

## THE 1970S

Not content to open one decade with a groundbreaking, Arena decided to open the seventies with another.

The actual groundbreaking occurred on August 28, 1968. Zelda had decided the time had come to work towards a second space: "I want another physical space. Some plays work better in a one-focus back-wall stage. I'm also interested in exploring the scenic challenges of the proscenium form. Also this will give us playwright space for new works." Initially called Stage II, the project brought back architect Harry Weese to work with Tom and Zelda, while adding resident set designer Robin Wagner to advise on the design and function of the space. At first, the thought was to have an entirely flexible space. But, according to Tom, "When we got done with the preliminary plans, the place had so many red exit lights it looked like a New Orleans whorehouse."

A clarity of purpose and a purity of style helped define the new theater instead. The space was to be an endstage with a fan-shaped house. It was not quite a thrust stage, although a thrust could be put in with little modifications; it was not quite a proscenium, although a frame could easily be constructed by a designer. It had many of the Arena's flexibilities: an overhead grid, a fully-trapped floor, exposed lighting catwalks that provided for a multitude of lighting possibilities. The house also had a similar rake to the Arena's seating. The two theaters were compatible without being competitive; like a favorite nephew, the new theater took on many of its beloved uncle's characteristics, while cultivating a second-generation personality all its own. The addition also housed a new cabaret space (to be called, affectionately, the Old Vat Room), a rehearsal room, a scene shop and more office space.

Funding for the new building came in an extraordinary new form. Washington philanthropist David Lloyd Kreeger pledged \$250,000 toward the completion of the new building. The new theater was named after Kreeger and he played Vivaldi's Sonata in A minor for Two Violins and Piano at the dedication. "They *have* to let me play my violin here," he said at the time. The Ford Foundation contributed

\$800,000 toward the building and other major contributors were the Old Dominion Foundation, the Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer Foundation, and the Twentieth Century Fund, along with Arena's increasingly loyal public who gave hundreds of smaller individual gifts. The dedication ceremony was on November 29, 1970. Entertainment was provided by, in addition to Kreeger's violin virtuosity, Viveca Lindfors, Robert Prosky, Jane Alexander, and Living Stage. Zelda said that "Today, the possibility of the world of the music hall and vaudeville and magic tricks and talking directly to the audience are all in one place here, all together out there, with the possibility of direct front-to-front confrontation with the audience."

What characterized the decade was that this "front-to-front confrontation" happened on stages that extended way beyond the new Kreeger Theater. If Zelda's quest for permanence was still beyond reach as the decade began, it was clearly achieved before the decade's close; no theater could have spread itself so far and wide without having a strong permanent base. It was a decade of many firsts, most of which were undreamt of when the theater began: the first American resident company to tour the Soviet Union, the first resident theater to receive a Tony Award, the first to be invited to perform at the International Hong Kong Arts Festival. The decade was also marked by director Liviu Ciulei's American debut, the taping of *Zalmen or The Madness of God* for broadcast on public television, many, many premieres, and the journey of several Arena productions to New York and beyond.

The theater's repertoire was particularly adventurous during the seventies. New plays from England, Canada, France, Germany—East and West, Switzerland, Austria, Poland, Hungary, Romania, the Soviet Union, and Australia broadened Arena's scope and were greeted enthusiastically by the cosmopolitan audience from the nation's capital. The "In The Process" series gave voice to several new and exciting writers. The Old Vat Room hosted a number of excellent—and lucrative—examples of the cabaret form, and the mainstage was proving to be very adept at creating its own versions of new musicals. Rotating repertory, that oft-experimented form, returned to Arena several times



during the decade, this time in a more artistically and financially successful way ("Remember, if you're doing *Hamlet* in rep with *Waiting For Godot*, you still have to pay the twenty-eight actors in *Hamlet* while you're performing *Godot* with four actors," cautioned Zelda). The 1976 "Bicentennial" rep of *Death of a Salesman*, *Our Town*, and *The Front Page* was a particularly felicitous use of the form.

The creative staff was revitalized by Alan Schneider's direction of some of the decade's most important projects and his leadership of the theater during Zelda's 1973-74 sabbatical season. David Chambers, a young director who launched the Old Vat Room and directed important premieres, like *Plenty* and *A History of the American Film*, in the latter part of the decade, took over the theater for the 1978 through 1980 seasons during Zelda's second sabbatical. Douglas C. Wager became Arena's first literary manager and started his directing career at Arena with productions of Sam Shepard and Kaufman and Hart. Designer Ming Cho Lee provided some of the theater's most stunning visual creations, including *Hamlet*, *Don Juan*, and *Our Town*. And designer Karl Eigsti's career at Arena hit full stride as he created the sets for the Hong Kong tour and over forty more productions in the seventies and eighties.

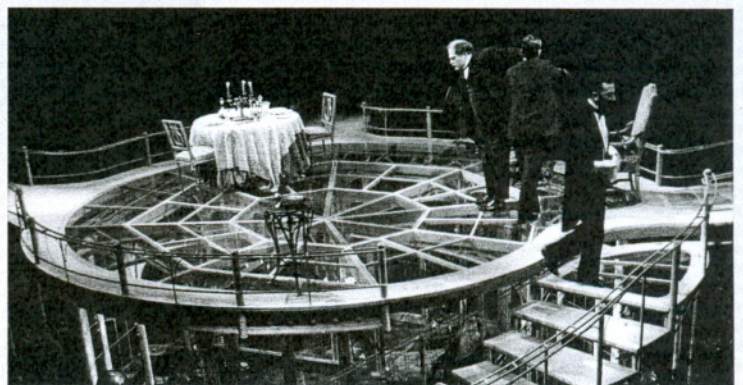
Other trends outside of the theater were to have some profound effects on the art inside. The Ford Foundation decided that, after the 1971-72 season, it would expect the Washington community to pick up some of the cost of supporting the yearly deficit. Although Arena had been playing to upwards of 90% capacity, the budget created a deficit of about \$1000 per performance. The community was solicited with a campaign organized by Tom Fichandler, asking for individual contributions in exchange for the privilege of becoming Associates of the theater. The Washington community, a notoriously difficult one for fundraising, would come through, even as costs continued to mount and season deficits began appearing.

The early seventies also brought to the city a proliferation of smaller theaters with a variety of artistic agendas, climaxed by the opening of the grandiose Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts—considerable competition. But it seemed to work to Arena's advantage. "Suddenly, with all the new theatrical faces in town," Zelda reasoned, "we were able to make up our face exactly as we wanted. We were no longer obliged to provide the full spectrum. Eclecticism is inevitably the death of identity and of art."

On the occasion of Arena's twenty-fifth birthday, Alan Schneider was asked to comment on Arena:

To my mind, there are three seminal figures in the greater American theater. First, Margo Jones, who created a theater in an Esso tank and made it all possible. Then, Tyrone Guthrie, who brought artistry and grandeur to the provinces. But he was an exotic transplant. He imported the castle fully built and dumped it down in Minneapolis. And finally, Zelda, who built the castle from the ground up, brick by brick, and made it truly American in a sociological sense.

In the seventies, this "American castle" became so prominent and so unique that it was able to export its treasures around the world to national and international acclaim.



Facing page: Tom Fichandler surveys the construction of the Kreeger Theater, which opened on January 15, 1971.

Top right: Gary Bayer, Robert Prosky, and Dianne Wiest in Alan Schneider's second production of *Our Town* at Arena.

Center right: Zelda and Alan Schneider confer during a rehearsal at Arena prior to the 1973 tour to Russia.

**THE 1970-71 SEASON**  
with the addition of the  
Kreeger Theater:

**The Night Thoreau Spent in Jail**  
by Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee  
Directed by Norman Gevanthor (A)

**Mother Courage**  
by Bertolt Brecht  
American version by George Tabori  
Directed by Gilbert Moses (A)

**The Ruling Class**  
by Peter Barnes  
Directed by David William (K)

**Jack MacGowran  
in the Works  
of Samuel Beckett**  
Adapted by Jack MacGowran with the  
approval and advice of Samuel Beckett  
Directed by Jack MacGowran (K/SP)

**Pueblo**  
by Stanley R. Greenberg  
Directed by Gene Frankel (A)

**Wipe-Out Games**  
by Eugène Ionesco  
Translated by Donald Watson  
Directed by Mel Shapiro (K)

**Awake And Sing!**  
by Clifford Odets  
Directed by Norman Gevanthor (A)

**What the Butler Saw**  
by Joe Orton  
Directed by David William (K)

**The Sign in Sidney  
Brustein's Window**  
by Lorraine Hansberry,  
Directed by Gene Lesser (A)

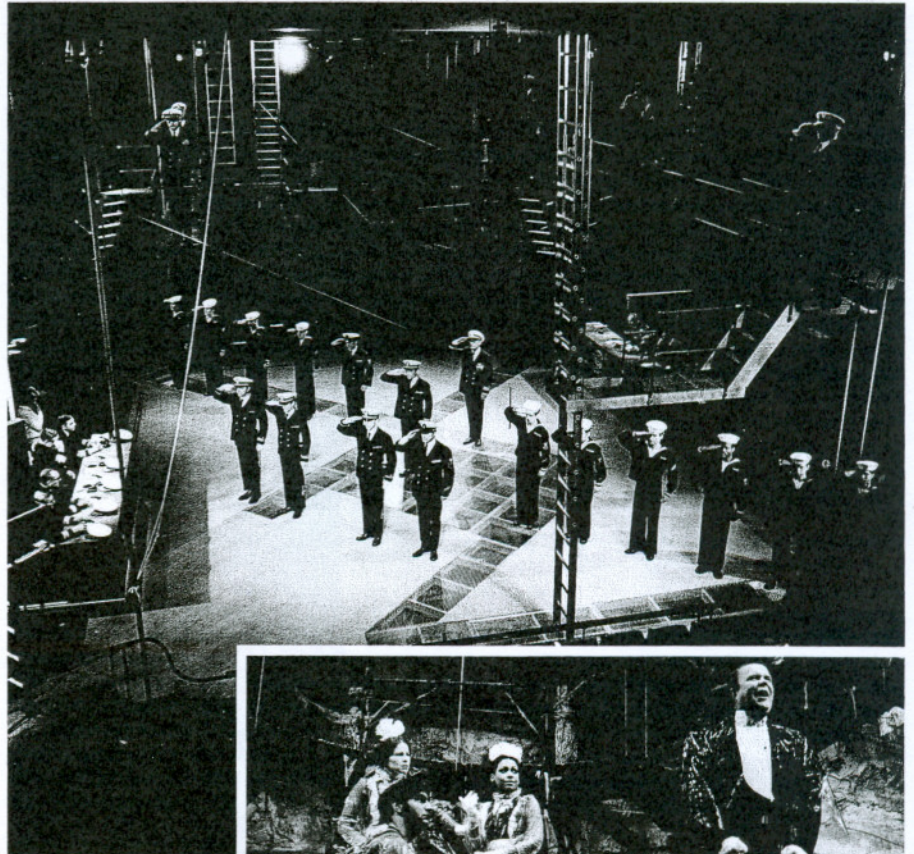
**SPOTLIGHTS**

**Pueblo**

Writer Stanley R. Greenberg spent two years researching fragments of information about the 1968 seizure of the *U.S.S. Pueblo* in Korean waters and the maltreatment of its crew. In this world premiere, galvanized by Gene Frankel's highly theatricalized production, the intricate set, masterfully executed under the leadership of longtime technical director Henry Gorfein, suggested the ship at sea, in battle, and the prison aftermath. The ship's actual commanding officer, Lloyd M. Bucher (who was played by Shepperd Strudwick) was wary of having the incident and himself portrayed on stage, but left the actual performance in tears.

**The Ruling Class**

British playwright Peter Barnes flew in for the last week of rehearsals and previews of this American premiere inaugurating the newly opened Kreeger Theater. The production featured Canadian guest artist Douglas Rain (who was the voice of HAL, the computer in *2001*) as the eccentric fourteenth Earl of Gurney who believes he is both Jesus Christ and Jack the Ripper. Barnes' challenging argument about the dual nature of moral fanaticism met with applause from the *New York Times* for its sophisticated, heightened theatrical reality and for continuing Arena's tradition of producing challenging new plays.



**Wipe-Out Games**

Translated from its original title, *Jeux de Massacre* or "Death Games," to *Wipe-Out Games* for its American premiere, Mel Shapiro's production bewildered critics but won the approval of Ionesco himself who graced the company with a backstage visit and bluntly exclaimed, "I found the direction and the performance to be excellent!" Twenty actors transformed into the 116 characters who populated this episodic tale depicting the effects of a mysterious scourge upon the populace of a nameless city. Described by one patron as "Hair without the dancing," this second production in the new Kreeger Theater firmly established it as a place for adventurous theatergoers.

Top: The cast of *Pueblo*. Middle: Ned Beatty (right) and the cast of *Wipe-Out Games*. Bottom: Douglas Rain and Eric House in *The Ruling Class*.

Arena opens its twentieth season with a production of *The Night Thoreau Spent in Jail* joining seventy-five other productions of the play scheduled across the country as part of an American Playwrights Theatre program to encourage playwrights to write for audiences beyond Broadway.

