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STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT ALBANY
1400 Washington Avenue, Albany, New York 12222

DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE

JOSEPH ROACH, Jr.

Courses Taught

Course #	Sem.	Title	Enrollment
THR 220	9/73	Theatre History	27
THR 331	9/73	History of Dramatic Criticism	23
THR 530	9/73	NeoClassic and Romantic Theatre	2
THR 397	9/73	Independent Study	1
THR 210	15/74	World Drama	21
THR 330	15/74	History and Theory of Dram.Prod.	14
THR 500	15/74	Intro. to Grad. Research	1
THR 397	15/74	Independent Study	1
THR 207	9/74	Intro. to Dramatic Art	144
THR 500	9/74	Intro. to Grad. Research	5
THR 397	9/74	Independent Study	3
THR 530	9/74	NeoClassic & Romantic Theatre	5
THR 699	9/74	Graduate Thesis	3

Productions

1973-74

Played Leicester in Mary Stuart

Played Egeon in The Comedy of Errors

Played several roles in Spoon River Anthology (Summer Theatre)

Committees

1973-74 Departmental Ad Hoc Committee on Casting Policy
Departmental Search Committee

1974-75 Departmental Search Committee
Departmental Student-Faculty Liaison Committee (As Comm.Chmn.)

Voluntary Contributions

Departmental Coordinator for Univ. Community Day 1974

Supervised expansion of Theatre slide collection-adding 800 new items

Conducted study group in writing style, Spring '74

THR 207	1/75	Intro to Dramatic Art	74
THR 330	1/75	History and Theory of Dram. Prod.	31
THR 500	1/75	Intro to Graduate Research	2
THR 699	1/75	GRADUATE THESIS	3

August 22, 1975

Dr. Joseph Roach
P.O. 125
Sweet Briar, Virginia

Dear Professor Roach:

The Teaching Awards Committee has informed me that you were one of several teachers nominated for an award in 1974-75.

You were not, however, despite the strength of support in your behalf, one of the two finally selected by the committee. Public announcement of their names will come early in the fall semester.

I know how thorough the committee was, and how difficult the members found the process of final selection. They asked that I pass along their feeling that you are indeed one of the "outstanding" teachers at Albany.

Congratulations on this recognition, and best wishes.

Sincerely,

Edward M. Jennings
Assistant to the President

EMJ/k1
cc: Dr. James Symons ✓
Chairman, Department of Theatre

May 15, 1975

Professor Joseph Roach
Department of Theatre
PAC 354

Dear Professor Roach:

I am truly sorry that you will be leaving the Department of Theatre and the State University of New York at Albany at the end of this academic year, for you have contributed a great deal to the program in your two years on our campus. Thank you very much for your dedication to the students and to your colleagues; it is appreciated. Please take with you my best wishes for continuing success in your new institution. We shall miss your services here.

Sincerely yours,

Ruth A. Schmidt
Dean of Humanities

RAS/ko

cc: Official Personnel File
Professor James Symons ✓

May 9, 1975

Professor Joseph Roach
Theatre Department

Dear Professor Roach:

This note is to confirm your resignation from the University and to express our sincere appreciation for your service.

So that you may plan your financial arrangements, the Personnel Office has asked me to remind you that your final payroll check will be issued on the date indicated below. Since you are on a 26 payment system, you will receive the remainder of your full salary in that check.

We wish you well in your future activities and would like you to know that if we can be of assistance in any way, you should feel free to call the Personnel Office at 457-8624.

Sincerely,

Phillip Sirotkin
Vice President -
Academic Affairs

Appointment Year Ends: August 31, 1975
Payroll Date: June 11, 1975
Title: Assistant Professor

PS:klm

bcc:Dean @ College of Arts and Sciences
Dean Schmidt
Dr. Symons
Dr. Martin
Ms. Norman
Payroll
File

MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 5, 1975

FROM: Dr. J.M.Symons, Chairman, Theatre Dept.

BUILDING ADDRESS: PAC 266



TO: John Levato

BUILDING ADDRESS: University College ULB 36

SUBJECT: Outstanding Teacher Recommendation: Joseph Roach

Prof. Roach has been, for the past two years, the most consistently successful teacher in our Department. We have eleven full-time teaching faculty.

Prof. Roach's evaluations are excellent. These include a range of courses from Introduction to Dramatic Art (enrollment 150+) for 200-level students, to graduate-level seminars.

