



Carolina's Playmakers Theatre

Many Ghosts Are Walking The University's Theater

By PETE IVEY

Ghosts of long ago stalk the stage and aisles of the Playmakers Theater in Chapel Hill. And it is not only owing to the dramatic tradition of the building, brought on by the thespians who have articulated behind its footlights.

The home of the Carolina Playmakers is in a building that is one of the oldest on the campus. It has in its years housed horses from General Sherman's Army, served as a dance hall for Carolina students, was the University Library for years. It also has been a bath house, a central place for shower baths in those early days before dormitories were equipped with such amenities. It has been the University's Law School building, and once chemistry labs were in the basement.

The Playmaker Theater's real name is Smith Building. It is named for Governor Benjamin Smith, who donated 20,000 acres of land in Tennessee to the University—some of the money to be used for a new building.

The building was first a dance hall. A short time later it was converted into a library. During the Civil War, Sherman's Army

occupied Chapel Hill. Chancellor Emeritus Robert House tells this story:

"A squad of Michigan cavalry, stationed in the village, found that the book stacks in the library made very good stalls for the horses.

"Ever since that time, Michigan horses have been noted for their intelligence, and Carolina students for their horse sense."

The front of the Playmakers Building has a most unique cornice on the tall columns. These are corn stalks, and were fashioned by a convict who labored in this artistic venture for the pay of ten cents an hour.

It was in 1925 that the Carolina Playmakers, on the upsurge under the influence of Professor Frederick H. Koch, took over the Smith Building, and it has popularly been known as the Playmakers Building since that time. The Carnegie Corporation gave \$13,000 and the Legislature \$25,000 for renovations.

The theater was designed in 1850 by architect Alexander Jackson Davis of New York. Archibald Henderson describes the building this way:

"Davis placed upon the cam-

pus its most beautiful building, Smith Hall, a structure of impeccable proportions, the perfect portico with classic Corinthian pillars showing a delightful variation from the Hellenic norm in the capitals of wheat and corn plants, with foliage of grace and beauty, symbolic of the native American landscape."

In the 300 years since North Carolina's beginning, this building, Smith Hall, stands as one of the lovely architectural structures of North Carolina, one of the half dozen or so striking contributions to American architectural genius.

So the ghosts that walk through Smith Hall are not only the playactors speaking the speech trippingly on the tongue, but also lawyers debating their legal points, chemistry professors in white coats with crucibles, librarians and books, students dancing to a light Virginia Reel, boys yelling in the central campus showers and singing in harmony with bathers and singers. Michigan horses, who were transient guests, and the generations of Carolina Playmakers whose exploits have been known on stage, screen, and the TV camera.

Playmakers To Launch New Season

"My Fair Lady," Lerner and Loewe's great musical comedy hit, will be the opening production of the fall semester as The Carolina Playmakers launch their 47th season on Oct. 23.

The Playmakers production of the lavish musical, which starred Rex Harrison and Julie Andrews on Broadway, will be presented in Memorial Hall on Oct. 23, 24, and 25. The opening night performance will be reserved for UNC students, their dates, and spouses, and season tickets for students are now on sale for \$4.00.

Other productions scheduled for the 1964-65 season are: "Hamlet," Dec. 8-13; "Oh Dad, Poor Dad, Mamma's Hung You In The Closet And I'm Feelin' So Sad," Feb. 23-28; "Billy Budd," March 30-Apr. 4; and "A Streetcar Named Desire," May 4-9.

The Student Night performances, a popular innovation which began last year, enable UNC students to attend the opening night performance of each of these five plays for half price. These Student Season Tickets are now on sale at the following locations: The Playmakers Business Office, 214 Abernethy Hall (next to the Scuttlebutt); Graham Memorial Information Desk; and Y-Court. Only 330 are available.

Major 'Y' To Lead Band

By FRANK WELSH

"Major Y" brings new talent and glamor and basic musical potential to the rejuvenated UNC Band of 1964. The new band director is known in national military circles as "Mister Music Man."

He is John F. Yesulaitis who came here this month as a faculty member of the Music Department and director of bands. Called "Major Y", for short, in the U.S. Air Force where he was associate director of the band in Washington, D. C., the new band director is now retired from the Air Force and entering a new career in collegiate music, in both instruction and performance.

In his 16 years conducting the top Air Force musical ensembles in Washington, Yesulaitis performed before heads of state, including France's DeGaulle, England's Queen Elizabeth, and Russia's Khrushchev.

Yesulaitis' 20 years of active service in military forces included duties as varied as flushing snipers, out of palm trees on Pacific islands in World War II and conducting an orchestra for Royal garden parties at England's Buckingham Palace. His honors range from the Bronze Star, presented for meritorious service under enemy fire, to a special commendation from the U. S. State Department for his personal efforts in organizing and presenting entertainment for State Dinners.

As a conductor, music arranger, composer, script writer, and radio and television producer, Yesulaitis has worked with at least 30 film stars, and his music has been used in more than 100 movies. He has appeared on stage with such personalities as Irene Dunne, Helen Hayes, Jesse Lasky, Lauritz Melchior, Marge and Gower Champion and Jane Powell.

He directed an Air Force radio program, Serenade in Blue, which was broadcast weekly on more than 2,500 American radio stations, for twelve years. "This program has also offered the first American-style music heard by millions in other countries," Yesulaitis said.