George Tabori attends rehearsals for his translation of *Mother Courage* which features his wife, Viveca Lindfors, as Courage and Jane Alexander as Kattrin. With the death of Helene Weigel, Brecht's widow and a famed interpreter of the title role, the production takes on added significance for the company. Alan Schneider writes her obituary for the *New York Times*.

The movie version of *The Great White Hope*, with original Arena co-stars James Earl Jones and Jane Alexander, opens the San Francisco Film Festival.

In a busy year for workshops and residencies, Living Stage conducts two workshops with the D.C. Department of Corrections, one for men with the D.C. Department of Corrections in Lorton, Virginia, and the other for women at the Women's House of Detention in D.C. *The Congressional Record Senate* describes Living Stage director Robert Alexander as "an inspiring and committed spokesman for the capacity and wisdom of today's children."

*Dance of Death*, which won critical acclaim at Arena during the 1969-70 season, opens off-Broadway with director Alfred Ryder, costume designer Marjorie Slaiman, and cast members Rip Torn and Viveca Lindfors repeating their Arena roles. In New York, the play closes after only eleven performances.

Ned Beatty leaves the cast of *Wipe-Out Games* to film *Deliverance*, which begins his major film career.

Zelda is named by *Harper's Bazaar* as one of the "100 Women In Touch With Our Time."

Tom Fichandler is elected president of the League of Resident Theaters (LORT).

David William's production of *What the Butler Saw* marks the first time the play is performed with Joe Orton's controversial original ending. Orton's anarchic, *deus ex machina* final image is restored, and the more racy missing part from a demolished statue of Winston Churchill (previously substituted by a cigar) is put in its, er, proper position.

Robert Hooks, co-founder of New York's Negro Ensemble Company, announces plans to open the D.C. Black Repertory Company within the First Congregational Church of Christ building complex. The company has a unique but brief history in D.C.

The season closes with the first major revival of Lorraine Hansberry's *The Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window* outside of New York.

*Awake And Sing!*, Arena's first production of a Clifford Odets play since *Golden Boy* in 1954, is revived with Robert Prosky (pictured) as the socialist grandfather, Jacob.

## THE 1971-72 SEASON

### **Pantagleize**

by Michel de Ghelderode  
Translated by George Hauger  
Directed by Gene Lesser (K)

### **Moonchildren**

by Michael Weller  
Directed by Alan Schneider (A)

### **Twelfth Night**

by William Shakespeare  
Directed by Jeff Bleckner (A)

### **The House of Blue Leaves**

by John Guare  
Directed by Norman Gevanthor (K)

### **A Conflict of Interest**

by Jay Broad  
Directed by Jerry Adler (A)

### **Uptight**

by Günter Grass  
Translated by A. Leslie Willson  
and Ralph Manheim  
Directed by Alan Schneider (K)

### **Status Quo Vadis**

by Donald Driver  
Directed by Donald Driver (A/SP)

### **Tricks**

Based on Molière's *Scapin*  
Music by Jerry Blatt  
Lyrics by Lonnie Burstein  
Book by Jon Jory  
Directed by Jon Jory (K)

## SPOTLIGHTS

### **Moonchildren**

An American expatriate whose play was first produced by London's Royal Court Theatre, Michael Weller was introduced to Arena Stage by Alan Schneider for this American premiere. A peek into the world of eight college students living and loving in the late sixties, the play brought together a cast which included Kevin Conway, Edward Herrmann, Christopher Guest, Stephen Collins, Jill Eikenberry, and James Woods. The production moved to Broadway and, although it only ran four weeks, it launched the careers of its cast and affirmed Weller as a major American voice. The play has since become a favorite of new generations of university students, which attests to its transcendent humanity.

### **Uptight**

Based on Günter Grass' novel *Local Anaesthetic*, the play used a half-dozen locales to create a cinematic exploration involving the student protest against U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War. The dislocation of the text was exploded further by Santo Loquasto's set (which included a suspended bridge used for bicycling) and a kaleidoscopic use of a music trio, sound effects, and rock music. During a preview curtain call, the company spontaneously broke into applause for the audience at having sat there and listened to the play's circular and difficult ideas with joy and recognition.



### **Pantagleize**

Michel de Ghelderode's *Pantagleize* provided the opportunity for Richard Bauer, in the title role, to distinguish himself as a leading actor with the resident company. Playing a character who unwittingly gets himself involved in leading a revolution, Bauer's *Pantagleize* was described as "Chaplinesque." Supported by Gene Lesser's direction of the action in silent-movie style, the performance crisply captured both the wit and the undertones of the playwright's world where dreams and dreamers are banished. One performance was late in starting because of a bomb scare—patrons remained skittish during the performance which featured several special effects of detonating bombs.

Top: Kevin Conway, Jill Eikenberry, and James Woods in *Moonchildren*. Middle: Richard Bauer and Macon McCalmán (center) in *Pantagleize*. Bottom: Richard Bauer and Paul Benedict in *Uptight*.

## THE 1971-72 SEASON



The Kreeger Theater and the Arena embark on their first full season together with simultaneous opening night celebrations for *Pantagleize* and the American premiere of *Moonchildren*.

Faced with a \$400,000 deficit from the 346 performances of the 1970-1971 season, the company dramatizes its financial plight with this nightly announcement: "Ladies and Gentlemen, \$1,000 has been lost in the theater tonight."

The Kennedy Center opens its first season. In contrast to predictions from the press (and within Arena) of a potential box office rivalry, Arena's PR director observes, "There's a residual benefit from all that Kennedy Center advertising. They're advertising not just their own offerings, but also the idea of going out to the theatre. That helps."

New York Shakespeare Festival director Jeff Bleckner takes a fresh look at *Twelfth Night* with a completely contemporary, abstract production featuring set and costumes by John Conklin and music by Paul Giovanni.

After a decade of performances, Robert Prosky leaves the resident acting company temporarily to join the Broadway cast of *Moonchildren* as Mr. Willis, the role he originated at Arena.

After its world premiere at Arena Stage, *A Conflict of Interest* moves to Broadway for an April 12 opening. *Show Business* comments, "This is the second play of the season that Broadway is borrowing from Washington D.C.'s famed Arena Stage."

Actors Theatre of Louisville turns Molière's comedy *The Tricks of Scapin* into a soft-rock commedia-style production called *Tricks*. Richard L. Coe of the *Washington Post* comments of the Arena production, "... the notion of one resident theater picking up a work inaugurated by another is a provocative one. With costs as they are in New York, this could be a production solution for future musicals."

Arena Stage receives the 1971 Margo Jones Award, given yearly to the regional theater that has made the most significant contribution to the dramatic art through the production of new plays.

After completing a series of lectures at the University of Texas, Zelda accepts an appointment as professor of theater at Boston University. Alan Schneider is also offered an appointment.

Zelda issues an institutional ban on the use of the word "regional" to describe what she prefers to call the resident theater movement, believing the theater doesn't represent the life or culture of a region, but is international in its scope.

*House of Blue Leaves*, written by John Guare, wins the New York Drama Critics Award for Best American Play of 1971. Its Arena production features Halo Wines in her Arena Stage debut and Gary Bayer (pictured) as Ronnie, the hero's son who wants to blow up the Pope.

## THE 1972-73 SEASON

### **I Am a Woman**

Conceived and arranged by Viveca Lindfors and Paul Austin  
Directed by Paul Austin (K/SP)

### **The Hostage**

by Brendan Behan  
Directed by Norman Gevanthor (K)

### **The Foursome**

by E.A. Whitehead  
Directed by Alan Schneider (A)

### **Our Town**

by Thornton Wilder  
Directed by Alan Schneider (A)

### **A Public Prosecutor Is Sick of It All**

by Max Frisch  
Translation by Michael Bullock  
Directed by Zelda Fichandler (K)

### **A Look at the Fifties**

Book, music and lyrics by Al Carmines  
Directed by Lawrence Kornfeld (A)

### **Enemies**

by Maxim Gorky  
English version by Kitty Hunter-Blair and Jeremy Brooks  
Directed by Alan Schneider (A)

### **One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest**

by Dale Wasserman  
Based on the novel by Ken Kesey  
Directed by Norman Gevanthor (K)

### **Raisin**

Book by Robert Nemiroff and Charlotte Zaltzberg  
Music by Judd Wolfin  
Lyrics by Robert Brittan  
Based on Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*  
Directed by Donald McKayle (A)

## SPOTLIGHTS

### **A Look at the Fifties**

After a limited run at the Judson Poets' Theater in Greenwich Village, this musical by the acknowledged leader of the off-off-Broadway theater movement came to Arena. Carmines wrote the play in reaction to the nostalgic sentimentality over the musical *Grease*, thus providing a view of the darker side of the 1950s. Turning the Arena into a thirty-six-foot basketball court with hoops at both ends, the play included a twenty-minute full-court game. Because the game was not "fixed," there were two endings to the play depending on which team won—the hometeam suburban whiz kids or the other-side-of-the-tracks gang.

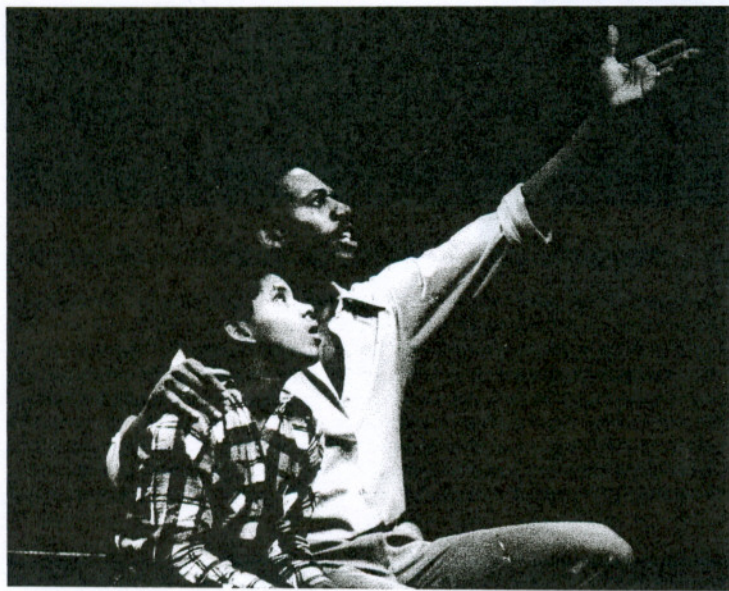
### **Raisin**

After Broadway producers had turned down the musical version of Lorraine Hansberry's play *A Raisin in the Sun* for eight years, Hansberry's tireless executor Robert Nemiroff brought the project to Arena Stage where it made theater history. Originally scheduled to close May 30, the production continued in a sold-out run through August 26 for a total of 110 performances, then the most successful show in the history of Arena Stage. The production closed just in time to make its Philadelphia try-out before moving on to an October Broadway opening, where it became the longest-running show of the 1973-74 season, garnering eight Tony Award nominations and winning for Best Musical.

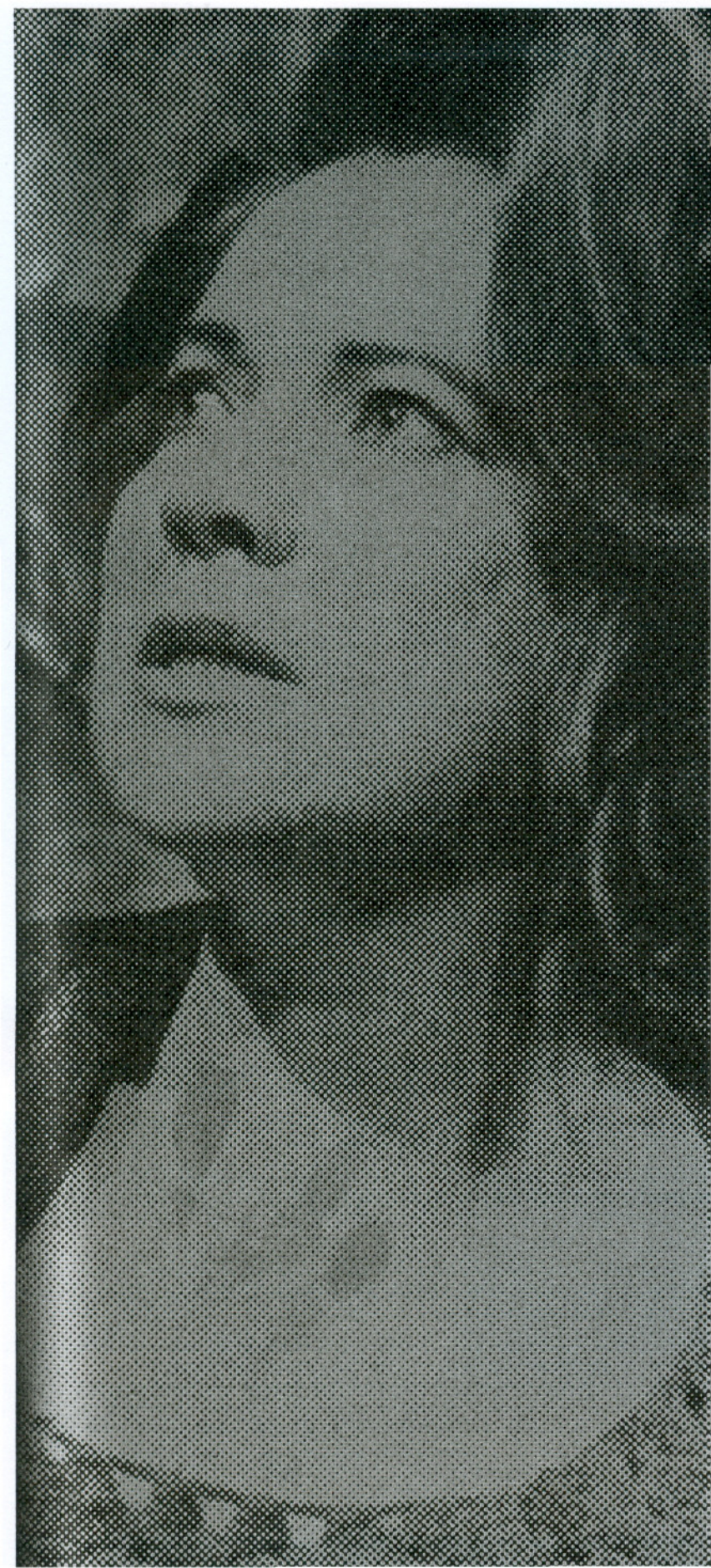


### **A Public Prosecutor Is Sick of It All**

Originally titled *Count Oederland*, Arena's American premiere of what Max Frisch called his "crime story" took the title of *A Public Prosecutor Is Sick of It All* from its first scene. Full of excitement, action and suspense, the play concerns a high-ranking government official, played by Shepperd Strudwick, who unleashes his passion against the social order by becoming the terrorist leader of a resistance movement. Reviewed as a "fascinating choice, a swirl of nightmarish ironies about order and chaos in the life of a not-so-stolid bourgeois," Zelda's production became a must-see for audiences seriously interested in theater.



