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The Record of a creative project in directing Yours, Anne

Tom Carter
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Carter, Tom, M.A.

San Jose State University, 1989

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THE RECORD OF A CREATIVE PROJECT IN DIRECTING
YOURS, ANNE

A Project Report
Presented to
The Faculty of the Music and Theatre Arts Departments
San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Tom Carter
August 1989

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ABSTRACT

THE RECORD OF A CREATIVE PROJECT IN DIRECTING YOURS, ANNE

Tom Carter

This project report presents a description of the processes and an evaluation of the results of directing and musical directing the play, Yours, Anne. It addresses all pre-production concerns including play selection, directorial concept, and design elements. It also examines the director's work with the actors in such areas as auditions, casting, actor coaching, blocking, and music direction. In addition, the report presents evaluations of the project's effectiveness.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This document bears the name of one author, but records the experience and involvement of many people. I am indebted to my graduate committee, Dr. Robert Jenkins, Professor Richard Parks, Professor Theresa Larkin, and Professor Janie Scott. They provided much appreciated support throughout the entire production process.

I am extremely grateful for the hard work, patience, and dedication of the cast and crew. Notable among the latter are Len Harris (Stage Manager), Mikel Sooter, Scott Sinagra, Diane Winesburg, Steve Placke (Shop Foreman), Katie Amstutz, Pam Sakoi, and Sara Beukers.

Throughout the years, my parents have been a source of inspiration and encouragement in my theatrical and scholastic endeavors. I, therefore, wish to thank Tom and Terry Carter.

Dedicated to the memory
of all the individuals
who were tortured or killed by the Nazis.

"Life will be life and we will be
people, and we will be free!"

Enid Futterman, Yours, Anne

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CHAPTER 1

Elements of Production Prior to Rehearsal

Introduction

This report presents an explanation and evaluation of a Creative Project in Music Theatre. Since the particular nature of the Special Master's degree required training in both the Music and Theatre departments, the author was both stage director and musical director for Yours, Anne, a lyric drama based on Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl. Yours, Anne, written by Enid Futterman with music by Michael Cohen, was presented in the Studio Theatre at San Jose State University's Theatre Arts Department on April 13 (matinee and evening) and on April 15 (evening only).

The director's preparation for this project included a background in singing, acting, directing, teaching, and designing within the professional, educational, and community theatre. It also included extensive performing of choral music on the professional and educational levels.

Purpose of the Project Report

The purpose of this report is to provide an account and analysis of the production experience. The report is organized so that the following information will be considered: play selection, production parameters, characteristics of the script, the director's concept,

design elements, requirements of the thrust stage, auditions, casting, actor coaching, blocking, musical direction, problems and solutions, and evaluations.

The introductory chapter provides information on all the elements of production that did not specifically include working with the actors. Chapter Two explains the director's methods of working with the actors, and Chapter Three includes the evaluations of the director and the members of his committee.

Play Selection

The director chose Yours, Anne after a lengthy search for the appropriate play. Prior to the choosing of Yours, Anne, he had considered The Fantasticks. Upon reflection, however, the director realized that the educational benefit of that choice would be minimal; he had previously directed two different productions of that play and starred in a third. He therefore sought to find a play which would test and strengthen his abilities as a director. Yours, Anne was chosen for its challenges, including the following:

1. Yours, Anne is based on Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl and therefore presents a familiar and much beloved story in a potentially threatening "musical" format. Being a musical treatment, it has the potential to alienate audience members who expect a musical to lack the sensitivity needed for this lamentable story.

2. Since Yours, Anne is an historical account of real people, the acting must be as truthful and believable as possible. Additionally, since these real people were in an incredibly stressful situation, the actors portraying them are challenged even further to remain believable in intense emotional conditions.

Production Parameters

The amount of financial and technical support a production receives affects a production profoundly. In addition to royalty and script costs, Yours, Anne was initially allotted a budget of \$100 for sets and costumes and \$500 for the pianist. Shop time was to be limited to one week of full technical support.

As time progressed, it became evident that a properties budget was essential and \$100 was allocated for properties. Diane Winesburg became the costume designer and spent much more than one week preparing the costumes. This support was indicative of the support provided by faculty members Bob Jenkins and Randy Earle and Shop Foreman Steve Placke who ultimately contributed considerably more than the previously agreed upon one week of support.

Lighting was the only area which remained somewhat limited since the Yours, Anne light plot shared a finite number of instruments with The Fantasticks, a show directed

by Lisa Beddow which ran in repertory with Yours, Anne.

Another parameter which affected the direction was the three-quarter thrust stage--a form decided upon by the production staff prior to the play's selection.

Characteristics of the Script

The script of Yours, Anne consists of 27 scenes which trace the Franks, Van Daans, and eventually Mr. Dussel from their relatively idyllic life in Amsterdam on June 12, 1942, through their capture by the Nazis two years later.

While the script is strictly linear, it is also fragmentary. The scenes, many of them short, often follow one another with no readily apparent relationship other than that of time.

