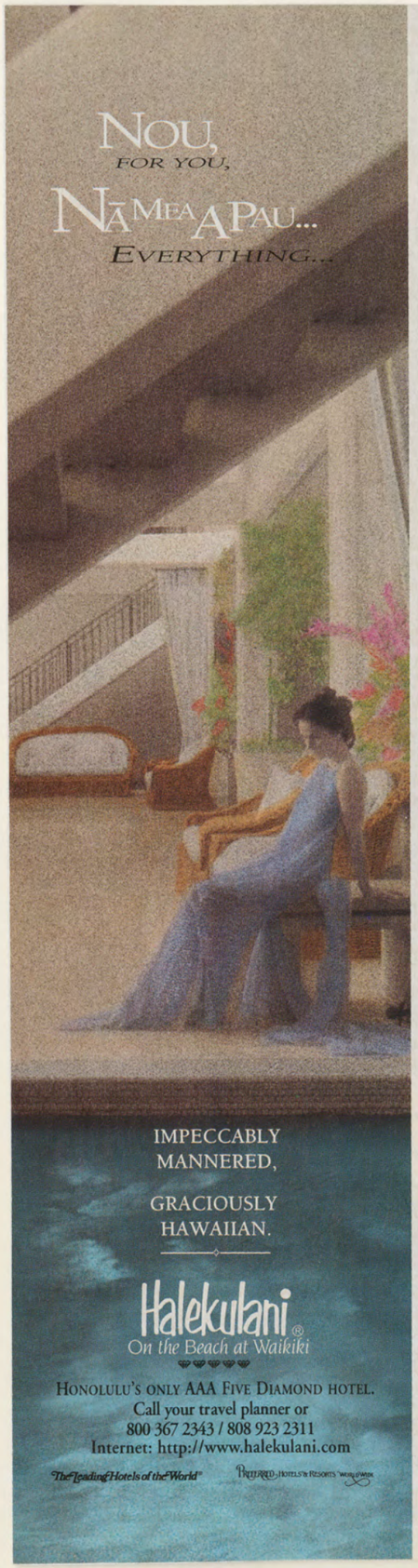
PERFORMING ARTS®

AUGUST 1999

the FIRST PICTURE SHOW

MARK TAPER FORUM

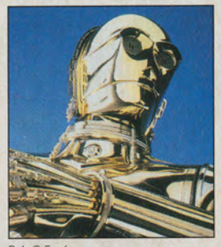
MUSIC CENTER OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY • CENTER THEATRE GROUP • 1998/99 SEASON



PERFORMING ARTS®

AUGUST 1999 • VOLUME 33 • NUMBER 8

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA EDITION



PAGE 6

PAGE 40

PAGE 44

CONTENTS

PREVIEW COLUMN

6 / The Arts of the State
A Guide to September Events in California

10 / Missing Footage
by Gerard Raymond

ARTS COMMUNITY ANGEL

16 / Brian Bemel
Brings Diversity in the Arts to Kids and Adults at the Thousand Oaks Civic Arts Plaza
by Libby Slate

P-I / PROGRAM INFORMATION

40 / The First Picture Show
by Sheryl Flatow

ON TRAVEL

44 / New Orleans
The City of Joie de Vivre
by Norm Chandler Fox

50 / Great Grilling

54 / A Remembrance of Gilman Kraft
by Norm Chandler Fox

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PERFORMING ARTS magazine is published monthly by Performing Arts Network, Inc. to serve musical and theatrical attractions in California: Los Angeles, Pasadena, Thousand Oaks, Orange County, Costa Mesa, La Mirada, Cerritos, San Francisco, Berkeley, San Jose, San Diego, and La Jolla; and in New Jersey at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center. PERFORMING ARTS magazine is published at 10350 Santa Monica Boulevard, Suite 350, Los Angeles, CA 90025. Telephone (310) 551-1115. Fax (310) 551-1939. E-mail: pankraft@aol.com.

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Missing Footage

by Gerard Raymond

It's no surprise to learn that Gen LeRoy has been an ardent theater-lover for over three decades. Over that same period, her husband, Tony Walton has established himself as one of the foremost set and costume designers in the business — he has won three Tony Awards (*Guys and Dolls, House of Blue Leaves* and *Pippin*) and one Oscar (*All That Jazz*). But now LeRoy is more than just a fan. She's an active participant in her own right. Her second play, *Missing Footage* receives its West Coast premiere at San Diego's Old Globe Theatre. The play is being staged by Walton, who has just recently turned his hand to directing.

"I never imagined I would try to write a play, because I was always in awe of everyone involved in the theater," says LeRoy expressing wonder at her new status as a playwright. A former art student and one-time model (she was featured in six of illustrator Norman Rockwell's celebrated covers for the *Saturday Evening Post*), LeRoy's career as an author started with writing books for children and young adults. After selling her award-winning novel *Cold Feet* to the movies, she segued into writing screenplays for Disney the best known of which is *Rock & Roll Mom* — but she says she hopes nobody will ever see those movies. (Along the way, LeRoy also coauthored a series of very popular cookbooks.) Although LeRoy says the prospect of writing for the theater really scared her, she nonetheless passed her first test with flying colors. Her debut work, *Not Waving*, a delicately balanced poignant comedy about a mother and her mentally-ill daughter, won Florida's Carbonell Award for Best New Play in 1996, and enjoyed a successful run in New York the following year.

In her new play, LeRoy focuses on the performing arts world, of which she and her husband have been part since the sixties. *Missing Footage* centers around Julianna Ricci, a prima ballerina who finds herself sidelined in her profession even as she's at the peak of her form. Julianna's fall from grace has a devastating effect on her two most loyal supporters — her foster sister and a devoted fan — both of whom desperately need their idol to be restored to her former glory.

Tanya Gingerich as Julianna Ricci, Rob Sedgwick as Anton Mate, Anne Rogers as Lynn Drew, and Tracy Shayne as Martha Ettridge in *Missing Footage*.

Discussing their current project together, LeRoy and Walton make an excellent team, although Walton says he initially resisted the idea of directing a play by his wife. "I tried very hard to discourage it, because it creates of us a sitting target," says the British-born designer turned director. LeRoy, however, was adamant. "Having an in-house director is like hitting the mother lode," she says. "I can see him rolling his eyes, but I don't care! He is so accessible and caring, and he has seen every rendition of the play that I've done. He's been like a very good coach in the background."

It is also through Walton that LeRoy first had the opportunity to meet with the various artists and personalities who have served as inspiration for *Missing Footage*. Walton, who was formerly married to British theater star Julie Andrews, was friends with Rudolf Nureyev and several Royal Ballet luminaries of the period. Over the years he worked as designer for several ballet companies including the San Francisco Ballet and American Ballet Theater. "The subject of ballet and ballet dancers has always fascinated me, and Tony knew all these people intimately," says LeRoy. "I saw how much the ballet meant to them and how much work it took for them to become as great as some of them were." The play itself was triggered by Walton and LeRoy's friendship with one particular ballerina whose powerful individuality had placed her at loggerheads with the management of the tradition-bound company to which she belonged.

But as the play took shape, the playwright and her director discovered that it encompassed some universal hard truths about a very demanding profession. Some time after she had started working on *Missing Footage*, LeRoy was introduced to a forty-something British woman with Audrey Hepburn looks who had once been a dancer with the Royal Ballet. When the roles stopped coming her way and her career was over, the woman ended up in Hawaii working as an office cleaner. "That hit me so hard because it validated everything I wanted to say in the play," says LeRoy. On another occasion, LeRoy and Walton happened to catch a television interview with French-born ballet star Sylvie Guillem; the dancer's experiences with the Paris Opera seemed to echo those of Julianna in the play. "The predicament wasn't really about coming to the end of something, it was potentially more moving if it happened to someone who was absolutely at the peak and who could perhaps go on for ten years longer," says Walton. LeRoy continues, "I realized that at 30-years-old it could be over, and that's terrifying."

The plight of those who surround a bright star — or any kind of magical presence, as Walton puts it — whose brightness begins to diminish is another strand in LeRoy's play. "The moths that surround the flame — the two women who are [Julianna's] friends in the play

THE FIRST PICTURE SHOW

Behind the scenes.

Ahead of her time.

In 1910, she left Ohio for a career in pictures.
First she changed her name.
Then she set out to change Hollywood.

The **Mark Taper Forum,** in association with AT&T: OnStage®, presents THE FIRST PICTURE SHOW, a new musical that traces the rise and fall of the aptly named Annie First. A pioneer in the early days of Hollywood, she produced, directed and starred in a series of silent films until the invention of talking pictures—and the power of censorship—drove her out of show business.

Over the past decade, AT&T:OnStage has sponsored more than 50 world premieres of new plays or musicals in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom. We at AT&T are proud of our long association with the Mark Taper Forum and join with the Taper in promoting the art of communication in the communities we serve.

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and David Gordon.
Music by Jeanine Tesori.
Directed and Choreographed
by David Gordon.
August 1- September 19
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For tickets call: 213 628-2772

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Sixth and Final Production of the 1998-99 Season
August 1 - September 19, 1999

The World Premiere Production of

the FIRST PICTURE SHOW

A New Play With Music

Book and Lyrics by **Ain Gordon** and **David Gordon**
Music by **Jeanine Tesori**
Directed and Choreographed by **David Gordon**
Associate Director **Ain Gordon**

Set Designed by **Robert Brill**
Costumes Designed by **Judith Dolan**
Lighting Designed by **Jennifer Tipton**
Sound Designed by **Jon Gottlieb** and **Philip G. Allen**
Music Director **Kimberly Grigsby**
Dramaturg **Corey Madden**
Casting - **Stanley Soble**, CSA, **Meryl Lind Shaw**, **James Calleri**, CSA, **Vince Liebhart**

Production Stage Manager - **Ed Fitzgerald**
Stage Manager - **Lisa J. Snodgrass**
Assistant to the Directors - **Karen Graham**

Time and Place:
The First Picture Show spans the years 1893-1995 in the United States.

The First Picture Show is a work of fiction rooted in fact. The authors have placed invented characters alongside figures of history.

There will be one intermission.

Produced in association with the Pick Up Performance Company.

The First Picture Show was originally commissioned and developed by Center Theatre Group/Mark Taper Forum.

Center Theatre Group/Mark Taper Forum is sponsored in part by grants from: the National Endowment for the Arts; California Arts Council; the Los Angeles County Arts Commission; and the City of Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department.

UNITED AIRLINES is the official airline of CTG.

L to R- Top Row: Christian Nova, Ken Marks, Harry Waters Jr., Ellen Greene, Steven Skybell; Middle Row: Kathleen Conry, Jeanne Sakata, Karen Graham, Chuck Rosen; First Row: Kerry K. Carnahan, Norma Fire, Estelle Parsons, Valda Setterfield.

Ellen Greene and Steven Skybell.

CAST
(in order of appearance)

Estelle Parsons ..... *Anne First (age 99)*
Christian Nova .... *Censor, Customs Official, Train Announcer, Movie Crew, Second Pianist*
Chuck Rosen ..... *Louie's Mother, Louie's Friend, Movie Crew, Newsman*
Kathleen Conry ..... *Lois Weber, Thelma March*
Ellen Greene ..... *Anne First (ages 15-38), Jane Furstmann*
Norma Fire ..... *May Furstmann, Connie Gardner, Gene Gauntier*
Harry Waters Jr. ..... *Censor, Percy Waters, Movie Crew, Cleo Madison, Rep. Hughes*
Steven Skybell ..... *Louis Furstmann, Henry Hooks, Monty Latour, Margery Wilson*
Jeanne Sakata ..... *Nurse Tina, Cindy Su, Justice McKenna, Marion E. Wong*
Karen Graham ..... *Louie's Friend, Jane's Assistant, Billy's Assistant, Nell Shipman*
Ken Marks ..... *Carl Laemmle, Ad-man, Billy Friend, Ida May Park, Second Pianist*
Valda Setterfield ..... *Rev. Wilbur F. Crafts, Alice Guy Blaché, Movie Crew, Awards Host*
Kerry K. Carnahan ..... *TV Newscaster, Movie Crew*
Kimberly Grigsby ..... *Naomi the Piano Player*

Anne Gee Byrd ..... *Anne First (age 99)* [September 7 - 12]

Production Credits

Associate Music Director **Steven Smith**
Music Preparation **Curtis Moore**
Resident Scenic Design Associate **Edward E. Haynes Jr.**
Assistant Costume Designer **Audrey Fisher**
Lighting Design Associate **Kimberly J. Scott**
Assistant Lighting Designer **Geneva J. Wynn**
Assistant Sound Designer **Rick Boot**
Prop Coordinator **Akeime Mitterlehner**
Production Assistants **Rachel Fain, Jason Horst**
Technical Assistant **Joseph Haupt**
Hair and Make-up **Linda Cardenas**
Lighting Intern **Debra Garcia Lockwood**

The following actors are covering the performers indicated. Substitutions are never made unless there is an announcement made at the time of performance. **Cindy Benson** for Kathleen Conry, Karen Graham, Kerry K. Carnahan; **Anne Gee Byrd** for Estelle Parsons; **Kerry K. Carnahan** for Jeanne Sakata; **Nancy Linehan Charles** for Norma Fire, Valda Setterfield; **Christian Nova** for Ken Marks; **Raymond Patterson** for Christian Nova, Chuck Rosen, Harry Waters Jr.; **Chuck Rosen** for Steven Skybell; **Deborah Van Valkenburgh** for Ellen Greene.

