, perhaps even Sophocles, were men whose work *was* the theatre, whose lives were lived on its stages, within its walls, among its people. But Goethe, although he undertook the direction of a theatre, walked apart, always the lone poet.

Had Goethe devoted his life, or most of it, to writing for the stage, rather than making the theatre only one of several abiding interests — philosophy, science, politics, other literary forms were among them — he might have been ranked by later generations along with Sophocles and Shakespeare. As it is, there is always a reservation about his dramatic poetry: his dramas are not shaped to the needs of actors or audiences; there is that sense of fragmented grandeur about them. Dramatic conflict is interrupted by philosophical speculation or extended lyrical flights; illuminating or beautiful they may be, but at the same time they bring the narrative to a standstill.

Aside from *Faust*, Goethe wrote *Iphigenie* and *Tasso*, but the formal limitations imposed by his own conception of neo-classicism diminished their dramatic effectiveness. His *Egmont* has extraordinarily dramatic scenes, but they are only loosely held in place by the framework of the play. It is the relatively minor domestic drama *Clavigo* that is probably the most effective of Goethe's works in performance.

Only in *Faust*, however, does Goethe exhibit those qualities that we associate with a true masterpiece. This tragedy was the fruit of virtually a lifetime of thought and endeavor. Goethe took the old legend of Faust, the man who sells his soul to the devil, as the basis for his drama, and he set out to shape a tragedy that would encompass not only his own personal experience but that of mankind as well.

Enter Nagle Jackson, bringing with him a wealth of acting, directing and writing skills. His inspiration — that theatre is hell and hell is a theatre — is what first attracted me to his play, along with the brilliant idea of having seven major writers explore the seven deadly sins.

Juicy stuff! And as I read and researched, I kept finding parallels — as Jackson already had — to Faustus and Gretchen, Don Juan and Dona Ana. With the metaphor of theatre in mind, I took it one step further — to the movies. Old

Faustus became Lionel Barrymore; young Faustus, a dashing John Barrymore; Don Juan, Errol Flynn, Dona Ana, Betty Boop; Helen of Troy, Marilyn Monroe. But wait a minute! I don't want to give it all away. As you can see, the parallels have given us lots of images to work with, and lots of music to accompany these familiar friends.

So my approach to this play is one of respect and love, to poke a little fun in the form of a kind of theatrical tribute. *Sturm und Drang* was never like this! I hope no one is offended. And don't take it too seriously — after all, it's only a play.

Finally, I want to thank Ed Hastings and everyone at A.C.T. for giving me this opportunity.

Michael Smuin

Michael Smuin

Notes on "Faustus In Hell"
by Nagle Jackson

A Parcel of Playwrights: *Author Nagle Jackson and contributors Jean-Claude van Itallie, Christopher Durang, Romulus Linney and Edward Albee.*

The story of John Faustus, which first emerged from folk tales and popular rumor in the 16th century, has been a fascination to Western civilization ever since. Unfortunately, however, neither of the two masterpieces written in dramatic form on this subject hold the stage. The play by Christopher Marlowe has a brilliant beginning and a terrifying end, but the middle section is a two dimensional and muddled series of contrivances and practical jokes. For this reason the play is rarely done. It is questionable whether or not Goethe even meant his *Faustus* for the stage, although he himself was Artistic Director of the theatre at Weimar and did give the epic poem a staging towards the end of his life. It is certainly not constructed with any eye to actual staging or dramatic architecture.

Interestingly enough, the finest play about that other Renaissance "rebel," who also divorces himself from divine authority and who also descends to hell before our very eyes — Don Juan — is also a flawed play. Molière's dark comedy has some of the greatest scenes and speeches of his entire oeuvre, but they are strung along a most unwieldy plot, borrowed from an earlier Spanish play and the two elements, plot and characters, never seem to merge organically. *continued next page*

It has been my notion to create a "theatre piece"using all these sources, plus many others from opera to German puppet plays and to make a Faustus *event*. To add to the occasion I have commissioned seven leading contemporary American playwrights, each contributing a short episode dealing with one of the Seven Deadly Sins. I have tried to remain faithful to the irreverent, witty and rambunctious nature of the originals. Goethe's *Faustus* is one of those books everyone discusses and no one reads, and therefore is generally considered to be a gloomy, philosophical piece. Nothing could be further from the literary reality. It abounds in ribaldry, sexual innuendo, literary gossip and mischief. Most of the moments which audience members will undoubtedly ascribe to me as the 20th century adaptor are, in fact, Goethe's. Like Marlowe and Molière, he enjoyed "shocking" the passive consumer.

TRANSLATIONS AND SOURCES

Consider the problem: in the first ten pages of this script we have material from Marlowe, Goethe, The Wakefield English Mystery plays, an anonymous German puppet play of the 1600's and myself as adaptor. The trick — and the fascination — was to meld all of these into one energy. Goethe's work delights in continual change, from stately verse to what the Germans call "Knuttelvers," or rhymed doggerel. He also uses prose from time to time. The Molière work is completely in prose — thank goodness. With the help of all the available modern translations, reigned in by my meager "college German" I finally arrived at a free translation of the Goethe sections which marry to the Marlovian iambic pentameter when necessary, or clash directly with it when that is more to the effect. Since French is — or was, alas — my second language, and Molière a well considered friend, those sections were the easiest and I found that he remained somewhat aloof from the Northerners surrounding him. All the bridging scenes, the glue between textual jumps, had to be created from scratch and when I summoned up my courage, proved to be most rewarding.

Now, more than two years later, I look forward to seeing Michael Smuin's interpretation at A.C.T.

About the Playwright

Nagle Jackson is Artistic Director of the McCarter Theatre in Princeton, where his recent productions have included Thornton Wilder's *Our Town*, Alfred de Musset's *Don't Trifle with Love* and James McLure's *Napoleon Nightdreams*. Last season at A.C.T., he directed the world premiere of his own play, *Opera Comique*, which won Best New Play, Best Production and Best Direction awards from the Bay Area Drama Critics Circle. He is also directing the new production of *Opera Comique* opening May 2 at the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C. Among his other A.C.T. productions are *Travesties*, *Hay Fever*, *The School for Wives*, *The National Health* and *Cat Among the Pigeons*. His first play, *At This Evening's Performance*, originally produced as part of A.C.T.'s Plays-in-Progress series, has subsequently been seen at McCarter and other theatres and was recently published by Dramatists Play Service. He has directed on Broadway and at leading regional theatres throughout the nation, from the Old Globe in San Diego to the Hartman Theatre in Stamford, Connecticut. His master classes in directing for Staret Productions in New York have made him a popular teacher, and he is a much requested speaker throughout the mid-Atlantic region. *Faustus in Hell* had its world premiere under Mr. Jackson's direction at McCarter in January, 1985. The A.C.T. presentation marks the West Coast premiere of the play.

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the Bastille. But of what? Two years from its presumed opening, the Opéra de la Bastille still has neither a project director (Mortier has gone back to plan his next six years in Brussels) nor an artistic director laying the groundwork for the new theatre — and two years in the opera business is no time at all. As for the *salle modulable*, and much else surrounding the building rising at the Bastille, it is enveloped in fog; the space is there, but no one seems to know yet what will be put in it.

But with or without the Opéra de la Bastille, the housing of music has been considerably expanded in Paris in the last few years. When Sir Georg Solti took over the Orchestre de Paris in the early 1970s, he insisted that a new concert hall be built for the orchestra. The result, the Palais des Congrès, is really suitable only for mundane conventions or musical or dance events requiring heavy amplification. When Daniel Barenboim took over the orchestra in the mid-'70s, one of his goals was to get out of the Palais des Congrès. A major French bank (nationalized under the Socialists) bought the 60-year-old Salle Pleyel and refurbished it; its dowdy 1920s appearance has been greatly improved, its erratic acoustics somewhat upgraded. Carnegie Hall it ain't.

