



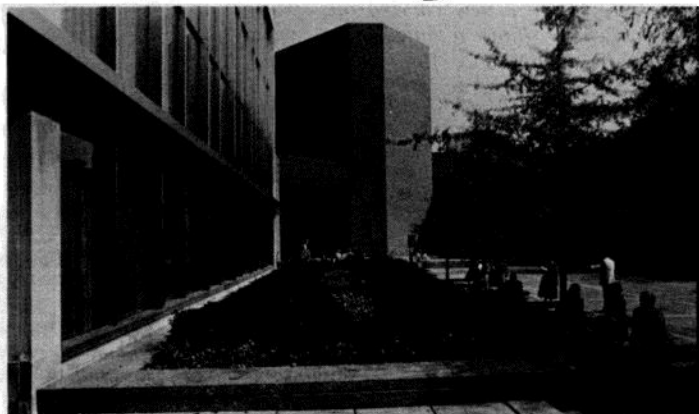
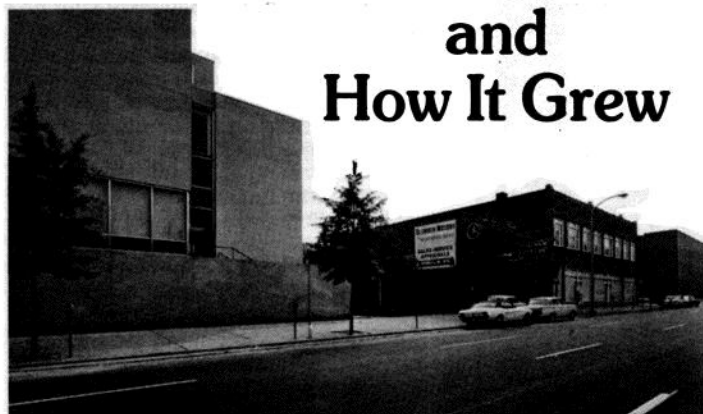
A Supplement to Almanac  
The News Magazine of  
The University of Pennsylvania

**ANNENBERG  
CENTER**  
**a**  
Performing Arts  
University of Pennsylvania  
In University City

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## Theatre From A to Z at Annenberg Center and How It Grew



Before 1971 the Annenberg School shared the 3600 block of Walnut Street with a car dealership. Nine years later the Annenberg Center complements the School and the University with its striking exterior and rich cultural life.

*"This is a Center with a difference. It will seek to serve the basic objectives of the University, to contribute to knowledge through teaching, research, public expression and service."*

Miss Nancy Hanks, Chairman, National Endowment for the Arts, at the Dedication Exercises of the Annenberg Center, April 1971.

Miss Hanks knew what the Center wanted to be when it grew up. Ambassador Annenberg's magnificent gift to the University of the superbly equipped three-theatre performing arts center was an auspicious start. But then there were the growing pains as the Center worked to evolve a professional theatre program that was unique in the city and an asset to the University's educational role.

So things moved slowly. The first presentation was the Center's own production of Bertolt Brecht's "St. Joan of the Stockyards." The sets in the Zellerbach Theatre, named for Harold L. Zellerbach, distinguished alumnus, were lavish, the costumes and masks stunning. *The National Observer* praised it as the "best production of a Brecht play in the United States this year."

Two other Center-produced productions followed: "Hough in Blazes" by Jerome Max, a prize-winning playwright, started no fires. But then came Julie Bovasso's "Gloria and Esperanza," a production that Ernest Schier of *The Bulletin* described as "the best theatre of the season."

Activity increased at the Center, but growing national economic problems were beginning to have their effect on the University and ultimately its ability to support expensive theatre productions. The cost of mounting these productions was escalating rapidly. Many of the research projects originally anticipated were unable to be realized because of lack of funding.

### A NEW FOCUS

A different programming format was considered and the Center began to look outside for quality productions which would augment the University's educational programs. In 1972 The New Phoenix Repertory Company opened its season at the Annenberg Center with an assist from local theatre entrepreneur and Penn alumnus, Franklin Roberts. O'Neill's "The Great God Brown," directed by Harold Prince, also a University alumnus and the person for whom the Center's 200-seat theatre was named, and Moliere's "Don Juan," directed by Stephen Porter, both received high critical acclaim.

