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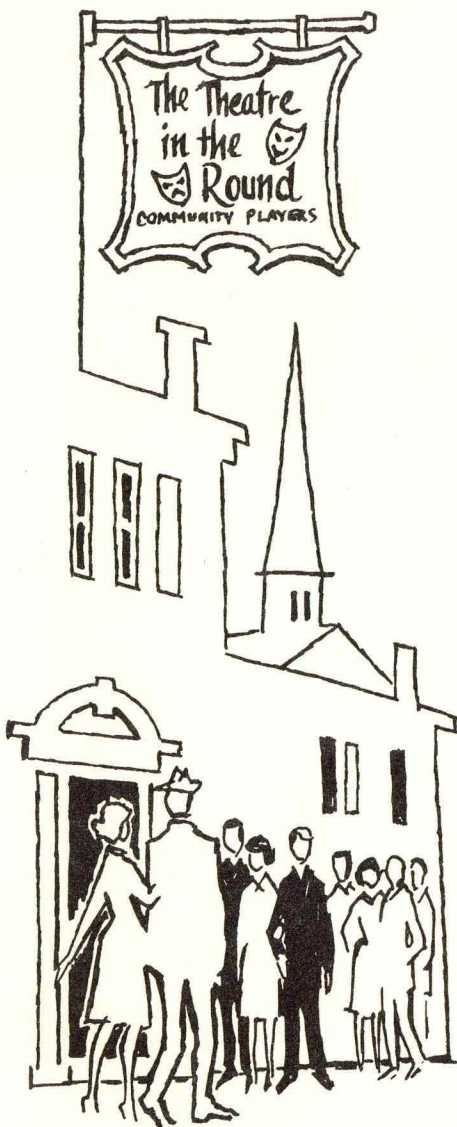


**Community**

**Theatre**

**Handbook**

INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS  
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Theatre  
Handbook**

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## Foreword

GOOD THEATRE DOES not have to be confined to the metropolis. Persons in smaller communities who are interested in drama often can use leisure time effectively in developing a theatre program that will enrich the lives of participants and be an asset to the community.

This handbook describes practices to follow in organizing and maintaining a productive community theatre. It is another in a series of publications by the Institute of Public Affairs concerned with the topic of community improvement. We hope that it will encourage the development of good community theatre in Iowa and elsewhere.

The Institute is grateful to the University's Department of Speech and Dramatic Art for its efforts in making this publication possible. One of the authors, Mr. William J. Rappel, was a graduate student in that Department for two years. The other author, Mr. John R. Winnie, is Associate Professor, Television Center, Department of Speech and Dramatic Art, and Executive Secretary, Iowa Community Theatre Association.

DEAN ZENOR, Director  
Institute of Public Affairs

Iowa City  
September 1961

# Preface

The purpose of this handbook is to present basic information about how a community theatre can evolve—about how devoted people can get a theatre started and keep it going. The main emphasis is on organization: first on an informal group basis, and then through various evolutionary steps toward a continuing formal organization.

The first part of the handbook deals with the relationships between the community and the theatre. It views the community theatre as a social institution.

Next, a number of ways in which a community theatre might be formed are described. This section suggests some devices that may be used to gather interested members and lists some organizations that may be interested in helping.

A description of community theatre organization and administration follows. The roles of the community theatre director and technical director are discussed in terms of the kind of personality and knowledge most desirable in these important positions.

The final section is devoted to the kinds of production centers available to community theatre groups. It points out that the local high school stage is only one of the many places where a play can be performed and that various other settings may be more desirable for the needs of a particular theatre group.

A selected bibliography is included in the first appendix at the end of the handbook. It lists the major how-to-do-it books in each area of community theatre work. A second appendix suggests sources for further practical information and supplies. Suggested constitutions and by-laws for three types of community theatre organization are contained in a third appendix.

The handbook is dedicated to those individuals who believe that community theatre is practical and worthwhile; that it is fun and exciting; that it fulfills a useful purpose in the lives of those who participate in it as producers and as audience; and that imagination, ingenuity, hard work, persistence, and cooperation can make up for meager resources and facilities. We hope that it will be a useful source of information to the neophyte who is interested in organizing and participating in a community theatre in his municipality.

WILLIAM J. RAPPEL  
JOHN R. WINNIE

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# Community Theatre

## As a Social Institution

FROM HIS BEGINNING man has been in the process of creating ways to satisfy his needs. As other men agreed that these devices for making life easier and more pleasant were good, these processes became organized and integrated into the life of a community. Thus, people living together have taken care of their needs to remain healthy, to increase their command of man's accumulated store of wisdom, and to worship the powers that control human destiny. The need of man to find an outlet for his creative energies has progressed also with his need to live in community with his neighbor. Man has built bridges and huts, created picture galleries and auditoriums, written of his triumphs, and, literally, filled the world with the products of his hands, heart, and soul. Man has found a way to organize these activities and to formalize them into institutions.

### *Let's pretend*

One of the earliest and most enduring of man's creative expressions has been to pretend that he is someone else. The drive behind the dancer in a Hopi Indian rain ritual and the performer in an ancient Greek drama is not so different as time and geographic distance might seem to indicate. There is a thrill in shedding your personality for the personality of a man intimately caught up in a struggle with superhuman



forces. This intriguing game of "let's pretend" has undergone many changes since the first theatre experience thousands of years ago, but the drive and the need to play remains. And man has found ways to institutionalize this need.

The act of playing, in its formalized state, allows everybody to get into the act. Total theatre—theatre at its best—usually occurs when painter, actor, writer, costumer, lighting technician, and harried ticket seller are all united in a common effort.

In the broadest sense, theatre is at its best when everyone participates. In the medieval religious pageant and in the contemporary community theatre, the preparation of the play for production is as important as the production of the play itself before an audience. The concern of the production in both instances is with the expression of its participants and the enrichment of the lives of its spectators, the fellow citizens of the participants.

### *The cycle of satisfied needs*

The individual worker in a community theatre finds it possible to satisfy needs within himself by participating in the various phases of play production and related theatre activity. The resulting presentation of the play in which each individual has found an outlet for his creative energies satisfies a need in the community itself. Thus, a cycle of satisfied needs is seen in the functioning of a community theatre. What begins with the individual's need to express his creative energies finds fruition when other individuals with like needs assemble and begin a group action. The group action results in the presentation of a drama which satisfies the needs of many people.

### *The elements of a social institution*

A community theatre may be viewed as a social institution. To some degree it has many of the elements attributed to social institutions. For instance, all institutions have a concept

which underlies their reason for being. The concept behind community theatres is that participation in dramatic production is rewarding.

The concept of a social institution is embodied in a structure. A group must have some form of organization to allow it to operate to the maximum satisfaction of its members. This structure need not be a building; it may be only a set of rules of procedure agreed upon by the members.

A single institution is only a single element in the total system of social integration. The theatre could not, in fact, exist in isolation from its educational and religious sister institutions. The urge toward dramatic production is only a single facet of the universal aesthetic impulse which seeks to create anew man's vision of himself and his world.

Not only do groups find a reason for acting and a method for acting, but they also find an organized way of acting. Business meetings are run according to parliamentary rules of order. A community theatre usually has a set of by-laws and a constitution which governs the behavior of its members and allows the most profitable and efficient conduct of its business.

These formal rules are only a small part of the regulation of behavior of individuals in a group action. Civilization and theatre activity both are governed by a vast code of conduct of which, like the proverbial iceberg, only a small portion is visible in official codes. People in community theatre automatically accept the fact that rehearsals begin on time, that lines must be learned by a given date, and that an informal agreement to do a certain job is binding.

Social institutions have conceptual unity. Although your children may find it irksome, they know that the school they attend is for their benefit. A school exists to teach the young. All the workers in a community theatre subconsciously know what the rewards of working in that theatre are. They know that they are "volunteers" and are content to have their work in the theatre be an avocational aspect of their lives.

The community theatre probably attracts people with a

greater variety of backgrounds and interests than do most social institutions. It literally takes all kinds to make a world or to make the world of a play. In the community theatre, socializer and serious artist, carpenter and actor, bookkeeper and director all find outlets for their energies and are the richer for the association with people who are their personality opposites.

To the reflective individual it must be a source of constant amazement that so many different kinds of people can get together and find ways to achieve their goals. In business or the arts a way is found "to get the job done." In groups or individually, a process is devised to accomplish the desired end. The community theatre plans a production schedule for each production and sets up a yearly calendar of events so that it can do all the jobs it has set for itself.

When a group of people get together to do a play for the first time, their organization is far different from that in existence when their community theatre looks back over twenty-five years of successful productions. But the group still will be a community theatre. This is an example of an element common to all social institutions which is called dynamic stability. An organization can and must change, but it will tend to retain its original identity and a constantly recognizable character.

### *Periods of institutional life*

A community theatre may be in its incipient stage of development for many years. Groups may remain play reading clubs for some time until they attract a sufficient membership to form a theatre.

When personality needs and institutionally sanctioned ends are complementary, the institution is said to be in a state of efficiency. This is the most desirable stage in the institutional life cycle.

Formalism characterizes the third period in the life cycle of an institution. This is the period in which it takes longer to find the right channels of getting a job done than it does to do

the job. Red tape suppresses individuality and misdirects energy.

An institution reaches a period of disorganization when factional strife, individual disregard of others' efforts, and conflicts over "right" institutional aims reach a high point.

It is obvious that every institution will want to operate in a state of efficiency, but it is not easy always to do so. Factional strife does arise in community theatres, but it must never become more important than the will of the majority of the members.

### *Tests of institutional health*

From time to time the leaders of any organization should review the health and well being of their organization. As a nation we do this on a grand scale once every four years. Members of a community theatre will want to examine their organization more frequently.

A community theatre is healthy when a majority of its members make considerable sacrifices for the organization. These workers in a healthy community theatre find their broad participation rewarding in a wide variety of ways. They get a good deal out of their participation.

Not only do workers in a healthy community theatre find individual satisfaction, but they also are aware of the worth of the theatre's efforts to the community at large. They will enjoy working in a project that makes their community a better place in which to live.

These are the three tests of the health of a community theatre: Do the members put a good deal of effort into their work? Do they get sufficient reward out of their participation? Have they earned the regard of the community? If a community theatre finds that it is scoring very low on any of these tests, it is slipping into a state of formalism or disorganization. More than one community theatre has become so involved in pursuits which were foreign to its members and its audience that it passed into the limbo of disinterest which is the fate of all theatres that disregard the sources of their well being.

# Creating the Desire for a Community Theatre

ONE OF THE MANY ways to create interest in the theatre in a community is to start a play reading club. Such a club will accomplish a number of objectives that will prepare the way for the creation of a community theatre. It brings together a group of people who have an interest in theatre and dramatic literature. Forming such a group may well take a year or more if it is done carefully. During this period you will have an opportunity to investigate the community's response to dramatic activity. Also, it will give a group of people a background in dramatic literature. But most important, it will serve to introduce the members of the club to each other. People who thought they were alone in their interest in theatre will meet others in the community with a similar interest. The exchange of opinions and ideas that results will go a long way toward creating a desire for a community theatre.

