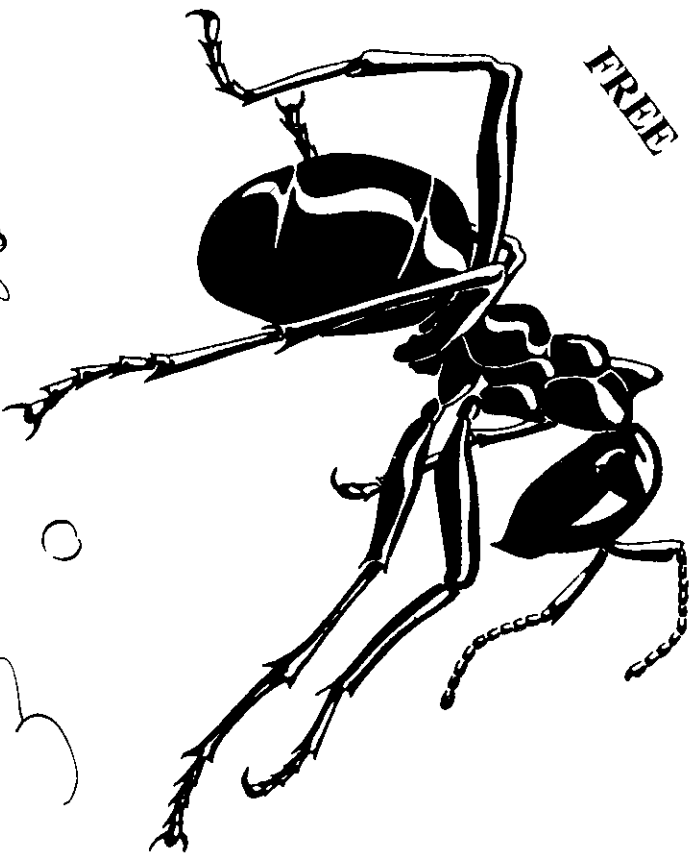


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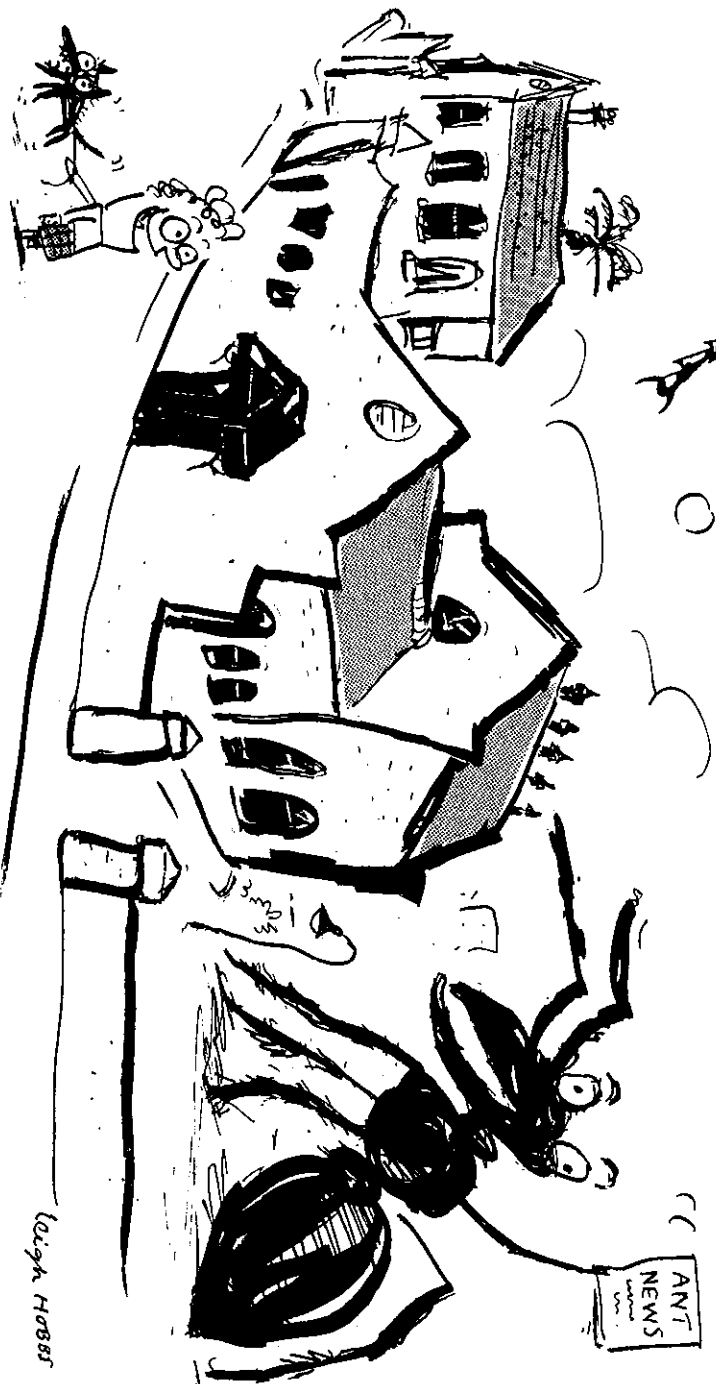


ANT NEWS 32

SEPTEMBER 1992

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Australian Nouveau Theatre Newsletter

ANTHILL AT THE GASWORKS!



Lalagh Hobbs

LIFE IS A DREAM

It seems... East to West, then, and now

The most important source is the story of the 'Awakened Sleeper', one of the most widely disseminated of Oriental tales. We first meet it in the *Synopsis*, more commonly called *The Seven Wise Masters*, a famous collection of Oriental apologies. A princess loves a page. Her nurse, who is in the secret, drugs him, and introduces him into the lady's apartment. The lovers meet. The page is then drugged and removed to his own room. On awakening he thinks his meeting with the princess a dream. This must have been the source of the Persian poet, Farid-Uddin Attar, who tells the same tale in the twelfth century.

