

New York Theatre Critics' Reviews 1955

Volume XVI, Number 25

• Rachel W. Coffin, *Editor* •

Year Ending December 31, 1955

1955 PRODUCTIONS

Premieres in Other Years

*Original Reviews Appeared
In These Volumes*

<i>Stage Play</i>	1954 Vol.	<i>Page</i>
Anastasia	192
Anniversary Waltz	339
Bad Seed (The)	223
Boy Friend (The)	299
Caine Mutiny Court Martial (The)	382
Dear Charles	316
*Fanny	256
Flowering Peach (The)	196
House of Flowers	189
Lunatics and Lovers	219
Mrs. Patterson	231
*Pajama Game (The)	324
Peter Pan	273
Quadrille	259
Rainmaker (The)	264
Reclining Figure	294
Saint of Bleeker Street (The)	199
Sandhog	239
Tender Trap (The)	282
Wedding Breakfast	243
What Every Woman Knows	208
*Witness for the Prosecution	216

•
1953 Vol.

Can-Can	.....	304
Kismet	.....	198
Solid Gold Cadillac (The)	.....	222
Tea and Sympathy	.....	266
*Teahouse of the August Moon (The)	.....	254

•
1952 Vol.

Seven Year Itch (The)	186
-----------------------	-------	-----

•
1951 Vol.

Fourposter (The)	190
------------------	-------	-----

*Asterisks indicate shows scheduled to play week of January 1, 1956

1955 PRODUCTIONS

Premieres During 1955

Reviews Appear in This Volume

<i>Stage Play</i>	<i>Page</i>	<i>Stage Play</i>	<i>Page</i>
All in One	325	*Matchmaker (The)	194
Almost Crazy	298	Mikado (The)	see 275
Ankles Aweigh	329	*No Time for Sergeants	238
Arlequin Poli Par L'Amour	217	Once Upon a Tailor	305
Barbier de Seville (Le)	217	Othello	285
Bourgeois Gentilhomme (Le)	230	Phoenix '55	317
*Bus Stop	346	*Pipe Dream	198
Carefree Tree (The)	249	Pirates of Penzance (The)	see 275
*Cat on a Hot Tin Roof	342	*Plain and Fancy	382
Catch a Star!	290	Princess Ida	see 275
*Chalk Garden (The)	227	*Red Roses for Me	182
Champagne Complex	334	*Righteous Are Bold (The)	185
*Damn Yankees	310	Roomful of Roses (A)	241
Dark Is Light Enough (The)	357	Ruddigore	see 275
Day by the Sea (3)	279	Seventh Heaven	302
Deadfall	224	*Silk Stockings	354
*Desk Set (The)	234	*Six Characters in Search of an Author	189
Desperate Hours (The)	370	Skin of Our Teeth (The)	293
*Diary of Anne Frank (The)	257	Southwest Corner (The)	374
Doctor's Dilemma (The)	397	3 For Tonight	337
Festival	393	*Tiger at the Gates	264
Grand Prize (The)	385	Time of Your Life (The)	390
*Hatful of Rain (A)	213	Tonight in Samarkand	365
Heavenly Twins (The)	220	Trial by Jury	see 275
Henry IV, Part I	282	Vamp (The)	210
H.M.S. Pinafore	see 275	*View From the Bridge (A)	272
Honeys (The)	314	Wayward Saint (The)	362
*Inherit the Wind	322	*Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter?	246
Island of Goats	260	Wisteria Trees (The)	377
Iolanthe	275	Wooden Dish (The)	254
*Janus	201	Yeomen of the Guard (The)	see 275
*Lark (The)	206	Young and Beautiful (The)	267
Master Builder (The)	349		

CRITIC'S CIRCLE AWARD..... 340

1955 CAST INDEX

<i>Authors</i>	180	<i>Managers or Producers</i>	180
<i>Cast</i>	177	<i>Scenic Designers</i>	181
<i>Dance Directors</i>	181	<i>Stage Directors</i>	180
	Composers; Lyric Writers, Librettists..... 181		

*Asterisks indicate shows scheduled to play week of January 1, 1956

Theatre Critics' Reviews brings you each week the complete reviews as they originally appeared in these New York newspapers.

NEW YORK JOURNAL-AMERICAN
NEW YORK DAILY NEWS
NEW YORK POST

NEW YORK MIRROR

NEW YORK WORLD TELEGRAM & THE SUN
NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE
NEW YORK TIMES

All Reviews copyrighted by the newspapers and reproduced by permission.

Yearly Subscription \$25.00

Published by CRITICS' THEATRE REVIEWS, INC., 235 East 22nd Street, New York 10, N. Y.

