




Eugene
O'Neill
Theater
Center



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Eugene O'Neill... was born to and for the theatre

He was the son of James O'Neill, a respected nineteenth century American actor. His writing was influenced by his family background and his diversified work experiences. Mythology, symbolism, and Freudian theories are all significant in his work; so his plays are well understood among the peoples of many lands. Not only have they become world renowned but they have been translated into more foreign languages than those of any playwright—with the possible exception of Shakespeare. He was awarded Pulitzer Prizes three times and the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1936.

It is fitting therefore that a theater center, situated close to New London where the O'Neills summered, be dedicated to the memory of Eugene O'Neill. Here, the creative environment invites exploration and experimentation. The Center is a forum of ideas. Its primary function is to provide channels for communication between artists of the highest caliber.

The Center offers working professionals and students the opportunity to challenge, to explore and to experiment in an effort to identify and develop new directions in theatre arts.

The Center provides the opportunity for: new playwrights to develop their craft; students to work directly with celebrated professionals; critics to educate themselves and the public; tapping undeveloped theatrical energies, and disseminating new concepts and ideas through media including television, radio, and publications.

The Center exists to stimulate creativity and thought and to provide a place and climate for artists to renew themselves and their art form.

"O'Neill would have liked his memorial."

Lewis Funke, NEW YORK TIMES

The National Playwrights Conference

The National Playwrights Conference, under the direction of Lloyd Richards since 1968, provides talented new playwrights the opportunity to experience having their plays directed, acted, and critiqued by foremost theatre and media professionals. The Conference also tests the material of established playwrights who are engaged in form, style, or technique explorations.

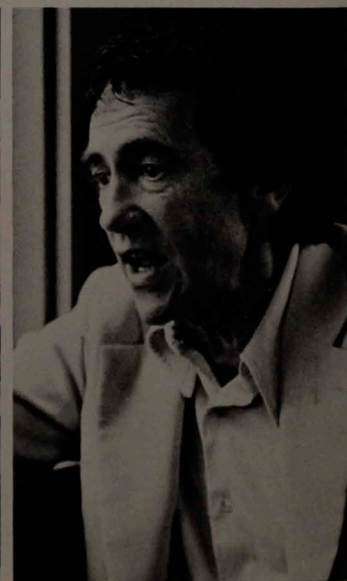
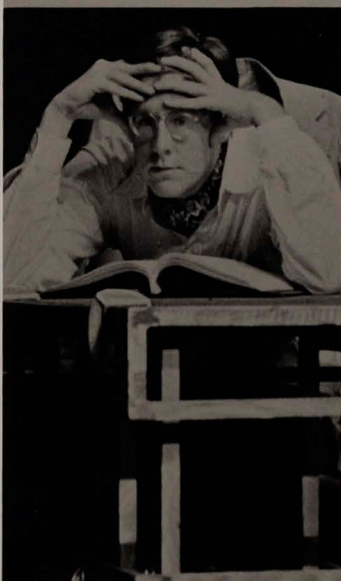
Approximately nine hundred scripts are screened each year to select 16 to 20 playwrights to participate in the Conference. The prime purpose of the Conference is to assist playwrights in arriving at a true evaluation of their work, while affording them the opportunity and right to be wrong in worthwhile creative search.

Also, each year several playwrights participate in the New Drama for Television project. Its purpose is to conceive and develop drama specifically for television while working with and receiving the creative attention of knowledgeable television practitioners.

Since 1966 the National Playwrights Conference has presented in staged readings 176 new plays by 127 playwrights and has provided a work opportunity for such talent as Thomas Babe (PRAYER FOR MY DAUGHTER), David Berry (G.R. POINT), Christopher Durang (A HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN FILM), John Guare (HOUSE OF BLUE LEAVES), Israel Horovitz (THE INDIAN WANTS THE BRONX), Jeff Wanshel (THE DISINTEGRATION OF JAMES CHERRY), Wendy Wasserstein (UNCOMMON WOMAN AND OTHERS), George Rubino (THE LAST TENANT), Sally Ordway (PASSAGE TO BOHEMIA), Percy Granger (EMINENT DOMAIN), Richard Wesley (THE LAST STREET PLAY), Corinne Jucker (HARRY OUTSIDE).

