

# DIRECTIONS

If you had children and they expressed an interest in acting, would you encourage them and/or what would you advise them?

"After making them aware of the incredible sacrifice and demands that acting makes on the individual--his life--his choices in that life--his relationships--I would put my hand on their back and push them to it!"

What is your most favorite place from all of those that you've ever visited--a location, not a country.

"That's such an absolute it makes it difficult to pick one--but some of my favorites are: The Barbicon Theatre (home of the RSC); Buenos Aires; Central Park in NYC; Via Sistina in Rome; J. Paul Getty Museum in Malibu, CA; St. Martins Lane, London; and a hill in Austerlitz, NY."

What is your exact time and place of birth?

"It's 6:30 a.m. in New York City, NY."

What is your opinion on the meaning of Christmas? And what would you like most to find under your Christmas tree this year?

"The one constant I have found that seems to arrive each Christmas--wherever in the world I've been--is that people become "very nice" as a group! One musical, two screenplays, three television scripts and an original play."

What do you like the most about yourself? What do you like the least?

"The enormous pleasure I get out of acting; and the least: actor's paranoia."

What is the most offensive thing you've ever come across?

"The following sums it up: "A characteristic of the ignorant is that they don't know the limits of their own ignorance--and when this happens they are overcome by pride."."

What is more important to you: peer approval or fan popularity?

"For me the latter is a result of the former."

We understand that you got suited up in armor at TRI\*CON II and participated in some fighting. After that experience, do you think you'd prefer to live in the medieval Middle Ages or the Buck Rogers' future?

"The Medieval Middle Ages!"



**THOM, NICK AND THOM AT TRI·CON II**

Do you know any foreign languages? If you could choose any other language to learn, which one would it be and why?

"I know a little Italian, Spanish and German.  
I would love to learn Latin since it's the cradle of most western languages. Latin would permit one to read in its original form some of the most incredible literature conceived by man."

If you could bring any dream you had into reality--with absolutely no restrictions--what would this ultimate fantasy be and why.

"To be able to move between film, stage and television on a constant basis with the best material of our best writers; while being directed by an energetic, creative director who had been hired by an equally creative, wise, energetic producer."

What are your top three favorite movies of the last year?

"Prizzi's Honor, Ladyhawk, and Camila."

When you were young, did you ever correspond with any actors you admired?

"Oh yes--still do!"

If for some reason you could no longer live in America, which country would you choose to settle in and why?

"England has always meant a great deal to me. The obvious ease of the common language is a fact--but the art world of England is incredible: theatre, film, television, literature--all seems to explode at you no matter where in the country you are. It's a remarkable country in that literature in particular is part of everyone's life no matter what their background. Great excitement comes from droves of people going to theatre and their creating some of the finest television programming in the English speaking world."

Who's "the boss" in the kitchen?

"It's a wise cook who lets the master of his specialty give his individual performance."

What words of encouragement can you give to struggling writers, singers, etc.

"Keep doing it and then do it more. The writer is fortunate in that he can take a machine or a pen and do his creating almost anytime--the singer, dancer, or musician has a studio, an instrument, or a teacher available to work at their craft. The actor has the difficult reality of knowing that he is a singular being who must always observe, listen, study, and absorb so that when he has the opportunity to use his craft the warehouse is full. There is no place for the actor to "just sit down and act at will"--with no audience it can become dull and socially dangerous!"

I'm certain you played a most convincing wizard in WIZARDS OF THE LOST KINGDOM. How did you psych yourself up into believing you had magical powers?

"It was one of those roles where the "costume" seemed to motivate a great deal--I didn't "act the costume" but it told me a lot--as did the storybook surroundings."



**THOM AND FREDERIC MAJOR  
IN "UNCLE VANYA"**

You worked with Alexa Visarion, a director from Bucharest, Romania, when you played "Astroff" in UNCLE VANYA this last January. Was it an enlightening experience and are there any major cultural differences in working for a Romanian as opposed to an American director?

"My experience with Alexa Visarion's production of "Vanya" will always stay with me. Alexa didn't stop for one moment in leading, teasing, seducing us into the farthest corners of the life and feelings of Chekhov's people. His guts to let us walk the razor's edge of creativity is rare. A rarity that comes from an unbending belief that he (Alexa) has in Chekhov and his personal directorial gifts. There is an almost fearless ability to trust the actor and what he is doing. Alexa seems to know when a moment would be full and real even before you arrived at it--only by what you were doing a moment before. Like some whimsical architect he made us rely on each other to have one piece on stage.

The one luxury that we all felt, was the time for rehearsal--six weeks. But for Alexa this was not enough--he likes six months! But the time factor is what we fight most in this country. Since the production was produced at The Actors Theatre of Louisville--great accommodation was given to us all by the producing end and Alexa. Accommodations that let us really make use of the six weeks."

Some of our best actors and writers have considered themselves outsiders and as children retreated into the more pleasurable fantasy lives of comic books, movies, etc. Did you ever indulge in this pastime and did you have a vivid and playful imagination as a child?

"I think more often than not actors are motivated to do what they do because of an almost child-like nature to "play"--which is what it really comes down to. Fortunately my "vivid and playful imagination" didn't stop with childhood."

When you work with a stunt double--do you spend a lot of time with him illustrating what your particular body movements for a scene would be--or does he just wing it?

"No good stunt double would "wing it"--so a good awareness of me, the actor, is always developed or observed by the stuntman. I have been very fortunate in my career in so far as the stuntmen I've worked with have all been talented, aware and committed men who appreciated me with the same respect I held for them."

Are there any directors you'd like to work with and why are they of particular interest to you?

"My list of actors and directors to work with only grows as I do, but in the directorial arena I've always wanted to have a time with Mike Nichols, whose work is filled with a patient intelligence that seems to make his actors look like they are creating in an effortless state. This also goes for his films.

Terry Hawks of England's RSC is filled with a vibrant energy and theatricality that gives his productions an enormous ease of life at its most immediate.

David Lean is a film director that I feel is a genius to work with. His characters have so many hidden thoughts and feelings that he allows the camera to search for. He's an exciting man...."

Which would you rather portray: a character with a lot of surface flash and panache, or a character where most of the action is internalized? Why would you want to do the one you select?

It's an almost contradictory question since even a "flashy" character must have an internal life developed as it is created. If an actor is doing "Cyrano" for instance, the demands on the guts of the character are enormous in intent and feeling. This larger-than-life character (Cyrano) must be rooted in emotional truth to be able to become the flamboyant, bold, heroic, romantic that he is. Since "flashy" characters may seem easier to play, in reality they are not, because of the greater demand to make the "flash" real."

What is the most "satisfying" benefit you receive from your performing?

"To have someone who has seen you perform--be it stage, film or television--come to you and say "You touched me, my life, you changed something in me."--it makes this individual artist know he has become a kind of "creative god" for a few moments--it's an ultimate experience in the creative life."

