



A Contemporary Theatre
Volume 2, Number 3



A WALK IN THE WOODS

BY LEE BLESSING

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A Contemporary Theatre
1989 — 25th Anniversary Season

A WALK IN THE WOODS

by Lee Blessing
July 13 — August 6, 1989

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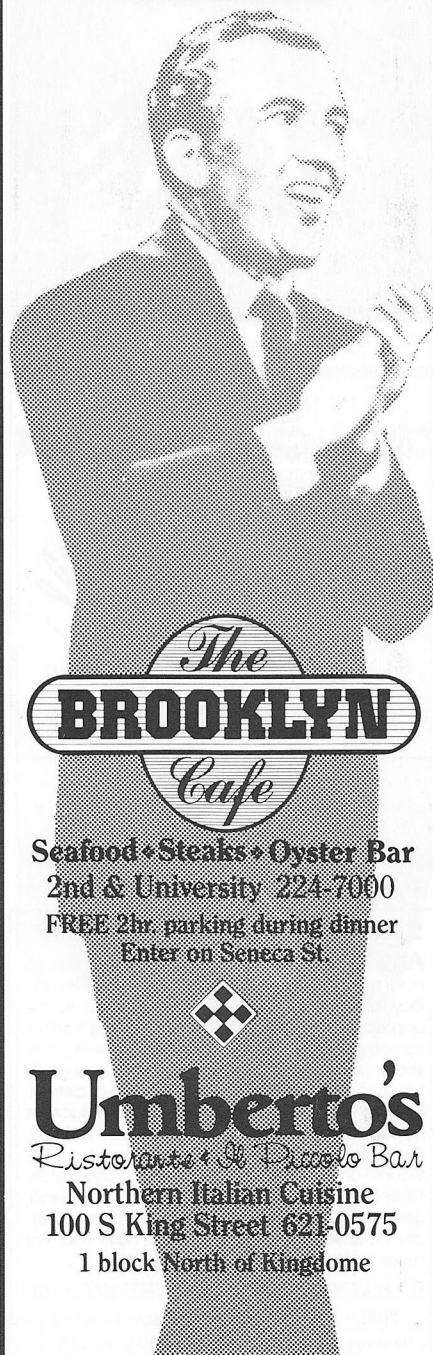
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Next at ACT

Red Noses

by Peter Barnes

August 17 – September 10

One third of christendom now lies under sod," laments Father Flote at the start of *Red Noses*, Peter Barnes' powerful, passionate — and hilarious — comedy about the Black Death. And indeed, things do look grim as the plague rages through France in 1348, leaving death and destruction in its wake. Yet it is from just this despair — rather unlikely material for a comedy — that Barnes has created his remarkable play of love, laughter and hope.

That love, laughter and hope comes in the form of Father Flote and his merry band of Red Noses. While ruthless Black Ravens loot corpses and spread the disease to kill off the rich, and zealous bands of Flagellants try to end the plague through the self-inflicted suffering, Flote — inspired by a divine vision — decides to form "a brotherhood of joy, Christ's Clowns, God's Zanies," and fight despair with joy and laughter.

"Heaven's to be had with my humiliation," insists Flote. "I've been chosen to go out to cheer the hearts of men with gibs, jibes and jabber jinks." To that end, he assembles a jolly troupe of comic misfits, entertainers so wonderfully awful that they probably wouldn't have made it through auditions for the Gong Show. With the blessing of the Pope — who hopes a little laughter will divert attention away from the ever-weakening Church — the Noses set off through the ravaged countryside to bring high, and low, humor to the suffering multitudes.

The Red Noses go on to achieve unprecedented success and popularity, culminating with a wackily triumphant performance of their own very unique version of the play *Everyman*. But as the plague ends and normal order is restored, the Church and State — returned to their previous positions of power — band together to isolate and crush those groups that now threaten their authority. Suddenly, the laughter provoked by Flote's troupe is no longer simply innocent, but a symbol of defiance against the establishment, making the Noses a dangerous group to have around.

