

Entertainment/ Sports

Last of the Red Hot Lovers

From the producers of *All that Jive II* and *Piano Lessons* African Globe TheatreWorks in association with Newark Symphony Hall present Neil Simon's classic *Last of the Red Hot Lovers*.

Starring Jeff Lambert as Barney, Deidre Da Silva as Bobbi, Tanya Turner as Jeanette, and Michele Rae - Elaine. Directed by Dawn Wilczynski this four person, three act play is an African American re-telling of the classic Neil Simon comedy about a hapless man going through a mid-life crisis and his decision to join the sexual revolution before it is too late. However with his gentle character, a devoted wife of 23 years and absolutely no experience in adultery, his attempts at seduction are interesting to say the least. What ensues is a comic examination of one man's life and weaknesses.

Jeff Lambert, deftly portrays 'Barney' who's mannerisms and naïve character serve as the brunt of most of the humor. His interaction with the bold and free-spirited Elaine (Michele Rae) showcase a mixture of brilliant comedic acting and dialogue between the two that can be matched only in a top notch theatre.

On Friday's opening night last week, the audience comprised mostly of couples, old and young, were treated to an intimate theatre setting and quality

performance worthy of off-Broadway prices for a mere \$10 per seat. It was worth every penny and more, so be sure not to miss this production before it ends next week. In fact, Saturday and Sunday shows are reasonably priced as well, about the cost of dinner for two at Red Lobster.

Show Dates: April 2002, 20, 21, 26, 27, 28 at Newark Symphony Hall 2nd Floor Theater 1020 Broad Street Newark call for reservations and ask for Local Talk Newspaper half price discount at 973-624-1584.

Tickets can also be purchased at Newark Symphony Hall box office.



Jeff Lambert



Michele Rae



Deidre Da Silva



Tanya Turner



REVIEW

Mid-life 'Lover's' revival begets hilarity

BY PETER FIUCHIA
STAR-LEDGER STAFF

One of Neil Simon's funniest — yet strangely neglected — plays is Newark. It's "The Last of the Red-Hot Lovers," Simon's 1969 smash about African Globe TheatreWorks of

Barney Cashman, a restaurateur who suddenly finds that he's 47 and not getting any younger. He still loves Thelma, his wife of 23 years, but given that she was his high school sweetheart and the only woman he's ever known intimately, he can't help wondering what he's missed along the way.

So Barney brings Elaine Nazario, one of his customers, to his mother's apartment while she's out working at Mount Sinai. And a cool customer she is. He wants to get to know her, while she just wants to know where the bed is.

When Linda Lavin played Elaine in the original Broadway production, she was a no-holds-barred shrew. Here, Michele Rae smartly plays her as a vixen, with a glint in her eye to offset her flinty smile.

Jeff Lambert has the role that Simon wrote for the late James Coco, and while he isn't as rotund as his predecessor — deflating a few lines that address his weight — he's just as funny. His Barney tries to be carefree, barking out hollow laughter and giving a would-be joyous clap of his hands. But soon those hands are nervously scratching the back of his neck. He's so jittery that no matter where he sits on the couch, he seems about to fall off it.

Lambert makes the audience roar when he says at the end of his debate with Elaine, "I'll never, ever do that again" — for the crowd knows that indeed he will. Good thing, too, for there are two more riotous episodes to go.

Nine months after Elaine, Barney tries to initiate another affair, now with a twentysomething actress he meets in the park. This time, Bobbi's the talker while he's the one anxious to proceed.

NEW JERSEY STAGE

The Last of the Red-Hot Lovers

Where: African Globe TheatreWorks, Symphony Hall Second Space, 1020 Broad St., Newark

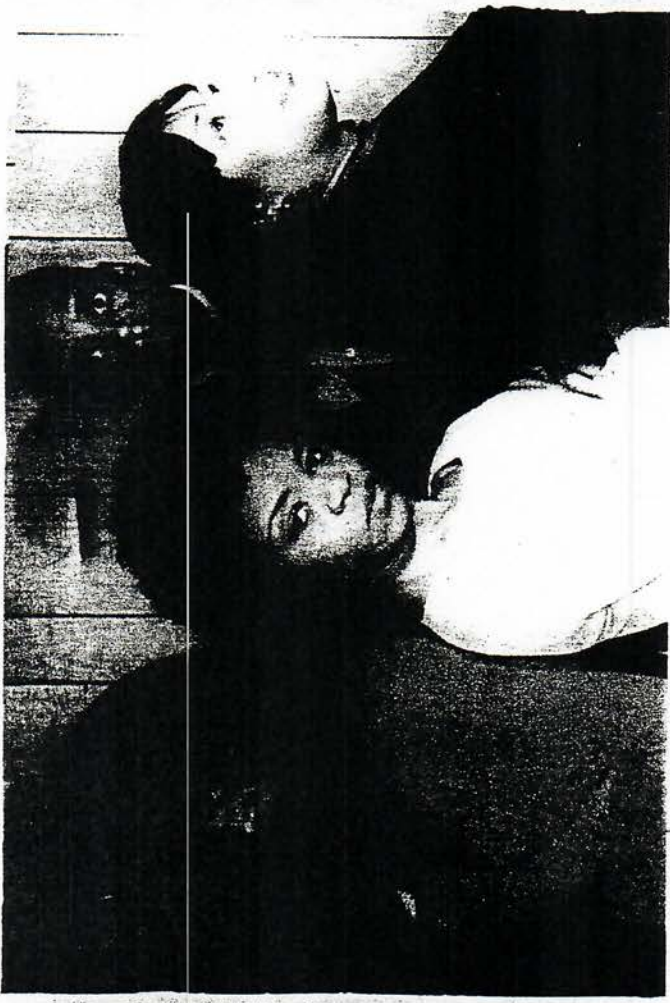
When: Through April 28. Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m., Sundays at 3 p.m.

How much: \$10 for Fridays, \$20 for other performances. Call (973) 624-1584 or visit www.africanglobe.com.

While Bobbi claims that the August day has made her "goofy from the heat," Deidre Da Silva proves she'd be goofy in the dead of winter, with a performance that's chat-terboxy and hilarious, yet fittingly seductive.

