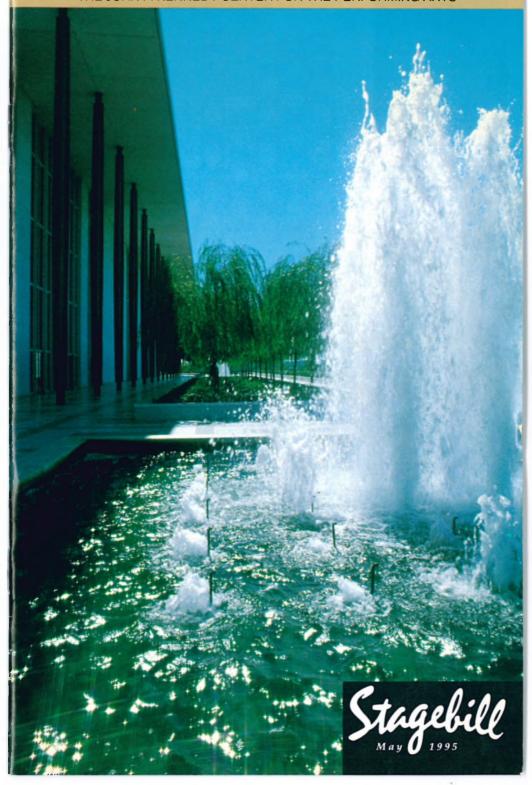
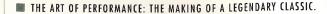
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The Angel Has Landed

Angels in America has received more media attention, and won more awards, than any other play in recent memory. As Angels alights at the Kennedy Center, Robert Sandla measures the wingspan of this two-part theatrical phenomenon.

The Program

28 Crazy for George and Ira

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Cover photograph by Carla Porch



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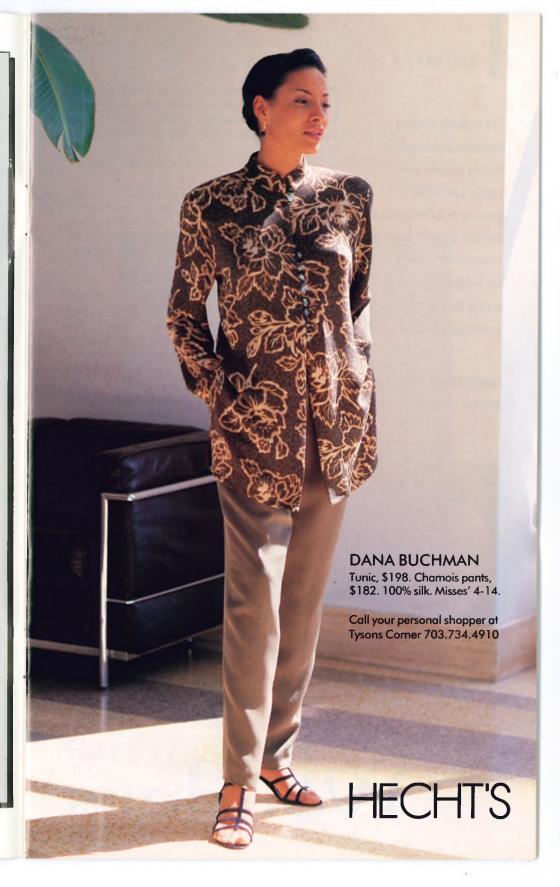
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teachers better by
showing them how to use
the arts in their
classrooms. In the process,
if's helping to ensure the
artistic literacy of a new
generation of students.

1

PAMELA SOMMERS takes us into the classroom.

Flavius Hall Jr. received no formal arts education in six years of elementary school. Yet Hall, now an Instructional Support Team member for the Prince William County, Virginia, public school system, vividly recalls one teacher using a well-known song as a powerful teaching tool.

"First we learned to sing 'This Land Is Your Land,' and to play it on a plastic flute. Then she pulled down a map, and showed us where the Gulf Stream waters,

"First we learned to sing 'This Land Is Your Land,' and to play it on a plastic flute. Then she pulled down a map, and showed us where the Gulf Stream waters, the New York islands, and the redwood forest were located. We broke up into groups, chose specific geographic areas, and wrote reports about them. We even came up with additional verses to the song!"

The teacher's unconventional approach, Hall says, offered "a historical aspect and a whole lot of fun. And it made you proud that you were an American."

Ten years ago, just out of graduate school, Hall was looking to take courses in the Washington area that would combine his love for the visual arts with useful teaching strategies, and he heard about the Kennedy Center's Professional Development Opportunities for Teachers program. Based on the premise that all teachers can make use of the arts in their classrooms, this series of participatory workshops led by artists and arts

educators provides hands-on experience with teaching an art form, or with using the arts to teach other curriculums. Workshops target teachers of all grade levels who serve students with a broad range of backgrounds and needs.

