Negative microfilm 64–838
received from university

KATTER, Nafe Edmund, 1926–
"THEATRE ARTS" UNDER THE EDITORSHIP OF EDITH J. R. ISAACS.

The University of Michigan, Ph.D., 1963
Speech–Theater

University Microfilms, Inc., Ann Arbor, Michigan

"THEATRE ARTS" UNDER THE EDITORSHIP OF EDITH J. R. ISAACS

by

Nafe Edmund Katter

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in the
University of Michigan
1963

Doctoral Committee:

Professor William P. Halstead, Chairman
Associate Professor Jack E. Bender
Associate Professor Hugh Z. Norton
Professor Kenneth T. Rowe
Professor Edgar E. Willis

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
LIST OF TABLES		iii
PREFACE		1
	PART I. BACKGROUND	
Chapter		
I.	LIFE OF EDITH ISAACS	6
II.	THE NEW STAGECRAFT AND THE EARLY YEARS OF "THEATRE ARTS" UNDER SHELDON CHENEY	19
III.	"THEATRE ARTS" UNDER EDITH ISAACS	43
	PART II. EDITORIAL POLICY	
IV.	INTRODUCTION	73
V.	ARTICLES ON INTERNATIONAL THEATRE	106
VI.	ARTICLES ON AMERICAN THEATRE	131
VII.	THE REGULAR COLUMNS--I	212
VIII.	THE REGULAR COLUMNS--II	243
IX.	EDITORIAL STAFF	327
X.	FORMAT AND CHOICE OF RAW MATERIALS	345
XI.	THE ACHIEVEMENT	355
APPENDIX.	RELATED ACTIVITIES	369
BIBLIOGRAPHY		381

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1.	Contents of Theatre Arts, 1916-18 (Analyzed by Subject Matter)	41
2.	Subsidy from Mrs. Elmhirst	61
3.	Available Totals on Theatre Arts Income for Periods 1926-28 and 1932-34	66
4.	Comparison of Pages Devoted to Various Subjects by Theatre Arts 1916-19 and 1919-24	78
5.	Pages Devoted to Various Subjects in Theatre Arts, 1916--June, 1945	81
6.	Articles Devoted Exclusively to Historical Materials	97
7.	Countries Covered in Theatre Arts Articles	107
8.	Foreign Playwrights Represented in Theatre Arts (1916--June, 1945)	109
9.	Plays by Foreign Playwrights Printed in Theatre Arts (1916--June, 1945)	112
10.	Foreign Designers Represented by Materials in Theatre Arts (1916--June, 1945)	116
11.	Foreign Directors and Producers Represented in Theatre Arts (1916--June, 1945)	117
12.	Total Pages in Articles Concerning Foreign Directors and Producers	121
13.	Foreign Actors Represented in Theatre Arts (1916--June, 1945)	123
14.	Foreign Theatres and Groups about Which Theatre Arts Published Articles (1916--June, 1945)	126

LIST OF TABLES--Continued

Table		Page
15.	Number of Pages in Theatre Arts Devoted to Playwrights (1916--June, 1945)	133
16.	Plays by American Dramatists Published in Theatre Arts (1916--June, 1945)	134
17.	Pages Devoted to Materials Written by or about Favorite Playwrights of Theatre Arts	137
18.	American Playwrights Represented by Materials in Theatre Arts (1916--June, 1945)	140
19.	Pages Devoted to Materials Written by or about Designers Featured in Theatre Arts .	145
20.	American Designers Represented by Materials in Theatre Arts (1916--June, 1945)	147
21.	Settings and Designs by Robert Edmond Jones Illustrated in Theatre Arts to 1945 . . .	153
22.	Settings and Designs by Lee Simonson Illustrated in Theatre Arts to 1945	156
23.	Settings and Designs by Norman Bel Geddes Illustrated in Theatre Arts to 1945 . . .	159
24.	Settings and Designs by Donald Oenslager Illustrated in Theatre Arts to 1945 . . .	161
25.	Settings and Designs by Jo Mielziner Illustrated in Theatre Arts to 1945	162
26.	First Appearance by American Designers in Theatre Arts	166
27.	Total Pages in Theatre Arts Concerning Professional Directors and Producers Working in the American Theatre	172
28.	Directors and Producers in the American Theatre Represented by Materials in Theatre Arts (1916--June, 1945)	173
29.	Actors in the American Theatre Represented by Materials in Theatre Arts (1916--June, 1945)	182

LIST OF TABLES--Continued

Table		Page
30.	Non-Commercial Theatres about Whom Materials Appeared in Theatre Arts (1916--June, 1945)	194
31.	Little and Community Theatres about Whom Materials Appeared in Theatre Arts (1916--June, 1945)	195
32.	Educational Theatres about Whom Materials Appeared in Theatre Arts (1916--June, 1945)	196
33.	Non-Commercial Theatre Workers in America (Both Directors and Scholars) Whose Writings Appeared in Theatre Arts (1916--June, 1945)	200
34.	Drama Critics for Theatre Arts (1916--June, 1945)	247
35.	Number of Lines Given to Production Elements in Isaacs' Reviews, November, 1933--June, 1938	259
36.	Editorial Staff of Theatre Arts	327

PREFACE

Few media are so admirably suited to the steady, detailed recording of the theatre's passing scene as the periodical magazine. Since the turn of the century many American theatre journals have appeared, yet only Theatre Arts had a long enough life to be able to make a substantial contribution to the theatre and to provide a continuity of record. Other periodicals devoted to the theatre, such as New Theatre, Stage, Theatre and Drama, Theatre Guild Magazine, American Drama Society, The Dramatic Mirror, Theatre Magazine, and The Drama were comparatively short-lived.

In contrast to the above magazines, Theatre Arts established the enviable record of thirty-two years of continuous publication.[1] This record is made more remarkable by the fact that those years embraced two world wars and a shattering depression. Although the ups and downs of business dictated occasional adjustment in size and coverage, the magazine maintained

---

[1] Theatre Arts has made slight modifications of its name over the years: Theatre Arts Magazine (1916), Theatre Arts Monthly (January, 1924), and finally Theatre Arts (November, 1939). These modifications are disregarded here, and it is called Theatre Arts throughout. The magazine has continued publication to the present, although it became essentially a new publication with the 1948 reorganization.

a consistency of policy and continuity of service unequalled among theatre periodicals.

From 1916 to 1948, Theatre Arts actively and extensively promoted the theatre in America, with an especial interest in the non-commercial theatre. It provided a forum for the exchange of new theatre ideas and methods throughout the world. It served as spokesman and champion of the New Stagecraft, faithfully recording and promoting this theatric renaissance. The term New Stagecraft is used here for the European theatre movement variously called the New Stagecraft, the New Theatre, the New Movement, and the Art Movement in the Theatre. It is used to cover all visual aspects, including the placement and movement of the actors by a director. The significance of this service was underlined when, after thirty-two years, the magazine changed ownership and editorial policy in 1948. In the Bulletin of the National Theatre Conference, theatre workers throughout the nation registered their praise for the magazine's contribution and their dismay at the change.[1]

For most of these thirty-two years Theatre Arts was the practical implementation of the views and ideals of Edith Juliet Rich Isaacs.[2] While she was editor, her magazine reflected her special interests, as well as her complete devotion

---

[1]"Posthumous Praise," National Theatre Conference Bulletin, X, No. 1 (April, 1948), 6-13.

[2]Mrs. Isaacs will be referred to as Isaacs throughout this study. Her husband, Lewis M. Isaacs, Sr., will be referred to as Mr. Isaacs.

to the theatre as an art. Almost singlehandedly she sustained the magazine through its trials and crises. The influence of Isaacs on Theatre Arts and on her staff, and the regard in which she was held, are described in the Oxford Companion to the Theatre by her long-time associate, Rosamond Gilder.

> Edith Juliet (née Rich) Isaacs . . . [was] for a quarter of a century one of the leading forces in the American theatre. . . . As editor of Theatre Arts from 1919 to 1945 she exercised a unique and beneficial influence on the theatre as a whole. She saw the American theatre as something more than a passing show. She saw it with its roots in the educational and community theatres throughout the country and in the perspective of its own historical past. She saw it constantly and steadily as an art form enriched by all the other arts and related to the world-theatre of which it is an integral part. Through the pages of Theatre Arts she exercised not only her remarkable editorial faculties, her taste in literature, her gift of discovering and developing young talent, her openness of mind and readiness of access, but also her own very keen faculties as a critic. She wrote with discernment on the theatre, dance, and music, and was an excellent judge of the graphic arts. She was also a clear-headed business woman who understood the economic as well as the aesthetic problems of the theatre and was in the forefront of the theatre's practical as well as spiritual battles.[1]

The editor of Theatre Arts was a theatre "evangelist" rather than a dramatic theorist, essayist, or critic. It was primarily the practical advancement and growth of theatre that concerned her. Accordingly, she put herself and her magazine in the forefront of numerous crusades and causes. Her editorial policy, her articles, books, editorials, critical reviews of plays, and related efforts in behalf of various theatre organizations, were the means by which she actively implemented

---

[1]Phyllis Hartnoll (ed.), The Oxford Companion to the Theatre (London: Oxford University Press, 1951), p. 392.

her views and hopes. In this way, Theatre Arts served as a potent promotional force. The special interest of the magazine was manifested primarily in its characteristic policy of editorial and critical selectivity. It is an analysis and description of this selectivity which forms the body of this paper.

Because the magazine is her significant achievement, this study is concentrated on Theatre Arts. However, since the magazine is so clearly a reflection of the views and personality of its editor, a brief biography is introduced. A description follows of the New Stagecraft, which provided the stimulus for the magazine's creation, and of the magazine's early years under Sheldon Cheney. The major portion of the study is a history of the magazine under Isaacs' editorship, a detailed description of its editorial policy as reflected in choice of materials and staff members, and a study of the articles, editorials, reviews, and books written by Isaacs. An appendix follows describing her role, and that of Theatre Arts, in the formation of various theatre organizations, notably the National Theatre Conference. There has been no attempt to evaluate objectively the magazine's influence through a study of sources outside the publication itself. Source materials for the study were largely the pages of the magazine itself, to which personal interviews with Isaacs, with her daughter, Hermine Isaacs Popper, and with Rosamond Gilder, provided an invaluable supplement. For their gracious assistance the author wishes to express his gratitude.

PART I

BACKGROUND

CHAPTER I

LIFE OF EDITH ISAACS

To many workers and devotees of the theatre Edith Juliet Rich Isaacs was Theatre Arts. The names, goals, and practices became strikingly synonymous. John Hutchens said, "More than do most magazines, Theatre Arts reflects the personality of its editor."[1] John Mason Brown wrote that Theatre Arts'

> . . . long career has been possessed of a continuity which is singular in such a shifting world as that of the theatre. That continuity has been supplied it mainly by Mrs. Isaacs, who has put the stamp of her own integrity, her own ideals, and her own free spirit upon the journal which she has guided with diligence during all these varying seasons.[2]

On the magazine's twenty-fifth anniversary George Freedley stated that it had been "largely due to her boundless energy, her exalted standards, her fine tact, and above all, her ability to write glowingly and well, that this periodical is in existence today."[3] Sheldon Cheney, founder of Theatre Arts,

---

[1]Clara A. Weiss, "The Publishing Program of Theatre Arts," Publishers' Weekly, Jan. 11, 1941, p. 134.

[2]John Mason Brown, "Two on the Aisle," New York Evening Post, Jan. 27, 1936, p. 20.

[3]George Freedley, "The Stage Today," New York Morning Telegraph, Jan. 19, 1941, p. 16.

emphasized that "she was the great lady of Theatre Arts, and you can hardly overpraise her part in building and maintaining the magazine's importance."[1]

As editor of Theatre Arts from 1919 to 1945, Edith Isaacs was chiefly responsible for the magazine's character, significance, and long life. There were many who criticized Theatre Arts as being "too international," "too arty," "too prejudiced," "too Yellow Book"[2] in tone. This much is certain: Edith Isaacs believed above all in what she was fond of calling "The Great World Theatre." She believed in the theatre as an art with a capital "A." She believed in the theatre as a correlation of all the arts, past and present. And she believed in the "Tributary Theatre"--those little theatres throughout the country, the best of which would feed the mainstream of the professional theatre. Hers was an active mind constantly searching for ways to help the theatre. Under her editorship Theatre Arts served not only as the record of an era in the American theatre, but also as an important force in the shaping of that record.

Edith Juliet Rich was born on March 27, 1878, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Her father was Adolph Walter Rich,[3] an

---

[1]Letter from Cheney to the author, Dec. 20, 1953.

[2]Brown, op. cit., p. 20.

[3]Although he began as an eyeglass salesman, Rich ultimately became a successful shoe manufacturer. His company's chief claim to fame seems to have been the fact that it was the exclusive choice of Julia Marlowe to produce her shoes. Indeed, Miss Marlowe's name was given to one of the company's shoe styles.

Hungarian Jew who had emigrated to America in 1850. Her mother, Rosa Sidenberg Rich, was a native of Germany. After graduating from the Milwaukee public schools, Edith Rich attended Milwaukee-Downer College and received a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1897, completing the required work in two years.[1]

Undoubtedly much of her devotion to the drama can be traced to the influence of her parents, because they brought with them the European's love of the "living" stage. The family not only attended the theatre regularly, but Adolph Rich also was one of a group of citizens who provided backing to bring professional companies to Milwaukee[2] and to encourage the local stock company. Although she was in contact with the theatre in her early life, her activity during these years did not suggest that she would make it her career.

In these early years Edith Rich had considerable acting experience. As a member of the Milwaukee-Downer dramatic club, she played "most of the comedy leads" in the college productions.[3] In addition, she had direct contact with the

---

[1]When Isaacs' parents informed her that she could have only two years of college, she made arrangements with the dean to complete the requirements for a bachelor of arts degree in two years. In 1943 Milwaukee-Downer awarded her a belated Phi Beta Kappa key.

[2]A number of the greatest German-speaking stars of the day, including Kainz and Sorma, brought companies to Milwaukee in their tours of the United States, particularly because of the large size of the German community in that city.

[3]Her favorite role, she said, was the young widow in The Young Mrs. Winthrop.

professional theatre, since members of the college drama club often played small roles in the local stock company.[1] Although she became increasingly involved in other activities, she continued this occasional acting until she left Milwaukee in 1904.

Another early interest which brought her into immediate contact with the theatre was the drama activity of Milwaukee's Lincoln House, one of the settlement houses established largely through the influence of Jane Addams to help acclimate the huge numbers of European immigrants pouring into America. As one method for helping the immigrant to adjust to his new environment, each house organized an amateur theatre group to perform plays for the membership. Starting in 1896, when she was eighteen, Edith Rich set up and managed the drama club of Lincoln House while she taught five hundred boys to speak English. After moving to New York City in 1904, she continued her settlement house efforts at Clinton Hall in the Henry Street Settlement.[2]

It was probably this meeting with European influences and New Stagecraft theatre "reformers" in the settlement house which produced editor Isaacs and which helped to shape her attitudes and opinions. Because of its immigrant membership, the settlement house theatre reflected the European theatre tradition, which had recently been revolutionized by the

---

[1]The Milwaukee stock company was directed by Frederick Paulding and George Foster Platt, later associated with Winthrop Ames.

[2]The famous New York art theatre, Neighborhood Playhouse, emerged from this settlement house.

movement known as the New Stagecraft. Many of the settlement house groups introduced the new European plays and theatrical methods into the American scene. Glenn Hughes points out that one such group, the Hull House Players, had been presenting "interesting European plays since 1907."[1] These amateur groups manifested a growing dissatisfaction with the status of the professional theatre in America, and many of the most active workers in the settlement theatres were those "rebels" who would lead the revolt against the commercialism of the Broadway theatre. In his book Footlights Across America, Kenneth Macgowan, himself a worker in the New York Henry Street Settlement, noted that "out of the amateur acting club of the settlement house came the first little theatre impulses."[2]

In addition to her theatre experience, Edith Rich acquired editorial training as editor of the high school and Milwaukee-Downer newspapers. As a college student, she wrote occasional reviews of touring companies for the Milwaukee Dial, and soon was invited by Mary Kincaid, literary editor of the Milwaukee Sentinel, to submit reviews to that paper. In 1899, when Miss Kincaid's son contracted tuberculosis and the family was forced to move west, Edith Rich became literary editor of the Sentinel at the age of twenty-one.[3] In 1913 she was

---

[1]Glenn Hughes, History of the American Theatre (New York: Samuel French, 1951), p. 370.

[2]Kenneth Macgowan, Footlights Across America (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1929), p. 47.

[3]One of her colleagues on the Sentinel was a young poet named Carl Sandburg.

appointed drama critic for Ainslee's Magazine and continued in that capacity until it ceased publication in 1915. She also did occasional free-lance writing for the Ladies' Home Journal and the Drama League's magazine, The Drama.[1]

Besides her other writing, she was an active amateur librettist. Late in 1903 she completed the libretto for an operetta, but the composer who was writing the music decided to drop the project. She wrote about the disheartening experience to a cousin in New York City. When this cousin met Lewis M. Isaacs, a young New York lawyer who was also a music critic and amateur composer, she suggested that he collaborate with her Milwaukee cousin in writing an operetta.[2] Soon librettist and composer were corresponding and exchanging words and music for The Spectre Bridegroom.[3] When the work was finished, the composer visited Milwaukee "to look over the ground,"[4] and early in 1904 Edith Juliet Rich and Lewis Montefiore Isaacs were married.[5]

---

[1]Articles written for the latter magazine include: "The Plays of Martin Schutze" (August, 1911), and "Christian Friedrich Hebbel" (May, 1912).

[2]In a personal interview, Mrs. Isaacs stated that long before she met Lewis Isaacs, she had been impressed by his music reviews which were frequently published in The Bookman.

[3]Husband and wife collaborated on more operettas. The Revolt of the Flowers was produced by New York's Clinton House, the settlement group which ultimately became the Neighborhood Playhouse. None, however, was produced professionally.

[4]Personal interview with Edith Isaacs, White Plains, N.Y., Sept. 3, 1953.

[5]Lewis Isaacs died on December 12, 1944, in New York City.

Shortly after their marriage they moved to New York City, where they made their home and where their three children were born--Marian in 1906, Lewis, Jr., in 1908, and Hermine in 1915. For many years Marian Rich has been a teacher of voice and acting: at her own New York studio, at the New School for Social Research, at the Berghof School of Acting, and at the American Theatre Wing. Lewis M. Isaacs, Jr., practices law in New York City at the present time. From 1937 to 1948 Hermine Rich Isaacs was an associate editor of Theatre Arts, writing occasional articles and a regular motion picture review column. She later served as a member of the staff of Harper's magazine.

A fourth, and perhaps the most vital, influence in shaping the views of Edith Isaacs was her intimate relationship with the Drama League of America.[1] It was this association which brought her into immediate contact with the champions of the art theatre movement, with the New Stagecraft, and, ultimately, with Theatre Arts itself. The Drama League was organized at Evanston, Illinois, in 1910. Its early membership was largely groups of clubwomen, college professors, and other playgoers banded together to "encourage the production of 'good' drama, and discourage by non-support the 'bad.'"[2] They directed their efforts against the "vulgar commercialism" of the professional theatre by means of a playgoers' committee

---

[1]She was at various times an officer and a member of the board of directors of the New York Drama League.

[2]Hughes, op. cit., p. 367.

which attended plays and wrote evaluations recommending those plays they approved. These recommendations were then published as bulletins and distributed to the membership. This method served, of course, to avoid the pitfall of publicizing the plays which they condemned, and also averted any possible prosecution under the anti-boycott laws.

In New York City, however, a group of people, interested in the allied arts and calling themselves the Macdowall Club,[1] had been functioning with similar aims and methods for several years before the organization of the Drama League. Formed "for the high purpose of promoting an interest in the allied arts--Music, Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, Drama," the Macdowall Club selectively reviewed New York productions, reporting only on those of which they approved. In the May, 1911, issue of The Drama, Sarah Barnwell Elliott described the club's goal.

> Believing that through the box office the audience can get ultimately the kind of play it wants, the Macdowall Club is pledged to support during the first two or three weeks of its production any play approved by its Drama Committee, in this way undoubtedly assisting in giving a new play the encouragement that will cause the manager to keep it on the boards, the feeling of the Club being that good plays die sometimes, before a supporting public can come to save them.[2]

As a member of this club and its drama committee, Isaacs practiced the selective reviewing of Broadway plays which was to

---

[1]At the time of his death in 1944, Lewis M. Isaacs was secretary of the Edward Macdowall Association.

[2]Sarah Barnwell Elliott, "The Macdowall Club," The Drama, May, 1911, p. 174.

become an integral part of the editorial policy of Theatre Arts.

When, after 1910, the Drama League began to open branches throughout the country, Isaacs was instrumental in uniting the activities of the Macdowall Club and the New York branch of the Drama League.[1] She gave freely of her time, reviewing plays for the membership, working in the League's New York bookshop, and occasionally translating German plays for the League's magazine.[2] Many of her associates and intimates in the New York Drama League were those same reformers active in settlement house theatre, in educational theatre, and in the art or little theatre. Some of the names which appear repeatedly in connection with activities of protest against the commercial theatre are Kenneth Macgowan, Irving Pichel, George Pierce Baker, Walter Prichard Eaton, Montrose Moses, S. Marion Tucker, William N. Guthrie, Brander Matthews, Alexander Dean, Gilmor Brown, Frederick H. Koch, E. C. Mabie, Barrett H. Clark, Elizabeth Wallace, Thomas Wood Stevens, Jack Crawford, Richard Burton, Charles Sergel, J. Howard Reber, Francis Neilson, William Lyon Phelps, Otto Kahn, George Arliss, C. M. Wise, Theodore Fuchs, S. H. Clark, Thomas H. Dickenson, R. C. Hunter, Robert Herrick, Glenn Hughes, and Paul Green.

---

[1]A letter from Sheldon Cheney to the author, dated December 20, 1953, describes Isaacs as "strong-minded" and "an able executive," and adds that "there were legends about the arbitrary way in which she kept the New York branch of the Drama League out of the national Drama League."

[2]The May, 1912, issue of The Drama contains Isaacs' translation of Friedrich Hebbel's Herod and Miriamne.

Isaacs' interests, however, were not confined to the theatre. The extent and range of her interest is indicated by the fact that she was for several years a member of the Milwaukee juvenile court commission. In 1916 John Price Jones, chairman of the United States Liberty Loan organization, appointed her women's editor for Liberty Loans in the Milwaukee Federal District, and in 1918 she was made national chief of women's publicity on Liberty Loans.[1]

From this survey of Isaacs' early years, it can be seen that her training and experience as editor, author, and critic, her knowledge of the theatre, and her complete devotion to the art of the theatre were all synthesized in her stewardship of Theatre Arts. Her close association with American theatre reformers, with the burgeoning art theatre movement, with the various "protest" organizations, and with the new theatre ideas from Europe had a marked influence on her and, consequently, on the modus operandi of Theatre Arts. Her extensive efforts in the settlement house and the Drama League brought her into intimate contact with the forces in revolt against the methods of the commercial theatre and with those ardent revolutionaries who were seeking to promote European theatrical innovation.

It was through her contact with New Stagecraft advocates and settlement house co-workers that Isaacs first became

---

[1]These unrelated activities are included here, because Isaacs herself mentioned them numerous times in personal interviews, indicating that they were a source of real pride.

involved with Theatre Arts. She was, in fact, associated with the magazine before her name appeared on the masthead as one of an editorial quadrumvirate in 1919. One of her associates in the Henry Street Settlement House and the New York branch of the Drama League was Kenneth Macgowan, whom John Mason Brown called a "courier" and "herald" of the New Stagecraft.[1] Macgowan persuaded Isaacs to join with nine other Drama League members in pledging $500.00 each to aid a struggling one-year-old quarterly magazine entitled Theatre Arts.[2] As a proselyte of the New Stagecraft, Isaacs continued to make occasional loans to the magazine before 1919, and gradually became more intimately involved in the publication.[3] According to Macgowan, she began to work on the production of the magazine primarily because she had "money, leisure, horse-sense and charm," and "with a real concern and belief in this

---

[1]Personal interview with John Mason Brown, April 10, 1955, Ann Arbor, Michigan. In August, 1917, Macgowan's name appeared on the masthead of Theatre Arts as a contributing editor.

[2]During 1917-18, when Cheney was in financial difficulties with Theatre Arts, he had offered the magazine to the Drama League's publication, The Drama, on condition that the League's magazine would enlarge its coverage to include all arts allied to the theatre. The League, however, was primarily interested in the drama itself, and the offer was refused.

[3]Letter from Sheldon Cheney to the author, Dec. 20, 1953. Cheney wrote: "In any case, I find a note that I owed Mrs. Isaacs $100, Mrs. James Harvey Robinson (of the Drama Bookshop, and very close to Mrs. Isaacs) $150, as well as two $25 loans to the magazine from friends at the Neighborhood Playhouse. (I take it that these were loans, not subsidies, because the card has the title 'Bills to be paid, Vol. II' and includes other entries, for printing, etc.)"

growth, she took the nasty jobs, greasing things, reading articles, pushing subscriptions, etc."

From 1919 to 1945 Isaacs was the motivating force behind the magazine's rapid growth and expansion. She became sole editor in 1924 and held this position until illness forced her retirement in 1945. Rheumatoid arthritis first struck her late in 1929. Treatment at the radium baths in Czechoslovakia allowed her to return reasonably recovered the following year, but six years later she was hospitalized after a second and more severe attack. Although she was placed in a full cast in 1938, she continued to direct the publication of the magazine from her bed. Increasing infirmity, however, forced her to delegate more and more responsibility to her associate editor, Rosamond Gilder. Finally, she retired in 1945, but her name remained on the masthead of the magazine as publisher until it was sold to Robert Dowling and Henry Steeger in 1946. In spite of the fact that she was largely bedfast after 1938, she remained alert, keen, and interested until her death at White Plains, New York, on January 10, 1956, at the age of seventy-eight.[1]

In addition to her work as editor of Theatre Arts, Isaacs was active in the affairs of several nation-wide theatre organizations, notably the National Theatre Conference and the American National Theatre and Academy. Her role, and that of Theatre Arts, in the activities of these organizations is

---

[1]New York Times, Jan. 11, 1956, p. 31.

indirectly related to the principles and aims which guided Theatre Arts and is, therefore, described in an appendix to this study.

The preceding pages have outlined the environment, training, and experience of Edith Isaacs as preparation for her stewardship of Theatre Arts. This biographical treatment is interrupted here to summarize the principles of the New Stagecraft movement, which provided the original raison d'être for the magazine, and also to trace the first years of Theatre Arts under Sheldon Cheney.

CHAPTER II

THE NEW STAGECRAFT AND THE EARLY YEARS OF "THEATRE ARTS" UNDER SHELDON CHENEY

The nineteenth century was one of theatrical rebellion and insurgency throughout Europe. The excitement and wonder of increasing scientific knowledge stimulated a thorough, detailed examination of the forces in nature with which mankind had to contend. In the theatre the artificiality of the romanticists was no rival for the knowledge and truth being revealed in science with growing power and significance. When such knowledge and truth were depicted on the stage, as was inevitable, the result was an almost fanatical devotion to the "slice of life" and the "fourth wall" conventions. Thus, as Kenneth Macgowan describes it: "Science made the theatre realistic and Realism made the drama scientific. It ceased to be a show. It became a photograph."[1] These naturalistic methods were pioneered in André Antoine's Théâtre Libre in France, Otto Brahm's Freie Bühne in Germany, J. T. Grein's Independent Theatre in England, and, in their early years, the Moscow Art Theatre in Russia and the Abbey Theatre in Ireland.

---

[1]Kenneth Macgowan, Continental Stagecraft (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1922), p. 214.

But even while the rebellion of the naturalists against the romanticists was gaining the ascendancy in Europe, a new insurgency was marshalling its forces to do battle with both naturalist and romanticist. Believing that in the methods of the naturalists "the theatre had turned its back on the theatre,"[1] the new rebels urged the return of art to the stage. They decried the lack of selectivity of "slice of life" and the strictures of the "fourth wall." They denounced the deadness of the "hack painter" and his painted backdrops, woodwings, and perspective.

> Believing, as Hugo had believed, in scenery which was more than an inanimate background, and advancing the idea of settings which were "silent characters" and "terrible and inseparable witnesses" of the "catastrophe," the leaders of the New Movement [New Stagecraft] approached their work in an entirely different manner from that which either the older backdrop painters or the Naturalistic assemblers of reality had employed. The new designer came to the theatre not as a spiritless hack but as an artist entitled to the privileges of interpretation and expecting to be judged as a creator. He was, in short, no longer a scene painter, but a scenic artist, and the difference is enormous.[2]

Thus, the stage setting of the New Stagecraft had to be "a visual participant in the drama, saying to the eyes what the text said to the ear, a reminder of fate, a builder of mood, in brief, a <u>silent character</u> of no slight importance."[3] Here was no literary revolution, but a movement born of the theatre.

The two "high priests" of the New Stagecraft were Adolph Appia, a Swiss, and Edward Gordon Craig, son of the

---

[1]John Mason Brown, <u>The Modern Theatre in Revolt</u> (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1929), p. 39.

[2]<u>Ibid</u>., p. 43.

[3]<u>Ibid</u>., p. 42.

English actress Ellen Terry. In 1891 Appia wrote La mise-en-scène du drame Wagnerien,[1] which described his theories of staging the music-dramas of Richard Wagner, and in 1895 followed with his larger work, Die Musik und die Inscenierung.[2] Appia's theories and designs, together with Craig's powerful popularizing influence, ultimately revolutionized scene design throughout the world.

Appia's primary goal was to enable the scenery and the lighting to express imaginatively the dramatist's intention throughout the entire play. Through his setting the designer was to interpret, and even heighten, the play's meaning. This meant that the "expressional" scene must be suggestively simple so as not to detract from the actor. In addition, it meant that the setting must be spatial or three-dimensional so as to harmonize with the living actor. To complete the unifying and harmonizing process, Appia urged the imaginative use of light to mold, unify, and dramatize both setting and actor, adding that "an object or an actor takes on a plastic quality only through the light that strikes it, and the plasticity can only be of artistic value when the light is artistically handled."[3] Further, Appia stressed the importance of changing the light as the play develops, in order to express and heighten the dramatist's changing moods.

---

[1]Paris: L. Chailley, 1895.

[2]München: F. Bruckmann, 1899.

[3]Quoted in Kenneth Macgowan, The Theatre of Tomorrow (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1921), p. 85.

Although Appia appeared before Craig, John Mason Brown states emphatically that Craig was "the greatest inspiration to which the New Movement [New Stagecraft] has responded."[1] There is little doubt that Craig's powerful influence sprang more from his writings and designs than from his actual accomplishment in the theatre. In 1902 he had his first exhibition and in 1905 published his first book, The Art of the Theatre.[2] Six years later came On the Art of the Theatre[3] and Towards a New Theatre.[4] In addition, he published a provocative magazine which he called The Mask.[5]

Craig believed that "to mix the real and the unreal, the genuine and the sham . . . is at all times, whether in Life or in Art, an error, a misconception of the nature of all things, a parody of purpose."[6] Like Appia, Craig sought unity, harmony, and artistic consistency in the theatrical production.[7]

---

[1]Brown, op. cit., p. 47.

[2]Edinburgh: T. N. Foulis, 1905.

[3]Chicago: Browne's Bookstore, 1911.

[4]London: J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 1913.

[5]The Mask, "a sumptuous Journal devoted to the Art of the Theatre," was founded by Craig in 1908 and was published and printed in Florence, Italy.

[6]Edward Gordon Craig, The Theatre--Advancing (Little, Brown & Company, 1919), p. 176.

[7]In reviewing Craig's book Scene, Isaacs wrote, "No living man has contributed more than Gordon Craig to the conception of the theatre as a vital unified organism. To test his theories--his 'notions, hopes, fears'--may prove expensive. Not to test them may be to bankrupt our theatre" (Theatre Arts, April, 1924, p. 281).

He was disturbed by the presence of inconsistencies and contradictory elements in the contemporary theatre: the poet's words *versus* the actor's colloquial utterance, the living actor *versus* the painted scene, the painted make-up *versus* the natural facial expression, as well as the effort for natural lighting and natural movement. In short, he wanted unity and consistency of style in all artistic phases of production. He preferred, of course, the poetic and imaginative qualities of the timeless and unlocalized scene, as well as the non-natural lighting which characterized Appia's designs. To achieve this unity and harmony, Craig held that the whole artistic creation of a production must spring from a single creative mind.

Although some of Craig's theories may be classified as extreme, it cannot be denied that they had a profound influence on the stature and authority of the modern director, as well as on the development of twentieth-century scene design. Sheldon Cheney wrote: "Craig's insistence shifted emphasis from all other theatre figures to that of the man charged with placing the play on the stage."[1] Craig's ideal was probably realized most effectively in the career of "the Barnum of the New Movement," Max Reinhardt.

Although the New Stagecraft started with Appia and Craig, it soon developed some radically different techniques.

---

[1]Sheldon Cheney, *The Theatre: Three Thousand Years of Drama, Acting and Stagecraft* (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1929), p. 517.

The theories of Appia and Craig freed the artistic imagination, inspired a variety of experimentation, and produced a general re-examination of theatrical production. Of the many artists influenced by Appia and Craig, some became copyists, but most were simply freed to experiment on their own, producing innovations which followed quite different lines from those laid down by Appia and Craig. To this group of experimentalists belong France's Jacques Copeau, Russia's Vsevelod Meyerhold, Germany's Max Reinhardt, and England's Harley Granville-Barker. The scope of the New Stagecraft is further illustrated by the fact that it embraced even the flat painting of Russian designers Bakst, Golovin, and Roerich--a painting, however, which now demonstrated new color values expressing the atmosphere of the play and projecting the spiritual sweep of the emotion in color and line.

Furthermore, the unity and harmony which the New Stagecraft brought to the visual elements of the production affected the art of the actor. The Duke of Saxe-Meiningen and the "free theatres" had developed practical techniques of careful, detailed, and thorough rehearsal, the elimination of stars, detailed attention to crowd scenes, and an intimate ensemble among the actors of the production. Many of these goals were retained in the acting and directing which paralleled the visual innovations of the New Stagecraft. The directors and producers of this period were keenly aware that individual, unrelated performances by actors could destroy, or at least

weaken, the unity of expression in the other elements. They too demanded cohesion and a sense of ensemble in the acting.

In brief, this was the New Stagecraft: a movement born of the theatre and nurtured by men of the theatre. Its goals were to bring new harmony, unity, and synthesis to those arts which are combined in the theatre; to bring imagination and harmony into the scene; to provide an overall unity and singleness of interpretation through the guiding mind of the director; and to produce cohesion and ensemble in the acting. What began as a scenic revolt, a "visual impetus" in the words of John Mason Brown, ultimately influenced and reshaped the other arts of the theatre, producing, paradoxically, greater centralization of control and at the same time greater artistic freedom.

The new methods just described, which had conquered the European theatre by the first years of the twentieth century, did not reach America until almost the brink of World War I, chiefly, John Anderson explains, "because the managerial system then in power was conservative and entrenched."[1] Without playwrights of quality, designers of imagination, or directors of significance, the laurels of the American theatre rested on stars such as Minnie Maddern Fiske, Richard Mansfield, Otis Skinner, Julia Marlowe, and E. H. Sothern.[2] Such a theatre was ripe for a theatrical renaissance.

---

[1]John Anderson, The American Theatre (New York: The Dial Press, 1938), p. 62.

[2]George Altman, Ralph Freud, Kenneth Macgowan, and William Melnitz, Theater Pictorial (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1953), text accompanying illustration 449.

The second decade of the twentieth century saw the emergence of New Stagecraft methods in the United States. In 1912 the newly-opened Boston Opera House engaged Josef Urban of Vienna to design its productions, and the influence of the new techniques was immediately recognized in his settings for Pelleas and Melisande, Monna Vanna, and others. Also in 1912, the new methods were employed in the designs of Livingston Platt at the Boston Toy Theatre. Two years later the first American exhibition of European stage design was prepared by Samuel J. Hume, a pupil of Gordon Craig.[1] In 1915 a young American designer, Robert Edmond Jones, who had spent a year at Max Reinhardt's Deutsches Theater, designed settings and costumes for Harley Granville-Barker's New York production of The Man Who Married a Dumb Wife. Jones was accorded instant recognition, and the New Stagecraft achieved its first toehold in America. Other American designers who were pioneers in spreading the new methods were Norman Bel Geddes,[2]

---

[1]The exhibition assembled by Hume in Massachusetts went to New York in 1915. Later that same year Hume was appointed director of the Arts and Crafts Theatre in Detroit, Michigan.

[2]Bel Geddes began designing in a Los Angeles little theatre, and in 1918 was commissioned to design a production for the Metropolitan Opera House. Mr. Geddes' hyphenation of his name has varied over the years. This study omits the hyphen in view of this note in Current Biography (New York: H. W. Wilson Co., 1948): "The family name is Geddes: when Norman Geddes and his wife, Helen Belle Geddes, were seeking a name for a magazine which they were launching, they finally decided to use a portion of both their names and call the periodical Bel-Geddes magazine. Later dropping the hyphen, Norman Bel Geddes, who was to attain renown as a theatrical and industrial designer and architect, continued to use the coined name."

Lee Simonson,[1] and Rollo Peters.[2]

Since the American commercial theatre largely resisted the advances of the New Stagecraft in the early years, the disciples of the movement were forced to look elsewhere for theatrical opportunity. They had recently seen the vivid ensemble ideal in the visit of the Abbey Theatre company from Ireland and the Granville-Barker group from London; fired with enthusiasm, they initiated a new era in the development of the American theatre. To fill their needs the art or little theatre came into existence. Soon

> a strange mania was gripping the cities of America, a mania which was to grow to colossal and inspiring proportions. The "Little Theatre" was on the way. The ideas of Maurice Browne had crept out of the top floor of the Fine Arts Building and had begun to sweep the cities of the Middle West. . . .[3]

There were, of course, amateur theatre groups producing plays throughout America before Maurice Browne established the Chicago Little Theatre in 1912,[4] but the Toy Theatre in Boston,[5]

---

[1]Simonson began designing for the Washington Square Players in 1915. Following World War I the group was reborn as the Theatre Guild. As a member of the board of directors, Simonson continued to design and occasionally to direct.

[2]Peters was most active as a member of the acting company of the Washington Square Players, and later the Theatre Guild.

[3]Whitford Kane, Are We All Met? (London: E. Mathews & Marrot, 1931), p. 162.

[4]The Chicago Little Theatre, seating only 91, had a life of five years under the direction of Maurice Browne, a young English poet who had recently come to America (Hughes, op. cit., p. 370).

[5]Launched in 1912, the Toy Theatre operated on a semi-professional basis for two and a half years (Ibid.).

directed by Mrs. Lyman Gale; the Little Theatre in New York,[1] directed by Winthrop Ames; the Neighborhood Playhouse in New York;[2] the Provincetown Players in Provincetown and New York;[3] the Washington Square Players in New York;[4] and Stuart Walker's Portmanteau Theatre[5] were pioneers in the art theatre movement.

These, and others like them, welcomed the New Stagecraft and experimented freely with the new methods. Their leaders were, in many cases, the same zealots who began their crusade in the settlement houses, in the Drama League of America, and continued in the universities and colleges of the nation. The masthead of the first issue of Theatre Arts in

---

[1]Also opened in 1912, the Little Theatre in New York City was strictly professional in a playhouse seating 299 (Ibid.).

[2]The Neighborhood Playhouse developed out of the community drama activities of the Henry Street Settlement in 1915 and for many years was heavily financed by Irene and Alice Lewisohn (Ibid.).

[3]The Provincetown Players began as an informal group of writers and artists who joined forces in Provincetown, Massachusetts, in 1915 and one year later established their theatre in New York's Greenwich Village. Its "graduates" included George Cram Cook, Robert Edmond Jones, Lawrence Langner, Jasper Deeter, Kenneth Macgowan, Donald Oenslager, Cleon Throckmorton, and many others (Ibid., p. 371).

[4]In 1915 the Washington Square Players were organized in New York, but the group disbanded in 1918. At the end of the war in 1918 some of the players met and organized the Theatre Guild, an organization which is still functioning today. In its early years it gave experience and training to talents such as Rollo Peters, Katharine Cornell, Lee Simonson, and many other actors, directors, and designers (Ibid., p. 372).

[5]The Portmanteau Theatre was the fourth historic theatre organization formed in 1915. Stuart Walker's group performed first at Christadora Settlement House in New York, but later toured the entire country (Ibid., p. 370).

1916 offered a representative list of these leaders whom Cheney had lined up as contributing editors.

One of the earliest and most important of these theatres in America was the Arts and Crafts Theatre of Detroit, Michigan. The sponsoring organization was the Society of Arts and Crafts, an association of artists and craftsmen from all of the arts.[1] In its tenth year, 1915, the society established a theatre in Detroit and invited Samuel J. Hume, an ardent advocate of the New Stagecraft, to become its director. Hume, a native of California, had studied at Harvard under George Pierce Baker and with Gordon Craig in Florence. After returning from Italy, Hume worked at the University of California's Greek Theatre in Berkeley, and in 1915 was brought to Detroit to direct the first production in an open-air theatre built on the Cranbrook estate of George C. Booth, a member of the Society of Arts and Crafts.

While in California, Hume met Sheldon Cheney, another champion of the New Stagecraft.[2] From 1910 to 1916 Cheney

---

[1]Thomas H. Dickenson, The Insurgent Theatre (New York: B. W. Huebsch, 1917), p. 202.

[2]Sheldon Cheney was born in Berkeley, California, on June 29, 1886, and received an A.B. degree from the University of California in 1908. Besides founding Theatre Arts and serving as its editor from 1916 to 1919, he is the author of several books, including The New Movement in the Theatre (New York: M. Kennerly, 1914), The Art Theatre (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1917), The Open-Air Theatre (New York: M. Kennerly, 1918), Stage Decoration (New York: The John Day Co., 1928), A Primer of Modern Art (New York: Boni & Liveright, 1928), The Theatre: 3,000 Years of Drama, Acting and Stagecraft (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1929), The New World Architecture (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1930), Expressionism in Art

had served as art and drama critic for several newspapers and was especially ambitious to further the cause of the New Stagecraft in America. Both men felt the need for a journal which would not only spread the doctrine of the new methods but would also serve as the means through which information about new developments and experiments in Europe and America might be disseminated.[1] In addition, it was anticipated that such a magazine might serve as an outlet or spokesman for the burgeoning art theatre and the artist-craftsman, and bind together in common cause the workers and groups in the New Stagecraft.[2]

Theatre Arts was originally projected for publication in California. Although Cheney had the title, format, list of contributing editors, and a tentative dummy of the first issue, he had been unable to find the capital to begin publication. As the newly appointed director of the Arts and Crafts Theatre, Hume proposed to Cheney that the Arts and Crafts Society in Detroit might be persuaded to subsidize the magazine. After Hume had explained Cheney's plans to the society's

---

(New York: Liveright Publishing Corp., 1934), Art and the Machine (New York: Whittlesey House, McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1936), A World History of Art (New York: The Viking Press, 1937), The Story of Modern Art (New York: The Viking Press, 1941), Men Who Have Walked with God (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1945). In 1961 he resided at Chapel Road, New Hope, Pennsylvania.

[1]An unsigned editorial in the November, 1916, issue of The Drama (p. 654) noted: "A group of the younger artists in theatre have felt that there should be a magazine devoted to the purely artistic interests of the playhouse, as distinguished from its commercial and social aspects."

[2]Letter to the author from Cheney, Dec. 20, 1953.

theatre committee,[1] the group promised $600.00 toward any first-year deficit, and in the fall of 1916 Theatre Arts began publication with offices in the Arts and Crafts theatre building in Detroit.[2] Although the Arts and Crafts Society provided office space for the magazine and $600.00 against any deficit, it assumed no legal or editorial control of the magazine.[3]

In the fourth issue, published in August, 1917, Cheney included a photograph of the interior of the Munich Art Theatre.[4] A half-page editorial compared American theatres unfavorably to those in Germany and concluded that "the Germans have the best theatres in the world."[5] With America on the brink of World War I, public sentiment was strongly anti-German.

---

[1]The annual report of the Arts and Crafts Society for 1917 lists the following members of the Theatre Committee of the Society of Arts and Crafts: William B. Cady, chairman; Daniel L. Quirk, vice-chairman; Ralph H. Booth, treasurer; Luretta Sanders, secretary; H. L. Burnett, Grace D. Guest, Katherine McEwen, Alexandrine McEwen.

[2]The $600.00 subsidy was renewed the following year, after which Theatre Arts moved to New York.

[3]In his letter to the author, Cheney says that since the society "did not wish to be responsible for the editorial or business administration of the thing," he kept complete ownership and editorial responsibility himself.

[4]Not identified by name until the November, 1939, issue of Theatre Arts (p. 765): ". . . A certain English critic had sent Theatre Arts a photograph of the beautiful Art Theatre in Munich with a caption to the effect that building a theatre as lovely as this, where the audience could see and hear from every seat and be comfortable besides, was a form of Germanic propaganda that no Anglo-Saxon would indulge in."

[5]Theatre Arts, August, 1917, p. 166.

Two members of the Society's theatre committee were so offended by the picture and the editorial that they threatened to urge cancellation of the second-year subsidy if that page were not removed. Because he was "all for keeping nationalism and art in separate compartments," Cheney refused to eliminate the objectionable page, and the theatre committee withdrew the subsidy. Cheney moved the magazine to New York City, finding offices at 220 West 42d Street. In the December, 1917, issue, published in New York, Cheney wrote:

> The removal of this magazine's office to New York was inevitable. As the center of the progressive as well as the conservative theatre, that is the only logical place for us to be, and the change from such a comparatively isolated place as Detroit was long ago foreseen.[1]

In reflecting on his behavior in this matter, Cheney admits that he was "probably bull-headed and over-insistent on having my say, in a place where I had been shown every courtesy and should have realized the sensitiveness of many minds towards any praise of German arts or theatre."[2]

As editor, publisher, and owner, Cheney turned out issues largely by himself.[3] The initial publication has as contributing editors Winthrop Ames, Maurice Browne, Walter Prichard Eaton, Clayton Hamilton, Frank Cheney Hersey, Sam

---

[1] Theatre Arts, December, 1917, p. 49.

[2] Letter from Cheney to the author, Dec. 20, 1953.

[3] Official ownership statement, Theatre Arts, August, 1917, p. 204.

Hume, Charles Rann Kennedy, Percy MacKaye, Hiram Kelly Moderwell,[1] Ruth St. Denis, and Thomas Wood Stevens.[2] When the magazine moved to New York in 1917, Sam Hume was dropped from this list and Kenneth Macgowan was added.[3] Arthur Hopkins joined the list with the May, 1918, issue. Several of these people wrote articles for the magazine in the early years,[4] but most only lent the prestige of their names.

Late in 1917 Cheney entered War Camp Community Service, an organization similar to the U.S.O. in World War II. Although he was stationed in New York, he was able to give little time to the magazine, and issues fell farther and farther behind schedule. The issue dated September, 1918, offered only one article and the following explanation directed to the magazine's subscribers:[5]

> This very abbreviated issue of Theatre Arts Magazine is not an indication of an insecure future, but merely a means of overcoming certain handicaps placed upon us during

---

[1]Mr. Moderwell changed his name from Motherwell during World War I.

[2]Masthead, Theatre Arts, November, 1916. Ames, Browne, and Hume were associated with art theatres; Eaton, Moderwell, and Hamilton were drama critics and/or authors; Kennedy, an actor, and MacKaye were playwrights; Stevens was a member of the faculty at Carnegie Tech; and St. Denis was an exponent of modern dance.

[3]Masthead, Theatre Arts, December, 1917.

[4]Eaton in November, 1916 (p. 9); St. Denis in February, 1917 (p. 75); Moderwell in February, 1917 (p. 51).

[5]The January, 1926, Theatre Arts notes (p. 1) that there were only thirty-two paid subscriptions for the January, 1918, issue, though special circumstances such as subscriber uncertainty about the future of the magazine and technicalities of renewal dates may partly explain this.

> the war period. At no time did we cut down the size of our issues, but we have fallen behind schedule dates, and rising costs of paper, engraving and printing make necessary a saving in some direction. It has seemed wise to throw the entire curtailment into this one issue, in order to begin the third volume without embarrassment, and to complete volume two before undertaking a reorganization and enlargement scheme.[1]

Cheney then went on to describe the organizational plan which was to be effected at the end of that year.

> Beginning with Number One of Volume III, dated January, 1919, Theatre Arts Magazine will enter upon a program of gradual expansion which will ultimately take it into the monthly field. Its scope will be widened to give more space to drama as distinguished from the other theatre arts; but it will continue to cover the old fields. Editorial control will be vested in a board representing those at present in charge and two other groups who had projected dramatic publications as soon as peace came. The combined forces will be able to offer a magazine of wider interest, more varied contents and more complete news service than has been possible under past conditions. The future is, indeed, bright.[2]

One of the "groups" mentioned by Cheney was S. Marion Tucker, critic and professor of drama at Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute. The other included Kenneth Macgowan, drama critic and author, and Edith Isaacs. All three were co-workers in the settlement house theatre, were associated in the New York Drama League, and were exponents of the New Stagecraft. Since Cheney was anxious to revive Theatre Arts, but had no capital, they decided to join forces;[3] and the magazine was reborn

---

[1] Theatre Arts, September, 1918, p. 179.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Letter from Sheldon Cheney to the author, Dec. 20, 1953. Cheney notes that Isaacs and Macgowan "did not care wholeheartedly for the name Theatre Arts, or else wanted to emphasize a new beginning. Generously they put my name at the head of the list of Editors, and eventually the old name was decided upon."

under the direction of an editorial quadrumvirate.[1] From this time on Edith Isaacs participated in the editing of Theatre Arts.

Now, what was the magazine's editorial policy at the time Isaacs joined the staff? The foreword of the first issue, in November, 1916, had set forth these goals: "To help conserve and develop creative impulse in the American theatre; to provide a permanent record of American dramatic art in its formative period; to hasten the day when the speculators will step out of the established playhouses and let the artists in."[2] It predicted the conquest of the regular commercial theatre by a "new generation of artist-workers--playwrights, actors, directors, decorators." It emphasized that these artists needed "the broadening and solidifying influence of a journal, designed for the artist who approaches the theatre in the spirit of the arts and crafts movement,[3] and for the theatregoer who is awake artistically and intellectually." In November, 1916, the Drama League's magazine attempted to define the scope of Theatre Arts' interest and activity.

> The new periodical is not designed to invade the wider field of the established trade journals, The Dramatic Mirror, and The Theatre, nor will it attempt to displace

---

[1]The reorganization of Theatre Arts under an editorial board was effected late in 1918, but the formal announcement was not made until the April, 1919, issue.

[2]Theatre Arts, November, 1916, p. 1.

[3]The phrase "arts and crafts" obviously was a courtesy bow to the Detroit Society of Arts and Crafts, and was tied to the New Stagecraft only during the year of publication in Detroit.

> The Drama. It is intended, rather, to complement these older publications, by supplying the working artist in the theatre with a news medium and a forum for the discussion of new ideas. It will be, in a sense, an expression of the arts and crafts movement as seen in the playhouse. The specific fields to be covered are: The New Stagecraft, acting, costuming, poetic playwriting, aesthetic dancing, and theatre architecture.
>
> The editors hope to make the magazine a clearing-house for information about the more technical matters of stage production, as well as a permanent record of the progress of the theatre arts in this country and Europe. It is hoped, too, that it will serve to focus the work of the little theatres and art theatres, which are being established in so many American cities.[1]

A comparison of this description with the subsequent history of Theatre Arts reveals that its fundamental aims and purposes did not change appreciably throughout its thirty-two-year existence.[2]

One of the marked characteristics of Theatre Arts' editorial policy was its careful and consistent selectivity. As editor, Cheney initiated a policy of selective reviewing of New York productions, and this policy became an integral part of the magazine's life. In the second issue, published in February, 1917, a brief critical analysis of four commercial productions in New York was included in the review of New York's art theatres. The editor, however, revealed his special interest when he explained that the four productions

---

[1]"A Theatre Arts Magazine," The Drama, November, 1913, p. 654.

[2]Theatre Arts restated its first statement of aims in succeeding issues: August, 1917 (p. 149) and February, 1918 (p. 101).

had the "characteristic poetic or intellectual 'art theatre' stamp."[1]

In spite of the fact that Cheney made a real effort to review productions in the New York commercial theatre, his own preferences prevented his reconciling himself to what he saw on Broadway. After Theatre Arts was moved to New York, the editor acknowledged this bias: "We have been too narrowly concerned with a limited movement; . . . in order to record all signs of progress toward a better theatre art in this country it is necessary to examine all new productions in both the regular and the insurgent playhouses."[2] In conformity with this view the prospectus for Volume II (1917-18) promised "reviews of all important productions, in both the independent and commercial theatres"; but this apparently new policy was qualified by the editor's statement that the "publication will remain primarily the organ of the progressives, and the fight against the forces of commercialization will be waged as merrily as heretofore."[3] The promise was short-lived, however, for in the February, 1918, issue Cheney wrote:

> On planning a department which would pass in review all new plays coming to the New York stage, we intended to provide for our readers one more check on the development of a better theatre in America. After enduring more than thirty New York productions in three months, the

---

[1] "New York's Best Season," Theatre Arts, February, 1917, p. 67.

[2] Theatre Arts, December, 1917, p. 1.

[3] Prospectus for Theatre Arts, Volume II (1917-18).

> Editor confesses that he no longer has faith that a record of such offerings can be said largely to concern the real art of the theatre.[1]

Thereafter, the policy of selective reviewing of New York productions was closely adhered to.

Under Cheney, Theatre Arts' editorial policy of selectivity also revealed itself in the magazine's choice of subject matter in articles. The early issues emphasized the activities of the art or little theatres, particularly the work of Sam Hume at Detroit's Arts and Crafts Theatre. The commercial theatre was virtually ignored with the exception of designers Josef Urban and Robert Edmond Jones and director Arthur Hopkins, all of whom reflected the New Stagecraft influence. Articles were written by Stephen Allard, Mary Austin, Claude Bragdon, Michael Carmichael Carr, Huntley Carter, Paul Claudel, Isadora Duncan, Walter Prichard Eaton, R. Clyde Ford, Zona Gale, Cloyd Head, Arthur Hopkins, Kenneth Macgowan, Josephine A. Meyer, Hettie Louise Mick, Hiram Kelly Moderwell, Claire Dana Mumford, James Oppenheim, N. Ostrovsky, Rollo Peters, Herman Rosse, Ruth St. Denis, Constance Smedley, William Lee Sowers, Lee Simonson, Frank Tompkins, Hamilton Williamson.[2]

---

[1] Theatre Arts, February, 1918, p. 85.

[2] Stephen Allard, "William Poel in America" (Nov., 1916, p. 24) and "Plays for Little Theatres" (Aug., 1917, p. 175); Mary Austin, "A New Medium for Poetic Drama" (Feb., 1917, p. 62); Claude Bragdon, "Artificial Lighting for Out-of-Doors," (Aug., 1917, p. 189) and "The People's Theatre" (Sept., 1918, p. 173); Michael C. Carr, "The Scenic Art of J. Blanding Sloan" (May, 1918, p. 159); Huntley Carter, "Wartime Theatres of England and France" (Aug., 1917, p. 151) and "Newest Tendencies in the Paris Theatre" (Dec., 1917, p. 35); Paul Claudel, "How My Plays Should Be Acted" (May, 1917,

The prospectus for 1917-18 explained the nature of the departments which would appear regularly in the magazine.

> The news section, under the title "The Theatre Arts Chronicle," will include reviews of all important productions, in both the independent and commercial theatres, often over the signatures of critics nationally known. The Department "At the Little Theatres" will continue to list programs and events of interest at the experimental playhouses. The book review departments will offer an authoritative record of all newly published plays and new books about the theatre. The Editorials will offer forward-looking comment on timely subjects related to dramatic art.[1]

The prospectus also noted that the illustrations would be chosen "to preserve the best work of modern designers of

---

p. 117); Isadora Duncan, "The Dance" (Dec., 1917, p. 21); Walter P. Eaton, "Acting and the New Stagecraft" (Nov., 1916, p. 9) and "Realistic Drama and the Experimental Theatre" (Dec., 1917, p. 18); R. Clyde Ford, "The Little Theatre and the Small Town" (May, 1918, p. 145); Zona Gale, "The Wisconsin Players" (May, 1917, p. 128) and "The Colored Players and Their Plays" (May, 1917, p. 139); Cloyd Head, "The Chicago Little Theatre" (May, 1917, p. 110); Arthur Hopkins, "Our Unreasonable Theatre" (Feb., 1918, p. 79); Kenneth Macgowan, "The Myth of Urban" (May, 1917, p. 99); Josephine A. Meyer, "Experimental: A Review of Plays Produced by the Washington Square Players" (Dec., 1917, p. 25); Hettie Louise Mick, "Puppets at the Chicago Little Theatre" (Aug., 1917, p. 161); Hiram Kelly Moderwell, "The Art of Robert Edmond Jones" (Feb., 1917, p. 51) and "A Note About Lee Simonson" (Dec., 1917, p. 12); Claire Dana Mumford, "A New Master and the Audience" (Feb., 1918, p. 67); James Oppenheim, "A Note on Poetic Drama" (Feb., 1918, p. 91); N. Ostrovsky, "The Moscow Art Theatre" (Aug., 1917, p. 178); Rollo Peters, "The Newest Art" (May, 1918, p. 119); Herman Rosse, "Sketches of Oriental Theatres" (May, 1918, p. 141); Ruth St. Denis, "The Dance as an Art Form" (Feb., 1917, p. 75); Constance Smedley, "The Greenleaf Theatre" (Feb., 1918, p. 94); Lee Simonson, "The Painter and the Stage" (Dec., 1917, p. 3); William Lee Sowers, "An Experiment in Simplicity" (Feb., 1917, p. 81); Frank Tompkins, "The Cranbrook Masque" (Nov., 1916, p. 3); Hamilton Williamson, "Tony Sarg's Marionettes" (May, 1918, p. 151).

[1]Prospectus for Theatre Arts, Volume II (1917-18).

scene and costume, with occasional pictures of notable theatre buildings, technical devices, dances, etc."[1]

The magazine's proportionate distribution of subject matter while under Cheney's editorship is charted in Table 1. It indicates that in the eight issues published by Cheney almost twice as many pages were devoted to stage design as to any other single subject. Out of a total of forty-five articles, thirteen concerned some phase of design; and of the one hundred ninety-seven pages in the eight issues, seventy-six, or 38.6%, were devoted to design. Articles on art and little theatres in America had the second highest total with forty-seven pages, or 24.8%, in twelve articles describing their work. The twenty-two pages, or 11.5%, on drama included two articles on poetic drama, two which listed plays for little theatres, and one which described the status of the realistic drama in the experimental theatre. Articles on acting, dance, producers, and foreign art theatres treated these subjects primarily as they related to, or expressed the principles of, the New Stagecraft.

From this analysis of Theatre Arts under Cheney's sole editorship, it can be seen that the magazine was designed to be a significant outlet for the dissemination of New

---

[1] Ibid. The prospectus included this additional information: "The format of the magazine is simple and dignified. There are about fifty pages in each issue, in clear type on paper of excellent quality. As heretofore, the magazine will appear four times each year; but in order to better fit the news columns to the activities of the theatre, the publication dates will hereafter be December, February, May and September.

"The yearly subscription price is $1.50; single copies 50¢."

TABLE 1

CONTENTS OF "THEATRE ARTS," 1916-18 (ANALYZED BY SUBJECT MATTER)

Subject	Pages in Vol. I (Nov., 1916 - Aug., 1917)	Pages in Vol. II (Dec., 1917 - Sept., 1918)	Total Pages (Vols. I & II)	Percentage of Total	Number of Articles
Design	34	42	76	38.6	13
U.S. Art Theatre	29	18	47	24.8	12
Foreign Art Theatre	12	10	22	11.5	4
Drama	14	8	22	11.5	6
Acting	6	-	6	3.0	2
Producers	3	6	9	4.6	2
Puppets	4	4	8	4.1	2
Dance	3	3	6	3.0	3
Miscellaneous	1	-	1	0.5	1

Stagecraft methods and principles. The emphasis rested heavily on the scenic artist and on the art theatre, where the new methods found eager acceptance. Dedicated to the theatre as an art, rather than merely a business, the magazine reflected a strong anti-commercial bias. Such bias, however, is not surprising when it is remembered that these were the years before the designer, the director, and the new methods had reached their eventual place in the American theatre.[1] The special character of Theatre Arts was also determined by the fact that it was directed toward the "artist-worker" in the theatre. Its concern was with the theatre in the playhouse and with the workers in that playhouse. While these emphases may have shifted somewhat in later years, the fundamental concepts and aims which first brought Theatre Arts into existence were never appreciably changed, even after the first battles were won.

---

[1]The late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century American theatre rarely gave the stage designer any program credit.

CHAPTER III

"THEATRE ARTS" UNDER EDITH ISAACS

The reorganization of Theatre Arts under an editorial quadrumvirate was announced in the April, 1919, issue, listing as editors Sheldon Cheney, Edith J. R. Isaacs, Kenneth Macgowan, and S. Marion Tucker.[1] The contributing editors, who had been listed in previous issues, were dropped from the masthead. The prospectus for the reorganized magazine stated, "As contributors and sponsors, the following have pledged their support to Theatre Arts Magazine: Walter Prichard Eaton, Maurice Browne, Mrs. Ben Ali Haggin, Percy MacKaye, B. W. Huebsch, Hiram Kelly Moderwell, Professor George Pierce Baker, Mrs. John W. Alexander, Montrose J. Moses, Robert E. Jones, Miss Kate Oglebay, Stark Young, Stuart Walker, Lee Simonson, Irving Pichel, Mrs. James Harvey Robinson, Mr. E. T. C. Miller, Mrs. Arthur L. Shipman, Joseph Urban, Mrs. Henry DeForest Baldwin, Alfred A. Knopf."[2] Some of these contributed articles

---

[1] Theatre Arts, Vol. III, No. 2 (April, 1919). (The first issue of Volume III, published in January, 1919, lists only Sheldon Cheney as editor.)

[2] Prospectus for Theatre Arts, Volume III (1919). A personal letter from Sheldon Cheney, dated December 20, 1953, says that Mrs. Ben Ali Haggin, Mrs. John W. Alexander, Miss Kate Oglebay, Mrs. James Harvey Robinson, Mrs. E. T. C. Miller, Mrs. Arthur L. Shipman, and Mrs. Henry DeForest Baldwin "came in as supporters among Mrs. Isaacs' friends. They reflect her close connection with the New York Drama League."

to Theatre Arts, but most merely lent the prestige of their support. Only Browne, Eaton, MacKaye, and Moderwell were retained from the initial list of contributing editors.

Through the years, official ownership statements, appearing periodically in the magazine, indicate that the editors and owners of Theatre Arts were virtually identical. However, Theatre Arts, Incorporated, often was listed as an owner, and there may have been some indirect ownership through this corporate name.[1] In addition, the December, 1926, issue of the magazine listed the following non-editors as owners: Bernard Baruch, Robert W. Bingham, Edgar A. Levy, Florence K. Mixter, and Kenneth Outwater. Clara Fecheimer was added to the group in 1927. Except for Levy, this list was soon dropped from the official statement, but in 1947 Baruch's name reappears and is joined by Robert Dowling, Lewis Isaacs, Ralph Jonas, and Henry Steeger.[2]

From 1919 to 1924 the magazine experienced a number of changes in its editorial board. Cheney was the first of

---

[1]The official ownership statement in the January, 1920, issue (p. 87) lists Sheldon Cheney, Edith J. R. Isaacs, Kenneth Macgowan, S. Marion Tucker, and Theatre Arts, Inc., as owners.

[2]In an interview with Edith Isaacs, White Plains, N.Y., Sept. 3, 1953, Mrs. Isaacs noted that when Theatre Arts was sold in 1946 to Robert Dowling and Henry Steeger, it was difficult to sell its preferred stock. Kenneth Macgowan came to the rescue by proposing that each of the stockholders give his shares to Theatre Arts. Bernard Baruch was the only "holdout" against this suggestion, claiming that "financial complications" in the gift made such action impractical. This probably accounts for the reappearance of his name as an owner in 1947, after Mrs. Isaacs had sold the magazine to Dowling and Steeger.

the editors to leave. In explaining his amicable departure in the fall of 1921, he pointed out: "For my part I wanted to get away from the editorial work because I had become ambitious to work directly in the Broadway theatre."[1] After leaving Theatre Arts, Cheney joined the staff of the Actor's Theatre, an art theatre in New York City. He continued, however, to contribute occasional articles to Theatre Arts.

In 1921, the year of Cheney's departure, Marion Tucker[2] decided to leave Theatre Arts and devote full time to his position as professor of English and psychology at Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute. Although Isaacs claimed that Tucker left the magazine because of "sickness in his family," there are indications of friction between Tucker, who did not approve of Isaacs' handling of the New York Drama League, and Isaacs, whose only memory of Tucker was that he was "a nice fellow."[3]

---

[1]Letter to the author from Sheldon Cheney, Dec. 20, 1953. He states further, "Incidentally, she [Isaacs] generously helped me when I took my family to Europe on a shoestring in 1926, intending to live by writing--by accepting every article I sent back to her, and perhaps paying for such material at a time when the magazine was still getting a part of its manuscripts free." A letter from Jack Morrison (writing for Kenneth Macgowan) to William P. Halstead, Sept. 26, 1951, noted that Cheney had no money of his own and was losing a little bit on the magazine.

[2]Samuel Marion Tucker was born in Sanford, Florida, November 25, 1876. He received an A.B. from Wofford College, South Carolina, in 1896; an M.A. from Columbia University in 1901, and a Ph.D. in 1907. He taught at Florida State College for Women from 1904 to 1911 and at Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute from 1911 to 1945. He has been professor emeritus since 1945 and is the author of several books on literature and the editor of several anthologies of plays.

[3]Personal interview with Edith Isaacs, White Plains, N.Y., Aug. 20, 1952.

Further, Lewis Isaacs, Jr., stated that Tucker was "never close" to Isaacs.[1] In describing the changes in the editorial board, Kenneth Macgowan hinted at the existence of friction when he wrote that there was "some slight thing . . . which may have something to do with Marion Tucker of the Drama League." There was no bitterness, however, and, Macgowan added, "the shifting about was amicable."[2] After leaving Theatre Arts, Tucker continued as president of the New York Drama League until 1924. In addition, he founded and edited the Little Theatre Monthly, published by the independent New York Drama League until its affiliation with the national league in 1925.[3]

In July, 1924, Kenneth Macgowan[4] announced in the

---

[1]Interview with Lewis M. Isaacs, Jr., New York City, Aug. 22, 1952.

[2]Letter from Jack Morrison (for Macgowan) to William Halstead, Sept. 26, 1951.

[3]Angela Guidry, "A History of the Drama League of America" (unpublished master's thesis, Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1949), p. 121.

[4]Macgowan was born in Wintnrop, Massachusetts, November 30, 1888. After graduating from Harvard University in 1911, he served as assistant dramatic critic of the Boston Transcript from 1910 to 1913. He was drama critic and literary editor of the Philadelphia Evening Ledger from 1914 to 1917 and on the staff of the New York Tribune in 1918. He was drama critic of the New York Globe from 1919 to 1923 and of Vogue from 1920 to 1924. He also served as director of the Provincetown Players during 1924-25 and was on the staff of the Greenwich Village Theatre from 1925 to 1927, in association with Eugene O'Neill and Robert Edmond Jones. He became a producer for Actor's Theatre in 1927 and in 1932 he joined the staff of R.K.O. Pictures Corporation, where he was successively editor, editor-in-chief, and associate producer. At University of California in Los Angeles he became chairman

pages of Theatre Arts that he was joining the directorial staff of the Provincetown Playhouse. His monthly review of the New York season added this note:

> This article marks the close of the theatre season and, for the present, the last of my monthly reviews of the New York stage. As director of Provincetown Playhouse I hope to develop plenty of stimulating material for other pages of the magazine, of which I shall continue to be Associate Editor, as well as to put into practice the experimental ideas Theatre Arts has always championed.[1]

Macgowan continued to contribute occasional articles to the magazine, and his name remained on the masthead as an associate editor until January, 1928. In addition to the Provincetown Playhouse, Macgowan worked with the Greenwich Village Theatre, the Actor's Theatre, and with motion pictures in Hollywood. Ultimately he became the chairman of the Department of Theater Arts of the University of California at Los Angeles, from which position he now is retired.

