MSA SESSIONS AT THE MLA

The Marlowe Society of America will once again sponsor two sessions at the MLA Convention, which will be in New York City. The first session will be the Annual Meeting of the MSA. The second session will be an MSA Workshop. As usual, the Annual Meeting will be followed by a refreshment hour.

ANNUAL MEETING

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE AS TRANSLATOR, PLAYWRIGHT, RHETORICIAN

Sunday, Dec. 28, 3:30-4:45 PM, Albee, Marriott


REFRESHMENT HOUR

5:15-6:45 PM, Albee, Marriott

A refreshment hour will follow the Annual Meeting in the same room. Be sure to stay and join us for conversation and something pleasant to eat and drink.

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE WORKSHOP

PROBLEMS IN MARLOWE'S VALUES AND BELIEFS

Tuesday, Dec. 30 at 8:30-9:45 AM, Ziegfeld, Marriott


CALL FOR PAPERS

MLA 1987

MSA solicits papers for its 1987 meetings at the MLA in San Francisco. Send abstracts or papers of fifteen-minute length to Matthew M. Proser, President, MSA, English Department, U-25, 337 Mansfield Rd., University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT 06268; (203) 486-2583.
MARLOVE SOCIETY OF AMERICA

Matthew W. Proser, President
Constance B. Kuriyama, Vice President
Sara M. Deats, Secretary
Robert A. Logan, Treasurer
Bruce E. Brandt, Membership Chairman and

MSA Newsletter Editor
Edward L. Rocklin, MSA Book Reviews Editor

All business and organizational correspondence except for memberships should be addressed to the President:
Professor Matthew W. Proser, President
Marlowe Society of America
Department of English, U-25
University of Connecticut
Storrs, CT 06268

New memberships and renewals should be sent to the
Membership Chairman:
Professor Bruce E. Brandt
Membership Chairman
Marlowe Society of America
English Department
South Dakota State University
Brookings, SD 57007

MSA Newsletter publishes reviews of Renaissance, and especially Marlovian, drama; notices of recent and forthcoming publications; and notices of events or items of interest to Marlovian scholars. The opinions expressed are those of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect that of the MSA. The editor reserves the right to refuse items, to ask for revisions, and to make stylistic changes that he deems appropriate. MSAN reviews are usually around 800 words long, but may occasionally be longer. The beginning of a review should identify the company, the dates of performance, and the director. MSA members are encouraged to announce publications and other items or meetings of interest to the membership. Materials for the next issue of MSAN should be received by April 1, 1987. Send inquiries, announcements, and submissions to Professor Bruce E. Brandt, Editor, MSAN, at the above address.

MSA Book Reviews publishes reviews of books on Marlowe and his period. Reviews, suggestions for reviews, and inquiries should be sent to the Reviews Editor:
Professor Edward L. Rocklin, Editor

MSA Book Reviews
Department of English and Foreign Languages
California State Polytechnic University
3801 West Temple Avenue
Pomona, CA 91768

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT
UPON THE OCCASION OF MSA'S TENTH BIRTHDAY
1976-1986

Time has passed very rapidly since MSA's current Executive Committee was elected back in 1983. Nevertheless, 1986 is at its end already; perhaps this is a not inappropriate moment for us to reflect on some of MSA's accomplishments over the past three years, and to glance at earlier days as well, since this year is our organization's tenth birthday!

First of all, I am delighted to say that we have quadrupled the number of dues-paying members in the past three years and, as you are aware, have put out a list of our membership, along with their addresses, in the last issue of our MSA Newsletter. The Newsletter, an information outlet admirably overseen, administered, and edited by our Membership Chairman, Bruce Brandt, of South Dakota State University, has served not only to distribute organization news, but as a scholarly and critical tool through the bibliographies and play reviews it has published. MSA Newsletter has also become increasingly professional in its look and design. Our MSA Book Reviews, with evaluations that are sometimes long, informative pieces in their own right, has continued to be a resource to members who wish to keep abreast of new books on Marlowe, Renaissance drama, and related matters. Edward Rocklin, its editor, who is now teaching at The California State Polytechnic University in Pomona, CA, hopes to continue this tradition, and is always looking for reviewers and suggestions for books to consider for review.

