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by Charles Dickens
Directed by David Maier
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At the Orpheum Theater

TAKING STEPS
by Alan Ayckbourn
Directed by
Richard E.T.White
December 3 through
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PERFORMING ARTS
San Francisco edition • December 1991 / Vol. 4, No. 12

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January's Jumping
Events not to miss next month

Glenda Dickerson has long collected images of Aunt Jemima, using the now-scarred figure, she says, "as a means of exploring what frightens us about being black women." When Dickerson and her collaborator Breaa Clarke began to talk about using Jemima as the focus of a new play, the initial reaction from friends and colleagues was "fear and outrage, and 'can't you take that head rag off'? So we knew we were getting somewhere!"'Re:Membering Aunt Jemima (An Act of Magic)," Dickerson and Clarke's audaciously deconstructive minstrel show, will premiere next month at the Lorraine Hansberry Theater.

Speaking from her home in Philadelphia, where she is head of the theater department at Rutgers University, Dickerson explained that she had been looking for a "way to honor the secret voices of our foremothers. Breaa and I have worked together for a long time in theater; our interest is not in kitchen sink drama but in bringing alive the lost voices. We started this project to build an icon in strictly African American images, but we kept borrowing.

"We had the material, the words of black women under siege, from slave narratives and other sources. One of the most heart-rending things is a letter written to the NAACP by the actual woman who last posed as Aunt Jemima, when the NAACP was denouncing the use of the image. But something was missing, something was missing. I realized that Aunt Jemima had to be at the center, and so we moved her back."

Organized as a minstrel show, with its traditional Intro, Oleo, and Walkaround segments, the show has some important differences from the old variety show: "For one thing we're calling it 'The Aunt Jemima Traveling Minstrel Show.'" Dickerson said, spelling it out. "It will involve first the dis-membering of Aunt Jemima; the stories and skits will be clustered around her body sections and all involve actual incidents of violence against women. Then, finally, we will celebrate and rebuild her."

Dickerson has not seen, but knows about, "Ethnic Notions," Jan Faulkner's horrifying and revelatory exhibition of images of black caricatures. Faulkner, an Oakland woman, has collected a huge assortment of objects ranging from cartoons to household implements and washing soda boxes depicting grinning black mammys, Little Black Sambo, the once ubiquitous ersatz hitching posts in the form of little black grooms, and other bits of racist kitsch that not long ago were quite pervasive. Shown in 1982 at the Berkeley Art Center and later the inspiration for a documentary film by Marlon Rigs, Faulkner's collection remains a painful, head-on confrontation with the casual stereotyping and degradation of black men and women.

It is the aim of Dickerson and Clarke to go straight through the masks and make visible the pride and strength, the true joys and real salt tears of Aunt Jemima and all her silenced sisters. Opening January 22 at the Lorraine Hansberry Theater, 500 Sutter Street, (415) 865-4145.

PARADISE FOUND
Although the prophet Mohammed abhorred idolatry and removed all pagan idols and most painted murals from Mecca's ancient Islamic sanctuary, the Kaaba, there is nonetheless a significant tradition of representational painting in Islamic art. While the great accomplishments of Islamic cultures were architectural, there are richly illuminated manuscripts, dating from the thirteenth century and depicting religious themes. And in the hands of Islamic artists, abstract designs became potent symbolic references. The Here and the Hereafter: Images of Paradise in Islamic Art, an exhibition of approximately fifty objects drawn chiefly from American collections...
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by Kate Regan Eaton
comes to the University Art Museum at Berkeley in an installation designed by the architect Charles Moore and inspired by Islamic architecture.

The exhibition, Realistic Alimentations of Life was twofold: an aeronautic idol and the sense that artists should not presume to compete with God, the only true creator of living things. Therefore Islamic artists evolved elaborate abstractions to symbolize Paradise. The exhibition includes richly ornamented objects such as mosque lamps, prayer rugs, tiles, metal and glass vessels, banners and other fabrics which make metaphorical allusion to the concept of Paradise. Many of these abstractions have an extraordinary emotional intensity: while Islam's sacred book, the Koran, was never illustrated, flame-like calligraphic inscriptions reveal the force of the word.

The Islamic afterlife admires many of the pleasures of earthly existence, and Islamic royal palaces and surrounding gardens were frequently planned as representations of Paradise. Thus, in the representational miniatures that do exist, the painted luxuries of curty life were a promise to the faithful of the happiness to come. Walter B. Denny, curator of the exhibition, has organized these images into four sections: Paradise and the Word, Paradise Realised, Paradise Symbolised and Paradise Attained. Each develops the ways in which artists and craftsmen focused on the promise and achievement of a heavenly life, available to any true Muslim who has obeyed the religious codes and duties required on earth. January 22-March 29 at the University Art Museum, University of California at Berkeley. (510) 642-6669.

GREEK TO ME
A different deconstruction is at work in Steven Berkoff's Greek, a reconsideration of Sophocles' Oedipus Rex. Greek is Magic Theatre's January offering and will be co-produced by Industrial Strength Productions, the splendid team that brought us last year's East. Berkoff's savagely beautiful look at life in East London.

Industrial Strength consists of the actors Joel Mullenix, Delia MacDougall (both had major parts in East), and Nancy Shelby, who produced East in its original South of Market performances. A series of stark and physically charged vignettes in which Berkoff's characters plunge into torrents of language combining common clichés, Cockney slang, and Shakespearean cadences. East met with such success that the company is still catching up to it. After moving to the On Broadway Theater in 1989, it went on to the Magic in 1991 and then to a well-received New York production.

The idea of Industrial Strength, Shelby explained in a recent interview with all three members, was to reverse the usual process of dramatic production: "We, the actors, had the play, the cast and the producers and we interviewed the director instead of the other way round." It worked so well for East that the company is in the process of incorporating as a nonprofit theater group. As Delia MacDougall put it, "In the established theaters, there were no opportunities for us; so

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California's Diverse Creative Forces

Eclecticism is king in the various dramatic outpourings from the Golden State

Trying to define California is like trying to catch a tumbling spark in a hot Santa Ana wind. No easy task, chasing something so elusive and mutable.

California's iridescent mix of fact and mythical fancy has always made it a hard place to figure. And the gale-force pace of economic, social, and cultural change now blowing across the Golden State doesn't make the job any easier.

Nor is it a very simple task getting a fix on those writers who dramatize life in this dynamic environment which today attracts so much national and global attention.

Like the state itself, the work produced by California playwrights is dauntingly eclectic in style and content. A random tour might start with the political theatrics of the San Francisco Mime Troupe and perhaps Bay Area neighbor George Cotes's theater-of-images.

Moving along, one finds a writer like Anthony Clarvo exploring life in microchip-rich Silicon Valley. And in the sleepy town of San Juan Bautista there's the reverberating voice of Mime Troupe alumna Luis Valencia and his legendary Teatro Campesino.

Los Angeles is home base for the alienated yearnings of John Stepping and other playwrights shaped by the influential outdoor Padua Hills Playwrights Festival. Amid Los Angeles's sprawl can also be found the controversial Reza Abdoh.

Jeff Rubio writes about theater for the Orange County Register and other publications, including American Theatre.

whose work blends a soaring political sense with frenzied, avant-garde imagery. Meanwhile, south to theatrically rich San Diego and back up again, one finds growing numbers of unique playwrights reflecting the emergence of California's Asian and Hispanic communities: such dramatists as Octavio Solis, Jose Rivera, Maria Sanchez-Scott, and Eduardo Machado.

David Henry Hwang, Valley Has Houston, and Philip Kan Gotanda.

"When it comes to playwriting, everything represented in the United States is represented in California," says Oskar Eustis, a resident director at the Mark Taper Forum who heads the new play development for the theater.

Looking beyond the diversity, however, Eustis and others close to California's new play output see among the state's dramatic features that are distinctly related to the experience of living here. They see writing marked by restlessness, a sense of searching, and of possibilities, often the result of Californians' disengagement from the rigid traditions and standards upheld by more established societies.

Shaped by the lonely enterprise of immigration, and often in pursuit of personal dreams, there is a marked introspection among many of these writers, some observe. But such inwardness, however pervasive, certainly hasn't prevented clear expressions of criticism and concern for a California speeding away from the simpler past of open arms, toward the sprawling complexities of an uncertain future.

If immigration is the source of California's diversity, the experience of transplanting oneself from elsewhere is also one over which much California playwriting unites, says Mark Huffluff, play development associate at San Diego's Old Globe Theatre.

"From William Sanyu to Sam Shepard to Valley Has Houston, California plays largely are migration plays," Huffluff says. "Hand in hand with that, in many cases, is a sense of impermanence. The work of Sam Shepard, who has influenced so many California playwrights, is a good
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by Jeff Rubio
example, where the family may have had the firm for one generation, and what their future holds is uncertain.

"It's very different from plays from older parts of the country, where the families often are much more settled in."

John Gore, literary manager for South Coast Repertory Theatre in Costa Mesa, concurs with Huddabrand.

"The California experience is largely the experience of coming from somewhere else to look for something, and there's a sense of being uprooted that comes from having forsaken traditions in coming here."

"These things inevitably filter into much of the drama here."

Gore cites the theme of displacement in the work of such writers as Philip Kan Gotanda, the Japanese-American author of *You Yoke Daing You Die, The Wash* and other plays examining cultural identity.

"Gotanda writes from the specific reference point of people who come from a very old culture to one that doesn't have much sense of tradition," says Gore. "California can be very exciting, but can also be a very shifting foundation on which to land."

Gore and Jerry Patch oversee South Coast Repertory's California Playwrights Competition, which solicits new plays from state residents and culminates with the annual California Festival — or "Calfest" — of staged readings and full productions of plays by writers living here.

Patch, South Coast Repertory's dramaturg, emphasizes what he sees as a distinctly Californian orientation toward the future, forged by geographic and philosophical breaks with the past. "The absence of a strong sense of tradition causes California writers to look forward."

"The plays tend to be about possibilities. The *Korean Comedies* is not a California play," Patch says of Eugene O'Neill's pessimistic classic, to make his comparison. "*Absurdgeschichten, is close to the mark," he says. Penned by Crime of the Heart author Beth Henley, a longtime California resident, and renowned through "Calfest" three years ago and followed by two mail order brides hopeful for good fortunes out West.

"Beth wasn't exactly cheery in the play," Patch says. "But she believed in the friendship of those women, and there was the feeling at the end that they might come closer to their dream."

"That ray of hope is typically not the kind of sense you see coming out of writers working on the East Coast these days."

"Writers who come out here tend to be a little more — if not optimistic — more upbeat."

Los Angeles-based playwright Jane Anderson, a San Francisco native who spent seven years in New York, agrees. "Many people on the East Coast tend to be more skeptical about life; they've been there for a couple of hundred years, and they've seen it all."

"But it's especially tough trying to survive as a theater artist in a place like New York right now. People come out here for a new start, and they often bring a sense of fresh possibilities."

"That's what Japan-born, Kansas-raised playwright Yelena Isin Houston sought when she ventured West to California."

Houston's Japanese mother and African Native-American father met in Tokyo during World War II. Both, her best-known play, chronicled her mother's experiences starting a new life in a small Kansas army town.

"I came to California because I wanted to escape the closed-mindedness of the Midwest. Politically and artistically, I found the ability to express myself more freely because of the openness of the California environment."

"I like the fact that I can write a play like *The Shaper* which is very lyrical and stylistic, and then turn around and write the quote-unquote 'well-made' play like *Necessities,* (the latter, her latest play, was produced at San Diego's Old Globe last summer)."

"It's exciting that out here we can go from someone like John Stepping, to more lyrical writers like myself, and to someone like Beth Abdallah."

The latter's play, *Ragmumps,* was produced in September at the adventurous Los Angeles Theatre Center which closed in October due to fiscal difficulties. In it, Abdallah employed frank depictions of sexual violence and a dizzying, collage-like style to explore the breakdown of the family, the specter of AIDS and social intolerance.

Indeed, the freedom and openness of the many see as fundamental to California play writing doesn't necessarily translate into severity.

"If you're intense and observant, as a serious writer should be, your optimism is tempered with a very gritty and frank acceptance of the realities of life," Houston says.

"You can't go out and write a play about daisies when you see a man sleeping on the sidewalk with sores on his feet."

Playwright Murray Mednick, founder of Los Angeles' Pasadena Hills Playwrights Festival, puts it another way. "A land of dreams is often a land of fantasies. To deal with a real world is what a real artist is obligated to do on some level."

Californians' inclination to criticize their environment can even employ some of the state's most archetypal institutions, a practice associated with Sam Shepard, with his deconstructions of Old West myths.

More recently, in *Food and Shelter,* seen last year at San Francisco's American Conservatory Theater, playwright Jane Anderson made Disneyland the last resort for a homeless family, who prolong their visit by camping out for the night on Tom Sawyer's Island. Hollywood-born John Stepping took on the golden myth of the California surfer in his drama *The Shaper,* about an eking-of-the-waves going off the deep end.

Marjorie Meyer, a San Pedro native, who recently reversed a trend by defect-
example, where the family may have had the firm for one generation, and what their future holds is uncertain.

"It's very different from plays from older parts of the country, where the families often are much more settled in," John Gore, literary manager for South Coast Repertory Theatre in Costa Mesa, concurs with Hufnagel.

"The California experience is largely the experience of coming from somewhere else to look for something, and there's a sense of being uprooted that comes from having forsaken traditions in coming here.

"These things inevitably filter into much of the drama here.

Gore cites the theme of displacement in the work of such writers as Philip Kan Gotanda, the Japanese-American author of *Yossef Dang You Die, The Wash* and other plays examining cultural identity. "Gotanda writes from the specific reference point of people who come from a very old culture to one that doesn't have much sense of tradition," says Gore.

"California can be very exciting, but can also be a very shifting foundation on which to build."

Gore and Jerry Patch oversee South Coast Repertory's California Playwrights Competition, which solicits new plays from state residents and culminates with the annual California Festival -- or "CalFest" -- of staged readings and full productions of plays by writers living here.

Patch, South Coast Repertory's dramaturg, emphasizes what he sees as a distinctly Californian orientation toward the future, forged by geographic and philosophical breaks with the past. "The absence of a strong sense of tradition causes California writers to look forward."

