

## THEATER

## 'Winterfest' of New Plays to Open at Yale

By HASKEL FRANKEL

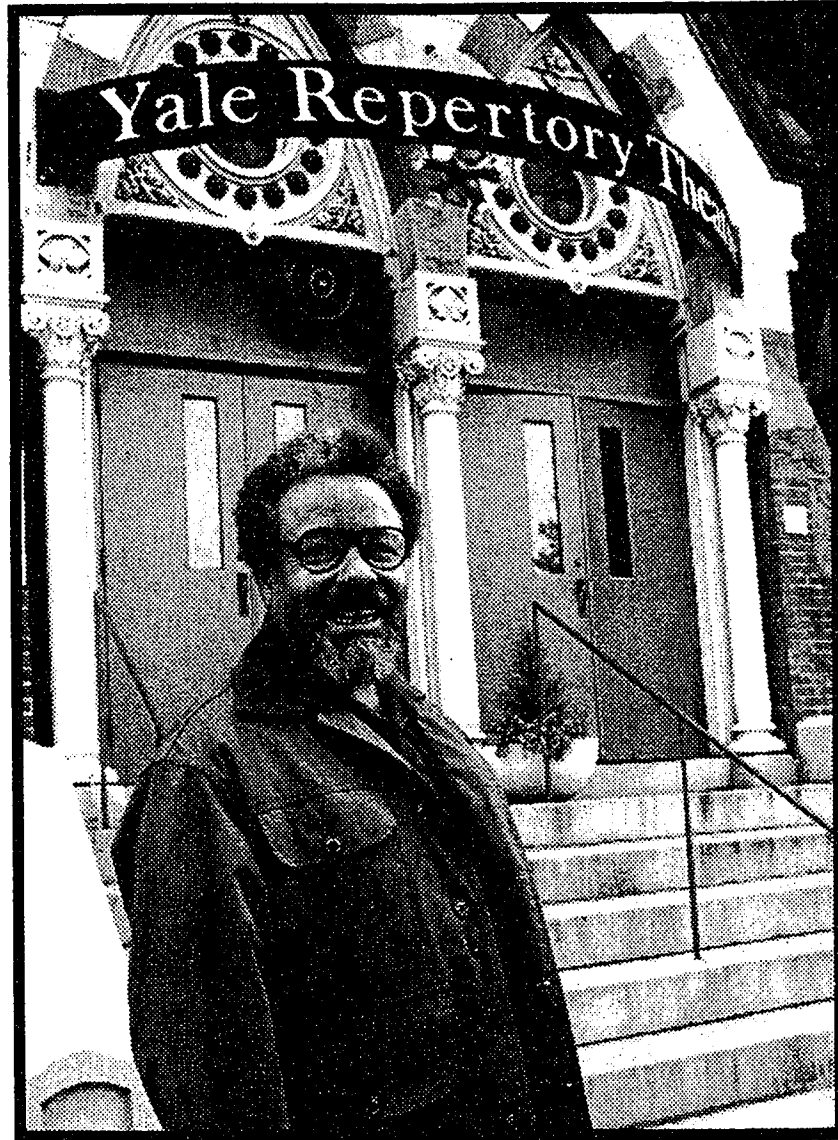
FOR the last 12 years, Lloyd Richards has served as artistic director of the 16-year-old National Playwrights Conference at the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center in Waterford. During his years with them the conference has presented 214 new plays by 156 playwrights. In going to Yale last year as artistic director of the Yale Rep and dean of the Drama School, it was expected that Mr. Richards's interest in new plays and playwrights would continue. It has. The "Winterfest of New American Plays" that begins on Saturday and runs through Feb. 21 at the Yale Rep is the proof of it.

Winterfest came about early in Mr. Richards's relationship with Yale. He felt that the Drama School and the Rep had to work very closely together and did so in most instances, but that there were two areas of deficiency in their relationship. Those areas were in writing and directing. Thinking ahead to his second season — the current one — he created the idea of Winterfest. One play would be removed from the Rep schedule and in its place would be a mini-repertory — the Winterfest — of new playwrights.

