

PROVINCETOWN THEATRE CO.
Summer 1992

May 21 - June 7

The Three of Cups by Sinan Unel

Directed by Sinan Unel

The New England premiere of a bittersweet drama by the author of last summer's hit *Thalassa My Heart* comes to Provincetown from a New York run.

June 25 - July 12

The Art of Dining by Tina Howe

Directed by P. J. McKey

A comic gastronomic adventure that will tickle your funnybone and your taste buds, by the award-winning author of *Painting Churches*.

July 23 - August 9

Crazed Teacups: a New Entertainment

written, directed, & designed by

Edward Gorey

A collage of short pieces from the noir side of drawing-room comedy, by the Tony-Award-winning master of PBS's "Mystery."

August 20 - Sept. 6

Melville Slept Here by Norman R. Allen

Directed by P. J. McKey

An uncommon historic tour mixes New England legend and contemporary drama in this comedy by the author of *Here to Stay*. New from the Playwrights' Workshop.

Sept. 17 - Oct. 4

Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?

by Edward Albee

Directed by David Matias

A legendary writer's greatest play: a surreal nightmare in academia, now in 3-D living color.

Shows 8 PM Thu-Sun (except as noted)
in our waterfront theatre at the
Provincetown Inn, 1 Commercial Street
Free Parking - All seats \$10 / \$12 opening

RESERVATIONS 508-487-3466



THE THREE OF CUPS

SINAN UNEL (Playwright/Director) lived in Turkey for 18 years before moving to Kansas to study Playwriting and English. THE THREE OF CUPS, his first English play, was produced by the Real Prophet Theater Group in New York City where it received a very positive critical reception. His other plays include TRAIN, KITTENS IN THE DARK, CHRISTMAS SONATA, FANTASIA FAIR, PORTALS, THALASSA MY HEART, THE LOST GOSPELS OF BLANKENBURG and TOLSTOY'S DEN. PORTALS and THALASSA MY HEART have both had Provincetown premieres.

MARK BAKER (Paul) is returning for his second season with PTC. Last year Mark was seen in Sinan Unel's THALASSA MY HEART, Edward Gorey's FLAPPING ANKLES and as Geoffrey in LION IN WINTER. As a year-rounder, Mark manages Harbor Hill Resort and serves as the president of the PTC Board of Directors. He thanks his partner Tom for supporting his creative efforts.

DAVID MATIAS (Greg) earned a B.A. in Speech and Drama from Trinity University in 1983 and became a member of the avant garde Jump-Start Acting Company while living in San Antonio, Texas. In 1986 he was awarded a full scholarship to pursue his M.A. in Theatre Arts from the University of North Dakota. After graduating in 1988, he moved to Cape Cod and actively began to participate with the Provincetown Theater Company: he wrote and performed his one-man play NOVA-NINO, acted in Edward Gorey's USEFUL URNS and FLAPPING ANKLES, directed THALASSA, MY HEART and serves on the Board of Directors. Favorite roles include Saul in AS IS for which he was nominated for the Irene Ryan Award. In 12 years he has acted in SERVANT OR TWO MASTERS, AS YOU LIKE IT, RICHARD III, LOOK BACK IN ANGER, ROSHOMON, EXIT THE KING, TWELFTH NIGHT, THE REAL THING, DRACULA and THE LION IN WINTER. One of his proudest honors was directing A SEPARATE PEACE, written and directed for the acclaimed playwright Tom Stoppard. In 1987 David's one-act play WEAPON 191407 was published in the Literary Magazine North Country. He's involved with