Yesulaitis began his military

career in 1936 as a French horn player with the U.S. Army Band. He was promoted to Warrant Officer Bandleader in 1942 and was sent to the Pacific Theatre of Operations to conduct bands for the 7th and 77th Infantry Divisions. He took part in beachhead landings in the Pacific, including combat duty on Guam, Leyte, Okinawa, and in



JOHN YESULAITIS

the Philippines. He was with occupation forces in Hokkaido, Japan, and in Korea.

He joined the Air Force band in Washington in early 1947 and began his series of appearances around the world. He has appeared in the Olympic Stadium in Berlin before an audience of more than 120,000. His appearance conducting the Air Force Symphony Orchestra at Bodo, Norway, marked the first symphonic concert above the Arctic Circle by an American orchestra.

A native of Coaldale, Pa., Yesulaitis received his early musical education at the Ernest Williams School of Music, then an affiliate of New York University, and the U.S. Army School of Music. He received a B.S. degree in Music Education from the University of Maryland in 1954.

After doing graduate work in composition at the Catholic University of America, he was awarded a Master of Music degree. He assumes band duties here immediately, succeeding Herbert Fred who has joined the music faculty at UNC in Greensboro.

Tryouts Scheduled

Tryouts for "My Fair Lady," first production of the Carolina Playmakers fall season will be held tomorrow night at 7:30; Sunday, 4 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.; Monday, 4 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

Tryouts, all of which will be held in Memorial Hall, will be conducted by Thomas M. Patterson, director of the play, Foster Fitz-Simon, choreographer, and Charles Horton, musical director.

Those trying out for singing roles should bring music for a song which they are familiar with, and those trying out for speaking roles will be asked to read a section of the script of the play.

Patterson announced, however, that it is not necessary to be familiar with the script in order to audition. The cast will include several principal roles, both male and female, and a chorus.

The Carolina Playmakers serve Chapel Hill and the University as a community theatre, and also provide a theatre laboratory for students in the Department of Dramatic Art. Tryouts are open to the public, and everyone is eligible and welcome to participate.

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Arts Festival Is Revived

By JOEL BULKLEY

The University will host the Esquire Literary Symposium next spring as part of Carolina's first Fine Arts Festival in 20 years, Festival co-chairman Henry Aldridge announced this week.

The Festival, a week-long salute to the creative arts, also will feature a Carolina Playmakers production, art exhibition, jazz concert and seminar and panel discussions.

This will mark the first time Esquire's Literary Symposium, held yearly on the campus of an American university, has been conducted in the South.

Participants in the two-session symposium have not yet been announced, but are expected to be top-ranking authors, short-story writers and playwrights.

The Literary Symposium, sponsored by Esquire Magazine, will be held April 5 and 6.

Last year's panel members, novelist Robert Penn Warren, short-story writer Bernard Malamud and playwright Edward Albee, appeared at Princeton University. Past symposiums have featured Dwight MacDonald, Norman Mailer, Gore Vidal and James Baldwin.

The Fine Arts Festival will be held March 31-April 6 with six University departments participating. Aldridge said it will be conducted in a manner similar to the Carolina Symposium with guest speakers and performing artists appearing both in the afternoons and evenings of Festival Week.

The Fine Arts Departments—Drama, Radio, Television, and Motion Pictures, English, Music, Journalism and Art—will join forces to bring students into closer contact with the arts and to foster greater understanding of and participation in the arts.

The general theme of the 1965 Festival will be "The University and the Arts."

The Festival will include at least one critic and performer in each art field and the week will include such activities, in addition to the Literary Symposium, as the Playmaker's production of "Billy Budd," productions by the RTVMP Department, a film critic, a music performance, the guest appearance of a famous performer or music composer and an exhibit by Ackland Art Center. Aldridge said the tentative schedule includes

the following programs:

Wed., March 31—Festival begins with Playmaker's production of the stage adaption of Herman Melville's "Billy Budd."

Thurs., April 1—John Chapman, who wrote the stage adaption, will lead a panel discussion or present a lecture on drama in the afternoon. The RTVMP Department will enter its presentation that night, probably the Southern premier of a recent experimental film, with critical appraisal by an outstanding film critic following the showing.

Fri., April 2—Ackland Art Center will unveil a special exhibition in the afternoon and evening with a guest lecturer in art speaking. Also that afternoon, the RTVMP Department will present student productions.

Throughout the Festival "Billy Budd" will be presented. No activities are scheduled for Saturday.

Sun., April 3—A performance of contemporary music by an outstanding composer is tentatively planned for the evening. Composer and music critic will appear in followup session Monday afternoon.

Mon., April 5—Repeat of Sunday evening music performance and Esquire Literary Symposium.

Tues., April 6—Literary Symposium continues and a jazz concert concludes the Fine Arts Festival Activities.

Participating artists and critics will be announced as soon as arrangements are completed, Aldridge said.

Funds for the Festival have been allocated by the University, but a solicitation of both students and faculty and an appropriation from Student Legislature will be sought to finance the Festival.

If the Festival is successful it will become a permanent program and alternate with the Carolina Symposium. Planning for this year's festival has been going on for well over a year and has received much of its impetus from Student Body President Bob Spearman, Aldridge said.

Officials of the Fine Arts Committee are Jim Meredith and Henry Aldridge, co-chairmen; Allen Morgan, treasurer; Janet Eakin, secretary; and Pat Dearborne, social directress.

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