The following season, 1973-74, The Phoenix returned with Prince directing Durrenmatt's "The Visit" and Porter directing Feydeau's farce, "Chemin de Fer." At this juncture another important development occurred: joining the Phoenix at the Annenberg Center was Joseph Papp's New York Shakespeare Festival at Lincoln Center. Papp brought such outstanding performers as Julie Harris, Charles Durning, Zoe Caldwell, Robert Shaw and Ken Howard, among others. *The Bulletin* thought Papp's arrival so significant that it devoted its lead editorial to welcoming him and noting that the "local theatre is taking on added luster for his coming."

Now the Annenberg Center seemed to be moving forward confidently with its professional theatre programs. The productions selected were an interesting mixture of old and new plays from increasingly interesting theatre companies. Prince returned for a third season directing Congreve's "Love for Love" with Mary Ure. Papp's New York Shakespeare Festival included Estelle Parsons, Liv Ullmann and Sam Waterston in such plays as Anthony Scully's "Little Black Sheep", Bill Gunn's "Black Picture Show", and Ibsen's "A Doll

House". The prestigious Shaw Festival of Canada joined the roster of quality producing organizations appearing at the Center and presented a highly successful production of "Charley's Aunt" starring Paxton Whitehead to complete the 1974-75 season.

### CONTINUING FINANCIAL PROBLEMS

While the steps were progressing, however, the financial difficulties were keeping pace. Managing Director Richard Kirschner, who had guided the Annenberg Center during its difficult formative years, resigned, citing lack of University financial commitment, and became the Managing Director of the Shaw Festival of Canada. During this time the Center had also been presenting dance attractions, including Viola Farber and Twyla Tharp. Film too made its presence felt with the "Black Film Festival," the "Films by Women" Festival and the Annenberg Cinematheque.

Stephen Goff, Assistant Managing Director under Kirschner, assumed the responsibilities of Managing Director and further developed and expanded the program. His first season, 1975-76, included the celebration of the nation's Bicentennial and saw the Shaw Festival return with Shaw's "The Devil's Disciple", and "Caesar and Cleopatra." The Western Savings Bank began its successful relationship with the Annenberg Center, helping present plays from the Kennedy Center and The McCarter Theatre Company. Williams' "Sweet Bird of Youth" with Irene Worth and Christopher Walken, and Joseph Jefferson's "Rip Van Winkle", starring Anthony Quayle and directed by Joshua Logan came from the Kennedy Center and the start of the Center's relationship with the McCarter Theatre Company was heralded with the presentation of "Awake and Sing", with Morris Carnovsky and Richard Gere starring in the Clifford Odets play.

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# Research & (Student) Development



The Sculpture Lobby leading to the Zellerbach Theatre provides ample rehearsal space for the Penn Players preparing for their November production of PIPPIN."

One of the Annenberg Center's proudest achievements is the growth of student involvement and educational programs. The student performing arts organizations that rehearse and perform at the Center give us a unique vitality. We learn and grow as the students' needs and interests lead to the development of new programs which enhance the students' development as the performers, managers, researchers, and audiences of the future.

## THEATRE ARTS MAJOR

This interdisciplinary program within the humanities is close to the interests of many at the Center. The Major draws on the divergent strengths of the University, including Annenberg Center staff members and the visiting directors, actors, and designers with the theatre productions. Center staff members Catherine Marshall and Albin Aukerlund teach courses using the professional theatre productions and the technical facilities of the Center. Theatre Arts 251, to be introduced this spring, will allow students to direct and design three original one-act plays being written this fall in visiting playwright Tad Mosel's playwrighting courses.

## INTERACTS

Programs are developed by this student group to keep a lively interaction between the performing artists at the Center, both professional and student, and their audiences from the campus and the larger community. Already this fall they have been involved in: after-theatre discussion panels; opening night lobby concerts by Penn student groups; audience development for the visit of the Warsaw Mime Troupe; Harnwell Arts House receptions for the Philadelphia Company and Trinity Square Repertory Company. This spring they will present their fourth annual Artsfest, the ten-day festival of the arts with student and professional groups offering dance, theatre, music and the visual arts.

