

A R T S

N E W J E R S E Y



THE NEW JERSEY STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS
AUTUMN 1986

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The New Jersey State Council on the Arts and the state's arts community had much to celebrate at the Council's annual meeting this past July. One hundred and seventy-eight arts organizations and 112 individual artists received funding totaling \$11,768,204, thanks to the unprecedented 46 percent increase in the Council's state appropriation. Governor Kean and the New Jersey State Legislature are to be commended for their commitment to the arts and their vision. They have demonstrated their belief that the arts play a vital role in enriching New Jersey's culture, economy, and heritage.

The arts community is also to be applauded for the high artistic standards they have continued to achieve. This year, several organizations and individual artists were designated 1987 Distinguished Artists based on their artistic merit. In addition, four organizations which have increased their impact on the state and have developed programs to achieve national recognition received Artistic Focus grants from the Council.

The Council's annual meeting always represents a new beginning, but at this year's meeting we not only welcomed the new, we also paused to reflect on our twenty-year history and how much we have grown since the Council's modest beginning with a staff of two in 1966. At that time the Council embarked on a mission to create greater opportunities for all New Jersey residents to become involved with the arts as creators, participants, and audience members. The progress that has been made in fulfilling that mission has been astounding. New Jersey has become a leader in state support for the arts and has earned a national reputation for artistic excellence. On

September thirteenth, we celebrated these achievements with the inception of the first annual Governor's Arts Awards. Through these awards, the governor recognized the contributions of corporations and administrative organizations as well as those of artists and arts institutions in making New Jersey a vibrant and varied home of the arts.

In upcoming issues of *Arts-New Jersey*, you will have the opportunity to read about some of the Governor's Arts Awards recipients. In this issue, you will meet Distinguished Artist Award recipient Brigit Kelly and become acquainted with a new series initiated by one of our Artistic Focus grantees, McCarter Theatre Center for the Performing Arts. You will also learn about how the arts are being supported by the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation through its Poetry Festival.

Along with these and other articles, we have also included, for the first time, a complete list of NJSCA grants recipients. We believe that this long and distinguished list is the most convincing evidence that we can give of the continued growth and excellence of the arts in New Jersey. ■



On the Cover:

Walkman

Frank Palaia

Contents

- 1 On the Cutting Edge: Glass at McCarter
- 4 Betting on the New
- 6 Poetry at Waterloo: The Dodge Foundation Festival
- 7 The Poet in Society
- 10 On the Cover: Frank Palaia
- 12 Art in China: Ancient Tradition and Modern Thought
- 13 Cultural Centers in China
- 14 Crafts in China
- 15 Hortense Green Honored
- 15 Governor's Award in Art Education
- 16 Poetry by Brigit Pegeen Kelly
- 20 Women in the Arts: American Women Writers
- 22 Collecting in the Eighties
- 24 NJ Musician at Interlochen

ON THE CUTTING EDGE: GLASS AT McCARTER

by Noreen Tomassi



Composer Philip Glass

If the avant garde can be said to have a “sound”, it is the sound of Philip Glass’s music. At Brooklyn Academy of Music, at the American Repertory Theatre in Boston, at the New Music Festival in Philadelphia, in the lofts and galleries of Manhattan, in the theatres of Europe, wherever innovation is welcomed or supported, Glass seems to provide the soundtrack.

To audiences at these events, the music of Philip Glass is familiar, immediately identifiable through its complex rhythmic structure formed by the Eastern method of adding small units of notes together to create large cycles, its avalanches of emotion-laden sound, and its small, yet startling, changes.

On October 27, the new Cutting Edge Series at McCarter Theatre in Princeton will open with a performance by the Philip Glass Ensemble. In the interview that follows, Glass talks about his recent opera collaborations with Robert Moran on *The Juniper Tree*; with writer Doris Lessing on *The Making of the Representative from Planet Eight*; and his utilization of a number of lyricists and singers including David Byrne, and Laurie Anderson, Paul Simon, The Roches, Suzanne Vega, and Linda Ronstadt on his newest album, “Songs from Liquid Days.” He also talks about government funding, for the arts, the joys of collaboration, and the musical challenges which now interest him.

JACK MITCHELL

Two years ago at the Guggenheim you spoke about your work with Robert Wilson and about the difficulty of setting words to music. Could you talk a bit now about “Songs from Liquid Days” and about work in that short form—the song—and how it differs from your work in opera. . .

In the work I’ve done with Bob (Robert Wilson) I’ve never worked in English. I’ve always worked in other languages. The last work I did was in Italian, in Latin. So it’s very different. Also, the whole scale of the piece is very different. “Liquid Days” is really an attempt to use English language in a song form so that you can understand what the words are. Now, in popular music this is very common; often we understand the words in popular music. Within the tradition of concert music—where the voice sings much higher—it’s often difficult to understand the words. I was really thinking about that problem. It’s a question of vocal range and intelligibility—and how those two factors work together to turn into a comprehensible song or an incomprehensible song. So it’s a very specific technical problem and I addressed that very directly with the “Liquid Days” songs. I was never thinking about that when I was working with Bob.

One of the things that I notice when listening to “Liquid Days” is that you’ve brought together some very strong musical personalities and very strong musical voices on the album. I found that in some cases—Linda Ronstadt is a

good example—the performer’s voice and style is very “present” on the album; with others, the personal voice is a bit subsumed. What were your aims in putting the album together?

Well, that’s very much the case. One of the big differences between opera and the song is that the interpreter of song brings much more to a song than—and this may sound strange—than an opera singer, mainly because largely the character in an opera is a known character. For example, if someone is singing *Carmen*, the singer is recreating a role. When you’re doing a song you don’t have that known character or that plot of the story that gives a background to what the song is, so the singer has to create much more around the song. The way to interpretation for the singer of the individual song is much greater than someone singing a role in an opera. Casting a song record becomes much more complicated than casting an opera. What the singer brings to the song counts for so much more. It took almost six months to find the right singers for the songs and the most backward thing I did was to write the songs before I found the singers. I should really have found the singers first and written the songs for them. But I didn’t do it that way, I did it the other way, unfortunately. The only one I knew I would use was Doug Perry, the singer on “Open

the Kingdom.” I knew his voice and I knew I would use him when I began.

That same question of personal voice or style. . . can you apply it now to the lyricists who contributed to the album? Do you feel that this was a problem or a factor in working with the words given to you by each of the lyricists? I didn’t have any problems with the words. In fact, I consider that I was very lucky in the words that I got. Because, after all, when I was asking the lyricists for words, I really didn’t know what I was going to get. In most cases I had a choice; I had one or two sets of lyrics to choose from. In

the case of David Byrne, I had a set of three; in the case of Laurie (Anderson), she gave me four and I picked one. Suzanne Vega gave me three or four. So there was a certain generosity on their part and it gave me more flexibility in trying to find lyrics that would fit together. I ended up with six songs but I was really drawing from more than a dozen.

You’ve done many interesting collaborations over a wide range in the past. Could you talk particularly about the challenges of working with another composer as you did with Robert Moran on *Juniper Tree*?

That was the first time I did that and actually it worked out very well because Bob Moran and I knew each other



JACK MITCHELL

and we knew each other's work and we trusted each other's work in a certain way. It worked extremely well. I think we were lucky, to tell the truth. It was something I wanted to try and I'm not so sure I'm interested in doing it again... it didn't deserve to work as well as it did. But we were together at the time that we did it, working together in adjacent cabins, and we were consulting each other quite a lot. And I think it worked partly because we were older, to tell you the truth, and we had done so much work in the theatre and we were doing it for the fun of it. We

were able to do it without a lot of personality problems that might have come up had we been younger people and less secure about our work. It's something I did simply because I'd never done it before. I've done a lot of things simply because I've never done them before. On occasion, that's been reason enough for me to do something. Maybe it's not such a very good reason, but it's been enough for me.

