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## The importance of the communal theatre as a civic institution and means by which it can be strengthened and improved

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THE  
IMPORTANCE OF THE  
" COMMUNAL THEATRE  
AS A  
CIVIC INSTITUTION  
AND MEANS  
BY WHICH IT CAN BE  
STRENGTHENED AND IMPROVED

---

By  
John J. Gemma

Stockton

1948

A Thesis  
Submitted to the Department of Speech  
College of the Pacific

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In partial fulfillment  
of the  
Requirements for the  
Degree of Master of Arts

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APPROVED *Edward S. Betz* Chairman of the Thesis Committee

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## PREFACE

"Three ties by which states are held together are: community of race; community of religion; and community of interest."

J. R. Seeley

"The Community Theatre is a house of play in which events offer to every member of a body politic active participation--a common interest."

Louise Burleigh

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## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of writing this thesis is twofold. The writer will first establish the importance of the communal theatre as a civic institution, and then he will regard the original research material as it indicates the means by which the communal theatre may be strengthened and improved. It is hoped that this research will prove interesting and valuable to drama enthusiasts, educators, and the people of any community.

There were five hundred and fifty questionnaires mailed out to community theatres and high schools. The purpose of these questionnaires was to accumulate valid firsthand information to aid the writer in writing this thesis. Three hundred questionnaires were sent to high schools, and two hundred and fifty were sent to community theatres throughout the country. The writer was gratified by the returns. One hundred ten questionnaires were answered and returned by the high schools, and eighty-five were received from the community theatres. These returns are representative of nearly every state in the United States.

It is hoped that the statistical material found herein will prove valuable not only to the individuals who



wish to promote a community theatre within their community, but that it will also be a measuring medium for the communal theatres now in existence. For, it is the belief of the writer that the majority of communal theatres in America are not utilizing to a maximum their potentialities as civic institutions.

At this time, the writer wishes to acknowledge and thank the following individuals: Dr. Roy G. McCall, Dean Edward S. Betz, Miss Martha Pierce, and Mr. DeMarcus Brown. Without their inspiration and encouragement, this thesis could not have been written.

## PART I

In the first part of this thesis, we will define what a communal theatre is, what its objectives are, and of what importance a communal theatre is as a civic institution.

## CHAPTER I

### DEFINING THE COMMUNAL THEATRE

There are many theatres which to some degree aspire to communal participation in their theatre activities within the community, but there are only a few theatres which uphold the basic ideals of the true community or civic theatre. Upon observing the title of a theatre within a community today, it is difficult for one to conclude whether it is a community or civic theatre or if it is of the commercial, educational, stock, or artistic type. One must study its organization to be able to place the theatre in a specific category. It is my aim then to study some of these theatres so that one may be able to distinguish them.

It is with caution that some would speak of the communal theatre and the civic theatre as being synonymous, but note the resemblance in organization of the Palo Alto Community Theatre and the Kalamazoo Civic Theatre. These theatres are nearest to the ideals of a perfect communal theatre.

#### THE COMMUNITY THEATRE

The Community Players of Palo Alto, California,

were organized by the Palo Alto recreation department in 1931. In their infancy, they performed in the old Community House now turned into a Veteran's Building. In 1932, the Palo Alto Community Playhouse was presented to the city by Mrs. Louis Stern, a resident who has been interested in the Players since their inception.

This organization has probably the most ideal set-up for community drama in the whole country. The activity was intended to provide new people with additional opportunity for acting, and the plays were experimental in production and talent. From a membership of one hundred in 1931 the group has grown to over six hundred. The Players' group is organized as a distinctly recreational activity. Starring and featuring vehicles are avoided insofar as it is possible to do so and still provide the audiences with good entertainment. What makes this group significant is that it is the only completely municipally subsidized community theatre in the United States. All the theatre's income goes into the city till. The city budgets the yearly amount needed by the Players' group to make their endeavor a financial success.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Glick and McCleary, Curtains Going Up, pp. 287-292.

Being a taxpaid venture, the Palo Alto Community Theatre is obviously approved and fostered by the voters of the city. The taxpayer should be alert in his interest toward the theatre's productions, and he can justly demand "good" theatre. Having paid for the existence of such an institution, like public education, the taxpayer can participate in the activity in accordance with the established rules of the organization.

#### THE CIVIC THEATRE

"Dedicated to the happy use of leisure," the Kalamazoo Civic Auditorium was given to the people of Kalamazoo, Michigan, by Dr. William E. Upjohn. In this civic social center it is hoped that the citizens of the community may find opportunity for a fuller indulgence in things artistic and cultural, thus enriching the life of the city as a whole. It houses the Kalamazoo Civic Players and is a headquarters for the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra. Here for a nominal fee the Civic Players has on hand all the facilities for play production.

The first President of the Civic Players wrote the following as part of his message for the 1934-35 season opening program:

In the spirit of the Amateur, and without regard for class or status, literally

scores of players unite here to banish for one hour or so weariness of which I have hinted and which is incident to our highly organized society. They find no end of fun in this form of self-expression and the total effort which they awaken or renew the illusion of the stage and so interpret life is very considerable. On both sides of the footlights your partnership is invited in this enterprise that enriches our community.

This civic theatre opens its heart to the people. It has approximately one thousand active participants yearly. Its membership numbers three thousand.<sup>2</sup>

The communal aspirations of the two communal theatres mentioned are similar in many respects. Both perform for their own community with hopes to entertain and to advance the cultural standards of the city. Both encourage the citizens of their community to participate in what they take pride in as a democratic organization. Both have had theatres provided for them by wealthy citizens who prided themselves on believing that this activity was important to the welfare of the city. These two theatres may be called either civic or community theatres, but their aims as a communal enterprise are the same.

#### THE LITTLE THEATRE

The next theatre classification with which we will concern ourselves is called the Little Theatre Group.

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<sup>2</sup>Kalamazoo Civic Theatre, Community Theatre Questionnaire.

These theatres were so called because of their size. These theatres have a small stage and a very limited seating capacity. Dissatisfied with the established theatre up to 1911, many drama-minded individuals took to the Little Theatre Movement which found its inception during the years of 1911 and 1912. It was their aim to bring the drama to the many scattered communities which had never seen the legitimate stage. They were what one critic has termed "amateurs on the way toward being professionals." Private theatricals or commercial theatres are exactly what their names imply - "private" and "theatrical." The little theatre is organized by an amateur group with intentions to amuse and spread the cultural aspects of the drama to all communities. In so doing, theirs is not a commercial venture but rather an impulse, free in spirit, in outlook, and in pecuniary standards.<sup>3</sup> They are the heralds of the communal theatre. So being, they are synonymous with the civic and community theatres. The last two theatres, in fact, are an outgrowth of the little theatre.

Although the little theatres have been an object of much ridicule, acclaimed a menace by David Belasco,

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<sup>3</sup>Mackay, G. D'arcy, The Little Theatre in the U.S., pp.14-23.

satirized by George Kelley in his play, Torchbearers, they live because of important communal ideals which they offer to the American way of life. Let us study the organization of the St. Petersburg Little Theatre. It was established in 1933 and today is a reputable theatre organization of 150 active members and 740 associates. It presents six productions yearly. Its objectives read as follows:

We believe: that the Little Theatre is a definite part of the civic and social life of our Community; that its chief purpose is to afford every individual who really desires it, opportunity for self expression in the arts of the theatre, without thought of payment therefore, that the democratic fulfillment of this purpose makes certain that the drama as an art and an educational and spiritual influence shall not die.<sup>4</sup>

#### THE COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY THEATRE

The pioneer in the establishment of the college theatre was Professor George Pierce Baker of Harvard University. He established the first university course in playwrighting in this country and the first University Laboratory Theatre. The theatre's now-famous name was Harvard's 47 Workshop Theatre.<sup>5</sup> Today many colleges throughout the country give degrees in dramatic art.

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<sup>4</sup>St. Petersburg Little Theatre, Community Theatre Questionnaire.

<sup>5</sup>Mackay, D. D'arcy, op. cit., pp. 113-135.



These college theatres train students in the field of dramatics and educate the students of their college and people of their community to appreciate the drama.

Another objective of the college theatre has been to train its students for the professional theatre. The college theatre seems to neglect the aspect of training its students for the communal theatre.

The university or college theatre is not, then, a communal theatre. Although it may be an inspiration to its community in providing citizens with theatre productions so that they may appreciate the college's experimental and traditional drama, this college theatre does not make provisions for the people of the city to participate in the production. Of course, this situation is as it should be. The school's purpose is primarily to train students in drama production. We do not have a parallel to the Comedie Francaise or the Moscow Art Theatre in this country.<sup>6</sup> The American universities and colleges should bear the joyful burden of educating the students in the drama. At the same time, the universities should awaken to the possibilities of the communal theatre and educate some of their students to venture in this field of drama.

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<sup>6</sup>Saylor, Oliver M., Our American Theatre, pp. 113-135.

### REPERTORY AND STOCK THEATRES

The repertory theatre is sometimes defined as a stock theatre. Both, instead of performing one play continuously, have several productions ready, varying the performances each night or each week.<sup>7</sup> These theatre groups at times practiced the star system. Some organizations were built around stars like Irving, Terry, and Mansfield.<sup>8</sup> Other groups, such as the ones directed by Stuart Walker, have an organization of fifteen players, any of whom might have the lead in one play and play the butler in another. Here we have no typing in casting and the banishment of the star system.<sup>9</sup> The repertory or stock theatres are professional groups. They do not possess any of the qualities of the communal theatre other than its object to serve towns and cities which would not otherwise see the legitimate drama. Their production costs are kept low, but their survival depends upon the box office receipts. This group was the first theatre group to make one-night stands on the road.

### THE ART THEATRE

Sheldon Cheney defines the art theatre as a theatre

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<sup>7</sup>Sobel, Bernard, The Theatre Handbook and Digest of Plays, p. 658.

<sup>8</sup>Mackay, C. D'arcy, op. cit., pp. 223-227.

<sup>9</sup>Sobel, Bernard, op. cit., pp. 737-739.

dedicated to creative staging of important plays.<sup>10</sup> He looks down upon the commercial theatre, which he believes is organized to earn profits in competition. This being the case, Cheney thinks that the drama as an art is pulled down to that standard which experience has shown will please the largest group of money-spenders.<sup>11</sup> According to Cheney, the drama of the commercial theatre is of a degenerated vintage, whereas the drama of the art theatre lifts itself to a loftier plane.

This type of theatre has professional people in its organization. It is their hope to do educational work in their communities in an effort to create some sort of public standard of amusement. Other than this public service, the art theatre has no other feature which might link it to the communal theatre.

The Little Theatre of Chicago is an art theatre. Maurice Browne, once its director, has said the following concerning the purpose of this theatre:

It is a repertory and experimental art theatre producing classical and modern plays, both tragedy and comedy, at popular prices. Preference is given in its productions to poetic and imaginative plays dealing primarily, whether as a tragedy or comedy, with character in action...The Chicago Little Theatre

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<sup>10</sup>Cheney, Sheldon, The Art Theatre, p. 15.

<sup>11</sup>ibid., p. 21.

has for its object the creation of a new plastic and rhythmic drama in America.<sup>12</sup>

### CONCLUSIONS

The question then is which of the group of theatres that have been discussed are communal theatres. What theatres of this group are "theatres of the people, by the people, and for the people?"<sup>13</sup> Which of these theatres have dedicated the highest potentiality of the drama to public and not private ends?<sup>14</sup>

After considering all the evidence set forth in this chapter we can make the following observations. The theatres which are communal instruments are the Civic, Community, and Little theatres. The college or university theatres find their purpose as educational media. They can train individuals for the communal theatre. The Art Theatre and the Stock or Repertory Theatre are still holding fast to many of the principles of the commercial theatre.

