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How to direct a comedy with high school thespians

Rosemary Ann Mallett-Koch

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HOW TO DIRECT A COMEDY WITH HIGH SCHOOL THESPANS

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Education: Secondary Option

by
Rosemary Ann Mallett-Koch
June 1994
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Approved by:

Dr. Alvin Wolfe, First Reader

Margaret Perry, Second Reader

Date
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ABSTRACT

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this project was to offer an effective, creative and pragmatic way for the neophyte director to direct a comedy with high school thespians. Teacher certification standards in theater are not well defined for secondary schools. This project attempted to help this teacher who found themselves faced with the awesome job of directing a high school play, but has limited or little experience in the process. Comedy was selected over drama because it requires more knowledge of technique and a greater understanding of the process to cause a positive end product.

Procedure

An understanding of the value of theater for young people was given as clarification why theater should be taught in the curriculum and how it develops the young person. An examination of what could and could not be offered in this project was set down to use as a guide for what the director could expect. The history and theory of comedy were examined to give the director an understanding of the intricate part comedy plays in the development of civilization. Once the theory of the project was established, the process for putting this project into practice was set down in five sections: selection of the play, casting the play, rehearsal process and technique, technical rehearsal, emotional problems and low G.P.A. The writer combined personal experience from 17 years of directing plays along with material gathered from published works to bring about a booklet to be used as a guide for the neophyte director. A large part of
the project came from the writer examining the personal process experienced while directing a play. The writing down of this process enabled the writer to examine what was successful and to add to this examination new theories which were then applied. Writing down a process that is done from prior training that has become instinct was enlightening. Many new ideas were added to this process and a sharper image of the student as an individual came into view.

The writer was able to give this booklet to an English teacher who was assigned to teach drama and direct the fall play. This teacher epitomizes the person the project was targeted toward. The teacher had little prior experience and was left to invent for herself what to do and how to do it. The booklet gave her a life line of a process to follow that relieved some of the anxiety built into her assignment. The writer was also able to give this booklet to a recent graduate in Theater Arts from California State University, San Bernardino, 1993. The graduate is planning on becoming a high school drama teacher and has requested a copy of the booklet to help guide her through her shows. Also, the writer sat on a panel of 4 high school directors at the 23rd Southern California Educational Theater Association's High School Festival as a six time recipient of outstanding high school plays. The booklet was set out on a table to discover what the response would be from fellow high school drama teachers. Several teachers, especially the relatively new teachers to the field, requested copies of the booklet. This was the entire purpose of this project. To impart to the new teacher the knowledge and experience of the writer.
because the writer knows what they are experiencing and how
difficult this job can be.

**Results**
The results of this project indicate that the process is indeed
more important than the end product, however for the end product
to be successful the process should have strong guide lines.
There are few resource books which examine and teach the process
in a simple and direct way for that neophyte director. There are
many books for the person who has a degree in theater arts.
However, the details of the process of directing a play in a
simple but complete format is not available. There are voids in
this area for the drama teacher who comes to the process with
limited experience.

**Conclusions and Implications**
This writer found that because of the new state requirements for
fine arts, the enrollment of drama students is increasing. The
certified teachers are not matching this increase. The
implication of this is simply that there are drama teachers who
are struggling to produce a play without any guidelines. The
children who are involved in a program of this caliber are not
going the full benefit of the process involved in mounting a
show. The stress place on a teacher who is concerned with the
production and can only see the opening night and doesn’t know
how to get their causes for burn out and negative experience for
both the teacher and student. The experiences with the local
teacher who was producing her first show and didn’t have the
knowledge of how to select a play, run an audition, write a
rehearsal schedule, or run a cue to cue rehearsal, proved to the
writer that this booklet saved her hours of confusion and stress. The process can be well defined and the end product will create a love of theater and a development of self confidence and self esteem for the teacher and students.
CHAPTER I

Rationale

When on his death bed a notable comic actor was asked if dying was hard. His now famous reply was; "Dying is easy comedy is hard." Directing a comedy with high school students is a difficult prospect and involves a great deal of preparation and work. The director must have a full understanding of what goes into the process of a successful comedy before he/she will ever realize this accomplishment. It is not enough to depend on the skill of the playwright and his ability to write comedy; the director must know how to translate this script into a three dimensional and visual work of art.

The young high school actor's concept of comedy does not usually come from the viewing of plays. It most often comes from watching television and seeing films. Young actors are mimics in their early stage of development and it is an artistic process which teaches them how to project their entire body and voice on stage for the audience's enjoyment. Often times the young thespian can not understand why he is not comical on stage. It takes a leap of faith for the theater student to trust in the fact that the voice must be projected to be heard, that proper articulation is required and that the character lives in the entire body. To teach them how to become a comic actor for the stage and not for the screen is a task that requires the teacher to understand fully comic technique for the theater. The director must also have a working knowledge in every aspect of the production.
There must be an understanding of the technical side of the production as well as the creative directing aspects.

The chapters and appendixes in this project are designed to provide the techniques and tools needed for the neophyte director in selecting a play; casting, creating a rehearsal process and technique, technical rehearsals, emotional problems and GPA.

The techniques and information in this manual are to be used as needed and are not intended to be the best (or only) way to produce and direct a comedy with high school thespians.

Statement of Objectives

The objectives of this project are to:

1. Provide ways to select and read a script for one’s particular high school cast, crew and venue.
2. Provide various suggestions as to how to cast a comedy and what to watch for during the casting process.
3. Provide helpful rehearsal techniques for developing the physical actor.
4. Provide rehearsal techniques for developing the young actors voice.
5. Provide various techniques in first and second reading, blocking, scoring, improvisations and character development.
6. Provide information on how to put together a directors bible and student bible, including sample audition sheet, directors casting sheet, call
back, contract, and rehearsal schedule.

(7) Provide suggestions for conducting a concept meeting, cue to cue, and paper tech rehearsal for the crew including samples of cue to cue, scene change, and an entrance and exit running sheet.

(8) Provide various suggestions for dealing with all G.P.A., at risk students, emotional problems, drug abuse and the “prima donna syndrome.”

(9) Provide a glossary of theatrical terminology.

Limitations

The limitations of this project are:

(1) Does not provide information on how to cast or direct a drama.

(2) Does not provide information on how to build sets or paint sets.

(3) Does not provide information on how to raise money through fund raisers, theater angels, or booster clubs.

(4) Does not provide suggestions for publicity, posters, and ticket sales.
CHAPTER II
The Value of Theater

When dramatic activity was first introduced in England's classrooms at the turn of the century it was seen by some educationalists, who were carrying the banner of the 'New Education' movement, to fit rather neatly with that movement's ideals. It seemed to epitomize child-centerness to an extent which drove Mr. Redmond Holmes (1911), a Ministry Inspector and leading figure in progressive education, in his Utopian view of education to recommend:

In Utopia acting is a vital part of the school life of every class and every subject that admits of dramatic treatment is systematically dramatized.

"But this recommendation has to be understood in the context of Holmes' philosophy which saw the function of education as fostering 'the child's whole nature, in other words, his soul" (Boston, 1984, p.7).

Education in the United States is still far from Holmes's ideal but we have moved towards it. In a survey done in 1986, the American Alliance for Theater and Education found thirty states require students to earn a fine arts credit for high school graduation. Educators who have strong beliefs about the importance of theater in the curriculum are still pushing for the concept of drama being in the center of the curriculum, not on the fringe. According to Motter (1970), drama can claim a legitimate place in the curriculum only if it meets the needs of the students.

A well planned and well-taught secondary school drama program
can satisfy the students' need to:

- Obtain skill in the use of oral language;
- Develop a well-adjusted personality;
- Learn to cooperate with others;
- Attain approval
- Develop a capacity for intellectual recreation;
- Develop an appreciation of aesthetic and cultural concepts.

Motter states, many of these needs may be met by other disciplines, however some are so specific they can be obtained only through a drama program. (p.4).

We as theater educators develop whole persons who need the artistic and creative dimensions of intelligence not addressed in the 3 R’s. Schubert (1972) asserts the creative and imaginative dimensions of the minds and hearts of many children are being destroyed in the educational process as presently constructed. (p.32)

When young individuals are developing their personality they learn about the world and its history of people through theater in a way which gives them a feel for their own history and broadens their understanding of the human experience in profound ways. Broadman (1977) proclaims theater art provides the best way to develop insight into relationships, empathy with other living creatures and their ideas and mores, and respect for their right to be what they are. Theater arts lead to enrichment of experience, to stimulation, to explore familiar paths more deeply or to strike out in new directions to a greater understanding of
life. "Any form of genuine art deserves encouragement for its own sake, not merely because it contributes to a practical result in another field" (p.6).

When a young person becomes involved in a theater production they become involved in a process starting with civilized man. It is this process of bringing to the stage the lives of characters that allows the student to learn about their own life. If involved in a production of Romeo and Juliet the student comes to learn that the conflict between teenagers and their parents, young love and gang violence still exist today as it did 400 years ago. They begin to learn about universal themes. When a student is involved in a comedy where the characters do not find anything comical about their situation but the audience does, it empowers them to see the comical side of their own life. Because teenagers have a tendency to be somewhat angst in their mood, they are able to see their own situations in life and find the humor. The ability to laugh and to help others laugh is a wonderful gift shared in the theater.

Involvement in a play teaches skills not found in other disciplines. "Ideally drama serves as a truly democratic model, for it is above all else consensual. It both celebrates social values and challenges them, thereby assisting the process of social change, so necessary to the health of a community" (Watkins, 1981, p.30). When a young student becomes involved in a production he is experiencing life in a pragmatic way difficult to find in other school disciplines. As in life, to be successful in theater, one
needs discipline.

Theater challenges the young person to conduct themselves in a responsible way. They must be on time and be prepared to work. This work involves close contact with other people who rely on them. The understanding that the process is more important than the end product enables them to see how staying on task, being dependable and prepared makes for a polished performance. Time waits for no person and the audience waits for no late entrance. Because the end product is set up for public display, the student must learn how to deal with the anxiety which goes hand in hand with opening night. Nothing builds character more than learning how to deal with their fears and disposition. The student is part of an ensemble where their work must meet the standards set by the director and their success determined by an audience. The students "ability to accept criticism, to get along with others, and to lose [themselves] in the success of class projects and production determines [their] value to that success" (Ommeney & Schanker, 1992, p.4).

It is in this learning situation a young person truly makes discoveries about themselves and their fellow person. The lessons learned in the theater are carried throughout their lifetime, enriched by that experience. To succeed in theater gives students the knowledge that they can be a part of a creative process is played before an audience.

History of Comedy in Theater

Comedy is as old as humankind itself. From the simple primitive people to the present day Neil Simon, comedy has
always been an important part of society. "The cave drawings of the Paleolithic period offer evidence of caricature" (Feibleman, 1962, p. 17), making primitive man an artist with a sense of humor. The term comedy emerges from the Greek, Komas, meaning a festive procession or revelry. The Dionysius festival was attended by followers disguised as half-man, half-goat. The followers worshiped Bacchus, the god of wine, and they enjoyed much drink, laughter, song, and dance accorded to these deities. The mainstay of comedy was the phallic element and the fertility marriage which "has been marked throughout history by an erotic tone, and in its lower manifestations relied openly on the stimulus of sex attraction" (Cornford, 1943, p. 68-9).

Aristophanes was the first master of Old Comedy. Greek tragedy was concerned with the past and the future, Aristophanes concern was with the present social life and its weakness. He concentrated on character types that were given "contemporary names and aimed at contemporary foibles" (Feibleman, 1962, p. 28).

Comedy flourishes during times of unrest and change. The buffoon can get by with statements that would be regarded as treason if seriously uttered. Aristophanes wrote most of his works during the Peloponnesian War fighting against the contradictions and shortcoming of the customs and institutions of his time. Much like our modern day Rowan and Martin, Saturday Night Live, and In Living Color, the comedy holds up a mirror to society. Aristophanes cried out for change in his plays. *In Wasps*, *Clouds*, *Frogs*, and *Birds*
his cry was against the wrong doings of his time. The ability to make fun of war is highlighted in his most famous play, Lysistrata, where the women have a strike against sexual encounters with the men until the war is finished. He cried out against war “until his very cries are stifled by the unhumorous force of the masses struggling to find their new place in the social world” (Feibleman, 1962, p. 31). When change came, Aristophanes lost his popularity. What he had lampooned no longer existed and he was replaced by the new writers.

The New comedy writers from Antiphanes to Menander were more romantic. Comedy, under the hands of Menander, “reached a maturity and perfection in form which made it the model for comedy from that time to the present day...” (Smith, 1930, p. 94). The New Comedy offered a sequence of incidents having a beginning, middle, and end. The plots, carefully constructed intrigues, used the element of chance to resolve the conflict. The comic plot of boy meets girl, boy gets girl, boy loses girl and boy gets girl back is the plot of Dyskilos, the only full play remaining from the work of Menander. This comic plot standardized the format of the comic play. This standardization liberated writers of comedy in numerous ways. “Since the basic Plot provided the beginning and the end, the writer could concentrate on the humor of his plot...secure in the knowledge that the ending was at hand whenever he needed it” (Grote, 1983, p. 19).

The Roman period owed much of its influence to the Greek Comedy. "Indeed, the comedy of the Roman's came so nearly to
resemble the New Comedy of the Greeks that but little of the primitive Latin drama is patent in it" (Smith, 1930, p. 99). The early plays came from the Fescennine verses or songs of native Italian comic poetry, performed by masked dancers. "These songs were Phallic songs which became so scurrilous that a law known as the Twelve Tables was enacted for their restraint" (Smith, 1930, p.100). The early Roman Comedy found the works of Menander to be most congenial to their taste. Roman comedy did not strive towards the discovery of the eternal truths and values as Aristophanes did but showed marks of a derivative civilization. "The gentle but stoic immobility, the refinement and the philosophical ideas are overlooked by Roman imitators who learned from the Greek writers retaining only their heavily-plotted outlines and coarse-grained characters" (Feibleman, 1962, p. 37).

Two other playwrights of the period were Plautus and Terence. Plautus adaptations were full of Roman places and characters but lacked greatness. His comedies gave us a robust look at Roman life and its shortcomings but did not aspire to show how it ought to be. Terence wrote comedies that substituted this crude vigor with a fastidious and correct style. The plays of Plautus and Terence were comedies of intrigue but the plays of Menander were comedies of character. By the last century BC two writers, Horace and Petronius, became popular. Horace based his comedy on small faults and amusing pleasures and Petronius wrote the uproarious Satyricon which satirized the nouveau rich of Rome. During the first century A.D., Comedy fell into open
obscenity and mute performances. The Roman audiences began to
demand that the actors play before them entirely naked. This
decline gave the Christian movement cause for their
disapproval on the licentious and dissolute theaters.

Christian movement took Rome and with it the theater.
There was no comedy in the Christian cause. The age of
darkness was upon Europe and theater could not survive. The
religious leader comes to affirm and not to deny. He holds
each thing sacred for us what it is, for what is positive
about it and not for what it comes to replace.
Consequently he in not in a position to view events
humorously (Feibleman, 1962, p.40)

Great movements which require an oath of allegiance have
little room for comedy. They are in to much of a hurry to
become established and powerful to take time out to laugh at
themselves. It wasn't until the establishment of the church
and its own form of theater through religious services that
theater was again able to surface. During this time the
wandering minstrels performed on streets and became outcast
in society. These minstrels gave way for the court jester and
in some cases they performed before the bishops. The minstrel
had a hard road full of hardships which often ending in
poverty and hopelessness. His songs were sharp criticism
against bad rules and bad clergy. Around the twelfth century
the Trouvere, who were educated nobles and merchants, replaced
the minstrels. The Trouvere benefited by the invention of
printing thus given way for the minstrel to be a reciter of
their songs.
Theater survived during the dark ages in the form of the village feast. Performed without the approval of the church, they were so popular throughout the continental Europe that comedy survived from the Greeks to the Renaissance. The Mummers' Play was the most interesting form of comedy in the Middle Ages. This medieval folk festival was "taken over for the church purposes, and in the form of the miracle play presented the legend of St. George and the Dragon" (Feibleman, 1962, p. 45). Medieval comedy was at constant disapproval of the church who wish to suppress all gaiety and criticism. Dante's great poem, the Divine Comedy, is the apotheosis of the middle ages. It is fitting that his comic poem, which satirized the ages has come down to us through the ages. From Dante to Chaucer, who opened the period of the Renaissance, this desire to maintain an ability to laugh at our society was maintained. Dante influenced Chaucer however, he was "convinced of the goodness of this world, the definite product of a new turn of interest" (Feilbeman, 1962, p.50). Despite the desire for the church to suppress theater, this new turn of interest helped theater to burst forth and brought mankind one of its greatest periods.

The Renaissance refers to the rebirth of humankind. The desire was to examine the old faith and to reexamine life and death. The Medieval man concern was life after death but the Renaissance man's concern was life. His influence came from the classic period. "Renaissance man sensed that in classic ages the emphasis had been upon living rather than preparation for death. He began to rediscover, through books
and ruins, the arts and sciences that classic man had cultivated to improve his lot" (Whiting, 1969, p. 38).