Red Noses is a glorious spectacle — ambitious, imaginative and wonderfully theatrical — that brilliantly bounces from ribald humor to political satire to heartbreaking tragedy. Filled with music and dozens of jokes that range from good to bad to very bad to truly awful, *Red Noses* promises to be a tour-de-force for director Jeff Steitzer and a remarkable cast featuring Seattle's finest talent: Eric Ray Anderson, Laurence Ballard, Kurt Beattie, David Mong, Gretchen Orslund, David Pichette, Michael Santo, Peter Silbert, Tom Spiller, G. Valmont Thomas, Steve Tomkins, David P. Whitehead, Michael Winters and R. Hamilton Wright as Father Flote. With so much talent assembled on ACT's stage, *Red Noses* promises to be the theatre event of Seattle's 1989 season.

"A glorious play ... a powerful and fascinating work that will take its place in the permanent theatre literature."

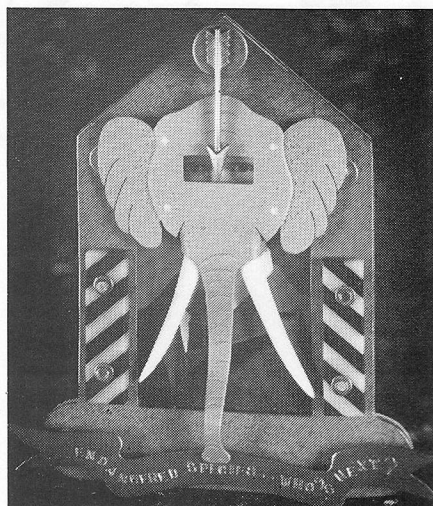
— *Variety*

"A grandly theatrical play, a work that could only exist on the stage, and one which uses the stage with great imagination."

— *Chicago Tribune*

"A brilliant play ... a tremendous life-affirming piece that celebrates the human spirit, proving that laughter can shock and stimulate as well as divert."

— *London Guardian*



"Endangered Species - Who's Next?"
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PLAY BY PLAY

Join ACT Artistic Director Jeff Steitzer and Literary Manager Steven E. Alter for an informal look at the process of staging *Red Noses*.

- Learn how the play came to be included in the season.
- Hear how the director approached casting and rehearsing.
- Preview costume and scene designs.
- Tour the theatre.

Monday, August 14, 7pm.

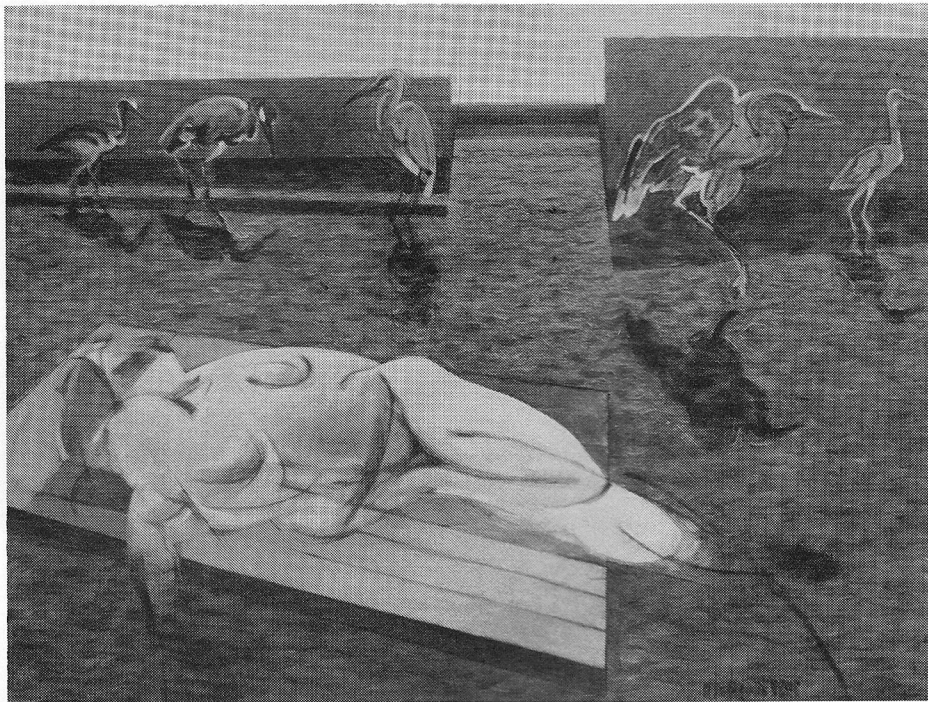
Refreshments will be served.

