

THE CAPIANO REVIEW



the act of peeling will reveal layers of reaction
to the experiment,
to racial preconceptions.

Leonard Angel, "The Lab Scene" scenario

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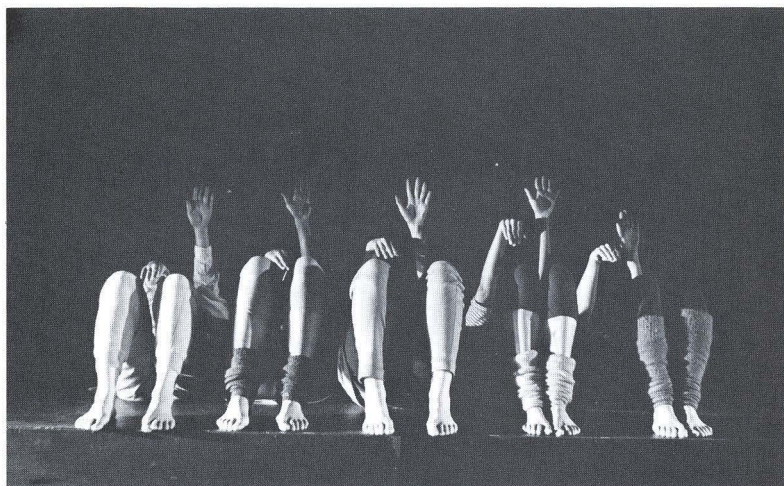
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INTRODUCTION



The process of writing a play requires an interchange of skills and responses, as anyone who has tried to write a script without personal stage experience or in isolation from actors and directors knows, and as is obvious to anyone who reads such a closet drama. It follows that an art form which elicits a collective response from its audience and, in fact, requires such group participation to be truly successful, would also require a collective vision in its making. The New Play Centre of Vancouver grew not only from the desire of members of the local theatre community—and in particular its Managing Director, Pamela Hawthorn—to develop “strength in the undergrowth,”¹ to encourage new writers, but out of this essential nature of the theatre itself as a collaborative art.

When a producer and director approach a play from the established canon, they must recapture in meetings and rehearsals the sense of group enterprise which was involved in its original writing or production. This is perhaps least understood by those outside the theatre when they attend a familiar play which has become solidified in the popular imagination, assuming as they often do that the printed

text has simply been taken out, dusted off and performed. But if the production works, it is because the company has recreated it, building on the tradition, but making a new, group creation. Hence, the 1979 Stratford Festival production of Shakespeare's *King Lear*,² while it followed the well known text, altered the time setting, allowed Peter Ustinov's unusual characterization of Lear, found more humour than is normally allowed, and grew out of a lengthy rehearsal process which has been preserved by Maurice Good in *Every Inch A Lear*.³

It is, perhaps, easier to see the necessity of such interchange in the writing of a new drama. The New Play Centre, understanding this fact of theatrical writing, aims to provide a venue for criticism and a workshop process for new authors who need to see their work come alive and need to share reactions to this projection of their imaginations. The Centre also aims to provide a support network of theatre professionals for new writers—and for established playwrights, like Leonard Angel—who cannot easily in this country find the repertory company atmosphere which naturally breeds collaboration and group writing. That such an atmosphere is beneficial to the development of new plays is attested to by the burst of writing which grew, in the early 1970s, from the genesis of a number of Collectives and Co-op Theatres, some of which have been able to survive. Of these, the New Play Centre has taken a prominent place, having mounted first productions of over one hundred new plays.

For the 1985 du Maurier Festival, Pamela Hawthorn determined to capitalize on (or force) this collaborative reality of theatrical writing by a rather bold plan. Instead of choosing plays from those submitted in manuscript for workshop development, she commissioned three new performance pieces, each involving a collaboration between a playwright and another artist from a related, theatrical medium. *Six of One*, as it was seen in performance at the Festival, resulted from such a collaboration among Angel, Gisa Cole (the choreographer), and Jane Heyman (the director). The playscript-in-progress, as published in this issue, records the text of this production somewhat further revised by cast workshops after the opening. The script no longer contains, however, the markings of this director and choreographer (although the dances are preserved on videotape and are, therefore, available). Here, then, is the text, waiting once again for the collective will of another director, another dancer, another cast to rework it into a new presentation.

The collaboration was not fully successful, as all those involved readily admit. Its purpose, however—and the purpose of this edition—was not only to produce a piece for performance in the Festival, but to begin the collaborative process which may eventually produce a more complete play. The central problem for any process art or, indeed, for any manipulation of text, is the very real problem of closure. This problem exists both in the practical sense of a deadline by which to present the play to an audience and in the semiotic sense of a point where the “infinite series”⁴ suggested by Charles Sanders Peirce finally ceases to signify a previous interpretant, a stopping of what Umberto Eco calls the “unlimited semiosis.”⁵ For practical purposes in this edition we took, as the end point of the journal, the opening performance, and, as the end point of the textual revision, the changes which that first production elicited. As Angel and Hawthorn discuss later in the Interview, such an arbitrary closing falsifies a process which, as the 1979 production of *Lear* (or, even more strikingly, Paul Mazursky’s 1982 filmic reconception of *The Tempest*) points out, may continue for centuries. It can also leave characterizations and actions unresolved and dramatic devices incompletely set, although in this piece these flaws may be forever unresolvable, especially outside the original group, because of the intensely symbiotic relationship which developed between the original team and the eventual text.

The concept of the play itself rose from the coming together of a number of separate interests. As the history in the following Interview suggests, Angel and Heyman were both working independently on related projects having to do with race relations and social education. When Hawthorn suggested they work together, they naturally developed a thesis having to do with multicultural issues; such an investigation of a mixed society complemented in content Hawthorn’s desire to see “Mixed Media Marriages” in form. Once the cast was selected to represent the ethnic mix of contemporary Canadian society, however, the team itself became an embodiment in skills and person of the didactic purpose of the piece. This direct analogy between *who* the members of the team were and *what* they were trying to say made the writing process a very honest recording of a group experience, but hampered the final production of a script which has easy application outside this group. As a result, a community of actor/dancers from various,

visible minorities, working in a workshop situation to make a statement about themselves as dancers and as Canadians of disparate ethnic background, becomes on stage a group of dancers from various, visible minorities trying to come together as a community with shared purpose. In skills, too, the group approximates the fictional company. In fact, for Cole, the suggestion that she choreograph a role for a choreographer character—that she create herself on stage—was so painfully personal that she refused to have the character appear. While these are as direct examples as one could find of writing out of a community experience (as discussed above), they also exemplify a somewhat closed world. It could be argued that the product is a play which was finally accessible only to those involved directly in the process as artist, actor or observer. One purpose of this issue, then, is to allow readers an entrée to this group so that a reading of the text can be enlivened in the imagination by invoking the movements, concerns and backgrounds of those who created it.

A second problem which the company faced throughout the writing was one of focus. Again because of the closeness of each participant to the material, too many possibilities presented themselves for discussion. Was this to be a play about race, or was it to be a play about broader cultural concerns, about women, about dancers, or about community? In the end, it tried to embrace all of these themes to some degree and, in the shortened time allowed it within the Festival framework, failed to develop any one of them adequately. The Journal details the changes in direction the project undertook. It also records the difficulty inherent in this collaboration between word and movement.

The original discussion piece which Angel wrote for Hawthorn and his continuing vision for the piece were highly abstract. Angel's ideas of "peeling" layers of personality to display the falsity of various racial stereotypes, of actors "coming off the wall" to come alive in a multiplicity of ethnic *personae*, excited Cole as possibilities for movement, but presented enormous challenges for dialogue and character interaction. It was difficult for the actors to find naturalistic

motivations for actions which were, at base, abstract extensions of thesis. Inevitably, as the process continued and the production date drew close, a story which could be staged took precedence and the play became more concrete, but more mundane. Central sub-texts like the racially mixed marriage were underplayed until, in the short format of the opening performance, they were entirely submerged. The comment on race became implied in the cast, itself a metaphor, and in the clever device of cast switches. Unfortunately, these switches, which attempted to pass racial stereotypes from character to character—from type to type—and, therefore, to explode them, were developed too late in the process. As a result, the audience understood too little of a character before the personality was passed and could not always see the same characteristics emerge in the new actor. Still, the opening night audience clearly understood the notion of the switches as a breakdown of absolute personality and, on a highly theatrical level, grasped the thesis, if not its original racial implications. The beautiful, final solo dance of the character Rose, reaching out of herself for membership in a larger community is, as Kerry Moore calls it in *The Province* review, “an effective soundless soliloquy,”⁶ but not necessarily one about race. The play as it stands is, as Moore notes, “a playful glimpse of a dance group whose collective identity is at odds with the members’ personalities,” but the symbolic identity of that dance group remains undefined.

Perhaps more than anything else, it is the short length of the play at this stage which denies it final success. There is too little room to develop the women’s personalities as real people or to endow them with stereotypic characteristics as cultural or ethnic emblems. Unlike the third of the Festival collaborations, *KnifeQuest*,⁷ which relies on known myth to frame its dance interpretation, *Six of One* must build credible characters and situation before it can destroy them to deflate social myth. To some extent there has been a tension in the building of this piece between a deconstructive purpose and

a constructive process. If the contemporary impetus is to break down the structures of cultural myth and to explore the resulting universe in language which is, itself, deconstructive, then the theatre, which has always been myth-making by nature, must seek a new language and form. It seems likely that the vocabulary of this new, anti-mythic myth-making (for to create a play in which no social stereotypes exist is to create a world which connotes an ideal and is, therefore, itself iconic), will be collaborative in form. The process outlined in this issue is an example of one step in this direction.

Reid Gilbert,
Drama Editor.

NOTES

- ¹ Pamela Hawthorn, personal interview, August 1984.
- ² dir. Robin Phillips, with Peter Ustinov, Stratford Festival Company, Stratford Festival Theatre, 5 October 1979.
- ³ (Victoria, British Columbia: Sono Nis P, 1982).
- ⁴ *The Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, ed. Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss, 8 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1931) I: 171.
- ⁵ Umberto Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics*, as quoted in Kaja Silverman, *The Subject of Semiotics* (New York/Oxford: Oxford UP, 1983) 15.
- ⁶ "Du Maurier plays intriguing," 19 April 1985: 49.
- ⁷ Peter Eliot Weiss and EDAM Dance Company, dir. Kathleen Weiss, in 11th Annual du Maurier Festival, Waterfront Theatre, Vancouver, British Columbia, 17 April 1985.

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 A:

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 ~~your~~ 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 - Packerbel 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 cheer). Cheryl (sings), you're not getting
of her tough tough moooooo - o's?
further up for one of your really tough ones are you?

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.

