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THE ACTING COMPANY, THE SECOND DECADE, 1980-1990; DEVELOPING CLASSICAL ACTORS AND PRESENTING GREAT PLAYS IN REPERTORY

by

Maria B. Orlowski

A DISSERTATION

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1992

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this dissertation is to investigate The Acting Company's work in the years 1980-1990 focusing on the work of the actor and his development in the process of rehearsing a play. The Acting Company (TAC), is a touring professional repertory company, established in 1972 by John Houseman and Margot Harley. A descendant of Jacque Copeau's acting tradition it is an outgrowth of a training program designed by Michel Saint-Denis for American actors in the Drama division of the Juilliard School of Art. TAC's best productions are characterized by spontaneous, organic acting and a classical style. This dissertation proposes that in its second decade, The Acting Company has fulfilled its goals: to develop young, well-trained actors and to bring great plays in repertory to audiences across the country. In the first chapter, TAC's philosophy, its stated goals, and its mode of operation will be presented. TAC's aesthetic principles followed those of Juilliard. The

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training of actors at Juilliard and the consequences of TAC's subsequent separation from Juilliard are briefly discussed in this chapter. Information about the selection and casting of actors and a survey of directors employed in the period will be included: then, the repertoire of TAC will be discussed. The next three chapters are devoted to three productions mounted in the years 1980-1990: *Ill Campiello*, directed by Liviu Ciulei(1980-81), *Orchards* directed by Robert Falls (1986-87), *Romeo and Juliet* directed by Leon Rubin(1989-91). Each chapter discusses the director, the director's idea of the production, the rehearsal process, the resulting performance and its critical evaluation. The study employs 36 tape-recorded interviews with the author and 107 reviews from local and national press. Analysis of data revealed that in its second decade TAC has fulfilled its stated goals. The results of the study reveal the overall effectiveness of TAC's work and make a convincing argument for TAC's importance to the American theatre.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am deeply indebted to the members of my committee, Professors John Baldwin, Frank C. Rutledge and Georg Schuttler, who were understanding and helpful offering invaluable suggestions for the improvement of this dissertation. And I am deeply grateful to my advisor Dr. Jon Baisch for his judicious guidance, detailed criticism and consistently wise counsel.

For reading this dissertation in various stages and for helpful criticism, I am forever grateful to Mark Harris and to William T. Melms who read this dissertation and helped with proofreading.

My thanks to John Miller-Stephany associate producer of The Acting Company for his generous help during my research. It is a pleasure to acknowledge the assistance of Jane Gottlieb, Head Librarian of the Juilliard School and, I would like to thank Diane Gorodnitzki and Martha Swope for granting me permission to use their photographs.

And I am grateful to Leon Rubin, Elizabeth Smith and Eric Fredriksen for giving me the opportunity to observe their work with the actors.

I owe so much to those who so generously gave their time to be interviewed: Stephen Aaron, Casey Biggs, Lynn Chausow, Liviu Ciulei, Robert Falls, Zelda Fichandler, Eric Fredricksen, Philip Goodwin, Jeffrey Guyton, Margot Harley, Richard Iglewski, Trish Jenkins, Michael Kahn, Jack Kenny, Mark Kincaid, Pierre Lefèvre, Michael McKenzie, John Michalski, John Miller-Stephany, Pamela Nyberg, Laurie Putnam, Brian Reddy, Mary Lou Rosato, Leon Rubin, Elizabeth Smith, Paul Walker, Michele-Denise Woods, Moni Yakim and the late Judith Leibowitz.

I owe the deepest gratitude to Margot Harley who made The Acting Company's archives available to me. Without her this study would not have been possible.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Acting Company (TAC) is a touring professional repertory company established in 1972 by John Houseman and Margot Harley. A descendant of Jacque Copeau's acting tradition that emphasized spontaneity of expression, improvisations, expressiveness of the body and vocal excellence, it is an outgrowth of a training program designed by Michel Saint-Denis for American actors in the Drama division of the Juilliard School of Art.

This touring theatre has a remarkable record of achievements that continues to the present day. Since 1972 TAC has travelled almost 500,000 miles, performed sixty-seven plays in forty-six states, and has played before two million spectators. In a broader sense, TAC is classical in that it is principally devoted to producing great plays from the past. The development of its actors and bringing the classics to audiences across the country are TAC's stated goals.

In the beginning period (1972-76), all TAC's actors had been trained at Juilliard. That original troupe of seventeen performers constituted a unique ensemble, one whose level of excellence would never be duplicated.

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The second period from 1976 until 1980 was a time of stable growth and development as evidenced in the study conducted by Susan Dianne Speers.[1] The third period of The Acting Company's existence, encompassing the years 1980-1990, is the subject of this study.

Although TAC's aesthetic principles and operating modes have not changed through the past twenty years, during its second decade the company has developed several characteristics which separate the present TAC from the original company formed from the group of graduates of Juilliard.

TAC's actors have been discussed in many magazine and newspaper articles. However, the topic of actors' development has remained largely unexamined. Moreover, the first decade of TAC's existence has been described in several published works which will be identified later, but the second decade has not yet been studied. The purpose of this dissertation is, therefore, to investigate The Acting Company's work in the second decade of its existence, the years 1980-1990. The focus will be the development of TAC's actors in the process of rehearsing and performing. This dissertation will demonstrate how, in its second decade, The Acting Company has fulfilled its stated goals by developing

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[1]Susan Dianne Speers, *An Evaluative Examination of the Development and Achievement of The Acting Company Under the Artistic Direction of John Houseman*, (University of California, Santa Barbara. Ph.D. diss., 1982. Ann Arbor, UMI, 1989. 8224651). According to Speers, a clear statement of purpose appeared for the first time in TAC's statements in 1976 (p. 120).

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Scope and Content of this Study

The first chapter will provide an overview of TAC's second decade. In this chapter the company's philosophy, its stated goals, and its mode of operation will be presented. TAC began as an extension of Juilliard Drama Division and its aesthetic principles followed those of Juilliard. The training of actors at Juilliard and the consequences of TAC's subsequent separation from Juilliard are briefly discussed in this chapter. The chapter will also include information about selection and casting of actors, the company's artistic and producing management, and the array of directors employed in the period. Further, the repertoire of The Acting Company will be discussed.

The stated goal of TAC is twofold: to bring classics to audiences across the country and to develop young American actors through performance experience. Three representative productions mounted during the period under consideration were chosen to demonstrate how this twofold goal is evidenced in the work of The Acting Company. Each of the next three chapters will present an analysis of one production. Each chapter will discuss the director, the director's idea of the production, the rehearsal process, the resulting performance and its critical evaluation. Each

chapter will focus on the creative process and will show how working with the director impacted the actors.

The second chapter will be devoted to *Ill Campiello* produced in 1980, the third chapter will be devoted to *Orchards* produced in 1986, and the fourth chapter will describe the production of *Romeo and Juliet* (produced in 1989), which this writer observed in rehearsal and performance.

Spanning ten years of TAC's existence these three productions exemplify the beginning, the middle and the end of the period under consideration. The first of these productions, a classical comedy, is most closely related to the first decade when the company was largely comprised of actors trained at Juilliard. The second production -- *Orchards*, inspired by classics, exemplifies the company's work with modern writers and shows how this work affected the repertoire and further development of actors. With its focus on language, the third production further links actors' development with Michel Saint-Denis' ideas that the form and the meaning are indivisible in poetry and that the meaning in Shakespeare's text is in the meter. At the same time, *Romeo and Juliet*, staged with new actors (after the previous season's troupe had to be dissolved for lack of funds), exemplifies some of the problems that the company is beset with today: mainly its severe financial difficulties and the resulting fluctuation of its actors.

The concluding section will summarize how the two goals were accomplished and will include some suggestions for further study.

Method of this Study

This study is based on taped interviews with past and present members of TAC, the company's directors, some Juilliard faculty, and with TAC's management. It also employs an investigation of the archives of The Acting Company and of The Juilliard School. A third component of the study, focusing on the external evaluation of TAC, is supported by a library and computer search which enabled this writer to gather what critics nationally have written about TAC's productions.

Interviews

Thirty-six tape-recorded interviews were conducted by this author over a period of three years. The interviews were held in New York City, Chicago, Illinois, Washington, D.C., Ann Arbor, Michigan, and Jackson, Michigan with actors and directors of The Acting Company, The Acting Company's management and with some members of Juilliard Drama Division. All interviews were recorded with the interviewee's permission. Thirty were personal interviews. Six were telephone interviews. The interviews were set in advance and the interviewees were informed ahead of time about the focus of the inquiry and about its purpose. For the three productions that are analyzed in this study, the

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author met personally with each of the three directors and with many of the actors. The focus of each interview was on an actor's journey in the process of rehearsing and on the transaction between the director and the actor. In preparing the questions for the interview, this writer's goal was to help the actor to recall the past, to recreate the rehearsal process, and to explore freely what was significant in the work that was discussed. The question: -- "How did being a member of The Acting Company contribute to your development as an actor?" -- was often answered in a manner that made this writer regret not being able to reproduce such response audibly. Several informal meetings with TAC's members took place in New York, Ann Arbor, Michigan, Dayton, Ohio, and in Jackson, Michigan. This study will also draw on this author's own notes and observations made while observing the rehearsals of *Romeo and Juliet*.

External Evaluations

The critical and audiences' response was revealed through published reviews as well as through interviews. The productions were performed in forty-six states, in small towns and in large academic centers. Since the company travels across the country, the reviews it earned came from both the local and national press. In total, 107 reviews were analyzed. For a review of TAC's repertoire, the author used internal sources such as The Acting Company's

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statements, reports, and promotional materials. For that segment of the study, a series of personal interviews with Margot Harley, the company's executive producer, Michael Kahn, TAC's former artistic director and with John Miller-Stephany, TAC's associate producer were especially helpful. The archives of The Acting Company proved invaluable in all aspects of this study.

Although the formal research for this dissertation began in 1989, this writer's actual exposure to The Acting Company's work began in 1980 when *Ill Campiello* was performed in repertory with *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Waiting for Godot*. Since that time, this writer has observed sixteen productions and participated in several workshops and discussions. In 1989 this author's review of The Acting Company's production of *Love's Labour's Lost* was published in the Theatre Journal.[2]

Review of Literature

Basic to this dissertation were two books written by Michel Saint-Denis: *Theatre: The Rediscovery of Style*, and *Training for the Theatre*.[3] The first is based on five lectures given by Michel Saint-Denis in March of 1958. In those lectures Michel Saint-Denis presented his views on the

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[2]Maria B. Orlowski, review of *Love's Labour's Lost*, by William Shakespeare (The Acting Company, Jackson, Michigan), *Theatre Journal*, Vol.41, No.4 (December 1989): 554-556.

3Michel Saint-Denis, *Theatre: The Rediscovery of Style*, introduction by Sir Laurence Olivier (1960; New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1986). ---, *Training for the Theatre; Premises and Promises*, edited by Suria Saint-Denis (New York: Theatre Arts Books; London: Heinemann, 1982).

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role of the classics in the contemporary theatre and discussed the way in which classical plays should be presented to a contemporary audience. This book explains the *fusion of reality and style* that Michel Saint-Denis has been seeking (the phrase is Michel Saint-Denis's). The second part, titled "Classical Theatre and Modern Realism" is especially important for this study. The four titles of the chapters are indicative of their content: "Style and Reality"; "Style and Stylization"; "Style in Acting"; "Directing and Designing". The last chapter deals with training for theatre.

Michel Saint-Denis's lifetime experience and writing was devoted to the issues of actors' training and his second book, *Training for the Theatre*, was indispensable for an understanding of Juilliard's legacy to TAC.[4] In *Training for the Theatre*, Saint-Denis gave shape to his experience as a teacher of actors in six acting schools, explained the pedagogical principles of actors' training, and gave clear advice for those who wish to follow his program. The book discusses such topics as specific training of the actor's body and voice, improvisation, and mask training. Each of the next five chapters is devoted to one aspect of actor training: physical and vocal expression, the imaginative background, improvisation and interpretation.

In a quest for both spontaneity and acquired discipline of art, Michel Saint-Denis followed the discoveries of

[4]Ibid.

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[7] Speers,

[8] Ibid.

Jacques Copeau. With the exception of that of Stanislavsky (from whose work he drew some of his conclusions), Jacques Copeau's writing predated most major trends in the acting theory of the 20th century.[5]

John Houseman's *Unfinished Business* and *Final Dress* document the beginning of actors' training at Juilliard and the creation of The Acting Company.[6] Selected parts of Houseman's diary give a good understanding of that period.

TAC's beginnings, from 1972 to 1978 are also covered in Susan Dianne Speers' doctoral dissertation.[7] Speers concentrates on the work and achievement of John Houseman while addressing the issues of management and budget. The dissertation proposes that "The Acting Company's general artistic and economic success, under the artistic leadership of John Houseman, and as America's only permanent touring repertory company, is evidenced in the first six years of its existence from 1972 to 1978."[8]

The Significance of this Study

The results of this study will help to create a better understanding of the contemporary American theatre. The practical applications of the results of this study will

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[5]Jacques Copeau, *Texts on Theatre*, edited and translated by John Rudlin and Norman H. Paul, (London and New York: Routledge, 1990). John Rudlin, *Jacques Copeau, Directors in Perspective*, (Cambridge, London, New York, New Roshelle, Melbourne, Sydney: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

6John Houseman, *Final Dress*, 10th ed. (New York: Schuster, 1983). ---, *Unfinished Business; Memoirs: 1902-1988*, (New York: Applause, 1989).

[7]Speers, 1982.

[8]Ibid.

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benefit actors and their public. This study points a way to new methods for both the training and the development of actors and may benefit the training of actors in American schools and Universities, especially for performing in classical repertoire. Further, this study creates improved understanding of the need for training actors for performing in repertory theatre. The extremely supportive attitude of TAC artistic and administrative staff toward this work seems to reflect their interest in having such a study done.

Definition of Terms

STYLE:

Style is difficult to define. According to The American Heritage Dictionary, style is the way in which something is said, done, expressed or performed.[9] Michel Saint-Denis defined *style* as:

> the perceptible form that is taken by reality in revealing to us its true and inner character. There is something secret about style. This perceptible or outward form holds a secret which we have got to penetrate if we are to perceive the essential reality which lies beneath it.[10]

Style constitutes an inherent part of TAC's artistic concept. Although in its broadest meaning the word *style* applies to a particular, distinctive or characteristic mode or form of construction or execution in any art or work,[11]

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[9] *The American Heritage Dictionary*, Sd College Ed.,(1985).
[10] Saint-Denis, *Theatre*.
[11] *The American College Dictionary*, Text Edition.

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[13] Zelda F
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in this study the term *Style* will be used in a way explained by Michel Saint-Denis in his book *Theatre: The Rediscovery Of Style*. Style in this context, wrote Michel Saint-Denis,

> ...is not something superficial or merely external. While it is closely related to form it cannot be reduced to form. It implies an idea of quality rather than elegance; or should we say, it implies quality before it implies elegance.[12]

Further discussion will follow in Chapter I.

CLASSIC n. according to *The New World Dictionary* applies to "a literary or artistic work generally recognized as of the highest excellence." This definition will be used in the study.

CLASSICAL ACTORS:

For the purpose of this study the definition of *classical actors* and of *classics* provided by Zelda Fichandler will be used.[13] Fichandler defines *classical actors* in the following way:

> . . . actors who, when they were at their best, were able to: move easily from one style to another, one playwright to another, one costume to another, one character to another; be serious and committed artists and yet have a sense of play and of performance-as-play; and make full use of their actor's instrument -- in voice and speech, in singing and dancing, in dueling and miming, in the analysis of the texts from the various periods of dramatic literature, and in filling

[12]Saint-Denis, *Theatre*.
[13]Zelda Fichandler, "The Acting Company; Statement of Purpose," April 1991, p. 4.

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> up these texts from beneath, from the subtext, from inside themselves. I came to regard these abilities as defining the "classical actor." A classical actor, then, was an actor who could do it all -- play a series of characters in a sequence of productions, with all his/her resources -- both human and technical -- available to bear upon the task.[14]

Zelda Fichandler defined classics as

> not necessarily . . . plays from an earlier time,. . . but of the past and more likely from other cultures; written in a form that was non-naturalistic, elevated, removed from human speech; demanding more of an actor's energy and concentration than "every-day plays" of the present and requiring a special and heightened . . . way of talking and behaving on the stage.[15]

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[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid., p. 5.

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CHAPTER II

OVERVIEW

The Acting Company (TAC) is a professional, touring, repertory company. The stated goal of TAC is twofold: to bring classical and modern plays to audiences across the country and to develop further young American actors.[1] After twenty years of existence, TAC is recognized as an organization with a record of success and acclaim. Clive Barnes named The Acting Company's production of *Romeo and Juliet* among the top ten productions of the 1990 Off-Broadway season.[2] Mel Gussow wrote that TAC:

> has covered America with a rich variety of classics and contemporary plays, as performed by a constantly replenished, youthful troupe of traveling actors. Many of our best young performers have emerged from The Acting Company; one of the pleasures of watching the group is to spot the future Kevin Kline, Patti LuPone and Frances Conroy.[3]

The national touring company is a recipient of the Los Angeles Drama Critics Award, an Obie and other awards. On January 9, 1980, John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts invited TAC to become its official touring arm. In the last twenty years TAC has travelled over 400,000 miles,

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[1]See TAC's fact sheet in the appendix.
[2]Clive Barnes, "Off-B'way Gold. Top 10 plays of 1990," *New York Post*, 29 Dec. 1990.
[3]Mel Gussow, "'Ill Campiello' By The Acting Company," *New York Times*, 16 Apr. 1981, p.20 (III).

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performed sixty-seven plays in forty-six states and played for almost two million spectators. During the last ten years TAC has toured through Australia (1980), performed at the Old Vic in London (1985), as well as in the Soviet Union, Poland, Yugoslavia and Germany in 1990.

Established in 1972 by John Houseman and Margot Harley, The Acting Company is the outgrowth of the Juilliard School's Drama Division. What is striking about TAC's productions -- acting skills, sense of style and ensemble playing -- is a legacy of Juilliard. The artistic concept of TAC grew out of the aesthetics of Juilliard.

Although the artistic leadership of TAC was disrupted by the death of John Houseman and has changed since then, the initial thrust of the Company has remained constant. TAC has prevailed despite serious problems. The company continues to function "largely due to the intrepid, tireless, dedicated leadership of Margot Harley, its Executive Producer."[4] TAC is actively supported by those past members of the company who have distinguished themselves in the American theatre and have achieved popularity in film and television. In addition, some of these performers formally assist the company as Associate Artists. In the 1990-91 season, for example, Kevin Kline and David Ogden Stiers served as Associate Artists along with Mary Lou Rosato, and Paul Walker. In addition,

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[4]Fichandler, 1991 p.17.

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dramatists Eric Overmyer and Alfred Uhry were also TAC's Associate Artists in the 1990-91 season.[5]

TAC operates under an agreement between the League of Resident Theatres and Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers of the United States. The fact that TAC has to rely for its existence upon the box office income, gifts, and contributions is a constant source of TAC's economic dilemma, and it remains a factor which constantly threatens the stability of TAC.

The Legacy of Juilliard

TAC was formed of actors who had been trained together at the Drama Division of the Juilliard School of Art, called Juilliard for the purpose of this study. Although described in several sources, this training bears upon the topic of this dissertation for the following reasons:

1. TAC's aesthetic orientation developed from the same principles as those of Juilliard and that orientation remained basically the same in the period under consideration of this study.

2. The level of excellence in classical acting that characterized TAC at its start was possible because TAC's actors were all trained at Juilliard.

3. Even when Juilliard ceased to be a single source of actors for TAC (as was the case in the period under consideration of this study), Juilliard's qualities remained a model of acting in a classical repertoire for TAC.

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[5]TAC's production of *On The Verge or The Geography of Yearning* by Eric Overmyer, will be discussed later in this chapter.

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4.Those members of The Acting Company who were trained at Juilliard exerted a strong influence on actors trained elsewhere.[6]

Juilliard's training program was based on the aesthetic principles of Michel Saint-Denis and John Houseman and was sharply focused on the development of acting skills. Fundamentals of the Juilliard program were designed by Michel Saint-Denis, a founder of six acting schools in Europe and Canada. Saint-Denis was at that time an influential teacher of acting.[7] His principle, "the fusion of reality and style," originated from the theory and practice of his uncle, Jacque Copeau, in whose theatre, the Théâtre du Vieux-Colombier, Michel began his theatrical practice.

Michel Saint-Denis's illuminations of the subject of style can be summarized by these three cardinal tenets. First, "Style has its own reality: it is made up of a choice of words, of shape, of rhythms and emphasis. This artistic reality cannot be separated from meaning {of the text performed}." Second, style cannot be superimposed on the work of art from the outside. An actor must *penetrate* the style in order to *reveal* the meaning: "To penetrate to the heart of reality, far beyond appearances," an actor must fully understand the "reality which the poet tried to

[6]TAC actors who were trained at Juilliard are listed in appendix.
[7]Following his work with Jacques Copeau in the School Vieux-Colombier, Michel Saint-Denis has established and directed the following schools: The London Theatre Studio from 1935 to 1939; The Old Vic Theatre School from 1947 to 1952;L'Ecole Supérieure d'Art Dramatique 1952-1957. The National Theatre School of Canada 1960; The Stratford Studio of The Royal Shakespeare Company 1962.

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express in his text."[8] Third, "If the form is destroyed or altered, the sense {of the text} is also destroyed, and the right sort of revelation will not be produced."[9] Michel Saint-Denis' concern for both reality and style was the heart of the structured training program at Juilliard. Organized in three basic divisions -- Body Training, Voice Training and Dramatic Interpretation -- and staffed by experts in the field; the training unified the text, the craft, and the knowledge of periods and styles in a holistic experience for the student. The classes were integrated in a structured progression of a four-year program. Saint-Denis' pursuit of a fusion of reality and style was supported by John Hoseman's "firm belief in the classics as a basis of training."[10]

In Michel Saint-Denis's quest for "natural freedom and acquired discipline," mask work held a prominent place. Since 1924 Saint-Denis had taught mask, continuing the practice of Jacques Copeau.[11] Saint-Denis argued that the mask allows the student to work through all the problems of acting.[12] First, it enables him "to experience in its most startling form the chemistry of acting."[13] For example, the beginning student must learn to give himself to the mask. Second, he has to control his body; to be aware of his

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[8]Saint-Denis, *Style*, p. 67.
[9]Ibid.
[10]Houseman, *Unfinished Business*, p. 425.
[11]Saint-Denis, *Training for the Theatre*, pp. 169-176.
[12]Ibid.
[13]Ibid.

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center and to be aware of his breathing. Third, the mask made the actor aware of the form of his body as a whole. If an actor tilts the mask in one direction, he has to "adjust his entire form."[14] Consequently, through the training with masks, the students were exposed to what Saint-Denis considered "two magnetic poles of all modern theatre: subjective reality and objective consideration of style."[15]

At Juilliard, Pierre Lefèvre began teaching mask work in 1970.[16] According to Lefèvre, it forces the actors to be very analytical, it makes them aware that they are responsible for everything they do, it forces them to be eloquent with the body and to eliminate insignificant things.

Mask training left its mark on TAC. TAC players, who often performed in large halls, learned to express the character physically instead of relying on facial expression that is lost in the theatre. According to interviewed actors, mask work helped to extend their range of expression, developed their acting skills, and helped them to create strong comic roles.[17] Interviewed actors, Lynn Chausow, Jack Kenny, Mary Lou Rosato, John Michalski,

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[14]John Michalski, personal interview by author, tape recording, Jackson, Michigan, 21 October 1990. Juilliard, Group II, TAC (1973-74, 1989-90).
[15]Saint-Denis, *Training for the Theatre*, p.47.
[16]Pierre Lefèvre, personal interview by author, tape recording, Juilliard 25 January 1991. Lefèvre specialized in theatre masks for 25 years. He taught it in Europe and in Canada.
[17]Lynn Chausow credits mask work on her creating a strong characterization of Donna Pasqua in *Ill Campiello* a discussion of which will follow in the next chapter. In the production of *Orchards* one play was staged in mask, as will be discussed in chapter III.

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Michele-Denise Woods, used mask work as a point of reference in discussing particular acting problems. Those actors who did not go to Juilliard learned mask work in TAC and practiced mask in workshops.

Overall, the disciplines learned at Juilliard helped those actors who subsequently toured with TAC. Their technical ability influenced those actors who came to TAC from other schools. Paul Walker, for example, said that he learned from Juilliard students how to improve his vocal skills.[18] As evidenced in the next chapter the production of *Ill Campiello*, produced at the start of the second decade, bore the mark of Juilliard's acting style. Those actors who were not trained there had greater difficulties in executing the director's ideas than Juilliard actors. Juilliard's influence was also felt in the later years of the 1980-1990 period, albeit to a lesser degree.

TAC's Separation from Juilliard

TAC's separation from Juilliard was a gradual process that took place because of both external and internal causes. Those were:

a. policy decisions.
b. personal choices of the majority of Juilliard graduates.
c. economical situation.

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[18]Paul Walker, personal interview by author, tape recording, New York, 26 January 1991. M.F.A., New York University, TAC (1980-82).

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TAC's separation from Juilliard began in 1978 when Gerald Freedman was appointed TAC's artistic director and began recruiting actors to TAC through regular auditions. According to Michael Kahn, Gerald Freedman began to use fewer Juilliard students.[19] "I think the reason Alan {Schneider} and I were brought in, was to, in a sense, renew the relationship with the Juilliard students since we both were involved."[20] But at that time, the situation at Juilliard had changed and The Acting Company was never able to recruit a larger number of actors trained at Juilliard. The separation from Juilliard, according to Michael Kahn, created a serious problem for the company.[21]

During personal interviews Harley, Smith and Kahn pointed to the success of the actors' training program at Juilliard as one of the reasons why recruiting Juilliard graduates became very difficult.

> The Juilliard students were being sought after a great deal by commercial agents. And so for them to make a decision to go on the road, for one or two years, and $450 a week, (when they could) perhaps do television . . . The agents were beginning to tell the Juilliard students not to go to The Acting Company. So it was getting harder to attract the best students of Juilliard to The Acting Company.[22]

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[19]Michael Kahn, personal interview by author, tape recording, Washington, D.C., 25 January 1992. Both Kahn and Alan Schneider were at that time members of the faculty at Juilliard where Schneider was the head of Juilliard's drama division. Freedman's artistic leadership of TAC is discussed in Speers, *Evaluative.*, 1982. pp.225-230.

[20]Kahn, 1992.

[21]Kahn, 1992.

[22]Kahn, 1992.

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According to Harley, Kahn, and Smith, in the recent years the students at Juilliard have changed. They are not interested in theatre as their primary goal. They are much more interested in Film and Television.[23]

Economic hard times made it more difficult to attract Juilliard-trained actors to TAC. When lack of funds made it impossible for many sponsors to offer longer residencies and TAC began to travel every night from one location to another, the life of the touring actors became more strenuous. For these reasons, according to Michael Kahn, Margot Harley, John Miller-Stephany, Elizabeth Smith, TAC was never able "to get reconnected to Juilliard."[24] As a result, according to Kahn, when Juilliard students stopped coming into TAC the quality of work suffered. Although there were some very good actors who came to TAC from other sources, Harley, Kahn and Smith agree that in general in the second decade TAC's actors did not attain the level of excellence exhibited by the first ensemble.

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[23]Margot Harley, personal interview by author, tape recording, Jackson, Michigan, 8 January 1989. Kahn 1992. Elizabeth Smith, personal interview by author, tape recording, New York, 2 March 1990; TAC's voice, speech, and text consultant, former head of the voice and speech department of the Juilliard Drama Division.

[24]Kahn, 1992.

Figure 1

The Acting Company Artistic Directors Michael Kahn and Alan Schneider, Executive Producer Margot Harley, and Producing Artistic director John Houseman.

Photo courtesy The Acting Company.

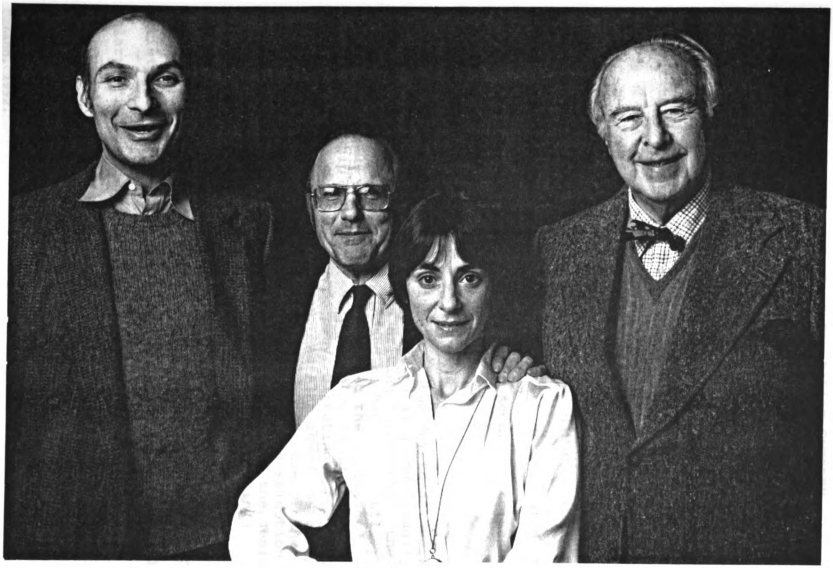

Figure 1

The Management of The Acting Company

John Houseman considered TAC his greatest legacy. In the period studied, Houseman was TAC's producing artistic director working with two artistic co-directors; Alan Schneider and Michael Kahn. Both Schneider and Kahn were brought to TAC after the departure of Gerald Freedman in 1978.[25]

In a way, the company remained under Houseman's leadership until his death. Houseman and Harley were in contact all the time but, as John's health deteriorated, the actual work was done mostly by Harley. According to Kahn, it wasn't really a triumvirate:

> Basically, Margot did all of the day-to-day work of the theatre, and all the fund raising and actually, in many ways Margot was the driving force behind the theatre at that time and indeed probably up until Zelda, still is. Alan and I shared the artistic directorship and that really meant choosing the repertory, choosing the company, directing a play each at least every other season. As Alan moved to San Diego, he was less actively involved because of the geography, so I ended up doing more of the selection of the actors and had somewhat more to do with the design. . . . The triumvirate worked because Margot, in a sense, ran the company.[26]

After Schneider's death (1984), Kahn remained as TAC's artistic director. His was a part-time job with a minimal salary; "it was a honorific position in which I was happy to contribute as much as I could."[27] He resigned in 1988.

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[25]Kahn, 1992.
[26]Kahn, 1992.
[27]Kahn, 1992.

Kahn stated that not having a full-time artistic director caused some of the company's problems because the company's artistic vision "was assumed to be such and such, but it wasn't necessarily one person's deep vision. It was the continuation of John Houseman's original idea."[28] Both Kahn and Schneider were chosen to lead TAC because their vision of theatre was closely related to that of Houseman and they did not attempt to alter Houseman's program.[29] After Kahn's departure Gerald Gutierrez was TAC's artistic director for one season.[30] John Houseman died on 30 October 1989. His death led to a subsequent appointment of Zelda Fichandler as TAC's artistic director.[31]

Procedures

The plays for the entire season are selected one year in advance, so when the actors are accepted into the company and cast, they go almost immediately into the rehearsals, which take place in TAC's New York quarters on 42nd Street. Outside of New York a different theatre is selected for the opening of each production. The company tours the country by bus. Actors fulfill additional functions on the tour. These include; leading the vocal and physical warm-ups, serving as a dance captain, being responsible for the stage

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[28]Kahn, 1992.
[29]Kahn, 1992.
[30]"And finally I felt that . . . it was not going to work to have a part time artistic director. So, I resigned and Gerry Gutierrez become the artistic director." Kahn, 1992.
[31]That will be discussed further in the concluding part of the study.

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combat. Actors also teach, conduct workshops, and lead discussions with the public.

Selection of Actors

In selecting actors for the touring ensemble, TAC's management uses stern professional criteria. In general, TAC actively seeks candidates with outstanding talent and with expressive skills of body and voice. Many actors come to TAC's auditions from the graduate programs of American conservatories. From the large pool of aspirants, the management tries to choose "someone with the most talent and imagination," said Harley.[32] The final selection is also affected by the particular requirements of the plays selected; "and you do have to think about assembling a company of different people, different types."[33] TAC seeks a well-trained actor who already has a basic preparation for working with a classical text, who has "a good handle on verse, . . . who is able to transform himself,"[34] and who has a well-developed voice, "we stress it, we wouldn't take anyone to the company who didn't have a good voice and good speech to begin with."[35] Also, the company is seeking an actor "who has the stamina to go on a tour of this

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[32]Harley, 1989.
[33]Elizabeth Smith, personal interview by author, tape recording, New York, 23 January 1991.
[34]Margot Harley, personal interview by author, tape recording, New York, 22 January 1991.
[35]Harley, 1991.

nature."[36] It is important to select people who can work together with other members of the group.[37]

The Development Of The Actor

Trained actors developed their skills by working with TAC. The following factors have contributed to the actors' growth:

a. benefit of daily performance.
b. playing in repertory in a variety of roles.
c. quality of the dramatic material.
d. the overall quality of selected productions.
e. ensemble acting.
f. skills of the experienced director.
g. guidance of the vocal coach.
h. guidance of movement, dance, and combat instructors.
i. benefit of daily warm-ups.

The most important was simply the chance to act. It was for Brian Reddy, "an amazing time of learning and growing."[38] Jack Kenny[39] and Michael McKenzie said that touring with TAC turned them into professional actors.[40] Working with TAC was for Casey Biggs, "one of the best, if not the best, experience . . . there isn't any other experience like this for an American actor."[41]

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[36]Harley, 1991.
[37]Harley, 1991.
[38]Brian Reddy, personal interview by author, tape recording, New York, 15 May 1990; M.F.A., University of Georgia, TAC (1980-82, 1985-86).
[39]Jack Kenny, personal interview by author, tape recording, New York, 24 January 1991; Juilliard graduate, group XI, TAC (1982-84).
[40]Michael McKenzie, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 18 June 1991; Webster College at Saint Louis, TAC (1986-87).
[41]Casey Biggs, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 25 July 1991. Juilliard graduate, Group VI; TAC (1980-82).

> You just become a better actor, because you are doing it a lot. That's how you learn how to be an actor. You can study all you like, but the way to become a good actor is working a lot.[42]

Former members who distinguished themselves in later work credited TAC's standards for such development. Mary Lou Rosato who toured for six seasons with The Acting Company, said;

> It was a very good thing for me . . . After four years of intensive conservatory training, I was given the chance to use all that training. And in a sense, it was not like continuing my education in a formal way, but to use my education, use what I had just learned. There are so many actors who get educated and then have no avenue to try what they've learned. I had that, and could build upon my experience yearly. I played every college stage from here to California.[43]

Kevin Kline said that four years with the company were for him as "twenty years in another theatre."[44]

> It was a version of the English repertory system where you finish school, then you go out to Birmingham or Liverpool or wherever to practice what you've learned, and you do great plays, in every different shape and size of theatre imaginable, for every different sort of audience.[45]

Playing diverse roles in the rotating productions was a significant experience. "In TAC I was able to play roles

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[42]Mark Kincaid, personal interview by author, tape recording Jackson, 20 October 1990; TAC (1987-88, 1990-91).

[43]Mary Lou Rosato, personal interview by author, tape recording, New York, 22 January 1991; TAC founding member, Juilliard graduate, Group I; TAC (1972-78).

[44]As related to this writer by Harley.

[45]Kevin Kline as quoted by Joe Morgenstern, "Kevin's Choice," *Connoisseur*, July 1991, p. 42. TAC founding member, Juilliard graduate, Group I, TAC (1972-76).

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that I never would have been able to play in the regular theatrical market here in the United States," said Philip Goodwin.

> And through that I think it was a process to grow. I think it was John Gielgud who said . . . {that an actor should} be able to play an old man before . . . {being} able to play a young man. My first role in TAC was that of a hundred-year-old doctor in *The Country Wife*. And it was tremendously instructive to me. It instructed me in the way of how you build a character . . . . You would build the younger character in the same way you would build an old character.[46]

"We were playing people of different ages," explained Jack Kenny, "I was playing an old man, and a young man" and had to shift from one character to the next.[47] Mark Kincaid said: "I love that kind of work. It stretches you as an actor . . . . makes you a much stronger actor. It's exciting to jump from one role to the next role."[48] Moreover, actors like performing in repertory because the challenging roles are more evenly distributed.

Interviewed actors explained how they developed their acting skills by playing multiple characters. "I gained valuable experience in vocal technique {playing} one night a seventeen-year-old kid, and on another night an old man," said Reddy.[49] In the 1980/81 season, for example, Iglewski was Estragon in *Waiting for Godot*, a blind musician in *Ill Campiello,* and Nick Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

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[46]Philip Goodwin, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 17 July 1991; Bowdoin College and the Drama Studio, London; TAC (1981-83, 1984-87).
[47]Kenny, 1991.
[48]Kincaid, 1990.
[49]Reddy, 1990.

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Touring exposed the player to the many, diverse, theatres across the country; theatres, that ranged from small, intimate places, to enormous halls seating over three thousand spectators. On one night the stage would be perfectly adequate; on another, just a High School gymnasium or even a hockey rink.[50] The performers were constantly forced to adjust to those ever-changing conditions.[51]

> You walk in, at say, six in the evening to a theatre you've never been in. And you have got to play that theatre, that night. And it can be anything from a High School gym to a three thousand seat, old vaudeville house, with four balconies up. We actually had to adapt the show occasionally . . . for playing completely in a round. You would have to suddenly adapt the physical aspects of the show . . . Set pieces would sometimes have to disappear because they didn't fit on the stage. So, you had to make those kind of adjustments to the theatre, while maintaining the integrity of the performance.[52]

Consequently, an actor had to "think about getting the ideas out," said Nyberg, which taught her how to regulate her voice. "If the house is a three thousand seat, you have to speak, for want of a better word, louder, than you do if the house is fifty seats."[53] Kincaid explained it this way:

> The first thing you do, you walk into a theatre, you see what the acoustics are like. You snap your fingers, you bounce your voice off the wall, a couple of times, and you gauge your entire performance on that. . . . Now, the way I'm going to perform a role in

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[50]McKenzie, 1991.
[51]Pamela Nyberg, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 14 June 1991; Juilliard graduate, Group IX, TAC (1980-82).
[52]McKenzie, 1991.
[53]Nyberg, 1991.

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> a 500 seat house, is going to be very different from the way I'm going to perform in a 2000 seat house.[54]

In the process the actor learned to adjust his voice for different houses. He also learned how to use his vocal instrument better. After doing just one tour with The Acting Company, Kincaid noticed a change in his voice. His range expanded. His voice became much more powerful.[55] According to Smith, an actor touring with TAC could develop the vocal endurance because he performed often and because conditions on the road forced him to be aware of his instrument.[56]

The size of the hall influenced the way the actors used their bodies, as well. In a small theatre, you don't have to do as much, and you can get the same ideas, emotions, and thoughts across, said Nyberg. "In a bigger theatre one needs to do bigger gestures."[57] That in turn taught the actors to be more flexible. According to Nyberg, because the tour forced the actors "to adapt to all sorts of different theatres," they were using their technical skills.[58]

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[54]Kincaid, 1990.
[55]Kincaid, 1990.
[56]Smith, 1990.
[57]Asked if the size of the theatre influenced the movement and expressiveness of her body, Nyberg said: "I never thought about that, but it might have. I don't know that I thought specifically about that. Although that is a good. . .In a bigger theatre one needs to do bigger gestures. Because you can't be *filmic*, so to speak, like in the small house, where you don't have to do as much, and you can get the same ideas, and emotions, and thoughts across. But in a big house you do have to think more grandly, for want of a better word."
[58]Nyberg, 1991.

