



Shifting Landscapes

WEAVING A TAPESTRY of vivid emotions, local choreographer **Liss Fain's** latest work, **Sudden Changes**, stems from a personal interest in environmental loss and diminishment. *Sudden Changes* elucidates the perception of altered boundaries, drawing parallels between the effect of land development on animal behavior and the human reaction to territorial loss. Composer **Michael McNabb** will accompany Ms. Fain's troupe with live saxophone and Next computer images. **Edging Toward Saturn**, a vigorous exploration of the ever-present yet invisible landscape of heat that surrounds us, will be performed as well. If you thought watching dance was a passive experience, you haven't seen Liss Fain's captivating choreography. Her work is highly physical and always interactive. Performances on Thurs-Sat, May 9-11, 8:30 pm, at the New Performance Gallery, 3153 17th St in S.F. Tickets are \$10. Call 863-9864.

DANA MOE

BOB BRYANT

The Downside San Jose Stage Company presents Richard Dresser's corporate comedy that takes a hard look at big business and the bottom-line choices between responsibility to the stockholder versus the consumer. Opens Thur 5/9 (through 6/2). Wed-Sat 8 pm, Sun 2 pm. **The Stage**, 490 South First St, San Jose. \$10.50-20, (408) 283-7142.

An Evening with Peter Ustinov One-man show by knighted British actor and writer, Peter Ustinov, best known stateside for his film portrayals of Agatha Christie's moustache-waxing inspector, Hercule Poirot. Tues 8 pm, Wed 3 pm, Thur-Sat 8 pm, Sun 3 pm (through 5/26). **Curran Theatre**, 445 Geary, S.F. \$12-37, 762-BASS.

Fire in the Rain . . . Singer in the Storm San Jose Repertory Theatre presents Holly Near's musical autobiographical docudrama which follows the transformation of a small-town country girl to an international troubadour. Previews Fri 5/10-Tues 5/14 8 pm. Opens Wed 5/15 (through 6/2). Tues-Fri 8 pm, Sat 5 & 9 pm, Sun 2 & 7 pm. **Montgomery Theatre**, 476 Park Ave, San Jose. \$13-25 (previews 14-20), (408) 291-2255.

Goodnight, Texas Playwright Terry Dodd presents a slice of contemporary Texan life. Presented by the Ensemble Theatre Company. Tues 5/14-Sat 5/18 8 pm. **Ruby Scott Theatre**, Tamaulipas High School, Miller Ave & Camino Alto, Mill Valley. \$12-20, 381-2249.

Harry Who? Musical revue celebrates low-profile composer Harry Warren, author of such well-known tunes as "42nd Street" and "You Must Have Been a Beautiful Baby." Thur-Fri 8 pm, Sat 2 & 8 pm, Sun 2 pm (ongoing). **Mason Street Theatre**, 340 Mason, S.F. Tickets/info 981-3535.

Hildegard! Live . . . at 85! Legendary World War II *chanteuse* Hildegard, who crowned "Darling, Je Vous Aime Beaucoup," "I'll Be Seeing You" and "Lily

Marlene" for NBC Radio's *The Raleigh Room* is back on the cabaret scene, recently breaking the house record at New York's Russian Tea Room. Camp? You decide. Opens Wed 5/8. Tues-Thur 8:30 pm, Fri-Sat 8:30 & 10:30 pm, Sun 3 pm (through 5/19). **Plush Room**, Hotel York, 940 Sutter, S.F. \$20 cover, 885-2800.

The Glass Menagerie The Lorraine Hansberry Theatre presents Tennessee Williams' classic portrayal of conflict in a Southern family. Opens Wed 5/15 (through 6/2). Wed-Fri 8:30 pm, Sat 2 & 8 pm, Sun 2 pm. **Lorraine Hansberry Theatre**, 620 Sutter, S.F. \$15-22, 474-8800.

Inherit the Wind Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee's dramatic portrayal of the Scopes "Monkey Trial," featuring oratory by battling attorneys William Jennings Bryan and Clarence Darrow. Thur-Sat 8 pm, Sun 3 pm (through 5/19). **Dorothy Rohnert Sprechels Performing Arts Center**, 5409 Snyder Lane, Rohnert Park. \$10-13.50, (707) 584-1700.