After the reorganization of Theatre Arts in 1919, there was no clear-cut division of labor within the magazine's editorial board. Since the four editors all had editorial training and experience, they shared the duties and responsibilities in the publication of the magazine. During the early years of the quadrumvirate the lead editorials were written

---

of the theatre department and at the present time is living in retirement. Macgowan's books include The Theatre of Tomorrow, 1921; Continental Stagecraft, 1922; Masks and Demons, 1923; Footlights Across America, 1929; Theater Pictorial, in collaboration with Altman, Freud, and Melnitz, 1953; and The Living Stage, in collaboration with William Melnitz, 1955.

[1] Theatre Arts, July, 1924, p. 446.

variously by Isaacs, Cheney, or Macgowan.[1] However, certain other functions came to be identified primarily with particular staff members. According to Isaacs, Cheney was "the best layout and paper man" and, therefore, planned most of the magazine's early format.[2] Because Macgowan had had experience as drama critic on the Boston Transcript, the Philadelphia Evening Ledger, and the New York Globe, he wrote Theatre Arts' drama reviews, until he joined the Provincetown Playhouse in 1924.[3] According to Macgowan, at the beginning Isaacs did "yeoman service, taking the nasty jobs of pushing subscriptions, reading articles, keeping book, packaging, etc."[4] With the departures of Cheney, Tucker, and Macgowan, however, she assumed increasing control and responsibility, until, in 1924, she became editor-in-chief. Thereafter, according to Isaacs, the associate editors acted primarily in an advisory capacity.[5]

With Isaacs as editor-in-chief, subsequent editorial staff members worked variously on all phases of the magazine.

---

[1]Letter to the author from Edith Isaacs, Oct. 15, 1952. Mrs. Isaacs states: "So far as I remember, I always wrote the lead editorials and sometimes others, except at the very beginning when Sheldon, Kenneth and I shared them."

[2]Interview with Edith Isaacs, White Plains, N.Y., Sept. 10, 1953.

[3]Idem. Mrs. Isaacs stated that of the four editors, Macgowan was "the best critic."

[4]Letter from Jack Morrison (for Macgowan) to William Halstead, Sept. 26, 1951.

[5]Interview with Edith Isaacs, White Plains, N.Y., Sept. 10, 1953.

John Mason Brown emphasized that he worked "at everything, including office boy."[1] George Beiswanger, another assistant editor, stated that all members of the small Theatre Arts staff "worked on every phase of the magazine, including the formulation of advertising, dummy issue, organization of news notes and proof-reading."[2] Rosamond Gilder explained that she "worked in a variety of capacities on the magazine, learning the editor's trade from a master hand."[3]

The story of Theatre Arts is the story of an unending struggle for financial solvency and economic independence. Although Theatre Arts described itself as a "special and expensive" publication "outside of the general commercial field," Isaacs hoped to develop within available funds "a manufacturing method which bears a right relationship to its sales possibilities."[4] Two problems were paramount here. First: the high-grade cuts, quality paper, type, and binding, discussed in detail in the chapter on editorial policy,[5] which lent the magazine an elegance and book-like permanence, were especially expensive items in the magazine's publication. Second:

---

[1]Interview with John Mason Brown, Ann Arbor, Mich., March 10, 1955.

[2]Interview with George Beiswanger, New York City, Sept. 11, 1953.

[3]Rosamond Gilder, "Farewell to Theatre Arts," National Theatre Conference Bulletin, April, 1948, p. 3.

[4]Letter from Edith Isaacs to Osmer N. Gorton, June 21, 1933 (from the files of Rosamond Gilder).

[5]See below, pp. 352-54.

because Theatre Arts appealed primarily to the artist-worker in the theatre, and because the magazine was often shared within theatre groups, its sales were comparatively limited.[1] These factors produced a situation in which the expense of the high quality materials could not be balanced with its limited volume of sales. To meet this serious problem Theatre Arts received help from several important sources.

Important assistance was provided by members of the Theatre Arts staff in an effort to reduce the magazine's overhead expenses. Such aid took the form of editorial services without remuneration, acceptance of Theatre Arts stock in lieu of payment for editorial services, and extended unpaid leaves of absence.[2] None of the original editors received any compensation; indeed, there are indications that, in the early years, they put money of their own into the magazine.[3] After Isaacs became editor-in-chief in 1924, several associate editors were added to the staff, and these received no financial compensation either.[4]

---

[1]Interviews with V. B. Windt and W. P. Halstead, Jan. 10, 1955, Ann Arbor, Mich.

[2]". . . Mrs. Isaacs feels a personal responsibility to some of the preferred stockholders, especially those who worked for the magazine in the early years and who took stock instead of salary for their services" ("Proposal to Dissolve Theatre Arts, Inc., with Present Financial Assurances from Editorial Publications Guaranteed Presents Objections," Spring, 1939 [from the files of Rosamond Gilder]).

[3]As was previously noted, Kenneth Macgowan says that Cheney "was losing a little bit on the magazine" (Letter from Jack Morrison to William Halstead, Sept. 26, 1951).

[4]". . . To enable you to estimate the investment fairly, however, I must add that my services have from the

Throughout its thirty-two-year history Theatre Arts was never able to pay standard salaries to its staff, and those who were paid received largely token compensation. Although the magazine's financial records are no longer available, facts gleaned from other sources suggest the salary arrangements. As an assistant editor in 1926 John Mason Brown was given twenty-five dollars a week, and as the magazine's drama critic, he was paid an additional twenty-five dollars for each monthly review.[1] According to George Beiswanger, who was an assistant editor between 1939 and 1944 at a salary of forty dollars per week, most of the editorial staff were paid between thirty and fifty dollars a week.[2] After Mrs. Isaacs' serious illness, Rosamond Gilder served as acting editor at a "secretarial salary" of fifty dollars per week.[3]

---

beginning been entirely without compensation, and that the associate editors, who have during the last five years acted in an advisory capacity, have had no compensation either" (Edith Issacs to Maurice Browne, "Memo on the Matter of a Proposed English Theatre Arts," April 23, 1929 [from the files of Rosamond Gilder]).

[1]Interview with John Mason Brown, Ann Arbor, Mich., March 10, 1955.

[2]Interview with George Beiswanger, New York City, Sept. 4, 1953.

[3]". . . Mr. Isaacs then stated that the suggestion for the 1940-42 budget reductions would be much less disturbing to Mrs. Isaacs if the transfer to Westrim were consummated and complete separation from Editorial Publications assured. This would leave Theatre Arts freer to accept contributions of service from the staff (such as are even now being made to permit it to work under the existing minimum budget) with the knowledge that they inure wholly and directly to Theatre Arts as intended. These contributions are in part necessary to replace such of Mrs. Isaacs' services as are being lost through her illness. (They include Miss Gilder's service as

Brown says the staff was "young and hot with the excitement of a cause." Beiswanger says that the staff felt that they were contributing to a "prestige magazine with an international reputation." And Gilder adds that the "staff did work for very, very small salaries because of the opportunity Theatre Arts gave them for interesting and stimulating work."[1]

Major financial help came from Dorothy Whitney Straight, the wife of Willard Straight, an American journalist, diplomat, and financier who had been active in founding the New Republic, Asia, and Antiques magazines.[2] After her husband's death, Mrs. Straight married Leonard Knight Elmhirst in 1925 and moved to England, where they established an experimental dance and drama school at their Dartington Hall estate in Devon. Almost from the beginning, Mrs. Elmhirst contributed substantial sums of money to the support of Theatre Arts, because she believed the magazine was "a great educational and spiritual force." Her initial subsidy of $25,000 enabled the magazine to expand and to begin monthly publication. From 1923 to 1930 she made regular annual contributions, except for the years of 1926 and

---

acting editor at a secretarial salary of $50.00 per week, long vacations without pay by the whole editorial staff, a gift from a staff member to pay for advertising, etc.)" ("Statement of views following a conference between Mr. Isaacs, Mr. Baldwin and Mr. Rose and a later conference at Mrs. Isaacs' apartment between Mr. Rose and Mr. and Mrs. Isaacs," Oct. 16, 1939 [from the files of Rosamond Gilder]. Hereafter cited as "Statement of views at conferences.")

[1]Letter to the author from Rosamond Gilder, Aug. 25, 1953.

[2]The Willard Straight Memorial Theatre at Cornell University was built with funds provided by Mrs. Straight.

1927, when her marriage and emigration to England made it necessary that she reduce her commitments in America.[1] When, however, Isaacs appealed in 1928 for sufficient funds to hire a business and advertising manager,[2] Mrs. Elmhirst gave Theatre Arts $9,000.00 during the next two years.[3]

A second major expansion of Theatre Arts was effected in 1930 with funds provided by Mrs. Elmhirst. In 1929 Maurice Browne, founder of the Chicago Art Theatre, proposed an English theatre magazine patterned after Theatre Arts. Isaacs explained her attitude toward the proposal in a letter to Ashley Dukes, an associate editor of Theatre Arts.

> Maurice Browne, now running the Savoy and Journey's End, is, as you may know, an old American Little Theatre Director. I have known him well for many years and he has been interested in Theatre Arts and Theatre Arts interested in him during trying times. By sheer accident, he met in England (and is associated in his Savoy productions) with the American woman now married to an Englishman, who has been an especially good friend of Theatre Arts.
>
> Mr. Browne was over here recently and told me that they were very anxious to start a magazine like Theatre Arts in London with some sort of alliance with us. I told him that you had often had the offer to start such a magazine but had turned it down, saying that because an international magazine happened to be published in New York was no reason to start another in London, but rather to support the first one; that we had all the best English writers contributing to Theatre Arts now; and that it would break an important link in our chain if a new magazine were started--so much so that if they were

---

[1]Letter from Anna Bogue, financial secretary to Mrs. Elmhirst, to Isaacs, May 18, 1925 (from the files of R. Gilder).

[2]Letter from Edith Isaacs to Mrs. Elmhirst, June 2, 1928 (from the files of R. Gilder).

[3]Letter from Anna Bogue to Edith Isaacs, March 14, 1929 (from the files of R. Gilder).

> to start one, I should probably quit and leave them the field. But that on the other hand, I was perfectly willing to do one of two things: 1) To sell out the American magazine to an English company, have it published in London with an American edition, or 2) enlarge the present magazine to include an English edition which I was sure we could get out as quickly and as inexpensively as if a new thing had to be started in London.[1]

Because Mrs. Elmhirst wanted Theatre Arts to have "the American inspiration," she agreed to give sufficient additional annual grants to pay for sixteen extra pages per month and to allow Ashley Dukes, Theatre Arts' new English editor, to cover theatrical activities throughout Europe. Accordingly, she pledged $110,000.00 for the years 1930, 1931, and 1932.[2]

The effects of the depression, however, forced the magazine to drop eight pages and cut the size of the staff in 1932. Isaacs explained the reason for such action by pointing out that Theatre Arts had not as yet "absorbed the costs of enlarging the magazine and starting the English office."[3] When she asked for a guarantee of $15,000.00 to meet any deficit in 1933, the Elmhirsts suggested that Theatre Arts join their other subsidized magazines, the New Republic, Asia, and Antiques, in an organization named Editorial Publications, Inc. It was hoped that the business merger of the four magazines would cut expenses through joint operations. After the

---

[1]Letter from Edith Isaacs to Ashley Dukes, May 23, 1929 (from the files of R. Gilder).

[2]Letter from Osmer N. Gorton, financial adviser to the Elmhirsts, to Edith Isaacs, Aug. 22, 1929 (from the files of R. Gilder).

[3]Letter from Edith Isaacs to Osmer N. Gorton, Mar. 2, 1932 (from the files of R. Gilder).

merger was effected in the summer of 1934, Isaacs explained the new arrangement to the officers and directors of Theatre Arts, Inc.

> In the summer of 1934, Editorial Publications, Inc. was organized to unite the offices and as many as possible of the business functions of Asia, Antiques, The New Republic, and Theatre Arts Monthly. . . .
>
> In writing to Mr. and Mrs. Elmhirst in advance about the possible relation between this new organization and Theatre Arts I said: "The union should give us not only greater security and assurance of permanence, but should offer business opportunities we have not been able to take advantage of with our very small organization.[1]

Under the new arrangement Theatre Arts received an annual subsidy of $15,000.00 and was to be reimbursed "for expenses in excess of $15,000.00 a year which were due to joining with the other more fully financed magazines."[2]

Under the name of Editorial Publications, Inc., Theatre Arts, the New Republic, Asia, and Antiques acquired joint offices at 40 East 49th Street in New York City. Isaacs became treasurer and a director of the organization. Although most business functions were combined under the joint arrangement, Daniel Mebane, business manager for Editorial Publications, explains that "Mrs. Isaacs, being devoted body and soul to her magazine, was unwilling to relinquish voting control, so that in respect to T.A.M. the merger was never completely effectuated."[3] As a member of Editorial Publications, Theatre

---

[1]"Theatre Arts Monthly: A Report for 1934," April, 1935 (from the files of R. Gilder).

[2]Theatre Arts, Inc., memo in re letter from Mrs. Elmhirst to Mrs. Isaacs on March 24, 1938.

[3]Letter to the author from Daniel Mebane, now publisher of Antiques magazine, Aug. 8, 1955.

Arts' "mechanical and overhead costs" were taken care of by the corporation. In addition, the magazine received an annual subsidy of $15,000.00, plus the assurance of the Elmhirsts that "if, for good and sufficient reasons, the deficit goes beyond $15,000," they would make up the difference.[1]

Friction developed almost immediately between Isaacs and Mebane.[2] This friction is implied in Isaacs' report on the merger to the officers and directors of Theatre Arts, Inc., in 1934.

> . . . It may not be possible for me to budget or to control Theatre Arts' expenses as accurately as I have in the past even if the mechanical and overhead costs (taken care of by the new corporation) are no more than before. . . . The greatest difficulty is that so many of the new expenses are for the material surroundings, of no creative use to the magazine, and presenting the problem of a constant additional annual burden, with no inherent source of income to balance them.
>
> For three years the entire staff has been working with all strength to decrease expenses and bring up the receipts in order to put back into the magazine eight pages that were dropped during the depression, to replace a discontinued fund for illustrations, to pay for necessary photographs, and especially to bring the level of new salaries up to the pre-depression level; for although there were no salary cuts among those who remained on the staff, there are several less people employed now than were employed to do the same work in 1931, and all replacements have been made at depression salaries, which

---

[1] Letter from Dorothy Elmhirst to Mrs. Isaacs, June 23, 1933 (from the files of R. Gilder).

[2] "Mr. Isaacs referred to the memo outlining the difficulties in the situation which had arisen since that time due to the union of the magazines in 1933, viz: the natural conflicts arising from the fact that Mr. Mebane was business manager of the other three magazines--but not of Theatre Arts--this in turn being due to the essential difference in the set-up of Theatre Arts as compared with the other magazines (the existence of outside preferred stockholders and Mrs. Isaacs' regular contribution of editorial service)" ("Statement of views at conferences").

must not be continued. This situation is further complicated now by the fact that salaries on the other magazines are higher, in many cases much higher, than ours.

When we first talked over the joint arrangement with Mr. Gorton, he suggested that Theatre Arts' overhead charges and joint business expense should be represented by a fee paid to the new corporation no higher than these same expenses were before, and that whatever additional costs there might be would be absorbed by Editorial Publications out of the hoped-for savings from the union of the other magazines.

Unfortunately, the enormously expensive adventure of remaking and equipping the offices seems to have eliminated this possibility, and Theatre Arts seems to be trapped in a situation where it can neither pay the added expense from its present budget, nor, with any fairness or pride, permit the other magazines to assume its share. Even if Mr. and Mrs. Elmhirst were to be generous enough to write off Theatre Arts' share of the reconstruction bill, there would still be a considerable added yearly deficit due to increased overhead expenses. And even if the annual subsidy were increased to meet this new deficit, Theatre Arts would still lose the single hope that has kept it alive all these years, namely, that the magazine would eventually balance its budget. A day's work of any length and an endlessly hard struggle seemed well worth while as long as the result was a magazine internationally useful in the cause of peace and human understanding, and with a possibility of economic permanence.

Perhaps this is too gloomy a picture of the situation. Some unexpected solution may present itself. It is my intention to work through the year 1935 as if there were every hope in the world that full and eager cooperation could solve the problem. But it would not seem fair to myself, to the stockholders of Theatre Arts, and especially to Mr. and Mrs. Elmhirst, if I did not state the situation today as clearly as I see it.[1]

In 1936 a plan of reorganization was offered by the Elmhirst advisers which would have completed the merger of Theatre Arts and the other magazines. The proposed merger served only to intensify the conflict. In the spring of 1939 the Theatre Arts side of the dispute was reviewed in a memo to the staff.

---

[1] "Theatre Arts Monthly: A Report for 1934," April, 1935 (from the files of R. Gilder).

The original union of the four magazines, made at Mr. and Mrs. Elmhirst's request in 1933, was concededly justified in spirit but concededly too, meant an added yearly expense to Theatre Arts which Mr. Gorton saw clearly and recognized as unavoidable, and agreed on behalf of Mr. and Mrs. Elmhirst (in writing) to absorb for Theatre Arts out of the group economies. This left Theatre Arts in a preferred position with relation to the other magazines, and when a reorganization was effected in 1936 and this preferred position crystallized, it intensified the resentment against it already existing in the mind of the business manager of the other magazines. He either didn't know, or ignored, the essential difference in the set up of Theatre Arts as compared with the other magazines (i.e. the existence of preferred stockholders and the annual contribution of Mrs. Isaacs matching that of Mrs. Elmhirst). He never gave Mrs. Isaacs advance information as to matters under discussion, even the proposed changes in organization, although he must have recognized their importance to Theatre Arts. The 1936 reorganization, which changed Theatre Arts' status entirely, was not reported to her until after it had become an established fact, although as Treasurer and a director of Editorial Publications, it might be assumed that she should have been posted. There were no meetings in advance of the reorganization, of which she had notice. Her knowledge arose for the first time from the setting up under Mr. Mebane's orders, on the books of Theatre Arts, of a $10,000 note representing advances by Mrs. Elmhirst, which up to that time had been taken care of by the issuance of stock--the authorized method theretofore employed.

Through neglect to inform Mrs. Isaacs of what was under way, Mrs. Elmhirst's lawyers acted at the time of the reorganization in ignorance of a confidential letter to Mrs. Isaacs from Mrs. Elmhirst assuring Theatre Arts of reimbursement for expenses in excess of $15,000 a year which were due to joining with the other more fully financed magazines. There were disputes from the start as to payment of the required excess over the $15,000. The scale on which Theatre Arts has always been managed is so much smaller than that of the other magazines, and their expenditures in various departments were so far in excess of the expenditures of Theatre Arts in corresponding departments, that all of these disputes, although involving comparatively small amounts, were extremely irritating to Mrs. Isaacs who, conscious of the heroic efforts made by her group to keep expenses down, could not but object to a cutting down insisted upon by the spokesman for the other magazines, in the face of their relatively extravagant expenditures.[1]

---

[1]Memo, Spring, 1939 (from the files of R. Gilder).

It was primarily this friction between Isaacs and Mebane which was the reason for Theatre Arts' return to an independent office in the spring of 1938.

Daniel Mebane, now publisher of Antiques magazine, explains the conflict by pointing out that

> what led to the severance of Theatre Arts from the group was Mrs. Isaacs' unwillingness to accept a $15,000 budgeted deficit allocated to the magazine by the Board of Directors. Her reasons, I always thought, were based solely on her criticism of the deficit allowed Asia, which she regarded as too high. Had she accepted the merger, dispensed with her own business manager and unified her operations with those of the other magazines, she could have lived within the $15,000 annual loss. Instead she insisted on retaining and even expanding her own staff with the resulting deficit of $20,000 a year. The magazine was released by the group in mid-1940, all deficits incurred up to that time having been paid by Editorial.
>
> It is too late in the day to express regrets now, but at the time I felt very sorry. Earlier I had worked closely with Mrs. Isaacs and we were good friends. But I could not avoid feeling her unwillingness to accept the ruling of the Directors was wrong-headed and not in the best interests of her magazine, which I had known and admired since the early 20's.[1]

Because of Isaacs' serious illness and the war crisis, the Elmhirsts' financial advisers proposed again in 1939 that Theatre Arts, Inc., be dissolved and the magazine be absorbed by Editorial Publications, Inc. They argued that such action would relieve the strain on the Elmhirsts' financial resources and would also result in a substantial reduction of the Theatre Arts annual deficit.[2] Isaacs, however, stated that if the Elmhirsts could not continue their support,

---

[1]Letter to the author from Daniel Mebane, Aug. 8, 1955.

[2]"Statement of views at conferences."

she would much "prefer to see the magazine terminated,"[1] rather than have it taken into the editorial and business control of Editorial Publications. When it became clear that the merger could not be successfully effectuated, Theatre Arts was entirely separated from the group.[2] Mrs. Elmhirst's total subsidy up to the merger with Editorial Publications in 1933 amounted to $144,000.00. Under the merger with Editorial Publications the total subsidy of Theatre Arts amounted to $136,830.00, making a grand total of $280,830.00. Table 2 lists the Elmhirst annual subsidy, as nearly as can be ascertained from available records.

It appears probable that the core of the dispute between Theatre Arts and Editorial Publications was Isaacs' characteristic resistance to any form of control. She had "misgivings" when the merger was first suggested by the Elmhirsts, and there were numerous later references to her "fear of the weakening of Theatre Arts' independence," to her fear of "a change in the standards of the magazine which would be in her estimation detrimental to its tradition," and to her concern "with the possibility of its being continued under other auspices of which she might not approve."[3] The problem was complicated, of course, by the disparity in the expenditures

---

[1] Ibid.

[2] Letter to the author from Daniel Mebane, Aug. 24, 1955.

[3] "Statement of views at conferences."

of the four magazines[1] and by the fact that the business manager of three of the magazines was not the business manager of Theatre Arts.

TABLE 2

SUBSIDY FROM MRS. ELMHIRST[a]

Year		Amount	
1923	.....	$10,000.00	
1924	.....	10,000.00	
1925	.....	5,000.00	
1926	.....	....	
1927	.....	....	
1928	.....	5,000.00	
1929	.....	4,000.00	
1930	.....	50,000.00	
1931	.....	30,000.00	
1932	.....	30,000.00	
Total subsidy to merger with Editorial Publications, Inc.		$144,000.00	
1933	.....	15,000.00	plus
1934	.....	15,000.00	plus
1935	.....	17,850.00	
1936	.....	17,480.00	
1937	.....	15,000.00	plus
1938	.....	21,000.00	
1939	.....	20,500.00	
1940	.....	15,000.00	plus
Total subsidy by Editorial Publications and Elmhirst	.....	$136,830.00	
Grand total	.....	$280,830.00	

[a]Figures compiled from correspondence in the files of Rosamond Gilder.

---

[1]"Mr. Isaacs said that when in 1933 the four magazines first moved to the joint office of Editorial Publications, Mrs. Isaacs had misgivings because she had felt that Theatre Arts had always operated in a very economical way, comparatively speaking, and that the scale of the other magazines was out of line with its budget allowances" (Ibid.).

Aside from Mrs. Elmhirst, Isaacs herself was the largest contributor to Theatre Arts. In interviews, however, she avoided questions on subsidization of the magazine whenever she could and, when pinned down, would say that her contribution was not of much significance in a study of Theatre Arts. Although exact figures are not available, there is sufficient evidence to indicate that she contributed heavily to the magazine in grants and loans. Most obvious, of course, is the fact that she never received any payment for her editorial or business services. A few examples will establish the fact that she also contributed heavily in cash. In a letter appealing to Mrs. Elmhirst for help, dated June 2, 1928, Isaacs wrote:

> Three years ago I saw that in spite of the obvious usefulness and influence of the magazine, it could never achieve this self-support without financial aid, which I seemed unable to secure, and I decided to stop publication. But there was a protest from theatre artists, teachers, students and other friends of the magazine which resulted in a group of them undertaking to raise the necessary minimum of $50,000. Only $32,000 of this was raised (of which I subscribed $10,000 as an evidence of my faith in the magazine). But the pressure was so strong that against my better judgment I went ahead anyhow, relying upon assurances that the necessary balance would be raised later. Unfortunately, these assurances, renewed a year later, have not materialized, and although we are further on the road than before, with a decreasing deficit each year, our capital is practically used up, and in order not to run the magazine into debts larger than I myself could be responsible for, I was obliged to curtail the only fund that could be curtailed, (and the last one that should be) the already minimum allowance for promotion which every magazine requires to maintain itself.

The letter added:

> We had hoped this year to reduce our deficit below $10,000 where I would have been able to carry it

> personally, but if our subscriptions don't increase, this will be impossible.
>
> If, however, there could be guaranteed to us for three years the salary of a good business manager, we could set free from our budget an amount for promotions which, with what I can afford to contribute, should either wipe out the annual deficit in that time or reduce it to a point where I could carry it myself and gradually wipe it out.[1]

A letter to Maurice Browne on April 23, 1929, discussing the enlargement of the magazine to include an English office, stated:

> Apart from an original subsidy of $5,000 to the Quarterly, Mrs. Elmhirst's several contributions to the magazine, aggregating $30,000 (and $6,00 of my own), are the only gifts that have ever been made to it. To enable you to estimate the investment fairly, however, I must add that my services as editor have from the beginning been entirely without compensation, and that the associate editors, who have during the last five years acted in an advisory capacity, have had no compensation either.
>
> The magazine has no debts today except for loans by me, aggregating $26,000.[2]

A Theatre Arts memo to the staff referred to "the annual contribution of Mrs. Isaacs matching that of Mrs. Elmhirst."[3] In addition, staff members such as Kenneth Macgowan[4] and Rosamond Gilder[5] have said that she made cash contributions

---

[1]Letter from Edith Isaacs to Dorothy Elmhirst, June 2, 1928 (from the files of Rosamond Gilder).

[2]Letter from Edith Isaacs to Maurice Browne, April 23, 1929 (from the files of R. Gilder).

[3]Theatre Arts memo, dated Spring, 1939 (from the files of R. Gilder).

[4]Letter from Jack Morrison (for Macgowan) to William Halstead, Sept. 26, 1951: ". . . There was also a rumor that Mrs. Isaacs herself underwrote the magazine."

[5]Letter to the author from Rosamond Gilder, Aug. 25, 1952: ". . . She undoubtedly contributed in cash, but that was never specified."

to the magazine. Thus, it appears likely that Mrs. Isaacs' probable contribution was $250,000.00 or more; however, this figure may include an evaluation of her services as editor and business manager.

In 1932 an additional source of income was anticipated in the projected relationship between Theatre Arts and the National Theatre Conference, whose headquarters were to be in the magazine's offices. Isaacs described her hopes for promotional assistance in a letter to the Elmhirsts' American representative.

> Nothing more hopeful has happened to Theatre Arts in years. For while this is not in any sense a grant toward our budget, it means: 1) That Theatre Arts is established as the centre of all Tributary Theatre work throughout the country, which should be of direct assistance both in circulation and in advertising, 2) That a great deal of promotional work which we could not afford in our present budget will be done in connection with the National Theatre Conference at no expense to us, and 3) That all of the service work which we have done heretofore without compensation will be done for us by the Conference.[1]

The Conference, however, never became the large organization Isaacs envisaged, and the hoped-for financial benefits did not materialize.

In spite of extensive financial aid, Theatre Arts was never able to escape an annual deficit. There were several reasons for this. First: unlike most magazines, Theatre Arts established a tradition of elegance which required expensive manufacturing methods. Its illustrations and articles were printed on a deluxe paper using large type and ample margins

---

[1]Letter from Edith Isaacs to Osmer N. Gorton, March 25, 1932 (from the files of R. Gilder).

and leading, giving it a book-like permanence. Furthermore, the magazine paid at the rate of two cents per word for all published articles, with the exception of little theatre material which took the form of publicity for a particular theatre. The rate for this was one cent per word.[1] These elements of editorial policy are discussed in detail in the following chapters.

Second: the magazine's sales possibilities were comparatively limited, due to the special nature of its audience. As is described in the section on editorial policy, Theatre Arts was directed primarily toward the theatre specialist--the theatre artist, teacher, and student. Its emphasis on the techniques of the theatrical arts did not have the popular appeal needed to attract a large lay audience. As a result, subscription sales could not be increased sufficiently to produce the needed income. Furthermore, there is evidence that, in line with its policy of careful selectivity, the magazine limited its advertising to items related to the arts of the theatre.[2] Its relatively high price of fifty cents per copy made it a publication which was more often read in libraries or passed about among friends. In particular, it

---

[1]Letter to the author from Hermine I. Popper, Oct. 1, 1952.

[2]An editorial in the May, 1925, Theatre Arts (p. 352) stated that the magazine intended "to limit our advertising to the arts and the industries allied to the arts." The April, 1926, issue (p. 282) described the advertising pages of Theatre Arts as "an editorial expression."

was circulated by teachers among their students, and was placed by community theatres where actors could read it between or during rehearsals.[1] All of these factors, of course, meant that the magazine's income would almost inevitably be too limited to balance its high production costs. Although complete figures are not available, Table 3 illustrates the relationship of the magazine's receipts, expenses, and deficits for two three-year periods.

TABLE 3

AVAILABLE TOTALS ON "THEATRE ARTS" INCOME FOR PERIODS 1926-28 AND 1932-34[a]

Year	Receipts			Expenses	Deficit
	Subscriptions	Advertising	Total		
1926	$12,632	$ 8,760	$21,654	$43,635	$21,981
1927	14,127	10,708	28,527	45,949	17,421
1928	15,790	11,281	36,210	45,788	14,577[b]
1932	. . . . .	. . . . .	33,359	53,805	20,446
1933	. . . . .	. . . . .	31,842	46,420	14,578
1934	. . . . .	. . . . .	34,804	48,875	14,071

[a]The figures for the 1926-28 period are taken from the "Memo on the Matter of a Proposed English Theatre Arts" to Maurice Browne, April 23, 1929, in the files of Rosamond Gilder. The 1932-34 totals are from "Theatre Arts Monthly: A Report for 1934," dated April, 1935, in the files of Rosamond Gilder.

[b]The 1928 deficit was reduced to $9,577 by Mrs. Elmhirst's contribution of $5,000 in 1928.

[1]Personal interviews with Valentine B. Windt, William Halstead, and other teachers of theatre.

Although Table 3 indicates a substantial yearly increase in receipts, it also shows a continuing unfavorable disparity between income and expenses. Subscriptions increased every year except the depression year of 1933.[1] From a low of thirty-two paid subscribers in 1918, the list was increased to 1,000 in 1919,[2] 6,000 in 1928,[3] 7,000 in 1929,[4] 10,000 in 1934,[5] 15,000 in 1941,[6] and 18,000 in 1947.[7] In the latter year the print order for Theatre Arts was 30,000 copies. This small but steady progress was made in the face of a shattering depression and World War II. The improvement in the income picture, of course, could not offset the fact that costs were increasing as well.

Throughout the war years Isaacs' increasingly severe arthritis made it difficult for her to manage Theatre Arts.[8]

---

[1]In a letter to Mrs. Elmhirst dated June 2, 1928 (in the Rosamond Gilder files), Isaacs wrote: "For eleven years of its existence Theatre Arts has had a steady and unbroken increase in subscriptions and advertising."

[2]Clara A. Weiss, "The Publishing Program of Theatre Arts," Publishers' Weekly, Jan. 11, 1941, p. 134.

[3]Letter from Isaacs to Mrs. Elmhirst, June 2, 1928 (in the Gilder files).

[4]"Memo on the Matter of a Proposed English Theatre Arts" to Maurice Browne, April 23, 1929 (in the Gilder files).

[5]"Theatre Arts Monthly: A Report for 1934," April, 1935 (in the Gilder files).

[6]Sidney M. Shalett, "Theatre Arts Through the Years," New York Times, Jan. 19, 1941.

[7]"Memo re Closing of Theatre Arts" (in the Gilder files).

[8]From 1939 until her retirement in 1945, Isaacs managed Theatre Arts from her bed in a Hotel Elysée apartment.

This illness, and the death of her husband in December, 1944, forced her retirement as editor in 1945. However, her name remained on the masthead of the magazine as publisher, with Rosamond Gilder as editor-in-chief. Finally, in January, 1946, Isaacs sold her controlling interest in Theatre Arts and went into complete retirement.

The magazine was purchased by Henry Steeger, president of Popular Publications, and Robert Dowling, head of City Investing Company, a New York real estate firm.[1] According to Rosamond Gilder both men had always admired Theatre Arts, and they assured Isaacs of their intention to continue the magazine in line with its long tradition.[2] The buyers put their own agent, Frank J. Fay, in charge of the business end, and Gilder agreed to remain as editor and drama critic.

However, on January 21, 1948, Steeger and Dowling sold Theatre Arts to Alexander Ince, formerly publisher of Stage magazine,[3] and publication of Theatre Arts was suspended with the February, 1948, issue. Gilder explained the sudden developments to readers of the National Theatre Conference Bulletin.

---

[1]Robert Dowling has for some years been the chairman of the board of American National Theatre and Academy. His City Investing Company controls a number of New York's legitimate theatres.

[2]"Memo re closing of Theatre Arts," (in the Gilder files).

[3]Ibid. Gilder noted that "Mr. Ince had tried to buy Theatre Arts in 1946 but Mrs. Isaacs had refused to sell it to him, preferring to close the magazine."

> The ideas of the present owner of Theatre Arts, Alexander Ince, are at the opposite pole from those of the magazine he has bought. Planning to revive the magazine Stage, which he ran for four issues in 1940-41, Ince was able to buy Theatre Arts when the two men who bought it from Mrs. Isaacs in 1946 (Henry Steeger of Popular Publications, a pulp magazine concern, and Robert W. Dowling of City Investing Company, a real estate firm) decided to sell.
>
> Ince believes a theatre magazine should be closely allied to show business and he has a number of producers among his backers. His plans and methods of operation are his own. They did not appeal to the editorial staff of Theatre Arts and not one of those who have been associated with its past history has any connection whatever with the new magazine. Since the decision to close--or sell--was made after the February issue of Theatre Arts had gone to press, this note, thanks to the Bulletin's hospitality, is the only opportunity for the editorial staff of Theatre Arts to say hail and farewell to its friends in the theatre off Broadway.[1]

According to Gilder, "the magazine was in good shape with $20,000 in the bank and no debts" at the time of the sale to Steeger and Dowling in 1946.[2] But when she returned from Europe in September, 1947, she "found that the magazine was running in the red."

> . . . Mr. Steeger and Mr. Dowling were unwilling to continue their backing but did not decide what they wanted done till late November. At that time Mr. Steeger decided to take Theatre Arts corporation into his Popular Publications corporation. On December 1st he moved the business departments of Theatre Arts into his own 42nd street offices. I naturally supposed he had made up his mind to continue for at least a year as the move and the concomitant agreement with me on editorial policy indicated as much. But on New Year's eve he changed his mind again and sent Mr. Fay to inform me that he was closing the magazine with the issue then on the press (February, 1948). I immediately requested in writing that a board

---

[1]Gilder, "Farewell to Theatre Arts," National Theatre Conference Bulletin, April, 1948, p. 5.

[2]It is believed, however, that the magazine had considerable obligation in long-term subscriptions.

> meeting of Theatre Arts, Inc. (of which I was an officer and stockholder) be held at once in order to plan an orderly closing procedure and also in order that I might have directly from the owners a statement of the basis on which the magazine might be acquired by those of us interested in preserving it and carrying it on. Both owners refused to hold the meeting or to see me, turning over the whole matter to Mr. Fay.[1]

Theatre Arts was sold to Ince in spite of the fact that Isaacs had refused his offer to buy the magazine in 1946.[2] The format and editorial policy of the new Theatre Arts was obviously directed toward the commercial theatre, resembling the former Stage and Theatre magazines more than the original Theatre Arts.

In summarizing the business history of Theatre Arts, it can be said that the editorial quadrumvirate which took over the magazine in 1919 introduced no fundamentally different policies from those of its founder. Because the staff worked on all phases of the magazine, there was no clear-cut division of labor. In spite of extensive subsidization by interested people and financial sacrifices by staff members, Theatre Arts' financial history is a story of constant struggle against annual deficit. This deficit was largely due to a

---

[1]"Memo re closing of Theatre Arts," (in the Gilder files).

[2]A letter to the author from Alexander S. Ince, written on Theatre Arts letterhead and dated August 19, 1955, stated that "when Mr. Dowling refused to meet the deficit of the old Theatre Arts, the magazine closed. As I was the sole bidder, the 8,000 subscribers were turned over to me with the understanding that I fulfill the subscriptions. Both Miss Isaacs and Miss Gilder would have preferred that the magazine die out.

"The circulation of Theatre Arts today is 60,000."

combination of high expenses, resulting from its tradition of quality materials, and limited sales, resulting from its specialized audience and relatively high price. Isaacs seems to have understood this problem clearly, for on June 21, 1933, she wrote: "The real business problem of any magazine is to develop within available funds . . . a manufacturing method which bears a right relationship to the magazine's editorial idea, and a fair relationship to its sales possibilities."[1] It seems that she was not able to achieve this goal in managing Theatre Arts. Of course, it should be remembered that small but steady progress was interrupted at critical moments by the depression and World War II. Yet, any summary of the history of Theatre Arts must end on the depressing note that, after a thirty-two-year struggle to maintain editorial freedom and gain financial independence, it was sold at a time when it had managed finally to reach those goals.

---

[1]Letter from Edith Isaacs to Osmer N. Gorton, June 21, 1933 (from the Gilder files).

PART II

EDITORIAL POLICY

CHAPTER IV

INTRODUCTION

The struggle and uncertainty reflected in Theatre Arts' financial history contrast sharply with the magazine's essentially confident and persistent editorial policy. Although it passed through several editorial reorganizations, Theatre Arts maintained a generally consistent modus operandi. Such editorial stability was largely the result of the homogeneous interests of its several editors.[1] While the magazine continued its original aims and goals when it came under the control of an editorial quadrumvirate in 1919, under Isaacs, Theatre Arts increased its coverage, scope, service, and significance. Although statements indicate that Isaacs did little writing in the early years,[2] as one of the four editors jointly responsible for editorial policy, she must have agreed to that policy. Furthermore, since these policies were preserved by

---

[1] Rosamond Gilder, Hermine Rich Isaacs, Robert M. MacGregor, Edward Reed (eds.), Theatre Arts Anthology (New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1950), p. xiii.

[2] Letter from Jack Morrison (for Macgowan) to William Halstead, Sept. 26, 1951, notes that "at first she wrote little or nothing." Letter to the author from Edith Isaacs, Oct. 15, 1952, states: "So far as I remember I always wrote the lead editorials and sometimes others, except at the very beginning when Sheldon, Kenneth and I shared them, and, of course, after Miss Gilder became editor-in-chief."

Isaacs after she became sole editor in 1924, it is obvious that they expressed her viewpoint, whether or not she actually formulated them.

Under the management of Edith Isaacs, the editorial policy of Theatre Arts was distinguished primarily by five fundamental characteristics: (1) a desire to correlate in the theatre all of the arts; (2) a desire to understand the present through a knowledge of the past; (3) a desire to bring the theatres of the world closer together in common knowledge and understanding through reciprocal stimulation and inspiration; (4) a desire to locate and encourage imaginative and promising artists in all phases of artistic activity; and (5) a desire to represent and encourage the growing non-commercial theatre movement throughout the country. It was these motives which shaped and directed the magazine's selection of materials.

The editorial policy of Theatre Arts manifested itself in many and varied forms, yet all of these forms seemed to be expressions and implementations of the same basic policies. Although the magazine did not preach, fundamental ideas and beliefs were reiterated variously in articles, illustrations, editorial columns, regular departments, and dramatic criticism. Partly through repetition, ideas expressed in these forms ultimately worked their way into the current of the theatre. In the words of John Mason Brown, the

editorial method of Theatre Arts was like the "Chinese drip torture."[1]

The elements of editorial policy discussed in this section include choice of materials--articles, illustrations, regular departments, editorial columns, and dramatic criticism--selection of staff members, and magazine format and choice of raw materials. As editor Isaacs controlled all these factors over a long period, with joint responsibility from 1919 to 1924, sole responsibility from 1924 to 1945, and supervisory responsibility from 1945 until the magazine was sold in 1946. It was Sheldon Cheney, however, who set the initial policy. Since his editorial aims have been described in Part I,[2] a brief restatement of his views will suffice to recall the early policy.

The theatrical stimulus which inspired Theatre Arts was the introduction into America of the European theatre movement known as the New Stagecraft. Because the magazine was designed to provide a voice for this movement and to supply the "working artist in the theatre with a news medium and a forum for the discussion of new ideas,"[3] its early interest was centered on the technical aspects of the theatre. In 1926 the editor explained that Theatre Arts had started

---

[1]Interview with John Mason Brown, Ann Arbor, Mich., March 10, 1955.

[2]See above, p. 35.

[3]"A Theatre Arts Magazine," The Drama, November, 1916, p. 654.

"with an emphasis on stage design, because there was no other magazine at that time that would consider the stage designer among the artists."[1] Thus, the first issues stressed elements of scenery and the work of little theatres pioneering in the new methods. Materials on other phases of production were treated as they related to the New Stagecraft.

Theatre Arts' alignment on the side of the aesthetic revolutionaries is clearly reflected in the names of its early subjects and contributors. There were articles on designers A. A. Andries, Sam Hume, Robert Edmond Jones, Rollo Peters, Lee Simonson, J. Blanding Sloan, and Josef Urban. Designers who wrote articles for Theatre Arts include Peters, Simonson, Claude Bragdon, and Hermann Rosse. Articles appeared on these non-commercial theatres: the Nine O'clock Theatre, the Cranbrook Theatre, the Chicago Little Theatre, the University of Texas Curtain Club, the Wisconsin Players, the Ypsilanti Players, the Greenleaf Theatre, the Washington Square Players, and the Moscow Art Theatre. English producer William Poel was discussed in one article, and others were written by French playwright Paul Claudel and American director Arthur Hopkins. In the early issues there were three articles on dance, two on puppets, three on drama, two on European theatre, one on acting, and one on the Negro theatre. It is

---

[1] Theatre Arts, January, 1926, p. 1. Theatre and Stage magazines did not often bother to note the designer when they published production pictures. Then, too, the designer seldom received billing in theatre programs in the twenties.

clear that the commercial theatre was virtually ignored, except for those designers from the professional stage who were exponents of the New Stagecraft.

After the editorial reorganization of Theatre Arts in 1919, the magazine's coverage was enlarged considerably and the editorial emphasis was shifted to the drama. The editors announced that

> the enlarged magazine will continue to print authoritative articles on the progress of Stage decoration and production, and each issue will contain, as heretofore, sixteen pages of illustrations, chiefly of settings and costumes. But a large amount of material relating purely to the drama will be added, as well as every sort of article that reflects a figure, a movement, or an event of moment to the American theatre, whether in the experimental stage groups or the commercial playhouse.[1]

This accurately predicted the newly enlarged policy; for, in addition to more material on the drama, Theatre Arts began publishing one or more plays in each issue. The policy of increased coverage also included a monthly selective review of New York's professional theatre[2] and a greatly expanded interest in foreign theatrical activity.

By 1923 there had been a conspicuous decrease in news and articles on the non-commercial theatre, undoubtedly crowded out by the material on drama and foreign theatres. But when

---

[1] Theatre Arts, January, 1919, p. 65.

[2] Kenneth Macgowan's reviews appeared in each of the twenty issues from 1919 to 1924, except for October, 1921, when the editors announced: "Since the first month of the new season has brought little of moment to the New York theatres, Mr. Macgowan's customary review is omitted from this issue. Instead Theatre Arts prints portions of a chapter and certain illustrations from his forthcoming book, The Theatre of Tomorrow."

Theatre Arts was expanded to monthly publication in 1924, this trend was reversed, and an annual issue was devoted to the non-commercial theatre. In addition, more news and information from theatres outside New York appeared in the regular editorial and departmental columns. Theatre Arts continued to publish material on stage design, but the battle for recognition of the designer as an artist was being won. Table 4 reveals the shifts in editorial emphasis by comparing the distribution of pages in the period from 1916 to 1919 with that of the period from 1919 to 1924.

TABLE 4

COMPARISON OF PAGES DEVOTED TO VARIOUS SUBJECTS BY "THEATRE ARTS" 1916-19 AND 1919-24

Subject	Pages 1916-1919	Percentage of Total	Pages 1919-1924	Percentage of Total
Broadway reviews	5	3%	163	15%
Design	76	43	151	14
Architecture	6	3	81	8
Drama	22	12	365	34
Foreign theatre	22	12	229	22
Non-commercial theatre	47	27	46	4
Theatre history	0	0	19	2
Poems	0	0	1	...
	178		1055	

After Isaacs became sole editor in 1924, Theatre Arts widened and varied the scope and coverage of its materials. Articles on foreign theatres and artists increased significantly, and although material on drama had declined in emphasis by 1930,[1] articles on American playwrights appeared more frequently. Just as the material on non-commercial theatres was crowded out in the 1920-24 period by new materials, so after 1930, the plays were forced out by the increasing availability of good essay materials. With the advent of World War II, however, Theatre Arts responded to the need for soldier drama by devoting three special issues to new scripts for use in military service, in 1942, 1943, and 1944. The enlargement of the magazine in 1930 to include an English office produced an increase in pages given to foreign theatre, acting, theatre history, and non-commercial theatres. Producers and directors received more extensive and regular treatment after 1935.

As Isaacs' concept of theatre expanded, her magazine went far afield to include and correlate such diverse arts as the dance, poetry, criticism, the circus, music, and opera. A special importance was attached to the value of theatre museums and collections. In order to keep abreast of the development of new art forms, and, at the same time, increase subscriptions, Theatre Arts gave increasing coverage to radio,

---

[1]While Theatre Arts published forty-nine plays from 1919 to 1930, it printed only six from 1931 to 1940.

television, summer theatre, and particularly the motion picture. In spite of its original vow that "we intend not to be swallowed by the movies,"[1] the magazine published extensive material on the motion picture after 1935. In fact, in the five-year period from 1936 to 1940 Theatre Arts printed almost twice as much movie material as it had in the nineteen years since its birth, and by 1944 it was publishing a regular, monthly motion picture review. The following table (Table 5) is a comprehensive tabulation of the number of pages devoted to various subjects in the years from 1916 to 1945, when Isaacs retired as editor of Theatre Arts. It is offered at this time to illustrate the extent of the magazine's interest, as background information, and as a source for future reference.

Correlation of the Arts

One of Isaacs' primary goals was to raise theatre standards by constantly relating them to other arts. She explained her editorial intention in the pages of her magazine.

> The first was to make the publication theatrical, that is, to have it represent all of the arts that go to the making of real theatre. The other which seemed more important to everyone concerned, was to make Theatre Arts doubly international--in its content and in its subscribers. The aim was to put a girdle around the earth through the medium of the theatre, to form a round-the-world chain that was stronger than politics or economics, in the faith that the theatre was not only the most democratic but the most international and illuminating of all the arts and so the soundest foundation for human fellowship. . . .[2]

---

[1] Theatre Arts, November, 1916, p. 1.

[2] Ibid., November, 1939, pp. 765-66.

TABLE 5

PAGES DEVOTED TO VARIOUS SUBJECTS IN "THEATRE ARTS," 1916--JUNE, 1945

Year	Audience	Aesthetics	Criticism	Theatre History	Museums	Drama and Dramatists	Play Texts	Broadway Reviews	Commercial Theatre	National Organizations	Foreign Theatre	Summer Theatre	Army Theatre	Non-commercial Theatre	Music	Dance
1916-'17	..	6	..	..	..	21	..	5	..	..	19	..	..	29	..	6
1918	..	..	..	..	..	8	..	..	5	..	10	..	..	18	..	3
1919	..	..	..	..	..	21	64	20	..	..	12	..	..	32	..	9
1920	..	..	..	6	..	25	53	34	..	..	72	..	..	7	..	6
1921	..	9	..	12	..	..	61	33	..	..	32	..	..	10	..	..
1922	..	..	..	2	..	6	72	37	..	..	53	..	..	5	..	..
1923	8	17	..	27	..	5	51	39	..	..	30	..	..	7	..	7
1924	..	23	..	36	..	53	177	83	..	..	30	..	..	40	..	66
1925	..	3	6	55	..	35	64	79	..	..	83	..	..	34	..	22
1926	4	..	12	34	6	77	62	82	9	..	48	..	..	37	..	9
1927	..	13	6	69	..	101	24	102	..	..	69	..	..	17	..	70
1928	..	6	6	70	5	73	31	77	..	..	68	..	..	18	38	26
1929	..	..	..	88	4	80	18	77	8	..	55	..	..	48	..	37
1930	..	..	25	120	4	60	30	68	14	..	108	3	..	42	22	36
1931	..	..	24	60	..	53	12	74	11	..	154	..	..	40	7	27
1932	..	..	38	161	9	53	3	80	..	3	130	..	..	26	..	5
1933	3	8	..	58	47	59	..	75	16	10	118	6	..	31	16	39
1934	..	..	..	13	19	26	..	74	44	8	118	..	..	36	13	41
1935	..	..	6	65	29	26	26	82	23	15	100	..	..	42	8	38
1936	14	..	14	33	..	34	8	79	12	12	132	4	..	30	..	29
1937	..	..	14	136	4	25	..	79	8	..	61	..	..	48	12	23
1938	..	..	..	86	..	63	..	73	21	..	84	17	..	39	6	18
1939	..	..	..	41	..	45	..	81	45	..	74	13	..	57	11	46
1940	..	..	5	57	..	43	..	72	57	74	80	9	..	70	..	74
1941	..	..	..	169	..	37	..	69	25	7	40	5	..	45	8	29
1942	..	..	31	4	..	22	52	69	11	..	49	7	6	41	18	14
1943	..	..	8	67	4	37	26	70	21	..	35	..	24	49	8	20
1944	..	..	..	15	..	53	23	69	4	..	59	..	40	18	6	13
1945	..	6	..	..	..	24	38	46	2	..	35	..	11	4	..	15

TABLE 5--Continued

Opera	Marionettes	Circus	Motion Pictures	Radio-TV	Negro Theatre	Directing & Producing	Acting	Make-up	Costume	Lighting	Design	Equipment	Theatre Architecture	Graphic Arts	Poetry	Book Reviews	Miscellaneous
..	4	..	..	..	2	3	6	..	1	4	37	..	..	..	..	..	..
..	4	..	..	..	..	6	..	..	..	..	42	..	..	..	..	..	..
..	..	..	..	..	..	..	5	..	..	..	39	..	..	..	..	..	..
..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	12	16	16	..	..	..	..
..	6	..	..	..	..	45	7	..	..	..	17	..	18	..	..	..	..
..	..	..	..	..	..	..	20	..	..	13	22	3	1	..	..	2	..
..	16	..	..	..	..	12	9	..	..	..	5	..	21	..	1	7	..
..	17	..	..	..	..	23	25	..	..	..	33	..	..	5	4	..	..
..	..	..	..	..	..	20	50	5	29	8	24	..	5	26	12	..	..
..	..	..	..	..	15	..	49	..	6	14	4	..	37	6	6	14	..
..	10	..	18	..	..	..	39	..	..	..	42	..	..	..	5	31	..
..	40	2	..	..	..	10	28	..	..	..	7	7	..	7	9	10	..
..	13	5	59	..	..	16	47	..	..	..	..	..	2	..	17	4	..
6	5	12	..	7	6	..	31	..	..	..	22	..	..	2	14	..	2
7	6	47	4	14	7	7	44	..	..	..	2	5	..	..	4	..	..
..	8	..	4	..	8	4	48	13	..	8	113	6	9	..	22	..	..
12	10	..	6	7	..	9	13	..	9	..	20	..	8	..	6	..	..
15	2	..	6	7	..	..	17	..	..	..	18	..	57	2	3	..	..
26	..	..	..	..	..	13	43	..	..	..	12	8	10	..	3	10	5
..	6	..	20	..	..	61	80	..	..	..	47	2	11	..	2	..	..
9	2	3	24	10	..	18	101	..	10	..	14	10	3	..	6	..	..
23	..	..	34	22	..	30	20	..	..	..	11	5	..	4	3	..	..
11	..	..	26	6	..	20	50	..	..	..	7	..	15	3	3	..	..
12	..	..	27	15	..	9	16	..	8	..	12	4	..	..	3	..	5
6	3	..	114	7	6	..	29	..	..	..	29	6	..	..	1	..	..
19	..	..	35	4	50	28	64	..	..	6	17	7	..	1	2	..	..
11	..	..	42	45	2	19	6	..	..	..	6	..	..	..	3	..	..
6	..	..	50	24	3	26	28	..	..	..	..	4	6	..	2	..	..
..	..	..	49	..	..	12	15	..	..	..	5	5	5	2	..	..	..

The idea of a correlation of the arts, also an outgrowth of the New Stagecraft, recognized the potential of the theatre in bringing together in production the various forms of art. An April, 1921, editorial emphasized that ". . . the theater of which artists dream will never come except through a fusion of all the arts in the hands of inspired producers."[1] Such a practice would produce, to use a favorite Isaacs term, a "dilation" of the theatre's breadth and scope of influence. An examination of Table 5 reveals the growth of Isaacs' concept of theatre and her extension of coverage to include such diverse subject matter as the dance, marionettes, the circus, music and opera, poetry, theatre architecture, theatre collections and museums, photography, motion pictures, radio and television, criticism, theatre books, and recordings.

Isaacs believed that the dance was a vital part of theatrical art, and after she became sole editor in 1924, there was a continuing increase in pages devoted to dance. In her April, 1936, review of the New York theatre, she included an evaluation of a Ballet Jooss performance and closed with this revealing comment:

> If there can be no drama without words, if dance can only be on the broad level of musical comedy, the abstract perfection of the classic ballet, or the separatist stage of the modern dance, then there is no place in the theatre for the more complex and demanding art of the Ballets Jooss, which aims to use theatrically all of the arts of the theatre except speech, and which requires, just as a play does--the participation of the audience to make it complete. But if there are--as surely there are--many

---

[1] Ibid., April, 1921, p. 162.

> forms of dramatic presentation that can dilate, to the theatre's great advantage, the region of the theatre, then the Ballets Jooss are--as their increasing strength and popularity would indicate--doing yeoman service in the field.[1]

The increase in dance materials can be seen in Table 5.

Theatre Arts' encouragement of the dance revealed itself in various forms. In an effort to arouse interest in this particular art form, the magazine published articles on dance and dancers in foreign countries--Bali, the Balkans, Burma, the Caribbean Islands, China, England, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Italy, Java, Japan, Mexico, Russia, and Spain. Often lavishly illustrated, the magazine described the dance forms of the Arab, the Hindu, the Mayan, the Negro, and--in a series of articles by D. H. Lawrence--the American Indian. Special issues in August, 1927, and September, 1940, described the ritual of the American Indian, dance in the Orient, England, and Mexico, and various dance forms in America. These issues included articles written by dancers Isadora Duncan and Ruth St. Denis, critics André Levinson, John Martin, Lincoln Kirstein, Cecil Smith, and others. The 1940 special dance issue also discussed economic problems in dance, music for dance, dance in books, and a history of dance since Isadora Duncan. An unsigned article entitled "Where Dance Meets the Theatre" discussed the correlation of dance in the theatre.

In addition, the magazine stimulated interest in the dance by printing the articles and pictures of such contemporary dancers as Isadora Duncan, Mary Wigman, Fred Astaire,

---

[1]Ibid., April, 1936, p. 254.

Paul Draper, Martha Graham, Agnes de Mille, and George Balanchine, as well as such famous dancers of the past as Marie Taglioni. Through its articles and pictures, Theatre Arts was a major influence in preparing this country to appreciate foreign artists such as Alicia Markova, Tamara Khanum, Vaslav Nijinsky, Kurt Jooss, and Argentina, whom Theatre Arts introduced to the United States before her personal appearance.[1]

All of these articles were accompanied by excellent photographs and drawings of various dancers in action: Argentina, Fred Astaire, George Balanchine, Valerie Bettis, Ray Bolger, Anton Dolin, Paul Draper, Isadora Duncan, Jane Dudley, Katherine Dunham, Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, Hugh Laing, Alicia Markova, Agnes de Mille, Pearl Primus, Ruth St. Denis, Charles Weidman, and Mary Wigman. These pictures helped to acquaint readers with the work of the artists.

Furthermore, there are indications that Isaacs gave direct financial assistance to a number of dancers, although in interviews she deprecated the idea. At the very least, the magazine's publication of articles written by them financially benefited dancers Isadora Duncan, Ruth St. Denis, Agnes de Mille, Argentina, Doris Humphrey, Antony Tudor, and Martha Graham. Many of these articles were solicited, and for all of them the authors were paid at the rate of two cents per

---

[1]In the January, 1929, issue (p. 3) the editor of Theatre Arts wrote: "Argentina has conquered New York. It is just a month since she landed almost unknown, as one critic said, except for what André Levinson had written of her in Theatre Arts."

word. In addition, Theatre Arts published Isadora Duncan's book The Art of the Dance and André Levinson's La Argentina.

Part of Isaacs' program to increase American knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of the dance involved the development of dance critics and criticism. In August, 1927, Theatre Arts called attention to the lack of dance critics, and in February, 1928, it boasted that "several of the newspapers have lately added critics of the dance to their regular staffs."[1] In an editorial in January, 1931, Isaacs complained that

> the English language is particularly barren of dance terminology. It is harder to translate a dance article of André Levinson's . . . than to find exactly the right equivalent for abstractions in science. . . . But the "New Movement" is helping that, too, as is indicated by such increasingly keen and distinctive criticism as John Martin's in the New York Times.[2]

To fill this void, Theatre Arts sought to lay the foundations for American dance criticism with analyses by André Levinson, Isadora Duncan, Ruth St. Denis, and others in the August, 1927, special dance issue. Dance critic Levinson wrote frequently and perceptively for the magazine for over a decade.

A further indication of Isaacs' broad concept of theatre is her interest in marionettes. Under her editorship, the magazine increased its coverage of marionettes and puppets, and in July, 1928, it brought out a special issue which contained articles on marionette activity in Germany, Czechoslovakia, France, Austria, Italy, Russia, Japan, England,

---

[1]Theatre Arts, February, 1928, p. 83.

[2]Ibid., January, 1931, p. 6.

Greece, and the United States. This issue also included articles on the history of the marionette, as well as on its construction and manipulation, and a puppet play script written by Grace Dorcas Ruthenberg.

A special Theatre Arts favorite was the circus. Editor Isaacs was convinced that the "three rings" were a vital expression of the theatrical scene. The February issue in 1936 emphasized the magazine's interest in the circus by stating, "Some of our readers object that circus is not theatre, but Eisenstein carries the issue with him across America."[1] In addition to occasional articles, a special circus issue was published in August, 1931, consisting largely of an extended article on the circus by Charles Bayly, Jr., and numerous illustrations of circus life. Actually, some of Theatre Arts' finest illustrations were reproductions of circus paintings by Marc Chagall, Gifford Beal, John Sloan, Everett Shinn, Boris Aronson, Jo Mielziner, and others.

Theatre Arts also emphasized the correlation between the musical arts and theatre through articles on the need for music and its function in the play, Arab music in New York cafés, the music of the American Indian, and music in Russia, China, and Brazil. There were articles on the music of Cole Porter, on American folk music, and on the status of American musical comedy. In addition, American composers Vernon Duke, Richard Rodgers, and Douglas Moore authored articles for the

---

[1] Ibid., February, 1936, p. 168.

magazine. The August special issue in 1928, "Music in the Theatre," was highlighted by Douglas Moore's "The Inhospitable Theatre," a criticism of the theatre's neglect of music; Bernard Sobel's criticism of musical comedy, "Musical Comedy, Quo Vadis"; John Martin's "Pardon for the Poet," on the correlation of music, poetry, and dance in the theatre; Robert Simon's "Why Write a Libretto"; Helen Ingersoll's description of a Neighborhood Playhouse experiment, "Orchestral Drama"; and Samuel A. Eliot, Jr.'s "Combattimento, A Battle of the Arts," defining the place of music in the theatre.[1] The August, 1945, special issue, "American Musical Comedy (Credit it to Broadway)," included production pictures of various musicals with a narrative by Isaacs and Rosamond Gilder.

After 1930 Theatre Arts published frequent articles and photographs of the opera and its artists in France, England, Sweden, Switzerland, Germany, China, and America. There were essays on operas such as Boris Godunov, Falstaff, Salome, Ernst Krenek's new opera The Life of Orestes, and Porgy and Bess, as well as an excerpt from Paul Horgan's opera, A Tree on the Plains, and literary portraits of Ezio Pinza, Gatti-Casazza, Lotte Lehmann, Bruno Walter, Gustave Olah, and Richard Rychtarik. A prolific writer on opera for Theatre Arts during the thirties was Irving Kolodin, opera expert

---

[1]An unsigned article in the December, 1937, issue (p. 970) entitled "Music Meets the Theatre" described the union of music, design, and dance in several productions (Paul Green's two plays, the Metropolitan, and the Ballet Jooss).

and music critic. Other articles and editorial columns were critical of opera in America, analyzing obstacles in the way of operatic progress.[1]

In publishing a poem by Edwin Arlington Robinson in July, 1920, Isaacs complained that America doesn't welcome poets in the theatre. Typical of Theatre Arts' frequent complaint was an article, "Poetry Seeks a New Home," by Gordon Bottomley, which emphasized the need for poetry in the theatre.[2] As part of Isaacs' effort to correlate the art of the poet and the theatre, and to encourage the poet-dramatist, Theatre Arts offered its readers numerous poetic dramas, including Percy Bysshe Shelley's The Cenci, John Drinkwater's The Storm, Edwin Arlington Robinson's Demos and Dionysus, Edith Hamilton's translation of Aeschylus' Prometheus Bound, M. Jagendorf's translation of Lope de Vega's The Pastrybaker, Padraic Colum's The Miracle of the Corn, John Mason Brown's adaptation of The Pageant of the Shearmen and Tailors, Lascelles Abercrombie's poetic melodrama The Deserter, and others by Alfred Kreymborg and Herbert S. Gorman. In addition, almost every Theatre Arts issue included at least one

---

[1]A May, 1933, editorial (p. 334) referred to the "artistic bankruptcy of the Metropolitan." A June, 1933, article by Isaacs (p. 467) is entitled "The Secret Marriage, Acting and Opera," and analyzes the need for singing actors in opera. In October, 1933, (p. 783) appeared "What Hope for the Opera," by Irving Kolodin.

[2]Theatre Arts, December, 1929, p. 920. Also typical is Carl Carmer's "Gordon Bottomley and Poetic Drama," which described the modern English champion of poetic drama (February, 1930).

poem by such poets as William Rose Benet, Conrad Aiken, and Edwin Arlington Robinson--a Theatre Arts favorite.[1] There were poems by actors Cornelia Otis Skinner, Horace Braham, and Tom Powers, as well as by novelist John Dos Passos. Other favorite poets included Eunice Tietjens, Charles Norman, Frances Frost, Owen Dodson, Earl Mohn, staff members Carl Carmer, Stark Young, and Ashley Dukes, as well as thirty-four others.[2]

In 1930 Theatre Arts recognized the radio medium with articles on radio drama, radio acting, writing for radio, and techniques of broadcasting, written by such authorities as Val Gielgud of the B.B.C., Norman Corwin, Davidson Taylor, Merrill Denison, Jerrold H. Lapham, John K. Hutchens, John Anderson, and Worthington Miner. In addition, the magazine published a number of radio dramas, including Norman Corwin's Samson, William N. Robson's Open Letter of Race Hatred, and Ranald MacDougall's The Death of Aunt Aggie. Other articles described Archibald MacLeish's radio verse-play The Fall of

---

[1]Lewis M. Isaacs, Sr., and Robinson were close personal friends, Mr. Isaacs serving as executor of Robinson's estate.

[2]In its search for poetic talents, Theatre Arts published poems by Hervey Allen, Charles Ballard, Sterling A. Brown, Cpl. Roger Whalen Busha, Dahomey, James Daly, Harrison Dowd, Louise Dutton, Jacqueline Embry, John Gould Fletcher, Helen Freeman, Frances Frost, Howard V. Gellendre, Everett Glass, Herbert S. Gorman, Doris F. Halman, Lindley Williams Hubbell, Harry Kemp, Keith MacKaye, David McCord, Margaret McGovern, Florence Kilpatrick Mixter, Charles R. Murphy, Frank O'Connor, Winthrop B. Palmer, Frances Park, Phyllis Preston, Dorothy Ramsey, R. Dana Skinner, Richard Steele, Rose Pastor Stokes, C. W. Stork, Charles A. Wagner, and John V. A. Weaver.

the City and Corwin's They Fly Through the Air. Between 1937 and 1942 Theatre Arts published six articles on the infant art of television.

The foreword in the first issue of Theatre Arts had vowed, "We intend not to be swallowed by the movies," and it was not until 1927 that articles on the motion picture began to appear in the magazine. The early issues of 1927, 1928, and 1929 were characterized by careful and limited treatment of the motion pictures, and were largely confined to the nature of cinema art and motion picture history. An examination of Table 5[1] shows that after 1936 the magazine increased its movie coverage by nearly 400%, and by 1945 it was printing a nearly regular movie review with the same selective viewpoint it had toward the theatre. Special issues were devoted to the motion picture in September, 1929, and in September, 1941. The 1929 issue included articles on "The Nature of the Cinema," the evolution of the motion picture, the progress to date in sound, press agentry in the movie industry, the Russian movie directors Eisenstein and Pudovkin, a history of screen acting by Richard Watts, Jr., John Hutchens on problems of the "Little Cinema" movement, W. Cameron Menzies on designing for the movies, and Monta Bell on directing the motion picture. The 1941 special issue was highlighted by Walter Wanger's article, "The Films: Forward from 1941"; Bette Davis and David Chandler "On Acting in Films"; "I Direct" by Garson Kanin;

---

[1]See above, pp. 81-82.

"The Motion Picture Cameraman" by Gregg Toland; and Christopher LaFarge's article on "Walt Disney and the Art Form." Theatre Arts also published articles on motion picture activity in foreign countries, including England, France, Germany, Mexico, Russia, Sweden, South America, and Thailand, as well as excerpts from two film scripts: Story of GI Joe and It Happened Tomorrow. Other articles described the work of movie directors Frank Capra, David Wark Griffith, Alfred Hitchcock, Fritz Lang, Lewis Milestone, Jean Renoir, and producers Albert Lewin and the Warner brothers.

Another view of this broad concept of theatre is expressed by Isaacs in an editorial in the February, 1927, issue.

> So many people have asked us why Theatre Arts is arranging an exhibition of Primitive African Sculpture this year instead of another exhibition of stage design. Partly by accident, partly by intention. It has seemed to Theatre Arts that one of the ways to enrich both the theatre and the world of art was by emphasizing the constant relation of the theatre to every form of art expression.[1]

In line with this editorial policy, Isaacs included articles on the theatre quality in such graphic arts as poster design, prints, paintings, sculpture, and photography. Essays emphasized this quality in the work of painters Pablo Picasso, Toulouse-Lautrec, and Salvador Dali, and in the art of photographers Alice Boughton, Doris Ullman, and Francis Bruguière. Illustrations representative of the dramatic qualities in the artist's work, such as Picasso's "The Three-Cornered Hat,"

---

[1]Theatre Arts, February, 1927, p. 159.

Ullman's photos of American scenes and types, and Ralph Steiner's pictures of a bridge and buildings, to mention only a few, made this quality more apparent. Other articles described the potential for the dramatist in folklore and the short story, the theatrical values in a bullfight, in an Italian festival horse race, in the performance of an Oriental magician, in a Gypsy carnival, in a memorial stone, in Moscow's Red Square. Still others concerned particular activities in church, prison, on shipboard, and at the World's Fair.

A final, but perhaps most typical, example of Isaacs' efforts to relate the theatre to other art forms is provided by a series of articles entitled "I Look at the Theatre," which appeared in Theatre Arts in 1930 and 1931. An editor's note in the August, 1930, issue stated:

> Theatre Arts is happy to announce that a dozen of the most distinguished artists in England--poets, novelists, painters--are contributing to the magazine a series of articles each under the title I Look at the Theatre. The list includes J. B. Priestley, Compton MacKenzie, Rose Macauley, Middleton Murray, C. R. W. Nevinson--the painter--Naomi Mitchison, Edmund Blunden, Ellen Wilkinson, Paul Nash and others.[1]

These various artists were invited by Isaacs to submit articles giving their considered opinions and views of the theatre. All complied with the invitation except Blunden and Wilkinson, who were replaced in the series by Martin Armstrong and Humbert Wolfe. Through this series, and others like it,

---

[1] Ibid., August, 1930, p. 637.

