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STUDIO ARENA THEATRE

Hedda Gabler



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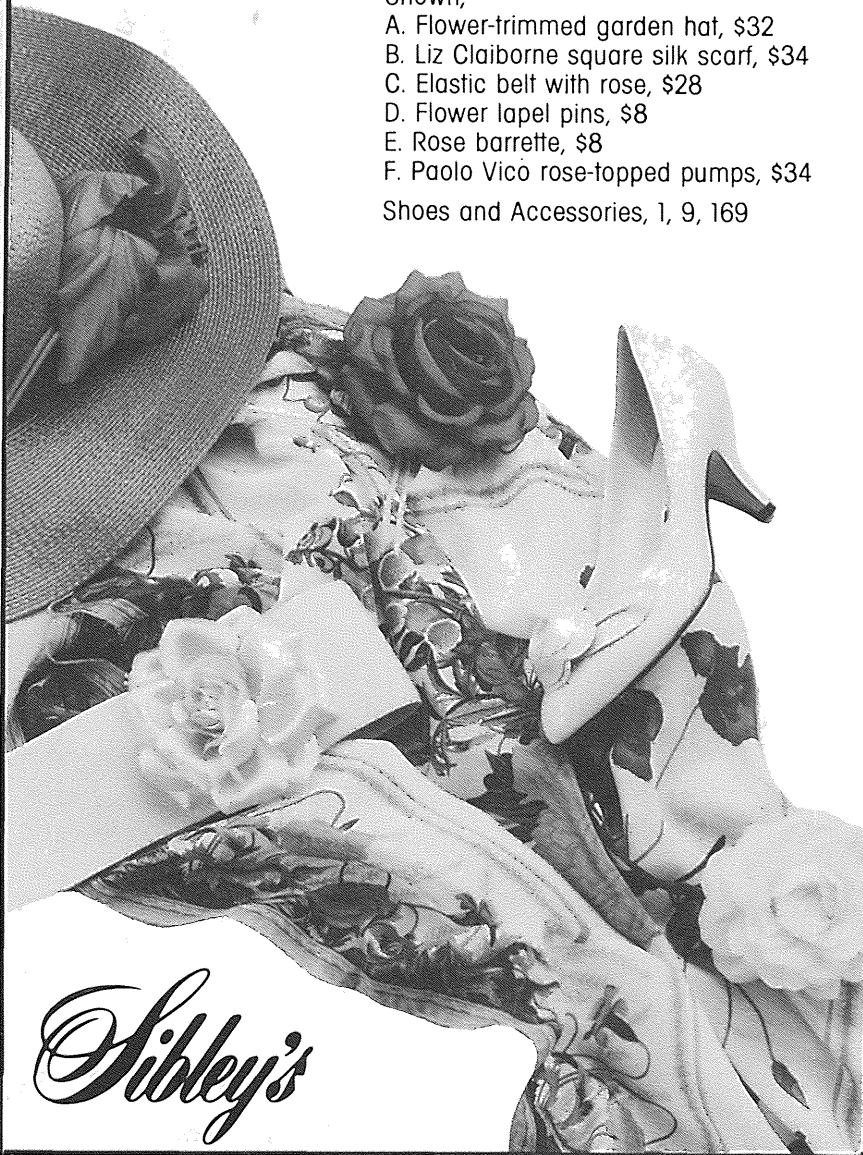
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DAVID FRANK, Artistic Director

RAYMOND BONNARD, Managing Director

presents

HEDDA GABLER

By

HENRIK IBSEN

A New Adaptation By

CHRISTOPHER HAMPTON

Directed By

ROSEMARY HAY

Set Designer

ROBERT MORGAN

Costume Designer

MARY ANN POWELL

Lighting Designer

DENNIS PARICHY

Sound Designer

RICK MENKE

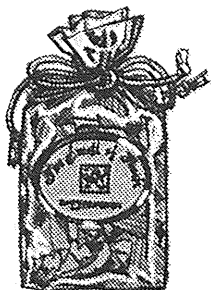
This production is made possible, in part, with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts and a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts in Washington, D.C., a federal agency, and from Erie County and the City of Buffalo.

Studio Arena Theatre is a member of the following national, professional organizations:
League of Resident Theatres and Theatre Communications Group.

HEDDA GABLER is produced by special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc., 45 West 25th St., New York, N.Y. 10010

183rd Production, April 21 - May 15, 1988

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CAST OF CHARACTERS (In Order of Appearance)

Berte	ARLENE CLEMENT
Aunt Julia	VIRGINIA DOWNING
George Tesman	JIM MEZON
Hedda Gabler	CHRISTINE BARANSKI
Mrs. Elvsted	JULIET PRITNER
Judge Brack	JOHN CAMERA
Eilert Lovborg	MATTHEW COWLES
<hr/>	
Production Stage Manager	GLENN BRUNER

SCENE SYNOPSIS

The action takes place in Tesman's house in Christiania, Norway.
The time is 1891.

ACT ONE: Early morning

ACT THREE: The next day
at dawn

ACT TWO: Afternoon

ACT FOUR: Evening

There will be one fifteen-minute intermission

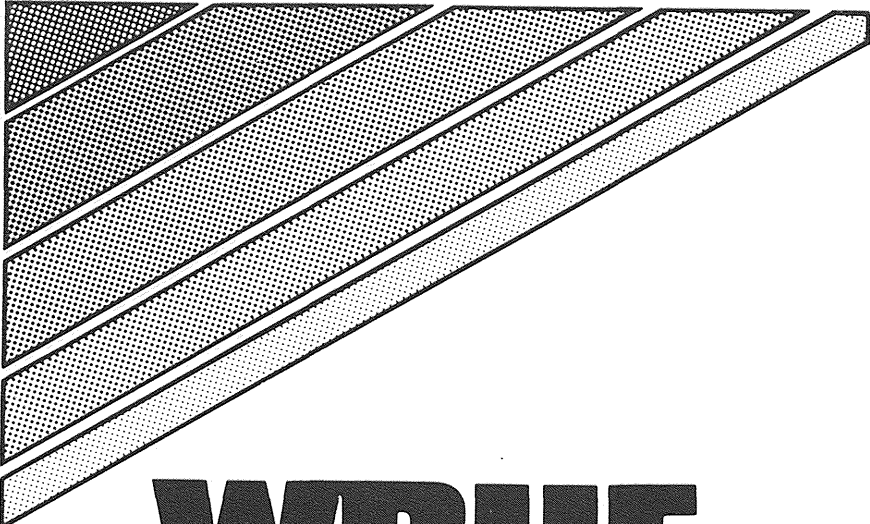
This Theatre operates under an agreement between the League of Resident Theatres and Actors Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