David Shapiro, the poet, has said of your work, particularly your work with Wilson: "It's as American as Einstein and New Jersey." Do you have anything to say about that?

I...that's a very curious quote...I know David...I have no comment about it. Einstein seemed very at home in New Jersey, didn't he?

The opera/musical theatre category in government funding is relatively new, in New Jersey particularly... Do you think the creation of that category by the NEA and the availability of funding has opened up opportunities or spurred growth?

The funding organizations are always the followers, they're never the leaders. What the NEA has done is an acknowledgement that some of the best and most innovative work today is being done in the collaborative medium of music/theatre. We might say that the decade of the seventies was dominated by the visual arts, and that the decade of the eighties is definitely dominated by the performing arts. It's almost the style of the eighties. That's why you see so much collaborative work, by the way, why you see so many people working in music/theatre and working together. I think it's been to the credit of the funding organizations that they couldn't help but notice this, that this is where the new work is happening. And so funding has been made available for it. But I would hardly think that they had signaled the advent of it or had even encouraged the inception of it. It really was in place in the late seventies, but once it got under way I

think it was perceptive to follow the lead. After all, administrators can really only follow what the creative elements of the community are doing. They don't ever really create anything.

So in a way the funding categories are good indicators of the culture.

Exactly. They tell you what's happening—and maybe three or four years afterward—but that's not so bad, I'm not complaining about it. In fact, I think that we've had a fairly perceptive group of administrators around the nation who've been very quick to see that. But on the other hand, they could hardly miss it since the large audiences that have, for example, developed around the Next Wave Festival in Brooklyn, have been around the performing arts. And you can hardly miss that. After all, from the funders' point of view, particularly with public funding, there's nothing wrong with things that have a popular base. If anything, they tend to be very responsive to that.

Do you think your music is more suited to non-narrative theatre than to more traditional forms?

Well, I work in different ways and the last two operas I've done have been stories, have



The Philip Glass Ensemble

been narrative stories and I'm working with writers who tell stories. Doris Lessing is my present collaborator. I have no loyalties to any school whether you call it the Theatre of Images or narrative theatre. I have absolutely no loyalties to any of them. I'm finishing an opera with Doris Lessing and Bob (Wilson) and I are talking about doing a new work called *The Arabian Nights* which might be less obviously a narrative than the work I'm doing with Lessing. So I don't feel obliged to follow any of those things. The music was suited very well for some of the more abstract kind of theatre pieces that were done but it doesn't work so badly for some of the others either. *The Juniper Tree*—which is a fairy tale—the music seemed to fit that just as well. I'm not sure that it matters for me. I don't think it's important. I think what's really important is who I'm working with. If I work with someone like Lessing obviously I'm going to be involved in a narrative situation. If I work with someone like Matthew Maguire or Bob Wilson or Twyla Tharp, maybe more abstract.

What do you look for in a collaborator when you choose a project?

Someone with an interesting mind and lively ideas and the energy to carry through a project. And I've found quite a few. I've worked with Twyla Tharp and again with Bob and I'm working with Andrei Serban on another piece—I work with lots of people. There are lots of lively, interesting people to work with, I've had no trouble finding people. What I

look for is someone thinking about something a little differently than I am, perhaps.

What musical ideas are most interesting to you now and how do you think your own music is evolving or changing?

Well, I've been interested for about the last ten years in the ideas of tonality, but that's hardly new. We came into the twentieth century with the crisis of tonality and we're leaving the twentieth century with the crisis of tonality. So, I think I'm concerned about the same thing that most people are concerned about. Those kinds of questions are what's most interesting to me now.

Are you addressing that in some particular way in your work with Dorris Lessing?

Yes, definitely. In this case it's a story which is full of ideas and I've been working with the idea of key relationships and thinking and development of ideas—and how does that affect the key relationships that exist in the piece of music. So I'm working with narrative content and harmonic relationship which is a very specific way of working, very specific. ■

Noreen Tomassi is NJSCA Publications Coordinator and editor of *Arts-New Jersey*



When the Philip Glass Ensemble takes the stage on October twenth-seventh in the newly renovated McCarter Theatre Center for the Performing Arts in Princeton, it will mark the beginning of a new era in performance at the theatre. New Jersey residents will no longer have to travel into Brooklyn to see avant-garde work. McCarter will have its own series of innovative performing arts available to area audiences by subscription.

The new *Cutting Edge Series* was created by McCarter's Special Programming Director William Lockwood in response to the growing enthusiasm for and interest in the new work of risk-taking artists like Glass. For Lockwood, the turning point was the appearance last spring at McCarter of Sankai Juku, the Japanese Buto dance troupe. "Sankai Juku was virtually sold out," Lockwood said. "We were thrilled. They were about as far out as we've gone at McCarter, beyond or against the grain of even what we call modern dance."

The enthusiastic reception and the lengthy standing ovations given to the Japanese

troupe demonstrated that McCarter's audiences were ready for something different. Lockwood felt it was time to take what had been isolated events and organize them into a series. "The major departure this year was the creation of the subscription option," according to Lockwood. Previously audiences for experimental work could purchase tickets only on an event-by-event basis. "We hope that we can now build a strong subscription base for the series. If we can develop a constituency of people who are willing to experiment, hopefully that audience will stick with us and provide solid support. We need to know that our audience is willing to gamble."

This year's series will include performances by Philip Glass (October 27), Avner the Eccentric (November 10), The Alchemedians (January 12), Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane & Company (February 13), and the Mark Morris Dance Troupe (April 18). The film, *Home of the Brave* by Laurie Anderson, will also be shown as a part of the series (March 19-22). For information and to charge by phone, call the McCarter box office at (609) 452-5200. ■



Avner the Eccentric will appear at McCarter Theatre in Princeton on November 10.



DAN WAGNER

The Alchemedians will bring their very special brand of performance to McCarter Theatre on January 12.



LOIS GREENFIELD

Former NJSCA fellowship recipient Mark Morris and his dance troupe will perform at McCarter on April 18.

POETRY AT WATERLOO: THE DODGE FOUNDATION FESTIVAL

by Ronnie Weyl

Jane Fonda's new *Workout and Weightloss Program* has earned a spot on the *New York Times* bestseller list. *In Search of Excellence*, the bestselling book on business management, is now a Book-of-the-Month Club selection. Judith Krantz's novel *I'll Take Manhattan*, another bestseller, has a bright future; it will provide the stuff for a television mini-series. When is the last time a poetry title enjoyed such a reception?

In a society that values trim bodies, fat pocketbooks, and social glitz, poetry is considered irrelevant, impractical, and inaccessible.

Last May, in a report made to the National Council on the Arts, Mary MacArthur, the National Endowment for the Arts Literature Program Director, confirmed this observation. "By 1982, more than half of all mass market sales were for books from only five publishers. Ten publishers accounted for more than 85 percent of the title sales. About 40,000 titles (hard and paper) were published last year in the United States. Of the 40,000 new titles, only about 16 percent were fiction, poetry, or drama. The 4,500 fiction titles (down by about 300 from 1983) included pop poetry—the Rod McKuens and the collections of 'inspirational verse'—as well as the serious poets."

According to Mary MacArthur, "this mentality . . . forces fine literature, literature that is not a mass market commodity, out of the domain of commercial publishing."

Why is there so little demand for poetry? Perhaps it's



Poets Carolyn Kizer, Theodore Weiss, and Galway Kinnell will appear at Waterloo Village in Stanhope as part of the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation Poetry Festival.



JUDI BENVENUTI

PAGANO/CONKLIN

the initial exposure to verse people receive in high-school English class. Lost in a maze of abstract symbols and obscure allusions, tangled in an underbrush of iambic pentameter and schematic rhyme, students vow never again to cross such alien terrain if they can help it. They concur with the beginning of Marianne Moore's poem on poetry: "I, too, dislike it: There are things that are important beyond all this fiddle."

