

*The City of Los Angeles
Children's Museum
Los Angeles, California
Caroline Labiner Moser, Trustee
Doyald Young, Designer/Artist
Bette Midler Benefit Show
Universal Amphitheatre*

Bette Midler is an acclaimed comedienne, a serious actress and singer, but her real *shtik* is camp, defined by the *American Heritage Dictionary* as “an affected affection for the artificial, vulgar, or banal.” Bette is particularly fond of the 1930s and '40s variety. This logotype was designed

to face the invitation cover for a Los Angeles Children's Museum benefit.

Bette is a light, two-weight, faux pen script; it is as flamboyant as Midler's persona. The word was written hurriedly in pencil, carefully traced and adjusted, and inked with a felt pen

on tracing paper. The **B**'s top beginning curve stroke is exaggerated, with a subtly curving stem that exceeds the curve's boundaries. The word's upward thrust creates a dynamic movement that is echoed by the elongated ellipses of the **B**. This upward angle repeats on the exaggerated



sweeping crossbar of the *ts*, and angles more steeply with the ebullient finishing stroke of the *e*, which ultimately gives the logotype its image. The weight distribution closely follows formal script, though more freely drawn, with two differently shaped *es*.

The campy silhouette **Midler** caps are bold extended shapes, and though the font is not a great statement of legibility, this particular combination of letters is legible. The style is reminiscent of the fonts of the Parisian designer, A. M. Cassandre. His fonts *Acier Noir*, *Bifur*, *Peignot*,

and *Touraine*, designed in collaboration with the type designer/typefounder Charles Peignot (with the exception of *Peignot*), are mainly illustrations of letters. Because the forms are offbeat and geometric, they are closely associated with the period in which they were designed: Pari-

sian Moderne and Art Deco. The shapes are posterish, without finesse—they appear to be tossed-off. In contrast, Roger Excoffon's *Calypso* is a design tour de force: his initial concept of a shaded piece of material folded to form a capital letter is brilliantly and absolutely resolved.

SOUVERAINES

Acier Noir (Black Steel)—A. M. Cassandre, Deberny & Peignot, 1936

WITCH DENAR

Bifur (Fork)—A. M. Cassandre, Deberny & Peignot, 1929

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890

Peignot demi—A. M. Cassandre, Deberny & Peignot, 1937

Touraine

Touraine bold—A. M. Cassandre and Charles Peignot, Deberny & Peignot, 1947

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
STUVWXYZ

Calypso—Roger Excoffon, Olive, 1958

■
These fonts designed over a 30-year period reflect the extreme. They are not particularly legible, but seldom are they used en masse. Instead, their use denotes a period of time or attitude, as do the Cassandre-style caps of *Midler*'s name.