

Theatre School

Paper Mill offers theatre classes to serve the interests and needs of a wide variety of individuals. Current offerings include:

JUNIOR PLAYERS: A multi-faceted program of music and drama training which enables students ages 7-12 to discover their creative personalities. Through theatre games, exercises, and full-scale productions with scenery, costumes, and props, students build skills of concentration, memorization, coordination, and self-discipline. Advanced students enter an All-Star program that tours productions to nursing homes and community centers. Enhancement workshops on specific theatre skills (stage makeup, dancing, singing, etc.) are offered throughout the year.



Jonathan Jacobs as Prince Theodore in the Paper Mill Junior Players version of "The Little Mermaid."

YOUTH THEATRE ENSEMBLE: This class provides training for students ages 13-17 who enter the class through an audition process and explore the process of building a performing ensemble. Students use improvisations and creative drama techniques to write their own script, which is then rehearsed and performed during the second half of the course.

MUSICAL THEATRE WORKSHOP: Designed for aspiring and accomplished singers ages 17 through adult, this workshop provides the opportunity to study with members of the Paper Mill family of professional theatre artists. Participants develop their performance skills while expanding their knowledge of the American musical theatre.



Students from Passaic High School attending a performance at Paper Mill Playhouse in Phase One of the Adopt-A-School Project.

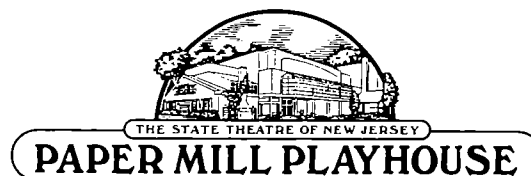
Other Educational Initiatives

CHILDREN'S THEATRE: Each year Paper Mill works with children's theatre companies from throughout the country to present and produce classic and popular titles from children's literature in both on-school-time and weekend children's events.

STUDENT MATINEES: Special student matinee performances are scheduled of mainstage theatre productions to allow educators to introduce students to classic shows from the repertoire of the American musical theatre. Pre-performance seminars and study guides are provided.

STUDENT RUSH TICKETS: Tickets for regular mainstage performances are sold for \$10 to students 15 minutes prior to curtain time.

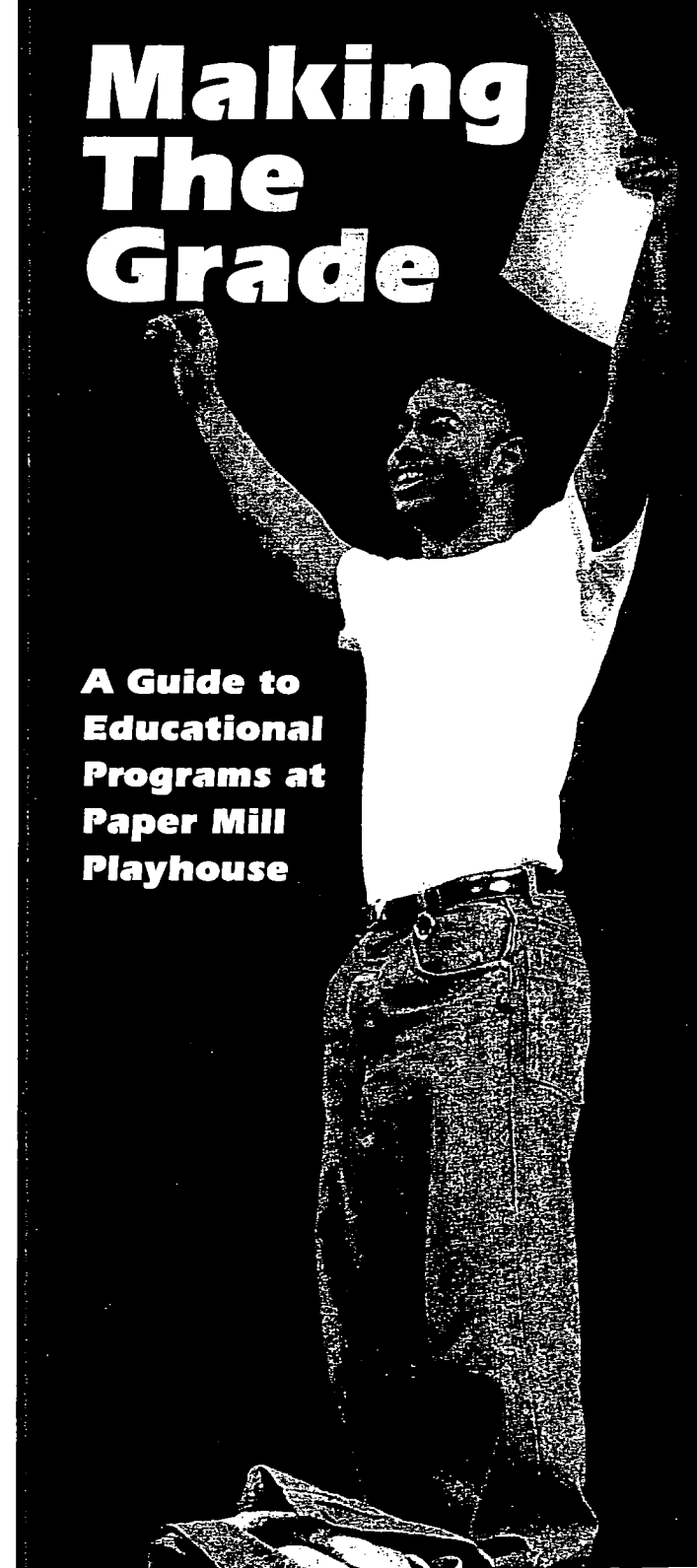
**For more information on
Educational Outreach Programming,
contact Susan Speidel,
Director of Education,
at 201-379-3636, ext. 2773**



Brookside Drive
Millburn, NJ 07041

Making The Grade

**A Guide to
Educational
Programs at
Paper Mill
Playhouse**



COMMITTED to excellence in the performing arts, Paper Mill Playhouse is also committed to education through the performing arts. As a result, the Playhouse offers a wide variety of educational outreach programs founded on the belief that no one can be truly educated without a basic knowledge and understanding of the arts.

The Adopt-A-School Project

First introduced at Newark Arts High School in 1989, the Adopt-A-School Project is a sequential three-year partnership for arts-in-education. More than 1,500 high school students and educators have participated in this curriculum-related project.

YEAR ONE: Focusing on the development of an informed audience, Phase One centers around trips to Paper Mill mainstage productions. Tickets and buses are provided free of charge, and students meet with actors, directors, and designers in pre-performance seminars. Study guides, specifically created for each production, enhance the live performance experience.

YEAR TWO: Phase Two places students center stage when, guided by professional theatre artists provided by Paper Mill, they form their own company and produce an original theatre work. The process helps develop essential collaborative skills while also discovering individual artistic voices. Phase Two culminates with a performance on stage at Paper Mill for an audience of invited guests.

YEAR THREE: In Phase Three, students design their own curriculum and participate in a series of theatre workshops based in areas of interest to the students. Workshops include acting, dance, stage combat, lighting and scenic design, and other technical theatre areas. Phase Three can also include teacher training for administrators and faculty of a particular school district.



Newark Arts High School student Tracey Ware performs onstage at Paper Mill in Phase Two of the Adopt-A-School Project.

Cover: Hillside High School student Shawn Bradshaw performs onstage at Paper Mill in Phase Two of the Adopt-A-School Project.

The Alternative Program

Since 1990, Paper Mill has worked with the faculty of East Orange Alternative High School in a unique execution of the Adopt-A-School Project tailored to meet the needs of at-risk students. Students attend mainstage performances at Paper Mill and participate in classroom workshops that use acting and performance techniques to improve literacy, increase communication skills, and awaken a desire to learn within the students. High school credit toward graduation is available for the participants.



Teaching Artist Bill Bowers leads a TheatreStart workshop with students from Millburn Middle School.