To quote an associate who works closely with Lloyd Richards: "In the Winterfest there are two playwrights from Yale and two from outside. There are two directors from Yale and two outside directors. Also the acting division — the combination of professional actors and student actors — is sort of similar. There are a fair number, probably more than half the company, of Equity actors, and there are a good number of student actors. It goes that way all the way down the line. The design for the whole Winterfest is supervised by the well-known professional, Ming Cho Lee, but working under him there are both staff people who are professionals and there are students.

"Whether the way the Winterfest is coming out is deliberate or not is uncertain. It all goes back to the plays, and there I am quite certain that if the plays were not up to snuff it would not have turned out that way because Lloyd does not compromise."

"Domestic Issues," directed by Barnett Kellman, is the work of Corinne Jucker of Stonington. It opens the Winterfest on Jan. 10. According to the subscription newsletter, "Yale Reports: News from the Yale Repertory Theater," the play asks the question, "Is there life after radicalism? In 'Domestic



The New York Times / Ken Laffal

Lloyd Richards outside the Yale Repertory Theater

tic Issues," a play of seduction, hope and betrayal, Corinne Jucker writes compassionately of the desperate steps people often take to change the course of their lives. This moving play takes on the important task of returning to the 'heroes' of the 60's counterculture with the perspective that a decade allows. A former revolutionary and a still politically committed wife return to the country they have fled and are forced to confront both the ghosts of the past and the realities of the present, the values of 'the cause' and its human

cost." Originally given a reading at the Rep's Sunday New Plays reading series, it went into rehearsal with Miss Jucker's 18th version. She is now working on the 19th.

"Rococo" joins the Winterfest repertory on Jan. 14. The playwright is a third-year student at Yale, Harry Kondoleon. The student-director is Dana B. Westburg. It is a crazy, offbeat play about the artist and society, the quest for success, fame, money and all that.

The third play enters the repertory on Jan. 17. It is "Sally and Marsha," by

Sybil Pearson, and was seen last summer at the O'Neill National Playwrights conference. It is a two-character play that explores the lives of two women faced with life in New York City. One is a native New Yorker, all one-liners and neuroses, while the other is from South Dakota and made up of folk wisdom and apple pie. Together, as they build a firm friendship, they and the audience examine the uncertainty of changing women's roles and how each must re-evaluate her goals and dreams. The play is directed by Robert Allan Ackerman.

The final play, "The Resurrection of Lady Lester," joins the repertory on Jan. 1. It is by Oyama, the pen name of Charles F. Gordon, a third-year playwrighting student. The director is James Simpson, a third-year directing student who commissioned the play last year because of his fascination with the jazz age. Mr. Simpson has stayed with the play all the way as it developed in workshops and the Drama School.

The play, which will have a jazz band on stage as well as taped music, focuses on the life and death of Lester Young, known both as Lady Lester and as the "Prez" of jazz. He is one of the unsung heroes of the jazz age, a man who got a new depth to music but who died forgotten by the world to which he had contributed so much — a victim of his art, his society and of himself.

All four plays will receive nearly full productions, but not quite. A new light grid has been hung below the regular one to pull down the whole sense of space on the Yale Rep stage and create a more intimate surrounding. The grid will be used for all four plays. The plan is for set pieces as opposed to backdrops or full wall sets. For those who remember the first play of the Rep's last season, John Guare's "Bosoms and Neglect," which showed a hospital room using only a bed and curtains surrounded by black space, the treatment will be similar. All four plays at the Winterfest, however, will be fully propped and fully costumed. Similar treatment throughout should give the four plays a unity appropriate to the idea of Winterfest.

For those considering attending the Winterfest, it is advisable to check performance schedules with the Yale Rep (436-1600). While tickets to the Yale Rep vary in price from \$6 to \$10, a package price of \$25 is available to those wanting individual tickets to all four plays. There is also a 25 percent discount to subscribers to the Yale Rep desiring to purchase additional tickets to the Winterfest.