Our meetings in the past three years have grown in both number and quality. In addition to our main meeting, MSA is now running a Marlowe Workshop; and if members observe the listings during the past three years (and the years previous to these as well), they will see some rather distinguished names. This year Alan Hager of Loyola of Chicago will once again be participating; so will Richard Hardin of Kansas University, and also Clark Hulse of the University of Illinois at Chicago, to mention only a few. Moreover, we have become increasingly international. Scholars from Canada and the UK are now participating in our sessions, including this year Jonathan Hart of Trent University, Canada, and Mark Thornton Burnett of Wolfson College, Oxford. Furthermore, we have managed to shape our sessions into containable units, and are now increasingly organizing around general topics of interest to the membership and the academic community.

Additionally, we have instituted a biennial award for quality work in Marlowe studies in the name of the notable Roma Gill, who is now in Oxford, England, and have given the first of these awards to Julia Briggs of Oxford for an excellent piece on The Massacre at Paris. Finally, as you know from the communications of Secre-
tary Sara Deats of The University of South Florida at Tampa, we are now having our second election in three years, the groundwork for our more recent one having been laid by our new Constitution. And now we must think about the future. The future begins with MSA's celebration of its own inception, which occurred under the guidance of its energetic Past-President, Jean Jofen, of CUNY. MSA is now ten years old, and we aim to celebrate this birthday, along with the 400th anniversary of the first production of Tamburlaine at our upcoming Second International Marlowe Conference, June 15 to 19, 1987, at The University of Hartford, West Hartford, Connecticut.

President Proser, 1985 Annual Meeting

Robert Logan, who is also Treasurer of our organization, has been made Director of this conference, and in this issue of the Newsletter he describes the prospective paper categories and invites abstracts and papers for consideration. Naturally, we encourage all our members to submit papers and to make a commitment to attend this conference. We are calling MSA's Second International Conference Marlowe: Ancient and Modern; and in addition to the papers and the chances for talk and exchanges with other Marlovians, we are hoping to schedule in a variety of other events for the pleasure and diversion of the participants. So watch for Robert Logan's announcement in this very issue of MSAAN. Vice President Constance B. Kuriyama of Texas Tech University and I look forward to seeing all of you at MSA's Second International Conference at the University of Hartford so that we can exchange ideas, socialize, and celebrate together. Meanwhile, all the members of MSA's Executive Committee and the Editors of its pub-

lications wish you the very best for the holiday season and for the whole new year.

Matthew Proser
President, MSA

SECOND INTERNATIONAL MARLOWE CONFERENCE

The Second International Marlowe Conference will be held from June 15-19, 1987, at the University of Hartford in West Hartford, Connecticut. The conference will pay tribute to the four-hundredth anniversary of the first production of Tamburlaine and celebrate the tenth birthday of the Marlowe Society of America. The theme of the conference is "Marlowe: Ancient and Modern." Among the sessions being considered are:

1. Tamburlaine
2. Marlowe and Critical Theory
3. Marlowe's Poems
4. Recent Critical Approaches to Marlowe's Works (Singly or in Combinations)
5. Marlowe's Politics
6. Marlowe's Dramatic Style
7. Marlowe and Medieval Theater
8. Marlowe and Modern Theater
9. Marlowe's Influence
10. Interdisciplinary Approaches to Marlowe
11. Marlowe and History
12. Reevaluations of Marlowe
13. Biography of Marlowe
14. Doctor Faustus: Traditional versus Contemporary views
15. Controversial Issues Relating to Marlowe's Works
16. Current State of Marlowe Studies (Scholarship, Criticism, or Bibliography)

In addition to the sessions, the program will include a welcoming reception, a champagne banquet, and both musical and dramatic events. There will also be an opportunity for members of the Conference to use the swimming pool, tennis courts, and other athletic facilities of the University of Hartford. Other attractions of the area include the Mark Twain House, the Wadsworth Atheneum, the Goodspeed Opera House, Bushnell Memorial, Sturbridge Village, a trip to Old Wethersfield to visit early New England homes, and the Hartford Stage Company. The planning committee is in the process of devising diversions that will suit the varied interests of all those who will be attending the Conference.