SPECIAL CREDITS

Publicity Photos Jim Bush
Casting Consultant Liz Woodman, c.s.a.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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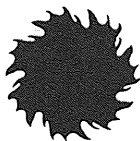
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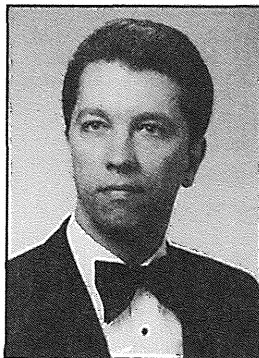
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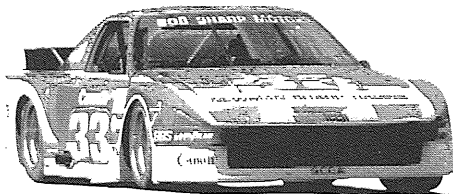
Many thanks to these "behind-the-scenes" folks who help us throughout the year. We apologize if anyone has been left out.

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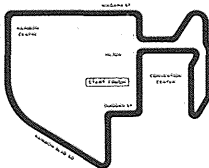


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ABOUT HENRIK IBSEN'S WRITING . . .

Whatever I have written has been without any conscious thought of making propaganda. I have been more poet and less social philosopher than people generally seem inclined to believe. . . . must disclaim the honor of having consciously worked for the women's rights movement. I am not even quite clear as to just what this women's rights movement really is. To me it has seemed a problem of humanity in general. And if you read my books carefully you will understand this. True enough it is desirable to solve the problem of women's rights, along with all the others; but that has not been the whole purpose. My task has been the *description of humanity*.

Henrik Ibsen
Speech to the Norwegian
Women's Rights League

The words are the words of actuality, but the drift of the words, something beyond this. There is the powerful impression of unseen forces closing in upon the place.

Edward Gordon Craig

Ibsen succeeded in doing what every major playwright had attempted after the end of the seventeenth century and what even Goethe and Wagner had not wholly accomplished: he created a new mythology and the theatrical conventions with which to express it. . . .

He made the precariousness of modern beliefs and the absence of an imaginative world order his starting point. Man moves naked in a world bereft of explanatory or conciliating myth. Ibsen's dramas presuppose the withdrawal of God from human affairs, and that withdrawal has left the door open to cold gusts blowing in from a malevolent though inanimate creation. But the most dangerous assaults upon reason and life come not from without. . . . They arise in the unstable soul. Ibsen proceeds from the modern awareness that there is rivalry and unbalance in the individual psyche. The ghosts that haunt his characters are not the palpable heralds of damnation whom we find in *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*. They are the forces of disruption that have broken loose from the core of the

spirit. Or, more precisely, they are cancers growing in the soul. In Ibsen's vocabulary, the most deadly of these cancers is "idealism," the mask of hypocrisy and self-deception with which men seek to guard against the realities of social and personal life. When "ideals" seize upon an Ibsen character, they drive him to psychological and material ruin. . . . Once the mask has grown close to the skin, it can be removed only at suicidal cost. . . . When the mask no longer shields her against the light, Hedda Gabler kills herself.

George Steiner

In our time, Mark Rothko wrenched, out of the simplest secular forms of shape and color, a reverberance, a religious power. This force possessed the plays of Ibsen. Where was the well-made politeness? Why did the individual scenes of the play move in great Stonehenges of energy? Why didn't the plays of Ibsen seem like the plays of Ibsen? These seemed to be all about furies and one's relation to the furies.

John Guare

REVIEWER'S COMMENTS ON THE PREMIERE ENGLISH PRODUCTION OF HEDDA GABLER, 1891

There is no reasoning as to a lunatic's behaviour; and Hedda Gabler is manifestly a lunatic of the epileptic class, among whom callousness to the sufferings of others and indifference to their own fate are frequently observed. . . .

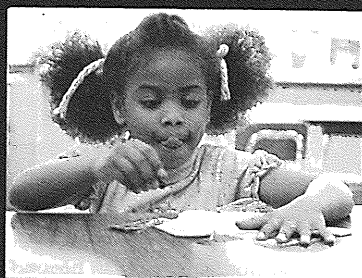
The Times

What is Hedda Gabler? She has something in her of Emma Bovary, a great deal of Jane de Simerose; she has kinship with Becky Sharp, and affinity with Julia. . . . She is compact with all the vices; she is instinct with all the virtues of womanhood. She is at once very possible and very terrible.

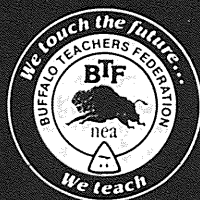
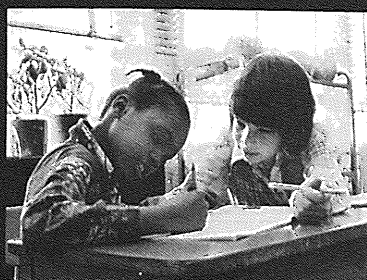
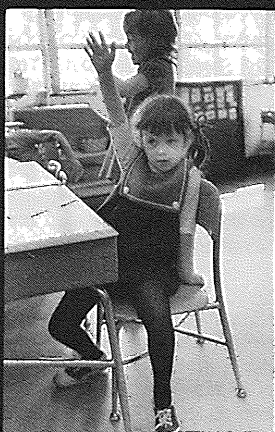
Black and White

HEDDA GABLER is the study of a malicious woman of evil instincts, jealous, treacherous, cold-hearted, and, as it seems to us, wholly out of place on the stage.

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. . . Mean and sordid philosophy . . . Insidious nastiness of photographic studies of vice and morbidity.

Saturday Review

A woman more morally repulsive has seldom been seen on the stage. She talks with conviction and acts like a lunatic.

Illustrated London News

In HEDDA GABLER he gives us a typical tragedy of modern life, and in the strange, sensitive, selfish heroine, he presents one of the most wonderful and subtle conceptions of woman in the whole range of dramatic literature. But though we hate his self-centered woman, with the bored, unsatisfied life, who fights like a cunning tigress, wounding and killing without pity, to gain the emotional and sensuous food she hungers for, with what a thrilling sense of pity and terror must we regard the fatal consequences of her spoiled life.

Sunday Times

She is various and sinuous and graceful, complicated and natural; she suffers, she struggles, she is human, and by that fact exposed to a dozen interpretations, to the importunity of our suspense.

Henry James, *New Review*

ABOUT HEDDA GABLER...

The pale, apparently cold, beauty. Expects great things of life and the joy of life.