The program offered just the sort of practical guidance Hall needed. Before long he was hooked, earning graduate and in-service credits, even occasion-

ally rubbing shoulders with celebrities.

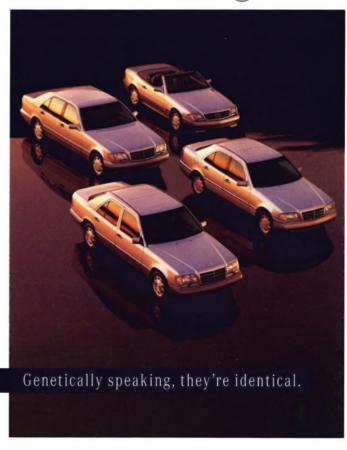
"These courses have opened my mind as to how I can integrate visual art, music, dance, theater, and poetry into the curriculum," he says, "how I can use many



Art smart: Participants in the Kennedy Center's Professional Development Opportunities for Teachers program



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of these teaching techniques in dealing with assessments, portfolios, disabled students, gifted students . . . and there's just the excitement of going to the Kennedy Center."

For some teachers, it is not just the wealth of workshops—some 30 to 40 are offered each year on evenings and weekends—or the Center's star-studded ambiance that inspires. "After you've been attending the courses for a while, you start seeing the same faces," says Charlene Sellner, a 20-year veteran of the Prince George's County, Maryland, public schools. "It's great—you hear what private schools and other public school systems are doing. You share stories."

The Kennedy Center considers educating teachers an essential component in fulfilling its mission, mandated by Congress, to serve as a national leader in arts education. "Teachers are the dynamic figures in students' experiences in school," says Amy Nordin, the program's manager in the Kennedy Center's Education Department. "Our long-term goals in arts education can only be achieved by improving teachers' knowledge and critical acumen, and their ability to teach about and through the arts. Only when teachers have this education can they help young people develop their own artistic literacy and provide them with experiences that inspire lifelong involvement with the arts."

More than 1,600 teachers from 14 metropolitan-area school systems attend workshops and related performances and discussions each year. Working in partnership with the school systems, the Kennedy Center makes every effort to ensure that its offerings are practical and pertinent to teachers' current professional development needs and are led by instructors who meet the Center's stringent criteria. Once selected, each instructor enters a collaborative relationship with Center personnel—an extensive planning process before each course is unveiled, and an evaluation afterward.

The Kennedy Center's local professional development programs have provided the model for a national project, called Kennedy Center Performing Arts Centers and Schools: Partners in Education. Currently, communities in 35 states participate in the program and have created more than 600 new professional development initiatives for teachers.

The most affecting testimony comes from teachers who have applied the principles they absorbed in Kennedy Center workshops—and have been astounded by their students' progress.

Teacher Kathleen Dockeray offered a most telling anecdote at a Program dinner held by the Professional Development Program:

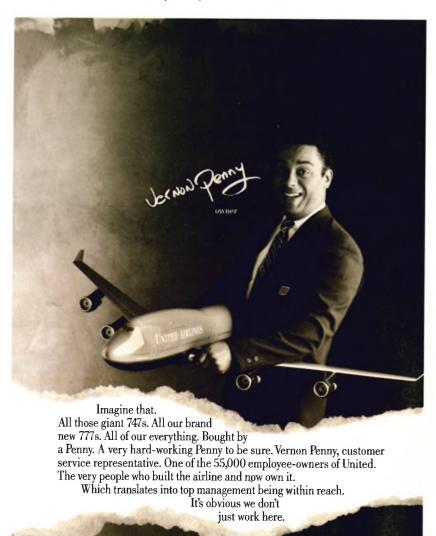
"One of my students, Fred, is reading below grade level and had been placed in the 'alternate' resource reading group since kindergarten. By the time he arrived in fourth grade, his self-esteem was low, to the point where he was not coming to school without a great deal of effort on the part of his mother.

"I attended a workshop, 'Making Musical Instruments of Diverse Cultures,' and the next day my class made musical instruments. This day turned out to be a turning point for Fred. It quickly became apparent that Fred made his instruments better than most and, to our shared delight, played his instrument better than anyone.

"Since then, Fred has written many reports on musicians and has not missed one day of school. In addition, he was the star of our schoolwide talent show. Had I not attended this workshop, Fred's talents might have gone unnoticed. I plan on participating in as many workshops at the Kennedy Center as possible. I owe it to Fred, and to other students like him."

For further information about the Professional Development Opportunities for Teachers program, call Amy Nordin at (202) 416-8838.

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Angels in America has received more media attention, and won more awards, than any other play in recent memory. As Angels alights at the Kennedy Center, ROBERT SANDLA measures the wingspan of this two-part theatrical phenomenon.

