

AMERICAN THEATRE

SEPTEMBER 2002

U.S. \$4.95/can. \$6.50

AFTERMATH ANXIETY

11 ARTISTS FACE
THE CHALLENGE OF
PUTTING 9/11
ON STAGE

SPECIAL REPORT:
'THEATRE FACTS 2001'
Tracks the 'Economic
Downturn

PLUS:

Why We Still Adore
DON JUAN

**HIP-HOP
THEATRE**
Takes Off

Brian Jucha's

We Have Some Planes
at Infernal Bridegroom
Productions of Houston



AMERICAN THEATRE

PUBLISHED BY THEATRE COMMUNICATIONS GROUP VOLUME 19 NUMBER 7 SEPTEMBER 2002

FEATURES

18 A Rake's Progress

That immortal immoralist Don Juan keeps pace with the age of Enron
BY MISHA BERSON

24 The View from Here

11 artists talk about the challenge of putting 9/11 on stage. Plus, DON SHEWEY on Robert Lepage's *Zulu Time*; ROBERT FAIRES on Brian Jucha's *We Have Some Planes* [\(web\)](#)



24



18

DEPARTMENTS

Editor's Note	2	New CDs	86
Letters	3	MARK DUNDAS WOOD swings with Romberg	
From the Executive Director	4	News from ITI (web)	87
When 9/11 Is History (web)		News from TCG	88
BY BEN CAMERON		September On Stage	96
Front & Center	6	Global Spotlight	99
<i>A Winter's Tale</i> raves; <i>Hairspray</i> camps it up; Carol Gilligan sees scarlet. Plus Entrances & Exits; Awards & Prizes; Trends & Events.		A sampler from the international stage	
In Memoriam	14	20 Questions for Eliza Rose Fichter	104
Nobu McCarthy BY DAVID HENRY HWANG			
Josef Svoboda BY JARKA M. BURIAN			
Critic's Notebook	36		
Hip-hop theatre is a genre to contend with			
BY KIM EUELL			
Profiles	40		
Sarah Jones hails the revolution			
BY MARTHA HOSTETTER			
First Person	45		
On seeing all of Shakespeare before age 30			
BY ERIC GRODE			
Blueprints	80		
Lighting a fire at Directors Lab West			
BY MEAD HUNTER			
Postmark Hungary	83		
Brave new views of Büchner and Brecht			
BY JIM O'QUINN			

49 Shifting Currents: A Digest of 'Theatre Facts 2001'

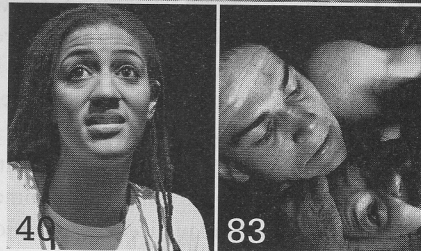
STEPHEN NUNNS tracks the field's course through troubled waters

59 'Where Do We Live'

The complete text of CHRISTOPHER SHINN's eloquent portrait of New Yorkers struggling toward common perspectives. Plus, an interview with the playwright
BY GRETCHEN VAN LENTE



36



49

83

VISIT AMERICAN THEATRE ONLINE AT WWW.TCG.ORG

On the cover: clockwise from upper left, Jodi McLaughlin, Amy Bruce, Kyle Sturdivant, Troy Schulze, Tamarie Cooper and George Parker in Infernal Bridegroom Productions' *We Have Some Planes*, written and directed by Brian Jucha. Set design by Tony Barilla; lighting by Roma Flowers. Photo by Amy Spangler.

A Pioneering Lab Heads West

What happens when 50 directors converge in California to talk about their work?

With more than 80 years of production history behind it, the grand and gracious Pasadena Playhouse counts as an historical landmark in neophile Southern California. At the time the Mission-style structure was built, Pasadena was an outpost of Los Angeles—12 miles away from the not-yet-urbanized downtown, a lengthy road trip through a meandering arroyo of oaks and chaparral.

Though the L.A. megalopolis has long since engulfed Pasadena, it is still a verdant, quiet oasis. But from May 18 to 25 this year, the town's flagship theatre was abuzz with laughter and debate. For this third convening of the Lincoln Center Directors Lab West, the Pasadena Playhouse played host, throwing open its doors to some 50 directors, providing a week in which these artists observed each others' work, participated in master classes and, above all, *networked*.

This West Coast convocation of directors is an offshoot of the Lincoln Center Theater prototype, which has been convening annually in New York for seven years now. To outsiders, the event has seemed shrouded in mystery. "That's

BY MEAD HUNTER

hardly intentional," says Anne Cattaneo, Lincoln Center's dramaturg as well as the lab's original architect. "It's just that it's hard to explain, because it's almost more of a context than a program."