Some such story lay back of the legend of the 'Old Man of the Mountain,' first reported to Europeans by Marco Polo in his famous book of travels, written 1296. The Old Man of the Mountain was a Moham-medan monarch who dwelt in a beautiful valley shut in by two high mountains. This valley was an earthly paradise, producing the sweetest flowers and the most delicious fruits. There, too, were palaces filled with the costliest works of art: pictures, rugs, silken stuffs, fountains running wine, milk, and honey, of which the inhabitants might partake *ad libitum*. There abounded fair women, all beautiful and richly arrayed, sweet singers and skilled players of musical instruments. Now the Old Man of the Mountain wanted to make his followers believe that they who followed and obeyed him were sure of entrance into paradise. The garden was guarded by a strong castle, which itself could only be reached by a secret path. From time to time he would select ten or twelve young men especially skilled at arms and gifted as leaders, give them sleeping potions and introduce them into the palace within the garden. After four or five days of rapturous delight, during which they believed they were in heaven, they were again drugged and returned to the cold outer world. They were then informed that their recent experience was all a dream, but that all who faithfully served the Old Man of the Mountain would attain a similar paradise at death. By this device the Old Man of the Mountain gained many faithful followers and grew in power.

The *Arabian Nights* version is as follows: Abou Hassan had been so strictly ruled by his father that when the latter died he

resolved to make up for lost time. He divided his fortune into halves, prudently investing one part, and devoting the other to his pleasures. After a year of riotous living, this is squandered. None of his friends would lend him money. Rendered cynical, he resolved never again to invite a native of Bagdad to his table, but to show hospitality to one stranger a day, and then break off relations that he might not experience ingratitude. One night he invited to dinner Haroun al Raschid, the caliph, who was touring his capital incognito. At table Abou wished that he might be caliph for a day. Haroun drugged his host and removed him to the palace. The courtiers were instructed. On awakening, Abou was shown every courtesy and informed that he was caliph. He passed a day of power and pleasure, punished his enemies, and sent a purse of 1,000 gold pieces to his old mother. In the evening there was a feast. The one-day caliph passed from hall to hall. Each surpassed the preceding one in magnificence. In the fourth he was again drugged and taken home. When he awakened, he still believed himself caliph. He beat his old mother for laughing at him. It was thought necessary to confine him in a mad-house. Later, after being discharged as cured, he again met Haroun al Raschid, who again drugged him and repeated the former experiment. This time Abou was not to be deceived; he thought he was dreaming. In the end Haroun undecieved him and gave him presents and a beautiful slave to wed.

Boccaccio (*Decamerone*, 8th novella, 3rd day) gives the tale a characteristic licentious turn. The abbot of a Franciscan abbey loves the wife of a peasant, Ferondo, who is jealous. Ferondo is drugged and transported to the abbey, where the monks beat him with rods and tell him that the place is purgatory and that he is being punished for excessive jealousy. After three days, he is again drugged and conveyed to his home. He awakens, cured of jealousy, and convinced that his unpleasant experience was a dream sent for the good of his soul. Other Italian novelists, notably Lasca and Griz-zini, give variants of the same theme.

We next encounter a cycle of stories in which Philip of Burgundy (reigned 1419-67) and a drunken beggar play the principal roles. Luis Vives, the Spanish humanist, tells the tale in a Latin epistle, print-

ed Antwerp, 1556. He says he had it from a page, while in Flanders. The historian Heuterus repeats it in his *Historia Rerum Burgundicarum* (Antwerp, 1620). So do a host of preachers and moralists. From the Low Countries so good a story speedily reached England. It was included in Richard Edward's *Collection of Tales* (London, 1570), a work now lost. *The Ballad of the Frolicsome Duke or the Tinker's Good Fortune* is of uncertain date. Among the various amusements which Philip of Burgundy offered the drunkard was a dramatic entertainment. Therefore it was a natural development to turn the story into the prologue to a play. It was staged as prologue and epilogue to *A Pleasant Conceited Historie*, called *The Taming of a Shrew*, first published in 1594 and still preserved. This was the direct source of the famous *Taming of the Shrew*, an adaptation made by Shakespeare and some unknown collaborator. Shakespeare adapts the old prologue, but omits the epilogue and the comments made on the play by the drunken tinker between the acts. He therefore does not tell the complete story. But the drunken Tinker, Christopher Sly, is one of his most living figures, and Shakespeare has given us the most genially comic version of this widespread tale, just as Calderon has given it its most lofty and inspired expression. Another famous English variant is that in Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1611). In France the story appears again in Goussard's *Tresor d'histories admirables et merveilleuses*, about 1600.

If we inquire what may have been Calderon's direct source, nothing closer has been suggested than the version in Agustín de Rojas' *Viaje entretenido* (1604). Here the story is localized in Spain. The drunkard is a Spanish peasant who expresses the most anxious solicitude for his wife, Tortibio, and his son, Bartolillo. The duke admonishes him: *Vete aquí, amigo, lo que es el mundo, todo es un sueño*. This possible source relationship was first indicated by an anonymous German reviewer, writing for the *Zeitung für die elegante Welt* in 1817.

In none of these versions is there anything about a king who imprisons his son and brings him up away from mankind in

Continued page 2.

Australian Nouveau Theatre
1992
PROGRAMME

Anthill Theatre
with Finders Drama Centre
at the Adelaide Festival
of the Arts

THE CRIMSON ISLAND
by Mikhail Bulgakov
MARCH 5-14
Royalaly Theatre, Adelaide

**GO ON PUNCH ME
IN THE STOMACH**
co-directed by Deb Miller
and Alison Summers
APRIL 8-11
Anthill Theatre, Napier Street

THE CHAIRS
by Eugene Ionesco
MAY 20-JUNE 21
Anthill Theatre, Napier Street

With the Next Wave Festival
**The Anthill Young
Playwrights Festival**
MAY 17 LIFE OF CELL by Jason Cross
MAY 24 BRILLIGRAMME No. 4 and No. 10
by Raimondo Correse
MAY 31 BEAT THE SAVAGE DRUM
by Barbara Kinsella and
GOLDBLOCKS MAYHEM
AND THE THREE BEARS
by Shannon Coppa

at the Melbourne International
Festival of the Arts
LIFE IS A DREAM

directed by Jean-Pierre Mignon
designed by Tomek Komar
lighting by Ben Cobham
make up by Lloyd James
composer: Sam Mallet

performed by Ian Scott, John F. Howard,
Humphrey Bower, John Penman,
Sergio Tell, Melita Juristic, Julie Masson,
David Sandford, Barney Medlin
OPENS SEPTEMBER 11
Anthill at the Gasworks Theatre