Very Steven Spielberg: Carolyn Swift and Robert Sella in Millennium Approaches



Before Angels in America opened on Broadway, one of its producers asked playwright Tony Kushner to consider deleting the play's subtitle. He didn't want to risk alienating potential theatergoers. No deal, Kushner responded; this is my play, and caveat emptor: Angels in America is "A Gay Fantasia on National Themes."

That's a hefty agenda even for the two sprawling, serious, hilarious plays that make up Angels—not to mention authorial honesty of a high order. For while Angels in America alone could sound like a line of misty New Age cards from Hallmark, "A Gay Fantasia on National Themes" sends up flares and announces a playwright as provocateur. (The subtitle also announces Kushner's lineage: George Bernard Shaw called Heartbreak House "A Fantasia in the Russian Manner on English Themes.") At a time when much commercial theater plays it safe, Angels grapples with AIDS, religion, sexuality, and the need for snappy one-liners; at a time when anti-gay initiatives are on the ballots in several states, Kushner puts homosexuals center stage; at a time when television-trained audiences are supposed to have the attention spans of Nintendo Game Boys, Millennium Approaches and Perestroika play out their epic dramas over the course of seven swift hours; and at a time when Hollywood's

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Playwright Tony Kushner

whiz-bang technicians spend millions to make the fake seem real, *Angels* dazzles with the power of the spoken word.

When Angels in America lands at the Kennedy Center's Eisenhower Theater for a 10-week run beginning May 2—Millennium Approaches plays May 2—June 8, and Perestroika follows June 9—July 9—it will be a homecoming of sorts: The Kennedy Center played a vital role in helping Angels take flight, through the Kennedy Center Fund for New American Plays. The Fund supports promising playwrights and helps fund the development and presentation of new works at the country's leading regional theaters.

Since its founding in 1985, the Fund has supported 49 productions at 36 theaters, including three Pulitzer Prize winners: Robert Schenkkan's *The Kentucky Cycle*, Wendy Wasserstein's *The Heidi Chronicles*, and *Angels in America*. The Kennedy Center Fund for New American Plays is a project of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts with support from American Express Company, in cooperation with the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities.

Angels in America merges the epic with the everyday; Kushner's canvas is alternately vast and utterly specific—Walt Whitman meets Neil Simon. And though

Angels whizzes through theatrical styles like a hot-shot dramaturg with coffee nerves—now it's Brecht! now it's a lecture! now it's full-out farce!—and tackles the hot topics du jour, the play partakes of a venerable narrative tradition: it bears witness. Beneath the anxiety: quintessential American optimism.

The plays chart the parallel break-ups of two relationships: a married Mormon couple and a "married" gay male couple. Increasingly drawn to men, lawyer Joe Pitt abandons his wife, Harper, unmooring her tenuous connection to reality. The loudly liberal Louis Ironson abandons his lover, Prior Walter, when Prior finds he has AIDS. Worlds collide when Louis and Joe embark on an affair. Around this central quartet swirl other personalities, real and imagined: Joe's stern Mormon mom; a sarcastic but sympathetic male nurse; Ethel Rosenberg, the alleged Soviet spy who was executed for treason in 1953; and Roy Cohn, the arch-conservative who died of complications from AIDS in 1986. These satellite characters embody big belief systems-Mormonism, capitalism, Communism, Judaism—that may or may not be coming apart. The only structure of the play, in fact, derives from relationships between characters, a strategy which speaks volumes about Kushner's view of a country destabilized by diversity: In order to write about America, Kushner writes about Americans.

Along the way we meet sober pioneers in a Conestoga wagon, flamboyant gay men, circumspect gay men, an Eskimo, an Orthodox Jewish rabbi, and the world's oldest living Bolshevik. Their interactions are surprising, but somehow inevitable. Of course Mother Pitt finds herself talking to a mystical homeless woman in the South Bronx. Of course Prior Walter and his pal Belize tiptoe into Joe's office like Laverne and Shirley. Of course Harper Pitt gnaws down a tree in Brooklyn's Prospect Park ("I thought I was a beaver. After that, the rest was easy"). Kushner may be proposing cultural shift as the new cultural norm: One character introduces another with the entirely factual "This is my ex-lover's lover's Mormon mother."

Some of the people in Angels meet their radically changing circumstances with aplomb; the centers of other lives cannot hold. Harper sees "beautiful systems dying, old fixed orders spiraling apart. . ." As her marriage crumbles, she escapes into Valium-induced hallucination. Others run for the hills when trouble comes. Louis dumps Prior at the first glimpse of the first Kaposi's sarcoma lesion.

Yet Kushner also revels in what he terms "the weird interconnectedness of life." Consider one intricate scene: An intensely secular Jewish homosexual man with New Deal Pinko parents says Kaddish, the Jewish prayer for the dead, over the body of Roy Cohn, coached by the ghost of Ethel Rosenberg, while attended by a former drag queen nurse who is pilfering Cohn's hoard of AZT, the anti-viral drug used against AIDS. The scene is bizarre and logical, funny and touching.

