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Production of A thousand clowns

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An Abstract of the Thesis Project of

Clifford John Sowle for the M.A.T.
(Name of student) (Degree)

in Theater Arts presented on August 21, 1967
(Major) (Date)

Title: Direction of the Production A Thousand Clowns

Abstract approved: 

Asher B. Wilson

The project chosen for partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Teaching in the field of Theater Arts was the production of Herb Gardner's comedy, A Thousand Clowns. This particular play was chosen because it met production requirements more closely than any other script considered for the project.

The project involved, after selection of the script, casting the characters, a six-week rehearsal period, consulting with the technical staff on matters of lighting, setting, and costumes, four performances at the Portland State College Idea Theater, two performances at the

Oregon State Penitentiary, and the compiling of a complete Play Production Book which describes all phases of the production.

Existing standards of play direction and production book composition were observed throughout the production period. Special emphasis was placed on each actor's development of his character, remembering that an educational theater situation is also a learning situation for all concerned. Character relationships became extremely important to the sense of script, as the play is actually built on a series of character sketches in which we see many contemporary American types. The play's conflict is seen through character and is obvious from the first few lines of Act I. Murray Burne has made his value judgments on American society and has found the latter to be far below his expectations. He is now attempting to live by his own eccentric rules and, at the same time, retain custody of his nephew, who is in the process of being removed from his home by the Bureau of Child Welfare.

Into this theme of individuality versus structure is woven the familiar boy-meets-girl pattern. The entire play, consequently, depends on character and inter-character relationships.

The play's pure entertainment value was stressed, rather than any moral message which might have been present in the script. The play is funny, but there are definite deficiencies in the areas of plot development and the play's philosophy. The purpose of the production was to

present consistently a humorous, enjoyable evening of theater for the audiences, and a beneficial learning situation for the actors, director, and production staff.

After several casting difficulties and minor technical slow-downs, A Thousand Clowns enjoyed near capacity houses at P.S.C., and an extremely warm reception from the members of Oregon State Prison's Upward Bound program. The show increased in effectiveness at each performance. Character came through to the audiences. Serious pace problems, involving quick timing from beginning to end, were solved. The actors did the work themselves. They improved their craft and learned and benefitted from this experience. From the director's standpoint, the experience was enjoyable and profitable, provoking new ideas and calling upon new methods to work them out.

PRODUCTION OF A THOUSAND CLOWNS

**A PRODUCTION THESIS
SUBMITTED TO PORTLAND STATE COLLEGE
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS IN TEACHING**

By

Clifford John Bowle

June 1968

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Date thesis is presented May 10, 1968

Typed by Lois Mock for Clifford John Sowle

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CHAPTER I - THE PLAY

Selection of the Play

The factors influencing the selection of A Thousand Clowns for this Master's degree production were those requirements imposed by the Theater Arts Department. The play had to be contemporary American, to require a reasonably small set, to have a small cast, and not to involve major costume problems. With these criteria in mind, the director set out to find a play which he liked, which had not been produced in the area recently, and which he felt he could cast. Initially, plays by Williams, Miller, and Saroyan were considered; but finding a play by any of these writers which would meet the above specifications proved to be impossible.

Next, several plays which had been produced recently on Broadway were examined. Of these, Herb Gardner's A Thousand Clowns seemed most capable of production within the physical limitations of Room 109--the area chosen for the production. This room, with a seating capacity of seventy-five, was originally a classroom, converted several years ago into a small theater. The stage is shallow, and once a set is placed on it, the playing area it affords is limited indeed.

For A Thousand Clowns, the sets were simple--one interior of a small, cluttered apartment, and one interior of a business office. The cast consisted of three men, one woman, and one boy. The costumes were all modern dress. The play had not been produced in Portland since 1964.

The play had enjoyed a successful run on Broadway. It seemed both witty and satirical and would obviously provide ample opportunity for character work for the six actors involved as well as an interesting problem in directing realistic modern comedy.

Author Information

Herb Gardner was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1934, and he has lived there most of his life. While attending the High School of Performing Arts in New York, he attempted his first play, a one-act entitled The Elevator. After leaving high school, Gardner went to Carnegie Technical Institute to study sculpture and to write plays. He soon gave over the study of sculpture for the study of commercial art, a venture which proved successful when his cartoon creation, "The Nabbishes," became popular. This success allowed him to return to writing, and he wrote his first, and only, produced play, A Thousand Glowns. The play was completed in 1962 when Gardner was 28 years old. With the exception of the novel, A Piece of the Action, which concerns the commercial art business, nothing has been heard from him since.

Background of the Play

A Thousand Clowns opened in New York on April 3, 1962, at the Eugene O'Neill Theatre with Jason Robards, Jr. as Murray, Sandy Dennis as Sandy Markowitz, Barry Gordon as Nick, William Daniels as Albert Amundson, A. Larry Haines as Arnold Burns, and Gene Saks as Leo Herman. The play ran 428 performances, with favorable reviews from the New York critics. The reviews were quite similar in their comments, all praising Gardner for his warm, fresh, truthful comedy. Howard Taubman, in the New York Times, said: "Herb Gardner has written a comedy which draws its substance from people who are warm with life and as credible. It makes you feel the vitality of the Manhattan in which it takes place. Each character is so vividly individualized that their personalities trail a wealth of relationships and experiences."¹

Another typical example is a quote from John McCarten in the New Yorker: "The play is so true, so original, so funny that it emerges as the first real comedy hit Broadway has had since Mary, Mary."²

The play's characters have allowed for award-winning performances. Sandy Dennis received a TONY award for the 1961-62 season. Several members of the original cast starred in the motion picture version of the play, for which Martin Balsam was given the Academy Award as best supporting actor for his role of Arnold Burns.

¹Howard Taubman, "Theatre: 'A Thousand Clowns' Opens," New York Times, April 6, 1962, Sec. 2, p. 31.

²John McCarten, "Assorted Oddballs," The New Yorker, April 14, 1962, p. 106.

CHAPTER II - ANALYSIS OF THE PLAY

Structural Analysis

For analytical purposes, each scene will be denoted either by the entrance or exit of a character, or by a definite shift in the thought or direction of a character.

A brief plot outline will precede the individual scene analysis. A Thousand Clowns tells the story of Murray Burns, television script writer, trying both to live his life as he wishes, and to maintain custody of his fourteen year old nephew, Nick. The dilemma raised by these efforts affords the central conflict of the play; can Murray keep custody of his beloved nephew without compromising his deepest intuitions about how life should be lived and enjoyed; can he break ingrained habits and foster new ones which are alien to him and still have a meaningful existence? Into the picture come Sandy Markowitz and Albert Amundson, employees of the Bureau of Child Welfare, who are engaged to be married. They attempt to discover whether or not Murray's attitudes and way of life are properly beneficial to his young nephew. As Murray is giving Sandy and Albert a sardonic account of his past life, Arnold Burns, Murray's older brother, a successful Manhattan business man, enters with fruit for Nick and Murray. Albert and Sandy, after some playful taunting by Murray, have an argument concerning professional practices. Albert loses his temper and leaves abruptly. Sandy stays with Murray, partly because of her anger with Albert and partly because she hasn't completed the job she came to do.