Just as the structure is fragmentary, so is the dialogue which often consists of different characters speaking one sentence at a time. Sometimes the scenes are broken up still further by presenting two or three dialogues going on between different sets of characters. While these different sets of people are relating simultaneously, the lines themselves are spoken one at a time. Therefore, Anne might be speaking to Dussel but must wait for Mrs. Frank to address Mr. Frank before she can continue speaking to Dussel.

The director found the script to be viable and workable as it is described above but decided to edit some

scenes, change the order of others, and excise still others. His choices were based on determinations of effectiveness and clarity.

The Director's Concept

Prior to choosing Yours, Anne, the director had never read Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl, never seen the play or movie version of The Diary of Anne Frank, and had never done any research on World War II or the Holocaust. As he investigated the Holocaust, the director was struck by the enormity and brutality of the tragedy. As he continued the research, he was further struck by the perception that the tragedy is still with us. Just as the Nazis dehumanized each individual child, woman, and man who belonged to the Jewish faith by thinking of them collectively and abstractly as "Juden," so do we dehumanize the memory of those individuals slaughtered by perceiving them as "six million Jews." In order to return the dignity each of them deserves, we must think of them as the individuals they were.

The director conceived of Yours, Anne as a ritual of remembrance in which the actual people depicted on stage are remembered, personalized, and humanized. He chose to manifest this through extremely realistic acting juxtaposed with various means of verfremdungseffekt (estrangement) which will be discussed in greater depth in subsequent

sections of this report.

Design Elements

Set

The set of Yours, Anne posed a number of problems for the director and designer. It needed to have several different levels to allow for separation of scenes, to aid with sight lines, and to give the sense of the different levels in the real achterhuis (annex) in Amsterdam. While it was necessary to give a sense of reality to the space, it was also important to imbue it with theatricality to aid in the verfremdungseffekt.

In solving the problems described above, set designer Bob Jenkins and the director designed a set in the style of suggestive realism consisting of four platforms of different heights overlapping each other at various angles. These platforms, backed by large wall flats, were situated on the upstage third of the thrust stage, allowing for maximum sight lines and staging possibilities. In order to be true to the real achterhuis, Jenkins based the color scheme of the set on actual photographs of the Amsterdam residence.

The pianist was placed behind the upstage center flat and had visual access to the stage through three scrims built into that flat.

Properties

Just as the set was designed for maximum utility, so were the furniture and properties. Properties designer Katie Amstutz and the director chose to fill the set with enough furniture and hand props to support the actors' belief in the given circumstances and to suggest the cramped quarters of the actual achterhuis. The furniture was merely a suggestion of the reality, however, since most of the actors used the floor for a bed (something the real residents did not do). A real kitchen sink was missing as well. The decision not to have real beds or a real sink was both practical and stylistic; space did not allow for them but suggestive realism permitted their absence.

Lighting

The lighting served two very important functions in Yours, Anne. At times, it isolated specific actors in specific areas of the set and, by this very isolation and other means to be discussed later, it reminded the audience members that they were watching a play--that the characters were actors representing real people.

Perhaps the most significant verfremdungseffekt in Yours, Anne was the director's decision to use slides which established, at the very beginning of the play, that these were actors attempting to honor specific individuals in history.

Once the house and preset lights went out, individual slides of each resident of the achterhuis were projected. As each image of the real person appeared, the actor portraying that person walked into the theatre and stood, face to face, with the enlarged image of his or her counterpart. As the last slide (of Anne Frank) was projected, the actress portraying Anne walked up to Anne's room, stopped at the top of the steps, then proceeded to the desk to write in her diary. As she made the physical transition from edge of room to Anne's desk, the slide went out, thus confirming the relationship between actor and real historical individual. This same device was used at the end of the play as the image of the real person was projected during each character's farewell to life.

In the final moments of the play, Anne's slide remained projected after she "died." After a taped speech of Anne's concluded with "...and I want to go on living, even after my death," Anne's slide went out, signifying her death. However, the diary special remained up, signifying that her life does indeed "go on."

Just as slides of the individuals were used to give the audience emotional distance from the actors, so were slides of Nazi influence used to maintain the audience's historical perspective during the scene which showed the motivation to go into hiding.

As these slides were being shown, other lighting effects were employed to further estrange the audience. The general lighting became red and a spotlight was directed at the actors which symbolized the Jewish individuals' growing sense of entrapment and persecution. The spotlight followed the Franks as they made their way from "home" to achterhuis and it further estranged the audience members by "hitting" them as well as the Franks. Thus, the scene described above was filled with verfremdungseffekt in the form of lighting. The director wished not only to estrange the audience members but also to give them some sense of the discomfort felt by the Jewish people. The overwhelming negative stimuli in the form of slides, lighting, and heretofore unmentioned Nazi voices was intended to overwhelm the audience members as the Nazi persecution overwhelmed those persecuted.

The spotlight was used again in the same symbolic form to represent the Nazis as they raided the achterhuis and arrested the individuals inside.