"One of the most rigorous and imaginative creative-theatre workshops extant."

Marilyn Stasio, CUE

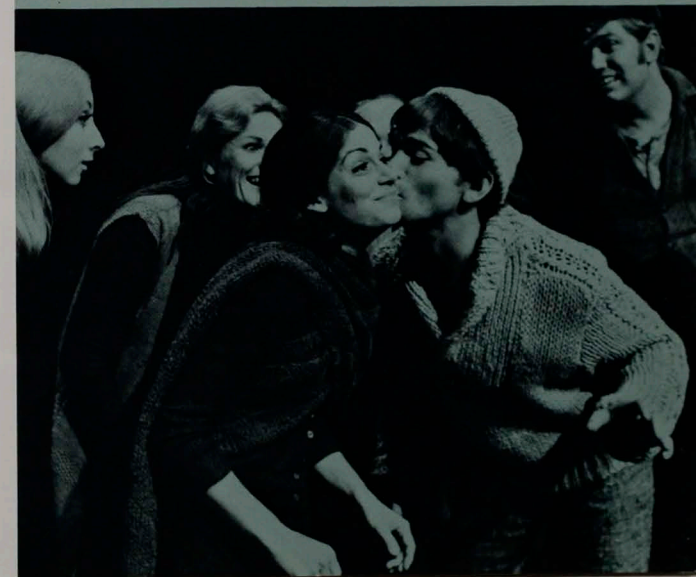
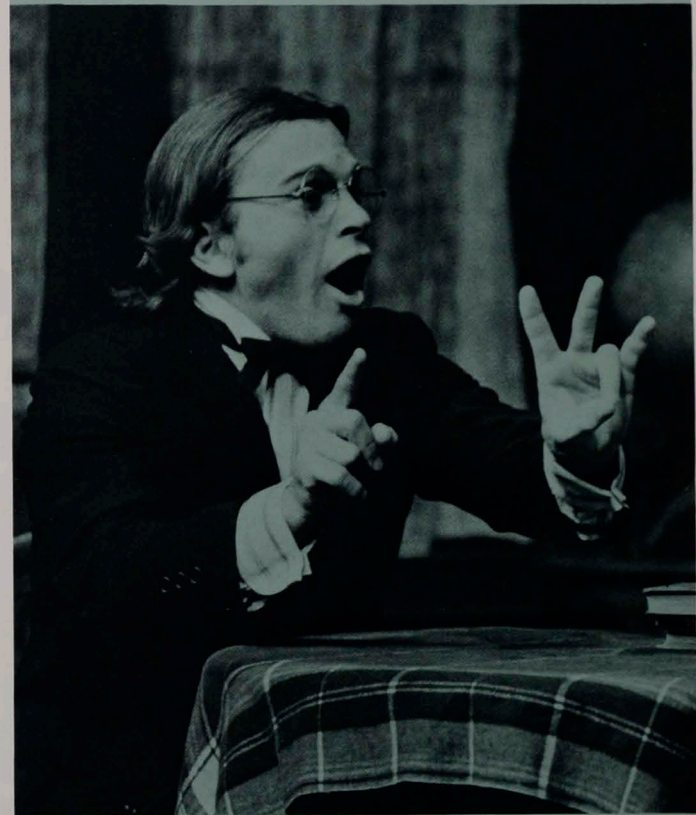


The National Theatre of the Deaf

The National Theatre of the Deaf, founded by David Hays, is a milestone in theater creativity. Not to be confused with a theater FOR the deaf, NTD uses the visual language of the deaf expanded into beautiful, penetrating, and intensely theatrical form, full of insight for all theater-goers. Four-fifths of the audiences are hearing people. The language of the deaf is interwoven with pantomime and dance in language forms. It is matched by speaking actors so that every word is seen and heard. Basic funding is from Media Services and Captioned Films of the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

The first project was the taping of a one-hour special for NBC's EXPERIMENT IN TELEVISION in March 1967. Since then NTD has toured over forty-seven states and fifteen foreign countries, playing more than two thousand performances in the world's finest theaters, and to over 100,000,000 television viewers.

