UPCOMING ATTRACTIONS
AT THE
SCHOOL OF DRAMA

SUMMERFOLK
By Maxim Gorky
A new American translation
by Lora Bratoff and Aaron Levin
The Penthouse Theatre
May 5-15

BLUE WINDOW
By Craig Lucas
The Playhouse Theatre
May 26 - June 5, 1993

CALL 543-4880 FOR
SUBSCRIPTION AND TICKET INFORMATION!

SCHOOL OF DRAMA

FACULTY

Executive Director, Barry Witham
Associate Director, Jack Wolcott

Theory, Sarah Bryant-Bertall
Playwriting, M. E. Comtois
Design, Robert A. Dahlstrom
Design, William Forroster
Design, Sarah Nash Gates
Technical Director, Jay O. Glumer
Acting, Corey Hansen
Acting, Robyn Hunt

Theatre History, Richard Lorenzen
Design, Richard Paulsen
Acting, Steve Pearson
Theatre, Michael Quinn
Acting, Judith Shahn
Directing, M. Burke Walker
Theatre History, Stephen Weeks

RETIRED AND EMERITUS FACULTY

Jack Clay
James Crider
Vanick Galstaun

Agnes Haaga
Paul Hostetler
Robert Loper
Warren (Tyke) Lounsbury

Geraldine Siks
Jack Sydow
Aurora Valentinetti

PART-TIME FACULTY

David Boushey
Jeff Caldwell
Bob Davidson

Mark Jenkins
Richard Jessup

Catherine Manka
Diana Smith
Scott Weldin

STAFF

Stage Technician, Malcolm Brown
Stage Technician, Alex Danilchik
Librarian, Liz Fugate
Costumer, Josie Gardner
Program Manager, Arlene Hamilton
Publicist, Denise Jarrett
Program Assistant, Dorothy Kerst

Costumer, Laurie Kurutz
Office Assistant, Sue Ryan
Secretary, Diana Smith
Production Manager, Anne Stewart
Cosumer, Meri Wada
Scene Shop Manager, Alan Weldin

In Special Recognition of Contributors to the School of Drama Endowed Scholarship Campaign 1992-1993

The School of Drama would like to thank the following individuals for their donations to the School of Drama Endowed Scholarship Fund. In recognition of their gifts, contributor's names will be engraved in a place of honor at The Glenn Hughes Performing Arts Theatre. Our goal is to raise $150,000 by July 1993. For more information call 5-0600.

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THE CAST
(in alphabetical order)

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Ken Van Dine
David Veach*

* Thesis production in partial fulfillment of a Master of Fine Arts degree
** composer of Prince of Lies & Immortal Sacrifice

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Assistant Stage Manager
Michelle Schneebeck

Rehearsal Assistant
Christina Chan

Vocal Coach
Deena Burke

Assistants to Costume Designer
Jean Frazier, Catherine Layton

Master Electrician
Scot Allison

Set Construction Crew
Bob Boehler, Craig Brown, Chuck Driscoll, Donald Dugan, Laura Hibbs, Tanya Hordney, Mark Hoffman, Brent Meyers, Shawnick Ogadhi, Diane Palmieri, Michael Perrone, Kim Petterson.

Costume Construction Crew
Cynthia Abbot, Susan Edie, Jennifer Mathiesen, Sarah Murdock, Sean Sullivan.

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Jeanette Allen, Daisy Bakos, Pete Bjordahl, Christina Chan, Margaret Evans, Devon Jones, Josie O'Brien

House Management
Sarah Chambreau, Young Chung, Elena Mihaitova, Hye Rey Yom

Production Office Staff
Rebecca Brown, Kara Morin, Margo Whitcomb

Graphics
Tom Silva

Ticket Sales
UW Arts Ticket Office

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS


MUSICIANS

James Ludwig (piano, percussion, kazoo, harmonica)
Jessica Marlowe (piano)

* Member of the Professional Actor Training Program, Thesis production

-- There will be one fifteen-minute intermission --

There are uncritical people who never doubt
And there are scrupulous people who never take action..
With the murderer's axe raised above their heads
They ask themselves whether he isn't human too...
You can make mistakes
By acting with too little thought,
But the mistake in time of danger
Is to go on thinking too long.

