

# The King and I



Lauren Ambrose at Alice's Tea Cup.



YOU WOULDN'T KNOW IT FROM HER BRIGHT-EYED APPEARANCE on a chilly Tuesday morning, but Lauren Ambrose has spent the better part of the last month weeping. Rivers of tears that streak her pale face with lines of running mascara. Every night she confronts mortality when her onstage husband in "Exit the King" learns he will die by the evening's end.

"I'm crying for two and a half hours straight," says Ambrose. "And then you leave the stage door and people are like, 'Can we take your picture?' And I'm thinking, 'I've never looked worse.' I need a lot of eye cream."

In the play, a revival of Eugène Ionesco's 1962 absurdist work on now at the Ethel Barrymore Theatre, King Berenger (Geoffrey Rush) learns he has only 90 minutes

who at 31 continues to exude the youthful energy of a college drama major. "For me to be around people who were so passionate about their work, I was like, 'Wow, what a great way to make your life.'"

Though most recognized for her five seasons on HBO's "Six Feet Under," Ambrose has stomped her share of floorboards, as Juliet and Ophelia in Shakespeare in the Park productions and in Lincoln Center's "Awake and Sing!" Later this year she will appear opposite Paul Giamatti in the darkly comic film "Cold Souls" and Paul Dano in Spike Jonze's "Where the Wild Things Are."

"I often find myself taking jobs because they scare me," she says. "I can't imagine doing only one kind of thing."

— Vanessa Lawrence

## CHINA PATTERN



"Portrait 08-7-2" by Zeng Fanzhi.

Zeng Fanzhi is a Chinese artist whose work looks kind of like a cross between Francis Bacon and Tim Burton. Last week, a smattering of art-world types and fashion folk showed up to

fete him at the Acquavella Galleries on the Upper East Side before a dinner at Philippe on 60th Street. Despite the recession, the gallery sold nearly a dozen paintings at prices that ranged between \$100,000 and \$2 million each. "I'm very content," said Fanzhi, speaking through his translator as guests like Zhang Ziyi, Vivi Nevo and Wendi Murdoch munched on steamed dumplings, spare ribs and sautéed string beans. (Get it? Chinese artist, Chinese food.) But Murdoch said she was holding out on buying because the paintings were still awfully expensive. "I'm hoping to get the one I want at a better price," she said with a laugh. As for Ziyi, she was feeling a lot of pride for her fellow countryman. "Whenever I have a movie here, someone else from China gets quoted saying, 'I'm so proud of her as a Chinese person. It's great for our country.' Well, tonight I'm thrilled to say that as a Chinese person, 'I'm so proud of him.'" Go China!



◀ Zhang Ziyi



Donna Acquavella

Jeanne-Claude and Christo.

Zeng Fanzhi

Tinsley Mortimer in a Chloé coat.

## EYE SCOOP



Mark Ronson plays for mom Ann Dexter-Jones and sister Charlotte Ronson.



Drea de Matteo and Nicole Richie.



Anna Paquin

THE SUNSET STRIP IS HARDLY A HAVEN FOR families — unless it's the multifaceted Ronson clan, who headlined a boisterous bash hosted by J.C. Penney on Friday at Bar Marmont in honor of designing daughter Charlotte Ronson's new fashion line, I [Heart] Ronson.

Grammy-winning son Mark Ronson led an all-star band with Sam Sparro, Daniel Merriweather and Alex Greenwald, while Charlotte's DJing twin, Sam, spun tunes. Despite a broken foot, matriarch Ann Dexter-Jones traveled to Los Angeles from New York to cheer on her brood.

The family's unique pedigree of celebrity, music and fashion drew all sorts of stars including Sting, Trudie Styler, Jewel, Anna Paquin, Nicole Richie, Drea de Matteo, Shooter Jennings, Milla Jovovich, Jeremy Piven, and Dsquared's Dean and Dan Caten.

J.C. Penney president Ken Hicks hoped the celebrities would set an example for Middle America that "this is what a star can wear and what I can wear," he said. (Notable exceptions being three of the revelers — Paris Hilton, Kim Kardashian and Simon Rex — who shot to fame via sex tapes.)

After guests helped themselves to a gifting closet (Dexter-Jones scooped up six outfits, including denim shorts and a sheer striped dress), rap group Plastic Little took the stage and true to form let the f-bombs fly.

▲ Milla Jovovich in Diesel.

AMBROSE PHOTO BY TALAYA CENTENO; RONSON PARTY BY STEFANIE KEENAN; FANZHI PARTY BY LAUREN FLEISHMAN