"Only connect" was E. M. Forster's succinct foreword to Howards End. Kushner knows that audiences interested in Angels may already share some of its concerns—that it could be seen as preaching to the converted. But preaching to the converted is what successful churches do every Sunday. The show's pack of awards—the Pulitzer, the Tonys, the Drama Desks, and so on-demonstrate that Angels reaches out to any audience with imagination and heart. Just when we have come to care about Prior, we see him in a doctor's office, flecked with cancer lesions and stretched naked on an examination table's icy slab of steel. He natters on nervously about his health, his relationships, his death. Lit by the harsh glare of an overhead spotlight, the scene looks like real life. It feels like a nightmare. Thirteen years into the AIDS epidemic, too many Americans feel the shock of recognition.

It's unfair to call Kushner a creature of the zeitgeist; it makes him sound like a paint-by-numbers playwright, cobbling together catharses from Oprah and the continued on page 26



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Opening Remarks

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The 1995 Jefferson Lecture in the Humanities "The Architecture of Community" Vincent Scully

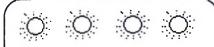
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Meet the Lecturer



The historian Vincent Scully believes that architecture is a "means of constructing relationships over time" and the key to understanding culture. The author of 17 books, numerous articles, and a television series on ancient and

modern architecture, Scully advocates building civilized, livable communities to nourish the human spirit. Scully is Sterling Professor of the History of Art Emeritus at Yale. From 1947 to 1991 his classes in architecture and art history were among the university's most popular, inspiring generations of architects, historians, and city planners. Renowned for his passionate lectures and for using two slide projectors to juxtapose striking images, he has aimed to teach his students "above all things, to see." In The Earth, the Temple, and the Gods: Greek Sacred Architecture (1979), Scully explains the power of architecture to civilize; in Pueblo: Mountain, Village, Dance (1989), to mediate between human beings and the natural world. Architecture: The Natural and the Manmade (1991) summarizes his views on the relation of structures to environment and on our architectural capital—the Greek temple, the Gothic cathedral, Renaissance Italian towns, Palladian villas-that prefaces the modern age. Born in 1920 in New Haven, Scully embodies that city, from the wood-shingled neighborhood he grew up in and immortalized in The Shingle Style: Architectural Theory and Design from Richardson to the Origins of Wright (1955) to his years at Yale. He entered the college on scholarship at the age of 16, and after Marine Corps service in World War II, he returned to Yale to earn his M.A. in 1947 and his Ph.D. in 1949. A champion of historic preservation, Scully fought to save New Haven Green and its neighborhoods in the sixties, when the nineteenthcentury city hall, post office, and public library he had used as a boy became redevelopment

prey. "My instinct-and I am a profoundly conservative person—my instinct is still to try to save everything," he says. He is an ardent defender of a humane architecture that will revive communities and of urban law that "makes environments possible for people to live together." He deplores the destruction of American cities, which, he says, became "terrible deserts . . . for the free passage of the automobile." When their environment is erased, people are "emotionally disenfranchised from the American dream," he maintains. His final class at Yale made the front page of the New York Times. Maya Lin, a former student who designed the Vietnam War Memorial, summed up the tributes of visiting architects: "He gave you the feeling that architects should make a positive difference in people's lives." Scully has continued to teach a course at Yale and at the University of Miami since his retirement. This year he is Mellon Professor at the California Institute of Technology. Scully has received four honorary doctorates and was twice recognized by Time magazine as one of the Ten Most Outstanding American College Teachers. He received the American 1994 Academy in Rome Award, has held Mellon lectureships at the National Gallery of Art, and served as a consultant for downtown development in Anchorage. He received the 1994 Lucy G. Moses Preservation Leadership Award of the New York Landmarks Conservancy and the New York Public Library's Literary Lions Award in 1992. A trustee of the National Trust for Historic Preservation since 1991, he is an honorary member of the American Institute of Architects. His other books include The Architecture of the American Summer: The Flowering of the Shingle Style (1989), The Villas of Palladio (1986), Louis I. Kahn (1962), American Architecture and Urbanism (1969), Modern Architecture: The Architecture of Democracy (1961, rev. 1974), and French Royal Gardens: The Designs of Andre Le Notre (1992).

Photograph by Don Perdue

This glimpse of Vincent Scully as a young and charismatic lecturer at Yale in the late fifties was written by a student of his, David McCullough. It was McCullough's first professional article, on his way to becoming the noted biographer of *Truman* and the voice of "The American Experience" on public television. The article appeared in *Architectural Forum* in September 1959 and is adapted here with the magazine's permission.

