

Sun. at 3. Opened: 3/12/87. *Imperial Theater*, 249 W. 45th St. (239-6200). 3 hrs. 15 mins.

Love Thy Neighbor—Jackie Mason, back on Broadway with a new one-man show of stand-up comedy. \$37.50–\$49.50. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sun. at 3. *Booth*, 222 W. 45th St. (239-6200). 2 hrs.

Master Class—In the early seventies, opera star Maria Callas took her diva persona from stage to classroom with a celebrated series of tutorials for young hopefuls. Slightly fictionalized, they're the subject of Terrence McNally's newest play, starring Patti LuPone (Evita) as the great *monstre sacrée* herself. \$32.50–\$45. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2. *Golden Theatre*, 252 W. 45th St. (239-6200). 2 hrs. 30 mins.

Miss Saigon—This reworking of Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* set in Vietnam during the fall of Saigon has just celebrated its fifth anniversary on Broadway. Score by Claude-Michel Schönberg; lyrics by Alain Boublil and Richard Maltby Jr.; directed by Nicholas Hytner. \$15–\$70. Mon.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2; dark Sun. Opened: 4/11/91. *Broadway Theater*, 1681 Broadway, at 53rd St. (239-6200). 2 hrs. 30 mins.

The Phantom of the Opera—In its ninth year on Broadway, Andrew Lloyd Webber's blockbuster continues to pack them in, passing the 3,200-performance mark recently and edging into sixth place among the longest-running musicals. And strangely—or wisely, depending on your point of view—it's no nearer to becoming a movie than on the day it opened. \$15–\$70. Mon.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2. Opened: 1/26/88. *Majestic Theater*, 247 W. 44th St. (239-6200). 2 hrs. 30 mins.

Rent—The late Jonathan Larson's reimagining of Puccini's *La Bohème* as it might be lived by a gaggle of contemporary young and hip types living in the East Village. \$30–\$67.50. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 2, Sun. at 2 and 7. *Niederlander Theater*, 208 W. 41st St. (307-4100). 2 hrs. 45 mins.

Sex and Longing—A new comedy by Christopher Durang, starring Sigourney Weaver as a woman who attempts to assuage the melancholy sense of displacement that is the abiding, inescapable bur-

den of sad humanity by trying to have sex every fifteen minutes. Did that sentence end up the way you were expecting? \$25–\$45; a limited number of \$15 student rush tickets will go on sale two hours before each performance. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Opened: 10/10/96. *Cort*, 138 W. 48th St. (239-6200).

Show Boat—Because it covers three generations of show folk, because its action spans four decades, because it shuttles between steamy Natchez and boreal Chicago, and because it touches on such varied subjects as race relations and the dispersal of families, *Show Boat* is usually described as having epic sweep. In a production such as this, certainly. There are problems with the plotting, but director Harold Prince's staging moves so swiftly and involvively that there is no time for questions. He is seconded by choreographer Susan Stroman, who with this effort surges to the forefront of Broadway dance creators. This *Show Boat* is a dream-boat. (Simon; 10/17/94.) \$40–\$75. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Opened: 10/2/94. Through 1/5/97. *Gershwin Theater*, 222 W. 51st St. (307-4100). 3 hrs.

Skylight—New York last saw that fine playwright David Hare in December, when Lincoln Center's short-lived production of *Racing Demon*, a drama about the current crisis of faith in the Church of England, seems to have proved somewhat too parochially British for American audiences. They shouldn't have that problem with this less polemical, more inward drama focusing on the reunion, after three years, of a wealthy restaurateur and a schoolteacher, discussing a love affair that may or may not have run its course. Don't miss the American stage debut of Michael Gambon, known to TV audiences here from Dennis Potter's *The Singing Detective* and the more recent PBS show *Maigret*—and to Sir Ralph Richardson simply as “the Great Gambon.” \$40–\$55. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. *Royale*, 242 W. 45th St. (239-6200).

Smokey Joe's Cafe: The Songs of Leiber and Stoller—They say the neon lights are bright on Broadway,

and when this show—drawn from the score Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller composed to accompany the American baby-boomer childhood experience—breezes into New York City, people gonna scrape and bow. You don't like crazy music? (We keep forgettin'.) Don't feel that way; baby, that is rock and roll. A tip, tip, tip, young blood: Buy yourself a ticket, sit down in the very first row. Have a drink and dig the band. Can't you hear the flügelhorn? Can't you hear the bell? Come to them sickly, they'll make you well. We don't know why our heart flips (and, baby, we don't care); we only know it does. Heartbreakin' nights, only in America. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. \$35–\$70. *At the Virginia Theatre*, 245 W. 52nd St. (239-6200)? Uh-huh. 2 hrs. 10 mins.

Sunset Boulevard—Andrew Lloyd Webber's (mega-) musical adaptation of the Billy Wilder film masterpiece about a deranged Hollywood dinosaur and her reluctant boy toy. London's Elaine Paige (*Evita*, *Cats*) recently took over from Betty Buckley as Norma Desmond. \$25–\$70. Mon.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2. Opened: 11/17/94. *Minskoff Theater*, 200 W. 45th St. (307-4007). 2 hrs. 30 mins.

