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### The Zournas Gift

The Zournas Gift consists of approximately ten thousand books from the reference libraries of the pre-1948 Theatre Arts magazine, the pre-1987 Theatre Arts Books library, the working library of Robert Mercer MacGregor, and the personal library of George Zournas. The Gift is especially strong in the area of the performing arts: ballet and modern dance are especially well represented. In addition, there are hundreds of books on the fine and decorative arts, English and American literature, and Asian philosophy. Included are numerous books that have become classics in the field of travel and exploration, as well as hundreds of beautifully illustrated books on Chinese, Japanese, Tibetan, Hindu, and Muslim art and architecture. There are also scores of copiously illustrated sales catalogues from the two great American auction houses, Christie's and Southeby's, and dozens of magazines concerned with the arts of Asia.

### Theatre Arts

Existing from 1916 to February 1948, Theatre Arts magazine had an extraordinarily long life for a theatre magazine. It survived two world wars and a major depression before it fell at last in 1948, the victim of economics. Established by Sheldon Chaney at the Arts and Crafts Theatre in Detroit, it was maintained, developed, and enlarged by Edith J.R. Isaacs during her years as its editor and publisher. She guided its destinies to New York where Theatre Arts flaunted the word "art" in the face of "show business" and proclaimed in its first issue its intention "to conserve and develop the creative impulse in the American theatre; to provide a permanent record of American dramatic art... to hasten the day when the speculator will step out of the established playhouse and let the artist come in."

From 1924 on, Mrs. Isaacs expanded the scope and influence of the magazine, increasing its size and bulk to include reviews of the English theatre and more articles on European theatre including those by European authorities.

As the magazine grew, associate editors joined the staff. The roster included Stark Young, John Mason Brown, John K. Hutchens, Rosamond Gilder, Hermine Rich Issacs, George Beiswanger, Norris Houghton, Cecil Smith, and Robert M. MacGregor. Though Theatre Arts started as the medium of an ardent group of young revolutionaries in the "art theatre," it grew with them and the theatre they represented as they made their way into the citadel of the commercial theatre. Theatre Arts was there to welcome them while constantly reminding them of their origins. So, too, did Theatre Arts cover the theatre in education and in the community, for it recognized that the American theatre embraces all of them as parts of its mainstream. And just so with films, which were subject to the same caliber of criticism and found nowhere else the overall critical and

pictorial record which Theatre Arts made for them. "A record and a prophecy" was Theatre Arts' slogan; this, surely, its achievement.

-from the Foreword to Theatre Arts Anthology

### Theatre Arts Books

Theatre Arts Books was the book publishing arm of Theatre Arts magazine. It started with six books including Stanislavski's *An Actor Prepares*, Isadora Duncan's *The Art of the Dance*, Richard Boleslavsky's *Acting: The First Six Lessons*, and other classics of the performing arts.

Over the years, the list was expanded to include books by the great ballerina Tamara Karsavina, the actors Sir Michael Redgrave and Sir John Gielgud, and the founder of the Juilliard Drama Division, Michel Saint-Denis. Other books added included the quintessential American play *Dark of the Moon*, Edward Gordon Craig's *On the Art of the Theatre*, and dozens of other essential books on the theatre.

In 1972 at the height of the Cuban Missile Crisis, another imprint was added to Theatre Arts Books, The Bhaisajaguru Series. Named for Bhaisajaguru, the Master of Medicine Buddha associated with the Eastern direction, the series was added to publish books on Eastern philosophies of consequence for contemporary people which might be overlooked by larger publishers.

The first to be published was *Peonies Kana: Haiku* by the Upasaka Shiki translated by Harold J. Isaacson, a professor at New York's New School for Social Research. Shiki is considered the last of the great Japanese haiku poets, so Shiki's proximity to our time makes his thought especially relevant today. *Peonies Kana* was followed by *Namu Dai Bosa* by Nakagawa Soen Roshi and Nyogen Senzaki, the two last great Zen Masters of the Rinza School of Buddhism. Next, *The Prince Who Became a Cuckoo*, one of Tibet's most cherished tales was added, translated by Geshe Wangyal. This was followed by *A Cure for Love* by the Persian poet Sa'adi, chosen and arranged by Harold J. Isaacson and Sara Douglas.

### Robert Mercer MacGregor

Robert M. MacGregor was born on August 5th, 1911, the son of Charles P. MacGregor, a Northern Baptist minister, and Mary Ellen Mercer. After graduating from Harvard, cum laude, in 1933 at the height of the Great Depression, MacGregor was lucky to find a job at Macy's in New York. After seven months as assistant buyer in "modern furniture,"

MacGregor became assistant editor at the book publishers Harcourt, Brace & Co. In 1935, he was sent to Moscow as a correspondent for *The New Republic* and other magazines. While in Moscow, he married the American sculptress Emma Lou Davis,

who was working on the celebrated mosaics in the Moscow subway. Between 1936 and 1938, he was in Peking, China as a correspondent for the United Press covering, among other things, the Manchurian Incident.

