

Magazine

'The Actors Must Connect With the Audience'

ARTISTS Reporty Theatre, which is Portland, Oregon's premiere theatre, in the form of a team of four, will be visiting Dhaka in mid-October to hold a drama workshop at the Shilpkala Academy, and will also perform for the TV.

A.R.T. will be presenting 'Driving Miss Daisy', which was highly successful in Broadway, and the film version of which has won many awards in 1990. The play deals with the growing relationship between a crochety old Southern lady and her Black chauffeur. The play is replete with elements of humanity and humour.

The other play 'Love Letters' involve the reading of letters sent between two individuals, who met fifty years ago. The author carries the audience through the vicissitudes of adulthood, marriage, divorce and consequential middle age.

In trying to bring in various aspects of American life, A.R.T. will also perform 'The World of Carl Sandburg', which is an adoption of the Pulitzer Prize winner's verse and prose.

A.R.T. revels in its innovative and economical performances. They are proud that the intimate theatre space provides the audience with a sense of involvement. The

immediacy is magical for the audience.

This Portland's off Broadway theatre specially deals with the subject with social and psychological insight. A.R.T. tries its level best to usher in high quality as well as social awareness. The theatre group includes top-notch actors, writers and directors.

Despite the limited budget, they have a hard-working and dedicated staff. Their aim remains high quality, intimate theatre.

The Portland troupe comprises Allen Nause, the artistic director. He has a reputation for being a director with a remarkable range, and has had his hands in the super hit comedies like 'Tons of Money' and 'Absent Friends'. He has also directed Y. B. Yeat's 'On Balle's Strand'.

The actors and actresses in the theatre troupe include J.P. Phillips, who is always known to have a busy schedule. His credits include roles in 'The Iceman Cometh', and three seasons with the New Shakespeare Touring Company. His

touring group too. She has received the Best Actress award in Portland three times, and the best Supporting Actress twice. She has co-authored three locally-produced plays. Her Portland acting credits include the role of Mrs. Patrick Campbell in 'Dear Lazarus', Titania in 'Midsummer Night's

Dream' and Aunt Eller in 'Oklahoma'. Vana O'Brian, who has appeared in forty productions in the last ten years, in the Portland area, is there in the

Allen Nause



Allen Nause



JoAnn Johnson



Vana O'Brian



J.P. Phillips

'Broadway', in '86. She has an M.A. in Speech/Theatre, and has toured as an actor/teacher with the Oregon Shakespeare festival's school visit programme.

being done in USA.

Allen Nause, on this occasion, stressed on how important and sensitive was the actor and audience relationship. He felt a rapport between the

play — the direction, acting or the script.

JoAnn Johnson spoke on how relevant Shakespeare was today.

With modern plays, the acting however is more accessible, as the language was easier, she added. Vana O'Brian reminded the listeners at this point, that no American play was as rich or rewarding as the Shakespeare plays.

The troupe leader Nause, and the actor Phillips, spoke of the Afro-American and Asian theatre in USA as something important. They dealt with social issues, they informed us, and were mostly to be found in places like San Francisco, where there was a large concentration of the Chinese. The Japanese, Vietnamese and Cambodians also contributed to the Asian theatre in USA, one was told. This information was given in answer to a pertinent question from Mr. A. U. M. Fakhruddin.

Mr. Jamil Ahmed of the Dhaka University asked about

the box office intake. To this the group answered that 65% of the money came from the box office. The American actors pointed that they wanted to 'soak up' in the culture of the other countries and were coming here to share ideas.

Vana O'Brian insisted that they must be able to have contact with the audience. Honesty is what one is guided by. I must connect with the people I'm performing for, she remarked.

When asked why they had chosen the particular three pieces, the group replied that this was done to portray the different aspects of American culture. 'Love Letters' was an upper class creation, while Sandburg was being celebrated as a blue collar poet.

'Driving Miss Daisy' brought in the South, about which there is so much of curiosity outside USA.

Rounding up the talk, the group spoke of the present popularity of Thornton Wilder, Tennessee Williams and Eugene O'Neill in America. Moliere, Sheridan, Shaw, Chekhov, and Ibsen were also pointed out as favourites of the U. S. audience.

volcanoes, and landslides); and on the other, presents this segment of the spectrum in such a way that it will be of the widest possible interest to disaster managers at the technical, professional, administrative and policy-making levels. The exercise consists in adapting scientific and technical knowledge to the needs of users who are not scientists themselves but who need to understand the physical parameters of disasters in order to decide, plan and implement mitigation measures, especially at the sub-regional and local echelon.