SCHOOL FOR WIVES

by Moliere
translated by Richard Wilbur
directed by Jean-Pierre Mignon
with Julie Forsyth, Ernie Gray,
Nadine Garner, Ian Scott
and Humphrey Bower
OPENS NOVEMBER 18
Anthill at the Gasworks Theatre

Guest Company:
**Chamber Made Opera presents
LACUNA**

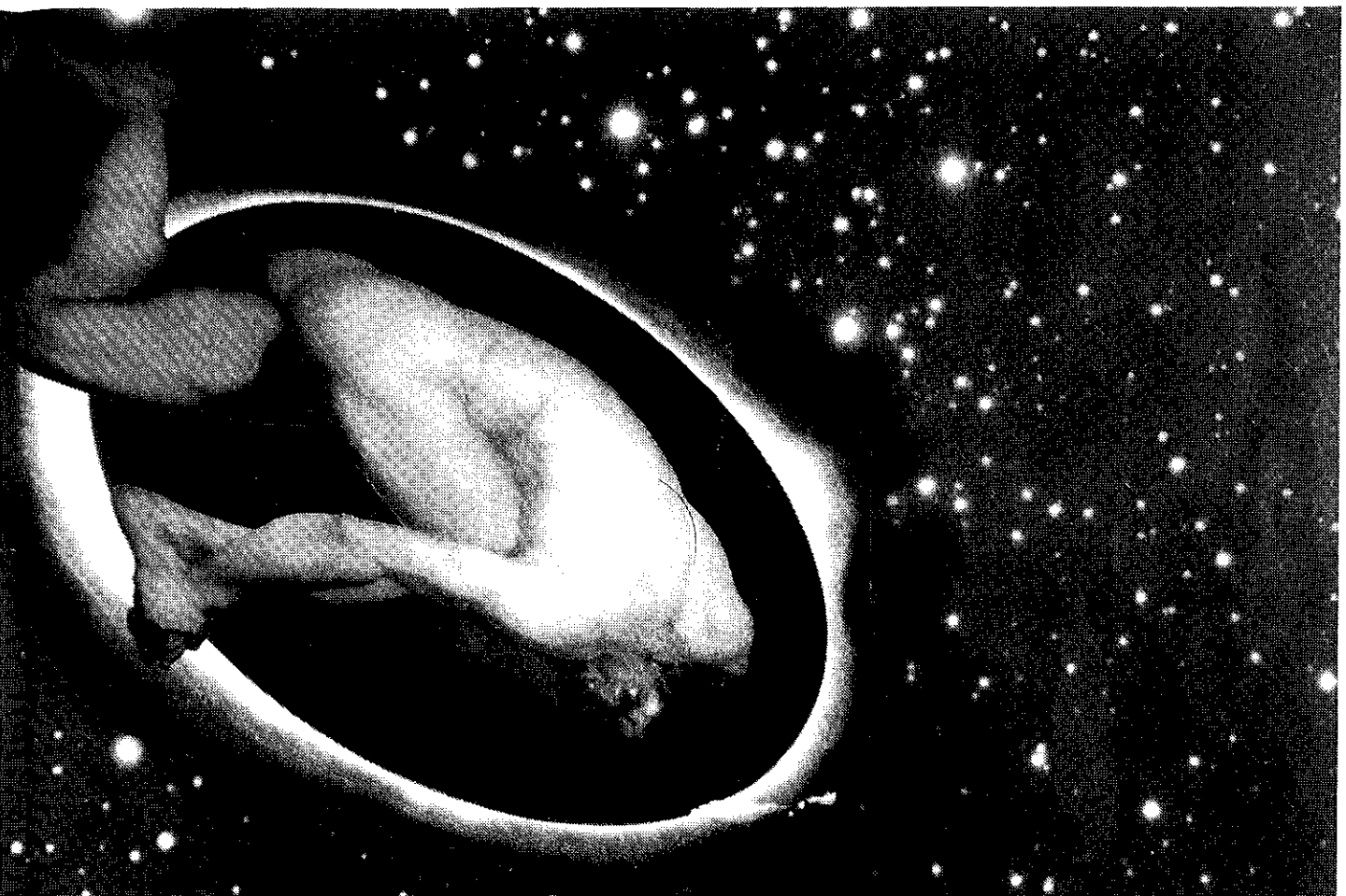
libretto by Douglas Horton
music composed by David Chesworth
directed by Douglas Horton
designed by Jacqui Everitt
OPENS OCTOBER 21
Gasworks Theatre

PERSONAE
An exhibition by *Commedia dell' arte* Masks
by Paolo and Paola Consiglio, Carl Massens, Peter
Donohue and Sylvia Reich
OCTOBER 3-31
Foyer, Gasworks Theatre

WE HAVE MOVED!
ANTHILL at the
GASWORKS THEATRE
21-25 Graham Street
Albert Park
Melway Reference: 57 D4
**BOOKINGS and
INFORMATION
699-3253**

Australian Nouveau Theatre
Artistic Director — Jean-Pierre Mignon
Administrator — Andrew Smalley
Associate Director — Suzanne Chanley
Administrative Assistants — Susan
Barnford and Roderrick Poole
Front-of-House Manager — Dale Knight
Community Theatre Coordinator —
Marianne Briggs

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PETER LONG

a vain attempt to defeat an unfavorable horoscope. This motive comes from another celebrated Oriental collection of stories, *Barlam and Josaphat*. Like most Eastern collections these stories are bound together by a frame story: Abenner, an Indian king, has a son, Josaphat, concerning whom the stars forecast that he will either be a great warrior king or a celebrated teacher and founder of a new sect. To defeat the latter possibility Josaphat is imprisoned in an isolated castle, surrounded with every pleasure and delight and deprived of the sight of sorrow. He must know nothing that will turn his thoughts toward religion or serious things. He is accompanied by a faithful mentor, Barlam.

