

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

An Historical Study of the Formation, Growth,
and Development of the Downey Children's Theatre

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Master of Arts
in Theater Arts

by

Thomas Edward Fitzgerald

Committee in charge:

Professor Melvyn B. Helstien, Chairman

Professor Donald Crabs

Professor Jerome Cushman

1969

The thesis of Thomas Edward Fitzgerald is approved:

Donald B. Rags

James O. Sullivan

William B. Holter

Committee Chairman

University of California, Los Angeles

1969

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
Abstract of the Thesis	viii
1. The Problem and Methods of Procedure	1
The Problem	1
Statement of the Problem	1
Importance of the Study	1
Methods of Procedure	2
2. History of the Downey Children's Theatre	3
Formation of the Children's Theatre	3
First Tryout	4
Adult Assistance	5
Theater Plant	5
Extension of the Program	5
Summer of 1956	6
Incorporation	7
Co-sponsorship	7
Patronage	7
Organizational Purpose	8
Drama Workshop Program	9
Season of 1956-57	10
Season of 1957-58	11
Season of 1958-59	12

Chapter	Page
Season of 1959-60.	13
Repeat Plays	13
Expansion Into Adult Theater.	14
Actors Equity Contract	15
Theater Building	16
Season of 1960-61.	16
Season of 1961-62.	17
Profit Balance.	18
Junior Programs Tour.	19
Season of 1962-63.	19
Tour	20
Percentage Proposal	21
Park Board Controversy.	22
Season of 1963-64.	22
Benefit Performance	23
Superintendent of Fine Arts.	24
Season of 1964-65.	25
Teen Theatre	26
Park District Dissolves.	27
Tenth Anniversary Birthday Party	28
Season of 1965-66.	28
Season of 1966-67.	29
Season of 1967-68.	30
3. Current Organization of the Downey Children's Theatre	33

Chapter

Page

Downey Children's Theatre, Inc.	33
Children's Theatre Administrative Council	34
Paid Professional Staff	34
Superintendent of Fine Arts	34
Administrative Assistant	35
Technical Director	35
Part-Time Paid Help	36
Assistant Technical Director	36
Scene Painter and Designer	36
Other Technical Assistance	37
Paid Crew Members	37
Costumer	37
Commercial Artists	38
Property Head	38
Other Assistance	38
Directors	38
Actors	39
Scheduling	39
Rehearsal Schedule	40
Transportation	41
Downey Theatre Guild	42
Teen Theatre	42
Budget	43
Teen Theatre Board	43
Schedule	44

Chapter	Page
Conclusions	44
Costume Storage	45
Awards Event	46
4. Technical Aspects	48
Present Theater	48
Rio Hondo Cafetorium	48
The Workshop	52
Workshop Building	54
Scenery	54
Design	54
Construction	55
Painting	56
Proscenium Club	56
Costumes	57
Proposed Theater Building	57
5. The Community and the Theater	62
Downey as a Community	62
Theater Under a Recreation Department	63
Main Objectives of the Downey Children's Theatre	65
Children's Theatre Play Selection	66
Adult Theatre Play Selection	67
Paid Actors	68
"Educating-up" the Downey Audiences	69
The Press	70

Chapter	Page
Open Tryouts	71
Children in Children's Parts	71
The Theater Without its Founder.	72
6. Conclusion.	74
Bibliography	82
Appendices	83
A. Plays Produced by the Downey Children's Theatre	83
B. Plays Produced by the Downey Theatre Guild.	86
C. By-Laws of the Downey Children's Theatre, Inc.	88
D. Job Classification for Assistant to Supervisor of Fine Arts	103
Job Classification - Technical Director	106
E. Awards Breakdown - Old System	108
Awards Breakdown - New System	112
Criteria for Princesses of Storyland.	116
F. Profit - Loss Statement. Season of 1961-62.	117
G. "Percentage of Gross" Proposal	120
H. Co-sponsorship Agreement	123
I. Profit-Loss Statements.	130

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

An Historical Study of the Formation, Growth,
and Development of the Downey Children's Theatre

by

Thomas Edward Fitzgerald

Master of Arts in Theater Arts

University of California, Los Angeles, 1969

Professor Melvyn B. Helstien, Chairman

It is the purpose of this study (1) to detail the historical development of this children's theater; (2) to show the way in which this theater has been organized and why it was done in this manner; (3) to show its relationship to the recreation and park district which co-sponsors it; (4) to present its relationship to the community in which it functions; and (5) to discuss the guiding philosophy that has influenced the growth of the theater.

Prior to this study no research had been done on the subject of the Downey Children's Theatre. Mr. John Hume, the director of the theater, made the files of the theater available for study. All of the factual information in this report has been obtained from material in these files. The material for the discussion of Hume's philosophy was derived from a tape recorded interview with

him.

The fact that this theater has had tremendous growth, and not just existed, is noteworthy. Why has this particular theater succeeded when so many others have failed?

This study should prove valuable to anyone who is thinking of starting a community theater or a children's theater. It is not meant to be a handbook, but it shows some of the problems faced by a developing theater and the ways in which they were solved. This study should serve as an indication of how one group has succeeded in developing an extensive program of production.

Chapter 1

THE PROBLEM AND METHODS OF PROCEDURE

The Downey Children's Theatre was formed thirteen years ago under the co-sponsorship of the Downey Recreation and Parks District. During its existence it has developed an extensive program of plays. The purpose of this paper was to discuss the formation, growth, and development of this theater program.

THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. It was the purpose of this study (1) to detail the historical development of this children's theater; (2) to show the way in which this theater has been organized and why it was done in this manner; (3) to show its relationship to the recreation and park district which co-sponsors it; (4) to present its relationship to the community in which it functions; and (5) to discuss the guiding philosophy that has influenced the growth of the theater.

Importance of the study. The fact that this theater has had tremendous growth, and not just existed, is noteworthy. Why has this particular theater succeeded when so many others have failed? This study should prove valuable to anyone who is thinking of starting a community theater or a children's theater. It is not meant to be

a handbook, but it will show some of the problems faced by a developing theater and the ways in which they were solved. It should interest those concerned with children's theater and community theater as an indication of how one group has succeeded in developing an extended program of production.

METHODS OF PROCEDURE

Prior to this study no research has been done on the Downey Children's Theatre. Mr. John Hume, the director of the theater, made the Children's Theatre files available for study. All of the factual information in this report has been obtained from material in these files. The material for the discussion of Hume's philosophy in Chapter 5 was derived from a tape recorded interview with him.

Chapter 2

HISTORY OF THE DOWNEY CHILDREN'S THEATRE

FORMATION OF THE CHILDREN'S THEATRE

The idea to start a children's theater in Downey, California was put forth by Mr. John Hume in the summer of 1955 to the Downey Park, Recreation and Parkway District. He presented the idea to Mr. Daniel Furman, then Superintendent of the District, and to Mrs. Lois Little, Senior Recreation Director.

John Hume had decided to settle in Downey after an early career which included teaching, acting, and directing, both professionally and non-professionally. He received his B. A. from San Jose State College and his M. A. from Stanford University.

At this time there was relatively little community theater activity in the Downey area and virtually no children's theater. The need for an activity of this nature was evident. Over a period of time several meetings were held by the three principals in the formation of this project. Hume's presentation of his idea to the Park District, while not unique, is indicative of his belief that, philosophically, theater and recreation are highly compatible.¹

Hume was employed by the Park District to direct

¹See Chapter 6.

a pilot play in order to measure the community response to a program of this nature. Recreation programs depend on participation for their existence. If an activity cannot be justified from this standpoint, it cannot be supported by the program.

First Tryout. In the fall of 1955 open tryouts were announced in the local newspaper for a production of "Hansel and Gretel", a play with 10 roles for children and 3 for adults.² Announcements were also sent to all of the local schools in order to get the widest possible publicity for the new program.

An estimated 250 children tried out for this production, which far exceeded the expectations of even John Hume.³ So impressive was this first tryout that plans were immediately begun for an extension of the infant project. Keeping in mind the participative emphasis of recreation programs, Mr. Hume immediately instituted a policy of double casting which is still followed. Double casting uses the greatest number of participants and provides a margin of safety in getting the play on. Children have a way of coming down with various ailments at the worst time!

²For a complete list of all of the plays produced by the Downey Children's Theatre along with their authors see Appendix A.

³John G. Hume, "A Brief History of the Downey Children's Theatre" (Downey Recreation and Park Department, Downey, California), p. 1. (Mimeographed.)

Adult Assistance. Adult participation was also actively sought and encouraged. As well as playing the adult roles in children's plays, adults were also needed to build scenery, arrange publicity, and in general to attend to the thousands of minor details that are essential in the production of a play. As is the case with most beginning theater projects, the founding organization can usually afford to pay only the director, if anyone, and the director cannot possibly take care of all the numerous details. A community theater director must rely to a great extent on volunteer help from the community. One of his key tasks is the bringing together of the talents of those volunteers in the most beneficial manner. The response of the adults in the community seemed to be as enthusiastic as the children's initial response.

Theater Plant. Another of the initial problems was that of finding a theater in which to give the performances. The year before Hume produced his first play the local high school auditorium had been condemned and torn down. The growing city was left without a single building suitable for play production or any other of the performing arts. Most of the schools in the area were built during the era when multipurpose buildings were the current fad, and so Hume had no choice but to turn to one of these when selecting a place for the production of "Hansel and Gretel".⁴

⁴See Chapter 4 for a discussion of this building.

Extension of the Program. The production of "Hansel and Gretel" was enthusiastically received by the community. Hume immediately made plans for additional plays to be produced during that school year. He decided to do two more plays, "Tom Sawyer's Treasure Hunt" and "Sleeping Beauty." No records are available for the first of these, but over 500 children tried out for parts in "Sleeping Beauty".⁵ Interest in the new program was definitely running high, and this convinced the directors of the park district that the theater program was warranted.

The solid support that these plays received at the box office had to be capitalized upon. A formal organization had to be established and, most of all, more money was needed to further the initial success of the program.

Summer of 1956. It was learned that the Downey Recreation and Parkway District could only be counted on to supply Mr. Hume's salary, \$1,000, and 500 hours for part-time help to assist in production. As generous as this amount was, it was evident that it wasn't going to be enough to support the rapidly growing program. The park district was in the process of expanding the park facilities due to the city's increased population and, as a result, could afford to support only a part of the theater program.

⁵Hume, op. cit., p. 2a.

Incorporation. The only answer to the financial problem was to go to the community itself for support. An appeal for funds was made and the response again was rewarding. It was suggested that the theater group incorporate in order to receive the financial benefits derived from incorporation. Papers were duly filed, and on October 8, 1956, the group was incorporated under the name "The Downey Children's Theatre, Inc., a non-profit civic organization."

Co-sponsorship. The Downey Recreation and Park District Board of Directors, hereafter referred to as the "park board," then decided to co-sponsor the Downey Children's Theatre, and to supply a part of the funds and leadership for the project. This arrangement was subsequently accepted by the newly elected Administrative Council of the Downey Children's Theatre. This co-sponsorship has continued, with minor modifications, up to the present day. Minutes of the meetings of the theater council, financial statements, and budget requests have consistently been prepared at the office of the park district, have been kept on file there, and have always been available to the Superintendent of the District, as well as to the members of the District Board of Directors.

Patronage. A system of patronage was set up to organize the contributions made to the theater. The scale began with Junior Memberships at one dollar each, per sea-

son, through sustaining memberships, patrons, and "angels," at ten dollars per year and up. Honorary life memberships have been given to those who perform extraordinary services on behalf of the theater.

Through this organization and with the help of volunteers in all phases of its program, the theater has been able to pay many of its own expenses. Many kinds of fund-raising activities have been held over the years; however, the admission price for children's plays has never been raised from the original fifty cents.

Organizational Purpose. The By-Laws of the Downey Children's Theatre state the purpose for which it was organized:⁶

(1) To foster good dramatic activities for children living within the boundaries of the Downey Recreation and Park District.

(2) To establish those procedures and regulations which will bring about good dramatic activities for children.⁷

In a press release issued in September, 1960, Mr.

Hume stated:

The primary purpose of the program is to offer recreation and instruction to as many children as wish it. The second objective, that of producing interesting, well-acted plays, must always be subservient to this. Fortunately for the theater, it has been possible to realize both objectives. This has been achieved because the program has two

⁶The organization of the Children's Theatre Council, and other aspects of the theater organization will be discussed more fully in Chapter 3.

⁷See Appendix C. for the complete text.

distinct facets--the theater and the workshop--each of which increases the effectiveness of the other.⁸

DRAMA WORKSHOP PROGRAM

The workshop program, or the drama workshops, as they are known began in 1956 in an effort to involve the interested children who could not be used in the play program. The drama workshops have proved to be a good training ground for the less experienced child.

The leaders of the drama workshops are qualified instructors, paid by the park district. The program as originally set up, included two workshops of eight weeks each, and featured creative dramatics, short plays, and skits. The sessions were (and still are) conducted in various elementary schools for students in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades one afternoon a week. The fourth through sixth graders had been the most numerous at tryouts, so it was felt that this is where the emphasis should be placed. Students younger than this were not included because they were not yet competent enough in reading skills to participate easily.

The drama workshop program has grown at a tremendous rate over the years. At its peak, workshops were held in eighteen schools during the school year and in ten during the summer. The sessions have been increased from eight

⁸John G. Hume, (unpublished press release to the Southeast News, Downey, California, 1960).

weeks to the full school year. It has been estimated that between 250 and 300 students participate each semester. With a large number of children gaining experience through both the theater program and the drama workshops, the theater has a broad base of experienced children to draw upon. The roles in the plays can be distributed among a large number of children. Because of this, it is rare for any child to get more than one large role in any year. This tends to eliminate the formation of cliques that have often contributed to the downfall of children's theaters and community theaters. As soon as a theater is taken over by a small "in-group", other interested people are often discouraged from joining the organization. The policy of double-casting helps to allay this problem by affording more children the opportunity to participate. This policy also gives the young actors the chance to observe someone else playing the same part.

SEASON OF 1956-57

The first full year for the Downey Children's Theatre was the season of 1956-57. The plays produced were "Rumplestiltskin," "Five Little Peppers," "Prince Fairy-foot," "Indian Captive," and "Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp." The membership and patron drive had netted \$612.00 for the theater. There are no figures for the total ticket sales for the whole year, but we do have the total for the first two plays. Ticket sales for these plays totaled

\$1,124.73.

Income from ticket sales, refreshments, any fund-raising activities, costume rental, touring, and advertising in the programs, as well as previously mentioned patronage and donations, go into the Downey Children's Theatre accounts.⁹ Out of this income the organization pays for scripts, royalties, costumes, fees to Equity actors, fees to the stage manager and crews, fees to any musicians that may be needed, scene designs, program cover and poster designs, refreshments, printing costs, and busses to bring the children to the plays. For its part in the co-sponsorship agreement the park district pays the salaries of all full and part time staff and for all materials and supplies needed to sustain the program.

SEASON OF 1957-58

The second season was quite similar to the first. The budget remained the same. The size of the program remained the same. All in all, the season of 1957-58 could be considered a consolidation year. The program of plays offered during the year was as follows: "The Ghost of Mr. Penny," "Hans Brinker, or the Silver Skates," "Peter, Peter Pumpkin Eater," "The Two Brothers," and "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs." During this season an estimated 10,000 children and adults participated in forty-two performances

⁹For an explanation of the costume rental, touring, etc. see Chapter 3.

of the five plays (according to Hume's estimate).¹⁰ These figures represent actors, crew, and audience.

