

Reid Gilbert / A PRODUCTION JOURNAL

Leonard Angel, Pamela Hawthorn

Hawthorn has commissioned a scenario for collaboration with a mime. Angel suggests a scenario involving collaboration with a choreographer. Hawthorn suggests the scenario become more of a theatre piece, less a dance piece. Seeking a second opinion, Angel consults Kathryn Shaw who agrees with Hawthorn, suggesting that the scenario is "still not written as something written for mime."

Hawthorn then determines that it is up to Angel to:

1. rewrite to make a full dance concept
2. rework to make a more scripted piece with literary emphasis, or
3. "drawer it."

Angel decides a third opinion is needed; he meets with Jane Heyman who agrees with the first and second opinion, suggesting this scenario will not work as a theatre piece.

October 19, 1984, cancelled; instead, Angel and Jane Heyman meet privately.

Heyman suggests that if she were to become involved in the project the scenario would either have to be completely reworked or they might try something completely different.

Heyman is interested in making a statement of ethnic impact in the theatre; the concepts with which Angel is working suggest a vehicle for her to make a comment on racism.

November 2, 1984

Hawthorn, Heyman, Angel

The three meet at Grandview Elementary School where Heyman is directing a play on ethnic relations. The meeting moves to the Shanghai Restaurant for bean curd, spinach, rice, prawn soup, tea and some decisions.

Heyman: Am I still working on this?

Hawthorn: It's still up for grabs.

Heyman joins the project as director.

Hawthorn raises money problems; a grant for 1985 will be necessary for rehearsal time salaries and production costs.

Angel discusses "tricking the audience" with racial and cultural elements to create scenes for the audience, to find the connection between dance material and racial material. He finds this idea hard to explain, but notes his mind is "ticking," "taking a journey to link racial with cultural as separate elements by a different body."

Hawthorn: Like taking a black soul player and making him into a rock musician?

Angel: Perhaps one role played by more than one actor.

Hawthorn: But how much farther can you go?

Heyman suggests her experience with her current production may give them some ideas. She hopes they can have "character and dance flow into and through each other."

Hawthorn sums up the discussion by noting that they are back to the concept stage again. She wants a script; she wants to see how the collaboration is going to work; she wants a team:

Hawthorn: We're a one man operation, again. A choreographer has to come in fairly soon.

Two choreographers will be consulted before Gisa Cole joins the project in January, 1985. The central problem of defining the concept and, therefore, determining the mix of dance and text continues until the workshops begin in March.

Hawthorn indicates the play will have a one-act format, 1¼ hour maximum.

The final reduction of playing time to less than forty minutes seriously hampers the development of character and reduces the thematic effectiveness of the switching of roles.

Angel suggests 7 actor/dancers or actors “skilled in movement.” The problem of finding such people, especially with the added restraint of finding a cast with an ethnic mix, is raised.

Hawthorn: There are some good, black Vancouver actors.

Heyman: More dancers than actors.

The final cast does achieve a mix of dance and acting experience and an ethnic mix, although these requirements force other compromises; six actors are finally chosen.

There is agreement that a musical and sound design is needed; discussion centres around a composer’s joining the team. A choreographer is urgently needed.

Angel: I’ll go back to paper and pen.

Hawthorn: I’ll do the choreographer.

Heyman: I’ll just sit and relax.

The decision is taken that the play will definitely have a cultural plot.

Angel predicts a script in December. The first script appears for auditions on February 12, 1985; the first draft of a full script appears on March 12.

November 16, 1984 Hawthorn, Angel, Heyman, dance consultants

Angel offers a think piece for a potential choreographer to consider:

personal journey

what about a theatre piece for race? (For ~~x~~ race, not about race,
doing something about the wonderful variations in the
people environment we live in.)

Thinking about it: mirror: what am I? company
what is my race? (everyone appears
as though suspended
in mirror space)

first glimpse of first child: his eyes unlike mine
his skin color unlike mine
his eyes like his mothers
his skin color like his mothers

memories: childhood: "the Jewish word for sun is shemesh
What's the Christian word for sun?"

memories: being liberated from a psychological burden (which
language to sepeak, Eng or Fr on moving to Van)
without ~~x~~ having known I felt the burden, a~~w~~erting
me~~x~~ to the sense of having a burden without knowing
you've had it. (knocking your head against a wall
without knowing that's what you're doing)

workshops with group.

vignettes--"Excuse me are you CHinese?"

groupings--find the real group.
Different people working at cross-grouping
purposes.

The idea of race: two theorists 'fighting' over whether the
groupings are arbitrary.

The image of the ainu.

Identity passports.
An old project: watch transmission of traits parents children.
Photo-essay.

In theatre this = DANCE! Groupings.

Then: sounds---explore phonetic groupings, ranges funneling into
language patterns.

Cultural symbols.

The whole process--As an autobiographical, (community) expression
--of the community
= NEW OPERA!

The choreographers feel it is difficult to say, "I'm going to do a dance without imposing a plot." They find it difficult to create a dance to a plot; one suggests that dance is a series of wonderful steps, not a story. Angel wants to create a pattern, not just a story.

Heyman: ... but with words, as well.

Hawthorn: what we have here is not a theatre production; it is a dance production.

The question is raised as to whether a collaboration with dance would become more accessible to the audience than a straight theatre production.

Hawthorn: Movement carries more expression...

Heyman: I didn't say the outline wasn't a theatre production... I did think it would be better conceptualized through dance rather than being only a dance or only a play.

The question is raised as to whether actors really understand a dancer's speed of working or whether they fear such speed leads only to cute stereotypes.

Hawthorn: ... not actors and dancers, but a group of multicultural people... artistic, but a more socially relevant statement.