Cast Index — continued

	PAGE
Weslow, William	382
Westerfield, James	254
White, Christine	213
White, David	241
White, Jimmy	302
Whiteside, Ann	241
Whitley, Albert	390
Whitman, William	189
Wickwire, Nancy	385
Williams, Edmund	322
Williams, John	357
Williams, Mervin	189
Williams, Musa	342
Wilson, Eleanor	362
Wilson, Elizabeth	234
Wilson, Patricia	193
Windom, William	385
Winslow, Rain	317
Winters, Marian	357
Winters, Shelley	213
Wiseman, Joseph	206
Workman, Jenny	193
Worlock, Frederic	397
Worthington, Tim	382
Wright, Joyce	275
Wyler, Gretchen	354
Y	
York, Ann	298
Yurka, Blanche	249

Authors

Abbott, George	310
Alexander, Ronald	385
Anouilh, Jean	206
Axelrod, George	246
Bagnold, Enid	227
Beaumarchais	217
Benson, Sally	267
Bernstein, Leonard	325
Bernstein, Robert A.	298
Betti, Ugo	260
Boiton, Guy	329
Burrows, Abe	354
Carney, Frank	185
Carroll, Paul Vincent	362
Chekhov, Anton	377
Dahl, Roald	314
Davis, Eddie	329
Deval, Jacques	365
Faber, Max	349
Fitzgerald, F. Scott	267
Frank, Anne	257
Fry, Christopher	264, 357
Gazzo, Michael V.	213
Gilbert, W. S.	275
Giraudoux, Jean	264
Glickman, Will	382
Goodrich, Frances	257
Green, Carolyn	201
Guthrie, Tyrone	189
Hackaday, Hal	298
Hackett, Albert	257
Hammerstein, Oscar, 2d	198
Hayes, Joseph	370
Hellman, Lillian	206
Holm, John Cecil	374
Hunter, N. C.	279
Husson, Albert	220
Hyman, Mac	238
Ibsen, Henrik	349
Inge, William	346
Kaufman, George S.	354
Latouche, John	210
Lawrence, Jerome	322
Lee, Leonard	224
Lee, Robert E.	322
Lengyel, Melchior	354
Levin, Ira	238
Locke, Sam	210
Logan, Joshua	377
Lumet, Baruch	305
MacGrath, Leueen	354
Marchant, William	234

	PAGE
Mariiaux	217
Miller, Arthur	272
Moliere	230
Morris, Aldyth	249
Morris, Edmund	254
O'Casey, Sean	182
Pirandello, Luigi	189
Reed, Henry	260
Saroyan, William	390
Semple, Lorenzo, Jr.	365
Shakespeare, William	282, 285
Shaw, Bernard	397
Shelton, James	298
Sherman, Henry	305
Simon, Danny	290
Simon, Neil	290
Sommer, Edith	241
Spewack, Bella	393
Spewack, Sam	393
Stein, Joseph	382
Steinbeck, John	198
Stevens, Leslie	334
Strong, Austin	302
Unger, Stella	302
Wager, Michael	189
Walker, Mildred	374
Wallach, Ira	317
Wallop, Douglass	310
Wilder, Thornton	194, 293
Williams, Tennessee	325, 342
Wolfson, Victor	302

Managers or Producers

American National Theatre and Academy	293
Bacher, William	302
Baker, Lawrence, Jr.	267
Barr, Richard	325
Becker, Bruce	365
Bloomgarden, Kermit	206, 257, 272
Boroff, George	305
Bowden, Charles	325
Brattle Shakespeare Players	282, 285
Brentano, Felix	393
Brisson, Frederick	310
Burr, Courtney	362
Byram, John	362
Carr, Lawrence	234
Carson, Alexander	210
Cobb, John S.	298
Cohen, Martin	210
Comedie Francaise	217, 230
Cornell, Katharine	357
Crawford, Cheryl	314
Dalrymple, Jean	282, 285, 377, 390
De Liagre, Alfred, Jr.	201
Deutsch, Armand	254
Dowling, Eddie	185
D'Oyly Carte Opera Company	275
Erskine, Howard	370
Evans, Maurice	238
Feuer and Martin	354
Finklehoffe, Fred F.	329
Fried, Walter	393
Fryer, Robert	234
Gaither, Gant	302
Gardiner, James W.	382
Gilkey, Stanley	241
Goodman, Martin	224
Gordon, Julius M.	224
Gregory, Paul	337
Griffith, Robert E.	310
Hambleton, T. Edward	189, 249, 317, 349, 397
Hammerstein, Oscar, 2d	198
Hammerstein, Reginald	329
Hartford, Huntington	279
Hayes, Joseph	370
Houghton, Norris	189, 249, 317, 349, 397
Hoyt, Howard	329
Huntington, John	374
Hurok, S.	217, 230
Jones, Margo	322
Joseph, Robert L.	264

