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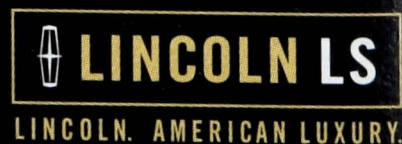
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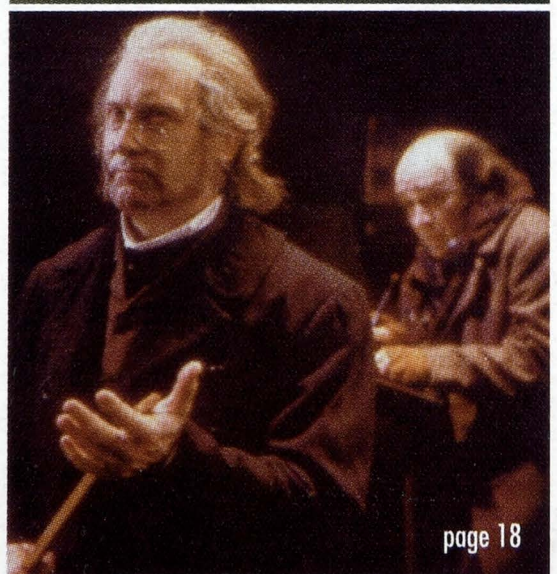
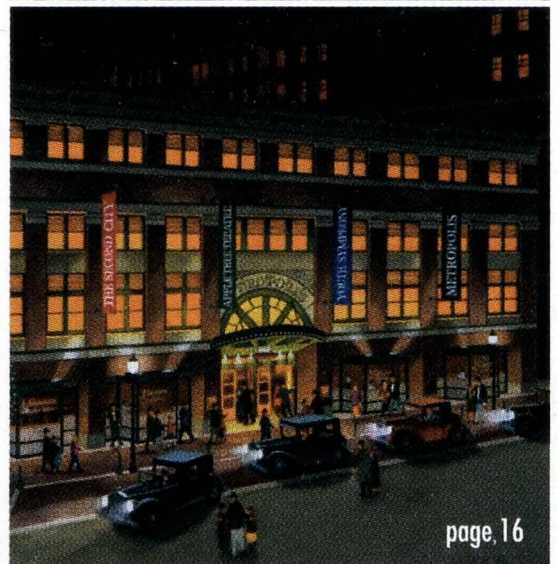
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ST. JOHN

BY MARIE GRAY



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PROVING GROUND

Chicago's Second City, celebrating its 40th anniversary this month, has served as a crucible of comic training for two generations of American performers. CHRIS JONES lights the path to commercial success.

Legacy of Laughter

Second City," says Tim Meadows of *Saturday Night Live* with nary a hint of irony, "is where I learned how to be a man."

Many people would be surprised to hear Chicago's irreverent citadel of sketch and improvisational comedy credited with building maturity, promoting moderation, or banishing childish play. But Meadows had called to talk about Second City's role in the development of his professional—rather than personal—maturity.

"It really was like going to graduate school for me," Meadows says. "When you have to put yourself and your material up in front of an audience every night of the week, you learn very, very fast."

Over the past four decades, Second City has been one of the most influential forces in the development of modern American comedy. The alumni of its casts and the graduates of its highly developed training programs have become a powerful force in Hollywood and on such important television shows as *Saturday Night Live*. And the growing list of illustrious alums—including Bill Murray, Chris Farley, Del Close, Martin Short, John

Comic sports:
Tim Meadows
and Chris
Farley

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saffron burrows

peter mullan

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presents

CABIN PRESSURE

Conceived and directed by Anne Bogart
Written and created by the SITI Company

The Ruth Page Theater
1016 N. Dearborn
Chicago, IL 60610

Performing Arts Chicago is part of the Audiences for the Performing Arts Network (APAN) Project, supported by the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund.

PAC programs are supported in part by a CityArts 3 Grant from the City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs; by grants from the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency; and by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts.

American Airlines is the official airline of Performing Arts Chicago's 40th Anniversary Season.

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This project is funded in part by the National Dance Project of the New England Foundation for the Arts, with lead funding from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. Additional funding provided by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and Phillip Morris Companies, Inc.

Photographs and tape recordings are not permitted during the performance. Latecomers will be seated only during pauses and intermissions.

www.PAChicago.org



About the Presenter

Performing Arts Chicago (PAC) is the city's leading presenter of new directions in theater, music, and dance, offering the Midwest the world's most innovative performing artists. PAC is dedicated to presenting artists at the forefront of their disciplines who revolutionize our notions of the stage, including: Robert Lepage (Canada); Ensemble Modern (Germany); Theatre de Complicite (England); the Maly Theatre of St. Petersburg (Russia); La Compagnie Philippe Genty (France); Handspring Puppet Company (South Africa); and Americans Steve Reich & Beryl Korot, Mark Morris, Philip Glass, Bill T. Jones, Twyla Tharp, and many more. In its 40 years of presenting, PAC's mission has been to broaden the perspective for the arts in Chicago, increasing the city's acceptance and support of new work by contemporary artists.

But Why?

Because the creation of art does not exist in a vacuum. Artists — like anyone else with an imagination — seek to be inspired. Once on a trip to New York, PAC's Executive Director Susan Lipman ran into choreographer Bill T. Jones at the Museum of Modern Art. He was there absorbing the works of other artists, searching for new ideas, looking to be inspired. PAC's position as a presenter facilitates this kind of exchange between artists — be they local or international. Thanks to theatrical wizard Robert Lepage's many trips to Chicago over the past few years, he has developed a new work entitled *Geometry of Miracles*, based on the life of Frank Lloyd Wright. If institutions like Performing Arts Chicago and the International Theatre Festival had never brought him to Chicago and nurtured his relationship with this city, he would not have had the opportunity to explore one of the world's greatest architects.

PAC also believes that new work should go beyond New York and Los Angeles. As a presenter, PAC's mission responds to Chicago's geographic position. Unlike cities on the coasts, which integrate outside influences easily into their arts and cultures, Chicago's location prevents it from receiving untraditional ideas quite as easily. This is why Chicago needs a presenter like PAC: by seeking out international artists with a different point of view, PAC expands Chicago's cultural horizons. In 1996, PAC received the Ruth Page Award for Outstanding Contribution to the Dance Community for "creating a home in Chicago for world-class dance that pushes disciplinary boundaries. In doing so, PAC has nurtured new audiences for dance through its artistic choices, marketing strategies, and outreach efforts."

Accomplishments such as these have motivated PAC for forty years to continue its search and presentation of boundary-breaking artists who shape the future of theater, music, and dance.

Enjoy the performance.

Ensemble	Will Bond*, Ellen Lauren*, Kelly Maurer*, Barney O'Hanlon*, and Stephen Webber*
Set Design	Neil Patel
Costume Design	James Schuette
Light Design	Mimi Jordan Sherin
Soundscape	Darron L West
Dramaturgy	Adrien-Alice Hansel, Kae Koger
Lighting Supervisor/Production Manager	Brian Scott
Production Assistant/Properties Design	Jason Szalla
Set Construction	The Production Studio
Company Stage Manager	Megan Wanlass*
General Manager/Tour Coordinator	Carolyn Clark Smith

There will be no intermission.

*Member of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States.

Anne Bogart is a member of SSDC, the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers, Inc., an independent national labor union.