"The plays tend to be about possibilities. *The Keenan Cometh* is not a California play," Patch says of Eugene O'Neill's pessimistic classic, to make his comparison. "*Abundance, *is closer to the mark," he says. Penney by *Crimes of the Heart* author Beth Henley, a longtime California resident closely linked to her native South, the play emerged through "CalFest" three years ago and followed two mail order brides hopeful for good fortunes out West.

"Beth wasn't exactly chauvinistic in the play," Patch says. "But she believed in the friendship of these women, and there was the feeling at the end that they might come closer to their dream."

"That ray of hope is typically not the kind of sense you see coming out of writers working on the East Coast these days."

"Writers who come out here tend to be a little more -- if not optimistic -- more upbeat.

Los Angeles-based playwright Jane Anderson, a San Francisco native who spent seven years in New York, agrees. "Many people on the East Coast tend to be more skeptical about life; they've been there for a couple of hundred years, and they've seen it all."

"But it's especially tough trying to survive as a theater artist in a place like New York right now. People come out here for a new start, and they often bring a sense of fresh possibilities.""

That's what Japan-born, Kansas-raised playwright Velma Hasa Houston sought when she ventured west to California.

Houston's Japanese mother and African Native-American father met in Tokyo during World War II. But he, her best-known play, chronicled her mother's experiences starting a new life in a small Kansas army town.

"I came to California because I wanted to escape the closed-mindlessness of the Midwest. Politically and artistically, I found the ability to express myself more freely because of the openness of the California environment."

"I like the fact that I can write a play like *The Shaper* which is very lyrical and stylistic, and then turn around and write the quote-unquote 'well-made' play like *Necessities* (the latter, her latest play, was produced at San Diego's Old Globe last summer)."

"It's exciting that out here we can go from someone like John Stepping, to more lyrical writers like myself, and to someone like Jane Abohl."

The latter's play, *Stagestruck*, was produced in September at the adventuresome Los Angeles Theatre Center which closed in October due to fiscal difficulties. In it Abohl employed frank depictions of sexual violence and a dizzying, collage-like style to explore the breakdown of the family, the specter of AIDS and social intolerance.

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ing to New York — targeted the underbelly of Hollywood in such plays as Elia Kazan, her drama about Los Angeles’s porn industry that was produced several years ago at the Los Angeles Theatre Center. Besides an empathy for characters living on Los Angeles’s sludgy fringes, Steppling and Meyer share an association with Pudat.

Founded in 1978 by playwright Murray Mednick (best known for his experimental work, The Coyote Cycle), the annual series of playwriting workshops leading to its outdoor festival has been spiritual home to some of California’s most unique and innovative theatrical voices.

The first gathering numbered Mednick, Sam Shepard, and noted playwright Maria Irene Fornes. Alumni include — besides Steppling and Meyer — David Henry Hwang (who went on to write M. Butterfly), Eduardo Machado (Burning Bush and Stiffen Want to Play the Blues) and John O’Keeffe (Shimmer).

If California really is what Joan Didion described as “a place where a boom mentality and a deep sense of Chloebrian loss meet in uneasy suspension,” Pudat stresses the latter.

“The work here is marked by a search for some sort of spiritual value,” says New York native Mednick, a product of New York’s Off-Off-Broadway of the late 1960s and early 1970s. “Then there’s the flip side, which shows the complete lack of it.”

A West Coast counterpart of East Coast grunge? Osكار Eustis, who spent the mid-1970s working in New York, says no.

“You could say some California writers’ disenchantment with aspects of the California Dream belongs to an older theme of disappointment with the American Dream seen in a play like Death of a Salesman.”

But there is something very distinctive about the tone of Californians’ criticism that has to do with things that are unique to this place: a grappling with an absence of roots or displacement in history. You clearly see that tone in the writers coming out of Pudat.”

Robert Blacher, associate director and dramaturg for San Diego’s La Jolla Playhouse, says California dramatists’ willingness to face hard personal and social issues is a healthy and necessary thing. “California’s playwrights are confronting the fact that the American Dream has been pushed to the West Coast. The frontier that has always been there is gone. Now they’re asking, what’s next?”

“It might not be optimism, but it’s potential for more productive than [conventional irreconcilable failure] California still got some time on its side. It’s a lot easier to be a thirty-year-old asking what’s gone wrong than a sixty-year-old. You can make some adjustments.”

Certainly, not everyone in California is interested in the noble pursuits of artistic excellence, theater professionals readily acknowledge. Plenty of writers here would just as soon conform to the more predictable rhythms and patterns of Hollywood.

Mame Hunt, who has served as literary manager for both the Berkeley Repertory Theatre and the Los Angeles Theatre Center, sees this as the distinct downside of play writing in the state.

“More people out here are apt to write plays that essentially are sitcoms or TV drama than back East,” she says. Joy Carolin, associate artistic director at American Conservatory Theatre who oversees the theater’s Plays In Progress program, says hopefully send plenty of television writing to her desk.

“We get a lot of sitcom plays set in Los Angeles. I also get a lot of plays from actual television writers who want to write for the theater.

“Some of them are great at writing TV screenplays, but they’ll have this script with a serious theme. This is their ‘play.’ It’s different, they believe. But most of the time it isn’t.”

South Coast Repertory’s John Garey says the Orange County theater’s annual call for new plays also results in more than a few submissions of scripts better suited to media other than theater.

“Hollywood inevitably casts its shadow over a fair amount of the writing done in the state, especially in Los Angeles, where people would like to parcel a script into a career in film and television.”

“We’re (South Coast Repertory) far enough from Los Angeles that many writers think of us as a place for theater, but a lot of the plays submitted to us

**This Month in San Francisco**

**San Francisco Will Be the Scene of A Russian Revolution**

_The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco is pleased to present the first major museum exhibit in America devoted exclusively to the Russian avant-garde theatre._

"Theatre in Revolution" brings attention to the experimental and creative achievement of Russian Theatre between the years: 1913-1935, and is on exhibit at the Legion of Honor Nov. 9, 1991-Feb. 6, 1992.
ing to New York — targeted the underbelly of Hollywood in such plays as Elia Kazan's *A Streetcar Named Desire*, her drama about Los Angeles's porn industry that was produced several years ago at the Los Angeles Theatre Center. Besides an empathy for characters living on Los Angeles's skid row fringes, Shopping and Moe share an association with Pudwilla.

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A West Coast forerunner of East Coast grumpiness? Okura East, who spent the mid-1960s working in New York, says no.

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"California's playwrights are confronting the fact that the American Dream has been pushed to the West Coast. The frontier that has always been there is gone. Now they're asking, what's next?"

"It might not be optimism, but it's potentially more productive than [complaining about irrevocable failure]. California's still got some time on its side. It's a lot easier to be a thirty-year-old asking what's gone wrong than a sixty-year-old. You can make some adjustments."

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by lesser writers are very much in the Hollywood vernacular." Hunt believes it's often more than a matter of Californians prospecting for Hollywood riches.

"It's not so much that these people are aspiring for Hollywood. It's what the culture encourages, sort of the shadow part of the zeitgeist."

Eustis, however, suggests that, in a negative way, the presence of Hollywood serves a useful purpose for serious theater artists in the state, by providing a standard of how not to make theater.

"Back East there have been very definite models for making theater. First there was the European — especially the English — model, and then Broadway," says the director, who worked in the New York theater community in the mid-1970s, and run San Francisco's Eureka Theatre before coming to the Mark Taper Forum.

"California theater doesn't have those reference points, but we do have film and television. It's the rock against which we break. We constantly have to ask ourselves: what is it we do that is undiluted in the television and electronic medium."

"What we return to again and again is that theater is a communal event that takes place in real time with other people."

Some see California's willingness to challenge the traditional venue of theater, or to let necessity dictate where a play will be performed as another significant aspect of creating drama in the state.

Besides Padua, they point to the early work of Luis Valdez's Teatro Campesino, which employed the back of a large flatbed truck to stage its "auto's," short plays dramatizing the plight of California's migrant farm workers, who formed both the audience and the actors.

"The folks at Padua don't sit around with an empty Shoshone in front of them," says Eustis. "They take advantage of whatever site they're at. Same with the Teatro. They had a truck, that's what was available."

"When people back East are writing a play they're often thinking about the building they'll put it in," says Eustis. "In California that's much less true, simply because sometimes the buildings just don't exist."

And where the buildings do exist, their often larger, more versatile stages provide greater production possibilities.

"The size of California's regional stages means we're less restricted to few-character, proscenium style plays," says the Old Globe Theatre's Mark Taper Forum. "There's more room for things to happen, for experimentation."

While California's relative "newness" has a deep impact on the drama produced here, a very real past has also provided a source of inspiration.

In Sausalito, for instance, the four-year-old company California On Stage is strictly devoted to developing new plays exploring California's history, and has enlisted such California writers as Anna Deavere Smith, author of the performance pieces On the Road, and Ellen McLaughlin.

Los Angeles on the 1910's was the setting for Luis Valdez's Zoot Suit at the Mark Taper Forum.

in (Infinite's House) Days and Nights Without the task.

Elsewhere, one searching for the existence of a vital, indigenous cultural heritage in California needn't look any further than one of the state's most significant dramatists, Zoot Suit (and the film, La Bamba) author Luis Valdez.

In 1986, Elaine Hunt was literary manager at the Los Angeles Theater Center when Valdez conducted a post-play discussion of his play I Don't Need No Studing Budes.

"When everyone was seated after taking a break Valdez looked out from the stage at all these Anglo people and said in that voice of God he has, 'Welcome To America,'" Hunt recalls.

"Your first reaction was 'what the (explicative) are you talking about?' Then you slowly realized that he'd been studying his history and you hadn't."

"Some of California's most interesting work is about denying that the void (in history and tradition) exists," says Eustis. Zoot Suit (Valdez's play set in Los Angeles in the 1940s) was a prime example of taking a piece of California history that was forgotten and making it both part of our vocabulary and a touchstone of our theatrical history.

"Sometimes the history is there but our consciousness of it isn't."

Meanwhile, observers look ahead to an increasing abundance of dramatic literature in California as the daughters and sons of its latest arrivals examine their own lives in a new land.

"So much rich writing came out of New York in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s because so many second-generation Jewish immigrants were recording their experiences," says Robert Blacker.

"This is just beginning to happen here, and I think it's going to give California play writing a vitality that the whole country hasn't seen in a long time."

California's stages are poised themselves to provide support for these new voices. Such venues as Los Angeles' influential East West Players and the Bilingual Foundation for the Arts, and the Bay Area's Asian-American Theatre have long provided homes for Asian and Hispanic playwrights.

To these can be added regional theater programs, including Teatro Meta at the Old Globe Theatre, Tim Neufeld at San Diego Repertory, and the Hispanic Playwrights Project at South Coast Repertory. Oskar Eustis of the Mark Taper Forum enthusiastically agrees with La Jolla Playhouse's Blacker that the new voices spell much excitement for California theater.

"Immigration has always been this country's biggest resource, culturally and otherwise. The same thing that happened in New York theater earlier is happening here."

"We don't admit it because, goddammit, many of these new immigrants are Latino and Asian. But they're bringing a cultural energy that's astonishingly rich. If California can tap into these resources, we can produce something unique and wonderful here."
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Rick Ebols, A.C.T.'s Wigmaster, has been with the company for twenty-one years. He arrived in San Francisco when a friend who had applied for a scenic design job at A.C.T. was turned down. Hearing that the company was looking for a good Wigmaster and Makeup Artist, he recommended Rick, who was hired on the spot. During his career, Rick has also created makeup and hair styles for many film and television productions, scores of commercials and the national touring companies of such hits as 42nd Street, La Cage Aux Folles and Sweet Charity, as well as more than 200 major A.C.T. productions.

One of the advantages of his job has been the chance to join the company on its tours within the United States and to Russia, Japan and Hawaii. "A.C.T. did annual engagements in Hawaii for ten years," he says, "playing at the University of Hawaii, Leeward College and Fort Ruger. I remember Fort Ruger particularly, because the backstage area was literally a dirt floor."

Actress Marc Singer, whose wig was from the Islands, had family there, and Ebols recalls that Marc made a big hit with her relatives by bringing them a plentiful supply of a certain brand of beer not available in Hawaii. "During that tour, Marc was playing Trofimov in The Cherry Orchard, and the part called for a very heavy wig and costumes. Marc was really sweating it out, and finally one of his buttons jumped up from his seat one night during the show and exploded. We found out later that he was wearing a corset."

"During the company's 1975 tour to Japan," says Ebols, "we met an incredibly friendly audience in the dedication of Japanese theater people to their jobs. One of them was the stage manager on a show we had brought to Tokyo, Ed Hastings' All the Way Home. On opening night, the intermission was ending, and the curtain was just about to go up on Act Two. In spite of the stage manager's protests, we went ahead with the second act, in true American style, not realizing that Japan's Crown Prince, who had graciously attended the première, was still entertaining guests in his private suite off the lobby. The poor stage manager was so upset that we had committed what, in his eyes, was an act of profound disrespect in resuming the show before the Prince was seated, that he faintly - we hoped - threatened stormy skies. He almost had us convinced that this was the only honorable thing for him to do under the circumstances. Eventually, he calmed down, but we couldn't help wondering that our passports would be confiscated and we'd be herded to leave the country in disgrace."

But it was in Moscow. Ebols says, that A.C.T. had its most unexpected confrontation with cultural differences. "It was in 1976, and we were on the official representative of the U.S. State Department's biennial cultural exchange program. It was great playing the legendary Moscow Art Theater. Of course, they have an acting training program, too, and the youthful energy of the students running up and down the stairs from class to class was almost like being back home in the A.C.T. Conservatory."

"It seemed as if everybody in Moscow went to the theater - like there was nothing else to do. We played to packed houses every night, and our interpreters told us that all our performances had been sold out weeks in advance. One thing puzzled us: we saw these huge banners everywhere. Some of them were typical slogans like 'Art Belongs to the People,' but we kept seeing others all over the city that read, '1976, our first! We couldn't figure out what the Russians were celebrating. Were they welcoming us, honoring the American biennial?"