SEASON OF 1958-59

The budget request was exactly the same as that of the previous year, except that Hume received a normal advance in his salary. His salary was now \$4,992. The five plays presented that year were "Lee Bobo, Detective for Chinatown," "Snow Queen and the Goblin," "Alice in Wonderland," "Mr. Popper's Penguins," and "The Red Shoes." Hume estimated in one report that 12,500 people participated in forty-one performances of the five plays.¹¹ In another report, however, the President of the Downey Children's Theatre Board indicated a tapering-off of audiences this season, so that there was no appreciable increase over the previous season.¹²

At a meeting of the Downey Children's Theatre Administrative Council in December, 1958, a system of awards for activities in the theater was first discussed. It was also suggested that a "Queen of Storyland" be chosen from

¹⁰Hume, "A Brief History of the Downey Children's Theatre," p. 2.

¹¹Ibid., p. 2.

¹²Lee C. Johnson, (letter to the Board of Directors, Downey Recreation and Park District, Downey, California, May 25, 1959).

among the teen-age girls who were active in the theater.¹³

These new proposals were initiated to stimulate interest in the theater program.

SEASON OF 1959-60

This season also offered five plays: "Beauty and the Beast," "The Five Little Peppers," "Peter, Peter Pumpkin Eater," "Heidi," and "Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp."

The broad classifications of the budget for this year were as follows: director's salary--\$5,265, drama workshop leaders' salaries--\$3,808, drama workshop summer program--\$840, and expenditures for materials--\$1,250. The total budget supplied by the park district was \$11,163. As usual, it was supplemented by contributions made to the Downey Children's Theatre, Inc., and by ticket sales.

Repeat Plays. The plays "Five Little Peppers," "Peter, Peter Pumpkin Eater," and "Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp" were the first to be repeated in the schedule of the Downey Children's Theatre. Although other plays would be repeated in the future, there was no strict policy for this. There have been three basic reasons for repeating plays. First, only popular titles were ever repeated. Hume felt that much larger crowds always came to these plays, and attendance was always a concern. Second, a group does not

¹³The organization of the award system and the choosing of the "Queen of Storyland" is discussed in Chapter 3.

have to be in operation many seasons before it is forced to repeat plays due to the lack of good scripts. Third, Hume feels that every three or four years the audience will have completely changed and this new audience will be seeing these plays for the first time.

In March of this year (1960) a class in make-up was offered in the city schools as a supplement to the drama workshop program.

In April of the same year the Downey Children's Theatre toured its first play. The production of "Heidi" was taken to Anaheim, California for one performance.

As can be seen, each year a new activity or two was added to the program. The period beginning with the 1958-59 season, and continuing for the next two years, saw great advances made in the program and in the variety of activities. This whole period in the history of the Downey Children's Theatre could be termed one of expansion.

Expansion Into Adult Theater. In addition to those previously mentioned advances, another major addition to the program was about to be undertaken. Adult plays would now be presented in addition to children's plays.

For some time Hume had been urged to begin a program of adult plays. Hume was acting in a production of "The Cocktail Party" for a little theater group in Pasadena, California. A group of Downey residents, headed by Mrs. Paley Johnson and Mrs. Charles Ripley, suggested that

"The Cocktail Party" be brought to Downey after its Pasadena run ended. The purpose was two-fold. First, it was to be a benefit performance to raise funds for the theater, and also it was designed to test the acceptance of the Downey theater-going public to an adult play.

In January, 1960, "The Cocktail Party" was presented. The response was encouraging, and the Downey Adult Theatre was formed and held its first meeting to set policy. The group decided to do a series of three plays each year, and a committee was formed to study scripts for possible production. Admission prices for adult plays were set at \$1.50 per play and \$4.00 for season tickets. From the beginning, the problem of play selection plagued the organization. Downey, being a conservative community, could accept any of the standard children's plays, but was more restrained in its acceptance of adult plays. In the future there would be many heated discussions about what was or what was not a suitable play for production.¹⁴

This expanded program caused two other changes of policy in the Downey Children's Theatre program. For the first time the theater would have to request a budget increase of some significance, and also, Mr. Hume would no longer be able to direct all of the plays.

Actors Equity Contract. In the fall of 1960 the

¹⁴This problem will be discussed more fully in Chapter 5.

park board approved a proposal that the theater enter into a contract with Actors' Equity. The agreement stated that the adult theater was required to hire two Equity actors for each adult play. Hume felt that this was necessary in order to keep up the quality of productions. This policy, among others, has been frequently criticized.

THEATER BUILDING

The elementary school cafetorium that had been serving as the theater for the group was terribly inadequate. It was inevitable that thoughts would turn toward the construction of a new auditorium--a building designed and equipped for play production. Neither Hume nor the Children's Theatre Board realized what a Pandora's Box of arguments, discussions, surveys, studies, plans, committees, and problems these desires would bring.¹⁵

SEASON OF 1960-61

In the approved budget for this season is an item which reads "workshop building--\$6,031." This building was built to replace a corrugated metal shed that had previously been in use.¹⁶ The rest of the years budget broke down as follows: director's salary--\$6,216, drama workshop

¹⁵A full discussion of the history of the proposed theater building will be found in Chapter 4.

¹⁶This newer, more spacious building will be discussed more fully in Chapter 4.

leaders' salaries--\$4,492, drama workshop summer program--\$1,053, incidental part time help--\$975. The total budget amounted to \$18,767. It will be noted that this was a considerable increase from the \$11,163 of the previous year. However, if the \$6,000 for the building is deducted, one wonders how the tremendous increase in the program was accomplished with virtually the same budget.

The plays that were produced during this season by the theater were, "Pied Piper of Hamelin," "Hansel and Gretel," "Crazy Cricket Farm," "King Midas," and "Tom Sawyer's Treasure Hunt." The Downey Adult Theatre produced "Dangerous Corner," "The Play's the Thing," and "Rain."

This season three of the children's shows were directed by people other than Hume. "Hansel and Gretel" toured to Anaheim this year as "Heidi" had the season before.

SEASON OF 1961-62

During this season, the first year in which the new workshop was fully utilized, the budget could be broken down as follows: director's salary--\$6,528, drama workshop leader's salaries--\$4,953.60, drama workshop summer program--\$1,161, part time help (Children's Theatre)--\$236.50, part time help (Adult Theatre)--\$838.50, materials and supplies--\$1,250, and new theater lighting equipment--\$547.80, for a total budget of \$15,505.40. As will be noted, the budget was finally being adjusted to compensate for the tremendous increase in activity of the pre-

vious year. The program of children's plays for this season included "Rumplestiltskin," "The Ghost of Mr. Penny," "Off With His Honorable Head," "Sleeping Beauty," and "Rip Van Winkle." The Adult Theatre Board voted to increase the number of plays to four on an experimental basis for the season. The plays were "Deadly Game," "Waltz of the Toreadors," "The Miser," and "Joan of Lorraine." "Rumplestiltskin" was selected to make the now annual tour to Anaheim.

As an indication of the growing acclaim of the Downey Children's Theatre, the Orthopedic Hospital in Los Angeles invited the group to give a benefit performance of the final children's play of the season--"Rip Van Winkle." The Children's Theatre accepted and, in June, the performance was given.

Profit Balance. It was always the intention to strike a profit balance between the Children's Theatre income from tickets and contributions, and the expenditures that were not covered by the park district's allocation of funds to the program. In line with this, a profit and loss statement of some of this year's plays might be of interest.

"Rumplestiltskin"	\$408.75 profit
"Ghost of Mr. Penny"	\$ 80.37 loss
"Off With His Honorable Head"	\$ 11.74 profit
"Deadly Game"	\$255.87 loss
"Waltz of the Toreadors"	\$385.85 loss
"The Miser"	\$ 43.95 profit
"Joan of Lorraine"	\$132.89 loss

There was a total loss of \$390.54.¹⁷ In future reports

¹⁷A break down of these figures is located in Appendix F.

it will be seen that all years were not this disastrous to the funds of the theater.

Junior Programs Tour. In February of 1963 the Children's Theatre Board discussed the advantages and disadvantages of setting up a tour schedule with Junior Programs of Southern California. On the plus side was the fact that the Downey Children's Theatre would become more widely known throughout the Southern California area. Also, the tour arrangement offered financial rewards. The expenses of the theater were getting a bit out of hand in comparison to its rather limited income. On the minus side was the tremendous organization required to support a program of plays at home and a tour at the same time. Also, the scenery would have to be specially designed to come apart and fold, so that it could be carried in one truck. This was a difficult task, since the Children's Theatre had the habit of staging rather lavish productions.

Ultimately the board decided to take on the tour. Junior Programs was to pay the theater \$350 per performance. The first tour was to be the following year, 1963-64. It was agreed that the Children's Theatre would tour two plays to nine different cities in Southern California.

SEASON OF 1962-63

It was realized that the Children's Theatre was getting to be a large organization. It was large in program, in budget, and in support from the community. An organi-

zation in such a position must, sooner or later, come in for its share of controversy. It was during this year that certain policies were initiated which would eventually cause much controversy.

Each season seemed to bring some change or new policy to the organization, and this season was certainly no exception. The number of children's plays was cut from five to three. This was done to make way for the addition of a musical production. The performance of a musical was to become a yearly tradition. The musical was co-sponsored by the Children's Theatre and by the Adult Theatre. The organization and energies of both groups were to combine to make the musical the grand finale of each season.

The children's plays done during the 1962-63 season were "Beauty and the Beast," "The Indian Captive," and "Mr. Popper's Penguins." The adult shows were "Blithe Spirit," "The Seven Year Itch," "The Man in the Dog Suit," and "J.B." The musical production was "The Wizard of Oz."

Budget appropriations for the year were as follows: director's salary--\$6,696, drama workshop leader's salaries --\$5,184, drama workshop summer program--\$1,215, for a total of \$15,466.

Tour. This season, before the Junior Programs tour began, two tour dates were set up independently by the Children's Theatre. "Indian Captive" was scheduled to play at Long Beach Civic Auditorium and "Beauty, and the Beast"

was performed at the El Capitan Theatre in Hollywood.

Percentage Proposal. At the March meeting of the Adult and Children's Theatre Boards, a proposal was adopted to supplement the income of the Managing Director, Mr. Hume. Hume had submitted this proposal to the Board. The agreement gave Hume 15% of the gross income of all Children's Theatre productions, Adult Theatre productions, and the Arm Chair Cruise Series.¹⁸ (The last-mentioned activity is a series of travelogues sponsored by the Children's Theatre). Mr. Hume justified the proposal in this way:

Since the success of the program of plays presented jointly by the Downey Children's Theatre, Inc., and the Downey Recreation and Park District depends to a great extent upon the efforts of its Managing Director, it is suggested that both organizations pay for the services of a suitable individual.¹⁹

The particulars of this policy did not see the light of public discussion until May of 1964 when the legality of the payments to Hume was questioned. The strongest argument against the payment was that Hume was already being paid to do the job, and that this policy amounted to double payment.²⁰

In April 1963, during a meeting of the Adult Theatre Board, the Board voted to change its name to the Downey Theatre Guild. At this same meeting there was much

¹⁸The full text may be found in Appendix G.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰This will be discussed in depth in Chapter 5.

discussion of the advisability of increasing the run of the adult plays from one to two weekends. A decision on the matter was deferred to a later date.

Park Board Controversy. Discussions in the community were beginning to focus upon the ability of the park board to adequately administer its program. Many in the community felt that the city should take over the administration of the Recreation and Park District. The chief reason was financial. A deficit had been found in the financial records and the entire program was under attack. The Children's Theatre was placed in a precarious position. The supporting organization, namely the Recreation and Park District, was on shaky ground. It was uncertain what this turn of events would mean to the theater's future.

SEASON OF 1963-64

This season was ushered in under a cloud. The uncertainty of the future of the park district hung over the whole project. The one bright spot was the upcoming tour that had been arranged with Junior Programs, with the financial rewards inherent in it.

The one change in the program for the year was the reduction of the adult play series from four productions to three. The musical was becoming a big project, and it was felt that the effort was needed there.

The children's plays for this season included "Little Women," "Heidi," and "Cinderella." "Send Me No Flowers,"

"A Roomful of Roses," and "Champagne Complex" were the adult plays. The musical was "The Music Man."

The budget could be broken down as follows: director's salary--\$7,020, drama workshop leader's salaries--\$5,184, Children's Theatre part time help--\$878, Adult Theatre part time help--\$247, drama workshop summer program--\$1,013, and materials and supplies--\$1,750. It will be noted from this that the summer program of the drama workshop had been cut slightly due to reduced attendance. The allotment for materials and supplies was increased by a sum equivalent to that cut from the summer program, so that there was relatively no change in the budget. The total for the year was \$16,192.

Benefit Performance. Aside from the fine tour schedule, one of the big events of this season was the benefit performance of "The Music Man." The guest of honor at the benefit was the actress Shirley Jones. Tickets to the benefit were \$25. The money raised was to go to the building fund of the proposed theater, and for the \$25. gift, the donor was to have his name inscribed on a seat in the new theater. The proposed theater of 500 seats was to be built in Furman Park in Downey. Before the performance Shirley Jones spoke briefly; after the show, Miss Jones, Mr. Hume, the cast of "The Music Man," and the audience walked the one block to Furman Park to dedicate the site for the new

theater.²¹

SUPERINTENDENT OF FINE ARTS

When the season was over, it was time for a budget review and also, the co-sponsorship agreement between the Children's Theatre and the Park District was due for review and renewal. At this critical time the Southeast News, a local newspaper, ran the story (with banner headlines) of Hume's "percentage of the gross" agreement. After many articles in the paper, several Park Board meetings, and much controversy, the dust finally settled, and Hume wound up with a substantial raise. The percentage agreement of the previous year was eliminated. A new co-sponsorship agreement was drawn up and approved.²² At this time the basic organization of the Park District was changed. The reason for Hume's raise was that he was given the new title of Superintendent of Fine Arts for the District. His new responsibilities included not only the administration of the Children's and Adult Theatres, but also the Downey Museum of Art and the Downey Symphonic Society.

Hume felt that with his newly expanded position he would have less time to spend on the theater program

²¹Plans of the proposed building; and a discussion of the many problems that soon arose to hamper the new project will be found in Chapter 4.

²²A copy of this agreement will be found in Appendix H.

and that he would need extra help in order to keep the program at its current level of quality. He proposed that the Park District hire a full time technical director, in order to relieve himself of that area of work. He also asked for a part time secretary to help handle the increased paper work that his new supervisory position entailed. Both of these requests were approved.

SEASON OF 1964-65

As a result of these changes the budget for this season was greatly increased over the previous year. The Superintendent of Fine Arts salary was set at \$8,904, the salary of the technical director was to begin at \$6,570, the part time secretary was to receive \$2,400, drama workshop leaders--\$4,800, drama workshop summer program--\$1,013, part time Children's Theatre help--\$878, part time Adult Theatre help--\$247, materials and supplies--\$2,250, for a total of \$27,162.