This production is made possible with generous support from AT&T: *OnStage*®.

Special Thanks from the Authors

These are some of the actors, dancers and musicians who were in readings, workshops and performances of *The First Picture Show* over the last two and a half years. Our thanks to them, to the current cast, and to anyone whose name we have inadvertently omitted: John Apicella, Beth Blankenship, Tine Byrsted, Diana Canova, Tony Capone, Cindy Cheung, Randy Danson, Robert Fieldsteel, Chuck Finlon, Cynthia Gates Fujikawa, Kate Fuglei, Rita Gardner, Jody Gelb, Nealla Gordon, Peggy Gould, Dion Graham, David Greenspan, Jane Hoffman, Julie Homi, Dan Illian, Chris Jones, Bill Kux, Dinah Lenney, Peter Maleitzke, Ruth Manning, Eli McAfee, Terry McCarthy, Maureen McVerry, Marty Moran, Jim Neu, Evan Pappas, Lola Pashalinski, David Pittu, Alice Playten, Julie J. Ramirez, Diane Shalet, Matthew Sklar, Michael Gene Sullivan, Henry Stram, David Toney, Tracy Thorne, Sal Viscuso, Kay Walbye, Gregory Wallace, Paul Zimet.

Credits

Set construction by F & D Scene Changes, Ltd. and ACT Scene Shop; Production photography by Craig Schwartz and Jay Thompson; Original costumes provided by A.C.T. in San Francisco; Costumes for CTG production built by CTG Costume Shop and additional staff: Cutter — Kathy Arellano, First Hands — Ann Glover, Maida Pirich, Stitchers — Ophelia Brown, Enrique Urbina, Assistant to Workroom Supervisor — Dian Camarillo, Intern assistants — Jerald Doswell, Bonnie Ramirez, Outside Tailoring — Muto-Little; Piano by David H. Abell, Fine Pianos; Sound equipment by Masque Sound®.

The silent movie *The Blot*, directed by Lois Weber, will be shown during intermission.

Actors and stage managers for this production are members of Actors' Equity Association, the only union for professional actors and stage managers in the legitimate theatre.

The following employees are represented by the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees and Moving Picture Machine Operators of the United States and Canada: Stage Crew Local 33, Treasurers and Ticket Sellers Local 857, Wardrobe Crew Local 768, Make-Up Artists and Hair Stylists Local 706; The managers and press agents of this theatre are members of the Association of Theatrical Press Agents and Managers.

ssdc The director is a member of the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers, Inc., an independent labor union.

Center Theatre Group/Mark Taper Forum is a member of the American Arts Alliance, the League of Resident Theatres (LORT), California Theatre Council, California Confederation of the Arts, Theatre LA, and a constituent of Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national service organization for the non-profit professional theatre.

CTG web site: http://www.TaperAhmanson.com

Ellen Greene.

Estelle Parsons.

A NOTE FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

I've often found myself in my travels around the country and the world dealing with people who refer to the Mark Taper Forum as a theatre in "Hollywood" — that mythical place of glamour and glitz and considerably less admirable attributes. I politely, but firmly, explain that the Taper is not in Hollywood, but in Los Angeles: a complex, sprawling cosmopolitan metropolis of unmatched diversity and a world center of business, science, finance and culture.

But, of course, we are also in Hollywood — at least metaphorically. For eight decades Los Angeles has been the Capital of the Movies, the place to which people have come from all over America and the world to work in motion pictures. Often they didn't have any idea what working in the movies meant, but they were inspired (possessed, some said) by this art which was in its beginnings "the people's art," created not by cultural or business elites but by ordinary people for ordinary people. Movies — as art, industry, an unprecedented technological, cultural and social phenomenon — and the people who make them are an essential part of the history, myth and everyday life of our community. When we commissioned David Gordon's and Ain Gordon's sly, dazzling theatre piece on the birth of the movies, *The First Picture Show*, I knew this story would resonate in our house as in no other theatre in the world.

And what a story it is. For us the movies are ubiquitous and familiar, both as an art and an industry, and it is difficult to imagine the early days when there were no traditions or models or rules to guide — or limit — the imaginations of filmmakers and audiences. The business of film was wide open too. Films were a novelty — a fad, most believed, which would eventually pass — that conventional businessmen and, indeed, much of America, ignored. Groups who were excluded from mainstream opportunities were welcome on the entrepreneurial new frontier of film, and women seized the opportunity and thrived as actors, directors, writers and producers. Of course, movies became too profitable a business and too powerful a social force to long enjoy such freedom and openness.

The great challenge with *The First Picture Show* has been to find a way to use the resources and potential of theatre to tell the story of the birth and development of the cinema, a very different medium and tradition though one that is also visual and dramatic. Fortunately, director, choreographer and co-author David Gordon happens to be one of the most imaginative and innovative artists in contemporary theatre and he, along with co-author and associate director Ain Gordon, have developed for *The First Picture Show* a style that combines the conventions of stage and screen in a most startling and delightful way. They have done more than reproduce in the theatre the effects of silent movies: they have found a way to re-create the strangeness and originality of the new medium so that we experience the surprise, delight, and even confusion felt by those who at the beginning of the century saw motion pictures for the first time. And when we added music — and made it a play with music (as distinguished from a musical), we joined forces with composer Jeanine Tesori whose talent and sensibility is ideally suited for this inventive form. She has been equally innovative, transforming the underscoring of silent film, in which music is often substituted or stands for dialogue, into the songs and sung dialogue of musical theatre.

The company, production team and the staff have worked with a wonderful collaborative spirit through workshops here and in New York, and an initial production with our associates and friends at American Conservatory Theater and Carey Perloff, artistic director. The spirit also applied to actors who played an important role in the development who are not in this production and especially to the Taper's associate artistic director Corey Madden, who served so brilliantly not only in her staff position but also as dramaturg for *The First Picture Show*. Bravo and thanks to all.

Because it is an issue in today's play (and in the history of Hollywood), I want to say a word on the subject of censorship. Every society is suspicious of the arts and anxious to control what ideas are expressed to whom and in what form and it is understandable that motion pictures, a mass medium of unprecedented force and scope, created an unprecedented degree of social anxiety. There's no need to detail the criticisms made of movies at the beginning of the century because they are virtually identical to contemporary complaints about the internet, television, and, yes, movies. In a 1915 decision denying First Amendment protection to motion pictures, the Supreme Court declared that movies are "capable of doing evil, having power for it, the greater because of their attractiveness." One can grant this (though adding that it is true of all other forms of expression, including congressional debates and Sabbath sermons) and appreciate the desire of communities to have some means of shielding themselves both from the perceived evil and today's really complex issues such as the role and amount of violence depicted in the media. But as the experience of the filmmaker in *The First Picture Show* dramatizes, we keep returning to the question of "Who are the censors?" Self-appointed guardians of the public morals? The government? Or even the industry itself? Sadly, history offers few examples of censors acting with honor, much less wisdom. Though the Supreme Court reversed its 1915 decision, it took 37 years to do so and still the battle rages, while the artist, as always, is put on the defensive.

The 1998-99 season has been, for me, tremendously satisfying. Although the plays were extraordinarily diverse in their styles and subjects, each found its audience here at the Taper. Much of the credit goes, I think, to the performers. Such masters as Carol Burnett, Cherry Jones, Molly Ringwald, Anna Deavere Smith, Donald Sutherland and Al Pacino (and now joined by Estelle Parsons and Ellen Greene) demonstrated that they are not only "stars" but great actors committed to the play, the ensemble and revealing the soul of the character. They and their colleagues — including Susan Egan, Diane Venora, Marian Seldes, Brian Kerwin, Jamey Sheridan, Paul Benedict and the rest of the acting companies — proved yet again that actors are the essence and life of the theatrical event.

Next season promises a continuation of interesting and challenging work, performers of significance and originality, and production work with some dazzling surprises. If you have not yet subscribed, I urge you to do so. Until then, let's fade up on David Gordon, Ain Gordon, Jeanine Tesori and our company and the long gone days when Hollywood was young and anything was possible. At the Taper, of course, we still think anything is possible, and it usually is. Especially with your help. Thank you for your ongoing loyality, commitment and support. Let's continue the dialogue into the next millennium together. And now — Action!

—Gordon Davidson

Center Theatre Group of Los Angeles

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In photo: Dorothy Davenport

THE REAL WOMEN OF EARLY HOLLYWOOD

by Cari Beauchamp

Oh, what an incredible time it was. Hollywood in the early 1900s was a magnet for creative and entrepreneurial misfits of both genders. Movies were an idea one week, before the cameras the next and in the theatres within a month. There were no paths to follow. There were no rules to break.

In those early days of constant evolution, few people took filmmaking seriously as a business and so the doors were wide open to women. They wouldn't be "given" the vote until 1920 and little was expected of or accepted from a woman other than to be a good wife and mother, yet they were involved at every level of movie making, working as directors, producers, editors and writers. The pressure to perform was so great that those creative few who thrived honed their skills in a collaborative setting.

Alice Guy Blaché was not only the first woman director, she was one of the very first film directors period. She was a secretary to the Gaumonts in Paris in 1896 when they agreed to let her "play" with their cameras as long as her clerical duties didn't suffer. Her after-hours creations were so successful that she was made the head of their quickly-formed film production company and figuratively gave birth to the French film industry by the time she moved to America with her new husband, the cameraman Herbert Blaché. In 1910 she formed Solax in New Jersey and supervised another several hundred films over the next four years.

Gene Gauntier began in pictures as an actress on the East Coast in 1906, but quickly moved to writing and directing. She claimed she could turn out three one-reel scenarios in a single day. The Vitagraph actress Helen Gardner formed her own producing company in New York in 1912 and made a dozen feature films under her own banner.

New York and New Jersey were the hub of activity in the early years, but as entrepreneurs and "Trustbusters" dared to stand up to Thomas Edison and his consortium, which held patents on the cameras, the film and even the sprocket holes, few states were without some company with a camera at work. Southern California became an oasis — not only was the weather almost always perfect for outdoor filming, it was 3,000 miles away from the Trust and their vigilantes.

The Los Angeles that greeted these pioneers who disembarked after their four-day train ride from the East was part boom town, part frontier. Hollywood, founded in 1903 with a population of 166 by a prohibitionist from Kansas, was just one of 40 incorporated cities within a 35-mile radius. It consisted of pueblos, miles of orange groves, a few hotels, large houses and clusters of businesses indiscriminately interspersed with lean-to refineries and thousands of wells, and then the occasional barn or deserted building on vacant land taken over by a roving band of movie makers shooting "on the lot."