From 1938 until 1942, the MacGregors were at Reed College, the famous experimental school in Oregon, where MacGregor taught creative writing and was the Dean of Men. From 1942 to 1946, MacGregor was in the United States Army as a Staff Sergeant and Battalion Survey Sergeant in the European Theatre. He was awarded a Bronze Star Medal with five battle stars. After V-E Day he was in Paris working for The Stars and Stripes Weekly Supplement, and in 1946 he became Editor-in-Chief of Army Talks, a weekly, published by the U.S. Army in Europe.

Back in New York, from late 1946 to 1948, he worked as assistant editor of Theatre Arts magazine, particularly in charge of book reviewing and book publishing. In 1948, when the magazine was sold, he acquired the book publishing department which he set up as Theatre Art Books, publishing books about acting, stage design, and various other aspects of the theatre. In 1950, MacGregor also became Managing Editor and Vice-President of the publishing firm New Directions which publishes contemporary poetry, criticism, some fiction by such authors as William Carlos Williams, Thomas Merton, Herman Hesse and Ezra Pound, and a few plays by such writers as Tennessee Williams. MacGregor was a member of New York's Century Association and was on The Overseers' Committee to Visit the Harvard University Press. He died in 1974.

#### George A. Zournas

George Zournas was born in Lubbock, Texas on May 6th, 1928. He was the son of John Zournas of Kalavryta in the Peloponessus of Greece and Lillie Jones of White County, Arkansas. The Zournases were proprietors of the celebrated Tech Cafe in downtown Lubbock. Because it was open twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, it became the gathering place for people of all kinds. It was in fact, a sort of European bistro. For example, after the Avalanche Journal was put to bed, Charlie Guy, the editor, and his reporters and pressmen would come to the cafe to eat and relax. Doctors, nurses, and families of patients at Lubbock's two hospitals, then downtown, came in along with bakers, flour still on their paper hats, after the next day's bread was safely out of the ovens. On Saturday nights roisters, hungry after dancing and drinking the night away at the old Cotton Club, came by to sober up and renew their energy. On Sundays, parishioners would bring their ministers and visiting evangelists in for dinner. Professors at Tech would come to talk with Mr. Peter Little, the cafe's bookkeeper, who was something of a scholar of classical Greece, and after their performances, musicians, brought to Lubbock by the Civic Music Association, would be brought to the cafe by their hosts to eat, relax and have fun.

When he graduated from Lubbock High School in 1944, two weeks after his sixteenth birthday, Zournas and his friend the violinist Roger Hall shared the 1944 Lubbock High School orchestra medal. That summer, Zournas entered the University of Texas at Austin

thinking he would become a Psychiatric social worker, however, he spent most of his time in the Music Department. He became a cellist in the University Symphony Orchestra, joined the musicians' union and became a cellist in the Austin Symphony. He played the cello in the University's memorable performances of Verdi's Requiem and Purcell's Dido and Aeneas.

In 1947, while taking a summer course at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Zournas' two uncles, who were involved in the management of the Cafe, died within six weeks of one another. He returned to Lubbock and spent the following semester there as night manager of the cafe. He also took a couple of courses at Tech and played the cello in the Inaugural Season of the Lubbock Symphony Orchestra. In the Spring of 1948, Zournas returned to Austin where he did volunteer work at the Austin State Mental Hospital taking recorded music programs into the wards and arranging live music programs. That same year he was elected President of the University of Texas Mental Hygiene Society, and was also invited to become a member of Phi Mu Alpha, the national honorary musical fraternity. In 1948, Zournas left the University to travel extensively in Europe and North Africa. By late 1949 he was in New York City where he was asked to join the staff of Theatre Arts Books. He later became, successively, junior partner, partner, and after the death of the publisher Robert M. MacGregor in 1974, publisher and owner of the company.

In 1959 after encountering Tibetans in that part of India which borders on Tibet, Sikkim and Bhutan, Zournas took a course in Tibetan given at Columbia University by the Lama Geshe Wangyal. Zournas was the only student in the class, but in those days Columbia gave a class even for only one person. Zournas and MacGregor became good friends of Geshe Wangyal and helped him and the Tolstoy Foundation bring four of the first Tibetan refugee monks to Geshe Wangyal's temple, Labsum Shedrup Ling, in Freewood Acres, New Jersey.

Zournas later became involved in Zen Buddhism and helped Nakagawa Soen Roshi, the last of the great Rinzaï Zen Masters, in his attempt to establish the Dai Bosatsu School of Zen in the United States. In connection with this endeavor Zournas was chosen President of the New York Zen Studies Society.

After MacGregor's death in 1974, Zournas became publisher of Theatre Arts Books, a position he held until 1987, when he then sold the company to the English publisher Routledge, which was establishing a presence, in the United States and was eager to add Theatre Arts Books' superb back-list of books on the performing arts to their own fine list of books on the contemporary theatre. The Theatre Arts Books reference library was not included in the sale. The huge archives of photographs and other illustrative material used over the years in Theatre Arts magazine was given to the Theatre Collection of the Houghton Library at Harvard University in memory of Mr. MacGregor by Rosamond Gilder, the last great editor of Theatre Arts, and Zournas.