All of the lighting choices in Yours, Anne were collaborative efforts between the director and lighting designer Mikel Sooter. As design meetings were held, both parties were continually struck by the similarity of their visions.

Sooter's design for Yours, Anne won for her the annual

Keylight Award for excellence in the artistry of stage lighting.

Sound Design

To manifest the theatricality of Yours, Anne, all of the sound cues were taped instead of live. These cues included doorbells, phones, explosions, German voices, sirens, bird songs, street noises, and footsteps.

Sound designer Scott Sinagra used the CART system and reel to reel tape recorder to deal with the sometimes complicated cueing of effects required.

In addition to the sound effects, Sinagra also compiled pre-show, intermission, and post-show music which he overlaid with various other effects including street noises, a Hitler speech, and children's voices. Sinagra's choices for the music were excellent for the mood they set. He also collaborated with the director in the designing of symbolic sound effects. For example, during the pre-show we juxtaposed Mozart's Eine kleine Nachtmusik (Anne's favorite piece) with the Funeral March by Wagner.

The director and sound designer also used symbolism in conjunction with the children's voices during the pre- and post-show music. The last sound heard on the pre-show tape was children's voices. The last three minutes of the pre-show music was also used as the post-show music, ending with the same children's voices. Though the point was

undoubtedly lost to most audience members, the director and designer were attempting to communicate that the potential for tragedy exists now just as it did in 1942. The times may have changed but people's attitudes towards each other still remain impersonal and inhumane. The fact that the voices heard are children's voices also gives hope--we as a society still have a chance to decide our own future.

Costume Design

The costume design, similar to the set design, was both realistic and suggestive in style. The actors wore realistic period clothing but had only a minimal amount of changes. While the amount of clothing was certainly not realistic (the actual people had many more clothes and many more opportunities to change them) the costumes themselves provided both the actors and the audience members with a sense of reality.

To further heighten that sense, the actors changed into distressed and altered clothing during intermission to show the effects of time on the clothes and on them. The actress playing Anne, for instance, wore smaller clothing during the second act and unbound her breasts to support the impression that she was growing into puberty.

Costumer Diane Winesburg did an outstanding job not only of fitting pulled costumes but also of designing color and fabric appropriate for each character. Her achievement

in costume design for this production was affirmed when the following month she was awarded the Theatre Department's annual J. Wendell Johnson award for excellence in design.

Makeup Design

Since the director saw makeup as an element of realism and not of estrangement, the makeup was very subtle. Broad makeup in such close proximity to the audience would have constantly estranged and would have hence gone against the director's concept of selective estrangement.

Designer Sara Beukers and the actors worked very carefully and effectively to suggest the facial characteristics of the real people being portrayed. The actor playing the older Mr. Dussel went as far as distressing his face with a latex base to give himself the pock-marked skin of his real life counterpart.

Requirements of the Thrust Stage

A thrust stage (surrounded by audience on three sides) presents the director and actors with certain conditions which must be recognized.

Though it might seem unnecessary to state, these conditions are very different than those of the proscenium stage. The stage pictures are drastically different for audience members in the different seating areas and, indeed, drastically different for different members in the same area. One of the director's primary duties is to

constantly monitor and create effective stage pictures and sight lines from different seats in the house.

One of the consequences of staging on the thrust stage is that actors will have their backs to some audience member almost all the time. The actors must be encouraged to find business and focus which will open themselves to views of audience members in the different seating areas. When it is inappropriate to adjust physically, the actors must be encouraged to "act with their backs," especially if their action or reaction is a critical one.

A standard solution to this problem of visibility on the thrust stage is to block the actors in such a way that they are moving continuously to different areas of the stage while also facing different directions. While Yours, Anne as conceived by this director presents few opportunities for such large movement patterns, it does present numerous opportunities for smaller physical adjustments and stage business which the director emphasized.

While movement is one solution to certain thrust staging problems, it must be blocked with the awareness of the relative strengths of the different acting areas. Different theorists and directors disagree about the specific identification of these areas, but this director considered upstage center the strongest position because the actors' backs need not be shown to any portion of the

audience. All other areas are strong or weak depending on one's point of view. The director's perception of these relative areas influenced the choice to locate Anne's desk up-center and dictated that important blocking be staged as far upstage as possible.

One other aspect of thrust staging needs to be discussed, and that is the concept of "working the diagonals." To maximize the visibility for the greatest number of audience members the actors need to face each other on the same diagonal whenever possible (the diagonal is figured relative to the horizontal and vertical axis of the basic stage). Any blocking which requires the actors to face each other while on a horizontal or vertical plane will effectively block the view of a disproportionate number of audience members.

CHAPTER 2

The Director's Work with the Actors

Auditions

Since Yours, Anne and The Fantasticks were drawing from a limited number of musical performers, the directors decided to hold combined general auditions. Audition notices had been posted a month earlier advising the actors that they would need to prepare one ballad for the general audition and a monologue or scene for Yours, Anne callbacks.