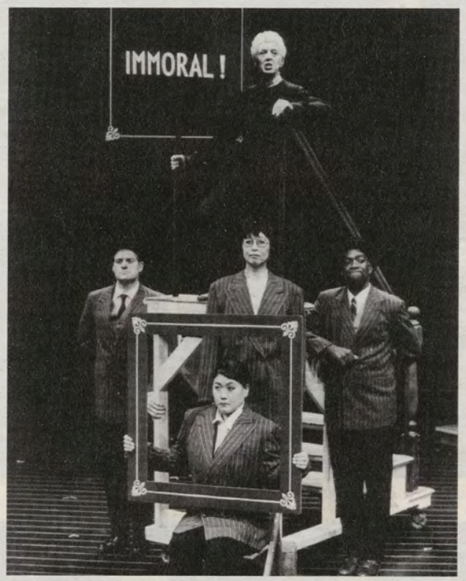
Los Angeles had been introduced to the "screen machine" in 1896 when the lights were dimmed at the Orpheum and the image of a life-sized Anna Belle Sun danced for a few precious moments, projected onto a large white sheet. The popularity of one-reelers shown between live vaudeville acts had grown so quickly that by 1908 there were already 10,000 nickelodeons throughout the country desperate for product. As the demand for movies skyrocketed, the atmosphere was permeated with a sense of excitement. Anything was possible.

Opportunity beckoned and women flocked to Hollywood. One of the first and most successful to direct in Los Angeles was a Blaché protégé, Lois Weber. A pianist turned actress, Weber began to write and direct as well, and soon rose to the top using innovative camera angles, split screens and detailed backgrounds and locations. With stories that stressed social significance and questioned prejudice, abortion and society's priorities, Weber became the highest paid female director in the country. Ardent in her beliefs, Lois opposed censorship and the death penalty and championed the discussion of birth control. Her controversial films like *Hypocrites*, featuring a reappearing naked woman dubbed "Miss Truth," packed the theatres and cemented her fame. "After seeing *Hypocrites*," said Variety, "you can't forget the name of Lois Weber."

Weber even owned her own studio for several years and actively promoted other women. She encouraged Cleo Madison and Dorothy Davenport to direct and she hired Frances Marion in 1914, the woman who would become her protégé and the highest-paid screenwriter—male or female—for over two decades. In turn, Weber was the most famous of a dozen women directors who found a booster in Carl Laemmle, the head of Universal.

A theatre owner suffering from the shortage of films, Laemmle had formed his Independent Motion Picture Company in open defiance of the Trust in 1909. He methodically chose a star a Trust company had created and offered "Little Mary—the girl with the curls" $175 a week. The doubling of her salary was too tempting for Mary Pickford to pass up so she said a tearful goodbye to D. W. Griffith, but not before introducing him to her two childhood friends, Lillian and Dorothy Gish.

As his company grew, Laemmle opened his "Universal City" on the outskirts of Los Angeles with Lois Weber as "Mayor." Dubbed "Uncle Carl" because of his propensity for hiring relatives, the plethora of women directors on his staff was hardly based on innate feminism. Rather, it seems Laemmle was willing to try anything and everything to keep churning out films. He was also the first to turn the growing interest in the movies to his advantage: for 25 cents each, 500 people a day toured his "city" and then sat on bleachers to watch films being made. A box lunch was included in the ticket price.



Top center: Valda Setterfield; Clockwise from left: Christian Nova, Jeanne Sakata, Harry Waters Jr., Kerry K. Carnahan.

Clockwise from center (on steps): Ellen Greene, Ken Marks, Karen Graham, Harry Waters Jr., Christian Nova, Estelle Parsons, Norma Fire, Steven Skybell, Kathleen Conry, Valda Setterfield, Jeanne Sakata, Chuck Rosen.

Cleo Madison starred in and directed dozens of films at Universal, as did Ida May Park, Ruth Ann Baldwin, Ruth Stonehouse, Lule Warrenton and serial queen Grace Cunard. Nell Shipman traveled the country directing wildlife adventures films. Jeanie MacPherson, another actress turned writer and then director, went on to lasting fame as the writer of many of Cecil B. DeMille's great epics. MacPherson and DeMille had adjoining offices and while many knew they enjoyed a decades-long affair, few confused their personal and professional lives, for DeMille would have many mistresses and only a precious few screenwriters.

Because of the collaborative and fast-moving nature of filmmaking in the teens, so different from today, it is easy to get caught up in the question of who directed, who wrote or who "first" did what. In reality, many women wore many hats and the bottom line is that for a brief but amazing time, they were encouraged to join a business where they were professionally nurtured by their bosses and each other. As Frances Marion noted at the end of her life, "I have found that it has always been one of my own sex who had given me a helping hand when I needed it."

It would be as writers that women prospered for the longest period of time: the names of Anita Loos, Bess Meredyth, Adela Rogers St. Johns, Zoe Akins, Lenore Coffee, June Mathis, Frances Marion, Sonya Levien and Catherine Turney laced the credits of films from 1914 into the 1950s. Many of their scripts were written for female stars like Norma and Constance Talmadge, Marion Davies, Mary Pickford, Joan Crawford and Greta Garbo, who not only carried the films but often had their own production companies. Writers' names often did not appear in the credits of the earliest films but we know from going through the copyright records of The Library of Congress that almost half of all films between 1912 and 1925 were written by women.

Throughout the teens and early 20s, the pages of every new movie magazine announced scenario contests and books like *How to Write a Photoplay*, advertised with the tag line "reap the rewards that come from an industry whose stupendous demand far exceeds the supply." A former scenario writer for Essanay in Chicago, one Louella O. Parsons, published *How to Write for the Movies* and it was selling briskly at a dollar a copy in 1915. Moving Picture Magazine's article on "A New Profession for Women" claimed women were naturals since they were used to writing letters and regarding paper as a "confidante" for their dreams and fantasies. In the 1920 book *Careers for Women*, Ida May Park wrote the chapter on directing.

There were dozens and dozens of other women who helped blaze the party. Margery Wilson, who indeed did play "Brown

Eyes" in *Intolerance* shortly after arriving in Los Angeles in 1914, directed several feature films as well as writing a half dozen books. And Marion Wong was president of Mandarin Film Company, reported to be "the only Chinese producing concern" in America.

It is difficult to overstate the impact that the films these women made had on the hinterlands. Different mores, fashions, lifestyles and foreign lands were all seen for the very first time. Oh, you could read about these things in books if you sought them out, but suddenly there it all was on the local big screen. *Joanna Enlists* encouraged young men to do the same. Suffragettes marching in the newsreels built support for their cause, *A Girl's Folly* revealed both the tangible benefits and the emotional price of living the high life, the work of Margaret Sanger was promoted in *The Hand that Rocks the Cradle*, and the list goes on and on. Their movies literally and figuratively opened up a whole new world to an entire generation.

Steven Skybell and Norma Fire.

Yet just as quickly as the opportunities for women to control their own creative product had opened, they began to close. While the origins of the studio system were seen in the formation of Metro Goldwyn Mayer in 1924, by the late 20s studios had become the only economical method to churn out the new high budget "talking" films. Sound required a massive influx of capital for new equipment, sound stages, and revamping theatres. Wall Street invested, and the hundreds of production companies that had flourished at the beginning of the decade fell victim to consolidations, mergers, and bankruptcies, reducing the number of profitable studios to only a handful by 1930. New layers of bureaucracy were added, jobs were tightly delineated and with production and distribution controlled by only a few, women were pushed aside. Movie making was now big business.

Ken Marks and Estelle Parsons.

When Cleo Madison could no longer find backers for her own films, she returned to acting in "minor roles in minor films." As early as 1919, Gene Gauntier became convinced the business had "passed her by" and moved to Sweden to write novels.

Both Lois Weber and Alice Guy Blaché suffered from the professional jealousies of their husbands, and both couples separated in the early 20s. Blaché returned to France, where her efforts to direct in the late 1920s were rebuffed. Weber's "message films" (like *The Blot* shown during the intermission of *The First Picture Show*) left the Jazz Age audiences cold. She attempted several "comebacks" during the 20s, married again, quickly divorced, and suffered a nervous breakdown. By 1932, her only source of income was as the manager of an apartment building in Fullerton. "The premier woman director of the screen and author and producer of the biggest money-making features in the history of the film business" only two decades before died penniless in 1939 and warranted only a few lines of an obituary in Variety.

A precious few of the women survived in the business into the late 30s, compromising along the way to the point where Frances Marion said "screenwriting became like writing on the sand with the wind blowing." Mary Pickford made her last film as an actress in 1932, but remained a producer as an owner of United Artists. Dorothy Arzner rose from the cutting room to become a director in the 1930s, but she was a rarity.

Today, after almost 70 years of diminished opportunities, women once again hold decision-making positions in filmmaking, and the pioneers celebrated in *The First Picture Show*, predecessors of the current women of Hollywood who have called them "our spiritual grandmothers," are finally taking their proper place in history. Many of their films have been lost forever, but archives such as the Museum of Modern Art, Eastman House, the Library of Congress, and UCLA protect those that still exist, and organizations like the National Film Preservation Foundation are racing against time to preserve them. Recent film retrospectives, new biographies, and a renewed interest in film history all give us reason to hope that these remarkable women will not be forgotten again.

——*Cari Beauchamp is the author of* Without Lying Down: Frances Marion and the Powerful Women of Early Hollywood, *(Scribner; UC Press) which is currently being made as a documentary for Turner Classic Movies and being developed as a screenplay.*

THERE'S NO BUSINESS LIKE FILM BUSINESS

by Christopher Breyer

In 1894 Thomas Edison had a plan for controlling the commercial exploitation of his new invention, the motion picture: he would sell the Kinetoscopes, the peep hole devices for viewing films, but not the camera (the Kinetograph) with which the films were made. He didn't realize it, but within a year he had lost control of the nascent industry. He ignored his customers' requests for more of the 50-foot one-minute films he shot in his "Black Maria" studio and, more importantly, their pleas that he develop a device to project moving pictures on a screen or wall. Since he imagined that 50 projectors would be enough to satisfy the world's interest in motion pictures, he didn't feel any hurry to invent a device that would cut into sales of the Kinetoscopes. By the time the Vitascope, Edison's projector, debuted at Koster & Bials Music Hall on April 13, 1896, several competitors had developed, and patented, competing products and Edison had lost his absolute legal dominance of the new medium. He would spend the next 20 years suing rival manufacturers of film equipment and films but while he had a good case, particularly with the camera, his efforts were doomed. He had committed what was — and would continue to be — the cardinal sin of the film business: he had ignored the customer and underestimated the potential of the medium.

For which we can be thankful, for it permitted three decades of explosive chaotic freedom and innovation which might have been impossible had the movies been controlled by anyone or managed as a conventional business. This chaos opened movies to almost anyone, most famously a generation of Jewish immigrants but also, as *The First Picture Show* demonstrates, to women. And it is likely that the effort to censor and control the content of films, which began a month after Edison shipped his first Kinetoscope, would have succeeded much sooner had the movie industry not been so fragmented, dynamic and contentious.

In the beginning, no banks or Wall Street financiers, no elites other than a few engineers and lawyers, were involved in motion pictures. No banker was going to challenge Edison's legal position and, besides, the business itself was insignificant — and hardly respectable. Film was a novelty, briefly popular in music halls and vaudeville houses (very useful during the unsuccessful 1900 "White Rats" strike by the vaudeville performers) but primarily a distraction for the working class patrons of dime museums and penny arcades. Still, there was enough business for Edison and his rivals, great and small, to continue making equipment and films and by 1903 distribution had taken its place as a central part of the film industry in the form of "exchanges" which bought films from the manufacturers and rented them to exhibitors.

In 1905 Harry Davis and John Harris, both experienced novelty impresarios, converted an empty Pittsburgh storefront into a movie theatre with some 100 seats. They opened the day before Thanksgiving charging patrons five cents to see a 20-minute program featuring Edward Porter's still classic 1903 one-reeler, *The Great Train Robbery*. Within a few weeks their Nickel-Odeon was selling out continuous showings from 8 a.m. to midnight and clearing $1,000 a week. This was not the first movie theatre — Thomas Talley opened his Electric Theatre offering "A vaudeville of motion pictures lasting one hour" at 262 S. Main Street in Los Angeles on April 16, 1902, and the following year the sons of a Polish-Jewish cobbler named Warner opened the 99-seat Cascade Theatre in Newcastle, Pennsylvania — but it ignited the great movie boom. There were perhaps three hundred places to see movies in America at the end of 1905. Two years later there were over four thousand and an average of two million people were attending daily.

