

# BROADSIDE

## NEWSLETTER OF THE THEATRE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Volume 21, no.1

Summer 1993

### TLA PROGRAM AT ALA: PERFORMING ARTS RESOURCES IN NEW ORLEANS

June 28, 1993 was indeed a "Big Day for TLA in New Orleans" for approximately 40 TLA members and interested nonmembers who took part in the day's activities. **Richard Buck** planned the varied program entitled "Performing Arts Resources in New Orleans," which included visits to historic theatres and **The Historic New Orleans Collection**, lunch at **Antoine's Restaurant**, and a panel discussion and reception at **Le Petit Théâtre du Vieux Carré** (Little Theatre in the French Quarter).

Theatre historian and restoration expert, **Jack Stewart**, arranged and led a walking tour of historic New Orleans theatres. Our first stop was the **State Palace Theatre** (formerly **Loew's**), where owner **René Brumet** described its history. In 1926 when the theatre opened at a cost of \$1.5 million, it was the largest theatre "west of Philadelphia and east of Chicago" -- with two balconies and a total seating capacity of 3500. Designed by **Thomas W. Lamb**, who specialized in hard-top theatres, the State Palace/Loew's has a domed ceiling resembling a European opera house, and is resplendent with Tiffany fixtures and two pipe organs. Before anti-trust legislation forced a separation between Loew's Corporation and MGM, every important MGM star from 1920s to the early 1940s made personal

appearances at the theatre in connection with their films. Today the theatre plays host to a variety of entertainments, including concerts, movies and live performances.

The tour moved on to the **Orpheum Theatre**, which opened in 1921 with 2000 seats but underwent extensive renovations in the 1980s that reduced the seating capacity to 1700. The Orpheum has a steel frame construction encased in concrete, and is less ornate and more intimate -- the last row of the second balcony is the closest to the stage of any theatre in New Orleans -- than the State Palace which it resembles with its domed ceiling. The Orpheum's first program featured **Singer's Midgets**, but the **Louisiana Symphony** is a regular attraction now. The theatre also works closely with the Fairmount Hotel across the street, as a venue for industrial shows and other special events.

The next theatre on our itinerary was the **Joy**, a small "box theatre" built in 1947 as a showcase for **Universal films**. Its first attraction was *The Egg and I*, starring **Claudette Colbert** and **Fred MacMurray**. René Brumet owns the Joy as well as the State Palace, and uses the Joy for motion picture exhibition.

The last theatre visited was the **Saenger**, an "environmental theatre" that gives patrons the impression of being ushered into a Florentine garden. The auditorium balcony is surrounded by grottos and statuary, and the atmospheric lighting includes twinkling stars and clouds floating across the night sky ceiling. It boasts a **Martin Wonder organ**, one of five manufactured. Costing \$3 million to build, the Saenger opened in 1927 as a 4000 seat theatre, entered via an open-air arcade of small shops; the shops have disappeared and the arcade has become the lobby, lined with Mediterranean-style tiles. At one time, the Saenger was divided into two smaller auditoriums to become a duplex film house, and the ceiling was covered with a horsehair carpet to deaden sound; it was restored as a legitimate house in the mid-1970s, but the carpet is still in place. The theatre now has a seating capacity of 2800. It offers a wide variety of entertainments, including touring Broadway productions, gospel shows, country music artists and industrial presentations.

Mr. Stewart then led us through neighboring streets near the area formerly known as the **Storyville Red-light district**, where he pointed out the facades and/or locations of several other theatres which have since disappeared as the sites were

converted to other uses. The walk ended in the French Quarter at **Antoine's**, the famous restaurant that has been in existence since 1840, where we had a chance to relax and chat with old friends and new acquaintances.

After lunch, we walked around the corner to **The Historic New Orleans Collection** located in the **Merieult House**, where we were welcomed by **Florence Jumonville**, the Head Librarian. We viewed the second part ("The 1930s: From the Crash to Pearl Harbor") of a two-part exhibition entitled "The Long Weekend: The Arts and the Vieux Carré between the World Wars, 1918-1941." Numerous photographs, paintings, sculptures, lithographs and drawings, manuscripts and published works offered glimpses of the people and the neighborhood that give the French Quarter its special ambience. The exhibition includes famous figures in politics and the arts as well as unknown individuals, Mardi Gras festivities along with mundane activities such as wash-day. A detailed catalog with a time-line of world events in the margins placed the exhibition in a wider context.