## THE 1972-73 SEASON



After several years of freelancing, Alan Schneider returns to Arena Stage as associate director.

Hugh Lester, production manager since 1968, takes on the newly created position of associate producer.

Jennifer Nelson joins Living Stage as associate director.

As its pre-season attraction, Arena presents Viveca Lindfors' rallying cry to an emerging women's liberation movement, *I Am a Woman*, following each performance with an open forum addressing questions from the audience.

Living Stage travels to Boston for seven weeks. The *Boston Phoenix* says about the troupe: "Living Stage is a revolutionary theatre—the group sees children as an oppressed class, and their performances, which involve the audience from the warm-up exercise to the final rap session, are aimed at loosening all those psychotic knots which bind imagination under inhibition."

Set among twenty tons of sand, the American premiere of *The Foursome* is hailed as a "must-see" production. However, school groups are advised that the male nude scene and the underdressed girls are "not for the tender." A porno film with the same title plays downtown at the same time. If indeed patrons for either show went to see the wrong one, there is no record of any complaints.

Zelda is named by the *Washington Post Magazine* as one of its "Washingtonians of the Year."

The role of McMurphy in the newly revised version of *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* launches Stanley Anderson, who joined the company in 1972, as one of the resident company's leading actors. The production is given a three-week extension.

Zelda and Alan Schneider form part of the American delegation to the International Theatre Institute Congress in Moscow.

Zelda announces her sabbatical year, handing over the artistic reins to Alan Schneider for the 1973-1974 season.

ABC's made-for-television version of *Pueblo* receives rave reviews with Hal Holbrook as Commander Lloyd Bucher, the role originated by Shepperd Strudwick in Arena's world premiere production.

*Tricks*, the Jon Jory musical from Actors Theatre of Louisville subsequently produced by Arena Stage, opens at the Alvin Theatre on Broadway, January 9, 1973.

*The Hostage* features an authentically stunning set by John Conklin and Robert Prosky's return to play the role of Pat, hailed as one of the best performances of his career. The production breaks all box office records in the Kreeger, playing to standing-room-only audiences. Leslie Cass (*pictured*) plays Meg, who runs the lodging house where the play is set.



# THE TOUR TO RUSSIA

## ESSAY

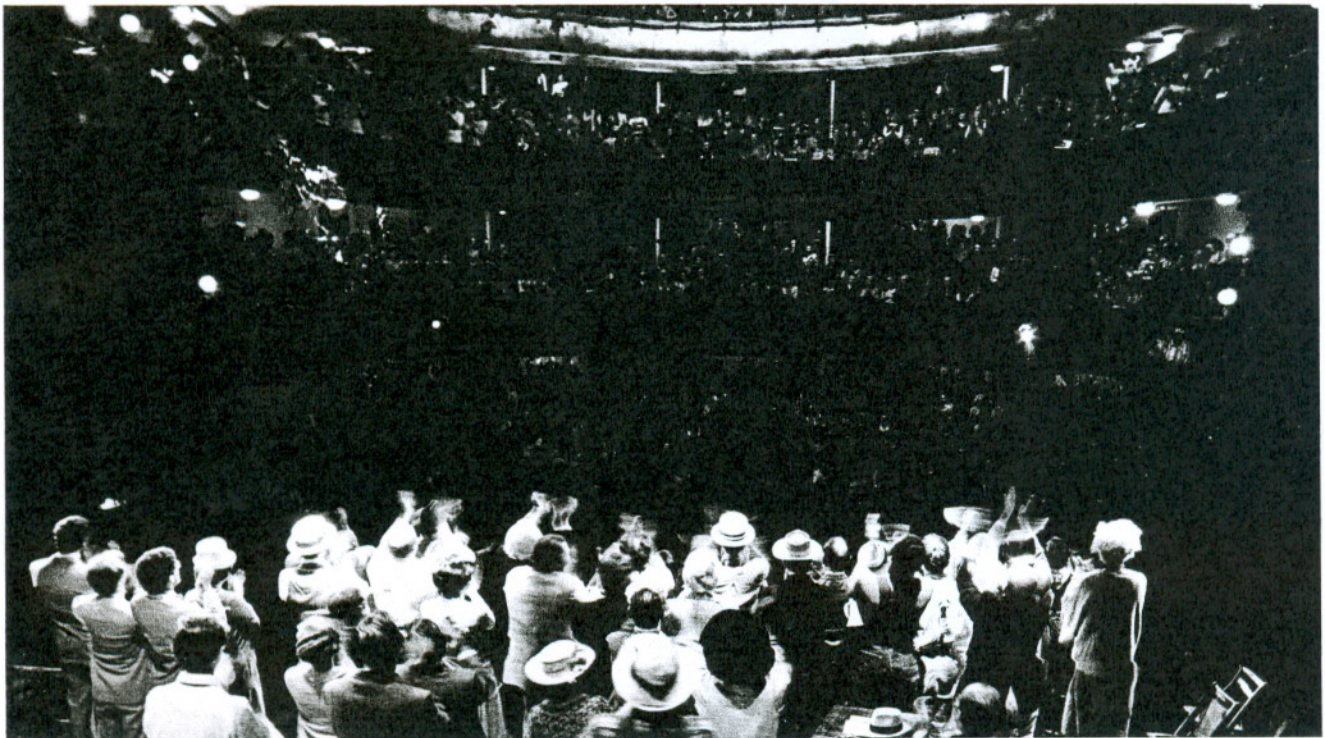
In many ways, it was like coming home. Arena has always had a strong affinity for things Russian. Some of that happened before the theater; Zelda was a Russian major at Cornell and was a Russian researcher for Military Intelligence after WWII. Likewise, director and associate Alan Schneider had been born in Russia and spoke the language at home during his childhood. The plays of Gogol, Gorky, and above all Chekhov have found a welcoming home at Arena as well. But the connection is deeper and more specific than that. It comes from the teaching and directing of Constantin Stanislavsky. As Zelda stated in a speech to the National Press Club: "The aim of the theater of Stanislavsky . . . is to know the human heart in all its complexity: to embody it, to make it visible and clear. . . . The Stanislavsky system is called by the Russians a "realistic system" since it is based on life and connects itself back to living. It is the system which Arena Stage uses, with its own particular adaptations, of course, in its work."

So it was with a particular sense of mission that Arena Stage approached its Russian tour, the first ever by an American resident theater group. The machinations and logistics behind the tour were a cross between a Le Carré novel and an Ionesco play. When Mark B. Lewis, director of the Office of Cultural Presentations for the State Department, first solicited Arena in 1972 for a possible tour, it was so confidential that he wouldn't talk to Zelda about it on the telephone. Eventually, Arena was selected out of several other theaters to tour in 1973. The State Department thought it was important to present American plays and recommended that the Soviet authorities accept Arena's production of Thornton Wilder's *Our Town* and Lawrence and Lee's *Inherit The Wind*. The Russian people were familiar with both (although the Wilder play had never been performed and they basically knew *Inherit The Wind* from the film), and, after the Ministry of Culture had seen Arena's current production of *Our Town*, they accepted the proposal on March 20, 1973.

Getting there may have been half the fun, but it certainly seems to have been twice the trouble. Schneider, who was to redirect his successful Arena production of *Our Town* for a proscenium stage, went to Russia in May to scout theaters and attend Russian performances. In a letter back to the staff, he wrote, "WE HAVE TO BE GOOD, because they ARE. . . . It all seems unreal, but I'm real." There were many frenzied memos between the State Department and the public relations staff, trying to sort out programs, press kits, posters, and buttons, all of which had to be in Russian.

A fair amount of monkey business had to do with the monkey which appeared in two scenes from *Inherit The Wind*. When Tom Fichandler asked the Russian tour organizer if there were monkeys in Russia so that they wouldn't have to transport one, his opposite number snapped back (with a straight face): "All of our monkeys are busy and booked up. Bring your own!" Eventually, Arena transported its own, one Sheila by name, although World Airways was concerned about her toilet habits. "Colonel Reiter [of World Airways] did not ask whether Sheila is toilet trained and I do not want to know myself," wrote Lewis to his staff. "If there are any more problems about flying Sheila to Moscow, or the importance of the monkey to the play, we will refer World Airways to Darwin."

Much had to be planned before the tour left, not the least of which was producing and directing the two shows to be toured. Although Schneider's play had to be restaged, Zelda had to direct *Inherit The Wind* from scratch with the Soviet tour in mind. (She was asked to send the Russians a program with the "cast in order of appearance" before she had even selected them.) As two Beckett one-acts were being performed in the Kreeger, Catholic University's Hartke Theater was offered as a site in which to present the productions which needed a proscenium stage for a "pre-tour run." Designer Ming Cho Lee scaled both sets for touring and Associate Producer Hugh Lester transferred the Russian metric measurements of the host theaters for the Arena staff



and built them to collapse into a convenient size for air travel. As *Our Town* performed two previews at Catholic and *Inherit The Wind* four previews, Mayor Washington declared September 27 Arena Stage Day in honor of the send-off.

On September 29, a World Airways jet left Dulles Airport with sixty-eight people, ten tons of scenery, costumes, and props, one monkey and a lot of excitement. The excitement from the Moscow side was so intense that no tickets were to be had for the one week engagement at the Moscow Art Theater's Filial Stage, so, at Zelda's insistence, students were let in to see the dress rehearsal, an unprecedented occurrence. As the technical staff trained their Russian counterparts, Zelda got to sit in Stanislavsky's chair and the company went sight-seeing. Opening night on October 3 of *Our Town* was a smashing success. Schneider had given Robert Prosky, who played the Stage Manager, several lines in Russian, including the closing, "You get a good rest, too. Good night." The audience (who had been listening on headphones to a flat simultaneous translation harrowingly put together in two nights by Schneider, Zelda, and a translator) responded with glee.

One attempt at *glasnost*, theater-style, almost backfired. At one point in the show, the Stage Manager asks the audience if they have any questions about the town of Grover's Corners. Len Stanton, an Arena actor who spoke Russian fluently, was planted in the balcony to ask, "Do you drink much in your town?" Terrence Currier, who played Editor Webb, pretended to ad-lib and responded, "I don't know what you'd call *much*." The Soviet audience responds to any mention of alcohol with huge laughs and this was no exception. But then a Russian lady grabbed Stanton and berated him for asking such stupid questions of their guests. But when the curtain came down, the Moscow audience evidently related to the small town in New Hampshire thousands of miles away and the actors who played its inhabitants. There was a standing ovation—no mean feat in Russia—and Dianne Wiest, who played Emily, observed tearfully, "Aren't they wonderful?" Schneider joined them for the third curtain call, a Russian custom, and the company applauded their hosts while the hosts applauded the company for a full five minutes.

The performances of *Inherit The Wind* were equally well-received. Although Zelda was concerned that the play wasn't getting laughs in dress rehearsal ("While no one wants the play to be the laugh hit of the century, still it is a witty play and wit is an important lever by which Drummond topples his opponent.") But the Soviets took this play about the Scopes monkey trial very seriously, although no one seemed to be offended by what someone said "could have been seen as a dialogue between an Orthodox Communist Party Ideologist and a liberal intellectual." The intellectual arguments seemed remote to them rather than incendiary ("Which will win, reason or folly?" was *Pravda's* take on the play) and one young student thought the play was too American. "If it's not about us, then it's not about us," he reasoned, in a sentiment not out of keeping with some of the characters in the play. The production would return to open the Arena in October on a set constructed before the tour. The company left the proscenium set in Leningrad as a gift.