TheatreStart

TheatreStart brings live theatre to elementary and middle school students of the Millburn and Union school districts. Students attend performances at Paper Mill and in-school performances presented by the award-winning Pushcart Players. Pre-performance workshops prepare students for the performance experience and post-performance workshops enhance the experience through related activities. **Teacher training seminars are also provided to help educators connect workshop activities to classroom material.**

Funding for the Adopt-A-School Project, the Alternative Program, and TheatreStart is provided by: The New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Dept. of State, The Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, Aetna Life & Casualty, Bell Atlantic-NJ, Beneficial Management Corporation, C. R. Bard Foundation, Inc., CoreStates New Jersey National Bank, Exxon Corporation, George A. Ohl Charitable Trust (First Fidelity, Trustee), The Leavens Foundation, MCJ Foundation, Midlantic National Bank, National Starch and Chemical Company, Nordstrom, PSE&G, The Schering-Plough Foundation, and with love from Kings and Joan and Allen Bildner.

Young Critics Program

The Young Critics Program is designed for high school seniors enrolled in Honors English, Creative Writing, or Journalism classes at previously adopted schools. With an eye on developing advanced critical writing and thinking skills through the wide variety of experiences available in live theatre, students attend performances at Paper Mill and write a review of the production for their school newspaper. Students also attend a workshop prior to their first performance to discuss the role of the critic.

Musical Theatre Awards

The Paper Mill Musical Theatre Awards celebrate achievement in musical theatre productions by New Jersey high schools. Recognition of outstanding accomplishments are made in the areas of performance, costume and scenic design, direction, choreography, technical production, and overall production excellence. The awards are announced in a ceremony on stage at Paper Mill which also features performances from top nominated productions. Scholarships are also awarded that night to outstanding students, nominated by their teachers, who will be continuing to study musical theatre after high school.

The Humanities Series

Each year, Paper Mill offers a series of discussion evenings related to mainstage programming and designed to bring people together to learn more about themselves and the society in which they live. All Humanities Series events are provided free of charge and feature eminent artists, scholars, historians, and critics discussing various aspects of a specific production, a related topic, or the theatrical art form itself.



(From left) Author Regina Barreca, actor/storyteller William Mooney, and film critic Bob Campbell participate in a Paper Mill Humanities Series Symposium.

ANGELO DEL ROSSI
PRESIDENT
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER



BROOKSIDE DRIVE
MILLBURN, N.J. 07041
973-379-3636
FAX 973-376-0825

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ADOPT-A-SCHOOL

— Paper Mill Lends A Hand —

Imagine you are a young, talented high school student studying acting or dancing or singing. All you think about, dream about and plan on, is spending your life working in theatre. The only problem is, even though you live half an hour by train from a major theatrical center, you never have the opportunity to see any professional theatre. Moreover, though you are getting plenty of experience working with fellow students, you have no professional contacts and no professional working experience.

In 1989, the management of the Paper Mill Playhouse of New Jersey read in a newspaper article that the students at Newark Arts High School faced such a serious intellectual and practical deprivation. They set about eliminating this deprivation with a groundbreaking program which they called Adopt-A-School. According to Susan Speidel, Director of Education for the Paper Mill, the plan initially called for giving qualifying students from Newark Arts an opportunity to see 1st Class professional productions by providing them with free tickets to all six Paper Mill productions that year. In addition, the Paper Mill also put the students in contact with the staff of the theatre, from whom the students could learn about all aspects of doing shows on a professional level.

The program proved so successful and so rewarding for both the students and the directorship of the Paper Mill that it was expanded to a second year. Instructors in dance, acting, etc., were sent directly

into the classrooms of Newark Arts. The second year program culminated in a student production, which toured the school district and was performed at the Paper Mill itself. These joint efforts again achieved success, and the program expanded into a third year (it is a three-year program which is still in operation today), where the students went on to master classes with guests artists.

The Adopt-A-School program has grown and evolved. As of the 1995 academic year, there were eleven schools participating, along with the ongoing participation of Newark Arts High School. This brought student involvement to over four hundred (forty students from each of the chosen schools), and the program was designated a "model" arts-in-education partnership by the Arts Alliance for Education, the education department of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. Such theatrical luminaries as Gerry Dixon and Savion Glover have been affiliated with the program; the former as a teacher, the latter as a student. Other students have gone on to professional careers in the theatre, but perhaps the greatest result was the demonstrable improvement in the general academic performance of those enrolled in the program. And this has proven to be the case in other communities around the country where theatres have "adopted" schools.

Where arts flourish, students flourish.



Photo: Dolia Photo

Stagestruck

by Peter Filichia

School Plays

John McEwen was disgruntled by what he read in the paper. Teachers at Newark Arts High were lamenting that their students weren't seeing theater, mostly because they couldn't afford to.

McEwen, Director of Development at the Paper Mill Playhouse in nearby Millburn, NJ, decided to do something about it. And when John McEwen goes into action, things happen. He's done wonders in helping the physically disabled out of their homes and into the theater, and has garnered much statewide respect and many honors for it.

So McEwen started trading "what-ifs" with Angelo Del Rossi, Paper Mill's Executive Producer. "We talked about how we needed some educational programming. Angelo was fully behind it. And that's how we began our Adopt-a-School Program, which has allowed 3,000 students to see our season's six shows absolutely free.

It's now been nearly seven years since Newark Arts High teachers brought 40 of their students to Thursday matinees at "The State Theater of New Jersey." Susan Speidel, a fundraiser who'd eventually become Paper Mill's first Director of Education, then wondered how the predominantly white senior citizen afternoon audience would do with students from racially diverse schools. "At first," she admits, "some subscribers wanted to change their seats. And some kids came in feeling, 'This is too fancy. We don't belong here.' Though," she adds, "Savion Glover, an Arts High student, would come to our matinee after having performed in *Jelly's Last Jam* the night before."

Says McEwen, "So we held symposia before the shows to make the kids feel welcome, while teaching them, too. They met the directors, performers, and set designers. They were learning, and feeling more at home."

Buoyed by its first-year success, Paper Mill started an artists-in-residency program where kids could write and produce their own pieces. Speidel states, "To Angelo's credit, he's always said, 'Let's take it to the next level. If you think we can do it, we can.'"

"So we sent creative artists into the schools to help the kids develop original scripts. We had them become a production company, where they'd design their own logo, get a \$1,000 budget, and sets that our shop builds. When one school's students decided they'd pretend to be a traveling group of storytellers, we built them a wooden trunk, which our scenic artists painted."

Now each May, schools come from around the state to present "An Evening of Original Theater, Created and Performed by Participating Students." Says Speidel, "The kids from Edison wrote a piece called *To Whom It May Concern*, a very hard-hitting look at hate crimes and bias—gender bias, age bias, absolutely everything. They were selected as one of the very few high school groups to appear next year in the Edinburgh Festival. Now we're teaching them how to fundraise to make sure they can go on the trip."

The Adopt-A-School Program is now a three-year program. Says Speidel, "We like to start with the kids when they're sophomores, and stay with them until they graduate. In our last year with them, we ask what intrigues them, so we can bring in artists to teach master classes. Mime and costume design are favorite choices. So is a make-up workshop, where we totally disfigure one student—break his nose, put welts on his head. The kids love that. But maybe most popular is stage combat, taught by Rick Sordelet, who did the fight sequences for our *Prisoner of Zenda* and the Super Bowl Halftime Show.

"What we also like," she smiles, "is that our teachers often validate their teachers—so the kids say, 'Gee, Mr. Smith isn't so stupid after all!' " And we like to validate teachers to their administrators."

There have been results. "Keyport High School, in a rural part of the state, didn't have an auditorium but a *cafetorium*," moans McEwen. "But now they've put drama classes in their curriculum."

"I always had a blind faith in the power of theater," says Speidel, "but now I've witnessed it first-hand. Like the inner city student who sat at the back of a workshop and seemed uninterested. But his teacher

October 16, 1995

TheaterWeek



Newark Arts High School student Kaisha Williams performs on stage at Paper Mill Playhouse in the Adopt-A-School Project.

called the next day and said, 'Jerry insists on knowing how they made the scenery move. Something's happened to this kid.'

