

BROADSIDE

NEWSLETTER OF THE THEATRE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

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Summer 1995

GEORGE FREEDLEY/THEATRE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION BOOK AWARDS

On Wednesday, May 31, the Theatre Library Association held the George Freedley-TLA Awards ceremony at Lincoln Center Library for the Performing Arts in the Bruno Walter Auditorium. Two critics, a film director and an actress presented awards to authors of outstanding books on Theatre, Film, and Television. The winners were Richard Abel, Neal Gabler, Faye E. Dudden and Simon Trussler.



Faye E. Dudden, Estelle Parsons

Michael Musto, writer for the *Village Voice* and "gossip guru," presented the first award, the Theatre Library Association's honorable mention, to Neal Gabler's book *Winchell: Gossip, Power and the Culture of Celebrity* (Knopf). Accepting the award on behalf of Neal Gabler was Gary Stevens. Stevens read Gabler's remarks which thanked the Theater Library Association and acknowledged the New York Public Library at Lincoln Center where most of the research for the Winchell book had been done. Gabler mentioned his special kinship with TLA for its support of his book *An Empire of Their Own: How the Jews Invented Hollywood* (Crown), the winner of the 1988 Theatre Library Association Award for most outstanding film book of the year. In accepting the award, Gary Stevens, a press agent who knew Winchell, remembered the man who invented gossip: "he was electric; he knew in a few seconds whether or not something

was good, and he wasn't afraid to pronounce his opinion."

Thierry Pathé, NYU professor and director of documentaries for theatre and television, presented the 1994 TLA Award for outstanding Film book to Richard Abel for *The Cine Goes to Town: French Cinema, 1896-1914* (University of California Press). His award was accepted by Eileen Bowser, former film curator at The Museum of Modern Art. She thanked TLA and said she was honored to accept the award on behalf of Richard Abel.

Clive Barnes presented the George Freedley honorable mention to Simon

Trussler for his book *Cambridge Illustrated History of British Theatre*. Barnes began by saying that people often ask "How do you remember all that stuff?" "Well" he said "we don't. We use reference books." He went on to say that there aren't many books that illustrate world theatre history. Accepting the award for Trussler was Peter-John Leone from Cambridge University Press. He said that Simon Trussler was deeply honored and that "we at Cambridge would like to thank the jury for their kind recognition."

The last presenter of the evening was Estelle Parsons who began her career as a production assistant on the "Today"

show, and made her Broadway debut in *Happy Hunting*. Along with her many theater credits, Parsons also won an Oscar for portraying Blanche in *BONNIE AND CLYDE*. She now is more popularly known as Roseanne's mother and Shelley Winter's daughter.

Estelle Parsons presented the George Freedley award for the best Theatre book of 1994 to Faye E. Dudden for *Women and The American Theatre, 1790-1870* (Yale University Press). Parsons said she enjoyed the book because it was one of the few times she had a chance to read something good. She also went on to say that there was a lot in the book about women who played men's roles as women. That is, they got dressed up in men's costumes but the audience still knew they were women. It was very popular because it gave men a chance to see women in something more revealing than a dress.

Accepting the award was the author Faye E. Dudden. She said that "history tells us something about the present. Looking at theatre is very important to understanding the past. I'm not a theatre person, I'm really just a historian." Therefore, she was doubly honored to have her work recognized by theatre historians and librarians. She went on to say that she wrote the book for historians but surprisingly the people who have liked the book have been theatre people. Dudden thanked her husband for being so patient and the Theatre Collection at Lincoln Center where she did much of her research. She urged everyone to support the National Endowment for the Humanities, which gave her the funding for this project. She said if it wasn't for the funds from the NEH the book would not have been possible.

The jurors for the George Freedley Award were James Fisher (Wabash



Freedley winner, Faye E. Dudden and Book Awards chairman, Steve Vallillo

College), Richard Wall (Queens College), and Don B. Wilmeth (Brown University). The TLA jurors were Barbara Stratyner (The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts), Steven Higgins (The Museum of Modern Art) and James Poteat (former TLA president). The Awards chairperson was Stephen M. Vallillo (St. John's University). --Michael Cunningham

BOOKS RECEIVED

Darling, Jean. *A Peek at the Past*. Jügesheim, Germany: Hamling, 1995. Distributed by Auntie Poppy Ltd., 294 South Circular Road, Dublin 8, Eire. IR £11/DM25/U.S. \$18, paper. [Autobiography of child star of "Our Gang" comedies.]

Gänzl, Kurt. *Gänzl's Book of the Broadway Musical: 75 Favorite Shows from H.M.S. Pinafore to Sunset Boulevard*. New York: Schirmer Books

(Simon & Schuster/Macmillan), 1995. \$35.00, cloth. ISBN 0028708326.

