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ARTISTIC DIRECTOR'S REPORT
23 April 1995

PIGSKIN PREPPIES

This show was almost a repeat of the experience of last Christmas. It pulled off, but just barely. The cast was plagued by illness, dropouts and unfulfilled commitments. As happened at Christmas, the cast and crew rallied and everything was covered but the quality was very uneven so that the strength of presentation varied wildly from show to show. Individual performances ranged from exceptional to mediocre for any number of reasons. Some people remained extraordinarily focused throughout while others never really conquered the material. Unless a good deal of homework is done, this show will require another rehearsal block before it has any additional performances. I do not pretend to have the reasons or this answers for this continuing situation, but here are a few of my thoughts:

The performing company is too small. People are used too much and too often and they are burning out. If this is the case the only solution is to make a concerted effort to increase the number of committed people as performers and technicians to even out the work load. The ideal would be to have a large enough pool to draw from so that each show would have no repeat performers or techies and that no one would get pressured into doing more than one or two shows at most in a season. Further advance planning, casting and rehearsals are necessary for all events, from bar nights to hotel shows. A greater diversity of venue may also contribute to an increase in our numbers and reduce performer overlapping.

A QUIET END

Pending its budget's approval, the summer play is ready to role. Open Stage has agreed to our use of their space with the same stipulations as two years ago, i.e. proof of liability insurance, custodial assistance, fee payment along with a written use schedule. They also asked that if we want to put an exhibition in the gallery we try to have volunteers to be there daily from 11AM to 1:30 PM and for first Thursday from 5 to 8 P.M. This latter request is not a condition of our use however. A letter, character and plot description has been prepared and is to be mailed to prospective auditionees that I will draw from the HCT actor file. Open auditions are tentatively set for Monday 8 and Tuesday May 9 at the Paper Moon. This will be finalized with Ronnie in the next day or so in order for the actor notices to go out. I would also like flyers placed in the bar for auditions as well. Rehearsals will begin the 16th of May and follow our normal Tues/Thurs pattern at the vault until mid June when they will gradually begin increasing in number.

Paul R. Foltz
Artistic Director

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR'S REPORT

13 AUGUST 1995

The Performing Company is currently in its rest/regroup mode, the usual state for the month of August.

The Summer event, our production of the play A Quiet End by Robin Swados, was both a triumph and a diaster for the Company. On the good side, the play was without question, the finest piece of work ever produced by this Company - every artistic/production aspect worked, if not perfectly then far above the norms of any theatre event in this area and could easily be compared to many Off-Broadway productions. The play also generated more press/media coverage for the Company than we've ever had before, definitely exceeding our 'outreach' goal. Our visibility in the overall community has never been greater with 75% of our audience coming from the general populace.

That visability, unfortunately, did not translate into major ticket sales. In eight performances there were only 297 people who attended, slightly more than 1/3 rd of our target number, making our primary goal of raising funds a virtual failure. In truth, if the production had not been essentially underwritten for its costs, not only would we not have had money to give away, we would have lost money. Add this sobering fact to the basic "Poodles" disaster and our score card reads "two strikes, no hits." The only explanation I can logically venture for this low turnout is in the play itself. People obviously didnt read the promotional materials or listen to the news reports. They saw the title, decided it was too heavy, too depressing or whatever and dismissed the idea of attending. If this is indeed the case, then I simply chose the wrong vehicle for us to perform.

As to other events of this Summer:

There was only one tour performance of "Poodles" which was at Altland's Ranch on June 25th for the benefit of York House. The show went better than it deserved to considering that we had only 5 of the original cast, two new performers, another who had rehearsed the show but never performed it and one who was a fill in where we absolutely had to have him, all compounded by the availability of people for only 5 rehearsals prior to the show. As is the norm at Altland's, the attendance was sketchy. Joy Ufema, however, was pleased with the results and did raise some money from ticket and program ad sales.

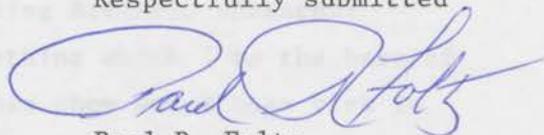
We will be doin a 10 minute set at the upcoming "Judy,Judy,Judy" show in York on Friday, 25 August at the Valencia Ballroom. Wartime with Tim, Eric and myself along with Bryon (Miss Pearly) doing I Will Survive will make up the program.

Jack Radcliff, a professional photographer I met through Joy at York House

has offered to do standard head and shoulder shots of the members of the Performing Company, gratis. We'll be working together to set up photo calls over the next several months until we can cover everyone. Our initial session will be on Sunday, 10 September at 1P.M. in the Vault and I have asked Jack, Tim and Bryon to do the first round.

The last activity of this Summer was the production and compilation of our 1st Calendar survey along with the development of our next two year calendar. Separate reports of these efforts are attached.

Respectfully submitted



Paul R. Foltz
Artistic Director

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR REPORT

At this time of year, we are barraged with the endless 'best of..., worst of...' programs, shows and articles. Although they are most often hideously boring, they do allow one some moments of introspection, a very positive action of examining what has gone before, gleaning what insights we can and perhaps even learning a lesson or two. In the preparation of this report for the Board and Members of Lily White and Company Inc., I have undertaken a similar process which can be summarized most easily (if I may abuse yet another author) as 'it has been the best of years, it has been the worst of years.'

The best things about this past year are fairly easy to enumerate. Line up our major events since last December and one can see some amazing Artistic advances:

Broadway Angel: a full length lip synch musical, something which (to the best of my knowledge) has never been done. This show was a huge risk in any number of ways from cast coordination, through developmental and technical stages to audience acceptance. After the first two performances, I was sure it was a failure. It wasn't until the second set of performances that I was really sure we had reached our audience. We had given them something unique and they responded well to it.