	PAGE
Julien, Jay	213
Kleinman, Sy	290
Kollmar, Richard	382
Laughton, Charles	337
Lerman, Oscar	210
Margolis, Henry M.	264
Martin, Feuer and	354
McClintic, Guthrie	241
Merrick, David	194
Miller, Robert Ellis	365
Mitchell, Stephen	279
New York City Center Theatre Company	282, 285, 377, 390
Nugent, Elliott	362
Playwrights' Company	264, 305, 342
Pollock, Gordon W.	182
Prince, Harold S.	310
Radnitz, Robert B.	267
Rodgers, Richard	198
Rogers, Emmett	238
Schumer, Yvette	382
Selznick, Irene Mayer	227
Shumlin, Herman	322
Smith, Hardy, Ltd.	260
Stevens, Roger L.	260, 272, 346, 357
Stine, Gayle	334
Styne, Jule	246
Taylor, Albert D.	310
Theatre Guild	194, 220
Traube, Shepard	385
Whitehead, Robert	272, 293, 346
Wilder, Clinton	189

Stage Directors

Abbott, George	310
Alexander, David	210
Anthony, Joseph	206, 305
Axelrod, George	246
Baty, Gaston	217
Brooke, David	325
Calhern, Louis	254
Champion, Gower	337
Charon, Jacques	217
Cirker, Ira	349
Clurman, Harold	198, 264, 346
Corsaro, Frank	213, 314
Da Costa, Morton	238, 382
Daniels, Marc	317
Denham, Reginald	201
Donehue, Vincent J.	325
Dowling, Eddie	185
Feuer, Cy	354
Fields, Joseph	234
Finklehoffe, Fred F.	329
Gerstad, John	362
Gibson, Robert	275
Glenville, Peter	260
Golden, Ray	290
Gordon, Michael	224, 334
Guthrie, Tyrone	189, 194
Hardwicke, Cedric	279
Hewett, Christopher	298
Homolka, Oscar	349
Jamison, Marshall	267
Kanin, Garson	257
Kazan, Elia	342
Kesler, Lew	298
Kilty, Jerome	282
Landau, Jack	249
Lumet, Sidney	397
Marre, Albert	227, 393
McClintic, Guthrie	241, 357
Meisner, Sanford	390
Meyer, Jean	230
Montgomery, Robert	370
O'Shaughnessy, John	182
Ritchard, Cyril	220
Ritt, Martin	272
Schaefer, George	374
Schneider, Alan	293, 365
Shumlin, Herman	322
Simon, Danny	290
Stix, John	285, 377
Traube, Shepard	385
Wilson, John C.	302

New York Theatre Critics' Reviews 1955

Volume XVI, Number 17

• Rachel W. Coffin, *Editor* •

Week of October 10, 1955

1955 PRODUCTIONS Premieres in Other Years

*Original Reviews Appeared
In These Volumes*

<i>Stage Play</i>	1954 Vol.	<i>Page</i>
Anastasia		192
Anniversary Waltz		339
Bad Seed (The)		223
*Boy Friend (The).....		299
Caine Mutiny Court Martial (The).....		382
Dear Charles		316
*Fanny		256
Flowering Peach (The).....		196
House of Flowers		189
Lunatics and Lovers		219
Mrs. Patterson		231
*Pajama Game (The)		324
Peter Pan		273
Quadrille		259
Rainmaker (The)		264
Reclining Figure		294
Saint of Bleecker Street (The).....		199
Sandhog		239
Tender Trap (The)		282
Wedding Breakfast		243
What Every Woman Knows.....		208
*Witness for the Prosecution.....		216

1953 Vol.

Can-Can	304
Kismet	198
Solid Gold Cadillac (The).....	222
Tea and Sympathy	266
*Teahouse of the August Moon (The)	254

