

# THEATRE THREE

## 69/70



## A HISTORY OF THEATRE THREE

Theatre Three was chartered by the State of Texas as a non-profit corporation in April of 1961 under the leadership of Norma Young, Jac Alder, Ester Ragland and Robert Dracup were co-founders. March of that year saw the beginning of production. Located in the various meeting rooms and ballrooms of the Sheraton-Dallas for its first seven productions, the theatre leased its own home in November of 1961 at 2211 Main Street.

The Main Street building had been a seat cover garage but had been derelict for several years. Volunteers from the acting company converted it to use as a 143 seat arena playhouse. Though the theatre had been critically acclaimed from the outset ("The best acting Dallas has seen for years and years and still more years" was one major reviewer's reaction to the first season) the financial existence of the organization was particularly perilous. A three thousand dollar grant from the now-defunct Community Arts Fund staved off shutdown in 1964 and was the beginning of civic recognition for the organization.

The early faithful patrons had survived uncomfortable seats, no air conditioning (there were funeral parlor fans tied to the chairs) and limited parking. But the critical acclaim continued and the early faithful were joined by new, adventurous enthusiasts. Theatre Three's founder, Norma Young, continued as the Artistic Director winning national and local awards. The building was revamped, air conditioning was installed and the tiny theatre that had been a garage was visited by admiring theatre people from all over the world. Still some Dallasites "never heard of Theatre Three."

In 1965 an original script by Dallas playwright Carolyn Echols was premiered. Called "Cat's Eye", the play attracted the interest of a number of friends of the authoress. These women organized a benefit premiere of the play to raise money for Theatre Three. Out of this successful event The Inner Circle (a women's auxiliary) was born and the base of community support and awareness widened.

Climaxing the growth of community awareness was the organization of the board headed by John Wisenbaker in 1967. The board's first challenge was urgent: 2211 Main Street had been scheduled for demolition by new owners. What could have been a shattering crisis was turned into splendid advantage with the solution to re-house the theatre in The Quadrangle. Funds for the purpose were raised during the 1968-1969 season and Moliere's "Tartuffe" has launched Theatre Three in its third home at Gala performances October 2nd and 3rd, 1969.

But the true history of Theatre Three is not financial, nor is it concerned with real estate. It's true history and accomplishment lies in the meaningful evenings it has added to the lives of Dallasites. Ultimately a theatre stands or falls by the quality of its plays. Since 1961 Theatre Three has presented **THE RELUCTANT DEBUTANTE** by William Douglas Home — **THE LADY'S NOT FOR BURNING** by Christopher Fry — **HOME OF THE BRAVE** by Arthur Laurents — **LILIAM** by Ferenc Molnar — **BORN YESTERDAY** by Garson Kanin — **SABRINA FAIR** by Samuel Taylor — **WAITING FOR GODOT** by Samuel Beckett — **SIX CHARACTERS IN SEARCH OF AN AUTHOR** by Luigi Pirandello — **MRS. McTHING** by Mary Chase — **THE MEMBER OF THE WEDDING** by Carson McCullers — **THE MOON IS BLUE** by F. Hugh Herbert — **WAITING FOR GODOT** (a revival) by Samuel Beckett — **LOOK BACK IN ANGER** by John Osborn — **THE LITTLE FOXES** by Lillian Hellman — **THE TAVERN** by George M. Cohan — **THE PHYSICIAN IN SPITE OF HIMSELF** by Moliere — **DON JUAN IN HELL** by George Bernard Shaw — **JULIUS CAESAR** by William Shakespeare — **AN EVENING OF JAPANESE THEATRE** (a Neiman-Marcus Fortnight event) — **LIGHT UP THE SKY** by Moss Hart — **TWO FOR THE SEESAW** by William Gibson — **PURLIE VICTORIOUS** by Ossie Davis — **ALL THE WAY HOME** by Tad Mosel — **THE HOSTAGE** by Brendan Behan — **THREE FOR THE PRIZE** (An evening of prize-winning one act plays) — **THE NEW DRUNKARD** (an original musical comedy based on the old mellerdrama) — **THE CARETAKER** by Harold Pinter — **NIGHT OF THE IGUANA** by Tennessee Williams — **CHAMPAGNE COMPLEX** by Leslie Stevens — **EMPEROR JONES** by Eugene O'Neill — **THE AMERICAN DREAM** and **ZOO STORY** by Edward Albee — **THE TIME OF YOUR LIFE** by William Saroyan — **COUNT DRACULA: OR, A MUSICAL MANIA FROM TRANSYLVANIA** by Larry O'Dwyer and Jac Alder — **THURBER CARNIVAL** by James Thurber — **OH DAD, POOR DAD, MAMMA'S HUNG YOU IN THE CLOSET AND**

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