

THE TOWN THEATRE

of

Columbia, South Carolina

1919-1974

by

C. Robert Jones

THE TOWN THEATRE of Columbia, South Carolina, 1919-1974

is, in part, a Masters Thesis in Theatre for the University of Georgia.
(The Thesis covers only the first twenty-five years of the Theatre's
history—1919-1944.) For further information: crobertjones.com
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DEDICATION

Rarely, if ever, do most of us take the opportunity to pay tribute to the teachers in our lives who bring substance, excitement, direction, and incentive to shape us as adults. It is with admiration and respect that this work is dedicated to:

Miss Elise Heriot, Miss Margaret Thompson, and to the memory of the late Misses Evelyn Winn and Pearl Harvey (of Arden Elementary School) whose strong instruction and values made learning an adventure

Miss Alice Blanton Carter and Miss Nita Pitts (of Columbia High School) who gave me a love of the English and French languages, and Shakespeare

the memory of the late Dr. Havilah Babcock (of the University of South Carolina) who introduced me to the wonderful world of words and offered the encouragement to write

Mrs. Louise Jones DuBose (former director of the University of South Carolina Press) who opened up the challenging realm of book publishing

Mr. Leo Brady (of the Catholic University of America) whose quiet professionalism and genuine love of theatre were inspirational--and continue to serve as worthy models

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INTRODUCTION

In modern times to be fifty-five years old is scarcely a newsworthy event. In any era for a theatre to endure fifty-five years and show no signs of stopping is indeed a noteworthy achievement. By the time the Town Theatre in Columbia, South Carolina, celebrated its fifty-fifth anniversary in 1974, it had already gained the distinction of being the nation's oldest community theatre in continuous operation under professional direction. In the realm of theatrical activity, this feat is no small accomplishment. Theatres, acting companies, and workshop groups have a way of flaring up for brief periods, waxing brightly, and then waning quietly into obscurity when funds, interest, or audiences decline. The Town Theatre's history in the transitory nature of theatrical endeavor merits attention, if for no other reason than its longevity. It is the purpose of this study to determine the factors contributing to the Theatre's present position of respect and historical significance, as well as to chronicle the history of the organization's first fifty-five years.

Theatre in Columbia owes its origins, by direct link, to Charleston. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the seaport city was the southern center of the best in theatrical performances, and its early playhouses--particularly the original Dock Street Theatre, gained wide prominence. It was inevitable when the state capital was shifted from Charleston to Columbia that the theatre tradition would follow. The Town Theatre's history is prefaced by a chapter devoted to the nature of the theatrical enterprises that had evolved from this early tradition and were prevalent in Columbia from 1900-1919, thus setting the background of the need for a community theatre. The study is based almost

entirely on primary sources. The Board of Governors of the Columbia Stage Society, a name which has become synonymous with the Town Theatre building itself, has graciously made available the existing records of the organization, including the minutes, scrapbooks, financial reports, program files, and personal correspondence. These records have been supplemented by extensive personal correspondence with former directors and other Theatre personnel, newspaper accounts, and personal interviews.

There are several areas of possible confusion in the interpretation of names and places throughout this study. These are noted in advance. For example, the Town Theatre building is leased annually by its owners the Columbia Stage Company to the Columbia Stage Society which is the producing organization. The name used most frequently by Columbians for the community theatrical enterprise is the Town Theatre. Whenever the Town Theatre is referred to specifically, either as the building or the organization, the word "Theatre" is capitalized. The Stage Society and the Town Theatre are used interchangeably to refer to the producing organization, the Columbia Stage Society.

The names of several of the women who have figured prominently in the Theatre's history have undergone changes by marriage. Their present names are used with their earlier names in parentheses in order to correctly identify them. For instance, Margaret Rhett Taylor was Mrs. Julius Taylor. After the death of Dr. Taylor, she was later married to

R. Adm. Charles W. Martin. She is referred to as Margaret (Taylor) Martin.

Because of the special nature of theatre seasons which usually begin in the fall (September-October) and end in the late spring (May-June), the use of the calendar year per se has been discarded in favor of the season span (i.e., 1931-32 instead of 1931).

Every theatre boasts its own legends and memorable events. Often, as these are retold and passed on, the facts are blurred or altered entirely. The Town Theatre is no exception. Whenever variations in information have occurred, every attempt to ascertain the true facts has been made.

Because most of the persons mentioned in the study are still living--with many of these still active at the Town Theatre--there arose the inevitable problem of presenting the Town Theatre's story not only accurately and honestly, but most of all, objectively. The very nature of a community artistic endeavor produces varying opinions, and, in the heat of sustained involvement, occasionally disagreements. Any fair assessment of the strengths of an enduring civic organization is also measurable by the contrasting evaluation of its weaknesses. An attempt has been made to point out both. Interviews and letter and telephone requests for information have been granted freely and with interest. Statements--whether positive or negative--have unerringly demonstrated respect and concern for the Theatre's program, its welfare, and its place in the community.

The Board of Governors has made no restrictions in the

presentation of the following material, and the cooperation of its members, past and present, has aided immeasurably in five years of research and writing.

Grateful thanks are due to Miss Ruth Hall Graham, Mrs. Claire Randall, Mrs. Charles E. Martin, Mrs. Daniel A. Reed, Mr. Walter O'Rourke, Dr. Fred E. Bentley, Dr. Richard Hofiman, Mr. James W. Thomas, the Board of Governors of the Columbia Stage Society, and to the late Mrs. Martha Penney for their help, advice, and supportive encouragement in the preparation of this history.

C. Robert Jones

Mars Hill, North Carolina

September 1, 1974

CHAPTER I

THEATRE IN COLUMBIA, S. C., 1900-1919

If one had found himself reading the pages of The State, Columbia's daily morning newspaper, in 1900, he would have noted articles that spoke of the completion of the Columbia-to-Cheraw railroad, the completion of the new City Hall and Opera House, the beginning of the construction of the new Union Station and the Knowlton Infirmary, the awarding of a contract for the completion of the State House, the delivering of several speeches by William Jennings Bryan, the first appearance of a horseless machine on the streets of Columbia, the opening of the new YMCA, and possibly he might have noticed an obscure paragraph early in January of that year which spoke of a free street exhibition at the corner of Blanding and Main to see a moving picture machine by the United States Vitascope Company.

At the dawn of the twentieth century, Columbia, the capital city of South Carolina, was only 114 years old. It had been a planned city, located in the almost exact geographical center of the state so that the state seat of government would be accessible to representatives from all counties. The bill to relocate the state capital, ratified on March 22, 1786, at the initial state capital in Charleston

stated that the commissioners were:

. . . authorized and required to lay off a tract of land of two miles square, near Friday's Ferry, on the Congaree River, including the plain of the hill whereon Thomas and James Taylor, Esquires, now reside, into lots of half an acre each, and the streets shall be of such dimensions, not less than sixty feet wide, as they shall think convenient and necessary, with two principal streets, running through the centre of the town at right angles, of one hundred and fifty feet wide; which said land shall be, and the same is hereby declared to be, vested in the said commissioners, and their lawful successors, for the use of this State.¹

On December 21, 1854, the town was chartered as a city, and the first annual election occurred in April, 1855. The young capital suffered its worst blow when eighty-four of about a hundred and twenty-four blocks in the heart of the city were destroyed by Sherman's Army in a wind-swept fire on February 17, 1865.

By 1900, the University of South Carolina, located about three blocks from the capitol building, was ninety-nine years old and had a student body of 212. By that same year, Columbia's telephone system, established in 1880, had 200 subscribers who paid an annual fee of \$18.00 for private telephones and \$25.00 for business telephones. Electric lights, first introduced into Columbia in 1888, were not yet in widespread use, and automobiles, paved streets, radio and moving pictures were yet to come--although they would all be firmly established before the first two decades of the

¹Quoted by Helen Kohn Hennig in Columbia: 1786-1936 (from the Statutes at Large, IV, 751-752), p. 6.

new century were over.

The population of the capital city in that first year of the twentieth century was 21,108 (with environs, 34,786), and throughout the city there was a total business investment of \$5,277,000 in all kinds of manufacturing and commercial enterprises.

Although Columbia was in reality over a century old by 1900, physically, because of the great fire in 1865, much of it was less than thirty-five years old. The city's next twenty years, 1900-1920, were destined to be an era of unprecedented activity at all levels of life. The population would increase to 37,524 by 1920, technological advances would be astounding, there would be a major war and the establishment of a military base, there would exist a total of six institutions of higher learning, and the city would see its most fervent theatrical era.

When they relocated the state capital from Charleston to Columbia in 1786, South Carolina's early legislators, without realizing it, gave Columbia's theatrical activity from 1900-1919 a substantial boost. Because it was in the center of the state, Columbia became the hub of the state's railroad systems. In addition, the city was on direct rail lines from New York and Washington to Charleston, Savannah, and Jacksonville--all of which were strong "road" towns for touring companies. To the west, Augusta and Atlanta were also easily accessible. Strong and intelligent management of a new and handsomely-equipped opera house, plus an agreeable geographical

location and an eager audience brought to Columbia during the first two decades of the century an intensity and quality of theatrical activity such as the city had never known.

When the new century began, Columbia lacked a theatre. The old opera house, standing on a site where two town halls and theatres had stood for more than half of the nineteenth century, had burned in 1899. The land, located on the northwest corner of Main and Hampton Streets, was sold to the city and the new City Hall and Opera House were to be built on the corner of Gervais and Main, just across the street from the front of the State House. The State of November 13, 1899, noted that the work on the new Opera House was to begin February 1 and the building, designed by Frank P. Milburn of Charlotte, North Carolina, was to be in the French Renaissance style of architecture. In addition to specific details about the size of the theatre, the front page article went on to say:

The higher conception of the function of the stage is that it should be educational in character, that it should form a moral and intellectual recreation for the people. A theatre ought to be a place where one goes to find motives for ideal thinking and where one's thoughts are elevated above the realm of the commonplace everyday happenings.²

Although the completion date was set for September, in time for a full theatre season, delays on materials postponed the opening until December. The year had been a lean one for entertainment in Columbia. Outside of the Spring Music Festival, the only other programs of any wide civic interest had been the readings and recitals at the YMCA, and the various

²The State, November 13, 1899.

activities at the colleges.

The evening of Saturday, December 1, 1900, was a glittering one for Columbia. Although the carpeting and many items of decor were not yet complete, the new Opera House opened with Thos. Q. Seabrooke & Co. in The Rounders. In the black tie audience were Governor and Mrs. McSweeney and Mayor Earle.

The Opera House, called the Columbia Theatre, was a model of all the latest in theatre construction. With a seating capacity of 1,500, it had four main floor boxes and four balcony boxes. One of the features most touted was the more-than-ample leg room. Those seated did not have to rise for persons passing by. There were five rows of seats in the dress circle and five in the balcony and gallery.

The whole building was 80' x 160' in size with the auditorium being 77' x 80'. The stage was 44' deep, 77' wide, and 70' to the gridiron, making it one of the largest in the southeast. The proscenium arch was 34' wide and 38' high, and there were 58 electric lights to illuminate the front curtain when it was down.

The theatre had five dressing rooms below the stage and an orchestra pit--also below stage level. House lights in the first year could not be dimmed but Columbians had long been accustomed to this.

Comfort features about which the theatre boasted were excellent heating, many fire exits, a sewerage system, and an unusual arrangement for the ticket offices so that ticket

takers could see the performance throughout.³ The building was said to be an almost exact copy of Wallack's Theatre in New York.

With Brown and Smithdeal as co-managers, the price range for The Rounders, which had run for 202 performances in New York, was 25¢, 50¢, 75¢, \$1.00, and \$1.50.

Despite a late beginning, the initial season was a full one in that more than fifty attractions were offered. (See Appendix A.) In general, it was typical of those which were to follow for the next ten years. While the size of audiences varied from program to program and full houses were not necessarily the rule, the Columbia Theatre in its most ambitious season had as many as 113 different attractions.

Brown and Smithdeal offered a number of inducements to attract audiences to the theatre during the first season. For less costly productions, matinee prices were often less than fifty cents for the best seat in the house. By the same token, the managers did not hesitate to raise admission prices for the more lavish productions. This fact was usually carefully noted in advertisements, however. To aid patrons, tickets were sold in advance at the Columbia Bookstore, and often prizes of cash and gifts were given away at Saturday performances. To encourage attendance on Monday night--usually the poorest in

³The area of fire protection in this era was a particularly sensitive subject. The earlier Opera House had burned and the new one was so arranged that if a fire broke out in the theatre, the City Hall offices, also in the same building, could quickly be sealed off. Further, in all articles, mention was made of the asbestos curtain which separated the stage from the audience, and the many fire exits--making it possible to empty the building in a matter of minutes.

terms of audience numbers--ladies were admitted free with an escort holding a thirty-cent ticket.

Although there were few colored people attending the theatre in the early period of the Opera House's existence, except for special bookings like the Black Patti Troupe, the building was designed with a separate entrance to the gallery on the Gervais Street side of the building for colored patrons.

Because of the oppressive heat during the summer months, the "road" season usually ended in May or June and did not resume until late August. Summer theatre activity during the early years of the century was sporadic. Columbians fled from the city on the many excursions offered by the railroads, and those who remained settled for the occasional concerts in the parks--particularly at Hyatt Park and Shandon.

On August 13, 1900, the Havens-Ainslee Company played Papa's Gun at Hyatt Park Open Air Theatre and a vaudeville company made up of local citizens played at the theatre intermittently that same summer. In May, 1909, an organization called the Columbia Stock Co. played The Christian and The Devil at the Hyatt Park Casino and also performed Cinderella. The group was called a summer vaudeville company and their programs included the showings of short movies. Admissions to the programs in 1909 were fifteen and twenty-five cents.

Also in 1909, on Tuesday, May 4, the Coburn Players presented As You Like It against a sylvan setting on the Ridgewood Country Club grounds. Charles Coburn played Orlando and the cast also featured in the role of Touchstone, Augustine

Duncan, brother of dancer Isadora Duncan.

The Columbia Theatre, which had a virtual monopoly on theatre and concert activity from 1900-1908, met its first real competition when the Lyric Theatre opened at 1417 Main Street under the management of D. H. Rockefeller during the State Fair on Monday, October 26, 1908. It was advertised as "The Home of Polite Vaudeville and High Class Moving Pictures (with) Beautiful Illustrated Songs Changed Every Day."⁴ The seating capacity of the Lyric was 1,000 and the theatre claimed to be well lighted and well heated. The stage was reported to be large and equipped with new and beautiful scenery. A ladies' retiring room with a maid in attendance was a specific feature.⁵ Box seats were twenty-five cents and the entire first floor had an admission scale of five and ten cents.

The 1908-1909 season was one of intensive theatrical activity. Among the many bookings at the Opera House were The Merry Widow (with a price range of 75¢ - \$2.50) which played three successful performances on Wednesday and Thursday, October 7 and 8, the Rosabel Morrison film version of Faust on Tuesday, November 24, Emma Calvé in concert on Monday, January 18, Nazimova in Ibsen's A Doll's House on Monday, March 1, Al Jolson in Lew Dockstader's Minstrels on March 19, 1909, and the Ben Greet Players in Macbeth on Thursday, March 30, 1909.

That same season the Lyric Theatre decided to play on a year-round basis because a vaudeville circuit of fifty-

⁴The State, October 24, 1908.

⁵Ibid.

two theatres in the South had been formed to guarantee year-round performances, and a third theatre was to make its appearance in Columbia.

On Monday, April 26, 1909, at eight P.M., the Grand Theatre, under the management of Carl Davenport, opened at 1621 Main Street. It was a vaudeville house which reported to offer "first run" pictures. The State, on April 28, said: "The theatre is a beauty and the bill itself is very strong."⁶ The Grand advertised its doors to be open at three P.M. each day with four shows daily. For certain bills, matinees were scheduled at 4:30 and evening performances at 8:15. Admission was five and ten cents. Throughout the theatre season of that year, the pages of the local newspapers burgeoned with news of local theatre offerings while sports reports were relegated to minor positions of prominence and length.

While Fitz Hugh Brown stayed at the helm of the Columbia Theatre for the whole period of 1900-1919, management of the other theatres changed hands several times during the two decades. Jake Wells succeeded D. H. Rockefeller as manager of the Lyric on Friday, August 20, 1909. In March of 1913, the Grand was resold to S. A. Lynch of Asheville by the Montgomery Amusement Company which had bought it from Lynch around 1910. Lynch kept the same vaudeville-movie policy of the theatre's interim owner. The Montgomery Company retained control of the Ideal Theatre which had opened at 1323 Main Street solely as

⁶Ibid., April 28, 1909

a cinema. As movies became increasingly popular, a succession of cinemas cropped up under the names of the Broadway, the Globe, the Air Dome, the Pastime, the Rialto, the Royal, the Majestic, and the Strand. The names and managements of these movie theatres changed frequently.

Despite Fitz Hugh Brown's success with the management of the Opera House which was owned by the city, he was taken to task in a printed pamphlet in 1914 by W. A. Coleman. Coleman and Dr. S. F. Killingsworth of Columbia had submitted sealed bids for leasing of the Opera House when Brown's current six-year lease expired in 1913. Brown had had to pay during that period an annual rental fee of \$1,800. Coleman and Killingsworth offered \$2,500 a year, but were turned down. They cited Brown's deficit in 1913 of \$349.84. Receipts had been \$3,477.50 and expenses, \$3,827.34. Brown was granted the license again for five years for the annual fee of \$1,810, the extra \$10 going toward expenses for lights burned in the lobby during engagements. (The city had previously paid for this.)

Coleman, in his published comments about the wrong done to him, argued that the rental didn't even cover the cost of the annual insurance premium.

As a matter of fact though, it matters not who manages the Theatre, he will get practically the same attractions as Mr. Brown gets, for there are a certain number of shows sent South each year by Klaw and Erlanger and the Shuberts, and whichever of these firms you tie up with would get the same attractions as Mr. Brown would get from either of these concerns. I don't know that the patrons are as well protected as they might be. A fact that has been called to my attention and which I notice also is that women of the "red light" district are regular patrons of the Theatre, sitting right down in the orchestra among your

wives, your daughters and your sisters. I do not know what the ordinance covering this is, but it seems to me if they have the right to attend the Theatre there should be some restricted space set aside for them.⁷

While Coleman's reply seems petulant, his observation about the Shubert and Klaw and Erlanger control over the Opera House attractions was founded on fact. Even though Brown had proved his managerial acumen, he still depended on these powerful organizations to keep the theatre supplied with a full season.

Coleman's seemingly unrelated comments about the moral tone of some of those attending the theatre had been voiced before, and a Community League was formed in 1916 to take up the issue of harmful influence of plays and films. It is doubtful, however, that attendance during this period was seriously affected by those who would have purged Columbia of any segment of its theatre-going audience or of its theatrical activity in general.

The seasons between 1909-1912 continued to be active seasons at the Opera House. From August 27, 1909 to January 1, 1910, manager Brown had a total of twenty-six separate plays, including those with such stars as Ethel Barrymore and Fritzi Scheff. The Columbia Theatre, as the Opera House continued to be called, had a consistent array of personalities on its stage. On Tuesday, November 14, 1911, the famous athlete Ty Cobb starred in The College Widow. On Saturday, December 9

⁷W. A. Coleman, Report on Opera House and City Hall for 1913 by W. F. Steiglitz--Councilman Superintendent in Charge. (Columbia: Dupre Printing Co., 1914), p. 7.

of the same year, Nat C. Goodwin was the stellar performer for The Captain, a play which listed in its credits the name of Daniel A. Reed as Kwan Sing, a Chinese boy. At that time, no one knew that Reed would be back in Columbia as a soldier during the war and would eventually become the Town Theatre's first director in 1919. Other famous names of the 1911-1912 season were Otto Kruger, Fritzi Scheff, Sydney Greenstreet, Viola Allen, Billie Burke, and Mary Boland.

It had become increasingly apparent, with the enormous popularity of films, that this new art form was going to affect the theatre situation, not only in Columbia but throughout the nation. All three theatres booking live performers in Columbia found that the easiest way to keep operating on dark theatre days was to book films. Films were cheaper than personal appearances, could be run continuously when live acts were not available to share the bill, and films had the built-in advantage of being a new curiosity, a new vogue.

By 1913, the Lyric had changed over almost completely to films. Admission was still five and ten cents. The Grand continued operating as a combination vaudeville house and cinema, with at least three shows daily. Matinee admissions were ten and twenty cents and the evening price range was ten to thirty cents. An added inducement that year at the Grand was the offering of S and H Green Stamps (five for each twenty-cent ticket).

The Columbia Theatre, in addition to its showing of Edison Talking Pictures along with plays, maintained its

policy of stellar live attractions, one of the most outstanding in 1913 being Weber and Fields. The Opera House was the largest theatre in the city and usually obtained the most spectacular of the Hollywood epics, but the Ideal Theatre, now a member of the K-B chain of theatres, astounded Columbians that year with Minnie Maddern Fiske's Tess of the D'Urbervilles and the five-reeler From The Manger To The Cross, a film which had been made for the staggering sum of \$100,000. By 1913, the movies had become sufficiently established to warrant a regular column in The State.

Time after time, Fitz Hugh Brown negotiated contracts which made Columbia a consistent leading southern theatrical center. On Tuesday, February 17, 1914, the first American tour of the Stratford-Upon-Avon Players brought The Merry Wives of Windsor to the stage of the Opera House. In its cast, listed as "Fenton, a young gentleman," was Basil Rathbone. The grand coup of the 1915-1916 season was a three-day engagement November 22-24 of D. W. Griffith's monumental Birth of a Nation. The price range for the film was 25¢ - \$1.00 for matinees and 50¢ - \$2.00 for evening showings. The film, advertised boldly in the press, claimed to have cost \$500,000, and to have 5,000 scenes, 18,000 people, and 3,000 horses.

The competitive nature of films, as well as their epic scope, doubtlessly contributed to the number of stage epics that appeared for a short time in the mid-teens. The Garden of Allah, which played in Columbia on Thursday, Decem-

ber 30, 1915, had a cast of one hundred and used a special train of six cars, four of which carried the scenery. One of its highly publicized features was a realistic Sahara sand-storm.

Perhaps the most exciting of the thespians to perform at the Opera House in the last years of Brown's management was Sarah Bernhardt who appeared on Friday, January 12, 1917. In an evening of four short works, Mme. Bernhardt played in La Mort de Cléopâtre, Du Théâtre Au Champ D'Honneur, and the final act of Camille. She did not appear in the short play Rosalie which was presented just before the Dumas segment. In many ways, her performance was symbolic, since it came at the twilight of ^{her} own career and in the twilight days of the "road" era.

By the time the 1920's had arrived, the Columbia Theatre had resumed the same position it enjoyed at the time of its opening twenty years before as virtually the sole site of live theatre entertainment in Columbia. The Liberty Theatre existed briefly at Camp Jackson during the war and afterwards; several other moving picture houses had been built; but the Columbia Theatre was still the "grande dame" of the entertainment houses and offered the best in first-run films and legitimate and vaudeville attractions. In 1931, the Opera House was renamed the Carolina Theatre and became the first-run cinema in the city's group of movie houses until it was torn down to make room for the Wade Hampton Hotel prior to World War II. Although the old Opera House had been converted

exclusively to movies in 1931, it enjoyed one final glittering night as a theatre when it hosted, on New Year's Eve of that year, Maude Adams in a triumphant return to the stage after a fifteen-year retirement.

While Columbia became one of the best road tour towns in the southeast between 1900 and the start of World War I, it did not owe its phenomenal theatre activity solely to enterprising local theatre managers. In great measure, South Carolinians benefited from the Columbia Theatre's alliance with the Theatre Syndicate. Formed in 1895-1896 by Sam Nixon and Fred Zimmerman of Philadelphia and Charles Frohman, Al Hayman, Marc Klaw, and Abraham Erlanger of New York, the Syndicate controlled both theatres and booking agencies, and in addition, produced many of their own attractions. The organization had come about to help bring chaos out of the inevitable confusion of single theatre agents flooding into New York seeking to plan seasons for their theatres by negotiations with individual producers. Idealistically, it was the answer for assuring a theatre manager a satisfactory season and at the same time a definite way of guaranteeing a touring company sufficient bookings to make a tour worthwhile financially.

The Syndicate reached its greatest era of prosperity from 1900-1910. The following statistics indicate the significant changes that took place. Between 1900-1904, the average number of new plays produced in New York each year was 72; the average number of plays on tour each year was 308. Between 1915-1919, the average number of new plays produced in New York

each year was 124; the average number of plays on tour each year was 72.⁸

The Syndicate had been criticized by such well-known writers, actors, and producers as James A. Herne, Richard Mansfield, James O'Neill, and David Belasco. Belasco, one of the few major independent producers, maintained that the Syndicate's greed and lack of culture destroyed competition and originality. Klaw refuted this by saying that the Syndicate helped to organize drama in the United States, elevated production standards, fostered better playwriting, familiarized America with the best works of European dramatists, and encouraged native productions.

In any case, the failure of the touring companies did not come about entirely as a result of managerial strife. Other contributing factors were the increased cost of rail travel, bad box office caused by attempts to economize on the quality of actors and productions, and a growing tendency among younger actors to regard all territory outside of Manhattan as barbarian country. The most important reason, however, was competition of the movies.

In 1900, the new toy called motion pictures was considered only a curiosity which posed no threat to live theatre. A scant thirteen years later, an advertisement appearing in The State gives testimony to a different fact:

After all it's the pictures that count!
That's why the Pastime is crowded Everyday.

⁸These figures are quoted by Kenneth Macgowan in Footlights Across America (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1929), p.72.

But Listen: The crowds you see standing in the Pastime lobby waiting to see the pictures prove that the Pictures are worth waiting to see.⁹

Movies, because of their ubiquity, accessibility, inexpensive admission prices, and obvious advantages of spectacle and closeness made possible by the giant screen, offered the wide range of entertainment with which the theatre touring companies could not realistically compete, and so professional live theatre was gradually squeezed out in Columbia as it was all across the country.

⁹The State, April 22, 1913.

CHAPTER II

THE BEGINNINGS OF COMMUNITY

THEATRE IN COLUMBIA

How does any community organization begin? Usually, there must exist a need or an idea, or a combination of the two. Columbia's Town Theatre is no exception. The need was realistic. There had never been a permanent civic theatre organization in South Carolina's capital city, and live dramatic performances, by the end of World War I, continued to be available only through the occasional college productions, through the plays that appeared on the stage at Camp Jackson's Liberty Theatre, or through the gradually diminishing touring companies at the Columbia Theatre (Opera House). Along with an acknowledged need, the idea for a community theatre was supplied by a young sergeant by the name of Daniel A. Reed who was attached to the 156th Depot Brigade at Camp Jackson.

Reed, an actor who had made his professional debut while still a child, in October, 1905, with Nat C. Goodwin in The American Citizen at San Francisco's Van Ness Theatre, discussed with a few Columbians in the spring of 1919, the practicability of establishing a community theatre in Columbia. He was invited to elaborate on his idea at the April

meeting of the Columbia Drama League¹ which met at the home of Mrs. A. R. Taber on Pendleton Street.² The idea for a civic theatre was enthusiastically received but Reed was mustered out of service shortly afterwards and left Columbia to accept a job with the National Amusement Company, Inc., at the New Majestic Theatre in Birmingham, Alabama before any concrete arrangements could be made.

In a letter dated May 23, 1919, to John D. Neal, an assistant community organizer with the War Camp Community Service, Frank Bradley, an English actor who was then director of theatrical activities at Camp Jackson, set forth a more concrete proposal.³ Bradley suggested a stage society made up of about twenty "playing" members who would also be "pupils" paying \$25 for a season of twelve weeks. A membership of five hundred members paying five dollars per season was to be the goal. Bradley further envisioned that the society would exist jointly in Columbia and Charleston to make the effort financially feasible and that the two towns would exchange visits of the two companies, making eight tickets available (two shows produced annually in each town with a season member receiving two tickets per show.) He proposed a budget of \$3,500, of

¹This organization was afterwards called the Columbia Drama Club and has continued in existence to the present time.

²The State, April 10, 1919. Reed read Lord Dunsany's play Gods of the Mountain as a highlight of the meeting.

³Bradley's letter has been kept with the minutes of the Columbia Stage Society.

which \$1,000 would have been his fee. Neal took Bradley to present his plan to a later meeting of the Columbia Drama League at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Julius Taylor [Margaret (Taylor) Martin]. The group endorsed the idea but it was later abandoned in favor of the less complicated plan that ultimately evolved.

With the War Camp Community Service as the organizing agent, the first meeting of the Columbia Stage Society was held at 6:30 P.M. on June 24, 1919, in the Victory Club Room of the Arcade Building with the following Columbians in attendance: Mrs. W. W. Ball, Miss Marjorie Cottam, Mr. and Mrs. J. T. Cozart, Miss Christine Davis, Miss Martha Dwight, Miss Pinckney Lee Estes, W. P. Etchison, Mrs. W. C. Farber, Mrs. R. W. Gibbes, B. P. McMaster, Mrs. William R. Moody, Mr. and Mrs. John D. Neal, F. L. Poindexter, Miss Mayo Rees, Mrs. W. C. Summer, Miss Frances Sylvan, Morton Visanska, and E. R. Walton.⁴ John Neal called the meeting to order and W. P. Etchison was elected temporary chairman. Neal outlined the suggested purpose, aims, and financing of the organization as well as the importance of securing a director for the fall. His proposed budget of \$5,030 was based on the Society's use of the Columbia Theatre as the site of the group's productions.

At a second meeting called three days later at the community club rooms of the Manson Building, Mrs. W. W. Ball was elected vice-president, Frances Sylvan, secretary, and Morton Visanska, treasurer. The committee appointed to draw

⁴Columbia Stage Society, Minutes, June 24, 1919.

up a constitution was composed of Miss Pinckney Estes, Miss Mary Hennegan, J. T. Cozart, and J. D. Neal. Since many members of the new Society were also active in such city-wide cultural organizations as the Read-a-bit Club, Afternoon Music Club, Columbia Art Association, the Drama League, the Business Women's Club, and the New Century Club, it was decided that these organizations be canvassed in hopes that one hundred per cent of their memberships would be added to the rolls of the Stage Society. Canvassers were selected for each group.⁵

Moving with exceptional zeal, the Stage Society met again five days later on July 2 at the Victory Club. At that meeting Henry W. Fair was elected president and committees on publicity, house-to-house canvassing, and director recruitment were appointed. It was announced that one hundred and thirty memberships had been pledged by that date.⁶

At the same meeting the constitution and its by-laws were presented and adopted. The stated objectives of the Stage Society were:

- First: To foster a community spirit, social intercourse and active participation in the work of the Society;
- Second: To encourage and develop instrumental, vocal and dramatic talent of the city and outlying communities;
- Third: To furnish the best forms of instrumental, vocal and dramatic entertainment for the members of the Society.⁷

The constitution stated that any white person was eligible to membership upon payment of dues and further provid-

⁵Society, Minutes, June 27, 1919.

⁶Ibid., July 2, 1919.

⁷Society, Constitution, adopted July 2, 1919.

ed for monthly programs of not less than one and a half hour's duration with various forms of music and drama. Participants in the programs were not required to be members of the Society, but casts of major productions had to hold Society memberships. The only salary to be paid by the Society was that of the director.⁸

As early as June 11, John Neal had written to Daniel Reed in Alabama to suggest the possibility of his returning as director, if the community theatre project were ever formally initiated. Martha Dwight, at that time a staff member of The State, Columbia's daily morning newspaper, had kept Reed's name before the group even after he had left Columbia, and Neal's letter mentions Miss Dwight's high recommendation as one of the major reasons for writing.⁹

Reed wrote back a long and glowing letter on June 14, stating:

In the months that I was in the army, I often thought of a civic theatre for Columbia because of its significance as a center of the eastern section of the south. You must understand that it is difficult for me to talk in a letter of so ideal a thing as a municipal theatre project, but my experience with organizations of this kind keeps the need of practical and business-like handling constantly in mind, so if I appear to soar in my plans know that I am really establishing concrete methods for the security of them all the time.¹⁰

Reed went on to state, "My present position is not pleasing to me because of its absolute commercialism . . ."¹¹

⁸Ibid.

⁹The Neal-Reed correspondence has been kept with the Minutes of the Society.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid.

and he consequently proposed a \$2,400 salary, based on twelve months or a \$2,000 salary based on ten months. Neal wrote Reed back after the Society had happily agreed to employ him and suggested that Reed draw up his own contract for the \$2,400 figure. The young actor did, reserving the right for lectures and readings so long as they did not interfere with his duties at the Theatre. With the signed contract, Daniel A. Reed became the first director of the organization and would eventually, in two separate terms, complete a total of ten years in that position.

The summer of 1919 continued to be a busy one for all parties involved in the new theatre undertaking. The Stage Society met weekly. By July 30, the membership rolls had passed the 400 mark. In an effort to further increase the number, Saturday, August 2 was set aside as Stage Society Day to canvass two of the Main Street theatres for memberships. Reed had left his job in Alabama after the contract negotiations and had gone to Illinois to marry Isadora Bennett, a reporter on the Chicago Daily News. The new director had promised to be in Columbia on August 15, and when he and his new bride arrived, they found a solid core of dedicated workers ready and anxious to begin. For them the "play" was now literally the thing uppermost in mind.

On September 4, Reed addressed the Columbia Stage Society for the first time. Still less than three months old, the group had accomplished the tasks of organization, completion of a constitution, the hiring of a director, and the

enlistment of a membership of 502. Impressed by the fervor and commitment of all those who had brought the Society into existence, the director spoke loftily:

Rid yourselves of all heavy thought at this moment; forget for the time being everything that is crass and crude in the entertainment line in theatre--turn to the great events--those great single performances--where either a play or an actress or actor made an impression on you that will live so long as memory lives. Do not consider our Society with patronizing or indifferent air--Just be an audience for the time being--and remember that a good audience is passive--just passive--never active--never active until it leaves the theatre as a mass and begins to think and talk for itself.¹²

After discussing the fact that good showmanship was the key to theatrical success, meaning " . . . good seats--good advertising--and then good sense spoken and interpreted on the stage, either in a humorous or serious way . . . ,"¹³ Reed warned the membership not to think of art as a literary discussion over afternoon tea and not to think of beauty in terms of millinery and statues.

Whether we call it art--or play--or work--or growth--it will be the same thing--It's going to be a certain thing anyway. Conditions will make it what it will be eventually, and of course, what we have to give When you think beauty think color and texture and quality --cleanliness is beauty. Purity of tone is beauty--evenness of feeling is beauty--laughter is beauty and so are tears . . . tears that flow from ugliness are in beauty's disappointment--tragedy is beauty's proof.

Here we are starting the career of a theatre--strong in the desire to bring to Columbia something it needs and has never had in exactly the way we can give it--must we not be careful in the way we found this project--must we not understand exactly what we are doing.¹⁴

It was apparent from the time of Reed's arrival that

¹²Reed's original typewritten copy of this address is a part of the Society's Minutes.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid.

the Stage Society's plays would not fare well in the Columbia Theatre. The new and unproven organization could not hope to fill the large auditorium and there were the realistic problems of expense in outfitting a production on such a large stage as well as the question of rehearsal time since the theatre was almost constantly booked with films or touring shows. The solution came from necessity. Reed designed a portable proscenium stage arrangement which could be used wherever the Society could find a place to perform.

The Society began rehearsals for its first production in Satterlee Hall of Trinity Episcopal Church and ultimately presented its debut performance on October 9 in Columbia High School.

Civic interest in the new Stage Society had been given a significant boost by Reed's presence and by the obvious determination with which the group was forging ahead. The State noted in an editorial the week before the first production:

War conditions have made both necessary and possible the formation of a community theatre in Columbia.

Today there is no opportunity for our people to see a real play in a theatre of this city. If we wish to see a play, we have to go to the Camp where Uncle Sam has kindly provided what our own community has not yet had the spirit to provide, or to maintain when it possessed--a real theatre.

.
But the real success of our community theatre depends, of course, upon ourselves, rather than upon the actors. They need our help, our inspiration and--our applause.¹⁵

Reed did not lack helpers in preparing for the opening. J. G. Heise, a professional scenic painter, worked with Mrs.

¹⁵The State, October 4, 1919.

Reed and Mrs. Marcellus Whaley of the Art League on the set. George Radcliffe, formerly a stage technician at the Columbia Theatre, provided canvasses and other materials at reduced prices, and H. L. Hennies of the Columbia Theatre built an adjustable switchboard which was as easily portable as the stage itself.

On opening night, President Fair conducted a brief business meeting prior to the performance of the plays, with reports by John Neal and Morton Visanska on the history and financial status of the Society to date. At the suggestion of Dr. Julius Taylor, a play selection committee was appointed, the members being Mrs. D. S. Pope, Dr. Taylor, and Reed.

The two one-acts chosen for the initial production comprised Alice Brown's Joint Owners in Spain and Lady Gregory's The Rising of the Moon. The latter play, though listed second on the program, was performed first. In it were W. K. Young, E. Z. Jones, E. H. Salmon, and director Reed. Joint Owners in Spain featured Miss Florence Olvey, Mrs. E. D. Hodge, Mrs. Hassel Ivey, and Miss Margery Luther.¹⁶ Between the plays musical selections were presented by baritone Maurice Matteson. The musical interlude set a precedent which was followed for many years.

The State on the following morning gave a glowing review of the Society's maiden effort:

Columbia has the beginning of a real community theatre. It isn't a building--yet. It is better than that--it's

¹⁶Society, Program and Minutes, October 9, 1919.

an idea, a vision, a confidence and a bit of experience. And in a material way it's about a thousand dollars' worth of artistic and pleasing scenery and false stage that can be hauled around and set up in whatever hall it seems good to the Columbia stage society to give a theatrical performance. But the best requisite of which Columbia professes toward a community theatre is a professional director who knows definitely what he is about and understands how best to approach his goal. Daniel A. Reed is appreciated in Columbia this morning not only as an actor of charm and subtlety such as he proved himself last night, but as a person of executive ability, of professional astuteness and artistic purpose.¹⁷

Even though the new Stage Society had been formally christened with its first production bill and been termed a success by reviewers and public alike, the cash receipts for the plays, performed only one time, were \$39.00.¹⁸

The first year for the Columbia Stage Society was perhaps one of its most trying. Having no permanent home, the group was constantly on the move. The November production was presented at Columbia High School, but for the group's first full-length production, The Misleading Lady, Reed wanted a theatre. Rental at the Columbia Theatre was too high, but the Society was offered the use of the thousand-seat Pastime Theatre, then owned by L. T. Lester, Jr. The Pastime, undergoing a refurbishing after a fire, was given free--except for running expenses and cleaning--and was the site of the Society's next four productions: The Misleading Lady, two bills of one-acts, and The Unchastened Woman.

After The Unchastened Woman in March, 1920, the Pastime was no longer available and the Society, now with a membership

¹⁷The State, October 10, 1919.

¹⁸Society, Financial Reports, 1919.

of about 600, again looked to the possibility of using the Columbia Theatre but there was a plan afoot at the time to sell the Municipal Building which housed the theatre. Even though the City Council agreed to hold off making a decision about selling the building until the Society could make a specific proposition, no arrangement was ever consummated.

The Society's April production of two one-acts was presented at Craven Hall and the May full-length production of Clyde Fitch's Beau Brummel was staged at Camp Jackson's Liberty Theatre with a later matinee actually performed in the often-suggested Columbia Theatre. The final production of the first season, Prunella, was given the last two days of June on the Athletic Field at the University of South Carolina.

Decision To Build

At the first annual business meeting of the Stage Society at the end of the season, the group discarded any further plans for renting the Columbia Theatre or possibly renovating Craven Hall by deciding to build its own theatre. Members present subscribed \$5,400 towards financing the project and Henry W. Fair was made head of a committee to canvass the other members and to select a site. George Coffin Taylor headed a committee that proposed the incorporation of the Stage Society and the selling of stock in the new Theatre which was estimated to cost \$25,000 - \$30,000.¹⁹

On July 30, 1920, the Columbia Stage Company was in-

¹⁹Society, Annual Report, 1919-1920.

incorporated with a capital stock of \$40,000. John M. Cozart was named president; August Kohn, chairman of the Building Committee; and A. S. Manning, chairman of the Finance Committee. Other officers of the Board were Morton Visanska, vice president, and Mrs. R. W. Gibbes, secretary and treasurer.²⁰

The par value of each share of stock was \$100 and was payable as the Board of the Company might direct. It was provided that all outstanding stock of the Stage Company might be bought by the Stage Society at any time at a price of \$110 per share. The Company hoped to build a seven hundred-seat theatre and would derive its dividends from a lease to the Stage Society which would in turn gain its income from membership subscriptions and admission fees. This arrangement, while eventually making possible the Society's goal, was in later years to provide a legal situation where it would be nearly impossible to sell the Theatre.

The site selected for the new Theatre was a lot at 1012 Sumter Street about halfway between the State Capitol grounds and the University, the distance from either being no more than a city block. Purchased for \$11,000, the property was 49' x 180' and had on it an old two-story frame house.²¹

²⁰Society, Archives, 1920. The Directors of the Stage Company were: W. W. Ball, John M. Cozart, Gustaf Sylvan, A. S. Manning, Mrs. W. W. Ball, Mrs. Beverly Sloan, Mrs. T. I. Weston, Mrs. Robert Gibbes, George C. Taylor, Morton Visanska, August Kohn, and William Anderson Clarkson.

²¹Ibid.

By September 15, 1920, \$27,000 had been subscribed to the Company with \$10,000 already paid in. That summer, the boll weevil damage to the cotton crop was severe and cash and promises dwindled drastically. At a meeting on September 29, it was decided to delay the building of the new Theatre until a larger amount of money had been paid in. Once again, negotiations were begun with the Columbia Theatre to stage six Society productions there during 1920-21.²²

Reed thought the idea was impracticable and one night at the home of theatre friends he stated, "I don't see anything to do but give the whole thing up and go . . . unless that house on our lot at 1012 Sumter Street could be made into a temporary theatre."²³ Arthur W. Hamby, a Columbia architect, was consulted that night, and the next morning he met the group at the Sumter Street house.

When the six hundred-member Stage Society opened its second season with The Gypsy Trail on December 15, 1920, the production was presented in the old house. Arthur Hamby had donated his plans for the renovation free and the whole remodelling cost had been about \$3,000, a good part of which had gone for a giant truss to support the roof. Seating three hundred people in cane bottom or folding chairs, the Town Theatre, as it had recently come to be called, had a stage that was 27' wide, 18' deep, and 16' high.²⁴ The

²²Society, Minutes, September 29, 1920.

²³Society, Archives, recalled by Martha Dwight.

²⁴Society, Archives.

Stage Company charged a rental fee to the Stage Society which had reduced its season ticket rate for the season from eight to six dollars because the price had been based on the assumption that the Society would be performing in the more expensive Columbia Theatre.

The Town Theatre in its new temporary home came to be, in a very short time, Columbia's leading center of cultural activity. In addition to the full and ambitious seasons of plays presented by Daniel Reed in the four years the Society used the old house as a theatre, the building was the site of meetings by many civic groups and became the popular locale for poetry readings by such poets as Carl Sandburg, Vachel Lindsey, and Padraic Colum. Violin virtuoso Efrem Zimbalist played a recital there and the small Theatre was also the scene of a touring opera company, Tony Sarg's marionettes, and most importantly for Columbia's cultural development, it was the site of the presentation of the first original plays staged by the Stage Society. It was also the place where many Columbians first had their taste of live theatre via the Junior Stage Society which Reed established there.

Daniel Reed, in his first year in Columbia, had won exceptional praise and respect from his colleagues and from Columbians in general. His salary was raised for the 1920-21 season to \$3,500 but when the season ended with a \$1,000 deficit, he voluntarily reduced his own income to \$3,000 for 1921-22. He suggested the same figure for 1922-23, with the proviso that it be raised to \$3,500 should the season end up

with a sufficient profit.²⁵

With a home base, the Stage Society began to formulate some of the policies it would keep over the years. In the first several seasons, productions were scheduled over a three-day period to include three evening performances and a matinee--usually at three or four o'clock. Some of the one-act bills were scheduled for shorter runs. The box office generally opened at ten o'clock on the first day of performances. Printed programs were simple one-sheet playbills with only the essential cast and crew information.

Immediately prior to the third season, the second in the temporary Theatre, the Stage Company spent about \$1,000²⁶ improving the building. The Theatre was painted green, and a tan and black awning was added over the steps. Inside, the floor was raked, and theatre seats were added. During that season, with a goal still set for one thousand members, the Society enlisted about nine-hundred and the membership fee was reduced to five dollars. The largest item in the proposed \$7,000 budget for the season, outside of the director's salary, was \$600 for insurance and taxes. This item, janitorial help, utilities, and office expense (another \$450, approximately) were budget costs which had not been borne the first season and which had been partly responsible, along with a slightly abbreviated season, for the deficit the second year.²⁷

²⁵Ibid., Reed Correspondence.

²⁶Ibid., 1921-22.

²⁷Society, Financial Reports, 1921-22.

Skillful management, added income from bookings and rental of the Theatre for attractions other than those of the Society, and an increased membership erased most of the deficit by the end of 1922.

In his director's report at the end of the 1921-22 season, Reed stated:

. . . [This] season has expressed more fully than any other what the policy of the Stage Society is. ENJOYMENT AND ENTERTAINMENT WITH ARTISTIC EXPERIMENT AND ENLIGHTENMENT.

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The word amateur--and the word "little" must not be used by members. We are experimentors[sic],--some of us have had a number of years in stage experience,--our casts are prepared as carefully as any cast of actors in the professional world,--and it has been proven that amateurs possess as much acting talent "pro-rata" as professionals do--so in either case the performance finally seen by the audience rests with the ability of the director.²⁸

Reed's goal was still a repertory company of regular actors. "When we get this we can represent the State, and it is our duty to strike at this end, for through it alone can the Town Theatre be perpetuated."²⁹ In two distinct ways, Reed extended the Town Theatre's influence over the state during that season. He had initiated the first of many tours with the opening production, Booth Tarkington's Clarence, which he took to Coker College in Hartsville and to Batesburg-Leesville High School. Secondly, he had put the Theatre into prominence by the establishment of the statewide playwriting contest, with the winning dramas to be premiered at the Theatre

²⁸Society, Archives, 1921-22.

²⁹Ibid.

and prize money to be offered by The State.

After two years in the temporary building, the director suggested that the playing season run from mid-October to mid-May, the limits on both ends determined largely by hot weather. Electric fans had been necessary for Alice in Wonderland, presented the final two days in June of the previous year. These season limits have remained generally in force, for the same reason, to the present time.

Business Manager

Although the director had had a part-time paid assistant in the technical areas of production from the first season, he carried on all the other business aspects, in addition to his directing responsibilities. Reed's brief illness at the beginning of the fourth season (which had postponed the season's opening until November 1, 1922) and the inauguration of the Junior Stage Society with its first production in January, 1923, were doubtless strong influences in the Society's decision on February 22, 1923 to employ a business manager in order to leave Reed free for production.³⁰ When the fifth season opened that fall, the decision was carried out. Miss Beulah Hall, who had played the lead in the Society's first Pulitzer Prize-play, Why Marry?, became the Theatre's first business manager.

Because the Stage Company did not wish to begin construction on the new building until the entire capital sum was on hand, the fifth year was played in the temporary Theatre

³⁰Society, Minutes, February 22, 1923.

with season tickets again set at five dollars for six full-length plays and four one-act bills. The projected budget was \$7,500.³¹

The season got off to an excellent start with Kaufman and Connelly's Dulcy which had just appeared in Columbia in a film version. After a bill of two North Carolina Playmakers' one-acts, Reed's own adaptation of A Christmas Carol, Oscar Wilde's Lady Windermere's Fan, and a solo recital by Ruth Draper, Columbians were dismayed at a headline that greeted them in The State on the morning of February 27, 1924: "Town Theatre May Be Closed."³² The city building inspector indicated the building was not fit to be used as a public playhouse and recommended that it be closed.

The Stage Society and Stage Company had always operated on the premise that the wooden structure was only a temporary playhouse, and were aware that the city had made a special concession to allow the building to be used as a public gathering place from the very beginning. Now that the future use of the building seemed doubtful, there was a flurry of activity which equalled that of the busy summer of 1919 when the Society was organized. Two days after the notice appeared in the newspaper, both Columbia dailies, The State and The Columbia Record, joined together to start a campaign to raise \$12,000 for a new theatre "of simple construction" to be erected on the Company's Sumter

³¹The State, September 9, 1923.

³²Ibid., February 27, 1924.

Street property.³³ On March 2, The State reported that funds were already arriving at its offices and in the same edition, University Professor George A. Wauchope, head of the English Department and an ardent supporter of the drama group, wrote an open letter praising the Stage Society and suggested that the new Charleston Drama League (which Daniel Reed had helped to organize) would snap Reed up in a minute if a theatre were not built in Columbia.³⁴ On March 4, the Drama Club met and Wauchope urged the group to get behind the theatre project. That same night at a joint meeting of the Stage Society and Stage Company, the Company decided to reopen its books and sell new stock at \$100 per share with new stockholders being on a parity with the old stockholders. The goal as stated at that meeting was to construct a fireproof theatre seating five hundred.³⁵

The next day at a joint inspection by city and Society, with architect Arthur Hamby representing the Society, it was decided that the small balcony in the Theatre would be closed and that a row of seats leading to an exit on the north side of the building would be removed. This left a seating capacity of two hundred and twenty.³⁶ The changes, thus effected, guaranteed use of the building until the end of the season.

³³Ibid., February 29, 1924.

³⁴Ibid., March 2, 1924.

³⁵Ibid., March 4, 5, 1924.

³⁶Ibid., March 6, 1924.

For the indefatigable Reed, the month of March, 1924, gave further testimony to the Town Theatre's widening circle of influence and to his increasing value to the Stage Society. Reed had gone to Charleston just as the death knell for the Theatre building had been sounded to begin the direction of the Poetry Society of South Carolina's production of Shaw's Candida. He revived his October production of Dulcy to be shown at the Theatre on March 13 for the State Teachers' Meeting, played Mr. Pim in Mr. Pim Passes By which opened March 18 for four performances, and visited Savannah, Georgia the last week of March to help organize that city's Town Theatre.