1952 Vol.

Seven Year Itch (The).....	186
----------------------------	-----

1951 Vol.

Fourposter (The)	190
------------------------	-----

*Asterisks indicate shows scheduled to play week of October 10, 1955

1955 PRODUCTIONS

Premieres During 1955

Reviews Appear in This Volume

<i>Stage Play</i>	<i>Page</i>	<i>Stage Play</i>	<i>Page</i>
All in One	325	*Mikado (The)	
Almost Crazy	298	(see headline note, page 275)	
Ankles Aweigh	329	Once Upon a Tailor	305
*Bus Stop	346	Othello	285
*Cat on a Hot Tin Roof	342	Phoenix '55	317
Catch a Star!	290	Pirates of Penzance (The).....	
Champagne Complex	334	(see headline note, page 275)	
*Damn Yankees	310	*Plain and Fancy	382
Dark Is Light Enough (The)	357	Seventh Heaven	302
*Day by the Sea (A).....	279	*Silk Stockings	354
Desperate Hours (The)	370	Skin of Our Teeth (The)	293
*Diary of Anne Frank (The).....	257	Southwest Corner (The)	374
Doctor's Dilemma (The)	397	3 For Tonight	337
Festival	393	*Tiger at the Gates.....	264
Grand Prize (The)	385	Time of Your Life (The)	390
Henry IV, Part I	282	Tonight in Samarkand	365
Honeys (The)	314	*View From the Bridge (A).....	272
*Inherit the Wind	322	Wayward Saint (The)	362
*Island of Goats	260	Wisteria Trees (The)	377
Iolanthe	275	*Wooden Dish (The)	254
Master Builder (The)	349	Yeomen of the Guard (The).....	
		(see headline note, page 275)	
		*Young and Beautiful (The).....	267

CRITIC'S CIRCLE AWARD..... 340

Theatre Openings

"Island of Goats"	"The Wooden Dish"
"Tiger at the Gates"	"The Diary of Anne Frank"
"The Young and Beautiful"	

*Asterisks indicate shows scheduled to play week of October 10, 1955

Theatre Critics' Reviews brings you each week the complete reviews as they originally appeared in these New York newspapers.

NEW YORK JOURNAL-AMERICAN
NEW YORK DAILY NEWS
NEW YORK POST

NEW YORK MIRROR

NEW YORK WORLD TELEGRAM & THE SUN
NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE
NEW YORK TIMES

All Reviews copyrighted by the newspapers and reproduced by permission.

Yearly Subscription \$25.00

Published by CRITICS' THEATRE REVIEWS, INC., 235 East 22nd Street, New York 10, N. Y.

"The Diary of Anne Frank" —continued

New York Post

October 6, 1955

By Richard Watts Jr.

The Moving Story of Anne Frank

There is a shattering sense of reality about "The Diary of Anne Frank," which Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett have dramatized from what must have been one of the most heartbreaking documents of the late war. By wisely shunning any trace of theatricality or emotional excess, the playwrights have made the only-too-true story deeply moving in its unadorned veracity, and, with young Susan Strasberg giving a lovely and sensitive portrayal of the title role, last night's opening at the Cort Theater provided a sense of truth that is unusual in playgoing.

There are some things which it is wrong to forget, and so, 10 years after she died in a German concentration camp, there is every good reason for remembering the story of the little Jewish girl who, with her family and some family friends, hid out in a garret in Amsterdam under the

Nazi occupation for two years, only to be taken off to prison an ironically short time before the liberation by Allied forces. All of this was actually set down in the child's diary, and it is presented here with the straightforward accent of complete credibility.

The Document

Since they were dramatizing a document, the authors were completely right in setting it down in documentary fashion. But to call their dramatization a documentary play is perhaps to give a false indication that there is no emotion in it. The truth is that

there is the deepest of feeling in it, but it is there by understatement, by implication, and in the quietest and therefore most convincing terms. There isn't a Nazi in it. There isn't a fabricated or highly-colored moment. Perhaps there is a minimum of art, but there is a maximum of honest compassion.

It isn't a play about heroes, either, save possibly in the modest courage of Anne's father. These trapped Jews in their garret are never romanticized. They are very ordinary human beings, who quarrel, are selfish, know fear and envy, display petty malice, and have no grand and ennobling emotions. But because they are such commonplace human beings, the sufferings and indignities heaped upon them are all the more terrifying, and we can share their experiences in a fashion we couldn't if they had been idealized or made larger than life.

The Heroine

Even Anne herself, with her valiant spirit and her warm nature, is not sentimentalized. She is an entirely fallible little girl,

who sulks, chatters, has a temper, rages at her mother, gets hysterical, and is quite capable of making a nuisance of herself. Yet somehow, amid all of the terrors surrounding her, she grows in spirit and understanding, and it is the play's major tragedy that such important loveliness was to be destroyed. Anne also had humor, and her tale has its humorous scenes that are all the more moving in their tragic context.

The title role imposes the most difficult tasks on Miss Strasberg, and she manages them enchantingly. It is a beautiful performance, warm, rich, at times with comedy overtones but always moving and real. You can see the girl growing in stature, and it is a touching experience. There are other good performances, particularly, I thought, by Joseph Schildkraut as the father, Gusti Huber as the mother, Lou Jacobi as a weak-spirited inmate of the garret, and Jack Gilford as a dentist given to whining. "The Diary of Anne Frank" is a moving document on the stage.

