

A R T S

N E W J E R S E Y



THE NEW JERSEY STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS
WINTER 1987

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In a matter of twenty-four hours, stockbrokers, truck drivers, retired citizens, and artists watched the stock market collapse and their investments and savings vanish. For months, there were signals indicating that the bullish market was faltering, but the 'crash' still came as a shock to many. And once again it brought to light the stark realization that a good thing doesn't last forever.

Undoubtedly many will suffer from their financial loss, but perhaps the most poignant victims are the young men and women fresh out of business school who settled in comfortably at major investment firms and felt entitled to become millionaires by the age of thirty. Many are now contemplating unemployment lines, wondering what hit them. Those who recognized the market's potential risks, diversified their investments, and planned for the future have suffered less devastating setbacks.

While one might argue that public support for the arts is

not as risky as the stock market, a parallel does exist. New Jersey provides a perfect case in point. In the past five years, New Jersey has experienced a boom economy. Moreover, we have had an unusually supportive Governor whose commitment to excellence in the arts has manifested itself in dramatic increases in the State Arts Council's budget, as well as a legislature that has approved and supported these increases. Consequently, we have all adopted an attitude of increased expectations. Unfortunately this attitude has given way to the notion of entitlement—an entitlement to dollars regardless of any evaluation of a group's artistry, fiscal accountability, or organizational management.

The Council has watched this trend of thought—"just give me my fair share"—evolve

and feels some alarm. Secretary of State Jane Burgio has spoken strongly against such thinking on the part of our arts groups and has urged them to think, instead, of actively cultivating other sources of support and solidifying their gain for the future. She has also encouraged the arts community to continue to monitor and support the positive work of legislators who have supported the arts. While the Kean administration has been bullish on the arts, there is no guarantee this era of understanding, commitment, and support will continue with the next administration.

Council member Dr. Clement Price points out that the feeling of entitlement is a significant part of the democratization of the arts. It is a good indication of our constituents' acceptance and ownership of the arts funding process.

Dr. Price makes an excellent point, and the specifics of his statement need to be stressed. In a democracy which involves

a state agency, constituents are entitled to a fair, objective evaluation and award process. Our arts groups are entitled to funding based on that process and their proven artistic excellence, administrative capabilities, and fiscal soundness. In other words, they must earn it. Arts groups are not necessarily entitled to receive a grant just because they exist.

If the Council were to eliminate the grants evaluation process and increase the grant awards made to arts organizations each year, without scrutinizing their performance and evaluating their goals, objectives, and long range plans, we would be committing a grave disservice to our arts constituents. First, we would be neglecting our responsibility to the State of New Jersey whose residents are entitled to

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On the Cover

The Plagues (Rivers of Blood)
1986
Miriam Beerman
Oil on Canvas
103" x 72"

NOVELIST PAULA SHARP TRACES THE SOURCES OF HER FICTION

by Mark Hillbringhouse

Paula Sharp always wanted to be a writer ever since she was in high school back in Wisconsin. Born in California, she was raised by her mother in North Carolina, New Orleans, and the Midwest, and has lived in Jersey City for the past eight years. Now working as a public defender for The Court of Appeals for the City of New York, she leads a double life, that of a full-time lawyer and published writer.

Neither endeavor seems to be suffering. This past July, she received a Distinguished Artist Award in literature from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, an honor bestowed upon only twelve other artists.

“Two days after the New Jersey State Council on the Arts informed me that I had won this fellowship award, I learned that my novel caught the interest of a publisher, and it was also the day I won my first case! When it rains it pours,” she exclaimed.

Sharp plans on using the fellowship award and the advance from her first novel to take a leave of absence from her law career in order to write. “I went to law school interested in public defense and I love helping my clients, but I also love to write and need the time to focus on that.”

She already knows the value of writing full-time. “A few years ago, an agent who had read one of my short stories in *The New England Review* called me and told me he liked the story and suggested I write a novel. In 1985, I took a year off from my job and went with my husband to live in a backwater town in Brazil along the



MICHAEL J. PETERS

**NJSCA Distinguished Artist
Paula Sharp**

AN EXCERPT FROM SHARP'S NOVEL, *THE WOMAN WHO WAS NOT ALL THERE*

"The worst one I ever had to deal with was [my daughter] Iva Lee's father," Ellen Moody followed Marjorie. "Didn't he promise to marry me and then a nosey lady in Amarillo tells me she heard him bragging he had more women on the side than he could count. Said he had left a wife behind in the Arkansas half of Texarkana and another in Brownsville, Texas, and hadn't divorced either one of them. I told the nosey lady I didn't believe it but then she got specific, and could even tell me the name of the Brownsville wife: Marguerite Fate, never will forget that name. The nosey lady says: 'That's bigamy, is what it is, and if you marry him too it'll be something even worse, double bigamy!' So when T-Bird comes by the house that night, I say, 'T-Bird, is it true you're harsing around? Is it true you've got women on the side?' And he says to me, now listen to this one: 'Sure I got women on both sides. But you're in the middle.' Next day I packed up my clothes and Iva Lee, who was hardly more than four months and smaller than a loaf of Wonder Bread, and we took a Greyhound to as far as I could pay to go.

... "Let me put my two cents in," said Faith. "I heard a lady at the laundry mat say that once when she got restless for some loving, she tried applying to one of those dating services. She got a call from a hundred-year-old man who was spending all summer in Florida, but had flown back home to bury his dog. It was a Weimaraner who had run into a cement mixer, and the man told her everything about the funeral; it was a full burial with all the trappings, including a Methodist minister. She said that that cured her for good from worrying about getting a man." ■

Amazon where he was doing social research on migrant workers. I thought this would probably be the only time in my life when I'd have the time to undertake such a project as writing a novel. While my husband was doing oral histories with the local farmers, I wrote five hours a day in the back of the bar where we lived, next to a grain warehouse.

"It was like being in the wild west, with a strange blend of characters moving between the old and new. I had just graduated Columbia Law School and here I was living on the edge of the jungle, getting to know the natives, learning the language, and writing my book."

When Sharp finished the novel, she sent it to the agent who had originally phoned her, but after reading it, he told her

the manuscript wouldn't sell. Instead of letting this rejection dash her hopes, she queried an editorial assistant she knew at Dutton for the name of a good, female agent, and contacted Gina Maccoby. Sharp made an appointment to see her, but at the designated hour, overcome with nerves, she left the manuscript on Maccoby's desk and darted out of the office. Within a few days, Maccoby called her to say she liked the book and would represent her. Maccoby submitted the manuscript to two publishing houses; the third, Harper & Row, offered Sharp a contract and an advance.

The novel, *The Woman Who Was Not All There*, due to be

published next September, centers around a southern woman raising a family by herself in a small town in North Carolina during the late 1960s and early 1970s. The female protagonist leads a somewhat unconscious existence, almost unaware of the great social and civil upheavals happening around her. The writing is rich in metaphor and allusions which vividly convey a woman's struggle in a world where men are seen as intruders. The opening passage reads:

"Marjorie's husband Byron Coffin had misled her for so long, she learned to lean away from life to keep from falling over, like a woman walking a large dog."

Sharp says she wanted to create characters that were be-



Novelist Paula Sharp

lievable to see and hear; she also wanted to tell a good story. "I like the idea of portraying a woman who was not all there during a volcanic time in our history. My characters in the novel are never in the center of the action. They remain at the periphery, almost marginal figures. As a feminist, I thought it would be interesting to write about an opposite sort of woman than I," but she confesses, "I actually drew the emotions for this character from the woman inside of me. Every woman has another woman, an opposite dwelling within."

Sharp's writing is filled with concern and compassion for the fates of her characters as they go about their daily lives in their struggle to get by. She does this by cutting close to the fabric of small town, southern existence, always keeping a wry sense of humor. She says her job as a legal aid lawyer has taught her compassion. "I see firsthand how our society wants to relegate the poor and criminals to something less than human."

Growing up in the South has also provided grist for the mill. "I was influenced by what I saw around me and was fascinated by the kind of people I encountered, people who lived through a changing world, yet who seemed unaffected, as if they would never change. I loved the accents I heard down there; I loved the pace."

Her fascination for southern settings can also be traced to her love of southern fiction, "for its meandering, Baroque

sort of prose and its tendency to cross over from the real to the fantastic. I'm interested in rural culture, and the South has more of that than the North. I majored in comparative literature as an undergraduate at Dartmouth and did my thesis on Latin American writers. I had a wonderful teacher there, Richard Corum, who inspired me to write and also to read the South American writers. I have found that southern writers in this country have a lot in common with their Latin American colleagues."

Sharp cites names like Ellen Gilchrist, Toni Morrison, Louise Erdrich, Russell Banks, and Raymond Carver as writers she admires. Flannery O'Connor, however, is her favorite author. "I feel that

southern writers use real people and real places more consistently in their novels than northern writers," she opines.

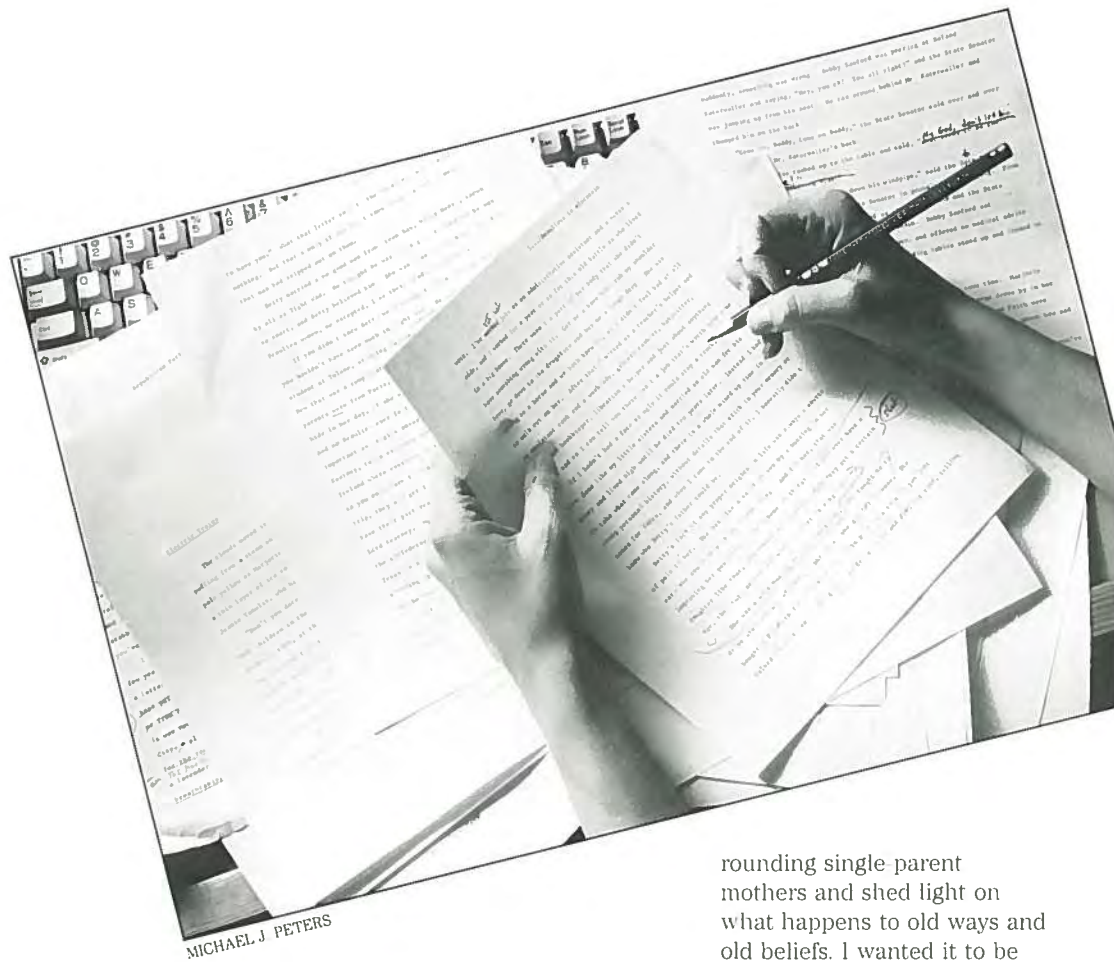
Sharp's mother has also been of great influence in her writing. "After raising me and my brother and sister," Sharp recalls, "she went back to school to get her degree. We lived in Mexico for a while when she was doing field work there as an anthropologist. That's where I learned Spanish."