The discussion continues and broadens into a debate over the use of amateur actors. The dancers present are concerned that "it's too ambitious to have real ideas and work with amateurs." Heyman responds that the reverse—professional dancers who are amateur actors—presents similar problems, but in her recent production, although it was "a lot of work," such a cast succeeded.

Angel notes that he has been to the dance studio to observe; now he feels "we're exploring with an aim." He describes recent developments in his ideas: experiments with vignettes, little scenes with contemporary multicultural settings, a movement away from racial concerns to cultural ones. He is thinking about mixed marriages.

The eventual script uses a pending marriage as a motif; the idea is introduced by Angel to the early workshops and grows out of the experience of the cast. The fact that the marriage is a mixed one, however, is understated to the point of being lost.

December 6, 1984

Heyman, Angel, dance consultants

The discussion continues of how to combine text and dance. Angel introduces the project as “an opera of sorts, exploring the physiological and sociological, . . . naked for the simplicity of self. The play is *for* race, not *about* race because there should not be a message.” A dancer present remarks that “the complexity of all this makes me feel lost.”

Heyman: I feel comfortable with the chaos, but we’ve got to get moving.

The dancers don’t see dance; they see mime-collage, not vignettes. There is natural movement implied, but it must be narrowed down. A choreographer must join the team immediately.

Heyman: Leonard and I didn’t want to do the narrowing down since this is a collaboration.

The final team is assembled: Angel, Heyman and Gisa Cole. More than five months into the project, the principals who will create Six of One begin “the first true steps of an artistic collaboration” (in Angel’s words). Before the concept is translated into words and actions, however, many more changes and tangential ideas will be explored.

January 31, 1985

Angel, Heyman, Cole [*the principals*]

Production details are discussed and schedules set.

With a Manpower grant [*salaries for 10 people for 9 weeks*] in place, a decision is taken to employ:

1. Heyman as director
2. Wendy Gorling as designer
3. 8 performers, including Cole as choreographer, a composer, and six actor/dancers.

The decision is taken to emphasize costumes over extravagant sets. Major concern is voiced over schedules and the terms of the grant.

The time frame of the play is discussed; questions are raised as to whether the play should be timed as part of a total Festival evening or for audience reaction.

Heyman is concerned over the lack of script on paper: "I'll be out of a job if you don't get something down on paper."

Angel brainstorms about images: masks, layers. He notes that Wendy Gorling has mask-making experience and might have a dual role.

In the end, costumes are also minimal.

*A first idea for a set and situation is proposed by
Angel for discussion: The Lab Scene.*

THE LAB SCENE

~bodies hang around the set; they will
be used for the experiment

~a scientist will hire an applicant
~the applicant will guide the audience
through the experiment

~the applicant is vulnerable; fears becoming
the object of an experiment

~the act of peeling will reveal layers of
reaction to the experiment, to racial
preconceptions: parts of the bodies will
be fitted to other parts from differing
racial types

Cole: I love the idea of hanging [*raising her arm in a puppet-like posture*].
I like the image of the monkey.

However, she also sees problems:

Cole: Is the laboratory as a scene conducive to flowing dance?

Heyman has trouble responding to the idea.

The Lab Scene is further discussed.

Cole describes an image of bodies “hanging off the stage.” Angel wants to “address the body head on.” He adds that they need a story because the Festival wants it that way: he reports that Hawthorn wants more of a play, rather than just images.

A split in conception has developed. Angel and Cole want pure dance and images, while Hawthorn and Heyman want plot and characterization. At this meeting, Angel and Cole decide they can deal with the necessity of providing plot and developed characters. In fact, no clear characters are drawn until the rehearsal workshops are underway and no plot is finalized until numerous drafts are rejected and modified.

Cole and Angel continue to explore the Lab Scene. The degree of life in the bodies is discussed. Cole introduces the idea of flat, one-dimensional characters, using a technique of cardboard cut-outs like those in carnival photographs. They talk of neutral masking and the stripping off of size, shape, colour to peel characters down to a “sameness” that “keeps changing.”

Angel introduces a “workshop leader” who cannot become a puppet, must be the “experimenter.”

Angel: I’m looking for a narrator’s myth, a Pandora’s Box—that kind of thing.

Cole: I still want to see the puppets hanging.

The idea is mooted of an I.Q. test, of the “leader” telling the “innocent” [*the applicant*] what he is doing, washing the brain of preconceptions and cleansing.

A danger to the “innocent” is introduced.

Angel: How individual are his/her perceptions?

Cole: Are we testing him/her to find out if the “innocent” is bigoted?

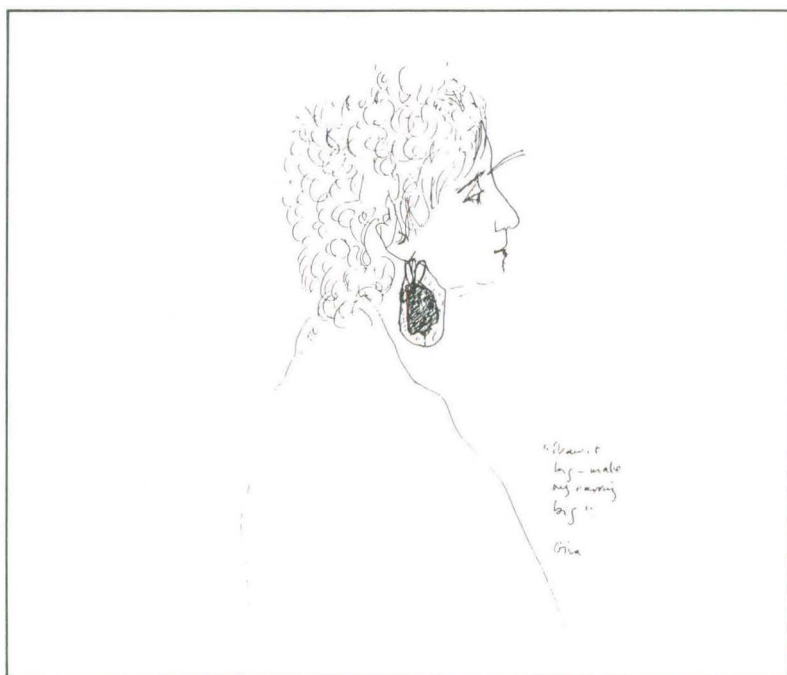
The ideas become fanciful. Cole notes that Heyman wants to break through racial prejudice in local theatre, that she wants to take the whole project very seriously, while some of these ideas seem too "light."

