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# HORIZON

The Magazine of the Arts

## ...hind Broadway's Boom

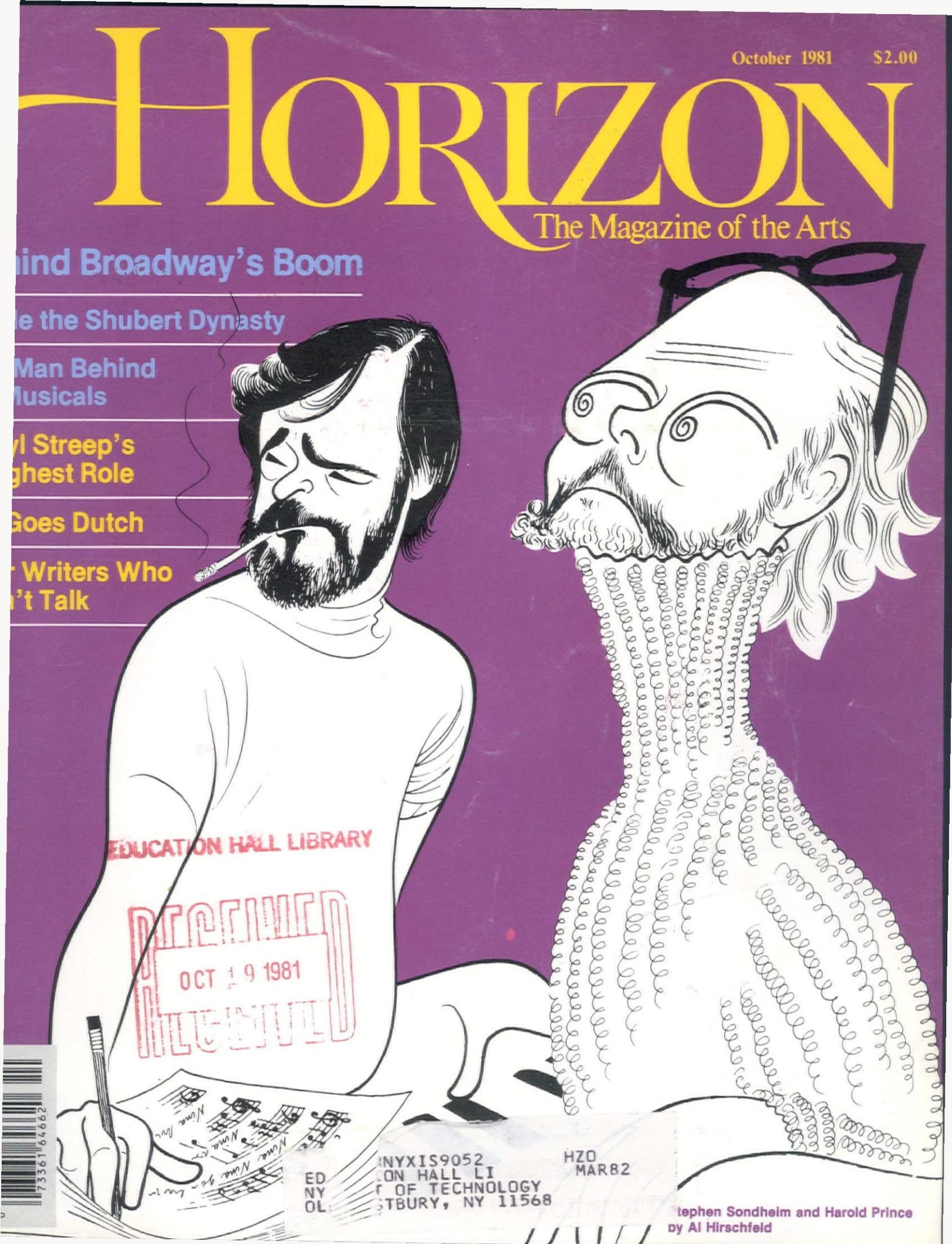
## ...le the Shubert Dynasty

## ...Man Behind ...Musicals

## ...yl Streep's ...ghest Role

## ...Goes Dutch

## ...r Writers Who ...'t Talk



Stephen Sondheim and Harold Prince
by Al Hirschfeld

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Signed oil on canvas,
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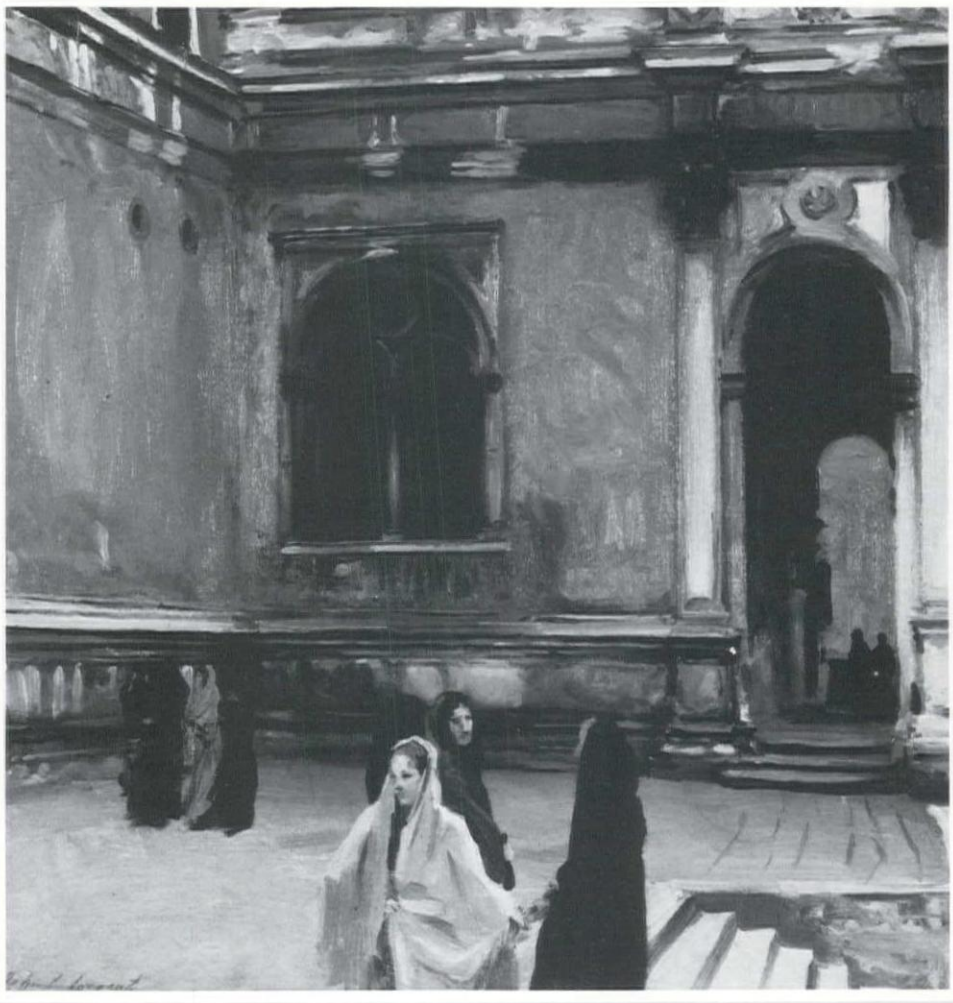

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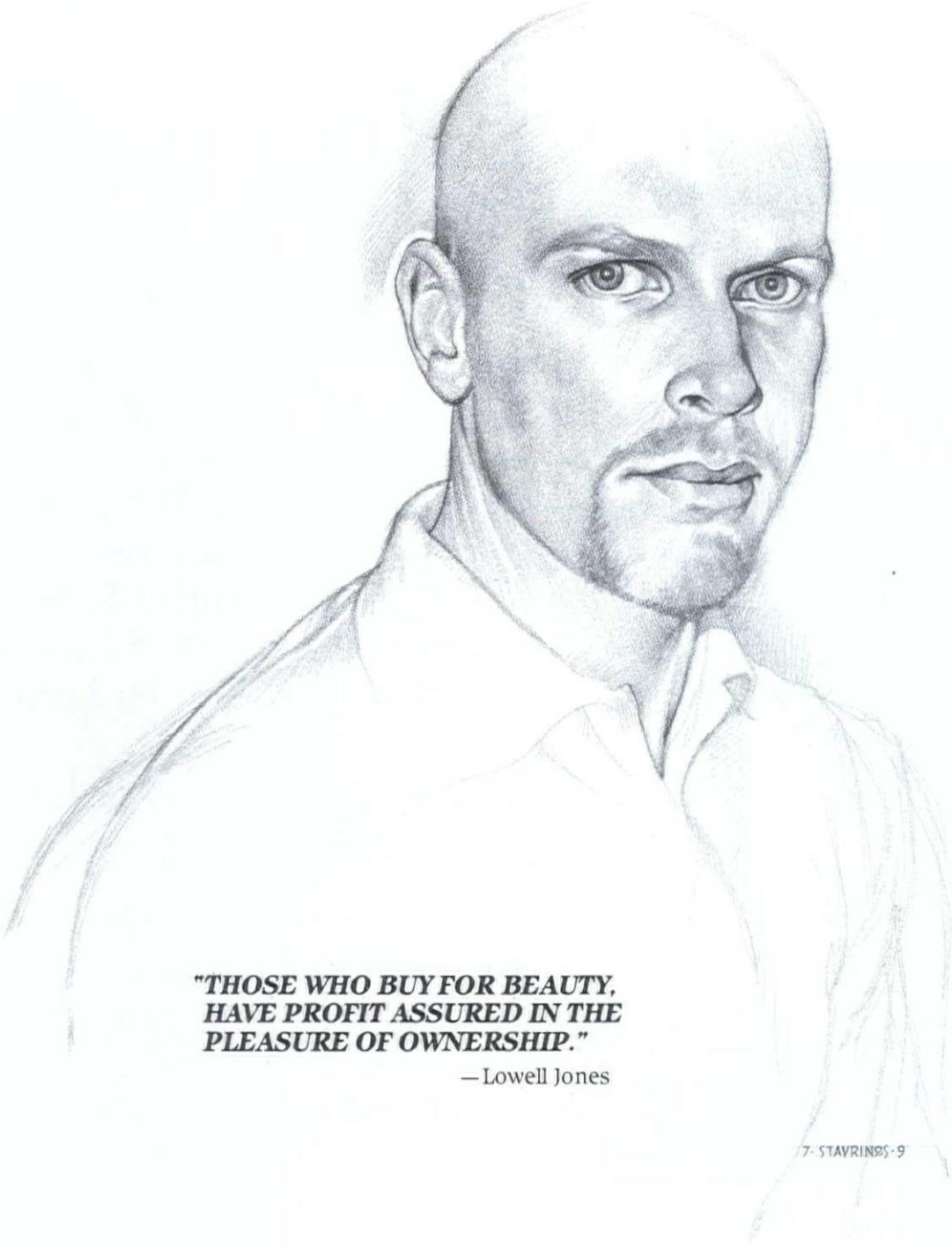


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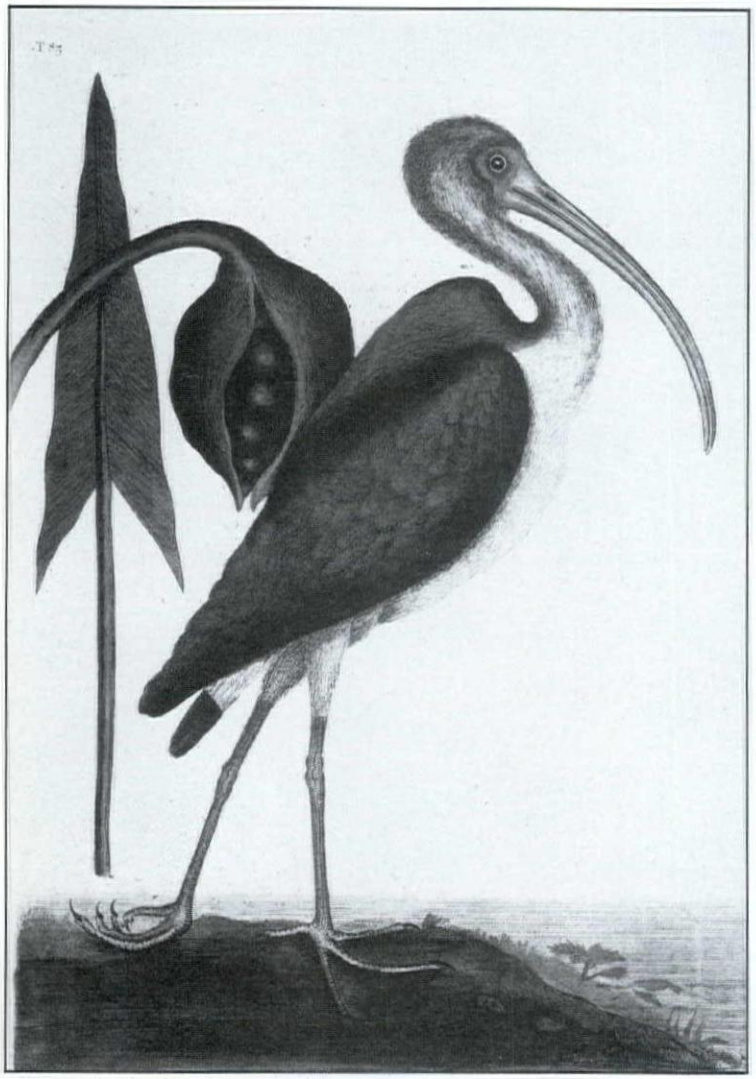

Mark Catesby, "The Brown Curlew," London, 1748. Hand colored copper plate engraving from Catesby's Natural History of Carolina, Florida, and the Bahama Islands.

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# HORIZON

*Volume 24* *Number 10* *October 1981*


*Cover:*
*Stephen Sondheim and Harold Prince by Al Hirschfeld. Reproduced by special arrangement with the Margo Feiden Galleries, New York.*

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Where has Pete Seeger gone? The pioneering folk singer is where he's been all along: the old songs, radical politics, utopian visions.

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They're names on book jackets—J. D. Salinger, Thomas Pynchon, William Gaddis, Don DeLillo. Beyond that, they're a mystery to us. Perhaps that's the whole idea.

**Broadway Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow** 53
It's not just a strip of theaters in Manhattan: it's the spark for American theater nationwide. A special section explores the past, present, and future of the Great White Way.

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A new musical promises to tell the truth about the Shubert brothers, the greatest dynasty Broadway's ever seen. The truth, as they say, isn't always pretty.

**Side by Side by Prince** By Howard Kissel 60
Musical comedy, argues Harold Prince, is serious business. As proof, he's offered *Fiddler on the Roof*, *West Side Story*, *Cabaret*, *Evita*, *Sweeney Todd*. . . Convinced?

**Up and Down the Avenue** 68
Ann Miller, Lanford Wilson, Tommy Tune, Joseph Papp, and others speculate on the future of Broadway. You might say it's the sound of one hand clapping.

# Stages Left and Right

Broadway is more than a row of blocks between Forty-fourth and Fifty-third Streets in New York City. That Great White Way may be the heart of the American theater—even its soul—but its body stretches from Maine to California. In the larger sense, "Broadway" embodies every community theater that's ever performed a musical, every touring company that's come to Seattle or Charlotte or Provo, every playwright or actor or technician who dreams of "hitting the big time."

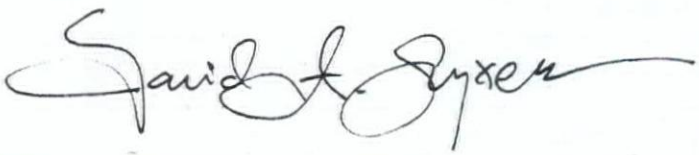
A glance at any theatrical calendar confirms this. At presstime, *Evita* is scheduled for the Shubert in Los Angeles and the Music Hall in Cleveland. *The Pirates of Penzance* is playing the Ahmanson in Los Angeles (through October 11). *Annie* is at the Desert Inn in Las Vegas. *They're Playing Our Song* is booked into the Forrest in Philadelphia (through October 24). And most important, Broadway provides the spark that fires American theaters on every level, from professional companies to college playhouses.

Not just the plays, but the network of theaters is part of Broadway. The Shubert Organization (see Norman Nadel's story on page 54) owns theaters in Boston, Chicago, and Los Angeles, the Blackstone in Chicago, the Forrest in Philadelphia, and the National Theatre in Washington.

The relationship between Broadway and the rest of the country isn't a one-way street. The time-honored tradition of trying a play out-of-town has been broadened to mine a rich vein of theater *originating* outside New York City. *A Talent for Murder*, Claudette Colbert's comeback play that opens October 1 at the Ethel Barrymore on Broadway, first played at the Eisenhower in Washington; Will Davis' *Mass Appeal*, which starts October 28 at the Booth, plays the Wilbur in Boston October 1 through 17. More significant, perhaps, is the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Crimes of the Heart*, which began in 1978 at the Actors Theater of Louisville; it opens November 4 at the John Golden on Broadway. Similarly, Alan Gross' comedy, *Lunching*, which will open on Broadway late this month, originated in Chicago two years ago.

So when we present a special section on Broadway, it's a special section on the American theater (even the world theater: *Nicholas Nickleby*, featured last issue, and *The Dresser*, opening November 5 at the Brooks Atkinson, are both British imports). Harold Prince, whom Howard Kissel profiles beginning on page 60, has left his mark on musicals known around the world, on stage, screen and television: *Cabaret*, *West Side Story*, *Evita*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Fiddler on the Roof*. . . . Ann Miller, Tommy Tune, Lanford Wilson and the others whose comments we've collected on page 68 are all part of a continuing American institution—the theater.

It's this national character that makes us skeptical of Broadway doomsayers, those who say the theater is dying, or dead. On Broadway and across the country, for decades, the motto has been "the show must go on." It has. And it will.



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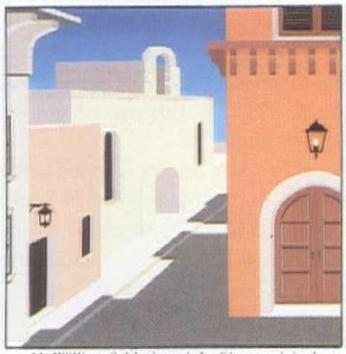

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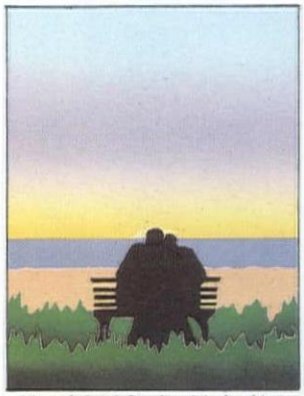

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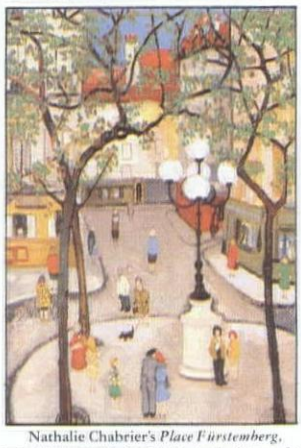

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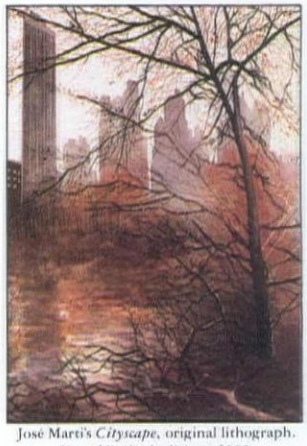

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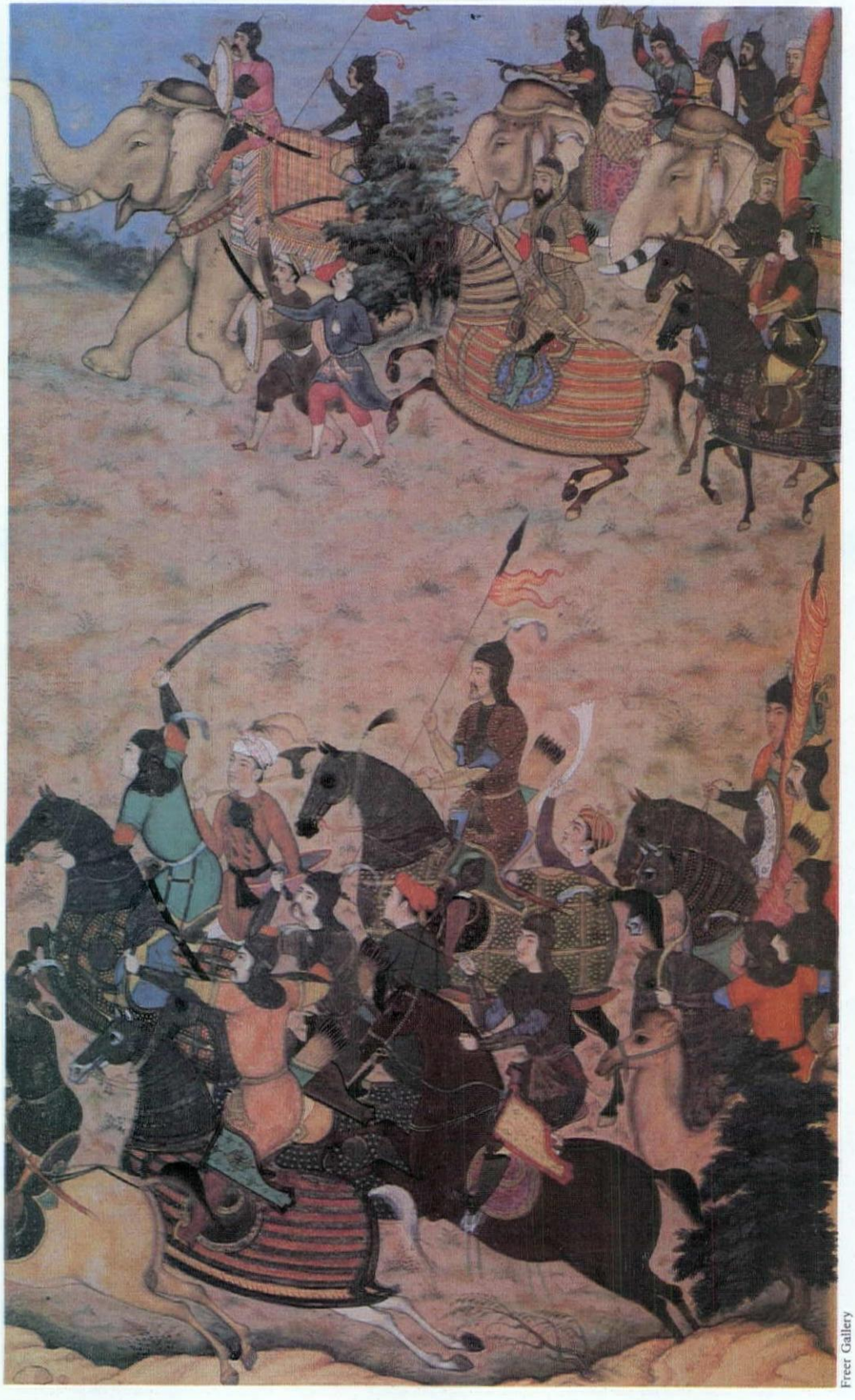
# Cross Country



Freer Gallery

*This page from the* Akbar-nama *manuscript, by Manohar, is rich in detail though just 11 x 17 inches in size (circa 1604).*

## Art

### Small Wonders

With brilliant colors and powdered gold an silver, the Mughal style of painting makes u in brilliance what it lacks in size. The sma paintings (usually less than six by eleven inc es) were chiefly confined to book illustratio and individual miniatures, and evolved i India between the sixteenth and nineteent centuries. Distinguished by their fine detai the paintings were made under the patronag of the Mughal emperors, a line of Islam rulers from eastern Iran (today Afghanistar who seized control of significant Indian terr tories beginning in 1526.

Seventy-four of these miniature fantasie from the Smithsonian's Freer Gallery of A are included in "The Imperial Image: Paintin for the Mughal Court," which opened Septem ber 25 and will continue through January 28 1982, at the Freer. The exhibit includes work from 1560 to 1640, representing the mos important period of Islamic art in India. Th paintings were made in the courts of the thre most important Mughal emperors: Akbar th Great (ruled 1556–1605), Jahangir the Worl Seizer (1605–1627) and Shah Jahan (rule 1628–1658), builder of the Taj Mahal. A majo text to be included is the *Akbar-nama*, biography of the Emperor Akbar by his confi dant, Abu'l Fazl. Only two major illustrate *Akbar-nama* manuscripts are known, an seven pages from the later version, made i 1604, are included in the Freer exhibition.

### American Stillness

In past hierarchies of art appreciation, the sti life has not fared well. "They were on the ver bottom rung," says John Mahey, chief curato of Philbrook Art Center in Tulsa, Oklahoma "No artist was thought to be very important i he specialized in still life. But, of course, w don't think in these terms anymore." Other wise, Mahey's latest project might not attrac the interest it has. "Painters of the Humbl Truth: Masterpieces of American Still Life' comprises 140 paintings, dating from 180 through 1939, in the largest historical survey o

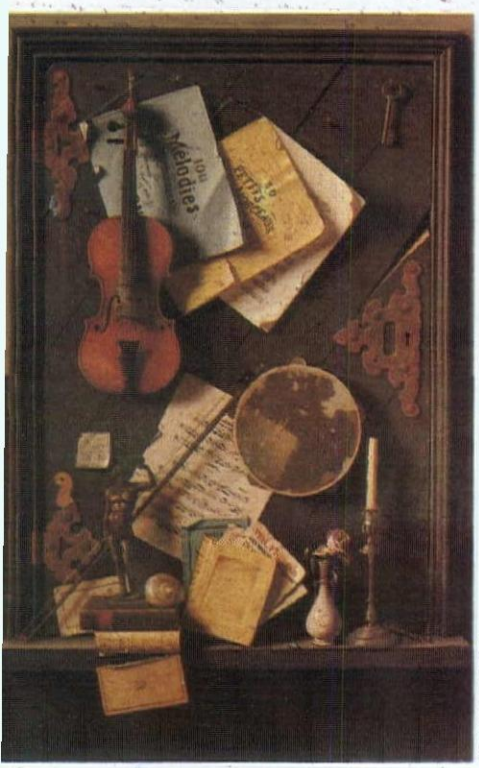
merican still lifes ever assembled.

For Mahey, "Painters" is the culmination f a dream that began with the publication of *merican Still Life Painting* by Dr. William erdts and Russell E. Burke III (Praeger ublishers, 1971): "I had hoped to organize an chibition based on that book, and I did; it ist took me ten years to do it." Gerdts super- sed the organization of the exhibition and rote the catalogue.

