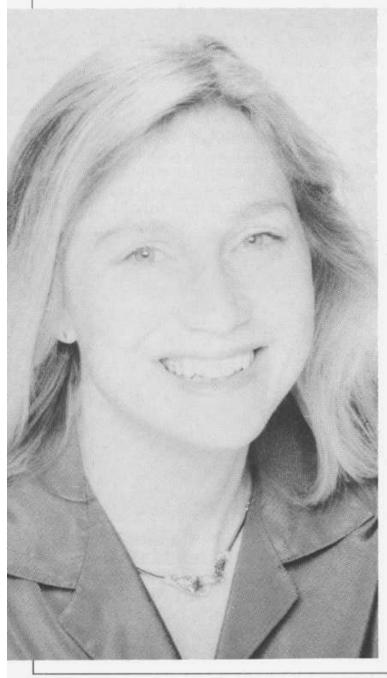
A Novel Drama

Ina Marlowe's read on Sister Carrie



irector Ina Marlowe and adaptor Tom Creamer chose to extend the success of their dramatization of Mark Twain's Roughing It by selecting the work of another writer from the Midwest, Theodore Dreiser. Sister Carrie, Dreiser's first novel, is set in Chicago and draws on the author's exposure to the city in the 1890s.

"Tom and I kept reading classics until we found one that we liked," notes Marlowe. "We read Melville and Poe and Henry James and even Jack Kerouac. We finally settled on Sister Carrie because Tom wanted to tackle something American and specifically Chicago. It's a great story with great characters, and so much is happening! There are chorus numbers, singing, there's a riot, labor turmoil, and a passionate

Marlowe adds that Sister Carrie—
the play as well as the novel—considers the effect of the city on men and women during the first decades of pell-mell industrialization in the U.S. The urban world, she says, is characterized by "pitfalls" and "corruption"—but also by opportunities unavailable in late-nineteenth century rural America.

love story spanning two cities."

"What fascinated me about the novel is that the characters are put down in very real what-they-do terms," Marlowe notes. "Dreiser never says, 'Don't be like Carrie or Drouet or Hurstwood.' He just documents their lives in a tremendously exciting plot and lets them make choices.

"The reader has to draw his own conclusions, and in the play we have taken the same tack we're trying to give a clear picture of the characters while letting the audience decide for itself."

-David Cohen