Those adults who do read and write poetry today, choosing the "road less traveled," can usually name a teacher or friend, a parent or relative, who guided them on their journey and led them to Marianne Moore's own conclusion.

If you demand on the one hand the raw material of poetry in all its rawness and that which is on the other hand genuine, you are interested in poetry.

The Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, a private philanthropic organization in Morristown, New Jersey which is committed to the raw material of poetry—young people, the environment, animal welfare—decided to sponsor a national poetry festival that would celebrate poetry as a response to the human experience and would touch the lives of more than a thousand New Jersey high-school students and their teachers, as well as other welcomed participants.

Twenty-four poets, including Pulitzer Prize winners Gwendolyn Brooks, Carolyn Kizer, Galway Kinnell, Gary Snyder, Stanley Kunitz, and Mary Oliver and New Jersey poets

A number of poets participating in the Dodge Foundation's Poetry Festival were asked to share their views of the role of the poet and of poetry in our society. Here are their responses:

Most of the poets of my generation would feel as I feel that many of the things we have done, many of the activities we have engaged in relating to poetry have been done for the sake of our own work. But there is a strong sense of commitment to poetry itself. We have given readings at places where they could not pay us just because we thought we could be of use to help re-establish poetry.

In the last thirty or forty years there has been a rather significant resurgence of interest in poetry that has gone all through society, right through to the schools, even in the lower grades. Now there are masses of people who write poetry and quite seriously. Poetry readings have become a permanent part of our cultural life. It's hard to say why this has happened. There are many social factors, including the Vietnam War. But we can say that it is through the dedication and imagination of many individuals. I think particularly of Elizabeth Craig who started the Poets in the Schools program and started the first poetry readings in schools.

The festival is a celebration of poetry's return to the life of ordinary Americans. I think

the most important thing it will do is bring into the lives, particularly of the young people of New Jersey, the potential of this oldest of all arts. It is the only place in our society, the only art form, in which you can directly express your innermost thoughts and feelings. It's also an art form which requires no particular body or technique. What is needed is an inner life, love of the world around you, and the mother tongue. You also need exposure to what poetry is. Whitman would have loved this festival. He dreamed that this would be a nation of poetry-lovers and poets.

Galway Kinnell

The poet's role in society is to try to define and clarify what society is, what the human mind is within that society, and what the mind projects despite society. The poet tends to hold out to humanity an elevated projection of what mankind can be.

Amiri Baraka

The poet's responsibility is to sustain language and to ensure that the great resources of the English language, including syntax, are maintained. English is one of the great musical instruments of the world, and I want to do all I can to make sure the language stays in tune and is amplified.

Carolyn Kizer

I write very much using the events and episodes of my own life, my family life, trying to explore and articulate the strong feelings that all people have in relationships. I write about marriage, I write about

Allen Ginsberg, Amiri Baraka, Joyce Carol Oates, Alicia Ostriker, and Stephen Dunn will share their art and their visions in workshops, panel discussions, and public readings on October 10, 11, and 12 at Waterloo Village in Stanhope.

"The Poetry Festival combines two of the Foundation's program interests: the arts and secondary education," commented Scott McVay, executive director of the Dodge Foundation. "Language may well be the distinguishing feature of our own species, and poetry is the concentrated heart of language. The pity is that less than one percent of arts funding, public and private, goes for poetry. We seek through this festival to bring together and honor poets of accomplishment and teachers who strive to promote better reading and writing among their students."

The opening day of the three-day festival will be devoted exclusively to the teachers and students. That evening and thereafter, the events are open to the public. The focus on students, however, has governed the festival's objectives, according to festival coordinator James Haba, a poet and associate professor of English at Glassboro State College.

"An Advisory Committee appointed by the Foundation invited poets who care about young people, who respect their experiences, and who have offered themselves

generously to young people through workshops and in classrooms throughout the country," Haba explained. "We also sought poets who share the Foundation's funding interests and who have made a name not merely in the private circles of poetry, but in the public world."

While the Dodge Foundation planted the seed for such a festival, which is believed to be the first of its kind in America in terms of its size and scope, it welcomed the insights and advice of poets and teachers who have helped bring the idea to fruition.

"The Foundation sent 3,700 letters to English teachers around the state, describing the festival and offering poetry workshops to be conducted in their schools preceding the festival," Haba said. "We also welcomed their comments and suggestions, and the response was extraordinary." Judith Ankiel, a teacher from Villa Walsh Academy, wrote:

"In previous centuries, society knew and revered their poets. Homer and other traveling bards who perpetuated a rich store of oral tradition were known, respected, and included in daily affairs of the average man. The twentieth-century poet remains remote and isolated from the mainstream of modern culture. To meet a poet in a school situation would certainly add a marvelous dimension to the lives of students who only have encountered poets in their literature books."

The Poets' Advisory Committee read these letters and, based on an assessment of the teachers' strength of commitment to poetry and their

energy, then selected twenty teachers to serve on a Teachers' Advisory Committee. The committee also used these letters to select 80 schools to be visited by poets. Ten of these schools will host four-day Poets-in-the-Schools residencies made possible by support from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts. Fifteen teachers will also have the opportunity to participate in a three-day poetry writing workshop conducted by Galway Kinnell in September.

Saul Cooperman, commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Education also sent letters to every high-school principal in support of the festival.

On October 10, Waterloo Village, a vibrant center for music and history, will be transformed into a literary arts center, with students, teachers, and poets meeting under canopied tents to talk about poetry, to write poetry, and to read poetry.

"We want to give students the opportunity to see firsthand what kind of poetry is being practiced today, who writes it, and how they do it, so the program emphasizes direct contact with the poets," Haba said. Poetry films and video will be shown continuously through the day.

At the official opening ceremony scheduled for Friday afternoon, Governor Thomas

Newark poet Amiri Baraka.



Kean, who has provided strong leadership and increased funding for both the arts and education in New Jersey, will present a proclamation declaring the week of October 6 through October 12 "Poetry Week in New Jersey" and applauding the efforts of those teachers who teach poetry. Galway Kinnell will read selected poems and have some of the teachers from his workshop read as well. Rap poets from Newark high schools will give a brief performance, and finally Amiri Baraka will give a reading.

Friday evening, the gates will be opened to the public and the festivities will begin with Ed Sanders, Gwendolyn Brooks, and Carolyn Kizer

reading their work. Gary Snyder will also give a reading, accompanied by the Paul Winter Consort who will provide the music. The next two days will feature more music, poetry readings, storytelling, panel discussion/demonstrations, and film and video presentations.

"Since it truly is a festival and not a writers' conference," Haba insisted, "the programs have been designed to interest a wide range of people, not just professional writers." The panel topics reflect this inclusive approach: "The Life of the Poet," "Poetry and Politics," "Music and Poetry," and "Poetry and the Future."

On Saturday night Derek Walcott, said to be the finest Caribbean poet writing in English, will premiere "Poetry Live," a poetry concert perfor-

mance piece featuring four actors in a collage of poetry accompanied by music.

All the events celebrate the very special relationship between poets, poetry, and the audience, which pleases Haba.

"In the late twenties and thirties, a movement which became known as the New Criticism disassociated the poet from the poem, removed the poem from any personal or historical context," he explained. The poem was to be fixed on the page, evaluated for its intricate structure of language, its metaphysical wit, and its controlled, i.e., academic style.

"By the late forties and fifties, poets in this country rebelled," Haba said. Social awareness inspired the verse of Langston Hughes and Gwendolyn Brooks. The Beat Poets sought, in Allen Ginsberg's words, "to compose poetry which invited a complete emotional and physical participation by the audience." In the sixties and seventies the Viet Nam War inspired poets like Galway Kinnell and Denise Levertov to use their craft as a vehicle of protest.