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<sup>12</sup>Mackay, D. D'Arcy, op. cit., pp. 103-109.

<sup>13</sup>McCleary and Glick, Curtains Going Up, p. 12.

<sup>14</sup>MacKaye, Percy, The Playhouse and the Play, p. 137.

## CHAPTER II

### THE PURPOSE OF THE COMMUNAL THEATRE

During the Golden Era of Greece, the theatre in Athens exerted a guiding influence both upon society and the stage. The theatre's presentation was a special event during the all-important religious days. The audience sat in the Theatre of Dionysus from morning until late at night. With its circular dance floor, low platform and sweeping tiers of seats, it represented the democratic stage at its best, a place where everyone could see and hear.<sup>15</sup> Our communal theatre today is the flame ignited from the ever-glowing spark that was the theatre of Greece.

#### A RECREATIONAL AND SOCIAL CENTER

Of the eighty-five community theatres who answered the questionnaires, forty-five were organized primarily as recreational and social centers for the community. These theatres have been performing plays which will entertain their audiences. They seek to give their audiences what they want. Most audiences enjoy comedies, Broadway successes, and in some rare cases, classical plays which

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<sup>15</sup> MacKaye, Percy, op. cit., p. 14.

they would not otherwise see in the commercial theatre. During the depression, some communal theatre groups were organized to provide the emotional stimulation needed by the community to bear up during those bleak days.

Here in the community theatre the people have become friendly, understanding neighbors. They have a community of interest both as members of the theatre's production cast and as members of the audience. They play together as a production cast. They sit in the audience to be entertained. The communal theatre is a new type of playground for the community.

#### A CULTURAL CENTER

Of the eighty-five community theatres who answered the questionnaire, forty-two organized their groups with the cultural aspect of the communal theatre. In different degrees, these playhouses have successfully fostered and cultivated the people's interest in the drama as an art. They have added new activities within their organization that this might be accomplished. Classes in play-reading, historical development of the drama, and other allied courses have been opened to the public. Other theatres have given over their facilities to such cultural programs like musical festivals, concerts, lectures and art and craft displays. These theatres have realized

that they have the possibilities of being the parent to culture within the community. The allied arts which have been accepted as an added feature are part of the drama of real life. If it is drama in its fullest sense with which the communal theatre is going to deal, then we should look with comfort and agreement upon those theatres which have no limited bounds in their presentations.

A VEHICLE WHICH AIDS SELF-EXPRESSION AND DEVELOPS CHARACTER

The democratic way of life which is our heritage encourages and expects the individual to express himself on social and political issues that may arise. People are not eager to do this, and upon doing so, they show little confidence in their self-expression. The community theatre presents a man with the opportunities to develop his character. Thirty-six community theatres from the eighty-five who answered the Community Theatre Questionnaire regarded the self-expression factor as one of the original reasons for having established a communal theatre.

In acting, stage design, costuming and many other areas of drama production, an individual has the opportunity to develop creativeness and self-confidence in his accomplishments. Either one brings a great deal of person-

ality and ability into this work, or with the help of the director and cooperative cast members, he may develop his intuitive knowledge of human beings, a cultural and factual background of history, and an imagination to do his work well. At the same time, the man in the audience, if he becomes a zealous follower of his community theatre, will voice his personal criticisms concerning the productions. The communal playhouse presents these possibilities, and without much trouble the individuals who become part of this experience are destined to improve their self-expression which in turn develops their personalities.

#### AN EDUCATIONAL MEDIUM

Today, many educators are thinking in terms of Audio-Visual Education. The communal theatre either directly or indirectly may serve as an Audio-Visual Educational medium. It is a controversial issue among many scholars as to whether all plays are written with the idea of educating the audience upon certain points. Some other thinkers will voice a broader statement. They state that an experience -- poor, good, or indifferent is an education in itself. If a communal theatre production is an experience for the audience, then the theatre becomes an educational medium.



Some communal theatres have other educational objectives. They produce plays of social and political significance.<sup>16</sup> Others provide academic courses in the drama so that the public may develop an appreciation and understanding of this art. Still others educate local talent who seek careers in the entertaining field. Many individuals on the production staff of the communal theatres have succeeded on the professional stage. In the Appendix, Table 31, we find that 42 out of 85 communal theatres provided 317 members for the professional stage.

It is a question among the communal theatres whether it is proper to think of the communal theatre as an educational medium. Only 17 out of 85 theatres had this in mind when they considered the objectives of their theatre. One may question if the communal theatre despite the thoughts of its organizers is an educational medium. Some educational theatres think this point to be exceedingly important. They are of the belief that the audience may be both entertained and educated. Of course, the audience need not be aware of what is taking place.

#### AIDS THE PROGRESS OF A COMMUNITY

Some of the community theatres came into being with

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<sup>16</sup> Appendix, Table 28.

the purpose of supporting a community charity drive. The community theatre of Jacksonville, Florida, was organized to provide entertainment for soldiers during the first World War. The people of Eureka, California, with the support of the city's Recreation Department, organized a group for the purpose of buying an organ. This project had another purpose. The organizers had hopes of awakening the community to a desire for a community theatre group. A very small number of the communal theatres perform one benefit show a year. Only 8 out of the 85 community theatres who answered the questionnaire mentioned as one of their objectives "civic improvement."

The communal theatre, both back stage and in the lobby, is a congenial place for the people of the community to congregate. Here they can discuss social, economic, and political issues. Here freedom of expression should be encouraged. Here the force of public opinion may gain momentum. Here words may initiate action. It is even possible for the communal theatre to provide facilities for town meetings. None of the theatres noted this possibility. The communal theatre is a home for the democratic principles of government.

### PROVIDES SPIRITUAL SATISFACTION

In this country we are very conservative in our attitudes toward religion. We tolerate each other's faith and gladly delete the discussion of the different sects from our public functions. But most people believe that there are some fundamental practices which are accepted by all of the sects. Of the community theatres who answered the questionnaire, 3 out of 85 have more or less said as much. This have been promoting the religious seasonal spirit with plays and pageants having a non-denominational point of view.<sup>17</sup> These theatres have also made a point that few plays have been effectively written with a religious theme. Religious seasonal pageants are also needed.

### COMMUNAL THEATRES WITHOUT REASON

Eight of the 85 community theatres who answered the questionnaire stated that they were lost souls when it came to expressing their purpose as communal theatres. Some stated that they were organized because of a popular whim. Others stated that they were a selected social group bearing the name of a community theatre. Still

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<sup>17</sup>Appendix, Table 21.

others have broken away from their communal ideals and have become theatrical schools. The Pasadena Playhouse has written the following in a letter:

The Pasadena Playhouse Association since 1937 has been a non-profit educational corporation of collegiate grades. It falls now more in the category of an educational institution than it does a community playhouse organization.

### CONCLUSIONS

Strictly speaking, the community theatres have about six objectives in view. The majority of the communal theatres have only three of these objectives in their constitutions. These objectives are as follows: 1) the community theatre is to be a recreational and social center, 2) the community theatre is to be a cultural center for the community, 3) the community theatre is to aid self-expression and develop personalities. A smaller number of the 85 community theatres which answered the questionnaire also included one, two, or all three of the following objectives: 1) the community theatre is to be used as an educational medium, 2) the community theatre is to aid civic progress, and 3) the community theatre is to provide spiritual satisfaction.

It would be an ideal communal theatre which would in-

corporate the six objectives in their proper proportions. Experiment and experience can be one's only aid in determining to what proportion each objective should be emphasized within the organization. We can say that none of these objectives is more important than the others but that all six should fit into the pattern of the communal theatre.

### CHAPTER III

#### IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNAL THEATRE AS A CIVIC INSTITUTION

The communal theatre is designed to serve the greatest good of the greatest number of individuals within a community.<sup>18</sup> As Percy MacKaye has earnestly written:

The status of the playhouse in society is as vital as the status of the university in society. The dignity and efficiency of the one demand the same safeguarding against inward deterioration as the dignity and efficiency of the other. The functions of both are educative. The safeguard of each is endowment.<sup>19</sup>

The endowment may be said to be the public support of and public participation in the communal theatre.

A community will survive and progress only when it is united. J. R. Seeley writes, "three ties by which states are held together are community of race, community of interest, and community of religion." The communal theatre offers its city a community of interest. It is a house of play in which events offer the public a common ground of participation and interest.<sup>20</sup> It further pro-

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<sup>18</sup>Wells, Ralph E., "Organizing a Community Theatre", (Chapter II in National Theatre Conference, Organizing a Community Theatre.)

<sup>19</sup>MacKaye, Percy, op. cit., p. 79.

<sup>20</sup>Burleigh, Louise, The Community Theatre in Theory and in Practice, p. xxxii.

vides for a community of race. Here people of different heritages work together on dramas which are representative of countries throughout the world. In understanding these foreign dramas, they begin to appreciate the lives of all individuals in their heterogeneous group who have foreign heritages. As to being a community of religion, the communal theatre is limited. This theatre must respect and understand the different forms of worship. It must not try to pick out one form of worship as being the only one. It can produce plays with themes that uphold the fundamental beliefs of all the religions. It can produce pageants and plays concerned with the seasonal religious celebrations like Christmas, Easter, and Thanksgiving. These days are of importance to all people regardless of what type of worship they may pursue.

The communal theatre satisfies two camps of thought: 1) the social thinkers who look upon the drama as the means of saving society, and 2) the artists who care to inspire and entertain with their art.<sup>21</sup> Let us venture into a short discussion of both of these points.

A communal theatre may stimulate civic pride and patriotism. In so doing, it is a means of saving society.

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<sup>21</sup>Dickinson, Thomas H., The Insurgent Theatre, p. 98.

The communal theatre, as we have already stated, interprets with its drama the meaning of life, and this is done effectively if the drama is artistically done.<sup>22</sup>

The theatre educates its community with the help of its art. As John Dewey has very effectively written about the drama:

It consummates, therefore, the range of fine arts, because in dramatic form we have the highest ideal of self, personality displaying itself in form of personality. The ideal and the mode of embodiment are both personal and beyond that art cannot go, for in this man finds himself expressed.

If we consider that drama is just another art and that art is only an art when it exists for its own sake, then we fail to understand the true meaning of art. Art carries a message. It is a systematic application of knowledge or skill in effecting a desired result.<sup>23</sup> Art at its best interprets the message with the greatest of simplicity and delicate depth of understanding so that anyone may comprehend the message. If it is understood, then art can be appreciated. If it cannot be appreciated and called beautiful, how can it be art? The communal theatre can therefore satisfy both schools of thought.

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<sup>22</sup>Overton, Grace Sloan, Drama in Education, pp. 3-14.

<sup>23</sup>Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 5th Ed., 1936, p. 60.



A crude presentation cannot be of great educational value, and all presentations artistically presented educate the audience and seek the audience's deep appreciation.

### CONCLUSIONS

The communal theatre is of great importance as a civic institution. It unifies the community in a common interest. It helps the community to improve its civic pride and patriotism. It helps the heterogeneous group within a community to understand each other as individuals; consequently it promotes the "democratic way of life." The communal theatre demands the best of drama as an art; therefore, it seeks to develop the cultural aspects of the drama. Finally, the communal theatre with its entertainment values makes a people contented and happy.

## PART II

In this second part of our research, with the aid of the answers to the questionnaires and other Community Theatre studies, we will diagnose the past experiences of the community theatres. The results should be of value to the individuals who wish to organize a communal theatre and of importance in strengthening and improving the communal theatres now in existence.