"Island of Goats"



New York World-Telegram

and The Sun

October 5, 1955

'Island of Goats' Unusual and Mystic

By WILLIAM HAWKINS.

The Italian playwright, Ugo Betti, is a tantalizing artist. Whatever else you might think of his "Island of Goats," it is unusual.

In this passionate and mystic drama at the Fulton, constant symbolism is so subtly employed that an on-looker must make private decisions as to its application.



"Island of Goats" is obsessed with

the struggle of human beings to be more

than animals. Betti has shorn his play of any but the most elemental facts.

The central figure is a possessive woman whose marriage has failed when she called her husband's intellectual bluff. He could no more succeed in the isolation she provided than he had in a busy society.

Life on the Farm.

Now she lives primitively with her daughter and sister-in-law, on a decaying farm.

Her masochistic bitterness has finally let her achieve true numbness, until she is closer to the goats on the island than she is to her family.

Into this sterile atmosphere comes an amoral lecher, who has known her husband in the prison camp where he died. The woman succumbs to him immediately. In short order the daughter and sister have followed her lead.

Jealousy and humiliation overcome the woman. The visitor is trapped in a well. His terror so unnerves the trio that the mother is able to send the other two away. She settles down to an eternity of bullying punishment.

Betti challenges his audience to imagine and to think, rather than making factual statements. It is permissible to surmise that the present translation does not always do him justice, with its academic vocabulary, and its frequent reference to "things."

Uta Hagen Superb.

The play's escape from pretentiousness and utter obscurity depends largely on the intense and essential performance of Uta Hagen as the mother.

She has passion and force,

"ISLAND OF GOATS"

Play by Ugo Betti, adapted by Henry Reed; staged by Peter Glenville; setting and lighting by Jo Mielziner; costumes by Motley; presented by Roger L. Stevens and Hardy Smith, Ltd., at the Fulton Theatre, October 4, 1955. The cast:

Edoardo..... Henry Sharp
Pia..... Ruth Ford
Angelo..... Laurence Harvey
Agata..... Uta Hagen
Silvia..... Tani Seitz

and a rare quiet concentration. This is an actress with the power to convince you, solely because she believes what she says.

Laurence Harvey plays the visitor handsomely, with erratic jauntiness. Under the circumstances, practically any kind of man could have won these ladies. For Betti's purposes, though, the role might add effect to the drama, if the visitor were dirtier and more sinister.

Ruth Ford has flashes of telling wiliness in the ill-explained role of the sister, and Tani Seitz reveals authentic dramatic strength as the harassed daughter.

October 5, 1955

'Island of Goats' Very Literary

By JOHN CHAPMAN

"Island of Goats," by the late Ugo Betti, Italian poet and dramatist, is an extremely literary variant of Oscar Wilde's story of Salome, without the excitement of music

by Richard Strauss. It has been adapted by an English poet, Henry Reed, and last evening Roger L. Stevens and Hardy Smith Ltd. gave it a lovely and polished production at the Fulton Theatre. But it takes more than fine words and good actors to make a play, and "Island of Goats" lacks the most necessary ingredient of all—interest.

In the opera, Salome left Jokanaan in a well because she couldn't have him, and hastened his death by having his head am-

putated. In the play, Uta Hagen leaves Laurence Harvey down a well and just lets him die there because she can't have him. Jokanaan was a godly and noble man; Harvey plays a rascal who is full of charm and talk. I have an idea that if Miss Hagen had relented and let him out of the cistern he would have talked himself to death in another act. This would have achieved the same ending, but with more peril to the audience. It is all right for actors to talk themselves to death

because they are paid for it—but if the production of such highly verbal works as "Tiger at the Gates" and "Island of Goats" continues, some paying customer is going to listen himself to death and there will be a big scandal.

No Time at All, Much

"Island of Goats" purports to take place on an island given to goat-raising somewhere in the Mediterranean. Three women live, nameless, in a cool and gloomy mill house with a well in the floor—a widow, her sister and the widow's daughter. They are unhappy and they look it. Along comes this glib and charming tramp and in no time at all—well, not exactly no time at all,

for it takes all evening—he has chattered all three of them into what dramatic poets call surrender. When he goes down the almost-dry well to fetch a bottle of wine, the widow decides he had better be left down there for safekeeping.

Harvey, young English actor known here for his movies, is a player of great charm, grace and humor. Miss Hagen maintains the studied air of the tragedienne, and the other two members of the bum's little herd of women are capably played by Ruth Ford and Tani Seitz. They have been directed with great deliberation by Peter Glenville. Jo Mielziner's lofty setting and crafty lighting are nice works of theatrical art.