After hearing all the performers sing, a process which included testing their range and its suitability for specific roles, the directors discussed potential casting choices and callback lists. Lisa Beddow needed certain performers for The Fantasticks, so this director excluded their names from the Yours, Anne callback list.

The Yours, Anne callback was a rigorous three and one-half hours of monologues, ear testing, solo singing from the score, and situational improvisations. Since neither Lisa Zambetti (cast as Anne) nor Dina Stubbe (cast as Mrs. Van Daan) could attend the callbacks, the director arranged to meet with them at another time. In order to avoid

potential disappointment or frustration for the actresses who did attend callbacks, they were advised that both Dina and Lisa were also auditioning.

Casting

The fact that nineteen people auditioned for a combined total of sixteen roles made casting both more and less difficult. The director of each show had to compromise and adjust certain primary casting choices but, once these adjustments were made, the remaining actors in each separate cast had only to be assigned the best possible role. Several actors also auditioned for Lysistrata, but, fortunately for Beddow and this director, director Richard Parks was extremely flexible with his casting in order to accommodate our and the actors' needs.

This director looked for certain general traits in each actor, including vulnerability, sensitivity to other actors, and an ability to risk and commit wholeheartedly to given circumstances. Beyond these desired general traits, the director looked for specific qualities and abilities for each role.

The role of Anne was the most demanding since Anne must not only act and sing well but must also be able to experience and believably communicate a complete emotional gamut running from despair to ecstasy. Add to these traits

an ability to look like and play a thirteen year old and the role appears very difficult to fill. Fortunately for all concerned, Lisa Zambetti auditioned. As an actress, she possessed all of the desired qualities and brought a wonderful sense of professionalism and dedication to her work. Though an untrained singer, she brought a wonderful purity and sweetness of tone to Anne's songs which she tempered with a strong chest voice when the circumstances and music required it.

The role of Mr. Frank was also particularly demanding since he must be believably older, mature, strong, sensitive, and charismatic. Richard Galli, a forty-seven year old graduate student, was a perfect match. The only problem Richard had was a lack of experience singing harmony. However, he made up for this with a willingness to work and be worked with that was surpassed by none of the other cast members.

The role of Mrs. Frank required a quiet strength and a mature ability to do much of her acting with no text. The actress cast would also need a strong singing voice in this production since she would be singing duets with Richard Galli whose voice was very powerful. Jennifer Russell brought not only the most trained voice to the production, but also a quiet dignity and maternalism which proved very effective even though she was only 18 years

old.

The role of Margot Frank also required a high degree of concentration and commitment to acting without a great deal of text. The actress also needs a strong chest voice with a good range to handle her solo. Elizabeth Mills, primarily experienced in dance, was chosen for her concentration and delightfully untainted emotional commitment she demonstrated in the situational improvisations. The director considers himself fortunate to find such an actress with the voice and discipline for this role.

The role of Mrs. Van Daan demanded an actress of great emotional range and depth as well as a subtle comic ability. Dina Stubbe brought an unparalleled blend of these talents as well as a strong and distinctive singing voice to the role. The role of Mrs. Van Daan is perhaps the most complex of the eight roles in the show and requires a mature awareness and advanced acting skills. Stubbe handled all the requirements beautifully.

The role of Mr. Van Daan, also complex, called for an actor who was able to handle a great deal of negative inner monologue. Mr. Van Daan is embittered, frustrated, and, in a sense, emasculated by the historical events and by his wife. Kevin Bradshaw, a graduate student, brought these abilities and more to the role. His diligent

physical and mental work proved very successful in presenting the troubled Mr. Van Daan.

The role of the Van Daan's son, Peter, requires both sensitivity and a strong tenor singing voice. Rian Galbreath acted the role of the awkward and shy Peter with subtlety and sweetness and brought a beautiful tenor voice to the role as well.

The role of Mr. Dussel called for, among other traits, a physical maturity, the ability to believably confront Anne, and an ability to express a powerful sensitivity to the fate of the Jewish people. Stephen Abdella, a graduate student, was cast and brought with him a powerful physical presence as well as a certain sense of aloofness and independence which suited Mr. Dussel very well.

Actor Coaching

One of this director's primary goals was to foster extremely realistic acting among the entire cast, acting which would be as close to "true life" as possible. For this reason, and since this director believes that a director is largely responsible for the quality of acting in his production, he strove to establish a shared acting technique among the cast. This technique or style will henceforth be termed "truthful realism."

Truthful realism is based on the notion that actors in a realistic production must act the way that human beings

truthfully act. In order to do so, the actors must understand human behavior and be able to employ this understanding on stage.

The director stressed seven tenets of truthful realism:

1. Human beings always have specific objectives.
2. If the objectives are important to them, people will do anything and everything to get what they want.
3. When people talk to each other, each person's objective is to affect the other's thoughts/actions in some specific way.
4. When trying to affect each other, humans constantly check the other (through any and all sensory means) to monitor their own progress towards their objective.
5. Human beings' thoughts are of specific and concrete images when they discuss a past event or describe a person, place, or thing. They "see pictures" in their minds.
6. Humans usually know their immediate past and their distant past.
7. People usually tell the truth and if they make a statement (such as "I love you") they usually know the reasons for their convictions.