Suggested donation: \$2.00

Space is limited. Please call 285-3220 for your reservation.

ACT donors of \$100 or more are invited to a 6 pm champagne reception to meet Play By Play artists. RSVP to Mary Stevens, 285-3220.

Art in the Lobby



For the past ten years ACT has donated space in its upper lobby to display the works of over 200 Northwest artists. We feel this gives our audience a chance to view new works by emerging talents and enhances their theatre experience. It also is an opportunity for ACT to be of ongoing service to the greater arts community.

ACT's Art in the Lobby curator Pamela Powers is pleased to present the paintings of Charles Jones during the run of *A Walk in the Woods*.

Charles Jones was born in 1946 in the rural eastern plains of North Carolina. He received a BFA in sculpture from East Carolina University in 1968. He came to the Northwest to attend the University of Washington, receiving his MFA in painting in 1974, and has worked and shown in the area since that time.

"My painting has been influenced by Botticelli, Bach, deKooning, Nietzsche, Joseph Campbell,

dogs, baseball, George Jones, triangles, and sex," said Jones.

"Painting is entirely too difficult but there is something good about the struggle. I can't explain things but by painting at least I am able to point. Painting gives me a chance to offer what I choose to signify out of the small, persistent awareness that something must be discovered and revealed. I work with the balance between clarity and complexity, hoping for both. For me painting has the ability to make time paper thin. The cave paintings at Lescaux (literally) spring to mind. We participate through images and inspirations, ranging freely from the materiality of naked flesh to the darkness of blood sacrifice."

If you are interested in purchasing any of the works on display here, or if you have questions about ACT's Art in the Lobby, please contact our House Manager or call the ACT administrative office at 285-3220. Sales of Art in the Lobby directly benefit the theatre.

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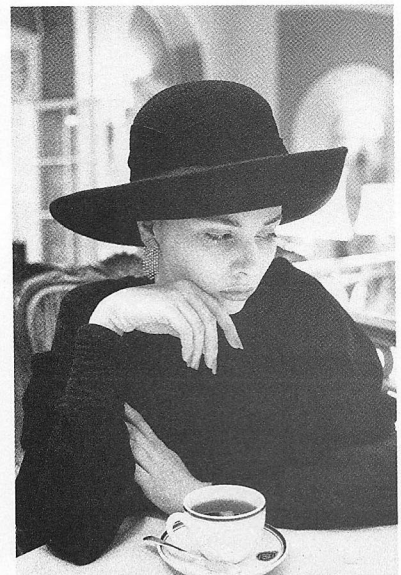
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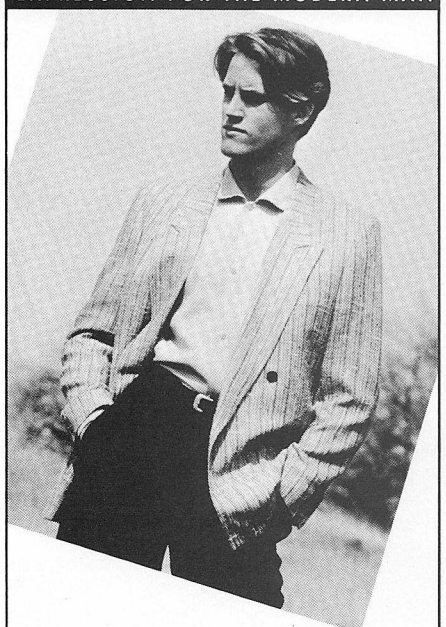
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Lee Blessing's