The effect of playing for different audiences were listed by several actors. "I think it is very important for the actor to grow," said Goodwin. "We played for children, and before senior citizens."[59] The actor learned to adapt. Michael McKenzie for example, recalled that after leaving TAC, he had worked as an understudy in a Broadway show and had to assume a role on a short notice.

> Suddenly, I was performing for the first time with an established production, in a theatre that I had never performed, before. And it was very much like being on tour. It was very much like stepping off the bus and going to this new place, and being in this new theatre.[60]

Appearing in great plays written with vision and passion was important; "They are not interested in just doing popular theatre," said Kincaid. "That's what makes {TAC} attractive to young actors." That's why Kincaid wanted to become an actor: "I wanted to do Shakespeare, I wanted to do Chekhov, and I wanted to do all those big, meaty parts."[61] The Acting Company, he added, is so attractive to young actors because it is a classical company:

> It delves in a new material, often. But, for the most part, their grounding is in Shakespeare and the classics. That's the kind of work I've always wanted to do. I fell in love with the theatre as a young man, but what made me want to become an actor was Shakespeare. The first time I saw a production of Shakespeare . . . Because that's what I wanted to do. That was large, and deep, and heart-felt, and magical...[62]

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[59] Goodwin, 1991.
[60] McKenzie, 1991.
[61] Kincaid, 1990.
[62] Kincaid, 1990.

Many actors spoke about the trials of the tour. "There was a lot of one-night stands. Which means, we go from town to town, and we do a show one night in one place, and then pack up to go, and leave the next morning to do a show the next night."[63] "We would often dress in empty classrooms and rehearse scenes on the bus..."[64] The tour tested the actors in more than one way; Iglewski spoke about physical endurance;

> learning about what kind of energy we had to maintain through the day or through the week, or better yet, through the month, or several months. Knowing that you have got a busy schedule ahead of you, asks you really to allot the kind of energy that you'll expend at any given moment. Because you know, you got a performance, or you know you got an eight-hours bus day coming up, or several bus days coming up.[65]

Interviewed actors valued the chance to perform with a company of skilled actors who treated their work seriously. On the road only the production mattered. Even the difficulties of the tour had a centering effect. Touring, said Iglewski, "creates a placement, a focus on the work, that is extraordinary. There is no other reason why you are on the road, but to do the work."[66] Consequently, the actors

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[63]Nyberg 1991.

[64]Gerald Gutierrez, "Artistic Director's Statement, 1988." TAC founding member, Juilliard graduate, Group I, TAC (1972-76). Artistic director of TAC 1988-89. Richard Iglewski, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 10 June 1991. M.F.A., University of California; TAC (1980-84).

[65]Richard Iglewski, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 10 June 1991. M.F.A., University of California; TAC (1980-84).

[66]Iglewski, 1991. "It focuses your attention on the work," said Nyberg.

expected to be taken seriously. Kincaid offered this observation:

> We don't do mediocre evenings in the theatre. When we go in, that's what we are here for, is to do that play that evening. So we go at it hammer and tongs. We go full out. We don't do lazy, slip-up performance and go home. It just doesn't happen.[67]

Several actors pointed to positive feelings generated by meeting their spectators. Iglewski:

> We would probably get to know some of the people who live in that area. Perhaps some theatre students in which case we would be able to do workshops with them. To be able to teach was a great advantage of TAC as a way of extending ourselves to the community. And although our stay in the community might not be long, we took advantage of whatever time we did have to reach out and to make the kinds of contacts that are professional and human. And that, of course, was very important to the development."[68]

According to Harley, there were "uniformly very good actors in the last ten years," but not as many "people that stand out over and above all the rest." Among the major talents, Harley listed Richard Iglewski, Pamela Nyberg, Philip Goodwin, David Manes, Casey Biggs, and Lynn Chausow.[69] Kahn cited Philip Goodwin, Richard Iglewski, and David Manis as examples of actors who came to TAC not from Juilliard but from other American conservatories. "By staying with the company for four or five years . . . {they}

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[67]Kincaid, 1990.
[68]Iglewski, 1991.
[69]Harley, 1991.

really became proficient classical actors and really developed skills."[70]

Vocal Expression

For the development of vocal expression, Harley credits TAC's vocal consultant Elizabeth Smith. In the period studied, TAC had actors who were not uniformly trained. They came from various schools around the country so the level of vocal competence varied; "Juilliard was very successful for a number of years, and the fact that the best of Juilliard used to go to TAC made TAC a very strong group."[71] Harley stated that those who come to TAC but were not trained by Smith at Juilliard, are coached "on a one-to-one basis until they catch up, or to some extent catch up, with the people that have had her." Elizabeth Smith explained that when the company comes to New York to rehearse, it stays for four weeks, during which she spends as much time as possible with the actors.

> My work is primarily on a text but if some have a major vocal or speech problem I try to take them to one side and give them some help. But of course to deal with anything like that effectively, you need certainly more than four weeks.[72]

Nevertheless, Smith's work is very effective. She gives an actor exercises dealing with particular problems. She works on text with the actor and with the director. "I

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[70]Kahn, 1992.
[71]Smith, 1991.
[72]Smith, 1991.

pay a great deal of attention to clarity, clarity of speech, clarity of thought, clarity of voice, clarity of idea, clarity of text." Smith explained that she helps the actor to make the text intelligible "which means being able to articulate . . . Not dropping the ends of lines, thinking on the line, using the text, breathing, phrasing."[73] She teaches the actor to mind his speech, to use phonetics, to articulate and to correct the speech sounds. Smith works with the actor to give him "the capability of being audible" in every auditorium.[74] That is, to project his voice. Smith is concerned with the actor's vocal equipment. She helps him to exercise, knowingly, the muscles involved; "paying attention to the development of resonance" and, to the placement of the voice.[75] She also designs exercises that help to increase the range and the power of the actor's voice.

Smith is universally admired as a vocal coach. "Smith is very dedicated to the company and the voice is very important to her," was a frequent remark. Lynn Chausow recalled that Smith taught her to find a center from which to speak.[76] Mark Kincaid said that Smith always gives precise guidance to an actor.[77]

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[73]Smith, 1991.
[74]Smith, 1991.
[75]Smith, 1991.
[76]Lynn Chausow, personal interview by author, tape recording, New York, 23 January 1991; Juilliard graduate, Group IX, TAC (1980-83).
[77]Kincaid, 1990.

> You benefit because she can tell you, she can pinpoint exactly, she will be watching a performance and she'll tell you exactly what your problem is and she'll tell you how to solve it. She will also do dramaturg work with you, she will tell you, she will give you the clues how to make your performance better, clearer, understood clearer. She will also tell you about your problems she will tell you {what to do, to allow the voice to come out freely} . . . your throat is clenching up like that there, you've got to release it. . . . She will give you exercises to help you do it. And she will show you how to keep your voice alive in the run of the show.[78]

A sense of indebtedness permeated the testimonies: Iglewski said that over a period of four years, when Smith was his vocal coach and his tutor, he learned "many valuable, life-career-long basics and complicated things from her."[79]

Overall, according to Smith, TAC's players are well trained; they can talk and act skillfully. Vocal work is a priority at TAC and most of TAC's players are very good vocal technicians.[80] "We work hard, on it. The first thing we do is we warm up."[81]

Warm-up

Smith designs the warm-up sessions in order to "bring the company into the world of the play, make them think together, help them relax and breathe and, prepare the

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[78]Kincaid, 1990.
[79]Iglewski, 1991.
[80]"Most of the people that the company hires come from the same line of thought about performing this kind of work." said Kincaid. "Its about the school of theatre that says that {the voice} has to be expressive that you have to use your body, so they actively recruit actors who think that way."
[81]Kincaid, 1990.

voice."[82] Basically she works through relaxation paying attention to the posture of the body.

> She will give you a little vocal thing, something like *Ha Ho*, but she's not just standing there doing *Ha Ho*. Her arms are flaring, *Ha Ho*, . . . it's connected . . . It is something that is happening physically as well. And it's an important lesson that it's all connected. It's all one, and the same. And it's good.[83]

Observing Peter Brooks' production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* inspired Smith to pay a close attention to the mutual dependence of the voice and the movement of the body.

> It made me realize that voice and movement are very closely allied . . . and that actors must be able to produce a sound in any position. . . .[84]
>
> It became obvious to me that actors would, or should, be able to use their voices in any position while they were moving. And so, I began to make my classes much more active. I introduced a lot of movement. I concentrated on the movement not interfering with the breath, but being able to breath and produce sound, even though the body was in a different position, so it was moving at a different speed.[85]

This writer observed a warm-up session led by Smith before the rehearsal of *Romeo and Juliet*.[86] When the actors are on a tour the warm-up session is focused on preparing them for the performance. The warm-ups are led by a designated member of the company.[87]

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[82]Smith, 1990.
[83]Kincaid, 1990.
[84]Smith, 1990.
[85]Smith, 1990.
[86]Smith work with actors during the rehearsals of *Romeo and Juliet* will be discussed in the fifth chapter of this study.
[87]Trish Jenkins, personal interview by author, Tape recording, Jackson, Michigan, 21 October 1990; Jenkins led the warm-ups, also observed by this writer, during the 1989/90 tour.

> It's a sort of athletic preparation for an aesthetic event,. . . To help them to relax, to help them to concentrate, to focus their voice, to focus their minds, to bring them together as an ensemble, as a group. And to take them into the world of the play.[88]

According to Lynn Chausow, the vocal warm-up is particularly important to the actor on a long and demanding tour.

> It forces you to come to a place where you could work with your fellow actors, after maybe having spent,. . . an evening on a bus, or having a bad breakfast at a strange hotel, . . . it forced you to came together as a group.[89]

Because the vocal warm-ups are routinely conducted during the tour, the actors acquire skills and discipline. "If you're relaxed, and you know how to breath, you can make a sound that's not going to hurt your voice. And the schedule is so rough that you need to take care of your voice."[90]

The Directors of The Acting Company

Experienced directors contributed to the development of young actors. "It was John's {Houseman} conviction," said Harley, "that the less experienced the actor, the more experienced the director has to be."[91] The roster of directors who have worked with TAC includes leading American and European artists. In the period discussed, the following directors worked with TAC; David Chambers, Liviu

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[88]Smith, 1990.
[89]Chausow, 1991.
[90]Chausow, 1991.
[91]Harley, 1991.

Ciulei, Robert Falls, Gerald Freedman, Paul Giovanni, Gerald Gutierrez, John Houseman, Michael Kahn, Barry Kyle, Mark Lamos, Michael Langham, Christopher M. Markle, Brian Murray, Charles Newell, Tony Robertson, Leon Rubin, Alan Schneider, Shozo Sato, Mervin Willis and Garland Wright.[92]

Some interviewed actors emphasized the impact of those directors on their work. Pamela Nyberg put it this way: "I was very fortunate because we had Liviu (Ciulei), and Michael Langham, and Garland Wright, and Alan Schneider."[93] Casey Biggs said that TAC gave him a chance "to play in a variety of styles and periods, to take risks, to stretch the limits of my imagination and my skills, under the guidance of some of the best directors in the world." And added, "I was proud to have known John Houseman and Alan Schneider; these are the legends of the modern American theatre."[94] "We were lucky in those two years that I was with the company, because we had such wonderful directors," said Nyberg. Nyberg explained:

> I need a director who can challenge me. I need to be told I'm doing the same thing, or I need to be asked to think of things in a different way. I need to be led in a different way, or else, I'll do it myself, and I don't always know that my way is the best way. But, if you are working with a director, that you know as intelligent and talented you're willing to go to any risks, great risks for them and that's what acting is about. Acting is about going out on a limb. Whether you succeed or not is not important. It's about going on a limb, about risking.[95]

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[92]A full list of 1980-1990 productions will follow.
[93]Nyberg, 1991.
[94]Biggs, 1991.
[95]Nyberg, 1991.

The opportunity to work with good directors makes TAC attractive to young actors because the productions are usually well conceived. Good directors, said Casey Biggs, "have been able to open up the play better in a more realized fashion."[96] Each director brought a different point of view and a different set of demands. Even when the production was less successful, interviewed actors pointed out their personal gains. It was vital for Kincaid, for example, to be exposed to a variety of theatrical styles. Kincaid worked with a Japanese director named Shozo Sato. Although, *Kabuki Macbeth*, was not very successful and, according to Kincaid, was in some ways painful, he regarded it as a positive experience, one that stretched him and enriched him as an actor.[97]

> We were working with a very stylized kind of acting. . . . It was very stylized, and it was very artificial, almost, but it was fascinating to get that big on stage. Because Kabuki is about being big, and large, and colorful. . . . It taught me not to be afraid of doing that.[98]

Several actors recollected the contribution of Garland Wright. Nyberg:

> I remember once in *The Country Wife* Garland Wright asked me to take a pause that was very, very long. Very long pause. And it was a little scary because it didn't get the reaction; it never got a big laugh, or anything. It never got a reaction the way I thought it should . . . or what one would hope to get. At first I

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[96]Biggs, 1991.
[97]Kincaid, 1990.
[98]Kincaid, 1990.

> didn't want to do it. Because it didn't work. It felt like it didn't work. But the more I did it, the more I realized that it wasn't about getting that reaction, . . . { but, rather,} about who that person was, and what that character was doing at that time.[99]

Harley said that TAC actively seeks those directors, who "have shown interest in working with young actors."[100]

Repertoire

TAC's repertoire was built with attention to the needs of the public and the actor. According to the company's official statements, the ultimate goal of TAC was to serve the community by performing plays of lasting value. According to John Houseman, TAC's choice of plays is "dominated by the fact that we are a repertory company."[101] Michael Kahn stated that when he was TAC's artistic director the repertoire consisted largely of the classical plays and included plays that were considered modern classics.[102]

> The plays were chosen because they were either important literature, sometimes they were the American classics, like *The Skin Of Our Teeth* or they were plays that certain directors wanted to do such like Liviu Ciulei when he wanted to do Paul Foster's *Elizabeth One* which connected to the classical repertory even though it was an extremely modern play.[103]

John Houseman wrote in 1986:

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[99]Nyberg, 1991. "It was actually a very good thing, and I actually rather enjoyed it after a while."
[100]Nyberg, 1991.
[101] John Houseman, "The Acting Company: New Home, Enduring Principles," *Equity News*, Vol.71 No.11. November, 1986.
[102]Michael Kahn, personal interview by author, Tape recording, Washington, D.C., 25 January 1992.
[103]Ibid.

> The Company is currently presenting a repertory of three productions. We opened our season in Hartford, Connecticut, with the premiere production of *The Gilded Age,* adapted by Hartford Stage Company Resident Playwright Constance Congdon from the Mark Twain/Charles Dudley Warner novel of the same name. . . . *The Gilded Age* is a sprawling, satirical work with romantic overtones combining post Civil War news stories with fictional characters. The novel, published in 1873, was so popular it gave the era its name.[104]

Another stated goal was to bring classical plays to places where that kind of repertory was rarely performed. For many small towns, TAC is the only professional theater. As Harley explains, the company's objective is to perform in small places, those that are rarely visited by professional theatre; not a big city, "where they have alternative theatre," but a small town like Jackson, Michigan (population forty thousand) is "the kind of place where we mean to play . . . we could bring something less popular, like *Venetian Comedy*, and we would get an audience."[105] With time, in such small towns TAC was able to build a considerable following. Yet it is too simple to claim that any good, well-acted play could be sent on the tour.

Two major considerations, according to her, governed The Acting Company's choice of plays: what the audience will accept, and what the actors can do. One consideration is the popularity of the play. Harley says the play has to have a familiar title.

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[104]Houseman, *Equity*, 1986. see the review of repertoire on the following pages.

[105]Harley, 1989.

TAC's dependence on box office proceeds complicates the selection process quite significantly. Standing between the potential spectators and TAC's artists are the local presenters who try to predict which play will sell. It has been difficult to persuade the presenters to accept a less-popular play. Sometimes, having only a limited knowledge of drama, they were reluctant to choose a play they did not know.[106] In the 1980-90 period this particular difficulty increased considerably. "We used to take around less-popular classics but great plays, and we were able to get an audience for it," said Harley. She explained that lately the local organizers are reluctant to request a play of unfamiliar title for fear of financial consequences. Michael Kahn expressed a similar opinion; TAC was forced to do "what seemed to be somewhat conventional choices . . . I think The Acting Company still have that problem."[107]

Another consideration in choosing the repertoire, according to Harley, is the young age of the actors. It is not a good choice for a young company to produce a play in which the major character, a person who carries the play, is fifty years old. It is easier for a young actor to play a very old character than fifty or sixty years old. Harley believes it is particularly difficult for a twenty-five-year-old actor to play a fifty-year-old character in a

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[106]In general, a well known play by William Shakespeare had better chances with the local organizers then a play by any other author, said Harley.

[107]Kahn, 1992.

contemporary play. "Even if he could characterize it, he couldn't do it emotionally."[108]

In addition, the play should respond to the needs of young actors who come to TAC hoping to perform challenging roles. One reason for choosing *Five By Tenn* was the fact that the production consisted of five short plays by Tennessee Williams, which "gave the actors a chance to play different things and therefore to demonstrate their versatility."[109]

Review of Repertoire

Both classical and contemporary plays were produced by TAC. Of the sixty seven plays produced by TAC between 1972 and 1991, 14 were written by William Shakespeare. The Restoration period was represented by plays of Middleton, Sheridan, Congreve, Ford, and Philip Massinger. Among translated classical plays produced by TAC, two were written by Moliere -- *Scapin* and *Tartuffe* (1982), one by Carlo Goldoni -- *Ill Campiello* (1980). None of the Spanish dramatic literature has been performed by TAC yet. Several plays produced by TAC were written by modern American and European writers. Some works were commissioned by TAC, *Orchards* among them. The following plays were produced in the period studied.[110]

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[108]Harley, 1989.

[109]Harley, 1989.

110Productions performed by The New York Ensemble are marked by asterisk. The New York Ensemble consisting of past touring members of TAC will be discussed later in this chapter. A full list of plays performed by TAC is provided in the appendix.

1980-81

A Midsummer Night's Dream by William Shakespeare,
directed by David Chambers and Christopher M. Markle.
Waiting for Godot by Samuel Beckett,
directed by Alan Schneider.
Ill Campiello, A Venetian Comedy by Carlo Goldoni,
directed by Liviu Ciulei.

1981-82

The Country Wife by William Wycherley,
directed by Garland Wright.
Twelfth Night by William Shakespeare,
directed by Michael Langham.

1982-83

Tartuffe by Moliere,
directed by Brian Murray.
Pericles by William Shakespeare,
directed by Toby Robertson.
Play and Other Plays by Samuel Beckett,
directed by Alan Schneider.
**The Cradle Will Rock* by Marc Blitzstein,
directed by John Houseman.

1983-84

The Cradle Will Rock by Marc Blitzstein,
directed by John Houseman and Christopher J. Markle.
The Merry Wives of Windsor by William Shakespeare,
directed by Michael Kahn.
Pieces of 8, eight contemporary one-act plays,
directed by Alan Schneider.

1984-85

The Skin of Our Teeth by Thornton Wilder,
directed by Gerald Freedman.
A New Way To Pay Old Debts by Philip Massinger,
directed by Michael Kahn.
As You Like It by William Shakespeare,
directed by Mervyn Willis.

1985-86

Orchards: Seven American Playwrights Present Stories by Chekhov,
directed by Robert Falls.
**Ten by Tennessee, a retrospective of one-act plays by Tennessee Williams,*
directed by Michael Kahn.

1986-87

Much Ado About Nothing by William Shakespeare,
directed by Gerald Gutierrez.
The Gilded Age by Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner,
adapted by Constance Congton,

directed by Mark Lamos.
Orchards: Seven American Playwrights Present Stories by Chekhov,
directed by Robert Falls.
**On The Verge or The Geography of Yearning* by Eric Overmyer.
directed by Garland Wright.

1987-88

Five by Tenn, a retrospective of one-act plays by Tennessee Williams,
directed by Michael Kahn.
Kabuki Macbeth by Karen Sunde,
directed by Shozo Sato.
**The Witch of Edmonton* by Thomas Dekker, John Ford and William Rowley,
directed by Barry Kyle.

1988-89

Love's Labour's Lost by William Shakespeare,
directed by Paul Giovanni.
Boy Meets Girl by Bella and Samuel Spewack,
directed by Brian Murray.
The Phantom Tollbooth by Susan Nanus, based upon the book by Norton Juster,
directed by Jennifer McCray.

1989-90

Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare,
directed by Leon Rubin.
The Two Gentlemen of Verona by William Shakespeare,
directed by Charles Newell.

The National Ensemble

The National Ensemble of past touring members is a fine example of further development of actors through performance experience. It was formed in 1982. Actors who have distinguished themselves in the American theatre return to perform in the National Ensemble but any past member of TAC can take part in the group.[111] Because of the common experience of TAC, they "know how to play together" and often form a strong ensemble.[112] In toto the National

[111]Harley, 1991.
[112]Rosato, 1991.

Ensemble presented four productions in New York City.[113] Eric Overmayer's *On The Verge*, directed by Garland Wright, is considered one of the best works ever done by TAC.[114] According to Miller-Stephany, the company wanted to produce *On The Verge* in New York because of the special characteristics of that play.[115]

> Eric Overmayer is very concerned and adept with language. And much of the comedy of *On The Verge*, rests upon the use of language. And, as we are a classical repertory company, we felt, that, that was one of our strengths, and that was a perfect vehicle to show off members of our National Ensemble.[116]

Two productions of the National Ensemble were also presented abroad.[117] Marc Blitzstein's *The Cradle Will Rock* directed by John Houseman in 1983 and very well received in New York, was also presented in London's Old Vic Theatre in 1985. According to John Houseman, TAC was "the first American company invited to perform in London as an ensemble."[118] The second production of the National Ensemble, *Ten by Tennessee*, presented in New York in the 1985/1986 season directed by Michael Kahn, consisted of ten of Tennessee Williams' one-act plays and was presented during two evenings. Part of this production, reduced to five of

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[113] see the review of repertoire.
[114] Harley, 1991.
[115] Miller-Stephany, 1991.
[116] Miller-Stephany, 1991.
[117] In the recent years TAC's stated goal was broadened to include one additional objective: to initiate and participate in international theater exchanges. Although the company had toured internationally before, that goal first appeared in the company's statement in 1989.
[118] Houseman, *Equity*, 1986.

those plays was presented in Europe in 1990.[119] Also directed by Michael Kahn, titled *Five by Tenn*, this production consisted of *Portrait of a Madonna, Talk to Me Like the Rain and Let Me Listen, The Long Goodbye, This Property is Condemned,* and *I Can't Imagine Tomorrow*. The plays were performed in English but were simultaneously translated into the audience's native language. For the spectators in the former Soviet Union, Vassily Aksyonov translated the plays because the existing translations into Russian "often fail to capture the poetry of the original text."[120] The production was performed abroad as an official cultural presentation of the United States. The tour was supported by the Arts America Program of the United States Information Agency, with the assistance of U.S. Embassies in the countries where the company performed.[121] *Five by Tenn* was very well received. The spectators, and the critics were impressed with the wide-ranging nature of the actors' craft. The viewers were impressed with the skills of the actors. "The other day I saw a great actress!" wrote Olga Kuchkina in *Moskowsky Komsomolec* upon seeing Rosato's rendition of the role of One in *I can't Imagine Tomorrow*.[122] By the way they were received the actors felt their "work given

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[119]Germany, Poland, Yugoslavia and the former Soviet Union.
[120]The Acting Company press release, 22 October 1990. Aksyonov, Russian novelist, playwright and poet, currently a professor at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia.
[121]The Acting Company press release, 22 October 1990.
[122]Olga Kutchkina, "Eto Nietchto!" {"It Isn't Just Something!"}, *Moskowsky Komsomolec*, 7 Nov. 1990.

validity and the group given validity."[123] They also felt that they made an important contribution and won a new audience for the American theatre.

> It is good for the reputation of the company. It is prestigious to do that kind of a production with former touring members. And of course, also very prestigious to be invited to go to Europe by the US government. . . . I think it was very successful. . . . We had a very good audience response in every city.[124]

Financial Problems

During the past ten years, TAC continued to struggle for its existence as it underwent several changes. Foremost of TAC's larger concerns is the unstable financial situation. The lack of funds caused many problems: in 1989 TAC had to cancel a season. The financial crisis that affected TAC resulted from diminishing funding for arts from governmental or private sources. While the costs of touring and of producing a play increased, the ability of many cultural centers around the country to underwrite some of the costs diminished resulting in the dependence on box office income. First, according to Miller-Stephany, fewer residencies affected the ensemble of actors.[125] In the first years, the company had residencies "and we were somewhere for half a week, or for a week." It is rare now. "The actor very often comes in the afternoon, plays in the

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[123]Rosato, 1991.
[124]Harley, 1991.
[125]Miller-Stephany, 1991.

evening, and leaves in the morning."[126] That kind of life was very difficult for actors. It is now more difficult to get people to go on a tour. Moreover, those actors who join TAC usually leave after one or two years. One actor said: "I don't want to go out of town anymore. I want to stay home, I want to have a life."[127] Second, fewer residencies meant less educational work, fewer discussions and workshops because the actors don't stay long enough in one place. Third, fear of financial consequences dictated careful choices of repertoire. Fourth, financial problems resulted in fewer productions presented each year by TAC.[128]

Conclusions

1. The stated goal of TAC is twofold: to bring classical plays to audiences across the country and to develop further young American actors through performance experience.

2. TAC began as an extension of Juilliard's drama division and its aesthetic principles followed those of Juilliard. Acting skills learned at Juilliard helped those actors who subsequently toured with TAC. During the second decade, TAC gradually separated from Juilliard.

3. TAC selects actors with expressive skills of body and voice. Those well trained actors develop through performance experience.

4. Skills of the experienced directors, guidance of the vocal coach, benefit of daily warm-ups, performing in repertory, challenging roles and accumulated performance experience helped TAC's actors to develop. According to interviewed actors in the

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[126] Harley, 1991.
[127] Kenny, 1991.
[128] Miller-Stephany, 1991.

period studied, TAC's directors influenced their development.

4. TAC's repertoire in the 1980-90 period consisted mostly of classical plays and included modern classics and plays that were inspired by classics as was the case with *Orchards*.

Assessing TAC's influence, Harley observed that the American theatre now has changed in the domain of actors and repertoire. According to her, the regional theatres around the country are able to do plays more successfully than they would have been able to do twenty years ago,

> thanks to the training that is now available through Juilliard and some other schools, and through The Acting Company. I think you know, Garland can, in Minneapolis, can put together successful Shakespeare productions. And so, can other theatres around the country. Michael Kahn, who used to be our artistic director, now runs the Folger. And he's put together really wonderful Shakespeare productions, that at one point American theatre couldn't have done it, because the actors weren't trained for it. Didn't have the experience. If you are able to get the actors to go where you are, and you cast carefully, we can do the classics in this country now. . . . Thanks to, in part, what we have been doing for twenty years.[129]

One important change in the life of The Acting Company was the recent appointment of Zelda Fichandler as its new artistic director. Fichandler's belief in the centrality of the actor[130] created enthusiasm among TAC's past and present members who hope that the company will be "a great asset for the American theatre."[131]

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[129]Harley, 1991.
[130]Zelda Fichandler, personal interview by author, tape recording, Washington, D.C, 25 January 1992.
[131]Iglewski, 1991.

The following three chapters will be devoted to three productions through which we will investigate the actor development and bringing classics to TAC's audiences. Let us now investigate the work of the young actors on a production of a comedy: Carlo Goldoni's *Ill Campiello* a fine example of classical repertoire.

CHAPTER III

ILL CAMPIELLO

This production of Carlo Goldoni's *Ill Campiello, A Venetian Comedy* opened at Lehman College in the Bronx January 16 and 17,1981. Adapted by Richard Nelson from a literal translation by Erica Gastelli, *Ill Campiello* was directed by Liviu Ciulei. The production had sets designed by Radu Boruzescu and costumes by Miruna Boruzescu; choreography by Anna Sokolow, with musical direction by Bruce Adolphe. Lighting was designed by Dennis Parichy. In the 1980-1981 season, TAC gave thirty-three performances in fourteen communities, and in the 1981-82 season eighteen performances in nine communities. Thus, during two seasons the actors gave fifty-one performances of *Ill Campiello* in twenty-three cities. *Ill Campiello* was played in repertory with two other productions, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Waiting for Godot*. In time, some members of the original cast were replaced as will be discussed later in this chapter. In the original cast were eight Juilliard trained actors; their names are indicated by asterisk on the following cast list:

Gasparina ..... Pamela Nyberg*
Donna Katherina Panchiana ....Michele-Denise Woods*
Lucietta ....Lori Putnam

Donna Pasqua Polegana.....Lynn Chausow*
Gnese .....Johann Carlo
Orsola .....Laura Smyth*
Zorzetto .....Brian Reddy
Anzoletto .....Robert Lovitz*
The Count .....Richard Howard*
Fabrizio .....Casey Biggs*
Sansuga .....Jeffrey M. Rubin*
An Urchin .....Paul Walker
Townspeople/Musicians .....Becky Borczon, Kevin McGuire, Richard S. Iglewski, and Alan Silver

This chapter will demonstrate how the director gave stage life to his idea of the play and how he helped TAC accomplish its goals: bringing good productions of classics to audiences around the country and developing young actors.

Through the rehearsal process and the tour, the actors learned:

1. How to build characters for large auditoriums, how to use the bold contrast, how to pace themselves on stage and how to use their bodies freely.

2. To be expressive with their bodies, to find the most expressive gestures for their characters and to justify those imposed by the director.

3. They learned to be selective, to adhere to the spine of the play, and to use only that gesture that defines the moment best.

4. They learned control; how to pace their actions how to increase the tempo of their delivery and how to sustain a pause.

5. To use the scenery, stage properties and costumes fittingly for their roles. To use the external circumstances for motivating their actions.

Director

Today, Rumanian born Liviu Ciulei has gained wide recognition as one of the leading directors of theatre and

opera.[1] Born in Bucharest on 7 July 1923, Liviu Ciulei made his American debut in 1974 with Büchner's *Leonce and Lena* at the Arena Stage. Alan Schneider, then an associate Director of the Arena Stage, upon seeing Ciulei's work in Rumania, recommended him to Zelda Fichandler.[2] Subsequently, Ciulei directed Gorky's *The Lower Depths* and Shakespeare's *Hamlet* at Fichandler's Arena Stage in Washington D.C. Also through the recommendation of Alan Schneider, Ciulei came to work at the Juilliard school. *Spring's Awakening* directed at Juilliard (1978) was Ciulei's first production seen in New York City. Two of The Acting Company actresses, Lynn Chausow and Michele-Denise Woods appeared in that production. Upon seeing his work at Juilliard, Harley invited Ciulei to direct a play for TAC. Paul Foster's *Elizabeth I*(1980) was the first play he directed at TAC. At the time of producing *Ill Campiello*, Liviu Ciulei was appointed an artistic director of the Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis, Minnesota, a position that he held from 1980 until 1985.

Actors remember Ciulei as a demanding director. "Liviu is very specific, and he tells you exactly what he wants, said Pamela Nyberg.[3] Many were clearly impressed by the wide-ranging nature of Ciulei's art. Those actors that worked with Ciulei said that they wanted to do it again. A

[1]He had also directed three films in Rumania, of which *Forest of the Hanged*, received an award for best direction at the Cannes Film Festival in 1965.
[2]Alan Schneider began his work with the Arena Stage theatre in 1953.
[3]Nyberg, 1991.

case in point is Casey Biggs, whom Ciulei offered a part in the upcoming production of *The Time of Your Life*, at the Arena Theatre. Casey Biggs said:

> . . . That's why I'm struggling right now, with the thought whether or not I should go to the Arena Stage and work with Liviu. . . . I consider him one of the genius directors of my day.[4]

Richard Iglewski who joined The Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis in 1983 and is a prominent member of that company, said:

> Liviu Ciulei is a profoundly brilliant director and he represents a way of thinking and directing that is inevitable to lead to growth in all the people that are around him. His perception of the text is such that he is like a surgeon, who reveals layer upon layer of skin and muscles and fat and tissue and sinew, and is able within that very operation to bring forth the very finest human quality that any text may have in a dormant stage. And that often requires extraordinaryly demanding questioning. And his style of work is both intensely crafted and it's also about a physical design. He is very, very much aware of the pictures that are drawn on the stage as a result of the kind of investigation that we do.[5]

The Text

Ill Campiello a *Venetian Comedy* was written by Carlo Goldoni for the Venetian Carnival and first performed in Venice in 1756. Two centuries later, in 1976, Sir Peter Hall chose *Ill Campiello* for the opening of Britain's National

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[4]Biggs, 1991.
[5]Iglewski, 1991.

Theatre Company at London's Olivier Theatre.[6] Although very popular in Europe, Goldoni's plays are seldom produced on the American stage.

At the time of writing *Ill Campiello*, Goldoni had already departed from the rules of *Commedia dell'arte* and developed his own realistic style introducing daily life of ordinary people to his comedies. The play is set in a Venetian neighborhood and centers around people grouped on a little square (*ill campiello*). The simple plot of *Ill Campiello* tells a story of three mothers each anxious to find a husband for her daughter. An arrival of an impoverished nobleman starts the chain of events that leads into quarrels, fights and revelries that can offer a director splendid material for theatrical invention.

From a literal translation by Erica Gastelli, *Ill Campiello* was translated and adapted by Richard Nelson. Nelson's adaptation was received with mixed responses from theatre critics around the country. Declaring that Goldoni's "rowdy and wonderfully colorful" *Ill Campiello* "is hardly your everyday theatre fare", Ann Holmes found the translation "lively and full blooded."[7] Holmes wrote, "Read, on the page, in an earlier English translation, the play seemed frivolous and not very pertinent to today,"[8] Prine

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[6]Directed by Bill Bryden, 25 October 1976. Peter Hall, *Peter Hall's Diaries; The Story of a Dramatic Battle*, edited by John Goodwin, (London: Hamish Hamilton 1983, Hamish Hamilton Paperback,1984), 266.
[7]Ann Holmes, "Acting Co's 'Ill Campiello' Delightful," *Houston Chronicle*, (Texas), 10 Sept. 1981.
[8]Ibid.

liked the "expertly written" translation and noted that Richard Nelson "captured the ribald humor which entertained Venetian audiences years ago," and that "The Acting Company's production provides a perfect example of how well a technically accurate presentation of an 18th century comedy can amuse the 20th century audiences."[9] Other critics faulted the translator for introducing vulgarity. Writing for *The New York Times* Mel Gussow observed that Nelson burdened Gasparina with an impossible lisp and that the actors have to plow through anachronisms and American colloquialisms.[10]

Director's Idea of the Production

> What interested me in the play was the fact that it deals with simple people in a small town. The play was written before the French Revolution,. . . . The literary form of Goldoni is embryo of the realistic theatre which took over in the 19th and 20th century.[11]

Liviu Ciulei's staging of *Ill Campiello* was inspired by the creative works of Giorgio Strehler who brought Goldoni into the 20th century theatre.[12] In his famous productions at the Piccolo Theatro in Milan, Strehler combined

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[9]Jeff Prine, "Humor is Ageless in Goldoni's 'Venetian Comedy,'" *Palm Beach Daily News*, 5 Apr. 1981.
[10]"for example, her statement that she is considered to be a dumb bunny." Mel Gussow, "'Ill Campiello' By The Acting Company," *New York Times*, 16 Apr. 1981, sec. 3: 20.
[11]Liviu Ciulei, personal interview by author, tape recording, New York, 3 March 1990.
[12]Ciulei, 1990.

theatricality with realistic elements.[13] "What Strehler did with Goldoni was very important," explained Ciulei, because:

> he took all the Goldoni plays, which were considered farces, and were placed in a cartoonish world,. . . in cardboard sets. He took {Goldoni plays} out of that, leaving the theatricality. The production was theatrical -- he had sets on out of painted canvas -- but, he had snow on stage, and he had the puddle of water, so he brought some realistic elements.[14]

Ciulei's concept for staging of *Ill Campiello* embraced both aspects of Strehler's innovative treatment of Goldoni. As Strehler's, Liviu Ciulei's production combined theatricality with "realistic elements."[15] This is not to suggest that Liviu Ciulei's production of *Ill Campiello*, as staged with The Acting Company players, did not have Ciulei's own unmistakable voice. It did. Ciulei "went to the heart of the play" and gave it his own stamp.[16] It was, according to Harley, "a wonderful production, one of the high points of our lives."[17] Paul Walker said that *Ill Campiello*, was one of the best productions, ever done by The Acting Company.[18] After more than ten years, interviewed actors pointed to many concrete examples of Ciulei's unique approach to the text of the play and to the art of an

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[13]Strehler's staging of Goldoni was world famous. Established in Milan in 1947, by Giorgio Strehler and Paolo Grassi, Piccolo Theatro travelled throughout Europe. This writer saw Piccolo Theatro's production of *The Servant Of Two Masters* by Goldoni in Poland in 1958.

[14]Ciulei, 1990.

[15]As will be demonstrated throughout this chapter.

[16]Walker, 1991.

[17]Harley, 1991. "even though, I didn't think that the company itself was up to it, I thought that he covered up their weaknesses for the most part."

[18]Walker, 1991.

actor.[19] Based on those actors testimonies, as well as the external evaluations, The Acting Company's *Ill Campiello* will be analyzed in this chapter.

Poetic Realism

During an interview with this writer, Ciulei explained that in his famous production at the Piccolo Theatro, Strehler "went to the real feelings, to the real reactions of the characters."

> And of this, little world; with their little dreams, with their little aspirations, small aspirations, with this touching, and very... touching is the best word, sensitivity, which it creates for us, this compassion, which we have for it. We can sympathize with those characters. Because Goldoni speaks about this world that hasn't got an American dream. They are happy if they get their husbands, those poor girls there. And that's their greatest moment in their lives. And then they'll be wives and then they'll have their daily troubles, starting with what to put on the table. And the kids, and the washing, and the linens . . .[20]

For Ciulei, the essential meaning of Goldoni's work was the little world of *ill campiello*. Actors recalled that Ciulei was very clear, about that world. When asked by Brian Reddy, "what is this play about" Ciulei said, that *Ill Campiello* is about a neighborhood: "As if you took a neighborhood, a block in the Bronx, and you ripped it off, and put it on the stage."[21] Reddy also recalled that the director wanted "the life off the stage, to keep going."

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[19]Note already cited remarks of Richard Iglewski.
[20]Ciulei, 1990.
[21]Reddy, 1990.