Isaacs hoped to enrich the theatre by "making new contacts with the art and life of the world."[1]

There is ample evidence in the pages of Theatre Arts that Isaacs habitually solicited materials directly from the artist "in the field."[2] In addition to the "I Look at the Theatre" series, a typical example of this practice is found in the preface of the special costume issue in August, 1925.

---

[1] Ibid., November, 1926, p. 801.

[2] Following is a representative sampling of the direct solicitation of articles.

"Editors are queer things. They ask you, for instance, to write about audiences. They are almost as queer as audiences" (Walter Prichard Eaton, "Audiences," Theatre Arts, January, 1923, p. 21).

"Hence my heart is heavy with distrust when, as a reviewer, I find myself asked to turn crystal-gazer and look forward from the bleak world of 1940 to the theatre which the readers of Theatre Arts may know when this magazine is celebrating its fiftieth rather than its twenty-fifth anniversary" (John Mason Brown, "Forward from 1940," Theatre Arts, February, 1941, p. 113).

"To carry the argument one step farther forward, the editors invited four representative artists, with varying professional approaches, to restate, in their own terms, the case for or against a possible unity in the dance" (Preface, "The Dance American Style," Theatre Arts, October, 1941, p. 773).

"You asked me how I came to tackle The Three Sisters, just now. . . ." (Guthrie McClintic, "Directing Chekhov," Theatre Arts, April, 1943, p. 212).

"For obvious reasons we have asked Mr. and Mrs. Heythum to write this article in the present tense. . . ." (Editor's note concerning Antonin and Charlotte Heythum, "A National Theatre in Action," Theatre Arts, February, 1940, p. 136).

"Theatre Arts chose this moment to send a letter to a representative group of the most admired and respected workers in the theatre asking their frank opinion as to the causes of the decline and their suggestions for possible remedies" (Editor's preface, "The Theatre Takes Stock," Theatre Arts, May, 1940, p. 327).

"So the editors asked a dozen theatre artists and good friends of Theatre Arts to suggest suitable plays, casts and directors for that part of a repertory which can be planned in advance: classic and modern revivals" (Editor's preface, "What Shall We Play," Theatre Arts, February, 1941, p. 146).

> A costume number of a magazine must obviously stand or fall by its illustrations. But we have tried to do something more interesting in this issue than simply to collect thirty pictures of beautiful costumes. We have tried through the text to illustrate the problems, the ideas, the approach and the scope of the work of the costume designer. To make this material more real and more valuable we have secured the articles not from writers about costume, but from the costume designers themselves. We believe that the material collected in this way has more than a literary value, especially to the layman, interested in costume, and to the student of design, learning his craft.[1]

Thus, instead of limiting the authorship of articles to a regular staff, any issue might contain articles written by a playwright such as Elmer Rice, a designer of the calibre of Robert Edmond Jones, by actor John Gielgud, director Arthur Hopkins, producer Brock Pemberton, dancer Isadora Duncan, singer Lotte Lehmann, critic Brooks Atkinson, musician Lehman Engel, or poet Gordon Bottomley. Also, these artists were persuaded to write on subjects other than their own specialties. For example, Theatre Arts had French playwright Paul Claudel describe how his plays should be acted, Gordon Craig analyze the art of Henry Irving, actor Whitford Kane chronicle the career of B. Iden Payne, director Sergei Eisenstein record the style of Mei-Lan-Fang, and designer Robert Edmond Jones urge the poetizing of the theatre. Such a policy stamped the magazine's contents with an authority, integrity, quality, and significance which few periodicals could claim.

Although Isaacs' great concern was the contemporary theatre, she did not neglect that theatre's heritage: its

---

[1] Theatre Arts, August, 1925, p. 566.

rich and varied history. It was her firm conviction that a thorough grounding in the past was indispensable to an appreciation of the present. Accordingly, a vital and continuing characteristic of her editorial policy was the correlation of the theatre's past with its present. Under Isaacs' editorship historical materials increased considerably. In addition to numerous articles and illustrations covering every phase of theatrical history, Theatre Arts published three special issues: "The World in the Mirror of the Theatre,"[1] a short history of world theatre; "A Picture Book of Plays and Players, 1916-41,"[2] a history of selected actors and their roles; and "Theatre with Father,"[3] a coverage of recent theatre history. Special issues were also devoted to playwrights Henrik Ibsen and Lope de Vega.[4] In 1941 the magazine ran a series of articles by Ashley Dukes under the title "Journey Through Theatre."[5] These articles recounted nineteenth- and early twentieth-century European theatre history and were later published by Theatre Arts in a book called The Scene is Changed. The extent of Isaacs' interest in theatre history can be seen in Table 6, which lists articles devoted exclusively to historical subject matter.

---

[1] Ibid., August, 1937. [2] Ibid., August, 1941.

[3] Ibid., August, 1943.

[4] Ibid., March, 1928, and September, 1935.

[5] Ibid., January, 1941, p. 20; February, 1941, p. 102; April, 1941, p. 306; May, 1941, p. 369; June, 1941, p. 419; October, 1941, p. 753; November, 1941, p. 831; December, 1941, p. 875.

TABLE 6

ARTICLES DEVOTED EXCLUSIVELY TO HISTORICAL MATERIALS

Playwrights

Title	Issue
"Aeschylus, the First Man of the Theatre"	Jan., 1929
"The Story of J.M.B." [James M. Barrie]	Nov., 1941
"Scotch Thrift in Fairyland" [James M. Barrie] .	Oct., 1919
"Aphra Behn"	June, 1928
"Dion Boucicault & Royalty Payments for Playwrights"	Nov., 1939
"Congreve as a Modernist" [William Congreve] ...	Jan., 1925
"Tragedy as They Order it in France" [Pierre Corneille]	Sept., 1937
"Euripides"	May, 1929
"Euripides Was a Soldier"	Jan., 1940
"John Galsworthy, the Novelist as Dramatist" ...	May, 1929
"W. S. Gilbert"	Oct., 1927
"Goethe and the Theatre"	June, 1932
"Goethe and Faust"	June, 1941
"Shakespeare and Goldoni" [Carlo Goldoni]	Nov., 1934
"Edward Harrigan"	Mar., 1926
"Concerning the Author of Herod and Miriamne" [Friedrich Hebbel]	Dec., 1938
"James A. Herne"	Dec., 1940
"Hrotsvitha"	Apr., 1930
Henrik Ibsen Special Issue	Mar., 1928
"The Coming of Ibsen, I"	Apr., 1930
"The Coming of Ibsen, II"	Nov., 1930
"The Plays of Henry James"	May, 1928
"Macchiavelli, 'Diplomat, Dramatist'"	Feb., 1939
"The Essay on Comedy & Its Author" [George Meredith]	Apr., 1929
"Thomas Middleton"	Dec., 1927
"Molière"	Sept., 1937
"From Circus to Theatre" [Plautus]	May, 1932
"Timon of Athens" [Shakespeare]	July, 1926
"Romeo and Juliet" [Shakespeare]	Nov., 1936
"Shakespeare's Clowns"	April, 1929
"Shakespeare and the Venetians"	Jan., 1930
"Shelley's The Cenci"	Jan., 1924
"Sophocles, the Quintessential Greek"	Feb., 1929
"The Variorum Stowe" [Harriet Beecher Stowe] ...	Apr., 1926
"The Poet as Dramatist" [Algernon Swinburne] ...	May, 1929
Lope de Vega Special Issue	Sept., 1935
"Gil Vicente, Pioneer Playwright"	Apr., 1942
"Webster" [John Webster]	Dec., 1937
"William Butler Yeats"	Apr., 1939
"With William Butler Yeats"	June, 1924

TABLE 6--Continued

Designers	
Title	**Issue**
Adolph Appia Special Issue	Aug., 1932
"Working with Appia"	Oct., 1924
"Designing Hamlet with Appia"	Jan., 1925
"Berain and the French Costume Tradition"	Mar., 1926
"Jacques Callot"	Dec., 1935
"Charles Ciceri and the Background of American Scene Design"	Dec., 1932
"Pietro Gonzaga"	Oct., 1922
"Inigo Jones"	May, 1928
"Charles Ricketts, R.A."	May, 1932
"Mentioning Serlio" [Sebastiano Serlio]	June, 1927
"Leonardo da Vinci, Stage Manager"	Nov., 1939
Actors and Acting	
"Isabella Andreini"	Feb., 1930
"The Benson Company" [Frank Benson, etc.]	Sep., 1931
"Young Roscius" [William Betty]	June, 1935
"Edwin Booth"	Nov., 1932
"Commedia Dell' Arte"	Dec., 1933
"National Comedy" [Commedia Dell' Arte]	Sep., 1938
"Deburau" [Charles Deburau]	Oct., 1928
"Charles Dickens, Actor"	Dec., 1938
"Mrs. John Drew"	May, 1943
"La NostalGilder" [Eleonora Duse]	June, 1926
"Eleonora Duse"	Sep., 1931
"Sense About Duse"	Apr., 1939
"The Boy Player" [Elizabethan boy actors]	May, 1936
"Grimaldi" [Joseph Grimaldi]	June, 1937
"The Jade Nelly" [Nell Gwynn]	Feb., 1937
"Hamlets" [Actors of Hamlet]	Dec., 1936
"Enter Ianthe, Veil'd"	Jan., 1927
"Henry Irving"	Oct., 1930
"Henry Irving"	Jan., 1938
"Joseph Jefferson"	June, 1929
"Joseph Jefferson"	June, 1943
"Charles Kean, Pedant Showman"	Dec., 1934
"Kemble Religion" [The Kembles]	Feb., 1933
"Richard Mansfield"	Feb., 1927
"Fierce and Luxurious Dolores [Adah Isaacs Menken]	Sep., 1930
"Modjeska" [Helena Modjeska]	June, 1927
"La Montansier" [Montansier (Marguerite Brunet)]	Sep., 1930
"The Heritage of Réjane" [Gabrielle Réjane] ...	Mar., 1938
"Dan Rice, American Clown and Humorist"	May, 1941

TABLE 6--Continued

Title	Issue
Actors and Acting--Continued	
"A Georgian Diary" [Mrs. Siddons]	Nov., 1933
"Talma" [Francois Talma]	Nov., 1926
"Dame Ellen Terry"	Oct., 1926
"Vestris, An Actress-Manager of 1830" [Mme. Vestris (Lucia Elizabeth Bartolozzi)]	Nov., 1928
Directors and Producers	
"Steele MacKaye"	Nov., 1927
"Gilles de Raiz, Europe's First Impresario" ...	Aug., 1930
"A Mid-Victorian Regisseur" [T. W. Robertson] .	Nov., 1929
Theatre Structure and Buildings	
"England in Vicenza: The Olympian Theatre" ...	Apr., 1921
"The Theatre of the Ten Thousand" [Die Grosse Schauspielhaus]	Jan., 1923
"The Story of the Stage"	Apr., 1923
"An Eighteenth Century Theatre" [Drottningholm]	Apr., 1924
"The Tenterhooks of Temptation"	July, 1925
"The Architectural Stage"	July, 1927
"A Note on Two Court Theatres" [Théâtre de la Petite Galerie]	Jan., 1928
"The Grand Duke Opera House"	Aug., 1928
"Some Court Theatres"	May, 1929
"The Open Air Theatre"	Aug., 1929
"A Castle in Cyprus" [Othello's castle]	Mar., 1930
"Drury Lane for a Night"	July, 1930
"The House of the Presence"	July, 1930
"The Theatre of Parma" [Farnese Theatre]	Mar., 1931
"The Player King & the Theatre at Drottningholm"	Mar., 1931
"The Garden Theatre of Marlia"	June, 1932
"The Roman Theatre of Verulanium"	Aug., 1935
"The Hermitage Theatre"	Dec., 1935
"The Elizabethan Theatre"	Mar., 1936
"Shakespeare's Stage" [Globe Theatre]	Oct., 1936
"The Mirror's Frame"	Aug., 1937
"Gabriel, 'Architecte du Roi'"	Mar., 1938
"Horse Opera House"	Feb., 1944

TABLE 6--Continued

Dramaturgy	
Title	**Issue**
"Changes in the Theatre"	Aug., 1924
"A One-Foot Shelf"	July, 1925
"Prefaces and Stage Directions"	Oct., 1926
"Tragedy"	Jan., 1926
"Comedy"	July, 1927
"Propagandist Theatres"	Feb., 1929
"Twenty-Three Thousand, The Lord Chamberlain Looked at Some Plays"	Apr., 1929
"The Dramatis Personae"	Feb., 1930
"A Hundred Years of Lovemaking"	June, 1930
"Melodrama"	Apr., 1932
Miscellaneous History	
"1620 - The Puritans and the Theatre - 1920"	Oct., 1920
"Out of the Past"	July, 1925
"Nights"	July, 1925
"On the Art of Italian Comedians"	Feb., 1926
"Theatre Within Theatre, The Comedy of the Claque"	Apr., 1927
"Student Theatres in the Middle Ages"	Sep., 1927
"The Theatre of John Tenniel"	Feb., 1928
"Renaissance Entries"	Aug., 1929
"The Naumachia, When the Stage Went Natural"	Apr., 1929
"To Theatre with Pepys"	June, 1929
"Theatre Tradition, I. Tradition in Drama"	Nov., 1929
"Theatre Tradition, II. Tradition in Acting and Presentation"	Dec., 1929
"A History of Acting in Twenty Pictures, with a Note"	Sep., 1931
"Comedy's Mirror in Ancient Rome"	May, 1932
"His Excellency, George Washington"	Feb., 1932
"Gods of the Theatre"	Mar., 1932
"The Theatre Mrs. Fiske Knew"	May, 1932
"Theatre: 1792"	Aug., 1934
"Romeo and Juliet, as Played on Shakespeare's Stage"	Nov., 1936
"Epigrams for Certain Theatre Folks, from the Count of Villamediana"	June, 1936
"The Season of '65"	Mar., 1937
"Napoleon and the Theatre"	Apr., 1937
"Style in Acting"	Sep., 1937

TABLE 6--Continued

Miscellaneous History--Continued

Title	Issue
"Marlowe's London"	Apr., 1939
"Who is This Dionysus"	June, 1940
"Daumier, Bourgeois Playgoer"	Mar., 1940
"English Theatre Riots"	Feb., 1940
"The Family of Oedipus"	Dec., 1940
"The American Theatre, 1916-41"	Feb., 1941
"Actors All, Between Two Wars"	Oct., 1941
"Of Thee I Sing, Twenty-five Years of American Playwriting"	Nov., 1941

It was Isaacs' firm conviction that any properly balanced theatre fare must offer productions of classical dramas as well as the modern. The inclusion of the best plays of the past would lend the "enchantment of distance" to any season. As part of Theatre Arts' efforts to correlate past with present and to encourage productions of the classics, the magazine published several classical plays, including Aeschylus' Prometheus Bound,[1] Molière's Georges Dandin, or the Discomfited Husband,[2] and Lope de Vega's The Pastrybaker.[3]

Besides these purely historical materials, Isaacs went further in the integration of the past and present by planning articles, series, and pictures which specifically

[1]Theatre Arts, July, 1927, p. 545. Translation by Edith Hamilton.

[2]Ibid., August, 1924, p. 605. Translation by Stark Young.

[3]Ibid., September, 1935, p. 713. Translation by M. Jagendorf.

tied the two together. The kinship of the Renaissance Commedia Dell' Arte actor and the modern vaudevillian was established in "Commedia Dell' Arte and American Vaudeville."[1] Another article, "After Booth,"[2] by Otis Skinner, opened with: "You ask me to compare the acting today with that in the mode of Edwin Booth's day." "The Comédie Française in the Present and the Past"[3] and "The Greek and English Genius"[4] drew other obvious past and present correlations. Nineteenth- and twentieth-century theatre were compared in "The Grand Old Days,"[5] and "Merriment from Megara"[6] described the comedy of primitive Dorian mimes and present-day counterparts. John Mason Brown's "Peg Woffington to Ina Claire"[7] drew parallels between present and past actors and was included in his book Letters from Greenroom Ghosts.

To further familiarize her readers with the theatre's history and heritage, Isaacs included in her magazine extensive material on various theatre collections and museums throughout the world. A special issue in September, 1933, contained articles on theatre memorabilia in England's

---

[1] Ibid., December, 1923, p. 321 (by Vadim Uraneff).

[2] Ibid., July, 1926, p. 446.

[3] Ibid., December, 1927, p. 929 (by Philip Carr).

[4] Ibid., May, 1928, p. 333 (by Edith Hamilton).

[5] Ibid., June, 1931, p. 485.

[6] Ibid., October, 1935, p. 770 (by Rosamond Gilder).

[7] Ibid., December, 1933, p. 955.

Victoria and Albert Museum,[1] the theatre collection in Vienna's National Library,[2] and Vsevelod Meyerhold's theatre museum in Russia,[3] as well as an article describing famous theatre collections throughout the world.[4] Scholar Allardyce Nicoll wrote his advice and encouragement to the student of theatre in the library,[5] and Montrose J. Moses analyzed the need to establish permanent homes for theatrical research and the preservation of manuscripts and papers.[6] Other issues included articles on the theatre collection in the national library in Vienna,[7] the museum of the Paris Opera,[8] McGill University's collection of pictures of Commedia Dell' Arte,[9] the Drottningholm Theatre museum,[10] the Yale University

---

[1] Ibid., September, 1933, p. 707 (James Laver, "Victoria and Albert Museum").

[2] Ibid., p. 697 (Joseph Gregor, "Cenodoxus or The Theatre and the Museum").

[3] Ibid., p. 689 (Valerian Stepanov, "Gostin, Russia's Experimental Theatre Museum").

[4] Ibid., p. 727 ("Famous Theatre Collections").

[5] Ibid., p. 712 ("Companions of Autolycus").

[6] Ibid., p. 719 ("Find What You Are Looking For").

[7] Ibid., December, 1926, p. 849 (Ashley Dukes, "The Monumenta Scenica").

[8] Ibid., April, 1928, p. 274 (Dorothy Hirshfield, "Near the Café de la Paix").

[9] Ibid., September, 1930, p. 807 (Gerhard R. Lomer, "Feather Pictures of the Commedia Dell' Arte").

[10] Ibid., March, 1934, p. 860 (Agne Beijer, "The Drottningholm Theatre Museum").

collection,[1] the Eleonora Duse collection at Asolo, Italy,[2] the museum at Turin, Italy,[3] and the Garrick Club collection in England.[4] In 1937 Theatre Arts climaxed this phase of its editorial policy with the publication of the book Theatre Collections in Libraries and Museums, by Rosamond Gilder and George Freedley.

Isaacs' conviction that the theatre could be enriched by relating itself to other arts was largely responsible for the scope and variety of her magazine's coverage. By incorporating the art of the poet, dancer, and musician, the theatre might achieve that synthesis and unity of arts which was the New Stagecraft ideal. Such a synthesis also would result in a more popular appeal and, hence, ensure the theatre's health and stability.

A second explanation of Theatre Arts' broad coverage can be seen in the expansion of Isaacs' concept of theatre. "Although Theatre Arts aims to limit its scope to the theatre, the theatre itself seems year by year to be making new contacts with the art and life of the world," she wrote. As Rosamond Gilder, her long-time associate, has pointed out,

---

[1] Ibid., November, 1934, p. 860 (Allardyce Nicoll, "In Search of the Theatre").

[2] Ibid., October, 1935, p. 786 (Dorothy Nevile Lees, "The Eleonora Duse Collection").

[3] Ibid., February, 1935, p. 139 (Allardyce Nicoll, "Royal Divertisements").

[4] Ibid., August, 1935, p. 601 (Ashley Dukes, "The Garrick Club Collection").

Isaacs was particularly sensitive to the "theatre quality" in various forms: in a photograph, a bullfight, a painting, a piece of African sculpture, a circus, or a castle. The inclusion of such materials added new depth and perspective to the meaning of theatre.

Finally, although an examination of Table 6 shows a concerted effort to correlate the theatre's past and present, it also reveals an obvious neglect of American theatre history. Several explanations are possible. Perhaps it was because this field did not begin to attract scholars and writers in quantity until late in the magazine's life. Undoubtedly there could have been much more written on the nineteenth-century American theatre by people who had lived through it, had Isaacs stimulated such writing. Or perhaps it was the fact that the vast European theatre heritage had produced the New Stagecraft, Theatre Arts' cause célèbre, while the theatre in the United States, mired in commercialism, resisted the influences and advance of that movement. Isaacs herself might have answered this question by asking: "What of real value to the 'Art' of the theatre has happened in two hundred years of American history?"

CHAPTER V

ARTICLES ON INTERNATIONAL THEATRE

The second of Isaacs' editorial intentions was to make Theatre Arts a truly international magazine. She believed implicitly in the "great world theatre" and attached special significance to the reciprocal stimulation possible in international theatre. She pleaded for international exchange of actors, designers, directors, and other artists, emphasizing that "there is no great national theatre that is not a great international theatre, that is not continually fed and constantly renewed from the sources of the world's theatrical artistry, by the plays and players, the designers and directors of the whole round world."[1] In order to implement this dictum, Theatre Arts printed articles describing theatre in forty-five nations, from Arabia to Austria, and Jamaica to Java. Table 7 lists these countries. In addition, there were articles on the Gypsy, on the American Indian, and on Negro theatre. Special issues on foreign theatre included:

The Moscow Art Theatre (October, 1920)
In the Theatres of Europe (April, 1922)
The Dramatic Arts of the American Indian (August, 1933)
British National Theatre (August, 1935)
The Theatre in Bali (August, 1936)

---

[1] Theatre Arts, April, 1934, p. 238.

The Soviet Theatre Speaks for Itself (September, 1936)
French National Theatre (September, 1937)
Theatre in Mexico (August, 1938)
Theatre in Sweden Before 1940 (August, 1940)
An International Theatre: Made in America (August, 1944)

TABLE 7

COUNTRIES COVERED IN "THEATRE ARTS" ARTICLES

Arabia	Italy
Argentina	Jamaica
Australia	Japan
Austria	Java
Bali	Latvia
Bohemia	Mexico
Bolivia	Morocco
Brazil	Norway
Bulgaria	Palestine
Canada	Philippines
China	Poland
Czechoslovakia	Rumania
Denmark	Russia
Egypt	Sicily
England	Soviet Georgia
France	Spain
Germany	Sweden
Greece	Switzerland
Holland	Syria
Hungary	Turkestan
India	Ukrainia
Indo-China	Wales
Ireland	

Except for the war years, international theatre enjoyed a dominant and significant place in the pages of Theatre Arts. In spite of the fact that the magazine was often criticized for being too international, Theatre Arts continued to increase its foreign coverage. Between 1924 and 1930 these materials doubled in number. In the five-year period from 1931 to 1935 more than twice as many pages were devoted to foreign theatre as to any other single subject. By 1936

they had nearly trebled.[1] In April, 1928, the magazine began publishing an annual calendar of summer theatre abroad. Regular editorial columns informed readers of noteworthy events in the theatre abroad. The May, 1944, issue introduced a new editorial department entitled "Theatre International," which brought together news and information on international theatre and its artists.

As part of Isaacs' plan to make Theatre Arts an international periodical, the magazine printed numerous articles on, and illustrations of, various individual foreign artists: playwrights, designers, directors, and actors. The editor also solicited material authored by outstanding European personalities. These articles and pictures were intended to provide the example and inspiration for a struggling infant art theatre movement in America, as well as to permeate and influence the American commercial theatre. Then, too, there was the immeasurable benefit to the artist provided by Theatre Arts' recognition and encouragement of his talents.

With the reorganization of Theatre Arts in 1919, editorial emphasis shifted to drama and the playwright. Since the New Stagecraft had its beginnings in the European theatre, considerable coverage was given to foreign drama and playwrights in an effort to generate interest in reading and producing their plays. Thus, when St. John Hankin's play The Constant Lover appeared in Theatre Arts in April, 1919, an

---

[1] See above, Table 4, p. 78, and Table 5, p. 81.

editor's note explained: "We are publishing this play with the double purpose of making it accessible to Little Theatre and other producing groups, and of stimulating a wider reading of St. John Hankin's plays."[1] Isaacs' desire for international exchange was graphically illustrated in an editorial which pointed out that since American playwrights couldn't fill the new and old theatres, a solution would be to fill these theatres with foreign plays. "Enough interchange and we shall have the theatre we are all looking for."[2] In addition to articles about selected foreign playwrights, Theatre Arts published a number of essays written by dramatists of other nations and more than twenty plays of international authorship. Tables 8 and 9 give the details of this coverage.

TABLE 8

FOREIGN PLAYWRIGHTS REPRESENTED IN "THEATRE ARTS" (1916--JUNE, 1945)

Playwright	Issue of Publication	
	Materials about Playwright	Materials by Playwright
Afinogenov	Mar., 1942	.....
Ruiz de Alarcón	Sept., 1935	.....
Gabriel d'Annunzio ..	Apr., 1920	.....
James M. Barrie	Oct., 1919	.....
	June, 1928	
	Nov., 1941	

[1] Theatre Arts, April, 1919, p. 67.

[2] Ibid., Oct., 1925, p. 701.

TABLE 8--Continued

Playwright	Issue of Publication	
	Materials about Playwright	Materials by Playwright
Gordon Bottomley	Feb., 1930	Jan., 1924 Aug., 1929 Dec., 1929 May, 1932 July, 1935
Dion Boucicault	Nov., 1939	.....
Edouard Bourdet	.....	Feb., 1927 Dec., 1928 Feb., 1930 Feb., 1931 Apr., 1931
Bertholt Brecht	Sept., 1934	.....
Harold Brighouse	.....	May, 1924
Paul Vincent Carroll	.....	May, 1945
Anton Chekhov	May, 1938 Oct., 1938	Feb., 1924
Paul Claudel	May, 1927	May, 1917
Padraic Colum	.....	June, 1925 Sept., 1926 May, 1932 Dec., 1935
Jacques Copeau	May, 1924	.....
Noel Coward	Mar., 1933 Apr., 1937 Jan., 1944	.....
Ashley Dukes	June, 1932	.....[a]
Lord Dunsany	July, 1919	.....
St. John Ervine	.....	July, 1931 Aug., 1935
W. S. Gilbert	.....	May, 1943
Jean Giraudoux	Feb., 1938 Mar., 1938	.....
Wolfgang von Goethe .	.....	June, 1932
Nicolai Gogol	Apr., 1931	.....
Maxim Gorky	Sept., 1935	.....
St. John Hankin	Apr., 1919	Apr., 1919
Herman Heijermans ...	Feb., 1925	.....

[a]The many contributions of English editor Ashley Dukes are not included in this list.

TABLE 8--Continued

Playwright	Issue of Publication	
	Materials about Playwright	Materials by Playwright
Georg Kaiser	Oct., 1931 Apr., 1935	.....
Vladimir Kirshon	.....	Sept., 1936
Benn Levy	.....	Aug., 1931 Oct., 1943
Eric Linklater	Oct., 1944	.....
Federico Garcia Lorca	Mar., 1932	.....
Aurelien Lugné-Pöe ..	.....	July, 1929
John Masefield	Jan., 1920	.....
W. Somerset Maugham .	Feb., 1945	.....
Franz Molnar	Apr., 1935	.....
Kaj Munk	Nov., 1939	.....
Sean O'Casey	June, 1925	.....
Luigi Pirandello	Oct., 1922 Dec., 1928 Feb., 1935 Apr., 1938	.....
J. B. Priestley	Jan., 1938	Aug., 1930
Ricardo Rojas	Apr., 1940	.....
Jules Romains	Dec., 1931	.....
Edmond Rostand	Jan., 1919	.....
Rossi di San Secondo	Nov., 1925	.....
Friedrich Schiller ..	May, 1936	May, 1936
R. C. Sherriff	.....	Feb., 1930
August Strindberg ...	Aug., 1940	.....
John Millington Synge	Mar., 1932	.....
Ernst Toller	May, 1924	.....
Leo Tolstoi	Nov., 1937 Nov., 1943	.....
Franz Werfel	Mar., 1926	.....
Emlyn Williams	Nov., 1942	.....
William Butler Yeats	June, 1924 Dec., 1935	Jan., 1919 Aug., 1939

TABLE 9

PLAYS BY FOREIGN PLAYWRIGHTS PRINTED IN "THEATRE ARTS" (1916--JUNE, 1945)

Playwright	Play	Issue
Bertholt Brecht	The Private Life of the Master Race	Sept. 1944
Anton Chekhov ..	The Tobacco Evil	Jan., 1923
	"A Tchehoff Scenario"	Apr., 1924
Kwei Chen	"Three Chinese Folk Dramas"	Nov., 1930
Padraic Colum ..	The Miracle of the Corn	Oct., 1921
Jacques Copeau .	The House Into Which We Are Born	July, 1924
John Drinkwater	The Storm	July, 1920
Ashley Dukes ...	The Player's Dressing Room .	June, 1936
	Tyl Ulenspiegel, or The Song of the Drums (4 parts)	Apr.-July, 1926
Jean Giraudoux .	Impromptu de Paris	Mar., 1938
St. John Hankin	The Constant Lover	Apr., 1919
Cheng-Chin Hsiung	The Thrice Promised Bride ..	Oct., 1923
James Sheridan Knowles	The Love Chase	June, 1930
Emile Mazaud ...	The Holiday	Jan., 1922
Franz Molnar ...	The Putty Club	July, 1923
Luigi Pirandello	Sicilian Limes	Oct., 1922
Lennox Robinson	Crabbed Youth and Age	Jan., 1924
J. Kinchin Smith	The Mummer's Play	Jan., 1923
Lee Chin Yang ..	A Land of Nobody	Sept. 1945

Some of the playwrights in whom Theatre Arts was interested were associated with art theatres in Europe influenced by the New Stagecraft. For example, Luigi Pirandello, an early Theatre Arts favorite, wrote a number of his plays for the Roman Art Theatre in Rome, Italy; Jacques Copeau, better known as régisseur than playwright, founded France's Vieux Colombier theatre; and Ashley Dukes, who, as English editor for Theatre Arts, wrote prolifically and variously in the magazine, directed England's Mercury Theatre.

Theatres in which the magazine had often expressed interest included the Moscow Art Theatre, which developed Chekhov and Gorky; Ireland's Abbey Theatre, which produced the plays of William Butler Yeats, Lord Dunsany, John Millington Synge, Paul Vincent Carroll, Lennox Robinson, and Sean O'Casey; and the Comédie Française, which presented the dramas of Paul Claudel. Other experimental dramatists whose plays were printed in Theatre Arts include Bertholt Brecht, St. John Hankin, Emile Mazaud, Franz Molnar, and Padraic Colum.

Isaacs' intention to encourage the poet in the theatre resulted not only in the publication of several poetic dramas, but also numerous articles on such foreign poet-dramatists as Garcia Lorca, John Masefield, Paul Claudel, Franz Molnar, Edmond Rostand, Franz Werfel, William Butler Yeats, Lord Dunsany, Jean Giraudoux, and others. England's playwright-poet, Gordon Bottomley, wrote prolifically for Theatre Arts on a variety of subjects, as did Edouard Bourdet, Padraic Colum, and St. John Ervine.

The New Stagecraft began in Europe primarily as a scenic movement under the pioneering leadership of designers Adolph Appia and Gordon Craig. Theatre Arts recognized this leadership from its first issues, publishing numerous articles written by and about Appia and Craig. The August, 1932, special issue was devoted to the study of Appia's theories and clarified him to American theatre workers by publishing translations of his complex and difficult German essays. These materials were accompanied by excellent pictures of his designs for such productions as L'Ile des Sons, Little Eyolf, King Lear, Prometheus, Iphigenia in Tauris, Orpheus, and Goethe's Faust. Although never realized in production, Appia's influential designs for Wagner's Tristan and Isolde, Das Rheingold, Die Valkyrie, and Parsifal were also pictured in the magazine. Reproductions of Appia's remarkable designs entitled "Rhythmic Spaces" were included in the special issue.

The esteem in which Theatre Arts held Gordon Craig is underlined in an editorial in the April, 1924, issue.

> No living man has contributed more than Gordon Craig to the conception of the theatre as a vital unified organism. To test his theories . . . may prove expensive. Not to test them may be to bankrupt our theatre.[1]

To implement this view, the pages of Theatre Arts frequently included some of Craig's provocative writings, including an opinion on the role of the theatre in civilization[2] and a

---

[1] Theatre Arts, April, 1924, p. 281.

[2] Ibid., January, 1919, p. 3 ("The Theatre and the New Civilization").

chapter from a biography of Henry Irving,[1] followed by a second study of his actor hero.[2] In addition, the magazine published pictures of some of Craig's most powerful settings, including Hamlet, The Pretenders, and his eight designs for Shakespeare's Macbeth.

In addition to articles on Craig and Appia, Theatre Arts covered the work of many of their European disciples, some of whom had American careers. The details of this coverage are presented in Table 10.

Besides Appia and Craig, Theatre Arts' favorite foreign designers included Herman Rosse, Joseph Gregor, Josef Urban, and Alexander Bakshy. Rosse and Bakshy wrote frequently for the magazine on varied subjects. Photographs of Josef Urban's settings appeared occasionally, and in 1929 Theatre Arts published Urban's book, Theatres. Other foreign designers whose settings were illustrated were Nicolai Remisoff, Serge Soudeikin, Oscar Strnad, Sointu Syrjala, Richard Rychtarik, Jonel Jorgulesco, David Ffolkes, Motley (Elizabeth Montgomery), Oliver Messel, Paul Nash, Alexander Golovin, Emil Pirchan, and Aubrey Hammond.[3]

It is generally recognized that the dominant position of the director in the modern theatre is due to the influence

---

[1] Ibid., October, 1930, p. 841.

[2] Ibid., January, 1938, p. 31.

[3] Although foreign, many of these designers had American careers, particularly in art theatres, such as the Theatre Guild, Neighborhood and Provincetown Playhouses, and others.

TABLE 10

FOREIGN DESIGNERS REPRESENTED BY MATERIALS IN "THEATRE ARTS" (1916--JUNE, 1945)

Designer	Issue of Publication	
	Materials about Designer	Articles by Designer
Kjeld Abell	June, 1940	.....
Nikolai Akimov	May, 1936	Sept., 1936
Adolph Appia	Dec., 1924 Jan., 1925 Aug., 1932	Aug., 1932
Alexander Bakshy	.....	Jan., 1923 Nov., 1927 Apr., 1927 June, 1927 July, 1928 Feb., 1929
Gordon Craig	Dec., 1927 Nov., 1928 Apr., 1935	Jan., 1919 Oct., 1930
Joseph Gregor	Dec., 1926 May, 1929	Mar., 1933 Sept., 1933
Louis Jouvet	June, 1928	.....
Constantin Korovin	Apr., 1920	.....
Paul Nash	Jan., 1924	Dec., 1930
C. R. W. Nevinson	.....	Sept., 1930
Charles Ricketts	May, 1932	.....
Nicolas Roerich	.....	Oct., 1921 Oct., 1922
Peter Rodyenko	.....	Apr., 1933
Herman Rosse	Apr., 1921	May, 1918 Apr., 1919 July, 1923 May, 1924 Nov., 1926
Alexander Tishler	Nov., 1934	.....

of the New Stagecraft. This artist, of course, first came to prominence in the practice of the Duke of Saxe-Meiningen and the "free" theatres of Europe, but the writings of Gordon Craig and the emphasis on productive unity in the New Stagecraft added stature to the position of director. Since Theatre Arts was devoted to the cause of the New Stagecraft, it gave considerable coverage to the art of the director. In fact, a list of the magazine's favorite directors includes a fairly complete listing of European leaders in the New Stagecraft movement. Table 11 lists those directors discussed in Theatre Arts and those whose writings appeared in the magazine.

TABLE 11

FOREIGN DIRECTORS AND PRODUCERS REPRESENTED IN "THEATRE ARTS" (1916--JUNE, 1945)

Director/Producer	Issue of Publication	
	Materials about Director/Producer	Articles by Director/Producer
André Antoine	.....	Mar., 1925
Nikita Balieff	Apr., 1921	.....
Harley Granville-Barker	.....	Oct., 1929 Apr., 1929 May, 1929 Oct., 1930 Nov., 1930 Aug., 1935 June, 1945
Gaston Baty	Mar., 1929 Jan., 1931	.....
Lillian Baylis	Feb., 1938	.....
Richard Boleslavsky	.....	Oct., 1923 July, 1923 Feb., 1927

TABLE 11--Continued

Director/Producer	Issue of Publication	
	Materials about Director/Producer	Articles by Director/Producer
Richard Boleslavsky	.....	July, 1929 July, 1931 Feb., 1932 Apr., 1932 June, 1932
Jacques Copeau	Oct., 1921 May, 1924 Sept., 1925 Oct., 1929 Sept., 1935	Apr., 1922
Noel Coward	Feb., 1939	.....
Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko	.....	Oct., 1943
Charles Dullin	Mar., 1929 Mar., 1936	.....
Sergei Eisenstein ..	.....	Oct., 1935 Sept., 1936
N. N. Evreinov	.....	Aug., 1924
John Gielgud	.....	Nov., 1943 Mar., 1945
Tyrone Guthrie	Apr., 1943	Nov., 1944
Sir Barry Jackson ..	.....	Mar., 1931
Louis Jouvet	Mar., 1929 Jan., 1931	Mar., 1936 May, 1936 Dec., 1936 Jan., 1937 Sept., 1937
Vsevelod Meyerhold .	Oct., 1932 Nov., 1935	Sept., 1936
Hans Jacob Nilsen ..	Mar., 1935	.....
B. Iden Payne	Feb., 1935	July, 1939
Georges Pitoeff	Mar., 1929	.....
William Poel	Nov., 1916	.....
Max Reinhardt	July, 1921 Oct., 1921 Jan., 1923 Apr., 1928 Mar., 1936 Jan., 1944	Mar., 1924

TABLE 11--Continued

Director/Producer	Issue of Publication	
	Materials about Director/Producer	Articles by Director/Producer
Constantin Stanislavsky ..	Nov., 1935 Jan., 1937 Feb., 1937 Oct., 1938	Jan., 1923
Richard Teschner ..	Oct., 1923	.....
Eugene Vakhtangov .	July, 1928	Sept., 1936
Yuri Zavadsky	.....	Sept., 1936

Some of the directors and régisseurs who interested Theatre Arts established major reputations in the art theatres of Europe, as well as in America. Richard Boleslavsky, director of the American Laboratory Theatre, wrote extensively for Theatre Arts, including a series of articles on the technique of acting which Theatre Arts published in a book entitled Acting: The First Six Lessons.[1] The magazine also published Constantin Stanislavsky's book An Actor Prepares.[2]

The French art theatre was represented by a most important Theatre Arts favorite, Jacques Copeau, who founded the Théâtre du Vieux Colombier. More space was devoted to Copeau and his New Stagecraft practices than to any other single director. Besides the articles and illustrations

[1]New York: Theatre Arts, Inc., 1933.

[2]New York: Theatre Arts, Inc., 1936.

describing his productions, the magazine published a complete translation of his play The House Into Which We Are Born.[1] Louis Jouvet, actor and director in the French art theatre, wrote numerous articles for Theatre Arts on various subjects, such as the Elizabethan theatre, Molière, theatre problems, and the art of the director. Other French directors and producers in the New Stagecraft tradition who interested Theatre Arts were Charles Dullin and his Atelier, Michel Saint-Denis and the Compagnie des Quinze, Gaston Baty, and Georges Pitoeff.

In England Theatre Arts particularly admired the work of exponents of the New Stagecraft such as Harley Granville-Barker. Barker's major contributions to Theatre Arts were his series of articles on drama, "Some Victorians Afield,"[2] and another on "The Coming of Ibsen."[3] Other English directors featured in articles and illustrations included Lillian Baylis and the Old Vic, Sir Barry Jackson and the Malvern Festival, B. Iden Payne and the Stratford-Upon-Avon Theatre, William Poel, Noel Coward, Tyrone Guthrie, and John Gielgud, a special Theatre Arts favorite.

A final, but by no means unimportant, directorial exponent of the New Stagecraft was Max Reinhardt, to whom Theatre Arts was particularly devoted. The experimentation

---

[1]See Theatre Arts, July, 1924, p. 459.

[2]Ibid., April, 1929, p. 256; May, 1929, p. 361.

[3]Ibid., October, 1930, p. 866; November, 1930, p. 931.

of "the great eclectic" in his Deutsches Theater, Grosses Schauspielhaus, Festspielhaus, and Redoutensaal was described and illustrated in the magazine almost regularly. His New York production of The Miracle was particularly admired by Theatre Arts and identified as a fine example of the methods of the New Stagecraft. Other German directors whose work was described in the magazine were Leopold Jessner and Richard Teschner. The number of pages the magazine devoted to Reinhardt, and the number devoted to the other foreign directors discussed in previous pages, have been computed in Table 12.

TABLE 12

TOTAL PAGES IN ARTICLES CONCERNING FOREIGN DIRECTORS AND PRODUCERS

Subject	Pages
Jacques Copeau	65
Richard Boleslavsky	49
Harley Granville-Barker	44
Max Reinhardt	37
Louis Jouvet	31
André Antoine	19
Constantin Stanislavsky	13
Vsevelod Meyerhold	11
Tyrone Guthrie	11
Noel Coward	10
Gaston Baty	7
B. Iden Payne	7
Lillian Baylis	7
Eugene Vakhtangov	6
John Gielgud	5
Yuri Zavadsky	5
Charles Dullin	4
Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko	4
Sir Barry Jackson	4
N. N. Evreinov	2
W. Nugent Monck	2
Total	349

One of Isaacs' pet projects was the encouragement of international exchange of actors. In the mid-thirties Theatre Arts battled the restrictions which Actors Equity Association in America placed upon foreign actors. In opposing such action, which would sharply limit the entry of foreign artists, Isaacs wrote:

> It is one of the essential characteristics of a national theatre that it can carry the best of the product of the theatres of all nations at all times, because it has its foundations so strongly grounded in native soil. It is just as true that you cannot have an adequate national theatre that is not international, as it is that you cannot have an integrated international theatre unless your native theatre is alive to world progress and vital within itself.[1]

To further the cause of international exchange, Theatre Arts published frequent articles on various foreign actors. This coverage is described in Table 13.

Many of the actors listed in Table 13 established early careers in the art theatres of Europe, and, like the playwrights, designers, and directors, came under the influence of the New Stagecraft. For example, Marta Abba, protegée of Pirandello, gained initial fame at the Roman Art Theatre. Michael Chekhov and Tamara Daykarhanova were students of Stanislavsky and the Moscow Art Theatre. Dudley Digges acted in the company at Ireland's Abbey Theatre. English repertory companies afforded early training to John Gielgud, Maurice Evans, Michael Redgrave, and Ralph Richardson. And Max Reinhardt shaped the early career of Elisabeth Bergner.

---

[1] Ibid., April, 1937, p. 256.

TABLE 13

FOREIGN ACTORS REPRESENTED IN "THEATRE ARTS" (1916--JUNE, 1945)[a]

Actor	Issue of Publication	
	Materials about Actor	Articles by Actor
Marta Abba	Oct., 1936	.....
Janet Achurch	Jan., 1928	.....
Barbette	Dec., 1930	.....
Elisabeth Bergner	Mar., 1935	.....
Leo G. Carroll	Apr., 1945	.....
Mady Christians	Apr., 1945	.....
Michael Chekhov	Oct., 1938	.....
Constance Collier	.....	Dec., 1941
Fay Compton	Sept., 1931	.....
Gwen Ffrangcon-Davies	Sept., 1931	.....
Tamara Daykarhanova ..	.....	May, 1931 July, 1931 July, 1932
Dudley Digges	Oct., 1941	.....
Eleonora Duse	June, 1926 Sept., 1931 Oct., 1935 Apr., 1939	.....
Edith Evans	Sept., 1931	.....
Maurice Evans	June, 1936 Mar., 1942	.....
[Virginia] Fabrégas ..	June, 1927	.....
Mei-Lan-Fang	Apr., 1930 Oct., 1935	.....
John Gielgud	Sept., 1931 Oct., 1936 Apr., 1939 Oct., 1939 Oct., 1942	Oct., 1937 May, 1937 June, 1937 Jan., 1937 Feb., 1942 May, 1943
Cedric Hardwicke	Sept., 1931 Oct., 1936	Sept., 1931 Feb., 1939
Paul Henreid	Mar., 1942	.....

[a]Although some of the actors listed had careers in America, they received their earliest training in European theatres and the countries of their birth.

TABLE 13--Continued

Actor	Issue of Publication	
	Materials about Actor	Articles by Actor
Wendy Hiller	June, 1936	.....
Whitford Kane	.....	Feb., 1935
Charles Laughton	Sept., 1931	.....
Gertrude Lawrence	May, 1942	.....
Lotte Lehmann	Apr., 1937	.....
Margaret Leighton	.....	May, 1944
Roger Livesey	June, 1939	.....
Ernie Lotinga	Apr., 1931	.....
Peter Lorre	Oct., 1936	.....
Paul Lukas	Feb., 1942	.....
Raquel Meller	Oct., 1924	.....
Eleonora Mendelssohn ..	Oct., 1936	.....
Helena Modjeska	June, 1927	.....
Michele Morgan	Mar., 1942	.....
Robert Morley	Dec., 1942	.....
Alla Nazimova	Dec., 1936	.....
Laurence Olivier	Feb., 1941	.....
Katina Paxinou	.....	Feb., 1942
[Ettore] Petrolini	Nov., 1935	.....
Master Pilling	Aug., 1931	.....
Ezio Pinza	Feb., 1938	.....
Michael Redgrave	June, 1939	.....
Ralph Richardson	June, 1939	.....
Sybil Thorndike	.....	Jan., 1932
Toto [Armando Novello]	Aug., 1939	.....
Emlyn Williams	Oct., 1936	.....

Frequently, foreign actors who were about to appear in American productions were previewed in the pages of Theatre Arts. These articles and pictures probably helped to prepare Americans to appreciate the unusual artistry of performers such as Mei-Lan-Fang, Fabrégas, Barbette, Petrolini, and Toto in their American appearances. The magazine's special interest in Eleonora Duse and John Gielgud probably helped to

enlarge their American reputations, even before they appeared in this country. Additional assistance was offered selected actors by encouraging them to write articles for the magazine. Thus, actor Gielgud's essays appeared frequently in Theatre Arts, including an autobiographical series entitled "An Artist's Apprenticeship,"[1] and actress Daykarhanova authored a series on the art of make-up for the stage.[2]

Some of the playwrights, designers, directors, and actors discussed in the previous pages were at some time in their careers, usually early, associated with one or more of the art theatres in Europe. These theatres, frequently strongholds of the New Stagecraft, were often individually described and illustrated in Theatre Arts. In addition to articles and production pictures, the regular editorial columns of the magazine informed readers of their current activity. The various groups covered by Theatre Arts are listed by country in Table 14. Other theatres and producing groups were treated within the regular reviews of European theatre and within various articles.

An examination of Table 14 seems to indicate that favorite European art theatres included Meyerhold's Kamerny, Copeau's Vieux Colombier, Comédie Française, Maddermarket, Cambridge and Malvern festivals, and the Moscow Art Theatre.

---

[1] Theatre Arts, May, 1937, p. 357; June, 1937, p. 453.

[2] Ibid., May, 1931, p. 393; July, 1931, p. 561. She also wrote an article on acting, "An Actor Faces the Footlights" (Ibid., July, 1932, p. 549).

Articles on the Abbey Theatre and Copeau's Vieux Colombier, and the special issues on Moscow Art Theatre[1] and British[2] and French national theatre[3] were influential in preparing America for visits by these groups.

TABLE 14

FOREIGN THEATRES AND GROUPS ABOUT WHICH "THEATRE ARTS" PUBLISHED ARTICLES (1916--JUNE, 1945)[a]

Group	Issue
AUSTRIA	
The Burgtheater	May, 1931
The Salzburg Festival	Nov., 1927
CANADA	
Canadian Backwoods Theatre	Sept., 1928
Montreal Repertory Theatre	July, 1932
ENGLAND	
Birmingham Repertory Theatre	Apr., 1925
Cambridge Festival Theatre	Sept., 1926
	Nov., 1929
	Nov., 1931
Elephant and Castle Theatre	June, 1925
Gate Theatre	Feb., 1928

[a]Theatre Arts also covered foreign language theatres in the United States, such as articles on the Chinese Theatre in Boston (Feb., 1925, p. 113) and the "Jewish Art Theatre" in New York City (July, 1920, p. 220). A special issue in August, 1944, entitled "An International Theatre: Made in America," described French theatre in America, German theatre in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Russian theatre and the Chinese tradition in the United States.

---

[1]Ibid., October, 1920.

[2]Ibid., August, 1935.

[3]Ibid., September, 1937.

TABLE 14--Continued

Group	Issue
ENGLAND--Continued	
Glyndebourne Festival	Sept., 1934
Leeds Civic Playhouse	Sept., 1928
	July, 1931
Liverpool Playhouse	July, 1938
Maddermarket Theatre	July, 1923
	April, 1928
	July, 1931
Malvern Festival	Oct., 1929
	Oct., 1931
	Mar., 1931
Mercury Theatre	July, 1936
Northern Repertory Theatre	Sept., 1932
Phoenix Society	Nov., 1924
Sadler's Wells	Mar., 1931
	Oct., 1944
Memorial Theatre at Stratford-on-Avon	Feb., 1932
FRANCE	
Atelier Theatre	Mar., 1936
Bat Theatre	Oct., 1921
Comédie Française	Dec., 1927
	Sept., 1937
	Feb., 1940
Comédiens Routier	July, 1936
Compagnie des Quinze	Apr., 1935
Théâtre Libre	Apr., 1920
	Mar., 1925
Odéon	Sept., 1937
Opéra Comique	Apr., 1928
	Sept., 1937
Théâtre de l'Oeuvre	July, 1929
Théâtre du Vieux Colombier	Jan., 1919
GERMANY	
Bauhaus	Apr., 1931
Komodie Theater	Oct., 1925
Volksbühne	Jan., 1933
IRELAND	
Abbey Theatre	Sept., 1926
Gate Theatre	Jan., 1941

TABLE 14--Continued

Group	Issue
ITALY	
Bragaglia Art Theatre	Sept., 1928
Roman Art Theatre	Oct., 1925
Teatro di Torino	Sept., 1930
JAPAN	
Tokyo Left Theatre	Oct., 1931
LATVIA	
Riga Art Theatre	Feb., 1927
RUSSIA	
Hermitage Theatre	Dec., 1935
Kamerny Theatre	July, 1923
	Apr., 1927
	Aug., 1931
Moscow Art Theatre	Aug., 1917
	Oct., 1920
	Oct., 1925
	Feb., 1926
Rustavelli Theatre	Jan., 1936
Theatre for the Young Spectator	May, 1931

Table 14 also reveals a penchant for the repertory theatre, which was related to the New Stagecraft ideal. Most of the theatres listed performed in repertory and many were highly experimental. This phase of the magazine's editorial policy was intended, of course, to spread the fame of these select groups and at the same time provide an appropriately worthy example for the theatre in America.

In all of these materials on international theatre, the current popularity or reputation of any theatre worker meant little or nothing in determining the magazine's interest.

In fact, it was fairly common practice for Theatre Arts to go out of its way to give space to some artist who, it felt, was not getting the attention he or she deserved. Frequently, the magazine would report on the progress of an artist a year or two after he had first been mentioned. The articles and illustrations were serious, perceptive studies of the art of the individual and were not concerned with their private lives or personal eccentricities. More often than not, materials were solicited directly from the artist working in the particular field, and many were encouraged to express themselves on art forms other than their own specialty. This policy not only lent authority and conviction to the magazine's materials, but also was of direct benefit and encouragement to the artist concerned.

It seems clear then that Theatre Arts remained devoted to the cause of the New Stagecraft. As the feverish crusade of the early years began to lessen in intensity, the magazine's materials became more thoroughly detailed and analytical in description. There was continued emphasis on the theories and designs of Adolph Appia, including a special issue; on the ideas of Gordon Craig, "the theatre's chief revolutionary"; and on other "experimentalists." The goal remained the simplified, appropriate, and decorative design which would help to unite all other elements of the production. As part of its plan to further this movement, the magazine sought out and publicized those artists of the theatre whose work reflected

the influences of the New Stagecraft. Many such artists and groups, visiting America, probably found more understanding and appreciative audiences because of Theatre Arts' efforts to introduce and describe their art before and during their American appearances.

Foreign theatre materials predominated in the magazine's first decade because the editor believed in the necessity of international exchange and in the example and inspiration offered by the artists and theatres of other lands. Other emphases included theatrical experiment, repertory organization, the poet in the theatre, and the correlation of all arts, as well as the correlation of the theatre's past with its present.

CHAPTER VI

ARTICLES ON AMERICAN THEATRE

While international theatre material predominated in the first decade of the magazine's life, Theatre Arts did not neglect the theatre in America. There was, perhaps, less need to report on American theatre people, since other publications were covering them. As previously pointed out, the New Stagecraft began as a scenic revolution in the theatres of Europe. Resisted by the commercial theatre in the United States, the movement found its initial outlet in America in the non-commercial art or little theatre development. As spokesman for the New Stagecraft, Theatre Arts assumed the guardianship of these art theatres and their artists, represented their interests, fought their battles, fed them with information, example, and inspiration. And when the young American artists emerged from these theatres, ultimately to permeate and conquer the commercial stage, Theatre Arts was there to encourage them.

Although articles on the drama were decreasingly emphasized by the mid-1930's, paradoxically, the coverage of American playwrights increased. As American dramatists of stature began to emerge in the late 1920's, Theatre Arts devoted more space in its pages to their efforts. Thus, while

the magazine printed only six articles about American playwrights before 1930, it published twenty-one after that year. More space was devoted to articles written by American than by foreign dramatists. Table 15 compares Theatre Arts' coverage of foreign and American playwrights from 1916 to 1945. In order to distinguish between European and American coverage by Theatre Arts, this study has treated among the American coverage any artist who has become a relatively permanent resident of the United States, and whose work was first noted or illustrated in the magazine after taking up residence in the United States, and who was not treated at that time as a visitor.

As part of its efforts to encourage American dramatists, it gave more than twice as many pages to the publication of American playscripts as were given to foreign. This search for American dramatic talent led the magazine to publish nearly fifty plays of American authorship. Three special issues were devoted to new scripts for production by the armed forces during World War II.[1] Another special issue in September, 1945, was entitled "New Plays by New Playwrights."

Many of the American dramatists in whom Theatre Arts was interested had their early careers in the non-commercial theatre movement. Arthur Hopkins, an American pioneer in the New Stagecraft who established his major reputation as

---

[1] Theatre Arts, September, 1942 ("A Scriptwriter's Sample Book"); September, 1943 ("A Book of War Plays for Production by the Armed Forces"); September, 1944 ("A Book of Scripts").

TABLE 15

NUMBER OF PAGES IN "THEATRE ARTS" DEVOTED TO PLAYWRIGHTS (1916--JUNE, 1945)[a]

Year	Foreign Dramatists		American Dramatists		Foreign Plays	American Plays
	As Subject	As Author	As Subject	As Author		
1916	...	...	7	...	...	...
1917	...	...	...	9	...	...
1918	...	...	...	...	...	...
1919	18	5	...	...	11	53
1920	9	...	4	...	9	44
1921	...	...	...	9	10	51
1922	6	...	...	...	41	31
1923	...	...	...	14	29	22
1924	12	25	...	18	50	105
1925	26	8	...	...	...	64
1926	10	5	10	21	44	18
1927	6	6	...	17	...	14
1928	11	...	7	3	...	31
1929	...	16	8	15	...	18
1930	7	10	...	...	12	18
1931	16	18	18	4	...	12
1932	15	22	30	12	...	...
1933	7	...	10	23	...	...
1934	...	...	...	7	...	...
1935	22	12	...	4	...	7
1936	...	18	...	2	8	...
1937	8	...	...	...	...	...
1938	35	...	5	9	...	...
1939	5	2	37	4	...	...
1940	10	...	...	8	...	...
1941	14	...	17	14	...	...
1942	13	...	...	7	...	10
1943	...	1	8	10	...	30
1944	12	...	33	6	14	9
1945	7	4	...	...	...	42
Total	269	152	184	216	228	579

[a]Includes materials only on those playwrights whose careers extend into the twentieth century.

a director, had his first play, Moonshine, published in Theatre Arts in 1919. The magazine also printed plays written by Ashley Dukes, director of England's Mercury Theatre and English editor of Theatre Arts after 1930, and by John Mason Brown[1] and Stark Young, both of whom wrote frequently and perceptively on the methods of the New Stagecraft as editors of Theatre Arts. The early plays of Zoë Akins and Susan Glaspell were produced on the stages of such non-commercial theatre groups as Neighborhood Playhouse and Washington Square Players. Theatre Arts published Zoë Akins' The Portrait of Tiero in 1920 and Susan Glaspell's Bernice in 1919. Paul Green, long associated with university theatre at Chapel Hill, North Carolina, found early welcome in the pages of Theatre Arts with the publication of his The No 'Count Boy. But, with the exception of Eugene O'Neill, whom it recognized early, Theatre Arts made no startling discoveries of dramatists. Plays by American dramatists printed in Theatre Arts are listed in Table 16.

TABLE 16

PLAYS BY AMERICAN DRAMATISTS PUBLISHED IN "THEATRE ARTS" (1916--JUNE, 1945)[a]

Play	Issue
Arthur Hopkins, Moonshine	Jan., 1919
Stark Young, At the Shrine	July, 1919
Susan Glaspell, Bernice	Oct., 1919

[a]The September, 1945, issue, which still showed the Isaacs editorial influence, contained the following two plays: Richard Harrity's Hope is the Thing with Feathers and Richard M. Morse's The Narrowest Street.

---

[1]Brown's contribution in this instance was a contemporary poetic adaptation of the medieval miracle play The Pageant of the Shearmen and the Tailors.

TABLE 16--Continued

Play	Issue
Eugene O'Neill, The Dreamy Kid	Jan., 1920
Gilbert Cannan, Gloves	Apr., 1920
Zoë Akins, The Portrait of Tiero	Oct., 1920
Eugene O'Neill, Emperor Jones	Jan., 1921
Harold Chapin, The Autocrat of the Coffee Stall	Apr., 1921
John Joseph Martin, Charlie Barringer ...	July, 1921
Stark Young, Queen of Sheba	Apr., 1922
Lascelles Abercrombie, The Deserter	July, 1922
Olivia Howard Dunbar, Blockade	Apr., 1923
Alfred Kreymborg, Helpless Herberts	Feb., 1924
Herbert S. Gorman, The Death of Nero	Mar., 1924
Daniel Corkery, Resurrection	Apr., 1924
Ernest Howard Culbertson, End of the Trail	May, 1924
Stark Young, The Colonnade	Aug., 1924
Paul Green, The No 'Count Boy	Nov., 1924
Edwin Arlington Robinson, Demos and Dionysus	Jan., 1925
Alter Brody, Rapunzel	Apr., 1925
Stark Young, Rose Windows	Oct., 1925
Alfred Kreymborg, Trap Doors	Nov., 1925
John Mason Brown, The Pageant of the Shearmen and the Tailors	Dec., 1925
John William Rogers, Jr., Bumblepuppy ...	Sept., 1926
Marc Connelly, Ex Cathedra	Dec., 1926
Alfred Kreymborg, Brother Bill	Apr., 1927
Donald Fay Robinson, The Maastricht Play	Dec., 1927
Alice Henson Ernst, Spring Sluicing	Feb., 1928
Hartley Alexander, Kills-With-Her-Man ...	June, 1928
Nan Bagby Stephens, Charivari	Nov., 1928
Natalie Vivian Scott, Zombi	Jan., 1929
Ernest Howard Culbertson, Across the Jordan	Dec., 1929
Alice Henson Ernst, The Valley of Lost Men	May, 1930
William H. Fulham, The Devil Comes to Alcatraz	Sept., 1930
Betty Barr & Gould Stevens, The Good and Obedient Young Man	Feb., 1931
Alfred Kreymborg, I'm Not Complaining ...	June, 1931
Teresa Davey, The King of Spain's Daughter	June, 1935
Sylvia and Max Liebman, Local Board Makes Good	Sept., 1942
William Saroyan, The Human Comedy	Sept., 1942
Robert Ardrey, God and Texas	Sept., 1943
Owen Dodson, Everybody Join Hands	Sept., 1943

TABLE 16--Continued

Play	Issue
Moss Hart & George S. Kaufman, Dream On, Soldier	Sept., 1943
Lt. Ralph Nelson, Mail Call	Sept., 1943
J. J. Alexander, Enemy	Sept., 1944
Ben Bengal, All Aboard	Sept., 1944
Betty Smith, Story Told in Indiana	Nov., 1944

One of the first Theatre Arts favorites was playwright Eugene O'Neill, who began his career with the Provincetown Playhouse, an American art theatre founded in 1915.[1] From the beginning the magazine recognized O'Neill's talents by publishing two of his first plays: The Dreamy Kid in 1920 and Emperor Jones in 1921. In reviewing a later O'Neill play, Days Without End, Isaacs wrote:

> New plays by Eugene O'Neill are always major events in the New York theatre and always a challenge to criticism. They are sure to be serious, powerful theatrical material. In method they are almost consistently venturesome and iconoclastic, aiming to dilate the region in which a modern playwright works by breaking down the conventional limits in which he may work. They leave no doubt of their author's sincerity or of his high social and spiritual purpose.[2]

Thus, in the opinion of Theatre Arts, O'Neill's dramas made a major contribution to the art of the theatre, and his plays were always given extensive and careful treatment in the magazine's critical pages. The respect which O'Neill

---

[1]Provincetown Playhouse first produced O'Neill's Bound East for Cardiff in 1916. When this group was merged with Greenwich Village Theatre, O'Neill joined Kenneth Macgowan and Robert Edmond Jones in its direction.

[2]Theatre Arts, March, 1934, p. 165.

enjoyed in the magazine is further attested by the fact that more space was devoted to O'Neill than to any other playwright, foreign or American. This coverage is computed in Table 17.

TABLE 17

PAGES DEVOTED TO MATERIALS WRITTEN BY OR ABOUT FAVORITE PLAYWRIGHTS OF "THEATRE ARTS"[a]

Playwright	Pages
Eugene O'Neill	66
Paul Green	44
Henrik Ibsen	42[b]
Luigi Pirandello	41
Lope de Vega	37[b]
John van Druten	27
Sidney Howard	20
William Butler Yeats	19
Noel Coward	19
Elmer Rice	19
Jean Giraudoux	18
Wolfgang von Goethe	17
Thornton Wilder	17
Robert Sherwood	16

[a]The foreign playwrights best covered by Theatre Arts are included for purposes of comparison.

[b]Special issue.

Another Theatre Arts favorite, second only to O'Neill, was Paul Green, presently playwright-in-residence at the University of North Carolina. Like O'Neill, Green defied the theatrical conventions of the nineteenth century by attempting to correlate in his plays elements of poetry, song, dance, and fantasy. In plays such as Roll, Sweet Chariot,[1]

[1]"If he happened to see the first night of Paul Green's Roll, Sweet Chariot, he had the thrilling experience of coming unexpectedly upon a great production. . . . Roll,

Johnny Johnson, and others, Theatre Arts commended Green's effort to add dimension and scope to the theatre by correlating in it all of the other arts. Reviewing Johnny Johnson in 1937, Isaacs wrote:

> If you cannot play the leading roles in the masterpieces of dramatic literature, perhaps the next best thing is to share in the shaping of new theatrical forms with the few modern dramatists who will risk the adventure. There are not too many of them, at best, who have anything to say that makes novelty and experiment worth while. Paul Green is one of the few. He is not, like Eugene O'Neill, an active iconoclast who goes around smashing obvious theatrical conventions of plot and scene and length of playing time. He is a poet and a philosopher who quite simply ignores any convention that interferes with his poetic desire to dilate the region of the theatre until it reaches back to its older boundaries, which included poetry, song, dance, fantasy, and which recognized the value of the comic interlude in tragedy.[1]

Later the same year, in summing up the New York season, Isaacs reaffirmed the significance of Green's contribution to the American theatre.

> To Paul Green goes the enviable, though perhaps not entirely satisfying, honor of being the playwright who has, during the season, gone the longest way forward on the difficult experimental road he has chosen to hew out for himself. Johnny Johnson, produced by the Group Theatre, made no money for the company; very few of the critical notices it received were more than passably favorable. Yet Johnny Johnson may go down in our dramatic history as one of the important plays of the decade, because in it Paul Green almost succeeded in his endeavor to unite dramatic action and speech with music, not using the music as an envelope for the action but

---

Sweet Chariot is a great new thing done, not worthily tried, but beautifully done. . . . But it is not Paul Green's play alone, and he would be the first person to say so. It belongs to the new theatre that uses imaginatively all the means at its command. Although Roll, Sweet Chariot failed at the box office, the play and production are sure to be recalled in any history of important contributions to American drama" (Theatre Arts, November, 1934, p. 811).

[1] Ibid., January, 1937, p. 10.

> as an integral part of the play and a companion to the spoken word. . . . Although Johnny Johnson played for only a few weeks on Broadway, it seems safe to predict that it will not be a forgotten play.[1]

Green's reputation, of course, cannot be compared to that of Eugene O'Neill, but Theatre Arts' recognition of his talent by the publication of one of his first plays, The No 'Count Boy, in 1924 is reinforced by the fact that two years later In Abraham's Bosom won the Pulitzer Prize.

Other Theatre Arts favorites included: Thornton Wilder, whom Isaacs described, in reviewing Our Town, as "distinctly a theatermensch";[2] Clifford Odets, watched and admired by Theatre Arts in his growth with the Group Theatre; William Saroyan, who wrote prolifically for the magazine and whose play The Human Comedy Theatre Arts printed in 1942;[3] and Elmer Rice, whose theatrical experimentation and repertory casting techniques Isaacs greatly admired. In addition, the poetic artistry of Maxwell Anderson found favor in the pages of Theatre Arts, as Isaacs wrote in 1934:

> Maxwell Anderson is more than any man among us doubly a playwright--by virtue of his dramatic insight into the essence of what is wrong that might be made right in the life about him (which makes him turn naturally to the theatre to interpret his own times) and by his poet's power to re-create the people of the past through dramatic means--character, situation, theatre speech. Every

---

[1] Ibid., June, 1937, p. 426.

[2] Ibid., June, 1938, p. 402. In March, 1925, Wilder tried his hand at dramatic criticism for the magazine. In the February, 1936, issue (p. 168), Isaacs noted that "he didn't like it!"

[3] See Table 16.

> step he has taken has marked growth, in choice of material, breadth of handling, quality of characterization, or beauty of writing.[1]

Other playwrights studied in the pages of Theatre Arts include Philip Barry, Rachel Crothers, Lillian Hellman, Sidney Howard, Sidney Kingsley, Howard Lindsay, and Robert Sherwood. Young dramatists who contributed articles to the magazine were Arthur Arents, Clare Boothe, John van Druten,[2] and Irwin Shaw. The details of this coverage are listed in Table 18.

TABLE 18

AMERICAN PLAYWRIGHTS REPRESENTED BY MATERIALS IN "THEATRE ARTS" (1916--JUNE, 1945)

Playwright	Issue of Publication	
	Material about Playwright	Material by Playwright
Hartley Alexander	.....	Mar., 1926 Jan., 1927 Nov., 1931 Jan., 1932 Aug., 1933[a]
Maxwell Anderson	June, 1933 Mar., 1936	.....
Arthur Arents	.....	Nov., 1938
Philip Barry	Nov., 1929	.....
Clare Boothe	.....	May, 1940
Gilbert Cannan	.....	Jan., 1920

[a]Two articles.

[1]Theatre Arts, January, 1934, p. 15.

[2]Van Druten is listed with American playwrights since he immigrated to America in 1926 at the age of 25 and shortly thereafter became an American citizen.