One day he escapes from prison and has four famous encounters. He sees for the first time old age, sickness, poverty, and death. His mind is now turned into serious channels and he becomes a great religious teacher. The very measures taken by the father to accomplish his ends defeat his purpose. The story of Josaphat is the fictional account of Buddha's early life. This narrative was translated out of the early Hindu dialects into Persian, then Arabic, then Greek (seventh century A.D.). Later the Greek version was turned into Latin, and still later into all the vernaculars of Europe. Both the Greek and Roman Catholic churches, ignorant of the origin of the narrative, have canonized Barlam and

Josaphat as Christian saints. Consequently their story may be read in almost any of the collections of saints' lives.

Calderon's direct source for this portion of his plot was Lope de Vega's play, *Barlan y Jozafa*. The Lope play was not printed till 1641, but Lord Holland owned a manuscript of it dated 1611. Calderon does not follow this source closely, but derived from it a small portion of his plot and some poetic imagery.

Another of Lope's plays, *El hijo de Re-duan*, also influenced Calderon. Baudcles, heir to a Moorish throne, is brought up rudely by shepherds, ignorant of his birth. Later he is brought to court and awakens first the mirth and then the terror of the courtiers by his crudities and violence. Baudcles kills his father, who, in dying pardons him, informs him of his parentage, and delivers over to him the kingdom.

The present writer was first to point out the close relationship existing between *La vida es sueno* and another play, *Los yerros de naturaleza y acertos de la fortuna*, written jointly by Calderon and Antonio Coello. This latter play has never been edited. It exists as an autograph manuscript in the Biblioteca Nacional. Its plot is very similar to that of *La vida es sueno* and many of the character names are identical. While it is impossible to say which of the two plays was first in the field, it looks as

though Calderon strove to improve singly a plot which he felt had been clumsily handled by the partners.

Farinelli, *La viza e un sogno* (2 vols., Turin, 1916), has not only collected most of the known sources and analogues of the plot, but has also made an extensive study of the dream motive in the world literature. The thought that human life is as unreal and fleeting as a dream has occurred to many thinkers at all times and places. The ancient Hindus conceived of the universe as God dreaming. Only Brahma existed. Outside him, all was deceit. Buddha continued the philosophy of Brahminism. The nothing is the only reality; nothingness, the ideal. The Chinese poet, Tschuang-tse, fourth century B.C., dreamed he was a butterfly. On awakening he reasoned that he could no longer be sure whether he were the butterfly, or the butterfly himself. Perhaps the dream was as real as the supposed reality. Perhaps we are all dreaming and shall only learn the truth when awakening in death. An old Hebrew maxim ran: "Life is a dream and death is the time of awakening; and betwixt life and death man journeys like a phantom." Similar sentiments are expressed by the Persian poets.

The Greek point of view was the antithesis of the Oriental. Life is good, brief to be sure, but enjoyable. What little we accomplish in it is yet of importance. Our works live after us. Yet Heraclitus taught that there is no being, only a becoming. All is in a state of flux, nothing stable. The rhythm of change is the only reality. Plato recognized that our senses cheat us, and sought truth from within. Euripides wrote: "Who knows if what we call life be not death, and death instead, what we fear, life?"

The scholastics of the Middle Ages returned to the asceticism of the East. The material was held to be base and vile. The human body was despised, human existence valuable only as a transition stage in which one might prepare for the life to come. The spiritual alone was admirable and real.

The Renaissance brought a wholesome reaction toward the joyous, pagan ideals of ancient Greece. Once more the claims of the body and the material were vindicated. Bacon advocated the study of Nature and established the inductive method of experimental science. But soon the scientists brought about a new reaction. Luis Vives exposed the vanity of attempting to ascertain truth. Montaigne with his famous *Que sais-je?* was even more sceptical. Descartes continued and developed Plato by making thought and the ego center of his universe: *Cogito, ergo sum*. Pascal points out that we dream that we dream.

Bishop Berkeley denied the existence of matter and set up a system of idealistic philosophy. Schopenhauer would reduce the whole universe to subjective illusion. The Christian Scientists have based a new religion on the negation of matter. Farinelli quotes a modern scientist, Melinand, as saying that death is a possible awakening. So the idea of life as a dream runs through the centuries. Victor Hugo curiously re-echoes Calderon when in the *Contemplations* he makes the dead say:

Vivants! vous etes des fantomes:
c'est nous qui sommes les vivants.

It is commonly thought that Calderon derived most of his dream philosophy from Philo the Jew, born 20 B.C. Philo attempted to reconcile Judaism with Greek philosophy. His *Bios Politikon* is an allegorical commentary on the life of Joseph. It was available in the Latin translation of Segismundo Galento. This name Segismundo may have determined the author in choosing the appellation of his chief character.

Reprinted from the introduction to "Three Plays by Calderon" by George Tyler Northup Ph.D., Professor of Spanish Literature, University of Chicago. Published by D.C. Heath and Company, 1926.

LACUNA CHAMBER MADE OPERA

Chamber Made Opera will present the world premiere of its recently commissioned opera, LACUNA at the Gasworks Theatre in October this year. Composed by David Chesworth with a libretto by Douglas Horton (the team that brought you REG-ITAL) the cast will include Lyndon Terracini, Bernadette Robinson, Yvonne Landan, Louise Fox, Ian Cousins, Jeanne Marsh, Jon Jackson and Steve Lane. Musicians will include John McAll and Peter Neville. Design will be by Jacqui Everitt with lighting by Philip Lechlan, whose latest design collaboration was the company's sell-out season of THE CARS THAT ATE PARIS performed at Ensign Smash Repairs in Clifton Hill.

LACUNA (a gap, or something missing), is an opera in three acts dealing with contemporary concerns through a medieval setting. The story charts the last twenty four hours in the demise of Orpheus' Uperworld, a world where personal and public power are caught in a desperate contest for legitimacy. This contest, as it is played in the contemporary world, has striking connections with the medieval trivium of a ruling class (both monarchical and bureaucratic), religious authority and the military.

Drawing on the game of chess as perhaps the best known schematic representation of medieval politics, Horton and Chesworth present an operatic abstraction on the aspirations and machinations of Western government. However, LACUNA is far from being simply a dramatised chess game, though through it the hierarchy of leadership is most clearly spelt out.

