

The Beginnings

"Nothing excites me more as a teacher than seeing opportunity open up for those with whom we've worked."

— Maria Gobetti

The Victory Theatre produced its first play in Spring, 1980. The play was **The Miss Firecracker Contest** by Beth Henley. "Miss Firecracker" was listed by Sylvie Drake as "one of the Ten Best Plays" in Los Angeles for 1980.

"**The Miss Firecracker Contest**, which launches Maria Gobetti's and Tom Ormeny's handsome new Victory Theatre ... demonstrates (Henley's) instinctive sense of satire... The encounters breed conflict, explosion, laughter, and love. Director Maria Gobetti has cast the play astutely... The sets aptly complement the text... And the costumes underscore the satire... This is a play on its way to somewhere."

— Sylvie Drake, Los Angeles Times

The play went on to earn itself a listing in Otis-Guernsey's Best Plays of 1980, among the honorable achievements in regional theatre that season.

"One of the joys of being a critic is discovering a good new theatre group or a good original play. To find both of them on the same night is a miracle."

— Rob Stevens, reviewing "Miss Firecracker" in Data Magazine

The 1980 Pulitzer Prize in Drama was awarded to Beth Henley for **Crimes of the Heart**. Ms. Henley wrote "Crimes" while she was an acting student in Maria Gobetti's acting classes. As Linda Grimsley wrote about Ms. Henley in *The Women in Theatre News*,

"She took the techniques she learned as an actress and applied them to her writing."

"This is a beginning... We have exciting plans for theatre in Southern California — plans that will continue to develop and promote the talent of new actors and playwrights; plans for live theatre that truly involve the audience."

— Tom Ormeny

The Dream

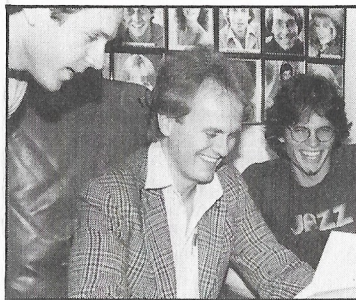
Maria Gobetti and Tom Ormeny are the directors of The Victory Theatre. In 1970 they formed an acting studio in Hollywood with the goal of developing an ensemble to present new plays.

From the start, the Gobetti-Ormeny Acting Studio established a fine reputation for training disciplined, professional actors. Both Maria Gobetti and Tom Ormeny are called upon frequently to coach at major studios.

In 1980 they opened The Victory Theatre, a new theatre/studio complex in Burbank. It is,

in the words of a visitor from the Los Angeles Theatre Alliance, a "Cadillac of a theatre." The new facility houses an equity-waiver main theatre and a smaller studio for classes and work in progress.

The Victory maintains a full program of training for established and emerging performing artists.



And The Victory Theatre also continues to make real the dream of producing new or rarely done plays on a regular schedule.

The Miss Firecracker Contest was the first step in that direction. "Miss Firecracker" was also the Victory's first production in the new theatre, and it was a solid success. Sylvie Drake of the Los Angeles Times called it "Funny, fun, original, and richly personal." It played to sold-out houses for three months — a wonderful beginning for the new theatre.

Now the Victory is ready to take the next step in its development.

This Fall, the Victory will launch its first season with four American plays. The season opens with **The Mound Builders** by Lanford Wilson. Following that will be two one-acts on the same bill: **My Cup Runneth Over** by Robert Patrick and the Los Angeles premiere of **A Party for Divorce** by Lee Kalcheim. And there will be two more productions, one of which will be a new musical.

The projected season offers a broad cross-section of American plays. It will provide an exciting realization of the Victory's dream of establishing a subscription theatre devoted to new plays and new talent.

The Future

The next phase of The Victory Theatre's dream will become reality once a subscription season is in place.

The Victory will continue to grow toward a fully staffed enterprise and either expand existing facilities or move to larger quarters.

The Victory will maintain its close ties with the film and television industry in the Los Angeles area. Plans are being made to stage pilots for television series — at a considerable saving to production companies. Successful productions on the Victory's main stage will be taped for the growing video-cassette/videodisc and cable markets. These projects will provide some of the support neces-

