

BROADSIDE

NEWSLETTER OF THE THEATRE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

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New Series

THE CAFFE CINO AND ITS LEGACY: OFF-OFF BROADWAY IS FOCUS OF EXHIBITION

Richard M. Buck, the Theatre Library Association's tireless and dedicated Secretary-Treasurer, has put together an extraordinary exhibition detailing the history and heyday of the Caffe Cino, an Off-Off Broadway playhouse which was the inspiration for a new movement in the theatre. The exhibition, which will be on view in the Vincent Astor Gallery of The New York Public Library at Lincoln Center until May 15, follows former TLA board member William Appleton's splendid exhibition on the life and career of composer Richard Rodgers.

The Caffe Cino flourished at 31 Cornelia Street in Greenwich Village, New York City, from 1959 to 1968. Beginning with the earliest days when the Cino was a poetry-reading cafe, the exhibition carries the story of the Cino to its end, when after founder Joe Cino's tragic death in 1967, a loyal group of followers tried to continue the tradition. Along the way, the viewer will discover many names and titles that have become landmarks in theatre history: Lanford Wilson, Tom Eyen, John Guare, Sam Shepard, Robert Patrick, *Dames at Sea*, *This is the Rill Speaking*, *The White Whore and the Bit Player*, and many, many more. One will also discover others who, though never well known in the world of "legit" theatre, were important in the experimental theatre movement. Among these pioneers were Harry (H.M.) Koutoukas, Doric Wilson, Robert Heide, Ronald Tavel, Ondine, and Jeff Weiss.

Many of the items on display have not been on view since the Cino closed. Because the Library was given a wealth of memorabilia, much of it literally pulled from the collage-covered walls of the Cino, the curator has been able to recreate the ambience of the place which Robert Patrick said "produced the most extensive and influential surge of theatrical experimentation since Euripides."

On March 5, at the opening of the exhibition, several hundred guests drank cappuccino made by the same machine which made the cappuccino many of them drank a quarter of a century earlier; they ate Italian pastries made by the same bakery whose pastries they ate all through the '60s; and they listened to reminiscences and tributes to the great Joe Cino made by Charles Loubier, Joseph C. Davies, Ellen



Stewart, Robert Patrick, Robert Heide, Robert Dahdah, Shirley Stoler, and many others who have first-hand memories of one of the most important and exciting times in the history of American theatre.

Hoffman will discuss the impact of the Cino on theatre that followed. The programs, which will begin at 6:30 p.m., will last approximately 40 minutes and will be followed by a question and answer period. Admission is free.

REMEMBERING THE CINO

Five symposia have been arranged which will enable the general public to discuss the Caffe Cino legacy with many of those who helped create it. Richard M. Buck will moderate the programs, which begin on March 21 with Joseph C. Davies, Charles Loubier and Larry Loonin who will discuss the beginnings of the Cino and the earliest days; on March 28, Robert Heide and Robert Patrick will talk about their experiences as playwrights at the Cino; the April 4 topic will be directing, creating and designing at the Cino, with Robert Dahdah and Kenneth Burgess; on April 11, Marshall Mason and Lanford Wilson will discuss working together at the Cino; and on April 18, Joseph Le Sueur and William M.



Joe Cino

photos by Timothy P. Bissell

TLA ANNUAL MEETING

The annual business meeting of the Theatre Library Association was held on Friday, October 19, 1984, in the Shubert Archive in New York. President Dorothy Swerdlove welcomed the assembled members and introduced the Executive Board and *ex-officio* representatives.

Richard M. Buck summarized his three-page financial report for 1983/1984 and reported that the working balance is \$3,231.58, a large sum when compared with the figures of the recent past. However, total membership figures are lower than last year's in both the personal and institutional categories. If the 70 unpaid members for 1984 are not paid up with the 1985 dues notice, a \$1,600 loss for the 1984/1985 budget will result. The membership approved Mr. Buck's suggestion to increase the TLA bank certificate from \$1,000 to \$2,000. Copies of the financial report may be obtained from the TLA office at Lincoln Center.