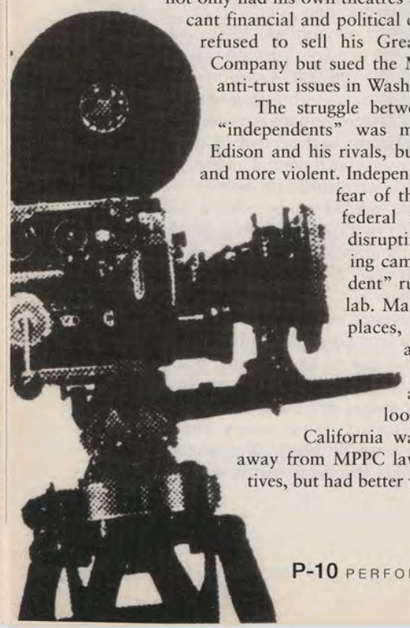
All one needed to become a prospering "showman" was a room, some chairs, and a projector and there were thousands of ambitious entrepreneurs eager to join this new "gold-rush." Many were immigrants, like William Fox, a garment worker, a "cloth sponger," who invested in a Brooklyn nickelodeon. Or Carl Laemmle, a frustrated and ambitious Wisconsin clothing store manager who put his life savings into a Chicago theatre. Marcus Loew, who had penny arcades in three states, noticed that one of his New York locations started losing money after a nickelodeon opened down the block. Within months he'd converted all of his arcades to movie theatres. A few

years later he made another daring move by converting several New York playhouses into "golden temples of the silent drama." The movie business rewarded risk.

The demand for films was huge and insatiable. The average nickelodeon showed a program of four reels and changed the program daily. Quality didn't matter but audiences preferred, and exhibitors needed, a steady supply of new pictures. As with exhibition, film production was not an expensive business to enter. The New York film company Kalem started in 1907 with $1,000 capital and a year later was netting $5,000 a week. With this kind of money at stake, it is not at all surprising that Edison increased his efforts to enforce his patents, deploying an army of spies, private detectives, and lawyers to shut down his rivals. In 1907 a court found that Selig Polyscope, a major manufacturer of films and equipment, had infringed on Edison's camera patents but rather than continue trying to crush his enemies in court, the Wizard of Menlo Park accepted a proposal by George Kleine, a mid-western distributor, that Edison and his major rivals combine their patents and, essentially, take over the movie business. Thus the Motion Pictures Patents Company (MPPC) was born: an airtight and supposedly, because of their patents, legal business monopoly. In January, 1909 the MPPC laid down the law to America's motion picture exchanges and exhibitors: exchanges had to be licensed to deal in MPPC films which could only be shown in theatres using projectors manufactured by the MPPC. MPPC films could not be distributed to unlicensed theatres nor could licensed theatres show non-MPPC films. All prices and procedures were rigidly set — an incomprehensible demand to entrepreneurs comfortable with haggling and chicanery.

As it happened, the exchanges ignored the rules, carrying on their usual dealing and double-dealing in both MPPC and independent films. Frustrated, the MPPC took over the exchanges, making them an offer they couldn't refuse: sell out or we'll cut off your supply of films.

There was, however, active resistance to the new film monopoly. In March 1909, Carl Laemmle, who had his own exchange and theatres, started the Independent Motion Picture Company (lovingly, and less so, called "The Imp" and known today as Universal Pictures) to make his own films. William Fox not only had his own theatres and exchange but significant financial and political connections. He not only refused to sell his Greater New York Rental Company but sued the MPPC and began raising anti-trust issues in Washington.



The struggle between the MPPC and the "independents" was much like that between Edison and his rivals, but grander, more intense, and more violent. Independent film-makers lived in fear of the sudden appearance of federal marshals, or hoodlums disrupting a shoot and destroying cameras, or a strange "accident" ruining the negative at the lab. Making movies in the usual places, New York, Pittsburgh and Chicago became an increasingly troublesome and producers began looking for alternatives. California was not only 3,000 miles away from MPPC lawyers and private detectives, but had better weather. It may seem odd that they chose small, puritan Los Angeles when San Francisco offered a tolerant, sophisticated metropolis with beautiful and varied locations and a rich arts and theatre community from which to draw talent. But L.A. had an advantage for film-makers who were breaking the law: it was nearer the Mexican border, to which one could flee with the camera should a suspicious character show up on the set. As it happened, the city proved most hospitable and within a decade it was the world capital of the movies.

By then the MPPC and its constituents were out of business. They lost in court, but their true defeat was in the marketplace. Quite simply, their business plan, their "paradigm," was wrong. The powers behind the MPPC thought of themselves as manufacturers, industrialists. Their ideal was Standard Oil and U.S. Steel and they created an efficient, rigid, and reliable system designed not for marketing stories but for making 1,000-foot reels of film which could be profitably sold at ten cents a foot. They were conservative in a variety of ways, valuing stability, disliking risk and change, and disdainful of both films and their working class audience. The MPPC institutionalized Edison's original sins of ignoring the customer and underestimating the medium.

For Laemmle, Fox, and their peers, film wasn't a manufacturing business but a retail business. They were the pioneers of consumer capitalism. The idea that they were "showmen" is a bit romantic but having started as theatre owners they were sensitive to their audience, more aware of, and willing to adapt to, the audience's growing appetites. They also had the advantage of not being restrained by self-imposed rules. All the independents shared was opposition to having anyone tell them how to do business. Otherwise they were ruthless in competing not only with the MPPC but with one another. At this time, the business of movies had the same freedom as the art of movie-making: there were no rules, anything was possible, and if your innovation was successful there were hundreds ready to steal it.

The MPPC was unable to accept, much less embrace, the two developments that still define American movies, the star system and the feature film. The star system was inaugurated by Carl Laemmle in 1910 when by the simple expedient of doubling their wages he stole two of Biograph's favorite performers, Florence Lawrence, known only as "The Biograph Girl," and "Little Mary" aka Mary Pickford. Every exhibitor new that some audiences preferred the films of certain unnamed and unbilled performers, but the MPPC producers couldn't acknowledge or exploit the phenomenon. They refused to give actors billing or credit because to do so would not only raise production costs — the actors would want more pay — but force the producers to deal with the fact that not every foot of film had the same value. Longer films — features — raised a similar problem as they cost more to make and the entire distribution system was designed for one-reelers and programs that changed daily. Besides, they argued, audiences wouldn't, or couldn't, follow a story longer than 15 minutes. In fact, audiences embraced the longer movies. It took D.W. Griffith's immensely successful (and much censored) 1915 12-reel *Birth of a Nation*, for which some theatres charged admission as high as $2.00, to convince the more conservative manufacturers that there was a market for longer movies.

The most daring, successful and influential of all movie moguls, Adolph Zukor dominated the industry through his radical ideas, and just as important, a startling ability to reconsider and change his ideas. A little known associate of theatre magnate Marcus Loew (and, like Loew, a Hungarian immigrant and former furrier), Adolph Zukor started Famous Players Film Company in 1912 because he believed there was an audience for longer, "quality" movies — even though there was no way to distribute or raise capital for such expensive movies. Fortunately, a group of farsighted theatre owners started Paramount Pictures to solve these problems and Zukor (who soon took over Paramount) was on his way.

The original plan of Famous Players — presenting "Famous Players in Famous Plays" — was to use well-known theatre actors in "quality" films. When it became apparent that movie audiences were unimpressed by the sometimes long-in-the-tooth idols of the legitimate stage. Zukor didn't hesitate to abandon this strategy. He did not, however, give up on stars; Zukor was the first to realize that stars are the "brand names" of motion pictures. He outraged and astounded his peers by paying enormous sums for the likes of Mary Pickford and Charlie Chaplin (in 1916 the pair were the world's highest paid "wage slaves," earning $10,000 a week) and then ingeniously finding ways of getting reluctant exhibitors to raise ticket prices to pay for the ever more expensive productions. Theatre owners, and eventually the competition, realized that Zukor's vision was correct: audiences would pay more to see their favorite performers. Over the course of the decade production costs and admission fees increased 1000%. But attendance increased also. By 1920 virtually everyone in America was going to the movies every week and the medium which had started as a working-class recreation had become fashionable middle-class entertainment.

Zukor believed he could dominate the industry as long as he controlled the most popular stars and he was ingenious in exploiting his assets. For instance, with stars he could force "block booking": if theatres wanted the hugely popular Mary Pickford movies they had to exhibit all of Paramount's films. Correctly fearing that Zukor would drive them out of business, a group of major theatre owners headed by Thomas Talley (still in the business 25 years after opening his Electric Theatre) started their own production company, 1st National, in 1917. 1st National didn't bother to buy or build a studio, but went straight to stars like Pickford offering even more lucrative deals than those they had with Zukor. Once again Zukor demonstrated his genius by reconsidering his strategy. Committed as he was to the star system, he was also able (thanks in part to the advice of Paramount's infallible director Cecil B. DeMille) to acknowledge its limitations. Stars are valuable but audiences are fickle; because old idols lose favor and new favorites appear without any warning it is impossible to really have a monopoly on the talent. With Wall Street and eager investors pouring capital into pictures, there was no limit to how high the bidding for stars might go and a producer could easily find himself bankrupt because he'd paid too much for a player who had fallen from favor. Zukor understood that movies were a retail business and he had hoped to dominate without having to invest in the retail outlet, the theatres. He realized he was wrong. As his Wall Street advisors Kuhn, Loeb, and Co. told him, "the largest returns of the industry result from exhibiting films to the public, not from manufacturing them." In 1919 Zukor began investing heavily in exhibition, the one arm of the business Paramount had avoided, buying theatres when he could, building when he had to.

It is clear where the industry was heading. The 1920s was a decade of consolidation and "vertical integration," with exhibitors combining into large circuits, theatre owners buying studios, and studios buying theatres. By mid-decade independent studios were unable to book their films into first-run houses in major cities because the major theatres were owned by or affiliated with major studios. This development did not go unnoticed in Washington. In 1922 the Federal Trade Commission brought an anti-trust suit against Paramount and attempted similar action after Warner Brother's purchase of 1st National in 1928. It would take a Supreme Court decision in 1948 to make the studios give up total vertical integration.

Motion Pictures had become big business — very big business. The studios were public corporations heavily dependent on Wall Street for financing. Quite apart from the costs of acquisitions and expansion, adapting production facilities and theatres for sound films was hugely expensive and left many studios deeply in debt to the two companies, AT&T and RCA, who owned the sound technology. The '29 Crash put the studios completely at the mercy of the financiers and by the mid-1930s all the pioneering moguls had lost control of their empires to bankers and orthodox businessmen. There were talented showmen running the studios but their creativity, their ability and, indeed, their willingness to innovate, was circumscribed by the values and procedures of their bosses, who wanted the movie business to be orderly, predictable, and rational. Gone were the chaotic days when anyone could try a new idea. Now

> A multitude of alleged experts awaited the fellow with a new thought, and when his innovation had completed the circuit of the studios intricate system there was seldom a trace of originality or novelty left in it.

The above was written in 1931 although it sounds exactly like contemporary criticisms of Hollywood film and TV studios.

The situation was considerably worse at the end of the 30s, by which time the long-running effort to censor the content of films had triumphed with the work of the Catholic Legion of Decency and the Hays Office's Production Code. The censors didn't just limit how movies dealt with sex or crime. There were fewer films about immigrants, or race relations, or political ideas, or poverty, or corruption in business or government. Hollywood made great movies and excelled at entertaining star vehicles, but the content and style — the "diversity" if you will — of movies narrowed considerably. The efforts to censor films succeed only because motion pictures had ceased to be a fragmented, dynamic, entrepreneurial business. The Motion Picture Patents Company failed, but the industrial paradigm of the movie as a mass-produced commodity had triumphed. Hollywood had become a factory — a Fantasy Factory perhaps, but a factory nonetheless.

—Christopher Breyer is a frequent contributor to Taper programs.

Ellen Greene and Estelle Parsons.