## ART

## Complex Works Shown at Atheneum

By JOHN CALDWELL

HARTFORD

DOTTY ATTIE, whose drawings are being exhibited at the Matrix Gallery of the Wadsworth Atheneum until Jan. 25, is a complex and even rather distressing artist. Her drawings, which were recently shown at the A.I.R. Gallery in New York City, are very small and extraordinarily delicate in coloring, but they have an intensity and strangeness all their own.

Take, for example, her drawings based on George Stubbs's famous painting of a lion attacking a horse. Miss Attie has split the picture into 20 or 30 parts, each of which is a separate drawing, but they are hung close together so the overall image is clear. Yet she changes Stubbs's conception in two important ways: the landscape is ordinary, even rather banal, in place of the wild, romantic desolation of the original, and instead of Stubbs's relatively straightforward coloration we find subtle, almost evanescent pastel tones. The effect is alarming. Suddenly we realize that Stubbs's placement of his horrific event in a notably uninhabited location somehow reassured us that the savage violence he depicted belonged to a world very far from our own. Miss Attie, by locating the scene in what could be a Connecticut landscape and coloring it so sweetly, has paradoxically heightened the terror of the scene.

For some time now, Miss Attie has been producing work that purports to chronicle the travels of what appears to be a homosexual couple in about the 1840's. Entitled "J. and Armand Tour the World," the series, while depicting nothing actually obscene, in some cases deals with some very disturbing material. For example, in a group of about 40 small drawings and narrative titles called, "The First Act: An Archeological Adventure With J. and Armand," the two commit a ritualistic sado-masochistic murder in the cause of archeological discovery. It is as bizarre as it sounds. What begins as a scientific effort "to discover, by any means in their power, evidence regarding early domestic and religious activi-

ty," ends in the death of an archeologist at the hands of his colleagues. The cause of the disaster is the discovery of a Babylonian tablet showing the Greek myth of Apollo's flaying of Marsyas, which the scientists decide to repeat as an experiment.

Nothing revolting is portrayed on the walls of the museum; Miss Attie depends on partial glimpses of action, our own knowledge of art history and the implications of ordinary language to depict her shocking story. Children may safely visit the museum. For the viewer willing to spend some time thinking about Miss Attie's drawings, the effect can be quite powerful. What she seems to be implying is that life is both banal and violent and that art is merely a delicate gesture at the edge of the abyss, a view we almost unconsciously protect ourselves against. Miss Attie is a little like Alfred Hitchcock in her ability to play delicately on things we don't even know we are afraid of. Because her work is beautiful, one waits, with some fear and trembling, for her promised next installment.

Also on view at the Atheneum is the work of Sylvia Plimack Mangold, an accomplished painter who is ill-served by the small number of works exhibited. Six drawings and eight paintings were not really enough for this viewer at least to get an overall sense of the artist's concerns. The small catalogue by the exhibition's curator, Andrea Miller-Keller, helps a lot, however. Generally, the artist has been interested in the complicated and paradoxical relation between paintings and reality. Whether in views of her studio floor in the early work or in the more recent views of her window framed with what appears to be masking tape but is actually painted on the canvas her interest has been entirely fruitful. In the latter, especially, her colors are wonderfully rich. For example, in an untitled work of 1979 a very vague gray nocturnal landscape is masked out against a dark blue, much larger border, which is itself narrowly surrounded by a royal blue area. Altogether, Miss Mangold's work is assured and often rather elegant. One looks forward to a larger retrospective some day. ■

## GARDENING

## Herbs for Year-Round Enjoyment

By CARL TOTEMEIER

HERBS are plants with many uses. They lend their fragrances to perfumes, their distinctive flavors to foods, their repelling qualities to ridding the home and garden of insect pests and their healing properties to medicines. Herbs may also be planted for the beauty they contribute to the garden.

Herbs were mentioned in the Bible and in the writings of Greek scholars. The thick volumes of the 17th-century herbals were largely compilations of the varied medicinal uses of herbs, many of which have been disproven while others have persisted until the present time.