A few seasons ago, the city of Paris did a major facelift on its 125-year-old Théâtre du Châtelet, renaming it the Théâtre Musical de Paris (everyone still calls it the Châtelet), where it puts on its own opera productions or invites others, providing a certain degree of competition for the Paris Opera. This is the city's biggest theatre, with some 2,500 seats, the place where New York's Metropolitan Opera performed under Toscanini on its 1910 tour to Europe, as well as the house for Diaghilev's first Paris season in 1909.

The Théâtre des Champs-Elysées, which is three blocks off the Champs-Elysées, is probably the most satisfying concert hall in Paris and it is certainly the most comfortable, with its rows of individual armchairs amply spaced in the orchestra level. It was built by Auguste and Gustave Perret, using the then new technique of reinforced concrete, and the building is an objet d'art in itself — Art Deco years before the fact, with a facade decorated with high reliefs by Antoine Bourdelle. After its opening in 1913, one of the first tenants was Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, so it became the site of the uproarious world premiere of Stravinsky's *Sacre du Printemps*, choreographed by Nijinsky. Right now it is closed for a major renovation, but normally it is the principal home of the Orchestre National de France and other orchestras of Radio France, the principal shareholder.

A relatively new, occasional site for opera is the cumbersomely named Palais Omnisports de Paris Bercy, on the Seine a little upstream from the Gare de Lyon. From the outside it looks like a lawn-covered bunker, inside it is an oval-shaped sports arena holding 15,000 spectators, give or take a couple of thousand depending on the sport, which might be six-day bike racing, boxing, indoor soccer. It might also be opera on a scale something like the Verona Arena with a roof, or large-scale choral works. It has already put on *Aida* and *Turandot* and the requiems of Berlioz and Verdi. In May it is applying its Cecil B. De Mille approach to Verdi's *Nabucco*, 16 performances in 18 days, with multiple casting that includes such singers as Piero Cappuccilli, Ghena Dimitrova, Olivia Stapp and Paul Plishka. There are no poor seats throughout the 100-to-350-franc price range, and while it does not provide the most subtle of artistic experiences, it does draw an audience made up largely of people who, for whatever reason, have never set foot in the Paris Opera.□

David Stevens reports on the French arts scene from his base at the International Herald-Tribune *in Paris.*

A.C.T. The Fifth Season, 1970-71

The 1970-71 season at A.C.T. remains the most compact in the company's history, with only six new productions and revivals of *Hadrian VII* and *The Tempest* from the previous year. As A.C.T. got back on its feet after a period of financial hardship, the company eased into full-scale repertory production at the Geary.

The new season got under way with a critically acclaimed but highly controversial production of Shakespeare's eternally problematic *Merchant of Venice*, with some observers charging that Ellis Rabb's *La Dolce Vita*-style staging, set in contemporary Italy, only underscored the play's inherent strains of anti-Semitism. The performances of Peter Donat as Shylock, Michael Learned as Portia and Ken Ruta as Antonio, however, were widely praised.

The 1970-71 stanza also found the late Allen Fletcher translating and directing *An Enemy of the People*, the first of what was to become an ambitious and rewarding cycle of Ibsen productions that would eventually encompass seven major plays over a period of twelve years.

Another season highlight was a world premiere musical, *The Selling of the President*, based on the popular book by Joe McGinniss, with Peter Donat as the would-be chief executive, Joy Carlin as his loyal wife, Ken Ruta as his running mate, and Michael Learned as their campaign manager.

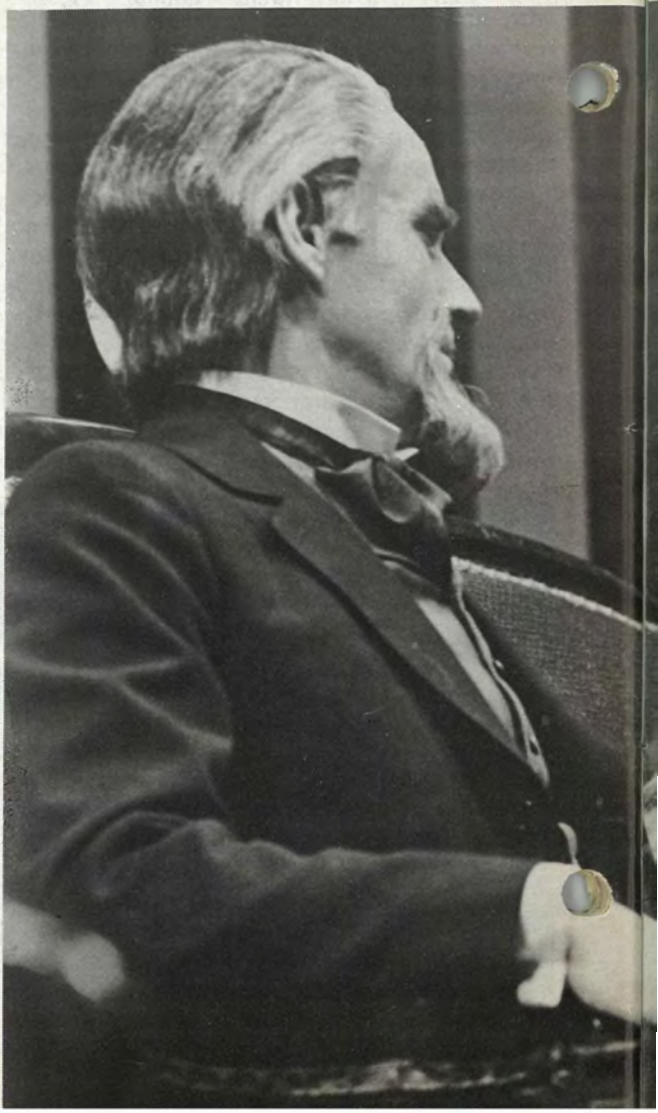
Photos by Hank Kranzler and William Ganslen.

Frances Lee McCain and Josef Sommer were leading players in A.C.T.'s West Coast premiere of Paddy Chayefsky's unconventional comedy, The Latent Heterosexual.