Taking Sides—Ed Harris stars as an American Nazi-war-crimes investigator, sparring with suspect conductor Wilhelm Furtwangler (Daniel Massey) over the question *Is art neutral?* \$32.50–\$45. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Opened: 10/17/96. *Brooks Atkinson Theater*, 256 W. 47th St. (307-4100).

Victor/Victoria—Reprising her title role in husband Blake Edwards's 1982 film, Julie Andrews—returning to the Broadway stage for the first time since the early sixties and Camelot—struts her stuff in (the late) Henry Mancini and Leslie Bricusse's musical adaptation of Mr. Edwards's comedy of sexual manners. “One way or another, Victor/Victoria will make history. Like a karaoke record, it's got everything minus one: a true star, a solid cast and ensemble, savvy staging and choreography, lush scenery and costumes and lighting, a funny (or at least doggedly farcical) book—everything but one really good song. This will be the test: Can a Broadway musical make it without a score? Julie Andrews has a look, voice, and personality that live in perfect harmony with one another, whether she is singing, dancing, acting, or just being. But there is—or rather, isn't—the unrelievedly second-rate music of the late Henry Mancini, augmented by three songs from Frank Wildhorn, which blend in seamlessly, alas. All the lyrics are by the once capable Leslie Bricusse, now given to such stuff as ‘Paris is so sexy/ Riding in a taxi [texti?]/ Gives you apoplexy.’ Still, *Victor/Victoria* may be the best unmusical musical you are ever going to see.” (Simon; 11/6/95.) With Tony Roberts, Michael Nouri, and Rachel York; written and directed by Mr. Edwards. \$20–\$75. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. *Marquis*, 1535 Broadway (382-0100). 2 hrs. 45 mins.

Off Broadway

Previews and Openings

Beat: A Subway Cop's Comedy—Comic reminiscence of ten years on the beat, by John DiResta, who remains a New York City Transit cop. \$20–\$25. Tues.–Thurs. at 8, Fri. and Sat. at 7 and 10, Sun. at 7. In previews for an 11/20 opening. *Kaufman Theatre*, 534 W. 42nd St. (279-4200).

Body of Work—In Theodora Skipitares's latest miniature work, more than 80 puppets trace the history of women's imprisonment and punishment through history. \$15. Wed.–Sat. at 7:30, Sun. at 3. Through 11/17. *La MaMa E.T.C.*, 74A E. 4th St. (475-7710).

Cakewalk—A personal reminiscence, of the kiss-and-tell variety, by playwright Peter Feibleman about his relationship with Lillian Hellman. Starring Linda Lavin. \$40–\$45. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Opened 11/6. *Variety Arts*, 110 Third Ave. (239-6200).

Demonology—A new comedy by Kelly Stuart juxtaposing sex, sabotage, and breast-feeding at the headquarters of a baby-food manufacturer. \$15. Wed.–Sun. at 8, Sat. and Sun. at 2. In previews for an 11/10 opening. *Playwrights Horizons*, 416 W. 42nd (279-4200).

Onstage Waste Not

TS. Eliot takes the New York stage with his poetry, once again, rather than his plays. This time it's not a megamusical about singing and dancing cats; it's *The Waste Land*. No humdrum poetry reading, this is an unusual, sometimes thrilling piece of theater performed by **Fiona Shaw**, who makes her long-awaited American debut.

New Yorkers who missed the opportunity to see the 37-year-old Irish-born actress's London triumphs—a lacerating *Electra*, a defiantly untamed Hedda Gabler, and her recent gender-transcending performance as Shakespeare's Richard II—can see Shaw, without props or scenery, bring to life Eliot's complex portrait of a spiritually starved postwar civilization. Shaw plunges into the fragmentary 430-line poem as it leaps cinematically through Eliot's self-styled “heap of broken images”—shards of urban city life, snatches of conversation, snippets from the entire body of world literature—carrying it forward to its hope-filled, cathartic ending. “It's like jumping from one play into another,” says Shaw.

The Waste Land is considered a modernist landmark of English literature; by performing it in the decaying Liberty Theater (scheduled for restoration after the show's run) on 42nd Street, Shaw and her innovative director Deborah Warner hope to tap into the whole things-falling-apart vibe of the final decade of this century. “I think people's awareness is heightened by the architecture around them,” says Shaw. “The poem changes its form and resonates more in different places; that's its real genius.” Indeed, given that the entire Times Square area is being transformed to usher in a Disney-style millennium, Eliot's “great hymn to cities,” as Shaw describes it, takes on new resonances. “Maybe,” Shaw adds, “it's a fax from this century to the next.” (From November 14 to December 15; Liberty Theatre, 234 West 42nd Street; 279-4200.)

GERARD RAYMOND