As times changed, many of the traditional uses of herbs were supplanted by modern technology and its products. One seldom looked to the herb garden for headache cure, seasoning for one's dinner or a fragrance to enhance a romantic night on the town. More recently, a revival of things natural and old-fashioned has again created interest in herbs.

It would seem appropriate at this time of year to devote our attention to the windowsill herb garden. Indoor culture of herbs differs little from that of any indoor plant. During the winter they will benefit from as much light as possible. If a sunny window is not available, growing them under light is certainly feasible. Twelve hours a day of

fluorescent lighting or a combination of natural and artificial light should suffice.

Cool temperatures will contribute to compact plants and sturdy growth. Daytime temperatures in the low 70's will be satisfactory if the night temperature is lowered at least 10 degrees. Not only will the plants become weak and straggly if kept at too high a temperature at night, but the increased rate of respiration will result in loss of essential oils which provide their fragrance or flavor.

Water only when the soil feels dry, and then water thoroughly. Humidity can be kept high in the vicinity of the plants by setting them on a tray of pebbles which are kept moist.

Heavy fertilization will also promote weak, straggly growth; once every four to six weeks should suffice unless they are being pushed into rapid growth under lights.

Lifting established clumps of perennial herbs from the garden and potting them in the fall to be brought indoors is seldom satisfactory. A better method is to establish new plants in the middle or late summer from divisions, cuttings or seeds. Such plants will be more vigorous and attractive. Even then, these plants may fail to stand up all winter under indoor conditions. For this reason, it is wise to prepare a generous supply of replacements, which can be held in a cold frame or in a greenhouse until needed.



Trudi Cowan

Among those perennial herbs well-suited for indoor culture are the scented geraniums, lemon balm, lemon verbena, sage, marjoram, rosemary, thyme and tarragon. The creeping thymes are suited to growing in hanging pots.

Annual herbs, those which can't survive outdoor conditions but must be started anew each year from seeds or cuttings, are probably better adapted to windowsill culture than are perennial herbs. Most are easily grown from seed. Chives, parsley and dill may be sown directly in the pots in which they are to be grown. Scatter several seeds

in each pot for an abundance of growth. The entire plant may be harvested with a kitchen shears when ready. A series of seedlings will provide a harvest throughout the season. Basil, with its large leaves, is best grown as a single plant to a pot. It, too, can be direct-seeded with the extra seedlings removed before they begin to crowd. The purple-leaved ornamental dark opal basil is particularly striking as well as useful.

Seeds of these and other annual herbs are available from mail-order seed companies at this time of year. Sow the seeds in moist soil, then enclose the pot in a plastic bag until germination takes place.

A simple but thorough new book has just been released for those who wish to learn more about herbs. Written by the mother-and-daughter team of Gertrude B. Foster and Rosemary F. Loudon, "Park's Success With Herbs" is available from the Geo. W. Park Seed Company Inc., of Greenwood, S. C. 29647 for \$9.95. It has information on growing 100 herbs as well as their uses. The color photographs are particularly helpful as are the ideas for planning a herb garden. ■

Readers are invited to submit garden questions. Those of general interest will be published. Address letters to Garden Questions, The New York Times, 229 West 43d Street, New York, N. Y. 10036.

## NEW OLD TOWN HALL

Wilton's Old Town Hall will mark the completion of its 2½-year restoration with an open house at 2:30 this afternoon.

Situated in a historic district of Wilton opposite the Congregational Church on Ridgefield Road, the Old Town Hall has been described by a local resident as "a beautiful, pristine building, typical of the first public structures in Connecticut."

Built in 1832, the little building was abandoned from time to time and came close to demolition before the local Garden Club raised more than \$100,000 to reclaim it.

A kitchen, rest rooms and a heating system were installed and the interior was furnished with antiques.

New posts and beams were concealed in the ceilings and in an interior balcony. "The building is held up by the new structure, but the existing structure is still there, in case future generations want to see how they built buildings in those days," said John Coffin, the architect who supervised the project.