## CHAPTER I

### ORGANIZING AND EDUCATING AN APPRECIATIVE AUDIENCE

#### PROBLEMS

The communal theatre's greatest problem is to organize and educate an audience that will appreciate a proper diet of plays. Usually, the theatre-going audience is a select group. It consists of the better-educated and the wealthier people of the community. The majority of the people of a community are not play goers. The communal theatre finds that it is very difficult to prompt the individual to see his first play, but if his first experience is a pleasant one, the individual usually comes back for more. This question of organizing and educating a community theatre audience is vital to the existence of the communal theatre.

#### THE JUVENILE AUDIENCE

It is very important that both the public schools and the communal theatres concern themselves with the children of today as active participants in the communal theatre of tomorrow. Let us observe and diagnose the statistics dealing with what the schools have been doing. Only 89 out of 108 schools who answered the high school

questionnaire have academic courses in the drama.<sup>24</sup> The majority of these courses deal with public speaking; only a very small number of the courses are directed toward the drama. Not one of the public schools has courses directed toward the benefits of a communal theatre. In communities where there is a communal theatre 41% of the high school students were interested in the drama. It is interesting to note that also 41% of the high school students were interested in the drama in the cities where there were no community theatres.<sup>25</sup>

It can be safely stated that the majority of students are not interested in the drama. If this is the case, they will cast dubious eyes toward the communal theatre. It is a fact that little is done in encouraging the student to realize the benefits of this recreational and cultural art. Compare this observation to the amount of attention that is paid by the high schools to the recreational field of sports. The comparison shows no parallel proportion of emphasis. It seems that high schools in general support a full athletic program. The number of high school students who participate in this program seem

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<sup>24</sup>Appendix, Tables 47-48.

<sup>25</sup>Appendix, Table 45.

to greatly outnumber those students who participate in high school dramatics. In cities where there is a communal theatre, out of 64 high schools only 18 schools have a dramatic club of a sort; and in cities where there are no communal theatres, out of 44 high schools, only 19 have dramatic clubs.<sup>26</sup>

The community theatre has done very little in organizing and educating a children's audience. Only 17 out of 81 of the communal theatres perform plays for the elementary school children; 10 out of 69 of the communal theatres perform plays for the adolescent group; and, only 5 out of 80 of the communal theatres have drama courses as an added feature of its theatre for the children.<sup>27</sup> About 5 out of 85 of the communal theatres have a children's theatre as part of its organization. The children's theatre in all cases is for the elementary group. Thirty-seven of the communal theatres responding sold student tickets.<sup>28</sup> Of this group the tickets sell at a high cost of ninety cents, average cost of fifty cents, and a good low of ten cents. The majority of the theatres sold tick-

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<sup>26</sup>Appendix, Table 35.

<sup>27</sup>Appendix, Tables 18, 19, 39, and 40.

<sup>28</sup>Appendix, Table 12.

ets for ninety cents.<sup>29</sup>

As the above statistics indicate, little is done by either the public schools or the communal theatres in organizing the educating a juvenile audience for the communal theatre. Many of the schools feel an obligation to educate the students for the communal theatre, but there are some high schools which have not been convinced that the communal theatre is important.<sup>30</sup> Very few communal theatres provide the proper productions for children. They claim that there are too few good plays for such an audience. Even more important is their claim that there are too few good plays for a family audience.

#### THE ADULT AUDIENCE

There are many methods by which the adult audience of a communal theatre may be organized and educated to enjoy and appreciate a proper diet of plays. Many of the responsibilities should fall upon adult public education. It would be interesting to consider the possibility of the communal theatre as being a part of the adult public education system. The director of the group would be called a

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<sup>29</sup> Appendix, Tables 14 and 17.

<sup>30</sup> Appendix, Tables 43 and 44.

teacher-director and would be on the education department's payroll. But we shall deal more extensively with the idea of the teacher-director in the next chapter.

The communal theatre could effect its own survival. It could offer courses dealing with drama appreciation and drama production. Proper advertisement is an aid in glorifying the importance of the communal theatre.<sup>31</sup> In comparing the community drama of Bali with that of America, Margaret Mead has made a suggestion as to how an audience would become a greater follower of the communal theatre. In Bali everyone from the poorest peasant to the proudest prince or priest can share the communal theatre. The citizens of Bali are as greatly interested in the rehearsals as they are in the final production. This interest in rehearsals, and the tendency of nonperformers and slightly-skilled persons to cluster into clubs on equal footing with the performers work to transform the participation of the audience. They become interested in the how and when of art. The American theatre's rehearsals are secret. Many of our performers and directors are uneasy when there are people around who witness the production in its infancy. Some are agitated to the point that their artistic temperments get the best of them. This makes for a great breach

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<sup>31</sup>Appendix, Tables 11 and 39.

between the non-performers and the production staff of the communal theatre. How interesting it would be if it were possible to develop in American life a pattern in which everyone in the community took an interest in rehearsals and the town gossip centered about how the leading man or the production was getting along.<sup>32</sup> The communal theatre would then be as interesting to the public as a championship game of baseball which is to be played by the local high school.

### CONCLUSIONS

Educating and organizing a juvenile and adult audience to appreciate a proper diet of drama is important both to the progress of the community and the development of the drama. As Clayton Hamilton writes: "The only movement for uplifting the stage which can have any practical and good result must be a movement for uplifting the audience."<sup>33</sup> The audience must be thought of first. Many of the communal theatres realize that they must produce plays which the public will come to see. In so doing, they must cater to the people's tastes. If the people's taste runs only to sophisticated comedies and

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<sup>32</sup> Mead, Margaret, "Community Drama, Bali and America", American Scholar, 11, pp. 77-88, (Jan., 1942).

<sup>33</sup> Hamilton, Clayton, Studies in Stage Craft, p. 261.



melodramas, then the theatre is stalemated. With the help of public education and the communal theatre's extra-curricular academic courses and lectures, the public would grow to enjoy and appreciate the best in drama; it would become intelligently critical of the productions it saw; and, ultimately, it would expect the communal theatre to give the public productions of high standards.

## CHAPTER II

### THE COMMUNAL THEATRE AND THE TEACHER-DIRECTOR

#### TEACHER-DIRECTOR

The director is a vital part of the communal theatre. He is the backbone of the organization. It is he who is responsible in shaping the Board of Director's policies for the betterment of the theatre. He must organize and educate an audience. He must properly educate the members of the production cast in the art of the drama and teach them to work amicably together so that they may perform productions of high standards. It is he who is directly responsible in developing a communal theatre which is an important civic institution.

It is appropriate that we call the director of a communal theatre a teacher-director. As we observe, his duties call for the capabilities of a stage director and a teacher. He must be both. While directing a production he is to teach the actors how to perform and the technical staff how to build and work with the stage sets. He must educate the administrators to the ways of the theatrical business. He is responsible for organizing an audience and educating it so that the drama will flourish and progress. He should be called upon as one of the co-

ordinators for the development of drama study in the city's public school. If this be the case, the communal theatre's director should not only excel in his profession as a director, but he should also have the necessary training which would establish him as a teacher. Having this number of responsibilities, the teacher-director should be well paid. His income should not depend upon the theatre's box office receipts, but he should be on the payroll of the city's educational department. We find that only 59 out of 85 of the community theatres are paying their director.<sup>34</sup> Of these, few paid the directors a living wage.

#### PROBLEMS OF THE TEACHER-DIRECTOR

The teacher-director's first problem is to know and understand the people of the community to whom he is responsible. He should become a part of the community life. He should be willing to participate in any of the city's social functions. There he should convince his public that he is an ordinary citizen who wishes to do his best for the progress of the community.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Appendix, Table 6.

<sup>35</sup> Gage, Richard N., "Director as a Citizen", (Chapter XVII in National Theatre Conference, Organizing a Community Theatre).

The teacher-director must at all times be alert to the fact that his personality will help sell the communal theatre; consequently, he must personify the democratic way of life. He must break down the connotative meaning that the public associates with a director or other people of the drama. The teacher-director must not allow the public to think him "arty" or "queer."

The second problem with which the teacher-director is confronted is that of being able to gain the respect and following of his production staff. He must break up cliques in the theatre and avoid being too friendly with any one person or a certain class of people. He must practice democracy and encourage his staff to do the same. At all times he should welcome newcomers and make them feel at home.

There are many other problems with which the teacher-director will be confronted. We will briefly comment upon the more important. The teacher-director must know people. An understanding of common-sense psychology will help. Thinking as a parent, the teacher-director should know and be able to cope with the children's needs of the drama. He should promote the possibility of having the communal theatre provide its facilities for an adolescent and grade school children's theatre. The public schools should be

responsible for these activities. In other words, the teacher-director should be a super-man.

### CONCLUSIONS

The communal theatre's director should be named teacher-director. This title befits an individual whose responsibilities are those of a stage director and a teacher. A professional type of performance is expected of the teacher-director, and for this, he should receive a living wage.

The teacher-director should be a model citizen. He should take an active part in community affairs. He should be a regular fellow respected and admired by his audience and his production cast. He should understand people and work for their welfare so that they will be contented and happy in a progressive community.

## CHAPTER III

### THE PROBLEMS CONCERNING THE PRODUCTION STAFF

#### PROBLEMS

The production staff of a communal theatre consists of three types of people. There are those who know their limitations in the art of drama production but are willing to learn. They are the loyal, hard-working participants. Second, there are those who think the communal theatre could not survive without them. They are the participants who breed cliques and break down the democratic ideals of the theatre. Finally, there are those who think they are not suited to become members because they are not "arty." Merging these types is one of the problems with which the teacher-director must concern himself.

#### ENCOURAGING PEOPLE TO PARTICIPATE

The dramatic impulse is part of the individual's equipment. It is based upon certain fundamental urges of the child. The child imitates and becomes creative when he ventures into self-expression by block construction or an impromptu monologue. He seeks the approval and praise of others. If encouraged, he will continue

with his creative abilities. The communal theatre can be beneficial to the child and the man by offering them a chance for self-expression and praise.<sup>36</sup>

There is no difficulty in getting children to participate in the activities of the communal theatre. The only exception may be found in the adolescent group. They must be convinced that when they are a member of the cast they are not "queer." The adult who has been conditioned to certain connotations with respect to the participants of the drama becomes a real problem. He must not only be convinced that the followers of the drama are regular human beings, but he must also be convinced that if he participates as a member of the communal theatre, he is improving his self-expression and his personality, and that his contributions are needed for the progress of his community.

The teacher-director may help this situation by encouraging a pleasant home-spun atmosphere at the communal theatre. He must discourage cliques. He must encourage people to act normally. He must convince the cast of the important purpose of the communal theatre. The objectives

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<sup>36</sup>Overton, Grace S., op. cit., pp. 47-64.

should be down in black and white.<sup>37</sup>

The teacher-director should consider this problem of enrolling participants as very important. Only 20 to 1000 active members are yearly participants in the 85 Community Theatres who answered the questionnaire. The average was 250.<sup>38</sup> This is very low when one considers the population of the cities that house the communal theatres. There are few towns and villages in the United States which have communal theatres. Nearly all of the communal theatres are in the cities.

The communal theatres may encourage the participation of those people who are concerned about the future of the drama. These people should realize that the communal theatre is also an experimental theatre. Plays which would be a risk for the professional theatre could be performed in the communal theatre. This theatre is a home for future dramatists, actors, and stage men who wish to enter the professional ranks. Of the community theatres which answered the questionnaire, 317 people out of 42 community theatres have joined the professional ranks.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>James, Burton W., "Organizing the Working Group", (Chapter III in National Theatre Conference, Organizing a Community Theatre).

<sup>38</sup>Appendix, Table 5.

<sup>39</sup>Appendix, Table 31.



Good advertisement helps to encourage people to become members. The propaganda which is to be used must prove the civic worth of the communal theatre. It should make people feel that they are missing a wonderful experience. The people should be made to look with envy upon the individuals who are members of the production cast.