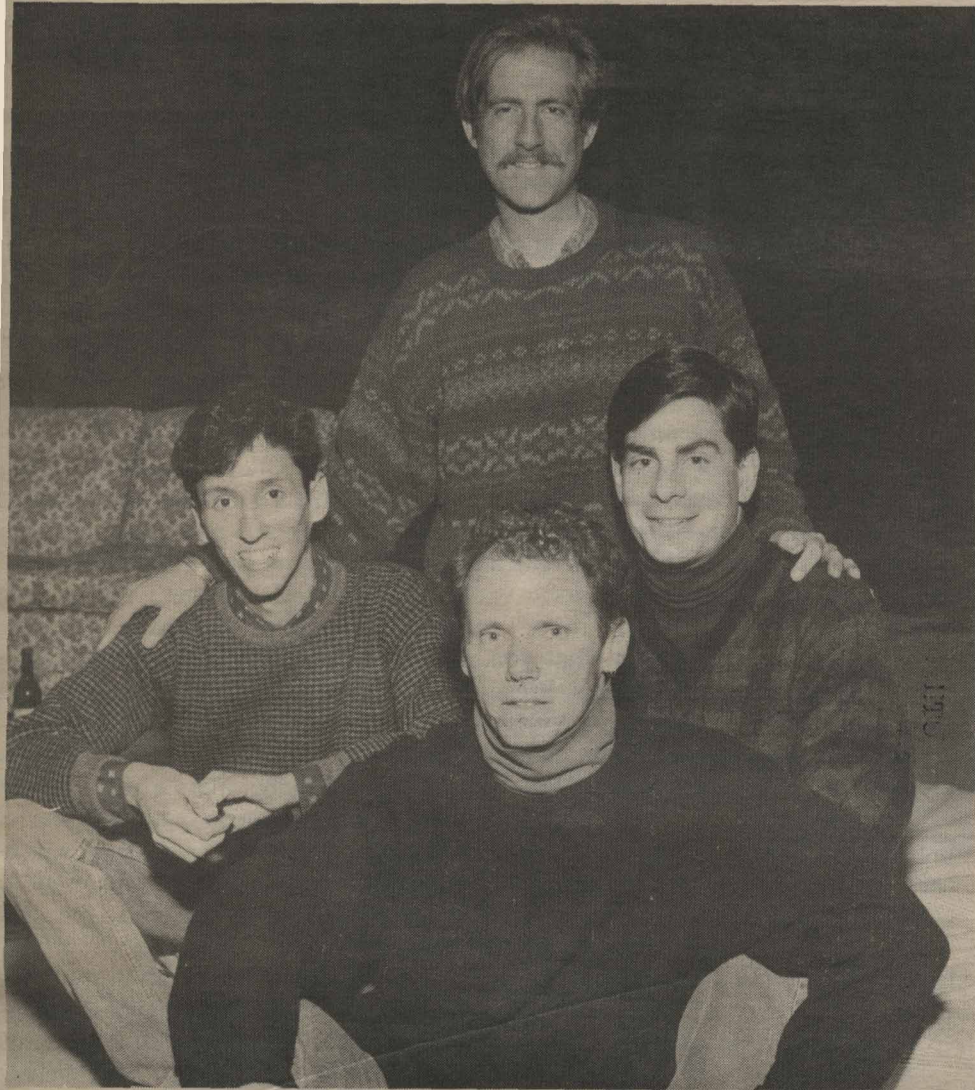
our local Playwright's Workshop and completed two original plays this winter with the "constructive help and inspiring support that comes from this creative, nurturing group." David also loves writing poetry and has a passion for living in P-town.

BILL CLARK (Mike) has been a member of the Provincetown Theatre Company for two years. He was last seen as Wilfred Owen in NOT ABOUT HEROES. He also appeared in Sinan Unel's THALASSA, MY HEART as Mr. Raymond for which he was nominated for an ACTE Best Actor award. Other roles with PTC include Steven in LISBON TRAVIATA and Larry in BURN THIS. Professionally Bill is a sign language interpreter in West Yarmouth and also teaches sign language at CCCC. He also does sign language interpreting at the Universalist Meeting House here in Provincetown. Bill is the vice-president of PTC.

JEANNIE GIAQUINTO (Assistant Director/Stage Manager) is a summer resident of Provincetown and a student at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, where she studies Anthropology. She was a costume designer for BLOOD RELATIONS, a play based on the life of Lizzie Borden.

PJ McKEY (Set and Light design) most recently designed the PTC's Boston production of Norman Allen's HERE TO STAY. Primarily a director, PJ most recently directed TALES OF THE LOST FORMICANS for The Wellfleet Harbor Actor's Theater and DAMNEE MANON SACRE SANDRA for PTC. This summer she will direct THE ART OF DINING by Tina Howe.