In her first novel, Sharp says she wanted "to explore the stereotypes and bigotries sur-

rounding single parent mothers and shed light on what happens to old ways and old beliefs. I wanted it to be understated, to let the characters themselves reveal the inequities of a woman's world.

"In my next novel, the one I am working on now, I have set the story in Jersey City where I have been living for years. I once taught elementary school in Jersey City, and feel I really know the people, how they live and how they think. The city has a huge immigrant population on the move. I'm interested in exploring how living in Jersey City has changed the people while they try to retain their cultural ways." ■

Mark Hillringhouse teaches creative writing and composition at Passaic County Community College and is the editor of *The American Book Review*. Hillringhouse received a NJSCA poetry fellowship in 1985.



Poet Brigit Pegeen Kelly, 1987 recipient of the Yale Series of Younger Poets Award.

Arts New Jersey caught up with two former NJSCA literary arts fellowship recipients whose work is earning them national awards and publishing contracts. Mark Hillringhouse interviewed poet Brigit Pegeen Kelly, a 1986 NJSCA Distinguished Artist, and novelist Ellen Currie, a 1985 NJSCA fiction fellowship winner, to discuss their most recent accomplishments and learn how they arrived at this point in their careers.

Brigit Pegeen Kelly
The past two years have proved very rewarding to Brigit Pegeen Kelly, a poet whose work captures the energy and movement of life and the world around her. Kelly won a poetry fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts in 1985, *The Nation* magazine's Discovery Award in 1986, and a Distinguished Artist Award from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts in 1986. Most recently, Kelly won this year's Yale Series of Younger Poets Award for her manuscript entitled *The Place of Trumpets*, which will be published by Yale University Press next spring.

"Getting recognition from my home state has made me feel closer both to my community and the artistic community in New Jersey," she said during a telephone interview from her farmhouse near Blairstown, where she lives with her two children and her husband, Michael Madonick, also a poet and a 1988 NJSCA Distinguished Artist Award recipient.

"Without these awards," she continued, "and all the attention and affirmation my work has received, I wouldn't have had the luxury to focus on my writing and reading, which has allowed me to develop as an artist. I also wouldn't have



been able to complete a manuscript."

Kelly moved to New Jersey in 1983 from the Pacific Northwest where she completed her degrees in mental health counseling and creative writing at the University of Oregon. She credited two teachers for helping her mature as a writer: John Haislip, who guided her training in formal writing, and Ralph Salisbury, who encouraged her to experiment with developing her own voice. And it is with her own voice that Kelly creates the people and the drama that play such a vital role in her work.

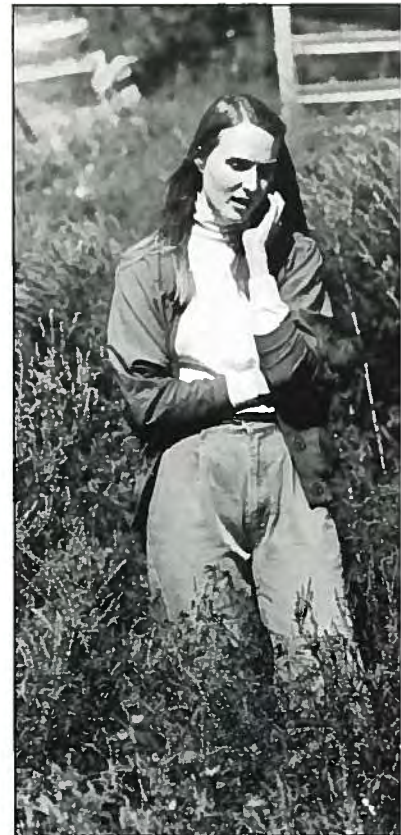
She traces her literary influences to her interest in psychology and folklore, "and the ways in which language can comprehend and reflect nature. I think we've lost sight of the intentions of nature as it operates around us and I try to acknowledge it. I also come from an Irish background steeped in folktales and myth, so I'm drawn to a lyrical tradition and to poets like Dylan Thomas and Yeats.

"My father was a big influence on me, too," she said. "He was an English professor

at the University of Indiana in Bloomington, where I grew up, and there were always books around the house; he was also always busy writing. Right now we're trying to collaborate on a play and a screenplay."

When asked what it is like being married to a poet, she admitted, "The only time there is tension is when one of us has more time to write than the other. Otherwise we're very compatible. Maybe it's because our rhythms are different. I write later in the day, at a much slower pace, and revise a great deal.

"We live pretty much in isolation up here," she continued. "This sense of isolation and the ideas that grow out of a sense of place have a way of working themselves into the writing. Of course, the monies from the New Jersey State Arts Council, and the other awards, have freed me, enabling me to take a leave of absence from my job, to explore those feelings, and to get the writing done." ■ —M.H.



Brigit Pegeen Kelly

Ellen Currie's *Available Light* was published by Summit Books in February 1986, and is now available in paperback by Washington Square Press.

Ellen Currie

For twenty-five years, Ellen Currie worked at J. Walter Thompson in New York, the largest advertising agency in the country, and spent four hours a day commuting to and from her job and Pennington, New Jersey, a semi rural area between Princeton and Trenton. Only on weekends did she find time to write. Her perseverance paid off, for in 1986, Summit Books published her first novel *Available Light* which she had worked on for two and a half years.

"I used to let everything go," she recalls, laughing. "I didn't do housework, didn't do the yard, and let the house deteriorate, just to get a couple of pages written."

Currie graduated from Adelphi University in New York and took courses in creative writing in the General Studies program at Columbia. Her teacher, Richard Humphries, liked her work and introduced her to a friend, Diarmuid Russel, a literary agent. "At the time, I was writing short stories," she said. "This was years ago, and Russel was always trying to get me to write and to publish, but the times forced me to earn a living. So I worked at J. Walter Thompson and kept getting promoted, when I finally made vice president. This past year, I was editing an in-house magazine distributed around the world and suddenly the magazine was discontinued. Just as my job folded, I heard that I won a Guggenheim fellowship. I couldn't believe my luck.

"Now I can write every day, and do so mostly in the mornings," she added. "This past summer I taught at Columbia University in the Writing Program, a very intense semester, and loved it. I loved the students. They were very serious. This winter I am teaching a fiction workshop for the Writers Voice at the West Side Y. My advice to young writers is that if you write honestly about what you see around you, you can't go wrong."

Currie's keen observations and honest portrayal of real people have earned *Available Light* significant recognition. The novel is now being translated into German and will also be published in a British edition. It has sold well, and at this writing, it has already gone into third printing and is being taught at Vassar and Sarah Lawrence.

Available Light has many voices, Currie explained. The narrative weaves through flashbacks and foreshadowing, mixing the past and present, written in third and first person points of view. "It's about kinship, about the varieties of human experience inside relationships, even about the way strangers relate to each other," she said.

"I've always been interested in behavior and why people do what they do, and I'm fascinated by the different intra-personal levels of relationships in a single family—the parents' parents and their parents and how those generations correspond with each other."

Ellen Currie is now completing a collection of short stories and a second novel that explores the relationships between the sexes, which will be entitled *The Boys Won't Let the Girls Alone*. ■ —M.H.

Novelist Ellen Currie, author of *Available Light*.



AVAILABLE LIGHT

A · N · O · V · E · L · B · Y

Ellen Currie

**"An astounding first novel...
a pungent, ferociously funny tale."**
—Walter Clemons, *Newsweek*

**"Available Light should be greeted
with celebration."**
—*The New York Times Book Review*

"An unqualified delight."
—*San Francisco Chronicle*



TOM VICTOR

THE AMERICAN STAGE COMPANY: AN ALTERNATIVE TO BROADWAY

by David Shifren

When Ted Rawlins and Jim Singer finished graduate school in Washington, D.C., moved to Manhattan, and decided three years ago to found a theatre company, they had no idea their dream would lead them to Teaneck, New Jersey. But in the two, short years since they established the American Stage Company, Bergen County's new equity theatre has witnessed a cornucopia of surprises. Its artistic director is actor Paul Sorvino; upcoming performances will star Diane Keaton, Richard Dreyfuss, Glenda Jackson, and Al Pacino; and a recent hit has been optioned for Off Broadway. Rawlins and Singer say they cannot believe their luck, but research and planning have done much to orchestrate their success.

"We conducted our own market survey," Rawlins explained, "and discovered that Bergen County comprises the state's largest concentration of theatre goers to New York, while having no theatre to call its own. We decided to go where we could find an audience and fill the void.

"New York City has been robbing New Jersey of its audiences for years," Rawlins continued, "but now, because of real estate prices, traffic, parking, and crime, New York is a less friendly environment for the arts." The statistics bear him out. A recent *Playbill* survey showed that many habitual theatre goers in New Jersey have become only occasional goers, owing to rising ticket prices and the inconvenience of traveling.

For Bergen County theatre goers, the American Stage



American Stage Company artistic director Paul Sorvino.

Company (ASC) offers an accessible alternative. The fact that ASC is easier and safer to get to and also less expensive than Broadway is no doubt appealing. Equally important, however, is the calibre of talent associated with ASC.

Paul Sorvino, a veteran of scores of films and Broadway shows, and currently a star of his own television series, brings years of experience to this fledgling company.

"I had envisioned having my own theatre for twenty years," says Sorvino, a Tenafly resident. "I just didn't know where it would be. Essentially I'm a theatre person. From rehearsals to performances, there is almost nothing about the stage I don't love."

