

THE VARIETY SHOW AS AN EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITY  
IN THE HIGH SCHOOL

A THESIS

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By

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I would  
appreciate  
views, and  
I Speech  
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The term, revue or variety show can be defined as any  
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## I. INTRODUCTION

In this age of television, the variety show has come into its own again. In the 'nineties' and the early part of the century it was known as vaudeville.

The term, revue or variety show can be applied to any program consisting of dancing, instrumental music, vocal solos and choruses, comedy skits, and other specialty acts which employ colorful costumes and stage settings.

This type of program is not of a theoretical nature for high schools to consider using; it is an actual working production. The variety show has been used in a few high schools and from past working experience, it has been found to have certain objectives and advantages. A few high schools in Kansas have successfully produced variety shows such as: Coffeyville, Hamilton, Larned, Dodge City, Osage City, and Washington Rural of Kansas City.

No activity of the school is more communal in its nature, or is more diversified in the talents used, than is a variety show. More students can have a part in this type of program than in any other production in the dramatic field. Through participation in this type of program, latent talents are discovered and cultivated; the over-aggressive pupil subdued; and the shy pupil encouraged and given self-confidence. Each one, according to his talents,



is given an opportunity to serve the common good and reap benefits of participation in a creative endeavor.

any school administration and faculty should have definite objectives in mind when planning and conducting school activity. There are four main objectives and are accomplished through the school variety program.

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- objective of a school variety program
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## II. OBJECTIVES OF THE VARIETY SHOW

Any school administration and faculty should have definite objectives in mind when planning and sponsoring an all-school activity. There are four major objectives that can be and are accomplished through the production of an all-school variety show.

Provides for the participation of many students. The first objective of a well-planned school activity should be that many students will have an opportunity to participate and reap the many benefits derived from group participation. The variety show provides the opportunity for many students to have an active part in the production, either as members of the cast or as members of the many crews necessary for the presentation of this type of program. No other school activity can assure such a variety of kinds of participation to so many students.

Provides for co-operation from various school departments. The second objective for school activities should be that all departments of the school give full co-operation in furthering those activities. It must be an "all for one, and one for all" situation if each activity sponsored by the school is to be a success. The variety show provides numerous opportunities where departmental co-operation

can be given and yet remain a part of classroom lesson planning.

The home economics department in some schools is very co-operative in integrating the making of costumes with their actual class work. This greatly aids the production and in addition, gives valuable, practical experience to the students. This practice is largely dependent upon the instructor, the size of the sewing classes and the size of the school.

In large high schools, the girls' physical education instructor usually has had some college training in interpretative and rhythmic dancing. Often times, her course of study also included tap and folk dancing. There is the possibility of integrating the teaching of these dances for the variety show with the gym class activities.

The music instructors, working with the dramatics teacher either as co-sponsors of the show or as assistants, are of great value to the success of the show. It is they who can best advise which students will fit into the show's choruses, instrumental numbers, boys' or girls' quartette, and solo numbers whether the plans call for classical, semi-classical, or popular music. Most of the rehearsals for musical numbers is done in class time.

The art instructor in a large school can certainly be an aid in the designing of sets for the show. Here

again, is a chance for co-operation between departments in the school. Art classes can design and paint the sets for the show if the director and the art teacher supervised the project. Most small schools are not fortunate enough to have a separate art department but there are usually some people on the faculty or some students who are talented in art.

The industrial arts instructors in most high schools usually have students in their classes who can not afford to make expensive pieces of woodwork, but who are there to learn the art of construction. Other students have finished their projects and are waiting on suitable lumber in order to begin another project. These students must be kept busy in class and the industrial arts instructor welcomes outside projects for these students. Set pieces, flats, and other scenery for the variety show can be built under the supervision of the instructor. This co-operation of the industrial arts department not only aids the furthering of the variety show, but it also provides a learning activity for students in their class work.

The journalism department can do much to arouse school interest in the variety show by working out a publicity campaign for the school paper. This department in large schools usually has a radio program on a local station at least once each week. By publicizing the show on the

school news program, outside interest will be aroused and the advertising campaign will be launched. This department can sponsor the publicity with the local newspaper.

Creates school and community interest. Today, a plea for better human relations is being stressed in business organizations and in community organizations. The variety show provides innumerable situations for co-operative group action and furthers interest between the school and community.

Besides being a means of entertainment for people of the community, the variety show offers an excellent opportunity for creating more interest in the welfare of the school. It gives the people a chance to see what the schools are doing along cultural lines. Great contributions toward building better attitudes, behaviors, and tolerance necessary for successful community relations can be brought about.

Besides using school talent, sometimes it is a wise gesture to invite certain talent from the area to take part in the show. This not only adds variety to the program and creates a wider scope of interest, but it also furthers friendly relations between the school and the community. Invite the town's barber shop quartette to sing a number or the featured cornetist from the municipal band to play a

solo. All of these acts are drawing cards for the show and are also stepping stones to a better understanding between the school and the school's patrons.

Another method of acquiring audience interest in the show is to ask people in the community to contribute some properties or items for costumes.

In one particular show given recently, four men's straw sailor hats were needed. The director started the search by asking the students to look for the hats in their homes, but to no avail. The next step was to ask at clothing stores in town and also at men's apparel shops in neighboring towns. One hat was found in the back room of a store and two others were generously lent by a near-by college, but the fourth hat seemed to be out of the question. An elderly man in the community heard about the need for the hat and made a special trip to a near-by town to see if a friend of his still had a sailor straw hat. The hat was secured and the plans for the costuming of the particular act went on as planned. The first night of the show, not only was the local gentleman who borrowed the hat in the audience, but he had also brought the friend and owner of the hat. Their curiosity had been aroused and they came to see why the hats were important to the show.

Mothers of students become interested in the progress of plans for the show by listening to their sons and

daughters who are in the show. Many mothers will volunteer to make their children's costumes or have them made. Many mothers will not only contribute their time and effort to making Sally or Jimmy's costume, but will offer their help remodeling or designing other needed costumes.

Serves as a means of raising revenue. The variety show is an excellent means of raising funds for many school or community projects. A program of this nature draws a larger audience than most other types of entertainment, chiefly because of the great number of students participating in the show. Another reason for a larger attendance is that the show offers a great variety of types of entertainment to suit all tastes. The greater number of students who take part in a variety show means that more relatives and friends will gladly pay admission to see the production. Even if Johnnie is on the stage crew, Mother and Father, aunts, uncles, and cousins will have heard about the set construction and snatches about the show. Their curiosity will have been aroused, and they will be on hand to view the results of Johnnie's efforts.

The proceeds from such a show can be used to purchase needed equipment for the various school departments and activities. Teachers who sponsor various school activities know that there are many expenses connected with their

individually sponsored organization. Usually these organizations must be self-supporting. By self-supporting, it means there are no funds set aside by the board of education, or other funds to pay the expenses of operating these activities. For example, the dramatics department of most high schools must replenish lighting and other equipment or provide new equipment. Make-up supplies, sound devices, scenery paint, lumber for set construction, and even stage furniture must be purchased from proceeds of these productions. True, there are many expenses in staging this type of production, but because of audience appeal, a good crowd can be assured.

Activities of the schools vary with the size of the school, the interest of the students, and the kind of community, but opportunities for building better and stronger organizations through the proceeds from a variety show are many. Some schools use this means to provide college scholarships for deserving students. Funds can be provided for educational trips, for band and orchestra instruments, for band uniforms, for athletic equipment, and numerous other uses vital to progressive schools that can not be obtained from funds established for that purpose.

The variety show could be given to raise funds for community projects such as charity drives, building funds



for a library, park, community house, and other desired projects.

If the show is to become an annual affair, this means each show will become a little more elaborate than the preceding year, and the cost of the production will be increased. In planning ahead, the administration or the director should keep the added cost in mind and set the admission price high enough the first year so that the price of tickets will adequately cover the increase in production costs of the future revues. Once a price of tickets is set, it is difficult to change that fee. Set it high enough at the beginning, and less comment will be caused than if the price is raised later.

If John Q. Public is asked to pay for all these school and community projects by taxation, he rebels; however, give him good entertainment, and he will gladly pay the price of admittance to be in the viewing audience.

The variety show is an excellent means of raising money; it pays in more ways than one.

### III. ADVANTAGES OF THE VARIETY SHOW

The production of the variety show as a school activity offers several advantages to the students, to the director, and to the school. This type of program provides several valuable educational opportunities, and it has certain aspects for developing the personality of the individual students. The brief time required for the actual production of a variety show and the fact that scene construction can be distributed over a period of time are advantages to both the director and the school.

#### PROVIDES FUNCTIONAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Mass participation. The variety show affords the opportunity for a greater number of students to participate, either as members of the cast or as workers on the necessary production crews.

A few years ago in a small rural high school with an enrollment of eighty-four students, seventy-six of these students had some part in the annual variety show. The few students who did not participate were those who did not wish to take part in any activity or were unable to be present at the two night rehearsals and the two night performances.

It is indeed gratifying to be able to give every student who wants to take part in the show an opportunity

to do so. So often other school activities offer the opportunity of participation to only a select, few students.

The large number of students that can be a part of the choruses, pit band, and dance numbers, plus the students who can do solo work either in the dance, drama or musical numbers add up to a production allowing maximum participation.

Team work and co-operation on the part of the students. Merging the activities of acting, scene construction, lighting, costuming, ticket selling, and publicity demands patience and understanding from all concerned. The variety show provides an easily available, realistic problem in human relations. Under stress, tempers are easily aroused and often heated battles of words ensue. A good show can not be assured if because of petty jealousy, Sally and Susie are feuding with the other two girls in the "Harvest Moon" tap number. All of the crew members and choruses, the actors, dancers, and directors must work as a team. They learn to co-operate with others and to work toward a unified production.