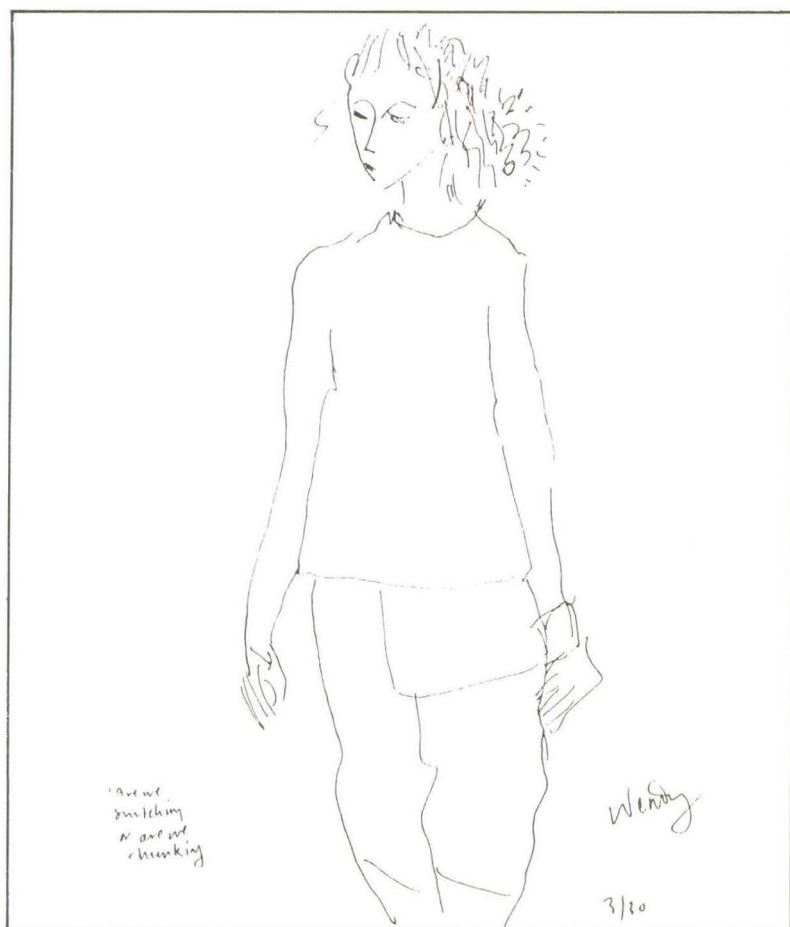
Heyman: [*to Angel*] In writing this have you considered how changing one line from character to character can make us reexamine our racial stereotypes? I've lost that. . . . I think the marriage needs to go back in—it's such a strong point.

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

Full company

Six of One opens.

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Waterfront Theatre
on Granville Island



The Production Team / INTERVIEW

On May 6, 1985 an interview among Jane Heyman, Leonard Angel, Gisa Cole, Pam Hawthorn and Reid Gilbert was held at the New Play Centre offices on Granville Island.

RG *Six of One* arose from two different promptings—a race relations project in which some of you were involved, and the decision by the New Play Centre to commission creative collaborations for this year's du Maurier Festival. Which came first?

LA The race relations project came first. However, these two things were going on independently and roughly simultaneously.

RG Jane, you were involved with this project right from the beginning, too, weren't you?

JH No, not quite as early as Leonard. I started last May, and I worked on the research part of it for a children's script and then I went on to do the pilot project on the teenage script which Dennis Foon wrote, and so I wasn't involved when Leonard was doing the initial research.

RG Can we outline the entire project which Judith Mastai of Simon Fraser University initiated?

LA Judith Mastai applied for funds to get three projects going, all on race relations, theatre in education or theatre for adults. The first was an elementary school project, the second a high school project, and the third a play for adults. She seeded these three projects without intending to produce the plays herself. And, in addition, she facilitated the process by holding workshops—open, unstructured workshops—in which all kinds of people were invited to come and do research, exploration and various kinds of theatre games. Anybody from the community could come and, as people dropped by, a kind of network developed.

RG What was the race relations part of these workshops?

LA O.k., o.k. Well, Canada's a very strongly multicultural society. Vancouver, in particular, is a very strongly multicultural community and it has become even more so in the last 15 or 20 years. We know from experience around the world that when societies are strongly multicultural, various tensions appear, groups get singled out. . . . Although Canadians pride themselves on being not nearly as racist as, say, Americans, there is a tremendous degree of racism under the surface in Canada.

RG As a playwright like Sharon Pollock explored earlier on in plays like *The Komagata Maru Incident*, set in Vancouver.

LA As we're finding out right now with Keegstra and Zundel and so on. There is a lot of racism of all kinds and varieties.

RG So the motivation was to explore racism, or . . . ?

LA The motivation was to contribute positively to the community in some fashion.

PH Through art, basically. Theatre is socially relevant and an educational tool, I think. Now that may not be the way Judith would describe it, . . . but it's taking theatre as an art form through which ideas can be brought forth and discussed from an educational point of view.

JH Yeah, in the broadest sense. I think theatre is a really powerful tool, or can be, for exploring any number of issues.

PH And certainly in the two student productions the students and teachers and the people involved did have discussions afterwards, trying to test the results, so to speak, from a cultural point of view.

RG The intention of the theatre piece itself being what? To promote that kind of discussion or to instruct?

LA Well, for the adult piece there were special problems; in the school productions you could tailor your educational strategy. But there were some obvious things, for example, in the adult piece. Theatre is traditionally supposed to hold a mirror up to society and yet, even though we live in a highly multicultural society, almost nowhere—at two important levels in the theatre—do we have any representation of this aspect of the community: actors will not be trained and will not get parts.

PH Multicultural actors.

LA Well, everybody is a multicultural actor. Everybody is a cultural actor.

RG Clearly, we'll have to define what we mean by this term.

JH People from visible minorities.

LA ... won't get parts. The other thing is that there isn't enough play material which reflects the multicultural reality in the text. So there are two aspects, that are very obvious, that you can start working on.

RG Jane, you were very concerned about that, I think. You suggested that an ethnically diverse cast would, itself, be a metaphor of race relations in the theatre.

JH This was, to lead back, one of the prongs of the original project. One was to create material that reflected the experience of the children who would be coming to see the plays and another was to provide an opportunity for people from visible minorities to work in the theatre, as Leonard was saying. And a spin-off of that—and this is where those open workshops started—was to provide an opportunity for people with talent to develop skills because the problem just spirals in on itself. Because the theatre we have now is predominantly a white theatre—an Anglo theatre, I think one could even say—people from minority communities don't come to the theatre very much. They don't see themselves reflected. I mean, this is only one reason; there are other reasons. But these people don't see any reason to believe that they could go on to a career in the

theatre, so they don't try out for acting schools, so they don't have the training, and, because they lack training, other people get cast in those roles (because you need actors of skill), and it goes on and on. So it was absolutely critical, when we were doing the adult piece, to cast people who reflected in some way the mosaic that makes up our society.

RG Is this the same sort of argument that Joan Littlewood, and now David Fennario would raise on behalf of workers' theatre, that the theatre must move to the work place, that it must be accessible to segments of society which habitually ignore it?

JH That's part of it. That was part of it certainly when we were doing the school plays and we didn't get to it on this one, which was too bad, because of just different places we were in the work. One of the things we did before was to take sections of the play to the community while we were working on it to get feedback, to find out if it was an accurate reflection of the world as they saw it or not. Or whether that mattered. Sometimes it was more important to show a different kind of viewpoint, because that would spark a discussion. As a result, the word got out, so by the time the piece was performed people knew about it and were interested and would phone up to say "Where are you? Can we come to that school?" It was stimulating a response from the audience.

RG In taking the pieces out; indeed, in the whole concept of the project, it seems to me there were two motivations. One, a kind of missionary intention to promote a beneficial discussion, and the other a more pragmatic plan to try out a play in progress to determine if it speaks in an authentic voice. From a playwright's point of view the purpose of doing that would be to improve the characterization, the actual dialogue and the cultural "voice" of the script. Were both these things involved when you took a play out? I'm trying to find out whether the workshopping and the community try-outs were to improve the final product, or whether this happy result was secondary to your desire to prompt a discussion and to break up racial attitudes.

JH In my experience it was absolutely both and they were equal in measure.

PH But Leonard didn't go through that process, you see, on the play which is under discussion here. Perhaps we should have done that but it did not become part of the working method; there were time problems and, perhaps, philosophical ones, too. In a way it is so much easier to structure that kind of situation in children's theatre than it is the minute you step into the so-called adult, professional realm of theatre.

RG Would it have been useful to you, Leonard, as a playwright to have that kind of community feedback?

LA It's really hard to say, you know. If we had been using that method then it would have had an impact on the whole project, and it would have rippled through the project and then it would have changed things.

RG But certainly it would have changed the script in some way.

LB It probably would have, depending at what points we had done it. This is the fascinating thing about this particular process. Because of the thematic base and the aesthetics of the collaboration, and the switching back and forth from the abstract conception to the literal conception, and the casting and so on, there are so many angles and each has impacted and affected in a very strong way. For example, the casting turned our thinking around very strongly. When we realized that with six women in the cast the abstract piece which had been conceived for three men and three women was not going to take place, we went in a totally different direction. So we went into a literal direction at that point. So every ingredient would certainly have had strong effects on the process, but I don't know that it's quite possible to say whether it would have been useful or not—it would just have been different.

RG You raise an interesting question about the all woman cast changing the conception. On February 14th, when the auditions were discussed, there was concern that having only female characters would destroy the thesis of the play. The original comment on race was not gender related; I'm assuming that's what you meant.

PH No, I think what was meant—and we had a long discussion about this—was that for Leonard any imbalance of male and female characters would destroy the thesis of the play.

LA That's right. As true a form as possible. One man and five women was really not right; it just put it off balance. Because what we were working on in abstract conception had to do with trying to freshen perceptions about the body, about what it is to have a body and be in a body, and all kinds of wonderful things like that. And we were playing games which involved having one person being hungry and another person eating and that eating act would satisfy the first person's hunger. And various things intended just to startle perceptions in various ways. And then we moved from that into the evolution of family structures and then finding fragments of culture developing. Once these people came off the wall and discovered—it was a kind of modelled evolution of culture—and, you can see, that would be completely different. But it did seem to require the family evolution and that kind of...

PH It required men.

LA It required men. That's what was involved.

RG And yet the “family in False Creek” idea arose at lunch at Isadora's after Jane's report on the auditions, so it must have been that the earlier “Lab Scene” concept also required a balance in your mind, that the various earlier concepts assumed a mix of men and women. But the final vision was framed by the all female cast which developed.

JH And that happened because not very many people of visible minorities turned up for the auditions. And we also had a double brief, which was that they had to be at least capable of moving as well as speaking. And in order to have a cast which represented visible minorities—we just didn't have very many strong men show up. I thought back then (who knows whether I was right or not) that we would have ended up turning down some strong women in order to cast some weak men, just for a sexual balance. So when we weighed all that

up, we thought that it was better to go for the potentially strongest group of actors, particularly because we didn't have a script at that point. So with nothing written down, and a lot of ideas being chucked around, and time closing in, we went for the strongest group of people we could pull together.

RG And so the thesis evolved because of the cast in front of you. The thesis changed, the play came out of . . .

LA The play came out of the fact that there was a different set of possibilities.

RG Apart perhaps from the cast itself becoming a metaphor by assembling various ethnic actors, did the racial theme emerge adequately in the final play? Was it sufficiently clear to the audience that the play carried a racial statement?

LA No way! It was not sufficiently clear to the audience that it was—that it would be about race. Well, first of all, there were two levels in our intention. Our first level was to write a play about a group of women.

RG Once you had an all woman cast.