Details of the Conference, including registration materials, fees, arrangements for food and lodging, and other pertinent information, will be available by early March. In the meantime, those interested in reading a
paper at one of the sessions are encouraged to submit a one-page abstract no later than February 1, 1987, to:

Professor Robert A. Logan
Department of English
University of Hartford
West Hartford, CT 06117-0395.

A full-length version of the paper will be due to Professor Logan no later than April 1, 1987. Final decisions on the complete program of sessions and the papers to be read will be made by May 1, 1987.

DIGRESSIO OR HOMEWORK?
SOME SPECULATIONS ON THE ENDING OF MARLOWE’S HERO AND LEANDER


The controversy about whether Marlowe’s Hero and Leander should be considered a fragment or a completed work centers largely on one question: how could a poem so arch about love, sex, lovers, and itself possibly be brought to a tragic conclusion, even if the original source calls for one? The shift in tone would be jarring in precisely the way the shift from Marlowe’s original to George Chapman’s completion is jarring. Working from the structure and narrative indicators of the poem itself—the only evidence we have—it is possible to deduce, speculatively but plausibly, an ending toward which it pointed that does not violate its comic Ovidian tone. At the end of the Neptune digression, the amorous god is depicted as mistakenly believing that Leander has been responsive and is susceptible to gifts. Neptune’s exit does not have the aura of conclusion or finality which the parallel Mercury digression does. Rather, we are led to anticipate a later appearance of the gift-laden god, whose further wooing culminates in Leander’s accidental drowning while returning to Abydos (or on some future expedition to Seri or Sestos). The god, grotesquely, comically conceived, would provide a grotesquely comic catastrophe quite in keeping with the treatments of the gods throughout the work. An examination of earlier portions of Marlowe’s poem reveals various indicators that it was headed for such an ending but was never completed.

IS CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL WRITER?


Marlowe is not an autobiographical writer, though his plays have often been discussed as if they were direct transcriptions of the poet’s inner being. Marlowe, along with Donne, Jonson, and Herbert, was a writer who was torn between assertive individualism and the conventional genres in which he expressed himself. It is difficult to differentiate private emotion revealed in terms of allegory, icon, or trope from the traditional material in which it is embedded. To compare Marlowe to romantic artists is misleading. Elizabethan memoirists do not express their individualism,
but rather their incorporation into the culture of which they are part—almost never do they attempt self-
discovery or self-revelation. Renaissance artists—
George Herbert is an example—project unique and pri-
ivate emotions onto public forms. They draw a stock of
tropes from the storehouse of history. Another strat-
ey of Herbert’s is to turn the figure of the poet into
a neotypological analogue of a biblical figure. In the
same way, Faustus or Edward II can be thought of not as
drawn from autobiography but as exemplary figures who
are "types" of Marlowe. It is therefore warranted on
psychological and rhetorical grounds to think of the
plays as similitudes of Marlowe’s private life. Mar-
lowe can be understood as a biographer of exemplary
types which serve as vehicles for self-discovery.

MARLOWE’S GHOST ON SHAKESPEARE’S STAGE

An abstract of the paper presented at the MSA Annual
Meeting, Chicago 1985, by Kay Stockholder.

MARLOWE’S GHOST ON SHAKESPEARE’S STAGE

Kay Stockholder, Chicago 1985

Shakespeare’s dramatic trajectory was shaped by an
effort to prove dramatically that the individualistic
ideas, forcefully dramatized on the English stage by
Marlowe’s plays, brought disaster to the human commu-
nity and violated the core of human nature. He honed the
techniques of powerful naturalistic character portrayal
in part as a means to find in the depths of the human
psyche evidence for a divinely ordered hierarchy. How-
ever, not only was such an attempt doomed to fail; it
also conflicted with his perceptions of political real-