In the final act, as Orpheus passes through his tormented Underworld of imagination and conscience, so too is he threatened with losing control and authority over his "pieces" — the rooks, one an ineffectual bureaucrat and the other a zealous democrat; the knight, one classically chivalrous and the other a mongering, coup-threatening general; and the fundamentalist and opposingly liberal bishops. The King and Queen represent their own opposition: both are a powerful confusion of values and aspirations. And, of course, there is the pawn incarnate, the witty and irreverent servant, Agatha. LACUNA is a potent and often hilarious drama of political satire and personal conflict.

With its cast of nine performers and five musicians, LACUNA is ideally suited to the new Gasworks Theatre — a venue where audiences can experience contemporary chamber opera in the intimacy intended by opera's innovative creators in the 17th century. This historical connection also pervades the themes and concerns of the piece, both musically and dramatically. Horton and Chesworth have worked closely together to create an opera which literally springs, textually and musically, "from the exigencies of the dramatic moment, the effect being one of an altogether hedonistic present." True to the tradition of the Orpheus myth, the music deals with opposition and contradiction. As Chesworth explains: "There is, in LACUNA, an interplay between a fictional ancient music of church and state which is modal in character, using cyclic, rhythmic, and melodic structures, and, an instinctive, energetic, speculative, secular music derived from an imaginary folk music tradition."

After the "improvised" nature of THE CARS THAT ATE PARIS, with LACUNA Chamber Made will present a "composed" work which will certainly be more melodic but nevertheless as innovative and removed from the standard operatic process as ever. LACUNA will perform from October 21st to November 7th, Monday to Saturday at 8:30pm. Tickets are \$18 and \$12 concession (cheap nights Monday and Tuesday, \$15, \$9). Bookings through Anthill on 699 3253.

Stephen Armstrong

PETER LONG



BECOME AN ANT FRIEND!

ANT FRIENDS is an organisation which exists to support Australian Nouveau Theatre and which acts as a vehicle for the company to enhance its relationship with its audience. We welcome people who would like to become more actively involved in the development of the company. For a \$30 annual fee, you will receive the following benefits: discount admission to all Australian Nouveau Theatre productions and co-productions; direct mail delivery of ANT NEWS to your home; and invitations to pre-show forums and special functions throughout the year. Join now and membership will last until December 31, 1993. Please make cheques payable to Australian Nouveau Theatre. Thank you for your support!

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POSTCODE

SOMETHING UNCOMMON FOR THE COMMON GOOD

An Interview with James McCaughey Chairman, Gasworks Arts Inc.

by Katharine Struck

James McCaughey has had a long and productive career in academics and theatre. In 1969, he established The Greek Theatre Project to explore the Greek classics; this group later evolved into The Theatre Projects which produced many modern and classic texts. He set up the drama course at Deakin University, and there in Geelong in 1977 founded The Mill Theatre, an exciting enterprise to serve as a cross-roads between the university and the community. He ran The Mill for eight years, returning to Melbourne to be artistic director of the Playbox Theatre Company for fourteen months. For the past four years he has been actively involved in the establishment of the Gasworks Arts Village as chairman of Gasworks Arts Inc.

One of James McCaughey's favorite analogies for the Gasworks Park is the town common found in those practical and socially conscious New England towns. In the midst of urban chaos was a patch of common ground, neutral territory. A verdant refuge from the madding crowd and the confines of the street; simultaneously, a shared space with room enough to accommodate the whole community for gatherings and public events. That in essence is what the citizens of South Melbourne have rolled out at their feet. Out of the ruins of industrial decay has arisen, like the phoenix in the old cliché a symbol of urban renewal and laudable human endeavour. For not only has the old gasworks site been transformed into a beautifully landscaped park where people walk their dogs and have family barbecues, but it has been designated as public land with an arts orientation, a concept without precedent in Melbourne, and one which in retrospect, may well be hailed as visionary. Here artists from different disciplines: painters, painters, sculptors, textile artists, and now, with Anthill's arrival, theatre practitioners, are given the opportunity to work in the privacy of studios on site within the context of the community at large. It is a tangible manifestation of the dialectic — the artist delving within to reach out — giving back through creation and instruction what it receives in support. At the Gasworks the internal and external worlds meet for the enrichment of both.

The evolution of the Gasworks Arts project, begun in the late 70's, has taken

years of commitment and dedication from many individuals. Its development has been a highly interactive process between the South Melbourne council, local residents and artists. Starting from the basis that the site was to be public land redeveloped as a park with facilities for local groups, many options were considered, all of which had their respective merits. What is remarkable about the outcome of this consultative process is the courageous enterprise and harmony of purpose manifested. Instead of becoming locked-in to one possibility, the final solution is innovative in concept, accessible to the whole community and aspiring to foster a socially enriching exchange and interaction between the community and local artists. With great foresight, it has been carefully designed to serve the goals of the present while leaving open other possibilities for the future.

For the past four years James McCaughey has been overseeing the delicate and awesome task of putting theory into practice. He has undertaken the job with a firm belief: "It invigorates and integrates the community to have the practice of the arts as part of its public life, and the arts in turn are reinvigorated through contact with the community. This will proceed not from the practice of one particular kind of art labelled 'community arts', as if the high and holy ground of art is divided into sections with one for the community arts' to dance upon, such an appallingly patronizing attitude; this will proceed from exploring the interplay of the arts practiced at the height of their capacity within a particular community." Even though the enterprise is only in its infancy, there has been ample evidence already that this approach has the potential for drawing the community together in ways that are constructive, educational and inspiring, and which at least attempt to address the social divisions existing between the affluent and the deprived, the young and the old. First of all there is an ongoing series of classes offered by the resident artists for a small fee, such as pottery and photography. Now that Anthill is installed as tenant and manager of the Gasworks Theatre, these have been supplemented by workshops it will be conducting in clowning, make-up, lighting, puppetry, just to name a few. There is a darkroom available for commu-