A WALK IN THE WOODS

Director	Jeff Steitzer
Set Designer	Bill Forrester
Costume Designer	Susan Haas
Lighting Designer	Rick Paulsen
Stage Manager	Craig Weindling

The Cast

John Honeyman	Laurence Ballard
Andrey Botvinnik	Tony Mockus

The action takes place on a mountain slope on the outskirts of Geneva.

Act One – Scene One: Late Summer, Scene Two: Autumn

Act Two – Scene One: Late Winter, Scene Two: Spring

There will be one intermission.

A Walk in the Woods is presented by arrangement with Dramatists Play Service, Inc. in New York.

Produced on Broadway by Lucille Lortel in association with American Playhouse Theatre Productions and Yale Repertory Theatre.

Originally produced by the Yale Repertory Theatre, Artistic Director LLOYD RICHARDS.

Second production, La Jolla Playhouse, La Jolla, California.

A Walk in the Woods was presented as a staged reading at the Eugene O'Neill Theatre Center's 1986 National Playwrights Conference.

Sign-interpreted performances for the hearing-impaired during the 1989 Mainstage Season
are made possible by a generous grant from U.S. Bank of Washington




A Contemporary Theatre is a member of the League of Resident Theatres, the American Arts Alliance,
the Washington State Arts Alliance, and is a constituent of the Theatre Communications Group.

This theatre operates under an Agreement between the League of Resident Theatres and Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

Directors and choreographers at ACT are members of the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers, an independent national labor union.

Stage crew work is performed by employees represented by the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (I.A.T.S.E.) #15.



The world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children.

—President Dwight D. Eisenhower

All autumn the chafe and jar / of nuclear war; / we have talked our extinction to death.