## CHILDREN'S THEATRE TROUPES

Penn Players, the undergraduate drama group, form theatre troupes which tour Philadelphia public and parochial schools and local hospitals. Creating productions designed to encourage audience participation and to stimulate creative activity following the visit, the 15 troupes last season reached approximately 10,000 stu-

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they participated in a rap session with the author and the entire cast, many of whom had been members of gangs in their own youth. From this beginning came the large Outreach Program which is now supported by foundations, corporations, the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, The Public Committee on the Humanities in Pennsylvania and the Annenberg Center itself.

The largest component of the Outreach Program is the Ticket Subsidy Fund. Each year we raise money to help distribute substantially reduced-price tickets for participants and the individuals themselves pay whatever amount they are able to afford. Last season over 12,000 individuals from 185 organizations benefited from this program. There is a wide mixture of groups, vocational schools, senior citizen centers, trade unions and handicapped organizations.

## A TOTAL THEATRE EXPERIENCE

But the Center doesn't just bring these individuals to the theatre. We try to do so in a way that makes the experience understandable as well as enjoyable, one that they would want to repeat. (In fact, one measure of the success of the program is the repeated requests of the groups to attend additional productions.) Our groups are supplied with Center-prepared study guides to the productions and are, whenever possible, brought to performances which are followed by the InterActs discussion sessions. In all cases our Audience Development staff works to match groups with productions which would be right for them. The addition of the Theatre for Children Series at the Center has made it possible to extend this program to the elementary school level also.

We have the Penn Players Children's Theatre Troupes which travel out to neighborhood schools and hospitals helping to bring out the joy and creativity in the children themselves. We have group subscription rates for schools and classes: 68 different colleges and 145 high schools have utilized Center productions when they have related to classwork involving diverse subject areas. We have special programs to involve industrial workers. Another program is specifically for the hearing impaired.

## THE NEED FOR OUTREACH

"Access to the Arts is both a need and a right of every individual." This is a statement by the National Governor's Association Subcommittee on the Arts—the Annenberg Center believes it is more than a philosophical belief. The reaching and involving of new audiences is both crucial for arts organizations to grow and thrive and essential for the full development of each individual. Extensive research has linked exposure to the arts with gains in basic academic skills plus an ability to cope with life at its fullest. As a part of a major university, the Annenberg Center feels it is both an obligation and an opportunity to find ways to involve our "third audience."

So when you attend a performance at the Annenberg Center you'll see a lot of the faculty, staff and students from Penn and other colleges and schools in the area. You'll have an opportunity to chat at intermission, perhaps, with one of our many senior citizens using our special discount rate. Perhaps you'll be fortunate enough to attend when the performance is being

# Everyone's Ticket to the Arts

We have what may seem a radical concept of what our audiences should be, but it's hardly a new one. Our idea is as old as the performing arts themselves which had their origins in the wandering troubadours, the passion plays and the Shakespearean era when productions were written and performed for everyman. Our Outreach Program at the Annenberg Center tries to revive this notion of audience by reaching out to those people who might not otherwise discover professional theatre productions on their own.

## OUR THIRD AUDIENCE

We count on the "general theatre-going public" as a major part of our audience. They are the people who, given the right amounts of interest in the chosen productions, sufficient publicity and reasonable ticket prices, will attend theatre. The second segment of our play-goers are the students from our campus and others. We speak of their extensive involvement elsewhere on this page.

But there is a third audience that we seek out—that part of the population who, because of financial, physical or cultural



Each year Penn Players Children's Theatre Troupes reach over 10,000 children, surprising and delighting them with their creative presentations. (Photo: Michael Leibowitz)

reasons, does not ordinarily attend professional theatre productions. For this audience the Annenberg Center has developed a large and many-faceted Outreach Program, directed by Marcella Beresin.

## THE GROWTH OF OUTREACH AT ANNENBERG

In existence since 1974, the Outreach Program started by bringing 200 members of local gangs to a production of "What the Winesellers Buy," a play which highlighted the problems of ghetto youth in relation to gang life and drugs. After the performance



## Ticket to the Arts (cont'd)

signed for the hearing impaired. You'll always be welcome at an InterActs after-theatre discussion panel where so many of our new theatre-goers gain insight and exposure to the ideas of theatre.