Haba describes the aftermath of the New Criticism as a "healing process." Poetry has become more accessible; poetry readings have become more popular.

"Giving Voice," a marathon reading of Langston Hughes's, Walt Whitman's, and Emily Dickinson's work, will affirm the shared experience of poetry, giving every person at the festival a chance to be both a reader and a member of the audience.

To preserve the weekend for posterity, Lawrence Pitkethly, director of the New York Center for Visual History, will videotape the entire event.

When asked about future poetry festivals, Haba said, "The success of this one will determine subsequent festivals. We hope to gather an audience and an awareness this year and perhaps next time, we will make it an international event." He paused for a moment, contemplating the essence of the festival. "When we learn how to read poems and write poetry, we gain confidence, mastery, authority. That is what we hope the festival imparts." ■

Ronnie Weyl is a contributing editor to *Arts-New Jersey*.

ON THE COVER: FRANC PALAIA

motherhood. What I'm always hoping to do is articulate what is felt by many people. I feel successful in a poetry reading when people in the audience laugh and cry, when they walk up afterward and say to me, "that poem is about my life." Poetry is about communication always. With luck it's about community.

Alicia Ostriker

Imaginative literature, that is both prose and poetry, expresses the soul of a people.

Joyce Carol Oates

The "business" of poetry is always feeling, the preservation, the cultivation of it at its best and deepest. Particularly today, when so much time and energy are spent on acquiring wealth and things, feeling is in danger of being lost, certainly feeling for others.

My poems, in addition to the personal, the exploration of my own resources, are mainly occupied with trying to capture a sense of others. Myself I have, others I don't. I draw on my own feelings and observations to write about other people.

Apart from my poems, yet closely connected with them, is my commitment to teaching; I have spent all my adult life working with young people, sharing and exploring poetry with them. As it is the happiest link I know to the magnificent past, so it is my principal communication with the present and perhaps with the future as well.

Theodore Weiss ■

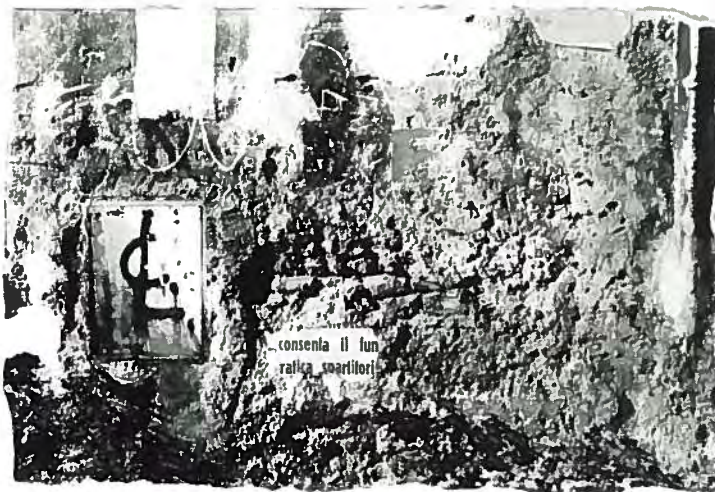
This month's cover features work by Franc Palaia of Elizabeth which was completed during his tenure as 1985-86 Rome Prize Painting Fellow. This prestigious award gave Palaia the opportunity to study at the American Academy in Rome for one year and to complete an Italian Series of paintings, sculptures, and photographs.

In the catalogue which accompanied an exhibition of Palaia's new work at the American Academy, Ida Panicelli wrote: "His work is an ironic representation of the rapport among architecture, signs of various kinds, advertisements, posters, graffiti, and patterns of eroded surfaces. He absorbs visual signals and replicates these images, not as pedestrian copies or with haunting melancholy, but as simulated fragments of urban archeology that he obtains through a

playful manipulation of common materials: sand, plaster, polystyrene, and pictorial strata."

Palaia has been interested in walls since 1972 when he began an investigation of walls in various parts of the world and various time periods. "Walls are drop cloths for urban societies," Palaia has said. "They reflect a culture and eventually become 'Rosetta stones' of the future." He has worked with prehistoric or cave walls (1972-74), American walls (1975-81), Chinese walls (1981-85), and—while in Rome—Italian walls.

"I make color photographs of walls, signs, murals, billboards, and graffiti and then fabricate these images using a mixed media secco fresco technique. . . My purpose is to isolate and call attention to certain aspects of cultural change and to present them in a realistic way." ■



Franc Palaia
"F"
Mixed media on color photo
20" x 30"

Artist Franc Palaia



Franc Palaia
Santa Sergio
Paper, gold leaf on wood
18" x 42"



Franc Palaia
Roman Wall, 1985
Mixed media on polystyrene
6' x 6' x 4'

EFANO FONTEBASSO DE MARTINO



ART IN CHINA: ANCIENT TRADITION AND MODERN THOUGHT

by Jeffrey A. Kesper

Months have passed since my visit to China, yet my memories of the country and its people remain vivid and alive. As I reflect on my delegation's tour, one lasting impression seems to dominate, and that is the dramatic contrasts I observed between the old and new. While adhering to ancient ways and upholding time-honored traditions, the Chinese people are eager to learn and explore new ideas and new ways to bring China into the modern world.

China Reconstructs, a magazine founded by Soong Ching Hung, wife of Sun Yat-Sen, the leader of the Chinese Revolution of 1911, captures the spirit of China today. The magazine reports on China's growth in every field—economics, technology, education, art, and archaeology—and places these developments in context to the past which binds the people to traditions spanning millenniums.

This dynamic tension between the old and the new manifests itself in the arts which, as I saw on my trip, are integral to the fabric of life in China. The arts represent a nexus of Chinese culture, history, and politics. They arbitrate between ancient traditions and modern thought. They provide a vehicle through which the Chinese may take risks, explore new ideas, and expand their vision of their culture and society, and they also provide a means for hundreds of nationalities—mostly minorities—to retain their identities and heritage.

Now that the Cultural Revolution is over, the arts are considered significant to China's national interests

again. The government now believes the arts can help further the country's drive for modernization.

To achieve this goal, it sanctions certain art communities which are organized in a hierarchy involving three distinct levels. Cultural associations and central institutes and academies can be found at the national and provincial levels. Societies founded by visual artists exist at the local level. If the government officially recognizes any of these groups, it will provide a budget for the group's operations and programs. If a group is formed and receives no official recognition, the artists themselves must absorb the costs of operation, an often difficult if not impossible task.

Artists in China are encouraged to make the past serve the present, yet it came as a disappointment to our delegation that in our travels we were allowed to see few examples of contemporary art, as we know it. We surmised that there was little modern art that was officially recognized or accepted and therefore there were few examples to be found in museums and cultural centers. We were informed that modern art, the avant garde, and other art forms outside the mainstream are not prohibited. For example, an exhibition of modern art would be permitted, but not necessarily encouraged. However, as it was explained to us, it might prove extremely difficult for a group of artists to find an appropriate exhibition site and arrange to pay the rent, lighting costs,



Yi Minority Tribe dancers in Shilin, China.

and other expenses. The organizers of such an exhibition might also find it difficult to arrange for press coverage or to attract an audience. Our hosts seemed most proud of their ancient traditions and wanted the delegation to see and experience artwork which they believe comes closest to perfecting an art form.

Therein lies a conflict between the favored and recognized traditional art forms and the interest in and almost furtive pursuit of modern art. The source of such a polarity can be traced in part to China's

CULTURAL CENTERS IN CHINA

The issue of funding for cultural centers is important not only in New Jersey, but also in China. The following article appeared as an opinion piece in China's English-language newspaper, *China Daily*.


