

September 28, 2017

The Library of Congress Hosts

AN EVENING WITH THE FIRESIGN THEATRE

(OR WHAT'S LEFT OF IT!)

AS

PHIL PROCTOR AND DAVID OSSMAN

PRESENT

“The History of the Art of Radio Revised”

(Live on Stage with Sound Effects)

“In the Studio with Porgie and Mudhead”

(Groovy 1970 Super-8 with Historic Commentary)

“Who Am Us Anyway?”

(A Nostalgic Q&A with Phil and Dave)



PHIL PROCTOR & DAVID OSSMAN, *Steve Allen Theater*, L. A. 2016

THE FIRESIGN THEATRE

Created in 1966, the 4-man writing and performing collective (Phil Austin, Peter Bergman, David Ossman and Phil Proctor), revolutionized comedy on LP with nine albums for Columbia Records, created the hippest of improvised radio shows, played folk clubs, then toured nationally, including a sell-out at Carnegie Hall, all by 1975.

Locked out of studio recording, the group's creative specialty, Firesign turned to large stage productions, including 1980's "Fighting Clowns," a Brechtian musical revue. A national tour in 1981 ended with the group's division and lengthy silence. Reunited after a decade for their 25th Anniversary, Firesign presented an elaborate stage performance based on their hit albums and toured summer festival stages.

Returned to the studio in 1998 by Rhino Records, Firesign created three new albums in their trademark style - Grammy-nominated CDs around Millennium themes. In 2001, Firesign created the Gold-medal winning "Fools In Space" for XM Satellite Radio, a PBS Special, "Weirdly Cool," and a live performance at the London Comedy Store for BBC4.

Performances on the road in 1999 and a select few in 2009-2011 were the last the full Firesign was to do. Peter Bergman died in 2012 and Phil Austin in 2015. The group was honored with the Norman Corwin Award for Lifetime Achievement and by the inclusion of "Don't Crush That Dwarf" into the Library of Congress' permanent record collection. More about them at firesigntheatre.com.

PHIL PROCTOR

Phil Proctor's career has taken him from Broadway, where he appeared in "The Sound of Music" and "A Time For Singing," and Off-Broadway in "The Amorous Flea," to National and International tours, including with the L.A. Guitar Quartet, performing a one-man reading of "Don Quixote." As an actor with the Antaeus Company in L.A. Phil was featured in "The Crucible," "Mother Courage," Arthur Miller's "The Man Who Had All The Luck," and most recently Dan Castellaneta's "For Piano and Harpo" at the Falcon Theater.

Besides being the announcer on the reality show "Big Brother" for three seasons, Proctor has supplied voices for countless commercials and interactive games including Dr. Vidic in "Assassin's Creed" and the evil computer in "Headlander." He played the drunken French monkey in Eddie Murphy's "Dr. Doolittle" series, Seahorse Bob in "Finding Nemo" and Charlie in "Monsters Inc."

His film work includes Henry Jaglom's first film, "A Safe Place," with Orson Welles, Tuesday Weld and Jack Nicholson, and later in "Hollywood Dreams" and "Queen of the Lot." Phil can also be seen in the sex farce, "Love Addict," and Sam Joseph's political thriller, "Window of Opportunity," among others.

He's appeared on TV's "Arrested Development," "Jimmy Kimmel Live" and "The Tonight Show," and guest-starred in classic series like, "All In The Family," "Night Court," "Dave's World," "Golden Girls," "Cagney and Lacy," "Simon and Simon" and "Last Man Standing."

In the world of audio, he and his wife Melinda performed as Hercule Poirot and Agatha Christie in "The BBC Murders," one of a dozen productions at the International Mystery Writers Festivals in Owensboro, Kentucky (where they were made Kentucky Colonels); and in Dublin, Ireland for four seasons in Roger Gregg's Crazy Dog Audio Theatre. For Otherworld Media he appeared in many roles in "The War of the Worlds 50th Anniversary Production," "We Hold These Truths" and "Empire of the Air." His many characters and voices can be heard in "The Golden Age of Pulp Fiction," "Fake Radio" and "Adventures in Odyssey."

Phil can currently be seen with comic legend Jamie Alcroft in the webseries "Boomers on a Bench." Planet Proctor (planetproctor.com) is his invaluable communication with the rest of the universe.

DAVID OSSMAN

Ossman became a pioneer FM radio broadcaster in 1959 at WBAI in New York City. When the station became listener-supported the next year, he created "The Sullen Art," an interview series with many of the major poets of the time, yielding a recently-released and annotated collection from the University of Toledo Press.

At Los Angeles' KPFK Ossman produced dozens of major programs – documentaries, dramas, musical, spoken word – and was for the early 1960s a familiar voice on the FM band. His first poetry collection, "Set In

A Landscape,” was published in Mexico in 1963 and he was a member of LA’s avant-garde arts community as presenter and performer.

At the height of Firesign’s success, Ossman wrote and starred in a science-fiction comedy for Columbia Records, “How Time Flies.” He began teaching radio writing and production in the late 70s, helped found the Midwest Radio Theater Workshop and the independent audio producers’ movement. In 1982 he developed and hosted “The Sunday Show,” a weekly arts program for NPR, and subsequently wrote, taught and produced drama programs for WGBH Radio, Boston.

Ossman and his wife, Judith Walcutt, created a memorable, prize-winning series of long-form radio dramas, including “The Red Badge of Courage,” “The War of the Worlds 50th Anniversary Production” with Jason Robards; “We Hold These Truths,” the 50th Anniversary Production of Norman Corwin’s historic take on the Bill of Rights; and “The Wonderful Wizard of Oz,” an authentically period, all-star version on the 100th Anniversary of the classic tale. Ossman and Walcutt were given a life-time Angie Award from the International Mystery Writers Festival where their final co-authored and directed production was Agatha Christie’s “The BBC Murders.”

Active for years as a voice artist, Ossman is remembered best for playing Cornelius in Pixar’s “A Bug’s Life.” He ran for Vice President of the U.S. in the character of George Tirebiter in 1976 and has written two mystery novels featuring Tirebiter.

A 30-year resident of Whidbey Island, Washington, Ossman has contributed original productions to the local community and children’s theater seasons, created cabaret evenings, broadcast festival events, appeared on TV, and regularly shows his collages at the Rob Schouten Gallery in Langley.