After many receptions, visits, and gift-swapping, the company travelled by train to Leningrad to the Pushkin Theater where they performed eight more rapturously received evenings on a fifty-five-foot-wide stage. Everyone they met was enthusiastic, from the technicians to the cab driver who spent ten percent of his monthly salary to see the troupe. There was exchange of literature, ideas, feelings, and tears. Wiest met with several Jews and dissidents there, providing them with Hebrew literature sent by Jewish groups in Washington. "I am not as happy now as before my trip," she explained about these meetings upon her return, "but I am certainly richer for seeing those



eyes." Many friendships were made and many thoughts lingered after the Aeroflot flight arrived at Kennedy Airport on October 16.

Among them are these: Zelda mentioned receiving a book from Georgi Tovstonogov, the esteemed late director of Leningrad's renowned Gorky Theatre:

Very often in life, Tovstonogov writes, people fail to understand one another. The theater throughout its history has tried to restore these broken links and to find a language to unite the stage and auditorium. And the actor derives his enormous educative power not from his ability to give lectures or to shout or to conduct politics, but from his ability to live organically on the stage. At the end of one of the chapters he states: "We must answer for one another, know one another and learn from one another." In the sense that Tovstonogov describes the aims and capacities of theater—a sense in which I entirely and wholeheartedly concur—our trip to the Soviet Union was a resounding success.

Robert Prosky, who was moved to tears while recounting his trip there, said, "Moscow is really the perfect place for a group of actors, because the city has a long tradition of respect for the artist. We had a reception with some Soviet actors and one of them said to me: 'When an actor comes to Moscow, wherever he is from, he is home.' And he was right."

Facing page: Cast and audience give each other a standing ovation following a performance of *Inherit The Wind* at the Moscow Art Theatre.

Above, top: A curtain call for *Inherit The Wind*. From left to right, Robert Prosky, Zelda, and Dana Elcar.

Above, bottom: Mark Hammer, Glenn Taylor, Vance Sorrells, Richard Bauer, and other company members admire the Russian poster for *Our Town* outside the Moscow Art Theatre.

## THE 1973-74 SEASON

### Two by Samuel Beckett: *Krapp's Last Tape* *Not I*

by Samuel Beckett  
Directed by Alan Schneider (K)

### Our Town

by Thornton Wilder  
Directed by Alan Schneider (K)

### Inherit The Wind

by Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee  
Directed by Zelda Fichandler (A)

**Tom** by Alexander Buzo  
Directed by Alan Schneider (K)

### Three Men on a Horse

by John Cecil Holm and George Abbott  
Directed by Norman Gevanthor (A)

### The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui

by Bertolt Brecht  
Translated by Ralph Manheim  
Directed by Carl Weber (A)

### Leonce And Lena

by Georg Büchner  
English version by Eric Bentley  
Directed by Liviu Ciulei (K)

### Zalmen or The Madness of God

by Elie Wiesel  
Stage adaptation by Marion Wiesel  
Based on a translation from the French by  
Nathan Edelman  
Directed by Alan Schneider (A)

### Two Plays in Repertory:

**In Celebration**  
by David Storey

### Relatively Speaking

by Alan Ayckbourn  
Directed by John Dillon (K)

### Horatio

Play and lyrics by Ron Whyte  
Music by Mel Marvin  
Directed by Charles Haid (A)

## SPOTLIGHTS

### Leonce And Lena

An American premiere for both Büchner's ironic comedy about a royal wedding and the directorial talents of Liviu Ciulei, this production included pantomime, music, dadaesque scenery, anachronistic costumes, and simultaneous action. Ciulei conceived the entire production, including sets and costumes: "I try to capture what I have seen in many young people today—a feeling of indifference, their eyes searching to make some kind of contact with the world. It is a state of apparent sadness that is broken by explosions of energy and almost unmotivated happiness." His work with Arena was made possible by special arrangement with the Romanian government and began a long and fruitful relationship with Arena.

### Krapp's Last Tape and Not I

While the company was in the Soviet Union, these two one-acts performed by Hume Cronyn and Jessica Tandy were the pre-season highlight under the direction of Alan Schneider. Schneider had been talking with Cronyn about doing *Krapp's Last Tape* since they worked on Albee's *A Delicate Balance* in 1966, but had nothing for Tandy to do to round out the evening. After a brief phone call, they flew to Paris to meet Samuel Beckett and that evening he wrote a piece for Tandy called *Not I*, a monologue spoken by a pair of lips suspended in mid-air.



### Zalmen or The Madness of God

Inspired by a visit to Russia in 1966, Holocaust scholar and acclaimed novelist Elie Wiesel created a powerful study of the oppression of truth for this world premiere of his first play. Set in post-Stalinist Russia, an aged rabbi breaks through the suffocating wall of fear to speak out against Soviet repression of the Jews before an audience of foreign visitors attending a Yom Kippur service. The Arena Stage company sponsored a special Monday night benefit performance, raising \$9000 to aid Soviet Jewry, and WNET-TV filmed the company at its studios in New York for a two-hour condensed version to be aired on the PBS show, "Theatre In America."



Top: Max Wright (center) and the cast of *Leonce And Lena*. Middle: Joseph Wiseman in *Zalmen or The Madness of God*. Bottom: Hume Cronyn in *Krapp's Last Tape*



# THE 1973-74 SEASON

The Ford Foundation announces a four-year challenge grant totaling \$742,542 designed to help Arena build a cash reserve and develop enough community support to allow Ford to end its regular contributions to the theater.

Australian playwright Alexander Buzo is in residence for rehearsals of the American premiere of his new play, *Tom*.

Twenty Arena actors petition outside the Soviet Embassy on behalf of dancers Valery and Galina Panov who were denied exit visas to leave the Soviet Union for Israel.

Richard Bauer and Halo Wines are husband and wife on stage as well as off during the revival of the 1952 hit *Three Men on a Horse*, making this the third production of the play, one in each of Arena's three homes.

Tom Fichandler is re-elected for a second term as president of the League of Resident Theaters (LORT).

Glenda Dickerson joins the Arena staff as director of the newly formed Black Writers Project, in search of new black plays and materials from other media to be developed into play form. The Project is launched with a staged reading of Evan Walker's *East Of Jordan*.

Zelda receives the Brandeis University Creative Arts Award.

A successful match of two plays under John Dillon's seamless direction launches the Kreeger Theater's first mini-repertory with Alan Ayckbourn's *Relatively Speaking* and the American premiere of David Storey's *In Celebration*.

The O'Neill Theater Center celebrates its tenth anniversary with a statement of purpose from the newly founded American Theatre Critics Association, "American theatre is beginning once again to become a truly national institution."

During the climax of the first act of *Zalmen or The Madness of God*, leading actor Joseph Wiseman falls ill. In a desperate effort to save the evening, twenty-five-year-old stage management intern Douglas C. Wager is given a pasted-on beard, a pasted-up Talmud (containing his lines) and sent on for the second act. His only qualifications to play the aged rabbi are some acting classes and some time spent living with an Orthodox Jewish family while in graduate school at Boston University. He goes on to become a major force at Arena.

Carl Weber, former assistant to Bertolt Brecht and former director of the Berliner Ensemble, sets *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* in a sawdust-filled circus ring with a five piece band suspended on a floating platform and actors singing from a trapeze. Richard Bauer (*pictured*) plays Arturo, Brecht's vision of Hitler as a Chicago gangster.

## THE 1974-75 SEASON

### Three Plays in Repertory:

#### **Death of a Salesman**

by Arthur Miller  
Directed by Zelda Fichandler

#### **Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?**

by Edward Albee  
Directed by John Dillon

#### **The Front Page**

by Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur  
Directed by Edward Payson Call (A)

#### **Boccaccio**

Stories from *The Decameron* dramatized by Kenneth Cavander  
Music by Richard Peaslee  
Directed by Gene Lesser (K)

#### **Julius Caesar**

by William Shakespeare  
Directed by Carl Weber (A)

#### **The Last Meeting of the Knights of the White Magnolia**

by Preston Jones  
Directed by Alan Schneider (K)

#### **The Dybbuk**

by S. Ansky  
A new adaptation by John Hirsch  
Directed by Gene Lesser (A)

#### **The Ascent of Mount Fuji**

by Chingiz Aitmatov and Kaltai Mukhamedzhanov  
Translated by Nicholas Bethell  
Directed by Zelda Fichandler (K)

#### **Sizwe Banzi Is Dead and The Island**

Devised by Athol Fugard, John Kani and Winston Ntshona  
Directed by Athol Fugard (K/SP)

## SPOTLIGHTS

### The Ascent of Mount Fuji

Having seen this post-war drama during its Russian tour, Arena won the coveted right to present the Western premiere of this, the first new Soviet play produced in America since 1967. This drama about human responsibility, written and performed in the tradition of Chekhov and Gorky, explores the guilt of a group of school friends who, gathered for a reunion, discuss the fate of an absent comrade denounced during World War II. The play's title comes from a Japanese legend that says one must climb to the top of Mount Fuji and there justify the actions of one's life before God. This powerful depiction of betrayal was brought to life by an extraordinary acting company under Zelda's direction.

### Sizwe Banzi Is Dead and The Island

An extended run in the Kreeger was the first stop on the American tour for this play about the depravity and inhumanity of South Africa's apartheid system. Audiences were stunned and awakened by *Sizwe Banzi*, a Kafkaesque nightmare-comedy in which a black laborer must switch identities with a dead man to obtain an employment passbook. A companion piece, *The Island*, was also presented in the Kreeger two nights a week. Performing the plays were John Kani and Winston Ntshona, who shared a Best Actor Tony for their Broadway performances in this double-bill.



### Death of a Salesman

Robert Prosky towered as Willy Loman in Miller's modern tragedy about a man who falls through the cracks of the American Dream. Zelda's production, praised by David Richards as "the meeting of a masterpiece and a company in full possession of its artistic means," inaugurated Arena's third attempt at a three-play repertory format. Sharing the bill with *Death of a Salesman* were two other American classics, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* and *The Front Page*. Arena packed up these productions and stored them until the next season when two of them were revived and joined by *Our Town* to form an All-American Repertory in celebration of the Bicentennial.

Top, clockwise from center: Howard Witt, Vivian Nathan, Max Wright, Mark Hammer, Dianne Wiest, Leslie Cass, Halo Wines, and Richard Bauer in *The Ascent of Mount Fuji*. Middle: Howard Witt and Robert Prosky in *Death of a Salesman*. Bottom: Winston

# THE 1974-75 SEASON

Arena opens its silver anniversary season with a rotating repertory of three American classics, *Death of a Salesman*, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, and *The Front Page*.

Arena architect Harry Weese is appointed to the National Council on the Arts by President Gerald Ford.

Robert Alexander conducts a two-week Living Stage workshop in Holland with seventeen participants from seven different countries.

The National Endowment for the Arts-sponsored Second Annual Federal Design Assemblies, intended to show federal administrators what good design is, how well it works, and why it is so agreeable, is held at Arena Stage. Arena was chosen to host the assembly because it was deemed an excellent example of good, functional design.

Recognition of service: Zelda receives a special award for national theater achievement at the twenty-third annual convention of the New England Theater Conference; Zelda, Tom and the Arena company are presented the Hebrew Academy of Greater Washington's annual community award in recognition of their concern for Soviet Jewry; and the American Newspapers Women's Club names Zelda one of its five International Women of the Year.

The public television film of Arena's production of *Zalmen or The Madness of God* receives its premier screening at Carnegie Hall as part of the 1975 National Conference of the United Jewish Appeal, attended by former prime minister of Israel Golda Meir.

Zelda is one of nine artistic directors of resident theaters to receive a \$200,000 "artistic director's discretionary fund" from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. She uses the money primarily to help pay actors' salaries, allowing Arena to continue to present large-cast productions and musicals.

The National Theatre of Nigeria bursts into the Kreeger with the American premiere of its Yoruba folk musical *Oba Koso*.

Delivering Indiana University's 1975 Ralph L. Collins Memorial Lecture, Zelda stresses that, although at twenty-five years old Arena is playing to 95% capacity and has reached artistic maturity, it is on the brink of financial disaster because of the lack of funding from the federal government and private foundations.

Arena earns \$20,000 at a benefit performance of *The Ascent of Mount Fuji*. Nancy Hanks, chair of the National Endowment for the Arts, tells those in attendance, "Arena is the finest theater in this country. This theater has ascended year by year for twenty-five years. We've got to help it ascend for the next twenty-five."

*The Dybbuk*, a story of demonic possession in a synagogue, provides Dianne Wiest (pictured) with an opportunity to give a stunning performance as a young girl invaded by the spirit of a dead man.