Loose in Paradise: Our first ever venture into dinner theatre, performed in a custom tailored performance space, taking a theme, applying it to an hour and a half show then carrying it into the meal menu and the performance environment as well generating, once again, an enthusiastic response. Although this show was given more performances than usual, it never really progressed to becoming the real 'road show' we had hoped to make it.

Lily in La La Land: The most solid hotel show that we have ever produced. Conceptually, it was the strongest, visually, one of the most interesting, technically, it was better than any show we have done, and financially, it was our biggest money raiser to date. For the most part, people were assigned areas of work and they pulled through with the least amount of tension of any of our major events.

Lily White Christmas Twee: the single most difficult cabaret we have ever done involving a complete theme, a break-neck pace with production aspects keyed to our venue (for the most part), and in spite of all the 'occurrences' managed to work. The audience enjoyed the show while the cast and crew proved, undeniably, that we are a Company.

From first meeting to final curtain, we rallied, helped one another, covered, replaced, juggled and ad libbed our way to a workable production.

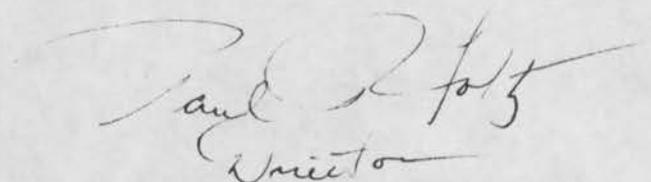
The worst parts of the year are, unfortunately, easy to enumerate as well. We are all dealing with the incredible losses we have been given this year. It was too easy for us to feel safe, almost immune, from all the illness and death. Reality decided to slap us about a bit, however, reminding us vividly just why we do what we do and that there will be alot more for us to handle before we can finally stop. Almost as disturbing to me as the physical losses we have suffered is the loss of active participation we continue to encounter. Many of us have been working at this company for five, eight or more years and we are tired. Many seem to have lost heart. Some seem as if they don't or are unable to care anymore. Our general membership is dwindling rapidly, moving toward disastrous proportions. We are facing the reality of scaling back our productions, or canceling them all together because there are too few people to do the work required. Yet can the people who have come to depend on the income we are able to supply them with scale back their needs? We have started to help two new AIDS service organizations this year. There is a new Hospice in Lebanon who has asked our assistance and now there are the hopes of opening a hospice here in Harrisburg. True, they aren't our responsibility. We aren't able to generate enormous sums of money the way an AIDS Walk can. We can only do so much with what we have to work with. It took us six years to raise \$50,000.00. Was it worth the effort? Do we make a difference?

We have only three main projects for 1995; a Spring Drag Show, the Summer Play and the Holiday revival of Broadway Angel. The Spring show will be developed as a two hour vehicle for a cast of twelve (6m/6f or 8f/4m). The theme will be decided by the cast from either Country/Western or a 40 years Retrospective of Pop Music. The show will open in early April in the Carriage House Theatre with a major part of our energies being focused on touring it, at least once a month, through October 1995. The revival of Broadway Angel will be done at th Paper Moon on the first weekend of December 1995 but it will also be available for touring between Mid November '95 and Mid January '96. The Production will have some revisions and minor editing done to it to tighten and improve it. The Summer play selection is A Quiet End by Robin Swados. The story invloves three men, sharing an apartment in New York, who are all living with AIDS. It is an emotional story where the men learn to confront their illnesses and deaths in the light of friendship, loyalty, and love. While the play is very touching and life affirming, it is also very funny at times and is an excellent venue for five actors, the 3 men, one's lover, and an unseen psychiatrist. Production is slated for July with an 8 performance run over two weekends, if we can afford it. It too could be taken on tour if we wanted.

This calendar is small but ambitious and some may say that I have learned nothing from this past year's experiences. On the contrary, I have a very clear vision of what this Company is capable, where it should venture and what it will entail, physically and financially. The greatest obstacle we have to overcome is our attitude. We will need a company of workers, not a handful of people who knock themselves out or drain themselves dry. We need individuals who will select only one or two areas that they want to work in, and who will commit themselves wholeheartedly to fulfilling those responsibilities. Then each of those individuals has to find someone to assist them, who in turn must find someone and so on down the line until person by person, project by project we grow into the dedicated work force we so desperately need. This organization has gained a great deal of respect in our local community over the past few years. If we can learn how to capitalize on that respect we can see this Company grow, becoming more dynamic and with a potential to do more good than any of us could ever have imagined possible. We are in need. By letting our needs be known and asking for help, we will get it. Most people are willing to respond to you if they are asked to do something definite and if they are made to feel welcome and appreciated. If we can learn to be flexible, learn that there is more than one way to do a job, learn that no one person or small group can accomplish everything or achieve the goals set out in our mission statement, learn that growth and change, though often painful, are positive experiences, learn that new individuals with new ideas mean new vitality to an organization and its overworked members, then we have a chance of surviving 1995 and will assure this organization's existence for many more years.

This Company has worked well in the past year(s). If it is to continue working, reaching the goals we have defined for it, then we as an organization must continue to strive to create unique artistic products that are solidly produced and diverse enough in scope to maintain, and hopefully increase, our audiences. The only way to achieve that diverse productivity is by fundamentally recommitting ourselves to the brazen idealism that brought this Company about in the first place. Recognize our problems. Define a set of solutions. Perform the actions necessary. Embrace the changes and challenges those actions bring about. Active commitment yields growth. Growth is life - individually and organizationally. The other choice is to stop trying and do any of us want to accept that responsibility?

My thanks to the Board and Members of this Company for all they have done this past year. I hope for your continued support in the year ahead


Director