The NTD works more than any other theater company in America. The growth of the work has been steady—from classics, translated into visual language; to works adapted to NTD style; to works created by the company itself. In June 1977, NTD received a special Tony Award for Theatrical Excellence. Among its television specials are a Passover Seder in sign language entitled "WHO KNOWS ONE" for WGBH in Boston which was televised nationally on PBS T.V., and "A CHILD'S CHRISTMAS IN WALES," filmed in England with guest star, Sir Michael Redgrave, which is becoming a perennial Yuletide favorite with television audiences.



*"A rich and memorable experience . . . Unique in the world.
They do things you might not believe possible on the stage."*

Elliot Norton, BOSTON AMERICAN

The National Theater Institute

The National Theater Institute is a laboratory in theater arts training. NTI was established in 1970 on the premise that students of the theater arts can best be trained by being exposed to professional standards. To this end, faculty and guest lecturers are drawn from the highest rankings of performing arts. They are artist/teachers whose achievements have been nationally, and often internationally, recognized.

The Institute offers a 14-week resident semester at the Center, in Waterford. Each semester is composed of nine-weeks of intensive workshop sessions, and three-weeks of rehearsal, which are followed by a two-week bus and truck tour of the Northeast of either an original American play or musical.

Work with the professional staff encompasses acting, directing, scene and costume design, lighting, puppetry, theater management, mime, children's theater, tumbling, fencing, singing, dance, and television production.

The program is enriched by regularly scheduled visiting artists—Peter Brook, Jan Kott, Alfred Drake, Jean-Louis Barrault, and many others of international fame have lectured—and by a series of field trips to regional and New York theaters.

National Theater Institute was begun with assistance of a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation and is accredited by Connecticut College.

"One of America's most important theatrical breeding grounds."

Frank Segers, VARIETY



Media Productions & New Programs

The Center has always placed a high priority on developing new programs and services to help meet the changing needs and priorities of the arts in general. The primary emphasis of the new programming has been placed upon media production and the exploration and development of new concepts through media including television, radio, and publications. A few of the new projects include:

Mozart: In Quest of the Man

In co-production with Wien-Film of Austria and Southern Television in London, the Center will produce a six-part dramatic series for television seeking through inquiry and investigation to discover Mozart, The Man.

The Dance Masters Series

The Center will produce four half-hour radio programs and four half-hour television programs which will focus on the recollections, philosophies, and thoughts of major American choreographers, master teachers, and dancers who have had a significant influence on the development of American dance.