Makes provision for the average student to take part. Many a student could never face himself to perform alone on a stage, but give that person the opportunity to be one of a group in an act, and he forgets his stage fright, his

frustrations and his repressions. Most pupils find it easier to "let go" of their repressions when they are behaving with a group than when they are performing alone.

In a revue, because of the many types of talent needed, the less popular, the less talented, and just the average boys and girls can be given a chance to participate and to belong to the group.

Plays exclude many who have a desire to take part because the cast is usually small. Musical productions exclude those who are not musicians. A variety show is just what its name implies. It affords an opportunity for the average student to fit into some part of it.

Serves as a motivation factor for creative ability in classes. Most every one has the desire to create. The desire to enjoy music, drama, and art is natural in people. The variety show can afford all kinds of opportunities to satisfy artistic, creative desires. Costuming, set designing, dance routines, writing of original skits, musical scores, pantomiming, and characterization are only a few of the opportunities presented to satisfy that creative desire of both pupils and directors.

For example, a project can be developed for planning acts or scenes in a variety show by the members of the dramatics class or the speech classes. The theme chosen

by the student and his individual ideas should be checked by the instructor. If the theme seems plausible, the student can build a miniature set, using set pieces and curtains. Work plans, drawn to scale for the construction of this set, should be required. The titles of possible musical numbers that would fit in with the setting could also be chosen by the student. Teen-agers have good imaginations, and if they know that the best plans will be chosen on a competitive basis and produced as a part of the real show, they will use all the ingenuity they possess to make their individual project better than their classmates' project.

One boy in a recent dramatics class of Hutchinson High School turned in a commendable project for an outer space setting. He built his set to represent an imaginary outer planet. The nose of a stylized rocket ship was upstage center, and strangely shaped rocks and boulders added balance right and left of the rocket. A sky cyc formed the background for the setting.

The set pieces of this outer space setting were constructed to scale. The student had included a lighting plot and a list of musical numbers with appropriate titles for his setting. He also had made sketches of costumes for a rhythmic dance routine to be used in this strange setting.

Creative work done by students in the art class, music classes, speech and dramatics classes, industrial arts classes and home economics classes can be correlated with the school's variety show.

Students like to let their imaginations wander and they enjoy creating and assembling ideas. As one student expressed it, "Gosh, this is fun!"

#### SCENE CONSTRUCTION CAN BE DISTRIBUTED

Scenery can be constructed well ahead of the production date of the variety show. Most of the scenery consists of set pieces and specially designed flats that can be lashed together to suggest the desired setting for an act. These set pieces, screens, and designed flats are more easily constructed than an entire set for a play because the space required for the construction is less. The storage problem of these pieces is not as great as the storage of a complete box set.

Perhaps the greatest advantage of this type of scenery is that many of these plastic set pieces can be used interchangeably in different acts. Such pieces as ground rows to place in front of the sky cyc to suggest distant hills, bushes or rocks will be perhaps useful in more than one scene.

Most high school stages have a cloth cyclorama which is usually a neutral color and serves as a good background for some of the less spectacular acts. Set pieces can be placed in this background to give a suggestion of atmosphere for the act.

The concert curtain or draw type curtain located about two or three feet back of the front or act curtain is very usable in the revue type show as other scenery can be set up behind it while an act is being performed in front of it. This cuts the delay between acts and speeds up the pace of the show, thus giving it unity. Scenery for a variety show is more easily assembled and taken down than most scenery required for a play.

#### PRESENTS CERTAIN ADVANTAGES TO THE INDIVIDUAL

Develops self-expression. The variety show helps to develop self-expression. Preparing, organizing and presenting material of any kind to an audience offers many educational opportunities to those who do it. Not only do speaking, singing, playing instruments, and acting have educational merit, but also the many activities required in staging a performance, making scenery, managing, advertising, prompting, handling stage equipment, and costuming have real educational value.

Most adolescent boys and girls go through a period in which they feel awkward and unimportant when around more mature and capable students. A chance to gain recognition will aid them in self-expression.

A freshman boy, whom we shall call, Jerry, was not only at the awkward age but was also a stutterer. When the school variety show was being cast, Jerry made the remark that he could never take part in anything. The director heard that Jerry liked to sing, and the music teacher verified the fact that he had a nice tenor voice. With the co-operation of the understanding and capable music instructor, Jerry was cast as a member of the boys' quartette. With appropriate costuming and some suggestions for animation of the words of the songs, this quartette was not only a success in the show but was popular in entertaining at various community clubs for the rest of the school year. Jerry overcame his self-consciousness of stuttering and became more poised and a much more interesting individual. He had gained recognition from both his school and his community. Poise, self-confidence, co-operation, punctuality, courtesy, and clear thinking are outgrowths of self-expression.

Develops personality. Plays, variety shows, and other acting and stage experiences are contributing factors



to personality development, self-expression, and a broadening cultural background.

Any check of educational achievement, to be complete, should take account of items of personal and social development. The learning of self-control, the building of integrity and the understanding of the rights of others is so necessary. The possession of a pleasing personality is a great aid in making one's self effective in society.

Out of participation in the variety program grows a feeling of security on the part of the pupil; he "belongs" because he is an active part of the life of the school. Today this feeling of belonging, this feeling of being needed is essential in the lives of teen-age boys and girls. A student participating in this type of program will learn some of the great lessons of the stage including poise, self-assurance, self-control, rhythm, a sense of timing, and the need for responsibility, and above all co-operation. All these traits are contributive to a good personality.

#### IV. DEFINITION OF TERMS USED

Revue or variety show. A revue is a program consisting of dancing, instrumental music, vocal solos and choruses, comedy skits, and other specialty acts which employ colorful costumes and stage settings.

Cyclorama. Cycloramas, or "cycs", are made of a variety of cloth materials and are hung on the two sides and the back of the stage in a U-shape to mask back stage areas.

Stage apron. The apron of the stage is the area extending from the proscenium (stage opening) to the orchestra pit.

Sky cyc. A large drop, high enough and wide enough to completely mask all exterior views, and painted blue, is commonly used to represent the sky. As it depends upon lighting for its effect, it should be a very soft tint of blue.

Ground piece or ground row. Ground rows, and other silhouette pieces, represent distant mountain ranges, clumps of bushes, hills, rocks, and the like.

Wing. A wing is a two-fold combination of two flats hinged together so that they fold face to face. They are covered with canvas and usually are painted to represent trees, foliage, columns or other scenes and are set up at

the sides of the stage parallel with the act curtain. They serve as entrances and exits on each side of the stage as well as provide a means of masking the off stage areas.

Concert curtain. The concert curtain is a draw type curtain hung from the grid and is located about two or three feet back of the front or act curtain. It is a very usable curtain in the revue type show as other scenery can be set up behind it while an act is being performed in front of it.

Drop. A drop is a scene painted on good duck or linen canvas and attached to an upper batten and lower batten so that it may be rolled up or down.

Gelatine. Gelatine is the color medium used in spotlights and other stage lighting to reflect various colored lights on the acts in the revue.

Spotlight. Spotlights should be used for good concentrated lighting on a specific stage area. Many spotlight lenses are of the plano-convex type; that is, they have one plane surface and one convex surface. Plano-convex lenses used for spotlights are crude, uncorrected pieces of crown glass, unsatisfactory for optical work but quite adequate for theatrical purposes.

Fresnelite. Replacing the plano-convex lens in many spotlights in the last few years is the Fresnel-type lens. It is a piece of heat-resisting glass cast with one plane

face and one consisting of concentric portions of lenses of different diameters and the same focal length. The diffuse-edge (soft-edge) beam, which is unavoidable in Fresnel lenses, is, however, sometimes a disadvantage.

Baby spotlight. Baby spotlights are designed to produce a concentrated beam of low and medium intensity under circumstances where larger instruments could not be mounted or concealed.

## V. PROBLEMS INVOLVED IN THE PRODUCTION OF THE VARIETY SHOW

Limited stage equipment. Of course, no high school can produce a variety show without encountering some drawbacks and limitations. The greatest limitation for most small schools seems to be the lack of stage equipment, especially proper lighting facilities. Very few small high schools have more than the conventional two rows of border lights and red, blue, and white footlights, but equipment for illuminating specific areas of the stage is lacking. It is unfortunate that directors in school theatres often allow salesmen from scenic studios and lighting-equipment companies to select lighting equipment for them. Usually the salesman is looked upon as an authority, and a considerable amount of money is wasted on the purchase of more borderlights and proscenium striplights that are obsolete in design and of very little use for the sort of production common in school theatres. Usually the illumination from footlights is directed upward, as well as backstage, and large shadows are likely to appear on scenery, because each source of light produces a shadow of every object in front of it. One can do very well without footlights if there are two spotlights in the auditorium ceiling or in the balcony, except when actors wear broad-brimmed hats. If the angle of the spotlights is about sixty degrees, footlights are necessary

in any case. The footlights, however, are often too bright rather than too dim.

Most school stages lack a concert curtain which is important in the production of a variety show. Curtains can be made of cheap material and hung on wires fastened to the side walls of the stage at the same level and can be drawn taut by means of turnbuckles.