-- BERTOLT BRECHT
GERMAN POLITICAL / THEATRE TIMELINE

1923  Unsuccessful Nazi coup in Munich
       Nazi and Communist parties temporarily banned
       Soaring inflation -- $1 = 2,000 billion marks

1924  More economic stability with introduction of new
       Reichsmark
       Hitler released after serving 1/5 of his prison
       sentence
       Bertolt Brecht directs for the first time

1925  Hindenburg elected president of German Republic
       Hitler re-forms the Nazi party
       Brecht does first theoretical writings

1926  Germany joins the League of Nations, Russo-
       German treaty of neutrality signed
       Founding of Hitler Youth movement
       First International conference of actors in Berlin
       Celebration of Max Reinhardt's 25th year as a
       director

1927  Growing prosperity, lower unemployment
       German Theatre very active and innovative,
       thousands of actors employed in theatres
       throughout the country
       Erwin Piscator opens his own theatre
       Nazis found their own (unsuccessful) theatre in
       Berlin

1928  Two million unemployed (300,000 the year before)
       Hitler's party and Communists gain a total of 40%
       of seats in federal elections
       Premiere of Brecht-Weill's Threepenny Opera, a
       huge hit

1929  Unemployment worsens
       Polarization in politics, more street violence
       Wall Street financial crash has worldwide ramification
       German actors protest against economic conditions
       Thomas Mann receives Nobel prize for Literature

1930  Final evacuation of Rhineland by World War I allies
       Communist and Nazi parties gain in elections
       German unemployment rises to 4 million

1931  Five and a half million unemployed
       Banks close temporarily
       More street violence with National Socialists
       Gustav Grundgens achieves success as opera
       director, as well as actor
       Some theatres go out of business
       Left wing political theatre groups very active until
       banned in March
       Piscator leaves for the Soviet Union
       Censorship reinstated

1932  Six million unemployed
       Nazis narrowly miss winning a majority in National
       election
       More theatres close, more actors out of work

1933  Reichstag (German parliament building) burns down;
       Nazis blame the Communists to stir up populace
       Nazis win a slight majority in parliament, Hitler
       becomes Chancellor
       Blacklists of authors and works published in press
       500 tons of books impounded by Nazis in Berlin alone
       Reinhardt, Brecht, George Kaiser, and many other
       intellectuals and artists flee to exile
       Faust starring Grundgens is revived in Berlin
       Grundgens named head of Berlin State Theatre
There are several layers of reality and fiction, truth and artifice, in Mephisto, the play are about to witness. As with any piece of drama that draws on historical materials, fact and fantasy tend to blur and converge after awhile. It may be helpful in this case for the viewer to be able to separate and identify them.

The first layer here is the actual experience of Klaus and Erika Mann, two of the six children of the great German novelist Thomas Mann, and his Jewish wife, Kascha. In the mid to late 1920's, Klaus and Erika led the relatively carefree lives of young, affluent, bohemian free-thinkers in Weimar Germany. Both dabbled in acting and writing, and frequented leftist theatrical and artistic circles. At one point, Erika married a talented, ambitious and handsome young actor named Gustav Grundgens. Their union lasted only a few years, ending in an acrimonious divorce.

In the early 1930's, as Adolph Hitler's National Socialist Party gained popularity, the Mann siblings became more vocal in their resistance to fascism. They put together an anti-Nazi revue called The Pepper Mill, and performed it successfully in German cabarets. Meanwhile, Erika's ex-husband Grundgens was enjoying a great success playing Mephistopheles in the Berlin State Theatre's production of Goethe's classic study of temptation, Faust.