## *Planning the first meeting*

It seems rather simple to say, "Let's start a play reading club." However, one soon realizes that the success of the whole project can be helped or hurt considerably by the quality of the first meeting.

Select the first play carefully. You need one that has a relatively large number of male and female parts of about equal length and one that doesn't involve a special style of acting or

the reading of verse. Consult your local library for copies of the play; try to get enough copies so that each person has one. Your librarian can be very helpful to you: he or she can help publicize your club, recommend members, grant you special access to the library's play collections, and possibly become a member.

The mood and tempo of the first club meeting is very important. Stress activity in your plans and make sure that you have a list of things that each person who comes to the first meeting can do before the next one.

If attendance is small, don't let that dampen the enthusiasm of the meeting. It is best to keep the meeting as informal as possible. Don't begin the meeting with a chat about the deplorable state of the American theatre, and avoid sounding like an *avant-garde* agent for art and Bohemianism. Get to the business at hand—reading a play—as soon as possible. Encourage your guests to stay for coffee and informal chatting after the meeting and extend a personal invitation to each to return to the next meeting. One method of promoting attendance is to request each person to bring some information or work to the next meeting.

### *Notice of the first meeting*

Contacting people personally is probably the best method of publicizing your first meeting. Telephone people you know are interested in such a club; invite them and ask them to invite others who might be interested.

You also should ask the society editor of the local newspaper to publish a notice of the meeting. Remember that newspaper people have deadlines to meet, so call before you go to see the society editor. Be sure that the facts for your news item are outlined carefully and that you have all the information that is needed to write a complete story. Unless you have had journalistic training and experience, don't try to write the item yourself; just make sure you have all the facts, that names are spelled correctly, and that you are prepared to answer ques-

tions. This advice applies with equal force in your approach to radio, television, and shopping guide reporters. They all work within a given format and are constantly faced with deadlines. Respect their time and their way of working.

### *Successive meetings*

If half a dozen people come to the first meeting, read a play, become interested in meeting each other again under similar circumstances, and enjoy themselves, the meeting has been a success. Before the meeting breaks up, plan the tasks each person should be responsible for in preparing for the next meeting. These tasks include contacting the newspaper, radio and TV stations, and the shopper's guide, choosing a new play to be read and obtaining copies of it, contacting prospective members, and reminding all members of the time and place of the next meeting just before it is held.

In successive meetings you can begin to plan for the future. Ideas and suggestions will come up for discussion. The need for officers and by-laws will become apparent as the group grows and the conduct of the meetings becomes more complicated.

It is best if the purpose and aims of the group become subjects of discussion spontaneously. If there is general interest in a more formal type of organization, committees can be formed to report on typical community theatre by-laws, constitutions, and articles of incorporation. You may wish to invite a lawyer to speak to your group on the differences between a non-profit and a profit corporation and the advantages and disadvantages of each. Also, a theatre specialist from a nearby college or university may be invited to speak to your group on some subject of interest to all. The objective, of course, is to keep the members you have and to interest more in becoming members.

The time may come when your play reading club may evolve into a play producing organization. This cannot come about until your membership is large enough and active

enough to staff the many committees and crews needed to produce a play and until the community has expressed a definite interest in your activities. Interest is best indicated by surveying your membership. When you have a representative cross section of the community's population, it is a fairly good indication that you will have broad support in the community. If your membership is limited in any respect, it reflects a serious gap in your community support; you should try to correct this before you begin soliciting an audience.

### *The city recreation department*

Your city's recreation department can do much to promote interest in theatrical activities. One possible project could be a one-act play contest to which any organization might submit a production. Also, the department might sponsor a play reading club or a beginning play producing group.

There are certain advantages to beginning your efforts toward a community theatre under the sponsorship of a city department or civic organization. Your newly formed or as-yet-to-be formed group acquires some of the prestige of the sponsoring organization until it has an identity of its own. The sponsoring organization will have a method of doing things that will enable you to conduct the early business of the dramatic group in an efficient manner. Channels of communication closed to you as a private individual are open because of your identification with a known and respected organization. You are apt to get a wider range of members when you make it known that you are operating under the recreation department. Open membership is implied by the very nature of the group's municipal affiliation.

### *Other sponsoring groups*

The church organizations in your community may be contacted for support in forming a play reading club or sponsoring a play contest. A good many community theatres in the United States are sponsored by church groups and perform in



church auditoriums and meeting rooms. Most churches have a youth organization which might be the ideal place to begin dramatic activities in the community.

The women's clubs in your community also might provide considerable help in your efforts. The American Association of University Women, the Junior League, the League of Protestant Women, etc., are service organizations with a direct interest in the welfare of the community. These groups are ideal sponsors for play contests because their members usually have other club affiliations which will help ensure wide participation in the contest. The Kiwanis, Rotary, Elks, and other men's service organizations also might be contacted for help in your plans.

Approaching such organizations for support in your early activities has certain advantages over the formation of a club on a private basis. By enlisting the wide support of the service and church groups already functioning in the community, your activities are much less likely to be thought of as private and exclusive. Any community theatre which acquires that reputation in its formative stages is almost certain to fail.

The obvious way to contact such organizations is to talk directly with the presidents. In addition, you might offer your services to the speakers' bureau or program chairman and suggest a talk on some aspect of the theatre or about community theatres in other towns.

### *Other sources of help*

For help and information, consult your public library. Also, the American National Theatre and Academy, the American Educational Theatre Association, and the National Theatre Conference will provide you reading lists, news of their own work in theatre, and an opportunity to affiliate yourself with national theatre organizations. Write also to your state community theatre association for help in your project and membership. The speech arts teacher in the high school, the dramatic arts instructor at a nearby college, or a community

theatre specialist at the State University will provide information and guidance.

### *The organization meeting* •

After you have proved the success of the play reading club, you are ready to consider a more formal type of organization. Most community theatres find that they need a president, vice-president, recording secretary, and treasurer. At the organization meeting these officers are elected as the first order of business, and the elected president presides over the remainder of the meeting. Sometime before this meeting a number of temporary work groups or committees should have been formed to draft tentative statements of the organization's by-laws, constitution, or articles as a non-profit corporation. These drafts can be discussed at the organization meeting and adopted or sent back to the work groups for further work and revision.

Parliamentary procedure and Robert's Rules of Order should be followed to give an orderly form to the conduct of business. It is wise to devote this meeting entirely to matters of organization. It may, in fact, take a number of meetings to settle all details of organization.

### *Should you incorporate?*

When you reach the stage of creating a formal, continuing organization, your group should give serious thought to the legal status of your projected organization. Many community theatres are organized as non-profit corporations. Briefly, a profit making corporation tries to make a profit that in some way benefits its owners personally. A non-profit corporation is organized for educational, cultural, or charitable purposes; and the persons participating in the activities receive no financial gain.

It is apparent that the vast majority of community theatres can be categorized as non-profit institutions. As such, the theatre can apply to the state in which it operates for permission to

incorporate as a non-profit organization. An attorney must draw up the request in the proper form and assist the theatre in submitting the request.

There are distinct advantages to incorporation for even small community theatres. Through incorporation, the theatre becomes a corporate entity. A law suit can be brought against the corporation for its total assets; however, the individual savings of the members are not subject to liability action. A theatre customer might, for example, fall on the theatre's steps and sue each member of the theatre's board of directors. Were the theatre incorporated, a law suit could be brought only against the theatre itself. Thus, incorporation is a protection for the members of the theatre.

Incorporation also assures the stability and continuity of the group. The formality of incorporation forces the young community theatre group to think carefully. The group is lifted out of a "club" frame of reference into one which involves the creation of a continuing civic institution.

The recently established group will find that incorporation makes it easier to obtain credit. Also, this legal status puts the theatre group on a level with other community organizations in the attitudes of local people.

The cost of a request to the state for incorporation as a non-profit organization varies from state to state, but usually is nominal.

Other advantages of incorporation include the fact that the income of non-profit corporations is not taxable and that such groups often are entitled to certain discounts.

It is not true that a non-profit corporation must not have a paid staff and cannot maintain cash assets. The theatre may have considerable cash assets without endangering its non-profit status so long as those assets are a part of funds allocated for the improvement of the ability of the theatre to carry on its activities. The theatre may have a large paid staff and still be a non-profit corporation, if such a staff is necessary to carry out the purposes of the theatre. Most theatres' articles

of incorporation state that no paid staff member may serve as a member of the board or have control of the allocation of funds.

If it is decided to dissolve a non-profit corporation, its assets may not be transferred to a private individual, but must be liquidated without gain to any of the corporation's members.

Many authorities on community theatre are adamant in their conviction that incorporation is the first order of business after electing officers in the first organizational meeting of the theatre. Undoubtedly, it is a matter of pressing importance and should be dealt with early in the life of a new community theatre.

### *Take time to get off to a good start!*

It will take time and effort to begin well. A year well spent in the beginning of a community theatre is not an overly generous estimate of the time which should be allowed for this phase of development. First, you must bring together a small group of persons interested in theatre; this group must be expanded to include many people who have a wide variety of talents and skills and represent all segments of the community. Finally, you must gain support from the community at large. This evolution of a community theatre takes time and patience. If you build slowly and well, that first opening night will be a success; and it will be followed by many more successes.

# Community Theatre

## Continuing Organization

THERE ARE a great many activities of a properly run, efficient community theatre that have little to do directly with the preparation of a play for performance. Someone must be responsible for the conduct of the theatre's regular business, for leading yearly membership drives, for reading the great number of plays from which only a few will be selected for production, for continuing the publicity efforts of the theatre, for keeping the financial records of the theatre in order, and for conscientiously conducting the hosts of other duties that enable the organization to produce plays.

### *Board of directors*

The theatre's board of directors is elected from the active membership of the theatre by the members to govern the activities of the theatre according to its constitution and by-laws. The size of the board in relation to the active membership allows the board to expedite routine decision making. The status of the board as a governing body removes it from actual play production and thereby allows it to concern itself with overall planning of the theatre's yearly calendar and to formulate plans to accomplish the long range goals of the theatre. These plans are always subject to the approval of the active membership.

Let us say that two items of business confront the theatre.

There is a bill for \$10 for office supplies and a report by the play reading committee recommending that a list of ten plays be considered for the three production slots open in the following calendar year. If these two items of business were brought before a meeting of the general membership of the theatre, they might well occupy an entire evening's agenda. They can be dealt with partially by the board of directors in a much more efficient manner. The board can approve the payment of the office supply bill upon recommendation from the treasurer (a board member himself); the treasurer includes the payment of that bill in his report at the regular meeting of the active membership. The board, representing the general membership, can vote on the plays suggested by the play reading committee and exclude the four suggestions receiving the fewest votes. This will reduce the number of plays recommended to only twice the number of slots available. In this way discussions at the general meeting can be more brief.