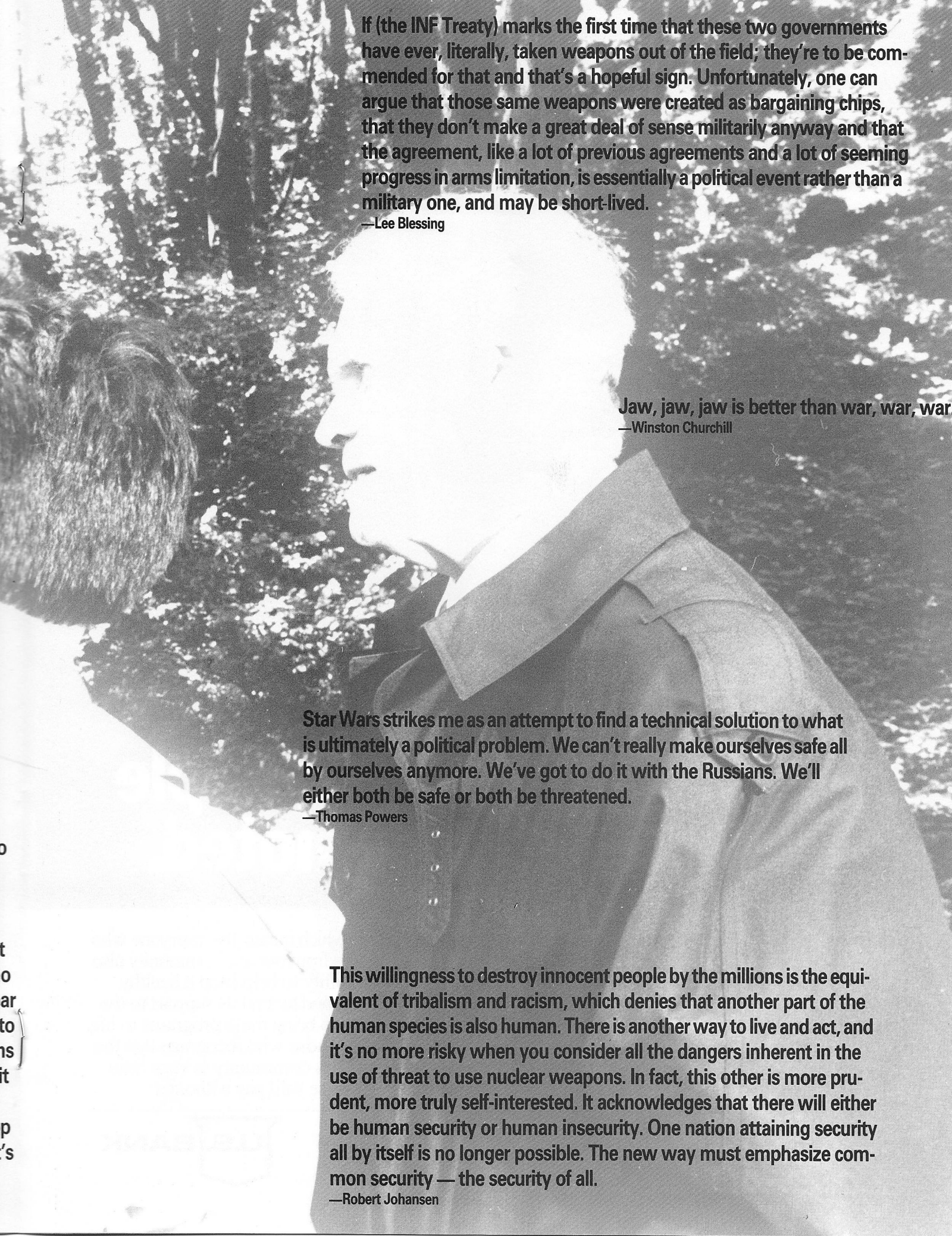
—Robert Lowell, *Fall 1961*

You think of the lives which would have been lost in an invasion of Japan's home islands — a staggering number of Americans but millions more of Japanese — and you thank God for the atomic bomb.

—William Manchester, *Goodbye Darkness*

Now the popular perception in this country is that you don't have to worry about peace anymore. That's something the Government is taking care of. So the average American is more concerned with Japanese cars, let's say, than with Russian tanks and is more concerned with ecological disaster than with nuclear disaster. But what the average American doesn't realize is that the INF agreement in no way slows down the arms race. Until there is a suspension of nuclear testing, research and development on both sides, we will continue to produce ever more lethal, ever more threatening first-strike weapons whose technological sophistication will more than offset any benefit to be derived from simple numerical reductions. Advances in weaponry go much faster than does arms control. And unless we stop research and development, we may end up with a nuclear bomb that's barely larger than a softball. And then where's your arms control?

—Rev. William Sloan Coffin, SANE/FREEZE



If (the INF Treaty) marks the first time that these two governments have ever, literally, taken weapons out of the field; they're to be commended for that and that's a hopeful sign. Unfortunately, one can argue that those same weapons were created as bargaining chips, that they don't make a great deal of sense militarily anyway and that the agreement, like a lot of previous agreements and a lot of seeming progress in arms limitation, is essentially a political event rather than a military one, and may be short-lived.

—Lee Blessing

Jaw, jaw, jaw is better than war, war, war
—Winston Churchill

Star Wars strikes me as an attempt to find a technical solution to what is ultimately a political problem. We can't really make ourselves safe all by ourselves anymore. We've got to do it with the Russians. We'll either both be safe or both be threatened.