Henry Reed's translation of the Betti drama may be a minor work of literary art, for much of it sounds well; but essentially it is not theatrical. It belongs, with "Tiger at the Gates," in a book, where it might very well be admired.

October 5, 1955

Expert Portrayals By Imposing Cast

Drama by Late Italian Poet
Presents a Baffling Theme

By JOHN McCLAIN

THIS is a frank admission that I haven't the vaguest idea what "Island of Goats" is about. This play by the late Italian author-poet Ugo Betti, translated by Henry Reed, opened last night at the Fulton Theatre with an expert and distinguished cast, limitless words, tears and frustrations, and an imposing Jo Mielziner set.

I sat there like a little soldier, catching every phrase, running it carefully through the Rube Goldberg device that serves as a brain, but nothing much came out at the end of the production line. Now I ask you:

An engaging and evil young man arrives at the sequestered home of three ladies on an island in the Mediterranean; a widow, her adolescent daughter and her sister-in-

law. The fact that he was a fellow prisoner with the widow's deceased husband induces them to give him lodging and he proceeds, with singular success, to engage in affairs with all three.

Sinister House

They haven't been having a very good time, these three lassies locked up together in a sinister old house, but the presence of this delectable and amazingly active young fellow in their midst leads to no end

of travail. The widow has been happy enough to enjoy him and pass him along to her sister-in-law, but when he gets her daughter in his sights, and it is obvious that the young girl, who has secretly succumbed anyway, is eager to continue the relationship, the mother revolts.

Well, what do you do? In this case you get the young man to go down into a well, conveniently front stage center, and the rope ladder slips off the hook. This boy is in real trouble; he is down a well without a ladder. And he has to stay there while the dolls sit around and discuss things like "eternity" for a couple of days. The mother keeps saying it is only a joke; they want to teach him a lesson, and for a few minutes I thought the whole thing might turn into comedy. But no; the boy tries to climb up the side of the well, falls, and dies.

Assured Playing

What do you make of this? All I know is that a rather selfish and persuasive young man invades a household and has extraordinary success with the three female occupants. He lies to them when they wish to be lied to, he is amusing and beguiling, and they all fall for him. So why don't they haul the poor bum out of the cistern? Is this the eternal voice of woman's conscience? Is this their method of squaring the odds?

I dunno. I can tell you that Uta Hagen, as the young widow, gives one of her assured and studious performances; that Laurence Harvey, the boy, is ingratiating and decorative in his first bow to Broadway; and that Ruth Ford gives a striking portrayal of the love-starved sister-in-law.

Tani Seitz, in her initial dramatic role, is acceptably bewildered and shaken as the daughter in her first brush with life's realities; Henry Sharp is an amiable local cab driver.

More than that I cannot tell you. There may be a moral that is overpowering and important and a scarlet thread of significance that is woven through the fabric. To me it meant one thing, and I will transmit this to the members of my sex: boys, keep away from wells!

New York Post

October 5, 1955

By Richard Watts Jr.

The Young Man Down in the Well

There is a well in the millhouse that Jo Mielziner has designed as the setting for "Island of Goats," and, as soon as the garrulous young man of the drama started his display of sex appeal, I began thinking it would be a good idea if someone put him down that well and left him there to cool off. Since this is exactly what the author eventually does, I suppose I should be grateful to him. And I am. But it's still impossible for me to say anything kind about his odd little play.

This "Island of Goats," which opened last night at the Fulton Theater, has been adapted by Henry Reed from the Italian of Ugo Betti, and I've been told that Ugo Betti is Italy's most important playwright since Pirandello. A few years ago we saw another Betti drama here called

"The Gambler," which seemed rather better than "Island of Goats." But, unless the dramatist is being betrayed by his translators, his presumable eminence is a dubious tribute to the current Italian theater.

Two Comparisons

It is true that the episode of the man marooned in the well by three vengeful but amorous women has a certain interestingly Poe-like quality. The method used by weak women to pun-

ish strong men may also call up memories of the Giraudoux of "The Madwoman of Chaillot." The comparisons are in both cases fairly distant and certainly have nothing whatever to do with quality, but the only part of "Island of Goats" I found entertaining was this particular section of it.

The events leading up to my favorite episode were somewhat as follows: A handsome and mysterious youth comes to the island of the title to see three women, the widow of a professor who had died in a concentration camp, her innocent daughter, and the sprightly sister of the dead man. He tells them he was a prison companion of the professor. The first two ladies don't seem to like him, but, despite the daughter's attempt to shoot him, he has very little trouble seducing all three.