By the end of Act I, Sandy has decided to remain with Murray for the night. The following morning, she feels guilty. She says she has carelessly abandoned her career and lost her fiancé. Murray charmingly engages her in his problems, and she decides to help him get a job to provide evidence of his stability so that he can keep Nick. Arnold enters and tries to persuade Murray that he must get a job or the welfare board will remove Nick from his care. He brings Murray an offer of a job by his former employer, Leo Herman--alias, "Chuckles the Chipmunk." Murray rejects it because he can't tolerate the phoniness of the television business. Arnold berates him for his implacability, and as a result of it Sandy leaves him. Thereafter, Murray, in a dramatic scene with Leo, accepts the job as a script writer. Sandy returns and play ends with Murray, Nick and Sandy becoming a family.

Scene one opens, in half-light, with Nick watching television. The voice on the television is that of Leo Herman as "Chuckles the Chipmunk." As the lights come up, the audience becomes aware of Murray's apartment which is phenomenally messy, with the exception of a meticulously neat alcove up left. The audience should wonder why the alcove is clean.

Murray's annoyance upon entering in scene two is caused by the noise of the television. His eccentric personality is revealed immediately through his phone conversation with a recorded weather report. The following conversation between Murray and Nick reveals information central to the plot, Murray's past occupation as a television script writer and Nick's attendance at a school for intellectually gifted children. Nick reminds Murray that representatives from The

Child Welfare Board are coming to inspect the apartment that morning. Murray's reaction indicates his contempt for all professional people. Nick questions Murray about his refusal to get a job, and Murray defends himself by saying that the business structure, its ethics, its morality, is joyless and degrading, and that it denies man's finer instincts. Thus, this scene reveals basic personality differences between Murray and Nick. Murray's independence and his nonchalance about practical matters contrast sharply with Nick's intelligent practicality. Murray's love for humanity and his understanding of human nature are revealed in a speech to Nick in which he describes watching people in a movie theater, what they wear and how different kinds of people assume certain characteristics.

Scene three opens with the entrance of Albert Amundson and Sandy Markowitz, representatives from the welfare board. Albert is a parody of a social worker, well-versed in sociological techniques, but possessing little common sense. He can't cope with any situation which deviates from his prescribed norms. Albert's complete lack of imagination contrasts with Murray's witty and fresh conversation. Albert is cold, factual, and grave. He is openly exasperated by Murray's remarks, which, to him, indicate Murray's total disregard for authority. Sandy is revealed as an eager, newly graduated social worker. She is anxious to do her job, which is to determine whether or not Murray's home is a good place for Nick.

Scene four briefly presents Arnold Burns, Murray's older brother. Arnold's intrusion at this point is included to provide more evidence for the social workers that Nick's home atmosphere is disruptive and

undesirable; i.e., people coming in without knocking. Since nothing of Arnold's internal character is revealed here, it is obviously a device to pique further the social worker's already aggravated professional concern. It is obvious from Arnold's dress that he is a rather typical, well-to-do, executive type.

Scene five begins as Arnold leaves the apartment. Murray explains that Arnold brings fruit on his way to the office every morning, and under questioning, gives a brief description of his work experience with Leo Herman. Murray's free spirit and his love of life are again emphasized, and Nick's love and concern for Murray is developed when he defends Murray's actions. On suggestion by Albert, Sandy questions Nick about his life with his uncle. Nick's efforts to protect Murray are summarily refuted by Murray. Albert's prudishness is revealed in the "Bubbles" sequence which is the climax of this scene. "Bubbles" is a statue of a naked girl whose breasts light up. Albert is not only shocked but fascinated, and his discomfort is obvious. Nick exits as Albert and Sandy begin arguing, ending the scene. (Gardner has him exit at this point because Murray would be unable to withstand a "three-against-one" attack at this point. Everyone pointing out Murray's failures would force the issue too early in the play's development.) The important fact here is that Albert is scandalized and is outraged professionally that Nick is in possession of anything as unseemly as "Bubbles."

Scene six reveals the essential professional conflict between Sandy and Albert. Sandy was amused by Albert's supercilious reaction to the statue, which wounded his pride. There is, thus, in this scene

a mixture of professional outrage and wounded vanity in Albert. As he attempts to redeem the situation from utter frivolousness and bring it back under the auspices of professionalism, Murray explodes and Albert is forced to back down temporarily. The tone of the conversation quiets as Murray describes Nick's peculiar background (he was deserted by Murray's sister when he was six years old and Murray was forced to raise him) to Sandy and Albert. This description is followed by conversation which contains the crisis for Sandy and Albert. Murray taunts Albert into a ludicrous position in front of Sandy, and Albert exits angrily and foolishly.

Scene seven reveals Sandy's true character. She is young, insecure, and obviously not well-suited to handling the problems involved in social work. A relationship develops between Murray and Sandy through Murray's gentle efforts to comfort her for her feeling of failure. He charms her by his humor and simple affirmation of basic emotions. He reveals in this scene his naive and sentimental regard for humanity. He uses a kind of armchair psychology in order to show her that things are not so terrible after all. Murray tells Sandy:

It's just there's all these Sandras running around who you've never met before, and it's confusing at first, fantastic, like a Chinese firedrill. But God damn, isn't it great to find out how many Sandras there are? Like those little cars in the circus, this tiny red car comes out and putters around, suddenly its doors open and out come a thousand clowns, whooping and hollering and raising hell.¹

Murray's personality is developed further in this scene. He doesn't

¹Herb Gardner, A Thousand Clowns, 1962, p. 46.

care at all about schedules. He is a lover of things, of people, and of his own freedom.

Nick's entrance begins scene ten--the final scene in Act I, and the scene which brings out an even closer relationship between Murray and Sandy. She likes the worry-free bachelor because he is so different from Albert, who is conventional, serious and dull. She has, by the end of the scene, become thoroughly involved with Murray and willingly a part of his establishment. The scene closes with Nick's retiring to a neighbor's apartment and Murray singing "Yes, Sir, That's My Baby."

Scene eleven, which begins Act II, opens with a phone call which Murray answers with great annoyance. The phone call, we find out later, is from Albert, but Murray hangs up before he realizes who is calling. There is a screen around the bed indicating that Sandy has spent the night with Murray. The phone call awakens her, and she and Murray begin a restrained conversation which reveals her shyness in facing the man with whom she has just spent the night. She exits to dress.

Scene twelve begins with Arnold's entrance. He is again bringing fruit to Nick and Murray. He pleads with Murray to get back to work in order to keep Nick. Murray, in contrast to Arnold's concern, is very nonchalant and self-confident and tells Arnold that he can handle everything and not to worry. Arnold's exit ends that brief scene.

Scene thirteen is introduced by Sandy's re-entrance. Another awkward conversation ensues between Murray and Sandy. The tone of the conversation is impersonal, its substance, trivial. Sandy exits in a formal manner on the pretense of returning to work. She waits, not far

from the door, for Murray to call her back and reaffirm the relationship begun the night before.

Murray does open the door and call after her, and her re-entrance opens scene fourteen. A warm and energetic sequence of dialogue follows in which Sandy declares her affection for Murray and her new-found freedom. However, Murray becomes suspicious of her when she indicates that she is going to move in with him and assume the responsibilities of his domestic life. Murray feels his own freedom threatened.