The cyclorama has become standard equipment on most high-school stages, and since the drapes and the complementary borderlights often represent a considerable investment, the drama director is expected to use them. This is a problem in setting certain scenes and creating the atmosphere needed for some acts in the show. Sometimes the director runs into the situation that arises as the result of a rule set by the janitor, that no screw braces are to be used because it ruins the stage floor. This situation means that all flats have to be anchored in another manner and striking a set quickly is almost out of the question.

Many high schools have a combination gymnasium-auditorium. This arrangement is a handicap for the drama and the physical education department. In spite of all the scheduling for rehearsal time on the stage, the physical education department finds need for extra time and both departments are inconvenienced. If at all possible, the

auditorium and the gymnasium should be separate units in the high-school building plans.

Time for rehearsals. Scheduling rehearsals for the variety show to fit into an already crowded daily schedule is another problem the director will encounter.

The zealous director must realize that he will meet with opposition from other high-school faculty members who will not share his enthusiasm. This is especially true when other activities crowd the school calendar and each department is bidding for the activity period during the day or for "vacant nights". The various school departmental clubs usually have their meetings during the so-called activity period of the day. Evening athletic events and other school programs are scheduled on the school calendar far in advance. Therefore, before starting work on the revue, it would be a good idea to find out what other activities one is likely to run into during rehearsal periods and how to avoid them with the least possible friction. The administration should call for the co-operation of the faculty in any all-school activity if it is of benefit to the school and the individual students.

Cost of production. The cost of production of a revue is variable, depending on the budget for the particular school and its sponsoring department.

The production must be paid for; therefore, one of the first considerations in planning a program of this type is the budget. Careful attention must be given to the cost of overhead expenses, scenery, costumes, properties, and equipment. The more spectacular and expensive acts should be carefully balanced with the less expensive. In the selection of acts, careful attention should be given to the possible utilization of old pieces of scenery and costumes, which may be rebuilt or reworked. Care and ingenuity must be exercised not to use the same setting or costumes without changing their appearance. An audience can become as easily wearied with the same set or dress used over and over, as it would be with the repetition of the same acts each year.

A variety show can be very economically produced if the cost of settings, costumes, music, and written material is kept at a minimum. This is a problem. Careful planning is required and economy must be enforced. Of course, the more elaborate the various acts are planned, the greater the cost for this type of production. One spectacular number in each show is advisable and economy must be exercised in the other acts, although they must not suffer from lack of appropriate setting or colorful costumes.



Search for materials. The director finds the selection of suitable material comparatively easy for the first performance of a variety show in a community. Because of the fear of repetition of types of acts, the task of securing material for comedy skits and dances becomes more and more difficult with each ensuing year. The selection of musical numbers alone is not a great problem as both the quantity and the quality of musical numbers is large, but the show must also contain dance routines and good comedy skits. True, there are some good one-act farces and comedies but they are not too well adapted to the variety show. Shorter skits are more desirable because the show must be fast paced; it must move quickly, and good, short, prepared skits are difficult to find.

## VI. PLANNING THE SHOW

### FORMULATING IDEAS

Where does one get inspirations for ideas to create different acts in a variety show? Ideas come from life itself, from the beauty of nature plus one's ingenuity and a good imagination. We have only to look around us, listen to music of different kinds, combine reality with perhaps some romanticism, and begin formulating ideas for acts in the show.

Some ideas seem to click from their first inception; others may seem conducive to a good act but by analysis, may lack that certain something that will interest an audience. Such ideas should be discarded and new ones formulated.

Central theme. There are two methods of building acts for a variety show. The first method is to build the acts around a central theme. Let me illustrate. Suppose the show is to be built around the music and the age of the American composer, George Gershwin. The dances, choruses, instrumental numbers, and the vocal solos will have a definite musical score to follow. On the other hand, the director can create his own version of costuming the acts, of designing the sets, of planning the dances, and of arranging the acts on the program.

If the theme were to be centered around the music of "Tin Pan Alley", the director would have an even greater chance of creating and formulating ideas to fit his supply of talent and staging facilities.

Hodge-podge. The second method of building a show of this type is not to build it around a central theme but to collect ideas for good acts regardless of their historical era, setting, or relation with other acts. This conglomeration of unrelated acts might be called a hodge-podge.

A show of this nature also has its advantages. It is in this type of planning that students are best able to contribute their own ideas for acts, sets, costumes, and dances. As has been mentioned previously in this study, students in speech and dramatics classes like to have a part in the planning of acts, sets, and costumes.

The revue is a combination of the arts and it is of a creative nature. In other words, the variety show can only be developed by students and director thinking creatively and continually being alert for new material. No sooner is one show planned but ideas for the next production should be in the process of creation. Above all, they must be fixed separately before attempting to put the show together.

## PRELIMINARY DECISIONS

Name of show. Regardless of the type of revue to be staged, a name for the show should be chosen that will last and become established if the variety show is to become an annual affair. It should be a name that is descriptive of the general theme or of the collection of unrelated acts. The name should be short and snappy, and it should lend itself well to advertisement copy.

Length of show. Usually a show is timed for either two hours or two and a half hours. It is a good practice to include a ten minute intermission about half way through the acts. The audience will come back refreshed and ready to give their complete attention to the scenes before them. If the intermission is omitted, the tired audience will lose its power of retention.

Number of acts. To determine the number of acts advisable for an evening's entertainment, one must first decide on the average time consumed by an act. Naturally, some acts will be longer than others, but the show must never drag. It must be fast paced. Most directors will include from twelve to eighteen acts, depending on the content of the act. Above all, they must be timed separately before attempting to put the show together.

## GATHERING MATERIALS

Some directors would disagree with the idea of gathering materials before considering the cast and personnel of the show. In a small high school, the director is personally acquainted with all the students and usually knows their capabilities. Even though the director can't know most of the students enrolled in a large school, he can estimate the available talent. Because the director has an idea of the quality of available talent, he should be able to gather the needed music, scripts, and dance routines before choosing the cast or members of the various crews.

Music. If the revue is to be based on a definite theme, the problem of selecting songs and instrumental music is much more simple. Song titles often suggest the possibility of an act in the show. If the show is not to be based upon a central theme but upon a mixture of ideas, there are still possibilities for using a group of numbers built around a theme title.

In a variety show called "Candid Capers", which was built around the hodge-podge idea, there was a group of four numbers presented under the title of "Moon Magic". Included in this group of numbers was a boys' quartette which sang "By the Light of the Silvery Moon". The second number by

the quartette was "Moonlight Bay", and the boys concluded this number with a soft shoe tap routine.

The curtain was closed and quickly opened again. Except for the addition of two garden benches and a change in lighting, the same exterior set was used. Girls, dressed in red and white pinafores and sunbonnets, and boys, dressed in blue jeans and straw hats, sang "Shine On Harvest Moon". They also did a tap dance routine.

The curtain was drawn while the benches were removed, and when the curtain again opened, four boys, attired in white dinner jackets, and four girls, dressed in pastel colored formals, entered from the sides of the stage waltzing to Sigmund Romberg's "Silvery Moon".

Thus centered around the theme, "Moon Magic", four entirely different numbers were presented and a basic exterior setting was used for each.

Another example taken from the same show, "Candid Capers", included a group of three numbers entitled, "Moods". There was a trumpet solo, "Lazy River", a soprano solo taken from "Porgy and Bess" entitled "Summertime", and a song and comic pantomime for a boy and a girl called "Lazy Bones".

These are only two examples that have been cited to illustrate that song titles can suggest either themes for an entire show or serve merely as an act within a show.

The best place to look for titles for songs and instrumental music is to visit a local music store and ask to look at both catalogues for popular and semi-classical music. Find a title theme and then list all the numbers that will fit into that theme. Books containing musical collections are also very helpful.

It is a good practice to include some older titles in your selection as the older people enjoy hearing songs that were popular when they were young. A religious number and perhaps a patriotic number are also advisable to include as part of the show.

It is wise to make all your musical selections far in advance of the time set for beginning rehearsals as much of the music must be ordered in specific keys and certain arrangements. Generally, the actual ordering of the music should be left to the music instructor, as he can best determine what arrangements and keys are advisable for instrumental and vocal numbers.

Scripts. One of the principal difficulties which faces the director is that of securing well written scripts. Good comedy skits that will fit into this type of show must be fast paced and should not exceed ten minutes in length.

Some skits are advertised in play catalogues, either in collection form or as separate manuscripts. Some of

these scripts can be used in their entirety or parts of them can be used to fit into an act. Most of the advertised, prepared skits are royalty free and the purchase of only one copy of the book is required.

Original skits are usually best suited to the variety show. Some members of the faculty can usually dream up some situation to provide material for an original skit. Even if they are not able to write the script, some other teacher or student, who is a clever writer, can be told the situation and then reproduce it into skit form.

Often times, local, national, or international current news will provide humorous situations that can be dramatized. Real names should not always be used but the humor can imply a particular locale or certain characters. Fictitious domestic scenes, school situations, faculty meetings, and club activities can provide humorous situations that can be worked into a five to ten minute act.

The surprise element figures well in the introduction of a skit. A sudden disturbance in the audience can create surprise, disgust, and finally enjoyment when the disturbance turns out to be actors planted in the midst of the audience, who then proceed to the stage to continue the plot. To illustrate this point: one soprano is half way through her solo, "One Alone" from "The Desert Song", when suddenly, a boy clad in a white coat and carrying a box



filled with bags of roasted peanuts starts down the center aisle calling his wares in a loud, raucous voice. The singer hesitates for a moment and then attempts to continue her solo. The peanut vendor is actually selling his product to other actors who are also planted in the audience. The soprano, suddenly losing her poise and temper, demands that he cease this disturbance. The rest of the skit, of course, is a play on words between the girl and the vendor, who finally finishes the act on stage.