Then there's the talent on stage. Last season's bittersweet comedy *Two for the Seesaw*, directed by Emmy-award-winning Paul Shyre, co-starred Tova Feldshuh, a nominee for

From left to right, American Stage Company's executive director James Singer, executive producer Theodore Rawlins, and associate producer Jamie Milestone.

Obie and Tony awards on Broadway, and James Hurdle, who, immediately after his ASC engagement, appeared on Broadway with Blythe Danner and Raul Julia in *Betrayal*. After starring in ASC's *The Rainmaker*, Gary Sandy left Teaneck to open on Broadway the following week in *Arsenic and Old Lace*. Finally, an upcoming show, *Possessed—The Dracula Musical*, will be directed by the legendary Morton DeCosta, original director of *Auntie Mame*, *The Music Man*, and last year's hit, *Doubles*.

"We look for the highest calibre of creative performing artists we can find and entice them to work in the most supportive and nurturing environment we can provide," says Rawlins.

"Performers who would like to do live theatre but ordinary

***Other People's Money* director John Ferraro (left) confers with playwright Jerry Sterner (center) and actor Henderson Forsythe.**



David Schramm as Larry "The Liquidator" Garfinkle in *Other People's Money* by Jerry Sterner.

ly don't for lack of time—a hit on Broadway can run indefinitely—can still rehearse with us, since we plan to run each production for only one month," Sorvino adds.

Having mounted seven productions thus far including Robert Penn Warren's *All the King's Men*, Arthur Miller's *The Price*, *Some Enchanted Evening—A Musical Review of Songs of Rodgers & Hammerstein*, and several world premieres, ASC has shown its diversity and commitment to American classics.

Support has come from several sectors. When Robert Donaldson, president of Fairleigh Dickinson University (FDU), offered the troupe use of FDU's three-hundred-seat theatre, the company gained a home. The university environment has been a blessing, for it has allowed the actors to

work in a noncommercial environment where the quality of the production is foremost. Often this is not the case in New York, where financial demands can lead to artistic compromises. "We have grown into the theatre rapidly," Rawlins explains, "and are now working with the university to develop a first class performing arts and theatre facility to accommodate audiences from Bergen County and all of northern New Jersey."

Other support has come from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, which Rawlins calls "the most progressive state arts agency in the country" and which he admits as having provided one of the main reasons he and Singer came to the Garden State.

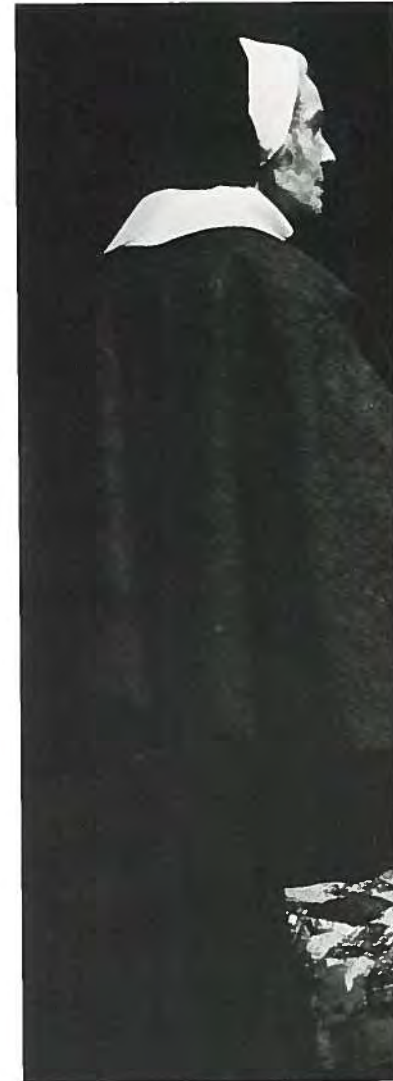
Funding from the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, "a state treasure," and the company's thousand subscribers have also helped ASC to operate "in the black," but another factor has been crucial. Approaching the enterprise as a business venture, Rawlins and Singer turned to businessmen for guidance, persuading Robert Lusko, a sales manager with Ford Motors, and Joseph Ross, a manufacturing executive, to head ASC's board.

"As corporation men," Rawlins says, "they realized that an arts organization could easily lose track of the concept of business. But under their guidance, their *strong* guidance," he quipped, suggesting that at least occasionally the artistic and business approaches clash, "we've been flourishing.

"There have always been individual patrons of the arts," Rawlins points out, "but now the most far-sighted corporations also recognize that by

AND FOR LOVERS OF THE BARD

GERRY GOODSTEIN



New Jersey Shakespeare Festival's production of Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, directed by Paul Barry. From left to right, Fiona Hale as Ann Putnam, Gedde Smith as Reverend Samuel Parris, Shannon Barry as Betty Parris, Laura Jones as Abigail Williams, Frank Nastasi as Tom Putnam.

associating themselves with theatre, they win a terrifically positive image. . . which is why the biggest corporations are also the strongest arts supporters.'

Finally, Rawlins credits Jamie Milestone, ASC's associate producer, for helping the theatre achieve so much in so short a time. "She is our voice of reality."

Besides producing plays, ASC plans to launch a professional acting school—The American Stage Conservatory—to train FDU students; to initiate a special summer program, workshops, and readings of new plays; and to develop a costume collection for use by local amateur troupes. It hopes to make its university-host a major theatrical center.

As for the play that is bound Off-Broadway, Jerry Sterner's *Other People's Money* which critics have called a comedy of "caustic wit" and "trenchant humor," and "an urgent comment on recent Wall Street scandals," its Teaneck producers expect it to undergo some changes in its journey across the Hudson.

"Obviously a lot more money will be spent on all facets," says Rawlins. "It may even get somewhat glitzy.

"But the real significance of the play 'making it' to Manhattan is that it proves we're on the right track: We're producing quality theatre. It also says to people in New Jersey, 'Listen, next time, see it here, first.'" ■

David Shifren is a screener for CBS/Fox Video, writes film and theatre reviews for newspapers and journals, and teaches creative writing at The Hudson School in Hoboken. He received a NJSCA literary arts fellowship in 1985.

"The play's the thing," said Hamlet, and anyone who doubts it can check with the New Jersey Shakespeare Festival. This year, the company, which makes its home at Drew University in Madison, is celebrating its twenty-fifth anniversary. Founded by artistic director Paul Barry "to keep the great plays of the past alive," the company presents three, fresh productions of Shakespeare each season and four other plays that feature the work of such playwrights as Noel Coward and Tom Stoppard.

In addition to their regular production season, the New Jersey Shakespeare Festival hosts an extensive internship program year round for those aspiring to work in theatre. Since 1983, the Festival has also produced a national symposium where six to eight hundred participants spend a weekend in August, attending five lectures and three plays. Guest lecturers have included Peter Saccio, chairman of the English department at Dartmouth College and author of *Shakespeare's English Kings*, and Jean Drucsedow, curator of the costume institute at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Innovative productions that often contemporize the Bard's work can explain much of the company's success. *Titan of Athens* was set during the 1929 stock market crash, while the 1970s women's

Paul Barry, artistic director, New Jersey Shakespeare Festival.



Ellen Barry, producing director, New Jersey Shakespeare Festival.



movement provided the backdrop for *Taming of the Shrew* which starred Gloria Steinem and Hugh Hefner look a likes. One year, the staging of *Richard II*, one of the company's most popular productions, coincided fortuitously with news of Watergate hitting the front pages. "Each day the headlines were mirroring what happens in the play," recalls Ellen Barry, producing director and Paul's wife.

While the company has had the same artistic director for the past twenty-five years—making it the Garden State's oldest theatre company under the same leadership—and has received support from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, some eighty corporations, three thousand subscribers, and most recently the National Endowment for the Humanities, presenting Shakespeare has not always been easy.

"Shakespeare wrote 'big' plays, and productions like *Coriolanus*—with fifty five member casts—take a large bite out of a company's budget. The greater challenge in recent years," observes Ellen Barry, "has been to lure people away from their VCRs. However, word of mouth is our best promotion," she affirms. "Nothing can compare with live theatre."

The Barrys' goal is to stage all thirty eight of Shakespeare's plays, making their company one of only a dozen in the world to have produced the entire canon. This past season they presented *Two Noble Kinsmen*, Shakespeare's last play and one of his least produced. They have only three more plays to go. ■ —D.S.

New Jersey Shakespeare Festival's production of *The Taming of the Shrew*, featuring Jonathan Smoots and Madylon Brans.

PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVES STRENGTHEN THEATRE AND DANCE COMMUNITIES

by Kathi R. Levin

Concerned with the overall development of New Jersey's arts organizations and artists, and interested in building partnerships and support networks throughout the state's arts community, the New Jersey State Council on the Arts (NJSCA) has acted as a catalyst in the creation of three statewide networks: the New Jersey Theatre Group, the New Jersey Dance Alliance, and the Presenters' Roundtable. The continued support and development of these networking groups is a major component of the NJSCA Performing Arts Program.

The groups, which meet on a bimonthly basis, are supported by hours of volunteer work on the part of their members. The structure, goals, programs, and services of each group reflect the artistic discipline represented, the organization's development and leadership, as well as the priorities and concerns of its participants. What members of each group all realize is that a sharing of resources, increased communication, joint problem solving, and support of one another's programming enhance the development of all organizations, and as a result, all the arts in New Jersey. The following article takes a look at the New Jersey Theatre Group and the New Jersey Dance Alliance.

New Jersey Theatre Group

The New Jersey Theatre Group, formed in 1978 by a group of five theatres at the suggestion of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, has evolved into an independent service organization for the promotion and development of professional theatre statewide. Its membership now includes



twelve professional (Actors' Equity) theatre companies—American Stage Company, Crossroads Theatre Company, Foundation Theatre, Forum Theatre, George Street Playhouse, McCarter Theatre, New Jersey Shakespeare Festival, Paper Mill Playhouse, Pushcart Players, South Jersey Regional Theatre, Theatre of Universal Images, and Whole Theatre—while its programs and activities reach an increasing number of theatre professionals and supporters each year. The ten to fifteen roundtables it sponsors give production managers, marketing directors, development directors, box office managers, and others an opportunity to discuss their roles in the theatre, sharing problems and concerns on a peer to peer level. The New

Jersey Theatre Conference, introduced last May, included an artistic directors' luncheon, a public symposium with guest speakers Peter Culman and Stan Wojewodski, Jr. of Baltimore's Center Stage, and a job fair which attracted more than 125 participants.