Finally, there's Jeanette Fisher, the wife of Barney's good friend. She turns out to be more nervous than Barney ever was — at least for a while. But then comes Jeanette's deluge of bitterness. "Name me three people who are kind, gentle and decent," she snarls. "What makes life worth getting up for?" Tanya Turner portrays Jeanette as a complicated woman in tears without missing any of the humor.

Director Dawn Wilczynski stages "Red-Hot Lovers" with the speed of a commercial comedy, but extracts the bittersweet juice from each scene. She keeps the action in 1969, so there's some talk about \$1.50 cab rides and producer David Merrick. But one thing hasn't changed: Anyone who's considering having an affair should see "The Last of the Red-Hot Lovers" before making that first date.



Mid-life 'Lover's' revival begets hilarity

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BY PETER FILICHIA
STAR-LEDGER STAFF

One of Neil Simon's funniest —

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While Bobbi claims that the August day has made her "goofy from the heat," Deidre Da Silva proves she'd be goofy in the dead of winter, with a performance that's chat-terboxy and hilarious, yet feebly seductive.

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Tonys? No, it's the Peters

Critic's cream of the crop in Garden State theater season

BY PETER FILICHA
STAR-LEDGER STAFF

What would happen if the New Jersey theater community gave its own Tony Awards?

How would the state's 21 professional and three semi-pro theaters stack up if a committee chose four or five nominees in 22 categories, as in the Tonys? How would the shows that drop by the New Jersey Performing Arts Center fare along with them?

When marquee names such as Judd Hirsch and Ben Vereen and seasoned Broadway performers like June Gable and Kevin Gray can't make the list, you know it was a potent year for Jersey theater. Ninety-six contenders opened, and fewer than half of them are represented here. It was that competitive a season.

It was varied, too. Theaters including the New Jersey Shakespeare Festival and Playwrights Theatre of New Jersey, both in Madison, 12 Miles West Theatre Company in Montclair, and Two River Theatre Company in Manasquan put a musical on their schedules — a rarity for them.

Here's what I consider the best of the 2001-02 season, from "Salt and Pepper" in Nelaong to "Peer Gynt" in Manasquan:

**BEST MUSICAL
NEW TO N.J.**

"The Book of Candy" (Playwrights Theatre of New Jersey, Madison); "Cookin' at the Cookery" (Two River Theatre Company, Manasquan); "Fosse" (New Jersey Performing Arts Center, Newark); "Pageant" (Forum Theatre, Metuchen)

Winner: "The Book of Candy," a delicious, bittersweet chocolate bar of a musical. Sweet, because it showed how far women have come since the '60s, but bitter, in



Adam Heller and Beth Glover go cheek-to-cheek in a scene from "The Book of Candy" at Playwrights Theatre of New Jersey.

PHOTO BY DAVID GARD

that it ultimately revealed how much women must still compromise to get what they want.

**BEST PLAY
NEW TO N.J.**

"Ctrl+Alt+Delete" by Anthony Clarvoe (George Street Playhouse, New Brunswick); "The Laramie Project" by Moises Kaufman (New Jersey Repertory Company, Long Branch); "The Trial of One Short-

Sighted Black Woman vs. Mammy Louise and Safreeta Mae" by Marcia L. Leslie (NJPAC); "Yellowman" by Dael Orlandersmith (McCarter Theatre, Princeton)

Winner: "Yellowman." It was a runner-up for the Pulitzer Prize, but a clear winner here. The story of a dark-skinned black girl who makes friends with a light-skinned black boy — and has no idea that skin tones will eventually

come between them — was heart-breaking.

BEST MUSICAL REVIVAL

"A Chorus Line" (Paper Mill Playhouse, Millburn); "Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill" (George Street Playhouse); "The Fantasticks" (New Jersey Shakespeare Festival, Madison); "The Robber Bridegroom" (12 Miles West Theatre Company, Montclair)

Winner: "A Chorus Line." The

greatest musical of them all still packs a punch, even after 25 years.

BEST PLAY REVIVAL

"Don Juan" (McCarter Theatre); "Romeo and Juliet" (McCarter Theatre); "Still Life" (Women's Theatre Company, Madison); "The Three Sisters" (New Jersey Shakespeare Festival)

Winner: "The Three Sisters." Of the 16 productions I've seen

since 1969 — including one in London with the Redgrave sisters, and one by a Russian troupe — this was the finest.

BEST ACTOR

IN A MUSICAL
Adam Heller ("The Book of Candy"); Brian Sutherland ("Guys and Dolls," NJPAC); Jim Walton ("Red Hot and Blue," Paper Mill Playhouse); Jared Zeus ("The Fantasticks")

Winner: Walton. Playing the part that Bob Hope originated nearly 70 years ago, Walton showed an ease with comic material that recalled the grand master of gags.

BEST ACTRESS

IN A MUSICAL
Carolee Carnello ("The King and I," Paper Mill Playhouse); Suzanne Douglas ("Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill"); Debbie Gravitte ("Red Hot and Blue"); Erica Piccininni ("The Fantasticks"); Diane Sutherland ("Guys and Dolls")

Winner: Douglas. We learned from last season's "Wit" at George Street that she was an astonishing actress. This year, we learned that she could sing with equal power.

BEST FEATURED ACTOR

IN A MUSICAL
Bruce Adler ("Red Hot and Blue"); Paul Benedict ("The Fantasticks"); Tim Federie ("A Chorus Line"); Luis Villabon ("A Chorus Line")

Winner: Adler. His way with double takes made us double over with laughter.

BEST FEATURED

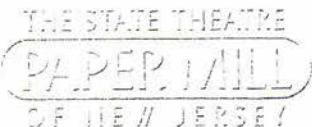
ACTRESS IN A MUSICAL
Ann Duquesnay ("Cookin' at the Cookery"); Cindy Marchionda ("A Chorus Line"); Reva Rice ("Fosse"); Debra Walton ("Cookin' at the Cookery")

Winner: Walton. Not only did the actress portray the legendary Alberta Hunter with style, but she also played — unbelievable as it seems — Louis Armstrong. And did a hilariously accurate job.

BEST ACTOR IN A PLAY

Jared Harris ("Hamlet"); Jeff Lambert ("The Last of the Red-Hot Lovers," African Globe TheatreWorks, Newark); Mark Nelson ("Talley's Folly," George Street Playhouse); Howard W. Overshow ("Yellowman"); William Schallert ("The Special Prisoner," Playwrights Theatre of New Jersey)

Winner: Nelson. As a Jew intent on marrying a wary gentile,



AIDS drama doesn't flinch

By BOB CAMPBELL

Typical summer theater—Montclair's TheatreFest, for example—aspires to be as restful as rippling surf. But this week, TheatreFest may whip up some angry waves.

