

The soul selects her own society-
Then-shuts the door-
On her divine majority-
Present no more.

-Emily Dickinson

THE ROAD TO MECCA



by **ATHOL FUGARD**

Directed by **NORMA YOUNG**

With

**ESTHER BENSON
CONNIE NELSON
GRANT JAMES**

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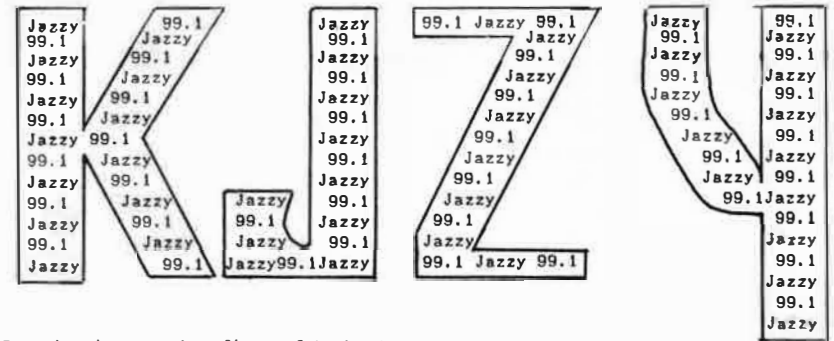
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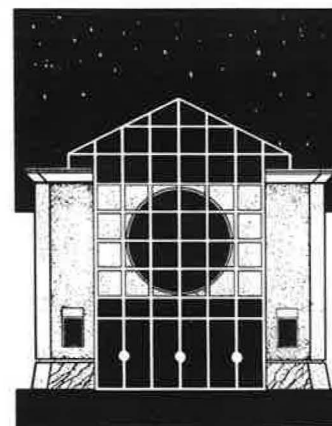
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The Production



Theatre Three
The Quadrangle
2800 Routh Street
Dallas, Texas 75201

NORMA YOUNG
Founding/Artistic Director

JAC ALDER
Executive Producer-Director

CHARLES HOWARD
General Manager

Present

THE ROAD TO MECCA

by **ATHOL FUGARD**

Directed by **NORMA YOUNG**

With

ESTHER BENSON

CONNIE NELSON

GRANT JAMES

Scenic Design by **HARLAND WRIGHT & CHERYL DENSON**

Costume Design by **CHRISTOPHER KOVARIK**

Lighting Design by **LINDA BLASE**

Sound Design by **TRISTAN WILSON**

Production Stage Manager **TERRY TITTLE HOLMAN**

Assistant Director **MARK HADLEY**

First Preview: Saturday, 13 January 1990

Opening: Wednesday, 17 January 1990

THE ROAD TO MECCA is presented at Theatre Three by special arrangement
with Samuel French, Inc., New York, NY

THE ROAD TO MECCA is sponsored by **The Dallas Morning News**

With additional support from the Eugene McDermott Foundation
in memory of Mrs. Bernard S. (Said) Goldberg

Helen Martins.....**ESTHER BENSON***
 Elsa Barlow.....**CONNIE NELSON***
 Marius Byleveld.....**GRANT JAMES***

Time - Autumn, 1974

Place - New Bethesda, South Africa

THERE WILL BE ONE INTERMISSION OF FIFTEEN MINUTES

*Member, Actors' Equity Association

It was a drive into the Karoo to spend a holiday that took me for the first time through New Bethesda, a small village in what turned out to be an absolutely magnificent setting. Driving to my friend's farm, I was struck by its isolation and thought to myself, hell, this would be quite a nice place to have a house to escape from the city. I mentioned this to my friend, who said, "Well, you know, the houses are dirt-cheap in New Bethesda because there has been a move from the rural areas into the cities."

I returned three months later with the express purpose of buying a house, which I still own. In the course of looking at various houses and getting to know a few of the locals, reference was made to a rather strange character who lived in the village. Her name was Helen Martins and the people were kind of apologetic about her because they regarded her as a little crazy. They said her craziness took the form of rather silly statues and sculpture that she made and had all around her house. I obviously couldn't resist the temptation of strolling in the direction of her house and seeing Miss Helen's "Mecca" for the first time. She was still alive at that point but had become virtually a total recluse. So, apart from seeing her in the distance once or twice, and nodding at her when she was among her statues and I happened to be walking past, I never got to know her personally. Over the next few years, thoughts about Miss Helen occurred with some frequency in my notebooks. I also began to discover more about the real Miss Helen.