Construction of cultural facilities is one of the very few goals that has not been met in the Sixth Five-Year Plan (1981-1985). And the reason couldn't be more clear: too little money and effort devoted to culture. This is the opinion of Hu Jiwei, member of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC)

The Party, and government have called on the nation to go all out in developing both the socialist material civilization and the socialist cultural civilization, the 70-year-old Hu said. But the latter is often ignored and State investment for culture facilities has been too little.

The goal in the Sixth Five-Year Plan was for every city to have a museum; every county, a library and cultural centre; and every township, a cultural club by 1985. This is still not true.

Theatres are a deplorable example, Hu said at a panel discussion of the current NPC session. At present, 80 per cent of Chinese theatres are wood and brick structures built before 1960. Moreover, a shortage of funds for maintenance and repair had reduced the number from more than 2,500 in the 1950s to fewer than 1,500 now. None of the five municipal theatres planned for 1984-1985 period has been completed. Again because of money.

Many leaders speak of the importance of building a cultural civilization, but when it comes to budgeting for it, cultural development usually is passed over, Hu complained. In the 30 years before 1978, the State's outlay



history. During the Cultural Revolution, industry, technology, and the sciences suffered major setbacks; advances made in education and the arts were devastated as well. China isolated itself from the rest of the world and during this time not only was a decade of world progress ignored, but centuries-old traditions and techniques in pottery, glazes, weaving, and printing were lost. It was often repeated by the Chinese that we met that the years of the Cultural Revolution produced a 'lost generation' in every sector of life.

Since the Cultural Revolution, the Chinese people have been busy reclaiming their heritage and embracing the future, and the arts are directly affected by this momentum, impacting on China's culture, economy, and education. The performing, visual, and literary arts and the area of crafts represent a viable tourist industry and a strong economic force. They are also the focal point of study and education. Once again, the academics and institutions employ traditional methods to teach their students, but they are also investigating current trends. As more and more artists are allowed to travel and study abroad and then return to teach or enter the job market, the Chinese cultural vocabulary will undoubtedly expand to incorporate new and innovative approaches to the creative process. My visit to China confirmed my belief in the arts as a universal language which can bring together diverse cultures and people to share in the greatest of human endeavors. ■



Artist in Hangshou, China.

Jeffrey A. Kesper is NJSCA Executive Director.

CRAFTS IN CHINA

by Yang Lizhou

Potter at work in Jingdezhen, Jiangx Province.



JEFFREY A. KESPER

for cultural development made up only 0.4 per cent of its total expenditures; expenditures for construction of cultural facilities only 0.2 per cent of total investment in capital construction.

In recent years, there has been some improvement, but far from enough. Cultural construction has been viewed as non-productive and relegated to the end of the long queue waiting for State funds. Once there is a decision to cut investment in capital construction, cultural projects are usually among the first to go.

There should be different yardsticks for cultural and economic development because of their different natures, Hu said. Overemphasis on economic benefits in cultural development is wrong. Recently, many entertainment units have been asked to assume sole responsibility for profits or losses, and are required to pay taxes like other enterprises. As a result many spend their time and energy on raising money rather than upgrading their professional level.

Some newspapers and magazines, in the face of rising paper costs, have turned to printing low-taste stories to attract readers. By so doing, they ignore the social effect of the media. At the same time, some good and useful books, especially those on scientific subjects, cannot be published because their readership is limited.

Many leading officials stress ideological education of the people, but their concept of such education centres mainly on speeches and lectures. Little attention is paid to the role that films, television, fiction and the arts can play in promoting socialist morality. Some leaders now even blame

these entertainment media for the rise in juvenile crimes.

Hu hoped that leaders will gain an understanding of the relation between economic and cultural development. A developed culture is as important as an advanced economy in modernizing a country, Hu said. It is true that without a developed economy, there will be no developed culture, but the opposite is also true. They complement each other. ■

This article is the last in a series written by the Chinese Arts Administration and reprinted in Arts-New Jersey.

The Central Institute of Arts and Crafts came into being in November 1956 and has grown from three faculties—Dyeing and Weaving Arts, Artistic Ceramics and Potteries, and Artistic Decoration—to nine faculties that include Dyeing and Weaving Design, Ceramic Design, Decorative Design, Book Arts, Artistic Industrial Design, Special Arts and Crafts, Interior Design, Garments Design, and History of Arts and Crafts.

In our Institute, which currently has a total enrollment of over 600 students including undergraduates and special diploma students, stress is laid on the teaching principle of combining both theory and practice, both designing and

manufacturing, both inheriting and creating, both teaching and producing, and both art and science in the teaching process. Attention is paid to making students concerned with people's material and cultural life. Efforts are made to organize students to conduct social and market surveys. Efforts are also made to better our students' aesthetic judgment, increase their ability for art creation and design, and enable them to master various ways of artistic expressions. Students are encouraged to participate in arts and crafts experimentation and in field work in factories so that they can familiarize themselves with industrial production processes, get hold of basic operational technology and skills, and enhance their capabilities for their future jobs.

Importance is also attached to the collection, classification, study and application of reference material and infor-

HORTENSE GREEN HONORED

On May 17, New Jersey State Council on the Arts Crafts Coordinator Hortense Green received an honorary Doctor of Arts from Georgian Court College in Lakewood. The degree was awarded in recognition of Ms. Green's dedication to the promotion of the arts—particularly crafts—in New Jersey.

A former professional dancer with the Metropolitan Opera Ballet, Ms. Green has served as crafts coordinator at the Council since 1978. ■



Sister Barbara A. Williams, president of Georgian Court College, presents Hortense Green with an honorary doctorate in recognition of Ms. Green's work on behalf of crafts in New Jersey.

GOVERNOR'S AWARD IN ART EDUCATION

For five consecutive years the Governor's Awards in Art Education, cosponsored by the Alliance for Arts Education and the Department of Education, have recognized the outstanding arts achievements of students and teachers in New Jersey. This year Berda Stout Rittenhouse, the NJSCA's Arts Education Coordinator, was among the eighteen distinguished educators honored by Governor Thomas H. Kean. Ms. Rittenhouse received the Art Educators of New Jersey Certificate of Achievement.

An art educator with twenty years teaching experience, the Milford resident joined the Council staff in 1979 to further develop quality educational programming in the arts. Ms. Rittenhouse holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education from Bucknell University and a Masters in Education/Creative Arts from Rutgers University. ■



Governor Thomas H. Kean congratulates NJSCA Coordinator Berda Rittenhouse as she receives a Governor's Award in Arts Education.

mation on national and folk arts and crafts and fine arts, and to learning from the classical and modern arts and crafts of foreign countries. For many years, the Institute has organized teachers and students to participate in many important designing tasks for the society in combination with academic teaching and scientific research.

Teachers and students have designed and placed interior furnishing including furniture and light arrangements, decorative paintings, ornamental fabrics, tea sets, and dinner service for the Great Hall of the People, the State Guest House, the Museum of the Chinese Revolution, the military museum in Beijing, recently erected hotels and restaurants, Chairman Mao's Memorial Hall, and the new Capitol Airport Lounge Building.

In addition, the Institute has also taken on the designing of exhibition halls for a great number of large-scale exhibitions, models for transportation vehicles, ship interior decoration, shapes and decoration of light industrial and textile products, commodity packaging, books and garments. All these practices have helped improve steadily the quality of teaching and studying. In order to ensure the undertaking of such designing tasks for the society in a more planned way on the basis of completing the teaching program, a designing center was set up in 1980 for the purpose of accepting the designing tasks for society. ■

Yang Lizhou is Chief of the Division of Fine Arts, Arts Bureau, Ministry of Culture in the Peoples Republic of China

NEW INFORMATION SERVICES DIRECTOR



The Council recently appointed Mary Chris Rospond to the position of Director of Information Services.

The Information Services Office plays a vital role in virtually every Council function, promoting agency services and programs to the public through its publications and media projects. The department also serves as a clearinghouse for statewide and national information on the arts.