Within the organization, there should be a constant turnover of actors and crew men. No one individual should consistently be the leading actor. No one individual should feel that he is the star. The teacher-director may think that this turnover would be impossible when his efforts should be directed toward productions of high standard, but he should realize that his talented group could be relied upon to teach others. In so doing, he would always have experienced people on hand. There is no better satisfaction for a person than to realize his importance of being able to teach others. In this way many of the production crew may be productively occupied.

Fair play should be the byword of the communal theatre. Casting should be accomplished by tryouts. Anyone should be given the opportunity to try out. The most capable should be given the part. Although the teacher-director will encourage all to participate, he must gain

the respect and understanding of his production cast when they consider his decisions. The members of the cast must realize their limitations. They should do whatever they are asked to do. The teacher-director should see to it that the duties of the individual befit his capabilities. Everyone must work for the anticipated production of professional standards. Everyone, regardless of what his contribution, large or small, must be made to understand that without his part the production would have failed. "There are no small parts, only small players."

#### CONCLUSIONS

The teacher-director is responsible for organizing and developing the communal theatre production cast. He must abolish cliques and diplomatically convince these groups that cliques are detrimental to the organization of a communal theatre. He must prove to the people of his community that they are welcome as members of the production staff and that, as members, they are all responsible in making the communal theatre a success.

## CHAPTER IV

### PRODUCTIONS MUST STRIVE

### FOR A HIGH LEVEL OF ARTISTIC ACHIEVEMENT

#### PROBLEMS

Although there are many activities which may revolve around the communal theatre, the most important feature of the theatre is its stage productions. If the teacher-director and his cast perform plays of a high level of artistic achievement, the communal theatre will continue to live. The production is the life blood of the theatre. The problem is how the teacher-director can achieve this aim. An individual who answered the community theatre questionnaire wrote that if he knew how to accomplish this and could look to continuous successes, he'd be a millionaire. This individual has ignored an important observation. Millionaires have become what they are because of realizing their mistakes.

#### PROPER DIET OF DRAMA

The "balanced diet" of drama is necessary for both the progress of drama as an art and for the progress of a people's cultural status. Many of the communal theatres fear to give their audiences a "balanced diet" of drama.

They provide only comedies and Broadway successes. This is what their people demand.<sup>40</sup>

Sixty-two out of 85 of the community theatres produce plays with the idea of audience diversion and emotional stimulation. Some 40 out of 85 of the theatres have tried a "balanced diet" of plays.<sup>41</sup> It is obvious that the purpose and ideals of the communal theatre are not understood by many of the individuals within the community. They approach the communal theatre with the same expectancy that they possess in approaching the commercial theatre. The commercial theatre whose purpose is to make money will play for the audience. No wonder the drama has lost its higher levels of achievement. But one may say that if the communal theatre is to be democratic, it too should cater to the people's wishes. Percy MacKaye has analyzed this situation as follows:

It is frequently asserted that the ideals of art and of democracy are irreconcilable; that art differentiates and uplifts, whereas democracy assimilates and levels. To this I venture the opinion that, in such an assertion, the ideals of democracy and of commercialism always levels; true democracy never... in accordance with the ideal of true democracy.

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<sup>40</sup>Appendix, Tables 22 and 23.

<sup>41</sup>Appendix, Tables 26 and 27.

the citizen, or the artist, is required to dedicate to the people whatever he believes best in himself-- and not merely what people may suppose to be best.<sup>42</sup>

It is important that the audience realizes the importance of a "balanced diet" of drama. This can be achieved by organizing and educating the audience. We have discussed the how and why in Chapter I of Part II in this thesis.

#### THE DRAMATIST AND THE PLAY

Many of the communal theatres have said that the American dramatist has failed to provide the communal theatres with worthwhile plays. He has been writing plays which are too trite or crude.<sup>43</sup> We must have dramatists who will write with the ideals and objectives of the communal theatre in mind. He should be able to depend upon his city's communal theatre as a proving ground for his plays. D. E. Lindstorm mentions a deficiency in rural plays, "Much remains to be done not only in developing a better appreciation of good rural plays but in getting people to write more of them...there are so many things in life and on the farm that so frequently go unheralded...the best comedies of rural life are just as

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<sup>42</sup> MacKaye, Percy, op. cit., pp. 19-20.

<sup>43</sup> Appendix, Table 25.

fine, just as respectful of what actually is, as those of city life, even the most sophisticated."<sup>44</sup> The dramatist would contribute a great deal to the communal theatre if he wrote about life in his community. He may contribute to the communities' understanding of their problems and their people.

#### DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL TALENT

Some productions of the communal theatres may be compared in artistic achievement with those performances of a professional commercial company. There is a great deal of potential community talent which lies dormant. Victor Hugo said, "...in the theatre the public soul was born...everybody is born with the dramatic instinct."

And Alfred G. Arvold adds:

Yes, there are dramatic materials in everybody's life in every state, in every country, and in every childhood. And one who spends his life in trying to extract that dramatic instinct from the people finds that there are oceans of talent yet unexpressed in communities.<sup>45</sup>

#### THE THEATRE

The communal theatre will perform at its greatest

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<sup>44</sup>Lindstrom, D.E., "Some Contributions of the Rural Drama to the Development of Rural Life", Recreation, 31, August 1937, pp. 289-290.

<sup>45</sup>Arvold, A.G., "Drama Materials and Man's Life", Playground, 23, April 1929, pp. 12-16.

efficiency if it has a good home and sufficient facilities with which to work. The theatre should be in the civic center of the community and have classrooms and what other rooms that are needed for the other activities which the theatre will provide. The seating capacity should be about 500, and the play should be performed as many times as is needed to accommodate the community. The cost of tickets should be about the same as motion picture admission prices. In this way, nearly everyone in the community will be able to see the productions. Admission prices can be this low if the communal theatre is tax supported. The community theatres found that Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday evenings are the best days for their performances.<sup>46</sup>

#### CONCLUSIONS

The community looks upon the communal theatre as producers of poor amateur shows. This need not be the case. With the aid of proper plays, a good theatre with appropriate facilities, and development of local talent, of which there is a sufficient quantity and quality, the communal theatre under the capable direction of the teacher-

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<sup>46</sup>Appendix, Table 27.

director can perform plays of a high artistic level. This can be done and must be done. For, as Percy MacKaye has said, "...night after night, year after year, our theatres are educating our people by the millions and tens of millions. The question is: shall the theatre educate those millions right or wrong?"<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>MacKaye, Percy, op. cit., p. 84.



## CHAPTER V

### FINANCING THE COMMUNAL THEATRE

#### PROBLEMS

Many of the communal theatres have failed because they were not able to keep balanced budgets. Although many of the services and donations of money are contributed to the community theatre by the community's citizens, the cost of a professional director, business manager, theatre's publicity, utilities, and materials must be met. Each of the community theatres has its own methods of solving these problems. The problem is to be able to have enough capital on hand for productions of a high level of artistic achievement and at the same time to provide a low cost of admission for the productions.

#### COST OF THE DIRECTOR

Of the eighty-five community theatres who answered the questionnaire, fifty-nine have directors who are paid for their services. Some theatres paid from \$100 to \$200 for each play the directors produced. Others contracted their directors on a seasonal basis. The seasonal salaries of these directors ranged from \$3,000

to \$5,000. The community theatres seemed to think that a director who was educated for community theatre work and was interested in this field was a great asset to the community players. If the director was professionally capable for this enterprise, the community players rationalized with the thought that if the director received a proper compensation, the community theatre could demand a high standard of service from its director. At the same time, it was felt that if a director was well paid he would feel obligated to earn his salary.

#### COST OF THE BUSINESS MANAGER

The life of the business manager is a merry one. It is he who lines up the production crews, promotes publicity, tries to economize on production costs, seeks patrons and subscribers, and whips up the financial report of the entire show for the Board of Directors. There are two important qualifications for a good business manager: first, he should be experienced in the ways of business, and second, he should have a keen sense of the theatre and a deep interest in the drama. Of the eighty-five community theatres who answered the questionnaire twenty-two pay their business managers a

salary.

The business manager's position is not a full time job in the organization of the majority of the community theatres, but his work is important and requires a great number of working hours. Consequently, the business manager is probably the only other individual on the community theatre's pay roll. In a budget for a community theatre in a southern city of 55,000 the business manager's salary was listed as \$1,200 for a season.<sup>48</sup> It will depend upon the size of the theatre, its income, and the discretion of the Board of Directors as to what the business manager's salary should be.

#### COST OF PUBLICITY

To organize and educate an active production cast and audience requires a great amount of effective publicity. The business manager is responsible for the promotion of this item. The cost of publicity depends upon the bulk of organizing and educating that is needed within the city. The newly organized community theatre group depends upon a great amount of publicity for its growth. The theatre which finds its existence ignored will find that publicity costs of necessity must be high.

Some community theatres have been fortunate enough

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<sup>48</sup>Selden, Samuel, Organizing A Community Theatre, p. 67.

to receive the services of the city newspapers and radio stations gratis. The newspapers have promoted the community theatre's ideals. The city's radio stations have made public service time available for spot announcements advertising the production. Some stations even provide half-hour programs produced and dramatized by the community theatre.

The greatest expense to be met under the title of publicity is the printing of bulletins, posters, mailing lists and newspaper publicity. Although the cost of publicity seems exorbitant, the community theatres have found this expense worthwhile. For good publicity has strengthened the position of the community theatre within the community. Publicity has proven to be an educative medium in alerting the citizen's attention toward the ideals of the community theatre.

#### COST OF MATERIALS

Creativeness, the making of something from practically nothing, is necessary when one considers the cost of materials with which the community theatre must contend. Although one can cut expenses by using old flats, patching canvas, and experimenting with light fixtures there are many other reliable methods upon

which the community theatre may depend to save the cost of materials.

The price of costuming for the community theatre's season is a fluctuating one. Expenses run high if too many period costume plays are produced. It has been found advisable that only one period costume play be given each season. Costumes are either rented or otherwise designed and tailored by the costume department of the community theatre. The price of rentals may run from \$50 to \$200 for each production. The average seasonal cost of costumes is from \$250 to \$500. If possible, it would seem advisable for the community theatre to build their own wardrobe. Of the theatres who have accomplished this goal some have rented their costumes to neighboring high schools. In this way, the community theatre receives an added revenue and obtains more prestige within the locale. The community theatres may depend upon city tailors and house mothers for the needed service in designing and sewing costumes. Then, the only cost is that of materials needed in the making of the costumes.

The cost of scenery and properties is unpredictable. The community theatre must depend upon the ingenuity of

the director for low costs in the building of scenery and properties. The remodeling and re-using of old materials may become a necessity. Costs may be cut if hardware, lumber and other materials are secured at wholesale prices from store owners who are interested and wish to contribute to the community theatre's endeavor. The store's kind gesture should be acknowledged on the program of the production. The business manager through healthy public relations may be able to borrow many of the properties that are needed for a production. This helps to cut down the operating costs. The seasonal cost of scenery and properties for a city of 55,000 may be about \$400.<sup>49</sup>

The cost of royalties and scripts is nearly the same for all community theatres. The average cost of one script is seventy-five cents and the royalty costs range from ten dollars to fifty dollars a performance. Other costs to be considered are: utilities, electrical equipment, postage and office supplies, and make-up. Those community groups who are fortunate to own their own theatre need insurance. The amounts which will be spent each season on the above materials and services depend upon the size and needs of the community thea-

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<sup>49</sup>Shelden, Samuel, op. cit., pp. 69-73.

tres concerned.