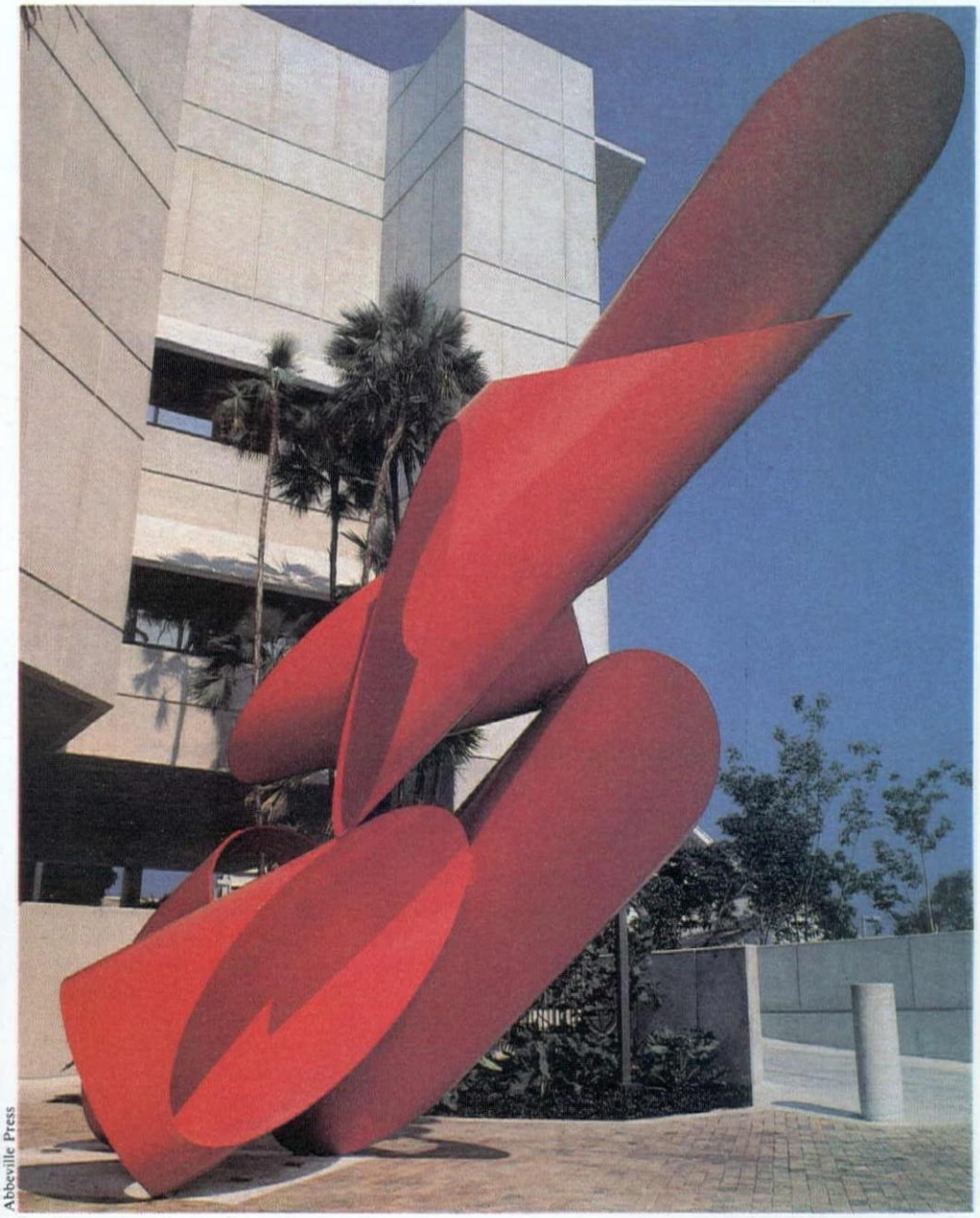
The roster of artists includes Raphaelle eale, Severin Roesen, William Michael larnett, and Charles Demuth, all represented y several prime examples; Frederic Church, Vinslow Homer, Charles Sheeler and Hans Ioffman are noted with rare or single xamples. Perhaps the rarest painting for merican audiences is Harnett's masterpiece, *he Old Cupboard Door* (1889), lent by the raves Art Gallery in Sheffield, England; the nonumental canvas, nearly six feet high by our feet wide, has not been seen in the United tates for nearly a century.

The Philbrook showing is from September 7 through November 8, after which it will ravel to Oakland, Baltimore, and New York.

he Old Cupboard Door *by William Michael larnett makes its first American appearance n a century at the Philbrook Art Center.*




Graves Art Gallery



Abbeville Press

*Alexander Liberman's* Ariel *(1980, 22½ x 11½ x 30 feet), outside the United National Bank Building in Miami, is of welded steel.*

## Liberman's Secret Identity

Alexander Liberman leads a double life. By day, he's editorial director for all Condé Nast publications. By weekend, he's a renowned sculptor and painter.

"I do my thinking in the morning before I get to the office," Liberman explains. "I spend every single weekend in the studio. That's twenty actual hours of work. Of course, you have to have an understanding wife. . . . There are all sorts of precedents. Artists have been diplomats, bankers, other things. Working at a job, I get a distance from art, and find the freedom to do what I want."

This fall it's Liberman's artistic alter ego that will get attention, beginning with the publication of a lavish book, *Alexander Liberman*, by Barbara Rose (Abbeville Press, $75). The Marlborough Gallery in New York will install one of the monumental sculptures Liberman is known for on its sculpture terrace

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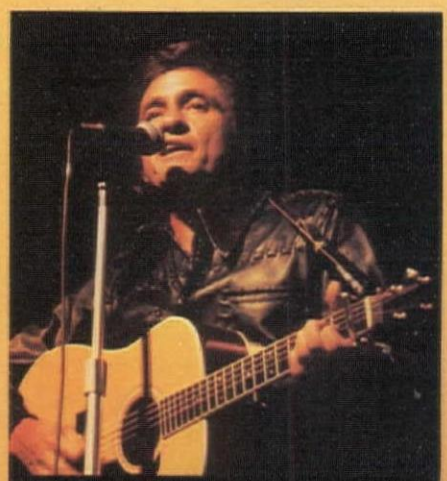
To assemble this collection, the staff of the Country Music Foundation carefully reviewed the Foundation's own archives of 75,000 records. In addition, they enlisted the support of all the country music record companies – whose vaults hold many of the master recordings selected for this collection. And they were able to obtain rare recordings from private collectors and country music artists themselves.

As a result, the Country Music Foundation Official Archive



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Also included will be the unforgettable recordings of such long-time *favorites* as Hank Snow, Ernest Tubb and Merle Travis. The *legendary giants:* Hank Williams, Patsy Cline, Jim Reeves, Flatt and Scruggs, and Jimmie Rodgers. And recordings that reflect regional influences and evolving musical styles – *bluegrass, Cajun, country gospel, western swing, honky tonk* and *rockabilly.*

The collection will include such *rare recordings* as Vernon Dalhart's 1924 recording of 'The Prisoner's Song' – country music's first million selling record, and Loretta Lynn's early classic 'Honky Tonk Girl' – now out of issue. And from the Foundation's archives will come *previously unreleased recordings* – studio "takes" never before made generally available.

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October 13. The André Emmerich Gallery in New York opens a show of Liberman's recent paintings and sculpture in November. Finally, Seven-Up Company is producing a film on Liberman for educational showings across the country later this year.

Liberman has been exemplifying his artistic credo—expounded in *On Circlism* in 1960—for some fifty years, first in abstract paintings and later in sculpture. His giant sculptures are on view at the Laumeier Sculpture Park in St. Louis; Federal Plaza in New Haven, Connecticut; Osborn Plaza in St. Paul, Minnesota; Storm King Art Center in Mountainville, New York; and many other public sites across the country.

He says of his work: "I think probably in all creative moments, there's a moment of discontinuity. I've always believed in that—that little jump, which perhaps leads to an insight. Maybe that was my little moment of insight. And I've been struggling with it—or against it."

## Music

### New Airwaves

When Henry Cowell was fifteen years old, he was invited to write the music for an Irish play, the music that would introduce the home of Manannan, the sea god. "I had to write some music that would put you in the mood of the deep tides as well as the waves of the sea," he recalled later. "I got the idea of having all thirteen of the lowest tones of the piano played together at once. Since I didn't have thirteen fingers on my left hand, I played this with the flat of my left hand. . ." This was the beginning of Cowell's celebrated "tone cluster" technique.

A portion of "The Tides of Manannan," played by the late composer, will be part of "Henry Cowell: The Gentle Pioneer," which inaugurates National Public Radio's *Radio-Visions* series October 8. The fourteen-p weekly program will explore contempor musical artists and the new music.

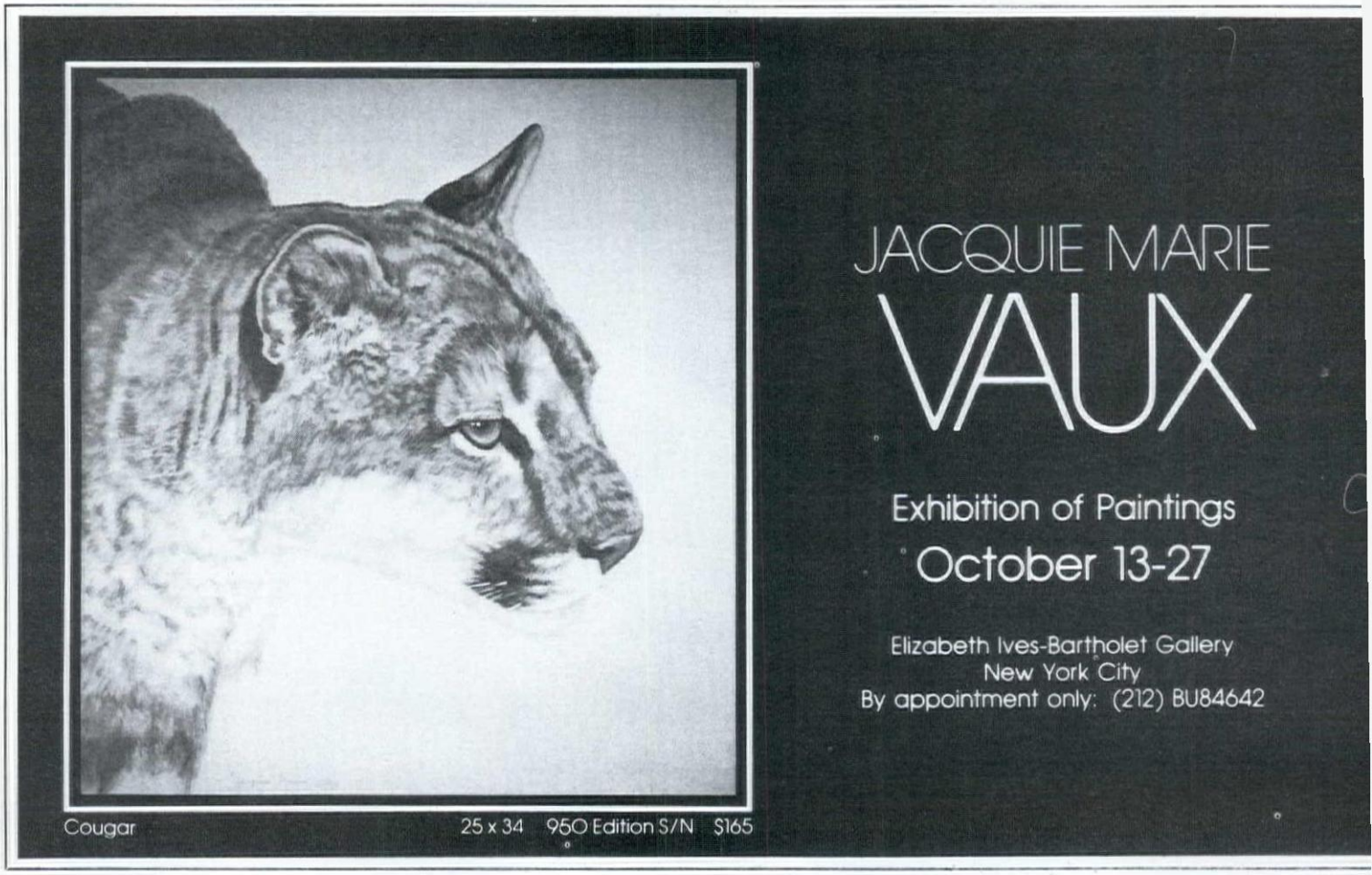
One of Cowell's most illustrious studer John Cage (see the December 1980 Horizo premiers his "Roaratorio" in the United Sta on *Radio Visions* in December. The wo based on James Joyce's *Finnegan's Wa* combines voices, music, and acoustic envir ments to create a "polyphonic oratorio."

Check local listings for all broadcast da and times, or call NPR's toll-free informati number, 1-800-424-2909 (after October 19).

## Photography

### Saluting O'Sullivan

Even without knowing the difficulty of the v collodion process that he mastered so e quently, one has to admire the photograp

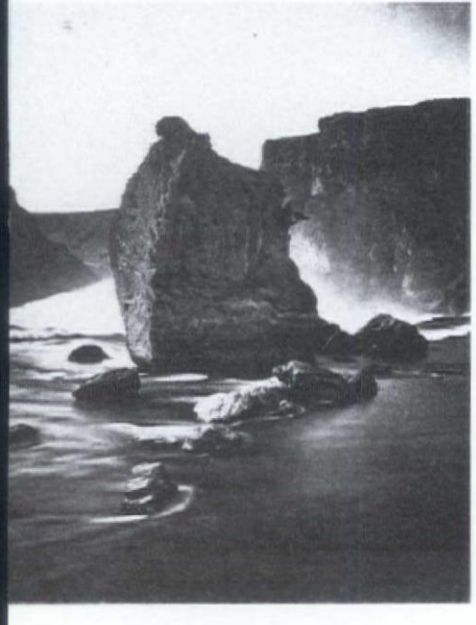


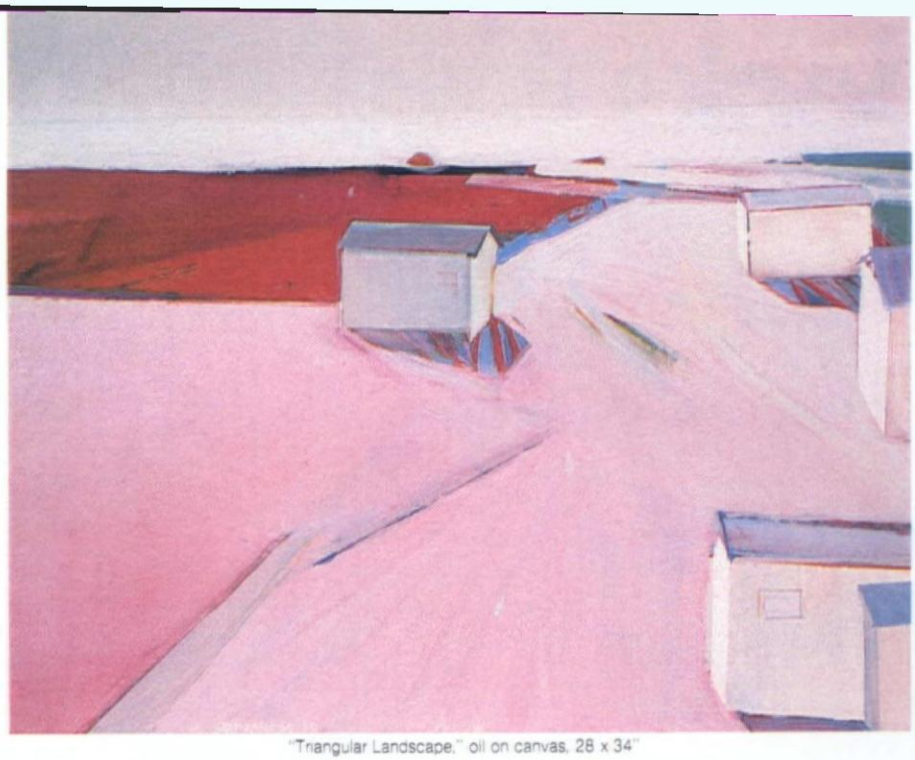
kill of Timothy O'Sullivan. His views of the ivil War are among the most memorable of n intensely divisive period in American istory. O'Sullivan then took his portable arkroom to create brilliant scenes of the ocky Mountains and Sierra Nevada. Accordg to Joel Snyder, professor of the humanities the University of Chicago, O'Sullivan's ountain views "were factually impeccable yet piritually different from those of his contemoraries who saw the American interior as ssentially picturesque."

Snyder's appreciation of O'Sullivan is videnced in "American Frontiers: The hotographs of Timothy O'Sullivan," an xhibition he organized with Michael Hoffan, advisor to the Stieglitz Center of hotography at the Philadelphia Museum of rt. More than 200 images were drawn from ntage prints in the National Archives, the ibrary of Congress, and private collections. A rge number of albumen prints have been ade from O'Sullivan's unpublished negatives r their first public display.

"American Frontiers" opens October 3 at e Philadelphia Museum of Art, where it mains until January 3, 1982. The Philadelhia tribute, which will travel to other useums in the United States and Canada, is e first major exhibition devoted exclusively O'Sullivan's photographs.

*imothy O'Sullivan's* Shoshone Falls, Snake iver, Idaho *(1874) is an albumen print, one f 200 prints in a new exhibition.*



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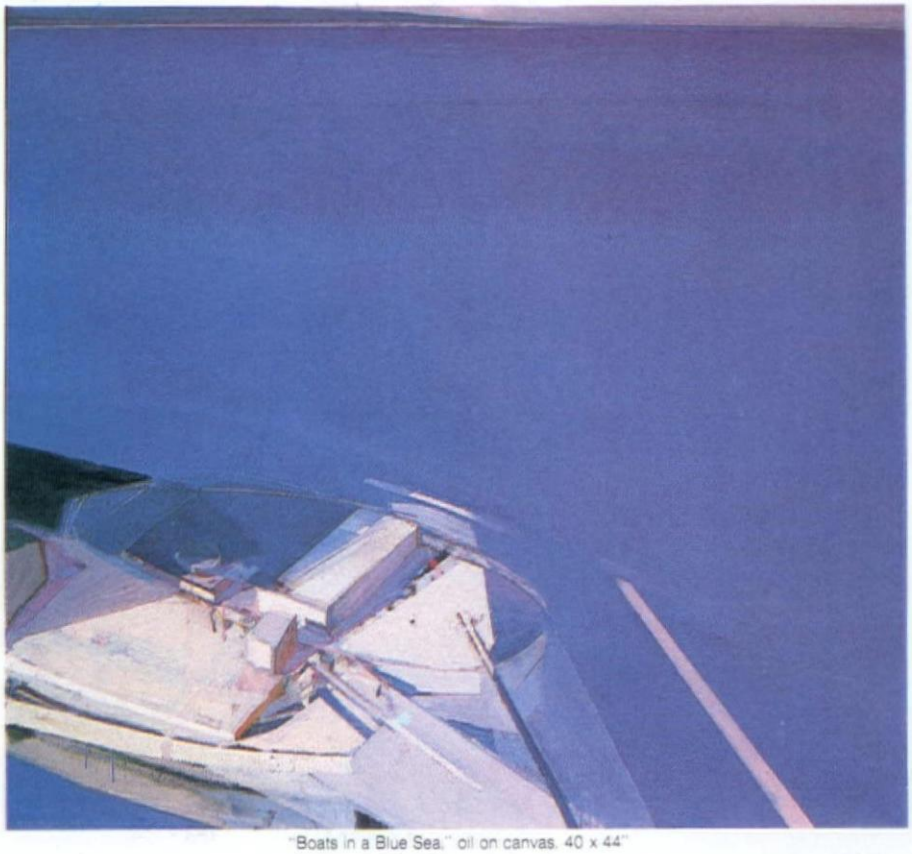

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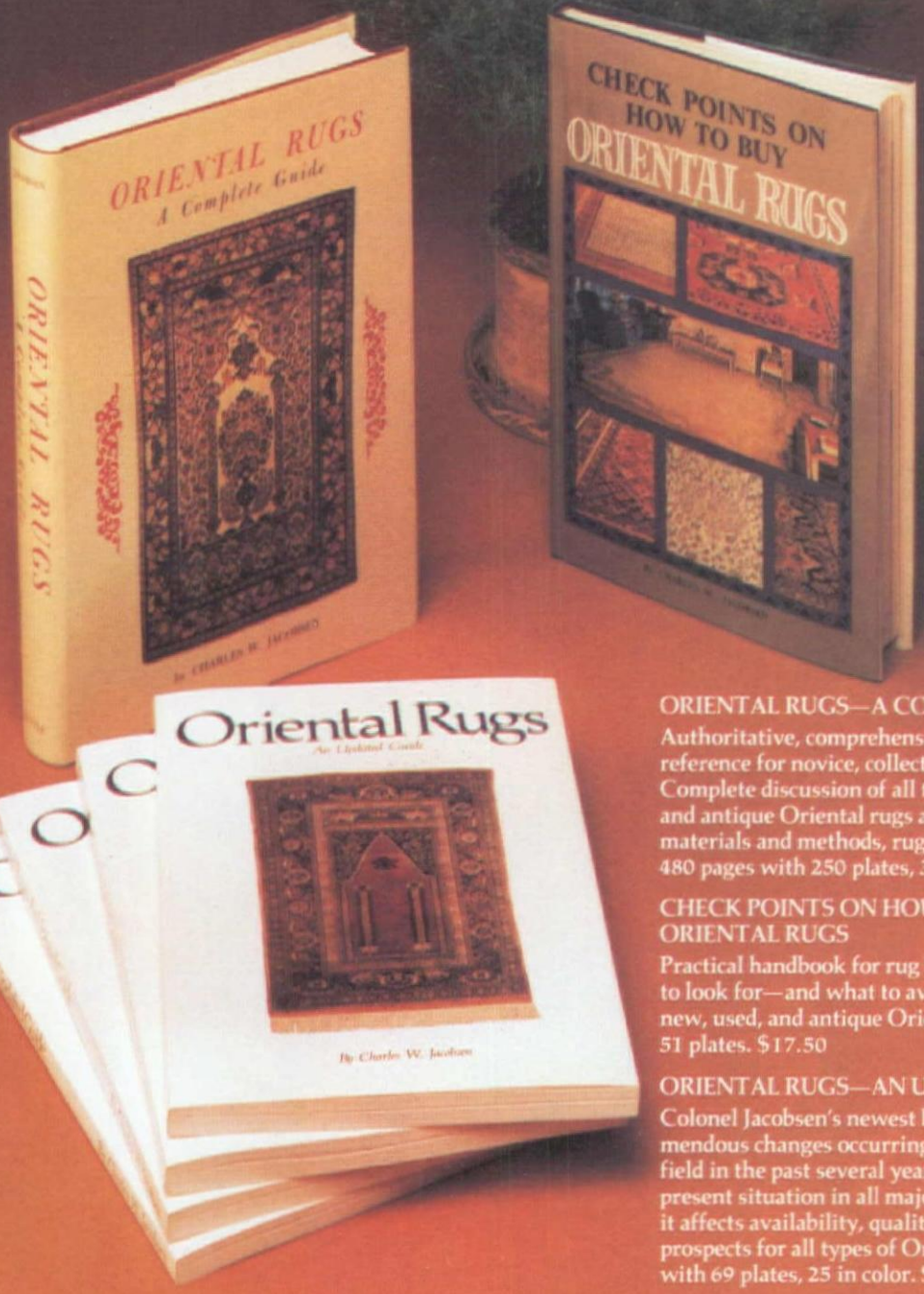


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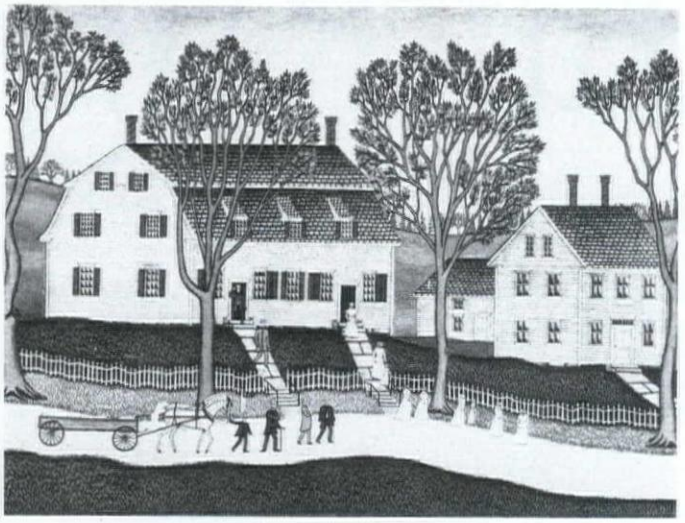

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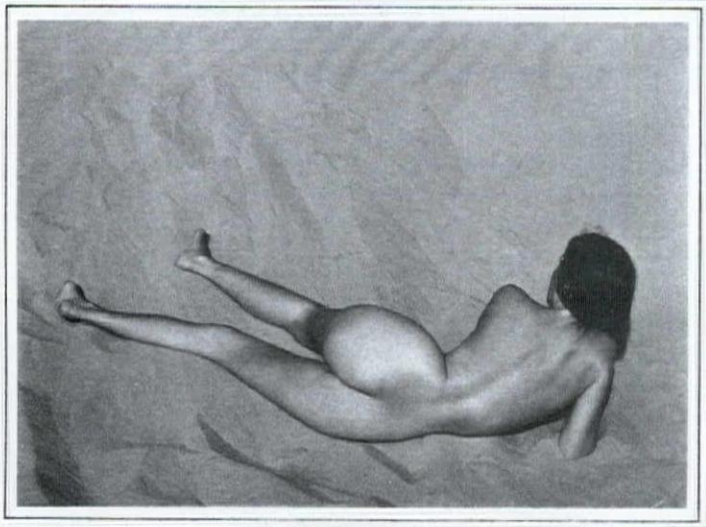

Edward Weston, "Nude, 1936," Vintage Print

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## Cross Country

## Books

### Opus Posthumous

Before she died last January, author Fa Brodie managed to finish what she kn would be her last book—a psychological stu of Richard Nixon. Most of Brodie's previc works had been extremely controversial, an furor still rages around the case she made *Thomas Jefferson: An Intimate History* t the third president's having sired seve children by his slave mistress, Sally Hemin *Richard Nixon: The Shaping of His Charact* published late last month, is equally certain infuriate Nixon's defenders, but it offe fascinating details of the ex-president's l that no other biographer has unearthed.

The February 1981 Horizon carried the la published profile of Brodie, in which she ga a preview of her Nixon findings. Lying, s asserted, was the obsessive streak that r throughout Nixon's life; hundreds of earli prevarications and deceptions prefigured t Watergate cover-up. The portrait that emerg is a grimly enthralling sketch of a man with natural bent for self-destruction.

Brodie did not live to have a chance to reb Jefferson scholars Dumas Malone and Virgini Dabney, whose recent books dismiss the tale Sally Hemings. In a review in the *New Yo Times*, the Southern historian, C. Vann Woo ward, while praising both books, insisted th were overly conclusive about the Hemin matter. Woodward did not go so far as t endorse Brodie's speculations about Jefferso but indicated that the theory of progeny by slave mistress stands firm as a biographic possibility. —*David Rober*

## Literature

### Missing in Action

At least one recluse comes out of hiding theatrically speaking, on Broadway thi month. A reclusive novelist in New England i the fictional protagonist of a new play by Tor Griffin, *Einstein and the Polar Bear*, openin October 22 at the Cort Theatre. Peter Straus stars as a writer supposedly loosely based o J. D. Salinger. For more on writers in hiding including Salinger, see Thomas LeClair' "Missing Novelists" on page 48 of this issue.

## Television

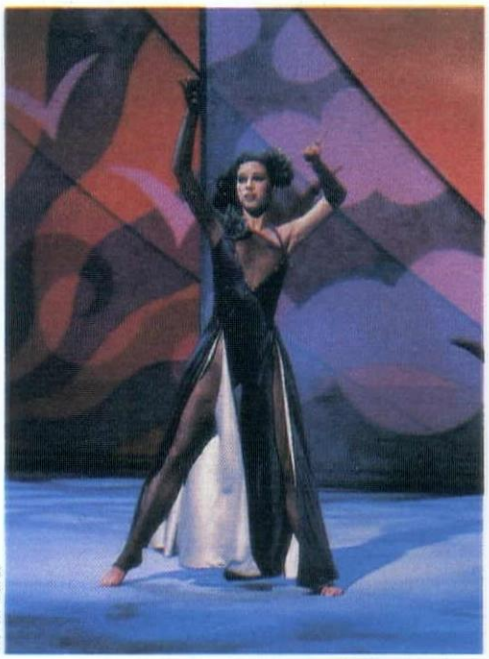
### High-Culture Wire Act

ike Dann, former programming chief at BS-TV and now a cable-TV consultant, has edicted that the advent of "the wired socie- " will change the world. In the arts, cable TV ill bring culture into Everyman's home.

