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THE HISTORY OF
THE GASLIGHT THEATRE

by
Jane Merrifield-Beecher

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A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the
DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE ARTS
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of
MASTER OF ARTS
In the Graduate College
THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

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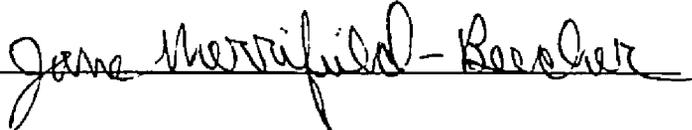
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. Jerry Dickey for his faith in my ability to complete a study of this magnitude, and for his astute writing and observation powers. Also, I am grateful to Dr. Sam Smiley whose Theatre 600 class gave me the necessary tools required to complete this thesis. The kindness of Jeff Warburton, Dr. William Lang, Dick Hanson, Dr. Mary Maher, and Dr. Frank K. La Ban made the demands of graduate school and writing a thesis a less stressful experience.

The assistance of Tony Terry, Patty Gawne, Tom Benson, and the Gaslight staff provided me with invaluable information which I greatly appreciate. I also want to thank my typist, Elaine J. Hoenig, for her typing and organizational skills and her dedication to this project.

I want to thank my parents for instilling in me the importance of higher education. Most importantly, I want to thank my husband for his love and support in helping me bring this sometimes difficult, but exciting, goal to completion.

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of Danny Griffith,
pianist extraordinaire, and my best friend. I miss you Danny.

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ABSTRACT

Tony Terry founded The Gaslight Theatre in Tucson, Arizona, in 1977. The thesis examines The Gaslight Theatre in order to validate the company's artistic relevancy as a contemporary producer of melodramas and to further understand the reasons behind the theatre's current success. The structure of the work begins with a history of melodrama, a look at the producer, Tony Terry, and his background and influence on The Gaslight Theatre, followed by a history of The Gaslight's three phases: The Victorian melodramas, the musical comedy melodramas, and the comedy spoof melodramas. A history of The Gaslight olio reveals the nature of the art form.

The thesis further provides a study of those involved in the theatre's success, as well as the company's inevitable link to the current theatre practices. Most importantly, the thesis examines The Gaslight Theatre's significance to the local and American theatre community.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION

Currently, The Gaslight Theatre dominates as one of the most popular theatres in Southern Arizona. The following pages chronicle the history of The Gaslight from its beginning through 1994 in an attempt to reveal the nature of the theatre and the factors involved in The Gaslight Theatre's phenomenal success.

Theatre in Arizona experienced major developments during the time that The Gaslight emerged in Tucson. Phoenix, the capital and largest city in the state, offered two Equity theatres from 1970-1981. The Palace West (1970-1973) typically presented Broadway musical tours such as Applause with Lauren Bacall. The overhead required to produce such big name shows, however, proved to be too much for the theatre, and in 1973, the Palace West closed. The Windmill Dinner Theatre (1974-1981) presented well-known stars and local actors in comedies and musicals. Because of financial difficulties, the Windmill closed its doors in 1981.

In 1977, Tucson supported four theatres which provided salaries comparable to union scale: the Broadway Dinner Theatre, the Saguaro Dinner Theatre, the Arizona Community Theatre, and The Gaslight Theatre. The Broadway Dinner Theatre and Saguaro Dinner Theatre presented comedies,

mysteries, and musical comedies. The Arizona Community Theatre (the only Equity house) produced comedies, dramas, tragedies, period plays, and experimental theatre. The Gaslight Theatre produced melodramas with a post-show vaudeville review. By 1984, The Gaslight Theatre and the Arizona Theatre Company (previously known as the Arizona Community Theatre) were the only remaining professional theatres.

While other theatres were closing their doors, The Gaslight Theatre officially opened theirs in 1977. The American public had recently experienced the disillusionment of the Vietnam War and Watergate Scandal. Audiences began a search for entertainment which would allow them to escape the realities of daily life. Films such as Rocky (1976) and Star Wars (1977) focused on spectacle and escapist storylines. These escapist films used the melodrama form, featuring one-dimensional characters, good versus evil, and the imperative happy ending. Joseph Gelmis, a reviewer for Newsday, described Star Wars as "an escapist masterpiece" (Parmentier 97). The 1989 World Almanac includes both Rocky and Star Wars in a list of fifty top grossing films in history. Based on the number of people going to see Rocky and Star Wars, it was clearly apparent that melodramatic films had become the most popular form of entertainment in America. The fact that The Gaslight Theatre emerged and grew strong during this period further indicates the popularity of the melodrama form.

Tony Terry founded The Gaslight Theatre in 1977, after viewing the success of several melodrama companies in the state of Colorado. In particular, the Imperial Hotel in Cripple Creek, Colorado, played a major part in the development of Terry's original concept. The Imperial Players presented actual nineteenth-century melodramas and modern melodramas patterned after the original form, as opposed to the farcical melodramas which satirized the Victorian originals. Terry chose to produce the original form, and in 1977, he opened his theater with Gold Fever (1976), by Howard Allen, a play patterned after a nineteenth-century melodrama.

Since The Gaslight's inception, the company has gained critical and popular success. As The Gaslight grew, the theatre experienced major artistic changes. The company's repertoire progressed from Victorian melodrama to musical melodrama to farcical melodrama. This thesis examines The Gaslight's evolution and the elements involved in the development of the theatre's unique style. Because the primary artistic developments occurred during the years 1977-1989, this study focuses on representative productions within these specific years.

The Gaslight Theatre presents melodrama farce year round on a full-time basis. The theatre is a commercial company which operates under the strong direction of Tony Terry and a select board of directors. The present theatre seats approximately 242, has a proscenium stage, and is furnished to

suggest an 1890s western saloon. Adjacent to the theatre is a 1950s diner and a commercial costume shop. The Gaslight complex employs nearly 75 people, including 8 to 10 actors and 4 members of a permanent technical staff.

The purpose of this thesis is to present a historical and analytical examination of The Gaslight Theatre in order to identify the typical characteristics of melodrama present in The Gaslight's work. Information about The Gaslight Theatre is plentiful, but to this date, no one has authorized an in-depth study. The body of this thesis proceeds in the following manner: Chapter 2 examines the Victorian melodrama and the olio for the purpose of revealing historical elements which exist in The Gaslight's repertory. Chapter 3 looks at producer Tony Terry, including his rationale for creating the theatre, his early business and artistic decisions, the contributions of his artistic team and his entrepreneurial skills. Chapter 4 analyzes the production of The Razor's Edge (1979) as representative of The Gaslight's early phase of development, with a particular emphasis on the Victorian elements in the script and the talents of the artistic team involved in the production. Chapter 5 examines the production of Just A Little Bit Of Magic (1979), the most successful play presented at The Gaslight during the musical melodrama phase. The chapter looks at the musical comedy elements inherent in the script, the playwright's rationale, and the artistic talents involved in the production. Chapter 6 analyzes Secret

Agent Man (1987), which reveals the farcical nature of The Gaslight's third phase, the playwright's rationale, and the influential contributions of the artistic staff. Chapter 7 looks at The Gaslight olio, a post-show variety entertainment which has been an integral part of The Gaslight's repertoire since the theatre's inception. Little Anthony's Diner (1987) serves as an example of a typical Gaslight olio which includes slapstick, satire, music, and dance. Chapter 8 is a summation of this thesis, which includes the primary points of the work and a final statement followed by an appendix which contains representative pictures, programs, and pamphlets from The Gaslight Theatre.