> Because he wanted the sense of the *campiello* extending, he wanted the audience to feel this life off stage. . . . There were 37 sound cues, that were all done live -- every night. They could have taped that, and just have the sounds come across. But he wanted a sense of the party going on off the stage.[22]

Actors recalled how Ciulei implored them to give life to the character by searching for details of life. But as Ciulei explained, the actor's function entailed more than building a character.

> I aimed to stage the play. To make the actors as much as they can in the psycho-physical given, to portray the character, and the character, to portray the situation of each scene.[23]

For Ciulei staging of *Ill Campiello* as in the staging of any other play means "to give it stage life."[24] Every aspect of actor's work was subordinated to that overall idea, to give the play a stage life.

> Stage life includes the level of voice, includes the psychological reaction, includes physicality also, includes the position where you put an actor to say a line, in a geography of the stage, in rapport with another actor.[25]

> Realism isn't bringing the reality on stage. Realism is already a reduction of reality. Certainly, naturalism is trying to bring all the life on stage. Realism eliminates a lot of elements which are found in nature and that's why naturalism has a name and realism has another one. So, it's already a sifted reality. It's a chosen reality in which you leave things out . . . and if it gets poetical vibration then it's called poetical realism and it isn't flat realism. Many people confound, make this confusion, between reality and realism...[26]

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[22]Reddy, 1990.
[23]Ciulei, 1990.
[24]Ciulei, 1990.
[25]Ciulei, 1990.
[26]Ciulei, 1990.

It follows, that Ciulei's concern as a director is with truth, "not the truth of the street" but, with the "bigger truth, which comes out in art work."[27] If one is concerned "just with reality," said Ciulei, "than you have a flat, so-called realism, which isn't really a realism."[28] Moreover, Ciulei uses his selected reality to define clearly the action on stage according to his own reading of the play.[29]

Actors said that Ciulei directs from a fullness of experience. Still, photographic naturalism does not beguile him: "What I really learned from him," said Walker, who credits Ciulei for becoming a director himself, is that on stage "there is always a behavior in a way, that reveals something."[30] Liviu Ciulei explained it this way:

> I think that all the movements, all the blocking, in this case, and in the most of the cases, has to be story telling. It must speak about what happens in the play, what happened before this moment; what will happen in this moment; and what it can trigger further. So it's just a matter of feeling the exact situation of the moment to express in a stage language the diagnosis to which you have arrived with a specific scene.[31]

The Three Worlds of *Ill Campiello*

Ciulei's *campiello* was populated by three groups of characters that were stylistically distinct. The first

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[27]Ciulei, 1990.
[28]Ciulei, 1990.
[29]It is important to note that Strehler's own work "leaned heavily toward Brechtian techniques" according to Oscar G. Brockett's *History Of Theatre*, 5th ed. (Boston, London, Sydney, Toronto; Allyn & Bacon, 1987), 677.
[30]Walker, 1991.
[31]Ciulei, 1990.

group consisted of the common people: the ordinary crowd, formed of the mothers, their sons and daughters. They were real, down to earth, speaking without pausing, "jumping on top of each others lines. . . vulgar, circular, overlapping, very low to the ground, like the Shakespearean crowd."[32]

Sharply contrasted with that earthbound crowd were the characters of Gasparina and the Count. According to Walker, they were daintier and a little more stylized, they always seemed to be on a little cloud. They resembled little figurines on top of music boxes, Gasparina, "sort of walked on a tipped toes."[33] According to Walker, it was a challenge for both actors to achieve that quality of "being off the earth," because, since their characters "were fools, they felt more like being down, but Liviu wanted the delicacy of that."[34] The third group was silent, stylized "sort of lost, sad, looking for the carnival."[35] That poetically-inspired world consisted of a masked Harlequin and of the musicians later transformed into the blind musicians at the wedding.

Walker recalled how detailed the texture of each world was.[36] As the blind musicians were crossing the stage, looking for the carnival, "in the middle, you would hear in this very silent world, like *haa*, the laughter of the people. As if we were always trying to get to them."[37] The

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[32]Walker, 1991.
[33]Walker, 1991.
[34]Walker, 1991.
[35]Walker, 1991.
[36]Walker, 1991.
[37]Walker, 1991.

three worlds were interacting with each other giving the production a quality of a continuous swirl and a character's action often seemed to be "in the midst of something," said Walker. Robust behavior was often juxtaposed with lyrical moments.

> He kept those three things . . . in rhythm, almost... The carnival people would come on, and then the poor people would come on, and then the little foolish people would come on, and then the carnival people would come on, and then the foolish people would come on, and so it had that rhythm.[38]

Letting the Actor Have a Critical Attitude

Critics noted that staging of *Ill Campiello* was interfused with satire of manners and modes of Venetian life that showed signs of modern interpretation. Some saw in Ciulei's production indications of Brechtian ideas. Some actors recalled that there was a continuous feeling that the actor was first presenting the character, and then stepping aside to comment on his character. Asked whether he applied Brecht's theatrical ideas in his production of *Ill Campiello*, Mr. Ciulei said:

> Very little, because, as you know, we all live in the post-Brechtian period, so we carry with us this experience which he did by letting the actor having the critical attitude about the role in which he plays. If the play allows that, if the play gives you the possibility to do that, then, why not use it. If the play would be hurt by this, this *distanciation*, or *alienation*, as you call *verfremdungseffekt*, then it would be wrong.[39]

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[38] Walker, 1991.
[39] Ciulei, 1990.

Actors noted that the director worked to achieve this critical attitude with the roles of the count and Gasparina in particular.[40] In that pair, each actor would do a gesture and let the viewer know that he was making a comment on it.

A Very Sad Comedy

Rather than a comedy of a bright and happy character, *Ill Campiello*, said Ciulei, is a sad comedy. Walker recalled how the director explained that in a comedy, "people are going through the worst things in the world."[41]

Ciulei made the actors aware of the "fine line between a comedy and a tragedy."[42] Woods explained, how she developed her character of Donna Katherina which a great many critics found very funny. Woods used the poverty of her character as the definite source of comic encounters. Being very poor was sad, but it was also very funny "because, since the character has so little, everything means a world for her and because it means so much for her, it becomes very funny."[43] In comedy as in tragedy the circumstances are similar. "How the character chooses to deal with those circumstances," separates the two genres.[44]

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[40]Walker, 1991. That will discussed in more detail later in this chapter.
[41]Walker, 1991.
[42]Michele-Denise Woods, personal interview by author, tape recording, New York, 25 January 1991; Juilliard graduate, group VIII, TAC (1980-82).
[43]"What's makes the characters funny is the tragedy of it. I mean... it's such a fine line between a comedy and a tragedy. And it's still the same, the circumstances are the same..."
[44]Woods, 1991.

Thus, with the characters of *Ill Campiello* their impoverishment can be a source of sadness or laughter:

> They are very poor, they only have these children . . . that can be very funny, because of the things they do. They do anything for these children. That can be very, very tragic. The comedy comes by how heightened the situation is. It means everything, and so . . . if it means so much to you . . . and you walk across the *campiello* and slip on a banana peel,. . . that makes it funny because it means so much to you.[45]

Actors recalled also, that the director focused on eloquent details before allowing the comedy to come out.[46] During the rehearsal process, Ciulei exercised a careful dissection of each situation until the underlying relationships emerged as a true cause of a comic encounter. For example, the fight between Anzoletto and Zorzetto ended up to be very funny, but during the first three weeks of rehearsals Ciulei focused on finding the real world of the *campiello* "before any spaghetti was thrown."[47] In every case, the actor's aim was to discover all the relationships before developing any action on stage. "He kept saying -- no, it has to come out of this relationship."[48] Examination of those relationships dominated the early rehearsal process. As Reddy's recollection demonstrates from examination of those relationships, actors could find inspiration for true human behavior which could escalate

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[45]Woods, 1991.
[46]Reddy, 1990.
[47]Reddy, 1990.
[48]Reddy, 1990.

quickly into intensely comic encounters.[49] This attitude to the text of the play informed Ciulei's work on *Ill Campiello* and led to the qualities of the production.[50]

Casting

Casting of *Ill Campiello* is a good example with which to illustrate Ciulei's distinctive style. The casting was challenging because of the characteristics of The Acting Company. Goldoni wrote plays for his company of actors, always thought of the actors for whom he was writing, and always had at his disposal a diverse group of actors.[51] Moreover, the author of *Ill Campiello* had actors whose physical characteristics, acting skills and age were markedly different from those of The Acting Company. While the roles challenged TAC players, Ciulei's direction helped them to create believable characters. However, he admitted,

> We can't aspire to realize the variety and the amplitude of each part, the variety between the parts, and the amplitude of each part, to perfection. We have to give in. We have to compromise. We have to reduce our pretensions. Because, you have sixteen people and you must cast them.[52]

The challenge of age was significant. Specifically, *Ill Campiello* called for three females and two male actors to portray older characters, so the young company players

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[49]Reddy, 1990.

[50]Mary Lou Rosato, Pamela Nyberg, Richard Iglewski, Michele-Denise Woods, Casey Biggs, Philip Goodwin, Laurie Putnam, Paul Walker. Not a member of *Ill Campiello*'s cast, Rosato was directed by Ciulei in several other productions.

[51]Ciulei, 1990.

[52]Ciulei, 1990.

were cast in those roles. Performing the roles of older characters proved beneficial for the actor's development. It was also, in the opinion of some critics very successful, although, as will be later discussed, some critics blamed the director for the perceived lack of verisimilitude.[53]

A great many critics, though, wrote that casting added a sense of surprise to the production. In seeking to give Goldoni's play the rich texture of Goldoni's Venice, Ciulei often used the act of contrasting: he cast the roles in deliberate opposition and used actors' physical qualities in unexpected ways. When a substitute was needed for Lynn Chausow in the role of Donna Pasqua Polegana, Ciulei chose a tall male to replace that diminutive actress. The role of Gasparina was written as a little ingénue. Again, that role was cast in opposition to what might be generally expected. The role of a traditionally sweet ingénue was played by Pamela Nyberg, a tall actress. In addition, he gave Gasparina a lisp. Yet another example was the role of Fabrizio, Gasparina's old uncle. Initially, before the arrival of the director, Biggs, the leading man, was cast as youthful Zorzetto and Reddy a character actor as the old Fabrizio. As the performers came to assume their roles and Ciulei noted their physical characteristics, he suggested a switch.[54]

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[53]Note the critical responses later in the chapter.

[54]Walker, 1991; Casey Biggs, said Paul Walker, was the handsome leading man in the company and Brian Reddy was one of the character actors, he played Snug in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and Ciulei gave him the role of Zorzetto.

> Liviu just took one look at them, and said no, no, no, we must make a switch. Because he liked the image of the old man having a glimmer underneath him of this handsome man having been played that way. And then the young man, to be played by this little bald, because Brian actually looks much more like a baby, even he was older. So, Liviu doesn't really have that feeling about young, old,... it's more the essence inside. And that transcends sex, it transcends age...[55]

Actors noted that there was "a pretty even distribution of good roles too. You know, *Ill Campiello*, there wasn't a bad role in it," said Biggs.[56] Walker also said that Ciulei chose *Ill Campiello* for the rich collection of good roles for young people. *Ill Campiello*, as John Houseman told reporters, was chosen as a "vehicle for the actors" to give them a chance "to develop character parts."[57] The female roles included three old women trying to find husbands for their daughters and three young girls eager to get married. The male characters of *Ill Campiello* consisted of two young men in love; two old men, one impoverished count, and four lame and blind musicians. So cast, TAC's sixteen actors transformed themselves into the characters of a classical comedy which was noted by several critics.

While some reviewers noted the talent and skills of those young players who rendered strong performances in roles of people half a century older, some of the New York reviewers, in particular, strongly criticized the choice of

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[55]Walker, 1991.
[56]Biggs, 1991.
[57]As quoted by Ann Ludwig, "Acting Company Performs Well in 'Ill Campiello,'" *The Chandler Arizonan*, 18 September 1981.

a play with so many older parts. Gussow observed that with *Ill Campiello*, Ciulei "faces the hurdle of having a number of young actors cast as older characters."[58] Other critics appreciated the acting skills of TAC players in rendering those characters. Ann Holmes, for example, wrote that "The best of the actors are those in the older roles."[59] While Ciulei's casting challenged young players, his direction helped them to create rich believable characters. Encouraged by the director to seek broad characterizations, the young players exhibited their talents with abandon. Critics praised the actors expressiveness and vitality, energy and level of concentration. Nevertheless, while most of the critics wrote that the characters embodied by the actors were vibrant and alive, New York critics found them dull.

Many actors said that Ciulei's guidance inspired them to create some of their best characters. Asked to name a role that she liked best in her acting career Chausow responded:

> O, I would have to say it was Donna Pasqua, definitely. It was very special. I wouldn't necessarily have the opportunity to do something like that in the commercial theatre. Most likely I wouldn't have the opportunity. They would get somebody a lot closer in age to that character. So, to have that opportunity, as a young actor, was a real gift, you know.[60]

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[58] Gussow, "'Ill Campiello.'"
[59] Holmes, "'Ill Campiello' Delightful."
[60] Chausow, 1991.

Critics noted that "No single character is singled out as a star," as Dolores Troplano wrote on 23 September 1981 in *RoundUp*. "Instead, each one shines his own separate light and together they illuminate the stage."[61] Asked if actors minded playing some of the small parts, Lynn Chausow responded: "I don't think that anyone did at that particular time mind playing a small role. We all created it together and it made it very special."

> When you are a part of creating something in one of Liviu's productions no matter how small it is, you feel very privileged to be a part of it . . . Liviu doesn't really consider anyone having a small role, every role is important.[62]

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[61]Dolores Troplano, "Ill Campiello A Venetian Comedy," *RoundUp*, 23 Sept. 1981.
[62]Chausow, 1991.

Figure 2

Members of The Acting Company in their premiere production of Carlo Goldoni's play *Ill Campiello*, a Venetian Comedy directed by Liviu Ciulei with script adaptation by Richard Nelson.

Photo by Martha Swope

Figure 2

The Rehearsal Process

The Rehearsals for *Ill Campiello* lasted four weeks. The actors worked six days of the week from ten in the morning to six at night. Actors were in the theatre "all the time because we were in all of the scenes, with the exception of maybe two, little, poignant, two-person scenes."[63] Since the actors were always on stage, observing, or partaking in the ongoing action, as Woods explained, the actors had to learn "how not to outshine" those people whose actions were central to the scene, "and how not to be the focal point . . . We had to learn as an ensemble, how not to take the stage."

The actors created a world of the play in which they remained whether or not their characters were actually in a particular scene.[64] Chausow said that actors did very much stay as a whole group when they rehearsed, trying to remain in character, while the director worked on other scenes.

> And you could get a lot of work done on your own character, at that time, by just listening to the other people in the community and finding out how you would respond.[65]

Interviewed actors recalled the prolonged scrutiny of their characters. A dance master taught the players how to dance the Italian dances of the period. The women wore rehearsal skirts. They had to find out how they would react

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[63] Woods, 1991.
[64] Specific examples will follow.
[65] Chausow, 1991.

to a given situation according to the style of the period. Lynn Chausow used the stage setting for her improvisations; she could peep out the window and partake in the action even though she was not actually in that particular scene. Moreover, with the presence of the adaptor, (Richard Nelson), "sometimes actual reactions could be written in."[66]

From the discussions with actors a picture of meticulous probing into the "real life" of *ill campiello* emerged. Lynn Chausow recalled sweeping the floor:

> He informed me that I didn't know how to sweep. . . . I was standing up there with a broom, just {moving it} back and forth and he said, now, is that the way someone sweeps? When they sweep they are meticulous they have to get dirt from one point to another, so if you . . . focus on the actual cleaning . . . when you have an imaginary broom, you find that you get much more. It's not fake anymore,. . . there is a purpose. . . . The movement is going with the purpose. . . . Whatever you are doing, the movement can become more intense, or you can forget that you are doing it but if you actually try to recreate the actual sweeping it can be quite difficult.[67]

With the groundwork thus laid, further analysis aimed at making all the actions clear to the actors. Chausow again:

> I think that Liviu works very much at what is happening between the people in the scene. More so, than in the dialogue. So, he is more interested in showing almost physically, what is happening between the people. For instance I had a scene with another actress where . . . we were talking about the town that was the basis of the dialog and he had us to do an activity which was something we would do every day, cleaning our vegetables. We took our chairs and we sat down with our bowls and vegetables, and whatever and just began to gossip. And it was more important, the

[66] Chausow, 1991.
[67] Chausow, 1991.

> scene become than about two characters trying to impress each other . . . competition between the two older women . . . became the focus for the scene.[68]

Ann Holmes wrote later about the same scene:

> One of the most hilarious scenes is the bean snapping moment on the square with toothless Pasqua and grizzled old Katherina, both mothers claiming to be younger than the other and themselves eager to wed again.[69]

Actors noted that Ciulei's observations about the life of the *campiello* stimulated their acting. For instance, Woods explained how "the psychological given," helped her to give stage life to the character of Donna Katherina.[70] Other actors also recalled how the detailed scrutiny helped to give their roles a vibrating stage life. He helped the young player to make his character more vibrant and alive by first finding the inner truth of his character; he then helped the young actor to develop it, and encouraged him to express it in broad characterization. In the process, Ciulei led the young players into incorporating vivid movements and miming into their roles. As a result of such work, the roles were deeply motivated and expressed in rich theatrical language.[71] The overall effect was of a vibrant pulsating life of the Venetian piazza. Wrote David Richards, "{they} snivel and scream. They make rude gestures and ruder noises. They are envious, petty, lusty,

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[68]Chausow, 1991.
[69]Holmes, "'Ill Campiello' Delightful."
[70]Woods, 1991.
[71]As noted by several reviewers.

loud, devious and bursting with the juices of life."[72] According to Richards, that vibrancy "was captured with such vigor by the youthful Acting Company that one trembles to imagine what would happen if anyone over 30 tried to horn in on the action."[73] "While some of the players are incarnating -- and very credibly -- characters three times their age, this production is clearly fueled by the energy of a troupe that is feeling its oats. It rarely sits still for a second."[74] Michael Joyce wrote that Ciulei has masterfully transformed TAC's actors "into a ranting, ricocheting gang of bubbling, bumbling plebeians."[75]

Actors said that Mr. Ciulei was resourceful in finding solutions which were both helpful and inspiring. He often suggested the atmosphere of the moment. He painted a picture, at the beginning with an emotional image, as this one recalled by Walker: *"Ill Campiello* is about poor people diving for food."[76] Actors were particularly impressed with the way this director helped them to disclose the meaning of the scene in a vividly expressed action. Reviewers noted the distinct visual qualities of the production and that each gesture was functional. When reminded that the critics noted how interesting and varied was the characterization of each role, the director said:

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[72]David Richards, "Raucous Time in Old Venice," *The Washington Star*, 11 Mar. 1981.
[73]Ibid.
[74]Ibid.
[75]Michael Joyce, "Campiello, delightful Pandemonium," *The Free Lance-Star*, (Fredericksburg, Virginia), 11 Mar. 1981.
[76]Ibid.

> But its written like that. So, if you read right, you just have to do it. And to give it stage life. Stage life includes the level of voice, includes the psychological reaction, includes physicality also, includes the position where you put an actor to say a line, in a geography of the stage, in rapport with another actor, and all that is our job, as directors.[77]

For company players, every scene bore meaning fitting into the pattern of *campiello*'s life. Reddy recalled how sounds cues done live every evening, extended the life of the *campiello*.[78] At some moments, the theatre seemed to be permeated by the distant noises of the ongoing festivity. At other times, a gentle music would break the mood.

Discussion of Director's Work with Actors

Actors recalled how the humor of this production developed from the director's focus on meticulous details. "The comedy came out of the needs of those characters," said Reddy. Finding the relationships seemed at first almost too tedious.[79] It wasn't until "almost late in the rehearsal" before the director finally allowed the comedy to come through.[80] The relationships between the people led to its comic intensity. For example, Reddy described how Ciulei worked with Anzoletto and Zorzetto to make their fight real. In rehearsal it was tedious as both actors had to find all the relationships involved in that scene. When all the

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[77]Ciulei, 1990.
[78]Reddy, 1990.
[79]Reddy, 1990.
[80]Reddy, 1990.

relationships became clear, the fight between Zorzetto and Anzoletto could start and escalate. That moment, which could be very funny, had to come out of these relationships between a mother and her son and his rival.

Knowing how much competition permeated the life of *Ill Campiello* inspired the actors to invent original stage behavior. Ciulei encouraged the players to create the situations and to improvise freely. Working that way, the players created a loud, boisterous sketch of eighteen century Venice. Actors also felt that they created *Ill Campiello*, that it was their production since improvisations were such an integral part of the entire rehearsal process.[81] For Lynn Chausow, for example, being able to change the actual text of the translation was important. Knowing "that you are not limited," helped her to be "free and easy with the dialogue."[82] That freedom in turn "opens you up to a lot more discoveries and behavior."[83] Knowing the environmental circumstances of their characters' life inspired the actors:

> It was very cold and they were wearing lots of layers of clothing . . . that could bring a lot of behavior . . . putting on their clothing or the taking off, commenting on what other people were wearing, and they

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[81]Chausow, 1991.

[82]Chausow, 1991. "It was nice, to work on a play where you could say: this doesn't exactly make the point that I think the character needs to make and to be able to fine tune in that way."

[83]Chausow, 1991. "I do remember making lots of changes in the text after being on our feet, and after improvising and rehearsing . . . . Luckily, we had a translator and adaptor who was sitting there in those rehearsals, and we could have input from both directions: from us, and from him, and from Liviu."

> were very poor people,. . . and they took great pride in their almost rags.[84]

From the discussions with those TAC players who had worked with Ciulei emerged a picture of a director who led the actors on a fascinating journey. With one exception, that of Brian Reddy, who felt that Ciulei was very dictatorial, and who said that he "wanted to experiment a lot more," interviewed actors were pleased with the rehearsal process. On the following pages Ciulei's work with Brian Reddy, and with Juilliard-trained actors: Casey Biggs, Lynn Chausow, Michele-Denise Woods, Pamela Nyberg, Richard Howard, will be discussed.

For Brian Reddy, who "wanted to experiment a lot more in rehearsal than Liviu would allow," the rehearsal process was difficult. Reddy, found it troublesome to be told exactly what he had to do.[85] His training did not prepare him adequately for classical comedy. Juilliard actors were "technically more proficient than we were and were able to . . . {follow Ciulei's directions}. Liviu directs in a very, very technical manner. And they were able to execute the moves that Liviu would want at that moment."[86] Reddy said that he was used to working in a different manner: that he wanted to find the center of what the character was doing:

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[84]Chausow, 1991.
[85]"That's the case with Ciulei I think no matter where he worked anyway," Reddy said during an interview.
[86]Reddy, 1990.

and then, from that, "I could accomplish whatever was necessary."[87]

> But that meant trying different ways until I found what fit right. I remember Liviu calling me after rehearsal once. And he said, you have to set what you are doing. And I said, but I feel that I need to experiment more. And he said I don't want you to do that. I want you to set and do it this way. So, that's what I had to do.[88]

Reddy created a full-blooded character generally praised by reviewers. When TAC performed in Washington, D.C., Lardner wrote in *The Washington Post* that Brian Reddy and Robert Lovitz "help keep things near a constant boil as the two temperamental suitors," Zorzetto and Anzoletto.[89] Even Mel Gussow and Terry Curtis Fox, two New York critics who criticized the production of *Ill Campiello*, praised Reddy's acting. Mel Gussow wrote in *The New York Times* that Brian Reddy was "quite amusing as a young man impatient to be in love."[90] Reflecting upon his experience with *Ill Campiello*, Reddy stated that now it would be much easier for him to work with Ciulei.

> I didn't have the technique at the time. I struggled a great deal to accomplish what he wanted. . . . And I don't feel like I found the character until well into the run. It was a case of him putting a shell on a character and me, after a time, finding a way of filling it in as opposed to being creative with the

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[87]"I wanted to experiment a lot more in rehearsal than Liviu would allow... and I found that difficult."
[88]Reddy, 1990.
[89]James Lardner, "Love and Gentle Anarchy," *The Washington Post*, 11 Mar. 1981.
[90]Gussow, "'Ill Campiello.'"

> character. The shell he gave was brilliant, but it took me a while to make it real.[91]

Mr. Ciulei was not so dictatorial in the recollection of Juilliard actors. They noted that an actor willing to fulfil Ciulei's concept can be free to create within the structure.[92] "He gives you this elaborate shell, and picture, and it's your job to fill it," said Casey Biggs. An actor willing to give up his ego, "to say yes, he is right. I don't have to argue with this, I just need to find out how to fill it out," will achieve results with this director, said Biggs. "He gave us the skeleton and we had to fill in the substance," said Michele-Denise Woods.[93] Actors felt that Ciulei gave them directions that were far more coherently thought out than any other director they worked with.[94] In some instances, actors worked independently, as for example Biggs, who said that he modeled the character of the old man, Fabrizio, after Liviu.[95] Lynn Chausow said that an actor ready to improvise had Ciulei on his side. Chausow explained that in rehearsal, she would create in her imagination the world of the *campiello*."[96] The empty stage stimulated her imagination;

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[91]Reddy, 1990. Note for example Casey Biggs' discussion that follows. Casey Biggs, is a Juilliard trained actor.
[92]Walker, 1991: "it is best to run with the image."
[93]Woods, 1991.
[94]Chausow said that there was no need for embellishing in this production, because the actors had so much to do to begin with.
[95]Chausow, 1991.
[96]"I don't think we had the set until very very late, until probably a couple of days before we opened." Chausow, 1991.

> all the things around me, that I imagined would be there, in this time, and this place. And, somehow, when you use your imagination, when you don't rely on the actual physical piece, it can open you up to a lot more possibilities. I would sit there and use that time when he was working on other scenes, to imagine myself in my home, in this *campiello*, where there wasn't running water and there wasn't a lot of food, and so forth.[97]

According to Chausow, she developed the physical life of her character from those given circumstances. Chausow's is a particularly worthy example for the investigation of Ciulei's work with the actor because she had considerably developed the role of Donna Pasqua Polegana on her own.[98]

Character Development

Actors explained that it was Ciulei's guidance that helped to give subtlety to their characters while his insistence on finding the artistic truth of the moment inspired them to render the real life of the *campiello*. Besides, as some explained, in developing their characters, their training at Juilliard had given them the necessary technique to find the inner as well as the outer life of the character.[99]

Ciulei explained that if an actor comes to rehearsal with a creative solution to a problem, he, as a director,

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[97]Chausow, 1991.

[98]"A lot of that came out in a play a lot of that was used but sitting there in that time in rehearsal and thinking of all those possibilities led me to ask for certain things," said Chausow.

[99]As stated during interviews with Mary Lou Rosato, Lynn Chausow, Pamela Nyberg, Michele-Denise Woods, and Casey Biggs.

would take that solution and use it in the play. If, however, the actor had difficulties in expressing his character physically on stage, he, as a director, would give the actor a specific gesture that would tell the story best.

Casey Biggs illustrated both sides. Within Ciulei's structure, Biggs could discover enough in the play for his own invention.[100] He played two roles in *Ill Campiello*: one was that of a very old man whom Biggs had based on Ciulei. "I must have been 24 at that time and people had no idea what age I was." When, *Ill Campiello* toured next season, Biggs played the role of a young lad, Anzoletto. Kyle Lawson was one of the many critics who had singled out his performance:

> Another showstopping performer is Casey Biggs, as Anzoletto, the hotheaded ribbon seller who is in love with Lucietta . . . . Everything about Biggs -- his loutish walk, his surly look, his hair-trigger jealousy -- is perfect, as technically admirable as it is rib-ticklingly funny.[101]

Ann Holmes wrote about Biggs' portrayal of Anzoletto and Reddy's Zorzetto, that in their rendition

> the two boys, . . . combined their rush to love with their reluctance to get trapped and reflected all the agonies of young man confronted seriously with girls for the first time.[102]

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[100] Biggs, 1991.
[101] Kyle Lawson, "In Festival's Ill Campiello, The Players are the Thing," *The Phoenix Gazette* (Arizona), 18 Sept. 1981.
[102] Holmes, "Campiello delightful."

As Biggs recalled, when he took over the role of Anzoletto, the only thing that Ciulei said to him was "he is very organic."[103] Biggs, who expected a detailed guidance from the director, felt complemented by the unexpected freedom to create the role on his own.[104]

The role of Donna Pasqua Polegana played by Chausow as well as that of Donna Katherina, played by Woods, were difficult because both actresses were just young graduates from Juilliard cast in roles of very old women. Both actresses developed their characters working from the inside out.[105] Chausow explained it this way:

> A lot of actors who had worked with Liviu think that he is working from the outside in. But, actually to me when I worked with him it was very much from the inside out.[106] Now, he may present something to an actor for example, and say: "I want you at this moment to lift your eyebrow a quarter of an inch. And I don't mean half an inch, I don't mean an eighth of an inch I mean a quarter of an inch." And some actors would interpret that to be a very rigid, outward way of giving a direction.[107] When I think of it however, I think of the meaning behind that physical expression, and that's what I understand about what he is telling me. So I would never approach it from just simply moving my eyebrow I would find what was going on inside the character, that caused an eyebrow to go that certain amount.

As Chausow explained, even though she was portraying a slightly crippled, old woman, she didn't seek any outside

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[103] Biggs, 1991.

[104] "I expected him to give me the performance... spoon it out to me. But, he just said, no,no,no, he is very organic. I though that was a complement," said Biggs.

[105] Woods, 1991.

[106] Chausow, 1991. Note similar reflections of Michele-Denise Woods further in this section.

[107] consider for example Brian Reddy.

inspiration for her movement in creating the role of Donna Pasqua Polegana.

> I worked very much from the needs and the restrictions of the character. So if she had to run if she had to move very quickly, given the fact that she was 200 pounds you move differently, when you imagine yourself to be eighty years old and very heavy, and you have to move quickly you put those circumstances to the character and then you just move. It's very much mask work. Like I was saying before, putting on the character and then putting demands on that character and seeing how that character behaves under these conditions.[108]

In order to give truth to the life of their characters, actors went out researching on their own the given circumstances as well as the past histories of their characters. Michele-Denise Woods for instance, told this interviewer that as a young, black actress, she deliberately sought justifications that would help her identify with the life of an old Italian woman. The first question she asked was:

> How could I bridge my African American cultural aspect with this character of Italian origin? And I do know, and I did some research, that in the southern Italy they were darker. . . they were darker because of Hannibal crossing the Alps, and they called them the barbarians and Africans from Cartagina came over and crossed the Alps and sort of went in, and took over southern Italy . . . I had to justify why Donna Kathe was a little darker.[109]

And so, that first question was followed by a host of others. As for example: why some people looked different. Therefore, she based it on the fact that the people who

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[108] Chausow, 1991.

[109] Woods, 1991.

inhabit the neighborhood are all from a lower class. In fact, "they are very, very poor and from a poor region of Italy."[110]

> It kind of helped because it was interesting how the people of the upper echelon were fair skinned with blond hair and blue eyes, and the people of the lower echelon were of darker hue, because they were out. They were the ones in the fields, doing the work and the ones of light hue where the ones who were in a house. And they were the educated ones.

One brief example deals with the kind of questions Woods asked in her search for motivations for her character's actions: why is finding the right husband for my daughter so important? "Because they had so little,. . . those children meant everything to them."

Woods looked unlike herself. Heavily padded, she appeared overweight, she was limping, her face was wrinkled with age and sorrows. Yet, Woods arrived at her external features working from the internal to the external.[111] As she researched her role, she began to formulate the main objective of her character. From her main objective, the character's movement, the gesture, the histrionics and mannerisms developed. "Once you know what it is that drives a... character... the characteristics come . . . I started with what drove her, what her passions were, where her weaknesses were, where she was vulnerable." Her vulnerability was tied not only to her daughter's future but

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[110]Woods, 1991.
[111]Woods, 1991. Also note Lynn Chausow's experience.

also to her own past. Once beautiful, she now feels frustrated: "It's gone, and I'm living vicariously through my daughter." Woods recalled how one day from that inspiration she made up the face of her character: "every line of her face."[112] When she now looks at the clippings, she feels that she really looked like Donna Katherina. Furthermore, "my husband, he says to me, I was bringing it home, that, he was telling his friends, I'm living with a 65-year-old Italian woman."[113]

The role of Donna Pasqua Polegana gave Lynn Chausow a chance to display her broad comic talent. As was the case with Woods, the character was very different physically from Chausow, and she developed her character working from the inside out.[114] To begin with, there was about fifty or sixty years difference in age.[115] "There was a lot of body padding," said Chausow.[116] She was especially delighted with the idea of making her character toothless and "very, very hard of hearing. Toothless, was suggested by facial movements and speech pattern," explained Chausow.[117] As a character actress, Chausow feels that if a character is very far away from an actress physically and where her age is concerned, "it almost becomes a mask," and so she can lose

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[112]Woods, 1991.
[113]Woods, 1991.
[114]Woods, 1991.
[115]Chausow, 1991; "I was a young woman when I played the part and she was about fifty or sixty years older than I was." said Chausow.
[116]Chausow, 1991.
[117]Chausow, 1991.

self-consciousness.[118] She finds it more difficult, sometime, to play parts that are closer to herself. Playing a role so much different from her own personal characteristics is easier, said Chausow, because:

> it's almost like you are dealing with another person, objectively. Of course you are playing a part, but when you are analyzing it, and you are working on it, you can really look at it as something outside of yourself.[119]

Reviewers were strongly impressed with Chausow's comic talent and delighted in her bold characterization. Ann Holmes wrote that Lynn Chausow's character "is like some toothless crone with the ways of Tammy Grimes."[120] Marilyn Stasio found Lynn Chausow "screamingly funny."[121] Mark Barrack noticed that

> Miss Chausow, became a fast favorite of the opening night audience. She is a dried-up flirt with no teeth, whose deafness keeps things in wonderful confusion.[122]

Jeff Prine wrote:

> As Donna Pasqua Polegana, a crude, chubby matron who refuses to acknowledge she is old and deaf, Lynn Chausow shows comedic talents similar to those seen in skits by Carol Burnett, yet her characterization is unaffronting.[123]

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[118] Chausow, 1991.
[119] Chausow, 1991.
[120] Holmes, *"Campiello delightful."*
[121] Marilyn Stasio, "Rousing 'Comedy'", *New York Post*, 17 Apr. 1981.
[122] Mark Barrack, "Festival Opens with Rollicking Italian Answer to Shakespeare," *Arizona Business Gazette*, 22 Sept. 1981.
[123] Prine, "Humor is Ageless."

Chausow explained that her character of Donna Pasqua Polegana had really developed from the inspired climate of Liviu Ciulei's rehearsals.

The roles of the count and that of Gasparina were challenging to actors in a different way. Less boldly drawn than the crowd of commoners inhabiting the *campiello*, these two characters represented the world of aristocrats.[124] In the playing of those two roles, actors' use of manners and gestures had a double edge. It seemed as though the actor commented on his character's use of gesture. At times they were merely caricatures of courtly manners. Ciulei wanted to portray the pair as fools and Pamela Nyberg and Richard Howard had to endow their characters with satirical overtones without losing the life of the character and the style of the period. Richard Howard as the count and Pamela Nyberg as Gasparina created a masterful pair emphasizing their comic pretensions. Kyle Lawson had praise for the "extraordinary comic performances" of Nyberg and Howard.[125] Critics noted that Nyberg played Gasparina with deep sense of humor and irony; the hilarious Gasparina was praised by many. Delighted with their performance Michael Joyce thus described the scene when a count attempts to seduce Gasparina:

> "Do you have a husband?" he queries. "How can I, when I'm not married," says she. "Have I seen your parents?" he pursues. "I don't know," says she,

[124] See The Three Worlds of *Ill Campiello*.
[125] Lawson, "In Festival's."

> blinking and looking around. "My father's dead." (so is her mother.) "This intrigues one," he murmurs, smiling. "One what?" she asks. And so it goes from one ridiculous confrontation to another.[126]

Observing the rehearsals from the perspective of both an actor in a production of *Ill Campiello* and an aspiring director, Walker knew how difficult it was for young actors to play those two roles. Moreover, it was hard to achieve the subtlety of characterization suggested by Ciulei. "He is a faded count," said Walker, and it was difficult for a young actor to give his character that quality of a faded nobility.[127] It was therefore fascinating, Walker recalled, to watch Howard as he first put on the nobility, and then, to see him "take it down a notch, you know, so it's a faded nobility."[128] Most difficult to achieve were "the glimmers of the past," said Walker, "how do we make those packets of glimmers?"[129] As Walker recalled, with those two characters specifically, the director worked very hard to convey the complexity of his idea of the production. For the pair of young actors, it was very difficult to show all the layers of their existence. It was particularly difficult to convey the duality of their existence, that is, to give life to their characters and to show that "they were basically fools."[130] According to Walker, those two characters had moments of intense nobility. It was as if "they reflected

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[126] Joyce, "Pandemonium."
[127] Walker, 1991.
[128] Walker, 1991.
[129] Walker, 1991.
[130] Walker, 1991.

about the futility of their lives;. . . the characters had an opinion about how wrong their life was."[131] These fleeting moments were juxtaposed with actions clearly intending to show the foolishness of their nature:[132]

> They had illusions about themselves,. . . that they were rich, and they weren't rich . . . they were lonely, lonely fools. So that was all that lisping and things like that . . . and they would sort of like realize their lives. And there would be a great nobility . . . sort of outside . . . almost like Brecht's.[133]

The role of Gasparina was challenging for Nyberg and as she recalled, she was not enthusiastic in trying to fulfil some of Ciulei's painstaking demands.[134] "Liviu really made me do all those things that the character did" said Nyberg recalling that Gasparina was a character that "nobody on the stage liked."[135] It is, according to Nyberg, very difficult for an actor "to play people whom nobody likes because it feels that way."[136] As her character, Gasparina, "was constantly being made fun of by everybody on stage," Nyberg began to feel uncomfortable herself:[137]

> And some of the things that he wanted me to do like the lisp, and things like that, I didn't want to do,. . . . I didn't think they were necessary . . . I felt stupid. . . . It felt like I was the one who was being laughed at, not the character . . . . And it's still that way

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[131] Walker, 1991.
[132] Walker, 1991. "And then they would do something stupid, again. So, he worked very hard at it."
[133] that will discussed in more detail later in this chapter.
[134] Nyberg, 1991.
[135] Nyberg, 1991.
[136] Nyberg, 1991.
[137] Nyberg, 1991.