He is an unusually popular instructor, but is not known to be an easy one. His popularity, in other words, has not been cheaply won.

His most impressive success has been with the fore-mentioned Introduction course. In the past, other professors have found the course "impossible" to teach due to the size and diversity of the class. The evaluations at those times suggested that the students didn't care much for it either! But with Roach teaching the course, it has become a popular and attractive course - for majors and non-majors alike.

Prof. Roach is indeed an outstanding teacher.

December 11, 1974

Professor Joseph Roach
Theatre Department

Dear Professor Roach:

It is my pleasure to confirm on behalf of the President, your reappointment to a new term at this University.

Questions regarding this matter should be referred to Dr. Symons. If there are specific questions you would like to refer to the Personnel Office, please feel free to call 457-8624.

Sincerely,

Phillip Sixotkin
Vice President -
Academic Affairs

New Term: September 1, 1975 - August 31, 1977

Rank: Assistant Professor

PS:pag

cc: Dean - College of Arts & Sciences
Dean Schmidt
Dr. Symons ✓
Dr. Martin
File

May 31, 1974

Dear Joe:

In looking over the student evaluations of courses for the Spring I was once again impressed by the extremely favorable evaluations of your teaching. You seem to have an unusual gift and I salute it. I'm very glad that you will be teaching the Introduction course next year, and I look forward to hearing (eventually) how it goes for you. In the meantime, congratulations on the fine job you have been doing.

Jarka M. Burian

JMB/kh

2. Justification for merit increment

- a. By chairperson of department:
(continue, if necessary, on a separate sheet)

Dr. Roach is starting only his second year with us, but already he has established a reputation among both students and colleagues as an outstanding teacher. The ACT rating conducted for two of his courses gave him an overall evaluation of "A" for both courses. In their individual recommendation for discretionary salary increases, nearly every department faculty member recommended Dr. Roach.

Furthermore, Dr. Roach has been a model of cooperativeness and enthusiasm. In addition to a very full teaching load last year, he performed major roles in two department productions -- and did so with considerable artistic success. And for the summer theatre program he again performed (and again without any obligation to do so) to the considerable benefit of the department's summer production of Spoon River.

His salary is below the average for his rank, but this is due to being in only his second year of teaching; and in any event, this recommendation is based on his professional contribution rather than a salary differential.

- b. Comments of Dean:

August 24, 1973

Professor Joseph Roach
Theatre Department

Dear Professor Roach:

This is to confirm the change in your status following the receipt of your Ph.D. Degree from Cornell University.

We have changed your title in our records from Lecturer to Assistant Professor effective September 1, 1973. We have also extended your term of appointment to August 31, 1975, and increased your salary to \$12,000.

Please accept our congratulations on your achievement.

Sincerely,

Leon J. Calhoun, Sr.
Director, Personnel

LJC:pap

cc: Dean - College of Arts & Sciences
Dean Schmidt
Dr. Burian
Dr. Martin
File

July 19, 1973

Mr. Joseph Roach
Box 1
Brooktondale, New York 14817

Dear Mr. Roach:

I am pleased to extend to you this offer to join the academic community of State University of New York at Albany as Lecturer for the period beginning September 1, 1973, and ending August 31, 1974. This term appointment is subject to and in accordance with the laws of this State and the Policies of the Board of Trustees. A copy of these Policies is enclosed for your reference. May I draw your attention to Article XI, Title C, and Article XIV, Title B, of these Policies for they are particularly applicable to all new non-tenured appointments. The starting annual salary for your academic year professional obligation will be \$11,500 to be paid over 26 bi-weekly payments per year, subject to such changes as may be authorized by law. If Ph.D. requirements are met prior to the beginning of the 1973 Fall Semester, your title will be changed to Assistant Professor, and your term of appointment will be for two years at an annual salary of \$12,000.

Under separate cover you will receive a package of materials concerning your fringe benefit choices. It is important that you check the date limitations in the accompanying memorandum and return the completed forms well within the specified time limits, to preclude possible employment time without coverage or possible restriction as to choice of options. Please indicate your acceptance by signing the endorsement provided on the enclosed copy and returning it promptly to the Personnel Office, ATTN: Mr. Leon J. Calhoun, Sr.

Dr. Burian and his colleagues in the Theatre Department have been enthusiastic in their support of your appointment. We send you a warm welcome to our campus.