Jonson, Ben. *The Alchemist and other plays*. New York: Oxford University, 1995. \$7.95, paper. ISBN 0192822527. (World's Classics)

McTeague, James H. *Playwrights and Acting: Acting Methodologies for Brecht, Ionesco, Pinter, and Shepard*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994. \$49.95, cloth. ISBN 0313289751. [Contributions in Drama and Theatre Studies, ISSN 01633821, no. 59].

Malamud, Randy. *Where the Words are Valid: T.S. Eliot's Communities of Drama*. Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1994. \$49.95, cloth. ISBN 0313278180. [Contributions in Drama and Theatre Studies, ISSN 01633821, no. 58].

Pereira, Kim. *August Wilson and the African-American Odyssey*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois, 1995.

\$29.95, cloth. ISBN 0252021371. [Also, \$12.95, paper. ISBN 0252064291.]

Playwright versus Director: Authorial Intentions and Performance Interpretations, edited by Jeane Luere. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994. \$55.00, cloth. ISBN 0313286795. [Contributions in Drama and Theatre Studies, ISSN 01633821, no. 54].

A Singular Elegance: The Photographs of Baron Adolph de Meyer. [Published in conjunction with an exhibition organized by The International Center of Photography, New York, 10 Dec. 1994-12 Feb. 1995]. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1994. Price n.a., cloth. ISBN 0811808300.

Whitmore, Jon. *William Saroyan: A Research and Production Sourcebook*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994. \$69.50, cloth. ISBN 0313292507. [Modern Dramatists Research and Production Sourcebooks, ISSN 1055999X, no. 6].

BOOK REVIEW

Subversive Laughter. The Liberating Power of Comedy, by Ron Jenkins. (New York: Free Press, 1994. ISBN 0-02-916405-2)

Ron Jenkins offers an insightful account of several of the most elusive politically-inspired clowns and comic theatres of our time in *Subversive Laughter*. Jenkins has previously published *Acrobats of the Soul*, a copiously illustrated introduction to the "new vaudevillians" who have emerged on American stages since the 1970s, but in *Subversive Laughter* he widens his scope. Jenkins' international gaze provides a unique survey of the ways in which the remarkably resilient stage

persona of the clown has influenced (and been influenced by) art and politics in such diverse regions as Bali, Lithuania, South Africa, Italy, Japan and the U.S. Immersing himself in each particular culture, Jenkins (who is trained as a clown himself) provides the closest thing to an insider's view while illuminating the complicated nature of the comic tradition.

In his first chapter, "Urban Slapstick and Survival," Jenkins traces the origins of the postmodern clown to Charlie Chaplin, the first comic genius of the twentieth century. Weaving Chaplin's screen art together with his politics, Jenkins describes a performer driven to comment on the ills of the society within which he operates. Chaplin believed that "Ridicule is an attitude of defiance. We must laugh at our helplessness against the forces of nature or go insane." (p.3) Jenkins believes that Chaplin's on-screen assault on all forms of authority, mixed with his criticism of social injustice off-screen, reveals his true theatrical persona. This merger of character and actor is necessary for Chaplin to emerge as the subversive national court jester Jenkins describes.

Jenkins's images of contemporary clowns leads him to test his theory that "Popular comedy can be a call for perseverance in the face of tyranny, death and oppression...For an audience with its back against the wall a clown is a metaphysical escape artist, a Houdini of the soul." (p.11) Throughout the book, Jenkins deals with several politically-inspired forms of comic theatre, focusing in each case on a specific artist or theatre company while sketching in the necessary socio-political background of the culture in which the artist or company functions. Variant details of technique are revealed, and these are often individually fascinating, but the dominant theme for Jenkins is

the clown's clash with oppression. This link helps him to establish the significant thematic similarities among these artists. As chapters explore the political satires produced by the Vilnius State Theatre, or the "terrifying" comedies of Johannesburg's Prince Dubu in South Africa, or Japan's *Taishu engeki*, or America's Bread and Puppet Theatre, or, in the strongest chapter, Italy's Dario Fo and Franca Rame, Jenkins persuades the reader that the clown can give "audiences common ground for laughter and free them from the isolation that pervades so much of modern life." (p.208)

Subversive Laughter is lucid, well-argued, and often compelling; the reader is consistently aware of the precariousness of the lives of those who must play the clown (and of Jenkins himself, whose own awareness of potential violence is always present). In "America's Comedy of Detachment," the book's capstone chapter, Jenkins concludes that the "through line that connects all these comic traditions goes beyond Chaplin's 'attitude of defiance' to a deeper function of humor that can turn an audience of individuals into a community...the things that strike us as funny have the power to set us free." (p. 208) What more could be asked from any theatrical form? Jenkins convincingly illuminates the universality and timelessness of the subversive clown.--James Fisher (Wabash College)

CALL FOR PAPERS

The Puppetry Yearbook. For the third annual volume of essays on the art, history, theory, and performance of puppetry to be published by the Edwin Mellen Press (Lewiston, New York and London). Papers are welcome on any aspect of puppetry and may be of any length. Illustrations are welcome.