Hedda feels herself demoniacally attracted by the tendencies of the times. But she lacks courage. Her thoughts remain theories, ineffective dreams.

Buried deep within Hedda there is a level of poetry. But the environment frightens her. Suppose she were to make herself ridiculous!

Hedda is [typical of a] woman in her position and with her character. She marries Tesman but she devotes her imagination to Eilert Lovborg. She leans back in her chair, closes her eyes, and dreams of his adventures.

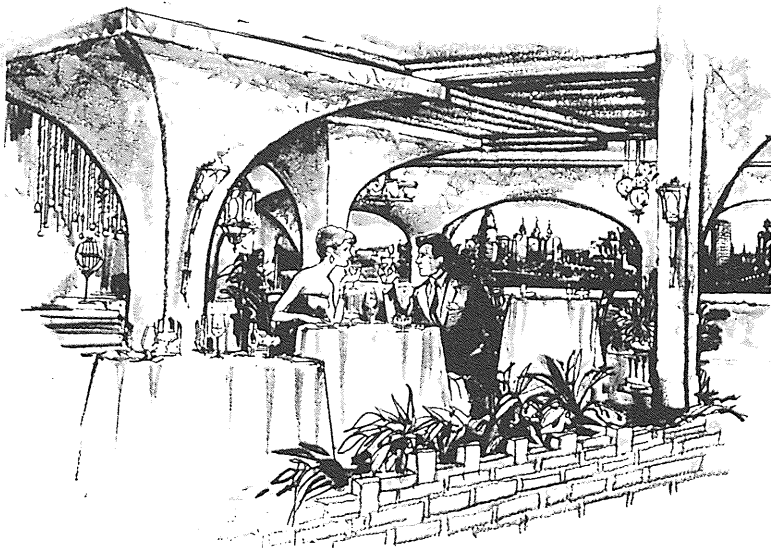
The greatest misery in this world is that so many have nothing to do but pursue happiness without being able to find it.

Men and women don't belong to the same century. . . .



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The demoniacal element in Hedda is this: She wants to exert her influence on someone — But once she has done so, she despises him. . . .

Life becomes for Hedda a ridiculous affair that isn't "worth seeing through to the end."

She really wants to live a *man's* life wholly. But then she has misgivings. Her inheritance, what is implanted in her.

CONCLUSION: Life isn't tragic. . . . Life is ridiculous. . . . And that's what I can't bear.

Henrik Ibsen

Though she has imagination and an intense appetite for beauty, she has no conscience, no conviction: with plenty of cleverness, energy and personal fascination, she remains mean, envious, insolent, cruel in protest against other's happiness, fiendish in her dislike of inartistic people and things; a bully in reaction to her own cowardice.

George Bernard Shaw

It was like a visit to the Morgue [sic] . . . There they all lay on their copper couches, fronting us, and waiting to be owned . . . There they all were, false men, wicked women, deceitful friends, sensualists, egotists, piled up in a heap behind the screen of glass, which we were thankful for . . . What a horrible story! What a hideous play!

Daily Telegraph

Hideous nightmare of pessimism . . . the play is simply a bad escape of moral sewage gas . . . Hedda's soul is a-crawl with the foulest passions of humanity.

Pictorial World

[Hedda] is selfish, morbid, cruel, bitter, jealous, something of a visionary, something of a wanton, something of a lunatic.

unidentified New York paper

Hedda is not hysterical. It is natural that actresses would wish to find an objective expression for the mystery of Hedda's nature. They cannot merely *stand there*, delivering her brilliant lines. They wonder what she is like alone, in private. And there it is usual to imagine her being more frank with herself than others. Alone, face to face with whatever she is face to face with, she is likely to moan and wring her hands, to *show* her inner distress, her desperation. This is wrong for Hedda just as it is meaningless for Nora. The hysterical gestures so often seen in the acting out of Ibsen's heroines are a way — secretive, on the sly, as it were

— of trying for a clear and neat motivation the author does not wish to provide. Hysterical feeling and silent desperation create a sympathy, a surrounding of attractive feminine weaknesses, pitiable, searing, but not very serious. It would seem to be the only motivations we can imagine embodying. Alone, what would Hedda do? Nothing, perhaps. She is immensely idle and the idle do not wring their hands. . . . There is a waywardness in her never to be explained, and yet it does not seem unreal, incredible. Hedda is real enough, tangled, knotted rather than truly complex. We cannot find the force in her that might have prospered under a different sun because her force, her presence, are very much contained in all those defects and compulsions out of which Ibsen has created her. She is not the flower of environment, but rather of inner essence.

Elizabeth Hardwick

Hedda is a number to beware. Yes, she's suicidal, but that doesn't mean she's in agony. She just lacks that super-attachment to life most of us take for granted. The idea of death comes very easily to her. People always ask, why does she marry Tesman? It's not because that's her only solution. There may be only three men in the play, but not in Oslo. The reason is that she knows she's going to die — so in the meantime she's just letting life happen, letting it come.

Maria Irene Fornes

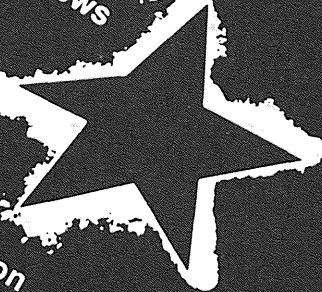
Hedda has invited portrayal as high tragedy, as pyrotechnic melodrama, as absurdist farce, as psychopathological document, as Marxist indictment, as feminist tract. She has been sentimentalized into a "good person," a misunderstood victim, and trivialized into a transvestite self-portrait of the artist. Faced with all these partial perspectives, one should begin by simply reaffirming her irreducible, many-sided humanity and, as well, the truth of an observation by Henry James on Ibsen: "His subject is always, like the subjects of all first-rate men, primarily an idea." The idea is incarnate in, not a role, but an entire play, and only attention to the ensemble of which Hedda is but one part will reveal it.

Rolf Fjelde

There is but one truly serious philosophical problem, and that is suicide. Judging whether life is or is not worth living amounts to answering the fundamental question of philosophy.

