



Fine Arts





Theatre Department photos







Photos by David P. Rosworth



Theatre: 1978-79

The theatre department offered the campus and area communities a variety of entertainment this year. The months of September to May were chock-full of productions, making the season notable for both the wide range of appeal and professional quality of its shows. That, according to department chairman James Flannery, was an important aim. "I feel the fine arts departments should make the community aware of how the University of Rhode Island can play an active role in the cultural activity of the whole state," he told a Cigar reporter early in the year.

"Cheerfulness" was also the name of the theatre department's game, on the whole, although productions of three new short plays zeroed in on such serious themes as growing up Catholic in America, the alienation implied in the sexual mores of the '70's, and the wistfulness of old age. These issues were explored in *Pontifications on Pig-tails and Puberty*, a constructed piece by director Judith Swift and the student cast, and *Perversity in Chicago* and *Duck Variations*, both by David Mamet. They had been so successful when the URI troupe presented them on campus last summer and again at the Edinburgh Festival in Scotland, that they were repeated as openers for the fall season.

A happy choice to usher in winter was one of Shakespeare's busiest and wittiest comedies, *Twelfth Night*. The student production was set in Regency times, more than a century after it had been written. The idea was to add the opulence and decadence of that period to the play, according to its director, Kimber Wheelock, and the concept worked well, giving the costumer and set designer an opportunity to produce some stunning effects. Shakespeare performances are always popular on campus, and *Twelfth Night* drew the second highest student attendance of the year.

From comedy, the theatre department moved on to a musical confection and old favorite that was pure delicious spun candy. *The Boy Friend*, by Sandy Wilson, an instant hit on Broadway when Julie Andrews starred in it back in the '50's, is a spoof of the Jazz age.

With Brien Jones, 25-year-old creator of the state's renowned All-Tap Revue as their choreographer, the mainly-student cast did a brilliant job of convincing the audience they were masters of such 1920's dance exercises as the Shimmy, the Charleston, and the Black Bottom. Their enthusiasm, virtually delicious sets by Paul Pavis and a high-class musical back-up by the music department's URI Jazz Ensemble combined for a real success. Twenty-five hundred people turned out to see its seven performances.

Cacciatore, three new one-act plays by New York playwright Joseph Pintauro, were seen for the first time outside Manhattan in a production by five advanced theatre majors who won admiring reviews around the state.

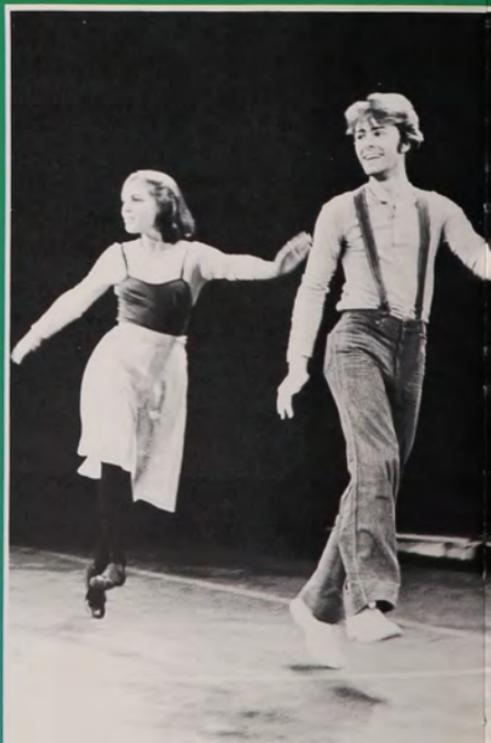
Perhaps the most ambitious undertaking of the year was a world premiere of *The Grub Street Opera* as the theatre departments final major offering. A ballad opera, written by the famed 18th century satirist, Henry Fielding, it had never been performed in all its 250 years, according to Professor Edgar V. Roberts, noted Fielding scholar. The high-style URI production proved that when they are presented well, music and comedy and action never get out of date. Because 18th century ballad operas generally used the popular music of the day, authors rarely bothered to write a score for them. Consequently, Charles Cofone, guest artist in the theatre department this year and musical director/set designer for the production was called on not only to write a score but to compose tunes where some had been lost. Professor Roberts, who attended a performance, was so impressed with the result that he plans to incorporate Cofone's score into an upcoming new edition of *The Grub Street Opera*.