Since people in "real life" think and behave this way,

actors who wish to behave realistically must do the same; their thoughts and actions must be behaviorally correct. Actors must identify their specific objectives as they relate to the other person; they must know how they want the other person to respond. Actors must constantly check the other to monitor their own progress. Actors must create concrete and specific images. They must fully flesh-out their immediate past and their present circumstances. They must tell the truth and fully understand the truth as they speak it.

While truthful realism is based on actual human behavior, it is not a degeneration into slovenly communication or self-indulgence. The director and the actors worked together to insure that each moment of Yours, Anne was filled with truthful realism which advanced the plot, clarified character and relationships, and supported the director's concept. The director tried consistently to give notes such as "Who are you trying to affect with that line?" and "You say you come up here and swear. Think of one time that you did that and experience it now."

By focussing on truthful realism the director hoped that the actors would be able to commit more fully and more truthfully to each moment. This commitment, in turn, would, it was hoped, engage the audience more completely in the world of the play and in the recognition that those

abstract historical statistics were fully real, special, and unique human beings.

Blocking

As discussed in Chapter One, the director wished not only to engage the audience members with truthful realism but also desired to remind them that this was a ritual of remembrance intended to honor and dignify the real people the actors portrayed. In addition to using the design elements for this purpose, the director also used blocking to manifest this concept.

In the second scene, after the actors entered from the house and faced the projected image of their real-life counterparts, the Franks and Van Daans sat on the bare stage in symmetrical groupings. While the dialogues intimated that they were in comfortable surroundings at home, the blocking suggested that they were actors in theatrical formations.

When the Nazi voices startled the characters from their idyllic existence, the actors moved through the space in large arcs, constantly turning and avoiding the spotlight.

Between each scene the illusion of realism was broken as the actors were perceived placing themselves and their properties for the next scene in the play.

At the opening of Act Two the actors entered from the house, sat on the downstage edge of the stage, and watched

slides of the Franks. Once the slides were finished, each actor walked toward center stage. When they were near center, Pam Sakoi, the pianist, played a violent, low chord cluster. At that moment the actor reacted as if the noise were a specific negative quality about life in the achterhuis. He or she moved away from the center, proceeded to a spot on the edge of the stage, and stood facing out. Throughout the song which followed, and during the dialogue interspersions, the actors moved almost as if in a harsh modern dance.

After this song, Anne remained in the center of the stage (while the other actors dispersed) and spoke one of her diary entries. She was neither at her desk nor did she ever look at her diary. She merely hugged it to her chest.

Perhaps the most significant blocking choice which served as verfremdungseffekt occurred at the very end of the play as Mr. Frank "said goodbye" to each member of his family and to his friends before he announced each person's fate by the Nazis. As they met in the center of the stage, they reached for each other, and, in pantomime, shook hands, hugged, kissed, caressed, but could not touch. They were separated by time, distance, and death, since Mr. Frank is narrating by necessity after the fact of their deaths. The only person who could touch Mr. Frank was Anne (who held the tips of his fingers lightly, then walked away), since

she, most of all, has continued to "go on living, even after [her] death." While each actor was saying goodbye, the slide of the actual person was shown behind him or her. The estrangement devices of characters unable to touch each other and slides of the actual people being remembered hopefully worked together at this moment to manifest the concept, "We are actors portraying these individuals and honoring their memory."

Musical Direction

Perhaps one of the most fortuitous elements of Yours, Anne was the fact that it is a lyric drama; it includes songs. This is particularly fortuitous since songs interrupting scenes of speech are built in estrangement devices; they readily remind the audience members that this is a play.

The director wanted to insure that the estrangement would be limited to philosophy and not aesthetics so he worked specifically on musical techniques which would help to create as pleasant a sound as possible from all actors. He spent a good deal of the early rehearsals working on music and concentrated on pitch, vowel uniformity, diction, clear cut-offs, phrasing, and dynamics. As rehearsals progressed, the director and the actors concentrated on emotional involvement with the songs, and eventually, were treating the songs more and more as text and less as

intrusive musical entities.

CHAPTER 3

Problems and Evaluations

Problems

While the director received a great deal of support from all involved, he still encountered certain technical and human problems.

One problem was that some of the technical requirements on the sound and light technicians were too challenging to be perfected in one run-through. While they are to be commended for their incredible diligence, the technicians simply needed more practice with the full complement of lighting and sound cues. Even though they supposedly had two technical run-throughs, the first run-through was devoid of sound cues due to equipment difficulties.

A second problem had to do with the actors' difficulty in picking up their cues. The director realized the complexity of the script and therefore started run-throughs as early in the process as possible. Even so, cue pick-ups were still slow. One reason for this, besides the difficulty of the script, was the rather worrisome absenteeism rate at rehearsals due to prior obligations, sickness, or, in rare instances, irresponsibility.