The number of plays produced this season remained the same as the previous one. The Theatre Board voted to have the adult plays run two weekends instead of one as an experiment to test audience reaction to the idea. The children's plays presented during this season were "Pinocchio," "The Red Shoes," and "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs." The adult plays were "The Best Man," "Who'll Save the Plowboy?" and "Playboy of the Western World." The mu-

sical was "Brigadoon."²³

TEEN THEATRE

Many people, after having become interested in the theater in Downey, wondered why the only activity carried on in the summer was the drama workshop program. The junior high and senior high school students who were active in the theater during the school year wanted some sort of drama activity during the summer months.

Due to the driving energy of one young man, Mike Ramsaur, the teenagers of the community began to organize a summer theater group of their own during the late spring of 1965. The group, which named itself the "Downey Teen Theatre," was strictly on its own from the beginning.

Aside from asking occasional advice from Mr. Hume and his technical director, they did the vast majority of the planning and work themselves.

The group decided to do a musical. The show they chose to do was "Babes in Arms," which, if one knows this particular musical, was a rather intriguing choice. From first to last, from obtaining the rights to the play, to handling the finances, to getting the show on the boards, the teenagers neither solicited nor received any outside help.

²³An over-all profit and loss statement for this season will be found in Appendix F.

The production, which opened in August, was a smashing success, playing to full houses for every performance. At the end of the summer, when the Children's Theatre was having a fund raising for the new theater building, the Teen Theatre donated all of its profits from "Babes in Arms" to this fund. It is interesting to note that this fund raising event increased the fund by \$1,000--a \$775 donation by the Teen Theatre and \$225 from all other sources.

The tremendous vitality of the Teen Theatre is a tribute to the drive and interest of the youth in this community. The Teen Theatre has produced a musical each year since 1965. They have not picked easy productions; in 1966 they presented "Oklahoma," in 1967 it was "Carousel," and in 1968 they did "Lil Abner." Each year the building fund has grown a little because of the efforts of these teenagers.

PARK DISTRICT DISSOLVES

It seemed that each summer some new crisis or reorganization of the program was to occur. This was caused by the fact that the new year's budget was always being reviewed at this time. During the spring of 1965 there had been much criticism of the administration of the General Manager of the Park District, Philip Chabody, and he soon submitted his resignation.

The City of Downey had long been critical of the Park District's administration of its responsibilities

and decided to set up its own Park Department. After many meetings the Park Board finally agreed to dissolve in favor of the city's new department. However, the city did not actually take over the operation until the beginning of the next fiscal year. During this interval Hume was appointed interim General Manager.

This meant that Hume now had even less time to devote to the theater program because he was still supposed to do his old job as well as his new one. He was also concerned about how the Children's Theatre would fare under the City Council, which would soon be the policy-setting body instead of the Park Board.

TENTH ANNIVERSARY BIRTHDAY PARTY

In September, the Children's Theatre staged a birthday celebration to commemorate its tenth anniversary. It was held at Furman Park--the site of the proposed theater. The party was also designed to raise funds for the building. The mayor proclaimed the month to be "Downey Children's Theatre Month," and a banner proclaiming this was hung across a main Downey intersection. The birthday celebration was an artistic, but not a financial, success. Shirley Jones, Randy Boone, and the U.S.C. Street Theater appeared. Songs from the past musical productions were sung. Many people from the community attended the celebration.

SEASON OF 1965-66

The tenth anniversary season of the Downey Children's Theatre featured "Tom Sawyer's Treasure Hunt," "Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp," and "The Pale Pink Dragon." The adult plays included "Come Blow Your Horn," "The Tea-house of the August Moon," and "Hamlet." The musical was "Bye Bye Birdie." "Aladdin" toured for five weekends on the Junior Programs tour and "Hamlet" toured to Cerritos College for one performance.

The budget for this season could be broken down as follows: Superintendent of Fine Arts--\$9,240, technical director--\$6,728, stenographer-secretary--\$5,274, drama workshop leaders--\$4,536, part time help--\$563; assistant technical director--\$1,355, materials and supplies--\$2,500, adding to a total of \$30,194. As will be noted, several changes have occurred over the last year. The part time secretary of the previous season had now become full time. The technical director now had a part time assistant. The summer drama workshop, after struggling for several summers with faltering attendance, was finally dropped from the program.

At the end of the fiscal year, July 1, 1966, Mr. James Ruth took over the job of Director of the Recreation and Park Department and the transfer to city administration was complete.

SEASON OF 1966-67

This season was the first under the aegis of the

Downey City Council. It included the following children's plays: "Rumplestiltskin," "Peter, Peter Pumpkin Eater," and "Mr. Popper's Penguins." The last mentioned went on the Junior Programs tour. The adult plays included "Mary, Mary," "Harvey," and two plays on the same bill, "The Doctor In spite of Himself," and "Ario de Capo." The musical was "Annie Get Your Gun."

The budget for this year requires a bit of comment. It is abnormally high due to the fact that it was now under the bookkeeping system of the city. The city shows all salaries in its budget as the total cost to the city, and not just what is paid to the employee. Thus, the figures for this years budget include retirement and other benefits that are paid by the city and are not included in the employee's paycheck. The budget was as follows:

Superintendent of Fine Arts--\$14,561.10, technical director--\$8,306.82, secretary--\$6,365.40, drama workshop leaders--\$4,107, assistant technical director--\$3,139, part time help--\$1,007, and materials and supplies--\$5,385.

The budget totaled \$42,971.32.

SEASON OF 1967-68

After another fine Teen Theatre production during the summer, the season of 1967-68 opened. For the first time since the Children's Theatre was formed John Hume did not direct a single play. It was becoming evident that Hume was moving to a solely supervisory position and tak-

ing a less active part in the theater program. /

The children's plays for the season included "The Tinder Box," "The Tough and Tender Troll," and "The Pied Piper of Hamelin." The adult play series continued with "Thousand Clowns," "It's Never Too Late," and "A Man for All Seasons." The musical production was "The King and I."

The final budget figures are not yet available for this season, but from a preliminary survey, they seem to show no significant change from the previous season.

At the June 3, 1968 meeting of the Downey City Council, by a vote of 3-2, the theater building was finally approved. Construction of the building began in November, 1968. After so many years of struggling with this problem, the fact that the building will finally be erected seems almost anticlimactic. Chapter 4 concludes with a discussion of the past history of the efforts to get this building completed and with the prospects for the future now that it has become a reality.

During this summer the adult theater planned a series of play readings. If they prove successful they will be continued throughout the regular season. Other new programs that have been proposed for the future are a marionette theater, and an annual religious play.

All thoughts are now focused on the idea that with the new theater coming soon, the program will have to ex-

pand greatly to fill the new facility, both in size of audience and in scope of program.

Chapter 3

CURRENT ORGANIZATION

OF THE DOWNEY CHILDREN'S THEATRE

A thorough discussion of the development of the organization of the Children's Theatre was handled in the chapter dealing with the history of the theater and will not be repeated here.

DOWNEY CHILDREN'S THEATRE, INC.

The Downey Children's Theatre, Inc. is a non-profit civic organization, and is registered as such in its incorporation papers. The group is co-sponsored by the Downey Recreation and Park Department, a Department of the City of Downey, and comes under the direct policy-making authority of the Downey City Council.

As described in Chapter 2 the budget for running the program comes from two sources, one is the City of Downey, and the other is the Children's Theatre. The Children's Theatre has as its sources of income (1) ticket sales, (2) junior memberships, (3) donations, (4) donations in the form of general memberships, (5) income from the touring of plays, (6) advertizing in the play programs, and (7) costume rental.¹

¹Budget figures for representative years can be found in Appendix I. A discussion of the development of the budget may be found in Chapter 2.

Children's Theatre Administrative Council. The main purpose of the Administrative Council is to set policy for the Children's Theatre. Each of the members of the council has a vote in the general meetings as well as other duties set forth in the by-laws. These duties and functions of the council members are very explicit. However, in practice, they seem to have been forgotten. The duties conferred on the council members in the by-laws are being handled instead by the paid staff members.

There is also some question about the method of appointing new members to fill vacancies on the board. Article 6 of the by-laws (nominations and elections) seems to have been ignored. Vacancies have come to be filled by the appointment of friends and acquaintances. At present the office of President has been vacant for over a year. There has not been a general election in over two years. In effect, the council has deteriorated from its original concept into a rubber stamp for the active administration of the staff.

PAID PROFESSIONAL STAFF

Volunteer help is the basis of any program in recreation. However, the volunteers that are interested in participating must have trained leaders so that their enthusiasm can be directed toward getting the necessary work accomplished.

Superintendent of Fine Arts. The functions of this

position is to administer the Fine Arts Department of the Parks and Recreation Department, and as the Children's Theatre program falls under the Fine Arts Department, it is under his supervision. As was mentioned in Chapter 2, this department is made up of the Children's Theatre, the Downey Symphony Orchestra, and the Downey Museum of Art. John Hume, who currently holds this position, has an extensive background in theater. However, a person employed in this post would not necessarily have to have a theater emphasis, because of the purely administrative aspects of the job.

Subject to the overriding will of the Recreation and Park Department, Hume sets policy for the theater portion of the Fine Arts Department. However, as was mentioned before, if the Administrative Council were functioning as it is supposed to, it would set policy for the Children's Theatre, as do the boards of both the museum and the symphony.

Administrative Assistant. This position is essentially that of secretary to the Superintendent of Fine Arts. All clerical work and correspondence is handled by this person. Such areas as publicity, tickets, donations, programs, mailing lists, files, production schedules, posters, and other related activities are handled with the close co-operation of the Superintendent of Fine Arts.

Technical Director. This position was set up to

provide supervision of all the technical aspects of staging the productions. Some of the things that must be attended to are design drawings, set construction and painting, property construction or acquisition, lighting, make-up, costumes, sound effects, and many other miscellaneous but important details. The technical director must also arrange for the storage of stock items such as properties, scenery and costumes. Mainly, all of this means that he has to supervise a great number of volunteers and part-time paid helpers in the accomplishment of a variety of necessary tasks. The particular problems of doing this in Downey will be discussed in Chapter 4.

PART-TIME PAID HELP

Assistant Technical Director. This position is essentially that of carpenter. He assists in the basic construction of all of the settings for the plays and assists the technical director in any other tasks deemed necessary.

Scene Painter and Designer. One person is usually hired part-time just to paint the scenery. On some occasions this is done on a "fee per play" basis. Since the beginning of the theater, the design drawings have been paid for in this way. In some seasons this task has been taken over by the technical director, sometimes the scene painter has done it, and occasionally someone not on the staff has done this work for a small fee. The technical director is responsible for the working drawings.

There seems to be a growing policy in the Children's Theatre to reward many required tasks with a small fee. It is no real monetary compensation for the hours spent, but, as Hume says, this token payment "encourages the consistency" of the volunteers.

Other Technical Assistance. Usually the Children's Theatre employs at least one high school or college student to do general clean-up work and to assist the technical director in any way that is needed.

Paid Crew Members. Ever since the beginning of the Children's Theatre, the policy has been to pay the key crew members. The money for this has come from the Children's Theatre funds and not from the Park Department. The sum paid is usually just a token amount ranging from \$5 to \$25 per show. The basis for payment has been consistency and dependability of work on the crew for an apprenticeship period of one year. After this first year has been served a crew member would normally be paid the figure at the low end of the scale and slowly over the seasons would work up to the top figure. There is no set rate of increase. It is based solely on the director's estimate of the individual involved. From time to time there have been misunderstandings about who was to be paid and what had to be done to be paid. In these instances the true meaning of the payment is lost.

Costumer. The costume storage maintained by the

theater provides many of the costumes for the plays. If suitable costumes cannot be found here, a person is hired on a "by the costume" basis to make the needed costumes. Only very rarely does the theater rent costumes.

Commercial Artists. The designing of posters and programs is paid for with a small fee. On some occasions this job has been done by the scene designer.

Property Head. For a small payment and with a small budget, usually \$25, one person has been assigned the task of finding, buying, or building all of the needed properties.

Other Assistance. All other assistance of a technical nature, or help in the office or in an individual's home is done on a strictly volunteer basis. The theater is dependent on these volunteers for the vast majority of its help. It is the job of the technical director to co-ordinate and organize both the paid and the volunteer help. The co-ordination and organization of the office help is the responsibility of the administrative assistant.

DIRECTORS

It has been a policy, since the first play not directed by John Hume, to pay a fee to each director who was not a full-time employee of the Park District. The fee paid is usually \$250. This fee has sometimes come from Park District funds and sometimes from the Children's Theatre funds.

The directors are usually selected by Mr. Hume on the basis of his knowing their work or having been recommended to him by someone whose opinion he values. On one or two occasions he has put advertisements in Variety and selected a director from among the applicants.

ACTORS

The Children's Theatre has an Equity contract for the Adult Theatre series as was described in Chapter 2. On several occasions the theater has paid transportation expenses to a number of actors in both children's and adult plays to induce them to take parts.² The plays are cast from open tryouts for the most part. The tryouts are announced in the local papers well in advance of their taking place.³

SCHEDULING

The scheduling of the events of the Children's Theatre has been fairly standard. A typical season might be arranged in approximately the following manner. The first Friday night after the new school year begins in September, an Awards Event is held. At this event awards for the past season are given out, and the Queen and Princess of

²A discussion of the pros and cons of this policy will be found in Chapter 6.

³See Chapter 6 for a full discussion of the tryout procedure.

Storyland are crowned.⁴

Tryouts for the first children's play of the season are usually held the day after the Awards Event. The tryouts for the first play of the Adult Theatre are scheduled at about the same time. The productions alternate between a children's play and an adult play all season, with the musical opening in mid-April to close the season. Christmas vacation usually divides the season in half. Each children's play runs for two weekends, with four performances each weekend--Friday night, Saturday morning and afternoon, and Sunday afternoon. The adult plays only run one weekend, with three performances--Friday, Saturday, and Sunday nights. The musical production runs four weekends with either five or six performances each weekend. performances are given Friday night, Saturday morning, afternoon and evening, and Sunday afternoon. A Sunday night performance is sometimes added.

Rehearsal Schedule. The average rehearsal schedule for productions is extremely short. A rehearsal schedule is rarely longer than seven weeks. Five or six weeks is more common. This length of time is adequate for adult plays, but is much too short for the double cast children's plays and musicals.

For children's plays and for the musical, the av-

⁴See the section of this Chapter on the Awards Event for a full discussion of this event.

erage week's rehearsal would be as follows: Tuesday and Thursday afternoon, Wednesday and Friday evening, Saturday morning and Sunday afternoon. All of the last about two hours. Because the plays are double-cast, each cast attends half of the rehearsals each week.

The rehearsals are held in various elementary schools around the city. Rio Hondo School Auditorium is usually only available for use during the last two weeks prior to opening night. The use of school facilities is free to the theater because the Park District and the School District have a mutual use of facilities agreement, which allows either to use the facilities of the other without charge. However, the school has priority on all scheduling in its own facility, so the Children's Theatre must plan its use of the building around school activities.

The scenery for each play is brought from the scene-shop to the stage two weekends before the show opens. The week after set-up is devoted to taking care of last minute technical details and running technical rehearsals. The week just prior to the opening is, of course, for dress rehearsals.