This year, the theatre department moved importantly in the direction of upgrading the actual dramatic experience offered to its students. One result was a more structured and intense Bachelor of Fine Arts program in the theatre, designed to appeal to those students with real professional ambitions. Judging by the calibre of the entertainment it offered, the move has been a successful one.





Photos by David P. Bosworth







Photos by Lee Greenwald

Music: 1978-79

The music department put together a solid year of entertainment. Student participation reached a high point as the department serenaded the campus community with performances appealing to a variety of musical tastes.

The URI Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Dr. Gregory S. Ceo, gave three major programs. The May program featured student soloists Peter Davis (bassoon), Barbara Youmans (contralto), Jennifer Wright (flute), Liana Ioffredo (soprano), and Stephanie Fraser (soprano). The orchestra also participated in the highly successful jazz festival in April. The highlight of the program was the premiere performance of *Celebration II* by Mac Chrupcala, a former graduate assistant and a highly successful jazz pianist from Newport. In December the group performed Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker Suite*, among other works.

In November the URI Chamber Orchestra, a group of seventeen select student musicians, presented a program of four Concertos by Antonio Vivaldi as part of the well-received Vivaldi Festival. The soloists were Patricia Farmer (violin), Marie Pucci (violin), Kathleen Curran (cello), Michael Butler (cello), Peter Davis (bassoon), and Jennifer Wright (piccolo). Donna DeAngelis (trumpet), Cheryl Gowing (organ), William Doyle (trumpet) and Kevin Kopchynski (English horn) were soloists in the spring concert of works by various composers from Handel to Copland.

Jazz, Jazz, Jazz II, a week-long event in the spring with record-breaking audiences, provided a perfect opportunity for the URI Jazz Ensemble to demonstrate its artistry. The group of twenty performers, directed by Dr. Arthur Molycka, also had its star soloists, especially Art Montanaro on trombone, Mike Andrea on trumpet, Frank diPietro on sax, Jim Wishart on guitar, and Joe Parillo at the piano. Half of the program consisted of original compositions of guest artist-trombonist Phil Wilson.

That Ram Band, The Pride of New England, numbered 130 marching musicians, fronted by the famous Ramettes. The band, directed by Professor Gene Pollart, assisted by

Lee Brown, presented 8 half-time shows at Meade stadium and away-games this winter. During the spring semester many of these musicians participated in the URI Symphony Wind Ensemble, also directed by Professor Pollart and his assistant, Lee Brown. The first concert was highlighted by an uncommon stereophonic performance of Copland's *Fanfare for the Common Man*. In their final program the group gave a stunning rendition of Tchaikovsky's *1812 Overture*.

The University Chorus of 84 voices and the Concert Choir of 42 voices shared three performances. Under direction of Professor Ward Abu-samra and his graduate assistant, soprano Stephanie Fraser, several masterworks were presented, including J. S. Bach's Cantata *Sleepers Wake* with Liana Ioffredo and David Pry as vocal soloists, and Mendelssohn's *Psalm 95*. As part of the Antonio Vivaldi Festival, the combined groups gave the composer's famous *Gloria*.

Under the direction of graduate assistant Stephanie Fraser, the Madrigal Singers a select group of twelve singers, specialized in performing European madrigalesque music of the renaissance and early baroque periods, all in appropriate costumes. The group contributed to the Festa Italiano produced by the Theater Department and Arts Council. The recently organized Swing Singers, also under Miss Fraser, concentrated on performing American show tunes in costume and with their own choreography.

Eleven members of the Opera Workshop, directed by Mary Langdon, special instructor in voice, gave highly successful performances of various operatic scenes from the classic and romantic periods. Particularly outstanding were the scene and duet from Puccini's *Sister Angelica* with Stephanie Fraser as Sister Angelica and Florence St. Jean as the stern princess, and the famous duet from the same composer's *La Boheme* given by Margaret Swanson as Mimi and Donald St. Jean as Rudolfo.

The department is looking forward to another busy and productive year in 1979-1980.





L. Greenwald



J. McLellan



J. McLellan



J. McLellan

Scale Studies

Scale Study No. 12

at the 1st Fingering

at the 2nd Fingering

at the 3rd Fingering

at the 4th Fingering

VII. I Sing The Body Electric