Tomorrow night, on its second stage, TheatreFest opens Larry Kramer's "The Normal Heart," a frank and passionate play about the indifference that allowed the AIDS epidemic to take root.

"The Normal Heart" is an explosive mix of clinical realism, political argument and intimate love story. Kramer's intensely personal look at the early stages of the AIDS plague has triggered controversy and debate since the play's premiere in 1985.

"In a way," says TheatreFest artistic director Phil Oesterman, "this is a history play, yet it's more relevant than ever. We've been bombarded by the media about AIDS, and we think 'If I hear any more about that I'll scream.' But it hasn't gone away. And it's not going to go away."

Kramer's play tells the semi-autobiographical story of a gay writer named Ned Weeks. Weeks becomes obsessed with the conspiracy of silence shrouding the nameless syndrome that's killing so many of his friends.

Weeks finds that heterosexuals shrug the threat aside, while fellow gays are afraid of risking their new-won freedoms and political gains. The order of the day is denial. Railing against opponents from Mayor Ed Koch to the most enlightened sexual radicals, Weeks becomes a fanatical crusader.

In the course of his battle, Weeks embarks on a love affair with

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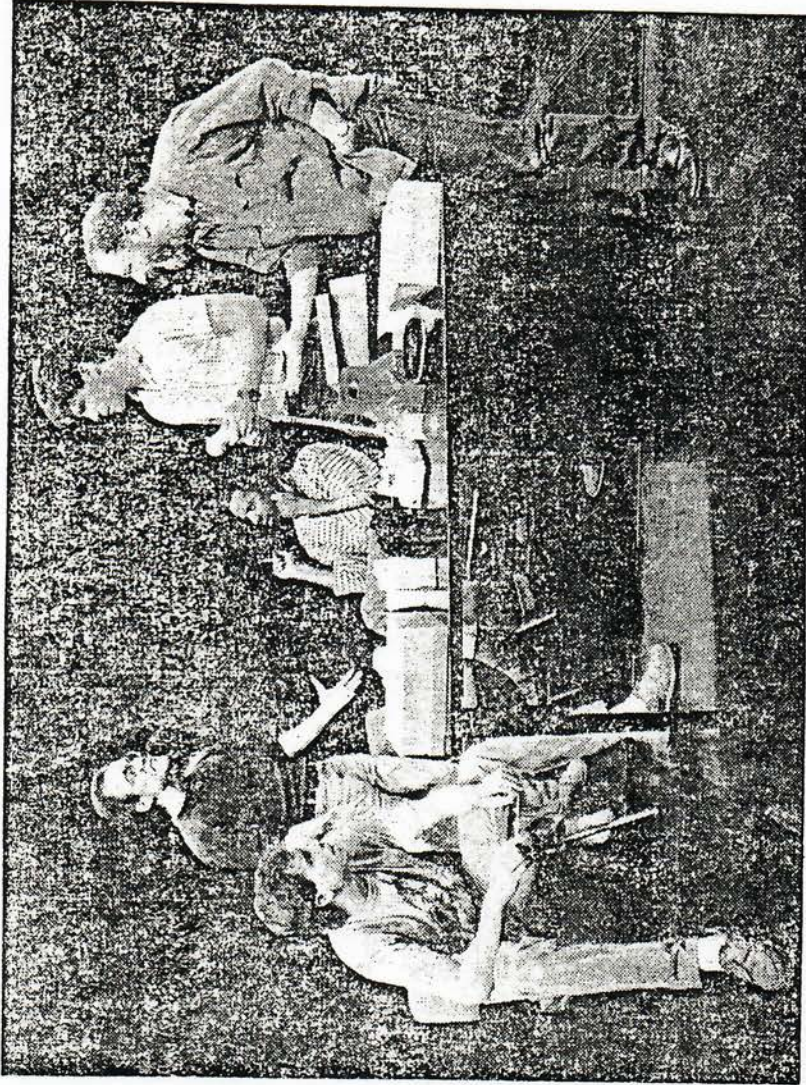


Photo by Jerry McCrea

TheatreFest artistic director Phil Oesterman, right, oversees a rehearsal of "The Normal Heart" at Montclair State College. Cast members, from left, include John Wooten, Brian Hugh O'Neill, Jeffrey Wingfield and Jerry Griffin

OPENING IN JERSEY

Superb 'Lady Day' actress puts audience under the spell of jazz great Billie Holiday

By BOB CAMPBELL

Loretta Devine gives a sensational rendition of jazz goddess Billie Holiday in "Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill." A repeat of her smash hit stint at San Diego's Old Globe Theatre, Devine's Holiday is the finest theater performance currently on view on this shore of the Hudson.

Devine is simultaneously giddy, coquettish, bitter, heartbreaking and hilarious as she enacts one of "Lady Day's" last appearances in a South Philadelphia club in the '50s, some time after her prison term for heroin possession and shortly before her death. Devine is a dazzling actress, and a strong enough singer to fill the vast Memorial Hall with gusts of pure feeling.

Lanie Robertson's musical drama skirts foul-mouthed soap opera as the drunk, and eventually drugged, Holiday interrupts her agreed-upon song list with a woozy, ribald, free-associating trip through romantic betrayals, racial wounds and showbiz asides. Hiding behind a bullet-proof smile, Holiday drifts through memories as hazy as this smoke-filled club, while her patient accompanist tries to steer her back to reality.

Funny, bawdy, frightened and vulnerable, Billie is a grand opportunity for an actress, and the imposing Devine (from Broadway's "Dream Girls") takes glorious advantage. Weaving regally in a white satin dress, she extracts a bittersweet grandeur from the role.

Her warm voice curls insinuatingly around the show's symbolic theme, "Don't Explain." She lovingly unfurls Holiday classics like "God Bless the Child" and "Ain't Nobody's Business" and sounds an even stronger echo of Bessie Smith in "Pig's Feet (and a Bottle of Beer)."

Differentiating herself from blues singer Smith, Billy says that she sings "the blues feeling with the jazz beat." It's exactly this combination of ruefulness and high spirits that gives "Lady Day" its special kick.