JO JOHNSON (House Manager) Since starting with PTC in 1988 as a dresser and hair stylist for CELEBRATION, Jo, a former salon owner and now a mother of two, has been active with most productions of this theater company. She has worked with EXECUTION OF JUSTICE, NOISES OFF, THALASSA MY HEART, DRACULA, LISBON TRAVIATA, MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM, and several others. She had her first stage debut as an urn in Edward Gorey's USEFUL URNS. She's grateful



Standing: Sinan Unel; Sitting: David Matias, Bill Clark, Mark Baker photo by Marian Roth

Three of Cups

by Kathy Shorr

It's 7:15 on a Saturday night and actors David Matias, Bill Clark and Mark Baker are running their lines for *The Three of Cups*, Sinan Unel's play which opens the Provincetown Theatre Company's summer season on Thursday, May 21. Clark suddenly looks blank, calls out, "Line!" and gets a prompt. Sitting in on a rehearsal, you realize that, apart from the skill involved in bringing characters fully to life, memorizing 80 pages of script must seem like an impossible task. But these guys can do it. They're all veterans of the stage. In fact, all three worked on Unel's last production, *Thalassa, My Heart*. Matias directed and Clark and Baker both had roles. They're eager to talk about differences they see between the two plays.

"The emotional depth of the characters is so much greater for me in this play," says Baker. "It's about situations that we've all gone through. We've all had

For the playwright, Unel, *The Three of Cups* also struck closer to his own experience. "It took me ten months to write the first draft of *Thalassa*. With *The Three of Cups*, I did the whole first draft in two weeks. It came much more from the gut, and from my own experience. But," he adds, "This isn't to say that one way is better than another. If you want to keep going as a playwright, you've got to learn how to really construct a play."

Not that *The Three of Cups* isn't carefully constructed. In fact, you notice its experimental structure immediately. One of the three characters is never actually present—or is he? The other two speak to him and through him, in asides and flashbacks. This sounds a little strange, but on stage, it works easily. "Once you catch onto what's happening, it allows you to go into several different planes of reality at once," Unel says. "You can follow both present and past action, also what's going on in people's minds."

Unel wrote *The Three of Cups* almost ten years ago. Does it seem out of date, with its polygamous relationships, its talk

for all of us. There's no mention of AIDS, which has affected all gay people in a very strong way. But the play is about relationships and on that level it still seems to be valid. Matias adds, "It's about making yourself vulnerable, about trust and betrayal. In fact, at one point we had three women read the parts instead of men, just to see if the play would work, and it did."

Unel thinks audiences may be jolted by the play's graphic sexuality. "When I wrote it, ten years ago, even in Lawrence, Kansas (where he attended the state university), this play was not risqué at all. I was just writing about how things were. Now people may come in to the theatre and be shocked. Things are so much more conservative in general."

I stayed through the three-hour rehearsal, in part, to see how they'd stage that final explicit scene. But just as they were hitting it, the actors started calling out "Line!" and then "Line" again, and it was apparent that they didn't know this part yet. Unel said, "Let's stop here for tonight," and instructed them to work on the last scene for the following evening.

So, I drove off around the rotary, towards the dark marsh and the quarter moon, feeling slightly unsatisfied, having to wait till opening night to see how they would pull it off.

Kathy Shorr is a writer and radio producer. She can be heard on Tuesday mornings on WOMR from 6-9am.

Front Street

by David Olearcek

The most recent visit to Front Street was just like my first: pleasantly and consistently surprising. Front Street's Italian menu emphasizes a straight forward selection of classic dishes. But what keeps Front Street's customers fiercely loyal is the showcase of tastes in chef/owner Donna Alpert's "Menu du Jour." From Crispy Risotto Crab Cakes to Pork Chops Savoy, her ever-changing fare is imaginative and eclectic. Each plate is alive with magnificent aromas and flavors, always generously proportioned.