Scene fifteen begins with a knock at the door, interrupting their discussion. Sandy's new commitment to freedom is belied by her hiding in the closet upon hearing the knock. Sandy is revealed in the closet but refuses to come out. Albert then explains to Murray that he and Sandy's parents are quite disturbed at her absence. He tells Murray, further, that the welfare board is preparing to remove Nick from Murray's home unless Murray shows evidence of his stability. Murray becomes more concerned. It manifests itself as an attack upon Albert's lack of humanity and warmth. Albert admits rather pathetically his inability to deal humanely with people in contrast to Murray's unusual warmth and appeal. Albert exits, leaving Murray pondering his situation.

Sandy's apology for her cowardice to a disturbed Murray begins scene sixteen. Murray's attitude changes during this scene from anger and resentment toward society's intrusion upon his private world to a kind of defeated resignation and acceptance. He explains to Sandy that he wants to protect him from becoming a puppet of the establishment.

Murray realizes, however, that he must sacrifice some of his own ideals in order to keep Nick and thus be able to train the boy to such a style of life. The scene concludes with Murray calling Arnold about the job with Leo Herman.

Scene seventeen opens in Arnold's office in Manhattan. It is necessary at this point to see Murray in the alien environment of the business milieu to emphasize his struggle to adapt to the kind of mentality which he so despises. Attention is drawn to the stage, again by the voice of "Chuckles." Leo Herman is speaking to Arnold over a speakerphone. Leo's conversation is disjointed and egotistical. Arnold is glumly agreeing with whatever Leo says.

The "intercom" signaling Murray's arrival begins scene eighteen. Murray begins mocking Arnold's success and the distasteful opulence of his office. His disgust with the television business is revealed, though he tells Arnold he will work for Leo if he must.

Leo's voice again over the speakerphone begins scene nineteen. In this scene, Leo's character is completely revealed. He is unreal, unbelievable: a repulsive individual, abounding with hysterical energy. After Leo's and Murray's relationship is exposed, Leo begins to aggravate Murray until Murray loses control and dumps the speakerphone in the wastebasket. Arnold becomes very angry with Murray for not playing the game. The conflict of the brothers' philosophies--conformity in order to survive versus individualism in the face of arbitrary social control--is the impetus for Murray's sudden exit. Arnold is left on stage, shaking his head at his brother's stubborn refusal to co-operate.

We return again to Murray's apartment for scene twenty. Sandy has completely redecorated the apartment. Nick makes a novel entrance from the fire escape, and he and Sandy have a short conversation in which he reveals his affection for Murray, his pleasure that he has gone to get a job, and a kind of reverential condemnation of his eccentricities. He explains to her his concern for his own security. An affection between Sandy and Nick is revealed which is particularly significant in the next scene. An apprehensive note ends the scene as Nick exits asking Sandy if Murray has seen the change in the apartment.

Murray's return from Arnold's office begins scene twenty-one. Murray is visibly shaken by the change in his apartment. He puts off Sandy's question about the new job by a series of speeches about human values containing a foreshadowing emphasis on apologies. Sandy realizes that Murray is trying to evade the issue and criticizes his lack of concern for Nick which she can only interpret as selfishness. Murray still relies on individualism and freedom to counter her attack. Sandy regrets she has failed to influence Murray and leaves. Murray is left alone in his own surroundings which are now foreign to him. The scene closes with him leaning out the window railing at his neighbors.

Band music opens Act III (scene twenty-two). Murray is seen marching joyfully around the stage, changing his apartment back to its original condition. Arnold enters, turns off "The Stars and Stripes Forever," and proceeds to deliver a very convincing, sometimes moving monologue, the emphasis of which is a defense of his own necessary conformity and its advantages. Murray returns to the battle with an apology for the individual, accusing Arnold of being totally unaware of

what is meaningful in life. Arnold exits, leaving Murray seemingly victorious but depressed.

Scene twenty-three begins when Nick enters, again, from the fire escape. He sees that Murray is dejected, and inquires about his mood. Murray refuses to comment about it and only answers Nick in an abatracted way. Nick tells Murray that he has made a choice about what his last name is to be. It is revealed that Murray told Nick he could use any name he chose until his fourteenth birthday at which time he had to select his permanent name. Nick shows Murray his library card which has the name "Murray Burns" on it. Murray, at first, is incredulous, but when Nick insists that he has chosen Murray's name, Murray is moved and is momentarily unable to respond. He realizes how much he means to Nick, and that their relationship is, and always has been that of a father and son. The significance of this awareness is made apparent in the following scene. It is the pivotal point in the development of the character of Murray Burns.

Scene twenty-four is begun by the entrance of Leo Herman. Murray and Nick are interrupted by a rude knock just before Murray must make a statement about Nick's decision. Leo enters like a "one-liner" comic, with a constant stream of patter, typical of the "T. V. comic." Murray, during this scene, remains relatively quiet, a sycophant. Leo is wearing his "Chuckles" costume and Murray and Nick are both thrown off guard. Leo has brought with him a statue of himself as "Chuckles." Nick is immediately suspicious of Leo, especially when he attempts to amuse him by his television routines. Leo makes a series of one-line comic comments about Murray's apartment and how the environment must be

detrimental to Nick. Nick bristles at the insinuation that his home environment is tawdry and proceeds to insult "Chuckles" by denouncing his routines.

Scene twenty-five is marked by Sandy's re-entrance. She has come back on the pretense of getting her professional files. This gives Leo an opportunity to implicate Murray in an illicit relationship with Sandy.

Scene twenty-six begins with Sandy's exit. Leo begins to criticize Murray's behavior. He accuses him of vulgarity, of subjecting Nick to an irregular life. Nick takes up the gage and tells Leo that he is not funny. Leo is embarrassed. Then Nick throws the statue of "Chuckles" to the floor, and demands that Leo leave. Murray has to interfere at this juncture in order to keep Nick from insulting Leo further, thus insuring his chances of getting the job. He tells Nick to go to his alcove, and proceeds to mollify Leo. Leo has a moment of self-awareness when he admits that his routines are not very funny. Murray attempts to cheer him up and Leo exits marking the end of the scene.

Scene twenty-seven is a short scene between Murray and Nick. Nick is disgusted by what he interprets as Murray's cowardice. He can't understand why Murray let himself be insulted by Leo. He doesn't realize that Murray suffered the ignominy because of Nick, because he values Nick and loves him more than his own liberty which he has, throughout the play, championed so fiercely. He tries to cheer Nick up, but is interrupted by Sandy's re-entrance which marks the twenty-eighth and final scene of the play.

In this scene, Sandy and Nick begin cleaning up Murray's apartment, ignoring his protests. Sandy plays "The Stars and Stripes Forever" and Murray can't remain immune to her energy and spirit. As the curtain closes all three characters are marching around the stage to the music.

Character Summations

MURRAY BURNS...

Murray Burns is basically a lovable eccentric who dislikes structure of any kind. He has made his value judgments concerning society and life in general and is now struggling to live in accordance with these judgments. He is a free-wheeler who wants to enjoy every minute of his life in his own way--even if it only means visiting the Statue of Liberty or the Empire State Building. Murray Burns is a lover of things and people, and, more especially, of freedom. However, his freedom is brutally self-centered and is not in keeping with the philosophy of his character, a philosophy which claims love for everyone.

Murray's philosophy is something which must be carefully handled, or the character can be damaged severely. Murray's idea of enjoying life seems to be limited to just having a sense of humor. His philosophy of life cries non-conformity to the death, but, because Murray loves Nick and must keep him, his actions in the end actually defend conformity. When he sounds off about his philosophy, he always seems to add, "with reservations." The play's exposition and explanation of Murray's philosophy are stated in long speeches by Murray, and these sections must be played very carefully lest the character become very boring, and even senseless, in direction.

