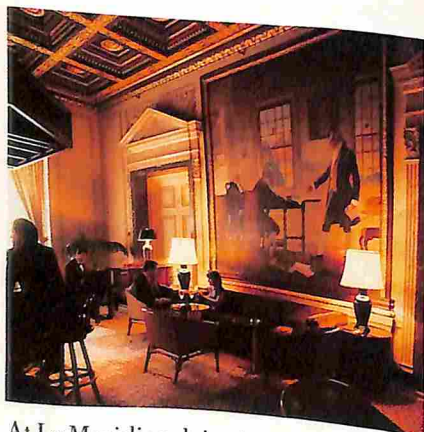


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## GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

### THE THEATRE

TO baby boomers and their children, the term "social club" has connotations both tragic and suspicious. To their parents, at least those parents who grew up in the thirties and forties in certain parts of New York, the phrase meant something altogether more innocent: a meeting place for teen-agers. "The clubs were spawned out of a need for space and privacy," says Leah Kornfeld Friedman, whose play about one of them, "Club Soda," opens this week at the WPA. "In neighborhoods where everyone lived in small apartments, and where those apartments often had large families in them, there was nowhere for kids to go to, so a group of guys would get together and rent a basement." The basements were generally in two- or three-family dwellings, and the rent, says Friedman, was "dirt cheap—maybe thirty dollars a month." Only young men were allowed as members, but the clubs would have socials, when young women would be invited to dance—to 78s. ("No parents ever set foot in these places," Friedman says.)

Some clubs, inevitably, were more prestigious than others. In this category, along the Brownsville-to-East Flatbush axis, the setting for her autobiographical play, Friedman remembers fondly the Hi-Hats ("They were a speck younger than my group and the Hi-Hats heroes ('They were named after a Charlie Barnett tune').") "And there really was a Club Soda," she assures us. When asked to trace the phenomenon's arc, Friedman becomes somewhat more circumspect. "The clubs may have begun in the thirties, but they flourished primarily in the decade after the war, and primarily in Brooklyn, although I understand that the Bronx had them, too." And why were there none in Queens? one wonders. "Apartments there were bigger—Queens was a place people moved to."

### OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

**BERGMAN ON STAGE**—The Royal Dramatic Theatre of Sweden presents Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, with Erland Josephson. Directed by Ingmar Bergman. In Swedish, with simultaneous English translation. Opens June 18 at 8, and runs through June 20. (BAM's Majestic Theatre, 651 Fulton St. 1-718 636-4100.) (\*)

**CIRCLE REPERTORY COMPANY**—The final play of the season is *THE BALCONY SCENE*, by Wil Calhoun. With Jonathan Hogan, Cynthia Nixon, and William Fichtner. Previews begin June 19. (99 Seventh Ave. S. 924-7100.)

**CLUB SODA**—A comedy by Leah Kornfeld Friedman, directed by Pamela Berlin. Preview on June 18. Opens June 19 at 8. (WPA Theatre, 519 W. 23rd St. 206-0523.)

**DIONYSUS**—An adaptation of Euripides' "The Bacchae" written and directed by Tadashi Suzuki. In Japanese, with simultaneous English translation. Opens June 20 at 8, and runs through June 23. (Juilliard Theatre, 155 W. 65th St. For tickets, call 752-3015.) (\*)

**EL ESPLENDOR**—A work created and performed by Grupo Zero, a Mexican troupe, and El Taller, a Californian outfit. Opens June 19 at 8, and runs through June 23. (Pregones, 295 St. Ann's Ave., the Bronx. 585-1202.) (\*)

**GETTING MARRIED**—A production of Shaw's com-

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edy, with Victoria Tennant, Lee Richardson, Nicolas Coster, and Linda Thorson. Directed by Stephen Porter. Previews through June 25. Opens June 26 at 6:45. (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)

**LIPS TOGETHER, TEETH APART**—Christine Baranski, Anthony Heald, Swoosie Kurtz, and Nathan Lane in a new play by Terrence McNally. John Tilling directed. Previews through June 23. Opens June 25 at 8. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907.)

**OGURI-HANGAN TERUTE-HIME**—The Yokohama Boat Theatre of Japan in an experimental work. In Japanese, with English supertitles. Opens June 20 at 8, and runs through June 22. (Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. 662-2133.)

**OTHELLO**—The first of three plays in the New York Shakespeare Festival's free summer series in the Park. Raul Julia, Christopher Walken, Mary Beth Hurt, and Kathryn Meisle lead the cast. Directed by Joe Dowling. Previews begin June 21. (Delacorte, Central Park near W. 81st St. For information about tickets, which are required, call 861-7277.)

**PROM QUEENS UNCHAINED**—A musical by Larry Goodnight, Keith Herrmann, and Stephen Witkin. In previews. (Village Gate, 160 Bleecker St. 475-5120.)