Finally we learned the truth: the famous Bolshoi Opera was celebrating its own 200th birthday, and we couldn't overlook the irony: they were celebrating 200 years of art; we were there to celebrate 200 years of government."

The company's international tours came off - for the most part, anyway - without any major disasters.

On the home-front, however, there have been some major fluxes, on a grand scale, like the one during the run of A Midsummer Night's Dream in 1984 at the Geary. "We had to delay the start of the show by more than thirty minutes," Ebols remembers. "And though most people in the audience never knew what happened, it was a real catastrophe. Just before curtain time, one of our more athletic students was doing stunts in the men's dressing room which was fine, except that he was using a water pipe connected to the sprinkler system. Well, it broke, and water started pouring out ten feet. One of the cast, John Bertzler, backed naked, made a game try to stop the flow with his hand, but it was out of control."

We had to guide the actors across the fly rails way up above the stage, because the dressing rooms were completely flooded. Some had to make their entrances by precariously crossing back along the flies to the other side. And it got worse. The break activated the entire backstage sprinkler system, emptying the reservoir tank on the Geary roof, and pouring water down the backstage walls in sheets until it turned the basement into a rather uninviting swimming pool. We couldn't even open some of the doors, because water would have rushed out and the stage would have been flooded. Eventually, we had the basement drained with pumps, but believe me, the Geary backstage was damp for a long time. It was like trying to do theater in a very dark, dank steam room."
Rick Ebols, A.C.T.’s Wigmaker, has been with the company for twenty-one years. He arrived in San Francisco when a friend who had applied for a scenic designer job at A.C.T. was turned down. Hearing that the company was looking for a good Wigmaker and Make-up Artist, he recommended Rick, who was hired on the spot. During his career, Rick has also created make-up and hair styles for many film and television productions, scores of commercials and the national touring companies of such hits as 42nd Street, La Cage Aux Folles and Sweet Charity, as well as more than 200 major A.C.T. productions.

One of the advantages of his job has been the chance to join the company on its tours within the United States and to Russia, Japan and Hawaii. “A.C.T. did annual engagements in Hawaii for ten years,” he says, “playing at the University of Hawaii, Leeward College and Fort Roger. I remember Fort Roger particularly, because the backstage area was literally a dirt floor.”

Actor Marc Singer, whose wig was from the Islands, had family there, and Ebols recalls that Marc made a big hit with his relatives by bringing them a plentiful supply of a certain brand of beer not available in Hawaii. “During that tour, Marc was playing Trofeo in The Cherry Orchard, and the part called for a very heavy wig and costumes. Marc was really sweating it out, and finally one of his Ills jumped up from his seat one night during the show and shouted to Marc, ‘You really look hot, brother’ and offered him one of the prized imported beers.”

“During the company’s 1975 tour to Japan,” says Ebols, “we got an incred-

ible lesson in the total dedication of Japanese theater people to their jobs. One of them was the stage manager on a show we had brought to Tokyo, Ed Hastings’ All the Way Home. On opening night, the intermission was ending, and the curtain was just about to go up on Act Two. In spite of the stage manager’s protests, we went ahead with the second act, in true American style, not realizing that Japan’s Crown Prince, who had graciously attended the première, was still entertaining guests in his private salon off the lobby. The poor stage manager was so upset that we had committed what, in his eyes, was an act of profound disrespect in resuming the show before the Prince was seated, that he jokingly — we hoped — threatened tears. It’s almost hard to believe, but we couldn’t help wondering if our passports would be confiscated and we’d be herded to leave the country in disgrace.”

But it was in Moscow, Ebols says, that A.C.T. had its most unexpected confrontation with cultural differences. “It was in 1976, and we were the official representa-
tive of the U.S. State Department’s biennial cultural exchange program. It was great playing the legendary Moscow Art Theater. Of course, they have no air conditioning program, too, and the youth and energy of the students running up and down the stairs from class to class was almost like being back home in the A.C.T. Conservatory.

“It seemed as if everybody in Moscow went to the theater — like there was nothing else to do. We played to packed houses every night, and our interpreters told us that all our performances had been sold out weeks in advance. One thing puzzled us: we saw these huge banners everywhere. Some of them were typical slogans like ‘Art Belongs to the People,’ but we kept seeing others all over the city that read ‘You, 1976 — the first time we couldn’t figure out what the Russians were celebrating. Were they welcoming us, honoring the American biennial? Finally we learned the truth: the famous Bolshoi Opera was celebrating its own 200th birthday, and we couldn’t overlook the irony: they were celebrating 200 years of art; we were there to celebrate 200 years of government.”

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American Conservatory Theater

present

TAKING STEPS
(1979)

by Alan Ayckbourn

Directed by Richard E.T. White

Scenery by Joel Fontaine
Costumes by Christine Dougerty
Lighting by Derek Duarte
Sound by Stephen LeGrand
Dialect Coach Lynne Soffer
Fight Choreographer Mark Silence
Assistant Director Susan Yonick
Associate Lighting Designer Jane Hall

The Cast
Elizabeth Lorri Holt
Mark Charles Lauer
Triumvir Howard Swain
Roland Ray Reinhardt
Leslie Harold Surratt (Dec. 3-Jan. 16)
Kitty Nancy Carlin
Mark Silence (Jan. 17-Jan. 55)

The action takes place in The Pines, a large three-story house outside a small English town: the attic, the bedroom, the living room and the linking stairs and passageways.

ACT I Friday night
ACT II Saturday morning

Time — The Present

There will be one intermission

Understudies
Elizabeth — Alicia Sedwick; Mark — Josiah Polhemus; Triumvir — Adam Pauk; Roland — Ed Hodson; Kitty — Julie Olh

Stage Management Staff
Karen Van Zandt and Donna Rose Fletcher

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Arts and Crafts
Richard E.T. White on Comedy in General and Ayckbourn in Particular
with Shoshana Marchard

Richard E.T. White is known for his stagings of epic theater on grand social themes. Alan Ayckbourn is recognized by his witty, brilliantly crafted farces. The two are an exceptional pair, and sometimes it is just such a singular partnership that inspires enlightenment in the work of both the director and the playwright. Why does a director like Richard White consider undertaking British fare?

"Ayckbourn is a precise and thoughtful observer of the illusions and fallacies of middle-aged, middle-class, married life: the three M's. And I, too, find myself middle-aged, middle-class and married," he explains. "So, no, this is not epic theater. Ayckbourn is not Shakespeare, and he's not Brecht, but that isn't what he's set out to do. There's no point in my having an avant-garde contempt for something that's really very good. For all the laughs, it's far from a comfortable perspective. Ayckbourn's view of marriage in the pressure-cooker of bourgeois life is really very, very bleak.

"Also, Ayckbourn writes like a director — which he is — and that gives me true director's opportunities." A writer schooled very much in the British tradition, Ayckbourn's long-time working home has been the Stephen Joseph Theatre in Scarborough, England. "He grew into his work," says White. "He began as an assistant stage manager in weekly repertory theater, really sort of an apprentice. He ran lights, did small walk-on roles... because a journeyman in all aspects of the theater. That comprehensive craftsmanship which utilizes the technical as well as visual and verbal skills is put to use in Bending Sky. The result is a unique stage work that relies as much on an architect's assessment of physical advantages and limitations as it does on the poet's muse.

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The writing of a play for Ayckbourn is...
a different process than that by which most modern playwrights work. Deliberate and practical, Ayckbourn is a speedy writer who usually works on a play for no more than four weeks. He claims that the first three weeks are spent mulling the play over, figuring out in advance, in great detail, exactly who does what—and when and where. The final week is devoted to writing. Such determined planning on his part is often dictated by the settings in which the action of his plays occurs. In Bedroom Farce, for instance, three chambers appear onstage side by side, while the drama unfolds simultaneously among the rooms. In Absurd Person Singular, based on the premise that the most interesting events at parties always take place in the kitchen, the playwright set scenes in a trio of such locations, each adjoining a larger room (offstage) where a party is in progress. Guests wander in and out of the kitchens, each seem onstage, each separate and with his own physical and social rules.

In Tulip Girl Ayckbourn wanted to write a play in which the action takes place in a three-story house, with scenes on each level of the building. Scarborough's Queen Joseph Theatre, however, where the play was developed, in an arena space. Consequently, the traditional set that suggested itself—that of a skeletal framework with three stories exposed to audience view—would work well on a proscenium stage, but not at the Queen Joseph. The audience, seated in the round about much of the stage, would simply not be able to witness the action in its entirety. The physical environment of the theater demanded some scenic monkey-business.
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THE SAFEST SEDAN ON THE ROAD.

The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety completed a 5-year survey of automobile safety. The survey examined failure rates involving 134 different car models from the model years 1984 through 1996. By this standard, the 4-door Saab 900 proved to be the safest sedan of all. And while it is structurally identical to the Saab 900, it now features an anti-lock braking system, a driver-side air bag, and a headlamp washer system as standard equipment. Three more compelling reasons to come in for a test drive.

Once Arkham's decided to set all three stories of the house on the same-level playing space, he was hooked. The challenge of attempting to achieve that physical reality took over to help shape the play. It could say Shining Steps grew out of the unusual circumstance where the staging idea came before the plot and characters had fully arrived. Arkham, the master craftsman, gradually built the set of relationships that comprise the play, and painstakingly introduces the individual rooms one at a time—until the rooms overlap and the stories collide. The impossible space becomes an alternate and believable reality. Parre, that most complex of comedies, requires just such a believable improbability.

"There's only a hair's breadth difference between tragedy and farce," White explains. "What pushes serious events over the edge into farce is the speeding up of reality. In Oedipus Rex, for instance, we learn the terrible facts one by one. The story is gradually and painfully revealed through messengers, oracles, etc. We live the revelation with Oedipus, we feel each small successive shock, right up to the horrific ending. But what if you accelerated that tragedy? What if one after another, in rapid succession—all at the same time—the various carriers of bad news ran in from the wings and started waging their arms about in front of Oedipus, demanding that he listen to them first? There would be no stillness, no order, merely an impossibly grotesque reality. The machine is out of control. That's farce."

Comedy arises from dissolution. Two opposites work against each other to create humor. As White describes, the fog-bound man in a bowler hat walking up the hill slips on a banana peel. We watch the clash of his dignity and his humiliation, and laugh. The incongruity of the moment is the essence of the nervous impulse to laugh. We all fear the loss of control that overcomes the man in the bowler hat, and our nervous impulse overrules. Behind that apparent loss of control there must be a perfectionist's touch. The characters in Shining Steps mistake each other's motives and actions again and again, so that the emotional goings-on of the play neatly mirror the near collisions of characters on the set. The actors dodge about the stage, and up and down the "stairs," rendering the plot more convoluted, and their actions more ridiculous, with each scene. Characters talk about each other behind one another's backs—literally, physically on stage. It is such Arkham's inspiration that gives the play much of its juice. "The physical reality of it all is far funnier than a mere pantomime," says the director.

Richard White acknowledges Arkham's social agenda where the playwright lampoons the way men view women in relationships. And both men, in this play, appear equally materialistic. "These people believe with all their hearts that they can buy happiness, that a change in environment will mean a change in spirit," he notes. "We all fall prey to that notion. That's part of what draws me to this piece."

"It's great fun to work on a play whose serious content is conveyed in such a light-hearted, farcical manner. In that respect, Shining Steps fits right in with much of the work I do." This production is the fruitful pairing of meticulous craft and boisterous art. "I like a play that allows the audience to participate fully at the end," White adds. "There's a touch of ambiguity in the closing moments of Shining Steps. I hope that will keep people thinking, get them talking as they leave their seats. The ending raises questions. That's good theater."
Once Arkwright decided to set all three stories of the house on the same-level playing space, he was hooked. The challenge of attempting to achieve that physical reality took over to help shape the play. One could say 'Riding Shy' grew out of the unusual circumstances where the staging idea came before the plot and characters had fully arrived. Arkwright, the master craftsman, gradually built the set of relationships that comprise the play, and painstakingly introduces the individual rooms one at a time—until the rooms overlap and the stories collide. The impossible space becomes an alternate and believable reality. Parke, that most complex of comedies, requires just such a believable improbability. 'There's just a hair's breadth difference between reality and the farce.' White explains. "What pushes serious events over the edge into farce is the speeding up of reality. In Oedipus Rex, for instance, we learn the terrible facts one by one. The story is gradually and painfully revealed through messengers, oracles, etc. We live the revelation with Oedipus, we feel each small successive shock, right up to the horrific ending. But what if you accelerated that tragedy? What if one after another, in rapid succession — even all at the same time — the various carriers of bad news ran in from the wings and started waging their arms about in front of Oedipus, each demanding that he listen to them first? There would be no stillness, no order, merely an impossibly grotesque reality. The machine is out of control. That's farce.'

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The British and Their Spooks

In Blundings, the mansion which was once an exclusive Victorian bordello is repeatedly haunted by the ghost of "Scarlet Lucy," a former resident and businesswoman. According to legend, Lucy provoked an argument with a gentleman client, who ended the discussion by stomping through with his boot, causing Lucy’s death, a sound, and the closing of the brothel. A century later, as Aykroyd's play takes place, the ghost of murdered Lucy is prowling the premises, taking her revenge by climbing into bed with men who are then found dead in the morning. The innocent and superstitious Tristan Watson, attempting to explain her apparent presence in his bed, claims with assured conviction: "I think it's to do with the paranormal laws of the supernatural!"

The supernatural, and the excarnation of it, is a study for which the British have the definitive penchant. The national interest was especially keen during the late nineteenth century when the countrymen popularized the ghost story, reflecting their fascination with otherworldly pursuits.

Spiritualism, the phenomenon of getting in touch with the dead through a medium, was highly in vogue, and seances complete with rappings, table-tapping and levitations were attended by such believers as Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Arthur Conan Doyle, Edward Bulwer-Lytton, and, at least on one occasion, Queen Victoria.

The spiritualist movement attracted, among others, Lewis Carroll, William Butler Yeats, and journalist W.T. Stead, editor of the Pall Mall Gazette who also published the journal of the supernatural, London. Appearing monthly from 1893-97, the first issue of London certainly stated Stead’s purpose: “To democratize the study of the spook.” The British citizens certainly believed every man and woman were entitled to a good scare.