### *Composition and election of the board*

A board of directors usually consists of the president, vice-president, recording secretary, treasurer, and that individual selected to direct the production of the plays for the season. The director of each play, or the director for the whole season, serves as an ex-officio member of the board while he is directing. He attends board meetings and is free to provide information or express opinions, but he has no vote in the official proceedings of the board.

The board may have other members. Some community theatres have boards with as many as twenty-five members, while some have boards with as few as six members. Most theatres count their board membership between eight and twelve.

Members of the board are elected annually. The election meeting should be announced in writing to the total active membership a month in advance of the meeting. Nominations

may be proposed by a nominating committee. Other nominations may be made from the floor, or in writing to the board at least two weeks prior to the election meeting.

At the first election of officers and board members, the individuals should be elected for staggered terms so that in succeeding years only one-half or one-third of the board members are elected each year. In this way the theatre will achieve a certain degree of stability and yet assure itself of having fresh blood injected into its leadership each year. The constitution should provide for terms of office and stipulate that no board members may serve more than two consecutive terms.

It is also customary that board members agree to refrain from active participation in play production during their terms of office.

In the original board of, let us say, twelve members, it would be wise to elect ten from the active membership and allow the elected members to invite two prominent citizens who are not associated with the theatre to serve terms of one year each. This will help assure the theatre of the finest board obtainable for the first crucial year of operation.

### *Duties of board officers*

It should be regarded as an honor to be elected to serve on the community theatre's board of directors. Such service also involves a good deal of work, for this group directs the theatre and guides it toward its long range aspirations.

The selection of the first president of your board of directors is a matter of utmost concern to all members of the theatre. During that first crucial year, this individual's administrative ability and personal resources will determine to a large degree the fate of the theatre for many years to come. It is the president's continuing responsibility to prepare the agenda and schedule for both board and general membership meetings. The president presides at both board and general membership meetings but abstains from voting in either case unless a tie vote is cast.

The vice-president assumes the duties of the president when the president is absent and the duties of the secretary when the secretary is absent. The vice-president shares the administrative duties with the president when those duties entail follow-up executive action. He can be of considerable aid to the president by assuming responsibility for seeing to it that decisions of the board are put into action while the president concerns himself with committee coordination and long range planning.

The recording secretary also is a board member and is responsible for recording all business conducted at both board and general membership meetings and for giving advance notice of such meetings.

### *The treasurer*

The treasurer is responsible for the collection, disbursement, and recording of all financial transactions incurred in conducting the theatre's business. He should follow standard bookkeeping procedure, for his records may be subject to audit by the state if the theatre is incorporated as a non-profit corporation. Semi-annual reports of the theatre's financial status should be made to the general membership. The treasurer also is responsible for reporting and handling all continuing fiscal responsibilities of the theatre such as insurance, property taxes, etc. In the first year of the theatre's operation, it would be wise to elect an accountant to this position so that an effective and efficient fiscal system can be established

### *The director*

If the theatre has a permanent director, he represents the production activities of the theatre in the governing body. His primary function in relation to the board is to advise the board of the production needs of the theatre and to provide information on production activities. The director should be a non-voting member of the board.

Other members of the board share among themselves the



responsibilities of administrative and technical committee coordination.

### *Membership committee*

This committee is concerned with creating that most vital element of every theatre's well-being: the audience. It directs the season ticket campaign and the individual ticket sales at the door.

The committee is composed of a chairman, who works closely with the president, and several team captains. Each team captain has charge of a team, usually of five members.

The membership committee chairman and the board president decide on the type of ticket campaign and the methods to be used. They plan the meetings of the team captains and the team workers before the campaign opens. They assure themselves that each of the team captains knows the aims of the theatre and of the season ticket campaign so that he can inform his team workers.

The team captains are responsible for preparing the prospective season subscriber lists for the team workers. They make sure that each team worker actually contacts each person on his list.

The first meeting of the membership committee should be held well in advance of the regular season. The purpose of the first meeting of the committee is to arouse enthusiasm for promoting the coming season. The chairman should outline the type of campaign to be conducted and explain how the successful accomplishment of the campaign will further the long range goals of the theatre. He should answer the team captain's questions and distribute to them the customer lists and season ticket agreement forms, which they will, in turn, distribute to the team workers.

During the second week of the campaign, a second meeting of the membership committee should be held. At this meeting you can assess the progress of the campaign and re-ignite any failing enthusiasm. The chairman can find out why

some people aren't buying tickets and, at a later board meeting, discuss ways of overcoming the objections.

The fall of the year is not the best time to conduct a membership campaign; the spring following the winter's season is much better. The ideal period seems to be between the deadline date for paying taxes and the time when families start planning their summer vacations.

You can use the telephone book or the city directory as your basic list of prospects' names, then phone each family or send a form letter. Better yet, if you have the manpower, you can assign people to contact every person in the community.

The ideal campaign probably would involve each of these techniques in a three-step process. First, each prospect would be made aware of the campaign through a hand-addressed, typewritten letter announcing the coming season ticket drive and the plays to be produced the following year. Shortly thereafter each prospect would be contacted by phone by a team worker who would ask for an appointment to discuss membership in the community's theatre. The final contact would be a personal one. The best approach is to get the prospect to sign an agreement to buy season tickets. The worker should collect no money; instead, he should ask for active participation in the work of the theatre. Such an approach helps build loyal support on a continuing basis.

The importance of this committee's work cannot be overstressed. Of the total effort devoted to the theatre, ninety per cent should go into the membership campaign; ten per cent to everything else.

### *The play reading committee*

This committee, in conjunction with the theatre's resident director or the single-play directors, reads, selects, and recommends a series of plays from which the theatre's season is selected by the active membership. Because the amount of available dramatic literature is so large and varied, the primary function of this committee is to select the small num-

ber of plays the theatre is able to produce and thereby provide its audience a balanced and provocative theatre diet.

This committee is composed of a chairman and usually three other members.

The duty of this group is to read a great number of plays each year. When a majority of committee members agree on the possibilities in a certain script, it is added to a list from which the committee makes its final recommendations. Usually such a committee should propose three times the number of plays necessary to fill the production slots in the coming season. The report on each play should contain a plot summary, a list of casting needs, the outstanding production or technical problems involved, and, finally, a summary of the play's merits or list of the reasons the committee feels the play should be done by the theatre. This report is made to the board of directors, and the board votes on the committee's suggestions and submits to the general membership twice the number of plays it will be possible to produce.

There has been a good deal written on the criteria for a successful community theatre play. What follows is an outline of criteria generally accepted by theatre people.

In general, it is believed that the subject matter of the play should be of interest to the community and its conclusions parallel to the prevailing beliefs of the community.

The plot line should be strong. Action should carry through the play. Plays written for a specific Broadway star should be avoided.

The script's technical demands must be within the range of the theatre's production facilities.

The play should have merit.

Of course, these criteria cannot be accepted as hard and fast rules, since each member of the committee has his own set of standards of common sense and good taste. There is also the danger that you will content yourself with increasing the theatre's bank account while feeding your audience insipid fare.

Different criteria usually are suggested to build a balanced season. Some say there should be a farce, a drama, a comedy, and a musical. Others say the productions should show a variety of technical approaches for, it is held, an audience tires of looking at a season of box sets. Many comment that the season should be "worthwhile." It should not leave the play-goer with only a remembrance of amusing incidents. These criteria, too, are subject to serious question. The Pasadena Playhouse did all of Shakespeare's history plays in sequence during World War II and had an exciting and profitable season. Other theatres do nothing but musicals and find their operations extremely successful.

The committee will find the public librarian to be helpful. Scripts of recent releases can be obtained from Dramatist's Play Service and Samuel French, Inc.; their addresses are given in the appendix.

### *The publicity committee*

The publicity committee has both long and short range objectives. It is responsible for publicizing each production in an attractive and compelling manner. In addition, it should promote the long range goals of the organization. This public relations phase of the committee's operation is designed to gain the community's understanding and sympathetic support. It is necessary to promote an attitude of good will between the community and the theatre and to build the reputation of the theatre into something of which the community can be proud.

The committee is divided into two teams to meet each of these goals. One team concentrates on the current season, while the second handles the long range public relations program. A single chairman coordinates the efforts of both teams and works closely with the president.

The current season team sees to it that each production is given adequate promotion; it is responsible for maintaining contacts with the press, radio, and TV in the area; it makes sure that the theatre takes advantage of the "free advertising"

or public service programs of the media. This committee cooperates with the membership committee in preparing direct mail publicity distributed to season ticket holders and prospects. Posters, displays in store windows, and other media are also handled by this committee.

The long range team uses those same media when appropriate. It also attempts to place the activities of the theatre in national publications such as the *Educational Theatre Journal*, *Theatre Arts*, and the *Quarterly Journal of Speech*. This committee handles the theatre's contacts with other organizations in the community. It arranges for guest speakers and programs for clubs and other organizations. It makes the theatre's library of play scripts and technical information available to interested parties for loan and handles the charitable activities of the theatre.

Here is a suggested schedule of publicity releases for a current production timed for maximum effectiveness: Four weeks before the first production the first publicity release should be sent to the media involved. This release could deal with the background of the author and the nature of the play in relation to the author. One week later, three weeks before production, the second release, dealing with the author's other writings, should be sent out. The third release should be sent to the media two weeks before the production. This release can deal with the story line of the play and points of special interest to the prospective audience. A few days later, about one and a half weeks before the production, the fourth release, dealing with the cast of the current production, should go out. In some instances the original cast of the show and original production features can be outlined in this release. One week before the production the fifth release should be sent out; a picture should accompany the story which may contain further information on the current production. Special technical features of the show can be included, such as the behavior of the goat in *Teahouse of the August Moon*. Four days, or on the Saturday prior to opening, the sixth release should be dis-

tributed. An interview with the director and the cast can form a large portion of this release. Ticket information, which began in the fourth release, can be made a special part of this story. The final release should appear in print and on radio and TV, if possible, on the opening night of the production. A picture of the cast during dress rehearsal could be included in the published story. Radio and TV coverage of the opening should stay as close as possible to the lively aspects of the current production.

This suggested schedule of publicity can be repeated for each new show. The pattern may be varied, of course, to fit the needs of the media available and to play up special features of a given production. The important points are the frequency of releases and the general direction of the releases. They begin by providing the prospective audience a background of the play and its author. Then, as production time approaches, the publicity shifts to the newsworthy aspects of the production from the local point of view. It is necessary to know each show thoroughly and to keep the audience's focus in mind when writing effective copy for any media.

The long range publicity team should meet regularly. At the first meeting, in spring or early fall, it should review the goals of the theatre and plan the specific goals the long range publicity should accomplish during the coming year. The committee should meet monthly to assess the success of the steps taken which lead toward effective public relations and the results of their campaign to put the work of the theatre in national magazines. The work of this committee can become very hazy and deal with subjects in terms of vague generalities unless a tight rein is kept on the scope of its activities. It is important for the chairman of the committee to see that specific goals and assignments are developed and carried out.