In 1983/1984 the Theatre Library Association participated in many conferences. During the ASTR/TLA joint meeting in November 1983, a lecture-tour offered members a look behind the scenes at Radic City Music Hall. In June 1984, at the ALA convention in Dallas, TLA and the Cinema Librarians Discussion Group co-sponsored an all-day panel which included presentations on recently acquired film collections and visits to four Dallas theatres. A detailed report by Dorothy Swerdlove may be found in *Broadside* 12:1. TLA was also represented at the Society of American Archivists' meeting, where a roundtable was held to discuss the previous year's proposals regarding special problems related to performing arts collections.

TLA plans several programs for 1984/1985. At the ASTR meeting in Bloomington, Indiana, there will be a recap of the TLA panel, "Current practices of various picture archives regarding production rights, procedures and copyright," originally presented at the TLA annual meeting in October*; an all-day program will be arranged for the ALA conference in Chicago; September events include SIBMAS and IFTR participation, in Great Britain; ASTR/TLA will again meet jointly in November, at the Milford Plaza Hotel in New York City; other events include the SAA meeting and the Conference on Black American Protest Drama and Theatre, to be held at Morgan State University in Baltimore.

The papers of the Conference on Preservation Management for Performing Arts Collections are being edited and will be published in 1985. A new series, *Performing Arts Documents*, is planned for 1986/1987. Consult *Broadside* 12:1 for details.

Geraldine Duclow, Anthony Ibbotson, Anne G. Schlosser and Wendy Warnken have been elected to the TLA Board of Directors; Vice-President Mary Ann Jensen has agreed to chair the Freedley/TLA book awards committees. New officials will be

elected by the Board at the February meeting.

— **Brigitte Kueppers**
Recording Secretary

*Richard Bennett, who spoke about the legal aspect of copyright, sent a copy of the outline of his talk to Dorothy Swerdlove. Anyone who attended the October 19 panel discussion and would like a copy of the outline should contact Ms. Swerdlove, Theatre Collection, New York Public Library at Lincoln Center, 111 Amsterdam Avenue, New York, NY 10023.

WE BELONG

TLA is a member of the American Library Association, the American Theatre Association, the Council of National Library and Information Associations, and the International Federation for Theatre Research. In addition, we recently joined the Association for Canadian Theatre History and will soon join SIBMAS.

NEW OFFICERS

Mary Ann Jensen, Princeton University Library, was elected President of the Theatre Library Association at the February meeting of the Executive Board. **Martha Mahard** of Harvard University was elected Vice President and **Lois E. McDonald** of the O'Neill Theater Center was chosen as Recording Secretary. **Richard M. Buck** of the Performing Arts Research Center at The New York Public Library will continue to serve as Secretary-Treasurer. The Executive Board passed a unanimous and enthusiastic resolution, thanking President **Dorothy Swerdlove** and Recording Secretary **Brigitte Kueppers** for their dedicated service. They will continue to serve as TLA board members.

HOLD THIS DATE

The Freedley/TLA book awards presentation will take place on Thursday evening, May 9, 1985, in the Vincent Astor Gallery of The New York Public Library at Lincoln Center. Further information, including announcement of the winners, will be sent to all members as it becomes available.

BOOK REVIEWS

Duse: A Biography. By William Weaver. New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1984. 383 pp. \$19.95.

Poor Eleanora Duse. After reading this well-researched biography of the Italian actress, one can only pity her as one of the

outstanding victims of her time. She was a victim of the men she loved, a victim of her repertory (which was influenced by the men she loved), and a victim of delicate health and nerves (also resulting from the men she loved). William Weaver lets Duse speak for herself through the voluminous correspondence she maintained with those closest to her. As one of our finest translators from the Italian, Weaver cannot be held responsible if Duse's letters often strike the reader as treacle.