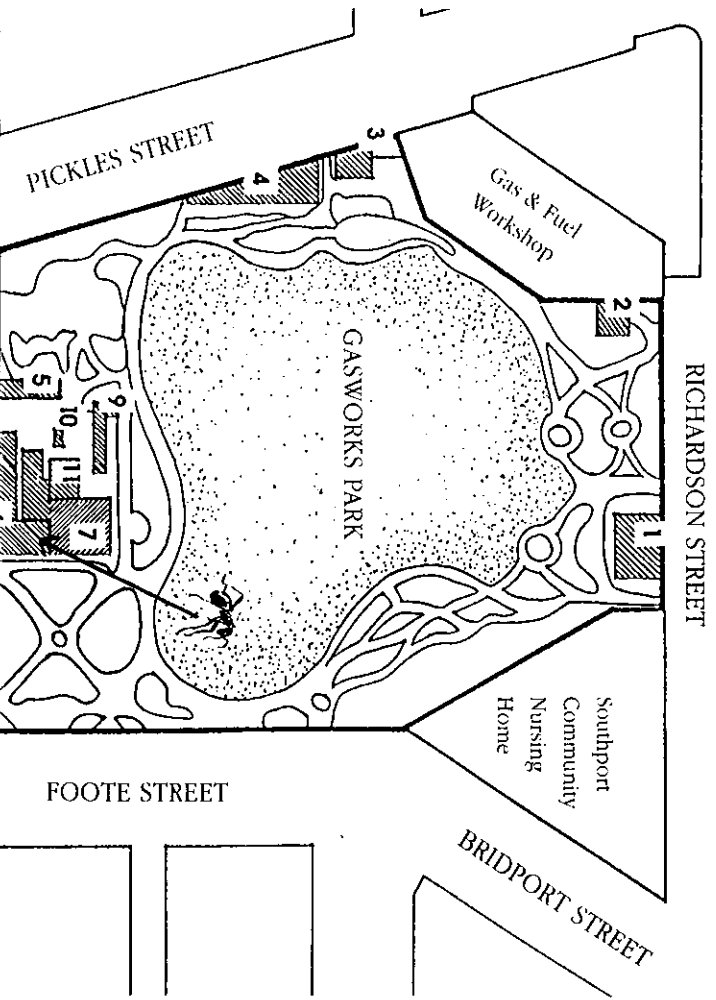
nity use, and an access kiln for firing pottery. In September there will be the annual sculpture exhibition, and plans are being actively considered for the establishment of a permanent gallery. And then there are special events, like the Mayor's Community Day, and just recently a music/theatre project entitled "City of Voices", which literally involve hundreds of people from the local schools, the recreation centre, the community health centre, senior citizens' groups etc., not to mention local artists. "We have worked very hard to demonstrate how arts activities in a simple and informal way can be integrated into a particular event. The vision of art as an integrative force has been realised in events like the Mayor's Community Day. It has been transformed and enlivened by the arts presence". But James McCaughey wants it made clear that the Gasworks is not some sort of cultural theme park where there will always be a frenzy of activity, the artists tinkering away like "the seven dwarves", expending creativity for all to see. "What could be worse, most of the time, than being scrutinized while working? This site will only succeed if the conditions are propitious for creating. Similarly, the objective is not to house the maximum number of artists but to attract those on site who can contribute specifically to the development of the park. Some people find it hard to understand how the Council is spending their money here. It is important to realize that we are networking vigorously and successfully within the community, but it is in ways that are often hidden. People must learn to trust that gradually, and more frequently, what happens in the privacy of studios will come to light in public events. What is exciting and awe-inspiring is the amount of learning we all have to do about the nature of public events. There really is no prescription or menu to follow." At the moment a photography exhibit is being organized which involves teaching technique and encouraging many diverse groups within the community to photograph themselves in institutional, domestic and social environments. A local high school wants to develop a specialist drama program at VCE level concentrating on the technical aspects of theatre. It is presently being determined how this course can be integrated into the

practice of theatre at Anthill for the mutual advantages such an interaction would offer are obvious: Anthill gets enthusiastic volunteers and the students will have practical experience. Already groups of students have been invited to watch rehearsals and are participating in making props for the current production of "Life is a Dream". Anthill has always nurtured young artists in an informal apprenticeship system and the company is now eager for the opportunity to formalize and extend this profitable exchange.

The response from the community in general to the objectives and events implemented thus far has been extremely rewarding to those artists, councillors and coordinators who have worked so hard to bring their visions to life. "Each month brings new evidence of a strengthening base of knowledge, affection and support for the site. We don't exist in a slot like a football club, something familiar people can grasp on to. We only exist as a growing possibility. In this way South Melbourne has become a laboratory for what could happen in other communities, even at a national level." Although James McCaughey feels it is still too early to start listing achievements, he has numerous anecdotes up his sleeve to demonstrate how that "growing possibility" is taking shape. "We had a sculpture by Anne Ross in the park which was hideously vandalized. There was a widespread reaction of anger and grief and a determination that something must be done to redress the loss. With admirable courage, empowered by community support, the South Melbourne council committed the money to have the sculpture recast in bronze." This kind of positive action undertaken by a community to protect and enhance its quality of life offers hope for all of us. As James McCaughey puts it: "What an opportunity this place offers at this point in Western society when so much is exhausted, or ossified, or being destroyed. The excitement and rewards increase as the possibilities become apparent. It has been a lot of hard work getting the infrastructure in place, and that's all people like me can do. Now it's up to the artists and the community."

ANTHILL at the GASWORKS The Community Arts Program

Anthill is offering an exciting community program designed to encourage active participation from interested members of the community. Those taking part will have the opportunity to become involved in a range of workshops and classes introducing them to the skills of theatre craft and taught by professional artists. Anthill will also be running programs aimed at specific groups within the South Melbourne community with the long term objective of establishing a "theatre community" network that produces work on a regular basis for local celebrations and festivals. The first of these projects will continue the work initiated by the creators and participants of "City of Voices", the show that christened the Gasworks Theatre. The aim is to assist them to develop another performance, along the lines of a cabaret, as well as nurturing their plans to establish themselves as an independent drama group. Another project on the drawing board will involve young people from the Hobson's Bay High School, St Vincent's Boys Home, the Montague Continuing Education Centre and unemployed youth from the South and Port Melbourne areas, many of whom live in the Park Towers complex. This Youth Arts project will involve up to ten coordinators who will begin work in March 1993, and culminate in a music/theatre performance. It is important to stress that the objective is to work in stages so that skills can be imparted in order to generate an on-going interest to the young people involved so that they gain self-sufficiency as well as confidence in their ability to contribute constructively to the community.