"Architectural Spellbinder"

By DAVID McCULLOUGH

Vincent Joseph Scully Jr. has been called "a sort of Billy Graham of architecture." Architect Louis Kahn says: "If the students don't get it from Scully, they'll never get it." Architect Philip Johnson concluded a guest lecture last winter with the cry: "Hurrah for History! Thank God for Hadrian, for Bernini, for Le Corbusier, and for Vince Scully!" As one of his colleagues sums it up: "Vince in many ways can do for architecture what Leonard Bernstein does for music."

The wiry young man about whom these encomiums flow is so far relatively unknown outside of New Haven, where he is one of the most popular, most frequently quoted teachers at the university. Nearly nine hundred students turn out for the courses he lectures on. Overflow audiences usually fill the balcony stairs and doorways at his lectures on American architecture, his most popular. Vincent Scully is only 38, but many of his admirers are ready to assert that he is the most influential architectural scholar of his time.

The qualities of a great leader are often difficult to pin down. Partly, at least, Vincent Scully's phenomenal success stems from his explosive vitality. Once, lecturing on Frank Lloyd Wright, he became so vibrant over his own phrases that he lost his balance and fell (he says "jumped") off the speaker's stand. Partly it stems from his openly cavalier spirit. A few years back he broke his wrist dueling at an undergraduate orgy. But above all, Scully's great success seems to arise from an unembarrassed, contagious passion for architecture, a passion that can move even engineers to standing ovations.

Scully's lecture courses, not including graduate seminars, are: the history of American architecture; Art 12, a basic survey course in which he delivers a section of about eight weeks; and history of Greek art and architecture, his current "love." His manner of teaching is much the same for each. As the last seats fill, he comes into the lecture hall with a curious lunging stride, makes a few introductory remarks in a tense, rather nondescript voice. Then the lights go out as a huge slide is projected on a wall-sized screen. At this point, standing alone in the dark with a 10-ft. pointer, his silhouette suddenly diminished beneath the immense screen, Scully takes command.

The voice, now strong, slightly theatrical, unleashes what one friend called "a musical avalanche of picture-making words." Quickly, surely, he translates visual images into verbal images, never "talking down," never making conscious effort to *instruct*. "I'm not really interested in individual psyches," he says. "I'm interested in the subject."

The slides flick by. Ideas are thrown out at a brisk clip. Now and then, like a veteran showman, he alters the pace. He becomes almost relaxed, lyrical, quotes passages from his "bibles" (Pindar, Aeschylus, Finnegans Wake, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, and Pilgrim's Progress). Or he rambles off on some of his heroes (Jefferson, Andrew Jackson, Le Corbusier). Or becomes uproariously funny (though he will berate an audience if it laughs at the wrong time). All the while he roams back and forth with his long wooden pointer, which seems to act as a lightning rod, picking up aesthetic charges from the picture and exciting the man at the other end.

Most of Scully's lectures are threaded with variations of his favorite themes: that architecture is a man-created world within the world; that there are two kinds of architecture, one which "serves as a backdrop for human life," another which "reaches into the unsayable nature of man"; that always great architecture gives scale to the land, and vice versa; and that the greatest architecture, like other arts, expresses basic truths for all time.

His approach is via the emotions, never inductive. As one architect has put it: "He uses his vast knowledge only as a vehicle with which to dredge up feeling. His attitude is not philosophical; it's religious." And it is precisely this attitude which leads ultimately, in nearly every Scully lecture, to those movingly reverent moments he has become most noted for.

After the audience has been bombarded with several slides showing the shoddier of New York's modern skyscrapers, a magnificent shot of the Seagram building flashes on. Scully pauses, probably for the first time since the lecture began. He lets the picture take over for as long as 30 seconds. Then, breaking the hush, he quietly says: "Here gentlemen, you see something grave and silent. Standing there in the disaster that Park Avenue has become, it looks as though it had just wandered in from some higher and more integrated civilization."

The Man Scully

Some of Scully's success in a field traditionally dominated by academic tedium may be traced to his background. Vincent Scully was born in New Haven in 1920, the only child of Mary Catherine McCormick and Vincent Joseph Scully, a local Chevrolet dealer and long-time president of the New Haven Board of Aldermen. A spindly "townie" fresh out of New Haven's Hillhouse High, Scully went to Yale on a scholarship in 1936. Except for the war years, and one year of study in Rome and another in Greece, he has been at Yale ever since. He graduated in 1940 with a B.A. in English. After an abortive attempt to enlist in the Royal Canadian Air Force (blocked by his parents) he wound up in the U.S. Army Air Forces instead, but washed out within a few months ("I was a real lousy flyer"). From there he went into the Marine Corps, received his second lieutenant's commission, and after actively serving in both Europe and the Pacific, came out with the rank of major.

It was then, at 25, that Vince Scully returned to Yale and fell with an almost crazed intensity into art and architecture. "When the war was over I wanted to do something specific," he recalls, "to pour myself into something real, not anything so allusive as literature. Art seemed solid." In the years following he acquired an M.A. (1947), and a Ph.D. (1949).

