



Stratford
-on-
Odéon

APRIL 20, 1998



The Folger Shakespeare Library

and

The Shakespeare Guild

are pleased to present

Stratford-on-Odéon

a revel at which the third annual

Sir John Gielgud Award
for Excellence in the Dramatic Arts

is bestowed upon

MISS ZOE CALDWELL

Featuring

Robert MacNeil
George Plimpton
Audra McDonald
David Loud
Sir Derek Jacobi

The Elizabethan Theatre



The Cast for this Evening's Festivities

ROBERT MACNEIL

We're grateful for the opportunity to welcome back as emcee of tonight's ceremony the distinguished journalist who lauded Sir John Gielgud at the 1994 unveiling of *The Golden Quill*, and who returned two years later to host the inaugural presentation of John Safer's elegant trophy at the Folger's 1996 spring gala.

A Canadian by birth, Mr. MacNeil is familiar to most Americans as the executive editor and co-anchor, from 1975 to 1995, of PBS's award-winning MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour. But Mr. MacNeil has also won plaudits around the globe for his lively and informative 1986 series on *The Story of English*.

Mr. MacNeil is the author of several books, among them *The People Machine: The Influence of Television on American Politics* (1968) and *The Right Place at the Right Time* (1982). In 1989 he moved us deeply with *Wordstruck* (1989), an eloquent memoir about a young boy's infatuation with the language that Shakespeare did so much to advance and dignify. In recent years Mr. MacNeil has turned his attention to fiction, with two novels in print—*Burden of Desire* (1992) and *The Voyage* (1995)—and a third to be released a few months hence.

In addition to the undergraduate diploma he earned from Carlton University, Mr. MacNeil has received more than two dozen honorary degrees, among them doctorates from Brown, Columbia, and Princeton.



GEORGE PLIMPTON

We're delighted that a man of George Plimpton's talents could be with us to take part in a revel that exalts the creative and performing arts. The grandson of an Amherst president who helped dedicate the Folger in 1932, and the son of an Amherst trustee who was long revered for his commitment to the Library and all that it represents, Mr. Plimpton holds degrees from Harvard and Cambridge and has received honorary doctorates from the University of Southern California and a number of other institutions.

Since 1953 Mr. Plimpton has edited the illustrious *Paris Review*. He's also presided over an influential *Writers at Work* series and an astonishing variety of other literary endeavors. Along the way he has contributed essays or provided editorial consultation to a broad spectrum of popular magazines, among them *Esquire*, *Food & Wine*, *Gentlemen's Quarterly*, *Harper's*, and *Sports Illustrated*.

The work for which Mr. Plimpton is most widely recognized, however, is the reporting he's done as the progenitor of "participatory journalism." Among the books that illustrate Mr. Plimpton's many interests are *Out of My League* (1961), *Paper Lion* (1966), *The Bogey Man* (1968), *One for the Record* (1974), *Shadow-Box* (1976), *Open Net* (1985), *The X-Factor* (1990), and *Truman Capote* (1997).

Universally hailed for his skills as a raconteur and television commentator, Mr. Plimpton has played significant roles in two of the most touching films of the mid-'90s: *When We Were Kings* and *Good Will Hunting*. Meanwhile he's found time to sit on the boards of such cultural organizations as the PEN/Faulkner Foundation and the English-Speaking Union. As one might expect, he's proud to be listed as a member of the NFL Alumni Association.



ZOE CALDWELL

As we present this year's Golden Quill to Zoe Caldwell, we pay tribute to one of the most charismatic and versatile artists of our era. Like Sir Ian McKellen, who received The Shakespeare Guild's initial Gielgud Award in 1996, and Sir Derek Jacobi, who graced the Folger's 65th Anniversary Gala when he accepted the 1997 trophy, Zoe Caldwell has exemplified the highest standards both as a performer and as a director.

A native of Australia, Miss Caldwell launched her theatrical career with three years in England's Stratford-upon-Avon, where she debuted as Bianca in an *Othello* with the celebrated Paul Robeson in the persona of the noble Moor. She went on to such parts as Cordelia in a *King Lear* with Charles Laughton as the raging monarch and as Helena in *All's Well That Ends Well* with Dame Edith Evans as a memorable Countess.