### *The financial committee*

The financial committee works with and is subordinate to

the treasurer. The committee assists the treasurer in handling funds and accounting for transactions.

As one of its responsibilities, the committee should prepare and keep up to date a list of standard materials that are purchased locally. This list and a comparative price and discount index is kept by the committee.

The committee also should keep similar lists for materials not available locally. This list should include the name of a responsible individual at the material source, the address, and current price lists. Notations of average shipping time from the source are also valuable. Such information often is kept in a three-by-five card file with an index of any catalogues contained in the theatre's files on the reverse side of the card.

The committee should help with the records of income and expense, which must be balanced against the operating budget, and maintain inventories and depreciation accounts of capital assets.

The financial committee is composed of a chairman, who works closely with the treasurer, and a small team of workers who are responsible for keeping certain specific accounts. The small team working under the treasurer and chairman balances the results of each night's ticket sales with the cash received and makes the appropriate account entries. The committee prepares an itemized budget for each production.

The work of this committee breaks down into long range work and the details of handling a specific production. The annual working budget, both for production and administration, must be allocated in specific areas, then further subdivided for each production. For example, a particular production may be allowed a production budget of two hundred dollars. This total then must be divided into specific sums that may be spent on royalty, script costs, costume, set, house costs (tickets and programs, publicity expenses, etc.).

The financial committee should meet in the spring, or at least before the first general meeting of the season, to plan the theatre's budget for the coming season. This budget

should be based on the cash on hand plus estimated season ticket sales and door sales. Before each rehearsal period the committee meets to discuss the budget for that particular show. During the show it makes periodic checks on expenditures for that show. After the show the funds allocated for that production must be balanced against the funds spent. At the end of each season, and at any other time set by the constitution, the committee presents an audit of the theatre's financial status to the general membership.

### *The house management committee*

Working in close conjunction with the chairman or a selected member of the finance committee, the house management committee is responsible for welcoming and seating the audience. The committee is composed of two co-chairmen, who work in conjunction with the representative of the finance committee, and a team of four to eight members. The co-chairmen divide their activities between handling the tickets and the audience. One chairman accepts responsibility for selling, taking, and counting the tickets. The other, usually formally referred to as the house manager, is in charge of the ushers, the coat checkers, and intermission refreshment arrangements. His main duty is that of overseer. He notifies the stage manager when the audience has arrived and is ready to see the performance. He may also be responsible for giving the backstage crews and actors periodic warnings of the approach of curtain time, although this duty is customarily referred to the stage manager.

The house committee co-chairmen arrive at the theatre one and one half to two hours before the performance is scheduled to begin. They and their workers make the theatre ready for the audience. The auditorium, ticket booth, coat checking facilities, rest rooms, and theatre lounge should be ready for the audience forty-five minutes before curtain time.

The chairman in charge of tickets must see to it that an adequate supply is always on hand. He should provide adequate



change for the ticket seller. He will help the ticket seller when the audience begins to arrive by handling the reservations made by season ticket holders and allowing the ticket seller to concentrate on cash ticket sales. This chairman is responsible for collecting the ticket stubs from the ticket-taker twenty minutes after the beginning of performance. He turns the stubs and the cash over to a member of the finance committee and assists him in balancing the two.

The house manager will assure himself that the ushers are familiar with the set-up of the auditorium's rows and sections. He will have picked up the programs from the printer before he came to the theatre on opening night and will see to it that each usher has an adequate supply each night. He will instruct the ushers on their warm and friendly approach to the audience members. The house manager will provide the ticket-taker a receptacle for the ticket stubs and information on curtain time and time of performance conclusion. He will check arrangements for serving refreshments during the first act and assist in clearing the lounge during the second act.

The entire committee is responsible for leaving the theatre in a neat and orderly condition.

The house manager also is in charge of opening the auditorium to the audience. This means that no audience member should be permitted to enter the auditorium until the house manager gives permission. Just before he is assured that the house is ready to receive the audience, he will go backstage and check with the stage manager to make sure that the backstage crews are finished with their last minute work. This aspect of the house manager's job is often neglected, and the audience is subjected to the sound of last minute hammering or snatches of recorded sound effects played backwards on a tape machine. Careful checking of lounge areas and house preparation are important details that add much to the audience's enjoyment and the theatre's reputation.

### *The program committee*

Working closely with the vice-president, the program com-

mittee is responsible for planning the agenda of the regular meetings of the active membership. The vice-president should tell the chairman of the program committee of the nature and extent of the business that must be conducted at the regular meeting; the items are determined by the board of directors approximately a week before the general membership meeting. The program committee is then responsible for creating an agenda that will reflect the interests of the general membership, create interest in potential new members, and sustain interest in current members who are not actively working on the upcoming production.

The program committee is composed of a chairman and three permanent committee members.

The committee should plan and coordinate the business and social portions of each meeting carefully so that the business is dealt with promptly and efficiently and the social portion of the meeting is cordial and lively. At the conclusion of each regular meeting the chairman of the program committee should announce the agenda for the next regular meeting. Although the agenda may be revised considerably in the interim between the meetings, an announcement of the planned agenda will give the general membership something to look forward to and plan for in the coming weeks. This is especially important to sustain the interest of members not actively engaged in the current production.

The types of programs used to create interest in the general meetings are limited only by the initiative, interest, and imagination of the program committee. Guest lecturers or guest performers might be invited to the general meetings. The members not actively engaged in the current production might prepare a one-act play for presentation at the general meeting. The entire membership might participate in a play reading with different members taking different parts for each act of the play. Plays beyond the production capabilities of the theatre can thus be brought to the attention of the membership. The general membership might take part in an evening of improvisation which the Russian director, Stanislavski,

found so effective in stimulating the imagination of the actor.

A member of the group can give a demonstration of applying stage make-up with a movie on that subject. Other technical subjects such as lighting, scenery and costume construction, or acting styles and different types of theatrical production styles such as impressionism, constructivism, and expressionism can be discussed with illustrations.

The theatre's membership can attend a performance as a body. Civic music concerts, museums, and plays are only a few of the many possibilities open to the theatre's membership. These activities may possibly be combined with a short trip to a neighboring metropolitan area. A number of members might read a recent book on the theatre or a theatre personality and present sections of it in the fashion of a play reading with one of the group reporting on the happenings between the reading sections. Or the group may listen to a particularly outstanding recording of a theatre performance.

The membership can broaden its interests by incorporating a movie series into the social portion of the meetings. A number of 16 mm films of outstanding quality are available at nominal cost. These films rarely reach the standard movie outlets but provide a theatrically oriented audience a very worthwhile experience. The group can, and periodically should, sponsor a dance and dinner that is open to the public. The awards for the best actor of the year, etc., can be announced at such a dinner-dance activity. Such activities help to bring the attention of the community to bear on the theatre and provide a considerable source of revenue. What is to be stressed is that the social portion of each regular meeting can be a considerable factor in broadening the outlook of your membership.

The average community theatre will find that the majority of its productions fall into the category of naturalistic light comedy and drama. The theatre's potential is a great deal larger than such a selection might lead one to believe. The theatre is continuously magical and educational. The program

committee can do a great deal to keep these facts constantly before the membership of the theatre.

The committee's working schedule will vary a great deal. In general, the committee should meet far enough in advance of each regular meeting to be able to announce the agenda of the *next* regular meeting at the upcoming one.

### *The building fund committee*

Most community theatres begin without a home and remain transient during the first five or ten years of operation. There is a good reason for the transiency of young theatre groups. Immediately after the transition from play reading club to producing theatre group, the actual productions of the organization will be few in number and modest in size. Owning a building or renting a building on a continuing basis would soon bankrupt the young group. The group will produce many a play, grow to double and triple its founding membership, and become an accepted institution in the community before the group achieves a permanent home. And this is as it should be. As the agenda of the group's meetings is determined by the desires and needs of the group's members, so too do the needs of the activities actually performed by the members determine the type, size, and ownership of the space used to house those activities.

This doesn't mean that the theatre group should ignore the eventual necessity for housing its activities under a permanent roof. The building fund committee is responsible for creating, on a long term basis, the support and funds for a permanent structure to house the theatre. This structure may be either a new building or a remodeled structure. The committee is responsible also for a long term preliminary survey of possible forms of theatre architecture and equipment suitable to the needs of the group.

The committee is composed of the president as chairman and four prominent citizens. It may appoint a working committee to serve under its leadership.

The duties of this committee depend upon how close the group is to beginning construction of a permanent home. In general, the committee is responsible for an annual fund drive to raise money for the building fund. It should attempt to keep up with the changes in theatre architecture and compile a list of consultants who have established reputations in the field of theatre construction. The committee should prepare and maintain an equipment survey of all theatrical equipment available. This survey can be conducted in cooperation with the finance committee's surveys of theatrical material sources. It is obvious that much of the work of the committee will be done by the working committee.

# Play Production Organization

IN THE PRECEDING section, we discussed the continuing, permanent organization of a community theatre, the formal organization that handles the day-in, day-out business, formulates the long-term goals of the group, and tries to make those goals realities.

In this section we will consider another type of organization: that necessary to produce a polished play of which the group can be proud. The following paragraphs describe how the efforts of the theatre director, technical director, and scenery, lighting, property, costume, and make-up committees are integrated into one cohesive whole that achieves the results desired. Although one person may direct all the plays in a given season and some of the technical crews may be the same for each production, in a sense, a new organization must be created for each new production. This is desirable if it brings new life into each production and if it gives the members opportunities to learn new skills and develop new talents.

## *The community theatre director*

A community theatre director is the individual responsible for the creation of a dramatic experience from a play script. His main concern is with the actor's voice and body as tools to bring the script to life; in addition, he is responsible for the overall aesthetic impression of the technical aspects of the

production. In many situations he is in charge of the design and supervision of all technical aspects of each production. He is concerned, in part, for the administrative aspects of the group when they relate to the production under his hand.

A different director may be selected for each production. In the formative period of most community theatres, this procedure is often adopted and has many advantages. The demands on a director's time during the rehearsal period are very great. Because of this, appointing a new director for each show will enable that director to approach the show fresh and with a high degree of energy. A series of directors for the theatre's season will breed a healthy, competitive spirit in the group because each director will want to make his show the best of the season. Each director will approach each show a little differently from any other director. In its earliest stages of development, a group may produce more significant successes by employing a new director for each production.

A single director can be appointed to direct all the plays of the season. He produces a sense of continuity in the work of the theatre, which will effect a sense of continuing authority, of established procedures, work habits, and critical standards. A single director for the season will afford the theatre a chance for steady development and growth as a producing unit. He will tend to establish routines of work habits which will give the theatre's members a sense of evolving toward a distinct standard of production. The group's efforts will not jump from production to production but will acquire a seasonal outlook and divided work load schedule. A single director per season will also give the theatre a most valuable figure in its public relations work. The single individual will become synonymous with the theatre's artistic and social efforts. There will be a single person to represent the theatre in social and civic events in the community. This person's gain in prestige will be reflected in the growing prestige of the group itself.