At least a half-dozen networks are scram- ing for a piece of that cultural wired society, id this month Dann's former employer opens s bid. CBS Cable will offer twelve hours of ts programming a day beginning October 12. ubscribers can view new productions starring ill Moyers, Norman Lear, Ralph Richardson, id the Twyla Tharp company, as well as lected acquisitions. A five-year, twenty-five- rogram series on American jazz commences ith "A Tribute to Count Basie," featuring ie Count, Tony Bennett, George Benson, and Sarah Vaughan. "The Life of Verdi," is a twelve-hour series with the voices of Callas, Pavarotti, Tebaldi, and Corelli.

Particularly notable is CBS Cable's upcoming "May O'Donnell's Dance Energies," which highlights the choreography of an American dance pioneer. O'Donnell, now seventy-four, was a principal dancer with Martha Graham; she then formed her own company and was an influence on Robert Joffrey, Gerald Arpino, and Norman Walker. Broadcast the week of October 19, this will be O'Donnell's first television special.

CBS Cable will be sponsored by advertisers, and so comes free to subscribers of participating cable companies. But don't expect cable culture to be a free lunch forever: Dann foresees a day when the total household bill for home electronic services will average $500 a month.



Steven Caras

*"Pursuit of Happiness" will be performed on "May O'Donnell's Dance Energies."*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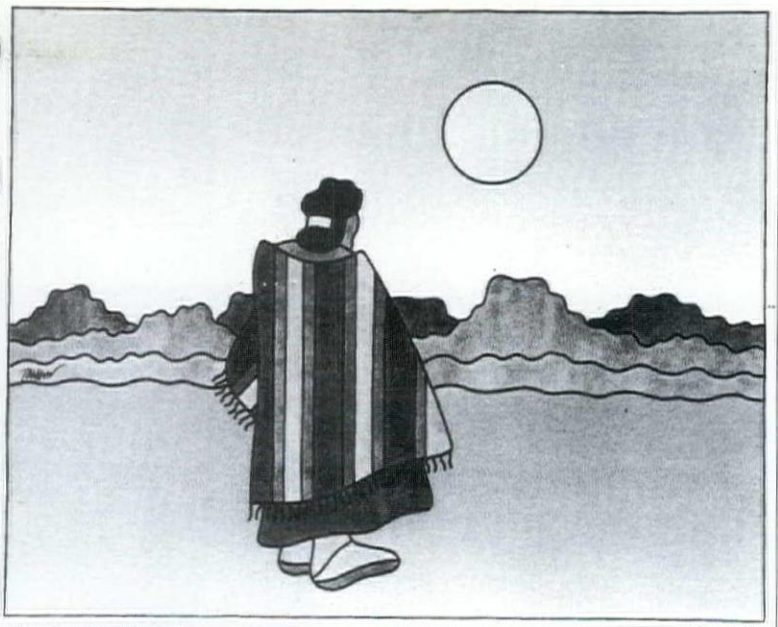

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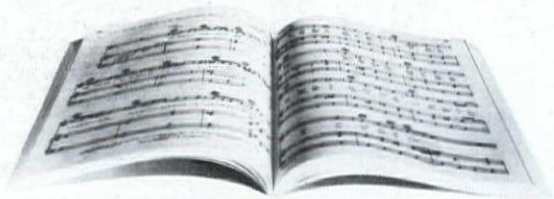
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## Cross Country

## Theater

### Actors Sitting Around Talking

Last year, when Susan Sarandon appeai with Eileen Brennan in John Ford Noonan's *Coupla White Chicks Sitting Around Talkii* it was the beginning of a love affair with t theater. "It brought me back to the reality what acting was all about," she says. "I s the incredible response from the audience a I couldn't accept nor understand it, becai when you make films you don't have any sei of how you affect people. I had been worki in a vacuum for so long, and suddenly I had admit to what I was: an actress."

Not someone to let her enthusiasm go waste, Sarandon started an acting compa that now includes Richard Dreyfuss, Broc Adams, Peter Boyle, Paul Dooley, Cai Kane, Peter Riegert, Anne DeSalvo, Anc Gregory, and Griffin Dunne. They meet eve Monday night in a space provided by t Public Theater in New York and opera within a loose framework wherein one c come and go without interrupting the ongoi improvisations. Different actors take coi mand each time. There is neither a director n a spectator in sight.

Explains Sarandon, "It's all about takii chances again, about remembering how make a fool of yourself without feeling ba about it, which becomes harder and harder tl more visible and 'famous' you become."

Although the group eventually aims at se ting up projects, "it's really for ourselves. W have the luxury of not having to perform f the public. The minute you have a publ —even a director—you're immediately censo ing. We're doing it for the joy of doing i without having to judge whether it's good bad. You become so product-oriented, s hungry for approval that you miss the who idea of trusting your instincts.

"It's also important to have a company actors who are supportive of each other an act as a group," Sarandon continues. "At certain point in their career, a lot of sta simply can't put aside their egos—it's tc terrifying—but this group did. More and mo people are asking about the company and keeps growing. Eventually, we may also have similar group in L.A." —*Dan Yak*

Because of our six-week lead time, changes in scheduling may have curred since the magazine went to press.

# *Strokes of Genius*

Genius surfaces . . . on the ooden stage, the musical :ore, the ballet barre, the ib and the quill, the color neared palette—and in the ages of HORIZON.

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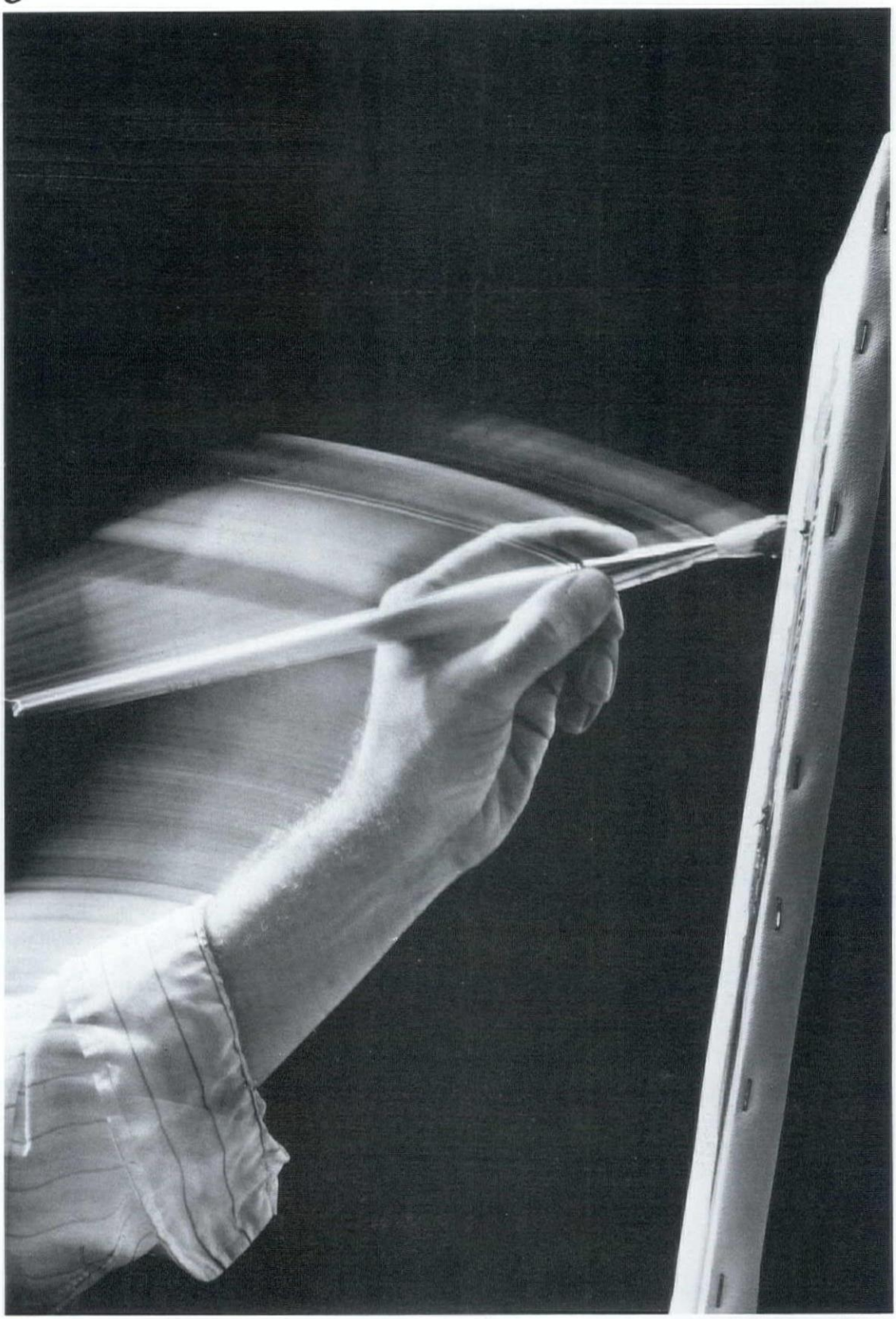


# Dutch Treats

## In this first look at a lavish private collection, we see how the Dutch saw Nature—and, by reflection, themselves.

By Joy DeWeese-Wehen

"A perfect painting is like a mirror of Nature, that causes things that are not there to appear, and that deceives in an acceptable, amusing, and praiseworthy way," said Samuel van Hoogstraeten of Rotterdam in 1678.

Deceptive? Amusing? Could he really have been reporting the tastes of those honest, sober, perfectionist people, the seventeenth-century Dutch? He could indeed: it was that very worship of tidy perfection in everything from a clock tower to a tulip bed that made the Dutch want to rearrange Nature in their "perfect paintings." The finest and most representative private collection of those seventeenth-century Dutch paintings—that of department-store magnate Edward William Carter—opens October 13 at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. "A Mirror of Nature: Dutch Paintings from the Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Edward William Carter" will be on view in Los Angeles through January 3, 1982, and then in Boston and New York.

The Dutch, as the Carter collection vividly illustrates, couldn't have been less interested in paintings of hills, rivers, or trees exactly as they looked in real life. They wanted Nature rearranged as God would have done if he had been a seventeenth-century Dutchman. After all, they had been carving up Nature for centuries as they reclaimed their country from the sea, so why shouldn't their artists have the same privilege? Artists had always painted in their studios, anyway, from memory, sketches, and their own imaginations. Outdoor painting came in only with the nineteenth century; until then, an artist would no more have taken his easel out to a scene than a writer today would lug his typewriter to a hilltop in order to describe the view. This same doing-Nature-one-better applied to flower paintings as well: nothing said that all the flowers in a painting had to be in season at the same time. Architectural studies and church interiors had to be as precise as a contractor's blueprint, but their elements could be scrambled from half-a-dozen less fortunate buildings. The Dutch didn't call this deception. They called it art.

Peter Mundy, visiting Amsterdam in 1640, said, "As for the art of painting and the affection of the people to pictures, I think none other go beyond them." The Dutch like paintings for interior decoration: large landscapes for the outer or street room to impress the neighbors, small "cabinet" pictures that could be studied with the same pleasure as reading a book, flower studies for the bedroom, still lifes of food and utensils to hang in the dining room, and "vanitas" paintings of skulls and guttering candles—Calvinist reminders of the brevity of life—for mijnheer's library for the good of his soul. Not only the gentry and merchants bought paintings. Butchers and bakers hung art in their homes and shops; even the humblest cobbler or blacksmith would have an original oil painting in his stall.

No wonder, with this staggering demand for art, that the seventeenth-century Netherlands produced not only the immortals like Rembrandt, Vermeer, and Hals, but more notable artists than almost any other nation has produced in a comparable period of time, especially a nation the size of the Netherlands. It was a peak of brilliance in a culture that had already produced Jan van Eyck and Hieronymus Bosch and that would produce such twentieth-century greats as Piet Mondrian, Willem de Kooning, and Karel Appel. It was also a peak of realism in Western art, casting a spell of influence over realist painters for centuries to come, particularly the nineteenth century.

For those who think of the Netherlands that quaint little country of wooden shoes a windmills, it is difficult to realize that in seventeenth century Holland was the great sea power on earth and the center of wo trade. From its holdings in the East and W Indies flowed a golden river of guilders. T Netherlands became the banker of Europe, foreign princes came to borrow money to p for the wars that the Dutch rulers wisely stay out of. Above all, the Dutch were materiali with a healthy appetite for worldly pleasur fascinated by science, devoted to possessio The court kept a low profile; the burghers h the money and the power.

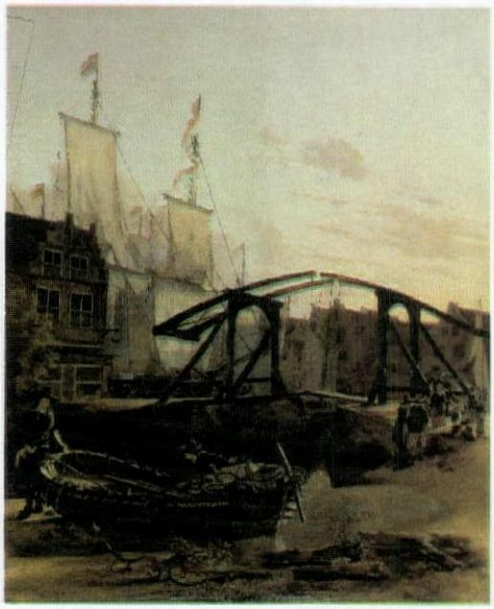
This was the great distinction between Dut art in the seventeenth century and that of t rest of Europe. Art patrons in the Netherlar were the wealthy Protestant merchant cla not the nobility or the church. Although th liked paintings that preached a good Calvin moral, they had no use for the showy religio works of the Counter Reformation in Ital Even the Dutch church interiors (a genre th originated) were more studies in space a light than religious exercises.

The Dutch were the first to teach that natu has a grandeur of its own, worthy of an artis attention as much as any classical scene or roy portrait. Their painters made two major cont butions to the development of landscape pain ing: spaciousness, and an almost palpable sen of weather and atmosphere. The enormousne of the skies and towering cloud forms contras dramatically with the toybox tidiness of t Dutch countryside. And some paintings conv so well the moist air of the Netherlands that t

*Careful study reveals a Calvinist moral in Ambrosius Bosschaert's* Bouquet of Flowers on a Ledge *(oil on copper, 11 x 9 inches), earliest painting in the collection.*

*Joy DeWeese-Wehen is a free-lance writer who lives in San Francisco and is a frequent contributor to* Horizon.

# It was a peak of realism in Western art, influencing centuries to come.



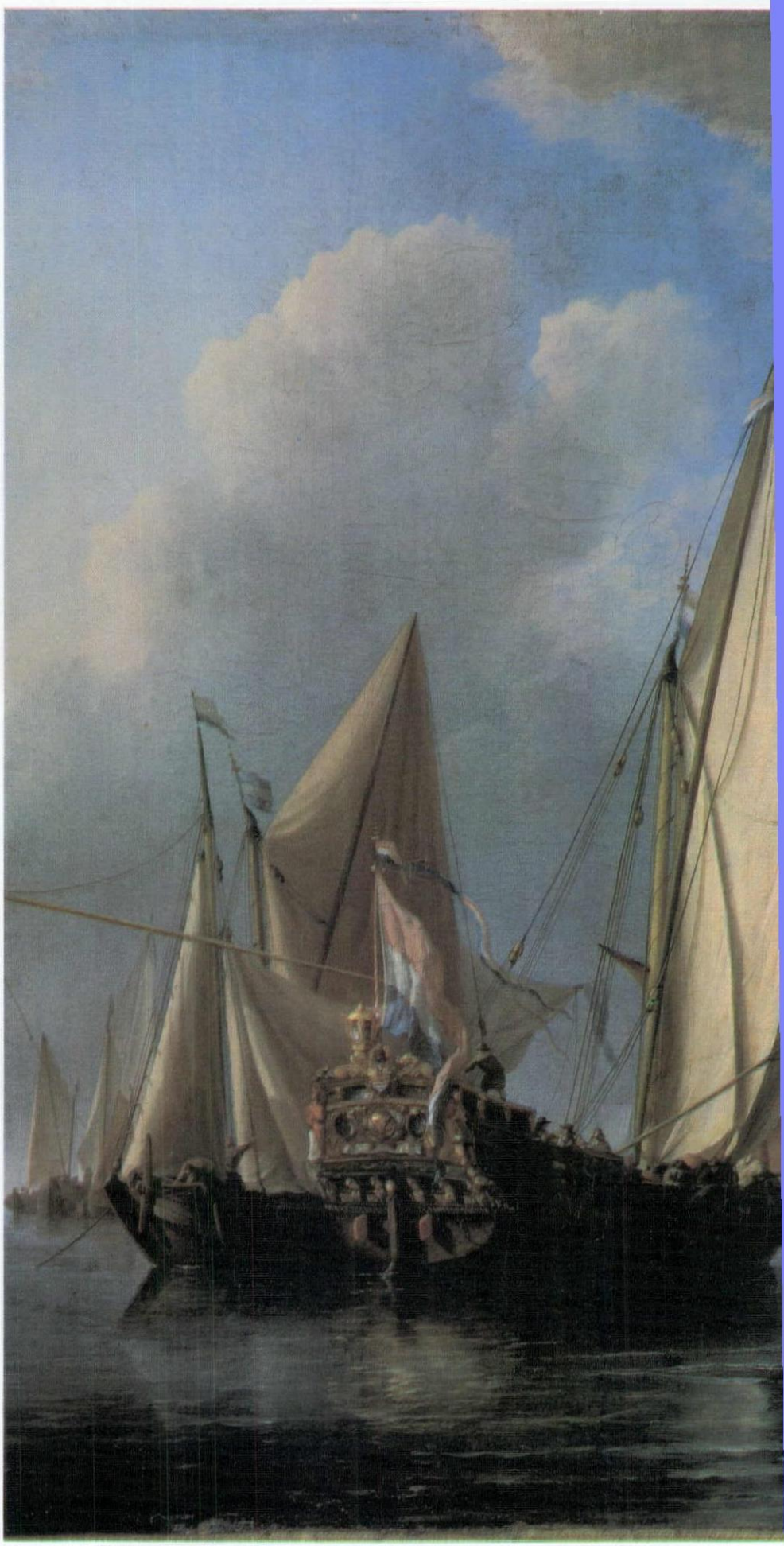
*Above:* View of a Harbor in a City *by Adam Pynacker (oil on canvas, 21¾ x 17⅞ inches). Right:* A Yacht and Other Vessels in a Calm *by Willem van de Velde the Younger (1671, oil on canvas, 13⅛ x 17⅛ inches). The Dutch, whose economy was linked with the sea, were fond of seascapes and exacting in their demands on seascape painters. Few liberties could be taken with reality.*

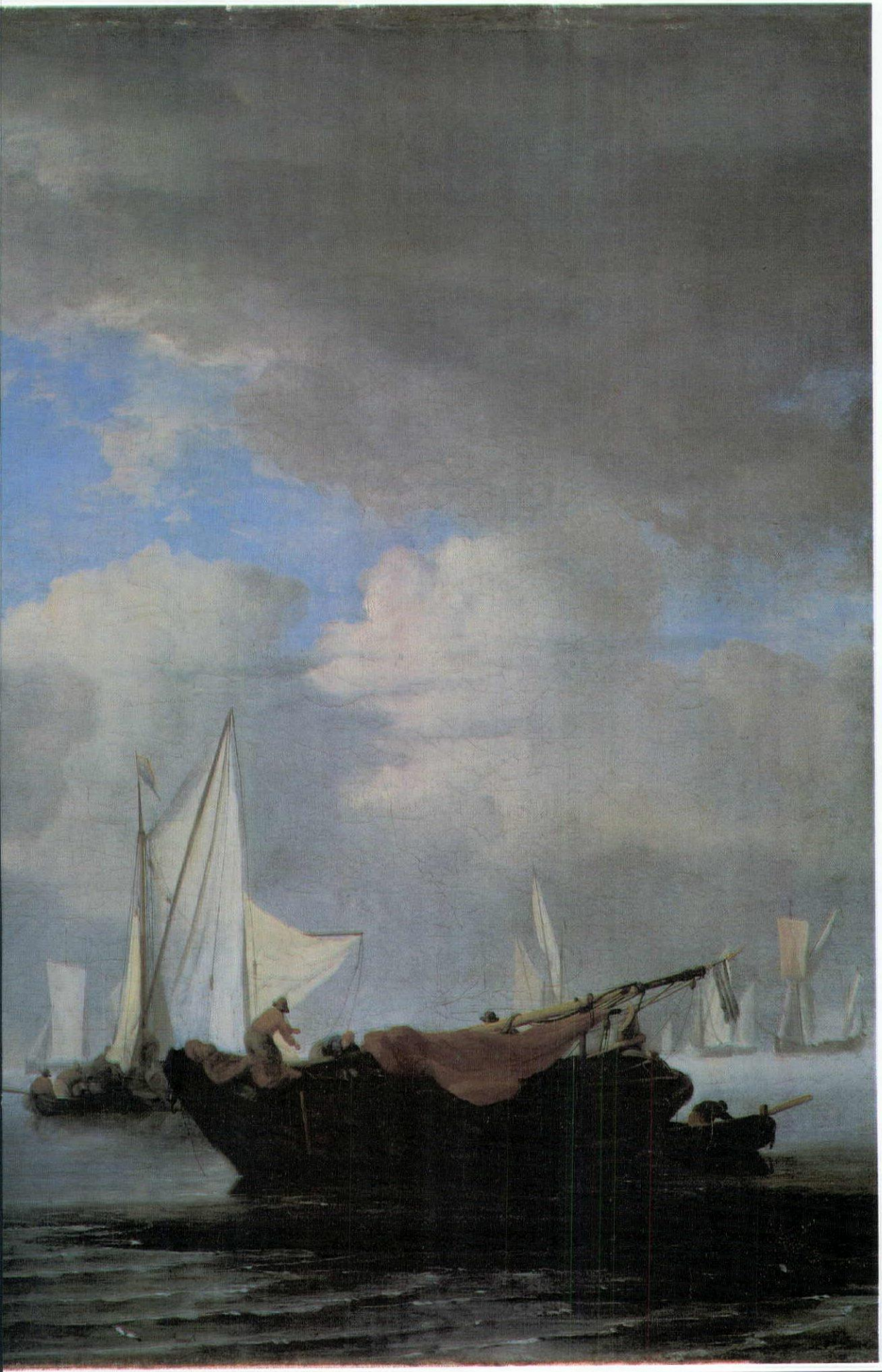
viewer feels his finger would come away wet if he touched the canvas.

No other country or period produced so many superb still lifes: they were symbolic of the Dutch devotion to their possessions and the intimacy and importance of things used in daily life. Even our phrase, "still life," comes from the Dutch word for such a painting—*still-leven.*

The Carter collection is rich in all these aspects of Dutch painting. Carter, chairman of Carter Hawley Hale Stores Inc. (Neiman Marcus, Bergdorf Goodman), founding president of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, noted philanthropist, discovered the lures of the Dutch early in life. He says simply, "I have always liked Dutch paintings," and the collection he has built with phenomenal rapidity over the last quarter century has some of the best. It is devoted exclusively to landscapes, seascapes, architectural interiors, town views, still lifes, and flower paintings.

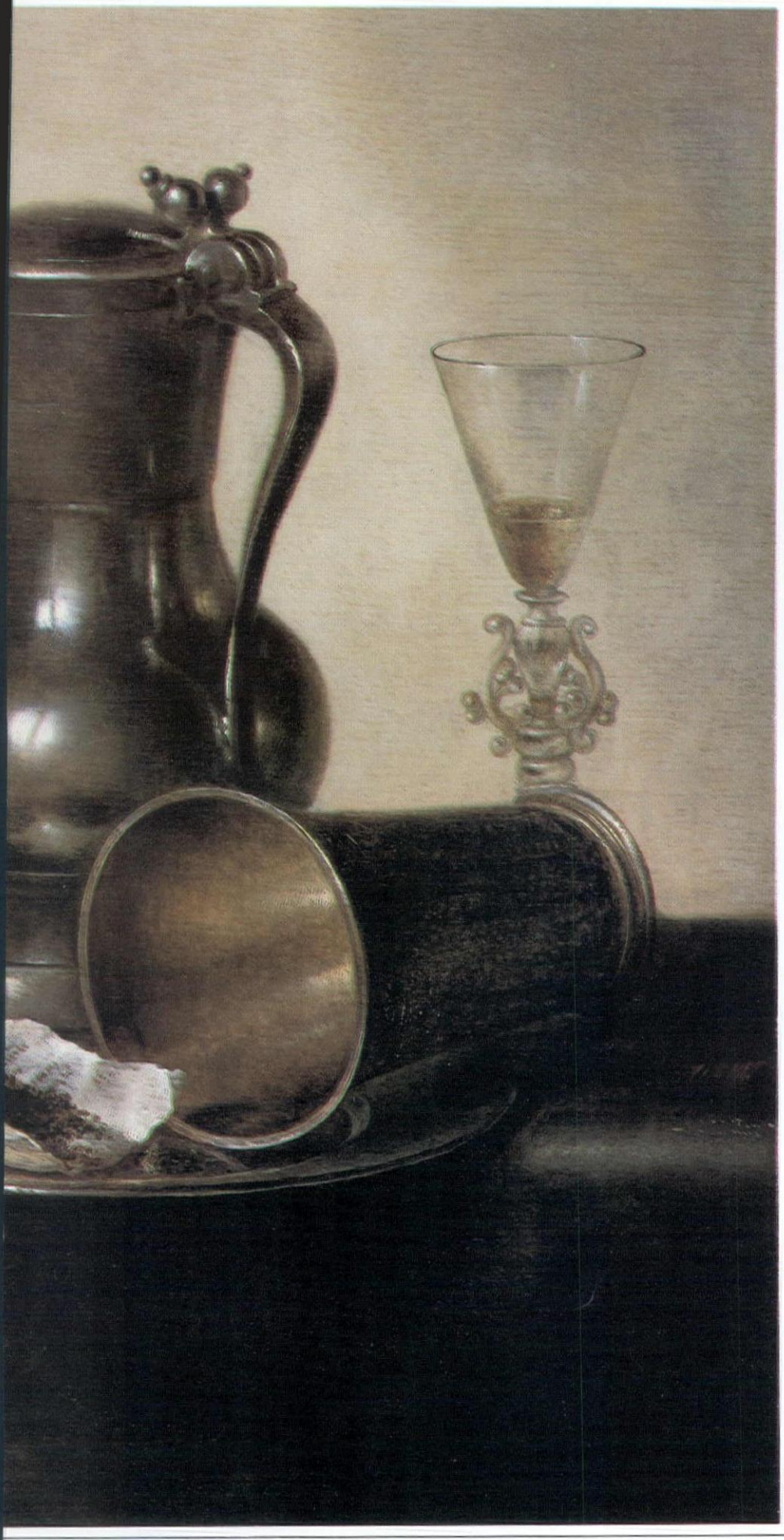
Carter's personal favorite is a landscape, *Winter Scene on a Frozen Canal* by Hendrick Avercamp. Influenced by Pieter Brueghel in



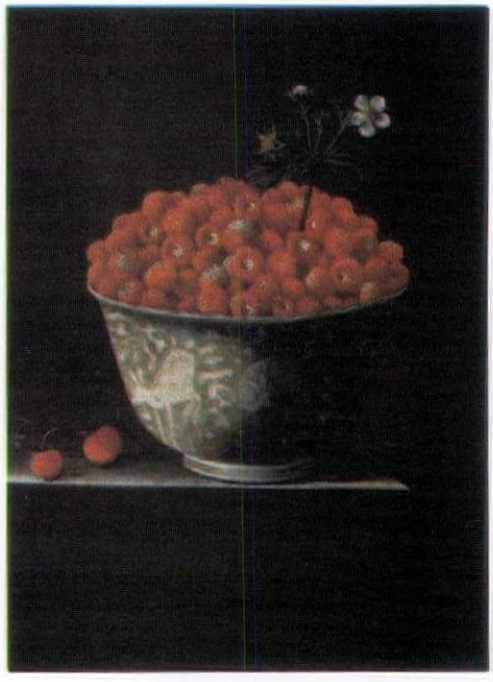


*Overleaf: Hendrick Avercamp's* Winter Scene on a Frozen Canal *(circa 1620, oil on wood, 14½ x 25¾ inches), Carter's personal favorite in the collection.*

HEDA
1637



# The Dutch were the first to teach that Nature had a grandeur of its own.



*Left:* Still Life with Tobacco, Wine, and a Pocket Watch *by Willem Claesz Heda (1637, oil on wood, 16½ x 21½ inches). Above:* Wild Strawberries in a Wan Li Bowl *by Adriaen Coorte (1704, oil on paper mounted on wood, 11 5/8 x 8 7/8 inches). Hedda's work can be "read" for its moral symbolism; Coorte's is "about" beauty.*

his cheerful, busy panoramas of the Dutch outdoors, Avercamp was the first artist to specialize in outdoor winter scenes of sport.

