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THE MAHABHARATA

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THE CAST

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The Boy.....ANTONIN STAHLY-VISHWANADAN
Ganesha/Krishna.....BRUCE MYERS
Arjuna.....VITTORIO MEZZOGIORNO
Yudhishtira.....ANDRZEJ SEWERYN
Bhima.....MAMADOU DIOUME
Nakula.....JEAN-PAUL DENIZON
Sahadeva.....MAHMOUD TABRIZI-ZADEH
Draupadi.....MALLIKA SARABHAI
Kunti.....MIRIAM GOLDSCHMIDT
Madri/Hidimbi.....ERIKA ALEXANDER
Dhritharashtra.....RYSZARD CIESLAK
Gandhari.....HELENE PATAROT
Duryodhana.....GEORGES CORRAFACE
Dushassana.....URS BIHLER
Karna.....JEFFREY KISSOON
Drona.....YOSHI OIDA
Bhishma/Parashurama.....SOTIGUI KOUYATE
Shiva/Pandu.....TAPA SUDANA
Shakuni.....TUNCEL KURTIZ
Ghatotkatcha/The Sun.....BAKARY SANGARE
Amba/Sikandin.....CORINNE JABER
The Gazelle.....CLEMENT MASDONGAR
Gandhari's Servant.....MYRIAM TADESSE

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PETER BROOK
MARIE-HELENE ESTIENNE

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Soundtrack on Virgin Records

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CECILE JAN DE LA GILLARDAIE

DIDIER PERELMAN

BERTRAND QUATREHOMME

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THE CHARACTERS

VYASA The whole story is told by an author/ narrator, VYASA, who frequently takes part in his own story.

GANESHA Vyasa is assisted by a half-divine scribe, GANESHA, who has an elephant's head on a human body.

BHISHMA BHISHMA swears to renounce the love of a woman. As a reward for his vow, the gods give him the power to choose the day of his death. A revered and immortal warrior, he is present throughout the story.

PANDU/ KUNTI/ MADRI

PANDU, king of the known world, is stricken by a curse that prevents him from fathering children. Giving his kingdom to his blind brother, DHRITHARASHTRA, Pandu goes to the mountains with his wives, KUNTI and MADRI. With the help of the gods, Kunti gives birth to three sons, and Madri to twin sons. These five brothers, the sons of Pandu, call themselves the PANDAVAS.

YUDHISHTHIRA

The first of the five brothers is called YUDHISHTHIRA. He is the son of KUNTI and DHARMA, the god of earthly harmony.

BHIMA The second son is BHIMA, son of KUNTI and VAYU, the god of the wind. He is the strongest man in the world.

ARJUNA The third son is ARJUNA, son of KUNTI and the king of the gods, INDRA. He is the finest archer and the greatest warrior in the world.

NAKULA & SAHADEVA

The other two brothers, who symbolize patience and wisdom, are the sons of MADRI and of the ASHWINS, the twin gods.

DRAUPADI The PANDAVAS marry one woman, DRAUPADI.

KARNA KARNA is the first born son of KUNTI; his father is the Sun.

DHRITHARASHTRA DHRITHARASHTRA is PANDU'S blind brother. He takes over PANDU'S kingdom and fathers a hundred sons, called the KAURAVAS.

GANDHARI GANDHARI is DHRITHARASHTRA'S wife, and the mother of the KAURAVAS.

DURYODHANA DURYODHANA is the first born of these hundred sons. He tries to seize control of the world and destroy his cousins, the PANDAVAS.

DUSHASSANA DUSHASSANA is the second born son, and assists his brother, DURYODHANA in his devious and power-hungry plots.

DRONA DRONA is master of arms and martial arts teacher to the PANDAVAS and the KAURAVAS.

KRISHNA Some say KRISHNA is the earthly incarnation (an avatar) of the great god, VISHNU. He is a friend of the PANDAVAS, and particularly of ARJUNA.

SHAKUNI SHAKUNI is GANDHARI'S brother, and uncle to the KAURAVAS.

AMBA AMBA is the princess who curses BHISHMA and searches the world for a man who can kill him.

GHATOTKATCHA GHATOTKATCHA is the son of BHIMA and the bewitching forest demon, HIDIMBI.

SYNOPSIS

A curious young boy walks searchingly through a maze of caves until he meets VYASA, our narrator, and GANESHA, his elephant-headed scribe. Vyasa offers to tell the boy THE MAHABHARATA, the greatest story of all time. What happens in THE MAHABHARATA? Everything. "What is not in THE MAHABHARATA," says Vyasa, "is not to be found anywhere else in the world." It is a spectacular, yet surprisingly simple, epic with a stunning assortment of characters, plots, and themes; love, hate, jealousy, betrayal, revenge, retribution, and finally, redemption. "If you listen carefully," Vyasa promises the boy, "at the end you'll be someone else..."