"The next time he attended, Jerry sat in the front row. He asked how much things cost, then wondered, 'My ticket says \$24, but I didn't pay. Who did?' And, probably for the first time, Jerry heard the names Schering-Plough, Kings Super Markets, and the Leavens Foundation.

"By the end of that year," Speidel reports, "Jerry was asking, 'Is there any way I can get a job here?' I was sorry to say there wasn't. But because I was doing a graduate school internship where I book artists for a summer festival, I called Jerry and said, 'We'll pay you minimum wage if you come in on the dates of the concert and go out and get the amenities the artist wants in his dressing room. You'll also get to see the performance.' "

Maybe that's why Jerry agreed. "And," states Speidel, "he's now in college planning for a career in theater. I know," she hastily adds, "not everyone will have that strong a reaction. But one of our workshops in public speaking or auditioning can help them to learn what it's like to get up in front of a prospective employer."

This year, 12 schools enrolled. Before they attended a performance of the current *Nine*, Speidel sent them study guides which she authored. ("The show makes more sense when the kids understand its frame of reference.") She let them know that "Fellini was an Italian film director, known for freely structured films in which

dreams and reality mingle." Included are quotes about his work from David Lynch, Claudia Cardinale, and RuPaul—as well as an intriguing one from the man himself: "It's my feeling that I've always told the same story."

Speidel acknowledges history, too, by informing the kids that in 1920, the year of Fellini's birth, women were enfranchised and liquor was no longer. Says Speidel, "I try to match the show to history and the rest of their curriculum."

And she tells the internal and external struggles that *Nine* endured en route to Broadway—reporting that Maury Yeston got the idea in 1962, when the Jersey City high school senior saw *8 1/2*. She includes photocopies of Hirschfelds and newspaper ads, too. "Ten years from now," she states, "when they're sitting around on a Saturday night and considering entertainment options, I'd like them to think of the theater." (They most likely will, after they see Robert Johanson's spectacular production, a match for the Broadway original.)

"Here's what's really ironic," says Speidel. "One day when burrowing through the archives, I found a 1938 interview with Frank Carrington, Paper Mill's original producing director. He said that he wanted the theater to be a family of artists to the community, a place people could study the performing arts. We feel we're accomplishing that. Some of those kids who thought they didn't belong here are now coming in and brightly saying, 'Hi, Connie!' to our head usher."

And have come to know the other theatergoers. "After one class saw *Brigadoon*, some kids came up and asked me, 'Where was Bob?' I didn't know whom they meant until they told me he was the gentleman who always sat in front of them. Because he was very elderly, they worried about him."

Here's the best part: Speidel went to the subscriber list, discovered Bob's phone number, called, and found out he'd changed his ticket because he had to be out of town. She then called and gave the good news to the relieved kids.

Which all goes to prove that when the Paper Mill Playhouse adopts a school's students, they feel as if they're part of the family.

Peter Filichia is the New Jersey theater critic for The Star-Ledger.

THE PAPER MILL PLAYHOUSE
ADOPT-A-SCHOOL PROJECT
STUDY GUIDE
for

Gigi

Study Guide Written by
Susan Speidel

Research Assistance by
Fred Vitale
and Mickey McNany-Damian

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Lerner and Loewe

One day in the summer of 1942, a young playwright and lyricist named Alan Jay Lerner was having lunch at the Lambs Club in New York City. As he remembered in his memoirs,

A short, well-built, tightly strung man with immensely dark circles under his eyes strode to a few feet from my table and stopped short...He stared a moment. I knew who he was. His name was Frederick Loewe...a struggling composer..."You're Lerner, aren't you?" I could not deny it. "You write lyrics?" he continued. "I try," I replied. "Well," he said, "would you like to write with me?" I immediately said yes and we went to work.¹

Frederick Loewe was born into a theatrical family in Berlin on June 11, 1901. The son of renowned singer Edmund Loewe, who created the role of Danilo in the first Berlin production of Franz Lehar's *THE MERRY WIDOW*, the young Fritz was a musical prodigy who made his debut with the Berlin Philharmonic at the age of 13 and who wrote his first operetta, called *KATRINA*, by the age of 15. The Loewe family moved to New York in 1923 when Edmund Loewe began to work for the famed theatrical director and producer David Belasco. After his father's death a few years later, the younger Loewe decided to stay in America and became a United States citizen. Known as "Fritz" to his friends, he made appearances as a concert pianist, but success as a composer eluded him. To make ends meet, Loewe took on a series of odd jobs including work as a cafeteria bus boy, a riding instructor, a boxer, a cowhand, and a night club piano player.

Alan Jay Lerner was born in New York on August 31, 1918. He was educated at private schools in England and attended Harvard University. His father, the founder of a line of women's clothing stores, had a great interest in language which he passed onto his son. While at Harvard, the young Lerner contributed to the *Hasty Pudding Show*. He also lost his sight in one eye during a boxing match in college, an incident which would later prevent him from serving in the military in World War II. Upon graduation, he worked in radio as a script writer for two years, writing hundreds of scripts for daily broadcasts. This provided a tremendous training ground and exercise in writing.

For their first joint venture, Lerner and Loewe wrote *LIFE OF THE PARTY* which opened and closed in Detroit. In 1943, they collaborated on *WHAT'S UP?* Despite the fact that it was directed by George Balanchine and had scenery by Boris Aronson, it lasted less than eight weeks. Two years later *THE DAY BEFORE SPRING* opened and ran for 167 performances, bringing Lerner and Loewe their first success. Broadway stardom came in 1947 with *BRIGADOON*, a musical myth set in the highlands of Scotland. Their next work was *PAINT YOUR WAGON* (1951). The story of prospector Ben Rumson who discovers gold in a California stream in 1853, Lerner wrote the script after researching the California gold rush.

¹ Lerner, *THE STREET WHERE I LIVE*, page 16.

Playwright George Bernard Shaw forbade the musical adaptation of his play PYGMALION during his lifetime, but the rights were granted after his death to Hungarian film maker Gabriel Pascal. In 1952, Pascal offered the project to Lerner and Loewe, but the team could not agree on how to change such a well-written drama, into a musical. The project stalled while they worked on separate projects for two years. Eventually, the problem of changing PYGMALION into a musical was solved by not really changing it all. The result was one of the most enduring musicals in theatre history - MY FAIR LADY (1956).

CAMELOT (1960) was based on T. H. White's THE ONCE AND FUTURE KING, a retelling of the legend of King Arthur. In the story, the young Princess Guenevere comes to England to wed King Arthur. Their marriage is a happy one until Lancelot, a young knight arrives from France. Lancelot and Guenevere fall in love, but are torn between their passion and their devotion to Arthur. They flee to France when the king's evil son, Mordred, plots against them. War with France ensues, but when Arthur meets the lovers in the field before the final battle, he forgives them. The king also stumbles across a young boy and charges him to keep the legend of Camelot alive by telling the story to everyone he meets. Through the boy, the legend of Arthur's court will not be forgotten.

Loewe retired in 1962 and Lerner went on to collaborate with composers Burton Lane (ON A CLEAR DAY YOU CAN SEE FOREVER - 1965; CARMELINA - 1979), Andre Previn (COCO - 1969) and Leonard Bernstein (1600 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE - 1976). In 1974, Lerner convinced Loewe to come out of retirement for the film adaptation of THE LITTLE PRINCE. The film was a critical disappointment and was pulled from theatres after only three weeks.