The director used parts of several rehearsals to run troublesome scenes, with and without the blocking. Speed-throughs were employed. Actors were called to special line rehearsals. The performances, while not perfect in regards to cue pick-ups, were far better than some rehearsals and reflected a genuine dedication to the ensemble by eight individual actors.

The third problem was a minor one and had to do with the inexperienced musical ears of some of the actors. The director worked privately for many hours with some in the cast, and the improvement was marked if not completely satisfactory.

Faculty Evaluations

On Thursday, April 25, the director met with the members of his Graduate Committee to discuss the production of Yours, Anne. What follows is the recollection of the faculty responses aided by notes taken by the director during the meeting.

Bob Jenkins

On the whole, Jenkins thought that the director had done "a hell of a job" with the play. He specified three moments which moved him to tears--the song "I Remember," the end of the "Chanukah Song" when the final chord was sung in only candlelight after which the actors exited the stage in candlelight, and Mr. Frank's goodbye to Anne.

Jenkins also said that the actor coaching was particularly successful, that the director "had a gift" for working with young actors and bringing the most out of them. He particularly enjoyed the characterization of Anne by Lisa Zambetti; he found it "quirky, fresh, unique, and a little bit bratty. A unique Anne Frank that rang true." Jenkins had trouble with two scenes he felt were over-directed--the Nazi voices scene with the overwhelming estrangement effects and the final tape of Lisa reading "...I want to go on living even after my death." Jenkins felt that the quality of the tape was lousy, that it took away from the actors' work, and that it could not match the power of the goodbye between Mr. Frank and Anne which immediately preceded it.

Theresa Larkin

Larkin was also generally positive and said that the director had succeeded with "several strikes against" him. She did not like the music very much and felt that the production worked in spite of it. Other aspects which she spoke well of included the "abstraction" of the staging, the ensemble, and "turning the actors inside out." She liked several of the performances very much, particularly Jennifer Russel's, Lisa Zambetti's, Richard Galli's, and Dina Stubbe's. Though Larkin liked the acting, she had some problems with the scene changes and the blue light

they took place in. She would have liked to have seen more done with them. She also wondered if there were not too many props.

Janie Scott

Scott was asked specifically to comment on the pianist's accompaniment. Scott found it "seamless and unobtrusive" and remarked that it supported the actors without detracting or interfering with their performances. She also did not identify with the slides of the other people besides Anne (at the beginning of the play) and suggested that this moment might not have been as successful as this director had intended.

Richard Parks

Parks found the directing "impeccable" and, when asked to offer some constructive criticism, said, "You're talking to the wrong guy. I loved it." He found all of the choices effective and thought that what was perhaps most remarkable was that the director had successfully overcome the tendency to play the "bathos" of the piece and had instead realized the "pathos" of the play while simultaneously using verfremdungseffekt. He also thought that the music worked both to estrange and to bring tenderness to the characters. Parks found the play particularly challenging and was impressed that he went away from it acknowledging the particular weaknesses and

negative characteristics of some of the characters but still feeling that they were "individuals who didn't deserve what they got any more than you or I would."

Concluding Remarks

This director has very positive feelings about the California premiere of Yours, Anne. Everyone involved with the production took a challenging and unknown new play and worked extremely diligently to make it successful. The director is proud of the editing, the concept, and the boldness of the choices made to manifest the concept. Yours, Anne gave him an opportunity to develop and manifest a directorial concept, the notion of which was unfamiliar to him prior to the Fall of 1988. The director is also proud of the actors' work, the musical direction, the design elements, and the attention given to truthful realism.

The audience members with whom he spoke gave unsolicited feedback which always supported his feelings about the production. They were all impressed with and affected by the slides, the quality of the acting, the staging, and the farewell scene during which the characters were unable to touch.

While Yours, Anne was popular with the audience, it was not a perfect production. Some of the light and sound cues were never as they could have been. A few of the

actors still struggled with truthful realism. The directorial choices made may have been distracting at certain points.

Because it was not a perfect production, it gave this director the opportunity to learn from his mistakes. He will certainly be more aware of the amount of time allotted for technical run-throughs. He will also treat the sound design with much more respect, deal with it earlier in the production process, and monitor its progress more closely.

This production of Yours, Anne was a play about the individuals involved and not about the tragedy of the Holocaust. The director wanted to emphasize that these were unique human beings who, like all individuals, have hopes, fears, joys, laughter, tears, and frustrations. The director hopes that the nature of the tragedy became more pronounced as the audience members perceived Anne, Margot, Mr. Frank, Mrs. Frank, Mr. Van Daan, Mrs. Van Daan, Peter, and Mr. Dussel as individual "people" and not just as abstract "victims" of the Holocaust.

DIRECTORS NOTES:

WHEN I BEGAN TO SEARCH FOR A PLAY TO DIRECT AS A MASTER'S PROJECT, I LOOKED FOR A SOCIALLY SIGNIFICANT SMALL-CAST MUSICAL WHICH PROVIDED INTERESTING ACTING AND DIRECTING CHALLENGES.