Submissions should include one double-spaced copy of the paper, a brief biography of the author, and illustrations (if any) that would accompany the paper. Deadline for submissions: March 15, 1996. Send papers, proposals or inquiries to: James Fisher, Editor. The Puppetry Yearbook, c/o Theater Department, Wabash College, Crawfordsville, IN 47933. Tel.: 317-361-6394. E-Mail: FisherJ@Wabash.edu

COLLECTION NEWS

Hatch-Billops Collection, Inc. With a grant from the **American Library Association**, the 14 volumes of *Artist and Influence*, the annual journal published by the Hatch-Billops Collection, have been indexed by **Professor Susan Duffy** and Librarian **Paul Adalian** of the University of California at San Luis Obispo. This index will be available to libraries next year. Hatch-Billops, with assistance from **Saskia Rozier**, a work-study student from Holland, has just completed a catalog of the approximately 1000 histories in its oral history collection in the arts. *The Lost Plays of the Harlem Renaissance*, an anthology of 16 unpublished plays written by African-Americans between 1920 and 1938 will be published by Wayne State University Press in the spring of 1996. The editors are **Professors James V. Hatch** and **Leo Hamalian** of City College of New York.

San Francisco Performing Arts Library & Museum (PALM) announces the establishment of a Theatrical Design Research Collection. The collection includes information on centuries of European design, international fashion, Chinese Opera costumes, Japanese kimonos, masks, military uniforms, children's fashions, even underwear. The initial concept for the collection was

sparked by a recent bequest from the estate of **Walter Watson**, a leading San Francisco costumer for the **American Conservatory Theater** and the **San Francisco Opera**. Mr. Watson's bequest consisted of over 500 books, prints and magazines with a particular focus on fashion and design in the 19th and early 20th centuries. An additional gift of over 400 books ranging from Asian and European set and costume design to the history of the American musical has been given by Professor **William Eddelman** (Stanford University). The collection is open to the public 5 days week. A list of the books currently in the collection is available for \$10. Please send check payable to SF Palm to Design List, SF Palm, 399 Grove St. San Francisco, CA 94102.

MEMBER NEWS

James Fisher recently contributed several articles: "Tender Men: Sherwood Anderson and Eugene O'Neill," to *The Eugene O'Neill Journal*, Spring/Fall 1993 (v.17, Nos.1 & 2); "'The Angels of Fructification': Tennessee Williams, Tony Kushner, and Images of Homosexuality on the American Stage," *Mississippi Quarterly* (Summer 1995); and, "A Cinemactor's Forgotten Theatrical Resume: Spencer Tracy on Stage," *New England Theatre Journal* (Summer 1995).

Ricky Jay played "The Cook" in ABC Movie of the Week, *The Ranger, The Cook & A Hole in the Sky*, broadcast Thursday, June 15, 1995 at 8:00PM.

Louise Kerz was the historical researcher for the 1995 Tony Awards (produced by Smith-Hemion Productions). She also was included in the *Who's Who of American Women, 1995*.

Scott Douglas Morrow was named Visiting Dance Artist-in-Residence by the Jay County Arts Council, Portland, IN. From June 4-18, he conducted master classes and workshops for children and their families, teachers and other community participants.

Maria P. Myers performed in *The Quadratic Rehearsals*, a new play by **Michael Kirby** presented in April at the Soho Photo Gallery. This August, she will perform in **Horton Foote's** *A Trip to Bountiful* at the Strand Theatre, Schroon Lake in the Adirondacks.

Barry Alan Richmond contributed an article on "The Grand Guignol® Theatre of Paris" for *Funeral Party* (New York: Horror Society of New York University, May 1995).

Don B. Wilmeth (Brown University) is currently a consultant for WNET and the New York Center for Visual History for a series of television documentaries on American theatre for PBS. He is also Dean-Elect, College of Fellows of the American Theatre, and Secretary of the American Society for Theatre Research (Anyone interested in ASTR should write Don). For the Fall 1995 semester, Don will be the O.R. and Eva Mitchell Visiting Distinguished Professor at Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas. For ASTR info., write: Don B. Wilmeth, Box 1897-Theatre, Brown University, Providence, RI 02912

OBITUARY

Sonia Moore, founder of the American Center for Stanislavsky Theater Art and the Sonia Moore Studio of the Theater, died on Friday, May 19, 1995 at the age of 92. A longtime TLA member, Mrs. Moore was a writer and an acting teacher who trained actors in the theatrical principals and theories of the

Russian director. Born in Gomel, Belarus, Mrs. Moore studied at the Moscow Art Theater before coming to the U.S. in 1940. She authored a number of books on acting including *The Stanislavsky Method* and *Stanislavsky Revealed: The Actor's Complete Guide to Spontaneity on Stage*. She was the widow of Leon Moore, a former Soviet diplomat who became an advisor to CIA Director, Allen Dulles. She is survived by her daughter, Irene Moore Jaglom, and grandchildren.