BIOS

ANNE GEE BYRD (*Anne First [age 99]* [Sept. 7 thru 12]) performed recently in *Pygmalion* at South Coast Repertory and *Patience* at the John Anson Ford Amphitheatre. She has also performed in regional theatres across the country, including the American Shakespeare Festival in Connecticut, the McCarter Theatre, Indiana Repertory Theatre, Seattle Repertory Theatre, the Old Globe Theatre (where she was last seen as Marjorie in *Home*), and the Mark Taper Forum (where she appeared in *The Wood Demon*). She was an associate artist with the late Los Angeles Theatre Company and is currently a member of The Antaeus Company. Her long list of television credits includes *L.A. Doctors, Beverly Hills 90210, JAG, Profiler, ER, Coach*, and the movies-of-the-week *Don't Talk to Strangers, Project Alf, Deadly Revenge* and *Ambush in Waco*. Byrd can also be seen in the films *Eight Millimeter* and *Mating Habits of the Earthbound Human*.

KERRY K. CARNAHAN (*TV Newscaster, Movie Crew*) is making her Mark Taper Forum debut in *The First Picture Show* and is grateful to be working with such a gifted cast. Born in Tokyo and raised in Los Angeles, she has appeared as Gussie in the West Coast premiere of Stephen Sondheim's revised production of *Merrily We Roll Along* at East West Players. Regional credits include *A Chorus Line* (Connie Wong), and *The Wizard of Oz* with Cathy Rigby. She is currently studying voice and opera with Deborah Shulman Bachlund. She thanks her husband, family and friends for their enduring support.

KATHLEEN CONRY (*Lois Weber, Thelma March*) has appeared on Broadway in *George M!* and *No No, Nanette*, and in national tours of *George M!* (at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion) and *Roar of the Greasepaint*. She's appeared in hundreds of productions in off-Broadway, regional, stock and dinner theatres across the country as well as free-lance work in voice-over, on-camera commercials and industrials. As a director/choreographer, she has mounted over 60 plays and musicals and presented several independent productions, most notably, the environmental staging of *The Sermon on the Mount*, both in the Arizona desert and New York's Central Park. She has been a visiting professor of drama at Whitman and Wagner Colleges and the University of North Dakota, and was honored as an outstanding alumna from her high school in Lakewood, Ohio in 1992.

NORMA FIRE (*May Furstmann, Connie Gardner, Gene Gauntier*) appeared most recently in *The First Picture Show* at A.C.T in San Francisco, and as an actor and dancer in Susan Marshall & Co's *The Most Dangerous Room in the House* at Brooklyn Academy of Music. She performed in David Gordon and Ain Gordon's *The Illustrated Radio Shows* and Ain Gordon's *Wally's Ghost* at Soho Rep; *Bintel Brief* at the Ensemble Studio Theatre; and Ken Lonergan's *The Waverly Gallery* at Naked Angels. She also performed in David Gordon's *The Mysteries and What's So Funny?* at Lincoln Center, on the national tour, and at the Wadsworth Theatre in Los Angeles. Regional theatre credits include *Hamlet* and *The Comedy of Errors* at North Carolina Shakespeare Festival; and *Noises Off, Joe Egg*, Beckett's *Not I, Uncle Vanya* and 20 more plays at Actors Theatre of St. Paul. Fire's television credits include David Gordon's *Punch and Judy Get Divorced* on PBS and a recurring role as Judge Jensen on *Law & Order*.

KAREN GRAHAM (*Louie's Friend, Jane's Assistant, Billy's Assistant, Nell Shipman*) has worked with the Pick Up Performance Company since 1986 as a dancer, actor, and assistant to David Gordon. She has also toured with Mikhail Baryshnikov's White Oak Dance Project, performing works by Lar Lubovitch and Mark Morris. Other dance projects have included the work of Randy Warshaw, Allyson Greene and Cynthia Oliver. Performance credits also include *The Mysteries and What's So Funny?* at the American Repertory Theatre and *The Firebugs* at the Guthrie Theater. Her own work has been presented in Minneapolis at the Hennepin Center and in New York through Movement Research at Judson Church and the Danspace Project. Most recently, Danspace Project presented an evening of Graham's work including *The Palace of Not Even Anything*, a collaboration with light artist Joshua White. Graham is a graduate of the University of Illinois, where she divided her time between the English and dance departments.

ELLEN GREENE (*Anne First [ages 15-38], Jane Furstmann*) has performed in New York in *The Threepenny Opera* (Tony Award nomination), David Rabe's *In the Boom Boom Room, Sorrows of Stephen, The Misanthrope*, and *Stage Directions* at Joe Papp's Public Theater; *Starting Monday*, Alan Menken's *Weird Romance*, and *Little Shop of Horrors* at the WPA (as well as in Los Angeles and London); Christopher Durang's *Nature and Purpose of the Universe*; and David Hare's *Teeth and Smiles*. Regional theatre credits include creating the title role of *David's Mother* at the Cleveland Play House, which she also performed on the West Coast tour, as well as performing in *Seven Deadly Sins* at the American Repertory Theatre and *Oliver* at Northshore. Film credits include *One Fine Day, Talk Radio, Pump Up the Volume, Fathers and Sons, The Professional, Killer: A Journal of a Murderer, Wagons East, Stepping Out, Me and Him, Next Stop Greenwich Village*, and Audrey in *Little Shop of Horrors*. Green's television credits include *Law & Order, Cybill, Dellaventura, Dinner at Eight* for TNT, and the HBO miniseries *Glory, Glory* (Ace Award nomination).

KIMBERLY GRIGSBY (*Naomi the Piano Player, Music Director*). Recent credits include the Broadway revival of *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*; *Twelfth Night* with music by Jeanine Tesori (Lincoln Center); *Love's Fire* with music by Adam Guettel (The Acting Co.); *cut time*, directed by Lisa Peterson, with works by Ricky Ian Gordon, Stephen Hoffman, Michael John LaChiusa and Jeanine Tesori (New York Theatre Workshop); *Fools Rush In* with music by Steve Marzullo; *Telaio: Desdemona* by Susan Botti. Recordings: *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* (RCA Victor); *Twelfth Night* (Resmiranda). Education: Southern Methodist University — a bachelor's degree in music in piano performance; Manhattan School of Music — a master's degree in music in accompanying.

KEN MARKS (*Carl Laemmle, Ad-man, Billy Friend, Ida May Park, Second Pianist*). Ken Mark's involvement in *The First Picture Show* spans three workshops, one full production and many phone calls. His association with the Gordons began when he appeared in the premiere of Ain Gordon's *Birdseed Bundles* at Soho Rep in New York City. He has appeared in *Present Laughter* and *Dancing at Lughnasa* on Broadway, and in dozens of plays off-Broadway and regionally including Paul in *June Moon* (Drama Dept.), Fluellen in *Henry V* (New York Shakespeare Festival), Alex in *Bright Lights, Big City* (New York Theatre Workshop), leading roles at the Guthrie Theater, The Long Wharf, The McCarter, Seattle Rep, The Actors Theatre of Louisville, and seven glorious summers at The National Playwrights Conference in Waterford, CT. Screen credits include *Hyde in Hollywood, The Confession, Land of Nod, Law & Order, Trinity* and *Live Shot*. A graduate of Northwestern University and The Yale School of Drama, Ken lives in Brooklyn, NY.

CHRISTIAN NOVA (*Censor, Customs Official, Train Announcer, Movie Crew, Second Pianist*) is thrilled to be making his Mark Taper Forum debut. Broadway: *Cyrano — The Musical*; National Tour: *The Phantom of the Opera*; Off-off Broadway: *Song by Song by Michael Valenti*; Regional: *Closer Than Ever, Evita, Baby, A Little Night Music, West Side Story, Carousel*; Recording: *Walking Happy* (solo CD), *Oh, Kay!* Television: *Law & Order*. Thanks to my family, Tony and Maggie.

ESTELLE PARSONS (*Anne First [age 99]*) swept to prominence with her Academy Award-winning performance in *Bonnie and Clyde*. She was nominated for a second Oscar for *Rachel, Rachel*. Her latest film is *Looking for Richard*. Miss Parsons is most widely known as Mother Bev on TV's *Roseanne*. On Broadway, she starred in and received Tony nominations for *Miss Margarida's Way, The Seven Descents of Myrtle* and *And Miss Reardon Drinks A Little*. At the Ahmanson, Miss Parsons played in Alan Ayckbourn's *The Norman Conquests* and Ernest Thompson's *A Sense of Humor*. She made her Los Angeles stage debut with Lotte Lenya in *The Threepenny Opera* in 1960. She is currently artistic director of the Actors' Studio.

CHUCK ROSEN (*Louie's Mother, Louie's Friend, Movie Crew, Newsman*) is thrilled to be making his first appearance at the Mark Taper Forum. Originally from Cleveland, Ohio, Chuck has worked extensively throughout the world. A graduate of Otterbein College in Westerville, Ohio, he has played such roles as Che in *Evita*. Bill Snibson in *Me and My Girl*, Greg in *Relatively Speaking*, and the Baker in *Into The Woods*. Los Angeles audiences may remember Chuck as Alfred/Sam in the Ovation Award-nominated *Romance/Romance*, the Drama-Logue Award-winning musical *Bittersuite* or the hit musical *Sisterella* at the Pasadena Playhouse. However, *his* most memorable role would be that of Barney Rubble in *The Flintstone's Show* at Universal Studios in Hollywood, where in a blonde wig and brown dress, he met his loving wife, without whose love and support, and that of his family, friends and pets, he would surely not be here.

JEANNE SAKATA (*Nurse Tina, Cindy Su, Justice McKenna, Marion E. Wong*) is pleased to return to the Taper mainstage after performing in the world premiere production of *The First Picture Show* at the American Conservatory Theater, as well as originating the lead role of Sonja Wong Pickford under Lisa Peterson's direction in the world premiere of Chay Yew's *Red* at the Intiman Theatre and Portland Center Stage. She previously performed at the Taper in Václav Havel's *Temptation*, and in Shakespeare's *Richard II*, directed by Robert Egan. Jeanne has also performed at the Lincoln Center (*Riddles of Bamboo*), Public Theater (*Macbeth*), Berkeley Repertory Theatre (*Last of the Suns*), Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Arizona Theatre Company (*M. Butterfly*), Syracuse Stage (*Tea*), A Contemporary Theatre (*Fish Head Soup, Agnes Smedley, Our American Friend*), Pan Asian Repertory (*Shanghai Lil's*), Cornerstone Theater Company (*A Beautiful Country*), and East West Players (*Big Hunk O' Burnin' Love*). A veteran of many local plays at such theatres as the Odyssey Theatre, L.A. Theatreworks and the L.A. Women's Shakespeare Company, she has especially cherished the classical roles of Ellida in Ibsen's *Lady From the Sea*, Duchess of York in *Richard III* and Solange in East West Players' 1994 production of *The Maids* (Drama-Logue Award for Outstanding Performance). Jeanne's screen credits include the feature film *Poison Ivy* and the new hit NBC series *Providence*, the MOW's *Hiroshima: Out of the Ashes, Fine Things, Consensual Relations* and *Alien Nation: The Enemy Within*, as well as *L.A. Law, Knots Landing* and *Adam 12*.

VALDA SETTERFIELD (*Rev. Wilbur F. Crafts, Alice Guy Blaché, Movie Crew, Awards Host*), a British-born dancer and actor, has worked with JoAnne Akalaitis, Woody Allen, Mikhail Baryshnikov, Caryl Churchill, Merce Cunningham, Graciela Daniele, Richard Foreman, Maria Irene Fornes, Brian DePalma, Ain Gordon, David Gordon, Don Mischer, Marie Rambert, Yvonne Rainer, Michael Sexton, James Waring, Robert Wilson and Mark Wing-Davey. She has been a member of the Pick Up Performance Company since its inception in 1971. She has received a Bessie Award for sustained achievement and an Obie Award for *The Family Business*.