...The story begins with a curse...the first of many. BHISHMA, a crown prince, pleases the gods by taking a vow of celibacy. But his vow angers AMBA, a young woman who demands that he marry her. While the gods reward Bhishma for being celibate -- no one can kill him because he alone has the power to choose the day of his death -- Amba wants revenge for his indifference. Her curse: she will spend the rest of her life searching for someone who can end his.

Like Bhishma, beautiful KUNTI also has a special relationship with the gods. She has a mantra...a secret chant that can summon any god down to earth to mate with her. Her first child, KARNA, results from her union with the Sun. But Kunti is too young and fearful to keep her baby, so she places him in a basket on the river and hopes for the best.

Some time later, Kunti marries KING PANDU. Their life is disrupted when he kills a gazelle while it is mating. The gazelle curses Pandu, promising that he will die if he tries to make love to Kunti or to his second wife, MADRI. Devastated, Pandu gives his kingdom to his blind brother, DHRITHARASHTRA, and heads for the mountains with his wives.

When Pandu bemoans the fact that he will never have children, Kunti haltingly reveals her special powers. Desperate to be a father, Pandu urges her to call upon the gods. Immediately, three sons appear; heroic YUDHISHTHIRA, the son of DHARMA, the god of earthly harmony; powerful BHIMA, the son of VAYU, the god of the wind; and the ultimate warrior, ARJUNA, the son of INDRA,

the king of the gods. Kunti shares her mantra with Madri, who gives birth to NAKULA and SAHADEVA, the twin sons of the twin gods of patience and wisdom. These five sons -- brilliant combinations of god and man -- are known as the PANDAVAS.

Meanwhile, King Dhritharashtra has married, GANDHARI, who selflessly covers her eyes with a bandage so that she can better understand her husband's blindness. Her pregnancy -- also extraordinary -- yields a large metal ball that turns into a hundred sons -- the KAURAVAS. Only DURYODHANA and DUSHASSANA the oldest and the most vicious, play an active part in the story.

Despite the fact that both sets of brothers -- the Pandavas and the Kauravas -- are raised together by their wise uncle, Bhishma, the cousins fight constantly and threaten to destroy each other. DRONA, their martial arts teacher, tries to mediate. But the attention he pays to Arjuna, who is an incredible warrior, makes Duryodhana more jealous than ever.

Enter Karna, Kunti's firstborn son, who's identity is known only to her. He has grown up to be a powerful warrior, too, and threatens to shame Arjuna. These two young men hate each other on sight, never realizing that they are half-brothers. Duryodhana is delighted. He is always looking for ways to reinforce his tenuous claim on the throne that should go to Yudhishtira and the sons of Pandu. Now, at last, he has met someone who can be a worthy opponent to Arjuna and help destroy the Pandavas.

On a happier note, Arjuna wins a remarkable prize in a contest; a beautiful woman named DRAUPADI. Before Kunti realizes that the prize is a woman, she orders her son to share his trophy with his brothers. Obeying their mother, all the Pandavas marry Draupadi, experiencing, and enjoying, love for the first time. They are very happy...too happy, as far as Duryodhana is concerned. He wants to steal their throne, their land, their power, and their wife, and he has stumbled upon the perfect way to do it.

His UNCLE SHAKUNI reminds him that noble Yudhishtira has one tragic flaw -- he loves to gamble. Duryodhana challenges his cousin to a game of dice and Yudhishtira accepts, not realizing that he will be playing against Shakuni, who is rumored to be unbeatable. Every roll of the dice brings a new loss for Yudhishtira. He loses his possessions, his kingdom, his brothers, himself...and finally, his beloved Draupadi.

When Duryodhana and Dushassana try to claim Draupadi as their lover, she curses the Kauravas, promising that there will be a terrible war that will destroy them. Frightened, Dhritharashtra urges his son to give the Pandavas another chance...double or nothing. Yudhishtira rolls the dice...and loses again. The Pandavas and Draupadi are condemned to exile for thirteen years.

During their exile in the wilderness, Bhima is seduced by HIDIMBI a magical creature of the night who has the power to disguise herself as a beautiful woman. They have a child, GHATOTKATCHA, who also possesses magic powers. As the child -- half man, half demon -- goes to live with his mother, he promises to help his father whenever his supernatural powers are needed.

Incapable of leaving well enough alone, the Kauravas come to the forest to check on their rivals. Dushassana, more vicious than ever, wants to kill the Pandavas, and is very disturbed to learn that Arjuna is in the mountains, searching for the "ultimate weapon." During his journey, Arjuna fights with a mysterious hunter who turns out to be the god SHIVA in disguise. Impressed by Arjuna's skills and by his high principles, Shiva entrusts him with PASUPATA, the ultimate weapon -- the weapon that can destroy the world.

Simultaneously, Karna makes his own bid for the weapon. Pretending to be a servant, he goes to live with PARASHURAMA, a powerful hermit who hates warriors. Thinking that Karna is a man of peace, Parashurama rewards him with the secrets of the sacred weapon. But when he discovers that he has been betrayed, Parashurama curses Karna: the moment Karna tries to summon the ultimate weapon, he will forget how to conjure it...and die.