Obviously, Murray loves Nick above all else. He takes a job he greatly dislikes in order to retain custody of his nephew. Why Murray did not seek more intelligent employment in this situation is not known. Murray obviously also loves Sandy and will most certainly

marry her; then the three of them will visit the Empire State Building together.

Murray is "on the fringe" in several ways. His words, and most of his actions, put him on the fringe of society. But Murray may also be on the fringe of sanity. He surrounds himself with clocks, radios, hats of various descriptions, and junk, and he screams "foul" when they are removed from his sight. Shouting tirades to non-existent neighbors in empty alleys begins each morning for the hero, for he feels that "it clears (his) head." A definite feeling of insecurity surrounds Murray, and this surely explains many of his words and actions more completely than the simple fact that he claims to be an "individual."

It is because the characters in this play are so different from each other that they attract each other in the first place. In addition to being different from the other characters in the play and from the majority of characters in society, Murray is humorous. He ascends from a comic figure to a semi-tragic individual at times, but he is generally fresh, affectionate and funny. It is his humor and philosophy that redeem the play.

SANDY MARKOWITZ...

Sandy Markowitz arrives at the home of Murray Burns with one clear and firm purpose: to determine for the Bureau of Child Welfare of the City of New York whether Murray's home is, or is not, the proper environment for a boy of Nick's age. She appears to be an intense social worker, eager to use her education in actual battle situations. She soon finds her feminine impulses at odds with her profession. After some thought on her part and much persuasion on Murray's, she discovers that she is "Plainly not cut out for (the) work." Sandy discovers she is the marrying kind, not the professional kind. Marriage has definitely entered her mind before, marriage with Albert Amundson. Marrying Albert would also be marrying social work.

One may wonder how Sandy can, suddenly, stay overnight with a man she has never seen before. We have here a young girl, never before away from her parents' home, who is concerned about 14-year-old boys drinking coffee. Sandy is a confused young girl. She has seen her future husband, Albert, in his truest self, which is a disappointment to her. She has also met a fun-loving bachelor who takes care of a wonderful 14-year-old nephew. After being indoctrinated into the wonderfully-carefree-outlook-on-life club, Sandy becomes convinced that this life is the only life.

NICK BURNS...

Nick Burns is precocious, almost a "wonder-boy." He has learned much about life from Murray, and he sees a great deal of it in the same humorous light as Murray. But Murray has not completely converted Nick into a copy of himself. Nick realizes what must be done if he is to stay with Murray. His school experience is "keeping him in touch." He even keeps his section of the apartment carefully "picked up" and neat. Nick is extremely perceptive and understanding.

ALBERT AMUNDSON...

Albert Amundson is a 28-year-old graduate of N.Y.U.'s School of Social Work. He looks like what we would expect to see when we hear the term "social caseworker." He comes complete with glasses, briefcase and tweeds.

Albert, like Sandy, was not born to be a social worker, although he has made a much better "go" of it than Sandy has. He cannot cope with a situation which varies from the social norm. He is completely devoid of imagination. His real self emerges as an individual primarily concerned with the Bureau's roles. He does have some dignity (as do all of the characters in the play) beneath his bureaucratic facade. He shows this dignity upon his return to the Burns' apartment.

Albert will probably never see Sandy again. He will return to the Bureau of Child Welfare and will continue to fill out its forms and questionnaires in his cold, unemotional way, being ever concerned for the niceties of bureaucratic procedure.

ARNOLD BURNS...

Arnold is 42 years old and the older brother of Murray Burns. He is employed as a theatrical agent and has done very well, financially, during the past 15 years.

Arnold is a decent, long-suffering individual. He has tried to be "big brother" to Murray for many months--without much success. His attempts to get Murray to conform to modern business and social standards have been futile. Arnold is a man who "talks the talk and watches the rules"--socially and professionally. Feeling no embarrassment in doing this, he admits to it freely and reaps its benefits, whatever they might be.

Arnold likes Murray very much and is especially concerned about Nick, who is also his nephew. Arnold's task is to use his position of importance in the television business to get Murray a job, therefore helping Murray keep Nick.

LEO HERMAN...

Leo Herman is, according to Gardner, "42 years old, makes \$1500 a week, and is a terrible listener." The \$1500 a week comes from being one of the most popular children's television show personalities in town. In addition to this, Leo is a picture of monumental egotism, self-abasement, insecurity, and hysterical energy. Leo is fretful. He seems "hopped-up" all the time.

At times Leo Herman is actually "Chuckles the Chippermonk." He is a strange type: 175 pounds of hysterical nervous energy under clothes which are just a little too big for him.

Leo is unreal, unbelievable. But above all, Leo is a sad individual and a bit repulsive. Leo admits this in his conversation with Murray: "I don't get along too good with kids." But then, Leo does not "get along too good" with anybody.

Leo has managed to get himself "sucked into" a booming television show business, where no-talent phonies do very, very well in terms of "cash-monies."

CHAPTER III - PRODUCTION OF THE PLAY

Technical Production

The technical areas of the production were handled by members of the Theater Arts staff. The set was designed by Roger Cooper, who also took care of the lighting; costumes were handled by Stormie Lineberger; properties were managed by Leila Saad. Makeup was no problem, as all the characters used a "straight" makeup, with the exception of Arnold, who needed only a few light age lines.

The director's needs in terms of lighting, setting, and costuming, were quite simple. General lighting, with a special area inset for the office scene, was all that was required. No special effects were needed in the area of production.

Two sets were needed. The second set, which was the office, was an inset in the apartment. A backing, with a well-defined lighting area, a desk, and a couple of chairs worked nicely. The apartment scenes were not complex in setting. Three entrances, an alcove, and a level with a window seat were necessary in the design. Standard room furnishings, complete with as much "junk" as could be procured, completed the apartment.

A problem existed in the use of the space on the stage. The room had to be well-filled and cluttered to obtain the effect desired, but this left very little room for the actors to work. The addition of an upstage level alleviated this problem to some extent, but blocking was a major problem. Considerable movement had to be allowed.

Costume needs were minimal. Modern dress dominated throughout with emphasis on physical size in the costumes of Murray and Nick. The larger Murray appeared, the more satisfactory, because of Nick's larger physical size. Sandy was costumed conservatively; Arnold wore a fashionable business suit; Leo was costumed to appear unkempt; and Nick was dressed to look as young and small as possible.

Sound effects involved the playing of a pre-taped, mock children's television show through the television set already located on the stage. The taping of the program was done with a group of children at a local community center. Minor re-wiring was required to accomplish the television program effect, as well as the live speakerphone effect, which was done over a microphone from back stage.

Theme music was specially recorded ukelele stylings, centered around a tune suggested by the author--"Yes, Sir, That's My Baby." The arrangement of the music was varied in tempo with the mood of each preceding scene.

Tryouts and Casting

The pre-arranged cast at the time of the selection of the play was most satisfactory. But as rehearsal time approached, class and work schedules, etc., made it impossible for several members of the original cast to actually be in the show. One week prior to rehearsals, general reading auditions were held. They proved productive in two cases: two possibilities for the part of Arnold, one of which was Phil Rudolph; two possibilities for Sandra, one of which was Michelle Egger. No possibilities for Murray appeared at tryouts. Consequently, Tom Earley was switched from his pre-arranged role of Albert to Murray Burns. This meant finding someone to play Albert, a task which proved to be very difficult. Earley's replacement was unable to take the part in the final minutes prior to rehearsals, and a third, and final, choice was not made until rehearsals had started. After deciding on Tom Earley for the part of Murray, the part of Sandra was offered to his wife, Michelle Egger. Roger Cooper remained as Leo, and Dan Robertson stayed with the part of Nick as originally planned.