So seriously did the Victorians take their phantoms that the Society for Psychical Research was founded in 1882 to conduct scientific inquiries into occult phenomena, especially the potential for life after death. Composed of both adherents and skeptics, members of this group included Cambridge philosopher Henry Sidgwick, who served as the first president, politician A.J. Balfour, and biologist and naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace (a co-originator with Charles Darwin on the theory of evolution). Also on the roster of members were such eminent physicists as William Crookes, Lord Rayleigh, Oliver Lodge, and J.J. Thompson, as well as psychologists William McDougall, William James and Henri Bergson. Even Sigmund Freud was a corresponding member of the Society for Psychical Research.

Woodcut by Stephen Alten for the First Modern Library Edition of "Proclamations, or the Modern Prometheus" (1818) by Mary Shelley.

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The abundant fascination in the supernatural on the British Isles was most apparent in the fiction produced in the second half of the nineteenth century. Novels, novellas, and short stories rich in the eerie and uncanny were heir to the Gothic novels of the early 1800s — works such as the familiar Frankenstein by Mary Shelley, and Charles Maturin’s now not-so-recognizable Melmoth the Wanderer. Many popular writers of the day experimented with tales from the crypt — Oscar Wilde (The Picture of Dorian Gray), Max Beethoven (Basilica Dobron), and George Eliot (The Lifted Veil), to name a few; even the Bronte Sisters’ Jane Eyre and Wuthering Heights, as well as Charles Dickens’ A Christmas Carol, can be placed in that class.

The most successful ghost story writers of the era, however, were those who made the genre their specialty: Sheridan LeFanu (Green Tea, Uncle Silas, In A Glass Darkly), Wilkie Collins (The Woman in White), Bram Stoker (Dracula), Charlotte Riddell (The Open Door, Old Shug Flowers), and Catherine Crowe, whose The Night Side of Nature and Family Legends was compiled of purportedly factual accounts of clairvoyance, witchcraft, doppelgangers and ghosts. Vanessa D. Decker, in her article “Supernatural Fiction” in An Encyclopaedia of Victorian Britain credits Crowe’s accounts as “some of the best in the British storehouse of ghost stories.”

Like the spiritualist movement, supernatural fiction “co-existed with and countered the period’s empiricism, skepticism and scientism,” according to Dickens. She concludes: “Supernaturalism served a purpose during the Victorian age. Spiritual fiction not only entertained, it also reaffirmed. Tensions brought about by change could be examined or neutralized, and a sense of the being and vitality of things spiritual could be discovered at a time when materialism, scientism, and deism threatened to smite out the numinous.”

The popularity of the supernatural and the spiritualist movement in late nineteenth-century Britain can be largely attributed to the decline of formal faith; as the power of the church ended with the onslaught of the Industrial Revolution, people sought to maintain some link with what became of the soul in the afterlife. Even ardent churchgoers, perhaps hinging their bets, participated in extra-curricular spiritual activities like seances.

Whatever the attraction of the supernatural to the Brits, their enthusiasm produced the famous ghost stories of the nineteenth century — the legacy of which continues to be built upon in modern literature. . . . and on our stage as well.

— Laura Davis

Many thanks to Dr. Joseph Alkhula, Victorian History, University of Minnesota, for contributing.
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Mary Shelley, miniature by Reginald Stinton.

Wilde Collins. Photo a portrait painted in 1870 by Collins’s friend J.E. Millais, who was with him when he met the original of The Woman in White.
American Conservatory Theater

WHO'S WHO

NANCY CARLIN was most recently seen in A.C.T.'s Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, alternating in the role of Maggie the Cat. Among the other roles she has played include the sharp-tongued Ma in Side Show, and in the Royal Shakespeare Company's production of The Tempest. She is also a member of the Bay Area Theatre Company, and appeared in A.C.T.'s production of A Midsummer Night's Dream.

Ed Bobson has appeared in A.C.T.'s production of A Midsummer Night's Dream, as well as in A.C.T.'s production of Much Ado About Nothing. He also appeared in A.C.T.'s production of Death of a Salesman, and in the Bay Area Theatre Company's production of A Midsummer Night's Dream.

CHARLES LAVIEN returns to A.C.T., where he has previously appeared in several productions. He is a member of the Bay Area Theatre Company, and has appeared in A.C.T.'s production of A Midsummer Night's Dream.

JULIE ODA joins the A.C.T. company this season as a Professional Theater Intern. She attended the University of California at San Diego, and has performed in several productions at A.C.T., including A Midsummer Night's Dream and The Tempest.

LORE HOLT, who makes her A.C.T. debut in A Midsummer Night's Dream, has appeared in several productions at A.C.T., including A Midsummer Night's Dream and The Tempest.

ED BOBSON has appeared in A.C.T.'s production of Much Ado About Nothing. He also appeared in A.C.T.'s production of Death of a Salesman, and in the Bay Area Theatre Company's production of A Midsummer Night's Dream.

ADAM PAUL is a Professional Theater Intern and the recipient of the Mrs. Paul L. Watts Fellowship. He attended the University of California at San Diego, and has performed in several productions at A.C.T., including A Midsummer Night's Dream and The Tempest.

SUSAN PILAR is an A.C.T. Professional Theater Intern and a recent graduate of A.C.T.'s Advanced Training Program. She attended the University of California at San Diego, and has performed in several productions at A.C.T., including A Midsummer Night's Dream and The Tempest.

RAY ROBSON has appeared in A.C.T.'s production of Much Ado About Nothing. He also appeared in A.C.T.'s production of Death of a Salesman, and in the Bay Area Theatre Company's production of A Midsummer Night's Dream.
American Conservatory Theater

WHO'S WHO

CHARLES LANEY returns to A.C.T., where he has previously appeared as Scrooge in Scrooge in Broadway, Johann in Pillars of the Community, and Bill in The Hot L Baltimore. He was most recently seen at the Berkeley Repertory Theatre as N. D. in Notre Dame de Paris. He has appeared at A.C.T. in previous seasons, most recently last season at Berkeley Rep. as George in Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?, the Devil/Matador in More and Super- man, and Judge Brack in Hedda Gabler. At the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles, he portrayed Dr. Douglas in Miss Elvira's Boy, and John in Wild Rice's The Boy. He will be seen in A.C.T.'s forthcoming production of A Midsummer Night's Dream.

LOUIE HOLY, who makes her A.C.T. debut in Danse Macabre, has appeared in numerous Bay Area productions. She has been seen in The Tempest, The Taming of the Shrew, The Merchant of Venice, and Much Ado About Nothing. She is currently appearing in The Taming of the Shrew at the Berkeley Repertory Theatre. She has also appeared in numerous Bay Area productions. Additional Bay Area acting credits include the productions of Berkeley Repertory Theatre, San Francisco Playhouse, and the San Francisco Opera Company. She received her B.F.A. from the University of California, Berkeley, and her M.F.A. from the University of California, Los Angeles.

MERYL STREEP in Alice in Concert at the New York Shakespeare Festival. She has performed other leading roles for national companies including the San Diego Shakespeare Festival, Seattle Rep, Pacifica Center for the Performing Arts, and the Denver Center Theatre. Among her television and film credits are "The Robert Kennedy Story," "St. Elsewhere," "Hill Street Blues," "Murdoch," "Moonlighting," and "The Stepfather." She is also a member of the Bay Area Theatre, Bay Area Sports, and studied in A.C.T.'s Advanced Training Program.

JOSIAH POLHEMUS joins the A.T. company as a member of the Professional Theater Intern Program. Currently an M.F.A. candidate in A.C.T.'s Advanced Training Program, he received his Bachelo- r of Fine Arts degree in Theater from the University of California, Santa Cruz. During his time at A.C.T., he has appeared in a number of productions, including "The Importance of Being Earnest," "A Midsummer Night's Dream," and "The Merry Wives of Windsor." He is currently working on his M.F.A. degree in Theater at the University of California, Santa Cruz.

LORI ROBBINS has appeared with A.C.T., Berkeley Rep, San Francisco Playhouse, and the San Francisco Opera Company. She received her B.F.A. from the University of California, Berkeley, and her M.F.A. from the University of California, Los Angeles. She is currently appearing in a number of productions, including "The Importance of Being Earnest," "A Midsummer Night's Dream," and "The Merry Wives of Windsor." She is currently working on her M.F.A. degree in Theater at the University of California, Santa Cruz.

KAY REINHARDT returns to A.C.T. after a successful career in television, film, and theatre. She received her B.F.A. from the University of California, Berkeley, and her M.F.A. from the University of California, Los Angeles. She is currently appearing in a number of productions, including "The Importance of Being Earnest," "A Midsummer Night's Dream," and "The Merry Wives of Windsor." She is currently working on her M.F.A. degree in Theater at the University of California, Santa Cruz.

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American Conservatory Theater

Boof! She has also worked at the Marines Memorial Theatre as production stage manager for The Boys in the Afternoon (with Kirk Douglas and Burt Lancaster) and The Girls by Cheryl Churchill.

BRUCE ELSFINGER (Stage Manager), who is now in his fifth season with A.C.T., was in Seattle for the previous three years as Production Stage Manager at the Inti- man Theatre and Production Manager with the Bathhouse Theatre. He directed the Intiman’s award-winning production of A Streetcar Named Desire, and produced and directed various shows independently, including A Breeze from the Gulf, Big Lady, and a touring production of his musical revue, A Tribute to American Musical Theater. Before moving to Seattle he had served as Production Stage Manager with P.G.A. Theatrefest in Solvang and Santa Maria. Mr. Elsfinger, who studied in London and graduated from Drake University, was also an art therapist in the school systems in Iowa and Montana.

ALICE ELLIOT SMITH (Stage Manager) is in her thirteenth season at A.C.T., where she has been the company’s master scheduler, production coordinator of Plays in Progress, director of staged readings, associate director of the Troubadour program, director of the studio production, A Wilderdiet, and co-director of Morning’s at Seven, Picasso, and the Plays in Progress production Rio Seco. In recent seasons the stage-managed Private Lives, The Lady’s Not for Burning, The Floating Light Bulb, Fountas in Hell, A Lie of the Mind, Dixie Dead Lilies, Golden Boy, Feathers, Woman in Mind, Joe Turner’s Come and Gone, A Tale of Two Cities, Judasism, Hippogriff, Burn This, Food and Shelter, Dark Sun, and Cat on a Hot Tin Roof.

DONNA ROSE FLETCHER (Assistant Stage Manager) comes to her first A.C.T. project having just completed the California Shakespeare Festival’s inaugural season. Previous work for the Festival includes Julius Caesar in 1988 and Twelfth Night in 1990. For the Berkeley Repertory she has stage managed several plays, including Lulu and The Winter’s Tale. She has an ongoing association with the hit musical Little Shop of Horrors, having stage managed most of the 5 year off-Broadway run, co-directed the Paris company La Falte Bojoule des Horrours, and toured Broadway and Switzerland with Der Kleine Horror-Laden. Ms. Fletcher will open a new company that show this February in Stockholm.

AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATRE DIRECTORS, DESIGNERS, AND STAFF

EDWARD HASTINGS (Artistic Director) is a founding member of A.C.T. having joined the company during its formation in Pittsburgh in 1965 and served as Executive Director under General Director William Ball. He was appointed Artistic Director by the Board of Trustees when Mr. Ball resigned his position in February, 1966. During A.C.T.’s twenty-five years in San Francisco, Mr. Hastings has directed thirty repertory productions, including Our Town, A Delicate Balance, The Time of Your Life, The House of Blue Leaves, Broadway, Street Scene, All the Way Home, Ithaca, July, The Girl of the Golden West, The Royal Tenenbaums and King Lear. This year, he directs a Silver Anniversary Seven revival of his first San Francisco A.C.T. production, Chekhov’s Aunt. Mr. Hastings’ commitment to new writing and playwrights is evident in the many world premieres he has directed at A.C.T., including Lataite Lucie Rom’s Dark Sun, David Rudal’s Judgment, Michael McClure’s General Connor, William Hamilton’s Hapless Landings and Martha Norman’s The Holdup. He served as resident director at the Eugene O’Neill Playwrights’ Conference for three summers and taught acting in 1984 at the Shanghai Drama Institute as part of the Theater Bridge Program between A.C.T. and the Shanghai Theater. He has been involved in the development of, cultural exchange and is a member of the Arts International Committee of the Institute of International Education. In 1978, his production of All the Way Home was presented in Tokyo. He directed a national company of the London and Broadway musical hit Oliver!, staged the American production of Shakespeare’s People starring Michael Bedoya, directed the Australian premieres of the Hot L Baltimore, and restaged his A.C.T. production of Sam Shepard’s Buried Child in Sarajevo at the Yugoslav Dramatic Theatre in Belgrade. Other productions have been presented on A.C.T. tours in the United States, including Hawaii, and he has been a guest director at major resident theaters throughout the country. A graduate of Yale College and the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, Mr. Hastings is also a teacher in the A.C.T. Conservatory.

JOHN SULLIVAN (Managing Director) joined A.C.T. as its chief administrative officer in 1980. A native San Franciscan, Mr. Sullivan has been active in the theater since the mid-1970s, when he directed Harvey Porter’s Afternoon Tea for the Circle Repertory Company in New York. In 1977 he joined the staff of the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles as a resident director and producer. As head of the Taper’s Forum Laboratory he produced numerous new plays by such writers as David Mamet, Susan Vanhouten, and A.R. Gurney. More recently he produced The Detective, a collaboration between Joseph Chaikin and Vaucluse Nouveau at San Francisco’s Magic Theater. A former deputy director of the California Arts Council, Mr. Sullivan has served on the boards of Theatre Bay Area and the San Francisco New Victorian Festival. After completing his graduate work at the University of Southern California’s School of Cinema, Mr. Sullivan wrote and directed numerous short films for the educational and entertainment markets, including three which were featured on national television.

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Emmy Award broadcasts. For five years he was a consultant to the Rand Corpora-
tion, focusing on the work on the process and societal impact of popular culture. As a communications consultant Mr. Sullivan has advised such diverse clients as the California Roundtable, Kansas City Power and Light, and Major League Baseball. Among his writings is The National Outdoor Leadership School's Wilderness Guide, a manual for camping and mountaineering published by Simon and Schuster, and numerous articles for magazines and newspapers.