Marianne Bragge

For information and details about workshops please contact Marianne on 696-2452

It's not often that local governments have such a commitment to the arts and are prepared to put such a large amount of resources, time and energy into a cultural complex such as this.

But that is what South Melbourne has done, and they have done it because they recognise the enormous benefits of improving the cultural life of a community. And they value the importance of preserving links with our past, such as these marvellous historic buildings, and rebuilding them for the future.

As a result of the City of South Melbourne's vision, the completion of this theatre marks the beginning of a new era of the arts for the South Melbourne community. Gasworks Theatre will proudly take its place as one of Melbourne's great cultural facilities. Australian Nouveau Theatre has long been part of South Melbourne's, and Melbourne's, cultural life, having built an enormous reputation over the last 12 years for its fresh and challenging approach to theatre.

Anthill has consistently gone where other theatre companies have not dared, providing new approaches to classic works, as well as presenting contemporary productions. The old dusty temperance hall in Napier Street was certainly quaint, but the cramped space and limited facilities meant that many productions were a struggle to stage. The new theatre doubles the audience capacity for Anthill's future productions, and as those in the industry well know, getting more "bums on seats" is the key to financial certainty.

The larger space and better facilities will also no doubt give Anthill greater scope and more flexibility in its productions. I hope this helps the new Anthill at the Gasworks to give Melbourne an even stronger vision for theatre.

The Hon Joan Kirner, Premier of Victoria July 14, 1992 — Opening of Gasworks Theatre

IN THE COLD COLD MORNING LIGHT

Anthill Theatre

February 13 — March 10

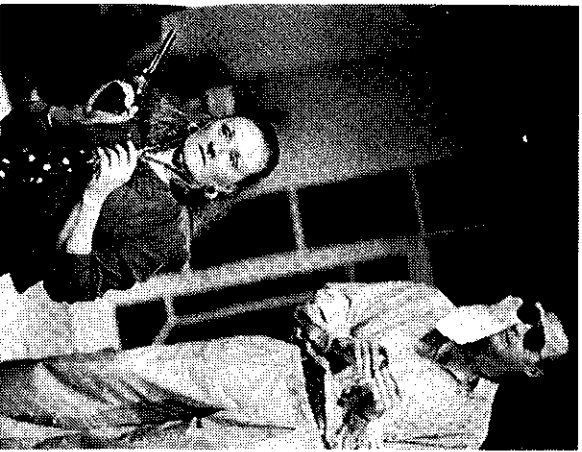
By Valerie Kirwan; directed by Jean-Pierre Mignon; dramaturgy Suzanne Chaudry; set design by Tomek Koman; costume designer Rose Chong; music composer Sam Mallet; lighting designer Brett Stewart; make-up designer Lloyd James; stage manager Sandra Ayache; assistant stage managers Elizabeth Moore and Jason Cross; wardrobe assistant Monica O'Brien; graphic design Peter Long; performed by Jillian Murray, Julie Forsyth, Kenneth Macleod, Carlos Sanchez and Sergio Tell.

In the *Cold Cold Morning Light*, the new Australian play produced by Melbourne's Anthill Theatre to open its 1991 season, is a depressing experience. It seems to sum up a cultural dilemma, an exhaustion of vision, and begs the question: if this is new Australian work by one of our more vital companies, what exactly is the state of contemporary Australian drama?

Valerie Kirwan's play is a post-modernist excursion into differing realities... but the play... wind(s) itself up in its own shallow complexities.

None of this is helped by Jean-Pierre Mignon's direction, which approaches the writing with an exaggerated respect. Had the play been directed with an eye to irony rather than a romantic artiness the writing may well have fared better.

Alison Croggon
The Bulletin



JEFF BUSBY

(The play) is highly idiosyncratic and more than mildly baffling.

It is this quality of illusion and mystery-ousness which director Jean-Pierre Mignon plays up. His production has a languorous quality (intensified by Sam Mallet's original score) in which mood is just as important as the words. The three leading actors move like dream figures through Kirwan's mysterious landscape, behaving in ways which intensify the air of paradox and anti-naturalism. The result is a play which is intriguing once you get into it.

Leonard Radic
The Age

In *The Cold Cold Morning Light* seems neither intelligently sane nor interestingly mad, and little in this play makes sense according to any of the incompatible array of dramatic conventions which are founded and abused.

Mignon's direction is always technically interesting but almost all sense of drama is lost.

The overall effect is awesomely inept, even though the director and his actors work mightily to breathe life into this script.

At its best Anthill is a terrific company, but its choice of *In The Cold Cold Morning Light* looks mistaken.

Peter Craven
The Australian

While we expect both Anthill and the author to give us extraordinary experiences of strangeness to stretch our imagination and break down linear expectations...

The play, rather than fulfilling its intention to enthrall and expand us, wanders off too much on its own, denying us emotional, let alone intellectual, engagement. As a result, even the acting is often pale and stilted.

...In the end, the greatest mystery about it is why they have flirted so perilously with such a self-absorbed piece in the first place.

John Larkin
The Sunday Age

It is easy to see why director Jean-Pierre Mignon was attracted to this new play by Valerie Kirwan. It is a long way removed from the naturalism and social realism that characterises so much Australian writing. The play is intriguing and of considerable interest in its exploration of suggestive psychological territory and unusual theatrical style.

But it is a pity that it has not been tightened up by some judicious pruning.

Helen Thomson
The Sunday Age

ENDGAME

Anthill Theatre

April 10 — May 12

By Samuel Beckett; directed by Jean-Pierre Mignon; dramaturgy Suzanne Chaudry; set designer Tomek Koman; costume designer Rose Chong; lighting designer Brett Stewart; make-up designer Lloyd James; production/stage manager Sandra Ayache; assistant stage manager Jason Cross; deputy stage manager George Kullikovsky; graphic designer Peter Long; performed by Jack Koman, Ian Scott, Sergio Tell and Julie Forsyth.