Cabin Pressure was made possible by generous contributions from the following sources:

National Endowment for the Arts

Funded in part by the National Dance Project of the New England Foundation for the Arts, with lead funding from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. Additional funding provided by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the Philip Morris Companies Inc.

Development Partners:

The Actors Theatre Of Louisville

In conjunction with the Audience Project, a grant made by the National Theatre Artist Residency Program funded by Theatre Communications Group and the Pew Charitable Trust.

Wexner Center for the Arts at Ohio State University

Cabin Pressure includes material from Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, by permission of Edward Albee, and also includes material from Noel Coward's *Private Lives*, by permission of the Noel Coward Estate.

Works in this play were sampled from the following sources: *Agamemnon*, Aeschylus, trans. By Louis MacNeice; *Theatre Audiences*, Susan Bennett; *Histrionics*, Thomas Bernard; *The Audience*, Herbert Blau; *To All Appearances*, Herbert Blau; *Distance in the Theatre*, Daphra Chaim; *The Presence of the Actor*, Joseph Chaikin; *Text on Theater*, Jacques Copeau; *Studies in 7 Acts*, Eleanor Dusa; *Towards a New Theatre*, Robert Edmund Jones; *An Anatomy of Drama*, Martin Esslin; *The Use of the Drama*, Granville-Barker; *Towards a Poor Theatre*, Jerzy Grotowski; *Insulting the Audience*, Peter Handke; *On Acting and Not-Acting*, Michael Kirby; *True and False*, David Mamet; *American Theatre* (4/9/98), Julius Novick; *The Invisible Actor*, Yoshi Oida; *Unmarked*, Peggy Phelan; St. Francis of Assisi; *Macbeth*, William Shakespeare; *Midsummer Night's Dream*, William Shakespeare; *The Art of Theatre*, Sam Shepard; Robert Wilson; *The Seagull*, Anton Chekhov; *Spider's Web*, Agatha Christie. The remaining text was sampled from Anne Bogart's Audience Project Interview, which took place at Actors Theatre of Louisville, January 1998 through June 1998.

CABIN PRESSURE IS A PLAY I DEVELOPED WITH THE SITI COMPANY in order to investigate the audience/actor relationship in the theater. The production opened to great enthusiasm at the Humana Festival of New American Plays in Louisville, Kentucky, in March 1999.

As a director in the theater, I am acutely aware of the tension, the exquisite pressure, or the lack thereof, between audience members and actors on the stage. The quality of the dynamics between actor and audience constitute a relationship. Sometimes the relationship functions and at times it does not. *Cabin Pressure* is an investigation of this potentially rich and creative relationship.

What is an audience? What is the creative role of the audience? What is the responsibility of the audience to the actor? What is an actor? What is the actor's responsibility to the audience? These are some of the questions that I posed to the SITI Company actors in rehearsal for *Cabin Pressure*. I wanted us to start with no preconceived notions or assumptions about the answers to these questions, but rather to experiment freely and play with possible variations on the theme. The result of these explorations is a production that speaks directly to the people in the room sharing it.

The spoken text and dialogue selected for *Cabin Pressure* is sampled from the writings of great dreamers of the theater such as Stanislavsky, Meyerhold, Artaud, Brook, as well as selections from my interviews with 57 theatergoers, and fragments from existing plays that suggest variations on the actor/audience theme.

I hope that *Cabin Pressure* will serve as a happy reminder about the potential humanity of the audience/actor relationship in the theater. In a time when computers, television, film, and mega malls dominate and mediate our relationship with others, perhaps the theater is a place to strengthen and heighten our direct connection with each other.

—Anne Bogart

profiles

ANNE BOGART (Director)

Anne Bogart, artistic director of the SITI Company. Recent productions with SITI include *Bob* (Wexner Center for the Arts/SITI); *Culture of Desire* (a co-production of SITI, City Theatre, and Portland Stage Company); *Private Lives* by Noel Coward and *Miss Julie* by August Strindberg (Actors Theatre of Louisville/SITI); *Alice's Adventures* (Wexner, City Theatre, City Stages, SITI); *Small Lives/Big Dreams*, *Going, Going, Gone*, and *The Medium* (SITI). Other recent productions: *Songs and Stories from Moby Dick* (by Laurie Anderson); *Gertrude and Alice* (the Foundry Theatre); *The Seven Deadly Sins* by Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill (New York City Opera). She is the recipient of two Obie Awards and a Bessie Award. Ms. Bogart is currently an associate professor at Columbia University.

WILL BOND (Ensemble)

Will Bond appeared in SITI's inaugural production of Charles Mee, Jr.'s *Orestes*, and has since created roles for SITI productions' *The Medium* (an Obie winner), *Small Lives/Big Dreams*, *Culture of Desire*, *Bob* (Obies for sound and light and three Drama Desk nominations), and *Seven Deadly Sins* at N.Y. City Opera. He has toured with Tadashi Suzuki and SCOT in *Dionysus*, and with Robert Wilson's *Persephone*. Mr. Bond continues to coach Suzuki and viewpoint training with SITI in Saratoga Springs, N.Y., and in workshops in universities and theaters all over the U.S. and abroad.

ELLEN LAUREN (Ensemble)

SITI credits: seven-year company member; *Cabin Pressure* (Actors Theatre of Louisville Humana Festival), *Private Lives* (ATL), *Miss Julie*

(ATL), *The Medium* (national and international venues), *Going, Going, Gone* (Humana ATL, the Magic Theater), *Culture of Desire* (national and international venues), *Orestes* (Toga, Japan), *The Miller Season* in New York City, nine years ongoing classes U.S. and abroad, eight seasons summer intensive program (Saratoga Spring, N.Y.). Additional credits: *The Adding Machine* (ATL), *Picnic* (ATL), *The Women* (Hartford Stage), all with Anne Bogart; 13 years collectively as resident company member Milwaukee Rep, Stagewest, the Alley Theatre; 10 years guest artist with the Suzuki Company of Toga under the direction of Tadashi Suzuki, both touring and teaching around the world; premiere of Roger Reynold's *Justice* (2nd Theatre Olympics Shizwoka, Japan); ongoing faculty member the Juilliard School of Drama, New York City; Kosavar Award for performance of *Anna II* in New York City Opera's production of *Seven Deadly Sins* under the direction of Anne Bogart.

KELLY MAURER (*Ensemble*)

Kelly has been a member of SITI since its inception. With the company she has performed in many productions including *The Medium*, *Small Lives/Big Dreams*, and *Culture of Desire* at NYTW, P.S. 122, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Walker Arts Center, Wexner Arts Center, City Theatre, and the Irish Life Theater Festival, Dublin. Regionally, Kelly has been seen as Rainbow in Maria Irene Fornes' *And What of the Night* at Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, *Hamlet* at StageWest, and Christine in *Miss Julie* at Actors Theatre of Louisville. Internationally, she has toured with Tadashi Suzuki in the Suzuki Company of Toga's *Dionysus* and director Robert Wilson in *Persephone*. Last year she performed the role of Jolly (as standby for Patti LuPone) in David Mamet's *The Old Neighborhood* on Broadway. Most recently, Kelly performed in the production of *Water Engine* at the Atlantic Theatre Company. Kelly also teaches the Suzuki method of actor training at N.Y.U., Fordham University, the Atlantic Theater Company, and workshops at universities throughout the U.S.