After a brief sojourn at the Royal Court Theatre in London, Miss Caldwell became a mainstay of Sir Tyrone Guthrie's prestigious Stratford Festival in Ontario. There she won kudos as Lady Anne in *Richard III* and as Cleopatra in a drama that brought a youthful Christopher Plummer into his element as Antony.

By 1966 Miss Caldwell was ready to take on Broadway, and she promptly seized a Tony Award for her depiction of Polly in Tennessee Williams' *Slapstick Tragedy*. Two years later she conquered Manhattan again when she won her second Tony, this time for *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, a show that had been mounted by the eminent producer who would soon become Miss Caldwell's spouse. Robert Whitehead was a

partner of Roger Stevens, and in 1976 it would be their collaboration that brought Sir John Gielgud and Sir Ralph Richardson to the Kennedy Center in Harold Pinter's enigmatic *No Man's Land*.

A third Tony made its way to Miss Caldwell's mantel in 1982, when she took the lead in a *Medea*, conceived and directed by Mr. Whitehead, that featured Dame Judith Anderson as the heroine's Nurse. Thirty-five years earlier, in a 1947 Whitehead production of the tragedy that had been directed by its Jason—a 43-year-old actor by the name of John Gielgud—Dame Judith had earned a Tony of her own in the robes of Euripides' vengeful title character.

As East Coast playgoers will vividly remember, Miss Caldwell acquired her fourth Tony Award a couple of years ago when she resurrected a figure not from classical antiquity but from 20th-century Greece: the legendary Maria Callas in Terrence McNally's *Master Class*. According to Time magazine's Brad Leithauser, who reviewed this tour-de-force in November of 1995, "Caldwell scissors across the stage in lean and elegant black. Although she does not sing a note, she does a brilliant job of suggesting—with the turn of a hand, the tilt of her head—the minor adjustment of someone attendant to an inner genius." In the end, says Leitheiser, Caldwell's diva "emerges as an invincible spirit."

Other stage vehicles for this invincible spirit have included Terence Ratigan's *Bequest to the Nation*, in which she enacted Lady Hamilton during the same London season (1970) in which Queen Elizabeth awarded Miss Caldwell the Order of the British Empire, *A Long Day's Journey into Night*, in which Miss Caldwell portrayed a despondent Mary as she ebbed away from Jason Robards' Tyrone, and *Lillian*, a one-woman impersonation in which Miss Caldwell's incomparable Hellman mesmerized New York audiences at the storied Ethel Barrymore Theatre.

Since 1977 Miss Caldwell has supplemented her acting with a number of stints as director. She's widely recognized for her interpretation of *Richard II* at the Canadian Stratford and of *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Hamlet* at the American Stratford in Connecticut. And in 1981, after she came to the rescue of a Broadway-bound *Othello*, it was praised for the fine-turned performances of James Earl Jones and Christopher Plummer.

We're pleased to observe that Miss Caldwell is being escorted to this evening's festivities by her husband Robert Whitehead, and that the two of them are accompanied by their sons Sam and Charles.



THE SHAKESPEARE GUILD

Founded by John F. Andrews in 1987, The Shakespeare Guild is a not-for-profit corporation that seeks to foster a deeper appreciation of the globe's leading dramatist. In 1994, as one of its means to that end, the Guild established the Sir John Gielgud Award for Excellence in the Dramatic Arts as a 90th-birthday gift for the man who, more perhaps than any other classical performer, has defined our century's approach to the production of Shakespeare.

Designed by sculptor John Safer, the Gielgud trophy endeavors to preserve a distinguished artist's "Praise" and perpetuate his "Character with golden Quill" (Sonnet 85). Each spring it is presented to an actor, director, producer, or playwright who exemplifies the ideals a stellar selection committee has identified with a tradition that includes not only Sir John but such legendary forebears as Richard Burbage, David Garrick, Sarah Siddons, Henry Irving, and Gielgud's great aunt Ellen Terry. The 1996 and 1997 recipients of The Golden Quill were Sir Ian McKellen and Sir Derek Jacobi.

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