ities. The conflict between these world visions is
perceptible in the ways in which neo-platonic ideology
generates dramatic structures designed to contain the
force of his erring protagonists. He used this neo-
platonic ideology to shore up the claims of hierarchy
and to counter the personal force of his own dramatic
creations, but was gradually forced to abandon the pow-
erful naturalistic psychology he had forged in order to
probe these problems in the tragedies. However, this
ideology, in combination with the related conception of
the stage as a microcosm, betrayed both the contradic-
tions inherent in the ideology of hierarchy, and his
characters’ and his own unconscious sympathy with the
ideas that had generated his most villainous figures.
The contradictions inherent in his ideas, passions, and
plays appear most vividly in The Tempest, the play in
which he had most strenously asserted a visionary hier-
archial harmony. Prospero’s individually acquired pow-
ers by which he establishes his progeny on the throne
of Naples reveals his, and probably his author’s, se-
cret kinship with Marlovian overreachers.

THE MASSACRE AT PARIS

Continuing with its commitment to staging the entire
Marlovian canon, the American Shakespeare Repertory
will perform Marlowe’s The Massacre at Paris during
January, 1987, at Theater 22, 54 W. 22nd Street, New
York, NY. ASR believes that this is the Massacre’s
American premier.

FAUST THROUGH FOUR CENTURIES
VIERHUNDERT JAHRE FAUST

To commemorate the four hundredth anniversary of the
appearance of Spies’s Historia, the Department of Ger-
man Studies at Indiana University plans to hold an
interdisciplinary conference to discuss the evolution of
the Faust theme in literature, in music, on the
stage, and in the fine arts.

For information, write the Faust Conference Com-
mittee, Department of Germanic Studies, Ballantine Hall
644, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana 47405.

MSA ELECTIONS

Procedures for this year’s election are proceeding on
schedule and in accordance with the new constitution.
The present officers have volunteered to serve another
term, but despite an announcement in the Newsletter and
a mail solicitation of the membership, no other nomina-
tions have been forthcoming.
RECENT AND FORTHCOMING

Two publications by MSA member Mark Thornton Burnett will be of interest to the membership:


David Ormerod and Christopher Wortham, Dr Faustus: The A-Text. (University of Western Australia Press, 1985). The edition is copiously noted, with notes and text on facing pages, and contains a good selected bibliography. The introduction judiciously traces the textual controversy and pays particular attention to the Renaissance understanding of magic.

Simon Shepherd, Marlowe and the Politics of Elizabethan Theatre (St. Martins, 1986). Shepherd argues the advantages of the mixed form of Elizabethan drama, which he sees as politically subversive of church and state.


ROMEO AND JULIET


Verona is a busy, bustling, modern Italian city in the RSC's production of Romeo and Juliet, filled with youths on motorcycles, clergymen, rollerskaters, and old men with sticks out for a stroll. Romeo (Sean Bean) and Benvolio (Martin Jacobs) drink coffee at a table on the street and watch the passers-by. But this is also a place dominated by Mafia organizations and plagued by violent gang warfare. Knives are quick to appear, sirens wail, and a leather-clad Tybalt (Hugh Quarshie) wields a chain with angry malevolence. When a smooth Prince Escalus (David Gower), in his sharp suit and sunglasses, refers to the rudely broken "quiet of our streets," one feels that he, too, plays an important part in perpetuating the state of lawlessness and unrest. Not surprisingly, the first we hear of Romeo is that he locks himself in his room, as if to protect himself from the outside world. The contemporary relevance of the interpretation is further suggested by the rock music played by an off-stage band, and by the sleek, modern lines of the revolving set, a staircase in marble and chrome.

A prosperous society preoccupied with appearances and security is presented. Capulet (Richard Moore) is the head of a thriving corporate business company, a self-made man from the north who sits at a large desk complacently puffing at a cigar. No wonder an alarm sounds and dogs bark when Romeo leaps over the Capulet wall into the orchard! Self-assured and worldly, Lady Capulet (Anna Nygh) is the gracious hostess of a party to which only the young and smart professionals are invited. Even the Nurse (Dilys Laye) is fashionable and sophisticated. It seems fitting that Capulet should be so concerned with a suitable match for his daughter in this world of financial wheeling and dealing, bloody family feuds, and the uncertainty of life.