This is certainly a haphazard way of obtaining a cast. Attempting to pre-cast can prove to be very troublesome.

Physically, the cast is not as far off the author's original conceptions as might be thought. Age requirements are met with minor exceptions in the cases of Nick, Murray and Arnold. The height contrast between Nick and Murray could have been greater, but the characters are physically believable. All the actors had the ability to do the parts, and all, except Albert, had stage experience.

A Thousand Clowns

Reading Passages

SANDRA: (Pausing at kitchen doorway, smiles politely.) Well, here I am. (She goes to MURRAY, gives him cup, sits on swivel chair. He sits on stool. She takes a sip of coffee, straightens her hair. She is quite reserved, though pleasant; she behaves as though at a tea social.) You know, yesterday was the first time I've ever been to the Statue of Liberty. It's funny how you can live in a city for so long and not visit one of its most fascinating sights.

MURRAY: That is funny. (He sips his coffee.) This coffee isn't bad, for yesterday's coffee.

SANDRA: I think it's very good, for yesterday's coffee. (Takes another sip.) What kind of coffee is it?

MURRAY: I believe it's Chase and Sanborn coffee.

SANDRA: "Good to the last drop," isn't that what they say?

MURRAY: I think that's Maxwell House.

SANDRA: Oh, yes. Maxwell House Coffee. "Good to the last drop."

MURRAY: It's Chase and Sanborn that used to have the ad about the ingredients: "Monizalles for mellowness" was one.

SANDRA: They used to sponsor Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy on the radio.

MURRAY: Yes. You're right.

SANDRA: "Monizallas for mellowness." I remember. That's right. I have to leave now.

MURRAY: Oh?

SANDRA: Yes. I'll have to be on my way. (She stands, takes her pocketbook, puts on shoes, starts towards front door.)

MURRAY: (Takes her file-envelope from the floor, hands it to her.)
Don't forget your files.

SANDRA: Oh, yes. My files. (She takes them from him, stands looking at him for a moment.) Well, good-bye.

MURRAY: Good-bye, Sandra.

SANDRA: Good-bye. (She walks out of the apartment, and closes the door behind herself.)

(Alone in the apartment now, Murray stands for a moment looking at the door. He then runs to open the door; she has had her hand on the outside knob and is dragged into room as he does so.)

MURRAY: (Laughing, relieved.) You nut. I was ready to kill you.

SANDRA: (Throws her arms around him, drops bag and files on floor.)

What happened? You didn't say anything. I was waiting for you to say something, or kiss me or--?

MURRAY: I was waiting for you, for God's sake. (He kisses her.)

SANDRA: I didn't know what was going on. (She kisses him, their arms around each other; he leans away from her for a moment to put his coffee cup on the table.) Don't let me go--

MURRAY: I was just putting my coffee cup down--

SANDRA: Don't let me go. (He holds her tightly again.) Murray, I thought about it, and I probably love you.

MURRAY: That's very romantic. I probably love you too. You have very small feet. For a minute yesterday, it looked like you only had four toes, and I thought you were a freak. I woke up in the middle of the night and counted them. There are five.

SANDRA: I could have told you that.

MURRAY: (He sits in swivel chair, she on his lap.) You knocked down maybe seven boxes of crackerjacks yesterday. You are twelve years old. You sleep with the blanket under your chin like a napkin. When you started to talk about the coffee before, I was going to throw you out the window except there'd be no place for you to land but the trash-can from the Chinese restaurant.

SANDRA: You mean that you live above a Chinese restaurant?

MURRAY: Yes. It's been closed for months, though.

SANDRA: Do you mean that you live above an abandoned Chinese restaurant?

MURRAY: Yes, I do.

SANDRA: That's wonderful. (She kisses him; jumps up from his lap happily excited about what she has to say. Takes off jacket, hangs it on back of morris chair.) I didn't go to work this morning and I simply can't tell you how fantastic that makes me feel. I'm not going to do a lot of things any more. (Picks at the material of her blouse.) This blouse I'm wearing, my mother picked it out, everybody picks out things for me. She gets all her clothes directly from Louisa May Alcott. (Picks up stool, changes its position in the room.) Well, we've all seen the last of this blouse anyway. Do you realize that I feel more at home here after twenty-four hours than I do in my parents' house after twenty-five years? Of course, we'll have to do something about curtains--and I hope you don't mind about the screen around the bed; I just think it gives such a nice, separate bedroom effect to that part of the room--(Picks up her bag and files from floor where she dropped them and puts them in closet. She is moving in.) Oh, there's so many wonderful tricks you can try with a one-room apartment, really, if you're willing to use your imagination--(He watches helplessly as she moves happily about the apartment judging it with a decorator's eye.) I don't care if it sounds silly, Murray, but I was projecting a personality identification with the Statue of Liberty yesterday--courageous and free and solid metal--(She kisses him, then continues happily.) I was here with you last night and I don't give a damn who knows it or what anybody thinks, and that goes for Dr. Malko, Albert, my mother, Aunt Blanche--Oh, I'm going to do so many things I've always wanted to.

MURRAY: For example?

SANDRA: Well--I'm not sure right now. And that's marvelous too, I am thoroughly enjoying the idea that I don't know what I'm going to do next.

(Stops pacing.) Do you have an extra key?

MURRAY: What?

SANDRA: An extra key. Altman's has this terrific curtain sale, thought I'd go and--

MURRAY: Well, then I'd better give you some money--

SANDRA: No, that's all right. (Holds out her hand.) Just the key.

MURRAY: Oh. (Looks at her blankly for a moment, then reaches into pocket slowly, finds key, slowly hands it out to her.)

SANDRA: (Snatches up the key, goes on delightedly pacing up and down.)

Murray, did we bring back any crackerjacks?

MURRAY: (Pointing to some packages on the desk.) Only stuff we brought back was the cleaning equipment. I'll admit this place is a little dirty, but all that stuff just for--

MURRAY: (Sits down in his chair.) Well, see, last week I was going to check with Uncle Arnie and some of the other agents about writing for some of the new TV shows. I was on the subway, on my way there and I got off at Forty-second Street and went to the movies. (Leans back in his chair, lights cigarette; NICK sits opposite him on the bed, listening interestedly.) There are eleven movie houses on that street, Nick. It is Movieland. It breathes that seductive, carpety, minty air of the inside of movie houses. Almost as irresistible for me as pastrami. Now, there is the big question as you approach the boxoffice, with the sun shining right down the middle of a working day, whether everybody going in is as embarrassed as you are. But once you are past the awkward stage, and have gotten your ticket torn by the old man inside, all doubts just go away. Because it is dark. And inside it is such a scene as to fracture the imagination of even a nut like yourself, Nick, because inside it is lovely and a little damp and nobody can see you, and the dialogue is falling like rain on a roof and you are sitting deep in front of a rotating color, Cinemascope, stereophonic, nerve cooling, heart warming, spine softening, perfect happy ending picture show, and it is Peacefulville, U. S. A. There are men there with neat mustaches who have shaved, and shined their shoes and put on a tie even to come and sit alone in the movies. And there are nearsighted cute pink ladies who eat secret caramels; and very old men who sleep; and the ushers; buddy, you are not kidding these boys. They know you are not there because you are waiting for a train, or you are on a vacation, or you work a night job. They know you are there to see the movie. It is the business and purpose of your day, and these boys give

you their sneaky smile to show you that they know. (Depressed by his own words, quietly, almost to himself.) Now the moral question for me here, is this: When one is faced with life in the bare-assed, job-hunting raw on the one hand, and eleven fifty-cent double-features on the other, what is the mature, sensible, and mentally healthy step to take? (He is slumped in his chair now.)