Finally, it should be emphasized that the Manual is not only a methodological guide, but also a practical guide on information-gathering and management to apply to the parameters described. The Manual is perhaps, above all else, a training tool in disaster risk assessment and reduction for professionals, policymakers and managers.

It is recognized that disasters are not strictly-speaking 'natural'. The agency of man is also a determining factor. However, the term 'natural' has been used for convenience as opposed to industrial, chemical, environmental and other man-made disasters.

The Manual differs from previous studies on comprehensive disaster mitigation in that it has systematized the technical spectrum of disaster risk assessment as a whole, albeit within a policy framework.

Mitigating Natural Disasters is a Manual intended as one of many disaster-management tools. It does not pretend to act as a substitute for other standard works or methods in disaster mitigation or management, and should not be seen to do so. It should be examined on its own merits.

The question we beg is: should we not rather have a disaster preparedness manual, or a general policy manual instead?

Work in these fields exists and continues to flourish. What we are attempting to do is fill a gap in the disaster mitigation spectrum.

The Manual addresses, on the one hand, a tangible segment of the disaster mitigation spectrum, namely the control and reduction of the physical damage caused by sudden and violent natural phenomena (floods, cyclones, earthquakes).

M.1, Price US \$ 30. — UNDRO

The Mike-ing Menace

by Parveen Anam

A quiet gossip over a nice, sugary cup of tea, accompanied by a 'singhara' wrapped in a newspaper, is the privilege of the Dhakaite. Dhaka is a nice enough place, except that very soon one realises that the 'nice, quiet' gossip is perhaps not so 'nice' and 'quiet' after all, because you are in a keen competition.

Competition? The very word is like a knell of depression. Competition in drinking sugary tea? Surely not? Ah, you guessed it. The competition is with the omnipresent MIKE-man and since he has the distinct advantage of possessing a gadget which you abhor (?) You soon find yourself shouting yourself hoarse trying to catch up on the latest in the gossip-front and the quiet afternoon, day, night, evening, morning (you name it) has turned into a shouting match between yourself and the MIKE-man to the extent that you probably even need a MIKE to hear yourself think. Because, surely in Dhaka, we take the cake for SOUND. And none contributing more vigorously to its overall effect than the ever-present MIKE-man. Or as blatantly and aggressively as yours truly the MIKE-man, at any given point in time, day or night. For who has not HEARD the MIKE-man, parading up and down the by-lanes, alleys, side-roads, main roads, with his mike, practising his vocal chords at the expense of the innocent citizen's hearing faculty? And an abandonment of thought and consideration that would

put the most shameless to shame?

Try and shut your eyes on a hot, sultry afternoon, or indulge yourself in some intellectual pursuit when lo and behold,



the hammering our ear drums and finer senses take in the process seems to give the guy so much sadistic pleasure, you feel he has missed his profession in life — chief of a torture chamber.

If it is a wedding in your neighbourhood, be prepared to put up with at least a week's (if you are lucky) if not, 'only a month's' entertainment of Hindi 'pop' songs on the MIKE, to enable you to partake in the celebrations (life would be so much easier if the happy couple had eloped, you mutter). Never mind if your child is ill and needs his rest or had his exams the day after and need the peace and quiet for his academic achievements.

The louder the MIKE-man the more convincing he sounds — or so he thinks. Be it a lost cow, or the elections (elections by the way are HIS great favourite) for must HE not remind you who to vote for — certainly a candidate of HIS choice, or where to donate the skin of your sacrificial animal? The ever faithful MIKE-man will remind you without batting a lid. And dare you protest? (the city fathers certainly do not) What was the adage "Let a sleeping dog lie"?

In Dhaka we should be fast adopting the adage "Let the MIKE-man be". And in the meantime, if your prayers go unanswered, and HE does prove too much for your system or your eardrums, buy yourself a pair of ear-plugs. You cannot go far wrong with those.

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truly need to be reminded of the weekly 'haat' in 'such and such' upazila, where you are sure to get the 'best' tooth powder in the land (by the time HE is through, you are sure you have a smelly mouth) and all at the TOP of his lungs (the envy of many a vocalist) under the banyan tree at your front gate.

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