As their period of exile draws to a close, the Pandavas consider their future. War with the Kauravas is inevitable. Hoping for advice, Arjuna visits KRISHNA, a mystic king who is part God and part man. So does Duryodhana. When Krishna offers himself or his weapons to the cousins, Arjuna, a man who knows how to fight but does not love war, wisely chooses the man/god as his mentor.

Krishna tries to appear impartial, but it is clear that he favors the Pandavas over the bellicose Kauravas, who refuse to even listen to his pleas for peace. Krishna tries to dissuade Karna from fighting by revealing that

he is Kunti's first-born son and half-brother to the Pandavas. But Karna is not interested in his past. He is ready for war. He wants to fight...even if it means the end of the world.

Just before the battle begins, Arjuna becomes dejected and confused, and refuses to fight his kinsmen. While the two armies are suspended in time, Krishna counsels Arjuna, delivering the "Bhagavad-Ghita," a practical and philosophical discourse on the nature and meaning of life. He teaches Arjuna about the "selfless act" performed within the context of duty. Ultimately, Arjuna accepts his destiny and agrees to fight.

The men start their war, a frustrating exercise in futility since Bhishma, leader of the Kauravas, cannot be killed because he still has the power to choose the day of his death. Or does he? The ghost of Amba, the woman who vowed to have him slain, appears. She has been reborn as a soldier, SIKANDIN, and she is still determined to kill him.

Her news solves one of Bhishma's problems. The Pandavas have appealed to him for help, and he would like to oblige them because he knows they are good. The war will never end as long as Bhishma is alive. Bhishma generously condemns himself to death by telling the Pandavas to place Sikhandin in the front line. Ironically, it is Arjuna, not Sikhandin, who shoots the fatal arrow into Bhishma's heart. He will die a long, slow, death.

Hoping to persuade Karna to end the war, Kunti tells him the truth -- that he is her son and brother to the Pandavas. Surely he must feel something for his brothers? He does feel something...envy. Their mother did not abandon them when they were infants. Now, they must pay the price. Karna makes one promise: he will kill Arjuna, but spare the other Pandavas. Kunti will have the same number of sons at the end of the war.

Driven by hatred, Karna throws himself into the battle with vigor. He has a magic lance that he is saving for Arjuna. But Krishna intervenes. Knowing that the lance can be thrown only once, Krishna decides that Ghatotkatcha, Bhima's changeling son, will be sacrificed to save Arjuna. Bhima calls Ghatotkatcha into the war. When Karna sees the demon, he finally uses his supernatural lance. Ghatotkatcha dies, leaving Karna unarmed and vulnerable, at last.

The balance of power shifts as the Kauravas weaken and

the Pandavas grow stronger. Bhima, who once vowed to eat Dushassana's entrails because he was so disrespectful to Draupadi, finally gets his chance. And Draupadi washes her hair in Dushassana's blood, just as she promised.

Duryodhana asks Karna to avenge his brother's death. The crucial battle between Karna and Arjuna is about to begin. But it is the earth herself, covered with the blood of too many young men, who stalls Karna's chariot wheels and causes his death. Just as the hermit Parashurama predicted, Karna is destroyed the moment he tries to destroy the world with Pasupata, the ultimate weapon.

After the battle, Duryodhana retreats to the bottom of a frozen lake, reflecting upon his defeat. He is forced to fight Bhima, who gives him a mortal wound in the leg...in the exact spot, as a matter of fact, where Duryodhana disrespectfully fondled Draupadi after he won her in the dice game. The Kauravas are defeated: the war is over.

Are there any winners? No. The Pandavas are saddened to learn that Karna was their brother...that they killed their own flesh and blood. But, in a sense, all the men who fought and died were their brothers. Now, the weary conquerors have inherited an almost empty world. But, at least there is a world. Arjuna had the courage not to use Pasupata. The Earth remains, and humanity can spring forth from the ashes of Armageddon.

Walking across the corpse-strewn battlefield, Gandhari mourns her two sons, Duryodhana and Dushassana, cursing Krishna for his indifference. He is responsible for their destinies...for the death and destruction all around them. Krishna listens patiently, telling her that one light has been saved...even if she cannot see it.

His life is over...Krishna will be killed by a hunter who mistakes him for a deer. But an unborn child in a woman's belly will survive the war, birth, and any other twists fate has to offer...and will live to create a new family. This unborn child will father the line that produces the curious young boy -- Vyasa's audience -- at the beginning of the story. The greatest story of all...the epic tale of man's rise, fall and rebirth, THE MAHABHARATA, has come full circle...

THE MAHABHARATA

PRODUCTION BACKGROUND

THE MAHABHARATA, a one hundred-thousand stanza Sanskrit poem written over two thousand years ago, is the national epic of INDIA. It is ten to fifteen times the length of the Bible, about eight times the length of the ILIAD and the ODYSSEY together, and is the basis of all Hindu culture. "Maha" is the Sanskrit word for "great." "Bharata," a family name, also means "Hindu" and, in a more general interpretation, "Man." Thus, THE MAHABHARATA can be translated as "the great story of mankind."