The spring months were a fervent time for the Stage Society. Hamby's sketch of his proposed 495-seat new theatre appeared in The State on March 30. The architect envisioned a brick facade with Lexington granite trimmings and ornate grillwork. The stage was to be 23' x 47' with a proscenium arch 20' wide and 15' high. The plans further called for a center aisle, two side aisles, and four exits on the south side. A building committee composed of T. I. Weston, Dr. Robert W. Gibbes, and director Reed was announced at the same time.³⁷

During April, May, and June while the Society was finishing up its fifth year of operation with seven original works on the boards, an intensive promotional campaign was

³⁷Ibid., March 30, 1924.

being carried on to obtain funds for the new Theatre building. Letters from such prominent citizens as Josiah Morse and William Spenser Currell, both of the University, and Helen Kohn Hennig, Columbia historian, praising the work of the Town Theatre appeared in The State.³⁸ Mrs. Hennig pointed out that the Town Theatre had been visited by theatre groups from Washington, D. C., Baltimore, Lynchburg and Richmond, Virginia, Atlanta, and New Orleans for the purpose of studying operation methods and organization, and that the Theatre had received nationwide recognition when Daniel Reed had been asked to lecture on make-up at the national Drama League convention in Chicago. She further stated:

Columbia's Stage Society has been the impetus for all this constructive work in dramatics. We cannot afford to drop by the wayside and thus announce to the world that we lack perseverance with which to back our vision. Columbia has been the foremost city in the development of a tremendous movement, a movement which is going to make the South famous. She must hold her place as the leader. In order to do that we must have a permanent, a brick, a well planned theatre.³⁹

In addition to the written expressions of support, a system of merchant coupons was devised to raise money. The coupons were to be given by merchants "equivalent to stock purchased by them, these coupons to be bought by members of the Stage Society and friends of the institution . . . good in trade at any of the stores participating in the plan."⁴⁰ The coupons were placed on sale at five dollars per book at a special window at the National Loan and Exchange Bank. Of the \$26,000 raised for

³⁸Ibid., May 7, May 13, June 3, 1924.

³⁹Ibid., June 3, 1924.

⁴⁰The Columbia Record, May 28, 1924.

the building, \$6,000 was subscribed in trade coupons, \$2,000 in building materials, and \$1,000 in services, and the rest in cash.⁴¹ While the Society would have preferred, doubtless, that coupons be exchanged for materials that could be used in the new Theatre, the books were designed to be exchanged as the purchaser wished. The expiration for the coupons was set at June 1, 1925.⁴²

By June 15, \$17,000 had been subscribed toward the building with a total of \$25,000 being sought. W. Bedford Moore, treasurer of the Stage Company and director of the building campaign, offered a challenge to the Society by pledging a personal guarantee of \$1,000, provided that ninety per cent of the Society membership (excluding students) would buy a fractional share of newly issued stock (\$10, \$25, \$50). A campaign supper was held at the Jefferson Hotel on June 16 to further raise funds.⁴³

On June 26, before the curtain went up on the temporary Theatre's final production, an original vaudeville called Home Brew in a second edition by Daniel Reed, Moore announced to the audience that enough money had been pledged to build the new Theatre. After long and sustained applause, he added that a few hundred dollars still needed to be pledged and that the coupons must be sold by the fall.⁴⁴

Symbolically, the vaudeville production had a final

⁴¹Company, Brochure Advertisement, 1924-25.

⁴²The State, May 27, 28, 1924.

⁴³Ibid., June 15, 1924, and lecture notes of Moore in the 1924 Scrapbook.

⁴⁴Ibid., June 27, 1924.

segment entitled ^{The} "Wedding Pageant" which referred to the marriage of Columbia to Art. It was the plan to have a similar sketch at the new Theatre's opening in the fall showing the wedding pair arriving in their new home. Home Brew closed on Saturday, June 28, 1924, and the wrecking of the old Theatre was begun Monday, June 30.

As Reed and his theatre workers packed the Society's equipment, barely one step ahead of the wrecking crew, part of the original portable stage built for the initial production in 1919 was discovered, a relic of the days when the Society had no home. That would not be the case again during the next half century. The materials in the old wooden Theatre were bought by John Hughes Cooper and hauled to Lakeview where they were destined to be part of the remodelling of an old mill into a tearoom.⁴⁵ After five years of existence, the Stage Society had produced more than fifty plays, an additional three productions by the Junior Stage Society, and well over three-hundred Columbians had appeared on its various stages. The first phase of its development, and probably its most difficult, was over.

⁴⁵Ibid., July 1, 1924.

CHAPTER III

THE EMERGENCE OF A PERMANENT HOME.

THEATRE POLICIES AND INNOVATIONS

When the Stage Society met on September 23, 1924, at Columbia High School to elect officers and formulate plans for the coming season, the foundation and framework for the new Theatre were nearly finished.¹ W. Bedford Moore, Jr., as director of the building campaign and Dr. Robert W. Gibbes, chairman of the building committee, had worked diligently throughout the summer to get the building constructed as quickly as possible. The next morning, The State reproduced photographs of Harry Jenkins' painting of the projected building and Emmett R. Conniffe's drawing of the new coat of arms.² The logo, which still is the emblem of the Stage Society, was drawn from an original sketch by director Reed, and shows a small town seen in perspective through an arch of foliage made by the Palmetto (state tree) on one side and the traditional water oak and Spanish moss on the other. The Town Theatre at the center ties together church, house of state, skyscraper and homes.³

¹Society, card to members. The contract had been awarded July 17 to the Mechanics Construction Co. of 1327 Main Street.

²The State, September 24, 1924. Jenkins was an architectural artist from Chicago. Conniffe was from Columbia.

³Ibid.

That fall, while the building was still under construction, the Stage Society, with new business manager Esther Bauer, was trying to enlist 1,000 members for an eight-play season.⁴ Although the building was promised by November 20, and no later than December 1, bad weather hampered progress and carpenters and electricians were still busy in the Theatre at seven o'clock on the evening of December 18, a scant hour and a half before the official opening took place.

The cast and crew of George Kelly's The Torchbearers, had had to rehearse much of the time in the cold and amid the accompanying cacophony of hammers and saws. Prior to the farce which satirized amateur acting and producing, there was a brief sketch called "A Curtain Raiser." The program termed it:

A fantastic prelude to the long life of this institution at which time many elements of the world of the theatre appear as phantoms and finally take their places in the walls to give unceasing inspiration to the creative work that is to be presented here.⁵

Director Reed's infant son, Jared, made his debut in the skit which symbolized that Columbia's dramatic effort was really just getting started.

The dedicatory address was given by Hatcher Hughes, who was at that time an assistant to Brander Matthews at Columbia University. Hughes, an apt choice for the occasion,

⁴Ibid.

⁵Program, The Torchbearers.

was a native of Cleveland County, North Carolina, and had lived at Tirzah in nearby York County, South Carolina, until entering the University of North Carolina. His interest in Columbia's new Theatre building, therefore, was more than incidental. Further, he had been named the 1924 Pulitzer Prize winner for his play Hell-Bent Fer Heaven and was at the zenith of his fame as a dramatist. In his address, he stated:

This theatre, this movement which I find here in Columbia means that the South is beginning to feel and to express her independence from New York, theatrically speaking, just as the North has in the last generation declared herself done with the old time colonial attitude toward Europe. America is now making American drama, and this theatre in Columbia means that you are beginning to realize that the best drama for South Carolina is native drama, the drama that expresses your own life, your own hopes, your own aspirations. This is the only drama that will get a firm hold upon the people. . . . I am not yet ready to offer congratulations on accomplishments. I see in this occasion promise rather than achievement.⁶

Despite the distinguished guests, the beautiful new building, and the play itself, the star of the occasion was Daniel Reed. Called out to the stage at the end of the second of the three acts, he spoke simply: "This is our great moment and it does seem fitting that I should be able to look into the eyes of you people who have been with me all along; who have made this occasion possible."⁷

The next day, The Columbia Record stated:

The new Town Theatre, a monument to Daniel Reed, director of the Stage Society and a triumph for Columbia's adventurous spirit among the arts, is a really beautiful place, which holds promise of fine and vital

⁶The State, December 19, 1924.

⁷Ibid.

experiments for the soul of Columbia and South Carolina.⁸ The total cost of the new building was \$23,650 (not including the seats which cost about \$1,500).⁹

The Society, with a chauvinistic dedication to South Carolina, was determined that the Theatre would be built from local materials. Made of Sumter Airdale brick with the softer mauve and rose-colored brick being used on the interior, the Theatre had four large Russian cartwheel wrought iron chandeliers, forged from a Reed design by the Tozier Engine Works. The main curtain was made from an inexpensive by-product of Pacific Mills (later called monk's cloth), as was an elegant "tapestry" of two pilgrims with three fawns playing in a glade designed by Ned Jennings of Charleston and given by the director. The painted fabric was not only decorative but proved to have acoustical value as well.¹⁰ For many years, the wall hanging dominated the center section of the Theatre's south wall.

The new Theatre, forty-two feet wide across the front, had a stage measuring twenty-two feet in depth and forty-seven feet in width with an elliptical proscenium arch eighteen feet high. There was no overhead flyloft or grid system, but the foundation was made strong enough to have one later when finances permitted. Beneath the stage were three dressing rooms and a workroom. Speaking tubes to dressing rooms

⁸The Columbia Record, December 19, 1924.

⁹The State, May 5, 1925.

¹⁰Letter from Mrs. Daniel A. Reed to the author, dated July 11, 1971.

and orchestra pit added final touches. The seating capacity was 445 persons.¹¹ This was to be the Theatre's largest seating capacity since structural design and property boundaries would deem future enlargement impossible.

When the initial performance of The Torchbearers had come to an end, the Columbia Stage Society's grandest dream had been realized: a new and permanent home dedicated to the performing arts. The guiding force had been the five-year-old organization's only director, Daniel Reed. Ironically, his name appeared nowhere on the premiere program.

During the early months in the new building, the Stage Society, aware of its maturing status and increased responsibilities, realized its future depended not only on a continuing artistic excellence but on sound and efficient business management as well. At its business meeting May 28, 1925, a complete new constitution was adopted. (See Appendix.) Among the significant changes from the 1919 original was the creation of a sixteen-member board. Under the new arrangement, each member would serve for a two-year term, with half of the initial sixteen members to serve only one year, to allow for eight new members to be elected annually. In order to encourage civic organizational support, one member each was chosen from eight of the most prominent Columbia cultural organizations, and eight members-at-large were elected from the general membership. The first Town Theatre Board comprised the following:

¹¹The State, May 5, 1925.

Evening Music Club
 Columbia Drama Club
 Columbia Art Association
 University of South Carolina
 Chicora College
 Columbia College
 Columbia High School
 Junior Service League

Mrs. Cora Cox Lucas
 Mrs. Alfred S. Gailliard
 Miss Caroline Guignard
 Dean L. T. Baker
 Prof. L. W. Jarman
 Dr. J. C. Guilds
 A. C. Flora
 Miss Katharine Heath

Members-at-large from the Membership
 of the Stage Society

A. W. Hamby
 Morton Visanska
 Dr. Julius H. Taylor
 Henry W. Fair

Joseph Norwood
 J. Fraser Lyon
 Dr. Robert W. Gibbes
 William E. Gonzales

The officers of the Board (president, first vice-president, second vice-president, and secretary-treasurer) were elected by the Board itself and also would serve two-year terms. The Board was empowered to elect a director and business manager annually and to fix their salaries. In order that the director might have more time for preparing productions, the constitution stated he would cooperate with the business manager but have no authority in business or financial matters (though he might on occasion have a contingency fund.) Although the business manager was elected by the Board, he was solely responsible to the president. Except for five amendments of a minor procedural nature added in 1927 and a minor re-wording in 1929 (See Appendix.), the constitution continued unchanged for the next ten years.

On May 23, 1935, it was again revised. The traditional hierarchy of organizational officers, president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer, (elected by the Board itself) replaced the former arrangement, with the president becoming an ex-officio member of the Board. The president, with Board con-

sent, was given the right to appoint, at his pleasure, a business manager. The president's appointees on the executive committee were reduced from five to two. (See Appendix.)

In essence the Board, as created in the 1925 constitution, assured a system of checks and balances in the Stage Society's management, and it became a direct agent for financial responsibility. The group of Columbians who comprised the Board also had the awesome task of maintaining and extending the image of the already-admired artistic program. While the Board freed the director from a great number of problems, it also imposed restrictive powers that the director had not been subjected to previously. The Board has maintained this position to the present time.

The Town Theatre Building

Throughout its history, the Theatre building, despite its success and charm, has posed problems to the Stage Company, the Stage Society, and to the various directors. Shortly after it was opened there was considerable rain damage and the studio, lobby, and offices had to be repainted.¹² When the Society was close to its economic nadir during the 1929-30 season, major expenditures were necessary for a new pump to keep out dampness in the basement¹³ and for two new furnaces.¹⁴ The Stage Society had continued to pay the annual rental of \$600 to the

¹²Business Manager's Report, Seventh Season (Martha Dwight). Theatre Archives.

¹³Society, Minutes, October 1, 1929.

¹⁴Ibid., December 3, 1929.

Stage Company¹⁵ and suggested that the cost of the new furnaces be deducted from the rent, but the Company, whose only income was the annual rental, had no other funds with which to pay taxes on the building and had to stretch out the \$350 furnace repayment to the Society. Fortunately, for the Theatre, the furnaces lasted out the lean depression years and were not replaced until 1941.¹⁶

The lobby and office area and the upstairs studio at the front of the Theatre had been ill-heated from the beginning. Finally the Board voted in 1933 to add a chimney so that both areas could be heated with fireplaces. It was not until the late fall of 1935, however, that a chimney was finally built, and it provided only one fireplace--in the ground floor business office.¹⁷

Although the lobby and studio were decorated many times during the permanent Theatre's first twenty years, there were no major changes during that time to any part of the building. The primary reason was financial. Even though the Depression had closed many community theatres across the country, the determined Stage Society, constantly in debt and with its existence depending on the income from each successive play, refused to close its doors.

¹⁵This figure was reduced between 1932-33 and 1945-46 to varying lesser amounts (\$400, \$450, \$500). At the beginning of 1946-47, the \$600 figure was reinstated. (Society, Financial Statements, 1932-1946.)

¹⁶Society, Minutes, November 27, 1941.

¹⁷Ibid., February 8, 1933 and December 17, 1935.

In 1934, when Belford Forrest (director, 1931-36) mentioned that the building next door to the Theatre was for sale for \$8,000, a committee composed of Dr. Walter Bristow, Mrs. Julian Hennig, and Mrs. Belford Forrest (then business manager), negotiated for possible purchase.¹⁸ The property could have been bought for \$7,000 with \$1,000 cash down and the balance on reasonable terms. The Board thought it better to improve its own property than buy more at that time.¹⁹ The decision was based primarily on the Society's poor financial status. The 1933-34 season had begun with a bank balance of \$8.00, and the Board did not wish to go into debt for the down payment on the lot. A \$2,500 note negotiated by Society president Margaret (Taylor) Martin in July, 1929, had been paid off only a few months prior to this at the end of the 1932-33 season.²⁰ Any further substantial indebtedness was not desirable. Although the decision not to buy the property limited any possible future physical expansion for more seating and enlargement of the stage, or possible parking space, the Board's conservatism seemed to be valid at the time because records show the financial picture of the Society was to become worse. The 1935-36 season opened with \$8.93 in the treasury²¹ and the 1936-37 year began with a deficit of

¹⁸Ibid., November 14, 1934.

¹⁹Ibid., December 12, 1934.

²⁰The State, October 9, 1933. The loan had originally been made to cover a \$2,200 deficit and to provide \$300 for starting the 1929-30 season. The note was framed for all to see.

²¹Society, Minutes, September 4, 1935.

about \$1,000.²² It was not until World War II, with the advent of thousands of service men to Fort Jackson, a revitalized and patriotic community response, a freer economy, and a vibrant young director by the name of Frederick Coe that the Town Theatre reached a level of consistent operation in the black.

Theatre Policies

With each director at the Town Theatre, as with a change of administration in any organization, certain policies, innovations, rules, and methods were altered. Daniel Reed, who directed ninety ^{subscription} major productions in his ten years at the helm of the Theatre, perhaps more than any of his successors, set the image and modus operandi which were the hallmarks of the professionalism for which the Theatre had been known from the beginning. Reed knew that a quality theatrical product was not enough. Promotion, audience comfort, efficient and courteous management in the front of the house--all were a part of making a success of the Town Theatre and keeping that success.

A four-performance run had been established with the Society's first full-length play, The Misleading Lady, in 1919 at the Pastime Theatre. The tradition continued and was followed by all the directors until the beginning of the twenty-fifth season (1943-44) when the number was raised to six. Usually, the four scheduled performances covered a three-day

²²The State, September 20, 1936.

period, with a matinee and evening performance given on the second or third day. Although the perennially best theatre nights--Thursday, Friday, and Saturday--were popular throughout the period, there seems to be no consistent formula for scheduling since all days, except Sundays, were used. One-act bills and children's plays were often planned for a two-day run only. During the 1931-32 season, director Belford Forrest suggested that matinees be abolished, primarily because of poor attendance, but the Board did not agree, feeling it would be unfair to those who had purchased season tickets on the premise that there would be matinees.²³ Afternoon performances, except for children's plays and an occasional special event, were discontinued at the end of the 1940-41 season.

From the time of the Society's premiere production in Columbia High School through Harry Davis' directorship in 1931, intermission music was an integral part of each performance. While the 1925-26 season set the ideal for the Stage Society by having musicians arranged for the whole season in advance, such was not the case during most of the twelve-year period. The 1925-26 musicians--F. J. Grube's String Choir of St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Matteson Studios, Miss Nell V. Mellichamp's Piano Studio, and a woman's instrumental quartet--agreed to provide music for one performance, or as needed, during each production.²⁴

²³Society, Minutes, January 12, 1932.

²⁴Among others who frequently offered entr'acte music

For a person wishing to attend a play at the new Town Theatre, the process was fairly simple. If he was a season member, he exchanged a detachable numbered coupon at the box office for a specific seat for the performance of his choice. (The reserved seat policy was established with the opening of the temporary Theatre, and with the exception of children's plays in some seasons and special events, has continued at the Theatre.) Later, a membership card, numbered around the edges with the number of productions planned, was punched when a seat reservation was made. At the first Theatre, the box office usually opened in the morning of the initial day of a run. In the permanent home, The Torchbearers set a precedent by having the box office open on Tuesday for a Thursday premiere. This was planned primarily to accommodate season members in order that they might have a better choice of seats. The one or two-day pre-show box office period has continued, with general admissions usually not permitted until the opening day itself. Admission prices for the first season in the permanent Theatre, for eight productions, were either a membership of \$5.00 (\$3.50 for students)²⁵ or single admissions of \$1.50 in the half of the house nearest the stage

for individual programs in the Theatre's early years were Florence Visanska, the Afternoon Music Club under Mrs. Cora Cox Lucas as president, Professor and Mrs. Walter Golz, Miss Leonore Purcell, Mrs. Arthur N. Green, Alfred Richter, the Columbia College School of Music, Mrs. Thomas Smyth, Mrs. Carl Summer, the Mozart Music Club, Dr. Pinkney V. Mikell, Mrs. William Furtick, Mrs. E. L. Crooks, and Mrs. Curran Jones. (Society, Playbills, 1919-1931.)

²⁵The State, September 24, 1924.

and \$1.00 for the rear section.²⁶ The single admission prices were lowered to \$1.00 and \$.75, respectively, that same season after The Mollusc in March.²⁷ Eventually all seats in the Theatre were sold at the same price, and by the twenty-fifth season, admissions for a seven-play season were either a membership of \$5.50 (\$8.80 for double adult, \$3.30, student) or single tickets at \$1.10 for adults, \$.55 for students, and \$.45 for enlisted men.²⁸ The ten percent amusement tax, added later, accounted for the few cents difference in basic prices from those of 1924-25, twenty years earlier. While season members were getting one less play for their money, the annual budget and general admission were approximately the same. Entertainment at the Town Theatre remained a bargain.

One of the important policies that was established by the Stage Society in its initial constitution, though not mentioned again specifically in other versions of the document, was that of segregation. Because of the long-standing tradition of segregation in the South, there was no particular reason to expect Negro participation in the Stage Society. Occasionally, Negroes attended dress rehearsals, children's matinees, or participated in special benefits, but no Negroes took part either onstage or backstage in the regularly scheduled productions. The one occasion during the first quarter century

²⁶Ibid., December 18, 1924.

²⁷Society, Card to members for A Bill of Three Plays, April 3-4 (1925).

²⁸The State, October 3, 1943.

when the matter did cause considerable discussion was during the 1928-29 season. The Society voted to produce Dr. E. C. L. Adams' play Potee's Gal for two performances at the Columbia Theatre, with the Town Theatre's regular tickets being accepted for the production.²⁹ Dr. Adams, a member of the Theatre's Board, based his play on the story "Big Charleston" from his own book Congaree Sketches. The all-Negro cast of 150 actors whose leading player was to have been New York actress Margaret Rhodes, known for her work in O'Neill's Dreamy Kid and Black-birds of 1927-28, would have played one of the two performances for a Negro audience. Before the project got under way, however, a petition of protest was circulated in the Society. President W. Bedford Moore discussed the matter with Dr. Croft Williams, an authority on social problems, and he also conferred with Episcopal Bishop Kirkman G. Finlay and Governor D. Clinch Heyward. No one objected to the play.³⁰ In a letter to Dr. Adams, Harry R. E. Hampton of The State wrote:

I have reason to believe that I voice the sentiments of the thinking, unprejudiced, fair-minded citizens of Columbia when I say that a successful production of this play with an all-Negro cast would mean more to the national reputation of the Columbia Stage Society than anything that organization has done or can do.³¹

Despite the approbation and support expressed, plans for the play were cancelled. The State on February 8, 1929, stated

²⁹Society, Minutes, January 5, 1929.

³⁰Ibid., February 5, 1929.

³¹Society, Scrapbook, 1928-29.

that the play had been cancelled due to the rising tide against the organization's use of a Negro cast and that it was too late in the season to get the production ready.³²

Playwriting Contests

Although the significant movement which had gained momentum on the heels of such successful small ventures as Chicago's Little Theatre, New York's Washington Square Players and Provincetown Playhouse was called the Little Theatre Movement, director Reed objected to the term "Little Theatre" because, as he put it, " . . . there was nothing little about our theatre."³³ Thoroughly professional and dedicated to the dramatic arts, Reed was not content to settle for a bill of fare limited to recent Broadway successes. More than any other director in the Theatre's history, he was a pioneer in searching for new and unproduced scripts of value. Of the fifty-two works which had their premiere at the Town Theatre as part of a regular season during its first half-century, fifty-one were produced during the first twenty-five years and of those, thirty-eight were directed by Daniel Reed. (See Appendix.)

To find original scripts, Reed suggested the idea of a playwriting contest. Underwritten by The State, the contest was limited to South Carolina residents, and prizes included \$100 for the best "three-or-more-act" play, and \$50, \$25, and

³²The State, February 8, 1929.

³³Society, Minutes, September 14, 1936.

\$25 for the first, second, and third best one-act plays. The State reserved the right of first publication in its pages, if it chose, and first performance rights were granted to the Town Theatre.³⁴ Forty-six entries were received in the first contest (1921-22) with the long-play award going to Miss Rebecca Dial of Laurens for No Dogs Allowed. The one-act play awards were won by Professor James P. Kinard of Winthrop College for Mortmain (first prize), Frances Gibbes Keith of Columbia for Jael (second prize) and Mrs. Perry M. Teeple of Columbia for Afterglow (third prize).³⁵ All of the plays were staged after the April 15 announcement of winners, the three one-acts on a single bill in May, and the long play in June with the playwright, herself, in the leading role. Judges for the first contest were Dr. Henry H. Bellamann, Mrs. B. L. Parkinson, and director Reed. Of the three playwrights cited for honorable mention, one was Charleston novelist and later Pulitzer Prize-winner, Julia Peterkin of Fort Motte for her play Daisy Mitchell.³⁶

The playwriting contests continued for a total of six years, through the 1926-27 season. The number of entries dropped to thirty-one in 1924-25, with only four full-length scripts submitted. The judges for that year, Mrs. W. W. Ball, Dr. Robert W. Gibbes, and Dan Reed, in order to revitalize the contest, suggested for the 1925-26 season that:

³⁴Society, Scrapbook, 1921-23.

³⁵The State, April 15, 1922.

³⁶Ibid.

1. one-act plays of higher order be essayed rather than long plays. (They gave no full-length play award in 1924-25.)
2. authors be apprised of the fact that many of the plays submitted evidenced more short story values than dramatic ones.
3. there be more comedies.
4. local, historical, and folk material had been virtually untapped as subject matter in previous contests.
5. the contest be extended to adjoining states.
6. the best writers be encouraged to participate.³⁷

The recommendations of the judges failed, however, because there were only eighteen entries submitted in 1925-26. The long-play winner, The Strange Woman by Frances Gibbes Keith, was not produced because it was not deemed suitable for the season then in progress.³⁸ Rebecca Dial, who had previously won the full-length awards in 1921-22 and 1923-24 for No Dogs Allowed and Undertow (as well as honorable mention for her one-act play Lifting the Veil in 1922-23), won both the first and second prizes for her one-acts A Social Success and Alpha and Omega.

The highlight of the 1926 annual meeting was the announcement that The State, through its president Ambrose E. Gonzales, had decided to extend the playwriting contest to the whole South (Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee, Kentucky, and Texas) with a \$500 prize for a long

³⁷Society, Scrapbook, 1924-25.

³⁸Business Manager's Report, 1925-26.

play and \$100 for the best one-act play and \$50 each for the next two one-acts of especial merit.³⁹ Despite the considerable increase in prize money, and judges who included George Pierce Baker and New York producer Brock Pemberton, the contest was beset with difficulties. The judges could not get together to confer, and in the rotating of scripts, one play was lost. Ultimately, the \$500 prize was not awarded. The three one-act winners, named early in 1928, were The Score by Dr. George Y. MacMurphy of Aiken, South Carolina (\$100), Three Who Wait by Mrs. Charlotte S. Richardson of Luling, Texas, and Miss Beatrice Sims of Texarkana, Texas (\$50), and Circus Day by Miss Frances Witherspoon of Brooklyn, New York.⁴⁰ The first two winners were finally staged at the Theatre but not until late in the 1927-28 season when they were directed by Reed's successor, William Dean. The new director elected to substitute Kenneth Sawyer Goodman's Dust of the Road in lieu of Circus Day because he felt it impracticable to produce.⁴¹

The waning of interest, economic pressures that more and more decreed the necessity for sure-fire commercial fare, and director Reed's departure brought a close to the regular playwriting contests. The contest was revived briefly during two other seasons before the Stage Society celebrated its silver anniversary. When Reed returned to the Theatre in the

³⁹Prize Play Contest Brochure. Theatre Archives.

⁴⁰The State, February 5, 1928.

⁴¹Business Manager's Report, 1927-28.

1936-37 season, he presented three one-act plays by South Carolina authors: Time Out by Jane Trenholm Bradley, A Rime For Silver by Nancy Telfair (pseudonym of Mrs. Louise Jones DuBose), and Funeral Flowers For the Bride by Beverly DuBose Hamer. The only prize offered that year was a production of the top plays at the Town Theatre.⁴²

Under Reed's second term successor, Carl Glick, a contest for a one-act play on a South Carolina theme was conducted in 1938-39, with prizes of \$50, \$25, and \$10 being provided by W. Bedford Moore and A. B. Langley.⁴³ Forty-nine plays were received with winners being Nancy Telfair of Columbia (first prize) for Silver Bullet, Edward M. Lowman of Charleston (second prize) for Black Night, and Doris Johnson and Sam Cothran of Columbia (third prize) for Flotsam and Jetsam.⁴⁴ None of the winners was ever staged as part of a regular season, however.

On June 12, 1927, an editorial in The State praising the Town Theatre for its contests in search of new plays, castigated community theatres in general by stating:

The Little Theatre tends, rather, to ignore the young dramatist, as it does the great actor, and goes in for distinguished authors and established plays.

The "production" of a new playwright is, to our mind, of infinitely greater interest and importance than the finest possible production of an old play.⁴⁵

⁴²Program, Personal Appearance, April, 1937.

⁴³The State, December 14, 1938.

⁴⁴Ibid., May 28, 1939. ⁴⁵Ibid., June 12, 1927.

The pioneering tradition of the Town Theatre in the production of new and untried scripts contributed in no small measure to the stature the Theatre achieved, not only in local circles, but in general theatrical circles as well. Hatcher Hughes, Eugene O'Neill, Padraic Colum, and Dorothy Heyward were among the well-known established writers who offered plays, while novelists Henry Bellamann (Kings Row) and the aforementioned Julia Peterkin (Scarlet Sister Mary), though early in their writing careers, cropped up among the non-winners in the various playwriting contests.⁴⁶ Mrs. Heyward's The Lighted House was the second major production staged in the new Theatre, premiering on January 29, 1925. George Pierce Baker, founder of the famous 47 Workshop at Harvard, of which Mrs. Heyward had been a member while a student at Radcliffe, said to the premiere audience, "Places like this are where American drama will have its birth."⁴⁷ Baker echoed the Stage Society's proven success and at the same time issued to the Theatre a challenge not only to maintain that achievement, but to better it in the years to follow.

⁴⁶Program, Personal Appearance, April, 1937.

⁴⁷The State, January 30, 1925.

CHAPTER IV

THE DIRECTORS AND THEIR PLAYS

Daniel A. Reed, 1919-1927 and 1936-1938

The post World War I fervor in the Beaux Arts in Columbia owes its major origins and impulse to the Town Theatre, and more specifically to its mentor, and first director, Daniel Reed. Columbia was far from the cultural desert that author and critic Henry L. Mencken was proclaiming the South to be. Throughout the 1920's, the Town Theatre's two stages provided an intellectual and artistic arena for the talents of such people as Martha Graham, Dr. Richard Burton, Vachel Lindsey, Alfred Kreymborg, Carl Sandburg, Efrem Zimbalist, Ruth Draper, Edgar Lee Masters, and DuBose Heyward. The vitality and dynamic personality of Reed was a force to be reckoned with and illuminati knew that something very special was taking place in South Carolina's capital city.

Reed came by his vibrant drive through a childhood that was hardly typical of his time. Born on July 12, 1892, in Denver, Colorado, his first formal education was with the Jesuits in their Sacred Heart College near Denver.¹ Reed's mother was a devout Catholic, his father an agnostic.

¹All of the biographical details of Mr. Reed's personal life have been furnished by Mrs. Reed in a memo to the author, August, 1970.

The elder Reed had been on the Louisville Courier Journal, but after going west he edited and printed a little paper in Morrison, Colorado. A colorful figure, he once had the temerity to publish Robert Green Ingersoll's controversial lectures attacking Christianity and the Bible.

When the family moved to a suburb of Los Angeles, Reed attended public schools and did odd jobs to pay for admission to the Wallace School, a dramatic school where students began their craft with the dance and vocal training. Shortly after he was thirteen, he was allowed to join Nat Goodwin's Acting Company. Goodwin was a friend of Reed's father, and the apprenticeship of a boy to a famous actor was an accepted theatre custom of the time. As a result of this association, Reed received the best training possible in acting, business management, stage managing, and directing. His experiences during that period (1905-1911) under such outstanding directors as McKee Rankin and Sedley Browne provided him with invaluable, first-hand knowledge.

In the renaissance that was taking place in the arts in the early years of the century, there also arose a new iconoclasm, a kind of revolt against art forms which many thought had become stale and effete. Theatre had already felt the effects of this revolt in the waning years of the nineteenth century through such prominent dramatists as Ibsen, Strindberg, Shaw, and Chekhov. The trend away from stock companies had gained momentum in Europe after André Antoine's success with his little theatre, Le Théâtre Libre

in Paris. Russia's Moscow Art Theatre, Germany's Freie Buehne, England's Independent Theatre, Ireland's Abbey Theatre--all sought something new in the way of dramaturgy and performance. Reed, too, fell under the spell of this new trend when he saw Maurice Browne's company from the Chicago Little Theatre at the San Francisco International Exposition in 1915. On his own, he went to Chicago and joined the celebrated pioneer group. After playing a wide range of roles, he accepted the position of director at the St. Paul (Minnesota) Little Theatre, an opulent and high-budgeted operation which would have been a "dream" job for any director in the business. World War I interrupted Reed's directorship and while it was assumed he would return to St. Paul after the war was over, he did not.

At Columbia's Camp Jackson, Reed was a Morale Sergeant, a job now equivalent to Special Services. In the line of duty there, he arranged parties and dances to which Columbia's nicest girls were invited. Gradually, it was learned that he had been "in the theatre." It was then only a quick step to his introduction to Miss Martha Dwight and the Drama League.

When Reed decided to cast his allegiance with the newly-formed Stage Society, he was aware of the small salary, but there was a challenge in the offing and he had glimpsed what he felt to be a wealth of untapped acting talent. Another important consideration for the young director was a sense of community. Having spent a good part of his life on the road, he was more than superficially aware of the special "character" that evolves from the grouping of people together in a commu-

nity. Reed believed in the quality of the people he had met in Columbia, and he championed with missionary zeal the belief that, as a town has its town hall, its town drug store, and its town doctor, so it should also have its town theatre. The philosophy and the name of the organization were his. When the Town Theatre became a reality, he brought in the lecturers, poets, and musicians that he and his wife knew from their early days prior to coming to Columbia, and artists used the lobby and studio walls to show their paintings. The Theatre, under Reed, became a focal point for all the fine arts.

"Dan knew music, art, literature, and painting," said Margaret (Taylor) Martin, as she remembered the director for whom she had acted, made costumes, and performed other varied theatre chores. "If you ran into Dan on the street, his conversation would be so exciting and interesting that by the time you got home, you'd be on top of the clouds. He was probably the most cultured director the Theatre ever had."²

Reed's enthusiasm and respect for the people with whom he worked was infectious. Whole families spent their leisure hours working on crews and on stage, and regardless of social station, the volunteers pitched in to do even the most grimy and difficult jobs. Mrs. Reed laughingly reminisced about the early days:

²Personal Interview, July 26, 1971.

We had no theatre, of course, and no place to work. My father had invented dye-scenery and we were going to have a luminous cyclorama. (You remember, we were "new school" on stage design.) A sign painter lent us a paint bridge out at the Fair Grounds, which was so tippy that he had fallen off and broken his back. (That's why it was available.) It was a hundred plus--the temperature of the gate of Hell--because it was right under the roof and when the melting tar came through the holes, you were inclined to duck.

Then we were given a basement in the Arcade Building, where you could not stand up scenery flats. You had to fix them into a corner of the ceiling and slant them toward the floor, then lie like a snake on the ground to finish them.³

As a condition for using Columbia High School's relatively new stage for the opening play, director Reed was not allowed to put any nails into the highly polished floor. He overcame the problem with a portmanteau stage, built with a false proscenium, which could be transported. This was typical of Reed's willingness to adapt to the host of "impossibles" that constantly faced him.

Reed's background in professional theatre was an enormous asset, particularly the first year, because of the difficulties of the "gypsy" status of the organization. Reed gained the support of the several professional theatre managers in Columbia and this ultimately brought about several bookings for the Society (before it had its own home), and also led to the temporary use of the burned-out Pastime Theatre where well-known artist Anna Heyward Taylor, along with

³Memo to the Author from Mrs. Daniel A. Reed, August, 1970. Mrs. Reed's father was playwright Clarence Bennett. He had discovered a way to give a luminous quality to paint pigment on canvas. The effect was comparable to that achieved when silk fabric is placed under light--a shiny appearance.

Mrs. Reed, Susan FitzSimons (Mrs. J. Richard Allison) and others, painted scenery in the alley for the several productions played there.

Although few South Carolinians are aware of the fact, Daniel Reed was the founder of the first organized drama classes ever held at the University of South Carolina. Reed had cultivated a stable of actors among the faculty at the University and had the backing of such admired men of letters as professors George Wauchope, Oscar L. Keith, Yates Snowden, E. C. Coker, A. C. Moore, and Francis W. Bradley--all of whom had appeared as actors for him at the Town Theatre. Dean L. T. Baker was on the Theatre's Board of Governors, so it seemed inevitable that Reed should be involved eventually in a program of drama instruction at the University. Reed first became associated with the University as a teacher during the 1925-26 season and it was during that same season that his biggest success with the students of the Drama Production Class (English 123) was achieved. Sun-Up, a North Carolina mountain play enacted by his students, played four performances at the Town Theatre in March and then played to a packed house at the Columbia Theatre a few days later for the state teachers meeting on the same night that The Concert, which he also directed, was being performed a few blocks away at the Town Theatre. Three days prior to the opening of Sun-Up, the ubiquitous Reed was performing in his own production of The Mollusc at Coker College. Acting, teaching, and directing simultaneously seemed to be the kind of activity on which the director thrived, for three

weeks after the night of the double theatre showings, he opened his first Shakespearean play at the Theatre, Garrick's 1748 version of Romeo and Juliet.

Reed's success with the Theatre was not without setbacks. From the very beginning of the venture, there were serious financial problems: gaining and maintaining season ticket holders, holding down production costs (especially royalties), and increasing individual ticket sales. During Reed's first term, 1919-1927, there was no city or county monetary support or angels giving large amounts. While sums had been given during the period, these had been earmarked for the building itself. The many individuals who donated moderate sums simply did not have the means to give to the building and to support the annual budgets. The third season had opened with a deficit of about \$1,000 of which \$500 was paid off during 1921-22.⁴ The 1925-26 season began with a deficit of about \$2,200, but \$1,600 of that debt was erased through several rentals of the Theatre, and from \$967.08 netted as a result of a benefit concert.⁵

The most shattering financial and artistic failure Reed met during either of his two terms came near the beginning of his eighth year (1926-27) with a gigantic undertaking in the form of a pageant called Hail! South Carolina! which he authored himself. Planned for an outdoor presentation at

⁴Society, Budget, 1921-22.

⁵Business Manager's Report, 1925-26. The concert by the Society for the Preservation of Spirituals, from Charleston, S. C., was sponsored by the Theatre at the Columbia Theatre.

the race track on the Fair Grounds, the spectacle had a cast of nearly 500, with a chorus of 300 being furnished by the South Carolina Federation of Women's Clubs.⁶ The pageant had no spoken dialogue but made use of two readers and titles (as in silent movies) projected from a stereopticon.⁷ The production was so big that a downtown headquarters for costumes was set up at 1309 Sumter Street over Stork's Grocery.⁸

After all the months of preparation, the production, while beautiful to the eye, proved a disaster. Near the end of the rehearsal period, the stage had to be moved to a different part of the track and the new site was too far away from the spectators for the spoken narration to be heard clearly. On the morning of the premiere, the winds from a hurricane blew the entire set down. The finishing unpleasant touch was added to the ambitious, but well-attended project when a large part of the audience took advantage of the more informal "house" arrangements and entered without tickets. Even though it was later given two performances at the Columbia Theatre (and generally admired under the controlled conditions), the attendance at the repeat showings was small. It had cost \$2,680.43 to produce and the total receipts, including those from the Columbia Theatre box office, were \$1,894.20. The Stage Society's tribute to South Carolina had

⁶The Columbia Record, September 29, 1926.

⁷Ibid., September 19, 1926.

⁸Ibid., September 29, 1926.

set the budget back by the sum of \$786.23.⁹

The rest of that year was spent trying to find ways to raise money. Reed gave a solo performance of his stage adaptation of Edgar Lee Masters' Spoon River Anthology which netted \$297; Dr. Robert Gibbes gave two Hypnotism Exhibitions netting \$214; a repeat performance by the Charleston Spirituals group netted \$579.90, and a harp-violin-piano recital by Hazel Ione Moses and Mr. and Mrs. Walter Golz netted \$109. Although the benefit performances cancelled the loss on the pageant, the accumulated deficit of the Theatre by the end of the season was \$2,456.¹⁰

Miss Dwight, in her annual report, makes clear that, while the season seems to have been a failure, such was not really the case. The director's salary increase of \$600, the assistant director's salary increase of \$250, and the pageant loss of \$786.23 added up to \$1,636.23, and this did not include a \$700 deficit figure brought forward from the previous year. Further, the membership dropped by 164 members--primarily because the annual campaign was being carried on concurrently with the preparations for the pageant, and canvassing had not been as thorough. It was not the happiest note on which to leave an eight-year stint at the Theatre.

Reed was a generous and outgoing man and his actors felt secure under his direction. On occasion he could be piqued to displeasure, and sometimes showed a trace of jeal-

⁹Business Manager's Report, 1926-27.

¹⁰Ibid.

ousy when proper credit was not accorded him, but he was first and foremost a professional and strove to perpetuate that same image for the Theatre.

Not only was his ability as a producer and director unequivocal, but he was also a much admired figure behind the footlights, acting in over forty of his own plays. While he did play leading roles from time to time, he seemed to derive pleasure from appearing in a varied assortment of minor character roles. Columbians who knew his work onstage delighted in picking him out in strange make-up and costumes.

Even though he had appeared in six previous plays during the first season, his first major acting role after becoming director was that of the title character in Clyde Fitch's Beau Brummel. The play was performed at Camp Jackson's Liberty Theatre, and was later given a special matinee at the Columbia Theatre. Reed's name appeared in bold-face type on the program and photographs of Reed as Brummel were given away. The State's review remarked:

Persons who had expected a beautiful and finished presentation of "Beau Brummell [sic]" were astonished at the careful beauty and the well high faultless finish of the performance last evening at the Liberty Theatre; and those who thought they realized to the fullest Dan Reed's talent and ability as an actor and as a producer had a revelation. Mr. Reed's portrayal of the interesting and unique "Beau," the most elegant and fashionable personage of the Georgian period, was as graceful, as exquisite, and as understanding a piece of character work as could well be imagined. . . . Mr. Reed sustained the character with consistent and consummate art and imbued it with that mixture of humor and pathos which made the inimitable "Beau" a real person to the audience and a most interesting and appealing one at that.¹¹

¹¹The State, May 25, 1920.

One of the nightmares every community theatre director faces at one time or another is the unexpected illness or emergency of a cast member. Reed, being an actor, was luckier than most and stepped in on several occasions to give credence to the old saw that "the show must go on."

Around the Town Theatre it is never known until the curtain rises whether or not the director is in the show, for it would seem that oftener than not something happens to somebody in the cast just before or during the "run" and, no matter what the role, Mr. Reed steps in and plays it.¹²

The above statement was written when the director took over for Dr. Pinkney V. Mikell, in Patience, the Stage Society's first musical. The writer went on:

As it turned out, "Danny" was one of the hits of the show, in make-up, in the hilarious comedy he put into the character and in the way he "pepped" up the people around him on the stage and kept things whirling.¹³

Occasionally Reed would come a-cropper in the eyes of some reviewer, as he did with Jack Young who saw the initial performance of The Gypsy Trail, which opened the temporary Theatre in the 1920-21 season.

Daniel A. Reed, as Michael Rudder, alias Mr. Jones, the newspaper reporter, was to us somewhat of a disappointment. This statement is made with the full realization that Mr. Reed's tremendous efforts to clear the way for the initial performance in the "Town Theatre," and his rehearsals of a fairly large cast for this play, must have interfered to a great extent with his study of his own part. To direct and at the same time to play a part is the hardest trial that is imposed upon an actor, and is not often essayed in professional companies. . . . Friendship with Mr. Reed does not deter the writer from offering the humble suggestion that he devote his entire time in the Stage Society productions to directing, and give

¹²The State, June 20, 1925.

¹³Ibid.

us perhaps once or twice a year the pleasure of witnessing his performance of some really worthwhile role.¹⁴

Out of all the many parts he played at the Town Theatre, the shining example of his consummate skill was his one-man show of Spoon River Anthology. Reed had first performed his reading of the Masters' work shortly after it was published in 1915, while working for Maurice Browne in Chicago.¹⁵ The evening of January 14, 1927, was a rare and special time for Columbia. With author Edgar Lee Masters in the audience of 358, Reed transformed the small Theatre into the various worlds of the inhabitants of the quaint graveyard. Stanhope Sams, one of South Carolina's most respected literary figures of the time and frequent reviewer of Town Theatre plays, wrote:

Daniel Reed deserves well of the people of Columbia for many achievements, and for many fine entertainments of the town, but he smashed his own record last night. . . . It was a tour de force. I can't think of any phrase in English that so gives it to us. It was a tour de force, the sheer memory and repetition of such a volume of verse. . . . some thirty-five impersonations were accurately sketched and as many characters brought like Lazarus from the grave and made to walk the earth again for a brief moon-lit span.¹⁶

Poet Masters merely bowed to the assembled audience, but he did speak after the performance to reporters:

I wish to be quoted directly, remember, for I mean every word of it. Columbia is one of the most fortunate cities I know of to have a theatre like this and a man with the genius of Mr. Reed to direct it. It is a big thing for the community--a very big thing--and something even bigger yet is going to result from this theatre.¹⁷

¹⁴The Columbia Record, December 16, 1920.

¹⁵The State, January 7, 1927. ¹⁶Ibid., January 15, 1927.

¹⁷The Columbia Record, January 15, 1927.

Reed performed the program in Charleston, Savannah, and at Winthrop before leaving the Town Theatre, and presented it at two of Brock Pemberton's theatres that fall in New York. Spoon River was destined to become a chef d'oeuvre for both Masters and Reed. The two gentlemen and the literary work were reunited one other time, in 1950, for a performance at New York's Town Hall to honor Masters, then eighty.¹⁸

When the Reeds left Columbia at the end of the 1926-27 season, he stated:

If I stay here longer, I'll get in a rut, the Town Theatre will soon get into a rut, Columbia people will drop into a rut. There will be too great a "sameness" of things.¹⁹

I love Columbia; and I hate to leave. In leaving I have one burning desire, and that is that the Columbia Stage Society may go on to even bigger and better things and that its future may be the brightest of all the "little theatres." I believe that with the splendid personnel and leadership here, this will be true.²⁰

Columbians took the Reeds' departure with great reluctance. At the annual meeting of the Stage Society on June 13, 1927, Mrs. Reed was presented a silver cream pitcher and sugar dish "for her gratuitous help on costumes for all those years."²¹ A glowing editorial appeared in The State the next morning. "An uncommonly well complemented couple for the special field they have elected, Mr. and Mrs.

¹⁸Brochure. Daniel Reed in Lecture Recital.

¹⁹Columbia Hi-Life, April 29, 1927.

²⁰The Columbia Record, April 14, 1927.

²¹The State, June 14, 1927.

Reed have deserved well the goodwill and regard of South Carolina, which will be theirs wherever their further engagements may take them."²²

During the nine-year interval between his two terms, Reed's theatrical activities took him across the length and breadth of the country. He served as director of The Eastman Theatre in Rochester, New York, general manager of Theatre Classics, Charles Coburn's project in New York, and then returned south briefly to dramatize Julia Peterkin's Black April and Scarlet Sister Mary. Martha Dwight had resigned as Town Theatre business manager at the end of the 1928-29 season and happened to be in New York for the premiere of Scarlet Sister Mary which starred Ethel Barrymore. Writing of the event, she stated:

At the opening performance of "Scarlet Sister Mary" there were Town Theatre people scattered all around me-- Ada Taylor Graham, Mrs. Bennett (Isadora Reed's mother), Frank Woodruff, Anna Swindell, Eleanor Ball, Doctor Bellamann--every one of them old Stage Society actors. The play was, in a sense, a Stage Society production, Danny Reed being the playwright and Julia Peterkin, the author. And yet how far from being a Stage Society production. We wouldn't have dared to put on anything so amateurish.²³

Miss Dwight's disenchantment may have stemmed in part from Miss Barrymore's insistence on playing the title character in a fashion alien to those who knew the South and Mrs. Peterkin's novel.

As a supervisory director for the Shubert office which had optioned Scarlet Sister Mary, Reed passed on plays, nomi-

²²Ibid.

²³The State, December 7, 1930.

nated directors, actors and performed other assorted duties.

Upon leaving the Shuberts, Reed became a dialogue coach for Paramount Studios at Astoria, Long Island. Movies were going into sound and theatre directors were much sought after. After his work at Paramount, an invitation to direct a new play at Muriel McCormick's posh Palm Beach Playhouse led to completing that season there and to directing the entire following season's plays because of the admiration he had inspired in the Russian actress Maria Ouspenskaya who was a featured performer there at the time.

Following his stint in Florida, he lectured on theatre for the Theatre Guild and later succeeded Arnold Korff as the Viennese composer Melchior Feydak in their production of Biography with Ina Claire. After a short tour in Paul Claudel's play, The Unknown Warrior, for Maurice Browne, he went to Hollywood where he had a writing-directing contract for Warner Brothers' First National Studios.

Throughout the period, he had kept in touch with the Town Theatre and remained influential in its policy making. The Board asked him to return as director for the 1929-30 season to succeed William Dean, who had served as director since Reed left the Theatre in 1927, but Reed had already made commitments. He recommended Harry Davis who had been his technical assistant in his final two years and the Board did employ Davis. Unimpressed by what he felt was a crude approach to aesthetics, Reed left Hollywood to return to the Town Theatre at the beginning of its eighteenth year, 1936-37.

Reed's return was a much heralded event. The Stage Society had gone through the horrors of the Depression, barely hanging on. With its first leader back, things had to get better. Seven shows were planned for a \$5.00 membership and the Society's largest number of subscribers, 893, was enrolled.²⁴ The director's salary was \$3,000.²⁵

A combination of two forces, both involving money, tended to put a damper on the decidedly upbeat feeling at the Theatre. First, the Theatre was about \$1,000 in debt from the previous season when Reed arrived,²⁶ and secondly, pennies were pinched even tighter after the first play, which used up an unusually large slice of the \$6,600 annual budget.²⁷

Reed wanted a significant vehicle for his return and negotiated with adaptor William Drake for the rights to Vicki Baum's Grand Hotel. The Town Theatre's production, which opened for four performances on November 12, 1936, was the first production outside New York (other than the professional touring company).²⁸ The seventeen scenes required forty actors, and to insure a quickly-moving tempo, Reed designed the first revolving stage the Theatre ever used. Built by Carlile Courtenay, the turntable had three slots and provided quite a novelty

²⁴Society, Minutes, December 18, 1936.