Jan van Goyen and Salomon van Ruysdael were the first to use detached impressionist touches of paint to portray the windy Dutch weather. Van Goyen, represented by *View of Dordrecht,* developed quick, whirling strokes to make the air vibrate. Van Ruysdael used large feathery trees for vertical accents, as in *River Landscape with a Ferry*, where they point to the pearly shades of his sky and clouds.

Aert van der Neer was the most famous specialist in moonlight and sunset landscapes. *Frozen River With a Footbridge* illustrates his typical high point of view. The feeling of immense space and sky is all the more remarkable for the dimensions of this "cabinet" painting: 15 x 19¼ inches.

An interesting curiosity is *Brazilian Landscape with a Worker's House* by Frans Post, who accompanied Prince Johan Maurits of Nassau on his voyage to colonize the northeastern part of Brazil for the Dutch West

# They had been carving up Nature for centuries; why shouldn't artists?

ıdies Company. His were the first landscapes ainted in the New World by a European.

Two small landscapes by Meindert Hobbema ·e included: the Carters found the second, ɔmpanion piece ten years after they'd pur- ıased the first, and were able to reunite them ı their collection. Hobbema, noted for his ·ees, was ignored by his contemporaries; it was ot until the nineteenth century that he achieved ɛcognition, particularly in England and rance, where he exerted considerable influence n Constable and the Barbizon school.

Jacob van Ruisdael was considered the ɔremost artist of the younger school of ıonumental landscape painters, with strong heatrical contrasts and grandiose cloud ormations. In his *View of Grainfields with a Distant Town*, the slanting sun dramatically potlights a field of uncut grain, while another tand has already been gathered into shocks; in he sky a towering battlement of clouds echoes he shape of the dark forest-crowned hill; a ingle home-bound farmer—a favorite device —anchors the scene to the human world.

Seascapes were special Dutch favorites, as so nuch of the Netherlands' economy was linked o the sea. This was one area of art where the ırtist was not encouraged to be "deceptive and ımusing"—his keen-eyed patron probably ɛnew more about sails, rigging, water currents, ınd winds than he did, and woe to him and his ɔmmission if he got a single wavelet wrong. The early marine works were little more than hipwrights' blueprints; Jan Porcellis, epresented here by *Vessels in a Moderate Breeze*, introduced choppy seas and threaten- ng skies. Willem van de Velde the Younger *Beach with a Weyschuit Pulled up on Shore* nd *A Yacht and Other Vessels in a Storm*) often sailed with his father in the Dutch fleet to ecord battles. After moving to England in 672 and being given the Queen's House at Greenwich for a studio, they served as court narine painters to Charles II, and influenced eascapes for generations to come.

Among the unique church interiors in the Carter collection is a gaunt, structurally powerful study of the Mariakerk in Utrecht by he hunchback recluse Pieter Saenredam, who ometimes took a quarter-century to complete a work. Another, Emanuel de Witte's startling *Interior of the Nieuwe Kerk in Delft with the Tomb of William the Silent*, with its tumultuous folds of a drawn-back curtain leading the eye to the Netherlands' most important monument, imitates the real curtain that often hung across Dutch paintings to protect them from dust and light.

Of the exterior architectural works, Adam Pynacker's *View of a Harbor in a City*, as an intimate harbor scene in an urban setting, is unique in seventeenth-century Dutch painting. *View of the Herrengracht, Amsterdam*, by Jan van der Heyden, whose combination of cobblestone-perfect realism with painterly atmosphere was only to be equaled by Canaletto in the next century, is Carter's own "close second" favorite in the collection. Van der Heyden was the first artist to rearrange elements of a known city to create imaginary views, a logical corollary to his principal profession of engineering and invention. He invented the firehose and developed Amsterdam's system of street lighting.

Seventeenth-century Dutch still lifes may be enjoyed purely as works of art, or they may be "read" as their owners would have read them, as a sort of Calvinist visual shorthand—each element with its particular chastising moral. In the earliest of the Carter examples, *Still Life With Tobacco, Wine and a Pocket Watch* by Willem Claesz Heda, one may admire the light effects on smooth glass, crumbly tobacco, and crinkled paper; or one may meditate upon the overturned cup ("The glass of life is empty"), the pocket watch ("Time is running out"), and the pipe and tobacco, all symbols of a dissolute life. Suitably chastened, the viewer turns to Adriaen Coorte's *Wild Strawberries in a Wan Li Bowl*; it teaches only one lesson, the immortality of beauty.

The spectacular finale of "A Mirror of Nature" is the flower paintings. The most flower-loving people in the world, the Dutch are also keen horticulturists, and flower paintings originated when proud burghers wanted "portraits" of their rarest specimens, much as they would order a group portrait of their grandchildren.

The earliest in the Carter collection is *Bouquet of Flowers on a Ledge* by Ambrosius Bosschaert, painted on copper with a miniaturist's precision. Each blossom is a meticulous, evenly lighted botanical study as divorced from its neighbor as though it had a frame around it. The setting of an open ledge with a sunny landscape behind it is unusual (Bosschaert usually placed his bouquets in a niche); the seashells recall the Dutch passion for conchology. This painting may represent a private horticultural collection, or it may have been a town dweller's substitute for a dreamed-of garden. The flowers were painted from studies, as they do not all bloom at the same time. Once again, the Calvinist need to moralize invaded even the sunny cheerfulness of a bouquet: death and decay are symbolized by insects preying on the blossoms; a dewdrop on a petal shows the transience of human life; another petal has a hole in it, reminding us that beauty fades; on the white rose is a *doodgraver* or burying beetle, which digs a nest for its larvae under a dead mouse. But lest the viewer dissolve in gloom at these unsubtle messages, Bosschaert included two upbeat notes: a butterfly and a carnation, which stood for the resurrection of the soul.

Very different is *Flowers in a Glass Vase* by the great woodcut artist Dirck de Bray, where dramatic shafts of light and shadow epitomize the day and night of the soul. Opium poppies have long been associated with night and sleep; morning glories close their petals at sunset. Just in case a particularly obtuse burgher wasn't getting the message, de Bray included the universal symbol for sin, a fly.

Finally, in an opulent, overblown symphony of rhythm and color, comes Jan van Huysum's great *Bouquet of Flowers in an Urn*. Brilliant, hectic, the flowers swirl and tumble out of the frame. Van Huysum was the only artist who painted his flowers from life; he once kept a client waiting two years until every blossom he wanted had come into season. The broken tulip, again a symbol of the passing of beauty, is one of his trademarks, as is the pale background scene suggesting a park, which anticipates the backgrounds of Gainsborough and Reynolds in the next century.

Given the long wait for a van Huysum still life, is it any wonder the Dutch opted instead for artifice and a perfectionist's control? When they peered into the "mirror of Nature," they didn't want fickle Nature dictating what they could see.

*Emanuel de Witte's* Interior of the Nieuwe Kerk in Delft with the Tomb of William the Silent *(1653, oil on wood, 32 3/8 x 25 5/8 inches), a noted church interior.*

"A Mirror of Nature" travels to the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, January 20, 1982, through March 14, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, April 7 through June 20. The exhibition is accompanied by a 192-page catalogue published by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

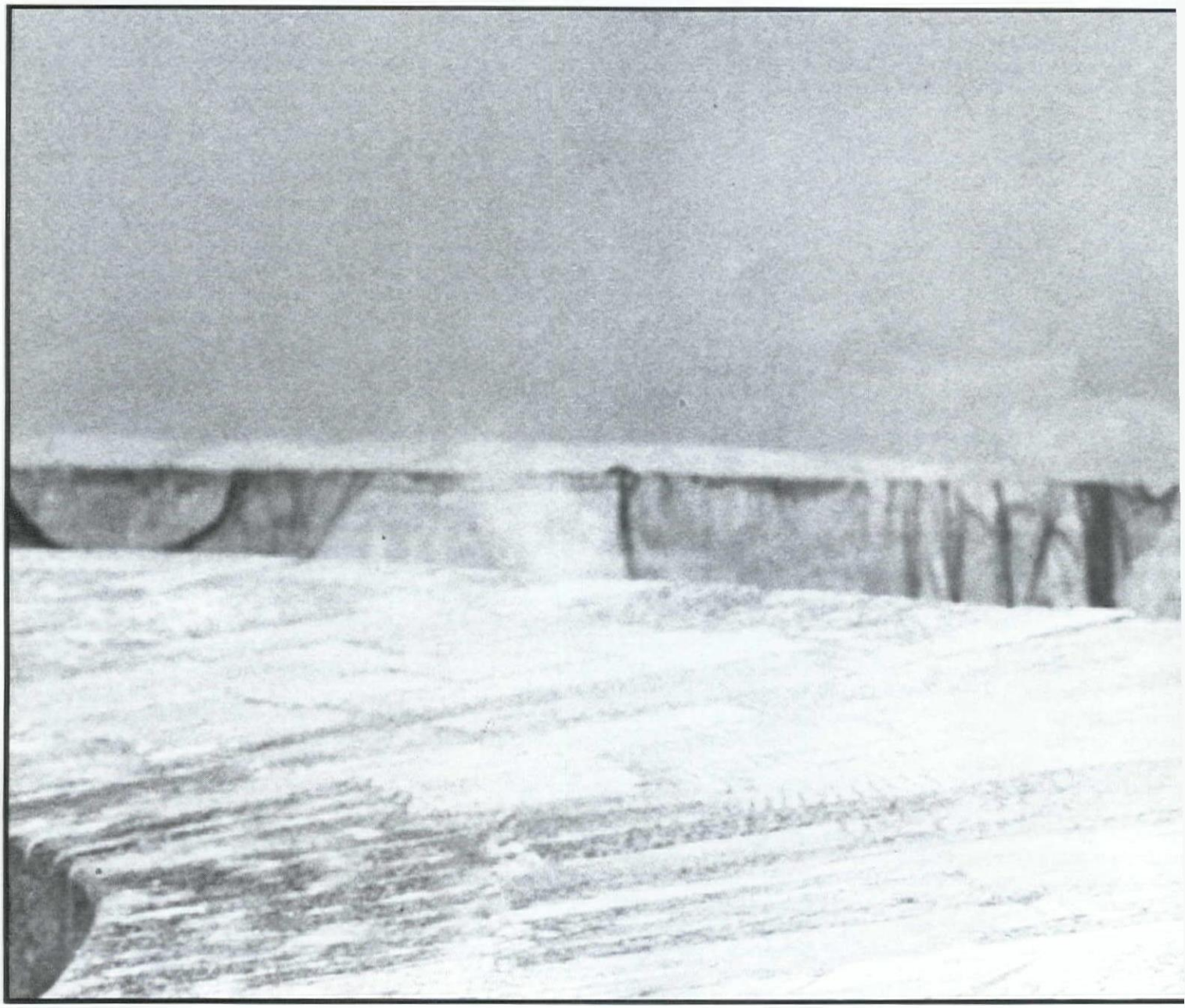
# A Stormy Courtship

## Persuading Meryl Streep to play *The French Lieutenant's Woman* was the easy part . . .

By Mel Gussow

When we first meet Sarah Woodruff, the mysterious title character in John Fowles' novel, *The French Lieutenant's Woman,* it is March 1867, and she is standing on a long spit that juts from the quay at Lyme Regis in Dorset, England. Dressed all in black, she is leaning against the up-ended barrel of a cannon. The wind is blowing, writes Fowles, "but the figure stood motionless, staring, staring out to sea, more like a living memorial to the drowned, a figure from myth, than any proper fragment of the petty provincial day."

On another day, in June 1980, director Kar Reisz has settled his film crew in Lyme Regi which, not so coincidentally, happens to be tl home of John Fowles. The novelist is also tl curator of the local museum and an expert c the region's history, geography, and weathe He has stated categorically that in Lyme Reg there are no storms in May, June, or July. T his chagrin, during the weeks of locatic shooting for the film version of *The Frenc Lieutenant's Woman,* scarcely a day passe without rain—sudden flashes or hour-lor



ownpours. Standing on the quay was Meryl treep, the acclaimed American actress, playg her first starring film role as the title haracter. She was dressed in black, staring, aring out to sea . . . and getting absolutely renched to the skin.

Weather was but the last of many problems ncountered in bringing *The French Lieutenit's Woman* to the screen; it premieres ationally October 2. The first obstacle was onvincing the money men that Fowles' hauntg, deviously complex novel could be a movie at all. It was a most unusual best seller. On one level, the novel is a lush, romantic view of an independent woman in an unliberated era; on another level, it is a contemporary commentary on the inhibitions of an earlier civilization and on the literary conventions of the Victorian novel itself. Those reflective undercurrents would seem to be untranslatable to the screen. Although the pivotal character is Sarah, we see her through the eyes of Charles Smithson, a handsome young geologist and ardent Darwinian. Charles is engaged to Ernestina, the pretty daughter of a rich merchant, but, after one glance at Sarah, a woman abandoned by a French lieutenant, he falls helplessly in love and forsakes his fiancée in pursuit of his new passion. Shifting from the enigmatic Sarah to Charles, with his contradictory emotions, pausing for observations from the author and concluding with two entirely different endings, the novel is by Fowles' own admission, "a diabolically difficult novel to compress."

All photographs © 1981 United Artists Corporation.

Nonetheless, from the time of its publication in 1969, the novel has tantalized movie makers. According to the author, it has seldom been out of option, bouncing from producer to director, including, most confidently, Fred Zinnemann who, some years ago, almost succeeded in putting together a production. But every interested party was deterred—by the complexity of the book, the casting of the title role, or the anticipation of a high budget. In a time of retrenchment in Hollywood, it looked as if it would have to be an expensive period film. Over the years, a multitude of top actresses had been rumored—but not signed—to play Sarah, including Vanessa Redgrave, Glenda Jackson, and Faye Dunaway.

For Fowles, the failure of anyone to get the project off the ground was disappointing but not unexpected, and in a curious way, he says, almost a relief. He'd had unhappy experiences with the two previous adaptations of his novels, *The Collector* and *The Magus*. Looking back on those films, Fowles says, "I respect William Wyler [the director of *The Collector*], and the movie had its moments, but those two actors [Samantha Eggar and Terence Stamp] were too glossy and Hollywood. *The Magus* had the wrong director. I made a mess out of the script, it was miscast, and we had bad luck." He expressed some of his disillusionment with the movie business in his most recent novel, *Daniel Martin*, whose hero is a screenwriter. Perhaps it is the fantasist side of his nature, but Fowles still remains fascinated by films. As he says, "For me, it's potentially a major art."

His original choice to direct *The French Lieutenant's Woman* in 1969 was Karel Reisz, the highly regarded British director of *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, *Morgan*, and

*Above and left: Meryl Streep in Lyme Regis for* The French Lieutenant's Woman, *in which she plays the title role of the mysterious, independent Sarah. "For Sarah," she says, "the town was the savage place."*

*From left: Patien Collier as Sarah's employer, Mrs. Poulteney; Leo McKern as L Grogan; Lynsey Baxter as Charles fiancée, Ernestina*

*Isadora*. It was the latter movie that was the main reason Reisz turned down the project. He didn't want to do another costume picture, although the periods were, of course, different. But in 1978, several movies later, Reisz reconsidered the project and decided to accept.

To write the screenplay, he chose Harold Pinter, an expert at transferring novels into films. Pinter then faced the second obstacle: how to find a cinematic equivalent of the book's refracted point of view, the intrusion of the author into the narrative (he actually becomes a character in the book). This is what drew Pinter into the project, at the same time that it puzzled him. "What fascinated me is that it is a period story from a modern vantage point," he explains. "It's not written by a Victorian novelist." In an early version of the script by a previous writer, there was a character of "the author," who, said Fowles, became a kind of ringmaster. The novelist was intrigued by the idea but eventually dismissed it as too familiar a device. Pinter's solution, which was supposed to be cloaked in secrecy during and after shooting, was to make it a film within a film, with the star playing a contemporary actress cast in the role of the French lieutenant's woman. In the course of making the movie, the actress has an affair with her leading man, who is playing Charles Smithson. The film cuts back and forth between contemporary and classical backgrounds, paralleling two love stories and contrasting Victorian repressiveness with our modern morality code. In all respects, the director and screenwriter consider their approach an act of interpretation. Very early, Reisz told Fowles, "Don't expect your novel on screen, but I hope it will be an intelligent variation on your themes."

A critical question remained: who would play the coveted title role? Once again, there were solicitations from top actresses and, says Reisz, "even from two actors."

At the peak of her new-found fame, with her face adorning magazine covers and *Kramer vs. Kramer* one of the most popular movies of the season, Meryl Streep was sitting in the office of her high-powered agent, Sam Cohn, discussing possibilities for her future. Streep recalls: "I thought that for the first time in my life, I'm actually not going to take the first job that was offered to me. I'm actually going to *decide*. I said, 'What I don't want to do is another urban, neurotic, unhappy woman . . . for a while. I'm sick of those movies, of acting in them and seeing them. I want to transcend that—to go to another period. I want to be in a fantasy, to be someone in another life, another place, another world. I want to be . . . the French lieutenant's woman!' "

Cohn, who usually does not reveal his emotions, smiled. "Ah," he said, "we just happen to have . . . a script!"

In turn, the director, screenwriter, and novelist all agreed that Streep was the ideal choice. Reisz came to that conclusion after seeing her play a tempestuous and highly comic Kate in *Taming of the Shrew* in Central Park. To him, it demonstrated that she had a wider range than she had shown in her movies, and that she could handle elegant language. Fowles had "always argued that Sarah could be a part for an American woman. Sarah would have felt more at home in America," he explains, adding, "I'm convinced that Meryl is the best actress of her generation."

Streep's interest in *The French Lieutenant's Woman* dated from the book's publication. "I wanted to dive in and fall in love all over the pages," she recalls. But, unlike many women, she did not think of herself as Sarah: "I know that people identified with her, but I held Sarah at a distance. I thought she was maddening. John Fowles gets a kick out of the fact that a lot of people picked up the book as some kind of banner for women's liberation, but, in fact, I found her a character I would not like to emulate. She doesn't seem liberated to me. She was very manipulative in a very old-fashioned feminine way, leading Charles on in a flirtatious manner. She was mendacious."

The casting was completed and a budget drawn up—at $8 million, an exceedingly low price in this time of sky-high costs. While stressing the authenticity of the period, Reisz was serious about not making "a big film" or an "archaeological reconstruction" of Victorian times. The book was not an epic and neither is the movie. Reisz thought of *The French Lieutenant's Woman* as an extension of his other, more overtly intimate, films. "They're various," he says, "but all of them are portrait films, with one central character. This has two people, a man and a woman," and only six other significant figures. Jeremy Irons' role as Charles is just as important as Sarah: "His relationship with her awakens him from a Victorian stupor," says Reisz. Many of the most consequential scenes in the film are close up and conversational, "with two people talking in a drawing room or in the Undercliff [the forest near Lyme Regis where Sarah and Charles have their encounters] in nature—with its innocence and its danger sin. We're very short on spectacle. We do have any big production numbers, no cas and no battle scenes.

"In the film, I tried to evolve a visual s based on Victorian paintings, a very form composed, *moral* kind of look," Reisz c tinues. "The composition tells the story—v controlled although there is a lot movement." At the center of the composit is Sarah: "Many people see themselves

**The novel is, by Fowles' own admission, "a diabolically difficult novel to compress."**

*Jeremy Irons as Charles and Meryl Streep as Sarah. For the role of Charles, Streep says she pictured the young Laurence Olivier, though she adds, "I can't imagine anybody better than Jeremy Irons."*

arah, in her relationship with Victorian life. 's how they see themselves in modern life—a erson imprisoned by time and by man. Both haracters are aware of it, though not in an in-ellectual way. If I caught a bit of that, it will everberate for modern audiences."

The decision was made to shoot the film, as uch as possible, in its actual locations: in yme Regis and in London. London was used or scenes at dockside, in men's clubs, and for Charles' final, frantic search through the nderworld for the missing Sarah. The Lyme Regis sequences made it doubly convenient for Fowles: not only could he be consulted on the script, he could also act as historical adviser.

The town of Lyme Regis has apparently changed very little in a century. It is a quiet, seaside community, brought somewhat to life in the past dozen years by the publication of Fowles' novel. Tourists flock to Lyme Regis to see where the fictional Sarah stood, brooding. One can imagine the increased influx after the movie is released this fall—tourists will flock to see where Meryl Streep stood. The stone pier, the Cob, still borders the harbor and the Undercliff is on the edge of the town, a place for private, pastoral walks. After studying photographs in Fowles' museum, the director decided that the town needed a fresh coat of period paint—pink and white for the houses and cobblestone color for the main street.

Two months before shooting began, Streep moved to London, setting up residence in Kensington with her husband, sculptor Don Gummer, and their young son, Harry. Though she is an adept mimic and good at accents, she

studied with a coach to perfect her *English* English. Soaking up atmosphere, Streep studied photographs by Julia Cameron and others, spending a great deal of time at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. Nonetheless, she makes it clear that "I really don't prepare before a movie a great deal. It's much more on-the-moment kind of inspiration, depending on what the people you're playing with bring to it. Working with a totally British cast, they, in a way, provided the context for me. I felt like an outcast. Not that the other actors didn't treat me well—they were lovely—but it was clear that I was an American girl playing the part of an Englishwoman, and a pariah.

"There is a certain *regard,*" she says, "a certain cast of Sarah's eyes that I was very interested in capturing." The novel says of Sarah's eyes: "They could not conceal an intelligence, an independence of spirit. It was also a silent contradiction of any sympathy, a determination to be what she was."

How to project that on screen? "Oh, well, that was *easy*!" she says, laughing. "A lot was described by the situation, by the people treated me—my employer, Mrs. P teney, the proper ladies of the town, the m was in love with. Sitting around in a co twelve hours a day does something to yo love doing things in costume. You put clothes on and suddenly you realize people look the way they do in photograp By wearing those clothes, you're *forced* in certain posture, the way you hold yourself, way your body is not free but encumbered,

*From left: Harold Pinter, writer of the screenplay; John Fowles, author of the original novel; Karl Reisz, director of* The French Lieutenant's Woman.

nowing that every morning you had to put hat on. When Sarah lost her position as a overness, she was a maidservant for Mrs. oulteney. She did menial tasks. There was a ertain propriety, certain ways of holding your ands. Playing Sarah, I had to observe the ight ways to behave. Then I decided whether I as going to do that or not.

"The level of good manners and propriety is o high," Streep says. "The Victorians walked nto a room and what they say to each other is ot very spectacular. You have to come in cooking with so much underneath. You have to come in *boiling,* cover it over and speak in a normal voice. Otherwise it just looks like a boring costume drama, a BBC kind of thing. I realized that the passions run so high *because* they're so repressed. That's a very difficult thing to capture on screen.

"I hurt. All the time. It literally hurt to do it. I couldn't figure out why. I was so happy at the end of each day—because I took off the corset, but also because I took off the pain of that kind of concealment. I would go home and dive into a demon rum punch."

At first, Streep had doubts about the character of Sarah. She says, "She is sort of a cipher, in terms of her specificity—Dustin Hoffman's favorite word. Specificity is golden for an actor. You could describe Ernestina or Mrs. Poulteney—or, for that matter, Charles—down to their toenails. Every one of them is an actor's dream. In fact, when I walked on set for the first day, I saw Ernestina's costume and I thought, 'Jesus, I'd give my *eyeteeth* to play her!' She gets all the laughs and it's so specific. When I saw what I was supposed to wear, which is absolutely correct, it was completely unadorned. Although we all like our freedom, the greatest thing for an actress is to have boundaries. I had to make that up out of whole cloth. I played her into my own personal needs. I made her more of an iconoclast and a stronger personality.

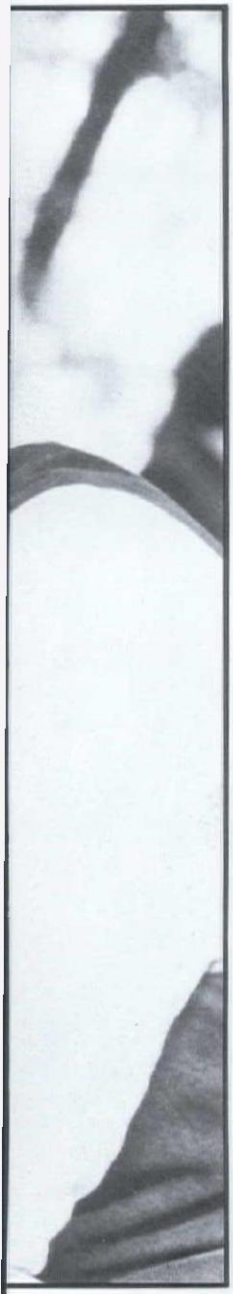
"I was afraid to meet Fowles. I thought, with an actor's insecurity, I'm not going to be what he imagined. He said, 'I didn't really imagine how she would look. I imagined essence.' That put me at ease." Her chief guide, Streep says, became the book itself. "I know the book by heart. I read it once before I did the part and then I used it like a bible, reading passages every night before going to sleep. It's such a rich source. Every single scene was shot out of continuity. I would say to Jeremy after a day of shooting, 'What are we doing tomorrow?' and he would say, 'The barn,' and I would say, 'Right, just preceding the barn is . . . ' and I couldn't remember. I would go back to the book, diving into fifty pages the night before a scene, just to see what happens before or immediately afterwards. In practical terms, the book was a skeleton, and it also was an inspiration."