Everything might have gone along quite idyllically if he hadn't started getting arrogant about his dubious conquests. He also talked too much. He told dull stories about his humorous ad-

ventures. At one point, he said: "How mysterious human actions are!" Having thus proved he was a philosopher, he later demonstrated that he could be whimsical. "I'm a real pussy cat," he told the daughter. It didn't surprise me that he got entrapped in that well. What astonished me was that there was some sentiment among the girls in favor of letting him out.

It also surprises me a little that three such talented actresses as Uta Hagen, Ruth Ford and Tani Seitz were interested in playing, respectively, the resentful widow, the friendly sister and the sensitive daughter. The young man is played by Laurence Harvey, an English film actor. I'd rather not commit myself about Mr. Harvey's skill until I've seen him under happier circumstances. As for Ugo Betti—well, I don't know the work of Henry Reed, the adapter of "Island of Goats." Maybe he's to blame.

NEW YORK Herald Tribune

October 5, 1955

THEATER

'Island of Goats'

By WALTER F. KERR

ONE OF the characters in "Island of Goats" is, I believe, the devil, and his principal activity in the new play at the Fulton is the seduction of three lonely women in a millhouse. As a punishment, he is condemned to spend the entire third act at the bottom of a deep well. A more fitting punishment might have been to send him out front to listen to the rest of the play.

"You do nothing but run about after each other in this house," expostulates the devil—a goatish young fellow who has drifted in out of the customary nowhere—as he is working upon his very susceptible victims. The statement is an accurate one, one of the few really graphic remarks made in the course of a singularly vaporish evening.

Up and down a very handsome Jo Mielziner staircase—well, there are actually three or

four staircases, some of them stone—slip a sorrowful widow, her dewey-eyed daughter, and her waspish sister-in-law. They are all good eavesdroppers. They lurk in the shadows beneath slatted and rotting ceilings; they sidle in at doorways with night-lights; they rustle to and fro clasping one another and the devil alternately.

Each spends the night with the lightly bearded stranger who has come to bind their souls. Each hears the call of the goat and feels the lure of the grass. Each spends a great deal of time urging the others to get out of the place—quick.

And all the time nothing is really happening. Ugo Betti's play—here translated from the Italian by Henry Reed—is statically conceived; around a fixed and unchanging pole of evil a handful of moths slowly revolve. It is also philosophically, rather

than dramatically, conceived: the characters are mere counters in an abstract game that is not taking place in a millhouse at all, it is taking place in the author's mind. The subject that is being discussed is the power of the flesh; and there is no flesh anywhere to be seen.

There are fleeting traces of it, to be sure, whenever Uta Hagen is given a line or two that describes a bit of life that took place some time before the curtain went up. Using a narrow and pathetic little smile—and that catch in her throat between words that is already familiar to us—she breathes a glimmer of reality into a memory of a child being shocked at the killing of a goat, or into a moment in which she tries to shatter her daughter's illusions about the family life they once shared.

She does something better than that, in fact. One of the playwright's essential symbols in this dialectical round-robin is the passion the goatherd comes to feel for his goats, the urge he develops to lie in the fields and "baa" back at them. Miss Hagen is compelled to describe just such an experience, and to beat feelingly by way of illustration. She does it with such quiet intensity and such miraculous con-

trol that not a trickle of laughter is heard through the house.

Laurence Harvey is the insinuating visitor who winds up—none too soon—an echoing voice in the subterranean depths, and he is at the very least industrious. He is willing to bring enormous amounts of energy to the business of playing childlike little games with the girls, blowing them kisses, shaking his shock of hair at them, and lolling enticingly on a sack by the fireside. It is an active performance, but not an intellectually interesting one. Ruth Ford's sister-in-law is not much more than a mournful echo from the sidelines, and Tani Seitz' daughter—with flaxen hair and the long, slender lines of a Swiss figurine—is a pretty curio with all too little substance.

Jo Mielziner's massive setting may be the one element in the production that succeeds in evoking the diabolism that interests the playwright. With its striking vertical lines and its faint shafts of light through a broken ceiling, it is a veritable bottomless pit—and a chilling one.

"How mysterious human actions are," exclaims one of the foursome late in the evening. The actions of automatons are more mysterious still.

The New York Times

October 5, 1955

Theatre: Man Mumbling From a Well

Ugo Betti's 'Island of Goats' Is Deep

By BROOKS ATKINSON

ONE man; three women. With the exception of an elderly Italian who makes two microscopic appearances, that is the entire population of Ugo Betti's "Island of Goats," which opened at the Fulton last evening.

The imbalance of sexes gets everybody in a jam. First, one woman; then another; then, it's time for the third. But just at the festal moment, the man falls down a well, and stays there, moaning and pleading through the entire third act. The three women stand around in various parts of the scenery discussing what to do, if anything.