1970-71

FIFTH SEASON

The Merchant of Venice
by William Shakespeare;
directed by Ellis Rabb

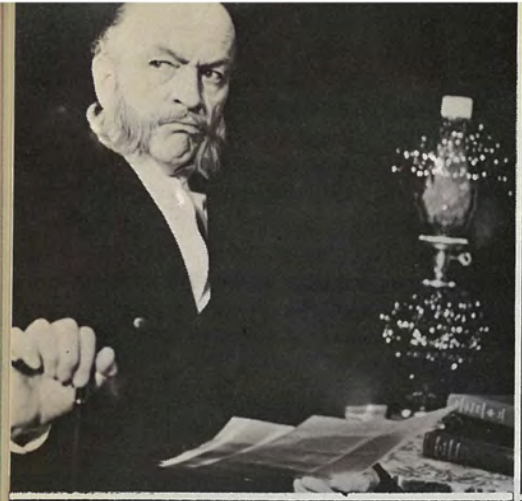


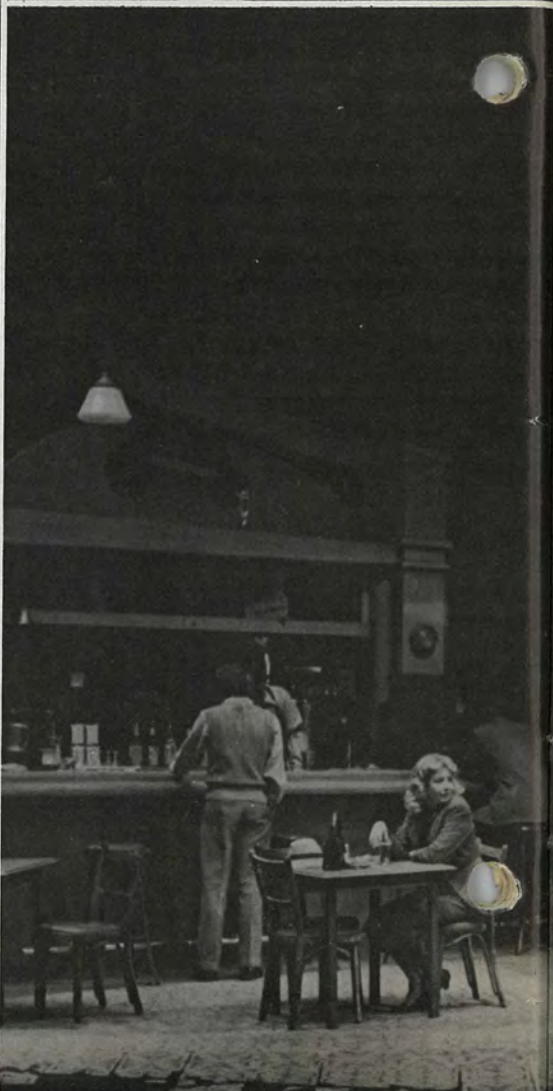
The Relapse
by John Vanbrugh;
directed by Edward Hastings
The Latent Heterosexual
by Paddy Chayefsky;
directed by Allen Fletcher
The Time of Your Life
by William Saroyan;
directed by Edward Hastings
An Enemy of the People
by Henrik Ibsen;
directed by Allen Fletcher
The Selling of the President
by Hample, James and O'Brien;
directed by Ellis Rabb
The Tempest
by William Shakespeare;
directed by William Ball
Hadrian VII
by Peter Luke;
directed by Allen Fletcher

Below: Ibsen's idealistic hero, Stockmann, was played by Peter Donat (right) and his more pragmatic brother by Jay Doyle in An Enemy of the People.

Far left: *Michael Learned played Portia in Ellis Rabb's controversial production of Shakespeare's* The Merchant of Venice, *set in modern-day Italy.*

Left: *In Ellis Rabb's* Dolce Vita*-style production of* The Merchant of Venice, *Peter Donat (center) played Shylock and Ken Ruta (at right) was seen in the title role.*





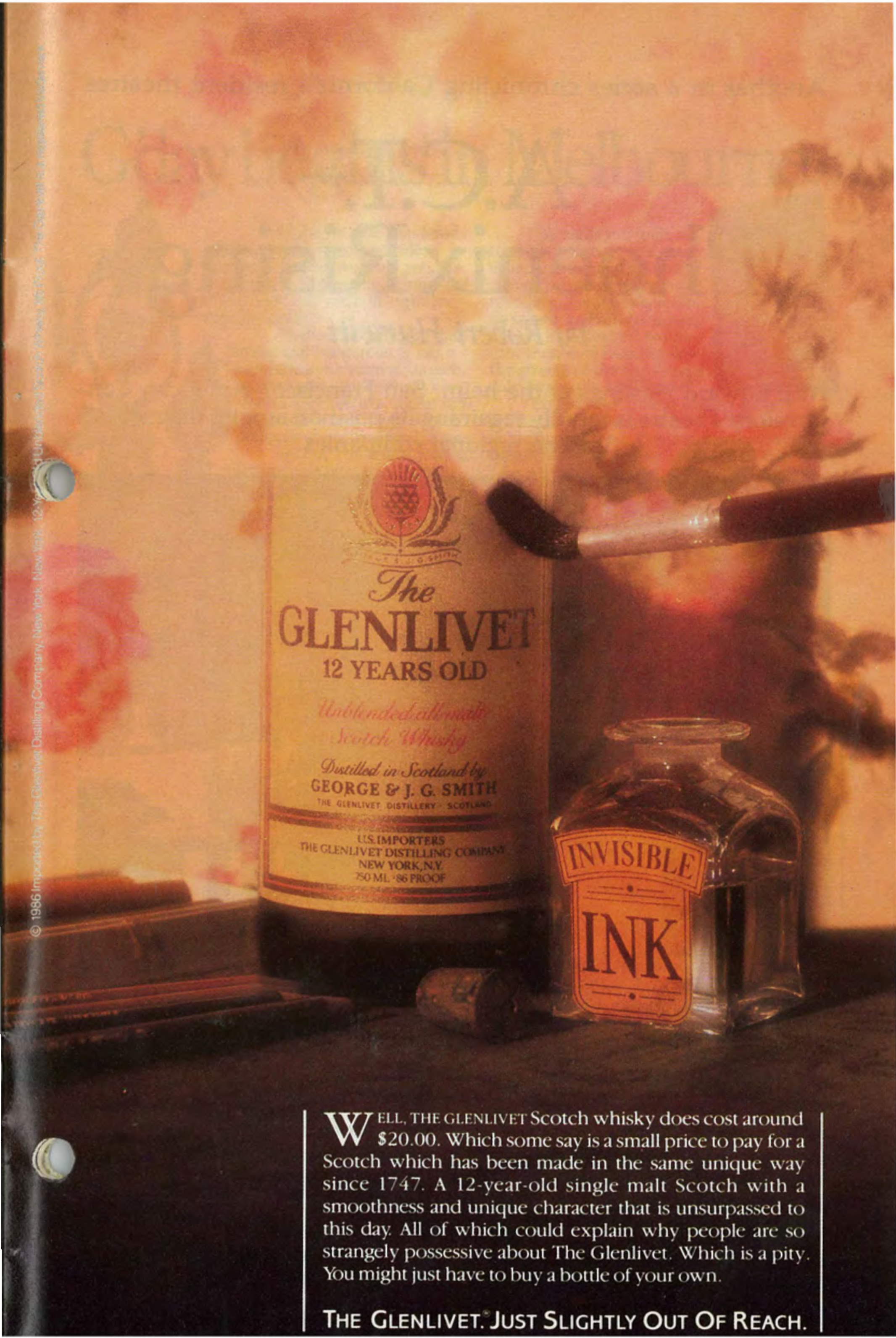
Near left: *In Edward Hastings' popular production of* The Time of Your Life, *William Paterson was seen as Kit Carson and Ken Ruta had the role of Joe.*

Below: *Jackson de Govia's evocative rendering of Nick's San Francisco waterfront saloon was a highlight of* The Time of Your Life *at A.C.T. Edward Hastings' production featured Michael Learned (seated at left) and Ken Ruta (seated at center).*

Far left, top: *William Paterson as the conservative printer with an insidious influence on a newspaper's policies in Allen Fletcher's production of* An Enemy of the People, *by Henrik Ibsen.*

Far left, bottom: *Joy Carlin played the wife of a dimwitted presidential candidate being interviewed by suave Joseph Bird in a scene from the world premiere musical,* The Selling of the President, *directed by Ellis Rabb.*

Dressed and bewigged to a fare-thee-well, Jay Doyle was featured as a lecherous matchmaker in Edward Hastings' production of The Relapse, *by John Vanbrugh.*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Another in a series chronicling California's resident theatres

A.C.T.– Phoenix Rising

by Robert Hurwitt

With Edward Hastings at the helm, San Francisco's American Conservatory Theatre is rapidly regaining its position among the nation's leading regional companies.