Born into a theatrical family, Duse made her stage debut while still a child. At 21 her heart was broken for the first time by the man who fathered her illegitimate child. The child did not survive and Duse almost didn't either, suffering her first grave illness. Later she made a loveless marriage with fellow actor Tebaldo Checchi. Overall he was not a really bad sort and with him Duse had a daughter. Duse loved her daughter very much and would feel a lifelong guilt for neglecting her in favor of her career. After separating from Checchi, Duse fell in love with Arrigo Boito, the composer and librettist. Their passionate affair often was carried on over great distances through the Italian mail, which was apparently a lot more reliable than it is today. Boito kept Duse at arm's length while allowing her to engage in fantasies of retirement and living as a family with him as father to her beloved daughter. Since Duse had no talent for keeping the money she earned her fantasy remained a fantasy. Seeking to have a hand in her career, Boito translated Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* for Duse. Not knowing English, however, he was forced to rely on an inferior French version and the play was a failure, except for Duse's own performance. In speaking of Boito in later years, she would refer to him as "il Santo." Surely his beatification could only have come as a result of her experience with her next lover, Gabriele D'Annunzio.

By all accounts (as well as by the miracle of photography), we know that D'Annunzio was an incredibly unattractive man. Yet he apparently drove women wild, having both a wife and a mistress when he met Duse. With an ego the size of Italy, D'Annunzio was to Duse a genius. She willingly dropped her repertory of Dumas fils and Ibsen to become a missionary in the church of D'Annunzio. And a lot of thanks she got for it. When his plays proved to be less than audience favorites, she was forced to do a few performances of *Dame aux Camelias* to pay the bills and to support D'Annunzio in the style to which he was becoming accustomed. For that he accused her of disloyalty. But his most unforgivable act was in writing *Il Fuoco*. His novel told the story of an aging woman (Duse was now 41) and her passion for a younger man. His graphic description of her aging body dogged her steps in Italy as well as her tours abroad, even to America.

Constantly forced to tour to earn money, constantly cancelling performances as a result of ill health or nervous prostration, constantly forced by her public to die yet

one more time in *Dame aux Camelias*, Duse kept struggling. Her affair with D'Annunzio left her on the brink of bankruptcy and suicide. But she survived and was sustained by her relationship with her daughter, now married and a mother.

D.W. Griffith wanted Duse to make a film with him but World War I interfered. We can only regret that the great Griffith was never able to work with the actress of whom Anton Chekhov wrote: "I do not know Italian, but she acted so well that I felt I was understanding every word. What a marvelous actress! Never before have I seen anything like it."

William Weaver scoured the archives in writing this book. He cannot be blamed, if after reading it, however, we feel more pity for the woman, than admiration for the actress.

— Ruth Carr

Fast and Furious; the story of American International Pictures. By Mark Thomas McGee. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1984. 264 pp. \$17.95.

Founded by James Nicholson and Sam Arkoff, American International Pictures (AIP) produced and/or distributed some 500 mostly low-budget movies from 1954 to 1980. AIP was the first film company to identify the emerging youth market and made films almost solely to satisfy it, initiating genres the major studios later imitated: 50's western, horror and SF pictures; juvenile-delinquent and motorcycle-gang films; beach-party movies; Italian-made sword-and-sandal epics; the (comparatively) well-mounted Poe adaptations; black exploitation fare; and assorted psychedelic, protest and urban/rural action pictures.

In recent years, AIP has rightfully been studied as a kind of mirror of American popular culture, reflecting the changing social/sexual/political values of American life. McGee's book is not such a study. It is made up of interviews with AIP directors, writers, producers and stars and is not an exhaustive study, nor is it well-written, often ironically (one hopes unconsciously) reflecting the beloved shoddy quality of the films under discussion. It is aimed at fans (like myself) but ultimately unsatisfying. So if names like Roger Corman, Herman Cohen, Dick Miller, Chuck Griffith and Sid Pink don't wreath you with nostalgia, pass it by.

— David Bartholomew

The London Stage 1920-1929: A Calendar of Plays and Players. Vol. I: 1920-1924; Vol. II: 1925-1929; Vol. III: Indexes. Compiled by J.P. Wearing. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1984. \$89.50.

J.P. Wearing's calendar of the London stage between 1920-1929 is an extremely useful guide to a decade of extraordinary theatrical activity. In addition to the conventional data provided to us in such volumes as Burns Mantle's *Best Plays* series,

the compiler adds still more detailed information on production staffs and useful references to contemporary reviews. The sheer bulk of the information is daunting, but the most minor details can sometimes be illuminating. In glancing over the data on Lilian Baylis' famous productions at the Old Vic, one is struck, for example, by the extent to which that formidable lady extracted full value from the members of her company who often not only doubled and tripled roles but functioned backstage as well. A further bonus is the data on opera and ballet performances. One can only marvel at the vigor of the theatre during this decade before radio, film and television had decimated audiences, but one marvels as well at the patience and care with which Professor Wearing has assembled this vast body of information.

