careful testing of boundaries, and attempts to convey bonhomie which typically attend meetings between total strangers. However, the sense that we were being watched from one side and listened to by Giuliani from the other helped to create an additional circumspection.

Defiantly low-tech and thoughtful, *Blind Lunch* feels very much like a Dadaist experiment gone right. Indeed, I felt as if I could have been four hundred miles south of Oldenburg, at Cabaret Voltaire in Zürich in 1916. It is not, in truth, the most profound of theatre works, but is a thought-provoking, beautifully executed piece in the true spirit of the avant-garde – and as such the most rewarding of the productions I experienced at PAZZ.

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Simon Trussler

Arthur H. Ballet, 1924–2012

Tribute to the long-serving Advisory Editor of *New Theatre Quarterly*, who died on 30 January 2012.

ONE of the articles Arthur Ballet contributed to *New Theatre Quarterly* was entitled 'After-Dinner Thoughts of America's Oldest Living Dramaturg'. This was based on a speech he had made in 1994 to the Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas – an organization which would never have existed had not Arthur become part of Sir Tyrone Guthrie's inner circle in the early sixties and pioneered the role of dramaturg at the theatre which still thrives under Guthrie's name. Since 1959 he had also been teaching hugely popular, always oversubscribed courses at the University of Minneapolis, as he continued to do until he retired in 1986. But the teaching was always in conjunction with other roles, on all of which he left an enduring imprint.

In 1961 he became Director of the Office for Advanced Drama Research – a grandiose title not of his choosing for an 'organization' run entirely from his own desk. From that desk he not only gave unstintingly of time and advice to hundreds of aspirant playwrights – Terrence McNally and Sam Shepard among them – but guided their work towards likely outlets. He also selected and edited no fewer than thirteen chunky volumes of the 'Playwrights for Tomorrow' series, at a time when getting a new play published by a new playwright was a risky venture. We got to know Arthur on the old *Theatre Quarterly* when he advised us on starting a rather humbler series of our own, called (unimaginatively) 'New Plays'. (This failed to reach thirteen titles, let alone thirteen volumes, though we did see new work by Howard Brenton, Caryl Churchill, and Arnold Wesker into print.) In 1975 he accepted our invitation to become one of our advisory editors, and gave stalwart and unwavering support during the crises that regularly afflicted the original journal; and he returned to that role from the first issue of *New Theatre Quarterly*. The journal has happily been free from crises since then: not so my own life at the time, when Arthur remained always a true friend and counsellor.

Arthur was also a regular dramaturg for the O'Neill Playwrights' Conference, and during the Carter presidency he served as an innovating Director of the Theatre Program at the National Endowment for the Arts. After his retirement to San Francisco, he became dramaturg for the American Conservatory Theater and the San Francisco Ballet, until the onset of Parkinson's disease slowly deprived him first of the capacity for travel and work, and eventually the capacity for communication. This was a huge tragedy for a man who so relished the use of language, whether in the lecture theatre or on the stage – or over a pub table. But it was more rarely that he committed himself to the written word. Early in his retirement I tried to persuade him to write his memoirs, and I have a 48,000-word file of what he sent me. It is full of wise words for playwrights and theatres – and dramaturgs – but it is short of the personal memories I had hoped he would share.

So I fall back on my own personal memories. Among these is a day spent in his company in 1980 at the Aldwych Theatre watching one of the all-day performances of the RSC's three-play version of *Nicholas Nickleby*. This was in the autumn of the year when the first round of Thatcher's Arts Council cuts had recently extinguished the old *Theatre Quarterly*, and Jimmy Carter had just been thrown out of office – which meant of course that Arthur lost his curacy at the National Endowment for the Arts, and rightly foresaw the downhill journey on which it would be set. So the talk was sombre when we met for breakfast, and we had to confess we were not altogether in the mood for a nine-hour marathon. But over a late lunch and then an early supper we rejoiced in the capacity of theatre to inspire and thrill and renew our faith that – let Thatcher and Reagan do their worst – the voice of the theatre, often of protest and surely of sanity, would not be stilled.

Courteously though needlessly, he would apologize for the occasional quiver in the hand that held his glass when, later on, we would adjourn to some pub to discuss a play and the state of the theatre and the world, about which he was always wise and never pretentious. I find that American obituarists have already used about him a phrase which is maybe un-English but which I have no hesitation in repeating: he was a sweet man.

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