Sincerely yours,

Phillip Sirotkin
Acting President

I hereby accept the foregoing appointment

Date	Signature	
bcc: Dean - College of Arts & Sciences	Dr. Martin	
Associate Dean Schmidt	Mr. VanDyck	
Dr. Burian	Ms. Stroyen	File

May 26, 1973

Jarka M. Burian
Chairman
Department of Theatre
SUNY at Albany

Dear Prof. Burian:


I would like to gratefully acknowledge your letter of May 17 and formally accept the offer of an Assistant Professorship or Lecturership as the circumstances warrant. I am very excited about the prospect of getting started at Albany next Fall.

I plan to be in Albany apartment-hunting and what not sometime during June. I would like to get together with you at that time and chat about the courses I will be teaching. I would like the theatre history course(s) to be very strong in visual documentation and illustrative material. I may be able to get copies and duplicated material from the Cornell slide collection to fill in any gaps, if need be. But more of this when I see you next month. (I will write again or call when I know the exact dates.)

Please find the enclosed forms, loyalty oaths et. al. I hope I filled them in correctly--the "Appointment Request" form was rather Delphic.

Once again, thanks. I can hardly wait.

Best,



Joseph R. Roach



STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENT VITA FORM

FORM UP-4
(3/65)

INSTRUCTIONS: Complete and forward one copy to Central Personnel Office with initial appointment forms.

1. CAMPUS Albany				
2a. NAME IN FULL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mr. Joseph Roger Roach <input type="checkbox"/> Mrs. <input type="checkbox"/> Miss			2b. DATE OF BIRTH Jan. 2, 1947	
3. EARNED DEGREES (List Highest Degree First)				
a. INSTITUTION	b. LOCATION	c. SPECIALIZATION	d. TYPE OF DEGREE	e. DATE RECEIVED
University of Newcastle upon Tyne (England)		Elizabethan drama	M. A.	July, '70
U. of Kansas	Lawrence, Kans.	Theatre/English	B. A.	June, '69
4. EARNED DEGREES IN PROGRESS				
a. INSTITUTION	b. LOCATION	c. SPECIALIZATION	d. TYPE OF DEGREE	e. DATE ANTICIPATED
Cornell U.	Ithaca, N.Y.	Theatre Arts	Ph. D.	August, '73
5. PREVIOUS EDUCATIONAL EMPLOYMENT (Include Prior State University Service List Most Recent Employment First)				
a. DATES OF EMPLOYMENT	b. INSTITUTION	c. LOCATION	d. TITLE OF POSITION	e. SUBJECT OR RESPONSIBILITY
Sept. 72-May 73	Cornell	Ithaca, N.Y.	Teaching Asst.	Freshman Humanities
1968-69	U. of Kansas	Lawrence	Instructor	Western Civ.
6. OTHER EXPERIENCE (List Most Recent Employment First)				
a. DATES OF EMPLOYMENT	b. EMPLOYER	c. LOCATION	d. TITLE OF POSITION	e. RESPONSIBILITY
1966-68	Creede Summer Rep.	Creede, Colo.	Actor/Director	Acting/Directing
7. PUBLICATIONS (Title & Date)				
(ed.) <u>Poems in a Manuscript Miscellany</u> (Eagle Press: Newcastle upon Tyne, 1969).				
8. PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS				
Member, American Theatre Association (ATA)				
9. HONORS, TRAVEL, LANGUAGES, Other Significant Data				
Honors in English, University of Kansas Omicron Delta Kappa Humanities & Social Science Fellowship, Cornell 1970-73 Reading knowledge of French, Spanish and German.				

LAST NAME

FIRST

INITIAL

CAMPUS AT

NEW APPOINTMENT - BACKGROUND INFORMATION
(Use typewriter or permanent ink only)

[REDACTED] pending
Social Security Number

Today's Date: May 26, '73

1. Mr. Mrs. Miss

Roach Joseph Roger
Last Name First Middle or Maiden

2. Permanent Address 5354 Shadow Lawn Drive Sarasota, Florida

Place of Birth Evanston, Ill. Date of Birth Jan. 2, 1947

4. U.S. Citizen U.S. Naturalized (date & certificate number) _____
 Non U.S. Citizen (if papers applied for, give date & place) _____

5. Married Single Widow Widower Divorced or Separated

Name of Spouse _____ Number of Children 1

6. If parents living, give name and address.

Mr. & Mrs. Joseph R. Roach (Sr.) 5354 Shadow Lawn Drive Sarasota, Fla.