Though obviously in a sense provoked by Miss Helen's story, I'd never quite been hooked by it. Then I discovered another fact about Miss Helen: that in the last years of her life, there had been one very significant friendship - a friendship with a young woman from Cape Town. I accidentally happened to meet the young woman. Because of my respect for Miss Helen the young woman gave me, as a gesture, a little memento of the occasion when we met - a photograph of herself and Miss Helen. I took one look at the photograph - it's a brilliant, beautiful photograph - and there was the play. I was hooked.

From an interview with Athol Fugard first published in THEATER magazine.



MRS. BERNARD S. (SAID) GOLDBERG

Theatre Three's production of THE ROAD TO MECCA by Athol Fugard is dedicated to the memory of a remarkable and beloved board member of Theatre Three, Said Goldberg. Though her recent death leaves her many friends bereft, it's impossible for friends to think of Said and not be filled with joy: Said always radiated graciousness and cheer.

Not only did she persuade Arthur Fiedler to come to Dallas to conduct benefit concerts with the Dallas Symphony Orchestra for Theatre Three, she was the champion ticket-seller to those annual events. She had a secret weapon: her considerable charm coupled with her delicious chicken salad she served to ply prospective donors.

Said was born in San Antonio, came to Dallas upon her marriage to Bernie in 1931 and was Neiman-Marcus' coat, suit and dress buyer for twenty-five years before retiring to travel with Bernie. After Bernie's death eight years ago, she was especially close to her sister Paula and brother-in-law John Goodlett. All three came to Theatre Three's shows together and regularly.

She held a long-time membership in the Fronian Club, the Public Affairs Luncheon Club and was involved in her neighborhood Turtle Creek Association. Through the Save The Children Foundation she supported a Phillipino girl. Her many friends include Mrs. Eugene (Margaret) McDermott who contributed to this production in Said's honor.

ESTHER BENSON (*Helen Martins*) recently finished a twelve week run at the Plaza Theatre playing Ouiser in *STEEL MAGNOLIAS*. Just before her success in *STEEL MAGNOLIAS*, Esther was at Hope Repertory Theatre in Holland, Michigan, playing Miss Helen in *THE ROAD TO MECCA*. Theatre Three was the first Dallas theatre Esther worked in on coming to Dallas. Audiences will remember her Theatre Three performances in *SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER*, *MORNING'S AT SEVEN*, *ARMS AND THE MAN*, *MAN AND SUPERMAN*, and *LIGHT UP THE SKY*. Esther's other Dallas appearances include *QUILTERS* at Stage #1, *EMINENT DOMAIN* at New Arts, and *A CHRISTMAS CAROL*, *UNCLE VANYA*, and *DIARY OF A SCOUNDREL* at Dallas Theater Center. Esther's New York credits include appearances on Broadway in *IVANOV* with John Gielgud and Vivien Leigh and *PERIOD OF ADJUSTMENT* by Tennessee Williams, Off-Broadway, at Lincoln Center and with APA-Phoenix Repertory. She has performed at major regional and university theatres, hosted a daily radio show, made commercials, and was Amanda Buckley on the television soap, *THE DOCTORS*. Recent television stints include ABC's *LITTLE GIRL LOST* and *GIDEON OLIVER*, and *THE AMERICAN ADVENTURE* on PBS. In addition to working with such stars as Helen Hayes, Rosemary Harris, Nell Carter, and others, Esther worked for three years auditing productions for the New York State Council on the Arts. Her articles have appeared frequently in the Travel Section of *The New York Times* and were also published internationally. Esther has recorded over 300 books of fiction, non-fiction, and poetry for the Library of Congress' Talking Books program.