In Italy the Commedia dell' Arte begin to blossom. It was a theater group popular to the common persons and very much involved with life and its foibles. Modeled after the Roman comedy only more vulgar, it usually dealt with a young man and his affections, mistaken identity, and misrepresentation. There were no scripts to follow just well defined characters. The players used a scenario that allowed them to improvise the dialogue. They traveled from town to town seeking out local gossip as their material. They would seek out the gossip mongers and lightly vail their characters with this gossip. In every small town there was always someone being cuckold, an old fool, the love sick young man, and the pretty young girl. Whiting (1969) points out that these "scenarios were quite trivial, and ordinarily featured some variation of cuckoldry or the eternal triangle" (p.39). Beyond the Commedia dell' Arte, Italy offered little in the way of theater during this period.

The truly dramatic output of comedy came from England. Even without Shakespeare "London from about 1580 to 1642 contributed more great plays than any other city during a comparable period before or since..." (Whiting, 1969, p. 40). Renaissance England was a time of great commerce, activity and excitement. The Renaissance person concern was with life and what it had to offer. Feilbeman (1962) notes that the Renaissance person went "from a preoccupation with life after death which the Church had taught, the Renaissance saw the
beginning of a new preoccupation: the problem of time" (p. 51). The concern was with living life to the fullest and filling time with that life. Smith (1930) has divided the comedy of this time into three forms: "The comedy of "humours" of Ben Jonson, the comedy of romantic humor of Shakespeare, and the comedy of manners of Congreve and Wycherley" (p.136).

Farce was enjoyed by both the English and the French. The English taste at the beginning of the Renaissance was for the "breath, vigor and realism of farce" (Smith, 1930, p. 137). There was a feeling of sheer play in the comedies of farce which prevailed in both countries. From the English play, *Ralph Roister Doister* by Vadall (1554) to Moliere's *Tartuffe* (1664) the farce endured. When looking at the English Renaissance one must begin with a headmaster of Eton, Nicholas Vadall, who in writing *Ralph Roister Doister* utilized English types over Latin. Around the same period a rousing farce-comedy of uncertain authorship was performed. This farce-comedy, *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, "Substituted English characters and an English setting for the Latin originals" (Whiting, 1969, p.41)

Shakespeare's predecessors were college graduates and he was a man of the people who heard the call of the players at an early age. Shakespeare worked as an actor and manager who ran his own theater company. He was the greatest writer who ever lived and yet he never attempted to have his own plays published. He does not even mention his greatest contribution to humankind in his last will, yet he mentioned his "second
best bed." Shakespeare was a country boy who did not take his London fame seriously. Perhaps it was this love for the theater and his fellow man that enabled him to write his work. His comedies were of Romance. He utilized many characters whose main concern was their love interest. His lovers, entangled with seeking out their one true love, were many times being hamstrung by unrequited love. No matter if it was Hermia looking for her Lysander or Viola who pines for her prince; the love sustained through the humor and the plot was the main stay of the plays. "The comedy of Shakespeare has, generally, no central figure such as we find in his tragedy; instead we have a number of men and women whose misadventures are of even greater interest to us than their characters" (Smith, 1930, p. 142). His plays often times leave behind areas of "familiar reality" (Smith, 1930), and heads for plots which are free in their imagination (p. 142). His sense of humor brought from the audience a feeling of sympathy for his characters. The English audience loved the plots of mistaken identities, twins being separated at birth, women disguised as men, women falling in love with women disguised as men, and unrequited love. The audience, swept along with these plots, knew that the couples would find their one true love and all would receive their just deserts. Shakespeare proved his genius by giving us great comic characters in his dramas. His most famous comic character, Falstaff, comes to us in *Henry IV*, Part I & II. Queen Elizabeth so loved the character of Falstaff that she requested Shakespeare to write a play with this character as
the center figure. *The Merry Wives of Windsor* was the result of this request and brings Falstaff back to life. His use of comic relief in his great tragedies brought us the grave diggers in *Hamlet* and the gate keeper in *Macbeth*. Shakespeare knew when to give the audience these comic characters thereby provided comic relief when the audience most needed it.

Shakespeare developed his style of humor from *Love's Labors Lost* to *Twelfth Night*. We become more affect by the character's situation and their human side as Shakespeare grows as a writer.

Ben Jonson (1572-1637) followed Shakespeare with his comedies. Where Shakespeare developed the plot in romantic intrigue, Jonson developed characters. He believed in the classic theory of comedy as a vice of the character and disapproved of the illogical framework of the romantic comedies. Jonson's realistic comedy "aimed at securing laughter or recognition; (and) the romantic comedy, laughter of surprise" (Smith, 1930, p. 138). Jonson was famous for developing the "comedy of humours." Whiting (1969) clarifies that the comedy of humours concept "is an outgrowth of medieval physiology which held that four elements, black bile, yellow bile, phlegm, and blood, according to their balance and proportion, determined man's disposition" (p.47). Jonson's theory was that if all four of the humors were in balance than a person would no longer be humorous. Jonson did not concentrate on one character in his plays but on a group of characters that "blunder against each other to arouse our mirth" (Smith, 1930, p.139). His device was to find the
unbalance quality and exaggerate this trait. This caused his characters to lacked depth or conflict. Smith (1930) points out that this approach to characterization "led him to an oversimplification of his character" (p.138). Jonson's greatest plays were Volpone; and The Fox. He wrote this play not just as a comedy piece but as a vehicle to show the viciousness of the human race. His main value to the English comedy was the stress on character in the comedy and he elevated comedy from its previous lowly position to an ethical art-form.

In terms of great plays being written during this time Thomas Dekker's(1599) The Shoemakers Holiday is added to this list. This play along with Shakespeare's The Merry Wives of Windsor gives us a look into the common men of the period. "Plays continued to be written until until 1642, but few bearing a date later than 1630 are of any importance" (Whiting, 1969, p.50) The Puritan church under the leadership of Cromwell closed the theaters in England in 1642.

France was going through its own Renaissance and the French farce was their greatest contribution. The face began with the medieval period and developed through the Renaissance. The favorite form of farce during the medieval times was "beatings, robbery, and adultery" (Smith, 1930, p.112). These aspects of the Old French farce gave French comedy its foundation. The Farce was a favorite with the common man because it was filled with action first and dialogues second. Also, the characters spoke as the common
man and they were without any moral or social value. Smith (1930) compared farce to comedy by saying that "farce is a departure from everyday reality to a lower plane; comedy is a departure from everyday reality to a higher. Farce excludes the operation of the moral consciousness; comedy requires that consciousness. Farce is mechanical; true comedy is spiritual" (p.115). It is this lack of the moral consciousness that creates the ability to laugh at physical injury or mental anguish. It was during the age of Louis XIV that Moliere (1622-1673), France's greatest comic writer, developed a comedy of character for the new form of farce. The treatment of character was his own. His characters were not just the buffoon or the cuckold. His characters had depth and moral conscience. His two most famous plays Tartuffe and Le Misanthrope's main characters are tragic figures with a comic mask. When Moliere first presented Tartuffe (1664) it portrayed such a stinging attack on religious hypocrites that even the King could not protect it from public criticism. This play was withdrawn from public presentation and even today some critics see this play as a serious drama. Moliere's plays "reveals his philosophy that extremes are bad, that wisdom and goodness are to be found in the neighborhood of the golden mean, that honest acceptance of the facts and follies of life is the only sane course a man can follow if he would escape being ridiculous" (Whiting, 1969, p.57).

Moliere's plots were simple and without imagination. It was his interest in his characters and what made them tick
that placed him as Shakespeare's contemporary. "Moliere deals with what men are at heart; what their externals are does not essentially interest him" (Smith, 1930, p.123). His characters were universal in that they spoke to humanity en masse. His characters are well recognized today for what they are as they were in the French court. The characters are of human nature that are well defined in their personal desires over the well fair of their fellow man. He places his characters in a setting of contrast. The characters go against the socially accepted and their antisocial aspirations are exposed by the other characters in the play. Moliere used his comedy as a weapon to unmask society for what it is. He had very explicit ideals about all aspects of life, from marriage to morality and he addressed these beliefs with satire and wit. Moliere gave laughter that was without inhibitions. He allowed the people to look at themselves and laugh long and loud. "The laughter of Moliere, with its firm physical basis and its sturdy common sense, acts as a catharsis upon our over absorption in self" (Smith, 1930, p.134). Moliere was even able to laugh at himself. When he discovered that he was close to dying, he wrote The Imaginary Invalid (1673) where he played the lead role of a sick old man. It is one of his most entertaining and popular plays. During the fourth performance of his production, Moliere collapsed on stage and died four hours later.

Theater did not experience another rebirth until the Eighteen century with the comedy of manners. The English, tired of the quality of life under Cromwell and the Puritans,
invited Charles II, known as the "Merry Monarch," to return from France and reclaim the throne. With Charles II came the new nobility from France who brought with them there love of the French farce. This rebirth of the English theater was only for the Courts pleasure. The educated playwrights were men to whom the common man did not exist. William Wycherley (1640-1716) and William Congreve (1670-1729), developed the comedy of manners. This comedy of manners or restoration comedy is high comedy that deals with the mind and the ability to utilize dialogue as rapiers of wit. Shakespeare dealt with plot and Moliere concentrated on character while this comedy of manners appealed to the head. "The audience must be on its toes in order to catch the clever lines, word play, and obscure allusions" (Ommenney & Schanker, 1932, p.179). This witty comedy of manners was a battle of the sexes. Wycherley started this trend with his production of The Country Wife. Congreve's Love for Love and The Way of the World have great comic pacing and timing that set the standards for later comedies of manner. The poet John Gay (1685-1732) gave us the biting satire in The Beggars Opera. The play was modernized by Bertolt Brecht in 1928 as The Threepenny Opera with music by Kurt Weill. Both plays are frequently performed for todays audiences. Restoration comedy combined the romantic and the realistic. "The plot and action derive from the romantic comedy of intrigue; the setting and character, from the realistic comedy of manners" (Smith, 1930, p.152). These comedies showed the immoral traits of people against a moral background. The characters try to
conform to the surface of social life while they promote their own personal desires. Often times these desires were sexual. The wit of this dialogue of sexual ideas in speech enabled the audience to laugh at their own desires in a way which they were not accustomed. Restoration comedy was at its peak with Congreve and Wycherley. It was said that when Congreve left the stage, comedy left it with him. "His greatest play, *The Way of the World*, appeared at the exact turn of the century, 1700, and clearly marks a climax in high comedy" (Whiting, 1930, p. 59).

The Eighteenth Century English comedy ushered in a new genre, sentimental comedy. Two outstanding playwrights, Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1751-1816) wrote comedies dealing with the social life of the Eighteenth Century wealthy, and Oliver Goldsmith (1728-1774) who was the prominent leader of satirical comedy. Sheridan's *School for Scandal* and *The Rivals* are still performed today around the world. His wonderful Mrs. Malaprop, who is the greatest misuser of words, gave the English language the word malapropism. His *School for Scandal* is clearly an English masterpiece. "It is a comedy of manners, a satire on the follies of the fashionable social circle of Sheridan's day" (Whiting, 1969, p. 62).

Goldsmith was Irish and by nature was emotional and sentimental however, by theory and intellect he created satirical dialogue of wit and charm. His play *She Stoops to Conquer* is "one of the most popular English comedies between Shakespeare and Shaw, enjoying a long and successful history
both with the reading public and on the stage" (Whiting, 1930, p.62).

England gave to the world two new comic forms: the ballad opera and the burlesque. Farce was still enjoyed during the period but only as short pieces used as "curtain raisers" or "after-pieces."

The nineteenth Century brought to the theater the melodrama. The melodrama is not given the place of honor as other form of plays but it suited the purpose for the times. The fight for personal freedom had been won and laughter is louder and greater during times of deep criticism. Great periods of comedy are times of revolution and with Queen Victoria sitting on the throne matters of decorum and propriety set the stage for the period known as the Victorian Age. The conservative middle class audience went to the theater to escape from everyday life and to get lost in the world of make-believe. A world of romantic life, of life not as it is but as it should be. The melodrama could be compared to our modern day soap operas. Life and death situations are simple in their plots and the hero and villain are one dimensional characters. It was a form of theater that quickly took root in America. The greatest melodrama was Harriet Beecher Stowe's famous novel, Uncle Tom's Cabin. The adaptation by George L. Aiken first appeared in 1852 and played well into the twentieth century. "It was played as rousing abolitionist propaganda, as a tear-jerker, a comedy, a musical, an animal show, a scenic spectacle, and a burlesque" (Whiting, 1930, p.72).
In England the comedy was not coming from playwrights but from poets and novelist. These poets and novelists ignored the theater entirely. Byron, Tennyson, and Browning wrote for the reading public only. These plays were titled "closet dramas, because they were not intended for performance.

Oscar Wilde, the nineteenth century greatest wit, "pokes fun at society, love, morality, and the preposterous stock situations of the contemporary stage (Whiting, 1969, p. 79). His play, The Importance of Being Earnest, shines in his great use of dialogue and wit.

Russia, the theater of serious drama, gave the stage a wonderful playwright in Anton Chekhov. Chekhov considered himself as much of a comedian as a serious writer. His one-act plays, The Marriage Proposal and The Boor allowed the audience to see the silly side of their serious society. The truly greatest Russian comedy of this period was The Inspector General, by Nikolai Gogol (1809-1852). This comedy that showed the corruption of those in power was a return to Aristophanes style of lashing out against corruption and folly. This play could have been censored as was Moliere's Tartuffe if the Czar had not seen it and approved. France once again saw farce as their comic muse. Georges Feydeau's, A Flea in Her Ear, is a madcap masterpiece that requires great skill in the art of farce to produce this fast paced, hilariously funny sex comedy. The most popular farce of this period is Brandon Thomas's Charley's Aunt (1892). This play retain the true style of farce with mistaken identities,
multiple doors, quick pace and a raucous ending. This play is for entertainment only and has no redeeming factors.

America, young and eager in its new fledging theater, gave the world excellent examples in comedy. As early as 1845 Anna Cora Mowatt gave us a comic gem in Fashion, which made fun of social people who so desire to be like their European counterparts. A new form of comedy called "bedroom farces" became the favorite of the people. The titles sounded naughty, Up in Mable's Room, Getting Gertie's Garter, and Ladies Night in a Turkish Bath, but were quite harmless.

The playwright to bridge the gap from the 19th to the 20th century was the Irish-Englishman George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950). He has been compared to Aristophanes for his originality and Shakespeare for his brilliance. Shaw began as a written in a multitude of professions. He worked as a composer of articles, a poet, novelist and a writer of advertisements. Influenced by Henrick Ibsen he was "convinced that the stage offered him a lively forum for his ideas on social and political reform" (Wilson, 1973, p.192). Shaw enjoyed to define his plays through a character or raisonner who was his mouthpiece. His brilliance of wit and cleverness taught the world that a play of ideas could be written with a sense of fun and humor. His plays Candida (1897), Caesar and Cleopatra (1899), Man and Superman (1903), Major Barbara (1905), Pygmalion (1912) explore the human element and frailty. It was his ability to develop a conflict of ideas from Major Barbara to Man and Superman that he has no peers. "No one has explore life's problems with greater sharpness.
and penetration: his ideas alone are enough to keep one alert
and satisfied even when he stops the show in order to bombard
his audience with them" (Whiting, 1969, p.94). His play
Pygmalion a comedy of manners was produced at His Majesty's
Theater in 1912. Preceding this success, eleven of his plays
were staged at the Court Theater between 1904 and 1907. These
successes "had something serious to say about contemporary
social evils, provided that it was said with wit and humor
conveyed by engaging characters within a strong story-
line" (Wickham, 1992, p.238). During his long career, Shaw
criticize the forbidden subjects that were at the very core
of the Victorian age. "With the death of Shaw in 1950 the
world lost one of its greatest thinkers, greatest
playwrights, and greatest humanitarians" (Whiting, 1969,
p.97).

The turn of the century brought us an outpouring of
plays around the world. "From 1900 to 1950 more plays were
published than during all preceding centuries combined"
(Whiting, 1969, p.69). The international sharing of plays
from London to Paris, New York and Moscow enabled a play to
be produced in another country within two years of opening.
The comic writers of this time began with Noel Coward in
England and George Kaufman in America. Coward wrote what was
known as sophisticated farce. He concentrated on the upper
class and their nonsense. Blithe Spirit is his most famous
play with its sparkling dialogue, ghosts, and two wives for
one husband. The comedy of this period reflected the middle
class and their attempt to keep a since about themselves when
so much around them was going awry. Broadway under the direction of Kaufman and George Abbot was "bringing Broadway's theatrical know-how and comic ingenuity to its polished perfection" (Whiting, 1969, p. 83). Kaufman worked with other playwrights. "Kaufman supplying the zany situations and uproarious lines and his collaborator providing the structure and discipline" (Wilson, 1982, p. 264). His first most successful partner was Marc Connelly. They collaborated on *Dulcy* and *Beggar on Horseback*. These plays established Kaufman as the man most desired as a partner. His collaboration with Moss Hart was his greatest work. *Once In A Lifetime*, *You Can't Take It With You* and *The Man Who Came To Dinner* not only scored on Broadway put have become nonprofessional favorites. "For two decades he provided the funniest lines in the funniest plays of the period and counter-balanced the growing seriousness and anxiety of many other playwrights" (Wilson, 1982, p. 264). His greatest achievement was a musical comedy, *Of Thee I Sing*, in which he worked with four authors.