Lerner and Loewe's greatest works came at a time when the American musical theatre was ready for fantasy. In the 1940's the musical theatre was dominated by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II whose OKLAHOMA and CAROUSEL were two high points in the evolution of the American musical theatre and signaled the renewal of a new national spirit. World War II had killed satire and revived the sentimental musical and the mood of the country had switched to escapism, nostalgia and fantasy. The same was true of Lerner's personal point of view and this was expressed in his lyrics. He had a profound interest in human emotions, the occult, extrasensory perception, reincarnation and all that is metaphysical. His lyrics are most successful when dealing in the realm of fantasy. In his autobiography, he stated,

My own taste has always run toward the romantic (meaning larger than life, not operetta). I have no gift for satire and I instinctively look for humor in the antics of personality. I like to write stories that move me, with the implicit hope that they will move others, too. This does not necessarily mean love stories, although it usually does. As a rule it is not sadness that brings tears to my eyes, but a longing fulfilled.²

² Lerner, THE STREET WHERE I LIVE, page 53.

Colette

Despite the autobiographical tone of much of her work, Colette, one of the most famous French writers of her day, remained secretive, evasive and elusive throughout much of her life. She was remarkably faithful to her inner vision throughout her long career as a writer which spanned almost 50 years and a host of literary styles and fads. At the end of her career, she noted that her finest works were part memoir and part essay, "a quite skillful arrangement of fact and fiction."³

Colette's full name was Gabrielle-Sidonie Colette and she was born on January 28, 1873 in the Burgundian village of Saint-Sauveur-en-Puisaye, approximately 120 miles south of Paris. Saint-Sauveur-en-Puisaye was a plain village with graceless streets and undistinguished houses. The main attraction of the town was a renovated castle dating back three centuries. It had a beautiful view of rolling, fertile fields and meadows with a vast and somber forest surrounding the site. When she was about twelve years old, Colette recalled that she was a "queen of the earth" in tune with nature and the animals who lived in the fields around her. Throughout her life, she was keenly attuned to the natural world - plants, animals and nature. For Colette, animals were not merely animals; they had lives and homes, friendships and feelings, and most of all possessed a sense of mystery that only those above the common run of mere human beings could grasp.

Although she was surrounded by books and was an avid reader and a bright student, there was little about Colette as a child that suggested she would have a literary career. Her father, Captain Colette, a rather dashing figure who was forced to abandon a brilliant military career in 1859 when he lost a leg during the Italian campaign of Napoleon III, was a tax collector. Although the family was not wealthy, Colette's parent's marriage was built upon deep love. Sido, as her mother was called, was the principal figure in young Colette's life and the author's insight into human character can be traced directly to her mother's influence. This insight was enhanced by Colette's own life experiences including three marriages, numerous love affairs and modest fame as a music-hall performer. Her first appearance as an actress was in 1903 and she later worked as a reporter, for the journalistic magazine called *LE MATIN*, and as a beautician. Although she excelled at all these things, her true success was as an author and her writing revealed a sensitivity to and appreciation of sensuality and humanity. Eventually, her novels and essays were internationally acclaimed and she was named as a member many literary and honorary societies including the Goncourt Academy, the French Legion of Honor and the Royal Belgian Academy.

At the age of 20, she married a 34-year-old journalist and author named Henri Gauthier-Villars, whom everyone knew as Willy. Her parents contested the marriage, but the headstrong Colette persisted and they were wed on May 15, 1893. The marriage was not a happy one however, and Colette suffered from depression and a nervous collapse. Her convalescence was long and monotonous and, as a distraction, Willy suggested that she write a journal about her school days. When the work was finished, Willy put the manuscript in a drawer, thinking that it was worthless. Two years later, while clearing out his desk, Willy found the manuscript, and decided that it might sell better than the pulp fiction that he was writing. Colette set to work again, touching up the text according to Willy's instructions.

³ Cottrell, COLETTE page 2



Colette
painted by Ferdinand Humbert
(circa 1900)

Entitled *CLAUDINE A L'ECOLE* (*CLAUDINE AT SCHOOL*), the book was published in 1900, under Willy's name. Carefully organizing a publicity campaign, Willy saw to it that a picture of a young girl was placed on the cover of the first edition of the book and coyly hinted to his publishers and the press that a female had in fact collaborated with him. "And that," explained Colette, "is how I became a writer."⁴

The novel was a great success and was the first of five books tracing the girlhood and married life of Claudine who, if not identical with Colette, nevertheless expressed important facets of the author's experiences. Gradually, the reading public learned that it was indeed Colette who had created the character and the superb style of her writing brought her recognition and independence from Willy. Within a few short years, she became France's most popular author. Throughout her life, she continued to write from her own experiences including the pleasures of her idyllic childhood, the superficial glamour of Parisian society, the sleazy glitter of her years as a music hall entertainer, her passionate friendships and affairs, and her two subsequent marriages. Her novel *GIGI*, belongs to the first two of these thematic areas and harkens back to the fond reminiscences of her childhood and the demimonde of turn of the century Paris.

GIGI is more of a fairy tale than a true novel. It was written in 1942, when Colette was almost 70 years old, a few months after Colette's third husband had been arrested by the Nazis and taken to a concentration camp. Colette was by then completely bedridden with arthritis and was often in great pain. She was also horrified by the ugliness of the war-torn world around her and escaped through her writing to the splendor and innocence of *La Belle Epoque* at the turn of the century. In *GIGI*, she recaptured some of her sparkling youthful vitality and the carefree world in which her fiction first took shape. The milieu is one of elegant corruption, inhabited by women whose good taste and dignity are the result of strict adherence to the "honorable habits of women without honor" - the code of the courtesan.

The source of the story was an anecdote related to Colette in 1926. The most significant change Colette made in her transformation of the events into fiction was to place the action at the turn of the century. In the characters given to her in the anecdote, Colette easily found models from her own fictional world and from her past. Sixteen year-old *GIGI* is Colette's final idealization of youthful exuberance and innocence. Bursting with life, *Gigi* is a tomboy with the same ideal of youthfulness that Colette, some forty years before had embodied in the figure of Claudine - her first major literary character.

GIGI is a comedy of manners and a masterpiece of style. The daughter of a not-so-successful stage actress, the title character is being brought up by her grandmother and aunt - two aging courtesans - who train her in the art of seduction. Although the family business is to be mistresses, not wives, the story never becomes sordid or sleazy. Thanks to the honesty and delicacy of Colette's style, the story emerges as highly moral and warm comedy. It is the fable of an apparently naive little girl who simply wants no part of a shabby life, and in her own straightforward way, proves her point.

⁴ Cottrell, COLETTE, page 13.

Colette
in costume for one of her
music hall performances



Gigi on Stage and Screen

In 1948, GIGI became a successful French film starring Danielle Delorme and introducing the character of Gaston's uncle, Honore Lachailles who does not appear in Colette's original story. In 1951, a non-musical version of the story opened on Broadway, written by Anita Loos and starring Audrey Hepburn, whom Colette herself had 'discovered' when the young actress was filming a small movie role on the beach in Monte Carlo). This version of the story eliminated Honore Lachailles and ran for 217 performances before touring throughout America. In 1954, the play was translated into French and became an enormous hit with Parisian audiences, opening just a few months after Colette's death.

A few years later, Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Loewe were looking for a follow-up project to MY FAIR LADY, their musicalization of George Bernard Shaw's play Pygmalion. Simultaneously, Arthur Freed, a producer at MGM studios in Hollywood, was looking for a project for his new star, Leslie Caron. Caron was a French dancer and actress who had been discovered by Gene Kelly for the film AN AMERICAN IN PARIS. Since she had previously appeared on stage as Gigi, in the London production of Anita Loos' play, Freed convinced Lerner and Loewe to musicalize Caron's stage success for a major motion picture. With the inspired casting of Maurice Chevalier, who had been a personal friend of Colette's, the role of Honore was added once again and became an important part of the story, providing a charming narration that could put the whole story in perspective for an American audience. Gaston was played with impeccable French elegance by Louis Jordan. The film was shot almost completely on location in Paris and critics and audiences praised everything about it. GIGI won ten Academy Awards including Best Picture, Best Director (Vincent Minnelli), Best Score, Best Color Cinematography, Best Art and Set Decoration, Best Costumes, and Best Editing.

During the 1970's, Lerner and Loewe had reached the end of their creative partnership, but collaborated one last time on an adaptation of their film version of GIGI for the stage. It opened on Broadway in 1973, with Daniel Massey in the role of Gaston, and ran for 104 performances.