Marriage of Figaro ACT presents Beaumarchais' comedy in which the cunning servant Figaro outwits his aristocratic employers, newly translated and adapted by Joan Holden. Opens Wed 5/8 (through 6/9). Tues 8 pm, Wed 2 & 8 pm, Thur-Fri 8 pm, Sat 2 & 8 pm, Sun 3 pm. **Palace of Fine Arts Theatre**, Bay & Lyon, S.F. \$10-29, 749-2ACT.

Of Mice and Men Center Repertory Company of Walnut Creek presents John Steinbeck's drama about two itinerant farm workers in 1930s America. Thur-Sat 8 pm, Sun 2:30 pm (ends 5/11). **Dean Lesher Theatre**, Regional Center for the Arts, 1601 Civic Dr. Walnut Creek. \$12, 943-SHOW.

Oliver Twist Civic Arts Junior Theatre presents Charles Dickens' classic of orphaned Oliver whose adventures lead him from a dusty old workhouse to the bustling streets of London. Sat 12 pm & 2:30 pm, Sun 2:30

pm (ends 5/12). **Newstage Theatre**, 1555 East St, Walnut Creek. \$5, 932-7824.

Our Country's Good Timberlake Wertenberger's drama, adapted from Thomas Kenneally's novel *The Playmaker*, is a portrayal of the struggles of the British convicts and military personnel who (forcibly) became the first colonists of Australia. Tues-Sat 8 pm, Sun 7 pm (through 6/13). **Berkeley Repertory Theatre**, 2025 Ad-dison, Berkeley. \$20-27, 845-4700.

Our Lan' Black Repertory Group presents Theodore Ward's emancipation drama. Thur-Fri 8 pm, Sat 2:30 & 8 pm (ends 5/11). **Black Repertory Theatre**, 3201 Adeline, Berkeley. \$10, 652-4017.

Party of One Long-running musical revue tackles tribulations of single life. Fri 8 pm, Sat 7 & 9 pm (ongoing). **Zephyr Theatre**, 25 Van Ness Ave, S.F. \$19-21, 861-6895.

Players in a Game CitiArts presents Dale Wasserman's dark comedy about religious persecution in the Middle Ages, as a new Grand Inquisitor embarks on his messianic mission. Tues-Sat 8 pm, Sun 2 & 7 pm (ends 5/12). **Gasoline Alley Theatre**, 1425 Gasoline Alley, Concord. \$10-12, 762-BASS.

Quartet Heine Muller's post-Holocaust version of Choderlos de Laclos' *Dangerous Liaisons*. Presented by Black Sheep Productions and the Noh Oratorio Society. Fri 8 pm, Sat 7 & 9 pm, Sun 8 pm (ends 5/12). **Next Stage**, Trinity Episcopal Church, 1668 Bush, S.F. \$5-8, 567-1758.

Real Women Have Curves El Teatro de la Esperanza presents Josefina Lopez's comedy about five Latina women coming to terms with their identities while they race to meet a deadline in an East L.A. dress factory. Thur 5/9-Sat 5/11 8 pm. **Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts**, Castro & Mercy Sts, Mountain View. \$15-20, 903-6000.

Rose Jewel and Harmony Hillbarn Theatre presents Sacramento native Robert Locke's

drama about three generations of women who are reunited by the crises in their lives. Fri-Sat 8 pm (ends 5/11). **Hillbarn Theatre**, 1285 E. Hillsdale Blvd, Foster City. \$7, 349-6111.

Secret Marriage Pocket Opera presents Donald Pipkin's new English-language version of Domenico Cimarosa's opera about a chain of lovers that is broken by the hidden marital status of two of its links. Sun 5/19 8 pm & Sun 6/2 3 pm. **PG&E's Beale Street Theatre**, 77 Beale St, S.F. \$14-18, 989-1855.

Side by Side by Sondheim Cabaret Productions presents an all-musical revue of Sondheim's best melodies from *Gypsy*, *A Little Night Music* and others. Dinner show available. Fri-Sat 8 pm, Sun 2 pm (through 5/19). **Village Theatre**, 233 Front, Danville. \$13.50 (\$28-30 with dinner), 930-7980.

Stars in the Morning Sky College of Marin Department of Performing Arts presents Russian playwright Alexander Galin's drama about a group of Muscovite prostitutes who are "cleaned out" of the city before the 1980 Olympics. Fri-Sat 8 pm, Sun 7 pm (through 5/19). **Studio Theatre**, Sir Francis Drake Blvd & Laurel Ave, Kentfield. \$5, 485-9385.