Michael Kitchen as Mercutio stands out as the most accomplished individual performance. A rollicking, bawdy drinking companion, he plays a solo on the electric guitar, dances rock and roll, and splashes about in the Capulet fishpond. His delivery is particularly fine, and he pronounces his lines with a gleeful relish. After the Capulet party, he takes aspirta in a glass of wine in a vain attempt to recover from the ravages of the previous night. Though he makes himself ridiculous when he takes a kick at Tybalt's immaculate sports car and sparks off the chain of events that leads to his being stabbed, he achieves a tragic dignity in death and his loss is keenly felt.

Of the lovers, Juliet (Niamh Cusack) is the stronger and more assured. Spirited and passionate, and with a hint of provocative mischief, she convincingly realizes the part of a young girl stricken in the first flush of love, and grows as the play progresses. Other aspects of the lovers' relationship, however, are less well handled. The balcony scene is conducted too quickly and loudly, and the delicate interplay of feeling becomes no more than comic. Romeo is a bitter and listless melancholic who has to be bullied into action by Friar Laurence (Robert Demeger) who slaps him as a parent would a child. The social background of the hero is never clearly delineated; he is less a gentleman than a parochial upstart and, given his lack of poetic sensitivity and yearning, it is difficult to understand why Juliet finds him so attractive. Moreover, the different mood of the latter half of the play (darkness and seriousness replace boisterousness and levity) is not successfully integrated into the reminders of the first half; the rock music is now distracting and irritating, and a carnival scene with caricatures of contemporary political figures is meaningless. Consequently, the death scene of the lovers fails to move or to suggest a sense of tragic waste. The weaknesses of the second half spoil the originality and
intelligence displayed elsewhere in the production.

As Escalus delivers the final speech (a tour de force in hypocrisy and expediency), he is filmed and applauded by an assembled stage audience. Divisions have been healed, but little thought is given to those who have died during the conflict. Peace descends on Verona, but it has been realized at an appalling cost.

Mark Thornton Burnett Wolfson College, Oxford

THE ALCHEMIST


Any teacher of Ben Jonson's plays who has struggled with an inability to remember who is who, who remains who, and who turns into how many whoms, would not have hit upon The Alchemist as the play most likely to be performed by a small company in a small dark loft, where the audience could only be enlarged by an advance of chairs upon the stage. In Fall, 1985, the American Shakespeare Repertory of New York City did make such a choice and, on the whole, justified it.

The director, Douglas Overtoom, opened up the stage-space by choric entrances between the acts, each character isolated in his neuroses, yet physically linked to those ahead of him and behind him, as in a cruel fairy-tale or a Dance of Death. These entrances led into a series of dialogues or fights, often accompanied by "offstage" actors performing obsessive rituals of expression and gesture at the sides of the stage as they waited to be sucked into the central vortex.

Subtle, Face, and Doll, appearing and disappearing behind a minimal screen at the back of the playing area, each time in a different disguise, developed the energy of the whirlpool; the shifting relationships between these three characters provided the force that twists and turns the narrative structure, sketching, altering, destroying, and rebuilding the fates of the passively greedy dupes. The monologues that make disguise-roles as solid as "real" ones were heavily, though not disasterously, cut in this production, but the plot lines were kept clear.

The great chest of treasure downstage—one of the few standing props, and one that could have been more obviously used from the beginning—was gradually filled up; the consortium of thieves disintegrated over greed for a woman, and the master of the house, returning with the ultimate weapon—rank—blandly scooped the pool. Doll and Subtle were returned to vagabondage, Jeremy/Face to his place as butler, and the fools were left in hell.

By academic standards, such a cut and squeezed performance would seem bound to be a travesty; by theatrical standards it was a howling success. Enough of the Jonson text remained to display his contempt for the dupes who feed the cheats, his admiration for invention, and his icy dissection of hypocrisy. The emphasis on swivel-eyed disguise, mugging, and physical vaudeville reminded us of what an eagle glance the mountain-bellied Jonson had for absurdities of physique and dress.

