



TAZ-MANIA

Tazewell Thompson brings new excitement to Syracuse Stage.

Labor Day has just passed, the new season of Syracuse Stage is about to begin, and artistic director Tazewell Thompson is excited.

Excited because this is his first real season after succeeding longtime director Arthur Storch in July 1992. Unlike last year, Thompson has chosen all the plays and has a deep-down feeling that audiences will like what they see.

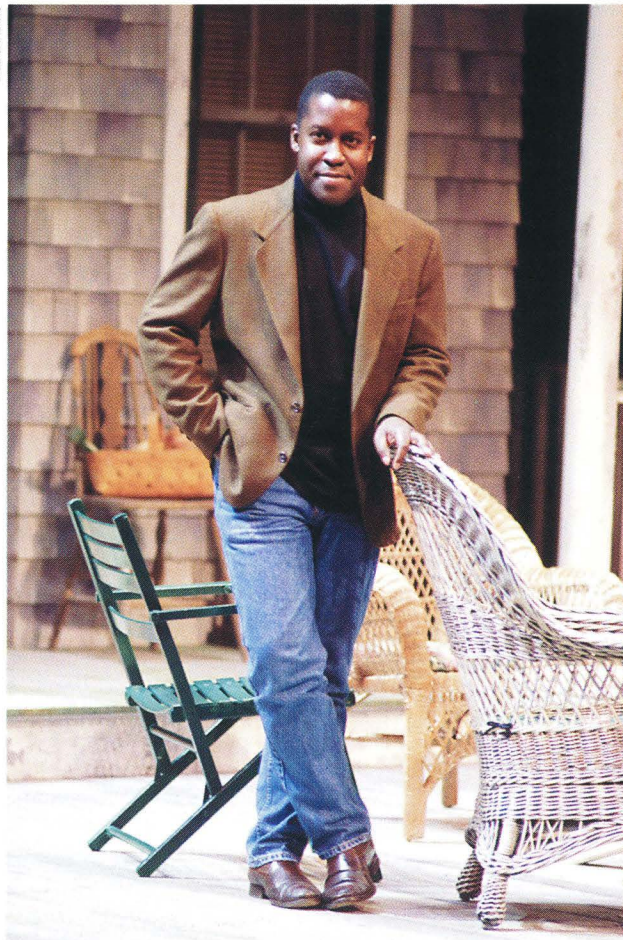
Sitting in the second-to-last row of the main theater on East Genesee Street, Taz, as he's affectionately called, is surrounded by the smells of stain and paint and the buzz of an electric saw. He's busy talking and thinking about the upcoming season, as well as years to come.

"I think this is a wonderful season, but a risky one," he says. "The community seems to be ready."

The first show, *Woody Guthrie's American Song*, opened in September and featured five performers playing Guthrie at different stages in his life. "It's an important piece with a point and social messages that are still relevant today," says Thompson.

This year's lineup is unusual for a regional theater, says Thompson, because only one of the plays, *Our Town*, is well known. In addition, two of the plays include sensitive topics: the stripping of American Indian culture in *The Indolent Boys*, and a woman coming of age amid adversity on the south side of Chicago in *Holiday Heart*.

Thompson makes no apologies for staging provocative and controversial plays. "I have to choose them from an instinctual feeling," he says.



Syracuse Stage's Tazewell Thompson "is one of the most talented, imaginative young directors working today," says James Clark, associate professor of drama.

He clearly wants to challenge his audience. "We must make the audience think and allow them to be taken somewhere else," he says. "The give and take is in the moment—that's why theater is exciting to me."

Thompson came to Syracuse Stage from the Arena Stage in Washington, D.C., where he worked as an artistic associate for more than four years. He grew up in New York City, studied drama at New York University, and has acted both on and off Broadway—he even performed in Syracuse Stage's 1979 production of *Butterfingers' Angel*.

He was recruited to Syracuse by producing director James Clark, who's also an associate professor in SU's drama department.

"Tazewell is one of the most talented, imaginative young directors working today," says Clark. "We're very fortunate that he selected Syracuse Stage over opportunities at other theaters in the country."

Syracuse Stage is not part of SU, but it shares a building with the drama department and has always maintained a close relationship with the University. Thompson is also close to the University. He teaches courses and often meets individually with SU's aspiring actors and actresses.

One of Thompson's goals is to involve and excite youth from the community. Last year he held a poster contest for *Jar the Floor*, his Syracuse Stage directorial debut. Students from local schools were asked to create poster designs for the play's marketing pieces.

The response was so good that multiple winners were named, and different designs appeared on various advertising pieces, playbills, and posters. This year students will create designs for *Our Town*, which begins March 15, and participate in an essay contest.