Transportation. Each season the Children's Theatre has had an agreement with the Downey Unified School District to use school busses to transport school children to see the plays. During the run of each children's play, a group from each of the elementary schools in Downey is

taken to a Saturday matinee. The season of 1967-68 was the first in many years that the School District, because of a financial cutback, could not supply busses. In order to keep the service for the school children, the Children's Theatre hired busses. This service was supplied by the Palos Verdes Bus Company at a cost of \$50 per bus per day. Depending on the number of children who had signed up in advance to see the play either one or two busses were usually adequate for each day. This whole bussing program is tied in with a publicity campaign that precedes each children's play. As a result, the matinees of the children's plays are always played to full houses.

DOWNNEY THEATRE GUILD

Although the Theatre Guild is officially a separate organization and the plays are directed to an adult audience, the basic structure exactly parallels that of the Children's Theatre. The members of the Administrative Council of the Theatre Guild and the Children's Theatre are the same. The business of both organizations is discussed at the same meetings. It is almost impossible to separate in the budget those items that pertain to the Children's Theatre and those that pertain to the Adult Theatre.⁵

TEEN THEATRE

⁵An attempt to do this has been made in the profit-loss statement to be found in Appendix F.

The Teen Theatre will be discussed in this paper because it is a direct outgrowth of the Children's Theatre.

The teenagers who comprise this group are, for the most part, those who have taken an active part in the Downey Children's Theatre, but there the connection ends. These teenagers owe their interest in theater and their training to the Children's Theatre, but the Teen Theatre is their own separate project. It is in operation during the summer months, so that it is not in conflict with the other theater in any way, but is rather a supplement to it.

Budget. The Teen Theatre has no paid employees whatever. The productions of this group are done completely by volunteer help. In order to earn money to pay for the production, the teenagers get together and have car washes, put on dances and do anything else that occurs to them. In past years the total cost of production has been paid for before the opening of the play. It must be said that with the use of stock items from the storage facilities of the Children's Theatre and with no employees to pay, the production cost to the Teen Theatre is considerably less than a similar production would cost the Children's Theatre.

Teen Theatre Board. In late spring the teenagers meet several times in order to plan the coming production and to elect officers to the Teen Theatre Board. They also

elect the directors of the plays. In this they have been extremely fortunate in their choices. The first two seasons of their program they chose Mike Ramsaur, a young man with a lot of drive and knowledge of theater. The third year the teenagers chose Ron Dwelley, Ramsaur's technical director and an equally talented young man, to direct the play. This method of selecting a director is fraught with the danger that a director might be chosen on the basis of his popularity rather than his directorial ability.

Schedule. The usual rehearsal schedule for the Teen Theatre productions is three hours per night, five nights a week, for almost two months. Their plays are not double-cast, and therefore they are able to concentrate on the one cast and make much better use of the available rehearsal time.

The Teen Theatre uses Rio Hondo Auditorium for all of its rehearsals because there is no conflict with school activities during the summer. The productions run from Tuesday through Saturday evenings for one week.

Conclusions. The success of the Teen Theatre is a tribute to the initiative and competence of those teenagers who have participated in the various productions. The Teen Theatre members have worked together as a group remarkably well. A "we're all in this together" spirit has been with them from the tryouts to the strike. This spirit of camaraderie has even infected the audiences of the plays.

The quality of the Teen Theatre productions, too, is very good. Almost all performances have been played to full houses.

COSTUME STORAGE

Over the years the Downey Children's Theatre very rarely has rented any costumes. Instead, material has been bought and the necessary costumes made. In this way a costume can be used for many productions, and more than compensate for its initial cost. When costumes are rented, the costumes are returned at the end of the run, and a rental fee paid. The fee charged to outside groups that rent these costumes as well as to the cast members of the Children's Theatre own productions is \$2.50 for each costume. Actors in Children's Theatre plays pay no more than \$5 no matter how many costumes they use. This fee is for cleaning and handling. All costumes are cleaned after each use.

As a result of its policy of making its own costumes, over the years the theater has accumulated quite a number of costumes. Also many costumes have been donated to the theater. A recent inventory of the costume storage revealed 1,292 costumes hanging on the racks. (This figure does not include accessories or part-costumes.) With such an extensive stock of costumes, many children's plays can be costumed completely without having to build or modify anything.

~~_____~~
~~_____~~
The plays done by the Children's Theatre have been of such variety that the different periods of dress are fairly well represented.

During the year costumes are rented out at the above mentioned fee to people in the community who have a need for a costume for some occasion.

AWARDS EVENT

Each fall the Downey Children's Theatre holds an Awards Event, at which time those who have taken part in the plays during the previous year are awarded various plaques, pins, and certificates in recognition of their work. Placed as it is at the beginning of the theater season, it helps to kickoff the coming season. The awards are given according to a scale of increasing difficulty. This is done in order to stimulate the participants to help more and to try harder each year. At each Awards Event the suspense mounts as the various awards are handed out; the exciting climax is the crowning of the new Princesses and Queen of Storyland. A list of the awards system followed for many years will be found in Appendix E. Also to be found there is the new "point system" for awards devised at the beginning of the 1967-68 season. It is too soon to tell what effect this new system will have on the giving of awards. The old system was abandoned because it was felt that it was too subjective. The new system represents an effort to remedy this.

-2-

The selection of the Princesses and Queen of Storyland begins in the spring of the year, when a committee of Children's Theatre Board members and John Hume meet to consider possible candidates. After the girls are chosen they are introduced at the performances of the musical production. One of the privileges of being a junior member is that of voting for the Queen of Storyland.⁶

⁶The criteria for the selection of the candidates are outlined in Appendix E.

Chapter 4

TECHNICAL ASPECTS

This chapter will relate totally to the technical aspects of the theater. It will begin with a thorough discussion of the building in which the plays are performed. Then the various technical difficulties of getting a show on in this inadequate plant will be discussed. The chapter ends with a discussion of the efforts of the Downey Children's Theatre to obtain a permanent theater building.

PRESENT THEATER

Rio Hondo Cafetorium. For its entire twelve season life, the productions of the Downey Children's Theatre and the Downey Theatre Guild have been performed in an elementary school cafetorium. The elementary school selected, Rio Hondo, is located on a secondary street near the center of Downey.

John Hume, having progressed beyond the point of deciding that he would do a play in Downey, was faced with the problem of finding a facility to accommodate this aspiration. The list of possible locations was dismal indeed. The schools had been built prior to Downey's incorporation in 1956, and were, therefore, constructed as cheaply and functionally as possible. The multi-purpose building, or "cafetorium," was being built instead of several separate-

use structures, such as cafeterias, gymnasiums, and auditoriums. This solution eased the budget, but proved a great inconvenience to the people who would eventually use the structures. In attempting to serve many functions, the buildings served none adequately.

Cafeteriums were to be found in all elementary schools, junior high schools, and high schools in the city. One of the high schools previously did have a conventional auditorium, but it was condemned in 1934 and torn down in 1957.¹ There was no auditorium or meeting hall in the entire area. With the approval of the school board, the home of the Children's Theatre would have to be in one of the school cafeteriums. Rio Hondo School was chosen because its cafeteria was the best equipped for the production of a play.

The portion of the building that is used for the dining room is fifty feet long and forty feet wide and has a flat floor. For the production of plays this becomes the audience seating area. On one of the short sides of this rectangular room, the stage rises 36" from the floor. The proscenium opening is 24 feet wide and 11'6" high. A short set of stairs rise to the stage on each side of the apron, which is two feet wide. The stage itself is fifteen feet deep from the curtain line to the back wall.

¹John G. Hume, "Chronological History of a Downey Theatre-Auditorium, (mimeographed), April 24, 1968, p. 1.

The playing area of the stage is small, but not unworkable.

The real problem of the stage is that there is no wing space--a very meager six feet on each side. Even this small area is not unencumbered; a lighting booth eliminates about half of the wing space on one side and a stair-well, about the same amount on the other. On the same side of the stage as the lighting booth is a small passageway leading to a storage room, which the Children's Theatre uses as a prop room.

There is no fly space above the stage. All of the curtains, teasers, and wings are hung dead. The two light borders are on a pulley-winch system, so that they can be lowered and worked on from the stage floor. There are two old wooden slotes, one for the main curtain and one for a second full curtain that hangs about ten feet behind the main. There is a small amount of space above the curtains, which amounts to about four feet at the proscenium wall, sloping down to nothing at the back wall. A lighting board with twenty-four 1500 watt auto-transformer dimmers is the extent of the lighting control, which is a great deal considering the building. The lighting equipment for this stage consists of three circuit striplights hung the full width of the stage on both of the light borders, and three circuit striplights that fold down into a trough on the apron. There are also three circuits in the ceiling fifteen feet in front of the proscenium to be used as ante-

proscenium lights. The trouble with these circuits is that they are clustered together opposite the center of the stage, which results in bad lighting angles. All of the above-mentioned equipment is permanently attached to the dimmer system.

This is about the extent of the equipment on the stage, but not the end of the problems of this rather diminutive theater. The stage is part of a multi-purpose room. The other purpose of the room is that of school cafeteria. Each evening after a rehearsal or performance, this room must be cleared of theatrical paraphernalia and lunch tables must be set up. The school also uses the stage for its programs and the showing of educational films. There is a roll picture screen located about five feet behind the curtain on stage. Each evening all of the setting that would fall between the curtain and the screen must be moved or stored behind the screen. With the more complex plays and musicals this becomes a real problem. A favorite method of gaining more flexibility and space on stage is to build out the stage into the audience portion of the building. Of course, when this is done, it must be removed every night. These are just a few of the major inconveniences faces by the Downey Children's Theatre in trying to put on plays in a building not really designed for that purpose.

This theater has no front-of-house facilities what-

ever. The group has constructed a portable ticket booth and two portable concession stands that are set up in front of the entrance of the building for each weekend of performances. Much time is spent by this theater in providing facilities that are part of other theaters.

There are no dressing room facilities located backstage. The group uses two restrooms for dressing and an unused classroom for making-up. The classroom is also used as a lounge area for actors waiting to go on stage. Both of these facilities are located about fifty feet from the stage, across an open courtyard. There is no intercom system to warn actors and, of course, a rainy day presents additional problems.

THE WORKSHOP

The workshop used by the Downey Children's Theatre is located 2.5 miles away from the Rio Hondo School stage. This creates a number of problems. First, the physical distance between the workshop and the stage affects the planning of all the scenery to be built for the theater. Every set must be planned and constructed as though the show were going to travel. Set pieces must be small or come apart in small sections; various items must be rigged to fold or collapse. Items of scenery must be designed so that the seams between these small units cannot be readily seen by the audience. Every item must be extremely strong and light in weight. Secondly, all scenery must

be prefabricated and painted in the shop so that there is virtually no additional work to be done on stage. Errors in planning and construction usually mean that the scenery must be brought back to the shop for alteration and repair. Such a minor thing as forgetting a hammer may waste a great deal of time when time is at a premium. If the stage were adjacent to the workshop, work could be done at any time, but because the stage being used is in a school, work can be done only after 3:30 P.M. and on weekends. This does not leave much time to work before the rehearsal begins--usually about 7:00 P.M.

The first workshop used by the Children's Theatre was located in the Recreation and Park District service yard in Imperial Park. The theater had a building in one corner of the yard that measured ten feet by twenty feet. It was constructed of corrugated metal on a wooden frame. It could best be described as a square Quonset hut. The actual floor space in the hut was so restricted that the construction and painting of sets had to be done on the blacktopped service yard that surrounded it. The hut itself was used only to store the scenery that was under construction and the scenery that was finished but could not yet be set up on stage. An added handicap was the fact that the nearest hot water that could be obtained was in a building that was located in the diagonally opposite corner of the eleven acre park. Work sessions often resem-

bled an extended "bucket brigade." Another shortcoming of this service yard was the lack of any lighting, which eliminated the hours after sundown as working hours.

Workshop Building. The budget for the season 1960-61 included an item for \$6,031 for a workshop building to be shared by the Downey Children's Theatre and the craft activity classes of the Recreation and Park District. This building was located in the same place as the previously mentioned hut. The inconveniences caused by distance from the stage would remain, but many of the other problems would either be solved or made much easier. The addition of this building to the facilities of the Downey Children's Theatre added storage space for supplies, materials, and tools, as well as adding hot running water and lights close at hand. A scene dock was built into one corner of the building. Two large dye vats were a feature that was soon added to the equipment. The floor area of the building was now large enough to set up scenery, protected from the weather, in advance of the time when it would be taken to the stage. In this way, any errors in construction or painting could be corrected before the actual set-up on stage. During the season of 1965-66, an outdoor shelter was constructed near the shop for additional storage of props and scenery.

SCENERY

Design. The designing of the settings for the plays

has never been carried out in a manner that would be considered usual by most theater standards. The artist paid to do the design sketches really is hired only to draw a picture of a design that has already been decided upon. He exercises no design decisions himself, but only follows prediscussed plans. On certain rare occasions the designer has taken part in these discussions. Included in these discussions are Hume and the technical director, or Hume, the technical director, and the director of the play, if it is not Hume. This amounts to "setting by committee," and has some advantages, as well as tremendous drawbacks. The reason for this arrangement is so that Hume can exercise final say over the design in his position as head of the theater.

Construction. As was mentioned before, all of the scenery must be built with an understanding of where the stage is in relation to the shop.

The second big consideration is the lack of off stage storage space. All shows with more than one set present great problems. Children's plays and musicals can almost always be counted upon to have more than one set.

It is an exercise in ingenuity to determine how to get the scenery for a seven set show on a stage with only six feet of wing space and no flying system. One method of solving this problem has been to use the prism system sug-

gested by Friederick and Fraser.² The only solutions that will work are ones that involve storing all of the scenery on stage, one set being part of or hidden by another.

No play has ever been turned down for production because of the complexity of the scenery. This philosophy is manifestly foolish in regard to some plays, because all the energies of the staff are then directed at being ingenious and not at putting on a good show. It would be far wiser to be realistic and succeed.

One of the most important qualities that this scenery must have is strength. Aside from the fact that it must be loaded on a truck, transported, and unloaded before it is used, the people who handle the scenery are the teenage crew members, and needless to say, the scenery receives much rough treatment.

Painting. Scene painting must, again, take into consideration the problem of distance to the stage. It is difficult to paint scenery when you can't really know how it will look to the audience. Of course, as with the construction, the painting must be virtually finished when it is set up on stage. Due to the amount of handling the scenery is given, vinyl paints are used extensively.

Proscenium Club. The Proscenium Club is a theater

²Willard J. Friederich and John H. Fraser, Scenery Design for the Amateur Stage (New York: The Mac Millan Company, 1950) pp. 209-13.

craft group composed of interested teenagers. The club meets Saturday afternoons during the season to help in the construction and painting of scenery, the collection of properties, and in general, to help with the numerous details necessary to the production of a play. The production crew for each of the shows is chosen from among the active members of the Proscenium Club.

Costumes. The Children's Theatre has no facilities for constructing costumes; therefore, the costumer must use her own equipment in her own home.

The procedure followed by the theater is to have all of the members of the cast of a given play meet at the costume storage facility a few days after the tryout. This is for the purpose of being fitted into an existing costume or being measured for a costume that has to be built. After this meeting, the costumer should have an accurate idea of how many costumes are to be made and how many need only to be modified.

Two weeks before the play is to open, a day is set aside for a costume review. The costumer brings the finished and modified costumes, and all of the actors try them on to see if any alteration is necessary. This is also the first opportunity that the director has to see the finished costumes under actual stage lighting conditions and in front of the set.