Douglas Overtoom as Face, Carol Dearman as Doll, and particularly Jeffrey Logan as the Alchemist were remarkable in their gusto. Their wild gyrations spun out the sense of lives improvised on the edge of destruction. Riotous imagination was broken only by the simple power of greed and the smooth power of privilege. We did see why, even in asserting his own control, "the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely; for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light." In Jonson's world, of course, the children of light are

Top to bottom: Overtoom, Dearman, and Logan as Face, Doll, and Subtle
only fools who lack the intelligence and initiative to put their desires into action, and so become dupes.

In the ASR production these minor characters often hovered uneasily between erotic realism and the urge to make symbols of their characters, lacking the style to link their parts to Jonson’s unifying concept. Robert Whaley as Abel Drucker could not challenge my memory of Alec Guinness in the role—his eager naivete, the pathetically small scale of his dreams and his corruption; this Abel was not a figure to stand behind the headlines in the newspaper for the rest of your life. Angela Madden as Dame Phiant appeared too generally disturbed to project the sexual avarice underlying her passive acceptance of everything—and everyone—planned for her; Sulry was not strong enough or mannered enough to reveal the envy behind his self-righteousness; and Robert Lerardi as Sir Mamon lacked the rich polymorphous sensuality which keeps him dreaming of a corrupt baby, self-delighting at the center of his self-created world.

Their later scenes did tend to find a common denominator for the characters’ self-destruction. Yet if this production overemphasized idiosyncrasy and mannerisms, failing to catch Jonson’s wider vision, in which wisdom consists only in acceptance of comic corruption, yet it caught, against all the odds, the rhythm of Jonson’s inexhaustible invention.

Barbara Rosen
University of Connecticut

TWO DC COMEDIES


In that Never—Never Land that still believes in "Freedom Fighters," "Star Wars," and the heroic murder of women and children in Tripoli, Shakespearean comedy must seem like some version of the "real world."

Folger’s Twelfth Night featured clarity in the speaking of the verse, a Maria (Catherine Flynn) who happily enlarged the role beyond its apparent dimensions, a Feste (Michael W. Howell) who could sing for a change, or two, and a dignified Malvolio (Floyd King) who was not so easily duped. The set, borrowed quite obviously from Koltai’s Much Ado, was a blinding problem at times—all those narcissistic surfaces! Another problem was Sibyl Lines, who was splendid in her ensemble work, but who tossed her crucial soliloquy (What means this lady?) into a "macho" asblin. The discovery, which amuses us and baffles a Viola not fully aware of the generic assumptions that incorporate her, was not there. The production flattened at precisely the point where it should deepen.

We learned nothing new from this production, but it reinforced the dictum that the director should trust the script. Gavin Cameron-Webb did just that, with pleasing results.

Douglas Wager had no respect for the script of the Shrew. He casually tossed the induction away and brought his audience into a world located somewhere between "The Godfather" and "Miami Vice." Wager is apparently innocent of the god-awful Bogdanov version for RSC in the late 1970’s which imposed the same puerile "conception" upon a hapless company. Wager’s version did appeal to the porter to my left, who was, after all, watching TV and who laughed loudly at external nonsense. He found it very funny that Bianca should interrupt her soft-porn play with Lucentio to watch a soap-opera on the tube that Wager brought onto his insulting set. He also enjoyed Casey Biggs’ conception of Petruchio as a flyweight contender with zipper at the ready.

Perhaps Wager’s worst scene was the celebrated road to Padua sequence. As sensis roared by, via stereo feed, Richard Bauer’s Vincentio appeared, a fortyish sports car aficionado. This modernization made ravioli out of a potentially very funny scene. Randy Danson’s Kate attempted to prove her superiority to Petruchio (which should have been easy!), but the badly blocked final scene had Petruchio seated. He was not permitted to demonstrate his awareness of her virtuosity. He just sat there.

It was an embarrassing production, playing to some conception of "what the audience wants." It smothered the vibrant comedy under the silliest of modern metaphors. It was sloppily directed and badly acted. In a city that showcases an outlaw national administration, this shabby Shrew will be celebrated in the popular ‘imagination’ for years to come.