—Thomas Powers

This willingness to destroy innocent people by the millions is the equivalent of tribalism and racism, which denies that another part of the human species is also human. There is another way to live and act, and it's no more risky when you consider all the dangers inherent in the use of threat to use nuclear weapons. In fact, this other is more prudent, more truly self-interested. It acknowledges that there will either be human security or human insecurity. One nation attaining security all by itself is no longer possible. The new way must emphasize common security — the security of all.

—Robert Johansen



The Actors

Laurence Ballard

John Honeyman

Laurence Ballard has performed in numerous ACT productions in the past few years, including last season's *The Voice of the Prairie* and *Principia Scriptoriae*. He was also seen in *A Christmas Carol* (1987), *Tales from Hollywood* (1986), *True West*, *Maydays*, and *Other Places* (1985). This past year he completed a fourth season with the Berkeley Repertory Theatre appearing in *Waiting for Godot* and *The Misanthrope*. A resident of Seattle, he has performed locally with the Seattle Rep, Intiman, Empty Space, and Tacoma Actors Guild. Other credits include Arena Stage, StageWest, two seasons with the Milwaukee Repertory Theater and five seasons with the Oregon Shakespearean Festival. He has recently been involved in a joint Japanese-American adaptation of Shakespeare's *King Lear* entitled *The Tale of Lear*, which in 1988 toured four American regional theatres before performing at the International Theatre Festival in Toga, Japan. This collaboration with Tadashi Suzuki will continue in the spring of 1990 at the Mitsui International Performing Arts Festival in Tokyo.

Tony Mockus

Andrey Botvinnik

Tony Mockus last appeared at ACT as Heinrich Mann in *Tales From Hollywood* and was so captivated by the title of the show that he headed straight to Los Angeles to begin work in television and film. His most recent film credits include *The Untouchables*, *Big Business*, and *She's Having a Baby*. Tony has also appeared in several television shows, including *Highway to Heaven*, *St. Elsewhere*, *Beauty and the Beast* and *21 Jump Street*. Look for his most recent work in an NBC mini-series called *Cross of Fire*, to be aired in November, and the pilot for the new series, *Snoops*.



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Directors & Production Staff

Gregory A. Falls, Founding Director

is the founder of ACT and the Young ACT Company and has directed over 70 productions at ACT in 24 years. He has created five original children's theatre revues and three Christmas shows (including ACT's holiday classic, *A Christmas Carol*), plus a scripted version of *The Odyssey* with playwright Kurt Beattie which was selected by *Time* magazine as one of the Ten Best Plays of 1985. His other original scripts include *The Persian Princess*, *Aladdin and the Magic Lamp*, *The Forgotten Door*, *The Pushcart War*, *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves* and *A Wrinkle in Time*. For ten years he was Executive Director of the University of Washington School of Drama. He is past president of the National Theatre Conference and the Washington Association of Theatre Artists, a founding board member of the United Arts Council of Puget Sound, and founder of the Champlain Shakespeare Festival.

Jeff Steitzer, Artistic Director and Director of A Walk in the Woods

has directed ACT's productions of *The Downside*, *Principia Scriptoriae*, *A Chorus of Disapproval*, *Merrily We Roll Along*, *The Diary of a Scoundrel*, *March of the Falsettos*, *On the Razzle*, *Tales from Hollywood*, *The Jail Diary of Albie Sachs*, *Maydays*, *End of the World*, *Quartermaine's Terms*, *Amadeus*, *Cloud 9* and *A Christmas Carol*. Among the numerous productions he has directed locally are *The Day They Came From Way Out There*, *Knuckle, Gossip*, *Filthy Rich*, *The Paranormal Review* and the *Illuminatus!* trilogy for The Space; *Guys and Dolls* for the Palace Theatre; *Bay City Blues* and *Father's Day* at the Bathhouse; and *Pinocchio* and *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* for the Seattle Children's Theatre. In 1987 he staged the critically-acclaimed American premiere of *Red Noses* at Chicago's Goodman Theatre. In 1981 he was an NEA Directing Fellow at The Guthrie and in 1982 he served as an NEA Artistic Associate to the Actors Theatre of St. Paul, where he staged *We Won't Pay! We Won't Pay!* and where his productions of *Tartuffe* and *How the Other Half Loves* won Twin Cities Drama Critics KUDOS for Best Direction. Jeff also has directed for the Alliance Theatre Company in Atlanta, the Portland Center Stage, Chicago's Wisdom Bridge Theatre, the Berkeley Rep, and elsewhere around the country.