After Hitler was elected Chancellor of Germany in 1933, Thomas Mann, his wife and their children fled, all eventually landing in the United States. Back in Berlin, however, Grundgens was sought out by one of his great admirers, Nazi Propaganda Minister Hermann Goering (a frequent playwright), who invited the actor to become the highly paid artistic director of the prestigious Berlin State Theatre. After taking a month to make up his mind, Grundgens -- a "rehabilitated" leftist -- agreed.

With special protection from Goering, Grundgens spent the next decade in Berlin appeasing the Nazi ruling elite (who had definite opinions about what kind of theatre should be produced), while also trying to maintain some artistic autonomy and shield the Jewish spouses of his theatre colleagues from harm. However, by the late 1930's, most theatre artists who were "enemies of the Reich" had either fled Germany, been sent to concentration camps, or committed suicide.

Grundgens ran the Berlin State Theatre until 1944, at which time the government, crippled by war losses, closed down all German playhouses. After the war ended, he was prosecuted as a collaborator and spent time in prison. But by the late 1940's, he was released and working as the superintendent (artistic director) of a major West German theatre. Because of the objections and legal action threatened by Grundgens and his family, Mephisto was not published in Germany until 1981.

Ariane Mnouchkine, the director and founder of Theatre du Soleil in Paris, read a French edition of Klaus Mann's Mephisto in the late 1970's. She was fascinated by a work which raised difficult questions about the responsibilities of artists in a time of great political crisis and moral upheaval. She also was eager to employ the clowning and commedia dell'arte skills her actors had acquired (for earlier productions), in reconstructions of the left-wing Berlin cabaret comedy of the 1930's.

And she hoped to further explore the epic theatre techniques of the innovative German playwright-theorist Bertolt Brecht. Brecht, not coincidentally, had known and worked with many of the theatre artists that the Mephisto characters are based on.

Mnouchkine's own productions have often had strong political overtones, and her company (founded in 1988, in the social ferment of the Paris student strike) excels at collaborative creation. For Theatre du Soleil's play adaptation of Mephisto, Mnouchkine added a number of characters not in Mann's original book, but based on German Theatre artists who were also victims of the Nazis. She also eliminated a few Mann characters and parts of the novel.

She chose instead to focus on the relationship between Otto Ulrich, (a character based on the Communist actor Hans Otto), and Hofgen (Grundgens). Their diverse paths serve a dialectical purpose in the drama. Wrote Mnouchkine, "...in contrast to the novel, our play retraces the journey of two actors...who at the beginning are apparently similar, have the same ideals, the same discourse, but who, through individual and professional choices without an obvious political bearing on the future, suddenly find themselves with political and historical roles diametrically opposed."

Though Mnouchkine is credited with sole authorship of this Mephisto (British playwright Timberlake Wertenbaker later translated it from French into English), she has always acknowledged the major contributions of her actors during a long rehearsal period of improvisation and exploration.

Brilliantly realized on two stages in Theatre du Soleil's Cartoucherie Theatre in Paris (which is, ironically, a former munitions warehouse), Mephisto was a great success for the company in 1979 and 1980. Theatre du Soleil has since gone on to present acclaimed interpretations of Shakespeare texts and Greek tragedies, as well as original works.

In 1981, Hungarian director Istvan Szabo made a popular movie version of Mephisto, starring Klaus Maria Brandauer in the lead role. It earned an Academy Award for Best Foreign Film, and focuses much more tightly on the character of Hofgen than does the play Mephisto. For Mnouchkine, it was essential to examine not simply one man who impersonates Satan and then succumbs to the devil, but a network of friends and colleagues who comprise a social microcosm. Her drama not only questions the choices made by Hofgen/Grundgens, but also the actions of those who opposed Hitler (communists, socialists and others) yet could not unite to block his rise to power. She poses some searching questions for artists as to whether art alone, and what kind of art, can change hearts and minds.

Program Notes by MISHA BERSON