A.C.T. made its San Francisco debut on January 21, 1967, with William Ball's production of Tartuffe *by Molière — "a screaming, bellowing, unbelievable triumph — with (above) Rene Auberjonois in the title role and DeAnn Mears as Elmire.*

IT'S been 20 years now since the American Conservatory Theatre set up shop in San Francisco. They haven't always been easy years; one couldn't even say they've always been good. But they certainly have been dramatic, sometimes it seemed almost self-destructively so. Now well launched on its third decade at its handsome Geary Theatre, and having survived an abrupt change of leadership, A.C.T. is looking healthier than it has in many years. The company that many felt was in its death throes just last year has made a remarkable recovery.

San Francisco's love affair with A.C.T. got off to a dazzling start on January 21, 1967, with William Ball's production of Molière's *Tartuffe* — "a screaming, bellowing,

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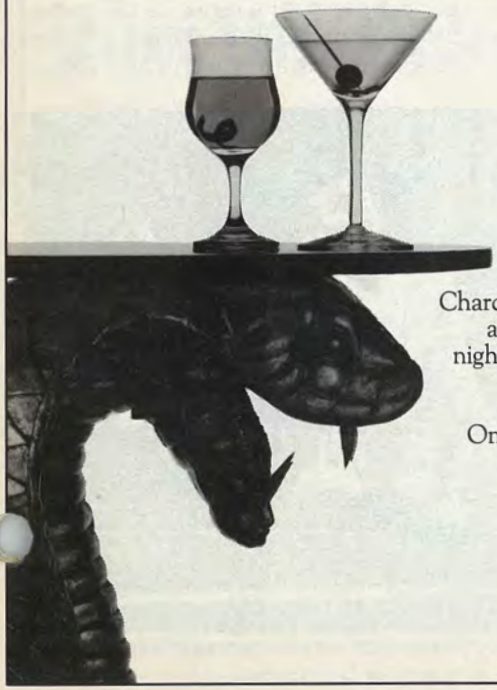

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unbelievable triumph," enthused *San Francisco Chronicle* critic John Wasserman. The town welcomed its new troupe with the unbridled enthusiasm of parched travelers coming across an oasis in the Sahara. And small wonder. San Francisco, a lively theatre town since the 1850s, had been bereft of high quality resident professional theatre — let alone daring, adventurous productions — since Jules Irving and Herbert Blau had left the seminal Actor's Workshop to head up the new company at New York's Lincoln Center in 1965.

In many respects the eagerness with which audiences and critics have welcomed the current season of the reborn — or, more accurately, revivified — A.C.T. recalls the reception it received during that first remarkable season. And for good reasons.

By the time the Actor's Workshop had rung down its final curtain, San Franciscans had once more grown used to the idea that they lived in a theatre town. Founded by Blau and Irving in 1952, the Workshop had been an important part of a nationwide, loosely associated movement — the regional theatre movement — that challenged and eventually overthrew Broadway's half-century old dominance of American theatre.

Within a decade after the close of World War II, ambitious regional repertory companies had begun to spring up all across the country. The Arena Stage in Washington, D.C. and Houston's Alley Theatre were among the first, but San Francisco's Actor's Workshop was among the most adventurous, consistently challenging its audiences with works by Brecht, Beckett, the controversial, then-new Albee, and (well before he had become widely known) the American debut of Harold Pinter. But the Workshop failed to survive Blau and Irving's departure, despite the efforts that kept it going through a lacklustre 1965-66 season. By the time William Ball's American Conservatory Theatre arrived, just about the only professional company in town was the ragtag, politically and artistically radical San Francisco Mime Troupe — a group with neither the desire nor the means to mount a full repertory season.

In 1967, A.C.T. was a regional repertory company without a region to call home. Ball had founded the company in 1965 in Pittsburgh, where it played its first, 14-play

HANK KRANZLER

Paul Shenar in Tiny Alice *by Edward Albee, directed by William Ball — a memorable event of the American Conservatory Theatre's early years in San Francisco.*

Peter Donat (center), "unforgettably hilarious" in Molière's The School for Wives. *He is pictured here with Rosemary Smith and Geoffrey Elliott.*

season. From the outset, the fledgling troupe was organized around Ball's vision of what a repertory theatre should be, a vision that made A.C.T. a unique institution in American theatre: It was to be an ongoing ensemble of theatre artists, providing actors with the steady employment necessary for full concentration on their craft. It was to operate on a rotating repertory schedule, challenging actors with perhaps three to six widely different roles in any given week, thus keeping their work fresh and stimulating their artistic growth. It would present a broad, eclectic mix of productions, both classic and contemporary. And it would be both a theatre and a conservatory where experienced artists would train the next generation of performers and undergo continuous training themselves.

It would also, according to Ball's plan, be a company of artists controlled by the artists themselves. By that, Ball meant a company which would enjoy an unprecedented amount of artistic freedom from a money-minded board of directors.

A.C.T. was part of the second wave of regional repertory theatres, and Ball, as A.C.T. historian John Wilk describes in his book *The Creation of an Ensemble,* was influenced by what he had seen taking place at other companies. He was particularly distressed by recent instances in which boards of directors had fired their founding artistic directors. Even as the concept of A.C.T. was taking shape, Ball was in the midst of mounting his production of *Tartuffe* — the same production with which he opened the seasons in Pittsburgh and later in San Francisco — at Lincoln Center when that board fired its theatre's management team, Robert Whitehead and Elia Kazan. Ball was determined that would not happen in his theatre.

Consequently, A.C.T. was organized as a national corporation, performing in Pittsburgh but headquartered in Delaware, with a board of trustees totally separate from the local board under whose auspices the group performed at the Pittsburgh Playhouse. The arrangement guaranteed the artistic independence Ball wanted. It also guaranteed a certain amount of trouble. When, at the end of the first season, the local board sought a larger say in company affairs, A.C.T. pulled

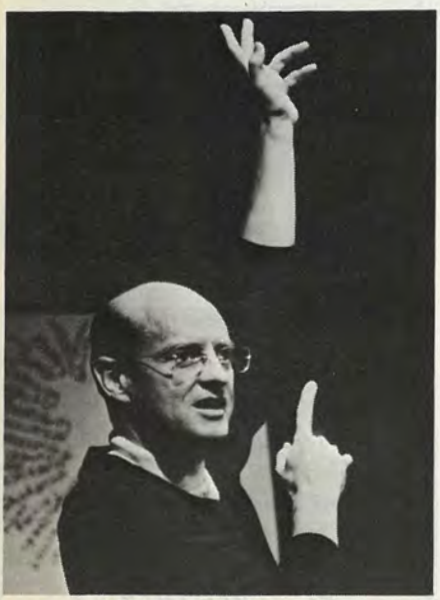
up stakes and hit the road in search of a city that would be more supportive on its own terms.

A.C.T.'s 1966 national tour included an impressive summer season at Stanford — impressive enough to inspire key members of the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce (especially Mortimer Fleishhacker, Cyril Magnin, and Melvin Swig) to open negotiations to bring the company to San Francisco permanently. There followed a brief but spirited bidding war between potential backers there and in Chicago (at one point A.C.T. resolved to play half-seasons in both cities each year, but that proved too complicated and expensive a proposition), and in 1967 A.C.T. moved into its new home at the Geary.

By any standards that first season was a blockbuster. It was only a half-season, 22 weeks in all. But within those five months A.C.T. presented 16 different plays, covering a range from *Tartuffe* to *Endgame*, *Arsenic and Old Lace* and *Charley's Aunt* to *Under Milkwood*, *Tiny Alice*, *Death of a Salesman*, *Krapp's Last Tape*, *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, and *Long Day's Journey into Night*. 47 actors played a total of 187 characters in 296 performances at two theatres — the Geary and the smaller, 640-seat Marines Memorial Theatre (former home of the Workshop) two blocks away. The schedule was so tight that some actors found themselves in two shows on the same night, making an exit at the Geary and racing uphill in full costume just in time to change and make an entrance at the Marines.