Holiday's raw, mincing, uninhibited voice could squeeze the sweetness from a lyric like perfume from one of her trademark gardenias. She could infuse a lyric line with a wild, skidding, witty spontaneity that's the essence of jazz. Devine has a more rounded, well-groomed voice—she suggests the po-



Photo by Jennifer A. Hulshizer

Loretta Devine as Billie Holiday in the TheatreFest production of "Lady Day" at Montclair State College

literate jazz lilt of an Ella Fitzgerald—but she's a powerful enough actress to convey the delicate, desolate beauty of "a dead person singing."

Her piercing sweetness makes you want to cry and clap your hands at the same time.

Will Roberson's production was originally designed for an intimate space at the Old Globe, and it's been hastily but effectively revamped for TheatreFest's sprawling auditorium at Montclair State.

Some audience members are seated at onstage tables, to create the closed-in intensity of Emerson's Bar and Grill (these theatergoers pay half price). Devine uses this supposed audience as her co-stars, while—by gliding out onto a gangplank-like stage extension—she also draws patrons from the auditorium's 1,000 seats into her spell.

Devine finesses this awkwardly bifurcated space because she's the kind of superbly trained actress who can glide from a Broadway belt to a cabaret murmur, from a roar to a whimper, in the blink of one mascara-ed eye. She can command this entire hall with one of her sky-high eyebrows.

Standing on a podium in a shaft of red light, pouring out the searing "Strange Fruit," she's a jazz Joan of Arc singing through the flames. She brings the audience to its feet.

Musical director/accompanist Rahn Coleman and local saxophonist Bradford Hayes lay down a solid jazz backing (unfortunately, the macabre interpolation of the Eisenhower-era anthem "I Believe" is missing). Jeffrey Wingfield's silent authority as a weary bartender contributes as much as a full-scale characterization.

The production has its shortfalls. Hardcore Holiday fans will miss the singer's plaintive, inimitable squeak. Devine's smashing performance lacks the emotional nakedness, eerily detailed mental states and uncanny approximation of Holiday's voice (and spirit) that Edythe Jason achieved in Bette Howard's 1988 production at New Brunswick's Crossroads Theatre.

Devine's Holiday is more polished and gracious and larger than life. She's gleaming and regal, like a dethroned queen. She's a Hecuba in South Philly, and she makes a royal evening out of "Lady Day."

MAIN EVENTS

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN NEW JERSEY BY DAWN E. HILL



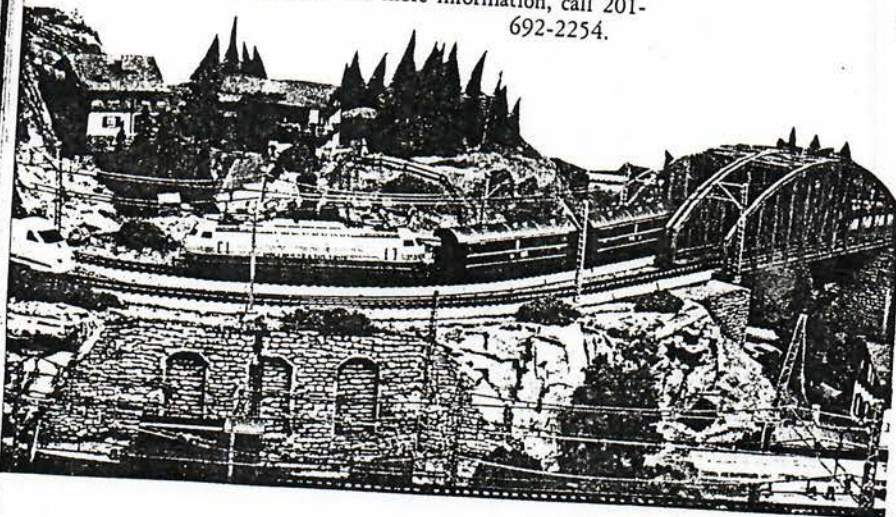
THE LEGEND LIVES

Despite the loss of Martha Graham last spring, the Martha Graham Dance Company continues to carry out the vision of this legendary dancer and choreographer. Through her dancetheater, Graham created

passionate, stylized expressions of human frailties, fantasies, and fears, changing the face of twentieth-century art. The company will perform at Princeton's McCarter Theatre, 91 University Place, on March 31 and April 1 in separate presentations. Together, the performances provide an overview of Graham's brilliant career. For tickets, call 609-683-8000.

ALL ABOARD?

You can't be a passenger on this train, but you can see it at Greenberg's Great Train, Dollhouse and Toy Show, March 28-29. The show will feature between 225 and 500 dealer tables, including operating train layouts, dollhouses, and collectible toys. The exhibition will be held at Fairleigh Dickinson's Rothman Center on Temple Avenue in Hackensack. Show hours are 11 AM to 5 PM and admission is \$5; children under twelve are admitted free with an adult. For more information, call 201-692-2254.



TALES FOR TOTS

If you haven't heard of *Stone Soup and Other Stories*, don't consult your chef! This musical play by the Verona-based Pushcart Players features international folktales and is a delightful introduction to culture, custom, and theater for children ages 4-9. *Stone*

Soup will be performed at the William Carlos Williams Center (1 Williams Plaza, Rutherford) on March 21. Call 201-939-6969 for tickets. Also watch for the Pushcart Players' April presentation of *Are We There Yet, Mr. Columbus?* Schools wishing to schedule a performance should call 201-857-1115.



OH KAY!

Next time you check out a book at the Newark Public Library, check out the library's exhibition of 50 original cartoons by *Star-Ledger* regular Kay Kato. Featuring humorous sketches of New Jersey programs, events, and celebrations, the exhibition is free to the public and runs through March. The Newark Public Library is located at 5 Washington Street and is open Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 9 AM to 9 PM; Tuesday and Friday 9 AM to 5:30 PM; and Saturday from 9 AM to 5 PM. For more information, call 201-733-7800.

Illustration reprinted with permission of the Star-Ledger and Kay Kato



Jim Estrin for The New York Times

Arsenal Gallery by the New York City Parks and Recreation Department.