STEVEN SKYBELL (*Louis Furstmann, Henry Hooks, Monty Latour, Margery Wilson*) made his Broadway debut with Colleen Dewhurst and Jason Robards in O'Neill's *Ah, Wilderness!* Other Broadway appearances include Lester Freed in *Cafe Crown* with Anne Jackson and Eli Wallach, and Stephen in *Love! Valour! Compassion!* His off-Broadway credits include Alice Tully Hall (*The Soldier's Tale*); Public Theater/Delacorte (*Two Gentlemen of Verona, Troilus and Cressida, Henry VI, pt. 1, 2 and 3*, and *Antony and Cleopatra* starring and directed by Vanessa Redgrave); and Vineyard Theatre (Tina Landau's *Dream True*, and *Antigone in New York*, for which he received an Obie Award). Regional credits include American Repertory Theatre (Edgar to F. Murray Abraham's Lear), Williamstown Theatre Festival, Yale Rep and McCarter Theatre. In 1997 he was one of the two Americans chosen for the inaugural company of Shakespeare's Globe in London, performing in *Henry V*, which included a command performance for HRH Elizabeth II (PBS' Great Performances). His films include Arthur Miller's *Everybody Wins, Simply Irresistible, Zoo* and Tim Robbins's soon-to-be-released *The Cradle Will Rock*. Mr. Skybell is delighted to be making his Mark Taper Forum debut.

HARRY WATERS JR. (*Censor, Percy Waters, Movie Crew, Cleo Madison, Rep. Hughes*) is pleased to be returning to the Mark Taper Forum where he appeared in *Miss Evers' Boys* and participated in a workshop of The Other Voices. He originated the role of Belize/Mr. Lies in *Angels in America*. Other recent regional theatre credits include *Antony and Cleopatra* at Berkeley Repertory Theatre, *Bleacher Bums* at Marin Theatre Company, *Thunder Knockin on the Door* (BATCC nomination, Drama-Logue Award) at San Jose Repertory and A Contemporary Theatre in Seattle, *The Game of Love and Chance* also at San Jose Repertory, *Raisin* at Theatreworks (BATCC nomination), *Sizwe Banzi Is Dead, The Tempest* and *Dreams of the Day* at Arizona Theatre Company, *Happy End* at New Mexico Repertory and *Godspell* (Drama-Logue Award) and *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* at Lambs Players in San Diego. On television, Waters was Tweedle Dee in the Disney Channel series *Adventures in Wonderland* and the African Prince Robert Mboto in the syndicated series *What a Country!* Other TV credits include

Amen, *227*, *Thea*, *Trapper John, M.D.*, *M*A*S*H* and several movies of the week. He was Marvin Berry in *Back to the Future I and II*, where he received a gold record for "Earth Angel." Other film credits include *Death Warrant* and *Big Bully*.

DAVID GORDON (*Co-Author* and *Director*) performed in the companies of James Waring and Yvonne Rainer, showed dances at the Living Theater, participated in the original Judson Church performances, and was a founding member of the 1970s improvisational group the Grand Union. He started the Pick Up Performance Company in 1971 (incorporated in 1978 as a nonprofit organization), is a Guggenheim fellow (1981 and 1987), and was a panelist and chairman at the NEA's dance program in the 80s. His video work has appeared on PBS's Great Performances, KTCA Alive TV, the BBC and Channel 4/Great Britain. *The Mysteries and What's So Funny?* written and directed in 1992, with music by Philip Glass and visual design by Red Grooms, won Bessie and Obie awards and was published in Grove's New American Theater, edited by Michael Feingold. *The Family Business*, written with Ain Gordon (associate director of the Pick Up Performance Co.), won an Obie Award and was performed at Dance Theater Workshop in 1994 and at the New York Theatre Workshop and Mark Taper Forum in 1995. In 1994 Gordon directed and choreographed *Shlemiel the First* for the American Repertory Theatre (A.R.T.) and the American Music Theatre Festival (A.M.T.F.); *Shlemiel* was presented at A.C.T. in 1996 and won 1997 Drama-Logue Awards for choreography and direction when it appeared at the Geffen Playhouse in 1997. Gordon is the only artist to be awarded Pew Charitable Trust grants in both theatre and dance; a 1993 National Theatre Artist Residency Grant to work with the Guthrie Theater, where he directed and choreographed *The Firebugs* in 1995; and a 1996 National Dance Residency Project Grant. Gordon is currently working on a commissioned musical adaptation of *The Wind in the Willows* for A.C.T.'s 1999-2000 season and two weeks of dancing at the Danspace Project in New York City in December 1999.

AIN GORDON (*Co-Author & Associate Director*) has had his work produced in New York City by Dance Theater Workshop, Performance Space 122, Dancing in the Streets, the Poetry Project at St. Mark's, Soho Rep, and the New York Theatre Workshop. His work has been presented by Dance Place in Washington, D.C., the Baltimore Museum of Art, Spirit Square in North Carolina, and the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival in Massachusetts, where he was artist-in-residence. He has collaborated with David Gordon (as co-writer, co-director and performer) on *The Family Business* (Obie Award), which culminated in a run at the Mark Taper Forum, and on the text for *Punch & Judy Get Divorced*, a musical commissioned by the American Music Theater Festival and the American Repertory Theatre, which premiered in 1996. Ain's play *Wally's Ghost* premiered at Soho Rep, received an Obie Award for playwriting, and has been reconceived with Steven Lippman as a screenplay called *The History of Everything*. His new play, *Birdseed Bundles*, has been workshopped at Soho Rep and presented in the Public Theater's New Works Now series. He is a 1992 and 1998 NYFA Playwriting Fellow and the recipient of a 1998 John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship. This fall he will begin work on a new commission for the Mark Taper Forum.

JEANINE TESORI (*Composer*). Theatre scores: *Twelfth Night*, directed by Nicholas Hytner, Lincoln Center Theater (Tony Award nomination, Drama Desk Award); *Violet* with lyricist Brian Crawley, directed by Susan H. Schulman (1997 New York Drama Critics' Circle, Lucille Lortel and Obie Awards, Gilman and Gonzales-Falla Musical Theater Award); *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, new music with lyricist Dick Scanlan; *Don Juan de Marco*, Joe Mantello, director, Craig Lucas, librettist. Conducting/Dance Music: *The Secret Garden, Tommy, How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying, Dream, The Sound of Music.* Television: *China: Walls and Bridges* (ABC), *The Winds of Freedom* (CBS). Recordings: co-producer original cast albums of *Violet*, *Twelfth Night* (Resmiranda Records), the Scribner Spoken Arts Series; and vocal producer, Silver Burdett and Ginn. Member ASCAP and The Dramatists Guild. Wife: Michael Rafter. Mother: Siena, age two.

ROBERT BRILL (*Set Designer*) designed Anna Deavere Smith's *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992* for the Taper. For Broadway, his credits include the set and club design for *Cabaret*, *The Rehearsal* and Sam Shepard's *Buried Child*. His off-Broadway credits include *God's Heart* at Lincoln Center Theater, *The Mineola Twins* for Roundabout Theatre Company, *Blue Window* at Manhattan Theatre Club, *A Park In Our House* at New York Theatre Workshop, and *The Batting Cage* at The Vineyard Theatre. Regionally, his designs include *An American In Paris* at Boston Ballet; *The House of Martin Guerre* at both The Canadian Stage Company and the Goodman Theatre; *Buried Child, A Streetcar Named Desire* and *A Clockwork Orange* at Steppenwolf; *Two Sisters and a Piano* for South Coast Repertory; numerous productions for La Jolla Playhouse, including *Having Our Say, The Good Person of Setzuan, Marisol, The Swan, The Hairy Ape, Much Ado About Nothing* and *Fortinbras;* and the world premiere of Steinbeck's *East of Eden*, a three-part cycle presented at The Western Stage. He has designed for Minnesota Opera, The Guthrie Theater, The Old Globe, South Coast Repertory, The Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Cleveland Play House, Playmaker's Repertory, and is a founding member of the San Diego-based Sledgehammer Theatre, where his credits include the world-premieres of Charles L. Mee Jr.'s *The War To End War* and *No Time Like The Present* presented at the Whitney Museum of American Art.

JUDITH DOLAN (*Costume Designer*) has designed costumes for opera, film, television and theatre. She has worked with Harold Prince on *Candide* (1997 Tony Award), *Willie Stark* for the Houston Grand Opera, Stephen Sondheim's *Merrily We Roll Along* on Broadway, and *The Petrified Prince* at The Public Theater (Lucille Lortel Award and Drama Desk Award nomination). Dolan's designs have also been seen at the Abbey Theatre in Dublin, Theatre Clwyd in Wales, the Taormina Festival, the Alley Theatre, the Kennedy Center, Wolf Trap Opera and The Shakespeare Theatre in Washington D.C. Last fall she designed costumes for a new musical for Harold Prince entitled *Parade*.

JENNIFER TIPTON (*Lighting Designer*) is well known for her lighting work in theatre, dance and opera. Her recent work in opera includes *Hansel and Gretel* for the Welsh National Opera and *Dialogues of the Carmelites* for the Santa Fe Opera. Recent theatre work includes *The Iphigenia Cycle* for Theatre for a New Audience in New York and *The Trojan Women* at the Shakespeare Theatre in Washington, D.C. Recent dance credits include Twyla Tharp's *Grosse Sonate* for American Ballet Theatre and Paul Taylor's *Cascade*. Tipton teaches lighting at the Yale School of Drama.

JON GOTTLIEB *(Sound Designer)* currently the Mark Taper Forum's and Ahmanson Theatre's resident sound designer, has been heard on and off-Broadway, most recently with Terrence McNally's Tony award-winning *Master Class*, starring Zoe Caldwell, Patti LuPone and Dixie Carter, and *The Heiress* at the Ahmanson Theatre in Los Angeles. For the Taper, his recent designs include *Hughie*, *Enigma Variations*, *House Arrest: An Introgression*, *Putting It Together*, *The Cider House Rules*, *Dealer's Choice*, *Neat*, *Room Service*, *Nine Armenians*, New Theatre For Now On The Mainstage, *Molly Sweeney*, *Changes of Heart*, *Blade to the Heat*, *Hysteria*, *Master Class* (for which he received a Theatre L.A. Ovation Award), *Black Elk Speaks*, *The Waiting Room*, *Floating Islands*, *Bandido!*, *The Wood Demon*, *Death and the Maiden*, *Lips Together, Teeth Apart*, *Angels in America*, *Twilight: Los Angeles 1992*, *Jelly's Last Jam*, and *Henceforward...*, for which he received a Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Award. His designs at the Ahmanson Theatre include *Candide*, *Conversations With My Father*, *Money and Friends*, *It's Only a Play*, *The Most Happy Fella*, *A Little Night Music* and *The Vortex* at the Doolittle Theatre. Jon has received six LADCC Awards, over 50 Drama-Logue and L.A. Weekly Awards, Career Achievement awards from The Los Angeles Theatre Alliance, the L.A. Weekly and the Los Angeles Theatre Center, and the Distinguished Artist Award from the Los Angeles Music Center Club 100. He served for five years as the resident sound designer at the Los Angeles Theatre Center, currently heads the sound design program at California Institute of the Arts and has been a member of the teaching faculty at both USC and the UCLA Schools of Theatre. For Disney Imagineering, he created original sound effects and design for two attractions at Walt Disney World in Florida.

PHILIP G. ALLEN (*Sound Designer*) has designed over 70 theatrical shows, including the first two seasons of *Reprise - Broadway's Best in Concert* at UCLA. Other design work includes the repertory of *Measure for Measure* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Cinderella* at the Ahmanson Theatre, *Only a Kingdom* at the Pasadena Playhouse, *Masada* at the Shubert Theatre in L.A., *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* and *Singing in the Rain* at the Coconut Grove Playhouse in Miami, *The King and I*, *South Pacific*, *Company* and *Into the Woods* for the Long Beach Civic Light Opera. For television, Allen assisted in the sound design for the 1998 Academy of Country Music Awards with Emmy Award-winning sound designer Bruce Burns and equalized the sound at the 56th Golden Globe Awards and 14th Soap Opera Awards. As a mixer, he engineered the gala production of *Saturday Night at the Summit* attended by Bill Clinton and the leaders of the G-7 countries, which featured performances by Michael Bolton, Amy Grant, Crystal Gayle, Chuck Berry, Kool and the Gang and Ronnie Spector. His theatrical work has earned him five Drama-Logue Awards for Outstanding Achievement in Sound Design and an Ovation Award nomination for Best Sound Design for a Large Musical.