Taz is also interested in producing works by new playwrights and introducing more people of color to the stage—both in the audience and on stage.

"I really want this to be a populist theater that the community feels is their theater."

—ANDREA C. MARSH

GOONIES

All is peaceful on campus at 7 a.m. on Friday, August 27. The only hint of the invasion to come is the presence of security officers and parking attendants. Then there's us, the Goon Squad. Not bodyguards, just bodies. Like a small battalion, we are armed with trolleys, carts, and muscle to help 2,800 freshmen and transfer students move into SU's residence halls.

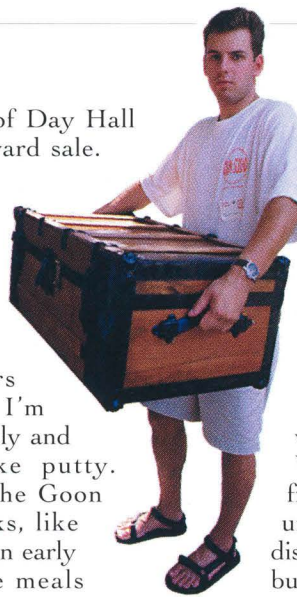
They begin to arrive as early as 7:30 a.m. A transfer student from New York City cruises up to Day Hall in a rental truck. We stare at the truck, its contents, then each other. Can all this stuff fit in one room?

By 9 o'clock the temperature has reached the mid-80s and students are pouring in from states as nearby as Pennsylvania and as far away as Texas. Everyone has the same basic stuff—duffel bags, stereos, milk crates, trunks, computers, and plants. They all appear to lack the same stuff too, like the items you really need for college, such as dictionaries.

The front lawn of Day Hall looks like a giant yard sale.

Inside, cart-pushing and box-toting Goons wait at least 15 minutes for elevators. I, like many, foolishly opt to brave the stairs rather than wait. I'm soon sweating heavily and my arms feel like putty. Volunteering for the Goon Squad has its perks, like being able to move in early and receiving free meals during Opening Weekend. But I didn't seriously believe, until now, that this would be a "high-impact workout," which is reason number six on my free TOP TEN REASONS TO BE A GOONT-shirt.

After numerous trips on the stairs, I'm stopped by a mother whose son I had moved into a sixth-floor room. "Oooo, you look awfully pale," she says, addressing me with motherly concern. "Perhaps you should take it



STEVE SARTORI

easy." Earlier I joked about not eating my Wheaties. Now the joke's on me. I'm tired, hungry, and feeling weak. Although I refuse her monetary tip, I agree it's time for a break.

On the steps of Graham Dining Center, which serves Day and Flint halls on Mount Olympus, I eat an orange and watch more students arrive. What I remember most about my first day on campus is the sense of uncertainty. This feeling gradually disappeared as I made new friends, but never before or since have I felt so awkward.

I'm told that many upperclassmen, particularly sophomores, become Goons because they remember how anxious they felt as new arrivals and how they appreciated help moving in. Although I agree with this sentiment, there was no such altruism behind my presence. My editors volunteered me to do it for this story.

Two Goons, roommates Jack Alvarez and Raymond Yao, tell me about Gooning chaos across campus at the predominantly freshman Brewster/Boland complex. Alvarez says one student's parents simply dropped her off and left. "We just couldn't believe it," said Alvarez. "How could parents not even want to see where their daughter is going to live for the next nine months? I guess they were just trying to teach her how to exist on her own right from the start."

Alvarez and Yao are scheduled to work from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m., the second of three overlapping shifts that began at 6:30 a.m. and end at 5 p.m. In the spirit of volunteerism, they decide to stay until the day's last car is unloaded. "Parents whose children we had helped earlier saw us later in the afternoon and couldn't believe we were still moving students in," Yao told me. "One person said we were a godsend."

My shift is over and I'm exhausted, but I also feel the urge to go on. I'm remembering what it was like to move in without the help of a Goon and how I'm part of a 46-year-old campus tradition. So when another mini-van pulls into the circular drive of Day Hall, I too decide to keep Gooning.

—ROBERT MOLL

SPOT POLL

➤ *Have students changed?*

Other than the way they wear their hair and clothes, we wanted to know if students today are different than the students of 20 years ago. We posed this question to 20 longtime faculty and staff members. Here's a sampling of what we found:

- ◆ "The attitudes and procedures of the students have changed. Twenty years ago there was an altruistic flavor. We were in the midst of demonstrations and the hippie movement. Students were more concerned about causes and blockading buildings. One reason to go to college was to affect society in a positive way, not to make money."
- ◆ "I don't think students have fundamentally changed. They are certainly making the same grammatical errors."
- ◆ "Students today are more interested in getting good grades than actually learning something. Previously, they were here for the education."
- ◆ "Student's today are less studious, but no less bright."
- ◆ "Now that I have gotten much older, the students of today look much younger."