Watching our new audiences receive, enjoy and become devotees of the arts has become as exciting as watching the fine performances of the artists themselves. ■

## Research (cont'd)

dents. In addition several troupes prepare excerpts from Annenberg Center productions for junior and senior high school classes to build interest in reading the plays and seeing the productions. Each year letters flood in from teachers and students who have enjoyed the visits: each year there are more requests than can be filled.

## STUDENT PERFORMING GROUPS

We have a roster of student groups performing and/or rehearsing at the Annenberg Center as full of talent and variety as any to be found in the city. The Center is proud to be involved with:

The Balalaika	Penn Dance Group
Orchestra	Penn Gospel Choir
Bloomers	Penn Players
Glee Club	Penn Singers
Jazz Ensemble	Quadramics
Mask and Wig	University Bands
Music Department	

November 15-17 will see the Penn Players presenting their first musical on the Zellerbach stage—*PIPPIN*, directed by Lisa Hemphill, musical direction by Bruce Montgomery, choreography by Susan Glazer of the Philadelphia Dance Alliance. Penn Players chairman Brian Dunbar enthusiastically speaks about the new challenges for Penn Players:

*"In an effort to get more people in the University community involved in a student production the Penn Players will present PIPPIN in the Zellerbach Theatre. This gives us a chance to build the most elaborate set since our Irvine days and gives our actors a chance to work with a professional artistic staff in the best theatre on campus."*

John Student, the new technical advisor to student performing arts, will be offering several workshops in technical theatre during November. He hopes to include a workshop on running the fly system as well as a workshop in scenic painting. Right now he's busy designing the set for *PIPPIN*.

## UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY AND THE ANNENBERG CENTER

Faculty in drama, comparative literature, history and other related theatre fields often require attendance at appropriate plays in our two theatre series. In addition many university residence halls purchase subscriptions to the series for their residents and sponsor discussions on the plays they see. The Harnwell Arts House invites visiting theatre companies to their residence for workshops and social interaction. The Arts House also has an apartment this year for the use of artists and faculty who visit the campus on a short-term basis.

## RESEARCH AT THE CENTER

Annenberg Center staff members are eager to work with students from various departments and schools in research projects. Wharton School students have been involved in marketing studies on children's theatre, evaluation of direct mail campaigns, design of audience surveys, as well

# Looking Ahead from the Center

Steve Goff, managing director of the Annenberg Center, knows there's a lot of work to be done just to solidify the programs already at the Center. But he also feels there's a lot more we would like to be doing. Many of the programs now at the Center are part of what we would like to see happen in a fuller way in the future.

Our **Series A and Z**, containing some of the nation's finest regional theatres, is part of our growth toward presenting some of the larger, more distant companies at the Center, such as Minneapolis' Guthrie Theatre, the Milwaukee Repertory, Los Angeles' Mark Taper Forum and San Francisco's American Conservatory Theatre. Our recent grant from the Pew Memorial Trust moves us one step closer to this goal.

We also want to become more involved in producing, on a small scale, the works of new and local playwrights, probably in the Prince Theatre. With the help of the Philadelphia Foundation we are now, with our Community Arts Assistance Program, able to be supportive of some local producing groups working with new plays.

as assisting the public relations, box office and development departments. Annenberg Center Technical Director and Research Electrician Albin Aukerlund hopes to conduct research on the psychology of stage lighting in relationship to audience reactions.

The Annenberg Center feels there are many avenues that have just begun to be explored in using the full resources of the Center for educational purposes. ■

## How It Grew (cont'd)

The 1976-77 season had five plays from the McCarter Theatre Company including Sam Shepard's "Angel City," a production of "Medal of Honor Rag" with Clifton Davis and Jose Ferrer. In addition, the Irish Government assisted in sending the famed Abbey Players to the United States and the Annenberg Center was fortunate to have O'Casey's "The Plough and the Stars" with Siobhan McKenna and Cyril Cusack. The French Government sent the Contemporary Arts Festival which included a performance of "The Ik" by Peter Brook's International Center for Theatre Research.