TABLE 18--Continued

Playwright	Issue of Publication	
	Material about Playwright	Material by Playwright
Rachel Crothers	Dec., 1932	May, 1940 Feb., 1941
John van Druten	.....	July, 1927 Jan., 1927 Jan., 1928 May, 1942 May, 1944
T. S. Eliot	Dec., 1938	.....
Alice Henson Ernst	.....	Aug., 1933 Sept., 1939 Feb., 1945
Zona Gale	.....	May, 1917
Paul Green	Oct., 1928 Dec., 1932 Dec., 1937 July, 1941	Aug., 1934
Edward Harrigan	Mar., 1926	Mar., 1926
Moss Hart	Feb., 1944	Dec., 1943
Cloyd Head	Nov., 1916	May, 1917 Jan., 1921 Oct., 1924
Lillian Hellman	Apr., 1935 Jan., 1944	.....
James A. Herne	Dec., 1940	.....
Sidney Howard	Oct., 1939 Apr., 1941	.....
Langston Hughes	.....	Nov., 1934
George S. Kaufman	Oct., 1932	.....
George Kelly	Apr., 1931	.....
Sidney Kingsley	Jan., 1936 July, 1938	.....
Alfred Kreymborg	.....	Oct., 1923
Howard Lindsay	Feb., 1944	May, 1940 May, 1943
Meyer Levin	.....	Jan., 1932 Feb., 1933 May, 1933
Clifford Odets	Apr., 1939	.....
Eugene O'Neill	Oct., 1920 May, 1926 Nov., 1931[a]	Feb., 1941

[a]Two articles.

TABLE 18--Continued

Playwright	Issue of Publication	
	Material about Playwright	Material by Playwright
Elmer Rice	Jan., 1932	May, 1929 June, 1935 May, 1940 Feb., 1941
Lynn Riggs	July, 1938	.....
William Saroyan	Oct., 1939	Nov., 1938 Dec., 1939 May, 1940 Feb., 1941 Mar., 1941
Robert Sherwood	Jan., 1939	Feb., 1937 Feb., 1941
Irwin Shaw	.....	Feb., 1941
Thornton Wilder	Jan., 1943	June, 1929 Nov., 1940 Feb., 1941

But if Theatre Arts had its special favorites among American playwrights, it also had its special prejudices. The pages of the magazine constantly decried the playwright satisfied "to allow the theatre to be an acted transcript of our newspaper headlines and our 'funnies.'"[1] Reviewing Merrily We Roll Along by George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart, Isaacs explained:

> Anybody who does not like his kind of play is, obviously, therefore, in the minority, and if he happens to be a critic it seems only fair for him to admit that he has a distinct prejudice against Mr. Kaufman's usual choice of material. To this critic, at least, taking characters

[1] Theatre Arts, February, 1934, p. 90.

> out of the life around you, reproducing them photographically (or casting them with enough personal resemblance so that they seem like photographs) with nothing but a shrewd deviation in situation, and sometimes brilliant, sometimes only unkind, satire to make the separation between life and the theatre, does not succeed in achieving theatre. So that if you happen not to be interested in the kind of people and the ideas and philosophy of life that Mr. Kaufman's writing represents, you cannot be theatrically absorbed in his plays in spite of your admiration for his ability.[1]

While she could criticize the "journalistic" style of George S. Kaufman, she could also praise the realism of Sidney Kingsley's Dead End, by pointing out that

> . . . what we are forever in need of is a stage on which theatre artists can transmute these facts, so that we shall see the river and the children and the dead end of their street before us while we walk along Fifth Avenue, so that, not through argument but through the influence of the beautiful thing--a fine play finely presented--we may remember the ugly thing which is the bleak border of our city life, and remember it so insistently that finally we must do something about it to escape from it ourselves. This thrust is what Dead End, at its best moments, achieves.[2]

A further indication of Isaacs' tastes and editorial selectivity is revealed in her attitudes toward modern playwrights Tennessee Williams and Jean-Paul Sartre. Early in his career Williams submitted several one-act plays for publication in Theatre Arts, but Isaacs read them and turned them down. Rosamond Gilder, acting editor of Theatre Arts at the time, recognized in Williams a real literary talent, and tried to persuade Isaacs to publish them. She was adamant in her refusal, however, describing the plays as "pussy"

---

[1] Ibid., November, 1934, p. 815.

[2] Ibid., December, 1935, p. 890.

and therefore not theatreworthy.[1] When Gilder was able to get an article from Jean-Paul Sartre, Isaacs refused to publish it in Theatre Arts, explaining that she was not interested in his "morbid negativism."[2]

It seems clear then that Theatre Arts emphasized material on foreign playwrights partly in an effort to spread the knowledge and influence of the New Stagecraft in America. Information about their techniques, methods, and ideas would provide the example, stimulation, and inspiration for an infant non-commercial theatre movement in America. At the same time Theatre Arts exerted a considerable effort to encourage the development of American dramatists by publishing their plays and soliciting their articles. Of course, the early preference was for playwrights developing in the art theatres, such as Provincetown Playhouse, Neighborhood Playhouse, and the Theatre Guild, where the principles of the New Stagecraft were in practice. But, inspired by O'Neill's success in emerging from Provincetown to conquer the commercial theatre, new dramatists of stature began to appear in increasing numbers, and Theatre Arts was there ready to encourage them and increase its coverage. Even more significant encouragement was provided to American designers.

We know that Theatre Arts' original raison d'être

---

[1]Personal interview with Hermine Isaacs Popper, White Plains, N.Y., Sept. 2, 1955.

[2]Idem.

was to further the cause in America of the New Stagecraft, primarily a scenic movement. The emphasis on Adolph Appia and Gordon Craig, as well as on European expatriates such as Josef Urban, was balanced by early recognition of American designers pioneering in the methods of the New Stagecraft. Major proof is provided by the fact that from a total of 792 pages on designers in Theatre Arts, 552 pages--nearly 75%--were devoted to Americans. All of these essay materials were accompanied by copious and handsome reproductions of designs and photographs of settings. Table 19 lists the number of pages in articles by or about the stage designers featured in the magazine. Foreign designers best covered in Theatre Arts are included for purposes of comparison.

TABLE 19

PAGES DEVOTED TO MATERIALS WRITTEN BY OR ABOUT DESIGNERS FEATURED IN "THEATRE ARTS"

Designer	Pages
Robert Edmond Jones	96
Adolph Appia	76[a]
Lee Simonson	68
Mordecai Gorelik	49
Edward Gordon Craig	45
Norman Bel Geddes	38
Alexander Bakshy	37
Herman Rosse	36
Donald Oenslager	29
Aline Bernstein	24
James Reynolds	24
C. Raymond Johnson	12
Nikolai Akimov	12
Josef Urban	11
Jo Mielziner	10

[a]Special issue.

Theatre Arts made significant contributions to the careers of important American designers, such as Robert Edmond Jones, Lee Simonson, and Norman Bel Geddes. An evaluation of the extent of this contribution was made by George Freedley, who wrote:

> Pictorially, this magazine has been outstanding, particularly in its recognition of designers whether famous or still generally unknown: Robert Edmond Jones, Lee Simonson, Norman Bel Geddes, Donald Oenslager, Jo Mielziner, Aline Bernstein, Watson Barratt, Raymond Sovey, Stewart Chaney, Norris Houghton have all found early recognition by the perspicacious Mrs. Isaacs. The portfolios of scene and costume designs have served to raise artistic standards in our theatre and today much of what we accept as usual has become that because of the championship of Theatre Arts during the past quarter of a century.[1]

In 1933 Vanity Fair magazine made the following editorial recommendation:

> We nominate for the Hall of Fame--Edith J. R. Isaacs, because in the course of fifteen years of editing Theatre Arts she has introduced to the public such unknowns as Robert Edmond Jones, Josef Urban, Lee Simonson, and Jo Mielziner, by publishing their first sketches.[2]

In addition to frequent articles on various designers, Theatre Arts published a special series, "The Designer Sets the Stage,"[3] written by Norris Houghton about Jones, Simonson, Geddes, Oenslager, Gorelik, Mielziner, Aline Bernstein, and Vincente Minnelli. From many of these artists Theatre Arts

---

[1]George Freedley, "The Stage Today," New York Morning Telegraph, Jan. 19, 1941.

[2]Vanity Fair, December, 1933, p. 21.

[3]Theatre Arts, October, 1936, pp. 776-88; November, 1936, pp. 879-91; December, 1936, pp. 966-75; February, 1937, pp. 115-25.

solicited materials for publication in the magazine. By publishing their essays, Isaacs helped launch the literary careers of Jones, Simonson, and others. Table 20 describes this coverage.

TABLE 20

AMERICAN DESIGNERS REPRESENTED BY MATERIALS IN "THEATRE ARTS" (1916--JUNE, 1945)[a]

Designer	Issue of Publication	
	Material about Designer	Material by Designer
A. A. Andries	Nov., 1916	.....
Maxwell Armfield	.....	Apr., 1919
Boris Aronson	Feb., 1941 Mar., 1942	Mar., 1937 May, 1940
Howard Bay	Oct., 1941 June, 1943	.....
Aline Bernstein	Feb., 1937 Feb., 1941	Aug., 1925 Oct., 1937 May, 1940 Apr., 1945
Claude Bragdon	.....	Aug., 1917 Sept., 1918 July, 1919 Aug., 1924
Michael C. Carr	.....	May, 1918 Apr., 1919
Stewart Chaney	Apr., 1935 July, 1938 Mar., 1945	.....
Charles Ciceri	Dec., 1932	.....
Ernest de Weerth[b]	.....	June, 1934 May, 1935

[a]Aronson, Gorelik, and Urban are included since they established early careers in America and had their designs for American productions illustrated in Theatre Arts.

[b]Theatre Arts, October, 1921, p. 319, refers to de Weerth as "one of the newer and younger Americans."

TABLE 20--Continued

Designer	Issue of Publication	
	Material about Designer	Material by Designer
Abe Feder	July, 1938	.....
Norman Bel Geddes	July, 1919	Apr., 1919
	Sept., 1929	Sept., 1930
	Oct., 1936	
	Aug., 1939	
	Dec., 1940	
	Feb., 1941	
Cedric Gibbons	Oct., 1937	.....
Mordecai Gorelik	Dec., 1936	Nov., 1932
	Feb., 1941	Jan., 1933
	Mar., 1942	Mar., 1934
		June, 1934
		Nov., 1936
		Mar., 1939
		May, 1940
Harry Horner	.....	Apr., 1941
		Nov., 1941
Norris Houghton	July, 1938	May, 1936
		Oct., 1936
		Nov., 1936
		Dec., 1936
		Feb., 1937
		July, 1937
		June, 1938
		Apr., 1940
Sam Hume	May, 1917	.....
C. Raymond Johnson	July, 1920	Apr., 1919
Robert Edmond Jones	Feb., 1917	Apr., 1919
	Nov., 1925	May, 1924
	Oct., 1927	June, 1924
	Jan., 1931	Aug., 1925
	Dec., 1936	Sept., 1927
	Feb., 1941	Sept., 1928
		Jan., 1939
		May, 1940
		Nov., 1940
		Feb., 1941
		Mar., 1941
Carl Kent	Oct., 1941	.....
John Koenig	Oct., 1941	.....
Samuel Leve	Oct., 1941	.....

TABLE 20--Continued

Designer	Issue of Publication	
	Material about Designer	Material by Designer
Louis Lozowick[c]	.....	June, 1927 July, 1928 Sept., 1929
Stanley McCandless	.....	Sept., 1926 Jan., 1939
Harold Burris-Meyer	.....	Apr., 1932 July, 1932 Nov., 1932 Jan., 1939
Jo Mielziner	Feb., 1937 Feb., 1941 Mar., 1942	May, 1940
Vincente Minnelli	Jan., 1936 Oct., 1936	.....
Donald Oenslager	Nov., 1936 Feb., 1941	Jan., 1927 May, 1940 May, 1941
Raoul Pène du Bois	Jan., 1936	.....
Rollo Peters	Feb., 1918	May, 1918 Apr., 1919 Feb., 1944
James Reynolds	Jan., 1921 Mar., 1936 June, 1937 Nov., 1937	Dec., 1942
Jean Rosenthal	.....	June, 1939 June, 1941
Lee Simonson	Dec., 1917 Nov., 1936 Feb., 1941	Dec., 1917 Apr., 1919 Apr., 1922 July, 1922 Aug., 1932 July, 1933 Jan., 1939 June, 1939 May, 1940
J. Blanding Sloan	May, 1918	Apr., 1919

[c]Lozowick's designs illustrated in Theatre Arts are for American productions.

TABLE 20--Continued

Designer	Issue of Publication	
	Material about Designer	Material by Designer
Cleon Throckmorton	.....	Feb., 1927
Josef Urban	May, 1917	Apr., 1919
Valentina	.....	Feb., 1941
John Wenger	.....	Apr., 1919
Alexander Wyckoff	Oct., 1927	.....

Many of the designers listed in Table 20 got early training and experience in various non-commercial theatres--Provincetown Playhouse, Neighborhood Playhouse, Greenwich Village Theatre, Theatre Guild, American Laboratory Theatre, Actor's Theatre, Civic Repertory Theatre, New York Repertory Company, Boston Repertory Theatre, Yiddish Art Theatre, Mercury Theatre, and others which are described later in this chapter. Since these theatres operated in line with methods prescribed by the New Stagecraft, their designers also reflected these influences in their work. A brief examination of the careers of a few of the Theatre Arts favorites may reveal the basis of the magazine's interest in them.

Robert Edmond Jones, whose designs "sounded the note that began the American revolution in stage scenery,"[1] was a special Theatre Arts favorite. Although he began designing

[1]Phyllis Hartnoll (ed.), Oxford Companion to the Theatre (London: Oxford University Press, 1951), p. 430.

scenery in 1911, his reputation was not established until his designs for Harley Granville-Barker's production of The Man Who Married a Dumb Wife in 1915.[1] Jones's sets and costumes for this play are generally credited with stimulating the development of modern American stage design, and in particular, the New Stagecraft in America. The strong influence of the New Stagecraft methods in Jones's work can be seen in the following description.

> In the practice of Jones and the younger men whom he has inspired it has meant a wholly new integration of the background with the spirit of the play in order more fully to project the playwright's thought, an emphasis upon essentials by the elimination of all obscuring detail, and thereby, as Jones himself has noted, the achievement of a fluid and imaginative dramaturgy comparable to that of the Shakespearian stage. In the case of Jones himself, it has likewise meant on the one hand the painter's feeling for color and texture which distinguished his investiture of Lute Song; on the other, the "superior realization of the mystery of space, the drama of shadows, and the poetry of the undecorated" which John Mason Brown found in his settings for Eugene O'Neill's The Iceman Cometh.[2]

Born in 1887, Robert Edmond Jones was educated at Harvard University and after graduation went to Europe with the intention of studying at Gordon Craig's school in Florence. Rebuffed by Craig's school, Jones went to Europe's famous Deutsches Theater in order to study the methods of Max Reinhardt. Returning to America, he was invited to design the setting and costumes for Granville-Barker's production of

---

[1]Bernard Sobel (ed.), The Theatre Handbook (New York: Crown Publishers, 1948), p. 455.

[2]Anna Rothe (ed.), Current Biography (New York: The H. W. Wilson Co., 1946), pp. 296-97.

The Man Who Married a Dumb Wife. He created numerous designs for Provincetown Playhouse, the art theatre which produced playwright Eugene O'Neill, and in 1925 joined with Kenneth Macgowan and O'Neill in the direction of the Greenwich Village Playhouse.[1] His long and fruitful association with American director Arthur Hopkins was highlighted by designs for Hopkins' production of Richard III, Macbeth, and Hamlet.

For more than twenty-five years Jones wrote prolifically for Theatre Arts on various aspects of design, costume, and aesthetics of the theatre. More space in the magazine was devoted to him than to any other single designer.[2] In addition to his stage settings, Jones designed color films in Hollywood during 1934 and 1935. He continued designing settings, primarily for the Theatre Guild and the Central City Opera House, almost until his death in Milton, New Hampshire, on November 26, 1954.[3] He was the author of The Dramatic Imagination[4] and, with Kenneth Macgowan, Continental Stagecraft.[5] In 1925 Theatre Arts published Jones's Drawings for the Theatre.[6] Illustrations of most of his designs, sketches,

---

[1]John Parker (ed)., Who's Who in the Theatre (11th ed. rev.; London: Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, Ltd., 1952), p. 860.

[2]See Table 19, p. 145.

[3]Ralph Pendleton, The Theatre of Robert Edmond Jones (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1958).

[4]New York: Duell, Sloan & Pearce, 1941. Much of this book appeared first as articles in Theatre Arts.

[5]New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1922.

[6]New York: Theatre Arts, Inc., 1925.

or actual settings were included in the pages of the magazine, and although he had made his mark in 1915, these pictures of his work certainly spread his fame and secured his international reputation. A list of Jones's designs illustrated in Theatre Arts can be seen in Table 21.

TABLE 21

SETTINGS AND DESIGNS BY ROBERT EDMOND JONES ILLUSTRATED IN "THEATRE ARTS" TO 1945

Setting or Design	Issue
Caliban and the Yellow Sands	Nov., 1916
The Happy Ending	Feb., 1917
Til Eulenspiegel	Feb., 1917
The Man Who Married a Dumb Wife	Feb., 1917
The Devil's Garden	Feb., 1917
Good Gracious Annabelle	Feb., 1917
Caliban	Feb., 1917
The Cenci	Feb., 1917
Simon the Cyrenian	May, 1917
Til Eulenspiegel	Dec., 1917
Washington: The Man Who Made Us	Jan., 1919
Washington	Apr., 1919
Redemption	Apr., 1919
The Jest	July, 1919
The Birthday of the Infanta	Jan., 1920
Richard III	Apr., 1920
The Birthday of the Infanta	Apr., 1920
The Seven Princesses	Apr., 1920
Much Ado About Nothing	July, 1920
Merchant of Venice	Oct., 1920
Macbeth	Apr., 1921
Swords	Jan., 1922
The S. S. Tenacity	Apr., 1922
The Hairy Ape	July, 1922
He Who Gets Slapped	Oct., 1922
Sketch of Cirque Medrano	Oct., 1922
Sketch of Redoutensaal Theatre	Oct., 1922
Hamlet	Jan., 1923
The Spook Sonata	Apr., 1924
Fashion	Apr., 1924
The Living Mask	Apr., 1924
The Cenci	June, 1924
At the Gateway	July, 1924
The Saint	Nov., 1924

TABLE 21--Continued

Setting or Design	Issue
Desire Under the Elms	Dec., 1924
Morgan	Dec., 1924
Beyond	Mar., 1925
Patience	Mar., 1925
Love for Love	June, 1925
Richard III	Aug., 1925
Swords	Aug., 1925
The Man Who Married a Dumb Wife	Nov., 1925
Richard III	Nov., 1925
Beyond	Nov., 1925
The Fountain	Nov., 1925
The Buccaneer	Dec., 1925
The Fountain	Feb., 1926
Macbeth	July, 1926
The Seven Princesses	Oct., 1927
The House of Women	Nov., 1927
Richard III	July, 1926
Faust by Gounod	Jan., 1928
Paris Bound	Mar., 1928
Machinal	Oct., 1928
At the Gateway	Dec., 1928
Serena Blandish	Mar., 1929
La Gioconda	June, 1929
The Lady of Newgate	June, 1929
Yolanda of Cyprus	Oct., 1929
Crossroads	Jan., 1930
Die Glückliche Hand	Mar., 1930
The Green Pastures	Apr., 1930
The Green Pastures	Oct., 1930
Le Preziose Ridicole	Jan., 1931
Wozzeck	May, 1931
When We Dead Awaken	Oct., 1931
Mourning Becomes Electra	Feb., 1932
The Green Pastures	Apr., 1932
Much Ado About Nothing	Apr., 1932
Faust	Apr., 1932
Ladies Leave	Apr., 1932
Night Over Taos	May, 1932
Camille	Aug., 1932
Camille	Oct., 1932
Carmen	Jan., 1933
Lucrece	Feb., 1933
Yolanda of Cyprus	Mar., 1933
The Merry Widow	Aug., 1933
Ah, Wilderness	Nov., 1933
Mary of Scotland	Dec., 1933
Mary of Scotland	Jan., 1934
Othello	June, 1934

TABLE 21--Continued

Setting or Design	Issue
Children of Darkness	Dec., 1936
Macbeth	Dec., 1934
The Sea Gull	May, 1938
The Sea Gull	June, 1938
Ruy Blas	Oct., 1938
Everywhere I Roam	Feb., 1939
Macbeth	Feb., 1941
Orfeo	July, 1941
Othello	Nov., 1943
Richard III	May, 1945

Lee Simonson was another American designer whose work early received special attention in Theatre Arts. Born in 1888, he received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Harvard University and after graduation became designer in 1912 for the Washington Square Players, an art theatre group in New York City. The organization was disbanded during World War I but was reorganized in 1919 as the Theatre Guild, with Simonson on the board of directors.[1] His stage designs for the Theatre Guild were influential in spreading the methods of the New Stagecraft throughout the theatre. Like Jones, Simonson had some professional reputation before Theatre Arts appeared in 1916, but it is probably true that the magazine's enthusiastic interest was instrumental in enlarging his national and international fame. With both Simonson and Jones, Theatre Arts often repeated designs and photographs of settings in later years which had been used years earlier.

[1]John Parker (ed.), Who's Who in the Theatre (12th ed.; New York: Pitman Publishing Corp., 1957), p. 1076.

Simonson's theories are described in his books, The Stage Is Set[1] and The Art of Scenic Design.[2] Illustrations of his settings which appear in Theatre Arts are recorded in Table 22.

TABLE 22

SETTINGS AND DESIGNS BY LEE SIMONSON ILLUSTRATED IN "THEATRE ARTS" TO 1945

Setting or Design	Issue
Iphigenia in Tauris	Dec., 1917
Pierre Patèlin	Dec., 1917
Overtones	Dec., 1917
The Sisters of Susannah	Dec., 1917
The Magical City	Dec., 1917
Iphigenia in Tauris	Apr., 1919
The Faithful	Jan., 1920
Power of Darkness	Apr., 1920
Heartbreak House	Jan., 1921
Liliom	July, 1921
He Who Gets Slapped	Apr., 1922
Morn to Midnight	Oct., 1922
R.U.R.	Jan., 1923
Tidings Brought to Mary	Apr., 1923
Peer Gynt	Apr., 1923
Alice in Wonderland	Apr., 1923
As You Like It	July, 1923
The Failures	Feb., 1924
Fata Morgana	May, 1924
Masse-Mensch	June, 1924
The Rise of Silas Lapham	Aug., 1925
Goat Song	Mar., 1926
Juarez and Maximilian	Dec., 1926
Marco Millions	Mar., 1928
Volpone	June, 1928
The Apple Cart	Apr., 1930
Uncle Vanya	June, 1930
Hotel Universe	June, 1930
Roar China!	Dec., 1930
Pas d'Acier	Apr., 1931
Back to Methuselah	June, 1932
The Faithful	June, 1932
Peer Gynt	June, 1932

[1]New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1932.

[2]New York: Harper & Brothers, 1950.

TABLE 22--Continued

Setting or Design	Issue
Miracle at Verdun	June, 1932
The School for Husbands	Dec., 1933
Hamlet	Feb., 1934
The Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles	Apr., 1935
Call It a Day	Mar., 1936
Idiot's Delight	May, 1936
Peer Gynt	Nov., 1936
He Who Gets Slapped	Nov., 1936
The Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles	Nov., 1936
The Apple Cart	Nov., 1936
The Masque of Kings	Mar., 1937
The Masque of Kings	Apr., 1937
Virginia	Nov., 1937
Madame Bovary	Dec., 1937
Amphitryon 38	Dec., 1937
Amphitryon 38	May, 1938
Swan Lake	Nov., 1938
Idiot's Delight	Jan., 1939
Marco Millions	Feb., 1941
The Streets Are Guarded	Jan., 1945

A third favorite of Theatre Arts, and a contemporary of Jones and Simonson, was Michigan-born Norman Bel Geddes, a designer whose style also helped to spread the influence of the New Stagecraft in America. Born in Adrian, Michigan, in 1893, Geddes studied at the Cleveland School of Art and at the Chicago Art Institute.[1] In 1916 he designed his first production for the Los Angeles Little Theatre and by 1918 was creating a setting for the Metropolitan Opera House in New York City.[2] Although he began his career in the little theatre, Geddes worked primarily in the Broadway arena. His

---

[1]Geddes attended the University of Michigan briefly and was given an honorary Master of Arts degree at the University in 1937.

[2]Who's Who in America, Vol. 50, 1958-59 (Chicago: A. N. Marquis Co.), p. 1013.

Broadway reputation rests primarily on his designs for Reinhardt's The Miracle--for which Geddes transformed a theatre into a cathedral--Lazarus Laughed, The Patriot, Lysistrata, Hamlet, and Dead End. Yet it is, perhaps, his unproduced projects for the theatre which represent his most ambitious and most impressive achievements. Among these are the projects for King Lear and the monumental The Divine Comedy. All of these designs were beautifully illustrated in Theatre Arts, and the magazine later published the Divine Comedy project in book form.[1] In addition to set design, Geddes was vitally interested in theatre architecture, and many of his unusual designs for various types of theatre buildings were illustrated for the first time in the pages of Theatre Arts. These appear in the October, 1922, September, 1930, and April, 1932, issues. After 1932, Geddes devoted most of his time to industrial design, and only occasionally designed for the theatre. Thus, most of the photographs printed in Theatre Arts after that date are republications of his earlier work. A listing of Geddes' designs is provided in Table 23.

In addition to these leaders, Theatre Arts was instrumental in promoting the careers of several other designers whose work manifested the influence of the New Stagecraft. As a professor of scene design in the School of Drama at Yale

---

[1]Norman Bel Geddes, A Project for a Theatrical Presentation of the Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri (New York: Theatre Arts, Inc., 1924).

TABLE 23

SETTINGS AND DESIGNS BY NORMAN BEL GEDDES ILLUSTRATED IN "THEATRE ARTS" TO 1945

Setting or Design	Issue
Pelleas and Melisande	Apr., 1919
Pelleas and Melisande	July, 1919
The Faithful	July, 1919
King Lear	July, 1919
La Nave	Jan., 1920
The Divine Comedy	Oct., 1921
Five theatre designs	Oct., 1922
Will Shakespeare	Apr., 1923
Alice in Wonderland	Apr., 1923
The Singing Globe	Jan., 1924
The Miracle	Mar., 1924
The Miracle	Apr., 1924
Jehanne d'Arc	May, 1925
The Mother of Christ	May, 1925
Arabesque	Jan., 1926
King Lear	July, 1926
The Sorrows of Satan	Oct., 1926
The Devil in the Cheese	Feb., 1927
Lazarus Laughed	May, 1927
The Patriot	Mar., 1928
Lysistrata	June, 1930
Six theatre projects	Sept., 1930
Hamlet	Nov., 1931
Hamlet	Dec., 1931
Hamlet	Jan., 1932
Project for a Soviet mass theatre	Apr., 1932
The Divine Comedy	Aug., 1932
Lazarus Laughed	Aug., 1932
Flying Colors	Oct., 1932
King Lear	Feb., 1934
Iphigenia in Aulis	Apr., 1935
Dead End	Dec., 1935
Dead End	Feb., 1936
Hamlet	Oct., 1936
Iron Men	Dec., 1936
The Eternal Road	Mar., 1937
It Happens on Ice	Dec., 1940
King Lear	Feb., 1941
It Happens on Ice	Nov., 1941
The Miracle	Jan., 1944

University, Donald Oenslager has divided his efforts between the university theatre and the Broadway stage. Born in 1902, Oenslager was educated at Phillips' Exeter Academy and at Harvard University. After a brief period of study in Europe, Oenslager appeared as an actor in 1924 in the Greenwich Village Theatre production of O'Neill's Desire Under the Elms. His first professional designs were for a Neighborhood Playhouse ballet, Sooner and Later, and for an Actor's Theatre production of A Bit o' Love.[1] Both of these settings were illustrated in Theatre Arts in 1925; however, he had been previously represented in the magazine by sketches of European productions of Macbeth and Romeo and Juliet which he had seen the year before in Europe. In 1925 he was appointed to the Yale University staff, and in the years that followed Theatre Arts published pictures of his sets, not only for the professional theatre in New York, but also for productions at Yale University. The year 1936 saw the appearance of his book Scenery, Then and Now.[2] In line with the magazine's habitual policy of publishing important unproduced designs, Oenslager's settings for Wagner's Ring cycle operas appeared for the first time in the January, 1927, issue of Theatre Arts. Table 24 lists the Oenslager designs illustrated in the magazine.

---

[1]John Parker (ed.), Who's Who in the Theatre (12th ed.; New York: Pitman Publishing Corp., 1957), p. 930.

[2]New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1936.

TABLE 24

SETTINGS AND DESIGNS BY DONALD OENSLAGER
ILLUSTRATED IN "THEATRE ARTS" TO 1945

Setting or Design	Issue
Sketches of *Macbeth* and *Romeo and Juliet*	Feb., 1925
Sooner and Later	May, 1925
A Bit o' Love	July, 1925
Morals	Jan., 1926
A Project for the Ring	Jan., 1927
Pinwheel	Apr., 1927
L'Histoire du Soldat	May, 1928
Brand	June, 1928
The New Moon	Nov., 1928
The Birds	June, 1929
Me for You	Oct., 1929
The Winter's Tale	Oct., 1931
Casina	May, 1932
Emperor Jones	Aug., 1932
The Flying Dutchman	Apr., 1933
Jezebel	Feb., 1934
Hamlet	Feb., 1934
Lady from the Sea	July, 1934
Venice Preserved	July, 1934
Gold Eagle Guys	Jan., 1935
First Lady	Feb., 1936
Russet Mantle	Mar., 1936
Stage Door	Nov., 1936
Red, Hot and Blue	Nov., 1936
Love of Three Oranges	Nov., 1936
Red, Hot and Blue	Dec., 1936
The Million Ghosts	Dec., 1936
You Can't Take It with You	Jan., 1937
Johnny Johnson	Jan., 1937
Two Hundred Were Chosen	Jan., 1937
Le Pauvre Matelot	May, 1937
A Doll's House	July, 1937
Edna, His Wife	Oct., 1937
Of Mice and Men	May, 1938
Otello (Verdi)	May, 1938
The Fabulous Invalid	Nov., 1938
The Fabulous Invalid	Dec., 1938
The Merchant	June, 1940
Prometheus Bound	June, 1940
The Fabulous Invalid	Feb., 1941
My Sister Eileen	Mar., 1941

In November, 1924, Theatre Arts introduced to its readers "a fresh designer"[1] who had begun his theatrical career as an actor with the Theatre Guild. Jo Mielziner was born in 1901 and received his artistic training at the National Academy of Design and Art Students and later at the Philadelphia Academy of Fine Arts. In Europe he studied with Vienna's Oscar Strnad, Gordon Craig, and in America with Robert Edmond Jones and Lee Simonson. After a year of acting with the Theatre Guild, he designed The Guardsman for the Guild in 1924 and The Wild Duck for the Actor's Theatre early in 1925.[2] The November, 1925, issue of Theatre Arts noted that Mielziner had been "swept into prominence by his effective settings for The Wild Duck and The Guardsman."[3] In the years that followed, the magazine printed more illustrations of Mielziner's designs, settings, and sketches than of any other American designer with the exception of Robert Edmond Jones. Table 25 lists those designs.

TABLE 25

SETTINGS AND DESIGNS BY JO MIELZINER ILLUSTRATED IN "THEATRE ARTS" TO 1945

Setting or Design	Issue
The Guardsman	Nov., 1924
The Wild Duck	Apr., 1925
Lucky Sam McCarver	Nov., 1925
Little Eyolf	Apr., 1926

[1] Theatre Arts, November, 1924, p. 772.

[2] Parker, Who's Who in the Theatre (12th ed.), p. 875.

[3] Theatre Arts, November, 1925, p. 717.

TABLE 25--Continued

Setting or Design	Issue
Faust	Apr., 1927
The Doctor's Dilemma	Feb., 1928
Strange Interlude	Apr., 1928
The Grey Fox	Dec., 1928
A Most Immoral Lady	Jan., 1929
Street Scene	Mar., 1929
The Little Show	June, 1929
Anatol	Mar., 1931
The Barretts of Wimpole Street	Apr., 1931
Distant Drums	Mar., 1932
Mr. Gilhooley	Apr., 1932
Lucky Sam McCarver	Apr., 1932
I Was Waiting for You	Apr., 1932
Biography	Feb., 1933
Yellow Jack	Feb., 1934
Romeo and Juliet	Dec., 1934
Panic	May, 1935
Flowers of the Forest	June, 1935
Kind Lady	June, 1935
Winterset	Nov., 1935
At Home Abroad	Nov., 1935
Jubilee	Nov., 1935
Winterset	Dec., 1935
Pride and Prejudice	Dec., 1935
Pride and Prejudice	Jan., 1936
The Postman Always Rings Twice	Apr., 1936
On Your Toes	June, 1936
Daughters of Atreus	Oct., 1936
Hamlet	Oct., 1936
Hamlet	Dec., 1936
Wingless Victory	Feb., 1937
High Tor	Feb., 1937
High Tor	Mar., 1937
The Star Wagon	Oct., 1937
Father Malachy's Miracle	Oct., 1937
On Borrowed Time	Mar., 1938
Too Many Heroes	May, 1938
I Married an Angel	Oct., 1938
Sketches of circus clowns	Aug., 1938
Sing Out the News	Nov., 1938
Abe Lincoln in Illinois	Nov., 1938
Abe Lincoln in Illinois	Dec., 1938
The Boys from Syracuse	Jan., 1939
The Merchant of Venice	Oct., 1939
Too Many Girls	Dec., 1939
Key Largo	Feb., 1940
Two on an Island	Mar., 1940
Higher and Higher	May, 1940

TABLE 25--Continued

Setting or Design	Issue
Journey to Jerusalem	Oct., 1940
Pal Joey	Feb., 1941
Flight to the West	Feb., 1941
Yellow Jack	Feb., 1941
Candle in the Wind	Nov., 1941
The Land is Bright	Jan., 1942
Best Foot Forward	Jan., 1942
Solitaire	Mar., 1942
Foolish Notion	Apr., 1945
The Glass Menagerie	Apr., 1945
The Glass Menagerie	May, 1945
The Glass Menagerie	June, 1945
Carousel	June, 1945

Not all of Theatre Arts' favorite designers enjoyed the success of Robert Edmond Jones or Jo Mielziner. Although few of James Reynolds'[1] designs were realized on the stage, Isaacs saw in his sketches and drawings a theatre quality that merited recognition. For this reason illustrations from Reynolds' unproduced "A Portfolio of Designs for Electra" were reprinted in several issues of the magazine over a period of four years.[2] When Theatre Arts published a portfolio of his travel sketches and drawings, entitled "Along the Silk Road from Samarkand to Srinagar," the editor suggested the basis for her preference.

> Theatre is not always limited to productions on an actual stage. Sometimes it lives vividly in the minds of artists and their audiences. In fact, some of the best theatre of our time has never been seen on a stage

---

[1]James Reynolds died at Bellagio, Italy, July 24, 1957.

[2]Theatre Arts, February, 1932, p. 148; August, 1935, p. 649; March, 1936, p. 201.

> but exists on paper and in books as it sprang from the fertile and unfettered minds of imaginative theatre men. Norman Bel Geddes' Dante, some of Gordon Craig's finest projects, many of Appia's soaring productions, the stage has not seen and, under present conditions, will not see. Such too, is James Reynolds' project for an Irish Electra, set on the rocky coast of Galway. Unrealized in the theatre, it lives--almost as if produced--in the minds of those who saw the drawings reproduced in Theatre Arts last year. Since then, Reynolds has returned from another voyage to far places; and again his portraits and sketches become characters and settings for a drama that can be played out as vividly in the imagination as in the theatre.[1]

Like most Theatre Arts favorites, Reynolds began his career in the non-professional art theatre. "After an obscure year with Stuart Walker in Indianapolis in 1919,"[2] Reynolds designed The Greenwich Village Follies in 1920 for the Greenwich Village Theatre. In 1924 he designed the settings for the Ram's Head Players production of L'Aiglon,[3] and The Bridal Veil for Richard Boleslavsky's American Laboratory Theatre in 1928.[4]

There were other American designers, too numerous to chronicle here in detail, who found favor in the pages of Theatre Arts. While some have had important careers in the Broadway theatre, many of them got their start in the art and little theatres where the New Stagecraft had found its first expression. Some of these favorites were C. Raymond Johnson, whose early settings were designed for the Chicago Little

---

[1] Ibid., June, 1937, p. 470.

[2] Ibid., January, 1921, p. 75.

[3] Ibid., November, 1924, pp. 756, 761-62.

[4] Ibid., April, 1928, p. 246.

Theatre; Cleon Throckmorton, who designed for Provincetown Playhouse, Greenwich Village Theatre, and Civic Repertory Theatre; Rollo Peters,[1] who initiated his designing career at the Bramhall Playhouse and the New York Repertory Company; Mordecai Gorelik, who designed sets for the Philadelphia Stage Repertory, Yiddish Art Theatre, Theatre Guild, and Group Theatre; Aline Bernstein, designer at the Neighborhood Playhouse and later at the Theatre Guild and Civic Repertory Theatre; Boris Aronson, who created settings for Civic Repertory Theatre, Yiddish Art Theatre, and the Theatre Guild; Stewart Chaney, whose early sets were designed for the Ann Arbor Drama Festival and the Theatre Guild; Howard Bay, who began designing for Theatre Union, Federal Theatre Project, and the Theatre Guild; Alexander Wyckoff, who did not continue professionally, but stayed a close friend of Isaacs; and Woodman Thompson, Claude Bragdon, John Wenger, Raymond Sovey, Albert Johnson, Arch Lauterer, John Root, Watson Barratt, Vincente Minnelli, Samuel Leve, Norris Houghton, John Koenig, Perry Watkins, Harry Horner, Carl Kent, Lemuel Ayers, Oliver Smith, Frederick Fox, and George Jenkins. The first appearance in Theatre Arts by these and other designers is chronicled in Table 26.

TABLE 26

FIRST APPEARANCE BY AMERICAN DESIGNERS IN "THEATRE ARTS"

Issue	Designer and Subject
Nov., 1916	A. A. Andries, Hansel and Gretel
Nov., 1916	Sam Hume, Tents of the Arabs
Nov., 1916	C. Raymond Johnson, Grotesques

[1]Peters enjoyed a successful career as an actor as well.

TABLE 26--Continued

Issue	Designer and Subject
Nov., 1916	Robert Lamson, The Honorable Lover
Nov., 1916	J. Blanding Sloan, Brown
Feb., 1917	Katherine McEwen, Abraham and Isaac
May, 1917	Morton L. Schamberg, Three Women
Aug., 1917	Claude Bragdon, New York Song and Light Festival
Feb., 1918	Rollo Peters, Tannhaüser
Jan., 1919	Irving Pichel, The Romance of Rose
Jan., 1919	John Wenger, Efficiency
Apr., 1919	Maxwell Armfield, Ruth St. Denis dance-drama
Apr., 1919	Michael Carmichael Carr, Iphigenia in Tauris
Oct., 1920	Burnham Hoyt, The Little Supper
Jan., 1921	James Reynolds, ballet designs
Jan., 1921	Cleon Throckmorton, Emperor Jones
Oct., 1921	Ernest de Weerth, Abundance and two other designs
Jan., 1922	Mordecai Gorelik,[a] Emperor Jones, Power of Darkness
July, 1922	Woodman Thompson, Romeo and Juliet
Apr., 1923	Roland Young, Alice in Wonderland
Feb., 1924	Reginald Marsh, Sancho Panza
Mar., 1924	Bernard Sovey, St. Joan
Apr., 1924	Howard Chaney, Treasure Island
May, 1924	Russel Wright, End of the Trail
June, 1924	Charles Ellis, The Ancient Mariner
July, 1924	Aline Bernstein, Grand Street Follies
Sept., 1924	W. Cameron Menzies, The Thief of Bagdad
Apr., 1925	Charles Vildrac,[a] Michel Auclair
June, 1925	Frederick W. Jones, Caesar and Cleopatra
Nov., 1925	Allan Crane, Twelfth Night
Dec., 1925	Clark Robinson, Dearest Enemy
Feb., 1926	Boris Aronson,[a] Between Day and Night
Apr., 1926	Louis Lozowick,[a] Gas
Aug., 1926	Simon Lissim,[a] Hamlet
Nov., 1926	Carolyn Hancock, An American Tragedy
Dec., 1926	C. E. Calthrop,[a] La Locandiera
Dec., 1926	Lillian Gaertner, The Straw Hat
Dec., 1926	Robert Van Rosen, Princess Turandot
Feb., 1927	Raymond Sovey, The Brothers Karamazov
Mar., 1927	Jonel Jorgulesco, Caesar and Cleopatra
Apr., 1927	Norman Edwards, Marriage of Figaro
Oct., 1927	Alexander Wyckoff, The Fan
May, 1928	Jo Davidson, Israel

[a]Although foreign-born, some designers listed had American careers, and the above-named settings are for American productions.

TABLE 26--Continued

Issue	Designer and Subject
Feb., 1929	Manuel Essman, Singing Jailbirds
Nov., 1929	Albert Johnson, Criminal Code
Jan., 1930	Roy Mitchell, Hamlet
Jan., 1930	Nicholas Yellenti, Veneer
June, 1931	Redington Sharpe, Major Barbara and five other designs
Oct., 1931	Arch Lauterer, Antigone
Jan., 1932	Henry Dreyfuss, The Cat and the Fiddle
Apr., 1933	Arthur P. Segal, Both Your Houses
July, 1933	Stewart Chaney, Pagliacci, Faust
Feb., 1934	Nat Karson, The Color Box
Apr., 1934	Aubrey Hammond, The Shining Hour
Apr., 1934	Florine Stettheimer, Four Saints in Three Acts
May, 1934	Frederick Kiesler,[a] Helen Retires
June, 1935	John Root, Ceiling Zero
Aug., 1935	Watson Barratt, The Riviera Girl, Bitter-sweet
Jan., 1936	Vincente Minnelli, At Home Abroad, Ziegfeld Follies
Mar., 1936	Samuel Leve, Peer Gynt
June, 1936	Howard Bay, Peer Gynt
June, 1936	Albert McCleery, Peer Gynt
Apr., 1938	Norris Houghton, How to Get Tough About It
May, 1938	Mercedes, Who's Who
Nov., 1938	John Koenig, Missouri Legend
Mar., 1939	Perry Watkins, Mamba's Daughters
May, 1939	Harry Horner, Family Portrait
June, 1939	Herbert Andrews, My Heart's in the Highlands
May, 1940	Richard Whorf, There Shall Be No Night
Oct., 1940	Tom Lee, Louisiana Purchase
Oct., 1941	Carl Kent, Somewhere in France
June, 1942	Lemuel Ayers, Angel Street
June, 1942	J. Randolph Campbell, Noah
June, 1942	Thomas Shanton, Macbeth
Dec., 1942	Oliver Smith, Rodeo
Apr., 1943	Frederick Fox, Men in Shadow
Oct., 1943	George Jenkins, Early to Bed

[a]Although foreign-born, some designers listed had American careers, and the above-named settings are for American productions.

From this survey of the designers covered in the pages of Theatre Arts several conclusions may be drawn. Most of the scenic artists in whom Theatre Arts took an early interest made their early reputations in art and little theatres such as Provincetown Playhouse, Neighborhood Playhouse, Theatre Guild, American Laboratory Theatre, Actor's Theatre, Civic Repertory Theatre, New York Repertory Company, Boston Repertory Theatre, Yiddish Art Theatre, Mercury Theatre, and in schools such as Yale University and Carnegie Institute of Technology. Since these theatres provided them their first creative outlet, it is not surprising that they should align themselves initially with these theatres employing New Stagecraft methods. As they moved on into the commercial Broadway theatre, they, of course, brought these new influences with them.

Year after year, Theatre Arts continued to illustrate unproduced designs in the belief that they represented important moments in the development of theatrical design. Pictures of Geddes' designs for King Lear, Lazarus Laughed, and The Divine Comedy, Oenslager's project for the Ring, and Reynolds' designs for an Electra found a prominent place in the pages of the magazine, although none was ever produced on any stage. In addition, Theatre Arts frequently included photographs of their sketches and paintings of people, places, and things.

Characteristically, the magazine frequently reprinted what it felt was the best work of a particular scene designer.

Thus, Robert Edmond Jones's settings for Arthur Hopkins' production of Richard III were illustrated in five different issues from 1920 to 1945;[1] Lee Simonson's sets for Peer Gynt appeared in three issues from 1923 to 1936;[2] and pictures of Norman Bel Geddes' King Lear settings were repeated several times from 1926 to 1941.[3] By repeating the best designs of the past the magazine hoped, not only to make these artists known, but also to impress the influence of their style and approach upon the theatre everywhere.

Finally, Theatre Arts gave national and international recognition to many of these designers while they were still young, inexperienced, and largely unknown. Jones, Simonson, and Bel Geddes were not yet thirty when Theatre Arts focused international attention on their achievements. Oenslager was two years out of Harvard University when the magazine pictured his first designs, and Mielziner was twenty-three when his designs for the Theatre Guild production of The Guardsman were illustrated in Theatre Arts. Albert Johnson was nineteen years old when his first setting appeared in the magazine, and Samuel Leve, whose first design was illustrated in the March, 1936, issue, had graduated from Yale University in 1935. Stewart Chaney was introduced while still working in the little theatre, several years before his first

---

[1]See Table 21, p. 153 [2]See Table 22, p. 156.

[3]See Table 23, p. 159.

Broadway production. News and pictures kept the names of many unknown artists in the reader's mind and the theatre's view.

> While Carl Kent waits to see his own union number for the first time on a Broadway production, he limbers up his designing pencils with projects for plays he has liked, such as John Henry, Native Son and Somewhere in France, a design for which is seen here. He has worked besides for several of the already established designers, and has tried his hand at easel paintings of theatre subjects and at sketching movie scenarios; he has even been found writing songs and lyrics for musical shows.[1]

This same editorial passion to uncover and encourage generally unrecognized talent was of vital service to many American directors, producers, and actors.

Although articles on the director and directing were comparatively few, materials in Theatre Arts largely covered the ranks of the serious directors in America. Table 27 computes total number of pages in Theatre Arts concerning directors and producers working in the American theatre. These articles were essentially of three types: those which analyzed the directorial theories of individual artists, those which described various directors at work in the theatre on a particular production, and those written by directors themselves. This coverage is listed in Table 28. Exceptions in the early issues of the magazine include an essay by Ashley Dukes on the history and responsibility of the director,[2]

---

[1] Theatre Arts, October, 1941, p. 744.

[2] Ibid., December, 1924, p. 819 ("The Way of the Producer").

and an article by Stark Young which set forth the theory that the director of the production has the same rights in his interpretation of the script as the conductor of a musical composition.[1]

TABLE 27

TOTAL PAGES IN "THEATRE ARTS" CONCERNING PROFESSIONAL DIRECTORS AND PRODUCERS WORKING IN THE AMERICAN THEATRE

Director or Producer	No. of Pages
Arthur Hopkins	30
Brock Pemberton	22
Margaret Webster	18
Harold Clurman	15
David Belasco	15
Maurice Browne	12
George S. Kaufman	10
Sam H. Harris	9
Robert Alton	9
Guthrie McClintic	8
The Frohmans	8
Garson Kanin	8
Theresa Helburn	7
Dwight Deere Wiman	7
Billy Rose	7
Arthur Sircom	7
Walter Wanger	7
Albert Lewin	7
Elia Kazan	6
Elmer Rice	6
Winthrop Ames	6
George Abbott	5
John Murray Anderson	5
Joseph Vernor Reed	5
Robert Sinclair	4
Orson Welles	4
Shepard Traube	4
Jed Harris	2
Herman Shumlin	1
John Shubert	1
Lawrence Langner	1
Auriol Lee	1
Joshua Logan	1

[1] Ibid., April, 1925, p. 227 ("The Art of Directing").

TABLE 28

DIRECTORS AND PRODUCERS IN THE AMERICAN THEATRE REPRESENTED BY MATERIALS IN "THEATRE ARTS" (1916--JUNE, 1945)

Director/Producer	Issue of Publication	
	Materials about Director/Producer	Materials by Director/Producer
George Abbott	Feb., 1936 Oct., 1942	May, 1940
Robert Alton	Jan., 1940	.....
Winthrop Ames	Aug., 1943	.....
John Murray Anderson.	Feb., 1936 April, 1936	.....
David Belasco	Oct., 1921 Aug., 1943	.....
Maurice Browne	April, 1921	.....
Harold Clurman	Feb., 1936 April, 1936	Nov., 1935 Feb., 1937 Feb., 1941
The Frohmans	Aug., 1943	.....
Jed Harris	Jan., 1931	.....
Sam H. Harris	Oct., 1938	.....
Theresa Helburn	.....	Oct., 1921
Arthur Hopkins	July, 1921	Feb., 1918 May, 1940 Feb., 1941 Feb., 1945
Garson Kanin	Mar., 1941	Sept., 1941
George S. Kaufman ...	Nov., 1939	.....
Elia Kazan	July, 1938 Mar., 1944	.....
Lawrence Langner	.....	May, 1940
Auriol Lee	.....	Feb., 1941
Albert Lewin	.....	Sept., 1941
Joshua Logan	July, 1938	.....
Guthrie McClintic ...	Feb., 1936	April, 1943
Brock Pemberton	.....	July, 1922 Mar., 1934 May, 1940
Joseph Vernor Reed ..	.....	Feb., 1934
Elmer Rice	.....	May, 1929
Billy Rose	Aug., 1939 Jan., 1945	.....
John Shubert	.....	May, 1940
Herman Shumlin	.....	May, 1940

TABLE 28--Continued

Director/Producer	Issue of Publication	
	Materials about Director/Producer	Materials by Director/Producer
Robert Sinclair	Feb., 1936 Mar., 1936	.....
Arthur Sircom	.....	June, 1942
Shepard Traube	.....	June, 1942
Margaret Webster ...	Aug., 1939	May, 1938 Jan., 1939 Jan., 1942 Feb., 1945
Walter Wanger	.....	Sept., 1941
Orson Welles	June, 1939	Jan., 1939
Dwight Deere Wiman .	May, 1942	.....

As early as 1921, Theatre Arts published articles on the theories and work in the American theatre of such directors as Maurice Browne,[1] founder of the Chicago Little Theatre; David Belasco,[2] the "Bishop of Broadway"; and Arthur Hopkins.[3] The first of a 1936 series of three articles entitled "The Director Takes Command" begins with an "Editor's Note" explaining the goal of the essays:

> The material for this article has developed so much more richly than the editors expected that only two of the scheduled interviews are included here. The others--Robert Sinclair, John Murray Anderson, Harold Clurman,

---

[1] Ibid., April, 1921, p. 113 (Ralph Roeder, "American Producers, I. Maurice Browne").

[2] Ibid., October, 1921, p. 259 (James G. Huneker, American Producers, III. David Belasco").

[3] Ibid., July, 1921, p. 230 (Walter Prichard Eaton, "American Producers, II. Arthur Hopkins").

> and Broadway's guest, Max Reinhardt--will follow in the next issue, or, perhaps, issues. We hope Theatre Arts readers will, however, think of them all as a part of one idea, the variety of the director's approach to his material and all of them as a part of 'Broadway At Its Best.'[1]

These articles, written by Morton Eustis, described the directorial approach in analysis of the script, casting methods, and rehearsal techniques of Guthrie McClintic and George Abbott,[2] Max Reinhardt and Robert Sinclair,[3] John Murray Anderson and Harold Clurman.[4] All of the directors interviewed by Eustis were agreed that there is no single theory of directing. In addition, the articles emphasized the distinctive nature of each director's approach--for example, McClintic's interest in revealing the "higher values" of the script, Abbott's concern with tempo, Reinhardt's "Regie Buch," or working script, Anderson's handling of the musical show, and Harold Clurman's unique improvisational method of rehearsing.

Other articles were eye-witness accounts of directors in action in the theatre, such as Noel Coward rehearsing Beatrice Lillie in Set to Music,[5] George S. Kaufman directing The Man Who Came to Dinner,[6] Robert Alton staging Du Barry

---

[1] Ibid., February, 1936, p. 114. [2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid., March, 1936, p. 211.

[4] Ibid., April, 1936, p. 270.

[5] Ibid., February, 1939, p. 115 (Morton Eustis, "High Jinks at the Music Box").

[6] Ibid., November, 1939, p. 789 (Morton Eustis, "The Man Who Came to Dinner with George Kaufman Directing").

Was a Lady,[1] and Elia Kazan directing "a modern legend," Jacobowsky and the Colonel.[2]

A number of prominent directors and producers in the American theatre wrote articles for publication in Theatre Arts, including Arthur Hopkins, Guthrie McClintic, Harold Clurman, Margaret Webster, and Brock Pemberton. In addition, essays were written by playwrights John van Druten and Elmer Rice on directorial problems for the dramatist. A brief examination of a few Theatre Arts favorites may indicate the basis of the magazine's interest in them.

Arthur Melancthon Hopkins was born in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1878, and began his directorial career in 1912 in New York City.[3] His long and fruitful association with Robert Edmond Jones gave Broadway some of its earliest and most impressive examples of the New Stagecraft. In powerful settings designed by Jones, Hopkins staged memorable productions of Richard III, Hamlet, and Macbeth. His outstanding list of plays includes The Wild Duck, Hedda Gabler, A Doll's House, Anna Christie, The Hairy Ape, Romeo and Juliet, Redemption, The Jest, Machinal, What Price Glory?, The Second Mrs. Tanqueray, Salvation, The Petrified Forest, and Paths of Glory. His last major

---

[1] Ibid., January, 1940, p. 39 (Morton Eustis, "Du Barry Was a Lady in Rehearsal").

[2] Ibid., March, 1944, p. 143 (Hermine Rich Isaacs, "First Rehearsals").

[3] Who's Who in America, Vol. XX, 1938-39 (Chicago: A. N. Marquis Co., 1938), p. 1250.

New York production was Hear That Trumpet in October, 1946. He was, however, actively involved with television after that date. Hopkins wrote frequently for Theatre Arts over a span of twenty-five years, and some of these materials formed the basis of his books, which include How's Your Second Act?[1] and The Glory Road.[2] Hopkins died in 1950 at the age of 72.

Another favorite was Guthrie McClintic, who was born in Seattle, Washington, on August 6, 1893, and was educated at the University of Washington and the American Academy of Dramatic Arts.[3] After early acting experience at Winthrop Ames's Little Theatre in New York City, McClintic became Ames's assistant stage director. While McClintic directed numerous productions on Broadway, his most outstanding directorial work was probably in those productions starring his wife, Katharine Cornell.[4] Among these are The Barretts of Wimpole Street, Romeo and Juliet, Candida, and the Jean Anouilh Antigone. His reputation also rests significantly on his staging of Winterset, Hamlet, High Tor, and Medea.

Harold Clurman, whose name appeared frequently in Theatre Arts, was born September 18, 1901, in New York City.[5]

---

[1]New York: Philip Goodman Co., 1918.

[2]New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1935.

[3]Freda Gaye (ed.), Who's Who in the Theatre (13th ed.; London: Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, Ltd., 1961), p. 776.

[4]McClintic met his future wife while both were working at Detroit's Bonstelle Playhouse.

[5]Gaye, op. cit., p. 346.

After graduating from Columbia University, he worked with Kenneth Macgowan, Robert Edmond Jones, and Eugene O'Neill at the Greenwich Village Playhouse in 1924. The following year he joined the production staff of the Theatre Guild and in 1931 founded the famous Group Theatre, of which he became managing director. His list of productions directed includes Men in White, Awake and Sing, Johnny Johnson, Golden Boy, Waiting for Lefty, Orpheus Descending, and A Touch of the Poet.

Although educated in England and active in the English theatre, Margaret Webster was born in New York City on March 15, 1905, the daughter of English actress Dame May Whitty.[1] In addition to her extensive acting experience in England with the Old Vic and in the United States, Webster directed for Maurice Evans, the Theatre Guild, and later as co-founder with Eva Le Gallienne and Cheryl Crawford of the American Repertory Theatre in New York City. Her American productions include Richard II, Hamlet, Family Portrait, Macbeth, Othello, The Cherry Orchard, The Tempest, Androcles and the Lion, Ghosts, and Hedda Gabler.

In the ranks of producers, Theatre Arts seemed to be particularly partial to Brock Pemberton, who was referred to from time to time in editorial and review columns.[2] In

---

[1] Ibid., p. 1152.

[2] In her monthly review of the New York season (Theatre Arts, November, 1935, p. 813) Isaacs exhorted New Yorkers to attend the theatre, warning that ". . . fine plays, and especially stern plays, however good and true and beautiful,

addition, he wrote occasional articles for the magazine for almost twenty years, including a review of theatre in London and Europe in 1922,[1] and an analysis of the difficulties and problems of the producer in the commercial theatre in 1936.[2] Born in 1885, Pemberton was assistant dramatic editor of the New York World and Times from 1911 to 1917, worked with Arthur Hopkins from 1917 to 1920, and produced independently in New York after 1920. His professional productions included Luigi Pirandello's Six Characters in Search of an Author, The Living Mask, and Maxwell Anderson's White Desert.[3]

Other Theatre Arts favorites included Winthrop Ames, who founded the ill-fated repertory New Theatre, but who went on to give Broadway many productions notable for their fine taste, especially a series of Gilbert and Sullivan productions;[4] Joshua Logan, who was one of the founders of the University Players at Falmouth, Massachusetts, studied with

---

make their audiences more slowly in a world that stands with its back to the wall, fearful of war and hunger and civil strife. Sometimes they make their audiences too slowly for a brave producer's purse that empties fast, with costs of house and labor what they are. So buy your tickets early, if you want more good serious plays. Don't let Brock Pemberton say that New Yorkers can talk about wanting a good theatre but the only plays they really want to see are the ones for which they cannot buy a ticket for love or money. . . ."

[1] Ibid., July, 1922, p. 217 ("Europe in a Nutshell").

[2] Ibid., March, 1934, p. 221 ("The Way of the Producer Who Walks Broadway").

[3] Who's Who in America, Vol. XX, 1938-39, p. 1963.

[4] Phyllis Hartnoll (ed.), Oxford Companion to the Theatre (2d ed.; London: Oxford University Press, 1957), p. 812.

Stanislavsky at the Moscow Art Theatre, and directed on Broadway On Borrowed Time, Annie Get Your Gun, Mister Roberts, South Pacific, Picnic, and many others;[1] George Abbott, who studied playwriting with George Pierce Baker at Harvard University and whose productions are legion in number;[2] and Elia Kazan, who was born in Constantinople, Turkey, in 1909, educated at Yale University, joined the Group Theatre in 1932, and directed for Broadway Casey Jones, The Skin of Our Teeth, Deep Are the Roots, All My Sons, A Streetcar Named Desire, Death of a Salesman, Tea and Sympathy, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, J.B., and Sweet Bird of Youth.[3]

Articles on the producer in the theatre described the function and historical background of this profession as in "Gilles de Raiz, Europe's First Impresario"[4] and "La Montansier,"[5] a study of "the first business manager and directress of the European theatre." Other materials described the method of a particular producer. In "Art and Business--A Record of the Theatre Guild, Inc.,"[6] Theresa Helburn outlined the business practices of that organization as a producing group.

---

[1]Gaye, op. cit., p. 757.

[2]Ibid., p. 169.

[3]Ibid., p. 683.

[4]Theatre Arts, August, 1930, p. 715.

[5]Ibid., September, 1930, p. 747.

[6]Ibid., October, 1921, p. 268.

In an article entitled "Apologia of a Producer--Farewell to All the Pomps and Vanities,"[1] Joseph Vernor Reed explained his decision to stop producing because of the evils of the commercial theatre. Reed later expanded this article into a book, The Curtain Falls.

A number of articles in later issues, such as the one on Billy Rose,[2] were largely biographical sketches of careers in the theatre. The October, 1942, issue offered a "Who's Who Among Producers" which included brief biographical profiles of George Abbott, Katharine Cornell, Cheryl Crawford, Vinton Freedley, John Golden, Max Gordon, Theresa Helburn, Lawrence Langner, Guthrie McClintic, Gilbert Miller, Brock Pemberton, Oscar Serlin, Messers Shubert, Carly Wharton, Martin Gabel, and John C. Wilson.[3]

In its materials on directors and producers, Theatre Arts provided full coverage of the men who were trying something outside the tradition. Descriptions of the directorial style and method of artists such as Hopkins, Reinhardt, Clurman, McClintic, and Kazan provided readers with some insight into the varied, complex, and vital art of the director. These materials, too, were usually accompanied by illustrative photographs of the artist and his work.

Articles in Theatre Arts on acting fall roughly into

---

[1] Ibid., February, 1934, p. 106.

[2] Ibid., January, 1945, p. 43.

[3] Ibid., October, 1942, p. 620.

four major groups: those which were concerned with the theory and technique of the actor's art, those which described and analyzed the particular approach and method of an individual actor, those which provided historical treatment of an actor and his acting style, and, finally, those few essays written by actors themselves. These materials are listed in Table 29. Again, this table includes several actors who, although foreign-born, had important American careers and became relatively permanent residents of the United States.

TABLE 29

ACTORS IN THE AMERICAN THEATRE REPRESENTED BY MATERIALS IN "THEATRE ARTS" (1916--JUNE, 1945)

Actor	Issue of Publication	
	Material about Actor	Material by Actor
Fred Allen	May, 1942	.....
Joyce Arling	June, 1936	.....
Fred Astaire	May, 1937	.....
John Beal	Jan., 1934	.....
Ray Bolger	Feb., 1943	Apr., 1944
Kitty Carlisle	Jan., 1934	.....
Montgomery Clift	Mar., 1944	.....
George M. Cohan	Jan., 1944	.....
Constance Collier	.....	Dec., 1941
Russell Collins	July, 1938	.....
Elisha Cook, Jr.	Jan., 1934	.....
Katharine Cornell	Jan., 1937	May, 1940
Edward Craven	Jan., 1934	.....
John Cromwell	June, 1936	.....
Bette Davis and David Chandler	.....	Sept., 1941
Katherine Emery	July, 1938	.....
Lynn Fontanne	.....	May, 1940
John Garfield	.....	Mar., 1943

TABLE 29--Continued

Actor	Issue of Publication	
	Material about Actor	Material by Actor
Walter Hampden	Jan., 1924	.....
Eric Hawkins	June, 1941	.....
Helen Hayes	Oct., 1936	.....
Louis Hayward	Apr., 1935	.....
Van Heflin	Mar., 1942	.....
Katherine Hepburn	Jan., 1934	.....
Sterling Holloway	.....	Apr., 1944
Douglas Hubbard	Mar., 1944	.....
Josephine Hull	June, 1945	.....
Eva Le Gallienne	Dec., 1927	.....
Philip Loeb	.....	May, 1940
Alfred Lunt	.....	May, 1940
Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne	Nov., 1936 Dec., 1937 June, 1939	.....
Bruce Macfarlane	Jan., 1934	.....
Fredric March	Apr., 1944	.....
Margo	June, 1936	.....
Myron McCormick	June, 1936	.....
Florence McGee	Apr., 1935	.....
Burgess Meredith	Jan., 1934 Jan., 1936 Mar., 1937	.....
James Monks	Mar., 1944	.....
Victor Moore	Mar., 1942	May, 1940
Paul Muni	Jan., 1931 Mar., 1940	.....
Mildred Natwick	Apr., 1935 Jan., 1936	.....
Elliott Nugent	May, 1944	.....
Paul Robeson	Oct., 1944	.....
Charles Robinson	Jan., 1934	.....
Lydia St. Clair	June, 1941	.....
Thelma Schnee	June, 1941 Mar., 1944	.....
Martha Scott	July, 1938	.....
Hiram Sherman	July, 1938	.....
Cornelia Otis Skinner ..	.....	Oct., 1941
Otis Skinner	Nov., 1929	July, 1926 Sept., 1938

TABLE 29--Continued

Actor	Issue of Publication	
	Material about Actor	Material by Actor
Onslow Stevens	July, 1938	.....
James Stewart	Apr., 1935	.....
Margaret Sullavan	May, 1944	.....
Joan Tetzel	Mar., 1944	.....
Ann Thomas	June, 1941	.....
Lana Turner	Mar., 1942	.....
Lucile Watson	June, 1941	.....
Orson Welles	.....	Jan., 1939
Richard Whorf	Mar., 1942	June, 1938 Jan., 1939 Feb., 1941
Perry Wilson	Mar., 1944	.....
Eric Wollencott	Apr., 1935.	.....

Probably the most significant materials in the first group were the six articles on acting technique written by Richard Boleslavsky, a pupil of Stanislavsky and founder of the American Laboratory Theatre. These essays, written in dialogue form and published as a book, Acting: The First Six Lessons,[1] by Theatre Arts for the National Theatre Conference, are generally recognized as having influenced the modern pattern of acting in America. The first lesson, published in October, 1923, concerned the technique of concentration;[2] the second discussed memory of emotion;[3] the third analyzed

[1] New York: Theatre Arts, Inc., 1933.

[2] Theatre Arts, October, 1923, p. 284.

[3] Ibid., July, 1929, p. 498.

dramatic action;[1] the fourth studied the technique of characterization;[2] the fifth emphasized the importance of observation;[3] and the sixth described rhythm in the actor's art.[4] Boleslavsky also contributed to Theatre Arts an article entitled "Fundamentals of Acting," in which he attempted to define the art of acting and explored the debate between the "Emotionalists" and the "Anti-Emotionalists." In this, Boleslavsky stated that

> the actor's art cannot be taught. He must be born with ability but the technique through which his talent can find expression--that can and must be taught.[5]

Boleslavsky's theories, which today are represented in essence as "the method," were supplemented in Theatre Arts by analyses of Stanislavsky's book An Actor Prepares, which set forth the acting method used by the great Russian actor-director. These "comments" were written by Robert Sherwood, Harold Clurman, Norris Houghton,[6] and John Gielgud.[7]

Over a period of eight years Stark Young contributed a provocative series of articles to Theatre Arts on various aspects of the actor's art. In "Illusion in Acting" Young

---

[1] Ibid., July, 1931, p. 608.

[2] Ibid., February, 1932, p. 121.

[3] Ibid., April, 1932, p. 294.

[4] Ibid., June, 1932, p. 477.

[5] Ibid., February, 1927, p. 121.

[6] Ibid., February, 1937, p. 148.

[7] Ibid., January, 1937, p. 21.

attempted to define the "acting illusion" and "truth in performance."[1] A second essay, "The Prompt Book," concerned movement and gesture.[2] Here Young pointed out that "the art of acting does not consist only of what is felt" but that "much of it lies in the external means by which feeling is conveyed." Other articles by Young concerned character acting[3] and the actor's use of the voice.[4]

A second group of articles written by Stark Young and entitled "Billet Doux" were explicit criticism of acting technique. Each essay consisted of several short treatises on various acting problems in the form of direct address by the writer to the unidentified actor. The subtitles of several of these "Billet Doux" will suggest the nature of the subject. The October, 1929, essay was addressed "To a Well-Dressed Wretched Young Lady" (on costume), "To an Actress Warming Her Hands" (on movement), "To the Victim of a Long Run" (on keeping a performance alive), "To an Actor Who Desires to Act Parts with a Grand Style" (drama reflects the times), "To an Actor on Kidding" (objections to ad-libbing), "To One Who is Apologetic," and "To an Actress Who Wishes to Get Herself in Place."[5] The article for May, 1930, was

---

[1] Ibid., February, 1924, p. 98.

[2] Ibid., March, 1924, p. 159.

[3] Ibid., December, 1925, p. 805.

[4] Ibid., October, 1926, p. 667.

[5] Ibid., October, 1929, p. 735.

directed "To an Actress Who is Called Intellectual," "An Item on Old Age," "To an Actor Who is the Layman's Puzzle," "Rhythm and Preaching," "To an Actress in a French Play," "Stiff Clothes," "To an Actor Who is Good for the Part but Bad for the Play," and "The Recollection of Scenery."[1] Other "Billet Doux" articles appeared in the May, 1931, and the April and October, 1932, issues of the magazine.[2]

Specific analysis and advice on the actor's use of voice--quality, emotional projection, pronunciation, diction, and emphasis--were offered in articles such as "Voice and the Magic Word," "The Sound of English," and "The Delivery of Words" by Windsor P. Daggett,[3] "Words in the Theatre" by Ashley Dukes,[4] "The Tongues of Angels" by Gilbert Gabriel,[5] "The Lazy Actor" by John Shand,[6] "An Actor Faces the Footlights" by Tamara Daykarhanova,[7] and "The Power Behind the Tone" by George Beiswanger.[8]

Other articles discussed the actor's use of his

---

[1] Ibid., May, 1930, p. 409.

[2] Ibid., May, 1931, p. 385; April, 1932, p. 307; and October, 1932, p. 816.

[3] Ibid., June, 1925, p. 366; January, 1926, p. 25; and July, 1929, p. 536.

[4] Ibid., December, 1925, p. 819.

[5] Ibid., January, 1928, p. 43.

[6] Ibid., February, 1928, p. 119.

[7] Ibid., July, 1932, p. 549.