After considerable development, the community theatre

may chose to hire a permanent salaried director. The majority of the well established community theatres in the United States have found that a permanent director allows the theatre to function in the best interests of all its members. The community theatre director is a person who has been fortunate enough to mix his vocation with his avocation. He works full time at his job, which is impossible for a volunteer director. He is usually university or professionally trained to handle the job, and his training allows him to offer his services as teacher to those willing to learn. The theatre tends to settle down to a balanced and ordered routine under the leadership of a salaried director.

Some of the disadvantages of having a different director for each show are: over a period of years, the system tends to encourage cliques to form; certain directors will draw about them a group of people who like to work for them but who don't wish to work for others; participant interest is high on one production and low on the next; in any theatre's membership good directors will be few and far between. Thus, the single show director system tends to break down from sheer lack of appropriate personnel. Even when it does work, it is usually abandoned when the theatre is able, for the group finds that the system leaves little opportunity for steady improvement.

The season director system also has its disadvantages. The director's work over a full season of plays is a full time job even if the theatre does as few as three productions a year. The theatre member who attempts to hold down a regular job and manage the directing of a season's plays might well find himself a physical wreck at the end of two consecutive shows. The season director system tends toward fatigue and a lack of variety in approach toward each play within the season. The director might do both comedy and drama in the same mood and see the setting of each drama in about the same style. The system can lead to despotism and favoritism. Since the director is working very hard, the group's members



are apt to excuse his recurrent casting of a single individual and arbitrary decisions. The system also tends to cut down on the training of new directors to a point where such a training program does not, in fact, exist. The volunteer director for an entire season's repertory is probably the least satisfactory system.

Of course, all the disadvantages discussed above are only apt to occur. The good director, whether he does a single show or a series of shows, will take pains to assure himself that such things as cliques, tempers, and lack of variety do not destroy the very foundation of the organization within which he is creating. The volunteer director has a noble tradition in the history of the theatre—Aeschylus, Moliere, Antoine, Stanislavski—and men of such quality can make brilliant theatre of an impossible situation.

The community theatre is interested in good productions, but the long-lasting theatre will be equally concerned with the needs of its membership. The salaried director is most likely to keep the needs of the membership of the theatre uppermost in his mind. However, even the salaried director system has its disadvantages. The director who does show after show may find himself going dry, his vision will grow increasingly narrow, and his shows will begin to look like they came out of the same factory. The salaried director can become despotic and show favoritism for some time but may be checked by questions about contract renewal. Perhaps the biggest handicap that a young, salaried director is likely to bring with him to his job is an over excessive zeal for the perfect production. He is apt to be more interested in successful productions than a successful community theatre with increasing active membership participation. The experienced, salaried director will realize that the very heart of a community theatre lies in serving the greatest good to the greatest numbers.

Entire books have been devoted to the subject of the director and his qualifications. One of the director's greatest talents

should lie in his ability to analyze a script. The director finds the central theme or action of the play and then gradually begins to visualize in his mind the action of the play. The play becomes a movie in his mind's eye. The making of that movie is a complex and delicate process, a truly creative process.

One improves his ability to visualize dramatic literature in terms of staging by increasing his interest in the action of people and the reasons that underlie that action. The director sees the speech and movement of people not as a simple everyday occurrence, but as complex hieroglyphics which tell the attentive observer a great deal about the psychology and philosophy of the people. To improve his ability to stage dramatic works effectively, a director must sharpen his sensitivity to what repetition has made routine—to life itself.

A director should be healthily and stubbornly persistent. His persistence should have the quality of tender regard mixed with impatience. He must know what he wants, he must be true to what he wants, and he must help his co-workers, his actors, to achieve what he wants. It is never an easy process to bring life to the stage, but the director had better help the actor and criticize his work before the actor submits his work to an audience. The actor will forget a good deal of hard work and tactfully severe criticism when he gets the laughter the playwright intended.

In relation to directing plays, the community theatre director has a great many duties. After the planning stage in the director's mind, he begins plotting the movement of the play. He will tell actors where to move and when to move there. A plan of these movements will be recorded in the script by the director before the first rehearsal.

The director must coach the actors. Because he can stand outside the action of the play, he is often in the best position to suggest certain improvements in the actor's characterization. The aspiring director should refer to the books on acting techniques listed in the appendix to find ways to help the actor.

The director is responsible for communicating the aesthetic

motif of the production to the designers of sets, costumes, lights, props, and make-up. He should be conversant with the various styles of theatrical production and be able to explain the effect of the devices he wishes the technical staff to utilize in the production.

The director must set deadlines and work schedules for each of the technical aspects of the production. The rehearsal schedule, approval of publicity releases, program copy, and the coordination of the entire production effort fall on the shoulders of the director.

However, the director's most important task is to promote morale during the heat of theatrical production. His taste, tact, and genuine interest in the growth and enrichment of the theatre during production can mean the difference between the successful theatre group and the group which manages to stay together for a few relatively successful productions. The theatre director who can enrich his public and his co-workers may not always create artistic productions, but his artistry has far reaching effects all the same.

### *The technical director*

The technical director supervises all technical aspects of a given production or series of productions. The theatre may appoint a group member to serve as technical director for a single show, for an entire season, or may hire a permanent, salaried technical director. The advantages of each system are synonymous with those discussed above in relation to the community theatre director.

The most efficient and imaginative technical director obtainable cannot work in a community theatre without considerable assistance from volunteer help. Therefore, in selecting a technical director from the theatre membership or hiring an individual, his ability to work with people should be considered as strongly as his knowledge of scenery construction and design. His personal enthusiasm and good-naturedness is of extreme importance to the forming theatre group and

becomes more important to the theatre that is constantly expanding its horizons.

The technical director should know how to draft working plans for scenery construction. He must be able to make scale drawings of the proposed construction so that his volunteer workers will know precisely what he wants. And he must know how to explain these drawings to his volunteer crews. He must know how to work all the power equipment at the disposal of the theatre. His knowledge of the various plans and patterns which precede the actual construction should extend into all the technical areas: costume patterns, lighting hanging diagrams, scenery working drawings, prop construction plans, and sound cue sheets. Because the technical director will not always have people who are able to design the various technical parts of a production, he should be able to design competently in each area.

It would seem that he is both jack and master of several trades; many of these skills can be acquired through study and practice. The ability to earn the respect and admiration of your fellow workers is much more difficult to learn. The leadership of the technical director should be matched both by his technical information and his ability to organize the work of many departments along efficient lines. His organizational ability is most important. All the technical aspects must be completed before the first dress rehearsal of the production. A working schedule must be set up for all technical crews with deadlines for each. These schedules are the backbone of a successful production unit. They must be made up under the supervision of the technical director; he must be able to coordinate the diverse efforts into a single working unit.

As the technical director's qualifications are many, so are his duties demanding and diverse. He is responsible for the overall aesthetic design concept of the production. The style of the production is decided upon by the director in most cases; the technical director turns the director's requests into

actuality. He and the director should decide on the style of the production before the first production conference.

The first technical production conference is called by and presided over by the technical director. Each of the technical aspects is discussed in relation to the style of the production. If the schedule of the theatre allows, each of the designers should bring his drawings to this meeting. In such a case the designers would have been told about the style of the production before the meeting, and the meeting then would be devoted primarily to unifying the various designs into a harmonious production design plan.

The working schedule for each technical crew will be distributed at the production conference. The technical director is then responsible for seeing that each crew meets the deadlines set in the working schedule.

The technical director's efforts are directed toward the total aesthetic picture produced by the combined technical effects. This points up the need to establish clear and definite communication channels between director and technical director. Neither of these men should be in the least surprised by anything that appears on the first night of dress rehearsal. If a costume design or a set color shocks the director, then something is extremely wrong with the system of information exchange within the theatre group. Each change of any technical importance should be conveyed to the director by the technical director as soon as possible. By careful planning and frequent conferences, the dress rehearsal period will be the ordered and efficient final preparation for an audience that it should be.

Often the technical director will become the crew master or stage manager of the production when it reaches the stage of technical run-throughs. This may result in unfortunate last minute compromises. The expertness of the technical director is needed the most in the last week of the set-up period. When the technical elements are being assembled for the technical rehearsals, the theatre can least afford to move him into an-

other job. It is much better to bring an assistant director in with the cast in the first rehearsal and use him as stage manager during the pre-performance and performance period. The cast will have a chance to get used to this assistant director-stage manager and will be less nervous than with a new person.

It is best to select a single technical director for each show of a young theatre group and have each of them directly subordinate to the director. The work of the technical director begins about six weeks prior to the opening of the production when he calls and presides over the first technical production conference. In almost every instance, this meeting should precede the casting of the production. When rehearsals begin and the technical crews begin construction, the technical director will need to be present every night. He will probably want to work longer hours than the regular technical crews and will find that the work will be better organized if he takes time to prepare for the arrival of each crew, carefully outlining the work for any given night.

### *The technical production conference*

The technical production conference is the meeting between the theatre's director, the technical director, and the chairmen of the scenery, property, costume, lighting, and make-up committees. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss or present for discussion the designs of each technical aspect of the production. The chairman of each committee will receive a working schedule of his particular crew. This meeting should stress the overall technical unity of the production and show each committee chairman the part his committee's efforts will play in achieving the desired unified end.

The first production conference should take place at least six weeks before the opening of the production. Ideally it should be scheduled before the production is cast so that the director's entire concentration can be directed toward this meeting. The director should prepare extensively for this

meeting, for it is here that the mechanics of production are begun. Certain decisions will be difficult to change once this meeting has been held. The director cannot, for example, call for a box set at this meeting and then decide, several weeks later, that an expressionistic set would be much better.

Subsequent technical production conferences may be scheduled at the discretion of the technical director, or he may assure himself that the production schedules are proceeding according to plan through informal, individual contact with the committee chairmen. The director should be left free to concentrate on his work with the cast and should not be contacted in these subsequent meetings unless changes in the designs discussed at the original conference are of a significant nature.

### *The scenery committee*

The scenery committee is composed of a chairman, who works in collaboration with the technical director, and a number of committee members. The size of the committee varies with the scenic demands of each production.

This committee is responsible for the design, construction, painting, and placement of the set on the stage. The members may be required to shift the scenery of the play during production if the action of the play involves more than a single set.

After the scenery design is approved in the first technical production conference, working drawings of the set must be drawn to scale. These working drawings include the dimensions of the pieces to be built, the type of construction necessary, the covering material to be used, and the color that each piece is to be painted. These drawings must be in the hands of the chairman before the committee assembles for the first night of construction work.

Once the chairman of the scenery committee has these working drawings, he probably will want to call an advance meeting of the entire working committee. At this meeting he

will explain the set and its construction to the committee and distribute a work schedule for each member of the committee. The committee then meets regularly to build the required new scenery, remodel existing scenery, paint, and place the completed set on the stage.

