

THE BENNINGTON THEATRE STUDIO

Presents

THE BRIDGE

by Hart Crane

Produced by courtesy of
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The Theatre
Bennington College
December 13, 14, 15, 1939
at 8:30 P. M.

EXCERPTS FROM THE LETTERS OF HART CRANE

"I am too interested in *The Bridge* thing lately to write letters, ads, or anything. It is just beginning to take the least outline – and the more outline the conception of the thing takes, – the more its final difficulties appeal to me. All this preliminary thought has to result, of course, in some channel forms or moulds into which I can throw myself at white heat. Very roughly, it concerns a mystical synthesis of America. History and fact, location etc. all have to be transfigured into abstract form that would almost function independently of its subject matter. The initial impulses of our people will have to be gathered up toward the climax of the bridge, symbol of our constructive future, our unique identity, in which is also included our scientific hopes and achievements of the future . . . If I do succeed, such a waving of banners, such ascent of towers, such dancing etc. will never before have been put down on paper!"

To Gorham Munson, February 18, 1923

" . . . I have been able to give freedom and life which was acknowledged in the ecstasy of walking hand in hand across the most beautiful bridge in the world, the cables enclosing us and pulling us upward in such a dance as I have never walked and never can walk with another . . . Note the above address, and you will see that I am living in the shadow of the bridge . . . And there is all the glorious dance of the river directly beyond the back window . . . That window is where I would be most remembered of all: the ships, the harbor, and the skyline of Manhattan, midnight, morning or evening, - - rain, snow, or sun, it is everything from mountains to the walls of Jerusalem and Nineveh, and all related and in actual contact with the changelessness of the many waters that surround it. I think the sea has thrown itself upon me and been answered, at least in part, and I believe I am a little changed - - not essentially, but changed and transubstantiated as anyone is who has asked a question and been answered." *To Waldo Frank, April, 1924*

"These 'materials' were valid to me to the extent that I presumed them to be (articulate or not) at least organic and active factors in the experience and perceptions of our common race, time, and belief. The very idea of a bridge, of course, is a form peculiarly dependent on such spiritual convictions. It is an act of faith besides being a communication . . . The form of my poem rises out of a past that so overwhelms the present with its worth and vision that I'm at a loss to explain my delusion that there exist any real links between that past and a future destiny worthy of it." *To Waldo Frank, 1926*

"I feel as though I were dancing on dynamite these days - - so absolute and elaborated has become the conception. All sections moving forward now at once! (didn't realize a bridge is begun from two ends at once . . .)"

To Waldo Frank, July, 1926

"What I am really handling, you see, is the Myth of America. Thousands of strands have had to be searched for, sorted and interwoven. In a sense, I have had to do a great deal of pioneering myself. It has taken a great deal of energy . . . until my instincts assured me that I had assembled my materials in proper order for a final welding into their natural form. For each section of the entire poem has presented its own unique problem of form, not alone in relation to the materials embodied within its separate confines, but also in relation to the other parts, *in series*, of the major design of the entire poem. Each is a separate canvas, as it were, yet none yields its entire significance when seen apart from the others."

To Otto Kahn, September 12, 1927

NOTE: There will be no opportunity to read programs during the performance.
House lights will be turned on only during the Intermission.

THE BRIDGE

*From going to and fro in the earth,
and from walking up and down in it.*
The Book of Job

Proem: To Brooklyn Bridge . . . Carolyn Gerber,
Chorus and Choral Group

I. Ave Maria . . . Wallace Fowlie,
Chorus and Choral Group

Columbus, alone, gazing toward Spain,
invokes the presence of two faithful
partisans of his quest . . .