While the company was shooting in Dorset, everyone was up at dawn, trying to outguess the weather. "We would have the most exquisite blue sky in the morning," recalls Streep, "and by six o'clock there would be glowering clouds and at six-thirty a thundershower that would run down the hillside and get all the trucks stuck. Then it would clear up for twenty minutes—completely." The most demanding scene was a long sustained monologue in which she tells Charles "what may or may not be the truth" about her relationship with the French lieutenant, and why it has resulted in her being an outcast in the community. "It's about nine minutes of talking. That's difficult to make interesting and real and not like a stage piece or something written—and to live through the story over and over again for each take. It took all day. It was something like that courtroom scene in *Kramer* [where she testifies about her reasons for leaving her husband and son—a scene that she partially improvised], but the effort was about treble. We were outside under a great magnificent tree on the edge of the cliff overlooking the sea. We were in total darkness at the beginning and in light at the end. The sun came out and we all stopped—and waited. You feel like you're being jerked along. If you're somebody whose mood swings are tied to the weather, you can go crazy there. I just hate interrupted process, which is why sometimes it was a very painful exercise for me."

That scene, beautifully enacted by Streep and Irons (who should emerge from the movie as a star), is a complete encapsulization of this tale of passion and deceit. The marvelously expressive actress fills her speech and her eyes with emotion. Everything that she says—some of it, we learn later, a fiction—stirs Charles' sympathy and his obsession. He is captivated by her, as is the audience. The moment is far more sensual, for example, than the couple's subsequent tryst in a hotel room.

Says Pinter of that scene, "Meryl is superb. It's a very long speech, almost unprecedented in film. She is a quite remarkable actress with a curious and singular vibration."

Reisz also feels that vibration: "Meryl is the most extraordinary mixture of the rational and the intuitive, and Sarah is one of those parts that requires flights of the imagination that are steep and complex. Meryl prepares and then on the day of shooting, it all evaporates. She throws herself into the wind—and she lets it take her." □



Pinter's solution, supposed to be cloaked in secrecy, was to make a film within a film.

*In Pinter's interpretation of the novel, Streep and Irons play young actors who are in turn playing the parts of "Sarah" and "Charles." The actors, like the "characters" they are shown playing, fall in love.*

*Mel Gussow is a drama critic on the* New York Times *and the* Times' *radio station, WQXR. He is a winner of the George Jean Nathan Award for dramatic criticism.*

CLEARWATER

# Keeping the Faith

## After forty years of folk singing, Pete Seeger is still asking, "When will they ever learn?"

By Tom Chaffin

I can't—it's against my principle," says Pete :eeger, the forced smile behind his graying :ard not quite masking his irritation.

"Ah, come on," says the photographer, icking away. "Relax!"

Seeger hates this sort of thing, but a promise a promise; so he stands, banjo in hand, raight as a cadet, ill at ease. Tall, tanned, still ıin as a young birch at sixty-two, resplendent ı jeans, mismatched socks, and a bright -shirt, he dutifully poses behind the stage here he'd been singing moments before.

"Just a few more, Mr. Seeger . . . Just a :w more . . . Now hold it . . . OK . . . One ıore like that . . . Smile."

"That's enough," says Seeger, and he walks ff—only to be stopped a few paces away by :porters. Patiently, he answers their ques- ons, more uncomfortable with each moment.

Then something happens: more people ather. This is no longer a press conference but n audience. "We've got cooking work. We've ot publicity work. We got writing work, pic- ıre work, singing work," says Seeger, now uoyant as he seizes the opportunity to plug or the *Clearwater*, the sloop he and a few riends built ten years ago and around which hey organized efforts to clean up the Hudson ;iver. "We got sailing work. There was an old ıavy man—almost as old as I am. He dropped lown and asked, 'Need some help?' Some- ıody found that he's great at splicing rope. Now he splices every rope we need spliced. There's a *lot* of work to be done here."

Thinking now about his getaway, Seeger ıauses, catches his breath, and concludes, 'There's *so many* jobs that need to be worked ın. There's so many jobs that need to be done hat, *honest to gosh,* I hope some of you will get involved!" He pauses again, and the audience applauds, freeing him to walk away to a nearby cabin, where he will close the door and relax for the first time this afternoon.

It is the fourth annual Hudson River Revival Festival—this year held in a sprawling state park tucked between the wide river and the tiny railroad town of Croton-on-Hudson, just above New York City. A few minutes before, the Weavers—the folk-revival quartet Seeger has worked with off and on since 1949—performed its final concert in a yearlong reunion. During the two-day festival, which lends support to the *Clearwater* and its conservation efforts, Seeger will spend much of his time, when not performing, talking with old friends, touring the booths set up by activists and artisans, and avoiding the reporters sprinkled among the thousands here this weekend.

Late in the day, I catch up with Seeger as he inspects an exhibit of custom-made wooden boats. His answers to my questions are mostly set-pieces, platitudes celebrating the dawning of a new day and the richness of American pluralism: "You know people don't use the term 'melting pot' like they did fifty years ago. They know this is an unmelted pot—and *hoo*ray!"

It is classic Seeger—a display of the left-wing Rotarianism, the unbridled faith that has made him for more than forty years a sort of Don Quixote of the American Left. Finally, I ask him if there is a dark side, a cynical side, even a nihilistic side, to this optimism.

"Oh sure," he says. "And some people don't like a lot of my songs because they tease too much. I don't know if you'd call them cynical. But to a certain extent, a lot of humorous songs contain a certain element of—you could say—cynicism. Like 'A Hole in the Bucket.' "

" 'A Hole in the Bucket'?"

"Yeah. You know"—he proceeds to sing—"*There's a hole in the bucket, dear Liza, dear Liza/There's a hole in the bucket, dear Liza, there's a hole. . . .* "

Several days later, Seeger and I are picking raspberries for breakfast in the patch that lies below his mountain cabin overlooking the Hudson River town of Beacon, sixty miles above New York City.

"I have to guard against moving too quickly from one area to another," Seeger says. "Toshi's very well disciplined. She picks one area clean and then she moves on. And because of her discipline, we do a good job when we pick strawberries for the annual *Clearwater* Strawberry Shortcake Festival."

As we harvest, talk turns to journalism, to Seeger's aversion to the cult of personality—"There's already been far too many stories on me"—and to a feature he still misses: "There was something *Reader's Digest* used to do regularly . . . and I've often wondered why they discontinued it. Maybe it was basically *too* darned democratic. That was a series called 'My Most Unforgettable Character.' They'd take some otherwise completely unknown person and tell why he or she was an extraordinary human being.

"And I think that was *great. Every* magazine should do this. Make a point that this is a rank-and-file-type person. Most magazines don't want to do it that way. They want to say: 'Well, they were unknown, but they were really great, and now we've made 'em a star.' I read a lot of these magazines just to see what the enemy is up to. And when I say the enemy, I mean the spirit of selfishness that lives in every one of us. And which is unfortunately encouraged in all too many schools.

"*Oh,* it really pissed me off when I saw an advertisement in a New York subway. It had a picture of a bright, young, high-school graduating class, all looking very smart. The heading was, 'Look at your competition. You'd better not drop out of school.' The reason not to drop out of school was that you'll be licked in the race for jobs. Instead of saying, 'Look at your cooperation,' they were

*Seeger at the Hudson River Revival Festival: 'All my life I've loved to sing, to make ı racket. I suppose I was show-offish.'*

## "When the world can't change you, then you can change the world."

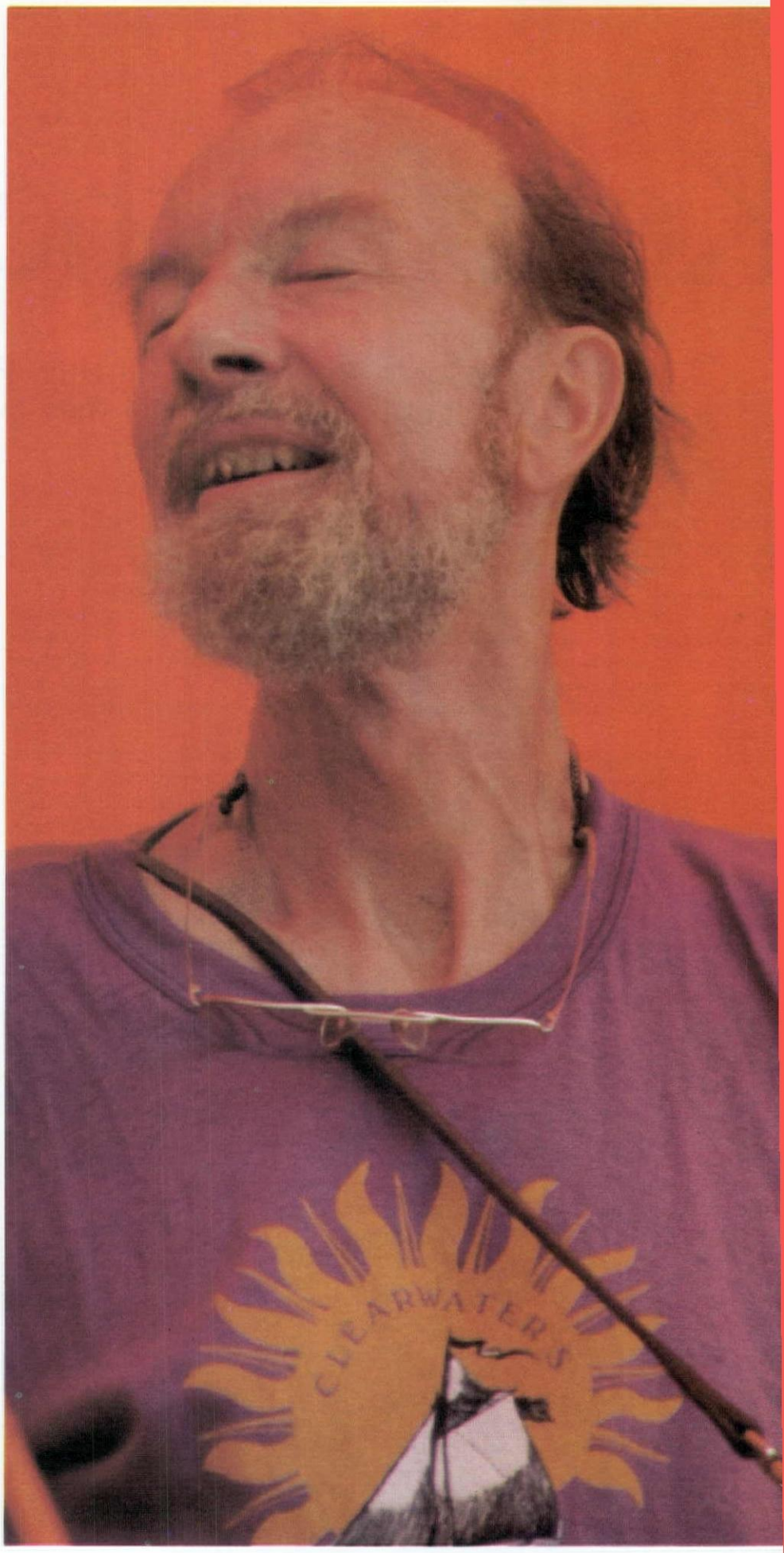
saying, 'Look at your competition.' "

Over breakfast, this brings to mind a trip from the fifties: "Toshi and I drove out to meet the Weavers in Las Vegas, and we passed through villages where people lived who hardly saw $100 from Christmas to Christmas. Their diet was a little beans and rice, and they made their houses out of mud—went barefoot except in the very worst weather. Then we emerged over the crest of a hill, and there was Las Vegas spread out on the floor of the valley, and the lights made it look like a handful of diamonds flung out on a black carpet.

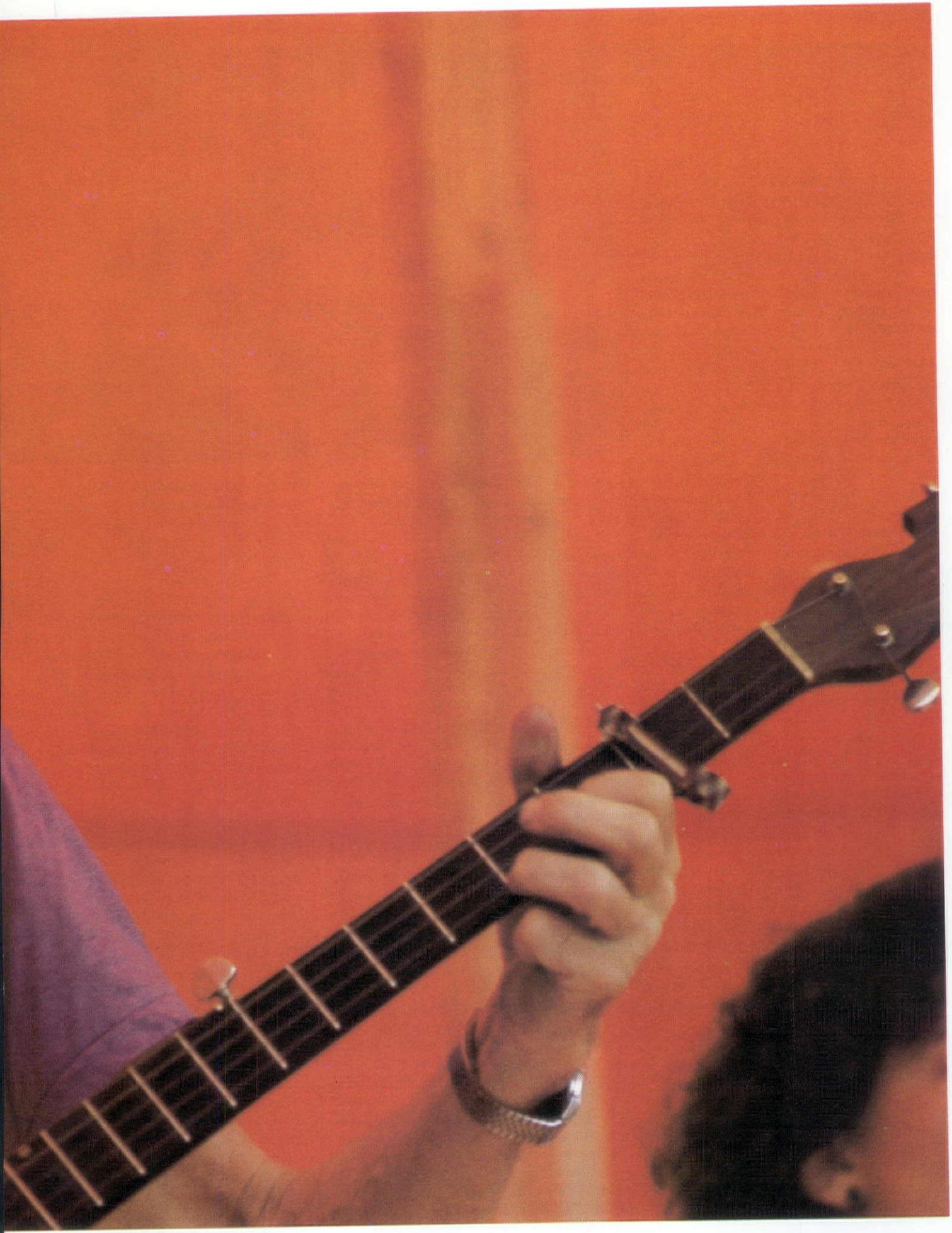
"We went down there and saw a group of friends we knew, with glazed eyes, pushing $1,000 back and forth across the table." Seeger pauses, as if taking a step back from the image. "It was just too *un*real, so *im*moral!" Matter-of-factly, he continues, "But we sang there for a couple of weeks, and I guess it was a worthwhile experience. Lee Hays [of the Weavers] used to say, quoting the old Communist poet Walter Lowenfels, that 'everything is grist for the writer's mill.' Lee and I would just look at each other and say, *grist*. Then he'd say, 'But where do you start shoveling when it's up to your neck?' "

This innocent abroad got his decidedly unproletariat start in this world of sinners in New York City in 1919. His father, Charles, was a Harvard-trained musicologist; his mother, Constance, was a concert violinist. Charles Seeger's family had made a small fortune in Mexican sugar refining and claimed a Mayflower Compact pedigree. Constance grew up in Tunisia and Paris and came from good Philadelphia stock. Charles Seeger had become a convert to socialism in Berkeley at age twenty-five; by the outbreak of World War I, he was too old to be drafted but, as an act of conscience, insisted on registering—as a conscientious objector.

Not finding steady work—in part because of Charles Seeger's radicalism—the family moved frequently: Patterson, New Jersey; upstate New York; New York City. By 1927, when Charles and Constance divorced, Charles, along with the rest of the American Left, had been swept by a new interest—folk music. When Charles Seeger married the avant-garde composer Ruth Crawford in 1932, he had little




*Seeger does a dozen or so big commercial concerts a year. These and song royalties pay the bills and free him to do benefits.*



trouble infecting her with his new interest. Although Pete Seeger was growing up in exclusive boarding schools, he saw family at Christmas, Easter, and summers. In their home, his own growing interest in folk music and the banjo was nourished, ultimately leading him to abandon his long-standing ambition to become a journalist. He dropped out of Harvard his first year, leaving behind John F. Kennedy and the rest of the class of 1940.

In 1941, Pete Seeger and Woody Guthrie enlisted singers Lee Hays and Mill Lampell and christened themselves the Almanac Singers. With a repertory of political and traditional songs, the group earned a recording contract and modest commercial success. Setting a pattern that would become familiar, the group's ascent was halted by FBI harassment and blacklisting; in 1942, Seeger was drafted.

Returning home from the war and the island of Saipan—where he worked on entertainment at the army hospital—Seeger plunged into a new project: People's Songs, Inc. The leftist talent agency promoted, published, and booked folk music. Seeger soon drifted away from the agency, preoccupied with performing.

During the stateside term of his army hitch, Seeger married Toshi Ohta, a dark-haired, half-Japanese woman almost a foot shorter and three years younger than he. She'd grown up in Woodstock, New York, and met Seeger through New York City folk-dance circles. A formidable woman, possessed of a devilish sense of humor ("I don't know why you want to ask Peter all those question. I've been hearing the answers thirty years. It's just one big cliché."), Toshi today invests her energy in family and the array of projects for which she is organizer and sustainer—music festivals, recycling stations, the *Clearwater*, Pete Seeger.

The late Lee Hays of the Weavers said, "I don't see how he could carry out any of his numerous projects if she wasn't there to pick up the pieces. Both Toshi and Harold Leventhal [Seeger's manager] have a full-time job keeping Peter on the track."

"Self-reliance." "Stick-to-it-iveness." "Let's buckle down and *do* something about the problem." Such phrases run through Seeger's speech like some secular liturgy of his New England Yankee Puritan heritage.

"Yeah, probably so. I'm kidded about it a lot," he says of that ancestry. "I would tend to agree with the reason Lincoln never joined a church. He said if he could find a church

*Singing for the Hudson River: "We want to organize an annual swim across the Hudson—like it to be like the Boston Marathon. . . ."*

which simply put the Golden Rule above the door, he'd join it. But even that wouldn't work. You know, Shaw said the Golden Rule's not really dependable: How do you know the other person wants done unto him what you want done unto you?"

Seeger's best work—songs like "If I Had a Hammer," "Old Devil Time," even "Talking Union"—rings with old-fashioned Protestant millenialism. "This has been true of a lot of grassroots revolutionary work," he says. "It's a weakness in some ways. I was criticized for this back when I was a teenager, for millenial philosophy—thinking that everything's gonna be hunky-dory all of a sudden. I quite consciously try to work against this. I used to introduce 'Climbing Jacob's Ladder' as a much more truthful account of things, an endless ladder you take one rung at a time."

He likes to tell this story: "There was a young pacifist at midnight in Times Square with a peace sign. They were having a Quaker peace vigil there way back in the fifties. A second guy stops and says, 'Do you really think you're going to change the world by standing here at midnight with this damned sign?' The young fella says, 'Oh, I suppose not—but I'm gonna make sure it doesn't change me.'

"I relayed this story all through the fifties and sixties and seventies. I told it to a poet in Vietnam once, and he smiled and said, 'Yes, when the world can't change you, then you can change the world.' "

It is one of his better set-pieces, testimony to what one critic called Seeger's "breathtaking naiveté." There's more, though: catacombs of darker vision. "I'd say Peter thinks there's le than one chance in ten that mankind can su vive more than another hundred years," sa one friend. "So he puts all of his efforts in that one chance in ten."

"Everybody's like a two-sided coin, ar he's more so than most," said Hay "Everybody's entitled to his dark side. I'v known him for forty-one years now, and th side he shows to me is invariably the bright sic —and that's the side that does the work."

Seeger's work ranges from the quotidia chores of mountain life—chopping wooc clearing vines, picking berries—to the publi responsibilities of his musical and activis careers. The *Clearwater* was part of the latte He got the idea in 1967 after reading *Sloops o the Hudson*, a turn-of-the-century volume len to him by a friend. Seeger was fascinated b pictures of the sloops that once regularly plie the Hudson, and decided that if he and hi neighbors could build and sail such a vessel, i would be a great way to get people interested i using and cleaning up the Hudson.

"I think the *Clearwater* taught me a lesson i how important it is to work in your own com munity," he says. "After twelve years of th *Clearwater* and our Strawberry Shortcak Festival, our town voted to put in a million dollar park down by the river. I can now sa that power comes out of the door of an oven. I broke down the resistance—even of the Birch ers. They like strawberry shortcake, too."

Seeger himself tells the parable of the sowe to explain his role in these projects, and it's a running joke among his friends that he sows more seeds than he could ever personally cultivate. Said Hays, "He has complained to me that he has too many great ideas and not enough people to carry them out."

## "If they couldn't put me behind barbed wire, they would put me under house arrest."

Late one afternoon, we are in the riverside ark at the Beacon shore. Seeger points to a ile of rotting seaweed three feet-high on the ank: "When we gathered that seaweed from ıe river one morning, that pile was this high. Vhat we're gonna do is give it a few more eeks to rot, then get all the local gardeners own here, and we'll have a seaweed mulch-ile workshop."

On another day, we are leaving his ıanager's office in New York and Seeger ıotices a copy of the *New York Times Aagazine* lying on a couch. The issue features cover story on Tin Pan Alley music. "You now what I've been thinking about," he says, ›icking up the magazine. "We ought to have a vorkshop on Tin Pan Alley music. We'll call t, 'In the Twenty-first Century, They'll Call Them Folk Songs.' And what we *really* ought o do is get Irving Berlin to come down from ıis Catskill Mountains home and lead it."

One of Seeger's more bizarre plans calls for he United Nations, that cathedral of an earlier iberal faith, to distribute temporarily deac-ivated nuclear bombs to every nation on earth. The UN would then go on worldwide television with the existential choice: " 'We're ready to hook these bombs up now,' " as Seeger puts it, " 'or we'll take them apart—which shall it be?' " Seeger has no doubt as to how the world would answer. "And after they've taken the bombs apart and put the uranium back in the ground where it belongs, we'd put exhibits all over the world to commemorate the event. We'd call it 'The International Museum of the Beginning of the End of the Age of Fear.' "

It is the central paradox of his celebrity that Seeger condemns the "cult of personality," yet realizes it is his most potent weapon in furthering his political ends. The decision to embrace celebrity was deliberate. One afternoon in 1948, a call from the American Labor Party came into the offices of People's Songs. The organization wanted to book folk singer Richard Dyer-Bennett for a benefit.

"Perhaps I can help you get him," said the People's Songs agent. "But in case he can't make it, how about getting Pete to do it?"

The ALP organizer was not enthusiastic: "Oh, we know Pete. He's sung on our sound truck for years. We need someone who can bring a mass audience. We need to raise money."

It was a moment for pause, Seeger says: "I looked at myself in the mirror that night and realized, here I was, I'd been knocking myself out for the ALP for three or four years, and I was not as much use to them as Bennett, who had gone out to build a career with a capital *C*. I'd been patting myself on the back and saying, 'I'm gonna stay pure, I'm not going to go in for all that phony career business,' but I was not as much use to the people I wanted to help. I decided to go in for publicity and all those things. Toshi took a photograph of me here with a big smile on my face, and we sent out *hundreds* of pictures all over the country."

In 1949 Seeger joined Lee Hays, Ronnie Gilbert, and Fred Hellerman in a quartet they called the Weavers. The group had a few successes; "Goodnight Irene" became a number-one hit. But the Weavers' star would fall as abruptly as the Almanacs': within three years after their first record, FBI-backed blacklisting had frozen the group out.

In 1956, Seeger's refusal to name names—coupled with his refusal to plead the Fifth Amendment—before the House Un-American Activities Committee brought him contempt citations. In 1961, charges resulting from the citations drew a one-year prison sentence. In 1962, six years after his appearance before HUAC, a federal court of appeals ruled Seeger's indictment was improper and overturned the conviction.

Seeger did not serve any of the prison sentence. But the controversy surrounding the Weavers and the legal limbo of the contempt charges cast a long shadow over his career during the 1950s and into the 1960s. His first network television work would not come until 1967—a famous, censored appearance on CBS's "Smothers Brothers' Comedy Hour."

Looking back, Seeger reveals little bitterness. "When the Weavers quit, I could have gone right back to leading a modest, unnotorious life. I got a job as a school teacher. I could sing at summer camps and so on, and that seemed fine."

In 1953, after an invitation to sing at Oberlin, Seeger developed a circuit of small, liberal-arts colleges. "See, the object of the blacklisters was to put me in a corner and keep me there. If they couldn't keep me behind barbed wire, they would, in effect, keep me under house arrest. So I decided, nope—I'm not going to give them the pleasure. Much though I like singing for little left-wing parties in New York and singing for kids in summer camp, I was going out and see if I could get bigger audiences across the country.

"Only by the end of the 1950s was I able to sing at the bigger, state-run universities, because the American Legion would get in there and make a big stink if I was going to sing at a big state college . . . It was a matter of pushing back the blacklist inch by inch."

Late in the afternoon, seated on a rock outcrop just off the gravel road that leads to the cabin, Seeger is talking songcraft: "I'd had the line 'long time passing' in the back of my mind for several years. That's a good phrase—'long time passing.' That sings well. But I didn't know where to use it. I copied out the lyrics: 'Where are the flowers? The girls have plucked them. Where are the girls? They've taken husbands. Where are the men? They're all in the army.' I was trying to figure out how to make a song out of it. All of a sudden the last line popped out to me: 'When will they ever learn?' It's a typical complaint of intellectuals. In twenty minutes, I had the whole song. I fiddled with it, changing a line here, a line there, for a day or so, and it was set.

"I rarely have written a song that didn't borrow a melody or an idea from somewhere else. Somebody wanted to put out a songbook of songs I had written, and I had an idea for a title. I said I'd call it *The Songwriter as a Joiner*. This is a pun in a sense: Beethoven said, 'I am a joiner,' implying that he puts together notes and instruments like a cabinetmaker. But I'm a joiner, too, also in the sense of joining organizations, and this and that. And the songs have also been put together in the sense that Beethoven meant. Like, 'Where Have All the Flowers Gone'—getting the idea from a Ukranian song and swiping part of the melody from an old Irish lumberjack song.

"At this particular age of life, I'm trying to sing a few old songs better, rather than trying to learn new ones. This is rather typical behavior, and I think there's a certain musical logic to it. If I could do a really good job on 'John Henry,' I'd be happier than if I could sing a half-job on fifteen new ballads."

It is dusk by now; a lone sparrow warbles in a tall birch. Seeger pauses to yawn. "You know," he says softly. "I was singing for one of the audiences the other day and I did 'The Internationale.' It's funny. Old lefties and socialists still cry when they hear it." □

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*Tom Chaffin, formerly on the staff of* Esquire, *is now a free-lance writer based in Atlanta. This is his first work for* Horizon.

