



PHOTOGRAPH BY BRAD BOWER



ALIVE AND OH-SO- WELL

The Mask and Wig troupe has played through four hot wars and one long, cold one. It's survived 18 Presidents of the United States and 10 heads of the University. It's outlasted the horse and buggy, the 5¢ cigar, chickens in every pot, freshman dinks, and Rowbottoms. It's seen the Russian Revolution and the Sexual Revolution. Once, it even identified the gypsies in our souls.

And now that it's been around for 100 years, the troupe is preparing to celebrate. By evoking its past: The first Mask and Wig production, back in 1888, was called *Lurline*. The centennial show, to be mounted early next month, is called *Lurline, Again!*; it will mark the return of the queen of the naiads of the Rhine River. In between, there've been yearly shows with topical humor and original music (including "Gypsy in My Soul")—and, more often than not, male undergraduates cutting up in women's clothes and wigs.

During the first half of the century, Mask and Wig presented extravagant musicals with full orchestras, sets, and lavish production numbers, which were performed before sold-out houses in gigantic professional theaters. For a time, the club even traveled in its own train. From the 1960s on, the productions became mostly comic revues, performed at the historic clubhouse in downtown Philadelphia.

Mask and Wiggers do their song and jig—and (here) mug—on stage at their clubhouse. From left to right: Robert Langer, '88 C; Bryan Margerum, '88 C; Chuck Virtue, '89 W; Hugh Fogel, '88 W; Chip Butterman, '88 C; and Tom Shanahan, '88 C.