The working schedule of the scenery committee is variable. At the very latest, the scenic depiction of locale must be complete by the beginning of the dress rehearsal period.

### *The lighting committee*

The lighting committee will hang and focus the lighting instruments, select the hue of the gelatins which will color the light, arrange for the control of the light, and manipulate the light controls during the performance of the play.

The committee is composed of a chairman, who works with the technical director, and a variable number of committee members, depending on the demands of the production.

The best lighting, as the best scenery and costumes, is that which attracts little attention to itself but seems necessary to the play being presented. This is an objective which is difficult to attain. The duties of the committee begin when the chairman of the committee attends the first technical production conference. At this meeting the kind of lighting for the play and a plan of how the lighting will be achieved is presented for discussion.

When the design has been approved at the first technical production conference, a hanging plot for the lights must be prepared. This plot shows where all the instruments will be placed and what stage areas these instruments will illuminate. It includes an indication of the color gelatin which each instrument will contain. This hanging plot must be completed before the first work meeting of the lighting committee.

At the first meeting of the committee, the chairman will explain the lighting requirements of the play and present the hanging plot to the committee members for discussion. Subsequent meetings of the committee will be devoted to hanging,



gelling, and focusing the lighting instruments themselves. The committee must prepare a cue book showing what lighting changes occur during the course of the play and what dimmers are adjusted to accomplish each change. This portion of the work must be completed by the first technical rehearsal of the play. During the technical and dress rehearsals and the performance of the play, the committee runs the control board for the lighting.

### *The property committee*

The property committee is responsible for borrowing, renting, buying, and constructing the stage properties that are to be used in the play. The members must assemble the required properties and place and shift them during the performance.

There are three types of stage properties: set, trim, and hand properties. This division of properties into three categories is designed to facilitate the work of the committee. Set props include all furniture and rugs used in the setting and the decorative objects that may be used. Trim props are those objects related to the walls of a stage set interior or to certain decorative refinements of an exterior scene. Hand props are used or carried by actors and belong visually to the stage picture and not to the actor's costume. In practice, some properties must be classified arbitrarily.

The property committee is composed of a chairman, who works closely with the technical director, and a variable number of committee members.

The chairman of the property committee attends the first technical production conference. At this meeting he will present for discussion a list of the properties required for the production. Any special props will be discussed as well as the style of the properties to be used. The chairman must assure himself that the style of the properties is in keeping with the style selected for the production.

The chairman, with a complete list of the properties needed for the production, then assembles his committee for its first

meeting. He will distribute a work schedule to each member and explain the properties for the show. He may give each committee member a list of properties he is to borrow before the next meeting of the committee. The committee can be divided into three groups, and each group can be made responsible for one type of property—set, trim, and hand.

Subsequent meetings of the committee are devoted to assembling and constructing the necessary properties. Before the first technical rehearsal the set and trim props will be placed in their proper position on the set. The committee will prepare off-stage storage space for the hand props before the first technical rehearsal. This storage space usually consists of property tables which are carefully labeled. These labels indicate the name of the prop, the name of the actor who uses the prop, and the act and scene in which the prop is used. The prop tables, appropriately labeled, are placed just outside the entrances through which the props are carried onstage.

The committee also shifts the properties during the course of the performance and has charge of sound effects.

The working schedule of the property committee is variable. The absolute deadlines are these: the set and trim props must be assembled before the first technical rehearsal, and the hand props before the first dress rehearsal. Of course, the production will run more smoothly if the properties are ready sooner. For example, the efficient property committee will have the hand props for the actors as soon as the actors no longer need to carry the book. The chairman will make sure that all borrowed properties are returned in excellent condition immediately after the close of the production. All items damaged must be replaced by the theatre at its expense in the shortest possible time.

### *The costume committee*

The costume committee is responsible for designing, constructing, borrowing, renting, altering, and cleaning all items of clothing and accessories worn by the actors. It cares for the

wardrobe during the production; and, in some instances, the chairman of the committee (called the wardrobe master or mistress) will approve the appearance of each actor before he goes on stage.

The costume committee is composed of the chairman, who works in collaboration with the technical director, and a variable number of committee members.

The duties of the committee depend a great deal on the type of production. The chairman of the committee attends the first technical production conference. At this meeting he presents his plan for the design of the costumes, their style, and the method of obtaining the costumes.

When the costume designs have been approved, the chairman calls the first meeting of the committee. He gives each member a work schedule and explains the costume designs in relation to the work of each committee member.

In collaboration with the theatre's director, he will arrange costume measurement appointments with each cast member when that person is not needed at rehearsal. This measurement appointment is necessary whether the actor is providing his own costume or his costume is being constructed for him. He will need to be told, in the case of modern dress, what items it will be necessary for him to furnish. If he does not have a particular item in his personal wardrobe, the costume committee then must assume responsibility for obtaining the item.

Subsequent meetings of the committee are devoted to making and assembling the necessary costumes. Measurements may have to be sent to costume rental companies. Certain items may need alteration. Other costumes may need to be made from design patterns. Fitting appointments will need to be scheduled with some actors. The committee sees that items are cleaned as needed and supervises costume changes during the performance.

The working schedule of the committee is variable. At the latest, the wardrobe must be ready for the first dress rehearsal. The committee must return the wardrobe, clean and in excel-

lent condition, to the theatre wardrobe, the rental company, or the individual owner shortly after the performance.

In the performance of certain period plays, the actors will be totally unfamiliar with the style of the clothing. Since the actors must appear to be wearing their costumes as easily as they wear their own clothes, it is often necessary to provide them rehearsal clothes. Long dresses with appropriate padding will allow an actress to adjust her movement early in the rehearsal period and avoid dress rehearsal awkwardness. These rehearsal clothes need not be decorative, for they are intended only to give the actor an opportunity to adapt himself to the cut and style of unfamiliar clothing.

The efficient costume committee chairman will use every opportunity to increase the theatre's wardrobe of useful clothing and fabrics. Attending auctions and visiting second-hand clothing stores will often allow the theatre to costume an elaborate period play with half the cost of renting the same costumes from a costume rental company. Specific information on costume construction and the characteristics of the various historical periods may be found in the volumes listed in the appendix.

### *The make-up committee*

The make-up committee is responsible for designs of the actors' make-up. In most instances, this committee will apply the make-up to the actors before each performance and assume responsibility for any make-up changes that occur during the course of the play's action. It also keeps the theatre's stock of standard make-up materials at an adequate level.

The make-up committee is composed of a chairman, who works with the technical director, and a variable number of committee members.

The chairman of the committee attends the first technical production conference at which the make-up design will be discussed.

The chairman will call the first meeting of his committee

prior to the first dress rehearsal and discuss the make-up tasks of each committee member. The chairman is responsible for seeing that the right materials in sufficient quantity are available for the current production. The committee members will apply the make-up beginning with the first dress rehearsal and continuing through to the final performance. The chairman of the committee replenishes the materials used at the close of the production and the committee cleans the make-up room.

The working schedule of the make-up committee is variable. The designs and the materials necessary to complete the designs must be prepared so that make-up for the first dress rehearsal will not take an excessive amount of time. Beards, wigs, mustaches, putty noses, and other difficult make-up jobs should be prepared in advance of the first dress rehearsal.

If the committee is fairly inexperienced, the chairman will be wise to call the members of the committee together and allow them to execute the make-up designs on each other. This will avoid excessive time delays on the first night of dress rehearsal and will allow the committee members to learn a good deal about the art of make-up.

# Form and Structure in Community Theatre Staging

THE CONTEMPORARY PLAY-GOER is so accustomed to seeing plays set behind the picture frame of a proscenium stage that he may easily forget that this style of stage structure is only one of a number of methods of staging a play. It is the most recent form of stage structure, but it is not necessarily the best nor is it necessarily the form that will be popular in the theatre of tomorrow. The community theatre that is looking for a place to stage its productions or is considering constructing a production center should consider carefully all possibilities. It should be made clear that the high school stage is only one of various places in which a community theatre can perform for an audience, and it may not be the most desirable.

## *The production center*

In its basic form, the production center is that building in which the theatre group opens its productions to the public. In its ideal form, it is a permanent home for the community theatre with comfortable lounge and seating areas for the audience, a flexible stage, and adequate working areas for the actors and for the construction and storage of scenery, costumes, and properties.

The need for certain areas remains constant in every kind of stage house, although the location of each in relation to the others varies. Actors must have a place to make up and put on

costumes. The Greeks placed their "scene building" areas in the rear of the stage, and the Elizabethans placed them under the stage. The factor that determines the placement of these elements in relation to each other is the relative position of audience seating area to stage playing area. In the community theatres of the United States in the twentieth century, the actor may find himself in three relations to the audience: in a proscenium theatre in which audience and acting areas are divided by the proscenium arch, surrounded by the audience as in the arena form of staging in which the playing area is surrounded by the audience seating area, or with the audience on three sides of him as in the horse-shoe or end-staging form in which the horse-shoe shaped playing area is surrounded by the audience on all sides but one.

These relationships between actor and audience give a community theatre a number of forms of staging to consider in the selection of a space most suited to its public performances. Our discussion will consider these three types of staging methods and advantages and disadvantages of each.

### *The proscenium stage*

This form of staging, most familiar to contemporary playgoers, separates the actor from the audience by placing the actor within the proscenium arch; the action of the play is seen in a kind of picture frame. It is almost as though one of the walls of a room had been removed, thus allowing the audience to peep in and see the action of the actors who, for the most part, ignore the fact that several hundred people are viewing them. This kind of staging has several advantages that, to some degree, explain the popularity of this type of theatre structure.

The proscenium stage is usually associated with theatre structures having a large seating capacity. Since the actor is separated from the audience, the audience itself may be seated some distance from the stage without noticeably affecting its involvement in the action of the play. In fact, up to a certain

point, the illusion the picture frame stage is so suited to create can best be maintained by separating the audience as distinctly as possible from the place of the action. Seating capacities of up to two thousand people are not infrequent in this type of staging.

The proscenium type of staging allows the theatre's designers to work within the picture frame design. Certain plays are admirably suited to this type of staging. Interiors of houses can be displayed most convincingly in this type of staging. It also allows the designer a certain freedom from exactly duplicating the objects used in real life. An actor who reads a current magazine in a play taking place in 1910 need not have a real magazine from that period, for the audience will be too far away from the action of the play to notice whether or not the magazine is really what it purports to be.

Because the proscenium stage is so familiar to contemporary audiences, many of the theatrical devices of the picture frame stage are readily acceptable to present day audiences. This form of staging doesn't require the audience to adjust to a new method of staging.

The fact that the audience seating area and the actor's playing area are clearly separated is a distinct advantage in the production of naturalistic plays that rely for their effect on the creation of the illusion that the audience is seeing a slice of life. No additional effort need be made by the producing group to disguise the fact that this is actually a play being performed before an audience.