Lincoln Center's website defines the lab as "an interactive forum to engage directors in an intensive study of their craft and to foster collaborative relationships among a community of artists." That describes well what the lab is today, but part of its original impetus was to stimulate new playwriting. Cattaneo and others realized that there were already plenty of programs that ostensibly did just that through readings and workshops. But where was all this development leading? It occurred to LCT that the bottleneck between development and production stemmed not from the absence of good scripts, but rather from a lack of advocates for them—especially in the form of directors who could commit to a script and its author.

Observing that there were few peer-

driven venues for directors, Lincoln Center established the New York lab as a series of hands-on sessions that would enable directors to grow as artists *and* as working professionals. Over the years, the New York Lab has provided participants with access to an astonishing roster of senior artists, including JoAnne Akalaitis, Daniel Sullivan, Mark Lamos, Hal Prince and Emily Mann, to mention a few. Perhaps even more important, the lab engendered a camaraderie so intense that soon West Coast participants were clamoring for a lab of their own.

For Sheldon Epps, artistic director of the Pasadena Playhouse, this year's Lab West represented an important aspect of his theatre's continued efforts to "reach out to the artists in this area—meaning the entire West Coast," he says with a wry smile. "Also it's a chance for all of us here to be connected to another great theatre, Lincoln Center." He wanted Lab West to create a place for directors to engage in discourse with each other. "That," Epps added, "and to complain. Directors don't often get to do that; they're the recipient of complaints from actors, designers and everybody else, but usually there's no one to listen to directors' complaints."

There's little time for that, however, on Lab West's busy first day. It kicks off with a symposium on musicals, after which Epps shares the process of mounting *Play On!*, his musical adaptation of *Twelfth Night*. The breadth of artists present is impressive. Some come from theatres that focus exclusively on original work; others espouse a dedication to the classics. Representatives from opera, performance art and even the circus are here. Nor does everyone hail from the West Coast—attendees from Atlanta, Austin, Chicago, Cincinnati, Washington, D.C., and beyond are present.

Andrew Sachs, who has served on Lab West's steering committee since its inauguration, says that encouraging a cross-sampling of directors has always been



A lab of their own: from left, Charlayne Woodard, Caroline Lagerfelt, Richard Thomas and Tonya Pitkins at Lincoln Center Directors Lab West.

a goal: "The point for us in creating the lab is to put directors with many disparate points of view in a room, light a match, step back and watch the fire burn. Every year it burns more brilliantly."

Day two exemplifies this intent. It starts early with an informal meeting with Cattaneo, who is amused to find she's become downright venerable. Eager participants stream up a wide, outdoor staircase lined with Spanish tiles, which leads along a broad loggia, up another few steps and into the Playhouse's library. There's a sense of hushed expectation.

Cattaneo stresses that Lab West, like the New York version, has no particular agenda. She compares the lab to a boat: "The Playhouse is like a dock. We can push the lab out into the ocean to see where it goes. The next step is wherever you steer it." That's important, she maintains, because theatre is adapting to a new era. She illustrates with a post-

Sept. 11 phenomenon at New York University—a surprising number of theatre majors, she says, have defected to pre-med programs...and vice versa. Cattaneo concludes with a challenge: "Soon you will be the ones running the theatre. You need to think about what models you will be utilizing. You have to think creatively; do not accept what is. Think instead of what could be. Create networks, find ways of working together with people. The more theatre there is, the better for everybody. The more you talk to one another, the more you gather together, the stronger everybody will be."

IN SHORT ORDER, THE DIRECTORS HAVE been through a series of intensives and are bursting to give voice to their own experiences. The stage is set for the "Directors Roundtable": a free-form confab in the Playhouse's green room (which is actually adobe colored, with a

Spanish fantasy décor). The discussion starts with a question that's on everyone's mind: How do we, as theatre folk, compete with the urgency of world events today? As one person puts it, "Many people nowadays feel like it's the end of the fucking world. How can theatre compete with that?" Notwithstanding the murmurs of assent, answers come flying back at once. Theatre is not merely a diversion; it's also a community, a forum, a shared space where people come together. Karen Lund, associate artistic director of Seattle's Taproot Theatre, relates that last fall her company was running Tim Slover's life-affirming play about Handel, *Joyful Noise*. In the weeks following Sept. 11, the houses were packed. "People wanted to be together in that terrible time," she recalls. "Yet across town, a political satire played to empty houses. It just wasn't a discussion people were ready to have yet."

usitt

The United States Institute for Theatre Technology congratulates all our 2002 award winners

Jennifer Tipton, USITT Award for a Lifetime Contribution to the Performing Arts

Arden Weaver, University of Minnesota, Special Citation 2002

Mary C. Henderson, Golden Pen Award for *Mielziner: Master of Modern Stage Design*

Kent Thompson, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Thomas DeGaetani Award

John Uthoff, Kansas State University, Joel E. Rubin Founders Award

Tony Meola, New York City, Harold Burris-Meyer Distinguished Career in Sound Design Award 2002