Formerly Public Relations Officer at the Newark Museum in charge of the promotion of some 40 exhibitions and over 300 cultural events annually, Rospond comes to the Council after ten years of national museum experience.

The art historian did curatorial work in the Department of Modern Art at the Detroit Institute of Arts. She later co-authored a book on regional artists for the Smithsonian Institution's Archives of Modern Art.

"After giving museum tours to unemployed auto workers in the late '70s and having them actually come to 'like' modern art, I decided to depart from the research library and concentrate on making the arts more accessible to the general public through cultural public relations. This new position with the Council offers me the challenge to do just that," says the Montclair resident.

Rospond attended Seton Hall University in South Orange and graduated from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor in 1977. ■

POETRY BY BRIGIT PEGEEN KELLY

*So this is the Sabbath, the stillness
in the garden, magnolia
bells drying damp petticoats
over the porch rail, while bicycle
wheels thrum and the full-breasted tulips
open their pink blouses
for the hands that pressed them first
as bulbs into the earth.
Bread, too, cools on the sill,
and finches scatter bees
by the Shell Station where a boy
in blue denim watches oil
spread in phosphorescent scarves
over the cement. He dips
his brush into a bucket and begins*

to scrub, making slow circles
and stopping to splash water on the children
who, hours before it opens,
juggle bean bags outside Gantsy's
Ice Cream Parlor,
while they wait for color to drench their tongues,
as I wait for water to bloom
behind me, — white foam, as of magnolias,
as of green and yellow
birds bathing in leaves, — wait,
as always, for the day, like bread, to rise,
and, with movement
imperceptible, accomplish everything.

DOING LAUNDRY ON SUNDAY —

Brigit Pegeen Kelly

Brigit Pegeen Kelly lives on a farm in Blairstown with her husband and two children and works as the associate editor of the children's literary magazine *Shoe Tree* and as a part-time teacher. Her poems have appeared in a number of magazines and anthologies including the *Anthology of Magazine Verse and Yearbook of American Poetry*, *The Beloit Poetry Journal*, *Ironwood*, *Northwest Review*, *New England Review*, *Poetry*, *Poetry Northwest* and *Prairie Schooner*. She was a 1985 recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts Poetry Fellowship and one of the 1986 winners of *The Nation*/"Discovery" contest.

Kelly grew up in a large family in the Midwest and after studying theatre and printmaking at Indiana University, earned a Licensed Practical Nursing degree from a technical college. She worked in nursing and theatre for a number of years in Indiana, California, and Oregon. She later completed a Bachelor's degree in creative writing and counseling at the University of Oregon, where she taught playwriting and composition as a graduate teaching fellow.

After Your Nap

I carry you outside
and we sit on the porch,

before us the vast expanse of bee-studded lawn
and the blank pastel shingle of the housing opposite.

In an upstairs window the dim t-shirt of a man moves,
is swallowed, returns again from shadow—a buoy

indolently bobbing on a gray and mild sea.
You roll away from me and lie on your back,

the small sack of your body filling slowly with itself,
while children careen and call

and I cradle my marriage gently in my lap—
a quiet thing, small, a thing barely breathing

like those curtains rising so faintly opposite
that could at any moment become taut, full-bellied

or fall to utter stillness.
The sky is ash colored, purple to the north—

they are burning grass from the fields.
The light is growing loose, the way clothes do

after having been worn for a long time.
In wide banded circles the birds rise and fall.

I run my hand over the neat purse of your small belly
the hard knot of your pubis

and think how surely we are contained
how well our small boundaries love us.

The Hill (for Huck)

When the dog barks at nothing, when the heat
lightning makes its phantoms in this sky—those who are passing,
those who are passing, wearing their robes,

even they have their hungers—then you by the gate
have no power to harm me. I shall go out
as the crickets do with the frost, letting their lake

of sound thin to ice. I shall go out
and this field will no longer be mine where one poplar stands
and the archer's target draws the night's

invisible arrows down, draws down the stars.
They fall into the target as into the sea and so we are born
and so shall die on this hill or elsewhere

and pass over this hill or elsewhere, lighting
the sky when it is hot and the flesh remembers its songs.
I will trust the dream. My son holds

the arrow in his hand, holds time
to its target and its grief, and time like lightning will split
the shaft, leaving this land to others—
and him to me.

To the Lost Child
(for Anna)

This is the field you did not come to, this
the damp November day confederate
clouds trail defeat across. The far hills
are purple as the ashes of old fires,
and black as guns or crutches the trees. But the fields
are oddly green, still, in this winter
thaw. Or perhaps it is late fall—the small
measures we find ourselves with
don't change the movement of things. We, like this crow,
passing over the cedars in lazy,
widening circles, wobbling and sliding
as it rights itself by some internal
decree, can only ride the currents that *are*,
and are not held, up and down.

I am glad
of the crows, they are like my own hands, always
here, always remembering the day
to itself, glad of the trees, of the startling
red weeds and blue pools of shale in this field
where one tulip poplar stands brisk
and tall as a good child, a bee box
at her feet, a bee box full of humming. And
this humming is the maker, the body
of the gold it broods over. This must be
so. Pollen would have no savor if it came
from colorless flowers, and silent bees,
for all their flying, would make no honey
but some watery substance, or nothing
at all. For sound does make things happen.
The cows wander and when they cry
I heave hay, rank with mold and the months
of dust that fly up in blue clouds, over
the fence; the red-hatted hunter shouts
and the deer careers into or away
from the arrow's whistling arc; planes moan,
the head rises to heaven. And, Anna,
had you called as our bull calf Moses did,
all night when he was first new, tied to a pine
under our window, bullying the thin air
he found himself in, wailing at the cows
on the other side of the fence
who would not see him for what he was,

until he forgot what he was and thought
we were one of him and he a fine man
in his uniform—had you called you would
have brought the sweet milk trickling between
your lips to form its lovely, cloudy pool.
I will not be sad. I count the things
I put in a box for us, all I thought
you would see, the scrawny forsythia starters—
pulled from the mother plant that smothers
the gate and each year must be thinned—tottering
along the drive, the deer trail lined with
the yellow roses that are still foolishly
blooming, the pines that cut the gray sky,
and the brilliant burning bush that all improbably
Moses, then grown, ate most of before
he barrelled away through the woods to
the farmer's far barley field where proud and stupid
he ate his fill until we, weeping, took
him away to one whose sturdy fence
would keep him home.

I can sit for a long
time now. Some war is over. Below me
the bog in the woods is black
and pungent with decay and the oil from
the red cans the old tenant left, and below that,
at the base of the hill, the rushing
stream is a gathering of voices. Many
voices. Yours. Mine. It moves, we move, and hands,
these things that find and belong to each
other, also move and carry like water
more than themselves as they fly in their bird-
like ways toward whatever small purposes
they have been given.

WOMEN IN THE ARTS: AMERICAN WOMEN WRITERS

by Ronnie Weyl

This past spring Rutgers University Press inaugurated the American Women Writers Series, with a group of four volumes written by major women writers from the 1820s to the 1920s. Rutgers University Press hopes to continue the series and reprint two or three more each year.

Joanne Dobson, Judith Fetterly, and Elaine Showalter are the series editors. Together they choose a scholar to edit each volume in the series.

The first four books released in April 1986 are: *How Celia Changed Her Mind and Selected Stories* by Rose Terry Cooke, edited by Elizabeth Ammons; *Ruth Hall and Other Writings* by Fanny Fern, edited by Joyce W. Warren; *Hobomok and Other Writings on Indians* by Lydia Maria Child, edited by Carolyn L. Karcher; *Quicksand and Passing* by Nella Larsen, edited by Deborah E. McDowell.

Three more works have been selected for publication in the spring of 1987: *Old Town Folks* by Harriet Beecher Stowe, edited by Dorothy Berkson; *Hope Leslie* by Catharine Sedgwick, edited by Mary Kelley; and *The Land of Little Rain and Lost Borders* by Mary Austin, edited by Marjorie Pryse.