A.C.T. kept up this exhausting pace with 27 plays the following year in its first full "double-repertory" season at the two theatres, performing everything from tragedy to comedy, classics to contemporary. Ball had set out purposefully to dazzle the city right from the start, and he did just that. The acting company for those first few years included the likes of René Auberjonois, Peter Donat, Michael

Learned, Ellen and Will Geer (before they moved on to their Theatricum Botanicum in Topanga Canyon), Michael O'Sullivan, Paul Shenar, Angela Paton, Ray Reinhardt, Sada Thompson, Richard Dysart, David Dukes, Marsha Mason, DeAnn Mears, and Ann Weldon. Behind the scenes was another all-star crew. The managing director was Bill Bushnell, who later went on to head the Los Angeles Actors Theatre and build the L.A. Theatre Center. The conservatory was organized and run by Robert Goldsby, who later left to found the Berkeley Stage Company with his wife,



A.C.T. founder William Ball.

actress Angela Paton. Goldsby's replacement, the late Allen Fletcher, was the former artistic director of Seattle Repertory. Edward Hastings, one of A.C.T.'s founders with Ball, was the company's executive director.

The directors who staged productions those first few years, besides Ball, Hastings, Fletcher, and Goldsby, included Auberjonois, Gower Champion, Jerome Kilty, Nagle Jackson (now artistic director of Princeton's McCarter Theatre), Ellis Rabb, Edward Payson Call, and Jack O'Brien (now artistic director at San Diego's Old Globe). Quite a crew.

"It was exciting to be working at full capacity," Hastings recalls. "In a funny way it's quite efficient using actors at full speed the way we did. The rotating repertory system allows for artistically and financially good use of a large company. And it was fun. Everyone was working and working hard. My mother always said, 'the more you do, the more you *can* do.' And it's true. It was invigorating. The excitement in the theatre was palpable."

Still, A.C.T. had set itself a pace that no theatre could keep up for very long. Certain economic realities began to make themselves felt: despite all the excitement it had generated, A.C.T.'s subscriptions were not growing as fast as anticipated and the substantial support provided by Fleishhacker, Magnin and the others in A.C.T.'s fundraising group were not enough to make up the difference. Then too, there was dissension within the company, primarily over the extent to which Ball exerted almost complete control in matters of policy. Bushnell left, as did Goldsby and several others. A.C.T. began to cut back. The double-repertory concept was abandoned as too unwieldy; seasons were reduced to eight plays (increasing once more to an average of ten by the end of the '70s), all at the Geary.

As the dust settled, A.C.T. emerged in pretty much the same form it was to hold for the rest of the decade: an ongoing, full-time ensemble of excellent actors performing a rotating repertory of classic and contemporary fare and operating a fully accredited and widely acclaimed conservatory. It was one of the largest regional repertory companies in the nation and its reputation was solid enough to earn it a Tony Award. It was also, however, increasingly being regarded as a somewhat staid dowager within what had become a lively, vibrant, wildly varied theatrical community.

By the end of the 1970s, San Francisco had become one of the world's leading

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centers of new forms of experimental theatre with groups like Snake Theatre (later split into Antenna and Nightfire), Soon 3, and George Coates Performance Works — but not even ripples of that work reached the Geary stage (in the form, say, of new staging possibilities). The most exciting new work by contemporary American, English, European and other playwrights — David Mamet, Caryl Churchill, Dario Fo, Harvey Fierstein, Athol Fugard, Slawomir Mrozek, David Rabe, Trevor Griffiths, Heiner Müller, Botho Strauss — was showing up not at A.C.T. but at the Eureka, Magic, Berkeley Stage and Julian theatres. True, A.C.T. staged a memorable version of Sam Shepard's Pulitzer Prize-winning *Buried Child* in 1980, but that play — like most of Shepard's new works in the late-'70s and early-'80s — had premiered at the Magic Theatre. A.C.T. was simply not the place to go to see new work.

Unfortunately, it had also lost its primacy in presenting the great classics. Though it had won great praise for Ball's daring version of *The Taming of the Shrew* in the mid-'70s, by the end of that decade its Shakespearean productions seemed haphazard, based more on showy design concepts than well thought through interpretations — as compared to the more solid work being done at the Berkeley Shakespeare Festival. Other companies were staging bold new interpretations of other classical authors and the Berkeley Repertory Theatre, by the early '80s, had developed its own first-rate professional acting ensemble for its mixed classical and contemporary seasons. A.C.T. was still the flagship company of San Francisco theatre, but largely by virtue of its size and $7-plus million budget. It seemed more and more to be resting at anchor, while the fleet sailed on by.

Not that A.C.T. was completely out of touch with what was going on in contemporary theatre. It did occasionally stage a new play, though these efforts by-and-

LARRY MERKLE

Left to right, Geoffrey Elliott, Michelle Casey, and Mark Murphey in Joy Carlin's production of The Lady's Not for Burning, *which signalled the end of austerity for A.C.T. when Edward Hastings assumed the reigns last year.*

large did not meet with great success. More importantly, through its Plays in Progress program, run by Edward Hastings, A.C.T. was aiding playwrights in developing new work and giving that work full professional, if fairly private, productions. The company reached out into the community in other ways too, sponsoring (again under Hastings' leadership in the early '70s) the founding of the short-lived Black Actors' Workshop and the long since independent and still active Asian American Theatre Company.

As the '80s began, however, Hastings, who had been Ball's right-hand man, left the company. "Why? Well, it was an accumulation of things, difficult to describe," Hastings says, adding that he sees no reason to harp on the past. "When Bill was away, I functioned as a sort of substitute and he came back and took control of things and I felt like we were duplicating our efforts. I felt a bit redundant. The reason we gave at the time — for my leaving, I mean — and which was perfectly true, was that I wanted a chance to get out and do more artistic work on my own, to do more directing instead of the administrative work I'd been involved in. And that's what I did."

At about the same time, Ball also parted ways with Cyril Magnin who, as head of the California Association for A.C.T. (CAACT), had long been the company's most active fundraiser. At issue once again was what Ball perceived as a question of a local community board trying to limit his artistic freedom. In the midst of a $1.5 million campaign to renovate the Geary Theatre, now owned by A.C.T., Magnin had sought assurances on behalf of a major potential donor that the company would stay in the city and continue to perform at the theatre.

The donor's request seems reasonable enough, especially given the pattern that had developed by the late '70s of an annual shortfall in the CAACT fundraising campaign, followed by veiled threats

from Ball that A.C.T. might go elsewhere, where it would be better appreciated, and then the happy announcement — a bit later — that goals had been met and a new season would be forthcoming. Consistently, Ball turned down the gift rather than give the donor the requested assurance. Magnin left CAACT. Ball took over management of the fundraising organization as well as that of the theatre.

In retrospect, the departure of both Hastings and Magnin in the early '80s marked the beginning of the end for William Ball's reign at the theatre he had

A.C.T. Artistic Director Edward Hastings (left) with the company's Managing Director, John Sullivan.

founded. From the outset, A.C.T. had been Ball's theatre; it was his vision, his dream, but it had also been a communal effort right from the start. The energy that had produced the seasons that dazzled San Francisco had been that of a dynamic creative and savvy management team and most of that team was now gone: Bushnell, Goldsby, Hastings, Fletcher, Laird Williamson (who had moved on to the Pacific Conservatory of the Performing Arts in Santa Maria), plus leading fundraisers Fleishhacker (deceased) and now Magnin. A.C.T. was looking like a one-man show, increasingly isolated from both the artistic and the funding communities.