At home or strolling about Yale's Art Gallery, Scully looks not unlike the undergraduates who idolize him. His pants are always a little too short. His shoes are seldom shined. His Ivy League jackets are more likely flecked with cigarette ashes. But there is nothing of the pipe-smoking, drop-by-my-studyfor-some-sherry look about him. He is too vivacious, too aggressive-looking to be considered professorial. In fact, as one former student describes him, "with his nearly pointed ears, his mischievous smiles, and those stormy Gaelic frowns he looks more like a man-sized leprechaun." He smokes, almost continuously, lumpy cigarettes which he rolls himself from a pack of Bugler tobacco. Going to and from work, he drives a stubby Citroen 2CV with the recklessness of a hot-rodder or (an analogy he would prefer) like Fangio at Le Mans.

Yet overriding all Scully's colorful personality quirks is his abiding, serious dedication. For every lecture he puts in an average of six hours' preparation pouring over stacks of slides, scribbling notes across big sheets of yellow legal paper. The slides he uses are never the same from year to year, nor are his lectures. Unlike some spellbinders, he does not simply give his audience a playback of last year's success. "I change my lectures because I change," he says. Professor Frank Edward Brown, Yale Latin scholar and one of Scully's friends, feels

that the change is a manifestation of growth. "Vince needs those lectures. He needs that audience in front of him to help him generate new ideas." And Scully seems continuously restless for new ideas, the way some men are restless for a new car or a new job.

The Creative Scholar

The fact that what Scully says about the work of Eero Saarinen this year may differ from what he said last year, for example, has given rise to the criticism that he is too inconsistent to be taken seriously. Professor Charles Seymour Jr., chairman of Yale's History of Art Department, answers the charge this way: "Scully is never content to dig back just for the sake of accumulating facts. He's looking for the truth and he always relates his findings to the mid-twentieth-century condition. In this sense he is a creative scholar, and like all creative people he does tend to ride enthusiasms."

Because Scully adheres to no set dogma, preaches no packaged set of values, most of his colleagues feel that he achieves the ultimate goal of education: to open the students' eyes without simultaneously putting blinders on them. "You inhibit the student, you freeze his point of view when you are afraid for him," says Scully. "After all he is not here to be indoctrinated, protected, or made happy. He's here to be taught to see—and to believe that anything is possible."

As one student has expressed it: "You go through three stages with Scully. First, you think he's the most exciting teacher you've ever heard and you religiously troop with the mob to all his lectures. Then, when you learn a few realities about building, you think he's all wet. And finally, usually senior year, you come back to Scully—and you realize just how damn good he really is."

On the teaching of architecture, Scully has said: "It suffers from an inadequate expression of architecture's real potential. It labors under an outworn materialistic determinism, a thin sort of functional determinism. . . They [the students] want to become architects, I believe, because they think it offers them a way to be creative without stepping outside society. But what they need is a more humanistic education. And because they are not adequately civilized men, they can't comprehend the alternatives."

Onward and Upward

Where Vince Scully will go from here is difficult to predict. Chances are he will stay at Yale. ("They're good to me here; they let me do what I please.") Chances are that he will concentrate on developing his perceptions and proliferating in scholarship. This fall he will publish his book, *The Earth, the Temple, and the*

Gods, written last year in Greece. It tells how the Greek temple got its form out of its placement, as man-made object, in a specific sacred landscape. This is his most ambitious and important work to date. Two earlier books—The Architectural Heritage of Newport, Rhode Island (with Antoinette F. Downing), 1952, and The Shingle Style, 1955—were well received. Both won prizes as the outstanding scholarly works of their years.

It seems inevitable that his influence will expand beyond the Yale campus. It also follows

that he will become increasingly important not only for students of architecture and students in general, but for architects as well; for ultimately it will be he and others like him who will create in this country a cultural climate more receptive to good architecture. His potential is great, but the pattern is refreshingly unpredictable.

[Reprinted with permission from Architectural Forum 111 (September 1959).]

Who's Who

The National Endowment for the Humanities supports exemplary work to advance and disseminate knowledge in all the disciplines of the humanities. Endowment support is intended to complement and assist private and local efforts and to serve as a catalyst to increase nonfederal support for projects of high quality. Although the activities funded by the Endowment vary greatly in cost, the numbers of people involved, and in their specific intents and benefits, they all have in common two requirements for funding: significance to learning in the humanities and excellence in conception. In the most general terms, NEHsupported projects aid scholarship and research in the humanities, help improve humanities education, and foster in the American people a greater curiosity about and understanding of the humanities.