The primary sources for this study came from personal interviews with producer Tony Terry, resident designer Tom Benson, resident costumer Patti Gawne, and musical director Danny Griffith. Other important sources include newspaper reviews, play scripts, articles written about The Gaslight, along with program notes and eyewitness accounts of the company's productions. The eight years of first-hand experience spent by the writer of the study provides the greatest amount of information.

The study details the work of significant individuals who contributed to The Gaslight's artistic and financial success. The intention here is to convey the collaborative efforts involved in The Gaslight's progression and eliminate any misconceptions about the artistic merit of the melodrama form

and The Gaslight repertoire. This thesis reveals the importance of The Gaslight Theatre to the Tucson community and the Arizona theatre scene. The work documents a movement toward escapist entertainment in American theatre and reveals The Gaslight's contribution to contemporary American theatre.

CHAPTER II.

NINETEENTH-CENTURY MELODRAMA

Melodrama carries the distinctive reputation of being the lowest form of theatre. The word "melodrama" has become universally synonymous with the word "bad." Some critics even go so far as to say melodrama is tragedy with the character left out (Corrigan 172). Yet this derisive form of theatre reigned supreme throughout the nineteenth century. What is melodrama? Why is melodrama the most popular form of entertainment today? An investigation of the Victorian melodrama answers these questions and reveals the origins of The Gaslight Theatre's present repertoire.

To understand melodramas, one must first analyze the preceding forms of drama. Prior to the 1800s, Neoclassical rules dominated theatrical forms. This dictum required that plays take place in a twenty-four hour period, have a single plot, contain five actions, remain in one location, draw their protagonist from the ruling class, and refrain from mixing comedy with tragedy (Brockett, History 162). The Romantic movement which emerged in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries replaced neoclassic logic with human experience and emotions. The industrial revolution, which began in the late seventeenth century, was in part responsible for the Romantic movement. The new factories created a

working class with individualistic ideas. The working class began attending theatres in large numbers, and playwrights began to write dramas specifically for them.

Romanticism developed slowly, first in Germany, then England, and finally France. The Romantics used Shakespeare's plays as models primarily because Shakespeare discarded the neoclassic structure. The Romantic plots depicted Gothic knights and noblemen who scaled castle walls to save their lady love. Horace Walpole's Castle of Otranto (1765), and Fredrick Schiller's Die Rauber (1782) exemplify the popular Gothic theme of the Romantic play. The melodramas which emerged during the mid-eighteenth century made use of these same thrilling elements, the only distinguishable differences being the Romantic drama's five-act form (as opposed to melodrama's three acts), and the Romantic avoidance of the happy ending (Brockett, History 444).

A contributing factor to the emergence of melodrama in England was the Licensing Act of 1737. "Legitimate drama" was to be played solely in the two government authorized patent theatres, and all others were to restrict their performances to music, spectacle, and dumb show (Roberts 217). The minor theatres found loopholes in the Licensing Act which enabled them to compete with the patent theatres. Non-patent houses added increasing dialogue, but stayed within the guidelines of the law by emphasizing music, spectacle, variety acts, and physical action (Brockett, History 460).

A typical evening at a nineteenth-century theatre featured a full-length play followed by a farce or short comic opera. These comic operas resembled the Italian intermezzi of the Renaissance and served the same purpose: to insure that the audience left the theatre in a joyful mood (Grimsted 99). Intermezzi, or musical numbers, included dance, ballads, and comic songs which were placed between acts and at the end of the show. These musical numbers evolved into a motley mixture of novelty acts, or "olios," which eventually became more popular than the full-length melodramas (Booth 60).

The melodrama format, then, was created by the discriminatory Licensing Act which forced non-patent houses to add music to their dramas. The word melodrama originally meant "melody drama" because of the music which was added to underscore the dialogue (Smiley, Theatre 253). Early productions stressed music and dancing and de-emphasized the dialogue. René Charles Guilbert de Pixérécourt, a French playwright, was one of the first to integrate music, dance, and dialogue equally. Pixérécourt's first successful play was Les Petit Auvegnates in 1797. He proceeded to write or adapt a hundred and twenty different melodramas in the following thirty-eight years (Roberts 217). Pixérécourt was the first to bill one of his plays as a melodrama; he did so with his play, A Tale Of Mystery, in 1802. Although Pixérécourt was a prolific playwright, he was not without competitors. August Freidrich Von Kotzebue, a German playwright, wrote more than

200 plays from 1787-1819 and was considered the most popular playwright of his time (Brockett, History 413).

A Frenchman and a German may have written the most melodramas, but the English embraced and developed the form. Various styles arose throughout the eighteenth century which were indicative of the times and varying tastes. From the late 1700s to the 1820s, Gothic melodrama, which used medieval themes, was popular partially as a reaction to neoclassic tragedy, but the industrial revolution and the works of Dickens inspired a trend toward melodrama of contemporary life. Pierce Egan's Life in London (1821) described everyday life and places in London. Douglas William Jerrold developed the trend initiated by Egan. Jerrold drew success from his nautical series, which dealt with pirates and seafaring themes. Black Eyed Susan (1829) was Jerrold's most popular nautical play (Brockett, History 462). The Victorian audience demanded more and more realism, and though exotic melodramas continued to exist, contemporary drama had gained precedence.

The contemporary themes gave rise to brutal realism. Londoners enjoyed nothing better than a good hanging and playwrights gave them what they desired. The Coburg Theatre in London became known as the "Bleedin' Vic." Melodramas at the Coburg contained exciting combats, terrifying horrors, and rivers of blood (Rahill 140). Crime dramas emerged naturally enough upon the scene. Sweeney Todd (1847) by William Dibdin Pitt, was based on a story about a barber who slit the throats

of his unsuspecting clients. The play inspired a series of Todd dramas which played for more than half a century (Rahill 144). Much of the material for the crime drama was lifted straight from the newspapers. Simon Lee (1841), Susan Hopley (1841), and Lilian the Showgirl (1836) were favorites at the Coburg. The theatres presented crime dramas with clinical detail and terrifying realism, just the sort of thing the audiences wanted.