YOURS, ANNE IS SUCH A PLAY

AS A SOCIALLY SIGNIFICANT DRAMA, YOURS, ANNE IS IMPORTANT AND TIMELY. DAVID DUKES, AN ADVOCATE OF RACIAL PURITY AND WHITE SUPERIORITY, HAS JUST BEEN ELECTED TO THE LOUISIANA LEGISLATURE. IN LONG BEACH, A WHITE POLICEMAN STOPPED A BLACK UNDERCOVER POLICEMAN FOR NO REASON OTHER THAN THE COLOR OF HIS SKIN AND SHOVED HIS HEAD THROUGH A PLATE GLASS WINDOW. GAY MEN AND WOMEN ARE BEING ASSAULTED DAILY. CURRENTLY, THE WEST GERMAN GOVERNMENT IS PREPARING TO CONTAIN ANTI-JEWISH RALLIES THIS APRIL 20TH, THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF HITLER'S BIRTH

AS LONG AS WE SEE OTHERS ABSTRACTLY, DENYING THEM THE RIGHTS, HOPES, AND FEARS WE RESERVE FOR OURSELVES, CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY WILL CONTINUE. UNTIL WE REALIZE THAT, AS ELIE WIESEL SAYS, "EVERYBODY HAS A FACE." WE ARE THREATENED WITH THE PROSPECT OF ANOTHER HOLOCAUST



*Yours,
Anne*

YOURS, ANNE IS PRESENTED BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT WITH CINECOMMUNICATIONS, INC.,
10 ROCKEFELLER PLAZA, SUITE 1009,
NEW YORK, NEW YORK, 10020.

April 13/ 2 & 8PM
April 15/ 8PM

UNIVERSITY
s a n j o s e s t a t e
THEATRE
u n i v e r s i t y

*Yours,
Anne*

LIBRETTO: ENID FUTTERMAN MUSIC: MICHAEL COHEN
CAST

Carter 33

ANNE LISA ZAMBETTI
PETER RIAN GALBREATH
MR. FRANK RICHARD GALLI
MRS. FRANK JENNIFER RUSSEL
MR. VANDANN KEVIN BRADSHAW
MRS. VANDANN DINA STUBBE
MARTIN ELIZABETH MILLS
MR. DUSSEL STEVE ABDELLA

MUSICIANS

PIANIST PAM SAKOI

1942-1944

THE ANNEXE, AMSTERDAM, HOLLAND

DIRECTION AND DESIGN

SPECIAL THANKS TO
LISA BEDDOW
DR. CONRAD BOROVSKI
MISS JEAANE GARSON
THERESA LARKIN
DR. RICHARD PARKS
JANIE SCHWARTZ
JANIE SCOTT
IRMELIN SLOMAN
GOETZ SPIESS
TONY TAPPER
MIKE TOUCHI
ST. PHILIP'S EPISCOPAL
CHURCH

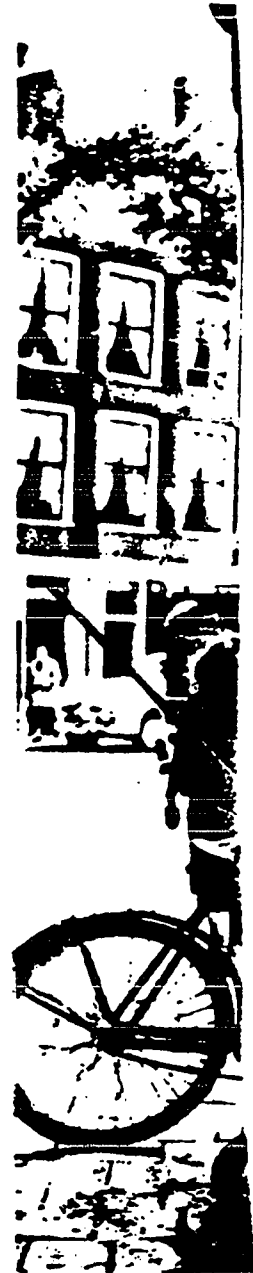
DIRECTOR/MUSICAL DIRECTOR TOM CARTER
TECHNICAL DIRECTOR JAMES K. CULLEY
SCENIC DESIGNER BOB JENKINS
SCENIC ARTIST STEVE BURRIGHT
LIGHTING DESIGNER MIKEL SOOTER
SOUND DESIGNER SCOTT A. SINAGRA
PROPERTY DESIGNER KATIE AMSTUTZ
COSTUME DESIGNER DIANE WINESBURG
MAKE-UP DESIGNER SARA BEUKERS
UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF KATE IRVINE