George Abbot was known primarily as a director however his farce, *Three Man On A Horseback*, was extremely successful. In Britian Anthony Merriott's *No Sex Please, We're British* keep the style of farce alive and help to establish the popularity of dry English humor.

America gave the world of theater a wealth in comedy. It also gave to the world a new form of comedy, the musical comedy. The musical comedy is truly the American contribution to theater. *Of Thee I Sing* won the Pulitzer Prize as best
American play of 1931-32, the first musical to win this honor. This play brought together the great Gershwin brothers George Kaufman and Morrie Ryskind. The plot deals with a young man becoming president, young romantic love and the love of fatherhood.

The theater in the first part of this century went through many changes. With the invention of the silent film, radio, the Little Theater movement and the establishment of drama departments in our universities gave the world "a new generation of actors, actresses and writers ready to meet the challenges presented to them by a society in a state of shock' (Wickham, 1992, p.239).

The second half of this century has gone through the turbulent 60's, The political 70's the greedy 80's and now the gay 90's. How has theater survived during these last forty years? One way is through the growth of theater festivals through out America and Europe. These venues offer new playwrights a place to find their voices. The famous Edinburgh Festival brings international theater companies together for the month of August. The festival, first established in 1946 now produces more shows in their non-professional fringe events than in the professional program. Also, the theater went back to the people in the streets. Beginning with the 60's, the new idea of theater flourished in Off Broadway and Off-Off Broadway. In the 1978-79 season the recorded number of productions were 111 compared to 54 on Broadway (Wilson, 1982, p.304). The social message was all important.
During the 1960's America produced one of its greatest comic playwrights in Neil Simon. Simon wrote during a time when Author Miller and Tennessee Williams were the Kings of Broadway. He astonished Broadway by "his amazing gift for turning out one comedy hit after another in rapid succession" (Wilson, 1982, p.310) Simon began his career by writing gags for Jackie Gleason, Sid Caesar, and Phil Silvers. He honed his talent working for Phil Silvers's T.V. shows writing thirty shows in thirty-nine weeks. His more recent plays have shown him as a writer of comedey-dramas. His biographical trilogies of Brighten Beach Memoirs, Biloxi Blues and Broadway Bound shows his true genius to allow comedy to grow out of believable characters and their lives. His Pulitzer Prize winning play in 1992, Lost in Yonkers is a drama that keenly knows when to relieve the tension through comedy.

A different type of comic writer of the period was Tom Stoppard. In his play Travesties (1975), Stoppard was quoted as saying he was "trying to contrive the perfect marriage between the play of ideas and farce or perhaps even high comedy" (Charney, 1978, p.187). Stoppard is know for his ability to mix and match styles and periods in his plays. His play Rosencratz and Guildenstern Are Dead is a different type of travesties where he brings in Hamlet and the Court of Denmark into his play as secondary characters. This play has been well received all over the world and was made into an art film with Robin Williams starring as the Actor.

In England Allen Ayckbourn gave his comedies a strong story line, well defined character and a laugh on every page.
His ability in play writing was to take the everyday person and read their daily concerns, hopes, desires and frustrations. In *Absurd Person Singular* (1974) his characters tug at our heart strings in their desires to be accepted while surrounded in their own inabilities and foibles. Like Simon, he matured in the 80's and brought fourth plays with a serious note that used comedy to make it go down easier. "At the end of this decade the measure of his mastery of theatrical craftsmanship is now to be gauged by his ability to accommodate these bleak observations about the state of Western civilization within the conventional requirements of an evening's entertainment" (Wickman, 1992, p.265).

In the opinion of this writer, Michael Frayn is a new voice in comedy. *His Clouds*, (1976) *Noises Off*, (1982), and *Benefactors* (1984) have established him as the new Simon or Ayckbourn. Time will determine if this is true.

Comedy has always survived in one form or another. The transition from this century to the next shall be stimulating. The world needs laughter now more than at any other time. It is encouraging to know that it has flourished during hard times and gives mankind that needed laughter from the giggle to the guffaw.

The Theory of Comedy

"The world is a comedy to those that think, a tragedy to those that feel". Horace Walpole

What is comedy? What makes us laugh? Do we all laugh at the same things? Is it healthy for us? Sigmund Freud compared laughter to an orgasm, a muscle spasm, that reaches a climax
and then subsides. Maurice Charney (1978) of Rutgers University clarifies this by explaining that while crying is "inspirational (drawing in the breath) rather than - expirational and explosive... In laughing, we are trying to get rid of some overwhelming and irresistible stimulus" (p.151). Psychologists believe laughter to be therapeutic. Laughter is good for the soul. During times of social conflicts the comedy becomes the popular form of entertainment. The soul purpose is to escape and enjoy laughter.

Comedy deals with certain aspects to be found in variations depending on the writer and the period in which they wrote. The universal comic devices used to establish the groundwork for comic theory is: illusion, social satire, dreams and fantasy, physical comedy, mistaken identities, character and plot.

In his book, COMEDY HIGH AND LOW, Maurice Charney asserts that comedy deals in illusions. The audience must have a willing suspension of disbelief and a sense of wit to enjoy comedy. The great silent comedy masters understood people need to laugh in the face of danger. The plots often dealt with danger and illusion. Harold Lloyd, who was a master at comedy, places his character in impossible situations for the comic exhilaration of danger. In his movie SAFETY LAST, he dangles from the hour-hand clock far above the street. His face conveys no fear he approaches this situation. He knows he is invulnerable and shall over come this minor obstacle. Buster Keaton was our greatest
master at comic danger. He himself was a trained acrobat and equilibrist. His ability to make the impossible look simple and to maintain his stone face created laughter unequaled. In his famous movie THE LOVE NEST, he is able to stand on a ladder perpendicular to the ship and survey the ocean with ease. This feat would be impossible for most comedians. His ability to create an illusion and his total lack of fear gives his audience great freedom. The comic hero never fell prey to the material things he scorned. "Lightness, agility, dexterity, the cunning of intelligence, the subtlety of spirit, the ingenuity and resourcefulness of wit—these are the qualities that ultimately triumph" (Charney, 1978, p. 147).

"Mack Sennett declared as a working principle: 'The joke of life is the fall of dignity.' "(Merchant, 1972, p. 8).

Mack Sennett knew that his Keystone cops could evoke laughter simple because he understood man's desire to see the dignified made common. His infamous chase scenes played havoc with anyone and everyone that stood in their way. Laurel and Hardy and the Marx Brothers mastered this form of comedy through making fun of the social graces. They must always have the last word and it must top what has just been said. Shakespeare's Falstaff understood this wit. In his military scene where he sees the dead Sir Walter Blunt he discourses on the sanity of playing dead so that he may live. He has the last say about death and it is a witty piece of work. The grave diggers in Hamlet play a game of one-upmanship with Hamlet. He is not able to maintain their level of wit as they receive the last laugh and dislodge Hamlet from his notable
social position. The great playwright of social satire, Oscar Wilde, showed us in The Importance of Being Earnest what social graces gone awry can do to a group of pampered people. George Bernard Shaw knew how to turn the laughter against the audience when he made them the target of his social satire. The works of Noel Coward, Tom Stoppard, Peter Shaffer and Alan Ayckbourn have brought the love of a good satire into the later part of this century.

Shakespeare brought us great plays of dreams and fantasy with his A Midsummer Nights Dream and The Tempest. "Fantasy deals with unreal characters in dreams and scenes imaginary in time and place" (Ommanney & Schanker, 1982, p.181) His wonderful character of Puck brings out the child in all of us. The buffoon Bottom shows us not as we wish to be but as mere mortals. In the twentieth century, Charlie Chaplin brought us dreams and fantasies during a time when they were desperately needed. He could melt our hearts with his sad little tramp and give it back in one piece with his comic ingenuity. In THE GOLD RUSH, his shoe eating episode played to an audience who perhaps went without dinner to see this movie. The dream sequence with the girl of his fancy finding him charming and witty while dancing with potatoes stuck to his fork has become a part of our collective image of Chaplin. He was the outcast whom everyone loves. Charlie Chaplin said "Comedy is the most serious study in the world" (Cole & Chinoy, 1962, p.523). When Chaplin studied a part he studied the everyday person. He would go out into the streets and observe people around him until he saw something of human
interest. After he watched them pass through this episode in their life, Chaplin would find the humor in the situation and develop it. The original situation would not be considered comic to the one it was occurring to in real life. This was his special genius, to take our everyday ordeals, find the humor and allow us to heal through laughter.

Physical comedy has been with the theater since the Commedia del Arte. We love to see the prat fall or the unexpected door opening into someone's nose. The greatest use of physical comedy comes with farce. Wilson (1976) states farce has no intellectual pretensions, but have excessive plot complications which result in ridiculous situations and strong physical humor, such as pratfalls or horseplay (190). The more unrealistic the situation, the greater the potential is for farce. The young man in Charley's Aunt trying to pass himself off as a wealthy woman of charm, the crazy Sycamore family in You Can't Take It With You who encourage the family members to do what ever they please, whenever they please, and the two sweet old ladies in Arsenic and Old Lace who feel it is their responsibility to poison lonely elderly gentlemen by putting arsenic in their elderberry wine are unrealistic situations that evoke laughter from the audience. In all of these plays the element of physical comedy is combined with two other elements termed, chase scenes and screen scenes. The chase scenes goes in and out of doors, through gardens, up and down stairs and around furniture. The screen scenes often have people hiding behind doors, screens, inside closets, behind furniture, inside cupboards and even behind
other people. Two great farces, A Flea In Her Ear and more recently Noises Off combine all of these elements and in doing so leave the audience weak from laughter.

The use of mistaken identity was a popular device of Shakespeare and many of his plays, for example, A Comedy Of Errors, capitalized on this device. The audience members are in on the joke from the beginning and rewarded with great comic moments on stage as the plot thickens and the victims become more outraged.

The comedy of character is derived from men and women who take extreme positions, make fools of themselves, or contradict themselves all of which is a basic ingredient of Italy's Commedia dell' arte. Moliere is a master at comedy of character. Wilson (1976) notes that in Moliere's The Doctor In Spite Of Himself and The Would Be Gentleman the characters see themselves or pretends to be something other than what he actually is (187).

Plot complication is another way in which the ludicrous manifests itself, including coincidences and the popular mistaken identity. Shakespeare, Sheridan, and Feydeau used this form to shape their wonderful plays of farce. In Sheridan's The School For Scandal, the main character in the play is thought to be upstanding and his brother a reprobate. However, during the plot, which uses a screen scene, the true morale fiber of the two brothers is revealed.

The set up and delivery of a line and comic timing is of such importance that it will be address in the chapter on second reading and scoring. Without comic timing the comedy
is lost and with out the set up the audience is not let in on the joke. When these two things happen the director is faced with a tragedy not a comedy.

Comedy is devised of many forms and fashions. Depending upon the degree of exaggeration, a comedy can feature strong physical humor or rely more on verbal wit. It can leave us physical exhausted from laughing, as in a farce or mentally enlighten as with satire.
CHAPTER III

Selecting a Play

Selecting a play is perhaps akin to selecting a marriage partner. You need to take your time and find a script you will be comfortable with during a long and involved rehearsal process. To quote critic Martin Esslin: "The first principle I tell directors is, 'Choose the right play.' In other words, to be a good judge of plays is the major qualification of the director" (O'Neill & Boretz, 1983, p.73).

What constitutes the right play for you as a high school director? What should you do before making your final selection? How do you begin? Begin by reading the play at least three times before you say 'I do' to this production. The first time you read the play you should read it for enjoyment. Read it from the view point of an audience member in your particular venue. Don't give one thought to whom you will cast or how you will design your set, just read it for pure entertainment. The second time you read the play, read it for character study. Look how each character fits into the story line. View each character separately and then the cast as an ensemble. During this reading you may begin to question whom you have from your pool of talent who could be cast in this show. Do not make any firm commitments to this first consideration. Always let yourself be open for wonderful surprises that can take place with young people and their uncanny ability to mature over night. The third reading is for the technical requirements. Are you capable of mounting this production in your venue without having to modify it to
the point of destroying the play. Also, at this time ask
yourself if it is of educational value. Is it a timely piece?
Does it have a universal theme? Is it appropriate for high
school students? You may have said yes to all other question
but if your last question of appropriateness is a no, then
don't do the play. If you have selected a play that may cause
some controversy make sure that you have the courage of your
convictions for your selection. Some administrators fear
public responses, therefore, make absolute sure the play is
valid and has literary merit.

First, what are the merits of this play? This should be
your main consideration in selecting a play for educational
theater. Aristotle observed six major elements by which we
can evaluate a play: (1) plot or story, (2) characters, (3)
theme, (4) language, (5) spectacle, and (6) melody or music.
(Sievers, 1965, p.17)

Selecting a comedy for high school students require the
first two elements are well defined. When evaluating a play
for its plot Martin Esslin says:

One of the things that shows up in a good script is
that the same type of action, pace, volume,
tonalitty must never go on for too long. The basic
principle of dramatic structure is that it is
happening in time, and its beats, their
subsections, must always be working by contrast.
If you have a slow section, it must be followed by
a fast section, if you have a loud section, by a
soft one. Study where the climactic points are, so
that you are working up towards climaxes. Very often one should evaluate a play not from beginning to end, but from the climactic scene, working downward and upward from it. (O'Neill & Boretz, 1983, p.77).

The high school director must also look at the characters in the play. "Are the characters interesting as people-colorful, contrasting, memorable, vital - in short, human?" (Sievers, 1965, p.18).

When looking for interesting characters look for traits like vulnerability and uniqueness. The vulnerable character endears audiences by totally exposing the character to attack. "In comedy, vulnerability comes from naiveté or vanity and is connected to physical manifestations" (O'Neill & Boretz, 1983, p.79). In considering characters it is important to look at the distribution of roles. Will your play depend on one very strong actor or will the parts be evenly distributed. It is wiser to seek out plays that allow for more of an ensemble cast to carry the play equally than to look at a play that is built around one main character. "In educational theater, look for plays with challenging roles for many young adults, for scripts that don't depend totally upon one or two stellar performances." (O'Neill & Boretz, 1983, p.79-80). When selecting a comedy remember, inexperienced actors work best in plays with physical action.

In selecting your play look closely at the theme. The theme is the idea behind the author's reason for writing the play. Stanislavsky put it best when he said, "Never forget
that what keeps the theater alive is not the brilliant lights, nor the splendor of sets and costumes, nor the effectiveness of the mise en scenes, but the idea of the playwright" (Gorchakov, 1950, p.390). In defining the difference between understanding the theme between comedy and farce Robert Cohen (1974) clarified the difference:

A comedy is a humorous play with an important theme, in which characters confront themselves and each other with amusing results. Comedy can be intense, passionate, insightful, and moving, but its organization of the dramatic experience avoids sustained pity or terror and elicits more laughter than shock. A farce is a humorous play-and it had better be wildly humorous-on a trivial theme, usually one that is thoroughly familiar to theater goers. (p. 26)

The theme in a comedy is often found in the title of the play. Unlike drama, the theme may not be any more than a reason for organized chaos. In the play You Can't Take It With You by Kaufman and Hart, the theme is an important message about the value of family love and enjoying life. This is a comedy with an important theme. The message in Rumors by Neil Simon is simple. It is a farce dealing with not believing anything you hear and only half of what you see.

State the theme of the play in a crystallized sentence or word. From this idea base your through line of action. It is important the students have a full understanding of the theme and how their character contributes.
The language of the play is more than just the spoken word. Language in comedy is witty and profound, but language in farce is fast paced and comical. Stanislavsky believed all art is an attempt to become music. When reading the play, read it with your ears. Listen for its “tone, imagery, cadence, and articulation, as well as its use of literary forms and figures. A play’s diction is a creation of both the playwright and the spoken voice of the actor” (O’Neill & Boretz, 1987, p.83).

Aristotle based the concept of music and spectacle on the fact which Greek plays were chanted or sung. Nevertheless, modern plays are still conceived in these terms. The sound of a play beyond dialogue is vital to comedy. The sound of pure silence before the catastrophe is at times greater than the actual sound. In farce the sounds are often off stage and lead ones’ imagination on a merry chase. The selection of music for the production is not to be taken lightly. The proper music can set up the mood of the play. In Thornton Wildes The Skin Of Our Teeth he places in the production notes his desire to open the show with THE WILLIAM TELL OVERTURE. This selection truly sets up the through line for the play. The selection of the sound cue required in the script are just as important. When does thunder become amusing? How long should the flash of lighting last? How loud does the door squeak? Is the off stage crash of a short duration, long duration or does it stop only to start back up again? Extend the throught of music to include all sounds including human sounds and orchestrate these
sounds into the through line of action.