In the end they do nothing. Two of them take off for Broadway and Forty-sixth Street. The third slumps down at the rim of the well, muttering and groaning pregnant phrases.

The late Ugo Betti's "Island of Goats" won the Italian National Drama Prize in 1950. It had a healthy run of two seasons in Paris. For it is portentously symbolic, and never means what it says, which is a blessing. After suitable study one could presumably abstract its meaning, and thus learn how to lead a more enlightened life.

But "Island of Goats" has certain fundamental theatrical defects that discourage celebration. It is swallowed up in gloomy space, Jo Mielziner's

And, in Truth, It's Also Dank and Dull

symbolic set towering so high that it pokes through the roof of the theatre. It is ugly to look at. It is almost motionless. The man talks a blue streak of sexless obscenities, which are monotonous. But the women make only the most sparing remarks after long pauses, and they are fairly toneless when they do. What they say is likely to be a caricature of all that is pretentious and humorless in the theatre.

Years ago Synge said that in the theatre one must have reality, and "that is why the literary drama has failed." It insists on eliminating people

on the stage and driving them out of the auditorium. In Italian and in French "Island of Goats" may have had some qualities of life that are missing in Henry Reed's English version.

But it is unlikely that they could survive Peter Glenville's monotonous production. It is virtually static. As the versatile man, Laurence Harvey talks continuously and moves now and then. But the women seem to be forming a series of tableaux on different stage levels, always representing something too deep for words.

They are Uta Hagen, Ruth Ford and Tani Seitz, all Equity members in good standing, and good citizens, too. Doubtless they are also kind to all who suffer in every walk of life. Let them have a little mercy on all those who suffered in the theatre last evening politely resisting dullness. There were heroes on both sides of the footlights.

Daily Mirror

October 5, 1955

Robert Coleman's THEATRE:

Italian Import Opens At the Fulton Theatre

• Betti's 'Island of Goats' a shocking, cynical comment on human race.

"There's disorder here," cried Agata, "there's chaos!" Agata happens to be one of the characters in Ugo Betti's "Island of Goats," and a darn fine critic to boot. She might have added: "There's a lot of symbolism mixed up in this mess." And we, for one, aren't going to try to fathom it.

"Island of Goats" is the latest play by the Italian bore to reach New York. The first was "The Gambler." That one also made theatre-going unpopular for quite a spell. The new arrival at the Fulton Theatre is all flossed up in a semi-poetic translation by Henry Reed. The usually astute Roger L. Stevens and Hardy Smith Ltd. are perpetrating it on the American public.

THE BAFFLING SCRIPT has to do with a devilish vagabond who comes to an eerie mill-house on an island in the Mediterranean. It is inhabited by three lonely women, a mother, her sister-in-law and a daughter. They are sex-starved, and, before the evening is over, all have joined the satyr's harem.

Then follows much soul-

searching and anguished re- crimination. Bitterness and jealousy, humiliation and ugly self-knowledge drive them to vengeance. They trap their tormentor down a well, and let him gurgle to a watery end. The two less determined flee the island leaving the earthy Agata to deal with the remains.

"Island of Goats" is a shocking, cynical comment on the human race. It implies that we were nothing better than animals, motivated by lusts and instincts rather than intelligence. Well, that's a rather bald statement of what we think Betti has to say. But if you want to plumb this tedious opus for further meanings, you're on your own.

Jo Mielziner has done a stunning set, while Motley has contributed accurately drab costumes. Peter Glenville, one of our favorite directors, has staged this study in degeneracy as if he were etching figures on Grecian vases. We haven't seen so many arty, stained-glass attitudes over recent semesters.

LAURENCE HARVEY, making an unfortunate American debut; Uta Hagen, Ruth Ford and Tani Seitz capture most

capably all the sordid implications of the unsavory piece. Gifted players all, they make the most of their opportunities, and achieve Glenville's pretentious interpretations with courage and straight faces.

We particularly liked newcomer Harvey. He is a master of style, of the bravura. It is regrettable that we had to see him first in such an unpalatable and unprofitable role.

Betti has been hailed in Italy as the most important dramatist since Pirandello. Though we refuse to accept this verdict, on the basis of what we have seen and read, we must admit that he is a modern Cagliostro. For he has the magic to hypnotize such usually discriminating men of the theatre as Stevens, Glenville and Alfred Drake.

As our pal Bob Francis, of Billboard, observed during an intermission, "Island of Goats" is 'Afternoon of a Faun,' with overtones of Sem Benelli." And Sem Benelli penned a magnificent "Jest."