To learn more about the series, *Arts-New Jersey* spoke with one of the series editors, Judith Fetterly, who is a full professor in the English Department and Women's Studies Program at the State University of New York-Albany.

How did the idea for an American Womens' Writers Series come about?

I had been concentrating primarily on the application of feminist criticism to classical American literary texts and had to decide whether to continue in that particular pattern, working with male texts, or to pursue working on women writers. I was intrigued by the possibility of nineteenth-century American women writers in particular. If you talk to most people, they would say there are none. Interestingly enough, these same people know the work of the British women writers from the nineteenth-century—Austen, the Brontes. I decided to explore what works I could find and to determine if the work was as bad as “they” said it was, that is, just sentimental drivel or trash.

In the spring of 1980, I took a sabbatical and read 200 texts over an eight-month period. Just to think about the field, I needed to immerse myself in this kind of extensive primary reading. I discovered a great deal of interesting material and it became clear to me that until someone could make the work available to a wider reading audience, my primary task would be to get it back in print and make it accessible to the general public.

How did all three editors come together and then find a publisher to become interested in the project?

I submitted proposals for anthologies to various publishers and out of that came two projects. One was *Provisions* which includes selections of the work of sixteen women writers, along with biographical material and critical reviews. I also co-

edited with Marjorie Pryse *American Women Regional Writers 1850–1920*. At a Modern Language Association conference, North Eastern University Press approached me and Joanne whom I had already begun working closely with, and expressed interest in reprints. Joanne and I sent that press a proposal which they chose not to accept. Then we met Leslie Mitchner, senior editor at Rutgers University Press, and she convinced her publisher to take the risk on a reprint series. Elaine was negotiating with a commercial press to edit a reprint series of works by late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century American women writers, but decided to join us at Rutgers Press.

We all have Leslie to thank. With an indefatigable spirit, she works with us in the selection process and shepherds the volumes through the press. We could not do it without her.

Could you explain the selection process?

Joanne and I originally compiled a list of texts based on our sense of what qualified as a major text. We were sensitive to issues of creating another literary canon, since women have been excluded by the established canon, but we did have to make choices. All of us read the various texts and come to an agreement at our editorial meetings. We are putting together a series that pro-

vides interesting and essential and crucial works of the most significant and influential American women writers from the 1820s to the 1920s. We initially invited people specializing in the field to write introductions to each volume. Since the series has begun, we have been receiving a number of proposals from individuals who wish to write introductions for particular works.

The response to the series has been excellent. Why are contemporary audiences so enthralled with works written more than a hundred years ago?

One of the possible definitions of any good piece of literature is that it continues to interest people beyond the interest it held for a limited group of people at a particular point in time. As a literary critic, it is interesting to reconstruct how a book appeared to people then, compared to how it strikes us now. But what is most interesting is what it has to say to us now.

Womens' literature of the nineteenth century is more modern than the works written by male writers living at that time. Hawthorne and Melville, for instance, used archaic language. And just look at their notion of characterization and the hemming of plot. Then look at Catharine Sedgwick or Carolyn Kirkland. Kirkland's *A New Home*, which is a series of letters sent from the Michigan frontier to New York and published in 1839, has a contemporary voice.

Women in the nineteenth



century had more of a sense of audience. They were writing to other women. They knew why they were writing and felt more comfortable with the language they were using. *They* were the popular American writers at the time and sold their works. Just consider the number of people who know Harriet Beecher Stowe.

Why have these works been condemned to obscurity?

My response has a lot to do with my theories on American women and men, on American culture, on literature, and on gender and literature. It's hard to give as thorough and sophisticated an answer as I would like. I'll simply say that in American culture, literary activity has always been seen as

a feminine activity. The arts in general are considered a feminine activity. That explains why the nineteenth-century male writers were not clear as to who they were, what they were doing, and to whom they were talking.

However, when the canon of American literature developed, it included only white middle-class men; it fit into the notion of a man's world. Paul Lauder has written a book on this topic. At the point where the teaching of literature became a profession, it became subject to the same trend: male teachers selected male texts which portrayed males in literature. Ironically, the vast majority of literature students are women who are taught by men and read men's works, works that do not speak to the experience of women.

So why is the climate right now for a reprint series of works by relatively unknown American women writers?

The feminist movement has had an impact on the field of

literature and literary criticism and has generated a good deal of interest in women's writings. You also have to look at trends in criticism. Today there are many schools of literary criticism that are scrutinizing canonization and dealing less with traditional and accepted texts. Once the interest starts, it takes off on its own momentum. The texts by women writers are there. It's just a matter of getting them back in print to be read. ■

Ronnie Weyl is a contributing editor to *Arts-New Jersey*.

The first four volumes in the American Women Writers Series can be ordered through Rutgers University Press, 109 Church Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901. Cost of *Ruth Hall and Other Writings*, *How Celia Changed Her Mind*, and *Hobomok and Other Writings on Indians* is \$30 (cloth); \$9.95 (paper). Cost of *Quicksand and Passing* is \$25 (cloth); \$7.95 (paper). Add \$1.50 postage and handling and (if you are a New Jersey resident) six percent sales tax. A review of *Quicksand and Passing* by Nella Larsen will appear in the next issue of *Arts-New Jersey*.

COLLECTING IN THE EIGHTIES

by Sam Hunter

As community involvement and corporate support of the arts become increasingly important to many of the major corporations in this country, the task of assembling privately owned collections for public viewing has become an art form of its own. When Commodities Corporation of Princeton began to assemble their collection, they enlisted the help of Sam Hunter, professor of Art History at Princeton University.

Dr. Hunter played an important role in assembling the Commodities Corporation Collection and recorded some of the difficulties and challenges of acquisition in his introduction to the catalogue, *NEW DIRECTIONS: Contemporary American Art from the Commodities Corporation Collection*. In the following excerpts from his essay, he articulates the principles that guided him in selecting works by emerging artists and talks about the vitality of the visual arts in the eighties.

My working criteria for making the choices might be of interest to the general viewer. For unfamiliar artists, a corpus of consistent work became as important a measure of success as the evidence of striking talent or sensibility. As one example, I vividly remember the pleasure and satisfaction of beholding row upon row of carefully arranged racks of paintings, all on a very high level of excellence, in Joseph Marioni's immaculate loft. The impression of a controlled order testified to an exemplary professionalism, which the paintings themselves (despite their wayward drips and scumbles) more than sustained upon a more careful study of the work.

For the better known artists, where stylistic tendencies have already been identified and clarified, the problem of evaluation was made simpler by the risks taken by other critics, and by the courage of a few enterprising art dealers. A major critical task is documenting a common sensibility for style, and assessing it in the course of discovering new individual talent. However, the most compelling and responsible judgments of new art are won from direct contact with the object. Some understanding of the issues art raises in response to the past is necessary to confer authority on such judgments beyond merely personal taste. An aura quickly surrounds influential new work, and it is often difficult to distinguish between genuine innovation, or promise, and the taste for change and novelty for their own sake. The surest beacon I have

found, besides an abiding faith in one's own instinctual judgment, is keeping a dialogue open with new work and new artists.

In making the collection, it soon became apparent that we have been passing through a period of transition and pluralism, as numerous commentators have noted repeatedly. Charles Jencks, the architectural historian, described it more accurately as a "Radical Eclecticism" in elucidating Post-Modernist architecture at the 1980 Venice Biennale exhibition, "The Presence of the Past." The current range of expression in paintings and sculpture extends from historicism to a continuing if somewhat enfeebled purist, abstract impulse; from vernacular and primitivist styles to photo documentary and Conceptual art. We seem to share in the visual arts the individualistic, self-centered spirit of the "me decade" apparent in other regions of high and low culture. And the mix of the two cultural standards also continues to be a source of inventiveness and even of social affirmations, despite the parlous state of the economy, the world, and the ecology.