The spectacle becomes a visual feast with comedy. The colors and shapes delight the audience's eyes as does the music their ears. The costumes can speak books about the character and the props can give subtle information. Pay attention to the detail in the spectacle. Do not allow items on the set that have been placed there randomly without forethought. Remember, in comedy and farce the audio and visual impact must delight the audience and not distract them. Again, pay attention to detail.

Select the play you want to do, determine what it is saying and conceptualize it in detail. From this point you are ready to begin the process.
CHAPTER IV
Casting the Play

After selecting your play, the next most important job is casting. When casting a play always remember ‘if you cast well 50% of the job is done, if you cast poorly the hell has just begun’. Therefore, take your time! Never rush into the casting process. If you need to take two weeks to properly cast the show, then take two weeks.

Advertising for the Auditions

It is important to make the auditions known by the student body. Post when and where the auditions will take place and advertise in the student bulletin. Assign your officers to make posters and place around campus a week before auditions. This will help to stimulate curiosity and enthusiasm for the auditions. It is difficult to combat apathy with young students. If they believe it is a fun and cool thing to be involved in; then they will come out for the auditions. Encourage your drama students to invite their friends to come out. Also, go out on campus and talk to the students yourself. Many a drama student became involved because a teacher stopped them in the hall and told them they thought they would be great in the play. Send out a flyer to your English teachers which gives information about the play and characters needed. It is important to work closely with your fellow teachers.

Types of Auditions

There are two types of auditions, the cold reading and the prepared piece. The cold reading does not necessarily
need to be cold for the student actors. In educational theater it is better to leave cold readings for a classroom project where the students really get the chance of learning how to audition without the threat of casting. Make the scripts available for the actors to read at least one week before your audition. Let them check out the script on a 24 hour basis. This is a job you can give to a drama club officer. Make sure if they do not return the script within the time allowed that they have severe consequences. You may disallow them from auditioning one day for each day they keep the script. The reason for this becomes clear as you find students who get a script and immediately want total ownership.

The second is a prepared reading. You select a few important monologues in the play and make copies of these available to the actors. With this method, they only need to turn in the monologue on the day they audition. They are to come prepared with the lines memorized and a character developed. This type of audition works well with a play such as The Canterbury Tales or The Skin Of Your Teeth. This is a faster way to cast your show, however you may need them to read a role they did not audition for and this is your right as a director.

Audition Week

A director needs to remain calm and level headed. High school students are in need of a director who is not as nervous as they themselves are. Welcome them into the theater. Make sure that the atmosphere is one of
professionalism and non-intimidating. Give them a little pep talk before you begin. Explain the process. Answer any questions they may have. Give them the audition sheet when they first come in. Always be friendly and approachable. Do not let your program become elitist. Keep in mind your ultimate desire is to turn as many young people on to theater as possible. You also need enough students for your program to build it to five full classes of theater and not just one or two.

Audition and Casting

When you set up your casting schedule you’ll need to determine how many days for this particular show. If you can do it in one week, then utilize the first three days for your open calls and the last two days for call backs. Do not cast the show on Friday if you need the weekend to think it over or if you feel you need another day of auditioning. The students will want to know immediately whom you are casting, but don’t let them control the situation. There is always the option of calling the cast on Sunday. Give an exact time you will be making the calls and stick to it. This process gives those who did not get cast, time to deal with their disappointment. The most important thing to keep in mind is that you are dealing with very young and vulnerable egos. There will always be those who will not be cast. Take time out before final casting to address this situation. Explain to them a director must look at the entire show and must cast for the part not for the student.

If you have a Drama Club and it has officers, require
they spend one assigned day assisting you in the casting process. This way you're left with the more important details. Before the auditions, you need to go through the script and select scenes to use. Place copies of these scenes in folders labeled with the characters' names and page number. These folders are used during the audition to help your assigned officers stay organized. When a group leaves the stage, they should immediately report to an officer and return the script. In using this method you can keep the pandemonium to a minimum.

On the first day set up a table with sign up sheets for each character. The sheets should have a description of the individual character. Allow the students to sign up for a maximum of three roles. Do not let them sign up for all the roles; you will not get through the casting process. After everyone has signed up, have your assistants place the students in audition groups by checking off their names as they are assigned. It helps to have clip boards, paper and pencil available for the officers. Advise them to place the novice with the more experienced students. Allow them to set up approximately 4-5 groups and then give them time to practice. When the audition begins, have them call in the groups' one at a time. Keep the amount of people in the theater at a minimum and demand silence. After the first three groups have auditioned, have your officers set up more groups. This way you have time to consider what you have seen on stage and take notes about the individual actors. Keep a director's sheet consisting of all the characters' names.
Leave room beneath the names for you to insert the actors' name as they audition. You can then place a number score next to their name or simply circle a particular student which you liked. Some directors cross names off too quickly and do not give the student a chance to try again. Remember, you are not casting a Broadway show and their training also consists of auditioning techniques. Try to work personally with each group and each student. Take your time. Speak to them and give them direction. It is not fair to expect the student to know what you want unless you tell them. Do not hope someone will come along and do just what you want them to do. Always remember you’re working with young people. It behooves your program to think of courtesy calls. Have a student audition who you know you can’t use but give them the opportunity to get on stage and try their wings.

The three most important things on stage are voice, voice and voice. During the audition make sure to take some time to listen to your actors' vocal ability. Turn your back on the stage and close your eyes to hear the students' articulation and projection. You know the script and the lines but you may not be aware the information is not getting across to the audience. Listen for proper articulation and projection. Once you have determined these two qualities, listen for the sound of the group as interesting characters. Remember, the term audience comes from the root word audio. The audience will tune out if they can not hear or understand what the actor is saying.

After making your first cut, set up your groups before
the next audition day. If you do this the audition begins to run itself. Advise the students to bring in a copy of their most recent report card. You may staple this copy to their audition sheet. This is a perfect time to assign an assistant or two from the group who has not been called back. Their responsibility is to call the groups onto the stage and keep the audition running smoothly. You may wish to hold individual interviews with each student. During the interview, ask them what part they would want if they could have any part. Some times the student has a better understanding of how they could fit into the production than the director. Go over their G.P.A. and attendance with them. Keep these auditions professional. Allow them to experience an audition where all actors are treated equally without any favoritism.

You may wish to try some improvisations with the group to see how well they work together. Set up situations from actual scenes in the script or make up scenes. Advise the students they are not required to know the line just the basic premise. This technique allows them to open up more and try their comic characters. It also allows the director the opportunity to watch and see who plays well off each other. The ability to play off each other is vital in comedy. Tell them to listen to each other and give and take in the improvisation. If you have a student who is good but does not play off the other actors and is always trying to take the focus then they will be difficult to work with. When you are finished auditioning and you are sure everyone has
had their equal opportunity; then place the students on stage and begin to look at your possible combinations. Call the students down to the curtain line and match them up with possible cast members. You do not want to wait until the first rehearsal to see them all on stage together for the first time. Remember, how a person looks with other people can be a determining factor. When finished, you may choose to cast the show immediately or send the students home. You need to make this decision, not the students.

When you post your cast list it is wise to have found out before casting what position the student would be interested in if they are not cast. On the casting information sheet leave room for this question. It helps the student if they still see their name on the list in some capacity. Strive for a theater company where everyone is involved in all aspects of the production. If you stress this point then students will come to appreciate that there is more to a production than acting. Try to rotate your actors around into different positions. Some of the most important learning takes place when your lead actor from the previous play becomes the crew member for this play. Some students will wish to talk to you about why they were not cast. Let them talk. Listen to what they have to say and don't compare them to the actor who was cast. They don't need comparison; they need to be heard. Try to give them something positive to walk away with.

Always keep in mind the process in educational theater is more important than the end product. The student is more
valuable than the production. With these thoughts in mind, the process will build a polished product in the end.
CHAPTER V

Blocking

Blocking for the neophyte director is the job that must be done but is dreaded much like the long awaited dentist appointment. The director who lacks blocking techniques will find the rehearsal process for less than enjoyable. As O’Neil and Boretz (1987) states in their book on directing, “There are two aspects to directing. One is the capacity for vision of the experience and the second is the craft for achieving it” (pg 1). It is this craft for mastering that vision that will be discussed in this chapter.

There are directors who believe actors should create their blocking from their sense of motivation. Such a concept will only lead to disaster with young high school students. Young people generally have great difficulty seeing beyond their own self and how they look on stage. Asking them to see the entire composition of the stage and to have awareness of the audience is inviting disaster. Young high school students need a director who comes in on the first day of blocking rehearsal with the action set in the director's bible and a strong vision of what is desired. This is especially true with comedy where composition and picturization are so important for the desired effect. Sievers (1965) breaks blocking into three basic functions. The first is to compose effective stage pictures. The second is to maintain the actors facial visibility in reference to the audience when he has lines or important reactions, and lastly to move the actor naturally from one phase to another. (pg. 99-100)
It is important for the director to have a basic understanding of the stage terminology used in blocking. The director needs to communicate to the actors without performing for the actor. The terminology used in this guide is for proscenium stage, because it is the most common type of staging in the high school environment. The stage area's has three planes and nine areas. The planes are UPSTAGE (US), CENTER STAGE (CS) AND DOWNSTAGE (DS). The Upstage is the farthest from the audience. When you move upstage you are moving away from your audience. Young actors have a tendency to move towards the audience when told to go upstage. It may help them to know the term upstage comes from the 20th century, when stages were raked and therefore were higher in the back than the front. To upstage a fellow actor means that you have moved upstage and are pulling focus away from them. Center Stage is the plane between Upstage and Downstage, and Downstage is the area nearest to the audience. The downstage foot is the foot nearer the audience. As the actor stands onstage and faces the audience the nine stage areas beginning in the Upstage plane are: UPSTAGE RIGHT (UR) UPSTAGE CENTER (UC) UPSTAGE LEFT (UL). The Center Stage areas are: CENTER STAGE RIGHT (CSR) CENTER STAGE (CS) CENTER STAGE LEFT (CSL). The strongest areas are: DOWNSTAGE RIGHT (DSR) DOWNSTAGE CENTER (DSC) AND DOWNSTAGE LEFT (DSL).

There are nine different body positions that the director will use to position his actors on stage. The strongest positions are full front (FF), 1/4 right (1/4R) and 1/4 left (1/4L). The next positions are profile right (PR) and
profile left (PL), 3/4 right (3/4R) and 3/4 left (3/4L), and full back (FB). Remember, these work in accordance with the actors right and left not the audience's. When asking actors to move the term used is "cross" (X). To cross downstage right (abbreviated as XDSR) means to move to the indicated area. You may wish for them to cross above a person or abject on the upstage side or below a person or object on the downstage side. There are two types of crosses, the straight cross and the curved cross. The straight cross shows determination and strength. Utilize this cross when crossing from one area to the other except if such a move were to block another actor on stage. For example, if you are standing DSC and you wish to move USR you should use a curved cross. The curved cross allows the actor to approach the area by opening up and moving into a shared position with his fellow actor. The curved cross shows confusion and indecision. Melodrama utilizes this cross where everyone tends to sweep onto the stage and create a graceful look. To open up means the actors must turn more of their body towards the audience. Young actors have a strong tendency to stand in a profile position when speaking with another actor on stage. This position closes them up to the audience. They need to learn to stay at a 1/4 right or left (keeping their downstage foot back!) to allow for a shared position. When an actor "has focus" he has the attention of the other actors. When an actor does something to distract from the main focus he is "stealing focus".

The director must remember that audience only looks at
one area at a time and the job of the director is to tell the audience where to look. The term for this is composition. The understanding of composition is necessary for a successful show.

Composition is the director's placement of the actors on stage in ways that enables the audience to focus. The key to composition is center of attention or emphasis. There are five types of emphasis: single, shared, secondary, multiple and offstage. With single emphasis the audience focuses on one actor or group at a time. The director may accomplish this by having the other actors turn away from the main focus so they are of less prominence. Shared emphasis allows the audience to watch two actors or two groups of actors at the same time while their eyes dart easily back and forth from one to another. One group or actor is dominant and the other is secondary. Use this technique when the secondary actor is being talked about and the audience wishes to see the reaction. In Noises Off by Michael Fraye, a scene in Act One has all but one member of the cast (Brook) worried about where Selsdon, an old actor who is known to drink, could have gone off to. The secondary character of Brook remains in this non-dominant position until she see Seldson walking up the aisle of the theater. She then takes dominate position until it is passed to Selsdon when he arrives on stage. This secondary emphasis adds variety and interest but must not detract from the primary emphasis. Use of the Multiple emphasis works in crowd scenes such as the opening of The Skin of Our Teeth by Thornton Wilder. There are moments where
there is no center of attention but a variety of individual groups move about with approximate equal interest. Again in Noises Off during Act Two where it feels like a three ring circus on stage, the director must lead the audience from one group to the next without confusion. The last form of emphasis is offstage focus. In Allen Ayckbourn's Absurd Person Singular the First and Second Act have Christmas parties occurring off-stage during the on stage action. Many times the audience is left looking at a bare stage while entire scenes are played off stage and therefore it is in the audience's collective conscious.

The next important factor for the director is knowing how to use composition for the desired effect. The director can accomplish this through utilizing varying levels, contrasts, balances, lines, and triangles. This also involves the action, stage designs, and lighting.

Levels are vital in the design of your set. This is especially important with a large cast. The levels can be simple with a few steps or platforms; more complex stages have several levels to work with. It is best to have several levels when working with a large cast. In Jabberwock intricate levels in the play are part of a three story house with an attic. However in The Skin of Our Teeth the director needs to discover where simple levels may be added to enhance the scenes. It is difficult to have a good composition of a large crowd scene without levels. If focus is needed and you have no levels, use the actors to create levels by utilizing various body positions. The actor may stand tall or stoop
over. The actor may kneel on one leg or squat on both knees, sit on the floor or even lie down. With the use of a simple chair, he may sit in the chair or on the arm, sit on the back, stand on the chair or just put one foot on the chair.

If equality is prevalent in all other aspect of the stage picture, the actor will then take focus. If all actors on stage are sitting the one standing will take focus and visa versa. If all actors are standing still the one moving will take focus and visa versa. If all the actors are in the same body position then the one who is not will stand out. In *In Absurd Person Singular* Act Two the suicidal wife is merely sitting at the table staring out front in a daze while everyone else is bustling about keeping themselves occupied. She maintains focus through her contrast to the movement on stage.

There are two types of balance, symmetrical and asymmetrical. Symmetrical balance is static and lacks a feeling of movement on stage. Asymmetrical balance can be explained by using the image of a child's teeter-totter. If one person sits on the end of the teeter-totter and the other sits closer to the center you have asymmetrical balance. The actor who moves closes to the center of the stage creates an asymmetrical balance. If you have three people on stage and one is standing close to the center line he would balance the two standing stage right. Asymmetrical balance is helpful when a comic moment is being set up.

Isolation is a form of composition that works well with comedy because it allows the audience to focus on exactly the
right person at the right time. In isolation, the character who is separated from the cast will be most emphatic. In Kaufman and Hart’s *You Can't Take It With You* isolation is used to set up the comic bit involving the drunken actress who has passed out on the couch, stage right. The rest of the family and guest are sitting center stage around the table. When she awakes and begins to sing, the cast looks in her direction passing over focus as she begins singing as she crosses the stage to plant a kiss on the startled Mr. Kirby. This comic bit sets the tone for the rest of the act and strongly establishes her character.

Generally, straight lines of action are not visually comical unless there is strong emphasis on the actor's body language. A line may be straight, broken, curved or may take the shape of an S. You may use a line to give focus to one actor by having all other actors focus on the one. Try to avoid a straight horizontal line across the stage. Such lines are awkward and stiff looking. If the picture requires the actors to stand together, utilize their body positions to add variety.

The most often utilized type of composition is the triangle. Be careful not to over use the triangle for it may quickly become monotonous. In addition, avoid the equilateral triangle because it will seem prearranged. When there are three people on the stage, the one at the apex will have focus. This apex can be at any point of the triangle. The other two actors must adjust themselves to give the emphasis. Irregular stage spacing of figures by counter-focus within
the triangle, with a variety of levels may also be an asset
to successful blocking. An actor who is sitting in the apex
position will take total focus until one of the other actors
moves away from the triangle causing the apex to change. When
using the triangle, the apex is where the audience will
focus. Triangles work well in comedy, because the pacing
changes the picture quickly.

The stage design may also help the focus. The arch way
of a door, a staircase, a massive piece of furniture are all
used for comic effects as well as focal effects. In _You Can't
Take It With You_ during the Second Act when Mr. & Mrs.Kirby
enters, the comic effect is greater if they stop to survey
this scene while standing under the arch, than if they come
into the room. It frames their reactions and gives focus to
their surprise.