# Missing Writers

## What are these novelists hiding from? Confusion. Distraction. The poverty of talk. Us.

By Thomas LeClair

"What really knocks me out," says Holden Caulfield in J. D. Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye,* "is a book that, when you're all done reading it, you wish the author that wrote it was a terrific friend of yours and you could call him up on the phone whenever you felt like it." Since 1951, when *Catcher* was published, readers sharing Holden's wish have driven Salinger to a hilltop retreat in Cornish, New Hampshire, where he hides from would-be friends in a concrete bunker-study and a house protected by a fifty-foot tunnel and guard dogs. Every few years a fan or journalist will catch him out for his mail, snap a photo of his back, and report his latest message for the world: "Stay away."

Salinger may be our best-(and least-) known literary recluse, but in recent years some of the most important American novelists have also chosen invisibility, sacrificing the large readership publicity can bring for special kinds of literary life and achievement. Thomas Pynchon, age forty-four, has not been photographed since high school, has never been interviewed, cannot be located by his parents or agent, and had the comedian "Professor" Irwin Corey accept his National Book Award for *Gravity's Rainbow* in 1973. William Gaddis, author of the 1955 masterpiece, *The Recognitions,* was so obscure in the sixties that he was rumored to be James Joyce alive in America or Thomas Pynchon as a young man. When Gaddis won the National Book Award for *JR* in 1975, he said, "I've been posthumous for twenty years." Look up Don

Illustration © 1981 Steve Salerno

*A professor of English at the University of Cincinnati, Thomas LeClair has written on books and literature for* Saturday Review, *the* New Republic, *and the* New York Times. *He's currently on a Fulbright Lectureship in Greece.*

DeLillo in standard biographical references and you'll find only his date of birth—1936—and the publication dates of the six highly regarded novels, including *End Zone,* he published in the seventies. When I caught up with him in Greece for the only interview he has allowed, he gave me a card engraved, "I Don't Want To Talk About It."

Why are these novelists hiding? When they emerge long enough to answer this question, their responses, taken together with their work, provide a penetrating criticism of American intellectual life and a reformulation of what—and how—literature is. We have important lessons to learn from their absence and even their silence.

"No no listen look," sputters a character in Gaddis' *JR,* "first time in history so many opportunities to do so God damned many things not worth doing." For novelists, these opportunities are for talk: three-minute chats on the network morning shows, local sell-a-book slots, half an hour with fumbling Dick Cavett, public radio, interviews for the book supplements, screenplay conferences, readings at colleges, lectures, panels on the state of the novel, awards judging, autograph sessions.

It's not only the commercialism of talk that the reclusive writers reject. For them, talking, with its instantaneousness and simplification, is the exact opposite of writing fiction. Not just a poor relation of fiction, but an activity that both interferes with their writing and diminishes its effects. Fiction is a complex vocabulary: characters are nouns, plots verbs, settings adjectives. A novel includes sentences and is itself a huge, delicate sentence. When novelists use our common vocabulary to talk about their work or the world, they become less than they are when they write fiction.

"If you're able to be straightforward about this invention of yours," observes DeLillo, "it's almost as though you're saying it wasn't altogether necessary. The sources weren't deep enough." Artists in nonverbal media—painters, dancers, musicians—and scientists have long objected to crossing over into common language. Reclusive writers fear a linguistic Gresham's Law: bad language driving out good.

This isn't paranoia, and it isn't just a novelist's problem. The novelist happens to be the canary in the coal mine of contemporary discourse. Even more than the poet, who now makes his living by performing, the novelist is sensitive to the noxious gas created by the shift from writing to talking, the revised to the spontaneous, whole ideas to brief opinions, content to medium. Television, where these shifts are most obvious, does have the seductive power of image, but media talk may be even more harmful. It can be confused—it is *words,* after all—with real thought.

"Confusion, waste, words empty of information," says Gaddis, who once wrote speeches for IBM executives, "are the atmosphere where we live." As information explodes, our way of formulating and communicating it implodes to talk. High-level discussions, committee deliberations, symposia, professional meetings, public forums, seminars, dialogues, rap sessions—all have the virtue of live exchange, but in a medium best used for cheering on athletes or ordering dinner, not for articulating complex ideas. By refusing the place reserved for them in the talkathon of American culture, absent artists make us aware of the babble in our ears, the difference between it and art.

In the quiet world of the reclusive writer, J. D. Salinger is the extreme: the silence he requires to do his work has become the silence of his work. After publishing four books—*Catcher in the Rye, Nine Stories, Franny and Zooey, Raise High the Roof Beams Carpenters, and Seymour: An Introduction*—between 1951 and 1963, he has released but one more story, "Hapworth 16, 1924," in the *New Yorker,* June 19, 1965. When a pirated edition of his early stories was printed in 1974, Salinger called a *New York Times* reporter and explained, as much as he has ever explained, his silence: "There is a marvelous peace in not publishing. It's peaceful. Still. Publishing is a terrible invasion of my privacy. I love to write, but I w just for myself and my own pleasure."

Is this childish self-indulgence or arti sainthood? Could one be the means to other? We will find out only if what Salin says he continues to write regularly is e published. What we know now is that Saling at sixty-two the father of two children in th twenties, remains attracted to youthful inn cence and mystical transcendence, the twin themes of his published fiction. When he h dinner several years ago with a novelist I knc Salinger was much more interested in talk with the novelist's twelve-year-old child th with the adults. He is also a very good frie and sometime companion of the writer Joy Maynard (*Baby Love*). As for mysticis "pure Zen" is the way Betty Eppes rememb her twenty-seven-minute conversation w Salinger last year. "I went to find Hold Caulfield," she reports. "Instead I found t Glass family—all of them."

Extremes of youth and religion meet in S inger's last story. "Hapworth 16, 1924" is letter home from summer camp by Seymo Glass, age eight, the spiritual wizard of t seven Glass siblings and the unpublished pc who committed suicide at age thirty-two in th early story, "A Perfect Day for Bananafish. Seymour states his belief in reincarnation, e plains that spiritual achievement may inclu "shocking discrepancies," and prepares h family for his early leavetaking. Read with si teen years of Salinger's silence in mind, th story seems a coded farewell from a writ who, like Seymour, finds others an interfe ence in his spiritual progress.

Writing as a form of meditation displeas those Salinger readers who believe he ow them fiction for their loyalty. To others it ma be inspiring to think of a modern noveli working without regard for audience or profi loyal to the processes of his art—perhap discovering, as Thoreau did at Walden Pond that the self pleased can be a drill to pierc through the sediment of reality.

Retreat, even to the point of self-abnegation Don DeLillo's characters share this urge wit Salinger and Seymour Glass. The heroes o *Americana, End Zone, Great Jones Stree Ratner's Star, Players,* and *Running Dog* fle the noisy worlds of the television industry, big time football, rock music, Manhattan chic, th pornography industry, even language itself, t search out a mysterious purity of being. Th creator of these refugees from a precisel

Wild World Photos

**J. D. Salinger, age sixty-two**
**Seen for twenty-seven minutes in 1980.**

## "Publishing is a terrible invasion of my privacy . . . I write just for myself . . ."

**Find the Missing Writers**
*If you can't find the writers on the previous page, they are clockwise from top left: Thomas Pynchon, J. D. Salinger, William Gaddis, and Don DeLillo.*

served American presence is also elusive. eLillo moves around, keeps his past and his dress to himself.

"But I'm an outsider, not a recluse," he in-ists. A handsome former athlete, now forty-ve, DeLillo is friendly, an invaluable mpanion in the ruins and restaurants of thens, a witty conversationalist, and fair imi-tor of Hall of Famers' batting stances. lthough carefully articulate, he asked that uch of our taped conversation remain off the cord: "Down the memory hole." He guards s private life, not to withdraw from the orld, but to move transparently within it. ne of the inspirations of his fiction, he says, hearing other people talk. Unlocated, nonymous, quiet, he can listen.

If anything moves DeLillo to volubility, it is hat he calls the "facile knowledge-market" f the communications industry: "Nothing is oo arcane to escape the treatment, the pro-ess. Subjects surface and are totally exhausted n a matter of days or weeks." In this atmos-here of mass trivialization, the writer "is riven to make things difficult for readers by is conviction that some truths aren't so easily rrived at, that life is still full of mystery."

When DeLillo composes, he shares his char-cters' need to narrow life and their purpose, inding what he calls "the word beyond peech." He prepares by "doing nothing, eeping life simple." With the proper detach-nent, he believes, "it is possible for a writer to shape himself as a human being through the language he uses. I think written language, fiction, goes that deep. The writer not only sees himself but begins to make himself or remake himself." For DeLillo, fiction is a private discipline. Only the product is public.

Ian M. Keown

**Don DeLillio, age forty-five**
**Last seen in Greece.**

## "Some truths aren't so easily arrived at . . . Life is still full of mystery."

The invisibility necessary for Salinger and DeLillo to write is also one way they, along with Pynchon and Gaddis, preserve the integrity, the strange discreteness, of their novels. When we see the novelist, note his clothes and gestures, identify the accent in his voice, he becomes a person. With repeated public appearances, he's a personality like "Capote" or "Mailer," names known for comedy acts. Person or personality, he is familiar, even ordinary, comforting in the ways he is like us.

But our reclusive novelists' works are written against the grain of the ordinary. Their insistent complexity or mystery comes from the novelist's ability to transcend personality, to assume many identities, speak many voices. Novels such as *Ratner's Star, Gravity's Rainbow,* or *JR* are not communications from "personable author" to "dear reader," as nineteenth-century novels were. Instead, they are massive, many-minded constructs, systems that seem generated by culture itself. Confronted by strange messages in bottles without return addresses, the reader cannot filter the texts through or reduce them to the author's talk. Having done "everything," he has nothing to say.

Pynchon is the genius of this effect. Groping for a way to talk about him, I once asked a class whom he most resembled. A chorus answered: "God." He seems to have been everywhere and yet is nowhere. No one claims to be sure why he's absent, though speculation ranges from the odd to the incredible. His agent, Candida Donadio, thinks Pynchon feels that he's "not good enough, a failure." Mimi Farina, at whose wedding Pynchon was best man, says he's underground because "he thinks he looks like a tall Bugs Bunny."

Some facts are available. The Pynchon family in America goes back to William Pynchon, who was treasurer of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Thomas Pynchon was born in 1937, grew up on Long Island, studied engineering and English at Cornell where he was a student of Vladimir Nabokov, spent some time in the Navy, worked for Boeing, and published *V.* in 1963. It won the Faulkner Foundation award for best first novel, and was followed by *The Crying of Lot 49* in 1966, which won the

United Press International

**Thomas Pynchon, age forty-four**
**Last photographed at age fifteen.**

## I once asked a class whom Thomas Pynchon most resembled. A chorus answered: "God."

Rosenthal award, and *Gravity's Rainbow* in 1973. In 1975, Pynchon turned down the Howells Medal awarded by the National Institute of Arts and Letters for the most distinguished achievement of the previous five years.

It's an excellent record for a young writer but modest credentials for a divinity. But read or even dip into *Gravity's Rainbow* once—an encyclopedia of the world from pre-Edenic slime to post-Apocalyptic rust, a novel that includes all the ways contemporary man knows and transforms the world, a story as powerful as the rockets it's about—and you will find the authoritative omniscience for which Pynchon is pursued by scholars, detectives, journalists, and obsessed fans.

They are all poor readers of his books. Each novel has a protagonist searching for a single person, group, or object that he or she thinks will restore Meaning to the world. "Some promise of hierophany," says Oedipa Maas in *Lot 49.* In the novels, Pynchon mocks this desire for singularity while displaying the intricacies that lie outside the quester's funnel vision. But because reduction to some single explanation is an old human tropism, some readers pursue Revelation outside the texts. They search for the source, *the* Thomas Pynchon. By disappearing, he destroys the illusion of first cause and final answer. His fiction is an introduction to the world, to the network of chaos, comedy, and beauty—without God, without a single point.

William Gaddis, whose two novels are as comprehensive and complex as Pynchon's, is nearly as inaccessible. *The Recognitions* is "about" forgery in art, religion, literature, and the rest of life; *JR* is "about" communications entropy in education, business, art, and the rest of life. Neither book jacket has a picture or biography of the now-fifty-nine-year-old author. When *JR* was published, Gaddis did give a reporter two direct quotes: "I mainly made my living at corporate writing" and "I have never read Joyce's *Ulysses*."

With the help of several novelists whom I'd previously interviewed, and with the promise that I wasn't interested in Gaddis' life or personality, I was allowed a three-hour visit in his Manhattan apartment. He showed me a large file of requests for his time and spoke at length about the triviality of literary discussion. Yet when Gaddis began talking about the nature of his art, he became enthusiastic, almost happy.

"What's the artist but the dregs of his work. The human shambles that follows it around," Gaddis has a character say. The artist is "dregs" because the best of him has gone into a work more beautifully designed and permanent than his life can be. For Gaddis, the novelist *serves* his art: "what the work as a whole demands." Why do his novels demand to be so long? I asked. "If one is involved with a complicated idea, and spends every day with it, takes notes, and reads selectively with it in mind, ramifications proliferate. If one has an obsessional wish to exhaust an idea, understand it on six, seven, or eight levels, the book gets longer and longer."

Alfred A. Knopf

**William Gaddis, age fifty-nine**
**Last known whereabouts: Manhattan.**

> The writer risks "the danger of believing his own myth created by talk."

If the "complicated idea" demands bar characters to fill it out, Gaddis told me, t novelist must sacrifice his own elegant lar uage to let them speak. This kind of dedicati to the art object as a "consistent entity of own" requires what Gaddis calls "unfra mented time," as free as possible from t distractions that would make "the creative a tist into a performing artist."

Once the novel is published, the "shamble that is the artist stays out of view, not to inte fere with appreciation of his formal constru tion. Though made of words and therefo "messaged," a Gaddis novel aspires to tl aesthetic condition of music, which he calls tl "highest of the arts, totally abstract ar ungraspable." The painters and musicians Gaddis' novels often fail by cooperating wi reality; the novels themselves succeed by i cluding reality on Gaddis' artistic terms. B the successful writer, Gaddis believes, runs y another risk: "the danger of believing his ow myth created by talk. That myth is just n there when he sits down to write."

There are also dangers in not talkin paradoxes of reclusiveness. Revulsion fc publicity creates publicity. The less a writer visible, the more he is pursued. Fleeing publi life, the writer may be unable to imagine except as a source of paranoia. Or, deeper ye the condition necessary for writing can becom the novelist's subject: purification, obsessior silence. The published novel, left on its owr may be misread—or not read at all. Or becom the text for cult readers oblivious to art.

Salinger, DeLillo, Pynchon, and Gaddis ac cept these risks because they want fiction t extend the human, touch extremities of mys tery, profundity, and art. They are not the onl recluses in America. Alexandr Solzhenitsy hides from political enemies behind barbed wir and electronic surveillance in Cavendis, Ver mont. "William Wharton," author of *Bird* and the recently published *Dad*, uses a pseudonym because he uses autobiographica materials and does not want his reputation as a painter affected by his writing. What links th four novelists here, however, is the deep anc essential relation between the independence o their lives and the originality of their works They know what Gaddis' young JR calls the "big groundswill [sic] about leading this here parade and entering public life and all." Gad dis, Pynchon, DeLillo, and Salinger lead by negation and absence, by silence. □

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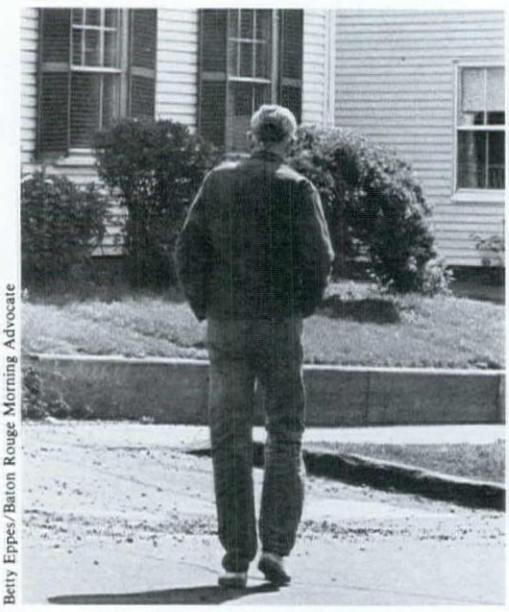


Betty Eppes/Baton Rouge Morning Advocate

*J. D. Salinger, 1980.*

# BROADWAY

# Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow

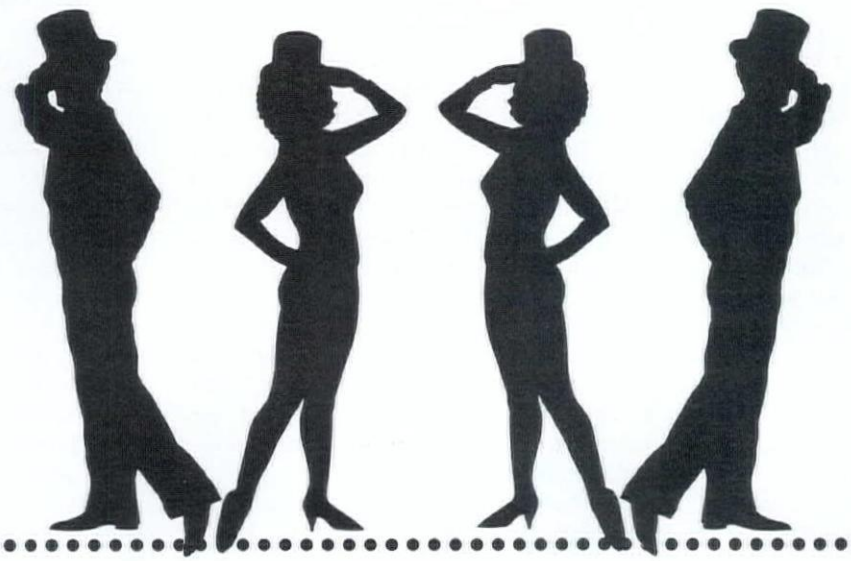
The world has been hearing "the lullaby of Broadway" for years, and it's never yet fallen asleep in response. More recently, we've been told that Broadway is "where all the lights are bright," and, yes, they've never seemed brighter. But despite the current musical assurance that tomorrow "is only a day away," it's not so clear what the future will bring to the Great White Way.

Simple enough to say that Broadway has made a comeback: attendance has almost doubled over the past seven years. More than 200,000 people a week line up at the ticket windows, totaling a $500-million annual business for New York City.

It's trickier to say how Broadway got where it is today, or even precisely where it *has* gotten. Trickier still to venture where it's going. But that's what HORIZON essays in the following special section.

"When the Shuberts Fit" is a picture of Broadway's yesterday, of a dynasty that helped build the American theater. Harold Prince, producer/director of *Evita*, *Sweeney Todd*, and the new *Merrily We Roll Along*, is a leading force on Broadway today; "Side by Side by Prince" tells how he revolutionized musical comedy. In "Up and Down the Avenue," Ann Miller, Joseph Papp, Ed Koch, Al Hirschfeld and other interested observers speculate on Broadway's tomorrows.

So give your regards to Broadway. Then come with us backstage.



# When the Shuberts Fit

## A new musical recalls the glory days of the men who made the Great White Way.

By Norman Nadel

Ghosts do not merely walk in Shubert Alley, that paved passage from West Forty-fourth Street to West Forty-fifth Street alongside the Shubert and Plymouth theaters. They dance, sing, juggle, laugh, posture, declaim, connive, proposition, *perform*. And they sure as hell *jump* when the ghosts of Lee and J. J. Shubert pass by (separately, never together), accompanied perhaps by the faint shade of Sam Shubert, who died young.

But the Shuberts' presence on Broadway, and to a lesser degree in theaters around the nation, isn't exclusively spiritual. The Shuberts were a dynasty, and in a quite different but no less pervasive way, the Shubert Organization is still a dynasty.

Moreover, this February it will be live performers, not ghosts, who perform in *Shubert Alley*, which is the title of a new musical celebrating the Shubert dynasty. Joel Schenker, who now occupies J. J. Shubert's office on the seventh floor of the Sardi Building (which the Shuberts built but which is best known for the restaurant on its first three floors), is producing it with Joseph Kipness and Ted Ravinett. The libretto will be by Dale Wasserman (who wrote the playscripts of *Man of La Mancha* and *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*) and the songs collected by Allan J. Friedman, a West Coast musician, from the scores of the 267 musicals the Shuberts produced between 1902 and 1953; Friedman has also composed a new number for the production. The format will be comedy, according to Schenker, with "twelve of the most beautiful showgirls in the world" and eighteen dancing girls.

*Former president of the New York Drama Critics Circle, Norman Nadel is a contributing editor of* HORIZON.

*Above: Sam Shubert, the third brother, died in 1905. Opposite: J. J. (left) and Lee Shubert built a Broadway dynasty.*

The musical begins in 1900 with the arrival of the Shuberts on the theatrical scene, but the Shuberts' story really begins in 1881, with the immigration of their father from Lithuania to the U.S. "Duvvid Szemanski from Shervient," he told the immigration official, who wrote down the approximation, "David Shurbent." After several more official entries it wound up as "Shubert." So that was the name of the family David Shubert met in New York the following year and brought to Syracuse, 300 miles upstate. Besides his wife, Catherine, there were six small children: Levi, Sam, Jacob, Fanny, Sarah, and Dora. And there was never enough money, and David Shubert had a drinking problem. . .

No one has researched this saga more searchingly, nor more entertainingly, than the late Jerry Stagg in his book, *The Brothers Shubert* (Random House, 1968). Brie somebody had to bring in the wherewitl which meant that Levi (henceforth "Le which he adopted because it sounded clas and more American) was on the street, sell newspapers, shining shoes, running erran while still a child. Sam and Jacob (later become "J. J.," though the second *J* ne stood for anything) followed soon after. Le choice spot for his ventures was in front of Wieting Theater, where little Sam became associate. One winter night the manager of Wieting invited Sam in out of the cold, a when the boy saw the road company of *1 Black Crook*, the first "girl revue" America, he was dazzled. Within a few ye not only Sam, but Lee and J. J. as well, h jobs in the theater. From there, the story rea like a nonfiction, Jewish Horatio Alger seri Except that, whereas Alger's *Ragged Dick* a *Tattered Tom* triumphed through hard wo and defeating the villains, the young Shube did it through hard work, learning from th rapacious competitors, even joining th when expedient, and *then* defeating them.

In 1895 a few powerful men in New Yo had set up an organization that became kno as the Trust, or the Syndicate, or as Klaw a Erlanger, named after two of the leaders, a before long it controlled the commercial sta in the United States. Not only in New York b in the rest of the country, the Trust ran most the theaters either through direct ownership through their booking of shows. The fees th collected for booking, advertising, talent, a other services were outrageous, as is the w with monopolies. Coincidentally, at the tir Klaw and Erlanger were ruling the Americ theater, President Theodore Roosevelt w earning his reputation as a "trustbuster" f breaking up the great holding companies th

were throttling competition. In time, a suit was brought against the Trust, but the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of Klaw and Erlanger and cohorts. Stagg reports: "Trade, said the court, implies that the commodity is vital to life. Ergo, restraint of trade would be wrong. But the theater is not vital to life; therefore it cannot be in restraint of trade."

Meanwhile, the Shubert brothers had begun operating theaters and producing their first attractions. They started in Syracuse, of course, and J. J. was running a theater in Rochester. Because they couldn't fight Klaw and Erlanger, they joined them. When Abe Erlanger was asked once why he put up with the Shuberts, in the few situations where they were competitive, he replied that he could crush them in an instant if he wanted to. By the time Erlanger realized how formidable his young associates and then competitors had become, he could no longer crush them.

When Sam and Lee Shubert came to York City in March 1900, they were opera five theaters and stock companies upstate. was twenty-seven, Sam about twenty-four, J. J., twenty-one. On May 20, 1901, opened his first New York production, *Bri Burglary*, at the Herald Square Theater; the Shubert musical, *A Chinese Honeymoon*, w year later. It became Sam's first hit show.

# The Rivals

## The Hatfields had the McCoys . . .

The Shubert name is a legend on Broadway, surviving even the deaths of the original family members, but the Shubert Organization is not without rivals. Its fiercest and most successful competitor has been the Nederlander organization, headed by James M. Nederlander.

In 1972, *Variety* profiled Jimmy Nederlander: "At 50 he is a short, slightly round, and dapper man who dresses more with the flair of a prosperous Rotarian than a Nathan Detroit . . . as an individual [he] remains so obscure that you won't even find him in 'Who's Who'. . ." Now nearly sixty, Nederlander hasn't changed his tailor, but his obscurity has proved short-lived. In the sixteen years since he arrived in New York, Nederlander has acquired control of nine of Broadway's thirty-four theaters; he now operates more theaters nationwide than the Shuberts. He has produced or coproduced such hits as *Whose Life Is It Anyway*, *Annie*, *Woman of the Year*, *Applause*, and *Otherwise Engaged*.

The story of Nederlander's rise is not without its ironies. In 1912, David Nederlander, a jeweler, bought the lease on the Detroit Opera House. Knowing little about theater management, Nederlander brought in the Shuberts—Lee and J. J.—as operating partners. As a boy, Jimmy Nederlander served his apprenticeship at Detroit's Shubert-Lafayette Theatre, owned jointly by his father and the

Nederlander Organization

*James M. Nederlander, chief rival to the Shubert Organization. "It seems the public taste right now is for musicals," he says.*

BROADWAY
YESTERDAY

# It was the Shuberts' idea to turn off the hot water in the theater restrooms.

Because they were determined and ruthless, cause they worked very hard, and because ey loved to make money and hated to spend the Shuberts never lacked for motivation. ıey figured, accurately, that the more eaters they owned or leased, the more shows ey had in production, the more companies ey had playing in New York and on the road, e more money would flow into the till. Some the economies they introduced have become traditions of the theater. When they introduced female ushers at the Casino Theater in 1908, it was not to advance the cause of feminism: women would work for less than men. The watery orangeade sold at intermissions provided additional income as well as employment for yet another Shubert. The Shuberts pioneered the ticket racks and "count-up" rooms in theater box offices, as a means of keeping a more accurate count of receipts. It was their idea to turn off the hot water in the restrooms.

Sam, the most gentle and mannerly of the Shuberts, died in a train wreck near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, in 1905. Thereafter, practically all Shubert productions, which previously had been under the aegis of Sam or Sam & Lee Shubert, were produced by "The Messrs. Shubert," with the plural designation embracing live Lee and dead Sam. J. J. was producing on his own, though much later he became an official part of the "Messrs."

By 1924, the Shuberts were operating eighty-six theaters in thirty-one cities, including thirty in New York and seven in Chicago. They controlled three-quarters of all ticket sales in the country. In addition to their own long-running productions, they booked 750 theaters for one-night stands. They took from thirty to fifty percent of the box-office receipts wherever they booked, and if box-office income anywhere dropped below a certain level, they'd get rid of the attraction and replace it with another. That gave the Shuberts security but denied it to the actors, technicians, and others involved in a production.

That was just the way the Shuberts worked. "When you went to see J. J., it was entering the throne room," recalls Gerald Schoenfeld, chairman of the Shubert Organization. Schoenfeld joined the Shuberts as a young lawyer in 1949. "J. J. and Lee each did everything himself. There was no delegation at all. They signed every check, every payroll. Everybody in the company would report to them, sometimes both of them, although some people were regarded as Lee Shubert's people and some as J. J. Shubert's people.

"We were told by J. J., 'Ours is a twenty-four-hour day, seven days a week, and I expect my lawyers to be on the grounds at all times.' Nights, Saturdays, Sundays. Calls at 2 A.M. When you were called, you'd wait on a bench outside J. J.'s office, maybe three or four hours. Still, they evoked the loyalest kind of employees, even though they treated them like slaves, made undue demands on them, with no one to whom an employee might look for redress of any wrongs."