When the lighter side of the show is being planned, remember that the surprise element and unrehearsed audience participation give the patrons added enjoyment.

Dances. Probably few high school teachers are authorities of the terpsichorean art, yet many can do ballroom dancing and some folk dancing. With this basic knowledge of dancing many dance routines can be planned. Folk dances such as the polka, the schottische, the Black Hawk Waltz, the Virginia Reel, the Mexican Hat Dance, and other national dances can be adapted to fit into colorful scenes. Young folks enjoy taking part in this type of dancing and a large number of students can participate in an act of this nature.

Another popular type of dancing well adapted to the revue is the tap dance. Usually some of the girls and occasionally some of the boys in the high school have had

lessons in tap-dancing when they were smaller. Knowing the basic steps, these students can readily work out tap routines to the tunes centered around a theme that has been chosen by the director.

If the school is not fortunate to have a women's physical education instructor, or teachers on the faculty who have had some experience in the art of dancing, full instruction books can be secured from some publishing companies. These books have illustrations and procedures that are comparatively easy to follow.

Costumes. Costumes aid in focusing attention on the actor or dancer; however, the costumes should be subordinate to the actor and to the production as a whole. The director should carefully consider his budget before planning and designing the various costumes for the variety show. There should be no overexpenditure on any one costume.

It is generally not necessary to use fine materials for these costumes. Cheap, showy materials can be used as the costumes will probably not be used again. It would be an unnecessary extravagance to make them of durable, expensive materials.

The purchasing of materials should not be limited to what the drygoods department stores offer. Bargain basements, ten-cent stores, curtain and drapery departments,

thrift shops, and second-hand stores should be visited. Remnants, old curtains, samples of rayons and tapestries, broken costume jewelry and ornaments, and old evening gowns are valuable materials to a designer of costumes.

For accessories and trimmings such as jewels, sequins, laces, and flowers, there is no better shopping place than the ten-cent store. It may not be necessary to purchase such items if the students will make the proper appeals to friends and acquaintances.

Color is an important element in costumes. Certain colors have different meanings on the stage. Some are cool colors; others signify warmth. The lines and colors of costumes tend to build up the tempo of a scene and contribute to the success of the production. Color grouping should, however, be correctly used. The colors should be carefully chosen and the groupings of colors should be harmonious.

The style of the stage setting in a revue influences the color arrangement. Those acts that depend upon bizarre effect demand striking and unusual combinations of colors. Color is, in this type of production, a very vital element in building up the required effect.

Unusual color combinations are for example like those used in a Gypsy scene around a camp fire. The tamborine dancers would use brightly colored costumes of unusual color

combinations. Reds, greens, yellows, and purples would predominate.

If the school cannot afford to rent or to make costumes, these must be borrowed from persons friendly and willing to co-operate in the project. Proper handling of borrowed costumes means precautions against tearing, soiling, or altering the garments. It also means pressing and mending with careful consideration of the delicate fabrics.

Borrowed costumes like borrowed properties should be collected from the various lenders and returned promptly after using. Before being returned, each garment should be carefully inspected, mended, and cleaned as thoroughly as the material will allow.

Renting costumes can be very expensive. There are several good costume rental agencies, but a charge is made for each day's use and the renter must pay shipping charges. Rental costumes, like borrowed costumes, should be collected and returned promptly, as an additional charge is made for tardy return. The garments do not have to be cleaned, but they should be mended if minor tears occur, and should be neatly packed for shipment.

Make-up. The use of general lighting and specific illumination from spotlights has made it necessary to be more careful in the application of the make-up used by

the performers. Make-up correctly applied enhances the appearance of the singers, dancers, and actors if that effect is desired.

The make-up should be finely shaded; lines should be few and carefully blended. In other words, the make-up should look convincing to the audience. Some stages have very little distance between the curtain line and the first row of seats for the audience.

There are two types of theatrical grease paints sold by many companies. There is the stick grease paint made in solid form; the other type of grease paint is sold in tube form. Both types are good. The grease paints can be ordered in many colors and shades. Make-up charts and instructions for application can be obtained from most of the theatrical cosmetic companies.

In addition to grease paint, other supplies needed are: cold cream for the removal of make-up and cleansing the face; brown and black dermatograph eye pencils; proper shades of lip rouge and cheek rouge, moist and dry; several shades of eye shadow and liner for highlighting and facial lines; powder of various shades; nose putty for shaping noses and chins; black wax for blocking out teeth; crepe hair, and spirit gum, as required for the application of beards and mustaches; cotton; paper tissues for cleansing the face; and a box of toothpicks for lining purposes. To

these basic requirements may be added other items from time to time. The system of numbering and classifying make-up items varies with the different manufacturers.

A brief procedure in applying a straight make-up is as follows: after cleansing the face with cold cream, the base or foundation should be applied to all parts of the face and neck visible to the audience. The foundation should be applied thinly and smoothly. Rouge applied in the proper place on the cheek will shape the face. Next, apply the proper shade of eye shadow and lining to accentuate the eyes, which are the most important features to an actor. Then rouge the lips. The lips should be shaped to suit the character, but must not be exaggerated beyond the natural outlines. Last of all, powder generously all over the make-up, powdering from the neck up to the forehead. Then dust off surplus powder with a very soft brush or cotton.

Skill in applying make-up can only be attained through practice. High school students can be taught the proper application of make-up in speech and dramatics classes. Both boys and girls like to make-up themselves and other students both as straight characters and as odd characters. From this group of students, a reliable, well-trained crew can be chosen to do the make-up for the production. These individuals must be taught not only the

proper application of the make-up, but they must learn to clean up the make-up room and put away the items of make-up when they are through with them.

There should be a full make-up rehearsal before the night of the production, and the director should check on all make-ups under the lighting setup for the production.

The following simple suggestions about make-up and colored light may prove useful: Amber light tends to make the complexion sallow. More rouge or rouge with less orange in it is necessary. Red light is reflected by rouge and leaves the actor apparently with no rouge. More rouge slightly toward the blue is necessary in red light. Blue light has the opposite effect. Rouge on the cheeks appears as two black spots. Green light gives the face a ghostly appearance and should be avoided unless the scene demands that effect.

Sets. As soon as an act has been chosen, whether it is a skit, a dance number, a choral number, or a combination of all three, the setting should be planned. Some acts will require more elaborate sets than others, and it is these sets that should be constructed first.

Sets for a revue must be designed in such a way that they can be set up and taken down silently and rapidly. The time elapsing between acts must be very short; therefore, the set must consist of artistically designed

backdrops, curtains and draperies, set pieces, or a few flats lashed together to suggest an interior or an exterior setting. Another requirement of the setting is that it can be economically constructed. Materials should be chosen wisely, and waste of these materials should be avoided.

Extra draw curtains can be made from a material called tobacco cloth. This material can be purchased in a hundred yard bolt for the price of fifteen dollars per bolt. It is a yard wide and can be sewed in strips and dyed to make an attractive curtain. (See appendix.) Some curtains that have been tie-dyed and have had sequins sewed on them, look very luxurious to the audience. The material is loosely woven, and if the brightest light is placed behind it, the curtains are transparent. They appear opaque if the light is focused in front of them. This material can be dyed beautiful colors, and looped from above the stage to form gracefully hung draperies for settings.

Other inexpensive set pieces can be constructed from heavy cardboard that can be obtained for little or no cost from furniture stores, hardware stores and mortuaries. Large mattress boxes, refrigerator cratings and casket covers prove very useful in the making of set pieces and ground rows for a scene.

If adequate funds are available, more durable materials can be used for the building of sets. Good lumber,



muslin, and canvas are the best materials from which stage sets may be constructed but these materials are more costly. If many sets are required for the show, the expense of construction from better materials will be high.

Working out an effective color scheme in a stage setting involves the careful consideration of two elements besides scenery. They are lighting and costumes.

Proper contrast has to be maintained between the color of the set and the color of the costumes worn by the actors, dancers, or other performers. The contrast must be harmonious. The setting should be more of a neutral color if the scenic area is large. The costumes and smaller set pieces or properties used by the cast should have brighter accented colors. Various shades and tints of the same color may be used together in any proportion, and complementary colors may be used together in unequal proportions.

A director has to make the sets to fit the conditions of the stage, the available equipment, and the budget. Before starting even the first steps in building, the whole plan of a set of scenery should be carefully drafted on paper. It should include complete diagrams of each set piece drawn to scale, the stage elevation, and even the cross sections and details of each unit in the whole set.

If time permits, it is a good idea for the director to make a miniature scale model of wood or cardboard. For

those persons who possess a creative understanding of scenery, but who cannot draw in perspective, the model is the easiest way to illustrate their ideas for the set. A model usually presents a setting much more clearly and definitely than a sketch. Even the color scheme can be tried out on the model either by use of water-color or show-card paints.

Lighting. The lighting cannot be completely planned until the scenery is built, painted and set up. True, the original designing must take lights into consideration, but the final questions regarding the color of gelatins, intensity of lights, and the cues for dimming and for intensifying light can be answered only after the scenery is in place and the actors are on stage in costumes.

Lack of equipment is no excuse for careless and thoughtless lighting. The more crude the apparatus, the greater the challenge to improve the lighting of the stage. Lighting affords an opportunity for investigation and experiment. The conventional spotlight can be used effectively in many ways. The lighting on many stages can be improved by the addition or substitution of two inexpensive display-window floodlights. Working with little is, indeed, a challenge for the non-professional director, but effective lighting can be obtained in spite of handicaps.