None of these ideas appears in the final script, although the Lab idea is retained through the audition period and the first scripted scene is based on it. The idea is dropped February 28th.

February 12, 1985

Heyman and Cole

First day of auditions. Angel has prepared a three page scene centred around the Lab Scene idea as an audition piece. Cole has prepared movement to complement it.



Cole, who is looking for the ability to integrate movement with voice, explains the Lab Scene concept, indicating how the characters are endowed. Heyman discusses with each group the “oblique task” at hand, and the multi-racial context of the scene.

Cole begins to run through a choreography.

The dancers are asked to see themselves as hooked to a wall, to come off the wall and to go into a melting movement. She wants the dancers to explore, using sounds, using all parts of the room, not to rush the scene.

Off THE Wall :Scenario

1. Everybody gets off the wall.
2. Discovery of a body switching.
3. Living with switched bodies.
4. Discovery of how to unswitch bodies (eg: Pairs cross on wall)
5. Everyone unswitches.
6. Searching for mates, matches, partners.
7. Triangulation problems; acceptances ; emergence of culture.
8. A couple; a pregnancy; a birth?: A family.
9. Family living.
10. Confronting the wall. (coda, recap, inverse suction of the wall)

Then Heyman introduces the script. Actors are divided into groups of two or three to read the scene; all have had the script earlier in the day to prepare. Heyman briefly characterizes each part:

A shy nervous student enters a reception area in a university basement.

She looks around nervously. No one's there.
She consults an appointment card.

Student Dr. Aithh? Dr. Aitch?

(She sits down, looks about.)

(Dr. Aitch enters: He is officious, tries to be pleasant and accommodating at all times.)

Studnet Excuse me? I'm looking for Dr. Aithch?

Dr. Aitch I'll just be a minute. I'm looking for the bloody file that I--It's a green file, you havnt seen a green --might have put it on one of the shelves. Most of the files are manila. This one is agreeen. You haven't noticed it have you?

Student No. I just got here.

* * *

Dr Tell you what. Why don't we start from the beginnning . Let's just pretend we're all organized, we know what we're doing. We'll just start from the beginning.

Studnet Okay by me.

Dr. Im Dr. Aitch. What can I do for you?

Dtudnet Do you want me to answer?

Dr. That is why I asked.

Studnet Oh! Sorry...I came about the experiments. It says here (classified ad) that you'll pay for people to volunteer as subjects?

Dr. Right.

Dr. So....you're interested in volunteering?

Studnet Well, maybe. If you could tell me what I'd have to do and ~~how~~ how much money. You see, I had some money withdrawn from me at the last minute. I mean, government money. It got cancelled cause of the cutbacks? But I've already signed up for the courses I need, and I need them. So that's what got me interested in the ad?

Dr. We pay a hundred dollars. Takes about a half hour.

Studnet That's all? Just a half hour?

* * *

Dr. So would you like to do it?

Studnet Sure. I'm game.

Dr. Okay.

Student When would I ...like...get paid? Now or after?

Dr. After. You'd only get paid after.

Studnet Oh.

Dr. Still game?

Studnet Yeah, I guess ee.

Dr. Okay. Now we face the first hurdle.

Studnet What's hthat?

Dr. I have to find the green file. It was supposed to be yours.

Studnet Oh.

After a read-through, the roles are switched for a second reading. Then a status game is played with the actors and those with a prepared monologue are invited to perform it.

From this call, three actors are chosen for the final cast. Auditions in the same format continue the following week.

February 14, 1985, 12:30 p.m., lunch at Isadora's The principals

Heyman reports to Angel on the auditions. She notes that there were two men in the audition, one of whom was interesting to her. The team discusses whether an all woman cast—however interesting that might be—would destroy the thesis of the play.

The thesis in question centres around a cast equally divided between men and women. In the end, the final cast is all women. This thesis has, however, also changed.

Discussion continues about the Lab Scene concept. Angel is worried about having to confine the “experiment” to a literal setting. Cole moves the discussion to a circus setting, to “heads and hands” in an undefined space.

Heyman: I’m having qualms with the Lab because we ourselves are experimenting by having a mix of actors. It makes more sense to me to have more of a scene, plot, storyline—more mundane. Like a family scene, except all different colours.

Heyman reintroduces the central concept of an ethnic statement.

Heyman points out that by hiring ethnic actors, or those from other minority groups—actors who are often turned down, become discouraged and no longer seek parts—the project itself becomes the point: the final play will be a metaphor for this process. When six actors of various ethnic backgrounds enter the stage, the audience will already have seen the thesis of the play.

An entirely new concept develops, replacing the Lab Scene idea. Now, the team contemplates a typical Vancouver family living in False Creek. But after lengthy discussion, they realize that the lack of definition in the idea overwhelms it; the question of race and the problem of accommodating dance into any naturalistic scenario prevent the family situation from taking form.