Melodrama appealed primarily to the unsophisticated audience, but around 1840 a gradual change occurred. The Theatrical Regulation Act of 1843 gave theatre houses equal privileges, yet the best playwrights had already moved to the non-patent houses. The populace could not be entirely blamed for their preferences, since the serious dramatists of the period failed to provide worthy material. Henry Bulwer-Lytton was the exception to the rule. He provided the theatres with nineteenth-century tragedy. His most popular play, Richelieu; or, The Conspiracy (1839), described a conspiracy to assassinate the Cardinal-Duke and depose of Louis XIII. Richelieu; or, The Conspiracy endured through the 1930s when Walter Hampden played Richelieu to packed houses, and George Arliss produced a movie of the play (Rahill 116). Bulwer-Lytton's plays typically contained blank verse and exaggerated emotions, but also included tragic elements such as the omission of comedy and the exclusion of the obligatory happy ending. Bulwer-Lytton billed his plays as tragedies and the

leading tragedians of the day frequently starred in his productions (Grimsted 258). Bulwer-Lytton's turn-of-the-century "tragedies" became known as "gentlemanly melodramas," primarily because it was his plays which brought the upper-class audience back to the theatre (Rahill 119).

American theatre became a thriving business during the nineteenth century. The industrial revolution created a demand for theatre in the eastern states, and as settlers moved westward, the theatres followed. As in England, melodrama became the theatrical mainstay. In Theatre: The Human Art, Sam Smiley states that during the early 1800s, producers preferred English productions to American originals (256). The ratio of English productions to American was about 50 to 1 (Rahill 225). Indeed, if one were to list the shows of the leading theatres in America, they would largely be a repeat of those playing at the Drury Lane and Covent Garden in London.

Many American dramatists wrote "national dramas" which stressed political and social themes. Superstition (1824) by James Nelson Baker dealt with New England intolerance and the Puritans' efforts to survive (Smiley, Theatre 256). Indian dramas became popular, and the "noble savage" received sympathetic treatment in George Washington Park Custis' 1830s Pocahontas (Brockett, History 484). Robert Montgomery Bird was the best known writer of American tragedy. He brought romantic tragedy to the American stage in The Gladiator (1831)

in which Spartacus was the romantic hero (Smiley, Theatre 257). Bird, a playwright of considerable talent, was set apart from other playwrights of his genre.

Uncle Tom's Cabin (1852), America's most successful melodrama, was based on Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel about the treacheries of slavery. The play received world-wide acclaim, and lent prestige to the American melodrama, yet Stowe did not approve of the various dramatizations of her novel. She shared the prejudice of the early American Puritans who felt theatre was an extravagant, perverse, and immoral form of entertainment. Asa Hutchinson, an American playwright, requested Stowe's permission to dramatize Uncle Tom's Cabin in 1852, but she refused, stating that an association with the theatre would damage her reputation and her cause (Moses 110). Although Hutchinson respected her wishes, other playwrights did not. Several playwrights dramatized Stowe's novel, but George Aiken's adaptation in 1852 received the most popular and critical success. Although Stowe felt the theatre would damage her original intent, it was the play, Uncle Tom's Cabin, which awakened the American public to the atrocities of slavery.

The subject of melodrama cannot be discussed without including the Irish playwright Dion Boucicault. Although he began his career in England, his most important contributions to theatre took place in America. His works profoundly affected the history of the theatre world. The playwrights

John M. Synge, Bernard Shaw, Sean O'Casey, Brendan Behan, and James A. Herne have acknowledged a debt to Boucicault (Rahill 178). Their gratitude is understandable, for not only was Boucicault an innovative writer, but he was also an aggressive businessman. Boucicault demanded and received a gross percentage of his plays' earnings, and he instigated an Act of Congress in 1856 which outlawed stealing play titles (Rahill 178). Boucicault discovered Henry Irving, tutored David Belasco, and maneuvered stage crowds long before Saxe-Meiningen gained notoriety for his extravagant stage scenes. Although Boucicault achieved critical acclaim as a playwright, he was best known for his spectacular special effects. In The Sidewalks Of New York, (1857), an actual fire was created; The Octoroon (1859) presented an exploding ship; and for The Colleen Bawn (1860), a cave with real water was created in which a drowning took place (Smiley, Theatre 254). Boucicault's experience as an actor gave him an insight into the collective mind of the audience. He once said: "The actual, the contemporaneous, the photographic," is what the public wants (Rahill 184). Boucicault wrote plays which combined sensationalism with realism, portrayed the extraordinary, and wrung tears of laughter and pain from the audience. Few, if any, writers have been more in tune with the masses and more willing to please them.

Melodrama continued to dominate the American stage after the Civil War until about 1920. Ibsen's plays had inspired

a realistic trend, but most playwrights simply added realistic elements to the melodrama form. Due to the influence of Bronson Howard's Shenandoah (1889), Civil War melodramas became quite popular on Broadway. Howard tried to produce the play for fifteen years, but it was not until the late 1800s that producers began to accept American themes. A barrage of Civil War plays came out in the late 1800s, such as The Girl I Left Behind and The Heart Of Maryland by David Belasco, as well as Secret Service by William Gillette. These American melodramas with American themes received critical acclaim both in Europe and America (Rahill 265).

David Belasco had a great influence upon this climactic chapter of American melodrama. Belasco stressed literal realism in his sets and direction. In Under Two Flags (1865), a blinding sandstorm actually swept across the stage. New technology created lights which were capable of astonishing effects, and he used this new resource with imagination and taste. After 1895, Belasco discarded the kidnapped orphans, foreclosed mortgages, opportune accidents, and missing heirs from his scripts. Belasco wrote realistic dialogue and saved violence for the end, yet he kept the plot reversals, suspense, and spectacular stage effects. The form was melodrama, but he made it more believable and more worthy of critical acceptance.

Critics often react to the word "melodrama" with disdain, but perhaps they do not understand the structure of the form.

In 1913, William Gillette addressed an audience of scholars with the statement, "No one that I ever met or heard of has appeared to know what melodrama really is" (Rahill Preface). Scholars have since analyzed the question of "what is melodrama?" and developed general criteria. Robert Heilman in Tragedy and Melodrama says melodrama is a conflict between men, or men and things, as opposed to a conflict within one's self (79). Heilman further states that the struggle between the "good" and "bad" guy appears in serious plays as well (79). Smiley says that the action in melodrama moves from happiness to conflict to a double ending with the villains being punished (Theatre 30). Roberts, in The Nature Of Theatre, agrees with Heilman's theory that conflict in the melodrama is between man and man (219). As can be seen, most theorists agree that the major conflict in melodrama is between man and man and not within one's self.

The "man and man" theory generally is true, yet some Victorian playwrights defied the norm and mixed both the tragic and the melodramatic conflicts. Robert Montgomery Bird depicts a protagonist who wrestles with his soul over a moral conflict in The Broker of Bogota (1834) (Smiley, Theatre 257). Secret Service by William Gillette portrays a protagonist who is torn between duty to his country and love for a lady. Under Two Flags by Louis de La Rameé, presents a hero who must choose between a married woman of high birth and a common woman who truly loves him. All three of these plays involve

major conflicts within the minds of the protagonists.