BENNY SATO AMBUSH (Associate Artis-
tic Director) is a veteran theater profes-
sional with national and international experience as a director, educator, pro-
ducer, and arts administrator. Before join-
ing A.C.T. last season, he was the Artistic/Producing Director of the Oakland Ensemble Theatre (OET) for eight years, where his directing credits included Division Street: A Night at the Apollo, O, Henry's Christmas, Tower of Babel, and Almeidas. Last season he directed Pippin Ephemeral in A.C.T.'s Plays in Pro-
gress series, which has helped nurture the creation of a Bay Area Native American Theater Company—Turtle Island Ensem-
ble. He also directed Leopards From a New England Night for the 1991 National Black Theater Festival in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. During the 1990-91 sea-
sion, he will direct Finns for the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Portland, and Miss Amer-
ica Days for the Alabama Shakespeare Festival. In addition, he has served as a National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Management Fellow in its Special Projects Program; as an Assistant Director-
in-Residence at Washington, D.C.'s Arena "Sting; as an NEA Directing Fellow at the Pittsburgh, Public Theater, and as a United States Information Agency a-
sorptive lecture at Kenyatta University, Nairobi, Kenya. He has served on the Board of Theatre Bay Area and chaired its Theatre Services Committee, is a mem-
ber of the Multi-Cultural Advisory Coun-
cil for the California Arts Council, and has been actively involved, regionally, and na-tionally in advocacy for cultural equity, non-traditional casting, and pluralism in American art. Mr. Ambush received his B.A. in theater arts and dramatic litera-
ture from Brown University, and his M.F.A. in stage directing from the Univer-
sity of California, San Diego.

JOY CARLSON is an Associate Artistic Director at A.C.T., and has been a mem-
ber of the acting company for many years. Among the roles she has played are 
Big Mama in Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, Miss Priss in A Tale of Two Cities, Annie Parker in When We Are Married, Meg in A Sea of the Mind, Enid in The Floating Light Bulb, Miss Priss in The Representative of Doing Earnest, Kitty Dini in The Time of Your Life, Bura in The House of Blue Leaves, Aam in Peer Gynt, Aunt Sally in All the Way Home, Stella in The Glass Men-
agerie, and Odessa in The Public Theater. She has been Resident Director of the Berkeley Repertory Theatre, and served as its Act-
ing Artistic Director. Among her direct-
ing credits are The House of Bernarda Aile, The Lady's Not for Burning, The 
Doctor's Dilemma, Mama Milan, Gogol's 
Bog, Hippolyta, and last season's world 
premiere production of Food and Shelter 
at A.C.T., as well as productions at the 
Oregon Shakespeare Festival, the San Jose Repertory Company, A Contemporary Theatre of Seattle, and the Shanghai Youth Drama Troupe of China, where she 
directed You Can't Take It With You.

DENNIS POWERS (Associate Artistic Director) joined A.C.T. in 1967, during the 
company's first San Francisco season after six years as an arts writer at the 
Oakland Tribune. Before being named to his present position in 1986 by Edward 
Hastings, he worked with William Bell as 
successively, Press Representative, Staff 
Writer, Dramaturg, and Artists and Repertoire Director. The A.C.T. produ-
cations on which he has collaborated as 
dramaturge or adapter include Oedipus Rex, Cymbeline de Bergman, The 
Cherry Orchard, The Disgraced Duchess, A 
Road Less Traveled, The Winnetka's Rail, 
Saint Joan and Diamond Lil. The most popular of his adaptations, the thirteen-year-old A Christmas Carol, was written by Laird 
Williamson (who was also his collabora-
tor on Christmas Miracles), which pre-
miered at Denver Center Theater Company in 1985 and was later published. 
Among the other theaters with which he has been associated are Long Wharf Thea-
ater in New Haven, Stanford Repertory Theatre, Pacific Conservatory for the Per-
forming Arts and San Francisco's Valencia Rose Cabaret Theater. Mr. Powers' reviews and articles have appeared in the New 
York Times, Chicago Sun-Times, Sacramento 
Review, Los Angeles Times, American 
Arts, Art News, Performing Arts and the San Francisco Chronicle.

SUSAN STAHLER (Consultant Director) came to A.C.T. four years ago as Director of the Song Conservatory. She is a play-
wright (Her MissMatched Sings was 
produced at Little Victory Theatre in Los 
Angeles, director) (more than 40 produc-
tions), actress (Cabaret Repertory The-
tre), and educator. She earned her M.A. 
from California State University Fullerton, 
taught in southern California for 14 years 
(earning a citation for outstanding teach-
ing in 1986-87), and served as founding 
Chairman of the Theatre Department of 
the Los Angeles County High School for 
The Arts. As the Conservatory she has 
created and directed Find Me a House, The 
Unlikely House of All/Middle Ages Con-
cert, 1985, and 20 Things & 20 Songs, 
directed The Story of Anne Frank, and 
Angela Bili and co-directed Who Are 
Those People? She serves on the Super-
intendent's Task Force for the San Fran-
sisco School of The Arts, on the Board of Directors of Bay Area Theatre Sports, and is a member of the Ministry Board of the Mission 
Community College, where she was a 
Kick-Off. Ms. Stahl is a registered dance 
consultant at Disneyland, and toured to 
Alaska, as Playwright-in-residence with the Oregon Shakespeare Festival's Educa-
tional Outreach Program.

BICK ECHOLS (Wigmaker) has designed hair and makeup for over 200 productions at A.C.T. since 1971, including Cat on a 
Hot Tin Roof, The Marriage of Pipette, Don't Sleep, Hollow, A Tale of Two Cities and the company's touring productions to Connecticut, Hawaii, Russia, and Japan. He also created wigs and makeup for A.C.T.'s television productions of Cymbeline de Bergman, The Hiding of the Shining, and A Christmas Carol. Among his other television and film credits are A Place in 
the Sun, Birdy, Over Easy with Hugh 
Downs, A Life in the Theatre with Peter 
Fontes and Ellis Rabb, “The Kathryn Crosby Show,” and over 100 commercials.

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Emmy Award broadcasts. In his free time he was a consultant to the Rand Corporation, focusing on the work in the process and societal impact of popular culture. As a communications consultant Mr. Sullivan has advised such diverse clients as the California Roundtable, Kansas City Power and Light, and Major League Baseball. Among his writings is The National Outdoor Leadership School's Wild Ozark Guide, a manual for camping and mountaineering published by Simon and Schuster, and numerous articles for magazines and newspapers.

BENNY SATO AMUSHI (Associate Artistic Director) is a veteran theater professional with national and international experience as a director, educator, producer, and arts administrator. Before joining A.C.T. last season, he was the Artistic/Producing Director of the Oakland Ensemble Theatre (OET) for eight years, where his directing credits included Miss Bennet, A Night at the Apollo, O Henry's Christmas, Towner of Bermuda, and The Albatross. Last season he directed The Great Gatsby in A.C.T.'s Plays in Progress series, which has helped launch the careers of Bay Area Native American Theater Company—Turtle Island Ensemble. He also directed Letters from a New England Doctor for the 1991 National Black Theater Festival in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. During the 1990s, as an Artistic Director, he will direct Forcex for the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Portland, and Miss America for the Ahmanson Festival. In addition, he has served as a National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Management Fellow in its Special Projects Program; as an Assistant Director in Residence at Washington, D.C.'s Arena Stage; as a United States Information Agency, Woods Hole class member in South Africa; and as a member of the Multi-Cultural Advisory Council for the California Arts Council, and has been actively involved in regional and national advocacy for cultural equity, non-traditional casting, and pluralism in American art. Mr. Amushi received his B.A. in theater arts and dramatic literature from Brown University, and his M.F.A. in stage directing from the University of California, San Diego.

JOY CARLIN is an Associate Artistic Director at A.C.T., and has been a member of the acting company for many years. Among the roles she has played are an Old Woman in A Tale of Two Cities, Annie Parker in When We Were Married, Mag in A Taste of the Mind, Enda in The Floating Light Bulb, Miss Primm in The Repertoire of being Earnest, Kitty Dini in The Time of Your Life, by Tennessee Williams, and as a Bride who is an Empty, in A Taste of the Mind by Tennessee Williams. She has been Resident Director of the Berkeley Repertory Theatre, and served as its Acting Artistic Director. Among her directing credits are The House of Bernarda Alba, The Lady's Not for Burning, The Pickwick Papers, and a production of The Importance of Being Earnest, at the Los Angeles Theater Center. She has also directed productions of the Tennessee Williams's A Streetcar Named Desire and The Glass Menagerie at A.C.T., as well as productions at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, the San Jose Repertory Company, A Contemporary Theatre of Seattle, and the Shanghai Youth Drama Troupe of China, where she directed You Can't Take It with You.

DENNIS POWERS (Associate Artistic Director) joined A.C.T. in 1967, during the company's first San Francisco season. After six years as an arts writer at the Oakland Tribune, before being named to his present position in 1988 by Edward Hastings, he worked with William Bell as successively, Press Representative, Staff Writer, Dramaturge, and Artistic and Repertory Director. The A.C.T. production, on which he has collaborated as dramaturge or adapter include Oedipus Rex, Cymbeline, The Cherry Orchard, The Diary of Anne Frank, and Richard III. His own works, The Wineyard's Tale, Saint Joan and The Salmon. The most popular of his adaptations, the thirteen-year-old A Christmas Carol, was written with Laird Williamson (who was also his collaborator on Christmas Miracles), which premiered at Denver Center Theater Company in 1985 and was later published.

Among the other theaters with which he has been associated are Long Wharf Theatre in New Haven, Stanford Repertory Theatre, and the San Francisco's Valencia Rose Cabaret Theatre. Mr. Powers' reviews and articles have appeared in the New York Times, Chicago Sun-Times, Saturday Review, Los Angeles Times, American Arts, Arts Journal, Performing Arts and the San Francisco Chronicle.

SUSAN STAUTER (Consultant Director) came to A.C.T. four years ago as Director of the Young Company. She is a playwright (her Miss Shirley Singh was produced at Little Victory Theatre in Los Angeles), director (more than 40 productions), actress (Cabaret Repertory Theatre), and educator. She earned her B.A. from California State University, Fullerton, taught in southern California for 14 years (including a one-year appointment as Director of California's Dramatic Arts), and served as founding Chairman of the Theatre Department of the Los Angeles County High School for the Arts. As a Conservatory she has created and directed Piloy a Bone, The Wildness of All (Teenage Voice Conference A.E.U.S.), 2 In 20 Things 4 On, directed The Diary of Anne Frank, and Angela Hill and co-directed Who Are They People? She serves on the Superintendent's Task Force for the San Francisco School of the Arts, on the Board of Directors of the Bay Area Theater Sports, and is a member of the Mystery Board for the A.C.T. Theater. She is also an artist, and a writer, and a director.

VICKI ECHOLS (Wigmaker) has designed hair and makeup for over 200 productions at A.C.T. since 1971, including Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, The Marriage of Figaro, Drunk Sex, Homeless, A Tale of Two Cities and the company's touring productions to Connecticut, Hawaii, Russia, and Japan. She also created wigs and makeup for A.C.T.'s television productions of Cymbeline, The Tempest of the Shire, and A Christmas Carol. Upon his television and film credits are A Place to Call Home, A Christmas Carol, and The Shining. He is a member of the American Guild of Musical Artists, and the Screen Actors Guild. He is a member of the American Guild of Musical Artists, and the Screen Actors Guild.
Mr. Erbols designed hair and makeup for the original production of Cinderella for the San Francisco Ballet and Hamlet with Anne Baxter and Christopher Walken for the American Shakespeare Festival, and A Life with Roy Dotrice for the Citadel Theatre in Edmonton, Canada. He worked on the national tour of A Night at the Opera and the national tour of A Night at the Opera and La Cage Aux Folles.

JAMES HAIRE (Production Director) began his career on Broadway with Eva Le Gallienne's National Repertory Theater. Among the productions he stage managed were The Medicine Man of Oklahoma with Minnie Pearl, Sylvia Syms, and Lorne Danz, The Shak; John Brown's Body; She Stoops to Conquer; and The Comedy of Errors. Mr. Haier also stage managed the Broadway productions of Georgie (a musical by Carole Bayer Sager), And Miss Reardon Drinks a Little; and the national tour of Woody Allen's Don't Drink the Water. Mr. Haier joined A.C.T. in 1971 as Production Stage Manager and in this capacity has managed more than a hundred productions; he has also taken the company on numerous regional, national, and international tours, including those to the Soviet Union in 1976 and Japan in 1979.

Thanks to Barb Wilde, Chris & Vio Patti, and Chris Sumpson

A.C.T. operates under an agreement between the League of Resident Theatres and Actor Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States.

A.C.T. is a constituent of Theatre Communications Group, the national organization for the nonprofit professional theatres. A.C.T. is a member of the League of Resident Theatres, American Arts Alliance, California Theatre Council, Theatre Bay Area, Performing Arts Services, San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, and San Francisco Convention & Visitors Bureau.

A.C.T. logo designed by Lambert Associates.

Foreplay from J. Sheridan Le Fanu's "In a Glass Darkly." Illustration by E. Ardizzone.
Mr. Ellis designed hair and makeup for the original production of Cinderella for the San Francisco Ballet and Hamlet with Anne Baxter and Christopher Walken for the American Shakespeare Festival, and A Life with Gay Drotos for the Citadel Theatre in Edmonton, Canada. He worked on the national tours of A Streetcar Named Desire with Debbie Allen, and toured in Las Vegas and London with Bing Crosby.

JAMES HAIKE (Production Director) began his career on Broadway with Eva Le Gallienne's National Repertory Theatre. Among the productions he stage-managed were The Midways of Oz with Minnie Goff, Sylvia Syms, and Leon Darn, The Shrek, John Browne's Body, A Shout to Compan, and The Comedy of Errors. Mr. Haire also stage-managed the Broadway productions of George (a musical by Carole Bayer Sager), And Miss Brandeis Drinks a Little, and the national tour of Woody Allen's Don't Drink the Water. Mr. Haire joined A.C.T. in 1971 as Production Stage Manager, and in this capacity has managed more than a hundred productions; he has also taken the company on numerous regional, national, and international tours, including those to the Soviet Union in 1976 and Japan in 1979.