> with me. I'm afraid to do things because I don't want to look stupid. I don't want people to laugh at me, you know . . . . And so he pushed for those things, and I did them... But, it wasn't easy . . . because I felt uncomfortable. And feeling uncomfortable is a good thing for an actor. It's not always good to feel comfortable. . . . You want to feel comfortable to know that you know your lines, and you know your blocking, and things like that. But, to maybe not be sure of whether the part is going in the way that you hope, I mean it's just good to not know. It's just good to not know, as an actor."[138]

Gasparina's way of speaking was indeed criticized by some reviewers. Frank Lispsius, for example, criticized a "silly lisp," of otherwise "elegantly played" Gasparina.[139] Gussow complained that "Gasparina has been burdened with an impossible lisp."[140] Other critics pointed to Nyberg's especially fine acting. Pamela Nyberg, wrote Jeff Prine, "plays Gasparina, a lovely yet simple, lisping girl who believes she is a blue blood."[141]

> Another crowd-pleaser was Gasparina . . . the proud orphan of a dead nobleman, who attracts attention of a down-on-his-luck cavalier count. . . . Miss Nyberg's refined manners, despite her hilarious lisp and slow wits, makes a sly counterpoint to her vulgar neighbors.[142]

Judy Greenspon praised Nyberg's comedic flair and found her Gasparina "magnificently hilarious. Her subtle actions and facial expressions alone held the audience in stitches."[143]

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[138]Nyberg, 1991.
[139]Frank Lispsius, "New York Theatre; Recent Openings," *Financial Times* (London), 22 Apr. 1981.
[140]Gussow, "'Ill Campiello.'"
[141]Prine, "Humor is ageless."
[142]Barrack, "Rollicking."
[143]Judy Greenspon, "Ill Campiello Brings Venice to Modern Times," *Peoria Times* (Arizona), 25 Sept. 1981.

Critics delighted in the diversity of female comic parts. "Goldoni's women are especially lively, and especially in this production," wrote James Lardner in *The Washington Post*.[144] Dolores Troplano who found the performers totally absorbed in their characters, liked the comic renditions presented by Lynn Chausow, Michele-Denise Woods, Becky Borczon, Ronna Kress, and Pamela Nyberg.[145] "Old age has never been so funny," wrote Kyle Lawson about the comic renditions of Chausow, Woods and Bowers:[146]

> Each of the three actresses creates a vivid characterization that stops the show in turn. They make it look so easy: Two of them -- Chausow and Bowers -- even forgo the traditional 'old age' makeup, relying instead on their talent.[147]

Ann Ludvig wrote:

> These actors are good ones. Yet a seasoning is in order - a maturity. . . The cast collectively puts it all together although some moments were liquidated by the pounding consistency of unmetered energy.[148]

Critical Evaluation

Overall critics concluded that TAC's actors performed well under Ciulei's direction "supplying the energy that reincarnated Goldoni's two-century-old words."[149] David Richards found the entire cast "quite splendid."[150] Jeff

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[144]Lardner, "Gentle Anarchy."
[145]Troplano, "Comedy."
[146]Ibid.
[147]Kyle Lawson, "The Players Are The Thing."
[148]Ann Ludvig, "Performs Well."
[149]Prine, "Humor is ageless."
[150]Richards, "Raucous Time."

Prine wrote about actors that "each one sparks the others and the whole feeling of their work is one of having fun."[151] Ann Holmes wrote that Ciulei animated his characters.

> And he has identified and capitalized upon each character as if painting them in different colors. Though they are basically similar in their lifestyles and problems, the characters under Ciulei's orchestration have become a crowd of individuals drawing fire, pain, love, envy from each other.[152]

Michael Joyce found the actors excellent. "They act and react with nimble agility."[153] Kyle Lawson wrote: "If this is the caliber of young actors being trained today, the American theatre isn't in for a revival, it's headed for a rebirth."[154] A great many critics found the production nothing short of ravishing. Michael Joyce wrote that The Acting Company production is a "twirling, bouncing ball of raucous merriment and fun."[155]

> In the hands of The Acting Company, and under the quite brilliant direction of Liviu Ciulei, *Ill Campiello* is a lusty, hilarious romp that had the opening night audience laughing almost from the first speech.[156]

The critics also noted the inventiveness with which the actors responded to the challenges of their roles. Deb Adler attributed the fact that "the play works so well" to the company's "precision, energy, ensemble playing and

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[151]Prine, "Humor."
[152]Holmes, "Ill Campiello Delightful."
[153]Joyce, "Pandemonium."
[154]Lawson, "In Festival's."
[155]Joyce, "Pandemonium."
[156]Lawson, "In Festival's."

professionalism,. . . {stating that} the pace, timing and quality of acting were essentially flawless."[157] Frank Lispsius, who found the production daring, liked the orchestrated staging of "the bawdy scenes." "that never loses its connection with human nature."[158] The critics praised the pace of the production and the timing of each scene. They noted admirable skill of the performers since *Ill Campiello* had a fleeting pace; the show was only an hour and twenty minutes long. Reddy recalled that he had to change shirts twice.[159] Lori Putnam said that she lost two pounds each time she performed.[160] A great many critics noted how well the actors worked together in *Ill Campiello*. David Foil wrote that the animated acting "bristles with energy,. . . carefully articulated exuberance . . . razor-sharp timing" and the actors performed as an "endlessly versatile unit," giving a "lovely ensemble performance."[161] Judy Greenspon wrote in *Peorian Times* that the cast worked together from the beginning to the end.[162] According to David Richards, actors "constitute such a tight ensemble that it is hard to believe they haven't lived together for a couple of decades."[163]

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[157]Deb Adler, "Ill Campiello Opens Festival with Wit, Humor," *Scottsdale Daily Press* (Arizona), 17 Sept.1981.
[158]Lispsius, "Recent Openings."
[159]Reddy, 1990.
[160]Lori Putnam, personal interview by author, tape recording, New York, 15 May 1990.
[161]David Foil, "Acting Company Creates a Rich World," *The Morning Advocate* (Baton Rouge, La.), 3 Sept. 1981.
[162]Greenspon, "Brings Venice."
[163]Richards, "Raucous Time."

Discussion of New York Critics

After *Ill Campiello* opened in New York City on April 15, 1981 at the Public/Newman Theatre the critical response was mostly negative. In his review in The *New York Times*, Mel Gussow wrote that act one "is occasionally enlivened by tomfoolery, and dampened by repeated jokes about flatulence and by caterwauling exchanges between old crones."[164] Gussow observed that the "drab, monochromatic setting might do for neo-realismo, but is exceedingly uninviting for Goldoni's merriment."[165] In *The Village Voice* Terry Curtis Fox described the stage design as mournful and the production as having "the odd look of a very accomplished college theatre."[166] Fox criticized Ciulei for "grafting a ridiculous conceit onto the comedy of classes." Mel Gussow wrote that

> for several reasons, this is not one of the company's more propitious ventures. . . . After the intermission, the evening somewhat improves, although there are still too many moments of shouting, hitting and pasta-pelting as a substitution for comedy.[167]

Mel Gussow also faulted the director for "having a number of young actors cast as older characters," and criticized the acting ensemble for effusive gestures and raised voices.

One exception among the New York critics was Marilyn Stasio in *The New York Post*, who found beauty in Ciulei's "brilliant production" and who praised the director for

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[164]Gussow, "'Ill Campiello.'"
[165]Ibid.
[166]Terry Curtis Fox, "Tarnished Goldoni," *The Village Voice* (New York), 22 Apr.1981.
[167]Gussow, "'Ill Campiello.'"

"firmly fixing the comedy in its social context."[168] Another was Wayne Lawson who described the production as "earthy and very funny."[169] Lawson found the casting faultless: "young and old parts come off equally well, and the ensemble acting is exemplary."[170] In his opinion Ciulei's perfectly staged effortless looking *Ill Campiello* "belies the greatest sophistication, down to the slightest artistic detail."[171] The production is "so good it might well serve as a yardstick and textbook for every theater group that professes interest in the classical repertoire."[172]

Summary

In retrospect, *Ill Campiello* stands up in actors memory as a gratifying experience. The actors speak of Liviu Ciulei as a brilliant director. Many members of TAC have worked with him since; most notably, Richard Iglewski who is a prominent actor at the Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis. Lynn Chausow played Puck in Ciulei's acclaimed production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Pamela Nyberg and Casey Biggs appeared in Ciulei's latest production of *The Time of Your Life*, by William Saroyan at the Arena Stage.[173]

Ill Campiello produced at the start of the second decade represents a period of closer ties with Juilliard, a

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[168]Stasio, "Rousing 'Comedy.'"
[169]Wayne Lawson, "Living Lessons," *The Soho News* (New York), 22 Apr. 1981.
[170]Ibid.
[171]Ibid.
[172]Ibid.
[173]David Richards, "Saroyan, Through a Glass Darkly," *New York Times*, 6 Oct. 1991.

period of longer residencies, and of touring in repertory of three or more plays which enabled TAC's actors a chance to perform in a variety of roles and provided TAC's spectators with a chance to view a wide range of plays. Thus, by producing *Ill Campiello*, TAC contributed to both the development of its actors and the repertoire of the American theatre.

As was documented in this chapter, the acting Company's players had a chance to develop their skills in the process of rehearsing their roles under the guidance of Liviu Ciulei. The actors learned how to perform in a classical comedy, to be daring in their choices, and to use physical expression for bold characterization. They learned how to work within the structure given by the director and to adhere to the spine of the play with selectivity and control. They learned that to act in a classical play they must understand well the external circumstances of characters far removed from their own frame of reference, and they learned to give expression to a character's inner life with selectivity focus and abandon. The actors were encouraged to improvise during the rehearsal process and to use the scenery, stage properties, and costumes fittingly for their roles. They learned to act as an ensemble whose focus is on a play; they learned about style; they discovered that style fuses the character's inner life with the external realities.

The next chapter will investigate TAC's production of *Orchards*. Written by contemporary authors, this text is an example of classical inspiration. Although the actor's task was similar to that of the classical drama, work on the contemporary material presented different demands.

CHAPTER IV

ORCHARDS

The world-premiere performance of *Orchards* took place at The Krannert Center for the Performing Arts in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois, 19 September 1985. The production, directed by Robert Falls, had sets designed by Adrianne Lobel, and costumes by Laura Crow. Louis Rosen composed original music and Paul Gallo designed the lights. The following actors appeared in the opening performance:[1]

The Man in a Case by Wendy Wasserstein
Byelinkov .....Brian Reddy
Varinka.....Mariangela Pino

Vint by David Mamet
Porter.....Craig Bryant
Commissioner Persolin.....Terrence Caza
Zvisdulin.....Joel F. Miller
Kulakevitch.....Philip Meyer
Nedkudov.....Kevin Jackson
Psiulin.....Aled Davies

Drowning by Maria Irene Fornes
Pea.....Philip Goodwin
Roe.....Anthony Powell
Stephen.....Mark Moses

A Dopey Fairy Tale by Michael Weller
Smile.....Phil Meyer
Father Baker.....Terrence Caza
Mother Baker.....Susan Finch*
Clarence.....Craig Bryant
Chatter(the dog).....Joel F. Miller
Mayor.....Kevin Jackson
Magistrate.....Anthony Powell

[1]Juilliard training is indicated by asterisk.

Minister.....Mark Moses
Female Frog.....Wendy Brennan*
Male Frog.....Brian Reddy
Sad Princess Gladys.....Laura Brutsman*

Eve of the Trial by Samm-Art Williams
Ma Lola.....Susan Finch*
Lester Simmons.....Brian Reddy
Pearl Simmons.....Laura Brutsman*
Tate.....Joel F. Miller
Alex Bushkin.....Philip Goodwin
Lilly.....Mariangela Pino
Kitty.....Wendy Brennan*

The Talking Dog by John Guare
F.....Susan Finch*
M.....Mark Moses
Hang-glider#1 .....Kevin Jackson
Hang-glider#2.....Phil Meyer

Rivkala's Ring by Spalding Gray
The Speaker.....Aled Davies

This chapter will investigate TAC's production of *Orchards* focusing on the characteristics of the production and on the work of the actor. The text, the director, the quality of the rehearsals and the reaction of the spectators had a share in bringing about the development of the touring actors and all those factors will be surveyed in this chapter.

1. Although the actor's task was similar to that of the classical drama -- to give stage life to his role -- his work on the contemporary material presented different demands.

2. The rehearsal process was affected by the director's individuality, his idea of the production and by the input of the dramatists who were present during the rehearsals.

3. The rehearsal process was also affected by the fact that the text was still being altered.

4. The quality of the ensemble was affected because during the rehearsal process the actors worked individually; they met as a group less often, they did not have group warm-ups, before the rehearsals.

5. Expressing the complicated inner life of Chekhovian characters was difficult for TAC's young actors.

6. The contemporary material called for different skills of the actors. Each actor was cast in several diverse roles which called on the skills of the actor to facilitate deft transformations.

7. The production utilized a variety of means of expression such as simulated flight, padded, grotesque costumes; and masks.

8. Modern language with its seemingly unstructured quality presented challenges especially in the area of rhythms, idioms, and subtext.

9. The actors learned from the rehearsal process how to develop a character in a modern play.

10. Touring with *Orchards* presented the actors with experience unlike that of the classical play. The actor had to find a way to be heard and understood during some very intimate moments of a contemporary drama while performing in some of the largest auditoriums around the country.

Orchards was a result of a close collaboration of many people. The plays, based on short stories by Anton Chekhov, were written by seven American writers: Michael Weller adapted Chekhov's short story, *The Skit,* into *A Dopey Fairy Tale;* Wendy Wasserstein dramatized Chekhov's - *The Man in a Case;* John Guare took inspiration from *A Joke* for his short play titled *The Talking Dog;* Samm-Art Williams wrote *The Eve of The Trial,* Maria Irene Fornes wrote *Drowning,* David Mamet wrote *Vint,* and Spalding Gray responded to Chekhov's short story *The Witch* with his monologue *Rivkala's Ring.* Woody Allen, Sam Shepard, David Rabe, Christopher

Durang, Wallace Shawn, and Lanford Wilson were also approached but, according to John Houseman, "declined, for valid personal or professional reasons."[2] Each writer was paid $1,000 commission and a guaranteed $3,000 in royalties.

Orchards was created, according to Houseman, "In an attempt to find fresh contemporary material."

> Most of the fifty-nine plays that TAC had performed . . . have been classics; because of the Company's traveling habits and insistence on repertory, it has had difficulty in attracting new plays, whose authors prefer to see them premiered in regular runs in New York or regional theatres.[3]

The initial spark for creating *Orchards* came from Margot Harley who had a dual purpose in this project.[4] First, since the Company's stated goal has been to perform in classical as well as modern repertoire, Harley wanted to produce a modern American play for TAC's audiences across the country. Local organizers, however, were usually hesitant to arrange a performance of a new play, written by an unknown author and would not "book any new playwright." Second, Harley wanted to stage a play by Anton Chekhov but at that time did not feel that the Company's actors "were seasoned enough" to perform in any of his well-known plays. As Harley explained "looking for some way to do Chekhov without doing one of the three or four major plays," she assigned Anne Cattaneo, the

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[2]John Houseman, forward to *Orchards; Stories by Anton Chekhov, Plays by Maria Irene Fornes, Spalding Gray, John Guare, David Mamet, Wendy Wasserstein, Michael Weller, Samm-Art Williams* (New York: 1986, Knopf).
[3]Ibid.
[4]Harley, 1991.

company's dramaturg, to consider some of the short stories of Anton Chekhov, "to see if we could ask some new playwrights to write one-act plays, or short plays, based on those stories."[5] This way, Harley felt, TAC would be able to find audience for a play based on the writing of Anton Chekhov, and "yet, we would have the voices of those young playwrights."

Not aware, at the start, of the work involved, Cattaneo selected the short stories and assigned each story to a writer to interpret according to his own sensitivity. The dramatists who finally adapted the stories were encouraged to use the material freely, according to their personal styles.[6] Thus, each play represented a highly personal vision of the writer.

At the time of commissioning the plays, John Houseman was the Producing Artistic Director of the Company, and Michael Kahn was the Artistic Director. The selection of Robert Falls was prompted by the playwrights.[7] According to Harley and Miller-Stephany, when Kahn inquired what director they would like to stage their plays, the writers listed their suggestions and Falls' name was "on every single one

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[5]Harley, 1991.

[6]Anne Cattaneo as quoted by David Richards, "Chekhov: Impudent Variations. In 'Orchards', 7 Contemporary Playwrights Bring the Master's Stories to the Stage," *Washington Post*, 11 May 1986. Don Shewey, "Chekhov's Stories Through the Eyes of Seven Playwrights," *New York Times*, 25 Aug. 1985, sec. G, p. 1.

[7]Michael Kahn, personal interview by author, tape recording, New York, 16 May 1990.

of those playwrights' lists, so he is the one who got chosen."[8]

Director

Robert Falls is the Artistic Director of The Goodman Theater in Chicago. In the past he had staged several productions of contemporary American and European dramas. In Chicago's off-Loop Wisdom Bridge theatre, where he has been the artistic director for nine years, he had directed, among others, Dario Fo's *We Won't Pay! We Won't Pay!*[9] For the Goodman theatre, he had directed *The Curse of the Starving Class*. *In the Belly of the Beast: Letters From Prison*, directed by Falls, was seen in London, Glasgow and Washington, D.C. Falls also served as Associate director of the Midwest Playwrights' Program for three summers.

Falls' choice of plays reflects his fascination with the dialogue between the old and the new.[10] As he told this writer during a personal interview, Falls believes that he was chosen to direct *Orchards* because of his great interest in new plays. He had also worked previously with some of the playwrights, had directed several of their plays, and, except for Samm-Art Williams, he knew all of them personally.

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[8]Miller-Stephany, 1991; Harley, 1991.

[9]At the time of staging *Orchards*, Falls was still the head of the Wisdom Bridge Theater in Chicago, and was just recently appointed to the Goodman Theatre in Chicago.

[10]Robert Falls, personal interview by author, tape recording, Chicago, 14 June 1990.

Director's Idea of the Production

The Director wanted to remain faithful to Chekhov's spirit, to stage each play in a mode most suited to its writer's voice, and to be true to the "individual vision" of each playwright. "*Orchards* is very much about how one sees the frailties of the world--with loving, nonjudgmental, whimsical and sometimes harsh eyes."[11] Each play is different in kind: with separate diction, with dissimilar language, varying rhythms, disparate idioms - each play is completely distinct stylistically.

Mr. Falls decided to present each play, distinctly, in the style of the writer so that the staging would not hide but rather emphasize the differences between the plays.[12] "I couldn't direct the plays all in one style. . . . I had to be very faithful to each playwright. And to their own particular rhythms, and quirky vision."[13]

Practical considerations dictated many of the directorial and designing choices. In designing the stage setting, for example, the practical aspects of a touring company that each night performed in a different theatre forced several conclusions. According to Falls, since the plays were very short, the changes had to be quick in order to keep the spectator's attention. In cooperation with the stage and costume designers, Falls chose a stage-setting that allowed for smooth transitions from one short play to

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[11]Richards, "Impudent Variations."
[12]Falls, 1990.
[13]Falls, 1990.

another.[14] In general they attempted to make it as simple as possible, not keeping the audience waiting. To allow for very fast changes in the simplest possible way called on the director's ingenuity to facilitate skillful transformations.

Mr. Falls credits the stage and costume designers for the final look of the show. The final image of the stage design was an enormous, 25-foot pair of glasses, evocative of Chekhov's famous spectacles, rising up over the stage. They decided on an emblematic use of stage elements -- a strip of silver signifying the lake for example -- and on a very minimal set altogether.[15]

> But it was really bare. It was plywood floor, it was cardboard tubes for trees, a "silver lake" -- it was just a strip of silver across,. . . it was a very minimal set. The trees stayed constant, but then, we had to bring in props and scenery onto that. And it had to be very quick, and it had to be very light -- in order to make all these transformations.[16]

Most of the reviewers found the staging effective. According to Falls, although that minimal set worked well for most of the abstract, modern plays, it created some problems with the staging of the plays that were more realistic, especially *The Eve of the Trial* by Samm-Art Williams. For that play they had to bring on stage screen walls and a great deal of furniture while striving to make the transformations as fluid as possible.[17]

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[14]Falls, 1990. Adrianne Lobel and Laura Crow respectively.
[15] "It was a basically Chekhovian looking set."
[16]Falls, 1990.
[17]Falls, 1990.

> It was just great fun, you know to start from a blank slate, and to read these plays, and just try to realize them on stage. And because they are miniatures, you couldn't worry about it too much, you just had to go with the instinct.[18]

The instinct of this director produced some remarkable results. The use of masks is the most striking example. Mr. Falls explained that his idea to stage *Drowning* in masks grew out of his close cooperation with the designers. After researching pictorial representation of several artists, Falls and the designers were struck by the images of "sad, fat people" suggested in the art of the Spanish painter Botero.[19] That visual metaphor became the basis for the figures.

> The heads were built out of latex from plaster casts. A spandex cap on the inside draws them in closely to the face, so that the movement of the mask seems like the natural movement of a face. The actors see and speak out of the eye and mouth openings.[20]

The oversize hands were padded but they moved like human hands. Combined with "fat suits" built by Barbara Matera, the "potato-like people, are amazingly life-like."[21] According to Sylvie Drake the gentle treatment of grotesquerie in *Drowning* was unforgettable.[22] "Three actors,

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[18]Falls, 1990.

[19]". . . {we} spent a lot of time looking at art. We found the work of Botero, -- Botero, the Spanish painter -- Botero has this wonderful rounds of sad, fat people . . ."

[20]"In the Shops," *Theatre Crafts*, March 1986, 12.

[21]Ibid.

[22]Sylvie Drake, "Some Fine Pickings from Chekhov in 'Orchards,'" *Los Angeles Times*, 11 April 1986, sec. Cal. p.10.

wearing hideously warted and enlarged head masks, provide a surreal and poetic enactment of the tragedy of love," wrote Sid Smith.[23]

Falls' first task was to establish the running order of the plays.[24] His decision in ordering the sequence of the plays was dictated by the nature of the dramatic material -- the first play introduced the audience gently into the world of Chekhovian characters.

> I chose deliberately to open with a play that seemed the most Chekhovian, which was Wendy Wasserstein's rather faithful adaptation of *The Man In The Glass Case* {which was} the only play to be performed in a Russian garb and a Chekhovian costume. Because I thought that was the best introduction and the audience should see that first and then they should go on a journey that would end with Spalding Gray's monologue the most abstract, demanding, and emotionally complex piece, the most modern, at the end.[25]

Most reviewers felt that he had accomplished that task; Hedy Weiss, for example wrote that the director brought "style and order to this incredible mix."[26] Some reviewers discerned Chekhovian images in the abstract set. Shelly R. Fredman, for example, praised the "Almost barren stage, punctuated by white poles here and there, the 'cherry trees' of a 19th century Russian village."[27] Writing for *The*

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[23]Sid Smith, "Orchards Salutes Chekhov Works," *Chicago Tribune*, 21 Sept. 1985.
[24]Falls, 1990.
[25]Falls, 1990.
[26]Hedy Weiss, "Fruits of 'Orchards' Deserve to be Plucked and Savored," *Chicago Sun-Times*, 3 June 1986.
[27]Shelly R. Fredman, "All-Star Team of Modern Playwrights Harvests a Chekhov Feast," *St.Louis Jewish Light*, 23 Oct. 1985.

Washington Post, Richards observed that the set "pays its subtle acknowledgments to Chekhov."[28] "In contemporary terms, it intentionally recalls the first-act setting of *The Seagull*."[29] The title alluded to *The Cherry Orchard* by Anton Chekhov.

Plays

The assortment of seven plays was conceived by Cattaneo, who selected the seven stories out of 22 volumes of Chekhov's work.[30]

> Wild, slapstick farces, symbolist meditations, scenes strictly of wordplay that someone like Ionesco might have written 50 years later -- stories that were, on one hand, absolutely 'Chekhovian' and on the other, unlike anything we know from the plays.[31]

According to Cattaneo, contrary to the past editors, who "aimed at achieving a certain unity of style and tone -- the same unity we had grown accustomed to seeing in the plays," she chose to expose Chekhov's diversity in her final compilation of plays.[32]

Cattaneo asked each writer to respond to Chekhov's writing in his own particular mode of expression.[33] She

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[28]Richards, "Impudent Variations."
[29]Ibid.
[30]Houseman, 1986.
[31]Statement by dramaturg, Anne Cattaneo, *Orchards*. A production companion 1985-86.
[32]"This uniform and overly reverend attitude is the one thing we know that Chekhov specifically objected to in Stanislavsky's approach to his work." Ibid.
[33]Ibid.

matched Samm-Art Williams' gift "for wild, boisterous farce" with Chekhov's *Eve of the Trial*, and assigned Chekhov's short story *The Witch*, to Spalding Gray, because the story's ambience and mystery brought associations with the qualities of Gray's writing for experimental theatres.[34]

> As I went back through the stories, I saw what I thought was David Mamet's Chekhov in a story called "Vint": a sharply delineated, amusing and bitter sketch of a group of employees playing cards late in the night after work with the faces of their employers and their wives on the cards instead of jacks, queens and kings.[35]

Behind the love story of Chekhov's "A Joke", Cattaneo found "humor, terror and metaphysical speculation."[36]

> It was the relationship between a man who cannot acknowledge his emotions and the woman who loves him that I felt would interest a writer like Wendy Wasserstein who has focused many of her plays on complex and highly charged personal relationships."[37]

Actors

Of the fourteen members of TAC, three were Juilliard graduates and five held MFA degrees from other American conservatories: two from the University of California (Aled Davies and Mariangela Pino), two from the Professional Training program of Temple University in Philadelphia (Phil Meyer and Anthony Powell), one (Terrence Caza) from the

[34]Ibid.
[35]Ibid.
[36]Ibid.
[37]Ibid.

Professional Actor Training Program at the University of Washington, and one (Brian Reddy) from the University of Georgia. Kevin Jackson was a recent graduate of the North Carolina School of the Arts. Craig Bryant graduated from the New York University's Theatre Program; Michael McKenzie graduated from Webster College at Saint Louis, Philip Goodwin attended the Drama Studio in London. Joel Miller was a student of theatre and opera studies at the University of Minnesota at Duluth.

For the actors, the creative process of *Orchards* provided a new challenge and excitement. They were fascinated by being a part of a new work and challenged by the demands of the contemporary material that was still being altered by the dramatists.[38] At the same time, the presence of the writers was intimidating for the actors. As Falls stated, "there was a pressure put on the actors by the fact that the living dramatist was out there in the room, often, and that they had a responsibility to that dramatist."[39]

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[38]Ibid.
[39]Ibid.

Figure 3

ORCHARDS; Seven American Playwrights Present Stories by Chekhov. 1986-87 Tour Photograph. Stephen (M. Bradford Sullivan, standing) Pea (Philip Goodwin, center) and Roe (Joseph Houghton, right) in Maria Irene Fornes' play "Drowning", directed by Robert Falls.

Photo by Diane Gorodnitzki

Figure 3

The Rehearsal Process

For the Company's actors, the work on this production differed from the work on other plays because the plays were still being altered during the rehearsal process.[40] But the rehearsals were different also because each short play had at most four characters. As a result, more work was done individually and the director worked with small groups of players.[41]

The rehearsal schedule reflected the demands of the material. For example, TAC players usually begin rehearsals with group warm-ups. During *Orchards'* rehearsals, however, the actors did individual preparations. Since they were dealing with seven plays, in the first hour sometimes only two actors were called. The entire group of actors met only for one play, at the end of the first act, *A Dopey Fairy Tale* by Michael Weller. "And that was sort of wonderful because it was a coming together for the first time of the entire Company." But, except for Weller's play, there was never any time that the whole Company was needed.[42] When the fourteen actors gathered for the first reading of the play at Michael Bennett's Place in New York, 890 Broadway, they began a long association with the writers.

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[40]Reddy, 1990.
[41]Falls, 1990.
[42]Falls, 1990.

The Writers

Each writer responded in his own style, so that each resulting play was distinctly different. Moreover, each dramatist followed his own vision not knowing the work of the other writers. Don Shewey reported in The *New York Times* that Maria Irene Fornes was attracted to *Drowning* by its "glimpse of the dark side of Chekhov."[43]

> Its about a man who does a drowning act, which is a strange kind of art. . . . I identified with him because as a playwright, you're always creating these acts and trying to sell them to people who don't really want them.[44]

Spading Gray told *The Washington Post* reviewer, David Richard, that he is a total solipsist,

> I believe we see the world through our own prism. I'm being as true to Chekhov as I can by being true to myself and what his story brought up in me. I looked for the parallels in my own life.[45]

The authors approached their assignments with a sense of challenge, were genuinely interested in the development of the production, and kept working on the plays throughout the rehearsal process. They were always within reach, were very interested in the development of their own manuscripts, and were curious about the work of other writers. They contributed in many ways to the development of the production. Some writers even followed *Orchards* on the

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[43]Ibid.
[44]Maria Irene Fornes, as quoted by Don Shewey. "Chekhov's Stories."
[45]Spalding Gray, as quoted by David Richards. "Impudent Variations."

road. Some kept rewriting and polishing their plays long into the rehearsal process.[46] Samm-Art Williams, for example, continued editing and re-arranging his play as the rehearsals continued and even after the company went on the road.

The dramatists were very accessible during the rehearsals both to the director and to the actors. "They worked quickly with a great sense of humor."[47] They were open to discussion, responsive to the needs of the actors and to the suggestions of the director. They were supportive and cooperated in the effort to get their visions on stage.[48] This attitude created a sense of sharing and the actor often felt that he was making a significant contribution to a new American drama.[49]

During the rehearsal process, Falls was attuned to "each writer's voice and vision," and he worked to guide the actors to each particular vision.[50] He felt his work being enriched by the writers' personalities and even by their presence. Their personalities were so strong that he was inspired even by the way each of the writers talked: "If they talked fast the plays needed to go fast if they talked slow the plays needed to go slow."[51] To a significant degree, *Orchards* was a project concerning the writers.[52]

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[46]Falls, 1990.
[47]Falls, 1990.
[48]Falls, 1990.
[49]Reddy, 1990.
[50]Falls, 1990.
[51]Falls, 1990.
[52]Falls, 1990.

Moreover, the writers were involved in the creative process of the production. Their suggestions often helped to establish the feeling of the scene. The writer's explanation of a character's inner life helped the actor to motivate his actions. The writer was often helpful in establishing the atmosphere of the scene. He helped to clarify the mood of the moment and, when needed, emphasized its lightness. For example, John Guare helped the actor by illuminating the nuances of emotional changes in *The Talking Dog*.[53] That was, as Falls stated, probably the most difficult piece to work on.[54]

> To navigate the emotional delicacy of that piece, was very, very tricky. And John Guare was very helpful on that. John Guare was very involved in the rehearsal. And Guare has a very... he walks a very fine line between tragedy and comedy in all his work and I must say that Guare was extraordinarily helpful in rehearsal with the actors and with me in getting to those points. The actors were very willing to go there and to navigate very tricky, emotional things, but John helped a lot. That was the trickiest piece.[55]

Michael McKenzie said, however, that although a writer can be helpful, a "good actor's and good director's" reading of a play is often superior.[56] McKenzie didn't entirely agree with John Guare's reading of his own play, especially, one aspect of the play having to do with the interpretation of the role of M, specifically "what the flying signifies." In the play, when F and M went hangliding, when they were up

[53]Falls, 1990.
[54]Falls, 1990.
[55]Falls, 1990.
[56]McKenzie, 1991.

in the air, the man was able to say to the woman -- I love you. "I liked the psychological aspect of that," said McKenzie. Mr. Guare, however wanted to portray M as a very earthy person. "And I thought there was another level of this play that was much more poetic."[57]

Perhaps the most important contribution of the writer during the rehearsal was in helping the player to get into the style of the piece. The actor learned from the writer about the intricacy of the modern language. As the player learned to appreciate David Mamet's bold use of the contemporary idiom he became aptly attuned to its peculiar rhythm and tempo. From John Guare the player learned to reveal his character through subtle transitions in tone. The writer's presence also had a stimulating effect on the actors' creativity bringing it vitally and imaginatively alive. For example, Philip Goodwin recalled what Fornes told actors about the sea lions:

> She had been to Florida, or sea world, . . . and have seen sea lions . . . performing for people there, and it had made the association with the Chekhov's play; with the man who performs drownings for money, for people. She made the association between that man and these sea lions. She looked at the sea lions, and looked into their eyes and saw something that was very sad, and very pained, in . . . the sea lions. Which is what caused her to think of these big, potato head type men. And there were things, stories like that, and things like that, that we, as actors were able to take out of her conversation, and put it into our characters' background.[58]

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[57]McKenzie, 1991.

[58]Philip Goodwin, personal interview by author, tape recording, Washington, D.C., 25 January 1992.

For Irene Fornes, who as a director usually directs her own works, it was the first time that she allowed another artist to stage the premiere of one of her plays. As Mr. Falls explained, Irene Fornes takes her work very seriously, and during the rehearsal process "She was very serious about her play, it was a major work for her, and I think it shows." Sylvie Drake wrote in *Los Angeles Times*:

> Of all the pieces, Maria Irene Fornes' succinct *Drowning* is the moodiest and, emotionally, the most mysterious and arresting -- in keeping with her elliptical kind of theatre language that always speaks volumes. The gentle treatment of grotesquerie in this one is unforgettable.[59]

Through this dramatic process, the writers formed an intellectual alliance with the actors. Involved during the crucial part of the rehearsal, the writers often helped the actors to find motivation for their actions. This attitude created a sense of sharing and formed in the players a collective perception of dramatic reality on stage. In addition, the presence of the dramatists contributed to a serious mood during the rehearsal. At the end, according to Mr. Falls, all the authors were very pleased with the outcome.[60]

The actors felt that the writers influenced their ability to express many shades of character. Actors recalled discussions with the authors. Philip Goodwin's

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[59]Drake. "Fine Pickings."
[60]Falls, 1990.

incarnation of PEA in *Drowning* was enriched by the presence of Irene Fornes for example.[61]

> She is not one to say, "this is how it must be done, and this is what the play is about." She talks in images and she talks in a round-about matter about the play. And so, as an actor you are put in a position, not an unhappy position, of trying to pick out the gems from what she talks about, something that you can put into your own acting computer and program through the character.[62]

The writers often helped the actors by illuminating the emotional qualities of a scene, by underscoring the nature of the conflict, for example. According to Shelly R. Fredman, "troupe members rose to the challenge offered by the playwrights."[63]

Director's Work with Actors

In his work with the actors, Falls wanted to de-emphasize their technical skills and to stress the cruder side of acting that he considered closer to the sensitivities of modern man.[64] Falls said that classical training tends to give The Acting Company's players a distant, presentational quality. In particular, Mr. Falls thought they lacked intensity and emotional edge.[65] The director's task was to help the actor find the life of these

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[61]Goodwin, 1992.
[62]Goodwin, 1992.
[63]Fredman, "All-Star Team."
[64]Falls, 1990. "I almost wanted to de-emphasize the training of The Acting Company, and put them through a whole set of different challenges. Which was contemporary. Getting them in a very contemporary mode."
[65]Falls, 1990.

very contemporary plays. Thus, the director encouraged each player to express his role in depth with all its rough edges through his physical responses. Mr. Falls felt that the emotional truth demanded by the writing of contemporary dramatists like Spalding Gray or Wendy Wasserstein would be served better by a more raw, "on the edge" kind of acting.

Falls also felt that The Acting Company would benefit from working on contemporary material. As Falls stated, there is a style within TAC and it is based on their Juilliard training. While, as Falls explained, not all TAC members are Juilliard graduates, "there's certainly a league-of-professional-training-school sensibility within them." They have been trained in voice and movement, "they've have been trained to look at classical texts."[66] On the other hand, Falls as a director comes from a much rougher place. As he stated, the non-profit theater in Chicago has a rougher aesthetic:

> It's a little bit more honest, it's dirtier, it's messier it's rougher. So I wanted to rough-up the actors a bit. I wanted them not to be so clean. I don't really care that much about spoken words; not words, sounds; beautiful sounds, training.[67]

Falls wanted to give his production an unhewn fiber with a less polished look to convey a tone of "playing on the edge." He aimed at a quality of acting that has a sharper, darker tone than their usual style of performing.

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[66]Falls, 1990.
[67]Falls, 1990.

Critical response and the spectator's reactions indicate that the actors succeeded in giving their roles that rough quality which Falls set out to achieve. Tim Boclage wrote in the *St. Louis Globe* that the quality of acting was so good that he could hardly wait to see TAC's Sunday performance in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*.[68] It was, according to Tom Jacobs, a beautifully acted production.[69]

Falls found rehearsing *Orchards* difficult. "It was difficult to struggle with the styles of each of the writers. But ultimately, I was very very pleased."[70] Of all the plays, according to Falls, *A Dopey fairy Tale*, was the most difficult piece to realize. It was also one that he contributed the most to, "in terms of a style, in terms of a look, in terms of an energy."[71] In the end he was very pleased with the way he made that difficult play work. Reviewers noticed the director's inventiveness in staging Weller's piece. It was, according to Jaye Alderson, one of the popular segments of the production. Alderson stated, that some very fine comedic talents were showcased in the production.[72] Hedy Weiss, praised Joel Miller's "beguiling mutt."[73] According to Alderson, Miller's rendition of Chatter the dog, "a dim witted, forgetful mongrel who

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[68]Tim Boclage, "Performances are Superb; Some of the Material isn't," *St. Louis Glob*, 17 Oct. 1985.
[69]Tom Jacobs, "An Evening of Chekhov -- sort of," *The Sun*, (University of California Riverside), 7 Apr. 1986.
[70]Falls, 1990.
[71]Falls, 1990.
[72]Jaye Alderson, "Premiere Updates Chekhov," *Northwestern* (University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh), 27 Sept. 1985.
[73]Weiss, "Fruits of 'Orchards.'"

nevertheless can talk," was outstanding.[74] Miller,"a John Candy-like comic actor who steals the *Dopey fairy Tale* as Chatter the Dog," made according to Hap Erstein "a very favorable impression."[75] Actors' physical and vocal expression for this play was stimulated by inventive costume design; the heads and feet for the frog prince, for example.

Mr. Falls decided on a very minimal set relying on mise-en-scene to suggest the locum and atmosphere of each of the seven plays. This minimal set allowed for smooth transitions giving fluidity to the production. Consequently, the minimal set forced the actor to give each play a visible shape on stage by creative use of his own means of theatrical expression. In particular, the actor's physicality became very important for the staging of *Orchards*. In *The Talking Dog*,for example, the actors practiced every motion of a choreographed flight in the air, so that at the end the hang-glider's simulated flying was executed with utmost care.

"The piece is beautifully balletic," wrote Megan Rosenfeld, "with the two gliding through the air quite convincingly using only the help of two strong associates, four fans and a lot of light blue silk."[76] "The stylized, airborne choreography was, according to Hedy Weiss, "beautifully executed."[77] After TAC's performance at the

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[74]Alderson, "Updates."
[75]Erstein. "Seven Tributes."
[76]Megan Rosenfeld, "Chekhov Takeoffs; 'Orchards': Variations on the Master's Work," *Washington Post*, 16 May 1986, sec. C, p. 6.
[77]Weiss, "Fruits of 'Orchards.'"