- Angel: I'm not married to any particular way of working, as long as we accomplish what we sat down to lunch about.
Heyman: Whether dealing with an image or task or script, it must be very vital. It must add up to something.
Cole: I could do it abstractly.
Heyman: I don't want to lose that.
Cole: Let's let that happen, but have a time frame. If it isn't happening by "x," we go to a more conventional framework.

February 14, 1985, 2:30 p.m.,
New Play Centre

The principals, Hawthorn,
Mark Cole [of NPC],
and the teams from the other
"Mixed Media Marriages" plays.

At a Production Meeting, the various collaborations present their plans and design needs. The du Maurier Festival public relations staff and New Play Centre staff attempt to co-ordinate the various projects.

Dates and times of performances are chosen.

Because Six of One is still so undefined, it is impossible to determine design requirements at this time. It is during rehearsal workshops that Ken MacDonald joins the team as set designer and only as the final script shapes itself that the ideas take physical form.

Six actors are chosen from twenty-two call-backs:

Lesley Ewen
Wendy Gorling [doubling as designer]
Marianne Jones
Yamanouchi, etsuko
Vicki G. Dhaliwal
Daina Balodis

Angel outlines a "Dance Studio" idea to Cole who is unhappy with this development, especially as she feels she might have made different audition choices had she realized she was seeking dancers rather than people who could move. She also dislikes the studio because it requires a dancer teacher and, as choreographer, she would be creating a part that was, in fact, her own life.

Cole: I don't think I could bear it.

Cole posits a solution: if the dancers are kept in a "warm-up environment," the teacher can be absent and the level of dance can be reduced.

The final concept develops.

Angel: The dance never has to happen.

Cole: I like that better. It's a real challenge. Have we time to do it? . . .
What of the multi-cultural group level?

Angel: . . . political interaction, reflecting the fact that this is our society.

Cole: That grouping would probably never happen in a dance company.
How fascinating to ignore this, to model the truth of an ideal society.

With variations, this group of student dancers without a teacher becomes the final scenario. The direct racial comment is dropped and the subtle statement which the company itself makes, and which Heyman articulated on February 14, emerges as the thematic subtext of the play.

Angel and Cole discuss how to work with the actors at the first rehearsals.

The workshop technique which will be used to shape the play is set. Improvisation and rewriting will explore relationships among the women in the company and lead to plot characterization.

Angel: Give the actors scenes to play. Leave things unresolved and keep building toward things that need to happen.

March 1, 1985,

Waterfront Theatre Rehearsal Hall

The principals, cast

The cast is introduced to concepts from which Angel plans to fashion the play:

1. Six people are found in a dance studio with the teacher absent.
2. They explore issues of being imprisoned in a body, of being a puppet.

The group discusses what motivates dancers to join a class; reasons which Cole and Angel have listed are brought to the group. Dancers, they suggest, come:

1. as a hobby,
2. for career training,
3. as part of a therapy programme,
4. because they have danced since childhood,
5. looking for a husband,
6. looking for a community; wanting a home,
7. because they are people who have simply discovered they love to dance.

Cole enumerates for the group some personal and working attitudes which dancers often share. While many can be questing, ego-building, narcissistic, bullheaded and competitive, others seek to be disciplined and, indeed, manipulated like puppets.

All of these traits appear in the character endowments which the group will struggle to develop over the next month.



The first workshop.

The group goes through a dance warm-up. Cole takes over the workshop, arranging the cast in a pattern:

*

Daina Balodis

*

Marianne Jones

*

Wendy Gorling

*

Yamanouchi, etsuko

*

Lesley Ewen

*

Vicki G. Dhaliwal

The dancers mime holding masks on sticks before their faces. Kneeling, they move together, trying to unify the separate images, to become one entity. Various forms evolve through the experimental movements.

This first movement exercise becomes the opening dance fragment in production. Holding grey cardboard squares in front of their faces, the dancers will lose their identity and become a single community image.

Heyman runs over schedules and the group plays a "Name Game." Angel outlines a preliminary scenario involving the characters Cheryl and Hannah. The group will begin to work from this premise.

The first session has been primarily one of introduction and a chance for the group to learn about each other as people and as artists. The challenge which these actors will face in learning to dance has also become clear.

March 7, 1985, Rehearsal Hall

The principals, cast

The session begins with dance instruction. Cole works on movement, employing the metaphor of a flower opening. Daina is cast as the teacher, leading the group through the "flower petal" choreography [*an early version of a dance concept*]. The group discusses how the leader would direct her dancers: "she doesn't always have to give out motivation. We're dancers. We're supposed to do what we're told."

As Cole reworks her choreography, changing her instructions, frustration develops among the neophyte dancers. There is the first real danger, noted by Heyman in her journal, that the group is "acting difficult."

Daina: But it's not the choreography.
Wendy: I think it's better. I think it works.
Daina: But it's not the choreography.
Wendy: But it frees them!

March 8, 1985, Rehearsal Hall

The principals, cast

Angel's first scene is read through after warm-up "theatre games." Heyman decides to reread the scene with different castings and, after the lunch break, to try a third casting.

Hannah
Cheryl
Pam
Dagmar
Valerie
Rose

I
Lesley
etsuko
Daina
Marianne
Wendy
Vicki

II
Wendy
Marianne
Lesley
Vicki
Daina
etsuko

III
Marianne
Lesley
Vicki
Wendy
etsuko
Daina



first read through of 1st
segment.

mark 885

The decision is taken to try further casting switches on the following Tuesday, March 11, 1985.

The team works on characterization as the casting arrays are changed.