New England Life Series

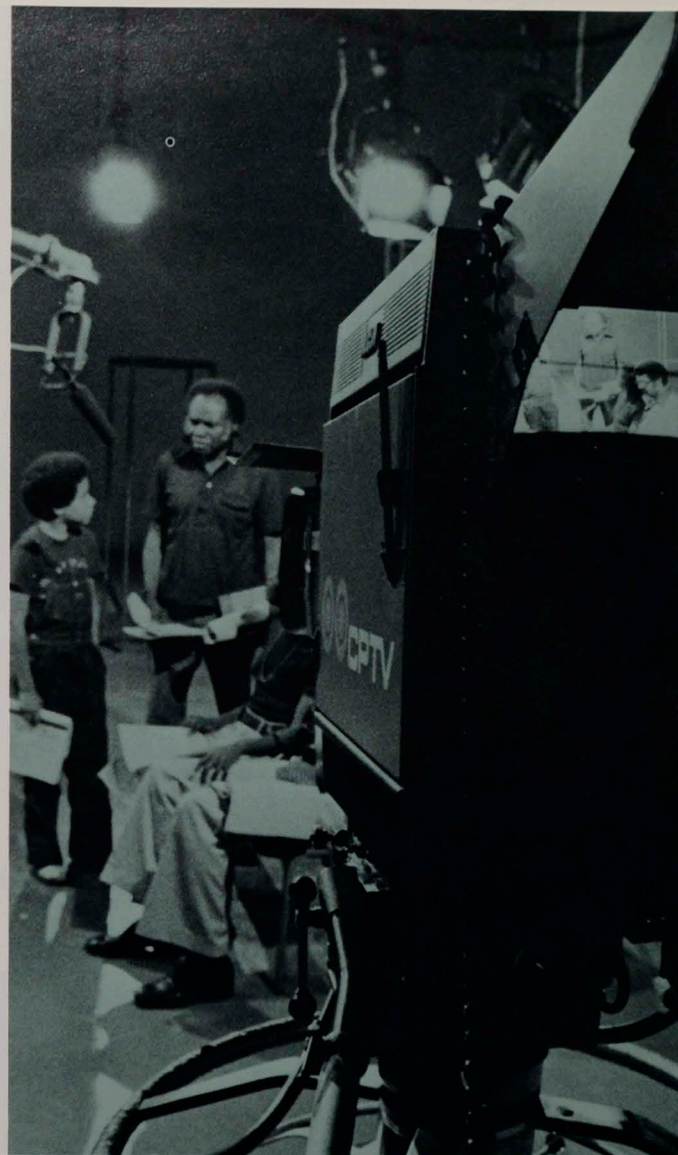
In conjunction with WGBY, Channel 57 in Springfield, Massachusetts, the Center will produce a pilot series of four television programs focusing on the folk history and stories of known and little known historical sites and cities of the Northeast.

National Marketing Survey

The Center will conduct a national marketing survey to explore all aspects of the potential use of television and media materials in higher, secondary, and elementary education.

Publishing

A publishing division has been established by the Center to produce and distribute performing arts related texts. The first effort, The National Playwrights Directory, was published in the fall of 1977.



Creative Arts in Education

The Creative Arts in Education program strives to make teaching and learning more interesting, exciting, and meaningful by integrating the arts into regular classroom curricula. It helps teachers develop the confidence, desire, experiences, and techniques which enable them to use visual arts, music, drama, movement, and creative writing in order to teach subjects such as math, science, and reading more effectively. The stress is on the creative process rather than on the arts, yet the pupils and teachers who work in this assimilated approach gain new insights, become more familiar with their environment, and an interest in the arts develops.

The program consists of eight components: a summer graduate course for teachers accredited by Connecticut College; follow-up training to the course in which the teachers work with artists to plan and direct classroom activities; a program designed to prepare artists for in-school sessions; on-call sessions, where artists conduct workshops in a classroom; in-service workshops for teachers; seminars with artists, teachers, student teachers, parents, school board members, administrators; auditorium performances; and a program which brings arts experiences to children and leaders in community agencies and neighborhood centers.

The Creative Arts in Education program operates in school systems in Southeastern Connecticut and in the Fishers Island, New York, school, serving over 1,200 teachers and more than 10,000 children.



Monte Cristo Cottage Theater Collection and Library

The Theater Collection and Library was started in 1963 with two important Collections: The Harriet Whitmore Enders Collection of dramatic literature and the Dale Wasserman Collection of theater books and periodicals.

Over the past decade, this collection has grown to be a widely respected resource for professionals, students, and the public. The Center is known internationally as a clearing house for research materials concerning the life and works of Eugene O'Neill. It serves the faculty, students, and staff of the Center program, plus area teachers, students, and theater groups.

Of special interest are the Lieblich-Wood Collection of Pulitzer Prizes and Drama Circle Awards of Tennessee Williams and William Inge, the Johnson-Briscoe Collection of books, letters, programs, and scrapbooks, the Harold Friedlander Collection of souvenir programs and window cards, and the Frank Leslie Collection of original letters written by Eugene O'Neill.