### THE THEATRE'S INCOME

The community theatre depends a great deal upon the financial backing of wealthy civic minded individuals who are willing to become donors or patrons of the community theatre. These individuals have even donated a theatre for some community player groups. Dr. William E. Upjohn contributed the Kalamazoo Players. Mrs. Louis Stern was responsible for Palo Alto's Community Theatre. The community theatres have had to prove their worth before such gifts were possible.

Season or subscriber's tickets have been a reliable source of income. The sale of these tickets provide a sum with which the Board of Directors may approximately budget for each play during the season. The sale of individual admissions is another revenue but one that is unpredictable. Other money has been received by the rental of the community theatre's electrical equipment and costumes, advertisements in the programs, sale of refreshments, and benefit dances and parties. Many of the theatres have had to depend upon one of the above sources to keep out of the red.

### TO OWN A THEATRE

It is the dream of all community groups to own

their own theatre. At their birth, the community players have had to depend on private homes and city halls for housing. Others were aided by the local adult education principal who provided the school's auditorium for their use. In time the cry is "Let's have our own theatre." In 1939, only nineteen community groups built theatres especially for the purpose of housing community drama.<sup>50</sup> These theatres were financed by donations or bond issues. Many of the community theatres are accumulating their small seasonal profits for this purpose. A theatre which is owned and operated by the community players seems to add prestige and dignity to their efforts.

### CONCLUSIONS

The commercial theatre's cost of productions has been fabulous in the past twenty-five years. Consequently, the cost of admissions for their productions scale from \$1.20 to \$3.65. This being the case only a selected few can afford the cost of admission. The community theatre's philosophy is different. It is their hope to have a reasonable admission cost equalling the price of a movie or reasonably lower. If this is to be accomplished, operating costs must be kept low. The community theatre

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<sup>50</sup> McCleery, Albert and Carl Glick, op. cit., pp. 337-339.



must rely upon the generosity of patrons, and the citizens of the community who are to allot their services. Carpenters may help build scenery; electricians may work on lights; tailors may sew costumes; and others may seek whatever work the community theatre provides that is allied with the individual's specialized career.

An efficient director who has the community theatre's interest at heart will coordinate the efforts of the organization so that it may have a balanced budget at the end of the season. The business manager's wise expenditures, good public relations, and constant check of the theatre's financial situation provides the necessary caution that is needed to keep operating costs down.

The community theatre's purpose is not necessarily to make a profit. It's aim is to be able to produce plays which can be seen by the greatest number of people in the community. The theatre's admission prices are reasonable and attractive to all classes of people. At the same time a sufficient income is needed by the community theatre so that it may be able to produce plays of a professional artistic standard.

## APPENDIX

### Author's Note

It seems desirable at this point to recapitulate the answers received from the community theatres and the high schools. The writer has also added to this appendix sample copies of the questionnaires that were mailed to over 250 community theatres and 300 high schools. This objective summary has been organized in "table" category. As the reader will notice, it seemed advisable with each table to first state the question, then to give the number of responses, and finally, to write the consensus of opinion.

(Sample Copy)  
QUESTIONNAIRE

## COMMUNITY THEATRE

I THE THEATRE

1. Name \_\_\_\_\_
2. Address \_\_\_\_\_
3. Year organized? \_\_\_\_\_
4. By whom? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Who is your director now? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Have you your own theatre? \_\_\_\_\_
7. How was it financed? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What is your seating capacity? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Is your theatre located in the civic center of the city? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Is it difficult for the public to get public transportation to your theatre? \_\_\_\_\_
11. Are refreshments served to the audience free of charge during intermission? \_\_\_\_\_

II MEMBERS

1. Number of members? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Active participants yearly? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Do you have:
  - (a) a professional director? \_\_\_\_\_
  - (b) any professional actors? \_\_\_\_\_
  - (c) any professional stage hands? \_\_\_\_\_
  - (d) a professional stage manager? \_\_\_\_\_
  - (e) a professional business manager? \_\_\_\_\_
4. If he is not a professional, is your director a student of the drama? \_\_\_\_\_ A college graduate of Speech and Drama? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Do members pay a tuition or club dues? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Name the individuals (by department titles) who are paid for their services as participants:
  - (a) \_\_\_\_\_
  - (b) \_\_\_\_\_
  - (c) \_\_\_\_\_

III PUBLICITY AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

1. Name two of the most effective publicity methods used to advertise your productions:
  - (a) \_\_\_\_\_
  - (b) \_\_\_\_\_
2. Do you sell student tickets? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Do you have any of the city clubs, fraternities, etc., help you to promote the sales of tickets? \_\_\_\_\_
4. How many complimentary tickets do you give out for each show? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What is the price scale of your tickets? \_\_\_\_\_

QUESTIONNAIRE (continued)COMMUNITY THEATRE

6. Give an averaged percent of the auditorium filled for each performance (over a year's time) \_\_\_\_\_
7. What has been your yearly profit during the last five years? \_\_\_\_\_

IV PRODUCTIONS

1. Number of plays presented yearly? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Do you have matinees for children? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Have you performed any plays especially for early aged children: (elementary group) \_\_\_\_\_  
(adolescent aged group) \_\_\_\_\_
4. If so, name five most successful plays:
- |     | PLAY  | AUTHOR |
|-----|-------|--------|
| (a) | _____ | _____  |
| (b) | _____ | _____  |
| (c) | _____ | _____  |
| (d) | _____ | _____  |
| (e) | _____ | _____  |
5. Have you performed any religious plays during the Easter and Christmas season? \_\_\_\_\_ Name five successes:
- |     | PLAY  | AUTHOR |
|-----|-------|--------|
| (a) | _____ | _____  |
| (b) | _____ | _____  |
| (c) | _____ | _____  |
| (d) | _____ | _____  |
| (e) | _____ | _____  |
6. Name five plays (other than above mentioned) of your most successful productions during your active organized period:
- |     |       |
|-----|-------|
| (a) | _____ |
| (b) | _____ |
| (c) | _____ |
| (d) | _____ |
| (e) | _____ |
7. Please give two reasons for your successes:
- |     |       |
|-----|-------|
| (a) | _____ |
| (b) | _____ |
8. Name your five most unsuccessful production:
- |     |       |
|-----|-------|
| (a) | _____ |
| (b) | _____ |
| (c) | _____ |
| (d) | _____ |
| (e) | _____ |
9. Give two important reasons for their failure:
- |     |       |
|-----|-------|
| (a) | _____ |
| (b) | _____ |

QUESTIONNAIRE (continued)COMMUNITY THEATRE

10. Are nearly all of your plays produced with the idea of audience diversion and emotional stimulation? \_\_\_\_\_
11. Do you produce any plays with an intellectual theme interpreting political, economic, or moral controversial issues? \_\_\_\_\_
12. If so, please name two most successful produced plays of this group: \_\_\_\_\_
- |     | PLAY  | AUTHOR |
|-----|-------|--------|
| (a) | _____ | _____  |
| (b) | _____ | _____  |
13. What are your total number of productions to date? \_\_\_\_\_
14. What evenings of the week do you perform? \_\_\_\_\_
15. How many times do you repeat the performance of your plays? \_\_\_\_\_

V MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

1. Do you encourage playwriting amongst your group? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Have any original plays been produced? \_\_\_\_\_  
 With success? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Are any of your former actors, directors or stage crew participants working on the professional stage? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Number? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Do you have any professional road shows perform in your theatre? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Number yearly? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What were the objectives of your community theatre when it was first organized?  
 (a) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (b) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (c) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (d) \_\_\_\_\_
5. State briefly the important reasons why you think you have such an earnest or otherwise indifferent attitude of the community audience toward your theatre?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
6. What were and are some of your problems in developing a community drama-going audience?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

(Sample Copy)

HIGH SCHOOL QUESTIONNAIRECOMMUNITY THEATREI OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN TO SEE THE DRAMA IN ACTION

1. Do you have a school's dramatic club that performs plays? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Please name five three-act plays the club has performed with great success in recent years?
  - (a) \_\_\_\_\_
  - (b) \_\_\_\_\_
  - (c) \_\_\_\_\_
  - (d) \_\_\_\_\_
  - (e) \_\_\_\_\_
3. Do you have a community theatre in your city? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Are the children encouraged to go see the community theatre's productions? \_\_\_\_\_
5. If not, please state two reasons:
  - (a) \_\_\_\_\_
  - (b) \_\_\_\_\_
6. Does the community theatre perform any plays especially for the students? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Is there a children's theatre in your community? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Have any professional road companies performed for the children at the high school? \_\_\_\_\_ At the community theatre? \_\_\_\_\_

II THE STUDENT THEATRE AUDIENCE

1. Is your school developing the student's appreciation of the drama through the reading of plays only, or do you require that they attend school and community theatre drama performances? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Should the school be responsible to develop a student drama-going audience? \_\_\_\_\_ Give two reasons why or why not?
  - (a) \_\_\_\_\_
  - (b) \_\_\_\_\_
3. What estimated percentage of your school's students do you believe are interested in drama production? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What estimated percentage of your school's students do you think have seen a professional drama performance? \_\_\_\_\_

III SCHOOL'S TRAINING OF STUDENTS TO APPRECIATE THE DRAMA PERFORMANCE

1. Do your schools include within the curriculum, from the first grade to the senior high school, courses of study developing the student's appreciation of the drama? \_\_\_\_\_

HIGH SCHOOL QUESTIONNAIRE (cont.)      COMMUNITY THEATRE

2. Does your high school have any speech and drama courses? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, please give titles: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Are your students encouraged to hear the drama performances given by the Theatre Guild on the radio? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What are some of the difficulties you are facing in trying to develop an appreciation of the drama by your students?
- (a) \_\_\_\_\_
- (b) \_\_\_\_\_
- (c) \_\_\_\_\_
- (d) \_\_\_\_\_

The Community Theatre QuestionnaireTABLE 1

Question: Have you your own theatre?

Statistics: Number of answers - 79  
 Yes - 40                      No - 39

TABLE 2

Question: What is the seating capacity of your theatre?  
 (Either owned or rented)

Statistics: Number of answers - 76

## Seating Capacity

Between:	100-200	9	theatres
	201-300	25	theatres
	301-400	14	theatres
	401-500	8	theatres
	501-800	20	theatres

TABLE 3

Question: Is your theatre located in the civic center  
 of the city?

Statistics: Number of answers - 75  
 Yes - 31                      No - 44

TABLE 4

Question: What is your number of members?

Statistics: Number of answers - 71  
 Low - 25  
 Average - 1000  
 High - 7500



The Community Theatre QuestionnaireTABLE 5

Question: What is the number of active participants yearly?

Statistics: Number of answers - 71  
Low - 20  
Average - 250  
High - 1000

TABLE 6

Question: Do you have a professional director?

Statistics: Number of answers - 85  
Yes - 59

TABLE 7

Question: Do you have any professional actors?

Statistics: Number of answers - 85  
Yes - 9

TABLE 8

Question: Do you have any professional stage hands?

Statistics: Number of answers - 85  
Yes - 6

TABLE 9

Question: Do you have a professional stage manager or technical director?

Statistics: Number of answers - 85  
Yes - 19

The Community Theatre QuestionnaireTABLE 10

Question: Do you have a professional business manager?

Statistics: Number of answers - 85  
Yes - 22

TABLE 11

Question: What are the most effective publicity methods used to advertise your productions?

Statistics: Number of answers - 85

## Publicity Used:

Number of  
Community  
Theatres

No publicity	2
Newspaper ads and features	71
Radio spot announcements and dramatic skits	21
Posters	23
Mailing list	20
Weekly bulletins	5
Bumper strips for autos	1
Table cards for restaurants	1

TABLE 12

Question: Do you sell student tickets?

Statistics: Number of answers - 80  
Yes - 37      No - 43

TABLE 13

Question: Do you have any of the clubs, fraternities, etc. help you to promote the sale of tickets?