## THE 1975-76 SEASON

### Long Day's Journey into Night

by Eugene O'Neill  
Directed by Martin Fried (K)

### An Enemy of the People

by Henrik Ibsen  
English version by John Patrick Vincent  
Directed by Zelda Fichandler (A)

### Once in a Lifetime

by Moss Hart and George S. Kaufman  
Directed by Tom Moore (A)

### Emlyn Williams as Charles

Dickens Directed by Emlyn Williams (K/SP)

### In The Process:

**Cabrona** by Cynthia Buchanan  
Directed by John Dillon

**What the Babe Said  
and Total Recall** by Martin Halpern  
Directed by David Chambers

**Madmen** by Steven Stosny  
Directed by Douglas C. Wager

**Busy Dyin'**  
by Sheila Quillen Hofstetter  
Directed by Norman Gevanthor (OVR)

**The Tot Family** by István Örkény  
Translated by Robert E. Sarlos and  
Jerry V. Pickering  
Directed by Edward Payson Call (K)

**Heartbreak House**  
by George Bernard Shaw  
Directed by John Pasquin (A)

**Waiting For Godot**  
by Samuel Beckett  
Directed by Gene Lesser (A)

**Dandelion Wine** by Ray Bradbury  
Adapted for the stage by Peter John Bailey  
Directed by Martin Fried (K)

### All-American Repertory:

#### Death of a Salesman

by Arthur Miller  
Directed by Zelda Fichandler

#### The Front Page

by Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur  
Directed by Edward Payson Call

#### Our Town

by Thornton Wilder  
Directed by Alan Schneider (A)

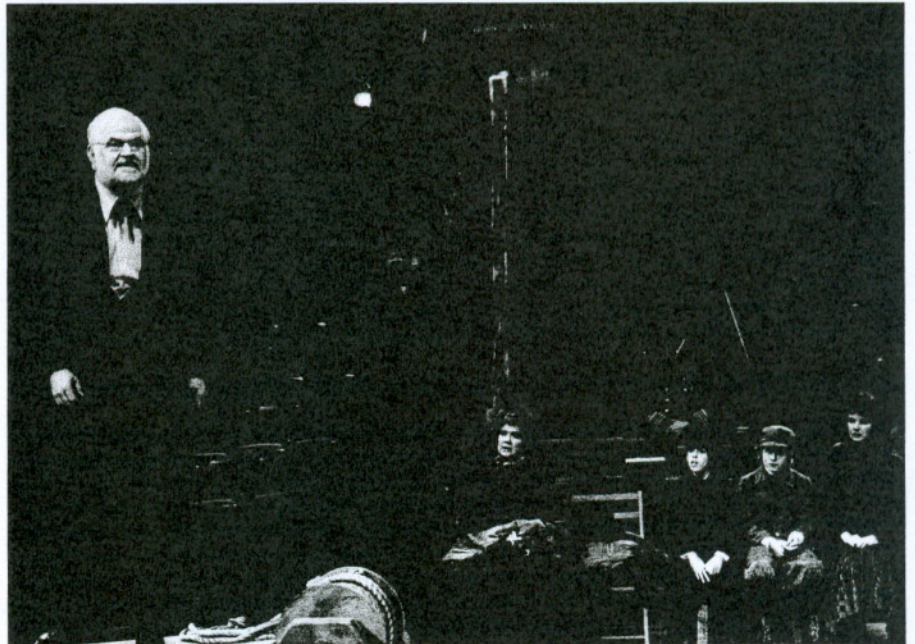
## SPOTLIGHTS

### An Enemy of the People

In the American premiere of a new translation, Zelda revived Ibsen in a lively, highly theatrical, and unorthodox production. Finding the humor within the play, the cast played it broadly and boldly and rediscovered the heart of the play's conflicts between truth and survival, while making it relevant for contemporary audiences with its references to the environment. "Environment" was the key word: the entire Arena house was transformed into a Norwegian fishing village.

### All-American Repertory

In celebration of the American Bicentennial, Zelda realized her dream in producing a rotating repertory featuring three beloved American classics—*Death of a Salesman*, *The Front Page*, and *Our Town*. All three productions were revivals of Arena favorites, plays that were part of Arena's history and the history of American theater. Robert Prosky alternated as Willy Loman and Sheriff Hartman in *The Front Page*, the role that he first played in his 1958 Arena debut. Alan Schneider restaged his classic version of *Our Town*, a play that had been a part of Arena's repertoire since 1952.




### Heartbreak House

This was Arena's second of three productions of Shaw's "fantasia in the Russian manner on English themes." The play, with its melancholy portrait of a society sailing into apocalypse, provides superb opportunities for an acting ensemble, and this proved no exception with Robert Pastene shining as the salty Captain Shotover and Dianne Wiest as the bewitching Ellie Dunn. The *Washington Post* thought it was "one of Arena's most assured productions of Shaw."

Top, l to r: Robert Prosky, Leslie Cass, Howard Witt, Jason Alexander, Chris Johnstone,

# THE 1975-76 SEASON



Tom Fichandler is honored with the Arts Management Award, a career service award for "his contributions to cultural development over the past decade."

Catholic University gives its annual President's Award for Distinguished Civic Service to Zelda.

In an unusual bonus for Washington audiences, the season holds two productions of Eugene O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey into Night*, one which opens the season in the Kreeger and another as part of the Bicentennial celebration at the Kennedy Center. David Richards of the *Washington Star* finds that the Kennedy Center's star-studded production is "numbing in all the wrong ways" while Arena's production "threw great shafts of illumination on [the play's] craggy configurations."

Living Stage conducts a two-week residency under the sponsorship of the Hartford Stage Company in Hartford, Connecticut.

*Boccaccio* heads to Broadway only to run into a musician's strike that puts the musical back on hold until a settlement is reached. It opens in early October, and while the performers are lauded, the show is not.

Two years after its Arena production, Elie Wiesel's *Zalmen or The Madness of God*, under the direction of Alan Schneider, finally reaches Broadway with Joseph Wiseman and Richard Bauer in their original roles and Marjorie Slaiman designing costumes.

The set design by John Conklin for Arena's production of *The Hostage* is displayed as part of the Contemporary Stage Design U.S.A. exhibit, organized by the International Theatre Institute and circulated by the Smithsonian.

Tom Moore, director of the Broadway hit *Grease*, directs a revival of Kaufman and Hart's *Once in a Lifetime* in the Arena as a special holiday offering, while Welsh actor Emlyn Williams' solo performance *Charles Dickens* is presented in the Kreeger.

Martin Fried, who will bring his affinity for Brecht to *Caucasian Chalk Circle* and *Galileo* in future seasons, takes on the difficult challenge of Arena's second production of *Long Day's Journey into Night* and the musical version of Ray Bradbury's *Dandelion Wine*.

With *Our Town* in the All-American Repertory at Arena and Preston Jones' *A Texas Trilogy* in the Kennedy Center's Eisenhower Theater, Alan Schneider has four productions running concurrently in Washington.

Max Wright (*pictured*), whose neurasthenic versatility made him one of Arena's most cherished character actors, plays Vladimir in the critically lauded production of *Waiting For Godot*.



# THE TONY AWARD

## ESSAY



Work in the theater, like virtue, should be its own reward. But, still, it's awfully nice to win a Tony.

In the mid-seventies, a small group of national drama critics decided to form an organization. They called themselves the American Theatre Critics Association and, by 1975, their membership grew to more than eighty newspaper and magazine writers. This was a group in which members were certainly capable of expressing their own opinions, and yet they were able to agree on one thing: that there needed to be greater national recognition of the role of the resident theater movement. Dan Sullivan, theater critic for the *Los Angeles Times*, suggested that a special Tony Award be given each year to honor a resident theater which had distinguished itself. The wide audience that watched the Tony telecast would be reminded that they had viable and important theater in their own communities.

The ATCA polled its membership and, out of 100 other possible theaters, they chose Arena Stage as their candidate to receive this first award, citing Arena as a "trailblazer" and representative of other theaters which have followed its lead. The Association took their recommendation to Alexander H. Cohen, the producer of the telecast, and he conferred with his colleagues from the League of New York Theatres and Producers (who administer the Tonys). They agreed to the award, making Arena the first theatrical institution outside of the Broadway world to be so honored. (The honor was almost revoked when, three weeks before the official announcement, news of the award was leaked by Clive Barnes to the *London Times*, but cooler heads prevailed.)

So, on the evening of April 18, 1976, in front of a national viewing audience tuned in to the thirtieth annual Tony Awards, actor Christopher Plummer went to the podium and asked "this visionary and courageous woman who began the Arena Stage to come and accept her award." Plummer went on to praise Zelda and the theater, saying they had "consistently provided the citizens of Washington with an amazingly broad spectrum of new works and American premieres of important foreign plays, balanced with a program of distinguished revivals" and that Arena was a "shining example of the excellence of the American theater."

In her acceptance speech, Zelda responded, "Thank you, Christopher Plummer, for presenting this award recognizing Arena Stage and the living art of theater across our country. I accept it in the name of my many and deep theater friends—Tom Fichandler and all the others—through whose labor and love this institution has been forged. A theater is a family—a unit that is emotional, intellectual, political, and very personal. Thank you, Arena family, for having lived these years with me, not only out of your ideals, but out of your selves. I salute you."

Another big winner that evening was *A Chorus Line*, which received nine Tony Awards. This musical, which was created at the not-for-profit New York Shakespeare Festival, went on, of course, to become Broadway's longest-running show. It seems fitting that the musical shared the limelight that evening with the longest-running show 250 miles from Broadway—and counting.

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As the Tony Award was given to Arena Stage, Dorothea Hammond and Robert Prosky were appearing as Linda and Willy Loman in Zelda's production of *Death of a Salesman*, which opened Arena's All-American Repertory in April, 1976. Hammond was in Arena's first production, *She Stoops to Conquer*, in 1950 and is the only performer to have appeared on all of Arena's stages.

# IN THE PROCESS

## ESSAY

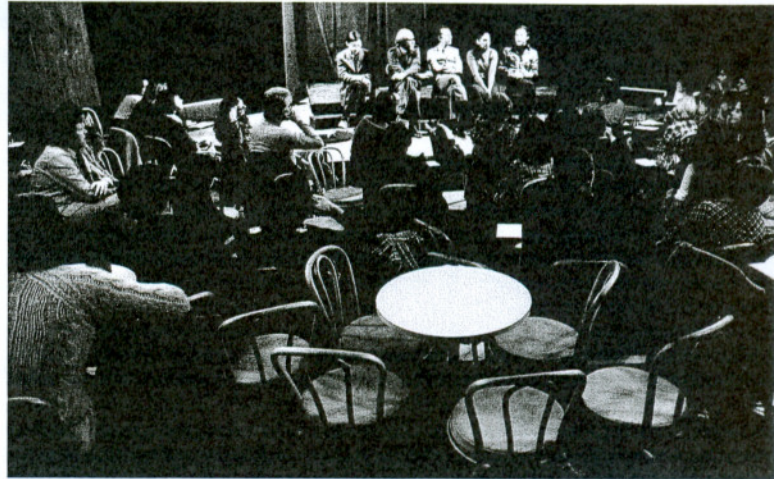
"Playwrights live in solipsistic little worlds. We stare at the walls, or out of the window, write a few words down, curse ourselves if the words don't say it, pat ourselves on the back if after ten minutes' reflection the words still have a kind of life, then go out to buy milk and curse the grocer for not recognizing that a genius has entered the store after a morning's exercise."

Playwright Anthony Giardina's words about the plight of his profession have all too often fallen on deaf ears. But in January of 1976, Arena initiated the "In The Process" series, a special program devoted first and foremost to the playwright. With the help of a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, a four-season playwrights' workshop was put together, emphasizing the writer's creative process and, in the words of "In The Process" coordinator Douglas C. Wager, showing audiences "how we think about what we do." From an officeful of stacked manuscripts, Zelda and Wager chose four plays that were not finished products, but rather, as Zelda called them, "material not yet quite ripe."

Arena's new third theater, the Old Vat Room, was converted by the Arena staff from a rehearsal room into a 180-seat cabaret space. Sitting around an open stage, with wine and cheese and comradeship readily available, the audience viewed the process with congenial informality. The concept was to take the promising manuscript and spend the money on human resources, rather than physical resources, to make the text come alive. Actors were cast from the Arena company and elsewhere, and skilled directors were chosen, so that the best people Arena could put together would be collaborating on the text. After some six months of director/playwright preparatory work, there was a two-week rehearsal process during which, according to Zelda, there was "a tremendous amount of input by the actors: the script was discussed and criticized, scenes were improvised, taped, and used by the playwright to construct new scenes. There was much give-and-take, re-doing, making and un-making, re-thinking, sharing, speaking out and talking back."

The play was then opened to an audience as a script-in-hand performance. As the projects were not open to the press to be reviewed, the audience became the only outside arbiter of taste. After every performance, the playwright and the director appeared on stage to discuss the play with the audience and listen to their comments, some of which were written down. A local paper remarked: "Arena audiences are by no means awed by the close proximity of the author. Arena Stage is the home team in Washington, and the playgoers have a strong sense of proprietorship about the actors and their work, an attitude which combines familiarity and affection with enthusiasm." For the final week of the process, which had seven to nine performances, the creative staff would incorporate the suggestions they found useful, rewrite and rehearse during the day, and often come up with a distinctly different play the following night.