[8] Ibid., October, 1940, p. 735.

costume and the art of make-up. These included "On Wearing Costumes" by Stark Young,[1] "The Painted Actor" by Ashley Dukes,[2] "The Face of the Actor"[3] and "Make-Up for the Small Stage"[4] by Tamara Daykarhanova.

The second major group of articles on acting in Theatre Arts, and which concern the technique of an individual actor, are best represented by a series of eight essays entitled "The Actor Attacks His Part." Written by Morton Eustis, they were based on interviews with Helen Hayes,[5] Lynn Fontanne and Alfred Lunt,[6] Nazimova,[7] Katharine Cornell,[8] Ina Claire,[9] Burgess Meredith,[10] Lotte Lehmann,[11] and Fred Astaire.[12] The first of the articles begins with an apologetic explanation for the inability of the actor to describe his technique.

> If these players do not enact the role of analyst as smoothly, as fluently or as articulately as they perform on a stage, if they often seem to 'talk around' an aspect of the problem, to pretend that it is impossible to

---

[1] Ibid., February, 1926, p. 89.

[2] Ibid., October, 1925, p. 675.

[3] Ibid., May, 1931, p. 383.

[4] Ibid., July, 1931, p. 561.

[5] Ibid., October, 1936, p. 798.

[6] Ibid., November, 1936, p. 857.

[7] Ibid., December, 1936, p. 950.

[8] Ibid., January, 1937, p. 37.

[9] Ibid., February, 1937, p. 126.

[10] Ibid., March, 1937, p. 227.

[11] Ibid., April, 1937, p. 285.

[12] Ibid., May, 1937, p. 371.

> fathom the method of an actor's achievement, to suggest that technique is an instrument which defies analysis, do not blame them too severely. How can they be expected to know as much about technique as the dressing-room artiste and her critical colleagues to whom the how's, the why's, the when's and if's of acting are an open book? They are only artists who 'tread the boards' as best they know how. The 'manner of their artistic execution, the part of their artistic work that is reducible to formula' (to follow the Oxford Dictionary's definition of technique) remains to them an uncertain, almost an inexplicable, quantity.[1]

Each article attempted to draw from the actor his approach to the playscript, his study and preparation of the character in rehearsal, and his performance of the role. Similarities and differences between actors were pointed out. For example, all were agreed that the actor in performance does not "lose himself in the part" or "live the role," that control is an essential tool in the actor's technique. In differentiating the approach of Lynn Fontanne and Helen Hayes, Eustis explained that Miss Fontanne "does not attempt to probe her character until she has worked on the part as an actress--a diametrically different attack from that used by Helen Hayes."[2] Unlike the Lunts and Katharine Cornell, who learn their lines at once, often before the first rehearsals, Nazimova does not commit her lines to memory until the final rehearsals, preferring to concentrate on character development.[3] In his interview with Katharine Cornell, Eustis concluded

---

[1] Ibid., October, 1936, p. 798.

[2] Ibid., November, 1936, p. 858.

[3] Ibid., December, 1936, p. 952.

that "where Nazimova, with the Russian background of training, approaches a role with a complete sense of detachment--feeling that she, herself, is 'nothing, nobody'--Miss Cornell quite consciously attempts to relate a part to herself."[1]

In line with the editor's intention to encourage the young, generally unknown actor, as well as to underline the importance of acting ensemble, Theatre Arts characteristically gave coverage to certain beginning or unrecognized actors. Sidney Shalett wrote in the New York Times that it was not uncommon for the magazine "to go out of its way to give a good deal of space to some obscure actor--who, it feels, is not getting the attention he or she deserves."[2] For example, "Some Younger Actors and the Road They Traveled" introduced readers to Montgomery Clift, Thelma Schnee, James Monks, Perry Wilson, and Joan Tetzel in March, 1944.[3] Another article entitled "Broadway Bits" underlined the importance of the supporting players in a production by describing performances in small roles of actors Russell Collins, Josephine Hull, Lydia St. Clair, Florence McGee, and Mildred Natwick. The last-named actress was given special promotion by critic Isaacs in a review column which reveals the editor's penchant

---

[1] Ibid., January, 1937, p. 40.

[2] Sidney M. Shalett, "Theatre Arts Through the Years," New York Times, Jan. 19, 1941, p. 23.

[3] Theatre Arts, March, 1944, p. 173. Other similar Theatre Arts articles include "They Also Serve" (February, 1936, p. 100) and "Actors in Their Quality" (June, 1941, p. 435).

for championing the cause of a particular actor whom it admired.

> The theatre, so rich in opportunity, is beyond words wasteful of its gifts, especially of the actor's talents. And when you see a young actress as full of power and persuasion as Mildred Natwick, and with such a gift for style and such a sense of the value of technical method, cast over and over again as an old woman, . . . you rebel against the system that makes such a thing possible. . . . It is a wise, gracious, touching performance that meets and masters every expressed and implied opportunity in the character and the situation, but it is nothing less than a shame for this talented girl to be caught, as she is being caught, in this trap of type-casting.[1]

Historical studies and illustrations of actors Richard Mansfield, Edwin Booth, Mrs. John Drew, Joseph Jefferson, Adah Isaacs Menken, and Mrs. Sarah Siddons were covered in Chapter 4.[2]

The final major group of articles concerned with acting are the few written by actors such as Otis Skinner, Cedric Hardwicke, Nedda Harrigan, Richard Whorf, Orson Welles, Cornelia Otis Skinner, John Garfield, Constance Collier, Ray Bolger, and others. These materials included Skinner's comparison of contemporary acting with that of Edwin Booth's day ("After Booth"),[3] Skinner's comments on acting comedy ("Kindling the Divine Spark"),[4] Hardwicke's discussion of the acting profession ("The Moribund Craft of Acting"),[5] Richard

---

[1] Ibid., April, 1936, p. 259.

[2] See above, pp. 95-103.

[3] Theatre Arts, July, 1926, p. 446.

[4] Ibid., September, 1938, p. 667.

[5] Ibid., February, 1939, p. 106.

Whorf's suggestions for a repertory of plays for a national theatre ("What Shall We Play?"),[1] Nedda Harrigan's account of a production performed for American servicemen during World War II ("Round Actors and a Play"),[2] and Constance Collier's description of the reactions of various playwrights to first performances of their plays ("Playwrights at Their Own First Nights").[3]

"The Theatre Takes Stock," in May, 1940, included short analyses of the theatre's ills by Katharine Cornell, Lynn Fontanne, Philip Loeb, Alfred Lunt, and Victor Moore.[4]

Theatre Arts' extensive use of pictures in its coverage of actors is indicated in an extended article entitled "History of Acting in Twenty Pictures" with commentary by Rosamond Gilder.[5] Captions which accompanied photographs of various actors, usually in the character and costume of a particular role, often contained the actor's brief description of his interpretation of the part. The August, 1941, special issue, "A Picture Book of Plays and Players," discussed and illustrated various actors in their important roles in the period from 1916 to 1941. The September, 1938, issue, entitled "In the Service of Comedy," analyzed

---

[1] Ibid., February, 1941, p. 146.

[2] Ibid., June, 1944, p. 357.

[3] Ibid., December, 1941, p. 888.

[4] Ibid., May, 1940, p. 327.

[5] Ibid., September, 1931, p. 739.

techniques of comedy performance through an examination of contemporary comedians and, in addition, provided pictures of outstanding comic artists.

From the scarcity of articles by actors as compared with those from other types of theatre workers, it can be assumed that Isaacs was less successful in stimulating them to write. This scarcity may have been because few people could write analytically about acting at the literary level which Isaacs upheld for the magazine, as contrasted with the many more who could discuss drama at this level. It is also possible, of course, that she failed to get materials from actors when they were between acting engagements and had the time available for writing. In Morton Eustis' series of interviews, however, she appears to have found a partial solution to the problem. This method seems to have been successful with all the interviewees except Alfred Lunt, where resistance to the analysis can be detected in such statements as "How Mr. Lunt achieves his effects is a question he cannot--or will not--elucidate" and "He dislikes putting anything at all on the record about his acting."[1] But the series does provide us with some information about the technique of these actors that we might not otherwise have, since none of them has written any detailed description of his acting method.[2]

---

[1] Ibid., November, 1936, p. 868.

[2] Katharine Cornell wrote her autobiography, I Wanted to be an Actress, in collaboration with Ruth W. Sedgwick.

From its inception, Theatre Arts was dedicated to furthering the cause and welfare of the non-commercial theatre in America in the belief that it was a seed-bed for the professional theatre in New York and the source for a national American theatre. The eight issues under Sheldon Cheney's editorship almost entirely ignored the established commercial theatre, and, while coverage of the professional stage increased significantly during Isaacs' tenure as editor, the non-professional theatre was continually nurtured and encouraged. Except for the three-year period from 1920 to 1924, when little theatre materials were crowded out of the magazine by other subject matter, articles, special issues, and regular columns were increasingly concerned with the non-professional theatres in America. Tables 30, 31, and 32 list non-commercial, little-community, and educational groups covered in Theatre Arts.[1] These tables, however, do not include incidental materials in the form of news notes, etc., within the regular monthly columns.

TABLE 30

NON-COMMERCIAL THEATRES ABOUT WHOM MATERIALS APPEARED IN "THEATRE ARTS" (1916--JUNE, 1945)

Group	Issue
American Laboratory Theatre	July, 1923
Ann Arbor Drama Festival	July, 1936
Central City Opera House	Mar., 1932

[1]Several organizations are included in Table 30 which may be classified as non-commercial in their early days, since their non-commercial goals were probably more important at the time than the commercial.

TABLE 30--Continued

Group	Issue
Civic Repertory Theatre	July, 1929
	Oct., 1934
Group Theatre	Oct., 1934
	Mar., 1939
	Oct., 1940
Hedgerow Theatre	Oct., 1941
Jitney Players	Aug., 1929
Neighborhood Playhouse	July, 1919
	Jan., 1922
	Feb., 1925
	Aug., 1928
	Oct., 1929
	Oct., 1934
Provincetown Playhouse	Mar., 1924
	Oct., 1934
Theatre Alliance	June, 1935
Theatre Guild	Oct., 1921
Washington Square Players	Dec., 1917

TABLE 31

LITTLE AND COMMUNITY THEATRES ABOUT WHOM MATERIALS APPEARED IN "THEATRE ARTS" (1916--JUNE, 1945)

Group	Issue
Amateur Comedy Club of New York	Feb., 1939
Chicago Little Theatre	May, 1917
	Apr., 1920
Cleveland Playhouse	Apr., 1924
	Aug., 1924
	Aug., 1926
	Dec., 1926
Cranbrook Greek Theatre	Nov., 1916
Dallas Little Theatre	July, 1930
Detroit Playhouse	July, 1931
Goodman Memorial Theatre	Sept., 1925
	Sept., 1928
	Mar., 1930
	Jan., 1931
Greenleaf Theatre	Feb., 1918
Hollywood Community Theatre	July, 1919
Le Petit Théâtre du Vieux Carré	Oct., 1937
Little Country Theatre of North Dakota	Sept., 1928
	Feb., 1934
Lobero Theatre	Sept., 1925
Nine O'Clock Theatre	Feb., 1917
Northampton Municipal Theatre	Oct., 1919

TABLE 31--Continued

Group	Issue
Pasadena Playhouse	Jan., 1924
	July, 1935
Pit and Balcony, Inc.	July, 1943
Pittsburgh Playhouse	Nov., 1937
Ram's Head Players	Nov., 1924
Santa Ana Community Players	July, 1929
San Francisco Theatre Union	Oct., 1937
Schenectady Civic Players	June, 1930
Theatre of the Golden Bough	Feb., 1925
Ypsilanti Players	May, 1918

TABLE 32

EDUCATIONAL THEATRES ABOUT WHOM MATERIALS APPEARED IN "THEATRE ARTS" (1916--JUNE, 1945)

Group	Issue
Bennington College	Dec., 1935
Cambridge School of Drama	Jan., 1931
Carolina Playmakers	Aug., 1924
	July, 1937
Carnegie Institute of Technology	July, 1939
Dakota Playmakers	Apr., 1920
King-Coit School	May, 1931
Smith College	Sept., 1928
Syracuse University	May, 1937
University of California (Berkeley)	July, 1921
University of Colorado	July, 1931
University of Iowa	Sept., 1934
University of Texas	Feb., 1917
Vassar College	Jan., 1928
	July, 1929
Washington State Theatre	July, 1937
Wisconsin Players	May, 1917
Wisconsin Union Theatre	July, 1938
Yale University	Apr., 1926
	July, 1936
	Oct., 1937

While most of the materials listed in Tables 30, 31, and 32 were descriptive in content, Theatre Arts also published numerous articles designed to provide specific information to workers in the non-professional theatres of the

nation. These included technical subjects such as stage lighting, stage equipment, stagecraft, stage management, production records, scene paints, mask-making, space staging, and outdoor settings. Articles on the business of the theatre covered organization, incorporation, royalties, budgeting, script rights, guest artists, touring companies, and box office. Other articles discussed problems in producing original scripts, criticism for the non-professional production, values and methods in teaching theatre, and techniques for directing amateurs.

Many of these articles were written by artists working in the field. In this way Theatre Arts encouraged the free exchange of ideas and information, making the best elements of the non-professional theatre available for all to share. A typical example of such materials is the series entitled "Directing Amateurs" written by Valentine B. Windt of the University of Michigan, F. Cowles Strickland of the Little Theatre of St. Louis,[1] Alexander Dean of Yale University, Bernard Szold of Le Petit Théâtre du Vieux Carré,[2] Frederick Burleigh of Pittsburgh Playhouse, and Edwin Duerr of the University of California.[3]

Like the series "The Director Takes Command" written by Morton Eustis, these three articles were designed to

---

[1] Theatre Arts, July, 1937, p. 562.

[2] Ibid., October, 1937, p. 818.

[3] Ibid., November, 1937, p. 899.

reveal the techniques used by six outstanding directors working on amateur productions. In each of the articles the director described his approach to the study of the script, the casting of the roles, and the methods of rehearsal. With three directors from community theatres and three from the university theatre, there was some diversity of opinion about problems and techniques, but each director indicated that there was no standardized formula for directing a play.

Another provocative and helpful group of articles, entitled "Adventures in Cooperation," appeared in Theatre Arts for July, 1935. The four essays were written by Barclay Leathem,[1] A. Everett Austin, Jr.,[2] Franklin F. Hopper,[3] and Valentine B. Windt.[4] The first of the articles, subtitled "Playhouse and University," described the cooperative relationship established between Cleveland Playhouse and Western Reserve University. Leathem emphasized the value for Western Reserve students of rehearsal observation and opportunities for students to appear in productions of the Cleveland Playhouse.

The second article, subtitled "Museum and Theatre," chronicled the establishment of a small theatre within the newly completed Avery Memorial Museum in Hartford, Connecticut. The author described the use of the theatre by the Museum for showing films and its rental to local groups for

---

[1] Ibid., July, 1935, p. 498. [2] Ibid., p. 503.

[3] Ibid., p. 506. [4] Ibid., p. 508.

the production of plays. He recommended the inclusion of theatres in museum buildings throughout the nation.

In a third article, Franklin F. Hopper called for turning the assembly rooms of many libraries into little theatres where plays might be produced and films shown under the library's auspices. He also suggested that other rooms might be profitably used to organize a theatre collection within the library.

The final article was written by Valentine B. Windt and described the cooperative liaison established at the University of Michigan between the dance, music, and drama departments. Combined courses for the three arts were organized and productions were presented which combined the talents of the three groups. The article emphasized the value of such cooperation for the departments concerned and for the University as a whole.

Other leaders of the non-professional theatre who wrote articles for Theatre Arts include Gilmor Brown, Frederic McConnell, Irving Pichel, Thomas Wood Stevens, and John Wray Young for the community theatre; and H. Darkes Albright, George Pierce Baker, Marston Balch, Harold Burris-Meyer, Alexander Drummond, Sawyer Falk, Hallie Flanagan, George Kernodle, Walter Kerr, Frederick Koch, Lee Mitchell, Donald Oenslager, and B. Iden Payne for the educational theatre. In addition, the magazine published articles written by university scholars such as John Cranford Adams, Barrett H. Clark,

John Gassner, Edith Hamilton, and Allardyce Nicoll.[1] This coverage is listed in Table 33.

TABLE 33

NON-COMMERCIAL THEATRE WORKERS IN AMERICA (BOTH DIRECTORS AND SCHOLARS) WHOSE WRITINGS APPEARED IN "THEATRE ARTS" (1916--JUNE, 1945)

Author	Article	Issue
John Cranford Adams ..	"Shakespeare's Stage"	Oct., 1936
	"Romeo and Juliet"	Nov., 1936
H. Darkes Albright ...	"The Theatre in Rural New York"	July, 1940
George Pierce Baker ..	"The Theatre and the University"	Feb., 1925
	"From a Harvard Diary" ...	July, 1933
Marston S. Balch	"Thomas Middleton"	Dec., 1927
	"The Theatre Reforms the Pulpit"	Oct., 1928
	"College and Community" ..	July, 1937
	"Molière in the Casbah" ..	Apr., 1944
Henry Boettcher	"Young Roscius"	June, 1935
	"Portrait of a Theatre-- Drama Department at Carnegie Tech"	July, 1939
Gilmor Brown	"Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow"	July, 1943
Frederick Burleigh ...	"Directing Amateurs"	Nov., 1937
Harold Burris-Meyer ..	"Mechanical Aids to Production"	Apr., 1932
	"Building Number Ten"	Nov., 1932
	"Lighting the Stage"	July, 1932
	"To Architects: Stop! Look! Listen!"	Jan., 1939
F. Curtis Canfield ...	"Evolution of a Playgoer"	July, 1934
Barrett H. Clark	"Edmond Rostand"	Jan., 1919
	"Eugene O'Neill"	May, 1926
	"Paul Green"	Oct., 1928
	"Playwright to Producer" .	Mar., 1935

[1]In 1933 Nicoll was appointed Professor of the History of Drama and Chairman of the Department of Drama at Yale University. He returned to England in 1945.

TABLE 33--Continued

Author	Article	Issue
Barrett H. Clark	"The Theatre Under Your Hat"	May, 1938
	"Letters from Sidney Howard"	Apr., 1941
Windsor P. Daggett ...	"Voice and the Magic Word"	June, 1925
	"The Lineage of Speech"	Sept., 1925
	"Hans Across the Sea" [sic]	Oct., 1925
	"The Sound of English"	Jan., 1926
	"The Delivery of Words"	July, 1929
	"The Art of Speech in Texas"	July, 1930
Harry E. Davis	"The Carolina Playmakers Touring Equipment".	July, 1937
Alexander Dean	"The Little Theatre Presents"	Sept., 1927
	"Directing Amateurs" ..	Oct., 1937
Alexander Drummond ...	"Drama in Colleges" ...	July, 1934
	"The Theatre and Industrial Democracy"	July, 1937
Edwin Duerr	"Charles Ciceri"	Dec., 1932
	"Tributary Theatre Inventory"	July, 1937
	"Directing Amateurs" ..	Nov., 1937
	"Teaching Theatre"	July, 1941
Walter Prichard Eaton	"Acting and the New Stagecraft"	Nov., 1916
	"Realistic Drama and the Experimental Theatre"	Dec., 1917
	"The American Theatre and Reconstruction"	Jan., 1919
	"Eugene O'Neill"	Oct., 1920
	"Playwrights and Professors"	Jan., 1920
	"American Producers--Arthur Hopkins" ...	July, 1921
	"Audiences"	Jan., 1923
	"On Some of the Old Actors"	Mar., 1925
	"Little Theatre Foregrounds"	Sept., 1925
	"A Professor is Thrilled"	July, 1926
	"Talma"	Nov., 1926

TABLE 33--Continued

Author	Article	Issue
Walter Prichard Eaton	"Richard Mansfield"	Feb., 1927
	"Steele MacKaye"	Nov., 1927
	"The Theatre Mrs. Fiske Knew"	May, 1932
	"Edwin Booth"	Nov., 1932
Sawyer Falk	"A Civic University Theatre"	May, 1937
Norman Felton	"Pit and Balcony, Inc." .	July, 1943
Hallie Flanagan	"Rasputin"	Mar., 1927
	"Puppets in Prague"	May, 1927
	"Experiment at Vassar" ..	Jan., 1928
	"Theatre Experiment"	July, 1929
	"A Theatre is Born"	Nov., 1931
	"Kurt Jooss at Dartington Hall"	May, 1934
	"Hell Hath No Limits" ...	Nov., 1934
	"Federal Theatre Project"	Nov., 1935
	"Make with the Maximum" .	July, 1943
Frank Fowler	"Plays Versus Equipment"	July, 1935
Theodore Fuchs	"To Architects: Stop! Look! Listen!"	Jan., 1939
	"Planning a School Theatre"	Oct., 1938
John Gassner	"The Group Theatre"	Oct., 1940
Paul Green	"Drama and the Weather" .	Aug., 1934
Edith Hamilton	"Aeschylus"	Jan., 1929
	"Sophocles"	Feb., 1929
	"Euripides"	May, 1929
	"Tragedy as They Order It in France"	Sept., 1937
	"Who is This Dionysus?" .	June, 1940
	"The Family of Oedipus" .	Dec., 1940
	"Goethe and Faust"	June, 1941
Glenn Hughes	"Making the Film Pay for the Theatre"	July, 1932
	"Amateurs and Professionals"	July, 1940
Frederick Keppel	"Portrait of a Theatre--Drama Department at Carnegie Tech"	July, 1939
George Kernodle	"The Outdoor Setting" ...	July, 1937
	"The Magic of Light"	Nov., 1942
	"The Public Affairs Skit is Here to Stay"	Nov., 1944

TABLE 33--Continued

Author	Article	Issue
Walter Kerr	"Musical Biography"	July, 1940
	"Professional Meets Tributary"	July, 1942
	"Pattern for Originals" .	July, 1943
Frederick H. Koch ...	"A Folk Theatre in the Making"	Aug., 1924
Arch Lauterer	"A Theatre for Bennington"	Dec., 1935
Barclay S. Leathem ..	"Adventures in Cooperation"	July, 1935
	"College and Community" .	July, 1937
George McCalmon	"Playwrights in Uniform"	July, 1944
Stanley R. McCandless	"Glossary of Stage Lighting"	Sept., 1926
	"To Architects: Stop! Look! Listen!"	Jan., 1939
Frederic McConnell ..	"Miriam, Sister of Moses"	Oct., 1919
	"The Cleveland Playhouse"	Apr., 1924
	"The Seeds of a City's Life"	Dec., 1926
Lee Mitchell	"Stage Fencing"	Jan., 1935
	"Stylization in Evanston"	July, 1935
	"The Space Stage Defined"	July, 1936
	"A New Scene Paint"	July, 1937
	"Production Records"	July, 1938
	"The Dance Choir"	Jan., 1939
	"To Architects: Stop! Look! Listen!"	Jan., 1939
	"Portrait of a Theatre--Drama Department at Carnegie Tech"	July, 1939
	"The Effect of Modern Stage Conventions on Shakespeare"	July, 1942
Allardyce Nicoll	"Companions of Autolycus"	Sept., 1933
	"In Search of the Theatre"	Nov., 1934
	"Royal Divertisements" ..	Feb., 1935
Lee Norvelle	"New Play Project"	July, 1942
Donald Oenslager	"A Project for the Ring"	Jan., 1927
	"The Theatre of Indo-China"	May, 1941
B. Iden Payne	"Portrait of a Theatre--Drama Department at Carnegie Tech	July, 1939

TABLE 33--Continued

Author	Article	Issue
Irving Pichel	"Scene and Action"	Apr., 1919
	"Stage Construction for Small Theatre and Community Buildings" ...	Jan., 1920
	"Stage Machinery and Lighting Equipment for Small Theatres and Community Buildings" ...	Apr., 1920
	"The Theatre Without a Stage"	July, 1921
	"Lighting"	Sept., 1925
George F. Reynolds ..	"College and Community" .	July, 1937
	"Amateurs and Professionals"	July, 1940
Samuel Selden	"To Architects: Stop! Look! Listen!".....	Jan., 1939
H. D. Sellman	"Control Board and Dimmer"	July, 1935
Boyd Smith	"The University Theatre"	July, 1933
Richard D. Speer	"Developments in Lighting"	July, 1935
Marian Stebbins	"Electra at Mills College"	June, 1939
Thomas Wood Stevens .	"What the Audience Wants"	Jan., 1931
	"Field Notes on the War in Times Square"	Sept., 1931
	"The Shearman and the Tailor's Play"	July, 1932
	"The Stage Without a Curtain"	Feb., 1938
	"Desert Processional" ...	Apr., 1938
	"Portrait of a Theatre--Drama Department at Carnegie Tech"	July, 1939
F. Cowles Strickland	"Directing Amateurs"	July, 1937
Bernard Szold	"Directing Amateurs"	Oct., 1937
John Wray Young	"Amateurs and Professionals"	July, 1940
Lloyd Weninger	"Lighting Change"	July, 1937
Frank M. Whiting	"Plans for a University Theatre at Minnesota"	Oct., 1944
Valentine B. Windt ..	"Adventures in Cooperation"	July, 1935
	"Directing Amateurs"	July, 1937

Beginning with the September, 1924, issue, most of the articles and other materials specifically directed to the non-professional theatre were included in an annual special issue entitled "The Little Theatre Yearbook," and later renamed "The Tributary Theatre Yearbook." The term "Tributary Theatre" was coined by Isaacs and was proposed as a title for the little theatre issue in the July, 1926, "Editorially Speaking" column. The term was not universally liked, however, because some teachers and groups claimed that they were not training or preparing for the professional theatre in New York. In July, 1947, the little theatre issue title was changed to "Theatre Off Broadway."[1] From 1924 through 1928 this annual special issue appeared in the month of September, and thereafter in the month of July.

In addition to the articles, the Tributary Theatre issue was especially valuable for the large number of illustrations it offered to workers in the field. Rarely were there fewer than forty photographs or drawings in these editions, and some contained as many as ninety or a hundred pictures. Included were scenes of productions at various theatres, as well as photographs of little theatre buildings, equipment, costumes, masks, artists, etc. These beautifully printed pictures set standards and goals for the many non-professional theatres throughout the nation and probably helped to establish national reputations for the artists of these groups.

---

[1] Isaacs' coining of the phrase "off Broadway" was probably not the origin of the present term.

On the occasion of Theatre Arts' twenty-fifth anniversary George Freedley wrote:

> No magazine serves the educational and community stage so successfully as Theatre Arts. Such men and women in this field as Frederick Koch, Gilmor Brown, Frederic McConnell, Barclay Leathem, Marian Stebbins, and Valentine Windt know full well the support that Theatre Arts has given them. They reciprocate it by sending records of their best work for inclusion in the magazine's annual Tributary Theatre issue in July. For twelve years this has proved the most important as well as the most comprehensive recording of their activities.[1]

Theatre Arts claimed, with some justification perhaps, that it had influenced the form of the non-professional theatre structures of the nation through its articles and illustrations of theatre architecture. Essays on this subject were often accompanied by photographs of existing theatres, as well as sketches and plans for proposed projects. Detailed explanatory captions accompanied the designs. Practical considerations such as construction costs, stage equipment, lighting facilities, storage area, and management of the theatre building were also analyzed and discussed in the pages of the magazine. Special architecture issues were published in August, 1926, and in September, 1934. The latter number was expanded by Isaacs into a book, Architecture for the New Theatre, and was published by Theatre Arts, Inc., in 1935. The range of subject matter in these special issues included the heritage of the Greek theatre, the changes needed in the interior of the modern theatre, and the characteristics of the ideal theatre exterior.

---

[1]George Freedley, "The Stage Today," New York Morning Telegraph, Jan. 19, 1941, p. 27.

Some of the articles directed to the non-professional theatre appeared as regular essays in Theatre Arts, many of them appeared in the annual Tributary Theatre issue, and many others appeared in a special department at the back of an issue of the magazine. This department, also called "The Tributary Theatre," was variable in its appearance and variable in size when it did appear. This irregularity was explained by the editor in the January, 1927, issue, when the column made its first appearance.

> From month to month it will print many pages, or few, or none. Sometimes a special article, . . . news and comments, with pictures or without, according as the material presents itself.[1]

The purpose of the column was to provide a specific and concrete source of information and exchange for the non-commercial theatres of the country. Editor Isaacs pointed out that

> . . . many of the finest impulses in the modern theatre originate far away from the metropolitan and professional centers. Much of the best creative talent in playwriting, acting and design is developing there. New audiences are growing up with new dramatic stimulae. Old problems of repertory, direction, organization, financing, architecture are being met and mastered in new ways. Schools and colleges are making new approaches to preparation for artists and for audiences. And a knowledge and understanding of all this is important--not only where it is happening, but even to the most sophisticated centers of the theatre. Every full stream of art must watch its headwaters. . . .[2]

The dedicatory explanation of the new feature's function added this avowal:

---

[1] Theatre Arts, January, 1927, p. 73. [2] Ibid.

> Moreover, there are from year to year increasingly significant men, groups, and organizations, whose power lies in their determination to stay away from New York and to establish real theatres in their own cities. It is vital for these people and these groups to have a medium for the exchange of ideas, of plans and of accomplishment. We will try, with their help, to establish that too.[1]

"The Tributary Theatre" served as a source of news and information on non-commercial theatre activity with the listing of production schedules, announcements of the formation of new groups and new theatres, notices of tournaments and tours, and data on the location and movement of artists in the field. Coverage included such diverse materials as a discussion of censorship in the theatre, a collection of reviews by critics of the little theatres, plans for a theatre building at Amherst, or Dartmouth, or Williams College, advice on obtaining rights to new scripts, and a who's who in the educational and community theatres. Much of this material was accompanied by photographs and sketches illustrating the subject under discussion.

In summarizing the articles on the theatre in America, it seems clear that Theatre Arts was devoted to the development and encouragement of a vigorous and representative American theatre. The early emphasis on foreign theatre was probably intended to provide the example and inspiration, for American coverage increased generally as American artists of stature began to emerge.

---

[1] Ibid.

With the possible exception of Eugene O'Neill and, perhaps, Paul Green, Theatre Arts made no remarkable discoveries of dramatists, but the search for native talent is reflected in the magazine's publication of more than forty American plays. Articles evidenced an interest in an experimental drama, American in character and in theme. With the development of important playwrights, Theatre Arts increased its coverage of American dramatists during the 1930's by more than 300 per cent over earlier coverage.

The influence of the New Stagecraft and the magazine's continuing interest in the designer is indicated in the emphasis given to the work of Jones, Simonson, Geddes, and Mielziner. The frequent and repeated illustrations of their designs, together with the printed materials written about or by them, probably helped to enhance their fame and champion their careers in the theatre. The magazine's characteristic search for new talent led to the early recognition and encouragement of a number of generally unknown or unrecognized artists.

Articles on directing, while comparatively few, covered the ranks of the serious directors in the professional theatre. These materials generally were obtained by interviewing individual directors, by watching a director at work, or by encouraging a director to write about his art. Through an analysis of the directorial style and technique of professional artists, Theatre Arts was able to achieve some clarification of the director's art.

In the category of acting, while Isaacs was not successful in getting articles from actors describing their technique, the magazine made a significant contribution to understanding the actor's art in its publication of Richard Boleslavsky's dialogues on acting. Other articles treated the various phases of technique from the use of the voice to the application of make-up. Again by the use of interview, the approach to a role by important actors was successfully obtained and recorded. In addition, the magazine's effort to extend recognition and encouragement to deserving talent is frequently in evidence. None of these materials manifest concern with the artist's personality or private life, but only with his work in the theatre.

By far the largest coverage in Theatre Arts was given to or directed at the non-commercial theatres of the nation. With the establishment in 1924 of an annual "Tributary Theatre" issue, articles, pictures, and news notes increased in number and scope. The addition of a special "Tributary Theatre" department further increased the coverage. Technical information on all phases of the theatre, both artistic and practical, was provided in these materials, and other articles provided for the exchange of new ideas and information. National recognition was extended to a number of artists in the field by the publication of their writings and pictures of their productions.

Finally, the study of materials on the American

theatre also reveals the magazine's characteristic emphasis on theatrical experiment, repertory organization, the poet in the theatre, the correlation of all the arts, and the correlation of the theatre's past with its present.

CHAPTER VII

THE REGULAR COLUMNS--I

"The World and the Theatre"

Editorial policy is evident in a study of the magazine's several regular departmental columns: "The World and the Theatre," "Theatre Arts Bookshelf," and "Broadway in Review."[1] The former department appeared initially in the January, 1925, issue as "The Great World Theatre"--a title perhaps derived from Max Reinhardt's production of the same name.[2] In October, 1929, the name was changed to "The Theatres of the World." The final title, "The World and the Theatre," appeared with the January, 1930, issue. Although the author of the column was never identified in print, Isaacs acknowledged in an interview that she "always wrote the lead editorials, except at the very beginning when Kenneth, Sheldon, and I shared them."[3]

In content and function the column appeared to be similar to the "Theatre Arts Chronicle" department, which

---

[1]Discussed in Chapter 8.

[2]Max Reinhardt's production of The Great World Theatre was reviewed in Theatre Arts for January, 1923, p. 17.

[3]Personal interview with Edith J. R. Isaacs, White Plains, New York, Sept. 3, 1953.

disappeared soon after the editorial reorganization of the magazine in 1919. Materials took the form of news and reports of theatre events, together with items of direct editorial expression. A meaningful summary of the magazine's editorial attitudes is found in the March, 1939, issue.

> Theatre Arts began as a young man's protest against everything that was wrong with the theatre and it has been active in almost every theatre fight during the whole of its existence--against censorship, against undue regulation and taxation, for organized audiences, for better business methods, for international freedom, for better architecture and a modern building code, against discriminatory legislation, against the application of industrial codes to non-profit theatres, for a worker's theatre, for professional cooperation with the Federal Theatre, for the encouragement of young playwrights, for the production of fresh scripts not only a first but a second time, against the selfishness and narrowness of leaders both in the professional and tributary field.[1]

A few examples of editorial expression taken from this column may serve to illustrate the editor's attitudes and point of view.

Editor Isaacs used "The World and the Theatre" column frequently to argue for greater international exchange in both plays and artists. Noting that more theatres were being built in New York than there were plays to fill them, she urged a favorite solution.

> Our playwrights can't fill new and old theatres, so fill them with foreign plays. Enough interchange and we shall have the theatre we are all looking for.[2]

When Actors Equity Association sponsored a bill which

---

[1] Theatre Arts, March, 1939, p. 159.

[2] Ibid., October, 1925, p. 701.

would bar foreign actors who are not "of distinguished merit and ability" and whose "professional engagements in the United States are not of a character requiring superior talent," Isaacs heatedly replied in her accustomed place.

> In a world that is desperately in need of international peace, fellowship and understanding, the theatre, with its rare capacity for clarification, is the last place that should be invaded by petty nationalism. . . . There is no great national theatre that is not a great international theatre, that is not continually fed and constantly renewed from the sources of the world's theatrical artistry, by the plays and players, the designers and directors of the whole round world.[1]

This editorial advocacy was supplemented by news notes and announcements of visiting foreign artists and groups, as well as foreign tours by American theatre people.

Repeatedly Isaacs emphasized editorially that the solution to the problem of getting more and better plays was not in building more and more theatres. In March, 1929, she explained her point of view.

> Mr. [Al] Woods' contention that too many theatres have partially caused the collapse is right, but his assumption of a diminishing audience is wrong. What is lacking to make all these theatres a success is the playwrights. . . . You do not make more playwrights by building more playhouses. Instead, you merely open the doors of the extra playhouses to play-craftsmen and play-carpenters. . . . More playhouses mean <u>less</u> chance for the best plays, since the competition is keen and prodigiously expensive for plays that will reach the tastes and pocketbooks of the masses, and reach them as quickly as possible.[2]

Two years later "The World and the Theatre" discussed

---

[1] <u>Ibid</u>., April, 1934, p. 238.

[2] <u>Ibid</u>., March, 1929, p. 161.

and analyzed a crisis in theatrical real estate in New York City.

> It was bound to happen. Those who for six or eight years have observed with increasing distrust the over-expansion of theatre building in New York could be surprised only that the recent crisis in theatrical real estate was so long delayed. The fact that a financial debacle has been at least temporarily averted by a plan for readjustment is beside the larger point involved.
>
> The larger point, as Theatre Arts has said at frequent intervals for many years, is this: you do not create playwrights or plays by building playhouses. In the heart of Manhattan Island, where real estate values are correspondingly enormous, there have been erected more playhouses than the theatre could ever have hoped to use consistently. The implications are far-reaching, whether the New York theatre is considered as a business or as an art. . . .
>
> There will be bad plays as long as there are incompetent people to write and stage them, but real estate conditions can--and do--aggravate that situation still further. . . . The result must be apparent to even the most casual looker-on: with "dark" theatres eating up rent incessantly, the only immediate remedy was to rush shows into production and onto Broadway with the least possible delay. A final item completes this unpleasant syllogism: even in periods of the most violent depression, there are still persons with money to whom the theatre is just another gamble.[1]

As a part of her effort to guard and protect the welfare of the non-professional theatre, Isaacs used this column to do battle with the provision in the National Industrial Recovery Act to extend the rules of the Theatre Code to the little theatres as well as the professional stage.

> Under cover of the claim that the little theatres have killed the stock company by unfair competition and have deprived union stagehands and scenic artists of their rightful labor, the National Legitimate Theatre Committee is considering forcing all the little theatres of the country under the Theatre Code. On its face

---

[1] Ibid., September, 1931, p. 707.

> this means obliging them to fulfill the requirements of the commercial theatre as to employment, wages, and hours of work. Actually it means putting the little theatres completely out of business. . . . The whole scheme is so unrelated to the facts of the case, so full of potential harm to the representative American theatre growing up outside New York and so out of harmony with the development of right uses for new leisure . . . that it will probably fall by the weight of its own folly. But since the little theatres are too various in scope, too individual and independent (and incidentally too poor) to form a union of any kind, and since no one who has their interests in any way at heart is represented on the Committee, it is just as well to bring the danger to immediate attention, before it is too late.[1]

The editorial concluded by pointing out that "the competition of road companies and the inefficiency of stock managers and directors, ruined the stock company."

When Actors Equity Association threatened to forbid professional actors to play in Pasadena Playhouse, Goodman Theatre, or Cleveland Playhouse, Theatre Arts joined forces with those groups and other interested theatre artists to dissuade Equity from taking such action. When the union reconsidered favorably, Isaacs announced the action in the December, 1934, column: "The Council of Actors Equity Association made an important decision this month in recognizing the right of its members to play with non-professionals in the casts of the Pasadena Community Playhouse, because the latter is a non-profit community organization."[2]

In addition, the editor used this column to urge the early release of production rights to plays, explaining "how

---

[1] Ibid., December, 1933, p. 905.

[2] Ibid., December, 1934, p. 885.

ridiculous it is that all over the country the chief difficulty of organizations like the Cleveland Playhouse is in getting production rights to plays they need, plays they should have."[1]

To help little theatres solve their budgetary problems Theatre Arts announced its alliance with the Little Theatre Film Service, explaining that

> for many years Little Theatres of various kinds all over the country have written to Theatre Arts that they find it difficult to pay their bills when they maintain a consistently high standard of plays and productions, usually with the corollary that plays less good were the only solution. It has always seemed to Theatre Arts that the only excuse for an experimental theatre is experiment in things worth while. Giving plays just to pay bills is hardly a worth while adventure.[2]

The editor suggested that the best in films might be shown on many vacant days as a supplement to good drama. "To the student of the theatre and to the audience away from the centers of the spoken drama they offer, at their best, examples of direction, composition, and design which should be illuminating."[3] The discussion concluded with an invitation to little theatres to "let us know if interested."

Various types of discriminatory and inhibitory legislation were attacked in this column. Arguing against a federal admissions tax, Isaacs wrote: "Why, instead of being encouraged, music and the drama should be singled out to bear a special burden is to me altogether inexplicable."[4]

---

[1] Ibid., April, 1930, p. 350.

[2] Ibid., September, 1928, p. 614.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid., February, 1928, p. 82.

When the tax was abolished, Isaacs cheered with this note: "The abolition of the tax is said to be due to the efforts of William C. Brady--may his galleries and balconies be full to S.R.O."[1]

In the March, 1931, issue the editor attacked a New York law prohibiting Sunday night performances in the theatre by pointing out that Pavlova could not have danced in New York on Sunday night, while

> . . . a hundred chorus girls in a motion picture theatre next door might cavort throughout the evening with ample legal protection. The legislators of New York State are in the inconsistent position of penalizing high ideals, perfection of artistic endeavor, and rewarding purely commercial entertainment.[2]

A change for the better was celebrated in the May, 1932, column.

> When the history of American art comes to be written one of the significant dates will undoubtedly be April 6, when the Governor of New York signed the bill permitting dance recitals in the theatre on Sunday evenings. This will seem a matter of minor importance, historic and aesthetic, only to those who do not know the long struggle that art in America has had--and is having--to set itself free from a Puritan tradition which is still woven closely into the fabric of our law long after its spiritual control has ceased. . . . The rider, which permits a performance to be forbidden by local option, indicates that the fight has not, even yet, been won, but there is no denying the first day of victory.[3]

When an unheralded law was proposed which would require the licensing of all schools and teachers of any art

---

[1] Ibid., August, 1928, p. 539.

[2] Ibid., March, 1931, p. 179.

[3] Ibid., May, 1932, p. 351.

in New York City, Isaacs warned of the dangers to a careless electorate.

> The dangers that confront a careless democracy whose voters do not regard their suffrage as of vital importance, for even the smallest public office, were never more in evidence than in the recent presentation to the Board of Aldermen of an ordinance to license all schools of the arts and every teacher of any art in the City of New York. . . . But it appeared surreptitiously once; it may appear again at any time, in a slightly changed form, perhaps, and it is obvious that from now on there should be a permanent watch to safeguard the freedom of the arts from political control. It is doubtful if any bill more gruesome could possibly be conceived.[1]

During the thirties Isaacs and Theatre Arts were almost continually involved in an editorial battle with New York City's Building Code which prevented theatre buildings from incorporating offices, bars, restaurants, and other businesses within the building itself. "The World and the Theatre" column regularly promoted a revision of the Code to allow the operation of restaurants and bars in New York theatres. After several months of close battle, Isaacs announced:

> The bill to allow the operation of restaurants and bars in New York theatres has been quashed for this year at least. But since all those concerned knew that a long fight was to be expected, the loss of the bill in committee is neither a surprise nor a great disappointment. It will be advocated again when the new assembly meets next January.[2]

A final example of Isaacs' militant stand against adverse legislation is provided in the column for March, 1938.

---

[1] Ibid., June, 1935, p. 397.

[2] Ibid., July, 1936, p. 491.

This editorial concerned the Federal Arts Bill, originally known as the Coffee Bill, which proposed the establishment of a permanent Bureau of Fine Arts as a unit of the federal government. Although Theatre Arts had always supported such an idea, Isaacs found the legislation objectionable as presented.

> For twenty years Theatre Arts has sponsored the idea of a bureau or ministry of Fine Arts on the theory stated in the Preamble of this Bill, namely: "It is the obligation of the Government to recognize that culture as represented by the arts is a social necessity consistent with democracy and also to recognize that such culture must be encouraged and developed in the interest of the general welfare." But this Bill is the direct negation of its own preamble.
>
> It is not consistent with a high standard in the arts, nor is it democratic, nor financially practical. . . . What is really serious is that by forcing Congress to consider such an unsound and impractical bill irreparable damage may be done to the cause we all have at heart--the ultimate establishment of a creative, democratic Ministry of Fine Arts.[1]

In the following months this column continued the discussion of governmental support of the theatre, adding a description of federal subsidization methods used in various countries of Europe.[2]

Censorship in any form always aroused the ire of editor Isaacs. In the April, 1928, column, noting the closing of Maya by the censor, she described the law which closed the play as "a dangerous law" and one that "should never have been passed."[3] An August, 1931, editorial brought Isaacs'

---

[1] Ibid., March, 1938, p. 163.

[2] Ibid., April, 1938, p. 242.

[3] Ibid., April, 1928, p. 230.

point of view more sharply into focus.

> Theatre Arts has always had the clear editorial conviction that the subject of censorship might happily be omitted from its pages. It might be taken for granted that Theatre Arts subscribers would require no argument on this matter. They would not believe in censorship any more than they would believe in war. Why bother them with other people's limitations? But there has just been formed a National Council on Freedom from Censorship, a militant organization to fight all the censors at once. . . . That does make a battle tempting. The very possibility in this forbidding democracy of being able to read, write, print, buy, sell, see and hear without the help and advice of a policeman, a politician . . . the distant vision of being decent in all the states at once makes a good fight seem a good game. The address of the Council is 180 8th Avenue, New York.[1]

Isaacs decried the formation by churchmen of the Legion of Decency for censorship purposes by emphasizing that "censorship in any form is an evil among a free people, because it limits the individual's responsibility for his own actions."[2] A brief note in the March, 1935, column sadly reported that

> however humiliating it may be to American pride in American freedom of thought, it must be recorded permanently here that the Boston censors considered Sean O'Casey's Within the Gates dangerous to the morals or the taste of their community and refused to allow its production in that stronghold of virtue.[3]

Another illustration of Isaacs' attitude toward censorship is found in the March, 1937, column.

> When you think of what meets the average high school student's eye or ear today in the movies, over the radio, in the news, in the picture magazines, and quite--or

---

[1] Ibid., August, 1931, p. 625.

[2] Ibid., September, 1934, p. 651.

[3] Ibid., March, 1935, p. 165.

> almost--without objection, it makes you gasp a little to hear of plays like Journey's End, As Husbands Go, Twelfth Night, mentioned as questionable theatre material for the young because of some situation they present or because of the human problems involved in their stories.[1]

When the governor of New York vetoed the Dunnigan bill which called for censorship of the theatre, Isaacs pointed out in her column the "need for organized watchfulness over theatre legislation and to applaud the fact that there was no element within the theatre itself not brave enough to oppose the Dunnigan bill openly and vigorously."[2]

Complaints against ticket speculation and ticket prices in New York appeared frequently, and various plans to combat these problems were reviewed and recommended editorially. In the February, 1935, column Isaacs announced a hopeful development.

> A group of the more important producers in New York City have announced a cut in the price of theatre tickets as a factor . . . in a new policy. It might be truer to call such a change a factor in a return to the policy of sanity under which alone a democratic theatre can prosper. . . . But when going to the theatre resumes a normal cost it may re-establish a normal theatre audience. Nothing happier or more hopeful has happened in the world of the playhouse in New York than this decision to bring down the price of tickets.[3]

Individual groups and persons were occasionally editorially criticized in "The World and the Theatre" column. Criticism of the Metropolitan Opera House as being artistically

---

[1] Ibid., March, 1937, p. 173.

[2] Ibid., July, 1937, p. 500.

[3] Ibid., February, 1935, p. 87.

bankrupt and stagnant culminated in a constructive analysis of the Metropolitan's problems by the editor in the April, 1940, issue.

> A Memorandum for Edward Johnson--Dear Mr. Johnson. Would we help your cause if we told the Metropolitan directors to make the goal of their appeal to save the opera two million dollars or nothing? If the Metropolitan is to be a "national institution" we want not only air conditioning but a few more usable seats; we want new productions, more modern, fresher, more vital; we want to modernize the stage and the lighting equipment; we want lyric opera and frequent performances at popular prices. Two million dollars may do it, and two is only twice one. With you as director of the opera, we could have all of that if you had the money to work with. Make them get it.[1]

In another column the Theatre Guild was editorially reprimanded for its refusal to allow an English company to use its translation of Ernst Toller's Man and the Masses. It was "not a sporting thing to do," the editor concluded.[2]

The June, 1934, column lamented the lack of "new young names of importance" in scene design, "due, in large part, to the forbidding tactics of the scene painter's union, and not to any lack of waiting talent."[3]

---

[1] Ibid., April, 1940, p. 225.

[2] Ibid., February, 1925, p. 128. In an interview with Lewis M. Isaacs, Jr., on September 5, 1955, in New York City, it was revealed that early enthusiasm for the Theatre Guild waned after a dispute between Isaacs and Lawrence Langner, director of the Guild, concerning advertising in Theatre Arts. Lee Simonson reported to Isaacs a proposal made by Theresa Helburn at a Guild board meeting that it might save money by cutting its paid advertising out of Theatre Arts, since, it was believed, the magazine would always provide free advertising for the Guild. Isaacs was correspondingly critical, and "the Theatre Guild people withdrew their subscriptions to Theatre Arts."

[3] Theatre Arts, June, 1934, p. 400.

Another issue revealed the editor's distinction between the theatre rebel and the agitator. This particular column included a criticism of the "money" attitude of the Actor's Forum,

> the insurgent group in Actor's Equity, who seems to think that the way to the actor's progress and happiness lies in blocking every move in the actor's world that is not directed to an increase of pay. . . .
>
> If all the young men who mean to fight the actor's cause would stop looking at their own images in the glass for a while and look farther ahead, they might help the actor's cause more definitely and more permanently. . . . They might find such a practical and unromantic job as helping to put a revised theatre section of the Building Code through the Board of Aldermen worth a rebel's attention, . . . because a modern theatre building, where steady work might be made to pay, would serve as a basis for sound organization. If these insurgents were really progressive and really good rebels, they would be thinking of fighting for an all year round theatre for the actor, some place where he could have a contract, at a living wage or better, to play a variety of parts, in a repertory of the world's good plays, forty weeks in the year, working with the same directors, designers, technicians, toward the same theatrical end.[1]

When playwright Sidney Howard criticized the Theatre Guild for replacing some of the highly paid stars in his play with lesser-known actors, Isaacs chided him gently but firmly.

> . . . What is more to the point is a discussion of what becomes, on this new tack of Mr. Howard's, of his own theory of the theatre as a place where an actor should be given every possible opportunity to develop his talents and so to entertain an audience--a theory which he seems to have forgotten when the success of his own plays was affected.[2]

---

[1] Ibid., December, 1935, p. 885.

[2] Ibid., December, 1927, p. 885.

Even a special favorite of Theatre Arts was not immune to the magazine's editorial criticism, and in the November, 1928, column Max Reinhardt was reprimanded for confining his talents for too long to motion pictures in the interest of making money.[1]

But if "The World and the Theatre" column was quick to criticize, it was also quick to defend a particular artist who it felt was being unjustly attacked, or who merited special praise and commendation. When S. H. Church of the Carnegie Institute of Technology attacked Brooks Atkinson as a "literary gunman," Isaacs replied:

> Theatre Arts often disagrees with Mr. Atkinson's criticisms--about Elmer Rice's talent, for example, and about L'Aiglon--but far more often when he says a play is good, or good enough, than when he says it is not. . . . It seems to be Mr. S.H.C.'s chief contention that critics do not safeguard a manager's investments as they should, that the more money a man invests in a theatrical work the more respect a critic must have for him, and that it was, in particular, distinctly evil of Mr. Atkinson to criticize unfavorably The Great Waltz, in which an investment of $300,000 had been made. That an enormous audience likes it in spite of the critics seems to S.H.C. evidence enough of its great value. Is it not rather evidence that the audience has been so trained to motion picture banality, extravagance and lack of standard that it will take a mediocrity like The Great Waltz with an easy heart in spite of the fact that enough money has been expended on it to have endowed a theatre for Eva LeGallienne in perpetuity?[2]

When Eugene O'Neill's talents were questioned by a critic after the failure of The Fountain, Isaacs came to the playwright's defense in her editorial column.

---

[1] Ibid., November, 1928, p. 771.

[2] Ibid., January, 1935, p. 5.

> Obviously, if The Emperor Jones, The Hairy Ape, Anna Christie and Desire Under the Elms were great plays in their degree a month ago, they are not less great if Eugene O'Neill makes hodge-podge of romance. . . . O'Neill is an experimental writer, a man with less talent which he can direct than genius which works through him to success. Anybody who has watched his work carefully would know this. The only charge that can fairly be brought against him today is that he might by this time know better his own limitations and, having experimented with new forms and material in his writing of plays, might advise with others who can see the results more objectively than he can as to whether the plays are worth production.[1]

The majority of materials in this column were reports on news, events, deaths, groups, theatres, production schedules, tours, tournaments, exhibits, books, personalities, and other developments. Many of these, however, were so presented as to reflect editorial expression. For example, the January, 1931, column began with the following item:

> The announcement by the League of New York Theatres that it expects to present a Spring Theatre Festival, like the Reinhardt Festival at Salzburg . . . may be only the work of an inspired press agent. But it is significant just the same, not only because such concurrence in high purpose among so large a group of managers would have been inconceivable two years, even one year ago, but also because this plan "to make the public theatre-conscious and stimulate an interest in the drama" is a really good idea and not in the least impracticable. Making the enormous New York entertainment public "theatre-minded" instead of "show-minded" should be no more difficult than making people "air-minded" or "motor conscious"--assuming the same devotion to the cause, the same honest presentation of the idea.[2]

Other items varied from a note lamenting the closing of Vienna's Prinz Regenten Theatre, a report on the publication of Isadora Duncan's autobiography, My Life, to eulogies

---

[1] Ibid., February, 1926, p. 124.

[2] Ibid., January, 1931, p. 3.

after the deaths of Florenz Ziegfeld, Richard Boleslavsky, and dancer Argentina. Materials ranged over a broad area of subject matter and nationality. Columns in special issues, such as those on the dance and on music in the theatre, were specifically adapted to the materials of the issue.

Under the editorship of Rosamond Gilder after 1945 this column remained the introductory feature of the magazine. Its content was still primarily news and announcements of theatre events and developments. It also continued to editorialize on and promote the causes of the previous editor. As in earlier issues, the column repeatedly urged the establishment of an American national theatre, and toward that end carried frequent news and comment on the American National Theatre and Academy.[1] The column also continued to encourage international artistic exchange and to lament the absence of repertory theatre in America.

The body of materials in "The World and the Theatre" department seems to reflect an active mind searching for ways to help the theatre. It also reveals the editor's particular viewpoints and prejudices. Isaacs used these pages as a channel for the dissemination of news and information on all phases of the art and its artists, as a means of combatting any threat to the welfare of the theatre, as a springboard for promoting better practices for a better

---

[1] Ibid., October, 1945, p. 548; January, 1946, p. 4; May, 1946, p. 254.

theatre, and as a source of stimulation and protection for the developing non-professional theatre of the nation. Like the other facets of the magazine's editorial policy, "The World and the Theatre" column served as an additional force for promoting the general aims of Theatre Arts.

"Theatre Arts Bookshelf"

Editorial policy was more indirectly evidenced in the regular appearance of the "Theatre Arts Bookshelf" column in every issue except those "special" issues previously discussed. In essence, this column was a monthly review of selected books on facets of the theatre and, in a few instances, books related to the theatre. The reviewers varied throughout the years. These included permanent members of the Theatre Arts staff such as Isaacs (also writing under the pseudonym of Frederick Morton),[1] Rosamond Gilder, Kenneth Macgowan, John Mason Brown, Ashley Dukes, Stark Young, and others. From time to time reviews were signed by various scholars, authors, and artists of the theatre such as Montrose Moses, Edith Hamilton, and Lewis M. Isaacs.

The magazine's choice of books for review suggests an editorial policy like that which influenced its coverage of plays, theatres, and artists. The basis for selection appears to have been determined by the editor's judgment of

---

[1]A personal letter to the author from Edith Isaacs, dated October 15, 1952, stated: "You may be interested to know that when I wrote two articles for the same issue, I signed one Frederick Morton; and although I seldom had letters concerning those signed EJRI, FM seemed to be more popular."

the book's importance, for the reviews habitually pointed out the value of the book to its field.[1] When the "Theatre Arts Bookshelf" was enlarged to three columns in the June, 1936, issue, the editor explained the purpose of the expansion, repeating the magazine's belief that theatre books make a reputation slowly. "So, beginning with this issue, Theatre Arts takes the first step by enlarging the book review pages and offering to publishers the opportunity to call their wares in the reviewer's company."[2] If the expansion should produce more theatre, more good books, and more theatre libraries, then the experiment could be called a success, Isaacs concluded. There was no change in the character or function of this column during the two-and-one-half year editorship of Rosamond Gilder.

The contribution and value of the "Theatre Arts Bookshelf" department seems to be in the nature of the consistently high standards applied by the editor to the theatre in print, and in the magazine's intention to bring important books to the attention of workers in the field. Corollary values, of course, would include the encouragement of scholars and artists to write such books.

Editorial Articles

Although under Isaacs' editorship there was no department of Theatre Arts labeled editorial, there was direct

---

[1] See, for example, Theatre Arts, February, 1931, p. 171.

[2] Ibid., June, 1936, p. 483.

expression of editorial policy in a number of articles written by Isaacs, either under her own name or her frequent pen-name, Frederick Morton. Most of these articles advocated actions, plans, or methods which were promoted in other sections of the magazine as well, such as "The World and the Theatre" column and the critical reviews of the New York theatre. Advocatory articles urged the establishment of a national theatre, the improvement of theatre architecture in New York and throughout the nation, the elimination of typecasting, the liberalization of stock rights to new plays, and the improvement of relations between the theatre and the unions.

Almost from its inception Theatre Arts looked to the day when an American national theatre would take its place with the permanent theatres of other nations such as England, France, Ireland, Russia, etc. In 1920 Isaacs wrote an article entitled "1620--the Puritan and the Theatre--1920,"[1] which was an analysis of the traditional American aversion to the theatre and also a challenge to its people to build a permanent theatre representative of American excellence. More than a decade later the magazine actively supported the establishment of the Federal Theatre, a unit of the Works Progress Administration designed to relieve unemployment in the theatre, in the belief that it might be the basis of a national theatre.[2]

---

[1] Ibid., October, 1920, p. 280.

[2] When Federal Theatre was set up in 1935, Isaacs was called upon for advice. She recommended Hallie Flanagan,

Two special issues in August, 1934, and August, 1944, were devoted to a review of national theatres in support of the magazine's advocacy. In "The Irresistable Theatre" Isaacs described the essential characteristics of a national theatre.

> Any living theatre must have five essential qualities: it must have an entity, an organism that can be recognized, as you recognize a human being, by certain traits of character and of physical presence that are marks of personal life. It must have permanence in some one or more of its fundamentals. It may be a permanence of place or of leadership, as in the Moscow Art Theatre or the Vieux Colombier or the Neighborhood Playhouse; of repertory, of company, or of idea, as in Meiningen or the Theatre Libre or the Provincetown, or of any two or three of these combined; but something it must be that stands firm and rooted, something not too transitory, in that transitory world of the theatre where performances die as they live, each day, as a production is set up, played through, and struck. It must have the power of growth, of progress, both in its permanent and its impermanent factors, because times change and it must change with them so that "Plus ça change, plus c'est la meme chose." It must bear within itself the power of generation, the element of renewal, a force that having flowed out of its own inner strength and integrity, can bring back strength from a newer, younger world. And finally it must have a goal that is essentially a theatre goal. There is no reason under the sun why the leader of a fine theatre should not hope to gain money, or power, or preferment from the enterprise. But these are by-products of theatrical success, not essential theatre goals, which must always be in some way related to the performance of good plays by actors of talent, and the consequent development of the theatre's

---

director of Vassar College theatre, for the post of national director. Shortly thereafter Miss Flanagan was appointed to that position by President Roosevelt. Many of the regional directors of Federal Theatre were educational and community theatre leaders whom Isaacs recommended on the basis of her acquaintance with them in the National Theatre Conference. Federal Theatre, however, died in 1939, when Congress cut off its funds (Edith J. R. Isaacs, "Communal Theatre--Indications of a Trend," Theatre Arts, July, 1936, p. 492).

> innate power of entertainment, edification, exaltation, escape and social persuasion. There has probably never been an organized theatre of importance that did not have, to some extent, these five qualities.[1]

The second national theatre issue described and illustrated the various national theatre expressions--French, German, Russian, Yiddish, and Chinese--within the American theatre.

In January, 1940, Isaacs wrote an article entitled "National Theatre--'A Record and a Prophecy,'" in which she analyzed past mistakes both in Federal Theatre and in the original group heading American National Theatre and Academy.[2] The article also described an eight-step plan for a national theatre put forth by Theatre Arts. Isaacs' related activities as a member of the executive board of the American National Theatre and Academy are discussed in the Appendix at the conclusion of this study.[3]

The general concern of the magazine with the state of the Broadway theatre manifested itself in articles on several problems. In May, 1940, an unsigned piece entitled "The Theatre Takes Stock" included this editorial explanation:

> Theatre Arts chose this moment to send a letter to a representative group of the most admired and respected workers in the theatre asking their frank opinions as

---

[1] Theatre Arts, August, 1934, p. 579.

[2] Ibid., January, 1940, p. 55.

[3] See below, p. 368.

> to the causes of the decline and their suggestions for possible remedies. . . . Theatre Arts had no axe of its own to grind. All branches of the theatre without exception, from the teamsters to the dramatists, were invited to contribute and to express themselves without restriction. . . . Since the editors of a magazine have the opportunity, each month, to express their opinions through what they say and what they print, it seems only fair to make no comment of our own at this time. . . .[1]

Then followed replies from Frank Gillmore, Rachel Crothers, Clare Boothe, George Abbott, Mordecai Gorelik, Barrett H. Clark, Margaret Webster, Philip Loeb, Rowland Stebbins, Fred Marshall, Lynn Fontanne, Brock Pemberton, Delia Nimmo, William A. Brady, Elmer Rice, Ruth Richmond, Robert Edmond Jones, Katharine Cornell, Lee Simonson, Vinton Freedley, Victor Moore, Gellendré-Simon, Ben A. Boyer, Aline Bernstein, Arthur Hopkins, Boris Aronson, Warren Munsell, Herman Shumlin, Jo Mielziner, John Shubert, E. F. Kook, Donald Oenslager, Howard Lindsay, Lawrence Langner, William Saroyan, and Alfred Lunt.

In the next issue Isaacs wrote an article, "The Public Takes Stock--An Open Letter to the Officers and Directors of the American National Theatre and Academy," in which she described the results of the survey and urged the calling of a meeting by the above organization for the "development of a plan of action."[2] In addition, the February, 1941, issue announced that "the editors asked a dozen theatre artists

---

[1] Theatre Arts, May, 1940, p. 327.

[2] Ibid., June, 1940, p. 421.

and good friends of Theatre Arts to suggest suitable plays, casts and directors for that part of a repertory which can be planned in advance: classic and modern revivals."[1] The article entitled "What Shall We Play? Repertories for a National Theatre," included the suggestions of Laurence Olivier, Eugene O'Neill, Elmer Rice, Harold Clurman, Auriol Lee, Thornton Wilder, Richard Whorf, William Saroyan, Rachel Crothers, William A. Brady, Arthur Hopkins, and Irwin Shaw.

As has been stated in the section of "The World and the Theatre," Isaacs was vitally concerned with the improvement of theatrical architecture. "To Architects: Stop! Look! Listen!" was an article setting forth desirable elements in theatre buildings.[2] In it Harold Burris-Meyer, Morton Eustis, Lynn Fontanne, Theodore Fuchs, James W. Grieg, Robert Edmond Jones, Alfred Lunt, Stanley McCandless, Lee Mitchell, Samuel Selden, H. D. Sellman, Lee Simonson, Margaret Webster, Orson Welles, and Richard Whorf each offered an analysis of the theatre's structural needs. In December, 1935, Isaacs wrote a challenge to interested people to make suggestions for the revision of the old New York City Building Code in a forthcoming meeting.[3] In the next issue another article reported on what had been done at the meeting and outlined plans for the magazine's fight to allow licensing

---

[1] Ibid., February, 1941, p. 146.

[2] Ibid., January, 1939, p. 67.

[3] Ibid., December, 1935, p. 910.

of bars and cabarets in theatres.[1] The March, 1936, number included an editorial essay entitled "Let's Drink to the Play--A Plea to License Cafes in New York Theatres," by Frederick Morton.[2]

Isaacs' interst in and concern for the art of the actor was indicated in a February, 1933, article: "Type-Casting--The Eighth Deadly Sin."[3] Here she analyzed the practice and described the dangers of type-casting to the artistic growth and development of the actor's art.

In an open letter to the Dramatist's Guild entitled "There's Millions in It!," Isaacs reported in the May, 1935, issue on a survey of stock towns made by Theatre Arts in an effort to effect an earlier release of play rights to non-professional groups.[4] Since stock and non-professional companies generally competed for plays, the dramatists' agents usually gave preference for the release of script rights to the stock companies, because they paid higher royalties. Theatre Arts' survey, which computed the number of towns and cities still supporting stock companies, found that there were few such groups left in the country. In her report on the survey, therefore, Isaacs urged that dramatists change their handling of play rights to allow an earlier release to non-professional groups.

---

[1] Ibid., January, 1936, p. 27.

[2] Ibid., March, 1936, p. 192.

[3] Ibid., February, 1933, p. 131.

[4] Ibid., May, 1935, p. 343.

In 1933 and 1934 Theatre Arts published a series of articles on the theatre's problems in dealing with the theatrical unions. The first, "Collective Bargaining--Theatre With a Union Label," was a critical description and study of the various theatre unions.[1] The second article, subtitled "Confusion Worse Confused," continued the discussion of union demands and practices, but began with an "Editor's Note" which disclaimed any prejudice and pointed to the source of the problem.

> Morton Eustis' article, "Theatre With a Union Label," has brought down on Theatre Arts the complaint that the editor is "against the unions." . . . On the contrary, it seems, to the editor of Theatre Arts, that the only way out of the economic morass in which the theatre is floundering is through better rewards for labor, permanent employment and a share in the profits of product. The worst count against the present business organization of the theatre is that it threatens to bring theatrical labor down to its own level of cupidity and speculation. But Theatre Arts believes in the right of the theatre--the most democratic of the arts, and an international language--to stand free of the mutual distrust of capital and labor, the antagonisms between groups, the penalties of retaliation for past injuries, with which the whole art and business of the theatre are saddled today to everybody's hurt. It believes, moreover, that the simplest way to clear the air is to bring all of the antagonisms into the open, to show how silly and unsound they are in the light of labor's best interests, which must be the best interests of the art that it serves.[2]

These evidences of editorial policy expressed in articles are another facet of Isaacs' continuing effort to advance the theatre as an art. They represent her analysis

---

[1] Ibid., November, 1933, p. 859.

[2] Ibid., January, 1934, p. 33.

of theatrical problems and her recommended solutions. They represent a part of the magazine's advocacy of a national theatre presenting the best in American drama, of an improvement in the theatre's physical structure, of the elimination of unhealthy practices adverse to the theatre's welfare, and of the improvement of relations among the workers of the theatre. Again, these appear to be indications of an active mind searching for ways to help the theatre.

Other regular columns which, although not written by Isaacs, reflect the magazine's editorial policy include "The English Scene," written by Ashley Dukes; "Films in Review," written by Hermine Rich Isaacs; and "Opera in Review," written by music critic Cecil Smith. These columns are briefly considered here for their relationship to the magazine's character and as representative of Theatre Arts' continuing efforts to keep abreast of the times.

"The English Scene" became a regular feature of Theatre Arts when the magazine was expanded in 1930 to include an English office.[1] Essentially a review of the English theatre, the article was also variously titled "The London Scene," "The Scene in Europe," or "The Italian Scene," depending on the materials being discussed. Ashley Dukes, an associate editor of Theatre Arts since 1924, was appointed

---

[1]However, an article entitled "The London Scene" by Ashley Dukes first appeared in the April, 1925, issue of Theatre Arts; and another, "The English Scene" by Ashley Dukes was included in the December, 1926, number. During World War II the column appeared infrequently.

English editor in 1930 and served, thereafter, as author of this column.[1] His reviews occasionally treated only a single play, or a group of plays representing a particular type, a theatrical season, the influences of certain actors, directors, or producers, and personal opinions and ideas of new trends and developments.

When the column was officially inaugurated in January, 1930, Dukes defined the character of his critical approach.

> Our monthly reviews of the London stage, of which this is the first, will consist of theatrical rather than dramatic criticism. And in case any reader should think that a false distinction is being made between these two forms, let us answer his objection forthwith.[2]

He then went on to define the dramatic critic.

> In general, the critic describes the play faithfully as he sees it, and his essential concern is with the play, and the implication of his work is a belief that the whole mechanism of the theatre, with its array of artists, is set in motion to translate printed or typewritten drama into its stage equivalent. The merits or demerits of a performance are measured by the success or failure of the imaginary translation.

