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Murray Directs

"Brustein" Opens

The late Lorraine Hansberry's "The Sign In Sidney Brustein's Window," opened at the School of the Arts on November 6 and will run through November 19 in the school's Drama Theatre.

The production is under the direction of Robert Murray, a resident director and instructor in the NCSA School of Drama. The set was designed by John Sneden, Dean of the Department of Design and Technical Production, with lighting by Ward Resur, Staff Designer, and costumes by Linda Margosian, a costume major in the School of Design.

"The Sign In Sidney Brustein's Window," (the title refers to an election campaign poster), was a vehicle for Miss Hansberry to explore her most passionate concern: political corruptions, commitment, racism, marriage and personal disillusionment. The plot is secondary to the development of such characters as Brustein and his wife, a prostitute contemplating who sells out to the machine, a homosexual writer and disillusioned woman trapped in a loveless marriage.

Cast in these varied roles are Andy Wood and Steve Bordner, who will alternate as Sidney; Joyce Reehling, as his ambitious wife; and Ron Dortch, as the sensitive Black man who is in love with the prostitute, played by Berlinda Tolbert. Also in the cast are Stanley Bernstein, Kurt Yaghjian, Christine Rosania, Jim Stubbs, William Jaegar and John Dornberger.

"The Sign In Sidney Brustein's Window" was premiered in New York during the 1964-65 season, and featured Rita Moreno and Gabriel Dell in the leading roles. It is set in the Greenwich Village apartment of Sidney Brustein, a Jewish intellectual, who according to the author, is "poised in hesitation before the flames of involvement." He is married to a volatile Gentile who is struggling between the role she is playing as Brustein's country girl wife and her own desire to become an actress.

The impact of the play is the change which takes place in these two central characters as they lose the innocence about life with which they have protected themselves and, in their numbness, reached out for meaning and commitment.

Miss Hansberry, a gifted Black writer, died of cancer at 34, shortly before the Broadway premiere of "The Sign In Sidney Brustein's Window." She herself was married to a Jew, Robert Nemiroff, who produced the play together with Durt D'Lugoff and J.I. Jahre. The play drew mixed critical notices, but a group of theatrical people, clergy and others were so impressed by the work that they formed a committee and raised money to keep it going for about three months. It is currently being revived in some regional theaters, including plans for a June Production by the Arena Stage in Washington, D.C.

Murray said he selected this particular work because he wanted to use a contemporary American play with a sufficient number of sizeable and challenging roles to provide an opportunity for each of the ten students in the department's pre-professional program. He further said that in "Sidney Brustein" there is length and depth and dimension to every character.

Discussing the casting of the play, Murray said that any student actor cast by him in any play is given the role for one reason; "It is a part that helps him grow unlike anything he's ever done before."

Although Miss Hansberry chose to deal with several social problems in this play, she has a central theme, which Murray feels she summed up in a quotation from her earlier prize-winning play, "A Raisin in the Sun":

"When you start measuring somebody, measure him right, child, measure him right. Make sure you done take into account what hills and valleys he come through before he got to wherever he is."



Photo by Beck

Freundlich Class

Irwin Freundlich, head of the NCSA piano department and Juilliard faculty member, gave a master class Tuesday evening, Oct. 27, in the NCSA Main Auditorium. This was the first Freundlich class of the year, and others will follow about once a month. The classes are held in the main auditorium on Tuesday nights, and are open to the public. Beginning at 7:30, they last approximately two hours.

Last week's program was as follows: Cynthia Wechen performed Beethoven's "C Major Concerto"; Alan Zingale, the Liszt-Busout "La Caupauella"; Bruce Moss, the Chopin "Bacchante"; and Leslie Spatz, the Mendelssohn G Minor Concerto.

CONVOCAION

Florence Jeanne Goodman, California poet, teacher and critic, will read her own lyric poetry at the Wednesday convocation this week at 1:30 in the Student Commons. Mrs. Goodman's poetry has appeared in a variety of journals over the past twenty years and has been included in readings at Harvard and UCLA.

Orchestra tours

The Piedmont Orchestra began its fall tour of 12 concerts in Charlottesville, Va., on November 4. The tour lasts for two weeks.