Albert Camus

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ABOUT EILERT LOVBORG

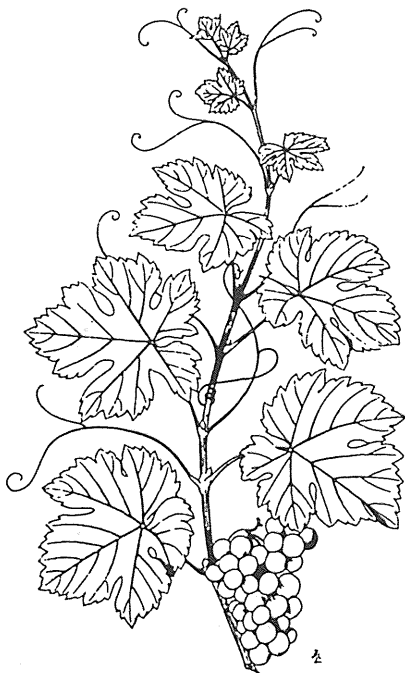
Eilert Lovborg has a double nature. It is a fiction that one loves only *one* person. He loves two. . . .

Eilert Lovborg believes that a comradeship must be formed between man and woman out of which a truly spiritual human being can arise. Whatever else the two of them do is of no concern. That is what the people around him do not understand. To them he is dissolute. Inwardly he is not.

It is in Hedda's presence that the irresistible craving for excess always comes over Eilert Lovborg.

Henrik Ibsen

The nature of the *Dionysian* . . . is brought home to us most intimately by the analogy of intoxication.



Under the charm of the Dionysian not only is the union between man and man reaffirmed, but nature which has become alienated, hostile, or subjugated, celebrates once more her reconciliation with her prodigal son, man. Freely, earth proffers her gifts, and peacefully the beasts of prey of the rocks and desert approach. The chariot of Dionysus is covered with flowers and garlands: panthers and tigers walk under

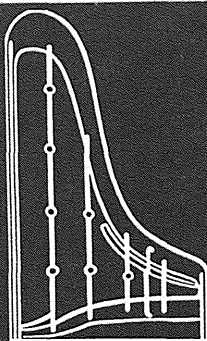
its yoke. Transform Beethoven's "Hymn to Joy" into a painting; let your imagination conceive the multitudes bowing to the dust, awestruck — then you will approach the Dionysian. Now the slave is a free man; now all the rigid, hostile barriers that necessity, caprice, or "impudent convention" have fixed between man and man are broken. Now, with the gospel of universal harmony, each one feels himself not only united, reconciled, and fused with his neighbor, but as one with him. . . .

. . . He feels himself a god, he himself now walks about enchanted, in ecstasy, like the gods he saw walking in his dreams. He is no longer an artist, he has become a work of art: in these paroxysms of intoxication the artistic power of all nature reveals itself to the highest gratification of the primordial unity.

Friedrich Nietzsche

Despairing narrowness consists in the lack of primitiveness, or of the fact one has deprived oneself of one's primitiveness; it consists in having emasculated oneself, in a spiritual sense.

Soren Kierkegaard



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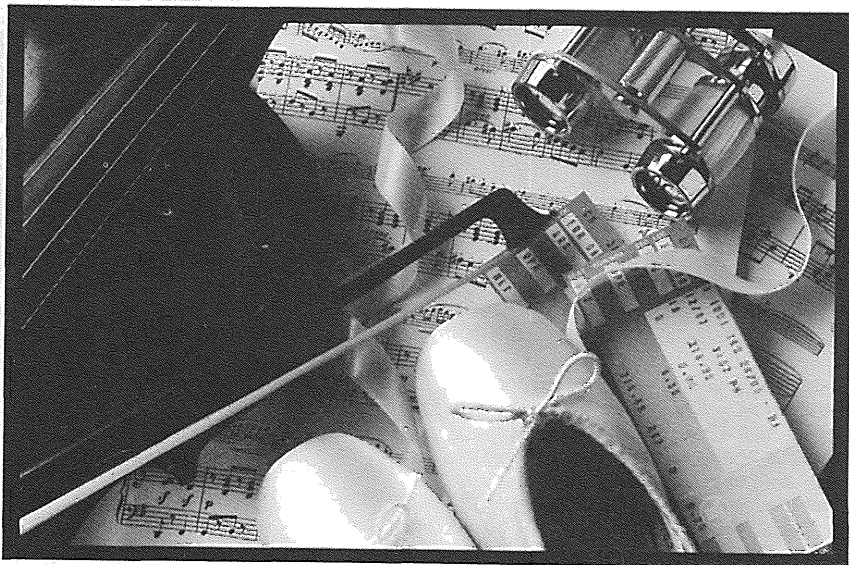
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CAST

CHRISTINE BARANSKI

Hedda Gabler



During the 1980-81 season, Ms. Baranski returned to her native city to appear at Studio Arena in LADY OF THE DIAMOND and TALLEY'S FOLLY. She won an Obie Award in 1983 for her role as Helena in the New York Shakespeare Festival's A

MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM. In 1984, she won a Tony Award for Best Supporting Actress in THE REAL THING on Broadway, as well as a Drama Desk Award. Other Broadway performances include THE HOUSE OF BLUE LEAVES and HURLY-BURLY. On screen, she has played featured roles in such films as LEGAL EAGLES, PICK-UP ARTIST, LOVESICK, 9½ WEEKS, and CRACKERS (directed by Louis Malle). She has numerous Off-Broadway credits including SALLY AND MARSHA and IT'S ONLY A PLAY at the Manhattan Theatre Club, COMING ATTRACTIONS at Playwrights Horizons, and the Workshop Production of SUNDAY IN THE PARK WITH GEORGE. After her performance here, Ms. Baranski will start rehearsals for a new Neil Simon play, RUMORS, set to open on Broadway in November.

Wanted—New Talent!

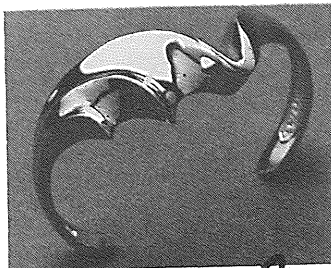
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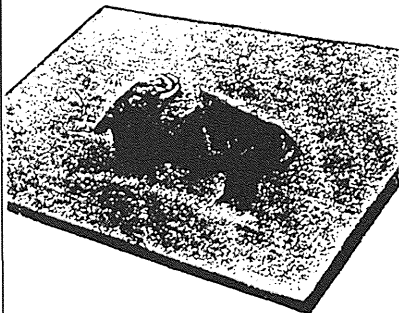
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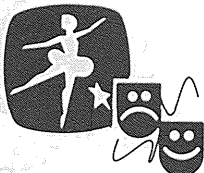
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CAST

JOHN CAMERA

Judge Brack



In five seasons with New York's CSC Repertory, he appeared in over sixteen productions including RICHARD II, HENRY IV, PART I AND 2, WILD OATS, H A M L E T, KING LEAR, New York's premiere of the complete PEER GYNT and Goethe's

FAUST. Mr. Camera's regional credits include THE DIARY OF ANNE FRANK in Indiana, A CHRISTMAS CAROL at Missouri Repertory Theatre and THE WINTER'S TALE at the Huntington Theatre Company. For the American Stage Festival, he played in COMEDY OF ERRORS, HOBSON'S CHOICE and ANGEL STREET. He has taught in Switzerland, herded sheep in Australia, wrote wine articles in France, was in two un-famous films in Italy and finally, appears in an American film, GEMINI, to be released this Spring.