The Developing Theatres Program and the New Jersey Theatre Jubilee have significantly increased the impact of the group over the last two years. The Developing Theatres Program has provided professional consultants to aid emerging theatres. "Our participation in the Developing Theatres Program was instrumental in helping us avoid many of the problems which befall new theatres," noted Ted Rawlins, producing director of American Stage Company, whose theatre received assistance in establishing an effective box office. "The advice, hands-on guidance, and networking

Members of the New Jersey Theatre Group, from left to right, Heidi Holtz-Eakin (talking); Laurence Capo, McCarter Theatre; Julie Ellen Prusinowski, Foundation Theatre; Kathi R. Levin, NJSCA performing arts coordinator; Ted Rawlins, American Stage Company; Jamie Milestone, American Stage Company; David Edelman, Whole Theatre; John Graf, Forum Theatre; Laura Aiden, New Jersey Shakespeare Festival; Herb Beitel, South Jersey Regional Theatre; and Geoffrey M. Cohen, George Street Playhouse.

with other theatres statewide have been invaluable.”

The most extensive project undertaken by the New Jersey Theatre Group thus far has been this past summer’s New Jersey Theatre Jubilee, a project cosponsored by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts and the Division of Parks and Forestry/Department of Environmental Protection. Six of New Jersey’s professional companies reprised productions from their most recent seasons in a month-long festival of free performances presented to standing room only audiences in the railroad terminal building at Liberty State Park.

“There is much to be proud of,” remarked Heidi Holtz-Eakin, NJTG executive director. “Our plans for the future include expansion of the Theatre Conference to two days, publication of a directory of the state’s theatres, and of course the continuation of the New Jersey Theatre Jubilee, which will hopefully become an annual event.”

Additional projects include New Jersey Plays, a series of staged readings by New Jersey playwrights; publication of a calendar of members’ schedules; and support of the Young Playwrights Festival sponsored annually by the New Jersey State Teen Arts Program.

New Jersey Dance Alliance

The New Jersey Dance Alliance was formed in September 1986 as an initiative of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts. The Alliance is cosponsored by the New Jersey Center for the Performing Arts, a Somerville-based organization whose mission includes providing support services for New Jersey dance companies.

The formation of the New Jersey Dance Alliance has

generated extraordinary interest throughout the dance community. Over fifty representatives of ballet and modern dance companies, independent choreographers, dancers and the dance press attended the initial meeting to announce the formation of the Alliance. From the onset the enthusiastic response signaled that the time was right for the development of a statewide dance alliance.

With guidance from the Council, the Alliance immediately undertook an extensive needs assessment through which a mission statement was formulated and adopted in January 1987. It reads:

The New Jersey Dance Alliance is an association of dance companies, dancers, choreographers, performance artists, and other supporters of dance whose purpose is 1) to increase public awareness of dance in New Jersey and to promote recognition of the quality and professionalism of dance in the state; 2) to foster communication and networking within the dance community and address the needs of the constituents of the dance community; and 3) to work in conjunction with other organizations including the New Jersey State Council on the Arts and the New Jersey Center for the Performing Arts to provide support and services to the dance community at large.

Priorities for programs and services were determined, such as networking with New

Jersey presenters, developing marketing and public relations plans, securing technical assistance, fundraising, self-marketing for dancers and choreographers, developing a dance audience mailing list, and initiating a clearinghouse to disseminate facility information and performance schedules.

A steering committee of volunteers representing a cross-section of the dance community from all parts of the state has provided the momentum to move the Alliance for-

ward. Current members of the steering committee include independent choreographer Susan Brody, Carolyn Dorfman (Carolyn Dorfman Dance Company), independent choreographer Peentz Dubble, Patti Harris (Atlantic Contemporary Ballet), Judy Leviton (Princeton Ballet), Lorraine McAdams (Mount Laurel Regional Ballet), Sharon Stephens (DanceCompass), as well as committee chairs Kathy Hall (Lillo Way Dance Company), Carol Coppola (Garden State Ballet), Pat Mayer (Rutgers University),



JACK MITCHELL

Roger Tolle and Anne Wennerstrand (in air) and Katherine J. Smith (kneeling) in choreographer Lillo Way’s “Boundary White.”

MODERN DANCE IN PROFILE: SIX NEW JERSEY COMPANIES

by Barbara Gilford

and Joanne Staugaard Jones (Beyond the New Jersey Turnpike). The committee is chaired by cosponsor representatives Kathi Levin, NJSCA performing arts coordinator, and Karolyn Tredeau, New Jersey Center for the Performing Arts.

This spring, the Alliance made a commitment to work more closely together to enhance the environment for dance in New Jersey. This ambitious mandate quickly developed a strong base of support. "I really believe that to survive individually we have to survive collectively and this is an unprecedented situation of cooperation and sharing among professional artists and companies from throughout New Jersey," said Carolyn Dorfman.

Three committees have convened to develop strategies that will help the Dance Alliance reach its goals. The committee on Networking with New Jersey Presenters participated in a panel sponsored by the Presenters' Roundtable to discuss presenting New Jersey artists. This past fall the Artistic Development and Networking Committee began a series of four "Informal Choreographer's Introductions" to enable members of the dance community to get to know one another's work. Future projects also include the development of a master class series statewide. The Audience Development Committee has

focused its efforts on the creation of a generic marketing campaign in support of New Jersey dance, with special emphasis on a National Dance Week kickoff next April.

The steering committee continues to work in conjunction with the committee chairs to further define the structure of the New Jersey Dance Alliance and to develop plans for the year including programs which focus on topics of interest to both artistic and managerial personnel. The New Jersey Dance Alliance will continue to develop a statewide dance audience mailing list and expand the personnel database initiated this past spring.

"Since its primary focus for the past several years has been on promoting New Jersey dance, the Center is extremely pleased with the formation of the Alliance and with the cohesiveness of the members that has become apparent at such an early stage," adds Karolyn Tredeau of the New Jersey Center for the Performing Arts.

Comments Judy Leviton of Princeton Ballet, "I feel that the most impressive aspect of the New Jersey Dance Alliance is that out of a scattered and diverse constituency we have begun to develop a sense of community which has mandated itself to work toward goals which are far reaching yet attainable. ■

Kathi R. Levin is the NJSCA performing arts coordinator. She serves as the Council's primary liaison and advisor to the New Jersey Theatre Group and Presenters' Roundtable, and initiated the founding of the New Jersey Dance Alliance.

"**W**hat makes modern dance wonderful is what makes it difficult,"

Carolyn Dorfman said, sitting comfortably in her living room during an interview this past fall. Dorfman, artistic director of the Carolyn Dorfman Dance Company, which is based in Union, is one of New Jersey's most articulate modern dance advocates.

"There aren't any parameters to hang on to, other than the basic elements of time, space, and energy," she continued. "The lack of boundaries makes it exciting. You have to be willing to let go of a lot of preconceptions."

Because the art form's beauty may be elusive to dancers whose aesthetic response was formed in a world of pink tights and toe shoes, modern dance has never garnered what choreographer Lillo Way calls a "Nutcracker-size audience." The intellectual, literary, and psychological points of view that once informed much of the substance of modern dance have rendered

it, by definition, a less popular art form. Today, this type of dance is often witty, colorful, antic, lyrical, sexy, and fun. It's no longer simply bodies frozen in positions of angst or writhing on the floor.

There is nothing stylistically similar in the Carolyn Dorfman Dance Company, the Lillo Way Dance Company, Teamwork Dance, the Center Dance Collective, DanceCompass, and Gallman's Newark Dance Theatre—six New Jersey modern dance companies—except a spirit of experimentation. Each company strongly reflects the ideas and style of its director and each makes a unique contribution to the New Jersey dancescape.

The companies all grapple with the issues of audience development and limited venues for performance. They share hopes for national prominence, increased touring opportunities, and paid rehearsals for dancers. All have received a mandate, in the form of state funding, to excel artistically, and practically in unison they all declare: "This is a great time for dance in New Jersey."

The New Jersey State Council on the Arts (NJSCA) awarded a total of \$149,271 to modern dance companies for this fiscal year, much of it in

Carolyn Dorfman



JOHAN ELBERS



SPELIOTIS PHOTOGRAPHY/
KENN DUNCAN LTD.

the category of development grants which can be used for non-artistic purposes.

"We are encouraging dance companies to determine their own futures," Jeffrey A. Kesper, NJSCA executive director, said of these grants. "We have acknowledged each company's artistry, and now want them to harness their vision and energy and focus on such

areas as long-range planning, marketing, audience development, and administrative and board development, or any other area they feel needs attention."

Lillo Way, whose eight-dancer troupe The Lillo Way Dance Company is based in Montclair and also incorporated in New York, considers modern dance a "high art form" and accepts the limited audiences, particularly in New Jersey, as part of the territory.

Until her fall season at Marymount Manhattan Theatre, Way had choreographed exclusively to twentieth century music and usually incorporated spoken text into her works, but she has broken her own traditions by choreographing a classical modern dance piece entitled "Boundary: White" to J.S. Bach's "Six Partitas." This capacity to surprise is one of the delights of the art form.

Teamwork Dance, a Princeton based company of twelve dancers under the direction of Mary Pat Robertson, has developed a faithful following in its six years of existence, according to Robertson. This is a lyrical troupe that conveys a light and feminine quality in performance, and projects a feeling of interconnectedness among the women. Teamwork Dance is in the vanguard of companies that maintain strong connections to ballet; the company has dancers on the teaching staff of the Princeton Ballet, and Robertson herself directs the school.

The Center Dance Collective, an all-female company based in Somerville, was formed in 1979 as the resident company of the New Jersey Center for the Performing Arts. This company is unique among the state's modern dance companies in artistic mission and structure. One singular feature is a repertoire of the works of dance pioneers Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn.

"We're very committed to using the Denishawn reconstructions as our vehicle to spread a knowledge of dance throughout New Jersey," ex

Members of DanceCompass:

Seated center, Nicholas Rodriguez, artistic director; Bottom row, Andres Santiago, Charlton Boyd; center, Marta Gonzalez, Hikari Baba; top row, Laurie Roth, Chris Nieder, Natalie Rogers, Manuel Rodriguez and Sharon Stephens, general manager/associate artistic director.



Charlton Boyd of DanceCompass in "Moonstruck" choreographed by the troupe's artistic director Nicholas Rodriguez.

plained Janet Rowthorn, the company's artistic director. "We are preserving a history. No one else in New Jersey or on the East Coast has our repertory." The reconstructed dances incorporate, as much as possible, the original music, lighting, and costume designs. Authenticity of production elements and choreography has been insured by Jane Sherman, a former Denishawn dancer, who works with the company to preserve these dances. This year's NJSCA grant will further the company's historical preservationist mission by enabling it to document, possibly through film, these exciting pieces and additional Denishawn works.

The company strives to be a collective, with shared administrative and production responsibilities as well as a spirit of artistic collaboration. Rowthorn choreographs for the company, as does founder Michelle Mathesius who creates only for women and combines her dancers' ideas with her own in the formulation of her dances.

One common strand that emerges in the interesting weave of the state's troupes is a commitment to dance in New Jersey. Nicholas Rodriguez, founder and artistic director of DanceCompass, which is in residence at Montclair State College, has described his company as "an inherently New

Jersey company." His dancers are mostly products of various training programs within the state. He and a number of his dancers trained originally at the Inner City Ensemble in Paterson and later at Juilliard in New York.