The orchestra, which is composed largely of NCSA faculty members, was made possible by a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation. The grant was intended to establish a chamber orchestra of professional musicians in the Southeast, both as an incentive to such musicians to settle in this area and also to stimulate talented students to apply for study with them at the School of the Arts.

For this tour, Roger Hall, in his capacity as President of the Foundation, arranged for Leon Fleisher, the prize-winning pianist, to serve as guest conductor.

Fleisher began his musical career as a child prodigy, making his piano debut at age seven in San Francisco. He was accepted as a pupil by Artur Schnabel when he was 10 and studied both in this country and in Italy before beginning his concert career at 14.

He was the first American to win a major European music competition when, at 23, he won first prize in the Queen Elizabeth of Belgium International Music Competition.

After an undiagnosed ailment robbed him of the use of his right hand in 1965, Fleisher mastered the unusual piano repertoire written for the left hand alone. Most of this music was commissioned by the pianist Paul Wittgenstein who had lost his right arm in World War I.

Fleisher was on campus last week for rehearsals and reported that he was very happy to be working with the Piedmont Orchestra, a feeling that was mutual.

Viewpoint

A Techie's First Tour

By KEVIN DREYER

The first dance tour this year traveled to seven North Carolina towns over the midsemester break. "Workout," "Flick-Flack" and "Poeme" were performed in six public schools and one college. The following story is the view from the wings or the back of the truck.



"Joseph," just back from Bethlehem, plans his next trip.

Photo By Dreyer

A tour is an interesting paradox. It can be fun and enjoyable or, if you let it get the better of you, it can be a real terror.

When I first found out that I was going on tour, I was very excited. I figured it was the best thing in the world, but that's not how other people felt. Everyone I talked to was of the same negative opinion.

"You'll be dead on your feet by the time you get back." "Don't delude yourself into thinking that it's going to be fun, because...well, you'll find out soon enough." "Have you said good-bye to your parents, because it may be the last time you'll see them." Not one person had a nice word and not one person suggested it might be fun. The talk was all of no sleep, no food and getting hassled.

One of the first things I was taught was that I should get into the habit of carrying a crescent wrench in my back pocket: it serves as protection, but it is not a concealed weapon. We were urged to buy heavy tools—not necessarily to do a good job, but rather for protection.

But in spite of the intensive preparation and the extreme paranoia of some of the crew and dancers, we never once got hassled by local grits. One crew member gave me a monkey wrench for a particular job and told me to keep it when I was through with it.

"Take it," he said, "I know that when 20 grits stand around staring at you, they aren't just curious." But as it happened, they were just that: curious.

Another blanket statement that was made was that we would get lost at least once a day and that we would often be stopped by small town police. Well, we did get lost just about every day out—but the small town police left us alone.

We were stopped once by a state policeman for failing to stop at a weighing station. Then he discovered that our U-Haul van had no inspection sticker. It cost us about an hour of time and \$15, but even the most paranoid of the crew had to agree that "he was a pretty nice pig."

At the end of the tour, I was tired and I think my stomach may have shrunk, but I was certainly not dead. I was back from work every night about 10:00 and did not have to be back until 6:30 the next morning. We had the option of getting a full breakfast and one other meal a day; some days we even had three meals! Any one who wanted to badly enough could have been both well rested and well fed!

But a tour isn't just not sleeping, not eating and getting hassled! It's the late hours setting up. It's the poor facilities. It's adaptability. It's the gratification of an appreciative audience.

There is fun and frustration in setting up and performing a show in a gymnasium. It is fun because it is a challenge and frustrating for the same reason. The first couple of times, it is fun to figure out how to mask windows with nothing suitable provided or to watch mice run across the dressing room floor.

Then there are the ice fights, the midnight parties and the late night shuffle board games. Then there was the arrival of the midnight raiders who threatened to break into the truck, if we didn't give them something. We sent them off with an empty brandy bottle. Then there was the time that one of the dancers got wrapped up in a back drop on one of the smaller stages.

It's all over now, but the spirit lives on. We'll tell the stories of this tour until everyone knows them by heart or until we get some better ones to tell. And until I have some better ones myself, all I can say to sum it up is "I hope I go on Nutcracker."