The first play in the series, Cynthia Buchanan's *Cabrona*, was an atypical example of the program, but an exciting one nonetheless. Buchanan, a novelist, brought her twenty-fourth (!) draft of the play into the process, which was directed by John Dillon. To play the central part of an Arizona spinster named Opal, Buchanan brought in an old friend of hers—Lily Tomlin. For the part of her brother, Tomlin was joined by former Arena Stage company member Ned Beatty, who had recently played her husband in the film *Nashville*. Such highly recognizable personalities were in direct contrast to the process' low-profile aims, but Tomlin and Beatty worked arduously in the service of the play. The audience proved to be helpful and prescient critics—after one member suggested a specific script change at the post-show discussion, Buchanan laughed and replied, "I rewrote that scene this morning—if



In its four seasons, "In The Process" produced sixteen new plays, eight of which would receive further productions. The ten playwrights were given three weeks of full rehearsal, an apartment, and the best staff that Arena could provide. Among the writers were Richard Nelson, who went on to do several adaptations for the mainstage and became a major playwright; Janet Neipris, who also chairs the Dramatic Writing Program at New York University; and Ron Whyte, whose own physical disability gave truth to his profound and moving examinations of disability. The audience took the program to their hearts as well; within one day of the first announcement of the series, the subscription was completely sold-out. When the funding cycle had finished after three seasons, concession sales from the first three seasons provided the money to keep the series going for another year.

Arena would explore the development of new plays and new writers in other forms. The Carousel of New Plays in 1981 put three plays in repertory on the mainstage, including Whyte's *Disability: A Comedy*, which had made an earlier appearance in "In The Process." PlayLabs, which appeared in the early eighties, were staged readings of three to four plays a year. Stage Four, which made its debut in the 1987-88 season and was funded by a grant from the Ford Motor Company, concentrated its efforts on fully but economically staged productions of new plays. This gave playwrights a chance to see their work through from page to stage and also offered opportunities to workshop new projects.

There is no one solution for the care and feeding of new plays, just as there is no one kind of play. "In The Process" provided a rare and much-appreciated laboratory to examine that strange chemistry that goes into creating a written work. Anthony Giardina summed up his impressions: "I half-expected to be destroyed. I wasn't. From this I can deduce either that people will always be kind or that the play maintains a certain shape and pliability that can be clung to in my darkest moments. Since I do not for a moment believe the former, I am forced to believe the latter. That is the strength I will bring to my next production, a strength I would not have had otherwise."

Richard Nelson, Douglas C. Wager, Jeffrey Sweet, Janet Neipris, and Thomas Grienerwald at a post-performance discussion in the Old Vat Room during the first

**THE 1976-77 SEASON**  
with the addition of the  
Old Vat Room:

**Forever Yours,  
Marie-Lou**

by Michel Tremblay  
Translated by John Van Burek and  
Bill Glasco  
Directed by David Chambers  
(OVR)

**Saint Joan**

by George Bernard Shaw  
Directed by Martin Fried (A)

**Emlyn Williams' Dylan  
Thomas Growing Up**

Directed by Emlyn Williams (K/SP)

**Saturday, Sunday,**

**Monday** by Eduardo de Filippo  
English adaptation by Keith Water-  
house and Willis Hall  
Directed by Norman Gevanthor (A)

**Play**

**That Time**

**Footfalls**

by Samuel Beckett  
Directed by Alan Schneider (K)

**Streamers**

by David Rabe  
Directed by David Chambers (K)

**In The Process:**

**Singers**

by Steven Stosny  
Directed by Douglas C. Wager

**Porch**

by Jeffrey Sweet  
Directed by Thomas Gruenewald

**Scooping**

by Richard Nelson  
Directed by Douglas C. Wager

**In The Process:**

**Exhibition**

by Janet Neipris  
Directed by Thomas Gruenewald

**Living At Home**

by Anthony Giardina  
Directed by Thomas Gruenewald  
(OVR)

**The Autumn Garden**

by Lillian Hellman  
Directed by Martin Fried (A)

**Catsplay**

by István Örkény  
Adapted by Clara Gyorgyey  
Directed by Edward Payson Call (K)

**The Lower Depths**

by Maxim Gorky  
Translated by Kitty Hunter-Blair  
and Jeremy Brooks  
Directed by Liviu Ciulei (A)

**A History of the  
American Film**

by Christopher Durang  
Music by Mel Marvin  
Directed by David Chambers (K)

**SPOTLIGHTS**

**Forever Yours, Marie-Lou**

The Old Vat Room, a 180-seat cabaret space, had its first full production with the American premiere of French-Canadian playwright Michel Tremblay's absorbing drama of a loveless working-class couple and their disaffected daughters. An advocate and pioneer of native Quebecois writing, Tremblay addressed his community not as colonized French people, but as a culture with a hybrid identity. The four solitary figures whose lives co-existed but seldom coincided were directed by David Chambers in his Arena Stage debut.

**Catsplay**

The American premiere of *Catsplay* led to comparisons between the Hungarian playwright and Molière. Much of that was due to an endearing performance by Helen Burns, a leading lady with Canada's Stratford Festival, whose performance as Mrs. Orban David Richards called "a hummingbird's flight between pathos and farce, headlong passion and threadbare reality, invincible hope and the sad avowal of time's damage." The story of Mrs. Orban's obsessive love at the age of sixty proved to be of universal interest. The play went on to an acclaimed production at the Guthrie and a short run at the Manhattan Theatre Club.




**A History of the American Film**

Described by Richard Coe of the *Washington Post* as "a film junkie's dramatic exorcism and theatrical revenge," Christopher Durang's wackily idiosyncratic *A History of the American Film* ended the season at Arena in a joint world premiere with the Hartford Stage Company, Mark Taper Forum and PlayMakers Repertory Company and proceeded to break all Arena attendance records from the previous eight years. The play, under Arena director David Chambers, went on to New York where critics were not as receptive as their Washington counterparts, but the production clearly announced that Durang was a major new American playwright who dared not be ignored.

Top: Marilyn McIntyre and Laura Esterman in *Forever Yours, Marie-Lou*. Middle: The cast of *A History of the American Film*. Bottom: Helen Burns in *Catsplay*.

# THE 1976-77 SEASON



Alan Schneider takes over as head of New York's Juilliard School of Drama, succeeding John Houseman.

In a production period cited as the heaviest in the theater's history, Arena opens three plays in three separate spaces within two weeks, with another in rehearsal and two more to follow shortly.

Former Arena actor Michael Cristofer wins the Pulitzer Prize for Best Play of 1976-77 for *The Shadow Box*.

Living Stage performs *Faces Of Fascism*, based on *Weeping in the Playtime of Others: America's Incarcerated Children*, a book by Kenneth Wooden.

Betty Comden and Adolph Green bring their New York revue to the Kreeger for a benefit performance. They will appear again for a benefit in 1987, and then benefit the audience when they arrive to watch opening night of *On The Town* in 1989.

John Kani and Winston Ntshona, both seen in Athol Fugard's *Sizwe Banzi Is Dead* and *The Island* at Arena in 1975, are placed under house arrest in South Africa "because of the offensive nature of the play, which is alleged to have highly political undertones" jeopardizing their return to the U.S. for further touring of both Fugard pieces.

Arena postpones the previously announced rotating repertory of *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *Watch on the Rhine* due to the extraordinary producing demands of a rotating repertory in the midst of the fourteen-play season. Instead, Lillian Hellman's *The Autumn Garden* is produced at the same time as Baltimore's Center Stage production of Hellman's *Toys in the Attic*, creating a Hellman mini-festival in the two cities.

Alan Schneider returns to the Kreeger with a Beckett trio—*Play*, *That Time*, and *Footfalls*—the latter two receiving their American premieres.

Arena alumni bask in Hollywood fame and Oscar nominations: Ned Beatty for *Network* and Jane Alexander for *All the President's Men*.

John Dillon, who directed Arena's memorable productions of *In Celebration* and *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, is named artistic director of the Milwaukee Repertory Theater.

The opening night of the American premiere of Hungarian playwright István Örkény's *Catsplay* is attended by special guests: Oleg Yefremov, director of the Moscow Art Theatre, and Mihail Rostchin, one of the Soviet Union's leading playwrights.

After Romania's capital of Bucharest is devastated by a March 31 earthquake, a special relief benefit is staged by the cast of Arena's production of *The Lower Depths* to aid the families of Romanian theater artists, many of whom were colleagues of *Lower Depths* director Liviu Ciulei.

David Rabe's shocking depiction of military life, *Streamers*, makes its Washington debut after a triumph off-Broadway. Howard Witt (*pictured*) powerfully portrays a platoon sergeant.

## THE 1977-78 SEASON

### Nightclub Cantata

by Elizabeth Swados  
Conceived, composed and directed by Elizabeth Swados (K)

### The National Health

by Peter Nichols  
Directed by David Chambers (A)

### Starting Here, Starting Now

Lyrics by Richard Maltby, Jr.  
Music by David Shire  
Directed by Patrick Adiarte (OVR/SF)

### The Caucasian Chalk Circle

by Bertolt Brecht  
Translated by John Holmstrom  
Directed by Martin Fried (A)

### Comedians

by Trevor Griffiths  
Directed by David Chambers (K)

### A Streetcar Named Desire

by Tennessee Williams  
Directed by Marshall W. Mason (A)

### Hamlet

by William Shakespeare  
Directed by Liviu Ciulei (A)

### Gemini

by Albert Innaurato  
Directed by Douglas C. Wager (K)

### Duck Hunting

by Alexander Vampilov  
Translated by Alma H. Law  
Directed by Zelda Fichandler (A)

### In The Process:

#### Separations

by Janet Neipris  
Directed by Susan Einhorn

#### The Desert Dwellers

by Sidney Renthal  
Directed by Steven Robman

#### Trappers

by Anthony Giardina  
Directed by Douglas C. Wager (OVR)

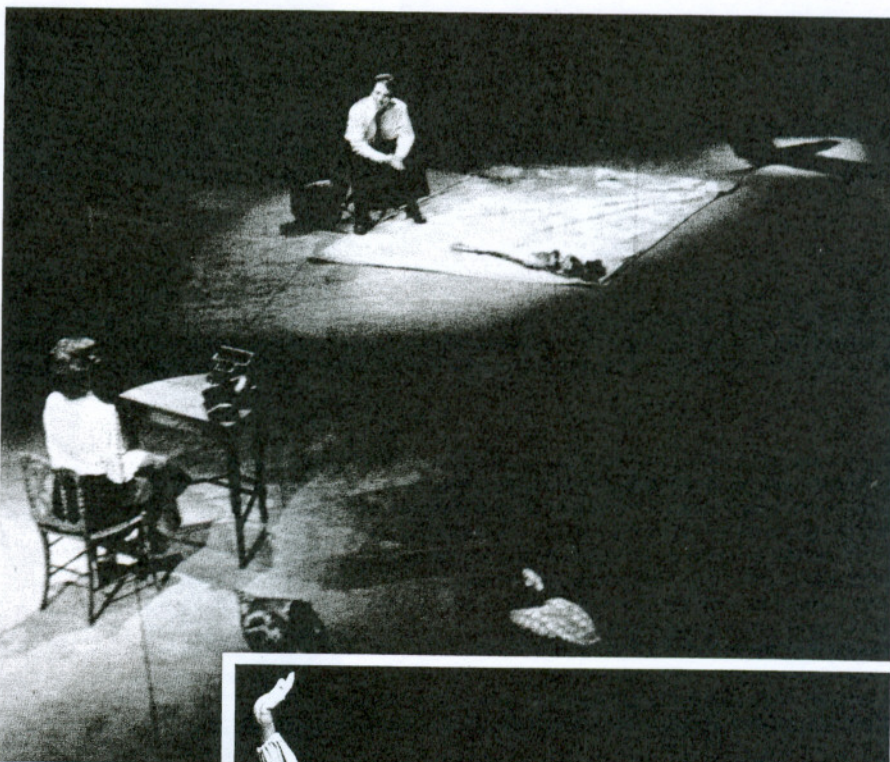
## SPOTLIGHTS

### Duck Hunting

Zelda ended the season with a return to her Russian roots with the world premiere of a new Soviet play, Alexander Vampilov's *Duck Hunting*. A haunting and often humorous look at the post-Stalinist generation, *Duck Hunting* showed American audiences how similar the search for meaning amid the dilemmas of modern life could be on the other side of the ideology gap. And the duck decoys from the production, suspended mid-air in Karl Eigsti's set, proved to be highly contested items at the Arena auction the following year.

### Hamlet

In his first English-language production of Shakespeare, Liviu Ciulei directed Arena's first and only production of *Hamlet*. Believing the play to be "about rooms and closets and whispers," Ciulei placed the play in an austere 19th-century Bismarkian court, a labyrinth of dark arches and secret byways passing underneath the Arena stage. The political machinations of a decaying society and one individual's unexpected fight against the system made for an evening referred to as "the Watergate *Hamlet*." The *New York Times* called the production "a triumph, not just of the season, but of the decade."



### Starting Here, Starting Now

In a four-month sold-out run, *Starting Here, Starting Now* proved that Arena audiences were eager for a cabaret theatrical experience. The revue, a collection of the best songs from a string of self-admitted "unrelieved flops" written over the past fifteen years by Richard Maltby, Jr. and David Shire, took the Old Vat Room by storm. The revue went on to have many other productions, ironically giving Maltby and Shire the high reputation the flop shows precluded.

Top: Stanley Anderson and Halo Wines in *Duck Hunting*. Middle: Catherine Cox, Eron Tabor, and Laura Waterbury in *Starting Here, Starting Now*. Bottom: Kristoffer Tabori in *Hamlet*.

# THE 1977-78 SEASON

Washingtonian Livingston Biddle, Jr. is appointed chairman of the NEA by President Jimmy Carter.