— Kerry L. Ryan

CAMPUS COMET

On the morning she was to travel to Albany to interview Al Gore on the *Today Show*, Rebekka Meissner was worried. Not about questioning the future vice president or appearing on national television, but about missing a French test.

"It hadn't occurred to her to make arrangements to take the test later, that the professor would understand why she was missing the test," says Colleen Bench, director of the Syracuse University Parents Office. "That's Rebekka. She always lives by the rules, and academics come first."

But has she ever got seconds, lots and lots of seconds.

Meissner, a junior majoring in international relations and French, certain-



STEVE SARTORI

Junior Rebekka Meissner was named Central New York's best weekly newspaper columnist in September.

ly ranks among the busiest students on campus. "I would hire her in an instant," says Bench, who last year worked with Meissner in the Office of Student Affairs, "but she's already doing a million things."

Consider Meissner's campus dossier this semester: She is a resident adviser in Watson Hall, a member of the University 100 (she gives campus tours to potential students and their parents), a part-time employee at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, a member of the Hendricks Chapel Bell Choir, a political correspondent for a University

FOOTNOTES

➤ *Mighty Dog.* Legend has it that exam-bound students once sought good luck by rubbing the left paw of the dog in the statue *Diana*, which used to stand in the main lobby of the Carnegie Library. When the lobby was transformed into a documents room years ago, *Diana* was placed in storage. The bronze sculpture, donated by creator Anna Huntington in 1932, re-emerged in 1992 and was placed on the second floor of Bird Library. Although the tradition is no longer followed, the paw is the only untarnished part of the statue.

➤ *What's Up?* We caught up with several former Student Government Association presidents. Here's what they're doing:

- ◆ Stuart Parker and wife Dorianne Bright, who served as presidents of the men's and women's student governments in 1954-55, are retired high school teachers in suburban Syracuse.
- ◆ Charles Hicks, SGA president in 1968-69, is a librarian at the Martin Luther King Jr. Library of Black Studies in Washington, D.C.
- ◆ Jordan Dale, SGA president in 1979-80, runs a children's camp in Cold Springs, New York.
- ◆ Harris Legome, SGA president in 1985-86, is an attorney with the New Jersey law firm of Capehart and Scatchard.
- ◆ Emily Zenick, SGA president for 1991-92, teaches English in Thailand as a Peace Corps volunteer.

— Compiled By Robert Moll

Union Television news program, and a columnist for *The Syracuse Record*, the University administration's weekly newspaper.

Meissner's writing has garnered particular attention. In September, she was named Central New York's best weekly columnist in an annual contest of the Syracuse Press Club. A recommendation from SU and one of her columns—a piece on why students don't vote—prompted NBC to select her as one of two students in the nation to interview Gore shortly before the presidential election.

In addition to everything else she does, Meissner is still a student, enrolled in the Honors Program no less. This semester she's carrying 17 credits, all of which are demanding except for a one-credit course in horseback riding. She likes to add one

credit of spice to her academic load each semester, which accounts for past classes in tap dancing and fencing and possibly springboard diving next semester.

Meissner spent last spring semester in Strasbourg, France, with SU's Division of International Programs Abroad. She interned with the Council of Europe and, on the side, took a course in French cuisine.

"The great thing about that course was you could say your homework got eaten and be believed," says Meissner, who was awarded an internship at the United Nations last summer, and, before graduating, wants to take a few writing courses in the Newhouse School.

Meissner came to college with one overriding goal, which—surprise, surprise—was to do as much as possible.

"There's so much out there to do and I don't want to restrict my interests," she says. "Syracuse is so rich in opportunities. That's one of the main reasons I came here."

Meissner, who's from Endicott, New York, chose Syracuse over Harvard and Cornell. "When I visited Syracuse the thing that struck me was how friendly and helpful everyone was," she says. "Everyone seemed to have a smile and the professors always seemed to have time for me. Coming here has been everything I thought it would be."

Meissner plans to go on to graduate school, unless she decides to work for a newspaper, magazine, television news station, or . . .

—BOB HILL

SPEAKING THEIR MINDS

Haitian refugees. Rodney King. Bill Clinton and civil rights. Every Sunday, a different topic. Every Sunday, a different panel. Every Sunday, it's *The Truth of the Matter* on campus radio station WJPZ, where guests and callers are invited to debate any number of race-related subjects.