Phil Schermer, Producing Director

has been with the theatre for over 20 years, during which he designed lighting for a great many productions, including *God's Country*, *Glengarry Glen Ross*, *On the Razzle*, *Painting Churches*, *King Lear*, *Amadeus*, *Cloud 9*, *The Greeks*, *Loose Ends*, *Custer*, *Catholics*, *Wings*, *Fashen*, *The Club*, *The Water Engine*, *A Christmas Carol*, *The Shadow Box*, and many more. At The Space he designed lighting for *Loot*, *The Mystery of Irma Vep*, *American Buffalo*, *A Prayer For My Daughter*, *Heat*, and *Dulsa*, *Fish*, *Stas* and *Vi*. He also designed lighting for The Rep and its Second Stage and sets for ACT, the Second Stage, The Space, and the Bathhouse.

Susan Trapnell Moritz, Managing Director

has been with ACT since 1982. Before that she spent four years with Dance Theatre Seattle as Educational Director and then General Manager. Her previous experience has ranged from a stint in Paris as a UNESCO bilingual aide to writing and editing positions in the Washington, D.C. area. She worked with the National Urban League and also taught English in Algeria. She holds a BA in French from the University of Lyon in France, and has done graduate work in dance education at George Washington University.

Lee Blessing, Playwright

is a Minneapolis native. His play *A Walk in the Woods* opened in 1988 at The Booth Theatre on Broadway, under the direction of Des McAnuff. It received Tony Award nominations for Best Play and Best Actor, and an Outer Circle Critics Award for Robert Prosky for Best Actor. *A Walk in the Woods* received its World Premiere at Yale Repertory Theatre, and its West Coast Premiere at the La Jolla Playhouse, winning the American Theater Critics Association's Award for Best Play. Other plays by Blessing include *Cobb*, which opened last March at Yale Repertory Theatre under the direction of Lloyd Richards; *Two Rooms*, produced last summer by the La Jolla Playhouse; *Eleemosynary*; *Independence*, co-winner of the 1984 Great American Play Award; *War of the Roses*; *Nice People* *Dancing To Good Country Music* and *Oldtimers Game*. All of these plays have received significant regional productions, most notably at Yale, La Jolla, the Actors Theatre of Louisville (where he's been represented in four new play festivals) and the Philadelphia Festival Theater for New Plays. Blessing has participated in three Eugene O'Neill National Play Conferences, and is the recipient of playwright grants from the Guggenheim Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts and the Bush, McKnight and Jerome Foundations. He lives and works in Minneapolis with his wife, director Jeanne Blake.

Bill Forrester, Set Designer

made his ACT debut with our 1973 production of *The Decline and Fall of the Entire World as Seen Through the Eyes of Cole Porter*. Since then he has designed a number of ACT productions including *A Christmas Carol*, *Maydays*, *Brighton Beach Memoirs*, *Biloxi Blues* and *The Voice of the Prairie*. He has also designed for The Empty Space, Seattle Children's Theatre, TAG, and the Honolulu Theatre for Youth.