THE MAHABHARATA has no equivalent in Western culture. It is a combination of religious text, epic poem, myth, historical tableau, and a series of short stories about the early history of India's ruling houses. The poem is the origin of thousands of beliefs, legends, thoughts, teachings, and characters, which, even today, are an important part of Indian life.

The conflict between the PANDAVAS and the KAURAVAS, the feuding families at the center of the piece, has been brought to life in religious pageants, stage presentations, television series, puppet shows, cartoons, and even comic books. Legendary director PETER BROOK first brought THE MAHABHARATA to the West in his nine-hour play. Now, Brook unveils his feature film version of this stunning epic.

Some historians believe that THE MAHABHARATA is a faithful account of the real-life war between two clans who existed thousands of years before Christ. Others maintain that the poem is entirely mythological. And a third group sees the epic as an important primer for political, social, moral, and religious behavior. But, in the end, this immense poem defies any single structural, thematic, historic, or psychological analysis.

Peter Brook and celebrated French screenwriter and dramatist JEAN-CLAUDE CARRIERE first became interested in THE MAHABHARATA in 1975, when PHILLIPPE LAVASTINE, a professor of Sanskrit and a modern-day storyteller, began reciting the epic poem to them. "It was as if we couldn't read," said Carriere, "as if we were somewhere in a village in India, listening to wonderful stories we hadn't heard before." Enchanted by what they heard, Brook and Carriere began to imagine the stories as a

play.

For the next nine years, they worked toward that goal, listening to more stories, studying, reading, researching, and striving for a better understanding of this monumental classic. Carriere wrote and rewrote, attempting to shape the eighteen volume poem into a manageable theatrical piece. By 1984, he was ready to continue the creative process with Brook's actors. In fact, Brook enlisted Carriere to read with the actors during casting, so that the writer could actually hear his own words and perfect them.

During this time, Brook, Carriere, and designer CHLOE OBOLENSKY, made several trips to India, where they gathered images and impressions for their drama, knowing that their job was not to imitate what they saw, but to suggest it. "We knew we could not reproduce the Indian way," Brook says. "Our costumes look Indian, but actually they are variations on Indian colors and designs. And the music is not true Indian theater music, but our way of interpreting it. What we are doing is refracting the Indian work through the many nationalities of our company."

And Brook's stage company was truly international; a multi-lingual, multi-racial group of actors from his own International Center of Theater Research (CICT) in Paris, representing a total of thirty-six different countries. After nine months of rehearsal, the nine hour play was unveiled at the 1985 Avignon Festival, where it was performed in a rock quarry. After a sold-out engagement at Brook's Theatre Les Bouffes du Nord, it went on to tour various European cities.

Subsequently, Peter Brook translated Carriere's French version of the play into English. In 1987, THE MAHABHARATA made its American debut at the Los Angeles Festival. Jack Kroll of Newsweek called it a masterpiece, "...a marvel of distillation, an organic three-part work that pours poetry, spectacle, sensuality, humor, and wisdom across the packed red clay that turns the stage into a living chunk of earth."

Kroll went on to say that, "watching this work is like experiencing some amazing conflation of the Homeric poems, the complete works of Shakespeare, the Bible, the movies of D.W. Griffith, and every other epic manifestation of all human cultures." William A. Henry of Time was equally enthusiastic, calling the work "a spellbinding journey through myth and fable, blessed with an unfailing sense of wonder."

A few weeks later, THE MAHABHARATA moved from Los Angeles to the Brooklyn Academy of Music, where it opened the fifth annual NEXT WAVE Festival. With a successful theatrical tour behind him, Peter Brook and his creative team faced a new challenge: to translate the spectacle that had overwhelmed theater audiences around the world into an equally stunning, yet simple, mini-series for television. Their first problem: to find a studio within their modest price range that could accommodate their difficult production. This problem -- and many others -- was solved when French cinematographer WILLIAM LUBTCHANSKY introduced Peter Brook to MICHEL PROPPER, a young French producer.

Propper and Americans ED MYERSON and RACHEL TABORI, partners in "Les Productions du Troisieme Etage," and Triptych Films were enthusiastic about THE MAHABHARATA and decided to raise the additional funds needed to make the project a reality. The initial budget drawn up by 3eme Etage called for four million dollars: they had three million. 3eme Etage and television entrepreneur REINER MORITZ of Reiner Moritz Associates decided to guarantee the rest.

But soon, everyone became convinced that, in order to produce something special...something more than "canned theater," they had to have more money. The budget zoomed to six million dollars. Now, the producers faced the challenge of finding additional funds. RENE BONNELL of French TV's Canal Plus unknowingly provided the solution to their problem. He rejected the idea of broadcasting the proposed six-hour mini-series, but was ready to buy a three hour film. Propper suggested to Brook that they prepare a shorter version, in addition to the mini-series, and the idea of a theatrical film took hold.