Dukes' major complaint against this type of critic seems to have been that too often he is

> inclined to take the literary view of drama, that is to demand a translation of better plays into terms of theatrical performance. How precisely this translation is to be effected by the actors and directors, or how precisely the better and better plays are to be written by the playwrights themselves without a theatre ready

---

[1] "The London Scene" in the October and November, 1932, issues was written by Alistair Cooke.

[2] Theatre Arts, January, 1930, p. 23.

> to receive them, these highbrows are not quite sure; but they are dissatisfied with contemporary drama because it is less subtle than the contemporary novel, or less inspired than contemporary poetry, or even less intelligent than contemporary criticism. The dramatic critic holds the field; the theatrical critic is outnumbered to such a point that he is almost invisible.

Then followed Dukes' description of the theatre critic.

> To our mind theatrical art is not a translation but an original language, like the arts of music or sculpture or painting; and drama represents the ability of the playwright to speak this language and make it his own. To our mind the theatre is to be judged, not by the fidelity with which it reproduces the thoughts and fulfills the intentions of individual dramatists, but by its own capacity to inspire good writing, good playing, good direction, and good design. If good writing comes first among these, and must remain the first, that is because the theatre itself originated in the brooding mind of man; because theatre as well as drama is a branch of poetics; and because the dramatist's written word is the sole enduring record of theatrical performance.

He concluded his discussion by identifying himself and

Theatre Arts with the theatrical public.

> The real theatrical public, which is that small section of the public in the habit of playgoing, is intensely interested in theatrical presentation and would be interested in theatrical criticism if any were forthcoming. Of course it is interested in drama too, but it knows the place of drama in the theatre rather better than the professionals of the press suppose. The real theatrical public would rather see a new theatre with a policy than a new dramatist with an idea. We agree with it most heartily, for we know that when the theatre with a policy is there, the dramatist with an idea will soon be writing for it, and writing the better for the knowledge of the purpose and destination of his work.

This rather lengthy analysis has been included here primarily because it represents the clearest and most direct statement of Theatre Arts' critical approach. Echoes of these tenets will be recognized in the following chapter, which deals with the criticism of editor Isaacs.

Dukes' approach in "The English Scene" reflects several characteristics which were entirely typical of the magazine's editorial policy and method. First: his commentary regularly sounded a call for the new and the experimental in the theatre. Second: his criticism of the theatre in England and Europe attempted to relate the plays to the times, to the historical past, or to the new developments and trends in the theatre. And third: in the tradition of his editor, Dukes was enthusiastic in his encouragement of international exchange of plays and artists. His column provided readers of Theatre Arts a direct contact with the theatre of other nations, a contact which was one cornerstone of the magazine's editorial policy.

The "Films in Review" column began its frequent but irregular appearance in Theatre Arts with the October, 1944, issue and continued through the final number in February, 1948. Hermine Rich Isaacs wrote all the columns which appeared. The influence of the magazine's editorial policy is indicated in the fact that the same selective approach was evident in the films chosen for consideration. Although the column was essentially a "review" article rather than one of dramatic criticism, the author recommended in her evaluation only those films she considered worth while or important. Foreign motion pictures were frequently covered in this column.

A new column added during Rosamond Gilder's editorship was entitled "Opera in Review" and was written by music

and dance critic Cecil Smith. It, too, appeared frequently but irregularly, beginning in March, 1947, and continuing through the final issue. This feature offered dramatic criticism of operatic productions in Chicago and New York, and was similar in nature and approach to the "Broadway in Review" columns under Isaacs' editorship.

A summary of the editorial columns in Theatre Arts under Isaacs' editorship reveals that these features were used primarily for the promotion of the magazine's general aims and ideals. Through a dynamic editorial policy, characterized by selectivity, the editor attempted to influence and shape the form and character of the theatre in America, both professional and non-professional.

In a position of prominence at the front of the magazine, "The World and the Theatre" column communicated anything which the editor thought was of concern or importance to the theatre, from a news announcement to the defense or condemnation of an individual person. Such materials provided a clear reflection of the editor's approach to the theatre, her attitudes, opinions, and special prejudices.

"Theatre Arts Bookshelf" provided the same selective treatment and recommendation of the best in print on the theatre and related arts. In addition, the materials suggested an effort to encourage the writing and publication of books about the theatre, which were often slow to sell.

A similar approach can be identified in Isaacs'

editorial articles which promoted the editor's favorite interests such as an American national theatre, revision of the New York Building Code, encouragement of repertory theatre organization, the welfare of the non-professional theatres of the nation, union-management relations in the theatre, and a general concern with the ills of the professional theatre.

Other regular columns, while not written by Isaacs, also reflect her editorial approach and method. The policy of selectivity is in evidence in "The English Scene," "Films in Review," and "Opera in Review."

Although these columns and articles express Isaacs' personal viewpoints and prejudices, they also reveal the recurrent theme of a better world through a better theatre and the active search for ways to realize that theatre. This same editorial approach and advocacy characterizes Isaacs' criticism in the "Broadway in Review" articles discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER VIII

THE REGULAR COLUMNS--II

"Broadway in Review"

Under Isaacs, the critical columns of Theatre Arts were used primarily for the same purpose as the rest of the magazine: promoting the standards of the New Stagecraft and editorializing for or against various aspects or conditions of the theatre. The total impression suggests that Isaacs was an advocate rather than a true critic, for, except when faced with a superb theatrical job of any kind, her prejudices tended to shape her criticism. The magazine's characteristic policy of selectivity is indicated in the choice of plays for review. These plays were chosen or emphasized in order to establish a point of view, and those which did not fit with this viewpoint were either almost grudgingly reviewed, or else entirely ignored.[1]

---

[1]Critic Isaacs explains: "Among the newer offerings, the plays well written, the roles well played, stood out like stars against a dismal background--until February came in, bringing in its train Thornton Wilder's Our Town and Paul Osborn's On Borrowed Time (which appears, by accident and not by preference, at the tail-end of this review) to freshen the atmosphere and change the aspect of the situation" (Theatre Arts, March, 1938, p. 171). In the June, 1935, issue (p. 405) her review notes that since there are so few plays an experiment, attending movies, would be tried. The explanation adds this revealing note: "It may be as

This method of critical selection was initiated, of course, by Sheldon Cheney, founder of Theatre Arts, who elected to review only those productions which met the magazine's standards. As an ardent, crusading advocate of the New Stagecraft, Cheney confined his criticism to the art theatres and largely ignored the commercial theatre. However, the second issue, dated February, 1917, included a selective review of the New York theatre under the title of "New York's Best Season," but it was almost entirely devoted to an evaluation of seven productions "that bore the characteristic poetic or intellectual 'art theatre' stamp."[1] After a cursory two-page review in the December, 1917, issue, Cheney wrote:

> On planning a department which would pass in review all new plays coming to the New York stage, we intended to provide for our readers one more check on the development of a better theatre in America. After enduring more than thirty New York productions in three months, the Editor confesses that he no longer has faith that a record of such offerings can be said largely to concern the real art of the theatre. In future issues we shall continue to list all professional productions (exclusive of musical comedies)--but a new classification will be attempted which will separate the wheat from the chaff more effectively than does the grouping which follows.[2]

In Volume II of the magazine this column appeared under the title of "Comment on Current (Recent) Plays."

With the editorial reorganization of Theatre Arts

---

well to note that while the pictures were not chosen to establish a point of view, neither were they selected wholly at random."

[1] Theatre Arts, February, 1917, p. 67.

[2] Ibid., February, 1918, p. 85.

in 1919, Kenneth Macgowan, one of the co-editors, became the magazine's drama critic by agreement of the other editors, and the review became a regular feature as the introductory article in each issue.[1] Although Macgowan's reviews continued the magazine's policy of selective reviewing, the articles now reflected a broader, more liberal view of the commercial theatre. This development may have been due to the fact that the influence of the New Stagecraft had by now begun to permeate the established theatre in New York, or, perhaps more likely, it may have been the result of reaction against Cheney's extreme prejudice. Cheney himself says that "I was probably more revolutionary and extreme in my dislikes of Broadway methods than the others."[2]

In any case, with Macgowan as critic the format and character of the article took shape. The title of the critique changed with each issue and usually reflected a theme suggested by the materials. Typically, the review began with an overall judgment of the season to date with an effort to define trends and developments in the theatre, followed by brief or detailed consideration of various productions, determined by the critic's evaluation of the production's importance to the theatre.

An examination of Macgowan's fifteen reviews also

---

[1]In an interview Isaacs noted that the editors were in agreement on Macgowan for the magazine's drama critic.

[2]Letter from Sheldon Cheney to the author, December 20, 1953.

indicates that his criticism, like the other sections of Theatre Arts, continued to reflect the magazine's early interest in and enthusiasm for experimental drama, repertory organization, and international exchange. Closely related to experimental drama was the critic's interest in plays which manifested a correlation of the arts in the production. In addition, there was in Macgowan's criticism an enthusiastic interest in the emerging American drama, particularly in the plays of Eugene O'Neill and others writing plays with native American theme. Macgowan's criticism characteristically put the artist's most recent work into the framework of his past achievements, comparing, for example, O'Neill's latest play with his earlier efforts. This critical method was utilized by Isaacs in her years as the magazine's drama critic.

Before Macgowan left Theatre Arts in 1924, he described the editor's plan to uncover critical talent.

> While the experiments of the Provincetown Playhouse call me away from reviewing, this magazine will try an adventure in criticism. For a time at least, the review of each month will come from a different hand. This may serve to bring varying groups of plays under the attention of critical minds peculiarly fitted to write of them. It will certainly provide a kind of sprouting bed from which a new dramatic critic may spring.[1]

During the next months critics for Theatre Arts included Thomas H. Dickenson, Robert Littel, Robert Garland, Edmund Wilson, Thornton Niven Wilder, Carlton Miles, Gilbert Gabriel, and John Mason Brown.

---

[1] Theatre Arts, October, 1924, p. 661.

Apparently Theatre Arts thought Macgowan's prophecy was fulfilled, because from this group it selected John Mason Brown to become permanent critic, a position he held from November, 1925, through June, 1928. Brown, in one capacity or another, continued as an outstanding critic on a journal until he left the Saturday Review of Literature. Robert Littel followed Brown as critic for Theatre Arts for one season and was replaced by John Hutchens, who served from October, 1929, through June, 1932. With Hutchen's departure, Isaacs repeated the earlier experiment, and monthly critics included Mildred Adams, Carl Carmer, Creighton Peet, Herschel Williams, Morton Eustis, Alison Smith, Barclay McCarty, and Merrill Denison. Table 34 lists play reviewers for Theatre Arts in chronological order.

TABLE 34

DRAMA CRITICS FOR "THEATRE ARTS" (1916--JUNE, 1945)

Critic	Date
Sheldon Cheney	1916--May, 1918
Kenneth Macgowan	Jan., 1919--Oct., 1924
Thomas H. Dickenson	Nov., 1924
Robert Littel	Dec., 1924
Robert Garland	Jan., 1925
Edmund Wilson	Feb., 1925
Thornton Wilder	Mar., 1925
Carlton Miles	Apr., 1925
John Mason Brown	May, 1925
Gilbert Gabriel	June, 1925
John Mason Brown	Aug., 1925
Gilbert Gabriel	Oct., 1925
John Mason Brown	Nov., 1925--June, 1928
Robert Littel	Oct., 1928--June, 1929
John K. Hutchens	Oct., 1929--June, 1932
Mildred Adams	Oct., 1932
Carl Carmer	Nov., 1932

TABLE 34--Continued

Critic	Date
Creighton Peet	Dec., 1932
Herschel Williams	Jan., 1933
Morton Eustis	Feb., 1933
Alison Smith	Mar., 1933
Barclay McCarty	Apr., 1933
Morton Eustis	May, 1933
Merrill Denison	June, 1933
Morton Eustis	Oct., 1933
Edith J. R. Isaacs	Nov., 1933--Oct., 1938
Rosamond Gilder	Nov., 1938--Dec., 1947

In this instance the search appears to have been unsuccessful, for Isaacs took on the responsibility herself, beginning with the November, 1933, issue. It would seem probable that had she continued to search for promising young critics, she would have found some who qualified by her standards. Apparently, she took on the responsibility because she felt that there should be critical continuity in such a journal, and she had not been able to find a critic whom she could retain. Since there were no experiments in later years, it would seem that she liked the job. The writer believes, however, that this liking was not so much the enjoyment of being a dramatic critic, as of finding a more effective medium for the communication of her basic ideas about theatre. As author of this feature she could more readily promote her views of theatre in the critical columns, probably read by all, than in "The World and the Theatre" and other editorial departments. Her reviews tend to reflect a greater effort to promote her causes than to provide dramatic

criticism. An examination of her basic approach to theatre confirms this view.

Edith Isaacs was a theatre critic rather than a drama critic. In 1932 she wrote that

> . . . an American editor may run the risk of asking whether, besides being a rare journalistic virtue, that literary approach to theatre criticism is not its chief handicap.
>
> The modern English theatre is a literary man's theatre, with Charles Cochran (and one or two others) admitted to the ranks for contrast, with due appreciation and enjoyment of what they do to make the arts of the theatre live, but still with the sense that the kingdom of the theatre is a dramatist's kingdom and not a showman's. While that point of view exists in the theatre it will exist in the press. Perhaps, while that point of view exists in the press it will exist in the theatre.[1]

She objected to that literary view of drama which held that the whole mechanism of the theatre, with its array of artists, is set in motion to translate drama into its stage equivalent. For her, theatrical art was not a translation but an original language, and drama represented the ability of the playwright to speak this language and make it his own. Reviewing Victoria Regina in February, 1936, she noted that "play structure is one of the elements which we, in today's theatre, have agreed to leave free to the playwright's personal desire."[2] Thus, the theatre critic is concerned not with the literary merits of the playscript, but with the playwright's effectiveness in realizing in his script the potential of the theatre.

---

[1] Ibid., September, 1932, p. 712.

[2] Ibid., February, 1936, p. 98.

More importantly, the theatre critic must give a due share of credit for a performance to other craftsmen than the playwright, recognizing that the drama is simply one art of the theatre and that it is impossible to credit the playwright without measuring the contribution of the actor, director, designer, and other artists. The theatre critic demands and evaluates his theatre "as theatre--drama, design, production and acting all as parts of one theatre whole."[1]

Actually, her criticism indicates that she might even have consciously given special emphasis to other crafts of the theatre, particularly to acting, as a challenge to other critics who she thought stressed the literary art too heavily.

> The visitor to the theatre who happens also to be a dramatic critic is at a decided disadvantage in the formal judgement of plays if he takes an over-keen pleasure in good acting. To judge a play as dramatic literature at a single hearing, with enough accuracy and perspicacity to state its values on paper, you must keep one intellectual eye open steadily during the performance, and intellectual evaluation is--as has so often been solemnly explained--quite a different thing from the free and sensitive enjoyment which we call aesthetic pleasure. If you are a literary man or a social philosopher, the problem is simplified: You will judge a play's theme for its story or social values, the dialogue for its literary quality, the characterization and denouement for their clarity and power, and--whatever the acting is like--you will be able to say with assurance: "This is--or is not--a good play." But when you take your theatre as theatre--drama, design, production and acting all as parts of one theatre whole--and when the acting is so good that it becomes the natural centre of attraction, you are apt to sit back in

---

[1] Ibid., May, 1937, p. 339.

> your seat and enjoy yourself, forgetting that you are a dramatic critic, and thereafter find it very difficult to say just how worthy a drama has been presented.
>
> Sometimes, too, even when you know how dull a play is--as with Bernstein's Promise earlier in the season--you like to pretend that it is better than it is because you want other people to have as good a time as you had watching the actors; yet you know nobody will trouble to go to the theatre if you say: really a very boring script, but you should see what Cedric Hardwicke, Irene Browne, Jean Forbes-Robertson and Frank Lawton do with it. And sometimes again--oftener than we realize, perhaps--good actors really fool us and we do not know whether a play that is particularly well acted is as good as it seems. The relation of the play, as performed, to the drama as written, is one of the many things that account for the variation in critical opinion. . . .
>
> Three times this month the theatermensch has been forced into a doubtful situation by complete casts of excellent players or by single entrancing performances.[1]

Accordingly, she was critical of specific reviewers who she believed were not cognizant of the contribution of the various production artists, other than the playwright. Describing the criticism of Joseph Wood Krutch, she wrote:

> . . . There seems, in other words, to be one element of the theatre change during the last twenty years that Mr. Krutch has missed, even with his keen scrutiny, namely, the change toward a theatre which is a unified organism, and in which it is no longer possible to judge any one element standing alone. Just as it would be impossible today to consider stage design only as a form of painting, so it is impossible to give the modern playwright either his full credit or his full responsibility by treating the drama solely as a form of literature, even theatre literature, without establishing the share that the actor has had in making his words and his characters live. . . .
>
> Theatre Arts has lived so clearly and long in the world of theatre that it is a little difficult today to face that world again made unreal and untheatrical by the separation of its essential parts. A part of its life disappears with such division.[2]

---

[1] Ibid., May, 1937, p. 339.

[2] Ibid., January, 1940, p. 71.

Discussing Alexander Woollcott's criticism of the Theatre Guild production of Goat Song, Isaacs asked:

> But, when all is said and done, what does that graciously reconsidered review, with its generous praise, tell you about Goat Song in the theatre, about what the director, the designer, the actors tried to do with Werfel's difficult script or what means they used to accomplish it? Nothing, really. Read it and see.[1]

She went on then to describe how much more deeply Woollcott was concerned with the whole event in the theatre, including his surroundings, than he was with what was going on on the stage.

While professing admiration for Brooks Atkinson, this revealing comment suggests the editor's point of view.

> Atkinson is not primarily a theatre man. He is first a philosopher, second a poet and last a critic. . . . His approach to the theatre is humanitarian and literary. He responds instantly to plays of social content. . . . His human instincts are much truer than his dramatic. The theatrical values are often apt to escape him.[2]

Isaacs' definition of the theatre critic is further indicated in her professed admiration for the critical approach of John Mason Brown and Stark Young. Reviewing Brown's book Two on the Aisle, she concluded: "There are all too few critics of the theatre who are essentially theatre-minded as he is."[3] In April, 1942, Isaacs wrote an article for Theatre Arts praising the critical method of Stark Young and concluding with this description.

---

[1] Ibid., March, 1942, p. 195.

[2] Ibid., June, 1937, p. 480.

[3] Ibid., November, 1938, p. 839.

> You can get from Stark Young his account of what the play was in relation to other plays in the same style or by the same author; what the actors did or tried to do with their roles, the designer with his setting; what the director achieved with his material--literary and human--and how he did it. And usually--added to that--you can get some illuminating comment on a pertinent phase of one of the arts of the theatre for which the particular play or performance in hand provided apt illustration.[1]

The fact that Isaacs' criticism also attempts to relate the playwright's present effort to his previous work, to evaluate carefully the actor's contribution, and to measure the role of the director and designer in the production suggests that she may have attempted to model her approach on Young's.

Isaacs believed that the responsibility of the theatre critic was to evaluate separately the artist's goals and his success in achieving them. Since the critic must be concerned with the ability of the artist to speak the language of the theatre, the critic must seek to determine: (1) What is the intention of the artist? (2) Does he achieve that intention? How does he achieve it?

> It is impossible to expect a critic not to be influenced unconsciously in his feeling for a play by his feeling for the worth and the truth of the lives presented. But the criticism that says a play of social purpose is good only when the argument it contains does not go too far beyond accepted economic thought is no more honest than the more popular loud-mouthed criticism that counts no play worthwhile that is not socially iconoclastic. The business of the critic is what it always was--to find out what the author intended to do, to report whether he did it and how, and to let the audience decide whether "it was worth doing."[2]

---

[1] Ibid., April, 1942, p. 257.

[2] Ibid., May, 1935, p. 331. This excerpt provides one example of the kind of convoluted writing which Isaacs frequently fell into and which probably confused the reader, even though Isaacs may have known what she meant.

Describing the proneness of the critic to force his own preferences, Isaacs wrote:

> Only the rarest critical genius escapes it and bends his whole effort to seeking out the author's intention instead of using an artist's work as a springboard for a defence of the critic's own ideas, artistic standards and political ideologies. Do you remember what the critics who didn't approve of communism did to one of Clifford Odets' finest and most moving plays, Till the Day I Die?[1]

Isaacs believed that although the theatre critic must not allow his prejudice or preference to warp his judgment of theatrical artistry, neither can he divorce himself from his own background and training. She described the critic's problem in the January, 1932, issue of Theatre Arts.

> . . . But to sit, at the end of a day, before a play which is, in intention, a work of art, to be relaxed enough to get some aesthetic reaction to the drama and the acting, and keen enough to get some intellectual stimulation so that you can rush from the playhouse to your desk and write, in an hour or two, not only the news of the event, but a critical estimate of the event, is a task so huge that no one who has not tried it can measure it. If more people had tried it there would be less who complain that newspaper critics take their prejudices to the theatre with them. Lord help us if they didn't.[2]

Her analysis continued with a description of the advantages enjoyed by the critic of a weekly journal, a description which seems to fit Theatre Arts.

> The man who writes considered reviews for a weekly journal of opinion, such as Stark Young writes for the New Republic, has a chance to weigh his preferences against his facts, to balance intention against achievement, to measure his words, to test his emphasis. He may write

---

[1] Ibid., December, 1942, p. 758.

[2] Ibid., January, 1932, p. 72.

> of the story of the play or of an idea represented by the play, or by the acting, or the production. He may be personal or impersonal--or each, by turn--and so he may bring to print, if he has the mind and the taste and will take the trouble, a critical essay on an event in the theatre as distinguished in method and in writing as Stark Young's reviews, let us say, of The House of Connelly or Mourning Becomes Electra. But a journalist's prejudices, that is, the combination of his natural taste, training and experience are the only solid foundations for his rushed critical thinking and harried writing.[1]

Thus, Isaacs' estimate of the critic's function and responsibility emphasized the importance of writing theatrical criticism rather than dramatic criticism. The critic must judge the play on the basis of theatrical effectiveness, not literary merit. Furthermore, he must weigh the contribution of each of the artists--playwright, director, actor, designer--in the production. Isaacs' reviews illustrate this viewpoint. In five years of theatre criticism there is no dependence upon standard theories of criticism and little use of the standards or terms of literary criticism. Primary emphasis was on production and an estimate of theatrical effectiveness.

The foundation of Isaacs' approach to theatre, and of her critical judgment, was the New Stagecraft ideal of the complete unification and harmonization in the production of all theatrical elements--play, acting, direction, and design. Discussing the award of the Pulitzer Prize to Sidney Kingsley's Men in White, Isaacs wrote:

---

[1] Ibid.

> Against the background of such a year as this, Men in White has come into possession of the Pulitzer Prize. This drama of the struggle that a doctor has between his personal desires and his work, with its envelope of life in a hospital, is by no means a first class play. The writing is said to have been much improved in rehearsal; even so, a reader of the script must wonder at the measure of playwriting values that places Men in White first in this long list. But the thing that makes it (except for the omission of Mary of Scotland) a good selection is that it comes to the stage as a unified work of theatre art, one that has been carefully studied, rehearsed and directed, so that it brings to performance something of every value that every artist in the theatre can contribute--the designer, the actor, the technician, as well as the playwright and director. Men in White is an expression of the newly-developing group sense that is evident in so many of the fresher American theatre enterprises and it will be generally agreed that the prize has been earned not only by Sidney Kingsley but by Lee Strasberg, director, and the actors of the Group Theatre.[1]

A second illustration of New Stagecraft influence in her criticism can be seen in her reference to the stage design by Norman Bel Geddes for a production of Shakespeare's Hamlet.

> During the last month New York critics were asked to judge two such electric productions as Mourning Becomes Electra and the Norman Bel Geddes' Hamlet. If, when they went to Mourning Becomes Electra, they had put aside not only all that they knew and felt about Eugene O'Neill but about the drama generally, they might as well have been any schoolboys put to the task. If they had come to Norman Geddes' Hamlet knowing nothing, or forgetting everything that has happened to the arts of the theatre since the days of Henry Irving and Beerbohm Tree, they would have found their minds so befuddled and their interest so torn that they would not always have heard the play for the excitement of watching the lights. And they might say, as, in fact some critics who were not quite ready for the full simplification of scenery and light did say, that the play was not there. Whereas a critic who took his experience and his training and his taste to the playhouse with him, and who

---

[1] Ibid., June, 1934, p. 410.

> had an adequate endowment of each, while he might or might not like what was done there, would at least be measurably sure to be aware of what it was and to be able to tell his readers what he had seen and heard.[1]

Frequently, Isaacs' critiques attributed the success of a production to its unity and harmony. For example, reviewing the Lunts' production of The Seagull, she concluded that "it is not the excellence of the individual performances or the translation, or the validity of Robert Edmond Jones' setting, but the unity of the production that is the matter of first importance."[2] After seeing Maurice Evans' Richard II, she reasoned that "if the audiences in this dulling season are crowding to the St. James theatre as to some popular musical show, their presence is a tribute to a unified theatre work in which the play, the players, the direction and the design join to form a harmonious whole."[3] Her review of Paul Green's drama, Roll, Sweet Chariot, pointed out that "it is not Paul Green's play alone, and he would be the first person to say so. It belongs to the new theatre that uses imaginatively all the means at its command."[4]

Adversely criticizing Robert Turney's Daughters of Atreus, Isaacs wrote:

> There has seldom been a production more unharmonious in every way. No two parts hung together. The setting was in one mood, the costumes in another, each good in its

---

[1] Ibid., January, 1932, p. 72.

[2] Ibid., May, 1938, p. 328.

[3] Ibid., April, 1937, p. 260.

[4] Ibid., November, 1934, p. 814.

> own way, neither related to the tone of the tragedy as Turney tried to establish it, with a classic background and a modern motivation.[1]

Isaacs' theatre was defined by its power for vicarious experience and for escape. Her theatre was one of illusion where, for the period of the play, the audience suspends disbelief and is captured by the truth of the production. "The theatre," she said, "can never be anything but a release from actuality, or--to use a word much abused by reformers--an escape."[2] In May, 1934, she recorded her definition of theatre by stating that the fundamental quality of a good play is

> . . . the ability to make a man forget for two hours the life he lives and the struggle for money, for work, for love, for peace, for pleasure, for power, that he sees hour by hour in the lives around him, and to make him live with the people of the stage as one of them for the play's length. This power of transmuting the realities of place, person and situation is one of the theatre's essential virtues, making it, to quote again Hebbel's oft-quoted phrase, "the only possible pause in a man's life."[3]

At its best, she believed, the theatre works not on the reason but on the emotions and the imagination.

Isaacs' theatre was not primarily concerned with the successful production or the quick triumph. Distribution of space in reviews was not dictated by the commercial success of the plays. In fact, her critical emphasis might just as easily fall on an obvious failure which she felt was important

---

[1] Ibid., December, 1936, p. 924.

[2] Ibid., May, 1934, p. 322.

[3] Ibid.

to the theatre or which had some especially interesting merit. An examination of Table 35 indicates that she was quite capable of subordinating the hit play of the month under review to what seemed to her a more interesting or significant production. For example, Parnell received almost ten times as much space in review as Boy Meets Girl;[1] Panic by Archibald MacLeish received almost seven times as much space as Petticoat Fever;[2] Escape Me Never received more than five times the space devoted to Three Men on a Horse;[3] and The Wingless Victory received more than three times as much space as You Can't Take It With You, an obvious hit.[4]

TABLE 35

NUMBER OF LINES GIVEN TO PRODUCTION ELEMENTS IN ISAACS' REVIEWS, NOVEMBER, 1933--JUNE, 1938

Issue	Play Reviewed	Play	Acting	Direction	Design	Total
Nov., '33	A Party	54	37	..	..	91
	Double Door	11	4	..	..	15
	Heat Lightning	4	1	1	..	6
	Murder at the Vanities .	14	..	..	..	14
	Kultur	13	..	..	..	13
	The Sellout	8	..	..	..	8
	Come Easy	38	..	..	..	38

[1] Ibid., January, 1936, p. 9.

[2] Ibid., May, 1935, p. 325.

[3] Ibid., March, 1935, p. 173.

[4] Ibid., February, 1937, p. 89.

TABLE 35--Continued

Issue	Play Reviewed	Play	Acting	Direction	Design	Total
Dec., '33	Ah, Wilderness	29	27	..	..	56
	School for Husbands	12	4	..	3	19
	Men in White	31	15	25	..	71
	The Green Bay Tree	19	25	8	..	52
	Sailor Beware	29	8	..	..	37
	As Thousands Cheer	4	17	13	..	34
	The Pursuit of Happiness	11	..	..	..	11
	Her Master's Voice	11	9	..	..	20
	Other New Plays					
	Ten Minute Alibi	..	..	..	..	1
	Keeper of the Keys	..	..	..	..	1
	Let 'Em Eat Cake	..	..	..	..	1
	Champagne Sec	..	..	..	..	1
	Three and One	..	..	..	..	1
	Her Man of Wax	..	..	..	..	1
	The Curtain Rises	..	..	..	..	1
	Spring in Autumn	..	..	..	..	1
	A Divine Drudge	..	..	..	..	1
	Give Us This Day	..	..	..	..	1
Jan., '34	She Loves Me Not	26	12	3	23	64
	The Wise Men of Chelm[a] .	41	11	..	..	52
	Doctor Monica	8	4	..	..	12
	Is Life Worth Living? ..	5	16	..	..	21
	Mary of Scotland	29	55	4	..	88
	Other New Plays					
	The Dark Tower	5	..	..	..	5
	Strange Orchestra	..	..	..	..	1
	Scorpion	..	..	..	..	1
	The Drums Begin	..	..	..	..	1
	Birthright	..	..	..	..	1
	Thunder on the Left	..	..	..	..	1
Feb., '34	Peace on Earth	103	10	..	..	113
	Tobacco Road	79	31	..	..	110
	Jezebel	32	16	..	10	58
	Other New Plays					
	All Good Americans	10	..	..	..	10

[a]Yiddish Art Theatre.

TABLE 35--Continued

Issue	Play Reviewed	Play	Acting	Direction	Design	Total
Mar., '34	The Lake	12	21	20	..	53
	Days Without End	70	39	..	..	109
	Come of Age	33	6	..	..	39
	Wednesday's Child	18	6	..	..	24
	Big Hearted Herbert	18	6	..	..	24
	Other New Plays					
	John Brown	6	6	..	..	12
	The Ziegfeld Follies	7	..	..	..	7
	False Dreams, Farewell ..	..	..	..	..	1
	By Your Leave	..	..	..	..	1
Apr., '34	The Joyous Season	21	5	2	3	31
	The Shining Hour	41	9	2	..	52
	Four Saints in Three Acts	29	3	29	8	69
	No More Ladies	5	23	..	..	28
	Broomsticks, Amen!	22	10	..	..	32
	Richard of Bordeaux	10	12	..	..	22
	Other New Plays					
	The Wind and the Rain ...	1	5	..	..	6
	After Such Pleasures	5	..	..	..	5
	A Hat, A Coat, A Glove ..	..	4	..	..	4
May, '34	They Shall Not Die	51	10	..	7	68
	Dodsworth	5	35	..	..	40
	Yellow Jack	18	12	..	35	65
	Other New Plays					
	The Pure in Heart	16	..	..	..	16
	New Faces	..	..	..	..	1
	The Shatter'd Lamp	..	..	..	..	1
June, '34	Stevedore	13	13	2	1	29
	Moor Born	14	..	..	..	14
Nov., '34	Roll, Sweet Chariot	35	12	..	..	47
	Judgment Day	24	26	..	1	51
	Merrily We Roll Along ...	48	3	..	..	51
	Spring Song	10	12	..	..	22
	Lady Jane	..	17	..	..	17
	The Distaff Side	29	3	..	..	32

TABLE 35--Continued

Issue	Play Reviewed	Play	Acting	Direction	Design	Total
	Other New Plays					
	Divided by Three	10	7	..	..	17
	Small Miracle	6	1	..	..	7
	Spring Freshet	3	5	..	..	8
	First Legion	4	3	..	..	7
	Dream Child	..	..	..	..	1
	Saluta	..	..	..	..	1
Dec., '34	Within the Gates	35	31	2	2	70
	A Sleeping Clergyman ...	10	9	..	5	24
	Conversation Piece	10	18	..	..	28
	Between Two Worlds	39	31	..	..	70
	Personal Appearance	17	5	..	..	22
	The Farmer Takes a Wife	31	6	..	..	37
	Other New Plays					
	Lost Horizons	14	13	..	..	27
	Ladies' Money	6	3	1	..	10
Jan., '35	Jayhawker	44	9	..	..	53
	The Abbey Players[b]	..	42	..	..	42
	L'Aiglon (Le Gallienne)[c]	14	22	..	..	36
	The Children's Hour	39	19	..	..	58
	Brittle Heaven	8	3	..	..	11
	Dark Victory	9	3	..	..	12
	Anything Goes	3	22	..	..	25
	Other New Plays					
	Say When	6	5	..	..	11
	Page Miss Glory	10	5	2	..	17
Feb., '35	Romeo and Juliet (Cornell)	34	46	6	4	90
	Valley Forge	31	7	4	..	42
	Rain From Heaven	28	..	..	..	28
	Gold Eagle Guy	12	5	..	..	17
	Accent on Youth	12	12	..	..	24

[b]Abbey Theatre Players.

[c]Civic Repertory Company.

TABLE 35--Continued

Issue	Play Reviewed	Play	Acting	Direction	Design	Total
	Sailors of Cattaro	19	13	..	1	33
	Mother Lode	21	..	..	..	21
	Ode to Liberty	2	6	..	..	8
	Other New Plays					
	Post Road	4	4	1	..	9
	Thumbs Up!	2	7	..	..	9
	Music Hath Charms	1	1	..	..	2
Mar., '35	The Petrified Forest	21	29	..	..	50
	Point Valaine	9	26	..	..	35
	Escape Me Never!	15	29	..	..	44
	Other New Plays					
	Fly Away Home	9	2	..	..	11
	Three Men on a Horse	3	5	1	..	9
	Laburnum Grove	2	5	..	..	7
	The Old Maid	4	9	1	3	17
	Crime and Punishment	4	..	..	..	4
Apr., '35	Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles	25	12	..	6	43
	Field of Ermine	18	..	..	..	18
	Bitter Oleander	31	9	..	..	40
	Noah	7	14	2	..	23
	Times Have Changed	10	4	4	..	18
	Awake and Sing	22	14	15	..	51
	The Inspector-General [Revizor][d]	6	18	..	..	24
	Rain (Bankhead)	13	9	..	..	22
	The Green Pastures (revival)	..	5	6	..	11
	The Barretts of Wimpole Street (revival)	7	23	1	1	32
May, '35	Petticoat Fever	10	4	..	..	14
	Panic	61	8	2	..	71
	Waiting for Lefty	29	5	..	..	34
	Till the Day I Die	35	6	1	..	42
	Other New Plays					
	Black Pit	20	7	..	2	29

[d]The Moscow Art Players.

TABLE 35--Continued

Issue	Play Reviewed	Play	Acting	Direction	Design	Total
	The Bishop Misbehaves ...	10	3	..	..	13
	The Dominant Sex	4	8	..	..	12
Oct., '35	Flowers of the Forest ...	19	36	2	..	57
	Ceiling Zero	21	14	2	2	39
Nov., '35	Paths of Glory	35	22	4	3	64
	Winterset	51	36	2	2	91
	At Home Abroad	4	22	..	1	27
	The Taming of the Shrew (Lunts)	..	35	..	4	39
	Othello (Merivale)	..	17	..	..	17
	A Slight Case of Murder .	8	1	..	..	9
	The Night of January 16th	14	7	..	..	21
	Most of the Game	15	1	1	..	17
	Other New Plays [If This Be Treason, Blind Alley, Remember the Day, and A Touch of Brimstone reviewed by another critic.]					
Dec., '35	Dead End	56	17	2	29	104
	Porgy and Bess	12	12	13	..	37
	Eden End	20	2	..	..	22
	On Stage	12	2	..	..	14
	Bright Star	23	14	..	..	37
	Other New Plays [Squaring the Circle, Crime Marches On, Jubilee, and Mulatto reviewed by another critic.]					
Jan,, '36	Pride and Prejudice	27	27	5	3	62
	Parnell	30	55	2	5	92
	Mother	27	10	2	8	47
	Jumbo	6	3	..	9	18
	First Lady	5	10	2	..	17
	Boy Meets Girl	3	11	1	1	16

TABLE 35--Continued

Issue	Play Reviewed	Play	Acting	Direction	Design	Total
	[How Beautiful With Shoes, Abide With Me, Peep for the Virgins, Whatever Goes Up, Night in the House, and Let Freedom Ring reviewed by another critic.]					
Feb., '36	Paradise Lost	114	7	..	..	121
	Ghosts (Nazimova)	..	37	..	..	37
	Rosmersholm (Le Gallienne)	2	12	..	..	14
	Victoria Regina	15	19	..	3	37
	May Wine	11	3	..	..	14
	Romeo and Juliet (Cornell revival)	..	29	..	..	29
	Libel!	9	15	13	..	37
Mar., '36	Mid-West	28	4	..	..	32
	Russet Mantle	55	4	5	2	66
	The Puritan	29	2	..	..	31
	Ethan Frome	26	20	1	6	53
	Lady Precious Stream ...	15	10	..	1	26
	Other New Plays					
	Call It a Day	6	7	1	1	15
	Ziegfeld Follies	..	11	..	..	11
	I Want a Policeman	6	4	..	..	10
	A Room in Red and White	2	3	..	3	8
Apr., '36	Ballets Jooss	26	..	..	..	26
	Love on the Dole	24	24	..	..	48
	End of Summer	15	54	2	1	72
	Dear Old Darling	..	17	..	..	17
	Other New Plays [The Postman Always Rings Twice, and Fresh Fields reviewed by another critic.]					
May, '36	Saint Joan (Cornell) ...	27	43	2	6	78
	Case of Clyde Griffiths	17	7	3	6	33

TABLE 35--Continued

Issue	Play Reviewed	Play	Acting	Direction	Design	Total
	Bitter Stream	28	6	..	1	35
	Idiot's Delight	45	21	..	2	68
	Murder in the Cathedral .	38	9	2	3	52
June, '36	On Your Toes	10	16	1	1	28
	Bury the Dead	32	10	2	..	44
Nov., '36	Hamlet (Gielgud)	6	61	3	4	74
	St. Helena	25	35	2	..	62
	Night Must Fall	16	10	..	..	26
	White Horse Inn	6	12	3	..	21
	Reflected Glory	9	20	..	..	29
	Seen but Not Heard	4	4	..	..	8
	So Proudly We Hail	4	..	..	..	4
Dec., '36	Tovarich	17	30	..	..	47
	Stage Door	29	11	3	..	43
	Daughters of Atreus	36	3	1	2	42
	And Stars Remain	9	7	..	..	16
	Swing Your Lady!	24	6	..	..	30
	Iron Men	36	19	4	..	59
	It Can't Happen Here	46	6	..	..	52
	Other New Plays [Ten Million Ghosts, White Man, The Laughing Woman, and Sweet River reviewed by another critic.]					
Jan., '37	Hamlet (Howard)	..	44	..	..	44
	Hedda Gabler (Nazimova) .	21	18	1	..	40
	The Country Wife	8	26	..	1	35
	Johnny Johnson	49	23	3	3	78
	200 Were Chosen	32	4	4	1	41
	Tonight at 8:30	45	3	..	..	48
	Prelude to Exile	8	16	..	1	25
	Other New Plays [Matrimony Pfd. reviewed by another critic.]					
Feb., '37	The Wingless Victory	99	40	..	12	151
	You Can't Take It With You	33	14	..	..	47

TABLE 35--Continued

Issue	Play Reviewed	Play	Acting	Direction	Design	Total
	Brother Rat	14	..	3	..	17
	The Show Is On	2	3	..	..	5
	Promise	5	13	..	..	18
	Other New Plays [Aged 26 reviewed by another critic.]					
Mar., '37	High Tor	42	26	16	..	84
	Othello (Huston)	17	40	1	..	58
	But for the Grace of God	50	..	4	5	59
	The Eternal Road	13	5	10	6	34
	Doctor Faustus (Welles) .	14	10	..	5	29
	And Now Goodbye	17	4	..	..	21
	Other New Plays [Tide Rising reviewed by another critic.]					
Apr., '37	Richard II (Evans)	39	42	16	..	97
	Masque of Kings	40	22	..	2	64
	Yes My Darling Daughter .	12	8	3	..	23
	Having Wonderful Time ...	8	9	..	..	17
	Marching Song	28	2	..	3	33
	Frederika	6	7	..	2	15
May, '37	Storm Over Patsy	25	44	..	..	69
	Candida (Cornell)	10	50	..	..	60
	The Amazing Dr. Clitterhouse	4	27	..	1	32
	Young Madame Conti	18	17	..	..	35
	Chalked Out	1	..	..	..	1
	Red Harvest	2	..	..	..	2
June, '37	Excursion	24	2	1	..	27
	Babes In Arms	6	32	5	..	43
Nov., '37	Virginia	8	10	..	11	29
	George and Margaret	11	3	..	..	14
	French Without Tears	14	10	..	..	24
	The Star-Wagon	44	11	..	..	55

TABLE 35--Continued

Issue	Play Reviewed	Play	Acting	Direction	Design	Total
	Other New Plays [Blow Ye Winds and The Lady Has a Heart reviewed by another critic.]					
Dec., '37	Susan and God	37	17	..	..	54
	To Quito and Back	16	30	6	..	52
	Kate Roche[e]	12	6	..	..	18
	Amphitryon 38	14	14	..	3	31
	I'd Rather Be Right	35	12	..	..	47
	Other New Plays [The Far-Off Hills, Many Mansions, and As You Like It reviewed by another critic.]					
Jan., '38	Golden Boy	66	20	..	..	86
	Of Mice and Men	39	39	4	2	84
	Father Malachy's Miracle	29	13	..	..	42
	Julius Caesar (Mercury Theatre)	18	8	24	..	50
	The Ghost of Yankee Doodle	16	4	..	..	20
	Barchester Towers	20	10	1	..	31
	Other New Plays [Young Mr. Disraeli, Too Many Heroes, Robin Landing, Antony and Cleopatra (Bankhead) reviewed by another critic.]					
Feb., '38	A Doll's House (Gordon) .	18	42	..	..	60
	The Shoemaker's Holiday (Mercury Theatre)	12	13	5	8	38
	Time and the Conways	35	18	1	..	54
	Hooray for What!	..	6	..	1	7

[e]Abbey Theatre Players.

TABLE 35--Continued

Issue	Play Reviewed	Play	Acting	Direction	Design	Total
	Between the Devil	..	5	..	..	5
	The Cradle Will Rock	11	10	..	..	21
	Other New Plays [Edna His Wife, Drama at Inish, Tell Me, Pretty Maiden, Siege, and Three Waltzes reviewed by another critic.]					
Mar., '38	Shadow and Substance	25	9	3	..	37
	Our Town	23	10	..	..	33
	One Third of a Nation ...	33	..	..	6	39
	Yr. Obedient Husband	23	7	..	2	32
	Stop-Over	24	14	..	..	38
	Other New Plays [All That Glitters, The Greatest Show on Earth, Tortilla Flat, Journeyman, If I Were You, Bachelor Born, Sumup to Sundown, and On Borrowed Time reviewed by another critic.]					
Apr., '38	Casey Jones	53	11	2	17	83
	How to Get Tough About It	20	6	..	..	26
	One Is Enough	9	5	..	..	14
	Wine of Choice	39	12	..	..	51
	Murder in the Cathedral .	30	13	1	..	44
May, '38	The Sea Gull (Lunts)	30	30	3	1	64
	All the Living	15	16	4	2	37
	Prologue to Glory	20	8	..	..	28
	Whiteoaks	10	20	..	1	31
	Other New Plays [Haiti, I Am My Youth, Who's Who, Schoolhouse on the Lot, Spring Thaw, and The Hill Between reviewed by another critic.]					
June, '38	What a Life	26	17	4	..	47

In addition, Isaacs sometimes reviewed particular plays at length, knowing that these productions had already failed and closed. Such was the case with Mother Lode,[1] Mid-West,[2] The Puritan,[3] and Your Obedient Husband.[4] A number of favorite productions, including Green Pastures,[5] The Barretts of Wimpole Street,[6] Till the Day I Die,[7] and Romeo and Juliet[8] were reviewed more than once, sometimes when they returned to New York after a tour, but also sometimes during an extended run.

Further evidence of her tendency to emphasize the theatrical values in a particular failure can be found in the reviews themselves. After analyzing the weakness in Robert Edmond Jones' production of Othello with Walter Huston in the title role, which ran for three weeks, Isaacs reproached her readers, stating that "it is greatly to our discredit as a theatre public that we are not concerned with experiment but only with success."[9]

Her criticism of Paul Green's plays, failures at the box-office, also reflect this critical approach. "Although

---

[1] Ibid., February, 1935, p. 103.

[2] Ibid., March, 1936, p. 175. [3] Ibid., p. 178.

[4] Ibid., March, 1938, p. 174.

[5] Ibid., April, 1935, p. 257. [6] Ibid., p. 258.

[7] Ibid., May, 1935, p. 328.

[8] Ibid., February, 1936, p. 104.

[9] Ibid., March, 1937, p. 178.

Roll, Sweet Chariot failed at the box-office, the play and production are sure to be recalled in any history of important contributions to American drama."[1] It may be worth noting that Paul Green's plays have seen few revivals among community theatre groups.

Isaacs looked to the day when the theatre-going public "would care to hear not only of complete success and novelty but of good or exciting elements that made mediocre productions worth seeing, and even of brave adventure that ended in failure."[2] In line with this goal, she selectively evaluated productions in accordance with her view of their importance to the theatre. Does the play in some way advance the theatre or, to use one of her favorite expressions, does it dilate the region of the theatre?

Does the play introduce or mark the advance of a promising young playwright? Instead of merely reviewing his current play, Isaacs' criticism attempted to put it in the frame of his career. She was particularly interested in following the progress of playwrights Eugene O'Neill, Maxwell Anderson, Paul Green, and Clifford Odets. A few examples may illustrate this method. In May, 1935, Isaacs reviewed Odets' Till the Day I Die.

> If you do not like the philosophy of communism you will not like the theme or the story of Till the Day I Die. But that should not muddle your mind about the

---

[1] Ibid., November, 1934, p. 814.

[2] Ibid., April, 1934, p. 243.

> poetic and dramatic quality of the writing, the progressive swell of the action, the rounded characterization of the main figures in the story and especially, Odets' most marked growth, the portrayal of the effect of changing situations on personality.[1]

The following year she measured Odets' dramatic progress in *Paradise Lost*.

> *Paradise Lost* is not a great play, as the Group thinks it is. But it is without doubt an important play because in material and method it marks the fresh, swift advance of a young dramatist who not only thinks and feels deeply, but whose writing talents are essentially and in an unusual degree theatre talents: the power to state a situation in terms of its most dramatic elements, to observe and define character, to write active dialogue, to conquer attention. . . . "Take it from me," he seems to say; and whether you take it or not, you must be impressed by his earnestness and his ideals.
>
> Such a subjective method applied to playwriting has, of course, its obvious penalties. As you watch the play, you find the playwright himself recurrently, and insistently, showing through his characters, and pretty soon you find yourself judging not the play, but the playwright, saying to yourself, "This boy thinks the Bronx is the world. He is not only cock-sure, but naively inexperienced."
>
> All of this only means that Mr. Odets has not made you accept either his first premise or his conclusion. But between the two there still stands a play of more than usual power, observation, tension.[2]

Her review concluded with:

> Odets' speech, moreover, when it is not affected, or perhaps it is more generous to say when it is not affected by his desire to try the higher flights of poetry, almost speaks itself, it is so exactly and seems so instinctively right for the stage--even if it is not always rightly adjusted to the individual character. Half of the strength of *Waiting for Lefty* was the strength of speech, clear, simple, expressive, every word doing its work singly and as a part of a phrase, a speech, a scene. In *Paradise Lost* Odets has carried both of these marked talents--the talent for the word and for writing an actor's play--far ahead of what he did in *Awake and Sing*.[3]

---

[1] *Ibid*., May, 1935, p. 328.

[2] *Ibid*., February, 1936, p. 94.

[3] *Ibid*., p. 97.

And finally, in January, 1938, she compared his achievement in Golden Boy with his previous efforts.

> He is still recording rather than creating, still not quite dramatically mature, with all his faults as plain to see in his playwriting as white figures on a blackboard. But he has vigor, and mental and spiritual pressure of ideas against his material which does not let his story down, and he is acquiring a sure sense of form. He has, moreover, that gift of rhythmic speech which is the mark of the more-than-one-play author.[1]

Since she was also interested in the dramatic progress of Maxwell Anderson, her reviews of his plays attempted to correlate his latest work with previous efforts. In January, 1934, she noted:

> Mary of Scotland marks Maxwell Anderson's tenth anniversary in the theatre, reckoning from the production of his first play, The White Desert, in 1923. Actually that first play was not much more than a tentative groping toward the theatre. Anderson's first real impact came that warm early-season evening in 1924 when a first-night audience threw off its customary lethargy to shout approval of What Price Glory?, the first war play to meet success, Anderson's collaboration with Laurence Stallings. The nine years between that play and Mary of Scotland have not been along a steady, successful path, nor along a single path, but along two ways that have been steadily converging.
>
> Maxwell Anderson is more than any man among us doubly a playwright by virtue of his dramatic insight into the essence of what is wrong that might be made right in the life about him (which makes him turn naturally to the theatre to interpret his own times) and by his poet's power to recreate the people of the past through dramatic means--character, situation, theatre speech. Every step he has taken has marked growth, in choice of material, breadth of handling, quality of characterization or beauty of writing. Night Over Taos, after the success of Elizabeth the Queen, was broader, deeper, yet a failure--the theatre's failure and not the playwright's. Gods of the Lightning pointed an earnest, fearless, angry finger at the Sacco-Vanzetti trial, but Both Your Houses, several years later, with the finger pointed at the houses of

---

[1] Ibid., January, 1938, p. 12.

> government (less angrily, perhaps, if not less bitterly) has a surer vision and a stronger foundation. Mary of Scotland is the best play he has written, the finest poetry, the clearest, most luminous characterization, with the same poet's protest which makes the wrongs of another day as living as our own. In Mary of Scotland the two roads meet.[1]

Isaacs' criticism reveals a preference for the play which attempted to utilize the arts of music and dance in the theatre. This principle of a correlation of the arts in the theatre was also related to New Stagecraft methods and was an important criterion in Isaacs' critical judgment. Her admiration for playwright Paul Green is a case in point. Although Green enjoyed little or no success in the commercial theatre, his plays received enthusiastic and extensive treatment in Isaacs' reviews. In November, 1934, she reviewed one of his plays.

> Roll, Sweet Chariot is a great new thing done, not worthily tried, but beautifully done. For years there has been talking and writing of the possibility of modern plays that should use their people and their themes as the Elizabethans did, not singly but together, weaving the individual stories into a pattern of character and action, adding to all the strength of each. For years there has been a looking forward to the time when someone would make a play of words and music, not separately but jointly, so that the music should be as integral a part of the play's sound and meaning as the words. Roll, Sweet Chariot achieves all this.[2]

Several years later, Isaacs recorded her estimation of Green's contribution to theatre progress in her review of Johnny Johnson.

---

[1] Ibid., January, 1934, p. 17.

[2] Ibid., November, 1934, p. 813.

> If you cannot play the leading roles in the masterpieces of dramatic literature, perhaps the next best thing is to share in the shaping of new theatre forms with the few modern dramatists who will risk the adventure. There are not too many of them, at best, who have anything to say that makes novelty and experiment worth while. Paul Green is one of the few. He is not like Eugene O'Neill, an active iconoclast who goes around smashing obvious theatrical conventions of plot and scene and length of playing time. He is a poet and a philosopher who quite simply ignores any convention that interferes with his poetic desire to dilate the region of the theatre until it reaches back to its older boundaries, which included poetry, song, dance, fantasy, and which recognized the value of the comic interlude in tragedy.[1]

In her annual June summation of the season, in which she reconsidered important productions, Isaacs emphasized the significance for the theatre of Green's efforts.

> To Paul Green goes the enviable, though perhaps not entirely satisfying, honor of being the playwright who has, during the season, gone the longest way forward on the difficult experimental road he has chosen to hew out for himself. Johnny Johnson, produced by the Group Theatre, made no money for the company; very few of the critical notices it received were more than passably favorable. Yet Johnny Johnson may go down in our dramatic history as one of the important plays of the decade, because in it Paul Green almost succeeded in his endeavor to unite dramatic action and speech with music, not using the music as an envelope for the action but as an integral part of the play and a companion to the spoken word. . . . Although Johnny Johnson played for only a few weeks on B'way, it seems safe to predict that it will not be a forgotten play.[2]

In Isaacs' view Green's correlation of music and dance in his drama represented a richer use of the theatre's resources for a fuller theatrical expressiveness.

Her interest in the dance prompted her to encourage

---

[1] Ibid., January, 1937, p. 15.

[2] Ibid., June, 1937, p. 426.

the correlation of dance in the theatre. In April, 1936, she gave a prominent position to a review of the Ballet Jooss.

> If there can be no drama without words, if dance can only be on the broad level of musical comedy, the abstract perfection of the classic ballet, or the separatist stage of the modern dance, then there is no place in the theatre for the more complex and demanding art of the Ballets Jooss, which aims to use theatrically all of the arts of the theatre except speech, and which requires, just as a play does--the participation of the audience to make it complete. But if there are--as surely there are--many forms of dramatic presentation that can dilate, to the theatre's great advantage, the region of the theatre, then the Ballets Jooss are--as their increasing strength and popularity would indicate--doing yeoman service in the field.[1]

Her extensive review of Gertrude Stein's Four Saints in Three Acts was particularly enthusiastic about Frederick Ashton's achievement in correlating dance movement with words and action,[2] because Isaacs believed that the drama is the only one of the arts which can employ to advantage the aid of all the other arts.

Closely related to Isaacs' interest in the correlation of the arts in the theatre was her critical interest in an experimental drama, involving a search for new forms with the stamp of originality and a spirit of adventure. As critic for Theatre Arts, it was not uncommon for her to give extensive treatment to critical or commercial failures which, she felt, represented a playwright's effort at experimentation. In her review of Archibald MacLeish's Panic, she referred to

---

[1] Ibid., April, 1936, p. 254.

[2] Ibid., April, 1934, p. 247. Ashton is choreographer for England's Royal Ballet.

the play as a "vital, valuable contribution to the theatre" and "the outstanding critical failure of the year." She then went on to explain MacLeish's intention and the probable reasons for the play's failure.

> In the writing of Panic, MacLeish was trying to create a form of verse related to modern American life and adaptable to theatre speech. Nor was that his only experiment. Theatre speech, once written, must be spoken in action, and in Panic the action, too, was experimental. . . . There is not a waste phrase or idea in the play, and unfortunately theatre attention today is not organized to take in ideas, or action, or character at quite such speed or under such pressure. . . . If MacLeish had known his theatre more intimately, he might have realized that what he essayed was more than our actors, untrained to such uses of speech and movement, could accomplish in the limited rehearsals given to a play to be presented for three nights only. . . .[1]

The analysis was concluded with the recommendation that the play be given a later revival.

> If you believe in Panic, therefore, perhaps the best thing to do is to let a new audience on another stage go back to the beginning with it, go back to the well-printed page--without further analysis or quotation or judgement--and find out for themselves what is there. There seems little doubt that Panic will be played again; the disturbing doubt is whether--after such a reception--Archibald MacLeish will write another play in this sentient and dramatic form of verse.[2]

Even in his weakest plays, the dramas of Eugene O'Neill enjoyed a prominent place in Isaacs' reviews, partly because of his general importance, but also because she believed that his search for new dramatic form through experimentation merited careful consideration. Although she described O'Neill's Days Without End as "dull, pedestrian, unpoetic, unconvincing," she also pointed out O'Neill's significance in the theatre.

---

[1] Ibid., May, 1935, p. 325. [2] Ibid., p. 327.

> New plays by Eugene O'Neill are always major events in the New York theatre and always a challenge to criticism. They are sure to be serious, powerful theatrical material. In method they are almost consistently venturesome and iconoclastic, aiming to dilate the region in which a modern playwright works by breaking down the conventional limits in which he may work. They leave no doubt of their author's sincerity or of his high social and spiritual purpose. In other words, they call for a critic's full, generous, sympathetic attention. Yet, for all their objective intent, they are so personal that they establish in the auditor an immediate reaction that stands in the way of impersonal, critical judgement. They are more apt to make a man say "I like it" or "I do not like it" than to leave him disinterested enough to ask "What was the author trying to do? Did he do it? Was it worth doing?" This inescapable subjective quality is their worst and most constant limitation.[1]

In her review of O'Neill's only comedy, Ah, Wilderness, it was obvious that she was not impressed.

> Ah, Wilderness, for example, is only a pretty good play--a pretty good, old-fashioned, well-made, undistinguished, conventional family comedy. . . . There is nothing in it, no juicy theatre speech, no compelling characterizations, no bold iconoclasm, to remind an admirer of O'Neill's favored plays that O'Neill is the author.[2]

Yet, Ah, Wilderness was reviewed that month first and received more space than any of the other plays reviewed except Men in White.

Isaacs' basic approach to the theatre is further revealed by a critical penchant for poetic drama, the imaginative fantasy. Her defense of Archibald MacLeish's experimental verse drama, Panic, suggests this preference. Part of her admiration for Paul Green and Maxwell Anderson may be explained by the fact that she identified in each of them the power of

---

[1] Ibid., March, 1934, p. 167.

[2] Ibid., December, 1933, p. 908.

the poet in the theatre. Plays by Green invariably received extended treatment in her reviews. An examination of Table 35 indicates that Anderson's plays were given marked emphasis, if not in first position, then in extent of treatment. Even the least successful of his dramas, Valley Forge and Masque of Kings, were reviewed prominently over more popular fare. An obvious example is her detailed discussion of The Wingless Victory, which received mixed notices, before You Can't Take It With You, an instantaneous hit.[1]

An additional example of Isaacs' critical concern for the poetic drama may be found in her defense of T. S. Eliot's verse play, Murder in the Cathedral.

> Even today, critics are still saying that Eliot's verse does not belong to the theatre; that the action is slow and undramatic; and that the three-time triumph is only a happy accident thrice repeated. Nothing could indicate more clearly how completely we have lost the sense of what theatre verse is, how our habit of seeing poetry as it looks on a printed page has blinded us to the living image created by its spoken presence. Actually Eliot's verse is intensely theatrical and made for the actor. . . .
>
> In form, action, the presentation of character, Murder in the Cathedral is a completely theatrical work.[2]

Isaacs believed that the contemporary theatre needed

---

[1]After giving five times as much space to The Wingless Victory as to You Can't Take It With You, she observed that "there remains after the play just the hint of a feeling that You Can't Take It With You had one eye on the movies, where you can be as funny as you please as long as fun does not interfere with romance when 'Boy Meets Girl.'" Her review concluded with the speculation that "perhaps neither You Can't Take It With You nor Brother Rat will be remembered twenty years from now" (Ibid., February, 1937, p. 96).

[2]Ibid., May, 1936, p. 342.

the enrichment of a thorough grounding in the past. In the March, 1935, issue she described her point of view.

> If you put such plays into the higher brackets your average must be pretty low compared to what you can see of painting and hear of music; that is true. But what have you a right to expect of a theatre from which you ask only new plays each season? The news in the world of painting may end yesterday but it does not begin yesterday. You do not go to the galleries to see only the latest painter's latest work. However radical and surrealist your taste, you temper the modern with the immortal. . . . Consciously or unconsciously your feeling about the vitality of an art season is based almost as much on the fine old things that you see again--in some new arrangement--as upon the paintings exhibited for the first time.[1]

To implement this view, her criticism emphasized and encouraged the production of classic and period plays. Her critical columns gave equally important and sympathetic consideration to John Gielgud's successful Hamlet and to the Othello of Walter Huston and Robert Edmond Jones, a monumental failure. An examination of Table 35 indicates that she was inclined to discuss revivals of great plays (Shakespeare, Marlowe, Molière, Ibsen, and Shaw) ahead of popular current plays, even when the revivals were not well received.

Her enthusiasm for classical drama is illustrated in her review of the Theatre Guild production of Molière's School for Husbands.

> It is good to see Molière, one of the greatest actor-manager-playwrights of all history, on the stage where he belongs. We have kept him far too long in our libraries. Anglo-Saxons, a little fearful perhaps of French style, dare not quite take Molière as he comes, preferring to consider him too little for our age rather than too big for our capacity. But the Theatre Guild has made so

---

[1] Ibid., March, 1935, p. 166.

> enticingly theatrical a production of School for Husbands that other professionals may soon be induced to tread where amateurs with imagination have long ago stepped in.[1]

Isaacs was particularly fond of expressing her preference for the classic and period play by referring to them as plays "with the enchantment of distance." In her January, 1936, review she gave more than four times as much space to a dramatization of Pride and Prejudice than to Boy Meets Girl and First Lady. Her reasons are suggested in the following comment.

> The newspapers, with their mere daily record of world events, have so completely taken over the field of every form of conflict which is the basis of drama that the theatre seemed for a few weeks to be trying definitely, and with some success, to create an opposite effect, to suggest a longer range by a series of plays of varied type that came with the enchantment of distance--in time, place, political society or theatre tradition. Then in a single look, completely upsetting the pattern, came two uproariously gay journalistic comedies out of the immediate life of Washington and Hollywood [First Lady and Boy Meets Girl]. . . . But even their quick triumph, that touched within twenty-four hours the last seat of the top gallery, has not disturbed the quieter victory of the earlier plays, especially of the one that seemed to have the least chance of popular favor, Helen Jerome's dramatization of Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice.[2]

Another example of her interest in the period play is provided in her analysis of Eva Le Gallienne's production of L'Aiglon.

> The play and the part belong to theatre history, and for all its obvious and marked imperfections, it is a right play for a repertory. But L'Aiglon is a period play, and the pompous, artificial elegance of the verse, the romantic tinge to every phrase and to every turn of the action,

---

[1] Ibid., December, 1933, p. 910.

[2] Ibid., January, 1936, p. 7.

> are as much a part of its period and its quality as the story itself. Clemence Dane has done it no service by taking the edge off the poetry in an effort to bring it more closely into harmony with our prose plays. L'Aiglon is not a play to be adapted. It should be played full-heartedly for what it is, or left alone. Nevertheless, even in this blighted condition, there is enough theatrical artifice left to the play to hold the attention high, and enough distinctly good performance to complete an evening's pleasure. . . . She [Eva Le Gallienne] achieved what she had obviously set out to do. With the younger players it was less successful. But some of them can, no doubt, gradually be trained away from the modern naturalistic method to a more old-fashioned and heightened attack, even upon Miss Dane's weak words, and the Civic Repertory production of L'Aiglon kept in the repertory, may still add to the theatre scene a performance at the other extreme from journalism, which is one of the things that Broadway needs today. It is fatal for the theatre to be afraid of the theatrical.[1]

Because of her belief in international theatrical exchange, Isaacs' criticism attached considerable significance to American performances of foreign plays and to international producing groups. "There is no great national theatre," she wrote, "that is not international in scope." Examination of Table 35 indicates that her reviews gave special attention to plays by Sean O'Casey,[2] Paul Vincent Carroll,[3] Federico Garcia Lorca,[4] Jacinto Benavente,[5] George Bernard Shaw,[6] James Bridie,[7]

---

[1] Ibid., January, 1935, p. 12.

[2] Within the Gates (December, 1934).

[3] Shadow and Substance (March, 1938).

[4] Bitter Oleander (April, 1935).

[5] Field of Ermine (April, 1935).

[6] Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles (April, 1935) and St. Joan (May, 1936).

[7] Storm Over Patsy (May, 1937).

J. B. Priestley,[1] André Obey,[2] Nicolai Gogol,[3] H. I. Hsiung,[4] and others. Foreign producing groups included the Abbey Players,[5] the Moscow Art Players,[6] and the Habima Players.[7]

Isaacs believed in the stimulating and provocative force of a healthy left-wing protest theatre to drive "a new wedge into old thinking." In November, 1937, she outlined her view of the potential value of left-wing theatre.

> It is quite safe to say that our commercial theatres are so hungry for scripts today that any good play, whatever its social thesis--unless it openly advocates overturning the government--stands as fair a chance of production on Broadway as on any propaganda stage. And yet it is a very distinct loss to the theatre that so many left-wing groups have fallen by the wayside, for in spite of their unrealistic approach to the theory of the stage, and the generally low standards of their plays and productions, there were useful impulses that came steadily from the left wing. In an art that is unhappily but inevitably fettered to an industry, and that is constantly beset by industry's fear of not being in the height of fashion, the mere impulse of opposition is in itself a worthwhile stimulus. And the theatre, not only on Broadway but all over the country, down to the last beginnings of tributary theatre, has felt the impulse of left-wing energy, of new material, of a new wedge into old thinking. There has been, moreover, with each new group that started, the renewed hope that this particular left-wing theatre might really be what it assumed to be--a worker's theatre --or might at least help to bring a worker's theatre into

---

[1] Time and the Conways (February, 1938).

[2] Noah (April, 1935).

[3] The Inspector-General (April, 1935).

[4] Lady Precious Stream (March, 1936).

[5] The Abbey Players (January, 1935) and Kate Roche (December, 1937).

[6] The Inspector-General (April, 1935).

[7] The Wise Men of Chelm (January, 1934).

> being. And certainly, in an age when the worker's place in society--his right, opportunity, responsibility--is a major issue, the theatre, which claims to be the art that reflects its age most clearly and prophesies most definitely the roads to progress, must, to be complete, have a worker's theatre.
>
> How to create such a worker's theatre, however, is still a master problem, and the left-wing theatres have contributed little to its solution. For it remains true, in spite of intellectual endeavor to prove the contrary, that all artistic creation is the fruit, not of a desire to improve the world, but first, of creative talent; second, of experience renewed in leisure and contemplation.[1]

Because she felt that the theatre needed this force, her reviews emphasized the left-wing dramas produced by various protest groups, often after the plays had quickly closed. Her criticism gave important attention to groups such as the Theatre Union, the Actor's Repertory Company, Federal Theatre, the Mercury Theatre of Orson Welles, and the Group Theatre.

Although her criticism tended to emphasize left-wing theatre, she was frequently critical of the lack of theatrical effectiveness in their plays. Reviewing John Wexley's protest drama They Shall Not Die, Isaacs wrote:

> Such a play is a success if it does its work--if it is true enough theatrically to stir your senses to response. But if it does not break down the wall between the stage and the audience and sweep your feelings across the footlights, if it does not put you on trial, it is, no matter how forceful the material out of which it is made, how important to get the play's message to the audience, not only bad art, but wasted ammunition, as thoroughly wasted as a fired projectile that does not reach its mark. . . . The stage lost its theatre quality because you did not believe your playwright. . . . It would be difficult to find a better example than They Shall Not Die of a propaganda play that failed to do what it set out to do because it cheated the theatre of its integrity.[2]

---

[1] Theatre Arts, November, 1937, p. 842.

[2] Ibid., May, 1934, p. 323.

She went on to describe her view of effective social propaganda in the theatre.

> Upholders of the theatre as propaganda think of the theatre as a bludgeon for ideas instead of a harrow for them. Actually a bludgeon stops the processes by which the theatre functions. The more violence you put upon the theatre's essential methods, the more you reduce its effectiveness and the less it works, either as art or as propaganda.
>
> If you want to use the power of facts as facts to persuade the human mind, you can do it with the newspaper, the forum, the soap-box, the photograph or the newsreel. The theatre at its best and freest works not on your reason but on your emotion and imagination. That is why the best social propaganda in the theatre is a good play, well-presented and well-acted, written by an artist with a social consciousness. The power for propaganda is not in the material, but in the artist. There can be no question of whether he shall or shall not use the theatre to arouse the public mind against injustice, war, race prejudice; the only question is whether he can so use it. As Copeau says, in the theatre one must be more than sincere, one must be capable.[1]

She made similar criticisms of Peace on Earth[2] and the Group Theatre's production of Case of Clyde Griffiths.[3]

Isaacs' standard of effective social drama is, perhaps, best revealed in her critical enthusiasm for such plays as Irwin Shaw's Bury the Dead, Sidney Howard's Paths of Glory, Elmer Rice's Judgment Day, Clifford Odets' Golden Boy, and John Steinbeck's Of Mice and Men. For example, of Steinbeck's tragedy she wrote:

> The drama is the perfect example of what a social play can be, without a line or a word of preachment, with only an artist's creative presentation of his theme and his characters. There is no personal resentment showing

---

[1] Ibid. [2] Ibid., February, 1934, p. 88.