ARNOLD: Now, I scared myself. You hear that voice? Look at that, I got you to stop. I got your complete full attention, the floor is mine now. (Chuckles awkwardly.) And I can't think of a God-damned thing to say. (Shrugging his shoulders, picks up his hat from table.) I have long been aware, Murray--I have long been aware that you don't respect me much--I suppose there are a lot of brothers who don't get along. But in reference--to us, considering the factors--(Smiles, embarrassed.) Sounds like a contract, doesn't it? (Picks up his briefcase, comes over to Murray.) Unfortunately for you, Murray, you want to be a hero. Maybe if a fellah falls into a lake, you can jump in and save him; there's still that kind of stuff. But who gets opportunities like that in midtown Manhattan, with all that traffic. (Put on his hat.) I am willing to deal with the available world and I do not choose to shake it up but to live with it. There's the people who spill things, and the people who get spilled on; I do not choose to notice the stains, Murray. I have a wife and I have children and business, like they say, is business. I am not an exceptional man, so it is possible for me to stay with things the way they are. I'm lucky. I'm gifted. I have a talent for surrender. I'm at peace. But you are cursed; and I like you so it makes me sad, you don't have the gift; and I see the torture of it. All I can do is worry for you. But I will not worry for myself, you cannot convince me that I am one of the Bad Guys. I get up, I go, I lie a little, I peddle a little, I watch the rules, I talk the talk. We fellahs have those offices high up there so we can catch the wind and go with it, however it blows. But, and I will not apologize for it, I take pride; I am the best possible Arnold Burns. (Pause.)

ARNOLD: Well--give my regards to Irving R. Feldman, will yar? (Starts to leave.)

MURRAY: (Going towards him.) Arnold--

ARNOLD: Please, Murray--(Puts his hand up.) allow me once to leave a room before you do. (Arnold snaps on RECORD-PLAYER as he walks past it to the front door; exits.)

CAST LIST

Murray. Tom Earley
Sandra. Michelle Egger
Nick. Dan Robertson
Albert. Dick Joyce
Arnold. Phil Rudolph
Leo Roger Cooper

Many thanks to all of you who read for me. The
first cast meeting will be at 7:00 P.M., Wednesday,
June 21, in Room 111 Old Main.

Cliff Sowle

Directing Procedure

Stress in directing A Thousand Clowns was on the play's entertainment value. Most plays are written for entertainment, but this play has very little else. The play's statement is weak; the plot is a little thin; but it does have great entertainment value in its characters and satire.

The characters are most lively and entertaining. Although they are incomplete in some respects, they are drawn with considerable thought and affection. The play is, in fact, a series of character sketches. With this in mind, character development was pursued from the first read-through rehearsals. Continual discussions with the actors were held on aspects of character and ways of showing these aspects to an audience. Actors with little experience catch on to this very rapidly, but often will confuse an audience by reading far more into a character than the author intended. Much individual work (in groups of two or three) was done through the first half of the rehearsal period.

After stressing individual character work so much, the problem of team work became painfully evident. Once an acceptable character was developed by an actor, even if only for a small section of a scene, it became necessary that the general inflections of his lines, the general speed of his movements, and the definition of his reactions, remained the same each time the scene was rehearsed. This was a good way to develop the team work, timing, and character interaction so essential to the feel of this production.

The play has to move quickly, giving the audience time to enjoy the humor but not to concentrate on the play's weaknesses. Specific sections in the play, where long speeches are frequent, can become extremely tiring and boring if a quick pace is not upheld.

The play must be, above all, funny. The play is a comedy, and everything in the production must point toward this.

Another stress always present in directing is actor development. This is an educational theater situation, and all concerned should derive knowledge and experience from it. The actors develop their own characters, within wide boundaries set by the author and director. The specific physical moves suggested by a character are worked out by the actors themselves. All actor suggestions are examined for practicality. This makes the rehearsal period, and consequent performances, a learning situation. As relaxed a rehearsal period as possible is preferred. This means that adequate rehearsal time must be allotted, anywhere from 80 to 100 hours. This time gives the actors a chance to laugh with, and at, themselves and each other. More can be accomplished in terms of a satisfactory production and the actor benefits if time can be devoted to the enjoyment of the play during the rehearsals.

All in all, to give the audience an enjoyable evening of very American theater was the main task. The author's aim--light satire about contemporary American types and mores--was also upheld. To portray this aim required, of course, observing the principles of play directing and acting. Presenting a show for an audience provides the actors with a challenge; but, in A Thousand Clowns, the task was both enjoyable and profitable.

Rehearsal Reports

Three complete read-throughs began the rehearsal schedule. These proved to be excellent for getting a general sense and feel of the characters and the total script.

Blocking the show took the next two weeks of the rehearsal schedule. Taking this much time allowed for several run-throughs of the section of the script blocked on a particular evening as well as a complete act run-through at the end of each week. At the end of this two-week period, the production looked especially fine, even with books in hand.

Character rehearsals began July 10th. This week went slower than anticipated, both in character development and line learning. One of the reasons for this slow-down was the fact that the actors playing Murray and Nick were both involved in a local production of Candida, for which technical rehearsals were in progress. Dismissing them early during this week provided needed time for work with the characters of Sandy and Albert. Albert has had very little acting experience, and has not worked on stage for several years. Character development and lines came more slowly for him than for the others. Act II seemed to go a bit better, as this is where the scenes with the minor characters are located, who are not involved in Act I.

By July 22nd, the date of the first complete run-through, lines were learned with a few minor exceptions. A couple of scenes looked good, a few spots of character showed through, but the pace of the production was slow.

Act divisions were made for rehearsal purposes with the intermission as the dividing point. The rehearsals on Monday and Tuesday, July 24 and 25, showed Act I improving very nicely, as more emphasis had been placed on it. Cues were still a little slow, timing was off in places, but the act was beginning to take shape. On the other hand, Act II seemed to slow down horribly, and by the end of the week was in very poor shape. Saturday's run-through put Act I in very fine shape, but the second act was still slow. The actors were not getting their points across and energy was almost nil.

Sunday's technical rehearsal again bore out that Act II was in dire need of extra work. As far as the technical aspects were concerned, lights, props, set changes, etc., were slow, but this is not unusual for a first technical rehearsal.

A distinct effort was made to speed up the second act for Monday's costume rehearsal. Act I was satisfactory. Costumes looked fine and the few costume changes which had to be made could be taken care of easily. The technical problems in light and sound cues were smoothed out considerably. The major concern was still with the drastic slowing down of the show's pace and the loss of energy in Act II.

