



SANDRA RIDER, JAE ROSS, GEORGE QUICK IN 'MARCO POLO'

Empty Sky), the music and the lyrics all came together. In Vega's musical the players are a group of Commedia dell'Arte actors who perform in the town squares and country barnyards of 16th Century Italy.

As the story begins, these itinerant singers, dancers, and musicians are preparing to play their version of Marco Polo's story for the wedding party of Lucrezia Borgia. "By framing Marco Polo's story in a play-within-a-play, we have the opportunity of commenting on the manners and morals of the Chinese court, as well as the Italian court of the infamous Borgias."

With the real audience playing the part of the Borgia audience, the Comme-

dia performers play their scenes center stage. All "backstage" scenes, donning costumes, makeup, and frequent bickering are also in full view of the audience.

There is a deliberate parallel among the actors as to what happens on stage in the Polo story and what happens offstage in the Commedia story. The romances and petty jealousies carry over from behind the scenes to the court intrigues on stage.

Designer Gilbert Johnson has created a set which emphasizes this dual nature by suggesting the splendor of the Vatican and Kubla Khan's palace in contrast to the makeshift canopied performing platform of the Commedia troupe.

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