BARNEY O'HANLON (*Ensemble*)

Barney O'Hanlon has been collaborating with Anne Bogart since the fall of 1986. With SITI: *Cabin Pressure* at ATL; *Culture of Desire* at Portland Stage Company and Festival Iberoamericano in Bogota, Columbia; *Small Lives/Big Dreams* at Actors' Theatre of Louisville, P.S. 122, and the Miller Theater; and *Seven Deadly Sins* at New York City Opera. In addition, he has appeared in Bogart productions at the Alley Theatre, Trinity Rep. Co., River Arts Rep,

Opera/Omaha, and various venues in New York City. As a longtime collaborator with Tina Landau, Barney created the role of "Howie" in 1969 (ATL - Humana Festival) and continued the role in *Stonewall: Night Variations* for En Garde Arts. He created movement for Opera Ebony's *The Outcast* at BAM's Majestic Theater, also directed by Ms. Landau, and choreographed the dueling tango sequence for *View of the Dome* directed by Michael Mayer at New York Theater Workshop. He has appeared in numerous works with Brian Jucha as a member of VIA Theatre, and has also worked with Richard Foreman, Robert Wilson, Lisa Peterson, and Molly Smith. He has appeared in *Hamlet* at ATL, directed by Jon Jory, and as "Gil" in Jon Robin Baitz's *A Fair Country*, directed by Scott Zigler at Steppenwolf Theatre Company.

NEIL PATEL (*Set Design*)

Neil has designed numerous productions with the SITI Company and Anne Bogart including *Bob*, *Alice's Adventures*, *Private Lives*, *Culture of Desire*, *The Adding Machine*, and the Miller Retrospective of *Going, Going, Gone*, *The Medium*, and *Small Lives/Big Dreams*. In New York his work includes the Tony Award-winning *Side Man* and numerous off-Broadway productions including *Quills* (Drama Desk nomination), *A Question of Mercy*, *View of the Dome*, *Brides of the Moon*, all for New York Theatre Workshop; *Hurrah at Last* at the Roundabout; *Henry V* at the Public/NYSF; *Mud, River, Stone* at Playwrights Horizons; and *The Grey Zone* and *Anadarko* at MCC Theater. Regionally, his work has appeared at the Guthrie Theater, Center Stage in Baltimore, Long Wharf Theatre, Steppenwolf, and La Jolla Playhouse, among others. In 1996 he received an Obie Award for sustained excellence in set design.

JAMES SCHUETTE (*Costume Design*)

Recent work includes set and costume design for *Carmen* at Santa Fe Opera and set design for Laurie Anderson's *Moby Dick* (BAM Next Wave Festival) and Tina Landau's *Space* (Mark Taper Forum and the Public Theatre). His work with the SITI Company includes *Bob*, *Alice's Adventures*, *Private Lives*, and *The Adding Machine*. His work with Tina Landau includes *Floyd Collins* (Old Globe, Goodman, AMTF); *Space*, *Berlin Circle*, *Time to Burn* (Steppenwolf); *Saturn Returns* (Public); *Stonewall*, *The Trojan Women*, *Orestes* (En Garde Arts); and *States of Independence* (AMTF). Other work includes *The Treatment*, *The Chang Fragments*, *Insurrection: Holding History* (Public); *The Secretaries*, by the Five Lesbian Brothers, *Quills*, *Lypsinka! A Day in the*

Life, Love and Anger (New York Theatre Workshop); *The Seven Deadly Sins* (New York City Opera); and *Transatlantic* (Minnesota Opera). Future projects include *War of the Worlds* and *La Boheme* at Glimmerglass Opera. He is a graduate of the Yale School of Drama.

BRIAN H. SCOTT (*Lighting Supervisor/
Production Manager*)

Brian Scott serves as SITI Company's lighting supervisor and production/technical manager. His past includes a five-year stint as lighting supervisor/guest designer for Actors Theatre of Louisville. While in Louisville he worked on five consecutive Humana Festivals of New American Plays and numerous other projects. In addition, Brian acted as the New York Shakespeare Festival's master electrician. He continues to work as an assistant to Mimi Jordan Sherin, and on occasion with Neil Patel.

MIMI JORDAN SHERIN (*Light Design*)

Ms. Sherin designed the SITI Company's productions of *Cabin Pressure*, *Alice's Adventures*, *Culture of Desire*, *Going, Going, Gone*, *The Medium*, *Small Lives/Big Dreams*, and *Bob*, for which she won an Obie Award. Past shows with Anne Bogart also include *Picnic*, *The Adding Machine*, *Miss Julie*, and *The Women*. On Broadway Miss Sherin designed *Our Country's Good* and *The Glass Menagerie*. For her extensive work at the New York Shakespeare Festival she has received an Obie Award, an American Theatre Wing Award, and four Drama Desk nominations. In London she has worked at the National Theatre and the Royal Shakespeare Company. Her regional theater work includes many designs for the Baltimore Center Stage, McCarter Theatre, Hartford Stage Company, American Repertory Theatre, American Conservatory Theatre, Actors' Theatre of Louisville, Long Wharf Theatre, and many others. Ms. Sherin has also designed extensively in opera including with the Vienna State Opera, Glyndebourne, Bayerische Staatsopera, the Royal Danish Opera, Wales National Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Opera Zurich, the Canadian Opera, the Washington Opera, Opera Australia, New York City Opera, Seattle Opera, and the Santa Fe, Glimmerglass, Boston, and San Diego Operas. Upcoming designs include productions at Bregenz Festival and English National Opera.

JASON SZALLA (*Production Assistant/
Properties Design*)

Jason recently moved to New York from City Theatre in Pittsburgh, where he was the charge scenic painter for three-and-a-half years. He first

worked with the SITI Company at City Theatre on *The Medium*, *Culture of Desire*, and *Alice's Adventures*. He was also the touring lighting designer and technician for Squonk, a performance art group based in Pittsburgh.

MEGAN WANLASS (*Company Stage Manager*)

