



THE NEW YORKER

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE PLAYS AND MUSICALS

GODSPELL—A revival of the 1971 musical by Stephen Schwartz and John-Michael Tebelak. (Lambs, 130 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinees Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

IN PERPETUITY THROUGHOUT THE UNIVERSE—A comedy by Eric Overmyer. (Hudson Guild Theatre, 441 W. 26th St. 760-9810. Wednesdays through Saturdays at 8, and Sundays at 7. Matinees Saturdays and Sundays at 3.)

INTO THE WOODS—The new musical by Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine is an attempt to show what lurks beneath the surface of conventional fairy tales. The amusing first half is like a musical staging of Bruno Bettelheim's "The Uses of Enchantment." The rather nasty second half degenerates into cheap philosophy. The costumes (by Ann Hould-Ward) and sets (by Tony Straiges) are pretty to look at, and the songs are beautiful or funny—sometimes both. Directed by Mr. Lapine. (Reviewed in our issue of 11/16/87.) (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 246-6363. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinees Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

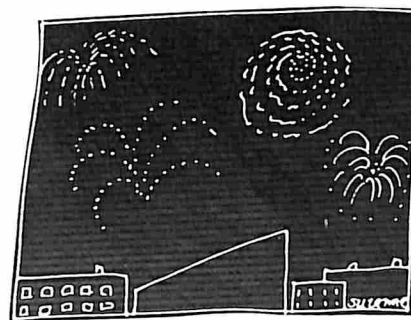
M. BUTTERFLY—David Henry Hwang's funny, mysterious, and often beautiful play is based on an actual case: in 1964, a French diplomat took as his mistress a star of the Beijing Opera, and some twenty years later—when they were both charged with being spies—discovered that "she" was a he. John Lithgow, in the leading role, gives an exceptional performance, and so does B. D. Wong as his lover. Lori Tan Chinn, George N. Martin, and Rose Gregorio give them sound support. (4/4/88) (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 246-0220. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinees Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.)

NEGRO ENSEMBLE COMPANY—WEST MEMPHIS MOJO, a production of the audacious Crossroads Theatre of New Brunswick, is set in a barbershop in West Memphis, Arkansas, in 1955 and tells of the attempt of a pair of blues songwriters and a guitarist to make it in rock and roll, which is beginning to take off. Martin Jones wrote the strong, witty script, and Rick Khan directed. (6/27/88) (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 246-8545. Wednesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 8:30; and Sundays at 7. Matinees Saturdays at 3 and Sundays at 2:30.)

OIL CITY SYMPHONY—Mike Craver, Mark Hardwick, Debra Monk, and Mary Murfitt, gifted and sophisticated singers and instrumentalists, appear as a quartet of dedicated hicks reuniting at their small-town high school in this very funny, very musical musical. Mr. Hardwick and Miss Monk, by the way, are alumni of "Pump Boys and Dinettes" of blessed memory. (1/18/88) (Circle in the Square Downtown, 159 Bleecker St. 254-6330. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7. Matinees Sundays at 3.)

THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA—The much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets (by Maria Björnson) everything about the show is negligible, including the overhyped performance of Michael Crawford in the title role. (2/8/88) (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinees Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.)

THE ROAD TO MECCA—An absorbing, if somewhat elusive, play by the South African dramatist Athol Fugard, about an aging woman sculptor who is mystical and independent, and who resists the attempts of a local minister to persuade her to go into an old-people's home. The performances, by Yvonne Bryceland, Mr. Fugard himself, and Amy Irving, as a young disciple of the sculptor, are impeccable. Starting Monday, July 4, Kathy Bates replaces Miss Irving. Mr. Fugard directed. (4/25/88) (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinees Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2. Special performance Monday, July 4, at 8.)



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ROMANCE/ROMANCE—A pair of charming one-act musicals that have travelled successfully from Off to Broadway. Scott Bakula and Alison Fraser are as romantic as required in the leading roles. Barry Harman wrote the clever books and lyrics, and Keith Herrmann wrote the engaging scores. Mr. Harman directed. (5/16/88) (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 944-9450. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinees Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

SPEED-THE-PLOW—David Mamet's satire on Hollywood is just as scathing, just as acute as his "Glengarry Glen Ross," and even funnier, if that can be imagined. Under the direction of Gregory Mosher, Joe Mantegna and Ron Silver give stunning performances as a pair of sleazy producers, and Madonna does well, too, as a wide-eyed secretary. (5/16/88) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6277. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinees Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

TAMARA—A participatory theatrical encounter, in which the audience must literally follow the characters as they move from room to room in what is supposed to be Gabriele D'Annunzio's villa. (7th Regiment Armory, Park Ave. at 66th St. 239-2590. Mondays through Wednesdays, and Fridays, at 8; Saturdays at 5 and 9; and Sundays at 7. The matinee schedule varies; please call ahead.)

