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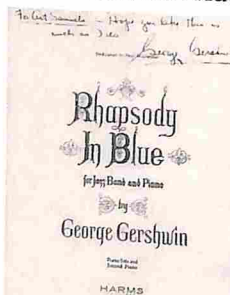
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and
Modern Prints

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New York 1925 4to

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THE NEW YORKER

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THE NEW YORKER

25 WEST 43RD STREET, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10036
(212) 840-3800

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THE NEW YORKER (ISSN 0028-792X), published weekly by The New Yorker Magazine, Inc., 25 W. 43rd St., N.Y., N.Y. 10036; Steven T. Florio, president and chief executive officer; Sam R. Spoto, vice-president; Stuart H. Jason, vice-president and treasurer; Ruth A. Diem, vice-president and human resources director; Frank Mustacato, vice-president and circulation director; Virginia L. Jespersen, vice-president and business manager; Lynn Guthrie Heiler, advertising director. Branch advertising offices: 111 East Wacker Drive, Chicago, Ill. 60601; 41 Osgood Place, San Francisco, Calif. 94133; Suite 1460, 5900 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif. 90036; 67 1/2 Chestnut St., Boston, Mass. 02108; 19 South Audley St., London, W1Y 5DN, Metropolitan Publishers Representatives: 3017 Piedmont Road, NE, Atlanta, Ga. 30305; 2500 So. Dixie Highway, Miami, Fla. 33133; 3016 Mason Place, Tampa, Fla. 33629; 3 Church St., Suite 503, Toronto, Canada M5E 1M2. Carol Orr & Co., Publishers Representative: 3300 Oak Lawn, Suite 414, Dallas, Tx. 75219. Vol. LXV, No. 13, May 15, 1989. Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. Authorized as second-class mail by the Post Office Department, Ottawa, Canada, and for payment of postage in cash. © 1989 by The New Yorker Magazine, Inc., in the United States and Canada. All rights reserved. No part of this periodical may be reproduced without the consent of The New Yorker. The magazine's name, logo, and various titles and headings herein have been registered with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. Printed in U.S.A. Subscription rates: \$56.00, payable in advance. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The New Yorker, Box 56447, Boulder, Colorado 80322.

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE

IT'S a little-known fact of theatrical life in New York that award-giving changes the nature of a production. This is not because the quality of an actor's performance changes when he has won a Tony or Drama Desk nomination or award and feels that he has nothing left to gain or lose or strive for, but because once the producer starts advertising the awards or nominations that a play or musical has garnered, the composition of its audience changes. People begin coming to see the play or musical for the wrong reasons—not out of any real interest in the work but simply because it has won awards. This is what producers want: when they advertise that a particular show ("Starmites," say) was nominated for a Tony awards, they are banking on the fact that people will come to see it who don't know that the show was in competition with three other equally bad musicals (say, "Carrie," "Welcome to the Club," and "Legs Diamond"). Unfortunately, an audience that goes to the theatre for the wrong reasons is an audience that is hard to play to.

Among this season's offerings that we feel might be worth attending before the hype surrounding the various upcoming awards begins to take its toll—if one had been planning to see the shows anyway—are: Wendy Wasserstein's "The Heidi Chronicles" (which has already suffered somewhat from having won a Pulitzer), at the Plymouth A. R. Gurney's "The Cocktail Hour," at the Promenade; and Brian Friel's "Aristocrats," at Theatre Four.

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedules and ticket information.)
THE BLESSING—A play by Clare Coss, with Anita Gillette, Kelly Bishop, and Louisa Horton. Previews begin May 11. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 840-3074.)
CYMBELINE—The ninth production in the Shakespeare Marathon stars Joan Cusack as Imogen. JoAnne Akalaitis is the director. With an original score by Philip Glass. In previews. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)
ELEEMOSYNARY—A play by Lee Blessing, with Eileen Heckart, Joanna Gleason, and Jennie Moreau. Directed by Lynne Meadow. Opens May 9 at 8, and will run through May 21. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907.)
EQUITY LIBRARY THEATRE—The final production of the season will be a revival of *Gigi*, Lerner and Loewe's 1973 musical that was based on the movie of the same name. Opens May 11, and will run through June 4. (103rd St. and Riverside Dr. 663-2028.)
S. J. PERELMAN... IN PERSON—Lewis J. Stadlen plays the American author and humorist in this one-man show written by Bob Shanks. Previews through May 16. Opens May 17 at 8. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2020.)
YANKEE DAWG YOU DIE—A two-character play by Philip Kan Gotanda, with Stan Egi and Sab Shimono. Previews through May 13. Opens May 14 at 7. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

NEW THIS SEASON

APPROACHING ZANZIBAR—Jane Alexander and Harris Yulin in a new play by Tina Howe. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 873-6103.)
ARISTOCRATS—Brian Friel's portrait of the fami-

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ly of Judge O'Donnell, of Ballybeg Hall, in Donegal, is witty, ironic, and loving. It is faultlessly performed by Niall Buggy (an astonishing actor, who got his start at the Abbey Theatre), John Pankow, Kaiulani Lee, John Christopher Jones, and Margaret Colin, among others, under the direction of Robin LeFevre. Distinguished setting, lighting, and costumes by John Lee Beatty, Dennis Parichy, and Jane Greenwood. (Reviewed in our issue of 5/8/89.) (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 246-0102.)