²⁵Ibid., July 20, 1936.

²⁶Budget, 1936-37.

²⁷Financial Statement, January 13, 1937.

²⁸The State, October 4, 1936.

for actors and playgoers.²⁹

Reed's friendship and widespread reputation with so many people in theatre circles had not only aided in bringing about this small coup for the Theatre but had given the Theatre advantages in earlier seasons. In 1926, Lula Vollmer personally gave Reed permission to do her Sun-Up. George Pierce Baker had been so impressed with Reed and the Theatre at the premiere of The Lighted House in 1925, that when he told playwright Edward Sheldon about the Town Theatre, Sheldon promptly gave Reed the rights to his play Romance. This was a special recognition because Romance, at that time, had not been released to non-professional groups. Padraic Colum gave Reed permission to premiere his play, The Betrayal, as did Knowles Entriiken for Ladies Laugh Last.

The formula which Reed worked out for producing a balanced season on his return was more or less followed consistently during his period of directing at the Theatre:

- 1st Play - glamour romance
- 2nd Play - brisk farce comedy or mystery (holiday time)
- 3rd Play - solid problem play
- 4th Play - classic, or one of historic import
- 5th Play - human comedy, art interest
- 6th Play - original, from play contest or submissions
- 7th Play - Gilbert and Sullivan or other musical³⁰

Even though the formula offered the variety demanded for community theatre, box office income in 1936-37 lagged behind expectations. The Players Club, formed in Reed's absence, sought to eradicate the pre-season debt of \$1,000 by having a

²⁹Ibid., November 8, 1936.

³⁰Ibid., September 28, 1936.

Deficit Dance. The event, scheduled at the Ridgewood Country Club on April 29, failed in its altruistic purpose, netting only \$60.³¹ At the end of the season, Dr. James Penney, then treasurer of the Society, was authorized to make a short term loan to cover unpaid salaries.³² He borrowed \$350 on a note signed by James H. Hammond, Arthur B. Langley, and himself.³³

Reed spent the summer in New York from long habit and while there agonized over how to produce a season that didn't cost a fortune in royalties or require elaborate period costumes. "I'm renegeing [sic] on Pride and Prejudice because of the costumes. I get a cold sweat when I think of that Sewing Committee and the costume angle of our sweet little theatre. It honestly scares me to see a character description that calls for a button even that isn't in period 1937."³⁴ A stickler for detail, Reed in the early years through a superb group of designers and seamstresses that included such people as his gifted wife Isadora, Margaret (Taylor) Martin, Mrs. Jack Griffin, and Miss Susan Guignard had set a standard for historically correct costuming. The primitive working conditions and paucity of space continued to be a problem, and now some of his old stand-bys were not available. Costumes, then, were an essential consideration.

³¹Deficit Dance. Society, Minutes, May 11, 1937.

³²Society, Minutes, May 19, 1937.

³³Ibid., May 25, 1937.

³⁴Letter from Daniel Reed to Ruth Hall Graham, dated July 10, 1937.

The chance to look at the Town Theatre in perspective reinforced for Reed that his original intention of remaining in Columbia only one season was the right choice.

I realize now how really fed up on the community theatre idea I am when I come here (New York), and how I must make next year my last. I've learned in the past year so forcibly that it's no longer for me--and that's what I wanted to find out. . . . There must be a way to get a town that can afford it, to subsidize a respectable company of professional theatre workers, as towns have been known to support the other arts. The theatre for me is not necessarily far off from the community type--I think my best work so far has come out of the warmth of a small town's support of me--but my quarrel is with the dilettante [sic] and the amateur. I no longer respect the empty claims of the community art project. For I have seen them destroy real artists right and left and make stepchildren of their best offspring.³⁵

Reed was forty-four when he returned to the Town Theatre. Having come from nine years of working in professional theatre, he felt an inevitable let-down. The small irksome problems merely hampered the artistic work by consuming time and necessary energy. Reed had never made any secret of the fact that he always preferred a repertory arrangement. In fact, that had been his goal at the Town Theatre from the beginning. Such was not possible in Columbia. There were no angels to support that kind of endeavor, and local governmental subsidy in substantial terms would not even be seriously entertained by those in power to legislate such. He did honor his commitment to return to Columbia for one more year, and with the end of the 1937-38 season, Reed left Columbia for good.

In the ensuing years, Reed returned to his first love,

³⁵ Ibid.

acting. He originated roles in two Shirley Booth plays, Come Back, Little Sheba and The Time of the Cuckoo, and won praise for his characterization of the psalm-singing hobo in the play, Hope Is the Thing with Feathers. Television opened up new horizons for Reed and he appeared frequently in such early live drama programs as the Variety Program Series of NBC-TV where he created the title role in the acclaimed drama, The Fisherman. Ill health forced his retirement from the stage in 1965.

Any assessment of Daniel Reed's work in Columbia must be made with continual reference to two ever-present conditions. First, he was the true pioneer of community theatre in the city. He originated most of the Town Theatre's policies, set the Theatre's high professional standards, and spread the good name of the Theatre to a wide area outside of South Carolina. He did not have to follow a previous director. He set the pace and led the way.

Second, in every season of his ten years, there was financial stress of some variety that affected the work he undertook. Money difficulties, despite the continued headaches they presented, may have proved, however, to offer a constant challenge not only to Reed but to the Stage Society as well. He overcame substantial odds to work with little or nothing when resources were not available. Reed's significant achievement, while it probably would have been similar if there had been money, doubtless was even greater because of the lack of great sums.

Although the Theatre has undergone many successful administrations since the two terms of its first director, none has equalled in length, influence, scope or vitality the work of Daniel Reed.

William Dean, 1927-1929

The old show business maxim, "That's a hard act to follow," took on a special significance when Daniel Reed left the Theatre in 1927 at the end of his first term. The right man at the helm in this crucial time of the Theatre's development was a necessity. The Stage Society had aimed high when it selected Reed. His professional credentials had been impressive. Naturally, the Theatre wanted to find a director of comparable background and experience to succeed him.

Mrs. Craig Barrow, a civic leader in Savannah, Georgia and also a friend of Dr. Robert W. Gibbes, brought to Dr. Gibbes a letter of application from William Dean who was then teaching Drama classes in Savannah. Dean's letter stated:

In London, England, New York, and Chicago, I worked under the management of George M. Cohan, Mr. and Mrs. Charles D. Coburn, Basil Dean, the Shuberts, Charles Dillingham, A. L. Erlanger, Edgar Selwyn, The Chicago Opera Association, Augustin Duncan and Frank Reicher (both formerly with the New York Theatre Guild), and with the Guild Players of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and the Carnegie Institute Little Theatre group.

My references are Mr. B. Iden Payne, Department of Drama, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh and Mr. Hubert Osborne of Yale University.³⁶

Dean's qualifications seemed excellent and his appointment

³⁶Letter from William Dean to Dr. Robert W. Gibbes, dated May 12, 1927. The letter has been kept with the Minutes of the Stage Society.

was announced at the annual meeting of the Stage Society on June 13, 1927.³⁷

A native of Liverpool, Dean was educated in the elementary schools of Liverpool and at Skerrie College, also in his home town. During World War I, he served in the English Transport Service on the Atlantic. Having studied music and drama at college, he turned his interests to theatre after the war, performing professionally in England and the United States. While in Pittsburgh, he married a young dancer and their daughter was nearly a year old when they arrived in Columbia.

William Dean's two seasons as director of the Town Theatre were difficult years for Dean and the Theatre. The Theatre's indebtedness was \$2,456 on his arrival. To complicate matters, the membership dropped from 528 the previous season to 419.³⁸ In addition, there were no sponsored offerings by the Society during the first year to bring in extra revenue. The end of Dean's first season brought the resignations of business manager Martha Dwight and of Harry Davis and Ora Mae Jackson who were serving as stage manager (technical director) and assistant stage manager. This was a critical blow. Davis and Miss Jackson had accepted teaching positions at Mississippi State College for Women at Columbus, Mississippi and, even though Mrs. Jack Crawford was an able new appointee to succeed Martha Dwight as business manager, the Theatre had lost its first and perhaps most diligent

³⁷The State, June 14, 1927.

³⁸Business Manager's Report, 1927-28.

early advocate. The 1927-28 season ended with a deficit of \$2,000,³⁹ which in reality represented a small financial success, considering the previous indebtedness.

Despite having to live up to the reputation of Daniel Reed, Dean offered a varied season his first year. His second production, the first Ibsen work at the Theatre, was A Doll's House and it was held over for two additional performances beyond the four scheduled for Thursday, Friday, and Saturday (matinee and evening) of December 1, 2, 3, and was also taken to Coker College as well. George Kelly's The Show Off (for which the author offered a reduced royalty) became the hit of the season, playing seven times at the Theatre. It also was the Theatre's most frequently toured show to date playing in Hartsville, Camden, Aiken, Sumter, Rock Hill, and Darlington.

When Dean had played in John Galsworthy's The Silver Box in Manchester, England, he met the author and later renewed acquaintance with him at Carnegie Tech. Based on this association, Galsworthy gave the Town Theatre a reduced royalty rate when Dean directed Galsworthy's Justice, which had first been staged in New York by Dean's teacher, B. Iden Payne. The following season, Dean directed another Galsworthy play, The Pigeon. Stanhope Sams agreed in his lengthy article on the production that Galsworthy's play was not one of the author's best, and despite reservations about the cast's authority and tempo stated:

. . . the general opinion must be that the play achieved

³⁹Society, Minutes, September 12, 1928.

a remarkable success. It was better as a whole than it was in parts or in certain characterizations--which is as it should be, no doubt, with the Little Theatre or communal groups of players. . . . William Dean deserves high praise for the fine results of interpretation and his work and training.⁴⁰

Although Dean's choices of plays were generally sound for community theatre fare, he was probably ill advised to continue the South Carolina Play Tournament, which had been started in Reed's eighth year, as part of the eight-play subscription series. Attendance for the 1928 two-day Tournament was only 389, less than a full house.⁴¹ There were only four entrants: Erskine Players, The Workshop of Greenville, which won first place with W. S. Fewell's There Ain't No Justice, the Queen Bess Players from Coker College, and the Community Little Theatre from Greenville. The 1929 Tournament, the final one, had only three participating groups: the USC Drama Club (directed by Dean), the Columbia High School Drama Club, and The Workshop of Greenville. Dean's group was named the winner with W. W. Jacobs' and Louis N. Parker's play, The Monkey's Paw. With a total attendance of only 187,⁴² the death knell was sounded for the Tournament. Further, Dean inherited the problem of what to do with the winners of the Southern Playwriting Contest (1926-27) which were not announced until February, 1928, about midway through his first season. He honored the Theatre's commitment to produce the first and

⁴⁰The State, April 30, 1929.

⁴¹Business Manager's Report, 1927-28.

⁴²Ibid., 1928-29.

second place winners, The Score and Three Who Wait, but substituted Kenneth Sawyer Goodman's Dust of the Road for third place winner, Circus Day, which he felt was impracticable to produce. The grouping of the three plays in four performances was seen by only 389 people.⁴³

There were several significant changes that occurred during Dean's administration. Printed programs throughout Reed's eight years had been the long popular one-sheet style. With Dean, the booklet format most frequently seen today was inaugurated. For the first time the program carried advertising (originally started by Martha Dwight) with revenue adequately covering printing costs for programs and tickets. In 1928-29, for the first time in its ten-year history, the Stage Society sought and received \$400 from the city council.⁴⁴ Also that season, the Theatre allied itself with the Theatre Guild to sponsor the Guild's production of Shaw's The Doctor's Dilemma at the Columbia Theatre.

Dean had accepted the job as director with the understanding that part of his salary would come from classes he taught at the University, which was then contemplating a Department of Fine Arts to be made up of music, art, and drama. Although this did help the financial situation at the Theatre, things went from bad to worse in the early part of 1929. In February, the proposed production of Dr. E. C. L. Adams' all Negro play Potee's Gal brought strife into the ranks of the

⁴³Ibid., 1927-28.

⁴⁴Society, Minutes, May 28, 1929.

Society. Further, Dean incurred the wrath of the Board by spending over \$200 on playscripts (to be read with possible production in mind) and for losing a valuable rug borrowed from Mrs. Robert Gibbes for a play. In March, a loan of \$575 to cover current operating expenses was necessary and was arranged by the officers.⁴⁵ By May, when the Theatre's deficit had reached over \$2,600,⁴⁶ Mrs. Crawford resigned, requesting no salary after April 1.⁴⁷ Dean offered a plan for the organization of the Society's activities (a season of six plays instead of eight, a studio workshop for students and the production of one-act plays, and a children's department with a production every two months),⁴⁸ but the suggestion fell on deaf ears. The Board offered Dean a chance to resign, but he refused to do so.⁴⁹ Although the Theatre did not renew his contract, Dean did retain his affiliation with the University and stayed on the staff as head of the Palmetto Players until the mid 1930's.

A Season of Guest Directors

The 1929-30 season, beginning the Theatre's second decade, may well have been the Theatre's most frustrating season. Margaret (Taylor) Martin, the only woman to serve in the capacity, became the Society's ninth president, succeeding W.

⁴⁵Ibid., March 12, 1929.

⁴⁶Ibid., May 28, 1929.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Ibid., April 10, 1929.

⁴⁹Ibid., June 11, 1929.

Bedford Moore, Jr.⁵⁰ Not only did it become her task to find another director, but she also inherited the leadership of an organization deeply in debt and with no business manager. Undaunted, she took over the second job as well, and in less than two months had the Society's course firmly charted for the forthcoming season.

Dan Reed was again sought as director, but having accepted another job, was not available. He did, however, offer a plan which the Society ultimately adopted: the appointment of Harry Davis as technical director for the whole season, with guest directors for each play. This would give the Society time to search for an experienced full-time director to replace William Dean.⁵¹ Davis and his wife were to be paid a total salary of \$1,800 for the season⁵² and both were to share responsibility for the Junior Stage Society. A further incentive was offered to the Davises, namely 50 per cent of the profits on an estimated operating budget of \$6,200.⁵³ The percentage arrangement initiated with Davis became a permanent arrangement offered with all directors' contracts beginning with the 1944-45 season.

Mrs. Martin and the Board further sought to establish a positive atmosphere for the new season by negotiating a loan with the South Carolina National Bank for \$2,500 (\$2,200 to be

⁵⁰Ibid., May 28, 1929.

⁵¹Ibid., June 11, 1929.

⁵²Ibid., July 9, 1929.

⁵³Ibid., August 6, 1929.

paid on the deficit and \$300 to begin the season).⁵⁴ This done, the next big undertaking was the securing of guest directors.

Belford Forrest, a drama director at the Emerson College of Oratory in Boston, was selected to direct the first play. An Englishman whose father was Dean of Worcester Cathedral, Forrest was a graduate of Trinity College in Dublin and had had the distinction of being a leading man in the original Hal Roach Picture Company when Harold Lloyd was still a boy. In addition to acting and directing, Forrest was also a playwright. His play, Lost Sheep, which opened in New York in May, 1930, was actually in preparation while he undertook the staging of Ferenc Molnar's The Swan in Columbia.

Forrest created a favorable impression during his brief stay. The Swan played to 728 in its four scheduled performances and was held over for one extra showing.⁵⁵ The year was getting off to a good start. Mrs. Martin, a decorator and artist, had provided a cheerful note by having some interior repainting done before opening night, and further provided the audience with attractive programs with handpainted swans on the blue covers. The play opened on October 3, the earliest opening production so far in the Theatre's history. With The Swan, another Town Theatre tradition was established, the opening night reception for the audience.

The second production, Paris Bound, which was performed

⁵⁴Ibid., July 9, 1929.

⁵⁵Ibid., Attendance Report, 1929-30.

a scant month later, was directed nominally by James Daly, who had selected the play in part because he had been a classmate of the playwright Philip Barry at Harvard. Daly had worked at the Carnegie Institute of Technology and had also studied with George Pierce Baker at Harvard. On Broadway, he had acted in several roles, and during the 1928-29 season had been guest director at theatres in Wichita Falls and Topeka. Like Forrest, Daly was also a writer, having authored a small volume of poems called The Guilty Sun in 1927. Unfortunately, the choice of Daly was not a particularly salubrious one for the Theatre. Daly returned to New York on October 26, nine days before the November 4 opening. Davis finished directing the play.

Between November and March, the Davises were incredibly busy. He wrote and directed a Junior Stage Society (then called "The Scalawags") version of Cinderella which played seven performances in January including one matinee at which chairs were added making it possibly the largest single audience thus far to attend a play in the Theatre.⁵⁶ Further, he directed Lynn Starling's comedy Meet the Wife which toured off and on between February and June, and finally another Junior Stage Society production, Wappin' Wharf.

The third guest director was Carl Benton Reid, who selected Richard B. Sheridan's classic comedy, The School For Scandal. Reid, later to gain fame as a distinguished character actor on Broadway and in films and television, was at the time

⁵⁶The State, January 14, 1930.

the principal actor and assistant director of the Cleveland Playhouse where he had been for several years. He had also worked with the Provincetown Players in New York. The play brought out some of Columbia's most outstanding actors, with Reid himself playing Sir Peter Teazle. When it was decided to hold-over the play two days after it had closed, Reid had already left Columbia so Harry Davis played the role for the final showing.

Between April 1 and June 21, Harry Davis finished out the season, directing two more Junior Stage Society productions and two full-length plays. Of the ten productions of the "guest" season, Davis had really done eight and the guests, two.

Harry Ellerbe Davis

If the preceding season had been frustrating, the ensuing 1930-31 season was destined to mark the economic nadir of the Theatre. Almost by default, Harry Davis became the director, a promotion from his previous position as technical director. He had proved his merit the season before, and the Society was in no position to look elsewhere. The season began with a cash-on-hand balance of \$1.12 and outstanding bills of \$245.⁵⁷ Davis' salary was raised to \$2,100 with an additional \$400 to be authorized for the technical director of his choice.⁵⁸

⁵⁷Society, Minutes, September 15, 1930.

⁵⁸Ibid., May 14, 1930.

It is due in no small measure to Margaret (Taylor) Martin, serving her second term as president, that the Society exists today. She and her Board refused to close the Theatre's doors in the face of a formidable avalanche of woes which descended almost immediately as the season began. Both Mrs. Guerry (Edmunds) Horton and Mrs. A. C. Heyward resigned their Board positions as secretary and as treasurer, respectively, in October. They were immediately replaced by Mrs. Arthur Simons and Hagood Bostick.⁵⁹ The resignations set up a chain reaction. In succeeding months, three more Board members resigned, including Arthur Hamby, the architect of the Theatre and one of its former presidents. Membership dropped from 350 in 1929-30 to 150 (plus twenty-six patrons) in 1930-31.⁶⁰ By December 2, the financial picture was so bleak that treasurer Bostick stated that Davis' November salary could not be paid.⁶¹

To increase the revenue, the Theatre negotiated with a church for Sunday rental at \$60 a month, but this was deemed too expensive a fee by the church and the Theatre refused to lower the figure.⁶² Non-royalty plays were suggested, and Board member Asher P. Brown suggested eliminating matinees, hold-overs, and one-night performances since all were potential weak revenue areas. The Society was counting heavily on a city council gift of \$400, and another possible \$300 from

⁵⁹Ibid., October 7, 1930.

⁶⁰Ibid., October 27, 1930.

⁶¹Ibid., December 2, 1930.

⁶²Ibid.

the proceeds of the Players Club Ball.⁶³ The city's allocation was not forthcoming and the Players Club netted only about \$25 from its second annual dance.⁶⁴

In March, Bostick resigned and Davis offered his resignation for the remainder of the current season in the event the Theatre was closed all of the next season. With \$400 due him in back salary, the decision was hardly unexpected.⁶⁵ Despite the desperate status of the Society, Davis completed the season on June 12, having directed a total of eight plays for the whole season.

In the two seasons that Harry Davis directed at the Town Theatre, he staged fifteen plays. An assessment of his work must be tempered by several existing conditions and facts. As a Columbian, and still quite young, Davis, despite his talents onstage and backstage, could not achieve at that point in his life the aura and respect garnered by his more "glamorous" predecessors. He could not compete with Dan Reed's vast experience and reputation, with William Dean's and Belford Forrest's English backgrounds, or Carl Benton Reid's acting experience. He was still a local boy. This, plus his youth, is partly reflected in the lower salary he was paid and to some extent in the drop in memberships. For Columbians, he was not yet strong enough in reputation to command a large following.

⁶³Ibid., January 6, 1931.

⁶⁴Ibid., February 3, 1931.

⁶⁵Ibid., March 3, 1931.

Perhaps the most trenchant factor acting against Davis had nothing to do with him personally. The Theatre's deplorable financial state reflected much of the economic status of the country. Davis was unfortunate to be in a position of leadership at the Town Theatre during the stock market crash of 1929. Stock losses between 1929-1931 were estimated at \$50,000,000,000⁶⁶ and those years coincided exactly with Davis' tenure. It was a time when the post-war 1920's affluence halted abruptly, and generally, money for such luxuries as live theatre was drastically limited. Davis was a victim then not only of youth and local origins, but of the times themselves.

Despite all the factors working against him, Davis and his wife contributed an incredible amount of work and innovation in the short two-year span. Photographs of sets indicate a high degree of expertise and attention to detail. The Davis-es edited a newsletter called "Offstage Noise" published "now and then" for the benefit of the Society's members and they brought the Junior Stage Society to new heights with six productions, four of which were dramatized and arranged by Davis.

Davis was the first director actively to involve the Town Theatre with the then relatively new invention, radio. The Theatre did its first radio stint, two one-acts on the Columbia NBC affiliate WIS on October 10, 1930.

Davis owed much to Dan Reed with whom he studied at the University of South Carolina and under whom he worked at the Theatre. Reed's versatility in theatre was emulated by

⁶⁶World Almanac. 1965, p. 208.

Davis who was adept at design, carpentry, lighting, directing, writing, and acting. One of the more important acting roles he played at the Theatre was that of the tutor in The Swan.

Stanhope Sams' review states:

Harry E. Davis, as the tutor, was unusually effective. At first a trifle stiff in his costume, he soon warmed to the role and thereafter was without fault. He spoke his "lines," as they will call them, with remarkable clearness and naturalness--two things that are becoming so rare as to seem traditional and antic. He has an unusual and fine talent.⁶⁷

Davis' energy on at least one occasion while he was at the helm of the Town Theatre proved too much. In climbing around some South Carolina low country trees to gather Spanish moss to be used in Ethel Barrymore's Scarlet Sister Mary production in New York in 1930, he sprained a shoulder. Despite the discomfort, he continued, without interruption, his ambitious schedule. Interestingly enough, the high energy level which had dominated the Theatre from 1919-1931 with an average of nine major productions per season dropped, when Davis left, to an average of seven productions per season through the 1943-44 silver anniversary season. For the next twenty years, the average was six. Today, the average is five.

In many ways, the work of Harry Davis in Columbia served as an excellent apprenticeship for his future career. Upon leaving Columbia, he went to Chapel Hill to become business manager and assistant director of the University of North Carolina's Carolina Playmakers, then under the direction of Frederick H. Koch. Except for work on a Master's degree at Colum-

⁶⁷The State, October 4, 1929.

bia University in the early 30's and a three and one-half year stint in the Army during World War II, Davis spent most of his time in North Carolina where he continued to bring lustre to an outstanding drama program at UNC (ultimately as head of the department), and to such enterprises as The Lost Colony and Unto These Hills where he served in directing and managerial capacities. He died September 15, 1968, and was honored with a posthumous award at the Southeastern Theatre Conference in 1969 "For Distinguished Service to Southeastern Theatre."

Belford Forrest, 1931-1936

Despite its precarious financial and personnel problems, the Columbia Stage Society weathered the summer of 1931 and refused to discontinue operation. In a real sense, the period marked the end of a phase for the Theatre. The death that year of the Theatre's first treasurer and one of its strongest advocates, Morton Visanska, and the stepping down of Margaret (Taylor) Martin from the presidency brought to a close the Reed era. While a number of the Board members had been with the organization since its earliest days, the leadership of the Board and the director were new. James H. Hammond succeeded Mrs. Martin as president, and the remaining officers were novelist Julia Peterkin as vice-president, Lucy Hampton Bostick as secretary, and Miss Mary Perry as treasurer. Interestingly, Mrs. Bostick would remain the Society's secretary for thirty-seven years until her death in 1968. The new director was Belford Forrest.

Forrest was still associated with Emerson College when

he accepted the invitation to take over the directorship at the Town Theatre. He imposed three conditions to his employment: that he should have a seven-show salary of \$2,040 (in addition to a sum he would receive from the Columbia City School System for teaching drama classes at Columbia High School), that he would have sole decision on plays produced, and that he would have a stage assistant.⁶⁸ Forrest undoubtedly had some trepidation about the new job he had undertaken, especially when the indebtedness at his arrival was \$4,401.47.⁶⁹ Nevertheless, he began his first full season in Columbia with Noel Coward's Hay Fever for the late-opening (November 30) 1931-32 year and began an association with the Theatre that was to last five years.

In a concentrated effort to build memberships, John E. Cecil, a Board member and director of the Columbia Forward Movement, acted as sales manager for the membership campaign headed by Charles H. Moorefield, also a member of the Theatre's Board. The goal was 1,000 season members to be enlisted in one day, October 16.⁷⁰ With a force of 182 workers, the campaign netted about 700 members who paid \$5.00 to see seven plays. Clearly, this was a positive note both for the Theatre and for Forrest.

As with each new director, changes evolved in policy

⁶⁸Society, Minutes, November 2, 1931. (The salary was later raised to \$2,075 thus comprising nearly half of the \$5,000 projected season expenditures--Financial Statement, December 5, 1931.)

⁶⁹Ibid., May 30, 1932.

⁷⁰The State, October 13, 1931.

and modus operandi. Beginning with Forrest, the musical intermission interludes which had been an integral part of all bills since 1919 were terminated. Forrest elected to change the traditional performance days from Thursday, Friday, and Saturday to Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, supplanting the Saturday matinee with one on Wednesday. This did not remain consistent, however, in the later Forrest seasons. Playbills, which had been one-sheet affairs under Reed and Davis, reverted to the booklet format with ads as used by Dean. Forrest added one further innovation, a "who's who" of the cast members. This feature has been kept to the present time. The Junior League was not asked to furnish ushers. This task was to be handled by the Theatre.

The thirty-six productions directed by Forrest give a clue not only to his tastes, but to the kind of program he felt a community theatre should conduct. Such plays as Hamlet, Julius Caesar, Macbeth, Othello, Candida, Lady Windermere's Fan, She Stoops to Conquer, David Garrick, The Marquise, Charley's Aunt, Camille, Hedda Gabler, Anna Christie, Caroline, East Lynne, The Gondoliers, The Mikado, HMS Pinafore, and The Pirates of Penzance greeted Columbians at the Town Theatre between 1931-1936. Possibly during no other five year period has the Theatre offered so consistently solid a bill of fare. Forrest established Shakespeare as a writer whom community theatres should not fear as too "erudite" or "classical" for the average playgoer. A very long editorial in The State on December 11, 1932 rhapsodized about Hamlet:

A hit, a very palpable hit!

This was, unquestionably, the opinion arrived at by the more sophisticated and experienced portion of the audiences that have witnessed the performances of Hamlet at the Town Theatre by the players that Director Belford Forrest has so quickly gleaned and sifted from our townspeople and collegians. It is also, no doubt, the opinion of those who have not had so good opportunities to see fine theatrical productions here or elsewhere. For the performances have been of exceptional merit, even brilliancy, and such as would have done immense credit to long-trained companies.

.....
We fear that it will be long, if ever, before we look upon its like again. Hamlet will remain a glorious tradition of the Town Theatre.⁷¹

Forrest lent the Theatre stature by his choice of repertory and his belief that a quality production began with a worthwhile script. Anna Christie was the first of only three O'Neill plays to be done by the Theatre. Forrest dared to undertake the play which his predecessors had feared as too controversial. Four new scripts were premiered during the Forrest period, three by the director himself. While Gilbert and Sullivan had been introduced to Town Theatre audiences prior to Forrest's coming, he established a tradition for an annual musical. World War II interrupted the inclusion of a musical, however, and it was not until the advent of Robert Telford in 1955-56 that musicals were resumed with consistency.

If Forrest was successful, there were several factors which aided him. During three of his five years the city appropriated an annual gift of \$300.⁷² The Theatre had a business manager all five years and also a technical director all

⁷¹Ibid., December 11, 1932.

⁷²In 1932-33, the sum was in scrip and had to be paid back in taxes. (Society, Minutes, April 12, 1933.)

five years. Mrs. Forrest managed the Theatre's business affairs for the first three and one-half years and was succeeded by Ruth Hall Graham. Wilbur Wertz (later a stage actor under the stage name of Robert Woods), Robert H. Cheatham, and Francis Letton (later the author of the successful play The Young Elizabeth) were technical directors who designed and built sets at the Theatre. While all of his predecessors had directed plays for children as part of the season, Forrest directed only one play designed specifically for children. Separate Children's Theatre directors were appointed with the 1933-34 season and children's plays were not part of the adult subscription series. Further, Forrest gained recognition and financial support for the Theatre with several strategically placed "theatrical" events.

The first of these was a production of Ibsen's Hedda Gabler with Julia Peterkin in the title role, and New York photographer Doris Ulmann as Julia Tesman. Mrs. Peterkin, still in the spotlight from her 1929 Pulitzer Prize winning Scarlet Sister Mary, was a South Carolina celebrity and a definite drawing card. The production, staged February 25, 26, and 27, 1932, gained even more publicity when Martha Graham, who had danced at the Theatre earlier that month, arranged for ladies in the play to be costumed from the Vanderbilt collection of Costumes. Hedda Gabler was well attended and was performed again, in Charleston, on April 2.

In 1932-33, Forrest offered free classes in play-writing and acting to members of the Theatre and Mrs. Forrest

taught voice and culture. These classes were well publicized and were well attended. The excitement of Hamlet, the first Shakespearian production since Reed's Romeo and Juliet in 1925-26, was quickly followed by a resounding success with Marian DeForest's dramatization of Louisa May Alcott's Little Women. After playing six performances at the Theatre, the production toured to Winthrop College, Union, St. Matthews, the Veteran's Hospital in Columbia, Camden, and Sumter.

The premiere of Josephine Withers Cardwell's If I Were Queen brought interest in a new script less than a month after Little Women, and Forrest's casting of James Resley, a former professional actor who had appeared with Walter Houston in O'Neill's The Fountain, as Armand opposite Columbia's popular Ruth (Hope) Ogden as Marguerite Gautier in Dumas, fils' Camille was another coup for the Theatre.

Although the Columbia City Schools ceased their financial support for further classes at Columbia High School in 1933-34, the Forrests continued their classes at the Theatre and Forrest's efforts were rewarded when Sarah Hook, one of his playwriting students, received word that Baker's Plays had accepted for publication her play, In a Bus Station.

Perhaps Forrest's most satisfying moment came in the fall of 1933. Despite the fact that the fifteenth season was beginning with only \$8.00 in the treasury, the \$2,500 note negotiated by Mrs. Martin in 1929 had been paid off and was framed to hang in the lobby on opening night.⁷³ The limited

⁷³The State, October 9, 1933.

financial success inspired the Board in a moment of gratitude and generosity to give the Forrests an automobile at the end of the 1933-34 season.

Although the high quality of production continued and the membership reached 879 for 1934-35, a kind of malaise began to slowly infiltrate the Stage Society in seemingly isolated ways. Forrest, perhaps more far-reaching in perception than his Board, could not convince them to buy the property adjacent to the Theatre. (The lot, at that time for sale, could have been purchased for \$7,000.) This was later to prove a costly decision for the Theatre.

Dr. James T. Penney noted at a meeting of the Board that the Theatre was missing contact with young men and women in the community. He and Dr. E. R. Crow were named as a committee to study this.⁷⁴ The financial picture became gloomy enough for the Society to vote on having a collector to collect unpaid memberships and other debts to the Theatre.⁷⁵ That the stresses, both subtle and obvious, were beginning to polarize the membership is borne out in James H. Hammond's remarks on the end of his presidency in 1935:

With art comes temperament. The theatre is sustained by it. There must be widely divergent ideas of how the theatre should be operated. The very nature of the organization is predicated upon conflicting ideals. When an organization is composed of cultured and intelligent people with firm convictions ripples must of necessity occur. It is suggested that there be a broadening of the line of demarkation between the board and the operation of the theatre. "Remote control," as I have often termed it.⁷⁶

⁷⁴Society, Minutes, April 10, 1935. They recommended (Minutes, June 12, 1935) that there be production assistants.

⁷⁵Ibid., May 15, 1935. ⁷⁶The Record, May 24, 1935.

Forrest's final season got off to a bad start when Charles H. Moorefield resigned as president, after having served only the summer months. Moorefield was succeeded by W. Bedford Moore, Jr., who had held the position seven seasons earlier. Although Forrest was ably assisted by Francis Letton and Fay Ball Alexander in the technical and children's areas, money again became a critical factor. The season opened with \$8.93 in the treasury and Frank Durham was granted a twenty per cent commission on all the old debts he collected.⁷⁷ The Board considered a number of alternatives in its search for funds. Among them:

1. Ask the members to donate \$1.00.
2. Have Julia Peterkin to speak and collect an offering.
3. Have an artists' night program.
4. Have William Lyons Phelps (then at Aiken) to speak.
5. Rent costumes for the forthcoming Sesqui-centennial celebration.
6. Establish a make-up department to teach the use and application of make-up.
7. Have Dr. Robert Gibbes give an illustrated lecture on South America.⁷⁸

Due to a lack of money for royalty payments, Forrest was forced finally to stage East Lynne and to create an "intimate review" for his final two productions instead of producing more costly shows such as There's Always Juliet.

⁷⁷Society, Minutes, September 4, 1935.

⁷⁸Ibid., March 3, 1936.

A crisis, and ultimately an impasse, occurred between Forrest and the Board when it came time to renew the director's contract. Forrest wanted to stay only if Mrs. Forrest were added to the staff too.⁷⁹ The Board pointed out that during Harry Davis' tenure only the director was paid, and declined Forrest's offer.⁸⁰

The State, learning of Forrest's resignation, wrote:

Dignity, with utmost care as to correct detail, have [sic] marked Mr. Forrest's direction, yet never has he allowed those factors to make his plays stilted. He has the happy faculty of training his cast, then on the night of the show "leaving it to them," he being perhaps the calmest person at the opening.⁸¹

Although a resolution was passed at the annual meeting of the Society in May urging Forrest to stay, it was not until the Board meeting of June 2, 1936, that the issue was finally closed. The Society had hoped to alleviate the financial stress of Forrest's salary by working out a joint arrangement with the University for Forrest to teach part-time. The University declined. Further, Forrest, appearing before the Board said his wife should be given the position of publicity director. A showman was needed, he felt, and Mrs. Forrest could handle the function well. He also stated that if he did stay, he would cater to the young contingent which had supported him.⁸² With this pronouncement,

⁷⁹Mrs. Forrest had been replaced as Business Manager in March, 1935 by Ruth Hall Graham.

⁸⁰Society, Minutes, May 8, 1936.

⁸¹The State, May 12, 1936.

⁸²Society, Minutes, June 2, 1936.

the die was cast and no compromise was deemed possible.

Like his predecessors, Forrest had weathered a difficult period in the Theatre's history. He had seen it through the roughest hazards of the Depression and had brought still more lustre to the organization by his talent and good taste. In April, 1938, less than two years after he left Columbia, Forrest was injured in an accident in Hollywood and both legs had to be amputated. The Players Club staged a benefit for Forrest a few days later, with Dan Reed as Master of Ceremonies. A purse was sent to the Forrests. Unable to survive the after-effects of the accident, Belford Forrest died May 1, 1938 in Los Angeles.

Carl Glick, 1938-1940

In the odd way in which fate sometimes decrees circumstances, it was the same guiding hand which had first found Dan Reed in 1919 that located his successor in 1938--that of Martha Dwight. Living at that time in New York, Miss Dwight interviewed Carl Glick for the Stage Society's Board and it was on her recommendation that he was selected.

Glick had an impressive background. Born in Marshalltown, Iowa, on September 11, 1890, he was graduated from Northwestern University in 1915 and had not only organized a little theatre in Waterloo, Iowa, but had directed in such widespread places as Balfour, New York; Sarasota, Florida; San Antonio, Texas; York, Pennsylvania; and Missoula, Montana. Over a period of some six years he wrote a column on the Little Theatre Movement for The Springfield (Massachusetts)

Republican.

Glick was offered a seven-play season salary of \$2,400, with a percentage of the profit above the budget.⁸³ Although the goal for season members was 1,500, only about 800 were actually secured.

The twentieth anniversary season got off to an interesting start by Glick's choice of Katharine Dayton's and George S. Kaufman's First Lady. The production opened on Thursday, October 27, 1938, but did not play the following night because Mrs. Roosevelt was speaking at the Township Auditorium. The first lady visited the Town Theatre while in Columbia. Her photograph with Glick in front of the Theatre (with billboard in the background) was excellent publicity for the new director.

Glick pursued a fairly moderate course during his two years at the Theatre. His play choices were typical of community theatre fare and he was lucky to be director at a time when several Broadway favorites became available for little theatre production: Ferber's and Kaufman's Stage Door, Wilder's Our Town, the Spewacks' Boy Meets Girl, Sherwood's The Petrified Forest and Clifford Goldsmith's long running What a Life. Glick adhered to the annual Forrest formula of a Gilbert and Sullivan, as well as a Shakespearian play, choosing The Taming of the Shrew as the special twentieth anniversary production.

Despite the fact that Glick had been chosen by Martha Dwight, he was not typical of his predecessors, all of whom Miss Dwight knew. Many of the Board members and other Theatre

⁸³Ibid., July 18, 1938.

people found his methods and approaches to the job difficult to understand, yet in many ways, he may have been up to that time, the best and most well-organized public relations spokesman the Theatre had had. He was a guest speaker to nearly all of the civic groups in Columbia during the two years and cultivated the idea of reaching out to spread word of the Theatre to as wide a segment of the city as possible. He was the first director to have publicized tryouts in the local newspaper and, in an effort to increase attendance, suggested a Block Tickets plan where a sponsoring group could get a 40% discount on up to 200 tickets purchased in a block (to be resold at regular prices to its members), and 50% discount on blocks numbering above 200 tickets.⁸⁴

Glick's background in journalism and creative writing proved to be a strong asset to the Theatre. During his tenure at the Theatre, the Society subscribed to a newspaper clipping service and the scrapbooks of the Theatre's activities throughout that period are some of the best in the Theatre's archives. In addition to this, he brought the Town Theatre lasting recognition in a book he wrote with Albert McCreery entitled Curtains Going Up. The book, published while he was in Columbia, concerns the workings of little theatres in the United States and prominently features the Town Theatre in its various chapters. It is still a valuable source work on community theatres of the era.

Another of the noteworthy contributions indirectly

⁸⁴This was passed at the Board meeting of January 27, 1939.

attributable to Glick is the early membership drive--begun in May/June for the following fall season. This has been retained as a permanent feature at the Theatre, often with cheaper rates or the offer of a bonus production if the membership is paid prior to a certain date.

Oddly, at a time when the Theatre continued to need better attendance (Glick's first season ended with a \$375 deficit.⁸⁵), the Board passed a resolution on May 31, 1939, to limit the membership for the next season to 1,200 and then not sell individual admissions to outsiders. It seemed that the director, in the promotion of the Theatre, was at cross purposes with the Board. Apparently unaware of Glick's unhappiness over certain policies, the Board was surprised in August of that year when Glick asked for more authority in determining Theatre policies, and promptly offered him a contract for the next season with no salary increase. In September, Ruth Hall Graham resigned as business manager and the 1939-40 season, though it began with Our Town, was off to a less than harmonious administrative start. Miss Graham did work on the membership campaign, and upon the resignation of Dr. James T. Penney on April 15, 1940, she became treasurer, a job she ~~held~~ held (with the exception of 1954-59) until 1973..

Glick was ably assisted during his directorship by Ann Scott (Barnett) Morris as director of the Children's Theatre in 1938-39 and by Mabel Bradley (Kalmakoff) Payne, in the same job in 1939-40. Two children's productions were

⁸⁵Society, Minutes, July 11, 1939.

done each year. Sets during the Glick tenure were designed mostly by Allen Whitehead, who was later to become a well-known executive with Music Theatre International, and built by Glen O. Schultz.

In retrospect, Glick is perhaps viewed as a transitional figure in the Theatre's development. Following Daniel Reed in Reed's second term provided a direct link to the beginning years of the Stage Society and at the same time prepared the way for the new ferment that was destined to be brought about by World War II. Glick's work in Columbia found words of praise, as the following letter indicates:

. . . I want to sincerely say that I think Our Town is one of the finest productions yet to be seen on the boards of our Town Theatre. . . .

When one leaves a theatre with the feeling that perhaps he has been too rushed to see into the heart of that sunflower or has not had the time to recognize that deep kinship of us all and that perhaps he is missing life in the living of it; that theatre has served a two-fold purpose.

Mr. Glick and the entire cast are to be congratulated upon the performance of Our Town.⁸⁶

Despite Glick's considerable theatre work, he will probably be best remembered as the author of seventeen books and nine published plays. His several books on the Chinese in America, including Shake Hands with the Dragon, The Good Luck Horse and The Magic Monkey had a wide following. His last work was The Story of Our Flag, a book for the juvenile market, published in 1964.

A raconteur and humorist, Glick delighted in telling

⁸⁶Letter from Mrs. Reginald L. Kramer to the Editor of The State. Published October 31, 1939.

anecdotes--often on himself. On the occasion of the publication of his book I'm a Busybody, the author complained about old acquaintances not stating their names when greeting you years later. His feeling was that one should say, "How do you do? I'm so-and-so."

Said Glick, "One day when I was going along Eighth Street in New York, I saw coming toward me a distinguished middle-aged lady whose face was very familiar. I felt I had met her some place or other, at a tea, or a reception, but at the moment I couldn't remember just where. As she came along I smiled. She smiled back.

'So I said in a polite and friendly manner, 'How do you do? I'm Carl Glick.'

"She replied in equally as polite and friendly manner, 'How do you do? I'm Eleanor Roosevelt.'"⁸⁷

Glick's family life proved puzzling to his colleagues in Columbia. Although he had married Broadway actress Sue Ann Wilson in 1936, she spent only one week in Columbia during his entire two years at the Theatre. Mrs. Glick, commenting on this, stated, " . . . I was what is now called a 'career woman'!!! and was holding down several interesting positions."⁸⁸

After leaving Columbia, Glick devoted much of his time to free-lance writing. In 1954, he joined the faculty of Western University at San Diego and retired in San Diego in 1961. Glick died there on March 7, 1971.

Frederick Hayden Coe, 1940-1944

World War II, a patriotic citizenry, enormously increased activity at Fort Jackson, and a bright young director

⁸⁷The State, August 29, 1949.

⁸⁸Letter from Sue W. Glick to the author, dated June 19, 1971.

named Fred Coe provided the Town Theatre with a boost unlike any it had previously known. From Alligator, Mississippi, via Nashville and New Haven came the new director, the first of six Yale Alumni to steer the organization between 1940-1974.

Coe had acted at the Nashville Community Theatre in productions of Winterset, High Tor, and Boy Meets Girl in 1937 and 1938. The job in Columbia followed schooling at George Peabody College and Yale, and ironically it was through Carl Glick's book Curtains Going Up that he first learned of the Town Theatre. Hired for a seven-play season, Coe received a salary of \$1,500.

If the persistent idea in show business that a large part of success depends on being at the right place at the right time is true, then Fred Coe is an excellent example. Coe's national renown has proved this. The swell of young military service people that flooded into Columbia in the early 1940's to get their Army basic training at Fort Jackson provided a source of rich talent from which Coe and the Town Theatre were to benefit heavily for the next four years. The emphasis and energy were youth-oriented and the Theatre's membership jumped from about 650 in 1940-41 to 1,249, nearly twice that many, in 1943-44. Coe, himself, was in his early twenties and provided the new zest and enthusiasm which the Theatre had long needed.

The bill of fare during 1940-41 represented what might be called "sure-fire" box office. There were virtually no real

gambles except perhaps Ferenc Molnar's Liliom which had not at that time gained the wide-spread recognition that Rodgers and Hammerstein would give it a few years later as the basis for their musical Carousel. Coe kept the tradition of an annual Shakespearian play only for his first season. After Twelfth Night in May, 1941, there was not another Shakespearian play done at the Town Theatre until March, 1958 when Robert Telford also staged Twelfth Night.

Gilbert and Sullivan operettas had been popular fare at the Theatre since Dan Reed's production of Patience in the 1924-25 season. Coe staged the Theatre's third mounting of HMS Pinafore his first year and the Theatre's second production of The Pirates of Penzance his second season. Except for an original musical review, Show Me First, in 1943-44, there were no musicals staged at the Theatre for a decade. Gene Crotty revived the tradition with Spring For Sure in the 1953-54 season. Gilbert and Sullivan works have not been produced since Coe's The Pirates of Penzance in the 1941-42 season.

A strong succession of popular American plays as High Tor, The Male Animal, The Man Who Came to Dinner, George Washington Slept Here, Claudia, Arsenic and Old Lace, The Philadelphia Story, The Women, My Sister Eileen, Green Grow the Lilacs, Junior Miss, and The Little Foxes flourished under Coe's directorial hand. In addition, he achieved a dramatic coup with the American stage premiere of Daphne du Maurier's Rebecca. The production not only focused national attention on the Theatre but also won a Hollywood contract for the young

actress Gloria Saunders who played the title character.

Fred Coe's four years in Columbia, like those of his predecessors, were not without their woes. He had inherited a considerable deficit upon his arrival, and despite his success, it took nearly two years to stabilize the budget. It was this situation which ultimately brought about the addition of a new category of memberships at the Theatre, the \$100 life membership. It was the Board's answer to expedient retiring of the indebtedness.⁸⁹

The War itself posed problems for Coe and the Theatre. In an effort to attract as many people as possible to attend the Theatre, the general admission was reduced from \$1.00 to seventy-five cents and students paid fifty cents.⁹⁰ Soldiers were charged twenty-five cents.⁹¹ The Board adopted Coe's suggestion to offer a double season ticket costing \$5.00.⁹² The reduced admissions proved to be a drawing card until the Theatre was faced with an admissions tax comparable to that of movie houses and other programs of entertainment. In an effort to strike a balance, the Board agreed to absorb the tax on season memberships and charge the tax on individual admissions.⁹³ Since the absorbed tax obviously represented a loss to the Theatre, the 1942-43 season quietly noted "Plus

⁸⁹Society, Minutes, June 12, 1942.

⁹⁰Ibid., June 30, 1941.

⁹¹The State, September 21, 1941.

⁹²Society, Minutes, March 17, 1941.

⁹³Ibid., October 16, 1941.

10%" on all memberships, except for patrons (\$25.00) and the later-added life members.

In addition to the tax and deficit problems, Coe was constantly faced with the wartime variables of rehearsal absences and, occasionally, sudden transfers of military people in his casts. Programs often note last-minute replacements. Further, materials and supplies were hard to obtain because of shortages and rationing. At one point in order to help the war effort, curtain time was changed to 7:15 on Wednesday and Thursday and 8:15 on Friday and Saturday because of the ban on pleasure driving. This allowed theatre-goers to ride buses home earlier in the evening.⁹⁴

While the War offered certain hazards in Town Theatre planning, including the ever-present possibility of Coe's being drafted, it brought an enormous sense of patriotism and unity into the ranks of Theatre workers. References to the purchase of new flags, the singing of the national anthem before performances, and the sharing of local dinner tables with servicemen who offered their limited free time to the Theatre are mentioned in newspaper articles of the period. Coe took productions to such places as Fort Jackson's Reception Center, its hospital, the Veteran's Hospital, and to the Congaree Air Base. The Theatre gave \$100 from its box office receipts of HMS Pinafore to Bundles For Britain.

⁹⁴The State, February 28, 1943. This plan was abandoned after only two plays, The Philadelphia Story (starting times 7:00 and 8:00 respectively) and The Women (7:15 and 8:15), in March, 1943.

Coe unquestionably benefited from an era when most Americans were pulling together in a common national effort. The morale, unlike that of the late twenties and thirties, was high. Further, he had the advantage of a solid staff who capably carried their own weight in the organization. Mabel (Kalmakoff) Payne served in the double capacity of business manager and Children's Theatre director during Coe's first year. She was succeeded by Alice Coe, the director's wife, as business manager. The Children's Theatre was discontinued. In the technical areas, Coe was more than proficient, but he was aided by a strong core of talented helpers including Glenn O. Schultz, Allen Whitehead, Elizabeth N. Gillelan, Joe Winter, Sanders Buchanan, and Richard Goode.

When Coe left the Town Theatre in 1944 to seek his fortune in New York with a fledgling invention called television, he had directed twenty-nine plays in Columbia. By that time, the Theatre was ending its first quarter century of operation and had logged an impressive 199 major productions. Coe's contributions may have marked the highest water mark the Theatre had experienced since the early years of Dan Reed's directorship. The new blood in artistic and management levels, and onstage, was the best tonic the Theatre could possibly have had. Oddly, the Theatre's initial impulse had derived from World War I and Camp Jackson. A quarter of a century later, the military base and another war gave it a needed transfusion.

That Frederick Coe was ambitious was clear from the

beginning of his work in Columbia. His choices of plays indicate that he not only understood his audience, but he developed a knack for giving them what they wanted. His casting was shrewd, and relationships with his fellow workers were affable and yet unrelentingly demanding and professional. He acted in about a fourth of his plays, taking such plum roles as Jonathan Brewster (the Boris Karloff role) in Arsenic and Old Lace, Mr. Darcy in Pride and Prejudice, Jack Favell in Rebecca, and Horace Giddens in The Little Foxes.

Coe's sense of showmanship and awareness of the value of publicity did not stop with his productions. When he fortuitously cast Josephine Zula and Adger Brown as Eliza and Higgins in Pygmalion, their resounding success and subsequent dramatic pairings became special treats for Columbians. Soon after it became known that the young couple planned to marry, Coe suggested that the wedding take place on the stage at the Town Theatre. Their romance had grown there and it seemed a logical setting for the ceremony. The army sergeant and his fiancée demurred.