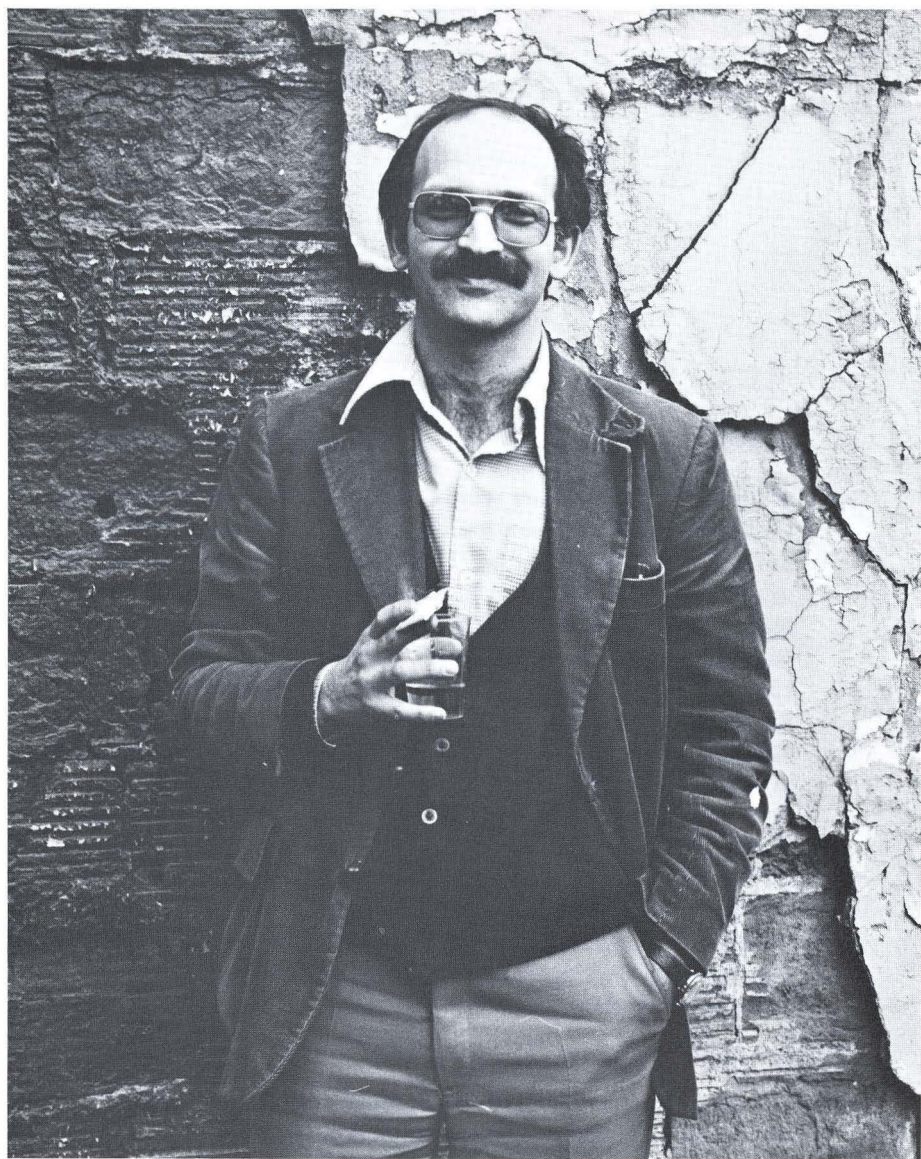
LA Yeah. And the second level was to use a theatrical device of having the performers switch the character parts among themselves in order to draw out unconscious stereotyping. We were relying on certain assumptions in the audience. Then we were relying on pacing ourselves, choosing the right moments to make these switches so that the audience would catch themselves making racial assumptions. For myself, I made two discoveries through the performance. One—and this was quite a surprise to me—was that the stage does not invite, if you want to put it that way, as much stereotyping as one would think. I think people stereotype more strongly when they're watching images from television or film or real life. Maybe it has something to do with the distance, maybe it has something to do with the way we see things. . . .

RG Because the audience is willing to suspend disbelief anyway in the theatre, so they're prepared to . . .

LA That's right. So, in other words, if (this is a frequent metaphor we talked in), if we cast a multicultural Noel Coward play, how startling would that be? I think, and this was surprising to me, I think it would not be startling at all. . . . people would hardly notice it. That's one problem we were up against without knowing it, or that I was. Another was the timing we chose for the switches, it did not allow enough time to settle in. We started very early, so that meant that nobody, nobody really had enough time to really get a hold on the characters in the first place so that when the thing switched they would be caught off guard. It became immediately an abstract dance of relationships and a metaphor. So *Six of One* became these six people all changing because they can all perform each other's parts. If you want to be very philosophical about it, it became a Jungian metaphor: we all have the myths within ourselves and we can all perform these other parts, or something like that.

RG But not a question of race.

LA We did not get as much of the racial stereotyping effects as we thought we would. Just to complete this—Judith Mastai, who was away for the performance, and has only seen it on video tape (and has had various discussions of the video tape), found that the reactions to the video are much more along the lines of what we were thinking about. So that might indicate that the discussions possible out of the video, out of simply an archival video record, might have more of the effects we were thinking of.



PH Oh, but it might also suggest something else, it seems to me, Leonard. Who are these people who saw the video? Did they come predisposed, with an intellectual concept in their minds, where your theatre audience did not?

LA Some people who came with that same intellectual predisposition and didn't find any content, didn't find any of those effects.

RG But that is an interesting question. One thing I wondered was for whom you were preparing this play? You made a point with me, Pam, that the whole series of plays in the Festival was conceived as an experiment and you stressed that in your programme notes. To anyone who was aware of the experiment (who had been around the edges of it as Judith Mastai or I were, or who knew the thesis of the experiment), could see the switches and understand the racial statement. But my question originally was, would someone simply coming in, buying a ticket and sitting down in the theatre understand it? And you said "no," Leonard.

LA No.

RG Then, for whom were you preparing this play?

JH I think that my first audience would, indeed, be the guy who just walks in off the street and buys a ticket.

RG So if that's the case, we come back to the question of whether that guy could react the way you wanted him to react. If he couldn't, is part of the problem that you didn't play strongly enough with the stereotyping? Might you have first established a really glaring racist stereotype with which most people in the audience could have identified—some by reacting against it, some by agreeing with it—and then switched it?

LA Well, that's an interesting question. What we wanted to do was create character and then see how the casting of these characters would, in fact, draw out the stereotyping. And it could be that we would have got the awareness going in people more strongly if we relied on over-racist caricature, but it doesn't make sense, because what we're doing is saying these characters exist as character, but they don't exist as black, as Japanese, as Native or Indo-Canadian; they exist as characters.

PH People.

LA We're not defining their authenticity, and they're not defined by their colour, so that any of our performers can play any of these parts. There is no textual contradiction with a performer's colour of skin, right? If we start stereotyping very strongly, you're suggesting what? That the first character who is played by Lesley, who is black, be snapping her fingers and jiving into the studio? Is that an example of what you mean?

RG Well, it's an example, yes, although we've not followed it through. After the audience had established the fact that there was some horribly racist statement here, had said "Oh, yeah, I always knew these guys were like that," then she would switch and the audience would be forced to confront its error.

LA But it was a very important premise for me that whatever we do, we do with similitude to character. So if somebody comes into the studio snapping her fingers and jiving, then that's her character.

PH That's fine, but all Reid's trying to say is if you start with a stereotypical idea that all blacks have rhythm and suddenly you force the Japanese to play that part, or, indeed, the white girl, then suddenly you see that all Japanese might also necessarily, or all white people might necessarily have rhythm.

RG And the audience says, "Oh, I see what's happening," as opposed to not seeing what the play is about at all.

PH So what we're talking about then, ultimately, is character type and character type crosses all boundaries.

LA We're talking about the same thing. Exactly the same thing. But your strategy is a slightly different kind of trap.

RG And that's the reason for my repeated questions about the audience. I'm not saying this is a good strategy, or a better strategy, but it seems to me that the theatregoer Jane says is going to come in off the street and buy a ticket can be presupposed to share some racial stereotypes. But he or she could not be presupposed to know the subtle layers of characterization and metaphor of non-racism that you expect him to share in order to understand your message. He or she might either share these racist feelings or be appalled by them and reject them, but he would react to them in some way. But I don't think you have any reason to assume that when a character comes out who doesn't display any racial character the audience will immediately say "Oh, look at that character not displaying the racial character." Why would the audience get to that if it hadn't been involved in the year long process you've been involved in? How would they get to that?

LA The same way that, at one of the rehearsals, you said "Hey, look how stereotypical that casting was," right? And, in fact, we know that it was a random casting. Now it may very well be that we might have made better choices along those very lines; we might have led people a little bit more strongly. So, yes, I guess. . . .

RG Could we go back to the cast switches because obviously that's the technique this play uses to explode these racial myths. How did you plan to make the audience pick up on the switches? I think they did understand them, but how did you, Gisa, choreograph them so as to announce it was switch time?

GC Well, it's really difficult to plan. We began in a way and direction that we all felt was going to work, but we were all making compromises by the tail end there. I mean, I didn't think that number of switches was going to work in the first place, and I felt we could make them even more dramatic, but Leonard felt that he really wanted them to be more subtle.

So by the tail end what we were trying to do was just make them read because there was so much confusion around them. But they were not—I felt as though they were just—that it was just the beginning and we had barely stylized them. That’s why it’s difficult for me to answer, because I didn’t *do* very much.

RG Should there be some sort of verbal key, some announcement that the stereotype is being given away? Or am I going back to my earlier notion of a more overtly racist characterization?

JH At some back draft, way back when, we had those kinds of statements, and they were all so clunky...

RG Too obvious...

JH Yeah; they just telegraphed: “these are people doing a play about race relations.” And it was to avoid that path, as I saw it (not having been there when Leonard and Gisa had the meeting at which the idea of switching came up) that the idea of going for something more subtle happened. This time around the experiment didn’t work. I still think it’s a valid one. I mean, we ended up with a clock ticking over our head. A clock ticking over your head is very good because on the one hand you see things that you would never bother to see if the clock wasn’t ticking; on the other hand, you run out of time to make changes. And in our case, because every time we made a switch an actor went off and learned a new character, if three days later, I came in thinking “I shouldn’t have made the change there,” I couldn’t really alter it. I mean, we just had to say “o.k.” We knew way before we went in front of an audience that there were too many switches and that they started too early. Whether or not my judgement that I couldn’t alter that situation was correct or not, I have no idea. But I felt more changes would just confuse us even more and it was better to live for a few days with what we knew was a bad decision and get through the performances and then go back to solving the root problems in the text to do with situation and character. Maybe I should have changed things. Sunday morning quarterback. But that was the problem.



GC There's a great sense of frustration.

RG If you knew what was going on, as I did, the switches worked very nicely; you should know that. I enjoyed seeing the switches happen. My only concern is again about this average person who doesn't know what the premise of the play is.

LA The average person . . .

PH I always love the mythical "average person" and we use him all the time.

JH What I love is when the mythical average person comes up and says, "It was all too subtle for me." They always assume it's *their* problem, not that we goofed, but that it's *their* problem.

LA Well, I know lots of people were appreciating the pure dance of characters switching but were, perhaps, not sure what it was in service of.

RG That's interesting, Leonard, because it takes me to the collaborative nature of the project. Can we talk first of all about the whole idea of the collaboration and then, more specifically, about whether you've been creating a movement with words, or a play with movement. Can you tell me a little about the notion of the collaboration?

PH Last spring, after we finished last year's du Maurier Festival, I simply decided that I wanted to try something different for the coming year. Different in a two-fold way. I wanted to find a way to prompt some excitement in the written material that we were, in general, receiving, most of which seemed to me to be essentially quite ordinary in nature. And the other thing was a little broader. I looked around the Vancouver theatre at the moment which is very commercially oriented and, indeed, very conservative, and I thought we [at the New Play Centre] are supposed somehow to be on the leading edge—which always makes me laugh a little, but nevertheless we're supposed to be—and wondered if there was some way we could take these two things and put them together. And the idea

I came up with, which is not a new idea, but is something that generally speaking hasn't been tried in Vancouver, was to put playwrights in contact at the conceptual level with artists from other disciplines and see what kind of theatre event might come out of that.