H. R. Coursen
BOWDOIN COLLEGE

TAMBURLAINE THE GREAT


Any production of Marlowe’s Tamburlaine, either Part I or II, is an epic undertaking; but a joint production of these plays, or one which attempts to weld them through cuts and innovative dramatic shaping, takes enormous risks. Janet Farrow and Douglas Overtoom ran those hazards in their Spring production at ASR, but their success was variable and sporadic. To
begin with, the physical limitations of their playing-space necessarily diminished the hugeness of Marlowe's dramatic canvas. Farrow and Overtoom attempted to overcome those limitations by arranging the seats like bleachers on two sides of a playing field. This redistribution aimed at enlarging the playing area, and the effect was achieved, but sometimes at the expense of the audience's ability to follow portions of the action which took place simultaneously at opposite ends of the field. This \textit{Tamburlaine} was at times a little like watching a tennis match, except that one was not always certain who was serving, and therefore dithered as to where to look first. Around the entire space a colorful representation of Ortelius' map had been hung, with the Asian, Mediterranean, African, and even North American continents depicted and appropriate locations labelled. This was an inventive concept and one could see lying behind it the desire to enlarge the audience's perception of both space and time.

This map, in fact, offered a preview of Farrow and Overtoom's total productional design, which divided the two parts of \textit{Tamburlaine} into three sections of one gigantic play. Thus Act I took place in Persia in the traditional period, the 14th Century; Act II, however, was laid in the 20th Century in North Africa, while Act III found its location in "Amerasia" in the 24th Century. The aim was to render \textit{Tamburlaine} as a kind of permanent universal force expressing itself in every age. And every age was rendered accordingly—with its own costumes and ambiance. The Persians in the first act were dressed in glittering "Arab" costumes and bright colorful fabrics. The contemporary segment was meant to suggest some decadent, modern North African state. \textit{Tamburlaine} was a Generalissimo in khaki, with dark glasses and a swagger stick, who reminded one immediately of Colonel Gaddafi. The final futuristic act seemed to take its costumes and stage effects from "Mad Max." Characters were garmented in plastic Glad bags, hub caps, swimming goggles, and surgical masks, and these were supplemented by a seemingly endless array of outrageous, idiosyncratic props. \textit{Tamburlaine} himself was drawn on stage in a supermarket cart! We were confronting, and with a lot of humorous grotesquerie, the anarchy following the crash of civilization, caused no doubt by the endless battles endemic to our hero's very long dramatic career over all of time and space!

All this showed considerable energy, invention, thought, and stamina; but in total effect the inventiveness descended at points into gimmickry, and the gimmicks took attention away from the larger concept of the play, its themes, and its dramatic point.

Of course, the whole sense of dramatic point in \textit{Tamburlaine} is a moot one, since the only thing the play's critics really agree on is that we are dealing

\begin{center}
\textbf{Empire Calcutta Theatre}
\end{center}
with something big, evidently heroic, and larger than
type. The play itself presents most of its characters
as if they were cartoons, and the repetitiveness of
the battles and confrontations, the colors and cruelty,
make some viewers feel that Marlowe never really devel-
oped his action in a dramatic way. These putative lim-
itations are somewhat redeemed by the play’s more mag-
nificent speeches, along with the mightiness and vital-
ity of the concept behind the whole. It is regretable,
therefore, that not all the famous speeches were
rendered with the understanding and conviction one
would hope; indeed, some of the most famous lines even
appear to have been cut, the most conspicuously absent
being Tamburlaine’s obligatory “earthly crown” declama-
tion.