With the financing falling into place, the production could move forward. Brook, Lubtchansky, and Obolensky agreed to shoot at the old Joinville Studios, scheduled for demolition in 1989. The sets designed by Chloe Obolensky had to be started at once...sets enabling the entire film to be shot on a single studio stage with over one hundred and fifty changes of scenery. Sets were built and filmed each day, and destroyed each night, even before the rushes were screened, much to the dismay of the completion bond company.

It took four thousand separate pieces of wardrobe, seventy-two hundred square meters of walls, ramparts, and mountains, over three hundred thousand feet of film, and a grueling shooting schedule to bring THE MAHABHARATA to

life. Editing began simultaneously with shooting. Just twelve weeks after he started -- an improbably short period of time to complete such a spectacle -- Peter Brook finished filming his epic, within budget and a mere three days over schedule.

THE MAHABHARATA had its world premiere as the opening presentation at the 1989 Venice Film Festival.

PETER BROOK
Director and Screenwriter

Hailed by the New York Times as "one of the great theater minds of our time," Peter Brook was born in London in 1925. He received his M.A. at Oxford, where he founded the Oxford University Film Society. He directed his first film, a student production entitled A SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY, at the age of nineteen and pursued a career in theater only because it permitted him to avoid the lengthy apprenticeships then customary in the British film industry.

Having served for a number of years as the director of the ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY, he currently heads the INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR THEATER RESEARCH (CICT) in Paris, an organization he founded in 1970 with Micheline Rozan, now operating out of the revived Theater Les Bouffes du Nord.

Among over fifty theatrical productions, he has directed LOVE'S LABOURS LOST, THE TEMPEST, and KING LEAR at Stratford upon Avon; RING AROUND THE MOON, OEDIPUS, A VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE, and HAMLET in London; IRMA LA DOUCE, THE VISIT, MARAT/SADE, A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM, and LA TRAGEDIE DE CARMEN in New York; SERGEANT MUSGRAVE'S DANCE, THE CONFERENCE OF THE BIRDS, TIMON OF ATHENS, and THE CHERRY ORCHARD in Paris. A number of these productions have been seen throughout the world.

Brook has adapted a number of his stage successes for the screen, most notably THE BEGGAR'S OPERA, MARAT/SADE, KING LEAR, and CARMEN. Among the other films he has directed are the cult classic on Gurdjieff's youth, MEETINGS WITH REMARKABLE MEN, and a highly regarded adaptation of Sir William Golding's novel, LORD OF THE FLIES, in which a group of children are stranded on a desert island where they re-create the rules of society as well as its evils.

In 1985, Brook and screenwriter/playwright Jean-Claude Carriere created a nine hour play from the great Indian sacred text, THE MAHABHARATA, and premiered it at the Avignon Festival. The play was translated into English and performed in all the major capitals of the world, before being adapted to film.

FILMOGRAPHY

PETER BROOK

1953	THE BEGGAR'S OPERA
1963	MODERATO CANTABILE
1963	LORD OF THE FLIES
1967	THE PERSECUTION AND ASSASSINATION OF JEAN-PAUL MARAT PERFORMED BY THE INMATES OF THE ASYLUM OF CHARENTON UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE MARQUIS DE SADE (MARAT/SADE)
1968	TELL ME LIES
1971	KING LEAR
1979	MEETINGS WITH REMARKABLE MEN
1983	LA TRAGEDIE DE CARMEN
1989	THE MAHABHARATA

JEAN-CLAUDE CARRIERE
Screenwriter

Born in 1931 in France, Jean-Claude Carriere is at once a scholar, author, screenwriter, playwright, translator, adaptor, caricaturist, director, and actor. Carriere's first contact with film occurred under the tutelage of Jacques Tati and Pierre Etaix, and in 1964 he began an association with Luis Bunuel on DIARY OF A CHAMBERMAID that lasted until Bunuel's death. Their collaboration yielded six films, including BELLE DE JOUR, THE DISCREET CHARM OF THE BOURGEOISIE, THAT OBSCURE OBJECT OF DESIRE and THE PHANTOM OF LIBERTE, and one book, MY LAST SIGH.

Carriere has also worked with such major filmmakers as Louis Malle (VIVA MARIA, THE THIEF OF PARIS), Volker Schlöndorff (THE TIN DRUM, CIRCLE OF DECEIT, SWANN IN LOVE), MILOS FORMAN (TAKING OFF, VALMONT), Jean-Luc Godard (EVERY MAN FOR HIMSELF), Andrzej Wajda (DANTON), Daniel Vigne (THE RETURN OF MARTIN GUERRE), Nagisa Oshima (MAX, MY LOVE), Carlos Saura (ANTONIETTA), Marco Ferreri (LIZA), and Philip Kaufman (THE UNBEARABLE LIGHTNESS OF BEING). With his friend Pierre Etaix, he also wrote the first feature shot in Omnimax, I WRITE IN SPACE, which is a regular presentation at the Geode at the Paris Science Museum.