GRANT JAMES (*Marius Byleveld*) is making his Theatre Three debut in *THE ROAD TO MECCA* in the role originally played by the playwright, Athol Fugard. Grant earned a Fine Arts degree from the Goodman Theatre in Chicago and has been acting and directing in theatres from coast to coast for more than 30 years. A writer/director in all media, Grant began writing, directing, and acting in the days of live radio drama, and he has made films and television specials in over 30 countries. His filming took him very near the location of *THE ROAD TO MECCA*. He has taught writing, production, and acting in such far-flung places as Quito, Ecuador and Cambridge, England. Since moving to Dallas three years ago, Grant has been seen in such roles as Frank in *EDUCATING RITA*, Reverend Parris in *THE CRUCIBLE*, and the hard-line Party Boss, Prodansky, in the English premiere of "R". Some of his favorite roles have been Henry in *LION IN WINTER*, Don Quixote in *MAN OF LA MANCHA*, and Henry Higgins in *MY FAIR LADY*. He was heard as Scrooge in Texas State Network's production of *A CHRISTMAS CAROL* and has also done television and radio commercials and industrial films for such clients as Holiday Inn, ARCO, and Cadillac. Grant was seen as Eddie in the feature film *UHF* with "Weird Al" Yankovic. He is currently working on two films, *SISTERS OF THE WAR* (a made for television movie) and *THE WINDMILLER* (a feature film), writing and directing both. Locally, he is represented by the Jackie Townsend Agency. Grant is married to agent and actress Juli Erickson, and between them they have 11 children, 24 grandchildren, and 5 great-grandchildren!

CONNIE NELSON (*Elsa Barlow*) is a Theatre Three favorite whose memorable appearances have included roles in the hit comedy *TAKING STEPS*, the musical salute to George and Ira Gershwin, *CLAP YO' HANDS*, the smash hits *A...MY NAME IS ALICE* and *LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS*, as well as *BENEFACTORS*, *THE SHOW-OFF*, *SEASON'S GREETINGS*, *BEDROOM FARCE*, *WORKING*, *CHICAGO*, *THE PHYSICIAN IN SPITE OF HIMSELF*, and *THE RUNNER STUMBLES*. Connie has also worked with Dallas Summer Musicals and Stage #1 in the world premiere of *ALL KIDDING ASIDE* by Charles Johnson, directed by Patrick Kelly. In New York Connie appeared in the 1984 One Act Play Marathon at The Ensemble Studio Theatre and also at The Encompass Theatre in *KENNEDY'S CHILDREN*. She performed with The Acting Company and co-wrote the hit revue *ISSUE I DON'T EVEN KNOW YOU*, directed by Jack Heifner. Connie's regional credits include Washington D.C.'s Arena Stage and a season at The Guthrie Theater under the direction of Garland Wright and Liviu Ciulei. Connie has worked in film, done a smattering of very tasteful commercials, and is represented by the Mary Collins Agency in Dallas. She appeared at American Repertory Theatre as Sheila in *THE BOYS NEXT DOOR* and most recently played Miss Leighton in *ONCE IN A LIFETIME* and Mrs. Dilber and Sister-in-law in *A CHRISTMAS CAROL* at Dallas Theater Center. Connie was born in Tennessee, reared in Texas, educated at Southern Methodist University and the streets of New York. She is happy to be back on stage at Theatre Three.

ATHOL FUGARD has been working in the theatre as a playwright, director, and actor since the mid-fifties in South Africa, England, and the United States. His earlier plays include *THE BLOOD KNOT*, *HELLO AND GOODBYE*, *BOESMAN AND LENA*, *STATEMENTS AFTER AN ARREST UNDER THE IMMORALITY ACT*, *SIZWE BANSI IS DEAD*, and *THE ISLAND*. Since 1980 three of his plays, in addition to *THE ROAD TO MECCA* - *A LESSON FROM ALOES*, *MASTER HAROLD AND THE BOYS*, and *A PLACE WITH THE PIGS* - have premiered at Yale Repertory Theatre. *THE ROAD TO MECCA* was just named by *TIME* Magazine as one of the ten best plays of the 1980's.

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LINDA BLASE (*Lighting Design*) has designed lighting for more than 25 productions at Dallas Theater Center as well as Theatre Three's recent productions of *THE FANTASTICKS*, *NOTHING SACRED*, and *WOMAN IN MIND*. During the 88-89 season Linda designed lighting for Dallas Repertory Theatre's *BROADWAY BOUND* and *A SHAYNA MAIDEL*, Callier Theatre's *THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE*, and designed lighting and sound for *TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD* at Dallas Children's Theater. She teaches an advanced lighting class at Dallas Arts Magnet High School.