Statistics: Number of answers - 80  
Yes - 20      No - 60

The Community Theatre QuestionnaireTABLE 14

Question: What is the scale price of your tickets?

Statistics: Number of answers - 85

Children: High .90 Average .50 Low .10  
 Adults: High \$3.00 Average \$1.00 Low .40

TABLE 15

Question: Give an average percent of the auditorium filled for each performance. (over a year's time).

Statistics: Number of answers - 76

Percentage	Number of Theatres
100%	10
90 to 99%	27
85 to 90%	6
80 to 84%	5
70 to 75%	17
60 to 69%	5
30 to 59%	6

TABLE 16

Question: How many plays do you present yearly?

Statistics: Number of answers - 77

Number of Performances	Number of Theatres
1	2
2	1
3	9
4	11
5	14
6	24
7	4
8	4
9	2
10	3
12	2
14	1

The Community Theatre QuestionnaireTABLE 17

Question: Do you have matinees for children?

Statistics: Number of answers - 84  
 Yes - 19                      No - 65

TABLE 18

Question: Do you perform plays especially for the elementary school children?

Statistics: Number of answers - 81  
 Yes - 17                      No - 64

TABLE 19

Question: Do you perform plays especially for the adolescent school children?

Statistics: Number of answers - 79  
 Yes - 10                      No - 69

TABLE 20

Question: What are the most successful plays performed especially for the children?

Statistics: See following charts.

## ADOLESCENT GROUP

*THEATRE SUCCESSSES	PLAY	AUTHOR	PARTS	SCENES	TYPE
2	JUNIOR MISS	J. Onodorov J. Fields	11m 6f	1 int.	Comedy
2	KISS AND TELL	H.H. Herbert	9m 6f	1 int.	Comedy
2	MALE ANIMAL	J. Thurber E. Nugent	8m 5f	1 int.	Comedy
2	MANY MOONS	J. Thurber (adapted by) C. Chorpenning			
1	BEST FOOT FORWARD	J.G. Holm	10m 7f	1 set	Comedy
1	CHRISTMAS CAROL	C. Dickens (adapted by) H.G. Sliker			
1	FRESH FIELDS	I. Novello	3m 6f	1 int.	Comedy
1	HAPPY JOURNEY	T. Wilder			
1	I'LL LEAVE IT TO YOU	N. Coward	4m 6f	1 int.	Comedy
1	LITTLE WOMEN	L.M. Alcott (adapted by) J. Ravold	4m 6f	1 int.	Drama
1	NIGHT OF JANUARY 16th	A. Rand	11m 10f	1 int.	
1	OUT OF THE FRYING PAN	P. Swann	7m 5f	1 int.	Comedy
1	PRINCE AND THE PAUPER	M. Twain (adapted by) H. Thomas	8m		Comedy
1	SNAFU	L. Solomon H. Buchman	10m 7f	1 int.	Comedy

\*Number of Community Theatres who picked this play as a successful production.

## ELEMENTARY CHILDREN'S PLAYS

*THEATRE SUCCESSSES	PLAY	AUTHOR	PARTS	SCENES	TYPE
4	CINDERELLA	H. Ould	5m 8f	none	Fairy essential Play
3	PINOCCHIO	A. Collodi (adapted by) A. T. Rice	20	5 int. 3 ext.	Fantasy
2	ALICE IN WONDERLAND	L. Carroll (adapted by) A. Gerstenberg	20	several sets	Fantasy
2	JACK AND THE BEANSTALK	N. F. Nixon	5m 4f	1 ext.	Fantasy
2	JEANNE D'ARC	M. M. Grimes	1m 5f	1 int.	Histori- cal Fan- tasy
2	SLEEPING BEAUTY	M. E. Clifford	6m 6f		Fairy Tale
2	TOM SAWYER	S. Clemens (adapted by) Paul Kester	13m 8f	2 int. 2 ext.	Comedy
2	WIZARD OF OZ	E. F. Good- speed	9m 5f	3 int. 2 ext.	Fantasy
1	CHRISTMAS CAROL	C. Dickens (adapted by) Daniel Reed			
1	GOLDIELOCKS AND THE THREE BEARS	E. Robinson			
1	HEIDI	E. H. Freeman	6m 7f	3 int. 1 ext.	Romantic Play
1	MAKE BELIEVE	A. A. Milne	30	exts. ints.	Fantasy
1	RAGGEDY ANN AND ANDY	J. Gruelle (adapted by) E. B. Cochrane	17	2 int. 3 ext.	Comedy
1	RED RIDING HOOD	E. Robinson			

\*Number of Community Theatres who picked this play as a successful production.

The Community Theatre QuestionnaireTABLE 21

Question: What were your successful religious plays?

Statistics: See following chart:

## RELIGIOUS PLAYS

*THEATRE SUCCESSSES	PLAY	AUTHOR	PARTS	SCENES	TYPE
3	A CHRISTMAS CAROL	C. Dickens (adapted by) H.G. Sliker			Drama
4	FAMILY POR- TRAIT	L. Coffee W.J. Cowen	12m 10f	1 int.	Rel. Drama
2	CRADLE SONG	G.M. Sierra (adapted by) P. Hereford	4m 10f	2 int.	Rel. Drama
2	WHY THE CHIMES RANG	E.A. McFadden			Drama
1	A CHILD IS BORN	D.E. Nichols			Rel. Drama
1	A CRICKET ON THE HEARTH	G. Brown			Drama
1	HOLY NIGHT	G.M. Sierra	12m 6f	2 ext. 1 int.	Rel. Drama
1	JOAN OF LORRAINE	M. Anderson			Drama
1	THE MIRACLE OF THE NATIVITY	R. Schram			Rel. Drama
1	MURDER IN THE CATHEDRAL	T.S. Elliott	10m 9f	3 int.	Poetic Drama
1	THE NATIVITY	R. Kinball			Rel. Drama
1	SHADOW AND SUBSTANCE	P.V. Carroll	6m 4f	1 int.	Drama
1	THE 10:40 TRAIN	L.C. Marsh			Drama

\*Number of Community Theatres who picked this play as a successful production.

The Community Theatre QuestionnaireTABLE 22

Question: What were your most successful productions other than those listed in previous questions?

Statistics: See following chart:

## MOST SUCCESSFUL PLAYS

*THEATRE SUCCESSSES	PLAY	AUTHOR	PARTS	SCENES	TYPE
11	ARSEWIG AND OLD LACE	J.Kesselring	11m 3f		1 int. Comedy
11	BLYTHE SPIRIT	N.Coward	2m 5f		1 int. Farce
9	KISS AND TELL	H.H.Herbert	9m 6f		1 int. Comedy
9	OUR TOWN	T.Wilder	17m 7f	Bare Stage	Drama
8	PAPA IS ALL	P.Green	3m 3f		1 int. Comedy
7	ANGEL STREET	L.Hamilton	2m 3f		Vic- torian Thriller
7	LATE GEORGE APLEY	J.Marquand G.Kaufman			Comedy
7	MAN WHO CAME TO DINNER	G.Kaufman M.Hart	15m 9f		1 int. Comedy
6	LITTLE FOXES	L.Hellman	6m 4f		1 int. Drama
6	DEATH TAKES A HOLIDAY	A.Casella	7m 6f		1 int. Drama
6	MY SISTER EILEEN	J.Fields J.Chodorov	21m 6f		1 int. Comedy

\*Number of Community Theatres who picked this play as a successful production.



The Community Theatre Questionnaire  
 MOST SUCCESSFUL PLAYS (continued)

THEATRE SUCCESSSES	PLAY	AUTHORS	PARTS	SCENES	TYPE
5	GEO. WASHINGTON SLEPT HERE	M.Hart G.Kaufman	9m 8f	1 int.	Comedy
5	LADIES IN RETIREMENT	R.Denham E.Percy	1m 6f	1 int.	Melo- drama
5	YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU	G.Kaufman M.Hart	9m 7f	1 int.	Comedy
4	AH, WILDERNESS	E. O'Neill	9m 6f	3 int. 1 ext.	Comedy
4	GUEST IN THE HOUSE	L.Coffee W.J.Cowen	12m 10f	1 int. 3 ext.	Rel. Drama
4	THE HASTY HEART	J.Patrick	8m 1f	1 int.	Comedy
4	I REMEMBER MAMA	J.Van Dru- ten	9m 13f	1 unit set	Comedy
4	JOAN OF LORRAINE	M.Anderson			Drama
4	JUNIOR MISS	J.Chodorov J.Fields	6f 11m	1 int.	Comedy
4	MACBETH	W.Shakes- peare	16m 6f	2 ext. 1 int.	Trag- edy
4	WINTERSSET	M.Anderson	16m 3f	1 int.	Drama
3	BELL FOR ADANO	P. Osborn	22m 5f	1 int.	Drama
3	CHICKEN EVERY SUNDAY	J. Epstein P. Epstein	12m 9f	1 int.	Comedy
3	CHARLEY'S AUNT	B. Thomas	7m 5f	1 int. 1 ext.	Farsial Comedy
3	CLAUDIA	R.Franken	3m 5f	1 int.	Comedy
3	DOUGHGIRLS	J.Fields	18m 8f	1 int.	Comedy

The Community Theatre Questionnaire  
MOST SUCCESSFUL PLAYS (continued)

<u>THEATRE</u> <u>SUCCESSSES</u>	<u>PLAY</u>	<u>AUTHORS</u>	<u>PARTS</u>	<u>SCENES</u>	<u>TYPE</u>
3	HAMLET	W. Shakespeare	15m 2f		Trag- edy
3	HIGH TOR	M. Anderson	14m 2f	1 ext.	Roman- tic Comedy
3	NIGHT MUST FALL	E. Williams	4m 5f	1 int.	Melo- drama
3	PETTICOAT FEVER	M. Reed	6m 4f	1 int.	Comedy
3	STAGE DOOR	E. Ferber G. Kaufman	11m 21f	2 int.	Comedy
3	GUDS IN YOUR EYE	J. Kirkland	13m 10f	1 ext.	Comedy
3	STATE OF THE UNION	H. Lindsay R. Crouse	11m 6f	3-4 ints.	Pol. Drama
3	THREE'S A FAMILY	P. Ephron H. Ephron	8m 8f	1 int.	Comedy
3	TAMING OF THE SHREW	W. Shakespeare	15m 3f	1 int. 1 ext.	Partial Comedy
3	THE WOMEN	C. Booth	35f	11 int.	Comedy

The Community Theatre QuestionnaireTABLE 23

Question: Give the reasons that you think were responsible for your successes.

Statistics: See following list:

1. "Due to good publicity."
2. "A superior production due to good play, effective directing, and member's cooperation."
3. "Strong audience appeal of the play."
4. "Because play was a Broadway success."
5. "Sound business management with low production costs."
6. "Large and diversified number of people in the production's activity."
7. "Knowledge of audience reaction."
8. "Timeliness of production performing seasonal plays."

TABLE 24

Question: What were your most unsuccessful plays?

Statistics: See following list:

The Community Theatre Questionnaire

## UNSUCCESSFUL PRODUCTIONS

<u>#THEATRE FAILURES</u>	<u>PLAY</u>	<u>AUTHOR</u>
3	BUT NOT GOODBYE	G. Seaton
3	FAMILY PORTRAIT	L. Coffee
3	LAURA	W. J. Gowen
3	ROOM SERVICE	G. Sklar
3	THREE CORNERED MOON	V. Caspary
2	AS HUSBANDS GO	J. Murray
2	CHARLEY'S AUNT	A. Boretz
2	CRADLE SONG	G. Tonkonogy
2	IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST	R. Crothers
2	LETTERS TO LUCERNE	B. Thomas
2	MR. AND MRS. NORTH	G. M. Sierra
2	A MURDER HAS BEEN ARRANGED	O. Wilde
2	NOAH	F. Rotter
2	NO TIME FOR COMEDY	A. Vincent
2	OUTWARD BOUND	O. Davis
2	OLD ACQUAINTANCE	E. Williams
2	THE RIVALS	A. Obey
2	SOLDIER'S WIFE	S. N. Behrman
2	SKIN OF OUR TEETH	S. Vane
2	SQUARING THE CIRCLE	J. Van Druten
2	TONIGHT AT 8:30	R. Sheridan
2		R. Franken
2		T. Wilder
2		V. Kaytsev
2		N. Coward

\*Number of Community Theatres that picked this play as an unsuccessful production.