Growth and vigor were in full evidence as the Western Savings Bank Series continued in 1977-78 with such brilliant stars as Jean Marsh, Jason Robards, Geraldine Fitzgerald and Herschel Bernardi. The Center became the presenter of almost 1/3 of all professional theatre seen in Philadelphia each year as it introduced a second series of plays in the more intimate Annenberg School Theatre—Off Broadway's Best at the Annenberg. Project director Sidney Bloom lined up a roster of distinguished playwrights, directors and actors, including Tom O'Horgan, David Mamet, Gregory Mosher, Jules Feiffer and many more. Critical and audience acclaim were highly favorable. Ernest Schier of *The Bulletin* was prompted to say: "... a dazzling program for theatre-goers has shifted to Annenberg Center."

## A TURNING POINT

Financial constraints were also in evidence that season of 1977-78 when the University eliminated varsity ice hockey for



Managing Director Steve Goff and actress Ruth Maynard share in post-theatre conversation after the opening night performance of "The Shadow Box."

Our offerings in film and dance should be cautiously expanded and we're also interested in exploring the idea of a musical theatre series. In general we feel that we have the best facilities in the city and that they should be in use by as many groups as possible.

There should be a way to foster closer connection between the technical courses in the Theatre Arts Major and the productions offered by our student groups. We *Cont. Pg. 4s*

financial reasons. It was feared the same would happen to the professional theatre series at the Annenberg Center, but a student sit-in at College Hall brought forth a large supporting voice from the student body and the press, giving the University encouragement to try and preserve the program.

Last season saw two distinguished series reaching large audiences: The Western Savings Bank Series had an average of 93% audience capacity while the newer Off Broadway's Best at Annenberg sold to 89% of capacity audiences. Rex Harrison, Claudette Colbert and George Rose opened the Western Savings Bank season with "The Kingfisher", followed by Tammy Grimes and Paul Hecht in "A Month in the Country", from the McCarter Theatre Company. Productions came from the Goodman Theatre, Trinity Square Repertory Company, LaMama Experimental Theatre Club and there was an exciting week of Edward Albee directing his own plays. Our Theatre for Children series debuted with two sold-out productions.

The current season at the Annenberg Center finds the direction of programming clearly set—to offer to the University, and the Delaware Valley, productions from the finest regional theatre companies in the country, as well as some exciting pre-Broadway attractions. The 1979-80 line-up brings these companies to the Center in the new Z Series in the Zellerbach Theatre, and to the A Series—formerly Off Broadway's Best at the Annenberg Series—in the Annenberg School Theatre. Also, Theatre for Children has expanded to three productions.

That's how we grew to Theatre from A to Z. The rest of this special publication will let you know all the other ways this "Center with a difference" has been growing, ways related to the professional theatre series but with important directions of their own. So we believe Miss Hanks would be pleased that her prophecy has been largely fulfilled. Much remains to be done and will be done. Keep your eye on the Annenberg Center! ■



Bruce Montgomery and the renowned U. of P. Glee Club in rehearsal at the Annenberg Center. This sell-out group is already making plans for its 118th annual production, "Hit High Sea".

#### Looking Ahead (cont'd)

want to give even more support and direction to our student groups as well as find ways for directing and design students to use their skills on actual productions, perhaps as independent study projects.

Summer has found our theatres dark and we'd like to find a way to change this. One idea might be to develop a program which could use area college students as apprentices.

So far we haven't found many ways to involve junior high school age students in our programs. We're not alone in this as it's an age that is too old for our Theatre for Children and too young for the majority of

adult theatre presentations. We've been thinking about a small program which would involve that age group in some of our student productions in addition to perhaps one, carefully selected professional theatre performance.

Our interest in, and work with, the regional theatre companies has impressed us with their scope and importance to the theatre world in general. It would be exciting for the campus and the city to have a conference of these regional theatre companies right here at Penn. It would be a big project but certainly one which we would be interested in taking on.

There has been a steady growth to-

ward cooperative efforts among Philadelphia's arts organizations that we'd like to encourage. Steve Goff chairs a committee for the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance which is developing programs of this nature. The Annenberg Center feels it has a role in the cultural life of the city as well as the campus.

As a part of all these thoughts about the future, we will always want to keep expanding the ways, if not the actual numbers, we serve the wider community through our Outreach Program. We're working with the University to install new ramps at the Center allowing us to accommodate more wheelchairs at each performance. Perhaps there is a way to amplify performances for the hearing impaired. We're eager to explore programs to involve our "third audience."

