

Constant Shopper

By Cindy Frenkel

In New York, holiday presents are some of the most fun to shop for—something for everyone, and there's so much to find—from extravagant gifts (buying your closest friends dinner and theater tickets, then babysitting their children for the evening) to stocking stuffers—it's all here.

If you've already found the perfect gift, make sure your presentation is equally memorable. A fine selection of wrapping paper is at the Cooper-Hewitt Museum, and if your gift is large, add something small on top for fun.

Years ago, a friend received two gifts that he still talks about—so if you're short on ideas and like these, feel free to adapt them to suit your needs. Once, he was given a box labeled "Things You Need" that was filled with his favorite soap, subway tokens, quarters, stamps and socks. Then he received a second box that read, "Things You Don't Need But Would Love to Own," which was filled with truly impractical but ridiculously fun items (including a few wind-up toys) on a piece of paper. Underneath the tissue paper was a signed, first edition play by Eugene O'Neill.

Classical Christmas Recordings To Play Every Day of the Year

By Allan Kozinn

The Christmas records I like best are those you don't have to file away by New Year's. True, that limits the field somewhat, but there are a surprising number of works composed for (or associated with) Christmas that bear listening any time. Probably the best example is Handel's "Messiah"—a Christmas-time perennial these days, although it was actually composed for performances around Easter, and doesn't sound in the least out of place in the middle of August.

In recent years I've preferred the early

Stuffing the Stocking with Holiday Gift Ideas

Our nerves are jittery as stock prices plummet, so let's start small, small and inexpensive. After all, it's easy to find something expensive and wonderful, but let's discuss gifts under \$100, under \$50 to put under a tree or hang in a stocking.

A large range of Shakespeare's plays in red or navy leather-bound miniature books are \$14.25 each at the Pierpont Morgan Library (29 East 36th Street at Madison Avenue, 685-0008).

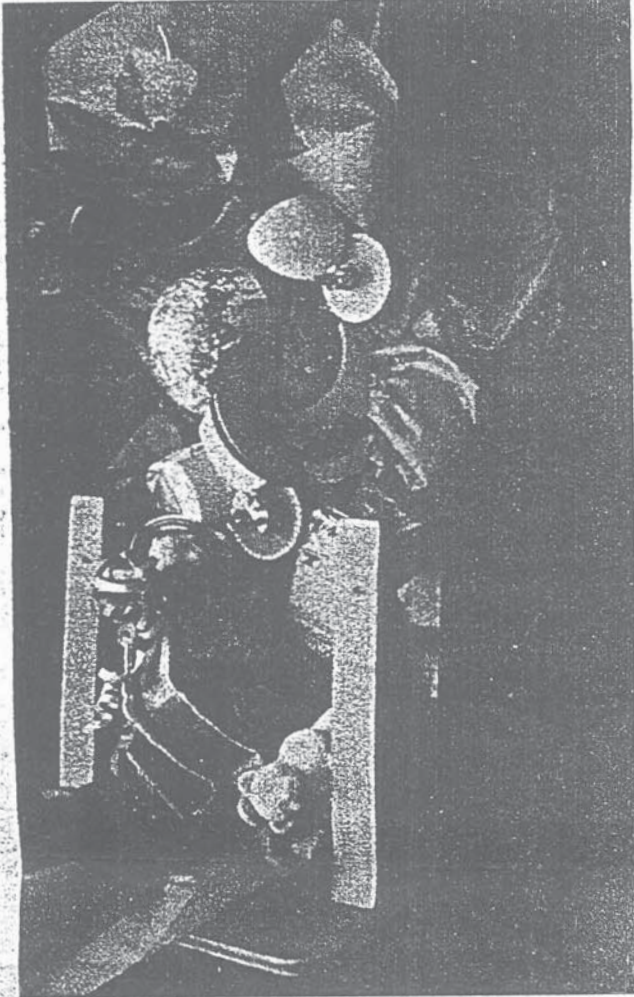
At the Gotham Bookmart (41 West 47th Street between Fifth and Sixth Avenues, 719-4448), there are volumes of poetry, available both in paper or hardcover, for \$5 and \$15. Their selection is primarily of women poets (Laura Boss, Claire Nicholas White), and many are translations. Each book comes with a magnifying glass.

