

WICKENDEN GATE GOES OFF-BROADWAY

The Bell Street Chapel is hosting Wickenden Gate Theatre's production of "Nightclub Cantata" which composer Elizabeth Swados describes as combining "the seriousness of a cantata with the frivolousness of a nightclub." Prose and poetry by contemporary writers of diverse ethnic backgrounds are set to even more divergent styles of music, including Motown, a gypsy dance, jazz, and raga. Under Judith Swift's direction and Charles Cofone's musical direction, 12 actors use singing, dance, and creative movement to "break down the defined territories of theatre, concert, and nightclub."

Wickenden Gate has been bringing thought-provoking plays to Providence for the past 5 years, and recently received a R.I. Foundation grant to hire a managing director. Mitch Howard and the Executive Committee of Bell Street Chapel have shown their support for the arts by making space available.

"Nightclub Cantata" continues through July 16th, Wednesday through Saturday at 8 p.m. Call 421-9680 for reservations.

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GEORGE

Summer Fiction YARD SALE

Back in 1988 there were yard sales and there were dogs and babies and cats, some fixed and some not, roaming the Armory District of Providence. Some babies had fancy strollers that were padded everywhere and others were smacked along the sidewalk by mothers who screamed vile things at them. The neighborhood was mixed and it was mixed-up and was the best place to live in Providence if you were curious.

It was not the yard sale to end all yard sales but there were things of interest. A padded camera case for two dollars which he looked and looked at but did not buy and a row of light female clothing fluttering from metal coat hangers hung on the chain link fence in front of the house. These acted as the beacon advertising the yard sale and he admired in particular a reversible corduroy jacket that was red on one side and purple on the other.

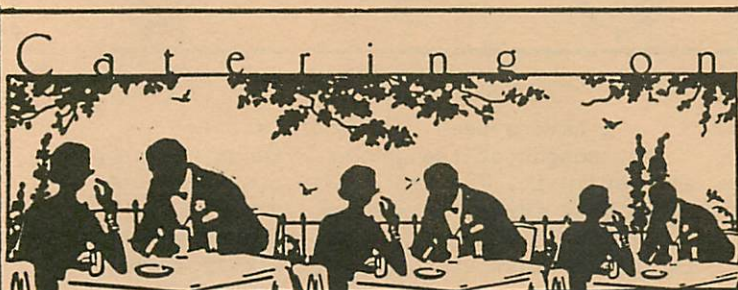
Holding it up for examination and to feel its softness, it was of a very soft and narrow wale, he considered buying it at the same time hoping that one day he might find someone to put inside it. Like the young woman who was selling it.

Her hair was wavy and very black and it shone like a country night in the bright sunlight of this clear day. He knew she colored it to make it blacker than it really was which didn't bother him and that she wore tinted contacts that did not make her eyes any bluer than they already were. He knew this because one day in the Hudson Street Market she'd taken one out and he'd looked at both her eyes.

Because it was such a nice sunny day and because she was there he sat down next to a friend of his who had brought some things to sell also. From this position and across the width of the driveway separating them he contentedly observed her who was willing to part with her reversible jacket.

She was sitting down also in a chair amidst her goods and spoke to him across the driveway. "I never realized what nice legs you have," she told him.

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They were not total strangers. It was a small neighborhood and they'd both lived in it for three and four years and so had on occasion spoken about this and that minor thing at parties or in the market.

"I've been waiting for you to notice," he said.

"I mean the way you're sitting now, that area up there in your thigh."

He knew very well the crease she was referring to. He was not eighteen anymore and he'd picked up a few things.

"I like your legs too," he told her. "I remember the first time I saw you. You were walking behind Classical High School carrying a sketchpad up against your chest. You looked like a schoolgirl but I could tell from your legs you weren't. And you were wearing jeans. Comfortable ones, but stylish too."

After the yard sale they went for a bicycle ride. She had made a gift to him of the reversible jacket because he'd gone to the market and gotten change and a cup of coffee for her. He figured he'd hold onto it and give it back to her one day or at least get her to wear it.

"My legs are serviceable," she told him. She had a strong and steady stroke and she was wearing turquoise long johns hiked up to the middle of her knees.

"That is the very best thing legs can be," he told her back. "They'll come in handy when we go backpacking and skiing. But in addition yours are terrific to look at too."

"They look good in high heels."

"Someday when I have some money I'll take you to a fancy place where you can wear them. Or maybe you can just put some on for me one day," and he saw her hovering lovingly over him in the tender and short reversible jacket that didn't have any buttons, had never been made with any in the first place.

"That's a thought," she said.

They stopped at a sales office for proposed condominiums overlooking the bay at India Point Park and scrutinized a scale model of the project that scared them both. It was so big and the prices were so high and when they asked where the sewerage was going to go nobody knew.

Then they stopped at a house where some friends of hers lived but the friends weren't home so they drank from the hose and kept on.

Blackstone Boulevard had just been repaved and they ended up at Swan Point Cemetery where she wanted to show him the black headstone of a motorcyclist but she couldn't find it amidst the forest of obelisks and angels.

"It has a motorcyclist sandblasted on it riding over the moon, then his name and the dates and underneath it says: 'I Seen The Light!' But I shouldn't be telling you this. You should see it for yourself."

On the way out, on the boulevard, there was an emergency wagon. Someone had collapsed which seemed like a very economical thing to do, then they hooked around and headed back home.

"I have a beau," she told him.

He thought of the jacket without the buttons and her in it. The red side was out and the cuffs were turned up showing purple.

"That's nice. Is it satin? What color is it?" He knew what she was talking about.

"A young man. He's my young buck."

"How depressing."

"Why?" she laughed.

"Why do you think?"

"I don't know."

"The thought that any girl has a boyfriend I find depressing."

That night she was going out with friends.

"What are you doing tonight?" she asked him.

"Probably read. Drink brandy and lay in bed and read. If the mood hits, scrounge through my address book and see if I can locate a like-minded female."

"That's the way I felt last night."

"You should've called me. Consider me next time."

"I will."

He wasn't going to hold his breath. He planned on living a long time and he wasn't going to be cremated. She said back in the cemetery that she wanted to be cremated but he could tell she hadn't completely made her mind up about that either.