Old formalist beliefs in the simple art object, or icon, as the basic neutral and unchanging source of meaning have been compromised recently by the exposure to new linguistic and structuralist viewpoints. Siteworks, Post-Modernist per-

Bruce Paterson
Mondrian Singing, 1976
Photograph: tape, pastel
applied
30" x 40"
The Commodities Corporation
Collection



Edward Bond
Juicer
Acrylic on canvas
67" x 49"
The Commodities Corporation
Collection



NJ MUSICIAN AT INTERLOCHEN



Elizabeth Lipnick of Scotch Plains met with New Jersey State Council on the Arts Executive Jeffrey Kesper this summer at the National Music Camp, Interlochen, Michigan.

Elizabeth, age 16, daughter of M/M Richard Lipnick, 1251 Lenape Way, attended the National Music Camp this summer to study oboe. She joined 1500 other students from across the United States and 20 other countries to study at the world famous camp which offers an eight-week summer program for young people ages eight through university. Students study music, dance, visual arts or theatre, and may go on to professional positions in major art organizations around the country.

Kesper attended the Institute for Executive Directors of the National Assemblies of States Arts Agencies which was held on the campus of the National Music Camp. ■

New Jersey musician Elizabeth Lipnick with NJSCA Executive Director Jeffrey A. Kesper.

formance pieces, and Conceptual art have broadened the assault on the formalist ideals of the sixties. So has the intellectual vogue of semiology, which argues for the right of the reader, or the viewer of art objects, to interpret and in effect to create the work before him. As the critic Stanley Fish recently wrote: "Interpretation is not the art of construing but constructing. Interpreters do not decode poems; they make them." Nonetheless, many works of quality even among the younger generation still persist in the reductive, 'Late Modernist' styles, despite the turn to vernacular idioms, on the one hand, and to a more cerebral and conceptualized approach on the other. A radical eclecticism assumes that old hierarchies and orders of dominant and subordinate styles have been discarded. Today, almost anything goes—so long as it can be aesthetically sustained and critically rationalized.

In fact, the rapprochement of various styles and moods is so striking, after the puritanical austerities of the sixties and seventies, that art today, in the process of change and détente, has found a new, more ebullient purpose and greater expressionist zest, with a fine impartiality, in both figurative and abstract modes. Rather than deplore the absence of certified masters, we should applaud and appreciate the extraordinary range of creative vitality.

There seems to be an assumption that "new" artists achieve celebrity and commercial success much too rapidly today only to be replaced by a fresh and highly regarded avant garde and fashionable new style virtually overnight. The result has been a stiffen-

ing of public resistance to "emerging" art, on the whole, rather than a widening sympathy for it. Anyone who takes the actual trouble to track through New York and regional studios and art galleries seriously pursuing new art must realize that the struggle for public acceptance among artists of quality goes on much as it always has, even though the opportunities for recognition through gallery shows and critical notices have multiplied many times over.

Advanced artists and all other categories of artists still seek a community of like-minded spirits who recognize their worth and form a generous ambiance in which new work can receive the critical scrutiny it needs to realize its potential. An informed audience and patron group willing to commit funds to new art are the *sine qua non* of cultural health. In bringing about this salutary condition, the imaginative and enlightened corporate patron has an increasingly important role to play, all the more so in a period when public programs have been so drastically cut back.

One can only hope that many more private and institutional collectors will support the more challenging forms of advanced art today. By so doing they can contribute meaningfully to the further stabilization and well being of our most serious and promising artistic community. ■

Sam Hunter is a Professor of Art History at Princeton University.

Applause

As coordinator for the New Jersey Theatre Group, I wish to congratulate you and the staff of the Arts Council for the superb new *Arts-New Jersey*. It is most attractive in layout and in the quality of the articles is exceptional. Hearty congratulations on your great "opening" and best wishes for a long run.

Heide Holtz-Eakin
Group Coordinator
New Jersey Theatre Group

On the Cover

Just browsing through the NJ State Council on the Arts Spring issue featuring a great article about my friend Adolf Konrad. Your magazine is beautiful and the cover reproduction exciting.

W. Carl Burger
Professor of Fine Arts
Kean College of New Jersey

Intensity

The spring edition of *Arts-New Jersey* was superb in appearance and in content. However, the contrast in intensity of tone between the printed matter and the paper was such that I found myself straining to read the material.

Charlotte Kleinfeld
Haddonfield, NJ

We thought so, too. We've changed printers and hope that the ink distribution will be improved in future issues.

Out of State

I love the look of *Arts-New Jersey*! It is both sophisticated and readable, a combination essential to state arts agency publications but not easy to do successfully.

You should all be very proud of the statement you are making about excellence in the arts.

Ardath Goldstein Weaver
Director of Support Services
North Carolina Arts Council

Montclair Art Museum

I received the Summer 1986 issue of *Arts-New Jersey* in this morning's mail. Intending to leaf through it casually, I was instead drawn in by the depth of coverage, the fine writing, and the excellent photography. I read it cover to cover.

What a delight! A professional, informative, timely, and lively publication on New Jersey art and artists. Keep up the good work!

Louise M. Horgan
Public Relations/
Publications Coordinator
Montclair Art Museum

Composer

This is to thank you for the article in the latest issue of *Arts-New Jersey*. I received my copy as I was putting the finishing touches on one of my fellowship compositions, and I must say that the article gave me a special feeling of pride in my work. The magazine is beautiful and I am happy to have been part of the summer issue.

Nicolas Roussakis
Composer

Arts-New Jersey
Volume 1, Number 3
Autumn 1986

Editor **Noreen M. Tomassi**
Contributing Editor **Ronnie Weyl**
Design **Johnson & Simpson**
Printing **Harvard Printing**
Typesetting **Optima**

Arts-New Jersey is published four times a year by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, a division of the Department of State. Letters to the editor and queries for articles should be addressed to Editor, *Arts-New Jersey*, 109 West State Street, Trenton, NJ 08625.

The New Jersey State Council on the Arts

109 West State Street, CN 306
Trenton, New Jersey 08625

Address Correction Requested

Bulk Rate
U.S. Postage
PAID
Trenton, N.J.
Permit No. 21

State of New Jersey

Thomas H. Kean, *Governor*

Department of State

Jane Burgio, *Secretary of State*

The New Jersey State Council on the Arts

Margaret Hager Hart, *Chairman*

Cheryl Martinez, *Vice-Chairman*

Joseph J. Amato, M.D.

Elizabeth G. Christopherson

David J. Farris

Franklin V. Fischer

Jerome Hines

Jean von Deesten Hooper

Dolores A. Kirk

Joanna E. LaSane

Gerald A. LeBoff

Lillian Levy

Michelle Mathesius

Assemblywoman Maureen Ogden, *Ex Officio*

Celeste S. Penney

Clement Alexander Price

Kevin Shanley

Senator Gerald R. Stockman, *Ex Officio*

Jeffrey A. Kesper, *Executive Director*

Barbara F. Russo, *Assistant Executive Director*

Mary Chris Rospond, *Director of Information Services*

Bonnie Bird, *Assistant Visual Arts/Arts Education Coordinator*

Hortense Green, *Crafts Coordinator*

Angelo Hall, *Assistant Grants Coordinator*

Kathi R. Levin, *Performing Arts Coordinator*

Ann Marie Makoski, *Grants Coordinator*

Ken McClain, *Arts Development Services Coordinator*

David Miller, *State/County Partnership Program Coordinator*

Rita Moonsammy, *Folk Arts Coordinator*

Tom Moran, *Visual Arts Coordinator*

Berda Rittenhouse, *Arts Education Coordinator*

Noreen M. Tomassi, *Literary Arts/Publications Coordinator*