COREY MADDEN (*Dramaturg* and *Associate Artistic Director/Taper*) is both a director and producer and has worked with playwrights in the development of new work for the last 15 years. Corey has commissioned and developed many works for the stage including Lisa Loomer's *Expecting Isabel*, which was presented at the Arena Stage this fall and will be produced at the Taper next season. Last season she directed Kelly Stuart's *The Square Root of Terrible* for P.L.A.Y. and *The Learned Ladies* at the University of Washington in Seattle. In 1996 she directed Marga Gomez's *A Line Around the Block* at the Public Theater and Taper, Too. This August, she directs *The Affliction of Glory*, a new play about English actress Sarah Siddons by Frank Dwyer at the Getty Museum. As a producer, Corey has worked with artists such as Tony Kushner, George C. Wolfe, Anna Deavere Smith, David Gordon and Ain Gordon. She has also produced numerous events in association with other cultural organizations including MOCA, LACMA, the Getty, Cal Arts and Cornerstone Theater.

STANLEY SOBLE, C.S.A. (*Casting Director*) was the casting director for the Ahmanson Theatre and the Mark Taper Forum, where his casting credits included the world premieres of the Pulitzer Prize-winning plays *Angels in America* and *The Kentucky Cycle*. Stanley was a proud member of the board of directors of the Casting Society of America. On Broadway, his work included *Angels in America*, *The Kentucky Cycle*, *Jelly's Last Jam*, *Big River*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, *Moon for the Misbegotten* and *The Human Comedy*, and off-Broadway, for Joseph Papp's Public Theater and BAM 's Next Wave Festival. Regionally, he cast projects for The Guthrie Theater, the Hartford Stage, the La Jolla Playhouse and the Arena Stage. He recently completed casting on *Victorville* for BBC Radio. Other television credits included *Breaking Through* for ABC-TV, *Legwork* for CBS, *Carolina Skeletons* for NBC, *Tailspin* for HBO and *Search for Tomorrow*. Feature films included *Lean On Me* (the student roles), *American Blue Note*, and *After Hours* with Mary Colquhoun. He directed for the Paper Mill Playhouse, Pacific Resident Theatre and the Taper's New Work Festival. He received five ARTIOS nominations from the Casting Society of America and won the award for *Angels in America*. He also won two Drama-Logue Awards. (Sadly, Stanley passed away on July 6. Please see page 17 and 18 for a special tribute.)

ED FITZGERALD (*Production Stage Manager*) has worked for 25 years as a stage manager, production manager and sound designer. For David Gordon and the Pick Up Performance Company, he has stage-managed *The Mysteries and What's So Funny?* (national tour), *The Family Business*, numerous productions of *Shlemiel the First* throughout the country, a retrospective dance concert at Jacob's Pillow, *Punch & Judy Get Divorced*, *Illustrated Radio Shows*, and several workshops of *The First Picture Show*. He works frequently at Manhattan Theatre Club in New York (most recently on *Captains Courageous—The Musical*) and the at the American Repertory Theatre in Cambridge, Massachusetts. His Broadway credits include *Carrie*, *The Tap Dance Kid*, *A Little Family Business* and *Da*.

AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER (*Co-producer*) is a Tony Award-winning theatre and school, dedicated to the art of live theatre through dynamic productions, intensive actor training in its conservatory, and an ongoing dialogue with its community. Founded in 1965, A.C.T. opened its first San Francisco season at the historic Geary Theater in 1967. More than 300 productions have since been performed to a combined audience of seven million. The A.C.T. Conservatory, which serves 1,450 students annually, has moved to the forefront of America's actor training programs, while serving as the creative engine of the company at large. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Carey Perloff and Managing Director Heather Kitchen, A.C.T. has achieved unprecedented success both with vigorous new works and bold reimaginings of the classics, garnering the prestigious Jujamcyn Award for outstanding creative contribution to the theatre and achieving a ranking of sixth in the nation for its acclaimed actor training program. Carey Perloff, Artistic Director; Heather Kitchen, Managing Director; Melissa Smith, Conservatory Director; American Conservatory Theater, 30 Grant Ave., San Francisco, CA 94108. Phone: (415) 834-3200. FAX: (415) 834-3360. www.act-sfbay.org

PICK UP PERFORMANCE COMPANY (David Gordon, Director; Ain Gordon, Associate Director; Bruce Allardice, Managing Director) is an award-winning nonprofit arts organization that supports the creation and presentation of contemporary theatre and dance. *The First Picture Show* was developed during residencies at the Mark Taper Forum, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, St. Clement's Theatre, Balletech, and the New York Theatre Workshop, with support from the National Endowment for the Arts, New York State Council on the Arts, AT&T Foundation, Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation's Multi Arts Production Fund, Fan Fox & Leslie R. Samuels Foundation, and National Dance Residency Program (which is

underwritten by the Pew Charitable Trust and administered by the New York Foundation for the Arts). The Pick Up Performance Company also acknowledges the support of the Harkness Foundation for Dance, Mellon Foundation, New York Communities Trust, Lila Acheson Wallace Theater Fund at Community Funds, Inc., and Philip Morris Companies, Inc.

GORDON DAVIDSON (*Artistic Director/Producer*) has led the Mark Taper Forum throughout its 32-year history. During that period, he has guided over 250 major productions to the Taper stage while also overseeing the numerous special projects sponsored by the Taper. In 1994 in New York, three of the four Tony Award nominations for best play were for plays developed and produced by the Taper: *Angels in America*, Part Two: *Perestroika*, *The Kentucky Cycle* and *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992*. *Perestroika* received the award (Part One of *Angels* received the previous year's best play Tony Award). Davidson's stage directing credits, Taper: *In the Matter of J. Robert Oppenheimer* (N.Y. Drama Desk Award), *The Trial of the Catonsville Nine* (Tony nomination, Obie and LADCC Awards), *Henry IV, Part One, Hamlet, Savages* (Obie, Outer Critics and LADCC Awards), *The Shadow Box* (Tony, Outer Critics and LADCC Awards), *Terra Nova* (which subsequently toured five cities in Japan), *Children of a Lesser God* (Tony Award nomination), *The Lady and the Clarinet, Tales From Hollywood, The American Clock, The Real Thing, Ghetto, Dutch Landscape, Unfinished Stories* and *Nine Armenians*. Opera: *Harriet: The Woman Called Moses* (world premiere, Virginia Opera Association) and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Los Angeles Music Center Opera); Theatre/Music: *Every Good Boy Deserves Favour* (co-production Taper/L.A. Philharmonic) and *Oedipus Rex* (L.A. Philharmonic); Film: *Zoot Suit* (executive producer), *The Trial of the Catonsville Nine* (director); Special Awards: Tony Award (theatrical excellence), LADCC Award (distinguished achievement), Margo Jones Award (encouraging new plays and playwrights), The Governor's Award for the Arts, the 1993 Casting Society of America Lifetime Achievement Award, the Honorary Gold Card membership into IATSE, Local 33, and the "Mr. Abbott" Award for Lifetime Achievement, among many others. Gordon was recently appointed to the National Council on the Arts, is a member of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences and is on the board of the Non-Traditional Casting Project. In addition to his role at the Taper, Gordon is also the artistic director/producer of the Center Theatre Group/Ahmanson Theatre, where for six years he presented the Ahmanson subscription season at the Doolittle Theatre in Hollywood, and directed in 1991 *A Little Night Music*. In the fall of 1995, Gordon directed the 30th anniversary production of *Candide* when the subscription season returned to the Music Center and the new Ahmanson Theatre. The Ahmanson's 33rd season begins this fall with a new production of *Amadeus* starring David Suchet and Michael Sheen and directed by Sir Peter Hall.

CHARLES DILLINGHAM (*Managing Director*) supervises all development, marketing, administrative and financial aspects of the Mark Taper Forum and the Ahmanson Theatre. Prior to joining Center Theatre Group, he was president and chief executive officer of an international production and management company in New York which presented the Bolshoi Ballet, Bolshoi Opera, Kirov Ballet, Kirov Opera and Royal Ballet at the Metropolitan Opera House and on national tour. He was the general manager and then executive director of American Ballet Theatre for eight years, during which time the world-renowned company toured to Paris and Japan, made ten television productions, and mounted 75 new productions. He previously served as managing director of the Brooklyn Academy of Music Theatre Company, as general manager of the American Conservatory Theater in San Francisco, and as an independent producer. He is currently a vice-president and board member of Theatre L.A.

ROBERT EGAN (*Producing Director*). Robert is the producing director of the Mark Taper Forum, and recently directed the critically-acclaimed productions of Patrick Marber's *Dealer's Choice* and David Hare's *Skylight*, as well as Tom Stoppard's *Arcadia* (LADCC Award for Best Play), Ariel Dorfman's *Death and the Maiden*, *Richard II* with Kelsey Grammer, Ariel Dorfman and Tony Kushner's *Widows*, Brian Friel's *Aristocrats*, *Sansei* (developed with the band Hiroshima), Anthony Minghella's *Made in Bangkok*, Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*, Henrik Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler* and Kendrew Lascelles' *Water Hole* for New Theatre For Now. At Taper, Too he directed Wallace Shawn's *Aunt Dan and Lemon* and co-directed two plays by John Steppling, *The Thrill* and *The Dream Coast*. Bob has been the producing director of all 11 of the New Work festivals from 1988-1998 and most recently, in the 1998 festival, he directed John Steppling's *Cut*, Kevin Heelan's *Common Ground* (based on the novel by J. Anthony Lucas) and Robert Glaudini's *The Poison Tree*. He also directed Jon Robin Baitz's *The Film Society* at LATC, and *Coq au Vin* with Naked Angels at the Coast Playhouse. He produced Wallace Shawn's *The Fever* at MOCA, the Taper's New Theatre For Now in 1985, and the 1990 and 1991 Taper, Too seasons. Prior to the Taper, he was associate artistic director for four years at Seattle Repertory Theatre, where he directed Christopher Hampton's *Savages*, Brian Friel's *Translations*, Snoo Wilson's *Salvation Now* and *The Grass Widow*, new plays by Richard Nelson and Albert Innaurato and Michael Weller's *The Ballad of Soapy Smith*, which he later dircted at the Public Theater in New York. He later returned to Seattle Rep to direct the world premiere of Michael Weller's *Buying Time*. Last year he directed the world premiere of Len Jenkin's *Like I Say* at UCSD. In England he has directed Mozart's *Idomeneo* and Shaw's *Saint Joan* at the Oxford Playhouse, as well as his own adaptation of *They Shoot Horses Don't They* for the Oxford Drama Society. He has two sons, Ian-Thomas and Alec.

DOUGLAS C. BAKER (*General Manager*) is now in his eighth season at CTG. Prior to moving west in 1990, Douglas managed many Broadway and national touring productions including *Tru* starring Robert Morse, *Born Yesterday* starring Ed Asner and Madeline Kahn, *The Gospel at Colonus*, *Annie*, *A Chorus Line*, *Working* and *The Wiz*. His previous association with CTG came when he served as general manager, as well as tour director and booker, for *Legends!* starring Mary Martin and Carol Channing, which had its world premiere at the Ahmanson Theatre in 1986. From 1982-85, Baker was executive director of the Independent Booking Office in New York City, a not-for-profit booking and information agency jointly established in 1957 by The League of New York Theatres and Producers and legitimate theatre owners/operators nationwide. He is a graduate of Albion College and is a member of the Association of Theatrical Press Agents and Managers where he serves on the Board of Governors. He is a founding trustee of Musical Theatre Works, a non-profit theatre based in New York, devoted to the development of new American musicals.

HORSEPOWER:	**222**
ENGINE PATENTS:	**184**
SEATING CAPACITY:	**5**
LEATHER (SQ. FT.):	**45**
AIR BAGS:	**4**
WHEELS (INCHES):	**17**
BOSE STEREO SPEAKERS:	**7**
STEREO WATTS:	**200**
TOP SPEED (MPH):	**143**

THE INNER CIRCLE

Harold Applebaum, 1999-00 Chair

The Inner Circle is an organization of community leaders who provide outstanding support to Center Theatre Group. Their help encourages this theatre to aim for high artistic standards and to continually refresh our ideas of the drama. For membership information call Sandra Shollenberger at (213) 972-3028.
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Thoughts From the Chairman

Historic Perspective:
From Dreams, Through Vision, To Reality

Thirty five years ago, the people of Los Angeles County eagerly awaited the opening of their brand new performing arts center — a dream realized through the determination, dedication and tenacity of visionary leaders. It was a thrilling summer of anticipation and excitement.