There are two kinds of stage lighting. They are specific illumination or shadow-producing light, and the shadowless light which is commonly called general illumination. Spotlights of various kinds are an example of specific illumination equipment. Footlights and stage border lights are classified as instruments of general illumination.

The use of spotlights is desirable in the variety show. In a small school, the auditorium is often built in connection with the gymnasium and the stage is usually very shallow. This situation provides a problem in staging group dances where space for movement is necessary, and the problem is increased when all the cast must appear on stage for the finale. If the footlights are not used, it is possible to increase the depth of the stage by using the area from the proscenium opening that extends downstage toward the audience. This area, extending from the proscenium opening to the outer edge of the stage is known as the stage apron. If the apron is used for the acting area, spotlights or ceiling beam lights must be used to light the actors.

It is important to regulate the angle at which the light from a spot is directed toward the stage. If no footlights are used, there is a greater possibility of shadow and shade on both the actors and the set. On the

other hand, if the stage were lighted only by means of borderlights and footlights, the background would receive the same amount of light that the actors, dancers or musicians receive.

Spotlights should be used for good concentrated lighting on a specific stage area. Many spotlight lenses are of the plano-convex type; that is, they have one plane surface and one convex surface.

If there is no balcony or place "out front" from which to direct the beams of spotlights to the stage, Fresnelites and baby spotlights can be mounted on pipe battens on stage in place of the first row borders or they can be mounted on the sides of the stage with their beams directed on the action.

There are numerous other types of specific lighting equipment but those mentioned in this study are most commonly used on high school stages. Some large schools are fortunate to have modern, well equipped stages, yet other schools have only footlights and borderlights of the obsolete variety.

For those directors who are not fortunate to have adequate lighting equipment, often inexpensive spotlights can be made from reflectors fashioned from the bright interior of oil cans, coffee cans and lard cans. Surplus army and navy depots often have bargains in electrical

equipment, and schools are given the priority for the purchase of all government surplus. There are books published (see appendix) that give directions on how to devise lighting equipment. The project of remodeling or making new electrical equipment for the stage could be integrated with the physics class or with the mechanical arts classes when they are studying electricity.

Color is important in the practice of stage lighting. There are several color mediums which can be used for lighting equipment. Colored glass is generally used for borderlights and footlights, but their colors are unsatisfactory for special purposes. Lamp dip, cellophane, and gelatine are also color media.

Gelatine is the color medium in most common use. It costs between fifteen and twenty-five cents for a sheet about 20 x 22 inches. The advantages of gelatine are its low cost and great variety of colors. Its disadvantages are the colors fade in a short time, and the gelatine is fragile. The gelatine can be cut to fit the color frames and can be placed in the various spotlights to give the desired effect. The effectiveness of the scenery, costumes, and the make-up to be used in a variety show can only be determined when tried under the lights.

A light cue-sheet should be made to cover each act in the show. It should be tentatively planned for the

light rehearsal and revised to fit the needs for the actual performance.

Sound. Certain skits or acts in a variety show demand sound effects for creating an illusion of mood or atmosphere. Many so-called offstage sound effects can now be produced by electrical transcription, and commercial recording companies have numerous sound recordings for sale.

An ordinary electric phonograph, even a portable one, is adequate for many recorded sound effects, but its loudness level would be too low for some sounds and they must be amplified. Amplifiers can be borrowed or rented from radio stores.

If possible, the stage should be equipped with at least one or two microphones. Cheaper microphones are satisfactory for mechanical sounds that need to be amplified; the better ones are needed for voice reproduction so that the voices will not seem distorted.

Most small schools are not fortunate enough to have adequate sound equipment but it is a goal to build toward.

The audience deserves to hear everything on stage and good sound equipment is the only solution to this problem.

Asbury. Every Director who has worked in a school

or school for

or he has gain

their ability

VII. PRODUCING THE SHOW the best method

CHOOSING THE CAST

After it has been determined what acts will be included in the show and the general manner in which they will be presented to the audience, the director is ready to select the cast. Careful consideration should be given to casting the various acts in the show.

Dancers. As has been said previously, there are usually some students in the school who have had some training in tap or ballet dancing. By casting these experienced people, the dance routines can be worked out more smoothly. If some inexperienced students are cast, the more experienced dancers can help teach the routines.

The director should attempt to cast pretty girls of about the same height and weight for the group dances. Many group dance rehearsals are necessary if each dancer is to do his steps accurately and in unison with the other dancers. The director should choose only the best dancer who has good timing and rhythm for the solo numbers.

Actors. Every director who has worked in the community or school for any length of time utilizes the knowledge he has gained of available actors who have demonstrated their abilities in former productions. From the

standpoint of efficiency, this is probably the best method of casting, but it gives no place to new actors and is likely to result in the charge of favoritism. Other methods of casting students for the skits in the show are by means of interviews, by means of tryouts, or by the use of a combination of these methods.

One of the greatest assets a director can have in dealing with students is a reputation for being absolutely fair and impartial in all phases of producing the show. He must remember he is a teacher and the purpose of the show should be primarily a learning process for the students.

Stage crew. The actual programming of the acts is a relatively small part of the work expended in the production of the variety show. A public performance calls for a large staff of stage workers besides actors, dancers, and musicians. This staff of crewmen should be carefully selected for faithfulness and sense of responsibility, and given clear ideas of what they are to do. The ability to take responsibility is of primary importance in this type of work.

Sometimes it is a wise idea for the director to choose a reliable boy who can serve as both technical director and may again "double" to serve as stage manager. The stage manager should be in full charge of the stage



during performances. His chief duties fall under two departments, properties and lighting.

During the rehearsal period, the stage manager must make note of all properties required for the production of the show, and he must check with the property chairman to see if they are available. When the time for dress rehearsal arrives, he should see that all properties are on the proper side of the stage, off stage, so that the cast can have easy access to them. If he is also the technical director, he must see to it that the settings are changed for the various acts.

The stage manager usually directs the lighting of the production. He usually is in charge of the light crew and must see that they have the correct light cue-sheets and that their actions are synchronized with the changes of the scenes.

Upon the stage manager, rests the responsibility for the smooth functioning of all off-stage business and this includes lighting, sound effects, property placement, curtain openings and closings, and warning of the cast's entrance cues. The show's smoothness of movement depends upon the stage manager's ability to organize and work with his various crew members.

For the execution of his duties the stage manager must select and train a stage crew. The stage crew will

consist of students who know a little about carpentry and who can, under supervision, construct the necessary scenery for the show. These boys or others are also necessary for shifting the scenery for the different acts. Each crewman must be instructed as to what pieces of scenery he is to put up or "strike" (take down), and when it must be done. The whole procedure in the "handling of the show" must be carefully planned and the crew must be able to work silently and rapidly.

The light crew or the "electricians" must be able to accurately dim or intensify lights by cues from their light cue-sheets synchronized with the action on stage. Some of the light crew will be back stage at the light control board. Others should be stationed in the balcony to operate the spotlight if they can't be controlled from back stage.

Usually one or two people can handle the sound effects, musical recordings, or regulate the microphones or loud speaking system. These people must also pick up their cues accurately and be able to handle the sound equipment efficiently.

House-staff. The house staff is responsible for the selling of tickets in the box office or at the door. The doorkeepers are responsible for the taking of tickets, and

the ushers have the duty for the seating of the audience and for distributing the programs.

The members of this staff must be trained to execute their duties in a smooth, efficient, and courteous manner. Some students who do not care to be in the actual performance like to be members of the house-staff and prove to be efficient in their work. They contribute a valuable part to the acceptance of the show by the public.

#### SETTING UP REHEARSAL SCHEDULES

Rehearsal time schedules should be set depending on the spare time a director has and the availability of students during the school day. Most schools have an activity period during the school day in which musical organizations practice for special events, or various clubs hold their meetings. All the students are not in these organizations; some students remain in a study hall or home room during the activity period. The director can usually find a place to include these students in an act in the variety show and can use this period for practice with them.

Rehearsals can be broken into fifteen minute practices, either daily or at least three times a week for some of the acts in the show. Other rehearsals can be held after school, but each rehearsal should be scheduled in advance so that there won't be conflicts with the students' other activities.

Daily schedules should be posted on a bulletin board that is easily accessible to all students so they can check it. The schedule should include the name of the act, the time of rehearsal, the names of the students in the act, and where the practice will be held. Promptness in reporting for rehearsal must be enforced.

If the show is planned months in advance of the opening performance, the music instructor can be working at short intervals with the boys' or girls' quartettes, with the instrumental numbers, and with the vocal solos. Dance routines should be worked out, and short rehearsals can be called either daily or at least three times a week on a set schedule.

Juggling rehearsals to fit an already crowded school calendar demands tact and consideration of other teachers, students, and activities. If a director starts early enough and carefully schedules a daily rehearsal sheet to meet with the approval of others, fewer last minute confusions and worries are avoided, and a smoother performance can be assured.

The show should open with a big act

at which all students can be

involved in some way. The following

are in rough order of importance

to be given in the order just before the inter-

## VIII. PUTTING THE SHOW TOGETHER

Putting the show together requires careful planning by the director and his assistants. Effective lighting, quick switches of scenery, correct placement of acts and the handling and supervision of a large cast are some of the problems that must be met when the show goes into final rehearsals. If possible, one dress rehearsal should be held several days before the first performance in order that rough edges may be smoothed or drastic last-minute changes can be given more attention.

Some directors require more rehearsals of the entire show, but if lighting, scene construction, and costumes have been completed, and the various acts have been functioning well, two complete dress rehearsals are usually sufficient.