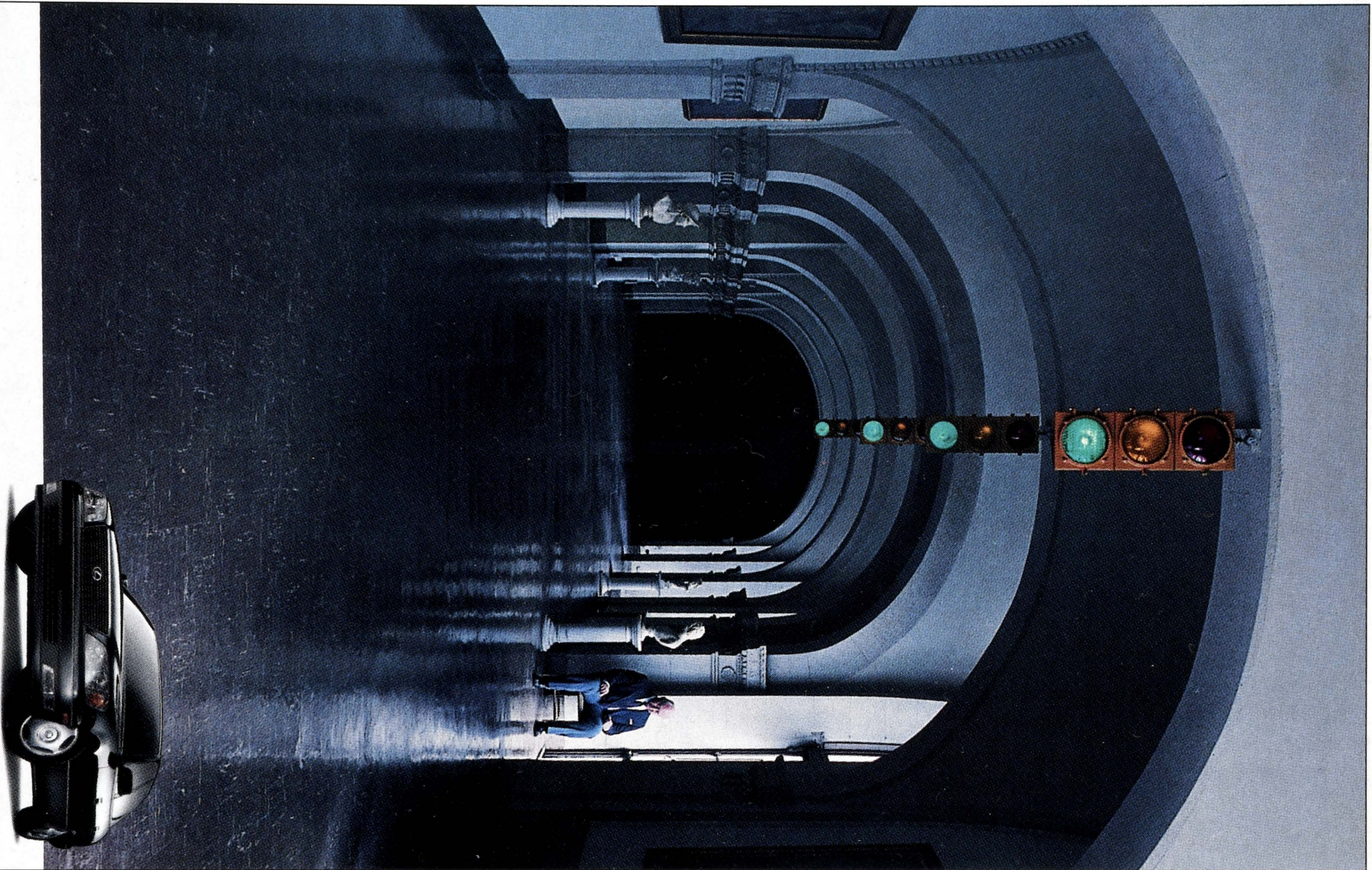
Megan Wanlass stage-manages all of the company's repertoire including the national and international productions of *The Medium*, *Small Lives/Big Dreams*, *Going, Going, Gone*, *Culture of Desire*, *Alice's Adventures*, *Cabin Pressure*, and *Bob*. She began working with Anne Bogart during *The Adding Machine* at Actors Theatre of Louisville. Her other credits include *The Dybbuk* (NYSF/the Public), *Conviction* (Music Theatre Group/Eve Ensler), and the '96, '97, and '99 Actors Theatre of Louisville Humana New Play Festivals. She is currently finishing a certificate program in arts administration at New York University.

STEPHEN WEBBER (*Ensemble*)

With SITI: *Cabin Pressure*, *Private Lives*, *The Medium*, *War of the Worlds*, *Culture of Desire*, and *Going, Going, Gone*. Off Broadway: *Trojan Women/A Love Story* at En Garde Arts and *Culture of Desire* at New York Theatre Workshop. Regional Theater: Actors Theatre of Louisville, Stage West, Portland Stage Company, City Theatre - Pittsburgh, and Milwaukee Repertory Theater. He also performed *Hamlet* at the Toga International Arts Festival in Toga-Mura, Japan.

DARRON L. WEST (*Soundscape*)

SITI Company member since 1993 and has collaborated with Bogart on *Escape From Paradise*, *Eye of the Hurricane*, *Picnic*, *The Adding Machine*, *American Silents*, and *Gertrude and Alice*. With the SITI Company, multiple productions in the U.S. and internationally of: *The Medium*, *Small Lives/Big Dreams*, *Going, Going, Gone*, *Miss Julie*, *Culture of Desire*, *Private Lives*, *Alice's Adventures*, *Cabin Pressure*, and *Bob* (1998 Obie Award-soundscape, 1998 Drama Desk nomination). Made his 1998 Broadway debut with *Wait Until Dark*. Other credits include: *Philip Glass* at Avery Fisher Hall. He is a design associate and "usual suspect" at New York Theatre Workshop, where his credits include Jonathan Larson's *Rent*. Former resident sound designer at Actors Theatre of Louisville, a two-time American Theatre Wing and Barrymore Award nominee for sound design, and winner of the 1997 Princess Grace Award for his work with the SITI Company.



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EXPANSION



Growing Pleasures

Apple Tree Theatre and Second City will soon have more space for their award-winning productions as the two companies expand to the new Metropolis Arts Center. BETTY MOHR moves in for the story.

Where's Superman? An artist's rendering of the new Metropolis Arts Center in Arlington Heights

The scaffolding around the construction site has come down. Workers are sanding the floors, painting the walls, installing electrical systems, and assembling seats for the auditorium. Only the finishing touches are left. The Metropolis Performing Arts Center is taking shape at 111 W. Campbell Street, right in the center of Arlington Heights.

Its opening scheduled for spring of 2000, the four-story cultural complex will be a mixed-use facility providing space for a variety of cultural and retail tenants. There will even be free parking.

But the big news is that the Metropolis will serve as a second venue for two Jeff Award-winning Chicago theaters, Apple

Tree and Second City. "We'll share the space with Second City and we'll alternate our shows with them," says Eileen Boevers, Apple Tree Theatre's executive artistic director. "We'll be transferring or remounting shows that originate in our Highland Park home."

The 311-seat theater, designed by architect John Morris, will have state-of-the-art acoustics and lighting, and can be reconfigured to accommodate both Apple Tree and the cabaret-style seating of Second City.

"We'll be presenting the best of Second City shows," says Kelly Leonard, Second City's producer, "and they'll rotate so we'll have a new show every two weeks."

Excited about their expansion, Apple Tree and Second City are betting that the center will encourage new audiences to join them in experiencing the thrill of live theater. With the track record of these two anchor tenants, that seems like a safe bet.

Betty Mohr is the theater correspondent for Chicago's Daily Southtown.



THE BOMBAY SAPPHIRE MARTINI. AS CELEBRATED BY MILTON GLASER.

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HOLIDAY TRADITION

Classic Carol

Now in its third decade, the Goodman Theatre's production of *A Christmas Carol* has evolved into a popular Chicago tradition. Artistic Associate Henry Godinez directs this year's version, from November 13 to January 2. JESSICA PETERSON previews the holiday classic.

In the opening chapter of Charles Dickens' short fable *A Christmas Carol*, Ebenezer Scrooge snarls to his resolutely cheerful nephew, "Keep Christmas your way, and let me keep it in mine!" As of this month, Chicago has been happy for 22 years to let the irascible old social Darwinist keep Christmas his way—onstage at the Goodman Theatre in its annual adaptation of the classic tale.