Thomas, a rather cheeky but sweet red-and-blue train who lives on the Island of Sodor with his fellow trains: Gordon, Henry, Edward, Percy, Toby and James. This live-action animation series is nonviolent. Sure, the trains get angry at one another, but they don't use guns and there aren't any bad guys. Everyone just has his ups and downs. This season's new episodes started with Thomas, once again undergoing trials and tribulations, all because he has a tendency to act bigger than his britches. But he always gets his comeuppance, including getting stuck on an incline while pulling too many trains. Some parents bemoan the lack of prominent female characters on the show. Annie and Clarabel, for example, are coaches and not full-fledged trains. The episodes have been narrated by Ringo Starr; starting Monday, the comedian George Carlin will appear on the 20 new episodes. Mr. Carlin also acts as the stationmaster on the core program of "Shining Time Station," which features live actors and has themes corresponding to "Thomas the Tank Engine" programs. The hourlong "Shining Time Station" is shown on Channel 13 at 8 A.M. and 3 P.M. on weekdays and at 8 A.M. on Sundays. It is also broadcast nationwide on PBS.

Kim and Jerry Brodey

92d Street Y
1395 Lexington Avenue
Manhattan
(212) 996-1100

Recommended ages: 3 to 8
Sunday

Kim and Jerry Brodey not only look alike (they are wife and husband), but they have also made their living together for the last eight years by writing and performing children's rock, soca and other styles of music in an act they have taken on the road. For the Very Young People series at the 92d Street Y, the Brodeys, who are from Toronto, will touch upon themes from fear of the dark to ecology. "Do You Know Where Your Garbage Go?" is one song; the catchy reggae refrain is, "You must put it in the cancan."

The couple also dance, use humor, mime, theater and wear clothes that evoke Key West. You could say they're infectious: some adults may even find themselves singing along.

The hourlong performance is to start at 1:30 P.M., has no intermission and takes place in the Kaufmann Concert Hall, where there are big comfortable seats. Tickets are \$12.

Keep in Mind

NATIONAL BOOK WEEK CELEBRITY RE-ADATHON, with readings by Elizabeth Koda-Callan ("The Tiny Angel"), Paul Zindel ("My Darling, My Hamburger"), Bonnie Zindel ("Hollywood Dream Machine") and Augusta Golden ("Ducks Don't Get Wet"). Tomorrow at the Staten Island Children's Museum, 1000 Richmond Terrace, Livingston, S.I., from 1 to 4 P.M. Free with museum admission of \$3 for adults and children 3 and up. Information: (718) 273-2060.

DUTCH-AMERICAN HERITAGE DAY, featuring Dutch-American storytelling and games led by Anneke Bull, a Dutch woman who will wear native dress and also discuss native foods, with sample treats. Tomorrow at 2 P.M. at the Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Avenue at 103d Street. Tickets, \$3 a person for nonmembers; free for members. Information: (212) 534-1672.

FALL FESTIVAL, with balloon popping, a cakewalk, fishing, face painting, children's raffle, silent auction (from helicopter rides to theater tickets) and rummage sale. Tomorrow from noon to 5 P.M. at Public School 3, 490 Hudson Street, between Christopher and Grove Streets, Manhattan. Admission, \$2 for adults and 50 cents for children. Information: (212) 807-6322.

DRUM MAKING AND PLAYING, a family workshop in which participants will make traditional Puerto Rican drums and learn how to play them. Sunday at 2 P.M., the Bronx Museum of the Arts, 1040 Grand Concourse, at 165th Street, Morrisania. Free, as is museum admission. Information: (212) 681-6000.



Pushcart Players

Jeff Wingfield in "The Long One," by the Pushcart Players.

TORONTO DANCE THEATER FAMILY DAY, the company's first New York engagement in six years, featuring James Kudelka's "15 Heterosexual Duets" (with music by Beethoven), "The Court of Lions" and "Dreamsend" (with music by Webern). Special ticket prices (\$10 for ages 6 to 14; \$20 for adults) at the 2 P.M. matinee tomorrow. At the Joyce Theater, 175 Eighth Avenue, at 19th Street, Manhattan. Information: (212) 242-0800.

"STONE SOUP AND OTHER STORIES," a small-scale musical with actors who perform excerpts from such folk tales as "Stone Soup" (Russia); "The Long One" (Africa); "Freddie Lee Fisher" (West Virginia), and "The Greatest Being" (India). Presented by the Pushcart Players of Verona, N.J. Tomorrow at 2 P.M. at the Ryerson Middle School, Valley Road, Ringwood, N.J. Tickets, \$5. Information: (201) 962-7063.

For Children

Dulcie Leimbach

■ Folk tales onstage ■ Once an estate, now a state park ■ How Indiana Jones faced the snakes ■ The interpretation of dreams, Freudian and otherwise.

'Stone Soup and Other Stories'

William Carlos Williams Center
1 Williams Plaza
Rutherford, N.J.
(201) 939-6969
Recommended ages: 3 to 9
Tomorrow

Last year, the Pushcart Players of Verona, N.J., toured not only their home state — from Franklin Lakes to Point Pleasant Beach — but also Kiev and St. Petersburg in what was then the Soviet Union. This season, the company, which performs mostly in schools, will present "Stone Soup" in a public engagement that is worth the half-hour drive from the Lincoln Tunnel. Using masks and a few props, two of the company's actors, Susie Paplow and Jeffery Wingfield, deftly re-enact four folk tales with morals for children to mull over.

"Stone Soup," a story from Eastern Europe in the spirit of Chekhov, presents Setonka Supovitsch, who wheedles free meals, and Matushka, who says her pantry, garden and chicken coop are bare. One out-snookers the other until, in a hurly-burly cooking session, "at brings Julia Child to mind, they both end up gorging on chicken soup.

"Freddie Lee Fisher" is an Appalachian story about an 8-year-old boy short on common sense. When asked to carry a cake home from Grandpa's, for example, he drops it and tries to piece it back together like a puzzle while remaining oblivious to his foolhardiness.

"The Greatest Being," from India, is more solemn. A king insists his daughter marry the "greatest person in the world." Easy enough for a king to say, but his daughter, Rashi, has set her sights lower: she just wants to walk down the aisle with Kashi, a mouse-catcher. The poetic humor builds as Rashi sets out on a quest involving a tête-à-tête with, among others, the sun, who wears a yellow shirt and sunglasses. Ultimately, she persuades her father that the great being is in their own courtyard.

