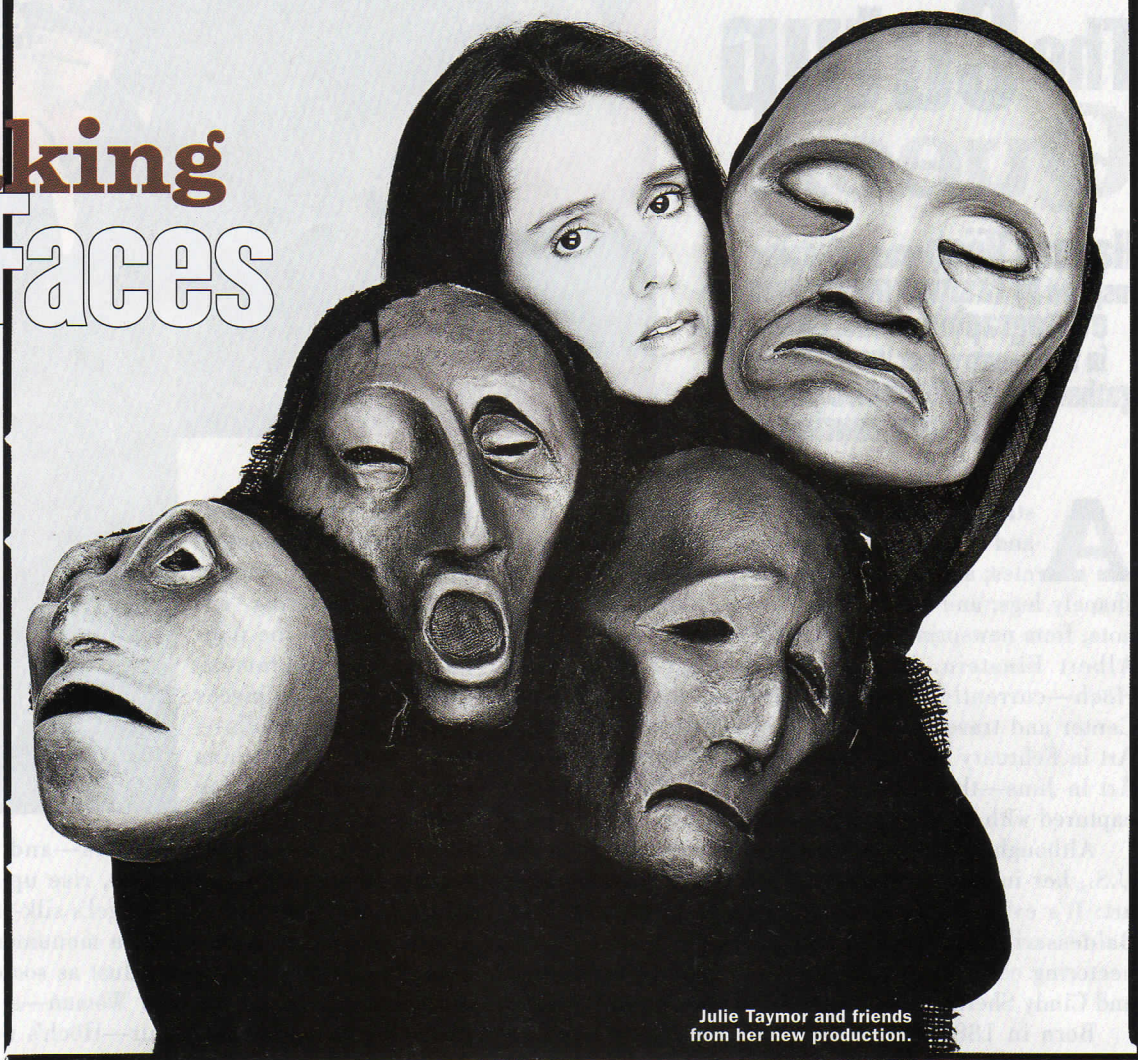


ART, BOOKS, MOVIES, DESIGN,

etc.

Making Faces



Julie Taymor and friends
from her new production.

A Lincoln Center debut this month, with a Disney musical waiting in the wings—has theater visionary Julie Taymor gone mainstream? The 44-year-old director, who made her name with a series of off-off-Broadway productions full of eye-popping puppets and masks and innovative mime and dance, is unconcerned. She has just previewed her version of *The Lion King* for the Michaels Ovitz and Eisner, who commissioned her to adapt the film for the Broadway stage. “They want me to do what I do,” she says. “It’s the kind of material that allows you to play on huge landscapes.”

To enter Taymor’s world is to let your imagination run wild. “My kind of theater makes people tap back in-

to when they were children,” she says. *Juan Darién*, which will open at Lincoln Center Theater’s Vivian Beaumont stage on November 24, is quintessential Taymor. Earlier produced at a Manhattan church, it’s a Uruguayan folktale about a jaguar cub that is transformed into a boy through maternal love, but returns to his animal state when confronted with human intolerance. Taymor’s staging of the story draws on Japanese Bunraku puppetry, Indonesian shadow theater, and a score (by her partner, Elliot Goldenthal) that mixes the sounds of a Catholic requiem with the rhythms of the rainforest. “Magic doesn’t need hiding,” she says. “The pleasure of theater is watching it happen before you.” ■

By Gerard Raymond