Technical and dress rehearsals on Tuesday and Wednesday were fair. There were good scenes both days. The general effect was good with small audiences responding nicely to aid the actors in their playing. A couple of technical problems still existed on Wednesday evening, and two costume changes had to be made. Final dress rehearsal was a little slow, the acts running 4 to 6 minutes slower than earlier in the week. The entire production had been adequate, in sections, at

one time or another during dress rehearsals. The problem now was putting the whole thing together and providing a consistently good show for the audiences.

Rehearsal Breakdown for A Thousand Clowns

Rehearsal Block Number	Pages	Characters
I	7-19	Murray, Sandra, Nick, Albert
II	19-32	Murray, Sandra, Nick, Albert
III	32-43 Plus Arnold's bit on page 19	Murray, Sandra, Nick, Arnold
IV	43-54	Murray, Sandra, Albert
V	54-64 72-77	Leo's voice, Murray, Arnold
VI	65-71 77-80	Murray, Sandra, Nick
VII	80-94	Murray, Sandra, Nick, Leo

Blocking Rehearsals

Day and Date	Block Number	Place and Time
Monday, June 26	I	7:00 in 109
Tuesday, June 27	II	7:00 in 109
Wednesday, June 28	III	7:00 in 109
Thursday, June 29	IV	7:00 in 109
Friday, June 30	I, II, III, IV	7:00 in 109

Rehearsals are planned to
run three hours each.

Without knowing about the Albert situation, I can proceed no further with the rehearsal schedule at this time.

<u>Day and Date</u>	<u>Block Number</u>	<u>Time</u>
Monday, July 3	V	7:00
Tuesday, July 4	NONE	NONE
Wednesday, July 5	VI	7:00
Thursday, July 6	VII	7:00
Friday, July 7	V, VI, VII	7:00
Monday, July 10	I Sandy and Albert	5:00-6:30 6:30-8:00
Tuesday, July 11	II Sandy and Albert	5:00-6:30 6:30-8:00
Wednesday, July 12	III	5:00-6:30
Thursday, July 13	IV Sandy and Albert	5:00-6:30 6:30-8:00
Friday, July 14	V	5:00-6:30
Saturday, July 15	VI, VII	10:00
Monday, July 17	I, II	7:00
Tuesday, July 18	III, V	7:00
Wednesday, July 19	IV	7:00
Thursday, July 20	VI, VII	7:00
Friday, July 21	NONE	NONE
Saturday, July 22	I-VII (all)	10:00
Monday, July 24	I, II, III, IV	7:00
Tuesday, July 25	V, VI, VII	7:00
Wednesday, July 26	Murray, Sandra, Nick	7:00
Thursday, July 27	Arn, Leo, Nick, Murr	7:00
Friday, July 28	NONE	NONE
Saturday, July 29	I-VII (all)	10:00

<u>Day and Date</u>	<u>Block Number</u>	<u>Time</u>
Sunday, July 30	ALL (Technical Rehearsals)	2:00 and 7:00
Monday, July 31	ALL (Costume)	7:00
Tuesday, August 1	ALL (Costume and Makeup)	7:00
Wednesday, August 2	ALL (Costume)	7:00

Thursday-Saturday: Shows--Curtain at 8:00

Makeup call at 6:45

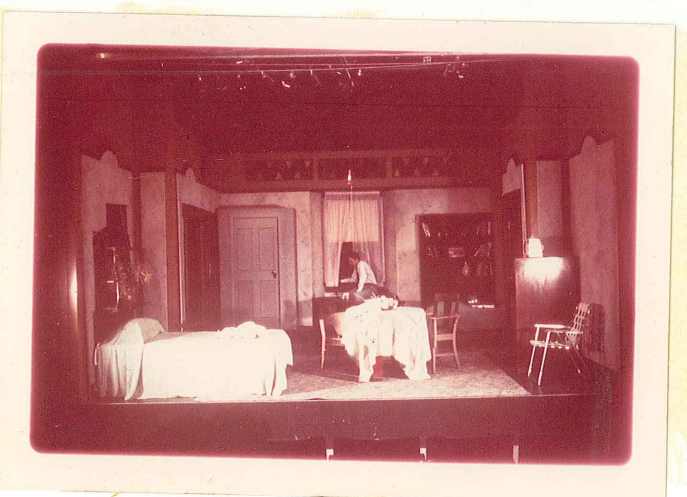
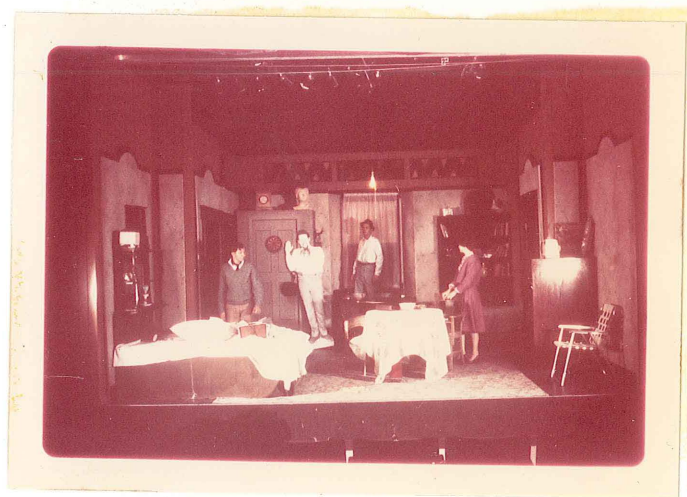
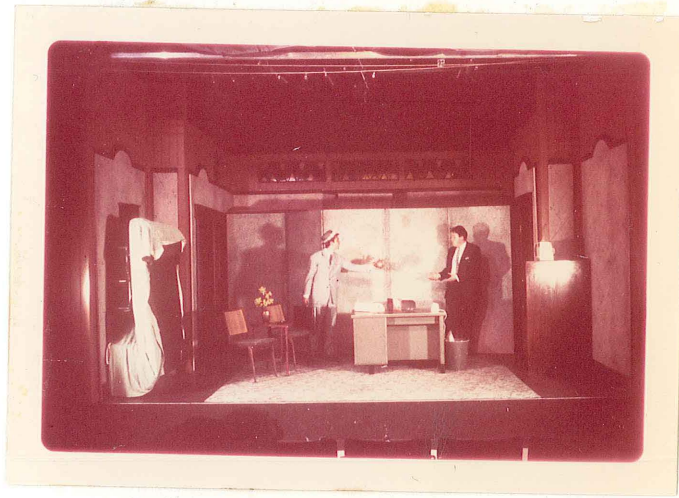
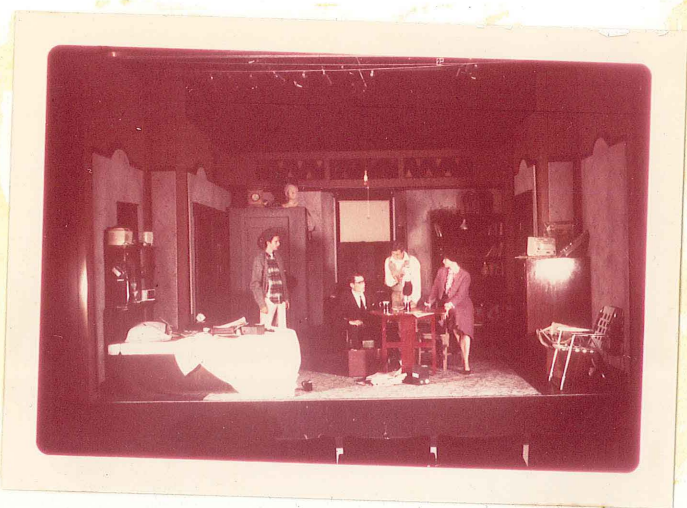
Sunday: Curtain at 2:00

Makeup call at 1:00

Photographs

The following photographs were taken on the evening of dress rehearsal and therefore should, but do not, give an exact portrayal of the final production. Changes in the various technical areas were made on opening day prior to curtain time. Lighting changes had to be made to reduce hot spots and better define the areas, costume substitutions were made, and set decorations were added to aid the appearance of the office scene.