Goodman Theatre in Chicago, Liliana Drechney called attention to Kevin Jackson's role which was performed "with physical skill."[78] The feel of flight was, according to Jopo, "strongly conveyed." Jopo wrote in *Variety* that Falls' staging "with actors serving as the couple's gliders is brilliant."[79] "The bright color and the use of humans as gliders," wrote Thelma Shinn, "added sparkle" to the production and intensified "the sensuality that Guare has captured from the Chekhovian original."[80] The production ascended to an "Icarus-like lyricism," according to Christopher Potter, "as actors Finch and McKenzie free-fall while held by 'glider' actors." Potter found the staging of *The Talking Dog* "beguiling enough to make you want to take flight yourself, and sad enough to tear your heart in two."[81]

The original music, composed by Louis Rosen, helped to amplify the sense of hang-gliding. Moreover, the piece was aptly choreographed by Larry Hayed who was able to endow the work with the lightness of effortless motion. Hedy Weiss praised Louis Rosen's "high flying music" that together with Guare's zaniness "carry this piece to the clouds."[82] According to Falls, *The Talking Dog* was wonderful to direct

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[78]Liliana Drechney, "Pluck Nice Tread from 'Orchards,'" *Leader* (Chicago), 15 June 1986.
[79]Jopo, "'Orchards.'" *Variety*, 16 Oct. 1985.
[80]Thelma Shinn, "Chekhov Adaptations Continue Festival," *Arizona Republic* (Phoenix), 1 March 1986.
[81]Christopher Potter, "Too Many Cooks. Playwrights Preen, Chekhov Fades in 'Orchards,'" *Ann Arbor News* (Michigan), 14 Jul. 1986.
[82]Weiss, "Fruits of 'Orchards.'"

because the elements he worked with were "just the actors; a piece of a blue cloth that came down from the sky, and a few fans."[83]

The immediate presence of the playwrights during the rehearsals made the actors feel that they were taking part in a new and important task and that their effort contributed to the development of new drama. This method of work gave each one a deep sense of immediacy; each felt a part of the creative process of the dramatist. Each knew that, by exploring the possibilities afforded by his role, he himself had a direct impact on the shape of the new dramatic material. This method of work gave the actors unexpected freedom to try, alter, and rework their renditions of a role.

Nevertheless, the work on *Orchards* created some problems for the players. One, was that the actors appearing in many roles had to make the transitions as smoothly as possible. The work called for quick transformations from one role to the next and from one style to another. Susan Finch, for example, who according to Alderson gave a fine, intense performance in *The Talking Dog*, had about ten minutes for a complete change to play Mother Baker in Weller's farce.[84] Immediately after the intermission, Finch appeared again as Ma Lola in Samm-Art Williams' farce, *Eve of the Trial*. After appearing as

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[83]Falls, 1990.
[84]Alderson, "Premiere Updates Chekhov."

Byelinkov in *The Man in a Case* at the start of the evening, Brian Reddy played the Male Frog in *A Dopey Fairy Tale*, followed shortly by the role of Lester Simmons in the *Eve of the Trial*. Aled Davies, praised by reviewers for his stunning impressionistic solo performance of Spalding Gray's long monologue, also appeared as Psiuling in Mamet's *Vint* and as the masked character of Stephen in Irene Fornes' *Drowning*.[85] Critics noted the technical competence with which TAC players executed these transitions. According to the reviewers, actors demonstrated their skills appearing in diverse roles. Shelley Fredman noted that

> Laura Bretsman appeared as a sad princess in a whimsical fairy tale adaptation by Michael Weller, and, moments later, strutted across the set vamping a southern floozy in Samm-Art Williams' *Eve of the Trial*.[86]

Falls also found the actors well-prepared for the task. As he explained, since all actors played three or four different people in the production, "there was a lot of make-up changes, wig changes, costume changes."[87] He stated that the training that they had received was quite good and that the training helped them in many ways. Especially, "the fact that they were used to sort of jumping into characters" helped them in some ways.[88]

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[85]Nels Nelson, "Orchards of Chekhov at the Zellerbach," *Philadelphia Daily News*, 21 Nov. 1985.
[86]Fredman, "All-Star Team."
[87]Falls, 1990.
[88]Falls, 1990.

Nevertheless, the same training that prepared the actors to execute difficult transitions and to display the richness of Mamet's language and to create vivid farcical characters, in some ways, according to Falls, hindered the actors' ability to perform in some of the contemporary plays. In particular, Falls found them "just a bit up tight. They were a little rigid. They weren't flexible and loose as actors."[89] They weren't, as he put it, living in the emotional truth of the play. "There was a sort of a distant, presentational quality to their acting that denied a sort of rougher, uglier, living, gutsier truth of work."[90] According to Mr. Falls, that lack of "gutsier truth" was most noticeable in the process of rehearsing the plays of Irene Fornes and Wendy Wasserstein. The latter in particular, "demanded a sort of a emotional truth" and that was harder for the actors to reach. (This will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.)

Falls guided the actors during the process of developing these roles, focusing on the characterization, helping them to explore the possibilities of each role. He wanted to broaden each actors' ability to express feelings. He helped each actor to discover and communicate his character's dramatic reality and encouraged the actors to find motives for actions that would force them to make bold choices. Working this way, the director ultimately

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[89]Falls, 1990.
[90]Falls, 1990.

succeeded in his goal of giving the modern edge to his production of *Orchards*. Richard Christiansen found the production "well performed by the company" and praised the "clear, keen delivery" of Aled Davies who "portrays the young man with a compelling edge of quiet desperation," as well as "a splendid heartbreaking performance by Kevin Jackson behind a gross mask."[91]

Falls allowed the actors ample time to explore their roles. For example, during the rehearsals of *The Man in the Case*, he guided Brian Reddy in creating his complicated character. Byelinkov, a pedantic teacher, was dismayed upon realizing what changes an intended marriage to Varinka might bring to his orderly life. Falls appealed to Reddy's empathy for an old man afraid of life, hiding behind galoshes and eyeglasses, helplessly relying on the constancy of daily routines. As he led the actor in discovering motivations and relationships of his character, Falls emphasized the difference between Varinka's playfulness and the working of the mind of a man like Byelinkov. This process helped both partners to find expression that best revealed their peculiarities and highlighted the bonds holding them together. In that scene, the interplay of those two contrasting characters was vividly embodied on stage, a fact noted by the reviewers, as for example, Thelma Shinn in the *Arizona Republic*.

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[91]Richard Christiansen, "Gray Picks up Where Chekhov Left off," *Chicago Tribune*, 3 June 1986.

Wasserstein, who according to Shinn, captured the quality of "a man who cannot break out of his 'case'{was} . . . excellently assisted by the talents of Brian Reddy and Mariangela Pino as Byelinkov and Varinka, especially in their inspired dance."[92] They make a good couple, according to Megan Rosenfeld, "a contrast in light and dark."[93]Jopo wrote in *Variety* that Reddy and Pino "make the piece work to perfection."[94]

Thus, the director's guidance gave depth to Reddy's character. Reddy told this writer that Falls was "terrific to work" with, because he created for an actor an atmosphere that allowed him to "find a moment for himself."[95] According to Reddy, Falls encouraged him to find his character through his own sensitivity -- "our input was sought in terms of where we were going with the scene."[96] The director's approach was "very organic" because he allowed the actor to "find the moment" and in general created a feeling of trust as he led the player in the development of the scene.[97] For example, in a pivotal moment of *The Man in the Case*, Byelinkov falls from a bicycle.

> Bob did not rehearse the bicycle fall until quite late into the rehearsal because he kept saying -- once you find the other moments, it will happen... For a couple of weeks, we only rehearsed the first half . . . and it just unfolded emotionally.

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[92]Shinn, "Adaptations."
[93]Rosenfeld, "Takeoffs;."
[94]Jopo, "Orchards," *Variety*, 16 Oct. 1985.
[95]Reddy, 1990.
[96]Reddy, 1990.
[97]Reddy, 1990.

> ...I'll never forget, he just allowed -- one day, he just didn't say anything, Bob, the director, where we would have normally stopped, we just kept going, we just kept going with the scene. Because he had observed that we had struck. We were on a true emotional path with that play right there. And he just allowed us to continue. And it just happened, organically, at that moment.[98]

Consequently, Reddy believes, that process gave subtlety and delicacy to his rendition of Byelinkov, which was generally praised by the reviewers. Hedy Weiss wrote in Chicago Sun-Times that Reddy "charmingly performed the role of {an} emotionally locked man."[99]

For the three actors cast in Irene-Maria Fornes' *Drowning* "a lot of the rehearsal process was physical."[100] The actors knew from the start that they were going to be wearing huge masks and "huge fat suits which will alter. . . {their} physicality. So, obviously that became a very important part of the rehearsal process."[101] However, as Philip Goodwin explained, they did not have "those fat suits, or the heads, all the way through the rehearsal process."[102] Although they could look at the designs, basically during the first part of the rehearsal process the actor had to "imagine what it would be like to have all of this extra stuff all over you."

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[98]Reddy, 1990.
[99]Weiss, "Fruits of 'Orchards.'"
[100]Goodwin, 1992.
[101]Goodwin, 1992.
[102]Goodwin, 1992.

> So, a lot of the rehearsal process was figuring out what one could do physically, how slowly you would be required to move and what kind of gesture would be effected by a fat suit and a couple of extra layers of flab on your arm, or on your side.[103]

Even the fitting for the mask that covered the entire head of an actor created an experience that contributed to a strong feeling that in turn enabled Goodwin to create a memorable character.[104] As Goodwin explained that fitting was frightening in itself, because in order to take the mold "they pore that latex stuff all over your head, and put a couple of straws up your nose." When the actor discussed the process of building his character of Pea he said that the physical attributes of the costume and the mask, and some pieces of scenery played an important part in his work.

> The hugeness of the body was very, very important to me. It affected how you sat, I remember the chairs that we had on the set in this little cafe. On the set were very tiny little chairs and so you had to perch your huge bulk on those little, tiny, chairs. So that almost created the character as much as the mask did. The mask then was a part of that whole physical being that the costume has also created.[105]

Asked by this interviewer whether the mask influenced his voice, or his rendition of the text, the phrasing or the pacing of it, the actor responded that his creation of the role of Pea came from the soul of the character. It was not "an association with the physicality, with the costume, and

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[103]Goodwin, 1992.
[104]As evidenced on the enclosed photograph.
[105]Goodwin, 1992.

the mask, and so forth," but that he took his clues for the emotional life of his character from the text of the play.

> The character of Pea was particularly remarkable to me, that he would be such a delicate soul. And that whole first scene is about his innocence and how in that innocence he found great beauty in simplest of things. I mean, it was a very small and delicate soul. So, the irony of this delicate soul in this seemingly indelicate bulk I thought was particularly marked. So, I didn't take my vocal ques from the costume and the mask as much as I took, I think I took more of that from the text itself.[106]

> We get to the third scene, which, it's interesting that in such a short play, that it has these three scenes that are completely different. The third scene in which the pain, and the hurt, and the rage, to some extent is released from this soul, and released because, I think all more strongly, because of the innocence and the delicacy of the earlier scene it's all more powerful.[107]

As Philip Goodwin recalled, the director postponed working at the large emotional transformation that the third part of the play required until quite late into the rehearsal process. All through the process the director seemed to be gently leading the actor on his journey until "we just sort of crept into it."[108]

> We didn't talk about that third scene for the longest time. We rehearsed the first two scenes in some detail. I mean, just exactly how it was you turn the page in the newspaper on top of the table, where you would place the finger in order to turn it just the right way, and how long it would take to turn your head to the right or the left . . . that sort of things. We were rehearsing in great detail for a long time. And we didn't touch that third scene at all for... And I

[106] Goodwin, 1992.
[107] Goodwin, 1992.
[108] Goodwin, 1992.

> think that's because, Bob felt that it was necessary to find that delicacy I was talking about in that rehearsal of the first scene . . . to completely know the soul of the character through that first scene before you could find out . . . what the reaction would be later on.[109]

It wasn't until the week of the technical rehearsals at the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts in Champaing-Urbana, Illinois, that the actor saw himself in the full costume and mask.

> We didn't actually get the whole costume until we got to Illinois. We worked with the fat suits, partial fat suits, in New York. But not the whole ones. We got as much as we could, but the clothes on top of it didn't come, and the full masks I don't think came until we got to Illinois.[110]

During the personal interview, the actor described how he began his technical work with the full costume and mask. In that large theatre complex, the actor found a mirrored room that allowed his own process of discovery.

> There were several rooms with mirrors, dance halls, dance rehearsal rooms, and we... and that point was when I actually went into the rooms and could do mirror work with the whole.[111]
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> When other pieces were being rehearsed I could take that time and go to the rehearsal rooms and look in the mirrors and I did discover a lot while working with the mirror.[112]

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[109]Goodwin, 1992. This aspect of the director's work is somewhat similar to Falls' work, with another actor, Brian Reddy, who also recalled postponing the most emotionally difficult part of his role. (as will be discussed later.)
[110]Goodwin, 1992.
[111]Goodwin, 1992.
[112]Goodwin, 1992.

> I was pleased to see that the costume with the hands, particularly, the hands, I thought, felt, were very important to the character: one that was very sensual in many ways. And the movement, that the movement of the hands be very live and delicate, with the soul, and expressive. And I was very happy to see that they were expressive. I could observe that in the mirror and see just how expressive they could be, and how delicate they could be.[113]
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> And you also notice too, when you doing, when you looking in the mirror, and observing that face, you see the jowls, you see the warts, you see the hugeness of it. But . . . the eyes are still yours, and the lips are still yours. When. . . you look at the mask in mask work, the eyes, quite often are not your eyes. Or the lips are not your lips. When you observe yourself in the mask in the mirror, you see that the eyes are still yours, so you find the gate way to the character in that mask into your own soul and that was comforting.[114]
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> I wonder how much that had to do with Chekhov itself . . . this play I think, this piece went through to the heart of Chekhov in a very direct way. . .[115]

The actors expressed their sense of satisfaction from working with Robert Falls. Brian Reddy, for example, told this writer that he enjoyed working with Falls because that director collaborated with the actor "very much from that American spirit."[116] *Orchards*, as directed by Robert Falls, according to Allan Wallach, served as a showcase for some fine young actors.[117]

Jopo commended the performers "who reach a generally high level throughout the evening. . . . The cast is excellent, with Reddy, Pino, Terrence Caza, Joel F. Miller,

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[113]Goodwin, 1992.
[114]Goodwin, 1992.
[115]Goodwin, 1992.
[116]Interview, Reddy.
[117]Allan Wallach, "7 Adaptations of Chekhov," *New York Newsday*, 23 Apr. 1986.

Finch, Philip Goodwin, Phil Meyer and Mark Moses especially impressive."[118] In Chicago, Tom Valeo, *Herald* theater critic, found the performances subtle and exciting.[119] The actors "romped their way through *Orchards*" wrote Christopher Potter in Ann Arbor, Michigan, "with a dazzling vigor and authority."[120]

Falls felt enriched by this unique collaboration with the playwrights and he learned from the authors.[121] In general he found that he could trust the playwright when approaching a text. For example, he learned from Mamet about the rhythm and tempo.

Challenges.

Although, *Orchards* provided the Company with a stimulating experience, it also created some problems. Actors' age was an issue raised by the director and by the critics; Gregory Springer wrote that the relative youth of the actors, "can be an intrusion, giving the impression you are watching auditions and tryouts rather than theatre."[122]

Competition among actors for the most challenging roles also created some problems. After a week of observing the players, Mr. Falls cast the show. All actors competed for their roles and that competitiveness was especially fierce

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[118]Jopo, "Orchards."
[119]Tom Valeo, "'Orchards' Offering a Tasty Batch of Theater," *Daily Herald* (Chicago), 14 June 1986.
[120]Potter, "Playwrights Preen."
[121]Falls, 1990.
[122]Gregory Springer, "Plays a New Perspective on Chekhov," *Champaing-Urbana News-Gazette* (Illinois), 20 Sept. 1985.

among males -- all of whom wanted to play The Speaker in Spalding Gray's *Rivkala's Ring*.[123] For this solo performance, Mr. Falls chose an actor most attuned to the rhythm and the unique qualities of Gray's work.[124]

> Spalding Gray's monologue is a wonderful piece of writing, and it's virtually a 25-minutes monologue for one actor. So all of the men in the company coveted that role. And it created some tension, . . . they felt that was the best showcase for their talents. And it did some unpleasant things, in rehearsal, because . . . all the men wanted that role, and if they didn't get that role they felt they were in subordinate roles in a play.[125]

According to Douglas Watt, Aled Davies' performance of Spalding Gray's *Rivkala's Ring*, was "the most effective part of the long evening."[126] Jopo wrote in *Variety*, that Aled Davies performed the monolog "with power and grace."[127] Grey's monologue was "spectacularly performed," according to Hedy Weiss.[128]

For the actors, according to McKenzie, it was a challenge to perform *Orchards* in some of the large theatres

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[123]Ibid.

[124]Ibid. The role originally played by Aled Davis was later, in the second season, performed by Michael McKenzie. However, the second season wasn't a full production, only four plays were performed. So, although initially all actors wanted the part of the speaker in Spalding Gray's monologue, according to McKenzie, very few people wanted it the second year. "Because we performed it very sporadically and it was a difficult thing to keep up. But I still loved it. There is nothing like it." McKenzie, 1991.

[125]"And of course, I could only choose one actor for that role, and I went with the actor who I felt was the most attuned to Spalding Gray's rhythms," Falls, 1990.

[126]Douglas Watt, "Oh Well, it Seemed Like a Good Idea at the Time," *Daily News*, 23 Apr. 1986.

[127]Jopo, *Variety*.

[128]Weiss, "Deserve to be Plucked."

around the country, as for example the Power Center in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

> In Shakespeare you do the same thing, but it's poetry, and it helped. It was written to be played in that kind of big place . . . These were contemporary plays. . . . {An actor had to} find a way to be heard and understood in a gigantic theatre, when what is rally happening is a very intimate conversation between two people.[129]

Overall, these challenges were met by the company and helped the company to grow. Mr. Falls described the actors as very hard working, highly motivated, and dedicated to the task at hand. Despite the challenges, working on a new dramatic project had a positive effect in bringing the company together. The exchange of ideas with the writers during the process of staging *Orchards* solidified the actors' commitment to the group. It was above all a very exciting period of work.[130] Most importantly, they felt that their combined effort contributed to the creation of new plays.

Performance

In the 1985-86 season, TAC gave 63 performances of *Orchards* in 30 cities. *Orchards* was played in repertory with *As You Like It*, in the 1985-86 season. In the following 1986 season, a shortened version, reduced to four

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[129]McKenzie, 1991.
[130]McKenzie, 1991.

plays, was performed seven times in repertory with *Much Ado About Nothing* and *The Gilded Age*.[131]

On the whole, the critics found *Orchards* well-cast and well-staged. Despite dissimilar styles of the seven plays, Falls created a spectacle that was poetical, sensuous, abstract, grotesque, and satirical, yet in the opinion of some reviewers, unified in its form and expression. It was an exciting performance according to Nels Nelson of *The Philadelphia Daily News*. Nelson liked especially Aled Davies' stunning, impressionistic solo in *Rivkala's Ring* which closed the production well. In Nelson's own words it "makes the evening" in such a way that "nothing else can top it."[132]

Several critics found the use of masks in this production especially interesting. Many wrote that the masks, gave a haunting quality to Irene Fornes's rendition of Chekhov's short story *Drowning* subtitled *A little Scene*.[133] Larry Kubert, for example, found them stunningly effective.[134] Falls felt, a special affinity with this "profoundly, beautiful play," which is, in his opinion, an "extraordinary work" and he confessed that it was most interesting for him to direct.[135]

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[131]see review of repertory.
[132]Nels Nelson, "Orchards of Chekhov at the Zellerbach," *Philadelphia Daily News*, 21 Nov. 1985.
[133]As seen on the enclosed photograph.
[134]Larry Kubert, "Seven Plays. Chekhovian Adaptations Entertaining," *Lincoln Journal*, 30 Sept. 1986.
[135]Falls, 1990.

> It was a profoundly moving play. Yes, absolutely, of all the plays of that group, of those seven plays, that play lingers for me. Its a very deep, profoundly written work. And the Masks were a wonderful challenge to come up with. . . . Philip Goodman was the principal actor and he did a remarkable work. Fortunately, we had the masks early, so we could do a lot of mask work, and work vocally, and physically, and the expressiveness of the character is cut out from it. But it's interesting that play, which was the most stylized -- and certainly, with the masks, and the body suits, and the stillness -- is the work that I think is the most profound, haunting of the seven plays.[136]

"This is an incomparably touching piece of theater of the absurd," Hedy Weis wrote about the staging of *Drowning*, "in which an elephant man type of creature falls in love for the first time, only to suffer the unbearable pain of rejection, need and total despair."[137] Weis was particularly impressed by the way, Fornes, "Miraculously, in just minutes,. . . had endowed this fleshy, wart-covered person (beautifully played by Philip Goodwin) with a full-blown soul."[138] Larry Kubert praised "superb efforts provided in the technical areas of lighting, costumes and articulated sets."[139] According to Douglas Watt, Paul Gallo's lighting suited every scene admirably."[140] Watt also found Laura Crow's costumes varied and entertaining.[141]

According to Falls, even when the company went on the road some re-writing and alterations were still taking place. In addition, the production was revised for the

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[136]Falls, 1990.
[137]Weiss, "Deserve to be Plucked."
[138]Ibid.
[139]Kubert, "Seven Plays."
[140]Watt, "Oh Well,."
[141]Watt. "Oh Well,."

second season because several actors left the company and, consequently, new actors were brought in. For example, Mark Moses, who "created a very strong character" as "M" in *The Talking Dog*, left the company after a while, and Michael McKenzie assumed the role of "M".[142]

The writers, were pleased with the production. For example, Michael Weller said that: "there's a kind of atmosphere about the whole evening that's unifying."[143] After viewing the production, Wendy Wasserstein confessed that she was delighted with what she saw. She also "rather liked being a part of this medley" of American playwrights.[144] Samm-Art Williams told Martha Kearns that he was pleased with the opportunity to freely adapt Chekhov and that he has enjoyed the production process.[145]

As the director, Falls had stronger affinity towards Spalding Gray and Irene Fornes' dramatic material. He felt less comfortable with Samm-Art Williams' or Wendy Wasserstein's plays.[146] Overall, however, the director stated that he was delighted with *Orchards*.[147] Falls was especially pleased with the way the spectators responded to the performance when he followed the actors on the road.[148]

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[142]Falls, 1990.
[143]Michael Weller, as quoted by Don Nelsen; "Playing Around with Chekhov." *Daily News*, 22 Apr. 1986.
[144]Wendy Wasserstein, as quoted by Marsha McCreadie: "Playwright Sticks Close to Storyline in Adaptation of 'The Man In A Case,'" *Arizona Republic*, 1 Mar. 1986.
[145]Samm-Art Williams, as quoted by Martha Kearns, "Chekhov Take-Offs," *Philadelphia City Paper*, Nov.15 - Dec. 6, 1985.
[146]Falls, 1990.
[147]*Theatre Crafts*.
[148]Ibid.

Most reviewers also responded well to the production of *Orchards*. Sylvie Drake praised Falls "for accurately sensing each writer's needs and providing an imaginative tracing of each play."[149]

Actors felt that performing *Orchards* was for them an important learning experience. Brian Reddy recalled an example:

> In *Orchards*, one night, we couldn't use the set. And, I don't know if you remember those trees -- people went out and played trees -- that weren't there on stage. Just that night, that's the way we did it. It was magic! So that I ultimately gave up the idea that I needed to do something a certain way, or that things needed to be done a certain way. And I gained the magic, the sense of magic of the theatre. The freedom of saying --O, we do it this way, how wonderful! -- and embracing that change. Not being afraid of it, but embracing that change, and allowing the experience to happen that night, that way. That, for me, was -- more than anything else -- was the biggest lesson of The Acting Company.[150]

The actors learned from the interaction with the audience. Early on, (September 1945) one reviewer wrote that "the timing was off, slightly, on the opening night, because the audience surprised the actors . . . with unexpected laughter."[151] Later, the actors become more sensitive to the spectators reactions. Post-performance discussions were gratifying for all interviewed performers. Michael McKenzie recalled one particular incident that

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[149]Drake, "Fine Pickings."
[150]Reddy, 1990.
[151]Springer, "Perspective."

happened during a question and answer period after he performed the Spalding Gray monologue:[152]

> I remember a woman standing up and telling me: "I just wanted to tell you to shut up. Why are you telling me all those things, why don't you just shut up . . . she was completely convinced that it was me just talking my own material.[153]

Discussion of the New York Critics

The actors' experience was less pleasing when the company began performing in New York.[154] The Acting Company presented *Orchards* to New York's public from April 20 through May 4, 1986 in the Lucille Lortel Theatre. According to Falls, the quality of the performance in the Lucille Lortel Theater in New York was altered. While on the American tour, the actors usually performed in large halls seating more than a thousand spectators. In New York City they found themselves in a small theatre with a seating capacity of only two hundred. "It didn't look right, it didn't feel right."[155] In addition, according to the director, New York reviewers failed to understand the plays.[156] Falls found it amazing that whereas, all over the country the critics were quite open and perceptive of the

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[152]McKenzie, 1991.
[153]McKenzie, 1991.
[154]The plays, according to Falls, "didn't quite work in the theatre." Falls, 1990.
[155]Falls, 1990.
[156] One of the premises, was that the spectator would further explore the plays in relation to proceeding originals"The spectator's preparation and energy," wrote Cattaneo, "as well as their understanding of the production has a significant effect on the performance."

meaning of the plays and of their theatrical realization, "suddenly we got to New York and they were the most conservative, weary, and they didn't quite get it."[157] The New York critics indeed found many faults in the production of *Orchards*. In general they criticized the plays. For example, Mel Gussow stated that "in none of these three divergent plays have the dramatists (Fornes, Weller and Samm-Art Williams) found an adequate substitute for their sources."[158] Moreover, Gussow wrote in *New York Times* that Guare's play, while remaining sensuous, "dilutes the story's mysticism." Although, according to Leida Snow, who reviewed *Orchards* on radio, some of the playlets were tantalizing and Mamet's play striking, "none of the works is totally satisfying."[159] Moreover, as she stated "there is an arty, forced feeling to the proceedings that may keep it from reaching a wider audience."[160] Douglas Watt complained of "boredom that quickly settles in."[161]

The New York critics found faults in the production of *Orchards* as well. Mel Gussow stated that the staging of *The Talking Dog* "with actors lifting actors to simulate flying - is awkward."[162] Gussow wrote, nevertheless, that Aled Davies

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[157]Falls, 1990.
[158]Gussow, "7 One-Acts," *New York Times*, 23 Apr. 1986,II:15.
[159]Leida Snow, 1010 WINS RADIO, 22 Apr. 1986.
[160]Ibid.
[161]Watt, "Oh Well,".
[162]Gussow, "7 One-Acts," "In Mr. Guare's updating, the sport becomes hang gliding and the setting is in the Catskills." It was unwise, according to Gussow to turn the emphasis of the story "from the young man's joke to the woman's fear, followed by her growing enthusiasm for the adventure."

"is a sensitive conduit for the author's words."[163] Clive Barnes, who reviewed the production in *New York Post*, found *Orchards* "in need not so much of pruning as total deforestation."[164] He also stated, that Chekhov "should demand a recount." It was, according to Barnes, "an evening of numbing, trivializing boredom, with virtually nothing to commend or save it, in either the concept, the writing, the staging or even the acting."[165] Barnes, who liked best the acting of Brian Reddy and Joel Miller, also noted, that he "had to admire the manner in which Aled Davies sustained the pretentious verbosity of Mr. Gray's monologue." As for the acting of the rest of the cast, it veered, according to Barnes, "between the mediocre, the inept, the exaggerated and the competent." Barnes also observed, that "the sketches were directed by Robert Falls, but not very noticeably."[166] Howard Kissel questioned in *Women's Wear Daily*, "What possible value is there to either students or audiences to present such trivialities as if they had anything to do with theater, let alone Chekhov?"[167] Praise for actors was nevertheless expressed in many evaluations including the one already quoted of Gussow who stated, that "as intended *Orchards* is a showcase for talented young actors."[168] "For the first time," wrote

[163]Ibid.
[164]Clive Barnes, "Chekhov Ambushed by Writers," *New York Post*, 23 Apr. 1986.
[165]Ibid.
[166]Ibid.
[167]Howard Kissel, "'Orchards,'" *Women's Wear Daily*, 23 Apr. 1986.
[168]Gussow, "7 One-Acts."

Gussow, "we hear a Spalding Gray's monologue delivered by someone other than Mr. Gray, something one might not have thought advisable."[169] Gussow also observed, that in *The Man in a Case*, while "Chekhov described a more tragic conclusion, . . . Miss Wasserstein has skillfully merged her voice with that of Chekhov." Gussow found the acting of Pino and Reddy "in harmony with the material."[170] *Orchards*, according to Wallach served "as a showcase for some fine young actors, in the 14-year old Acting Company."[171]

Summary

According to Cattaneo, *Orchards* was created with a hope of providing a model for other theaters.[172] The results of Cattaneo's idea, however elicited mixed response and several critics, including those outside of New York, found faults with the dramatic material. The dramatists were unable, in the opinion of some reviewers, to capture the complexity of Chekhov's writing. According to La Jeanne T. Gilmer, for example, *Orchards*, was "a gross misrepresentation of Chekhov's works". The playwrights "made them vulgar, repulsive and humorless."[173] David Richards ridiculed the "impudent variations" on Chekhov.[174] Some critics who found the acting exciting, criticized the writers for "playing

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[169]Falls, 1990.
[170]Gussow, "7 One-Acts."
[171]Wallach, "7 Adaptations."
[172] Cattaneo, "Statement by Dramaturg."
[173]La Jeanne T. Gilmer, "Gross Misrepresentation of Anton Chekhov's Works," *Wyoming State tribune*, 14 Mar. 1986.
[174]Richards, "Impudent."

around with Chekhov."[175] While the performances were superb, according to Tim Bocklage, some of the material was not.[176] Howard Kissel inquired "Why, once the material was in, was it treated as if it were Holy Writ?"[177]

Margot Harley, also felt that the plays were not as good as they could have been, for which, she faulted both the dramaturg and herself, "because those plays needed to be reworked."[178] The fact that Cattaneo accepted the plays as they were submitted, (with one single exception) weakened the overall quality of the production. Unfortunately, according to Harley, not enough work was done on the dramatic material before the rehearsal process began.[179]

> I thought she {Cattaneo} was afraid to ask those particular playwrights to make changes. As it turns out I didn't realize that I knew those playwrights probably better than she did, and I probably should have interfered. It's one of the few times in my career, that I didn't interfere, and I should have interfered because those plays needed to be reworked in several cases.[180]

Nevertheless, according to Harley, "though it was not completely successful," *Orchards* was a very interesting production.[181] Falls stated that *Orchards* was a very positive experience for the company, beneficial to the

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[175]Nelson. "Playing."
[176]Bocklage. "Performances."
[177]Kissel, "'Orchards.'"
[178]Harley, 1991.
[179]Harley, 1991.
[180]Harley, 1991.
[181]Harley, 1991.

development of the actors. "I think it was an important play for them."[182]

Falls felt that actors gained from the experience because he brought a different point of view to the rehearsal process.[183] Falls also believed that working with the new playwrights, was beneficial for the actors. "I think that it was in many ways the most exciting thing they have done for a number of years. It was certainly different, and it certainly challenged the company in a whole different way."[184] With *Orchards*, according to Falls, The Acting Company "seized a chance to involve itself with a group of important American playwrights."[185] Moreover, Falls believes that, by commissioning the major American writers, TAC contributed to the development of the American theatre.[186]

In conclusion, through the work on *Orchards*, TAC contributed to the development of its actors, as documented in personal interviews. By commissioning and producing *Orchards*, TAC contributed to a creation of original work by young American playwrights that was performed to large audiences sixty-three times in thirty cities around the country. Published in 1986, *Orchards* found its way to many regional and College theatres and to libraries around the

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[182]Falls, 1990.
[183]Falls, 1990.
[184]Falls, 1990.
[185]Falls, 1990.
[186]Falls, 1990.

country, enriching the repertoire available to theatre students in American Universities.

The next chapter will investigate how the skills of the experienced director, the guidance of the vocal coach and of the combat director contributed to the development of TAC's actors working on a Shakespearean text. An analysis of the rehearsal process, observed by this writer during a period of two weeks, will further document how TAC's actors developed.

CHAPTER V

ROMEO AND JULIET

This production of *Romeo and Juliet* opened at Stockton State College in Pomona, New Jersey on March 24th,1990.[1] In the 1989-90 season TAC gave thirty-one performances of *Romeo and Juliet* in cities. In the following 1990-91 season TAC gave ninety-four performances in sixty-three cities. It was a very long tour, said John Miller-Stephany, "probably the longest tour that we ever had."[2] Overall, *Romeo and Juliet* was performed 125 times in seventy-four cities. The production, directed by Leon Rubin, had sets designed by Derek McLane, and costumes by Martin Pakledinaz. Joe Mennonna composed original music and Stephen Strawbridge designed the lights. Fights were staged by Erik Fredricksen and choreography was done by Elizabeth Keen. Staff Repertory director was John Rando. The casting was conducted by Stuart Howard and Amy Schecter and the following actors appeared in the opening performance:[3]

Sampson.....Andrew Prosky
Peter.....Rainn Wilson
Balthasar.....Anthony M. Brown*
Benvolio ..... Mark Stewart Guin

[1]This was a second staging of the play by TAC. The first production of *Romeo and Juliet* was directed by Nagle Jackson in the 1978-79 season.
[2]John Miller-Stephany, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 6 January 1992.
[3]Juilliard training is indicated by an asterisk.

Tybalt ..... Mark Kincaid
Capulet ..... John Michalski*
Lady Capulet ..... Lisa McMillan*
Montague ..... David Walt
Lady Montague ..... Jillian Lindig
Prince Escalus ..... Darryl Croxton
Romeo ..... Geoffrey P. Cantor
Paris ..... Laurence Drozd
Nurse ..... Trish Jenkins
Juliet ..... Diana LaMar
Mercutio ..... William D. Michie
Old Capulet ..... David DeBesse
Friar Lawrence ..... Jeffrey Guyton

This chapter will demonstrate how rehearsing and touring with the production of *Romeo and Juliet* expanded the means of expression of TAC's actors. An analysis of the rehearsal process, observed by this writer during a period of two weeks, will further document how TAC's actors developed through the process of working on a classical play with a director whose goal was to give language priority over spectacle and how working with this director impacted the actor and how his role developed. Mr. Leon Rubin, the director of *Romeo and Juliet*, was trained at The Royal Shakespeare Company. The aesthetic principles of the Royal Shakespeare Company were influenced by Michel Saint-Denis' focus on giving reality and style to the performance.[4] Leon Rubin instilled in the actor concern for the spine of the play, stressed the unity of performance, and taught the actors to speak verse well.

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[4]See Saint-Denis, *Theatre*.

Director

Leon Rubin, the author of *The Nicholas Nickleby Story*, has worked with Trevor Nunn as one of the three-man directorial team on the original Royal Shakespeare Company's production of *The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby*. He was formerly the artistic director of the Bristol Old Vic and Watford Palace Theaters in England and the Lyric Theatre in Belfast. Currently, Rubin is Chairman of the Drama Division at Middlesex Polytechnic in London; he has lectured on Shakespeare in Germany and Japan and directed plays in theaters of Germany, Greece, Japan, as well as in the United States.

In his work with The Acting Company, this director's dual goal was to focus on language and to help the actor to simplify his actions on stage. Mr. Rubin considers an actor's ability to speak verse well an important element of his craft; therefore, as he explained, he especially put emphasis on text and language with a company of young actors. Coming from the Royal Shakespeare Company tradition, where he was trained, Rubin attended to Shakespeare's metrics because as he explained, "meter is meaning, and the verse itself tells you about the state of mind, tells you about the character, if you know how to analyze it."[5] Thus, he felt that when he taught the actor how to analyze the shape, style and rhythm of Shakespearean

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[5]Leon Rubin, personal interview by author, tape recording, New York, 3 March 1990.

text he gave him tools with which to find the meaning beyond: "If you know how to pull it apart and look at it carefully, then it actually aids and helps the performance."[6] The player had to understand precisely his character's intentions and to reveal them by the appropriate medium of expression with artfulness and style.

Director's Idea Of The Production

Concern with the spectator's reception of the play led the director to search for a way to make the story meaningful to a contemporary audience. The director chose the Romantic period because he felt that it is closer to the imagination of today's audience. He developed the humorous elements of the text to balance its tragic aspects. Mr. Rubin conjured images of the romantic era because "the Romantic age gives us images that we understand."[7]

> I decided to set the play somewhere in the early or mid-19th century, Europe, with a specifically Italian feel to it. The idea of the setting was not to choose a particular historical moment in time, but to choose a setting that draws on the imagination of a particular period. And the period I'm concerned with is the Romantic Age. So the concept of the play is to establish the play in the romantic imagination of the early to mid 19th century.[8]

Following the director's idea to set the production in the Romantic era Martin Pakledinaz designed the costumes on the styles of 1830's. Derek McLane, the set designer, took

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[6]Rubin, 1990.
[7]Rubin, 1990.
[8]Rubin, 1990.

inspiration for the stage setting from Giovanni Battista Piranesi,[9] whose etchings "of crumbling pillars, arches and ruins suggested a sinister, eerie atmosphere," and were seminal to images found in Romantic art.[10] The raked sets created an image of enlarged sections of Piranesi's drawings and were generally praised by reviewers. Robert Massa, for example, liked the director's choice in relocating the play in the early 19th century. Massa wrote in the *Village Voice* that:

> McLane's set of neoclassical ruins both looks like an actual place and effectively evokes the play's various locales. The murky lighting and brocade costumes promise a rich atmosphere.[11]

Despite its visual appeal the raked set made the battles more difficult for the actors. It was never big enough, so the actors, according to Erik Fredricksen,

> were always cramped, which makes it more dangerous. It can give it a nice sense of tension, but it also means that you have to really be awake if there are two or three people fighting.[12]

Mr. Rubin wanted to guide the contemporary audience in the understanding of the nuances of the text. He particularly wanted to help the spectator to understand the humor and the depth of feeling imbedded in Shakespearean

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[9]Italian artist, 1720-1778.
[10]TAC's Study Guide for *Romeo and Juliet* by Victoria Abrash, Sheila Keenan and John Miller-Stephany.
[11]Ibid.
[12]Erik Fredricksen, personal interview by author, tape recording, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 23 October 1990. This will be discussed later in this chapter.

drama and he chose the Romantic period because he felt that it is closer to the imagination of today's audience. *Romeo and Juliet* is as much comedy as it is a tragedy, said Mr. Rubin:

> I think it begins as a comedy, and becomes a tragedy, a very dark tragedy, but that happens quite late in the play. . . . That connects with the age in which Shakespeare wrote the play. Because I think he is using medieval traditions of romance and courtly love, and he's satirizing it, he's making fun of it, he's exploiting it. An audience of his time would have understood what the object of satire was. People are spouting poetry at each other although they've only met a few moments before, Romeo's early verse is not very good, his poems are very cliched, and one suspects that Shakespeare's trying to tell us something about the nature of his {Romeo's} love. He always falls in love, he's in love with Rosalinde, and then suddenly, Juliet and we don't take that very seriously, the language suggests that. But to achieve that, Shakespeare has used the medieval past of his own world, and an audience would understand that. So a lot of that humor is lost for us, because we don't understand what he is making fun of to start with. Whereas the Romantic age gives us images that we understand. When we talk about Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata*, if you played that gently on the piano, anybody would say that's very Romantic, without understanding where that word Romantic comes from, but it comes from the period we're talking about. If you talk about two lovers holding hands against a full moon, that's an image that we would say today is romantic, but again that's an image that comes from the early 19th century. A lover standing outside, shouting at the heavens with his shirt open, is from Goethe, that's another image from the same period. So my feeling is that by setting it in the Romantic age, we can both enhance the "small-R" romantic side of the play, because we can make it something the audience will respond to, on the level of full moons and violins playing. But it's also one that can satirize the situation as well.[13]

Furthermore, his belief that *Romeo and Juliet* is as much comedy as tragedy led to emphasis on the playful elements at

[13]Fredricksen, 1990.

the onset of the performance. He felt that both elements are very strong in this Shakespearean play and should be unraveled.[14]

The director felt that the public in viewing the familiar images would respond to the romantic side of the play. In particular, he felt that this would be a good setting for the play since the Romantic Age was one in which youth was very important and the play is about youth. He further explained that another reason for the 19th century setting was the Romantic Age's obsession with mock-medieval Gothic.