Coe's severance of ties with the Town Theatre was clean. He informed the Board several months before expiration of his contract of his intentions to go to New York.⁹⁵ With the exception of Dan Reed's first departure from the Theatre in 1927, Coe was only the second of the six directors in the first twenty-five years to leave the Theatre on a positive note. This became an enormously valuable factor for Coe's

⁹⁵Society, Minutes, April 6, 1944.

successor and for continuity in the ranks of the organization.

In New York, after brief stints in acting and assistant stage managing, Coe was a production assistant at NBC-TV early in 1945. Five years later, "Television Playhouse" which he produced was cited as the outstanding dramatic production of the new medium. His honors and achievements since have placed him among the top ranks of producers and directors in the United States. The Miracle Worker, Two For The Seesaw, All the Way Home, Gideon, and A Thousand Clowns are among the many plays which owe their initial productions to Coe. He is credited with fostering the careers of such playwrights as William Gibson, Tad Mosel, Paddy Chayefsky, N. Richard Nash, and Sumner Locke Elliott. Actresses Anne Bancroft, Eva Marie Saint, Jo Van Fleet, and Sandy Dennis (all Oscar winners) furthered their careers with roles in Coe plays, and directors Delbert Mann, Arthur Penn, and J. Vincent Donehue gained wide recognition by working with Coe. In 1961, Coe was named Presidential TV Advisor to President Kennedy, and in 1962, he was presented with the "Distinguished Career Award" of the Southeastern Theatre Conference. His work continues.

The founders of the Columbia Stage Society envisioned the kind of organization that would present the very best program in the performing arts to Columbians, and they also wanted an organization that would last. The Society's insistence on professional direction and its uncompromising stand on the matter brought a strength and continuity to the operation of the Town Theatre. The six regular directors between 1919-1944

were an exceptionally talented group of men. The Theatre's continued existence through turbulent financial periods, and the Depression, was due in no small measure to them and the plays they presented.

CHAPTER V

ACTORS AND THE PLAYERS CLUB

While so many current theatre people refer to contemporary theatre as a director's medium, it has to be acknowledged in the final analysis that it is the players with whom the general public most closely identifies the moments of comedy, pathos, and fantasy onstage. Through their performances and because of the enticements of scenery, costumes, lighting and make-up, the players stir the imagination of the audience in the theatre. Playwrights and directors may offer written material and guidance, but it is the actors who are seen when the curtain goes up.

Generally speaking, the Theatre has used amateur actors in its productions. With the exceptions of a few guest performers brought in for specific roles in the later years, no actors have been paid. Although Reed may well have envisioned a professional resident company when he started, the community Theatre's non-professional status has always been maintained.

Initially, most of the actors at the Town Theatre came from the membership of the Stage Society which was composed primarily of those interested in the arts in Columbia--business and professional people, educators, the University community,

and so on. The roster of names which fostered its growth was quite literally a list of the prominent persons in the community. While Reed did not limit his casting to those who held memberships, those were the people he knew best. Since open tryouts and auditions did not become established practice until the 1930's, actors were simply "asked" to take roles. The standing joke at the Theatre during the Reed era was that the director always had "a cast in his eye." The method of cast selection was an accepted procedure and was not challenged. Margaret (Taylor) Martin, who often acted in Reed's productions, said that she, like others, preferred his approach in choosing a cast and would not have liked an open tryout. While this might have fostered the idea of cliquishness about the Theatre, Mrs. Martin explained that such was not the case because the same people who supported the Theatre were also those who supported the other cultural endeavors in Columbia and they all knew each other.¹

Reed was always on the lookout for new talent and was not above approaching complete strangers, if he felt they possessed the right qualities for a particular role. His impetuosity on at least one of these occasions nearly frightened two little girls into running for police aid. The incident occurred during the 1920-21 season when he was directing Alice in Wonderland.

I had cast both the elongated and the tiny Alice, and was driven almost to desperation in my search for the main

¹Personal Interview, July 15, 1970.

Alice. I lined up a possibility or two but they were of the "fussy" fairy princess type and would have imposed following the Rackham illustrations rather than the Tenniel. So, just a week before our date for the play we were still without an Alice. It was a Saturday morning--kid's movie morning around 10 o'clock. I had an errand that took me through the State House grounds and there in the path just ahead of me walked two little girls--each gripping a diminutive purse. One of the two was Alice! At last! Found! So I hastened to catch up with them--they heard my footbeat and accelerated theirs--I pursued--even called out. "Wait, little girls!" Nothing doing. They ran. They had reached the Wade Hampton monument before I caught up with them. They turned defiantly to face their pursuer. I stated simply who I was--and what I wanted. The Alice one (it was Elizabeth Barnes) said she'd ask her mother and if it was at all possible she could come to a rehearsal that afternoon and tryout the part. Well, she came. And she was it!²

One of the popular myths that has grown up in the Town Theatre, and often quoted over the years, related to Miss Florence Olvey who is supposed to have uttered the first words in the first Town Theatre play in 1919. Actually the program does list the play in which Miss Olvey appeared, Joint Owners in Spain, as the first of a bill of two one-acts. Reed, however, switched the order of the plays as listed on the printed program and it was W. K. Young who usurped Miss Olvey's place in the Society's history since he was one of the four cast members (including Reed) of the other play, The Rising of the Moon. While Reed probably did not intend to set a precedent, it is true that all of the Town Theatre directors in the first quarter century, except guest James Daly and Carl Glick, acted in their own shows.

²The State, March 24, 1940. (Reed was writing of this incident to Mabel (Kalmakoff) Payne on the occasion of her production of Alice in Wonderland at the Theatre. Elizabeth Barnes was married to Evander Brown in February, 1950.

One of the first actresses to earn a permanent place for herself in the annals of the Town Theatre was Mrs. R. Beverly Sloan. Born in British Honduras, Mrs. Sloan had come to Columbia in 1901 to attend college. When Dan Reed produced the Stage Society's first full-length play, in the old Pastime Theatre, it was Mrs. Sloan who played the title character in The Misleading Lady. Shortly after that, when the Society bought the old house at 1012 Sumter Street and turned it into a theatre, it was Mrs. Sloan who starred in the first production, The Gypsy Trail. The occasion of the opening of the temporary Theatre had a special significance for Mrs. Sloan. The house had been her home. After their marriage, she and her husband had lived there with her father-in-law. Reminiscing at eighty-three about her early acting experiences, Mrs. Sloan commented that she had enjoyed them and that compliments had been important to her, but her involvement in the theatre had not been serious. There were too many other things which she enjoyed doing.³

If numbers of roles are representative, there are a dozen-or-so actresses who emerged as the "stars" of the first twenty-five years. Ruth (Hope) Ogden, Elizabeth Belser Fuller, Fay Ball (Alexander) King, Margaret (Taylor) Martin and Perla Sumner all logged more than a dozen roles during the time, and they were followed closely by Mrs. D. S. Pope, Sara Jones, Ada Taylor Graham, Mae Maner Coleman, Frances Keith King, and Josephine Zula Brown.

³Personal Interview. August 21, 1970.

Fay King and Elizabeth Fuller were products of Dan Reed's Junior Stage Society where they acted while still children, finally graduating into adult roles. Mrs. King charmed Columbians with her youthful performances as Juliet in Romeo and Juliet and as Cecily in The Importance of Being Earnest and tried her hand briefly at professional theatre in New York. She toured with Madge Kennedy in Michael and Mary in 1930-31. Mrs. Fuller, a respected artist now living in Anderson, South Carolina, continued a long association with the Theatre. She served as the Theatre's business manager from 1944-1952 and was active in both set and costume design, and onstage.

Of the women actively involved onstage in the Stage Society between 1919-1944, perhaps the one who made the most diversified contributions to the Theatre was Margaret (Taylor) Martin. Mrs. Martin not only graced the stage in a dazzling array of roles, but she and her husband, the late Dr. Julius Taylor, had been instrumental in helping Martha Dwight and Dan Reed get the organization started in 1919. She is the only woman ever to serve the organization as president; she founded the Players Club; and she designed and built costumes over a long period of time. Although Mrs. Martin has retired from active participation in the Theatre's affairs, her interest in the organization remains lively. In recent years, she has gained recognition as the author of Charleston Ghosts.

One of the highest compliments that can be paid to any actor is to call him an actor's actor. There is no praise

quite so satisfying as that from one's own peer group. Ruth (Hope) Ogden warrants this as do few other Town Theatre performers. The number of roles she had played between 1924-1944 exceeded thirty. She portrayed the title or central figures in Romance, A Doll's House, The School for Scandal, Fashion, East Lynne, Personal Appearance, Camille, Morning's at Seven, Anna Christie, Liliom, Arsenic and Old Lace, Pride and Prejudice, and Rebecca. Before she retired from the Town Theatre's stage in 1949, she played leading roles in Elizabeth the Queen, The Glass Menagerie, and The Barretts of Wimpole Street.

Mrs. Ogden, now retired and living within walking distance of the Town Theatre, later worked in the Broadway productions of A Trip to the Bountiful and The Miracle Worker (both Fred Coe productions) and Inherit the Wind.

When she played the title character in the Town Theatre's production of Elizabeth the Queen, Columbia's well-known portrait painter, Charles Mason Crowson, was commissioned to do a portrait of Mrs. Ogden as Elizabeth, the painting to be used on the set. The handsome canvas now hangs in Mrs. Ogden's apartment. Standing next to it and reflecting, Mrs. Ogden said, "I never thought of myself as being able to act."⁴ The thousands who saw the petite lady at the Town Theatre over the years would doubtless have taken issue. Even though Mrs. Ogden has not appeared in a play at the Theatre since her performance as Elizabeth Barrett Browning in the 1948-49 season, her legend still persists.

⁴Personal Interview. August 20, 1970.

In addition to the "regulars" who gained their own following and achieved their own successes, there were a number of single roles which brought recognition to the Theatre by virtue of the actresses' prominence. Dan Reed cast Mrs. William B. Burney, then State Regent of the DAR, in The Doctor in Spite of Himself. William Dean chose Mrs. L. H. Jennings, a past president of the South Carolina Federation of Women's Clubs and at that time president of the Southeastern Council of Federated Clubwomen, for The Charm School. Belford Forrest used Julia Peterkin and New York photographer Doris Ulmann for Hedda Gabler, and Margaret Vale (stage name of Margaret Flinn Howe) in his own play Fanny Dorini. Miss Vale, who had acted professionally with Nazimova, Marjorie Rambeau, and Jane Cowl, was the daughter of Dr. J. William Flinn of the University. Her marriage at Flinn Hall, her home on the USC campus (just around the corner from the Theatre), had been a noteworthy social event, due in no small measure to the fact that Woodrow Wilson was one of the guests.

One of the most widely acclaimed successes was achieved by Gloria Saunders, a Dreher High School student who was cast by Fred Coe as the du Maurier heroine, Rebecca. Seen at the Theatre by a talent scout, Miss Saunders won a film contract and, while she never attained stardom in its true Hollywood sense, she did appear in such films as O. S. S. with Alan Ladd and Cry Danger with Dick Powell and Rhonda Fleming.

By 1944, the male contingent of performers who had appeared in the most productions included Dan Reed, Frank

Durham, Harry Davis, J. T. Penney, Hagood Bostick, Martin Jones, Coleman Karesh, Wilbur Wertz, Ray Dutrow, Sr., and Adger Brown. Reed had acted in an incredible forty-one plays during ten years of the period (1919-1927, 1936-1938) followed by Durham in some twenty-odd plays (1923-1935), and by Davis in about nineteen plays (1924-1931). All three were directors of the Theatre, although Durham's tenure did not begin until after the first quarter century had ended.

Dutrow, Bostick and Jones were Columbia businessmen, and Brown had come to Columbia first as a student at the University, then as a soldier at Fort Jackson. Wertz (later known professionally as Robert Woods) and Durham were products of the Junior Stage Society and most of their work at the Theatre had been done while they were still students. Both Karesh and Penney were on the faculty at the University.

From the very beginning of the Theatre's first season in 1919, the University's finest educators gave their talents to productions at the Theatre. Among the more frequent performers were Charles Mercer, Benjamin Hodges, Francis W. Bradley, René Stephan, Oscar L. Keith, Isadore Schayer, E. C. Coker, Kershaw Walsh, and Yates Snowden. Others to appear were: John Chase, James MacBride Dabbs, Orin Crow, A. C. Moore, Henry C. Davis, George McCutchen, Mrs. W. O. Sweeney, Robert Lumianski, and Ewing Tucker Bonn.

Although many actors played more roles, it is probably Coleman Karesh who shared Ruth (Hope) Ogden's stature as an actor's actor. Bluntschli in Arms and the Man was followed

by such roles as Hamlet in Hamlet, Mark Antony in Julius Caesar, Iago in Othello, Mephistopheles in Faust, and Petruchio in The Taming of the Shrew. He also played major roles in David Garrick, The Marquise, Justice, The Pigeon, Fashion, and The School for Scandal.

While all of the Town Theatre's directors between 1919-1944 went on to achieve some kind of prominence after leaving Columbia (except possibly William Dean), few of its actors did. Arthur Penn who appeared as Chick Clark in My Sister Eileen under Fred Coe's direction gained renown in the theatre but as a respected stage and film director (The Miracle Worker, Bonnie and Clyde), not as an actor. Lawrence 'Larney' Goodkind became an east coast representative for Universal pictures and is now an author's agent in New York. Francis Letton gained success as an author (The Young Elizabeth); Allen Whitehead became an executive of Music Theatre International; John McCrae whose outstanding voice gave stature to four Gilbert and Sullivan works (1932-36) became a well-known soloist, opera director, and stalwart of the Brevard Music Center; and Frank Woodruff, who as a teenager played Romeo in the Theatre's first Shakespearean venture, later held such jobs as manager of the Lux "Theatre of the Air" and as a film director (Curtain Call) at the old RKO Studios.

The Players Club

When Margaret (Taylor) Martin was struggling to keep the Town Theatre from ceasing operations in 1929, she hit upon an idea which proved to be an excellent "shot in the arm"

for an organization that was close to financial disaster. The Players Club was to be made up of those who had taken part in plays and productions at the Town Theatre and its avowed purposes, according to The State, were to be to help produce plays and encourage and welcome newcomers.⁵ It was officially organized September 18, 1929, with Alex Martin as president, Morton Visanska as vice president, and Mary Perry as secretary. It had no constitution, by-laws, or membership dues. When Mrs. Martin was asked how and why the first Players Club Ball had been given, she replied:

It was out of dire necessity--not for funds, which goodness knows were scarce at times, but for good will--to save for Columbia, the Town Theatre. It took place in 1929 [sic] when dissention split the ranks of the theater's ardent supporters, and the season opened with no director, no business manager, a woman president and a new low in membership. Many said they would never set foot in the place again, some declared, "This is the end of the Town Theatre," and Morton Visanska reiterated, "No matter what happens, never let the doors close."⁶

Ultimately, over the years, the Players Club became an organization which was a social adjunct for the Theatre. Beyond producing an annual costume ball each year with the proceeds going to meet some need at the Theatre, and an occasional project, the organization's activities were sporadic. Only in the early years did it show its best potential value to the Stage Society. Regular meetings in the fall of 1929 saw the presentation of Mushroom Soup and The Portrait, original one-act plays by Dr. Robert E. Seibels

⁵The State, July 7, 1929.

⁶Ibid., January 28, 1954. Actually, the first costume ball took place on January 31, 1930.

and Frank Durham, respectively. Its first costume cabaret, held at the Jefferson Hotel January 31, 1930, made a profit of \$368.10, of which \$350 was applied to a Theatre loan note.⁷ In 1930-31, the Club sponsored a Bridge Tournament, and in 1931-32, Belford Forrest started an Experimental Theatre in the Players Club, its purpose being to aid in casting by giving actors a training ground.⁸ The 1933-34 season saw the sponsorship of the Club's first full-length play, Belford Forrest's On the Third Day which toured to Winthrop College, Walterboro, and to several Columbia churches. The offering collected at the performances was earmarked for a lighting switchboard. During other seasons in the 1930's and 1940's, the Players Club gave such gifts to the Theatre (usually from annual ball proceeds) as costumes, sewing machines, a grand piano, and curtains.

During the 1937-38 season, the Players Club adopted two kinds of membership: active and inactive. Active members paid annual dues of fifty cents and could hold office.⁹ Also that year, the president of the Players Club became an ex-officio member of the Board of the Stage Society.¹⁰

The Players Club quickly became a "prestige" organization. The annual balls, whose costumes were oriented to a different theme each year, were chaired by the city's most

⁷Financial Report, Costume Cabaret, January 31, 1930.

⁸Program for Candida, 1931-32.

⁹Program for Coquette, 1937-38.

¹⁰Society, Minutes, May 19, 1938.

outstanding citizens and attended always by a capacity crowd. For the 1938 Ball of Nations, the costume parade was judged by Douglas Ellington, architect of the Dock Street Theatre restoration in Charleston. The 1939 Ancestor's Ball had its grand march led by Governor Burnet R. Maybank, and the 1944 Play Titles Ball proudly boasted in its publicity that opera singer Helen Traubel would attend the ball after her concert in the city that night.

Although the annual balls gave the Players Club a social aspect, the Club quietly performed other deeds which perhaps lent more stature to its name. The benefit evening, planned to raise a purse for the critically injured Belford Forrest in 1938, and activities planned for soldiers during World War II (Sunday afternoon music programs in the Theatre lounge, and an extra performance of each play for servicemen) contributed worthily to the Players Club's *raison d'être*.

After World War II, the Club sponsored during the 1945-46 season "The Town Theatre Presents," a thirteen-week series of half-hour radio dramas on WCOS (ABC). In 1949-50, another weekly radio series, "From Your FBI," was sponsored by the Players Club on WIS (NBC). In 1951, a short-lived Junior Players Club was formed, modelled after its senior counterpart. In the 1960's, the Players Club presented several one-acts, a program of short ballets, and a Shakespeare reading group.

From 1929-30 through 1968-69, there were thirty-eight costume balls with only two wartime years, 1941-42 and 1944-

45, interrupting the long tradition. Mrs. Martin's idea had more than proved its worth and the Stage Society has greatly benefited from the Players Club's existence.

CHAPTER VI

THE JUNIOR STAGE SOCIETY AND THE CHILDREN'S THEATRE

Although Dan Reed had produced his own "droll mime" Three Scarecrows and his adaptation of Alice in Wonderland during the 1920-21 regular season, there was no formal attempt to organize a children's group until the Society's fourth season. The Junior Stage Society was born in late 1922 and its first production was Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves, which opened for four performances January 12, 1923.

The Junior Stage Society was originally a separate organization. After its third year, it merged with the regular Stage Society as a junior branch. Under its first officers, president Jack Wells and secretary Fay Ball, the children's group, ages six to sixteen, met on Saturday mornings and was conducted by the children themselves--under the guidance of director Reed. Each junior production was discussed and criticized, skits and scenes were given, and instruction in diction and acting were regular features. Even though the initial impetus for the organization had gained widespread publicity through the Columbia City School System,¹

¹Reed gained the approval of Superintendent W. H. Hand to write a letter to the teachers.

the Saturday morning sessions, at first successful, were finally discontinued. The primary reason perhaps lay with the more and more popular appeal of Saturday movie matinees for children.

During the 1924-25 season, the Junior Stage Society was reorganized with a few specific changes. A hundred member limit was set and the age range changed from eight to sixteen. Memberships for the season were set at \$5.00 (reduced to \$3.50 after a short while) and allowed a child to take part in one of the three planned productions of the season, enroll in classes in reading and expression, and attend the adult plays at matinees. The constitution of May, 1925, which incorporated the Junior Stage Society into the parent organization, further refined these rules by reducing the membership fee to \$3.00 and the maximum age range from sixteen to fifteen.

The Junior Stage Society maintained a consistent level of activity through Dan Reed's first term at the Theatre primarily because the plays were part of the regular subscription series. In addition, there was an extra appeal in that Reed did most of his own dramatizations of the famous children's stories that appeared onstage. With the advent of William Dean in 1927-28, the children's branch underwent hard times. Part of the reason for this was that Dean had inherited the Play Tournament which not only consumed time in preparation but also used up a production slot which had previously been filled, as a rule, by a junior production. Further, Dean's wife operated her own dancing school and her students' recital was presented as a major production during Dean's first season.

Actually only one Junior Stage Society production was done between September, 1927 and May, 1929, and that was Jane Trenholm Bradley's adaptation of The Wizard of Oz. The play's success was further underscored by the fact that Mrs. Bradley, a prominent Columbia writer, had already had three other plays which were premiered at the Theatre.

At the beginning of the 1929-30 season of guest directors, Harry Davis was instrumental in revitalizing the children's branch of the Theatre and it was at this time that the Junior Stage Society came to be called The Scalawags. The membership fee remained \$3.00, entitling children to attend the ten planned shows of the season. Four of those were to be children's productions. A one-act play, Swimmin' Pools, by the visiting director of The Swan (Belford Forrest) got the junior group off to a rousing start. Its talented cast of five included Frank Durham, Wilber Wertz, Frank Woodruff, Harry Davis, and Forrest himself. Davis completed the Society's promise of four junior productions that season, directing all four. Two were his own dramatizations.

During the 1930-31 season, the year of great crisis for the Theatre, Davis did two children's productions and six adult plays. During the next two seasons under Forrest, there was only one specifically planned children's show per season.² After the 1932-33 season, children's plays were no longer included as part of a regular season, and the junior program was

²Little Women was performed in 1932-33, but it was part of the adult series.

directed by separate directors. Dan Reed did prove the exception to this when he returned to the helm of the Theatre in 1936, by directing A Christmas Carol and Rip Van Winkle in the 1937-38 season.

The first of the separate directors for the children's plays was Jane (Schaffer) Holman. She held the position for two seasons, producing a record number of five productions per season. During 1933-34, there was no budgeted salary for the youth director, although the Board passed a resolution to grant her fifty cents on all children's tickets sold.³ The following season, \$360 was designated as the annual salary for the children's director and the amount was raised to \$370 at mid-season.

During Belford Forrest's last season, 1935-36, Fay Ball (Alexander) King succeeded Jane Holman as director of the children's program. Her salary was \$360 for the season of three plays. Forrest had found that the five plays for children during the preceeding two years had played havoc with the schedule for the adult productions and the Board reduced the annual number to three and also advanced the minimum junior membership age to ten. Discipline with the younger children had become a problem.

Mrs. King continued her work during two seasons, but in an economy move the Board voted to eliminate the position of children's director at the end of Reed's first season back

³Society, Minutes, November 8, 1933. It is assumed that this fifty cents per ticket refers to the "season" ticket.

at the Theatre. This was done with the proviso that the number of adult shows would be reduced from seven to six and the number of children's shows would be reduced from three to two. Reed would direct all eight.⁴

All during the latter part of Mrs. King's second year, she and the Board had actively looked for a civic organization which would take over the children's wing. Their first choice had been the Junior League, but the League turned them down.⁵ The search proved fruitless. Rather than abandon the Children's Theatre altogether, the compromise with Reed assuming the responsibility resulted.

When Carl Glick succeeded Dan Reed in 1938, the Board went back to its old plan of having a separate children's director, and Ann Scott (Barnett) Morris was employed. She served in the position only one season, directing two plays.

When Ruth Hall Graham resigned as business manager in September, 1939, after four and one-half years in that job, her successor was Mabel Bradley (Kalmakoff) Payne. Mrs. Payne had only the month before been named by the Board as the best candidate to become director of the Children's Theatre. As both business manager and director of the Children's Theatre, Mrs. Payne received a monthly stipend of \$75 based on a nine-month contract.

During her first year, she was aided by Fay King who taught a class in puppetry and by Betty Payne who taught a

⁴Ibid., May 5, 1937.

⁵Ibid., December 18, 1936.

class in "stage presence and graceful movements."⁶ Ultimately, the pressure of both jobs proved too heavy. Mrs. Payne said it would not be possible for her to continue another year without clerical help and at least \$1.00 from each junior membership. The Board, appreciative of Mrs. Payne's contributions, agreed.⁷ In her two seasons as children's director, Mrs. Payne directed four plays. When she was succeeded by Alice Coe (Fred Coe's wife) as business manager for the 1941-42 season (Coe's second year), the children's theatre program was abandoned. Except for one production staged jointly by Delbert Mann and Elizabeth (Belser) Fuller in 1947-48, there were no children's plays performed at the Theatre under Theatre auspices until Mary Lou Kramer, in association with the Junior League, revived the Children's Theatre in 1949-50 under director Gene Crotty.

The course of children's theatre at the Town Theatre during its first quarter century was, at best, erratic. The Board and nearly all the directors realized the value of a children's program, both as a community service and as an ever-enlarging stable of new talent from which to draw. The major reasons for the variations in the program probably are, in priority order, money and time. The Theatre faced constant financial difficulties from 1919 until World War II. All of the directors during the period were underpaid. The Theatre had little or no money for separate personnel trained in children's theatre work. From a time factor alone, it was

⁶The Columbia Record, October 12, 1939.

⁷Society, Minutes, June 27, 1940.

not practicable for a director to do artistic justice to a full season of adult plays as well as to several children's shows--especially when technical help was often only voluntary.

Reed had initially called the children's branch the Junior Stage Society. With Harry Davis, it was the Scalawags. By the time of the separate children's directors of the 1930's, it was simply the Children's Theatre and that term has remained.

PART II

The Town Theatre, 1944-1974

CHAPTER VII

CHANGES AT 1012 SUMTER STREET, 1944-1974

By the time Fred Coe left Columbia at the end of the Town Theatre's twenty-fifth season in 1944, the Stage Society had come of age and was operating on a successful financial and artistic footing. During the next thirty seasons, the producing organization would: see its membership nearly doubled; increase its annual budget from about \$8,000 to nearly \$50,000; stabilize the number of season major productions at an average of six, and experience only five deficit seasons. Twelve directors would stage over 170 major subscription productions, and only three of the twelve would have seasons where there was no salary bonus.

The Building

Between 1924-1944, there had been little money to make improvements on the Theatre building itself. Outside of the installation of a chimney for a fireplace in the office, and the installation of two furnaces and some minimal lighting equipment, the only changes that had been made were with paint, curtains, and patching materials. In 1948, the interior natural brick walls of the auditorium were painted for the first time, a blue-green, under the super-

vision of Margaret (Taylor) Martin.¹ About that same time, lighting technician Joe Winter oversaw the installation of ante proscenium lighting equipment. Prior to this time, the only way to light the front of the stage had been with footlights or with instruments hung from inverted "T" bars dropped through the chandeliers closest to the stage.²

The most extensive renovation to the original structure was begun late in 1950 and formally opened with a barn dance April 27, 1951. A scene shop annex behind the stage had been the most needed facility from the very beginning. Sets had had to be constructed on the stage itself, in the alley, or in other make-shift locations. The shop addition cost approximately \$7,000.³ Of that amount, Miss Susan Guignard donated brick worth \$600 (about half of the total amount needed), Earl Delay gave the roof,⁴ and W. Bedford Moore, Jr. gave \$1,000 in matching funds.⁵ A final balance of \$1,500 was received through an authorized sale of bonds with Society reimbursement of that amount in Company stock.⁶

Significant changes to the Theatre building, primarily

¹The Columbia Record, September 16, 1948. In 1972, several coats of paint were sandblasted from the walls, thus returning them to their original look.

²Ibid.

³Society, Minutes, May 21, 1951.

⁴Ibid., November 2, 1950.

⁵The State, May 20, 1951.

⁶Society, Minutes, March 22, 1951 and May 21, 1951.

for production flexibility, were made under directors Robert Telford in 1957 and Paul Kaufman in 1963. An eight-foot apron was added over what had originally been the orchestra pit, and designer Chris Thee further increased the acting area by adding two small ante proscenium stages by the side walls for The Rainmaker during the 1956-57 season. In later years, these three areas have been rebuilt and often reshaped from production to production, but they remain a helpful aid in simultaneous settings and easy flow of action, particularly in musicals. During Kaufman's tenure in 1963, a door was cut in the stage left proscenium wall for access to the small stage in that corner.⁷ A comparable door on the opposite side was deemed impracticable because of electrical wiring and other rigging on the backstage side of the wall.

Other major expenses in the building prior to 1974-75 were for a gas heating system at a cost of \$3,294.40 in 1956;⁸ a new lighting switchboard costing \$5,662.79 in 1954,⁹ and for new seats in the fall of 1952. A seat fund had been started early in 1952, but it lacked about \$1,250 of covering the total cost, and the Board paid off the debt out of the operating budget for the season.¹⁰

⁷Ibid., January 10, 1963. The cost was \$75.00.

⁸Ibid., May 16, 1956. ⁹Ibid., September 7, 1954.

¹⁰Ibid., November 20, 1952. There was a proviso. Future receipts for the seat fund would be reapplied to the current operating budget.

In 1974, the upstairs lounge (or green room, as it is often called) was paneled and its furnishings either re-finished or replaced. The project was essentially paid for from an annual grant to the Theatre by the State-Record Company. The room was officially designated the Bostick-Graham Room and the dedicatory wall plaque reads:

THE BOSTICK-GRAHAM ROOM
Dedicated to

LUCY HAMPTON BOSTICK

Columbia Stage Society
Board of Governors 1928-1968
Secretary 1935-1968

and

RUTH HALL GRAHAM

Columbia Stage Society
Board of Governors
Treasurer and Historian
1932-1974

A Lifetime of Loyal Dedication
and Loving Service

We Will Always be Grateful

April 28, 1974

For the most part, however, other than the occasional repainting and redecorating of certain areas, and normal maintenance, repair, and replacement, little has been done to change the physical structure of the building, and it remains today very much as it was in its first season in 1924-25.

The Town Theatre Trust

On April 4, 1950, the South Carolina Secretary of State

issued a charter to an eleemosynary corporation known as the Town Theatre Trust. The need for a third corporate member of the Town Theatre family (the Columbia Stage Company, chartered as a business corporation, owned the Theatre building while the Columbia Stage Society, chartered as an eleemosynary corporation, produced the plays and took charge of all other activities associated with the Town Theatre program) was deemed necessary when it was realized that it would be entirely possible for an outside group to buy a controlling interest in Company stock and thus gain control of the Theatre itself. The purpose of the Trust, then, was to buy at least fifty-one percent of the Company stock in order to keep the Theatre in "friendly" hands and to forestall an occasion when an over-optimistic group might vote to mortgage the building and later lose it. It was estimated in 1950 that at least 600 of the original stockholders who had originally paid \$100 per share had either died or moved away from Columbia.¹¹ For most of the original investors, the money had been considered not as an investment, but as a contribution to the cultural life in Columbia.

Officers of the new Town Theatre Trust were: president, Dr. Robert W. Gibbes; vice-president, James Dreher; secretary, Elizabeth (Belser) Fuller; and treasurer, W. Bed-

¹¹Program, Born Yesterday, April, 1950. The Stage Company was chartered July 14, 1920 with an authorized capital stock of \$40,000 (par value of each share \$100). On December 7, 1933, the charter was amended to decrease capital stock to \$4,000 (par value of each share reduced to \$10).

ford Moore, Jr. The trustees (including the above officers) were: Miss Susan Guignard, Ruth Hall Graham, Neill O'D. Bultman, Martin B. Jones, and Frank B. Gary, Jr. They were selected by the membership of the Society.

In 1969, Society president H. Simmons Tate, Jr. made an attempt to clarify the status of the Trust, which in seeking the fifty-one per cent reassignment of stock in 1950, had set the proviso of July 1, 1951 as a deadline. If fifty-one per cent of the stock had not been acquired by that date, the assignment of stock to the Trust would be null and void. The problem of determining if the requisite amount had been purchased became knotty when it was discovered that the stock transfer book had been misplaced, and the stock stubs were cluttered with postcards, letters, and other scraps of paper indicating that some certificates had been purchased by the Company and canceled or donated back to the Company and canceled. It was further found that in many cases, amounts shown on assignment forms did not agree with amounts of stock supposedly held by the persons (according to the stubs in the stockbook). In addition, questionable signatures (primarily those by heirs of deceased stockholders) or no signatures on the assignment forms left the legality of some forms in doubt. Tate was confronted by the possibility, in the computations, that the Stage Company may accidentally have issued more stock than authorized to do so by law. In a memo to the Board of Governors on December 11, 1969, he

stated:

I have spent a great many hours attempting to straighten out the stock situation for the Columbia Stage Company. The problem involves almost every problem in corporate law that I can think of, I have decided that the best course of action is for the Town Theatre to employ someone, for example an accountant or a senior law student, to go through these papers. . . . It may even be necessary to have a declaratory judgment lawsuit to straighten the matter out.¹²

Ultimately, Bernard Manning became the legal expert to untangle the knots in order to resolve the problem.

The Stage Company today still operates on the basis of its ownership of the Town Theatre building and the land itself--its only assets. Essentially it exacts an annual rental (upped from \$600 to \$900 in 1973-74) of the Stage Society and is responsible for taxes and repairs to the building. The Company, although a business corporation, never declared dividends, or profits, and its only income--the rental of the building--has left the Society to handle much of the repair work to the building. If indeed the Trust succeeded in securing more than fifty-one percent of the stock, the question of Company ownership could conceivably be challenged by the Stage Society. The confusing stock problems continue to hang on, with occasional calls to the Theatre business office by stock inheritors wanting to know the value of their "legacies."

¹²Society, Minutes Book, Memo by President H. Simmons Tate, Jr. to the Board of Governors of the Stage Society, December 11, 1969.

The Board of Governors and Theatre Policies

In general, the Board of Governors continued to be a watchful and yet silently strong force in the Theatre's proceedings. Having established a policy of supervisory control over the organization and the directors it employed, the Board could be as gracious in its approbation as it could be unrelentingly decisive in its displeasure. Long criticized for reelecting the same members term after term, the Board, at the recommendation of its president James Dreher, voted in 1952 that its members could not succeed themselves unless there were exceptional circumstances (i.e., part of a project then in progress, or in the contrary interests of the Theatre itself).¹³ Several long-term members were opposed. Quietly in 1953, the succession clause was rescinded.¹⁴ In a May 28, 1969 amendment to the constitution, however, the clause for non-succession, underlined, was reinstated.¹⁵ At the same time, the four officers of the Society and the president of the Stage Company were given ex-officio Board status, with a vote. This set the total Board composition at twenty.

Much of the reason for the continuing reappearance of the same faces on the Board was the apathy of the general membership in attending the annual business meetings. Usually,

¹³Society, Minutes, June 16, 1952.

¹⁴Ibid., August 3, 1953.

¹⁵Society, Constitution, Article IV, Section One. Amended May 28, 1969.

only a handful--mostly Board members and members of recent casts and crews--were present. The nominees presented by the Board were seldom challenged by floor nominations, and records would seem to indicate that few, if any, nominated from the floor were ever elected.

Although the Theatre's Board always observed a policy of segregation, the issue had never really been a major concern. With the Supreme Court decision in 1954, however, the Society was confronted with an inevitable problem. The Board, wishing to maintain the segregation policy, elected to avoid possible conflicts by carefully screening lists of potential members prior to the annual subscription drives.¹⁶ In 1964, it finally passed a resolution disallowing sales of season tickets to Negroes, but at the same time permitting individual ticket sales to Negroes.¹⁷ The decision set up a chain reaction within the Theatre at large. Mrs. Reginald Kramer, then director of the Children's Theatre which was managed by the Junior League, refused to continue in her position if the Children's Theatre were integrated, so the Board modified its earlier statement by keeping the Children's Theatre on a completely segregated basis.¹⁸ When Mrs. Kramer left her position at the end of the 1965-66 season, the children's plays were performed for integrated audiences at the insistence

¹⁶Society, Minutes, September 16, 1958

¹⁷Ibid., August 17, 1964.

¹⁸Ibid., October 27, 1964.

of the Junior League which felt its national headquarters would object to segregation. Generally, however, it was not until after the golden anniversary season, and then with a unanimous Board affirmation that Article II, Section One of the Constitution (relating to membership) was clarified to apply to all members of the community.¹⁹

¹⁹Ibid., January 18, 1972.

CHAPTER VIII

THE DIRECTORS AND THEIR PLAYS

Francis Marion Durham, 1944-1946

The successor to Fred Coe turned out to be the second of two Columbians to serve the Theatre as director. Frank Durham grew up in the organization at 1012 Sumter Street and was barely ten years old when he made his acting debut under Dan Reed's direction in The Piper during the 1922-23 season. Durham acted in a formidable array of roles throughout the 1920's and 1930's under Reed, fellow Columbian Harry Davis, and later under Belford Forrest. His firsthand knowledge of the organization proved to be an excellent asset during the two seasons he served as director.

Born February 1, 1913 in Columbia, Durham was educated in the Columbia Public Schools and received his bachelor's degree from the University of South Carolina in 1934 and his master's degree from the University of North Carolina in 1937. Although he had proved himself as an actor in Columbia and with such theatres as the Caravan Repertory Theatre in Boston and later with the Summit Playhouse near Hendersonville, N. C., Durham was probably more at home in the world of academe--teaching and writing, and his later career gives testimony to this.

Leaving the Citadel where he had taught for several

years, Durham began the Theatre's twenty-sixth season with a salary of \$2,700 and no technical help. A total membership of 1,201 paid a season price of \$6.00 for six plays,¹ and the six admissions could be arranged in whatever fashion the holder wished. Of the plays presented that year, O'Neill's Ah, Wilderness! and Maugham's Home and Beauty drew praise from serious theatre buffs because of the stature of the writers. O'Neill had been represented at the Theatre only by Anna Christie, and Maugham by The Circle and Caroline. Although the O'Neill comedy had more appeal, Durham drew significantly on the public relations value of the Maugham play, because the author was, at the time, in the low country town of Yemassee where he had previously done much of the writing of The Razor's Edge. Maugham did not come to Columbia for the play, but did send greetings to the cast and director.

Of the twelve plays Durham directed in his two years at the Theatre, the most popular box office success was his final production in 1946, the recently-released and family-oriented I Remember Mama. The Record review stated:

Top applause for the performance must go to the director, who skillfully handled 32 different scenes in two acts, with no major changes of scenery and none of the usual bumpings of furniture about the stage. The story was convincingly played to the opening night audience.²

Capably efficient and professional, the Durham tenure brought no appreciable changes to the Theatre. The War's

¹Society, Minutes, May 29, 1945.

²The Columbia Record, May 28, 1946.

end and transitions at Ft. Jackson made a supply of men in acting roles equally as unpredictable as the War years had done, and Durham, himself, was often pressed into last minute additional casting problems. Paper shortages decreed simpler one-sheet playbills, and a thrifty budget forced the director to design his own sets or to rely heavily on the volunteer help of such able craftsmen as Elizabeth Belser, Catherine Rembert, and Allen Whitehead. When he left the Theatre, he returned to teaching.

In 1953, Durham received his doctorate from Columbia University and went on to establish himself as author, collaborator, and essayist in such books as DuBose Heyward: The Man Who Wrote Porgy, Giant From the Wilderness (with Harlan Hatcher), and The Collected Short Stories of Julia Peterkin. He held a Fulbright Lectureship in American Literature at the University of Adelaide, South Australia in 1958, and a Smith-Mundt Lectureship in American Literature and Civilization at the University of Saigon, Vietnam in 1961-62. He taught at various times after leaving the Town Theatre on the faculties of the Citadel, the College of Charleston, the University of North Carolina, the South Carolina Medical College (as special lecturer), and at the University of South Carolina. Durham died October 9, 1971 in Columbia.

Robert Dale Martin, 1946-1947

Of the three directors who served the Town Theatre for a one-year term only, Robert Burns Nachtmann was the first.

Chosen primarily on the recommendation of Frank Durham who had known him at the University of North Carolina, the new director was a native of Webster Groves, Missouri. He was married to the former Janice Martindale, and it was from her last name that he derived his own professional name. Martin had had a varied career prior to his coming to Columbia. He was a 1938 graduate from the University of North Carolina where he had played Claudius at the age of seventeen to Dr. Frederick Koch's Hamlet in a much praised production. He had acted in other Shakespearian plays at the Globe Theatre in San Diego, California, had worked at the Cleveland Playhouse as actor and technician for one year, and had had a bit part in the Broadway production in 1938 of You Can't Take it With You. Further, he had acted for three seasons in The Lost Colony at Manteo, North Carolina, had worked briefly for WRAL-Radio in Raleigh, and had seen active duty in the Pacific during World War II. The summer before arriving in Columbia, Martin directed at the Summit Theatre near Hendersonville, North Carolina.

Of the six plays Martin directed in Columbia, four had already had excellent commercial successes: Night Must Fall, Laura, State of the Union, and They Knew What They Wanted. The last two, Pulitzer Prize winners, were also starring vehicles for the young director. Of his work as director/actor in State of the Union, the Record stated:

The venerable face of Columbia's Town Theatre greeted its "first nighter" last night with streamers and bunting

of red, white, and blue. Inside one of the best opening performances ever witnessed here took place.

Robert Dale Martin in the first act was caught red-handed stealing his own show. In spite of Bob's weary protestations that it "is impossible to direct and act in the same show," he gave his audience an excellent performance as Spike McManus in addition to a well-directed three acts.³

Martin's brief time in Columbia, like that of his predecessor, reflected little change in the Society's program. With an annual budget of \$8,350 and a salary of \$2,700, the twenty-eighth season had a membership of 1,234. All the figures represented little or no significant departure from the postwar settling-down period. Martin designed and directed all six shows and was considered to be a good director by the Board. The Governors, however, chose not to renew his contract for another term, citing difficulties in the areas of cooperation, organization, and leadership.⁴ Martin became director of the Augusta Players in Georgia after leaving Columbia, and later entered a successful career in television in New York.

Delbert Mann, 1947-1949

The second of six Yale alumni to come to Columbia as director of the Town Theatre was Delbert Mann, a native of Lawrence, Kansas and a 1941 graduate of Vanderbilt University. Mann had been a B-24 Liberator Pilot during World War II. For his thirty-five missions, he was awarded the Distinguished

³Ibid., December 10, 1946.

⁴Society, Minutes, May 6, 1947.

Flying Cross, the Air Medal with four Oak Leaf Clusters, the Presidential Unit Citation, and six Battle Stars. He served fifteen months in England as a combat intelligence officer. After the War, Mann spent 1945-47 at the Yale Graduate School.

During Mann's years in Nashville, Tennessee, he worked at the Nashville Community Theatre and at the Nashville Children's Theatre winning acting awards for his roles in Our Town, and in What Price Glory? It was in Nashville that he first met Fred Coe who later provided the link to the Town Theatre.

When Mann arrived in Columbia with wife Ann Caroline and young son David to begin his work, he had just finished a summer of directing at the Wellesley College summer theatre. His two seasons at the Town Theatre, partly through the presentation of a solid array of recent Broadway successes and partly through his own talent and personality, represented the strongest upsurge of activity within the Society since the Coe War years. By the time he left in 1949, the membership had jumped by about 700 members to the 2,000 mark, the first time that plateau had ever been reached.

Between 1947-49, the stage sparkled with productions of such plays as You Can't Take it With You, The Glass Menagerie, Dear Ruth, The Corn is Green, Dream Girl, John Loves Mary, The Barrets of Wimpole Street, Command Decision, and Life With Father. Like most of his predecessors, Mann also found himself occasionally behind the curtain line as well.

He played the leading roles of Morgan Evans in The Corn is Green and John in John Loves Mary.

There seemed to be constant activity at the Theatre during the two years. Mann, with Elizabeth (Belser) Fuller, co-directed The Sleeping Beauty as an "extra" to his initial season, marking the first children's production since before the War. To encourage the interest of children in the play, a poster contest was held. When Dear Ruth proved to be a box office bonanza and was held over for an extra performance, Mann revived the tour idea and took the production to the Mt. Zion Institute in Winnsboro. He did the same with The Barretts of Wimpole Street, and also toured Command Decision to Ft. Jackson. A Theatre questionnaire was circulated to get audience opinion from those who had seen four or more shows. Mann was interested in criticisms, suggestions of plays for the following year, and how the Theatre might be improved to attract even larger audiences. (Five of his twelve adult shows were extended beyond the usual six-night run.) Mann got the Board to approve on a trial basis "Oscar" type acting awards for both seasons. These engendered interest among the production workers, but the annual awards presentations did not continue on a regular basis after Mann's tenure.

A contest to further increase season memberships the second year was undertaken, with prizes offered by Columbia merchants. It was this successful undertaking which helped to reach the 2,000 membership level. In a step towards a Dramatic Workshop, Mann offered a bonus Sunday production

on December 12, 1948 of three one-act plays: John Doe, directed by Joe Bishop; Over the Teacups, directed by Joanne Stone; and The Boor, directed by John Farnum.⁵ Publicity for the period, while generally excellent, was greatly enhanced by a Thursday column called "Talk of the Theatre," written for The Record by Ann Caroline Mann, herself a former journalist.

The Theatre had no full-time paid technical designer, but Mann benefited from a group of such proven craftsmen in the setting, costumes, and lighting areas as Margaret (Taylor) Martin, Elizabeth Belser, Hal Shadwell, Joe Winter, Charles E. Rogers, George Burnette, and Brown McLendon.

Mann's success in Columbia was obvious. Rain was reputed to have the largest box office in five years,⁶ and the clamor over Life With Father caused a panic situation at the Theatre when the opening night performance was sold out in two hours, with a scalper willing to pay \$5.00 for the usual \$1.50 seat. That play's nine performances were seen by a total of 3,323 people--a Theatre record for that date.⁷ It was a perfect way to end the Theatre's thirtieth season and a harmonious note on which Mann could sever his ties cleanly with the Theatre to accept a call to the then-unheralded world of television in New York.

⁵The Record, November 25, 1948.

⁶Ibid., December 2, 1948.

⁷Society, Minutes, May 31, 1949.

The rapport between Mann and the Board was unusually good. Near the end of his first year, he presented an Eleven-Point List of Recommendations to the Board and at the following meeting,⁸ the Board discussed or took action on all eleven points.⁹ Among the significant recommendations passed were the suggestion that ticket prices be raised, and that a children's director be sought for the 1949-50 season. Mann was, in great measure, responsible for the Theatre's searching out Mrs. Reginald Kramer to reestablish a tradition for children's theatre. His suggestion that the Theatre employ a full-time technical director was put off "until next year."

When Mann left Columbia, he went to New York at the invitation of his old friend Fred Coe who was at NBC-TV. Although he had never seen a television show, Mann was hired, and after three months, had already directed his first show (for Philco Playhouse). In the early years of television, the new medium wanted directors with theatre experience and Mann happened to be in the right place at the right time.

It was not until Paddy Chayefsky's Marty that Mann found the fame that catapulted him into the consciousness of television and movie audiences. Done first as a television play in 1953 with Rod Steiger in the title role (because another show was not yet ready), the play was filmed

⁸Ibid., April 27, 1948

⁹While some of the suggestions were never acted on, only one recommendation was disapproved: the season acting awards in the "Oscar" fashion. The Board did grant the approval later, however, at its September 14, 1948 meeting.

in 1954. In story book fashion, it was named best picture of the year by the judges at the Cannes Film Festival, by the New York Film Critics, and by the Motion Picture Academy which also bestowed Oscars on director Mann, writer Chayefsky, and star Ernest Borgnine. Marty was the first television-oriented show to be done by Hollywood.

Following his recognition with the run-away success, Mann directed such films as Bachelor Party, Separate Tables, The Dark at the Top of the Stairs, Middle of the Night, Lover Come Back, That Touch of Mink, and Desire Under the Elms. His achievements and success in the film industry earned him the position of President of the Motion Picture Directors Guild.

When Mann returned to Columbia in 1970 as a guest of the Town Theatre for its Lucy Hampton Bostick lecture series, he spoke of his work at the Town Theatre as being invaluable training for the career that followed. "Theatre is the basis of it all. The actor-director relationship is it. The community theatre provides the greatest training one could receive."¹⁰

As a director who has directed most of the great acting talents of the English speaking world (and the star-studded casts of the television versions of David Copperfield, Jane Eyre, and Heidi attest to this), Mann selected

¹⁰Lecture, Dreher High School Auditorium, Columbia, South Carolina, March 8, 1970.

as his one moment of theatre magic--his favorite theatrical memory--a scene between Mary Russell Eleazer and Frank Bell as Laura and the Gentleman Caller in his Town Theatre production of The Glass Menagerie in 1948. "It was sheer magic. There was something intangible created."¹¹

A reviewer of the time, seeing the production, stated:

Director Delbert Mann, his cast and crew have so sharply and delicately defined "The Glass Menagerie" that we count it not only the production of the season, but predict its stand as one of the finest in the Town Theater's run.¹²

Delbert Mann's work continues.

Clarence Eugene Crotty, 1949-1955

Yale University maintained its hold at the Town Theatre when Gene Crotty succeeded Delbert Mann, at Mann's recommendation. The two directors had known each other at Yale, and Crotty's MFA Degree was only a few months old when he arrived in Columbia to direct six shows with a budget of \$11,975 and a salary of \$3,000.

Clarence Eugene Crotty was born January 5, 1915, in Stephenville, Texas, and was graduated from Texas Christian University in 1935. Prior to directing at the Del Rio (Texas) Little Theatre from 1937-39, he had acted with a summer theatre in Massachusetts and had been an extra in several Hollywood films. Later, he acted with the Canopy Players in Texas.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²The Record, January 29, 1948.

During World War II, he was a B-26 pilot, logging fifty missions over Europe and Africa. Like Mann, Crotty also worked at the Wellesley College Summer Theatre (as a stage manager, in Crotty's case).

In the curious way that trends seem to be set and to reflect the spirit of the times, Crotty consistently exemplified what has been called the "quiet 1950's." His six seasons as director marked the second longest tenure of any director except Daniel Reed. The membership of the Stage Society was 2,035 in 1949 and 2,100 in 1955. The intervening years showed no great variance, except in finances. By the time Crotty left, the annual budget had jumped to \$20,245.40 and the director's salary was \$5,700.