From mid-1982 to the spring of 1986, A.C.T. reached its lowest ebb, artistically and financially. Faced with a $1.5 million deficit and decreased funding from the California Arts Council and other agencies — already concerned about the perceived decline in artistic quality on the Geary stage — Ball announced stringent economy measures that virtually abandoned some of the original concepts of A.C.T.

There would still be a theatre and a training program, but rotating repertory was abandoned in favor of the more economical series of shows presented sequentially. The acting ensemble was cut back to the point where few of its remaining members still had a full season of employment. The lavish sets and costumes of A.C.T.'s heyday were to be no more. Increasingly, instead of using seasoned actors in key roles, Ball began casting conservatory students in parts they clearly weren't ready to handle. Ball himself, who had not directed a show at A.C.T. since 1978, returned to directing shows, but if that act was supposed to reinspire confidence in the company it didn't work. Perhaps he had grown rusty, perhaps he was too preoccupied with financial matters, perhaps he simply no longer had the artistic fire in his gut — whatever the reason, the shows that Ball directed during his last two seasons with A.C.T. (Pinter's *Old Times*, Bill Davis's *Mass Appeal*, the medieval *Passion Cycle*) were among the least successful in what were otherwise undistinguished seasons.

Not that it's been all unrelieved tedium at the Geary these past few years. The 1983-84 season opened with Byron Jennings and Mark Harelik in a brilliant production of Shaw's *Arms and the Man* (largely an import from PCPA) and closed with a suitably frothy *The Sleeping Prince* and an intriguing new play on incest by Robert Locke, *The Dolly*. The 1984-85 sea-

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son at least featured Peter Donat's unforgettably hilarious performance in *The School for Wives* by Molière. Even the woeful 1985-86 season had its moments of pleasure in Nagle Jackson's diverting *Opera Comique*.

The 1986-87 season opened with Stephen Sondheim's Sunday in the Park with George, *"stunningly staged by Laird Williamson."*

LARRY MERKLE

LARRY MERKLE

The 1986-87 season also brought to the Geary stage Claude Purdy's "moving, moody, bluesy" production of Ma Rainey's Black Bottom, *by August Wilson, with Ann Weldon (seated) as Ma Rainey.*

Nothing on stage, however, could match the drama that was unfolding offstage. Following Magnin's 1981 departure and the deficit that developed the next year, the press began to focus increased attention on A.C.T.'s finances and management policies. Meanwhile, virtually unnoticed by the press, the A.C.T. board of trustees had undergone some fundamental changes. Partly as a result of the 1981 merger of CAACT's activities with A.C.T. itself, partly due to pressure from the California Arts Council and other funding agencies, the old "national" board — mostly made up of company members and longtime supporters of Ball's around the country — had been substantially augmented by local community members. The result was a board vitally and intimately concerned with the decline in A.C.T.'s fortunes and willing to take action to correct it — even if that meant replacing the artistic director. On February 21, 1986 in a now famous gesture, Ball called a company meeting following a rehearsal of the crucifixion of Christ in the *Passion Cycle* and announced his resignation.

The board of trustees reacted quickly, meeting two days later and announcing Ball's replacement as artistic director — Edward Hastings. Hastings moved just as quickly to take control and turn the company around, announcing the replacement of the season's final play — William Mastrosimone's two-character *The Woolgatherer* — with Christopher Fry's large-cast *The Lady's Not for Burning*. It was a signal that the days of austerity were over, that A.C.T. was about to return to the ambitious programming of its early years. And when Hastings announced the 1986-87 season it was clear he intended to make good on that signal. Five of the eight plays announced would be West Coast premieres, including Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine's *Sunday in the Park with George*, A.C.T.'s first black play, August Wilson's *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, and Nagle Jackson's sprawling *Faustus in Hell*, directed by Michael Smuin. It was a season designed to revive A.C.T.'s sagging morale with something of the panache with which the company had ended San Fran-

cisco's theatrical drought in 1967.

Now that Hastings' first full season at the helm is moving into its final month, there's no question that the future looks considerably rosier at the theatre on Geary Street than it did just a year ago. There have been more risks taken and other signs of artistic life at the Geary this year than for several years past put together, and that alone is cause for celebration.

The season got off to a flawed but memorable start with *Sunday in the Park with George* — flawed chiefly by Sondheim's own self-indulgent second act and by the miscasting of a weak singer in a key role, but stunningly staged by Laird Williamson in just about every other respect. After that remarkable opening, the season sagged slightly — except for A.C.T.'s venerable, fail-safe Yuletide offering, *A Christmas Carol* — with Joy Carlin's only fitfully successful version of Shaw's *The Doctor's Dilemma* (featuring a superb supporting medical cast) and Albert Takazauckas's beautifully sensitive rendering of Woody Allen's surprisingly pedestrian *Floating Light Bulb.*

Came the spring, however, and A.C.T. was back on track with Hastings' own sharply crafted staging of Tom Stoppard's *The Real Thing* and a daringly theatrical, comically tragic production of Chekhov's *The Seagull,* directed by Jerome Kilty. *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* gave the company its third superb show in a row in Claude Purdy's moving, moody, bluesy production (scheduled to move to the Los Angeles Theatre Center after its current A.C.T. run). But the improved quality of the shows on stage was only part of this year's success story. Hastings was clearly building for the future — not only bringing back a number of once familiar audience favorites like Ken Ruta, Ann Weldon, and Fredi Olster, but new talent culled from Berkeley Rep, the Berkeley Shakespeare Festival, the Magic and other Bay Area theatres. *Ma Rainey,* as Hastings pointed out, was only the first installment on a promise to broaden the ethnic com-

position of the company and the work it presents. "Even if there is not a specific ethnic play in future seasons," he said, "I think there will definitely be a mixed company. Nontraditional casting will be a strong element of next season."

William Paterson and Joan Stuart-Morris in Nagle Jackson's Opera Comique, *highpoint of the "woeful" 1985-86 season.*

LARRY MERKLE

Nancy Carlin as Masha in Jerome Kilty's recent, "daringly theatrical" production of The Seagull *by Chekhov.*

With little fanfare Hastings also began another experiment for the future. This spring A.C.T. returned to presenting plays in rotating repertory — just for a few weeks, overlapping the opening and closing weeks of each play, but it's a beginning.

Audiences apparently liked what they saw this year. Subscriptions, which had been in the low twenty thousands in A.C.T.'s halcyon days, rose once again to over 18,000 this year after last year's low of 12,500. A.C.T. is looking financially healthier as well, with that pesky deficit now down to about $350,000 — thanks in no small part to the austerity measures of Ball's last years with the company as well as to its improved fundraising capabilities with a more active board of trustees and Cyril Magnin once more lending a hand.

"Spirits are really high," Hastings says, assessing the mood at A.C.T. at the end of his first season. "I think we're all feeling good about the work we've done so far. Certainly it's been great to see all those full houses, and the response of the audiences in those houses. But we're just beginning. We have to continue to raise our standards of performance, to increase the size of the audience. I think we have a mission to be a place where the highest standards of theatrical excellence can be established. We have a responsibility to our audience to present the greatest dramatic literature, past and present. And in addition to that, it's our duty to represent the community in all its ethnic diversity, both in the performers we present and in the audiences we attract. These are the areas we'll be concentrating on in the seasons to come."

Something is definitely struggling up from the ashes on Geary Street. It just might be a phoenix. □

Robert Hurwitt is editor of West Coast Plays *and the theatre critic for the* East Bay Express *and* San Francisco Focus. *His writings appear frequently in* California *magazine,* Image *and the* Los Angeles Times.