The Jefferson Lecture in the Humanities, established by the Endowment in 1972, is the highest honor the federal government bestows for distinguished intellectual achievement in the humanities. The lecture, traditionally delivered each spring, provides the opportunity for an outstanding thinker to present in a public forum matters of broad concern in the humanities. The lecturer is chosen each year by the National Council on the Humanities. Former lecturers include Lionel Trilling, Erik Eriksen, Robert Penn Warren, Paul Freund, John Hope Franklin, Saul Bellow, C. Vann Woodward, Edward Shils, Barbara Tuchman, Gerald Holton, Emily Townsend Vermeule, Jaroslav Pelikan, Sidney Hook, Cleanth Brooks, Leszek Kolakowski, Forrest McDonald, Robert Nisbet, Walker Percy, Bernard Lewis, Gertrude Himmelfarb, Bernard Knox, Robert Conquest, and Gwendolyn Brooks.

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Performance HIGHLIGHTS

part May 2, when Tony Kushner's much-heralded Angels in America descends onto the Eisenhower Theater stage for a nine-week run. An ambitious and controversial epic that deals with themes of sexuality, religion, ethnicity, and AIDS, Angels has won virtually every important award a play can win-including the Tony and the Pulitzer-and has elicited almost universal hosannas from the critics. The New York Times' arbiter supreme Frank



Rich lauded it as "the most thrilling American play in years." Part one of this bipartite blockbuster, Millennium Approaches, runs through June 8. Perestroika, the equally impressive second part, runs June 9-July 9. Angels was originally developed with help from the Kennedy Center Fund for

New American Plays

The National Symphony Orchestra welcomes two prime examples of youthful virtuosity into the Concert Hall this May. Violin spellbinder Joshua Bell joins conductor Richard Hickox and the NSO May 4, 5, 6, and 9 for performances of what is arguably the greatest of all works for the instru-

he clouds of anticipation finally ment, Beethoven's Violin Concerto in D major, Op. 61. Also on the program are pieces by Ravel and Britten. May 11, 12, 13, and 16, pianist Jean-Yves Thibaudet brings his technical brilliance to bear on the Saint Saëns Piano Concerto No. 5, with Jiri Belohlavek at the podium. Other works include Ravel's charming Mother Goose Suite and Martinu's Symphony No. 4.

> With Tony Award-winning choreography by Susan Stroman, a boisterous script by Washington native Ken Ludwig, and the immortal music and lyrics of George and Ira Gershwin, who could ask for anything more? Not The New Yorker, which has called Crazy for You "heaven on earth...everything an American musical comedy should be." At the Opera House May 16 for a fiveweek run, this smash musical hit features 15 beloved Gershwin standards, including "I Got Rhythm," "Someone to Watch Over Me," and "Embraceable You." In addition, the show features four recently rediscovered Gershwin numbers, including "K-ra-zy for You" and "Naughty Baby."

> The Capital's own acclaimed dance troupe, the Washington Ballet, presents Choo-San Goh's Moments Remembered and premieres by Nils Christe and Graham Lustig at the Terrace Theater May 17-21.

> > -Michael McQueen



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evening news. Yet part of Kushner's gift lies in plucking voices, thoughts, faces, feelings out of the imagination to synthesize where we are right now. Angels articulates the country's growing strain of millennial anxiety, that vague, uneasy sense of dread that something's coming... and it ain't going to be good. (Millennial anxiety is nothing new. It happens every thousand years or so.) But any epoch in which men and women drop dead day after day, year after year, and the best modern medicine can do for them is hope they are comfortable and bid them farewell, can be allowed to think of itself as a time of plague.

When chaos looms, magical thinking prevails. Angels are big now. Where Angels Walk, which The New York Times dryly describes as "stories about angelic intervention in human affairs," landed on the paperback bestseller list for 27 weeks lodged between Mama Makes Up Her Mind and William Shatner's Star Trek Memories, but expressive of yearning for spiritual guidance all the same. On a rather more exalted level than the pop pantheon, Kushner espouses a pantheistic spirituality: the Christian angel, the ancient rabbi, the Mormon elders, the medieval Yorkshire farmer—each proffers his or her truth.

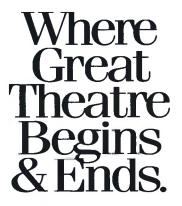
ngels crystallizes the reversal of fortune in American theater that has been brewing for twenty years, ringing down the curtain on Broadway's cultural hegemony. Kushner started writing Angels in 1988 for San Francisco's Eureka Theatre Company; hugely successful productions at London's Royal National Theatre and Los Angeles' Mark Taper Forum followed. When Angels opened on Broadway that spring, having already picked up the 1993 Pulitzer Prize for Drama, acclaim was nearly a foregone conclusion, although the New York media machine propelled the play to a peak of public awareness. Now, in a full circle, the play is again being produced by enterprising theaters all over the country, and being performed in the national touring production that arrives at the Kennedy Center this month. Just as the show forces us to reexamine concepts of minority versus mainstream theater, its production history reveals American culture's process of decentralization. Both *The Kentucky Cycle* and *Angels* won the Pulitzer before opening on Broadway, and last year's Pulitzer winner, Edward Albee's *Three Tall Women*, is running—contentedly—off-Broadway and is about to come to the Kennedy Center this fall.