Jean-Pierre Mignon's realisation of *Endgame* is outstanding — uncompromising, restrained and tuned like an evernavigating clock which finally comes to a stop when Clov (Ian Scott) freezes in mid-stride and delivers the play's coda in a moment as moving and terrifying as you will ever experience in the theatre.

This is a production with the theatrical intelligence to match the genius of one of the great plays of our time.

Paul McGillhick
Financial Review

In recent times the Anthill-based Australian Nouveau Theatre company has mounted first-rate productions of both 'Waiting for Godot' and 'Happy Days'. 'Endgame' is something of a disappointment by comparison. The physical details are exactly right, with the greyness of the walls and the dusty greyness of the costumes matched by the grey skin tonings of Nell, Nagg and Clov. But somehow the production lacks sparkle. It is not that it overdoes the bleakness, but rather that it underplays the rich vein of Irish humor.

Leonard Radic
The Age

For all its bleakness, *Endgame* is perversely comic, perversely vital. And this is what Mignon and his excellent cast bring to the production.

Jack Koman as Hamm is at once comic, menacing, pathetic, pitiless and pitiful and Ian Scott gives a crystalline performance as Clov; he might have been born for the role. And Julie Forsyth as Nell produces one of her performances of unsettling transformativ magic.

More than any writer than perhaps Kafka, Beckett creates the metaphor stripped bare, demanding its own shape and space. It has to be seen in the theatre which is why this production, in its uncompromising fidelity to the writing, is such a joy.

Alison Croggon
The Bulletin

It is more than 30 years now since Samuel Beckett wrote *Endgame* and the play remains one of the mountains of contemporary theatre. The poetic density of Beckett's language and the extreme economy of his dramatic means give the play's tragicomedy a *King Lear*-like quality.

Jean-Pierre Mignon's production at Anthill struggles impressively with the play's maze of shifting tones, but fails to deliver it whole... yet this high-minded and impassioned production (will please some people).

Peter Craven
The Australian



JEFF BUSBY

...a high-class production, of absurdist cosmic clowning, brimming with the experimental quality we have come to expect from Anthill at its height.

It is the company's 50th production. Anthill's inaugural show in 1980 was a program of short Beckett works. Since then, they have done both 'Godot' (1990) and his 'Happy Days' (1989). With *Endgame* continuing a very successful lineage, Anthill must rate as the country's greatest custodians of the master's voice.

John Larkin
The Sunday Age

THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO

Australian Nouveau Theatre and The Melbourne Theatre Company

The Playhouse,

Victorian Arts Centre

August 3 — September 1

By Pierre Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais; translated by Anne C. Murch; directed by Jean-Pierre Mignon; dramaturgy Suzanne Chaudry; set design Stephen Curtis; costume design Angus Strathie; lighting design Jameson Lewis; composer Sam Mallet; choreography Lynette Mann; make-up design Lloyd James; assistant director Michael Kantor; production manager Ian Cookesley; stage manager Trevlyn Gilmour; assistant stage manager Katherine Crawford-Gray; sound recording Kerry Saxby; performed by Barry Otto, Julie Forsyth, Pamela Rabe, Ross Williams, Jack Koman, Alex Menglet, Ian Scott, Helen Morse, Nadia Corrento, Paul English, Reg Evans, George Farfax.

The combination of the Melbourne Theatre Company, the Australian Nouveau Theatre (Anthill) and the Victoria State Opera provides as eclectic a cross-section of the performing arts as we are likely to see on one stage at the one time for one distinctive production.

Possibly only Jean-Pierre Mignon, Anthill's prodigious director could have turned such an unlikely marriage of convenience into such an overwhelming tour de force (farce?). The visual richness of opera sets and costumes, the finely-tuned physicality and sub-textual insights that so characterise Anthill's performance style together with the sophisticated resources of the MTC have created quite an unexpected theatrical pleasure.

Mignon invests his usual intelligence and

energy into the play, which a lesser director might have presented as a light, frothy period-cum-fashion piece. For Mignon, however, the froth merely tops up a more potent cocktail.

Everything is elegantly choreographed, yet nothing is obvious — so smooth and fluent is the presentation. Such precision is what actors crave, and here they more than rise to the challenge.

A large and diverse cast culled from Anthill and the MTC, they work flawlessly together embracing each other's skills with impeccable timing in an impressive display of ensemble acting.

Peter Weiniger
The Age

Mignon controls all the levels with a deft hand — creating brilliantly faceted comedy in which... the hilarity serves to drive home its barbed observations. The production's style will be familiar to Anthill's audiences but with the added dimensions given by Stephen Curtis' sumptuous set and Angus Strathie's absurd, colourful costuming. For all its spectacular visual appeal, however, the focus is on the acting and the text. The cast attains ensemble acting of very high quality but Barry Otto, in a performance of virtuosic control which implies all Figaro's emotional complexities, is outstanding.

Alison Croggon
The Bulletin

This joint production of Beaumarchais's classic comedy by the Melbourne Theatre Company and Anthill had the audience shrieking with delight, but it is light years away from Jean-Pierre Mignon's best work and highlights the deficiencies of both companies. Mignon's *Figaro* exhibits very little of his considerable flair... the production is visually monotonous in the extreme. On top of this, the scampering style of face which Mignon has chosen looks like a dance of performing fleas in the relative immensity of the Playhouse. There is none of the dynamism of a good Anthill production.

Peter Craven
The Australian

Mignon's production works because it honours the text. Actors talk and listen to one another. Comic routines are appropriate and skilfully executed. Characters are colourful but credible. And through it all the director's theatrical intelligence makes sure that each element has a function in relation to every other element... The result is one of the finest and boldest pieces of theatre seen in our theatrical wilderness for some time.

Paul McGillhick
Financial Review

Last year, the MTC and Anthill did 'Waiting for Godot' together, and this production is on a much grander scale, with even greater success than before...

The result is a very convincing and entertaining blend, a match, you might say, of the MTC and Anthill, under direction by the latter's artistic director, Jean-Pierre Mignon, who is already much credited for his high-class treatment of the classics...

...one of the best reflections of classical repertoire seen in Melbourne in a long time.

John Larkin
The Sunday Age



JEFF BUSBY