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Frontispiece from J. Sheridan Le Fanu's "In a Glass Darkly." Illustration by Edvard Munch.
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in French oak casks, which ultimately provides the finesse and elegant character that have been the hallmark of our house for centuries. Excessive?

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A.C.T. Prologues

A.C.T. and the Junior League of San Francisco invite you to join us for informative discussions, free of charge, before the Tuesday Preview series performance. The Prologues are held from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Doors open at 5:00 p.m. Upcoming discussions include:

December 3, 1991 Taking Steps by Alan Ayckbourn

at the Stage Door Theater

January 21, 1992 Cyrano de Bergerac by Edmond Rostand

at Theatre on the Square

February 4, 1992 Charley's Aunt by Brandon Thomas

at the Stage Door Theater

March 24, 1992 The Cocktail Hour by A.R. Gurney

at Theatre on the Square

April 7, 1992 Good by C.P. Taylor

at the Stage Door Theater

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Macy's Harvest Masquerade Ball A Smashing Success

K
ights on white horses, fairy princesses in gossamer, and no one turned into a pumpkin! On Saturday, October 19, Macy's at Union Square was magically transformed into an 18th century evening of fantasy and intrigue celebrating the opening of San Francisco's theater season and A.C.T.'s 25th Anniversary. A fundraiser benefiting A.C.T.'s Conservatory Scholarship Fund, the Harvest Masquerade Ball inaugurated a spectacular new seasonal event at Macy's — the three-week Harvest Celebration, designed to bring the rich beauty of the Golden State to the field to the table in colorful displays of fall gardens, a gourmet farmer's market, an array of cooking classes by top California chefs, and exquisite harvest table settings. Highlighted by an ambrosial repast created by celebrated restaurateur Wolfgang Puck, the Harvest Masquerade Ball was hosted by Mr. Daniel Flunkstein, Chairman of Macy's California, and Harvest Masquerade Ball Co-chairs Diana Dalton and Mrs. Henry Bowles. String ensembles entertained with dulcet melodies while patrons dined by candlelight in an autumn setting at a table-of-a-kind culinary extravaganza. Wolfgang Puck and distinguished chefs Anne and David Gingras of Postrio, Kazuto Matsunaka of Chihiros on Main, Makoto Tanaka of Saison, and Patrick Pastry Chef Patrick Levesque designed and executed a memorable menu that included a range of appetizers with smoked salmon and stuffed, fresh and smoked sausages, Oaxaca ceviche, and Postrio pizzas. Chilled lobster risotto and spicy sauced rack of veal and miniature desserts featuring the nuts and berries of autumn, all accompanied by pesto-ornamented wine from Chappellet Vineyards, J. Jordan Champagne, and Bonny Doon Vineyard.

The Macy's West Building on Union Square became a wooded wonderland through the deft touch of Academy Award-winning designer Peter Young. set and costume designer for the BATMAN and ROBIN WOOF Films, and partygoers embarked on a remarkable journey beneath a 30-foot domed cathedral of oak boughs vaulting the main hall. Throughout the fantasy-filled evening, A.C.T. Conservatory students performed theatrical vignettes, from dangerous deeds to comic capers, directed by A.C.T. Resident Director Sahin Epstein, while Dance Through Time entertained with historical promenades in period costumes. Before the adventure was through, merry revelers donned mystical masks and danced the night away to the spirited melodies of the Solid Senders.

Thanks to Macy's, the Harvest Masquerade Ball helped raise over 20% of the $175,000 in scholarship funds A.C.T. awards annually. Four professional training programs serve over 1,500 students each year: the Advanced Training Program, leading to the Master of Fine Arts degree; the Academy, providing ongoing performance training; the Young Conservatory, serving students 8 to 15; and the Summer Training Congress. Through the A.C.T. Conservatory Scholarship Fund, many deserving students realize their educational goals.

Craig Slaght Appointed To ARTS Panel

A.C.T. Young Conservatory Director Craig Slaght has been selected by the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts (NFA) for a four-year appointment to the Arts Recognition and Talent Search (ARTS) panel. Mr. Slaght joins a board of four theater professionals and educators which nominates young artists for selection as Presidential Scholars in the Arts, and awards scholarship monies to ARTS applicants whose work has been judged outstanding. Since its founding in 1981, more than 54,000 high school seniors from every state in the nation have participated in the ARTS program. A.C.T. Artistic Director Edward Hastings served on the ARTS program theater panel from 1983-1985.

Craig Slaght joined A.C.T. in 1985 as Director of the A.C.T. Young Conservatory, and currently also serves on the Executive Board of Theatre Bay Area. During his tenure with A.C.T., he founded and directs the New Plays Program — a workshop designed to enable young people to experience the stage in a way relevant to their age and circumstances, commissioned from eminent playwrights, and created specifically for the group. The first

work developed in this program, Timothy Mason's Anaximenes Days, was recently published by Dramatists Play Service. He is co-editor, with Jack Sherratt, of Great Scenes from the Stage for Young Actors, published by Smith and Kraus in March 1991; and Great Monologues for Young Actors, to be released in January 1992.

Prior to his arrival at A.C.T., Mr. Slaght was Head of the Acting and Directing Program at the Los Angeles County High School for the Arts, and served as Staff Director of Acting Technique and Shakespeare at the Interlochen Center for the Arts.

The NFA was created in 1981 to encourage young artists in the fields of dance, music, jazz, theater, visual arts, and writing by assisting them financially and by creating opportunities for them to advance in their educational and professional careers. Approximately $14.5 million in ARTS program services and unrestricted cash awards have been allocated by The NFA to aspiring young artists. The NFA is a publicly supported, non-profit, non-governmental organization headquartered in Miami.

ARTS applicants are solicited from every public and private high school, arts and education associations. Following preliminary screening by the panels of experts,
American Conservatory Theater

NEWS FROM THE AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER

State from the field to the table in colorful displays of fall gardens, a gourmet farmer’s market, an array of cooking classes by top California chefs, and exquisite harvest table settings. Highlighted by an ambient repast created by celebrated restaurateur Wolfgang Puck, the Harvest Masquerade Ball was hosted by Mr. Daniel Flinckstein, Chairman of Macy’s California, and Harvest Masquerade Ball Co-chairs Diana Dalton and Mrs. Henry Bowles. String ensembles entertained with delightful melodies while patrons dined by candlelight in an autumnal setting at a one-of-a-kind culinary extravaganza. Wolfgang Puck and distinguished chefs Anne and David Gingras of Per picto, Kazuto Matsunaka of Chinoise on Main, Makoto Tanaka of Sugoi, and Tryst Pastry Chef Patrick Levesque designed and executed a memorable menu that included a range of appetizers with smoked salmon and sturgeon, fresh and smoked sausages, Osetra caviar, and Per picto pizzas. Chilled lobster ravioli and Seppuku sweet and sour vegetable fruit salad accompanied the savory bites. The Mad Tea Party hosted by finesse Wineries and the Vineyard Tours for wine enthusiasts completed the gastronomic journey.

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CONTRIBUTORS

This list below reflects gifts received between August 1, 1969 and October 31, 1971.
FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Administrative Offices
A.C.T.'s Administrative and Conservatory offices are located at 450 Geary Street, San Francisco, CA 94115. (415) 749-2200.

Box Office Information
A.C.T.'s Central Box Office
Location: The lobby of the Geary Theater, located on Geary at Mason Street one block west of Union Square.
Box Office Hours: 9:30am-5pm Tuesday through Saturday; 10am-6pm Sunday and Monday.
Ticket Information/Charge by phone: (415) 749-2200. For your Visa, Mastercard, or American Express card.
Box Offices at the Stage Door Theater, Theatre on the Square and the Orpheum Theatre: Full-service box offices will be open 90 minutes before each performance in these venues.

BASS: A.C.T. tickets are available at all BASS/TM centers, including The Warehousehouse and Tower Records/Cinema. Charge by phone: (415) 510-762-BASS or (415) 988-BASS.

THE STAGE DOOR THEATRE
Ticket Prices:

THE ORPHEUM THEATRE

Previews:

Orchestra/Loge $22
Balcony $16
Gallery $10

Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday

Orchestra/Loge $26
Balcony $20
Gallery $10

Friday/Saturday

Orchestra/Loge $32
Balcony $24
Gallery $11

Group Discounts: For groups of 10 or more, call Linda Graham at (415) 346-7805 for special prices.

Latecomers: Latecomers will be seated at an appropriate interval.

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

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

Discounts: Half-price tickets are frequently available on the day of performance at STBS on Union Square in San Francisco. Half-price Student and Senior Rush tickets are available at the theatre box office 90 minutes prior to curtain. (Please note: Busk ticket is available for The Piano Lesson 90 minutes prior; Matinees Senior Rush price is $5.00. All half-price tickets are subject to availability, one ticket per valid I.D.

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

Wheelchair Access: The Stage Door, Theatre on the Square, and The Orpheum are accessible to persons in wheelchairs.

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

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

Smoking is not permitted in the auditorium.

Beepers! If you carry a pager, beeper, watch or alarm, please make sure that it is set to the "off" position while you are in the theater to avoid disturbing the performance. Alternatively, you may leave it with the House Manager, along with your seat number, so you can be notified if you are called.

Special Programs
A.C.T. Prologues are presented before the Tuesday evening Performances for all productions, except Christmas Carol, from 5:00 pm to 6:00 pm. Doors open at 4:00 pm. Please check your tickets for the appropriate theater's location.

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

School Matinees: 1:00 pm matinees are offered to elementary, secondary, and college groups. Thousands of students attend these performances each season. Tickets are specially priced at just $8. For more information please call Katherine Spiehmann, Student Matinee Coordinator at 749-2200.

Conservatory: A.C.T. offers classes, training, and advanced theater study. Its Young Conservatory program offers training for students between the ages of 8 and 19. Call 749-2200 for more information.

A.C.T. Venues: ORPHEUM THEATRE

The Orpheum Theatre is located on Market Street at Eighth, near the Civic Center BART/MUNI Station.

The Theatre on the Square is located indoors on Market Street at Eighth, one block from Union Square.

Theatre on the Square

This 736-seat Theatre on the Square, is located in the Montgomery Park Hotel, at 450 Post Street between Mason and Powell. Conveniently located within a short walking distance of the Stage Door Theatre, Theatre on the Square is close to many fine restaurants along Post and Mason streets. Ask our Box Office for suggestions.

Stage Door Theatre

If you need to ferry a lot of kids and cargo, you should know about the 2WD and 4WD Isuzu Rodeos. You see, not only does the Rodeo carry 35 cubic feet of cargo, it also has the most overall passenger room in its class. One model even has seating for six!

What's more, the Rodeo comes standard with a rear-wheel Anti-lock Brake System. And a long wheel base for a smooth, car-like drive. All at a price lower than any other 4-door in its class. So you and your family can cruise in greater comfort for a lot less money. Relatively speaking.

For a free brochure, call 1-800-245-4549.

THE ISUZU RODEO $12,919

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Box Offices at the Stage Door Theater, Theatre on the Square and the Orpheum Theatre: Full service box offices will be open 90 minutes before each performance in these venues.

Stage Door/Stage Manager: Box Office is located at 450 Mason Street, one block from Union Square.

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*Compared to a 4-door 2WD base model. TMSPRICExcept tax, license and transport, inc. Optional equipment shown as additional cost. Please note the nearest exit. In an emergency, WALK, do not run, to the nearest exit.
IN FASHION

To Give and To Receive

Some of the best shopping destinations and gifts in California

On the top of everyone's wish list for the holidays are two revered commodities: Time and money. At no other time of the year do these two elements cross paths so frequently and with such intensity. This year, we've put together a shopping list for you of some of the best shops California has to offer. This will help to save you time, at least. After all, money's only money.

South Coast Plaza is a shopper's paradise. There are over 300 shops in one location, with hotels, restaurants, and theaters within walking distance. Many shops, including Calvin Klein, Barney's, Emporio Armani, Liz Claiborne, and Neiman Marcus, are all in the same area and accessible to the entire plaza. There are also a number of unique boutiques, including Givenchy, Versace, and Gucci.

On a holiday shopping trip, we spotted more than a few "must have" items. At Barney's, the jewelry cases are filled with modern and antique pieces that are mainly exclusive to the stylish New York store. Miriam Haskell's collection is made from the late designers' own models and brought up-to-date with current stones, pearls, and metal finishes. Gabrielle Sanchez, Kamino, and Linda Lee Johnson are among the contemporary jewelers. Their Hermès department is a well-edited selection of the finest items from this European master of leather goods. When browsing through you will find colorful and unique, handmade gifts for the entry. Emporio Armani, which houses the minimalists' designer's trendier, less expensive collection for men and women. Here, one can buy Armani suits, underwear, children's clothes, shoes, and some pasta, and get outfitted for casual and black tie festivities.

For pure elegance and simplicity, Calvin Klein's store is it. Offering both Calvin Klein sport and the designer collection, the colors will soothe your soul. Calvin's beaded evening slip would be a welcome addition to anyone's holiday wardrobe.

And these are just a few of the specialty store finds. Bullocks has opened a separate men's store with all the best designers. Nordstrom stands alone in selection and service. Saks Fifth Avenue can always be counted on for something special. And Robinson's, which anchor's the Crystal Court plaza host to three more floors of stores.

Moving up the coast, no shopping trip is complete without Beverly Hills. The newly restored Regent Beverly Wilshire Hotel is a shoppers retreat, with a complete health spa, exercise facilities, beauty and massage services. Within the hotel, you'll find wonderful restaurants, Buccellati jewelers, and a just-opened Escada boutique which shows off Margaretha Ley's complete concept of sportswear, business attire, eveningwear, accessories, and fragrances.