The Community Theatre Questionnaire

## UNSUCCESSFUL PRODUCTIONS (continued)

*THEATRE FAILURES	PLAY	AUTHOR
2	THREE MEN ON A HORSE	J. G. Holm G. Abbott
2	UNCLE HARRY	T. Job
1	ANIMAL KINGDOM	P. Barry
1	ANDROCLES AND THE LION	G. B. Shaw
1	BELL FOR ADANO	P. Osborn
1	BERKLEY SQUARE	J.L. Balderston
1	CLAUDIA	R. Franken
1	CRAIG'S WIFE	G. Kelly
1	CYRANO DE BERGERAC	E. Rostand
1	A DOLL'S HOUSE	H. Ibsen
1	ENCHANTED COTTAGE	Sir A.W. Pinero
1	EAST LYNNE	N. Albert
1	FLY AWAY HOME	D. Bennett E. White
1	THE GUARDSMAN	F. Molnar
1	GENTLE PEOPLE	I. Shaw
1	HANLET	W. Shakespeare
1	HASTY HEART	J. Patrick
1	HIGH TOR	M. Anderson
1	HEDDA GABLER	H. Ibsen
1	IN A GARDEN	P. Barry
1	IVORY DOOR	A.A. Milne

\*Number of Community Theatres that picked this play as an unsuccessful production.

The Community Theatre Questionnaire

## UNSUCCESSFUL PRODUCTIONS (continued)

<u>*THEATRE FAILURES</u>	<u>PLAY</u>	<u>AUTHOR</u>
1	JANE EYRE	M. Carleton
1	KNIGHT OF THE BURNING PESTLE	Beaumont & Fletcher
1	KISS THE BOYS GOODBYE	G. Boothe
1	LITTLE FOXES	L. Hellman
1	MY SISTER EILEEN	J. Fields J. Chodorov
1	MURDER IN THE CATHEDRAL	R.S. Eliot
1	THE MALE ANIMAL	J. Thurber E. Nugent
1	PRIDE AND PREJUDICE	H.J. Version
1	PETTICOAT FEVER	M. Reed
1	SUN UP	L. Vollmer
1	SILVER CORD	S. Howard
1	SPRINGTIME FOR HENRY	B.W. Levy
1	POUCH BEARERS	G. Kelly
1	TAMING OF THE SHREW	W. Shakespeare
1	TROJAN WOMEN	Euripides
1	YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU	M. Hart G. Kaufman

\*Number of Community Theatres that picked this play as an unsuccessful production.

The Community Theatre QuestionnaireTABLE 25

Question: Give the reasons that you think were responsible for your failures.

Statistics: See following list:

1. "Audience does not appreciate heavy drama."
2. "Audience oblivious to experimental drama."
3. "Plays were too trite or crude."
4. "The Community Theatre had no or poor publicity to promote the play."
5. "The director's poor casting of the play."
6. "Lack of cooperation between the members."
7. "The plays were not very well known by the audience."
8. "Lack of efficient rehearsals."
9. "Subject of play not suitable for the audience."

TABLE 26

Question: Are nearly all of your plays produced with the idea of audience diversion and emotional stimulation?

Statistics: Number of answers - 85  
 Yes - 62                      No - 17

TABLE 27

Question: Do you produce any plays with an intellectual theme interpreting political, economic or moral controversial issues?

Statistics: Number of answers - 85  
 Yes - 40                      No - 45

The Community Theatre QuestionnaireTABLE 28

Question: What are some of your successful plays produced because of their intellectual theme?

Statistics: See following chart:

PLAYS WITH INTELLECTUAL THEMES					
*THEATRE SUCCESSSES	PLAY	AUTHORS	PARTS	SCENES	TYPE
4	STATE OF THE UNION	H.Lindsay	11m	3 - 4	Drama
		R.Crouse	6f	int.	
3	JUDGMENT DAY	E.Rice	4f	1 int.	drama
3	TOMORROW THE WORLD	J.Gow	3m	1 int.	Drama
		A.D'Usseau	7f		
2	ANTIGONE	Sophocles			Drama
2	CANDIDA	G.B.Shaw	4m 2f	1 int.	Comedy
2	JOAN OF LORRAINE	M.Anderson			Drama
2	MARGIN FOR ERROR	C.Booth	7m	1 int.	Mys- tery Comedy
			2f		
2	SKIN OF OUR TEETH	T.Wilder	4-5m	1 int.	Fan- tasy
			4-5f		
2	THUNDER ROCK	R.Ardrey	8m	1 int.	Drama
			3f		
2	WINGS OVER EUROPE	R.Nichols		1 int.	Drama
		M.Brown	20m		
1	ADDING MACHINE	E.Rice	14m	5 int.	Drama
			9f	2 ext.	
1	ANNA CHRISTIE	E.O'Neill	8m	2 int.	Drama
			2f	1 ext.	

\*Number of Community Theatres that picked this play as a successful production.



The Community Theatre Questionnaire

## PLAYS WITH INTELLECTUAL THEMES (continued)

THEATRE SUCCESSSES	PLAY	AUTHORS	PARTS	SCENES	TYPE
1	AMERICAN LANDSCAPE	E. Rice J. Cook	14m 7f	1 int.	Drama
1	ARRON SHANKS	S. Sax			Drama
1	BELL FOR ADANO	P. Osborn	22m 5f	1 int.	Drama
1	BOTH YOUR HOUSES	M. Anderson	13m 3f	2 int.	Satire
1	CRAIG'S WIFE	G. Kelly	5m 6f	1 int.	Drama
1	DOCTOR'S DILEMMA	G. B. Shaw			Drama
1	FAMILY PORTRAIT	L. Coffee W. J. Cowan	12m 10f	1 int.	Rel. Drama
1	HAIL NERO	M. Stocks	7m 6f	unit set	Hist. Drama
1	HOME OF THE BRAVE	A. Laurents	6m	none	Drama
1	JIM DANDY	W. Soroyan			Drama
1	JOHNNY JOHNSON	P. Green	49m 6f	13 simple scenes	Legend
1	JOURNEY'S END	R. C. Sherriff	10m	1 int.	Drama
1	LISTEN PROFESSOR	A. Afinogenov (adapted by) P. Phillips	5m 6f	1 int.	Comedy
1	LITTLE FOXES	L. Hellman	6m 4f	1 int.	Drama
1	MY HEART IS IN HIGH	A. C. Martens	5m 6f	1 int.	Comedy

The Community Theatre Questionnaire

## PLAYS WITH INTELLECTUAL THEMES (continued)

THEATRE SUCCESSSES	PLAY	AUTHORS	PARTS	SCENES	TYPE
1	OUR TOWN	T. Wilder	17m 7f	none	Drama
1	OUTWARD BOUND	S. Vane	6m 3f	1 int.	Drama
1	SHADOW AND SUBSTANCE	P. Carroll	6m 4f	1 int.	Drama
1	SIX CHARACTERS IN SEARCH OF AN AUTHOR	L. Piran- dello			
1	TAPESTRY IN GREY	M. Flavin	3m 1f	simple settings	Drama
1	THE TIME OF YOUR LIFE	W. Soroyan	18m 7f	2 int.	Drama
1	WAITING FOR LEFTY	G. Odets			
1	WINTERSSET	M. Ander- son	16m 3f	1 ext. 1 int.	Drama
1	YELLOW JACK	S. Howard	26m 1f	unit set	Drama

The Community Theatre QuestionnaireTABLE 29

Question: What evenings of the week do you perform?

Statistics: Number of answers - 85

Theatres Performing On:

Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
7	33	40	51	63	62	50

TABLE 30

Question: Do you encourage playwriting within your group?

Statistics: Number of answers - 85  
Yes - 49      No - 36

TABLE 31

Question: Are any of your former actors, directors or stage crew participants working on the professional stage?

Statistics: Number of answers - 85

42 out of 85 theatres had members who became professionals.

Out of this number of Community Theatres, 317 people became professionals.

TABLE 32

Question: What were the objectives of your Community Theatre when it was first organized?

A. Objectives of the majority of Community Theatres in order of frequency:

1. "Provide pleasant and useful entertainment for public and members."

The Community Theatre Questionnaire

Objectives of the majority of Community Theatres (continued)

2. "Provide opportunities for members of the Community Theatre that they may practice and improve their creative impulse in the field of dramatic art."
3. "Provide training in the dramatic arts."
4. "Bring legitimate theatre to the public with emphasis on the cultural aspect."
5. "Promote the democratic philosophy."
6. "Promote social intercourse."

B. Objectives of the smaller number of Community Theatres:

1. "Aid civic growth."
2. "Promote self-confidence and other personality traits of the individual participant."
3. "Promote a critical drama audience."
4. "To aid other community projects by giving benefit performances."
5. "Stimulate playwriting."
6. "To train individuals for the professional theatre."
7. "To develop the American Drama."

TABLE 33

Question: State briefly the important reasons why you think you have such an earnest or otherwise indifferent attitude of the community audience toward your theatre?

A. Why the indifferent attitude?

1. "The community looks to the Community Theatre as producers of poor amateur shows."

The Community Theatre Questionnaire

## Why the indifferent attitude? (continued)

2. "The general run of people in a community have never seen a play and have a negative attitude toward seeing their first legitimate drama."
3. "The professional theatre within the community offers competition."
4. "Because of ticket costs, the movie is a great competitive factor."
5. "Poor directors formed cliques within the membership causing dissatisfaction within the community."
6. "The public schools do very little in educating their students to appreciate drama."
7. "Lack of understanding by the majority of people within a community as to what the ideals of a Community Theatre are."

## B. Why the earnest attitude?

1. "The community newspaper is behind the Community Theatre."
2. "The productions are of a professional caliber."
3. "The Community Theatre has a paid professional director who receives the respect of the community."
4. "Varied Community Theatre productions which gives every thespian an opportunity to enjoy his kind of play."
5. "A subscription audience helps to talk up the season's plays, consequently interesting others. At the same time it helps to cut the price of admission."

The Community Theatre Questionnaire

Why the earnest attitude? (continued)

6. "Policy of practicing a democratic philosophy within the Community Theatre: 1) giving anyone within the community a chance to become a member and participate in the productions; 2) outlawing cliques; 3) avoiding the re-use of one individual in a season."
7. "Having a low admission cost."
8. "Being sponsored by the city recreation department."
9. "Stimulating a friendly feeling between the Community Theatre and the community."

TABLE 34

Question: What were and are some of your problems in developing a community drama-going audience?

1. "Trying to please the audience."
2. "Trying to clear the cost of the production."
3. "Avoiding cliques and other internal friction between the Community Theatre members."
4. "Finding good plays for their particular Community Theatre audience."
5. "Prove that the Community Theatre can do productions of merit."
6. "Trying to balance the theatre 'diet'."
7. "Encouraging more people to participate in the Community Theatre productions."