RG So, in fact, the two things—your project and Jane's experiments with multicultural castings—work interestingly together. You are both trying to break certain walls around traditional aesthetic and ethnic preconceptions. That's how this particular collaboration fits itself together.

PH I suppose so. But that, I think, was incidental.

RG So when Pam first talked to you about it, Leonard, were you excited, turned off or mystified by the notion that you would be collaborating with someone in another field? Did you want to write the racial idea out in a script, or do it in another way?

LA At that point it was a dance. It was very much a dance. One of the first conversations with Pam had to do with the necessity of there being a script and it having elements of character, or fragments of character, and so on to bring it into the realm of theatre.

PH Actually, Leonard chooses "character," and I'm sure we talked about that, but I remember clearly saying I wanted "verbal quality."

LA Ah, "verbal quality," right.

PH And it was language I wanted to deal with. In what way it didn't matter.

LA Right; you're right. But I'm reflecting my own mental processes which took that and then thought about the relationship between something you might call pure dance and something which would be brought into the realm of theatre and, for myself, I adopted as a principle that if the character were totally extracted, it wouldn't mean anything to me as theatre. Some fragments of character would have to exist in order for it to be properly theatrical.

RG But, Gisa, you were saying that the same character could have emerged directly in movement.

GC Oh, I'm not sure. I'm not sure about that, because what you're doing in movement is dealing with the emotions and sensations that can evoke a sense of a person's perceptions of a character. I think it's a tremendous challenge. Dance is the abstraction for me. That doesn't lay down any concrete at all; it lets you have open-ended theories.

RG Which may, or may not, evolve some kind of thesis.

GC Dance: sometimes an audience takes the piece of dance on a journey that has nothing to do with what the choreographer set out to do, but that's o.k.

RG Would a dance that was pure movement, but that consisted of six women from different visible minorities make some sort of implicit race relations statement just by the fact that the dancers were from different races?

GC Well, I think that there was some statement made in those five flashes that we did at the beginning of the show. People saw all kinds of different things in them. And it was; it came out of a subconscious spewing out of material, not from standing there saying, "I'll put this black one beside a green one, and we'll look at the height, and. . . ." All kinds of ideas and thoughts bounced off the person who saw it. But how to integrate that with a script I'm not sure, because I think we got off track somewhere along the line. I think we cast it before we knew what we were doing, you know; we spent a lot of energy backtracking on our original designs.

RG Were you satisfied in the performance we saw that there was a sufficient relationship between the dance fragments at the opening of the show and the beginning of the text itself?

GC No.

RG No? You felt that there was dance and then it stopped and a play began?

GC I think the whole thing was a failure, so I can't answer. No, I don't think it worked. And I think Leonard and I would have had to spend a much longer time coming up with a concept.

RG May I say, just personally as someone who saw opening night and who hadn't seen the dance fragments in rehearsal before, that I had trouble seeing how they integrated with the text once it started, but when you repeated Lesley's solo dance at the conclusion of the play, that image of her hand up in the air, clutching, made for me, in dance, absolutely the same thematic statement which the text had just made. It bound the play, focusing it beautifully and, therefore, I understood the reason for it at the outset.

GC Yeah, we did set...

RG That was conscious, then?

GC Yes, it was conscious and we had decided that, but the thing is that I wanted to integrate a lot more of that movement into the situations, into the community of dancers working together. We didn't have a chance to do that.

RG Did the play need to be twice as long to do that and to explain the switches? Two or three of your comments suggest to me that you might have needed more time on the collaboration process, but it also seems the play, itself, didn't have enough time to establish character, to establish the switches, to integrate the dance into them. The play was just too short?

LA It could be that the psychological material that we are dealing with in the play is more like fifty minutes and we were dealing with 30 to 35 minutes playing time.

RG When you say it was too subtle, I wonder whether it just went by too fast to establish relationships, to establish that the dances were anything other than an aspect of setting.

GC They were supposed to be the goal this group of people were working toward, you see. But what happened was, first of all, we didn't have enough time, we ran out of time. I ended up teaching these people for six weeks how to move. That's why I say it was the cart ahead of the horse, because we got the casting before we knew we were going to make a piece about dancers in a studio. We started to try some of this stuff and they couldn't speak or move. You know, they... couldn't...

RG That's something you learned, then, Pam, in terms of the experiment.

PH Yes. I think maybe right from the very beginning, in a way, the experiment might have been doomed to failure. I don't mean just this one; I mean the total package, and frankly I don't have enough experience to be able to answer that. I do think, more than likely, when you look at successful collaborations of art projects, more than likely they emerge out of working situations which might be based on something quite different. I mean, people sit in an English class together for three years and out of that they form a relationship, and out of that emerges a collaborative art form. You know, I am just being facetious there, but a set up like that.

RG Well, what about the EDAM Dance Theatre? It is a collective used to working together. Was its collaborative process, then, different?

PH Most people seem to think the EDAM piece was the most successful in the Festival and one of my guesses for that would be precisely this: you already had an integrated group there which had philosophical and artistic goals in mind that they were trying to achieve, whereas, in this case, we pretty well put a bride and groom together and said, "Here you guys, move forward and see. Oh, and yeah, we want a baby in less than nine months, please." For everyone involved, even for me as producer, it was very frustrating, but to a certain extent you can look back on it and see some gains. And for the most part the structures and finances of Canadian theatre are such that there's no other way to do collaborative art other than exactly what we set out to do here.



- GC* I learned so much on the collaboration . . . there were many things that were of great benefit; I don't regret the experience but I feel we didn't make something which excited us. Maybe it excited you, but it didn't me. I ended up feeling the frustration of it rather than the feeling that we're getting closer to what we wanted to do.
- RG* You suggest that you didn't make an exciting theatre piece. I would argue that while you may not have got across an intellectual statement, that it might have been too quick, or too subtle, it was a very pleasant experience. I don't know if it was exciting, but it was a very pretty theatre piece. I mean this term to be a compliment, as the movement created this mood. The combination of music, dance, costume, colour: Liza and I commented on the visual tone; it was a very pastel, very pleasant, very soft unfolding.
- GC* For me it was too close to my own world and it was not a true depiction of my own world. It was like I had taken my clothes off and put them up there and, you know, it wasn't an attractive body.
- LA* . . . my sense of the show was that it was very pleasing in the abstract dance sense of watching all those characters taking over each others' parts. And many people did say that by the end of the piece they caught on . . . although all on the abstract, dance level, the dance of character interchange level, rather than through the interchange of stereotypes—although there was some of that, too.
- RG* There was certainly some gender stereotyping which seems to fly in the face of your earlier comments about race. Dagmar, the character who is getting married, keeps giggling and running to the phone to check things with her fiancé in what seems to me as broad a stereotype of the mindless, "going to a Tupperware shower" bride as one could find.
- GC* But we weren't setting out to talk about those kinds of women.
- RG* But that's how you endowed one of these women: Dagmar.
- PH* Yes, from my point of view, that's how that woman was endowed, as well. A dizzy blonde.

RG Interesting: in the audience we saw a stereotype of this mindless woman, and then saw many other women assume the role. So in the abstract we could say all, and therefore, no, women are dizzy blonde fools. So I keep coming back to this device as a means you might have employed to develop the racial statement. But enough of characterization. Jane, what's the role of a director in a collaboration like this? That's a huge question, I know, but did you see a role within the collaboration or as a policewoman on the process?

JH End up a traffic cop, is about what...

GC I think that she was a third collaborator. I don't think you can pinpoint and say she was anything less. She was as much part of the collaboration as any of us were. There you are, Jane.

JH But I think that's part of the problem. You know, given the limits of the time thing, there was a little bit of "too many cooks."

PH But I think in reality we had to step in and cook.

JH Yeah, but it's like I was taking control and I knew I was doing it. The switches are a prime example. I mean the switches happen too fast and that was my decision. And it was a mistake.

GC But we also had to do it when Leonard wasn't with us. You know, midway, or when we had to start doing the switches and everything, Leonard wasn't there. So some of this stuff we had to go ahead and take decisions.

LA For me, the thing I keep coming back to is that a project like this does not lend itself to saying, "This was the experiment. The experiment stopped there." The Festival was, for us, the focal point of a certain process and that's the way it was set up. That's what I understood it to be. We were trying to fertilize and stimulate and explore the borders. We were trying to present that to an audience who is interested in aesthetics and in going further and then take it from there.

And in that sense I made, for myself, some very exciting discoveries about the way theatre works and the way dance works, and the race relations project. True enough, this does need to be explored further in order for the fruit to be gathered.

RG Is it the director's job to help the audience see this aesthetic experiment Leonard is describing, or to help the audience get the point about the race theme? Or both?

JH For me the bottom line is to tell a story and to entertain an audience. And if you are not doing that, if you are not moving them, in some direction, it doesn't matter how many political points you make, it doesn't matter how many aesthetic points you are going to push; all that stuff becomes academic and will only, in fact, get through to the audience if the other thing is happening. I prefer to do theatre that makes a statement, but "ya ain't goin' to do it" unless you've gotten your audience excited, unless you've gotten them involved. And that's my job.

LA That's right. But there is one difference here, and that is we are dealing with a dance-theatre collaboration and the element of narrative is up for grabs to some extent. *KniteQuest* [with text by Peter Eliot Weiss] was mythic, had mythic ingredients and it had narrative fragments, but narrative fragments do not constitute a narrative. However, we chose to go a route in which there is a narrative line... and then have this technique of switching which is a classic alienation technique in theatre.

RG But first you had to get your audience to care about the narrative, to know the six women individually. For example, one of the subtexts which was discussed over and over again during the writing process is the issue of an interracial marriage. You put it back in the production script, but I would argue that no one in the audience knew Dagmar's marriage was interracial, no one cared about this marriage.

JH Yeah, but that goes back. First of all, the characters got switched before anyone really identified with Dagmar; the scenes establishing that Dagmar is marrying Cheryl's brother—if we want to follow that through—must be developed more strongly. There's a focus problem, which is what Leonard is working on now, raising the stakes of the whole play. Once we've got the main line clearly in, then one of the threads of the tapestry may or may not be this character who's getting married to somebody's brother and then the switches can be reset to play inside the mind or the theatre of the mind of the person watching it. But until certain basics are solved, then all the rest of it is just tinkering around on top.

RG At what point must you stop being fluid with the action, or the characterization, and simply say this is the relationship, this is the plot? We're faced with the very real problem of closure.

LA Two weeks before you are due on the stage, if you're doing it that way. Otherwise there's no deadline; it's whenever.

PH I think what Leonard said was a little facetious, but it is actually to the point. You saw an artificial break in the process [the Festival production], but ordinarily the way the New Play Centre operates is without putting those artificial breaks in. Take, for instance, *The Unveiling*. I'm not sure, Leonard, how long that play was around—probably three years...

LA Three years, three and a half years...

PH At least three and a half or four years from the original inception through all the talking and the theses and the workshops until one day, sitting on the back porch, I said to Leonard, "Okay, we've gone as far as we're going to go this way. We're going to do the play." Even that was a man-made stop.

GC Isn't the playwright the one who says, really, this is my finished play?



LA No, because I think what Pam is saying is very true. At a certain point the producer decides we're going to produce it; that is not my decision.

RG But that's an additional constraint when you make a collaborative piece, isn't it? You can't keep collaborators together for four years...

JH Theatre's a collaboration. Not necessarily between people from different art forms, but it's always a collaboration.