7. Ethnic Origin Caucasian Negro Oriental Spanish American
 American Indian Other

(State of New York policy permits eliciting this information following appointment)

8. In case of Emergency please notify

A. Mr. J. R. Roach 5354 Shadow Lawn Dr. Sarasota, Fla. (813) 922-
Name Home Address Zip Telephone
Father 5200

(relationship if any) Business Address Zip Bus. Telephone

B. _____
Next of kin (if different) Address Zip Telephone

9. Military service current status or eligibility 1-H

10. Three references, including present or most recent employer. Names and addresses.

- (1) A complete dossier is on permanent file with the Educational
- (2) Placement Bureau, Cornell University, 14 East Avenue, Ithaca, N.Y.
- (3) _____

NOTICE: * Any questions which do not provide sufficient space on the form, mark with an asterisk (*) and continue on a separate sheet.

May 9, 1973

Mr. Joseph Roger Roach
54-B Hasbrouck Apts.
Ithaca, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Roach:

Please accept this as acknowledgement of our having received your letter of application for a position in our Department. Our Search Committee is currently reviewing the applications we have received. We shall be getting in touch with those people from whom we should like additional information or with whom we should like to have an interview.

Sincerely,

Jarka M. Burian
Chairman
Department of Theatre

JMB/kh

Joseph R. Roach
Dept. of Theatre Arts
104 Lincoln Hall
Cornell University
Ithaca, N. Y. 14850

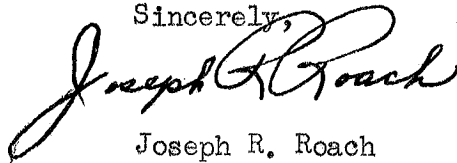
Albert B. Weiner
Dept. of Theatre Arts
SUNY at Albany

Prof. Weiner:

Bert States gave me your name and suggested that I write to you regarding a possible opening in your department for a new Ph.D. in Theatre Arts. I have taken the liberty of sending along a dossier.

I am currently in the final stages of my dissertation and will have the degree in hand as of next September. In addition to the academic dossier, I can furnish a complete resume of my acting, directing and theatre management experience if you would find that pertinent.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joseph R. Roach". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Joseph R. Roach

Spoon River's Dead Confess

By ELEANOR KOBLENZ

What was shocking to the public in 1915 when "Spoon River Anthology" was written is no longer even surprising, but what made this slim volume of free verse so intriguing can still appeal to an audience. This is clearly demonstrated by the State University Summer Theatre's current production of Edgar Lee Masters' classic work which paints a dramatic portrait of this 19th century "Peyton Place."

Composed of a collection of epitaphs from a rural cemetery, the vehicle is a series of monologues which expose the seamy side of life behind the facade of a seemingly respectable small mid-western town.

There really is a Spoon River in Illinois; one can meander today through its cemetery and view the tombstones, reading here and there lines which author-poet Edgar Lee Masters lifted verbatim into his anthology. Even the same names appear — a first name from one stone, a last name from another, but enough to give authenticity to the material.

Behind the Scenes

In the dramatic version of Masters' work we meet the former townspeople as they are "sleeping on the hill." There is the deacon who died of cirrhosis of the liver, not from too much watermelon as everyone thought; the milliner who knew all the ladies' (and the gentlemen's) secrets; the wife who burned down the barn and her husband along with it; Russian Sonia, who lived with a man for 20 years while everyone thought they were married; the heroic soldier who died of malaria; and the Senator who never knew his mother was really the German maid.

Dozens of characters step into the spotlight to bare their souls and confess their sins — some seriously, some with tongue in cheek.

Costumed in authentic turn-of-the-century rural garb, the dozen actors who make up the cast shift characters easily as they sit, stand and criss-cross back and forth on the spare set of multi-level platforms.

While the specific actors portraying each

character were not identified, some of the interpretations and character delineations were particularly skillful. We were able to determine that it was Joseph Roach who was outstanding as Benjamin Pantier, an attorney, and "Indignation" Jones, an old ne'er-do-well (among many other parts).

Poor Pacing

Jinx Lindenauer, too, scored in a number of roles. Also most effective were Marci Lynn Peres as Russian Sonia, and Thomas L. Brennan in several characterizations.