The Community Theatre Questionnaire

What were and are some of your problems in developing a community drama-going audience? (continued)

8. "Trying to get a full house on opening night."
9. "Reduce cost of admission."
10. "Trying to convince Community Theatre members that they should have a professional director."
11. "Improvement of the facilities for production."
12. "Educating the public to appreciate the Community Theatre productions."
13. "Trying to establish an effective Board of Directors."
14. "Trying to cope with the high cost of royalty on plays."
15. "Having a person come to see their first play."
16. "Trying to promote effective advertisement."
17. "Trying to produce plays for children and promoting a children's theatre."
18. "The need of classroom space and teachers to educate the people as to the appreciation and benefits of the drama and a Community Theatre."
19. "Attempting to keep the theatre democratic."
20. "Convincing the people that they don't have to look to the larger cities for good drama productions."

High School QuestionnaireTABLE 35

- Question: Do you have a dramatic club that performs plays?
- Statistics: A. High schools that have a Community Theatre in their city.
- Number of answers - 64  
Yes - 46                      No - 18
- B. High schools that have no Community Theatre in their city.
- Number of answers - 44  
Yes - 25                      No - 19

TABLE 36

- Question: Please name five three-act plays the club has performed with great success in recent years.
- Statistics: See following list:

(List of plays from high schools where a Community Theatre exists in their city).

*DRAMATIC CLUB SUCCESSSES	PLAY	AUTHOR	PARTS	SCENES	TYPE
8	JUNIOR MISS	J. Chodorov J. Fields	6f 11m	1 int.	Comedy
7	THE FIGHT- ING LITTLES	B. Tarkington (adapted by) C. Franke	5m 10f	1 int.	Comedy
6	LITTLE WOMEN	L. Alcott (adapted by) J. Navold	4m 6f	1 int.	Drama
6	MAN WHO CAME TO DINNER	G. Kaufman	15m 9f	1 int.	Drama

\*Number of dramatic clubs that picked this play as a successful production.



High School Questionnaire

List of successful plays from high schools where a Community Theatre exists in their city. (continued)

*DRAMATIC CLUB					
SUCCESSSES	PLAY	AUTHOR	PARTS	SCENES	TYPE
6	SPRING GREEN	F. Ryerson C. Clements	8m 7f	1 int.	Comedy
6	YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU	M. Hart G. Kaufman	11m 7f	1 set	Comedy
5	NINE GIRLS	W. Pettitt	9f	1 int.	Mystery Drama
5	OUR TOWN	T. Wilder	17m 7f	none	Drama
5	PRIDE AND PREJUDICE	H. Jerome	10m 16f	3 int.	Comedy
4	AND CAME THE SPRING	H. Hayes J. Hayes	9m 8f	1 int.	Comedy
4	DATE WITH JUDY	A. Leslie	5m 9f	1 int.	Comedy
4	EVER SINCE EVE	F. Ryerson C. Clements	6m 5f	1 int.	Comedy
4	RAMSHACKLE INN	G. Batson	9m 6f	1 int.	Mystery Farce
4	TOMORROW THE WORLD	J. Gow A. D'Usseau	3m 7f	1 int.	Drama
4	WHAT A LIFE	G. Goldsmith	8m 9f	1 set	Comedy
3	CHARLEY'S AUNT	B. Thomas	7m 5f	1 int.	Farcical Comedy
3	GEO. WASHINGTON SLEPT HERE	M. Hart G. Kaufman	9m 8f	1 int.	Comedy
3	JUNE MAD	C. Clements F. Ryerson	7m 6f	1 int.	Comedy

\*Number of dramatic clubs that picked this play as a successful production.

High School Questionnaire

List of successful plays from high schools where a Community Theatre exists in their city. (continued)

*DRAMATIC CLUB						
SUCCESSSES	PLAY	AUTHOR	PARTS	SCENES	TYPE	
3	NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH	J. Mont- gomery	5m 6f	2 int.	Far- cical Comedy	
3	OUT OF THE FRYING PAN	P. Swann	7m 5f	1 int.	Comedy	
3	PAPA IS ALL	P. Greene	3m 3f	1 int.	Comedy	
3	SMILING THROUGH	A. Martin	5m 5f	2 ext.	Drama	

List of successful plays from high schools where a Community Theatre does not exist in their city.

*DRAMATIC CLUB						
SUCCESSSES	PLAY	AUTHOR	PARTS	SCENES	TYPE	
4	MAN WHO CAME TO DINNER	M. Hart G. Kaufman	15m 9f	1 int.	Comedy	
3	THE BARRETT'S	M. Carleton	6m 6f	1 int.	Comedy Drama	
3	EVERY FAMILY HAS ONE	G. Batson	5m 7f	1 int.	Comedy	
3	JUNE MAD	F. Ryerson C. Clements	7m 6f	1 int.	Comedy	
3	JUNIOR MISS	J. Chodorov J. Fields	6f 11m	1 int.	Comedy	
3	PRIDE AND PREJUDICE	H. Jerome	10m 16f	3 int.	Comedy	

\*Number of dramatic clubs that picked this play as a successful production.

High School QuestionnaireTABLE 37

Question: Are the children encouraged to go see the Community Theatre's production?

Statistics: Number of answers - 60  
Yes - 42 No - 18

TABLE 38

Question: Why do you not encourage your students to attend the Community Theatre productions?

Statistics: See following list:

1. "Plays are too sophisticated."
2. "The Community Theatre is so completely separated from the school."
3. "Productions only sold out to adults."
4. "Plays are not suitable for children."
5. "Community Theatre productions not professional enough."
6. "Price of admission too high. There are no special children's rates."
7. "Community Theatre's seating capacity only 100, and plays are restricted to members and friends."
8. "Community Theatre gives only spasmodic performances."

TABLE 39

Question: Does the Community Theatre perform any plays especially for the students?

Statistics: Number of answers - 62  
Yes - 20 No - 42

High School QuestionnaireTABLE 40

Question:	Is there a children's theatre in your community?
Statistics:	A. High schools that have a Community Theatre in their city.
	Number of answers - 61
	Yes - 20                      No - 41
	B. High schools that have no Community Theatre in their city.
	Number of answers - 33
	Yes - 1                      No - 32

TABLE 41

Question:	Have any professional road companies performed for the children at the high school?
Statistics:	A. High schools that have a Community Theatre in their city.
	Number of answers - 60
	Yes - 22                      No - 38
	B. High schools that have no Community Theatre in their city.
	Number of answers - 39
	Yes - 13                      No - 26

TABLE 42

Question:	Is your school developing the student's appreciation of the drama through the reading of plays only, or do you require that they attend school and Community Theatre drama performances?
Statistics:	Number of answers - 65
	Reading of plays - 37
	Performances - 28

High School QuestionnaireTABLE 43

Question: Should the school be responsible for the development of a student drama-going audience?

Statistics: A. High schools that have a Community Theatre in their city.

Number of answers - 61  
Yes - 57                      No - 4

B. High schools that have no Community Theatre in their city.

Number of answers - 37  
Yes - 35                      No - 2

TABLE 44

Question: What are the reasons why or why not the schools should be responsible for the development of a student-going audience?

A. The school should be responsible because:

1. "Cultural development and wise use of leisure time."
2. "Improve appreciation of the drama."
3. "Contributes to the 'tone' of the community."
4. "Contributes to the life of the individual."
5. "Drama as a medium for educating students."
6. "To help citizens of our nation to become better audience material."
7. "Raise standard of entertainment."

High School Questionnaire

8. "An aid for youths' better understanding of life."
9. "Eventually it will produce a theatre-going audience with a finer taste who will demand and get better plays."
10. "Contributes to the appreciation of fine arts."
11. "To help the student to enlarge his interests in the world."
12. "In order to extend student's general education."
13. "For appreciation of dramatic literature."
14. "Pointing the way to a more worthwhile life."
15. "As a preparation to acquire culture and augment classroom theory."
16. "Dramatic literature presents values forcibly."
17. "Teaching appreciation of theatre ought to raise standards of production of American drama, radio, and movies."
18. "Development of talent and finds talent to develop."
19. "The theatre is a learning experience."
20. "Encouragement in artistic pursuits."
21. "Interest gained while young tends to last if properly nourished."

High School Questionnaire

- B. The school should not be responsible because:
1. "Parental objection -- in many cases certain religious groups."
  2. "Professional theatre often sets a bad example. Productions poorly done. Plays are too sophisticated."
  3. "Movie competition."
  4. "Community Theatre competition."
  5. "School facilities limited."
  6. "Foreign population within the community."
  7. "No opportunity to see legitimate acting except in school shows."

TABLE 45

Question: What estimated percentage of your school's students do you believe are interested in a drama production and what estimated percentage of your school's students do you think have seen a professional drama performance?

- Statistics: A. High schools that have a Community Theatre in their city.
- Number of answers - 40  
Interested in drama production - 41.55%
- Number of answers - 35  
Have seen a professional drama performance - 25.9%
- B. High schools that have no Community Theatre in their city.
- Number of answers - 54  
Interested in drama production - 41.38%

High School QuestionnaireTABLE 45 (continued)

Number of answers - 53  
 Have seen a professional drama  
 performance - 29.7%

TABLE 46

Question: Do your schools include within the curriculum from the first grade to the senior high school, courses of study developing the student's appreciation of the drama?

- A. High schools that have a Community Theatre in their city.

Number of answers - 58  
 Yes - 19                      No - 39

- B. High schools that have no Community Theatre in their city.

Number of answers - 41  
 Yes - 9                        No - 32

TABLE 47

Question: Does your high school have any speech and drama courses?

- A. High schools that have a Community Theatre in their city.

Number of answers - 61  
 Yes - 55                      No - 7

- B. High schools that have no Community Theatre in their city.

Number of answers - 47  
 Yes - 34                      No - 13



High School QuestionnaireTABLE 48

Question: What are some of the difficulties you are facing in trying to develop an appreciation of the drama by your students?

Statistics: See following list:

1. "No financial help."
2. "Failure on the part of administration to see importance of speech or dramatic training."
3. "Time for drama activities on school schedule not provided."
4. "Lack of interest at home in legitimate drama."
5. "High cost of plays."
6. "Fact that many present day stage attractions are not suitable for high school students."
7. "Expense of attending professional shows; few rates given."
8. "Hollywood presentations (movies) have such unlimited production scope that legitimate drama seems to lack appeal. The movies are also cheaper."
9. "Lack of a good Community Theatre."
10. "We have no professional performance nearby."
11. "No organized speech and drama work in school system under eleventh grade."
12. "Auditorium not available sufficiently."
13. "Texts include Shakespeare only."

High School QuestionnaireTABLE 48 (continued)

14. "The trend runs too much toward comedies."
15. "Audience prejudice against trivial items of smoking, etc., for stage."
16. "Principal prefers low brow drama."
17. "School audiences laugh at dramatic efforts of school."
18. "Lack of ability in reading plays."
19. "Lack of time in crowded English courses."
20. "The children don't grow up with drama - when they get to high school they can't seem to appreciate it."
21. "Lack of Community Theatre to carry out interest gained."
22. "Lack of time on part of the faculty members -- no drama teacher."
23. "Teacher training institutions have not recognized its importance."
24. "Too few trained dramatic teachers."
25. "Prevalence of cheap movies and radio plays without real literary or dramatic merit."
26. "Drama in the literature courses is not made very interesting."
27. "No drama organizations that cater to school ages."
28. "The people and students have the philosophy that a play is a means to earn money with no other value. There has been no education regarding the cultural value of speech."

High School QuestionnaireTABLE 48 (continued)

29. "Traditional curriculum forbids sufficient number of students from electing speech and drama courses."

TABLE 49

Question: Are your students encouraged to hear the drama performances given by the Theater Guild on the radio?

Statistics: A. High schools that have a Community Theatre in their city.

Number of answers - 64  
Yes - 48                      No - 16

B. High schools that have no Community Theatre in their city.

Number of answers - 43  
Yes - 28                      No - 15

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