



A BRIGHT NEW LOOK FOR OFF-BROADWAY — While one group of young Indian people stormed the bastions of government and the BIA, a totally different group of Indians stormed

New York City. The American Indian Theatre Ensemble, the first all-Indian performing theatre group rate rave reviews from N.Y. drama critics for an exciting new kind of theatre.

Indian Theatre Ensemble Would Like to Tour Alaska

Alaskans may get a chance to see the first all-Indian theatre troupe in America. The American Indian Theatre Ensemble is presently playing to enthusiastic audiences on off-Broadway, but is seeking funds to finance a tour of Alaska in 1973.

The company was organized by Ellen Stewart of the experimental theatre, La Mama, and by Hanay Geiogamah, a Kiowa-Delaware Indian from Oklahoma. The company has been in residence since February of this year, studying theatre technique and absorbing the artistic intensity of theatre that can only be found in New York.

Eventually they hope to find a home that is centrally located in "Indian country where we can develop works and then take them to the reservations and urban areas where Indian people live."

"We want to do plays about the Indian past, present, and future. We believe that the American Indian Ensemble Theatre can function as a component of the overall movement to achieve true equality and self-determination for American Indians."

"Eventually we want to organize a performing arts group within every Indian tribe that is large enough and viable enough to sustain one. If we can do this then there is no question that Indian culture will thrive and evolve in the future."

The troupe's first offering is a combination of cultural heritage and contemporary relevance. The program opens with "The Deer Slayer", a dance by David Montana which depicts

the cycle of life and death for both man and animals.

David is accompanied by the E-Yah-Pah-Hah Chanters, students from the Institute of American Indian Arts at Santa Fe, New Mexico, under the direction of Ed Wapp, Jr.

"The use of sound," said

Theatre Journal, "is remarkable, the soft drumming that often propels the actions forward, and the whirring of the birds . . . a sensitivity to very low-level stimuli, dim lights, soft sounds . . . by which a strong and unfamiliar sense of being is

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Theatre Ensemble . . .

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evolved."

The company performs a creation myth, "Na Haaz Zan", told in Navajo with a running translation in what the company calls "Indian English."

The evening concludes with an original play by Hanay Geiogamah, "Body Indian", a rollicking, fiercely honest play about "the wildest, drunkest party you can ever imagine."

According to a reviewer, the play is about "a group of grossly drunken Indians, talking about leases they have signed, money they don't have, wine they want more of."

Bobby Lee, a one-legged alcoholic arrives with \$400, hopefully to pay for an alcoholic cure. He passes out from time to time.

Bit by bit he is robbed of the money by his friends, and at last the money is gone, even his wooden leg.

Bruce Miller as Bobby Lee, gives a performance that is "outstanding," "hauntingly convincing". It is a play, says the New York Times, about "people without work, or hope — people at the bottom of the heap. The company is fine in it. This troupe offers a new kind of theatre and I welcome it."

The sixteen members of the American Indian Theatre Ensemble come from almost as many tribes. A letter to Tundra Times announcing the hoped-for tour of Alaska came from Jane Lind, a young Aleut.

Any individuals or organizations wishing to assist this bright young company in raising money to bring their show to Alaska should contact: The American Indian Theatre Ensemble, La Mama Experimental Theatre Club, 74A East 4th St., N.Y., N.Y. 10003.