Crotty directed thirty-four regular season productions and one bonus production, Orphan Nell or The Tale of the Moth and the Flame. The melodrama was produced to raise money for the new shop addition at the rear of the Theatre. The plays, in general, represented tried-and-true commercial vehicles. Only three of Crotty's plays broke the 3,000 attendance level: Harvey (3,252); The Women, in its second production (3,121); and Mister Roberts (3,079). His forays into works by such international playwrights as Shaw and Giraudoux met mixed public reaction and small houses. Of Shaw's Heartbreak House in 1951, reviewer Toni Child wrote:

One of the most brilliant, well-rounded casts assembled on the Town Theatre stage in many a year thoroughly amused and confused an opening night audience last night with George Bernard Shaw's comedy-satire, "Heartbreak House."¹³

¹³Ibid., April 5, 1951.

Of S. N. Behrman's adaptation of Jean Giraudoux's Amphitryon 38, which Crotty chose as his final play at the Town Theatre in 1955, the same writer wrote:

High comedy of Greeks and gods rated low in Columbia's idea of entertainment as Town Theatre director Gene Crotty's swan song turned out to be a stuffed turkey enjoyment-wise.¹⁴

Bob Ackerman in The State differed:

In many ways the production of "Amphitryon 38" at Town Theatre is a crowning achievement. . . . It is definitely a memorable production for Gene Crotty's final play as director.¹⁵

During the 1953-54 season, Crotty produced Spring For Sure, the first musical that the Theatre had done in ten years. A play about mountain folk, the musical had first gained prominence at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. The attendance of 2,941 indicated Columbians approved of the inclusion of a musical as a part of the regular season.

Crotty was aided immeasurably in his directorship years by Elizabeth (Belser) Fuller, who continued as business manager until January, 1952, and by her successor Julian (Mrs. Hunter) Kennedy. In addition, the Theatre finally acted on Mann's suggestion and appointed a technical director: Hal Shadwell, at \$1,800 for the whole 1950-51 season. Shadwell served only the one year. Crotty depended on such temporary helpers as Joe Bishop, Brown McLendon, Jack Rast, and Robert

¹⁴Ibid., May 24, 1955

¹⁵The State, May 25, 1955.

Daubenspeck to carry a portion of the technical burden until Laurence Weaver took over the position with Death of a Salesman in 1954. Since that time, the Theatre has almost consistently had a paid designer-technician on the staff.

Perhaps the greatest asset to the Theatre in its overall program during the six years was the renaissance of the Children's Theatre under the directorship of Mary Lou (Mrs. Reginald) Kramer, with sponsorship by the Junior League. Mrs. Kramer directed sixteen plays for the Children's Theatre during the Crotty years and established a program of excellence and continuity that the Theatre had never experienced so consistently in the children's area. Crotty and the Society were not the only benefactors of this new vitality. Out of Mrs. Kramer's work grew a whole generation of young actors who would not only strengthen theatre in Columbia, but in far-flung theatrical centers as well.

Mrs. Kramer's program of three plays per year did effect a change in Crotty's program during his final two seasons. The traffic and mere logistics of staging six adult shows and three children's shows in ten months proved too unwieldy for all involved, so the Board voted to lower the number of adult plays to five (at the same membership rate).¹⁶

Although Crotty had acted in his early career, he did not appear often onstage at the Town Theatre. He did take over for an ailing Phil Benediktsson in Mister Roberts, how-

¹⁶Society, Minutes, April 3, 1953.

ever, and later cast himself as the aging roué David Slater in The Moon is Blue, a production believed to be the first, other than the professional showings, in the United States.

In 1953, Donald Russell, then president of the University of South Carolina, and Samuel Latimer, editor of The State and also a member of the Board of the Society, along with James Dreher and Frank Gary were instrumental in working out a University-Town Theatre arrangement whereby four courses would be taught by Theatre staff members at the University. The University was to pay \$5,000 to the Theatre. Beside the main advantage of being able to employ a technical director for the Theatre, this was envisioned as the seed for a drama program at the University which at the time had only an extra-curricular players group and no formal drama department. Crotty was to head the program, with Robert Daubenspeck (recently hired by the Theatre from Yale as technical director) as assistant professor to teach scenery construction. Mrs. Kramer was to teach stage speech, and Crotty, history of the theatre, and play interpretation. Almost from the beginning, there were problems. Daubenspeck apparently did not like technical work either at the University or at the Theatre and was dismissed from both jobs, leaving Crotty to rely on volunteers at the Theatre and on himself to take over the scenery class at the University. Crotty had been under the impression that the University would create a new separate drama area after the first year of the joint arrangement, but a lack of money was advanced as the reason for the failure to

proceed with the plan. Although Mrs. Kramer elected not to continue the second year, Crotty and Laurence Weaver, Daubenspeck's successor, completed the second season. Both, however, were unwilling to continue with the arrangement beyond that point. While the joint venture may appear to have failed, the teaching experience gained by Crotty may have been a significant factor in his decision to resign from the Theatre in 1955, because he became a full-time staff member and drama director at the University after leaving the Town Theatre. The successful and admired Theatre Department at the University today owes much to Gene Crotty. It was not until after he began his full-time work at USC in the fall of 1955, with Oedipus Rex in a tiny makeshift theatre behind the president's house, that drama at the University was taken seriously by University administrators.

Crotty's tenure ended at the Town Theatre with regret on the part of the Board with whom he had had an affable and professional relationship. He had been successful artistically and financially, and his colleagues thought of him as talented, fair-minded, and as a gentleman. His camaraderie with the actors and crews is borne out in a poem written by Gren Seibels, a local radio news director at the time of Crotty's production of Louis Verneuil's play Affairs of State in 1953:

Ode To Crotty
or
AFFAIRS OF LATE

Here's to Crafty Crotty--
Svengali come true;
Talents awfully spotty.
'Mongst those whose blood is blue.

Brown, Tobias, Seibels, Dreher
 McMahon, Lind, to cope with.
 Silk purse from sow's ear--
 A burden to go to the Pope with.

Louis wrote it, and cut his throat;
 Gave Crotty food for thought.
 At dress rehearsal--and I quote--
 Gene asked, "What hath God wrought?"

Came opening night, Gene spoke a prayer--
 The curtain rose--Gene lost more hair--
 But lo, against the Eastern sky--
 Three Wise Men stood--a miracle to declare:

For on that night, as the curtain went up--
 Dreher spoke up, Brown brightened up;
 Seibels straightened up; Tobias speeded up;
 Lind warmed up--and McMahon showed up--
 And so after all, Gene didn't throw up.¹⁷

Crotty, the Town Theatre's only bachelor director, continued his work at the University until ill health brought about his death on January 22, 1961, at the age of 46. Crotty had spent nearly twelve years in Columbia, a place which he considered home. He chose to be buried in his adopted city, and his legacy of \$400 to the Town Theatre is one of the very few bequests made to the Theatre in its long history.

Robert S. Telford, 1955-1958

Not wishing to break what was fast becoming a tradition, the Society's Board of Governors selected as Crotty's successor still another Yale alumnus, Robert S. Telford, a native of Staten Island, New York. With a brand new master's

¹⁷The poem has been kept in the Society's 1952-53 Scrapbook.

degree in hand, Telford had earlier obtained his BA in Theatre Arts from the Pasadena School of Theatre. He saw Army service in Japan during World War II, and was called back into the Army during the Korean conflict, serving in Korea with the Seventh Division. He had had a hand in several off-Broadway productions and had been actor-director-manager of a summer stock company in Stamford, Connecticut.

In what had become a fairly standard Board business policy over the years, the new director was hired at a smaller salary than his predecessor. Crotty was earning \$5,700 plus a percentage of the profits his final season. Telford was also to share in any profits, but his starting base salary was \$4,000. The projected annual budget for the season was lowered by nearly \$6,000 while the number of productions was raised again from five to six. Despite what seemed to be a handicap for the young director, the membership--2,140 his first season--grew to 2,370 by his third season. By virtue of a vital and successful program all three years, Telford never received an annual bonus of less than \$2,250. In his final season (1957-58), with a base salary of \$5,400 and a handsome bonus from his share of the profits, Telford's annual income exceeded the \$7,500 mark. It was the most money any director had ever made in any one year in the Theatre's history.

Although it was not recognized by many in the Society until long after he had left, Telford's grasp of theatre and the way it works and his own objective overview of the Town

Theatre in particular were a shot in the arm for the organization. He was aware of the insular position in which the Society had placed itself by long years of habit. The restricted membership, the sentimental attachment to a building whose facilities were inadequate and which offered no possibilities for expansion, and the difficult co-existence of director and business manager whose duties often overlapped and conflicted were anathema to him. His attempts to bring the Town Theatre "out of itself" were zestfully pursued, and had he stayed longer, the organization may have forestalled some of the serious problems it was to encounter in the late 1960's.

From the beginning, Telford tried to make clear to Columbians that the Theatre was "Your Theatre."¹⁸ He wanted to dispel the clique concept and bring in new life blood. He did. Ahead of the time of such ambitious cultural projects as Lincoln Center in New York and Kennedy Center in Washington, Telford envisioned a civic center complex, either at the current location with adjacent property purchased to add to it, or at an entirely new location. The Stage Society would be the hub. In January of his final year, he presented an outline proposal for the future of the Town Theatre to the Board.¹⁹ Society president Frank B. Gary, Jr. appointed a committee headed by Samuel L. Latimer and composed of Mrs.

¹⁸Letter from Robert S. Telford to the author, May 6, 1970.

¹⁹Society, Minutes, January 16, 1958.

W. Bedford Moore, architect G. Thomas Harmon, William C. Stiefel, barrister Irvine F. Belser, Jr., and Society treasurer Julian Hennig, Jr. to:

. . . make a full study of the desirability and the feasibility of improving the physical facilities used by the Columbia Stage Society in the production of plays, either by enlarging or altering the present building of the Columbia Stage Society on Sumter Street, or by acquiring a building, or an interest therein, elsewhere in the City of Columbia; that in making its study the Committee consult with such persons or agencies in Columbia or elsewhere that it may consider of possible help to it; that it report its findings and recommendations, either in a series of interim reports or in one final report, to this Board for its future guidance. The Committee is especially requested to include in its study the question of financing the recommended program.²⁰

Unfortunately, by the time the committee presented its recommendations in September, Telford had already left the Theatre to become producing director of the Virginia Museum Theatre in Richmond. The committee recommended that a fund drive for \$40,000 be inaugurated. With this sum in hand it was hoped that a foundation would be interested in matching or making up the balance of funds needed for the new civic project. Mr. Latimer and Mr. Hennig noted that the building was so tied up legally that no immediate course was possible, and that the property on either side of the Theatre was not for sale anyway. The matter was quietly dropped and no further definite action was taken.

That Telford had a broader civic view of the Theatre's

²⁰Letter from Frank B. Gary to the committee members (in the minute book), February 20, 1958.

²¹Society, Minutes, September 16, 1958.

part in the city's cultural life was borne out by some of the innovations he undertook. Newsy, chatty playbills included listings of the fine film series, the arts calendar, activities at the Lyric Theatre, Children's Theatre, and Players Club. Opening nights had live radio coverage by Ruth (Gottlieb) Moore of guests arriving for the performance. Telford did a limited, once-a-week stint of acting/reading solo performances on Miriam Stevenson's program on WIS-TV, and worked out with Don Ferguson of WNOK-TV a half-hour weekly Town Theatre news talk format for Ferguson's regular program "In and Out." He got the Town Theatre on NBC's weekend "Monitor" program, wrote articles for Theatre Arts and Players Magazine, and attended theatre conferences in Louisville and Chapel Hill.

Telford conducted periodic Sunday afternoon workshops on various aspects of drama at the Theatre; he was the first director to use a filmed sequence as part of a play (for The Solid Gold Cadillac in 1956); and he devised a system of permanent first-night seating for members--mainly to assure consistent attendance for openings and to cash in on the glamour of an opening night.

A canny and observant eye on the public and its tastes led Telford to solid choices for his season fare. Of the eighteen plays he staged, not one dipped below the 2,000 mark in attendance. Call Me Madam (with guest star, singer Billie Mustin) was seen by 3,543^{people}%, the single largest attendance as of that date at the Theatre.

Telford opened his second season with the musical Where's Charley? Its overwhelming success drew an audience of 3,463 and marked the first time a production had played ten performances in the Theatre. With that production, the tradition for the annual musical was begun. Every season since has had at least one musical production.

Apparently not afraid of the Bard, Telford directed the first Shakespearean production in seventeen seasons. Ironically, Twelfth Night had also been the last Shakespearean play to be performed as part of the regular season at the Theatre (in 1940-41, directed by Fred Coe).

Telford's insight into people and their values as individuals doubtlessly played a great part in his success in Columbia. In his very first playbill, he published two full pages of Theatre committee names with telephone numbers of the crew heads. Never before had the unseen minions of the Society been given so important a billing. Each became a vital cog in the wheels of the machinery that made the Town Theatre work and he made them all aware of their importance. "He doesn't hesitate to ask anybody to do anything," his wife Jodi was quoted as saying to columnist Charles Houston.²² Telford admitted that before "he makes his demand, he figures out just how far and in what directions he can command any particular person. They're all so individual and so different."²³

²²The Richmond News Leader, Richmond, Virginia, June 10, 1966.

²³Ibid.

Like Dan Reed before him, Telford evidenced a definite sense of autocracy and was frustrated in a situation where

. . . the Business Manager . . . was in charge of everything from the curtain to the front of the house, while I was responsible for everything from the curtain back. I have always felt that a director should run the entire theatre no matter how many there were working with or under him or her, for just the look of the lobby or behavior of the ticket taker can affect the reception of his play.²⁴

Although Telford directed his wife in several major roles in Columbia, he elected not to cast himself--preferring the multi-faceted position he had made of his directorship. Like most of his predecessors, however, he did end up on the boards unexpectedly--in Witness for the Prosecution.

Director Robert Telford this time proved himself to be as consummate an actor as he is a director. Stepping in to handle the role of Mr. Justice Wainwright, the judge, when Tom Legare had to bow out due to illness, Telford displayed real showmanship that has been evidenced before through the work of his actors.²⁵

In Richmond for eight years after leaving Columbia, Telford saw the membership at the Virginia Museum Theatre grow from about 1,000 members to six times that many. Between 1966-1970, he was the managing director of the Fort Worth (Texas) Art Center and its Scott Theatre. Following his work in Texas, he directed and managed Kermit Hunter's outdoor drama The Trail of Tears in Tahlequah, Oklahoma. He became director of the Tulsa Little Theatre September 1, 1970.

²⁴Letter from Robert S. Telford to the author, May 6, 1970.

²⁵The Record, December 5, 1957.

Louis Wilson Ingram, Jr., 1958-1959

The second of the three directors to serve only one season was Louis Ingram, a native of Boston, Massachusetts. Ingram, twenty-six at the time of his election to the directorship at the Town Theatre, attended the Choate School in Wallingford, Connecticut, and he held a BA Degree from Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida. He had directed for the Sanford Theatre Guild in Sanford, Florida and at the Fred Stone Theatre in Winter Park, Florida. Ingram first became acquainted with the Town Theatre through Columbian George R. P. Walker, Jr. whom he met during his army training. Walker, who had played the role of the accused Leonard Vole in Witness for the Prosecution under Telford, provided the link for Ingram's introduction to the Town Theatre. Hired for \$4,500 and a percentage of the profits, Ingram had a budget of \$18,768.54 for six shows. The membership for the season was 2,023.

The year got off to a bad start with his first production, The Reluctant Debutante. Although the play brought out of retirement the popular acting couple Josephine and Adger Brown who had not acted together at the Theatre since Jubilee in 1951-52, Ingram's use of an improvisational approach to rehearsals confused those who were long accustomed to a more rapid pace in the short rehearsal period allotted to each show. Many of the cast members were frustrated because they felt the improvisations hindered their chances to polish the light comedy. The play opened, but Mrs. Brown became ill during the run and Elizabeth Jordan,

then business manager, finished out the final performances with script in hand.

The season was an important one for the Theatre since the fortieth anniversary of the Society would occur during it. Long-range plans for a special celebration had been made. It became apparent to the Board less than two months after the season began that things were not going well in the Theatre. Complaints were being voiced to the Board at a time when the Society needed to be putting its best foot forward. At an executive committee meeting of the Board on November 6, 1958, Ingram was upbraided by the officers. They insisted that he have open tryouts and interview his own actors, rather than using a casting director since many actors resented not having the attention of the director himself. Further, they admonished him to improve the image of the Theatre and to keep out any undesirable elements. Lastly, they insisted that he allow the curtain to be opened at the end of each performance in order to allow members of the audience, if they chose, to come onstage to talk with actors and crew.²⁶ This final point, long a sore subject with directors and crew alike, offered no real alternative, however, since there was no place else in the cramped quarters where well-wishers might go.

In his director's remarks in The Boy Friend playbill, Ingram referred to the happy atmosphere that had existed

²⁶Society, Minutes, November 6, 1958.

during preparation of the play, noting that the production had been free of the "acrimonies which have been known to accompany certain other productions."²⁷ The remark incensed the Board because of the implied disparagement to the Theatre. In addition, Ingram ran afoul of the play-reading committee because they felt he ignored their recommendations. By the December Board meeting, the Governors had become so concerned that they voted to begin a search for a new director the following season, and to have a stand-by director in mind for the rest of the season then in progress.²⁸

The internal problems resulted in many of the more experienced actors boycotting tryouts, and Ingram was forced to use many new faces. Despite the woes, however, audience attendance remained consistently high and the season progressed to its conclusion with a hit production of Brigadoon. The play was presented as a joint venture of the Theatre and the Columbia Lyric Theatre and was co-directed by Ingram and Frank Harris.

Generally, Ingram's play choices were in keeping with the kinds of plays the Theatre had previously produced. Only Monique and The Velvet Glove lacked the advantages of well-known titles. The anniversary play, like Crotty's special 300th production four years earlier, was French. Anouilh's Time Remembered had had a stylish Broadway production the

²⁷Program, The Boy Friend, 1958-59.

²⁸Society, Minutes, December 16, 1958.

year before with Helen Hayes, Richard Burton, and Susan Strassberg. Ingram capitalized on this and also on the fact that his leading lady, Betty Lane Cherry, had been a former Miss United States.

Brigadoon, with an audience of 3,257, reached fourth place in the all-time attendance record as of that date, and the talents of the participants were exceptional. Russell George and Lanny (Benson) Palmer, both established opera and concert singers, headed the large cast which had the good fortune to have among its various accompanying musicians concert pianists Marian Stanley Benson and Peter Duchin. For Ingram, the success was a balm for the difficult year.

In spite of all the problems, the Ingram tenure in many ways had a salubrious effect at the Theatre. The Board found itself working, really working in the two areas of its strongest concerns: image and finances. The new actors who debuted at the Theatre gave it an even broader base from which to cast future shows. Ingram's schedule of classes taught at the Theatre by Paul Dreher (make-up), Joe Winter (lights), Chris Thee (stagecraft) and himself (acting) were attended by over 100 people and continued a tradition of the Theatre's larger service to its members and to the community.

When Ingram left Columbia, he became manager-director of the Ross-Common Summer Playhouse at Wind Gap, Pennsylvania. Later, he turned his attention to law, studying at the University of South Carolina Law School.

Henry DuBarry Knower, 1959-1962

Once again, a clarion call was sent to New Haven. When it became certain that Ingram would stay at the helm for only one year, the Board wrote to Yale University, and the highly recommended applicant the Board chose to employ was Barry Knower, a native of Birmingham, Alabama. He held a BA degree from Princeton and, like Mann, Crotty, and Telford before him, had just received his master's degree before coming to Columbia. Knower had lived in Paris and had traveled extensively in Europe during the summers of 1948-50. He had acted and been a technician at the McLean (Virginia) Summer Theatre in 1952, and was an assistant director of the Bull Run Summer Theatre in Middleburg, Virginia in 1954. Prior to matriculating at Yale, he served a two-year stint in Army intelligence at the Pentagon. When he arrived in Columbia, Knower was twenty-seven. He was employed for \$4,500 (and a percentage of the profits) to direct six plays with a budget of \$18,956.56.

The paid season membership during Knower's first year was 2,385, the largest of record to the current time. Significantly, with the beginning of the 1960's, the membership dropped during Knower's second year by nearly 600 members. It would be fourteen years, four directors and four business managers later before the figure would rise again to the 2,000 level.

Knower directed sixteen plays during his three seasons

at the Theatre. The Board voted once again to lower the number of season plays to five during the director's second and third seasons.²⁹ All of his productions, except a double bill of The Bald Soprano and A Phoenix Too Frequent and J. B., were well attended. Indeed, South Pacific, with an attendance of 3,806, broke all of the existing records by that time. Guys and Dolls and Macbeth also passed the 3,000 mark.

Knower's play choices represented a significant departure from those of recent seasons. He intermingled popular commercial successes with plays of probing insights and plays that evaluated man's deeper values. In the playbill for George Tabori's drama, Flight Into Egypt, Knower wrote:

Flight Into Egypt, produced in 1952 by Elia Kazan, received split notices from the critics and, since only bedroom farces can survive such notices, closed. Yet those of us in Columbia who have read it and worked on it are convinced that it has a rare and moving power, that it makes a substantial and valid statement about the human condition--in short, that it merits another hearing.³⁰

Rashomon, The Deadly Game, St. Joan, Inherit the Wind, Macbeth, Our Town, J. B., The Commentator and South Pacific all offered the substance, as well as entertainment values, that Knower's tastes reflected.

In 1960, Frank Gary suggested a playwriting contest,³¹ and for the first time since Carl Glick's tenure in 1939, a

²⁹Ibid., May 26, 1960. ³⁰Program, Flight Into Egypt, 1959-60.

³¹Society, Minutes, March 22, 1960.

contest in search of a new play was held. The State-Record Co. underwrote the \$1,000 prize money with Crotty and Knower serving as preliminary judges and Coe and Mann, the final judges. Knower staged the winner, The Commentator by Ben Irwin, a forty-nine year old public relations executive from Los Angeles, at the end of his second season. The State, reviewing the play, said:

There is something inevitably exciting about a debut and no exception was last evening's first-time-ever performance--the dimming of the house lights, the expectant hush before the initial rolling back of the red curtain, the first glimpse of the opening set, were all heightened by the thrill of seeing an artistic creation come alive for the first time.

Mr. Irwin has written a good play--a gripping and thought-provoking one--and the Town Theatre has done a splendid job of producing it.³²

Irwin, interviewed by the same paper, stated:

I'm tremendously impressed by your Town Theatre, the spirit behind it. I cannot conceive of this show being done better.

.
Barry (Knower) has demonstrated superb casting in the leading roles. (Referring to Gren Seibels, Roy Lind, Sharon Eck, and Jimmy West)³³

The contest, the first of national interest sponsored by the Theatre, brought in more than 300 entries from all over the United States. It was repeated in 1961-62 with the same set-up. The winner, To Arms, To Arms by Joseph Scott of New Haven, Connecticut, was selected by judges Delbert Mann and John Gassner, Sterling Professor of Drama at Yale, but it was decided not to produce the play. J. B. was staged

³²The State, May 26, 1961.

³³Ibid.

instead.

As had been done with many of his predecessors, Knower held classes at the Theatre (during his first season). Having been an assistant to George Izenour at Yale, he was well prepared to teach stage lighting. In addition to the lighting class, he also taught a class in advanced acting. Technical director Chris Thee taught a class in scene painting. Knower's technical skills proved a boon when he took over the technical area (without pay, at his request) after Macbeth during his final year.

One of the herculean tasks performed by Knower during his last months as director was the adaptation of his two and a half hour stage version of Macbeth to a one hour and forty-five minute version for Educational Television. It marked the first time a Town Theatre production had been taped for television.

Knower's objective view of the Theatre was to be both an asset and a liability to the young director. During his first season, he suggested that help be sought from the Ford Foundation for a new building rather than to continue patching the current structure--which he had spent a good part of the year overseeing.³⁴ Julian Hennig moved that a committee be appointed to remove the encumbrances to the Stage Company's mortgaging of the property. The motion was passed,³⁵ but

³⁴Society, Minutes, March 22, 1960.

³⁵Ibid.

like the Telford plan of several years earlier, the issue died once more. The Board did decide that it was not in the Theatre's best interests to be considered for inclusion in a proposed coliseum and theatre complex.³⁶

At the beginning of the third year, Knowler wrote the following comments in the Little Mary Sunshine playbill:

"Ask Not . . ."

Categorically any non New York, non-professional enterprise such as ours falls under the heading of "community" or "civic" or "little" theatre. Since in most such organizations only two or three staff members are salaried, the sine qua non of continued existence is the community's love of living theatre, and willingness to implement this dedication with expenditures of time and physical effort. This working dedication has been the force behind the tremendous expansion of community theatre across the nation during the past five years, in areas where otherwise television and the movies would be the only sources of dramatic entertainment. This working dedication was the force that gave Town Theatre its form and being, forty-three years ago. But in Columbia, the energizing impetus of its presence is no longer felt. Town Theatre is not truly a community theatre in that its productions are no longer a result of true community effort.

Town Theatre has enjoyed periods of great prosperity, and has graduated theatre professionals of considerable note. Its supporters are justly proud of these achievements, but dazzled by the glitter of the past have grown complacent about the problems of the present and the urgent demands of the future. Whereas most community theatres are so organized that consistent and active participation at the production level is a continuing requirement for membership on the Board of Directors, in Columbia no Board member need feel compelled to so much as enter the Theatre between performances. Whereas in most communities energetic young adults form the nucleus of backstage crews, in Columbia we must depend almost entirely on high-school students and transient soldiers from Fort Jackson.

Do these facts indicate that Columbia does not care for live theatre? Not at all, for attendance records have been established in each of the past two seasons despite programming that certainly has not pandered to TV-conditioned notions of popular taste. Are we to infer that people do not work at the Theatre because the ambiance is unpleasant or the staff too demanding? Not

³⁶ Ibid.

at all, by the testimony of a dedicated few who, willing to blend a little sweat with a little dirt, return to help on show after show, season after season. The evidence is that Columbia is fond and proud of Town Theatre, but that a majority of the populace takes very much for granted its continuing existence and success.

Perhaps if an itinerant tornado were to rip this 37 year old playhouse from Sumter Street tomorrow, the Theatre's "supporters" would rise to the demands of obvious emergency and toil for its reconstruction. More difficult to recognize is the fact that it requires almost as much energy to maintain the healthy youth and vitality of an organization as to build or rebuild from scratch. Stagnation and decay, now well advanced in certain areas of our setup, are more insidious enemies than physical disaster, and much more destructive.

The direct responsibility for the Theatre's administration and productions rests with the staff, and Don (Mannfredi), Marianne (Rodgers) and I are capable of handling it alone if we must. But the more we are forced to do personally through lack of community interest, the more it becomes our theatre, the less yours. We would prefer to see Town Theatre become once again a project that Columbians can call their own, not by mere accident of residence, but by association of effort.³⁷

The director was immediately censured by the Board for "disloyal and improper action" and his privilege of writing in any future playbills was denied.³⁸ Knower's remarks, like those of Mann, Crotty, and Telford before him--when all had touched, in different ways, on the Board's aloofness, isolation, and inertia (particularly in regard to planning for the future)--were taken as criticism rather than constructive suggestion. An impasse between Board and director resulted. For some on the Board, immediate replacement would have been desirable, but image and continuity were ever-present factors.

³⁷Program, Little Mary Sunshine, 1961-62.

³⁸Society, Minutes, November 9, 1961. (He did have a column in his final playbill, however.)

Knower's final productions were Pulitzer Prize plays Our Town and J. B. Of the latter, The Record reviewer wrote:

Art of a remarkably high order was alive on the stage as J. B., the prizewinning play, was staged by a talented director and cast.

.....

That a non-professional cast and crew could so effectively meet the challenge of conveying the spiritual essence of humankind is a wonderful credit. Hats off to Director Knower and the entire hard-working group.³⁹

It was, perhaps, a fitting tribute, and also a tacit recognition of the importance of the director's point of view in the over-all scope of a community theatre program. "What I must affirm," Knower wrote about his three-year stay in his parting remarks in the J. B. playbill, "is an experience of reward and education. I have enjoyed myself, and I have learned. I hope that you have enjoyed yourselves, and have learned."⁴⁰

Paul W. Kaufman, 1962-1966

Yale University's virtual directorial monopoly (eighteen out of twenty-two years since 1940) was broken when Paul Kaufman, a professor at the College of St. Scholastica in Duluth, Minnesota, succeeded Barry Knower as director. A native of Philadelphia and graduate of its LaSalle College, the thirty-four year old Kaufman had spent four years in the Air Force and held a master's degree in

³⁹The Record, May 18, 1962.

⁴⁰Program, J. B., 1961-62.

Speech and Drama from the Catholic University of America in Washington, D. C. Prior to his work in Minnesota, Kaufman had taught at both Webster College and St. Louis University in Missouri. Kaufman's beginning salary was \$5,000, plus fifty per cent of any profits⁴¹ to direct six plays with a budget of \$19,085. In essence, he was being paid \$1,000 less than Knower to do one play more on a budget that was that of \$2,743 less than/the preceding year. The membership jumped by 262 Kaufman's first year to 1955. This marked, however, the largest season membership of his four-year term.

The first thing Kaufman did once he was on the job was to change the long-standing Wednesday opening night, begun by Mann in 1947, to Friday, with the Theatre being dark on Sunday and Monday. Kaufman knew that traditionally Friday and Saturday were the best audience nights, in terms of attendance, and Monday, the worst. This allowed each production to play two weekends. Also, the Friday opening allowed more time for opening night festivities since it was a weekend night. The policy has continued to the present time.

On the surface, the Kaufman years seemed to reflect little change in the over-all program of the Theatre. The plays represented standard recent Broadway fare with well-known titles. Only Julius Caesar and Winterset offered any

⁴¹ This was a slight change from past procedure. Formerly, the profit-sharing plan for most of those directors who had it was based on fifty per cent of the first \$5,000 net profit, and twenty-five per cent of any additional amount.

potential gamble to a "commercial" schedule. Still, the Theatre was undergoing subtle changes. Symptomatic of these was the ending of a forty-four year tradition of complete volunteer help in manning the box office. The Junior League had most recently handled the staffing for adult plays, but they abandoned this community service at the end of the 1962-63 season.⁴² The Forest Lake Woman's Club took over the box office for Julius Caesar, the second play of Kaufman's second year--for the remuneration of \$50.00 per show, the money going to their own civic projects.⁴³

The minutes of the four years refer to a morale factor at the Theatre,⁴⁴ the continued poor attendance at annual meetings of the Society,⁴⁵ the aforementioned problems with the segregation issue, and mounting repairs to the building which constituted a perpetual headache.

When plans for a museum complex (which would include a theatre) were published, Dr. John R. Craft, Columbia Museum of Art director and also a member of the Society's Board, said the theatre would be available to a local group--and that if the Town Theatre were to choose to become a part of the complex, it would not have to lose its autonomy. The Society's Board expressed interest, but the proposal did not come to fruition.⁴⁶

⁴²Society, Minutes, June 18, 1963.

⁴³Ibid., November 20, 1963. This arrangement continued through the 1970-71 season.

⁴⁴Ibid. ⁴⁵Ibid., September 30, 1964.

⁴⁶Several years later, the Workshop Theatre of S. C. did renovate a building gained in urban renewal in the same city block as the Columbia Art Museum.

During Kaufman's first season, a disruption of his activities was caused by his illness. The schedule progressed as announced, however, with his wife Jeannette taking over the directorship for The Mousetrap. The play-writing contest, begun two years earlier under Knower, continued for a third season but bogged down when judges Emlyn Williams, Bob Telford, and Delbert Mann deemed none of the plays worthy of the prize. A lecture series, begun in 1965 and lasting for six years, supplanted the contest. The State-Record Foundation underwrote the lectures for \$1,250 annually. (See Appendix G)

Perhaps Kaufman's biggest headache of the four year period occurred with his production of My Fair Lady. Anxious for the Town Theatre to be one of the first community theatres to produce what had become at that point the longest-running Broadway musical, Kaufman grabbed the rights for the play in Columbia and rushed the musical into production. The show seemed plagued from the beginning. Kaufman earlier had had problems with musicians because of union rules and rates, so a \$600 figure to Don Wood of Dreher High School for the use of his band students, supplemented by professional musicians as needed, seemed a reasonable price to pay for the "orchestra."⁴⁷ The multiple sets designed by the director and Duke Ebert for the tiny stage were thought through with care and seemed workable. The costumes were rented.

⁴⁷Society, Minutes, February 18, 1964 and April 7, 1964. Pianist Ann Goff who also accompanied Carnival earlier in the season refused any remuneration for either show and was given a gift.

Choreography was devised by Margaret and Lanneau Foster. With a cast headed by Englishman George Curry and the reigning Miss Columbia, Ruth Henderson, the combination of talents couldn't miss, yet the only unqualified praise the production drew in these areas from the local critics went to the costumes. Marian Sapp, writing for The State said: "Not that the opening night was an unmitigated disaster. It was simply a disaster." She called the choreography "dull," and applauded the cast and band "for even appearing for the second act."⁴⁸ Marshall Reed in his review for The Record said the show was "too long" and that "someone should amend that first act eternity." Reed found Curry's speaking voice "pitched a trifle high" and Miss Henderson's singing voice "limited."⁴⁹

Adger Brown, who had played Henry Higgins in Coe's Pygmalion, was pressed into service to write his reaction to the show, in the hope of having some positive written statement about the musical. While he shared some of the statements of the reviewers, generally, his remarks were softer--despite his displeasure with the "thin" orchestra. In wry fashion, he closed his observations with: "All in all, 'My Fair Lady' is not a show to miss!"⁵⁰

Even though the local reviewers had blasted the

⁴⁸The State, March 12, 1964.

⁴⁹The Record, March 12, 1964.

⁵⁰The State, March 13, 1964.

production in unusually strong language for a civic endeavor, the attendance for the show reached 3,569, making it Kaufman's best attended show--and the only one to go over 3,000. Generally, public reaction to the reviewers' remarks worked in favor of the production. The "controversy" helped to tighten the show, and the audience response, particularly to Miss Henderson, Dr. Curry, and to Elizabeth Malloch Davis (playing Mrs. Higgins) was enthusiastic and supportive. Kaufman did not fare as well--giving some credence, perhaps, to the ironic show business maxim: "If the show is good, the actors are marvelous; if it is bad, the director is terrible." Whatever conclusions were drawn about the production, financially the box office revenue (in part because the general admission had been raised to \$3.00 for the show) was the largest in the Theatre's history, by that time, for a single show.

A declining membership, a deficit his third season, and a general ambivalency about the director seemed to be motivating factors for the non-renewal of Kaufman's contract for 1966-67. Between January 18, 1966 (when the decision was made) and March 17, 1966, not only was Kaufman's successor hired but the Theatre underwent a barrage of letters and editorial comment in the local press in praise of Kaufman and condemning his non-reappointment.

The remainder of his final year was not a happy time either for Kaufman or for the Board. The Governors, as they had done with Knower, refused to allow him to publish his director's column in the playbills, and his last show, Max-

well Anderson's poetic work of another era, Winterset, marked the nadir of Kaufman's twenty-three plays. Marshall Reed wrote of it:

A suspicion of more production difficulties than met the eye Friday night. In the role of Judge Gaunt, a pivotal part, only a man with professional stature could step in, read most of his lines from a script, yet maintain the essence of character. Newcomer Payne Williams did this, but long passages in [the] second act bogged somewhat in spite of his noble try.

.....

There was unintended irony in the playing of Shadow, a substitution situation putting Paul Kaufman on stage in his last production for TT. Shadow was carried off stage, inexorably finalized in script and fact by Things As They Are.⁵¹

Four years prior to this, before his first production, Kaufman stated:

Whether it's community or educational theatre, my basic philosophy is that the primary aim of theatrical productions is the enjoyment of the audience.

.....

I feel that community theatre is an essential part of a city's cultural life, offering not only valuable training for aspirant actors pursuing theatrical careers, but also a source of new social contacts, a refreshing change from daily routine, and an enjoyable outlet for creative talents, both on stage and backstage.⁵²

After his work in Columbia, Kaufman became an assistant and professor in Communications Arts at the Loyola University of Los Angeles in California.

⁵¹The Record, May 14, 1966.

⁵²The State, September 16, 1962.

Richard A. Harrison, 1966-67

Once more the Board turned to Yale University for its new director. A Hoosier native and a graduate of Indiana's Franklin College, Richard Harrison had planned a career in law and was set to go to M. I. T. A disenchantment with the idea of long years of schooling caused him to abandon the prospect. By chance he traveled to Fort Worth, Texas and became involved with the same theatre group that his predecessor Telford was just taking over as Harrison arrived in Columbia.

. . . A new world opened to me. I got to know people. I began to share the excitement of creating something that hadn't existed before. I knew the satisfaction of performing before an audience, the sort of electric reciprocity, the give-and-take between actor and audience. To put it succinctly, I was hooked; incurably, by the theatre. I did everything--built scenery, stage managed, worked the lights--everything.⁵³

After leaving Texas, Harrison worked with the touring company of the Cleveland Playhouse. Later, while studying for his Master of Fine Arts degree in theatre at Yale, he directed the Post Road Players of Stoney Creek, Connecticut, and also found time to direct an off-Broadway production in New York.

Like most of his fellow Yale alumni at the Town Theatre, the thirty-year old Harrison assumed his post with the master's degree fresh in hand. His six-play contract called for a salary of \$6,300 (\$300 more than Kaufman's), plus \$500 per play for each children's play he would direct. In addition, he was to receive fifty per cent of any profits

⁵³Program, The Firebugs, 1966-67.

on the proposed budget of \$25,896.20.

Harrison's announced season of plays was:

The Firebugs by Max Frisch
The Imaginary Invalid by Molière
Six Characters in Search of an Author by Pirandello
Galileo by Bertolt Brecht
Paint Your Wagon by Lerner and Loewe
The Happy Haven by John Arden

Anyone familiar with the Town Theatre's general bill of fare could tell at a glance that no playreading committee from the Society's membership had recommended the roster of plays which The Firebugs playbill called "A Real Community Theatre Season."⁵⁴ Harrison's choices did represent a balanced and provocative season of solid theatre works--but not the kind Town Theatre members were used to seeing. There was not one recent Broadway success among the lot, and most of the titles were either unknown or only vaguely familiar to most of the membership.

The season ticket drive netted only 1,578 subscribers, the lowest figure in twenty seasons. The gloom of the situation was not brightened by the opening production, Max Frisch's The Firebugs, subtitled: a learning play without a lesson. A cast, made up largely of newcomers, did not succeed in selling the script or production to a large segment of the 1,450 people who saw the play.

Although Paint Your Wagon was Harrison's best attended play (1,815), his most admired production, including the Broadway fillip A Thousand Clowns which he substituted for the

⁵⁴Ibid.

Brecht play, was probably Six Characters in Search of an Author. Adger Brown in his review stated: " . . . seldom in its history has Town Theater offered theater of such exalted quality. Richard Harrison and his company of players have indeed done themselves--and Town Theater--proud."⁵⁵ Marshall Reed ended his review with: "The play's the thing and this is superlative."⁵⁶

Shortly afterwards, the Board, in making its decision about retaining Harrison, met its most serious challenge since the election of Margaret (Taylor) Martin as President in 1929. Concern over finances, policy disagreements, personality clashes, production choices, and morale in the organization were being weighed against a director whose talent was obvious but whose obeisance to the Board took second place to what he felt to be his own professional integrity. In the end, it was the director's "attitude" towards the Board and the public which precipitated a negative decision.

The announcement of the non-renewal of Harrison's contract opened a Pandora's box, the like of which had seldom been seen in the Society. Petitions were circulated to get the Board to reverse the decision, a barrage of letters appeared in the press, and Harrison, himself, indicated he wished to stay at the Town Theatre. For the first time,

⁵⁵The State, January 21, 1967.

⁵⁶The Record, January 21, 1967.

the Board was seriously threatened in the matter of a director's contract. One of its members wrote to the Board to suggest that the decision had been hasty and expressed a desire that the matter be reconsidered. In the debate, a former director, then a member of the Board, pointed out that if Harrison were re-employed working conditions with the Board would be insupportable, that the authority of the Board would be nonexistent, and that the Board could be pressured into changing any action. The remarks were designed to keep harmony on the Board. In another balloting, the original decision was reaffirmed. This vote, made on April 5, 1967,⁵⁷ provided for the first time in its forty-eight year history, a major schism in the Society on all levels, and from it was born the very next month the Workshop Theatre of South Carolina, which in time would funnel off a large segment of the best young talent the Town Theatre had produced.

Harrison completed his year of six adult plays and two children's plays--having directed all eight. The final play, John Arden's The Happy Haven, drew an audience of only 212, making it one of the poorest draws since the earliest years of the Society. The Record reviewer wrote of it:

As a bow-out for Director Richard Harrison, it was a dignified, professional job of work in parting. The directing, and the DIRECTION was forward despite all There will be those who will pooh-pooh the swansong, but it will be a long time before a more competent director takes the reins.⁵⁸

⁵⁷Society, Minutes, April 5, 1967.

⁵⁸The Record, May 20, 1967

Harrison became the managing director of the Rochester (Minnesota) Civic Theatre when he left Columbia.

John Bitterman, 1967-1969

The director who would be on hand to see the Town Theatre through its fiftieth anniversary basically broke the mold of his predecessors in the background that he brought with him. He had been primarily a businessman and a government worker, having directed his first show while managing a firm in suburban Philadelphia. John Bitterman was a native of Virginia, but he attended schools in Maryland, Washington state, New Jersey, and California, as well as the William and Mary Extension in Norfolk. In New York he took a directing seminar with José Quintero at the Circle-in-the-Square Theatre. Bitterman was employed to direct five adult shows and two children's plays for a total of \$7,500, plus fifty per cent of any profits. With a budget of \$25,441.12, the season membership his first year was 1,713.

His ten adult shows in two seasons represented the tried-and-true genre of Broadway or film successes which Harrison had eschewed. Only Hogan's Goat offered any real question mark. Both Neil Simon plays produced his first season (The Odd Couple and Barefoot in the Park) outpulled the Pulitzer Prize musical How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying in attendance, although none reached the 3,000 level.

Bitterman offered classes in speech on a limited basis and he persuaded the Board to reinstate the "Oscar" acting awards. The only two areas of major concern that confronted the director arose with casting and with the Children's Theatre. Coming into a new town and establishing directing skills was hard enough for any new director, but Bitterman's arrival on the heels of the Harrison controversy couldn't have been more ill-timed for him. He tried to cast Darkness at Noon and Hostile Witness but both had large male casts and fell by the wayside. He appealed to the Board for help and they prepared a list of actors who had worked consistently at the Theatre during the past ten years. Part of the problem, they suggested, was Bitterman's closed tryouts--director and actor on a one-to-one basis rather than all contenders being able to view their competitors in open auditions. The Board encouraged him to change his approach.⁵⁹ Further, Bitterman was not aided by the fact that the Workshop Theatre had been organized. It debuted shortly after he arrived with Dylan at Fort Jackson February 29, 1968, thus taking with it many workers he could no longer count on. During Bitterman's tenure, a short-lived dinner theatre also was opened. Suddenly, where the Town Theatre had once had a monopoly on theatrical activity in Columbia, it was competing with the Hadassah Players, the Lyric Theatre, the University Theatre, the Columbia

⁵⁹Society, Minutes, January 16, 1968.

College Theatre, and the Workshop Theatre in production schedules. There simply were not enough actors in Columbia to accommodate that many groups, and even though there was some gravitation by actors to where the best roles were, Bitterman, because he was new, had a more difficult time getting experienced casts. By his own admission, ninety-five of the 140 actors (nearly sixty-eight per cent) who appeared in the adult productions in the two years were new to the Town Theatre.⁶⁰ While the new faces were healthy for the Society, they did affect, doubtlessly, production standards since many of the ninety-five were also new to the stage.

Adger Brown noted for Gigi:

But this is a soufflé of a play--and a Paris soufflé at that. In the hands of a hard-working but for the most part unsuitable cast, the concoction resembled the aforesaid soufflé somewhat less than it did a hoecake. The lines are the lines of Paris, but the heavy handling is "Kansas in August."⁶¹

Bitterman was more fortunate with The Odd Couple:

His (Bitterman's) directorial hand in shaping the performances of his players and in the blocking of their movements onstage is so wonderfully unobtrusive that as you watch their rib-tickling antics, you are rarely, if ever, aware of the director's role.⁶²

In addition to the casting worries, Bitterman met scant success with the children's plays he directed. Timing (because of holiday conflicts) and a lack of well-known titles

⁶⁰Program, Picnic, 1968-69.

⁶¹The State, December 2, 1967.

⁶²Ibid., October 15, 1967.

were advanced as major reasons. The Junior League still had sponsorship of the Children's Theatre, with a representative on the Board, but Mrs. Kramer had not directed since Kaufman's final year. It was entirely probable that the six children's plays directed by Harrison and Bitterman suffered, not only because of the problems these directors encountered, but also because the shows were an additional responsibility to a full season of adult plays. It was a back-breaking schedule for one person to do justice to both the adult program and the Children's Theatre.

Over the years, various civic organizations and churches had asked to rent the Theatre for productions. Most often, the groups had been turned down by the Board--not as a gesture of poor community spirit, but because the Society's own program was usually so full that there was scarcely a time when the stage was not being used for rehearsals or performances. Even before Bitterman's first show, the Lyric Theatre had asked to use the Theatre during Christmas week. Bitterman, although in favor of helping, suggested that the booking might affect the flexibility of his own program which was still not completely set. The Board decided to grant the request anyway, and the new director was in little position to demur.

Bitterman's tenure was aided immeasurably by the fiftieth anniversary celebration which was in the planning stages almost from the time he arrived in Columbia. The Board pulled out all the stops to make the occasion memo-

rable. Bitterman chose Oliver! as the anniversary play; the Board had a luncheon the day following the opening, with Isadora Bennett Reed, the wife of the first director, as its guest speaker; and the business staff oversaw a "sprucing up" of the Theatre building. The final event was a guest lecture sponsored by the State-Record for the membership at Dreher High School with Sir Tyrone Guthrie as speaker.

Bitterman had one adult play and one children's play to do after the anniversary show, before the season ended. He completed William Inge's Pulitzer Prize play Picnic and Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp by May 26. The year, reflecting the glow of a happy golden anniversary, was ending on the quietest note in several seasons. Bitterman was expected back the following season, but on June 20, 1969, he resigned to become assistant director of the South Carolina Arts Commission. Once more, the search was on for a director.

Anita Grannis, 1969-1973

Within ten days after Bitterman's resignation, the Board had an application for the directorship of the Theatre from New York native Anita Grannis, who was beginning her seventeenth season as a stage director for North Carolina's prestigious Flat Rock Playhouse. Miss Grannis had learned of the opening through Walter O'Rourke, who was technical director at both the Town Theatre and Flat Rock Playhouse. After interviews and contract negotiations, Miss Grannis was offered the same contract as Bitterman (five adult

plays and two children's plays for \$7,500 plus fifty per cent of the profits) or an alternative of \$7,000 for five adult plays, plus fifty per cent of the profit beyond the first \$500. She chose the latter, with a projected budget of \$31,026.34. The Society was to arrange for a separate director for the children's productions. With its seventeenth director, the Society was beginning its second half century in a way that no other single season had begun. Not only was Miss Grannis the first woman to direct the Society, but at the time of her employment, she was senior to any of her predecessors in age and experience. She had quite literally directed several hundred productions for such theatres as the Tampa (Florida) Community Theatre, Theatre Nashville, the Macon (Georgia) Little Theatre, Flat Rock Playhouse and the Racine (Wisconsin) Theatre Guild where she had just completed three years as managing director. As a professional actress she had appeared in summer stock in theatres throughout New England, and on television she had acted on such programs as "Hallmark Hall of Fame," "Treasury Men," "Big Story," and the "Frank Sinatra Show."

In New York, Miss Grannis had directed four plays for Equity Library Theatre, sponsored by the Actors Equity Association; she directed educational radio programs for universities and colleges; and she worked six years as an actress, stage manager, and assistant director with the Irish Repertory Players in Abbey Theatre plays, having been

associated with such noted figures as Paul Vincent Carroll, Dudley Digges, and Padraic Colum.

As a producer, Miss Grannis had shared producing chores in summer companies in Branford, Connecticut, and Mt. Vernon, New York. Love in Our Time, a full-length adult play written by Miss Grannis was produced off-Broadway in New York, and a children's play, Lucky Cinderella--also authored by the new director, had been widely staged on the east coast. In addition to writing free-lance radio scripts, Miss Grannis had also written documentary films for the University of Buffalo (New York), Case Institute of Technology in Cleveland (Ohio) and the National Film Board of Canada. Her educational background included study at New York University, private study in acting with Morris Carnovsky and Will Lee, and a year in Europe. The experience was formidable. The only reservation expressed by the Society Board was in regard to her health. Miss Grannis had had a coronary the previous season in Wisconsin, but had recovered to finish out three more plays. Her doctors had given her a clean bill of health, however, so the Board seemed assuaged.

In many ways, Miss Grannis' four years as director represented both a calming effect on the organization and a rise in the Society's fortunes. The membership rolls dropped by nearly 400 members to 1,554 her first season, and to an alarming 1,356 her second year. Both years represented an ebb--the lowest membership years in twenty-three seasons. The fault was not necessarily that of Miss Grannis. Several

factors entered the picture. Although it was not generally known, business manager Martha Penney was seriously ill during the period, and while she continued valiantly in her job until shortly before her death in April, 1971, the membership campaigns, normally under her jurisdiction, were less successful than in previous years. Further, the frequent changes in directors (four in less than four years) had created doubts about what had long been considered a stable institution. In addition, the proliferation of theatre groups in Columbia had begun to affect membership possibilities.

In 1971, Mrs. Charles (Claire) Randall succeeded Mrs. Penney as business manager. That same year, Tom Campbell joined the staff part-time, first as a guest director for Play it Again, Sam when Miss Grannis was ill, and then as the director of Peter Pan for the Children's Theatre. With Campbell as full time Youth Theatre director in 1972-73, Miss Grannis and Mrs. Randall firmly established in their work, and the stabilizing presence of designer and technical director Walter O'Rourke who had already completed eight seasons, the Stage Society had found its stride again and the jump in membership to 2,145 reflected it. The last time the membership had exceeded the 2,000 mark had been under Barry Knower thirteen seasons before.