The final aspect of composition is stage lighting. Stage
lighting alone can be comical and draw focus. In Neil Simon’s
_God's Favorite_ we find the young son daring God to show his
power. He demands this while standing outside on the porch.
God shows his power through strikes of thunder, lighting and
smoke. The comic effect through lighting is even greater than
the actor's lines.

Picturization tells the story through the actor's body
language on stage and his character's relationship which
evolves from the action. In _You Can't Take It With You_,
during Act Two when the Sycamores and Kirbys are playing the
game of word suggestion, Mr.Kirby sits at one end of the
table puffed out like a proud child because his associations
to the given words happened to be clever. Mrs. Kirby sits at the opposite end in Grandpa's chair. Her body language shows her desire to remove herself from the scene. When it is time for her words to be read back and her response to the suggested word 'sex' is 'wall street' - the reaction of the family at the table goes from Mrs. Kirby to Mr. Kirby like a tennis game. When she says she thought of that because Mr. Kirby is always talking about wall street even 'when they are in the middle of...', the family members at the table react through body language; the three family members sitting on the couch stage right react with the 'see no evil, hear no evil, and speak no evil picturization'.

It helps a new director to spend time watching good comedy and paying attention to the setting up of good comic pictures. Think in terms of a tennis serve. One must throw the ball high into the air before slamming it across the net. The director should set up the picture before the comic effect to get the proper response from the audience. If the director fails to do so, the audience may not get the comic bit and the laugh is lost.

The picturization at the end of the scene is important to comedy. The last image the audience sees before the black out may tell an entire story. In Noises Off, the last image at the end of Act Two, where the director has just sat on a cactus with the entire cast watching from different levels and stage positions, is a wonderful tag to the end of the scene. In Absurd Person Singular in Act Three the tag is four characters dancing around in a circle with various kitchen
articles being carried or worn on their person. The look that the couples give to each other as the scene blacks out tells where the story would go if this were not the last act.

The movement of the character will help determine frame of mind. A sad comic character will move slowly with bent shoulders and multiple sighs and the happy go lucky character will move with short, quick movements to evoke a bright mood.

In comedy, it is crucial that the comic moment be established with a visual picture that stands out a moment before the 'slam'. Do this through movement and picturization. In movement it is timing that can set up the correct response. There are three possibilities for timing movement. Movement before the line will set up the line; movement after the line will set up the move; and movement on the line will give strength to both line and movement. For example, in Noises Off the director must give an insecure actor the motivation for leaving the stage. The actor playing the director gives several answers of the technical reason why he must be off stage, however the actor wants an emotional reason. The director patiently walks across the stage without saying a word, gets into the actor's face and then delivers the line. This move sets up the comedy of the line which is a hasty fabrication of the characters personal history. The actor accepts this and later in the play we can see he has added this direction to his exit. In Shakespeare's A Mid-Summer Nights Dream, when Puck comes out to announce that his mistress has fallen in love with a monster, saying the line first sets up the comic movement of
his impersonation of the monster. In the first act of *God's Favorite* when Sydney sees the chair he loves, he moves and says the line at the same time. This gives emphasis to the lines and to his cross to the chair. Movement can greatly enrich comedy and farce. Inventive directors and their cast can find many ways to use movement for such comic touches.

In blocking a play there are some techniques that the neophyte director may find useful. It is important to have a ground plan and a set design before beginning blocking. The ideal situation for the director is to have a model of the set built to scale enabling a three dimensional visualization. Building your own set can be simple. Most play books come with a ground plan of the set design. With this as a guide and some tag board, cut out a model to match the ground plan with a scale of 1" equal 1'. Most flats should be 4'x8' or 4'x10'. With these dimensions in mind, devise a model to scale. When this is completed, begin blocking by using anything from toy models to spice bottles to indicate the actors movement on stage.

To put together a bible Xerox off each page of dialogue, cut and paste onto a sheet of white paper with the script page centered. Utilize the area around the page for blocking notes. Each page of dialogue needs a page of ground plan facing it. It works best to have the dialogue on the right side and the ground plan on the left. Some pages of dialogue may have so much movement that it may be necessary to have two pages of ground plan. (See examples at end of chapter.)

With the beat changes already indicated in the script
and with an understanding of the direction of the character, now start to block the movement. Remember, in comedy one may have several beat changes on one page. In a farce there will be constant beat changes on one page. Knowing where these beat changes are constitutes the actor's movement on stage. Before you begin, place the director's bible and the model in front of you. Move the pieces around until the correct composition and picturization are found for this beat. With a pencil, transfer this pattern onto the ground plan. Keep working this way until you have the basis blocking for the entire show. When beginning blocking rehearsal, the director may wish to change some of the blocking. It is less stressful on the director to arrive at the first blocking rehearsal with a preblocking idea on paper then to try to figure it out with his young actors. If something doesn't work, say so, and begin again. Remember to change it in your bible or have your student director make the changes for you as they occur. The student actors will be willing to try new blocking with the director and to give suggestions when they feel secure in what the director is doing. After having set the blocking, the director may wish to color code the characters to their blocking. Using colored pencils go back through the script and color the blocking. After having blocked several shows, the director may become confident enough to begin preblocking with colored pencils. The colors help the assistant director and the actors see their movement on stage if they need to check it later during rehearsals.

The director needs only pay attention to the greater
picture when first blocking. Do not be concerned about detail. It is best to utilize the first blocking rehearsals to give the actors their movement from one area or piece of furniture to other without trying to give them detailed stage business. Keep the blocking and stage business separate. Blocking deals with movement from one place to the other and stage business deals with what the character personally does before, after and during this movement. It is too much to ask of a young actor to remember detailed stage business during blocking rehearsals. Paint the large picture first and then go back and put in the details. The details can come in during the pacing rehearsal. When the book is out of their hands the actor is able to use his entire body to convey his character's personality.

Schedule blocking rehearsal for 10 to 15 pages of script a day. Rehearse by slowly giving them their blocking and having them indicate it in their bibles. When necessary, show the young actor what is desired in the picture. Take the time at this point to correct any bad stage picture habits. For example, correct them if the actors are closing themselves off from the audience, moving awkwardly across the stage, or standing with their downstage foot forward. Correct them on these things now because if waiting until later they will have built these bad habits into their blocking. It will become more difficult to get them to play to the audience and open up if you wait until a later rehearsal. Remember, the young actor is what he rehearses. When finished, take a break and then come back and run what has been blocked. During this
run through, the director will see if it is what they want and if it works. Remember with blocking to break it down step by step and then put it all together at the end. The students will be surprised to see it run so smoothly and this will give them confidence. During these blocking rehearsals, be satisfied if they move at the right time and stay open to the audience. The clever and brilliant bits of characterization will come at a latter rehearsal. Avoid trying to do too much at the beginning. The director and students will burn out and the play will suffer. You have six to eight weeks to accomplish a final product. Process is more important than the final product and if the process is done with care the end product will be successful.

First Read Through

After the show has been cast and before the blocking rehearsals begin it is necessary to have a read through. Keep in mind that this may be the first time for many of your students and they need to know what to expect. Post the date and time of the read through at the same time you post the cast list. Inform the students to bring with them the following items: pencil, pen, highlighter, note pad, nutritional food and water. Nutrition is necessary for young people. It is difficult to maintain concentration during a three hour session on an empty stomach. Notify the students that this read through is for cast and crew. This is a mandatory rehearsal. Do not waver on this requirement. It is important to establish a professional attitude from the start. The director will need to have the following items
ready: rehearsal schedule, scripts, contracts, set design or model, copies of the floor plan, food and water. Again, the reason for the food and water is for the students. The best way to start off a long rehearsal schedule where you will need energy is by setting an example of taking care of the body first. Have food and water that first day for all members of cast and crew. Although you have advised them to bring their own, some students will not or can not.

This first read through is called "being at the table". Assign your assistant director to set up chairs around a table for everyone. If possible, place a blackboard at the top of the table. Advise the students to sit next to the person that they have the most contact with during the show. After the students have settled into their chairs and are enjoying their refreshments hand out the assigned scripts, contracts and rehearsal schedule. Go around the circle and have each student introduce themselves and give their characters' name or their crew job. Then discuss the contract and point out how important it is to the production. Next, cover the rehearsal schedule week by week. Advise the students to highlight the days which they are required to attend. Make sure that they understand the meanings of each term. Have the students highlight their lines. Tell them not to pay any attention to the blocking directions in the script. Those directions come from the first production not from this production. Also, hand out to the students' copies of the floor plan for their own bible. After all of this business has been taken care of and all the questions are
answered it is time to share with the cast and crew the concept of the show. If you have a model it will be easy for the cast to understand what your idea of the final production will be. Explain to them that this is a concept and things may change during the rehearsal schedule. Encourage them to add to the concept any ideas they may have for the production. Maintain a through line in your vision so it does not meander. If you do not have a model or a rendering, use the black board and give them a vision of the production. Take your time with this section of the meeting. Make sure the crew feels they are an important part of this process. This is a time for the cast and crew to view their separate but equal jobs with pride.

Next step is to explain to the students what they should do during the read through. As the cast members are reading their script they should write down the page number and line of any mention of their characters personal traits by the playwright, other cast member, or by their own character. Advise them that this first read through should be for enjoyment and without any preconceived ideas about their characters. They will be required to read the script two more times to properly analyze the scripts through line of action and their own characters' spine or motivation. The director or the assistant director should read the information in the italics. The crew members take notes on the entrances and exits, scene changes, quick costume changes, prop movement, light cues and sound cues.

It is important to give the students a break at the end
of each act. A five minute break will do a great deal towards keeping the students involved. Before they go home give them their homework assignment for the next day. They are to have written out all of the information about their character given in the script. This information comes from what they say about themselves, what other characters say about them and the playwrights description. Remind them to bring all of the same items back with them the next day. The crew will not be present for this second reading because they should be starting on the building of the set.

End the session by standing in a circle and hold hands. Say a few words to the students. Ask them to close their eyes and send a squeeze around the circle starting with the director. This is a pleasant way to end the day with high school students.

Second Read Through and Scoring

"It is by now a commonplace to say that American actors do not spend enough time working on voice. Anyone who has heard European actors knows that their voices are more pleasing, flexible and useful as a means of expression. Whether he likes it or not, the director in the American educational theater will find he is a voice coach, among his many other duties"

This quote is almost thirty years old, and yet it still applies today. The term Audience comes from the root word audio. In Shakespeare’s day the theater goers would say that they were going to hear a play not see a play. The three most important things on stage are Voice, Voice, and Voice. When
teaching high school students that there is a great
difference between street speech and stage speech the
director must begin with vocal training. Ideally, this
training would take place in the acting class where voice and
diction is taught as part of the curriculum. Ommanney and
Schanker (1982), devotes a chapter to voice and diction. This
chapter would be an excellent reference for the director who
may be unsure of this technique. During the rehearsal
process, after you have spent time doing table work on the
first reading and you have blocked the show, it is time to go
back to the table for more work. This second reading is
specifically needed for the proper voice control and line
interpretation needed in playing comedy. It is a tedious
process, however it must not be avoided because pacing in a
comedy is within the language of the script.

The meeting must begin by going over the importance of
knowing the script word for word and line perfect without
paraphrasing. Young actors will feel that if they are close
enough to the line is satisfactory. That is a dangerous
fallacy. The writer who has written a comedy has spent
precious time deciding what the best method is of setting up
and delivering the line or the joke. To change this is highly
unprofessional and damaging to the production. This second
reading could last a week and will require breaks every half
hour. It is a process where the actor uses his brain in
conjunction with his vocal tools and makes notes in his
bible, better known as scoring.

This second reading should formally begin by having a
vocal warm up. It is important to ingrain in the young actors mind the importance of being physically warmed up before going on stage. If the vocal warm up is skipped, than the entire reason for this second reading loses its importance. The actor must know proper articulation, resonation, pronunciation, and projection. Articulation requires the use of his articulators that are the Tongue, Jaw, Teeth, Lips and Cheeks. The Percussive sounds which require the use of these articulators are: P, B, T, D, K, G. The P, T, G, are aspirant sounds which need air in order to explode from the mouth. A simple exercise to do is: Pa, Ba, Ta, Da, and Ka, Ga, repeated over and over until it is done quickly. Once mastered, go forward and backward with the sounds as follows: Pa, Ba, Ta, Da, and Ka, Ga; Ta, Da, Pa, Ba. Once an actor has mastered this exercise it should become mandatory before every run through and performance. It is also vital that the director remind the student that the final consonants not be lost and words not slurred together. The sound of Can't you becomes “can't chew" if the articulation is weak. The resonators are made up of the Hard and Soft Palate, Throat, Nose, and Sinuses. The resonating sounds are: M, N, and NG. Another important sound on stage is the aspirant WH and H. An emphasis must be made to the student that there is a difference on stage between such sound alike words as: Which and witch, Where and wear, Whine and wine. If an actor is not sure of the correct pronunciation of a word, they should go to the dictionary and find out. This exercise also offers an aid in better understanding of a word. An actor should not
say something on stage that he doesn't fully understand. Projection is vital for a young actor. The need for this will be determined by the size of the theater. If working in a large theater, time needs to be spent on training in projection.

After covering this material with the actors, give them a copy of the Scoring Sheet.

**SCORING**

**KEY WORDS:** The word which emphasizes the meaning of a phrase. Circle all key words in your sentence.

**POINTING:** A rise or fall in pitch, volume, or a slowing down in tempo.

**PAUSE:** There is the pause, the long pause, and the great pause. When using the pause, the actor should remember the pause will hold as long as the situation and the actor can justify it. That it will point the line or movement which come immediately after it. It implies suspense and should be preceded by a rising inflection. Mark in script with two vertical lines placed between the words where the pause occurs.

**INFLECTIONS:** Upper inflections give comedy and downward gives drama. When doing a comedy, most inflections will go up at the end of a sentence. Mark with a small arrow going up or down.

**CIRCUMFLEX:** Rising and falling within the word. Mark with a inverted V.

**INVERTED CIRCUMFLEX:** Falling and rising within the word:
Mark with a V.

**ELONGATE WORD(S):** Elongate a word or words to give it emphases. Mark with an arrow under word(s).

**SHORTEN:** Used to emphasis a different tempo in the speech. Mark with an inverted arrow under word(s).

The table work and second reading may now begin. The students will sit around a table with pencil and script and read their lines as they feel they should be said. They should approach this reading as if it were readers theater and not hold back because they are sitting down and not on their feet. As they read their line, the director makes notes in his bible as to where they are using their scoring. Pay close attention to key words. When the actor is finished with a line, either go on, or make the necessary corrections. If you go on, have them mark in their script the scoring you have from your bible. Young actors will change their interpretation regularly unless it is marked in their script. If they need correction, then work slowly with them, having them try several different ways to say their lines. Once you both settled on what works, mark it in you bible, while they mark in theirs. This process is time consuming, however it works, and without it the production suffers in the mouth of inexperienced actors. Comedy requires good comic timing which comes from understanding how to deliver the lines. The lines need to be given to the audience with the correct scoring, articulation, projection and pronunciation.

When this process is completed they need to transfer it to the stage. Spend one day at the table and the next day on
stage applying what you did from the previous day. Sit with
you back to the actors and listen to their sound. Do they
articulate well? Can you hear them at all times? Are they
applying the scoring? The director should not follow along in
the bible, it will reduce the ability to really hear the
actors. The director has to monitor the sound of his show
just as he monitors the blocking.

Some common problems with young actors is lack of
articulation, particularly final consonants. If an actor is
not articulating have them lock their jaw and speak without
the use of this articulator. It is a difficult to do; having
to make oneself be understood, and generally the student
actor detest doing this. Regardless of the complaints, have
them do this until they can be understood. Once this has been
accomplished, ask them to speak without a locked jaw. The
sound that will come out of their mouth will astound them and
create a heightened confidence. If projection is the actor’s
downfall, have them lie on the floor, close their eyes and
relax. Once relaxed, the actor speaks the lines while the
director moves further and further away from the actor. Each
time the director moves away, he asks the actor to speak up
and match the director’s volume. When the appropriate volume
is reached, let the rehearsal continue with the actor lying on
the stage floor. After having maintained the proper volume
for a good five to ten minutes, let the actor join in the
movement taking place on stage. This simple exercise offers a
physical understanding of projection.

During the following rehearsals, periodically check the
actors articulation and voice by sitting with back to stage and eyes closed. The pacing in a comedy depends on proper control of the language. If the pacing begins to sound to slow, fast, or awkward, check the lines. If the laughs are not coming when they should, if the jokes are not being understood, lines and scoring must be checked. If the actor is paraphrasing, he will damage the pacing and if he is off in his scoring he will wreak havoc on the comic timing.