BLACK AND BLUE—An evening of classic blues and jazz, conceived, designed, and directed by Claudio Segovia and Héctor Orellana, who created "Tango Argentino" in a similarly commemorative but far less visually opulent style. Musicians of renown have been assembled, and while Ruth Brown, Linda Hopkins, and Carrie Smith sing, Bunney Briggs, Jimmy Slyde, Savion Glover, and a troupe of hoofers young and old give the tap-dance subculture a workout. (2/6/89, under Dancing.) (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 246-0102.)

BORN YESTERDAY—Madeline Kahn's performance as Billie Dawn (the role that made Judy Holliday famous) is the only good thing about this revival of Garson Kanin's 1946 political fable. Ed Asner is entirely inadequate as the scrap-metal tycoon who makes the mistake of hiring a *New Republic* writer to educate his mistress. So, unfortunately, is Daniel Hugh Kelly, who plays the journalist. (2/13/89) (46th Street Theatre, 226 W. 46th St. 246-0102.)

BRIMSTONE AND TREACLE—Dennis Potter wrote this stage version of his own 1975 television film, which the BBC, having commissioned and paid for the thing, found too "nauseating" to transmit. (They broadcast the film in 1987.) It has none of the subtlety or complexity of either "The Singing Detective" or Potter's novel "Blackeyes." The play is a hodgepodge of images borrowed from Pinter and Peter Nichols—the devil descends on a couple trapped in a benighted existence with their spastic daughter—and seems to date from a period before Dennis Potter figured out that he was Dennis Potter. (Interart, 549 W. 52nd St. 246-1050. Closes May 21.)

CANTORIAL—Ira Levin's play about a couple who move into a renovated apartment on the Lower East Side that was once a synagogue, only to find that the place is haunted by the restless spirit of an intrusive cantor, no less. Anthony Fusco and Woody Romoff are as cute as all getout playing, respectively, the young man of uncertain origins who finds himself wanting to be a Jew and the wise old bird who owns the deli across the street. (Lambs, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)

CHU CHEM—A small Jewish delegation (2m, 1f) visits China in the fourteenth century and finds traces of another, larger delegation that went there a thousand years before that. This musical is probably harmless if you can manage to ward off the cutes. (Ritz, 219 W. 48th St. 246-0102.)

THE COCKTAIL HOUR—A dramatist returns home to break the news to his prosperous family that he has written a play about them and to ask their permission to have it produced. More easily said than done. A. R. Gurney's humor has never been more sparkling, his characters never more engaging. Under Jack O'Brien's direction, Nancy Marchand gives a marvellous performance as the hero's mother, and Holland Taylor and Keene Curtis do well also. (11/7/88) (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

FORBIDDEN BROADWAY 1989—A source of continual merriment, this revue is a cluster of parodies

of shows along with Great White Way. Gerard Alessandrini conceived and directed it and wrote the witty, barbed lyrics. The performers are Toni DiBuono, Roxie Lucas, David B. McDonald, and Michael McGrath—inspired mimics all. (9/26/88) (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.)

THE FORBIDDEN CITY—This domestic drama about a black family living prosperously on the edge of suburban Philadelphia in 1936 was written by Bill Gunn, who died the day before it opened. It's essentially an unfinished play, as full of interest as it is of excess and inconsistency. The writing ranges from the embarrassingly overwrought to the inspired, as does the acting, under Joseph Papp's direction. With Gloria Foster, Akili Prince, and Frankie R. Faison. (4/17/89) (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

GHETTO—A play about an actual theatre in the ghetto in Vilna, Lithuania, during the Holocaust, or, more precisely, a play about an attempt to produce a show there. Joshua Sobol is the author; Stephen McHattie, Jarlath Conroy, and Donal Donnelly, poor souls, appear in the leading roles. (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)

THE HEIDI CHRONICLES—Wendy Wasserstein's play looks at first glance like standard baby-boom playwrighting fare, but some alchemical combination of graceful-mindedness and good writing enable her to capture, lampoon, and transcend her generation all at the same time. With a superb cast, led by Joan Allen.



Ping Chong's "Noiresque"

(12/26/88) (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

I COULD GO ON LIP-SYNCHING!—This one-man variety show made up of cultural arcaia is kind of weird, kind of quirky, and kind of brilliant. Performed by John Epperson and written by him and Justin Ross (who directed), it uses the rhetorical tactics of drag theatre to attack some of the Big Questions, managing not so much to raise lip-synching to an art as to transform aural montage into psychodrama. Certainly this is the strangest show in town. (Theatre Off Park, 224 Waverly Pl. at 11th St. 627-2556.)

JEROME ROBBINS' BROADWAY—A collection of high spots from "On the Town," "Billion Dollar Baby," "High Button Shoes," "The King and I," "Peter Pan," "West Side Story," "Gypsy," "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum," and "Fiddler on the Roof," all of which were choreographed or directed, or both, by Jerome Robbins. The evening is an orgy of family entertainment, a display of theatrical arts and crafts, and a canonization of Robbins and his era. Whether the fifties was your generation or your parents', this is the show for you. (3/13/89, under Dancing.) (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

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