The history of melodrama includes a variety of styles which makes the overall form difficult to qualify. Scholars can merely point out the general elements of the form. Smiley says that the materials of melodrama are faraway places, everyday life, black and white characters, and special effects. He states that, "The purpose of the whole is to arouse hate for the nasty characters and fear for the well-being of the nice ones" (Theatre 254). Rahill's definition repeats those listed by Smiley and adds elevated prose, extensive mime, and a benevolent comic (xiv). As stated earlier, specific elements cannot be qualified in melodrama. Billy The Kid (1906) by Walter Woods used dialogue which created a local flavor rather than romantic prose. The later melodramas, such as Under Two Flags, disposed of pantomime altogether. The elements in melodrama are too varied to define, yet there are basic ingredients which are inherent in all melodramas.

Melodrama has a definite structure upon which most scholars agree. In Playwriting: The Structure of Action, Sam Smiley states that melodrama deals with serious action which arises from a threat to the sympathetic character by the unsympathetic one; the threat is serious, but a happy resolution is achieved (48). Smiley further states that good and evil are more clearly stated in melodrama than in tragedy or comedy (Playwriting 48). Oscar Brockett, in his book World

Drama, agrees with Smiley, stating that the characters are divided into the sympathetic and unsympathetic, with no question as to where the audience's sympathy lies (141).

The emotions in melodrama deal with fear and hate: fear for the good characters, and hate for the evil ones. The materials of the form include suspenseful plot; the style, expressing emotions of hate and terror; the final purpose, to show man's innate goodness and heroic nature (Smiley, Theatre 48).

The appearance of stock characters is an important feature which can be found in all melodramas. The following is a list of the most popular Victorian stock characters: hero, heroine, villain, villainess, hero's comic sidekick, villain's comic sidekick, comic woman, old man, and old woman (Booth 16-30). The hero, though brave, strong, and kind, is not usually a wise man. He spends most of his time attempting to untangle the villain's evil web. The hero's sidekick insults the villain, plays the buffoon, and often accidentally saves the day. The most volitional character is the villain, who chooses and initiates the action. He is intelligent, immensely evil, and determined. The villain's sidekick is shifty, cowardly, and comical. The villainess is a raven-haired beauty who pairs with the villain and uses her womanly wiles to dupe the hero. The heroine is the heart of the melodrama and often the stake, or the desired object in the play. She suffers banishment, abduction, threats, and

persecution, yet her convictions never waver. Heroines make clever, insightful speeches which soundly chastise the villains. The comic woman is often partnered with the hero's sidekick. She serves as a friend or servant of the heroine and carries on a flirtatious, face-slapping love affair with the comic man. The old people reinforce the sentimental elements in a melodrama, and are often directly related to the heroine. They play the aged parents who recall happier days and pray to heaven for mercy. Although all of these characters do not appear in every melodrama, they are representative of the most popular characters in nineteenth-century drama.

Melodramas contain various characters, yet their purpose is the same. The characters neither grow nor change, since their moral nature has been established in the beginning and stays constant throughout (Brockett, World 14). Characters are good or evil, and the evil characters initiate the threat and drive the action. Because good characters are rewarded and evil ones punished, Brockett says melodrama is related to tragedy "through its happy conclusion" (World 14). Since the protagonist spends his time avoiding disaster, the thoughts expressed in melodrama are usually more expedient than ethical (Smiley, Playwriting 48). Most scholars agree that melodrama must contain a fight against evil and end with reward for the good and punishment for the bad.

George Bernard Shaw, the playwright, intellectual, and

scholar, believed that melodrama was a valid art form:

A good melodrama is a more difficult thing to write than all this clever-clever comedy: one must go straight to the core of humanity to get it, and if it is only good enough, why, there you have Lear or Macbeth (qtd. in Gerould, Preface).

Shaw, a cynical theatre critic, found virtue in the humanistic qualities of melodrama. Yet an essay by James Rosenberg, in Corrigan's Content And Craft In Drama, states that other scholars regard melodrama as a form "fit only for the critic's scorn and laughter" (169). Rosenberg agreed with Shaw, stating that Medea, Richard III, and Cyrano De Bergerac are universally accepted as melodramas. Rosenberg goes on to say that if these classics are melodramas, should they also be scorned? Stephen Sondheim considers a great deal of classic drama to be melodrama and lists Oedipus Rex as an example. He says the surprise solution and the violent, bloody, and dramatic conclusion make Oedipus Rex a serious Grand Guignol (qtd in Gerould 3). Can it be surprising, then, that in the 1930s Oedipus Rex, Electra, and Hamlet were advertised on Broadway as melodramas? (Gerould 3). Perhaps melodrama encompasses more theatrical forms than many scholars would care to admit.

Rosenberg states that scholars criticize the melodrama form for its theatrical nature (169). Perhaps for this reason melodrama has remained popular from the eighteenth century

until today. Rosenberg says melodramatists choose their characters and plotlines with an eye for entertainment (174). What playwright does not? One might argue that theatre should be an intellectual experience, but a good melodrama affects both the intellect and the emotions. Theatre is a sensory experience, not merely an aesthetic one. Audiences attend the theatre expecting to be stimulated and entertained, and a good melodrama does just that. Melodrama transports them into another world, and allows them to escape the monotony of daily existence.

The Gaslight Theatre's first season included several original Victorian melodramas and post-show "olios." Over the course of ten years, the repertoire changed from Victorian melodrama to melodrama farce with a post-show "olio." The Gaslight's original intent was to provide quality entertainment for the whole family, and they have continued to do so. The next chapter takes a look at the producer, Tony Terry, his artistic rationale, and his influential team.

CHAPTER III.

THE PRODUCER

Anthony Denison Terry, Jr., born December 5, 1953, in Tucson, Arizona, to Marney and Anthony Terry, Sr., was to become one of the most successful theatre producers in Arizona. Terry, Sr. ran his own respected law practice and Marney Terry practiced nursing at Tucson Medical Center. Tony, Jr. (as he was to be called) had a younger sister, Annie Terry, and a younger brother, Tom Terry. They enjoyed a middle-class upbringing with boy/girl scouts, hockey, biking, and backyard cookouts. Live theatre did not play a part in Tony, Jr.'s childhood, but his fond memories of family activities influenced the type of theatre he would eventually produce.

Terry entered the University of Arizona in 1972 in general studies. After working on a stage crew for the drama department, Terry decided to major in pre-med and minor in drama. His choice to minor in drama bewildered his parents who hoped his new interest in the theatre would fade with maturity.

Terry continued to play a backstage role in the University of Arizona drama productions, and he worked on shows for a Tucson touring choir group called Up With People. During a tour with Up With People, Terry travelled through Skagway, Alaska, which would become the home of his first

theatre.

In the summers of 1973, 1974, and 1975, Terry worked as a guest attendant for Lake Mancos Ranch near Durango, Colorado. One of the ranch activities included visits to Durango's Diamond Circle Melodrama. Terry had never seen a melodrama/olio show and found the format entertaining and unique. He discovered that Colorado provided the most melodrama theatres in the country. With an inkling of opening his own theatre, in the summer of 1975, he toured the best-known melodrama companies in the state of Colorado.