The yearly event has become one of the premier holiday traditions in Chicago theater, due in no small part to the work's adapter (and Goodman resident dramaturg), Tom Creamer. "It's neat that we are a part of the holiday for everyone," says Creamer. "Hopefully, not the part of the tradition that is shopping on Michigan Avenue, but the part that brings you back to what it's all about." Creamer's adaptation of the 1843 story has embodied this tradition for Chicago audiences since 1989, when he penned a script to replace several previous versions of the play. *A Christmas Carol* premiered at the Goodman in 1978, first adapted by Barbara Fields and later by then-artistic director Gregory Mosher with Larry

Festive fliers:
Ebenezer Scrooge
(Rick Snyder) and
the Ghost of
Christmas Present
(Felicia P. Fields) in
A Christmas Carol

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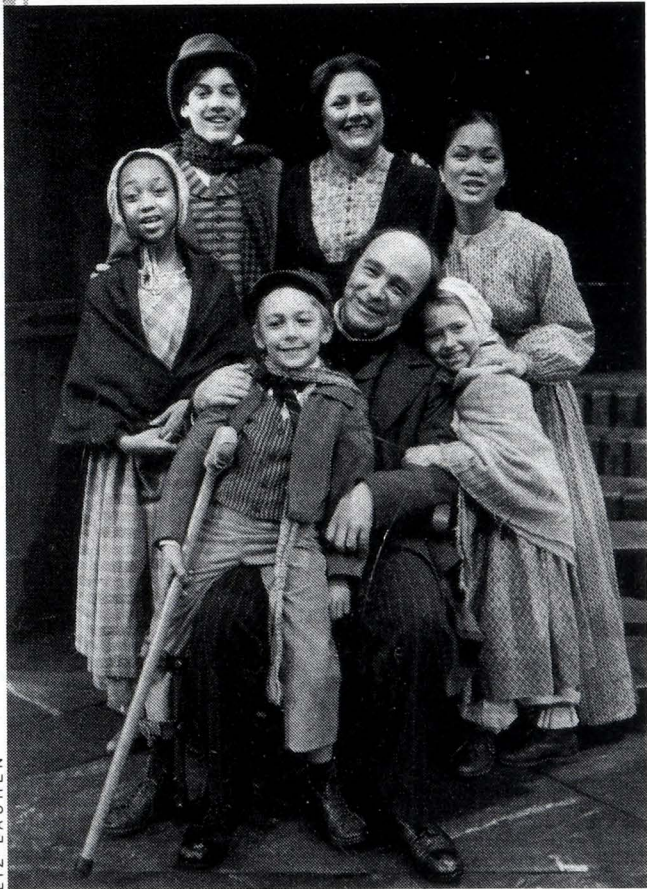
CHRISTMAS ONLY IN THEATRES

CLASSIC CAROL

Sloan, taking a brief detour to the Auditorium Theatre in 1984 before returning to the Goodman stage.

When the Goodman commissioned a script update a decade ago, Creamer worked for several months to create a piece that would capture Dickens' essentials and satisfy the high expectations of the Goodman's audience. The result was a formula that keeps audiences returning every year as a holiday ritual. It also encouraged the spin-off success of last year's *Jacob Marley's Christmas Carol*, written and performed by former Scrooge Tom Mula, which begins a tradition of its own with this year's encore in the Goodman Studio.

Creamer attributes his play's appeal to the central theme of Dickens' original work. "The image of being reborn as a new person in the dark of winter is still strong and compelling," he says, "and if we continue to interpret that truly and faithfully, people will come back to see it." Its charm works equally well on the cast members, many of whom return year after year to reprise their roles or to take on new ones. Noted actor and Steppenwolf member Rick Snyder returns as Scrooge for a second year of miserly glee. He also performed the role of Bob Cratchit in three productions in the



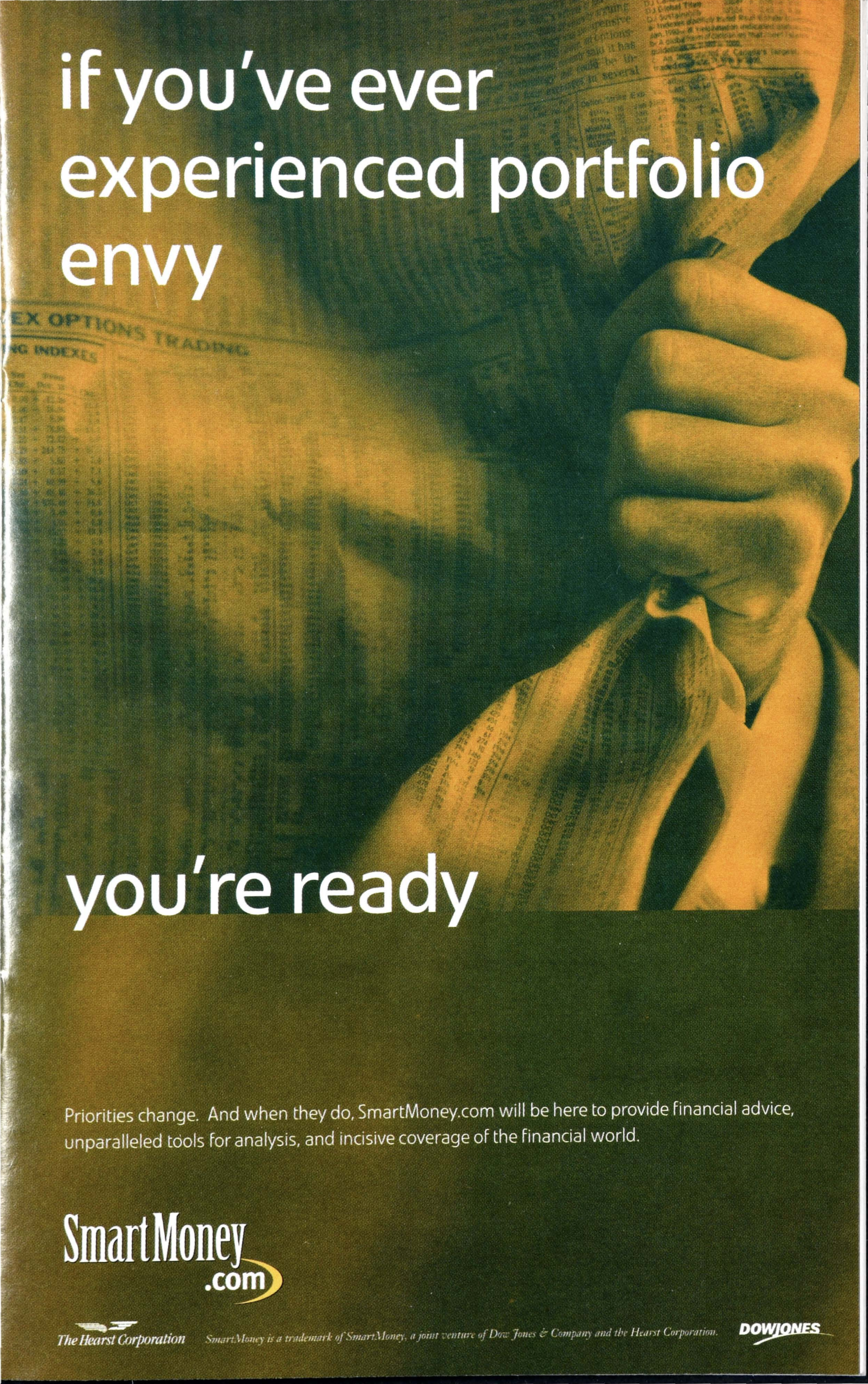
LIZ LAUREN

Family man: Bob Cratchit (Brad Armacost) surrounded by his wife and children in A Christmas Carol.