CHRISTOPHER KOVARIK (*Costume Design*) has designed numerous productions at Theatre Three, including his personal favorites *TAKING STEPS*, *THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE*, and *BROADWAY*. Chris has worked at other Dallas theatres and is an active S.T.A.G.E. member.

HARLAND WRIGHT (*Scenic Design*) is a native Texan and Dallas resident who has worked in theatre in Dallas since 1964. His first design project for Theatre Three was for *THE BOY FRIEND* in the old seat-cover garage downtown. Since then he has designed, among others, *A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO THE FORUM*, *ROAR OF THE GREASEPAINT*, *ANYTHING GOES*, *CELEBRATION*, *LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS*, and *THE SEAGULL* for Theatre Three. Mr. Wright is also well known in Dallas as an advertising and graphic designer. He has also art directed or designed numerous television commercials and industrial films. As resident art director for Mulberry Square Productions in Dallas he was production designer for the world acclaimed motion pictures *BENJI* and *FOR THE LOVE OF BENJI* and designed settings for the Benji television specials and series. Mr. Wright will also be remembered as the tallest Teddy Roosevelt in history in Theatre Three's production of *ARSENIC AND OLD LACE*.

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CHERYL DENSON (*Scenic Design & Production Manager*) made her Theatre Three directing debut with last season's holiday hit production of *THE FANTASTICKS* and recently directed the Jones/Schmidt classic for the second time. Dallas audiences have seen her directing work in *BROADWAY BOUND*, a hit at Dallas Repertory Theatre, and *PULP AND CIRCUMSTANCE* at Theatre Gemini. Cheryl has designed sets and/or costumes for numerous Theatre Three productions, including the garden setting for this season's *WOMAN IN MIND* and the speakeasy-backstage for *BROADWAY*. Her acting appearances include such hits as *SAFETY* and *TOP GIRLS*. Cheryl has served as Theatre Three's Production Manager since the Fall of 1983.

TERRY TITTLE HOLMAN (*Production Stage Manager*) joined Theatre Three for the 1987-88 Season. She has been a stage manager for over 14 years and has worked with Dallas Ballet, Plaza Theatre, Mansion Dinner Theatre, Theatre Memphis, and Theatre Midland. Terry is a member of AEA, IATSE, and the Texas Tech mafia. She would like to thank the three women who have been most influential in her career, Mrs. Enid Holm, Mrs. Bodine Johnson (her drama teacher) and Ms. Norma Young (Mrs. Johnson's drama teacher.)

Staff

NORMA YOUNG (*Founding/Artistic Director & Director for THE ROAD TO MECCA*) was born in Dallas, reared in Oak Cliff, and educated at Sul Ross State University in Alpine (which gave her its Distinguished Ex-Student Award in 1982). Ms. Young's career took her to Houston and New York before she returned to Dallas to found Theatre Three in 1961. She has served as Theatre Three's Artistic Director continuously since then. In addition to her extensive directing credits, Ms. Young has played many leading roles for Theatre Three, most recently in the world premiere of James Duff's *A QUARREL OF SPARROWS* and before that in Jean Anouilh's *THE WALTZ OF THE TOREADORS*. Her guest appearances have taken her to San Antonio's Guadalupe Cultural Center in *LA CASA DE BERNARDA ALBA* and Houston's Alley Theatre in her one woman show *THE LIFE SHE LED*. Ms. Young named Theatre Three for playwrights, productions, and audiences: elements she values equally in her concept of theatre. *Dallas Times Herald* has named her "Dallas' First Lady of the Theatre" and *Ultra Magazine* cited her as one of five "grande dames" of Texas. Last December, with Jac Alder, she received the Dallas Historical Society Award for Excellence in Creative Arts.



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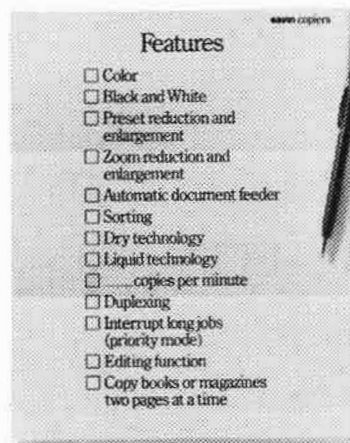
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