The brothers rarely talked to one another; instead, they talked through their employees. But employees had to be careful not to take sides. Bernard B. Jacobs, president of the Shubert Organization, whom Schoenfeld brought into the company in 1957, recalls: "If you were one of the people who saw both, and

ıuberts. He worked as an usher, a box-office sistant, and eventually as a press agent. Dur- g World War II, his tour of duty included an signment to the staff producing Moss Hart's *'inged Victory* on Broadway. After the war, ederlander returned to the theater, managing e Lyceum in Minneapolis for eight years.

In 1957, the first shots were fired in what has come the Broadway equivalent of the war tween the Hatfields and the McCoys. The ɔnsent Decree of 1956—the culmination of ( years of federal antitrust action against the ıuberts—forced the brothers to dissolve their eatrical partnerships. One casualty was the ıubert-Lafayette in Detroit. Nederlander has aimed that the Shuberts tried to force his ther out of the partnership and out of the eater business by offering an absurdly low ice for his share of the theater. Gerald hoenfeld and Bernard Jacobs of the Shubert rganization deny any such plotting ever took ace. Nevertheless, the two groups have ldom been on amicable terms since.

Nederlander and his brother, Joseph (who ns the firm's Detroit office), made their move to New York in 1965, acquiring the Palace ıeatre for $1.5 million. The Nederlanders ere seen as outsiders: "the brothers from etroit," the *New York Herald-Tribune* called em. Throughout the bleak times on Broadway the early seventies, Nederlander remained otimistic. He continued to purchase theaters ıd, in 1972, told *Variety* that Broadway would : "greater than ever" in a few years: "There e no bad theaters, just bad plays."

He was right. Today Broadway is booming ıd there aren't enough theaters for all the ays and musicals waiting to open. "Broad- ay is the hub of the legitimate theater," ederlander explains patiently. "New York is ı international city. People come from all er the world to this island of Manhattan. I ıve always felt, and did when Broadway was its lowest ebb, that living theater will always , as long as you have creative producers like Joe Papp, Hal Prince, David Merrick. These people are professionals."

Though he doesn't smoke, Nederlander's voice sounds as though it is being squeezed around a fat Havana cigar. The large desk in his office above the Palace Theatre is laden with precarious stacks of paper: notes, memos, reports. A picture of his father hangs behind the desk. He riffles through a dozen phone messages as he talks.

"People don't buy theaters, they buy plays," he says. It is a line he is fond of. "Nobody ever calls and asks, 'What's playing at the Palace Theatre?' They call and ask, 'Is that where *Woman of the Year* is playing?' The theater's no good without an attraction."

For that reason, Nederlander has become an active producer as well as a theater owner. "I would much prefer to run theaters than to produce plays," he says, "but if the plays are not there, I have to produce them." Many of his productions are English imports, including *Whose Life Is It Anyway?* and next season's *The Dresser*. The Nederlander Organization is also involved in bringing the Royal Shakespeare Company's massive production of *Nicholas Nickleby* to Broadway this fall. The $400,000-a-week adaptation of Dickens' classic is such an enormous undertaking that the production is being coproduced by Nederlander, McCann and Nugent, and—yes— the Shubert Organization. The partnership is eliciting almost as much talk as the play itself.

Nederlander dismisses talk that Broadway today is culturally impoverished, saying, "What is culture? Is rock-and-roll culture? Is opera? I say it is all part and parcel of the same thing. . .Isn't a brilliant musical as artistic as a brilliant play? It seems the public taste right now is for musicals.

"We have to concentrate on entertainment, what the public is interested in seeing," he says. "Otherwise we would be out of business. We're not a nonprofit company, though sometimes it looks that way." —*David Bither*

# "J. J. read a play occasionally, but he didn't really know what he was reading."

you were tempted to get in the middle of that situation—if J. J. made a denigrating remark about Lee, for example—and you were to join in and say, 'Oh yes, you're right,' you'd get your head chopped off. They had a right to criticize one another, but no third party had a right to join in the criticism.

"They were relatively uneducated," Jacobs continues. "They succeeded and survived in a field which essentially is intellectual and cultural. They dealt with the leading playwrights of their day, men of distinction in letters, and they were able to deal with them, many times intimidate them, participate in their creativity in a way that was remarkable considering how little they had to give out of their educational background."

"Lee Shubert was a very shrewd man; he left taste to people he trusted," says John Kenley, a theatrical producer who worked for him from 1930 to 1940. "He used to like me very much because I wasn't very literate, though I wasn't quite illiterate. But I'd advise him to do a play or not to do a play; I wouldn't get into the innards or the dramatic worth of it. I'd just say, 'Mr. Lee, put your money up for Saroyan because Brooks Atkinson is going to like him, Burns Mantle is going to like him, and it will be a hit' [Atkinson and Mantle were leading drama critics]. . .Herman Shumlin never would have been able to direct Lillian Hellman's *The Children's Hour* [1934] without Lee. I urged Mr. Lee to do it; I begged him to do it. He was afraid because of the lesbian angle, and a couple of years before, everybody had been jailed because of a play called *The Captive*, which also was about lesbians. Shumlin and all those people owed it to Mr. Lee to have any of their stuff produced, because he was the only one then who put his own money into it."

If Lee Shubert had a weakness, Kenley adds, it was that he was a womanizer. Of all the hundreds of women who passed through his office, one in particular—Marcella Swan—captured his heart; ultimately, he married her. Typically, though, Lee Shubert was at one time involved with both Marcella Swan *and* her sister.

"Mr. Lee did a lot of lovely things and so did J. J., but mostly for girls," Kenley recalls. "The Shubert Benefit Fund was for destitute actors. Most producers, when they played the Shubert theaters, were assessed a certain sum for the benefit fund. But the only ones who got any funds out of it were destitute hookers or destitute showgirls." (While this is true in the main, it's not literally correct; occasionally a male employee benefited.)

"J. J. was a womanizer, too. All the girls were in love with him, and he with them, but very temporarily. He'd have two professional girls all the time, of course," says Kenley. "Whenever a good-looking girl came to his office, about a job or whatever, I'd have to stand between him and her—otherwise he'd stick his hand up her skirt. He liked to do that but not all the girls appreciated it." Theatrically, however, "J. J. wouldn't take the risks that Lee did. J. J. read a play occasionally, but he didn't really know what he was reading."

Schenker, producer of *Shubert Alley*, recalls: "J. J. was the volatile, mercurial, monstrous son of a bitch when he wanted to be. But men who knew them both well say that J. J. was a much more human person than Lee. Both men were without real friends."

Kenley says frankly, "I loved the man—Lee. There were many people who loved him. . . "

When Lee Shubert died, on Christmas Day, 1953, J. J. Shubert quit producing musicals and plays altogether. In 1955, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the Shuberts, unlike their predecessors in the Trust, were subject to the antitrust laws. A year later, Federal Judge I. T. Kauffman signed a consent decree under which the Shubert Organization was required to sell a dozen theaters in six cities and to get out of the booking business; the consent decree was finally vacated this September. Today, the dynasty owns 16½ theaters in New York City (the half is the Music Box Theater, with Irving Berlin owning the other half) and six elsewhere in the U.S.

Gradually, J. J.'s son, John, for whom his father seemed to have only contempt, took over the business, with a conspicuous lack of success. John died in 1962 of a massive coronary, at fifty-three, en route to Florida by train to visit "a dear friend." He had left directions for his funeral to be held on the stage of the Shubert Theatre. The current set for *Camelot* was covered by black cloths and his widow, Eckie, was seated in a tall, black chair beside the rose-covered coffin. Roger L. Stevens, now director of the Kennedy Center, read the prepared eulogy, as directed in the dead man's instructions. It was weird.

No less weird, however, than the sequel. It came out that the "dear friend" in Florida John Shubert was going to see was a second Mrs. Shubert who, like the first, had a son. Naturally there was a bitter lawsuit, and ultimately Eckie Shubert won the title and that went with it. Both children were allow to use the name Shubert, though the forme secret Mrs. Shubert no longer could.

The subsequent decade, during which nephew, Lawrence Shubert Lawrence, Jr., w titular head of the organization, was anythi but distinguished or especially profitab Finally, in 1972, the board ousted Lawrer and replaced him with Schoenfeld and Jacol Production and profits have grown dramat ally and steadily since then.

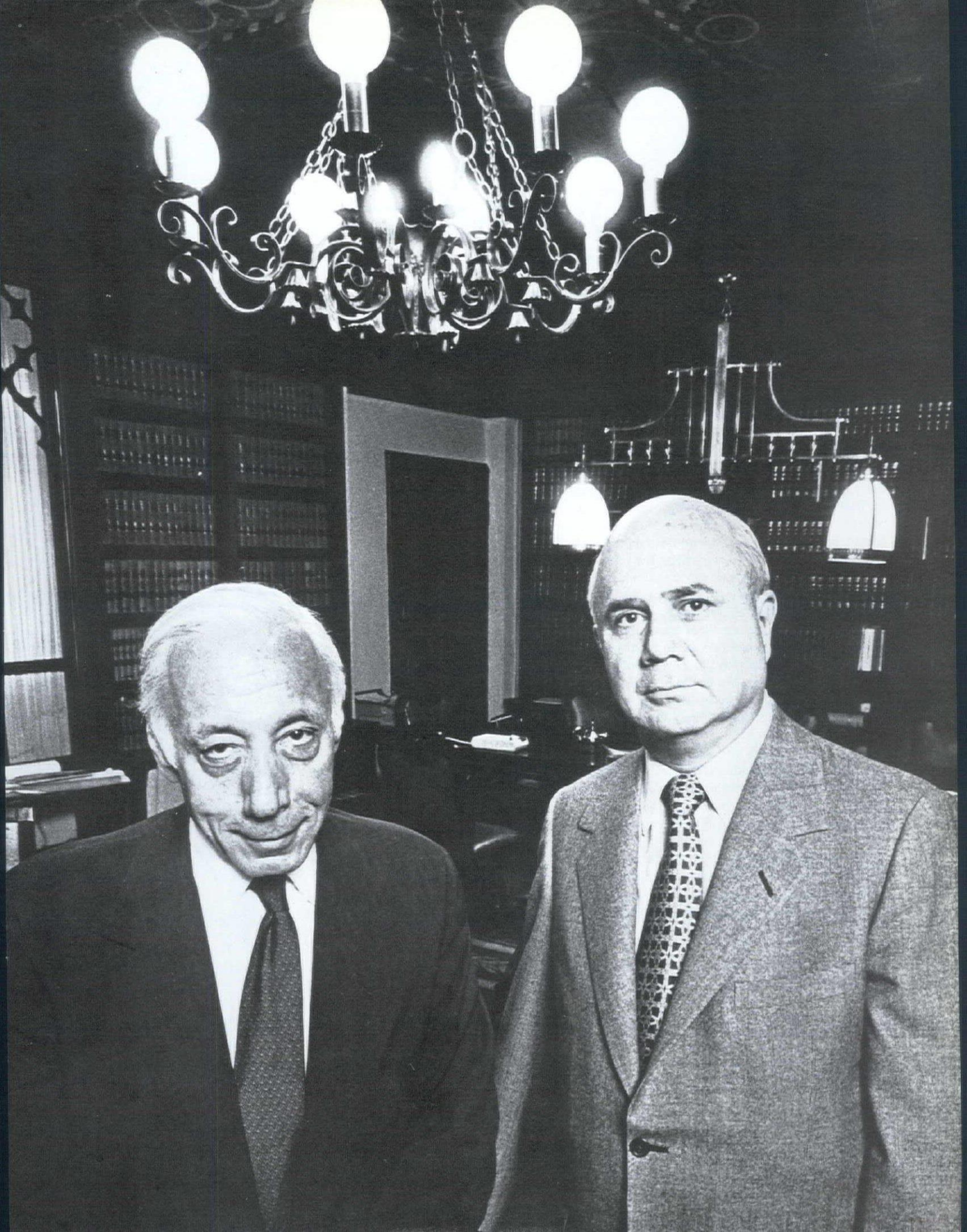
"Without [the Shuberts] sustaining the theaters throughout the Depression Schoenfeld says now, "there would be theaters today. Maybe there would be oth theaters, but it would take a long time to rev an American theater. And if nothing else cou be said about them, they accomplished that

*Shubert Alley* is, in part, an effort to set t record straight on the Shubert brothers a their accomplishments. Says Schenker, "I always been enormously interested in the sto of these three brothers, but nobody's ev dramatized it. One hears stories of how mo strous they were or how nice they were, and intend to tell the truth."

And what is the truth about the colorf controversial Shuberts? The truth, perhaps, to be found in Shubert Alley, and in t Shuberts' other theaters across the countr "They preserved a heritage for this count that you would never have without the buildings," says Jacobs. "These buildings a the heart and core of what makes this countr from a theatrical point of view, different fro any other country in the world. What mak this city different from any other city. The buildings are a national treasure. The Shuber also had the foresight and good sense and lo for the theater which compelled them to lea these buildings to a foundation so they cou continue as part of that tradition.

"No matter what people may say abo them, no matter how difficult they were—ar obviously, they were difficult—they dete mined to be in this business and they dedicat their lives to this business. They loved th business and they perservered in this busine in very difficult times, and they worked the asses off and they died on the job and th never gave up, either one of them."

*Gerald Schoenfeld (left) and Bernard Jacob part of the Shubert Organization since 1949 and 1957, respectively, run it today.*



# Side by Side by Prince

## Harold Prince takes musical comedy seriously, but he's learned to laugh about it.

By Howard Kissel

Early in 1963, the creators of a musical based on Thornton Wilder's farce, *The Matchmaker*, brought their project to a Broadway producer known for his interest in adventurous musicals. The producer had tried his hand the year before at directing a musical, a task sometimes compared to orchestrating the Normandy landings, with considerable success. So it was his director's side that the composer and librettist tried to interest when they performed the score of their fledgling musical—*Hello, Dolly!* They failed to woo him, but he did offer them some free advice. "You must get rid of that absolutely ridiculous song," he told them, referring, of course, to the title number.

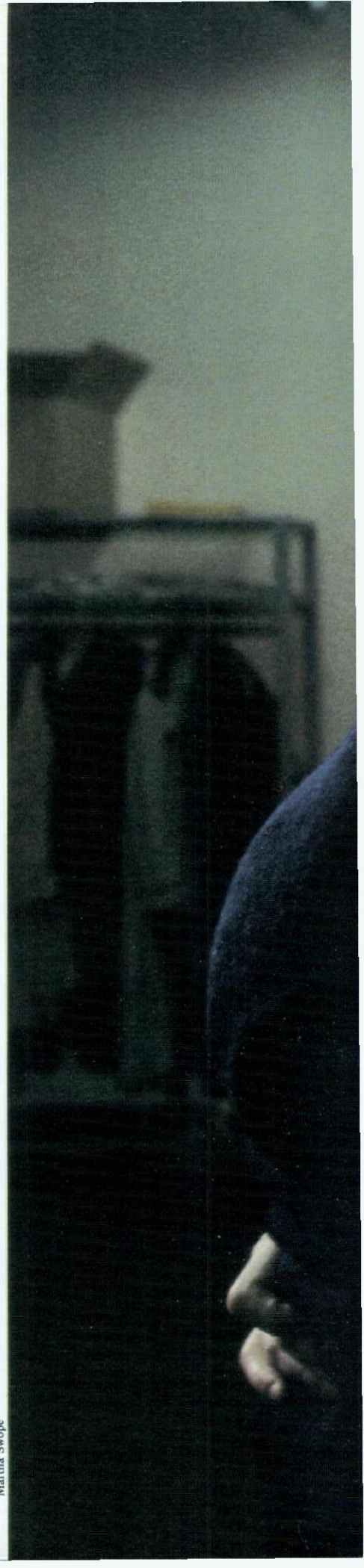
One might imagine, with such commercial acumen, that the producer/director might have ended up selling insurance in Keokuk. Instead, Harold Prince became one of the most successful and influential figures in Broadway history, a fact all the more remarkable since his career has been built on principles diametrically opposed to the blatant commercialism underlying *Hello, Dolly!* This fall he will open a Stephen Sondheim musical roughly based on George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart's 1934 dark comedy, *Merrily We Roll Along*; Prince is still going his own way, and it's a long way from *Hello, Dolly!*

Prince, seated behind a Parsons-table desk absolutely free of clutter, seems to enjoy being reminded of his judgment of *Hello, Dolly!* No one, in fact, has probably told the story oftener than Prince himself. There have been times when his seriousness about musical theater has made his life and career difficult, but the last few years have been good ones for him. Prince talks animatedly in a hard-sounding voice softened by frequent laughter.

By 1963, Prince, then in his midthirties, already had an impressive reputation as a producer. He had begun his career only a decade earlier with an assortment of small jobs including stage-managing *Wonderful Town* and acting as production assistant for a musical revue written by Walter and Jean Kerr. Prince's first efforts as a producer were two big commercial hits, *The Pajama Game* and *Damn Yankees,* both of which he coproduced with Robert Griffith, with whom he had worked in the office of the legendary producer and director, George Abbott. (Abbott, now in his nineties, still works and shares Prince's Rockefeller Center office.)

Abbott's career was based on his infallible knowledge of what makes people laugh, what makes shows tick. He often simply told actors where to stand and how long a pause to take before delivering a line. However much they resented his approach, actors grudgingly admitted it worked. Abbott's sense of craft made his office an excellent place for Prince's apprenticeship.

Prince's own taste in musicals became apparent in 1957 when he took over, from Cheryl Crawford and Roger Stevens, a project that Leonard Bernstein and Arthur Laurents had been working on for over a decade. Originally called *East Side Story,* a version of *Romeo and Juliet* with the warring families Jews and Italians, the musical was now titled *West Side Story* and reflected the conditions of New York in the fifties. One member of the creative team was a friend of Prince, a young lyricist named Stephen Sondheim, who was making his Broadway debut. Prince and Sondheim had



*Harold Prince with Patti Lupone of* Evita. *"It's the hottest show I ever worked with," he says, not at all surprised by its success.*

Martha Swope

# "I feel guilty about the money lost on *Pacific Overtures* and *Follies*. A lot of it was my own."

net, auspiciously enough, at the opening of *outh Pacific,* Prince as a guest of Rodgers, ondheim a guest of Hammerstein. Long efore either was a figure of consequence in he theater, Prince remembers, he told Sondeim over coffee at a Times Square Walgreens hat they were the logical heirs to the Rodgers nd Hammerstein tradition. This prophecy ame true in *West Side Story*. Though Rodgers nd Hammerstein had started a new era in nusical theater with *Oklahoma!,* considered he first musical in which the songs were an inegral part of the story, *West Side Story* gave he musical a new urgency. Between the audi-nce of *Oklahoma!* and the characters lay a listance of forty years; *West Side Story* was as ontemporary as newspaper headlines. Though *West Side Story* is now regarded as a landmark, he reviews were mixed. The Tony that season vent to the cheerier *The Music Man*.

If Prince was audacious in his choice of subects for musicals, he was equally brave in giving young talent opportunities. In 1959 he produced a show about New York politics, *Fiorello!,* giving the title role to an off-Broadway actor named Tom Bosley and asking a pair of young songwriters, Sheldon Harnick and Jerry Bock, to do the score. The book for *Fiorello!* was written by novelist Jerome Weidman, and the show won a Pulitzer Prize, one of a handful of musicals ever to do so.

In 1961 Robert Griffith, Prince's longtime coproducer, died and Prince began working on his own. One of his first projects was the first musical with both music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, which starred Zero Mostel. Mostel was Prince's choice for *Forum;* Larry Gelbart and Burt Shevelove, who coauthored the book, accepted him only when their first choice, Milton Berle, proved too expensive. That year Prince also took on his first directorial assignment, Jerry Bock and Sheldon Harnick's *She Loves Me*.

Neither of these two undertakings in itself seemed that significant, but Prince took some talent from each when he embarked on his next project. No one who saw the short-lived but much-admired *She Loves Me* suspected that its authors' next musical would be one of the most successful shows in Broadway history. Prince produced that show, which was called *Fiddler on the Roof*.

The enormous success of *Fiddler* itself was never regarded as a "sure thing" in its early stages. Joseph Stein, who wrote the book, remembers a backers' audition at which a potential "angel" asked him, "And after all the Hadassah ladies have seen it, then what?" When the show opened in Detroit, *Variety* panned it, terming it "mediocre," which increased the creators' nervousness as they approached New York. There critics were generally favorable, though Prince took a certain pleasure reprinting their reviews seven years later when he threw a party to celebrate *Fiddler*'s becoming the longest-running show on Broadway; their reviews were far from uniformly positive.

Prince never challenged the authority of Jerome Robbins, who directed and choreographed *Fiddler* and constantly forced the authors to refine their work. The prodding ultimately made Stein and Harnick focus on the notion of "Tradition." But Prince also made creative contributions to the show. At one point he was invited to see what used to be called "an eleven-o'clock number," a splashy musical moment intended to reawaken lagging audience interest just before the conclusion. Since *Fiddler* ends with the dark but hopeful mood of people forced to abandon their home for something new, there was nothing intrinsically splashy around which to create "an eleven-o'clock number." Robbins had come up with a fantasy number to enliven things. Prince realized this was not a formula show and the fantasy was extraneous. He suggested they drop the fancy production number and concentrate on the story. The result was "Anatevka," a simple number in which the Jews sing wistfully, ironically of the shabby, dangerous "home" they are leaving as they set out for America.

Apart from its importance in the history of American musicals, *Fiddler* made an inestimable contribution to Harold Prince's career. For the next dozen years he had a network of "angels" who would back anything he did almost automatically. In effect, his experiments in musical theater until the midseventies were subsidized by the loyal, grateful backers of *Fiddler*.

The next few years were not financially successful for Prince, but most of the projects he initiated were to have important consequences. He linked, for example, two songwriters who had never teamed before, John Kander and Fred Ebb, and had them write a show for a nineteen-year-old performer named Liza Minnelli; the trio has been virtually inseparable since that initial collaboration in

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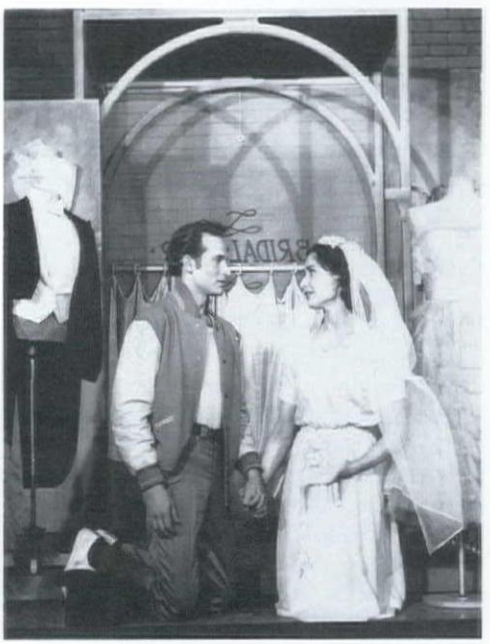

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*Opposite:* A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum, *with (from left) Brian Davies, Preshy Marker, and Zero Mostel, was one of Prince's first solo projects and the first musical with both music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim. Above, top: Prince took a chance on the then-unknown Tom Bosley in* Fiorello! *Bottom:* West Side Story, *with Larry Kert and Carol Lawrence, gave the musical a new urgency, reflecting youth-gang struggles in 1950s New York City.*

1965. Prince was also experimenting. In *It's a Bird, It's a Plane, It's SUPERMAN*—with a book by Robert Benton and David Newman (who later wrote *Bonnie and Clyde*) and a score by Charles Strouse and Lee Adams (who wrote *Bye Bye Birdie*)—Prince made the whole stage look like a comic strip complete with boxes, a foreshadowing of the kind of stage pictures that would become essential to his "concept musicals."

Between his initial directorial success—the gentle, warm *She Loves Me*—and his next triumph as producer and director—the abrasive 1966 *Cabaret*—Prince had an important artistic revelation. On a visit to Moscow in 1965, he saw a production based on the work of Vsevolod Meyerhold, a Soviet director who had come into prominence during the artistically stimulating decade following the Russian Revolution. Unlike Konstantin Stanislavsky, who refined his obsession with realism into a greater and greater concentration on petty detail, Meyerhold wanted theater to prod, stimulate, startle, even irritate the audience. Meyerhold disappeared in the purges of the late thirties, but his theatrical legacy persisted.

For Prince, the exposure to this alternative to naturalism led to what has been called "the concept musical," which means essentially a musical built around a key metaphor rather than a conventional plot. In the case of *Cabaret*, the whole theater became the seedy Berlin cabaret where the hideousness of Nazism was mirrored. Prince has often stated that he was not thinking merely of Germany in the thirties, but of Chicago in the summer of 1965, when racial hatred flared openly in street battles. To make the image complete, the set included mirrors, bringing the audience onto the stage, as accomplices in the action.

Though Prince takes his musicals seriously, he does not go about his work with the attitude of an evangelist. He was pleased when perceptive observers saw what was happening. He was just as pleased when conventional Broadway patrons took the show in stride, as when, coming up the aisle after a performance of *Cabaret,* he heard one middle-aged woman say to her husband, "I don't know which I enjoyed more, this or *Hello, Dolly!*"

Prince continued to experiment, collaborating again with Kander and Ebb on a musical version of *Zorba.* He also made a film, an erotic comedy called *Something for Everybody,* which has found a cult audience.

At the same time his friend Sondheim was also maturing. In 1964 Sondheim created, in collaboration with Arthur Laurents, an extremely ambitious (some might say pretentious) musical, *Anyone Can Whistle,* a fable about conformity and spontaneity. *Anyone Can Whistle* ran for a week and made cocktail party conversation for many years thereafter. The musical was a career setback for Sondheim, who had to return temporarily to being a lyricist, collaborating uneasily with Richard Rodgers on *Do I Hear a Waltz?* After a few unsuccessful projects, Sondheim began work on a show that brought him in line with Prince's "concept musical." With his 1970 *Company,* the American musical entered a entirely new phase. The score Sondheim created for *Company* was a major departure from conventional "show tunes" and gave Broadway a sophisticated idiom in which it could address issues as serious as those shaping late-sixties rock. Moreover, the musical numbers were no longer contingent on a plot. Some grew out of the characters' situations, but others were almost in the nature of essays.

What made *Company* an important departure was the way everything was executed. The scenery, which for decades had been a key part of Broadway musicals largely because it was splashy and lavish, now became part of the musical's statement. *Company* was conceived by Prince as a series of images, and Boris Aronson's glass-and-chrome sets were as essential to the tone and spirit of those images as Sondheim's score.

Martha Swope

Martha Swope

*Top:* Pacific Overtures, *an ambitious historical musical using Oriental theater, failed. Bottom:* Company *(here starring Larry Kert) brought the musical closer to a youth culture more accustomed to cinema.*

# "It's a fatuous enough world that people believe what they read in Earl Wilson."

It was Prince who brought in Aronson, the tellectual among scenic designers. It was rince who recognized the talents of Michael ennett, who, in *Company,* began using dance explore character, an opportunity his earlier signments had not provided. The same team orked together on the next Prince-Sondheim ow, *Follies,* based in part on material Sondeim had been developing independently, ostly on the complex emotions Prince experinced seeing a photograph in *Life* of Gloria wanson, gowned in Hollywood splendor, tanding evocatively in front of the ruins of a lew York movie palace. The photo suggested series of images—about aging, ambition, 'entertainment''—all of which were explored n another trailblazing musical.

Both shows, because they were dealing in netaphors rather than in conventional stories, lienated as many people as they attracted. The udience for musical comedy, after all, is not an rty crowd—the remarkable thing about musicals is that they have become a subtle, ophisticated art while providing amusement for udiences who have little interest in "art." *Company* was a *success d'estime* and a financial ossup; *Follies* was not appreciated critically and became a financial disaster.