— William W. Appleton

Shakespeare in Sable: A History of Black Shakespearean Actors. By Errol Hill. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1984. 224 pp. \$20.

Recently an entire front page of the newsletter of British Equity was devoted to a very large reproduction of the distinguished American actor, Ira Aldridge, in one of his memorable Shakespearean roles. At the same time the British group's American counterpart, Actors' Equity, seemed more interested in saving the Broadway theatres. The concern of New York-based performers for preserving places where they can show their talents is certainly understandable. Their British cousins, however, have thrown the spotlight on the almost forgotten career of the New York-born Ira Aldridge (1807-1867) in an effort to arouse Equity members to the lack of opportunities in casting not only for British blacks, but for Asians and other talents from minority groups as well. Having stages for shows is of course necessary, but it's also important to see that talented performers, regardless of race, creed, or sex, have their fair share of the available work.

In his fascinating and thoroughly documented study, Errol Hill, a theatre professor at Dartmouth, has chronicled the careers of outstanding—and a few not so outstanding—black performers in Shakespearean roles in the United States and abroad. He notes four Shakespearean characters perceived as black, which offered scope for black tragedians in the nineteenth century, when slavery and its aftermath made it extremely difficult for talented blacks to find any kind of role, even in demeaning farces and minstrel shows. Ira Aldridge, for example, was forced to make his great career in Europe, where he was much admired and sincerely respected for his art and his character. He died on tour in Poland. In Europe he was able to play the most demanding of Shakespearean roles, such as King Lear, in his native tongue with ensembles from other nations speaking other languages. His genius was such that there were no

major outcries against integrating a black tragedian into a white company. In 1865 he could play Othello to Madge Kendal's Desdemona in Britain, but it would be almost a century before Paul Robeson could do the same opposite Uta Hagen on Broadway.

The large-spirited talent of Henrietta Vinton Davis, whose career spanned the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, was denied the fullness of expression and the proper stages it deserved. Professor Hill makes it quite clear that the reasons for that were the prejudices and traditions which had infected the American theatre and its audiences, discouraging integrated casts and relegating black performers to stereotypical roles and shows in many instances. Hill does not write of those customs and events in the full flush of a polemic, but more in sorrow than anger about what was lost to our theatre and to those performers who were denied the arenas, roles and fellow players to which their talents entitled them, and lost to audiences who instead saw black performers not at all or in productions unworthy of them and their race.

Fortunately this fine chronicle does not brood on the injustices and losses of the past, though it certainly does not overlook or excuse them. Rather, the bulk of the narrative recounts the gradual gains for black performers, notably in Shakespeare's dramas, on the twentieth-century American stage, and in foreign triumphs as well. It looks to the future, saluting the efforts of such producers as Joseph Papp who help black players win the right to play far more than the original four black roles in the Shakespearean canon: Aaron, Othello, the Prince of Morocco, and Cleopatra.

Because the Federal Theatre, during its all-too-brief tenure, did so much to open stage doors to black performers, it is entirely appropriate that John Houseman should contribute the foreword to this information-packed volume. After all, he and Orson Welles helped gifted black thespians create the WPA "Voodoo" *Macbeth*. Errol Hill is not such a purist, however, that he can resist sharing with his readers an evocation of that 1939 jazzed-up version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, called *Swingin' the Dream*, starring Louis Armstrong as Bottom, Butterfly McQueen as Puck, and "Moms" Mabley as Quince.

The focus, as the title indicates, is primarily on black performers interpreting Shakespeare, but Hill thoughtfully uses this as the occasion to demonstrate how playing the Bard's works has opened other doors in the American theatre as well. In documenting the work of black theatre ensembles, he also raises some cautionary questions about the future, especially in light of Joseph Papp's efforts to create a "Third World" troupe at the Public Theatre. This is a most rewarding book, both for its fund of information as well as for its effective evocation of the black experience with Shakespeare on stage.