PROPOSED THEATER BUILDING

Since John Hume began the Downey Children's Theatre in 1955, he has seen the need for a permanent theater plant in which to do the productions of his group. The problem has been to make others also see the need.

The building of an auditorium in which the theater could do its plays is not a wholly selfish desire on its part. There is no other auditorium in Downey. Any program that takes place in Downey that would normally take place in an auditorium is restricted to school cafeteriums or other multipurpose buildings, high school gymnasiums, or football fields. None of the alternatives is adequate. Downey manifestly needs an auditorium. Almost anyone looking at this city from the outside would agree. Unfortunately, not many of the people looking at the situation from the inside seem to agree.

The matter has been under study for over eleven years. It all began in 1957 when the only auditorium in Downey was torn down after having been condemned as sub-standard. The year before a bond issue failed (by two-thirds of one per cent), which would have built a new auditorium to replace the old one.³ Since the first opportunity was lost, there has been one study group after another appointed, various recommendations made, and none of them carried out. When one study seemed quite feasible, then it was

³John G. Hume, "Chronological History of a Downey Theatre-Auditorium, Op. Cit. p. 1.

time for another study.

In 1960 the Recreation and Park District included plans for an auditorium in its master plan for Furman Park. Until the Park District was dissolved and the city took over the administration of the parks, it was always assumed that the new theater would be built there. The reason for wanting the theater to be built in Furman Park were three-fold. First, the Park District already owned the land, thus saving the cost of buying land for this purpose. Second, Furman Park is in a fairly central location. Third, the theater would simply be an addition to a cultural complex that had already been started in Furman Park with the building of an Art Museum.

One of the big delays was caused by the discussion of the size of the building in terms of the number of seats. Various studies, newspaper articles, and expressions of public opinion stated that the ideal number of seats would be anywhere from 400 to 2,000. This discussion is indicative of the whole controversy. First, there would be articles in the paper and meeting on the subject with the result that, finally, one size would almost be decided upon. Then suddenly some important person, who supposedly had been totally unaware of any discussion, would publicly come out for a different size, and the whole thing would start all over again.

The problem of raising money for such a large pro-

ject was immediately solved when the city took over the Park District. It had already set aside a cigarette tax fund to finance just such a civic improvement. The city would pay cash for the auditorium, if it should ever decide to build it.

The next big problem was to be the location of the building. After having been the proposed site of the theater for six years, the Furman Park location was suddenly considered highly undesirable by the residents of the area. In the ensuing months several different locations were proposed and, after the usual routine of acceptance and last minute rejection, a site was finally approved. The architect was now commissioned to adapt the already finished plans for the Furman Park site to suit the new location in the civic center area. At last, after all the discussion, it seemed as if the new theater would actually be built. But this was an election year (1968), and two of the five City Council members who had voted for the theater were defeated by two men who had run on a platform of "not rushing into anything on the auditorium question."

The stage seemed to be set for another disappointment to all of those in the community who wanted the theater, and had been denied it so many times in the past.

The regular meeting of the city council was held on June 3, 1968. On the agenda were the architects' final plans, which the council was supposed to either accept

~~or reject.~~

As expected the two new council members voted against acceptance of the plans. The three remaining councilmen stuck to their previous position and voted for the theater. The measure passed and the building of the new theater was finally to become a reality.

One thing was obvious from this meeting--the discussion and controversy was far from over. Still to be discussed was the question of how and by whom the theater was to be managed? How much of a part the Children's Theatre organization would have in this management was another question to be answered. The pattern of resistance at every turn seemed to be continuing even though the theater had been approved.

Chapter 5

THE COMMUNITY AND THE THEATER

This chapter will deal, in a general way, with the relationship of the community to the theater. It will also be concerned with John Hume's guiding philosophy, as expressed by him in various interviews. The ideas attributed to Hume in this chapter were all derived from a tape recorded interview with him. This interview took place in December 1966, in the offices of the Downey Recreation and Park Department.

Downey as a Community. In order to understand more fully the character of the inhabitants of Downey; who are for the most part the people that work on, act in, and support with their time and money the activities of the Downey Children's Theatre, a brief description of the city and a few of its pertinent characteristics would seem appropriate.

Downey is a city of 97,200 people (est. 1967); located thirteen miles southeast of the Los Angeles Civic Center, and is connected with it by the well known Santa Ana freeway on its way to Orange County. The city is almost totally residential in nature except for a few industries, the most wellknown being North American Aviation--the builder of the Apollo space capsule.

The per capita income of this community is over

~~_____~~
\$9,000 dollars, which would seem to indicate that the rank and file of those who put the spacecraft together live elsewhere.¹ A brochure from the Downey Chamber of Commerce estimates that "probably more than half the homes in the city can be classed as exclusive, making Downey one of the genuinely fine residential areas of the state." As might be expected from statements of this sort, politically speaking, the voters of this area have a consistent record of conservatism.

Surprisingly, Downey was an unincorporated area until 1956. This means that the Downey Children's Theatre was organized a few months before Downey became a city.

The Downey Recreation and Park Department administers six parks, a total of sixty acres of recreational area, with all of the programs that this implies. Most of the cultural activities that take place within the city are under the auspices of this department. It sponsors not only the Downey Children's Theatre and the Downey Theatre Guild, but also the Downey Museum of Art and the Downey Symphony Orchestra.

Theater Under a Recreation Department. Hume feels that a theater program fits very well under the guiding hand of the Park and Recreation Department.

The normal recreation department is not equipped,

¹Luskey's Blue Book, 1967 Edition, p. E.

in either facilities or education of its staff, to handle the complexities of an extensive program of plays, and so they need experts in the field to manage the program.

The concept of recreation has team sports as its basis, and all other activities are considered a little suspect. As Hume put it, "Whoever heard of a park without a ball diamond?" Those people who are primarily recreation oriented have been talking for a long time, in glowing terms, of the need to diversify. Such activities as theater are right in line with this attitude. Part of the problem seems to be this "activity" attitude of recreation people. They balk at any program that offers more than simply a way to spend one's time. If there are other values to be derived from it, such as aesthetic and intellectual ones, it is automatically under suspicion as not being suited to the recreation program.

Hume feels that the theater cannot be concerned only with itself or the way in which it has traditionally done things, but it must take the interests and talents of the people in the community into consideration and, through ingenuity, integrate them into plays. Theater that is primarily concerned with itself and its own perfection as an art is "affected," to quote Hume, "and there is no room for it in community theater." The theater program must be integrated fully into the program of the Park Department.

Main Objectives of the Downey Children's Theatre.

Hume has stated that the main objectives of the Downey Children's Theatre are to satisfy the cultural needs of the community. He goes on to state that "my interest is in the practical application plays have in people's lives." The direct affect upon the participants, both audience and actors, is the most important aspect of the Downey Children's Theatre. The change or development of a child as he participates in more theater activity is clearly demonstrable. This change may be seen and even measured, whereas the adult theater is not as satisfying to Hume because "you can't see the results as easily."

Hume feels that the ends of the Theatre Guild are theoretically the same as those of the Children's Theatre, but due to the set ways of the adult theater goer, it is practically impossible to meet these ends. In Hume's view, "Adults don't change." The only value possible to an adult audience, according to Hume's philosophy, would be that of entertainment. Besides being entertaining, a play might serve to reinforce a previously held belief, but it would be unlikely for the action on the stage to alter an accepted belief.

Children are deeply moved by what they see on the stage and can be truly affected by it, but adults can only be superficially moved to any extent. According to Hume, the big cause of this is over-exposure. An adult sees so

much in his life that one more play will not be likely to affect him. He is constantly bombarded by productions on television to the extent that he has, so to speak, "turned-off." As a result, it is extremely difficult to reach an adult in our modern society.

Hume has strong objections to the type of theater found in colleges and universities. He is apparently opposed to any of what might be termed "serious theater" in this country. He calls it all "affected." By this he means that this intellectualism in the theater does not address itself to the problems of our day. The theater seems only to be concerned with perfecting itself, to get better and better in each little facet of production, so that perfection is all that matters in the end. "Eventually plays would have to be super-plays to satisfy," according to Hume. Then, summing up the idea, he adds, "Plays don't have to be perfect in the technical sense, it's the excitement that counts."

To Hume, the true purpose of the theater is to interest children in going to the theater. It is an important part of their education and a beginning of a cultural involvement that should last the rest of their lives. The children so educated will make the enthusiastic audiences of tomorrow.

Children's Theatre Play Selection. The children's plays have been selected on a random basis over the years.

The scripts have been drawn mainly from the catalogues of the most well known publishers of children's dramatic literature. An effort has been made to produce original plays by unpublished playwrights. "The Two Brothers" in the season of 1957-58, "The Pale Pink Dragon" in the season of 1965-66 and "The Tough and Tender Troll" in the season of 1967-68 are examples of this policy. In recent years Hume has tried to include one or two unfamiliar titles in the series in order to give variety to the program. However, no conscious effort has ever been made to achieve a balance among the various types of plays. Technical difficulty has never been a consideration in play selection. The reverse has often seemed to be true. Hume seemingly has a predilection for the technically showy, ambitious play.

Each year Hume makes a show of having the Children's Theatre Board approve the selections of the plays for the next season. In reality, the choice is solely his, and the board is simply bowing to his desires in the matter.

Adult Theatre Play Selection. When Hume was asked if he had complete freedom in choosing plays for production, his immediate response was affirmative. It became evident later in the discussion that any lack of freedom was due to his self-imposed censorship. A glance at the list of plays produced by the Downey Theatre Guild over the years shows a preponderance of "sexy, little situation

comedies," as Hume calls them. The reason for this choice of plays is related to Hume's idea of what adult audiences want from a community theater. Hume feels that people in general "don't want to see a play that they cannot identify with immediately." "Sexy, little situation comedies" are apparently something that the citizens of Downey can identify with immediately. This fits the school of thought that believes that pure entertainment is all that should be attempted; any attempt to provoke thought would simply result in the audience walking out. As Hume has said, "Successful theaters prosper on these little entertainments; if these are not done, the theater will fail." Hume has stated that after he has put on a play with something to say, and there have been quite a few of those, people come up to him and ask why he produced such a play when there are so many good comedies that could be done instead.

When asked if he felt that this was just a local phenomenon, Hume replied, "No, this applies all over the country, and anyone who knows anything about the theater will tell you the same thing. A good serious play will fail where a bad comedy will succeed."

Paid Actors. As has been mentioned before, Hume had a policy since the formation of the adult theater to pay at least two actors in each adult play, and in certain other instances, he has paid mileage money to any number of actors in children's plays and in the musical as well.

He has been criticized regarding this policy frequently by those in the community who feel that local residents should be entitled to all of the parts in the plays. In response to questions of this sort, Hume again refers to the average man's great familiarity with skillfully done shows. The average member of the audience sees hours and hours of well-acted material each week on television. Hume reasons, therefore, that the audience will not accept anything but the best in the way of acting when they go to the theater. Hume doubts that there enough people in the community qualified to compete with television acting and, therefore, he must go elsewhere to find actors who can-- and, of course, pay them for their work.

On other occasions, however, Hume has expressed a desire to develop local talent by giving them various small parts in the plays, so that over a period of time they could become competent actors.

"Educating-up" the Downey Audience. When asked about his feelings on the subject of making a conscious effort to schedule more and more thought-provoking plays, Hume rejected the idea completely. Contrary to popular belief, Hume feels that it is virtually impossible to improve a playgoer's taste in plays by exposing him to better theater. It is Hume's point-of-view that "a man will only like what he knows," and will not like anything that is new. The only time that one can show something new to a

person and be sure of getting a positive response, is when that person is a child.

Hume realizes that the sort of plays most often produced by the Theatre Guild cannot really be defended as plays. He prefers to call them "entertainments," or "children's plays for adults." Hume gives the impression that he deplures this situation, but he feels that it is the only way to have a successful theater operation. The old cliché of the tired business man wanting to relax after a hard day at the office, and wanting to be amused and not made to think about the problems of the world, is true in this suburban community. Hume believes that he should cater to this, and make no effort to change this attitude.

The Press. Editorially, the Southeast News, Downey's leading newspaper, has treated the Children's Theatre rather badly. It has done this, not so much by direct attacks on the program, but rather by editorially opposing policies and programs that affect the theater. There have been one or two occasions when a direct confrontation occurred, namely, over the percentage paid to Hume out of the gross income of the plays, over the payment of out-of-town actors, and over the question of the proposed theater.

As far as publicity releases are concerned, Hume feels that, for the most part, the paper has printed everything that has been sent to it, with relatively little editing on its part. He does feel, however, that the paper

is printing less now because he has given over most of the job of writing publicity to others who are not as familiar as he with the program. As a result the articles seem less interesting, and the paper prints fewer of them.

Open Tryouts. On the question of whether or not his tryouts were completely open, Hume responded with an emphatic "Yes." He went on to qualify this statement in the following way. When it is known in advance that there will be particular problems with casting a certain play, or a particular role that is large or difficult, there are certain measures that Hume would take. The Children's Theatre keeps a list of active local actors, compiled from all the plays that have been produced by the group. All of the actors who could possibly play the part or parts in question are contacted in advance of tryouts. On occasions, if there is an outstanding prospect, he is given a copy of the script. Hume is quick to point out that this advance preparation in no way effects the tryout, because if someone better shows up, the part will go to him. It also happens that some of the people who are asked in advance are the ones that are paid. This is a point that particularly irritates some of the local participants.

Children in Children's Parts. Hume believes that it is vitally important for children to play as big a part in children's theater as possible. Children should play the child characters. This may seem obvious, but is not

always the case. For example, the Assistance League Playhouse in Los Angeles has women playing all of the roles. Hume thinks that this is wrong for several reasons. As Hume says about this, "What must the children in the audience think of an adult on the stage pretending to be a little boy or girl?" In the first place, this juxtaposition is ludicrous from the standpoint of any viewer, and second, the whole point of the children's play is lost because it has lost all believability. When a child is playing a child's part, the children in the audience can empathize with the characters in the play. The same may be said for the adult roles. The prime concern should be in the believability of the characters and the situation. The child audience must be able to believe in honest relationships between the characters. If there are all adults playing the roles, or all children, the situation is unbelievable.

Community theaters have a distinct advantage because they have a wide range of ages and types to choose from, whereas an educational theater would be restricted to the age group encompassed by the school.

The Theater Without its Founder. The probability of the Downey Children's Theatre surviving without John Hume at the helm is rather doubtful. Hume believes that it could only do so if another person with a strong personality was found for the job. He feels that it takes a person of this sort to keep a theater going. Finding

someone like him, in this respect, would be very difficult, because, as Hume put it, "Most theater people are interested in the theater primarily and in the community in which it is located, only secondarily." This attitude is destined to cause a community-oriented theater to fail.

"It takes a driving, exacting, emotionally involved monomaniac to do plays and to want them to be good," states Hume. Any person who does not feel this way will be doomed to mediocrity. It takes this kind of person to be a leader and make people willing to follow him. As Hume has said, "People work for other people, never organizations."

A director of community theater must want to serve the community more than indulge his own self interest as far as theater is concerned. He must be willing to modify his own attitudes toward the theater if they in any way conflict with the program in which he is engaged.