Along Wilshire Boulevard, one can dart in and out of major style icons. Guinan, which has everything for the home, also has a unique collection on international holiday decorations. Neiman Marcus has recently opened a new men's department on the top floor for atmosphere and gracious service. Skipping through the golden Triangle reads like a who's who of fashion cognoscenti: Giorgio Armani, Gianni Versace, Claude Montana, Prada, Gucci, Fred Hayman, Bijan, Ralph Lauren's Polo, Chanel, Gianni Russo Fez, and so many more.

by Barbara Foley

Photography: John Pippin

DECEMBER 1989
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On a holiday shopping trip, we spotted more than a few "must have" items. At Barney's, the jewelry cases are filled with modern and antique pieces that are both exclusive and stylish. New York store Martin Hassell's collection is made from the latest designs of models and brought up to date with current stones, pearls, and metal finishes. Gabrielle Sanchez, Kames, and Linda Lee Johnson are among the contemporary jewelry designers. Their search for the selection of the finest stones from this European master of leather goods is frequent. Among the most popular are Hermes, which has everything for the home, also has a unique collection of international holiday decorations. Neiman Marcus has recently opened a new men's department on the top floor for atmosphere and gracious service. Skipping through the golden Triangle reads like a who's who of fashion cognoscenti: Giorgio Armani, Gianni Versace, Claude Montana, Prada, Gucci, Fred Hayman, Bijan, Ralph Lauren, Polo, Chanel, Gianfranco Ferre, Etro, and some pasta, and get outfitted for casual and black tie festivities.

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For pure elegance and simplicity Calvin Klein's store is it. Offering both Calvin Klein sport and the designer collection, the colors will soothe your soul. Calvin's beaded evening slips would be a welcome addition to any woman's holiday wardrobe.

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Moving up the coast, no shopping trip is complete without Beverly Hills. The newly restored Regent Beverly Wilshire Hotel is a shoppers retreat, with its complete health spa, exercise facilities, and beauty and massage services. Within the hotel, you'll find wonderful restaurants, Buccellati jewelers, and a just-opened Escada boutique which shows off Margartha Ley's complete concept of sportswear, business attire, afternoon wear, accessories, and fragrances.

Along Wilshire Boulevard, one can dart in and out of major style icons. Guips, which has everything for the home, also has a unique collection of international holiday decorations. Neiman Marcus has recently opened a new men's department on the top floor for atmosphere and gracious service. Skipping through the golden Triangle reads like a who's who of fashion cognoscenti: Giorgio Armani, Gianni Versace, Claude Montana, Prada, Gucci, Fred Hayman, Bijan, Ralph Lauren, Polo, Chanel, Gianfranco Ferre, Etro, and some pasta, and get outfitted for casual and black tie festivities.
Tiffany’s — and that's before lunch. Los Angeles also has some hidden favorite shopping haunts: Montana Avenue in Santa Monica, with its selection of easy furnishings for the home, Shabby Chic, Nonesuch, and Hemisphere for starters, and casual life-style clothes, including ABS, line and Sams for Kids. Main Street, also in Santa Monica, has a collection of California designers including Leon Max for clothing, Stems for gifts and the Functional Gallery of Art, for at-home art that's aesthetically pleasing while it works. Melrose, in West Hollywood, is another serendipitous place for finding the unusual.

_RESOURCES TO WATCH:

Anchors stores including L.A. Eyeworks, Maxfield, and W represent cutting edge style, while others capture the trends almost before they happen. Heading east, turn the corner on La Brea and feast on the well-chosen fancies at Replica, Jennifer Joanne, Repeat Performance, Patina, and American Rag. Not far away is The Beverly Center, where lines never cease for Peter Morris's Hard Rock Cafe, The Gap, Bullock's, and The Broadway have some of their best stores here, while Traffie, Chamine,

At Left: Photo Credit, San Francisco and Beverly Hills: assorted trends and antique jewelry pin with a 16th-century head. Immediately, The Great Lady's Barn is at N.O. Schwarzs, The Beverly Center.

Below: Photo Credit, New York, South Coast Plaza: Norman Rockwell's in Olympic gold.

Bottom left: Photo Credit, 24 Bally's Drive. A wood handcrafted sport, a brightface, dog's fat and stippin on their signature pencil.

Bottom right: Photo Credit, Stella, Main Street, Santa Monica: jewel-colored ceramic beads.

At Right: Photo Credit, American Express Card.

You're not about to wear your financial savvy and stability on your sleeve. There are other places.
Tiffany's — and that's before lunch. Los Angeles also has some hidden favorite shopping havens: Montane Avenue in Santa Monica, with its selection of easy furnishings for the home, Shabby Chic, Nonesuch, and Hemisphere for starters, and casual life-style clothes, including ABS, Sams and Sams for Kids. Main Street, also in Santa Monica, has a collection of California designers including Leon Max for clothing, Stems for gifts and the Functional Gallery of Art for at-home art that's ethereally pleasing while it works. Melrose, in West Hollywood, is another serendipitous place for finding the unusual.

Anchoring stores including L.A. Eyeworks, Maxfield, and W represent cutting edge style, while others capture the trends almost before they happen. Heading east, turn the corner on LaBrea and feast on the well-chosen fantasizes at Replicate, Jennifer Jordan, Repeat Performance, Fatima, and American Bag.

Not far away is The Beverly Center, where lines never cease for Peter Morton's Hard Rock Cafe. The Gap, Bullock's, and The Broadway have some of their best stores here, while Traffico, Chandra, Atmosphere, Lucy Zahran, and FAO Schwarz represent the fine caliber of specialty stores.

If you like your shopping outdoors, Century City Shopping Center and Market Place is a healthy spot. Go Sport has one of the most complete sports gear selections in the city. Bernina is an irresistible, book-browser's haven. Great men's stores include Politix, Rosenthal, and Brooks Brothers.

Last stop, San Francisco, where Union Square meets Sutter Street and a world of fashion coincides. Gumps started out here. So did I. Magnin and Wilkes Bashford. More recently, by S.F. standards, Neiman Marcus and Saks Fifth Avenue have filled up the square. Not far away on Market Street, Nordstrom presides over several floors of indoor stores. And a walk down Maiden Lane will take you to Ralph Davies where designer names including Louis Vuitton and Romeo Gigli, abound. A new area for specialty stores on Fillmore Street is riveting Union Street, and even more out-of-the-mainstream is Flush, an everything-store south of Market Street and the brainchild of Rosemary Kheban interior designer Chuck Windows.

Wherever you shop, take a little time and enjoy the magical creativity of the season. □

At Left: From Gumps, San Francisco and Beverly Hills: assorted breast and antique jewelry pillow with a 25mm ostrichhead seal. The Grand lady bear is by Nino Schultz, The Beverly Center.

Below: From Barney's New York, South Coast Plaza: Hermes Kelly Bag in French agate.

Bottom left: From Dior at Van Buren Drive: A wool handwoven scarf, a bracelet, and cashmere in their signature pastel.

Bottom right: From Stems, Main Street, Santa Monica: jewel-colored ceramic bowls.

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ON TRAVEL
A Short History of Packing

Primitive man didn't pack. Once he had exhausted the food and clothing supply in his immediate vicinity, he merely strolled through the wilderness until he met another woolly mammoth. Dressing for dinner was simple. He ate the inside and wore the outside. Matters didn't change significantly for millennia. Even at the absolute pinnacle of ancient civilization, people tended to stay put, enjoying the glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome. The notion that other societies might offer novel opportunities for diversion didn't occur to them. Life was too short—thirty-five years was the average span—to include much time for travel. There were no retirees. Work, as such, had not yet been invented. The Greeks and Romans felt, with reason, that they already lived in the best of all possible worlds. When the Viis, Ostro- and other

Elaine Kendall is an author, journalist and playwright who writes frequently on travel and the arts.

Tourists have always been a ready test—particularly to locals. Above: Jacques Callot's Les Boubaloeres en Voyage, c. 1621. The cynical inscription reads: "Are these not fine messengers, straying through foreign lands?"

by Elaine Kendall

December 1991
51

else was supplied by his hostess.

Once the Renaissance dawned, the decencies of the crusaders were so consumed with making up for lost time that their trips were necessarily short—business trips, really, to pick up commissions for mosaics, bronze doors, and altarpieces. Usually, the artists began from a place that offered relatively nothing and ended up in a city that had everything, comparatively speaking. Why pack if you're going from the benighted hamlet where you were born to Rome, Florence, or Siena? Food only look like a bumphkin among the city rich.

There matters happily rested until the early nineteenth century, when the invention of the steam engine abruptly changed the status quo. From that point on, unprecedented numbers of people began going from one place to another by boat and train, methods that provided space for amounts of baggage undreamed of in the era of stagecoaches and sailing ships. Aggravating the situation, the industrial revolution had supplied whole
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The notion that other societies might offer novel opportunities for diversion didn't occur to them. Life was too short -- thirty-five years was the average span -- to include much time for travel. There were no retirees. Work, as such, had not yet been invented. The Greeks and Romans felt, with reason, that they already lived in the best of all possible worlds. When the Visigoth, Ostrogoth, and other assorted Goths eventually sacked Rome, they didn't pack for the trip either, unless you call carrying a bludgeon and a spear packing. Savage as they were, the Vandals knew they could get everything they needed once they arrived at their destination. That, in fact, is why they embarked upon the adventure in the first place. The Goths were vicious, cruel, and barbaric, but they weren't foolish.

There may have been some rudimentary packing during the Crusades, but by and large the crusaders wore all their clothes, saving space in their saddle bags for food and ammunition. Journeying by horseback, in chain mail underwear and full metal jacket, trousers, gloves and helmet, restricted you to the essentials. Armor doesn't float. Medieval women, who were somewhat more fastidious than the men and likely to change clothes every year or so, were left behind under circumstances that virtually guaranteed they wouldn't stray far from the castle keep.

All a knight enroute needed on his tour was a love poem and a lance. Everything else was supplied by his hostess.

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new categories of possessions to whole new categories of people, and within a few decades, even ordinary folk owned more than the clothes on their backs and a change for Sunday. For the first time in recorded history, people began traveling for pleasure, to show off their acquisitions to friends and enemies. Until then, travelers were either explorers, warriors, or the starving and oppressed, none of whom had much in the way of movable goods. The relatively small numbers who enjoyed an agreeable life—nobles, mostly—stayed home. Here, emigrants used covered wagons, which were horses. They held everything. You see their heirs today, toiling around in RVs, living in their luggage to avoid carrying it.

By the late nineteenth century, the world had entered the golden age of packing, a short, blissful period that would end irrevocably when the airplane supplanted the ship and train, putting us all back to square one. Without dwelling morbidly upon the differences, think of the steamer trunk. Though some have been restored and reincarnated as occasional tables, few contemporary Americans have ever actually seen one open and in use—one side fitted out with a dozen sturdy wooden hangers and a shelf rack, the other neatly divided into drawers for gloves, hosiery, shirts, and what were then politely called "small clothes." Of all the wondrous Victorian inventions, nothing but the indoor water closet enhanced the general quality of life. The steamer trunk was armoire and dresser in one. What wouldn’t fit in that could go into an ordinary trunk; a handsome accessory solidly built of wood and covered with fine leather, spacious enough for morning coats and ermine, with a removable tray for silver-backed brushes. Hats traveled separately, in round boxes tailored to their shapes, and no real lady or gentleman would leave home without a portable desk and a bookcase, which often matched. Packing for a century travelers was merely a matter of transferring their belongings from one spacious place to another. The only hard part was deciding which ball gown to leave behind and how many top hats a chap might need on the Grand Tour. When the choice was impossible, one simply kept another trunk or two, to be marked "Not Wanted On Voyage" and stored below, or better still, Fort Outward, Starboard Home, PUSH in neatly stencilled letters.

Though relatively few enjoyed such luxury, that didn’t worry the fortunate, and it shouldn’t worry us. On arrival, the luggage would be hauled around by beavers of burden—horses, donkeys, and in some parts of the world, oxen. When human beings took on this job, they were paid for it, poorly, but paid. Even Third Class in the heyday of transatlantic travel was considerably more commodious than a seat on the Concord today. Steerage passengers were crowded, but they weren’t strapped down, though steerage had little else to recommend it except price, which was about $10 from Liverpool to Boston. The density was no worse than on a t47 and the food and sanitary arrangements were comparable. You could actually stretch out and lie down in steerage, though of course there would be other people right next to you, some of whom might be sea-sick or poor company, but all things considered, the only essential difference between steerage then and economy now is time, and not as much as you might think. Unlike their counterparts today, people who traveled steerage weren’t loaded down with color TVs, microwave ovens and seven-foot plank pandas. On their way to a new life in the new world, they either left their pitifully few possessions behind or sold them to raise the fare, carrying the insignificant remainder in sacks made of old rags. Those were carpet bags, the precursors of carry-ons, and they hadn’t been in use for a week before they acquired a bad name.

Eventually the carpet-baggers were run out of town, but their luggage lingered on, surfacing a few decades later as the ValPak. First developed for the military and naively hailed as a brilliant innovation, the ValPak was made of fabric far less attractive than old Klims. Designed to send clothing in bulk during the journey, the bag was supposed to be unlatched and swung over a closet bar upon arrival, whereupon the contents would presumably "hang out," eliminating the need for either unpacking or pressing. Unhappily, even officers in tip:

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THE PAN PACIFIC HOTEL San Francisco

Corona Bar & Grill

...the dishes have been worked out carefully. They’re not only gorgeous on their colorful ceramic plates, but they taste clean and refreshing on the palate—a wonderful combination of earthy native-American and spicy Latin-American ingredients with sophisticated cooking techniques.

Patricia Untermin, San Francisco Chronicle

Sunday Brunch
11:30 A.M. – 3:30 p.m.
88 Cyril Magnin, San Francisco 392-5500

of extra molecules; a fact that explains why laundry takes up twice as much room as it did before. The shoe pocket works only if you wear a man’s size eight to ten. If your shoes are smaller, there’s room for one more, and if they’re bigger, the pocket is completely useless. Nothing else in a person’s wardrobe is shoe-shaped. Furthermore, the two- or four-suit turns the looser into his own beast of burden, a problem the manufacturers have lately attempted to solve by attaching wheels, which is like putting skates on a rug doll. The newest and most expensive models have an intricate plastic system which turns them into a luggage cart, at least until the gadget breaks from strain and the inability of most people — even CEOs of major companies — to remember how it works. To all intents and purposes, “Carry-on” is an oxymoron. Nevertheless, the desire to shorten the wait for luggage is so powerful (equal to thirst, hunger or sex) that people continue to use these bags, making orthopedists the fastest-growing medical specialty in the world.