PUBLICATIONS

Rags, quarterly reviews of costume, clothing & ethnic textile books. 16 expert reviewers will critique new and recent books in these fields, hoping to stimulate industry wide discussion and interest in what is presently being published. Annual subscriptions: U.S. (\$14.00); Canada (U.S.\$15.00); U.K.

(£12.75); Other (U.S. \$20.00). Payable to R. L. Shep, Box 668, Mendocino, CA 95460. Tel: 707-937-1436. Fax: 707-937-3059.

CALENDAR

October 27, 1995. Theatre Library Association. Annual Business Meeting, 4:00-5:15PM. Reception: 5:15-6:00PM. The program will feature author **Ethan Mordden** who will discuss how he researched his forthcoming book on musicals of the Twenties and the changes he has encountered in doing musical research. Program runs from 6:00 to 7:00PM. At the Shubert Archive, 149 West 45th St., NYC 10036.

November 8-12, 1995. American Society for Theatre Research/Theatre Library Association Annual Conference, at the Marriott in St. Louis. [CORRECTION: Guided Bus tour of St. Louis Theatre District has been changed to Thurs. afternoon, Nov. 9, from 1:30-4:00PM]. Led by Carolyn H. Toft, the Executive Director of the Landmarks Association of St. Louis, the tour will include interiors of the Fox Theatre and the Powell Symphony Hall and the exteriors of the Black Repertory Theatre, the American (formerly Orpheum) Theatre and the Scott Joplin Historic Site. Tour is limited to 45 persons; cost is \$15.00 per person. Deadline for advance reservations is October 15th. On Fri., Nov. 10, from 4:00 to 5:30PM, TLA will present a panel on "Performing Arts Collections in the St. Louis area" with panelists, Martha Clevinger (Missouri Historical Society Library), Jean Gosebrink (Special Collections, St. Louis Public Library), and Kevin Ray (Special Collections, Washington University Library).

July 8, 1996. TLA at ALA. "Professional Use of Theatre Collections." Co-sponsored by both the ACRL English & American Literature Section (EALS) and the ACRL Arts Section. Panelists include: Ming Cho Lee, Marian Seldes. At the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, 7-10PM.

August 22-24, 1996. Dance to Honour Kings: Sources for Court and Theatrical Dramatic Entertainments, 1690-1740. CALL FOR PAPERS. Using or interpreting the sources is the conference theme; proposals concerned with major collections, specific resources, biography, patronage, specific theatres, cities or geographical areas, iconography, reconstruction of dance or music from primary source notation and the role of the "critical edition" are particularly welcome. **DEADLINE FOR PROPOSALS: Nov. 1, 1995.** Send 200-300 word proposal, including information about a-v requirements to: Dance Conference King's, c/o The Department of Music, King's London, The Strand, London WC2R 2LS United Kingdom. Tel.: 01235-850 756

September 1-7, 1996. 21st International Congress of SIBMAS, in Helsinki, Finland at the Theatre Museum and at the Central Library for the Performing Arts and Dance. The theme is: Winds of Change. To help SIBMAS members cope with the new technologies and compete in the market for funds & audiences, special attention will be given to audiovisual displays & multimedia. The conference will focus on four major topics: electronic documentation; exhibitions & education; marketing, publicity & fundraising; computing & new technologies. The circular and preliminary call for papers will be sent out in Autumn 1995. For information, contact: Hanna-Leena Helavuori, Theatre Museum, Tallberginkatu 1 F 2/73 00180 Helsinki, Finland Tel.: +(358)-0-6945088 Fax: +(358)-0-6945211

**THEATRE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL MEETING
OCTOBER 27, 1995**

Place: Shubert Archive
Time: 4:00-5:15PM, Business Meeting
5:15-6:00PM, Reception
6:00-7:00PM, Program

Author Ethan Mordden will discuss his forthcoming book.

**ASTR/TLA ANNUAL MEETING
in ST. LOUIS**

A SPECIAL TOUR FOR EARLY ARRIVALS

PLEASE NOTE:

**TLA Tour will be on Thursday, November 9, 1995
from 1:30-4:00PM.**

SEE Calendar for more information.

Officers of the **Theatre Library Association** (founded 1937): President, **Geraldine Duclow**, Head, Theatre Collection, Free Library of Philadelphia; Vice President, **Robert Taylor**, Curator, Theatre Collection, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts; Executive Secretary, **Maryann Chach**, Shubert Archive; 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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