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The Matchmaker (1988)

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Spring 1988

## The Matchmaker Playbill

Providence College

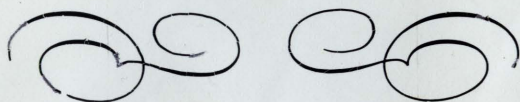
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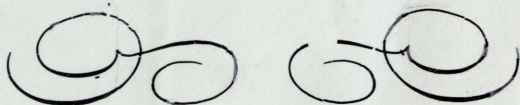
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The Blackfriars Theatre

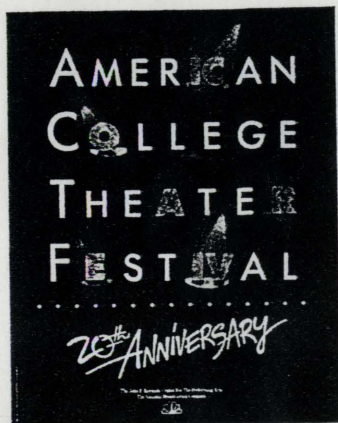


~ THE ~  
**MATCHMAKER**

~ A Farce by Thornton Wilder ~



on the campus of Providence College



AMERICAN COLLEGE THEATER FESTIVAL  
20th ANNIVERSARY

PRESENTED AND PRODUCED BY THE JOHN F. KENNEDY CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

SPONSORED BY THE NATIONAL BROADCASTING COMPANY

*Supported in Part by  
The Kennedy Center Corporate Fund  
The U.S. Department of Education  
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This production is an Associate entry in the American College Theater Festival. The aims of this national theater education program are to identify and promote quality in college-level theater production. To this end, each production entered is eligible for adjudication by a regional ACTF representative and certain students are selected to participate in ACTF programs involving awards, scholarships, and special grants for actors, playwrights, designers, and critics at both the regional and national levels.

Last year more than 650 productions and 15,000 students participated in the American College Theater Festival nationwide. By entering this production, our department is sharing in the ACTF goals to help college theater grow and focus attention on the exemplary work produced in college and university theaters across the nation.



# The Blackfriars

The name BLACKFRIARS has both a religious and a theatrical connotation. In the high Middle Ages it was a popular name given to the Dominican Friars who over their white wool tunic wore a black cloak and cowl — for traveling and for cold weather. (The Carmelites were called Whitefriars because of the white cloak they wore over their brown tunic.) When the Dominican preachers came to England they built a friary or convent near London which was called Blackfriars. When the Dominicans and other religious orders were suppressed at the time of the Reformation, the house called Blackfriars, with its large enclosed refectory, was used for theatrical productions. In 1608 the King's Men, Shakespeare's Company, leased Blackfriars for winter productions. And so the name survives, in history and in popular memory, with this mixed connotation.

In our own time, and in the living memory of many people on this campus, the name emerged again, and affixed to it was the same double connotation, at once religious and theatrical. For the name BLACKFRIARS was the name given to the Catholic theatrical group formed by the Dominicans in Washington D.C. in the early thirties. Fathers Urban Nagle and Thomas Carey, both Dominicans, started the Blackfriars Guild, a theatrical group dedicated to writing and producing plays that were both artistically appealing and spiritually challenging. That initial experience in Washington, moreover, provided the impetus for other Blackfriar chapters in various cities — New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Providence, Pittsburgh, Louisville, Rochester, etc. Another Blackfriars' venture, a summer Institute of the Dramatic Arts at Catholic University was the seed-bed and the inspiration for the now-famous School of Speech and Drama founded at Catholic University in the late thirties, under the direction of Gilbert V. Harke, O.P.

When Fathers Nagle and Carey were transferred to New York City they became the driving force behind the Blackfriars Theatre, one of the first Off-Broadway Theatres. Operating in a small and intimate theatre on West 57th Street, the Blackfriars Guild staged its first play in 1941 and remained in continual operation until the early seventies. During this time the Guild produced over forty original plays, availing itself of the energies and talents of hundreds of New York actors, many of whom went on to outstanding theatrical careers.

We may take this as a good omen, then — this latest adoption of the name BLACKFRIARS for the Providence College Theatre — an omen promising a theatrical venture joining high artistic integrity to spiritual reach and purpose.