Of the myriad possibilities raised for each character, certain traits emerge which eventually find their way into the final characterizations. These include:

- Hannah: assertive, mothering, dramatic, sympathetic, the instigator, one of the characters who wants to be in charge,
Cheryl: thin-skinned, fed-up,
Pam: free-spirited, gossipy, someone who speaks before she thinks, a trickster who “loves the moment,”
Dagmar: self-centred,
Valerie: timid, apologetic, always justifying herself,
Rose: strong-willed.

It is the character of Rose which is most thoroughly developed in terms of action at this point, but this character changes more than any other as the action is scripted. Two entire sub-texts—her use of Punjabi and her toilet habits—are dropped, which radically alters her personality. These two items of characterization continue to be an issue of disagreement between the playwright and the cast.

The cast begins to determine the interrelationships among the characters, to learn who likes whom and how the hidden relationships affect the larger group.

After lunch, the choreography is further worked.

March 12, 1985,

Rehearsal Hall

The principals, Ken MacDonald, cast

Concerns about language arise from the readings. The cast feels that Rose’s speaking in Punjabi is hard to believe, that it exists for thematic rather than characterizational motives. Daina notes that the “vocabulary of dance is French.” Concern is raised about the swearing in the opening scene and about the action which has Rose audibly using the bathroom.



In the afternoon, Angel and the cast discuss questions which underlie the action and character; the group is attempting to bring verisimilitude to the characters while exploring them as symbols of community.

The central difficulty of melding a statement on race with a believable play about a group of real women continues to vex the cast workshops, as it did the earlier "think sessions." In addition, issues of the artistic personality and definitions of talent add a third level to the abstraction.

Angel is trying to explore the psyche of a dancer while the cast is seeking the reasons why their characters behave as they do in the script. It is clear that the project team, while it is striving to work together, is not moving in one direction.

Angel asks if "anyone has ever quit a company." Five of the team have. A lengthy discussion ensues as to why. Reasons include a lack of clear direction within the company, a need for greater challenge and the guilty feeling that art is a luxury rather than a necessary addition to society.

Picking up this last thought, Ken MacDonald notes that our culture maintains a “strange opposition between work and art.”

Angel: It is impossible within the human condition to strip away creativity—artistry—rhythm—pulse. It’s a part of our biological natures.

The basis for producing art is our language and processes of imagery.

MacDonald: Art is what separates people from existing to living.

The early notion of a racially mixed marriage as metaphor is brought to the cast. The reaction of each member is discussed in an attempt to define the terms and to determine typical emotional responses. As the discussion continues, tangential issues of marriages between various groups move the discussion away—once again—from the racial statement.

Lesley: Class difference and educational background are at least as strong as cultural difference.

March 13, 1985, Rehearsal Hall	Heyman, Cole, cast
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March 14, 1985, Rehearsal Hall	Heyman, Cole, cast
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March 15, 1985, Rehearsal Hall	The principals, cast
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The dance routines are rehearsed. Heyman substitutes for Wendy Gorling, who is ill, as new choreography is tested.

New pages of script are presented; the cast reads through the text, offers comments, suggests changes, responds to Angel’s questions.

Pam - see ring earlier (14)

Pam Hey, where'd that ring come from.

Dagmar Oh, this? This is my engagement ring.

Pam Looks expensive.

Hannah ~~You got a ring?~~ He gave you a ring!

Dagmar Uh huh.

Hannah Lets see.

Dagmar

~~We're having a traditional wedding so I~~
~~make him give me a diamond!~~ Mar?

Pam H:

I love it.

Val Its really nice.

~~Cheryl I wish I could be getting married.~~

Pam Everybody see Dagmar's ring?

(SHE SHOWS)

~~(CHERYL GETS UP AND WANDERS OFF)~~

Hannah Cheryl? ..Cheryl?

Cheryl Don't worry about me please.

~~Hannah Cheryl.~~

Pam Cheryl...What are you doing?

HannahCheryl..What ARE you doing.

(THEY FINISH WARM UP)

(DAGMAR GOES TO THE PHONE)

Rose ~~I~~ feels good.

Pam That was a good warm up.

Val ~~Yes~~ Thanks ~~to~~ Hannah.

Hannah You're ~~you~~ welcome.

Pam So,What are we going to do now?

~~Rose (WITH LIESON)...on the floor with their legs and feet...~~

Hannah May I see?

Rose Sure.

Pam If I could only take a bit off ~~of~~ here.

~~Val Looks fine to me.~~

LOOK TAKING
OFF RING!

* LIGHTS. (2)

establish some
kind of function.

END W/UP. ???

(2) HUMOURING
GIVE & TAKE

DON'T
PUSH:
I DON'T
BELIEVE
IT.

Dance work from 10 a.m. until noon.

Angel and Heyman work on the script of the “choreography scene.” They begin to delineate areas of the stage: a social area and a warm-up/work area with a sound system as room divider.

Although the sound system disappears, this is the basic set which MacDonald will dress for the Festival production. Actors entered from outside stage right and met around a “social area” suggested by a coat rack. They moved centre stage to dance. The dressingroom door was back, stage left and Dagmar’s telephone upstage from it. An exercise bar dominated the rear of the stage and visually connected the two sides of the set. The set was a muted grey with white accents, against which the bright colours of the rehearsal togs and leg-warmers stood out beautifully.

Some new choreography is introduced.

Over lunch, the principals make several decisions about the scene:

1. the skill level of the fictional dance troupe will be such that they could be “invited to a three day Art Festival,” but are “not about to go professional.”
2. After the choreographer [*Dorothy*] is found to be asleep, the fictional group will try to “recapture the phone choreography,” [*one of the new dance routines*] but will be unable to do so and collapse “in a heap.”
3. The character Cheryl will know what she wants, which is to push the fictional group to professional status, but will realize that she is not, herself, ready to force this change.