— Glenn Loney

BOOKS RECEIVED

- Bryan, George B. *Stage Lives: A Bibliography and an Index to Theatrical Biographies in English*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985. 386 pp. \$49.95.
- Heys, Sandra. *Contemporary Stage Roles for Women: A Descriptive Catalogue*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985. 195 pp. \$35.
- Laughlin, Haller and Randy Wheeler. *Producing the Musical: A Guide for School, College, and Community Theatre*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1984. 151 pp. \$27.95.
- Milhous, Judith and Robert Hume. *Producible Interpretation: Eight English Plays, 1675-1707*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1985. 336 pp. \$30.
- Ranald, Margaret Loftus. *The Eugene O'Neill Companion*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1984. 827 pp. \$65.
- Rowell, George and Anthony Jackson. *The Repertory Movement: A History of Regional Theatre in Britain*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985. 234 pp. \$39.50.
- Thomson, Peter, ed. *Plays by Dion Boucicault: Used Up, Old Heads and Young Hearts, Jessie Brown, The Octoroon, The Shaughraun*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984. 238 pp. \$44.50.



WORK IN PROGRESS

Charleston Theatre Management of Charles Giffert (1817-1825). Ph.D. Candidate. University of Nebraska. Nan L. Stephenson, 420 Bancroft Way, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70808.

PERFORMING ARTS RESOURCES

Volume 10 of *Performing Arts Resources*, now at the printer, includes essays on institutional archives. Featured are articles on the Warner Brothers' Collections at USC and Princeton, the Twentieth Century-Fox Collection at UCLA, the J.W. Thompson Company Archives, as well as information on collections of lighting equipment in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom.

PAR 11 will include two translations by C. Thomas Ault of late 18th-century documents on Baroque theatre machinery and design. TLA is also planning to publish notes of the Conference on Preservation Management for Performing Arts Collections, held in 1982.

COLLECTIONS

An outstanding collection of film scripts has been acquired by Indiana University Library, Bloomington. Originally brought together by Ira Wolff of Larchmont, New York, the collection consists of 2,400 scripts ranging in date from the 1920s to the 1980s. Many contain annotations by technicians, actors and directors. Approximately 650 scripts, including *Casablanca*, *Rear Window* and *The Wizard of Oz*, are original; others are photocopies made from originals in other collections.

The William Butler Yeats Archive is now housed in the main library of the State University of New York at Stony Brook. Formerly located in the University's Cen-

ter for Contemporary Arts and Letters, the Archive will now be located in the Library's Department of Special Collections. The Yeats Archive is the most complete collection of Yeats materials outside Ireland.



QUERIES

The Committee for the Eugene O'Neill Centennial Exhibition is interested in locating unique documents and objects relating to the career and work of the playwright. If any person or institution has anything which could be lent for the exhibition, please write or phone Mary Henderson, Curator, O'Neill Centennial Exhibition, Museum of the City of New York, 5th Avenue at 103rd Street, New York, NY 10029 (212-534-1672).

The Societe Jersiaise on the Island of Jersey in Great Britain seeks information about a collection of correspondence between Lillie Langtry (the Jersey Lily) and Arthur Jones which, they believe, was purchased by an American collector a few years ago. They would like to obtain some idea of the contents of this collection and possibly secure copies for their archives. Anyone with information about this collection is asked to contact Mr. H.T. Porter, Springbank Nursing Home, Vallee des Vaux, Jersey, Channel Islands, Great Britain.

Officers of the **Theatre Library Association** (founded 1937): President, Dorothy L. Swerdlove, Curator, the Billy Rose Theatre Collection, The New York Public Library at Lincoln Center, New York City; Vice-President, Mary Ann Jensen, Curator, the William Seymour Collection, Princeton University Library, Princeton, New Jersey; Secretary-Treasurer, Richard M. Buck, Assistant to the Chief, Performing Arts Research Center, The New York Public Library at Lincoln Center, New York City; Recording Secretary, Brigitte Kueppers, Archivist, Shubert Archive, Lyceum Theatre, New York City.

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