1990s. Ora Jones, a former Mrs. Cratchit, is the Ghost of Christmas Present; and Robert Schleifer, previously seen as Mr. Adams, will play the Ghost of Christmas Past.

While working on the script, Creamer found himself "writing to the demands of the set—how it could move and what scenes had to follow other scenes." The space and technical potential of the Goodman main-stage both inspired and limited Creamer's vision for the landscape of Scrooge's fantastic voyage. When the 2001 season at the new Goodman Theatre opens, Creamer and the artistic staff will complete a revamped version of *A Christmas Carol* to take advantage of the state-of-the-art space. "We'll have new opportunities to explore the play, and we'll have great fun with reinventing stuff that we've been technically frustrated with for a while," says Creamer. Fortunately, the scale of the 840-seat Albert Ivar Goodman auditorium will enable even more theatergoers to enjoy the renovated production without sacrificing the intimacy of the old favorite. The spirit of the current production will surely continue to captivate audiences in its bigger, brighter new home. After all, according to Creamer, "that's the marvel of Dickens' book and why it keeps working. It continually reminds us of what the Christmas virtues are, and why they're worth celebrating."

Jessica Peterson is an assistant program editor at Stagebill in Chicago.

A person in a suit is shown from the chest up, holding a newspaper. The newspaper has financial data, including a table titled "EX OPTIONS TRADING" and "INDEXES". The person's hand is visible, holding the newspaper. The background is dark and textured.

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**4-DOOR BODY.
2-DOOR SOUL.**



DRIVEN.

and Jim Belushi, and Valerie Harper—represents a myriad of comic styles and covers several different decades.

Second City's current producer, Kelly Leonard, is younger than the troupe itself. But he still feels the weight of history.

"This organization has touched every aspect of the entertainment industry in an important way," Leonard says. "It's a never-ending contributor to the best of American comedy." Since there are Second City outposts in Detroit and Toronto, that's also true of Canadian comedy. (Andrew Alexander, the founder of SCTV, currently owns all of the Second City branches as a privately held, for-profit operation.)

"Along with The Groundlings [a Los Angeles-based troupe] and the Harvard Lampoon, Second City was where so many of the *Saturday Night* people started," says Meadows. "We laugh at the flaws of the people from the different groups—and the joke is that Second City and The Groundlings are totally incapable of socializing together."

Second City, of course, has its origins in a derogatory essay about Chicago that was first written by A.J. Liebling and published in the *New Yorker* magazine (it later became a full-length book). Founded by Paul Sills, Bernie Sahlins, David Shepherd, and Howard Alk in 1959, the troupe was a direct descendent of the Compass Players, an improvisational group that began life in a small Hyde Park storefront near the University of Chicago. Back then, Old Town was not the yuppie playground it is today—Wells Street was smack-in the middle of a very tricky neighborhood.

One of the original members of the Compass Players was Mike Nichols, the illustrious director of such movies as *The Graduate* and *Primary Colors*. He looks back with affection on those early years in Chicago (where he worked with fellow comedian Elaine May). Nichols remains close to Sills, with whom he teaches a weekly acting class in New York.

"It turned out to be the very best possible training for what I ended up doing," Nichols says. "Being thrown in front of an audience every night made us very light on our feet. There were big laughs, but there were also times when we would literally run out the door and jump into the lake. Failure became something that we could handle."

So how did all this come to happen in the prosaic Midwest of the 1950s? Was it just the luck of the moment?

Nichols credits Sills' inclusivity and "spiritual generosity," which created a non-hierarchical ensemble with no stars or supporting players. It thus became possible to develop a new style of democratic comedy that has spawned comedic artists for four decades. But, like other great events in entertainment history, there were certain intangibles behind the early years of Second City.

"It was a mysterious moment where a lot of people showed up in Chicago at the same time and

Good old days:
Fred Willard,
Robert Klein,
Alex Canaan
(top, left to
right); Judy
Graubert, David
Steinberg,
Sondra Caron
(middle); and
Bill Matthieu,
circa 1966



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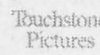
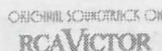
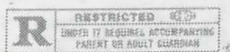
-MICHAEL WILMINGTON, CHICAGO TRIBUNE

A TIM ROBBINS FILM

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DECEMBER 10

LEGACY OF LAUGHTER



**Rogue's
gallery:**
Harold Ramis,
Eugenie Ross-
Leming, and
John Belushi
(above);
Eugene Levy,
Dan Aykroyd,
Gilda Radner,
Rosemary
Radeliffe, and
John Candy
(at right)



began a series of overlapping conversations," says Nichols. "The script, the preparation, and the rules were all stripped away. It was so terrifying that all the tools you need to create theater became a part of you that never went away."

Over time, of course, even innovation can turn into stale repetition. And one reason audiences keep flocking to Wells Street is that Second City has proven itself to be a troupe willing to take new risks. That's why 1995 saw a show that threw such Second City staples as short sketches, blackouts, and doors right out the window.

"We'd been accused by critics of resting on our laurels," says Leonard. "And even though audiences still seemed to enjoy the old ways, we had become bored with the form ourselves. So we decided to do something completely different."

The result of these innovations was *Piñata Full of Bees*, a radically different revue. The show featured a cast that never left the stage and replaced sketches with an overall arc and characters that kept reappearing throughout the whole evening. More of an homage to Artaud than Monty Python, *Piñata* gave Second City a whole new energy.

Since then, well-received revues like *Paradigm Lost* and *Riverants* have pushed the comedic envelope even further, with new directors, like the edgy Mick Napier, emerging as powerful creative forces. And the placements at *Saturday Night Live* continue—Rachel Dratch recently joined the NBC show.

Between December 16 and 19, Second City is hosting a variety of events in honor of the anniversary, including a special 40th-year revue, public alumni reunions, an improvised Web broadcast, improv workshops, and a series of roundtable discussions featuring founder Sahlins and the likes of Alan Arkin and Ed Asner.

"Second City always has been an incubator with a steady paycheck that's located away from the industry-driven pressure of the coasts," says Leonard. "And over the 40 years, we've shown that the improv form provides actors and comedians with the best opportunities to develop their own voices."

Chris Jones writes about theater for the Chicago Tribune, Variety, and other publications.

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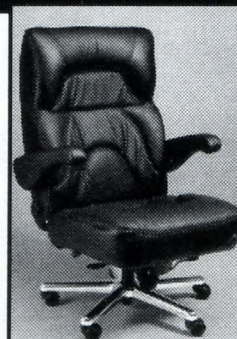
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CENTENARY CELEBRATION

Joyeux Noël

On December 16, 1899, a baby boy who would one day be known as "the Master" was born. This month, the 100th anniversary of Noël Coward's birth will be observed in retrospectives and revivals of his work. LAURENCE MASLON previews the marvelous party.

*Theatrical attitude: Gertrude Lawrence and Noël Coward in
Tonight at 8:30*



The world hasn't treated me so badly," remarked Noël Coward on the occasion of his 70th birthday, "but, then again, I haven't treated it so badly either." Thirty years later, as we celebrate the century and Sir Noël's 100th birthday, it's time for the world to repay the favor once again.