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PreView June

Upcoming Arts Events in California

by Jeffrey Hirsch

THE TUNING OF THE TAPER

In the beginning there was the Romain Gary novel. Then the film version starring Simone Signoret appeared and won the 1977 Academy Award for best foreign film. Now comes **Roza**, the musical, an altogether new treatment — by Julian More and Gilbert Bécaud — of the tale that has proven itself so durable in other entertainment media. A retired streetwalker who cares for the offspring of still-practicing ladies of the evening is at the eponymous center of the story, lending it vitality, humor and warmth. As performed in the current West Coast premiere production by Georgia Brown, Roza has, in addition to the proverbial heart of gold, an earthy, world-weary maternal quality that is likely to appeal to children of all ages. Harold Prince, the papa of many a musical hit, has staged the show on an affectingly intimate scale. Through June 14. Mark Taper Forum, 135 N. Grand Avenue, (213) 410-1062. ***Los Angeles.***

OLD FAVORITES

There have been so few successful new comedies seen in New York in recent seasons that the "direct from Broadway" smash hit has virtually ceased to exist as a touring entity. **I'm Not Rappaport**, a surviving exemplar of the dying breed, arrives in California this month to remind us of what we've been missing. Judd Hirsch and Cleavon Little, the original stars of the show, reprise their roles as a couple of codgers sitting around cracking wise in Central Park. Author Herb Gardner remembers the old days when comedies could make you laugh *and* feel good — and manages to do both in this 1986 Tony Award-winner. Through May 27. Curran Theatre, 445 Geary Street, (415) 673-6440. ***San Francisco.*** June 2 through 28. Henry Fonda Theatre, 6126 Hollywood Blvd., (213) 410-1062. ***Los Angeles.***

MARTHA SWOPE

Judd Hirsch and Cleavon Little as the lovable codgers of Herb Gardner's I'm Not Rappaport, *at L.A.'s Henry Fonda Theatre.*

FROM BERLIN TO BERKELEY

The timeless tug of war between good and evil continues. It is every bit as difficult to remain virtuous in these naughty times as it has been at any prior time in history. And yet, as in epochs past, there must surely be among us some few persons who resist the temptation to exploit others for their own profit. Or maybe not. The search for a benevolent being in Bertolt Brecht's parable play **The Good Person of Szechwan** turns up a fine

candidate, a penniless and guileless prostitute named Shen Teh. But the gods must be crazy to choose her, for under adversity even she displays a knack for treachery and deceit. Shen Teh's dilemma is a remarkably modern one: what price survival? An unparalleled master at casting such thorny questions in dramatic terms, Brecht here employs the conventions of the Chinese theatre to explore the good, the bad and the ambivalent. May 15 through June 28. Berkeley Repertory Theatre, 2025 Addison Street, (415) 845-4700. ***Berkeley.***

PAGE TO STAGE

When a novelist of the first rank decides to try his hand at playwriting, the results are certain to be of interest. Czech writer Milan Kundera's first work for the theatre, **Jacques and His Master,** enlarges not only on its own author's literary accomplishments, but also on the achievement of Denis Diderot, the great 18th-century writer and thinker. Diderot's novel *Jacques le Fataliste* provides the point of departure for Kundera's play, a lively examination of the relationship between servants and masters of all kinds. Aren't the relations of lovers and those between story tellers and listeners just variations on the old theme of the servant/master symbiosis?, Kundera asks. In response, he provides a dazzling night's entertainment in which life, love and art intertwine to make of us all rapt subjects. June 4 through August 2. Los Angeles Theatre Center, 514 S. Spring St., (213) 627-2250. ***Los Angeles.***

GIRDLING THE GLOBE

San Diego's Old Globe Theatre is about to embark on its summer season, the real heydays of the year for the Tony Award-winning company and its ever-growing audience. Three shows will begin performances late this month — one on each of the Globe's stages — to be followed by another three openings in July. First up (previews begin May 29) on the Cassius Carter Centre Stage is **Marry Me a Lit-**

tle, a wittily constructed musical revue comprising 17 previously unperformed songs by Stephen Sondheim. Just a couple of days later, in the outdoor Lowell Davies Festival Theatre, **Night of the Iguana** makes its bow, taking us on Tennessee Williams' moody 1961 journey to a Mexican hotel where a quartet of lost and lonely travelers are desperately seeking salvation. The Globe's first Shakespeare of the summer previews June 5 in the Old Globe Theatre. The play is that magnificent pageant of Roman history and steamy love on the Nile, **Antony and Cleopatra**. Festival '87, June 3 through September 20. Old Globe Theatre, Balboa Park, (619) 239-2171. ***San Diego.***

STAGE SHORTS

Bay Area: Among the offerings of the San Francisco New Performances Festival are the S.F. Mime Troupe's **Dragon Lady's Revenge** (June 9 through 14) and the world premiere (June 11 through 28) of Antenna Theater's **Radio Interference**, (415) 863-1201 . . . June 3 through 28 the Eureka Theatre presents the West Coast premiere of **The Kathy and Mo Show — Parallel Lives**, a two-woman comedy about feminism, sex and other hilarious topics, (415) 558-9898 . . . Athol Fugard's early drama of fear and loathing in South Africa, **Boesman and Lena**, will be revived at the Oakland Ensemble Theatre, May 28 through June 28, (415) 839-5510. ***Orange County***: South Coast Repertory presents **The Real Thing**, Tom Stoppard's romantic comedy in which life both imitates and contradicts art, May 15 through June 21, (714) 957-4033. ***Los Angeles***: Joel Grey stars as the divinely decadent emcee in Kander and Ebb's **Cabaret** at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, beginning June 16, (213) 871-2002 . . . The Pasadena Playhouse presents the world premiere of **Mail**, a new musical about a man whose letters come to life, June 5 through July 5, (818) 356-PLAY . . . **Arsenic and Old Lace**, the old chestnut that put elderberrry wine on the lethal substance list, is revived at the Wilshire Theatre June 2 through 28, (213) 871-2002. ***San Diego***: La Jolla Playhouse's fifth season gets off to a spirited start with the May 26 through June 27 engagement of **The Matchmaker**. Linda Hunt stars as the best-loved yenta in dramatic literature, (619) 534-3960 . . . Charles Dickens' novel about the transformation of the world by the industrial revolution, **Hard Times**, is being staged by the San Diego Repertory, May 22 through July 11, (619) 234-8800 . . . East County Performing Arts Center closes its current Broadway season with Gordon Jump in the fiendishly entertain-

Joel Grey, the "divinely decadent" emcee of Cabaret *at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion.*

Sarah Vaughan lends her talents to the Playboy Jazz Festival, which lights up the Hollywood Bowl on June 13 and 14.

ing musical **Little Shop of Horrors**, June 9 through 15, (619) 440-2277.