PH And again it depends on what your working situation is like. I mean, what if you were working in a society with a theatrical background which permitted an ongoing relationship with dancers, singers, musicians, etc. I was trying to say earlier that so far in North America we haven't been able to dream that structure up.

JH My experience has been that these deadlines always exist and a scene gets played which still doesn't ring true. Actors really are skilled, usually, at making things work. It's nicer when things work by themselves, but actors can make almost anything work. But then every playwright whom I respect needles away at the piece and sometimes they wake up, or the director, or someone else who's seen the work speaks to them and suddenly the thing rings true and tells you that *this* is the true solution. And then the scene gets rewritten and it may be at that point that you realize this isn't a scene about marriage at all, but it's a scene about death, you know. After working for twenty years, that's what I'm trying to do, to hone my instincts. I keep nipping away at people's ankles, trying to find the thing that is true.

GC But he does have the final decision to put down the play.... I'm just trying to relate this to dance: I have the final decision when my dance is finished. There's a point when the artist says, "I'm finished."

- RG* That's what I was suggesting about the collaboration. It's hard for Leonard to tinker on this play four years down the road when Gisa may not be available to tinker simultaneously with the related dance moment. Surely this kind of work has special restraints.
- LA* There is, and there might have been even more so if we'd gone the original route with three men and three women. As it is, there's enough of the script that's a whole entity in itself.
- RG* Do you, as artists, have a conscious sense of building a residual bank of images, or themes or subtexts as you go through a creative process together? In my notes, images and ideas which appear very early on and then disappear, reappear later in variant form. For example, on January 31st, when you were discussing having actors peel off the walls, Leonard said something to Gisa about the notion of having the dancers hanging off the walls and Gisa said she loved that image, "the image of a kind of puppet hanging," and mimed a monkey-like arm, hanging in the air. This is the image, of course, which informs Lesley's reaching arm movement in what must be the most lovely dance in the production version. You stored this image and reproduced it in the choreography. Are you in any conscious way aware of working like this?
- GC* Subconscious; it's that great, big subconscious that I really trust. And I let it float; I really allow that; you have to get to a point where you're experienced enough and know how to pull from yourself—to allow that to happen. I think my dances are getting better now because I allow that subconscious to come through.
- RG* So it's there, floating. In the early part of the collaboration, before you had a cast, you went in many directions, seemingly against one another, seemingly getting nowhere, but in fact you were storing these images and your group responses to them. . . .

GC That's the best part.

LA We were working with the switching concept way back when, and then it dropped out, and then it came back in again.

JH I started working with the switching last May [1984].

RG In the early discussions with Judith Mastai?

JH When I was working on the other set, before I ever worked with Leonard.

LA That's right. And during those workshops we were working with switching.

RG So this is simply another example of the notion discussed earlier of an instinct honed for years to recognize the moment when this and that can come together finally. You build a residual, subliminal bank of things that are going to come together some day and that bank might be built for twenty years. Isn't that what the whole history of literature, art and theatre has been doing for centuries?

JH Uh, huh.

RG And that, of course, is why the play we saw the other night is not finished, but is on-going.

LA As is the script, itself.

Leonard Angel/
SIX OF ONE:
A PLAYSCRIPT
IN PROGRESS



Location: A dance studio.

Time: The present, evening.

Note: Performers switch parts during the course of the performance. This switching should be designed in such a way as to clarify in the minds of the audience, as it watches character interactions, that the stereotypic endowments of the characters pass from actor to actor.

VALERIE *To audience.* What is it about dance studios? The mirror, the bar, the polished wood floor, a couple of high windows letting light stream in, morning light and afternoon light, and high lamps for evening work. I don't know about you, but I can't walk into a studio without thinking of all the dancers who have been through: all the dancers who have stayed and all the dancers who've gone on to other things. Like me, for example. Haven't been here or any other dance studio in years. But I had to come back, take a look at the old place. So the other day I called Dorothy up. "Can I come up and see the space again?" I said. Didn't even have to tell her who it was; she remembered my voice just like that. She has a wonderful ear for sounds; always did. People used to tease her she spent so much time absorbed in music it was a wonder she ever came up with choreography at all. She'd laugh and say that's how she came up with the images—by listening—emptying herself of images and listening, and then looking at everybody's bodies and the images would be there. Where was I? Oh yeah, the phone call. "I'd like to see it," I said. She didn't even ask me how come. "Sure," she said. "Do you want anybody else to be here?" "No," I said; "It'll be more use to me empty." "Good," she said, "because we're off on a tour next week." And she left me the key. And I came here and started remembering.

Oh, that first day I came to this place, all shy and nervous, and thinking dance would be a magic way out of my shyness. Guess what? It wasn't. And then I remembered the work, the stretching, and stretching and more stretching. And then there was the session that I kept coming back to. I think that session stuck out, oddly enough, because that was the one time Dorothy didn't show up at all. And that was the session I had come here to think about.

Outside.

HANNAH Dorothy? Dorothy?

VALERIE Oh—I forgot. In those days, Dorothy had to rent the studio out to that karate group. They always left their things out. *She puts the place in a mess.* That's better.

Hannah enters and bumps into a chair.

HANNAH Every time. Every single time.

Valerie leaves discreetly.

Hannah opens lights, fiddles with the thermostat, changes into work clothes. Cheryl enters.

HANNAH Hi, Cheryl.

CHERYL Shit.

HANNAH What's the matter?

CHERYL Nothing.

HANNAH Nothing?

CHERYL Nothing. I just had a bad day.

HANNAH Something in particular?

CHERYL No.

HANNAH O.k., if you don't want to talk about it, I'm not going to push. If you don't want me to. . . . Do you?

CHERYL Want you to what?

HANNAH Want me to push.

CHERYL It was a bad day. Let's just leave it at that.

HANNAH O.k., o.k. It was just a bad day. Nothing to do with tonight at all, Dorothy's decision coming up?

CHERYL I'm here to work; I'm going to work just like any other night.

HANNAH You know what I think's going to happen? I think Dorothy's going to—

CHERYL Hannah, please. I don't want to get excited about it.

HANNAH Sorry.

CHERYL *Looks at the time.* Any reason Dorothy's not here yet though?

HANNAH No. I just got here. She's probably just on her way.

CHERYL Well, it is a bit early still. You don't mind if I change the music? I want to hear the piece we're working on.

HANNAH Go right ahead. Hi, Valerie.

VALERIE Hi, Hannah.

HANNAH I didn't see you come in.

VALERIE No—I just . . . came in. Oh, my god. I forgot.

HANNAH What?

VALERIE The assertiveness book you lent me. I'm really sorry.

HANNAH Oh, it's all right.

VALERIE I meant to put it in my bag, and then I forgot. I'll bring it tomorrow.

HANNAH Well, I don't really need it.

VALERIE No, no. I promised I'd have it back for you by today.

HANNAH That's all right.

VALERIE Can you tell I didn't quite finish it?

HANNAH Well . . . what did you think of it?

VALERIE I don't know.

CHERYL And they always leave their exercise mats out. Dorothy should stop renting to them if they can't even manage something as simple as cleaning up after themselves.

HANNAH Yeah, and where's she going to get the rent? I'm glad Dorothy isn't the disciplinarian you are.

CHERYL Fuck!

HANNAH You're too cheerful, you know that?

CHERYL I got into a stupid scrape with my bike. Stupid car comes flying out of nowhere; I had to hang onto a stop sign. The stupid bike kept on going out from under me, taking my foot with it.

HANNAH Did you hurt yourself?

CHERYL Nah. On top of everything else I've got schedule hassles at the restaurant like you wouldn't believe. They want me there 27 hours a day. *Cheryl changes the music.*

HANNAH Cheryl, can I ask you something?

CHERYL What?

HANNAH Would you like a little massage?

CHERYL That's very kind of you Hannah, but no thanks.

She goes into the changing room.

HANNAH Hey, come on Cheryl, don't behave like that.

Pam enters.

PAM Where's Dorothy?

HANNAH Tell us what the problem is.

VALERIE Hi, Pam.

PAM Hi, Val.

HANNAH Cheryl...

VALERIE I... uh... wanted to ask you... Pam?

CHERYL Hannah, you're not everybody's mother, even though you like to think you are.

PAM What's up?

HANNAH Cheryl's in a foul mood.

PAM Uh oh, are we in for one of her tough days or what?

HANNAH She'll be all right. She's probably just a little bit nervous because of tonight.

PAM Yeah, I guess we're all going to be a bit nervous tonight. Eh, Val?

VALERIE Uh... yeah... I guess so!

PAM But I'm really proud of myself.

HANNAH How come?

PAM I got myself in a good mood. Whatever I was doing—getting my clothes together, driving the car—I could hear my little mental clock ticking, ticking: what's it going to be? what's she going to decide? in a few hours we'll know—tick, tick, tick; tick, tick, tick. And then I'd calm down. I'd shut my eyes.

HANNAH While you were driving the car?

PAM No.

HANNAH Just joking.

PAM But I calmed myself down. I'm going to be in a good mood. *Sings.* I'm going to be in a good mood; I'm going to be in a good mood.

HANNAH Oh brother.

Dagmar enters.

PAM Nobody minds if I change the tape?

DAGMAR Hi, Pam, Hannah.

PAM Hi, Dagmar.

VALERIE Hi, Dagmar!

PAM Hey, Dagmar, how's this for music to come down the aisle to?

Puts on the music.

DAGMAR I do take this man to be my lawful wedded husband.

She glides down to the tape deck.

DAGMAR Where's Dorothy?

PAM She probably wants to make a big entrance.

There is some knocking at the door. Also the phone which has been brought out from the office starts ringing.

DAGMAR Yeah, so we can all be hanging on her words.

PAM What do you think it's going to be?

DAGMAR I think she'll go for it.

ROSE *Off.* The door is stuck. I got to get in quick; let me in. The door is stuck.

PAM *Answering the phone.* Dagmar, it's for you. It's your fiancé.

HANNAH Hi, Rose.

Rose hands Hannah a note.

DAGMAR Hello... yeah, it doesn't matter to me.

HANNAH What's this?

ROSE I never had to pee so bad in my life.

HANNAH Rose?

ROSE It was under the door.

Rose goes to the changing room.

PAM What do you think Dorothy's going to say?

HANNAH I think she's going to tell us we're not quite ready, but the best way for us to get ready is for her to rent the space and the pressure'll bring out the best in us. And then we'll have to work towards the performance?

DAGMAR *On the phone.* No—you've already disturbed me. No, we haven't started yet. . . . Well, tell them yellow.

HANNAH She's going to say: we're not quite ready yet, but if we all push each other a little bit, we'll get there. I predict those will be her very words.

Hannah has a look at the note.

DAGMAR I know they have to know by tonight, but they were already told that. No, I told you we haven't started yet, but we're about to.

HANNAH Hey, everybody—

VALERIE Uh. . . Pam. . . Can I talk to you for a second?

Cheryl returns from the changing area.

PAM Sure, Val, what is it?

HANNAH Everybody—yoo hoo!

CHERYL What's up?

DAGMAR Yeah, I know that. I know that. . . . Yeah, I know.

VALERIE Well, . . . the thing is. . . we were talking last time about the section where. . . let's see. . .

HANNAH Please, can I have everyone's attention?

PAM Just a sec. *Fanfare.* Tata ta ta tata!

DAGMAR So it won't be a problem. . . no problem. . . it won't be a problem. . . no problem. . . Yeah, I gotta go. . . Bye.

HANNAH Dorothy isn't coming tonight. She left this note.