Chapter 6

CONCLUSION

In thirteen years, the Downey Children's Theatre has come a long way from its rather shaky beginning in 1955. The budget, which is of questionable adequacy, has nevertheless increased steadily to complement the ever-expanding program of plays. The staff has also increased over the years, so that the theater can no longer be considered a one-man operation. It should not be forgotten that this theater originated in the imagination of just one person, John Hume. It was coaxed along, and slowly built up through the energies of this same man. This paper does not choose to put forth a ground plan for building a community theater, but simply tries to show the growth and development of one particular theater, located in a particular place, with a particular kind of people for its audience. This paper attempts to show the problems faced by this theater, and the methods used to combat them.

It also attempts to show something of the philosophy which guided it through its existence. Whether or not the philosophy has any validity for other theaters cannot be known, but the fact cannot be overlooked that it has met with some success in Downey for a number of years.

As John Hume has pointed out, it is most important

to serve the community. Percy MacKaye too, has said, "Theatre should be dedicated to public, not private, ends."¹

John Wray Young in his book The Community Theatre and How It Works suggests that there are some very basic questions that any fledgling community theater must ask itself.² Due to the controversy it has stirred from time to time, the general antagonism of the local press, and a general leveling off of the audiences in the last few years, it would seem to be valid to ask some of these questions about the Downey Children's Theatre.

The first question for a theater to ask itself, Young suggests, is "Does the Community need this theater?"

The simple answer is, of course, yes. Without the Downey Children's Theatre the community would have almost no live theater at all. There are a few small church groups that occasionally produce plays.

If one looks more closely at the question the answer does not present itself so readily. The Children's Theatre seems to be regarded, even by its most active supporters in the community as a cultural program that helps to enrich the education of their children, much in the same way as ballet lessons, arts and crafts, and music lessons do. If, in fact, this theater is only fulfilling

¹John Wray Young, The Community Theatre and How It Works (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957), p. 2.

²Ibid., p. 14.

the role of another activity that keeps the children out of their parents' way a few hours each day then the drama workshop program would probably serve as well, at much less cost. This theater, being located in one of the most affluent cities in our affluent country, is certainly not having the affect in the lives of the people it serves that it would have if it were located in a less advantaged area. To the affluent it is simply another activity, to the disadvantaged it could be an experience.

When one thinks of the question in terms of the adult play program the answer seems to be "no" from any point of view. Because of the philosophy which guides this theater, and the conservative nature of the community, a steady diet of "frothy comedies" seems to be all that Downey is interested in. The tired business executive or aero-space engineer would rather absorb the standard television fare in the relaxed solitude of his living room than be made to dress up and go out to a theater to see a play that may require him to think. With these restrictions it is questionable whether or not the theater program for adults can be justified.

Another point which relates to the basic question is whether or not the theater can function as well under the auspices of the recreation department as it could on its own. There is the advantage of being part of a large organization for the stability that it offers. On the other

hand, a recreation department has its own demands to impose and a theater must be able to live within these demands.

Primarily a recreation department insists, by its very nature, on large numbers of participants for any program it sponsors.

The theater program in Downey suffers to a greater degree from the old problem of having interested people continually shunning the backstage activities for the lights and applause, than an educational theater might. The sons and daughters of engineers, doctors, lawyers, and business men find it far easier to see themselves in the role of actor than in one of carpenter or painter.

The restrictions of most scripts dictate the numbers of actors that can be worked with at a given time. Double casting helps, of course, but one can only use just so many spear-carriers and ladies-in-waiting, especially when the plays are given on a stage with a 24' proscenium opening.

The marriage of a drama program and a recreation department has its conflicts built in. A department that is geared to seeing how many games of touch football it can keep going at once on a given afternoon, simply cannot understand a group of a few people practicing for weeks to give a few performances. The cost of such a program per participant seems to them outrageously out of proportion to its value.

The question also arises as to whether the extended debate that was carried on and is still being carried on, concerning the construction of the new theater in Downey indicates a deep seated antipathy toward the arts in general. One has but to glance at the report presented by Hume on the history of the debate on the theater to be struck by the fact that over a period of ten years every roadblock imaginable has been thrown in its way. Other large undertakings have their problems, but this seems to go far beyond the bounds of reasonable difficulties.

Tied very closely to this question is the question of the treatment of the Downey Children's Theatre by the local press. Although Hume denied this when asked, the Children's Theatre has often been either treated badly or ignored entirely for long periods of time. Many of the problems with the new theater, as well as many other problems, can be traced to the door of the local press. These have ranged from editorial attacks on the theater to refusing to publish articles publicizing the Children's Theatre programs of plays.

It would seem a valid assumption that the community of Downey is really not suited to the location of a community theater. This brings us to Young's second question in which he suggests that a new theater group should ask itself, "Is the interested group representative of the community?"

In order to answer this question a few other questions must be asked. Do the members of the community come to see the plays? In the first few years of the Downey Children's Theatre the audiences grew dramatically, but this had as much to do with the expanding program as it had to do with increased appeal of the theater to the community. In the last few years the audience has leveled off, and for some of the activities of the Children's Theatre, it has declined. The activity most seriously affected by the audience decline is the adult play series. A vigorous campaign is being conducted to try to reverse this trend. The problem of lagging audiences is being studied by the administration of the program. Whether or not this new program will have any effect remains to be seen.

One of the criticisms that has frequently been directed at the theater is that of the policy of paying some actors from out of town in order to "improve the quality of the production." This has the effect of cutting down the participation of those in the community who are interested in the theater. They feel, quite correctly, that they are no competition for professional actors. The result has been the relatively meagre showing of local people at the tryouts for the adult plays.

From the audience's point of view, they would rather drive the few miles to Los Angeles or Hollywood to see a truly professional production. After all, no one that

they know is in the local production, and the paid actors that the Downey Children's Theatre can afford to pay do not as yet have names of sufficient stature to draw large crowds.

This whole question tends to give the theater a "clubby" atmosphere, whether it deserves it or not, that is so fatal to theaters that must draw on volunteer help for much of their support.

Even the children's program is not immune to these charges. In a recent local newspaper article, Downey City Councilman Donald L. Winton pointed out that the same 150 children and teenagers do most of the acting and production work for all of the children's plays, and very few new names creep into the list each year. Whether these charges have any foundation at all is not really the point. The point is that if these things are felt to be true by the community as a whole the theater is due for an early downfall.

Aside from all of these questions, the most important facet of the program is that the children of the community are being exposed to good children's theater. Stories presented by actors who can be empathized with, in settings that seem almost real, can have a profound affect on the child. A child who grows up with theater in this way cannot help but be better for it in the long run. As Winifred Ward has so aptly stated:

No art can become a vital, moving force in a country unless the children grow up in it, unless it is a part of their lives from the time they are very young. And so, if we are to build a theater in this country, with appreciative audiences who will bring their interest and their support to what is good, we must expose our children to the best plays in the same way that they are exposed to the finest music.²

²Winifred Ward, Theatre for Children (Anchorage, Kentucky: The Children's Theatre Press, 1950), p. 32.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Friederich, William J. and John H. Fraser. Scenery Design for the Amateur Stage. New York: The MacMillan Company, 1950.

Hume, John G. A Brief History of the Downey Children's Theatre. Downey, California: Downey Recreation and Park Department (mimeographed)

_____. Chronological History of a Downey Theatre-Auditorium. April 24, 1968. (mimeographed)

_____. Unpublished press release to the Southeast News. Downey, California, 1960.

Johnson, Lee C. Letter to the Board of Directors, Downey Recreation and Park District, Downey, California, May 25, 1959.

Luskey's Blue Book, 1967 Edition. Anaheim, California: Luskey Brothers and Company, Inc., 1967.

Ward, Winifred. Theatre for Children. Anchorage, Kentucky: The Children's Theatre Press, 1950.

Young, John Wray. The Community Theatre and How It Works. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957.

Appendix A

PLAYS PRODUCED BY THE DOWNEY CHILDREN'S THEATRE

- 1955-56 "Hansel and Gretel" by Lillian and Robert Masters
"Tom Sawyer's Treasure Hunt" by Charlotte B. Chorpenning
"Sleeping Beauty" by Charlotte B. Chorpenning
- 1956-57 "Rumplestiltskin" by Charlotte B. Chorpenning
"The Five Little Peppers" by Rosemary Gabbert Musil
"Prince Fairyfoot" by Geraldine Brain
"Indian Captive" by Charlotte B. Chorpenning
"Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp" by James Norris
- 1957-58 "The Ghost of Mr. Penny" by Rosemary Gabbert Musil
"Hans Brinker of the Silver Skates" by Tom Taggart
"Peter, Peter Pumpkin Eater" by Martha B. King
"The Two Brothers" by Jerome V. White
"Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" by Jessie Braham White
- 1958-59 "Lee Bobo, Detective for Chinatown" by Rose Hum Lee and Charlotte B. Chorpenning
"Snow Queen and The Goblin" by Martha Bennet King
"Alice in Wonderland" by Madge Miller
"Mr. Popper's Penguins" by Albert O. Mitchell
"The Red Shoes" by Hans Josef Schmidt
- 1959-60 "Beauty and The Beast" by Robert Vincent Pierik

- and Mildred Alan Engdahl
- "Five Little Peppers" by Rosemary Gabbert Musil
- "Peter, Peter Pumpkin Eater" by Martha B. King
- "Heidi" by Lucille Miller
- "Aladdin and The Wonderful Lamp" by James Norris
- 1960-61 "Pied Piper of Hamelin" by Madge Miller
- "Hansel and Gretel" by Lillian and Robert Masters
- "Crazy Cricket Farm" by Lillian and Robert Masters
- "King Midas and the Golden Touch" by Charlotte B. Chorpenning
- "Tom Sawyer's Treasure Hunt" by Charlotte B. Chorpenning
- 1961-62 "Rumplestiltskin" by Charlotte B. Chorpenning
- "Ghost of Mr. Penny" by Rosemary Gabbert Musil
- "Off with His Honorable Head" by Theodore Hatlen
- "Sleeping Beauty" by Charlotte B. Chorpenning
- "Rip Van Winkle" by Grace Dorcas Ruthenburg
- 1962-63 "Beauty and The Beast" by Robert Vincent Pierik and Mildred Alan Engdahl
- "The Indian Captive" by Charlotte B. Chorpenning
- "Wizard of Oz" by L. Frank Baum. Adapted by Frank Gabrielson
- 1963-64 "Little Women" by Sara Spencer
- "Heidi" by Lucille Miller
- "Cinderella" by Charlotte B. Chorpenning
- "The Music Man" by Meredith Wilson

- 1964-65 "Pinocchio" by Dorothy Dayton Stone
"The Red Shoes" by Hans Josef Schmidt
"Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" by Jessie Braham White
"Brigadoon" by Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Loewe
- 1965-66 "Tom Sawyer's Treasure Hunt" by Charlotte B. Chorpenning
"Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp" by James Norris
"The Pale Pink Dragon" by Phyllis McCallam
"Bye Bye Birdie" by Michael Stewart and Charles Strouse
- 1966-67 "Rumplestiltskin" by Charlotte B. Chorpenning
"Peter, Peter Pumpkin Eater" by Martha B. King
"Mr. Popper's Penguins" by Albert O. Mitchell
"Annie Get Your Gun" by Irving Berlin, Herbert and Dorothy Fields
- 1967-68 "The Tinder Box" by Alan Broadhurst
"The Tough and Tender Troll" by Phyllis McCallam
"The Pied Piper of Hamelin" by Madge Miller
"The King and I" by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II

Appendix B

PLAYS PRODUCED BY THE DOWNEY THEATRE GUILD

- 1960-61 "Dangerous Corner" by J. B. Priestly
"The Play's the Thing" by Ferenc Molnar
"Rain" by John Colton and Clemence Randolph
- 1961-62 "Deadly Game" by James Jaffe
"Waltz of the Toreadors" by Jean Anouilh
"The Miser" by Moliere
"Joan of Lorraine" by Maxwell Anderson
- 1962-63 "Blithe Spirit" by Noel Coward
"The Seven Year Itch" by George Axelrod
"The Man In The Dog Suit" by Albert Beich and
William Wright
"J. B." by Archibald MacLeish
- 1963-64 "Send Me No Flowers" by Norman Barasch and Carroll
Moore
"A Roomful of Roses" by Edith Sommer
"Champagne Complex" by Leslie Stevens
- 1964-65 "The Best Man" by Gore Vidal
"Who'll Save the Flowboy?" by Frank D. Gilroy
"Playboy of the Western World" by John Millington
Synge
- 1965-66 "Come Blow Your Horn" by Neil Simon
"The Teahouse of the August Moon" by John Patrick
"Hamlet" by William Shakespeare

1966-67 "Mary, Mary" by Jean Kerr

"Harvey" by Mary Chase

"The Doctor In spite of Himself" by Moliere

"Ario de Capo" by Edna St. Vincent Millay

1967-68 "Thousand Clowns" by Herb Gardner

"It's Never Too Late" by Felicity Douglas

"Man for All Seasons" by Robert Bolt

Appendix G

BY LAWS OF THE DOWNEY CHILDREN'S THEATRE, INC.

ARTICLE 1 - NAME

The name of this organization shall be the Downey Children's Theatre, Inc.

ARTICLE 2 - OBJECT

Section 1: To foster good dramatic activities for children living within the boundaries of the Downey Recreation and Park District.

Section 2: To establish those precedences and regulations which will bring about good dramatic activities for children.

ARTICLE 3 - MEMBERSHIP

Section 1: The membership shall consist of General Members, Sustaining Members and/or Patrons, and Honorary Members.

Section 2: General Members shall be adults who are not in default of dues. A general membership entitles an individual to voting privileges.

Section 3: Sustaining members shall be those patrons, either individuals and/or organizations, who contribute at least Ten Dollars (\$10.00) or more towards the welfare of the Downey Children's Theatre, Inc., within a fiscal year. Sustaining members are entitled to voting privileges.

Section 4: Honorary members shall be those individuals who render extraordinary services to the Children's Theatre, Inc. Honorary membership shall be granted by a majority vote of the Administrative Council.

Section 5: General Membership, under exceptional circumstances, may be granted to individuals under eighteen years of age by a simple majority vote of the Administrative Council.

ARTICLE 4 - OFFICERS AND ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL

Section 1: The officers of the Downey Children's Theatre, Inc. not to exceed fifteen in number, shall constitute the Administrative Council. Officers may be elected from the General and/or sustaining Members or they may be appointed by a simple majority vote of the Council.

Section 2: The Administrative Council shall consist of the following officers: President; Vice-President; Treasurer; Secretary; Production Manager; Play Adviser; Personnel Supervisor; Design Supervisor; Settings and Properties Supervisor; Wardrobe and Make-up Supervisor; Music and Dancing Supervisor; Lighting and Sound Supervisor; Promotion and Publicity Supervisor; Box Office and Ticket Sales Supervisor; House Manager.

Section 3: The duties of the Administrative Council are:

A. To call meetings of all members.

B. To call meetings of the Administrative Council.

cil at the direction of the President.

C. To approve all public statements and/or announcements regarding the Children's Theatre, Inc.

D. To draft the necessary regulations to carry out the object of the Downey Children's Theatre, Inc., subject to the approval of the General Membership.

