

Back Alley Theatre is doodling for dollars

By TOM JACOBS
Daily News Theater Writer

The drawing is fairly crude, but the image is unmistakable. The sketch is of the front face of the White House. Underneath are scribbled the words, "A nice place to live."

The artist: Michael Dukakis. Democratic presidential nominee. Doodler.

Dukakis' sketch is one of approximately 160 celebrity doodles that will become the possession of the highest bidder Saturday during the Back Alley Theatre's fourth annual Doodle Auction.

Other celebrities who have contributed doodles include Gregory Peck, Katharine Hepburn, Dudley Moore, Amy Irving, Joe Frazier, Rocky Graziano, Henry Mancini, Peter Falk, Leonard Nimoy, Arnold Palmer, Isaac Asimov, Johnny Cash, Quincy Jones, Bob Hoskins, Susan Sarandon and George Burns.

Tom Brokaw contributed a self-portrait of himself on television. John Lithgow provided a self-portrait of himself on stage starring in "M. Butterfly." So did Michael J. Fox (who, unlike Lithgow, is playing an amplified guitar).

Both Lillian Gish and Vincent Price drew whales, an image that presumably relates to their recent film "The Whales of August." Sir Neville Martinson sketched a few bars of music, appropriately enough. Sir John Gielgud drew a vase full of flowers.

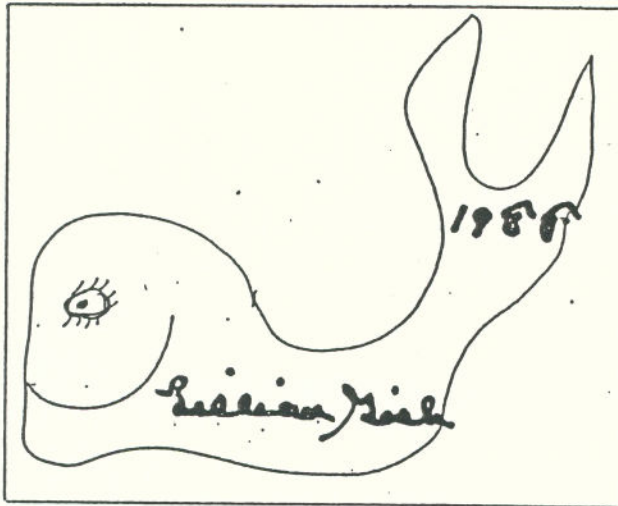
Last year's auction raised more than \$30,000 for the Van Nuys theater, with doodles fetching anywhere from \$15 to \$2,000. Theater officials expect to top that this year, since they have approximately 60 more doodles to auction than they did in 1987.

Some of the doodles are obtained by writing to a celebrity, either directly or through a publicist, according to the theater's Kip Meyers. Others were obtained through the intercession of a friend of a friend. Persistence played a part; so did luck.

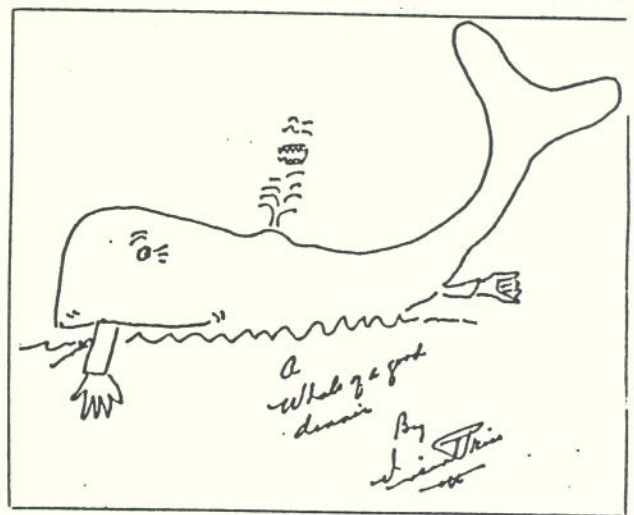
"Laura (managing director Laura Zucker) happened to run into Carol Burnett at a party," she said. "She drew two doodles on the spot."

Both will be auctioned Saturday.