In 1974 the Center purchased the Monte Cristo Cottage in New London Connecticut where Eugene O'Neill spent his summers as a boy and young man.

Designated a National Historic Landmark, the Monte Cristo Cottage is presently being renovated. It will house the Center's Collection of theater resource materials and American theatre memorabilia.

"I merge with the sun, sand, sea, and wind and become as meaningless and as full of meaning as they are."

Eugene O'Neill



National Critics Institute

The National Critics Institute offers a work/study program for professional theater critics and arts writers. In its more than ten year history, NCI has attracted more than seventy writers from newspapers of all sizes and from magazines, TV and radio stations to its four week program at the Center in Waterford.

NCI was established to assist in elevating the level of arts criticism in the United States and to provide writers the opportunity to grow at the same pace as the arts and artists whose works they report on and interpret. This goal is made possible by daily critiques of plays and films which are examined, in tutorial sessions with a resident Master Critic.

The Humanist Lecture Series provides an almost daily session with a distinguished authority. A. M. Nagler, Elizabeth Chase, A. Bart Giametti are among those who have lectured on art, iconography, and man's aspirations. The purpose of the series is to provide a wider range of knowledge for those writing in the several fields of arts.

In addition, the program features seminars with theater authorities, including writers, directors, actors, dancers, and scene designers.

NCI is a super-refresher course for professionals; it allows writers to stand back from their work and to re-examine it, while storing up new knowledge.

The faculty includes project director Ernest Schier, theater and film critic of The Philadelphia Evening and Sunday Bulletin; Lawrence DeVine, drama critic, The Detroit Free Press; Dan Sullivan, drama critic, The Los Angeles Times; Norman Nadel, Scripps-Howard culture editor, and Julius Novick, The Village Voice. In addition, many well known arts critics appear as guest lecturers.

"The major value of the Institute . . . was the saturation in theatre we had to undergo . . . it was stimulating, awakening, and sometimes terrifying."

Bill Marvel, NATIONAL OBSERVER

Annual Deaf Playwrights Conference

The first Annual Deaf Playwrights Conference under the direction of Patrick Graybill was held in 1977 in conjunction with the National Theatre of the Deaf Summer School.

Five deaf playwrights worked with the NTD Company, dramaturgs, and advisors in the exploration of plays for the deaf.

Professional School for Deaf Theatre Personnel

Deaf people involved in local and college drama activities and the education of deaf children throughout the country come to the Center for five weeks of concentrated study in acting, movement, sign-mime, theatre laboratory, Tai Chi, fencing, tumbling, design, and other basic and advanced theatre courses. The faculty includes a dozen top talents of the professional stage and a number of accomplished actors and directors of the National Theatre of the Deaf.

The School is a concentrated program which functions six days a week, beginning with calisthenics at 7:30 a.m. There are lectures, discussions, special projects, and field trips to enhance the student's experience.

For the past eleven years, the School has grown in number of students, duration, curriculum, and diversity of programs. It is the country's only professional drama program for deaf people.



The Little Theatre of the Deaf

The Little Theatre of the Deaf is actually two companies of five members each—four deaf actors and a hearing actor—who use a unique combination of visual language, mime, and the spoken word to create theatre specifically for children.

The repertoire always includes a vivid description of visual language in addition to first rate poetry, fables, tales, and stories for both hearing and deaf children. Performances end with improvisations generated by the young audience.

The LTD was chosen, with four others, to represent the United States at the World's Children's Theatre Conference in Albany, New York. Subsequently, the LTD received the Jennie Heiden Award bestowed by the American Theatre Association for excellence in professional children's theatre. Most recently, the company won a national competition for an original play when they performed Dennis Scott's "SIR GAWAIN AND THE GREEN KNIGHT" at the Kennedy Center.

Performances in over 200 communities in America and in over 12 foreign nations reaffirm the stature of these two companies which also have made regular television appearances on SESAME STREET.

"A tour de force . . . a virtuoso performance . . . an art form of its own. A colossal vocabulary of grace, an extra and superbly articulate dimension."

THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN



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