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CAST

ARLENE CLEMENT

Berte



Ms. Clement is a Buffalo native who worked for more than 30 years as a secretary. One special day in November 1984, she enrolled in the Studio Arena Theatre School and the acting bug bit. Since then, she has appeared in such Studio Arena Workshops as MOTHER HICKS and THE CAUCASIAN CHALK CIRCLE. Her subsequent roles at several dinner theatres and with various local groups in Buffalo have ranged from comedy to drama and helped her polish her craft. In the role of Berte, she is making her first appearance as a professional.

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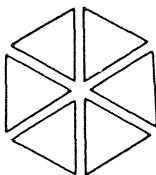
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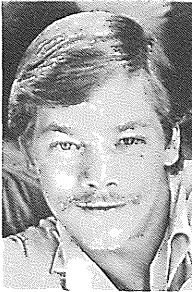
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CAST

MATTHEW COWLES

Eilert Lovborg



Henrik Ibsen (GHOSTS) and a motorcycle (B.M.W.) contributed heavily to the productive partnership of Matthew and Mrs. Cowles (Miss Baranski). They have produced two angelic daughters thus far: Isabel Vida and Keteri Tekakwitha. As long as

they're Catholic they may as well take advantage of it! Mr. Cowles is a member of the Ensemble Studio Theatre in New York City. His Off-Broadway credits include THE INDIAN WANTS THE BRONX, KID CHAMPION, THE FOURSOME, and THE TIME OF YOUR LIFE. He caused a sensation creating Billy Clyde on ALL MY CHILDREN. On Broadway, Matthew has played in MALCOLM and SWEET BIRD OF YOUTH. His film credits include: SLAPSHOT, THE PEOPLE NEXT DOOR, EDDIE MACON'S RUN, THE WORLD ACCORDING TO GARP, STARS AND BARS, and DEAD AND MARRIED, soon to be released.

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Sat.	2	Götterdämmerung
Mon.	4	American Legion Band
Tues.	5	The Nylons
Wed.	6	Ferrante & Teicher
Thurs.	7	Itzhak Perlman/BPO* Concert
Fri.	8	Pete Fountain
Sat.	9	Tony Bennett
Tues.	12	Tosca
Wed.	13	The Charlie Daniels Band
Thurs.	14	Tosca
Thurs.	14	Canadian Brass
Fri.	15	Tosca
Sat.	16	Spyro Gyra
Sun.	17	Tosca
Tues.	19	Viennese Concert/BPO*
Wed. 20 & Thurs. 21	21	Miami City Ballet
Fri.	22	Leontyne Price
Sat.	23	Pearl Bailey
Sun.	24	Steven Wright/James Lee Stanley
Wed. 27 - Sat. Aug. 6	6 (16 shows)	Peter Pan

AUGUST

Sun.	7	Peter, Paul & Mary
Wed.	10	Bucket Dance Theatre
Thurs.	11	Kingston Trio/Glenn Yarbrough
Fri.	12	Lionel Hampton
Sat.	13	Victor Borge
Wed. 17 - Sat. 27	27 (16 shows)	42nd Street
Sun.	28	Gordon Lightfoot
Wed. 31 - Sat. Sept. 3	3 (5 shows)	Ballet West - Giselle

SEPTEMBER

Sun.	4	Nancy Wilson/Wynton Marsalis
Wed.	7	Gershwin Marathon/BPO*
Thurs.	8	Roy Clark
Fri.	9	The Spinners
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CAST

VIRGINIA DOWNING

Aunt Julia

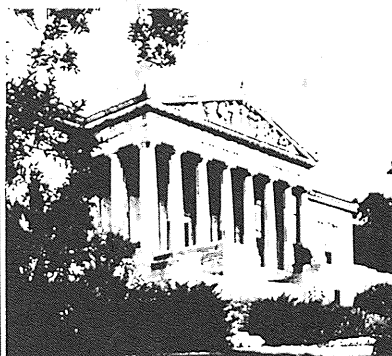


Virginia Downing most recently understudied Jean Stapleton and Polly Holliday in Broadway's ARSENIC AND OLD LACE. She also appeared with Henry Fonda and Olivia de Havilland in Broadway's A GIFT OF TIME. Ms. Downing has performed in many Regional Theatres such as

Portsmouth, Theatre by the Sea; Milwaukee Repertory; Washington Arena Stage; and Princeton, McCarter Theatre where, incidentally, she won the New Jersey Critics' Award for her performance in D.H. Lawrence's THE DAUGHTER-IN-LAW. Numerous Off-Broadway shows include Ann Sexton's MERCY STREET at the American Place. Some of the films that she can be seen in are BUTTERFIELD 8, THE GIG, and soon to be released, 2ND EFFORT. She speaks fluent French and Italian, and has translated plays from French to English. She is presently working on her one woman show on George Eliot.

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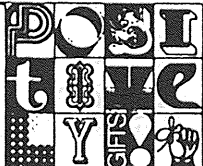
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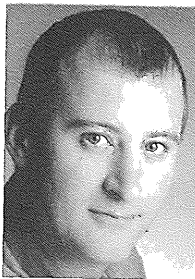
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CAST

JIM MEZON

George Tesman



Mr. Mezon returns to Studio Arena where, last season, he played Henry in THE REAL THING. He then returned to the Shaw Festival, last Summer, where he played Adolphus Cusins in MAJOR BARBARA and Slightly Soiled in PETER PAN. He

went on to Vancouver to play Herschel in FIRE, and returned to the Shaw Festival Olympic Tour of YOU NEVER CAN TELL. He has acted across Canada in plays written by English, Irish, Welsh, Danish, Norwegian, Scottish, Russian, Italian, Greek, Mexican, American, Canadian, and Tasmanian playwrights. Mr. Mezon considers himself extremely fortunate to have been taught his craft by the late Powys Thomas, well-known Stratford actor.