E. Each member of the Administrative Council has one vote.

F. The President will vote only in case of a tie vote.

ARTICLE 5 - DUTIES OF OFFICERS

Section 1: The President

A. He shall preside at regular and special meetings of the General Membership and of the Administrative Council.

B. He shall appoint such committees as shall be necessary and appoint chairman thereof.

C. He shall be empowered to recall any appointments made by him.

D. He shall approve any delegation of duties among the members of the Council.

E. He shall present to the members of the Administrative Council facts indicating the failure of an Administrative Council member to per-

form his duties.

F. He shall replace non-functioning administrative members with a temporary appointment, subject to the approval of the Council.

G. He shall conduct all General and Administrative meetings in an orderly manner..He shall cause an agenda to be prepared for all meetings. The agenda shall provide an opportunity for each Administrative Council member to present information.

Section 2: The Vice-President

A. He shall assume the duties of the President in his absence.

B. He shall serve as ex-officio chairman of all standing committees.

C. He shall assume the duties of the President for the duration of the term in the event the President's office becomes vacant.

D. He shall act as Public Relations officer for the organization.

E. He shall serve as Social Chairman of the organization with specific responsibility for all fund-raising affairs.

F. He shall be responsible for clearing play performance dates with the Master Calendar maintained by the Coordinating Council.

Section 3: The Secretary

- A. He shall record the minutes of the General and Administrative Council Meetings.
- B. He shall maintain a roster of General, Sustaining and Honorary Members.
- C. He shall be responsible for obtaining a meeting place for General and Council meetings, on suggestions of Administrative Council.
- D. He shall notify members of meeting time and place for all general, special and Council meetings.

Section 4: The Treasurer

- A. He shall assume the duties of the President in the absence of the President and the Vice-President.
- B. He shall receive, account for, and disburse funds collected as dues or contributions.
- C. He shall receive, account for and disburse funds collected as performance or other payments.
- D. He shall prepare and submit a financial report at the end of each fiscal year for presentation to the Administrative Council.
- E. He shall prepare and submit a financial report of each project of the Downey Children's Theatre, Inc. to the Administrative Council at the conclusion of each project.

F. He shall be authorized to pay petty cash bills in the amount of one dollar and twenty five cents (\$1.25) provide receipts are tendered.

G. He shall be authorized to pay bills by check, provided all checks shall be signed by one of the following combinations; Treasurer and Vice-President, Treasurer and President, and President and Vice-President.

Section 5: The Production Manager

A. To coordinate all phases of each project undertaken by the Downey Children's Theatre.

1. To prepare a production schedule, with the assistance of the Director, Production, Promotion, Publicity and Box Office Administrators, which will include completion dates and deadlines of all phases of each project.

2. To assure completion of the various phases of the project at specified times and dates of the projected schedule by individual contact with Administrative Council members.

3. To inform the Administrative Council of the progress of each project undertaken by the Downey Children's Theatre.

Section 6: The Play Advisor

A. To read and select plays for production by the Downey Children's Theatre.

1. To prepare a list of plays for production far enough in advance to enable proper production, promotion and publicity plans to be made.

2. To present the list of plays to the Administrative Council for approval.

Section 7: Personnel Supervisor

A. To procure suitable director for each of the productions of the Downey Children's Theatre.

1. Prepare a list of available people for presentation to the Administrative Council for approval.

2. Maintain a current list of volunteer workers, their preference as to type of work, available hours for work, addresses and telephone numbers.

Section 8: Design Supervisor

A. To procure suitable scenic designers and technical directors for each production of the Downey Children's Theatre.

1. Prepare and maintain a list of available people.

2. Assign individuals to productions with

the approval of the Administrative Council.

3. Procure designer's sketches and drawings far enough in advance to assure a sufficient amount of time for the ordering of materials and construction of sets.

4. Plan approximate construction dates with assistance of technical directors as far in advance as possible.

B. To cooperate with settings and properties supervisors in the preparation of a suggested list of building materials to be purchased and/or borrowed by the Downey Children's Theatre for use during the entire fiscal year.

1. To present the building material list to the Administrative Council for approval.

Section 9: Settings and Properties Supervisor

A. To cause to be constructed and/or borrowed and painted all stage settings and properties to be used in the productions of the Downey Children's Theatre.

1. To ascertain that a technical director has plans and drawings necessary to properly supervise all construction workers.

2. To provide building materials, construction workers and painters for the technical director's supervision.

B. To provide a person to supervise the procurement, building and handling of all hand properties.

C. To provide a sufficient number of stage hands to properly mount and move the stage settings and properties for all dress rehearsals and performances.

D. To arrange for transportation of all scenic effects from the place of construction or storage to the theater.

E. To assure the proper dismantling, transportation and storage of all settings and materials of the Downey Children's Theatre.

F. To assure the return of all borrowed materials used in stage settings or as properties.

Section 10: Wardrobe and Makeup Supervisor

A. To cause to be provided proper costumes and makeup for each production of the Downey Children's Theatre.

1. To cooperate with designer in providing the necessary pictures and patterns for those individuals making the costumes.

2. To assure the proper condition and handling of all costumes during dress rehearsals and performances.

B. To assume responsibility for the proper stor-

age of all cloth, costumes, accessories and makeup supplies of the Downey Children's Theatre.

C. To prepare and present to the Administrative Council a report on the makeup and wardrobe needs and purchases for the fiscal year.

D. To provide a sufficient number of people to properly apply the necessary makeup for each dress rehearsal and performance.

E. To provide a sufficient number of people to assist actors in changing costumes and caring for said costumes during rehearsals and performances.

F. To maintain a current inventory of all wardrobe and make-up supplies.

Section 11: Music and Dancing Supervisor

A. To cause appropriate music and dancing to be provided for performances of the Downey Children's Theatre.

1. To cooperate with the Director and Designer in drawing up a list of musical effects and dances to be an integral part of each performance.

2. To secure the services of choreographer and musical director to carry out the desired effects.

B. To arrange for all recording of music, securing of musicians and musical instruments which will be used at rehearsals, dress rehearsals and performances.

Section 12: Lighting and Sound Supervisor

A. To furnish appropriate lighting and sound effects for all dress rehearsals and performances of the Downey Children's Theatre.

1. To cooperate with the Director, Designer and Technical Director in drawing up a list of lighting and sound effects for each production.

2. To procure technicians capable of executing the needed effects.

3. To rent, purchase or borrow all special equipment needed to accomplish the desired effect.

4. To prepare a list of required materials and their cost for presentation to the Administrative Council for approval.

5. To cooperate with the music and dancing supervisor in arranging for the necessary recording instruments and recording times.

Section 13: Promotion and Publicity Supervisor

A. To cause good, sustained promotional and publicity work to be done in the interest of

the Downey Children's Theatre.

1. To cooperate with the Administrative Council in drawing up an overall plan for the promotion of public interest and publicity for individual projects of the Downey Children's Theatre.
2. To cooperate with the Director, Designer, Technical Director and Production Manager in drawing up a promotion and publicity schedule to fit into each overall production schedule.
3. To submit periodic reports to the Administrative Council suggestions for better public relations and methods for increasing community interest.

Section 14: Box Office and Ticket Sales Supervisor

- A. To cause tickets to be printed and made available to all people wishing to purchase them.
 1. To make tickets available to all who wish to sell them, i.e., individual cast members, retail stores, service groups.
 2. To advise the Administrative Council on the proper admission prices for children and adults.
- B. To perform the necessary clerical and accounting tasks connected with the sale of season

and individual tickets and to make this information available to the Treasurer.

C. To provide for the sale of tickets at the door on performance days.

Section 15: House Manager

A. To maintain orderliness and efficiency in the auditorium on performance days.

1. Provide for a sufficient number of ticket takers, doormen and ushers.

B. Provide leadership to keep order in the rooms used by the cast and dancers before and after their stage appearances during dress rehearsals and performances.

1. Provide recreational supplies to maintain cast order.

ARTICLE 6 - NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

Section 1: Term of office shall be from the first Monday in May to the first Monday of the following year.

Section 2: Election of officers shall be held by ballot in the April meeting preceding the end of the fiscal year.

Section 3: New officers shall be installed in May following the elections in April.

Section 4: A nominating committee composed of three members appointed by the President shall be appointed in March to prepare a slate of officers to be submitted to

the membership during the April meeting. No person may be nominated for office without his consent.

Section 5: Nominations may be made from the floor for all offices.

Section 6: All elections shall be held by secret ballot. The President shall appoint a committee of at least three members, not nominated for office, to poll the votes.

Section 7: Vacancies in office shall be filled for the unexpired term by the President, with the approval of the Administrative Council.

ARTICLE 7 - MEETINGS

Section 1: Regular meetings of the General Membership of the Downey Children's Theatre, Inc., shall be held on the first Monday of each month from 7:30 to 9:30 P.M. It shall be the responsibility of the Secretary to obtain a meeting place and notify members.

Section 2: The annual meeting shall be held in May, with the installation of officers, and the presentation of annual reports, financial or otherwise.

Section 3: When a regular meeting falls on a National or State holiday, the regularly held meeting shall be postponed to the next successive day at the same time as the regular meeting.

Section 4: Special meetings may be called by the President or by any five members of the Administrative Council, provided all members are notified in writing of

time, place and purpose of such a meeting.

Section 5: Administrative Council meetings shall be held on the first Monday preceding the regular meeting.

ARTICLE 8 - QUORUM

Section 1: A regular meeting of the General Membership cannot be held unless a quorum is present. A quorum is defined as ten or more General and/or Sustaining members.

Section 2: Eight members shall constitute a quorum of the Administrative Council.

ARTICLE 9 - DUES

Section 1: The dues of active members shall be one dollar (\$1.00) per year per member and shall be payable for the fiscal year on or before July 1st of said year.

Section 2: The minimum contribution to qualify as a sustaining member or patron shall be ten dollars (\$10.00) per year per member.

Section 3: Honorary members shall not be required to pay dues.

ARTICLE 10 - AMENDMENTS

Section 1: These by-laws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the quorum of members present at any General Membership meeting, provided the call of the meeting shall include the proposed amendment.

Appendix D
JOB CLASSIFICATION FOR
ASSISTANT TO SUPERVISOR OF FINE ARTS

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

As an Administrative Aide, to work under the supervision of the Superintendent of Fine Arts in arranging for the successful plans and completion of the various theatrical projects undertaken by the Downey Recreation and Park District and the Downey Children's Theatre, Inc. under their agreement of co-sponsorship, including supervision of and liason between various individuals and civic, educational, and governmental groups as they participate in said projects; to act as subscription secretary, maintaining or establishing all scripts, mailing lists, files, correspondence, box office reports, ticket orders, production schedules, cast lists, and printing orders, including tickets, posters, programs, invitations, and such other activities and services as may be required from time to time.

As an Administrative Aide, to work under the supervision of the Superintendent of Fine Arts in arranging for the various projects undertaken by the Downey Recreation and Park District and the Downey Symphonic Society under their agreement of co-sponsorship, including supervision of and liason between various individuals and civic,

educational, and governmental groups as they participate in said projects; to act as payroll clerk and subscription secretary; maintaining or establishing mailing lists, files, correspondence, box office reports, ticket orders, production schedules, printing orders, including tickets, posters, programs, invitations, and such other activities and services as may be required from time to time.

As an Administrative Aide, to work under the supervision of the Superintendent of Fine Arts in arranging for the various projects undertaken by the Downey Recreation and Park District and the Downey Museum of Art under their agreement of co-sponsorship, including assistance in handling the clerical aspects of the Downey Museum of Art as they are commonly handled in the offices of the Downey Recreation and Park District, and such other similar duties for other sponsored or co-sponsored recreation groups, such as the Downey Chess Club, as may be assigned from time to time.

DESIRABLE QUALIFICATIONS

Training and Experience. A college degree in the area of fine arts is desirable but not necessary. At least four years experience as a secretary or office manager familiar with office machines, filing, bookkeeping and personnel practices; a general familiarity with community or professional theater, symphony orchestras, and art museums.

Knowledge, Skill, and Personal Qualities. Ability to remember details, initiate office schedules and practices; carry responsibility for detailed clerical projects, to write letters and publicity, as well as the desire and ability to work with a variety of individuals, children and adults. Some typing is required, shorthand is desirable but not necessary.

JOB CLASSIFICATION - TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Under supervision and with assistance to assume responsibility for complete designing, planning construction, rigging, painting, proper storage and transportation of stage settings and properties, including installation and maintenance of lighting equipment, supervision of costume construction and wardrobe maintenance, makeup storage and application; management of all resident and touring production crews of live adult and children's plays produced by the Downey Children's Theatre. To organize, encourage, and supervise directly the work of child and adult volunteers as well as employees of the Downey Recreation and Park District and Downey Children's Theatre as they participate in the activities of the Downey Children's Theatre to supervise, to establish, and to maintain the theatrical program jointly sponsored by the Downey Recreation and Park District and the Downey Children's Theatre. He shall work under the supervision and be immediately responsible to the Superintendent of Theatre Arts.

DESIRABLE QUALIFICATIONS

Training and Experience. Graduation or equivalent from an accredited college or university with a major in

theater arts; at least two years experience as a designer, stage carpenter, scene painter, or stage manager; at least two years experience in a supervisory capacity preferably with children.

Knowledge, Skill, and Personal Qualities. A comprehensive knowledge of the fundamentals of scenery design, construction, painting, and maintenance; a working knowledge of theatrical lighting techniques and lighting equipment, its maintenance and operation; a general knowledge of costume history and construction, wardrobe storage, and makeup techniques; an outstanding ability to manage and to direct the talents and skills of other production workers, especially junior and senior high school age children.

Appendix E

AWARDS BREAKDOWN - OLD SYSTEM

CHILDREN

Each Participant receives a paper award and the right to buy a silver pin.

Supporting Roles.

- A. Receive a paper award which entitles them to buy a silver pin.
- B. If in two supporting roles per season, receive a silver pin.
- C. If in three supporting roles per season, receive a silver pin with rubies.
- D. If in four supporting roles per season, receive a silver pin with sapphires.
- E. If in five supporting roles per season, receive a silver pin with diamonds.

Feature Roles.

- A. If in one feature role, receive a silver pin.
- B. If in two feature roles in one season, receive a silver pin with rubies.

Leading Role.

- A. If in one leading role per season, receive a gold pin.
- B. If in two leading roles per season, receive

a gold pin with rubies.

Production Personnel.

- A. If in one production, receive a paper award and the right to buy a silver pin.
- B. If in two productions with approximately 15 hours per production (or 6 days), receive a silver pin.
- C. If in three productions with approximately 45 hours (9 days), receive a silver pin with rubies.
- D. If in four productions with approximately 60 hours (or 12 days), receive a silver pin with sapphires.
- E. If in five productions with approximately 75 hours (or 15 days), receive a silver pin with diamonds.

Independent creative workers are considered individually.

Paid production personnel will receive special awards only in exceptional cases.

General Service.

- A. Group or Individual receives paper award; additionally, season tickets may be awarded in exceptional cases.

ADULTS

Each participant receives a paper award and the

right to buy a silver pin.

Out-going Administrative Council receives a gold pin after the first year, then appropriate stones added for each consecutive year: A. rubies, B. Sapphires, and C. diamonds.

Out-going President, appropriately inscribed gavel.

Adult Actors

- A. If in one production per season, receive a silver pin.
- B. If in two productions per season, receive a silver pin with rubies.
- C. If in three productions per season, receive a silver pin with sapphires.
- D. If in four productions per season, receive a silver pin with diamonds.
- E. If in five productions per season, receive a gold pin.

