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National Museum of African American History and Culture

Playbill for Def Poetry Jam on Broadway

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At This Theatre

THE LONGACRE

[image - drawing, Stan Stark credit]

This theatre was built in 1913 and is now owned by the Shubert Organization. Recent productions: A Thousand Clowns; Judgment at Nuremberg; Taller Than A Dwarf; Voices in the Dark; The Gershwins' Fascinating Rhythm; Medea, star-ring Diana Rigg (Tany Award); Any Given Day; the dance musical Tango Passion; Truly Blessed, a musical celebration of Mahalia Jackson; George Furth's Precious Sons with Ed Harris and Judith Ivey; Peter Nichols's British play Passion starring Frank Langella; Lanford Wilson's Angels Fall; Jim Dale and Stockard Channing (awarded a Tony for er performance) in a new production of Joe Egg; and this theatre's longest-running play, Children of a Lesser God by Mark Medoff, which won a Tony Award as Best Play of the season and two more for John Rubinstein and Phyllis Frelich.

Hits of the 1970's included Terrence McNally's uproarious farce The Ritz, with Rita Moreno (Tony Award) and Jack Weston; Julie Harris winning a Tony Award for her memorable performance in her one-woman show, The Belle of Amherst; John Gielgud and ralph Richardson in Pinter's No Man's Land; Al Pacino in a revival of David Rabe's The Basic Training of Pavlo Hummel.

On May 9, 1978, Ain't Misbehavin' opened here. This revue of Fats Waller's songs won a Tony Award, a New York Drama Critics Circle Award as the season's Best Musical. It starred Ken Page, Nell Carter, Charlaïne Woodard, and Andre DeShields.

In the 1960's this theatre housed such interesting productions as A Case of Libel, starring Van Heflin, Sidney Blackmer and Larry Gates; Zero Mostel in his powerhouse, Tony Award-winning performance in Ionesco's bizarre Rhinoceros with Eli Wallach, Anne Jackson, Morris Carnovsky and Jean Stapleton; Lorraine Hansberry's Te Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window; Margaret Leighton, Zoe Caldwell and Kate Reid in Tennessee Williams's totally insane Slapstick Tragedy; Hal Holbrook in his Tony-winning performance in Mark Twain Tonight and in Robert Anderson's I Never Sang for My Father, starring Teresa Wright and Lillian Gish.

The theatre's best plays in the 1950's were Lillian Hellman's adaptation of Anouilh's The Lark, starring Julie Harris, Boris Karloff and Christopher Plummer; a silken comedy of manners, The Pleasure of His Company by Samuel Taylor, starring Cornelia Otis Skinner, Walter Abel, Cyril Ritchard, George Peppard, Charles Ruggles and Dolores Hart; and a comedy called fair Game about New York's garment district, starring Same Levene and an actress named Ellen McRae, who later changed her name to Ellen Burstyn.

From 1944 until 1953 this theatre was a radio and a TV playhouse. It returned to legitimacy with Ladies of the Corridor, a play by Dorothy Parker and Arnaud d'Usseau. Julie Harris then appeared here in Mademoiselle Colombe and Little Moon of Alban.

Some highlights of the past: three Clifford Odets plays-Waiting for Lefty, Till the Day I Die and Paradise Lost (1935); the memorable fantasy On

The collage consists of two main parts. On the left is a black and white reproduction of a theatrical program titled "At This Theatre THE LONGACRE". The program includes a drawing of the Longacre Theatre and lists various productions and actors, such as "A Thousand Clowns", "Judgment at Nuremberg", "Taller Than A Dwarf", "Voices in the Dark", "The Gershwins' Fascinating Rhythm", "Medea", "Any Given Day", "Tango Passion", "Truly Blessed", "Precious Sons", "Angels Fall", "Children of a Lesser God", and "The Belle of Amherst". It also mentions awards like the Tony Award and the Drama Desk Award. On the right is a color advertisement for Continental Airlines. It features the text "WE'RE PROUD TO BE THE OFFICIAL AIRLINE OF BROADWAY." and "JUST BE GLAD WE DON'T SING ON BOARD." Below this is the Continental Airlines logo and the slogan "Work Hard. Fly Right." The background of the ad shows a stylized globe.

Borrowed Time (1938); Miriam Hopkins in two hits-a delightful musical, Little Jessie James, and An American Tragedy, adapted from Theodore Dreiser's classic novel; and George S. Kaufman's hit comedy, The Butter and Egg Man.

Space limitations prevent us from mentioning all the productions which have played this theatre.

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