The Iron Springs Chateau in Colorado Springs and the Imperial Hotel in Cripple Creek, Colorado, two theatres Terry visited, represented two dissimilar styles of melodrama. The Iron Springs Chateau presented burlesque melodrama/olio spoofs (which included risqué jokes), and the Imperial Hotel produced Victorian melodramas and vaudeville olios. Although the Imperial's shows ran two to three hours, they were more suited for children than burlesque. Terry, who has always been "kid-oriented", decided upon the Victorian format for his first theatre.

In the summer of 1976, an Up With People colleague, Bob Lorrie, invited Terry to work with him running a tour bus in Skagway, Alaska. The pay included \$1,500 a month, tips, and board. Terry jumped at the chance to make money and experience a new adventure.

Terry's job was to transport tourists who travelled to

Skagway by way of cruise ships and the Narrow Gauge Train, which was the only way to reach Skagway. The tourists remained in Skagway for four to six hours, then returned as they had come. In 1976, Skagway offered a main street with turn-of-the-century shops and an amateur production called The Days of '98. Terry, who directed the tourists to various entertainment spots, observed a need for a professional production. Terry left Skagway with his summer savings and a resolve to return the next summer with a crew of actors.

In the fall of 1976, the Actors Company Theatre, which would later become Arizona Theatre Company (Tucson's equity theatre), produced a foot-stomping western melodrama called Diamond Studs which brought financial success. Terry approved of the energetic format and set out to write a melodrama with a real conflict, a saloon flavor, lots of action, dancing and singing, and a setting in 1890s Skagway, Alaska. He united the talents of Carol Calkins (a cast member of Diamond Studs) and Howard Allen, an actor/playwright (both had graduated recently with performance degrees from the University of Arizona) to write the melodrama. Calkins and Terry helped develop the plot, and Allen wrote the dialogue. They came up with an action-packed play in which the hero fights for the life of his gal and a gold claim. They cast the play with local actors and began rehearsals in March of 1977 at the Temple of Music and Art (a theatre built in the early 1900s, now the home of Arizona Theatre Company) The company included

Carol Desco, Roger Lumas, Susan Wedekind, Tracy Hall, Howard Allen, Tom Benson, Bob Laurie, Mike Gilbert, Mark Hill, and Tony Terry. Calkins had planned to go to Skagway but went instead to Key West to work on what would be Tennessee Williams' last production. The Skagway cast included students from the University of Arizona music and drama department who had a great deal of performance experience.

Terry ordered a red-and-white show tent, which would be the theatre, and rented an old Skagway house (the top floor was condemned) for the actors to live in. His bankroll came primarily from his previous summer as a tour guide which, although substantial, could not meet the needs of a new theatre.

The show tent arrived just in time for the opening but was army green; it snowed the first two weeks, which filled the tent with mud and water; the audience (though enthusiastic) was small, since the tent was not on the main street; and the cold weather dampened the spirits of the Arizona actors.

Terry expected ticket returns to pay the actors' salary, rent, utilities, and show costs, but the audience numbers proved to be uneven. Terry feared he would not be able to pay the actors' salaries, so he retrieved his tour guide position which allowed him financial gain and the freedom to direct tourists to his Mighty Moose Melodrama Theatre. Terry's additional income and the larger audiences gave him the means

to pay the actors and break even. Terry and the company left Skagway believing that their summer venture, although tough, was a successful one. However, Terry felt the positive factors involved in his Skagway venture did not outweigh the bad, so he set his sights on a new location.

The first Gaslight Theatre opened in Tucson, Arizona, on November 16, 1978. Terry returned to Tucson and began making arrangements with the owner of Pinnacle Peak (in Trail Dust Town) to rent a red storage barn at 5641 East Tanque Verde Road. The barn had a loft which allowed for scenery and lights. Terry still needed to build a stage, bathroom, and dressing room, but he did not have the finances to do so.

Terry registered at the University of Arizona with plans to pursue his medical career and run the theatre as a hobby. His parents could not understand his desire to open a theatre, but his Grandma Terry, who had attended Vassar College, shared his love for the theatre and loaned him \$10,000 to build the first Gaslight Theatre.

Terry, his brother Tom Terry, Roger Lumas (an actor), and Tom Benson joined forces to remodel the barn and create a melodrama theatre. They worked long hours for two-and-a-half months and opened the theatre with their Skagway show, Gold Fever, directed by Bill Damron, who would be their Artistic Director for the first season. Molly Starr played piano for the first four productions. Starr had a peppy, vaudeville style which involved the audience. Her preshow music inspired

the audience members to participate in the upcoming show.

The audiences enjoyed the unique melodrama format and the informal atmosphere. Terry's brother, Tom, helped create the mood by standing in the back of the audience "booing" and "yaying" and "ahhing" the actors. Audience participation became an important piece of The Gaslight shows, although at times, their overwhelming participation (such as throwing the basket with the popcorn) required the bar manager, Garvon Larson, to intervene for the sake of the actors.

The audience response to the Gaslight was overwhelmingly positive, yet the average house for the first year was 20 to 50 people. Terry recalls going to Pinnacle Peak with his brother and giving away tickets so the audience would not be so sparse. Michelene Keating, the reviewer from The Tucson Citizen, had a great impact on The Gaslight's popularity. She wrote intelligent and glowing reviews about the "new theatre" and all those involved. Her reviews singlehandedly brought the Tucson audience to The Gaslight Theatre.

Terry also recalls Danny Griffith's impact when he arrived to musical direct for Flower of the South. He said before Griffith joined the company, the productions were entertaining, but after Griffith arrived, they took on a more professional look. "It was Keating and Griffith," Terry said, "who pulled the Gaslight over its first hurdle" (Interview).

Ticket prices at The Gaslight ran \$4.50 for adults and \$3.50 for seniors and students, free for children, and \$7.95

for a steak dinner and show. Pinnacle Peak provided the steak dinner (they were just across the parking lot), and they provided a liquor license which meant Terry did not have to acquire his own. In 1977, one obtained a liquor license from an existing business or a defunct business; the process was lengthy and expensive. A hard liquor license involved more trouble and expense.

Traditionally, hard liquor returns from dinner and melodrama theatres made up half the profits, but Terry decided early on that hard liquor would not play a part in his theatre: "I did not want to run a bar." Terry decided to serve unlimited popcorn, soft drinks, wine, and beer. The popcorn served two purposes: popcorn made patrons thirsty, and the audience could pitch popcorn at the villains (a tradition the audience actively participated in, sometimes at the actor's expense). The audience enjoyed The Gaslight package and the theatre began to gain momentum through word of mouth.