Music & Dance

THE GREAT WALL OF SOUND

San Francisco Concert Opera concludes its season with a preview of a new opera that is certain to attract attention when it premieres in a fully staged version next fall in Houston. **Nixon in China** is the brainchild of *wunderkind* stage director Peter Sellars. He sees in Richard Nixon's 1972 trip to Peking an event of great historic moment, played out by colorful public figures whom, he guesses, posterity is likely to view as icons of our era. Since the figures in question are the likes of Nixon, Henry Kissinger and Chairman Mao Tse-Tung, it may be that Sellars has got it right. Poet Alice Goodman provided the libretto and John Adams composed the score for this post-modern response to a major meeting of Eastern and Western minds. May 21 and 22. Herbst Theatre, 401 Van Ness Ave., (415) 392-4400. ***San Francisco.***

THE SIDEMEN OF SUMMER

There will be something to please jazz lovers of all sorts at next month's **Playboy Jazz Festival**. From New Orleans, New York, up and down the West Coast and even from Great Britain will come notable soloists and ensembles to fill Cahuenga Pass with swinging sound. Sarah Vaughan, Jeff Lorber, Lionel Hampton, Ruben Blades and Etta James are among the artists who will appear, providing a survey of jazz from traditional to avant-garde. Bill Cosby hosts the party and is certain to add good humor to the festivities. June 13 and 14. Hollywood Bowl, (213) 450-9040. ***Hollywood.***

BUSY BEETHOVEN

1810 was a very productive year for Ludwig van Beethoven. The great composer completed work on his fifth (and final) piano concerto, — the "Emperor" — wrote

an overture and incidental music for Goethe's tragedy *Egmont*, and made a good deal of progress on his seventh symphony. These major works of that especially fertile year, along with symphonic and chamber pieces dating from all other periods of Beethoven's creative life, will be performed next month by the San Francisco Symphony (and friends) during the orchestra's annual **Beethoven Festival**. Highlights of the eight-performance tribute include Alfred Brendel playing a complete cycle of the piano concertos and the Beaux Arts Trio joining the orchestra in the Triple Concerto. Kurt Masur conducts throughout the festival, which opens with a program comprising the *Egmont* music and the Symphony No. 7, a coupling that shows what a genius can accomplish in a single year if he just puts his mind to it. June 19 through July 2. Davies Symphony Hall, (415) 864-6000. ***San Francisco***.

Beethoven Festival maestro Kurt Masur, at Davies Symphony Hall June 19-July 2.

JUST FOLKS

Every performance given by the **Aman Folk Ensemble** is a veritable festival of international ethnic dance. The acclaimed company has in its repertoire pieces that reflect America's wide-ranging cultural heritage and that remind us of the invigorating ways ordinary people have always moved to music. June 13. Royce Hall, UCLA, (213) 825-9261. ***Los Angeles***.

ADDED MUSIC NOTES

Orange County: The Gene Krupa Orchestra backs up Kay Starr and The Modernaires in a June 19 **Tribute to Glenn Miller** at the Orange County Performing Arts Center, (714) 556-ARTS. ***San Francisco***: The colorful denizens of Catfish Row return to California one more time as **Porgy and Bess** plays the War Memorial Opera House, June 24 through July 5, (415) 431-1210. ***Los Angeles***: The first of what we hope will be an annual series of **Chamber Music Concerts at the John Anson Ford Theatre** takes place June 5, 6 and 7, (213) 464-2826 . . . Best make your plans for the upcoming **Hollywood Bowl** season early to avoid being disappointed by sell-outs. Watch this space for news of the upcoming July to September Festival '87. Phone for information (213) 850-2020.

Art

BAUHAUS REVISITED

The influence of the Bauhaus continues to be felt in fields as seemingly disparate as architecture, weaving, painting and industrial design. Indeed, among the legendary school's greatest achievements was the integration of a wide variety of fine arts disciplines with craft techniques. The Bauhaus's successes in wedding theory to practice and art to craft can be discerned in all their subtlety and sophistication in **Bauhaus Formmeisters**, a show of works on paper by eight important artists who taught in the school's workshops. Prints by Vasily Kandinsky, photographs by Walter Peterhans and


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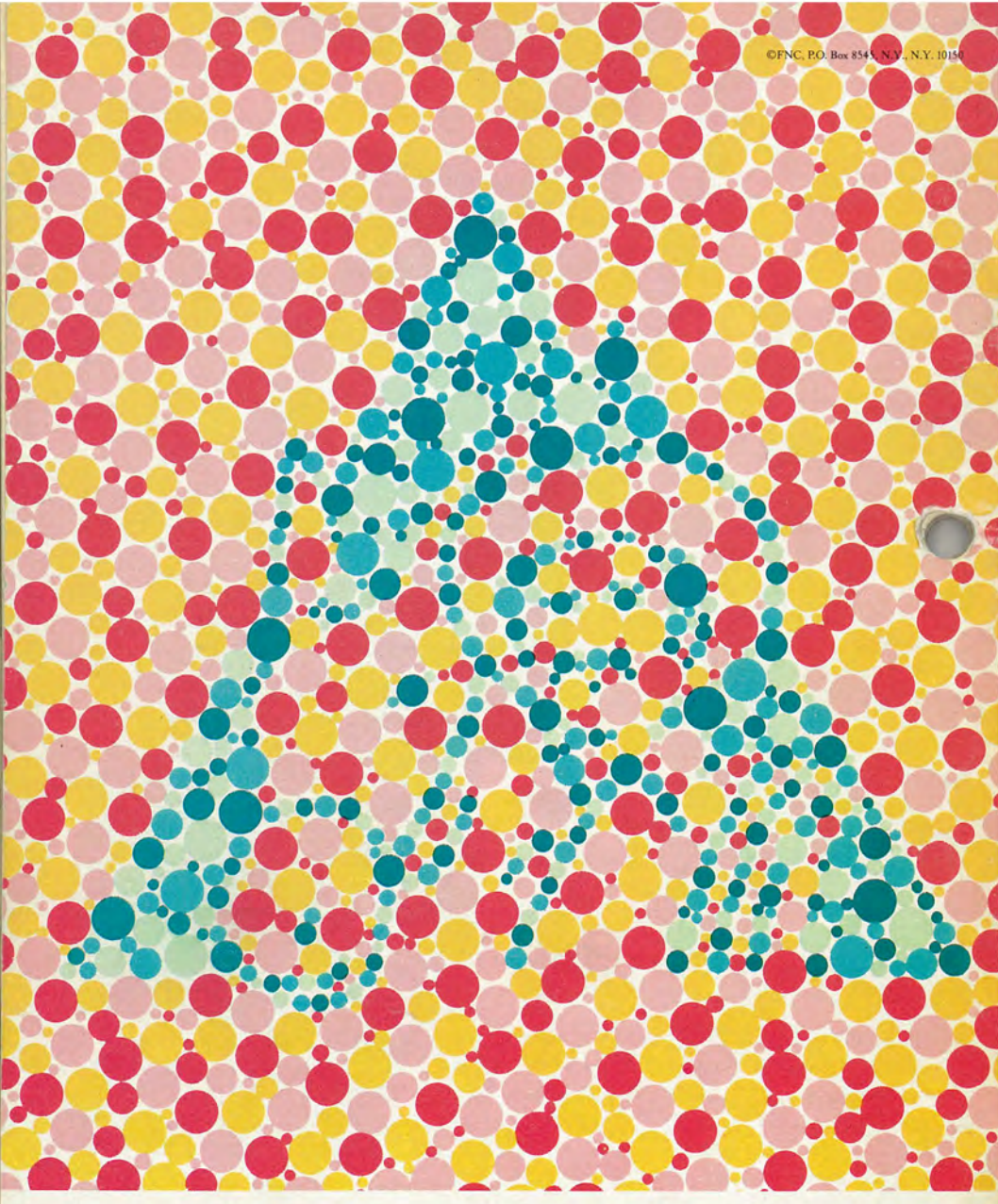
Instructions for use: Stow gear—packs, anything, everything—in cargo area. Place self and a friend in reclining front buckets, seatbacks up. Secure shoulder harness. Fire up 2.6 liter engine. Depress clutch. Put five-speed into position. Take off...off road...any road. Make a mental list: Four-wheel drive, skid plates, 15" radials. Check inclinometer for tilt angle and degree. Check tach. Check your options: Driver's seat with independent suspension. Headlamp washers. Fold-down rear seat. The list of standards and options goes on and on, so you can. Country of origin: Japan. Importer: Dodge. Destination: Anywhere...and beyond.



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