In addition to a successful membership campaign chaired by Mary Lina and Wit Kosicki, part of the new enthusiasm came with a gimmick inaugurated by the Board to entice season memberships. For all who paid for their memberships prior

to September 1, a bonus production, Mame, was offered in addition to the five regular plays for the season. The membership price did not change. It was decided that Campbell should direct the play because Miss Grannis would still be at Flat Rock for her summer season when rehearsals needed to begin. By all counts, it was a bargain for subscribers. Ironically, Mame was the best attended show of the Grannis tenure (3245), with a revival of Life With Father marking the only other adult play of the four years to exceed the 3,000 plateau. It was seen by 3,038 people.

In spite of an obvious growth and an establishment of equilibrium in the Society, the Board did not urge Miss Grannis to continue after her fourth season. Concern about her health and the increasing demands of an arduous schedule played a great part in the decision. Campbell left shortly before the end of the season to accept the directorship of the Island Players at Hilton Head Island, South Carolina.

An assessment of Miss Grannis' work in Columbia must reflect a positive trend and a definite growth factor for the Society. She took over the directorial reigns at a difficult time and held onto them with assurance. As a woman, she was somewhat at a disadvantage. In a time when women were fighting for equal recognition, Miss Grannis, though admired and respected (and despite her impressive credentials), had to work hard to prove herself professionally in an organization that had long been oriented to dealing with individualistic and often aggressive young men.

Miss Grannis' relationship with the Board was polite and professional. The Board was not particularly fond of her use of a volunteer assistant director in mounting her productions, although the practice is fairly common in production preparation. At the end of her first season, she wrote a lengthy director's report which she presented to the Board. Her recommendations, borne out of long years of experience, were seriously received, and president Simmons Tate made a significant effort to involve the Board in the suggestions offered by the director.

The tastes of most directors are reflected in their choices of a bill of fare. On the surface, it might be difficult to observe a single point of view or definite path Miss Grannis' plays seemed to take, yet in a more leisurely fashion she set about to offer serious theatre buffs more than "warmed-over Broadway." Not since Knower or Harrison had a director ventured into the depths that Miss Grannis essayed with such productions as The Lady's Not For Burning by Christopher Fry, The Royal Hunt of the Sun by Peter Shaffer, The Threepenny Opera by Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill, The Waltz of the Toreadors by Jean Anouilh, The Tempest by Shakespeare, A Cry of Players by William Gibson, and Beyond the Horizon by Eugene O'Neill. Not all of the plays were successful. The Shaffer and Anouilh productions were very poor box office draws, but Columbia audiences were more than enthusiastic about the Shakespeare and O'Neill works--perhaps proving that good "classics" done well are still worthwhile fare in viable

theatre. Adger Brown wrote of The Tempest:

A gorgeously packaged "Christmas gift" to Columbia theatergoers arrived Saturday night . . .

To provide such a production demands theatrical courage, hard work, and the marshaling of all sorts of talents in varied fields--all of which Miss Grannis has nobly done.⁶³

Undoubtedly, the highlight of Miss Grannis' four years came with the arrival in Columbia of some 1,500 theatre people from ten southeastern states for the Southeastern Theatre Conference early in 1972. As one of the host organizations (along with Columbia College and the University of South Carolina), the Town Theatre was very much a focal point for the visitors, not only because of its long history, but because two of the five productions being staged in Columbia during the conference were at the Theatre. Tom Campbell had chosen Barrie's Peter Pan (in the Broadway musical version) as the children's play and Miss Grannis had selected William Gibson's A Cry of Players, a play dealing with Shakespeare's early life, as the adult entry. Both directors hit "pay dirt." Campbell's cast had eighty-five headed by Bobby Bullock in the title role. A Cry of Players had a strong cast of thirty-two headed by University freshman Chip Latimer as the young Shakespeare, Jayne Mulvaney as his wife Anne, and Adrian Elder as Kemp. The Gibson play was performed Friday and Saturday nights, with Peter Pan being staged at the Saturday matinee. If the casts had

⁶³Ibid., December 5, 1971

any fears about playing to so august and astute a body of critics, it was not obvious, and conference members went away from Columbia in high praise of the Town Theatre. The real heroes of the weekend were probably Walter O'Rourke and his stage crew who had sets for the two major shows to shift and reshift--all being further complicated by the rigging for "flying" Peter Pan in an area where there was no fly loft and grid system. Dan Reed would doubtless have been proud of what transpired in the tiny Theatre during the two days.

After Miss Grannis' four seasons had ended, she retired in Columbia, continuing, however, her position with the Vagabond Players at the Flat Rock Playhouse in the summertime.

Joseph T. Ridolfo, 1973-

For Miss Grannis' successor, the Board moved away from New Haven, Washington, and New York to another theatre center--New Orleans. Joseph T. Ridolfo, a native of the Mississippi delta city, held a master's degree in theatre from Louisiana State University at New Orleans and had previously taught at Behrman High School in the same city. Between 1969-72, he worked for two short-lived theatrical ventures, La Mise En Scene Théâtre and the American Repertory Theatre. While at LSU, he served as an intern at Le Petit Théâtre du Vieux Carré.

His announced season of six plays appeared in the playbill of Miss Grannis' final production and the bonus

membership production, continued its second season, was Fiddler on the Roof. The season membership rose to 2,267, and Ridolfo was to be paid \$11,000 to direct six adult plays and two children's plays on a projected budget of \$49,856.00.

The bonus opener, already Broadway's longest-running musical, became the Town Theatre's biggest bonanza: the longest run (fourteen performances), the biggest cash box office (\$7,937), and the largest attendance (4,093). The opening remarks of The State review stated:

A highly merited standing ovation on opening night left no doubt in anyone's mind that Joseph Ridolfo's first major effort as director of Town Theater is a major success.

It is a rare thing indeed when a community theater musical production "goes together" in all its aspects--music, dancing, and acting, but such is the case with Ridolfo's production of "Fiddler on the Roof" . . .⁶⁴

All in all, the admired production made an auspicious beginning for the young director.

The productions of Night Watch and The Diary of Anne Frank which followed proved to be less happy in reception. The director was taken to task in The State review of The Diary of Anne Frank for failing ". . . to point up some of the most important scenes in the play. . . . Much of the pathos," the review continued, "has been ignored, and most of the humor is overdone."⁶⁵ Inexperience of some of the important members of the cast was noted as a major factor

⁶⁴Ibid., October 8, 1973.

⁶⁵Ibid., December 9, 1973.

in the lukewarm response to the Pulitzer Prize play. Part of the problem for both Night Watch and Diary was a truncated rehearsal schedule caused by Fiddler on the Roof and The Wonderful World of the Brothers Grimm (the first children's play). Four productions between September 8 and December 15 proved too heavy for adequate rehearsal time on the third and fourth plays. With Any Wednesday, The Lark, and I Do, I Do, however, Ridolfo added a lustre to the season and the fifty-fifth year ended with a total attendance of 15,472 making it the second best attended season of record after Telford's topper of 15,575 in 1957-58.

Under Ridolfo, the Theatre once again returned to offering a matinee performance--on Sunday afternoons. The Sunday showings took on a family orientation and attracted many viewers from nearby towns and cities who would not have come to Columbia for evening performances. Another tradition reinstated was the touring plan. Both children's plays were taken to Camden and to Orangeburg.

In the summer of 1974, Ridolfo conducted a two-week dramatic workshop designed for high school juniors, seniors, and college students. His work continues at the Theatre.

CHAPTER IX

ACTORS AND CREWS

While it is true that in the early days of the Columbia Stage Society, performers usually came from the social circles prominent in the arts in Columbia, World War II changed the pattern. The large influx of military personnel and the war, itself, became a great leveler. Although the Board has remained very much like the original founders in character, the actors and crews probably represent a broader spectrum of interests and social levels. Most of the directors have had little concern about the social positions or backgrounds of performers, preferring instead talent, suitability for roles or availability for crews, and interest. At the Town Theatre, it is not necessary to hold a season membership in order to act onstage or work backstage. A great number of the performers and crew members are, in fact, not members of the Society. Thus, in matters of policy, many of the very artisans who are responsible for the product are ineligible to vote.

The Society has staunchly maintained its preference for amateur status for its actors. Guests Billie Mustin and Bill Splawn were cast in Call Me Madam and Carnival, respectively, but the Board was not enthusiastic when Anita Grannis suggested the possibility of using a paid professional

actor as Tony in a proposed production of The Most Happy Fella, and they also voted that no actor should be "starred" in a play--i.e., listed above the title in the playbills.¹ Paul Kaufman had begun the practice with Photo Finish in the 1964-65 season and it had been used on an intermittent basis after that.

During the first twenty-five years, the Town Theatre produced more actresses of note than actors. Beginning in the 1940's, this changed--possible by a trend in playwriting (more and better roles for men), or by virtue of the plays chosen for production. Most of the local "stars" achieved their status by frequent appearances onstage, year after year. If computations are accurate, in the fifty-five year span, 1919-1974, two actresses logged admirable records for community theatre performers. Ruth (Hope) Ogden's thirty productions are followed by Sara Jones' twenty-two. Tied after them at eighteen are Elizabeth (Belser) Fuller and Cynthia Gilliam. Closely following, in descending order, are Margaret (Taylor) Martin, ^{Josephine Brown} Perla Sumner, Bette Herring, Mrs. D. S. Pope, and Naomi Calvert.

If the large number of roles established by actresses seems unusual, those for the men are even more impressive. Dan Reed's forty-one roles are followed by Jim E. Quick's thirty-two, and then by Ray Dutrow, Jr.'s twenty-six. Other actors performing fifteen or more roles include Adger Brown,

¹Society, Minutes, February 21, 1968.

Geddeth Smith, Roy Lind, Martin Jones, Harry Davis, J. T. Penney, and Hagood Bostick. They are closely followed by Jim O'Shea, Burrell Sanders, Frank Harris, David Dreiman, Harvey Golden, and George Curry.

While there was comment, from time to time, on the over-exposure of certain performers, the consistent appearances of many of the often-used actors helped to guarantee strong productions.

Frequently, actors became noted for certain types of roles. Lanny (Benson) Palmer, Mickey Mattox, Ruth Henderson, Naomi Calvert, Shirlee Teuber, Voight and Ceile Kempson, Johnny DeHart, Dave Davidson, Henry Everett, and Bill Splawn became stalwarts in musicals. Meaty dramatic roles attracted Mary Arnold Garvin, Ruth (Gottlieb) Moore, Winifred Wells Orr, Marjorie Good, Bette Herring, Peggy Petroff, C. P. MacInnis, Jim Whitten, Richard Breeland, Paul MacMahon, Gren Seibels, George Curry, Frank Harris, Harvey Golden, Milton Dickson, Mel Glass, James Dreher, Charles Gerald, and Jim O'Shea.

Ingenues and comedienues who appeared often in later years included Joyce Shirer, Sarah Hardy, Jean Turbeville, Cynthia Gilliam, Frances LaBorde, Malie Bruton, and Kathleen (Bowman) Dreiman. Their male counterparts included such actors as Joe (Dave) Bishop, Burrell Sanders, Geddeth Smith, Alex Lancaster, Paul Crouch, Al McNeely, David Dreiman, Chip Latimer, and Adrian Elder.

The actors named are only a few of literally hundreds who peopled the stage with distinction. Many of these (and others) went on to do professional work: Sarah Hardy, Mary Arnold Garvin, Richard Goode, Gedde Smith, Burrell Sanders, Joe Bishop, Milton Dickson, Jimmy Maher, Voight and Ceile Kempson, Chris Thee, Norman Twain, Mallory Graham, Joyce Shirer, Richard Veale, and Elizabeth Malloch Davis.

Several of the actors also became directors for other theatre groups or colleges: Joe Bishop, Arnold Wengrow, Frank Harris, Russell Green, Jim E. Quick, Paul Dreher, Harvey Golden, Milton Dickson, Paul Crouch, Mel Glass, Malie Bruton, Cynthia Gilliam, and Mary Arnold Garvin.

Since the founding of the Workshop Theatre in 1967, many of the younger actors who grew up on theatre at the Town Theatre have done the major part of their dramatic work with the newer group. Tensions have lessened in the years since Richard Harrison left Columbia, however, and most of Columbia's actors go to whichever group has the roles they want.

Crews

Most typical theatre audiences give little thought to the backstage minions without whose help fine productions are impossible. Directors and actors have long since learned that respect for those who build sets; run props, sound, and lights; create make-up; and who build costumes is not only desirable but mandatory in an atmosphere where professionalism is the hallmark.

The strongest element in the continuity of the Stage Society's activities over the past ten years has been the presence of designer and technical director, Walter O'Rourke who first joined the Theatre's staff for the 1964-65 season. O'Rourke had known director Paul Kaufman at Catholic University where both were students, and Kaufman was instrumental in bringing him to Columbia. O'Rourke, who has worked with seven directors (including Tom Campbell and Mrs. Kramer) and two business managers at the Town Theatre is also designer and technical director in the summertime for the Flat Rock Playhouse in North Carolina. In the course of a calendar year, he designs and oversees the building of sets for a total of sixteen-eighteen major plays in both theatres.

Quiet, professional, and imaginative, O'Rourke has been consistently and lavishly praised for the excellence of his sets by audiences and critics alike. Paid only a fraction of what his talent could command in professional theatres, the designer remains a stabilizing force in the Society.

In the ten years of his work, O'Rourke has updated or replaced most of the smaller equipment used in production work. Steel steps to the stage, a masonite stage floor, and refurbishing of basement make-up and dressing rooms have also been additions. A lack of a fly system, the tiny stage, the romanesque proscenium arch, and a lack of a costume room remain the inadequacies that most hamper O'Rourke in the technical and design areas.²

²Personal Interviews, June 18, 1970, July 19, 1974.

O'Rourke, and all the Theatre's directors alike, have been fortunate over the years by having many craftsmen whose work is seen but whose faces are not necessarily known by audiences. Longevity records may be held by current make-up chairman Dottie Dreiman who took over the area under Telford for the 1955-56 season, photographer Gordon Brown who has photographed most of the Theatre's activities since the 1956-57 Telford season, and by Mrs. R. Brantly Cox and the late Martha Penney, who, between them recruited or scheduled most of the box office helpers from 1934 until 1963 when the Forest Lake Woman's Club took over.

Another long-term crew chairman was Elaine Taylor Brantley who ushered at the Theatre for nine years, eight as head usher. Interestingly during the period, she entered and finished high school, entered and finished Columbia College, and found time to marry Joseph E. Brantley.

Long years of crew service were also achieved by Margaret (Taylor) Martin on costumes, Joe Winter on lights, and Iris (Creswell) DeMates on publicity and cast suppers. The unusual nature of the continuing support of these and many others who served long terms gave an inner strength to the producing organization and aided greatly as directors came and went.

Musically, the Town Theatre has benefited from Columbia's finest musicians and dancers in musical direction and choreography. Most of the private major dance studios in the city have been represented with their directors as choreographers

for musicals. Columbia College and the University, as well as private teachers, have lent their musical support in training choruses, principals, and in accompaniment. In a very real sense, musicals have advanced a constantly-changing synthesis of talents, and underline the community nature of the endeavor.

Robert Telford, who brought about so much positive change in the Society, also established a tradition which has given many of Columbia's young artists a showcase for their talents. With his very first playbill, he changed the cover format which formerly had included only the Theatre's logo, play title, and playing dates. For the most part since 1955, covers have been the work of such artists and photographers as Cynthia Cloyd, Chris Thee, Alex Lancaster, Ted Solomon, Larry Moshell, Richard Alpert, Gordon Brown, David Suggs, Sam Glenn, James Haynesworth, Ron Buff, Jerry Tiemann, Howard Menken, Jean McWhorter, Trudy Knower, Philip Eck, and Jean-Marie La Munière.

Fortunately, throughout the Town Theatre's history, the dedication, talent, and long hours of its actors and crews have been the sources of the constant renewing of the organization's program from year to year. The times of the Society's greatest stresses usually involved shortages of money, director problems, or Board problems (or combinations of these). The thousands of volunteer actors and crew members who have worked long hours at the Town Theatre in fifty-five seasons have been remarkably positive--mostly free of

overwhelming strifes--and wanting the best possible product. That they have occasionally wondered why Board involvement in the Theatre seemed like apathy by comparison suggests, in part, why there has long been a gulf between production forces and the Board.

CHAPTER X

CHILDREN'S THEATRE

When Mrs. Mabel (Kalmakoff) Payne left the Children's Theatre at the end of the 1940-41 season, the children's program was discontinued. With the exception of Delbert Mann's and Elizabeth (Belser) Fuller's The Sleeping Beauty during the 1947-48 season, there were no children's productions until March 3, 1950 when Mrs. Reginald Kramer began the Children's Theatre again with a production of The Magic Ring. The play, performed three times to large audiences, was based on Hans Christian Andersen's The Princess and the Swineherd, and the occasion became a landmark in the Theatre's history. It was the first of thirty-eight plays Mrs. Kramer directed between 1950-1966, during which time the Columbia Children's Theatre gained prominence as one of the foremost organizations of its type in the United States. As if to presage the future, The Magic Ring featured young actors Geddeh Smith, Sarah Hardy, and Jimmy Maher, all of whom ultimately reached professional plateaus before the tenth anniversary of the production in 1960.

Delbert Mann had provided the initial impetus for reviving the Children's Theatre, and just as he was leaving Columbia, the Board voted to accept his suggestion of three children's plays to be performed the following year. All

proceeds, after expenses and a percentage to the technical director, would go to the director. They recommended Mrs. Kramer.¹

Mary Lou Kramer was eminently qualified for the job. She had been head of the Department of Spoken English at Columbia College since 1934, a job which she held until 1952. Born in Millen, Georgia, Mrs. Kramer attended Georgia State College for Women, Leland Powers Speech School in Boston, and Columbia University. At one point, she also spent three seasons with the Red Path Lyceum Company. Long before she began her work at the Theatre, Mrs. Kramer had been turning out students who went on to professional careers in Theatre. Two of her more successful protégées were Evelyn Wall who played in Kiss and Tell in New York, and Bettye Ackerman who has frequently co-starred onstage and on television with her actor husband Sam Jaffe.

To begin her chores at the Theatre, Mrs. Kramer was advanced \$100 working capital.² With an individual admission price of sixty cents and a total box office of \$564.70, expenditures for The Magic Ring were \$387.90. The net was only \$176.80.

For the next season, the Children's Theatre arrangement changed slightly. The Junior League took over its sponsorship and for this service received fifteen cents

¹Society, Minutes, May 31, 1949.

²Ibid., January 10, 1950.

from the \$1.25 each of the 677 members paid to see three shows.³ By the time the season ended, Mrs. Kramer received \$647.88 as her share of the net for the three plays.

The Junior Theatre, as it came to be called, ranged through teen age. Plays were rehearsed in Mrs. Kramer's miniscule playhouse in the back of her home at 729 Kawana Road and then casts were transported to the Theatre's stage as dress rehearsals neared. The readjustment to the larger stage often provided many humorous and chaotic moments for actors and director alike.

As the Junior Theatre continued to grow, the number of annual productions was reduced to two in the 1956-57 season and has remained generally at that number ever since. The Junior League gained a representative on the Board beginning with the 1961-62 season, and at the annual meeting in 1962, it was announced that the League's Board representative would have ex-officio status with full voting rights in the affairs of the Society. At that same time, the Junior Theatre was placed under the direct control of the Board, with the Junior League continuing in its cooperative function.⁴ Although the League kept this arrangement with Harrison and Bitterman after Mrs. Kramer left, it elected to discontinue its twenty-year association altogether at the end of the fiftieth season. Dissatisfaction with the children's plays

³Although the original agreement was that the Junior League receive twenty-five cents from each season ticket, financial statements indicate only fifteen cents was paid.

⁴Society, Minutes, September 12, 1962.

was cited as the reason for the move.⁵

The next five years once again brought an erratic functioning of the junior group. Mrs. Kramer returned to direct one production, Hansel and Gretel, in 1969-70, Tom Campbell did three productions in 1971-72, 1972-73 (as the group came to be called the Columbia Youth Theatre), and directed Ridolfo /two in his first season.

Generally speaking, even today the name of Mary Lou Kramer is still bound to children's theatre at the Town Theatre. Besides the strength of the productions and the strong following achieved by Mrs. Kramer, the single most important thing she accomplished during her long association with the Theatre was the training of young actors. Ultimately they became, in the late 1950's and 1960's, the Theatre's most promising and valuable assets. It is entirely possible that this factor was not foreseen by the Board, or the Theatre at large during the early years of Mrs. Kramer's work. The focus, quite naturally, was on producing successful children's theatre, not on the excellent by-product: education. Ironically, Dan Reed's early hope of a repertory company at the Town Theatre was happening, on a limited basis, by the training at the Theatre itself of the next generation of performers.

Playbills under Crotty, Telford, Knowler, Kaufman, and Harrison are replete in their cast rosters with such

⁵Ibid., April 22, 1969.

Kramer alumni as Paul Dreher, Chris Thee, Cynthia Gilliam, Jim E. Quick, Alex Lancaster, Pixie Foster, Geddeeth Smith, Donald Devet, Jean Turbeville, Meredith Pogue, Harriett All, and Jimmy Maher. The discipline, speech training, and professionalism were evident in their work. It is perhaps understandable why the more eclectic play choices of Knowler and Harrison were appealing to many of this group who yearned to extend their own skills beyond the less challenging conservative comedies and "safe" dramas.

Although children's plays have been produced by directors as part of the adult season; by a children's organization under the regular director; by separate directors; and by the regular director who staged them in addition to an adult season, the most successful arrangement at the Town Theatre has been with a separate director (solely for children's plays) who had a sponsoring organization to handle all the aspects of production. The Kramer-Junior League-Society collaboration, despite the variables from year to year, more than proves this. No matter how idealistic or simple it has seemed to have one director stage both the adult and children's plays in a season's ten months, the consistent result has been that the Children's Theatre has taken second place in priority. Tom Campbell's brief employment, with the title of Youth Theatre Director, may have offered a practicable solution to the problem. The idea for the Columbia Youth Theatre (ages 14-24) had originated with Don Johnson and Wally Whitworth, and the Board gave official

recognition to the group in July, 1972 by inviting its president to be an ex-officio member of the Board. The Town Theatre's Board was to provide advisory help, and funds for both groups would be combined in the Society's treasury.⁶ Campbell's directorship and guidance, his creative dramatics classes, playwriting contests, organizing of teenagers to usher at adult shows, and other activities--as well as the staging of the youth productions--opened excellent possibilities. There were present the elements of training and practical experience that were the hallmarks of the Kramer years.

While Children's Theatre has generally been desired at the Town Theatre, because of its inclusion of young people in the over-all Society program, rarely has there been strong Society focus on the area with a view towards what it can accomplish for the organization. Throughout the country, well-managed children's theatres have proved that they:

1. can bring in substantial revenue;
2. through live performances can create a love of and an interest in the dramatic art form;
3. can build a future adult audience. Children who get in the habit of attending children's plays are more likely to continue to go to the theatre as they grow into adulthood;
4. serve as an excellent training ground for a new generation of adult actors;

⁶Ibid., July, 1972.

5. serve as a catalyst to get parents interested in the adult plays. Parents coming back and forth to the theatre to pick up children at rehearsals are a potential "captive" audience for season memberships;

6. can further utilize the theatre building to help pay for overhead expenses charged to adult plays;

7. foster the more particular meaning of the word "community" as it relates to theatre; and

8. aid immeasurably in giving participants poise, discipline, and a method of learning how to work with others. Most often at the Town Theatre, however, an awareness of these factors has remained on the sub-conscious level. As long as Mrs. Kramer successfully ran the children's area, she was left very much on her own. That the Society failed to capitalize on the total potential of its outstanding junior group during the period is probably true. The lack of serious and aggressive future planning in the children's area since would tend to support this conclusion.

CHAPTER XI

A REVIEW AND A VIEW

In its first fifty-five years, some interesting statistics and facts have emerged in the Columbia Stage Society. There have been:

- 18 regular directors (all professional)
- 18 presidents
- 20 vice-presidents
- 12 secretaries
- 11 treasurers
- 6 separate directors for the Children's Theatre
- 16 business managers

Within this group of leaders there were a number of long-term office holders. Lucy Hampton Bostick was secretary for thirty-seven years; Ruth Hall Graham, in three terms, was treasurer for twenty-eight years; and Mary Lou Kramer was Children's Theatre director for seventeen years. Presidents Arthur Langley and Frank B. Gary, Jr. served terms of twelve and ten years, respectively, while James Dreher completed ten years as vice president followed by six years as president. Dan Reed, in two terms, was director for ten years.

Productions

352 major adult productions¹

¹This figure represents major bills. In the early years, often an evening's bill would include two or three one-act plays. Such an evening is counted as one production. This accounts for the disparity in the numbering mentioned on current playbills. This total includes the bonus productions Hail!

- 19 children's plays (1920-21 through 1932-33)
directed by the regular directors
- 73 children's productions (1933-34 through 1973-74)
(Of these, sixty-three were staged by separate
directors, and ten by the regular directors.)

The Top Ten Plays in Attendance

<u>Play</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Atten- dance</u>	<u>Director</u>
1 <u>Fiddler on the Roof</u>	1973-74	4,093	Ridolfo
2 <u>South Pacific</u>	1960-61	3,806	Knower
3 <u>My Fair Lady</u>	1963-64	3,569	Kaufman
4 <u>Call Me Madam</u>	1957-58	3,543	Telford
5 <u>Where's Charley?</u>	1956-57	3,463	Telford
6 <u>Guys and Dolls</u>	1959-60	3,410	Knower
7 <u>Peter Pan</u>	1971-72	3,348	Campbell
8 <u>Life With Father</u>	1948-49	3,323	Mann
9 <u>Macbeth</u>	1961-62	3,303	Knower
10 <u>Brigadoon</u>	1958-59	3,257	Ingram

Only Life With Father and Macbeth are non-musicals.

Out of 352 major productions, it was inevitable that some would have been restaged in later years. On the adult subscription series, the following plays have had two productions: Mr. Pim Passes By, The Mollusc, The Importance of Being Earnest, Lady Windermere's Fan, The Pirates of Penzance, Julius Caesar, Twelfth Night, Macbeth, Our Town, Arms

South Carolina (1926), Orphan Nell (1950), Mame (1972), and Fiddler on the Roof (1973)--as well as the Play Tournaments of 1927, 1928, and 1929 which were counted as season productions.

and the Man, Arsenic and Old Lace, and The Women. Only one adult series play, H. M. S. Pinafore, has had three productions.

Because of the nature of children's literature, many children's plays have been repeated. The record is held by Cinderella with six productions, followed by five productions each for The Sleeping Beauty and A Christmas Carol.

In musical theatre, the Society has produced thirty-nine musicals in fifty-five years. While this figure includes the original vaudevilles of Reed, Dean, and Forrest, and a revue organized by Coe, all of the other musicals staged in the first twenty-five years were Gilbert and Sullivan works. There were eleven productions of eight operettas. Interestingly, out of all the musicals so far staged at the Theatre, South Pacific is the only Rodgers and Hammerstein collaboration which has been produced.

While it will come as a surprise to most Columbians, William Shakespeare has been the most produced playwright at 1012 Sumter Street. Eleven productions of eight plays by the Bard have been staged, six of them between 1932-1941. At least ten productions for children have been written or adapted by Charlotte Chorpenning, in second place. George S. Kaufman (eight plays) and George Bernard Shaw (six productions of five plays) follow in third and fourth places.

The Society has produced twenty-six original plays in their premiere performances; of those, twenty-five were produced in the first quarter century. The Commentator (1960-61) is the only original major production script done

since 1944. Twenty productions of nineteen Pulitzer Prize plays have been staged, two of those being musicals.

Looking back over fifty-five seasons permits one to begin to place into perspective the enormous contributions made by the Theatre to the cultural life in Columbia: a continuing program of live theatre for adults and children, play-writing contests, play tournaments, a lecture series, classes and workshops, a site for visiting dancers, musicians, poets and scholars, and a place for artists to display their work.

In addition, the Theatre has played a significant part in the early development of several other theatre organizations. On February 19, 1950, the Hadassah Players produced in the Theatre their first play. The next year on April 12, the South Carolina Opera Workshop (a parent of the current Lyric Theatre) was formed and produced its first production at the Town Theatre. In September, 1967, the South Carolina Theatre Association held its initial formation meetings at the Theatre. In a very real sense the Theatre has been regarded in Columbia as a center for cultural activities. The building itself existed long before a permanent art museum became a reality in Columbia and before the University asserted any real leadership in the arts. Its intimate size has been popular for musical programs and lectures, and its central downtown location has further enhanced its worth. Daniel Reed, by his diversified use of the building and approach to the larger possibilities of his job, established a strong tradition which has held on.

Within the organization itself, the course of progress has been more erratic. Reed suggested the creation of a Board of Governors early in the 1920's, once the Theatre had been built. This was done primarily to take some of the heavy burden from his own time as he ran the artistic program, as well as to provide a recognized agent for financial responsibility. It was a logical step, yet a chasm between Board and production people became evident almost as soon as Reed resigned in 1927. The Board, by implication of Reed's strong tastes and course for the Stage Society, assumed a strong mandate to continue the Theatre's eight-year Reed tradition. In so doing, it took on more responsibility than even Reed envisioned. In addition to its fund-raising and image-making concerns, the Board, in order to preserve the Reed image for the Society, extended its control to the artistic area as well. This subtle move gave the Board a power-hold that proved to be a formidable wall to subsequent directors, and many felt trapped by tradition as they tried to advance their own programs. Of all the Society's directors, Reed was probably the only one who could have wielded absolute control over the Society's Board. Almost every director after Reed had major differences with the Board. Coe, Mann, Crotty, and Telford, by virtue of successful seasons and skilled diplomacy, managed healthy relationships with the Governors. Most of the other directors fared less well. Dean was not admired personally by the Board and incurred their displeasure when they felt his ethics and productions were sub-standard to

those of Reed. Forrest, one of the most admired early directors, locked horns with the Governors in a bitter dispute that may have given the first strong evidence of the Board's separation from production people. Had Forrest remained, he stated he would devote his energies to the younger people in the Society who had supported him. He was referring to actors and crews, not to the Board.

Glick's diversified background as playwright, novelist, journalist, and director--and his more mature age--seemed to be a threat to some on the Board. He was greatly different from his predecessors, socially and professionally, and not tractable.

With the younger directors in later years--particularly Knower, Kaufman, and Harrison--the Board insisted on its absolute control. When these directors tested this authority or became too "heady," their knuckles were quickly rapped and they were punished in such ways as denial of their columns in playbills, or, ultimately denial of contract renewal.

A certain amount of criticism of the Board, like criticism of teachers and army sergeants, has been expected in the Society. When the criticism erupts in the press and ultimately causes a split in the allegiance to the Society, as in the non-renewal of the Harrison contract, however, the causes are worthy of scrutiny.

Dave Davidson, who had appeared in such productions as Brigadoon, Carnival, Paint Your Wagon, and Six Characters in Search of an Author, wrote in a published letter:

As an active participant in Town Theatre productions for the past nine years, I say Richard Harrison is far and away the most creative and capable director I've worked with on either a professional or amateur level.

The only problem is that Richard Harrison is his own man. . . . There is a feeling in the air around TT these days of artistry and accomplishment and participation which has been missing for many years.

This participation does not extend to the Board of Directors, a handful of people who absolutely and completely control theatre activity in this town. . . . Their real quarrel with Mr. Harrison is that he is not a diplomat or a rubber stamp who will perpetuate the status quo. He might rock the boat a little.

The boat needs to be rocked. The TT Board has been a self-perpetuating organization for years. . . . We have an antiquated theatre, a minimum amount of equipment and a membership roll which is pitiful in relation to the size of the community.²

Mary Arnold Garvin, who had acted in Julius Caesar, Look Homeward, Angel, A Man for All Seasons, Six Characters in Search of an Author, and Paint Your Wagon, also wrote a letter to the editor:

The dismay of many of us stems from the attitudes of Board Directors who do not give Mr. Harrison reasons for his dismissal, who never attend rehearsal to see him at work, who do not visit backstage to see the work being done, and who never make inquiries of us who put on each production.³

Cynthia Gilliam and Jim E. Quick, who like Miss Garvin have given most of their theatre time to the Workshop Theatre of South Carolina since the Harrison season, expressed the view that over the years the Board has failed to actively

²Society, Scrapbook, 1966-67.

³Ibid.

and adequately make way for new members in its ranks and thus has "allowed the Theatre to be turned into a trophy to gather dust. The Board is not really interested in the Theatre; it is interested in perpetuating tradition."⁴

The Harrison supporters were further angered by what they considered to be a demeaning condition for the director who they felt had been relegated to the maintaining of the Society's tradition and to serving as an apprentice to it.

Although John Bitterman's tenure following Harrison's was relatively quiet, he also felt an inbred inertia in the Board. He wrote:

MORTAL INSTITUTIONS

The only way in which man's institutions may become immortal is if mortal men do not shackle their institutions to themselves. By so doing, they doom their institutions to their own mortality.

(The following incident is true, but the names have been changed.)

While in New York last December, I called a few people whom I had known in community theatre in northern New Jersey.

One of the people I called was Jack. I had known Jack originally in the 1950's when he was about 25. He was a board member of the N. J. Players, had been active on stage, backstage and had written a couple of children's plays which the group had produced and toured.

Jack was a whole-hearted enthusiast; one of a variety of dedicated stalwarts well known to community theatres across the country. It is because of people like Jack that community theatre has enjoyed such tremendous growth and over-all success. During lunch he might scribble notes for his next children's play; then, after work, quickly eat, change to old clothes, drive to a storage area, paint sets for an hour or two, then begin a rehearsal.

⁴Personal Interview, August 21, 1970.

Sometimes he was an actor, sometimes, director; occasionally he worked as a stage manager, or on props. The important thing was, when something had to be done for the players, Jack would do it, if at all possible. Most of the board members with whom he was active were similarly dedicated.

The group prospered.

When I called Jack last December I asked him how things were going with the group. He had, he said, resigned his board position a little over a year before, so that he might devote more time to the writing of children's plays.

"But," he added, "I'm going to have myself put back on the board."

"Oh," I said.

"Yes, there are some new people on the board who didn't have anything to do with building up the group and although I really don't have any time to give to it, I can't see letting these newcomers take over the Players."

So the time of Jack's service to the theatre had drawn to a close and a new era begins; an era in which his board membership becomes merely a power ploy; an era in which the theatre will serve him. An era during which there will gradually come to exist a communication gap between Jack and the more active participants in the theatre. As the problems gradually evolve and Jack's experience with the theatre becomes more and more of an historical, rather than a present-day, perspective; as more and more aspects of the day-to-day operation have to be explained to Jack and thus, filtered through others, Jack will come to find his references rooted more and more in the past. More and more frequently he will be heard to say such things as, "No, we never have paid to have that done and I don't see why we should begin now."

Perhaps some day he will come to realize why: because fewer and fewer board members are available when there is a job to be done.

Again, perhaps some day, Jack may realize that the reason why many new, intelligent, hard-working volunteers seem to drift on to other activities or groups is because these volunteers eventually come to realize that there is no chance of their ever being invited to share in the decision-making processes at the board level. They begin to feel physically used and intellectually ignored.

Jack should continue his retirement from community theatre until, with an open mind, he is once more truly ready to serve. The decision-making process requires time to study problems completely, thoroughly discuss them and compare notes with others. Community theatre board members should also be prepared to assist in the mounting of at least one production each season. If a board member cannot, or will not, physically assist in play production in some capacity, he should step down to make way for one who will. A board member who will not read plays, help obtain props, paint sets, act, make or distribute posters, construct costumes or sets, paint the green room, or do anything more than mutter "Nay" or "yea," is not actually serving the theatre, regardless of what he did onstage or backstage last year or twenty years ago.

The only way in which man's institutions may become immortal is if mortal men do not shackle their institutions to themselves. By so doing, they doom their institutions to their own mortality.⁵

In his recommendations to the Board at the end of his first season in 1948, Delbert Mann wrote:

I feel that regular Board meetings should be held, publicized well in advance, and that some kind of requirement of attendance be enforced. These meetings should be held at night, not late in the afternoon when everyone is anxious to get home to supper. They should be given time enough for adequate discussion of problems without the necessity for the ever-present urge to get away as quickly as possible. I feel strongly that these meetings must be just as important to the members as any other meeting which they attend and if the member finds that he cannot give this time to the Theatre, someone who can should be given his place on the Board.⁶

In an earlier season, Mary Lou Kramer, director of the Children's Theatre, stated her displeasure to the Board regarding its seeming apathy: "A successful theatre is the result of a working Board. You're a prestige Board. Not one of you would run your own business that way."⁷

⁵Copy given to the author at an interview August 19, 1970.

⁶Mann, Delbert. Recommendations to the Board of Directors of the Columbia Stage Society, March 25, 1948.

⁷Personal Interview, January 8, 1971.

At the end of her first season in 1970, Anita Grannis, in her director's report to the Board of Governors, expressed concern about the insularity of the Board from the production contingent.

Identity. We need to reconsider what kind of theatre we are and in which direction we want to go. Times and conditions have changed since the great days of Town Theatre, but our approach does not seem to have changed with them. At the present time we are supported mainly by a paid subscription membership whose attitude to a very great extent is that of a commercial theatre's audience: they want to buy tickets and see plays, without any personal involvement. Most of the volunteer production work of this theatre (acting and backstage work) is done by members of the community who are not subscribers and who--though we could not put on the plays without them--have no voice in the running of the theatre and in fact sometimes feel alienated from an invisible Board of Governors who make the rules.

We thus have a dichotomy in the composition of our theatre group: (1) Part of it is composed of persons who buy subscriptions, have a vote and do no work; (2) Part of it--a minority, but vital--is composed of people, many of them younger, who do not buy subscriptions, contribute an enormous amount of time and work and have no vote.

In other words, we have some of the characteristics of the commercial theatre and some of the characteristics of the community theatre. The active workers are not really bound to the theatre in any organizational sense and hence most do not feel real responsibility to it, nor identification with it. In place of having a close bond to Town Theatre as their organization, they move around from theatre to theatre wherever an interesting opportunity offers. This has created many problems in securing players and backstage personnel.

With our non-working subscription voting membership and the working non-subscribing non-voting non-membership, we have no true homogeneity such as I have been told existed in the theatre's earlier years.

Many community theatres provide different classes of membership with a provision for including bona fide working members who pay a minimal fee, who are encouraged to think of themselves as part of the theatre and to vote, and who often evolve into excellent working Board members. I realize that one reaction to this idea will be that it might be dangerous. I think however that apprehensions on

this point could be cleared up by proper provisos for working membership.

If we are to be a true community theatre, we should give thought to this lack of homogeneity and this lack of communication.⁸

Mann also was aware of the gap between the Board and those who worked actively in the production aspects of the Theatre. One of his recommendations dealt with the matter indirectly:

The setting up of an Artist Membership composed of a selected number of members who have demonstrated during the past year the ability and willingness to work on any phase of the Theatre's activity, would be of great value in building interest and in revitalizing the Theatre. Such membership would be selected by a board appointed by the Board of Directors together with the staff, and would select those who had met certain requirements of work during the past year. This Artist Membership would be limited in number (100 suggested), would be rechosen at the end of each season, would be the voting body of the society, and would be the recipients of special favors where possible. This type of set-up would inspire newcomers to work so that they could become eligible for membership. It would be an honor to be one of the selected ones, care being taken that membership be based solely on work done and value to the Theatre during the past season.⁹

While suggestions and criticism have continued to be given to the Board by actors, directors, and crew workers, that fact alone has been healthy. For the most part, these people have cared enough to be vocal about something to which they have lent their time and effort. Indifference and apathy by those who have differed would have been worse.

To better understand the foregoing statements, one

⁸Grannis, Anita. Report of Director to Board of Governors Town Theatre, May 27, 1970.

⁹Mann, Recommendations, March 25, 1948.

might ask: What is the function of a Board of Governors in a community theatre? Part of the communication problem that has existed at the Theatre could stem from a lack of knowledge of what a Board should concern itself with. A panel addressing itself to this issue at the American Educational Theatre Association convention in Minneapolis in August, 1963, suggested the following:

Obligations of the Board of Governors
of a Community Theatre

1. To raise funds, search for contributions, and be financially responsible for the organization.
2. To exert influence, when and where needed, on behalf of the organization. All members must be willing and able to do this.
3. To be a tool or instrument for action on behalf of the organization.

The panel further amplified internal theatre organizational structure:

1. Board members should not be theatre knowledgeable. The rationale for this statement stemmed from the business nature of the three items above. Theoretically, the Board has employed a director who is theatre knowledgeable and who can run the artistic program of the theatre. The panel's feeling was that the Board once it had carefully selected a director, should leave him alone and not interfere.
2. There should be no actors on the Board. The argument for this statement applied primarily again to a matter of business. While the Board is interested in the artistic success of the theatre, its first concern is financial solvency. The actor's first concern, while he may be interested in the business aspects, is to artistic success.
3. The director must be able to convince the Board that he knows the best interests of the theatre, even to subjugating personal ideas. Theoretically, the Board

would do the same and harmony would exist.

4. The Board must accept the fact that a new director is bound to bring his own expert and specialized training with him. He should not be expected to fit into a pre-conceived and "locked-in" framework which offers no elasticity.
5. The director should be invited to all nominating meetings of the Board and have a say in the casting of his own Board, harmony being the main objective. The director should make it his duty to get to know each Board member as an individual and periodically meet with each on an informal basis.
6. The director should not be a member of the Board because he is put in the position of voting on his own tenure and salary.¹⁰

While these statements were representative of opinions by theatre people from all over the United States, there would probably be differing views about them within the Society. Over the years, directors at the Town Theatre seem to have been saying that the Board has exerted too much control over artistic matters, and too little interest in such Board concerns as the future course of the Theatre and its building, the financial status of the Company and the Trust, the increasing of the membership, the preparation of groundwork which would permit production workers to share in policy-making procedures, and the extension and maintaining of the Theatre's good and ever-positive image. If this be true, it is probable that actor/crew complaints would have been minimal since these have inevitably come when a director was having difficulties with the Board.

¹⁰ Author's notes from the convention, August, 1963.

In 1969, when the Society was searching for a director after the resignation of John Bitterman, president Simmons Tate took significant steps forward to establish once again the level of stability the organization had known in the 1940's and 1950's. The Board negotiated with former director Robert Telford, who, while not available for the 1969-70 season, would have been interested in a future arrangement after that season. Telford's visit with the Board offered a positive plan: a season which included five or six plays, a workshop group for experimental plays, a children's theatre, and classes on all aspects of theatre. His interest in expanding the Theatre into a new complex (Probably costing \$750,000 - \$1,000,000) included a fund drive and time-table for building (ten-fifteen years) which aimed for an opening of the first part of the complex in 1971-72. Telford's condition for coming would have been a Society commitment to such an endeavor. His own commitment would have been to make Columbia a permanent stop in his career in order to carefully nurture and guide the enterprise. A salary of about \$17,000 to match his current one, while nearly \$10,000 beyond Bitterman's was not a major concern to Telford who suggested pledges to underwrite a part, or a housing/utilities allowance as part of the total amount.

After his visit to Columbia, Telford wrote the following proposal to the Society's Board:

PREFACE

Certain conditions now exist which might bear examination

in the light of the PURPOSES (Article II of the Constitution) of the Columbia Stage Society and the changing cultural and social situation in the greater-Columbia area. The phrases "advancement in the community . . . of experimental arts . . . promotion . . . foster and develop the cultural aspects . . ." indicate a deep concern for both the performing arts and the people for whom the arts exist.

The population has grown from approximately 75,000 to nearly 130,000 (estimates given me), an increase of over 60%. Membership in the Columbia Stage Society (Town Theatre) has dropped 20%. Had membership kept pace with the population growth, it would now be 3,840. Had it continued at the 1955-58 rate of growth, it would be closer to 7,000. All of this is speculation, but we know that the Greenville Little Theatre now has 9,000 members, so growth in that area of South Carolina is possible.

THE PLAYS

If a person picks up a brochure and says of one of the plays, "I've got to see that one," you have a potential ticket buyer. If he speaks of three of the five plays, you have a potential subscriber. This indicates the need for at least three recognizable titles, classical or contemporary. They might be old fashioned and conservative or they might be avant garde and provocative, but they should intrigue and attract. The remaining two can be of the same extremes (conservative or provocative), but they offer the opportunity of introducing subjects and treatments unknown to the general audience.

Of prime importance is the need to evaluate plays in the light of the specific audience for which they are produced. Audiences differ, not only geographically but also from year to year. Perhaps Columbia today includes a number of people raised on a more provocative form of theatre than presently offered. As a result, population growth may bypass theatre growth. Young people must have an incentive to select the performing arts over the drive-ins and television. When we speak of "fostering" and "developing the cultural aspects of our community life" (the Constitution), we are talking about a culture and a community which time is constantly changing.

More specifically, childrens theatre plays today can have something to say relative to the moon and space walks. Such subjects are filled with the same wonder which prompted ALLADIN and THE WIZARD OF OZ. Adults used to the television style of LAUGH-IN will not necessarily turn their backs on a sentimental and joyous production of YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU, but they will ignore a

theatre that turns its back on contemporary styles and themes entirely.

We might be amazed at what our mass media and instant communications have provided in the way of knowledge, feelings and concerns. The Town Theatre needs to produce the classics--the "safe" classics, at least--and it should produce contemporary plays--again, the "safe" ones, but it should also provide the opportunity of viewing what is going on in Poland, Japan, Germany, etc. These new plays can be produced in a workshop atmosphere which will appeal to a concerned audience without jeopardizing the commercial security for the main theatre body.

PEOPLE WHO PUT ON PLAYS

All of this ties in with the group on which every creative organization depends, the artists and performers. Without stimulation and an avenue toward betterment, there is no incentive for the creative person. A community theatre exists by virtue of a careful working agreement between its policy makers and its production personnel. One cannot survive without the other, and so one must continually court the other. Being unlike individuals, they may never share the same pleasures and accomplishments, but they can share the same concerns and objectives.

People who act, paint or build scenery gain satisfactions which are intensely personal. To a civic minded member of many committees, they may seem simply selfish. But, for a creative person, concentration on his art or craft means concentration on the self. We who watch and listen must not only accept this, we must foster it. We must provide the breeding ground for talent. That means the freedom to explore, test out new ideas and to make mistakes, if necessary. When one does this with his own talent, he may appear to others as self-indulgent, but in reality, the creative person puts his life and his reason for being to a severe and arbitrary test, the test of a public. One must avoid dampening creativity. The arts are filled with crises and problems, and the best we can do is not close them out, but embrace them. To do the former is to throw out the baby with the bathwater.

Some day the Town Theatre should have a variety of season subscriptions. Perhaps a "pop" season can give the audience what it thinks it wants, while an "in" season can provide what it didn't know it wanted. Then everybody can "pop" "in" to see everything that's going on!

THE PLANT

The present theatre can barely allow for rehearsals of legitimate plays while volunteers run noisy equipment and hammer nails behind the thin metal door which separates the shop from the stage. Both of these in constant use prohibit use of the theatre by anyone else. Separate rehearsal areas needed for dance and chorus rehearsals compound the problem once a musical is tackled.

If two more halls were available, chorus and dance rehearsals could take place simultaneously with principal rehearsals; if the shop were separate, volunteers could saw and hammer to their hearts content without disturbing any of the three. If a fourth hall were available, all this could go on while the theatre auditorium was rented for additional income. During most of the season, the halls could serve as rehearsal and performance areas for childrens theatre, experimental theatre, Creative Dramatics classes--all sort of school activities--plus the ballet, orchestra and Lyric Theatre. Ironically, most community theatres can earn an income only about 160 hours out of the 4,380 per year (based on seven productions, each with eight performances).

It appears inevitable that the present building will go to the State. The property should return about \$75,000. Although no present provision allows for replacing existing buildings, there is no reason why the legislature cannot be asked to appropriate an amount equal to the cost of a comparable building on today's market. Certainly, this would be small payment for the more than fifty years of service the Town Theatre has given the city and state.

The timing for this changeover is of prime importance. Left to the mercy of the appropriating agency, the Town Theatre couldn't adequately prepare and plan for its removal to another location. It would seem reasonable, therefore, for the Town Theatre to influence, somehow, the timing of these agencies which determine when and how the state should act.

The design of any new theatre should take into consideration the earning capacity of the property. In this case, space is earning power. Simple, rectangular space is the cheapest of all to build. Cinder (concrete) block and cement slabs (poured and hoisted) can result in imaginative use of line, mass and form. Architects here (Fort Worth) have provided me with the following figures:

for simple, rectangular rehearsal halls, the cost per square foot, \$10 to \$11 with heating and air conditioning (\$7 without),

a functional, attractive lobby, properly equipped, about \$18 per square foot,

the auditorium, as little as \$10 for the shell itself, but as much as \$15 with accoutrements,

the shop, exclusive of equipment already owned, about \$10

Depending on the size, shape and juxtaposition of the buildings, it seems conceivable that the first stages (an auditorium, lobby, stage house--with modified fly-space--shop and three halls) could be constructed for less than \$300,000. This would still allow for rugs, paint, heating and air conditioning, but rely on the inventiveness of the designer to create a proper air. The design could incorporate a long range, ten year plan with two or three additional stages in construction and landscaping. A maximum of \$700,000 could be stretched over a ten to twelve year period.

Just how much might be appropriated by the state, county and city governments is a matter I cannot estimate. We know of the possibility of \$75,000 and more barring unforeseen complications in using funds belonging to the Columbia Stage Company. I have been encouraged to think that local city and county governments might contribute on the basis of the Town Theatre's fifty year heritage.

When it comes to fund raising for the arts, we must accept the fact that business men, foundation boards and utility supervisors are not necessarily "culturally oriented." They are usually civic-minded, however, and they are always good business men. They need to be approached by equally civic-minded business men. They know that a thriving theatre can mean a good place to live and an attraction for "idea men" from metropolitan areas. The argument for the Town Theatre is not, "See how much we have done over the past fifty years," but rather, "This is what we can and will do under changing conditions with your support."