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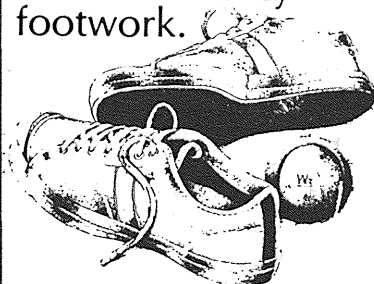
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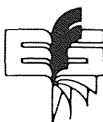
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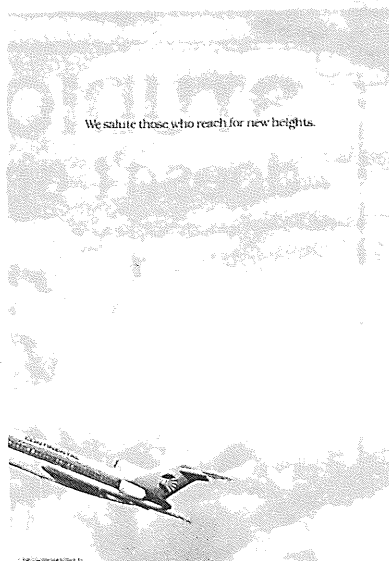
JULIET PRITNER

Mrs. Elvsted



HEDDA GABLER marks Juliet's Studio Arena debut. Her other regional credits include Miranda in *THE TEMPEST* at TheatreVirginia and a season at the Illinois Shakespeare Festival where she was seen as Julia in *THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA*,

Hero in *MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING* and *The First Witch* in *MACBETH*. Her New York credits include Desdemona in a staged reading of *OTHELLO* with F. Murray Abraham and a season in the Juilliard School Repertory where she played Hannah in *THE NIGHT OF THE IGUANA*, Isabelle in *MY SISTER IN THIS HOUSE* and Suky Tawdry/Mrs. Trapes in *THE BEGGAR'S OPERA*.




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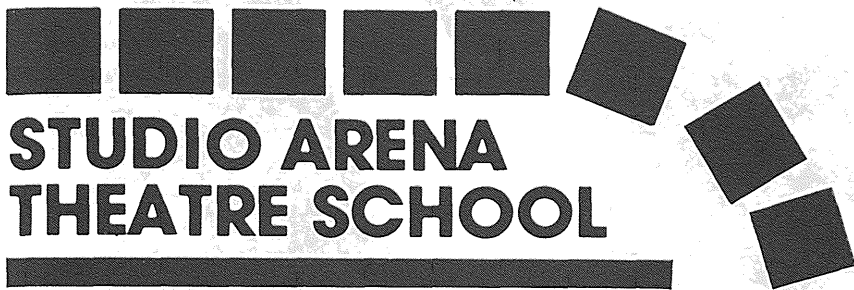
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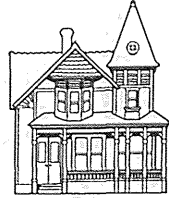
ROSEMARY HAY

Director

Rosemary Hay studied Theatre Production at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art. She assisted Trevor Nunn at the Royal Shakespeare Company on ROMEO AND JULIET and THE WINTER'S TALE. New York productions include: HITTING TOWN (The Directors Company), JOEY'S STORY from ROAD (Ensemble Studio Theatre), THE RUFFIAN ON THE STAIR (The Open Space Theatre), and LA MUSICA (Nat Horne Theatre). She assisted James Lapine at the New York Shakespeare Festival on A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM. This year, she has directed three productions at the Juilliard School and has recently been made a member of the Juilliard Faculty. In September, she will direct the American premiere of ASTONISH ME, a new English play about Jean Cocteau.

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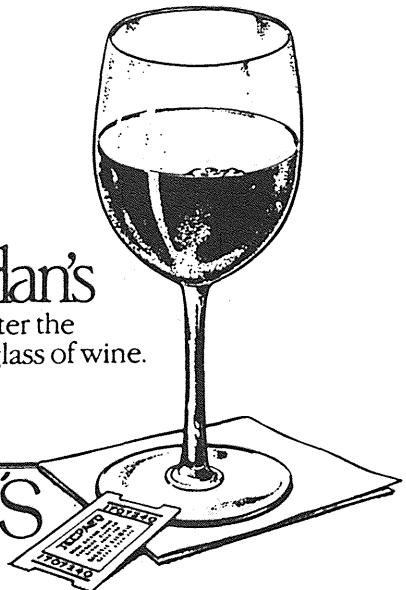
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ROBERT MORGAN

Set Designer

Robert Morgan's scenic design for HEDDA GABLER and costume designs for TWELFTH NIGHT continue an eight season association with Studio Arena Theatre. His contributions to last year's roster include costume design for THE REAL THING, scenic design for A LITTLE NIGHT MUSIC, and stage direction for HAY FEVER. Most recently, his costumes dressed the Broadway productions of I'M NOT RAPPAPORT and SHERLOCK'S LAST CASE. Mr. Morgan lives in Vermont's North-east Kingdom with his wife Wendy, a Legal Services attorney.

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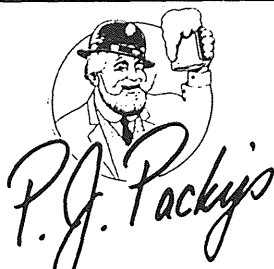
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JUNE 27	Englebert Humperdinck	8 PM	AUG. 10	Lou Rawls	8 PM
JUNE 28	Englebert Humperdinck	8 PM	AUG. 12	Natalie Cole	8 PM
JUNE 29	Yankee Doodle Dandy Musical Review	1:30	AUG. 20	George Carlin	8 PM
JUNE 29	Kenny G	8 PM	AUG. 21	Tom Jones	7 PM
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JULY 1	Ronnie Milsap/ Carl Perkins	8 PM	AUG. 25	Kenny Rogers 6 & 9:30 PM	
JULY 2	Roger Whitaker	8 PM	AUG. 27	EVITA (matinee)	2 PM
JULY 3	Roger Whitaker	7 PM	AUG. 27	EVITA	8 PM
JULY 6	Four Tops	8 PM	AUG. 28	EVITA	7 PM
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JULY 13	Dionne Warwick	8 PM	AUG. 31	Ann Murray	8 PM
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DESIGNERS

MARY ANN POWELL


Costume Designer

HEDDA GABLER is Mary Ann Powell's third outing with Robert Morgan, having designed costumes to his sets for THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST and A LITTLE NIGHT MUSIC. Ms. Powell has particularly enjoyed the varied nature of her design assignments in this, her third season as Studio Arena's resident costumiere. They include THE NORMAL HEART and TINTYPES. Mary Ann's proudest involvement this season, however, was Buffalo's first annual HOLIDAY PERFORMANCE which united thirteen area theatres to raise over a ton of food for the needy. She looks forward to a summer of travel and relaxation.