**STITSHA**—A play by Cont Mhlanga, presented by Zimbabwe's Amakhosi Theatre. Opens June 19 at 8, and runs through June 23. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.) (\*)

**TATTOO THEATRE**—A wordless play by Mladen Materic, presented by the Open Stage/Obala company, of Yugoslavia. Opens June 19 at 8, and runs through June 22. (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 255-5793.) (\*)

**TODAY IS MY BIRTHDAY**—A play by the late Tadeusz Kantor, presented by Poland's Cricot 2 company. In Polish. Opens June 18 at 7:30, and runs through June 23. (La Mama Annex, 66 E. 4th St. 475-7710.) (\*)

### NEW THIS SEASON

**AND THE WORLD GOES 'ROUND: THE SONGS OF KANDER & EBB**—A musical revue, with Bob Cuccioli, Karen Mason, Brenda Pressley, Jim Walton, and Karen Ziemba. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

**BREAKING LEGS**—The Mafia meets Off Broadway. Philip Bosco and Vincent Gardenia can seldom have been funnier than as a pair of mobsters who back a new play in order to win a young dramatist for Gardenia's daughter. Tom Dulack wrote the comedy; John Tilling directed it. With Larry Storch, Victor Argo, Nicolas Surovy, and, above all, Sue Giosa as the daughter who spins the plot. (Reviewed in our issue of 6/3/91.) (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

**CHARGE IT, PLEASE**—A comedy by Carlos Gorbea. Three performances a week are in English; four are in Spanish. (Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 354-1293. Closes July 7.)

**THE COMPLETE WORKS OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (ABRIDGED)**—A presentation by Reed Martin, Jess Borgeson, and Adam Long, three actors from L.A. known as the Reduced Shakespeare Company. (Marymount Manhattan Theatre, 221 E. 71st St. 279-4200. Closes June 23.) (\*)

**ENCORE!**—A revue of songs from musicals that the Jewish Repertory Theatre has done in the past. (344 E. 14th St. 505-2667.)

**ENSEMBLE STUDIO THEATRE**—Presenting the 1991 festival of one-act plays, Series C: "The World at Absolute Zero," by Sherry Kramer; "Salaam, Huey Newton, Salaam," by Ed Bullins; "The Last Yankee," by Arthur Miller; and "Big Al," by Bryan Goluboff. (549 W. 52nd St. 247-3405. Closes June 23.)

**FRIDAYS**—A 1981 play by Andrew Johns, with Henderson Forsythe and John Peakes. Presented by the Riverside Shakespeare Company. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000. Closes June 23.)

**THE GOOD TIMES ARE KILLING ME**—The cartoonist Lynda Barry devised this memory play of

words and pop tunes about a racially mixed neighborhood. At the heart of it is the friendship of two little girls, one white, the other black, who are delightfully portrayed by Angela Goethals and Chandra Wilson. The undercurrent of serious comment on race doesn't add much, but every humorous scene scores a bull's-eye. Also with Kim Staunton, Wendell Pierce, and Holly Felton. Mark Brokaw directed. (5/6/91) (Second Stage Theatre, Broadway at 76th St. 873-6103. Closes June 30.)

**GYPSY**—The Tyne Daly-led revival of the great Laurents-Styne-Sondheim musical has returned to Broadway for a limited engagement. It is so delightful—and the cast so engaging—that we think anyone would be happier for having seen it. One suggestion: don't applaud when Mama Rose comes down the aisle (you'll drown out the first number). (12/4/89) (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

**THE HAUNTED HOST AND SAFE SEX**—A double bill consisting of a 1964 comedy by Robert Patrick and a revised 1987 comedy by Harvey Fierstein. Mr. Fierstein and Jason Workman make up the cast of both plays. (Actors Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. 691-6226.)

**THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME**—Everett Quinton's new show, which is billed as "a quasimusical." (Charles Ludlam Theatre, 1 Sheridan Square. 691-2271. Closes June 23.)

**I HATE HAMLET**—In Paul Rudnick's jokey farce, Nicol Williamson gives a stunning comedy performance as the ghost of John Barrymore, summoned to aid a young Hollywood actor who has been booked to play Hamlet in the Park. Mr. Williamson is ably supported by some of the other actors, but the show boils down to a marvellous solo turn. (4/22/91) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 582-4022. Closes June 22.)

**JACKIE MASON: BRAND NEW**—The comedian brings his one-man show to Broadway again. (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100.)

**LOST IN YONKERS**—There's not one glimmer of honesty or authenticity in this family melodrama by Neil Simon. Set in Yonkers during the Second World War, it's about what happens when a cowering, pathetic man has to leave his two adolescent sons with his intimidating mother for the better part of a year. (3/11/91) (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 221-1211.)

**LUSTING AFTER PINO'S WIFE**—A comedy by Sam Henry Kass. (45th Street Theatre, 354 W. 45th St. 564-8038.)

**MAMBO MOUTH**—John Leguizamo portrays seven Hispanic characters in a one-man show, which was seen this spring at the American Place Theatre. (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477.)

**MISS SAIGON**—Oh, the horror! The horror! (4/29/91) (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200.)

**MR. GOOGOL AND MR. PREEN**—A new comedy by Elaine May, with Zohra Lampert, William H. Macy, and Mike Nussbaum. Directed by Gregory Mosher. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

**NOVA VELHA ESTORIA**—A work performed by the Brazilian troupe Grupo de Teatro Macunaima. (Repertorio Español, Gramercy Arts Theatre, 138 E. 27th St. 889-2850. Closes June 23.) (\*)

**ONCE ON THIS ISLAND**—A musical by Lynn Ahrens (book and lyrics) and Stephen Flaherty (score), which is based on Rosa Guy's 1985 novel, "My Love, My Love." (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

**ONLY THE TRUTH IS FUNNY**—The comedian Rick Reynolds' one-man show. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

**PAGEANT**—A musical spoof of beauty contests.

The New York International Festival of the Arts is taking place all over the city through June 23.

For recorded information about performances, call 768-1818; for tickets, call the individual box offices. Festival events are indicated by an asterisk.



June 24, 1991

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