"The Long One," set in Africa, enlists a menagerie: a monkey, a rabbit, an ostrich, a tiger, a rhinoceros and a caterpillar. Rabbit, the main character, brushes off the monkey's tactics to lure an unseen creature out of rabbit's house. "I am the Long One," the voice bellows, with help from the audience. "Go away or I'll trample you." Who is this portentous voice? And can the monkey — or anyone else — get this mysterious being out?

The 45-minute performance, which begins at 1 P.M., takes place in a cavernous theater with a Baroque chandelier overhead. Tickets are \$7 for adults and \$6 for children. The modern, black-painted center is in a courtyard off Park Avenue, the main road in Rutherford, at Spring Dell Avenue.

Caumsett State Park

West Neck Road
Lloyd Neck, L.I.
(516) 423-1770
Recommended for all ages
Daily

On the baronial grounds of an estate once owned by Marshall Field 3d (whose grandfather founded the Chicago department store), hot polloi can roam the 1,500 acres of Caumsett State Park as if they, too, were to the manor born.

Except for the parking lot, the estate, on a woody peninsula reaching into Long Island Sound, is pretty much the way it was left when the state acquired it in 1961, with its brick mansion, gray, wind-blown outbuildings, caretakers' cottages and pond. Only an ugly prefabricated stable, crying out for even a lone wisteria vine, is new; there, visitors can take lessons for \$35 to \$45 an hour. Information on lessons: (516) 673-5533.

Caumsett, named for the Matinecock Indian word meaning "place by a sharp rock," is an endless communal backyard. One recent Sunday, dozens of families unpacked an array of equipment from their cars, including bicycles with training wheels, wagons, strollers, bicycles built for two and tricycles. The concrete paths are wide enough for joggers and walkers alike. If your children's legs can hold out for the two-mile walk (one 3-year-old insisted on resting on the park benches along the way), they can pretend they're pioneers discovering the Long Island Sound.

Surf fishing is permitted. The silence is punctuated by the whir of Canada geese taking flight; they sound just like helicopters. A visit here is fodder for the imagination of anyone traversing the bare fields or woods: the family in front of you is the visitor, of course, while you are only biding your time until the butler serves you tea and scones in the conservatory.

The park is open from 8 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. daily. Admission is free; so is parking until Memorial Day weekend, when it costs \$3 a car through Labor Day. No dogs or picnicking is allowed. There are restrooms on the grounds.

'Great Movie Stunts: Raiders of the Lost Ark'

The Museum of Television and Radio
25 West 52d Street
Manhattan
(212) 621-6800
Recommended ages: 7 and up
Through May 31

This behind-the-scenes program, narrated by the actor Harrison Ford, is about the feats of the Intrepid — and perhaps crazy — stunt people of Hollywood. With the focus on perilous scenes from "Raiders of the Lost

Ark" (interspersed with scenes from very early movies, like those of Buster Keaton), Mr. Ford tells about his and the stunt men's most blood-pumping acts.

In "Raiders," that was no stunt man who rappelled into a pit swarming with 9,000 snakes; it was Mr. Ford, who says he's not afraid of snakes. One stunt man was dragged under a truck along a desert road for six seconds (considered a long time). The stunt men, who maintain that their work is an art form, say a fight scene is usually the most dangerous work because actors often are inept at punching.

Mr. Ford deftly demonstrates how to use a bullwhip; a stunt man ably flips a truck (which pleased Steven Spielberg, the film's director, very much), and the stunt woman for Karen Allen, the female lead in the film, is pushed into the snake den barefoot (unlike Mr. Ford, who got to wear shoes).

The 50-minute program, shown in the sumptuous M.T. & R. Theater with its big screen, is at 2 P.M. tomorrow. It costs \$5 for adults and \$3 for children under 13. Unfortunately, the film is slightly blurry, straining the eyes.

'The Dream Catchers'

La Guardia Performing Arts Center
31-10 Thomson Avenue (entrance on Van Dam Street)
Long Island City
Queens
(718) 482-5151
Recommended ages: 6 to 11
Tomorrow

Instead of treating nightmares as phenomena that can be brushed off, this intense puppet show, a world-premiere performance by the Théâtre Sans Fil of Montreal, is bold and vociferous in its treatment of youngsters' fears. This is not for the faint-hearted. The sound effects, for example, magnify a ghost's mean, mocking laugh. The use of black light, props painted in neon colors, and a smoke machine heighten the eeriness. The large animal puppets — a crocodile has a juicy red jaw — seem utterly real.

But what power and imagination emanate from the troupe! The life-size stuffed puppets are manipulated by puppeteers dressed and hooded all in black — they look like members of the secret police — behind their backs. Brother-and-sister puppets tell each other in detail about images, characters and scenes from their best and worst dreams: a candy tree, a castle, a birthday party, a ghost, a witch, a crocodile, deep woods and a monster. Freud lurks. A vampire reveals his pathological need to bite Melissa, the girl puppet. But Melissa and her brother, Jeffrey, overcome their worst fears, which is what the show is meant to do, said Henriette Major, the company's writer.

After the 50-minute program, which begins at 4 P.M., the troupe will discuss dreams with the audience. Tickets are \$5. The new theater is two blocks from the No. 7 train's stop at 33d and Rawson Streets; walk along Queens Boulevard toward the Manhattan skyline until you reach Van Dam Street.





The Theatre Buff

by Donald Collester, Jr.

Lady Day At Emerson's Bar and Grill

by Donald Collester, Jr.

The life and times of Billie Holiday is the subject of the cabaret-drama "Lady Day At Emerson's Bar and Grill," presented by Theatrefest, the professional Equity company in residence at Montclair State College. And a compelling production it is.

Unlike the sanitized and passionless 1972 film, "Lady Sings the Blues" (in reality a vehicle for Diana Ross), "Lady Day at Emerson's..." describes the demons, torments, and triumphs of the legendary jazz performer. Born Elnora Fagan, the granddaughter of a white slave owner, Billie first listens to music in a Baltimore brothel which her mother cleans. After moving to Harlem, Billie becomes a singer almost by accident. Success comes quickly. She moves up from bars to nightclubs such as Small's, to the Apollo and finally to Carnegie Hall. The great saxophonist, Lester Young, gave her the unique name of "Lady Day", and she dubbed him "Pres", as in President. She surpasses in popularity the legendary Bessie Smith, who was her idol.