Actors

For the first time since its onset, financial problems had disrupted the continuity of The Acting Company's work. Margot Harley explained that although lack of funds was always a problem, the management had, up to that period, succeeded in keeping the company afloat. However, in 1989 TAC had to cancel one season and let all the players go. It was a crisis that even threatened the very existence of the company.

The immediate challenge was to transform a new group of people with diverse backgrounds into an unified ensemble of actors. The new troupe of actors had only two who were past members of TAC: Mark Kincaid and John Michalski. Kincaid, who played Tybalt, performed previously with TAC in the

[14]Rubin, 1990.

1987-88 season playing Don Pedro in *Much Ado About Nothing* and Macduff in *Kabuki Macbeth*. Michalski in the role of Capulet is a 1973 graduate of the Juilliard School's Drama division. He first toured with TAC performing in *Measure for Measure, U.S.A.* and *The Beggar's Opera*. All the other members were new to the company. One actor, Rainn Wilson, completed the Master's Program at New York University headed by the present artistic director of TAC, Zelda Fichandler, and was trained by Michael Kahn. Three actors graduated from Southern Methodist University in Dallas. Two actors had been trained under Bob Hobbs in the Professional Actor Training Program at the University of Washington. Jeffrey Guyton had received a Chalmer's Award and a Tyrone Guthrie Award for his work at Stratford Shakespeare Festival in Canada where he had performed for four years serving also as a movement coach. The challenge of preparing the young actors for the demands of a classical touring company was met by the director and the vocal coach. In addition, several professionals worked with the actors during the rehearsal process.

Figure 4

Tybalt (Mark Kincaid, in black) pins Mercutio (William D. Michie) against a wall during a deadly duel in The Acting Company's 1990-91 production of William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, directed by Leon Rubin.

Photo by Martha Swope

Figure 4

The Rehearsal Process

The rehearsals for *Romeo and Juliet* took place in New York City in the 42nd Street offices of TAC. Mr. Rubin dealt with questions of handling Shakespeare's text throughout the rehearsal process. He did it by teaching the young players how to work with language and how to use language for the actor's specific needs. Thus, Mr. Rubin emphasized verse structure, especially meter, because, as he explained, understanding how to say a line gives the player an insight into the meaning beyond. Introducing the verse structure in that way guided the performer in making the verse livelier. The actors were often reminded to trust the natural music of the verse. During the rehearsal process Rubin controlled the movement of lines paying attention to the beat. He listened diligently: he listened to the sound of their voices and to the tempo; he checked the intonational patterns, attentive to the place of accent in verse, and he led the player to express the verse with a sense of flow thus making it more effective.[15]

His analysis of verse structure aimed at making the verse real for the players and contemporary for the spectators so that "the audience understands what they are saying and connects it with their own lives."[16] Drawing the actor's attention to what is happening within the scene, he

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[15]As noted by several critics. Evie Rapport stated that the text was "spoken with admirable clarity and remarkable insight." Evie Rapport, "This 'Romeo and Juliet' Comes Alive," *Kansas City Tribune*, 12 Nov. 1990.

[16]Rubin, 1990.

implored the actor to express that action through the act of speech. Working in this manner, the director helped the players to communicate the essence of the experience through the medium of language. This manner of working with language to communicate the meaning of the play by nuances of speech had practical consequences for the actors. It helped them to make the images more concrete and to use a wider range of effects.

Mr.Rubin's second goal was to teach the actors how to simplify their actions on stage.[17] He explained that young actors

> always want to do too much. They always want too many arm movements, gestures, they want to move into different positions on the stage;. . .{ however}. . . with the complexity of verse, every physical movement competes with language; therefore, only one of them will win each time, and I prefer that the verse wins most of the time.[18]

Rubin was determined to eliminate the actors' mannerisms and bad habits: "Don't indulge" he often repeated, warning actors not to do things that interfere with the text. "Don't speak too much with your arms." "If you start moving the legs you lose the text -- concentrate on rooting yourself to the ground." During the rehearsal process, the director was determined to give priority to the text, and he was ever watchful for unnecessary stage business that detracted attention from Shakespeare's

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[17]Rubin, 1990.
[18]Rubin, 1990.

dialogue. This goal he achieved by teaching them to center themselves, to focus their performance physically, and to connect their actions to the detailed work on language. Although there was no resistance to such preference for language, there was sometimes suspicion: "Some actors feel it's too academic, or too technical." But, he explained, "by introducing the technical side gently the verse becomes an ally and a friend, not an enemy."

> If you know how to pull it apart and look at it carefully, then it actually aids and helps the performance. It doesn't stand in the way of it. And that's what I try to do, in the sort of psychological part of preparing a company.[19]

As Trish Jenkins recalled, working with Rubin was a challenge, for American actors who "want to fill up the whole stage space."[20] The director discouraged extraneous, physical movement that doesn't serve the text.

> When an actor would come in on the scene and be very physical trying to use the space. . .he would say, "no just come in, just stand there and talk, just stand there and use the text and see where that takes you...[21]
>
> I guess what he was telling me was that when you do that you lose, you may know what you are saying, the other actors may know what you're saying but as far as the audience understanding is, if there's a lot of running around and you are sacrificing the verse, then you are loosing the sense of the scene. . . And I learned that, it's in the word, it's in the verse...[22]

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[19]Rubin, 1990.
[20]Trish Jenkins, telephone interview by author, tape recording, 1 December 1991.
[21]Jenkins, 1991.
[22]Jenkins, 1991.

Mark Kincaid, liked the director's insistence on language.

> If you noticed, a lot of Leon's direction in that show was: don't work so hard, stand there and let the language work for you. And, of course that's very true. The language is so beautiful, and so deep, that the audience wants to hear it and you don't have to work so hard.[23]

Rubin's regard for the structure of the verse was reflected in the way he implored the actor to express his role through the act of speech. His advice to the actor was to trust the natural music of the verse; "the play's music leads you" was his frequent reminder to the actor. The director constantly drew attention to the form emphasizing the importance of both the meaning and the form of the line. When he wanted an actor to exhibit the quality of text or to find the correct rhythm, he helped make the blank verse more exciting for an actor; he would, for example, correct the flow of the line: "it's purely metrical. It has a faster moving rhythm." He addressed the problems of versification, helping the actor to observe the accentual pattern of Shakespeare's verse and to be more at ease with iambic pentameter. As the last resort he demonstrated, showing the actor where the accents fall in a particular line by tapping the beat on the edge of the table.

Attuned to the actor's rhythm of delivery, he discouraged too many pauses which kill the energy level. When a pause was too long, he asked the player to keep the

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[23]Kincaid, 1990.

performance *allegro*. At another time he asked an actor to skip a pause altogether because the rhythm of the line needed to flow. Calling for a faster tempo, he would tap the beat on the top of the table. "Go with the lines, rest with the lines" was his constant remainder.

Throughout the rehearsal period Rubin kept an open communication with Elizabeth Smith where accents or the meaning of a line of verse were in question. He often consulted with Smith on matters of rhythm and pronunciation when the actor's delivery conflicted with the desired effect of the verse.

When Mr. Rubin discussed Shakespeare's images, he aimed at making them clear for a contemporary audience but without losing the stylistic quality of the text. He patiently illuminated the idiomatic reality of Shakespeare's verse. He made the players aware of the play of wit in Shakespeare's dialogue in order to bring lightness and playfulness to their delivery. Thus, in the course of a rehearsal, Rubin was able to make the verse "win most of the time."[24] Working this way, the director ultimately succeeded in giving the language the important role in the production.

During the rehearsal process, the director's focus was on the company as the whole. He controlled the level of concentration and the interaction between the players. Unrelated activities were forbidden and the director

[24]Rubin, 1990.

required concentration from all participants. Actors waiting offstage were discouraged from reading newspapers, knitting, and from any other actions that might distract the eye during the creative process; Mr. Rubin explained that activities unrelated to work at hand diminish the player's concentration and cause his energy to fall. As is customary for TAC each rehearsal began with a warm-up.

In his book about the Royal Shakespeare Company, *The Nicholas Nickleby Story*, Rubin stressed the value of "a healthy rehearsal process" that allows each player to explore various possibilities intrinsic to his role in the supportive presence of fellow actors.[25] Rubin wrote that an actor should resist the obvious, easy solutions and strive to find the best possible expression for his character.

> Rehearsal is a very private process. Within the four safe walls of a rehearsal room, actors and directors must have the time and opportunity to allow themselves to make mistakes. They must be free to say and do stupid things if necessary.[26]

Rubin's conviction that an actor should try various approaches to his role avoiding easy solutions was beneficial for the development of The Acting Company's players during the process of staging *Romeo and Juliet*. He would often give gentle suggestions leaving the execution to the actor. Several actors expressed their appreciation of the freedom to explore during Rubin's rehearsal process.

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[25]Leon Rubin, *The Nicholas Nickleby Story; the Making of the Historic Royal Shakespeare Company Production* (London: Heinemann, 1981), 65.
[26]Ibid.

Mark Kincaid, for example, said that he likes to work in such manner "not set anything. Not for a while, anyway. . . Not shoot like a performance on day one."[27] According to Kincaid, the director and the actors worked very well together and he often felt encouraged to experiment with the role: "You want to try something else, try it this way."[28] Trish Jenkins said that if an actor came prepared, "there was a real sense of freedom."[29] During the rehearsal process, Jenkins felt encouraged by the director to develop her role of Nurse. She recalled that "If I came in, and had certain ideas for how I wanted to work with Juliet," for example, she was encouraged by the director to do so.[30] As the result, Jenkins said that the role of the Nurse was for her "the most freeing role I've ever played."[31] The director worked with Trish Jenkins in building the character and she felt free to follow her instincts giving the Nurse qualities of a gregarious woman who "lives for the moment." From the start "we sort of were on the same wave length," said Jenkins about her work with this director.[32] Trish Jenkins said that Rubin "was very open," and she could suggest her own interpretation of the scene.

> If I came in with an idea, that was sort of accurate with the text, or with the context of the production of

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[27]Kincaid, 1990.
[28]Kincaid, 1990.
[29]Jenkins, 1991.
[30]Jenkins, 1991.
[31]Trish Jenkins as quoted by Terry Morris, "Love and Doom at Victoria," *Dayton Daily News*, 27 Apr. 1990.
[32]Jenkins, 1991.

> *Romeo and Juliet* he had no problem with that. So there was a real sense of freedom as long as you were prepared.[33]

The age of the Nurse was an issue for Jenkins, who "didn't want to be a young actress playing an old character." Instead she began to build her character as

> someone who took care of Juliet, who could actually almost be my age, maybe a little bit older, and just dealt from the humor and the situation that the character was in, and Leon seemed to support that, and he always discouraged the fact that I would have to play it as an older character.[34]

In the first scene, before the ball, for example, instead of "playing her sort of worried and looking for Juliet", Jenkins chose to be robust and excited about the party." Rubin seemed very supportive which made her feeling confident "because once you get the first beat, the rest of the play flows from that."[35]

What has made Rubin's work memorable to actors is that he allowed the actor time to develop his character. Character study led the actor into discovering motivations and relationships. Jenkins said that she at first was rather timid in expressing strong emotions on stage and that Rubin encouraged her to express her feelings freely, not to be afraid to render them vividly to the spectator.[36] At one rehearsal the director evoked images of the mourners in a

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[33]Jenkins, 1991.
[34]Jenkins, 1991.
[35]Jenkins, 1991.
[36]Jenkins, 1991.

Sicilian village which led her to expressing her lament by hitting her breasts with her fists.

Working this way, the director helped his actors to embody on stage the attitudes revealed through the process of analysis. He would focus on what happens dramatically to the characters on stage. While the actors practiced the precise movements of a choreographed stage battle, for example, Leon moved around the room, giving motivation for their actions. He emphasized the difference between the fights; while the first is a street brawl with pleasure involved for people watching it, the second is a dangerous play, but still a play generating feeling of enjoyment; the third -- the duel between Romeo and Tybalt -- is a deadly one. Moreover, Rubin made each player aware of the subtle nuances of his or her role.

Working in this manner gave the actor a heightened perception of his character's dramatic reality. While rehearsing the meeting of Romeo and Juliet, Rubin gently led the actors with his suggestions to establish the feeling of the scene without apparent tension so that it developed from the flow of the show. Working with Romeo at the beginning of the balcony scene, he emphasized the lightness of the moment: "have a nice big smile of happiness, its much better when its light; lots of charm. The beginning is terrific when it is so gentle." And again to motivate his actions: "Start thinking of hiding a little."

Throughout the process of rehearsal, the director focused on the plot's progression in order to maintain the clarity of the story line. Of special interest was Rubin's work with the actors to make Shakespeare's imagery closer to contemporary sensibility. In order to help the performer share the poet's vision of his character, Rubin emphasized the difference between the frame of mind of Shakespeare's characters and that of a contemporary man. Thus, the director worked patiently to assure that the character embodied by the actor thinks and feels as the man from Shakespeare's play and not narrowly as the actor himself. While illuminating the emotional qualities of a particular scene, he showed that scene's function in the entire play. For example, he made Juliet aware of her speech early in the play, (in the scene with the Nurse), because, he said, it "establishes the darker side of the play; it brings this strange language that will be later with Juliet in the vault scene."

Rubin's work with LaMar, who played the role of Juliet, illustrates how the director encouraged his actors to probe deeper into their characters. A case in point is the director's work toward finding the heartfelt expression of grief. In exploring that crucial moment of the play, the director implored the actress playing Juliet to be unconstrained in her expression. He explained that unlike the modern character who is often monosyllabic in grief, Shakespeare's characters are "incredibly articulate" in

their suffering. This manner of work helped the young actress to reach the profound expression of her feeling. LaMar's acute sensibility was especially evident in her expression of Juliet's suffering. For example, in the scene with Nurse, LaMar's interpretation of "Some word there was, worser than Tybalt's death" from finding in the Nurse's confusing speech the truth: "Tybalt is dead and Romeo - banished/", LaMar's rendition of - "That 'banished', that one word 'banished'/" - which she repeated with growing intensity - gave depth to Juliet's shock of first recognition. This manner of work made Juliet's psychological torment visibly embodied on stage.

In every important instance, the director discouraged working for results, asking the actor or actress to concentrate on the character's progression, on the emotional journey. To Juliet's - "I think, that's it: I am going to die," Leon responded by probing deeper into the process and leading her through the emotional journey: "What she is saying is she is philosophically resigned. She has made her decision to kill herself. She is not doing it now, it's a philosophical process." Working in this manner gave the actress a heightened perception of her dramatic reality so that at the end of this rehearsal with both actresses working intensely together, we had witnessed a profound transformation; Juliet in tears thinking through her decision to kill herself. At the end of that process, LaMar's faculties were deeply attuned to Juliet's dramatic

condition and the director encouraged her to boldly express her grief. The result was tender and moving as was noted by several critics.[37] Mr. Rubin worked to broaden the actor's imaginative capability. He, for example, explained Juliet's awakening to life and then contrasted that with her final dilemma. By creating a juxtaposition of a young girl from the beginning of the drama with the Juliet who accepted the potion, the director led her to the realization of other mental pain, not only the grief. By communicating the essence of the scene, Rubin induced the growing awareness of Juliet's dramatic condition: dependent on the adult's world yet alone in despair. Thus, in the process of the rehearsal her work deepened as she was eager to exploit all nuances hidden in the role of Juliet.

LaMar recalled later that she developed the character by immersing herself in the text.

> I tried consciously not to have specific thoughts on Juliet, not make any concrete choices before-hand. . . the character comes from the text. . . I had to relax into it, get the rhythm.[38]

In order to establish the rhythm of the scene, the director often gave specific instructions to the players, such as this one to Capulet in the banquet scene: "You need to come sooner with the line. We lose the rhythm. Pauses kill the energy level." He then followed his remarks with detailed

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[37]Critical responses to LaMar's work will be discussed later in this chapter.

[38]Diane LaMar as quoted by Margaret Boswell, *The State Journal-Register*, (Springfield Illinois), 26 Apr. 1990.

work on the scenes that needed it most. This technique demanded real concentration from the actors through the process of rehearsing *Romeo and Juliet*.

The director used the final phase of the rehearsals to encourage the actor to share his work with the audience. To this end, it was important, first, to maintain the energy level and concentration. Second, he appealed to the actor to retain all the verbal details already worked through the rehearsal process, and only then to take the details and the texture to the performance level. He continued his emphasis on language, asking the players to continue working on tongue control in order to improve projection and expressiveness of text. After one of the last rehearsals, he observed that the performance now had two kinds of scenes: very fast and very slow. The summation of the problems revealed during the rehearsal was then followed with detailed work on that segment of the play. Before the run-through Rubin made the actors aware that they were not ready yet to perform; he asked for concentration to bring out all verbal detail. He also wanted them not to attack too ferociously, but rather to take it slowly: "otherwise it loses its charm, its humor and lightness." The text was again the center of the director's attention. He urged the actors not to lose the important textual points and to be bolder with the language.

After the rehearsal, he was pleased that the story line now had become very clear. However, he warned the company

not to be complacent because during the performance the story line can be lost. So, he appealed to the players to focus on voice and breathing to make the text more effective. His comments during the rehearsal were such as:

- We are losing the text at the beginning of the marriage scene.
- The energy is terrific the text is lost.
- The laughter is too loud; we are losing text.[39]

After the first run-through Rubin asked for more work on detail: "John, do not go into a funeral tone. Keep it lively until you discover that she is dead." Again that note was followed by work on the chosen scenes. On the next day he found that the vault scene had a good texture: back and forth movement. Nevertheless, he kept asking the players to continue working on verbal detail: "It is an internal scene, not sharp enough, not precise enough."

The rehearsals of *Romeo and Juliet* lasted seven weeks. The company rehearsed the play from February 12, 1990, every day, Tuesday through Sunday, from ten in the morning until 7PM. The entire process benefited the troupe in many ways. The director's idea of the play guided the player's actions; clarity of the concept of the production kept imagery and plot in the center of attention. Rubin's work with the young actor helped him to communicate the essence of the experience. Moreover, Rubin's probing during the rehearsal process gave a deepened expression to the actor's portrayal

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[39]Director's notes for actors during the rehearsal of *Romeo and Juliet*.

of character. The director's emphasis on plot progression and on expressiveness of language as well as his attention to actor's craft and his work to eliminate the unnecessary stage business focused the actors' efforts on what happens dramatically to their characters on stage and helped to disclose the meaning of the scene through clear, purposeful actions. In the process, this period of intensive work helped them individually as actors in developing their craft; and it focused their collective energies into the common goal -- staging of a play -- thus cementing the ensemble. It was a period of intensive, exciting work that had a profound influence on the group. For the final week of rehearsals, the company moved to Pomona, New Jersey where the production opened on March 24, 1990. After the opening performance, the director met with the actors and gave them his final comments. When this writer observed the rehearsals of *Romeo and Juliet*, other members of the production staff were the fights director, the choreographer, and a dance teacher who conducted waltz workshops. Their expertise in the movement of the period helped to instill in the performers the proper bearing and the style of the piece.

Stage Combat

Eric Fredricksen, the fight director, stated that the company's actors were, in general, well prepared for the physical demands of the production. "They all moved pretty

well; they had in their own way a pretty good foundation."[40] There was, however, according to Fredricksen, a clear distinction in preparation among some of the actors who took part in the combat.[41] A striking example was the technical superiority of the actor playing Tybalt over those actors that played the role of Romeo.[42] According to Fredricksen, that difference in physical ability was most evident in the duel between Romeo and Tybalt. Romeo's fights were crucial for the production. Although a great majority of critics found the combat exiting to watch, according to Fredriksen this duel was not as effective as it might have been had a better fighter played the role of Romeo. The actor who was originally cast as Romeo, Geoffrey P. Cantor, was never comfortable with the fighting which was magnified by the fact that his counterpart, Mark Kincaid, in the role of Tybalt was the better fighter, using the sword skillfully. In his armed combat with Cantor, "the most problematic fighter," Kincaid conveyed greater force. It became even more challenging "to make it look real" when the combat turned to an unarmed struggle at the end. "I always worried a bit that Tybalt was gonna win."[43] The director wanted that struggle to be ugly at the end. However, according to

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[40]Fredricksen, 1990.

[41]Some actors were "very tight, physically" which is detrimental for the stage fighter, said Fredricksen. One actor, for example, was very strong and muscular, "but with that, also, is a certain tightness,. . . you could see the muscles of his arms, holding on too tight to the sword."

[42]Fredricksen, 1990.

[43]Fredricksen, 1990.

Fredricksen, to participate in an unarmed struggle requires more finesse from an actor than to fight with the weapon.[44] "It was complicated having one person who was physically in control and the other a little less confident, participating in unarmed" struggle.[45]

> "It's just, who ever is left standing. And then in a very short, shhh, at the end, where Romeo is absolutely, -- very brief that fight should be. I've seen it, some times it goes on and on, it's not quite right. It's just, suddenly, nothing stands in my way. He becomes this monster in a way.
>
> And it was a shame to have as a penultimate, or the crescendo of this development, a fighter that you never felt secure about.[46]

Even after the change in casting, the new Romeo was not capable enough to counterbalance Kincaid's skills, for Mark Stuart Guin, according to Fredriksen "seemed always a little tentative" in his fight with Tybalt.[47] Many choices in the staging of the fights were dictated by the technical problems arising from touring. A consideration for the safety of both the players and the spectators was a major factor that determined the choice of the weapons used for stage combat in this production. Fredricksen chose *shlager* blades because they are very durable. This kind of a blade "may bend, but it won't break."[48]

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[44]Fredricksen, 1990.
[45]Fredricksen, 1990.
[46]Fredricksen, 1990.
[47]Fredricksen, 1990.
[48]Fredricksen, 1990.

Performance

The group of actors that toured in the 1990/91 season did not consist of the same actors who rehearsed the play for seven weeks in February and March of 1990. Of the sixteen actors directed by Leon Rubin in the production of *Romeo and Juliet*, only eleven remained in TAC for the next season. Five actors and actresses left TAC. Those were: Daryl Croxton (Prince), Anthony M. Brown (Balthasar), Lisa McMillan (Lady Capulet), Jillian Lindig (Lady Montague), Geoffrey P. Cantor (Romeo). A more detailed discussion of the most drastic change, that of the actor portraying Romeo, will follow. In addition, when Mark Guin took over the role of Romeo, another actor was brought into the company to play Guin's role of Benvolio. As a result, half of a very tight group of the four young men that originally surrounded the protagonist as well as the protagonist himself were no longer the same people who participated in the rehearsal process. The drama was propelled by the conflict between the house of Capulet and the house of Montague represented on stage by that foursome. Auxiliary to Romeo and his friends were Lady and Lord Montague and in the next season the actress playing Lady Montague was also replaced. The counterbalance was created by the Capulets' household which was also partly changed in the next season.[49] The Capulet

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[49]Lady Capulet was played originally by Lisa McMillan, a Juilliard trained actress. In the next season that role was played by Kathleen Mary Mulligan.

family was very well cast originally.[50] The new actors who assumed the parts of departing players did not have the benefit of the long rehearsal process. All the changes were implemented during a period of two weeks in the summer of 1990. Leon Rubin flew in from the United Kingdom to New York City to conduct the rehearsals. With so many new actors taking over parts previously rehearsed by other players, the production had changed. Mark Kincaid said:

> I'm sorry we lost Darryl, because Darryl brought a lot to the production. Darryl was an older actor, so he brought weight to the show. He also had a beautiful, beautiful, speaking voice, and he was able to open and close the show so beautifully. But, we have other actors, and they are just different performances now, that's all.[51]

Casting of the Role of Romeo.

While most of the casting modifications occurred because an actor had to be replaced, one change, that of the actor playing the role of Romeo, was brought about in order to improve the production. Terry Morris wrote that Cantor is "a disappointment as Romeo, except during his act one scenes with Juliet, when he is delightful."[52] The casting of the role of Romeo was problematic from the beginning. Margot Harley said that she let the director cast Geoffrey P. Cantor as Romeo because she already had opposed him in many

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[50]Fredricksen, who witnessed the opening night's performance, said that "they were all very strong."

[51]Kincaid, 1990.

[52]Terry Morris, "Sadly, 'Romeo and Juliet' Dies too Soon," *Dayton Daily News*, 3 May 1990.

other aspects of the production.[53] Harley added the following reflections:

> You asked me about casting. Sometimes I back down, and sometimes Liz backs down. And a case in point was the Romeo, where we backed down even though we were not happy with Leon's choice. We let him have his choice, because we had pushed so many other things on him. And, because we didn't have a great alternative to that Romeo at that time. But he was not good, and he actually, was destructive to that production. . . . in performance he was a major problem. And it really wasn't until we replaced him, that the production began to really soar.[54]

Elizabeth Smith, who had spent some time with the actor playing Romeo, declined discussing particulars of her work with the actors in a way which would reveal anything about their weaknesses or problems. She insisted that part of her work must be private.[55]

> We replaced Romeo that you saw rehearsing with another one and I actually did spend a little bit of time with him. . . .We worked on the text, we worked on the meaning, we worked on building speeches, there were various problems that I did not solve."[56]

The company actors seemed to favor the change in casting of the role of Romeo. The change was crucial, because "with a role of that size it compromises the entire production."[57] Moreover, Kincaid asserted that the ensemble worked better

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[53]Harley, 1991.
[54]Harley, 1991.
[55]Elizabeth Smith, personal interview by author, tape recording, New York, 23 January 1991.
[56]Smith, 1991.
[57]Kincaid, 1990.

after that change, because Mark Guin (who replaced Geoffrey P. Cantor in the role of Romeo) cooperated with his fellow actors better.

> Mark {Guin} is a very fine actor. . . he works with you, he shares the stage with you, he works with you, he hammers things out. . . .In my particular case, I have to do that combat every night. The combat is very demanding and it can be very dangerous. . . you have to be able to trust your partner, and to work things out. And that piece of a show looks a lot better with Mark than it did with Geoffrey {Cantor}.[58]

As delineated in his statement, Rubin intended his production of *Romeo and Juliet* to be meaningful for today's audiences without sacrificing its stylistic qualities. He intended to let that language speak. In execution, Rubin's ideas culminated in a performance that was well-received by the critics as well as its many spectators. "It was a superb production" wrote Ann Ker after TAC's performance in Springfield, IL on April 28, 1990.[59] The lucidity and focus of the production was noted by several critics. According to Noreen Toner, Rubin "helped make the story clearer, more understandable" and the actors "used their bodies imaginatively to convey meaning."[60] Mr. Rubin's attention to the clarity of the action was now reflected in the actors' economy of gesture and stage business which was noted by several critics.[61] To speed the exit/entrance transitions,

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[58]Kincaid, 1990.
[59]Ann Ker, "Audience Falls in Love with Great Romeo and Juliet," *Woodridge Progress*, 28 Apr. 1990.
[60]Noreen Toner, "Stockton's Romeo and Juliet Sexy," *The Press* (Atlantic City, N.J.), 24 March 1990.
[61]As will be discussed in this chapter.

Rubin used overlapping scenes -- a cinematic cross/fade technique, whereby the new action begins in a new location without delay, immediately following the exit of the players from the preceding scene and even, at times, while the actors from the previous scene are still on stage. Evie Rapport wrote in the *Kansas City Tribune* that the production "briskly staged by Leon Rubin, raced along ruthlessly to the pre-ordained disaster of its last scene."[62] Mr. Rubin's staging underscored the strife between the two families in Verona. The distractive power of hate was made apparent by Mark Kincaid in the role of Tybalt whose first entrance carried the audience into the center of the conflict. Many critics praised the vitality of the production. Terry Morris, for example, wrote that "this is a production with guts and attack."[63] Evie Rapport wrote that "flashing swords and swirling capes gave visual reality to the hair-trigger tempers of the feuding young Capulets and Montagues."[64]

Audience-actor interaction was also strengthened by the dynamic choreography of stage fights, that were among the play's most arresting scenes. Those fights, directed by Erik Fredricksen, were thrilling to watch, according to critics. The ensemble-style playing was especially striking in the first battle, a mass brawl engaging the entire troupe. Executed with utmost care, it gave visual substance

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[62]Evie Rapport, "This 'Romeo and Juliet' Comes Alive," *Kansas City Tribune*, 12 Nov. 1990.
[63]Morris, "Victoria."
[64]Rapport, "Comes Alive."

to the family feud introducing the audience into the center of the ongoing conflict. Moreover, an effective use of stage properties in this battle emphasized the contrast between classes: noblemen's swords juxtaposed with pots, axes, and chains of the servants. In that scene, the use of a chain was particularly expressive. According to Fredricksen, it is very difficult to get the desired effect with a chain, but in that production, he could rely on the skills of a particularly adept actor, Jeffrey Guyton, who gave his motions with the chain suitable energy and power without sacrificing the safety of those around him. It is very difficult to perform with a chain. "Unless you can really get the whole body {moving}, it tends to be a snake and it can hit you."[65] The choreographed combat was aptly integrated into the dramatic action in this production of *Romeo and Juliet* which was praised by several critics. Anthony Chase noted the opening with "a scene in pantomime that moves directly into the first of a number of exciting fights...[66] "In this Verona sword fights are lusty," wrote Noreen Toner after the opening night in Stockton State College.[67] According to Ann Ker, the choreography for the stage fights was quite good.[68] Christopher Potter wrote that the sword-fights choreographed by Eric Fredricksen

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[65]Fredricksen, 1990.
[66]Anthony Chase, "Unromantic 'Romeo' Entertains," *Buffalo News*, 17 Aug. 1990.
[67]Toner, "Stockton's Romeo."
[68]Ker, "Audience."

"appropriately range from playful to deadly serious."[69] Terry Morris wrote that

> from the opening scene clash between Montague and Capulet hotbloods wielding chains, buckets and cudgels, to the duel just before the dreaded intermission. . . this is a production with guts and attack.[70]

Anthony Chase described the effect on the audience in this way:

> The big street fight in Act 3 begins as a playful -- if mean-spirited -- frolic before turning real ugly. Consequently, Mercutio's dying words, "A plague on both your houses," coming as they do by surprise, mark a turning point in the action. . . . The performers are skillful, and in all instances adequate for the tasks that confront them. William Michie makes an engaging Mercutio.[71]

Critical Evaluation

The production of *Romeo and Juliet* was, overall, well-received by critics across the country. Chuck Graham noted that the production "was easily appreciated by the predominantly teenaged audience of some 1,500 last night at the Music Hall of the Tucson Convention Center."[72] "In addition to his interpretative virtues, Rubin has fashioned a production that entertains," wrote Anthony Chase.[73] Most critics have noted that the director deftly played on the

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[69]Christopher Potter, "Shouting and Stomping Mar a Classic," *Ann Arbor News*, 22 Oct. 1990.
[70]Morris, "Dies too Soon."
[71]Chase, "Unromantic."
[72]Chuck Graham, "'Romeo, Juliet' Pleases Young Audience," *Tucson Citizen*, 31 March 1990.
[73]Chase, "Unromantic."

themes of "anguish and despair. . . . turning comedy into tragedy."[74] Some, however, found contrary meanings in the production. For example, in a clear disregard for the director's idea about the Romantic age, Anthony Chase wrote that Rubin's direction "illuminated Shakespeare's text by highlighting its unromantic nature."[75] And Robert Massa criticized the director in The *Village Voice,* stating that "the action is more vivid, but at the expense of the contrasting humor in the wordplay and much of the real world that surrounds the tragedy."[76] According to Massa, the production "suggests both the romantic and the cautionary sides of the tale, but neither comes through with much force.[77]

Several critics noted the acting ability displayed by the company's players. They liked LaMar's Juliet replete with nuances of distress and pain. In the *Kansas City Tribune* Evie Rapport stated that the play "comes alive." Rapport liked the acting of William D. Michie as Mercutio who "had a cynic, acid edge;" John Michalski, "who gave Capulet a crisp acid reading," Trish Jenkins "who clearly revelled in the Nurse's bawdy prattlings," and Mark Kincaid as Tybalt.[78] Jeffrey Guyton, wrote Rapport, "made Friar

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[74]Barbara Smith, "Timeless 'Romeo and Juliet' Performed at State," *The Express*, Monday, April 30, 1990.
[75]Ibid.
[76]Robert Massa, "Wherefore Art Though," *Village Voice*, 8 January 1991.
[77]Ibid.
[78]Critical Response to Mark Kincaid's acting will be discussed in more details later in this chapter.

Lawrence both funny and touching."[79] Ann Ker liked the comic renditions of Jeffrey Guyton who "had some hilarious moments," and of Trish Jenkins who was "simply marvelous as the Nurse."[80] Ker also liked the acting of Lisa McMillan as Lady Montague and Darryl Croxton as Prince Escalus.[81] Jenkins, according to Florence Pennella, "added a wink to several scenes."[82] And Jeffrey Guyton as Friar Laurence, "nicely balanced humor and compassion as he tried to reconcile the lives of Romeo and Juliet in the midst of overwhelming odds."[83] Graham wrote that Jenkins was the funniest and "got some big laughs playing Juliet's Nurse."[84] According to Graham, Michalski "struck a particularly poignant note," in the role of Capulet."[85] Florence Pennella on the other hand wrote that Michalski was "forceful, although at times a little too overbearing."[86]

The actors' manner of speaking verse and their ease with Shakespeare's dialog was noticed by many critics. Furthermore, the director's focus on language unified actors' means of expression, actively engaging the audience. Barbara Smith wrote that actors' "every gesture and inflection served as interpreter."[87] Ann Ker praised LaMar

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[79]Rapport, "Alive."
[80]Ker, "Audience."
[81]Ibid.
[82]Florence Pennella, "Romeo and Juliet was a bit Uneven, but Enjoyable," *Poughkeepsie Journal*, 8 Oct. 1990.
[83]Ibid.
[84]Graham, "Pleases."
[85]Ibid.
[86]Pennella, "Uneven."
[87]Barbara Smith, "Timeless."

"who made every word both audible and meaningful."[88] Others observed the actors' ease with handling Shakespeare's dialogue. Terry Morris praised the "performers who enliven the material with natural gesture and by emphasizing the subtle over the obvious."[89] Evie Rapport said that the metered Elizabethan dialogue, "was spoken with admirable clarity and remarkable insight" by TAC players.[90] "The only exception," according to Ann Ker, was Geoffrey P. Cantor as Romeo, "who did not quite measure up to the rest of the cast.[91] Kerr found his delivery not convincing enough.[92]

Many critics were impressed with LaMar's sensibility in her portrayal of Juliet. Morris wrote that she "is more compelling as her young life grows ever deeper, darker and more complicated."[93] According to Chuck Graham, LaMar's rendition of the role projected a "spectrum of emotions that ranged from ecstasy to desperation."[94] According to Florence Pennella, LaMar gave "familiar lines new life, speaking them as if they were new pronouncements, inspired by the moment."[95] Pennella wrote that:

> LaMar's performance as Juliet made the evening worthwhile. . . . LaMar convinced as she made the transition from abandoned youth to a woman aware of what she must do to protect her secret marriage to Romeo. Even as she died, LaMar presented a Juliet that

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[88]Ann Ker, "Audience."
[89]Morris, "Dies too Soon."
[90]Rapport, "Alive".
[91]Ker, "Audience."
[92]Ibid.
[93]Morris. "Dies too Soon."
[94]Graham, "Pleases."
[95]Pennella, "Uneven."

> balanced bravery, dignity and sadness, making the role ring true.[96]

LaMar's emotional rendition of her role made the tragic story meaningful to a contemporary audience. It was especially moving in her parting with Romeo. In that scene, she expressed full consciousness of the finality of her character's dramatic situation. According to Evie Rapport, LaMar and Guin played the young lovers "with such tender integrity and giddy grace that their piteous story seemed almost a genuine tragedy."[97] Rapport wrote that "the acting from the central characters was uniformly strong," and that LaMar was "particularly memorable as Juliet; in her able hands, the child-woman given the courage by her love became the strong heart of the production."[98] Rapport also liked Guin's "swooning" Romeo who "beguilingly changed from tentative, ardent young man back to crushed and despairing boy."[99] According to Anthony Chase, LaMar created a "most sensitive and bewildered Juliet."[100] "She gives a pleasing performance in terms of interpretation and timing, though one might wish for more vocal variety to soften the monotonous high pitch."[101] According to Robert Massa in the *Village Voice*, LaMar's Juliet is sweet at first and darkens persuasively," but he found "stray moments of heavy-

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[96]Ibid.
[97]Rapport, "Alive."
[98]Ibid.
[99]Ibid.
[100]Chase, "Unromantic."
[101]Ibid.

handedness, as when Juliet shouts from her balcony."[102] The actors' teamwork was praised by several critics. Other performers were well-received by some reviewers and criticized by others. In particular, Toner liked the way the actors used "their bodies imaginatively to convey meaning," and the "very well-timed" facial expressions. Smith noted that the actors "were able to convey the extremes of emotion that are at the heart of the play."[103]

Whereas most critics praised the fine performances rendered by TAC's players, there were others who criticized the acting severely. Thus, Robert Massa praised in the *Village Voice*,(January 8,1991) the rapport between Juliet and her Nurse, but otherwise, declared that "there's little chemistry in the company's *Romeo and Juliet*."[104] According to Massa, Mercutio had "too little presence." Most disappointing was for Massa "Guin's gangly Romeo."[105] According to Terry Pow, "the lyric quality of the drama" was missing in LaMar's and in Mark Guin's performance.

> Instead, they pursued their infatuation with all the subtlety of Popeye and Olive Oil, Guin indulging in distracting double-takes and other bits of business at inappropriate moments and LaMar booming her lines almost melodramatically at times.[106]

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[102]Ibid.
[103]Graham, "Pleases."
[104]Ibid.
[105]Ibid.
[106]Terry Pow, "Romeo and Juliet was Exciting, but Lacked Shakespeare Touch" *Jackson Citizen Patriot* (Michigan), 22 Oct. 1990.