CHERYL What does it say?

HANNAH Should I read it?

CHERYL It doesn't matter if you read it; just what does it say?

PAM What does it say?

Rose comes back from the changing area.

HANNAH All right, I'll read it: "Dear Dancers. Guess what? At 5 o'clock this afternoon the landlord dropped in to give us notice he's not renewing the lease and to vacate A.S.A.P."

Various people react, groan, "Oh no."

"Not to worry, though," she says. "I'm going to hassle it out with him and I'll work out something or my name isn't Dorothy. His wife is on the board of the Canadian Conference of the Arts and, if worst comes to worst, I'll drag *her* into it." Et cetera, Et cetera. "Meantime, Hannah or Cheryl can lead a good warm up." And then she gives us these steps we can work on, cause she promised us tonight she'd rough in the end of the piece.

PAM On paper?

CHERYL Let me see.

ROSE Yeah, can I see?

HANNAH Just a second—*Hannah turns the note over and reads.*

CHERYL Doesn't it say anything about her decision?

HANNAH Yeah—

CHERYL Read it out, for godsake.

HANNAH It's no go. She doesn't think we're ready.

Cheryl takes the note and reads carefully.

PAM Why?

HANNAH She doesn't think we're ready. Maybe after working another year.

Out.

VALERIE And as everybody went about their business, trying to salvage their mood, I was kind of borne aloft almost on a high of watching and observing. And that high of watching and observing kept on and on for the longest time, right through the whole evening. And where I normally would have encouraged myself to do something like go over to Pam and talk to her, or say something to everybody, and then feel prevented by my shyness,

or try it, but get it all balled up, I felt something free inside me, temporarily, anyway. And it didn't matter whether I was shy or not. I was watching and observing, and for the first time, that was enough.

DAGMAR Hey, Twyla Tharp's at the Queen E. tonight. Maybe we could do a quick warm-up and then go down and see her.
Poor response. Well, I just thought it might be fun to take advantage of the free evening.

VALERIE It's not a free evening.

DAGMAR I didn't mean it was free, free . . .

VALERIE I didn't mean that you meant. . . .

DAGMAR Oh, . . . never mind.

PAM What are we going to do then?

CHERYL We'll do the warm up and then we'll try out the new steps. We'll make note of our questions. Then we'll go home. O.k.?

PAM Yeah.

CHERYL Everybody?

HANNAH Yeah.

DAGMAR O.k.

CHERYL Everybody ready for the warm up?

PAM Why didn't she think we're ready? What does it say?

HANNAH Have a look. "The technique isn't there yet."

PAM Oh.

HANNAH Look, the important thing is what it says afterwards, right Cheryl?

CHERYL The technique isn't there.

HANNAH No, she goes on to say something else.

PAM "Don't be discouraged"—this part?

HANNAH Yeah. Read it out. We should all hear what she says there.

PAM Oh, it's too depressing.

CHERYL Can we warm up? Please?

DAGMAR Warm up, warm up!

They get into place, except Hannah.

HANNAH "I'm sorry, I know everyone's going to be disappointed, and I know I'm disappointed along with everyone, but we'll get there, we'll get there—" Can we just warm up please? . . . 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4.

They start warming up.

HANNAH Wait, Cheryl. Can we do it standing up?
 CHERYL Why?
 HANNAH That's what Dorothy did last week.
 CHERYL But we've only done it a few times, Hannah.
 HANNAH I thought she was going to start using that one from now on.
 PAM I think I'd prefer to do the one on the floor myself.
 HANNAH Why don't we use this opportunity to continue something new? Maybe we should start pushing ourselves a little bit.
 CHERYL Do you want to lead the warm up? Is that what you're getting at?
 HANNAH I just thought it would be good to do what Dorothy would have done.
 DAGMAR It doesn't matter much either way.
 CHERYL Why don't you lead the warm up. You can lead it your way if that's what you want.
 HANNAH O.k. O.k. I give up. Forget I ever said I thought we should do it standing up. I was wrong. I made a mistake. I shouldn't have interrupted. Go ahead.
 DAGMAR Oh, for heaven's sake!
 CHERYL No, I'm not going to continue now.
 HANNAH All right, all right. I'll tell you what. I'll continue the warm up starting on the floor. Everybody ready?
 PAM Ready.
 ROSE Ready.
 HANNAH O.k. Let's take it from the start. And 1...2...

Hannah continues the warm up, during which Cheryl gets up and wanders off.

HANNAH Cheryl? Cheryl?
 CHERYL Don't worry about me, please.
 PAM Cheryl... what are you doing?
 HANNAH/
 CHERYL *Together.* What ARE you doing?

They finish the warm up. Dagmar goes to the phone.

ROSE . . . feels good.

PAM . . . good warm up.

VALERIE Thanks, Hannah.

HANNAH You're welcome.

PAM So, what are we going to do now?

HANNAH Come on everybody, let's not get discouraged, all right? So: we're picking up from the trio on the floor. Everyone remember where they were? Rose—the trio on the floor? . . .

ROSE I'm getting there.

DAGMAR *On the phone.* Hi, John . . . fine, . . . no, Dorothy isn't coming tonight.

PAM Let's see. . . .

DAGMAR Listen . . . I just called cus I wanted to remind you. . . . Listen. . . .

CHERYL You were there—

DAGMAR Go ahead, guess.

HANNAH Dagmar—

DAGMAR Yeah, yeah. How'd you know?

HANNAH Dagmar, we're waiting.

DAGMAR Yeah, but still, it must be ESP. . . . Coming.

CHERYL So, how are we going to go about this?

DAGMAR They're waiting for me. . . . What? . . . The guest list's not growing too big? . . .

CHERYL Remind me to unplug the phone when she's done.

HANNAH What if Dorothy tries to call?

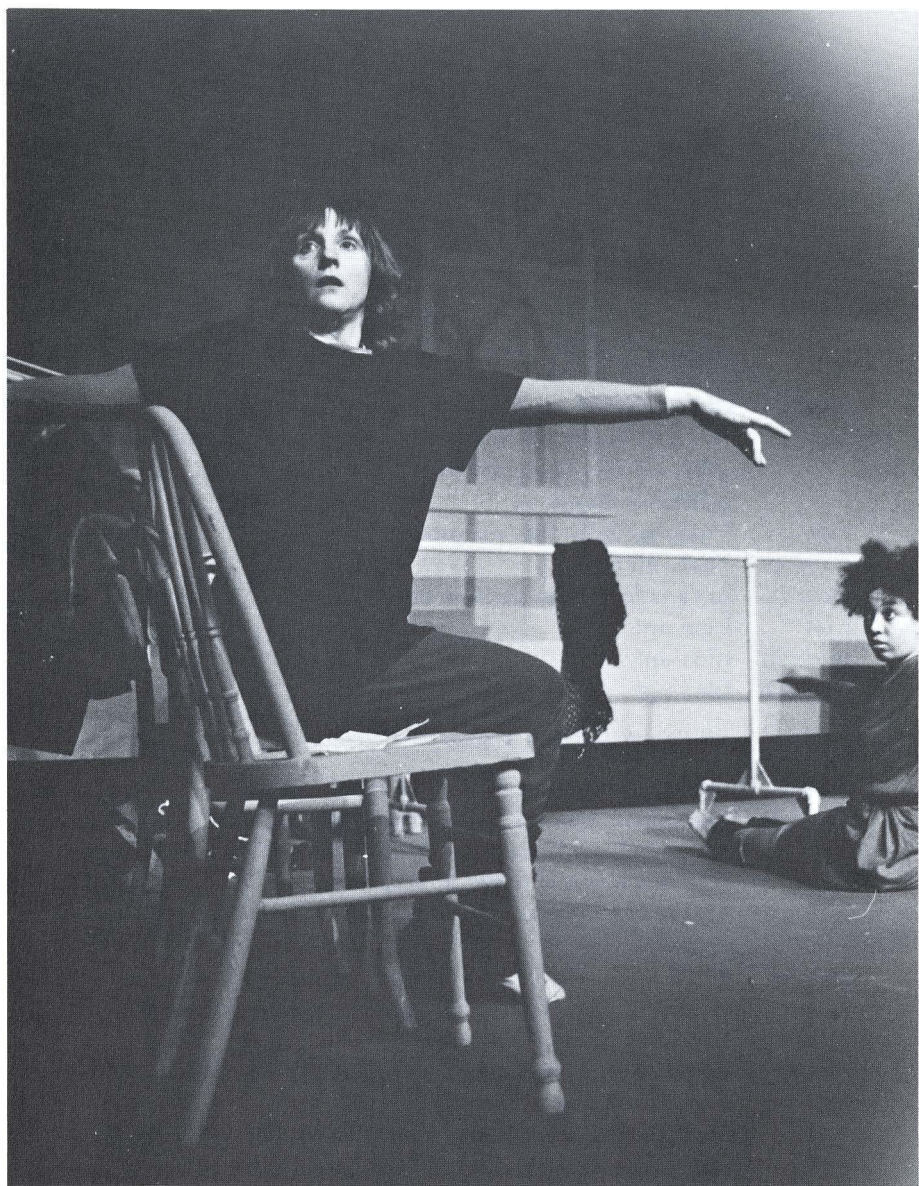
DAGMAR Of course we're going to have everybody from the studio.

HANNAH But they won't come, sweetheart, if you don't join in the work.

HANNAH *To Cheryl.* Do you want to do the instructions?

CHERYL O.k.

PAM We're ready to go. We're ready, ready, ready and willing to go!



Pause.

HANNAH Cheryl. We're all ready.

CHERYL *Has some trouble figuring out the steps on paper.* Yeah, but I think we should at least mark that section from the top before we continue.

PAM Yeah, actually that's a good idea.

HANNAH Yeah, all right.

CHERYL Let's take it from the line up.

PAM Line up!

HANNAH Line up!

DAGMAR Line up!

All line up. There is a space for Cheryl.

CHERYL I'll stand out and count, o.k.? And, ... Val?

VALERIE Coming. ... *Out.* As I was coming into the line up, I heard something inside me say, "Don't lose it. Keep watching even when you're doing it; keep watching; keep watching." And so that's what I tried to do even while being in the steps. ...

CHERYL 5...6...7...8... *They start the dance.*

PAM Wait a minute. I didn't get it right. I've lost the count.

CHERYL You were doing it right.

PAM Was I? I don't feel secure with it at all. I'm sorry.

CHERYL 5...6...7...8... *They try it again.*

PAM *Interrupting.* I don't know what it is. My legs are just hanging onto the end of my hips. I feel ... 'eccch' ... they're not working. I'm sorry. I just couldn't get it right.

CHERYL You were doing it right, Pam.

HANNAH It's o.k. You looked just fine.

PAM Really?

HANNAH Yeah.

CHERYL 5...6...7...8... *They try it again.*

PAM *Interrupts the piece again. Aaaagh! I'm sorry, I just can't get it.*

CHERYL You got it Pam; you got it right again. Why the hell can't you just do it and get on with it?

PAM *Stung.* I can't do it. I just can't do it.

CHERYL Oh, get off it.

PAM I thought we were coming along so well, and I feel like we're nowhere now.

HANNAH We're not nowhere, Pam.

PAM Dorothy thinks we're nowhere.

HANNAH Dorothy doesn't think we're nowhere.

PAM No. We're just not somewhere.

HANNAH Look, Pam, of course this is going to bother us a bit. We should expect that. But today, right here, right now—this is when we have to work—all of us, keep up the work, not get discouraged. Right? "We're going to get there, we're going to get there?" Remember?