In the afternoon, the team questions Angel about the script. etsuko raises again the problem the cast has with the foreign language speeches. Vicki feels that Rose would be “too aware of her environment” to speak Punjabi. She also raises the serious problem of word equivalency between languages.

This workshop demonstrates well the revision process through which the script is going at this point. For example,

MacDonald thinks the Wayne and Shuster references then in the text are awkward. He also doesn't understand the joke contained in the line, "half the world can't do their laundry,"

which eventually becomes "... I hate to tell you this, but half the world can't manage something as simple as cleaning up after themselves" (in the production script) and has disappeared completely in this published version.

He next finds the "merry-go-round" speech too poetic for the tone of the dialogue and wonders whether a character as young as Pam would use such imagery.

Cheryl	Well I'm sorry. I'm quitting.
Pam	Here we go again.
Cheryl	Pardon me?
Pam	<i>Did you just say you were quitting? Cheryl. That's right.</i> This is the way it always happens. First you mouth off a bit, then you announce you're going to quit. Then we plead with you, Dorothy talks to you privately for about 45 minutes, messages your ego no doubt and then you decide you're going to be with us once again. We're just hopping on the merry go round. (waltz) Yum pa pa, yum pa pa, yum pa pa...

The image is rewritten as:

Cheryl I guess I should call Dorothy now. Sorry.
Pam On the merry go round, off the merry go round,
on the merry go round---....off the merry go round--
(She thinks about something)

It is later revised again to:

Hannah (shrugs pleased) Call Dorothy.
Pam It was just the old merry-go-round, that's
all it was. ...How do you like that.

By the production script, the image itself has disappeared, as the group response to Cheryl's departure and injury changes. Pam's aggressive laughing in the face of Cheryl's "foul mood" has been retained only in an opening scene where their relationship to each other is established. Here, however, the singing is not a "waltz" rhythm suggestive of the carousel but a jive rhythm intended to characterize Pam. The notion that it is Cheryl's mood swings which upset the company has been replaced by a more collective responsibility for success or failure.

Pam Boo boo do dee bo boo po doo--
Hannah Cheryl, don't just behave like that. Tell me what's going on.
Cheryl I'll tell Dorothy. That's enough.
Hannah Come on Cheryl, that's not like you. - *jelly her out of mood*
Cheryl Hannah, you're not everybody's mother, even though you like to think you are.
(Cheryl slams door on Hannah's face) - *TAPE OFF - Packerbell tape out*
Pam Boo boo do dee bo boo po dee?
9 but (Hannah is hurt. She continues to clean up.)

Pam What's up?

Hannah Cheryl's behaving strange.

Pam Strange like what?

Hannah Strange like in a real foul mood.

Pam Um oh. Is she going to be in one of her tough moods or what?

Hannah That's what I'm afraid of.

Pam Beo boo po dood, be boo po doo (to herself). Cheryl (sings), you're not getting
~~yourself up for one of your really tough ones are you?~~ *Is she going to be in one
of her tough tough moooooo -o's?*

Hannah ~~Pam~~-Hey Pam! Cut it out!

~~Pam~~ (sings) Cheryl you're not going to be tough tough tough on everybody, are you?

By this published version, Pam has become sympathetic to Cheryl's nervousness both in the injury scene and in the opening exposition of character. The "merry-go-round" image and the defiant singing have both disappeared, and Pam's singing has become a means for her to bolster her own confidence. Although the singing has become an actual line of dialogue—"I'm going to be in a good mood. I'm going to be in a good mood"—the earlier vocalized sounds have, interestingly enough, been retained and transformed into clock ticking sounds. [see p.78]

This process of comment by the principals and cast, revision and then further consideration takes place over each separate set of actions or dialogue. It makes the final production script a highly collaborative piece, but it slows the writing process considerably.

After a three hour meeting with Cole, Heyman notes in her journal:

my main problems so far:-

1. What is this play about?
2. Can we show culture in a deeper way than Mr. T / bathroom habit etc — also see through attitude, way of dealing — touching etc. — which go deeper than obvious refs.
3. What is the journey for each character?
4. Dugman is especially stereotyped at the moment.

She questions “how the play is changing,” noting in her journal that “all the cultural references are now gone. Instead, [they are]... thinking of changing the casting several times through the piece—just when it appears we are creating a stereotype—we change the actor.”

The central device of the cast switches is set. Heyman moves to outline in her notes the literary and theatrical requisites this plan will demand:

“THIS MEANS... We *must* care about the characters.
—the relationships & pecking order *must* be clear
—through lines *must* be clear.”

In identifying the literary pivots on which the device will depend, Heyman foreshadows the problems which will flaw the production. The group will wrestle for the remainder of the workshop period to endow the characters and find a theatrical means to switch the roles, but the audience at the opening will not easily understand the abstract racial statement or follow the switches.

March 21, 1985,
Rehearsal Hall

The principals, cast, stage manager
for the du Maurier Festival.

The idea of an interracial marriage is discussed again. Idea: Dagmar will be marrying Rose's brother.

The director and cast ask for direction about the theme of the play: "There are a lot of opinions here, but is it about Dagmar's pregnancy, or what?"

Angel: We are building the piece through detail—so all pieces are relevant. It is about "the magic of the lived moment," . . . about the fact that a community is a multiple focused unit.

The character of Rose is discussed; the only ethnicity which Angel appears to be exploring is that of the Indo-Canadian character. The action of having the character exit to the bathroom is discussed again. The group does not feel it is necessary, and the use of Punjabi to excuse herself still seems unnaturalistic to them.

Angel: We have to create a character who likes to speak her mother tongue, or if that doesn't work we'll try something else.