Then, to be sure, there is the overriding diffi-
culty in Tamburlaine of simply rendering such speeches.
The ASR was not always entirely successful. Sometimes
the problem was the conception of the action; sometimes
it was the limitations of the actors that caused the
problem. For instance, the opening scenes in Mycetes’
court were principally broad, comic presentations with
Mycetes projected as ancient and virtually catatonic
when he was not downright carnivously biting slave-
girls. There is some sanction in the text for this
kind of approach, because Mycetes is scarcely an ideal
prince, and his weakness as a leader is clear. I found
ASR’s innovation funny, but it might have caused some
members of the audience to pale a bit. So might have
the vision of the newly crowned ministers of Cosroe,
who crawled on their knees before him, abjectly twidd-
dling their thumbs! Here familiar lines were rendered
in a style of burlesque that might cause us to quibble,
but at least the rendering provided a new kind of di-
version. The readings of individual actors were at
moments less ambiguous in their success, or lack of it.
True, Douglas Overtoom played his Tamburlaine as a
grand charismatic character. With his dark, blazing
eyes and extraordinarily mobile face, which can shift
rapidly from handsome to cruel or ugly to brave, Over-
toom is always capable of commanding his audience’s
attention. His diction was clear, sonorous, and cer-
tainly loud, if perhaps at moments a bit strained, es-
pecially toward the end, a problem which, considering
the presentation lasted over three hours, was only
to be expected. However, Zenocrate as played by Lisa
Gray Beeeson was wooden and woolen-mouthed, and not
even her startling beauty and unadulterated sexiness
could overcome these limitations. Carol Dearman’s Za-
bina, on the other hand, was strangely affecting when
she was not playing the character strictly for laughs.
Dressed in an oversized costume to increase her girth,
and pulling the sides of her mouth strenuously down-
ward, Ms Dearman belted out her lines and veritably
tattered her passions at the death of her husband Baja-
zeth. Ms Dearman doubled as a slave girl too, but
nothing in that role could compete with her depiction
of an enslaved Zabina serving hors d’oeuvres to Colonel
Tamburlaine’s decadent guests at a cocktail party in a
tent on the North African desert!

Jeffrey Logan’s Usuracamas was creditable, but
Logan simply did not have the material to work with
which he had in his excellent performance last winter
as the title character of Jonson’s Alchemist. Tambur-
laine’s other friend, Techelettes, was also effective, as
portrayed by Robert Lerardi; so was Christiane McClus-
key as Zenocrate’s lady-in-waiting, Anippe. Stephen
Cassidy’s Bajaneth approached Carol Dearman’s Zabina in
broad comic playing. His deep-voiced growlings and
snortlings in the homoerotic Turkish court’s overwrought
world of fantasized instincts complemented his over-
weight Zabina, who stood behind her lord like a sumo
wrestler, slung-breasted, big-bottomed, and scornful-
mouthed. But in many of the performances, the actors
were merely reading their lines. They had not tamed
the overwhelming demands of Marlowe’s declamatory style
nor found a way to shape real characters, if in fact
this is really possible with many of the figures in this
play. Because even in the best production, how
long can one endure those exhausting battles of rhetor-
ic between the kings or their consorts, who go at each
other in the declamatory style of figures in Genet’s
drama?

But despite the business, gimmickry, and the limi-
tations of some of the acting in ASR’s production, it
was not without its conceptual points. If the grand-
ness of space and time meant to be conveyed by the use
of Ortelinus’ map and the division of the play into dif-
f'erent eras turned out only to be gestures constrained
by the reality of ASR’s playing-space, nevertheless
Farrow and Overtoom’s presentation did manage to por-
tray Tamburlaine and his spirit as some kind of abiding
and indestructible force in the universe. This is be-
cause the directors persistently linked the aggressive
instincts that color the play with the carnal and lust-
ful, as for instance in the scene when Cosroe (Richard
Sanie) dies, where we also see Menaphon (David Bach-
ra) inextremis sexualis, and in various orgiastic
activities that interpenetrate the action in this pro-
duction. These kinds of doings might appear to be
merely sensationalistic, and I suppose to some degree
they actually are; however, by tying the aggressive
instinct directly to the sexual (in quite an array of
its permutations), the ASR production managed to ex-
pose the underlying tension in a good deal of Marlowe’s
dramatic technique. Tamburlaine’s is a puzzling world
of larger-than-life passions which indeed seem rooted
in conflicting yet married primal instincts, a setting
that transcends the petty world of individual pleasures
and pains.

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