Douglas C. Wager, who had coordinated Arena's In The Process series, is named literary manager. Arena's first full-time literary manager, he is one of only twelve in resident theaters around the country in 1977.

Oran Sandel joins the Living Stage as an actor, dancer and singer.

Arena decides to develop Studs Terkel's *Working* for the stage. While Arena and Terkel are still in the planning stages, the book gets optioned as a musical. A musical version of the material appears instead at the Goodman Theatre in Terkel's hometown of Chicago before moving to Broadway (with costumes by Marjorie Slaiman), where it is quickly put out of work by the New York critics.

Out of four hundred applicants, Living Stage is selected by the U.S. Bureau of Education for the Handicapped to conduct a one-year demonstration program on a \$82,000 grant. Some of the work is featured on the WRC-4 telecast . . . and *Always There's a Rainbow*. About the telecast, the *Washington Star* says, "These are children who can barely talk—singing. Or would you believe others who live in wheelchairs—dancing? All the good spirits and vitality of Living Stage actors envelope the children and bring them into the magic circle of creative play-acting."

Zelda is named to the Board of the newly formed American Arts Alliance, an arts lobbying group uniting museums, symphonies, dance, opera and theater for the first time.

Celebrating twenty-year Arena acting veteran Robert Prosky's extraordinary contribution to the theater, Zelda writes to him in a public letter: "You are not only one of the leading actors in America but you have also been at the heart, have *been* the heart, and a part of the conscience, and mind, and the bridge of communication to the audience, of a new form for theater in our country."

For the play's thirtieth anniversary, Arena mounts Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire* and brings in Circle Repertory Company founder and artistic director Marshall Mason to direct.

In between performances at Wolf Trap, the 150-member Performing Arts Society of the People's Republic of China tours Arena, fascinated by the theater's facilities and its computer-controlled lighting system.

Washington audiences are treated to three different *Hamlets* in the spring of 1978. In addition to Arena's four-hour production, the Shakespeare Theater at the Folger offers a traditional *Hamlet* and New Playwrights' Theater presents a forty-five-minute spoof.

*The Caucasian Chalk Circle* gets a revival at Arena with stunning sets and costumes by Santo Loquasto and a witty performance by Terrence Currier (pictured) as the Singer.

# THE EASTERN

## EUROPEAN CONNECTION



It would be impossible for a theater devoted to the best of world literature to ignore the wealth of drama available from the Russian world—Chekhov, Gorky, Gogol, Turgenev—or the post-war absurdist writers from Eastern Europe, like Ionesco or Mrozek. Arena has presented these and many other writers on its stages and has also expanded its vision to include directors and designers from the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. This has made Arena unique among its fellow resident theaters as the pre-eminent home of Eastern European work in America.

Beyond the Russian background and tastes of Zelda and Alan Schneider, there is an attraction to this post-war literature, this fusion of deep humanity and curious abstraction, made diamond-sharp by the pressure of repression and intolerance. Zelda talks of the way that these plays—by Slawomir Mrozek, István Örkény, Alexander Vampilov—appeal to our political, theatrical, and emotional instincts: "Political repression finds release in theatrical explosion. These plays take their energy from the strength of their metaphors. They don't examine a small universe in a realistic way, they compress a very large universe and explore it in images. In production, the challenge is to release that universe theatrically. These plays have been very popular with our audiences. You can read them politically, if you choose to; if not, you can read them psychologically."

Mrozek was particularly adept at constructing political absurdities that distressed the censors in his native Poland. When Arena produced two one-acts of his, *Enchanted Night* and *The Police*, in 1970, Polish authorities prevented his visit to Washington to see the plays. He arranged for a special visa. Fed up with his country's policies, he emigrated to Paris, where in 1974 he wrote *Emigrés*, which used his first-hand knowledge of the intellectual exile to explore the clashing ideas of freedom in East and West. The play was directed at Arena in 1980 by Romanian director Liviu Ciulei, who recognized the uniqueness of the play's conflict in world history: "The play is the result of an age in which the intellectual has more information than ever before and when economic development has formed an entirely new working class. These two forces live in the same world, but have little in common. They touch as the waves and the rocks." In the summer of 1990, the new freedom in Poland allowed Mrozek to be celebrated with a fiftieth-birthday festival of over seventy of his plays, several performed by Soviet theater companies.

István Örkény was one of Hungary's leading poets and novelists when his young wife, a dramaturg in Budapest, convinced him to adapt his novels for the stage at the age of fifty-five. The American premieres of *The Tot Family* (1975), *Catsplay* (1977), and *Screenplay* (1983) all occurred at Arena, the direct result of Zelda's having heard about an Israeli production of *The Tot Family* in 1974. Örkény's chimerical whimsies and conflicts come out of what he articulated as a characteristic Hungarian attitude: "This is a small country with a very tragic history and very tragic traditions. But even so, very often we have tried to change our destiny. With rebellions, with revolutions, with whatever we could do. Even when there was really no escape, we tried to change our situation." The Arena productions contributed to Örkény's celebrity in his own land, and, after his death in 1980, his widow contacted Zelda about producing *Screenplay*, his circus-like version of his country's political trials. Zelda went to Budapest to see the play and meet with Susan Örkény and subsequently directed the Arena production.

The Arena company's tour to Russia allowed Zelda to see one of the great post-war Soviet plays, *The Ascent of Mount Fuji* by Kirghiz playwrights Chingiz Aitmatov and Kaltai Mukhamedzhanov, which Zelda directed in 1975. The Soviet production spoke directly, if subtly, about human conscience in the Stalinist era, while the Arena production, opening shortly after Watergate, forced American audiences to confront their own legacy of shattered trusts and political betrayals. Alexander Vampilov's *Duck Hunting* was performed in 1978, after Russian scholar Alma Law had piqued Zelda's interest by reading her a synopsis of the play.

Another tour to Eastern Europe produced an even more enduring event. In 1972, Alan Schneider travelled with the International Theatre Institute to Romania to see Liviu Ciulei's Bulandra Theatre. Ciulei, the artistic director there since 1963, scheduled six of his company's productions to be shown while the ITI was there, and the effect on the audience was overwhelming. Schneider invited Ciulei to Arena and he made his American debut with Büchner's challenging comedy *Leonce And Lena* in 1974. Zelda wrote to Ciulei, after preview audiences emerged baffled, "America may not be ready for you, but Arena is." For Ciulei, the change of scene was more than welcome: in 1972, he was demoted at the Bulandra by the Romanian authorities.

Ciulei has directed seven productions at Arena, a variety of work from Shakespeare to Pirandello, from Molière to Mrozek. What they all have in common is Ciulei's intense humanism, his ability to reveal the world of another culture and make it not only relevant to our modern eyes, but to make it *matter*. "You must reflect the questions of today's world in the classics, tune them to the music of the time. The audience should leave the production aware of themselves as members of society." Trained as an architect, Ciulei has designed many of his productions and has directed in many of the major theaters in this country, culminating in his bold artistic directorship of the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis from 1980 to 1986. But Arena remains a favorite home: "Zelda has created the most difficult thing in a theater," he said in his inimitable way. "She has created the air. . . . You can see her footsteps in every corridor."

In 1983, Zelda's footsteps took her to the Guthrie to see Ciulei's production of *The Three Sisters*. While there, she attended a run-through of *Tartuffe*, directed by Lucian Pintilie, a former protégé of Ciulei's and a Romanian expatriate. "I was blown out of my seat," she said. "I committed on the spot to bring Pintilie and *Tartuffe* the following year to the Arena." Indeed, the production was explosive, both at the Guthrie and the Arena, a characteristic of the director himself. Trained to be a film director, Pintilie was hired by Ciulei at the Bulandra in 1960, where his provocative career culminated in a production of *The Inspector General* which so scandalized the authorities that Ciulei was asked to step down and Pintilie moved to Paris. Pintilie's work has a darker, more incendiary political edge than Ciulei's, but there is the same close examination and deep respect for the text. Pintilie will often find a metaphor in the subtext of the play and explode it emotionally and visually. Working with his design collaborators Radu and Miruna Boruzescu, he has turned the entire Arena into a madhouse for *Tartuffe*, created a giant camera lens to separate truth from illusion in *The Wild Duck*, and brought on hobby horses and clown hats to emphasize the main characters' childishness in *The Cherry Orchard*. He maintains a healthy skepticism about the work: "*The Wild Duck* is like the most banal soap opera. I could put com-

mercials between the acts. At the same time, it is a masterpiece that examines an eternal human dilemma."

Perhaps Arena's greatest coup was in bringing over Soviet director Yuri Lyubimov for his famed production of *Crime And Punishment*. Revered among the Soviet intelligentsia and students, Lyubimov was director of Moscow's Taganka Theatre for twenty years and a highly influential director known for his stark, visual, fluid staging. In London to direct his own version of the Dostoyevsky novel in 1983, he castigated the Soviet censors for their increasing interference in his work. As a result, he was stripped of his directorship, his apartment, and his citizenship. It was this incident that, ironically, finalized plans to have him work at Arena, which had been in the works since Zelda saw him during the Russian tour of 1973.

Lyubimov was inspired to adapt the novel after he read the essay of a Moscow schoolchild which concluded: "So, Raskolnikov was right to murder the old woman. Too bad he got caught." Lyubimov said, "When I read the composition, I thought I had two choices: either I had to die right away, on the spot, or I had to put on a production that would show Dostoyevsky in the light in which he saw himself." The production at Arena was a focus of national and international attention, but perhaps the most touching aspect of it was the large group of Soviet expatriates living in the U.S. who were able to see the work of their beloved Lyubimov again. Zelda felt "we had a connection of the heart and geography. I think he agreed to make his American debut here because he felt comfortable with us and knew we were going to honor his artistic impulses." Indeed, the Arena production remains Lyubimov's only non-operatic theatrical production in America.

Audiences have taken the world exported and exploded by these writers and directors very much into their hearts. *Tartuffe*, *The Wild Duck*, Ciulei's *Six Characters*, and *Crime And Punishment* have been among Arena's most successful shows financially, as well as artistically. The recent thaw in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union has only made these cultures more interesting to Americans. Far from narrowing our view, the new freedoms allow us to come into contact with more theatrical worlds. For the 1990-91 season, Liviu Ciulei directed the English-language premiere of Viktor Slavkin's *Cerceau*, a 1985 look at contemporary Soviet society just before Gorbachev. The horizon continues to expand. As Örkény said in 1977: "For the American citizen, freedom is a standard balance of duties and rights that has existed for two hundred years. For us, freedom is a phenomenon in motion. It has a yesterday and a tomorrow. The yesterday was different and the tomorrow will be different from today."

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Facing page, top: Liviu Ciulei (right) works with Richard Bauer on a scene from his 1989 production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Facing page, middle: Yuri Lyubimov (left) during a rehearsal of his adaptation of Dostoyevsky's *Crime And Punishment*.

Facing page, bottom: Lucian Pintilie (center) directs Stanley Anderson and Shirley Knight in *The Cherry Orchard*.



THE 1978-79 SEASON

**Tales from the Vienna Woods**

by Ödön von Horváth  
Translated by Christopher Hampton  
Directed by David Chambers (A)

**The 1940s Radio Hour**

by Walton Jones  
Directed by Walton Jones (K)

In The Process:

**The Past**

by Anthony Giardina  
Directed by Douglas C. Wager

**Disability**

by Ron Melville Whyte  
Directed by Richard Russell Ramos

**Casualties**

by Carolyn Nelke  
Directed by Sheldon Larry (OVR)

**Ah, Wilderness!**

by Eugene O'Neill  
Directed by Edward Cornell (A)

**Curse of the Starving Class**

by Sam Shepard  
Directed by Douglas C. Wager (K)

**Tintypes, a Ragtime Revue**

Conceived by Mary Kyte with Mel Marvin  
and Gary Pearle  
Directed by Gary Pearle (OVR/SP)

**Loose Ends**

by Michael Weller  
Directed by Alan Schneider (A)

**Don Juan**

by Molière  
Translated by Richard Nelson  
Directed by Liviu Ciulei (A)

**Nevis Mountain Dew**

by Steve Carter  
Directed by Horacena J. Taylor (K/SP)

**Idiot's Delight**

by Robert Sherwood  
Directed by Edward Cornell (A)

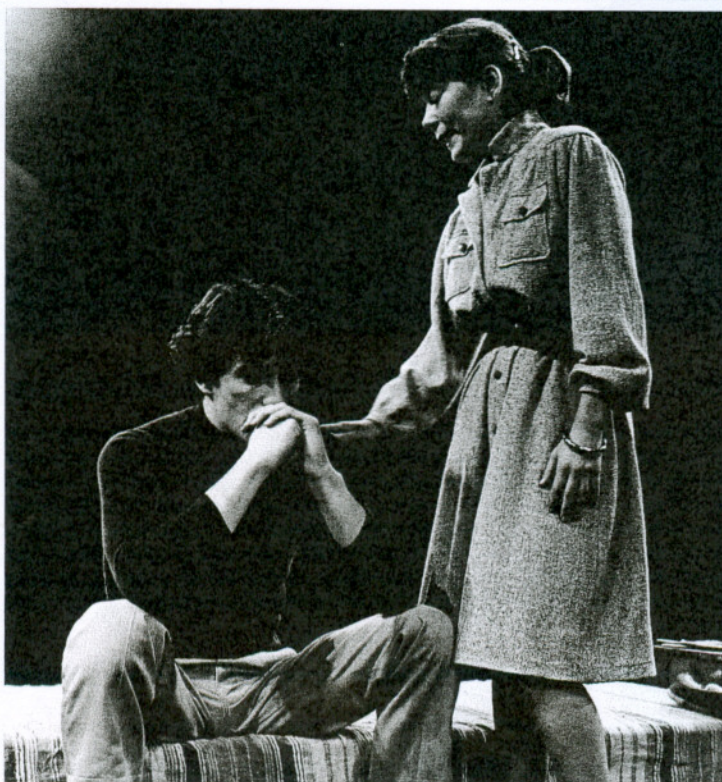
SPOTLIGHTS

**Tintypes**

Described as "a pleasantly nutty way to rummage through the past," Arena's world premiere of *Tintypes*, a spirited look at turn-of-the-century America told through dance and ragtime music, made Washington audiences rummage in Arena's basement—the Old Vat Room—for three months at capacity. Directed by Gary Pearle, *Tintypes* went on to tour resident theaters throughout the country before moving to New York and winning a Tony nomination as Best Musical. One of the versatile performers was Jerry Zaks, who was to become one of New York's most accomplished directors.