Director's Bible

The director's bible is the director's best friend. Once having selected the play, begin the Bible, for it shall be the reference book for the entire 8 week preparation of the show. The director's bible contains all information important to the play. There are several approaches to setting up a bible. Each director develops their own method of setting up a bible. Regardless of what method is selected, it must be kept simple but complete. The bible may be divided into three sections.

Section I

1. Rehearsal schedule.
2. Play contracts.
3. Completed Audition Information sheets.
4. Cast’s names and phone numbers.
5. Crew’s names and phone numbers.
6. Adult volunteer’s names and phone numbers.

Section II

1. The script with the set design facing each page.
2. All blocking
3. All entrances and exits, Lights, Sound, and Special Effects cues marked and color coded in the margin of the script page.
4. A running order list of all entrances and exits with page number. (Compiled from #3)
5. Costume plot and costume changes.
6. Property plot and character’s hand props with running order of stage use.
7. A copy of the scene change movement backstage.
8. Make-up needs and special needs wigs, blood, etc.

Section III

1. Financial sheet for cost of show. Keep this in a large envelope where the receipts and bills may be placed for quick reference.
2. Publicity calendar with time lines for posters, programs and photos.
3. Miscellaneous information.

With this bible the director will have everything needed at his finger tips and will not spend time looking for an item. The stage manager and assistant director should both have prompt books. This prompt book (or bible) would contain the technical information indicated in their own play script. The students should make their own prompt book and use the director's bible to obtain needed information. It is advised in high school theater that the assistant director use his prompt book to call all technical cues during the show, while the stage manager utilizes his to supervise the back stage.
action. These prompt books should be completed before the first run through. It is best to begin the first run through with the sensation of a organized work in progress rather than a haphazard production that will fall into place as opening night approaches. This organized method is well worth the time and effort. It relieves the director of the stress of answering questions addressed by eager students who wanted the results yesterday and further gives them a sense of security.

It is also advisable to have a large master calendar in the theater or classroom which has the information of all times lines and production dates. This calendar should have the due dates of all press releases, programs and poster to printer, tickets ordered, meetings, and rehearsals. This master calendar would allow any student to stay on target with the process and see a time line laid out for them.
CHAPTER VI

Rehearsal Techniques

The director has now come to the point where the actors have analysed their lines, know their blocking and are ready to get on stage and begin performing. During these next few weeks, the director will want to do some rehearsal exercises to help develop pacing, characterization through movement and listening techniques. All of these must be a part of a comedy in order for it not to become flat from a repetition of just doing run through with notes. This rehearsal chapter will offer techniques that have proved successful for writer. They are offered in order of implementation.

Tennis

Tennis was developed by Allan Ayckbourn at the Oxford summer workshop in England in 1985. This technique is used for pacing. The director may start with the modified version developed by the writer and then move on to the way Mr. Ayckbourn taught this technique.

This exercise is schedule for the week after all lines are due. If the students are weak on lines, this exercise will go slower, however the young actors will know their lines at the end of this process. All the director needs for this exercise is a tennis ball, one chair for each actor, the directors bible and patience. The first part of this exercise may be done in the rehearsal hall and not on stage. The students place their chairs in a circle and are advised that they sit in the chair when their character is off stage and
stand when they are on stage. The actor who has the lines holds the ball in his hands. As they finish the line, they toss the ball to the actor with the next line. They continue to do this for the entire play. If their line comes next, they are not allowed to signal to the actor with the ball. The actor must know who precedes and who follows his lines. The ball becomes the focus and pacing for the lines. The director follows along in the script and if the student incorrectly says his lines, he must start over until he gets the line correct. The director takes it one page at a time. If the students make a mistake at the beginning of the page then they must go back to the top of the page and start over. If they make their mistake in the second half of the page, they must start over half way down the page. When the dialogue is a page of quick one liners and the students have their lines perfect and know who gets the ball next, the pacing just flies across the circle. This exercise helps the young actor become aware of the script as a whole and not just when his line comes. This may take a full week to get through, however it is well worth the work. While directing Noise Off, the writer of this project used this exercise and by the end of the week the pacing was tight and focused.

The second part of this exercise and the way that Mr. Ayckbourn uses Tennis, is by doing it while the actors are on stage doing their lines and blocking. The students start paying close attention to whomever has the ball and where it is going next. Once the ball is removed and they have their first run through without a tennis ball, the dialogue and
focus takes on the look and sound of a polished production. Remember, this exercise is difficult at the beginning just like any thing that is rewarding, but it pays off triple the work.

Blind Reading
This exercise used for listening to fellow actors on stage was developed by Lee Shallet at South Coast Repertory in 1980. The writer has used this exercise to help the high school student listen to his fellow actors on stage and to check his lines. The director will need a chair for each student, their bible and a small source of light. This exercise should be done in the classroom or rehearsal hall where the director can make the room as dark as possible. The actors sit in a circle with their backs to each other and their eyes closed. They are then asked to visualize the stage and to listen to their fellow actors as if hearing the dialogue for the first time. They are to perform in character. Monitor them to make sure that they have energy while sitting and do not slump down in their chair. The director then sits with the bible and a clip board. With the use of your stage managers and assistant directors, all having a copy of the script, everyone is assigned a few actors dialogue to follow. The read through then begins with the actors vocally performing their lines and the team of directors and stage managers marking on their paper the line and page number that the actors are changing. If you change the line, you change the pacing. In comedy it is very important to be word perfect because the pacing is tied into
the lines. Much like learning Shakespeare, the student actor needs to adhere to the lines as the playwright wrote them in order to create a tight show. At this point, no one should be missing lines or paraphrasing, however, this is when you tighten up the script to word perfect. The students enjoy this exercise because they often times hear lines as if for the first time and see in their minds eye actions that they may incorporate into their characterization.

Animalization

This is a great exercise to do on a Saturday afternoon when the students are ready to explore they character physically. They have been asked previous to this day the question, "If your character were an animal, what type of an animal would it be and why?" They answer these questions on paper and place in their bible. On the day of the exercise, have them wear loose, comfortable cloths. In the rehearsal hall where hopefully the director can monitor the lighting to a dim effect have the students lie down on the floor. Have them relax and pay close attention to their breathing. Once they are relaxed, tell them to take the position of their animal while asleep. Now the director must talk them through them waking up, discovering that they hungry, finding food and eating. Do not let them relate to each other. Keep it an intimate process with just themselves. After approximately 20 minutes of this exploration where the director has been asking relative questions on their animal behavior, have them begin to become a human being. They will be asked to metamorphose into a standing, walking person while
maintaining some of the animal characteristics. Once they are comfortable with these characterizations, set up an improvisation that comes from the story line of the play and have them act it out. For many students this is a real breakthrough. They feel as if they are no longer themselves and because of this they are free to explore their character.

In the exercise book, Acting, the Creative Process by Albright and Albright, Irene Worth gives an interesting account of a metamorphic way to achieve assistance with characterization:

"When Andrei Serban was directing THE CHERRY ORCHARD for the 1977 production at Lincoln Center, he gave us an exercise in improvisation which was exciting and extraordinarily helpful. Three assistants, not actors, read the text of a scene as the actors mimed the action. This indirectly helped us to learn our lines with ease.

He then asked us to select an animal which seemed closest to our character's nature and to express this essence through the animal's actions. It was liberating to lose one's human body and helped to free the actor from his natural shyness and self-consciousness. The following day we repeated the scene from the day before, the readers again speaking the words, dryly, without emotion, but this time we performed the scene as animals and for an extended period of time. These mute, anthropomorphic emotions were
swift, powerful, poignant, very true, and the sequence of exercises made us concentrate on the character instead of ourselves. Both text and character were illuminated. Eventually, many of the new, unexpected actions were put to direct use in the play"(pg.146).

This animalization exercise described above can be applied to high school students who have been successful in the prior exercise. Some of the students are not able to break out of their inhibitions as well as other, however they may be more successful with the next exercise.

**Restoration**

This technique called Restoration was developed by the writer. When working with high school students it is sometimes difficult for them to truly let go and enjoy themselves on stage. At this stage of personal growth, they are dramatically aware of their own self and how they look to others. As a character in a play they must leave this particular baggage behind in order to build a character who is truly theirs. This exercise inspires physical ownership of the lines. It develops their awareness of sub-text, the thought beneath the line, and inner-monologue. The neophyte actor will diligently learn their lines and develops their characters and even the brightest student will not understand everything they are saying on stage. The director can generally hear when the student is just reciting lines and when they understand what they are saying. However, this exercise gives the students a physically ownership though
actions of each word and line being said on stage. It also allows the director a visual sense of how well their students understand the interpretation of the lines.

This exercise is most successful on a Saturday morning when the students are not tired from a full day in classes. Once again have them wear sweats and comfortable shoes. Tell them to eat well that morning because they will be burning up a great deal energy. The students are placed on the stage with the set or in the rehearsal hall with chairs and desk to help represent the set pieces. They are told that they are to perform the entire play with movements that show their subtext. As they show this thought beneath the lines with their bodies they also say the lines as loud and as big as they vocally can without screaming. The exercise looks like a Restoration play when movements were overacted, however these movements are ten times what would be performed in a Restoration plays. The purpose of this exercise is for the students to develops a true understanding of what they are saying through action that is larger than life. If a student comes to a word or line that they are just saying because it is in the script and have no real knowledge of what is beneath the line this exercise will help them. This exercise allows both the director and actor see what their fellow actors are saying to them and it can work as a snowball effect when everyone gets into the art of acting out their words with gusto. The actor who is familiar with this exercise from previous shows or class work can take it one step further by acting out their inner-monologues. Their
reactions to what they are hearing while they hear it will quickly notify the actor and the director if the student really understands what their inner-monologue should be with the dialogue. Once this higher level is understood by all the actors on stage, then they all may add this to their exercise. While working on You Can't Take It With You, the writer watched the entire cast act out both their sub-text and inner-monologue with such energy and fun that it added a sparkle to the production that was always present. It is an exercise that also brings them closer together as an ensemble group. The fun that occurs during this exercise is contagious and can give back to a production that has started to wane a new jolt of life.

It is best to do this exercise 10 to 7 days out from opening. If it is done to late, the technical aspect of the show will have taken on precedent and if to early, the actors will not find the rejuvenating effected desired.

Improvisations

This exercise is a favorite among the student actors. It can be applied at any time during the rehearsal process. The director sets up a situation that is talked about in the script but not actually performed on stage. In this improvisation the students know the scenario from the script suggestions. They should also know their main objective and their frame of mind. The students are then encouraged to begin the improvise and to stay in character throughout the scene. The director may side coach the actors, giving them directions as to where to go next and asking them how they
feel. This technique is used by Stella Adler as a way to encourage that part of the actor which guides the character through the scene to be developed. This inner guide has been compared to an Iceberg where 90% of the actor is the character and the other 10% keeps the character focused on where they are going in the scene. Few student actors are able to achieve this almost total immersion. This exercise can help them to obtain this ability. An example of this exercise used by the writer was with the production of *Noises Off*. The story line is of a acting company rehearsing a play that will go on the road. In Act one you meet all of the characters and discover who is having an affair with whom. In Act Two, six weeks have past and these affairs are going sour. Act two consist of the audience watching the action back stage during an afternoon matinee. The antics going on behind the scene give this fast pace farce its title. A successful exercise was to ask the actors to improvise that it is 4 hours later and they are now involved in their evening performance. The actors knew what their motivations were and went after them with an energy and enthusiasm to match the writing and finished the exercise exhausted, but with a new understanding of their characters and an incredible energy for this particularly difficult show.

An exercise that can help the director with actors who make weak entrances and do not become their characters until after coming on stage is taken from Uta Hagen’s book *RESPECT FOR ACTING*. In the chapter titled “Three Entrance” she asks three simple questions of the actor before entering: 'What
have I just done', 'What am I doing right now', and 'What's the first thing I want when I come on stage'. The director may assign the students to answer these questions on paper for each one of their entrances to help them understand the characters' life off stage. As an improvisation, the director can have the students spend time actually improvising their off stage scene in the wings before entering. In the production of *Rumors*, whose premise was a anniversary party for a couple the audience never meets because the husband has been shot, the writer had each arriving couple improvise their time spent in their imagined car back stage before entering. This exercise brought each couple on stage with a strong moment before and characterization. The couple who was discovered on stage when the lights came up was required to improvise their arriving at the house, hearing the gun shot, and breaking the back door window in order to get into the house.

With a farce the amount on entrances and exits are great and each one needs to tell the audience what has been experienced by the character off stage. The director may wish to set up a day of entrances to be improvised and rehearsed with the on stage action in order to keep the continuity of the show.

When rehearsing a show with high school students it is important to keep them working through these rehearsals without them coming to a point where they feel that as long as they know their lines then the show will come together in front of an audience. The high school director must ignite in
their actors the knowledge that the process is more important than the end product. To just know your lines is akin to wanting to build a house and being satisfied with living on the cement slab. The knowledge of the lines is just the beginning of the process, not the end. The true joy in theater comes from rehearsals where the actor is challenged, the process is exciting, and develops a young person with a better understanding of themselves through this great process called acting.
CHAPTER VII

Concept Meeting

Once a director selects a play, the next thing to do is hold a concept meeting with the following designers: Set, Lights, Costume, Make-up, and Sound. The Assistant Director and Stage Manager(s) should also be present. These artists will have had a copy of the script to read before this meeting so that they are able to contribute to the concept. At this meeting the artist involved sit at a table facing each other and discuss the director's concept of the play. The director has a particular idea or theme from which he hangs the rest of the play. During this meeting, the director needs to inform the staff of what is required for this particular production. This is when a great amount of brainstorming, and ideas are created. In an ideal situation, the majority of these members are adult professionals who have had experience in lighting, sound, sets and costumes. If the director is working entirely with students, it is important for the director to come to this meeting with a strong concept of what is needed and how to obtain the desired result. There are several very good books and more recently, videos on the technical aspects of theater. When working with high school students, give them the necessary material and training before asking them to come up with a design. The director needs to lead the meeting, going from the over all desired effect to more specific needs. During this meeting, give the members a time line when the designs are required. The designers need to work together in order not to conflict
in the mood or atmosphere in creating their production. They need to know the colors and style of the show to keep the production consistent with the director's concept. It is during this meeting that ideas are introduced and discussed for the desired result. This is a creative meeting which begins with concepts that are brain stormed by all involved and results in a total concept of the show.

Paper Tech

Approximately 10 days prior to opening night the director needs to call for a paper tech. This process is where the director and all crew heads meet and go through their individual prompt books or bibles and mark all cues. These cues include the lights, sound, special effects, actors entrances, and scene changes. It works best to start at the top of the bible and work through it with the entire crew marking in their bibles all the information and then highlighting what pertains specifically to them. The assistant director, who will be calling the cues, will mark in their bible in the following matter. Approximately four lines prior to the actual cue, they draw a line out to the margin of the bible and mark it as a warning cue and assigning it a number. Then on the actual line, draw a line out to the margin where the cue occurs. During the production, the assistant director will then call "Warning light cue 16" then four lines later, "Light cue 16, Go." In using this terminology each time, the crew will not mistake a light cue with a sound cue. Also, do not vary from this terminology. Consistency makes for a tight show. It is important to stress that each
cue be called first with a warning and then the actual take. If two or more cues occur simultaneously, then the assistant director will call “Warning light cue 12, sound cue 4” and then call “light cue 12, sound cue 4, Go”. During a highly technical show when there is a great deal of cues to call, the assistant director must stay on top of the calls so as not to miss-call any of the cues. The paper tech is a way for all of the crew members to sit around the table and work through the script with an eye towards any difficulty or trouble spots that they might encounter during the Cue to Cue rehearsal. Do not try to do a Cue to Cue without this rehearsal. The time will be well spent and it will allow for a professional Cue to Cue.

Discuss with your crew members all of the different duties that they must perform every night prior to opening. For example, the crew must arrive in plenty of time to sweep the stage floor and off stage floors, pre-set for act one, check the props and costumes, and check any special effect items. A good rule of thumb is for them to check, check again and check one last time. They should also create for themselves during this paper tech a PRE-SHOW check list that they will review before each show and during each intermission. Young thespians have a tendency to do their job well on the first night and then fall back on the second night because the edge is off of the production, and that is when mistakes happen. Enforce this in their minds during the paper tech. Remind them of their importance to the smooth running of the show. A good crew can cut time off the show by
running a tight back stage area. They will develop a certain pride of ownership in their show if they are trained as professionals and treated as such. During this paper tech, enforce in them the need to wear all black back stage and to maintain silence. While working through the script try to trouble shoot any problems that may occur. Make sure the light technician and sound technician understand that they are to only take their cues from the assistant director. It is important that one person is responsible for the technical crew and no more than two people are responsible for the stage crew. The show may require a back stage right manager and a back stage left manager, both of whom have marked all actors entrances, scene changes and special effects in their bibles and have highlighted the ones pertaining specifically to them. The crew heads must realize that the stage managers are answerable to the director and everyone else is answerable to them. They must treat their crew members with respect as the director treats them with respect. They need to know that there is a certain chain of command in theater and that it is important not to waiver from it or disaster may occur back stage. The discipline that young students learn from this type of experience will benefit them ten fold later on in life. Their is nothing more stressful for a high school director then an unhappy stage crew. Train them well during this paper tech and avoid future problems. The paper tech is the difference between a well run show and one that lacks professionalism.
Cue to Cue

The Cue to Cue is a rehearsal set aside solely for the crew in order for them to learn their technical cues. It is also an opportune time for the director to begin to relinquish the responsibilities of the show over to the assistant director and stage managers. The cues have all been previously written into the prompt books during the paper tech, now is the time to try them in action. During this rehearsal, the actors are required to be available for the crew to rehearse their light, sound and special effect cues. This is not an actor’s rehearsal, nor should an actor tell or advise a crew member of what to do or at what time. It is important to establish at the beginning of the rehearsal that the assistant director will be conducting a rehearsal going from one cue to the next, and that the actors will be asked to give the necessary lines preparing the crew to hear or see their cue’s. This can be a tiresome rehearsal for the actors who must remain on stage quiet while the crew work on their cues. Advise the actors not to leave the stage until dismissed by the assistant director.

