

## World premieres set the stage for Chicago's 1985-86 theater season

By Sid Smith  
Entertainment writer

**N**ew plays and musicals are starting to fill the 1985-86 production calendar, as more of Chicago's resident theaters set their upcoming season schedules.

Victory Gardens, 2257 N. Lincoln Ave., plans a year of five world and Midwest premieres, including several by playwrights who have done well by the theater in recent seasons.

The new works include "Wild Indian," by Theodore Shank, about a lone surviving Stone Age Indian discovered in 1911 and put on exhibit at the Smithsonian Institution [running Sept. 25-Nov. 3]; "Gentrification," a drama about urban pioneers trying to revitalize a neighborhood, by Dean Corrin, who gave the theater a 1984 hit with his "Butler County" [Jan. 22-March 2]; and "Mr. 80 Percent," a

### Arts at large

comedy on post-sexual revolution mores, by James Sherman, the author of the theater's current hit, "The God of Isaac" [May 28-July 6].

Midwest premieres include a stage adaptation of Studs Terkel's book "American Dreams: Lost and Found" Nov. 20-Dec. 29, and "Split Second," Dennis McIntyre's off-Broadway police melodrama about racial conflict, March 26-May 4.

For more information, call 549-5788.

● Casting has been completed for Northlight Theatre's production of Tom Stoppard's "The Real Thing," scheduled Sept. 19-Oct. 27.

David Darlow, who played the title role in "The Philanthropist" at Court Theatre last season and

the lead in "Terra Nova" at Wisdom Bridge Theatre, will play Jeremy Irons' Tony Award-winning role in the comedy concerning an extramarital merry-go-round. Kristine Thatcher, a former resident actor with the Milwaukee Repertory Theatre who played Kate Nickleby in the Great Lakes Shakespeare Festival's "Nicholas Nickleby" at the Blackstone Theatre in 1983, will play the part of his mistress-turned-wife, the role portrayed on Broadway by Glenn Close.

The rest of the cast includes Barbara Gaines, Joe Van Slyke, Kevin Gudahl, John Mueller and Katherine Lynch.

For ticket information: 869-7278.

● The Absolute Theatre Company's second season of residence at the Theatre Building, 1225 W. Belmont Ave., will consist of five Midwest premieres and include the troupe's first repertory program.

Two English plays, "Good," by C.P. Taylor, and "The Accrington Pals," by Peter Whelan, will play in repertory in September; Taylor's work concerns the effects of the holocaust on a German professor in Hitler's Germany, while Whelan's depicts the lives of the members of a World War I battalion and their relatives waiting word back home.

"Pass the Butler," a farce by former Monty Python member Eric Idle, has been scheduled for a November run; Arthur Kopit's 1984 Broadway comedy/drama on nuclear devastation, "The End of the World," plays in February; "The Crucifer of Blood," Paul Giovanni's Sherlock Holmes saga, concludes the season in May.

For more complete schedule information, call 327-5252.

● "Dr. Who: The Inheritors of Time," local playwright John Ostrander's stage adaptation of the

popular "Dr. Who" television series, is now expected to open in a production in October at the Pickwick Theater in Park Ridge.

Veteran actor/director William J. Norris will stage the production. The new play, for which the BBC granted the exclusive North American stage rights, concerns what happens to the title character after his final regeneration.

● The Illinois Theatre Center, Park Forest, will present three Chicago area premieres and an original musical as part of its 1985-86 season.

The area premiere of "Quilters," a musical tribute to American pioneer women, begins the season Sept. 27-Oct. 20. "Messiah," a new play by Martin Sherman, the author of "Bent," gets its Midwest premiere Nov. 1-17. A revival of "110 in the Shade," the musical based on "The Rainmaker," plays Dec. 6-Dec. 31.

The 1986 schedule includes Tina Howe's "Painting Churches" Jan. 6-26; "Greater Tuna," a comedy for two actors playing 20 roles Feb. 7-23; the Midwest premiere of "Sherlock's Last Case" March 14-30; and "Hangin' Round," an original musical about aging by ITC artistic director Steve S. Billig, April 18-May 4.

All productions are scheduled in the theater in the Park Forest Public Library at 400A Lakewood Blvd. For ticket information call 481-3510.

● The Chicago premiere of "Night Mother," Marsha Norman's 1983 Pulitzer Prize-winning drama about a suicidal young woman's final confrontation with her mother, has been added to Wisdom Bridge Theatre's schedule next season.

The drama will play Feb. 27-April 13; previews begin Feb. 19. For information call 743-6442.