The Old Town Hall, which can accommodate about 100 people, will support itself through rentals to public meetings and gatherings and as the home of the Garden Club.

For information, call 762-5573.

## STRING VIRTUOSOS' DEBUT

"Our repertory doesn't fall into the symphony programs," said Cynthia Treggor, one of three first violinists in the new Arioso chamber ensemble, performing its first concert at 8 P.M. Saturday in Hartford's Trinity Church, 120 Sigourney Street.

The group, composed of members of the Hartford Symphony Orchestra, was formed to "demonstrate the virtuosity of a string ensemble and spotlight the solo abilities of the individual players," said Miss Treggor.

The group's members are Michael Pollard and Karin Fagerburg, first violinists; Joseph Edelbeg, Barbara Blumenshine and Perry Elliot, second violinists; Michael Moody and Irene Cervantes, violists; Jeffrey Krieger and Laura Kane, cellists; Robert Black, double bass, and Margaret Francis, harpsichord.

Bert Lucarelli will be guest soloist Saturday and again on April 24, when works by Johann Sebastian Bach will also feature Rodney Hardesty, counter-

tenor.

Saturday's program is devoted to the works of Antonio Vivaldi. Tickets are \$4.50. Call 278-1450 for reservations and information.

## SOLAR ENERGY AT WORK

The Connecticut Audubon Society at 2325 Burr Street in Fairfield is attempting to become "a regional center for passive solar information," said Gary Krasnow, director of the facility's Renewable Energy Resource Center, and speaker at 8 P.M. Friday on "Audubon Center Passive Solar Retrofit Update."

By inviting the public to share in the process of converting its buildings to solar energy, the center is providing an educational service while taking steps to reduce its oil usage from \$2,000 a year to perhaps \$500.

Plans call for the construction of a 10-by-40-foot solar greenhouse connected to an existing building, moving work areas from the north to the south side of the building and enlarging clerical and volunteer services space. Cost estimates are \$75,000 to \$100,000.

Mr. Krasnow's talk will be illustrated with slides. Admission is \$2.50. For more details, call 259-6305.

## JAPAN FILM SERIES

"From Samurai to Seiko, from tea ceremony to Toyota," is the catchphrase for a series of four Sunday programs beginning at 5:30 P.M. today in the Westport Unitarian Church, 10 Lyons Plain Road. The programs deal with the influence of Japanese culture on the United States and the Japanese "threat to the American economy."

Japanese traditions, land, education, politics, economy, society and the relationships the country has formed throughout the world will be explored in discussions and in the films of Sumner Glimcher. The film narrations were written by Edwin O. Reischauer, former United States Ambassador to Japan.

Admission is \$5 for one program, or \$17.50 for the series, and participants are requested to bring a dish for the potluck supper to be shared after the programs.

To reach the church take Exit 42 off the Merritt Parkway, go north one mile toward Weston on Route 57, turn right on Lyons Plain Road. Call 227-7205 for reservations.

Eleanor Charles ■

## MOVING UP?

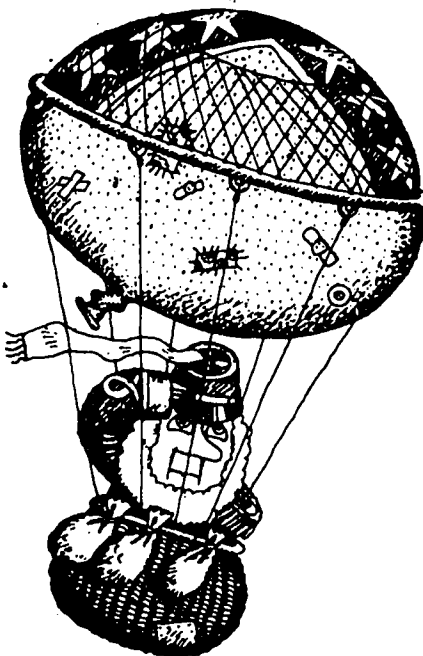
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