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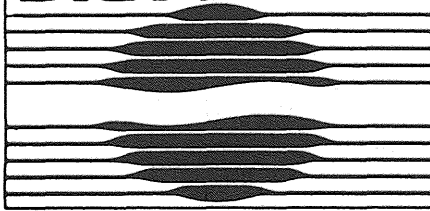
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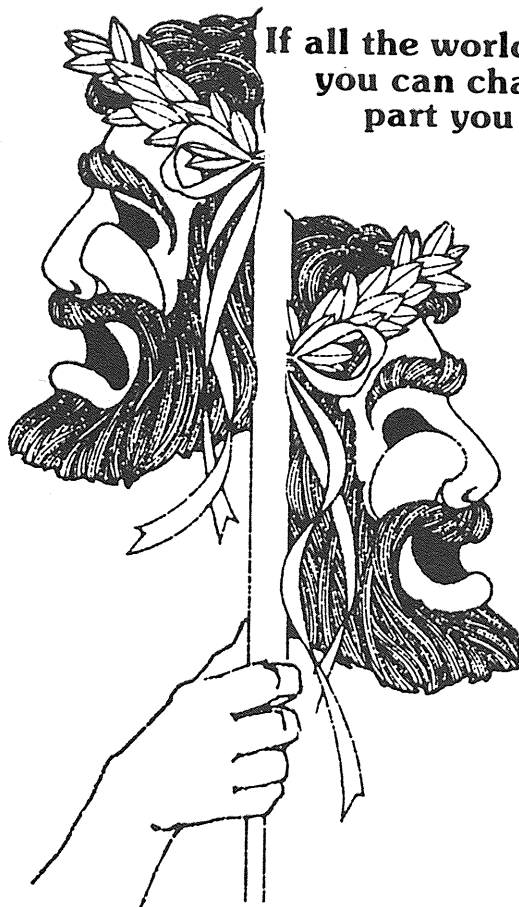
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DESIGNERS

DENNIS PARICHY

Lighting Designer

Dennis Parichy designed A VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE for Studio Arena Theatre last year. He has just designed the New York premiere of Athol Fugard's THE ROAD TO MECCA and his work is currently seen in the Broadway production of Lanford Wilson's BURN THIS, Off-Broadway in A SHAYNA MAIDEL, and in THE NERD in Chicago. Recent work includes SUMMER AND SMOKE in Los Angeles, PENN AND TELLER, THE NERD and COASTAL DISTURBANCES on Broadway. He designs extensively for regional theatre including The Mark Taper Forum, The Goodman Theatre, Seattle Rep and Syracuse Stage. In New York, he is resident designer for Circle Repertory Theatre and frequently designs for The Acting Company and Manhattan Theatre Club. He has received Tony Nominations, the Drama Desk, Maharam and DramaLogue Awards and an Obie for his designs.

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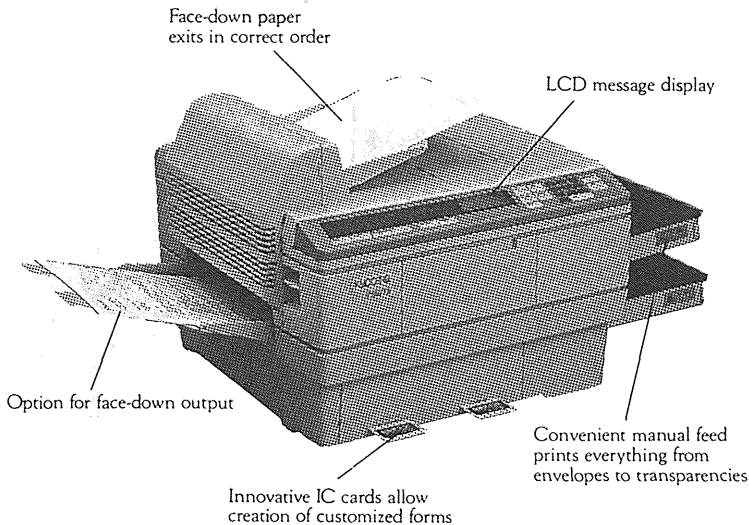
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DESIGNERS

RICK MENKE

Sound Designer

HEDDA GABLER is a milestone for Mr. Menke. It marks his 100th production as resident Sound Designer for Studio Arena Theatre. Over the years Mr. Menke in conjunction with the management of Studio Arena, has built up the Sound Department to the point where it is one of the finest in regional theatre in the country. Rick is proud of that fact and is looking forward to further growth over the next 100 shows! Outside of Studio Arena, Mr. Menke's latest project is a design for a new production of A RAISIN IN THE SUN at the Morris Mechanic Theatre in Baltimore, Maryland. Rick resides in Buffalo with his wife Elaine and their two gorgeous children, Katie and Nathan.

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PRODUCTION

GLENN BRUNER

Production Stage Manager

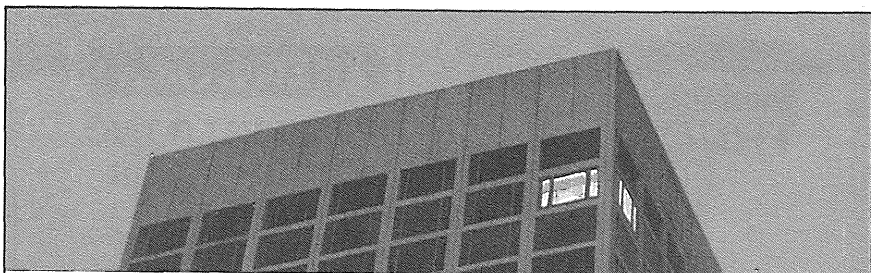
HEDDA GABLER marks the end of Mr. Bruner's third season at Studio Arena. A native of San Antonio, Texas, he stage managed this season's productions of THE NORMAL HEART, STEPPING OUT, and TINTYPES. Prior to moving to Buffalo, Mr. Bruner was on the stage management staff of Houston's Alley Theatre. In San Antonio, he was a member of the technical staff of Earl Holliman's Fiesta Dinner Playhouse, where he worked on more than forty productions. In New York, Mr. Bruner stage managed the Off-Broadway premiere of Alan Ayckbourn's SEASON'S GREETINGS. An avid amateur photographer, Mr. Bruner plans to spend his summer in and around the Texas Hill Country.