In the production script the use of the Punjabi language and the exit to the washroom have both disappeared; in the published script, reference to a need to visit the washroom has been reintroduced by Angel after the workshop process has concluded.

Heyman: Let's forget the ethnicity and deal with the fact of women.

Through this and many subsequent workshops the discussion continues as the team attempts to define the theme and establish character. The actors are concerned that the racial statement be clear; the director is concerned that the audience understand the play; the choreographer is troubled by the inexperience of some the dancers and cannot find a focus in the text for her dance conceptions; the playwright continues to outline a subtle and abstract statement on many levels which eludes definition.

March 24, 1985, Rehearsal Hall

The principals, cast

March 27, 1985, Rehearsal Hall

The principals, cast

Pam Hawthorn attends a reading. Her eighteen suggestions include:

1. casting as close as possible to racial stereotypes at the outset and then changing the roles; starting with something identifiable so the audience will not become confused,

As the Interview in this edition indicates, this idea was not one on which the team could agree.

2. the need to prepare the audience for the warm-up segment,
3. the elimination of all phone conversations (except perhaps one for comic effect),

The phone messages from the fictional choreographer are dropped, but the phone is used as messenger to inform the audience of the marriage plans. Unfortunately, these calls are too short and audience attention is insufficiently directed for the device to work in production.

4. the need to focus on characters on stage, rather than on missing, offstage characters who don't contribute to the group.

March 28, 1985, Rehearsal Hall

The principals, cast

The morning is spent in observation at Cole's dance studio. Notes are made of the personalities and habit of dancers and of their clothing. The physical aspects of the studio are noted as set suggestions.

Heyman attempts to find in the habits and environments of the real dancers, endowments for her characters which will give them "specifics of behaviour which would reveal audience bias to themselves."

The group works on detailed character descriptions, including costume colours for each personality and appropriate music for each. The “Clown,” the “Taskmaster,” the “Mother” are identified. Hannah’s character is especially outlined as she is emerging as the central force.

The “food sequence” of the script at this point—multicultural food brought to the rehearsal by the dancers—is thought to be too obvious a racial device.

The food is eliminated, although the habit of the group itself of bringing snacks to rehearsals is translated into a bit of business in the production script where Dagmar brings a bunch of grapes to the dance studio and shares them. It is typical of this workshop collaboration that a feature of the real world of these actors is suggested as a textual device and, although highly modified, does, in fact, find its way into the fictional world of the dancers.

Discussion about the characters and actions continues. Heyman’s notes ask:

How old are the women? Is there an age spread or not? Does this affect the hierarchy? At the moment they tend to read like very young women or “girls”. Is this because they are not at the moment dealing with anything real which affects them all? Cheryl’s quitting could be this issue, if it means that the group’s survival really is at stake, and not just because of a performance on Saltspring, but because they discover how important they all are to each other, and the group finds a way of continuing even when their central focus (what brought them all together in the first place) is missing. Further to this, is the feeling at the moment that the women are all in some sense weak, and not in any convincing way strong. We lack a sense of where they’ve come from or what the struggle is.

March 29, 1985, Rehearsal Hall The principals, MacDonald, cast

The central issue at the afternoon workshop is the decision that the play is to be 20 to 25 minutes long, rather than the 45 to 90 originally mooted. The marriage subtext will, therefore, be reduced.

Heyman: ... everything is mushing around in my brain. There's arrival, there's warm-up... maybe if we could just figure out how these sections fit together?

Angel attempts to "clear" earlier versions as he presents a new version of the early scenes. He speaks of using "things I drop in [as I write, without knowing] where they are going, but I know they must be picked up—can't be left." He discusses changes to the script now that they have decided on the "cast switching thing."

The script Angel presents at this workshop contains the final version of the opening scene. Progress toward a working script has accelerated.

Judith Mastai attends the workshop for a read through and offers her opinion, especially on the racial themes.

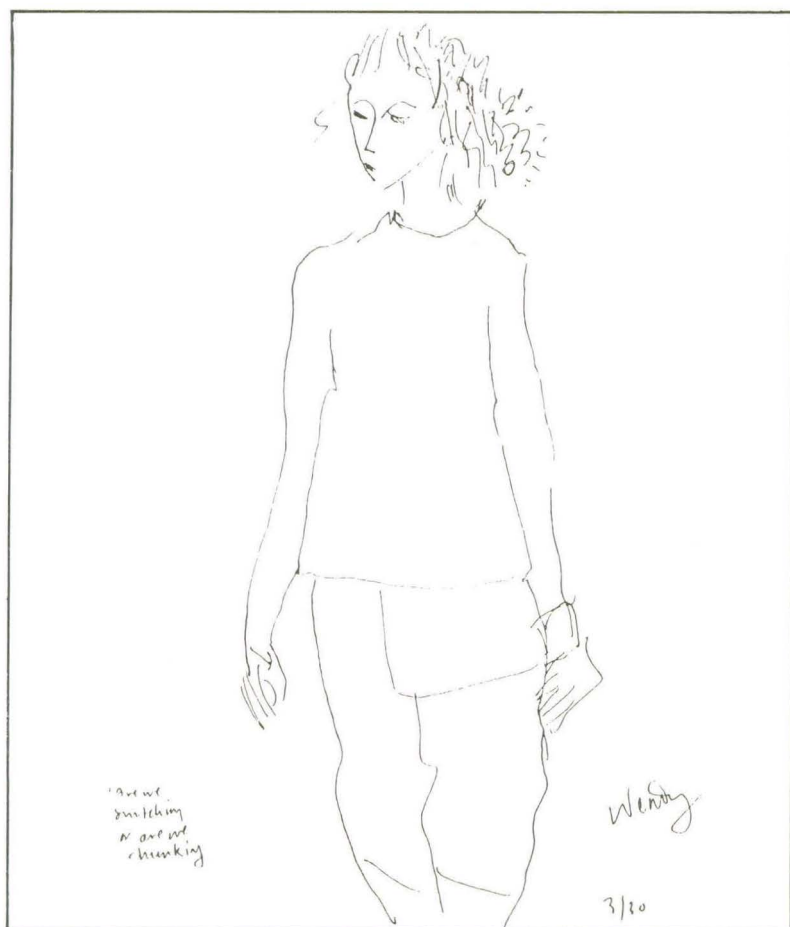
Heyman: [*to Angel*] In writing this have you considered how changing one line from character to character can make us reexamine our racial stereotypes? I've lost that. . . . I think the marriage needs to go back in—it's such a strong point.