For the past several years Carriere has worked closely with Peter Brook and his International Center For Theater Research, serving as writer, translator, or adaptor on TIMON OF ATHENS, THE IK, THE CONFERENCE OF THE BIRDS, LA TRAGEDIE DE CARMEN, and THE CHERRY ORCHARD. Carriere wrote (and Brook translated into English) the full nine-hour stage version of THE MAHABHARATA, the first attempted dramatization of the entire Hindu epic poem. Along with Brook and Marie-Helene Estienne he adapted the work for the screen.

Carriere currently serves as Chairman of the European Foundation for Image and Sound Professionals, also known as F.E.M.I.S., which is the new French Film School.

CHLOE OBOLENSKY
Designer

Born in Athens of Greek parents, Chloe Obolensky was educated in England and France . She began her work in the theater as an assistant to Lila de Nobili and went on to design sets and costumes for a number of plays and operas throughout Europe. Among the directors she has worked with are Gian Carlo Menotti, Mauro Bolognini, Raymond Roulleau, and Franco Zeffirelli.

For the past several years Obolensky has worked with Peter Brook, designing his productions of THE CHERRY ORCHARD, LA TRAGEDIE DE CARMEN and THE MAHABHARATA, all of which toured the major capitols of the world. Her work on the film of THE MAHABHARATA, completely different in both sets and costumes from the play, represents her first feature film credits.

Obolensky is also author of THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE: A PORTRAIT IN PHOTOGRAPHS, which has been published in the United States, Great Britain, France and Germany.

WILLIAM LUBTCHANSKY
Cinematographer

Born in Paris in 1937, William Lubtchansky was educated at the Ecole Louis Lumiere and began his career as first assistant cameraman and camera operator for Andreas Winding and Willy Kurant. In 1968 he became a full-fledged cinematographer, completing three films that year, including UN FILM COMME LES AUTRES by Jean-Luc Godard. He has since worked extensively with Godard for over twenty years on such projects as ICI ET AILLEURS, COMMENT CA VA, NUMERO DEUX, EVERY MAN FOR HIMSELF, and the most recent NOUVELLE VAGUE. He has also worked with Godard on numerous video films for French television.

Lubtchansky has also been the preferred cinematographer for such directors as Jacques Rivette, for whom he photographed DUELLE, NOROIT, MERRY GO ROUND, LE PONT DU NORD, and LOVE ON THE GROUND; Claude Lanzmann, for whom he shot ISRAEL WHY? and SHOAH; Nadine Trintignant, for whom he did IT ONLY HAPPENS TO OTHERS, DEFENSE DE SAVOIR,

UN INNOCENT, BROTHER AND SISTER, NEXT SUMMER and UNE AMOREUSE; Michel Drach, for whom he lit LES VIOLONS DU

BAL and PARLEZ MOI D'AMOUR; and Jacques Doillon, for whom he did THE TEMPTATION OF ISABELLE, LA PURITAINE, and COMEDIE. Lubtchansky has also worked with such masters as Robert Bresson on THE DEVIL, PROBABLY, Francois Truffaut on THE WOMAN NEXT DOOR and Marco Ferreri on I LOVE YOU.

CAST BIOGRAPHIES

URS BIHLER (Dushassana)--Swiss-born Urs Bihler first came to Peter Brook's attention after working with actress Miriam Goldschmidt in a 1974 production, EMO AND SANU, directed by Goldschmidt. Brook invited Bihler to act in his productions of UBU and MEASURE FOR MEASURE and, in 1980, he rejoined Brook's company for CONFERENCE OF THE BIRDS. From 1980 until 1986, Bihler was associated with Peter Stein's Schaubuhne in West Berlin. He returned to Brook's International Center of Theater Research (CICT) in Paris for the original and subsequent versions of THE MAHABHARATA.

RYSZARD CIESLAK (Dhritharashtra)--Polish-born Ryszard Cieslak trained at the Krakow Academy and, in 1961, met Jerzy Grotowski in whose company he remained for over twenty years, playing leading roles in a mainly Polish repertoire. From 1973 through 1976, Cieslak toured Europe and America in a variety of productions and, in 1983, he left acting to direct, first in Poland and then in Italy, Spain, Denmark, and France. In 1984, Brook invited him to create the role of the blind king Dhritharashtra for which Cieslak learned French. He acted for the first time in English, recreating the role for the American tour of THE MAHABHARATA, and does so again in the film. He currently teaches drama at New York University.

GEORGES CORRAFACE (Duryodhana)--Paris-born, of Greek parentage, Georges Corraface began his training at the Paris Conservatoire while performing at the same time in the theater. Following a season at the Comedie

Francaise, he took a three year hiatus to travel in Europe and America, but returned to the stage in 1978 to play Octavius in Michael Cacoyannis' Athens production of ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA. Since then Corraface has alternated between stage roles and substantial roles in film and television. He came to CICT in 1984 to create the role of Dushassana in the French stage production of THE MAHABHARATA, before being cast as Duryodhana in the English language stage and film versions. Corraface has just been selected by David Lean to play the title role in his long-planned film adaptation of Joseph Conrad's NOSTROMO.