On the Paper Mill Stage

Paper Mill's production of Gigi is under the direction of Robert Johanson, who stated,

We wanted to evoke the milieu of Paris at the turn of the century. The city is more than a setting for the show; it is a major character as well. The thing that ties all the elements of GIGI together is the glorious music. It is a shimmering thread that runs throughout the show. Lerner and Loewe's score is a lush romantic collection of classic songs like "Thank Heaven for Little Girls," "I Remember It Well," "The Night They Invented Champagne" and the Oscar-winning title song. Paper Mill's production will also restore two songs from the film that were cut when the show was first transferred to the stage. At the heart of GIGI, however, remains the intimate story of a truly sweet and remarkable young girls' coming of age; her yearning for love and for "something more" out of a life that has been arranged for her.



*Members of the French society
relaxing at a fashionable seaside resort
(1900)*

La Belle Epoque

La Belle Epoque refers to the years at the end of the 19th century and prior to the beginning of the first World War - 1900 to 1914. In Paris, it was a time of fashionable salons and a lifestyle full of elegance, style and grace. France was secure in her industry, her international relations, her trade, her army, her navy and her economy. Trade and colonialism had poured unprecedented wealth into Europe, industrialization had increased material comforts, and a whole generation of French citizens had come of age untouched by war.

The main business of life during La Belle Epoque was pleasure. Champagne was inexpensive and the value of enjoyment in life was high. Despite a pose of boredom and an affected blasé attitude amongst the upper class, there was a zestful interest in the century to come and the science and advances that would create the next century.

The men of French society were sophisticated, elegant and graceful - *a homme du monde*, or man of the world. The image of women in La Belle Epoque was of an ideal - an exquisite, perfectly dress Parisian beauty. The rich put on a dazzling show, dressing extravagantly, dining lavishly and flaunting their infidelities. Regarding love and marriage, there was a code of conduct that governed both sexes and their approaches to extra-marital affairs.

In good society, illicit love was permissible as long as it remained clandestine. If one broke the seventh commandment [Thou Shall Not Commit Adultery], one broke it with style and above all with discretion, for...appearances were of paramount importance. A young man was expected to sow his wild oats, a husband was expected to have a mistress. A wife might even have a lover, as long as she was never found out...There was even a code for infidelity and a woman felt herself to be truly honorable if, after taking on a lover, she managed somehow to break off marital relations with her husband. To remain faithful to one's lover was considered exceptionally splendid. Divorce was a deep disgrace and a divorced woman was a social outcast. One duchess had a friend who had not only been divorced, but remarried. The duchess still corresponded with this friend but her letters were always delivered by hand in envelopes on which nothing was written, as the duchess refused to accept her friend's new name.⁵

Celebration was the mood of the day. When, after a bitter transit strike that had lasted for months, the local trains were put back into service, they appeared decorated with ribbons, confetti and garlands of flowers. Montmartre was the center of Paris entertainment in the 1890's with dance halls and music halls where working men could indulge in wine, women and song. The famed home of the scandalous "Can-Can", the Moulin Rouge, opened it's doors in 1889 and the red windmill above the nightclub's entrance began to turn as an entire decade in the life of Paris passed from history into myth.

⁵ Skinner, ELEGANT WITS AND GRAND HORIZONTALS, pages 23-24.



Sarah Bernhardt
as she appeared in Edmond Rostand's play
L'aiglon
(1900)

At the end of the 19th century, the philosopher Frederick Nietzsche said, "As an artist, a man has no home in Europe save Paris." The city was in fact home to the most stimulating people of the day and there was an explosion of intellectual activity and artistic innovation. The scientific community was filled with anticipation and excitement as people eagerly embraced new ideas. Louis Pasteur's work in microbiology and Pierre and Marie Curie's studies of radium (which won the Nobel Prize for physics in 1903) added to the age's assurance that science and medicine would cure all of man's ills.

Literature was regarded with great seriousness and Marcel Proust had published his first work, *LA REVUE BLANCHE*, in 1889. Poems were recited in street cafes along with lines of dialogue from Edmond Rostand's play *CYRANO DE BERGERAC*. Sarah Bernhardt, with her extraordinarily beautiful speaking voice and perfect diction was being applauded in *LA DAME AUX CAMÉLIAS* by Alexandre Dumas, fils, as the world's greatest actress and Isadora Duncan, who performed barefoot and in flowing tunics, was blazing the trail of modern dance with fire and impetuosity. Vaslav Nijinsky, who combined physical virtuosity and acting ability in his dance; was about to cause a sensation with *THE AFTERNOON OF A FAUN*, a ballet that featured lyrical and stirring music by Claude Debussy, and everyone in Paris hummed the popular tunes of Jacques Offenbach. In addition, an entirely new art form was born in 1894 when the Lumiere brothers made the first short films.

It is in painting and the visual arts, however, that the unbridled creativity of the period is most evident. An artistic revolution had been gathering force in the 1860's when Edouard Manet first shattered convention by painting female nudes in everyday surroundings rather than in idealized or idealized settings and principles of color, line and composition that had been accepted since the Renaissance were called into question. Art critics and patrons fought with zeal over the merits of new painting styles including Impressionism, Postimpressionism and Fauvism. Paul Cézanne was being heralded, in the last few years of his life, for his use of geometric forms and Henri Matisse was being attacked as "barbaric and naive...a child who plays with the box of colors he just got as a Christmas present."⁶ Vincent Van Gogh, who came to Paris in 1886, was working in obscurity to create sun-drenched canvases and George Seurat was composing complete landscapes with juxtaposed dots of color. August Rodin was bringing boldness and originality to the world of sculpture, Paul Gauguin had yet to discover his own artistic voice and was painting images dominated by Japanese influences, and Pablo Picasso, who moved to Paris from Spain in 1904, was beginning to experiment with monochromatic moods in what would become famous as his "blue period."

In the commercial art world, Paris fairly blossomed with bright posters and magazine covers. Chiefly responsible for this flowering of the graphic arts was the revival of lithography by artists who, like Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, were influenced by Japanese art and worked to perfect bold designs with strong lines and vibrant colors. Lautrec was from an artistic family and as a result of a congenital weakness in his bones and several childhood accidents, only grew to four feet eight inches in height. Despite this disability, he had a successful art career and is, as represented in the musical *GIGI*, a symbol of the artistic vitality of Paris at the turn of the century. Unhappy in his personal life and an alcoholic by an early age, Lautrec haunted Montmartre, the nightclub district of Paris, wandering from one cabaret to another. He sat for hours in the Moulin Rouge nightclub, sketching the dancers and musical entertainers of the day with a somewhat detached style. He is sometimes regarded, because of his posters of entertainers, as a lighthearted or shallow artist but he is neither.

⁶ Russell, John. *THE WORLD OF MATISSE*, pg. 60.



Windmill at Montmartre

by Vincent Van Gogh

(1887)



Evocation (The Burial of Casagemas)

by Pablo Picasso

(1901)



Le Goulue Entering the Moulin Rouge
by Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec
(1892)

Divan Japonais

75 rue Des Martyrs



Ed Fournier
directeur

Le Divan Japonais

by Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec

(1892)



*The abiding symbol of La Belle Epoque
The Eiffel Tower*

Lautrec's intention was to report life as he saw it without the personal involvement or rage of his contemporaries. His designs are captivating with an underlying essence of melancholy. Attracted by people of action, he frequented circuses, sporting events and theatres and captured both the frenetic and glittering world on the surface of La Belle Epoque and the seamy and desperate world that existed underneath. He chose garish colors and adopted a drawing style that is exaggerated and grotesque. He applied the same technique to the posters he designed to advertise the night spots he frequented and to immortalize the style and mannerisms of their most famous performers. His ill-health and frantic lifestyle took its toll and he died at the age of 37. His career was brilliant and brief and his sketches and paintings created a lasting image of La Belle Epoque.