The assistant director begins with the first cue of the show. This is usually the PRE-SHOW music, house lights, curtain warmers, curtains, action, ect. From this point the assistant director goes through the prompt book from one cue warning to the next. The actors are asked to perform in character to ensure the correct pacing for the stage crew to perform their duties. The cues should be done three times to insure that the crew remembers know what to do. To ask young
inexperienced high school students to remember what they did after only one try is preluding a failure not success. After the cue has been executed three times, the assistant director may go on to the next cue. The director will check each one of the cue's to assure that it is sufficient. If the light cue is done at the right time but the lights are too hot or too low, now is the time for the light technician to check the setting and mark the proper setting on their cue sheet. This is the same for the sound technician. The sound cue should be marked for the proper level reading. Working through the script in this manner will allow everyone the opportunity to learn their cues and see what they will look or sound like. The stage crew must also rehearse any difficult scene changes at this time. It is best to have the scene changes choreographed and walked through before the actual cue to cue. Take time out before a rehearsal or before the cue to cue for the stage crew to walk through their scene change in full light. While they are walking through their scene change, the director may watch from the audience to see if there are any traffic pattern problems and to solve them before they do it with work lights. If the stage manager is a capable student and not needed in the actual scene change, they can watch from the audience and correct any problems. The director should try to give as many of the duties as possible over to the students during this rehearsal. This is where the student begins to take on the full responsibilities of the show from the now less involved director; the more confidence is thus established. Converse directly with the
assistant director and stage manager and have them speak to
their crew members. If the director is seen as the only
responsible person, it becomes difficult for the students to
take over the show on opening night. On this night, the
director is in the audience with the other audience members.

Some problems that might be encountered have to do with
the students feeling as if they are going to make a mistake
and not wanting to get in trouble. It is important that these
fears are nipped in the bud as early as possible. Mistakes
will be made, but how the director deals with them will be a
crucial factor. Do not raise your voice or yell at the
students. This only causes more tension. Take the student
aside and ask if they know what they did wrong, and what they
are going to do to correct the mistake. If they can’t answer
these questions, then talk them through it. If you need to
physically show them what they need to do, then do so.

The actors will sometimes boss the crew around. This
must not happen. The actors must be reminded that this is not
their rehearsal nor is it their job to give the cue’s or
advise the crew what to do. If a director encounters a
nervous or insensitive actor who is slowing down the process
with their suggestions, take them aside and advise them to
just say their lines on stage and nothing more. Most actors
want to work with the crew because they know the value of a
good crew.

When finished with the cue to cue bring the crew into
the house and go over any parts of the play that they had
problems with. Make sure that the crew leaves that day
feeling esteemed about running the show. Ask the actors if they have any questions or concerns. This is the time to iron out any problems before full run though commences. Taking this time out of a rehearsal process is vitally important to ensure the sound performance of a production.
CHAPTER VIII

Emotional Problems with the Student Actor

In working with high school students the teacher will encounter some problems that have nothing to do with the production but everything to do with the student. The theater student will spend as much time, and in some cases more time, in the theater than they will with their own families. It is important, therefore, that the teacher create a warm and loving disciplined environment in which the student may feel free to express themselves without fear of ridicule or embarrassment. It is important to stress the importance of discipline with the students. The theater teacher who creates this environment and allows for the children to feel safe in their trust of the teacher will not only open the students full potential for talent, but at the same time offer the assistance of an adult to whom they can talk. It helps the teacher to have an understanding of body language and an ear for listening. Since both of these are talents that an actor and director must develop, most theater teachers have an intuitive sense of what is going on with their students without being told. Some times the teacher will know what is going on before the students involved even know. The theater teacher develops a seventh sense about their students that allows them to veer them away from their problems. The most common problem encountered backstage is the back stage romance. When you spend a great deal of time in a make believe world, falling in love with a fellow actor or crew member is sometimes unavoidable. It is best to leave these
situations alone if they don’t interfere with the show. Sometimes a triangle love affair will develop and the games that the third person will play need to be addressed. Let them know that during the rehearsal process and especially during the show they are not to be affectionate back stage or to cause any problems because of jealousy. A director can tell when the actor is not making the same commented entrance as they have been making because of a last minute hug or kiss from the girl friend or boy friend. This new way of preparing for the entrance will become a habit unless the director speaks to the actor and tells them that it has effected their performance. It is best not to go back stage during a performance, however once in a while it doesn’t hurt to quietly walk around back stage and see how things are going. If the walk around occurs prior to the above mentioned entrance and the director finds the couple, simply wait until the actor has entered stage and remind the partner that the actor is too filled with their scent to keep their mind on the show. This comments usually brings on the usual smiles and blushes and they are reminded of their obligation to the show without being scolded. The director may then talk to the actor privately after the performance. It is always best to speak to the students privately. The ability to hold their hand or place the gentle hand on the shoulder incurs the feeling of caring, and looking into the young persons eyes lets them know that this is a committed conversation. The third party student in a love affair needs to be reminded that inappropriate behavior is not allowed. Do not dismiss
this person's feelings. Let them know that a caring adult will listen to them after rehearsal or during lunch if they need to talk about it.

Young students have a great deal of emotion and some wear it on their sleeve while others keep it tucked away. The director may find that a member of the cast has recently attempted suicide. This happens more often in today's society. The writer has been teaching for 13 years in high school and has had seven attempted suicides occur. These students need the director to handle them with a great deal of tender loving care and to help give them the self-esteem they are lacking. They need to hear praise as often and as public as possible, yet one should not cater to them. Most students do not want pity, they merely want understanding. Make sure that the parent is notified of the attempted suicide and help arrange to get them into counseling.

The director may encounter a student who has been cast in a lead role and feels that they do not deserve the part especially if they have won the role over an older and more experienced actor. They may display their insecurities in ways that seem ungrateful or childish. They may become the prima donna in order to combat their own insecurities. If this happens, take the student aside after rehearsal and ask them questions about how they feel about their performance and then listen to their replies. There are many excellent books on communication skills if the director does not feel they are able to properly listen to a student, however sometimes all they need is for the director to sit down with
them and find out the root of the problem. If a student has truly become a prima donna then the director can remind the cast, during the notes given after rehearsal, that there are no stars in the production, the production itself is a star and all members are equally important. Most students will listen to this advise, but those that do not, need not be cast again. The most talented student may sit out a production or even more effectively be assigned a backstage crew job in order for them to appreciate the essentials of theater. A nice tradition to start is for the cast and crew to get to know and respect each other by having a pre-show party. This is like a cast and crew party only it is held after the show has been cast and the crew selected but before the rehearsals begin. The director may hold it after school or at a parents house. The students may also have secret pals during the rehearsal process. This allows them to take care of each other if they learn that their secret pal has had some negative or positive experience. It also makes for a fun opening night with everyone receiving something. Set a rule about spending money. If the students lacks the necessary monetary resources, have them compose something special for their secret pal from the heart. The student cherish this more than any flower or stuffed animal they may receive.

These measures will create a pleasant atmosphere for the students. The crew and actors can help paint the set together, and build the props in order to develop a real pride of ownership through this process. The director may also require that theater company members who are not in the
show be involved by offering their efforts one work day on
the set. This keeps a feeling of unity within the theater
company and gives all of the members a part in the show.

Students at this age often times experiment with alcohol
or drugs. A director needs to be aware that this can occur
with the students even during school time or rehearsal time.
The contract gives the guide lines as to the penalty for
using alcohol or drugs. If a student is involved, get them
into a program as quickly as possible. Make it perfectly
clear that they may not be involved in the company until they
are clean and sober. Stress the fact that if the offense is
severe enough they may be dropped permanently from the
program.

The director may encounter grade problems from their
students. In the state of California it is required that a
student maintain a GPA of 2.00 or better with only one F in
order to be involved in extra curricular activities. Often
times the theater student who is a great actor is not a great
student in regards to academics. Require that they bring with
them to auditions a copy of their last report card and a
recent grade check sheet for the semester. Do not let them
audition if they fail to turn this in. If a student is a
good actor and would be right for the part but fails to bring
in these sheets, it is usually because they have a low GPA.
The director must obtain his records and discuss with the
student privately the importance of the grades. If the grades
are less than the required 2.00, then the director can put
the student on a three week probation at which time they must
raise their present grades to a 2.00. Since most shows are
cast at the beginning of a semester, the student can usually
meet this requirement. The director should use all possible
avenues - taking advantage of student tutors and other
available resources. The director must then monitor the
student with a weekly progress report. He may require a
meeting with the student after rehearsal every Friday to
discuss the progress. A number of students graduate from high
school that may have dropped out had it not been for an
extra-curricular activity, motivating them to improve their
scholastic performance. If a student’s grades are too low to
place them on a three week probation then do not cast them in
the show or put them on the crew until they have brought up
their GPA. Again the director must help monitor this student
with a weekly progress report to ensure that when the show
opens six to nine weeks later, the students grades are good
enough for them to work on the make-up crew or the front of
house crew. The writer has seen students go from a low GPA of
1.56 to being on the Principle's honor role in one year
simply because they were motivated (and monitored) to
accomplish this task. A teacher’s first priority is to ready
the students for the ‘outside’ world. Never place the
production ahead of the students welfare. Ignoring the
academic individuality of the student is to deny the
fundamental purpose of attending school: to obtain an
education.

The director may encounter greater emotional problems
with the students. When students become attached to a teacher
they will sometimes open up to them information about themselves that they have never shared with anyone. The director may find a student who has been molested, raped or physically abused within the theater company. Do not wait until this occurs to find out how to handle the situation. Have at your finger tip the name and number of local agency's that can help the child. Remember, you are responsible to report to the proper agency anything of this nature. If a student begins to confide in the director, it is best to inform the student that the law requires the reporting of these types of crimes. This will not be an easy situation to handle so be prepared.

Theater brings together an enormous range of students and their backgrounds. They are coming face to face with problems that the director may not have even thought of when in high school. Do not dismiss anything as impossible because it seems unlikely. In todays society the director may have to deal with the loss of a loved one or even a member of the company because of drunk driving, AIDS, drug overdose, domestic violence or a drive by shooting. The director may have to deal with pregnancy and abortions. This is the world that they live in and they choose to escape to the theater to find themselves and release their emotions. Be prepared for anything and be alert for changes in the company that may signal possible problems.
Abstract Set Drapes, single units of doors or windows arranged for music or ballet numbers. No effort at realism or locale. Common in television.

Absurd Theater of the Contrary to most schools of thought that there is meaning of some kind in life, the avant-garde of the fifties saw living as illogical, irrational, unreasonable, formless and a mass of contradictions. In France where absurdism had its greatest strength, Eugene Ionesco, Samuel Beckett, and Jean Genet were the leaders. In England, N.F. Simpson and Harold Pinter and in America Edward Albee, Arthur Kopit and Jack Gelber were part of the movement.

Acting Area That part of the stage visible to the audience during a production.

Actor's Equity Association Union of professional legitimate theatre actors with HQ in New York city.

Ad Lib Generally improvised or added words and gestures that are not written in the script or rehearsed.

A.N.T.A. American National Theatre Academy Congressionally chartered organization for serving the theatre in all its branches. Supplies advice and various services. Offices in New York city.

Antagonist That which causes conflict and is most in opposition to the main character (protagonist) of the play.

Apron Space on stage in front of main curtain; very wide in restoration and 18th century. Much of the play took place there. The part of the stage in front of the proscenium arch.
**Arena stage** A form of center staging with audience on 3 or 4 sides.

**Aside** Words spoken by the actor in a lower tone. The audience is supposed to hear them, the other characters are not.

**Backdrop** Large flat surface at the rear of the stage, painted to suggest locale or scenery and used with wings in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. In present day theatre usually represents the sky.

**Backing** A series of flats or drops placed behind doors and windows to mask backstage area. Also used to denote money that helps produce a play.

**Backstage** The part of the stage not visible to the audience. It includes the regions on either side as well as at the back.

**Backwall** The rear wall of the stage.

**Base** A face paint that is used as a foundation for make-up.

**Batten** A long pole or piece of lumber to which lights and draperies are fastened or suspended; also used to fasten flats securely together.

**Blackout** Complete darkening of the stage by cutting off all lights.

**Border** A drapery or flat hung above the acting area to make the fly gallery; also a strip of lights hung from above.

**Border lights** A series of lights above and at front of the stage to light the acting area with general illumination.
**Box Set** Standard setting of today with back wall, two sidewalls and usually a ceiling to represent an interior.

**Broad Comedy** Slapstick bordering on farce or burlesque. Overdone for sake of contemporary groundlings and lacking subtlety.

**Build** To increase the tempo or intensity of a scene, as in climaxes.

**Burlesque** Character traits, stage business, or movement so exaggerated that the sense of reality or its illusion are destroyed. Emphasizes humor.

**Business** Action involving a property.

**Business Props** Properties that are to be used or handled by actors.

**Cable** Electrical wiring, insulated in rubber, to convey current from lighting outlets to fixtures.

**Ceiling** Hinge flats suspended horizontally above the acting area in interior sets to mask the fly gallery.

**Circuit** All electrical equipment under the control of a switch.

**Commedia dell'arte** A pantomime or drama without any set literary form. The theatre of common people in Europe beginning in the 15th century. It gave us such characters as Harlequin, Pierrot and Columbine.

**Constructivism** A movement in Russia whose proponents objected to illusion in the theatre, for scenery substituting ladders, platforms, planes, put together in a most distorted fashion and usually backed by a bare wall.
**Convention** An untruth that the public accepts—for example: blue light for moonlight and yellow light for sunlight, although in reality daylight is more blue. Something that has come to be a style or form.

**Conventional Theatre** Indicates accepted theatre building with raised stage, scenery, lights and proscenium, with auditorium and audience out front as we know it.

**Corner Block** Small triangular pieces of plywood placed over a butt joint for strength.

**Corrugated** Small fastening piece of steel or iron shaped in alternate ridges and grooves. It is pounded into two adjacent surfaces of lumber to fasten them together.

**Counter-weight** A weight connected by a rope or steel cable which balances the weight of scenery when hoisted up into the fly gallery.

**Crew** The members of a group engaged in any one type of stage work.

**Cue** The final words, business or movement of one character before another begins his own. The signal for the tech crew for their next action.

**Cut-Out** A small flat with irregular edges made to resemble a tree, rock or mountain, etc.

**Cycloramas** Any smooth surface used to represent sky: also a large drapery hung to enclose the acting area.

"**Dues ex machina**" (Latin) When Fate (or the author) intercedes to save the action from the logical conclusion.

**Dimmer** An electrical device used to vary the intensity of
stage lights or auditorium lights.

**Downstage** The part of the stage nearest the audience.

**Dramatic Action** Term used to describe the action that takes place within the play—Oedipus' search for the slayer of Laius—Hamlet's search to discover if the ghost has spoken the truth, then his efforts to right the wrong. What happens in the play to the characters beyond physical action.

**Drop** The name given to the curtains that are hung from the flies.

**Dutchman** A narrow strip of muslin painted with glue or paste and used to cover holes in scenery. A technique used to seam together to flats on a set to give them a complete look.

**Effect** Atmospheric phenomena created by the use of lights also all stage sounds except speech.

**Epic Drama** The work of Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956) Brecht called all drama before his own "Aristotelian" and described it as aiming to enthrall the audience by building to a climax—arousing and then purging their emotions. His drama thought to arouse the spectators thoughts as it strove to prevent emotional involvement. It was made up of short disconnected scenes, the emphasis on society rather than the individual.

**Faking** Imitating or counterfeiting materials and objects for theatrical purposes.

**Fireproofing** A substance applied to stage scenery to make it nonflammable.

**Flat** A muslin-covered wooden frame, used in combination with other flats; it is used to form settings.
**Flies** The high region above the stage where scenery "flown".