"We are in New Jersey to help develop the dance situation," he has said, and Carolyn Dorfman supports that position.

"Every company of artistic quality benefits every other company," Dorfman strongly asserts. She believes dancers grow from collaboration and applauds the mutual support and sense of community developing via the New Jersey Dance Alliance, an initiative of the State Arts Council. The New Jersey Dance Alliance is in the process of addressing the common needs and concerns of dance companies and independent choreographers. (See page 11.)

Kathi Levin, NJSCA performing arts coordinator, describes the modern dance companies

as possessing a "lot of energy, vitality, and drive toward artistic excellence. The big question is whether these companies will flourish and gain national prominence," she commented.

Valerie Sudol, dance critic for the *Newark Star Ledger* and a forceful voice speaking on behalf of excellence in dance, believes that such prominence cannot be achieved until production values are strengthened.

"There is a failure to take into account the visual elements of the overall theatrical production," she commented recently. "Much of the work looks like it's fun to do, but it's not always fun to watch. That's the leap that has to be made."

Rodriguez shares this priority and has made it an artistic goal this season. His most recent work, a playful gambol using chairs and set to the music of J.S. Bach, promises in the rehearsal stage to make

Members of the Carolyn Dorfman Dance Company in "Lifeline."



JOHAN ELBERS

the leap Sudol described.

Because the state's companies are still in an early development stage, they are accessible to dance aficionados in ways that nationally prominent companies are not. Artistic directors are available to explain their work which is often connected to life and explores and reflects familiar issues. "City Graphics," Rodriguez's portrayal of the urban landscape which premiered last season, reveals elements of city life that range from a mugging and drug addiction to a curbside vignette that captures the fast tempo and variety of people found on city streets. Dorfman has explored through dance dual-career marriage, the Holocaust, and connections to past and future generations.

Alfred Gallman, founder and artistic director of Gallman's Newark Dance Theatre, is both an emissary for and interpreter of the black American experience. Gallman's Alvin Ailey-style company is in residence at Essex County College in Newark and also maintains a school on the campus. His company's repertoire incorporates ballet, jazz, and modern dance in a spectrum of works that demands a vibrant,



Members of the Carolyn Dorfman Dance Company in "Sephardic Songs."

Members of Teamwork Dance, from left to right, Nancy Thiel, Heather McKnight, and Mira Pospisil.



Members of the Center Dance Collective, from left to right, Julie Rapone, Karen Kreyling (in air), and Teal Marx in "With a Twist," choreographed by Collective member Janet Rowthorn.



MARRA DEVINCK

From left to right, Roger Tolle, Demian Acquavella, and Fay Simpson in choreographer Lillo Way's "Canterbury."



JACK MITCHELL

Members of Gallman's Newark Dance Theatre.



PAUL KOLNIK

high energy style, and his dancers deliver.

Company members were all trained through Gallman's Newark Dance Theatre School's Urban Scholarship program and a number have emigrated to Alvin Ailey's American Dance Center and the Dance Theatre of Harlem. The "loss" of these dancers is evidence that Gallman's standards are in accord with top national companies.

The acquisition of pieces such as Talley Beatty's "Mourner's Bench" and Fred Benjamin's "Ice Fire" is further confirmation of the level of professionalism he has achieved. Gallman, who for years was a staff member at the Garden State Ballet School and whose jazz workshop there inspired the founding of his company, describes these two pieces as "staples in the repertoire that say we have reached a certain level. We have to educate the audience to quality."

So, despite the fact that New Jersey has no specific facility set aside for modern dance performances, and that it also has no established season when companies can showcase their work, New Jersey modern dance is growing. Drawing on the resources they have available to them, New Jersey's premiere modern dance companies are extending artistic boundaries in interesting and innovative ways. ■

Barbara Gilford is a freelance writer and dance critic for the *New York Times New Jersey Weekly* section.

DELIVERING THE SYMPHONY TO SOUTHERN NEW JERSEY

by Sharon Kewish

Editor's Note

This fiscal year, the New Jersey State Council on the Arts awarded five of southern New Jersey's finest arts organizations endowment grants which are intended to encourage these groups' continued growth and financial stability. Arts New Jersey invited one of the recipients, the South Jersey Symphony Orchestra (SJSO), to provide a profile of the organization.

The following article, written by board chairman Sharon Kewish, traces the SJSO's various stages of development and speculates on the future.

Perhaps because of our name, the South Jersey Symphony Orchestra, I am often asked, what is South Jersey? What boundary does one cross to find himself or herself within its borders? The answer is relative; no two answers are alike. The consensus is that southern New Jersey is due south of one's present stance within the state. To my mind, southern New Jersey is south of Trenton and Toms River, in our state's eight southernmost counties.

Southern New Jersey is a rural-suburban area that covers one-half of the state's land mass. The South Jersey Symphony Orchestra (SJSO) serves one half of the state on a regular basis with programs and concerts given in multiple locations. Our mission is to present fully professional, symphonic concerts for the educational and cultural enrichment of the 1.8 million residents of this area.

To do this, we have divided southern New Jersey into six sub-regions. Each sub-region has its own concert locations and a volunteer committee which sends elected representatives to a regional board of

directors. In this way, the SJSO is owned equally and democratically by the entire region.

The orchestra was founded largely through the efforts of our conductor, Samuel Muni who was born and raised in southern New Jersey and was motivated by his love for the region. Armed with Herb Cohen's book *You Can Negotiate Anything*, Muni, in 1981, convinced five southern New Jersey union locals of the American Federation of Musicians to write letters stating that they would provide funding from their Music Performance Trust Fund allocations if we contracted a proportionate number of musicians from their locals. He then negotiated similar letters of support from southern New Jersey's freeholders and cultural and heritage commissions.

With \$30,000 of support already secured, he applied for and received a \$20,000 grant from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts. He proceeded to match this grant with contributions and admissions, and the symphony performed two programs and six concerts in the 1982-83 season.

This season, with a projected \$275,000 budget, the SJSO has expanded to six programs and twenty concerts, three concerts in each of the six sub-regions in Cherry Hill, Camden County; Glassboro, Gloucester County; Millville, Cumberland County; Cape May and Ocean City, Cape May County; Tuckerton, Burlington County; plus two concerts at Resorts International Superstar Theatre in Atlantic City, Atlantic County.

Since the first concert in June 1982, we have never repeated a program or repertoire. From season to season, our programming is always new. Our programming in the



Samuel Muni, founder and musical director of the South Jersey Symphony Orchestra.

past five seasons has consisted largely of the nineteenth-century orchestral repertoire, with a smaller portion of eighteenth- and twentieth-century works interspersed. This season opened in Atlantic City with a performance of Carl Orff's "Carmina Burana" featuring the Choral Arts Society of Philadelphia as our guest chorus.

Our second Atlantic City concert was a pops program featuring pianist Jon Kliftonoff in Gershwin's immortal "Rhapsody in Blue." Maestro Muni, who is an accomplished baritone, joined soprano Ellen Lang, singing the memorable tunes from Lerner and Lowe's *My Fair Lady*.

Our four other programs consist of classical symphonic literature and include Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 5; Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto with Alexander Simionescu, violinist; Liszt's "Les Preludes;" Beethoven's "Emperor Concerto" with Hugh Sung, pianist; Haydn's Symphony No. 104; Ravel's *Scheherazade* featuring Metropolitan Opera mezzo-soprano Katherine Ciesinski; Rimski-Korsakov's "Scheherazade" and Stravinsky's "Fire-bird Suite."

Since admission income accounts for only one-third of our funding, and since southern New Jersey does not have any major funding sources such as corporations and foundations, support from the NJSCA is most critical in our region. We were all extremely pleased when the NJSCA awarded us a \$60,000 general operating support grant and a \$57,000 excellence award to start an endowment.

SJSO's future looks bright and promising. Our financial base is growing. We have increased the size of the orchestra to seventy musicians and envision the ensemble becoming a full-time performing group by the turn of the century. At some point, when we outgrow our present performing facilities, we will promote the construction of performing arts centers throughout southern New Jersey. And of course, we will continue to stress excellence in performance. ■

Sharon Kewish is regional board chairperson of the South Jersey Symphony Orchestra.

METROPOLITAN OPERA IN NEW JERSEY

In 1983, the Metropolitan Opera Education Department, working with the New York City Public Schools, developed a training course for teachers entitled the Metropolitan Opera Teacher Workshop Series. This course has provided teachers with the necessary skills to help their students create and produce original works of opera/music theatre in their own schools, from conception to production.

Since 1985, the New Jersey State Council on the Arts (NJSCA) has cosponsored the Metropolitan Opera Teacher Workshop Series in conjunction with its Artist/Teacher Institute (ATI), a ten day summer arts residency program for adults. Each year, ten teachers from nine elementary and intermediate schools are selected to participate. Principals from throughout the state nominate teachers for consideration.

Selected teachers attend the workshop series at ATI and are exposed to the individual art forms that combine to produce opera. Workshop content includes auditions, writing, music composition, vocal production, acting, costume and set design, makeup, and lighting design. All sessions are led by Met Opera Guild education and artistic staff.

Following their ATI experience, teachers return to their schools and advise students who form their own production company. The student company writes the script, designs the costumes, sets, props and lights; manages the production; and performs the work. As an essential part of this process, students apply skills learned in their other disciplines; for example, math is incorporated when building sets and lights, and grammar is

indispensable for script writing. Students also gain a wonderful sense of credibility, accountability, and responsibility, and learn the value of team effort. In this process, the students use their imaginations and skills in well-guided situations and achieve some degree of immediate success.

This year the Metropolitan Opera Guild Education Department has added another facet to its educational outreach programs in New Jersey. It has created a new opera production to be performed in New Jersey exclusively for New Jersey schools. The purpose of this production is to provide more New Jersey students with a meaningful and exciting introduction to this art form.

Gianni Schicchi, a one-act, forty-eight minute comedy by Giacomo Puccini, is a highly melodic and dramatically fast-paced opera. This short piece, in English with a simple plot, is comprehensible, especially for young and musically inexperienced students. An intimate setting in which students are closer to the action on

stage makes the whole production more accessible.

The opera will be preceded by a ten minute staged introduction which will reveal the characters and focus students' attention on highlights from the music and the story. The fully staged production will include thirteen professional singers and an orchestra of thirty-one instrumentalists, with Paul Nadler as conductor. The cast and design teams are comprised of young American singers and designers.

The *Gianni Schicchi* performances will be made available to New Jersey students of different ages and backgrounds from elementary through high school. Five matinee performances will take place at Raritan Valley Community College's theatre in Somerville the week of March 21, 1988.

