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## The Season Ticket, January 1997

Columbia College Chicago

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# The Season Ticket

Vol. XI Iss. 2 Columbia's Theater/Music Center Jan. 1997

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## HELLO AGAIN

Hey, hey everybody. Well, it looks like the season is well underway.

The weather is growing colder and colder still. Fortunately and unfortunately, this time of year, means that the end of the semester is a mere heartbeat away. Which means students will be fighting their end-of-the-semester apathy to complete all of the schoolwork that piled up as a result of their beginning and mid-semester apathy.

### Staff

Editor: Matt Thornton

Contributors: Sheldon Patinkin, Susan Padveen, Susan Osborne-Mott, Patricia Morehead, Tom Mula, Henry Godinez, Dr. Josette M Behrend and David Puskiewicz

And what will the next semester bring? Well, besides the events detailed in the newsletter, there is this year's Theodore Ward Prize winning play written by Charlotte A. Gibson. The play is entitled **Lost Creek Township** and is set to run March 12-23 in the Getz Theater. More details on the play will be given in the next Newsletter.

## Faculty Activities: The Continuing Saga

Artist-in-Residence Tom Mula is currently appearing for the sixth season as Scrooge in The Goodman Theatre's production of **A Christmas Carol**. In other Christmas news, his best-selling book, **Jacob Marley's Christmas Carol**, made its debut on WBEZ radio this Christmas Season. Mula performed a theatrical version of his book at the Goodman on Dec. 2nd as a benefit for Season of Concern and Columbia College faculty member Frances Maggio.

Coincidentally, Artist-in-Residence Henry Godinez directed **A Christmas Carol** for the Goodman Theatre. Godinez will be both acting and directing in **Transformations** in January and February at the Goodman Studio with Regina Taylor (from the T.V show **I'll Fly Away**). For March and April, he will be acting in the Apple Tree Theater's **Blade to the Heat** For the summer of '97 (warmth!) he will be directing **Romeo and Juliet** at the Colorado Shakespeare festival.

Dr. Josette M. Behrend performed for the Founder's Day Convocation of East-West University on the 11th of November in the Crystal Ballroom at the Blackstone Hotel.

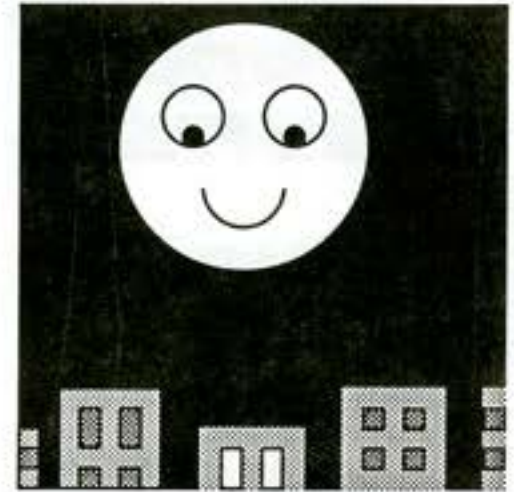




# A Little Night Music

It's not often that theater is inspired by film, but in the case of *A Little Night Music*, it would seem that the stage has taken from the screen. The Stephen Sondheim musical, currently in production for December is based on an Ingmar Bergman film, *Smiles of a Summer Night*. "It was one of the few 'comedies' he directed," says director Susan Osborne-Mott. The story of the play, set in turn-of-the-century Sweden, deals with the ups, downs, construction and reconstruction of relationships. "It's a mature love story," Osborne-Mott points out, "Some of the leading characters in this play are in their mid forties. Love changes when you're that age. It's still there but it's deeper and it allows you to laugh about love more." The beginning of the play is almost fanciful. Madame Armfeldt, one of the pivotal characters in the story, tells her granddaughter, Fredrika, anecdotes that allude to the shape of the story to come. She also talks about how the night, a continuing motif in the play, smiles three times: once for the young, once for the fools, and once for the old. Madame Armfeldt's daughter, Desiree, is one of the central characters in the play. She is an actress with a promiscuous reputation involving Fredrik, a lawyer, now married to a much younger woman named Anne. A few years prior to the play, Desiree and Fredrik had engaged in a romantic affair that abruptly ended. When Fredrik and his wife attend one of Desiree's performances, her passion for Fredrik is rekindled and she wants to know if the same is true for Fredrik. To answer this question, Desiree asks Madame Armfeldt to arrange a dinner party for her, Fredrik and a couple of their friends. One acquaintance, Count Malcolm, has recently been having an affair with Desiree and has alienated his wife, Charlotte as a result. Malcolm sends Charlotte to inform Anne of Fredrik's affair with Desiree, the plot thickens: couples break apart and come back together

as true feelings are ignored or covered by false decorum. The maid and the butler are even drawn into love. However, "their relationship is the easiest to understand," comments Osborne-Mott, "because they don't play games." To make sense of these love triangles are the quintet which observes and comments on the actions of the lovers in song.