Three docents then escorted small groups through the history galleries of the Merieult House, built in 1792. The rooms are arranged chronologically, and contain paintings, maps, documents (including the papers for the Louisiana Purchase of 1803) and artifacts going back to the days of Spanish and French rule. The furnishings have been carefully chosen to preserve the elegance of the building and to carry out the wishes of the Collection's founders, **General and Mrs. L. Kemper Williams**.

The final segment of the day's program, a panel discussion on performing arts in New Orleans, took place in the Petit Théâtre du Vieux Carré where **Larry Knowles**,

artistic director of the theatre, informed us that the theatre was entering its 77th consecutive season. Over 200 years old, the building was originally the home of the last Spanish governor of Louisiana. Now, it is divided into two performance spaces, a main auditorium that seats 400 to 446 patrons and a small children's theatre that can accommodate over 100 individuals.

The first speaker was **Ms. Jumonville**, who described the performing arts resources available in the Historic New Orleans Collection, also known as "the Best Little Lore House in Louisiana." The Collection consists of exhibition galleries, some of which we had just visited, and three research divisions: pictorial materials (maps, paintings, prints, photographs and three-dimensional objects); manuscripts (including a microfilm collection of local newspapers and Louisiana-related documents in foreign repositories); and a library of printed materials (books, pamphlets, broadsides, sheet music, programs, theses and dissertations). There is also a publications unit that publishes monographs and a quarterly newsletter.

The collection documents theatre, dance and music in Louisiana going back to 1792, when the first theatre and the first public ballroom opened in New Orleans. Among its holdings are programs for **Jenny Lind's** concerts and two self-portraits by the actor, **Joseph Jefferson**, whose winter home was in Louisiana. Both opera and jazz are covered, as are motion pictures. The **Deutsches Haus Archive** in the Manuscripts Division documents the cultural activities of the German immigrants who arrived in the mid-nineteenth century and became an important part of the life of New Orleans. The research facilities are open to the public free of charge and without appointment, Tuesdays through Saturdays, but

researchers' topics should relate to the history and culture of New Orleans, Louisiana, and surrounding regions.

Next, our morning tour guide, **Jack Stewart**, briefly described the history of theatres in different New Orleans neighborhoods, illustrating his talk with slides of no longer extant theatres. He also gave an account of some of the local and touring shows which have played in the various locations. Besides his work as a restoration contractor, Mr. Stewart has a jazz band, and is now compiling a history of vernacular music in New Orleans.

The final panelist was **Bruce Raeburn**, Head of the **Hogan Jazz Archive** at **Tulane University**, which has extensive oral history records on jazz. Mr. Raeburn described how dance bands had helped to start the jazz mania, which made early jazz scholars assume that theatres were too large and cold and "refined" for improvised jazz performances, and he credited Mr. Stewart with helping to disprove this misconception. Theatres were important as a training ground for young musicians, some of whom were pre-teenagers, and often there were jazz performances in front of the theatre as well as on the stage. Unionized pit bands in theatres also played jazz, and jazz musicians at one time formed the backbone of the American Federation of Musicians in New Orleans. Even during the Depression, jazz musicians could find work in **WPA bands**.

Theatres also afforded musicians an opportunity to be seen by touring acts, such as **Ethel Waters**, **Sophie Tucker**, **Bessie Smith** and **Paul Whiteman**. (An interesting sidelight on the jazz scene concerned **Paul Whiteman**. His symphonic jazz orchestrations had been hailed in New York, but the New Orleans audience did not consider his music jazz. During one concert, he became so angry

that he stalked off the stage and left the band to improvise -- which they did very successfully). Many jazzmen could read music, but they pretended that they couldn't

because of public expectations. In spite of the improvisational nature of jazz performances, some items from the early repertoires have been preserved on recordings.

The afternoon ended with an informal reception in the theatre lobby -- a long day, but a rewarding one.

--Dorothy L. Swerdlove

## MEMBER NEWS

**Sidney P. Albert**, Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at California State University-Los Angeles, recently donated his **George Bernard Shaw** collection to the Brown University Library. An internationally known Shavian scholar, Albert is an authority on Shaw's *Major Barbara*. His collection of Shaw's books, manuscripts, photos and other memorabilia is one of the world's finest private collections. Prof. Albert's collection is rich in manuscript material - more than 90 autographed and typed letters, postcards, notes, inscribed books and signed photos as well as costume designs and a fragment of music in Shaw's hand. The collection also includes more than 2000 books by and about Shaw, among them a substantial group of his pre-1900 publications and works by critics, many of them inscribed. The collection is also strong on ephemera - pamphlets, "rough proof" rehearsal copies of plays, press clippings, film stills, posters, publicity photos, recordings, photographs of Shaw's 1933 visit to Hollywood, and publications of Shaw societies in London, New York, Los Angeles and Tokyo. Brown has also acquired upon Albert's recommendation correspondence between Shaw and his American publisher, **Dodd, Mead & Co.**; that purchase, including 15 letters, original contracts, sketches and photographs of Shaw, and more than 100 files