Their next show at least offered the audience a plot. It was based on Ingmar Bergman's *Smiles of a Summer Night.* This time the concept was musical rather than visual—the score was largely a series of waltzes. The show, *A Little Night Music,* even had a hit song, "Send in the Clowns," which made it a more popular show than its predecessors.

Having thus overindulged the public taste, Prince and Sondheim turned to their most ambitious collaboration. *Pacific Overtures* was an attempt to tell the story of the nineteenth-century Western colonization of Japan through the techniques of Oriental theater. The personality of Commodore Perry, for example, was expressed in a Broadway version of a traditional "lion dance," a sort of Kabuki star turn. One of the songs used the verse structure of haiku. In one of the most impressive feats of his career, Aronson made Perry's ship move with the fragility and delicacy of a paper dragon. The show overflowed with inventiveness and brilliance. That its cast was entirely Oriental—until the final scene, when Japan has become modernized, even the female roles were played by men, a key Oriental tradition—did not make it more accessible to the conventional musical audience. Had the *New York Times* been enthusiastic, *Pacific Overtures* could at least have become the season's cocktail-party show. But without the *Times*' imprimatur, the show was doomed, and so was Prince's reliance on a steady group of happy, loyal backers.

At this moment the way Prince was perceived on Broadway changed importantly. He became an "intellectual," a noun rarely used in a positive sense between Forty-fourth and Fifty-third streets after about 1960. Intellectuals were especially distasteful in 1976 because the previous season *A Chorus Line* had opened. To the cognoscenti, *A Chorus Line* was one of the few non-Prince shows that fulfilled the principles of the concept musical. Better still, it proved there could be Big Money again on Broadway.

Prince, he now recalls with some amusement, thought he could regain ground by looking elsewhere. He arranged to direct the film version of *A Little Night Music,* starring Elizabeth Taylor. Ralph Rosenblum, who has edited the films of Sidney Lumet, Woody Allen, and Mel Brooks, and who edited Prince's *Something for Everybody,* observed that Prince was used to insisting on the precision that is necessary in the theater but that does not work on the screen. The precision of Prince's vision left little room for the editor to practice his craft. As a result, Rosenblum felt *Something* was stiff. Much the same was true of *Night Music,* which was completed in the fall of 1976 but was not released until the spring of 1978. Despite its star and its hit song, *Night Music* was a financial debacle.

Disasters, it is generally believed, come in threes. The third for Prince was a feeble theatrical comedy called *Some of My Best Friends,* which was about a man who talks to plants and animals. "I really thought it was funny," a bemused Prince says. The critics didn't. The play closed in less than a week, leaving Prince at the lowest point in his career.

Prince's fortunes were changed from an unexpected quarter. Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd-Weber, who had written *Jesus Christ Superstar,* wanted him to direct a stage version of their new hit album, *Evita,* in London. It had often been remarked that the English were incapable of turning out a Broadway musical. The reason usually offered is that London theater is paced more genteelly than Broadway, and musicals depend on a taut, intense sense of pacing. In this case, the tautness and intensity were being imported with Prince. Moreover, the high energy level with which his shows are associated was reinforced by the need to recapture his reputation.

"I thought to myself, Not only have you decimated your reputation in New York—now you're going to do it in England," Prince remembers thinking as he began work. "I was frightened out of my wits. I asked if there was a quick way to contract hepatitis. I would have done anything to hide under the bed."

Oddly, *Evita* turned out to be the easiest show Prince had ever directed. "Monday morning everything just clicked," he recalls. As far as his directorial career is concerned, *Evita* has been his most successful show. In addition to productions in every English-speaking country, there are sixteen foreign-language productions scheduled to go by the end of 1981. Prince himself is directing them in Vienna, Athens, and Mexico City.

Prince is not at all surprised by the success of *Evita*: "It's the hottest show I ever worked with. Without anybody taking clothes off, without any overt attempt at sexuality, it's a very sexy show. I felt something similar when I did *Cabaret,* a sexual energy just working on it, something just bubbling there."

A lot of this energy comes from the character herself, whose treatment caused considerable controversy when the show opened. Does *Evita* glorify fascism, as some of its critics charge? "The fact is, I don't know how I feel about Eva Peron," Prince says. " That's what makes it interesting. I am political, but not really as much as others—preaching is too boring. Faye Dunaway, who made a TV film about her, wrote me she had fallen in love with Eva Peron. Nacha Guevara, an actress and singer who was exiled from her native Argentina because of her leftist politics, resents the way Eva is treated in the show—she doesn't think we're fair to her."

Between the London and New York productions of *Evita,* Prince staged Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd,* his most controversial musical, but, oddly enough, one of his most commercially successful. In the late spring of 1979, the original cast album of *Sweeney Todd,* a two-record set, was on *Billboard*'s list of the ten best-selling albums in the country, a highly unusual situation for a Sondheim show. It's even odder for a melodrama set in nineteenth-century London concerning a misanthropic barber who slits the throats of his customers, then sends the corpses down to his neighbor, a lady baker, who makes them into meat pies.

# Working on *Sweeney Todd*, "every morning I felt, 'Do I have to get out of bed?' "

Originally Prince didn't want to direct *Sweeney Todd,* which, for all the outrageousness of its situation, has a fairly straightforward narrative. Prince became interested when he thought of an overarching metaphor: the stage in *Sweeney Todd* was dominated by the oppressive skeleton of a Victorian factory, constantly reminding the viewer of the grimy socio-economic context of the story, thus making it a more complex piece than the traditional melodrama on which it was based.

For Prince, working on *Sweeney Todd* was difficult—"Every morning I felt, 'Do I have to get out of bed?' But that's what the show was about. The world is an unfair place. Most people don't have much poetry in their lives. They don't see the sun. They hate their jobs. For me Monday to Friday is thrilling and stimulating."

Though Prince does not write the musicals he directs, he has inevitably become associated with their severe views. A year ago he was willing to concede to his critics that much of his work was "cold." As he approaches his next theatrical project, *Merrily We Roll Along,* his attitude is less dark. "I think I'm warmhearted," he laughs. "As you get older you can't hold on to your vision."

Kaufman and Hart's original *Merrily* moves backward in time, showing us a man on the skids, an alcoholic, then reversing to the time when he graduated from high school as the class member most likely to succeed. The overall tone of the original, Prince feels, was melodramatic. Moreover, the passage of time has changed our perspective on the play: "In 1934 the leading character was almost a villain. Our standards have become so polluted that now he seems like Everyman. We want it to be a more gentle thing."

The new version will begin with the valedictorian of a graduating class welcoming back the school's most famous graduate, a poet, composer, and Academy Award-winner and coincidentally the author of the school song. When the composer comes out, his part turns out to be played by an eighteen-year-old boy, who tells the graduating class, "I don't feel a day older."

For Prince the metaphor is true. " I told my teenage kids it's difficult for me to feel older than they are. If your life is any good at all you feel youngest and most secure as you get older. The idea gets metaphorized when you have an eighteen-year-old playing an eighteen-year-old at the same time as another eighteen-year-old plays a forty-five-year-old." (The entire cast of *Merrily We Roll Along* will be under twenty.) "The minute the show becomes kids it becomes subliminally a different evening—the kids are saying, 'This is you, not us. This is not the route we have to take.' "

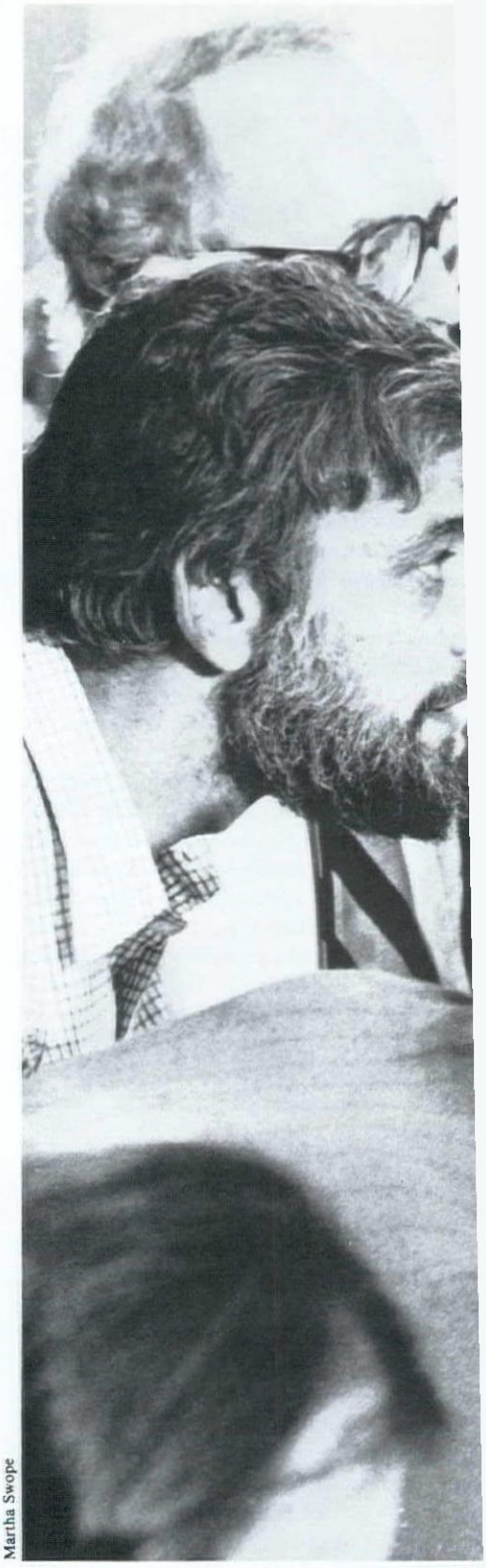
Part of the motivation for this concept for *Merrily* is Prince's own children, the oldest of whom is seventeen. Prince is not generally thought of as a family man. It is not an easy role for someone with such difficult standards. He was reproached for his behavior during a school play: "Daddy, you looked so bored." His reply was uncompromising: "I was awake. What do you want? When was the last time you saw me awake in an auditorium?"

Despite such confrontations, Prince says, "I'm very impressed by my kids and their friends . . . They're willing to jump in head first. They're eager to be honest." By having all the parts played by youngsters, Prince can make the show "optimistic without being safe." (The way other producers and directors regard being "experimental" is pretty much the way the word "safe" sounds in Prince's mouth.)

In addition to *Merrily*, Prince is accepting invitations to direct opera. He has directed several experimental works for the New York City Opera and the decidedly unexperimental *Girl of the Golden West* for the Chicago Lyric Opera. This spring he staged a new Carlisle Flood opera based on *All the King's Men* for the Houston Opera and is making plans to produce Wagner's *Ring* in Berlin in 1984–1985. The most recent German staging of the *Ring*, the controversial Patrice Chereau production at Bayreuth, amused Prince because it looked so familiar: "His *Gotterdammerung* looks exactly like *West Side Story*—brownstones and fire escapes. I've already done that. I think the look for the *Ring* should come from Neuschwanstein, mad King Ludwig's murals. The ideas will come from Shaw."

Prince is also at work on a musical based on Billy Wilder's *Sunset Boulevard,* a project he first discussed with Jeannette MacDonald twenty years ago. It's now being written for Angela Lansbury and will be executed by Stephen Sondheim in an idiom quite different from MacDonald's. For February 1982, Prince has planned a revival of *Pacific Overtures* in London, and for next spring he has announced a musical called *A Doll's Life,* about what happens after Nora (in Ibsen's *A Doll's House*) slams the door.

When William Goldman wrote his classic appraisal of Broadway, *The Season,* a dozen years ago, one of his sobering conclusions wa that the major group of Broadway producer and directors—he put Prince at the top of th list—came to power in the forties and fifties Twelve years later the same situation is true Things may be even worse, since several of th producers on Goldman's list have died and nc



Martha Swope

*Sondheim (left) and Prince open their most recent collaboration,* Merrily We Roll Along *November 1 at the Alvin Theatre.*

important successors have appeared.

The reason why few aspire to this position may become clear when Prince says, with a certain amount of irritation, "I have read ad nauseam about being a millionaire. We live in a fatuous enough world that people believe what they read in Earl Wilson's column. The fact is for twenty-five years I've had good years and bad years. I've never approached a measure of security. All this time I've lived very well, sometimes unrealistically well. But there have been some terrible times—I feel guilty about the money that was lost on *Pacific Overtures* and *Follies*. A lot of it was my own. Money never meant that much to me, and I'm not going to change our way of living now. The thing I'm happiest about is that, after twenty-five years, I have an artistic freedom and an emotional security I've never felt before."

The movies, where people make instant reputations and instant millions, are understandably more attractive to the minds that might have entered the theater a few generations ago. But Prince doesn't have that kind of mind: "In other arts, once you've established a reputation you're treated like a hero. In the theater every time out you're judged as harshly as you were the first time. I kind of like that." □

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*Howard Kissel, the arts editor of* Women's Wear Daily, *last wrote for* HORIZON *on "New York Repertory Follies" (December 1980).*

# Up and Down the Avenue

## We ask the man on the street (and the star and Broadway expert on the street): Is there life in the theater?

**Al Hirschfeld**, Broadway caricaturist:

The more they charge for tickets, the more they seem to make. I don't know that it has anything to do with the productions themselves—they're mostly old revivals. Financially, things are better than they've ever been.

But very few serious plays are being done—they're mostly musicals. It's very odd, because a musical costs a million dollars to put on. Some sort of law of insanity prevails, and always has, on Broadway.

I am saddened that not many new playwrights are evolving who have any permanence. David Mamet and Jules Feiffer, who've come from off-Broadway, are the only two I can think of offhand. Broadway is a fabulous invalid, always dying but it always comes back. The playwright, though, is in a terrible position. There are so many who can't get a play produced.

**Ann Miller**, star of *Sugar Babies*, now in its third year on Broadway:

The pictures are so bad and the television is so repetitious that people are forced to seek good entertainment. They go to the theater. Broadway is Mecca, and it's been that way for eons of time.

A new generation is coming to Broadway. Old people come to see us in *Sugar Babies* to bring back part of their youth. But there are just as many young people. We're a curiosity piece to the young people.

The future of Broadway is the brightest it's ever been. All those great writers TV has gobbled up, though they might be making loads of money, are realizing that to do something of quality, they have to come back to Broadway.

**Christopher Catt**, maitre d' at Sardi's, the Broadway restaurant billed as the meetingplace of stars and theatergoers since 1921:

I think we're going to see more and more musicals, more and more rock and roll stars and Sinatra playing on Broadway for limited runs, and less and less of anything that has a substantial message to it.

**Geoffrey Holder**, Broadway actor, chore rapher, and costume designer, starring in spring 1982 film version of *Annie*:

It's disgusting how our good writers have b destroyed. They cannot do experimental w on Broadway. They're not allowed to m mistakes. America has a big inferiority c plex where England is concerned: everyth British has to be good. Too many of the p ducers are so busy bringing it in from anot country when they could be bringing it fr another town.

We are reviving a lot of old stuff, whicl very good. We still revive Shakespeare Broadway, so there's nothing wrong with bri ing back *My Fair Lady*. *My Fair Lady* has come back to stand on its own twenty-fi thrity years later. *The King and I*—you've go see whether it's really good. I would like to *Chorus Line* play thirty years from now, a then see if it holds up. Then we know whethe is really a classic. After all, how long have been doing *Tosca* and *Madame Butterfly*?

**oseph Papp**, producer-director of the New ork Shakespeare Festival, producer of *A horus Line*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, and *allery*, a workshop production now in ehearsal:

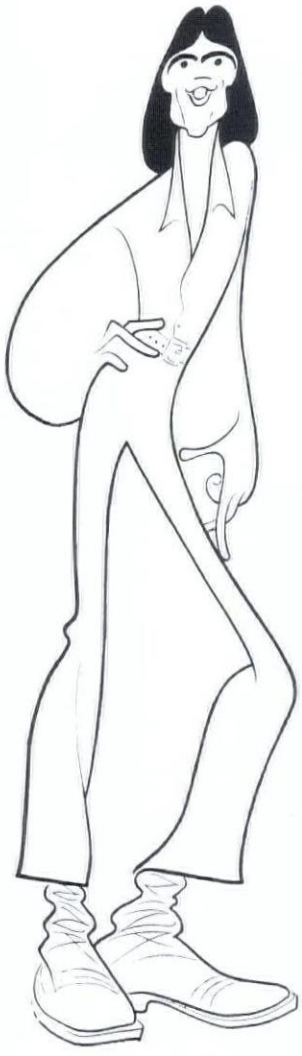
rtistically, Broadway hasn't made much of a omeback. Why do people go? You might as ell ask why they eat ice cream. They need ome sort of pacifier, and these days Broadway s providing it.

I see no indications of any innovations. ven the noncommercial theater is just as reary now as the rest of Broadway. There's othing challenging or provocative. But it just akes one or two people to really change the cene on Broadway; it could happen any day.

**anford Wilson**, playwright, author of the alley family trilogy—*Talley's Folly*, *Fifth of uly*, and *A Tale Told* (opening October 22 at he Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles):

see no sign of Broadway having made any ind of a comeback in the last ten years. There re a number of musicals that the audience nows every song in the show before they go in nd they sit there singing along with it, but hey don't have to experience anything except omething they could experience following a ouncing ball. The stuff may be done well; it may be done badly; but it sure as hell doesn't require anything from an audience. Not even that they listen. You could sit there doing your laundry list.

I don't see any reason that an audience can't come to a show expecting to have to listen and to have to pay attention to the show. After all, they've spent a great deal of money. They might as well try to be engaged. If the audience comes with that anticipation, I see no reason why they would be disappointed.



**Tommy Tune**, director of *Cloud Nine*, choreographer and Tony-winning director of *A Day In Hollywood, A Night In The Ukraine*, and choreographer/codirector of *The Best Little Whorehouse In Texas*:

Broadway came back because a decade ago we were in a severe depression. Broadway simply mirrored the times. The audiences today are different: due to the watching of television, today's audiences tend to talk a lot. Theater audiences of earlier times knew that you were supposed to listen. What do I see in the future of Broadway? Less theater. More lights.

**Ed Koch**, mayor of New York City:

The Broadway theater came back in the last three years in the same way the city of New York came back. Broadway and New York are synonymous; they're inextricably involved with one another, reaching for the stars.

**Joan Alleman Rubin**, editor of *Playbill*, the magazine distributed free to patrons of the New York theater:

Interest in theater, like the interest in everything else, is cyclical. It always makes a comeback. It made a very dramatic comeback this time for a couple of reasons. No question that advertising on television brought in new audiences to Broadway theater. That was also related to the fact that the price of a ticket was raised, because obviously it's expensive to market and promote on television. The third factor was the advent of *A Chorus Line*, which was a huge blockbuster.

The future of Broadway is now a real-estate problem. With so many theaters booked and so many seats filled, we'll have to have new theaters. I don't see any sense of it looking gloomy—quite the contrary. □

# Films

## Sandwiched Heroes

However tenuous his position in the other arts, the hero is alive and well at the movies. But the unique hero, the hero provocatively reconsidered, is a rarer creature, and his absence was sorely felt in the derivative blockbusters of this past summer. For all their dazzling effects and self-conscious ironies, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, *Superman II*, and *Arthur* haven't an original character among them. Rather, their protagonists are yearning re-creations of movie heroes past. Their conflicts are reassuringly straightforward: American versus Nazi, man versus tarantula, lovable n'er-do-well versus humorless rich relations. During its first hour, Brian DePalma's *Blow Out* promises more ambiguous circumstances and a less typical hero in the person of John Travolta's porno-film soundman. But, finally, DePalma also succumbs to facile polarization and Travolta becomes a pale imitation of Cary Grant's advertising executive in *North by Northwest*.

Thus, Sidney Lumet's *Prince of the City* and Peter Weir's *Gallipoli* make a refreshing change this fall. Again, we are introduced to protagonists who *seem* heroic archetypes. Lumet's narcotics detective, Danny Ciello (Treat Williams), risks security, friendships, and life itself to thwart police corruption and expiate his own former wrongdoings (see "The Lumet Network" in the September 1981, HORIZON). Weir's Archy (Mark Lee), a young Australian athlete, leaves family and track-running fame behind to fight for the British in World War I. As in *Superman II* and *Blow Out*, simple rights and wrongs are readily discernible. Danny is *right*; the officials who exploit and then turn on him are manifestly *wrong*. But, to their credit, Lumet and Weir push beyond comforting truths to greater ambivalences. They scrutinize not only the heroes' motives, but the nature and finally the validity of heroism itself. Can heroes do more harm than good? Have the movies inculcated heroic ideals unfit for real-life application?

Yes and no, is Lumet's response in the consciously detached and often discomfiting *Prince of the City*. Danny—a loyal detective and friend—agrees to expose police corruption to the Knapp Commission, with the stipulation that he never be asked to betray a former partner. Government officials agree and shower him with praise and protection. By film's end, however, these same officials (or their

lacements) have forced Danny to inform on nself and his closest friends. Though finally nerated, the broken protagonist returns to nistrustful police department and a life of f-doubt—as hero, villain, and victim.

A dark and gripping, but scrupulously passionate film, *Prince of the City* is more sely allied to Martin Scorsese's vision of roism in *Mean Streets* and *Raging Bull*, than Lumet's own perceptions in his earlier *Serpo*. Where Serpico was a maverick, Danny is mmitted to his job and police friendships. with Scorsese's heroes, Danny's moral pulse evolves out of a mixture of guilt, olence, faith, and self-destructive whim.

Yet Lumet wisely refuses to portray Danny's roic decisions as unilaterally a matter of atholic and psychological remorse. Yes, he is rmented by his bribe-taking corruption, but anny is also manifestly a man who thrives on nger, who travels without weapon and bodyard when he most needs them, who time and ain recklessly courts retaliation. Early in the m, a sympathetic Knapp Commission offial speculates that Danny half wishes to be nished for exposing his fellow cops. True, t as Lumet subtly conveys, Danny also half joys the gambler's dare-all risk, much as the ro of *Mean Streets* enjoys holding his palm the candle flame. So Danny's ultimate demise is thematically intriguing. On the one hand, the fact of his terrible suffering—particularly in light of the apparent inevitability of continued police corruption—forces us to ask if the result is worth the heroic effort. But, on the other hand, are this hero's—and, by implication, all heroes'—sufferings self-willed? Lumet supplies no easy answers, leaving us with mixed, but powerful feelings.

On its surface, *Gallipoli*, Australian Peter Weir's best film to date, presents a more traditional subject and hero. As in his earlier *Picnic at Hanging Rock* and *The Last Wave*, Weir selects a blond, personable, conventionally handsome, and virtuous protagonist: here, the open-faced, seventeen-year-old Archy, one of Australia's fastest runners. The year is 1915, the setting a small Australian village where Archy trains for a major track meet and schemes to leave home to fight with the British in Turkey. The film's destination, apparent from the start, is a battlefield notorious to every Australian schoolchild—the island of Gallipoli (a site comparable to the Alamo), where British callousness and disorganization precipitated the senseless butchering of thousands of Australian soldiers.

With this ending ever in sight, *Gallipoli* watches its "athlete-dying-young" grow assuredly toward extinction. More than any of Weir's earlier characters, Archy evolves as a funny, fallible, likeable human being as well as a symbol. Like Danny Ciello, Archy can't resist a dare. When challenged to a foolish race the day before an important match, he accepts and badly bruises his feet proving his manhood. Also like Lumet's hero, Weir's is a good and affectionate friend: one of Archy's more endearing qualities is his attachment to a not-quite-as-swift, considerably less valiant runner named Jack (Bill Kerr). But conspicuously unlike Danny, Archy is young, idealistic, pure, and eager to sacrifice for a cause. Still, his heroism is similarly futile. He dies gloriously but also stupidly.

Though its message is not unfamiliar, *Gallipoli*'s characters, narrative, and descriptive nuances are unusually compelling. As with Danny's undoing, Archy's pointless death profoundly challenges the traditional code of heroic ethics. Was this handsome, skillful, loving young boy meant for no more than this silly act? Would he—and the world—not have been better off if he'd cravenly fled the battle? And yet, there's no denying that we are moved by his daring and swiftness. Heroism, even needless heroism, still has power.

A subtle narrative irony gives a further twist to *Gallipoli*'s complex vision of heroism. The night before the battle, Archy's commander asks him to play runner, rather than fighter, in the next day's activities. Believing this role the less dangerous and less vital, Archy suggests that his fearful and only slightly slower runner friend, Jack, assume the messenger's duties, while he fights the good fight. At the time, Archy's decision seems brave and wise. Later, when hundreds (Archy among them) die because the cease-fire message from the British arrives too late, one wonders . . .

The capacity to evoke this wonder is a distinguishing virtue in both *Gallipoli* and *Prince of the City*. Like *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and *Blow Out*, these films are conspicuously aware of their movie heritage. But where the Spielberg/Lucas and De Palma movie references are wry or nostalgic, Lumet's and Weir's are intelligently troubled and, in Lumet's case, even self-critical. While Weir understands the power of conventional Hollywood war films, he also perceives their dangers: by stressing the glory of battlefield courage, they ignored war's darker, less meaningful sacrifices. *Prince of the City* casts a shadow on the certitude of earlier police exposé movies, and on Lumet's own *Serpico*.

*Prince of the City* and *Gallipoli* are fine original works that are also derivative in the best sense of the word. Rather than attempting to replicate a bygone world, they bring vital, contemporary interpretations to old struggles and ideals.—*Diane Jacobs*

*eft: Mark Lee plays the heroic Archy in eter Weir's new film,* Gallipoli. *Below: rchy and Frank (Mel Gibson) are fellow ustralian farm boys who go off to war on ehalf of the British in Turkey.*

# There's a lot worth saving in this country.

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# Letters

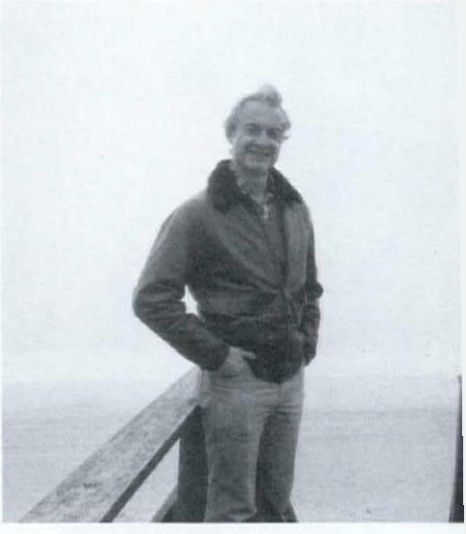
**Mamluk Revival**

We enjoyed the article in the July/August i of HORIZON describing the new Mamluk exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum. like to point out that the Jewish Museu mounting an exhibition titled "The Man Revival: Metalwork for Religious and Dor tic Use" concurrently with the Met's exh tion. It comprises a group of inlaid m vessels from the Jewish Museum's perma collection, produced in Damascus, Jerusal and Cairo in the late nineteenth and e twentieth centuries, which, due to their er mous aesthetic value and resemblance Mamluk work of the fourteenth through teenth centuries, merit the term, "Mam revival." This exhibition at the Jew Museum represents the first scholarly, pu recognition of this material. Exhibition da are November 18, 1981, through March 1983. Thank you for passing this on to y readers.

Barbara L. Kaplan
Director of Public Information
The Jewish Museum

**Corrections**

*In the July/August HORIZON, the author of story, "From Photography to Funk," v listed as "Richard Atkins." The byline shou have read "Robert Atkins." In the Septemb HORIZON, the opening photograph f "Lichtenstein" should have been credited Sarah Wells. HORIZON regrets the errors.*



*Roy Lichtenstein*