Panelist: *I feel my mission is to teach*

and raise up the black man and woman so that we may return to the greatness we had in Africa before we were robbed and stripped of our royalty and knowledge of self.

Caller: *He wants to set up schools to have black people here and white people there. I understand he's saying that it's been like that through history, but he needs to let go of the past a little bit. We should unite and deal with the problem together.*

Panelist: *I agree with part of what you said, but it's hard for a slave to unite with a slave master, for a sharecropper to unite with the one who's collecting the crop. I do not agree with this philosophy that poor raggedy Africans should be uniting with people who are rich and have everything they need.*

The Truth of the Matter is about voicing opinions and expressing concerns. It's produced by the brothers of Kush Neter Ammon-Ra fraternity, an African-American brotherhood dedicated to raising the consciousness of young black men.

"The general purpose of the show is to give a voice to those students most in need of one," says Kevin Wardally, a



The brothers of Kush Neter Ammon-Ra created *The Truth of the Matter* to raise the consciousness of the local African-American community.

senior majoring in political science and economics, president of Kush Neter Ammon-Ra and the University's NAACP chapter, and producer of *The Truth of the Matter*.

The brothers of Kush Neter Ammon-Ra created the show to fill a void. Members felt there was no on-campus forum for them to voice their opinions and ideas. Several other groups and organizations had programs. They also wanted to be heard.

"A lot of us walk around campus with these feelings in our stomachs," says Jamal Wright, a junior majoring in magazine and finance and one of the show's founders. "So rather than walk around with our thoughts in our heads—many good thoughts, many bad—this is a forum for us to express ourselves and get feedback from the public."

"We try to keep the show very broad," says Wardally. "Our panelists do get into some heated debates. We try to get people on both sides of the issue and then play devil's advocate."

The Truth of the Matter is one of the highest-rated talk shows in WJPZ history, with callers from throughout Central New York discussing issues with panelists from the campus and community. The show isn't just about talk, however. It urges people to become involved and announces opportunities to do so.

"We're all about activism," says Wright. "We don't care what you stand for, as long as you stand for something."

—ANDREA C. MARSH

PHOTOS BY STEVE SARTORI



Junior Jamal Wright is one of the hosts of *The Truth of the Matter* on campus radio station WJPZ. The highly rated Sunday morning call-in show invites guests and callers to discuss any number of race-related issues.

FAR FLUNG

The week before David Jones was last in Syracuse he completed a yearlong stay in Saudi Arabia. The week after, he jetted off to Algeria for another year of work. His baggage for both trips included his Syracuse University schoolwork.

Jones is an MBA student in one of SU's Independent Study Degree Programs, or ISDP. Program students do the majority of course work at home and are required to attend on-campus classes as infrequently as two or three weeks a year. Jones, a geologist, hopes to complete his degree in December, when he'll return from Algeria for final exams.

Like Jones, most ISDP students have full-time jobs. Some also have rather interesting backgrounds.

ISDP students have included a South African naval officer who was later tried as a Soviet spy, an African chieftain, a former commandant of the Marines, the minister of tourism for the Bahamas, a former network news correspondent, several FBI agents, and a Saudi Arabian prince.

When required in Syracuse for his master's of social science program, the prince, billionaire Alwaleed Bin Talal Alsaud, chose to live off campus—way off campus. He once stayed at the Plaza Hotel in New York City, commuting to Syracuse each morning for two weeks via a private jet and limousine. He was accompanied by a bodyguard who waited outside each of the prince's classrooms.

Most ISDP students aren't quite as wealthy or well-traveled. Many are simply people who want a degree but have too many responsibilities to be full-time students.

"This is a perfect program for someone like me, who needs a degree and can't take two years off to go live in some dorm," says Susan Weissman, a professor of communication design at Northern Virginia Community College.

Weissman, 46, earned a master's degree in illustration in August. She attended two-week summer residencies in Syracuse during three summers and joined classmates in visiting prominent illustrators in New York, San Francisco, Atlanta, and London.

"You can't meet these kinds of peo-



Syracuse University's acclaimed Independent Study Degree Programs welcome students from across the country—and sometimes the world—to earn degrees in five undergraduate and six graduate programs.

ple and receive this kind of education anywhere else, and that's what I need to break into the business on a national level," says Weissman.

ISDP has 11 degree programs—five undergraduate and six graduate—and will add a master's program in public relations beginning next year. Launched in 1966, ISDP is among the three oldest programs of its kind in the nation and is consistently ranked among the best.