Production Personnel

- A. If in one production in a supervisory capacity, receive a silver pin.
- B. If in two productions per season in a supervisory capacity, receive a silver pin with rubies.
- C. If in three productions per season in a supervisory capacity, receive a silver pin with sapphires.

D. If in four productions per season, in a supervisory capacity, receive a silver pin with diamonds.

E. If in two productions per season with approximately 15 hours per production (or 6 days), receive a silver pin.

F. If in three productions per season with approximately 45 hours (9 days), receive a silver pin with rubies.

G. If in four productions per season with approximately 60 hours (12 days), receive a silver pin with sapphires.

H. If in five productions per season with approximately 75 hours (or 15 days), receive a silver pin with diamonds.

Independent Creative Workers.

A. For 1st year, receive a gold pin.

B. For succeeding years, appropriate stones.

Adult personnel working in two categories or more will have to be considered separately. Only one pin can be awarded; however, a season ticket or an honorary membership may accompany the pin.

Paid production personnel will receive special awards only in exceptional cases.

AWARDS BREAKDOWN - NEW SYSTEM

Divisions, values, and points per activity and per hour for determining recognition and awards:

CAST AND CREW POINTS

Actors.

1. Leading	20
2. Feature	10
3. Supporting	5

Dancers.

1. Leading	20
2. Feature	10
3. Supporting	5

Crew Members.

1. Stage Manager	50
2. Chiefs	40
3. Prompter	20
4. Assistants	20

ATTENDANCE POINTS

These points apply to all cast and crew.

	Present (plus)	Absent or Late (minus)
1. Performances	20	20
2. Dress Rehearsals	20	20
3. Regular rehearsals	10	5

	Present (plus)	Absent or Late (minus)
4. Extrasrehearsals	5	2
5. Set-up	20	20
6. Technical rehearsals	20	20
7. Strike	20	20

Points will be credited for attendance and deducted for unexcused absence or lateness.

Excused absences will mean that credit for attendance will not be given.

Excused lateness will mean that only partial credit will be given.

If an individual is given travel allowance, then his attendance points total will be reduced by one-half.

SET CONSTRUCTION

	Points per hour. (independent) (group)	
1. Plans and Supervision	10	--
2. Art Work	10	5
3. Sewing	10	5
4. Surfacing and Decorating	10	5
5. Clean Up	15	10

Points will be deducted for coming late or leaving early as follows: 2 points for every 10 minutes.

COSTUMES

	Points per hour. (independent) (group)	
1. Plans and Supervision.	10	--
2. Sewing and Decorating	10	5
3. Records (check in and out)	10	5
4. Clean-up	15	10

Points will be deducted for coming late or leaving early as follows: 2 points for every 10 minutes.

PROMOTION AND PUBLICITY

1. Office	10
2. Home	10
3. Public Appearances	5
4. Poster Passing	10

POINTS AWARDS

1. Honorable Mention	1 to 99
2. Certificate	100 to 299
3. Silver	300 to 599
4. Silver with rubies	600 to 899
5. Silver with sapphires	900 to 1199
6. Silver with diamonds	1200 to 1499
7. Gold	1500 to 1799
8. Gold with rubies	1800 to 2099
9. Gold with sapphires	2100 to 2399
10. Gold with diamonds	2400 to 2799

where individuals are to be considered for special awards such as, honorary memberships, plaques, nomination

for Princess of Storyland, etc., other factors will also be considered---attitude, efficiency, personal appearance, manners, consistency, etc. (See criteria for Princess of Storyland)..

Where individuals accrue fewer than 100 points in any season, only honorable mention will be given and no tangible award, regardless of the award that individual may currently hold. Honorable mention will be given where a step has not been achieved.

Accurate records of regular activity points will be kept, but it is the responsibility of the individual to report his point total to the person in charge at the completion of the individual activity.

Point totals will be assigned each independent activity.

CRITERIA FOR PRINCESSES OF STORYLAND

AGE

Must be at least tenth graders at the time of coronation. There is no maximum age limit.

PARTICIPATION

1. To be eligible to be appointed Princess of Storyland, the individual must have accrued at least 1500 points at the time of appointment.

2. Girls must have participated in at least one play during the preceding season.

ORGANIZATIONAL PRESTIGE

The degree to which the girl represents the qualities which Downey Children's Theatre seeks to develop in the children of the community.

1. Demeanor

2. Character

ATTITUDES

1. Loyalty

2. Interest

STAGE PRESENCE

1. Poise

2. Grooming

3. Cleanliness

Appendix F
PROFIT - LOSS STATEMENT
SEASON 1961-62

RUMPLESTILTSKIN

Box office receipts	\$1,176.07 (\$450.00 Anaheim)
Season tickets	59.56
Program advertising	52.00
Total	\$1,287.63
Expenses	878.88
	\$ 408.75 Profit

DEADLY GAME

Box office receipts	\$ 229.50
Season tickets	78.75
Program advertising	87.50
Total	\$ 395.75
Expenses	651.62
	\$ 255.87 Loss

WALTZ OF THE TOREADORS

Box office receipts	\$ 282.50
Season tickets	78.75
Program advertising	87.50
Total	\$ 448.75
Expenses	834.60
	\$ 385.85 Loss

GHOST OF MR. PENNY.

Box office receipts	\$ 534.44
Season tickets	59.56
Program advertising	52.00
Total	\$ 646.00
Expenses	727.37
	\$ 80.37 Loss

THE MISER

Box office receipts	\$ 376.50
Season tickets	78.75
Program advertising	87.50
Total	\$ 542.75
Expenses	498.80
	\$ 43.95 Profit

OFF WITH HIS HONORABLE HEAD

Box office receipts	\$ 533.20
Season tickets	59.56
Program advertising	57.00
Total	\$ 649.76
Expenses	638.02
	\$ 11.74 Profit

JOAN OF LORRAINE

Box office receipts	\$ 318.50
Season tickets	78.75
Program advertising	100.00

Total

\$ 497.25

Expenses

630.14

\$ 132.89 Loss

Appendix G

"PERCENTAGE OF GROSS" PROPOSAL

Conditions and suggestions regarding proposed payment of a/the Managing Director.

Since the success of the program of plays presented by the Downey Children's Theatre, Inc. and the Downey Recreation and Park District depends to a great extent upon the efforts of its Managing Director, it is suggested that both organizations pay for the services of a suitable individual.

1. At the present time, the Downey Recreation and Park District is providing nearly all that it can be expected to provide for leadership of the Downey Children's Theatre activities.

2. It is suggested that the Managing Director be paid a percentage of the gross income from each event to which tickets are sold, including the adult play series, the children's play series, and the Arm Chair Cruise Series.

(a) A percentage rather than a flat-sum payment is suggested, not only because it offers an incentive to the individual, but it is further suggested that the only proper way to scale the recompense of a Managing Director is on the overall effectiveness of his events or upon the gross attendance at the individual attrac-

tions.

(b) 15 is suggested as a fair percentage; for Mr. Popper's Penguins, the gross income is approximately \$1,100.00; 15% is nearly \$165.00; the income for an adult play this year is approximately \$800.00, 15% is approximately \$120.00. The income for an arm chair film this year is approximately \$150.00. 15% is approximately \$12.50. Assuming that this is an average season, 15% will result in a payment of approximately \$1,200.00 for a full season.

(c) It is suggested that 15% be paid only for the remainder of this season, including Mr. Popper's Penguins, Wizard of Oz, J. B., and the remaining two attractions of the Arm Chair Cruise, and for a full season beginning July 1, 1963.

(d) It is certain that this expense can be met for the remainder of this season and quite probably for each succeeding season; however, it is suggested that the percentage payment be reviewed each season and be adjusted to the current situation of the following season.

3. It is believed that such payment to its Managing Director is a normal necessary expense for the Downey Children's Theatre, that such payment was proper from the be-

ginning, and it is not properly considered payment from the profit now produced by the Downey Children's Theatre, or a recompense for extra work, except as extra work must always result from normal necessary growth and development such as the Downey Children's Theatre undergoes each year.

Appendix H

CO-SPONSORSHIP AGREEMENT

This agreement, made and entered into this First day of July, 1968, by and between the City of Downey, a Municipal Corporation, hereinafter referred to as "City," and Downey Children's Theatre, Inc., hereinafter referred to as "Children's Theatre, Inc."

WITNESSETH:

Whereas, City is a municipal corporation engaged in providing municipal services to its residents; and

Whereas, Children's Theatre is a non-profit corporation duly organized and existing under and by virtue of the laws of the State of California for the purpose of providing services in the performing arts; and

Whereas, City recognizes the existence of a need for recreation by the residents of City, among others, in the form of music and drama and performing arts; and

Whereas, City is authorized to contract with any person, including Children's Theatre, for the maintenance and operation of recreational activities within City; and

Whereas, City desires Children's Theatre to provide recreation in the fields of music, drama and the performing arts primarily for and on behalf of the residents of City, upon the terms and conditions hereinafter set forth;

and

Whereas, Children's Theatre is willing to assist the City in providing such recreation for the residents of the City upon the terms and conditions hereinafter set forth; and

Whereas, City and Children's Theatre desire to co-sponsor recreational activities consisting of stage plays, musical plays, readings, pantomimes, marionette or puppet shows, travel films, art films, and such other similar activities to be agreed upon by the parties as within the purview of this agreement, and to contribute services, funds and materials at the times, in the manner, and upon the conditions hereinafter provided, to the end that the residents of City will participate in and receive the benefits of said recreational activities under the control and supervision of City.

Now, therefore, City and Children's Theatre do hereby agree as follows:

1. Children's Theatre, in pursuance of the purposes of this agreement, does hereby agree to:

(a) Furnish to City, by March 1, 1969 a proposed production and activity plan and estimated revenues for the period from July 1, 1969 to June 30, 1970, said plan to include, among other things, the following: the number of plays or other productions to be produced for children

and adults and for special projects, the kind of plays or productions to be produced, the place or places at which they are to be held, the time and date on which they are to be presented, and the price to be charged to the public for admission thereto; and to obtain City's approval of the proposed production and activity plan prior to putting said plan into effect.

(b) Pay for all services to be furnished or rendered and materials and equipment to be furnished for the staging of the productions organized and initiated by Children's Theatre which are not otherwise agreed to be paid for by City as hereinafter provided in paragraph 2 hereof.

(c) Provide that City's Theatre Director, to the extent consistent with his other duties to the City, shall also serve as Children's Theatre's Director. Children's Theatre shall neither compensate or pay said Director nor any employee of City for services rendered to the program organized and produced by Children's Theatre.

(d) Encourage residents of City to participate in the recreational activities organized and produced by the City and the Children's Theatre

o pursuant to the terms of this agreement.

(e) Initiate the selection of programs, plays and other activities to be performed and produced by City and Children's Theatre.

(f) Keep accurate and complete accounting records reflecting all financial transactions of Children's Theatre, not handled by the City, which records shall be available at all reasonable times for audit by City or its authorized representatives.

(g) If, for any reason, the Children's Theatre ceases to function, its assets shall be held by City for it in trust until it resumes operations or until six months after the termination of this agreement, whichever occurs first. If, upon termination of trust, Children's Theatre shall not have resumed operation, or if the Children's Theatre becomes dissolved, its assets shall be and become the property of City.

(h) Maintain an active Board of Directors of at least 15 members who will be responsible for developing operational policy within the broad guidelines established by the Park and Recreation Commission and approved by the City Council.

2. City, in order to implement the purposes of this

agreement, does hereby agree to do the following:

(a) By June 1, after the Children's Theatre presents its proposed production and activity plan called for under 1(a) hereof, City shall advise Children's Theatre of its approval or disapproval or modification on the production and activity plan.

(b) Assign City's Theatre Director to serve as the Director of the Children's Theatre, whose primary duties shall be directing and supervising the recreational activities co-sponsored by the parties hereto, including but not limited to supervision of personnel employed by the Downey Children's Theatre or assigned by the City to the co-sponsored program.

The City will also provide such additional personnel as City may deem necessary and advisable to carry on this co-sponsored Recreation program and the objects of this agreement.

(c) Said Theatre Director shall be responsible to the City, only, and shall provide and maintain constant supervision of said co-sponsored recreational activities and personnel in the interests of the City.

(d) Purchase and/or rent materials or equipment regularly used for the construction of stage

scenery and properties, in an amount as budgeted by City, title to said property to be vested in City, and said property to remain with and be stored by City.

(e) Provide office space, filing space, storage facilities, and such other supplies and services as City may from time to time determine to be necessary and advisable in order to carry out the co-sponsored recreational program and the objects of the Agreement.

3. City's Theatre Director, while acting as the Director for Children's Theatre, shall engage in play directing and leadership of the co-sponsored program, and shall receive no money, remuneration or compensation of any kind from Children's Theatre.

(f) To annually consider the program's financial needs when preparing the City's annual budget, and to include within the City's annual budget, funds in an amount to be determined at the sole discretion of the City, for the purpose of financially assisting the Theatre program activities, and to organize, plan and present said programs to the residents of the City for its cultural development.

4. With respect to Workmen's Compensation coverage for persons engaged in carrying out the co-sponsored pro-

gram, it is hereby agreed that all employees of City who are engaged to any extent in assisting Children's Theatre in carrying out said program in pursuance of this Agreement shall be insured by the City, the premiums for such insurance to be paid by City; and with respect to all other persons employed by Children's Theatre in carrying out the purposes of the co-sponsored program, they shall be insured by the Children's Theatre, who shall pay the premiums for such insurance.

5. The term of this agreement shall be for July 1, 1968 to June 30, 1969.

Appendix I
PROFIT-LOSS STATEMENTS

SEASON OF 1964-65

	INCOME	EXPENSES	TOTAL
PINOCCHIO	3,449.99	2,022.34	1,427.65
THE RED SHOES	1,110.03	1,274.10	- 164.07
SNOW WHITE	2,894.87	2,039.39	855.48
BRIGADOON	4,288.92	6,212.60	-1,923.68
BEST MAN	1,014.84	1,594.71	- 579.87
PLOWBOY	878.72	1,012.26	- 133.54
PLAYBOY OF WEST. W.	982.38	1,111.49	- 129.11
ARM CHAIR CRUISE	612.10	760.00	- 147.90

SEASON OF 1965-66

TOM SAWYER	1,097.42	1,089.77	7.65
PALE PINK DRAGON	929.15	931.33	- 2.18
ALADDIN	3,897.48	1,198.30	2,699.18
COME BLOW YOUR HORN	- 804.20	915.05	- 109.83
TEAHOUSE	770.69	864.16	- 93.47
HAMLET	1,262.24	1,639.79	- 377.55
BYE BYE BIRDIE	4,184.61	3,599.93	584.68

SEASON OF 1966-67

RUMPLESTILTSKIN	1,424.20	1,270.36	153.84
PETER PETER	670.65	732.57	- 61.92
POPPER'S PENGUINS	2,509.63	1,222.75	1,286.88

	INCOME	EXPENSES	TOTAL
MARY, MARY	738.49	531.47	207.02
HARVEY	686.43	570.98	115.45
DR. IN SPITE	666.80	493.69	173.11
ANNIE GET YOUR GUN	3,672.22	7,002.61	-3,330.39
ARMCHAIR CRUISE	520.70	670.10	- 149.40

E N D

UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES

THESIS NO.

2835