Placement of acts. Acts must be balanced for sequence or contrast. All the musical numbers should not be together nor should the several skits all be placed in the first or last part of the show. Music, acting, and dancing must be interspersed throughout the length of the show.

The show should open with a big act. A fast moving musical number in which many students can take part is a good opening for the show. The following acts should let down in tempo and then gradually build to somewhat of a climax in the number just before the intermission.

After a ten minute intermission, the second half of the show should open with a rising, fast moving number. The next few acts should contrast in tempo and type, and the show should then build toward a climax. A big spectacular number should be included in the second half of the show. This spectacular number should be just before the finale, and the audience will leave happily content that it was an evening well spent.

In small high schools and even in larger school systems, some of the more talented students will be cast in more than one act. If they appear in several acts, this involves frequent costume changes. Acts must be arranged in such a manner that these students will have sufficient time for costume changes.

The elaborateness of the scenery for certain acts and the limitation of stage facilities to place this scenery quickly and effectively must be taken into consideration when the order of acts is being arranged on the program.

Since the time elapsing between acts must be very short, the scenery most difficult to set up for the big spectacular number can be put in place during the intermission. Smaller acts such as skits, solos, or small ensembles can precede the big number in the second half. These smaller acts can be played in front of the concert curtain, draperies, or even on the stage apron in front of

the act curtain if the limitation of stage facilities require it.

Supervision of cast. With the large cast of actors, singers, dancers, and other performers in a variety show, there must be available rooms or space in which they can stay while waiting for their entrance. Not only must a student use these waiting rooms until he has an entrance on stage, but also he must not be allowed to go into the audience to view the other acts of the show, nor should he be seen in the corridors. He should be instructed to report for make-up and costuming by six-thirty in the evening and then go to his waiting room where he must remain until notified to be in position for his entrance on stage. Upon completion of his act, he must return to the waiting room and remain there until the finale. Every person who appears in an act during the show is on stage for the finale.

Supervisors are needed to keep students quiet and to see that the actors are ready for their stage entrances when notified. All this should be practiced at dress rehearsals as well as the nights of the performance. Actors, who are on stage before the curtain is opened, should never be allowed to peek through the curtain at the audience. This training in ethics and stage manners is important for a successful show.

## IX. PUBLICIZING THE SHOW

A community must be sold the desire to patronize school activities. Just as an athletic activity must have community backing to stay above board financially, so the dramatics and music departments must be a financial success in this venture. Good publicity is essential if the variety show is to have a large paying audience.

Advance publicity. Various mediums of advertising should be used in conducting a publicity campaign. The advertising staff, working directly under the business manager, must be capable of producing attractive and effective advertising that will sell the show to the public and yet be ethical and maintain dignity. To do this, the staff must be prepared to utilize all the channels of publicity, both vocal and written.

The methods of approach in a publicity campaign will differ as to the size of the school and the size and the type of community, but nearly every individual reads the daily and weekly newspapers. News stories about the plans and the progress of the coming production can be started early. These can be followed by interviews with the cast members, with the chairmen of production committees, and perhaps with faculty members. Pictures in costume of the featured members of the various acts in the show should be



played up in the local newspapers and even in the county papers. Never miss an opportunity to display pictures and suitable advertising in well patronized business establishments such as hotels, drug stores, barber and beauty shops, windows of department and dress shops, recreation centers, and cafes. The school photographers and the journalism department of large schools can do much to create a successful publicity campaign. Small schools can employ the local photographer or students who claim photography as their hobby to take pictures of the cast for advertising purposes. In return for these services, the photographers will be able to sell additional finished prints at a profit to zealous collectors of snapshots among the student body.

Posters, cards, banners, and a form letter telling about the coming production are effective and widely used methods of advertising and are adaptable to both large and small schools.

If the school is situated in or near towns having a radio station, many clever skits, interviews, and musical numbers can be presented to inform the people of the coming event.

Some larger cities in Kansas are fortunate to have a television studio, and some local programs are built around local talent or interviews with people concerning community events. Wichita's KAKE TV and Hutchinson's KTVH

are only two stations which do have a few programs of this type.

Numerous opportunities are afforded students for contacting and arranging for various methods of advertising a revue. Members of speech classes can contact the presidents of various clubs in the community and ask permission to give announcement speeches about the coming revue. This not only serves as a means of advertisement, but it also gives students the experience in public speaking. Of course, all advertising schemes should be under the advisement and the supervision of faculty members, but students can learn early that tact and a good personality go far in selling their ideas to the public. It is an excellent lesson in better human relations.

Advance ticket sales serve as another means of advertising the show. Individual recognition should be given to those students who sell a certain number of tickets, either by issuing free tickets to them, or by publicizing the fact that the individual is a super-salesman. Another method of encouraging students to sell tickets is by allowing them to earn points toward an award in dramatics.

Programs. The format of a program for a variety show is a little different from the type used for plays. It need not necessarily be artistically designed. The

variety show program should be printed upon colored paper and can be either the long, narrow type, or the folded book form. Because of the many cast members and the numerous students on the production crews, a larger program is necessary than that used for plays.

Everyone likes to see his name in print. Recognition should be given to all those people who have contributed in any way toward making the show a successful production. Those people in the community who have loaned costumes and properties, the mothers of the students who have helped with the production, and any other individuals who have contributed time and effort for the show should be given acknowledgment on the printed programs.

If the community is not opposed to soliciting of advertisements, ads can be printed on the program or a list of patrons who have contributed can be included. These ads or contributions from patrons of the school can defray the expense of the printing of the programs.

The various acts on the printed program should be given catchy titles. Some titles should reveal what the act really will be, while others should leave the audience in suspense as to the content of the act. Such titles as "Hollywood" (Out of the Smog), "We Wonder", "Who Me?", "There's Nothing Like a Song", and "Moods" are examples of program captions that do not reveal the exact content of the act.

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Library

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A handy, easily understood manual on stage and  
lighting, using the question-and-answer method of  
presentation. Contains many good drawings and a  
glossary of technical terms.

2. Robert W. Herold. Stage Lighting. New York: The  
Peterson & Company, 1942.

A library volume with spiral binding. A very good  
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directions and directions. **APPENDIX**

Lighting

3. Wheeler, Charles. How to Light Stage Equipment. New York:  
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Make-up

5. Lord, John P. Make-up. New York: Samuel French, 1930.

6. Factor, Max. Guide on the Art of Make-up. New York:  
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A set of nine color plates, subject matter  
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SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHIES AND LISTS OF DEALERS AND  
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BIBLIOGRAPHIES

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Cornberg, Sol, and Emanuel L. Gebauer. A Stage Crew Handbook. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1941.

A handy, easily understood manual on scenery and lighting, using the question-and-answer method of presentation. Contains many good drawings and a glossary of technical terms.

Hake, Herbert V. Here's How! Evanston, Illinois: Row Peterson & Company, 1942.

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Fuchs, Theodore. Home-Built Lighting Equipment. New York: Samuel French, 1939.

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McCandless, Stanley R. A Method of Lighting the Stage.

New York: Theatre Arts, Inc., revised edition, 1939.

A good book on how plays are lighted.

Make-up

Baird, John F. Make-up. New York: Samuel French, Inc., 1930.

Factor, Max. Hints on the Art of Make-up. Hollywood: Max Factor Make-up Studios, 1936.

A set of nine pamphlets, subject matter tersely and ably presented and illustrated.

## DEALERS AND MANUFACTURERS OF STAGE EQUIPMENT

## Costumes

- Brooks Costume Rental Company, 3 West 61st Street, New York, N. Y.
- Colorado Costume Company, 1751 Champo, Denver, Colorado.
- Eaves Costume Company, Eaves Building, New York, N. Y.
- Kansas City Costume Company, 1409 Walnut, Kansas City, Missouri.
- Southern Importers and Exporters, 200 Fannin Building, Houston, Texas.  
Costume material, wigs, fans and other supplies.
- Western Costume Company, 5335 Melrose, Hollywood, California.  
Period costumes, accessories, fancy dress.
- Wichita Costume Company, East Douglas, Wichita, Kansas.
- Wolff, Fording and Company, 46 Stuart Street, Boston, Mass.  
Costume fabrics, trimmings.

## Lighting Equipment

- Century Lighting, Inc., 521 West 43rd Street, New York 36, N. Y.
- Grand Stage Lighting Co., Inc., 23 West Hubbard Street, Chicago 10, Illinois.
- Major Equipment Company, 4603 19 Fullerton Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.
- Theatre Production Service, 1430 Broadway, New York 18, N. Y.
- The Strong Electric Corporation, 94 City Park Avenue, Toledo 2, Ohio.

## Make-up

Art Craft Play Company, Cedar Rapids, Iowa.  
Steins Make-up.

Heuer Publishing Company, Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

Max Factor's Make-up Studios, Highland Avenue at Hollywood,  
Los Angeles, California.

Professor J. Warnesson's Make-up, 62 West Washington Street,  
Chicago, Illinois.

The Northwestern Press, 315 Fifth Avenue South, Minneapolis  
15, Minnesota.

## Scene Paints

Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company, Chicago, Illinois.

Strobolite Company, 35 West 52nd Street, New York, New York.

## Sound-effect Records

Dramatists Play Service Inc., 14 East 38th Street, New York  
16, New York.

Gennett Records Division of Starr Piano Company, Richmond,  
Indiana.

Thomas J. Valentino, Inc., 150 West 46th Street, New York 36,  
New York.  
78 RPM's.

## Tobacco Cloth

Clinton Cotton Mills, Clinton, South Carolina.  
Cloth sold in 100 yard lots.