The Eiffel Tower

Perhaps the most enduring symbol of the creative energy of La Belle Epoque is the Eiffel Tower, an immense structure of exposed latticework which was erected for the Paris Exposition of 1889. As stated by the organizers, the purpose of the exposition was to

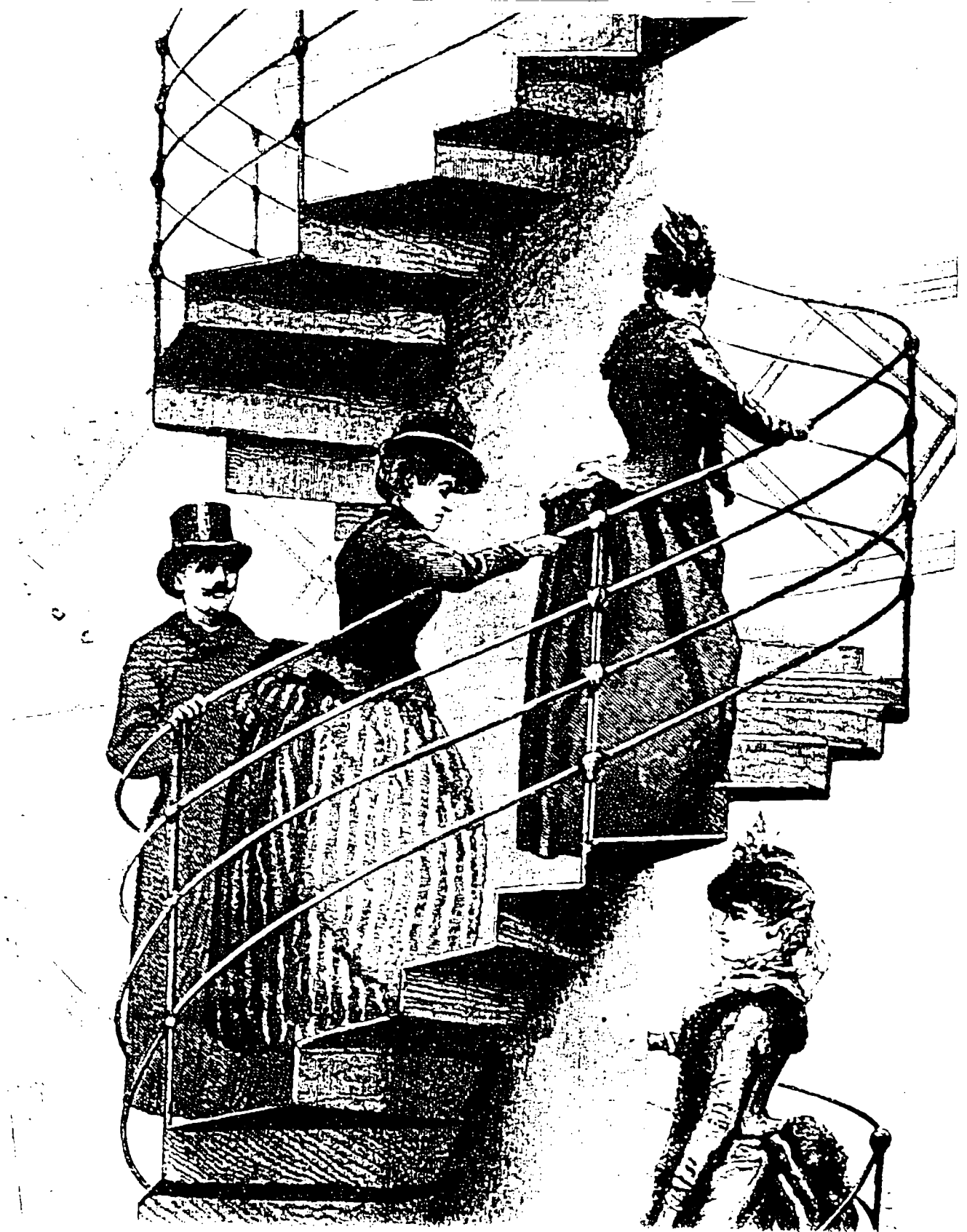
...show our sons what their fathers have accomplished in the space of a century through progress in knowledge, love of work and respect for liberty...and future generations will thereby be more determined than ever to climb still higher than we have.⁷

Made of iron, the tower was named after the French structural engineer Alexander Gustave Eiffel, who was assisted in the design of the tower by engineers Maurice Koechlin and Emile Noguier and the architect Stephen Sauvestre. Built to celebrate the science and engineering achievements of the age, the tower symbolized the vigor and brilliance of France's designers, engineers and industrialists. The tower stands 984 feet tall and was the tallest structure in the world until the Chrysler Building was constructed in New York, in 1929.

At the time of its construction, many Parisians were against the tower. Soon after work had begun in January of 1887, a petition, signed by leading artists and writers of the day, went to the Director of Works for the Exhibitions. They protested that the tower was ugly and would "dominate Paris like a black, gigantic factory chimney, its barbaric mass crushing Notre-Dame, the Sainte Chapelle, the Tour Saint Jacques and the Louvre⁸." There was also concern amongst the inhabitants of the area that the tower was unsafe and would fall to the ground causing mass devastation. One professor of mathematics claimed his calculations proved that Eiffel's design would collapse once construction reached 700 feet and a popular newspaper declared the tower would sink into the ground from the weight of the iron girders. Eiffel replied to these challenges by personally guaranteeing the safe construction of the tower and assuming responsibility for any accidents. If the tower proved to be dangerous, as his critic's claimed, Eiffel would pay for its demolition.

⁷ Harris, THE TALLEST TOWER, page 10.

⁸ Ibid, page 69.