Twenty-six years after the death of the gifted theater artist, there is a series of events designed to celebrate "the Master's" particular genius; he would have called it a "marvelous party." In Britain, Methuen Publishing has released a twelve-volume set of Coward's complete works, and Overlook Press has published *The Complete Lyrics of Noël Coward*, edited by Barry Day. The Royal National Theatre of Great Britain is performing the classic *Private Lives*, as well as a portmanteau of short plays called *Masterpieces*. Over here, in the country that Coward so adored (when he wasn't tweaking it), Carnegie Hall revived Coward's seldom-seen *Sail Away* in a concert version last month. Meanwhile, his plays are being produced from Wilmington, Delaware, to San Jose, California. In New York, Hayley Mills and Keir Dullea will appear in two one-acts entitled *Noël Coward's Suite in Two Keys* later this season. *Waiting*

continued on page 38

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An ensemble-based theater company, SITI's work is an example of the disciplines it practices and the artistic values it develops. The company's mission is: 1) To create new works for the theater. 2) To perform and tour these productions nationally and internationally. 3) To provide ongoing training for young theater professionals in an approach to acting that forges unique and highly disciplined artists for the theater. 4) To foster opportunities for cultural exchange with theater professionals and audiences from all over the world.

In addition to Artistic Director Anne Bogart, the SITI Company is comprised of ten actors, four designers, a production manager, stage manager, and general manager. The company represents a change in thinking about the relationships between artists and institutions. One way SITI is accomplishing its mission is by integrating into other organizations of the existing American and international theater systems.

Most recently, the SITI Company created its new production, *Cabin Pressure*, which opened at the Humana Festival of New American plays. Other SITI productions include: *Orestes*; *The Medium*; *Small Lives/Big Dreams*; *Going, Going, Gone*; *Ms. Julie*; *Private Lives*; and *Culture of Desire*. We are currently developing our new large-scale production *War of the Worlds* to premiere at the 2000 Humana Festival in Louisville, Kentucky.

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For more information on the company and its training programs and performances; to purchase copies of *Anne Bogart: Viewpoints* or SITI Training T-shirt; or to make a tax-deductible contribution in support of SITI, please contact:

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About PAC's APAN Projects

Supported in part by Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest

In fall of 1997, Performing Arts Chicago was one of only ten presenters across the U.S. to receive a prestigious, multi-year grant from the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund. The purpose of the grant, titled Audiences for the Performing Arts Network (APAN), is to "support exemplary, mid-sized, multi-disciplinary performing arts presenters to expand audiences for outstanding music, theater and dance work through extended artists residencies and other programs." APAN funds will enable participants on all levels to increase, diversify and more deeply engage audiences—the ultimate goal being to sustain audience development beyond the APAN project.

From now through June, 2001, PAC is engaging in an extensive audience development campaign involving 20 Chicago-based organizations, three regional presenters, and four internationally-acclaimed artists: Bill T. Jones (dance), Robert Lepage (theater), and Steve Reich (music) with Beryl Korot (video). Each artists will premiere at least two new works during the APAN project and participate in a series of residency activities hosted by PAC and at least one of its Community Partners. The events range from lectures to master classes, video installations to film festivals, radio interviews to post-performance receptions. One of this year's APAN projects is:

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The second installment in a series to investigate the 20th century's most innovative choreographers through the film and/or video medium. CineDance 2000 will include videos, films, documentaries, and panel discussions focusing on the works of these choreographers and their immense influence on the dance culture.

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in a Broadway
production of Sir
Noël Coward's
*Waiting in the
Wings*, which
opens on "the
Master's"
birthday—
December 16.**

in *the Wings*, a comedy about a home for retired actresses, has its American premiere with Lauren Bacall and Rosemary Harris at the Walter Kerr Theatre on December 16—Coward's 100th birthday.

Why all the fuss? Partly, it's due to Coward's extraordinary output: almost 70 plays, musicals, or revues; several screenplays (including *Brief Encounter* and *In Which We Serve*); innumerable stage and film appearances as an actor; and a slew of songs that can rank among the best from the early part of the 20th century—many of which he performed to acclaim in, of all places, Las Vegas during the mid-1950s. His star burned so brightly that, at one point, he had four plays running concurrently in the West End, while every dance band in every hotel from Russell Square to Kensington was playing his jazzy, mordant tunes; he was only 25 at the time. "Precocious" seems a rather inadequate word under such circumstances.

Critic Kenneth Tynan summed him up as a "unique personality which has never existed before in print or in paint. Even the youngest of us will know in 50 years time exactly what we mean by 'a very Noël Coward sort of person.'" The recent news that Madonna would star in a film adaptation of his 1952 comedy of manners, *Quadrille*, seems more apt than shocking; Coward loved celebrities, loved his own celebrity, and knew it made excellent material—girl or boy.

His own material as a playwright has come under criticism for being brittle and detached, but that is, in itself, a superficial reading of his work. Toward the end of his life, when Coward was asked to "sum it up," he replied, "Now comes the risk of being corny or not. It's about love. That's all." His major comedies are all about love—it's just that love has to compete with the egotistic demands of 20th-century society. *Private Lives* concerns a couple who can't live with each other but can't live without each other, and *Design for Living* is about two men and one woman torn between self-love and love for others.

Coward realized that the chit-chat and small talk of 20th-century life actually obscures deeper passions and anxieties than our hurried and mechanized society allows us time to express. His polished, enameled dialogue decorates a Pandora's Box of emotion.

Finally, nothing captures this century like the fabled Coward wit. The examples are manifold; two will suffice. He once described the musical *Camelot* as "*Parsifal* without the laughs"; and, during a rehearsal with actress Claudette Colbert, proclaimed, "I'd wring her neck, if only I could find it." Coward's wit—in his work and in his life—turned thought into expression at the speed of light and he made it seem easy. Speed, economy, precision—what could be more "20th-century" than those qualities?

And so, as we pant arduously to cross the finish line of our century, it is with dismay and delight that we look ahead and see the cool Mr. Coward offering us a refreshing cocktail from the other side. He crossed the finish line long ago.

Laurence Maslon is a full-time faculty member of the Graduate Acting Program at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts.

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'70S FEVER

Stayin' Alive

Twenty years after their sequined reign, two 1970s icons are returning to center stage. ANN LEWINSON considers the resilience of *Saturday Night Fever*, ABBA, and other artifacts from the age of polyester.

They're selling out nightly across the street from each other in London, and they're headed our way: *Saturday Night Fever* and *Mamma-Mia*. The former is the long-gestating stage production of the hit 1977 film about a dancing Bay Ridge paint store clerk. Featuring the Bee Gees' original score and a couple of new songs, it's now a hot Broadway ticket as well. *Mamma-Mia*, with a score comprised of 22 of the greatest hits of another seventies group, ABBA, is a musical comedy about a young bride of questionable paternity who invites her three possible fathers to her wedding. The show is due in Toronto and points south in 2000.

ABBA and the Bee Gees have a lot more in common than a string of 1970s hits and acronymic names—they have close harmonies; pristine, antiseptic production values; and studied artifi-



JOAN MARCUS

ciality. These records are defined by their unique sound—it's impossible to recall an ABBA hit without hearing those tinny female voices engulfed in a Wall of Sound, or the Bee Gees without their helium falsettos. Both groups created great pop recordings—but great songs?