## A DETAIL OF PLAY COMPANIES NOT FOR A

## VARIETY SHOW

## Skits

The following is a detailed example of an act with-  
Walter H. Baker Company, 178 Tremont Street, Boston 11,  
Massachusetts.

Eldridge Entertainment House, Denver, Colorado.

Heuer Publishing Company, Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

Ivan Bloom Hardin Company, 3806 Cottage Grove Avenue,  
Des Moines 11, Iowa.

Samuel French, Inc., 25 West 45th Street, New York 19, New  
York.

(Figure 1) which served as the background for the act.  
The Northwestern Press, 315 Fifth Avenue South, Minne-  
neapolis 15, Minnesota.

Farthest from the center of the stage was a large picture  
of a tully near the bottom of the flat. The two wheels  
of the sky cyclorama were clips outlined in blue near the  
top of the flat (Figures 1 and 2). Silver glitter was  
sprinkled on the tully. A ground piece of diamond-shaped  
(Figure 4) made of cardboard was braced and set on the  
sky eye. This ground piece was painted to resemble  
irregular lines on it.

A wheel 4 1/2 inches in diameter was constructed of heavy  
cardboard with a box of saddles, 7 1/2 inches in diameter  
cut from heavy cardboard (Figure 5). The wheel was  
painted white and outlined in blue, and the saddle was  
painted black. The saddle was set on the wheel.



A DETAILED EXAMPLE OF AN ACT FOR A

VARIETY SHOW

The following is a detailed example of an act actually used in a high school variety show. The name of the act was entitled "Tulip Time".

Setting. The scene was a stylized windmill set.

Two 6 by 12 feet flats were lashed together, braced, and set in an angle on each side of the blue sky cyclorama (Figure 3) which served as the background for the set. The flats were covered with white newsprint and the two flats farthest from the center of the stage had a blue outline of a tulip near the bottom of the flat. The two flats next to the sky cyclorama had tulips outlined in blue near the top of the flat (Figures 1 and 2). Silver flitter was sprinkled on the tulips. A ground piece of distant hills (Figure 4) made of cardboard was braced and set in front of the sky cyc. This ground piece was painted white and had blue irregular lines painted on it.

A windmill 6½ by 5 feet was constructed from a heavy cardboard mattress box and two paddles, 7½ feet long were also cut from heavy cardboard (Figure 5). The windmill was painted white and outlined in blue, and the paddles were blue with silver flitter on them. The paddles had a rod

running through them that was bolted so that a stage hand could turn the paddles from behind the windmill (Figure 6).

A blue backing was set back of the windmill door giving it depth, and scrim was tacked back of the three tiny windows. A small elongated electric bulb was attached back of each scrim covered window, and when lighted gave the appearance of a light within the mill.

Lighting of the set. The set was well lighted by five Fresnel lights located on the first batten nearest the act curtain. These Fresnels had pink (Shocking Pink) gela-  
tines in them. Two spotlights were focused on the stage from the balcony. These two spotlights had violet gelatine paper in them.

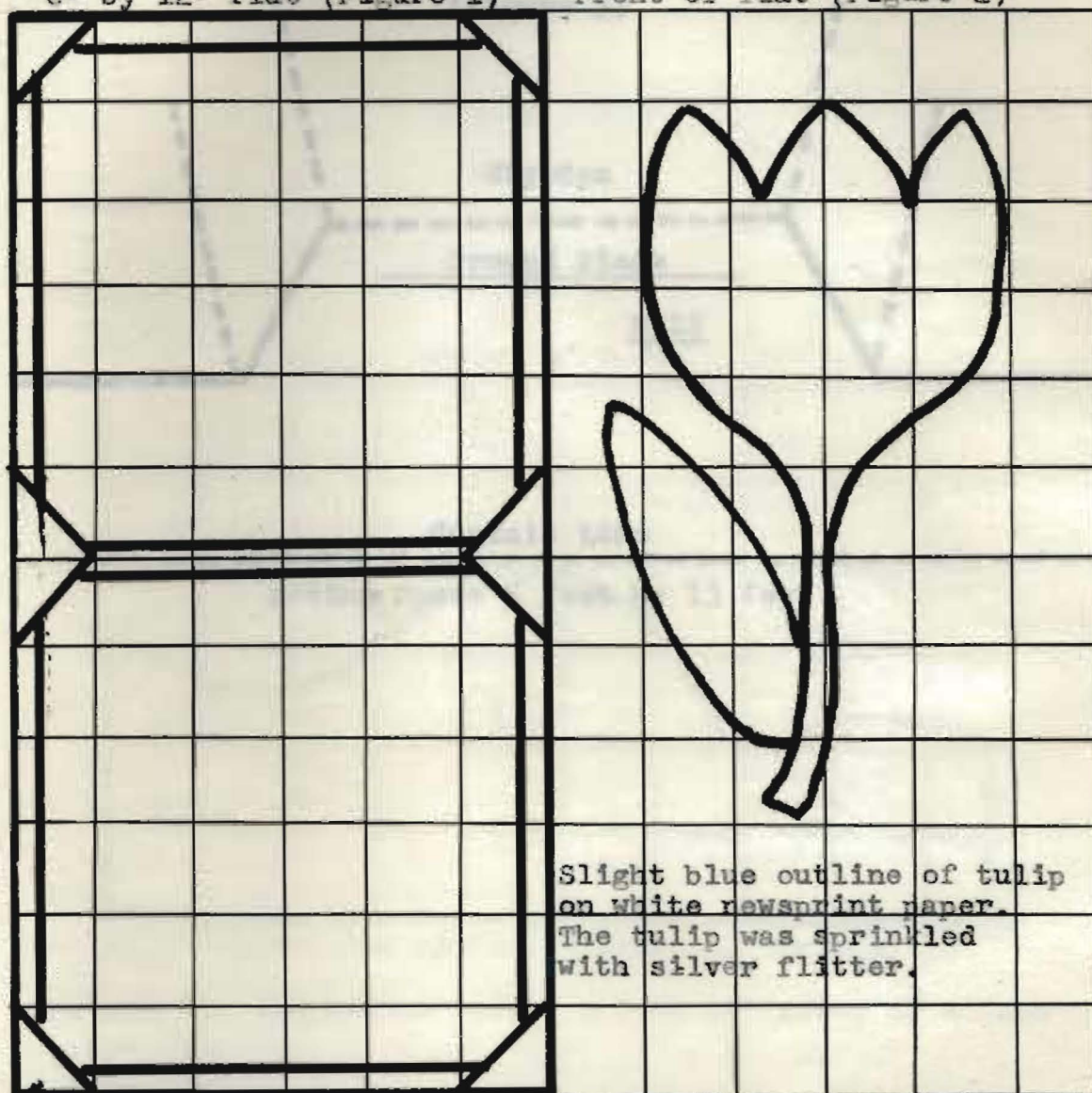
Light blue outline of mill  
on white newspaper paper  
The galls were sprinkled  
with silver

The flats were placed together and braced in front  
of the set... The two flats...  
were held together...  
and the two flats...  
were near the top of the set.

## DECORATION OF FLATS

6' by 12' flat (Figure 1)

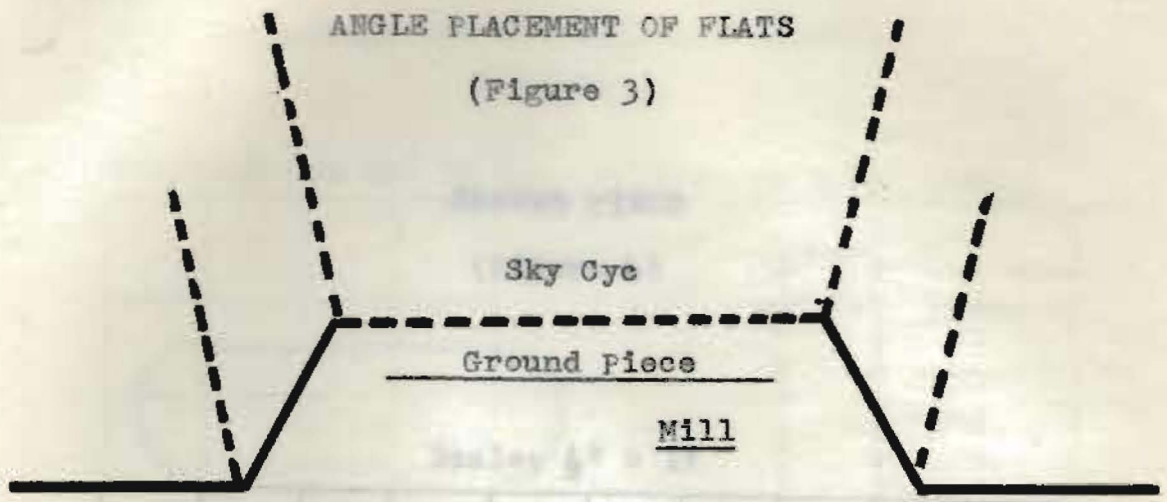
Front of flat (Figure 2)

Scale =  $\frac{1}{2}$ " = 1'

Two flats were lashed together and braced on each side of the sky cyclorama. The two flats farthest from the sky cyc had the outline of the tulip at the bottom of the flat and the two flats nearest the sky cyc had a tulip outlined near the top of the flat.

ANGLE PLACEMENT OF FLATS

(Figure 3)



Curtain Line  
 Acting Space 5 feet by 13 feet

ground piece was placed in front of the sky eye  
 and the dimensions were 5 feet 10 inches by 4 feet

The ground piece was one from heavy  
 cardboard and holed by two small jacks. It was  
 painted white with blue tulle and lines at the  
 top.