The few who stubbornly rejected these flappy trunks were offered an extreme alternative, suitcases made of a hard metallic substance guaranteed not to dent no matter how brutally treated. Concentrating upon the fact that these bags could be hung from skyscrapers, danced upon by elephants and run over by power mowers, the manufacturers forgot that the contents wouldn’t be made of the same material. Totally unforgiving, not even minimally expandable, these containers made no allowance whatever for even the most essential acquisitions, like a pair of sunglasses or a bottle of shampoo. Those who carried them not only looked as if they were travelling with a roast turkey, but were forced to take along a tote (carpet) bag to accommodate the overflow, because these new cases would demolish anything made of glass, metal, plastic or even leather, while remaining intact themselves, exactly as guaranteed. With the advent of this invention, the brief Golden Age was irrevocably over, its last pathetic gasp the wagon meant to let you wheel your fifty pound carry-on at least part of the way. Once offered free, these carts now cost $1.50, to be inserted

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top condition seldom succeeded in getting the bag onto the bar, at least not on the first try. Never meant to withstand such onslaughts, the closet bars usually brake, leaving the owner’s possessions in far worse condition than they would have been rolled up and stuffed into a duffel, but then the distinction between officers and other ranks would have been blurred. Amazingly, the civilian public embraced these bags with enthusiasm, though they instantly abandoned other wartime make-shifts like tuna wiggle and leg paint. The two-suiters quickly became fancier, heavier, and longer, developing bulges of various sizes all over itself, becoming a

of extra molecules; a fact that explains why laundry takes up twice as much room as it did before. The shoe pocket works only if you wear a man’s size eight to ten. If your shoes are smaller, there’s room for one more, and if they’re bigger, the pocket is completely useless. Nothing else in a person’s wardrobe is shoe-shaped. Furthermore, the two- or four-suit turns the bearer into his own beast of burden, a problem the manufacturers have lately attempted to solve by attaching wheels, which is like putting skates on a raja doll. The newest and most expensive models have an intricate plastic system which turns them into a luggage-cart, at least until the gasket breaks from strain and the inability of most people—even CEOs of major companies—to remember how it works. To all intents and purposes, “Carry-on” is an oxymoron. Nevertheless, the desire to shorten the wait for luggage is so powerful (equal to thirst, hunger or sex) that people continue to use these bags, making orthopedics the fastest growing medical specialty in the world.

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ACCORDING TO strict protocol, of course, in the coin and notes of the country in which you’ve arrived after banking hours. But even if one has crisp bills and exact change, the machine is seldom gratified, showing its displeasure by spitting them out or shredding them. The most affluent porters seldom did that.

The only, if somewhat extravagant, way to avoid packing and its attendant hardship is to buy a second home, an alternative millions of Americans have chosen, justifying the expense as “an investment.” Naturally, they’re reluctant to admit that they use their entire condo only to get a closet and a place to store an entire set of golf clubs or skis, which, like the crusader’s armor, can’t be folded. (We’ve made virtually no progress in packing since the middle ages. The condo is a contemporary version of Byzantium — somewhere to store the things you need away from home, equally expensive, soon redundant, and devilishly hard to maintain at a distance.) Worse still, it fails. Heavy winter clothes left in the ski condo develop moth holes. Bathing suits and light summer things abandoned at the beach lose their elastic and acquire yellow spots of unknown origin, resistant to all known solvents. Sooner or later, you’ll have to pack again, and when that happens, it’s time to sell the second house.

Some people have avoided packing (much) by taking virtually nothing and buying all new clothes on arrival, a deceptively tempting method if you’re going to the great European capitals, but altogether impractical if your destination is somewhere more remote or deprived, like Papua or Leningrad. Before you take this way out, take a moment to consider why the Japanese do all their shopping here. Remember too, that Italian men have twenty-eight inch waists, that European shoes don’t come in widths, but get wider as they get longer, and that all seasonal clothes vanish completely from foreign shops in January 1, March 1, July 1 and September 1, regardless of the actual weather. On a hot fall day in Paris, when you can still wear a sweater, the Italian looks in the stores has nothing but molehill and sheepskin. It’s like Christmas, though it’s 80°F on the sidewalk. Everything you’ve ever heard in song and story about Paris in spring is true, provided you’ve remembered a down parka.

An increasingly popular opinion doesn’t entirely eliminate packing, but simplifies it. According to this theory, you take your oldest clothes and discard them along the way. While you may look shabbily, you won’t look that much worse than someone whose new clothes have just emerged from a two-suit, and you’ll be absolutely elegant in comparison to thoseUtilitarians whose luggage was lost. Though this method has some distinct advantages, it’s ineffable, allowing for no charges of schedule or unforeseen delays. Still, when you get home, weary, jet-lagged and impoverished, you don’t have to unpack (much) and your good clothes will still be usable.

A special variation of the old clothes option is wearing as much as possible on route, a system popular among the wives and daughters of Middle Eastern potentates. They travel in layers of French haute couture under their chaussures, not only obviating packing but avoiding customs duty, since no customs inspector in this untold world and in his right mind would dare ask anyone from the Gulf states to lift her veil. Sadly, there’s not much an American can glean from this ingenious approach, unless he or she doesn’t mind looking like the Stay-Puff Marshmallow man.

There is no one who doesn’t have to pack, sometime. Your mother packs to go to the hospital to have you; you have a diaper bag from that moment on, and packing is the last thing your survivors do for you in this world. In between, there’s a lot of it. Even heads of state must pack — how else can they be ready for photo opportunities? Can they tote off the plane in rumpled suitcases? As if the world were nothing but a branch of their neighborhood gym? That’s how America lost its once proud place in the pantheon of nations. Most of us don’t look respectable when we travel. We’ve given up. Bring back the steamer trunk, and our star will rise again. Strike ‘drip dry, ‘carry-on,” and ‘all purpose’ from the travel lexicon. They’re synonyms for shaggy, back-breaking, and inappropriate. As far as I’m concerned, give it back to the circus, where it belongs.

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Restaurant Guide


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FNO, 1 Union Place, across from Thalia Vier in the Mezzanine, 623 4th St. (415) 296-2856. Open for dinner daily from 6 PM to 11 PM serving San Francisco Italian cuisine. The menu features delicious, selected as one of six best Italian restaurants in San Francisco by the San Francisco Chronicle.

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ENOTECA LANDINI, Open Thurs.— Sat.: 600 Van Ness (415) 861-5980, M-F 11:00 AM-2:00 PM & 5:00 PM-10:00 PM, Sat. 5:00 PM —1:30 PM & 5:00 PM-10:00 PM & Sun. Food of Italian heritage. Artistic Italian events. Reservations accepted. AE, DC, MC, V.

FUSO, 1 Grant Place, across from Thacher's in the Andoraa Mall (415) 362-3806. Open for dinner daily from 5:00 PM to 10:00 PM serving San Francisco Italian cuisine. Pan with variety of dinner options, selected as one of six best value Italian Restaurants in San Francisco by the Zagat guide. AE, DC, MC, V.

MAX'S OPERA CAFE, 661 Van Ness (Golden Gate Bl.) at Open Thurs.—Sat.: 11:00 AM-11:00 PM, Mon. — Sat. 11:00 AM-1:00 PM, Thurs. — Sat. 11:00 AM-1:00 PM & Sun. Updated New York style deli. Pan with variety of dinner options served from 5:00 PM. AE, MC, V.

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Combined from page 5
whether you leave altogether or start it on your own.

"Greek, according to Joel Mullinax, has "more of a through-line than East, but has the same sort of poetic language. Berrocks uses the violence of Cockney language, but it's not a voyeuristic violence. It's ugly and upsetting, but it's fresh, it makes one face violence afresh. In deliberately choosing the most reprehensible thing you can face, you're left with the pure experience. And in that there is some redemption." Set in a Cockney world from which Oedipus — Eddie in the play — rises against his inevitable fall, this revisionary view of the Oedipus myth proposes that it's better to crawl back into the womb, as Oedipus inadvertently does in marrying his mother, than "to stick a horn up someone's ass and get a medal for it." In a world where "Maggot Starchie" — Cockney rhyming slang for Margaret Thatcher — reigns and a mysterious plague is raging, an honest sexuality is salvation.

"In East, sex was violence. Here it's against the violence," MacDougall notes. As in East, the love scenes are un- settingly frank, yet Berrocks's sweeping reader is always exhilarating. January 22-February 28: Magic Theatre, Building 2, Port Boulevard, (415) 444-9901.

IN BRIEF
Theater: American Conservatory Theatre reviews Edmund Boand's masterpiece of romantic love, Cymon de Bergomac, in a new production. January 21- March 14, Theatre on the Square. (415) 749-2475 . Man of La Mancha, starring Paul Sills as Don Quixote and Sharron Baston as Aldonza, opens in January at the Orpheum — call Best of Broadway, (415) 474-3800 . Dance: Margie Gillis, the Canadian soloist whose performances are marked by daring physicality and acute psychological insight, now appears with her brother, Christopher Gillis, of the Paul Taylor Dance Company; this is the dance event not to miss. January 16 at Herbst Theatre; call San Francisco Performances, (415) 888-6449 . Music: The Minnesota Orchestra, conducted by San Francisco Symphony's former artistic director, Edo de Waart, appears on San Francisco Symphony's Mercedes Great Performances Series. The featured soloist in Berg's Violin Concerto is Nigel Kennedy, notorious to some for his sprightly punkish haircuts and outre choice of footwear, his profound masculinity is what you want to hear. January 26 at Davies Symphony Hall. (415) 436-5400 . Art: Calum Colvin: The Two Ways of Art, a complex photographic installation by the contemporary Scottish artist, who has fashioned a fantastic adventure for his toy sailor-born, a shelled Action Man doll who crosses the geographic wilderness of Scotland's stereotypes, idols and moral confusions. January 10-March 16, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. (415) 863-8800. 

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THE LAST WORD

Clothes Make the Woman

Sarah Bernhardt was fifty-five years old when her performance as Hamlet was received with immense enthusiasm in Paris and embarrassment in England. She played the melancholy Dane in an oversized yellow wig, trailing a cloak from one shoulder draped around her furlined doublet and slashed tights: one reviewer had the impression of watching a mosquito under a microscope. Max Beerbohm, calling her "the Princess of Denmark," wrote of the iron control he and the audience had to exercise to keep from exploding into laughter.

The Divine Sarah had played male characters throughout her career. Soon after Hamlet she undertook the role of Hamlet, the Duke of Reichstadt in Edmond Rostand's L'Aiglon, playing a sickly youth who had died at twenty. Quizzed once if she actually preferred playing men, Bernhardt explained: "it is not the male roles, but the male brains that I prefer." Not long after women entered the acting profession in seventeenth century England, they realized that men still had the advantage with many better and longer roles written for them. Shakespeare may have created Lady Macbeth and Ophelia (to be performed by boy actors, of course), but Othello and Lago, not to mention Hamlet or Lear, required infinitely greater sobriety, virtuosity, and range. Women gradually moved in on such roles as ambiguous gender as Pack and Ariel; when Kenneth Branagh recently cast an actress as Lear's Fool, he was following precedent as far back as Priscilla Horton's performance in 1858.

A generation before Bernhardt, the first

by Peter Hay

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DECEMBER 1991

61
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Many great stars, from Mrs. Siddons to Dame Judith Anderson, have played Hamlet; but such virtuoso performances became curiosities rather than creative interpretations of the role, even though critics scruffled earnestly about the feminine side of Hamlet's character. During the First World War, with many young men overseas, Sylvia Thorndike often played men at the Old Vic. However, this practice had nothing to do with the vogue for male impersonators, then reaching its height.

Women dressed as men, for the sake of the clothes rather than the role, had its origins in the so-called “breeces” parts of Restoration comedy, and especially eighteenth century operas, with women taking the parts of courtesan singers whenever the genuine article was in short supply. In the theater, transvestism purposely revealed the shape of the female form, especially when either morality or fashion prevented even an ankle to be shown.

Another influence behind male impersonation came from English pantomime, where the Principal Boy has always been a breeches part, requiring, in the words of one writer, “a good pair of legs.” This is how Vesta Tilley began as a child, before conquering the English music halls and then the vaudeville circuits in America with her impersonations of male charac

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Publicists emphasized Tilley's normal family life and feminine side to make sure that her image would not be confused with "mannish women," as lesbians were called. Similarly Julian Eltinge, the leading female impersonator of the age, was always depicted as effeminate as a man's man. Consequently, the majority of Eltinge fans were women, while men idolized Vesta Tilley. She also made a great impact on fashion: young Edwardian gentlemen, especially those returning after a few years in the colonies, flopped to the Empire on Leicester Square to learn from Vesta Tilley about the latest Saville Row fashions.

One night in New York, she wrote in her recollections, "I rushed off stage to make the change from an Eton boy to a Dude — and to my horror found that my maid had forgotten to put cuff links in the cuffs of my shirt. The band was playing the introduction to the song — the links could not be found! I snatched a bit of black ribbon which my maid was wearing in her hair, and hastily tied the cuffs together with a black ribbon bow. Shortly afterwards a leading firm of gentlemen's hosiery, on Broadway, were exhibiting cuff links in the form of a black ribbon bow, as the very latest fashion in London . . . ."

Vesta Tilley had many imitators on both sides of the Atlantic; one of them, Kathleen Clifford, was described as the "smardest dressed man on the American stage." But the vogue went beyond fads and fashion. It coincided with women's emancipation from dull's clothes and into practical work attire; when the vote and other freedoms were won, male impersonation declined.

The preoccupation Peter Pan is perhaps the only true breeches part left in the repertoire, with spectra dressers in men's clothes only when a part requires it, as Garbo did in her favorite role of Queen Christina, or Barbara Streisand in Yentl. Male and female impersonators have roots deep in both the theater and in social taboos. The fascination comes from magical transformation through the art of illusion. Its appeal lies in the pursuit of impossible dreams.

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