MAMADOU DIOUME (Bhima)--Born in Senegal and trained at the Dakar Conservatoire, Mamadou Dioume made his stage debut in 1968 as Creon in Jean Anouilh's ANTIGONE. For the next fifteen years he continued to play leading classical roles at the Senegalese National Theater until, in 1984, he was invited by Peter Brook to play Bhima in THE MAHABHARATA. Dioume has also appeared in numerous Senegalese films and, in 1982, played a prominent role in Bertrand Tavernier's COUP DE TORCHON. The English language productions of THE MAHABHARATA represent Dioume's English speaking debuts.

MIRIAM GOLDSCHMIDT (Kunti)--Long dissatisfied with her work in the German theater, Miriam Goldschmidt was so impressed with Peter Brook's book of theatrical theory, THE EMPTY SPACE, that she pawned a family heirloom and went on a pilgrimage to Paris once she learned that Brook lived there. Overcoming seemingly insurmountable obstacles, Goldschmidt ultimately landed an interview with Brook and became one of the founding members of the CICT. Since then she has been involved in almost all of the CICT productions, except for those done in the 1981/1982 season, during which time she appeared at Peter Stein's Schaubuhne in Berlin. Goldschmidt created the role of Kunti in the first staging of THE MAHABHARATA and has stayed with it through all subsequent incarnations.

JEFFREY KISSOON (Karna)--Born in Trinidad of Afro-Indian parents, Jeffery Kissoon was raised in the Eastern theatrical tradition by a great grandfather who had been a strolling player in India and a father who was a poet-songwriter, deeply versed in the Ghita. A serious student of yoga, Kissoon began acting in 1972 in a one man show based on the works of Nijinsky. He next played Malcolm in the late Peter Coe's all black production of MACBETH and has continued within the classical

repertoire, performing several seasons with the Royal Shakespeare Company, most notably as Caliban, both in England and on tour. Before joining CICT to play Karna, Kisson spent two years in the cast of the popular British television series GRANGE HILL.

SOTIGUI KOUYATE (Bhishma/Parashurama)--Born in the African nation of Burkina Faso, Sotigui Kouyate is descended from a long line of orators entrusted with the transmission of their country's history from generation to generation. Following this ancient tradition, he became an actor, dancer, singer, musician and composer. He also played professional soccer until he was thirty and founded the National Ballet Company, The Volta Theater Company and an instrumental ensemble. Since the late sixties, Kouyate has acted in many African, German and French films, most notably in the 1986 commercial success, BLACK MIC-MAC. In 1984 Peter Brook invited him to create the role of Bhishma in THE MAHABHARATA and, two years later, he undertook the challenge of learning English from scratch to play the part in the States and on film.

TUNCEL KURTIZ (Shakuni)--Born in Turkey, Tuncel Kurtiz began acting in the late fifties and became a director in the mid-sixties. From 1968 through 1971 he was head of the People's Theater in Ankara and Istanbul, and he has acted in over sixty-five films and in over forty theatrical productions in Turkish, Arabic, German, Swedish, and English. Kurtiz has played lead roles in many film by the late Turkish filmmaker Yilmaz (YOL) Guney and, at the 1986 Berlin Film Festival, he won the prize for "Best Actor" for his performance in the Israeli film, THE SMILE OF THE LAMB, by Shimon Dotan. Kurtiz joined CICT in 1987.

ROBERT LANGDON-LLOYD (Vyasa)--Born in England and trained at London's Central School of Speech and Drama, Robert Langdon-Lloyd worked with Peter Brook as early as 1963, as part of his Theater of Cruelty. He teamed with Brook for his first season with The Royal Shakespeare Company, and again for both the stage and screen versions of MARAT/SADE. In 1968, Lloyd was part of Brook's experimental production of THE TEMPEST and, in 1969 he appeared as Edgar in Brook's film of KING LEAR, starring Paul Scofield. Lloyd was one of the founding members of CICT in 1970 and, in 1971 he participated in THE ORGHAST, performed in Iran. Lloyd played Puck in the world tour of Brook's legendary A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM, and after

participating in CONFERENCE OF BIRDS, he was cast as Liliast Pastia in the touring company of LA TRAGEDIE DE CARMEN. Most recently, Lloyd performed in the States in Jean-Pierre Ponnelle's operatic production of LEAR, and in Michael Weller's 1986 play, GHOST ON FIRE, originally staged in Chicago. New York audiences saw him in Martha Clarke's highly acclaimed VIENNA: LUSTHAUS before he rejoined CICT to create the role of Vyasa in THE MAHABHARATA.