Pictures were taken of each set change and the beginning and end of each scene or act. All the pictures are not included here, as some of the slides did not print well for use in this paper. The photographs which follow are arranged in order from the middle of Act I to the end of Act III, two pictures per act.



CHAPTER IV - FINAL ANALYSIS OF THE PRODUCTION

Problems in Directing

Several problems in directing A Thousand Glows were encountered. This was the director's first experience with a full-length college theater production, and problems in the control of the production apparatus resulted from this inexperience. He was unsure of the demands he could make on the technical staff. Also, because of his position as a degree candidate, the director had to determine several things: What his rights were concerning use of the school's facilities; how much he could expect from the standpoint of technical assistance, and how much authority he would be able to exert on the personnel involved with the production. Thus, he was deeply concerned about several aspects of the technical production late into the rehearsal period. Because he was not familiar with Portland State College policies, complications and difficulties were encountered in such areas as publicity, securing equipment outside the department, and costuming procedures. These complications made directing a little more difficult, but maximum cooperation was received from the production crews.

The director was completely satisfied with the director-actor relationship. Rehearsal appointments were consistently kept by the entire cast, progress by each cast member was adequate, and performance effort was sustained throughout each presentation. Direction suggestions and criticism were well accepted even though he was relatively

inexperienced in direction above the high school level.

In every production (as indicated in the section of this paper dealing with rehearsal reports), some scenes "shaped up" sooner than others. Concentration levels differed from scene to scene in each rehearsal, and scenes would play differently from rehearsal to rehearsal.

As production time neared, and technical rehearsals began, the director stressed total performance requirements to the actors. Concentration was to be a combined effort, with all the actors working together throughout each scene in favor of a consistent total performance. Consistency was the key--consistency in character, energy, pace, and reaction. Individual performances were subordinated to achieve a total performance.

Evaluation of Productions

A Thousand Clowns was presented in the Idea Theatre at Portland State College on August 3, 4, 5, 6, 1967, and in the Chapel at the Oregon State Penitentiary on August 18, 1967. The latter performance was in conjunction with the prison's "Upward Bound" program, which provides educational opportunities for inmates.

Full, or nearly full, houses were enjoyed for all four performances at Portland State. The penitentiary performance, which included the presentation of Act I for the women's section of the prison, played to approximately seventy five persons. The normal differences in nightly audiences were noticed during the run in the Idea Theatre. Lines which received laughs during one performance would go by almost unnoticed during the next. The amounts of overt reaction would vary from performance to performance. Generally speaking, the show played to "good" houses, in terms of size and obvious enjoyment of the play.

The reaction of the prison inmates was excellent, in both the men's and women's sections. They thoroughly enjoyed the show, which, the director believes, prompted some of the actors to give their best performances on this day.

Opening night, Thursday, was beset by technical problems. Sound equipment which had previously functioned properly failed to work, directly prior to the opening. Replacement of the equipment caused a late curtain. The speakerphone, an important part of the office scene, failed to operate, requiring the use of a back stage speaker as a substitute. One or two minor property miscues were handled

satisfactorily by the cast. However, what seemed to be a very hectic, unorganized production backstage proved to be very satisfactory from the viewpoint of the audience. Dick Joyce, in the role of Albert, came through with a very professional performance, even though his stage experience was limited. The first-night audience, as all the houses, seemed to be especially responsive to Dan Robertson in the role of Nick. He seemed to pick up the pace noticeably on opening night, and played Nick with a great freshness and vitality. The show's pace was as consistent as it had ever been; the first few minutes played as rapidly as they ever had, and the cast seemed to feel satisfied with their portrayals.

The Friday night audience, while less ecstatic about the production as a whole, responded warmly and demonstrated a larger understanding of the play. The pace of the production was generally slower, owing to a reduction of nervousness in the actors and a greater assurance of their specific techniques. Of particular note, the quality of Phil Rudolph's performance as Arnold Burns was much superior to anything this actor had done, either in rehearsal or opening performance. Technically, the show ran smoothly. All problems that were apparent to the director in Thursday's performance had been rectified. The over-all stamina of the actors was good. They seemed to be more in control of themselves than on opening night. Fewer lines were dropped and the characters were solidly recognizable.

The Saturday night performance was the most exciting. The show was moving along and the actors seemed to be working harder, perhaps because of the reactions of a more adult audience. The actors showed

more polish, due to the experience of the other two nights. The performance of Michelle Egger was exceptional. Gardner had provided a rather shallow character in Sandy, but this night Miss Egger brought a great deal of imagination and skill to the performance, which hitherto had been dampened by nervousness and a complex of technical problems. The technical aspects of the production ran smoothly during the two remaining performances.

The Sunday afternoon matinee, due to the extreme heat, provided discomfort for the actors as well as for the audience. Consequently, the intensity of the performance was lessened, but the audience, although uncomfortable, responded enthusiastically. It should be mentioned that the Sunday afternoon audience was predominantly younger. A few of the older members commented on the excessive heat, but it seemed that the actors felt as comfortable as could be expected and gave a strong performance.

The performances at the penitentiary were extremely rewarding for both myself and for the actors. The actors were apprehensive about performing for the prisoners, as might be expected. The direction and planning by Thomas Gaddis provided adequate comfort for the traveling troupe. The facilities were, of course, properly governed, and the inmates were singularly helpful and attentive to the actors and technical assistants. It should be pointed out that there is no guaranteed response of the inmates to a dramatic production. Men confined and subjected to prison discipline are given an opportunity to react as they choose to any production. The director felt apprehensive, and the actors felt uncertain. An example of the result of this

kind of pressure was the lapse in memory of one of the actors during the performance for the women's prison, which resulted in the loss of an entire scene. However, the performance given for the male inmates was superior to anything the cast and crew had done previously. It is significant that the audience at this performance reacted not only to the obvious "jokes" in the play which Mr. Gardner supplied in abundance, but also indicated a genuine understanding of the play as a whole. Roger Cooper (as Leo Herman) who had, up to that point, been somewhat inconsistent in his performance, was inventive and consistent in his timing, and genuinely funny both to the audience, and, as was later revealed, to the actors.

Tom Earley submitted probably his best performance as Murray Burns during this showing. Mr. Earley, who was both unsuited physically to the part and skeptical of his ability to portray the character, nevertheless showed a fine understanding of his role. He was accepted enthusiastically by the audience, who believed everything he said. His character appealed to the inmates because of its flavor of individualism and revolt against the structured society.

The technical phase of the production was handled beautifully by the technicians and the voluntary help of the inmates. However, the transportation of the set required considerable rebuilding and designing to enhance portability and erection.

Observations from other people in the dramatics field are always welcome. One of Portland's better amateur actors commented, concerning the play, that A Thousand Clowns was "an excellent attempt at producing a possible comedy, which, in my opinion, was successful."

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