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NEXT ON STAGE: 1988-89 SEASON

A Few Words From David Frank

In the summer of 1983, browsing through a copy of *London Theatre Record*, I came across a set of extraordinarily enthusiastic notices for a play I'd never heard of: *MEN SHOULD WEEP* by Ena Lamont Stewart. The normally acerbic and argumentative London theatre critics reacted to this play with such unguarded praise that they lapsed, uncharacteristically, into the language every promoter dreams of — "triumphant," "devastating truth," "brilliant," and "deeply moving" echoed the headlines.

Surprisingly, *MEN SHOULD WEEP* never did move to Broadway as one would expect. However, it will finally receive the American premiere it deserves as the opening production of Studio Arena Theatre's 1988-89 season. It is, in a sense, a wonderfully naive work. Written, apparently in just two days, in 1946 by an unknown minister's daughter, it has no philosophical pretensions, no grand scheme. Set in Glasgow during the Depression, it portrays the struggle of family life, under conditions of appalling poverty, from a woman's point of view. It does so with great humor, honesty and unusual perception. It is, in the best sense, an elemental and totally innocent piece, freshly observed and deeply felt.

This same quality of innocence is characteristic of our second and third productions scheduled for next year. For the holiday season we will present Robert Harling's remarkable first play, *STEEL MAGNOLIAS*. Although much more raucously comic than *MEN SHOULD WEEP*, it derives its strength from similarly honest and perceptive observation. Set in a beauty shop in a small town in Louisiana, Mr. Harling's play is also without pretension

but he knows his characters so well and paints their qualities — both ludicrous and endearing — so vividly, that audiences have no choice but to surrender to their idiosyncratic charm. And comedy or not, they are eventually moved by the generosity and courage of this all-female cast as they face the commonplace triumphs and tragedies of any small town.

Between these two naturalistic works, we will sandwich a musical, *THE BOY FRIEND*, that is, arguably, about innocence itself. Set just a decade before *MEN SHOULD WEEP*, it is a gentle spoof on the artifice of the musical comedies of the 1920's. Miraculously, not only charm but a simple power emerges from its very ingenuousness. The music reminds me of cockney songs artlessly — and more or less tunefully — celebrated in the pubs of London with the help of quantities of warm beer. Songs sung for the joy of singing, without regard for an audience.

The first half of next season, three plays with accessible, old-fashioned stories will be dedicated to a kind of theatrical innocence that should in no way be confused with shallowness, but is, on the contrary, one of the foundations of theatre magic.

The second half of our season will see a marked change. Peter Shaffer's *THE ROYAL HUNT OF THE SUN*, Athol Fugard's *THE ROAD TO MECCA*, and Tina Howe's *PAINTING CHURCHES* are all very sophisticated plays. Lack of space precludes an introduction to these three plays — the sophisticated half of our season — but I will give them their due in a future article.

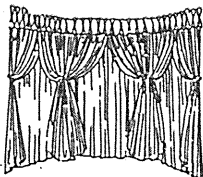
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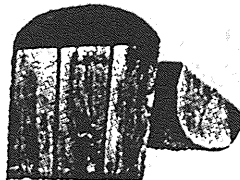


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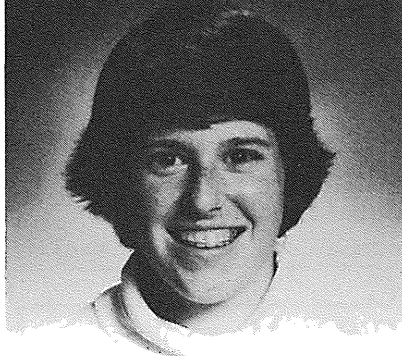
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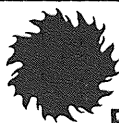
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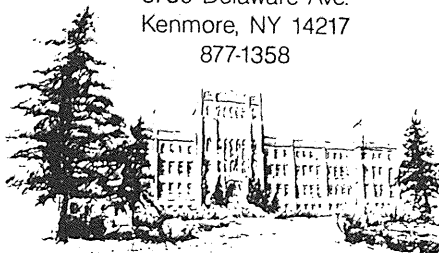
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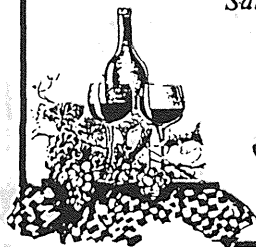
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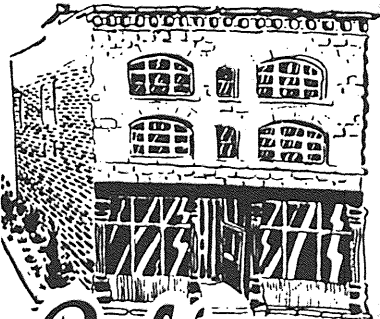
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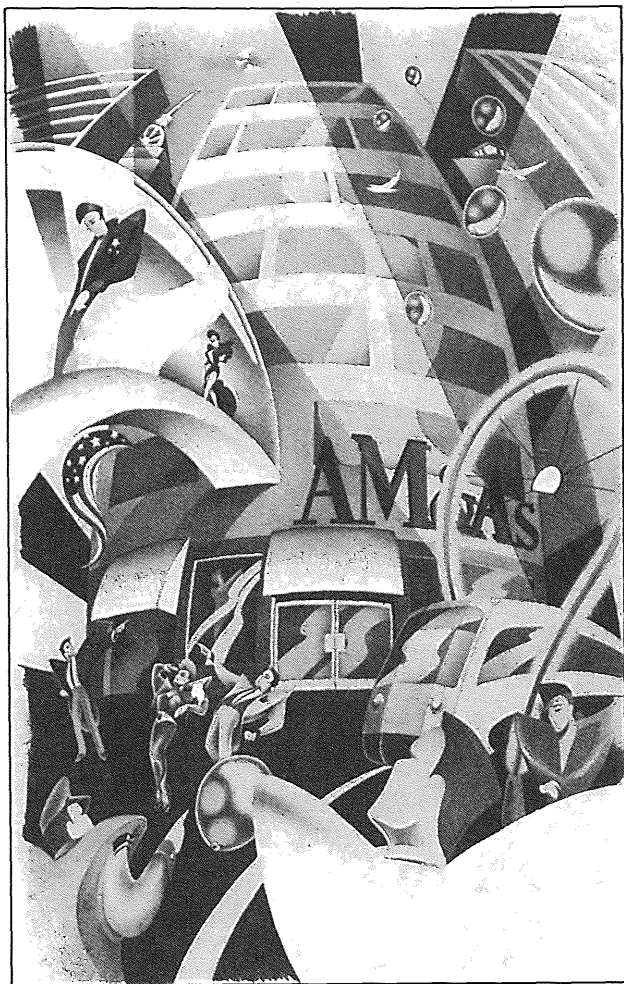
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