Karl Eigsti, Brandeis University, Distinguished Achievement in Scene Design

Beverly Emmons, Lincoln Center, Distinguished Achievement in Lighting Design

Thomas A. Kelly, Center Line Studios, Distinguished Achievement in Stage Management

Awards for Young Designers & Technicians

Joshua W. Peklo, KM Fabrics Inc. Technical Production Award

Nathan Heverin, Rose Brand Award for Scene Design

Ian Hunter, Clear-Com Intercom Systems Sound Achievement Award

Olivera Gajic, Zelma H. Weisfeld Costume Design & Technology Award

Dan Eslinger, Frederick A. Buerki Golden Hammer Scenic Technology Award

Brook D. Carl, Kryolan Makeup Design Award

Timothy R. Semon, Stage Management Award

Brian Koehler, W. Oren Parker Award for Scene Design

Camille R. Connolly, Barbizon Award for Lighting Design

Part of the mission of USITT, the association of design, production, and technology professionals in the performing arts and entertainment industry, is to bring recognition to those who have made outstanding long-term contributions to the profession and those who are starting their careers.

To learn more about USITT, visit www.usitt.org or call 800-93USITT (800-938-7488)

James Haffner of Opera America says professionals in his field are constantly coping with "questions of extinction." Will we have jobs in 10 years? Yet he notes that opera has not only grappled with this question but has taken action. "Opera companies across the country have launched aggressive outreach campaigns in the last decade. These programs involve students, encouraging them to not only perform but also write their own material. This demystifies the opera experience and gives them a frame of reference when they attend an actual performance." As a consequence, he says, opera is the most well-attended performing arts form among audiences 18 to 25 years old.

As Lab West races toward its con-

"The point is to put directors with many disparate points of view in a room, light a match, step back and watch the fire burn."

clusion, the final few days are crammed with activity. Gordon Davidson, artistic director of L.A.'s Mark Taper Forum, contributes a personal overview of regional theatre history and how we've gotten to where we are today. La Jolla Playhouse's artistic director Des McAnuff leads a work session on *Twelfth Night* that bookends the week's earlier investigations. Luis Alfaro, co-director of the Latino Theatre Initiative at the Mark Taper Forum, introduces a refreshing change of pace by leading the directors through writing exercises, allowing them to see the process of creation from a different vantage, and librettist George Furth brings the week full circle in an exploration of how to make a musical.

Sachs says he hopes the event will have ramifications for L.A., in particular. "What's great about the lab," he says, "is that directors and artistic directors from different parts of the city are talking and collaborating. They're sharing designers, stage managers and actors. And even better, they're mixing it up with directors in Seattle, San Francisco, Palm Springs, Austin and Phoenix. It's only a matter of time before these small and medium-size companies start moving shows from one city to the next. My hope is that the lab will have played some small part in that process." **AT**

Mead Hunter has recently moved to Portland, Ore., where he is spearheading the new-play development programs at Portland Center Stage. Information about Lab West is available online at www.lctdirectorslabwest.com.

AUDITIONS AUDITIONS AUDITIONS

WAKE UP IN JAPAN

UNIVERSAL STUDIOS JAPAN

THE POWER OF HOLLYWOOD™

Come be a part of the most successful new theme park in history with exciting shows such as WaterWorld™, The Wild, Wild, Wild West Stunt Show® and Universal Monsters Live Rock And Roll Show™. Audition for the following positions at Universal Studios Japan™ in Osaka.*

- Dancers who can sing
- Singers who move well
- Celebrity Look-a-Likes
- Comedic Improv Performers
- Stunt Performers

DETAILS:

NEW YORK, NEW YORK
September 17 & 18

ORLANDO, FLORIDA
September 20, 21, 22

TORONTO, ONTARIO
September 24 & 25

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS
September 27 & 28

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA
September 30,
October 1 & 2

Please visit our website at www.usj.co.jp or call our hotline at 1-877-776-7548 for specific location/times and audition requirements including character profiles.

Please arrive 30 minutes prior to call time for registration. A non-returnable headshot and resume is required.

*You must be willing to relocate to Osaka, Japan, for a period of up to 12 months.

The Wild, Wild, Wild West Stunt Show® & © Universal Studios. Universal Monsters™ TM & © Universal Studios. Universal Monsters Live Rock And Roll Show™ TM & © Universal Studios. WaterWorld™ TM & © Universal Studios. The Blues Brothers® & © D. Aykroyd and J. Belushi Pisano. CHARLES CHAPLIN™ TM & © Bubbles, Inc. S.A. 2002. Licensed by Copyrights Group. TM Marilyn Monroe, LLC, c/o CMG Worldwide www.MarilynMonroe.com. The Power Of Hollywood™ TM USJ Co., Ltd. Universal Studios Japan™ TM & © Universal Studios. All rights reserved. CR02-1454. EOE.

It's a big universe. Where do you fit in?