The action is divided into Units:

1. The choreographer [Dorothy] will not arrive. Dagmar suggests they might "take advantage of a free evening" to attend a Twyla Tharp programme at the theatre. Hannah disagrees; Dagmar leaves.
2. Rose continues to work and offers to work with Pam. Valerie offers to support Hannah's position, but is rejected.

3. When Pam feels she's mastered the tricky section of the choreography, she offers to go through it with the remaining dancers, using masks to replace the missing members; it doesn't work: they cannot rehearse.
4. The members enjoy the "foot and hands" dance by themselves, without the leader.
5. Pam suggests that Cheryl's position isn't so irresponsible; Hannah accepts this. Pam and Valerie leave as they cannot rehearse with only two people.
6. Rose continues moving, as Hannah wants to lock up.

The cast improvises this scenario, searching for an ending for the play.



March 30, 1985, Rehearsal Hall

The principals, cast

Angel presents the new ending in script form; Heyman notes in her journal, "We're on a track."

Experiments begin with cast switching.

The switching of roles becomes the most arresting aspect of the production although, for the audience not previously familiar with the race relations theme, the switches are not entirely clear. Not enough time is available to establish individual characters before the actors switch and while the exchange of costume pieces announces the simpler switches adequately, the more complex ones are lost. This workshop considers key words ["sensitive," "defensive," "grow up"] as triggers, but these textual signals are not developed.

April 2, 1985,

Karen Jamieson Dance Studio

Heyman, Cole, cast

The first day of rehearsal.

Disaster strikes. A threat of German measles removes one actor, and endangers another who is pregnant. In the words of Heyman's journal, the day is "spent swimming in mud."

Cole works with Lesley on her solo dance.

April 3, 1985,

Karen Jamieson Dance Studio

Cole, Heyman, cast

The rehearsal phase cannot be documented in detail in the space of this issue. The team meets daily and settles into a disciplined routine of rehearsals.

Heyman divides the play into units and organizes the work around these units. She asks her cast to find the "dynamic" of each unit. She encourages improvisation to "find your character's ritual." She encourages the actors "to yell stop if, at any point, you don't know what's going on."

The switches are rehearsed in the pattern now set in the script.

April 9, 1985,
Karen Jamieson Dance Studio

Heyman, Cole, cast

The measles threat seems past: the same cast will continue.

The studio set is taking shape: a coat rack, three chairs and mats have been situated.

The cast works on the rhythm of the piece:

Heyman: Entrances are forever agonizing before you get them right.

Rehearsals continue. Cole becomes worried that the dancing is not ready and that the play itself may not come together.

The cast has trouble with the rationale for some of the switches. Angel has created switches for their racial significance and the cast finds some of them awkward from within their characters. It is agreed that Lesley must end up as Rose in order to end the play with her solo dance. The cast worries that the switches aren't clear:

Wendy: If they [*the audience*] don't get it now, they'll be out in the lobby.

Rehearsals continue to the afternoon of opening night, April 17, 1985. Even so, Heyman remarks at the Dress Rehearsal, "We are under rehearsed."

April 16, 1985, Waterfront Theatre

The principals, cast

Rehearsal on stage with costumes [*which are the cast's own sweatsuits, dance tights, and so on*].

The cast works on the phone conversations, still a problem.

Cole, working on the dance scenes, comments to Hawthorn: "You don't even know about our play. . . . It'll be a surprise to us all."

Heyman and the stage manager work on preparing the play for presentation.

April 17, 1985, afternoon,
Waterfront Theatre

The principals,
cast, and Festival crew

Dress Rehearsal.

There are last minute technical changes: the window is too high; the timing of lights and music is adjusted; there are some sound problems. Minor problems arise: the tensor bandage Cheryl wears after her bike injury cannot be seen; one actor cannot be heard; two lines are missed. As well, however, a more serious problem with the switching still exists.

After a run through, the cast and principals (including Angel who has not been at all rehearsals and has, therefore, new suggestions to make) hold a final production conference. Heyman is concerned that the energy level is too low. Cole fears that a heaviness of body makes the major switch [*of the entire cast*] seem mechanical, that it does not flow out of the music and rhythm of the piece.

Heyman encourages her cast: "You've had a new attack of confidence. You create an aura of lovely charm working together."

Indeed, the collaboration is, in production, a very charming piece. The music, the rather delicate movement and the mixture of attractive faces makes a very "pretty" vision on stage. The subtle set mutes the sharp colours of the dance togs; the opening dance sequences and the final solo dance have a dreamlike quality. The result is that the total piece becomes gentle and rather pleasing. In fact, for the audience on opening night, the continuing ambiguity of character and underdeveloped racial theme are submerged to a large extent under an attractive surface. It is only afterwards, in the lobby (as Wendy worried), that most members of the audience realize they haven't really "gotten it."

April 17, 1985, 9:00 p.m., Waterfront Theatre

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