The staff at the Annenberg Center want to work to develop the Center in ways that will allow it to serve the world of performing arts, both student and professional, in a manner which would be of importance for the campus, the city, and the Delaware Valley. ■

**FRONT AND CENTER** is the official newsletter of the Annenberg Center for Communication Arts and Sciences, University of Pennsylvania.

**Stephen Goff, Managing Director**  
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**Assistant Ed. . . . Deborah Addis, Judith Weiss**  
**Photographers . . . Julie Jensen, Anthony Hull**

## From Arts Major to Zellerbach

**OUTREACH—INTERACTS—THEATRE ARTS MAJOR—ARTSFEST—HEARING THEATRE FOR THE DEAF—PENN PLAYERS—TICKET SUBSIDY FUND—QUADRAMICS—PENN GLEE CLUB—GOSPEL CHOIR—TOURING CHILDREN'S THEATRE TROUPES—ASSISTANCE TO LOCAL PERFORMING ARTS GROUPS** . . . You're probably

reading about many of these Annenberg Center programs for the first time. Maybe you thought we only presented two series of professional theatre. Maybe you've even wondered what such a large building can be doing all the rest of the time. The answer is "a lot", and you have read about all we're doing in this special supplement to the *Almanac*.

In one way, however, the play is really the thing at the Annenberg Center. Not because it's the most visible. But because professional productions of worthy plays by outstanding theatre companies are what a theatre is about. It's not that the rest of the programs mentioned above aren't important but rather that most of them wouldn't even exist without this central core of professional theatre productions.

Of course, student performing arts organizations existed long before there was an Annenberg Center. In many ways their productions enhance us, rather than the reverse. But we believe that our superb facilities, and the opportunity to work with our staff and meet the professionals in the visiting productions—let alone seeing the performances—are valuable components to what the students do and how they grow.

So perhaps that's one answer to "Why do we do it?" Professional theatre costs a lot of money, especially operating as a non-profit professional theatre. There are no private backers investing money in the hopes of getting a return. There are only audiences, foundations, corporations and individual donors who are committed to professional theatre to fill that inevitable income gap between expenses and the earned income from ticket sales and rental revenues.

We've been asked why we don't go into the commercial theatre world where there is the (remote) possibility of making a big financial hit. There are many answers to that question but probably the most important answer is another question: Is that what a theatre connected with a major educational institution should be doing? It doesn't seem so to us. The Annenberg Center feels it has a unique opportunity and obligation to the campus and the city to bring to Philadelphia outstanding plays, playwrights and theatre companies that would not otherwise be seen here. And then to make these productions available to as wide a segment of the population as possible.

You've been hearing our motto "Theatre from A to Z", referring to our two series of professional theatre productions from some of the country's finest regional theatre companies. You're not alone if you wonder just what a "regional" theatre company is. *The New York Times* on October 14th had a major article on just that topic—even the theatre companies themselves don't agree on the term or the definition. As we use the term at the Annenberg

Center it means that we bring to Philadelphia, from cities around the country, theatre companies who have consistently been doing outstanding work in their own locations in developing new plays, playwrights and acting ensembles. The companies are regional in the sense that they have their origins in a specific location, but their productions are responsive to the theatre world as a whole.

It is at these regional theatre companies that the new works of the theatre are being developed and the classics lovingly preserved. The tables are reversed in the theatre world now because these theatres have become the source of many of Broadway's productions. *The New York Times* article stated: ". . . many of the most significant new American plays of recent years have originated at these (regional) theatres—David Rabe's 'Streamers' (presented by the Philadelphia Company in our Harold Prince Theatre this October), David Mamet's 'American Buffalo' (Fall 1978 in our Off-Broadway's Best at the Annenberg Series), Michael Weller's 'Loose Ends', Michael Cristofer's 'The Shadow Box' (Zellerbach Theatre, Series Z, October, 1979), to name just a few."

Our goal is to make certain that what is happening in theatre in the country is also happening in Philadelphia and on campus. Series A and Series Z, Theatre from A to Z. With the addition of our three productions in the Theatre for Children series we can say Theatre for All Ages. When you add our marvellous student productions and visiting local theatre, dance and music groups, it becomes, "Theatre from A to Z for All Ages and All Stages." ■