The main problem with the production seemed to be in the pacing and this error must be laid at the feet of the director, Edward Golden. Actors spoke almost exclusively in oratorical style — strict measured tones — with abrupt pauses for emphasis.

More variety and change of pace to fit the different characters would have given a necessary lift to the material, and would have pointed up the pathetic qualities of some characters and the gentle humor present in others.

In addition, less marching around by entire cast after each monologue and more smoothly choreographed movement would enable scenes to flow more easily one into the other.

Music of the People

On the other hand, the musical portions of the production were a delight. Guitarist-singer Devorah Zusman and vocalist Paul Poore gave outstanding renditions of a number of charming folk songs. Miss Zusman has a lovely voice, full and throaty in both upper and lower registers and with beautiful, clear tones. Mr. Poore's spirited offerings were a welcome change of pace and added another dimension to the whole.

Also in the cast were Jerrold Brown, Joni Goldberg, Howard Kolins, Maria Makes, Marilyn Ornstein, and Thom Prager.

The production will be repeated this weekend, Wednesday through Saturday, at 8:30 p.m. in the Laboratory Theatre on the Albany State campus.

KITE July 10, 1974

SUNYA Theater Plans 'Blue Leaves'

John Guare's "The House of Blue Leaves," winner of the 1971 Critics' Award and the Obie Award as best American play, will be presented July 17-20 and 24-27 by the Albany State University Summer Theatre. In "The House of Blue Leaves," Guare employs humor to present the bitter disappointments suffered by an unsuccessful New York songwriter.

The play has been described as a "psychological

farce" involving a group of bizarre characters thrown together on the day when the Pope visits New York City.

Director Albert Weiner is assisted by stage manager Alan Von Stetina and assistant stage manager Joff Liebman. Cast members selected are Jim Barone, Kathleen Collins, Jerry Duckor, Nancy Elliot, Jody Hiatt, Louise Itzler, Vicki Kichman, Jon Liebman, Hank Maloy, Andy Marashinsky, Edward Reich, and Susan Scherf.

Masters' 'Spoon River' is a well-served-up

By MARTIN P. KELLY

Drama Critic

The adaptation of Edgar Lee Masters' work, "Spoon River Anthology," by Charles Aidman provides an opportunity for a multitude of character vignettes. In the hands of the company at the State University Summer Theater in Albany, the Masters is well served.

Director Edward Golden has collected a fine group of varied voices and character types which give the production the flexibility and variety it needs in order not to be swallowed up by the sardonic view of small-timelife pictured in Masters' work. At times the frustration and bitterness of the various charac-

ters—all deceased individuals resting in Spoon River's cemetery—are overwhelming and dulling to the senses.

Golden doesn't always gain the heightened effect of the irony in many of the vignettes so necessary to relieve the tragic tone of much of the material. Masters outrages his reader and, in this case, his viewer by destroying the bucolic view of small-time life that a Thornton Wilder might provide in his Grovers Corners.

While this outrage is not as severe today as it was 60 years ago when the work first appeared, it is still felt in some small measure when one questions the complete infatuation with the losers of life. Only near the end does Masters attempt to call our minds to the eternal hope in mankind for

better things but it is not sufficient to balance the bulk of the evening.

The 12 performers are on stage for the full two acts, picking up the threads of characters as the stories unfold without any real relation to each other. The actors overcome the particular difficulty of exposition of character in moments quite expertly, no mean feat.

Of the cast, Joseph Roach stands out as an actor possessed of a fine, deep, flexible and resonant voice. He shifts from tragic tones to the comic demeanor with skill and his physical bearing gives the characters added stature.

Jinx Lindenauer plays a host of characters adroitly and the one that stays in mind most is the shortest segment, that of a simple Chinese girl who died as a young girl from a blow that caved in her ribs which doomed her to be buried in alien soil with no children to

do her honor.

Masters' characters are all restless with their mortality and rail against a God who puts them to such daily tests in life even though they are capable of great deeds and thoughts.

Thom Prager has several vignettes in which he plays a frustrated native of Spoon River who searched abroad for fame as an artist and couldn't find it, and he is equally successful in creating the character of a young soldier who dies in the Phillipine swamps during the war to quell the native insurgents.

It may seem unfair to single

out some individuals since the production gives equal balance to all the performers, yet some strike viewers with

greater impact.