Terry recalls his commitment to the turn-of-the-century style. He used roll drops (painted canvas rolled on a long tube which could be raised and lowered by a pulley system) and Victorian scripts because they were true to the period. Yet, he says the Victorian scripts possessed a wordy, stilted style, an opinion shared by the technical director/shareholder, Tom Benson. Benson stated in a 1991 interview that, "the scripts were so long, the comic dialogue had to be cut to

save time." Danny Griffith offered the solution of using Lillian De La Torre's scripts; De La Torre was a modern playwright who wrote 1890s melodramas in an informal style. However, after two shows, the royalties proved to be too costly for the new theatre.

Terry recalls commissioning Michael Maines and Eric Erickson to write musical melodramas because of the need for entertaining scripts which did not require royalties. He said although he paid for the script (which averaged \$500-\$800), he made up for the initial cost with future royalty-free productions (this was part of the playwright's contract). Terry acknowledged the talents of Maines and Erickson in a 1994 interview. He stated that their characters, though entertaining, were realistic. Indeed, the audience enjoyed the duo's work. Their second show at The Gaslight, Just A Little Bit Of Magic, brought more patrons than the theatre could accommodate.

The Trail Dust Town theatre housed 104 people. By the end of their second season as they began to turn audience members away, Terry contemplated expanding the theatre. Terry remembers trying to persuade the owner of Pinnacle Peak to allow expansion into their shared parking lot, but the owner needed the space since the lot facilitated all of the Trail Dust Town traffic. Terry began looking for a new space to house the theatre, which he found one half mile down the road at a new Santa Fe style shopping center, which later became

The Gaslight Plaza.

The new building marked the center of a cluster of boutiques and restaurants. The building included one large room which had to be remodeled. Terry, Garvon Larson (now a shareholder), Tom Benson, Phil Baker (the light designer), Jim Swan (an actor), and Michael Crawley (an actor) worked long after midnight building a stage, backstage (with a bathroom), a tiered seating area (with 210 seats), two side-stages, a light booth, and a service bar. None of the workers had construction experience. They finished the theatre in six months and began preparation for the Grand Opening which was to take place on January 1, 1980.

The new theatre initiated some changes in Terry's business structure. Tony Terry bought his brother Tom's share of the theatre, and Tom moved on to write and produce a "Mr. Romance" column for Tucson papers, local radio stations, and television. Garvon Larson became a shareholder, as did Terry's uncle, Dr. Steve Terry, who invested in the move. The theatre remained dark for two weeks and after several postponements (due to the Fire Marshal), opened on January 15, 1980 with a Maines/Erickson adaptation of The Drunkard.

The theatre maintained its audience and Terry began to make a profit until he produced Little Mary Sunshine, directed by Michael Maines. The show required royalties and did not include an olio. The Gaslight audiences (who had just been introduced to melodrama) were not interested in a witty spoof

of the genre, and they missed the olio. Terry recalls that the royalty costs and lower box office returns almost cost him the theatre. From that time on, Terry vowed he would produce shows specifically written for The Gaslight Theatre.

Terry overcame his financial difficulties with the Maines/Erickson play The Contender. From that point forward, his finances continued to grow. He added cheese crisps, hot dogs, and ice cream to the menu, opened a bike shop, started a printing business, opened a pizza shop, opened a dinner theatre, and started a '50s diner within the span of two years. When asked if Terry envisioned his businesses while planning to open the second Gaslight, Terry replied, "No . . . I don't plan anything. I live from day to day. Except for the bike shop, all the businesses evolved out of need."

In 1979, Terry employed 50 people; by 1981, he employed 100 people. Terry says he added employees as the necessity arose. Grandma Tony's Pizza developed "out of guilt." Terry began adding two-show nights in 1980 to accommodate his growing audience. He felt guilty that the actors worked for six hours without a dinner break, so he bought pizza for the cast at the Pizza Hut across the street. He resented the outlay of cash each week, so he bought ovens, placed them in a storage room, and began making pizza himself. Terry added pizza to The Gaslight menu as well, "We had the ovens . . . why not?" He recalls buying frozen dough, "we made some pretty bad pizza in the beginning." He bought a dough maker,

and through trial and error, developed a quality pizza and named it "Grandma Tony's Pizza." His pizza was voted "Tucson's favorite pizza" several years in a row. Terry currently owns seven busy pizza shops.

Terry's printing business occurred because of the need for tickets, programs, menus, and business cards. He recalls placing his first printer in the corner of the service bar. He moved next to the pizza shop and began commercial printing. He remembers that outbidding other print shops for an all-city realtor listing account pushed The Gaslight Print Shop into the profit margin. The Gaslight Print Shop currently resides at The Gaslight's new location, 7010 East Broadway Boulevard, and continues to be a leader in the Tucson printing business.

Terry got the idea for a costume shop from the Actors Community Theatre, who began renting their costumes in 1980. Terry recalls thinking "We already have the costumes, why not make a profit off of them?" Terry included theatre make-up, masks, wigs, and a resident seamstress to build costumes on order. The costume shop services schools, clubs, theatres, and the general public. The Gaslight Costume Shop, managed by Patti Gawne (the resident costumer), is a credible and thriving business.

Terry moved into a new theatre and opened another in the course of six months. Michael Maines, the artistic director, convinced Terry to open the Tucson Stage Company which would serve as a dinner theatre and run concurrently with The

Gaslight shows. Terry rented a large room next to The Gaslight and shared a liquor license and kitchen with Los Yentes, a Mexican restaurant next door to the Tucson Stage Company. Los Yentes' chef (also the brother of the owner, Michael Fox) prepared the food which was catered to the theatre nightly. The theatre had a small stage and seated 150 patrons. The Rainbow Connection (a show group) presented pre-show and after-show music (the talented trio became an attraction for after-show audiences). Michael Maines and Rex Totty (a company member) directed five productions: Great American Backstage, Sleuth, I Do, I Do, Bullshot Crummond, and Gaslight. Although the critics praised the productions, the audience numbers remained uneven and the royalties cost more than the small house could support. Terry recalls that when the chef at Los Yentes died and the restaurant closed, he decided to close the Tucson Stage Company. Terry said, "that was one experience I will never repeat." He said the headaches involved in running a dinner theatre, royalties, food, liquor license, etc., outweighed the returns.

Terry did not waste time regaining his losses from the dinner theatre. While on business trips to Disneyland, he visited several '50s diners. He approved of the family atmosphere and realized there was a profit in 1950s nostalgia. In 1981, Terry built a kitchen in the dinner theatre, added black and white checkered tile, a soda bar, a jukebox, red vinyl booths, 1950s wall hangings, a 1950s menu, and

waitresses in saddle oxfords and poodle skirts who sat down next to you to take your order. He named the restaurant "Little Anthony's" (a name inspired by an employee). The restaurant provided a place for Gaslight audiences to have dinner before the show and a place to dance after the show. Terry hired a '50s band called "The Cadillacs" to perform on weekends. The restaurant became a favorite spot for children's birthday parties and business luncheons. However, Little Anthony's did not provide a large profit until The Gaslight moved to their Broadway location. Little Anthony's currently serves breakfast, lunch, and dinner daily to a crowded and satisfied clientele.