For more information about these performances call the Metropolitan Opera Guild Education Department at (212) 582-7500, ext. 512. For information about the Teacher Workshop Series and Artist/Teacher Institute, call Berda Rittenhouse, NJSCA Arts Education Coordinator, at (609) 292-6130. ■

**Teachers participating
in the Met Opera Teacher
Workshop Series.**



THE PRIMAL IMAGES OF MIRIAM BEERMAN

by Alejandro Anreus

After the “triumph” of the New York School (Abstract Expressionism and its successive “isms”), the death camps of World War II, the atomic bomb, and the continuing mutilation of human beings by repressive regimes, it is difficult if not impossible for an artist in this day and age to deal successfully and directly with the human image.

Miriam Beerman is among a handful of American artists who has the conviction and vision to resurrect, in her painting, the figure in all its contradictions. Stylistically, Beerman can be classified as an Expressionist. However, unlike the trendy, empty rhetoric which forms the basis for neo-expressionism, Beerman's work has evolved over the past twenty five years from a genuine preoccupation with the present condition and destiny of humankind. The content of her work has less in common with the contemporary scene than with the great humanists of twentieth century art: Rouault, Orozco, Kollwitz, and Lebrun. Although she is thoroughly grounded in tradition, she is no imitator, but rather a continuator with a visual language of her own.

Born in Providence, Rhode Island, and a resident of Upper Montclair since 1973, Miriam Beerman studied at the Rhode Island School of Design where she concentrated on figurative painting. After graduation, she went to Europe in 1953–55 on a Fulbright scholarship. By this time, gestural abstraction was in the air and Beerman's work grew out of its precepts. She had intended to study printmaking full-time with Wil-



liam Hayter at his Atelier 17, but became more interested in painting and spent most of her time working in her hotel room and later in a large studio. “I could have attended the Sorbonne, but chose to stay away from academic painting,” she said. Her intellectual life grew deeper and richer as well. She read the Old Testament, philosophy, mythology, natural history, and a great deal of poetry. All this literature did not make her work literary; it only reaffirmed her humanist values.

By the early sixties, Beerman had left abstraction behind and returned to the figure; this time, her figures

Homo-Amphibian
1978
Miriam Beerman
Oil and tusche on paper
44" x 35"





Death of Marat
1970
Miriam Beerman
Oil on canvas
72" x 52"

more than ever reflected the turbulence of the decade. Yet her approach to the work remained closely linked in method to Abstract Expressionism. She attacked (and still attacks) the canvas or paper in a very intuitive manner. She is spontaneous, allowing the gesture to give shape to the forms. Her line or brushstroke is sure—both when delicate and barely perceptible and when aggressively dense. Her colors are rich and intense, whether light or dark. There is a certain “baroque” joy in how she pushes the paint around. Like the masters of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Beerman enjoys the qualities of paint, its sensuality, liquidity, and paste.

Throughout the sixties, Miriam Beerman painted victims butchered and lying on blood-spattered ground, violence generating violence, beast men imposing terror. The Vietnam War and other conflicts of the time found themselves reflected in the desolation and pain of her images (*Death of Marat*, 1970).

“The pain finally became too much for me to bear,” she recalls, “and I had to stop painting in this manner. Around 1970, I turned to animals as my principal subject matter and worked with these images for the next ten years.” Her animals are noble creatures that show in their faces “human qualities”: humor, stoicism, and serenity. Sometimes, a wisdom beyond words is visible in the faces of her primates. All of these works were done on paper with oil and ink. They tend to be monochromatic, and all are religious drawings full of lush brushwork. By the end of the seventies, her animals were becoming grotesquely human

(*Homo-Amphibian*, 1978), and this humanity had much in common with Beerman’s earlier work, for it was brutal and monstrous.

For the past seven years, she has been painting and drawing the figure without compromise or inhibition. The serenity of her ten years as an “animalier” is gone and in recovering the figure with all its mutilations, she holds it up to us, forcefully confronting us, disturbing our complacency.

There is a political preoccupation in Miriam Beerman’s work, a preoccupation born of a concern with ethics more than ideology. Thus, her imagery is universal and not explicit. Fear and compassion inform her work. The fear, however, is not of the paralyzing kind, but rather an end product of the indignation felt when faced with barbaric acts. Her compassion is one of complete identification with the victim. Yet her drawings and paintings are not locked in this dense content, as some of her recent pieces show (*Dutch Artist with Dead Hare*, 1987 and *Hunger Artist*, 1987). Here, there is some relief through a dark absurdist humor.

“Although the figure is a constant element in my work, I am not restricted to the representation alone, for I am never satisfied until a personal energy and abstraction are equally involved. This means that certain surreal qualities are allowed to enter into the work. No matter how powerful the theme, I am constantly on the alert in avoiding too literal an interpretation.”

Some have found Miriam Beerman’s images unpleasant,



Dutch Artist with Dead Hare
1987
Miriam Beerman
Acrylic, oil, pastel, ink, and collage on paper
63" x 60"

**NJSCA Distinguished Artist
Miriam Beerman in her studio.**



NEW JERSEY NETWORK AND THE ARTS: HOW TELEVISION BRINGS THE ARTS TO LIFE

by Barry Kipnis

even ugly. This fact illuminates the core of her art; like the black paintings of Goya or the *Hospicio* frescoes of Orozco, her work makes a powerful statement that confronts the public's consumerist need for decoration and superficiality.

For the past two years, the artist has been working simultaneously on two series: one of artists and the other of Biblical plagues. The first series is made up of imaginary portraits of Soutine, Cezanne, Beckett, Frida Kahlo, Renoir in his wheelchair, and Van Gogh with his bandaged ear. All of these subjects are outsiders, sufferers whose heroism lies in their ability to create despite their human limitations. The portrait of Cezanne, done in blues, greens and grays (the only warm color is the red-orange of the fruit) shows him sitting with hands clasped, anxiously meditating as a gush of pink light covers the fruit and skulls on the tables next to him. This is an image of the artist as a self-doubter who, in the case of Cezanne, nevertheless created monumental art.

The Plagues series is full of apotheosis, dynamism, and harsh colors. Beerman painted eight of the ten plagues, not as archaic Biblical history, but rather as eternal metaphors of twentieth-century disasters, from the Holocaust to the Killing Fields. She painted seven of the eight paintings, all measuring seventy-two by eighty-two inches, during a twenty-eight day residency in June 1986 at the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts in Sweetbriar, Virginia.

Miriam Beerman's work has not gone unnoticed. She has had twenty solo shows in New York and New Jersey and was the first woman in the Brooklyn Museum's history to have a solo exhibition there, in 1971.

Her work has been exhibited in group shows at the Delaware Art Museum in Wilmington, the American Academy of Arts and Letters in New York, the Newark Museum, the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia, the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa, and many more. Her work is also included in permanent collections of the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, the Newark Museum, the Brooklyn Museum, the Whitney Museum of Art in New York, the Montclair Art Museum, and others.

Beerman's years of committed work have also earned her several awards. She received two NJSCA visual arts fellowships in 1978 and 1983 and a Childe Hassam Purchase Award from the American Academy of Arts in 1977. This past August the NJSCA named her a Distinguished Artist and awarded her a \$15,000 fellowship. At the end of this year, she will be honored by two solo exhibitions: *Primal Ground: Works from 1983-1987* at the Montclair Art Museum, which will be on view through January 24, 1988, and *Witches, Demons and Metamorphosis: Works on Paper* at the Montclair State College Art Gallery, on view through January 8, 1988.

In an age of recycled, soulless art that, at most, simulates, Miriam Beerman's paintings give witness to man and paint as everlasting subject and matter. ■

Alejandro Anreus is an assistant curator at the Montclair Art Museum. He has written frequently on Expressionism.

Television and the arts have always had a tenuous relationship. Seeking the broadest audience possible, commercial television has historically shied away from the arts, except for brief dalliances with dramatic ventures such as *Playhouse 90*. Public television, on the other hand, has made gallant efforts to champion the arts, producing such outstanding programs as *Great Performances*, *Live at Lincoln Center*, and more.

New Jersey Network (NJN), the state's own public television station, has demonstrated a strong commitment to arts programming. In 1982, NJN broadcast the first edition of *State of the Arts*, a video magazine devoted to the arts and cultural scene in New Jersey. Today, the weekly arts program has become synonymous with what's going on in the arts in New Jersey.

"Our role is to report on the tremendous artistic excellence occurring in New Jersey, to capture the artistic experiences, and transmit it to viewers in a way that is meaningful and informative," said Scott Moniak, host of *State of the Arts*. "Our cameras delve into the emotions and ideas of artists and performers and try to explore the creative process in action."

"I see *State of the Arts* as a bridge between the people who make art and those who love it," offered Nila Aronow, producer of the program.

In a geographic area saturated with media coverage, *State of the Arts* is the only program in the region to provide consistent and comprehensive coverage of the arts. However, even with its early success, funding for the program lapsed in 1984, forcing the show off the

air for six months. It was revived with funding from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, which has coproduced the show since 1985.

"The first two years of this program for and about New Jersey's arts community have been an exciting venture, not only for the New Jersey State Council on the Arts but for New Jersey artists in general," observed Franklin Fischer, NJSCA board member and liaison between the Council and New Jersey Network. "*State of the Arts* has enabled the arts community to enhance its base by bringing the arts image into greater focus. I am pleased that we have been able to continue this arts enrichment program on a weekly basis, as we hope to strengthen our program content, giving the residents of this state an opportunity to appreciate what the arts organizations have to offer them."

"Increased funding from the Arts Council has enabled us to broaden and deepen our coverage, add new members to our staff, do profiles and feature segments, and expand our ability to portray the arts in New Jersey," Moniak said.

A seasoned television journalist whose career spans fourteen years, Moniak joined the show in 1985, leaving his spot as host of *PM Magazine* in Los Angeles to come east to NJN.

Assisting Moniak and producer Aronow are two new additions to the staff, field producer/correspondent Anisa Mehdi and associate producer Amber Edwards. Mehdi is a former producer for *CBS News* where she worked with Bill



From left to right, Jim Zombeck, New Jersey Network (NJN) studio crew; Scott Moniak, host, *State of the Arts*; Freddie Chisolm, NJN director; Tom Wisnoski, NJN studio crew; Hortense Green, crafts coordinator, New Jersey State Council on the Arts.

Moyers on *CBS Reports* and the program *West 57th*. Edwards was a reporter with WTZA-TV in Kingston and Utica, New York. She has also worked in theatre, both on stage and behind the scenes.

Moniak is particularly excited about the new 1987-88 season. This past October, *State of the Arts* unveiled a new set that recreates a museum environment featuring works by New Jersey's outstanding visual artists. The set provides a versatile backdrop for the show and gives artists another forum to showcase their work.

Programs planned for this

year include a two-part look at corporate architecture in New Jersey, and an entire program devoted to crafts, with interviews of craft artists Charles Kumnick and JoAnne Schiavone, both past NJSCA crafts fellowship recipients.

Shorter segments will include a look at design arts and the new funding category the Council has created for individual artists in this field; a special Thanksgiving music program featuring the major choirs in the state; a celebration of the Bicentennial of the Constitution that draws on music and dance of the eighteenth century; and a look at balletic and operatic adaptations of Shakespeare's works.