If you're looking for baubles—like small brass Scottie pins (\$6 to \$13), Jan Reestrål (219 East 89th Street between Second and Third, 527-4795) is a tiny shop jammed with such knickknacks. Simple hand-painted cat pins run \$6.50 and \$13 depending on size; these would particularly please children and teens. Hand-painted

At Mythology (370 Columbus between 77th and 78th, 874-0774), you'll find wacky items for under \$5, including plastic wind-up sushi that waddles, a palm-size TV that changes scenes, loaded dice, and a plastic piece of banana or watermelon that's really a night light (\$4.50). Teeny flip books (as you flip through the book, the pictures seem to move) include "Alice's Flip Book"; it starts off with the Cheshire cat sitting on a branch, by the end of the book he's literally all smiles; \$2. Magnetics of realistic scenes have great detail ranging from your standard TV dinner (\$8) to wine, cheese and clusters of grapes (\$9).

One of the many rarely heard works of Camille Saint-Saens is a sweetly lyrical Christmas Oratorio, an early piece for orchestra, organ, chorus and soloists. Martin Flaming leads a resilient performance with massed forces from Dresden; and coupled with the work is a remarkably robust performance of a Felix Mendelssohn cantata based on the Lutheran Christmas hymn, "Vom Himmel Hoch" (Capriccio 10 216).

A more sober and mysterious Christmas work is Olivier Messiaen's "La Nativité du



A small sled packed with presents at E.A.T. Gifts.

A hi-tech black toothbrush is \$30 which seems outrageously expensive, but has a replacement brush for \$3 so it can last a long time. You'll also find more substantial gifts here—good art books, whimsical ceramic ware, and lots of zany toys for adults.

If you want something unusual yet a bit more serious, but you don't know what, try Aris Mixon & Co. (381 Amsterdam Avenue between 78th and 79th, 724-6904).

Aris finds objects from all over the world, and you'll see antique hairpins, ultra-modern desk accessories, non-fertile ostrich eggs (so you're not killing an ostrich), Oriental dolls, boxes of marbledized pencils, old mother-of-pearl cufflinks, and beaded necklaces (turquoise, lapis, or coral). You'll find many things for under \$50.

Tree ornaments include their best seller from last year—a great, glass, hand-blown pickle (75 cents). Small glass with Christmas scenes (a tree, Santa, a skier, a snowman) begin at \$6.50 for a 2-inch size and go up to \$29 for a 7-inch size. There's

a wide range of picture frames—they start at \$9 for a small rosewood frame and go up to \$130 for a beautiful 8"x10" mother-of-pearl frame; it's black inlaid with Chielet-size pieces of pearly lavender and Ming green. Inlaid wooden frames by Euramex have a classic appeal—put a photograph inside and it's sure to please.

For gifts for the home try Zona (97 Greene Street between Prince and Spring, 925-6750), in SoHo. Zona has a particular dedication to craft, and when they opened seven years ago they were devoted to presenting a selection of products that were made at Arcosanti, the prototypical urban village in Arizona conceived and designed by architect Paolo Soleri (the store remains one of the few places in the country to sell Soleri bells). Soon after, they moved into Squaw Valley (Tur-Soon after, they moved into Squaw Valley (Tur-nishings, and many people attribute the popularity of southwestern design to Zona's influence. Now, however, Zona's been looking to different areas of the world for beautiful things (only 30 percent of their

current products are from the Southwest), including Italy (particularly the Tuscany area) and Kyoto, Japan.

Many pieces have a coarse charm; hand-stained, pine dough bowls are perfect for cedar, polipouri or tiny stones; the small size is \$14, the extra small is \$8. Table runners certain to dress up the plainest table have an Oriental feel but are made in Brooklyn; in maroon or navy with blocks of turquoise, pink and lavender woven into them, they're \$72. A pink-and-gray cotton runner has a lovely subtle weave (\$35).

Zona also has furniture, and great "rag" style rugs made by Sarah Hochkill. Most have striking geometric shapes in a wash of color; a 3'x5'1" admired is \$365. In addition to time in the bustling shops, finding gifts for family and friends, remember various charities, and help those less fortunate this year. Spread the holiday spirit—whether by becoming a volunteer or by simply signing a check. Your time and efforts are needed; they matter. And happy, happy holidays to all!

Lynne Tesza