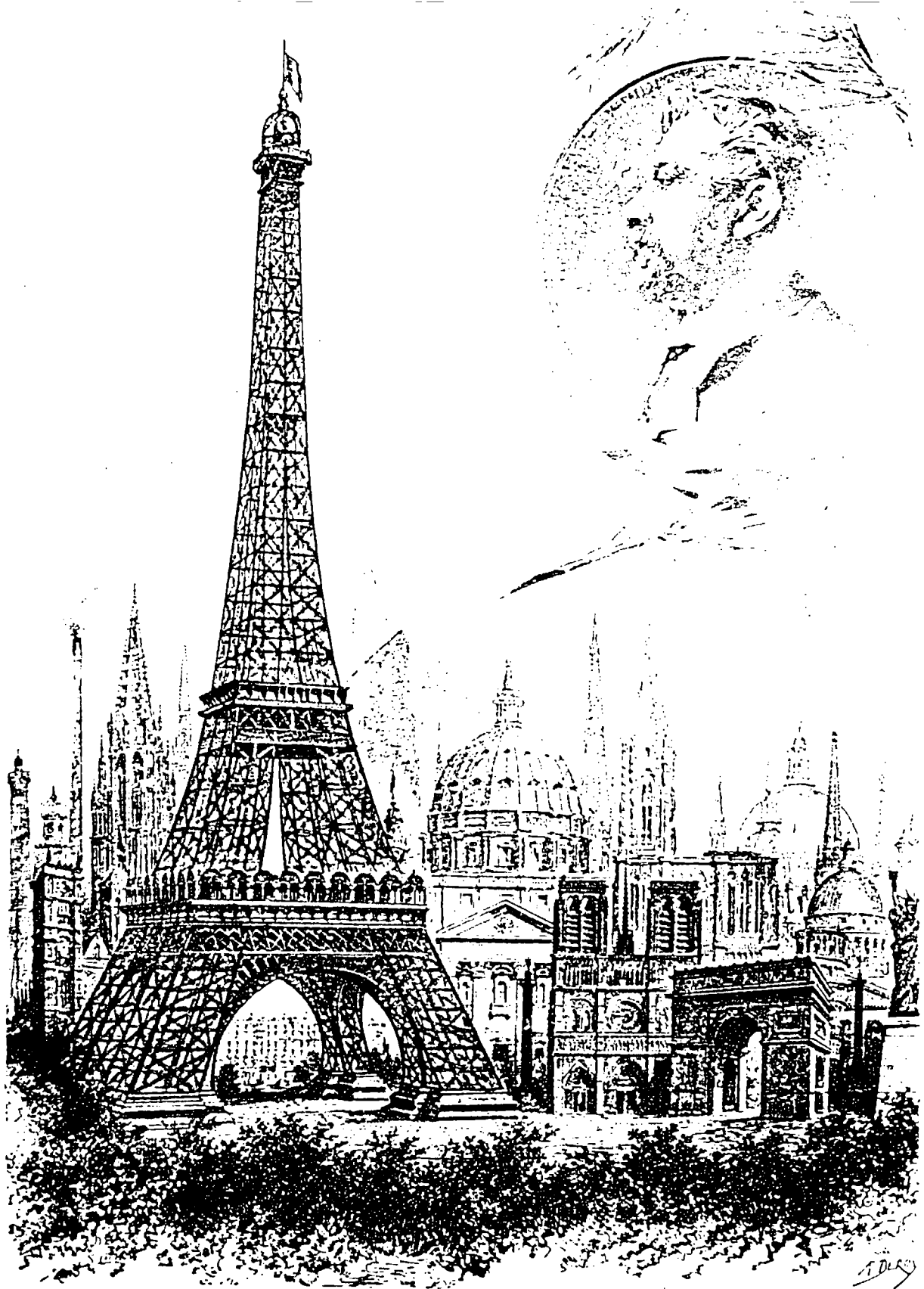


*Visitors to the Grand Exposition of 1889
climbing the steps to the top of
The Eiffel Tower*

Eiffel's self confidence came from his belief in the design of the tower, his devotion to accuracy and a lifetime of experience with large engineering projects. His notable bridges include iron structures in Portugal and the south of France and he also designed the framework for France's gift to America, the Statue of Liberty. He approached the challenge of building the tower with painstaking preparation that is unique in the history of great engineering projects. His clockwork precision and careful planning not only allowed him to complete construction by the deadline, but to build the structure with the loss of only one life. This was a remarkable safety record in comparison with other large building projects of the time such as the Brooklyn Bridge which claimed the lives of twenty workers and designer, John Roebling. So perfectly balanced was Eiffel's design, that the huge supports that form the base of the tower could be moved into position by only three or four men. When the base of the structure was completed, no more than two and one-half inches separated the outreaching beams from the horizontal frames. The rest of the tower was completed without so much as a file or hand drill being used to correct the alignment of the rivet holes. True to his word, Eiffel completed the tower in time for the opening of the Exposition, but installation of the elevators did not take place until several months later. This did not, however, deter tourists who visited Eiffel's masterpiece, climbing the more than 1600 steps to the top and it was estimated that more than two million people visited the tower during the Exposition.

Dominating the skyline of Paris, the Eiffel Tower is composed of a platform resting on four separate supports (called pylons or bents). Above this, is a second platform and supports that merge into a unified column. In the construction of the tower, the curve of the base pylons was precisely calculated so that the bending and shearing forces of the wind were progressively transformed into forces of compression, which the bents could withstand more effectively. During the early part of the twentieth century, the tower housed a private office for Eiffel and a laboratory where he conducted wind experiments and weather observations. The tower was also used for wireless transmissions in the early days of radio and survived the German occupation of Paris during the second World War. It was liberated with the rest of the city in the summer of 1945 and once again the national flag of France flew from the top.

Today, the tower houses restaurants and gift shops and is used as a television broadcasting tower. As one of the major tourist attractions in Paris, it can receive as many as 5,000 visitors per day and is one of the most photographed sights in the world. There are more than 150 employees including security police, maintenance technicians, elevator operators, and ticket sellers. As part of a continuing maintenance program, the Tower is regularly checked for defects and faults via closed-circuit television. Every seven years, a small army of 30 workers is brought in to scrub off the accumulated grime, touch up rust spots with a special sealant and paint the tower with a rust-inhibiting silicone and lead paint. Besides possessing special protective qualities, the paint has to be elastic enough not to crack when the top of the tower sways in high winds or when the base of the tower expands and contracts due to changes in temperature. More than fifty-five tons of paint are needed and the process takes a total of two years to complete at a cost of more than \$300,000.



*The Eiffel Tower
compared to the tallest structures in the world at the time
with an inset of a commemorative coin of Eiffel
minted for the Great Exposition of 1889*

Paris

Paris, the capital of France, is located in northern France on both banks of the Seine River. The city sits 90 miles from the river's mouth on the English Channel. The city and surrounding suburbs (the Ill-de-France region) is one of Europe's largest metropolitan areas. Paris is more than 2,000 years old and was settled by the Gauls of the Parisii between 250 and 200 BC, who built a fishing village on an island in the Seine. This village grew into Paris, which is today the business, historic, intellectual diplomatic, religious, educational, artistic and tourist center of France. One of the major cities of Europe since the Middle Ages, the city as it exists today really developed in the second half of the 19th century. The city's greatest growth came between 1850 and 1890, when the population doubled in size to more than 2 million. The population reached a peak in 1921, after which people began migrating away from the city. Since then, as homes have been replaced by offices in Paris proper, most of the growth has occurred in the suburbs.

The economic activities of Paris today overshadow those of any other part of France in importance. After tourism, the cities' largest industry is banking and much of the smaller industry in central Paris is of the craft type, based on skill and most often family owned. Many of these industries make luxury items such as perfumes, furs, gloves, jewelry and clothing, and Paris has long been a major force in the fashion industry. Book printing, publishing and toy manufacturing are also major activities in central Paris. Heavier industries are situated in the suburbs. These include the manufacture of automobiles, machine tools, and electronic products. Construction and the production of building materials are also important sources of revenue in the city. The city is divided into 20 districts, each with its own mayor. Each of these is again divided into four sections. Two prefects and a mayor administer the city as a whole with the assistance of a general council. The climate of Paris is characterized by a lack of extremes, with an average temperature of 66 degrees F in July and 37 degrees F in January.

Champagne

Champagne is a sparkling wine from the Champagne region of France. The French government allows the use of the name only by wines grown in this region, and has often sought to prevent its use by American and Italians who make sparkling wine by the champagne method. The champagne method dates from the 17th century and was discovered by a monk named Dom Perignon, who is said to have been the first to use pieces of cork as bottle stoppers. The wines of this period were bottled while still fermenting; the cork stopper forced the carbon dioxide produced by fermentation back into the wine, creating an effervescent liquid.

Modern champagnes are made with a blend of three different wines, bottled with a small amount of sugar that fuels a second fermentation. After aging for three to five years, the bottles are uncorked and any accumulating sediment is removed. The bottles are recorked and wired shut and the wine is ready to drink. There are three dominant flavors of champagne - Brut which is very dry, Sec which is medium in sweetness and Doux which is the sweetest. One of the most famous champagnes bears the name Dom Perignon.



The City of Paris

The Works of Lerner and Loewe

1942 - THE LIFE OF THE PARTY (stage)
1943 - WHAT'S UP? (stage)
1945 - THE DAY BEFORE SPRING (stage)
1947 - BRIGADOON (stage)
1951 - PAINT YOUR WAGON (stage)
1956 - MY FAIR LADY (stage)
1958 - GIGI (film)
1960 - CAMELOT (stage)
1973 - GIGI (stage)
1974 - THE LITTLE PRINCE (film)

The Works of Colette

1900 - CLAUDINE A L'ECOLE
1901 - CLAUDINE A PARIS
1902 - CLAUDINE EN MANAGE
1903 - CLAUDINE S'EN VA
1904 - DIALOGUES DE BETES
1907 - LA RETRAITE SENTIMENTALE
1908 - EN CAMARADES
1909 - L'INGENUE LIBERTINE
1910 - LA VAGABONDE
1913 - L'ENVERS DU MUSIC-HALL
1916 - LA PAIX CHEZ LES BETES
1919 - MITSOU
1920 - CHERI
1922 - LA MAISON DE CLAUDINE
1926 - LA FIN DE CHERI
1928 - LA NAISSANCE DU JOUR
1929 - LA SECONDE
1930 - SIDO
1932 - CES PLAISIRS
1933 - LA CHATTE
1934 - DUO
1936 - MES APPRENTISSAGES
1941 - JULIE DE CARNELHAN
1943 - NOCES
1944 - GIGI
1946 - E'TOILE VESPER
1949 - LE FANAL BLEU
1950 - OEUVRES COMPLETES

Terms Relating to Gigi and La Belle Epoque

Alsace Lorraine - Two historic sections of eastern France; the national allegiance of the land was frequently debated between 1900 and 1945

Sarah Bernhardt - (1844-1923) A French actress of great renown who is considered to be one of the greatest actresses of all time. She gained fame in Paris, but was soon known all over the world and toured the United States nine times. Her personal life was unconventional and she was an expert at maintaining a fascinating public image. Her right leg was amputated in 1915, as the result of a fall, but she continued to appear on-stage in rigorous roles.