The games that are played by the couples are not for fun, though, they are the result of people taking themselves too seriously. However, once the games have run their course, most characters fare well. "The people who wind up better off at the end of the play are those who are willing to laugh at themselves," says Osborne-Mott.

Osborne-Mott felt that *A Little Night Music* was chosen for its complexity both musically and dramatically. The roster of songs, which features the hit "Send in the Clowns," is challenging due to the structure and content of the lyrics. Each song has something distinctive to say and most do not rely on repetition of lyrics for their structures. In terms of dramatic structure, Susan Osborne-Mott feels the play distinguishes itself by the depth of its characters. She cites that most musicals leave actors to develop their characters without assistance from the script. However, the script of *A Little Night Music* contains such strong story elements that rich characters are created along with exceptional musical performances. The ultimate challenge for this play, as with other musicals, will be to infuse the musical and dramatic



elements of the play to create a fluent production. This demand has meant long rehearsals for cast and crew. However, the end result was quit an accomplishment for everyone.

The staff for **A Little Night Music** includes Larrance Fingerhut as musical director and choreography by Laura Thoma. Betsy Leonard is the show's set designer. Leonard recently worked with Osborne-Mott for Peninsula Players in Door County, Wisconsin. Melissa Malm designed the lights and Stacey Rich is the costume coordinator.

# IVANOV

**T**he story of a Chekhov play is never what it's about, says director Sheldon Patinkin while addressing the subject of *Ivanov*, his current directing project. The story, none-the-less, is of a man named Ivanov who is at the low point of his life. Ivanov serves on the community council in a rural town during pre-revolutionary Russia. He is also the owner of 3000 acres of farmland that is being supported solely by his income as a council member. Two of

Ivanov's relatives live on the farm and are continuously asking him for additional handouts not even realizing the financial peril they are all in. In addition, Ivanov's ideas about handling his serfs and servants have plunged him further into debt. Other misfortunes for Ivanov include his estranged wife who has a terminal case of tuberculosis. Ivanov's treatment of his wife is questioned by her doctor who feels that Ivanov is responsible for his wife's condition. He also falls in love with a younger woman, whose parents are not pleased with the relationship.

From the thematic perspective, Patinkin feels the play is truly about a man who feels smothered by the society around him and disillusioned by a world that has not lived up to his expectations. The play presents a microcosm of a society that is very self-absorbed; many of the characters, such as Ivanov's farm-bound relatives, have their own personal goals and do not think of the community around them. "Almost every play I direct deals with the subject that we are all responsible for one another," says Patinkin. *Ivanov* is no exception.

Patinkin was drawn to this play because of the challenges it offers for both directors and actors. He states that "Chekhov is among the most rewarding of playwrights for actors to work on in terms of building and discovering the inner life of a character and working in ensemble." The challenge from the director's standpoint, Patinkin says, is that *Ivanov* is "Chekhov's most flawed play. It has too many plot devices, the ending is very hard to get to and there is a difficult shifting between comedy and drama." Patinkin theorizes that these problems are due to the fact that *Ivanov* was written before Chekhov was introduced to Stanislavski's dramatic method and the Moscow Art Theater, which produced his other four plays. Indeed, *Ivanov* is one of Chekhov's earliest produceable works. The challenge for Patinkin and his actors will be to iron out these flaws. However, *Ivanov* does have one

element working for it as Patinkin explains, "Most audiences don't like Chekhov because there is not enough story. They are about relationships and behavior. *Ivanov* has more story."

At the time of this interview, *Ivanov's* production planning was in its initial stages. Dan Hooker is stage managing. Jeff Curley is designing lights. Kristy Jodlowski is designing costumes and Christopher Wren is designing sets. Wren's plans for the set are formalistic in design and will reflect the theme of the play. By the release of the newsletter, cast and crew should be hard at work preparing the play for its February showing.

## Performances for IVANOV

will be in the New Studio Theater, 72 East 11th Street.