Yet Lady Day was still Elmore Fagan, a child who was raped when she was ten and also victimized by racism throughout her life. She had four husbands, none of whom was more important than Sonny Monroe ("My first love and worst love"), who first introduced her to the heroin addiction that would take her from a limousine to a Philadelphia courtroom and then to a West Virginia woman's prison for a year and a day. In Mr. Roberson's drama we meet Lady Day years later, but she has never recovered. She jokes about white parole officers with their blue jackets and white socks, but the imprisonment, disgrace and loss of her livelihood has taken a terrible toll on her spirit. Worst of all, she is alone. The four husbands have gone, and even more tragic is the loss of her mother, the woman she refers to as "the Duchess."

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be purchased prior to departure. Cancun has been building hotels at an resulting in an oversupply of rooms. These low cost packages won't last much stage of them now. Europe during these high season tourist days are still Yugoslavia, Poland, Soviet Union. They are good values also. Two week all inclusive trips are 1200.

This n' That

have arrived in Madison and what a couple they are. The New Jersey opening production has our recommendation for an evening well spent. er goes, know full well that Romeo Montague and Juliet Capulet are ragedy, have still rejoiced in their passion. Maureen Pedala cast as Juliet eo look and act as the play describes them. Cheryl Williams, who plays t, Victoria Boothby, all the cast-Bravo! Well cast, well acted. A few of the to standard, but this did not detract from the overall production. The the choreography by Jozia Mieszkowski, the musical direction, the sets- e Madrigal Singers who greeted us upon arrival, added to the evening and

one since it will mark a milestone for the Festival and Paul Barry, its ctor. With the opening of KING JOHN in August, the Festival will become rid to have completed Shakespeare's entire 38 play canon. Barry will be e directed all 38 plays. This is the last season for Paul and Ellen Barry have it end with such an accomplishment is notable. n nightly rotation this season will include "MEASURE FOR MEASURE" tion to "ROMEO AND JULIET". For ticket information call 377-4487. will surely be a sell out. The New Jersey Shakespeare Festival is located Madison, New Jersey.

rio Festival Orchestra Series at Waterloo Village opened on Saturday er concert. It was marvelous. fer an extensive program over the summer. Included will be rare hestral music, jazz and pop concerts, poetry festivals, conferences, ng for everyone is sure to be found among their offerings. For infor- kets call 347-0900. Waterloo Village is located on Waterloo Road in

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The Theatre Buff

by Donald Collester, Jr.

continued from page 6

The setting is a bar in South Philadelphia in 1959, just months before Lady Day died from her addictions. She can barely make it to the nightclub floor and only after she is given her trademark gardenias to wear in her hair. Once performing she sings her trademark songs and reminisces about her life, sometimes to the point where she must call upon Jimmy Powers, her pianist, to "keep me in line." Mr Roberson's play received the Outer Critics Circle Award for the Off-Broadway 1986-87 production for good reason. "Lady Day at Emerson's" is a unique blend of music and drama which captures not only the suffering but also the spirit of Billie Holiday.

The original Off-Broadway production suffered somewhat by the casting of Lonette McKee, who bore no vocal, physical or temperamental resemblances to Lady Day. The Theatrefest production is blessed by the performance of Loretta Devine. A Broadway veteran of Michael Bennett's "Dream Girls" and Bob Fosse's "Big Deal", Ms. Devine is known to television viewers as a member of the cast of "A Different World" and one of the stars of "Sugar and Spice." Nothing in her biography would describe her as a jazz singer, but she is one in this performance. Whether she sings Bessie Smith songs ("A Pig's Foot and A Bottle of Beer"), Fats Waller songs ("Ain't Nobody's Business") or standards ("Them There Eyes") she is a consummate cabaret singer. When she sings the signature songs of Billie Holiday such as "Strange Fruit", she is a superb actress as well as singer. In the most moving moment when Billie sings "God

Bless the Child" (which she wrote for the Duchess, her mother) there is a superb moment of song and theater. I cannot conceive of anyone playing this role better than Loretta Devine.

The Summerfest production, guided by Producer and Artistic Director Phil Ostermann, is excellent. Rahn Coleman is perfect as Jimmy Powers and also is extraordinary in the musical direction and arrangements of more than 20 songs. He is well assisted by Bradford Hays on saxophone, and Jeffrey Wingfield is fine in the non-speaking role of Emerson, the owner-bartender. Finally, substantial credit should also be given to Will Roberson who is equal to the difficult task of staging this cabaret-drama in a proscenium theater without sacrificing the requisite intimacy.

MUSIC, DANCE, THEATRE

Outdoor Concert featuring the National Chorale on Library Lawn at Fairleigh Dickinson University **Friday, July 13th, 7:30 p.m.** admission is free.

* * * * *

Little Shop of Horrors Auditions at New Jersey Public Theatre in Berkeley Heights at John E. Runnells Hospital on **July 12, 6 p.m. and July 14, 2 p.m.** call **322-3808** for more information.

* * * * *

"Cyclone in Calico: An Interview with Mary Ann Bickerdyke" will be performed at The Unitarian Church in Summit during the **9:30 a.m.** service on **July 15.** The church is located at 4 Waldron Ave. in Summit.

* * * * *

Special Dance Workshop at YMCA offering two sections, ages 6-8 will meet from **12:30 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.** and ages 9-13 from **2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.** beginning **July 16** and ending **August 2.**

* * * * *

Morris Museum Events :
July 17th Children's Play "Pinocchio" presented by the Yates Musical Theatre, **11 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.** in the museum's Bickford Theatre.
July 17th Story Time for children ages 3-6, **10:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 a.m.**

* * * * *

"The Ant and the Grasshopper" presented by the Townsquare Playhouse, Church and Wall Streets, Rockaway. Matinee performances **July 17-20, 24-28, 7 p.m.** performances **July 22, 27, 28.** Call **361-5235** for ticket and matinee times.

* * * * *

Ninth Summerfest Concert Announced at Tourne Park in Boonton Township **Wed., July 18 6:30-8:30 p.m.** Grover Kemble & Blow Daddy O. Call **326-7600** in case of rain.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Montclair Actor Jeff Lambert Stars In 'Driving Miss Daisy'

Montclair actor Jeff Lambert is starring in the African Globe TheatreWorks production of the Alfred Uhry drama, "Driving Miss Daisy," which plays through Sunday, Oct. 6, at the second-floor theater at Newark Symphony Hall, 1028 Broad St. in Newark. Performances are on Friday and Saturday at 8 p.m., with a matinee on Sunday at 3 p.m.