Camille - LA DAME AUX CAMELIAS, better known to English-speaking audiences as CAMILLE, was the first successful play by Alexander Dumas, fils. Written first as a novel in 1848, it was presented as a play in Paris in 1852. In it, Dumas portrayed the life of a Parisian Courtesan and although the characters and moral issues of her life were presented in a stereotypical way, it captured the essence of the demimonde and LA BELLE EPOQUE.

Claude Debussy - (1862-1918) A French composer of the romantic school, he is best remembered for his lyrical interpretations of nature such as LA MER and as the composer of the ballet THE AFTERNOON OF A FAUN.

Courtesan - A prostitute; originally the mistress of a ruler or a king.

Demimonde - A phrase used to refer to chic society during La Belle Epoque; literally translated as "half of the world."

Isadora Duncan - (1877-1927) An American dancer who, with little formal dance training, rejected the restraints of classical ballet and pioneered modern dance. Her style highlighted natural movement and the freedom of her dances was matched by her tempestuous personal life.

1812 Overture - An orchestral work written by Russian composer Peter Illych Tchiakovsky (1840-1893). Celebrating the war of 1812, the piece is known for being extremely loud and featuring live cannon shots during performance. In contemporary television advertising, it provided the theme for "Puffed Rice" cereal which was promoted with the slogan, "This is the cereal that's shot from guns"

Fauvism - An artistic movement in Paris and the South of France that used raw, vibrant colors within bold black outlines with a distorted use of perspective. Condemned at the time as being an assault on the Parisian's traditional love of order and harmony, this style of painting today is regarded as both joyous and elegant.

Flamenco - A style of singing, dancing and guitar playing that originated in Andalusia in the south of Spain and derived many of its characteristics from the music and dance of Gypsies. Flamenco dancing is characterized by intricate toe and heel clicking and by the posturing of the male dancers and the twisting arm and hand gestures of female dancers.

Follies Bergere - A French music hall entertainment in which women wore scanty, but glamorous costumes.

Impressionism - A term derived from a painting by Claude Monet entitled IMPRESSION: SUNRISE. The term was quickly taken up by sympathetic critics who used it in an alternative sense to mean the impression stamped on the senses by a visual experience that is rapid and transitory.

Paul Gauguin - (1848-1903) One of the leading figures in postimpressionist art of the 1880's and 1890's, Gauguin's personality and his principles of coloring and composition exerted a strong influence on modern painting. He spent his later years in Tahiti and created a series of paintings that depict the physical beauty of that culture.

Henri Matisse - (1869-1954) Matisse ranks among the greatest painters of the 20th century and was one of the founders of the Fauvism school of painting. Fauvism was a derogatory label applied to artists who exhibited together in 1905 and shocked the general public with unrealistic images composed of strokes of bright, often clashing color and defying all traditional canons of painting.

Maxim's - A fashionable Paris nightspot, popular at the height of La Belle Epoque and noted for being the favorite dining place of glittering Parisian society.

Milieu - the environment or social setting for a particular event.

Vaslav Nijinsky - (1888-1950) One of the greatest male dancers in the history of ballet, the Russian-born dancer had a brief but brilliant career and was most famous for his collaborations with Russian choreographer Serge Diaghilev including LE SPECTRE DEL LA ROSE (1911), THE AFTERNOON OF A FAUN (1912), and THE RITE OF SPRING (1913).

Jules Offenbach (1819-1880) Originally born in Germany, Offenbach is best known as a composer of French music hall pieces such as BARBE-BLEUE and LA VIE PARISIENNE.

Pablo Picasso - (1881-1973) The most successful and influential artist of the 20th century, Picasso influenced painting, sculpture and graphic art. The lyricism of his early "blue" and "rose" periods, reflecting the elegance of La Belle Epoque, vanished during the first decade of the 20th century when Picasso experimented with cubism, a style which proved to be of fundamental importance to the development of modern art.

Marcel Proust (1871-1922) A French novelist who is best known for the work REMEMBRANCES OF THINGS PAST, Proust was out to alter consciousness and demonstrate the relationship between art and love.

Renaissance - The great revival of art, literature and learning in Europe in the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries.

The Riviera - A coastal strip of the Mediterranean on the southeast coast of France; known for beautiful beaches and elegant resorts

August Rodin - (1840-1917) One of the greatest and most prolific sculptors of the 19th century, Rodin created public monuments along with numerous small and intimate sculptures. His most famous work is entitled, "The Thinker" which he created in 1880.

Edmond Rostand - (1868-1918) French playwright and poet who is best remembered today as the creator of the famous play and character of the same name, CYRANO DE BERGERAC

Georges Seurat - (1859-1891) A French artist who contributed to painting by introducing a more systematic and scientific technique known as pointillism or divisionism, in which small dots of color are grouped to create a sense of vibrancy, tending to interact and fuse in the spectator's eye. His most famous work is SUNDAY AFTERNOON ON THE ISLAND OF LA GRANDE JATTE (1884-86) which served as the inspiration and centerpiece of the contemporary musical theatre piece SUNDAY IN THE PARK WITH GEORGE by composer Stephen Sondheim.

Trouville - A fashionable seaside resort on the Normandy coast of France frequented as much for the gambling casinos as for the sea and the surrounding picturesque landscape.

Vincent Van Gogh - (1853- 1890) Although almost wholly unknown during his brief lifetime, the painter Van Gogh is today perhaps the most widely known and recognizable representative of the postimpressionist school. His work was an important bridge between the 19th century and 20th century art worlds.

Venice - Venice is a popular vacation destination and is the capital of the Venezia province in the Veneto region of northeastern Italy. Built on and around the Grand Canal, travel throughout the city is mostly by motorboats, water-buses, gondolas or on foot.

Versailles - The palace of Versailles was built in 1662 and served for more than 100 years as the official residence of the monarchy of France. It was the most elegant palace in Europe and featured lavish halls and salons, including a dazzling Hall of Mirrors that was added in 1678. In later years, the palace was used for state events, the signing of international treaties and is today a major French tourist attraction.

Aux Francis

Occasionally, a character in GIGI will use a French phrase or word when they are speaking. Not only does this add authenticity to their speech, since they live in France and would naturally speak French, it adds a bit of local color and charm to the language of the musical. Here are some French words and phrases that will help you understand and enjoy the show.

Bourgeoisie - The social class between the aristocracy or very wealthy and the middle or working class.

Cassoulet - An earthenware or glass baking dish, usually with a cover, in which food can be baked and served; a casserole.

Cheri - A term of affection meaning darling or dear one.

Comme il faut - A phrase used, sometimes sarcastically, for appropriate social behavior literally translated as “as is necessary,”

Crepes Suzette - A very thin pancake in a hot orange-flavored sauce, and usually served in flaming brandy.

En Brochette - A broiled dish of meat (usually lamb) and vegetables cooked and served on a skewer; a shish-ka-bob.

Fontainbleau - A famous fountain in the middle of Paris.

Raison d’etre - Literally translated, “reason for being.” When he addresses the audience at the beginning of the musical, Honore Laschailles refers to Gigi and her story as “our raison d’etre.”

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