[3] Ibid., May, 1936, p. 338.

> through Steinbeck's, but only pity, deep pity, for the men to whom such things happen in our day, and for the men that let them happen.[1]

Her review of Judgment Day drew this conclusion: "With a little less theatre skill or a little less dramatic quality Judgment Day would remain only an argument."[2]

One of Isaacs' strongest critical prejudices was her objection to what she called "journalistic" drama: plays which were largely transcripts of newspaper headlines or the comic strips.

> . . . Vivid, authentic, spirited journalism is as important to the world of the theatre as it is to literature; our commercial theatre has made the double error, first, of thinking it was of most importance and, second, of treating all plays as though they belonged to the world of journalism. But the theatre has its own revenges. Plays that are focused on the news, related closely to the problem of a day or an hour, do not live longer than their material lives in the world of action, unless, that is, they have the artist's seal upon them.[3]

In her mind such plays, without the artist's influence, would be quickly forgotten.

> It is strange how recurrently, year after year, time sets its mark on certain plays and avoids all others. It is stranger still that the plays so marked are not the most journalistic and immediate, but those that most clearly show the theatre catching up to the artist, often the best plays in each season. All around and about them are sure to be productions that might just as well have come last year, ten years ago, a generation ago, except for a shift of argot, an alteration in a "news slant," or a bit of intellectual fashion that has drifted across the roads of art. They are the routine matter of a routine

---

[1] Ibid., January, 1938, p. 14.

[2] Ibid., November, 1934, p. 814.

[3] Ibid., August, 1934, p. 607.

> theatre, and are as unimportant when they are written "in a good cause" as when they are written simply to make money--which is a good enough cause in a good theatre. . . .[1]

Her review of *If This Be Treason* implied her resentment of the obvious appeal of such plays.

> Although it is certainly not the most realistic of typical journalistic dramas, *If This Be Treason* has the advantage of all plays written out of current headlines: they are bound to incite a quicker response than a less contemporaneous work that might well be finer drama.[2]

Isaacs identified this weakness particularly with the plays of George S. Kaufman. Reviewing his *Merrily We Roll Along*, she wrote:

> All of the plays this month are not in themselves as rewarding as *Roll, Sweet Chariot* and *Judgment Day*. But many of them are entertaining, competently written and so well acted that they provide a wealth of genuine theatre pleasure. So, for example, *Merrily We Roll Along* by George Kaufman and Moss Hart. There is probably nobody in the entire American theatre who can hit the mark he aims at as directly and consistently as George Kaufman. . . . Anybody who does not like his kind of play is, obviously, therefore, in the minority, and if he happens to be a critic it seems only fair for him to admit that he has a distinct prejudice against Mr. Kaufman's usual choice of material. To this critic, at least, taking characters out of life around you, reproducing them photographically (or casting them with enough personal resemblance so that they seem like photographs) with nothing but a shrewd deviation in situation, and sometimes brilliant, sometimes only unkind, satire to make the separation between life and the theatre, does not succeed in achieving theatre. So that if you happen not to be interested in the kind of people and the ideas and the philosophy of life that Mr. Kaufman's writing represents, you cannot be theatrically absorbed in his plays in spite of your admiration for his ability.[3]

---

[1] *Ibid.*, February, 1937, p. 97.

[2] *Ibid.*, November, 1935, p. 824.

[3] *Ibid.*, November, 1934, p. 815.

What seemed to disturb her, in particular, was her belief that Kaufman's success had sired a series of poor imitations, manifesting little more than dramatic carpentry. Her review of Peace on Earth, which specifically blamed Kaufman for the epidemic of shallow plays, sympathized with playwrights and posed the question: "What is the use of telling them that it is a waste of the theatre's money to do what can be done as well on a soap box or with a projection machine if we waste the theatre's money many times?"[1] This critical bias against Kaufman's journalistic methods may have made it impossible for her to evaluate properly a play like You Can't Take It With You, which was probably above Kaufman's ordinary level and which Isaacs treated comparatively briefly.

Isaacs seems to have given willing ear to those dramatists who tried to interpret journalism and the news and not merely report. In May, 1936, she reviewed the Lunts' production of Idiot's Delight.

> Robert Sherwood's drama, Idiot's Delight, with which Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne have come back to New York, although it is as close to the news as anyone could wish who clamors for contemporary comment in its most direct form, makes the news come all the way out to the theatre before the playwright swings into action with it. And even then--leaving the facts of imminent war and its causes all their essential and degrading truth--Mr. Sherwood picks and chooses among them, taking only what a playwright needs for the strict uses of his theatrical situation, his drama's action, his characters' motivation, singly and in conflict. Over and around these facts he builds his play and, because he is an artist and has done his work well, he gives back to his audience, through his

---

[1] Ibid., February, 1934, p. 90.

> actors, the abundant pleasure of a fine theatre performance (which is what they paid for at the box office), plus the full shock of the news "seen through a temperament."[1]

Another playwright who Isaacs felt interpreted the news, rather than merely reported, was Elmer Rice. Her admiration for his plays was based, in part, on her view that Rice was able to present subject matter taken from the news with theatrical power and dramatic skill. She identified this same skill for artistic realism in Sidney Kingsley's Dead End.

> But what we are forever in need of is a stage on which theatre artists can transmute these facts, so that we shall see the river and the children and the dead end of their street before us while we walk along Fifth Avenue, so that not through argument but through the influence of the beautiful thing--a fine play finely presented--we may remember the ugly thing which is the black border of our city life, and remember it so insistently that finally we must do something about it to escape from it ourselves. This thrust is what Dead End, at its best moments, achieves.[2]

Another example is provided in Isaacs' review of Tobacco Road in 1934.

> There is one play that dared to open during the tricky holiday month that followed the autumn's harvest of successes which will, it seems safe to say, be remembered and spoken of--with admiration or with sharp distaste--long after the last curtain has fallen upon its sordid scene. It is Tobacco Road, a story of the Georgia "crackers," which Jack Kirkland fashioned out of a novel of the same name by Erskine Caldwell. It is one of the few dramatizations which emerges as a play in its own right, and is probably one of the bitterest plays ever produced in New York, but one of the most compelling.

---

[1] Ibid., May, 1936, p. 340.

[2] Ibid., December, 1935, p. 892.

> Moreover, it has much of the essential truth and many of the elements of living theatre beauty that Peace on Earth so sadly lacks. He gives you always the feeling of having created something and not merely reported on it, of making it worth his players' while to follow him the full way along the road he chooses for them.
>
> Almost unanimously the dramatic critics of the daily papers agreed that Henry Hull had done the best piece of acting of his career, but that Tobacco Road was too brutal for the theatre. They resented especially the emphasis on the distorted sex aspects of the play as being almost unbearable to watch, and their opinion has been supported by the greater part of those who have seen the play. Which seems strange in a theatre that can take gaily to its heart almost the same distortion treated as farce in The Pursuit of Happiness, that accepts with pleasure the nakedness of Murder at the Vanities, and for which no burlesque joke is too free to be funny. The only thing that makes this comment pertinent to dramatic criticism is the query whether the difference in the reaction to like situations by people who take their theatre seriously is not in itself a comment on what the theatre can do when it exerts its power, making an audience unconsciously share vicariously, or consciously refuse to share, in the play's experience.[1]

Additional examples of her criticism in which she lauded the playwright's skill in creating and not merely reporting may be found in her reviews of such plays as Winterset, Men in White, Yellow Jack, Stevedore, and others.

It is possible that Isaacs' prejudice against journalistic plays may have been related to what appears to be a distaste for light comedy. An examination of Table 35 indicates that she gave considerably more space to serious drama than to comedy. Her reviews suggest only limited interest in playwrights such as Philip Barry, Noel Coward, John van Druten, and S. N. Behrman. In April, 1934, she evaluated Barry's The Joyous Season.

---

[1] Ibid., February, 1934, p. 93.

> The Joyous Season was no worse in such respects than some of Mr. Barry's more successful plays, which relied heavily on clever dialogue for their delight. But there are, somehow, things an audience forgets when a man comes into a room with a good joke on his tongue that they remember unfavorably when he preaches. From the outside it looks as if a little more rehearsal, a few author's changes, omissions and additions in the script, a greater unity of idea in the actors' approach, and a heightened direction might have saved The Joyous Season to the theatre's advantage.[1]

The following year she reviewed Barry's new play, Bright Star.

> One of the most disconcerting failures of an early season which has emphasized quick success and quick failure was Philip Barry's Bright Star, with Lee Tracy and Julie Haydon, probably one of the laziest plays ever written by an experienced playwright. . . . It needs no more than that to know what was the matter with Bright Star, to know, in fact, what has been the matter with so many of Mr. Barry's recent plays. He is living too far from the theatre. Even the plays which showed his talent most clearly showed it as a gift for dialogue and for divining the motives and the manners of people within a limited special range. It was never a boldly original, or complete, theatre talent. It should be fed, heavily fed, on close theatre association, in order not to die of malnutrition. Cannes and Mount Kisco will never make a playwright out of Mr. Barry. All of which is too bad.[2]

Isaacs consistently reviewed unfavorably the plays of Noel Coward. Referring to Coward's "sleek and negligent sophistication," she wrote: "It is doubtful whether a playwright of Mr. Coward's talent and experience ever conceived a less viable script than Conversation Piece or, if conceived is too creative a word, ever threw one together and offered it for performance."[3] The following year she summarized her

---

[1] Ibid., April, 1934, p. 244.

[2] Ibid., December, 1935, p. 899.

[3] Ibid., December, 1934, p. 899.

reaction to Point Valaine (starring the Lunts): "The only trouble with Point Valaine is that it is an empty and an obvious play."[1] Finally, in January, 1937, she reviewed his Tonight at 8:30.

> The amateurish element in what should be the most professional and sophisticated show of the season--Noel Coward's Tonight at 8:30--is less easily forgiven. No one ever thought that Mr. Coward was a playwright with a distinguished talent, or an actor with notable gifts. What he brought to the theatre was a sense of comic relationships in sharp relief, a glib and often brilliant speech, a keen wit, and a certain flair for expressing bluntly and brightly the things that people feel who do not feel deeply. Mr. Coward's more serious ventures have almost always been more superficial than his froth. Tonight at 8:30 has very little sparkle, and nothing to take its place.[2]

Her criticism of S. N. Behrman's Rain from Heaven is summarized by: "Rain from Heaven might easily have been called Conversation Piece."[3]

The light comedy of John van Druten fared little better in her criticism. In her critique of The Distaff Side, she scolded the playwright personally and directly.

> In The Distaff Side, which John van Druten calls "a comedy of women," it must be said frankly that the author is the villain. . . . Really, Mr. van Druten, this must not happen again! It is an insult to the theatre to leave Dame Sybil so nobly barren; it embarrasses an audience to see her moving about there on the stage with her hands tied and her voice dulled down to the tones of suburban maternity.[4]

---

[1] Ibid., March, 1935, p. 173.

[2] Ibid., January, 1937, p. 18.

[3] Ibid., February, 1935, p. 96.

[4] Ibid., November, 1934, p. 818.

Reviewing Most of the Game in November, 1935, she noted:

> John van Druten's new play, Most of the Game, directed by Auriol Lee, achieves a peculiar and not entirely pleasant triumph. . . . The play does not focus very well, and is not funny except in a dozen bright lines of the kind Mr. van Druten knows so well how to write, so it is not possible to be sure of what the author intended. But if the play was, as it seems, a study in boredom, it is so infectious that you can feel and almost hear the audience slump.[1]

In Isaacs' view of the theatre, the drama was identified as only one art of that theatre, making it impossible to credit the playwright without recognizing the contribution of the actor, director, designer, and other artists of the production. Hers was a theatre in the playhouse, and the play was to be judged and evaluated only as it might find expression in the arts of the theatre. This view is best summarized in the following statement.

> The bards who were the ancestors of our playwrights had only the magic of the story-teller's art with which to compel the attention of their audience. The modern playwright has far more than that: he has the actor, the director and designer as collaborators. They can do much to help a playwright point his moral and adorn his tale. But there is one thing that none of them can do, nor all of them together: they cannot take the place of the playwright as a story-teller; they cannot tell his story for him. . . . An actor may hide a story's inherent weakness by the power of his own presence, or a director by shifting the emphasis from story to character. All of these things can help immeasurably to thicken up the weave of a thin tale or to better a poor play, but they will not tell the story a playwright fails to tell. Nothing can do that but another dramatic imagination playing upon the same material as, for example, Shakespeare's imagination played on Holinshed.[2]

---

[1] Ibid., November, 1935, p. 823.

[2] Ibid., December, 1936, p. 919.

The importance which Isaacs attached to the actor's contribution in the production is one of the most significant characteristics of her criticism. "The actor's successful use of his own tools is the major means to a play's fulfillment,"[1] she wrote. Acutely aware and critical of the tendency of drama critics to neglect the actor, she also admitted her own tendency to be overly influenced by an actor's performance.[2] Thus, her reviews often gave particular emphasis to a production because of what she felt was memorable and exemplary acting, even though the other theatrical elements might be ineffective. This emphasis on the actor is also evident in the frequency with which she credited strong acting with lifting weak dramatic material. For example, after pointing out the weaknesses in Broomsticks, Amen!, she added: "Such character playing alone was worth the price of admission to the theatre, assuming, that is, that there are still people left who go to the theatre to see acting."[3]

Although her judgment of Keith Winter's The Shining Hour was unfavorable, she noted that the production was "apt to wheedle your mind into thinking it good because it is so excellently presented, so technically sure and so expertly acted and directed."[4] Of Big Hearted Herbert she wrote:

---

[1] Ibid., September, 1937, p. 675.

[2] See above, pp. 241-42.

[3] Theatre Arts, April, 1934, p. 251.

[4] Ibid., p. 245.

> It is a pleasant evening's entertainment, and would be worth attention even if it had no more to offer than the rich, round acting of J. C. Nugent, and of Elisabeth Risdon, who plays the worn-down, loving, and finally rebellious mother of the family.[1]

Describing Maria Ouspenskaya's performance in Dodsworth, she concluded: "By the perfection of its characterization and the impact of its concentrated power, it gives this well-made, popular, realistic, unimportant drama a moment of theatre escape that is worthwhile."[2] Her admiration for the acting of Helen Zelinskaya of the Yiddish Art Theatre and Francine Larrimore in Spring Song was briefly expressed: "Watching these two women play is enough pleasure for one evening."[3]

In her mind Jayhawker was an important production primarily because of a single speech and the performance of Fred Stone in that speech.

> To hear Fred Stone declaim it was a pleasure not soon to be forgotten. To hear his voice mount and roll and drop and mount and roll again, to watch the great, full movement of his arms, stretched out, held high, joined over his head, clutching his coat and throwing it off, clutching his windbreaker and throwing that off, straining at the collar of his shirt, each release seeming to set his fiery spirit a little more free--that was a performance to remember.[4]

"Parnell," she wrote, "might well not succeed without these players of small parts."[5] In her review of To Quito and Back, she warned:

---

[1] Ibid., March, 1934, p. 171.

[2] Ibid., May, 1934, p. 326.

[3] Ibid., November, 1934, p. 817.

[4] Ibid., January, 1935, p. 9.

[5] Ibid., January, 1936, p. 9.

> But a director who believes in type-casting should be careful that all of his actors play for type surfaces alone, for when a man as talented as Buloff not only looks like Zamiano but can feel and move and act like Zamiano, he can pull a play to pieces with as little effort as a people's revolution can destroy the castle of the Countess Rivadovia.[1]

Although Isaacs' criticism of acting often reads like a fascinated and inspired amateur, her careful and detailed analysis of various acting performances suggests some technical knowledge of the actor's art. In her view the actor's ability to characterize convincingly and with variety was, perhaps, his most important asset. Effective characterization might be achieved, she felt, by "the complete rounding out of a portrait--presence, motivation, action--in such a way that the character remains clearly in the memory as a known person long after the play has left the boards."[2]

In her summary review of the 1936-1937 New York season, she listed outstanding acting performances and drew several conclusions.

> First, the number and variety of characters it represents, showing how theatre material has broadened its range to include all peoples and all classes. Second, how the actors are divided between those who have the art of creation and those who have the craft of physical characterization--that is, between those few artists whose personality is so strong and whose artistry is so great that, although they remain always themselves in appearance, they can persuade you of the reality of any part they play, and those who can change their own presence so completely that in appearance, voice, movement they seem to be not themselves but a different person with each part they play--a genuine and useful talent in the theatre.[3]

---

[1] Ibid., December, 1937, p. 920.

[2] Ibid., June, 1937, p. 427.

[3] Ibid., p. 428.

The actor's ability to play a variety of characters was also underlined in her review of Lady Jane.

> For surely the happy actor today is not the handsome man who struts his way across the stage play after play in the modern equivalent of boots and spurs. It is the man whose talent and training are flexible enough to enable him to create a new character when he plays a new part, and who can be a modern villain without a pistol or poison or black mustachios.[1]

Another example is found in her description of Wilfred Lawson's performance in Prelude to Exile.

> The acting of Wilfred Lawson as Richard Wagner is the best thing in William McNally's biographic play called Prelude to Exile, produced by the Theatre Guild, with settings by Lee Simonson. When you remember Mr. Lawson as the embattled barrister in Libel! with his full-faced, well-fed, straight-backed, clear-voiced, aggressive presence, you will be taken aback by the change in personality which he creates and sustains in the character of Wagner. The likeness to the familiar portraits of the composer is almost absolute; that is a minor detail; his success lies in fitting his walk, the slightly weak knees, the nervous shoulders, the movements of the musician's hands, the voice from the stubborn lips to the outlines of portraiture.[2]

Her criticism also indicates acquaintance, if not familiarity, with the Stanislavsky method of acting. There are repeated references to character created from within, playing within outward, the "spine" of a role, motivation, and acting ensemble. Reviewing Katharine Cornell's Candida, Isaacs wrote:

> The actress has molded herself into the part so excellently well that if you did not know her, you might think her Candida not an actor's created character--although, even then, you might wonder how she drew all the members of the perfect cast so closely to her if it was not by what Stanislavski calls "the communion" of the actor's art.[3]

---

[1] Ibid., November, 1934, p. 317.

[2] Ibid., January, 1937, p. 21.

[3] Ibid., May, 1937, p. 347.

The Stanislavsky practice of careful and detailed study of character is reflected in many of her reviews. For example, in 1936 she noted that

> actors, to play their parts well . . . must have in mind clearly their personal relations to the events that led up to the play. They must know how they would have acted in all the assumed circumstances that make the play's background and create the play's conflict.[1]

In her review of Pride and Prejudice she noted:

> In Jane Austen's day the psychological analysis of character and motive had not yet complicated too much the playwright's or the novelist's art. Character was stated on the basis of one or two significant traits. For the other people in Pride and Prejudice as a play, that is still enough, but Elizabeth is obliged to express, and to react to, a wide range of mood and quality, in relation to her father, her mother, each sister, each suitor, and several minor characters. To change about like this with freedom and conviction and still retain that period realism which is the essence of the play's style is a hard job technically, and Adrianne Allen does it so well that most people in the audience will never know that it takes any talent or any labor to do it.[2]

References to acting ensemble appear in her criticism of the Moscow Art Players, "who claim a certain distant kinship with the Moscow Art Theatre and who are led by Michel Chekhov, nephew of the playwright."

> . . . But the performance, as a whole, is a disappointment, and it must be admitted that these players show the Moscow method at a disadvantage. They have polished the outer surfaces of their characters so highly that unnecessary details of delineation are continually reflected against the field of the central action. The actors are all too steadily busy, too definitely present. Instead of creating, as the players of the Moscow Art Theatre did, a sense of unified ensemble they give, in this play at

---

[1] Ibid., April, 1936, p. 248.

[2] Ibid., January, 1936, p. 8.

least, the impression of many separate photographs taken, by accident, on the same film.[1]

In her review of the Yiddish Art Theatre's production of The Wise Men of Chelm, she wrote: "But there was a breadth of movement, much very good individual acting and a standard of ensemble playing that we did not know uptown until the Moscow Art Theatre came to show it to us."[2]

Isaacs' criticism also gave important attention to the actor's technical tools of voice and movement. "An actor's language," she wrote, "is not made of words, but of movement, projection, voice and gesture."[3] Examples of her interest in these elements of technique are abundant throughout her criticism. To illustrate, in her review of Parnell she analyzed the performance of Margaret Rawlings.

> Margaret Rawlings gives one of the most tantalizing performances of the year--of many years--as Mrs. O'Shea. She is handsome enough to give the immediate sense of personal allure required to make Parnell's love at first sight believable. She has that special kind of actor's intelligence that expresses itself not so much through ideas as through voice and movement and gesture. She seems to know exactly what Mrs. O'Shea means and feels. But in spite of her splendid equipment, she seems to have no control of her craft, to lack, or to ignore, the actor's power of translation. So, for example, although she has a fine, deep voice, she gives it no breath support, so that in sustained passages she growls out the first words and lets the last spurt out as they will. She never stands erect, and she walks with her head thrust forward; her gestures are twentieth century, angular, rushed, big-city gestures. She sucks in her cheeks when

---

[1] Ibid., April, 1935, p. 256.

[2] Ibid., January, 1934, p. 12.

[3] Ibid., November, 1936, p. 835.

she listens, and has a dozen other mannerisms which remind you even in her most dramatic scenes that this Mrs. O'Shea is really Margaret Rawlings, and never quite makes you believe that this Margaret Rawlings is Mrs. O'Shea.[1]

She was particularly enthusiastic about Henry Hull's detailed characterization of Jeeter Lester in Tobacco Road.

Henry Hull as Jeeter Lester is the protagonist, not only of the play but of all these people. If Tobacco Road has done nothing else, it would have been worth the theatre's attention to give him a part so apt for his creation. It remains one of the miracles of the art of acting that a man who has so long been cast to the type of his own pleasant presence can pick up a part as difficult as that of Jeeter Lester and make it live. Somewhere in the memory of his early Kentucky days Henry Hull must have kept a thousand details of the character of a man like Jeeter Lester, and of how it expresses itself in the way he sits and walks and talks. He has remembered the way Jeeter can do nothing for a stretch of time, walk half a dozen steps with one shoe on and one off before his mind picks up the idea that the shoe is off and he sits down in the road to put it on; just how he would look at a bag of turnips when he was hungry or at the golden hair of his wife's daughter (that was not his); how his eyes would light up at the sound of the horn on the new Ford car, or dim down at the sight of his wife lying dying before him, or how he would let the grains of earth--his land--run through his fingers lovingly, and flame up with terror and anger at the thought of leaving the farm to work in a factory.

This old man, as Erskine Caldwell drew him, may be a fat morsel for a player, full of opportunity for theatre device. Perhaps it was easy for Mr. Hull to make him as bad and rotten as he was, but that was only the outer edge of his achievement. The important thing he did was to recreate in Lester the shadow of those qualities which had once made him, or his father, a man and a farmer--the love of the land and the love of woman's beauty.[2]

Of Hull's performance in The Masque of Kings, she wrote:

It would be worth while to see that scene a dozen times to note what it is that he does--without a gesture, a

---

[1] Ibid., January, 1936, p. 13.

[2] Ibid., February, 1934, p. 94.

> movement, a change of voice--that carries his carefully masked purpose so clearly over the footlights to the audience.[1]

Her review of Days Without End pointed out the difficulty of the play for actors, particularly in the role of Loving, played by Stanley Ridges. Then she described the technique by which Ridges "achieved its realization astoundingly."

> He uses almost no gesture but a quick opening and closing of the hand. He stands motionless except, when John moves, to follow him step by step. The uncovered portion of his face is as unchangeable as the mask above it. He puts upon his voice the whole burden of creating character, yet he gives a demoniac reality and unreality to the part, making Loving seem separate from John and yet within him.[2]

In her review of Ah, Wilderness Isaacs described George M. Cohan's method in defining the character of the father.

> He creates a living portrait of the man. He casts off entirely the clear line, the sharp active rhythm which have been the familiar marks of his stage personality, and, with only his spectacles for make-up, he builds the slightly stooped, hesitant, wise, kindly paterfamilias. He speaks through his nose, out of the corner of his mouth, in a low voice that is seldom raised, and yet his sense of projection is so accurate that, to the last seat in the house, every syllable he speaks comes more clearly, and more beautifully, than most players' shouts. Many of his gestures and his movements seem to end half-way but they carry their direction so clearly within them that with your own mind you follow them through to the end, unconsciously adding your emphasis to his own, joining him in the action as in the idea. Nat Miller is an easy part to play but what Mr. Cohan does to it is a lesson in the art of acting.[3]

---

[1] Ibid., April, 1937, p. 261.

[2] Ibid., March, 1934, p. 169.

[3] Ibid., December, 1933, p. 909.

A further example of her critical awareness of acting technique is provided in her analysis of Burgess Meredith's Mio in Winterset.

> What Meredith does with the part of Mio, the son of the law's victim, will be remembered when he is old as one of the finest, freest and yet most completely balanced of poetic theatre portraits. It is an extraordinary piece of work for a young man to do. He seems to have all of an actor's tools at his command--voice, gesture, body and mind, clear, resonant speech, the power of long, steady tension and quick release, an instinctive rightness of tempo for each scene and an unusual range of emotional quality. He takes the double realistic, poetic characterization and fuses it into one, takes the short speeches in a rhythm that sharpens them to a point, and holds out the longer ones (sometimes too long for the action)--giving the phrases back to the audience in the full measure that the poet-playwright has given them, even when the playwright seems wrong.[1]

She was intrigued by the subtlety of Marta Abba's playing in Tovarich.

> You hear actors talk of the lift needed to give their playing in comedy the right gay feeling, or of the impetus their comic spirit gets from taking their gestures high, but, although in a general way you can sense what they mean, there does not seem to be any factual reality about it as you watch them. When you watch Marta Abba in Tovarich you get the point at once. . . . You can, if your senses are keen, see the change from duchess to maid and back again, not only in the words that Marta Abba speaks or the tones in which she speaks them, but in the lift that comes from her heels straight up through her spine to the tips of her ears in the gay moments, and the little droop that alters, not quite imperceptibly, the line of the shoulders when the memory of nobler days intrudes upon a drab immediacy. It is expert playing from within outward, and a joy to watch.[2]

Her admiration for the Group Theatre's acting techniques, based on the Stanislavsky method, was reflected in

---

[1] Ibid., November, 1935, p. 818.

[2] Ibid., December, 1936, p. 920.

numerous reviews. For example, she was impressed with J. Edward Bromberg's performance in Men in White.

> A characterization which is one of the high points of the season is J. Edward Bromberg's playing of Dr. Hochberg in Men in White. With little make-up, the young actor becomes wholly the middle-aged, unassuming surgeon. By use of the more subtle elements of the actor's craft, he creates as well the inner soul of the man--the honorable, sympathetic doctor who is self-sacrificing in the high cause of medicine and who calls for the same selflessness from his younger charges.[1]

She attempted to analyze Katharine Cornell's technique in projecting the character of Oparre in The Wingless Victory.

> An interesting technical achievement accompanies Miss Cornell's mastery of the role of Oparre. Her effort to transmit clearly over the footlights the illusion of a character and emotion that are strange not only to her but to all Western living results in a change in her natural presence to make it represent the slower rhythms of life on islands of the East. Her whole body is more relaxed, her movements lower keyed and without tension, and this lack of tension releases, perhaps unconsciously, the whole lower register in her fine voice so that it has not only all of its ordinary warmth and color but almost double its usual range and, in the angry speeches, twice the usual volume. It would be an interesting study to compare records of Miss Cornell's voice as she speaks a major speech in The Wingless Victory, in Saint Joan, in Romeo and Juliet, in The Barretts, but the records should, in each case, be made during an actual performance. There would be much to learn from them of what part a voice plays in an artist's delineation of character.[2]

Her continuing curiosity about the technique of acting is revealed in her reconsideration of The Barretts of Wimpole Street, which Cornell brought back to New York after a road tour.

> If Miss Cornell, or Guthrie McClintic who staged the play, could take the time and the trouble, it would make a

---

[1] Ibid., March, 1934, p. 212.

[2] Ibid., February, 1937, p. 95.

> highly interesting theatre clinic to study exactly the changes in lines, in characterizations, in tempo or business or ensemble playing, which have helped a play of medium worth grow to its present stature. They probably would not know the answer themselves.[1]

Her review of At Home Abroad pondered the power of "a theatre presence" and a "developed power of projection."

> For someone who cares to solve a problem in the art of acting, there is material in At Home Abroad. A Japanese chorus enters, all dressed alike. What is it that makes every eye turn almost immediately to the girl at the left, who is no better looking, certainly than the others, who makes no move to attract your attention until your attention is already focussed upon her and she flips her skirt in the naughty way in which only Beatrice Lillie can do it? Here, it is easy enough to say, is a perfect case of what technicians call "personality projection." But how does it act? Who knows?[2]

A possible critical preference in acting style and method may be deduced by the prominence which she gives to Katharine Cornell in Romeo and Juliet, The Barretts of Wimpole Street, Flowers of the Forest, Saint Joan, The Wingless Victory, and Candida. The extent of her admiration for Cornell is suggested in her review of Romeo and Juliet, where she concluded:

> And so to Juliet. It is good for once to speak without reservation and to say quite simply that Katharine Cornell in her performance has wiped out the memory of other Juliets. . . . Of the whole performance there is no more to say than that it is the East and Juliet is the sun.[3]

Although she was not impressed by John van Druten's Flowers of the Forest, she extolled Cornell's performance.

---

[1] Ibid., April, 1935, p. 258.

[2] Ibid., November, 1935, p. 821.

[3] Ibid., February, 1935, p. 94.

> The character of Naomi Jacklin gives no opportunity for the sheen and flame that lend such glory to Katharine Cornell's playing--the beauty and youth and passion of her Juliet, the pity and romance of Elizabeth Barrett. Naomi Jacklin is a woman who is living entirely off the surface of life, for fear of disturbing what lies beneath that surface. . . . That was the part as van Druten wrote it. That is Naomi Jacklin as the playwright left her, and as Miss Cornell plays her--never yielding to the temptation to deepen her character or to broaden it for emotional effect. . . . All that Katharine Cornell does is to listen, as nobody since Mrs. Fiske has listened, silently, without gesture, never demanding or encouraging attention. And her restraint is its own reward; for nothing could give better evidence of her creative gifts than her ability to command and constrain her powers to serve a play's requirements; to limit their range, when to give too much would be to take away something essential to the play's quality. . . . When, after another five years, let us say, a record of Miss Cornell's ten-year achievement is made up, it seems quite probable that her production of Flowers of the Forest will mark the point at which she distinguished herself--her playing and her relation to a complete performance--from famous stars of an earlier generation.[1]

When Cornell brought Romeo and Juliet and The Barretts of Wimpole Street back to New York after successful tours, Isaacs reviewed the productions a second time.

She also betrays a special worship of Nazimova in the prominence which she gives to Doctor Monica, Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles, Ghosts, and Hedda Gabler, in spite of the fact that some of these were weak productions. Reviewing Doctor Monica, she noted:

> Doctor Monica, another play from the Polish, fared less well in spite of the fact that it had the advantage of Nazimova's presence in the leading part; and she is so fine an actress and so good a workman that it is almost as much a pleasure to watch her build up a poor part as to see her create a rich one.[2]

---

[1] Ibid., June, 1935, p. 400.

[2] Ibid., January, 1934, p. 13.

Her estimation of Nazimova's performance in Ghosts is also revealing.

> Nazimova's performance of Mrs. Alving in Ibsen's Ghosts is something to remember. . . . What Nazimova does to the play--not only to her part in it--is to separate the temporary argument from the eternal, to take from the situation all of its elemental values and give us not so much Ibsen's Mrs. Alving as the woman of any age who finds her motherhood betrayed and who comes before us at the moment when nature interferes to settle the account. Taken on that basis Nazimova's performance is very nearly perfect, full of variety, showing a hundred angles of her character, fluid and steadily mounting in strength and in suffering. It is a performance to be grateful for.[1]

The weaknesses which she cited in Nazimova's production of Hedda Gabler did not lessen her enthusiasm for the actress's playing of the title role.

> There is none, it seems, better calculated to tear the heart out of her mystery than a student of character like Nazimova, and no one who has seen Nazimova act Hedda is apt to forget her performance, which is created down to the last detail of bitterness and cruelty, of lust and heartlessness, of pressure and immobility. . . . Yet even if you never get, in Hedda Gabler, that unified satisfaction that came from the production last year of Ghosts, Nazimova's Hedda is something not to miss if you enjoy watching a fine actress in a great part.[2]

Elisabeth Bergner was another actress in whom Isaacs identified the "heightened attack" and emotional power she seemed to prefer. While she felt that Escape Me Never! was a poor play, she seemed overwhelmed by the power of Bergner's playing.

> What Bergner does with this material is a masterpiece of acting resource. Wherever a bit of drama comes to the

---

[1] Ibid., February, 1936, p. 97.

[2] Ibid., January, 1937, p. 11.

> surface of the story she picks it up and develops it. For the long stretches where there is no play at all, she simply takes her character and by the sheerest virtuoso playing makes it serve as a substitute for story and for situation. What happens to Gemma Jones becomes for the moment the whole dramatic event. Usually when a player forces a part into too high focus because the play lacks point, she weakens the play still further without advantage to her own playing. Not so Bergner, who quite simply leaves the rag, tag and bobtail of the play completely behind her so that she seems to be a bit of living sculpture acting a living part before the painted background of a story. Her playing is so full of invention, so rich in characterization, fed from such an endless well of human understanding and artistic interpretation, that interest in her performance never flags.
>
> Such a feat is remarkable enough in itself. But there is more to what she does, for, in spite of this power and persuasion, she never takes a scene from another actor who has something to contribute to it, but enriches his playing. . . .
>
> It seems impossible that anyone who cares for acting as an art should not admire what Bergner does with the flimsy material of Escape Me Never! There is more to be learned about acting from seeing her play Gemma Jones with so little drama to bolster her than there is from most performances. Yet when you go away from Escape Me Never! the keenest desire you have is to go back to see Katharine Cornell measuring her strength against Shakespeare's Juliet.[1]

Other favorites who received important treatment in Isaacs' criticism include John Gielgud (Hamlet and Noah);[2] Maurice Evans (St. Helena and Richard II); the Lunts (The Taming of the Shrew, Point Valaine, Idiot's Delight, Amphitryon

---

[1] Ibid., March, 1935, p. 174.

[2] Isaacs' review of Gielgud's Hamlet stated: "There have been many notable performances of Hamlet, even in the limited theatre of our times, but none of them has achieved so completely as this, the triumph of Shakespeare's poetry--of the words themselves, the richness and clarity of their tone, the philosophy and humanity of the story they tell, the grand procession of their lives, their essential theatric value" (Ibid., November, 1936, p. 842).

38, The Seagull); Eva Le Gallienne (L'Aiglon, Rosmersholm, A Doll's House); and many of the actors of the Group Theatre. The reviews were usually accompanied by photographs of the actors in costume, together with a brief note.

Isaacs' criticism also reveals a prejudice against the motion picture actor, who she felt were limited to surface characterization and superficial playing. In her June, 1935, review, she noted that "since the month is fairly barren in the theatre . . . it seemed worth while to make a quick round of the pictures to find out, if possible, what there was on the screen that would serve as a fair substitute for the man who loves the theatre." Her critique closed with an attempt to differentiate acting in the motion picture and on the stage.

> The difference has something to do, of course, with the fact that a motion picture story is not rehearsed--or played--in the sequence followed in the picture, but in bits that use the same setting. Obviously that makes good characterization, created from within, far more difficult and often makes it false if carried over into unrelated scenes. And conversely it gives an advantage to the actor who plays close to the surface of character, who can make a quick transition, and who has enough variety of facial expression and enough flexibility of movement to cover the superficiality. And does that not, in turn, also influence the effect upon the audience, so that--generally speaking--good motion pictures give you relaxation, good plays re-creation? One lets you down, the other picks you up. Perhaps some day Stark Young may be induced to see Les Miserables or some equally illuminating picture, and explain the whole matter--as only he can. Meantime the defense rests.[1]

She frequently attributed what she felt was weak acting

---

[1] Ibid., June, 1935, p. 410.

to the influence of Hollywood. In her review of Jezebel with Miriam Hopkins, she wrote:

> Miriam Hopkins looked very beautiful as Julie Kendrick. She wore her lovely clothes with a distinguished air, and spoke her foolish lines in a way to make their meaning as little obvious as possible. If she moved about like a moving picture queen, and registered her emotions as they do in Hollywood, it is only fair to her to say that that method was as well suited to the design of the play as any other would have been.[1]

Reviewing The Night of January 16th, she noted:

> Doris Nolan as Karen Andre, the girl accused of the murder, rose to her task when she was called to the stand, but sat like a motion picture actress waiting for a call to the camera, entirely unconcerned with what went on about her, during the rest of the play.[2]

Finally, in her review of Young Madame Conti, she commented on the failure of Constance Cummings to characterize.

> It has only one difficult passage--the hour before the hanging--and in this Constance Cummings shows both a breadth and a depth of power and persuasion that are almost enough to make the part worth her while as an exhibition of technique. The rest of the play she does very well too, except for the fact that she is always Constance Cummings, always a lady, playing the part of a bourgeois and a prostitute, as she would if the theatre were a motion picture house and not the Music Box.[3]

These last three productions were treated briefly or near the end of a review. She did, however, acquiesce to popular interest on rare occasions, opening her review with The Lake, a production marking Katherine Hepburn's return to the stage, in spite of the fact that she liked neither the play nor the performance.

---

[1] Ibid., February, 1934, p. 97.

[2] Ibid., November, 1935, p. 823.

[3] Ibid., May, 1937, p. 340.

The influence of the New Stagecraft on Isaacs' approach to theatre is further revealed by her evaluation of the director's role in the production. Her critical enthusiasm for Four Saints in Three Acts was primarily due to her view of the director's achievement.

> In this lovely theatre prank you see an example of the kind of theatre that Marie Rambert, who has been Frederick Ashton's teacher, has been working towards, that Ashley Dukes is forever talking about, that Copeau and Alice and Irene Lewisohn and the Habima Players understood, that Martha Graham aims at, that Norman Geddes experimented with in Arabesques, that Leopold Stokowski plans for, that Robert Edmond Jones has written about. This is theatre that begins with the director and not a kingdom of argument.[1]

Isaacs' criticism emphasized the vital importance of the director's responsibility to achieve the New Stagecraft ideal of a unified and harmonious integration of all the theatrical elements. Her review of Maxwell Anderson's High Tor reflects her point of view.

> Such a complicated story is a challenge and an opportunity to a director, and when you have seen High Tor twice and read it at least twice, you begin to realize that there is something more to make this production an event to be remembered than the playwright's poetry and humor, the form of his story, the sparkling characters as he presents them to the actors and as the actors gallantly and beautifully present them to the audience. There is the major achievement of the director in harmonizing all of these divergent elements so that you accept the real, the romantic and the imagined whole-heartedly as interweavings of the same fabric. High Tor in the theatre, is first and foremost Guthrie McClintic's achievement. He has played no tricks with the text. He has simply made use of all the arts and the mechanics of the modern theatre so that the poet's stories come over to us as one, just as such stories came over in Shakespeare's day, before audiences had come to depend on

---

[1] Ibid., April, 1934, p. 247.

> scenery or lighting or machines, and had only their own imaginations to supplement a poet's gifts.[1]

The director must achieve the sense of ensemble among the actors of his production. Describing Sailors of Cattaro, she wrote:

> A play of such marked contrast between ideals and achievement, where strong purpose triumphs only to go down in defeat before lack of technical training for the struggle, needs first-class ensemble playing and direction to put its meaning over, and that it lacks in the Theatre Union performance.[2]

She was also critical of the director's failure to achieve ensemble in To Quito and Back.

> What makes To Quito and Back less than adequate is the play's inexplicable casting or, given this particular cast, the fact that the director could not establish a rhythm and a harmony between the actors.[3]

In her review of Porgy and Bess, she pointed out Mamoulian's success in achieving ensemble in a largely inexperienced group.

> The direction of the play, which won Mamoulian his first honors in the New York theatre, comes back somewhat too influenced by Hollywood ideas of light and of masses. Less people might give a better sense of the crowd; less moving hands with their shadows, might be more convincingly dramatic; less red lights might seem more brilliant. But that should not hide the fact that Mamoulian has developed a real acting ensemble out of a group of singers, many of them without stage experience, and has established and maintained a dramatic relation between the action and the song and the story, between the character who is singing and the ones who are listening. All of this, as our regular opera performances bear witness, is a difficult thing to do.[4]

---

[1] Ibid., March, 1937, p. 177.

[2] Ibid., February, 1935, p. 100.

[3] Ibid., December, 1937, p. 919.

[4] Ibid., December, 1935, p. 894.

An important part of the director's function, she believed, was to guide the individual actor in the development of his characterization, in the establishment of relationships with other characters in the play, and in his delineation of character in crowd and group scenes. In March, 1934, Isaacs reviewed The Lake, attributing much of the production's weakness to director Jed Harris.

> A large share of the blame for the unsuccess of the play, even within its own range, rests upon his shoulders. His direction has added nothing to the incomplete story told by a playwright who, though theatre-trained, was not theatre-minded enough to play out her whole play on the stage, instead of leaving the big scenes . . . to narrative and audience imagination. He has clouded one of the play's main motives by allowing the mother to seem so stupid that no girl of Stella Surrege's willfulness and independence would have been unable to escape from her. He has left the individuals who make up the crowd in the wedding scene absolutely impersonal and unreal--like so many puppets--instead of using each friend or neighbor as an echo or an opposition to Stella's outlook on life and her response to happiness and to disaster.
>
> Above all, he has left Katherine Hepburn floundering in her own abilities. . . . Surely it is a director's business to help her to that knowledge and at least to regulate her relation to her fellow players until she acquires it.[1]

Her review of the Group Theatre's production of Men in White emphasized one of the Group Theatre's outstanding characteristics.

> Men in White marks a long step in advance for the Group Theatre. The unity and fluency, the quiet tension of the large company's playing in the crowd scenes are an accomplishment in direction greatly to the credit of Lee Strasberg.[2]

---

[1] Ibid., March, 1934, p. 166.

[2] Ibid., December, 1933, p. 916.

In Isaacs' view the director must also achieve a focus, both in action and in pictorial composition. Her review of Libel noted that

> the play itself is, actually, slight, yet there is something that keeps you steadily, eagerly interested in the solution of the case against Sir Mark Lodden, something more, that is, than the acting--all of it good--and that something seems to be the focus achieved by the director.[1]

She was critical of the direction of Theresa Helburn in Mary of Scotland, because the director, she felt, had failed in focusing many of the elements of the production.

> The ensemble playing never takes on any life whatever. The pictorial composition is never focused, individual characters never outlined, even the costumes badly worn. Much of this may be charged to unimaginative direction but a part of it is fairly laid at the door of our form of theatre that assembles its players freshly for each play from the street corners and the casting offices.[2]

In her review of Clifford Odets' drama Awake and Sing, Isaacs concluded:

> The direction, unfortunately, does not help the play, which, while it is full of promise, is thin and weak in important spots and not always clear in the action. It could be strengthened immeasurably by slowing down the pace, relieving the tension and eliminating much of the business, which is well enough thought out but unimaginative and unnecessary.[3]

Another part of the director's job in Isaacs' mind was the effective utilization of his setting and stage space in planning his movement and business. This element, she felt, was not achieved in Odets' Awake and Sing.

---

[1] Ibid., February, 1936, p. 105.

[2] Ibid., January, 1934, p. 17.

[3] Ibid., April, 1935, p. 255.

> These people in this wretched Bronx flat are, it is easy to imagine, forever treading on each other's toes. A director with the right restraint would have suggested much of this without actually letting it seem that two of the people on his stage were always trying to occupy the same space at the same time, and continually interrupting or doubling on each other's speech. By the time the play is over you are worn down, not by the story and its despair, but by the nervousness of the performance.[1]

Effective planning of such movement and action were emphasized in her review of Libel:

> Otto Ludwig Preminger, from Reinhardt's Theater in der Josefstadt, has directed the play with remarkable fluency, so that there is in this unchanging and constantly seated court-room audience an unceasing flow of necessary and contributing movement, without a single concerted activity or any theatrical display. It is quite a remarkable achievement in focusing and harnessing stage movement, and still leaving every bodily reaction, gesture, sound free to contribute something to the presentation of the character from whom it springs.[2]

Examination of Isaacs' criticism indicates that when she devotes major attention to the direction of a particular production, it frequently turns out to be a director for whom Theatre Arts has previously shown admiration. For example, plays directed by Arthur Hopkins,[3] Margaret Webster,[4] Guthrie McClintic,[5] Max Reinhardt,[6] Harold Clurman,[7] Lee Strasberg,[8]

---

[1] Ibid. [2] Ibid., February, 1936, p. 105.

[3] The Joyous Season and Paths of Glory (Ibid., April, 1934, and November, 1935).

[4] Richard II (Ibid., April, 1937).

[5] Romeo and Juliet, Winterset, Hamlet, and High Tor (Ibid., February, 1935, November, 1935, November, 1936, and March, 1937).

[6] The Eternal Road (Ibid., March, 1937).

[7] Men in White and Awake and Sing (Ibid., December, 1933, and April, 1935).

[8] All the Living (Ibid., May, 1938).

Orson Welles[1] of the Mercury Theatre, and Elia Kazan[2] of the Group Theatre almost invariably occupy an important place in Isaacs' criticism.

Although the scene designer had long since won his battle for recognition as an artist of the theatre, Isaacs' criticism reflects her concern for the designer's contribution to the production. In her review of As Thousands Cheer, she reveals the New Stagecraft influence in evaluating the settings of Albert Johnson.

> In the new manner of revues, this one takes a theme to give it form. It has found one suited to its material in the headlines of a newspaper, used to perfection in Albert Johnson's settings. In fact, just as we are about ready to say that in spite of all that a designer may add to the beauty of a production his contribution in scenery is never of first importance, Johnson makes his settings the form-giving element of the revue. . . . It is amusing to note that they are so little a painter's conception and so entirely for the theatre--dependent on light, color, swift change, and on the actors and costumes that complete them.[3]

In words that sometimes seem to echo Appia and Craig, she emphasized the value of the setting that acts with the players. On one occasion, she illustrated her point of view by citing Max Reinhardt's revealing statement, "Tonight the red carpet will play with us."

Just as she objected to photographic reality in the playwright's work, so she preferred the theatrical setting

---

[1] Julius Caesar and A Shoemaker's Holiday (Ibid., January, 1938, and February, 1938).

[2] Casey Jones (Ibid., April, 1938).

[3] Ibid., December, 1933, p. 919.

espoused by the New Stagecraft. For example, she wrote in her review of Dead End that Norman Bel Geddes' setting

> uses all of the realistic material of the place of the play; it multiplies detail; but it changes the scale and the relations between objects portrayed, and again between the objects and the people who play before them, so as to make the theatrical element completely dominate the realistic. It is a setting that acts with the players.[1]

Another example of Isaacs' preference is provided in her review of J. B. Priestley's Eden End.

> The difference between presenting real material theatrically and naturalistically is the difference between Dead End and Winterset on the one hand, and Eden End by J. B. Priestley on the other. . . . But it is not the place or the people that make the play dull; it is something in the author's very desire for factual perfection, for making the scene on the stage be like, rather than seem like, Dr. Kirby's home in Eden End.[2]

Again, in evaluating one of Mordecai Gorelik's sets for Casey Jones, she wrote:

> How anything that seems so close to the real thing can be so theatrical and so beautiful remains a stage designer's secret. . . . Certain it is that that setting establishes at once the dramatic mood of the play; and every time it reappears, it recreates the mood, sharpened by the progress of the story.[3]

Her review of Men in White, which also comments on Lee Simonson's book, The Stage Is Set, reveals her critical attitude toward realism in the theatre.

> Lee Simonson, in The Stage Is Set, complains that the face of the modern theatre is turned against realism, but it is actually only set toward a richer use of the theatre's resources, a fuller theatrical expressiveness.

---

[1] Ibid., December, 1935, p. 891. [2] Ibid., p. 894.

[2] Ibid., April, 1938, p. 248.

> Whenever realism is not out of line with that extension it remains within the pale; for when a form in art is peculiarly suited to a given need, it does not disappear as long as the need remains.[1]

Her criticism further indicates an awareness of the technical problems involved in the planning of the stage setting. For example, in reviewing Ethan Frome, she attributed part of the production's failure to Jo Mielziner's method of staging.

> Perhaps, too, there is some mistake in handling the setting as Jo Mielziner has done, dropping the curtain after each short scene and loosening the audience's attention each time, instead of spotting the stage with smaller playing areas that could be used for three or four quick successive scenes by blackouts, without the drop of the curtain.[2]

Generally, Isaacs gave less space in her criticism to considerations of scene design than to script, acting, or direction, except in the emphasis which she gave to favorite designers such as Robert Edmond Jones,[3] Lee Simonson,[4] Norman Bel Geddes,[5] Jo Mielziner,[6] James Reynolds,[7] Raymond Sovey,[8]

---

[1] Ibid., December, 1933, p. 910.

[2] Ibid., March, 1936, p. 182.

[3] Ibid., April, 1934; May, 1938 (One Joyous Season and The Seagull).

[4] Ibid., December, 1933; December, 1934; April, 1935; November, 1937 (School for Husbands, A Sleeping Clergyman, Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles, and Virginia).

[5] Ibid., December, 1935; March, 1937 (Dead End and The Eternal Road).

[6] Ibid., May, 1934; February, 1935; November, 1935; March, 1936; May, 1936; November, 1936; February, 1937 (Yellow Jack, Romeo and Juliet, Winterset, Ethan Frome, St. Joan, Hamlet, The Wingless Victory).

[7] Ibid., December, 1934 (Within the Gates).

[8] Ibid., January, 1934 (She Loves Me Not).

Stewart Chaney,[1] and Mordecai Gorelik.[2] It may be, of course, that she chose to consider at length only those designers who fit the mold of the New Stagecraft. Her reviews suggest that she had an appreciation for theories of scene design, but her real interest appears to have been acting. With all her general stress on scenery, costumes, and lighting in Theatre Arts, she gave not much more comment on them than would a New York newspaper critic. In other words, while she believed in their value theoretically, she didn't really see them. Perhaps, too, since her magazine published numerous production photographs of current plays in every issue, she may have preferred to let the pictures speak for themselves.

Previously cited excerpts from Isaacs' criticism suggest that she used the critical columns of Theatre Arts, as in other parts of her magazine, to editorialize on topics not under specific consideration. A few additional examples may further clarify the nature of her extreme prejudices. When the Pulitzer Prize Committee gave its 1934 award to Sidney Kingsley's Men in White, Isaacs attacked the group in her review column. The reference to the National Theatre Conference is particularly revealing.

> In the first place, why should anyone whose judgment is worth-while serve on a play jury whose decisions can be overruled by the Advisory Board of the School of Journalism

---

[1] Ibid., January, 1936; March, 1935 (Parnell and The Old Maid).

[2] Ibid., January, 1936; April, 1938 (Mother and Casey Jones).

> of Columbia University, a university that is distinguished for lack of dramatic accomplishment? Columbia sits on a hill, watching B'way, aiming all of its playwriting endeavors toward B'way, not even associated with the National Theatre Conference, distinctly neglectful of everything that is building toward a native American theatre in so many of the large universities and colleges of the country. And yet it has never even succeeded in making a second-rate B'way playwright. Why should Mr. Walter Prichard Eaton and Mr. Clayton Hamilton and Mr. Austin Strong serve on a play jury that must take orders from Columbia? Why again is it assumed that a young man just beginning his fight in the theatre needs praise and encouragement more than a man like Maxwell Anderson, who has fought the bitter fight so long? Or why assume that his play, Mary of Scotland, because it is fine dramatic poetry that concerns itself with relations in human nature based on a story of a far-off day, will do less to "represent the educational value and power of the stage" than last year's winner, his play, Both Your Houses, concerned realistically with dishonest politics? If the phrase "original American play" was to be interpreted to mean only plays on living American material, why should that not have been made clear to the play jury in advance?[1]

Her first review in November, 1933, pointed out that several older theatres in New York were being razed, while another was being converted into a beer garden. She went on to decry "shoestring producers" and stated that more theatres do not make for more and better playwrights. Further unrelated editorial opinion is evidenced in the following excerpt from this review.

> Everybody tells you wisely today, what others have been telling them for ten years past: that you don't make playwrights, or showmen, or actors, by building theatres; that as soon as you build more houses than you can fill with good plays and good acting you weaken your theatre, dilute your audience, and discourage your finest talent; that there is less chance even, for permanent employment or for material profit in one theatre too much than in one too little.[2]

---

[1] Ibid., June, 1934, p. 406.

[2] Ibid., November, 1933, p. 835.

Isaacs' review of a left-wing production prompted this criticism of the left-wing theatre in general and reveals the extent to which she went beyond her critical function to become an advocate. Analyzing the demise of Theatre Union, she complained:

> They have been, generally speaking (and with obvious exceptions), more snobbish, complacent, pompous, vain, superficial and undisciplined than the average Broadway producers, and no more businesslike. Moreover, they were as greedy for capitalist funds as economic royalists, and as careless of their responsibility for gifts given to a cause. You might hear one day of a group's struggle to put on a play at a figure one-fifth the usual Broadway cost, and read the next day that a director of the group had just gone by plane to Hollywood and back in three days to put a script in the hands of a Hollywood producer. You found directors of these struggling groups taking summer holidays in Europe, although they never had enough money before to travel farther than from the Bronx to Jones Beach. And at the first moneyed backon from Broadway or the films, left-wing allegiance disappeared in thin air. Generally speaking again, and again with exceptions, the left-wing groups were treated more kindly and sympathetically both by the press and by the public than any commercial producer doing work of the same standard would ever have been. To say that their failure is due to anything but their own limitations is not sporting.
>
> Theatre Arts has waited--a little uncourageously, perhaps--to say all this, until there was no organization actively at work in the field that could be harmed by such outspoken criticism, because the field was one that so badly needed cultivation and because in every group there were some, often many, fine people seeking--blindly, perhaps, but no more blindly than the rest of us--the real way to dilate the region of the theatre at the labor end. If we are outspoken now, it is in the earnest hope that any new left-wing group that enters the field will come determined to discipline itself before it attempts the heavy task of disciplining the world. If we cannot expect leadership from free men and good workers, where can we expect it.[1]

Her periodic advocacy of repertory organization is

---

[1] Ibid., November, 1937, p. 842.

illustrated in her review of the Walter Huston-Robert Edmond Jones Othello.

> Yet when all of this is said and done, one fact remains to be noted: a production like this Othello, handled with such care by gifted artists whose long devotion to the theatre and success in it have gained them the respect and admiration of their fellows and of a large public, should have insured them at least an interested response in the biggest theatrical city in the world. You are not dealing here with vanity, or with a miner actor's or director's effort at self-exploitation, but with the effort of a distinguished player and director-designer to dilate the region of the actor's playing and to enlarge the range of the theatre by the restoration of one of the world's great masterpieces, lost to us today. It is greatly to our discredit as a theatre public that we are not concerned with experiment but only with success. This may be because we have no repertory theatre to interest us in various interpretations of great roles, or it may be the reason why we have no repertory theatres. In either case, it is a serious limitation on theatre progress, for often an artist's failure to achieve some new and worthwhile thing that he sets out to do is, in the end, of more importance to him and to the theatre than the success that precedes or follows it.[1]

Isaacs' advocacy of international exchange of artists and theatres is also present in her critical columns. When a bill, sponsored by the American Guild of Musical Artists, was proposed in Congress, which would limit foreign actors in American performances, she made a direct attack using her review to promote her point of view.

> The chauvinism and reaction of the bill are only its minor vices; its ignorance of the laws affecting the interpretive arts is its major characteristic. When Lawrence Tibbett, President of the American Guild of Musical Artists, chief sponsors of the bill, says that the bill is good because it is only a nationalistic reprisal against other governments with like limitations, he makes his stand clear enough. But when he adds that America must

---

[1] Ibid., March, 1937, p. 178.

> be "culturally independent," he shows the full folly behind the bill. . . . There is no such thing as cultural independence, and the sooner our legislators and their sponsors stop talking Hitler's language, the better it will be not only for American art and artists but for the larger understanding between the troubled peoples of the earth.
>
> It is one of the essential characteristics of a national theatre that it can carry the best of the product of the theatres of all nations at all times, because it has its foundations so strongly grounded in native soil. It is just as true that you cannot have an adequate national theatre that is not international, as it is that you cannot have an integrated international theatre unless your native theatre is alive to world progress and vital within itself.[1]

A final example of her editorializing in the critical columns of her magazine is found in the March, 1935, issue, where she opens her critique with several pages of criticism on The Petrified Forest, largely devoted to a personal attack on actor Leslie Howard for his complacent willingness to play himself in every role.

> The exciting melodrama that passes on around him as the play progresses fortunately keeps you from thinking too much about Mr. Howard at the time. It is after you get away from the theatre that you begin to wonder how this actor, with his expressive talent, his keen intelligence, and his long record of successes, can still find it worth his while to do the same thing over and over on the stage and in the movies--just being forever himself. What can make the pother and unreality and uncertainty of an actor's life worthwhile for a man with Mr. Howard's wits except acting--creating something in voice and speech and manner and character that is not himself? Even if he goes on pleasing his public, as he does, does he not bore himself to death?[2]

In summarizing Isaacs' criticism, it appears that her critical method was essentially that of an advocate rather

---

[1] Ibid., April, 1937, p. 225.

[2] Ibid., March, 1935, p. 170.

than a traditional critic. Like the other columns, she used the "Broadway in Review" department for the advocacy of the magazine's purposes and ideals. Isaacs habitually used her reviews to promote her viewpoints on varied aspects of the theatre, and such commentary often appeared within the review as interpolations. This is, perhaps, explained by the fact that Theatre Arts was a magazine of advocacy, rather than an unprejudiced reporter of theatrical activity.

Isaacs believed that, to be effective, the critic must write theatrical criticism; that is, he must measure the contribution of director, actor, and designer, as well as the playwright. Further, the critic must evaluate separately the artist's intentions and his success in achieving them on the stage.

Her criticism indicates that, in her view, the playwright's success in the theatre is determined not alone by the literary qualities of his script, but by his ability to utilize effectively the arts of the theatre in his play. In addition, her reviews suggest a preference for experimental drama, for classical revivals, and for plays which incorporate a correlation of the arts. Her concern was not for the box-office success, but for the daring experiment, even the worthwhile failure. Frequently, she expressed a distaste for what she called "journalistic" plays, except where the news might be interpreted through the vision of an artist. Characteristically, her criticism attempted to put the dramatist's latest work within the framework of his past achievements.

Isaacs was intensely interested in the art of the actor, and acting is analyzed in her reviews more extensively and in greater detail than ever before in the magazine's critical pages. Her criticism of acting seems to reflect a fine ability to express an appreciation of the performance. While she appears to recognize techniques involved, her extended descriptions of various acting performances tend to read like well-expressed enthusiasms. This penchant for acting sometimes resulted in a neglect of other aspects of the production.

Her approach to the theatre reflects the New Stagecraft ideal of unity and harmony within the production, and her criticism recognizes the contribution of the director in achieving the unified and harmonized integration of all theatrical elements. Furthermore, her consideration of the direction of a production often reveals an interest in a particular director for whom Theatre Arts has shown a previous fondness, such as Arthur Hopkins, Max Reinhardt, Harold Clurman, Guthrie McClintic, Margaret Webster, Elia Kazan, and Orson Welles. A critical preference is also possible in the emphasis given to productions of the Group Theatre, the Theatre Guild, the Neighborhood Playhouse, the Federal Theatre, Actor's Repertory Theatre, the Mercury Theatre in America, the Theatre Union, and, to a lesser extent, the Abbey Theatre, Civic Repertory Company, and Yiddish Art Theatre.

Isaacs' criticism manifests a general neglect of scene design, except, of course, for the magazine's favorites. This

neglect seems strange in contrast to the earlier emphasis of Theatre Arts on the setting and the designer. Her neglect of scenery may have been the result of her interest in acting; or perhaps she did not have a good evaluative eye for the setting, except where it might dominate the production or be spectacularly theatrical. Her reviews also reveal that she paid little attention to costume or lighting, which may indicate that, while she believed in their value theoretically, she really didn't see them as a critic.

Probably the most unorthodox characteristic of Isaacs' criticism is her periodic use of the review column for editorializing on any subject in her mind at the moment. One month it might be the promotion of a national American theatre; another might encourage the international exchange of plays, groups, or artists; the next month might see battle with some legislation, censorship, or practice detrimental or inhibitive, in the editor's mind, to the theatre; and still another review might open with an attack on the Pulitzer Prize Committee of Columbia University, or on an indifferent public which failed to support Robert Edmond Jones' experimental production of Othello. These specific and occasionally extreme prejudices are reflected in the advocative and promotional nature of her reviews. Such a practice may possibly be explained by the fact that most of the departments and features of Theatre Arts manifest a similar selective advocacy and editorial policy, recalling John Mason Brown's

description of the magazine's editorial method as "the Chinese drip-torture."

Isaacs was not a good writer. Her style is sometimes clumsily complex and is further complicated by a method of punctuation which does not help to clarify it. John Mason Brown has said that Isaacs was sensitive and perceptive but that "today one would probably not reread her stuff for literary appreciation nor for the sheer pleasure of good reading."[1] It is possible that her writing was dominated by an oral style, where one uses non-grammatical forms and interjections. Or, perhaps, the European heritage of both parents may have meant that English was a second language in her home. In any case, her occasionally convoluted style tends to confuse or puzzle the reader, even though Isaacs may have had a clear idea of what she meant to say.

---

[1]Interview with John Mason Brown, Ann Arbor, Michigan, March 10, 1955.

CHAPTER IX

EDITORIAL STAFF

The editorial staff of Theatre Arts was in itself a kind of editorial expression reflecting the magazine's policy. In its thirty-two years of existence this publication developed a number of important literary, critical, and editorial talents such as John Mason Brown, Carl Carmer, Morton Eustis, Rosamond Gilder, John K. Hutchens, and Stark Young. Table 36 offers a complete list of the magazine's editorial staff members.

TABLE 36

EDITORIAL STAFF OF "THEATRE ARTS"

Name	Title	First Listing on Masthead	Last Listing on Masthead
Sheldon Cheney ...	Editor	Nov., 1916	Oct., 1921
S. Marion Tucker .	Editor	Apr., 1919	Oct., 1921
Kenneth Macgowan .	Editor	Apr., 1919	June, 1924
	Associate Editor ..	July, 1924	Dec., 1927
Edith J. R. Isaacs	Editor	Apr., 1919	.....
	Editor-in-Chief ...	July, 1924	June, 1945
	Publisher .	July, 1945	Mar., 1946

TABLE 36--Continued

Name	Title	First Listing on Masthead	Last Listing on Masthead
Stark Young	Editor	Jan., 1922	June, 1924
	Associate Editor ..	July, 1924	Feb., 1925
	Associate Editor ..	May, 1926	June, 1940
Ashley Dukes	Associate Editor ..	Jan., 1925	.....
	English Editor ..	Jan., 1930	Feb., 1948
John Mason Brown	Assistant Editor ..	Jan., 1926	.....
	Associate Editor ..	Jan., 1928	June, 1931
Carl Carmer	Assistant Editor ..	July, 1931	July, 1933
Rosamond Gilder .	Associate Editor ..	Jan., 1938	.....
	Editor	July, 1945	Feb., 1948
Tom Squire	Editorial Staff ...	Jan., 1938	Apr., 1939
Hermine Rich Isaacs	Editorial Staff ...	Jan., 1938	.....
	Managing Editor ..	Nov., 1940	.....
	Associate Editor ..	Jan., 1944	Feb., 1948
Morton Eustis ...	Editorial Staff ...	Jan., 1938	.....
	Associate Editor ..	Nov., 1940	Oct., 1944
Susan Tully	Editorial Staff ...	Jan., 1938	.....
	Assistant Editor ..	Nov., 1940	Nov., 1942

TABLE 36--Continued

Name	Title	First Listing on Masthead	Last Listing on Masthead
George Beiswanger	Editorial Staff ...	Jan., 1940	.....
	Assistant Editor ..	Nov., 1940	Nov., 1944
William Lindsay Gresham	Assistant Editor ..	Jan., 1945	July, 1945
Franklin Houston	Managing Editor ..	July, 1945	Jan., 1946
Dorothy Davies ..	Editorial Staff ...	July, 1945	.....
	Assistant Editor ..	Apr., 1946	Oct., 1946
Kathryn Stein ...	Editorial Staff ...	July, 1945	.....
	Editorial Assistant	Apr., 1946	Feb., 1948
Robert Burghardt	Business Manager ..	July, 1945	Feb., 1948
Norris Houghton .	Associate Editor ..	Jan., 1946	Apr., 1947
Edward Reed	Managing Editor ..	Apr., 1946	Feb., 1948
Lawrence Heyl, Jr.	Assistant Editor ..	Jan., 1947	Dec., 1947
Patricia Lawrence	Editorial Assistant	Jan., 1947	Oct., 1947
Cecil Smith	Associate Editor ..	Apr., 1947	Feb., 1948
Robert McGregor .	Book Editor	May, 1947	Feb., 1948
Katharine Canaday	Assistant Editor ..	Jan., 1948	Feb., 1948

Interviews with John Mason Brown,[1] Rosamond Gilder,[2] George Beiswanger,[3] and Hermine Isaacs Popper[4] indicate that they were first attracted to Theatre Arts by the excitement and opportunity offered in a "cause" and a "crusade," as well as by the fact that the magazine was a "prestige" publication. Salaries paid to staff members were minimal. While exact figures are not available, Brown said that he worked for the "bread but not butter salary" of twenty-five dollars per week. According to Beiswanger, he was paid forty dollars per week in 1940, and as acting editor Rosamond Gilder received the "secretarial" salary of fifty dollars per week. Beiswanger added that "there was some discontent with the low salaries," but most were eager, as beginners, to work for a magazine with an "international reputation." Gilder agreed that the staff worked for very small salaries "for the opportunity to do interesting work."

All, however, testified to the excellence and value of their training and experience as editorial staff members of Theatre Arts. Brown stated that, as an editor, Isaacs was a "generating personality" in the way she affected other artists, and he described her as a "Promethean" figure. Most importantly, he emphasized that, in his years with Theatre

---

[1]Ann Arbor, Michigan, March 10, 1965.

[2]New York City, Aug. 19, 1952.

[3]New York City, Sept. 11, 1953.

[4]White Plains, New York, Sept. 2, 1955.

Arts, Isaacs taught him much about criticism. She was, in his words, a "mother superior" and a "matriarch" of the theatre.[1] Gilder said she was "dominant and strong-minded, as strict with her editors as with the young beginners," and her influence on the staff and writers was strong.[2] Hermine Isaacs Popper pointed out that Theatre Arts "imposed standards and the magazine's imprint more firmly than usual or than, perhaps, is good." She, too, described her mother as "firm and strong-willed."[3]

According to Brown, however, there was no editorial dictation, because the staff was "in rapport" and saw eye-to-eye on the main goals and aims.[4] George Beiswanger said that Isaacs was an excellent editor of articles with a real gift for pointing up the meaning or significance of a particular theme or idea, and he added that her editing always improved his original work.[5] In Gilder's opinion Isaacs had the journalist's sense of organization of literary work, as well as the editorialist's virile, pointed attack.[6] Hermine Isaacs Popper described her mother's approach as a "personal kind of editing." Rather than accept the writer's article as he

---

[1]Brown, interview cited.

[2]Gilder, interview cited.

[3]Popper, interview cited.

[4]Brown, interview cited.

[5]Beiswanger, interview cited.

[6]Gilder, interview cited.

wrote it, she would work it over with the author, correcting, adjusting, eliminating unwanted adjectives, etc., until the article met her standards.[1] Both Gilder and Beiswanger recalled the enthusiasm and excitement of the weekly conferences at Isaacs' bedside in the Hotel Elysée during her long illness, when the staff met to select for future issues materials and photographs with a real "theatre quality." Gilder described the editor's system to ensure a degree of selective objectivity. When the materials and production photographs for the "Tributary Theatre" issue were received from the various college and community theatres, the literature and pictures were separated and each group given a key number. The staff then examined them and made their selections without knowing the actual identity of the groups.

In these interviews there was also unanimous praise regarding the editor's recognition of talent in embryo and her efforts to develop it. Beiswanger stated that Isaacs had "a standard to be upheld in picking people to write for the magazine."[2] The fact that several of the youthful staff members had studied at Harvard University under George Pierce Baker would suggest the nature of such a standard. John Mason Brown and Carl Carmer were both students of Baker and graduates of Harvard. Morton Eustis worked under Baker for more than a year before joining the staff of Theatre Arts. A

---

[1]Popper, interview cited.