Unfortunately, some of the proscenium stage's greatest strengths are also its greatest weaknesses. By its very nature, the proscenium stage separates the audience from the actor; and, in certain instances, this separation is not desirable. The actor is denied that intimate sense of contact with his audience that the Elizabethans used to great advantage. The audience, on the other hand, must miss a great deal of subtlety in the actor's performance, for he is obliged to project his subtle emotional nuances into a large auditorium. The inexperienced



actor may find this need to project his thoughts and emotions a greater task than he can handle successfully.

The production costs on the proscenium type of stage are higher than for any other form of staging mentioned in this discussion. The original cost of constructing a new proscenium theatre is greater than the new construction of either of the other two forms of staging described here. The equipment on the stage itself tends to be more complex and expensive than that necessary in the other forms of staging.

But the major disadvantage of the proscenium stage is its inflexibility. There is no practical way to alter the relationship of audience and actors. The actor can, of course, move out onto the small forestage or even carry his action out into the main aisle of the auditorium, but the spectator will have the feeling that the actor has somehow stepped out of his element for a brief moment and will soon return to "where he belongs."

### *The arena stage*

In the arena stage, the actor *belongs* in the very midst of the spectators. He can, from almost any position in the acting area, reach out and touch the audience. The stage is intimate in the extreme, and this is one of its main advantages. Whereas the actor's turn of body might be needed to communicate an idea on the proscenium stage, the same actor can communicate the same idea on the arena stage with an intake of breath, a slight movement of the head. The inexperienced actor, once he adjusts to the nearness of the audience, finds his task much easier on the arena stage. He can be more true to life and need not work so hard to project his emotions to an audience.

Production on an arena stage is almost always cheaper than production on a proscenium stage. There are no flats to build to simulate walls, no elaborate doors to construct, no scenic vistas outside windows that must be created. And since the arena is smaller in area, the amount of furniture and decor needed is less.

A large room with high ceilings can be turned into an arena

theatre at low cost, but it is almost impossible to remodel any building except a church or a movie theatre into a proscenium stage. Equipment costs are slightly less expensive for an arena theatre because the playing area and seating area are smaller.

The arena stage allows the designer to work in sculptured design rather than painting design. Because the audience sits all around the playing area, the designer must work in three dimensions. The back of a sofa suddenly becomes as important as its front. Frames can be hung from invisible wire to simulate mirrors. The possibilities of three dimensional design are almost unlimited.

The arena form also finds its strength turned to weaknesses in some instances. The relation between actor and audience is intimate, but seating capacity is sacrificed. The arena house rarely seats more than three hundred spectators. And these spectators are placed in the peculiar position of being able to watch one another watching the play. There are many people who feel that being able to see the audience on the far side of the performers destroys the theatrical illusion.

There is no curtain in the arena theatre, making it difficult for actors to exit. Certain effects are ruined when you sense the actors getting up and leaving the playing area during the blackout.

It is difficult to do multi-set shows on the arena stage, because you cannot change sets behind the curtain nor find much room offstage in the usual arena theatre to store a great deal of furniture. Rapid scene changes are almost impossible and must usually be done in the full view of the audience.

A certain technical precision is required in arena stage craftsmanship and arena acting that is often difficult to learn. Furniture must be authentic, and props must be real. The actor who drops a line in arena staging cannot wander toward the wings until he hears the prompter's cue. He always has his back to some part of the audience.

The arena theatre is nearly as inflexible as the proscenium stage. If the seats in an arena theatre are permanently in-

stalled, there is very little that can be done to rearrange the relationship between player and audience.

### *The horse-shoe stage*

The horse-shoe or three-quarter arena form of staging tends to combine the salient advantages of the arena and proscenium methods without many of the disadvantages of the two. The horse-shoe stage usually allows a seating capacity of from three hundred to seven hundred and fifty. Even in the larger capacities a sense of intimacy is retained in the relationship between audience and actors.

This form of staging places a wall behind the actor, thus allowing the designer to locate the action of the play more easily. This single surface is a great help for many other reasons. It may be used to display a cyclorama on which the lighting can suggest time of day. Fireplaces, doors for surprise entrances (which are almost impossible in arena staging), and special wall decor denoting period and economic condition of the inhabitants are just a few of the many uses of this wall from the designer's point of view. This wall gives the actor a chance to face away from his audience; this is especially useful in scenes of violence or when the actor wishes to lose the attention of the audience.

Except when the action of the play is in the downstage portion of the playing area, this form of staging avoids having the audience look past the action into the faces of other spectators. Various staging devices, such as tableaux that end in blackouts, tend to disturb the audience less in this form of staging than in arena staging. It also allows the actors a number of exits that do not take them through the audience. Much of this traffic can be avoided in the horse-shoe type of staging, thus saving it for those times when it is most effective.

Designers are intrigued by this form of staging, for it allows them to combine flat and sculptural design in the execution of the sets, lights, and properties. The actor may come downstage to confide to the audience or establish a close re-

lationship with the audience in scenes of subtle emotional values, he also can retreat upstage to place his action against a definite scenic background. Horseshoe staging allows a combination of remoteness and intimacy, and was, in fact, the scaffold on which Shakespeare worked to such excellent advantage.

This form of staging, although ideal for certain types of plays, has some inherent disadvantages. Its increased size and complexity as compared to the arena stage costs more, both in the construction of an appropriate new building and in the cost of producing each show. Although still considerably below the usual costs of proscenium production, horseshoe staging tends to involve more expensive production and equipment costs than arena staging.

Although the production of multi-set shows is more easily accomplished in horseshoe staging than arena staging, it is still considerably more difficult than on the proscenium stage with its possibilities of revolving and sliding auxiliary stages. And, unless a somewhat awkward curtain arrangement is employed, set changes must be accomplished in full view of the audience.

This form of staging also tends to be relatively inflexible if the seating arrangement of the audience is permanently fixed. Some rearrangement is possible, but such rearrangement tends to look like a make-shift job even when accomplished with considerable skill.

This mixture of strong advantages and inherent disadvantages in all three forms of staging has caused no little concern in the architects' offices charged with the design of the contemporary stage. Many community theatre groups have carefully weighed the advantages and disadvantages of each type of staging and have decided to use or construct a building designed to enable the group to produce in one of the styles. Other groups have tried producing on the proscenium stage of the community's high school, have constructed a temporary arena stage in a large meeting room, and then have moved to

horse-shoe production in the same room by rearranging the seating.

Obviously the best stage structure is that which allows the group to produce each of its productions to maximum effect. And, because many theatres produce plays from diverse periods employing different staging techniques, there has been a considerable impulse in the past decade to redesign the stage structure for each production. Some designers have come to the conclusion that the best theatre is the most flexible theatre. Essentially this means that the theatre needs no theatre, in the conventional sense, but rather a large room with movable seating arrangements. This enables the theatre group literally to build the theatre anew for each production.

### *The flexible stage*

The flexible stage is not a stage at all; instead, it is a large room with high ceilings in which the audience seating area's relation to the actor's playing area is arranged anew for each production. The audience is seated on folding chairs placed on movable platforms varying in height. Beginning with a series nine inches high, they progress upward in nine inch increments through the number of rows the capacity of the house allows. The platforms are usually three feet wide and eight feet long and are constructed in the manner of theatre parallels.<sup>1</sup> Thus, the theatre that has such a flexible design can construct any type of stage; the flexibility of the arrangement avoids many of the disadvantages of each form of staging.

This extreme flexibility and freedom of the flexible stage is its principal advantage. The director and designer are free to set the play's action in its most expressive locale and to arrange the audience's relation to the action of the play.

Another advantage is that the entire theatre can be dismantled and the space not needed for storage rented to others.

The novelty of the flexible stage is another of its advantages.

<sup>1</sup> For a suggestion on the construction of parallels, see Herbert Philippi *Stagecraft and Scenic Design*, p. 80.

The playgoer will be introduced to new ways of seeing the action of the play, and the actor will learn the particular requirements of playing in a variety of stage areas.

But the principal advantage of the flexible stage is that it allows the community theatre to present plays written for particular forms of staging in the form for which they were intended. A Shakespearean play will not be confined behind a proscenium arch, and a naturalistic play will not be forced into the center of an audience. Because this form of staging requires only a large empty room, it is especially suitable for community theatre groups with limited resources.

Of course, no form of staging is totally free from certain problems. Increased set-up time for each of the theatre's productions must be allowed when a flexible stage is used. The theatre's acting area and seating area must be arranged before the set-up of the scenic elements can begin.

Unless the work of building the movable elements is carried out with taste and a sense of unified decor, the theatre can assume a look of transciency. Although this is by no means necessary, it is a factor to be considered in the choice of this form of staging structure and its subsequent construction.

If the community theatre has a large audience and must accommodate, for example, one thousand spectators at each performance, this form of theatre structure is impractical. Moving a thousand folding chairs and the platforms can prove an immense and impractical task. The flexible stage is best suited to medium capacity audiences.

The flexible stage usually involves additional production costs in contrast with more permanent kinds of staging. Since the possibilities are almost unlimited, a sensitive designer will exploit some of these possibilities; and the theatre will have to pay for the means to realize these new ideas. For example, the designer will hang lighting instruments in unexpected corners; and the theatre will have to provide cable to connect these distant lights with the control board.

The community theatre that is considering new construc-

tion or looking for a place to perform publicly will be well advised to consider carefully the advantages and disadvantages of the various forms of stage structures. The group probably will want to perform on the various types of stages before it commits itself to any one form.

Some of the excellent books on theatre architecture are listed in the appendix. In addition, the community theatre's building fund committee will be well advised to consult any one of a large number of theatre consultants who have long experience in advising theatre groups on the best form of theatre architecture for their particular needs. A qualified theatre consultant can be obtained to visit your community theatre and discuss your building plans with you. This will be money well spent if it results in a permanent home for the theatre that serves the theatre's membership and is a source of pride and enjoyment to the community.

APPENDIX A  
LITERATURE ON COMMUNITY THEATRE  
ADMINISTRATION AND PRODUCTION TECHNIQUES

GENERAL LITERATURE

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DIRECTING

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APPENDIX B  
CATALOGS AND OTHER  
SOURCES OF INFORMATION

SCENERY

Ben Walters  
125 W. 26th St.  
New York, N.Y. 10001  
(Celastic)

Roscoe Laboratories  
29 Moore St.  
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11206

J. H. Channon Corp.  
1447 West Hubbard St.  
Chicago, Illinois 60622  
(Stage Equipment)

J. R. Clancy, Inc.  
1220 W. Belden Ave.  
Syracuse, N.Y. 13204

Mutual Hardware  
106 West 54th St.  
New York, N.Y. 10019

Gothic Color Co.  
90 Ninth Ave.  
New York, N.Y. 10011  
(Paint Pigment)

Theatre Production Service  
45th West 46th St.  
New York, N.Y. 10036

Northwest Studios  
2608 Nicollet Ave.  
Minneapolis, Minn. 55408

Knoxville Scenic Studios  
P.O. Box 1029  
Knoxville, Tenn. 37901

Great Western Stage Equipment  
Co.  
1324 Grand Ave.  
Kansas City, Mo. 64106

LIGHTING

Associated Lighting Co.  
521 Brannan St.  
San Francisco, Calif. 94107

Hub Electric Co.  
2255 West Grand Ave.  
Chicago, Ill. 60612

Century Lighting, Inc.  
521 West 43rd St.  
New York, N.Y. 10036

Ward Leonard Electric Co.  
Mount Vernon, N.Y.