To allow the future of the Town Theatre to rest on what one person may think is good theatre is to place an improper burden on each play. Imagine, if you will, the finest production of the season, one with rave reviews and a packed house on opening night. The next morning you visit a man who might give \$25,000 for a new building. You have primed him by having his wife take him to the opening night . . . perhaps his first at the Town Theatre. That next morning you find he has been bored with a play he neither understood nor elected to see, and just had a fight with his wife over the matter. Results? The most

successful campaign I have ever watched waged involved a person who was not associated with the arts but who talked straightforwardly about the purpose of the arts and the meaning of the term "All American City."

While I was in Columbia one person volunteered \$100 a year for ten years and said there were certainly thirty others who could do the same. With such support along, one could build a shop and one rehearsal hall. People who love opera, ballet and symphony would join in erecting a place they could share for rehearsals and performances. Children who like creative classes and who go to childrens theatre could contribute to their future by helping to build a place in which to work. I'm reminded of F. D. R.'s plea each year for children to mail him just a dime to help fight polio. The March of Dimes began with ten cents and grew to millions.

TIME SCHEDULE

During the coming nine months the following should be considered, planned and prepared:

- 1) determine plans for state appropriation of the existing property,
- 2) set in motion action necessary to compensate the theatre for its lost building at present day costs,
- 3) find a site, between one half and a full acre in size, suitable for a new Town Theatre location,
- 4) complete steps necessary for the Columbia Stage Society to deed the property and its resources over to the Town Theatre for its new location,
- 5) obtain a cost analysis for a complex of new buildings to serve the maximum interests of area performing arts groups,
- 6) meet with representative of various performing groups to detail their space, calendar and equipment needs,
- 7) investigate the management of recent arts fund drives (notably the symphony) and plan a variety of techniques under different individuals and committees,
- 8) set up a building and canvassing schedule with deadlines and alternates,

9) set about a public relations campaign which will establish and confirm the Town Theatre as a cultural asset in the total community.

CANDIDACY

If I were to come to Columbia, it would not be in any sense a return to whatever existed ten years ago. There is a new city and there are new interests. The kind of preparation outlined above would enable me to accept the existing situation, knowing that a new plant and new ideas were forthcoming.

It is conceivable that a new building could begin to go up in the Spring of 1971. A Summer program of classes and workshops would enable the theatre, complete with the Lyric, Ballet and other groups with classes and productions, to open "grandly" in the Fall of 1971. The building itself might offer only the bare essentials, but it would be a living, breathing facility, and, as it grew, it could become more decorative without sacrificing its initial functionality.

An application to the State Arts Council can be made for the difference between the present director's salary and a new one to be agreed upon. Under the new South Carolina Arts Commission program entitled "Arts Organization Personnel Development," the Commission may pay two-thirds of an increase in salary the first year, one-half the second and one-third the third year. A Director's Fund could be set up with a guaranteed amount maintained for three years and any number of persons invited to share its upkeep. A maximum of \$9,000 or less could underwrite anticipated proceeds and supplement the Commission's grant during a three year period. The growth of the theatre would, hopefully, lessen each year the need for underwriting. Housing might even be provided at a fraction of what a director might be able to get on his own and thereby further reduce the salary.

PRESENT ORGANIZATION

I was impressed by the Board's efforts to ferret out the will of the community and to avoid continuance of what has been referred to as "self-perpetuation." Certainly, what appears to be an amendment to Article IV, SECTION ONE of the Constitution outlawing consecutive terms for the Board Members is tangible evidence. There might remain some inconsistency in Article III, SECTION TWO as to the voting membership; this implies that the Executive

Committee shall decide who may vote for the Board which in turn votes for the officers and Executive Committee . . . something I'm sure was not intended. I have always been told that Season Subscribers were the voting members of the Columbia Stage Society. The Constitution should make that clear.

I am familiar with only one other theatre which separates the business of operation from the production. In Tulsa, Oklahoma the Board was responsible for hiring the theatre's Business Manager. Their original director was no manager, and he preferred it that way. Before his replacement had been in the director's seat half a year, the board granted him full managerial authority. The board was unused to a person who was a good organizer as well as a good director. When they found such a one, the situation changed. My eleven years as Director/Manager of both the Virginia Museum Theatre and the Scott Theatre (while director of STARCO) have somewhat established my ability to run a cultural complex. Indeed, in Richmond, I began with six on my staff and an annual income of \$27,000. Eight years later, there were fifteen on the staff and an annual income in excess of \$130,000. The care and treatment given a patron at the box office or by the ticket taker is as much a part of my production as the acting done on the stage; either can kill a good play. As Managing Director I could properly run the theatre as a unit, carrying out the policies and aspirations of the Board.

CONCLUSIONS

There was conflicting evidence in Columbia as to which group was dying and which was flourishing. The fact that there were differing points of view, however, indicated to me that the most important problem was dissidence. I made the statement earlier that, in the arts, one cannot wall out crisis without eliminating a potentially creative arm. No business can survive without proper harnessing of its resources, and in theatre the resources are primarily human. Actors do not hang on the wall like works of sculpture and painting, and they are anything but static in their activity and points of view.

Theatre people can be drawn together by a central theme of devotion. To understand what this means, one must go to various people and places . . . as I did in Columbia last week and as I have elsewhere . . . and listen to their desires. Where I find a rational mean, it relates to "theatre." My interest is in "theatre" as an art form and as an institution. Anything that impairs that relationship is, to that extent, less than "theatre."¹¹

¹¹Telford, Robert S. The Town Theatre, Columbia, S. Carolina a proposal, August, 1969.

Board member Gren Seibels wrote to the president regarding the possible employment of Telford, and Tate distributed copies of the letter to the Board members:

Since the weekend of Bob Telford's visit, I have been trying to reorganize my ideas concerning the crisis which faces the Town Theatre. After a careful study of the proposal subsequently submitted by Bob, I find that our views coincide at nearly every point.

To be quite candid, I think we must make a sharp break with prior practice and attitude, or stand by while our theatre slips through mediocrity to oblivion. Complacency and sentimentality have left us with a physical plant that has not been substantially improved in a generation, and a governing policy that froze 20 years ago.

I may be stoned for saying this, but the Old Town Theatre of the 1940's and 1950's is dead, albeit unburied. As a participant in perhaps a dozen productions during the 1950's, I confess a certain fondness for those old bricks and boards. But given the chance to swap sentiment for an adequate stage, decent dressing rooms, sanitary plumbing facilities, good acoustics, a modern heating & cooling system, separate construction shops and so on & on, I wouldn't hesitate two seconds.

As Bob has quickly observed, Columbia grows while the Town Theatre shrinks. I, for one, love the Theatre enough to suggest that since heroic measures are needed to revive it, let's start thinking and acting like heroes.

I would submit that two steps must be taken immediately. One: Reach an agreement with Bob Telford whereby he will become our Managing Director immediately upon the end of the 1969-70 season. Two: begin exploring ways & means to replace the present plant in an orderly and rational manner.

You have my promise that I will gladly do everything in my power to help accomplish these two immediate goals.¹²

After several meetings to evaluate the Telford proposal and his possible employment, the Board elected to have its Long Range Planning Committee, already composed of chair-

¹²Letter from Grenville Seibels to H. Simmons Tate, Jr., September 4, 1969.

man William L. Otis, Jr., Mrs. J. Adger Brown, Gren Seibels, Samuel Latimer, and Ambrose Hampton (with the addition of Wallace Martin), to present a report to the Board on or before May 1, 1970. It was decided that this report would have to preclude any commitments to a director.¹³

After six months, the committee presented the following report:

REPORT - FUTURE PLANNING COMMITTEE
COLUMBIA TOWN THEATER

The Long Range Planning Committee, Town Theater, was charged by letter of November 19, 1969, by Simmons Tate, President, with the following responsibilities:

- A. A concept as to the type of theater we should have in the immediate and long term future.
- B. Plans for the necessary physical facility to meet the needs of the proposed concept and,
- C. A time table for the construction of the necessary physical facility.

In addition to these charges recommendations were requested with respect to:

- A. The kinds of plays we should have.
- B. The possibility of a mixed or double season of traditional and workshop.
- C. Childrens theater.
- D. Type of play.
- E. Whether the theater should be a landlord of other performing arts.
- F. The feasibility of a new building on a new location

¹³Society, Minutes, November 12, 1969.

or alternatively to possibly make an arrangement with the State to retain our present facility.

G. The layout and requirements of a new facility.

The Planning Committee has met over a period of six months and considered the aforementioned charges. After considerable discussion and investigation we are returning with this report. In some areas the committee felt it could discharge the responsibility, in other areas it was felt that some specific charges should be deferred to an operational committee should this report be accepted in part or in total.

The Committee began its investigation with some "feel" for what the theater was. We approached this with the questions:

1. What is the stability of Directors of our Theater over the past ten years?
2. What is the ratio of membership at our community as related to the population in our community over the past ten years?
3. What has been the change in box office for our plays taking into account the increase in competition for the "entertainment hour"?
4. What is the quality of operations in our theater as compared with similar theaters in our area of the Southeast?

As we approach these questions we discovered that if you group our membership by age groups 0 to 20, 20 to 35, 35 to 50, and over 50 that we had a preponderance of membership in the highest age group and it appeared that this trend was accelerating. This left us with the general feeling that we needed somehow to re-generate the appeal in our community particularly in the 20 to 30 age group. The feeling was voiced that the support in this age group was rapidly dwindling and that in fact it was one of the factors which enabled us to become a first class theater. It was evident that, because of salary and competition, in the last six years we have had four directors and the six years before that four more. It is also immediately apparent that the Town Theater is not competing effectively for the entertainment dollar and that the support for the advanced "high theater" concept while vocal was not substantial in numbers.

In further approaching the concept of our long range theater, several things were considered at once. Of prime consideration was the fact that our theater must

become economically successful if any long range planning is to be successful. With this in mind we recommend that we should have a full season of popular saleable entertainment in the form of plays. Our first decision in play selection should be box office appeal. In line with this we recommend that more attention be given to advertising Town Theater as entertainment. For instance, there should be a listing on the theater page or entertainment page of the newspaper and perhaps opening nights could be expanded into a social function with the possibility of things such as champagne, black tie, etc. This to develop a charisma again in the theater.

The divisive forces in our city have worked to the detriment of theater for the last several years. The Committee felt that all possible things should be done to attempt to bring the theater back together. There are many other sources of theater entertainment in Columbia now and these also work as drains to the available pool of talent, therefore, it is to our advantage to keep the talent and the audience as undivided as possible. We would recommend, therefore, that we include Workshop Theater as part of our offering. We feel, however, that Workshop should be in addition to the regular season of plays which is now being offered. These workshops could be bonuses to contributors and may well also expand horizons of our talent. We also feel that Childrens Theater gets our young people interested in theater at an early age and could be an excellent source of future talent as well as audience. We, therefore, recommend the Childrens Theater to be continued.

Part of this recommendation will involve the expansion of theater facilities. Upon completion of this, Committee recommends that theater be attempted on a year round basis. When a year round basis is achieved the use of professionals may be considered when financially possible, for summer shows.

The physical facilities of the theater are deemed to be inadequate for even todays needs. The Committee investigated three possible avenues of approach:

1. Construction of new structure away from the present location.
2. The incorporation of Town Theater and a new museum/ University Cultural Complex in the downtown area.
3. Improvement of the present location.

Mr. Harold Brunton of the University of South Carolina was brought in and the alternatives were investigated.

After considerable discussion the committee determined, that if possible, the most feasible and desirable alternative is the improvement of the present location. On the basis of the foregoing the following resolutions were passed:

1. That we desire to continue the separate entity of the Town Theater and not share the facilities if at all possible.
2. That all possible efforts should be exerted to make the operating entity and owning entity one in the same as soon as feasible to simplify the operating structure.
3. That it would be unwise to seek or accept State, Federal or City money which might obligate Town Theater or jeopardize its autonomy.
4. This Committee recommends to the Board of Directors that we re-affirm the stated policy of Town Theater to accept membership and participation with no prohibitions or qualifications other than those stated in the constitution.
5. That the Board of Directors must not lose sight of the historical significance of the Town Theater. Not only to Columbia and South Carolina but to the Nation in that it is now the oldest continued operating community theater in the United States. It is our recommendation that we make every effort to require additional property which will enable us to enlarge and improve the existing facility while preserving the historical significance and character of the location. Specifically that we investigate through the appropriate planning and political authorities the establishment of the concept of this historical art center in the middle of the State complex, and the inclusion of it in the future planning for the area. Consideration is to be given to some physical enlargement of the facilities in keeping with the historical architecture of the present theater.

The general feeling of the Committee in line with the resolutions is that a lobby could be developed on the north side of the theater, which will run from the front to the back, the new area adjacent to the old stage could be used as back stage and support area, the front portion to be used as a lobby with entrances into the theater from the lobby. The architecture of this to be in substantial conformance with the architecture of the present theater. In addition to this we would recommend a balcony addition of 75 to 100 seats which would be necessary if the envision (ed) success of the theater is achieved. The aforementioned expansion could only be possible if

the State of South Carolina could in some way release 30 feet of the property which they own immediately adjacent to the theater. This has been explored with the State to some extent and we have not been encouraged by them that they will agree to leave us as a "gem" in the middle of the State Governmental Complex. However, it is felt in the Committee that a blue ribbon group could approach:

1. The Historic Columbia Society
2. Lyles, Bissett, Carlisle & Wolfe
(The Planners for the Governmental Complex)
3. The Budget and Control Board
4. The Architectural Civic Group

and sufficient public impetus could be achieved to enable us to have more latitude than is presently evident. The Committee feels that with the expansion of present facilities and with the consideration of keeping the oldest continually operating theater in the United States in its location and that as a historical gem, we have considerable leverage in fund raising to achieve financially what will be necessary. It is, in other words, a "natural" for fund raising. Naturally, all of the aforementioned has been developed on an assumption. The assumption was made by necessity that we had to proceed on the basis that the owning entity and operating entity concerned with Town Theater can be made one and the same. It appears that this is now possible as a result of a considerable amount of investigation work by President Tate in regard to the ownership of the Town Theater Company. This information will be presented in a separate report.

The Committee did not feel that detail could be achieved in its deliberations. As a result, any specifics of the facilities, directions, plays, etc. have not been undertaken other than those things which have already been expressed.

In summary the Committee expresses itself that the Town Theater as presently operating is fighting a holding action which is losing. If some change in direction is not undertaken, inflation divisiveness in talent, audience and support and the increasing amount of competing entertainment in the City will put us out of business. The Committee is excited about the concept of the Town Theater as a "historical gem in the center of the state complex". We are excited about the fact that we could retain our present autonomy and individuality with this but also, in all probability re-unite and combine factions. The con-

cept is a tremendous spring board for fund raising and the financial limitations appear to be negligible. With the physical concept goes the concept of a mixed fare strongly weighted towards saleable entertainment but also including Workshop and "High Theater" for the vocal minority. The appointment of an enthusiastic "blue ribbon" committee for implementation will be required. Such a committee with appropriate sub-committees would be in a position to bring a plan to fruition. It is the general feeling of the committee that it will take in the neighborhood of three years from the point of decision before such an ambitious combination of projects could be completed. This is only an estimate as a more suitable time table can only be arrived at by an implementation committee.¹⁴

On most of the major points, the Planning Committee differed diametrically with the points of the Telford proposal. President Tate resigned May 28, 1970, less than a month after the Planning Committee presented its proposal, and, like the Telford proposal of 1958, both the Telford proposal of 1969 and the Planning Committee's proposal of 1970 slipped quietly into oblivion. Inaction once more prevailed. The conservative trend in planning for the future--begun in 1934 when the Board opted not to buy the lot next door--continued.

A View

What is the future of the Town Theatre? Based on a past filled with illustrious people and memorable moments, the course ought to be immediately clear, yet the changing natures of the contemporary theatre, the times, and the general membership offer no real assurances. More and more,

¹⁴Report, Future Planning Committee, Columbia Town Theater, William L. Otis, Jr., chairman. Presented in May, 1970.

recent Broadway fare offers fewer new titles for community theatre, and subject matter for family audiences becomes even more scarce. Revivals of "classics" have become a strong financial necessity for many community groups to stay alive, and the Town Theatre is no exception to this.

Even though it is the Board that has maintained the image established by the founders, the Theatre is generally discussed in terms of its directors. In one way or another, each has left his mark on the organization, and some have left legacies affecting the future that no one would have envisioned. The national renown gained by directors Coe and Mann after they left Columbia, for example, has prompted an often-made statement in the Society: "Directing at the Town Theatre provides a good stepping stone for a young director." The emphasis of the statement is mal-placed. It implies for each director that he is expected to stay only a few years. Further, there is the accepted implication of a frequent change of directors, and this condition has been fact at the Theatre. While the advent of new directors has been salubrious in many cases, continuity and stability have almost always been affected. The frequent changes have also helped to foster an attitude of tentativeness about each new director within the Board's membership. This has seemed restrictive and confusing to the directors and has given the Board an appearance of being both suspicious and defensive. Neither condition has promoted unqualified trust in mutual understand^{ing} and relationships.

A more serious result of the frequent changes in directors has been a fluctuating membership. The percentage of non-renewal of season memberships in recent years has reflected this. From the director's point of view, a short tenure has also been undesirable. Kaufman's observation was that "It's a poor policy for the board to change directors every three of four years. It requires that long for a director to become acquainted with local talent resources, to assemble a group of capable volunteers."¹⁵ In the past thirty-five years, only Crotty in his six terms really had the chance to develop this theory.

It is of interest to note that at the three largest community theatres in South Carolina--Greenville, Charleston, and Spartanburg--the directors have all been in their respective posts over twenty-five years. Continuity and stability are assuredly part of that success. Telford's willingness to settle in Columbia in 1970 to plan a long-term Theatre operation could well have restored the element of mutual trust and established the sense of continuity so long desired on all levels in the Society. His own outstanding success at the Theatre, the enormous contributions to organizations in Richmond, Ft. Worth, and Tulsa, the Board's respect and admiration, and his own charisma and talent would have provided a formidable combination from which to start.

Another part of the "stepping stone" trend in director

¹⁵The State, February 2, 1966.

recruitment in the past thirty-five years may suggest still another aspect of the cumulative Board-director communication gap. With the exception of Ingram, Bitterman, and Miss Grannis, the prototype sought as a director was a young man with a recent master's degree in theatre. All six Yale alumni, for example, had just received master's degrees a few months prior to coming to Columbia. The obvious advantages to the Society of this were the education in a prestigious school, the youth, the energy, and the fact that such young men would accept lesser salaries than more experienced directors since the graduates were just beginning their first full-time professional directing jobs. It is a fact that all of the Society's directors could have earned more money in comparable theatres in larger cities, or in other professions. The Society has seldom had the means to pay a director for the true value of his talent. Coupled with that is the knowledge that Town Theatre directors have never had such fringe benefits as Social Security (the Theatre is exempt), paid insurance coverage, and retirement. Even bonuses, when earned, have not made the total annual income of the directors competitive with that of most other professional areas.

The disadvantages posed for the Society by the employment of young graduates have been many. The directors: have had to make adjustments from academe to community; have often suffered from a lack of experience, particularly in working with community volunteers; and have had to adjust

from the more sophisticated theatre climate of such cities as New Haven, New York, Washington, Philadelphia, and New Orleans to that of a typical small community theatre. Further, new concepts and a different modus operandi by a new director often have proved unsettling to the Society. Robert Dale Martin, a young degree holder from the University of North Carolina at the time of his 1946-47 season, commenting on this last statement twenty-eight years later remembered, "We never did it before!" as the kind of Board response to new ideas. "It was frustrating!"¹⁶

One of the more subtle disadvantages that has come about with younger directors--both for the Board and the directors--has been a type of parent/child relationship. The youth and inexperience of the directors have often placed them in an inferior position in prestige and in bargaining power with regard to the Board. This has made a consistent professionalism on both sides difficult at times. (The deference paid to Miss Grannis in her first season, for example--because of her vast experience and background--showed a marked contrast in Board/director attitude.) Thus, the breach in over-all communication has resulted in an uneven relationship, and this has been an enormous disadvantage for the director since he has had virtually no recourse for Board displeasure. Often the Board has taken suggestion or criticism from the director as implied disloyalty. The Board's

¹⁶Telephone Interview, August 6, 1974.

authority, thus challenged, has been reinforced by meting out some punitive action (as denial of the director's column in the playbills). Such measures generally have fostered recalcitrancy and only made communications more difficult. While the Board has not reneged on its annual contracts with its directors (and each contract is still negotiated for one season only), a director's continued employment, has, on occasion, been as tenuous as the whim of the most influential Board members.

While the autonomy of the Stage Society was a trait to be admired during the lean Depression years, it has continued to affect the future of the Society, and perhaps detrimentally. In 1966, for example, the Lyric Theatre proposed a joint season and a joint membership campaign for both organizations, offering a package deal of \$12.50 for the two memberships. (The Theatre's regular season membership was \$10.00 that season.) The Board vetoed the suggestion on the basis that the Theatre's membership drive was already under way.¹⁷ In effect, such a proposal would have guaranteed the Lyric Theatre a building in which to work, since its productions have been staged mainly in Dreher High School's auditorium. Practically, however, there would not have been time to produce six theatre plays, two children's plays, and one or two Lyric Theatre productions in the ten-month season--unless some adjustments were made. Still, with compromise,

¹⁷Society, Minutes, August 23, 1966.

such a union may well have benefited both groups:

1. doubtless both theatre groups would have gained more members--even though there would have been some overlapping of members in both groups; (A similar joint subscription drive of several theatres in Washington, D. C. has proved beneficial to all involved.)
2. one membership drive instead of two and with potentially more workers offering a bigger "package" suggests the possibility of more community interest; and
3. while the Lyric Theatre would have gained a place to perform, the Town Theatre would also have had the built-in advantages of the musical resources of the Lyric Theatre.

The combination of talent in both groups would have been a hard combination to beat.

In the same way that the Board protected the Town Theatre's autonomy in that instance, it also was instrumental, by inaction, in the formation of the Workshop Theatre of South Carolina. Telford and Knower had suggested workshops for experimental plays. Mann had produced his own extra workshop productions in addition to his contracted adult series. Crotty finally was able to stage his choices of experimental fare at the University. Ironically, while the Town Theatre had trained a solid crop of young actors

in Mrs. Kramer's children's program, these same actors and others were given no challenge in the continued "warmed-over Broadway" plays which came to be expected in the adult series and which prompted visiting lecturer Sir Tyrone Guthrie to comment: "Having looked over your programs for the past several seasons, I conclude that the Town Theatre is not an artistically distinguished institution."¹⁸ Harrison's unusual and provocative season offered many of the more serious actors a glimpse at what they had been missing. In a very real way, the condemnation of Harrison and his season seemed a condemnation of innovation and experimentation, and a chance to ever perform the works of writers not deemed suitable for the general Society membership. The splinter group which formed the Workshop Theatre of South Carolina could well have achieved the same thing--but under the aegis of the Town Theatre, as part of its wider obligation to the theatre tastes of the community. Telford's view of the cultural complex concept with the Town Theatre as the hub could well have come to pass with both the Lyric Theatre and the Workshop Theatre being "in the family" rather than becoming competitors in an ever-increasing proliferation of theatre groups in Columbia. This lack of vision by the Society has proved costly.

The Board, in its staunch autonomy, has always seemed to fear that any compromises of the Society as founded in

¹⁸Lecture by Sir Tyrone Guthrie, sponsored by the State-Record Company for the Town Theatre membership at Dreher High School Auditorium March 23, 1969.

1919, and as established in actual tradition by Daniel Reed, would jeopardize either the organization or the Theatre building, or both. While the fears may have been grounded in genuine and sincere concern, there are no strong evidences that any group has ever tried to "take over" the control of the Society or the building. Like the Biblical parable concerning the hiding of the one talent lest it be stolen, the Society has not allowed its talents to multiply even when those avenues were suggested by the few visionaries who passed through the doors at 1012 Sumter Street.

In recent years, Columbians have expressed concern that someday the State of South Carolina, which virtually has surrounded the Theatre with office buildings--thus making it an island to itself, might take over the property for some state use. In an effort to prove that this thinking is symptomatic of defeat--and therefore not a viable option--Claire Randall, the current business manager, has quietly sought to reverse the thought process to place the State of South Carolina as a donor, rather than a potential taker. Through the South Carolina Department of Archives and History and the United States Department of Interior, the Town Theatre has been nominated to appear in the National Register of Historic Places. This recognition offers proof of a proud and pioneering tradition in the arts in South Carolina and a step forward not only to preserve it, but to advance it. Mrs. Randall's dream is the State's official recognition of

the Theatre's value by a gift or offer of adjacent land for expansion to the needs of a growing community. The idea is progressive and positive and suggests the very same ideals and most valuable attributes of the founding fathers in 1919. Hopefully, the Society will implement the dream (or an equal or better alternative) with zeal, commitment, and with expedition.

CONCLUSION

Columbia was designed by men of foresight and vision. There was no comparable way, however, that an organization such as the Town Theatre (even today few people are aware that the producing organization is really called the Columbia Stage Society) could chart a future that was so neatly laid out.

Begun in the most humble way, the organization's largest assets were its enthusiasm, its determination, its core of dedicated workers, and above all, its mentor Dan Reed. Nothing came easy. At every corner there seemed to be a new and unexpected hurdle to cross. It must be acknowledged that, once begun, the Theatre garnered not only the respect of those who came within its sphere, but the respect of those who read of the theatre work being accomplished in South Carolina's capital city. It was an organization of which to be proud and the cultural life of the state was enriched by it.

It was these intangible qualities which aided in very real ways when Columbia bankers gave loans in times of financial stress and when Columbians of means anonymously gave sums to keep the Theatre going.

No organization which exists largely on the voluntary gifts of time and talent of those who support it will ever

have a predictably consistent program to offer. There will be highs and lows in artistic merit as there are talents available in actors and directors. Fortuitously, the Columbia Stage Society never compromised on its insistence on having professional direction. Despite the varying temperaments and abilities associated with the eighteen regular directors at the Town Theatre from 1919-1974, the public has been assured of a continuity in professionalism.

While it is not unusual in many community theatres for directors to remain over long periods of time in leadership positions, it is perhaps rare to find theatres where one man has continued to dominate so strongly after he is no longer present. Daniel Reed achieved that in Columbia. Director for ten seasons, he charted a program that was so vital and so admired that successors Dean, Davis, and Glick were in a very real sense, limited before they even started their work. Others, by virtue of a time lapse and vastly different backgrounds, were less affected, but even they, too, felt the omnipresent tradition of the founding father.

Reed's place in the organization is assured historically, but it was his insight, ability, dignity, and unerring sense of showmanship that gave the organization the reputation it attained. The small brick building at 1012 Sumter Street stands as tangible evidence that he was in his own way something of a miracle worker.

Much attention in this study has been given to the Board of Governors of the Columbia Stage Society, for it is that

body which evolves and effects policies of the Town Theatre. The evaluations and judgments have characterized the Board in both positive and negative lights since, like the human beings that comprise its membership, it has not been infallible. Despite the criticisms that the Board has encountered over the years, one clear and strong factor remains: the Town Theatre continues to thrive after fifty-five seasons. Whether it would have been wise for the Board to bring about new policies as they were offered will, of course, never be known. The rules of logic suggest that there was no way for the Society to survive the great economic crises of the Depression, yet the determined spirit of a few dedicated Columbians overcame the long odds and miraculously kept the operation afloat. That spirit has doggedly persisted in other times of stress and is still a subtle but strong force in the organization.

By virtue of its long history and its distinguished contribution to the arts in Columbia, the Columbia Stage Society holds a perpetuating mandate to the cause of varied and quality theatre for the artisans who give their time to make it possible and to the community at large: SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE. Armed with the spirit, energy, and vision of its founders in 1919, the Town Theatre might well adopt as its motto the late Robert Kennedy's point of view in his trenchant observation:

Some men see things as they are and say why.
I dream things that never were and say, why not?

APPENDIX A

FIRST SEASON AT THE OPERA HOUSE

Saturday, December 1, 1900 The Rounders (Thos. Q. Seabrooke & Co.)

Myrkle & Harder Company

Monday, December 3	<u>Princess of Patches</u>
Tuesday, December 4	<u>Knobs O' Tennessee</u>
Wednesday, December 5	<u>Dangers of a Great City</u>
Thursday, December 6	<u>Looking For Trouble</u>
Friday, December 7	<u>An Indiana Romance or</u> <u>A Run-Away Wife¹</u>
Saturday, December 8 (Mat.)	<u>For His Sister's Sake²</u>
(Eve.)	<u>The Defaulter</u>

Una Clayton Company (Except for Tuesday)

Monday, December 17	<u>Darkest Russia</u>
Tuesday, December 18	<u>A Darktown Frolic on The</u> <u>Rialto, presented by the</u> <u>Black Patti Troubadours³</u>

¹The week's bill was changed and it is not certain which of these plays was performed.

²Matinee prices were ten cents for children and twenty cents for adults.

³An article in The State, December 15, 1900, notes: "Inasmuch as the better class of Negroes are so anxious to hear this celebrated troupe it was deemed simple justice to allow them the privilege . . . the white people are no less anxious to see Black Patti and they can get downstairs seats at balcony prices for this attraction, which is said to be very fine."

Wednesday, December 19	<u>A Midnight Masquerade</u>
Thursday, December 20	<u>Why Jones Left Home</u>
Friday, December 21	<u>The Roarer</u>
Saturday, December 22 (Mat.)	<u>The Sultan's Daughter</u>
(Eve.)	<u>The Little Pauper⁴</u>
Wednesday, December 26	<u>What Happened to Jones, with</u> <u>William Gillette</u>
Thursday, December 27	<u>Other People's Money, with</u> <u>Hennesy Leroye</u>
Friday, December 28	<u>A Midnight Bell</u>
Monday, December 31	<u>Secret Service</u>

1901

Saturday, January 5	<u>My Daughter-in-Law, with Miss</u> <u>Marion Converse</u>
Tuesday, January 8	<u>The Three Musketeers, with</u> <u>Harry Glazier</u>
Friday, January 11 (Matinee & Evening)	<u>When-we-were-Twenty-one, with</u> <u>George Clarke</u>
Monday, January 14	<u>Why Smith Left Home, presented</u> <u>by The Clever Co.</u>
Wednesday, January 16	<u>Enoch Arden, by Richard Strauss,</u> <u>presented by Olmsted-Potwin-</u> <u>Breneman Concert Co.</u>
Saturday, January 19	<u>King of The Opium Ring</u>
Tuesday, January 22	<u>The Greatest Thing in The</u> <u>World with Sarah Cowell</u> <u>LeMoyne</u>
Saturday, January 26	<u>A Young Wife, with Frank</u> <u>Tannehill, Jr.</u>
Monday, January 28	<u>The Man From Mexico, with</u> <u>George Boniface, Jr.</u>

⁴The Clayton Co. was booked from December 17-22.

The Crescent Stock Co. (Through February 2)

Thursday, January 31	<u>Forgiven</u> (First SRO performance at the theatre. 100 turned away)
Friday, February 1	<u>Myrtle Ferns</u>
Saturday, February 2 (Mat.) (Eve.)	<u>East Lynne</u> <u>Master and Man</u>
Thursday, February 7	<u>The Last of His Race</u> , with Creston Clark and Adelaide Prince
Saturday, February 9	<u>Side-Tracked</u> , presented by A. Q. Scammon's Co.
Wednesday, February 13	<u>Robin Hood</u> , presented by The Famous Bostonians (Light Opera Co.) SRO; Governor and Mayor in attendance
Saturday, February 16	<u>The Councillor's Wife</u> , with Eric Hope
Tuesday, February 19	<u>Quo Vadis</u> (Advertised as the original London and N. Y. production--6 acts, cast of 50, 8 scenes)
Wednesday, February 20	<u>The Watch on the Rhine</u> , with Al H. Wilson
Wednesday, February 27	Primrose and Dockstader (Minstrel Company)
Friday, March 1	The Great Herrmann (Magician)
Wednesday, March 6	<u>The Burgomaster</u> (A half-page ad billed it as the original production, cast of 80.)
Wednesday, March 20	<u>Prince Pro-Tem</u> , by Dan Pack- ard Opera Company
Thursday, March 28	<u>Heart and Sword</u> , by Walker Whiteside Co.
Phil and Nettie Peters Comedy Co.	
Monday, April 1	<u>Finnegan's Luck</u>

Tuesday, April 2	<u>Mugg's Landing</u>
Wednesday, April 3 (Mat.) ⁵ (Eve.)	<u>The King of Liars</u>
Thursday, April 4	<u>A Booming Town</u>
Friday, April 5	<u>The Dashing Widow</u>
Saturday, April 6 (Mat.) ⁶ (Eve.)	<u>Mistakes</u>
Saturday, April 13	<u>Brown's in Town</u>
Friday, April 19	<u>My Friend from India, with Mary Vokes</u>
Friday, April 26	<u>Charley's Aunt, presented by local amateurs called the "Columbians", trained by Mrs. M. W. Lovell, for the benefit of the Colum- bia Library</u>
Monday-Tuesday, May 6-7	Spring Music Festival
Friday, May 10	<u>Charley's Aunt, (Repeat per- formance by the "Columbians" for the benefit of the Sol- diers' Home)</u>
Monday, June 17	Billy Lamar's Minstrels, sponsored by the YMCA

⁵No title was given in newspaper accounts.

⁶Ibid. The Peters Co. was booked from April 1-6.

APPENDIX B, PART I
CONSTITUTION OF THE COLUMBIA STAGE SOCIETY
(Adopted Summer, 1919)

Article I.

Name

The name of this organization shall be Columbia Stage Society.

Article II.

Object

The object of the Society shall be:

First: to foster a community spirit, social intercourse and active participation in the work of the Society;

Second: to encourage and develop instrumental, vocal and dramatic talent of the city and outlying communities;

Third: to furnish the best forms of instrumental, vocal and dramatic entertainment for the members of the Society.

Article III.

Membership

Any white person is eligible to membership upon payment of dues.

Article IV.

Officers

1. The officers shall be: a president, a vice-president, a secretary and a treasurer.

2. The officers shall be elected at the last monthly meeting of the Society and shall hold office for one year or until their successors are elected and qualify.

3. Elections shall be by ballot.

4. The nominees receiving a majority of the votes cast shall be declared elected.

5. The president shall be ex-officio member of all committees.

6. In the election of officers each member shall be entitled to one vote for every membership card that he holds.

Article V.

Meetings.

Meetings shall be held at least once a month at such time and place as the president shall designate.

A program shall be given at each of these meetings of not less than an hour and a half duration and shall consist of the various forms of music and drama. Those taking part in the program do not need to be members of the Society (an exception to this case shall be those meetings at which the big productions are given. The members of the casts of these big productions must be members of the Columbia Stage Society.)

Article VI.

Quorum.

Fifteen members of the Society in good standing shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at regular or called meetings and a majority of the votes shall

decide all issues.

Special meetings shall be called at the direction of the president and, in his absence, at the discretion of the vice-president, secretary or treasurer in the order named.

Article VII.

Amendments.

The constitution may be altered or amended by the vote of two-thirds of the members present and voting at any meeting, provided the alteration or amendment shall have been proposed in writing and submitted to the members of the Society at the last previous monthly meeting.

BY-LAWS

Article I.

Duties of Officers.

1. The President, or in his absence, the Vice-president, Secretary or Treasurer, in the order named, shall preside at all meetings of the Society. It shall be his duty to supervise the work of the Society and enforce the constitution and by-laws and he shall cast the deciding vote at any meeting where there shall be a tie.
2. The Vice-president shall, in the absence of the President, preside at all meetings and assume all of the duties of the President.
3. The Treasurer shall keep a record of all persons belonging to the Society and of all receipts and disbursements, pay all bills approved by the President and render a bi-

monthly report to the Society. The Treasurer shall execute such bond as, in the discretion of the other officers, is necessary, the expense of said bond to be paid for out of the funds of the Society.

4. The Secretary shall attend and keep a record of all meetings of the Society, conduct and keep all correspondence under the direction of the President or Vice-president.

Article II.

1. The dues of the Society shall be decided by the vote of the members at the last meeting of the Society of each season.

2. All monies received from dues and other sources shall be and remain the property of the Society and be disbursed by it under the constitution and by-laws.

3. The Secretary, under the direction of the President, shall collect all monies due the Society and on receipt pay the same to the Treasurer, taking his receipt therefor.

Article III.

Stage Director.

At the last monthly meeting, or as the emergency arises, the President shall appoint a committee of five to secure the stage director. His activities shall be under the direction of and supervision of this committee and he shall be responsible for the satisfactory production at all monthly meetings of the program and shall select his casts, train them and attend to all the details of scenery,

electrical mechanics, costumes etc.

Article IV.

Salaries.

The only salary of the Society shall be that of the Stage Director and shall be left to the discretion of the committee on stage direction.

Article V.

Meetings.

At the conclusion of the necessary business, a program shall be provided by the Stage Director of at least one and a half hours' duration.

Every member shall be entitled to admission to each of the eight monthly meetings and to a reserved seat at any other production.

Article VI.

Monies shall be paid out by the Treasurer upon receipt or written order from the President or Vice-president.

PART II

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS OF THE COLUMBIA STAGE SOCIETY .

(Adopted at the Annual Business Meeting, May 28,
1925--at the end of the first season in the
permanent Theatre)

Preamble

WHEREAS, the life of the Columbia Stage Society depends upon an adequate and efficient business management, and

WHEREAS, from experience it has been shown that the successful management of the Columbia Stage Society will depend upon a closer affiliation of the several interests in the community supporting the Little Theatre Movement, and

WHEREAS, it appears that the unification of the various organizations of the community into a single management responsible for the conduct and support of the Stage Society can best be effected through the establishment of a Board of Governors, charged with duties hereinafter defined, and representing the several groups in the city devoted to its artistic advancement.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Constitution and By-Laws to which these resolutions form a preamble be and hereby is adopted as the law governing the Columbia Stage Society.

Constitution

Article I

SECTION 1. The name of this organization shall be the Columbia Stage Society of Columbia, S. C.

SECTION 2. The purpose of the organization shall be the

advancement in the community, both city and state, of the experimental arts of the little theatre, including spoken drama, pantomime, music, musical drama and the promotion of such literary and artistic objects as will foster and develop the cultural aspects of our community life.

Article II

The governing body of this organization shall be a Board of Governors consisting of sixteen members, eight of whom shall be elected for terms of two years and eight of whom shall be elected for terms of one year at the annual meeting of the Society in May, 1925, both groups of eight to be elected thereafter for terms of two years at the expiration of their said terms of office; so that at the annual meeting of the Society in May of each year the terms of eight members of the Board will expire and eight new members shall be elected annually. The purpose in mind is to elect eight new members and carry over eight old members each year. Regular meetings of the Society shall be held during the months of May and November of each year. Other meetings shall be held at the call of the President. Qualification for membership on the Board of Governors shall be membership in the Columbia Stage Society. It shall be the duty of the Board of Governors to fix the salaries of all employees of the Society.

Article III

The Board of Governors of this Society shall elect its

own officers, to serve for terms of two years as follows:
A President, a first vice-president, a second vice-president
and a Secretary-Treasurer.

Article IV

Duties of Officers

SECTION I. The President shall be responsible to the Board of Governors for the general conduct of the affairs of the Society and shall devote thereto at least one hour a day three days a week during the two seasons of his term of office; he shall have authority to appoint an executive committee of five members with which he shall meet for counsel and advice at least one-half hour a week.

SECTION 2. The Vice Presidents shall serve in the absence of the President in the order of their priority, and shall serve in connection with the affairs of the Society in introducing speakers, etc., as they may be called upon.

SECTION 3. The Secretary-Treasurer shall be responsible to the Board of Governors for correct minutes of all meetings of the Society and shall keep an accurate record of all receipts and disbursements; all moneys of the Society shall pass through his hands and be paid out only by check which shall be countersigned by the President; he shall check the bills against the Society and as far as possible supervise the financial affairs of the organization, under the direction of the President, as developed and reported by the Business Manager.

SECTION 4. The Manager shall be employed annually by the Board of Governors at a salary to be determined upon from year to year and shall be responsible solely to the President and under his or her direction alone.

Article V

The Director

SECTION 1. The Director shall be elected annually by the Board of Governors and shall be responsible to the President and Board of Governors for such number of character of stage productions during the season as may be approved by said President and Board; he shall co-operate with the Business Manager under the supervision of the President but without having any authority in connection with any business or financial matters. As occasion requires a suitable contingent fund shall be provided by the President for the use of the Director

SECTION 2. The Director shall have authority to employ an assistant at such salary as may be approved by the President and Board of Governors.

Article VI

Membership

SECTION 1. Memberships in the Stage Society, with dues appertaining thereto, shall be classified as follows:

	<u>Annual Dues</u>
1. Patrons	\$25.00
2. Sustaining Members	10.00
3. General Memberships	6.00
4. Student Memberships	4.00
5. Junior Memberships	3.00

(1) Patrons shall be entitled to all voting and other privileges of the Society and in addition will be given one additional set of tickets for guests.

(2) Sustaining members, with the patrons, shall constitute a program and casting committee and shall likewise be entitled to all privileges of the Society. The program and casting committee shall be called by the President as occasion requires to meet with the Director for advisory purposes and to offer opportunity for suggestions which the Director may use at his pleasure.

(3) Senior members shall be entitled to all privileges of the Society except the special privileges mentioned in paragraphs (1) and (2) above.

(4) Student members shall be entitled to all the privileges of the Society to which General members are entitled and are in no wise to be limited in their prerogatives by virtue of their smaller membership fee. All memberships shall entitle the holders thereof to one season ticket to all productions of the Society except the Junior Memberships which are limited.

Article VII

Junior Stage Society

The Junior members shall constitute the Junior Stage Society, which shall be under the same management and shall be an integral part of the Columbia Stage Society. It shall be organized by the Director. Junior members shall be en-

titled to tickets to the Junior Stage Society productions and to all matinee performances. Any child under the age of fifteen shall be eligible for membership in the Junior Stage Society.

Article VIII

Qualification and Election of Members

All persons of good character and standing in the community shall be eligible for membership in the Columbia Stage Society and shall be admitted by recommendation of a member and elected by the executive committee.

Article IX

Amendments

(1) Amendments to the Constitution and By-Laws shall be made by a vote of a two-third majority of the members present at any regular or call meeting of which the entire membership has been notified by mail or advertisement two days in advance.

(2) Notice of any contemplated change in the Constitution shall first be submitted to the Board of Directors for their approval and with the endorsement submitted to the Society for adoption.

By-Laws

Article I

Duties of Members

The duties of the members of the Columbia Stage Society

shall be to co-operate with the Business Manager in the up-building of the organization by recommending to membership eligible friends and acquaintances and communicating to them the ideals and aims of the institution; to lend suggestions to the Director in connection with the programs and productions; and to aid the President and Board of Governors whenever possible by advice and support.

Article II

The Board of Governors shall consist of sixteen members as hereinbefore indicated and they shall be chosen so far as possible as follows:

One member each to represent each of the following civic organizations:

The Evening Music Club, The Columbia Drama Club, The Columbia Art Association, The University of South Carolina, Chicora College, Columbia College, The Columbia High School, The Junior Service League; and eight members from the general membership of the Society. The President of the Society shall act as ex-officio President of the Board of Governors. Seven members of the Board, including the President, shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

PART III
AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION
OF THE COLUMBIA STAGE SOCIETY

(Adopted at the Annual Business Meeting, June 13, 1927)

By-Laws

Amend Article II, by substituting on the Board of Governors, a member of the Junior Chamber of Commerce for a representative from Chicora College.¹

Constitution

Amend Article II, by eliminating the meeting of the Columbia Stage Society in November of each year.

Amend Article IV, by eliminating the meeting of the President and the Executive Committee one half hour each week, and substitute therefor "as occasion demands."

Amend Section III of Article IV, to read as follows:
"The Secretary shall be responsible to the Board of Governors for correct minutes of all meetings of the Columbia Stage Society."

Add Article X as follows:

"No indebtedness in excess of \$25.00 shall be incurred by the Business Manager, Treasurer or Stage Director, without

¹Chicora College had originally been started in 1886 as The South Carolina Presbyterian Institute for Young Ladies. It opened in Columbia in the Hampton-Preston mansion October 1, 1890. In 1910, its name was changed to the College for Women. In 1915, it was combined with Chicora College then operating in Greenville. Financial depression finally necessitated a union with Queens College, Charlotte, North Carolina in 1930.

authority in writing from the President. All expenditures shall have the supervision of the President.

AMENDMENT ARTICLE V, SECTION I

(Adopted at the Annual Business Meeting, May 22, 1929)

"Provided, however, the Board of Governors may in their discretion elect in one person a Director and Producer, instead of a Director and a Business Manager, as provided for in Section 4 of Article IV and in Section 1 of Article V, whose employment shall be defined by an agreement in writing signed by the Director and producer and by the duly authorized officers of the Board of Governors."²

²This amendment was added at the end of the Section in question. It did not supplant any of the text already in effect. It was passed primarily for the financial relief of the Society which at that time had an indebtedness of more than \$2,000.

PART IV

CONSTITUTION OF THE COLUMBIA STAGE SOCIETY

(Adopted at the Annual Business Meeting, May 23, 1935)

Article I.

Name

Section One. The name of this organization shall be the Columbia Stage Society of Columbia, S. C.

Article II.

Purposes

Section One. The purpose of the organization shall be the advancement in the community, both city and state, of the experimental arts of the little theater, including spoken drama, pantomime, music, musical drama and the promotion of such literary and artistic objects as will foster and develop the cultural aspects of our community life.

Article III.

Membership

Section One. All members of the Columbia Stage Society under the constitution last in use are hereby constituted members under this constitution without formality.

Section Two. All persons of good character and standing in the community shall be eligible for membership in the Columbia Stage Society and shall be admitted by recommendation of a member and elect-

ed by the executive committee.

Section Three. Regular meetings of the membership of the Society shall be held at such time in May of each year as the Board of Governors may designate. Other meetings may be called by the President at pleasure.

Section Four. Membership in the Society shall be classified, and annual membership dues determined by the Board of Governors.

Article IV.

Board of Governors

Section One. The governing body of this organization shall be a Board of Governors consisting of sixteen members eight of whom shall be elected for terms of two years at the annual meeting of the Society in May of each year. The purpose in mind is to elect eight new members and carry over eight old members each year.

Section Two. Qualification for the membership on the Board of Governors shall be membership in the Columbia Stage Society.

Section Three. It shall be the duty of the Board of Governors to fix the salaries of all employees of the Society.

Section Four. No member of the Board of Governors shall receive a salary from the Society.

Section Five. The Board of Governors shall meet at such times and places as the by-laws may provide; five members shall constitute a quorum.

Article V.

Officers

Section One. The officers of the Society shall consist of a President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer, to be elected by the Board of Governors for a term of two years.

Section Two. The President shall be an ex-officio member of the Board.

Section Three. The retiring President shall remain an ex-officio member of the Board.

Section Four. The Finance Committee shall function until the close of the season of the year for which they were elected.

Article VI.

Duties of Officers

Section One. The President shall be responsible to the Board of Governors for the general conduct of the affairs of the Society and shall devote thereto during the two sessions of his term of office such time as occasion may require.

Section Two. The Vice-President shall serve in the absence of the President, and shall serve in connection with the affairs of the Society in introducing

speakers, etc., as they may be called upon.

Section Three. The Secretary shall be responsible to the Board of Governors for correct minutes of all meetings of the Columbia Stage Society, and other duties incidental and appertaining to the office.

Section Four. The Treasurer shall keep an accurate record of all receipts and disbursements; and shall check the bills against the Society and as far as possible supervise the financial affairs of the organization, under the direction of the President, as developed and reported by the Business Manager.

Article VII.

Business Manager

Section One. By and with the consent of the Board of Governors, the President shall annually appoint, to serve at his or her pleasure, a Business Manager, who shall receive such salary as the Board may determine. The Manager shall have actual charge of all business and financial affairs of the Society. No debt shall be incurred except by the Business Manager. The Business Manager shall be responsible to the President and under his or her direction alone.

Article VIII.

Director and Staff

Section One. The Director shall be elected annually by the Board of Governors and shall be responsible to the President and Board of Governors for such number and character of stage productions during the season as may be approved by said President and Board; he shall co-operate with the Business Manager under the supervision of the President but without having any authority in connection with any business and financial matters.

Section Two. Members of the Staff shall be elected by the Board of Governors for such time and at such salaries as may be determined by it.

Article IX.

Employees

Section One. All employees shall be elected by the Board of Governors, except the Business Manager, whose selection is determined by Article VII herein.

Article X.

Committees

Section One. By and with the consent of the Board of Governors, the President shall appoint annually, to serve at his or her pleasure, two members of

the Board to serve with him or her as an Executive Committee. This Committee shall meet upon call of the President.

Section Two. The Executive Committee shall advise and council [sic] the President on matters that may arise between meetings of the Board of Governors.

Section Three. By and with the consent of the Board of Governors, the President shall appoint such other committees to carry out the purposes of the Society as the Board may desire.

Article XI.

Authorities

Section One. The Board of Governors shall have the supreme authority to direct the policies and activities of the Society.

Section Two. The Executive Committee shall have the same rights as that of the Board, pending a meeting of the Board and subject to final ruling of the Board.

Section Three. The President between Board and Executive Committee Meetings, shall have plenary powers.

Article XII.

By-Laws

Section One. The Board of Governors may adopt by-laws to better conduct the business of the Society.

Section Two. By-laws may be adopted, amended or repealed by a two-third vote of the full voting strength of the Board of Governors at any meeting of the Board.

Article XIII.

Rules of Order

Section One. Robert's Rules of Order shall govern all meetings of the Board of Governors and the Society, except where there are conflicts with this constitution, in such conflicts the provisions of the constitution shall prevail.

PART V
AMENDMENTS TO THE MAY 23, 1935 CONSTITUTION
OF THE COLUMBIA STAGE SOCIETY

(Adopted at the Annual Business Meeting, June 8, 1955)

ARTICLE IV.

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

- Section One. The governing body of this organization shall be
(Amended) a Board of Governors consisting of fifteen members,
 five of whom shall be elected for terms of three
 years at the annual meeting of the Society in May
 of each year. This membership composition to be
 effected by electing in 1956 three members to
 serve for three-year terms and five members to
 serve two-year terms, and thereafter annually
 electing five members to serve for three-year terms.
- Section Six. The Board of Governors shall have the power to fill
(Added) the unexpired portion of vacancies occurring in the
 Board.