[2]Beiswanger, interview cited.

brief biographical examination of the more prominent staff members may indicate a basis for the magazine's interest in them.

After the departure of Sheldon Cheney and Marion Tucker in 1921, Stark Young, professor of English at Amherst College, joined Isaacs and Kenneth Macgowan as editors of Theatre Arts.[1] When Isaacs became editor-in-chief in 1924, Young and Macgowan were subsequently listed as associate editors. Young's name was dropped from the masthead in the March, 1925, issue but reappeared as associate editor in May, 1926, where it remained until July, 1940.

Stark Young was born in Como, Mississippi, on October 11, 1881.[2] He received his A.B. degree from the University of Mississippi in 1901 and his A.M. from Columbia University in 1902. From 1904 to 1907 he was instructor of English at the University of Mississippi. He was appointed to the English staff of the University of Texas in 1907, and in 1915 joined the English department at Amherst College. In addition to his contributions to Theatre Arts, Young wrote

---

[1]Theatre Arts, April, 1942, p. 257. "But it was exactly Stark Young's feeling for the theatre (expressed in earlier articles) that was the basis of the invitation to become one of the editors of this magazine. In fact, Theatre Arts aided and abetted the campaign to lure Mr. Young out of the security of his professorial chair at Amherst, because it seemed that his knowledge and appreciation of the arts would be of inestimable service both to the artists of the theatre and to their audience."

[2]Who's Who in America, Vol. XXX, 1958-59 (Chicago: A. N. Marquis Co., 1960), p. 3078.

dramatic criticism for the New York Times from 1924 to 1925 and was a member of the editorial staff of the New Republic magazine from 1921 to 1947. Theatre Arts published four of his plays: At the Shrine (one-act, July, 1919); Queen of Sheba (one-act, April, 1922); The Colonnade (four acts, August, 1924); and Rose Windows (one-act, October, 1925). His books include The Flower in Drama,[1] Theatre Practice,[2] The Theatre,[3] and Immortal Shadows.[4]

Ashley Dukes was born on May 29, 1885, and was educated at the Universities of Manchester and Munich.[5] From 1908 to 1914 he worked as a drama critic and play translator and from 1920 to 1924 as journalist and editor. In 1924 he began writing plays: The Man With a Load of Mischief (1924), Tyl Ulenspiegel, or The Song of Drums (1926), One More River (1927), The Fountain Head (1928), and Matchmakers Arms (1930). Dukes also translated and adapted The Dumb Wife of Cheapside (1929), from Rabelais; Mandragola (1939), from Macchiavelli; and Jew Süss[6] (1939). In 1926 Theatre Arts published his drama Tyl Ulenspiegel, or The Song of Drums,[7] and the June,

---

[1]New York: Scribner's Sons, 1923.

[2]New York: Scribner's Sons, 1926.

[3]New York: George H. Doran Company, 1927.

[4]New York: Scribner's Sons, 1948.

[5]Hartnoll, Phyllis (ed.), Oxford Companion to the Theatre (2d ed.; London: Oxford University Press, 1957), p. 209.

[6]Dukes' drama is based on Power, the historical romance by Lion Feuchtwanger.

[7]Theatre Arts, April, 1926, p. 240; May, 1926, p. 312; June, 1926, p. 385; and July, 1926, p. 481.

1936, issue included one of his short dramas, The Player's Dressing Room. In 1933 Dukes founded and directed the Mercury Theatre, a theatre specifically for poetry in London. In 1941 Theatre Arts published a series of articles by Dukes entitled "Journey Through Theatre," which traced recent European theatre history by means of an autobiographical account of his own experiences with it. These were published in 1942 under the title of The Scene is Changed.[1] His other books include Modern Dramatists,[2] The Youngest Drama,[3] and Drama.[4] Dukes died on May 4, 1959.

Dukes came to Theatre Arts in 1924 as an associate editor. When the magazine was enlarged in 1930 and a London office was opened, Dukes became English editor. In this post he wrote a regular review column of theatre in England and occasionally in Europe. One of his functions as English editor was probably to encourage the submission of articles by English and European artists of the theatre. In this task he did excellent service for Theatre Arts.

One of the youngest, and most talented, members of the editorial staff was John Mason Brown. Born in Louisville, Kentucky, on July 3, 1900, he received his A.B. degree from Harvard University in 1923, where he studied in George Pierce

---

[1]London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1942.

[2]London: F. Palmer, 1911.

[3]London: E. Benn, Ltd., 1924.

[4]New York: Henry Holt, 1926.

Baker's "47 Workshop."[1] During 1924 he wrote for the Louisville Courier-Journal and the Boston Transcript, and the following year he went to Europe with designer Donald Oenslager. Before he left, Isaacs asked him to write an article for her magazine, and a few weeks later he sent her an essay on the Drottningholm Theatre, Sweden's eighteenth-century court theatre at Drottningholm castle. On the strength of this article he was invited to join the magazine's staff. His name first appeared on the masthead in May, 1926, as assistant editor, and in January, 1928, he was promoted to associate editor. From November, 1925, to June, 1928, Brown served as drama critic for Theatre Arts. He left the magazine in June, 1931, after a "disagreement" with Isaacs.[2] But their relationship continued warm and friendly, and his articles appeared from time to time in its pages.

Brown taught at the University of Montana in the summers of 1923, 1929, and 1931.[3] He was dramatic critic for the New York Evening Post from 1929 to 1941 and for the New York World-Telegram from 1941 to 1942. He also served as critic for the Saturday Review of Literature, and although no longer a member of the magazine's staff, he still contributes from time to time. For some years Brown has been one

---

[1]John Parker (ed.), Who's Who in the Theatre (12th ed.; New York: Pitman Publishing Corporation, 1957), p. 308.

[2]Brown, interview cited.

[3]Parker, loc. cit.

of the most successful speakers on the lecture platform, and his early experiences in lecturing are recounted in Accustomed As I Am.[1] Brown's adaptation of the medieval play The Pageant of the Shearmen and the Tailors was published in Theatre Arts in December, 1925.[2] His books include The American Theatre as Seen by Its Critics,[3] and The Portable Charles Lamb,[4] both of which he edited; The Modern Theatre in Revolt;[5] Upstage--The American Theatre in Performance;[6] Letters from Greenroom Ghosts;[7] The Arts of Playgoing;[8] Two on the Aisle;[9] Broadway in Review;[10] Accustomed As I Am; Many a Watchful Night;[11] Seeing Things;[12] Seeing More Things;[13] Morning Faces;[14] Still Seeing Things;[15] and Through These Men.[16]

---

[1]New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1942.

[2]Theatre Arts, December, 1925, p. 824.

[3]New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1934. Co-editor, Montrose J. Moses.

[4]New York: Viking Press, 1949.

[5]New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1929.

[6]New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1930.

[7]New York: Viking Press, 1934.

[8]New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1936.

[9]New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1938.

[10]New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1940.

[11]New York: McGraw Hill Book Co., 1942.

[12]New York: Whittlesey House, 1946.

[13]New York: Whittlesey House, 1948.

[14]New York: Whittlesey House, 1949.

[15]New York: McGraw Hill Book Co., 1950.

[16]New York: Harper, 1956.

Another Harvard graduate who studied under George Pierce Baker was Carl Carmer. Born on October 16, 1893, he took his undergraduate degree in 1914 at Hamilton College and his Master of Arts from Harvard University in 1915.[1] His teaching positions included instructor of English at Syracuse University, 1915 to 1916; University of Rochester, 1916 to 1917; head of the public speaking department at Hamilton College in 1919; assistant professor of English at the University of Rochester from 1919 to 1921; and professor of English at the University of Alabama from 1921 to 1927. In 1927 Carmer worked as a columnist for the New Orleans Morning Tribune and from 1928 to 1929 as assistant editor of Vanity Fair magazine. He joined the staff of Theatre Arts in 1929, appeared on the masthead of the magazine as assistant editor in July, 1931, and left in July, 1933. His articles for Theatre Arts were largely concerned with theatre in the South and with American playwrights such as Philip Barry, George Kelly, George S. Kaufman, Paul Green, Maxwell Anderson, and British dramatists Gordon Bottomley, Ashley Dukes, and Noel Coward. His books include Deep South,[2] Stars Fell on Alabama,[3] Genesee Fever,[4] America Sings,[5] For the Rights of Men,[6] and Cavalcade of

---

[1] Who's Who in America (1958-59), p. 450.

[2] New York: Farrar and Rinehart, Inc., 1930.

[3] New York: Farrar and Rinehart, Inc., 1934.

[4] New York: Farrar and Rinehart, Inc., 1941.

[5] New York: A. A. Knopf, 1942.

[6] New York: Hinds, Hayden and Eldredge, 1947.

America.[1] Carmer is at present living in retirement in Irvington-on-Hudson, New York.

After his graduation from Harvard University in 1928, Morton Eustis spent a year and a half working under George Pierce Baker at Yale University. Later he served as an apprentice reporter with the New York World News Service, "where for three years he did general reporting and a considerable amount of feature work for that paper's dramatic and theatre pages."[2] Eustis also worked briefly on the staff of the New York Evening Post. Although his name did not appear on the masthead of Theatre Arts until January, 1938, he was writing articles for the magazine as early as 1933. Eustis became an associate editor in October, 1940, and remained on the masthead while serving as a lieutenant in the United States army from December, 1942, until he was killed in action in France on August 13, 1944.

His 1933-1934 series of articles on the business of the theatre was published in a book entitled B'way, Inc.: The Theatre as a Business;[3] another series, "The Actor Attacks His Part," on the acting styles of Katharine Cornell, Helen Hayes, Alfred Lunt, Lynn Fontanne, Ina Claire, Nazimova, Burgess Meredith, Fred Astaire, and Lotte Lehmann was also published in book form, Players at Work.[4]

---

[1] New York: Crown Publishers, 1956.

[2] Theatre Arts, April, 1934, p. 320.

[3] New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1934.

[4] New York: Theatre Arts, Inc., 1937.

Rosamond Gilder was the associate who served for over twenty years as Isaacs' devoted assistant and confidante. Born of a wealthy family in Marion, Massachusetts, Gilder served with the Red Cross in France during World War I.[1] She was a free-lance writer until Isaacs utilized the services of her neighbor in Gramercy Square as assistant in the formation of the National Theatre Conference, an organization of leaders in the professional and non-professional theatre.[2] During the years Isaacs was an active director of the Conference, Gilder worked as editorial secretary of that group. She was director of the Bureau of Research and Publication for Federal Theatre from 1934 to 1935. From 1945 to 1950 Gilder served as secretary of the American National Theatre and Academy, an organization of which Isaacs had been vice-president. In 1962 she is chairman of the United States Center of the International Theatre Institute and the representative of the American National Theatre and Academy on the National Commission for United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Although Gilder's name did not appear on the masthead of Theatre Arts as associate editor until January, 1938, she had written articles and book reviews for the magazine as

---

[1]Who's Who in America (1958-59), p. 1032.

[2]Gilder and Isaacs were acquainted as residents of Gramercy Park, in New York City.

early as May, 1924.[1] When Isaacs was stricken with rheumatoid arthritis in 1938, Gilder assumed practical management of Theatre Arts. She became editor-in-chief on Isaacs' retirement in 1945. In addition to her duties as editor, she wrote the magazine's monthly review of the New York theatre from 1939 until Theatre Arts was sold in 1948. Her subsequent resignation, with that of the entire staff, concluded a service of almost a quarter of a century. Her books include Enter the Actress,[2] A Theatre Library,[3] Theatre Collections in Libraries and Museums[4] (with George Freedley), and John Gielgud's Hamlet.[5] She is also editor, with Hermine Rich Isaacs, Robert M. MacGregor, and Edward Reed, of Theatre Arts Anthology,[6] a collection of articles from the magazine.

Under Gilder's editorship, there was a continuing expansion in the scope of the magazine's coverage and audience appeal. The addition of motion picture, opera, and phonograph recording reviews indicates an effort to broaden the base of the magazine and give it more popular appeal.

---

[1]"It was in 1924 that I first sat down at a desk in a long, cluttered office on 42nd Street, and, picking up the symbolic blue pencil, began to read proof for the April issue of Theatre Arts. . . ." ("Farewell to Theatre Arts," National Theatre Conference Bulletin, Vol. X, No. 1 [April, 1948], p. 3).

[2]New York: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1931.

[3]New York: Theatre Arts, Inc., 1932.

[4]New York: Theatre Arts, Inc., 1936.

[5]New York: Oxford University Press, 1937.

[6]New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1950.

The traditional policy of careful selectivity for quality, however, continued under Gilder's stewardship; but the materials no longer as strongly reflected editorial expression as they had under Isaacs. Perhaps, as Hermine Isaacs Popper points out, this was because Gilder was "more married to the showshop idea of theatre" and seemed to be "more interested in the business end of show business."[1] Popper also states that Gilder had less taste in visual aspects and less concern with the décor, but "compensated for this by having Cecil Smith in charge of dance and opera." On the whole, there were comparatively few changes in editorial policy in the shift of editorship, primarily because Gilder was devoted to representing Isaacs with personal devotion.[2]

Over the years associate, assistant, and managing editors included George Beiswanger, now on the faculty of Georgia State College for Women; Katharine Canaday; Dorothy Davies; William Lindsay Gresham; Lawrence Heyl, Jr.; Norris Houghton, former co-producer of the off-Broadway Phoenix Theatre and presently director of theatre at Vassar College;[3] Franklin Houston; Hermine Rich Isaacs,[4] daughter of Edith J. R. Isaacs

---

[1]Personal interview with Hermine Rich Isaacs Popper, White Plains, New York, Sept. 2, 1953.

[2]Idem.

[3]Norris Houghton's books include: Moscow Rehearsals (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1936); Advance from Broadway (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1941); But Not Forgotten (New York: Sloane, 1952); Return Engagement (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1962).

[4]Hermine Rich Isaacs wrote the motion picture review column in Theatre Arts from 1944 to 1948, and after leaving the magazine worked on the literary staff of Harper's magazine.

and wife of Robert Popper; John K. Hutchens,[1] drama critic and presently book review editor of the New York Herald-Tribune; Robert M. MacGregor, presently director of Theatre Arts Books, Inc., a publishing firm which split from the magazine in 1948; Edward Reed; Hilda Reis; Cecil Smith,[2] music and drama critic; Susan Tully, presently on the staff of the New York Public Library; Patricia Lawrence; Tom Squire; and Kathryn Stein.

For most of Theatre Arts' thirty-two years, Isaacs was business manager for the magazine, as well as its editor. However, a monetary grant made by Dorothy Straight Elmhirst enabled Isaacs to hire a business manager, and the masthead for the August, 1933, issue listed B. B. Knudsen in that post. Knudsen was replaced, however, by Ernest Silverman in January, 1938, who was dropped from the masthead in July, 1940. The void from July, 1940, to July, 1945, was filled in the latter month when Robert Burghardt appeared as business manager, and remained until the magazine was sold in 1948. The masthead

---

[1]John K. Hutchens was born in Chicago on August 9, 1905, and received an A.B. degree from Hamilton College in 1926. In 1927 and 1928 he worked as film critic and assistant dramatic editor for the New York Evening Post. He served as radio editor for the New York Times from 1941 to 1944, and was drama editor for the Boston Evening Transcript from 1946 to 1948. He is the author of The American Twenties: A Literary Panorama (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1952).

[2]Cecil Smith was born in 1906 and was educated at the University of Chicago and Harvard. He was on the music faculty of the University of Chicago from 1929 to 1947. In 1936 he was music critic for the Chicago Tribune and dramatic critic and editor for that paper from 1938 to 1943. He is the author of the book Musical Comedy in America.

for the January, 1947, issue also credited Felice Pakula as "promotion manager," but the name was dropped in the January, 1948, number.

In summary, the editorial policy of Theatre Arts as reflected in the choice of staff resembles the other facets of the magazine's editorial method. The characteristic search for new talents extended into the literary and critical arts as well, and the subsequent careers of some of the staff would suggest that Isaacs was a good judge of writing ability. Interviews with several staff members give evidence of the quality of training and experience under her guidance. Their homogeneous interests and broad editorial experience, working on all phases of the magazine, produced a cohesive force and loyalty which manifests itself today in expressions of admiration and devotion. The fact that Isaacs was unable to pay competitive wages to her staff may explain the rather brief stay of most of Theatre Arts' workers. Only the few independently wealthy people, such as Gilder, and those who held jobs which allowed time for additional activities remained out of loyalty to Isaacs and her magazine.

CHAPTER X

FORMAT AND CHOICE OF RAW MATERIALS

Editorial policy is also revealed in the magazine's format and in the choice of materials used in its manufacture. Essentially, there was little change in the format of Theatre Arts throughout its thirty-two-year history. The early issues, of course, reflect some variation in organization, as the editors sought to find a basically effective pattern for the magazine. Most of these changes, however, occurred during the first four volumes from November, 1916, through October, 1920.

Since Theatre Arts began publication at the end of a year, the first issue was dated November, 1916. The second number appeared in February, the third in May, and the fourth in August, 1917. The second volume published issues in December, 1917, February, May, and September, 1918. The last number contained only one article and totalled eight pages. Editor Cheney blamed the war and rising costs of paper, engraving, and printing. But he promised a new start under an editorial board beginning with Number 1 of Volume III.[1] Thereafter, issues appeared regularly in January, April,

---

[1] Theatre Arts, September, 1918, p. 179.

July, and October throughout the years of quarterly publication.

The first three years of the magazine's life saw the evolution of four separate columns which represent direct editorial expression. The first of these, "Editorial," appeared in fifteen issues from November, 1916, through October, 1921, and contained editorial comment on the activities of artists and groups in the experimental theatres, as well as other events, items, or problems of general theatrical interest. The column disappeared with Cheney's departure from the magazine in 1921. Its function was, in part, assumed by "The World and the Theatre" column initiated under Isaacs' editorship and retained during the tenure of Rosamond Gilder.

Two early columns on news and reports from the experimental theatres were "With the Theatre Artist" and "Progress in Theatre Art." These were combined into "News of Theatre Art and Artists" with the February, 1917, issue, and in August, 1917, was entitled "News and Comment." "At the Little Theatres," expanded in December, 1917, to "At the Little and Experimental Theatres," joined the combined columns listed above in the January, 1920, issue as "The Theatre Arts Chronicle." This column also disappeared after the January, 1921, issue. Its news and information functions were absorbed by "The World and the Theatre" and "The Tributary Theatre" columns.

A third column, "Theatre Arts Bookshelf," evolved from "The Newly Published Plays," a critical review of selected plays, and "New Books About the Theatre," a book review feature. These two were combined in the "Theatre Arts Bookshelf" with the January, 1920, issue of the magazine. This column remained intact during the editorships of both Isaacs and Rosamond Gilder. The use of these columns by editor Isaacs in the promotion of the magazine's editorial policy has been discussed in Chapter IV.

Since Cheney chose largely to ignore the commercial theatre in New York, there was no regular play review column in Theatre Arts under his brief editorship. The second issue of the magazine, dated February, 1917, included an admittedly selective review under the title of "New York's Best Season." In a later issue a similar critique appeared as "Comment on Current (Recent) Plays." With the establishment of an editorial board in 1919, a regular review column, written by co-editor Kenneth Macgowan, was instituted. The title of the article, which was located at the front of the magazine as the first feature, was thematic in character and varied from month to month. This practice continued even after the column was identified as "Broadway in Review" on the first page of the May, 1927, issue.

Throughout the years of quarterly publication, the cover of Theatre Arts included the title of the magazine, the volume and issue number, and a small sketch which varied

from a primitive mask to the motif of the Moscow Art Theatre. From time to time a special feature of a particular issue might be announced on the cover. Cover colors varied with each number. Starting with the May, 1918, issue, a table of contents was printed on the reverse side of the front cover. Advertisements, related to the theatre, appeared on the back cover with the January, 1919, publication.

The June, 1924, cover of Theatre Arts was framed by a line drawing of square columns on the sides and steps at the bottom. Within this frame were printed announcements of various feature articles or the subject matter of a special issue. This design characterized the front cover of the magazine until October, 1939, when pictures of actors, various theatre artists, or sketches were habitually printed between the title and announcements. The cover color was a bright yellow for eleven years from December, 1924, to February, 1935, when varied colors for each issue were again used. The table of contents page usually faced the front cover. Advertisements, now expanded to include restaurants and hotels, were placed on the inside of the front cover and on both sides of the back cover. From February, 1941, onward commercial theatre productions were advertised in these pages. Occasionally, one or two extra pages of advertisements were added to the front or back of the magazine.

From October, 1946, through the final issue, in February, 1948, the cover of Theatre Arts contained a sketch

rather than a picture. The single exception was a photograph of John Gielgud in Love for Love. Cover colors continued to vary in each issue. During this period advertisements increased to their largest number in the magazine's history, but they were almost entirely of New York productions, drama schools, and theatrical supply houses.

The "Foreword" of the first issue was replaced in the second by a frontispiece which remained throughout the quarterly years. Here the magazine usually printed a short poem or occasionally an editorial commentary on some aspect or period of the theatre. Advertisements were infrequently substituted for this feature. The reverse side of the frontispiece was usually a picture of an important artist of the theatre, a theatre building, a production scene, or a stage design. After the October, 1924, issue, the frontispiece material was permanently replaced by advertisements or the table of contents; but the practice of printing a photograph on the rear side of the frontispiece continued during both the Isaacs and Gilder editorships. These pictures eventually came to include scenes from motion pictures as well.

In November, 1933, this front section of the magazine began to include a column, along with the advertisements, entitled "See for Yourself," listing current plays in New York, productions scheduled to open, and those plays which had closed after more than a two-week run. The April, 1943, issue added a list of films with the following explanation:

"The editors have made no effort to include all motion pictures that have entertainment value but confine their recommendations to those pictures that no intelligent fan would want to miss."[1]

Under Rosamond Gilder's stewardship a fifth section was added to this column and was entitled "Summer Circuit."[2] Like the other listings, this section simply enumerated professional companies touring the United States during the summer months. Other new columns included in these front pages during Gilder's editorship of Theatre Arts were "Contributors,"[3] a listing and brief identification of guest contributors to the particular issue; "Entr'Acte,"[4] a letters-to-the-editor column; "The Tormentor,"[5] a quiz column designed to test the reader's knowledge of the theatre; "Record Previews,"[6] a listing of new recordings of various types; and "The Small Screen,"[7] a listing of new sixteen and thirty-five millimeter films available for showing.

The original price of the magazine was fifty cents per copy with a yearly subscription rate of two dollars.

---

[1] Theatre Arts, April, 1943, p. 261.

[2] First appeared in Theatre Arts for June, 1946.

[3] First appeared in Theatre Arts for June, 1946.

[4] First appeared in Theatre Arts for October, 1946.

[5] First appeared in Theatre Arts for November, 1946.

[6] First appeared in Theatre Arts for December, 1946.

[7] First appeared in Theatre Arts for March, 1947.

The January, 1922, issue printed on its cover a copy price of seventy-five cents, but the annual subscription rate remained the same throughout the quarterly period. With monthly publication in January, 1924, the price was restored to fifty cents per copy, and the yearly subscription cost was set at five dollars. In November, 1936, the price was lowered further to thirty-five cents per copy and three dollars and fifty cents per year. This figure remained during Isaacs' editorship of Theatre Arts. The final price adjustment was made in October, 1946, when the magazine announced an increase to fifty cents per copy, made necessary by higher publishing costs. This price remained in effect, thereafter, throughout Gilder's editorship to February, 1948.

The size of Theatre Arts remained relatively constant during the years of quarterly publication. Except for the September, 1918, number, issues averaged about fifty-two pages, six inches by nine inches, with a complete one-inch margin. Type varied from average to small size but was always readable. With monthly publication in January, 1924, the number of pages was increased and the dimensions of the magazine were enlarged to seven inches by nine and one-half inches. Top and bottom margins were one inch and side margins were increased to an inch and a half. Type was considerably larger and leading was liberalized, making the magazine easier to read and giving it a more impressive appearance. Theatre Arts was again enlarged in the January, 1930, issue to seven and one-half inches by

ten and one-half inches, but margins and type sizes remained the same. The 1930 enlargement also increased the number of pages by sixteen from an average of eighty per issue to ninety or more.[1] The effects of the depression, however, forced a reduction of eight pages in 1932,[2] and further shrinkage was noted during World War II. By 1943 most issues contained about sixty pages, or less, per number.

Under Gilder's editorship the format of the magazine was further changed when in the July, 1946, issue each page was divided into two separate columns in place of the original one column of previous issues. The size of the type was also reduced. These changes in format were probably introduced to allow for increase in words within the same space. From the beginning of publication, pages had been numbered consecutively throughout each volume, but with the January, 1947, number each issue began with a page 1.

Perhaps one of the most impressive and important characteristics of Theatre Arts' editorial policy is indicated in the magazine's use of pictorial illustration. The articles, reviews, and regular columns were lavishly illustrated with portraits of the artists of the theatre, past and present, with production scenes from the best of the professional and non-professional theatre, with pictures of the world's finest

---

[1]Letter from Osmer N. Gorton to Edith Isaacs, Aug. 22, 1929 (from the files of R. Gilder).

[2]Letter from Edith Isaacs to Osmer N. Gorton, March 2, 1932 (from the files of R. Gilder).

theatres, with drawings and photographs of important scene designs, and with photographs reflecting the theatre quality in a bridge, a bullfight, or a stone. Pictures varied in size from three and one-half inches by four inches to three inches by six and one-half inches, and from a half page to a full page with margins. Occasionally, a picture might occupy a two-page space in an issue. While early pictures were sometimes dark in tone and rather difficult to distinguish, quality improved greatly as the art of stage photography advanced. Illustrations were almost invariably accompanied by captions which were of varied length and often contained critical commentary. The illustrations in Theatre Arts constitute one of the finest pictorial records of the development of an exciting era in the American theatre.[1] Consideration of the magazine's pictures has been included in the discussion of the materials they illustrate.

A final facet of Theatre Arts' editorial policy is seen in the magazine's choice of the raw materials used in its manufacture. For example, articles and columns were printed on text, or antique, which is a paper usually used in the printing of books,[2] and certainly a deluxe paper when compared to the thinner, and therefore cheaper, paper used by most commercial magazines. Illustrations and photographs

---

[1]Letter from Sheldon Cheney to the author, Dec. 20, 1953.

[2]Personal interview with Edward E. Lofberg, manager, University of Michigan Printing and Binding Department, March 10, 1957, Ann Arbor, Michigan

were printed on a special and expensive paper called dull enamel and, in a costly process, were directly inserted into the book.[1] High quality cuts constituted one of the most expensive items in the magazine's manufacture.

In addition, as has been already pointed out, Theatre Arts was printed in large type with ample margins and leading which gave the magazine a deluxe and scholarly appearance more typical of book composition than of a magazine periodical.[2] This additional expense has given Theatre Arts a book-like elegance and permanence which reflect the editor's intention to make the magazine "a record and a prophecy."

To summarize: the format, organization, appearance, and raw materials used in the magazine's manufacture were designed to give Theatre Arts an elegance and permanence which would make it worthy of preservation. The quality of its arrangement and appearance lent dignity and stature to the theatre as an art. Its pictures and illustrations probably helped to raise the standards of the theatre in America by setting goals and providing provocative stimulation for the artists and groups in the professional and non-professional theatre. And all of this was achieved in the face of rising cost and increasing expenditure, with little increase in price and no interruption of publication.

---

[1] Idem. [2] Idem.

CHAPTER XI

THE ACHIEVEMENT

Throughout its thirty-two years, Theatre Arts consistently treated the theatre as an art with dignity and significance. Founded by Sheldon Cheney in 1916, the magazine came under the control of an editorial quadrumvirate in 1919, consisting of Cheney, Edith J. R. Isaacs, Kenneth Macgowan, and S. Marion Tucker. With the departure of the other editors by 1924, Isaacs became editor-in-chief and remained in that position until she retired in 1945. Her replacement was her longtime assistant and devotée, Rosamond Gilder, who served as editor until the magazine changed ownership in 1948.

At the beginning Theatre Arts' raison d'être was "to hasten the day when the speculators will step out of the established playhouses and let the artists in." Its avowed purpose was to promote the cause of the New Stagecraft, primarily a revolution in scenic art, and to provide an outlet for the dissemination of the movement's principles and practices. Emphasis was given almost entirely to the scene designer as an artist of the theatre and to the new art theatres where the experimental methods were being utilized. The

commercial theatre was considered only in so far as it reflected the techniques of the New Stagecraft.

Under the editorship of Edith J. R. Isaacs, the magazine's original aims and goals remained in force, but the scope and depth of coverage increased significantly. Editorial policy developed a broader and more analytical character. Believing the theatre to be a great force for world peace and understanding, Isaacs expanded materials on foreign theatre as a source of stimulation and inspiration for the theatre in America. Complete freedom of international exchange was the Theatre Arts ideal.

Moving from quarterly to monthly publication in 1924, the magazine further increased the number and coverage of its articles. In addition, these materials became more definitive and analytical in treatment. With the marked increase in pages and space Isaacs encouraged a correlation of all the arts in the theatre with extensive coverage of dance, music, poetry, marionettes, circus, and other art forms. Heavy emphasis on the artists and theatres of the past was a part of Isaacs' effort to correlate the theatre's past with the present, clarifying modern theatre practice through an understanding of a rich theatrical heritage. Isaacs believed that such correlation was the best means, to use her familiar phrase, of "dilating the region of the theatre."

In its coverage Theatre Arts encouraged the development of young American artists of the theatre. In articles

and in the publication of playscripts it searched for American dramatists of promise, particularly those writing plays with native American themes. Although it made no unusual discoveries, with the possible exception of Eugene O'Neill and Paul Green, the magazine emphasized the work of O'Neill, Green, Elmer Rice, George Kelly, Lillian Hellman, and Thornton Wilder, to name a few.

In scene design Theatre Arts reflects the continuing influence of the New Stagecraft. It encouraged and championed the careers of such designers as Robert Edmond Jones, Lee Simonson, Norman Bel Geddes, Jo Mielziner, and others by publishing their theories as well as their designs. The frequent and excellent illustrations of settings and sketches made these and other artists known throughout the theatres of the world, and their design set standards and goals for theatres everywhere.

By its emphasis on the importance of productive unity, Theatre Arts may have influenced the development of the American director as the master artist responsible for the unified ensemble of all theatrical elements. The analytical examination of the directorial styles and techniques of Arthur Hopkins, Max Reinhardt, Harold Clurman, Guthrie McClintic, and others may have helped to raise, or at least reinforce, the status of the director in the theatre.

The editor's interest in the art of the actor is probably most clearly evidenced in the critical pages of Theatre

Arts, but a more significant and influential contribution may have been the magazine's original publication of Richard Boleslavsky's theories of acting, which have had an important effect on acting in the American theatre.

As principles espoused by Theatre Arts began to permeate the commercial stage, the magazine gave increasing attention to the Broadway theatre. But Isaacs saw the American theatre as something larger than the confines of New York City. Under her editorship, the non-professional theatres of the nation were continually fed with widely varied and analytical studies of the finest in present and past theatre art. In addition, the magazine served as a source for the exchange of ideas and methods, as well as news and comment, among the artists of these groups.

The editorial and critical columns of Theatre Arts were important in the promotion of the magazine's goals and aims. Like the articles, these features reflected the influence of the New Stagecraft, advocated an American national theatre, urged the establishment of repertory and experimental theatres, emphasized the values of international exchange, encouraged the improvement of theatre architecture, and militated against any law, stricture, or practice which might inhibit or prevent the free growth of the theatre.

Theatre Arts' standards were high. Illustrations, paper, type, and format gave the magazine an elegance and permanence which were more typical of book publication than

a magazine of the theatre. Such editorial practice has provided a fine record of the period for the use of scholar and historian.

In research materials for this study no specific or direct criticism of Theatre Arts, either of editorial policy or management, was encountered. In an article written by John Mason Brown reference was made to a general criticism occasionally leveled at Theatre Arts that the magazine was too international, too arty, too esoteric. The critic, or critics, however, were never identified. Personal interviews with former staff members and associates hinted at Isaacs' strong-willed dominance over every aspect of the magazine's management, but all pointed out that there was no editorial dictation since the staff were in rapport. Isaacs' almost fanatical resistance to any form of control or dependence is indicated particularly in Theatre Arts' relationship with Editorial Publications. This resistance to control may, at least in part, be responsible for the magazine's inability to achieve financial solvency. Her strong-mindedness and aversion to compromise are also suggested in her stormy relations with the Drama League and with the National Theatre Conference.

Study of the volumes of the magazine itself reveals other facets of Isaacs' editorial attitudes and prejudices, which on occasion become highly personal and vitriolic in their nature. Her dislike for what she called "journalistic"

drama led her into severe criticism of a number of American playwrights, notably George S. Kaufman. A preference for plays with "the enchantment of distance" may have rendered her unable to appreciate the light comedy of plays such as You Can't Take It With You, Boy Meets Girl, and others. In addition, her critical penchant for acting--resulting in a neglect of costume, lighting, and scenery--may have lessened the authority of her criticism. There is also the possibility that her characteristic editorial and critical selectivity may have too strongly limited her view of the theatre, forcing her and Theatre Arts into weak or narrow judgments or positions.

Other examples of her extreme attitudes are found in her personal criticism leveled against both groups and individuals, such as the Metropolitan Opera, the Theatre Union, the Theatre Guild, actor Leslie Howard, and many others. A particularly revealing attack was made by Isaacs on Columbia University for its handling of the Pulitzer Prize award for drama in 1934 and for its failure to affiliate with the National Theatre Conference.

The motivation for this type of direct and personal criticism may be understood when it is recalled that Isaacs and Theatre Arts were clearly and actively advocates rather than disinterested, objective viewers of the theatrical scene. The above limitations, if such they are, seem unimportant relative to the magazine's constructive influence and contribution. The significance of that contribution is, perhaps,

best indicated in the following tributes to Theatre Arts and its editor by professional and non-professional theatre workers, brought out by the suspension of the magazine in 1948.[1]

> The closing out of Theatre Arts, as the magazine we have known for over 30 years, is an irreparable loss to the American theatre. To all of us committed to the arts of the theatre, it was the book from which we gleaned not only the lesson and the text but the vision and the faith as well.
>
> Its accumulated issues are a monument to the good taste, catholicity, and the integrity of Edith Isaacs and Rosamond Gilder, its editors. Here's hoping that somehow, someway, Miss Gilder may be able to start it again.
>
> ----Sawyer Falk, Syracuse University[2]

> I remember looking with a rather jaundiced eye on the words Theatre Arts when Sheldon Cheney blazoned them across the little quarterly which he started at Cranbrook, Mich., in 1917. They seemed precious and a little special. In the course of a few years they assumed a definite, creative significance as the magazine concentrated more and more on the new stagecraft that was making over the appearance and, to some extent, the meaning of theatrical production in America. Now these words have come to mean in a broad sense all the basic arts of the theatre and, beyond that, the two new forms of dramatic expression which have grown from it--the movies and the radio.
>
> We owe this to two people and their sense of what theatre could and would come to mean to our society. They are the courageous and foreseeing founder of the magazine, Sheldon Cheney, and the woman of vision, energy and devotion who kept it alive and made it the unique, significant and inclusive publication that it ultimately became, Edith Isaacs. The passing of the Theatre Arts that we knew and valued destroys not only a vitally useful influence on us all, but also a monument to the accomplishments and the sacrifice of those two gifted and devoted people.
>
> ----Kenneth Macgowan, University of California

---

[1]National Theatre Conference Bulletin, Vol. X, No. 1 (April, 1948), pp. 6-13.

[2]Falk was a vice-president and member of the board of directors of the American National Theatre and Academy and president of the National Theatre Conference from 1944 to 1952. He died in 1961.

The loss of the old Theatre Arts will not be repaired by anyone. The magazine and the service of Edith Isaacs and Rosamond Gilder to it were of distinguished value to the American theatre. The memory of what they did will be imperishable.

----Frederic McConnell, Cleveland Play House

Theatre Arts was a window to world drama. Through it we saw the best. The special issues in particular brought to sharp focus the stimulating theories and accomplishments of leaders everywhere. As editors, Mrs. Isaacs and Rosamond Gilder reached beyond the commerce of theatre to its function as an art and its place in our lives. They did not compromise with expediency, but held fast to high purpose. Theatre Arts was more than a magazine--it was a challenge to greater achievement.

----Barclay Leathem, Western Reserve University

To maintain artistic integrity for more than 30 years, through wars and depressions, requires courage and conviction of a high order. Theatre Arts had these qualities, as well as others equally admirable. In a country where high standards are rare, special tribute should be paid such a phenomenon, special banners flown.

----Glenn Hughes, University of Washington

The suspension of Theatre Arts, as we have known it, is a matter of real regret to me. Under the editorship of Mrs. Edith Isaacs, and later of Miss Rosamond Gilder, it has been a faithful recording of all that is best in our theatre and an inspiration to workers in the theatre everywhere. I feel the sense of loss that I would feel at parting from a cherished friend.

----Robert Edmond Jones

I cannot say how much I regret the loss of Theatre Arts to all of us in the theatre field. I shall always remember what an inspiration it has been to me through the years. In this I am joined by the Pasadena Playhouse staff, our players and our students to whom that wonderful magazine has been a constant source of help. I shall never cease to be grateful to Edith Isaacs, Rosamond Gilder and all those who made the magazine such an invaluable contribution to the theatre.

----Gilmor Brown, Pasadena Playhouse

For a generation Theatre Arts with its allied enterprises and services, under the creative leadership of Mrs. Edith Isaacs, has provided varied inspiration, an unequalled survey and record of the art theatre of our time, idealistic encouragement and practical support for all the facets of the tributary theatre.

We have owed and we owe that journal much: What would

we have done without it; what will we do without it? If we may and can, let us help make a worthy successor--in appreciation of Theatre Arts 1915-1948.

----A. M. Drummond, Cornell University

I hated to see Theatre Arts go. Once a month it brought a fresh approach to those of us steeped in Broadway. By the same token, it may have seemed to a few of us too much on the art side but it was good for our souls, to coin a euphemism. Its singleness of purpose, in its exclusive devotion to the theatre, was always heartening.

----Brock Pemberton

Theatre Arts has become so much a part of theatre work in colleges and universities that it is impossible to see how we can get along without it.

Creative as well as critical, the editors raised immeasurably standards of acting, design, and production throughout the country. They have given us a sense of the past in drama and at the same time, have kept us informed as to the newest developments throughout the world. Consistently, the policy of the magazine has been broad: geographically, to include foreign as well as domestic stages, and community and college stages as well as Broadway; and thematically, to inform us not only of theatre but of cinema, radio, music and dance.

----Hallie Flanagan Davis, Smith College[1]

The suspending of Theatre Arts is a distinct loss to the entire world of the theatre. By this action, the American theatre is greatly impoverished. To the community and educational theatre, the loss is irreparable.

The staff, students, and patrons of the Indiana University Theatre join me in expressing gratitude to the founders, editors and staff of Theatre Arts for the rich contribution which has been made to the entire theatre movement over a long period of years, and to us in particular.

----Lee Norvelle, Indiana University

Theatre Arts was part and parcel of the growing-up years of the modern American theatre. Every month, for nearly a third of a century, it proclaimed the importance and dignity of the theatre, and was a rallying cry for all of us who helped, or thought we helped. We drew a good part of our inspiration from its pages, and somehow it gave us courage and faith when the going was hard.

----Barrett H. Clark, Dramatists' Play Service

---

[1]Mrs. Davis was national director of Federal Theatre and, at the time of this article, was director of theatre at Smith College.

In the change of ownership of Theatre Arts one can only hope that the aspirations and contributions of Edith Isaacs will not be abandoned. Appreciation of the best in the theatre was long stimulated by her unfaltering perception and devotion. The light of her approval shone on many achievements in America and abroad that otherwise would have gone unnoticed. As to how much she heightened the aspirations of others, there is no way of measuring. Contributions such as hers cannot be tabulated in annual statements, but they are written in the grateful hearts of many who know their debt to her.

She is one of the few and true theatre standard bearers of her time and as such long will be revered and remembered. Her successors will not find it easy to attain the heights she so long inhabited. May they be inspired by her example.

----Arthur Hopkins

Of the writing of epitaphs there is no end. Supposing we refuse to write one for Theatre Arts. Suppose we ask Rosamond Gilder how much it would cost us--theatre workers, theatre organizations like NTC, NETA and ANTA--to keep it alive; and having asked, set we about to raise the money to keep it going, or revive it before the fresh grass browns over the grave. If necessary print it on cheap paper, cut out photographs, but preserve the one journal which speaks to, for, and about the theatre. We do not need the venerable dead. We need Theatre Arts alive!

----Maurice Gnesin, Goodman Memorial Theatre

Theatre Arts, under the editorship of Edith Isaacs and Rosamond Gilder, has made a very fine contribution to the theatre over a long period of years. I think it has been of a special value to everyone working in production.

We must regretfully say hail and farewell to the old magazine and hope that the new Theatre Arts will be a worthy successor to the fine tradition the old one established.

----Theresa Helburn, Theatre Guild Inc.

I know of no way to estimate accurately and scientifically a cultural and social force such as Theatre Arts. It served to keep the Broadway theatre international-minded and it served to keep the Broadway theatre something of a living force among the frequenters and supporters of the thousands of so-called "tributary theatres."

In our colleges and universities Theatre Arts was not merely a magazine; it was a significant and important text book, a highly valuable adjunct to our teaching and our training. The loss of Theatre Arts is, therefore, just

exactly that much of a handicap to college and university training in theatre and drama. We will feel that loss in each of our classrooms. Why should such a definite and distinct loss be allowed?

Theatre Arts never should have been permitted to get into the position in which it could be killed before the "tributary theatre" even knew what was happening and hence before it could take any saving action. When Theatre Arts is again developed by the devoted service of rare artists and individuals (perhaps under another name), it must be developed under different auspices and under sponsorship that will guarantee against another such killing.

----Hubert Heffner, Stanford University

It has been said that theatres are great by virtue of their audiences, but it should be added that audiences are great only by virtue of their critics. For over a decade Theatre Arts has supplied the audiences of America with standards and critical evaluations of this country's theatrical movements. Under its editors, Edith Isaacs and Rosamond Gilder, the work of the chronicler and the critic has been raised to a fine art. With an unflagging enthusiasm, and an honest integrity, it has pointed the way to a great American theatre. In these troubled days, it will be sorely missed, but I am sure its radiance will not dim but, rather, guide us to a greater future.

----Burton W. James, Seattle Repertory Playhouse

I cannot imagine how we are going to get along without Theatre Arts. For thirty years now it has served as a record, as a teacher, as a stimulus, as an inspiration and a challenge. The creative force which emerged from the editorial offices has helped shape the American theatre; it will continue to shape it, for its influence will live long beyond 1948. We all are deeply in debt to Mrs. Isaacs and Miss Gilder.

----Henry Boettcher, Carnegie Institute of Technology

Theatre Arts always has held a unique place in both the American theatre and the international theatre. It will be a great pity if we are robbed of the extremely valuable record which the past files of the magazine provide. ----Jo Mielziner

Theatre Arts literally introduced me to the world of the theatre. When I went to college from a tiny town in Texas, I had seen only a few high school plays. I worked in the library at school and quickly discovered the current issue of Theatre Arts. Deep in the stacks of the library I buried myself every day after work, and read every word in every issue of the magazine. At first it

was like one great big glorious binge. When I began to sober up a little, I found Theatre Arts was more than a great record of our American and world theatre; it was a standard, a credo, a philosophy. It took me still longer to realize it not only recorded but inspired people into working and dreaming new accomplishments that sometimes matched the standards Theatre Arts set up.

This force has been so strong and imprinted itself so indelibly upon me, that I feel sure the same thing has happened to thousands of others; therefore, I cannot accept the fact Theatre Arts is no longer in existence. It certainly is still very much alive to me. It would be still "aliver" if I could be looking forward to next month's issue. I think we should do something about it. Can't we?

----Margo Jones, Dallas Theatre Inc.

Words that convey important ideas or deep feelings may fix themselves in proverbs, and so be of influence long after their first appearance in the sentence that became a proverb. Or the verbal expression may be a symbol of the person saying or writing it. Theatre Arts has many symbols of personality in the writings of its two editors. Their passages of criticism are not quoted as proverbial wisdom, perhaps, but these are all of a piece and representative of a total influence.

One example from November, 1946, is enough proof for all who knew the Theatre Arts of Volume I, Number 1 to Volume XXXII, Number 2. The editor quoted John Mason Brown's words, "The war has changed my whole critical attitude. The war I hope has changed me. I have no longer any interest in what used to delight me--the 'flit-gun' dismissal of mediocrity. The extra job of criticism, as I now see it, is to rise to appreciation rather than rejoice in depreciation."

The editorial commentary on this was: "Appreciation, be it noted, does not preclude discrimination. Theatre Arts believes wholeheartedly in both." Its readers know that its editors believed in both and demonstrated the belief each year in every number.

----David H. Stevens, Director of Humanities,
Rockefeller Foundation

Perhaps the best summary of Theatre Arts' place in the history of the American theatre is provided by the magazine's devoted servant, Rosamond Gilder.

Theatre Arts represented something much needed in the American scene--needed, indeed, in the world theatre, to judge by the expressions of dismay that its disastrous

end has elicited. Month after month for thirty-two years it reiterated, by its very format and being, its faith in the idea of theatre, its belief in the theatre as an art. Through wars and depressions and the ups and downs of business, it never lowered its flag nor debased its standard. There was in the editorial ambient of Theatre Arts an enthusiasm for the theatre wherever it existed. Good theatre, on Broadway or off, in Russia, France, Germany, China, Calcutta, Bali, was equally important in its eyes. It held no brief for show business as opposed to educational theatre nor, on the other hand, did it ever pretend that theatre was an amateur's plaything or anything less than one of the greatest, most difficult and taxing of arts. Starting as the banner-bearer for the artist's re-entry into the theatre, it was especially proud to show the works of American and European designers, to open its pages to discussions of the crafts, to pioneer for new forms and new creative impulses. The artists, playwrights, critics, poets, directors, actors, musicians, dancers of three decades, finding its pages hospitable to their dreams, its editor wise and discerning, made Theatre Arts what it was--a record of that which it once prophsied, a golden book of the Golden Age of the American Theatre.[1]

---

[1]National Theatre Conference Bulletin, loc. cit., pp. 3-4.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

RELATED ACTIVITIES

Edith Isaacs did not limit her efforts in behalf of the theatre to the editing of Theatre Arts. Dedicated to the improvement of the theatre and to the establishment of an American national theatre, she participated in practically every worthwhile activity connected with the promotion of theatre. Evidence of this interest has already been provided in Chapter IV, which examines the various editorial columns and features of the magazine under Isaacs' editorship.

Over the years she attended innumerable conferences and meetings on various aspects and problems of the theatre. She spoke at a number of these conferences, including several of the conventions of the American Educational Theatre Association.

The two organizations in which she was most active were the National Theatre Conference and the American National Theatre and Academy. While these activities are not directly related to her work as editor of Theatre Arts, they do reflect the general editorial policy of her magazine and her efforts in behalf of the theatre in America. For this reason a brief summary of her participation in these two organizations is included here.

In November, 1925, B. Iden Payne and Chester Wallace called a conference on "The Drama in American Universities and Little Theatres" at the Carnegie Institute of Technology. Since Theatre Arts had been urging such conferences for some time, Isaacs was, of course, present.[1] She also attended the "second annual conference of representatives of the non-professional theatres" called by George Pierce Baker at Yale University in 1927.[2]

The next year Kenneth Macgowan, a close friend of Isaacs and an editor of Theatre Arts from 1919 to 1924, received a financial grant from the Carnegie Foundation to enable him to visit the non-commercial theatres of the country. He reported his observations in a book, Footlights Across America,[3] and in an article[4] in Theatre Arts, calling for the establishment of a permanent "National Theatre Council" to give structure to the theatre of the nation.[5] In 1931 Macgowan secured a grant of $2,500.00 from the Carnegie Foundation

---

[1] Theatre Arts, September, 1925, p. 587; November, 1925, p. 762; March, 1926, p. 208; May, 1926, p. 344; and September, 1926, p. 578.

[2] Ibid., January, 1927, p. 74; March, 1927, p. 217; April, 1927, p. 307.

[3] New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1929.

[4] "A Dozen Rubicons," Theatre Arts, July, 1929, p. 480.

[5] "The reason for the mimeographed handout was to get a reaction from theatre people so that their reactions in the composite would serve as a lever for more money from Carnegie for a National Theatre Council" (personal letter from Jack Morrison [for Kenneth Macgowan] to William P. Halstead, Sept. 26, 1951).

through the American Association of Adult Education to finance a three-day conference of non-commercial theatre leaders at Northwestern University.[1] At subsequent meetings in Iowa City (State University of Iowa) and New York City, the National Theatre Conference evolved. Isaacs was elected Secretary-Treasurer, with Baker as President and Gilmor Brown of Pasadena Playhouse and E. C. Mabie of Iowa University as Vice-Presidents.

The early promotional literature written by Isaacs described the National Theatre Conference as "a cooperative membership organization to serve collectively the interests of the American theatre."[2] Theatre Arts described it in the following paragraph:

> The National Theatre Conference hopes to remain, as its name implies, a not-too-heady and not-too-definite organization, but rather a medium for the exchange of ideas and of collective service between the leading organized theatres of all kinds throughout the country: a gesture in the direction of wiping out that sense of distance and aloneness which adds so much to the difficulty of the American director or playwright who works far away from New York.[3]

Active membership in the early National Theatre Conference was open to the executive heads of active non-commercial theatres, and associate memberships were open to anyone.[4]

---

[1]National Theatre Conference Report of Funds Received and Expended, May 13, 1935 (from the files of Rosamond Gilder).

[2]Membership circular for 1933 (from the files of Rosamond Gilder).

[3]Theatre Arts, October, 1947, p. 10.

[4]National Theatre Conference Report, May 13, 1935 (Gilder files). The principal executive of a community or college theatre producing three or more full-length plays during a year could be an active member. Associate members received more limited services.

With the NTC staff and activities accommodated in the offices of Theatre Arts,[1] Isaacs conducted for the Conference a questionnaire survey of the non-commercial theatres of the nation in order to discover the most valuable services which could be supplied by the Conference. The specific early goals of the Conference were defined in her summary of the questionnaire's results:

> Almost all the work indicated as within the scope of the National Theatre Conference can be handled by an organized exchange of information and ideas by four [sic] methods:
> (1) CONFERENCES - local, regional, and national. The literal "meeting of the minds" which is, especially in the arts, the most creative and energizing form of exchange.
> (2) INFORMATION BUREAUS - regional and national, chiefly to make known the best sources of information.
> (3) PUBLICATIONS - The printing, reprinting and distribution of books, brochures, articles, etc., which are of special interest and use to workers in the theatre, and teachers of theatre arts, or such as may stimulate a larger and finer audience interest in the theatre.
> (4) NEWS LETTER - to members.
> (5) EXHIBITIONS - A visual presentation of the best standards of theatre production, design, architecture, books, costumes, etc.[2]

In one effort to effect these goals Isaacs turned over to the NTC the book publishing activities of Theatre Arts, Inc. Thus, the Conference was credited with the publication of Rosamond Gilder's A Theatre Library (1932), Stanley

---

[1]Theatre Arts supplied rent-free office space to the Conference for the first two years, and charged fifty dollars per month from October, 1933, because additional space had been rented for it when the magazine moved to 40 East 49th Street.

[2]Edith J. R. Isaacs, The American Theatre in Social and Educational Life (for the National Theatre Conference), p. 55.

McCandless' A Method of Lighting the Stage (1932), Henning Helms' Lighting the Amateur Stage (1932), Richard Boleslavsky's Acting: The First Six Lessons (1933), Dorothy Coit's Kai Khosru and Other Plays for Children (1934), Behind the Magic Curtain: Eight Folk Scenes (1935), Isaacs' Architecture for the New Theatre (1935), and Gilder and George Freedley's Theatre Collections in Libraries and Museums (1936).

In addition, several other projects undertaken by Isaacs for the Conference were of probable value to the theatre in America. In 1934-35 Isaacs conducted a survey of the four hundred "stock towns" of the United States in an attempt to demonstrate to the Dramatist's Guild that these cities no longer supported stock companies, and that, therefore, there was no reason or justification for the delay in the release of plays to non-commercial theatres in these areas. Her report on the survey appeared in Theatre Arts under the title of "There's Millions in It! - An Open Letter to the Dramatist's Guild."[1]

In November, 1935, the Theatre Code Authority of the Federal Government attempted to place the non-professional theatre under the rules of the Professional Theatre Code. With the help of Gilder, Boyd Smith of Yale University, and the editorial columns of Theatre Arts, Isaacs successfully opposed this plan. At about the same time Actors Equity Association threatened to declare Pasadena Playhouse a commercial

---

[1] Theatre Arts, May, 1935, p. 343.

theatre. Such an action would have meant that Pasadena, Cleveland Playhouse, and other community theatres of the type would have had to pay full Equity salaries to professional actors performing in those theatres. Acting again for the Conference and with the help of the magazine, Isaacs was instrumental in delaying the move and, finally, in dissuading Equity from taking such action. These activities by Isaacs were discussed in some detail in Chapter IV.

Isaacs assisted on other projects for the National Theatre Conference. In order to handle the work involved in these projects, as well as the editorial labor on the books, pamphlets, and news letters, Isaacs secured the appointment of one of her staff, Rosamond Gilder, as a half-time Editorial Secretary. The salary of Gilder and that of a secretary, in addition to the other expenses, exceeded the Conference's membership dues. This deficit was covered by grants from the American Association of Adult Education, but there was never enough of a subsidy to finance a membership drive which Isaacs felt was necessary. Actually the Conference received a succession of grants from 1932 through 1936, when the subsidy was terminated.[1] Such aid was a part of the Association's philosophy of helping organizations to get started, but ending support when the group became solvent or proved that it could not sustain itself.

---

[1]Letter from Edith J. R. Isaacs to Gilmor Brown, Feb. 7, 1936 (from the files of Alexander Wyckoff).

When the American Association of Adult Education ended its support of the National Theatre Conference's activities in 1936, the Conference was threatened with dissolution. Isaacs proposed that the university and community theatres represented on the Conference's Council make direct annual grants of $300.00 to $500.00 each until membership dues increased.[1] E. C. Mabie, however, recommended that the New York office be closed and that "the work of the secretary-treasurer be separated from the tasks which might be assigned to another person as New York representative."[2] In order to operate within collected dues, this new secretary would serve without salary, as they do in many educational associations. Isaacs felt that such a person, living outside New York and with responsibilities in addition to a full-time job, would not be able to continue the efforts needed to sustain the organization. What had started as a disagreement over the method of saving the Conference developed into a highly emotional and personal argument with the exchange of bitter letters.[3] The final vote favored Mabie's plan.

At about the same time, negotiations were in progress with the Rockefeller Foundation for financial support of the

---

[1]David Stevens, "Historical Notes," NTC Bulletin, December, 1950, p. 39.

[2]Questionnaire sent by Mabie to the Council for vote, April 16, 1936 (from the files of Alexander Wyckoff).

[3]Letter from Isaacs to Council members, April 22, 1936; letter from Mabie to Isaacs, March 31, 1936 (files of Alexander Wyckoff).

National Theatre Conference.[1] In order to conform to the pattern and rule of grants made by the Foundation, the Conference was reorganized with a limited invited membership, in contrast to the earlier open membership which Isaacs supported.[2] This, too, produced violent arguments. When the Conference was reorganized to receive Rockefeller subsidy, Isaacs resigned as Secretary-Treasurer and did not exercise leadership in it thereafter. She retained her membership, however, and continued to publicize the Conference's activities in Theatre Arts. Completing the break, the magazine took back its former practice of publishing theatre books.

The National Theatre Conference, then, was organized through the leadership of Kenneth Macgowan and George Pierce Baker, and men from the non-commercial theatre headed it throughout its life. But Isaacs was in active charge of its activities from 1931 to 1936 and during these years directed its activities primarily at publication--carrying on a campaign directly related to her similar work as editor of Theatre Arts.

Isaacs' participation in the American National Theatre and Academy was probably due to her interest in the establishment of a representative national theatre in America. Frequent articles, editorial commentary, and news notes

---

[1]Letter from E. C. Mabie to Gilmor Brown, Jan. 6, 1937 (from the files of Alexander Wyckoff).

[2]National Theatre Conference Bulletin, March, 1946, p. 45.

encouraging such an institution appeared in the pages of Theatre Arts for many years.[1] In 1935 the American National Theatre and Academy was granted a federal charter at the instigation of a number of Philadelphia socialites and their friends in other eastern cities.[2] Unluckily, Federal Theatre, a unit of the Works Progress Administration, was launched at about the same time. Fearing too much overlapping, the Academy's sponsors decided to delay any action until a later time.[3]

According to Isaacs, the charter members of ANTA "knew so little about the theatre either as an art or as a business that they could not formulate a definite plan."[4] With the advent of World War II active leadership of the organization was turned over to an Executive Committee consisting of Winthrop Ames, Mrs. August Belmont, J. Howard Reber, A. Conger Goodyear, chairman, and Edith J. R. Isaacs, secretary. The new Executive Committee realized "that there was, in our theatre as it existed, neither a satisfactory form of business enterprise, nor a recognized artistic leadership, nor an organized audience--three elements absolutely essential

---

[1] "Portrait of a Theatre," Theatre Arts, January, 1933, p. 32; "The Irresistible Theatre," ibid., August, 1934, p. 577; "Communal Theatre," ibid., July, 1936, p. 492; "National Theatre--1940," ibid., January, 1940, p. 55; "The Public Takes Stock," ibid., June, 1940, p. 421; "What Shall We Play?" ibid., February, 1941, p. 146.

[2] Letter from Col. C. Lawton Campbell to W. P. Halstead, July 9, 1951.

[3] Ibid. [4] Theatre Arts, January, 1940, p. 55.

to an actively functional national theatre."[1] So, ANTA remained dormant throughout the war.

With the end of the war in 1945, Robert Breen and Robert Porterfield presented a "Foundation Plan" to ANTA. Isaacs published the plan in Theatre Arts,[2] and it was adopted by the ANTA Board.[3] Breen became Executive Secretary, replacing Isaacs, who was by now invalided with rheumatoid arthritis. She continued, however, to publicize the work of ANTA and to encourage it personally. A direct tie was re-established when ANTA in 1950 gave a home and financial support to the United States office of the International Theatre Institute, with Rosamond Gilder, Isaacs' long-time friend and associate, in charge.[4]

A final instance of Isaacs' influence is indicated in the fact that, when the Federal Theatre was set up in 1935, Isaacs was called upon for advice. She recommended Hallie Flanagan (Davis) as national director, and for several years consulted with Flanagan. As a result of this association, the regional plan of the National Theatre Conference was taken over by the Federal Theatre. This regional organization was in turn adopted by ANTA when, in 1951, it held the first National Theatre Assembly.[5]

---

[1] Ibid. [2] Ibid., October, 1945, p. 599.

[3] Ibid., May, 1946, p. 254.

[4] The International Theatre Institute is an agency of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

[5] William P. Halstead, "The National Theatre Assembly," Educational Theatre Journal, March, 1951, p. 11.

It seems clear, then, that Isaacs' participation and activity in behalf of the National Theatre Conference and the American National Theatre and Academy are further indications of her efforts to promote a better theatre through organizations designed to provide a free exchange of ideas, information, and stimulation. Her direct involvement in the formation of these groups, together with the encouragement provided them by Theatre Arts, constitute evidences of her dynamic search for ways to help theatre and its artists.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Periodicals

Theatre Arts Magazine: An Illustrated Quarterly. Vol. I, Nos. 1-4 (November, 1916--August, 1917). Detroit: Sheldon Cheney. Vol. II, No. 1--Vol. III, No. 2 (December, 1917--April, 1919). New York: Sheldon Cheney. Vol. III, No. 3 --Vol. VII, No. 4 (July, 1919--October, 1923). New York: Theatre Arts, Inc.

Theatre Arts Monthly. Vol. VIII, No. 1--Vol. XXXIII, No. 2 (January, 1924--February, 1948). New York: Theatre Arts, Inc.

Brown, John Mason. "Two on the Aisle," New York Evening Post, Jan. 27, 1936, p. 20.

Elliott, Sarah Barnwell. "The Macdowell Club," The Drama, May, 1911, pp. 174-76.

Freedley, George. "The Stage Today," New York Morning Telegraph, Jan. 19, 1941, p. 16.

Gilder, Rosamond. "Farewell to Theatre Arts," National Theatre Conference Bulletin, April, 1943, pp. 3-4.

Isaacs, Edith J. R. "Christian Friedrich Hebbel," The Drama, May, 1912, pp. 3-19.

_____. "The Plays of Martin Schutze," The Drama, August, 1911, pp. 168-71.

Obituary of Edith J. R. Isaacs, New York Times, Jan. 11, 1956, p. 31.

"Posthumous Praise," National Theatre Conference Bulletin, April, 1943, pp. 6-13.

Shalett, Sidney M. "Theatre Arts Through the Years," New York Times, Jan. 19, 1941, sec. 9, pp. 1-2.

Stevens, David. "Historical Notes," National Theatre Conference Bulletin, December, 1950, p. 39.

"A Theatre Arts Magazine," The Drama, November, 1916, pp. 654-55.

Weiss, Clara A. "The Publishing Program of Theatre Arts," Publishers' Weekly, Jan. 11, 1941, pp. 130-35.

Books

Altman, George; Freud, Ralph; Macgowan, Kenneth; and Melnitz, William. Theater Pictorial. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1953.

Anderson, John. The American Theatre. New York: The Dial Press, 1938.

Boleslavsky, Richard. Acting: The First Six Lessons. New York: Theatre Arts, Inc., 1933.

Brown, John Mason. The American Theatre as Seen by Its Critics. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1934.

_____. The Art of Playgoing. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1936.

_____. Letters from Greenroom Ghosts. New York: Viking Press, 1934.

_____. The Modern Theatre in Revolt. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1929.

_____. Upstage--The American Theatre in Performance. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1930.

Carter, Huntley. The New Spirit in the European Theatre. London: Ernest Benn, Ltd., 1925.

Cheney, Sheldon. The Art Theatre. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1925.

_____. The New Movement in the Theatre. New York: M. Kennerly, 1914.

_____. Stage Decoration. New York: The John Day Co., 1928.

_____. The Theatre: Three Thousand Years of Drama, Acting and Stagecraft. New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1929.

Clurman, Harold. The Fervent Years. New York: Alfred Knopf, 1945.

Craig, Edward Gordon. On the Art of the Theatre. Chicago: Browne's Bookstore, 1911.

_____. The Theatre--Advancing. Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1919.

_____. Toward a New Theatre. London: J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 1913.

Dickenson, Thomas H. The Insurgent Theatre. New York: B. W. Huebsch, 1917.

_____. The Theatre in a Changing Europe. New York: Holt, 1937.

Dukes, Ashley. Drama. New York: Henry Holt, 1926.

_____. Modern Dramatists. London: F. Palmer, 1911.

_____. The Scene is Changed. London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1942.

_____. The Youngest Drama. London: E. Benn, Ltd., 1924.

Eustis, Morton. B'Way, Inc.: The Theatre as a Business. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1934.

_____. Players at Work. New York: Theatre Arts, Inc., 1937.

Flanagan, Hallie. Arena. New York: Duell-Sloane & Pearce, 1940.

_____. Shifting Scenes of the Modern European Theatre. New York: Coward-McCann, 1928.

Freedley, George, and Reeves, John A. A History of the Theatre. New York: Crown Publishers, 1941.

Gaye, Freda (ed.). Who's Who in the Theatre. London: Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, Ltd., 1961.

Geddes, Norman Bel. A Project for a Theatrical Presentation of the Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri. New York: Theatre Arts, Inc., 1924.

Gilder, Rosamond. Enter the Actress. New York: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1931.

_____. John Gielgud's Hamlet. New York: Oxford University Press, 1937.

_____. A Theatre Library. New York: Theatre Arts, Inc., 1932.

_____, and Freedley, George. Theatre Collections in Libraries and Museums. New York: Theatre Arts, Inc., 1937.

_____, and Isaacs, Hermine Rich; MacGregor, Robert M.; and Reed, Edward (eds.). Theatre Arts Anthology. New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1950.

Hartnoll, Phyllis (ed.). Oxford Companion to the Theatre. London: Oxford University Press, 1951.

Hopkins, Arthur. The Glory Road. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1935.

_____. How's Your Second Act? New York: Philip Goodman Co., 1918.

Houghton, Norris. Advance from Broadway. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1941.

_____. Moscow Rehearsals. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1936.

Hughes, Glenn. History of the American Theatre. New York: Samuel French, 1951.

Isaacs, Edith J. R. Architecture for the New Theatre. New York: Theatre Arts, Inc., 1935.

_____. Theatre: Boston: Little, Brown, 1927.

Jones, Robert Edmond. The Dramatic Imagination. New York: Duell, Sloan & Pearce, 1941.

_____. Drawings for the Theatre. New York: Theatre Arts, Inc., 1925.

_____, and Macgowan, Kenneth. Continental Stagecraft. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1922.

Macgowan, Kenneth. Footlights Across America. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1929.

_____. The Theatre of Tomorrow. New York: Boni and Liveright, 1921.

Mackay, Constance D'Arcy. The Little Theatre in the United States. New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1917.

McCleery, Albert, and Glick, Carl. Curtains Going Up. New York: Pitman, 1939.

Moussinac, Leon. The New Movement in the Theatre. London: Batsford, 1931.

Oenslager, Donald. Scenery, Then and Now. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1936.

Parker, John (ed.). Who's Who in the Theatre. London: Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, Ltd., 1952, 1957.

Pendleton, Ralph. The Theatre of Robert Edmond Jones. Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1958.

Rothe, Anna (ed.). Current Biography. New York: H. W. Wilson Co., 1946, 1948.

Simonson, Lee. The Art of Scenic Design. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1950.

_____. The Stage is Set. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1932.

Sobel, Bernard (ed.). The Theatre Handbook. New York: Crown Publishers, 1948.

Stanislavsky, Constantin. An Actor Prepares. New York: Theatre Arts, Inc., 1944.

Stevens, Thomas Wood. The Theatre from Athens to Broadway. New York: Appleton, 1932.

Urban, Josef. Theatres. New York: Theatre Arts, Inc., 1930.

Vardac, A. Nicholas. Stage to Screen. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949.

Who's Who in America: A Biographical Dictionary of Notable Living Men and Women in America. Chicago: A. N. Marquis Company, Inc., 1938-39, 1948-60, 1958-59.

Young, Stark. The Flower in Drama. New York: Scribner's Sons, 1923.

_____. Immortal Shadows. New York: Scribner's Sons, 1948.

_____. The Theatre. New York: George H. Doran Company, 1927.

_____. Theatre Practice. New York: Scribner's Sons, 1926.

Unpublished Material and Interviews

Beiswanger, George. Interviews, New York City, Sept. 4, 1953; Sept. 11, 1953.

Brown, John Mason. Interview, Ann Arbor, Michigan, Mar. 10, 1955.

Cheney, Sheldon. Personal letter to the author, Dec. 20, 1953.

Gilder, Rosamond. Interview, New York City, Aug. 19, 1952.

_____. Personal letters to the author, Aug. 21, 1951; Aug. 25, 1952; Aug. 25, 1953; Feb. 9, 1954.

_____. Personal files. In offices of Theatre Arts Books, New York.

Halstead, William P. Interview, Ann Arbor, Michigan, Jan. 10, 1955.

Ince, Alexander S. Personal letter to the author, Aug. 19, 1955.

Isaacs, Edith J. R. Interviews, White Plains, N.Y., Aug. 20, 1952; Sept. 3, 1953; Sept. 10, 1953.

_____. Personal letter to the author, Oct. 15, 1952.

Isaacs, Lewis M., Jr. Interview, New York City, Aug. 22, 1952.

Lofberg, Edward E. Interview, Ann Arbor, Michigan, Mar. 10, 1957.

Mebane, Daniel. Personal letters to the author, Aug. 8, 1955; Aug. 24, 1955.

Popper, Hermine Isaacs. Interviews, White Plains, N.Y., Sept. 2, 1953; Sept. 2, 1955.

_____. Personal letter to the author, Oct. 1, 1952.

Windt, Valentine B. Interview, Ann Arbor, Michigan, Jan. 10, 1955.

Wyckoff, Alexander. Personal files. Now in the Theatre Collection, New York Public Library.