CHERYL Yeah.

HANNAH *To Pam.* And remember how good you felt when you came into the group, Pam, how low you were, cause you hadn't been getting any strong direction, and then you came in with us.

PAM It feels like I never came in. All my life I've been in one group or another or another.

ROSE And you're going to continue all your life?

PAM Maybe I will. *Beginning to sing.* Maybe I will.

ROSE So there you are.

PAM Yeah.

HANNAH One more shot?

Pam nods.

CHERYL Yeah, and what's she going to do? Stop again?

PAM Thanks for the vote of confidence.

HANNAH So shall we try it again?

ROSE Sure.

CHERYL Oh, I'll do it over and over and over again. I'm the patient type.

HANNAH Pam?

PAM Sure.

DAGMAR Oh—I have a great idea. I know what will help. Pam, your steps are harder than mine in this part, and they draw a lot of attention. If you're not really comfortable with them, then we could . . . uh . . . switch parts, and ask Dorothy if we could leave it switched that way. Especially seeing as we'd already rehearsed it, and you might be more comfortable with my part.

PAM I don't know your part.

DAGMAR How about Val's part?

PAM Yeah, I know that one.

DAGMAR And you know mine, right, Val?

VALERIE Yeah.

DAGMAR All right. So we do a three-way switch. All right with you, Val?

VALERIE Well—I don't know. I guess so if . . .

DAGMAR O.k., there we are. So, you'll do Val's part and I'll do what you were—

CHERYL Hold on. Hold everything. You are not solving anybody's problem this way.

DAGMAR All right. I thought it was worth a try.

CHERYL So: positions? And: 5 . . . 6 . . . 7 . . . 8 . . . *Counts them through. They dance. Cheryl gets loud and sharp around the section Pam previously stopped at.*

PAM *Stops.* Fuck! I just can't get it. I'm sorry.

CHERYL *Overlapping—cued by "can't get it."* Well, that's it. I don't need this.

PAM What are you doing, Cheryl?

CHERYL I don't need this.

PAM Where are you going?

CHERYL I'm going home. Thursday we'll have someone who can lead us and someone who can stroke egos and do whatever else needs doing.

HANNAH Cheryl, please don't go.

CHERYL Why not? Dorothy's note says if you're in the mood, work on the piece. Looks like Pam isn't in the mood.

HANNAH Now who's the one behaving like a spoiled baby?

PAM Thanks, Hannah.

HANNAH Please. Today of all days.

CHERYL It's not such a big deal. Thursday she'll be back; we'll have the usual session; she'll deal with Pam. Why do we have to knock our heads against a brick wall?

HANNAH It's that very attitude that led Dorothy to think we're not ready.

CHERYL Oh, you know, do you? Nothing to do with our technique.

HANNAH Technique comes from being in tune with each other.

CHERYL As far as I'm concerned we're here to get better as dancers. Dorothy's our teacher, and she's not here. That's all.

HANNAH Cheryl, there's more to it than that.

CHERYL Like what?

HANNAH Like developing bonds between us, as a group, understanding each other, working with each other—

CHERYL Oh, come off it. We don't have to be great buddies, bosom sisters.



HANNAH Then what is it? Just technique?
CHERYL Yeah.
HANNAH Cheryl, if you don't see what's wrong with that, we might as well be living on two different planets. We're not even in the same group.
CHERYL See ya Thursday.
HANNAH If you walk through that door, you're walking out on the group. You're walking out on us Cheryl, and I for one don't care if you come back.
CHERYL You "for one"?
HANNAH You want to find out how we all feel? You want to take a poll? Go ahead, ask them.
CHERYL You're making a mountain out of a molehill.
HANNAH I'm serious.
CHERYL Yeah, too serious. Bye.

Cheryl leaves.

VALERIE Out. Nobody said anything for a bit, until Hannah tried to pick up the pieces. And I kept on listening and watching. And also I took out my appointment book, and that was when I decided I'd keep a diary.
HANNAH I'm sorry. I said what I felt I had to say. I still feel that way.

Rose returns to studying steps.

PAM But what does that mean? You said certain things about "if she walks through that door."
HANNAH I meant them.
PAM So what does that mean?
HANNAH We follow through.

Dagmar is dialing the phone.

PAM But you said some pretty strong things about her not bothering to come back. How can you follow through without splitting up the group?

HANNAH I don't know if it's really a group if it's so easily split.

ROSE What are you up to, Dagmar?

DAGMAR There's time to make the theatre if I hurry.

HANNAH Dagmar!

DAGMAR Well, Cheryl is gone; we can't rehearse without her here. *On the phone.* Hi... it's me. We can still go. Don't ask. I'll meet you there.

HANNAH We can rehearse without them.

DAGMAR *Dressing, readying herself.* How? Who's going to stand out and watch? Me? No way. Pam?

PAM Not really.

DAGMAR Rose?

ROSE *Moving on her own.* No.

DAGMAR Valerie?

VALERIE Well, maybe. I guess really the thing is...

DAGMAR Look, whether you do it, Hannah, or Val does it, or anybody, that leaves two out. That's not enough.

HANNAH I don't see why.

VALERIE I didn't really finish what I was saying...

HANNAH We should try. We should try.

DAGMAR Why? Dorothy'll be back on Thursday. Cheryl's right. *Consults time.* Oh, it's going to be close. Anybody else want to come? ... Twyla Tharp? Cheesecake with me and John after? ... See ya! *She leaves.*

HANNAH Dagmar! *Dagmar leaves.*

ROSE So, shall we try the new stuff?

HANNAH The new stuff?

ROSE The stuff Dorothy wrote down for us. On the note.

HANNAH Right. Of course. That's what we're here to do. That's what we're going to do. *Hannah gets the note.*

PAM How are we going to do it if there's only four of us?

HANNAH You know what's going to happen now?

PAM What?

HANNAH We're going to get this new section down to a "t." We're going to get it perfect. Dorothy will be back Thursday, and will she or will she not see who decided to carry through? She'll see who kept on working. Then Cheryl will have to explain. And Dorothy will tell *her* to shape up. Maybe she'll learn something from that, too. It pisses me off that just because she's got technique she thinks she doesn't have to work with us. So: Rose, Val, Cheryl have their feet touching in the air. Of course, Cheryl isn't here, so she won't get this material.

PAM If Cheryl has to explain then she's going to say that I was the problem because I was having trouble with the line up.

HANNAH Yeah, and we tell them that the very next time we tried it, it was no problem.

PAM Yeah, but that hasn't happened yet.

HANNAH Pam—"We'll get there, we'll get there." Remember?

Rose takes the note.

ROSE Okay: Hannah, Pam, Dagmar move into the spaces. Dagmar's missing there, too.

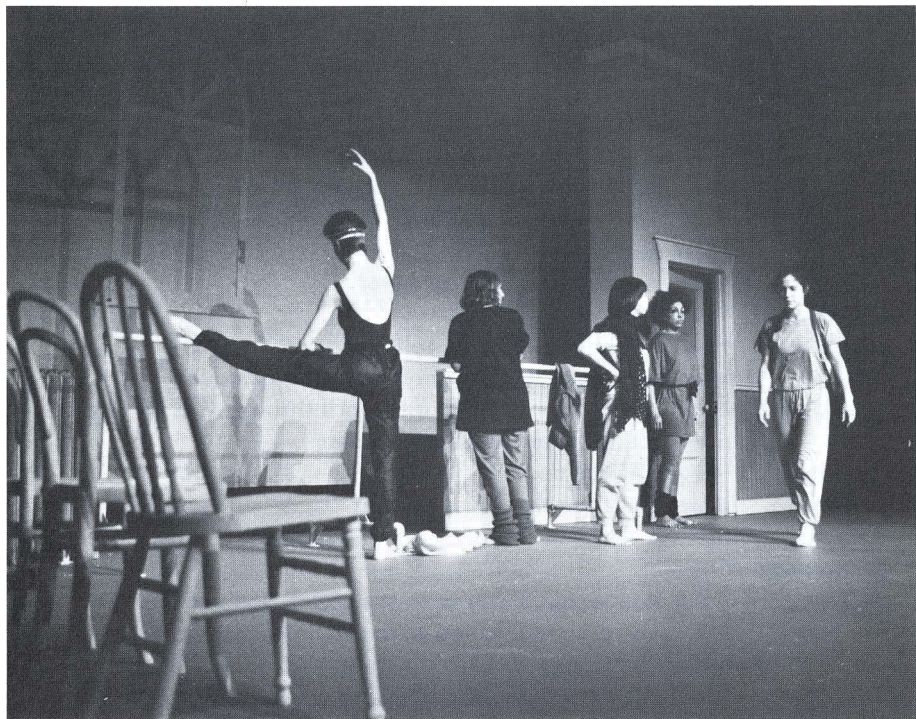
HANNAH All right, here we go, Pam!

ROSE And then... we all roll on our backs... take 8 counts over, left hip up to our knees, facing out... 1... 2... 3... 4... 5... 6... 7... 8.

PAM But the thing is she will say it was my fault, and we weren't getting anywhere cause it was my fault.

ROSE Left foot lunge... two counts, with arms sweeping in a circle...

PAM I don't like that. I don't want that to happen.



- ROSE On three we all stand, turning right, and make a circle
 joining hands, moving for eight double counts. . . .
- HANNAH It's not your fault that she walked out, or Dagmar goes
 off to the theatre. You're the one here working.
- ROSE . . . then face downstage, feet together. . . .
- HANNAH Isn't that right, everybody?
- VALERIE Yeah.
- ROSE Outside people sweep arms and cross one another, around
 the group . . . 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4.
- PAM But they're not going to say that.
- HANNAH Nobody is accusing you, Pam. You're not the problem.
- ROSE Centre person onto. . . . Let's reverse.

They reverse.

HANNAH You're not the problem.

ROSE We all do four of those airborne steps starting on the right. . . .

PAM It's going to look that way, when all she has to say is. . . .

HANNAH Pam, please. Rose, Val, just a sec. Hold everything.

ROSE And "Don't worry," she says. "We'll clean up the details. Have fun."

PAM Why can't Dorothy just be here?

ROSE What?

HANNAH Pam is feeling she's going to be accused.

ROSE You don't want to work through the instructions?

HANNAH I don't see how we're going to work through it if we're not together about what we're doing.

ROSE We could just do it.

PAM Rose, can I see that for a second?

ROSE Sure.

HANNAH O.k.

PAM All it says is that if you're in the mood, you can work on some new material. If you're in the mood. It doesn't say we have to stay. Cheryl's right.

HANNAH We don't have to do anything. It's a free country. But what should we be doing? We want to do what we should be doing.

PAM Maybe we should all go home.

HANNAH I just want so much for us as a group!

VALERIE Out. I don't know if anyone noticed me scribbling away in my notebook or not; . . . I don't think so. They were too busy coping with the rug that had been pulled out from under them. And I don't remember what it was I was writing down. Whatever it was, it seemed very important, very charged at the time. I was writing the names of colours and shapes of people, and ideas about movement. I think I was leading up to being a wonderful choreographer. Sometimes, I wish I'd kept that little notebook. But it's gone, long gone by now. Anyhow, the next I looked up, there was a bit of a commotion on the stairs leading up to the studio.

Footsteps off. They hear that somebody's coming.

VALERIE Hey, maybe that's Dorothy! Maybe she finished with the landlord!

Valerie rushes to the door to see. It's Cheryl, being helped in by Dagmar. Cheryl is limping.

VALERIE Cheryl?

CHERYL I'm all right, I'm all right.