Kushner may have written better than he knew. Like The Kentucky Cycle, The Mahabharata, Nicholas Nickleby, and the works of Robert Wilson, Angels requires an epic stretch of time to realize its epic vision; unlike those works, it is reproducible. For all its broad scope, the show could be presented by a few actors in street clothes with a few pieces of furniture. The words take us where the play leads. Kushner's notes recommend a theater-of-poverty aesthetic, but he can't really want that. Having an actress climb down a ladder to suggest the angel's magnificent descent engages the imagination. But it's a lot more fun to herald her arrival with High Renaissance fanfare, breathtaking flight, and Sensurround sound.

Millennium Approaches ends with the angel's arrival: great beatings of wings, flashes of light, an explosion, the whole sacred-scary shebang. "Very Steven Spielberg," whispers an awed Prior. The angel proclaims, "Greetings, Prophet; The Great Work begins: The Messenger has arrived." Blackout. Curtain. Talk about cliffhangers: It's a gay Perils of Pauline.

Millennium Approaches shows us where we are now—or where at least some of us are now. Then Kushner confronts us with the question: What next? Part two of Angels, Perestroika, proposes answers on the personal and political fronts. For if an angel can land in a contemporary American home, surely salvation is not as remote as it seems.

Robert Sandla is Stagebill's editor in chief.



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The Kennedy Center THE JOHN F KENNEDY CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

Crazy for You, on stage in the Opera House beginning May 16, is a joyous mix of songs from George and Ira Gershwin's Girl Crazy, and from their other shows. too. Which tunes come from what show?



PETER FILICHIA charts a Gershwin hit parade.

n their 1930 musical Girl Crazy, George and Ira Gersh-

The creators of the 1992 musical Crazy for You asked scorecard.

Six songs in Crazy for You come from the Gershwins' movies, three from A Damsel in Distress (1937):

- ◆ "I Can't Be Bothered Now"—You could call this Fred Astaire's big number in the picture. But wasn't every Astaire number big?
- ◆ "Stiff Upper Lip"—Ira chose the title because he wanted something British-sounding. Twenty-two years later, he learned that "stiff upper lip" was an American expression dating back to 1815—and the British didn't adopt it until 1880.
 - ◆ "Nice Work If You Can Get It"— The second Crazy for You song that asks, Who could ask for anything more?

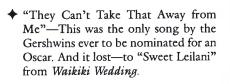
Three others come from Shall We Dance? (1937):

Lucky guy: Kirby Ward and ◆ "Shall We Dance?"—It's such a good title and idea for a friends in Crazy for You song, no wonder Rodgers and Hammerstein borrowed it 14 years later for The King and I.



- win made the world swoon and sigh and shout with such songs as "I Got Rhythm," "Embraceable You," "Bidin' My Time," "But Not for Me," and "Could You Use Me?" And the show introduced two leading ladies nobody had ever heard of: Ginger Rogers and Ethel Merman. They became stars overnight. Who could ask for anything more?
- for more—and got it. Crazy for You, playing in the Kennedy Center Opera House May 16 through June 18, snatched its story and settings, situations and characters from Girl Crazy, and made them even better. Crazy for You is replete with great Gershwin tunes, some known, some "new." some recently rediscovered. If you've wondered which Gershwin songs in Crazy for You come from Girl Crazy and which come from other sources, here's the
- ♦ "The Real American Folk Song"—For Ladies First (1918), Ira was writing a song entitled "If You Only Knew What I Thought of You, You'd Think a Little More of Me," but abandoned it to work on this one instead.
- ♦ "What Causes That?"—Many songs are dropped during tryout; here's a rare instance of one that was reinserted after the opening, of Treasure Girl (1928).
- ♦ "Naughty Baby"—For the British show Primrose (1924), Ira took some lyric help from Englishman Desmond Carter.
- ♦ Entrance to Nevada, or "I'll Build a Stairway to Paradise"—In the 1922 edition of The George White Scandals, this song was introduced by George White himself, along with seven castmates and Paul Whiteman's Orchestra.

Peter Filichia is the New Jersey theater critic for The Star-Ledger.



♦ "Slap That Bass"—Astaire and Dudley Dickerson performed this in an ocean liner's engine room, in rhythm to the boiler noise.

Six other songs come from other Gershwin stage musicals:

- ◆ "Someone to Watch Over Me"—In Oh, Kay (1926), Gertrude Lawrence, playing a duke's sister who pretends to be a housemaid, sang this to a rag doll.
- ♦ "Tonight's the Night"—The song was written for Show Girl (1929), though it went unused-and was unknown until it was found in a Secaucus, New Jersey, warehouse in 1982.



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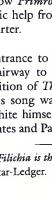
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