Susan Haas, Costume Designer

comes to ACT for the first time from Minneapolis, where she has worked for the past 12 years designing, composing and performing. Most recently, she has designed costumes for *Ubu for President* at Theatre de la Jeune Lune, *Lloyd's Prayer* and *Orlando*, *Orlando* at Illusion Theatre and *Liquid Skin* at Mixed Blood. Her designs have also been seen at Brass Tacks, and in *The Heart of the Beast* Mask and Puppet Theatre. Susan is also a musician and has composed music for *Circus* at Theatre de la Jeune Lune, *His-story—Why is it Called She?* at the Southern Theatre Overtones Series, and *Ein Hunger Kunfler* at Illusion Theatre. This spring she performed with Imp Ork at the Walker Arts Center.

Rick Paulsen, Resident Lighting Designer

is pleased to return to ACT for his sixth season, this time as Resident Lighting Designer. Previously at ACT, he has designed the lighting for *Angels Fall*, *End of the World*, *Tales From Hollywood*, *The Jail Diary of Albie Sachs*, *March of the Falsettos*, *The Diary of a Scoundrel*, *A Chorus of Disapproval*, *Principia Scriptoriae*, *The Voice of the Prairie*, *The Downside* and *Breaking the Silence*. Over the past six years, Rick's work has been represented extensively in the Seattle area at ACT, The Empty Space, Intiman, The Seattle Rep, Seattle Opera, Seattle Children's Theatre and, this past winter, at St. James Cathedral. Some of his favorite productions have been *Through the Leaves*, *Execution of Justice* and *Overgrown Path* at The Space, *Landscape of the Body* and *Frankie and Johnny in the Claire de Lune* at The Rep, and *Angel Street* at Intiman. Also, Rick has served as Tour Lighting Designer for The Rep's tours of *Tartuffe* and *Hogan's Goat* in 1988 and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* in 1989. Outside of Seattle, Rick has designed lighting for *The Crucible* at Milwaukee Rep, Jeff Steitzer's production of *Red Noses* at the Goodman Theatre in Chicago, *Two Gentlemen of Verona* at the Denver Center, *Not About Heroes* at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, and *The Miser* at Portland Center Stage. Also, Rick first designed professionally on five productions at the Oregon Contemporary Theatre in Portland. For the past five years, Rick has taught lighting at Cornish College of the Arts.

Craig Weindling, Stage Manager

was stage manager for ACT's productions of *God's Country*, *The Voice of the Prairie*, and *The Marriage of Bette and Boo*. He previously served as PSM at Actors Theatre of Louisville, where he has participated in the Humana Festival of New American Plays since 1981. Craig has worked locally with Intiman and has toured to Vancouver, Dublin International Theatre Festival, Kennedy Center, Spoleto Festival USA, and Sophia, Bulgaria. He served as the production stage manager at StageWest in Springfield, Massachusetts and stage managed with the Arizona Theatre Company, New Globe Theatre, and North Carolina Shakespeare Festival. Craig worked as lighting designer/technical director for two seasons with the White Barn Theatre in Westport, Connecticut, and has done national and regional tours with CAJY. Last year he managed Tadashi Suzuki's *The Tale of Lear* at StageWest in Springfield, Massachusetts.

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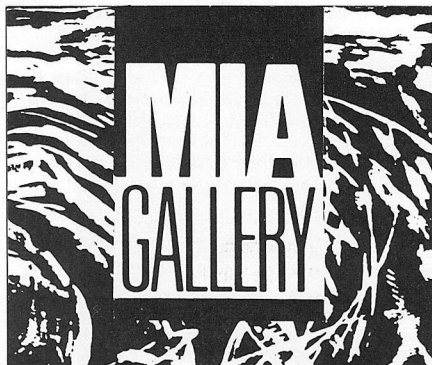
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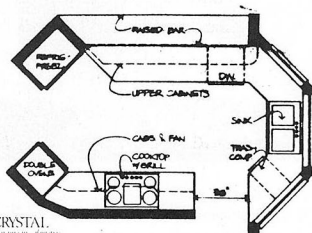
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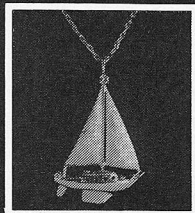


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