PRODUCTION STAFF

STAGE MANAGER LEN HARRIS
ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER ALICE SIBLEY
MASTER CARPENTER STEVE PLACKE
COSTUME CREW *ALICE SIBLEY, STEPHANIE SCHAFFER
MAKE-UP CREW SARA BEUKERS
SET CREW *ANDY HOHENNER, ERIC TOMIKIN, KRISTIE HOOKER
LIGHTING TECHNICIAN *THERESA ROSKOS, MIKEL SOOTER
LIGHTING ASSISTANCE KEVIN CORNELIUS, RON SPAULDING
FOLLOW SPOT OPERATOR MARY ANN EVENS
SOUND TECHNICIAN JENNIFER TILMAN
HOUSE MANAGER DEBRA TIMMERMAN
BOX OFFICER MANAGER KELSEY HARDING
PUBLICIST MARY ANN EVANS
CARPENTER'S ASSISTANTS PIP PANITCHPAKDI, HEATHER HOBSON, ANDY HOHENNER AND
STUDENTS OF DRAMA 10, 50, 52 AND 150
PROPERTY CREW *BONNIE KAYSER, MARY ANN EVENS AND KATIE AMSTUTZ

* DENOTES CREW HEAD

THERE WILL BE ONE FIFTEEN MINUTE INTERMISSION



AMERICA'S
LONGEST
RUNNING
PLAY

The Fantasticks

The award-winning, internationally acclaimed Musical
by **Tom Jones and Harvey Schmidt**

Beneath the comic surface of song and dance sword-play and word-play, this is a warm love story about two young people trying to grow up and cope in the adult world.

"The Fantasticks is a boy, a girl, and an audience's memory."

"Try to remember the kind of September when life was slow and oh, so mellow . . ."

April 12/ 8PM
April 14/ 2PM & 8PM

World Premiere

THE DUCK SISTERS

by **Sheldon Rosen**

Award-winning playwright Sheldon Rosen (*Ned and Jack*) will be in residence to complete writing and oversee the world premiere production of his new play.

The Duck Sisters is a new version of *Uncle Maroje* (based on the Renaissance Yugoslavian commedia by Marin Drizcik).

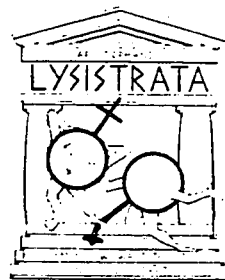
March 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11



*Yours,
Anne*

This is a touching tribute to a remarkable girl who proclaims to the world that we are all good at heart. *Your's, Anne* is a musical drawn from *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl*. It has received rave reviews since it has been presented as a "lyric drama."

April 13/ 2 & 8PM
April 15/ 8PM



LYSISTRATA

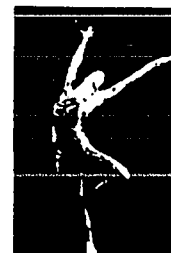
by **Aristophanes**

A ferocious mix of fantasy, insult, song, phallos, jokes, puns, politics, treatment & secrets and sex.

Under the leadership of the determined Athenian, Lysistrata, the women of the warring city-states of Greece unite in refusing their husbands all sexual favors until all arms are laid aside. The final victory of the female cause represents a sexual comedy without peer in the history of the theatre.

April 28, 29
May 5, 6, 10, 11, 12, 13

DANCE THEATRE '89



Innovative works of classical, modern and jazz dances

This collaboration of students, faculty, guest choreographers and dancers is a treat for the whole family. You won't want to miss this imaginative showcase of dance talent.

March 31, April 1, 5, 6, 7, 8

SJSU Theatre produces musicals



Alyssa Jensen — Daily staff photographer

Anne Frank, played by Lisa Zambetti, pretends she is a movie star in 'Yours, Anne'

By E. Mark Moreno

Daily staff writer

Last week's University Theatre spring musicals were an interesting blend of the fanciful and the somber with performances of "The Fantasticks" and "Yours, Anne."

"Yours, Anne," the second spring musical, was cheerfully moody in its adaptation. A musical with a tragic ending is not easily adapted from stage to stage. On the Studio Theatre stage, it was gripping.

Adapted from "Ann Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl," the music assisted the play in capturing the essence of a story that has moved a generation of readers.

The cast, leading with Lisa Zambetti as Anne, was well-balanced and emitted the universal characteristics of a very human play.

Zambetti was convincing and potent as the spirited adolescent, and brought Anne even closer to life with her physical resemblance to the young diarist.

"I know I'll survive, I'm glad I'm alive," Zambetti sang with optimistic innocence.

Although the cast is strong and supportive, Anne's character was the only one that was allowed full development (that's the way it might have been written—it does come from a diary). Two characters that stand out above the rest are that of Mrs. Van Dann (Dina Stubbe) and Peter (Rian Galbreath).

As Mrs. Van Dann, Stubbe was moving, troubled and sometimes funny. Her troubles and feelings became the audience's, which is the result of good drama.

As her son Peter, Galbreath projects good vocals and seems to have created his own character in this production. Like the boy in the book, he's shy and detached, and this comes across well.

This production, directed by Tom Carter, merged happiness and tragedy in a way that probably left many in the audience thinking. The elements of despair, youthful problems, hope and inevitable death were well-blended into one of University Theatre's better productions.