(Adopted at the Annual Business Meeting, September 12, 1962)

ARTICLE IV.

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

- Section One. The Children's Theatre Chairman of the Junior
(Added) League of Columbia shall, during her tenure of
 such office, serve ex-officio as a member of
 the Board of Governors of the Columbia Stage

Society, with full right to vote and otherwise participate in the management and affairs of the Society.

(This proviso was automatically invalidated with the cessation of Junior League sponsorship of the Children's Theatre at the end of the 1968-69 season.)

(Adopted at the Annual Business Meeting, May 28, 1969)

ARTICLE IV.

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Section One. The governing body of this organization shall be
(Amended) a Board of Governors, consisting of the President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer and the President of the Columbia Stage Company as ex officio members with a vote and fifteen (15) additional members, five (5) of whom shall be elected for terms of three (3) years at the annual meeting of ~~The~~ Society in May of each year; pro-
vided, however, that no member shall be eligible for election to two consecutive regular terms as a member of the Board of Governors.

ARTICLE V.

OFFICERS

Section Two. The President, Vice-President, Secretary and
(Amended) Treasurer shall be ex officio members of the Board and entitled to vote on all matters coming before the Board.

Section Three. The retiring President shall remain an ex-officio member of the Board until the first performance under the new Board.

(Clarification action of the Board of Governors, January 18, 1972)

"The Board unanimously affirmed that the purposes stated in Article II, Section One of the Constitution of the Columbia Stage Society apply to all members of the community."

APPENDIX C

PLAYS PRODUCED AT THE TOWN THEATRE, 1919-1974

The following pages present a chronological list of plays produced by the Columbia Stage Society from its first production of two one-acts at Columbia High School October 9, 1919 through its final play of its fifty-fifth season, June 2, 1974

During the first season, productions were staged at several different locations, and these locations are noted. During the second, third, fourth, and fifth seasons (1920-21 through 1923-24), all productions were staged at the temporary Town Theatre at 1012 Sumter Street. Beginning with the sixth season (1924-25), all productions (except where noted) have been staged in the current Town Theatre at 1012 Sumter Street.

Each play is capitalized and is followed by the name of the author (where known). For the first fourteen seasons (through 1932-33), adult and children's productions are listed together since all were staged by the regular directors. Beginning with the fifteenth season, most of the children's plays were directed by separate directors, and an additional list chronicles children's plays, their directors and authors from that point on.

Plays marked with an asterisk indicate those with their first productions taking place at the Town Theatre.

Director--Daniel A. Reed

First Season, 1919-20

1. (Presented at Columbia High School)

THE RISING OF THE MOON by Lady Gregory
JOINT OWNERS IN SPAIN by Alice Brown

2. (Presented at Columbia High School)

THE PRICE OF COAL by Harold Brighouse
NEVERTHELESS by Stuart Walker

3. (Presented at the Pastime Theatre for three performances and at the Liberty Theatre at Camp Jackson for one performance)

THE MISLEADING LADY by Charles Goddard and Paul Dickey

4. (Presented at the Pastime Theatre)
 "The Farewell Supper" from THE AFFAIRS OF ANATOL by
 Arthur Schnitzler
 THE GLITTERING GATE by Lord Dunsany
5. (Presented at the Pastime Theatre)
 MOONSHINE by Arthur Hopkins
 THE GRASSHOPPER by E. Grenet-Dancourt
6. (Presented at the Pastime Theatre)
 THE UNCHASTENED WOMAN by Louis K. Anspacher
7. (Presented at Craven Hall)
 SUPPRESSED DESIRES by Susan Glaspell and George Cram Cook
 THE GAOL GATE by Lady Gregory
 NETTIE by George Ade
8. (Presented at the Liberty Theatre for two performances
 and at the Columbia Theatre for one performance)
 BEAU BRUMMEL by Clyde Fitch
9. (Presented on the University of South Carolina Athletic
 Field)
 PRUNELLA by Laurence Housman and Harley Granville-Barker

Second Season, 1920-21

10. THE GYPSY TRAIL by Robert Housum
11. THE DUMMY by Harvey O'Higgins and Harriet Ford
12. THE QUEEN'S ENEMIES by Lord Dunsany
 THREE SCARECROWS by Daniel A. Reed
13. NEARLY MARRIED by Edgar Selwyn
14. THE STRONGER by Giuseppe Giacosa
15. BELIEVE ME, XANTIPPE by Frederick Ballard
16. *ALICE IN WONDERLAND adapted by Daniel A. Reed

Third Season, 1921-22

17. CLARENCE by Booth Tarkington

18. THE LAMP-POST by Chase Varney
THE DUMB AND THE BLIND by Harold Chapin
19. WHY MARRY? by Jessie Lynch Williams
20. "Questioning Fate" and "Episode" from THE AFFAIRS OF
ANATOL by Arthur Schnitzler
21. THE RIDER OF DREAMS by Ridgely Torrence
FOURTEEN by Alice Gerstenberg
22. THE GREAT DIVIDE by William Vaughn Moody
23. THE MAN WHO MARRIED A DUMB WIFE by Anatole France
24. *LADIES LAUGH LAST by Knowles Entriken
25. *AFTERGLOW by Mrs. Perry M. Teeple
*JAEL by Frances Gibbes Keith
*MORTMAIN by James P. Kinard
26. *NO DOGS ALLOWED by Rebecca Dial

Fourth Season, 1922-23

27. ENTER MADAME by Gilda Varesi and Dolly Byrne
28. SEVENTEEN by Booth Tarkington
29. ALI BABA AND THE FORTY THIEVES dramatized by Lady Bell
30. WIDOWED by Louis Gilmore
THE TRAVELING MAN by Lady Gregory
31. *FOOLISH JACK by Daniel A. Reed
THE SLEEPING BEAUTY dramatized by Lady Bell
32. A SUNNY MORNING by Jose and Serafin Quintero
*A VALENTINE INTERLUDE by Daniel A. Reed
EUGENICALLY SPEAKING by Edward Goodman
33. THE PIPER by Josephine Preston Peabody
34. *THE VICTEROLA by Erin Kohn
*THE STRANGER by Frances Gibbes Keith
35. *JACK AND THE BEANSTALK adapted by Daniel A. Reed
36. *LIFTING THE VEIL by Rebecca Dial
*THE TRUTH by Elizabeth Malcolm Durham
37. *THIS AGE by Jane Trenholm Bradley

38. *HOME BREW an original vaudeville by Daniel A. Reed

Fifth Season, 1923-24

39. DULCY by George S. Kaufman and Marc Connelly
 40. *A CHRISTMAS CAROL dramatized by Daniel A. Reed
 41. LADY WINDERMERE'S FAN by Oscar Wilde
 42. MR. PIM PASSES BY by A. A. Milne
 43. *HUNGER AND COLD by Elizabeth Malcolm Durham
 *ALICE MARKHAM, SPINSTER by Sarah Louise Duncan
 44. *SOAP SUDS by Jane Trenholm Bradley
 *ENOCH ARDEN musical reading by Daniel A. Reed
 45. *HILDA by Frances Gibbes Keith
 46. *UNDERTOW by Rebecca Dial
 47. *HOME BREW second edition of an original vaudeville
 by Daniel A. Reed

Sixth Season, 1924-25

48. *A CURTAIN RAISER a short sketch for the opening of
 the new theatre by Daniel A. Reed
 THE TORCHBEARERS by George Kelly
 49. *A CHRISTMAS CAROL (revival) by Daniel A. Reed
 50. *THE LIGHTED HOUSE by Dorothy Heyward
 51. THE MOLLUSC by Hubert Henry Davies
 52. THE LOST SILK HAT by Lord Dunsany
 THE LAST OF THE LOWRIES by Paul Green
 *A CROSS-STITCH PUZZLE a pantomime by Erin Kohn and
 Daniel A. Reed
 53. A SUCCESSFUL CALAMITY by Clare Kummer
 54. *SISTERS by Jane Trenholm Bradley
 *GAMESTERS ALL pantomime to DuBose Heyward's poem by
 Daniel A. Reed
 *LOVE IN A CUPBOARD by Dorothy Heyward
 55. THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST by Oscar Wilde

56. PATIENCE by Gilbert and Sullivan

Seventh Season, 1925-26

57. ROMANCE by Edward Sheldon

58. YOU AND I by Philip Barry

59. *THE CRICKET ON THE HEARTH dramatized by Daniel A. Reed

60. THE CONCERT by Hermann Bahr

61. SUN UP by Lula Vollmer

62. THE MOLLUSC (revival) by Hubert Henry Davies

63. ROMEO AND JULIET by William Shakespeare

64. *IDOLS by Marshall Andrews

*THE WITCH'S SPELL by Tressie Pierce

*A SOCIAL SUCCESS by Rebecca Dial

65. *ALADDIN AND THE LAMP dramatized by Daniel A. Reed

66. RUDDIGORE by Gilbert and Sullivan

Eighth Season, 1926-27

67. ARMS AND THE MAN by George Bernard Shaw

68. *HAIL! SOUTH CAROLINA an historical pageant by Daniel A. Reed given at the State Fair**

69. THE TRUTH by Clyde Fitch

70. THE DOCTOR IN SPITE OF HIMSELF by Molière

*THE BETRAYAL by Padraic Colum (first presented by Director Reed's USC summer school class in 1926)

71. *SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN DWARFS dramatized by Daniel A. Reed

72. HER HUSBAND'S WIFE by A. E. Thomas

73. *THE FACE by Frances Gibbes Keith

74. Play Tournament

75. PRINCESS IDA by Gilbert and Sullivan

**Not a regular season production (Presented for the State Fair Association during State Fair week.) a Centennial

Director--William Dean

Ninth Season, 1927-28

- 76. THE CHARM SCHOOL by Alice Duer Miller and Robert Milton
- 77. A DOLL'S HOUSE by Henrik Ibsen
- 78. THE SHOW-OFF by George Kelly
- 79. *THE SCORE by Dr. George Y. MacMurphy
DUST OF THE ROAD by Kenneth Sawyer Goodman
*THREE WHO WAIT by Charlotte S. Richardson and Beatrice Sims
- 80. JUSTICE by John Galsworthy
- 81. A FAN AND TWO CANDLESTICKS by Mary McMillan
"A Russian Ballet" story by William Dean, performed by Mrs. Dean's dancing classes
- 82. Play Tournament
- 83. AREN'T WE ALL? by Frederick Lonsdale

Tenth Season, 1928-29

- 84. HE AND SHE by Rachel Crothers
- 85. MARCH HARES by Harry Wagstaff Gribble
- 86. THE PATSY by Barry Connors
- 87. THE CIRCLE by Somerset Maugham
- 88. THE PIGEON by John Galsworthy
- 89. Play Tournament
- 90. *THE WIZARD OF OZ adapted by Jane Trenholm Bradley
- 91. *VAUDEVILLE arranged by William Dean

Guest Directors

Eleventh Season, 1929-30

- 92. THE SWAN by Ferenc Molnar (directed by Belford Forrest)
- 93. PARIS BOUND by Philip Barry (directed by James Daly)
- 94. *CINDERELLA (dramatized and directed by Harry Davis)

95. MEET THE WIFE by Lynn Starling (directed by Harry Davis)
96. WAPPIN' WHARF by Charles S. Brooks (directed by Harry Davis)
97. THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL by Richard B. Sheridan (directed by Carl Benton Reid)
98. *ROBIN HOOD (arranged and directed by Harry Davis)
99. OUTWARD BOUND by Sutton Vane (directed by Harry Davis)
100. THE TINDER-BOX dramatized by Lady Bell (directed by Harry Davis)
*THE THREE WISHES (written and directed by Harry Davis)
101. TONS OF MONEY by Will Evans and Valentine (directed by Harry Davis)

Director--Harry Davis

Twelfth Season, 1930-31

102. HOLIDAY by Philip Barry
103. SEVEN KEYS TO BALDPATE by George M. Cohan
104. *SLEEPING BEAUTY dramatized by Harry Davis
105. THE YOUNG IDEA by Noel Coward
106. FASHION by Mrs. Anna Cora Mowatt
107. ALI BABA AND THE FORTY THIEVES dramatized by Harry Davis
108. *UP THERE by Frances Gibbes Keith
109. ON APPROVAL by Frederick Lonsdale

Director--Belford Forrest

Thirteenth Season, 1931-32

110. HAY FEVER by Noel Coward
111. CANDIDA by George Bernard Shaw
112. *THE KNAVE OF HEARTS by Belford Forrest
113. HEDDA GABLER by Henrik Ibsen

- 114. THREE LIVE GHOSTS by Frederick Isham
- 115. DAVID GARRICK by Tom Robertson
- 116. LADY WINDERMERE'S FAN (revival) by Oscar Wilde

Fourteenth Season, 1932-33

- 117. THE FIRST MRS. FRASER by St. John Ervine
- 118. HAMLET by William Shakespeare
- 119. LITTLE WOMEN by Louisa Alcott with dramatization by Marian De Forest
- 120. *IF I WERE QUEEN by Josephine Withers Cardwell
- 121. SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER by Oliver Goldsmith
- 122. CAMILLE by Alexandre Dumas, fils
- 123. EXPRESSING WILLIE by Rachel Crothers
- 124. THE GONDOLIERS by Gilbert and Sullivan

Fifteenth Season, 1933-34

- 125. *FANNY DORINI by Belford Forrest
- 126. JULIUS CAESAR by William Shakespeare
- 127. WHEN LADIES MEET by Rachel Crothers
- 128. THE CRIME AT BLOSSOMS by Mordaunt Shairp
- 129. ANNA CHRISTIE by Eugene O'Neill
- 130. THE MIKADO by Gilbert and Sullivan
- 131. BROKEN DISHES by Martin Flavin

Sixteenth Season, 1934-35

- 132. THE TRIAL OF MARY DUGAN by Bayard Veiller
- 133. MACBETH by William Shakespeare
- 134. THE LATE CHRISTOPHER BEAN by Sidney Howard
- 135. H. M. S. PINAFORE by Gilbert and Sullivan

- 136. ANOTHER LANGUAGE by Rose Franken
- 137. THE MARQUISE by Noel Coward
- 138. CHARLEY'S AUNT by Brandon Thomas

Seventeenth Season, 1935-36

- 139. HER MASTER'S VOICE by Clare Kummer
- 140. OTHELLO by William Shakespeare
- 141. THE GHOST TRAIN by Arnold Ridley
- 142. CAROLINE by W. Somerset Maugham
- 143. THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE by Gilbert and Sullivan
- 144. EAST LYNNE by Mrs. Henry Wood
- 145. *HI-WAYS AND BI-WAYS by Belford Forrest

Director--Daniel A. Reed

Eighteenth Season, 1936-37

- 146. GRAND HOTEL adapted from the German original of Vicki Baum by William Drake
- 147. LET US BE GAY by Rachel Crothers
- 148. DOUBLE DOOR by Elizabeth McFadden
- 149. FAUST adapted from Goethe's dramatic poem by Daniel A. Reed
- 150. PERSONAL APPEARANCE by Lawrence Riley
- 151. THE DRUNKARD by William H. Smith
- 152. *TIME OUT by Jane Trenholm Bradley
- *A RIME FOR SILVER by Nancy Telfair (Louise Jones DuBose)
- *FUNERAL FLOWERS FOR THE BRIDE by Beverly DuBose Hamer

Nineteenth Season, 1937-38

- 153. THE ROYAL FAMILY by George S. Kaufman and Edna Ferber
- 154. THE HAPPY HUSBAND by Harrison Owen
- 155. A CHRISTMAS CAROL (revival) by Daniel A. Reed

- 156. THE SILVER CORD by Sidney Howard
- 157. RIP VAN WINKLE by Washington Irving in the Joseph Jefferson version
- 158. COQUETTE by George Abbott and Ann Preston Bridgers
- 159. MASTER SKYLARK by John Bennett in a dramatization by Edgar White Burrill
- 160. THE YEOMEN OF THE GUARD by Gilbert and Sullivan

Director--Carl Glick

Twentieth Season, 1938-39

- 161. FIRST LADY by Katharine Dayton and George S. Kaufman
- 162. GOLD IN THE HILLS by J. Frank Davis
- 163. THE WORLD AND HIS WIFE by Charles Frederic Nirdlinger from José Echegaray's EL GRAN GALEOTO
- 164. H. M. S. PINAFORE (revival) by Gilbert and Sullivan
- 165. STAGE DOOR by Edna Ferber and George S. Kaufman
- 166. THE TAMING OF THE SHREW by William Shakespeare
- 167. A WOMAN'S WAY by Thompson Buchanan

Twenty-First Season, 1939-40

- 168. OUR TOWN by Thornton Wilder
- 169. BOY MEETS GIRL by Bella and Samuel Spewack
- 170. THE SECOND MAN by S. N. Behrman
- 171. THE PETRIFIED FOREST by Robert E. Sherwood
- 172. WHAT A LIFE by Clifford Goldsmith
- 173. NIGHT OF JANUARY 16TH by Ayn Rand

Director--Fred Coe

Twenty-Second Season, 1940-41

- 174. HIGH TOR by Maxwell Anderson

- 175. MARGIN FOR ERROR by Clare Boothe
- 176. MORNING'S AT SEVEN by Paul Osborn
- 177. H. M. S. PINAFORE (third production of this play) by Gilbert and Sullivan
- 178. LILIOM by Ferenc Molnar
- 179. TWELFTH NIGHT by William Shakespeare
- 180. THE MALE ANIMAL by James Thurber and Elliott Nugent

Twenty-Third Season, 1941-42

- 181. THE MAN WHO CAME TO DINNER by George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart
- 182. LADIES IN RETIREMENT by Edward Percy and Reginald Denham
- 183. SKYLARK by Samson Raphaelson
- 184. THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE (revival) by Gilbert and Sullivan
- 185. GEORGE WASHINGTON SLEPT HERE by George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart
- 186. GOODBYE AGAIN by Allan Scott and George Haight
- 187. THE BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE by William Saroyan
- 188. CLAUDIA by Rose Franken

Twenty-Fourth Season, 1942-43

- 189. ARSENIC AND OLD LACE by Joseph Kesselring
- 190. PRIDE AND PREJUDICE by Jane Austen in a dramatization by Helen Jerome
- 191. THE PHILADELPHIA STORY by Philip Barry
- 192. THE WOMEN by Clare Boothe
- 193. PETTICOAT FEVER by Mark Reed
- 194. PYGMALION by George Bernard Shaw
- 195. REBECCA by Daphne du Maurier (American premiere)

Twenty-Fifth Season, 1943-44

- 196. *SHOW ME FIRST original musical comedy with book by Fred Coe, and music and lyrics by Adger Brown, Fred Coe, Gloria Crouse, Mary Edwards, Clarence Etters, Leonard C. Moltz, and Allen B. Whitehead
- 197. MY SISTER EILEEN by Joseph A. Fields and Jerome Chodorov
- 198. GREEN GROW THE LILACS by Lynn Riggs
- 199. JUNIOR MISS by Sally Benson
- 200. GUEST IN THE HOUSE by Hagar Wilde and Dale Eunson
- 201. THE LITTLE FOXES by Lillian Hellman
- 202. THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS by Lawrence Langner and Armina Marshall Langner

Director--Francis Marion Durham

Twenty-Sixth Season, 1944-45

- 203. JANIE by Josephine Bentham and Herschel Williams
- 204. AH, WILDERNESS! by Eugene O'Neill
- 205. HOME AND BEAUTY by W. Somerset Maugham
- 206. DANGEROUS CORNER by J. B. Priestley
- 207. OVER TWENTY-ONE by Ruth Gordon
- 208. PAPA IS ALL by Patterson Greene

Twenty-Seventh Season, 1945-46

- 209. BLITHE SPIRIT by Noel Coward
- 210. A BELL FOR ADANO by Paul Osborn from the novel by John Hersey
- 211. MR. PIM PASSES BY by A. A. Milne
- 212. LOVE FROM A STRANGER by Frank Vosper from a story by Agatha Christie
- 213. ELIZABETH THE QUEEN by Maxwell Anderson
- 214. I REMEMBER MAMA by John van Druten

Director--Robert Dale Martin

Twenty-Eighth Season, 1946-47

- 215. OUT OF THE FRYING PAN by Francis Swann
- 216. STATE OF THE UNION by Howard Lindsay and Russel Crouse
- 217. NIGHT MUST FALL by Emlyn Williams
- 218. ON BORROWED TIME by Paul Osborn
- 219. LAURA by Vera Caspary and George Sklar
- 220. THEY KNEW WHAT THEY WANTED by Sidney Howard

Director--Delbert Mann

Twenty-Ninth Season, 1947-48

- 221. THE ROAD TO ROME by Robert Sherwood
- 222. YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU by George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart
- 223. THE GLASS MENAGERIE by Tennessee Williams
- 224. DEAR RUTH by Norman Krasna
- 225. THE CORN IS GREEN by Emlyn Williams
- 226. DREAM GIRL by Elmer Rice

Thirtieth Season, 1948-49

- 227. JOHN LOVES MARY by Norman Krasna
- 228. RAIN by John Colton and Clemence Randolph from a story by W. Somerset Maugham
- 229. A HIGHLAND FLING by Margaret Curtis
- 230. THE BARRETT'S OF WIMPOLE STREET by Rudolph Besier
- 231. COMMAND DECISION by William Wister Haines
- 232. LIFE WITH FATHER by Howard Lindsay and Russel Crouse

Director--Clarence Eugene Crotty

Thirty-First Season, 1949-50

- 233. THE MALE ANIMAL by James Thurber and Elliott Nugent

- 234. THE WINSLOW BOY by Terence Rattigan
- 235. TWO BLIND MICE by Samuel Spewack
- 236. SPOOKS by Robert J. Sherman
- 237. BORN YESTERDAY by Garson Kanin
- 238. HAPPY BIRTHDAY by Anita Loos
- 239. ORPHAN NELL or THE TALE OF THE MOTH AND THE FLAME** by
Flo Knight Boyd

Thirty-Second Season, 1950-51

- 240. GOODBYE, MY FANCY by Fay Kanin
- 241. BERKELEY SQUARE by John L. Balderston
- 242. HARVEY by Mary Chase
- 243. THE HASTY HEART by John Patrick
- 244. HEARTBREAK HOUSE by George Bernard Shaw
- 245. THE VOICE OF THE TURTLE by John van Druten

Thirty-Third Season, 1951-52

- 246. SEE HOW THEY RUN by Philip King
- 247. PENNY WISE by Jean Ferguson Black
- 248. EDWARD, MY SON by Robert Morley and Noel Langley
- 249. THE WOMEN by Clare Boothe
- 250. JUBALEE by Patricia Colbert Robinson
- 251. THE MAN by Del Minelli

Thirty-Fourth Season, 1952-53

- 252. THE HAPPY TIME by Samuel Taylor
- 253. ARSENIC AND OLD LACE by Joseph Kesselring
- 254. MIRANDA by Peter Blackmore
- 255. MISTER ROBERTS by Thomas Heggen and Joshua Logan

**Not a regular season production (A bonus production to raise money for the shop annex)

256. AFFAIRS OF STATE by Louis Verneuil
257. THE MOON IS BLUE by F. Hugh Herbert

Thirty-Fifth Season, 1953-54

258. BELL, BOOK AND CANDLE by John van Druten
259. BIOGRAPHY by S. N. Behrman
260. DEATH OF A SALESMAN by Arthur Miller
261. JANE by S. N. Behrman
262. SPRING FOR SURE by Catherine McDonald and Wilton Mason

Thirty-Sixth Season, 1954-55

263. MY THREE ANGELS by Sam and Bella Spewack
264. BERNADINE by Mary Chase
265. SABRINA FAIR by Samuel Taylor
266. HIS AND HERS by Fay and Michael Kanin
267. AMPHITRYON 38 by Jean Giraudoux and adapted by S. N. Behrman

Director--Robert S. Telford

Thirty-Seventh Season, 1955-56

268. THE REMARKABLE MR. PENNYPACKER by Liam O'Brien
269. THE CAINE MUTINY COURT-MARTIAL by Herman Wouk
270. ARMS AND THE MAN by George Bernard Shaw
271. DIAL "M" FOR MURDER by Frederick Knott
272. THE COUNTRY GIRL by Clifford Odets
273. THE SOLID GOLD CADILLAC by Howard Teichman and George S. Kaufman

Thirty-Eighth Season, 1956-57

274. WHERE'S CHARLEY? by George Abbott and Frank Loesser

- 275. BAD SEED by Maxwell Anderson from the novel by William March
- 276. THE TIME OF YOUR LIFE by William Saroyan
- 277. THE DESPERATE HOURS by Joseph Hayes
- 278. THE RAINMAKER by N. Richard Nash
- 279. THE TEAHOUSE OF THE AUGUST MOON by John Patrick from the novel by Vern Sneider

Thirty-Ninth Season, 1957-58

- 280. CALL ME MADAM by Howard Lindsay, Russel Crouse, and Irving Berlin
- 281. WITNESS FOR THE PROSECUTION by Agatha Christie
- 282. JANUS by Carolyn Green
- 283. TWELFTH NIGHT by William Shakespeare
- 284. IT'S NEVER TOO LATE by Felicity Douglas
- 285. THE MATCHMAKER by Thornton Wilder

Director--Louis Wilson Ingram, Jr.

Fortieth Season, 1958-59

- 286. THE RELUCTANT DEBUTANTE by William Douglas Home
- 287. THE BOY FRIEND by Sandy Wilson
- 288. MONIQUE by Dorothy and Michael Blankfort
- 289. THE VELVET GLOVE by Rosemary Casey
- 290. TIME REMEMBERED by Jean Anouilh in an English version by Patricia Moyes
- 291. BRIGADOON by Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Loewe

Director--Henry DuBarry Knower

Forty-First Season, 1959-60

- 292. GUYS AND DOLLS by Jo Swerling, Abe Burrows, and Frank Loesser

- 293. RASHOMON by Fay and Michael Kanin from stories by Ryunosuke Akutagawa
- 294. THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST by Oscar Wilde
- 295. FLIGHT INTO EGYPT by George Tabori
- 296. VISIT TO A SMALL PLANET by Gore Vidal
- 297. THE DEADLY GAME by James Yaffe in an adaptation from the novel TRAPPS by Friedrich Duerrenmatt

Forty-Second Season, 1960-61

- 298. SAINT JOAN by George Bernard Shaw
- 299. BUS STOP by William Inge
- 300. INHERIT THE WIND by Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee
- 301. SOUTH PACIFIC by Oscar Hammerstein, II, Joshua Logan, and Richard Rodgers
- 302. *THE COMMENTATOR by Ben Irwin

Forty-Third Season, 1961-62

- 303. LITTLE MARY SUNSHINE by Rick Besoyan
- 304. A PHOENIX TOO FREQUENT by Christopher Fry, and THE BALD SOPRANO by Eugène Ionesco
- 305. MACBETH by William Shakespeare
- 306. OUR TOWN by Thornton Wilder
- 307. J. B. by Archibald MacLeish

Director--Paul W. Kaufman

Forty-Fourth Season, 1962-63

- 308. BYE BYE BIRDIE by Michael Stewart, Lee Adams, and Charles Strouse
- 309. ADVISE AND CONSENT by Loring Mandel from the novel by Allen Drury
- 310. GOLDEN FLEEING by Lorenzo Semple, Jr.

- 311. THE MIRACLE WORKER by William Gibson
- 312. THE MOUSETRAP by Agatha Christie
- 313. WHO WAS THAT LADY I SAW YOU WITH? by Norman Krasna

Forty-Fifth Season, 1963-64

- 314. CARNIVAL by Michael Stewart and Bob Merrill based on material by Helen Deutsch
- 315. JULIUS CAESAR by William Shakespeare
- 316. MAKE MINE MINK (BREATH OF SPRING) by Peter Coke
- 317. LOOK HOMEWARD, ANGEL by Ketti Frings from the novel by Thomas Wolfe
- 318. MY FAIR LADY by Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Loewe as adapted from George Bernard Shaw's PYGMALION
- 319. SEND ME NO FLOWERS by Norman Barasch and Carroll Moore

Forty-Sixth Season, 1964-65

- 320. WONDERFUL TOWN by Joseph Fields, Jerome Chodorov, Betty Comden, Adolph Green, and Leonard Bernstein based on the play MY SISTER EILEEN by Fields and Chodorov and the stories by Ruth McKenney
- 321. ALL THE WAY HOME by Tad Mosel based on the novel A DEATH IN THE FAMILY by James Agee
- 322. PHOTO FINISH by Peter Ustinov
- 323. A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS by Robert Bolt
- 324. ENTER LAUGHING by Joseph Stein as adapted from the novel by Carl Reiner
- 325. SHE LOVES ME by Joe Masteroff, Sheldon Harnick, and Jerry Bock based on a play by Miklos Laszlo

Forty-Seventh Season, 1965-66

- 326. DAMN YANKEES by George Abbott, Douglass Wallop, Richard Adler, and Jerry Ross
- 327. MARY, MARY by Jean Kerr

- 328. SEPARATE TABLES by Terence Rattigan
- 329. NEVER TOO LATE by Sumner Arthur Long
- 330. WINTERSET by Maxwell Anderson

Director--Richard A. Harrison

Forty-Eighth Season, 1966-67

- 331. THE FIREBUGS by Max Frisch
- 332. THE IMAGINARY INVALID by Molière
- 333. SIX CHARACTERS IN SEARCH OF AN AUTHOR by Luigi Pirandello
- 334. A THOUSAND CLOWNS by Herb Gardner
- 335. PAINT YOUR WAGON by Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Loewe
- 336. THE HAPPY HAVEN by John Arden

Director--John M. Bitterman

Forty-Ninth Season, 1967-68

- 337. THE ODD COUPLE by Neil Simon
- 338. GIGI by Anita Loos from the novel by Colette
- 339. BAREFOOT IN THE PARK by Neil Simon
- 340. HOW TO SUCCEED IN BUSINESS WITHOUT REALLY TRYING by Abe Burrows, Jack Weinstock, Willie Gilbert, and Frank Loesser based on a novel by Shepherd Mead
- 341. TAKE HER, SHE'S MINE by Phoebe and Henry Ephron

Fiftieth Season, 1968-69

- 342. THE MARRIAGE-GO-ROUND by Leslie Stevens
- 343. HOGAN'S GOAT by William Alfred
- 344. BOEING-BOEING by Marc Camoletti in an English adaptation by Beverly Cross
- 345. OLIVER! by Lionel Bart
- 346. PICNIC by William Inge

Director--Anita Grannis

Fifty-First Season, 1969-70

- 347. DON'T DRINK THE WATER by Woody Allen
- 348. THE LADY'S NOT FOR BURNING by Christopher Fry
- 349. FUNNY GIRL by Isobel Lennart, Bob Merrill, and Jule Styne
- 350. THE ROYAL HUNT OF THE SUN by Peter Shaffer
- 351. CACTUS FLOWER by Abe Burrows based on a play by Pierre Barillet and Jean-Pierre Gredy

Fifty-Second Season, 1970-71

- 352. UNDER THE YUM-YUM TREE by Lawrence Roman
- 353. WAIT UNTIL DARK by Frederick Knott
- 354. THE THREEPENNY OPERA by Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill based on John Gay's THE BEGGAR'S OPERA
- 355. CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF by Tennessee Williams
- 356. THE WALTZ OF THE TOREADORS by Jean Anouilh

Fifty-Third Season, 1971-72

- 357. PLAY IT AGAIN, SAM by Woody Allen
- 358. THE TEMPEST by William Shakespeare
- 359. A CRY OF PLAYERS by William Gibson
- 360. FORTY CARATS by Jay Allen based on a play by Pierre Barillet and Jean-Pierre Gredy
- 361. RIVERWIND by John Jennings

Fifty-Fourth Season, 1972-73

- 362. MAME by Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee and Jerry Herman based on the novel by Patrick Dennis and the play AUNTIE MAME by Lawrence and Lee

(Directed by Tom Campbell)

- 363. BUTTERFLIES ARE FREE by Leonard Gershe

364. ABSENCE OF A CELLO by Ira Wallach
365. BEYOND THE HORIZON by Eugene O'Neill
366. LIFE WITH FATHER by Howard Lindsay and Russel Crouse
adapted from Clarence Day's book LIFE WITH FATHER
367. LAST OF THE RED HOT LOVERS by Neil Simon

Director--Joseph T. Ridolfo

Fifty-Fifth Season, 1973-74

368. FIDDLER ON THE ROOF by Joseph Stein, Sheldon Harnick,
and Jerry Bock based on the Sholem Aleichem stories by
Arnold Perl
369. NIGHT WATCH by Lucille Fletcher
370. THE DIARY OF ANNE FRANK by Frances Goodrich and Albert
Hackett based on ANNE FRANK: THE DIARY OF A YOUNG GIRL
371. ANY WEDNESDAY by Muriel Resnik
372. THE LARK by Jean Anouilh in an adaptation by Lillian
Hellman
373. I DO! I DO! by Tom Jones and Harvey Schmidt based on
THE FOURPOSTER by Jan de Hartog

CHILDREN'S PLAYS

1933-34 Through 1973-74

Children's plays prior to 1933-34 were staged by the regular directors and are included in the roster of plays for those directors. The directors represented below are:

Jane (Shaffer) Holman	Elizabeth (Belser) Fuller
Fay Ball (Alexander) King	Mary Lou Kramer
Daniel Reed (Second Term)	Richard Harrison
Ann (Barnett) Morris	John Bitterman
Mabel (Kalmakoff) Payne	Tom Campbell
Delbert Mann	Joseph T. Ridolfo

1933-34 Holman

THE BIRDS' CHRISTMAS CAROL by Kate Douglas Wiggin

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD dramatized by Lura Forrest and Jane Holman

THE CALL OF THE EAGLE
THE QUEST OF THE EVIL ONE

THE LITTLE PRINCESS by Frances Hodgson Burnett

1934-35 Holman

WHY THE CHIMES RANG dramatized by Elizabeth McFadden

RIP VAN WINKLE adapted by Herman Ould

CINDERELLA dramatized by Belford Forrest

PATSY by Fannie Barnett Linsky

HANSEL AND GRETEL dramatized by Lura Forrest

1935-36 King

RACKETTY PACKETTY HOUSE by Frances Hodgson Burnett

HANS BRINKER OR THE SILVER SKATES dramatized by Eleanor Ball

THE WIZARD OF OZ dramatized by Frederick Ames

1936-37 King

MR. DOOLEY, JR. by Rose Franken and Jane Lewin

HEIDI dramatized by Eleanor Ball

THE DRAGON by Lady Gregory

1937-38 Reed

A CHRISTMAS CAROL adapted by Daniel A. Reed

1938-39 Morris

MRS., WIGGS OF THE CABBAGE PATCH by Alice Hegen Rice

THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES by Charlotte Chorpenning

1939-40 Payne

THE SECRET GARDEN dramatized by Clare Tree Major from the
story of Frances Hodgson Burnett

ALICE IN WONDERLAND adapted by Mabel (Kalmakoff) Payne

1940-41 Payne

TOM SAWYER adapted by Sara Spenser

THE LITTLE PRINCESS by Frances Hodgson Burnett

1941-42 Through 1946-47 -- No plays done1947-48 Belser and Mann

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY by Charlotte Chorpenning

1948-49 None1949-50 Kramer

THE MAGIC RING by Madge Miller from Andersen's THE PRINCESS
AND THE SWINEHERD

1950-51 Kramer

JACK AND THE BEANSTALK by Charlotte Chorpenning

THE LITTLE PRINCESS by Frances Hodgson Burnett

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD OF SOUTH CAROLINA by Marion Baker and
Emmett Robinson

1951-52 Kramer

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST by Emmett Robinson

A CHRISTMAS CAROL adapted by Martha B. King

TREASURE ISLAND by Ruth P. Kimball from R. L. Stevenson's story

1952-53 Kramer

CINDERELLA by Charlotte Chorpenning

THE PIED PIPER by Madge Miller from Robert Browning's poem

ALI BABA AND THE FORTY THIEVES adapted by Lillian and Robert Masters

1953-54 Kramer

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY by Charlotte Chorpenning

HEIDI adapted by Lucille Miller from Johanna Spyri

ROBIN HOOD adapted by James Norris

1954-55 Kramer

SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN DWARFS adapted by Jessie Braham White

LAND OF THE DRAGON by Madge Miller

*THE STRANGE CASE OF MOTHER GOOSE by Pamela and Edward Borgers

1955-56 Kramer

MANY MOONS by James Thurber

A CHRISTMAS CAROL adapted by Martha B. King

SIMON BIG EARS by Aurand Harris

1956-57 Kramer

KING MIDAS AND THE GOLDEN TOUCH by Charlotte Chorpenning

HANSEL AND GRETEL by Lillian and Robert Masters

1957-58 Kramer

THE PUPPET PRINCE adapted by Allen Cullen

THE WIZARD OF OZ adapted by Mary Lou Kramer and Jim E. Quick

1958-59 Kramer

CINDERELLA by Charlotte Chorpenning

THE RED SHOES by Robin Short based on Andersen's story

1959-60 Kramer

STIFFSTEP OF STUMPINGHAME (PRINCE FAIRYFOOT) by Geraldine
Brain Siks

THE WONDERFUL TANG by Beaumont Bruestle

1960-61 Kramer

THE MAGIC RING by Madge Miller

ALADDIN AND THE WONDERFUL LAMP adapted by James Morris

1961-62 Kramer

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY by Charlotte Chorpenning

JACK AND THE BEANSTALK by Charlotte Chorpenning

1962-63 Kramer

RIP VAN WINKLE adapted by Grace Carcus Ruthenburg

THE BRAVE LITTLE TAILOR by Aurand Harris

1963-64 Kramer

THE SNOW QUEEN AND THE GOBLIN dramatized by Martha Bennett King

OLIVER TWIST adapted by Muriel Browne from Dickens

1964-65 Kramer

SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN DWARFS adapted by Jessie Braham White

LITTLE WOMEN adapted by Marian De Forest from Alcott's novel

1965-66 Kramer

THE WIZARD OF OZ adapted by Mary Lou Kramer and Jim E. Quick

1966-67 Harrison

TOM SAWYER dramatized by Sara Spencer from Twain

WINNIE THE POOH dramatized by Kristin Sergel from A. A. Milne

1967-68 Bitterman

CINDERELLA by Charlotte Chorpenning

THE MAGIC WISHING WELL by Liz and John Bitterman

1968-69 Bitterman

MARCO POLO by Geraldine Brain Siks

ALADDIN AND THE WONDERFUL LAMP by Elizabeth Brown Dooley

1969-70 Kramer

HANSEL AND GRETEL dramatized by Lillian and Robert Masters

1970-71 None1971-72 Campbell

PETER PAN with music by Mark Charlap, Jule Styne and lyrics
by Carolyn Leigh, Betty Comden and Adolph Green
from James Barrie's play

1972-73 Campbell

PINOCCHIO

THE STRANGE CASE OF MOTHER GOOSE by Pamela and Edward Borgers

1973-74 Ridolfo

THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF THE BROTHERS GRIMM by Louis Q. Barroso
and Fred Palmissano

CINDERELLA by Charlotte Chorpenning

APPENDIX D
PRESIDENTS, DIRECTORS, AND BUSINESS MANAGERS
OF THE COLUMBIA STAGE SOCIETY
(1919-1974)

Presidents

Henry W. Fair	1919-20
John Cozart	1920-21
Anderson Clarkson	1921-23 (Through January, 1923)
Dr. Floyd D. Rodgers	February-June, 1923
Robert Moorman, Sr.	1923-24
A. C. Flora	1924-26
Arthur W. Hamby	1926-28
W. Bedford Moore, Jr.	1928-29
Margaret (Taylor) Martin	1929-31
James H. Hammond	1931-35
Charles H. Moorefield	June-September, 1935
W. Bedford Moore, Jr.	1935-37
A. B. Langley	1937-49
Frank B. Gary, Jr.	1949-59
James H. Dreher	1959-65
Allan C. Mustard	1965-67
H. Simmons Tate, Jr.	1967-70
Roy V. Lind	1970-73
Thomas C. Langford	1973-

Directors

Daniel A. Reed	1919-27
William Dean	1927-29
Harry Davis & Guest Directors ¹	1929-31
Belford Forrest	1931-36
Daniel A. Reed	1936-38
Carl Glick	1938-40
Frederick H. Coe	1940-44
Francis Marion Durham	1944-46
Robert Dale Martin	1946-47
Delbert Mann	1947-49
Clarence Eugene Crotty	1949-55
Robert S. Telford	1955-58
Louis Wilson Ingram, Jr.	1958-59
Henry DuBarry Knowler	1959-62
Paul Kaufman	1962-66
Richard A. Harrison	1966-67
John M. Bitterman	1967-69
Anita Grannis	1969-73
Joseph T. Ridolfo	1973-

¹The Guest Directors were Belford Forrest, James Daly, and Carl Benton Reid.

Business Managers¹

Beulah Hall Heyward (Mrs. A. C.)	1923-24
Esther Bauer	1924-25
Martha P. Dwight	1925-28
Catherine M. Crawford (Mrs. Jack)	1928-29
None ²	1929-31
Lura Monier Forrest (Mrs. Belford)	1931-March 1, 1935
Ruth Hall Graham	March 13, 1935- September 13, 1939
Mabel Bradley Payne	1939-41
Alice Coe (Mrs. Fred)	1941-44
Virginia Adams	May, June, 1944
Elizabeth Belser (Mrs. Willis Fuller)	1944-January 1, 1952
Margaret Morrisette (Mrs. N. Welch, Jr.)	January 21, 1952- February 1, 1953
Julian Kennedy (Mrs. Hunter)	February 1, 1953- 1955
Elizabeth Jordan (Mrs. L. Marion)	1955-February, 1961
Mary Ann Rodgers (Mrs. Paul)	February, 1961- 1964
Martha T. Penney (Mrs. James T.)	1964-71
Claire Randall (Mrs. Charles H.)	1971-

¹The Town Theatre did not have a Business Manager during its first four years. The contracts of Business Managers, like those of the Directors, were generally negotiated, in the early years, for the theatre season, September-June. The dates listed represent theatre seasons. Mid-season resignations and appointments are noted by specific dates.

²Primarily because of the Depression, the Theatre could not afford a Business Manager. Margaret (Taylor) Martin, while nominally the President of the Society, also served as Business Manager during the two year period.

APPENDIX E

THE PLAYERS CLUB ANNUAL BALLS

(1930-1971)

<u>Season</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Chairman</u>	<u>Theme</u>
1929-30	1/31/30	Jefferson Hotel	Mrs. Julius Taylor	Costume Cabaret
1930-31	1/30/31	Jefferson Hotel	Mrs. Julius Taylor	Circus Masquerade
1931-32	5/10/32	Columbia Hotel	Mrs. William Farber	Movie Masquerade
1932-33	2/17/33	Columbia Hotel	Mrs. Edwin G. Seibels	Mother Goose
1933-34	4/27/34	Township Aud.	Mrs. C. R. W. Morison	Gay Nineties
1934-35	3/1/35	Township Aud.	Mrs. Sewall K. Oliver	Opera Ball
1935-36	12/27/35	Jefferson Hotel	Miss Susan Guignard	Old English Christmas
1936-37	1/8/37	Jefferson Hotel	Mrs. J. Rion McKissick	None--Masked Ball
1937-38	2/4/38	Jefferson Hotel	Mrs. William M. Shand	Ball of the Nations
1938-39	2/3/39	Jefferson Hotel	Mrs. W. Bedford Moore, Jr.	Book and Play Titles
1939-40	11/16/39	Jefferson Hotel	Mrs. William Farber	Go as Your Ancestor
1940-41	11/8/40	Township Aud.	A. C. Heyward, Sr.	Americana
1941-42	(None)			
1942-43	11/13/42	Jefferson Hotel	Mrs. John T. Sloan, Jr.	United Nations

<u>Season</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Chairman</u>	<u>Theme</u>
1943-44	2/11/44	Jefferson Hotel	Mrs. James B. Deerin, Jr.	Actors and Actresses
1944-45	(None)			
1945-46	2/15/46	Jefferson Hotel	Mrs. A. B. Langley	Carnival
1946-47	1/31/47	Jefferson Hotel	Mr. and Mrs. James F. Dreher	Advertising
1947-48	2/6/48	Jefferson Hotel	Mr. & Mrs. Frank Gary	Movie Ball
1948-49	1/28/49	Jefferson Hotel	Mr. & Mrs. Martin Jones	Melody Ball
1949-50	1/20/50	Jefferson Hotel	Mr. & Mrs. Wallace Martin	Suppressed Desires
1950-51	2/2/51	Jefferson Hotel	Mr. & Mrs. Hunter Kennedy	Radio!
1951-52	1/25/52	Jefferson Hotel	Mr. & Mrs. Donald Dial	Famous Pairs
1952-53	1/30/53	Jefferson Hotel	Mr. & Mrs. Allan Mustard	Play Parade
1953-54	1/29/54	Jefferson Hotel	Mr. & Mrs. Townsend Belser	Platter Parade
1954-55	1/28/55	Jefferson Hotel	Mr. & Mrs. A. C. Heyward, Jr.	Famous Quotations
1955-56	1/13/56	Jefferson Hotel	Mr. & Mrs. Roy Lind	Masquerade
1956-57	2/1/57	Jefferson Hotel	Mr. & Mrs. Irvin Belser, Jr.	A Political Ball
1957-58	2/14/58	Jefferson Hotel	Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Nettles	"Whodunit" Ball
1958-59	2/7/59	Jefferson Hotel	Dr. & Mrs. George Curry	Wine, Women, and Song
1959-60	2/5/60	Jefferson Hotel	Mr. & Mrs. Stephen McCrae	Kings and Queens

<u>Season</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Chairman</u>	<u>Theme</u>
1960-61	2/11/61	Jefferson Hotel	Mr. & Mrs. Charles Sanders	Famous Romances
1961-62	1/27/62	Columbia Hotel	Mr. & Mrs. Paul Rodgers	Best Sellers
1962-63	2/9/63	Jefferson Hotel	Mr. & Mrs. Julian Hennig, Jr.	Broadway Hits & Misses
1963-64	1/25/64	Jefferson Hotel	Mr. & Mrs. Broadus Thompson	Say It With Slogans
1964-65	2/20/65	Jefferson Hotel	Dr. & Mrs. Raymond A. Moore	What Ever Happened to . . .
1965-66	1/29/66	Jefferson Hotel	Mr. & Mrs. Melvin J. Glass	Artists and Models
1966-67	1/21/67	Wade Hampton Hotel	Mr. & Mrs. Robert McHugh	Games People Play
1967-68	1/19/68	State Fair-ground	Dr. & Mrs. Joseph Dillard	Comedy and Tragedy
1968-69	2/14/69	National Guard Armory	Mr. & Mrs. Robert Register	Once Upon a Time
1969-70	4/11/70	Wade Hampton Hotel	Dr. & Mrs. Daniel W. Hollis	Remembrances of Phrases Past
1970-71	2/27/71	Sheraton Columbia Inn	Mr. & Mrs. Welch Morrisette, Jr.	The Generation Gap

APPENDIX F

PRESIDENTS OF THE PLAYERS CLUB

(1929-30 Through 1970-71*)

1929-30	Alex Martin
1930-31	Arthur Hamby
1931-32	Arthur Hamby
	Captain Douglas Blizzard
1932-33	Joseph Morgan Stokes
1933-34	Dr. James T. Penney
1934-35	Dr. James T. Penney
1935-36	René Stephan
1936-37	René Stephan
1937-38	Dr. E. Tucker Bonn
1938-39	Dr. E. Tucker Bonn
1939-40	R. A. Conard
1940-41	Mrs. Margaret (Taylor) Martin
1941-42	Martin Jones
1942-43	Mrs. J. P. Crouse
1943-44	Mrs. W. Bedford Moore
1944-45	Mrs. Robert White
1945-46	Allen Whitehead
	H. Pierce North
1946-47	J. Adger Brown
1947-48	Dr. F. Porter Caughman, Jr.
1948-49	Mrs. Marion Jordan
1949-50	Richard Breeland
1950-51	Roy V. Lind
1951-52	Betty Crews
1952-53	Mrs. Townsend Belser
1953-54	Frank Harris
1954-55	Mrs. J. Scott Brown
1955-56	Mrs. J. Scott Brown
1956-57	Paul Rodgers
1957-58	Paul Rodgers
1958-59	Grenville Seibels
1959-60	Dr. George Curry
1960-61	Dr. George Curry
1961-62	Jack Masters
1962-63	Jack Masters
1963-64	Dr. George C. Rogers, Jr.
1964-65	Dr. George C. Rogers, Jr.
1965-66	Dr. George C. Rogers, Jr.
1966-67	Alfred R. McNeely
1967-68	Cynthia Byrd Gilliam
1968-69	Dr. Raymond C. Elam
1969-70	Mrs. Bernard Manning
1970-71	Mrs. Bernard Manning

*Became inactive after this season.

APPENDIX G

THE LUCY HAMPTON BOSTICK LECTURE SERIES

The lecture series began in 1965 after the annual nationwide Playwriting Contest was discontinued the preceding season. The State-Record Company, which had sponsored the contest, likewise underwrote the principal costs for the lecture series by its annual gift of \$1,250 to the Society.

In 1970, the series was named in honor of Mrs. Bostick who had served as secretary of the Society for thirty-seven years (1931-32 until her untimely death on July 18, 1968 as the result of an automobile accident several days earlier.)

Although the lecture series was designed primarily as a gift to season subscribers, the Society, in order to secure speakers of note, incurred sufficient costs beyond the cash grant that the financial burden ultimately brought about the demise of the series. The State-Record Company has continued the annual grant, however, and the money has been used in such Theatre projects as the refurbishing and dedication of the Bostick-Graham lounge upstairs at the Theatre.

The speakers on the lecture series were:

February 15, 1965	Edgar Bergen
February 21, 1966	Tom Ewell
June 16, 1967	Ann Landers
January 20, 1968	Margaret Webster
March 23, 1969	Sir Tyrone Guthrie
March 8, 1970	Delbert Mann

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