covering contracts and reprint rights, provides a picture of Shaw as a businessman who composed his own contracts and championed the economic cause of writers. For more information about the Sidney P. Albert- G.B. Shaw Collection, contact: Jennifer Lee, Curator of Printed Books, John Hay Library, Brown University, 38 Brown St., Box R, Providence, RI 02912. Tel: 401-863-2146. Fax: 401-751-9255.

**Betty Corwin**, founder and director of the **Theatre on Film and Tape Archive** of the **Billy Rose Theatre Collection** at the **New York Public Library for the Performing Arts** at Lincoln Center, recently received two prestigious awards. The first was an **Obie Award** presented in recognition of outstanding achievement in Off Broadway and Off-Off Broadway Theater during the 1992-1993 season and reads: "To Betty Corwin for her Distinguished Contribution as a Theater Archivist." **David N. Dinkins**, Mayor of the City of New York, presented Ms. Corwin and TOFT with a Certificate of Appreciation "for its extraordinary work of recording and maintaining on tape live theatrical performances and theatre-related material and making it accessible; by forming this important record of theatre in our time, it preserves the work of theatre professionals in order to inform and inspire our own generation and many generations to come."

**James Fisher (Wabash College)** will give "The La Follette Lecture" at Wabash College on October 29, 1993. The Title of the lecture is "Fool's Play." Prof. Fisher's books include *The Theatre of Yesterday and Tomorrow: Commedia dell'arte on the Modern Stage* (Edwin Mellen Press, 1992), *Al Jolson: A Bio-Bibliography* (Greenwood Press, 1993) and the forthcoming *Spencer Tracy: A Bio-Bibliography* (Greenwood Press, 1994).

TLA Board member, **Steven Higgins (New York University)**, and his wife **Mary** recently welcomed a new addition to the Higgins family - their son, **Walker Stevenson Higgins**, who was born 11:20PM on February 11, 1993 at Mt. Sinai Hospital. Walker weighed almost 9 lbs at birth. Steven was recently awarded tenure at NYU.

**Frank C.P. McGlinn** was recently honored for his donation of the **Frank C. P. McGlinn African American Theatre Collection** to the **Afro-American Historical and Cultural Museum**, in Philadelphia. Covering a period of 142 years (1850-1992), the collection richly documents Philadelphia's theatrical past through the performances of African Americans. Included in the collection are posters, programs, broadsides, newspaper clippings, show advertisements, correspondence and photographs. Early items of interest include a rare broadside program dated 1850 of the appearance of the "Nightingale Ethiopian Serenaders"

in Philadelphia and a 1904 *Uncle Tom's Cabin* performance at the Chestnut Street Opera House. The **Harlem Renaissance** and **Paul Robeson** are also well represented in the collection.

**Laurence Senelick** (Tufts University) delivered lectures on "17th Century Acting" for the Hartford Stage Molière Symposium and on "Mime before Decroux" at the Movement International Festival in Philadelphia this summer. Among his publications are his article "Offenbach and Chekhov or La Belle Elena" which has been reprinted in *Reading Chekhov's Text*, edited by Robert Louis Jackson (Northwestern University Press) and his forthcoming "Moonlighting in the Music Hall: The Double Life of Charles Rice" in *Theatre Survey* (November 1993).

**Don B. Wilmeth** (Brown University), President of the **American Society for Theatre Research**, co-edited (with Tice L. Miller) the *Cambridge Guide to American Theatre* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993). He is the editor of the series "Studies in American Theatre and Drama" also for Cambridge University Press. In June 1993, Wilmeth went to Japan as a guest of the **Japan Foundation** to see traditional performances, lecture, and examine the popular entertainment archive at the **National Popular Theatre** in Tokyo. He is the curator of the **H. Adrian Smith Collection of Conjuring Books and Magicana** at Brown University.