Lambert is making his third appearance with the African

Globe TheatreWorks in Newark, which is in association with Newark Symphony Hall.

"Driving Miss Daisy" is about the relationship between a 70-year-old wealthy, strong-willed Southern matron and her equally indomitable black chauffeur, spanning 20 years.

Lambert's first appearance at the African Globe was last year in "The Piano Lesson," and he returned to play Barney Cashman in African Globe's African-American retelling of Neil Simon's comedy, "The Last of the Red Hot Lovers," for which he was nominated last season by Peter Filichia as Best Actor in a Play.

Lambert also appeared in "Haiti" at 12 Miles West Theatre; "The Normal Heart" at TheatreFest; and "Lady Day at Emerson's Bar & Grill," starring Loretta Devine. He has also performed in TV's "Guiding Light," "As the World Turns" and "All My Children."

Tickets are \$10 on Fridays; \$20 on Saturdays and Sundays. For information and reservations, call (973) 624-1584, or visit the Web site at www.africanglobe.com.



JEFF LAMBERT

AN EGGS-CITING DEBUT

Jersey stage troupe gets big 'roll' on White House lawn

By BETTESPERO

The Pushcart Players are on a roll. The well-traveled troupe from Verona is a featured attraction today at the 113th annual Easter Egg Roll for children on the White House lawn in Washington, D.C.

This afternoon Pushcart is to perform "Stone Soup and Other Stories," one of the company's original musicals for youngsters.

"There is an emphasis on storytelling," explained Ruth Fost, Pushcart managing director. "Our show fits in well with that theme."

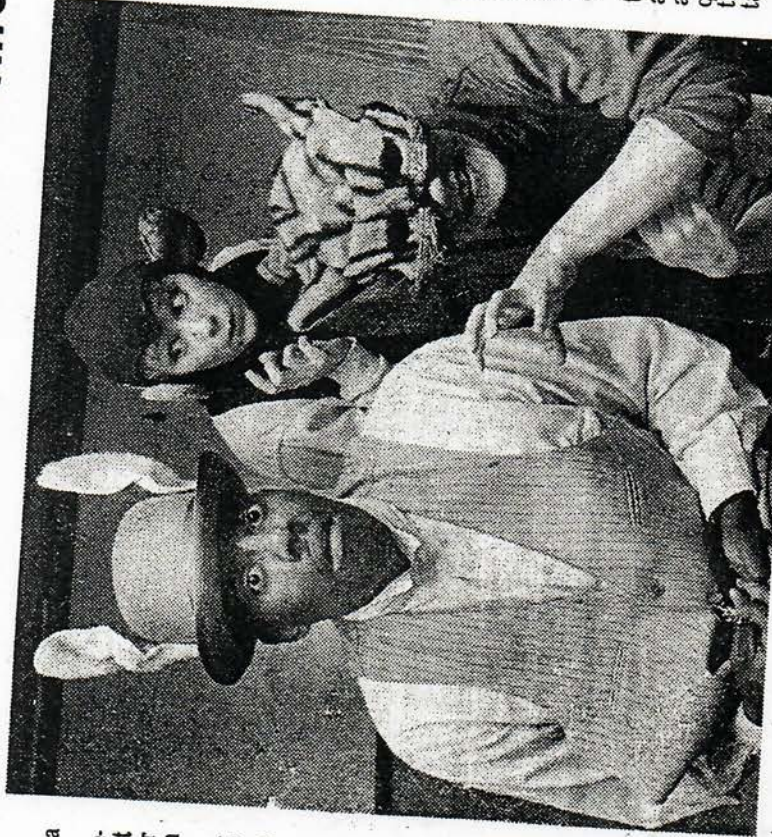
"Stone Soup and Other Stories" is composed of four folktales from around the world: Africa, America, India and Russia.

"This show promotes books and reading. We use the word 'library' several times," Fost said. She noted that one of the stories, "The Long One," is an African tale that has a rabbit as a central character.

The players will perform for a half-hour outdoors. "The stories are very adaptable," commented Fost. "They have a nice, informal feeling which should suit the garden setting."

She considers the small-scale show ideal for young children, pre-kindergarten age through fourth grade. But parents and grandparents like it, too.

In adapting the show for its lawn engagement, the players eliminated the sets. Props and costumes will act as "scenery." Performers will sing a capella, with a mockenspiet instead of a keyboard for musical accompaniment. Actors are Tim Herman and Anna



Members of the Verona-based Pushcart Players rehearsing for today's Easter Egg Roll at the White House are, from left, Jeffery Wingfield of Orange, Anna Smrye of Montclair and Susie Paplow of Morristown Smyre, both of Montclair; Jeffery Wingfield of Orange, and Susie Paplow of Morristown. Sandi Zimmermann of Somerville is the musician. Geoffrey Morris of Montclair is stage manager.

Photo by John A. Gibson Jr.

Fost.

Chances of that are slight, Fost conceded. Security precautions have ranged from White House requests for the birth dates and Social Security numbers of company members to lists of props and costumes.

The troupe will transport its personnel and accoutrements to the White House in two theater company vans. Official credentials issued to the troupe will ease the vans' entry through the White House gates.

A month ago Karen Giorno, a staff member of the White House Visitors Office, invited Pushcart Players to perform at the annual fete. It was short notice for the troupe, which has become accustomed during its 18-year history to a full, year-round calendar in schools, libraries, museums and theaters. But today happened to be an open date on the pushy Pushcart schedule.

The troupe performs regularly throughout New Jersey and farther afield in the New York metropolitan area. Last fall the players carried off quite an acting coup by staging one of their children's shows in Kiev, the capital of Ukraine.

When the Players returned from their theatrical trek, Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-N.J.) read their accomplishment into the Congressional Record. The troupe has invited him to the Egg Roll.

The thespians cannot linger long on the lawn. They must return right away to New Jersey, where their next show is tomorrow at the Paper Mill Playhouse in Millburn. There they will perform "Are We There Yet, Mr. Columbus?"

Besides performing their own show, the players plan to take part in other Egg Roll activities during the day. "We hope to send our regards to the first lady and her husband," quipped