It was an historic summer as well, as Southern Californians looked forward to a brand new home for the Los Angeles Philharmonic and a host of theatrical and musical offerings made possible by the new breathtaking Music Center venues.

In the summer of 1964, the country was in the midst of a presidential election following the death less than a year before of a young president who used the power of the White House to showcase many of America's most gifted performing artists. A maverick British rock group, the Beatles, made its second U.S. tour while changing popular music forever.

The boys of summer '64, our world-champion L.A. Dodgers slumped to a sixth-place tie with Pittsburgh — only to reclaim the title in 1965.

"My Fair Lady" won the 1964 Oscar — five years before the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion would claim the Academy Awards ceremony for 24 of the next 30 years.

In 1964, the Pulitzer Prize was not awarded in drama, music or fiction, but went to Walter Jackson Bate's biography of John Keats and Louis Simpson's poetry collection, *At The End of the Open Road.*

A young African American minister and civil rights activist, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was awarded the 1964 Nobel Peace Prize, the same year Congress passed the Civil Rights Act.

Our 31st president, Herbert Hoover, died in 1964, as did novelist Flannery O'Connor and biologist Rachel Carson whose 1962 best seller *Silent Spring* ignited concern for environmental preservation.

SYLVIA MAUTNER

More than 100 Music Center supporters recently enjoyed a cocktail reception at the famed restaurant L'Orangerie sponsored by Northern Trust Bank. Pictured (l-r) are Music Center Chairman and Chief Executive Officer **Andrea Van de Kamp**, *Northern Trust Bank President* **Sherry Barrat**, *and Music Center President and Chief Operating Officer* **Joanne Kozberg**.

In Los Angeles, a valiant group of dedicated visionaries had inspired a movement determined to preserve the performing arts. Their vision resulted in L.A. County's new performing arts center which would open before the end of the year. The selfless dedication of these first Music Center pioneers set the tone for an unprecedented 35 years of service on behalf of all who cherish the performing arts. That legacy of service is matched by our phenomenal volunteer campaign team who made the 30th Anniversary of the Music Center Unified Fund a success.

I want to particularly express my heartfelt thanks to the incredible 1999 volunteer campaign leadership who ensured the success of our final MCUF Campaign. **Maria D. Hummer** of Manatt, Phelps and Phillips, **Paul Watson**, Vice Chairman of Wells Fargo and **Bruce Karatz**, Chairman and CEO of Kaufman and Broad, gave tirelessly for the 30th Anniversary campaign. Maria, Paul and Bruce, we couldn't have done it without you!

Now, as we move forward to establish the Fund for the Performing Arts, we build from an indispensable legacy of generosity that informs the culture of Southern California as much as our vital entertainment industry, our verdant and breathtaking geography, our pioneering technologies, our master builders and our creative thinkers.

By supporting The Music Center, we affirm the creative genius and artistry of a powerful cultural history which, as much as anything else, defines Southern California.

Indeed, 1964 was a memorable year. It's the year the people of Los Angeles County made the performing arts a permanent part of the landscape by building The Music Center. Today, 35 years later, we still have the inspiration to dream, the vision to act, and the dedication and commitment to turn dreams into reality.

Sincerely,

Andrea Van de Kamp

Andrea Van de Kamp

THE MUSIC CENTER OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY

The First Picture Show

by Sheryl Flatow

In an essay entitled "Memory and Imagination," the writer Patricia Hampl notes that "what is remembered is what becomes reality." It's an idea that suffuses the new theater piece *The First Picture Show*, a play with music written by David and Ain Gordon and composed by Jeanine Tesori. As a character says, "History doesn't happen. A lot of things happen, and somebody decides which ones will be history."

The First Picture Show, commissioned by and currently playing at the Mark Taper Forum, following its world premiere in May at American Conservatory Theater in San Francisco, reflects on the early days of motion pictures and the politics of censorship. It also remembers long-forgotten but integral contributors to the silent-film era and, in so doing, redresses history — although David and Ain, father and son, had no idea they were about to embark on such a journey when they began writing the show.

The Gordons had decided to investigate the world of silent pictures when Gordon Davidson, the Taper's artistic director, expressed interest in supporting their next project.

"Ain and I were in Los Angeles, and we would walk around in the downtown area and see all these defunct movie theaters which have been turned into shopping malls," says David. "It was like being in the middle of an historical situation. We both have an interest in old films, and felt it was a subject worth exploring. All we knew when we started was that the play would be about silent movies and the issues of censorship as movies began. We were very aware of the issues of censorship as the Internet was roaring ahead at the turn of this century. And we suddenly realized that what is happening with the Internet at the start of a new century is the same as what happened with movies at the beginning of this century."

Initially, the main characters were to be an aged film director and his nephew. But they underwent a dramatic transformation following a visit by Ain to the Performing Arts Library in New York. "As I began scanning shelves, looking for anything that might have useful research material, I saw this little, narrow book entitled, *Early Women Directors*," says Ain. "I picked up the book, and I couldn't believe what I was seeing. I went to a pay phone and called David and said, 'Change everything. It's not a man. It's a woman.'"

Film buffs are well aware of the contributions to silent movies made by such directors as Cecil B. De Mille, Erich von Stroheim, D.W. Griffith, King Vidor, Mack Sennett, Buster Keaton, and Charles Chaplin. But how many have heard of Lois Weber? Alice Guy Blaché? Cleo Madison? Marion E. Wong? Margery Wilson? Nell Shipman? Certainly, their names were unfamiliar to the Gordons when they began work on *The First Picture Show*. But now all these pioneering directors are part of the fabric of the piece.

The two main characters, however, are fictional creations. Anne First is 99 years old and living in a nursing home, when she receives a visit from her great-niece, Jane Furstmann, a documentary filmmaker. Jane has only recently learned about her aunt, and is determined to make a movie about Anne and her remarkable career. As Anne's story unfolds — on a studio sound stage, replete with film clips and title cards — *The First Picture Show* alternates between past and present, and between two actresses, one playing the aged Anne, the other playing her younger self.

"She's a fictional character," says David, who also directed and choreographed the show, "but she represents the amazing number of women who left their towns in the middle of America at the ages of 14, 15, or 16, and took the train to California to be in this thing called the movies. They didn't know exactly what movies were, or how they worked, or what their place would be in this world. But they were astonishingly adventurous, and they came. Nobody had made movies before, so there were no categories, no job titles, no unions. Therefore, anybody — women and men — could be anything on one day, and something else the next. You could be an actor on Monday, a camerawoman on Tuesday, and a director on Wednesday."

"Also, most people who started film companies were not people who wanted to make art," says Ain. "They were businessmen who had been in some other kind of business and decided that this

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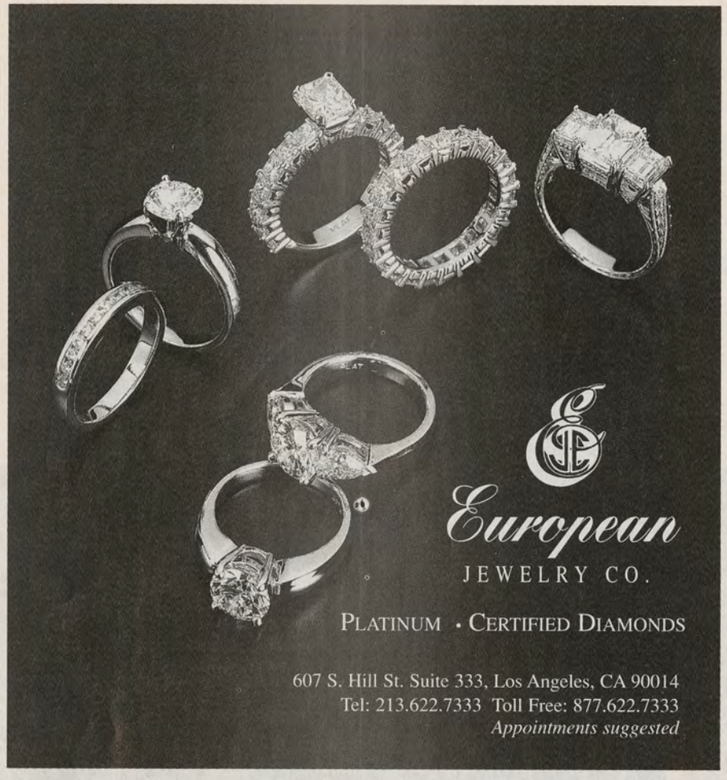

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would make them more money. So I think there was a kind of employer and sweatshop mentality, and I don't mean that pejoratively. 'Who will come in and do this labor cheaply? Whoever will do it, and can make me money, can do it.'"

The Gordons felt that, given the nature of the story they were telling, it was essential to include a woman's voice in the artistic process. "Very honestly, when we started to look for composers, we said, 'The creative team is two men at the moment, and we're making a show all about women,'" says Ain. "If you're making a show about women, and you're saying women don't always get all the jobs they should get — well, you better do something about that."

They found what they were looking for when they met Jeanine Tesori. "She's very talented," says David, "and I feel very lucky to have met her. She is remarkable and open and honest, and it's been a true collaboration."

Tesori became part of the project after seeing a workshop in New York. "The world that they were creating was not one that I'd seen before, and that interested me," she says. "Once I got involved, we had a lot of discussions about what kind of music we wanted, what kind of piece we were making, and what kind of experience we're trying to give to the audience. That's still under constant discussion, and the piece has changed extensively since San Francisco."

What they did not do was create a true musical: *The First Picture Show* is really a play with lots of music. "In a musical, all roads lead to song," says Tesori. "That is not the case here. Sometimes the road leads into a visual. Sometimes the road leads into a cathartic scene. And sometimes it leads into a song."

The score is written for two pianos, one of them slightly out of tune. An onstage pianist plays them both, occasionally accompanied by a cast member. "These old movies were homespun," says Tesori. "People just made it up as they went along. And David, in particular, wanted the show to achieve this very homespun quality. So we tried to create something very intimate. The music provides the landscape, and heightens and deepens the past and the journeys of these people. The sound of an out-of-tune piano adds a whole other dimension to the music being played. The pianos at old folks' homes are usually neglected, and if you sit down and play 'Beautiful Dreamer' on a really banged-up, old piano, it informs the song in a different way. I suppose that piano is also a metaphor, although I don't think I set out to do that. But this piano was built to be beautiful, and simply had aged. That was its only crime. It lacked attention and got old. Therefore the sound inside changed."

What *The First Picture Show* makes disturbingly clear is that, in many respects, the more things change, the more they remain the same. Working women today face many of the same issues as the women who pioneered films. The motion picture industry is again run, with few exceptions, by clueless businessmen whose concern is not art, but the bottom line. And those on the Far Right who blame the film industry and the Internet for the moral decay of society had their counterparts 100 years ago.

Among the people Ain came across in his research was the Rev. Wilbur F. Crafts, and he has become the embodiment of the censorship issue in the show. "Rev. Crafts was very clear and intelligent about his point of view," says Ain. "We had some transcripts of congressional speeches he made, and some of his arguments weren't bad. I don't want to go where he wanted to go, but I recognize the problems he was discussing, as they exist for me too. He's funny and overzealous by my standards, but we didn't want him to come across as foolish or stupid."

Some eighty percent of all the silent films ever made, by men and women, are lost to the ages. And the careers of most of the women directors were lost even before the silent-film era had run its course. *The First Picture Show* addresses some of the reasons why their careers were cut short. "The studios began consolidating in the early 1920s," says Ain, "and if you worked for a smaller studio and got bought up, you didn't have any power. The people who got the money to buy up the studios were men, like the Warner Brothers and Sam Goldwyn. The women couldn't hold out as independents against that, so they had to close their independent studios, as did many men. People who had been around for some time, like D.W. Griffith, just went down the drain. Except that he ended up in the history books, and the women didn't." □

Sheryl Flatow is a San Francisco-based writer on the arts who contributes regularly to Performing Arts *magazine.*

Missing Footage will be at the Mark Taper Forum from August 11–September 19.

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