Singers Paul Poore and Deborah Zusman piece together

Roach file

Comedy of Errors 3-22-74

Make No Mistake About It

by Nancy Miller

State University Theatre's production of William Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors* last weekend afforded a pleasing night of entertainment to virtually all who came within its charmed sphere. For Edward Golden's directing debut at Albany State, the transposition of the play into the milieu of the American West of the 1800's was a huge success. For those novices, whose appetites for Shakespeare had never been whetted, this production offered a good starting point from which to build an appreciation for the great playwright. And, finally, for those with a more sophisticated background, the delightful rendition of this early Shakespearean comedy took on added dimensions in its new setting.

Heavily indebted to Plautus' *The Twin Menaechmi*, much of the play's comedy arises from the repeated mistaken identity of one identical twin for the other. To complicate this basic problem, Shakespeare presents us with not one, but two sets of twins, thus increasing the capacity for misadventure geometrically. Howard Kolins and Nelson Avidon as the twin Antipholuses (Anti-ipholi?) of Syracuse and Ephesus respectively, serve as the focal points for much of the fun which devolves from the situational comedy, with each being taken, in turn, for the other, with hilarious consequences. This basic confusion is amplified and compounded further by the interchangeability of their two servants Dromio, played with puckish frivolity by Thom Prager and Charles Varadian.

Although the contingent from Syracuse were slightly more effective, all four of these roles were amply filled and were played off against each other with remarkable balance and congruity—as is essential to the overall success of the play.

The secondary characters were, for the most part, an adequate complement to the twins. Egeon, the father of the twins Antipholous, played by Joseph Roache, gave a fine portrayal of the doomed cowboy whose last necktie was fated to be a rope. His long-lost wife, Emilia, in the person of Maria Makis was

that fine figger of a western woman, whose mothering energies once deprived of her children was chanelled into that bane of spinsterhood—the mission. Her missionary zeal was a splendid addition

costume designer and of Robert Donnelly as set designer. Lighting effects under the supervision of Jerome Hanley were especially fine, with the strobe-light escape scene among the highlights.



rosenberg



No error was the Comedy, but a success.

to the play, and the moment in Act V when the separated couple recognize one another was priceless. The presidin' officer in those parts, in the person of the Sheriff/Duke was played with dubious solemnity by Erwin E. Rablet (anagram). The wife of Antipholous of Ephesus, Adriana, played by Marilyn OrNSTein, was uneven in spots, owing to the difficulty of rhyme and meter in some of her speeches, but was nonetheless effective. Jody Hiatt, Adriana's sister and the unwitting object of her brother-in-law's twin brother's love (whew!) was alternately outraged by the seeming impropriety of his advances, yet was coyly receptive to his overtures. Last, but not least, Jerrold Browns' highly stylized portrayal of Angelo the goldsmith, as the slick-talking Mexican added the finishing touches to the western panorama in high fashion.

Although the minor characters were somewhat weak and uneven, they were, however, instrumental in recreating the West within the bounds of this play, and were, therefore, marginally successful. The special effects called for were met by the im-

live efforts of...

Search

Troy

The Times Record, Monday, July 8, 1974

Theater Review

Albany State's 'Spoon River' Compelling

By DOUGLAS deLISLE

ALBANY — The State University Summer Theater ended their season last week with a compelling production of "Spoon River Anthology" in their home in the Performing Arts Center at Albany State University.

"Spoon River Anthology" is originally a work first published in 1915. Using free verse and native speech patterns, author Edgar Lee Masters threw out traditional Illinois town.

Covering the span of time from 1860-1910, the work is a series of monologues spoken by the natives of Spoon River buried on a hill overlooking the town. The dead

have no lies to tell, and they speak out with poignant candor. Actor Charles Aidman recognized the work as an ideal theater piece so he combined 60 characters with traditional songs and new music by Naomi Caryl Hirschorn for an evening that is as fascinating as it is different.

The monologue form of this theater piece could be very static. Director Edward Golden has conquered this problem by fluid staging and a rapid pace complemented by excellent technical effects.