"We're in a unique position to compete in this market because there are few institutions with the reputation of Syracuse University involved in a program like this," says Robert Colley, program director since 1981.

ISDP students, who number nearly 1,000, receive class assignments during their residency stay at Syracuse. When off campus, they communicate with professors via phone, mail, fax, and electronic mail. Course requirements are the same as for students on campus. "You're held to all the same responsibilities as students on campus, but it's like you cut every lecture," says Jones, who keeps an apartment in Bangkok, Thailand, and once lost his homework in New Guinea when searing heat and humidity ruined his computer disks.

"When I was in New Guinea, the only way I could talk with my profes-

sors was on a satellite uplink at \$10 a minute," says Jones. "I told them I'd never fax them anything."

—BOB HILL

KEEPING THE FAITH

If someone had told Toby Manewith to spend a long time getting to know herself before becoming a rabbi, she would have laughed at them. Yet this is the advice she offers to anyone entering the clergy.

"Before you can be anything to anyone else, you have to know who you are and what your convictions are," says Manewith, the newest member of Hendricks Chapel's religious staff and the first female rabbi in Central New York. "I go to work in a job from 9 to 5, but I feel that being a rabbi isn't what I do, it's who I am."

Sitting on the steps of Hendricks Chapel one blustery September afternoon, Manewith is somewhat preoccupied with preparations for the Jewish high holidays. She's been on campus only three weeks and she's trying to meet as many students as possible while also preparing for Rosh Hashanah.

She spends 50 to 60 hours a week on campus between her chaplain hours, services, overseeing the new

Kosher Kitchen (where deeply observant Jewish students take their meals), and advising the Hillel Student Organization.

Even hanging out with students in the Hillel Lounge and watching *The Blues Brothers* is important to Manewith, who asks students to call her Toby. "If I'm not willing to be there and to connect at the most basic level," she says, "then I don't have the right to stand on some pulpit and talk about how people must live their lives, about what is right and what is wrong."

Students are impressed with Manewith, says sophomore Daniel Berkowitz, president of Hillel. "She is not your stereotypical rabbi," he says. "She brings youth and vitality to both Judaism and the Chapel."

Manewith decided to become a rabbi while teaching Hebrew school as an undergraduate at Northwestern University. She went on to study at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati, where she was ordained before coming to Syracuse.

Being a woman in a traditionally male role isn't easy, says Manewith, who is often forced to defend her position. "I have served in synagogues where people wouldn't come to services

because I was a woman," she says.

The orthodox synagogue Manewith once attended with her parents still forbids her to lead services. She cringes at the sexist comments directed at her, like "I never knew rabbis were so cute," and "Oh, honey, look at the woman rabbi."

"You would never say, 'Oh, honey, look at the man lawyer,'" says Manewith. "It gets so frustrating."

Manewith nonetheless says she enjoys working at the University and looks forward to interacting with students and discussing topics such as race relations, women in the clergy,

and interfaith dialogue. "I'm absolutely having fun," she says. "At a university, people are used to things that are a little away from the norm. People are willing to open themselves to new ideas."

"Before I became a rabbi, I had a more clinical view of the role. But on a campus where so many people are searching for all sorts of things— theological, intellectual, and moral—people look to me a lot. I have the opportunity to be so much to so many people, and because of that, I have the opportunity to get so much back."

—KERRY L. RYAN

ARMCHAIR READING

What faculty and staff are reading this winter:

- ◆ Margaret Thompson, associate professor of history, *For the Sake of Elena*, by Elizabeth George: "It's part of a series of mystery novels. I find them to be very interesting and wonderful escapist literature."
- ◆ Jim Wildman, sound designer, Syracuse Stage, *The Elephant Man*, by Bernard Pomeroy: "It's about a very interesting man, Maerck, who was deformed but still possessed tremendous
- ◆ Donald H. Singletary, associate professor of public relations, *A Taste of Power*, by Elaine Brown: "It's about a coming of age in a generation of America. It's told from a sociological and historical view about what happens to black people in America."
- ◆ Linda Milosky, assistant professor of special education, *Animal Dreams*, by Barbara King-Soliver: "It talks about personal transformations as well as bigger societal issues, such as the effect humans have on the environment."
- ◆ Ruth V. Small, assistant professor of information studies, *You Just Don't Understand: A Conversation*, by Dr. Deborah Tannen: "This is kind of light reading about how women and men communicate in different ways."
- ◆ Bruce Hare, department chair and professor of African American studies and professor of sociology, *Race Matters*, by Cornel West: "It's about how racism is a normal mental illness in American society."



Toby Manewith is the newest member of Hendricks Chapel and the first female rabbi in Central New York.