

Satisfaction

Antonio Criscimagna

wiping
 with continuous excrement
 of ticker tape machine
 standing navel down naked
 tuxedo clad waistline up
 toilet trained
 chimpanzee
 blinks across the dead sea
 of Lake Erie
 blinded by the ritual
 of heart disease
 awaiting the moron missile run

THE ESSENCE OF THE THEATER

Candy Haas

My interest in drama began when I was a very small child, and it will be with me until the day I die. Whether I am in the cast or in the crew, on the stage or in the audience, I have a genuine love for dramatics. Despite many, many thrilling moments on stage, my favorite times are the "before and after." These moments of anxious preparation and joyous exhilaration are what I feel the theater is all about.

Before a play or ballet there are weeks of rehearsals, stagings, and fittings, all building to a climax during production week. The frenzy of technical rehearsals and dress rehearsals increases until finally the day arrives. The day a play opens, I have a special habit. During the afternoon I go to the theater. The stage is dark and the theater is empty. I enter quietly, turning on a few lights, and walk onto the

set. To me this quiet, lonely walking of the set is a very essential part of my performance. I think about my role, and as I touch the furniture and props, I think through my lines. After I feel sufficiently adjusted to the surroundings, I sit upon the edge of the stage and look at the auditorium. Row upon row of empty seats return my steady gaze as I enjoy an almost powerful feeling in the lonesome surroundings. The absolute excitement of a theater, whether it be desolate or a full house, is mystifying. One can almost hear the shifting movements of an audience, then the laughter, and then the applause. There is a definite magic within the confines of a theater. The walls echo the emotion of past productions; the hushed darkness whispers of forgotten encores; everywhere the memories of previous Hamlets, Kates, and Romeos linger on. The only reality is the steady red and white glare of the exit signs.

After walking the set, I have a light supper and return to the theater for make-up call. The entire backstage area is alive and bustling. Lights are being checked and re-checked; props are placed and costumes are arranged; technicians are checking sound cues; publicity crews are unlocking doors and getting ready to sell tickets. In the midst of all this commotion and excitement there emerges a central figure, the director. Opening night for a director is a difficult thing. He has created the production, counseled the actors, worked out the difficulties, and now his creation is out of his hands. He wears a somewhat distressed expression as he tries to chat with anyone in range. It is truly a good idea to avoid a director before a show; his nervousness is infectious.

Approximately five minutes before curtain a silence descends backstage. Most of the audience awaits on the other side of the curtain. Props, lights and sets are all in position. The actors are costumed and ready. Good luck wishes are exchanged, the curtain goes up, and the show begins. During the show there are many moments of excitement. Getting laughs, remembering lines, making an entrance exactly on cue, all of these are part of the excitement that the theater is. For me, however, the most exciting moment is curtain call. The play is over, and the cast is assembled on stage. The curtains part; suddenly the applause catches fire and builds to a crescendo. For those brief, fleeting moments of glory, actors live and die. That applause is the life blood of the theater.