There was also a noticable disparity in the reception of other roles. Christopher Potter wondered, in the *Ann Arbor News*, whether The Acting Company "has run alarmingly short of quality thespians."[107] With the exception of "stately" John Michalski who "puts genuine shading into the half-tyrannical, half-dotting father," Ben Eric, who "makes a noble, earnest Benvolio," Kincaid, Jenkins, "a stock jolly-myopic Nurse," and Michie, Potter had severe criticism for the actors.[108] In a review in Ann Arbor News, Potter wrote:

> Though William D. Michie flubs Mercutio's Queen Mab" speech . . .he otherwise effectively molds a debonair, half-mad clown-prince who, when fatally wounded, can scarcely believe the fate that's suddenly befallen him.[109]

Otherwise, Potter found faults with the actors and with the director. He criticized actors "vocal assertiveness" and said that the actors "bellow and bluster their way through" the play.[110] Potter had particularly harsh words for both protagonists, saying that "it is difficult to detect any metamorphosis in Guin's Romeo." Potter also criticized LaMar's "hyperkinetic Juliet" saying that "she throws herself about in an ungainly, tomboy style which could only be called vintage American."[111]

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[107] Christopher Potter, "Shouting and Stomping Mar a Classic," *Ann Arbor News* (Michigan), 22 Oct 1990.
[108] Ibid.
[109] Ibid.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Ibid.

Mark Kincaid also received mixed reviews. Several critics noted his "blustering Tybalt. According to Fredricksen who staged the fights, Kincaid always seemed centered. He was also the best fighter.[112]

> He had a sense of panache. . . . he looked like a marvelous villainous type. . . . and he had the sort of flair that I think is very much Tybalt, the showiness.[113]

Tybalt's showiness was at the center of the play's dramatic conflict dynamically propelling the action. According to several critics Kincaid created a strong Tybalt. Christopher Potter liked his "black-garbed thug as Tybalt."[114] Terry Pow liked Kincaid's fine performance of a Tybalt whom "you definitely wouldn't want to meet on a dark night."[115] Anthony Chase wrote that Kincaid is "delightfully menacing as Tybalt."[116] Clive Barnes liked his "savagely feline Tybalt."[117] Mark Kincaid said that he is not afraid to do something that is very large and theatrical.[118]

> There is no point of me walking on the stage as Tybald in this great big black outfit with boots up to my knees, mincing around the stage. . . It's got to be big. That's why Shakespeare wrote that character. It's just bigger than life. Mercutio should be bigger than life. All those characters are very large

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[112]Fredricksen, 1990.
[113]Fredricksen, 1990.
[114]Potter, "Shouting."
[115]Pow, "Exciting, but Lacked."
[116] Chase, "Unromantic."
[117]Clive Barnes, "Romeo and Juliet is Very Nice Twice," *New York Post*, 24 Dec. 1990.
[118]Kincaid, 1990.

> characters. And you just can't approach them the same way you do Sam Shephard or Chekhov. It's got to be bigger. That's one reason I like Shakespeare anyway, because it's big and colorful. It's bigger than life.[119]

Some reviewers faulted Kincaid for his rendition of Tybalt. Florence Pennella wrote that Kincaid "played the dark knight a little too darkly."[120] Robert Massa found Kincaid's Tybalt "too hammy."[121]

In some instances, the difference in the reviewers' responses to the acting seem to be affected by the critic's expectation of typecasting. That is, some critics expected casting of the roles in such a way that an actor's own physical features would characterize the role. John Houseman discussed that very issue when he juxtaposed typecasting with allowing young actors to play various roles for which they are not necessarily suited physically.[122] The actor's age was an issue in the critical response to TAC's productions under consideration of this study. Some reviewers were unwilling to accept a young actor's rendition of an older character even when the actor's ability to portray an older character was praised by others.[123] The young age of Jenkins in the role of Nurse, was often criticized in reports of *Romeo and Juliet*.[124] Robert Massa

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[119]Kincaid, 1990.
[120]Pennella, "Uneven."
[121]Massa, "Wherefore."
[122]John Houseman, "In Defence of Repertory."
[123]Compare similar critical responses to *Ill Campiello* and to *Orchards*.
[124]Casting young actors in the roles of older characters was also criticized in reviews of *Campiello* and to *Orchards* as discussed in the third and fourth chapter of this study.

found the Montagues "disconcertingly young" for the roles.[125] Since the young age of actors was also criticised in the earlier productions, this issue will be briefly discussed in the concluding part of this study.

The greatest praise was given to TAC in the *New York Post* by Clive Barnes who wrote twice about this production.[126] On December 24, 1990, Barnes wrote that the production was "absolutely superb," and that:

> The Acting Company. . . turned up wondrous trumps in a *Romeo and Juliet* that conveyed all the play's hectic speed of passion, its youthful poetry and its sense of tragic ecstasy and waste."[127]
>
> The young British director, Leon Rubin,. . . had welded his team of youthful actors -- few of them particularly experienced -- into a formidable ensemble, and they tackled the play with clarity and grace, together with a verve and attack that was pure pleasure to watch."[128]
>
> Mark Guin and Diana LaMar made tremulous, ardent and touchy lovers. William D. Michie provided a neatly sardonic Mercutio, and Mark Kincaid a savagely feline Tybalt. But it was the teamwork and the staging -- including an excellent setting by Derek McLane -- more than individuals which so memorably counted."[129]

Five days later, on Saturday, December 29, 1990, Clive Barnes asserted that TAC's production of *Romeo and Juliet* was one of the top ten productions of 1990 Off-Broadway season.

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[125] Massa, "Wherefore."
[126] Barnes, "Very Nice."
[127] Ibid.
[128] Ibid.
[129] Ibid.

> By far the best Shakespeare of the year came from the late John Houseman's The Acting Company, which, under the direction of Leon Rubin, gave a hell-bent, heaven-sent staging of *Romeo* - speedy, articulate and elegant, with Mark Stuart Guin and Diana LaMar as the star-cross'd lovers.[130]

In conclusion, this production of *Romeo and Juliet* contributed to the development of young American actors and brought Shakespeare's play to audiences throughout the country. The actors learned to be selective in their choices; to eliminate mannerisms and bad habits; to focus on the text. They mastered their skills in speaking verse well, and developed while working in a great classical play. Performed 125 times mostly in large halls for audiences that often included young people, this production of *Romeo and Juliet* fulfilled an important cultural function, introducing young viewers to great plays of the past.

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[130]Barnes, "Top 10 Plays."

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

Summary

The stated goals of The Acting Company are to develop young American actors and to bring classics to audiences across the country. As this study revealed, in the second decade TAC continued to fulfill its goals. Interviewed actors felt that their potentials and acting skills were realized and developed during rehearsing and performing with TAC. TAC's productions were well-received by spectators and critics around the country.

By performing Goldoni's *Ill Campiello* in a production that was faithful to the spirit of the writer and the style of the epoch, TAC introduced a great (yet little known) dramatist to modern audiences and enlarged the scope of classical plays considered by other theatres in the country. The production was performed fifty-one times in a course of two seasons. The actors were challenged during the rehearsal process. They learned from Liviu Ciulei how to give life to their characters by searching for details of their character's life and how to be selective in order to allow their characters to portray the situation of each scene in accord with the vision of the director. They learned how to act in a classical comedy.

With *Orchards*, according to Robert Falls, The Acting Company "seized a chance to involve itself with a group of important American playwrights."[1] By commissioning new dramatic material from major American writers, TAC contributed to the creation of a new original work that was performed in stimulating production sixty-three times around the country. Moreover, *Orchards* was published in 1987 and found its way to libraries around the country thus contributing to the repertoire available to theatre students in American Universities.

As documented in the chapter devoted to the production of *Romeo and Juliet*, the young actors learned to speak verse well. Performed 125 times, mostly in large halls for audiences that often included young people, the production of *Romeo and Juliet* fulfilled an important function of acquainting the young viewers with great plays of the past as it brought one of Shakespeare's plays to its audiences.

In the period under consideration, TAC produced twenty seven classical and contemporary plays. In the opinion of critics, TAC's productions had vision and focus, were true to the spirit of the writer and appealed to the present-day viewer. Moreover, the productions were performed with great acting skill to large audiences across the country. TAC has also traveled internationally gaining critical praise and recognition. Despite TAC's artistic successes, its economic

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[1]Falls, 1990.

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[2] Harley,

problems remained severe and in recent years have worsened significantly.

Assessing TAC's influence, Harley observed that the American theatre now has changed in the domain of actors and repertoire. According to Harley, the regional theatres around the country are able to produce classical plays more successfully "than they would have been able to do twenty years ago thanks to, in part, what we have been doing for twenty years."[2]

Topics to Explore in Future Studies.

There are several topics worth exploring in future studies in order to assess TAC's place in the American theatre. One is the realm of TAC's spectators around the country. Further studies should provide additional information of the reception of the classical plays offered by TAC. Especially worthy of a closer analysis is the reception of TAC's productions of classics by the school audiences. A study of changes in public reception of the classical theatre in general is also one of the possible topics to pursue; to evaluate the likely impact of TAC's yearly visits on the spectators in small towns.

Another topic to consider is an analysis of the critical responses to all TAC's productions. As was evidenced in this study, there was a great disparity in the critical reception of the productions studied.

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[2]Harley, 1989.

Specifically, the New York critics differed often in their opinions from other reviewers around the country. A comparative study is needed to analyze this topic fully. Also, a comparison of the responses to TAC's productions by professional theatre critics with those that appeared in the daily newspapers may be revealing. Another suggestion is to analyze all reviews published by one critic. Some critics reported on many of TAC's productions, Mel Gussow, Clive Barnes, David Richards, most notable; Gussow is one of those important American critics who evaluated TAC from its start. Another area is a business study of TAC's economic situation particularly since financial problems continue to limit TAC's operations.

Prospects for Continuation

TAC ended the decade with severe financial problems; the limited financial support along with diminishing support for art around the country caused shorter residencies which in turn created a difficult life for the touring actors and affected the nature of the ensemble. Recruiting actors and retaining them for a longer period has become a problem. While, at the beginning, the actors stayed in the company for three or more years, during the second decade, many actors left the company after only one season. Changing location from night to night and a virtual disappearance of longer residencies was the main cause of the fluctuation of actors.

Lately, The Acting Company is not able to mount as many productions as in the beginning years. Moreover, the continuity of the ensemble was disrupted in 1989 when, because of financial and other problems beyond their control, the company came very close to closing. "We had no tour, we had no artistic director, and the finances were just awful."[3] Margot Harley had to let all the actors go. Lack of financial support remains TAC's main problem.

In 1990 Margot Harley set up a search committee for an artistic director which resulted in the appointment of Zelda Fichandler, the founder and former Producing Director of the Arena Stage in Washington, D.C. With Zelda Fichandler at its helm, the company seems to stand on much surer ground. As one of the moving forces behind the resident theater movement in America, Zelda Fichandler is, in the opinion of many, the hope that can save the company.[4] Zelda Fichandler said:

> We are trying to build on the achievements of John Houseman and Margot Harley and to imaginatively extend the possibilities within the company to such things as more permanent residencies in art centers, or in theatres, or in schools, where we can really become part of the community. . . . We'd like to stay longer in certain communities and come back every year. So that we'd become an organic part of their theatre life; and that we can establish a relationship with schools, either high schools or colleges, that isn't transitory, that isn't temporary, that we can have a lasting effect.

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[3]Harley 1989.

[4]Harley, 1991, Kahn, 1992, Iglewski, 1991, Biggs, 1991, Miller-Stephany, 1991.

Under Fichandler's leadership, training together will be part of life. "We're always going to keep that as a feature and we are extending it."[5] Her dual goal is to improve actors' skills and to build an ensemble.

> We want to further extend the concept of this company as a company who trains together, performs together, and teaches together. So this past year we had a fairly extended . . . training period. We would train . . . in the morning, rehearse in the afternoon. . . . .And so, the company in one year, it's a new company, was able to really look like an ensemble.[6]

According to Fichandler, TAC has a real function. It could be two companies; there's no end of what it can be if it has cultural support.[7] Whether TAC will continue to grow and develop, or whether it will survive but will be forced to scale down its aspirations will greatly depend on the economy.

Major Changes

The company is now at a pivotal point. As it looks ahead to its third decade, TAC is undergoing changes brought about by the new artistic leadership. In her analysis of TAC's past, Fichandler stated that the company "drifted away from its Juilliard roots and its unity of style became less defined."[8] As did her predecessors, the new artistic

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[5]Zelda Fichandler, personal interview by author, Tape recording, Washington, D.C., 27 January 1992.
[6]Fichandler, 1992.
[7]Fichandler, 1992.
[8]Fichandler, "The Acting Company" June 1991, p.1.

director places the quality of the ensemble and the centrality of the actor as one of her principal goals.

> I can't work otherwise. I mean if they stay one year and then they go away I can't build anything . . . . I've been with a company where they stayed 20 years. I don't want them to stay twenty years. but I'd like them to stay four or five years, even three years, and then some of them, there'll always be some that have been there before, so the company will develop a style. But this business of going in for one year is no way to build an acting company. That service fulfills half of its mission, which is to provide theatre for people that might not otherwise see it, but it doesn't fulfil a mission of being a true acting ensemble. You can't stay for one year and build something with your fellow actor in company with your fellow actor.[9]

Fichandler's concerns for the stability of the ensemble constitute a continuity of purpose with the founders of TAC.

Under the leadership of Zelda Fichandler, TAC will be different than it was in the past in the following ways. First, the recruitment of actors for the company will be different. In general, fewer actors will be recruited from Juilliard and more from the Graduate Acting Program at New York University where Zelda Fichandler is the Artistic director.[10] The criteria by which actors are selected for the company will be altered under the new leadership as one of Fichandler's goals is to promote multi-culturalism. The character of the company, said Fichandler, should be representative of the composition of the society. Therefore, Zelda Fichandler wants her ensemble to reflect

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[9]Fichandler, 1992.

[10]New York University's Tish School of the Arts.

the social mosaic of our time and she intends to "actively recruit actors of color."[11]

> I auditioned six hundred actors, and chose seventeen, and half of them are people of color, not white, ethnic people. So that too is a wonderful model as we travel around the country for action that can be taken by people of different backgrounds, together.[12]

Formerly, most of TAC's members were young; in the future Zelda Fichandler intends to invite older, more experienced actors to perform with the company on a limited basis. This action will help the company since the young age of TAC's actors was criticized in the reviews of the three productions studied. Performing with older, more experienced actors will also help the young actors to develop.

Second, the company's character will be affected by a different approach to choosing the repertoire. The new artistic director plans to produce fewer "European classics" and more "socially relevant plays" that reflect the dominant issues of our time.[13]

> We want to move from the production of the classics, which have been largely European classics, to the creation of new work, and new work created from a culturally specific point of view.[14]

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[11]Fichandler, 1992.
[12]Fichandler, 1992.
[13]Fichandler, 1992.
[14]Fichandler, 1992.

> We will continue to explore the classics, as they serve today's world. But we do want to very much create a unit, within this company, that makes up work for its own time.[15]

Third, the production of plays will be affected by the company's own *space* which will travel with the touring actors and which will be identifiable as belonging to TAC: "one performance space that will embrace the body of our work and establish a particular relationship . . . between the company and the audience."[16]

The challenge for TAC is to retain its place in the American theatre. The goal, said Zelda Fichandler is to develop a style, a nature for the company.[17]

> What is the nature of a company? It's an ensemble, that is they play together, it's spirited, it's useful, it does its work for the sake of the audience, and it does its work for the highest standards of the craft, its terminus is the audience, and its origin is the self. And it's constantly finding more about the self so that it can constantly give more to the audience. So a style will emerge . . . . In a process of selecting actors you can already form a style and you can form a character for the company.[18]

The company's difficult financial situation continues to be a major threat to any plan, however. On 20 January 1992, during a personal interview in Washington, D.C. Zelda Fichandler said:

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[15]Fichandler, 1992.
[16]Fichandler, "Statement," p 24.
[17]Fichandler, 1992.
[18]Fichandler, 1992.

> You know, I say all of this optimistically but I don't know where the money is coming from for the moment. We are really suffering because the communities out there are suffering. The country is suffering economically; they can play less and less for what costs us more and more.[19]

She brings to the company forty years of experience as a founder and artistic director of the Arena Stage. She brings to the company a vision that, in some ways, is different from TAC's original roots but that, in her view, reflects the needs of theatre for our time. Most importantly, she brings to the company a sense of mission with which she infuses those around her creating enthusiasm and passion. The link with TAC's original program is reflected in the significance given to the ensemble of actors and to the central role of that actor in a theatre. In her statements Zelda Fichandler reminds us of the true meaning of theatre:

> To me The Acting Company is all company and very little institution. It's a theatre without walls it re-focuses the theatre experience back to the actor. No one goes there to see costumes or the sets. They only go. . . to see an actor.[20]

TAC stands on much surer ground now with Zelda Fichandler's leadership. With her at its helm, The Acting Company takes a firm step into its third decade.

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[19]Fichandler, 1992.
[20]Fichandler, 1992.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

THE ACTING COMPANY FACT SHEET

1989-90 FACT SHEET

Founded in 1972 by Margot Harley and John Houseman, The Acting Company is the only permanent, professional repertory theatre company touring nationwide. Its mission is to provide highly talented, well trained American actors with an opportunity to further develop their craft by touring in a repertory company; to develop a theatre-going public by playing first-rate productions from the classical repertory before diverse audiences; to conduct educational classes and theatre demonstrations in high schools and colleges across the country, thus increasing students' awareness and appreciation of theatre; to initiate and participate in international theatre exchanges, and to build, through the ongoing participation of all its members, an American ensemble, with a unique ability to perform together in a classical and contemporary repertory.

The season's National Touring Ensemble consists of 17 actors from America's finest professional schools, conservatories and resident theatres. Through an intensive rehearsal and performance schedule, the actors perfect their craft in the ensemble tradition, with each stop on the tour providing a new audience, a new theatre and a new test of their dramatic skills. Former touring members have benefited greatly from this touring process and, as a result, have gone on to become some of the most sought-after professionals performing today. While the average rate of unemployment among actors in their chosen field is approximately 80%, former touring members of The Acting Company are consistently in demand -- performing on and off-Broadway, in regional theatres, on television and in films.

This year the Company has residencies in many major cities including Tucson, Arizona; Fort Worth, Texas; New Haven, Connecticut; Louisville, Kentucky and Dayton, Ohio. As well as performing in larger metropolitan areas, the Company has also played in small communities such as Opelika, Alabama and Grand Forks, North Dakota. Audiences in towns such as these often have limited access to professional theatre. By bringing plays with distinguished production values to theatres across the country, the Company has encouraged the development of a discerning national audience. To date, The Acting Company has traveled more than 400,000 miles, performed 66 plays in 46 states and has played before almost 2,000,000 theatre-goers.

Over the years the Company has been the recipient of numerous awards including the Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Award and several Obies. In January of 1980 the nation's John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts invited The Acting Company to become its official touring arm. The Acting Company is proud of this affiliation and, in addition to representing the Kennedy Center on its national tours, the Company performs at the Kennedy Center's national Imagination Celebrations and annually plays in the Center's Terrace Theatre in Washington, D.C. The Acting Company also has a home in New York City. This off-Broadway theatre, named after John Houseman, enables the National Touring Ensemble to schedule longer New York City residencies, and houses dynamic new productions for the New York Ensemble which is composed of former touring members of The Acting Company.

APPENDIX B

LIST OF ACTORS

Members of The Acting Company's touring ensemble in the period of 1980-90; asterisk indicates training at Juilliard.

Irwin Appel (1987-88)*
Lisa Banes (1979-80)*
Oliver Barreiro (1987-88)*
Spencer Beckwith (1987-89)*
Dan Berkey (1990-91)
Casey Biggs (1980-82)*
Becky Borczon (1980-82)
Ethan T. Bowen (1990-91)
Bonnie Bowers (1981-82)
Wendy Brennan (1985-87)*
Anthony M. Brown (1989-90)*
Laura Brutsman (1983-86)*
Craig Bryant (1985-87)
Jerome Butler (1983-84)*
Michael Butler (1979-80)*
Geoffrey P. Cantor (1989-90)
Johann Carlo (1980-81)
Terrence Caza (1983-87)
Lynn Chausow (1980-83)*
Libby Colahan 1982-85)
Constance Crawford (1986-88)*
Darryl Croxton (1989-90)
Anthony Cummings (1988-89)*
Keith David (1980-81)
Aled Davies (1984-86)
David DeBesse (1989-90)
Matt deGanon (1984-85)
Jacqueline DeHaviland (1983-84)
DeLane Matthews (1983-84)
Laurence Drozd (1989-91)
Matthew Edwards (1990-91)
David Eichman (1990-91)
Stephanie Erb 1990-91
Ben Eric (1990-91)
Albert Farrar (1984-85)*
Susan Finch (1984-86)*
Gayla Finer (1988-89)*
Julie Fishel 1984-85
David Fuller (1983-84)
Megan Gallagher (1982-83)*
Melissa Gallagher (1986-87)*
Philip Goodwin (1981-83, 1984-87)
Larry Green (1988-89)*
John Greenleaf (1976-79, 1988-89)

Mark Stewart Guin (1989-91)
Jeffrey Guyton (1989-91)
Harriet Harris (1977-80)*
David O. Harum (1982-83)
Jacqueline DeHaviland (1983-84)
Paul Hebron (1987-88)
Barrett Heins (1981-82)
Tom Hewitt (1982-83)
Laura Hicks (1979-80)
Joe Houghton (1986-87)
Richard Howard (1980-81)*
Richard S. Iglewski (1980-84)
Kevin Jackson (1985-86)
Trish Jenkins (1989-92)
Jack Kenny (1982-84)*
Matthew Kimbrough (1987-80)
Mark Kincaid (1987-88, 1989-91)
Ronna Kress (1981-83)
Douglas Krizner (1986-89)
Rene Laigo 1987-88)
Diana LaMar (1989-91)
Oni Faida Lampley (1987-88)
Peter Lewis (1987-88)
Jillian Lindig (1989-1990)
Bellina Logan (1990-91)
Robert Lovitz* (1979-81)
Michael MacCauley (1988-89)
David Manis (1982-85)
Michael Manuelian (1982-84)
DeLane Matthews (1983-84)
Steven Mattila (1983-84)
Theresa McCarthy(1988-89)
Michael MacCauley(1988-89)
Davenia McFadden (1983-84)
J. Andrew McGrath* (1982-83)
Kevin McGuire (1980-81, 1986-87)
Michael McKenzie (1985-87)
Lisa McMillan (1989-90)*
Randle Mell (1978-1980)
Phil Meyer (1983-86)
John Michalski (1973-74, 1989-91)*
William D. Michie (1989-91)
Joel F. Miller (1984-87)
Mark Moses (1985-86)
Kathleen Mary Mulligan (1990-91)
Alison Stair Neet (1986-89)
Jonathan Nichols (1987-88)*
Pamela Nyberg (1980-82)*
Patrick O'Connell (1981-82)*
Laura Perrota (1987-89)
Mariangela Pino 1985-86)
Anthony Powell (1983-86)
Andrew Prosky (1989-91)
Lori Putnam (1980-81)

David Rainey (1988-89)*
Brian Reddy (1980-82, 1985-86)
Margaret Reed (1982-83)
Tom Robbins (1977-80)
Jeffrey Michael Rubin*(1980-82)
Ken Sawyer (1988-89)*
Charles Shaw-Robinson (1978-80)
Alan Silver (1980-81)
Gary Sloan (1988-89)
Derek David Smith (1984-85)*
Laura Smyth (1980-81)*
Jack Stehlin (1982-83)*
M. Bradford Sullivan (1986-87)*
Martha Thompson (1988-89)*
John Tillotson (1987-89)
Pamela Tucker-White (1981-82)*
Ana Valdes (Ana Yen) (1984-85)*
Ray Virta (1981-83)
Daniel Virth (1981-82)
Paul Walker (1980-82)
Gregory Wallace (1988-89)
David Walt (1989-1990)
Gregory Welch 1983-84)*
Rainn Wilson (1990-92)
Michele-Denise Woods (1980-82)*
Ralph Zito (1986-88)*

ACTORS LIST BY YEARS.

1980-81.
17 total; 7 Juilliard actors.

1. Casey Biggs (1980-82)*
2. Becky Borczon (1980-82)
3. Johann Carlo (1980-81)
4. Lynn Chausow (1980-83)*
5. Keith David (1980-81)
6. Richard Howard (1980-81)*
7. Richard S. Iglewski (1980-84)
8. Robert Lovitz* (1979-81)
9. Kevin McGuire (1980-81, 1986-87)
10. Pamela Nyberg (1980-82)*
11. Lori Putnam (1980-81)
12. Brian Reddy (1980-82, 1985-86)
13. Jeffrey Michael Rubin*(1980-82)
14. Alan Silver (1980-81)
15. Laura Smyth (1980-81)*
16. Paul Walker (1980-82)
17. Michele-Denise Woods (1980-82)*

1981-82.
17 total; 7 Juilliard actors.

1. Casey Biggs (1980-82)*

2. Becky Borczon (1980-82)
3. Bonnie Bowers (1981-82)
4. Lynn Chausow (1980-83)*
5. Philip Goodwin (1981-83, 1984-87)
6. Barrett Heins (1981-82)
7. Richard S. Iglewski (1980-84)
8. Ronna Kress (1981-83)
9. Pamela Nyberg (1980-82)*
10. Patrick O'Connell (1981-82)*
11. Brian Reddy (1980-82, 1985-86)
12. Jeffrey Michael Rubin*(1980-82)
13. Ray Virta (1981-83)
14. Paul Walker (1980-82)
15. Pamela Tucker-White (1981-82)*
16. Daniel Virth (1981-82)
17. Michele-Denise Woods (1980-82)*

1982-83
15 total; 5 Juilliard actors.

1. Lynn Chausow (1980-83)*
2. Libby Colahan 1982-85)
3. Megan Gallagher (1982-83)*
4. Philip Goodwin (1981-83, 1984-87)
5. David O. Harum (1982-83)
6. Tom Hewitt (1982-83)
7. Richard S. Iglewski (1980-84)
8. Jack Kenny (1982-84)*
9. Ronna Kress (1981-83)
10. David Manis (1982-85)
11. Michael Manuelian (1982-84)
12. J. Andrew McGrath* (1982-83)
13. Margaret Reed (1982-83)
14. Jack Stehlin (1982-83)*
15. Ray Virta (1981-83)

1983-84
16 total; 4 Juilliard actors.

1. Laura Brutsman (1983-86)*
2. Jerome Butler (1983-84)*
3. Terrence Caza (1983-87)
4. Libby Colahan 1982-85)
5. Jacqueline DeHaviland (1983-84)
6. David Fuller (1983-84)
7. Richard S. Iglewski (1980-84)
8. Jack Kenny (1982-84)*
9. David Manis (1982-85)
10. Michael Manuelian (1982-84)
11. DeLane Matthews (1983-84)
12. Steven Mattila 1983-84)
13. Davenia McFadden (1983-84)
14. Phil Meyer (1983-86)
15. Anthony Powell (1983-86)
16. Gregory Welch 1983-84)*

1984-85
15 total; 5 Juilliard actors.

1. Laura Brutsman (1983-86)*
2. Terrence Caza (1983-87)
3. Libby Colahan 1982-85)
4. Aled Davies (1984-86)
5. Matt deGanon (1984-85)
6. Albert Farrar (1984-85)*
7. Susan Finch (1984-86)*
8. Julie Fishel (1984-85)
9. Philip Goodwin (1981-83, 1984-87)
10. David Manis (1982-85)
11. Phil Meyer (1983-86)
12. Joel F. Miller (1984-87)
13. Anthony Powell (1983-86)
14. Derek David Smith (1984-85)*
15. Ana Valdes (Ana Yen) (1984-85)*

1985-86
15 total; 3 Juilliard actors.

1. Wendy Brennan (1985-87)*
2. Laura Brutsman (1983-86)*
3. Craig Bryant (1985-87)
4. Terrence Caza (1983-87)
5. Aled Davies (1984-86)
6. Susan Finch (1984-86)*
7. Philip Goodwin (1981-83, 1984-87)
8. Kevin Jackson (1985-86)
9. Michael McKenzie (1985-87)
10. Phil Meyer (1983-86)
11. Joel F. Miller (1984-87)
12. Mark Moses (1985-86)
13. Mariangela Pino 1985-86)
14. Anthony Powell (1983-86)
15. Brian Reddy (1980-82, 1985-86)

1986-87
14 total; 5 Juilliard actors.

1. Wendy Brennan (1985-87)*
2. Craig Bryant (1985-87)
3. Terrence Caza (1983-87)
4. Constance Crawford (1986-88)*
5. Melissa Gallagher (1986-87)*
6. Philip Goodwin (1981-83, 1984-87)
7. Joe Houghton (1986-87)
8. Douglas Krizner (1986-89)
9. Kevin McGuire (1980-81, 1986-87)
10. Michael McKenzie (1985-87)
11. Joel F. Miller (1984-87)

12.Alison Stair Neet (1986-89)
13.Matt Bradford Sullivan (1986-87)*
14.Ralph Zito (1986-88)*

1987-88
15 total; 6 Juilliard actors.

1. Irwin Appel (1987-88)*
2. Oliver Barreiro (1987-88)*
3. Spencer Beckwith (1987-89)*
4. Constance Crawford (1986-88)*
5. Paul Hebron (1987-88)
6. Mark Kincaid (1987-88, 1989-91)
7. Douglas Krizner (1986-89)
8. Rene Laigo 1987-88)
9. Oni Faida Lampley (1987-88)
10.Peter Lewis (1987-88)
11.Alison Stair Neet (1986-89)
12.Peter Lewis (1987-88)
13.Jonathan Nichols (1987-88)*
14.Laura Perrota (1987-89)
15.Ralph Zito 1986-88*

1988-89
14 total; 6 Juilliard actors.

1. Spencer Beckwith (1987-89)*
2. Anthony Cummings (1988-89)*
3. Gayla Finer (1988-89)*
4. Larry Green (1988-89)*
5. John Greenleaf (1976-79, 1988-89)
6. Douglas Krizner (1986-89)
7. Michael MacCauley(1988-89)
8. Theresa McCarthy(1988-89)
9. Alison Stair Neet (1986-89)
10.Laura Perrota (1987-89)
11.Ken Sawyer (1988-89)*
12.Martha Thompson (1988-89)*
13.John Tillotson (1987-89)
14.Gregory Wallace (1988-89)

1989-90
17 total; 3 Juilliard actors.

1. Anthony M. Brown (1989-90)*
2. Geoffrey P. Cantor (1989-90)
3. Darryl Croxton (1989-90)
4. David DeBesse (1989-90)
5. Laurence Drozd (1989-91)
6. David Eichman (1990-91)
7. Mark Stewart Guin (1989-91)
8. Jeffrey Guyton (1989-91)
9. Trish Jenkins (1989-92)
10. Mark Kincaid (1987-88, 1989-91)
11. Diana LaMar (1989-91)

12. Jillian Lindig (1989-1990)
13. Lisa McMillan (1989-90)*
14. John Michalski (1973-74, 1989-91)*
15. William D. Michie (1989-91)
16. Andrew Prosky (1989-91)
17. Rainn Wilson (1990-92)

1990-91
17 total 1 Juilliard actor.

1. Dan Berkey (1990-91)
2. Ethan T. Bowen (1990-91)
3. Laurence Drozd (1989-91)
4. Matthew Edwards (1990-91)
5. David Eichman (1990-91)
6. Stephanie Erb (1990-91)
7. Ben Eric 1990-91)
8. Mark Stewart Guin (1989-91)
9. Jeffrey Guyton (1989-91)
10. Trish Jenkins (1989-92)
11. Mark Kincaid (1987-88, 1989-91)
12. Diana LaMar (1989-91)
13. John Michalski (1973-74, 1989-91)*
14. William D. Michie (1989-91)
15. Kathleen Mary Mulligan (1990-91)
16. Andrew Prosky (1989-91)
17. Rainn Wilson (1990-92)

APPENDIX C

THE ACTING COMPANY REPERTORY REVIEW

1972-73

Women Beware Women by Thomas Middleton,
directed by Michael Kahn
The Lower Depths by Maxim Gorky,
directed by Boris Tumarin
Ring Round the Moon by Jean Anouih,
directed by Stephen Aaron
Interview by Jean Claude Van Itallie,
directed by Gene Lesser
The Indian Wants the Bronx by Israel Horovitz,
directed by Gene Lesser
The School for Scandal by Richard Brinsley Sheridan,
directed by Gerald Freedman
The Hostage by Brendan Behan,
directed by Gene Lesser
U.S.A. by Paul Shyre and John Dos Passos,
directed by Anne McNaughton

1973-74

Next Time I'll Sing to You by James Saundrers,
directed by Marian Seldes
Measure for Measure by William Shakespeare,
directed by John Houseman
The Three Sisters by Anton Chekhov,
directed by Boris Tumarin
The Beggar's Opera by John Gay,
directed by Gene Lesser
The Knack by Ann Jellicoe,
directed by Garland Wright
Scapin by Moliere,
directed by Pierre Lèfevre
The Bear by Anton Chekhov,
directed by Boris Tumarin
the Diary of Adam and Eve from the Apple Tree
by Jerry Bock and Sheldon Harnick,
directed by Gerald Gutierrez

1974-75

Edward II by Christopher Marlowe,
directed by Ellis Rabb
The Time of Your Life by William Saroyan,
directed by Jack O'Brien
Love's Labour's Lost by William Shakespeare,
directed by Gerald Freedman

1975-76

She Stoops to Conquer by Oliver Goldsmith,
directed by Stephen Porter
Arms and the Man by George Bernard Shaw,
directed by Edward Payson Call
The Robber Bridegroom by Alfred Uhry and Robert Waldman,
directed by Gerald Freedman
The Taming of the Shrew by William Shakespeare,
directed by Gerald Gutierrez

1976-77

The Way of the World by William Congreve,
directed by Norman Ayrton
The Kitchen by Arnold Wesker,
directed by Boris Tumarin
Camino Real by Tennessee Williams,
directed by Gerald Freedman
Duck Variations David Mamet
directed by Gerald Gutierrez

1977-78

King Lear by William Shakespeare,
directed by John Houseman
Mother Courage and Her Children by Bertold Brecht,
directed by Alan Schneider
Chapeau by Alfred Uhry and Robert Waldman,
directed by Gerald Freedman

1978-79

Antigone by Jean Anouilh,
directed by Alan Schneider
Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare
directed by Nagle Jackson
A Voice of My Own by Elinor Jones,
directed by Amy Saltz
Broadway by George Abott and Philip Dunning,
directed by Gerald Gutierrez

1979-80

The White Devil by John Webster,
directed by Michael Kahn
Domino Courts by William Hauptman,
directed by Richard Hamborger
Split by Michael Weller,
directed by Jonathan Furst
Elizabeth I by Paul Foster,
directed by Liviu Ciulei

1980-81

A Midsummer Night's Dream by William Shakespeare,
directed by David Chambers and Christopher M. Markle.
Waiting for Godot by Samuel Beckett,
directed by Alan Schneider.
Ill Campiello, A Venetian Comedy by Carlo Goldoni,
directed by Liviu Ciulei.

1981-82

The Country Wife by William Wycherley,
directed by Garland Wright.
Twelfth Night by William Shakespeare,
directed by Michael Langham.

1982-83

Tartuffe by Moliere,
directed by Brian Murray.
Pericles by William Shakespeare,
directed by Toby Robertson.
Play and Other Plays by Samuel Beckett,
directed by Alan Schneider.
**The Cradle Will Rock* by Marc Blitzstein,
directed by John Houseman.

1983-84

The Cradle Will Rock by Marc Blitzstein,
directed by John Houseman and Christopher J. Markle.
The Merry Wives of Windsor by William Shakespeare,
directed by Michael Kahn.
Pieces of 8, eight contemporary one-act plays,
directed by Alan Schneider.

1984-85

The Skin of Our Teeth by Thornton Wilder,
directed by Gerald Freedman.
A New Way To Pay Old Debts by Philip Massinger,
directed by Michael Kahn.
As You Like It by William Shakespeare,
directed by Mervyn Willis.

1985-86

Orchards: Seven American Playwrights Present Stories by Chekhov,
directed by Robert Falls.
**Ten by Tennessee, a retrospective of one-act plays by Tennessee Williams,*
directed by Michael Kahn.

1986-87

Much Ado About Nothing by William Shakespeare,
directed by Gerald Gutierrez.
The Gilded Age by Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner,
adapted by Constance Congton,
directed by Mark Lamos.
Orchards: Seven American Playwrights Present Stories by Chekhov,
directed by Robert Falls.
**On The Verge or The Geography of Yearning* by Eric Overmyer.
directed by Garland Wright.

1987-88

Five by Tenn, a retrospective of one-act plays by Tennessee Williams,
directed by Michael Kahn.
Kabuki Macbeth by Karen Sunde,
directed by Shozo Sato.
**The Witch of Edmonton* by Thomas Dekker, John Ford and William Rowley,
directed by Barry Kyle.

1988-89

Love's Labour's Lost by William Shakespeare,
directed by Paul Giovanni.
Boy Meets Girl by Bella and Samuel Spewack,
directed by Brian Murray.
The Phantom Tollbooth by Susan Nanus, based upon the book by Norton Juster,
directed by Jennifer McCray.

1989-90

Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare,
directed by Leon Rubin.
The Two Gentlemen of Verona by William Shakespeare,
directed by Charles Newell.

APPENDIX D

EXEMPLARY REHEARSAL SCHEDULE

420 West 42nd Street
Times Square Station
PO Box 898
New York, New York 10108

THE ACTING COMPANY

America's Touring Classical Repertory Ensemble
Founded in 1972 by Margot Harley and John Houseman
[illegible] Group/Acting Co., Inc., A Non-Profit Organization

Telephone: (212) 564-3510
Fax: (212) 714-2643

Margot Harley
Executive Producer

ROMEO AND JULIET

REHEARSAL SCHEDULE FOR THURSDAY 3/8

10	III,5
11:15	IV, 1
11:45	IV, 2
12:05	IV,3
12:30	IV,4
12:45	IV, 5
1:30	Jillian to wig fitting 3rd Fl Office
1:30	Break
2	David DeBesse wig fitting 3rd Fl Office
2:30	Run Act III, thru End of Act IV
3:30	Lisa to wig fitting 3rd Fl Office
3:30	V, 1&2
3:30	Trish Jenkins to Costume Fitting @ 890 Broadway
4	V,3
5-7	Waltz/Dance

Tony, Bill, Lisa, Larry, Diana, Mark Guin, Trish J, Trish F, Mark K, David D, John M., Geof, Jeff

APPENDIX E

WHERE ARE THEY NOW ?

The Acting Company News

The Acting Company's mission is to develop American actors capable of performing the world's important and enduring plays, and to develop a national audience for classical repertory.

Group I Acting Company, Inc. **June, 1992**

Where Are They Now?

Wondering where they are now? Here's an update on some of The Acting Company's former touring members.

Brooks Baldwin was the dialect coach for Oliver Stone's controversial film *JFK* and for the Broadway revival of *A Streetcar Named Desire*. **Casey Biggs** was in the recent Arena Stage productions of *The Time of Your Life* and the musical *It's a Wonderful Life*. **Pamela Nyberg** played Kitty to Casey's Joe in *Time* and she now has a major role in Nicholas Wright's *Mrs. Klein* at Arena (under Zelda's direction). **Dennis Boutsikaris** is receiving rave reviews for his performance in The Manhattan Theatre Club's production of *Sight Unseen*. **Duane Boutte** is in the new musical *Riverview* at the Goodman Theater in Chicago. **Michael Butler** and **Frances Conroy** were in the Tony nominated Broadway production of **Richard Nelson's** *Two Shakespearean Actors*, directed by Jack O'Brien. Jack was Associate Artistic Director of The Acting Company during the Company's formative years and Richard wrote the translation of Goldoni's play *Il Campiello* which the Company mounted during its 1980-81 season. **Terry Caza**, specializing in the works of A.R. Gurney of late, most recently appeared in Hartford Stage's production of *The Snowball* and Stage West's production of *The Cocktail Hour*. **Anthony Cummings** and **Matthew Kimbrough** are both in the new musical version of *Gilligan's Island* at the Flat Rock Playhouse in North Carolina. Matt was also in the Pulitzer Prize winning play, *The Kentucky Cycle* at the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles.