**Loose Ends**

Seven years after *Moonchildren* received its American premiere at Arena, director Alan Schneider and playwright Michael Weller reunited to stage its emotional, if not actual, sequel, *Loose Ends*. Schneider described Weller as a latter-day Chekhov detailing the sad/funny lives of the "me" generation coming of age in the land of the overly free. The cast included New York actors Kevin Kline and Roxanne Hart who subsequently performed the play at Circle in the Square in New York.



**Curse of the Starving Class**

While Douglas Wager had directed a workshop production of *Angel City* one year earlier, his spring production of *Curse of the Starving Class* was Sam Shepard's official Washington premiere. The story of a family's inability to sustain a small California avocado farm as they search for the American Dream divided critics and audiences alike over the brutality of its language and action but was uniformly applauded as a faithful interpretation of an important voice in the American theater. Arena would later stage Shepard's *Buried Child* and *A Lie of the Mind*.

Top: Carolyn Migini, Mary Catherine Wright, Jerry Zaks, Timothy Jerome, and Nedra Dixon in *Tintypes*. Middle: Stanley Anderson in *Curse of the Starving Class*. Bottom: Kevin Kline and Roxanne Hart in *Loose Ends*.

## THE 1978-79 SEASON

David Chambers begins his first season as associate producer while Zelda takes a two-year sabbatical.

Arena receives a \$300,000 Challenge Grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. Arena must meet the NEA funds with \$900,000 to be raised from corporate, foundation, and community donors. Tom Fichandler says the grant and matching donations will form a small endowment reserve to insure the theater's financial stability.

*Violent Crime: Its Causes and the Public Response*, a three-act play performed by Living Stage about the myths and facts of criminal violence, is filmed in Indianapolis as part of a colloquium sponsored by the Indiana Lawyers Commission.

Through a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, Richard Nelson joins Arena as playwright-in-residence for the season. Nelson's one-act play, *Scooping*, is presented in 1977 as part of In The Process. Nelson translates Molière's *Don Juan* for Liviu Ciulei's production. While critical reaction to the production is mixed, there is universal acclaim for Ming Cho Lee's glass-ceilinged subterranean bachelor apartment.

Zelda is quoted in the *Washington Star* as saying, "The miracle of theater is that it ever happens at all."

Arena is selected as the first American theater to perform at the Hong Kong International Arts Festival. They will tour their upcoming season productions of Arthur Miller's *After The Fall* and Kaufman and Hart's *You Can't Take It with You*.

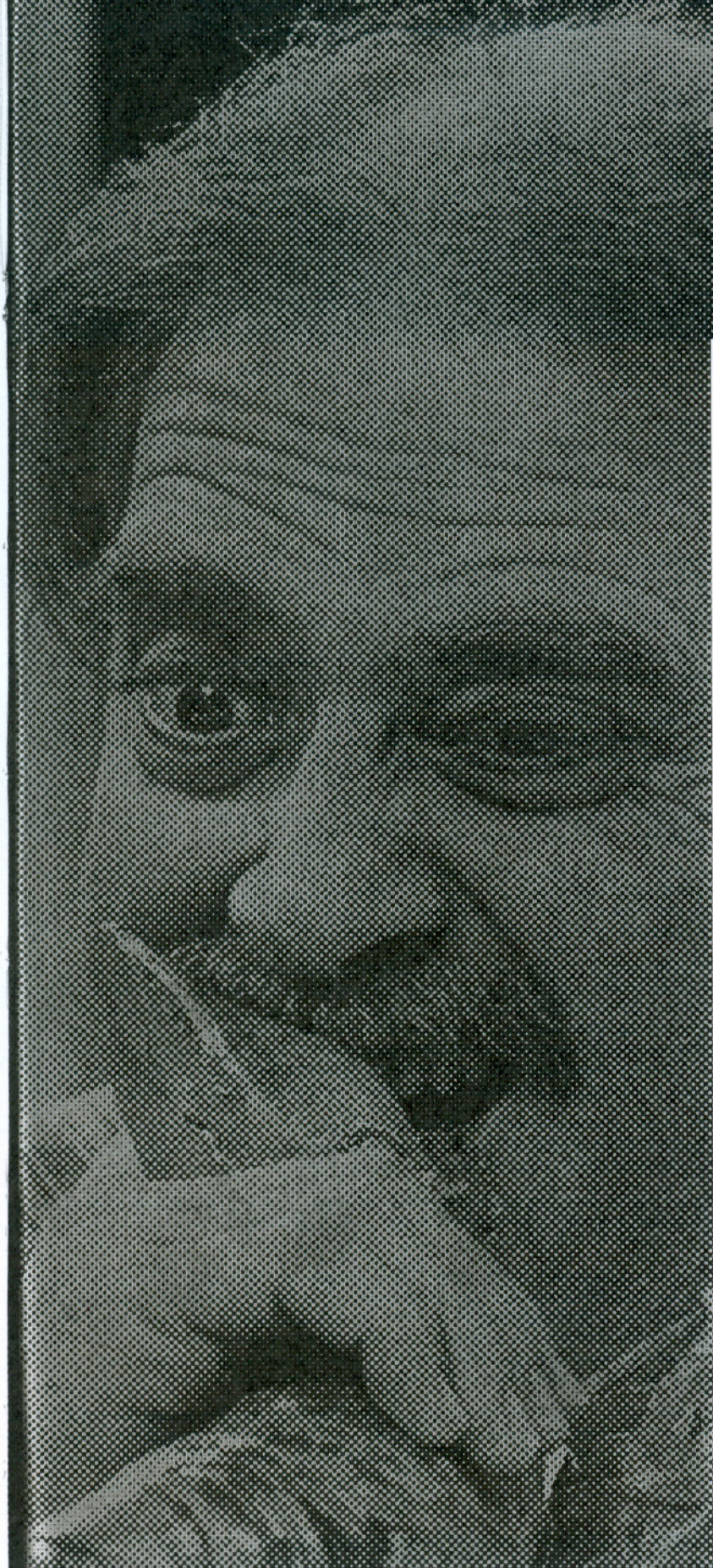
Walton Jones, a native of Falls Church, Virginia, chooses Arena over Broadway for the first non-Yale production of his *The 1940s Radio Hour*. Extended through the holidays, this affectionate look at radio's Golden Age is invited to make a special holiday appearance at the White House Christmas party. Later in the month, Vice President and Mrs. Mondale celebrate their twenty-third wedding anniversary by attending a Kreeger performance of the play.

On their first tour of the western hemisphere, Liviu Ciulei's Bulandra Theater Company performs Paul Foster's *Elizabeth I* and Caragiale's *The Lost Letter* for two days in June in the Kreeger.

Living Stage travels to Arizona to conduct workshops for deaf children. The project is sponsored by the Arizona Commission on the Arts and Humanities.

Arena joins forces with the National Symphony and other Washington arts institutions to form the D.C. Consortium to lobby the Hill for funding separate from the Humanities and Arts Endowment monies. The Consortium cites the lack of major private industry and state and county government as the reason behind lobbying Congress for additional funds.

O'Neill's only comedy, *Ah, Wilderness!*, is an ensemble effort at Arena that gives company member Mark Hammer (pictured) a chance to shine as the poignantly playful Uncle Sid.



THE 1979-80 SEASON

**The Winter's Tale**

by William Shakespeare  
Directed by David Chambers (A)

**Teibele and Her Demon**

by Isaac Bashevis Singer and Eve Friedman  
Music composed by Richard Peaslee  
Directed by Stephen Kanee (K)

**Design for Living**

by Noel Coward  
Directed by Gary Pearle (A)

**You Can't Take It with You**

by George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart  
Directed by Douglas C. Wager (K)

**After The Fall**

by Arthur Miller  
Directed by Zelda Fichandler (A)

**Billy Bishop Goes to War**

Written and composed by John Gray in  
collaboration with Eric Peterson  
Directed by John Gray (K)

**Plenty**

by David Hare  
Directed by David Chambers (A)

**Emigrés**

by Slawomir Mrozek  
Translated by Maciej and Theresa Wrona  
with Robert Holman  
Directed by Liviu Ciulei (K)

**An American Tragedy**

by Anthony Giardina  
Based upon the novel by Theodore Dreiser  
Directed by Michael Lessac (A)

**Mummenschantz**

The Swiss Mime-Mask Theater Production  
(K/SP)

SPOTLIGHTS

**Emigrés**

In the American premiere of Polish playwright Slawomir Mrozek's *Emigrés*, the problems of Eastern Europe were confronted with his characteristic wit in this tour-de-force, two-and-a-half-hour, two-handed talkathon. Richard Bauer's intellectual political exile and Stanley Anderson's plodding worker who seeks his fortune abroad meet and prove two people from the same country can talk endlessly but may never understand each other. Director Liviu Ciulei called it "one of the most important plays of the culture of our century. It could not have appeared in another century."

**Plenty**


David Hare's modern British political drama, *Plenty*, raised plenty of eyebrows in its American premiere. The play traces Susan Traherne's journey from World War II resistance fighter to her disillusionment with present-day England and the enervation of her political and personal happiness. Its shocking commentary on the hypocrisy of the world caused as much a stir as the production's on-stage nudity, and Blair Brown (playing the role later performed by Kate Nelligan on Broadway and Meryl Streep in the film) scored a triumph, beginning her professional and personal relationship with Hare.



**You Can't Take It with You/After The Fall**

Arena made history by being the first American theater to perform at the Hong Kong International Arts Festival. The troupe toured two uniquely American productions—a third revival of *You Can't Take It with You* and Arthur Miller's harrowing personal drama, *After The Fall*. Upon their return, Zelda and company opened *After The Fall* in the Arena within a matter of days to the Washington critics. Stanley Anderson electrified audiences with his searing portrayal of the autobiographical Quentin, and Linda Lee Johnson made an impressive Arena debut as Maggie, his self-destructive movie-star wife.

Top: Richard Bauer and Stanley Anderson in *Emigrés*. Middle: Stanley Anderson and Linda Lee Johnson in *After The Fall*. Bottom: Blair Brown and John Glover in *Plenty*.



Arena launches a major new handicapped accessibility program with signed performances for the hearing impaired (beginning with *The Winter's Tale*) as well as forming the Arena Stage Handicap Access Committee to address additional accessibility issues.

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation presents Arena with a \$125,000 grant to defer the costs of producing the classics which will help the theater "avoid the five characters, one-set syndrome," says Executive Director Tom Fichandler.

Joseph Papp comes to D.C. to co-produce *The Art of Dining* with Roger Stevens at the Kennedy Center. He subsequently announces plans to begin looking for performance space or some sort of arrangement that will allow him to produce in Washington. The plan never comes to fruition.

After sharing the increasingly difficult job of fundraising between them, Tom and Zelda name Elspeth Udvarhelyi as Arena's first director of development.

David Chambers completes his second season as associate producer. He later becomes artistic director of The Repertory Theatre at St. Louis and joins the faculty of the Yale School of Drama.

Living Stage conducts its new program for juvenile offenders in which youths on probation from the D.C. Superior Court work with the troupe twice a week in four-hour sessions. Living Stage director Robert Alexander says about this program, "We believe in these people's lives. They've been pushed around and been brought up in a society that doesn't care too much about them. We let them know by what we do and what we say that we do care about them."

Arena hits the big time when it turns up as an answer in the *New York Times* crossword puzzle.

Brought up from the ranks of In The Process playwrights, Anthony Giardina adapts Theodore Dreiser's *An American Tragedy* for the closing production of the season in the Arena. While lauded for maintaining the integrity of the novel, critics felt the dramatic adaptation ultimately failed to match the impact of the novel and film.

Since writer Isaac Bashevis Singer's schedule only permitted him to write on Saturdays, his and co-writer Eve Friedman's *Tiebele and Her Demon* took three years to complete. But after a successful production at the Guthrie, it is brought to Arena prior to its Broadway run.

Halo Wines (pictured) displays her particular knack for comedy and lends a farcical *hauteur* to the proceedings as Mrs. Kirby in *You Can't Take It with You*.