Terry's new businesses kept him busy, yet he continued to guide the artistic progress at The Gaslight Theatre. Terry recalls expanding the technical aspects in the shows as the budget increased. Tom Benson recalls that "Tony's obsession with special effects" began with Maines' production of Treasure Island (1981). The set included the frame of a ship with a mast for sailors to climb on, a shooting cannon, a moving backdrop, miniature pirates, waves, and a dock. Maines continued to develop story lines which incorporated special effects and Terry played a part in developing the ideas. Terry states that the special effects are an integral part of The Gaslight: "The audience expects them." Certainly, the audience was pleased with the format. In 1981, Terry remembers the theatre being 80% to 100% full year round.

He raised the ticket prices to \$10.00 for adults, \$2.50 for children, and \$9.00 for seniors and students. Terry paid the actors \$150.00 to \$250.00 a week during the early 1980s and he paid \$50.00 rehearsal pay to cover transportation costs. The age-old salary dispute between actors and producers also occurred at The Gaslight, however, Terry paid twice as much as the other three professional theatres in Tucson (except the Actors Community Theatre which required an Equity Card). Terry recalls that he had a large overhead, and he did not have the cash he appeared to have. Whatever the case, the core group continued to work for Terry and enjoyed a respectful, friendly relationship with their producer.

In 1983, Michael Maines moved to Los Angeles and Terry enlisted James Gooden (a company actor) to direct for The Gaslight. Gooden directed a combination of Maines' scripts and earlier Gaslight offerings in a style similar to the early Gaslight shows. Peter Van Slyke joined the troupe in 1983 and became artistic director in 1984.

Terry continued to emphasize special effects, which Van Slyke willingly incorporated in his scripts. Benson remembers Zorro (1984) and Phantom of the Opera (1988) which included, respectively, a burning building and a reversible mirror/wall as two of Van Slyke's most interesting shows to design. Over the course of two years, Van Slyke moved The Gaslight's style from musical melodrama to comedy spoof.

During the 1980s, Terry remained involved in the

productions, adding humorous special effects, editing jokes and critiquing actors, cutting songs or adding songs, and making sure the shows met The Gaslight's professional standards. Although Terry had a reputation for requiring plenty of jokes in each script, Armen Dirtadian (a company actor) recalls that Terry's decision to have the Phantom speak Christine's name before he died, changed a campy ending into a touching and quiet moment. Dirtadian (who played the Phantom) said he is forever grateful to Terry for his insightful decision (Interview). In a 1994 interview, Terry said, "I want my villains to pose a real threat." He said he prefers Maine's musical comedy style to broad slapstick because the storylines involve the audience more than the ad-libbing and special effects.

However, the audiences seemed to enjoy The Gaslight's spoof phase as evidenced by the growing attendance numbers: from 60%-70% capacity in the early '80s to 80%-100% capacity in the late '80s. Terry's audience was expanding quickly. He needed more seats. His lease at The Gaslight Plaza would soon be expired, and he planned to sign the new lease until the landlord doubled the rent, which Terry felt was high to begin with. Terry (who had never seen eye-to-eye with the landlord) negotiated a transaction with the owners of the old Jerry Lewis Theatre at 7010 East Broadway Boulevard, and in the middle of the night, he moved everything to his new location. The Lewis Theatre had a stage; it had recently been altered

for a cabaret show produced by a University of Arizona graduate, Joseph Andaloro. Terry added a balcony, a backstage area, and a front office. The construction workers included Tony Terry (producer), James Blair (stage manager), Robert Murray (light designer), Cameron Martin (actor), Garvon Larson (shareholder), and Brian McGinnis (lighting designer). The theatre remained dark for two weeks and opened on January 15, 1991, with Wade Ohurlihan, Singing Cowboy, written by Nick Seivert, the new artistic director.

Terry bought the adjacent former Valley National Bank branch which housed his costume shop, and pizza shop. Little Anthony's was built next to the theatre with the pizza shop squeezed in between. The theatre had thirty-two more seats, but the design remained the same: rough-cut plank wood, tiered seats, round tables (a saloon style room).

Terry continues to guide the concurrent artistic director (1994), Nick Seivert, who writes fast-paced scripts based on 1940s movies. Seivert displays a flair for comic dialogue and concise storylines which continue to draw an audience that Terry says is currently full, "99% of the time" (Interview). The shows include a substantial amount of ad-libbing (in which the audience greedily anticipates and delights). Polished deliveries, and concise comic timing continue to characterize the actors' performances as evidenced by The Tucson Citizen headline, "Gaslight sails a high seas hit" (Graham, "Sails").

Terry married Jeanette Boesel on October 4, 1991. They

currently have two children, Tess, age four months, and Tres (Tony III), age two years. Terry also has an eleven year old son, Brian Terry.

Terry employs 300 people and runs a five-million-dollar-per-year business (this includes all of his businesses). In a 1994 interview, Terry states that he is an independent businessman who enjoys the competition of other businesses. His success rests solely on ticket sales, while other theatres must rely on donations, federal aid, and tax breaks to supplement their returns. Terry said, "The theatre business is highly risky," but he enjoys success when the odds are against him.

In a 1991 interview, Tom Benson attributed The Gaslight's success to Tony Terry:

A lot of talented people contributed to The Gaslight's success, but I think the credit belongs to Tony and his unfailing business sense. Tony set out to make a theatre that he would like to go to with friends and family for a good time. His personal taste is the standard at The Gaslight, and the audience is his audience, or rather they are him.

When asked the purpose of The Gaslight Theatre, Terry replied, "It provides family quality time . . . family experiences, and it introduces kids to theatre which we hope they will follow up on . . . mainly, I just wanted to create good family

entertainment." Terry says his success is revealed in the telephone calls The Gaslight Theatre receives daily for tickets. "The callers don't ask what's playing anymore . . . they know . . . quality family entertainment."

CHAPTER IV.

THE RAZOR'S EDGEORIN THE NICK OF TIME

In 1976, the Gaslight Theatre presented an adaptation of Sweeney Todd, a Victorian melodrama written in 1847 by William Dibdin Pitt. The play derived its theme from an actual crime committed in London (Rahill 144). In 1978, Stephen Sondheim created the musical adaptation of Sweeney Todd, which enjoyed critical acclaim. The Gaslight Theatre capitalized on Sondheim's success and presented a cut version of the 1847 melodrama renamed The Razor's Edge; or, In The Nick Of Time. The following pages focus on the scriptural analysis of The Razor's Edge, the technical aspects of the production, the actors involved in the show, the musical director, and the directors connected with the Gaslight's Victorian phase. An analysis of the production of The Razor's Edge (1979) reveals the core element responsible for The Gaslight's successful productions and provides an in-depth look at the kind of melodrama presented at The Gaslight from 1977 to 1979.