Keith David was nominated for a Tony for his performance in the new Broadway musical *Jelly's Last Jam*. **Melissa Gallagher**, **Bellina Logan** and **Matt Bradford Sullivan** are all in *As You Like It*, a Shakespeare Theatre "Free for All" production in Carter Barron Park in D.C. **Libby George** is just back from Utah where she appeared in the Pioneer Theatre Company production of *Lettice and Lovage*. **Philip Goodwin** continues his association with The Shakespeare Theatre in Washington. His most recent assignment in D.C. is to play Angelo in *Measure for Measure*. **Gerald Gutierrez's** production of *The Most Happy Fella* has been nominated for a Tony in the best revival category. **Harriet Harris** is in the new Keith Reddin play, *The Innocents' Crusade*, at the Manhattan Theatre Club. **Tom Hewitt** is in the hit off-Broadway comedy *Beau Jest* at the Lambs Theatre. **Pat Hodges** is now in the Broadway production of Brian Friel's *Dancing at Lughnasa*. **James Houghton** (now known as Joe) is the Artistic Director of the

(continued on back page)

(continued from Page 6)

Signature Theatre Company in New York where he recently co-directed *Ambrosio* with playwright Romulus Linney. Richard Howard continues to work at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival where he is currently cast in *La Bete* and *Ladies of the Camillias*.

Kevin Kline and Randle Mell are both in Lawrence Kasdan's film *Grand Canyon*. Kevin McGuire just hit the road to play the leading role in the national tour of the musical *The Secret Garden*. John Michalski is back on the road as well, as is Ray Virta, both in a tour of *M. Butterfly*. Joel Miller can be seen in a featured role in a recent episode of CBS's hit T.V. series *Murphy Brown*. Charlie Newell is the recipient of the 1992 Alan Schneider Director Award which was sponsored by Theatre Communications Group and the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers. John Rando is directing *Romeo and Juliet* in San Antonio. Among his cast are recent Acting Company members Lisa Benavides, Matt Edwards and Mark Stewart Guin.

Brian Reddy was in the National Actors Theatre productions of *The Crucible* and *A Little Hotel on the Side*. Mary Lou Rosato has just finished a run of *Triumph of Love* at the McCarter Theatre in Princeton. David Schramm is currently featured in the Cleveland Play House production of *Man of the Moment*. If you are in the Boston area you might catch Derek David Smith in A.R.T.'s production of *Misalliance*. Norman Snow can be seen in the Mark Taper Forum's current production of *Richard II*. Finally, Paul Walker directed a production of *Life and Limb* for the Graduate Acting Program at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts.

These are just the tip of the iceberg. As usual, Acting Company members are appearing on stages and screens across the country.

Group I Acting Company, Inc.
THE ACTING COMPANY
P.O. Box 898
Times Square Station
New York, N.Y. 10108

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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MEMBERS OF THE ACTING COMPANY'S TOURING ENSEMBLE IN THE PERIOD OF 1980-90

The following list, courtesy The Acting Company, includes only those actors whose recent work is known to TAC's management and represents only credits earned after touring with TAC. Asterisk indicates current or most recent employment (as of 12/10/91).

Irwin Appel (1987-88): *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Hartford Stage); *Romeo and Juliet* (Theatre for a New Audience at the Victory Theatre)*

Lisa Banes (1979-80): *Look Back in Anger* (Roundabout; *The Admirable Crichton* (Long Wharf); Regan in *King Lear* and Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing* (Old Globe Theatre, San Diego); *Mellon* (PBS); Obie Award for *My Sister in This House* (Second Stage); Title role in Joseph Chaiken's *Antigone* (New York Shakespeare Festival Public Theatre); *The Three Sisters* Manhattan Theatre Club); *The Hotel New Hampshire* (Orion Pictures); *The Cradle Will Rock* (The Acting Company National Ensemble production off-Broadway at American Place and Douglas Fairbanks); *Search for Tomorrow* (NBC); *Isn't It Romantic* (Playwrights Horizons and Lucille Lortel Theatre); *Marie* (Dino De Laurentis Film, MGM) *Kane and Abel* (CBS Miniseries); *Ten By Tennessee* (The Acting Company National Ensemble production, Lucille Lortel Theatre); *The Equalizer* (CBS); *Police Plaza* (CBS-TV Movie); *Progress*, directed by John Tillinger (Long Wharf); Mary in *On The Verge* (The Acting Company National Ensemble at the John Houseman Theatre); Martha Gelhorne in the TV Mini-Series, *Hemingway*; *Cocktail* with Tom Cruise (Disney); Title role in *Emily* (Manhattan Theatre Club); *Rumors* (Broadway); guest appearances on *China Beach* (ABC); and *Life Goes On* (ABC); *The Trials of Rosie O'Neill* (CBS-TV Series)*; *Julius Caesar* (Mark Taper Forum)

Casey Biggs (1980-82): *Desperate Acts* (No Smoking Playhouse); *Mass Appeal* (Arizona Theatre Company); *The Cradle Will Rock* (The Acting Company National Ensemble, NYC and at the Old Vic, London); Stanley Kowalski in *A Streetcar Named Desire* and title role in *Billy Bishop Goes to War* (Arizona Theatre Company); *Happy End* (Arena Stage); *Issue? I don't Even Know You!* (The Acting Company National Ensemble Cabaret at Playwrights Horizons and The Ballroom); *Execution of Justice* (Arena Stage); As a member of Dear Knows Company: *Dubliners* 1985-86 season at Arena Stage: *Women in Water, Restoration, The Philadelphia Story, Bette and Boo* and played Petruccio in *The Taming of the Shrew; Exception and the Rule* (Lincoln Center Theatre Company); *Alamo - The Price of Freedom* (film); Jack Burton in *All the Kings Men* (Arena Stage); title role in *Elmer Gantry* (Ford Theatre); *Ryan's Hope* (ABC daytime serial); *Appearances* (NBC Movie); *Cross Hairs of Hate* (NBC Movie), *STAT* (ABC-TV series); *Julius Caesar* (Mark Taper Forum); It's a *Wonderful Life* and *The Time of your Life* (Arena Stage)*

Becky Borczon (1980-82): *Medea* (Cincinnati Playhouse-in-the-Park); Quilters (Arizona Theatre Company); *Issue? I Don't Even Know You! (*The Acting Company National Ensemble Cabaret at Playwrights Horizons and The Ballroom, NYC); Member, Dear Knows Company; Understudy for all female roles in *On the Verge* The Acting Company National Ensemble at the John Houseman Theatre); *Dubliners* (Home for Contemporary Theatre and Art); *No One Dances* (Home for Contemporary Theatre and Art); *Love Lemmings* (Village Gate); *A Little Night Music* (New York City Opera); *Law and Order* (NBC-TV Series)*

Laura Brutsman (1983-86): *General Hospital* (ABC-TV); *The Witch of Edmonton* (Shakespeare Theatre at the Folger); *Without Apologies* (Hudson Guild);

Michael Butler (1979-80)* Christiane in *Cyrano de Bergerac* (Alley Theatre); *The Seagull* (The New York Shakespeare Festival Public Theatre); 1980-81 season at Arena Stage; title role in *Candide* (Guthrie Theatre); Ferdinand in *The Tempest* (Denver Center); Bob Dylan in *Jazz Poets at the Grotto* (The Production Company); Joe in *Winners* and He in *How He Lied to her Husband* (Roundabout); *Twist and Shout* (Actors Studio); composed and performed *It's Still Life* (Whitney Museum and Actors Studio); *Twist and Shout* (Odyssey Theatre, Los Angeles); *Five by Tenn* (Acting Company International tour); *Two Shakespearean Actors* (Lincoln Center Theatre)*

Johann Carlo (1980-81): Season at Guthrie Theatre: *Candide, As You Like it; Plenty* (New York Shakespeare Festival Public Theatre and Broadway); Title role in Nadia (TV film); *Cinders* (New York Shakespeare Festival Public Theatre); *Twist and Shout* (Actors Studio); *Rich Relations* (Second Stage); *Crime Story* (NBC); conceived and performed *It's Still Life* (Whitney Museum and Actors Studio); *Pee Wee's Playhouse* (TV); *Twist and Shout* (Odyssey Theatre, Los Angeles); *Reversal of Fortune* (Warner Bros. film); *La Bete* (Broadway- Eugene O'Neill Theatre)*

Terrence Caza (1983-87): *The Bacchae* (Guthrie Theatre); *Coriolanus* (McCarter Theatre); Taught North Carolina School of the Arts Audition Workshop; Gig Hollis in *Wall of Water* (Yale Repertory Theatre); Frederico in *Saturday, Sunday, Monday* by Eduardo de Filipo (Huntington Theatre, Boston); Count Almaviva in *The Marriage of Figaro* (Playmaker's Rep); Don Carlos in *Don Juan* (Huntigton Theatre, Boston); *For Sale or Lease* (Playmaker's Rep); *Peer Gynt* (Hartford Stage Company); *Hyde Park* (Huntigton Theatre, Boston); *The Cocktail Hour* (Arizona Theatre Company); *The Snowball* (Hartford Stage Company)*

Lynn Chausow (1980-83): *Agnes of God* (Bus and Truck company); *Jacque and his Master* (American Repertory Theatre); *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Guthrie Theatre and Pepsico Summerfare); *Tiger's Wild* (Playhouse 91, off-Broadway); John Ford Noonan's *Mom Sells Twins for Two Beers* (West Bank Cafe); Helena in *All's Well That Ends Well* (Shakespeare theatre at the Folger);

Constance Crawford (1986-88): *Orpheus Descending* (Broadway)*

Anthony Cummings (1988-89): *Peccadillo* (GeVa Theatre); *Eleanor* and *I DO I DO!* (Pittsburgh Public Theatre)*

Keith David (1980-81): Understudied Earle Hyman in *The Lady from Dubuque* (Broadway); Understudied Raul Julia in *Othello* (New York Shakespeare Festival Central Park); *The Thing*(Universal Film); *Mahalia*, a musical about the life of Mahalia Jackson (Boston and Hartman Theatre); Alec Wilder's musical *Clues From a Life* (Vineyard Theatre); Oberon in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and Squire Allworthy in a musical version of *Tom Jones* (Pittsburgh Public Theatre); *Map of the World* (New York Shakespeare Festival Public Theatre); *Platoon*(Orion Pictures); *Stars and Bars* (Columbia Pictures); Oberon in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, (San Diego Rep); *They Live* (Universal); *Coriolanus* (New York Shakespeare Festival Public Theatre); *Titus Andronicus* (New York Shakespeare Festival Central Park); *Jelly's Last Jam* (Mark Taper Forum and Broadway)*

Albert Farrar (1984-85): *Coriolanus* (New York Shakespeare Festival Public Theatre)*

Gayla Finer (1988-89): *Ellison and Eden* (A Voice in a Well Ensemble); *Othello* and *Fuente Ovejuna* (Shakespeare Theatre at the Folger)*

Julie Fishel 1984-85: *The Rainmaker* (Virginia Stage)*

David Fuller (1983-84): Orsino in *Twelfth Night* (Alaska Rep); Gentleman Caller in *The Glass Menagerie* (Virginia Stage Company); Sergius in *Arms and the Man* and Reverend David in *The Foreigner* (Theatre Virginia); *The Normal Heart* (Walnut Street Theatre)

Megan Gallagher (1982-83): *Hill Street Blues* (NBC); *The Slap Maxwell Story* (ABC); *China Beach* (ABC); *A Few Good Men* (Broadway); *Troubleshooter* (NBC-TV Movie)*

Melissa Gallagher (1986-87): *The Witch of Edmonton* (Shakespeare Theatre at the Folger); *As You Like It* (Shakespeare Theatre at the Folger); *Jane Eyre* (GeVa Theatre)*

Libby George (1982-85): *The Skin Of Our Teeth* and Dorine in *Tartuffe* (Great Lakes Shakespeare Festival); Betty in *Miss Julie Bodiford* (Repertory Theatre of St. Louis); Bobbie Beeler in *The Feud* (Independent Film); *Equus* (GeVa Theatre); Blood Wedding (Coconut Grove Playhouse); *Richard III* (Riverside Shakespeare); *Twelfth Night* (Center Stage); *Mistress Quickly* in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (Shakespeare Theatre at the Folger)*

Philip Goodwin (1981-83, 1984-87): *The Witch of Edmonton* and title role in *Macbeth* (Shakespeare theatre at the Folger); *Peer Gynt* (Hartford Stage Company); *Twelfth Night* (Shakespeare Theatre at the Folger); *The Illusion* (Hartford Stage Company); *Hamlet* (New

Buckinghamshire (New York Theatre Workshop); *King Lear* and Dauphin in *Saint Joan* (Shakespeare Theatre at the Folger)*

Larry Green (1988-89): *Black Eagles* (Crossroads Theatre); *Hamlet* New York Shakespeare Festival Public Theatre)*

John Greenleaf (1976-79, 1988-89): *Charley's Aunt* (Victory Theatre Association); *Comedy of Errors, Henry IV, Titus Andronicus, Henry V, Nicholas Nickleby* (Great Lakes Shakespeare Company); *As You Like It, Nicholas Nickleby,* (Cleveland Playhouse); *Playboy of the Western World* (PBS/WVIZ); *Ballerina* (North Light Repertory); Mike in *A Moon For the Misbegotten* (Steppenwolf Theatre); Assistant Director of *A Midsummer Night's Dream,* (Steppenwolf Theatre); Bert Cates in *Inherit the Wind* (GeVa Theatre)

Gerald Gutierrez (1972-76): directed *A Life in the Theatre* (Off-Broadway and PBS); directed *She Loves Me, The Rise And Rise of Daniel Rocket* and *Geniuses* (Playwrights Horizons); directed *The Curse Of An Aching Heart* (St. Nicholas Theatre and Broadway); Resident director (Playwrights Horizons); appeared in *The Cradle Will Rock* (The Acting Company National Ensemble, NYC); directed *Fiorello!* (Goodspeed Opera House); directed *Terra Nova* (Old Globe, San Diego and Playwrights Horizons at American Place Theatre); directed Wendy Wasserstein's *Isn't it Romantic* (Playwrights Horizons, Lucille Lortel, Los Angeles and Chicago); directed *The Fourposter* with Tovah Feldshuh (Chataugua Institution); directed *Much Ado About Nothing* (The Acting Company); *Lucky Guy* (Plaza Theatre, Dallas); directed 1-2-3-4-5 Workshop and *Emily* (Manhattan Theatre Club); directed mainstage production of 1-2-3-4-5 (Manhattan Theatre Club); *Hyde in Hollywood* (Playwrights Horizons); directed *Carousel* (Houston Grand Opera); directed *The Most Happy Fella* (Goodspeed Opera House and Broadway revival)*

Jeffrey Guyton (1989-91): *Amadeus* (Delaware Theatre Company); Dromio in *The Comedy of Errors* (Theatre for a New Audience)*

Harriet Harris (1977-80): *Buried Child* (Dayton, Ohio); *To Grandmother's House We Go* with Eva LeGalienne (Tour); The *Greeks* (Seattle Rep); Audrey in *Christmas on Mars* (Playwrights Horizons); Lydia Languish in *The Rivals* (Michigan Ensemble Theatre); Lady Macduff in *Macbeth* (Ark Theatre); Elmire in *Tartuffe* (Guthrie Theatre); *Issue? I don't Even Know You!* (The Acting Company National Ensemble Cabaret at Playwrights Horizons and The Ballroom, NYC); Elmire in *Tartuffe* and Ann Whitefield in *Man and Superman* (Arena Stage); *Cyrano de Bergerac* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Guthrie Theatre); Ophelia in *Hamlet* (New York Shakespeare Festival Public Theatre); 1986-87 Season at (American Repertory Theatre); title role in *Hedda Gabler* (Great Lakes Shakespeare Festival); Violet Robinson in *Man and Superman* (Roundabout); Calpurnia in *Julius Caesar* (New York Shakespeare Festival Public Theatre); *The Grace of Mary Travers* (L.A. Theatreworks); *A Flea in her Ear* (Long Wharf); Lady Macduff in *Macbeth* (New York Shakespeare Festival Public Theatre); *The Crucible* (Roundabout); *Hedda Gabler* (Phoenix Theatre); *Five By Tenn* (The Acting Company International Tour)*

David O. Harum (1982-83) *Bert and Maisy* (Old Globe, San Diego); American Premiere of Tom Stoppard's *Rough Crossing* (Alabama Shakespeare Festival); 1988-89 season at (Alabama Shakespeare Festival)*

Barrett Heins (1981-82): *Growing Pains* (Harold Clurman Theatre); Understudy in *Good* (Broadway); The Nephew in The *Sunshine Boys* with Lou Jacobi and Eddie Bracken; Sgt. Wiseman in *Another World* (NBC); Lyle Connors in *One Life to Live* (ABC); Mel Gibbons in *Another World* (NBC); *The Power and the Glory* (Philadelphia Drama Guild); Dialect Coach for *Home Front* (Broadway); Voice and Speech Faculty, SUNY at Purchase; Billing in *An Enemy of the People* (Roundabout); *Brass* (CBS-TV Pilot); *Classified Love* (CBS Movie); *Baby Boom* (United Artists)

Tom Hewitt (1982-83): 1983-84 season at Arena Stage, including Jack Tanner in *Man and Superman; Gigi* (National Tour); *Execution of Justice* (Arena Stage); 1985-86 season at Arena Stage, including *Women in Water, Restoration, The Philadelphia Story, The Taming of the Shrew;* Razumikhin in *Crime and Punishment* (Arena Stage); 1987-88 and 1988-89 seasons at Arena Stage, including the title role in Tadashi Suzuki's *Tale of Lear,* the twins in *Ring Around the Moon,* and *Chorus of Disapproval; Life is a Dream ((*American Repertory Theatre); *The Man Who Came To Dinner* and *Merrily We Roll Along* (Arena Stage)

Laura Hicks (1979-80): company member of The Actors Theatre of Louisville for two years; *Talking With* (Manhattan Theatre Club); *Screenplay* (Arena Stage); *The Cradle Will Rock* (The Acting Company National Ensemble); *Paducah* (American Place Theatre); Ten *by Tennessee* (The Acting Company New York Ensemble Production, Lucille Lortel Theatre); Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet* ((Shakespeare Theatre at the Folger); Obie Award for her performance as Alex in *On The Verge* (The Acting Company National Ensemble at the John Houseman Theatre); *Vienna Lusthous* (Venice and Vienna); Understudy, *The Heidi Chronicles* (Playwrights Horizons and Broadway)

Joe Houghton (1986-87): Romulus Linney's *Heathen Valley* (Theatre for the New City)*

Richard Howard (1980-81): J.W. Smith in *Private History of a Campaign that Failed* (PBS); George in *Our Town, As You Like It, Room Service, The Marriage of Figaro, A Christmas Carol* (Guthrie Theatre); *The Dining Room, A Streetcar Named Desire, Our Town, The Taming of the Shrew,* Arizona Shakespeare Company); Studio Cameraman for KCTA Minneapolis pledge drive; Fedotik in *Three Sisters,* Antonio in *Twelfth Night* Peter Quince in *A Midsummer Night's Dream,* Lignere in *Cyrano de Bergerac,* Lexy in *Candide, Execution of Justice,* (Guthrie Theatre); *Execution of Justice,* (Broadway); *Ten by Tennessee* (The Acting Company New York Ensemble Production, Lucille Lortel Theatre); *A Midsummer Night's Dream,* (Pepsico Summerfare); 1987- and 1988 season at Oregon Shakespeare Festival, including: Wesley in *The Curse of the*

Starving Class, Malcolm in *Macbeth, Richard II, Shoemaker's Holiday**

Richard S. Iglewski (1980-84): Sebastian in *The Tempest* (Arena Stage); *A Christmas Carol* and *The Imaginary Invalid* (Guthrie Theatre); member of acting ensemble at the Guthrie Theatre, roles played there include Buckingham in *Richard III* and Polonius in *Hamlet**

Kevin Jackson (1985-86): Understudy for Cory in *Fences* (Broadway); *Spunk* (Public Theatre)*

Jack Kenny (1982-84): *The Taming of the Shrew* (Huntigton Theatre); *Between Friends* (Independent Film); *Issue? I don't Even Know You! (*The Acting Company National Ensemble Cabaret at Playwrights Horizons and The Ballroom); Rinkin in *Papushko* (Colonnades Theatre); *The Cradle Will Rock* (The Acting Company National Ensemble at The Old Vic, London); *Normal Heart* and *Rum and Coke* (New York Shakespeare Festival Public Theatre); taught voice and speech (Playwrights Horizons Theatre School); writer for Children's Theatre Workshop; Naphtali, Getzel and Chaiken in *The Rise of David Levinsky* (George Street Playhouse); James Taxi in the premiere of *In a Pig's Valise* by Eric Overmyer (Center Stage); *Master Jacques* in *The Miser* Lincoln Center Institute); *The Rise of David Levinsky* (John Houseman Theatre); understudy for male roles in *On The Verge* (The Acting Company NY Ensemble at the John Houseman Theatre; On *The Verge* (Syracuse Stage); *A Quiet End* (St. Louis Rep); *Miami Vice* (NBC-TV); *The Taming of The Shrew* (Theatre for a New Audience); *Emily* (Manhattan Theatre Club); Silas Slick in *Naughty Marrietta* (New York City Opera); *News from St. Petersburg, Pillow Talk* and *Seeing Someone* Manhattan Class company One-Act Play Festival); *Cafe Crown* (New York Shakespeare Festival Public Theatre and Broadway); *Fiddler on the Roof* (Broadway and national Tour); Sibs (TV series)*

Matthew Kimbrough (1987-80):*Buried Child* (North Light Repertory); Fiorello! (Spectrum Theatre, Chicago); *Terra Nova, She Stoops To Conquer, A History of The American Film, The Royal Family, Black Coffee, The Lion In Winter, I'm Not Rappaport* (GeVa Company); *Eddie Macon's Run* (Universal Film); Mitch in *A Streetcar Named Desire,* (Stage West); Rufus Buck in *Shot Through the Heart,* a new musical by Paul Giovanni, (Birmingham, MI); Patrolman Feeney in *Detective Story* Ahmanson Theatre); *Desire Under the Elms* (Hartford Stage); *Great Expectations* (Guthrie National Tour); *Dames at Sea* (Pennsylvania Stage Company); Lenny in *Of Mice and Men* (Syracuse Stage and National Tour); *Biloxi Blues* (film); *Loving* (ABC-TV); *Revelations in the Courthouse Park* and Casino Paradise (world premiere at American Musical Theatre Festival); *Hard Times* (Portland Stage); *Fletch Lives* (Universal Film); Big Mac in *On the Waterfront* (stage premiere at Cleveland Play House); *Juan Darien* (Music Theatre Group); *Jane Eyre* and *Man of La Mancha* (GeVa Theatre)*

Mark Kincaid (1987-88, 1989-91): *Southern Cross* (Alliance Theatre Company)*

Ronna Kress (1981-83): Carter in Wendy Wasserstein's *Uncommon Women and Others* (Huntigton Theatre Company, Boston); *Rounding the Corner* (Colorado Actors Theatre); *In The Off Season* (film); Member, Dear Knows Company; Moth in *Love's Labour's Lost* (Shakespeare Theatre at the Folger); *Dubliners* and *No One Dances* (Home for Contemporary Theatre and Art); *Junglebird* (Red Moon Ensemble)*

Douglas Krizner (1986-89): *Oh, Pioneer* (Huntigton Theatre, Boston and American Playhouse)*

Diana LaMar (1989-91): Constanze in *Amadeus* (Delaware Theatre Company)*

Oni Faida Lampley (1987-88): *The Wall Inside* (Open Eye Theatre)*

Bellina Logan (1990-91): The Acting Company National Ensemble International tour to the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe; *Law and Order* (NBC-TV Series)*

David Manis (1982-85): Malvolio in *Twelfth Night, The Skin of Our Teeth,* M. Loyale in *Tartuffe,* Baron Deible in *The Game of Love* (Great Lakes Shakespeare Festival); *And They Dance Real Slow in Jackson; Tenn by Tennessee* The Acting Company NY Ensemble Production, Lucille Lortel Theatre); Aubrey Piper in *The Show-Off* and the Porter in *Macbeth* (Great Lakes Shakespeare Festival); Autolycus in *The Winter's Tale* (Shakespeare Theatre at the Folger); *Three Guys Naked From The Waist Down* (Wilma Theatre); Company Member, 1987-88 Season, Actors Theatre of Louisville; Actors Theatre of Louisville tour to Poland; *Voice of the Prairie* (Alley Theatre); *The Broken Pitcher* and *The Increased Difficulty of Concentration* (Center Stage); *Mother Courage* (Williamstown); Co-Author and Performer of *White Whines* (San Diego Rep Cabaret); *Rough Crossings* (New Theatre of Brooklyn); *As You Like It* (Actors Theatre of Louisville); *Merry Wives of Windsor* (Shakespeare Theatre at the Folger)*

Davenia McFadden (1983-84): *Destroyer* (film); *Key Exchange* (film); *Private Sessions* (CBS-TV Movie)

Kevin McGuire (1980-81, 1986-87): *Sunday in the Park with George* (Theatre Factory of St. Louis); *Midnight Caller* (NBC-TV Series); *Les Miserables* (National Tour and Broadway*

Michael McKenzie (1985-87): Morris Townsend in *The Heiress* and Gar Public in *Philadelphia Here I Come* (Asolo Theatre); *Junglebird* (Red Moon Ensemble); *Eastern Standard* (Broadway)*

Randle Mell (1978-1980): *Arms and the Man* (Carnegie-Mellon); Member of the B.A.M. Repertory Company; performance at Seattle Repertory; member of The Actors Theatre of Louisville; toured with new plays in Budapest, Hungary for The Actors Theatre of Louisville; a *Weekend Near Madison* (New Play Festival, Actors Theatre of Louisville and off-Broadway); Drama Desk nominee for *The Cradle Will Rock* (The Acting Company National Ensemble, NYC and at the Old Vic, London); *The Three Sisters* (Guthrie Theatre); Al Capone

in *America's Sweetheart* (Chicago Workshop Production); *Noises Off* (Broadway); Rosencrantz in *Hamlet* New York Shakespeare Festival Public Theatre); *Tenn by Tennessee* The Acting Company NY Ensemble Production, Lucille Lortel Theatre); Roskolnikov in Yuri Lyubimov's production of *Crime and Punishment* (Arena Stage); *Macbeth* (Broadway); Bobby Kennedy in *The Fitzgeralds and the Kennedys* (ABC); *Macbeth* (La Lajolla Playhouse); *Oh Pioneer* (Seattle Rep, (Huntigton Theatre and American Playhouse); *The Crucible* Roundabout); *The Equalizer* (CBS-TV Series); *Separate but Equal* (TV Movie); *Stranger in the Family* (ABC-TV Movie)*

John Michalski (1973-74, 1989-91): *Gorey Stories* (Broadway); Theatre Of The Living Eye; *Playing with Fire* (Roundabout); Victor in *Private Lives*, Rhode in *Towards Zero* (Woodstock Playhouse); George Tesman in *Hedda Gabler* (Barter Theatre); *The Rivals* (Manhattan Punchline); *The Dining Room* (Virginia); *M Butterfly* (National Tour)*

Joel F. Miller (1984-87): The *Witch of Edmonton* (Shakespeare Theatre at the Folger); *The Taming of the Shrew* (Theatre for a new Audience); *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Hartford Stage); *Macbeth* (CSC Repertory); *Temptation* and *Up Against It* (New York Shakespeare Festival Public Theatre)*

Alison Stair Neet (1986-89): *New Anatomies* (Home Theatre)*

Jonathan Nichols (1987-88): *Measure for Measure* (Lincoln Center Theatre Company)*

Pamela Nyberg (1980-82): *The Dining Room* (Goodman Theatre); Bianca in *The Taming of the Shrew* and Emily in *Our Town* (Arizona Theatre Company); *Twelfth Night* (Guthrie Theatre); Understudy for female roles in *Tenn by Tennessee* (The Acting Company NY Ensemble Production, Lucille Lortel Theatre); Rosaline in *Love's Labour's Lost* and Hermione/Perdita in *The Winter's Tale* (Shakespeare Theatre at the Folger); *A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Man Who Came to Dinner, A Doll House, The Seagull, The Time of your Life* (Arena Stage)*

Patrick O'Connell (1981-82): *Amadeus* (Broadway and First National Tour); *Der Inka von Peru* (Performing Garage); Title role in Oedipus (NYU); Standby for Peter and Stuart in *Common Pursuit* (Promenade, off-Broadway); Roper in *A Man for all Seasons* (Roundabout); *Murder on the Nile* (The Actors Theatre of Louisville); Peter in *Common Pursuit* (Promenade NYC); *A Thousand Airplanes on the Roof* (Beacon Theatre Philadelphia); *The Guiding Light* (CBS)*

Richard Ooms (1972-80): ten seasons with the Guthrie Theatre, credits as a company member in Minneapolis include *Room Service, Heartbreak Hotel, Threepenny Opera, Guys and Dolls, The Importance of Being Earnest,* Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol, Anything Goes* the Lawyer in *Great Expectations, Hang on to Me* (world premiere), *The Importance of Being Earnest,* (Guthrie National Tour), Archbishop of Canterbury in *Richard III*

Anthony Powell (1983-86): Benvolio in *Romeo and Juliet*, Florizel in *The Winter's Tale*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, and *The Witch of Edmonton* (Shakespeare Theatre at the Folger); title role in *Hamlet* (Great Lakes Shakespeare Festival)*

Lori Putnam (1980-81): *Movin' Right Along* (PBS); *The Firm* (NBC Pilot) *The Guiding Light* (CBS)

David Rainey (1988-89): *The Screens* (Guthrie Theatre)*

Brian Reddy (1980-82, 1985-86): Filmed *Annie's Day;* Queen of Hearts in *Alice in Wonderland* (Broadway); *The Cradle Will Rock* (The Acting Company National Ensemble, NYC); Frank in *All my Sons* (Pennsylvania Stage Company); *Another World* (NBC); *Twelfth Night* (Lincoln Center Theatre Institute, Triplex, NYC); *Romeo and Juliet*, *Mandragola*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *The Witch of Edmonton* (Shakespeare Theatre at the Folger); *The Alchemist* (Yale Repertory Theatre); *Irma Vep* (Georg Street Playhouse); *Southern Cross* (Alliance Theatre Company); *Othello* Classic Stage Company) *M. Butterfly* (National Tour); *What About Bob?* (Touchstone Pictures); National Actors Theatre member: *The Crucible*, *The Master Builder*, and *A Little Hotel on the Side* (Belasco Theatre - Broadway)*

Margaret Reed (1982-83): Ann in *All my Sons* (Pennsylvania Stage Company); *The Beckett Plays* (Clurman Theatre); Isabel in *The Mayor of Zelmea* (Shakespeare Theatre at the Folger); *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Walnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia); Shannon O'Hara in *As the World Turns* (CBS); producing and performing in *The Three Sisters* and *No Exit* (Broadway)*

Tom Robbins (1977-80) member of the McCarter Theatre Company, including roles in *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Moby Dick Rehearsed*, *A Christmas Carol;* member of The Paper Bag Players Company; *Times Like These* (Actors and Directors Lab); *The Rise and Rise of Daniel Rocket* (Playwrights Horizons); *On the Air* (Van Buren); *The Cradle Will Rock* (The Acting Company National Ensemble, American Place theatre Off-Broadway); *Isn't It Romantic* Playwrights Horizons and Lucille Lortel); Writer for *Issue? I don't Even Know You!* (The Acting Company National Ensemble Cabaret at Playwrights Horizons and The Ballroom); *America's Sweetheart* (Hartford Stage); *Fiorello!* (Goodspeed Opera House); *Just So* (Jack Lawrence theatre, NYC) Eugene in *Girl Crazy* (Seattle Rep); *Spencer for Hire* (ABC); *On The Verge* (The Acting Company National Ensemble at the John Houseman Theatre); 1987 summer season at O'Neill Center; The Innkeeper in *Les Miserables* National Tour; *Jerome Robbins' Broadway* (Broadway); *The Threepenny Opera* (Broadway); *Baby Talk* (ABC-TV Series)*

Ken Sawyer (1988-89): *Ellison and Eden* (Voice in the Well Ensemble)*

Charles Shaw-Robinson (1978-80): *Tartuffe* (Buffalo Studio Arena); Bertram Cates in *Inherit the Wind; Mass Appeal*, *Monday after the Miracle*, Chris in *All My Sons* (Cincinnati Playhouse); *The Cradle*

Will Rock (The Acting Company National Ensemble, NYC and at the Old Vic, London); member of (Alaska Repertory Theatre); *The Cruelties of Mrs. Schnayd* (New York Theatre Studio); *Battery* (NY Theatre Workshop, New Directors Project, Perry Street Theatre); *Hamlet* (Cincinnati Playhouse); season with Berkeley Shakespeare Festival - roles included Benedick in *Much Ado About Nothing* and Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet; Twelfth Night* ((Center Stage)*

Derek David Smith (1984-85): *Cruise Control* (WPA Theatre); *Tenn by Tennessee* The Acting Company NY Ensemble Production, Lucille Lortel Theatre); *Romeo and Juliet* (Shakespeare Theatre at the Folger); Leslie in *The Hostage* (Coconut Grove Playhouse); *The Witch of Edmonton* (Shakespeare Theatre at the Folger); *Hyde in Hollywood* (American Place Theatre and American Playhouse); *All's Well That Ends Well* (Center Stage); *King Stag* (Alley Theatre); *Five by Tenn* (Acting Company International Tour); *The Mystery of Irma Vep* (Center Stage)*

Jack Stehlin (1982-83): Claudio in *Much Ado About Nothing* (Milwaukee Rep); *Henry IV Part 1* and *Don Juan* (New York Shakespeare Festival Public Theatre); Understudy for Stanley in *Brighton Beach Memoirs* (Broadway); Petruchio in *The Taming of the Shrew* (Missouri Rep); Dauphin in *Henry V* New York Shakespeare Festival Central Park); Saint-Just in *Danton's Death* and Hotspur in *Henry IV*, Part 1 (Center Stage); The Son in *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, Roger in *Balcony*, created the role of Apollo in a workshop of Robert Wilson's *Alcestes*, Tomazo in *The Changeling*, created the role of Bobby in *Gillette* (A.R.T.); Truffaldino in *The King Stag*, (A.R.T.; Venice Biennale, Perugia Communale Festival); Prosecuting Attorney in *Another World* (NBC); Roy in *Biloxi Blues* (Cape Playhouse); director of *Danton's Death* (Rapp Center); director *of Speed-the-Plow* (Alley Theatre); former artistic director of Stage Repertory theatre in Houston, Texas

M. Bradford Sullivan (1986-87): Bertram in *All's Well That Ends Well* (Shakespeare Theatre at the Folger); *Coriolanus* (New York Shakespeare Festival Public Theatre); *Macbeth* New York Shakespeare Festival Public Theatre); *Five by Tenn* (The Acting Company National Ensemble International Tour)*

Martha Thompson (1988-89): *The Least of These* (American Stage Company); *Eleemosynary* (North Carolina Shakespeare Festival); *Casanova* (New York Shakespeare Festival Public Theatre)*

Pamela Tucker-White (1981-82): Shelly in Thomas Babe's *Home Again Kathleen* (American Renaissance Theatre); *Anthony and Cleopatra* (Lenox Arts Center); 1986-87 Cleveland Playhouse season including *The Three Sisters, 1940s Radio Hour* and *Noises Off*.

Ana Valdes (Ana Yen) (1984-85): *Help* (ABC-TV Series); *As the World Turns* (CBS-TV daytime serial)*

Ray Virta (1981-83): Artistic Director, Youth Theatre, Rochester, NY; directed *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, (Rochester, NY) appeared in

Vinagrette (NYC); Simon Bliss in *Hay Fever* (Cincinnati Playhouse); *Issue? I don't Even Know You!* (The Acting Company National Ensemble Cabaret at Playwrights Horizons); Romeo in *Romeo and Juliet*, Doc in *Crimes of the Heart*, Smiggy in *Masters of the Sea*(Missouri Rep); Orsino in *Twelfth Night* and Damis in *Tartuffe* (Great Lakes Shakespeare Festival); Member, Dear Knows Company; *Dubliners* (West Bank Cafe and Home for Contemporary Theatre and Art); Time in *The Winter's Tale* (Shakespeare Theatre at the Folger); Dr. Joh in *Summer and Smoke* (Mt. Gretna Playhouse); *The Taming of the Shrew* (Theatre for a New Audience); *No One Dances* Home for Contemporary Theatre and Art); *The Paper Gramophone* (Hartford Stage Company); *Jacques and his Master* (New Theatre Brooklyn); *Progress* (Hudson Guild Theatre); *M. Butterfly* (National Tour)*

Paul Walker (1980-82): *The Cradle Will Rock* (The Acting Company National Ensemble, NYC); two seasons at Guthrie Theatre; Gloucester in *King Lear* (T.O.M.I.); *The Three Sisters, Twelfth Night, A Christmas Carol* (Guthrie Theatre); *Cloud Nine* (Portland Stage Company); Torvald in *A Doll House* (Stage West); teaches acting and theatre games at NYU*; taught modern drama and theatre games at Midsummer in Oxford, Member Dear Knows Company*; *Dubliners* (West Bank Cafe and Home for Contemporary Theatre and Art); *All the Beasts Together* (Ensemble Studio Theatre); Reynaldo in *Hamlet* (New York Shakespeare Festival Public Theatre); taught workshops at (Arena Stage); and Colorado Springs; *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Pepsico Summerfare); *Crime and Punishment* (Arena Stage); co-directed *The Rivers and Ravines* (Arena Stage); *No One Dances* (Home for Contemporary Theatre and Art); director of *Short Takes '89 Ladies, Legacy* (Music Theatre Group); recipient of a 1989 National Endowment for the Arts Directing Fellowship; Director of *Conquest of the South Pole* (Arena Stage); *Five by Tenn* (The Acting Company National Ensemble International Tour)*

Gregory Wallace (1988-89): *The Screens* (Guthrie Theatre); *Light Shining on Buckinghamshire* (New York Theatre Workshop); *Our Country's Good* (Hartford Stage and Broadway)*

Michele-Denise Woods (1980-82): Drama Desk nominee for performance in *The Cradle Will Rock* (The Acting Company National Ensemble, NYC and at the Old Vic, London); taught voice and diction at the High School of Performing Arts; participant in *Tribute to Marc Blitzstein* at Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center, New York City; *Do Lord Remember Me* (off-Broadway and Tour); *Zion* (New Federal Theatre at Riverside Church); singing cabaret at Sylvia's supper Club in New York City)*

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