**Floor Cloth** A large canvas stretched upon the floor of the acting area.

**Floor Plan** A bird's eye view from above with walls, entrances and furniture all shown in place.

**Fluffed Line** A stammer, stutter, twisting of words or other faulty delivery by the actor.

**Fly** To raise scenery above the floor of a stage by use of ropes, battens, etc.

**Fly Catching** Movement, sound made or business by an actor to attract attention to himself when emphasis should be elsewhere.

**Foots** Striplights placed in a sunken groove at the edge of the apron or below the curtain line. Use in the early theaters before hanging lights. Also used to light the legs of dancers in ballets.

**Fore stage** Part of stage nearest audience when an inner proscenium is used. Sometimes use interchangeably with "apron".

**Front of the House** The lobby of the auditorium.

**Fourth Wall** An imaginary wall at the proscenium through which the audience sees the play.

**Gauze** Transparent misty material hung as a drop and lending diffuse, atmospheric effects.

**Gel** Squares of transparent, plastic colored material placed in front of stage lights to produce colored effects. Called a
color media.

**Ghost Walks** Term used by actors since the day of Shakespeare to denote a payday. (The actor who played the Ghost in Hamlet went to the manager and said the actors refused to go on unless the payment for the latter performances had been made. He returned with money in hand and announced, "The Ghost walks tonight.")

**Gimmick** A device or trick used for a special effect, usually in an effort to get a laugh, although it may seek to elicit any emotion.

**Grid** Framework of wood or steel above the stage. Used to support and fly scenery.

**Ground Cloth** See floor cloth.

**Ground Row** Low cut-out strip of scenery used to mask lights in front of the cyclorama.

**Ham Acting** An exaggerated and insincere performance, notable for noise rather than honest feeling or sincerity. Extravagant gestures, choking sounds and trickery are used for their effects alone. Should not be confused with broad acting or projection.

**Hand Property** Article to be carried on stage by an actor.

**House** The audience, or audience-chamber.

**Jog** A flat narrower than the standard size, for corners in interior sets.

**Keystone** A small piece of plywood cut in the shape of a keystone used for fastening a toggle to a still of a flat.
Lash Line Rope used in fastening upright flats together.

Left Stage The half of the stage on the actor's left as he faces the audience.

Light Bridge Sections of pipe extending horizontally and vertically above and just beyond the proscenium arch; light units are fascinated here and directed upon the stage.

Light Leak Light that can be seen through a crack or opening in the set.

Light Plot A technical diagram of the lights and light changes used in staging a play.

Light Spill Light that strikes the proscenium or set and thus "spills" over in a distracting manner, rather than just striking the area it is supposed to cover.

Load The amount of power which a conductor or circuit can safely carry.

Masking Hiding backstage parts or the fly gallery from the audience by means of pieces of scenery.

Moscow Art Theatre Established by Constantine Stanislavsky in the last decade of the 19th century; was at its peak in the 1920's and 30's. Considered to be one of the finest theaters in the world.

Obligatory Scene The scene that the playwright has led us to expect and without which the audience would be disappointed. Sometimes referred to as "scene-a-faire", literally, "scent-to-do".

Off Stage The part of the stage outside the acting area and not visible to the audience.
Olivette See Floodlight

On Stage The part of the stage comprising the acting

Outlet A plug in the wall or floor connecting stage lights with the switchboard.

Paint Frame A wooden frame which holds set pieces of flats upright so they may be painted.

Papier-Mache A method of modeling objects by applying strips of paper, soaked in glue, to a form, and molding to the desired shape.

Parallel A collapsible platform used for an elevation.

Permanent Set A single set used throughout the play and altered from scene to scene merely by changing draperies, props, etc.

Personal Props Properties Used exclusively by an individual actor.

Pin Rail A double row of rope fasteners or cleats placed on a pipe rail above the stage. All hanging scenery ropes are tied off there.

Platform Form See Parallel.

Plug An electrical outlet.

Pocket A group of receiving sockets into which cables are plugged.

Practical Capable of actually being used, rather than faked.

Prime A preliminary substance of whiting and glue, or the
first coat of a given color on a flat.

**Producer** In America, the individual or group that raises the money or underwrites the production financially. In England, usually considered to be the director as well.

**Property** Any object placed or used in the set, exclusive of scenery or costumes.

**Property Plot** A diagram of the properties used throughout the play.

**Proscenium** The arch or frame separating the playing space from the auditorium.

**Protagonist** The leading character in the play-- The one in which the plot revolves around. Whom the audience is most interested.

**Rail** The top or bottom strip of lumber in the frame of a flat.

**Rake** The angle at which the walls of a set are positioned to improve side-visibility for the audience.

**Ramp** A sloping platform placed upon the stage floor for elevation.

**Repertoire/Repertory** A list of dramas, operas, parts, etc, that a company or person has rehearsed and is prepared to perform.

**Reveal** The inset or thickness piece used on archways, windows, etc, to make them appear solid.

**Rigging** The ropes, blocks, and pins for placing and moving pieces of scenery.
Right Stage  That half of the stage on the actor's right as he
stands in the center of the acting area facing the audience.

Ring Up  The command to pull up the curtain at the beginning of a scene.

Run Through  To perform the play without stopping for acting or technical corrections.

Sandbags  Heavy sacks filled with sand used for holding down pieces of scenery by placing sandbag on the flats brace.

Screen Actor's Guild  Union of motion picture actor's.

Scrim  Coarse, porous material which can be painted and used for making semi-transparent curtains in depicting vision scenes, dreams, and other similar effects.

Set  A) The acting area. B) To prepare the acting area with scenery and props for the performance. C) To establish the business of the play.

Set Pieces  Units of scenery made to stand alone, not fastened to other pieces.

Setting  The scenery and stage properties as arranged for a given scene.

Shift  To move scenery for a given scene.

Sill Iron  The flat metal strip extending along the floor across the open space in a door flat.

Size  A mixture of glue, whiting and water used to prime a flat.

Soliloquy  A speech delivered by an actor when alone on stage.
There are two types: A) Constructive: explains the plot to
the audience, as in many of Shakespeare's prologues. B)
Reflective: shows personal thought or emotion, as in Hamlets
famous "To Be or Not To Be...".

**Spill** Light shed upon the stage unintentionally.

**Spot, Spotlight** A lighting instrument for illuminating a
limited area upon the stage.

**Stack** To fold or store scenery when not in use.

**Stage Brace** A device made for supporting flats.

**Stile.** The vertical pieces of lumber in a flat frame.

**Stock, Stock Company** A resident company presenting a series
of plays, each for a limited run, but not
repeated after the engagement.

**Storage Space** The regions immediately off stage where
scenery and props can be placed when not in use.

**Strike** To remove the scenery and properties of a given set.

**Take it Away** The signal to open the curtain.

**Teaser** Border upstage and just back of the curtain. Masks
the flies and determines the height of the proscenium opening
during the performance.

**Theatre Guild** Producing organization in New York. It works on
a subscription series there and in many other large cities.

"The Method" Name applied to the Russian or Stanislavsky
approach to acting: very subjective, retrospective and
individualistic.
**Thickness Piece**  A piece of scenery attached to a flat side so as to indicate thickness, as of a wall or door.

**Threefold**  A unit of scenery consisting of three flats hinged together.

**Toggle Bar**  The horizontal piece of lumber bracing a flat frame.

**Tormentor**  Upright masking pieces used at each side and placed immediately behind the front curtain.

**Trap**  Opening in the stage floor, permitting entrances or exits from under the floor.

**Trip**  To fold a drapery for storing so that it will occupy a small enough space so as not to be seen when flown.

**Twofold**  A unit of scenery comprising two hinged flats.

**Type-Cast**  To cast people of the same age appearance, size or nature as the character in the play. Mostly an outgrowth of the realist theatre.

**Unit Set**  A set so designed that changing locales are suggested by changing drapes and props and the occasional addition of a set piece.

**Up Stage**  That half of the stage farthest from the floodlights.

**Vaudeville**  Production consisting of several acts—singing, dancing, dialogue, acrobatics, etc. all unrelated but offering a variety of entertainment. It was called "Music Hall" in England. Extremely popular in America until the mid-thirties. To play "The Palace the leading Vaudeville house in New York, was the goal of every act. W.C. Fields and Bob Hope
played the Palace.

**Wagon Stage** A movable platform upon which scenery is fastened off stage and wheeled into position on stage.

**Working Run Through** A rehearsal run through where the director or stage manager has the right to stop the rehearsal in order to correct any problems or mistakes. Most run through's are working runs until the last week when the show runs without stops and notes are given to the actors and crew after rehearsal.

**Wings** Offstage space to left and right. Sometimes refers to wing pieces used in series of two or three on either side of the stage as part of a wing and backdrop set.

**Yoke** Projecting arm used to chain a light unit to a batten.

These are the more common terms used on the stage. Learn them well. Find out exactly what the items look like or what they mean as related to the theatre. This aids in getting work accomplished in less time and with more efficiency.
APPENDIX II

DIRECTOR’S CASTING SHEET

JOE BENJAMIN  SIDNEY LIPTON

DAVID BENJAMIN  ROSE BENJAMIN
APPENDIX III

AUDITION INFORMATION SHEET

NAME______________________GRADE_______AGE_____

HEIGHT____WEIGHT_____G.PA.______PHONE#_______

WEEKLY CLASS SCHEDULE

Fill in your daily class schedule

1ST PERIOD _______________ 6TH PERIOD _______________

2ND PERIOD _______________ 6TH PERIOD _______________

3RD PERIOD _______________ 7TH PERIOD _______________

4TH PERIOD _______________ 8TH PERIOD _______________
AFTER SCHOOL SCHEDULE 3-6 P.M.

Indicate times that you are **not** available

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MON.</th>
<th>TUES.</th>
<th>WED.</th>
<th>THURS.</th>
<th>FRI.</th>
<th>SAT.</th>
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<tr>
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</table>

**CREW JOBS**

Please check the areas that interest you.

**FRONT OF HOUSE**
- House Manager
- Head Usher
- Usher
- Concessions
- Lobby Display

**TECH CREW**
- Lights
- Sound
- Video

**STAGE CREW**
- Stage Manager
- Asst. Stage Manager
- Crew Manager
- Set Crew
- Paint Crew
- Prop Manager
- Prop Crew
- Make-up
- Costume

Assistant Director_________________
APPENDIX IV

PLAY CONTRACT

THE SKIN OF OUR TEETH

DIRECTED BY ROSEMARY MALLETT-KOCH

I____________________, agree to take responsibility for the part of____________________, in ____________________.

In addition, I know ultimately that I am responsible for every aspect of the play and I accept that responsibility and the sense of accomplishment that accompanies it.

I will attend all scheduled rehearsals and all of the stagecraft days. I will check in and out with the stage manager. If there is some dire emergency that would necessitate my missing a rehearsal, I agree to notify Ms. Mallett or the student director at least ONE DAY in advance to clear the absence. In any case, if I miss more than two rehearsals for any reason; other than illness or arrangements made prior to casting (i.e. sports, etc.) I will be dropped from the play.

I also understand that I may be responsible for providing my own costume and hand props and will help to secure the other props needed for the play. If I borrow a costume, or props from drama, Ms. Mallett, another student, or any other agencies, I agree to return it clean and in good condition one week after the show closes. I will also be sure that my costume is hung up and put away after each rehearsal and my props are put in their proper places. If I see someone else's costumes or props laying around, I will put them away out of consideration for the play.
As for professional conduct, I agree to be on time for all rehearsals, not to chew gum during rehearsals, to be totally conscious, and to perform on and off stage with the degree of professionalism necessary to the successful production of the play.

I will take direction in the constructive spirit in which it is intended, from Ms. Mallett and the student director. I will control myself on and off stage. I will not criticize my fellow performers, directors, crew, etc., but will try, instead, to support them in their creative endeavors. I will offer positive suggestions for the enhancement of the production at the proper time and place. I will not leave the stage without permission or refuse to go on when instructed.

I realize that I must maintain a G.P.A. of 2.00 with only one F to participate in this program. I will attend all my classes during tech week and production week. I realize that this is a privilege and will work towards staying on task, maintaining a good G.P.A., and good attendance in all classes. I will not indulge in any form of drug or alcohol abuse and will refrain from associating with those students who are not clean and sober. I will treat with respect: the stage, props, fellow actors, crew, directors, and especially, myself. I realize that I will be dropped from the program if I do not maintain the high standards required of a theater student.

SIGNATURE
STUDENT

SIGNATURE
PARENT
APPENDIX V

PRE-SHOW TO DO LIST

Sweep entire stage, on stage and off left and right.

Stage Right

Check all props on prop table.

Check furniture for stage right entrance.

Check all curtains for sight lines.

Stage Left

Check all props on small prop table.

Check all furniture for stage left entrance.

Check all curtains for sight lines.

Actors Check

At 7:00 all actors report to stage to check all furniture and props are where they are needed.

After last check, director's pre-curtain dialogue occurs with cast and crew.
## APPENDIX VI

### CUE SHEET

#### GOD'S FAVORITE

**LIGHT-SOUND-SPECIAL EFFECTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CUE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
<th>LIGHTS</th>
<th>SOUND</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>p.3</td>
<td></td>
<td>Grandfather clock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>p.3</td>
<td></td>
<td>Alarm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>p.4</td>
<td>(special effect: snowbank explosion)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>p.4</td>
<td>Lights on</td>
<td>Alarm stop (visual)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>p.4</td>
<td></td>
<td>Telephone rings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>p.5</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tele.stop (visual)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>p.5</td>
<td></td>
<td>Door screech open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>p.9</td>
<td></td>
<td>Telephone rings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>p.10</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tele.stop (visual)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>p.10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>p.12</td>
<td>Lights off</td>
<td>Alarm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>p.12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>p.12</td>
<td>Lights on</td>
<td>Alarm stop (visual)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>p.13</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cold wind blows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>p.17</td>
<td></td>
<td>Fire engine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>p.43</td>
<td></td>
<td>Telephone rings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>p.44</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tele.stop (visual)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>p.45</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Black Out

**END ACT I SCENE 1**


---curtain-open---

(lights up)

19. p.45 Telephone rings
20. p.45 Tele.stop(visual)
21. p.47 Lights blink/dim
22. p.55 Thunder

Lightning

(special effect: smoke/drapes fall, etc.)

23. p.56 Thunder

Lightning

Thunder

Lightning

(special effect: more smoke)

24. p.64 Black Out

**END ACT I SCENE 2**

---CURTAIN CLOSE---

INTERMESSION MUSIC 12 MINUTES "I SMELL A BAR-B-Q" BLINK LIGHTS 3 TIMES HOUSE LIGHTS FADE
Curtain Open

(lights up)

24. p.65 (special effect: smoke rises from ruins)
25. p.76 Thunder
26. p.83 Wind
27. p.83 Thunder
28. p.84 Beam of Light
27. p.84 Car (horn/drive)
28. p.85 Lightning
28. p.85 Thunder

Black Out

End of Act II

Curtain
APPENDIX VII

Running List of Entrance/Exits

God's Favorite

Act I

Scene 1

PAGE CHARACTER'S ENTRANCE / EXIT

Page 3 - Sidney can be seen (on balcony)

Page 4 - Sidney exits (off balcony)

Joe enters (hall)

Ben/Sarah enter (hall)

Page 5 - Joe exits (balcony)

Page 6 - Joe enters (balcony)

Joe exits (balcony)

Page 7 - Joe enters (balcony)

Page 11 - Rose enters (dining room)

Page 12 - Rose exits (dining room)

Joe/Ben/Sarah exit (hall)

Page 12 - David enters (balcony)

Page 13 - Joe enters (hall)

Ben/Sarah enter (hall)

Page 15 - Morris/Mady enter (dining room)

Page 16 - Morris/Mady exit (dining room)

Page 17 - Joe exits (balcony)

Rose enters (hall)

Page 18 - Joe enters (balcony)

Page 21 - Sarah exits (hall)
Scene 2
Page 45 - Morris enters (dining room)
Page 46 - Joe enters (dining room)
Morris exits (dining room)
Rose/Sarah/Ben enter (dining room)
David enters (dining room)
Page 47 - Morris/Mady enter (dining room)
Page 56 - David/Morris/Ben/Sarah exit (dining room)
Rose exits (dining room)
Sidney enters (balcony)
Page 62 - Sidney exits (balcony)

Act II
Scene 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Character's Entrance / Exit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Page 65</td>
<td>Morris/Mady enter (dining room)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 66</td>
<td>Rose/Sarah enter (dining room)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 68</td>
<td>Ben enters (hall)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joe enters (hall)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 75</td>
<td>Ben/Sarah exit (hall)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rose exits (hall)

Page 76 - Morris/Mady exit (dining room)

Sidney enters (fireplace)

Page 83 - Sidney exits (fireplace)

Page 84 - David enters (hall)

Page 85 - Rose/Sarah enters (dining room)

David exits (dining room)

Page 86 - Ben enters (dining room)

Morris/Mady enter (dining room)

David enters (dining room)

Page 87 - Rose/Ben/Sarah/Morris/Mady exit (dining room)

Joe exits (dining room)

Sidney enters (balcony)

Curtain
Bibliography