Paramount Cosmetics Co.  
431 Fifth Ave  
New York, N.Y. 10016  
(Cinnabeck gelatin)

Major Equipment Co.  
4003 W. Fullerton Ave.  
Chicago, Ill. 60639

Frank Adam Electric Co.  
3650 Windsor Place  
St. Louis, Mo. 63113

General Electric  
Lamp Division  
Cleveland, Ohio 44112

General Radio Co.  
275 Massachusetts Ave.  
Cambridge, Mass. 02139

Kliegl Bros.  
321 West 50th St.  
New York, N.Y. 10019

Brigham Gelatin Co.  
17-19 Weston St.  
Randolph, Vermont 05060

Ariel Davis Mfg. Co.  
3687 South State St.  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84115

Radiant Lamp Corporation  
300 Jelliffe Ave.  
Newark, N.J. 07108

### COSTUMES

Colorado Costume Co.  
1224 Seventeenth St.  
Denver, Colo. 80202

Capezio  
630 Ninth Ave.  
New York, N.Y. 10036  
(Ballet Shoes)

Dazien's  
125 N. Wabash Ave.  
Chicago, Ill. 60602  
(Fabrics, Accessories)

Leo's Advanced Theatrical Co.  
32 West Randolph St.  
Chicago, Ill. 60601  
(Accessories)

Western Costume Co.  
5335 Melrose Ave.  
Los Angeles, Calif. 90038

Van Horn & Son  
232 North 11th St.  
Philadelphia, Pa. 19107

Hoffert Shoe Co.  
6 East Lake St.  
Chicago, Ill. 60601

Eileen Holding Dancewear  
441 West 21st St.  
New York, N.Y. 10011

Ben Walters, Inc.  
156 7th Ave.  
New York, N.Y. 10011

### MAKE-UP

F. W. Nack  
30 N. Dearborn  
Chicago, Ill. 60602  
(Wigs)

Paramount Costumes  
32 West 20th St.  
New York, N.Y. 10011

Max Factor and Co.  
1655 N. McCadden Pl.  
Hollywood, Calif. 90028  
(Wigs and Make-up)

M. Stein Cosmetics Co.  
430 Broome St.  
New York, N.Y. 10013

## SCRIPTS

Samuel French, Inc. 25 West 45th Street New York, N.Y. 10019	Dramatist's Play Service 440 Park Avenue South New York, N.Y. 10016
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## THEATRE CONSULTANTS

Bowman, Ned A., University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pa.  
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Fuchs, Theodore, Northwestern University, Evanston, Ill.  
Professor, Department of Theatre Arts

Gillette, Arnold, The University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa  
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Jewell, James Earl, 360 Sixth St., San Francisco, Calif.  
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Chairman, Department of Speech, North Dakota State University

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versity of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa 52240

APPENDIX C  
SAMPLE COMMUNITY THEATRE  
CONSTITUTIONS AND BY-LAWS

Large-sized Community Theatre

Article I

*Name and Object*

Section 1. This organization shall be known as the .....  
Theatre.

Section 2. The objects of this organization shall be:

- a. to stimulate a civic interest in drama
- b. to produce worthy plays
- c. to provide dramatic study
- d. to stimulate an interest in play writing

Article II

*Membership*

Section 1. Anyone in the community may become a member upon the payment of dues.

Section 2. There shall be three types of members—active, general, and sustaining. The active members shall be those who participate in the productions and management. The general members shall be those who merely attend the performances. The sustaining members, or patrons, shall be those who do not take an active part, but are interested in the success of the theatre and form a guaranteeing body by paying higher membership dues. Honorary members may be selected from time to time by the board of directors.

Article III

*Conduct of Meetings*

Section 1. Robert's Rules of Order Revised shall govern the conduct of all business, except where specified otherwise in the constitution or by-laws.

Article IV

*Quorum*

Section 1. A quorum at a regular meeting shall consist of one-fourth of the active membership.

Section 2. A quorum of a meeting of the board of directors, notice of which has been given by the secretary, shall consist of five members.

Section 3. At any meeting of the board of directors called for emergency purpose without due notice from the secretary, seven directors shall constitute a quorum.

#### Article V *Powers and Duties of Officers*

Section 1. The president shall preside at all general meetings. He shall also preside at the meetings of the board of directors and have a vote only in case of tie. He is a member and chairman of the executive committee. He shall be ex-officio member of all committees, voting only in case of a tie of other members present.

Section 2. The vice-president shall act in the absence or disability of the president and shall have all powers and perform all duties of the president during such absence or inability.

Section 3. The secretary shall issue notices of meetings to all members, record minutes of all meetings, and attend to correspondence. He shall have custody of the constitution, by-laws, charter, and all other records.

Section 4. The treasurer shall collect and, under direction of the board of directors, disburse all funds, and shall keep an accurate account of receipts and disbursements. He shall render a report to the board of directors at the annual meeting and from time to time at the request of the board

#### Article VI *Terms of Office*

Section 1. All officers shall continue in office until the first regular meeting of the board of directors following the annual election, at which time the new officers shall assume their duties .

#### Article VII *Officers and Their Election*

Section 1. The officers shall be a president, a vice-president, secretary, treasurer, business manager, and a board of twelve directors.

Section 2. The nominations for officers shall be made by the nominating committee appointed by the president and to these names may be added further nominations from the floor.

Section 3. Elections shall occur during the month of April.

Section 4. The board of directors may from time to time appoint additional officers or agents, whose duties shall be defined and whose activities shall be subject to its control. The board of directors also will have the power to fill any vacancy that may occur among its own membership or among the officers, except that of president, such election to be continued until the next annual election.

Section 5. A director of productions shall be appointed by the board of directors, who shall have entire charge of all plays produced. He shall have power to appoint such assistants as he may desire, insofar as he does not interfere with the responsibilities and duties of the working committees. He is an ex-officio member of the board of directors and all of the committees, attending meetings and discussions, but not voting.

#### Article VIII

##### *Meetings*

Section 1. The annual meeting of all members shall be set for the month of April as determined by the board of directors.

Section 2. Other meetings may be called by the president or three directors on three days' notice. In such a case one-fourth of the membership shall constitute a quorum.

Section 3. Directors' meetings will be held at the call of the president, or by any three members of the board. Notice of time and place shall be given by the secretary.

#### Article IX

##### *How to Amend the Constitution*

Section 1. All amendments to the constitution must receive a two-thirds vote of the active membership present providing that notice of such proposed amendment be sent to each member not less than fourteen days prior to such a meeting.

#### BY-LAWS

#### Article X

##### *Committees*

Section 1. There shall be two standing committees of the board of directors—executive and finance. The executive committee shall consist of the president, treasurer, and two members of the board of directors. The finance committee shall consist of three members of the board of directors to be appointed by the president.

Section 2. There shall be the following general standing committees: membership, program, publicity, play reading, production, house, stage, properties, and costumes. The chairmen of these committees shall select the rest of the membership of their respective committees. The chairmen of the general committees shall be ex-officio members of the board of directors

#### Article XI

##### *Dues*

Section 1. The dues for general and active members shall be \$2.00 per year, and shall be due upon receipt of notice from the treasurer.

Section 2. The honorary members shall not incur the payment of dues.

Section 3. The dues for sustaining members shall be at least \$25.00 per year.

#### Article XII

##### *How to Amend the By-Laws*

Section 1. Amendments to the by-laws may be made by a two-thirds vote of the board of directors.



## Medium-sized Community Theatre

### Article I

This organization shall be called the ..... Community Theatre.

### Article II

The objects of this theatre shall be to stimulate the production of good plays and to provide dramatic study for those individuals in the community interested in the theatre arts.

### Article III

The officers of this theatre organization shall be a president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, auditor, and a director.

### Article IV

Section 1. The annual meeting shall be held the second regular meeting in May.

Section 2. All officers except the dramatic director shall be nominated and elected by ballot at the annual meeting, to serve for one year. They may be re-elected for one term only.

Section 3. The officers, together with the chairman of the play selection committee and the chairman of the finance committee, shall constitute the executive committee.

### Article V

The membership shall be unlimited and open to the entire community.

### Article VI

This constitution may be amended at any regular business meeting of the organization provided that the proposed amendment has been presented in writing at the previous business meeting.

### Article VII

Section 1. The president shall preside at all meetings at which he is present, shall exercise general supervision over the affairs and activities of the organization, and shall serve as ex-officio member on all the standing committees.

Section 2. The vice-president shall assume all duties of the president in the latter's absence.

Section 3. The secretary shall handle correspondence for the theatre and keep the minutes of each meeting, said minutes to be an accurate record of all business transacted.

Section 4. The treasurer shall receive all club funds and pay out funds only by order of the director. He shall keep an itemized account of all receipts and expenditures.

Section 5. The director shall cast all plays, appoint production staffs, and direct all plays.

#### Article VIII

The regular meetings of the theatre shall be held on the second and fourth Mondays of each month from September to June at 8:15 p.m.

#### Article IX

Two-thirds of the membership shall constitute a quorum.

#### Article X

All committees shall be appointed by the president. The standing committees to be appointed are: library, social, program, membership, and finance.

#### Article XI

Section 1. The theatre will present three major productions a year.

Section 2. The theatre shall present a weekly radio and/or TV program over station . . . . . for a twenty-six week run, the project to be under the supervision of an appointed director.

#### Article XII

All funds shall be used for the producing of plays and for the purchasing of equipment for the theatre.

#### Article XIII

Robert's Rules of Order Revised shall be authority upon all questions not covered by the constitution and by-laws.

#### Article XIV

The by-laws may be amended at any regular business meeting of the theatre by a two-thirds vote, notice of said amendment having been given at the previous regular business meeting.

## Small-sized Community Theatre

### Article I

This organization shall be called the . . . . . Little Theatre.

### Article II

The object of this club shall be to promote a civic interest in the theatre.

### Article III

The officers of this club shall be a president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, and a director or group of directors.

### Article IV

The membership shall be open to anyone in the community paying a participation fee of . . . . .

### Article V

The regular meeting of the club shall be held on the first and third Mondays of each month at such a place as is designated by the officers.

### Article VI

The president shall have the authority to appoint all committees deemed necessary to the organization.

### Article VII

Annual election of officers will take place the first Monday of each September. Any participating member is entitled to cast a vote in the election.

### Article VIII

The by-laws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the participating membership.