THREE WAYS HOME—S. Epatha Merkerson is a welfare mother; Malcolm-Jamal Warner is her unmanageable sixteen-year-old son; and Mary McDonnell is a volunteer social worker assigned to her case. All of them are splendid. The play, by Casey Kurti, much of it in monologues, is comic and sad and never dull. (6/6/88) (Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7. Matinees Sundays at 3.)

URBAN BLIGHT—A revue, with sketches by among others, Wendy Wasserstein and David Mamet and songs by David Shire, Richard Maltby, Jr., and Edward Kleban. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 246-8989. Tuesday through Friday at 8. Closes Friday, July 1.)

LONG RUNS—ANYTHING GOES: This exuberant revival is primarily a celebration of Cole Porter himself. The company, which includes Bill McCutcheon, Howard McGillin, Linda Hart (substituting for Patti LuPone, who returns on Tuesday, July 5), and Kathleen Mahony-Bennett, does more than justice to the words and score. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinees Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) **BROADWAY BOUND**: Neil Simon retains his accustomed skill at comedy but has wisely suppressed his weakness for sure-fire gags in a touching and unexpectedly serious study of a family—presumably the playwright's—as it begins to fall apart in Brooklyn in the nineteen-forties. Joan Rivers plays the mother; Gene Saks directed. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.

Nightly, except Sundays and Monday, July 4, at 8. Matinees Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.) **BURN THIS**: A play by Lanford Wilson, with Eric Roberts as a foulmouthed restaurant manager who woos and wins his dead brother's dancing partner. (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinees Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.) **CATS**: A musical version of T. S. Eliot's "Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats." Score by Andrew Lloyd Webber, choreography by Gillian Lynne, and direction (and some lyrics) by Trevor Nunn. A superb spectacle, which may run for many more years and give cats the right to vote and hold office. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinees Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.) **A CHORUS LINE**: A group of young dancers audition for a handful of chorus jobs in a show not yet in rehearsal and by the time the evening is over we know everything about all of them. (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinees Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.) **DRIVING MISS DAISY**: Frances Sternhagen and Earle Hyman star in Alfred Uhry's play, which tells of the growing attachment of a cranky old woman in Atlanta to her black chauffeur. Directed by Ron Lagomarsino. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 564-8038. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinees Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) **THE FANTASTICKS**: This longest of long runs recently celebrated its twenty-eighth birthday. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7:30. Matinees Sundays at 3.) **42ND STREET**: Pleasantly old-fashioned choreography by the late Gower Champion and a few classic songs enliven an otherwise inert pastiche of the Warner Brothers movie that made Ruby Keeler a star. (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 398-0280. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8:15. Matinees Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2:15, and Sundays at 3.) **FRANKIE AND JOHNNY IN THE CLAIR DE LUNE**: Carol Kane and Bruce Weitz in Terrence McNally's enchanting comedy about sex and the sudden onset of love in an apartment on Tenth Avenue. (Westside Arts, 407 W. 43rd St. 541-8394. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7. Matinees Sundays at 3, and Wednesday, July 6, at 2:30.) **ME AND MY GIRL**: A silly chestnut of a British musical, dating back to the thirties. With Jim Dale. (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 246-0102. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinees Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) **LES MISÉRABLES**: Tim Shew and Anthony Crivello star in the musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel, but the real standouts of the production are the settings, by John Napier, and the lighting, by David Hersey. Starting Tuesday, July 5, Norman Large replaces Mr. Crivello. (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinees Saturdays at 2; special matinee Monday, July 4, at 2:30.) **NONSENSE**: A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinees Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) **SARAFINA!**: This South African musical, an explosion of talent, was conceived, written, and directed by Mbongeni Ngema, who also, with Hugh Masekela, composed and arranged the score. The acting, dancing, and singing, to a local form of popular music called Mbaqanga, are a wonder. (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinees Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) **A SHAYNA MAIDEL**: A well-wrought and deeply moving play by Barbara Lebow about a Polish-Jewish family torn apart by the events of the Hitler era. The production is beautifully directed by Mary B. Robinson. Bring lots of Kleenex to this one, but expect to leave uplifted. (Westside Arts, 407 W. 43rd St. 541-8394. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinees Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) **STARLIGHT EXPRESS**: A bore on roller skates. (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 586-6510. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinees Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sun-

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