South Pacific Peninsula Civic Light Opera presents Rodgers and Hammerstein's musical about love in the South Seas. Fri-Sat 8 pm, Sun 2 pm (ends 5/12). **San Mateo Performing Arts Center**, 424 Peninsula Ave, San Mateo. Tickets/info 579-5568.

Swan Magic Theatre presents Elizabeth Egloff's quirky tale that explores the mystery and power of love when a nurse in Nebraska falls for a mischievous swan named Bill. Previews Thur 5/9-Sat 5/11 8:30 pm.

Opens Tues 5/14 8:30 pm. Wed-Sat 8:30 pm, Sun 2 & 7:30 pm (through 6/16). **Magick Theatre Southside**, Fort Mason Center, Bldg D, S.F. \$11-20, 441-8001.

Tartuffe Theater of the Blue Rose presents Molière's comedy about religious hypocrisy. Fri-Sat 8:30 pm, Sun 5/19 3 pm (through 5/19). **Theatre of the Blue Rose**, 2525 Eighth St, Berkeley. \$5, 540-5037.

Tokyo Bound Asian-American Theatre Company presents a one-woman show written and performed by Amy Hill (of Wayne Wang's film *Dim Sum*) that debunks stereotypes of Japanese women through eight impersonations. Thur-Sat 8 pm, Sun 3:30 & 7:30 pm (through 5/26). **Asian American Theatre**, 403 Arguello Blvd, S.F. \$13-15, 751-2600.

Tongues Hardback Theatre presents Sam Shepard and Joseph Chaikin's collaborative and experimental drama that strips down routine to look at the basis of our fears. Thur-Sat 8:30 pm (through 5/18). **SOMAR Theatre**, 934 Brannan, S.F. \$9, 649-7456.

A Turk in Italy West Bay Opera presents Rossini's romantic opera about a flirtatious young married woman and an amorous Turk. Fri 5/17-Sat 5/18 8:15 pm, Sun 5/19 2 pm (also Thur 5/23-Sat 5/25 8:15 pm). **Lucie Stern Theatre**, 1305 Middlefield Rd, Palo Alto. \$10-22, 329-2623.

Twelfth Night Shakespeare's classic comedy, featuring cross-dressing and mistaken identity, in which a lady of the court falls in love with a woman disguised as a young man who herself pines after a young courtesan. A happy heterosexual ending for all, after much unscrambling. Fri-Sat 8 pm

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Fain Dancers' 'Changes' in S.F.

By Marilyn Tucker
Chronicle Staff Critic

Liss Fain, a choreographer from Boston who relocated to the Bay Area last year, is currently presenting the modern dance company she calls Liss Fain Dance at the New Performance Gallery.

Fain appears to be a highly skilled and intelligent choreographer whose dances mirror the constant state of change in which humans live out their lives. What gave Thursday's program of dances like the new "Sudden Changes" and last year's "Edging Toward Saturn" an obvious range and depth was the formal logic that Fain applies with such surety.

In "Sudden Changes," danced by Mary Carbonara, Alli Chagi, Jennifer Frees, Jeff Porter and Brenda Stine, the dancers appeared in the long first section in constantly and unexpectedly shifting groups of two and three. A skulking and hunched-over trio might dissolve into a twosome bent over on the floor, the third dancer then falling backward on them.

Slow Turn Dynamics

Vigorously pumping arms became caught up in the dynamics of a slow turn. Another group in a slow motion frieze would go crashing to the floor.

In "Sudden Changes," one got the feeling that Fain was offering

a world in which its participants are victims of their surroundings. This environmental theme was given emotional emphasis in the second part, which was tinged with the melancholy of those who know that in moving they are going nowhere at all. In this section, Fain's dancers were often lost in a Rodin-like contemplation.

Composer Michael McNabb's compelling music for "Sudden Changes" involved a mix of live and electronic music, with McNabb's saxophone catching a listener in a web of doomsday intensity.

Three Components

In "Edging Toward Saturn," Fain presents a dance of three formally thought out components, al-

though the phrases of the first section are often flat, lacking textural complexity. There were lots of entrances and exits for seven dancers, who gradually become identified as the duos and trios that will give the mini-dances of the second section as distinctive a look as the ethnic dances of 19th century ballet.

The state of flux that Fain presents ends with an all-out and no-holds-barred physicality, its remarkable bravura buoyed up by David Fetcho's taped score.

In addition the dancers of "Sudden Changes," Tony Coray and Paul Medlyn were part of the crew.

The program will be repeated for the last time tonight at 8:30.