### CALL FOR PAPERS

*Puppetry*: For the second annual (1994) volume of essays on puppetry (history, theory and performance), to be published by the Edwin Mellen Press, Ltd. Volume I will be available in autumn 1993. For Volume II, please send papers or proposals to editor: James Fisher, c/o Theater

Department, Wabash College, Crawfordsville, IN 47933. **DEADLINE: June 1, 1994.**

**Art, Glitter and Glitz: The Theatre of the 1920s celebrates American diversity. CALL FOR PAPERS.** Deadline for proposals: **November 1, 1993.** Papers on a variety of topics related to the 1920s as a turning point in American theatre and drama; topics include: playwrights of the 1920s, popular American theatre, theatre groups/repertory theatre, theatre critics and criticism, actors, directors, designers, censorship, drama and the arts, drama and the film, social types and stereotypes. Previously published material should not be submitted. For information, contact: Athelene A. Collins, Conference Coordinator, Hofstra Cultural Center (HCC), 109 Hofstra University, Hempstead, NY 11550-1090. Tel.: 516-463-5669. Fax: 516-564-4297. Conference dates: **November 3-5, 1994.**

### EXHIBITIONS

**International Center for Photography** opened "100 Years of Broadway: A Photographic View," at the ICP Midtown Gallery (1133 Avenue of the Americas, NYC). Show runs from July 22 - October 3, 1993. Curated by **John Estin**, the show features photos of rehearsals, productions, performers, theatres, and Broadway in interesting juxtapositions. Photos were loaned by the **Museum of the City of New York**, **The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts**, **The Shubert Archive**, **The Museum of Modern Art**, **Magnum Pictures, Inc.**, **ICP**, **The University of Texas at Austin**, **Princeton University**, **Louis Botto**, private collections and the many photographers who caught the moment.

**The University of Texas at Austin.** The Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center is presenting "Gaudy Nights: Music Hall and

Cabaret" (through November 24, 1993). Curated by **Dr. William H. Crain** and **Melissa Miller**, this exhibit displays costume and set designs by artists such as **Erté** and **Léon Bakst**, posters for celebrities such as **Maurice Chevalier**, and photographs documenting the routines of stars such as **Josephine Baker**, **Vesta Victoria**, **Fanny Brice** and **Bert Williams**. At the **Leeds Gallery**, Flawn Academic Center, "A Matter of Perspective: Realism in the Theatre" (September 15, 1993-January 14, 1994) is an exhibit focusing on the late 19th century emergence of Realism, a comprehensive aesthetic designed expressly to convey ideas and actions to an audience by invoking the audience's experience with the so-called "Real World." The manuscripts, books, artwork, photographs, and stage models from the Ransom Center's collections examine the development and endurance of Realism. The rise and popularity of Realist works by playwright **Henrik Ibsen**, the critical opinions of English playwright **George Bernard Shaw**, the performance technique of **Stanislavski**, and the visual standards of French Theatre director **André Antoine** are the focus of the exhibit.

### OBITUARIES

**Louis Sheaffer**, 80, died August 7, 1993 in Brooklyn. A former reporter and film and drama critic for the *Brooklyn Eagle*, Mr. Sheaffer won a Pulitzer Prize for the second volume of his biography of **Eugene O'Neill** (*O'Neill, Son and Artist*, 1974). The first volume *O'Neill, Son and Playwright* was published in 1968. Sheaffer was the recipient of the Theatre Library Association's **George Freedley Memorial Award** for the most distinguished book on the theatre in 1968 for the first volume of his O'Neill biography. He was also awarded an honorable mention for volume 2 in 1973.

**Dr. Gerald Kahan**, 69, died on August 14, 1993 in Athens, GA. A native of the Bronx, Dr. Kahan was Professor Emeritus of Drama and Theater at the University of Georgia where he taught for 23 years before retiring in 1982. He later became a dealer in theater-related antiquarian books and art and had his own business, *Theatricana*. During World War II, Kahan served as a bombardier on B-24 aircraft. He completed 30 combat missions over Germany and Austria. He was reassigned to the 885th Heavy Bombardment Squadron, a subsidiary of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), and flew 20 more missions providing assistance to partisans hiding in the mountains of Yugoslavia, Greece,

Albania, and the French and Italian Alps. A first lieutenant, Kahan received the Air Medal with clusters and a European Theater campaign ribbon with eight battle stars. Dr. Kahan attended the University of Wisconsin at Madison where he received his bachelor of arts, master of arts and Ph.D degrees. He taught at Western Washington College in Bellingham, WA and Reed College in Portland, OR. During his academic career, he directed more than 60 productions. His book, *Jacques Callot: Artist of the Theatre* (University of Georgia Press) received the 1976 George Freedley Memorial Award for best American book on Theatre. Dr. Kahan was a member of the Southeastern