Past seasons of *State of the Arts* have featured such world-

renowned figures as Dizzy Gillespie (who will appear in a jazz special aired later this year), Herbie Mann, Maurice Hines, George Segal, Theodore Bikel, Itzhak Perlman, Maya Angelou, Christopher Durang, dance groups Alvin Ailey and Pilobolus, Marvin Hamlisch, and others who have performed or exhibited work in New Jersey. The series has also spotlighted New Jersey's own McCarter Theatre, the Princeton Ballet, Crossroads Theatre, and the New Jersey Shakespeare Festival, and has presented visits with New Jersey artists such as Franc Palaia of Elizabeth whose modern frescoes won him a prestigious fellowship at the American Academy in Rome.

Moniak summarizes television's value to the arts. "Certainly print can be more thorough in detail, but television can provide an insight into the passions of an artist

that no other medium can do. If one person who has never before appreciated the arts does so after seeing our show, then we have succeeded." ■

State of the Arts is broadcast every Sunday night at 10 p.m. and rebroadcast every Monday at 5 p.m. on UHF channels 23 (Camden), 50 (Montclair), 52 (Trenton), and 58 (New Brunswick). It is also carried on New Jersey cable systems and broadcast in Washington, D.C. and in parts of New York, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and Delaware.

Barry Kipnis is a freelance writer who writes for New Jersey Network, the *Asbury Park Press*, and *Commerce* magazine.

THE NEW JERSEY ARTS ANNUAL: CLAY AND GLASS

by Joan Dean

The components found in clay and glass may be primitive and unrefined but the work that artists produce from these materials are certainly not. They are as sophisticated as they are varied, as evidenced by the *New Jersey Arts Annual: Clay and Glass* exhibition currently on display at the Montclair Art Museum. The work reflects a broad range of creative effort. Some pieces retain their natural color and texture, while others, more technologically developed, contain a surprising combination of organic material.

A unique, national model, the New Jersey Arts Annual was initiated in 1985 by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, in partnership with six of the state's finest museums: the Jersey City Museum, the Montclair Art Museum, the Morris Museum, the Newark Museum, the New Jersey State Museum, and the Noyes Museum. Twice a year, artists living or working in New Jersey have the opportunity to submit works for jurying. The three other shows in the four-part series include *Painting, Sculpture, and Drawing; Fiber, Metal, and Wood*; and *Printmaking, Photography, and Multiple Artworks*.

Jurors for the current clay and glass exhibit were Douglas Heller, cofounder and director of the Heller Gallery in New York City and former vice president of Associates of the



Oval Platter
1987
Alan Willoughby
Earthenware
25" x 18" x 3 1/2"

Untitled
1987
Rodi Rovner
Sand-mold blown glass
11 1/2" x 10" x 8"



Untitled House
1987
Laura Burch
Earthenware
15" x 13" x 13"



*Spring Beauty, Cloistered
Botanical with Spirits*
1987
Paul Stankard
Glass
2" x 5 1/2" x 2"

American Craft Museum; Robert Koenig, director of the Montclair Art Museum; and Jacquelyn Rice, chairman of the Ceramics Department at the Rhode Island School of Design and former juror for the National Endowment for the Arts. From over 250 submissions, thirty two pieces were selected, representing the work of eighteen artists. Koenig, who is pleased with the installation, says, "This display speaks well for New Jersey craftspeople, and we are honored to be associated with the Arts Annual and the State Arts Council."

To have a series devoting a major exhibition to crafts represents nothing less than a milestone for the crafts community. "It's very exciting to see crafts exhibited at the Montclair Art Museum," says Susan Eisen, an exhibitor who has worked primarily in clay for the past fifteen years. "The state's museum directors and the public have become more receptive to the idea that crafts is in fact a fine art." A past NJSCA crafts fellowship recipient, Eisen recently had her work *Habitat Series/Cleft* selected as the "Krakow" purchase prize in the II World



Gateway
1985
Susan Eisen
 Clay with metal oxide washes
 16 1/2" x 20" x 6"



Triennial Exhibition of Small Ceramics in Zagreb, Yugoslavia.

Another exhibitor, Paul Stankard, who also considers this an excellent opportunity for craftspeople, has directed his creative energy in the past four years toward his "botanical series." His rectangular glass blocks have designs that depict the empirical world of nature, along with a mythical world inhabited by "root people" who live below the earth. Stankard has worked with glass for almost twenty years and makes his home in southern New Jersey.

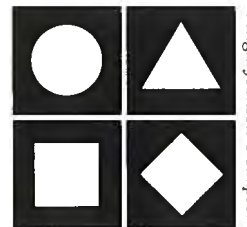
"I am particularly glad to see one of this region's rich traditions coming alive," he observes. "There are a growing number of artists in southern New Jersey who are

exploring the medium of glass which has a two-hundred year heritage here. The groundswell of support for this work is already starting to be noticed, and with the Council's help and with exhibitions like this one, artists, audiences, and the entire state benefit."

The *New Jersey Arts Annual: Clay and Glass* exhibit will be on display until January 17, 1988. For more information, contact the Montclair Art Museum, (201) 746 5555. ■

Joan Dean works part time in the NJSCA publications office.

This logo was designed for all publications relating to the New Jersey Arts Annual, a series of juried exhibitions, open to the thousands of professional visual artists living or working in New Jersey. The shapes symbolically represent each of the four media groups making up the series: Clay & Glass; Painting, Sculpture & Drawing; Fiber, Metal & Wood and Printmaking & Photography.



**NEW JERSEY
 ARTS ANNUAL**

CARLOS HERNANDEZ APPOINTED TO ARTS COUNCIL BOARD

The New Jersey State Council on the Arts announced the appointment of Carlos Hernandez of Jersey City to its board. Council board members are appointed by the Governor and serve without pay for three-year terms.

Educated at York College of the City University of New York, Hernandez received a Ph.D. in psychology from the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. He is currently vice president for academic affairs at Jersey City State College and is responsible for all aspects of academic planning and management.

At the Council's September public meeting, Dr. Hernandez described his commitment to the theme of "the arts as the soul of the city" and expressed interest in expanding cultural opportunities in the urban environment.

Dr. Hernandez has been a consultant to the Smithsonian Institution/Cooper Hewitt Museum in New York and was a member of the President's Task Force on Goals of the 1980s. He also served on the statewide articulation committee for county and state colleges.

Active in community service, he was appointed to the national and New Jersey boards of

SHELLEY KUSNETZ



Council board member
Carlos Hernandez

ASPIRA of America and has been a member of the Puerto Rican Education Coalition of Jersey City since 1981. He is a past regional chairman and a statewide council member of the Hispanic Association of Higher Education.

According to NJSCA chairman Celeste S. Penney, "Dr. Hernandez has long been involved in the life and education of our urban community. We look forward to the special insight he will bring to the New Jersey State Council on the Arts." ■

CULTURAL BOND ISSUE UPDATE

For the past few years, representatives of the arts community in New Jersey have been working together to raise the public's consciousness about the deplorable condition of many of the state's cultural centers, and the absence of such facilities in certain parts of the state. Most recently, they endeavored to mobilize support for a \$100 million bond issue to fund cultural centers, historic preservation efforts, and environmental projects, and they succeeded.

On November 3, 1987, New Jersey voters cast their ballots in support of the bond issue. A bond referendum analysis has revealed that sixty-three percent of the voters supported this bond issue, while sixty-seven percent opposed the bond issue that would have established a state baseball stadium.

The New Jersey State Council on the Arts will be responsible for awarding \$40 million in grants for capital improvement of cultural centers such as theatres and concert halls. A portion of these funds can be allocated for new construction and acquisition of new property, so that areas of the state that currently have no cultural centers could develop such a facility. A matching funds requirement will result in a minimum capital investment of \$80 million in these facilities.

Another \$25 million will go to the New Jersey Historic Trust to provide grants and loans to finance restoration, renovation, and rehabilitation of historic sites, with the remaining \$35 million targeted to expand the existing Green Acres program for acquisition and development of open space and natural resources. ■

YOUNG ARTISTS AS CULTURAL AMBASSADORS

by Noreen Tomassi

Just as New Jersey manufacturers once supplied the steel cables for the world's physical bridges in the first half of the twentieth century, New Jersey artists are now reaching out to citizens and artists around the world, building new bridges of understanding and friendship.

For the past seven years, Nagel Jackson, McCarter Theatre's artistic director, has been inviting guest directors from around the world to direct a production at the Princeton theatre. Last year, Georgyi Alexandrovich Tovstonogov, said to be the pre-eminent Soviet director of our time, took a brief leave from the Gorky Theatre in Leningrad to direct *Uncle Vanya*. This past fall, Romanian expatriot Liviu Ciulei, who has been working at the Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis and who for many years was the director of the Bulandra Theatre in Romania, directed *Coriolanus*. Nagel Jackson plans to visit Leningrad this spring and direct an American play at the Gorky Theatre.

While these exchanges involve professional artists who are riding the tide of detente, *glasnost*, and our own country's changing ideas about the importance of international arts exchange, this story focuses primarily on New Jersey's young, aspiring artists. The following four examples of grassroots international arts exchange all shared similar motivations—to exchange ideas, share expertise, and become familiar with another culture—but each one was as unique as the individuals and communities involved.



A street scene in Moscow where the Trenton Sister City Youth Orchestra visited in April 1987.

Trenton and Moscow

For Judy Morse, a violinist and the orchestra conductor at Hopewell High School, the idea of forging an artistic connection between Moscow and Trenton came about during her 1984 trip abroad when she competed in the prestigious annual International Tchaikovsky Competition. While in Moscow, she met Vladislav Novozhilov, the mayor of the city's Lenin District who invited her to return to his city and bring with her young American music students interested in performing for their Soviet counterparts.

Upon her return to the United States, Morse enlisted the aid of Trenton businessman Shelley Zeiger, whose interest in Soviet-U.S. exchange was well-known to her. As owner of a large import business, he

has established strong ties with the Soviet business community. In 1986, he brought the Kirov Ballet to Trenton to perform at the War Memorial. Zeiger Enterprises sponsored the Moscow Ballet's appearance at the War Memorial this past November, and proceeds from the thirty-member troupe's two performances were shared by the Greater Trenton Symphony Orchestra and the Tren-Mos Fund, which sponsors a variety of creative exchanges between the two sister cities.

Zeiger believes the arts should play an important part in the creation of international relationships between cities. "The more we learn about

Soviet culture and the more they learn about ours, the more we find out how alike we are," Zeiger said in a recent interview. "Free exchange of the arts between the Soviet Union and the United States has global implications. Through the arts we find we are not really the adversaries we once thought we were and that realization carries over into many other areas."