Fresh slices of fish in the Peppered Tuna Carpaccio were appointed with sweet, fresh pickled ginger, curly endive and a crisp slice of sugar beet shaped to hold a wasabi condiment. Simple in its preparation, it was an excellent prelude of what was to come. The piquant aroma

Playwright and others affirm Provincetown's creativity

PROVINCETOWN — Waxing poetic about the good old days is a favorite Provincetown pastime. How often we've all mused about turning back the clock to the days of the Provincetown Playhouse and the Hawthorne painting school, the days before Commercial Street's invasion by T-shirt shops and those factory seascape "galleries" with their perpetual boast of "many more inside!" Though he spent most of his productive years elsewhere, we invoke the memory of Eugene O'Neill ad nauseum and claim him as ours exclusively.

But all this sentimental wallowing obscures a heartening truth — Provincetown's arts community is alive and thriving. And most of its brightest denizens — poets, painters, novelists and playwrights — aren't just passing through. They've made their homes here.

Playwright Sinan Unel moved to Provincetown from New York City in 1985, and has since had two plays produced here, "Portals" and "Thalassa, My Heart" (in which, by the way, a character expresses comic exasperation with Provincetown's O'Neill-ophilia.) On May 21, the Provincetown Theater Company will present the local premiere of Unel's "The Three of Cups."

Unel wrote the play in 1982, just three years after he arrived in the United States from Turkey, where he had lived for the previous 18 years. The two-act play, which



Susan V. Seligson

draws its title from the tarot, was produced at the University of Kansas, where Unel was a student, and then in 1986 by The Real Prophet Theater Group in New York City. The local production — May 21-24, May 28-31 and June 4-7 at The Provincetown Inn — is the first to be directed by Unel himself.

Comprising three characters — a young man, his lover's ex-lover who arrives at the man's apartment unannounced, and the ghostly presence of the lover himself — the play is an unsparing examination of our capacity for manipulation, deception and control. The themes Unel tangles with are universal: The play happens to involve three gay men, but there are both humorous and chilling moments of recognition for anyone, of any age, gender or sexual preference, who has ever been in an intimate relationship.

Although the play's writing predates Unel's Provincetown years, it is, in a sense, a Provincetown play. We are a community of incestuous entanglements and intersecting triangles, a town whose modest social and geographical dimensions place ex-spouses and estranged lovers side by side on town boards and the checkout line at the A & P. Once, while dining in a popular restaurant in the center of town, I noticed that nearly every person in the place was connected by love, business or blood to everyone else.

The play, or at least this production of it, also belongs to Provincetown because its three actors — Bill Clark, David Matias and Mark Baker — are all members of the theater company's weekly playwrighting workshop, which Unel coordinates. When Unel brought

"The Three of Cups" to a workshop session this winter for a fresh reading, he casually assigned his three friends the roles of Greg, Mike and Paul. It felt so right that the three men, all experienced actors who have performed in many local productions, simply adopted the parts they'd read. "The parts just fell into place," says Unel.

"The Three of Cups" is the first play Unel wrote in English. Unel describes himself as a meticulous rewriter whose work normally undergoes many incarnations. With each new play, that process grows more and more painstaking, mainly because he is increasingly aware of the rigors of form and character development, he says. But "The Three of Cups" emerged at a time when Unel was less encumbered by craft. The result was a stark honesty that still surprises him, an honesty he feels he is just beginning to really recapture in his work in progress.

"It was just sheer inspiration," says Unel, 33. "It came from raw feeling. This was my first project and I was at my most creative and my most playful. It just took on a life of its own."

Seeing or reading the play is like riding that wave of creativity. The dialogue is briskly paced, almost dizzying, and the characters' observations fly out at you like machine gun fire. Whether the audience likes the play or not, I'd be surprised to see any yawns.

With a favorable review in New York Native, the play did well in New York, but Unel feels a special connection to his Provincetown audience. "This is a very supportive audience for new works," he says. "People are willing to take the risk of seeing new plays or works in progress, which is great for a playwright." The rest of us, of course, owe a debt of gratitude in return, to the people who keep our town's creative heritage from fading into a museum exhibit.

Susan V. Seligson live in Provincetown.