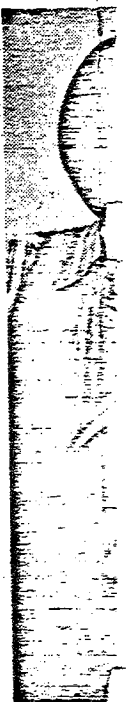
EDWARD MENDUS has designed a set of platforms and pillars that lend themselves very well to stage pictures of startling beauty. The cast is silhouetted, spot-

lighted and back lit by the expertise of lighting designer Harry Feiner. Particularly effective in the lighting at the rear of the playing area. Feiner creates portraits in light using artfully draped scrims lit from above and below by well-placed banks of colored lights. The effect the lighting has on the total mood of the piece is immeasurable.

To single out any one member of the cast would be to slight the whole cast. Thomas L. Brennan, Jerrold Brown, Joni Goldberg, Howard Kolins, Jim Lindenaner, Maria Makis, Marilyn Ornstein, Marci Lynn Perres, Thom Prager, Joseph Roachm singers Paul Poore and Devorah Zusman are all outstanding. It is absolutely amazing to find a cast of this size in a work of this complexity without a single weak link.

Whether playing old men, children, soldiers, embittered widows or soldiers disillusioned by their horrible deaths, the whole cast enters completely into the spirit of the production, listening interestedly and reacting to the stories the others have to tell. Not all is gloom though. The piece is broken up by humor and ribald songs.

If living, vital theater is your bag, make it a point to see this production which will play again this week from Wednesday through Saturday.



THOM PRAGER
River Anthology
Saturday at

picture of Prager & Ornstein

Allen file

Golden Fall

Roach

KN - July 3
'Spoon River'
at SUNYA

Charles Aidman's adaptation of Edgar Lee Masters' "Spoon River Anthology" opens tonight and will play through July 6 at the State University Albany Performing Arts Center. Curtain time is 8:30 p.m.

Repeat performances of the play will be staged July 10 through July 13 at the university's arts center.

The play uses American folk music to reveal both the humorous and the pathetic sides of life in a small town at the turn of the century. The production includes Thomas L. Brennan, Jerrold Brown, Joni Goldberg, Howard Kolins, Jinx Lindenauer, Maria Makis, Marilyn Ornstein, Marcel Perres, Thom Prager, Joseph Roach and Michael Steese.

Costumes are by Jane Morgan; sets by Edward Mendus and lighting by Harry Feiner.

Spoon River has stirring moments

July 5
KN

THE SPOON RIVER ANTHOLOGY," by Edgar Lee Masters. Adapted by Charles Aidman. Directed by Edward Golden. At the SUNYA Summer Theater Performing Arts Center, Albany.

A review

mer Theater Performing Arts Center, Albany.

By JIM KUNSTLER

As a nation we are constantly trying to rediscover ourselves, and one of the most popular stage vehicles for this undertaking is Aidman's adaptation of Edgar Lee Masters' book of poems, "The Spoon River Anthology." The work is a series of vignettes out of small town life in Illinois (period, 1860-1910), each poem the voice of a villager speaking from the grave.

It is an exceedingly appealing work and also a very difficult one to produce for the stage. The production typically runs along the lines of Aidman's Broadway show of the late fifties, a pair of actors and actresses trading off portraits with frequent folk-song interruptions.

And so the nut of the problem in producing this show is how to do it in an original manner: Charles Aidman's adaptation was not just the translation of a book into a play, but a directorial *mise en scene*.

Director Edward Golden has correctly perceived this problem, to a point, and has endeavored to enrich the format with a large cast and a multileveled set for the more dynamic visuals and tableaux which the the play, feasibly, calls for.

He has also cast some very interesting players throughout the piece, often casting directly against type (though because of the ensemble listing in the program, I am unable to identify the players, role against name).

What does come through here is the richness of life in the small Illinois hamlet: the diversity of character, consciousness and circumstance, so that one old man rues the day of his birth and his next-door-neighbor walks gracefully into the arms of death. The "types" are all there: village atheist, minister, prostitute, town drunk, thief, immigrants, drudges, singers of life, chasers after death, would-be-poets, reprobates, creatures of faith.

The genius of Masters, in this particular work, (he was a prolific author of quite a lot of unsuccessful stuff too), was the clarity of focus which he brought to these profiles of ordinary people in an ordinary place. He rendered them quite extraordinary. The rhythms of their voices through the poetry of Masters form one of our quintessential cultural documents.

The evening has its stirring moments, interesting effects and movements. Perhaps one of the reasons we indulge in so much cultural self-analysis, is that we really know so little about each other, like the American human beings who lived and died in Spoon River, Ill.