VITTORIO MEZZOGIORNO (Arjuna)--Naples-born Vittorio Mezzogiorno began his acting career spending two years as a member of Edouardo de Filippo's theater company. After leaving theater to act in films, he was twice voted "Best Actor" in Italy, the first time for his role in Francesco Rosi's highly acclaimed film, THREE BROTHERS (1980). Mezzogiorno has also acted in four French films, most notably as Nastassia Kinski's brother in THE MOON IN THE GUTTER and as a doomed pimp in Patrice Chereau's highly controversial L'HOMME BLESSE, both of which were released in the States. Mezzogiorno created the role of Arjuna in the stage MAHABHARATA and learned English to play it on the American stage and on film.

BRUCE MYERS (Krishna)--British-born Bruce Myers trained at RADA and began his professional career with the Liverpool Everyman Theater. A member of the Royal Shakespeare Company from 1967 through 1970, he was present at the inception of CICT along with MAHABHARATA co-stars Robert Langdon-Lloyd, Miriam Goldschmidt, and Yoshi Oida. Myers has participated in every major CICT production and has also made numerous film and theater appearances in France, England and America. In 1980 he appeared at New York's Public Theater in THE DYBBUK, directed by Joseph Chaikin, and the following year he conceived and performed in his own two-man version of the play. Myers first played Karna in the French version of THE MAHABHARATA before being cast as Krishna in the English-language incarnations.

YOSHI OIDA (Drona)--Trained in classical Noh theater in Japan, Yoshi Oida appeared in numerous plays, films and television shows in his native country before coming to Paris in 1968 to participate in Peter Brook's theatrical experiment, adapted from THE TEMPEST. Remaining with Brook in Paris, he became one of the twelve original founding members of CICT and travelled with them throughout Africa and America as part of their three-year research program in the early seventies.. Oida has

performed in most CICT productions including the French MAHABHARATA. In 1975 he formed a company of his own with which he has toured in original plays he has adapted from classical Oriental texts.

HELENE PATAROT (Gandhari)--Born in Vietnam though raised almost entirely in Paris, Helene Patarot made her first public appearance in a staging of THE TEMPEST, followed by an extensive tour in the African play L'OS, (which has also been staged to much acclaim by Peter Brook.) Patarot has performed on Parisian stages in classical roles by authors as diverse as Gorky and Racine. She also had a major role in Alain Resnais' film, LIFE IS A BED OF ROSES. Patarot joined CICT to create the role of Amba in the U.S. production of THE MAHABHARATA, and it was her first performance in English. She was elevated to the role of Gandhari, mother of the Kauravas, in the film.

MALLIKA SARABHAI (Draupadi)--The only fully Indian cast member in this adaptation of the greatest Indian epic, Mallika Sarabhai was trained at the Academy of Performing Arts at Ahmedabad founded by her mother, herself a professional dancer. Trained in dance, drama, music, and puppetry, she has made many world tours as a soloist as well as with her mother's Darbana Dance Company. Sarabhai has researched extensively in folk performance techniques and has a Ph.D. in Arts Management. She made her film debut in India at the age of sixteen and has since made dozens of motion pictures. When selected by Peter Brook to play Draupadi in the original production of THE MAHABHARATA, Sarabhai had never spoken French, and learned it from scratch. It was also her theatrical debut as an actress.

ANDRZEJ SEWERYN (Yudhishtira)--Born in East Germany but raised in Poland, Andrzej Seweryn attended the National School of Drama in Warsaw. Since graduation in 1968 he has performed in numerous films for such internationally acclaimed directors as Andrzej Zulawski and Andrzej Wajda, for whom he acted in PROMISED LAND, WITHOUT ANAESTHESIA, ORCHESTRA CONDUCTOR, (for which he won the "Best Actor" prize at the Berlin Film Festival,) and MAN OF IRON. In the Polish theater he has played numerous classical roles and he has taught drama at the Warsaw Academy of Drama. Since 1980, Seweryn has been based in Paris where he has acted on stage for such directors as Patrice Chereau and Andrei Serban. He came to CICT in 1984 to create the role of Duryodhana, and made his

English speaking debut playing Yudhishtira on stage in the States.

ANTONIN STAHLY-VISHWANADAN (The Boy)--Born and raised in Paris of French-Indian parentage, Stahly-Viswanadhan became familiar with the stories of THE MAHABHARATA as a child, spending most vacations in Southern India. Since the age of five he has been a serious student of Suzuki violin and he was one of the original children to play the Boy on stage in the French production of THE MAHABHARATA.

TAPA SUDANA (Pandu/Shiva)--Born in Bali to a Hindu family thoroughly familiar with THE MAHABHARATA, Tapa Sudana was trained in Balinese dance and in the martial arts. After studying at the Javanese Academy of Theater he joined a

variety of experimental groups and ultimately relocated to Europe, performing with a traditional dance and mask-theater group. As a mask specialist he was invited to participate in Peter Brook's THE CONFERENCE OF THE BIRDS, which led to his casting in CARMEN and the several versions of THE MAHABHARATA.