Zeiger was excited by Judy Morse's plan to organize a youth orchestra especially for the exchange, and he agreed to sponsor a competition to recruit young musicians from every part of the state. Together he and Morse contacted Trenton Mayor Arthur Holland, and as a result, a sister city relationship between the Lenin District of Moscow



EDDIE BIRCH

1988 NJSCA choreography fellowship recipient Nicholas Rodriguez in his own piece "Gordian Knot."

and Trenton soon evolved, receiving formal approval from the Trenton City Council.

With the support of Holland and Governor Kean and the help of Education Commissioner Saul Cooperman, a statewide audition was held and the Trenton Sister City Youth Orchestra came into being. The thirty six-member chamber orchestra included talented young musicians from every part of New Jersey.

According to Morse, travel expenses for the trip were approximately \$60,000. "The bulk of this money was raised in each musician's home town or county," explained Morse. "In some cases, students raised the entire amount of their travel. In other cases, travel costs were provided by the student's family." These funds were supplemented with

the proceeds of a benefit concert by the newly formed orchestra, held at the Trenton War Memorial last March.

Morse recalls how serious the young musicians viewed their odyssey. Amelia Gold, an Englewood resident and a violin student at the Manhattan School of Music, was quoted as saying, "It is important for Soviet and American kids to meet so that the next generation can better understand each other, but the main reason I am looking forward to my visit is to see how Soviet students practice and play."

The exchange of musical techniques, however, was not the only item on their agenda. "Someone told them that Soviet kids like to trade for certain American products," Morse said, "and by the time we left the states, every suitcase included large caches of American bubble gum and American yo-yo's."

Laden with these tokens of friendship, the orchestra arrived in Moscow in April 1987 and were met by their Soviet counterparts from Moscow's four major music schools. The American musicians' first day in the Soviet Union began with participation in a roundtable with Moscow city officials and music students. During their stay, the orchestra performed four concerts, playing a program that included Beethoven, Handel, Copland, Saint Saëns, Mozart, Thompson, and Gershwin. Morse found the Soviet music students and audiences to be kind, friendly, and genuinely curious. "Everywhere we performed, there was a packed house. The concert halls were large, each seated over a thousand people, and we were always met with standing ovations, thunderous

applause, gifts of flowers. . . it was an overwhelming experience for all of us."

Paterson and Paraguay

For Paterson resident, Nicholas Rodriguez, a professional dancer and the artistic director of DanceCompass, the opportunity to travel to Paraguay in 1984, and again in 1987, and share his expertise with the Paraguayan dance community came unexpectedly. Rodriguez was not actively seeking an international experience; he was recruited by the Arts America Program of the United States Information Agency (USIA).

"Nicholas was recommended to us by a professor at Juilliard," said Marti Villareal, a program officer at Arts America. "We were looking for a talented dancer and choreographer, a rising star in the dance world, but also someone with a fluency in Spanish. Nicky fit the bill exactly."

Rodriguez made his first trip to Asuncion, the capital of Paraguay, in October 1984. His official title was "Cultural Specialist" and the purpose of his visit was to expose the Paraguayan dance community to American modern dance. During his five-week residency, he worked with twenty five of Paraguay's leading dancers, conducting master classes and choreographing a piece for them.

According to a follow-up report submitted to the USIA by the Cultural Affairs Officer at the American Embassy in Asuncion, the residency was an overwhelming success. "The work of Nicholas Rodriguez can only be described as superlative," the officer wrote. ". . . he

Members of the Newark Boys Chorus with friends they met on tour in China.

fashioned a company that presented one of the most polished performances seen in Paraguay this season and represented the best of U.S. cultural achievement.”

The success of his first residency garnered Rodriguez a second invitation from the USIA. He returned to Paraguay in the winter of 1987 where he had an opportunity to work again with many of the dancers who had participated in his first workshop. “The dancers retained an understanding from my earlier visit,” Rodriguez said recently, “and I was able to build upon this strong base which resulted in a very successful run.”

Whether Rodriguez will continue his association with Paraguay will depend on private initiative, since the USIA program does not fund the same artist or type of residency more than twice. “We hope that our initial support will encourage continued contact,” explained Marti Villareal. “It would be wonderful to see Nicholas tour Paraguay in a couple of years as a result of the groundwork that was laid during his residencies.”

Newark and China

The Newark Boys Chorus China Tour in 1985 came about as a result of five years of planning by the school’s staff and administration, according to John Holly, the school’s information officer. After many unsuccessful attempts to establish contact with the Chinese government, the school received a cable in December 1984 inviting the Chorus to come to the People’s Republic in March 1985. With little more than three months to raise the necessary funds, school officials decided to postpone the trip until May.

Faith Wiesner, who was the



chorus’s concert manager at the time, stepped in and mobilized members of the faculty, staff, and board of trustees in an all out effort to raise the needed funds. As a result, generous grants and loans were secured from the Victoria Foundation, Prudential Insurance, and the New Jersey State Legislature, and the Newark Boys Chorus became the first such organization to tour China since the advent of the Cultural Revolution.

Armed with a repertoire that included Vivaldi, Mozart and Aaron Copland, American spirituals and jazz, and a specially learned program of Chinese folk songs, the twenty six-member boys chorus—accompanied by then-music director David Butterfield, six chaperones, and a reporter from the *Star-Ledger*—toured Beijing, Xian, Nanjing, Wuxi, Suzhou, Hangzhou, and Shanghai.

They sang at the National Children’s Palace, break-danced on the Great Wall, discovered the Coca Cola stand tucked away in the Imperial Gardens of the Forbidden City, and demonstrated phrasing and timing techniques to members of the Children’s Chorus Group of Beijing.

New Brunswick and Japan

One of the most successful Sister Cities relationships in the country has evolved between New Brunswick and the Japanese cities of Fukui and Tsuruoka. In July 1987, Sister Cities International (SCI), a nonprofit corporation established to promote international cooperation and understanding, honored New Brunswick’s ambitious multi faceted program with a Best Overall Program Award. This award was sponsored by the Reader’s Digest Foundation and presented at the Sister Cities International Annual Conference in Fort Worth, Texas.

The special relationship between New Brunswick and her

two Japanese sister cities, Fukui and Tsuruoka, dates back to the early nineteenth century, when Robert C. Pruyn, a Rutgers graduate (1833), was named the first American minister to the Japanese Shogunate. He encouraged Japanese students to attend Rutgers Preparatory School and Rutgers College. These initial contacts sparked interest on the part of scholars, business leaders, and government and university officials to embark on their own exchanges.

In 1960 the mayors of New Brunswick and Tsuruoka signed an agreement establishing a formal Sister Cities link between the two cities. This action was followed in 1982 by a similar agreement between New Brunswick and Fukui. In 1985, New Brunswick joined Sister Cities International. The city was granted a charter by SCI based on its longstanding, historical ties.

The fruitful relationships es



Two Fukui Junior Orchestra members perform the "Cherry Blossom Fantasia" on the koto, a 13-stringed Japanese instrument, as part of the cultural exchange between New Brunswick and sister cities in Japan.

established among businessmen, educators, and government officials in New Brunswick and the two Japanese cities gained a new dimension as a result of a visit by Fukui's Mayor Ohtake to New Brunswick in 1985. The Japanese delegation was greeted at City Hall by the Vocal Dynamics, a New Brunswick High School Chorus. Mayor Ohtake was so impressed by the chorus that he suggested they visit Japan. In return, Fukui would send New Brunswick its Junior Orchestra.

To prepare for this ambitious exchange, Mayor John Lynch created a Charter Committee in January 1986 comprised of twenty nine community leaders and citizens. To raise the funds necessary for the proposed exchange, the committee organized "Celebrate Japan" week which took place the week of March 2-8, 1986. The citywide celebration included a Zimmerli Art Museum exhibition entitled *Japonisme: Japanese Influence on Great Art*, exhibits of Japanese memorabilia and gifts at the Henry Guest House and the New Brunswick Public Library, and a series of public school exhibits, films, and lectures structured to teach New

Brunswick students about Japanese culture.

The major event—and the major fundraiser—of the week, was a sold-out, international concert, "Japan and America: Voices of Friendship." The concert featured the renowned Kwansai Gakuin Glee Club, which is the oldest existing male chorus in Japan, along with Rutgers Glee Club, and the Vocal Dynamics. The concert raised nearly \$10,000. This was supplemented by individual donations as well as support from Johnson & Johnson, the New Brunswick Rotary Club, Raritan Valley Chamber of Commerce, Hyatt Regency Hotel, Triangle Foundation, the *Home News*, E.R. Squibb & Sons, and Japanese corporations.

In addition, New Brunswick's Sister Cities Fundraising Committee applied for and received grants from Sister Cities International and the Middlesex County Cultural and Heritage Commission. According to Sister Cities Project Coordinator Jane Tublin, who is also the state representative to Sister Cities International, not one cent of New Brunswick taxpayers' money was used.

"Supporting this exchange was a way for the entire city to work together toward a single goal," Tublin said. "Cultural exchanges are important because they awaken the community to what it means to be a part of the world. Everyone

involved recognized that this was a wonderful opportunity for our young people to experience another culture."

Members of the Vocal Dynamics arrived in Japan on May 14, 1986 for a three-week tour. In Tokyo, the students visited the Imperial Palace Plaza, the Meiji Shrine, the Asakusa Kannon Temple, and other cultural landmarks. In Tsuruoka, they met with Mayor Saito, performed in the city's schools, and sang in performance with Tsuruoka youth groups. In Fukui, they rehearsed and performed with the Fukui Youth Orchestra.

That summer, on July 21, the Fukui Youth Orchestra arrived in New Brunswick where they performed at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital

and gave a free concert at Buccleuch Park, receiving a standing ovation from the delighted audience. According to Tublin, future projects will include professional artist exchanges. ■

Noreen Tomassi is program officer at the Arts International Program of the Institute of International Education and a former editor of *Arts New Jersey*.

The Vocal Dynamics, New Brunswick High School's choral group, and director Ernie Scott, visited Japan as part of a sister cities exchange program.



Continued from inside front cover

have access to the highest quality arts experience. By supporting artistry less than excellent, we would be selling short our artists and our audience, and would also potentially be undermining our future.

Second, we would have no vehicle by which to identify any problems or obstacles facing our arts groups. The grants evaluation process enables us to study the groups in-depth and develop new grants programs that can address particular problems.

Finally, if we were to award funds based on entitlement, we would ultimately be fostering an unhealthy dependence on one resource. The Council's objective is to foster self-sufficiency and accelerate arts groups' professional growth. We now provide technical assistance, development, challenge, and endowment grants that can facilitate this growth. All these grants programs are based on the merit of each organization.

It is time to acknowledge a future that is uncertain, and to begin making plans for a number of possible scenarios. It is time to let our legislators know how their support for increased arts funding has helped our arts groups and

artists realize their goals and improve the quality of life throughout the state. It is time to act in support of the growing arts budget and congratulate those legislators who have approved and supported those increases. It is time to develop strategies that will ensure continued support for the arts despite any economic fluctuations and no matter who sits in the governor's office and the legislature. ■



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The New Jersey State Council on the Arts

109 West State Street, CN 306

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