DAGMAR We need some ice.

PAM What happened?

Pam goes to get the ice from the fridge. They sit Cheryl down on a chair.

DAGMAR Just as I start pulling out of the parking lot, I see Cheryl limping her bike back. . . .

CHERYL I'm all right. I'll be all right.

DAGMAR She sprained something.

CHERYL Yeah, well . . . it's had enough time to start swelling.

PAM What do you mean?

ROSE You came in with that injury, didn't you?

CHERYL Yeah.

HANNAH And you were trying to ignore it all the way through?

CHERYL Yeah. And on the bike, I. . . .

VALERIE What are you doing? *Valerie takes over tending the injury.*

CHERYL I suppose I was stupid. I said, "To hell with the pain." I'd go right through warm up and rehearsal—oh that's cold—and that's what made me so awful, Pam; I was just holding the pain in and thinking if I could do that, the least you could do is not bog the group with so many repetitions. But then, on the bike, the pain got to the point I said I've got to have it looked at. I thought I'd go to the VGH, but then I figured there's ice here. . . .

PAM And warmth?

CHERYL Yeah.

HANNAH I'm sorry, Cheryl. If I had realized what was going on, I wouldn't have been so hard on you.

CHERYL And if I hadn't hurt myself?

HANNAH Hey, I'm trying to apologize to you, Cheryl.

CHERYL Watch it. People will start thinking we see eye to eye.

HANNAH And we don't?

CHERYL *Mocking.* What do you think?

HANNAH Yeah, well, I guess this studio's big enough for the two of us.

CHERYL *Fake macho.* Thanks, Hannah. *Normal voice.* So, who's going to give me a lift? I should get this leg home where I can rest it.

DAGMAR I will.

PAM I've got a bike rack on my car. I can take the bike.

CHERYL There's no point in both of you driving all the way out to my place.

PAM All right, I'll do it then.

DAGMAR It's no trouble for me. It's on my way.

VALERIE I could ride the bike over to Cheryl's.

HANNAH Sounds like we've really got our act together now.

CHERYL I'll go with Pam.

People are preparing to go and going.

VALERIE And so I put away my notebook and went with them. Later, in my diary, I jotted down predictions of what would become of each of us. I started the page: Where Will We Be? I won't bother going through my predictions, but here's what, in fact, happened. Dagmar had a baby, and though she came back to work with Dorothy later, it was only on a hobby basis. Cheryl went into a different group shortly after, a group that worked her harder—or that made her feel like she was working even harder—so that she could feel even more self-determined. Pam moved to South America with her husband—who she hadn't met yet—or was it Singapore? I can't remember now. She's probably putting herself through the wringer there, too. And I decided well, (*shyly*) well, of course, I decided I enjoyed my jottings so much I'd work at them; I'd work as hard at them as anybody works at dance. And then I'd be able to show myself my own way, too.

You guessed it. I'm the author of the piece you're watching. And that's what I realized that night: whether you do it through dance or plumbing—whatever—it's 6 of 1, half a dozen of the other. Anyhow, to get back to the story.

Cheryl, Dagmar, Pam leave.

We were off, and that left only Hannah and Rose. They stayed on. In fact, they're still with Dorothy's group. They're probably performing at the moment in Toronto or Montreal or whichever place the tour stopped first. I got some of the other predictions wrong in my little notebook then, but I didn't get theirs wrong. And even though I left the studio with no concrete idea of what they said or did, that didn't matter one bit. I may not even have been wondering at the time. But I still know what happened—even if briefly—between them.

Valerie leaves.

Rose continues working.

HANNAH So can I lock up, now?

ROSE I want to stay till nine.

HANNAH Yourself?

ROSE You can stay. Why don't you stay, too?

HANNAH I don't know. It's not the same without everybody else. No slight to you. I'm really exhausted. I think I'm going to go home, have a hot bath.

ROSE O.k.

HANNAH Rose, the door won't lock without the key; it's not a latch lock. That's why I wanted to lock up. O.k.?

ROSE Leave the keys... I'll lock up.

HANNAH Yeah, but Dorothy expects me to have a spare set of keys so if she's late (or she can't show—like tonight—it doesn't happen very often, but just in case) I have to have them.

ROSE I'll bring them on Thursday.

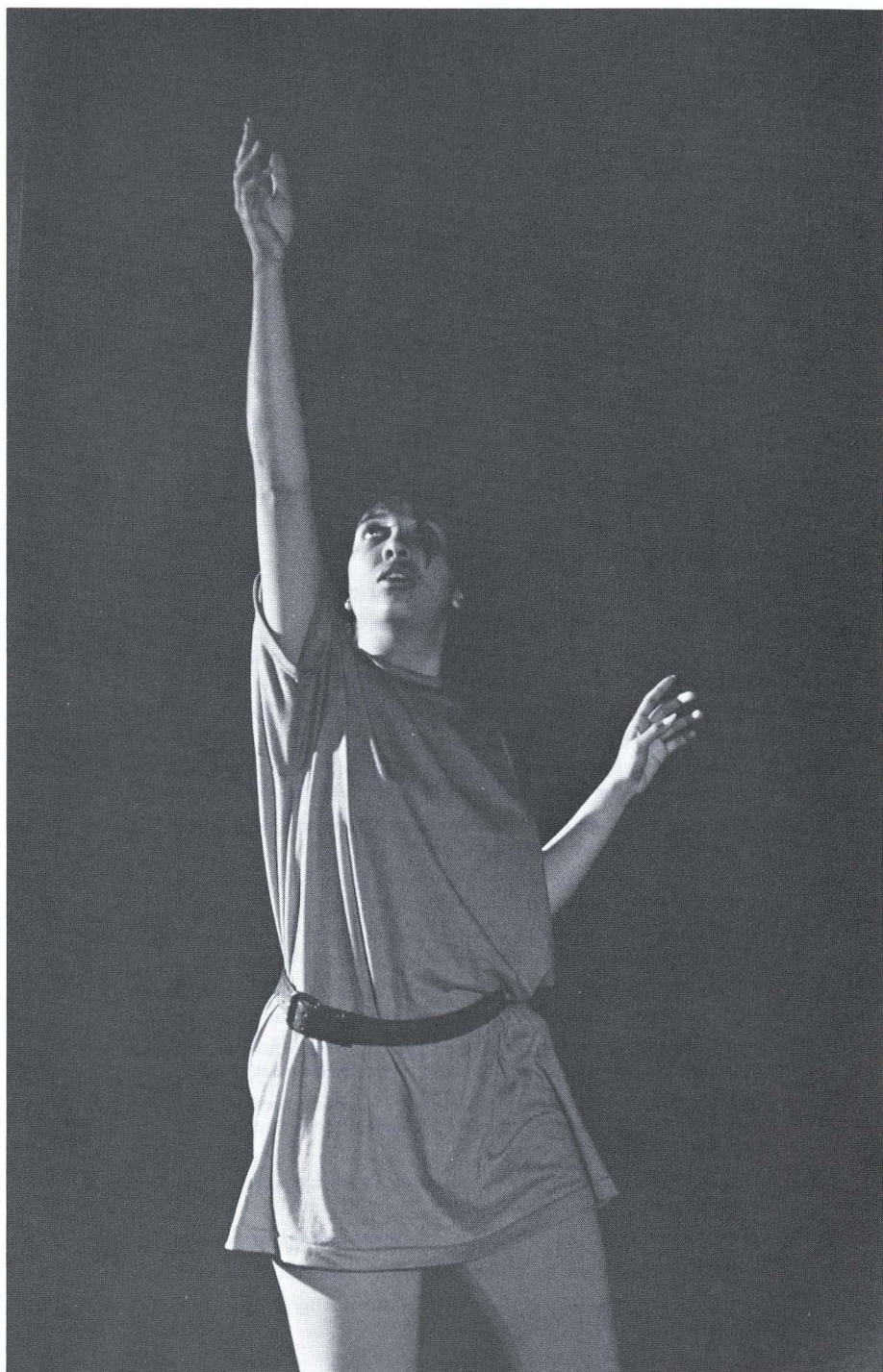
HANNAH Oh... oh, yeah, o.k.

Hannah has realized something and puts the keys down for Rose to pick up later.

ROSE Thanks, Hannah.

HANNAH ... have a good time. See ya Thursday.

Rose continues moving. The lights slowly come down.



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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

LEONARD ANGEL: Playwright

Born in Montreal, Leonard Angel first received a B.A. from McGill, and then an M.A. in Philosophy, an M.A. in Creative Writing and Theatre and a Ph.D. in Philosophy from the University of British Columbia. Leonard Angel has become an established playwright, many of whose plays have been staged by The New Play Centre. His produced work includes *Incident After Antietam*, *Isadora and G.B.*, *The Unveiling* and the monologue, *A Poet Goes To The Dentist*. His play, *Eleanor Marx*, was produced at the Bathhouse Theatre, Seattle and given a public reading at the Writer's Theatre in New York in April, 1985.

GISA COLE: Choreographer

As a young dancer, Gisa Cole performed with such companies as Pacific Dance Theatre, Prism Dance Theatre, The Vancouver Symphony, C.B.C. television, the Vancouver Opera Association and in productions of the Vancouver International Festival. She was awarded scholarships to train with the National Ballet of Canada and the Royal Winnipeg Ballet and, with the support of two Canada Council grants, she studied in New York with Martha Graham and Merce Cunningham. In 1974, she became Artistic Director of Prism Dance Theatre and has since worked with her own companies, with Mountain Dance Theatre, Studio 58 and the U.B.C. Recreation Department. She has recently been Resident at the University of Waterloo and given Master Classes at Stanford University and at the Guadalajara Modern Dance Company in Mexico. She is now Director of Main Dance Place, a community oriented dance studio. Gisa Cole has worked on other productions at the New Play Centre, for Westcoast Actors and as the choreographer for the Arts Club's national tour of *Cruel Tears*. She has most recently shown new works in *Trans-Forms* at the Firehall Theatre, Vancouver.

JANE HEYMAN: Director

Educated in the University of British Columbia Department of Theatre, Jane Heyman became Artistic Director of Holiday Theatre in 1967 and then worked in repertory theatre in England from 1969 to 1972. She returned to Vancouver in 1974 and has since been an Associate Director at the New Play Centre. She has been involved as Director and Actor in numerous workshops of new scripts; her most recent NPC projects include *After Baba's Funeral*, and *Tsybaly*, both by Ted Galay. Other recent work includes Brecht's *Happy End* for the Vancouver Playhouse Acting School, and the pilot production of *Skin*, by Dennis Foon for the Race Relations Project One. She also works as a teacher of Acting, Directing and Drama In Education; she has taught at U.B.C., Malaspina College, Camosun College, and Studio 58. From 1982 to 1984 she taught at the David Thompson University Centre in Nelson, B.C., where she was co-ordinator of the Theatre Department.

PAMELA HAWTHORN: Producer

Since she became its Managing Director in 1972, Pamela Hawthorn has developed The New Play Centre to its current position as one of the primary developmental theatres in Canada. She has encouraged the development of a score of new Canadian playwrights, many of whom have become well established writers. The NPC has mounted premiere productions of over 100 plays. Pamela has directed *The Unveiling*, *Free At Last*, *Ned and Jack*, *MA!*, and *Beautiful Tigers* for the NPC. She has directed numerous plays for companies including The Vancouver Playhouse; The Globe Theatre, Regina; Bastion Theatre, Victoria and The Stratford Festival. She has most recently directed *Taming of the Shrew* and *Crimes of the Heart* for the Missouri Repertory Company, in Kansas City.

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