Theatre Conference, the International Federation for Theatre Research, the Theatre Library Association, and the American Society for Theatre Research. He contributed an annual cash prize to the latter organization to encourage the work of young scholars in theater. He was designated to receive the Society's Lifetime Achievement Award at its annual conference in November in New Orleans. He is survived by his wife, Sara; two daughters, Deirdre Kahan Allen and Megan Kahan Reuter and four grandchildren. Donations in Dr. Kahan's memory may be made to the Athens Area Emergency Food Bank, The Sandy Creek Nature Center, or the Athens Area Humane Society.

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## CALENDAR

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**October 21-23, 1993.** Music of the American Theatre, A Symposium. Organized by Penn State's Institute for the Arts and Humanistic Studies. Speakers/Performers include: **Gerald Bordman, Keith Ingham, Edward Jablonski, Charles Kalman, Robert Kimball, Miles Kreuger, Burton Lane and Deena Rosenberg.** Contact: George Maurer, Director, Institute for the Arts and Humanistic Studies, Ihlseng Cottage, Penn State University, University Park, PA 16802. Tel. 814-865-0495. Fax: 814-863-8349.

**October 29, 1993.** Annual TLA Business Meeting and Program. Bobst Library, New York University. 5:00-7:00PM.

**November 1, 1993.** Deadline for submission of entries for the **Louis Gottschalk Prize** sponsored by the **American Society for Eighteenth Century Studies**. All scholarly books, including commentaries, critical studies, biographies, and critical editions, written in any modern language are eligible. For more information, contact: Kristine L. Freeman, Office Manager, USU CC 108 Utah State University, Logan, Utah 84322-3730. Tel. 801-750-4065.

**November 3-5, 1993.** Special Libraries Association, The First Northeast Regional Conference. "Information Professionals, Partners for Success," at The Rye Town Hilton, 699 Westchester Ave., Rye Brook, NY (914-939-6300). For more information, contact: Agnes Mattis, Northeast Regional Conference, Bowling Green Station, P.O. Box 916, New York, NY 10274-9016. 212-493-8306.

**November 12-14, 1993.** American Society for Theatre Research (ASTR)/Theatre Library Association (TLA) annual conference, Monteleone Hotel in the French Quarter, New Orleans. Conference theme is "Culture and Performance."

**March 10-13, 1994.** Mid America Theatre Conference, 15th Annual Theatre History Symposium "Theatre Space and Place," at the Hyatt-Regency Hotel, Minneapolis. **CALL FOR PAPERS:** Organizers of the 1994 Symposium invite diverse methodological approaches to the study of various constructions of theatre space and place across a wide range of historical periods and cultural contexts. The use of visual aids, in all forms, is very much encouraged. Send abstracts (two copies, 250 word maximum) **before December 1, 1993** to: Prof. Kent Neely and Kim Marra, Co-Chairs, MATC Theatre History Symposium, c/o University of Minnesota Theatre, 330 S. 21st Ave., Minneapolis, MN 55455.

**June 27, 1994.** TLA at ALA, Miami, FL.

**November 18-20, 1994.** American Society for Theatre Research (ASTR)/Theatre Library Association (TLA) annual meeting, New York City. Location: New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Lincoln Center.

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TLA ANNUAL MEETING AND PROGRAM -- FRIDAY, OCTOBER 29, 1993  
AT BOBST LIBRARY, NEW YORK UNIVERSITY  
70 WASHINGTON SQUARE SOUTH (AT 4TH ST. & LA GUARDIA PLACE)  
LOCATION: FALES LIBRARY, 3RD FLOOR

5:30-6:00PM: ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

6:00-7:30PM: PROGRAM:

"UNCOVERING HIDDEN TREASURES--PANEL FOCUSING  
ON 'OFF THE BEATEN TRACK' FILM & VIDEO  
COLLECTIONS IN NEW YORK CITY."

PROGRAM COORDINATOR: STEVEN HIGGINS, NYU  
PANELISTS INCLUDE RICHARD KOSZARSKI, AMERICAN  
MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE, ASTORIA.

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Officers of the Theatre Library Association (founded 1937): President, James Poteat; Vice President, Robert Taylor, Curator, Theatre Collection, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts; Secretary-Treasurer, Richard M. Buck, Assistant to the Executive Director, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts; Recording Secretary, Rosemary L. Cullen, Brown University.

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