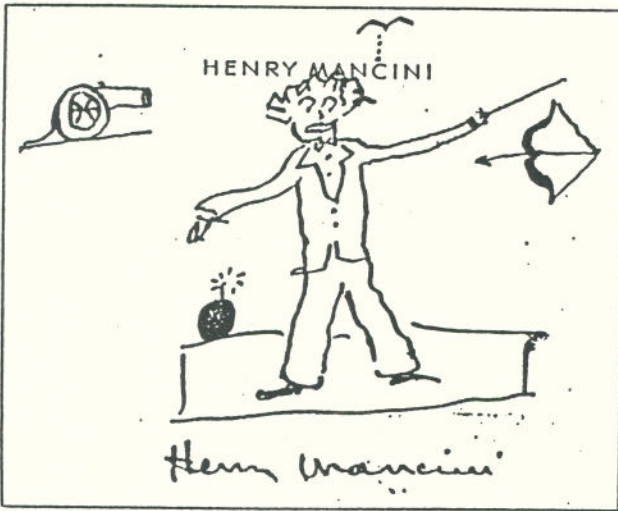
The auction will take place from 3 to 6 p.m. at a private Encino home. Anyone interested in attending should call the theater at (818) 780-2240 and make a reservation. Tickets are \$35; the event will include food, an open bar and music by a string quartet.



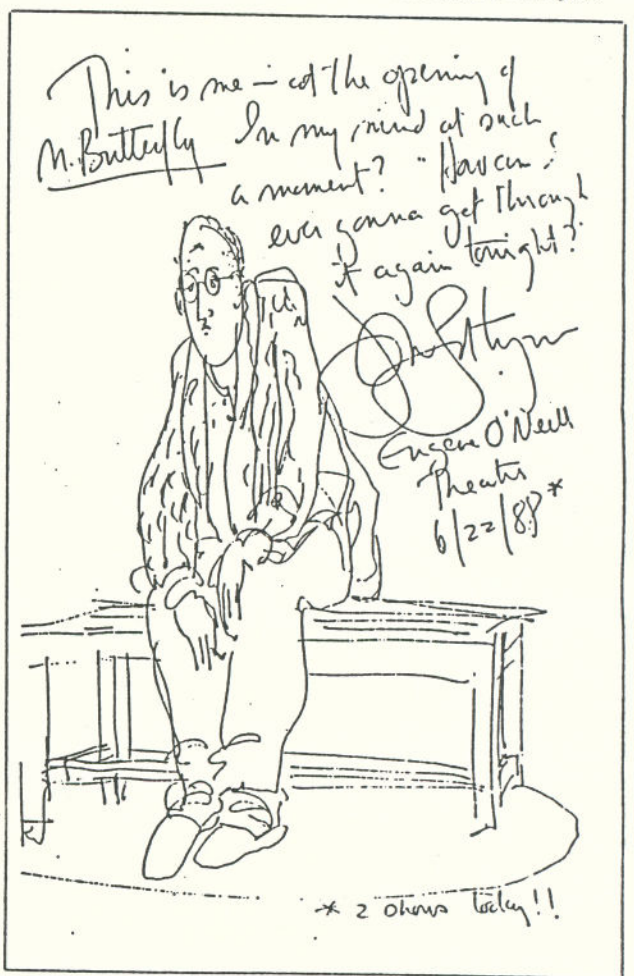
The Gish fish is a whale drawn by Lillian Gish.



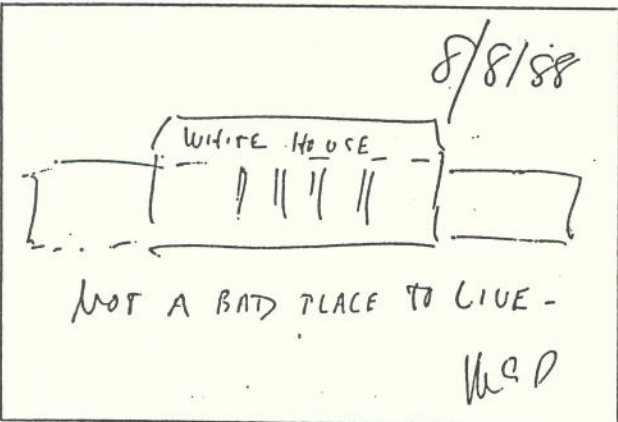
Vincent Price was a co-star with Gish in "The Whales of August."



Henry Mancini's is an explosive world.



John Lithgow offered a self-portrait from "M. Butterfly."



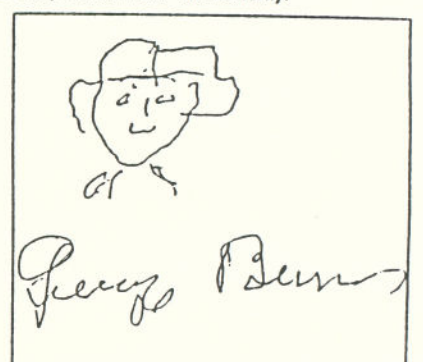
Michael Dukakis is drawn to 1600 Pennsylvania Ave.



Tom Brokaw also drew a self-portrait.



Sir John Gielgud's vase of flowers.



An artistic statement from George Burns