Think about ABBA's biggest American hit, "Dancing Queen." The beat? Ripped off from George McCrae's "Rock You Baby." "Dancing Queen"'s pop savvy is so calculated that the record begins in the middle of the chorus, so you can sing along without having to wait for the verses' pesky lyrics to cycle through. Now imagine Tony Bennett singing "Dancing Queen." Is there really a song in there? If you caught Bono covering the song on U2's 1993 *ZooTV* tour, you know the answer.

Or watch Tony Manero strut downstage singing *Saturday Night Fever*'s opening number, "Stayin' Alive." Transferring a dance movie to the stage seems like a natural, but there's a little problem—the film's Tony wouldn't be caught dead singing. In the movie, the songs are background music, sung by men whose pants must have been tighter than John Travolta's. So it's jarring when a white-suited Tony sings "Stayin' Alive." It doesn't belong in his register. Even more important, it doesn't belong to him.

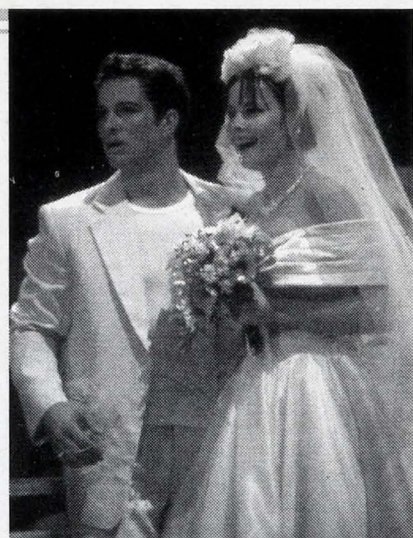
When Mick Jagger sang "It's the singer, not the song" in 1966, the Rolling Stones were articulating something new about what rock and roll had done to pop music—no longer were there "songs," in the Tin Pan Alley sense, but recordings, created in a studio and defined by their performance.

A little background for the pop-music illiterate, and those who spent the 1970s at disco-record bonfires orchestrated by album-oriented rock radio stations: ABBA was a Swedish band composed of two couples—the boys wrote the songs and the girls sang them, the name of the group an acronym of their first names. After winning the Eurovision song contest with "Waterloo" in 1974, ABBA proceeded to conquer the western world.

For Americans, who think of ABBA as a 1970s novelty act, it's hard to grasp the group's phenomenal popularity, particularly in England, where in its heyday it scored nine number-one hits and 25 top-40 hits, and in Australia, where the band has sold more albums than in any other country, and spawned ABBA "tribute" bands like Bjorn Again. *ABBA Gold*, a greatest-hits compilation released in 1992, has sold over 13 million copies worldwide.

ABBA's songwriters, Benny Andersson and Bjorn Ulvaeus, are no strangers to musical theater. They first tried writing a mini-musical, the trilogy "The Girl with the Golden Hair" on ABBA's 1978 *The Album*, and went on to collaborate with lyricist Tim Rice on the musical *Chess*. They've also written a second musical, *Kristina*, which is, unsurprisingly, the most successful musical ever to premiere in Sweden. Ulvaeus got the idea for *Mamma-Mia* while taking his kid to see a West End revival of *Grease*. The production featured a rather anachronistic song written for the movie by one of the Bee Gees, Barry Gibb.

The Bee Gees (that is, the Brothers Gibb: Barry, Maurice, and Robin) are Englishmen who grew up and rose to fame in Australia and now live in Miami. Under the guidance of manager Robert Stigwood, they remade themselves from a folk trio to the cleverest of Beatles imitators to blue-eyed soul



CATHERINE ASHMORE

**Bell bottom
renaissance:
*Saturday
Night Fever*
(opposite) and
Mamma-Mia
bring 1970s
hits to the
musical stage.**

STAYIN' ALIVE



men. Though the group professed to loathe the term “disco” as much as any 1970s metal-head, their *Saturday Night Fever* sound track defined the disco era. It sold 30 million copies worldwide, making it the biggest-selling film sound track in history, with three number-one hits: “Stayin’ Alive,” “Night Fever,” and “How Deep Is Your Love.”

Twenty-five years later, we are wallowing in nostalgia. The 1970s we cele-

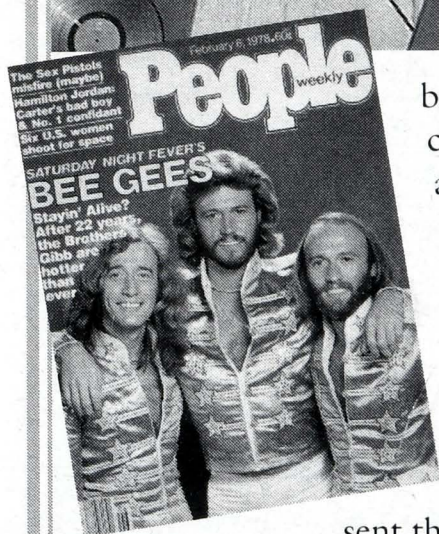
brate was a decade of guilt-free sex and drugs, open marriages, and cocaine without consequences. We repress memories of Watergate and enshrine the mindless fads of the decade—Pet Rocks, Mood Rings—toys that opiated a country disillusioned by its leadership and beating the hastiest of retreats to the womb. We make fun of the polyester clothes, but we probably wear a lot more unnatural fibers now—and they cost more. We watch reruns of *The Brady Bunch* on Nick at Nite, through a scrim of irony so that no one will see us sucking our thumbs. But unlike other revived kitsch from the 1970s, *Saturday Night Fever* and *Mamma-Mia* pre-

sent themselves as irony-free nostalgia to be indulged in by aging baby-boomers, while Generation Xers can cocoon themselves in music that has the potency of nursery rhymes.

Perhaps that’s why, 25 years later, the Swedish sound is ruling the American charts again—as a glance at the unlauted production credits on any Backstreet Boys or Britney Spears record will attest—and Barry Gibb is on VH1’s “Storytellers,” painstakingly explicating the lyrics to “Stayin’ Alive” as if he were Elvis Costello. You see, the line “the New York times effect on man” is a play on words (“times,” *Times*—get it?). The Bee Gees’ music was never about the lyrics, which were barely intelligible—“Wazaduiduibah,” sung in a freakish falsetto, is much more memorable than “What’cha doin’ on your back?” I mean, it ain’t Cole Porter, nor should it be.

So, does the music of ABBA and the Bee Gees belong onstage? Probably not. Does pop and rock music? Of course, and it’s the key to revitalizing an art form that’s been crippled by both the Andrew Lloyd Webber and Stephen Sondheim acolytes. Gifted songwriters like Elton John, Randy Newman, Paul Simon, Pete Townshend, and Tom Waits have all attempted to write for the stage, with varying degrees of success. Elvis Costello has undoubtedly considered it—Rufus Wainwright should give it a try. But like the sons of Lloyd Webber and Sondheim, their artistic insecurity causes them to take themselves too damn seriously. The phenomenal London success of *Mamma-Mia* and *Saturday Night Fever* is about nostalgia, of course, but it’s also because there aren’t many new old-fashioned musical comedies that send you off dancing in the streets. If today’s composers would just lighten up a bit, we wouldn’t have ABBA and the Bee Gees to kick around anymore.

Ann Lewinson is the managing editor of hbo.com.



Star power:
ABBA and the
Bee Gees at
the height of
their 1970s
success



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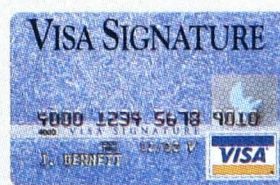
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