- II. Powhatan's Daughter
1. The Harbor Dawn . . . Mary-Averett Seelye,
Dance Chorus and Choral Group
 2. Van Winkle . . . Herbert Shaw,
Dance Chorus and Choral Group
 3. The River . . . Chilton Ryan
Dance Chorus, Chorus,
and Choral Group
 4. The Dance . . . Edward Thommen,
Dance Chorus, Chorus,
and Choral Group

Intermission - 10 minutes

- III. Cutty Sark . . . Molly Howe, Adele Bookman,
Dance Chorus and Choral Group

*O, the navies old and oaken,
O, the Temeraire no more!*

—Melville

IV. Three Songs

The one Sestos, the other Abydos high.

—Marlowe

1. Southern Cross . . . Wallace Fowlie,
Dance Chorus
2. National Winter Garden . . . Chandler Cowles,
Dance Chorus
3. Virginia . . . Chilton Ryan,
Dance Chorus

- V. Quaker Hill . . . Valerie Pottberg,
Chorus

*I see only the ideal. But no
ideals have ever been fully
successful on this earth.*

—Isadora Duncan

- VI. The Tunnel . . . Virginia Todahl,
Dance Chorus, Chorus,
and Choral Group

*To find the Western path
Right thro' the Gates of Wrath.*

—Blake

- VII. Atlantis . . . Carolyn Gerber, Molly Howe,
Mary-Averett Seelye,
Chorus and Dance Chorus



CHORUS

Carol Channing
Carol Christopher
Barbara Cox
Lilian Deissler
Barbara Ellis
Deborah Froelicher
Jane Hartington
Katherine Henry
Nancy Lee Keith
Jeanne Michaels
Valerie Pottberg
Virginia Todahl

DANCE CHORUS

Adele Bookman
Gloria Eksergian
Nancy Fahnstock
Carolyn Gerber
Molly Howe
Gregory MacDougall
Ray Malon
Barbra Miller
Chilton Ryan
Herbert Shaw

CHORAL GROUP

Hope Miller, Soloist
Margaret Yorke Allen
Sara Carter
Dorothy Coffin
Eleanora Eaton
Edna Edison
Nancy Hay
Diana Marvin
Ann Mills
Judy Paris
Mary-Averett Seelye

Understudy: Eleanore Oldden

Poem arranged for production and directed by Arch Lauterer

Speaking of the poem directed by Ben Belitt

Movement composed and directed by Martha Hill

Musical score by Gregory Tucker

Choral Group under the direction of Hope Miller

Settings and lighting designed by Arch Lauterer

Costumes designed by Elizabeth Reittel
assisted by Gregory MacDougall

Regisseur: Florence Lovell

Stage Manager: Peggy Myers

Technician: Edward Glass

Orchestra: Under the direction of Gregory Tucker; Flute, Mary Perrine; Oboe, Robert McBride, Chandler Cowles; Clarinet, Robert McBride, Josephine Winmill, Harold Gray; French Horn, Carol Haines; Double Bass, Mimi Wallner; Piano, Zoe Williams; Banjo, Robert Woodworth; Percussion

TECHNICAL STAFF FOR THE PRODUCTION

Electricians: Kay Lauterer, Henry Seymour, and Mary Somers Wood
assisted by Marjorie Hill and Rosemary Perks

Scene Construction Crew: Margaret Yorke Allen, Barbara Cox, Roberta Dixon, Elizabeth Hass, Marjorie Handwerk, Katherine Henry, Marjorie Hill, Joan Case Leonard, Ruth Lescher, Joan Lewisohn, Teru Osato, Elaine Pear, Rosemary Perks, Valerie Pottberg, Phyllis Wood

Costumes constructed: Under the direction of Mildred Moore, by Roberta Dixon, Marjorie Handwerk, Mary Heed, Katherine Henry, Joan Case Leonard, Ruth Lescher, Mary Perrine, Valerie Pottberg, Mary Louise Sistrom, Virginia Todahl, Mrs. Ross, and members of the costume construction class

Stage Crew: Marjorie Handwerk, Hal Jamison, Teru Osato, Will Parker, Phyllis Wood

Dressers: Roberta Dixon, Mary Heed, Joan Case Leonard, Faith Richardson, Margaret Twichell