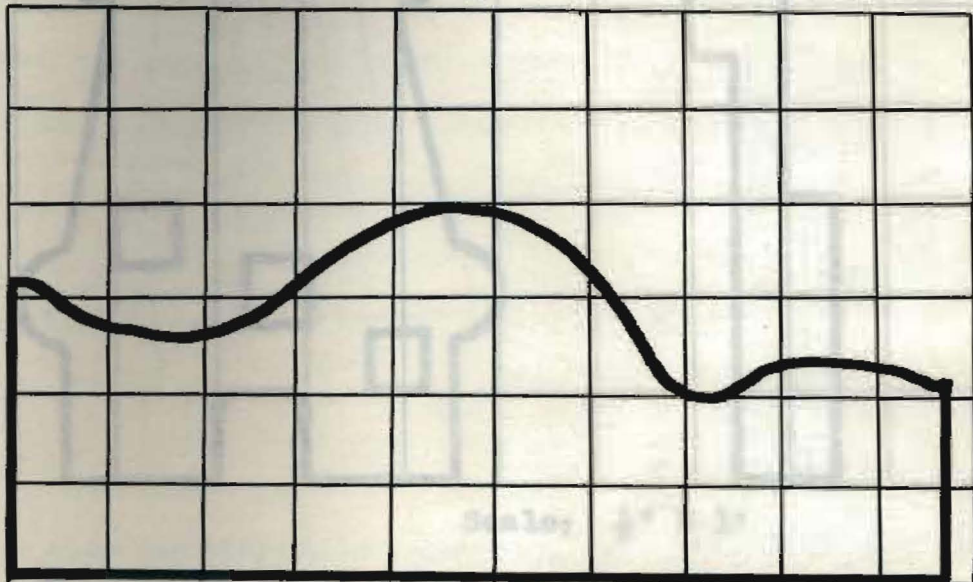
## PATTERN FOR WINDMILL AND PATTERNS

(Figure 5)

Windmill was 6' by 5'. Paddles were 7 1/2' long.

## GROUND PIECE

(Figure 4)

Scale:  $\frac{1}{2}$ " = 1'

Ground piece was placed in front of the sky eye and its dimensions were: 9 feet 10 inches by 4 feet

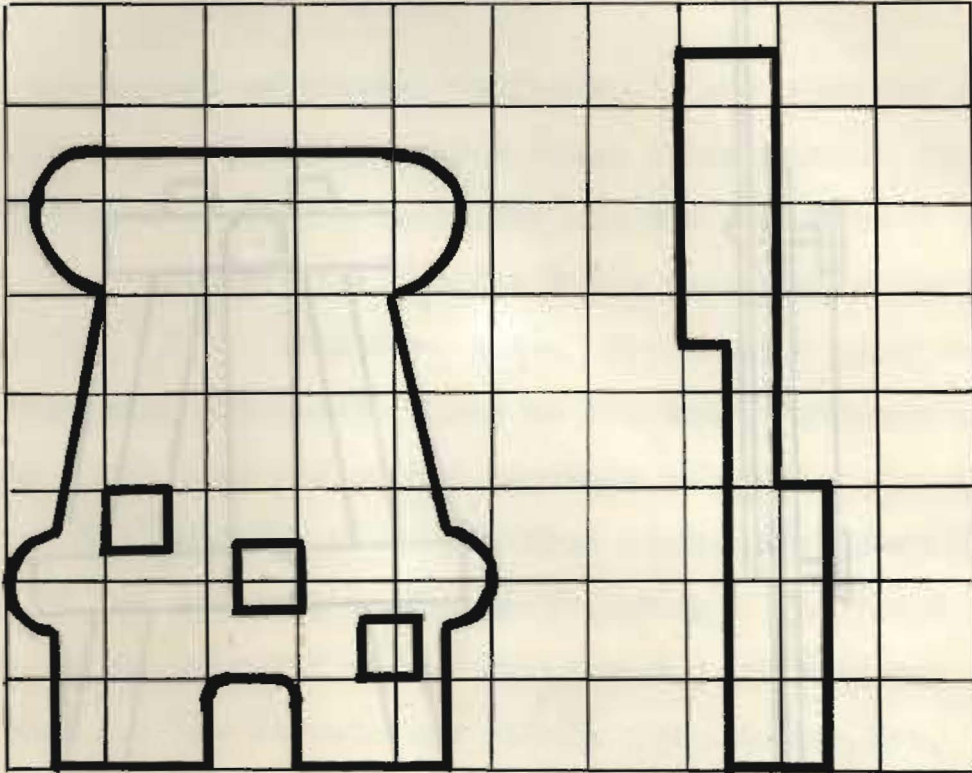
CONSTRUCTION: The ground piece was cut from heavy cardboard and braced by two small jacks. It was painted white with blue tulips and lines at the base.

The two paddles were painted blue and had silver flippers on them. A blue backing was set back of the door. Fabric was glued on the back of each window.

## PATTERN FOR WINDMILL AND PADDLES

(Figure 5)

Windmill was  $6\frac{1}{2}'$  by  $5'$ . Paddles were  $7\frac{1}{2}'$  long.



Scale:  $\frac{1}{2}'' = 1'$

The windmill was braced by two jacks at the back. The paddles had a rod through them enabling a stage hand to turn them.

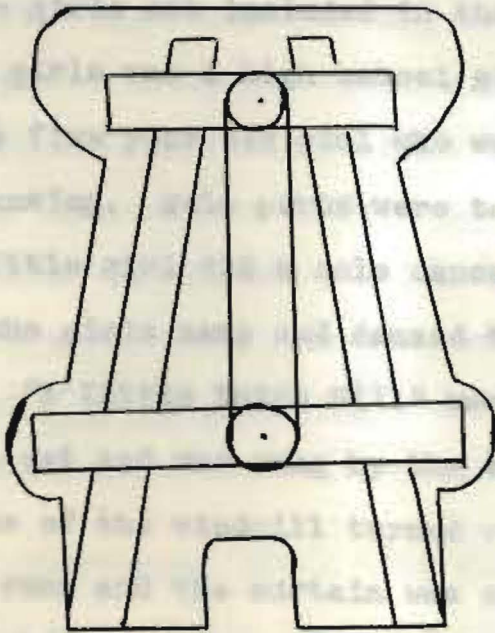
Construction material. Heavy cardboard from large packing boxes was used (mattress covers and casket wrappings).

Paint. The windmill was painted white and outlined in blue. The two paddles were painted blue and had silver flitter on them. A blue backing was set back of the door. Scrim was glued on the back of each window.

WINDMILL BRACING

AND PULLEY

(Figure 6)



Back of windmill: The cardboard structure must be securely braced and a rod run through the two paddles and attached to a pulley.

Pulley to turn the paddles.

The couple began to their original position. A wheel was turned on the next segment in the center of the stage with girls on the inside and the boys on the outside--first counter clockwise and then clockwise. After the completion

Music. Three selections were used as the basis for the act, "Tulip Time". For the first part of the act, six boys and girls sang and danced the polka to "In an Old Dutch Garden".

The second selection, "Wilhemena", was sung and danced by two girls not included in the other dance group. One of these girls was a high school girl and the other was a little five year old girl who was quite talented in singing and dancing. Solo parts were taken by the older girl while the little girl did a solo dance to the tune, "Wilhemena". Both the girls sang and danced together on part of the song.

"A Little Dutch Mill" was used as the last number of the set and was sung by the entire group. The large paddles of the windmill turned while this last song was being sung and the curtain was slowly drawn on the act, "Tulip Time".

Dance. The basic polka step was used and adapted to the music, "In an Old Dutch Garden". Each couple began the dance from a line in front of the stylized background toward the apron of the stage and turning in a clockwise manner, danced back to their original position. A wheel was formed on the next movement in the center of the stage with girls on the inside and the boys on the outside--first counter clockwise and then clockwise. After the completion



of this movement (so many bars of the music) the dancers broke this formation and danced back to their original line position facing the audience.

Any good polka instruction book can give ideas for a dance adaptable to the musical selection, "In an Old Dutch Garden". The formations and movements are dependable upon the size of the stage and the dancing space available. Two suggestions for basic polka steps can be found in the following instructions books: Dancing Back the Clock by Charles C. Thomas and published by the College Offset Press 148-150 North 6th Street, Philadelphia 6, Pa., and Fun in Sharing Fun the Co-Op Way prepared by Durward G. Dewitt, Consumers Cooperative Association, Kansas City 13, Missouri.

Costumes. Since blue and white was the color scheme for the act, "Tulip Time", costumes were fashioned from light blue cambric. The six girls in the polka group had skirts of this material and their blue weskits were laced with black ribbon. They wore white peasant blouses and white Dutch caps and small white aprons.

The six boys wore blue cambric trousers fashioned with Peg-pockets and blue cambric vests adorned with large, covered cardboard buttons. Their blue Dutch boy caps were made of the same blue material. They wore white shirts and black string ties.

Patterns for these costumes can be found in the costume section of Simplicity or McCall's pattern books in any department store.

The two girls in the "Wilhemena" number had short circle skirts made of blue cambric a shade darker than the other Dutch costumes. They wore white peasant blouses and their little Dutch caps were of the same blue as their short skirts. The caps had silver glitter around the head bands and on the peaks of the caps.

The high school girl was a pretty dark haired girl and her little partner in the dance was a blond. This contrast in size and coloring added much to the effectiveness of the act.