Show times (Note: changed times)

Feb 21 at 4:00 Feb 22 at 7:30pm

Feb 23 and 25 at 7:30pm

Feb 26 at 2:00pm

Feb 27 at 7:00pm (*opening*)

Feb 28 at 7:30pm (*2nd opening*)

Mar 1 at 7:30pm Mar 2 at 3:00pm

Mar 4 at 7:30pm Mar 5 at 6:00pm

Mar 6 at 4:00pm

Tickets are \$2. Free tickets are available to students and not-for-profit groups but are subject to availability. Call 663-1600 ext. 6126 for reservations.

## Meet Patricia Morehead

Part-Time Faculty Member Patricia Morehead is another new face in the Theater Music Department. She can be found instructing students in music appreciation classes such as "From Chant to Zappa" or instructional classes such as "Sightsinging."



Before joining the Theater/Music faculty here, she had been teaching at Roosevelt. Upon her arrival at Columbia, Morehead was pleased at the diversity of the artistic disciplines offered. Commenting on the Theater/Music Department, she states: "It's a practical artist's working environment. When you walk in, you walk through an art gallery." Morehead's experiences teaching have been quite positive. She feels that the majority of her students are hard working and show great interest in the courses she teaches.

However, Patricia Morehead's teaching attributes are not exclusively used on college students. Her Saturdays are spent teaching children between 8 and 15 about composing. Morehead and her young composers have been working on a version of *Cinderella* which will take the shape of a live reading accompanied by music. Composing does seem to be a passion for Morehead. She has been involved in the creation of music for 15 years now and is also studying for a Ph.D. on the subject at the University of Chicago. Her creative process regarding composition usually entails first generating a central idea for the piece. One day, a musician friend of Morehead's asked her to write a flute piece for her. She listened to several of the flautist's ideas which Morehead thought to be impractical for a flute score. Finally, the flautist asked her to just write a piece that would sound appealing on the flute. Using these liberal guidelines, Morehead thought back to a book she had read by Margaret Atwood entitled *The Edible Woman*. At first she thought she should read the book again but decided that the text might give her too much information, so instead, Morehead thought back to the emotions she had felt while reading the book and translated them into a melody fit for the flute.

Patricia Morehead's composing skills have often become a key element in musical performances for the Chicago-based new music ensemble named Cube. The group consists of Morehead

playing oboe, her husband serving as keyboardist and conductor, two flautists and a percussionist. Morehead is co-artistic director of the group along with Janice Mitchell, who has a background in performance and videographic art. The group performs original material, in addition to pieces by Chicago-area composers and classical pieces as well. Mitchell's influence often leads to Cube performances that feature performance pieces in conjunction with the group's instrumentals. In a show called "Naked Neon," a neon artist and a group of dancers were featured against the backdrop of an improvised score by Mitchell. The show was very successful.

Occasionally, Morehead does have free time in her busy schedule which she has been known to spend with her husband in Galena, Illinois. "The Europeans have an old tradition of going to the country in the summer to compose music; I can see why," says Morehead, who believes that one should have "basic quiet time" to compose music. It is Galena, in fact, that inspired Morehead to begin work on her current independent project which is an arrangement to be performed by Cube and The Mass Ensemble that details the life of the legendary Indian Chief, Blackhawk. The visual centerpiece of Morehead's production will be an 18 foot long bowed sculpture which functions as a musical instrument. The massive sculpture was created by Bill Close of the Mass Ensemble who will also be playing it during the production. Close has been working with Morehead to develop the production which will first manifest as a fifteen minute aria this spring in collaboration with the Mass Ensemble. Morehead and Close will then develop the aria into a full fledged opera.

## 2+UDENT PROJECTS

All student projects are free admission. Times are not listed for directing projects. Call 663-1600ext. 6126 for showtimes and other info..

### Jan 13-16 Classic Studio

**The Mousetrap**, directed by Kevin Hanna

### Jan 13-16 Classic Studio

**Seduced**, directed by Mara Blume

**Hedda Gabler**, directed by Jeff Harnish

### Feb. 17-20 Classic Studio

**Insomniacs**, written and directed by Jamie Wise

### March 10-13 New Studio

**Godspell**, directed by Peter Loza

### RECITALS/CONCERTS

**Orchestration Concert:** Jan 6, 7:00pm, Getz

**Comp I Concert A:** Jan 6, 4:30pm Getz

**Guitar Recital:** Jan 7, 5:30pm, New Studio

**Woodwind/Brass Recital:** Jan 8, 1:00pm, Classic Studio

**Comp I Concert B:** Jan 8, 4:30pm, Getz

**Percussion Recital:** Jan 9, 1:00pm, Classic Studio

**Vocal Ensemble Concert:** Jan 9, 4:30pm New Studio

**Senior Vocal Recital:** Jan 15, 7:00pm Classic Studio