A brief description of the plot reveals the appealing factors that The Razor's Edge held for the Victorian and The Gaslight audiences. A young barber, Sweeney Todd, is sent to prison so that a lecherous judge can prey on Todd's beautiful, young wife. Todd returns from prison intent upon revenge. He

acts out his revenge by slitting the throats of his unsuspecting customers and robbing them of their valuables. Todd's partner in crime, Mistress Lovett, uses the bodies to fill her marvelous meat pies. Mark Ingestre, a young sailor, returns from the south seas with a valuable string of pearls which he plans to present to his fiancée, Todd's daughter, Johanna. Ingestre enters Todd's shop for a shave, and Todd slits his throat and dumps him in the basement. Todd, in disguise, brings the pearl necklace to Ingestre's friend, Jeffrey. Todd accuses Jeffrey of murder and uses the necklace to implicate him. Todd thinks he sees Ingestre's ghost, and he admits his crimes. Todd runs from the court to his basement where he meets Mark Ingestre, who has miraculously escaped Todd's attack. Todd slits his own throat, and Johanna and Ingestre are reunited.

The line of action in The Razor's Edge follows a mimetic pattern. Todd murders a young sailor, Mark Ingestre, and the young man's friends search for him. Ingestre miraculously reappears for a climactic ending in which Todd kills himself.

The structure of The Razor's Edge reveals a nineteenth-century melodrama format. The ideas which the playwright wished to impart can be found in most Victorian melodramas: "Money is the root of all evil," and "Good prevails over evil". An example from a speech by Sweeney Todd expresses the idea that greed is man's greatest undoing: "I feared it would come to this, and through accursed gold for which men sell

their souls and barter their eternal salvation" (Maines 3.2.28). The playwright's belief that good prevails over evil can be seen in Mark Ingestre's final speech: "The foul murderer, Todd, is dead, and villainy has earned its just reward" (3.2.30).

The dialogue in The Razor's Edge shows the style primarily used by Victorian playwrights. The characters speak in a heightened quasi-Elizabethan manner, yet the dialogue is in prose. Contractions are never used, and expressions such as "adieu" and "anon" appear throughout the script. There is a strong use of metaphor. The language is formal, yet emotional, with very few distinctions occurring between the Cockney characters and the British characters. One of Tobias' first speeches includes an example of metaphor: "How I should love to become a sailor! Happy and joyous in my freedom, breathing the fresh pure air of liberty" (1.1.34). Tobias' rhetoric is not the typical speech of a poor, Cockney boy. Mark Ingestre's friend, Jeffrey, maintains Tobias' formal style: "Let me pray you, lady, to subdue this passion of grief, and listen with all patience to what I shall unfold" (1.3.11). Some of the characters' dialogue sounds as if it came from an actual Shakespearean script.

Johanna's dialogue with Eustice makes use of the Elizabethan "adieu" and follows a Shakespearean iambic pattern: "Farewell dear sir, farewell kind gentlemen. I owe you my best thanks as well for the trouble you have taken in

which you have detailed what has passed . . . adieu, till two days fly" (1.3.13). Pitt's use of sixteenth-century language and iambic meter in the previous passages is indicative of the style practiced by Victorian playwrights.

Sweeney Todd's dialogue proves to be more emotional than the other characters. Todd's speech in the courtroom is an example of the passionate monologues found in Victorian melodramas: "Keep away from me, keep away! It is useless to deny my guilt. The very dead arise from their graves to prove that I, Sweeney Todd, am a murderer . . . a murderer!" (3.2.28). Emphatic phrases like those above gave the actor theatrical license and inspired the audience to become actively involved in the production.

The mood in The Razor's Edge is darker than most melodramas. Two murders are committed in a most gruesome manner, and one of Todd's victims is a pure, young boy, which leaves a shadow of darkness over the happy ending. Most Victorian villains have an evil persona but remain in complete control of their sanity. Victorian playwrights presented their villains as evil characters who never experienced regret. Sweeney Todd verges on insanity throughout the play until he ultimately goes insane. He admits his villainy and has moments of remorse. One almost feels sorry for Todd as he cradles the lifeless body of Mistress Lovett in his arms and begs her to reveal her murderer: "Mistress Lovett, answer,

come—come speak to me, tell me who was the perpetrator of this foul crime" (3.2.29). The audience knows that Todd is the perpetrator of the crime. When Pitt added the element of insanity to Todd's character, he gave the role dimension—a rarity for nineteenth-century villains.

The Razor's Edge is indeed a good example of the Grand Guignol style which dominated the theatre scene during the 1840s-1850s, London. The Grand Guignol format inspired a darker mood and made use of greater technical aspects. Because the storylines were based on news events, the characters possessed more dimension and relevance.

Although the Grand Guignols varied from the usual melodrama style, the format remained unchanged. The stock characters discussed in Chapter II make their appearance in The Razor's Edge. Mark Ingestre is the young, brave hero; Johanna is the sweet, pure heroine; Jeffrey is the hero's faithful sidekick; Mistress Lovett is the villainess; Tobias is Lovett's faithful servant; and Todd is the evil villain. True to melodrama form, the sidekicks, Mistress Lovett, Tobias, and Jeffrey, provide the comic elements in the play.

The melodrama theme of "Good versus Evil" plays an important role in The Razor's Edge. Although the playwright provides an explanation for Todd's evil behavior, he makes it clear that the evil-doers must be punished.

When The Gaslight Theatre produced The Razor's Edge

(1979), they did so with an eye for the Victorian period. Under Michael Maines' strong direction, the set designer, light designer, costumer, musical director, and actors collaborated to produce a finely tuned period piece.

The company involved in the production received its training from the University of Arizona Drama Department which focused on basic theatre techniques and period pieces. Peter Marroney, the department head, maintained the directing classes; Irene Comer instructed the acting classes; Robert Burroughs contributed his talents to the scene design classes. The influence of the above instructors on The Gaslight Company contributed to the success of The Razor's Edge.

Most of the actors held a performance degree or were a part of the University of Arizona Drama graduate program. The cast list includes: James Wiers as Sweeney Todd; Jane Merrifield as Mistress Lovett; Tom Benson as Mark Ingestre; Eric Erickson as Jeffrey; Tracy Hall as Tobias; Rex Totty as James; and Robert Robak as Jarvis Glut.

The actors maintained a similar approach to their roles. However, some played their parts broader because their characters required heightened emotions, but the overall style remained the same.

The local reviewers realized the unique talent of The Gaslight actors. Michelene Keating, a reviewer from The Tucson Citizen, said: "The cast is one of Gaslight's best, capturing the full spirit of melodrama and playing it to the

hilt" ("Razor's"). Keating's quote suggests the actors played their parts with an unusual amount of energy. Keating also states that "the script is more sophisticated and more polished than previous Gaslight melodramas." John Peck, the reviewer from The Arizona Daily Star, stated that the actors created "larger than life roles". Yet he also stated that the company demonstrated "the variety of forms melodrama can have" ("Troupe"). Peck and Keating agreed that the acting styles were heightened and that The Razor's Edge was the company's most sophisticated offering yet. Another reviewer felt cheated because The Razor's Edge did not present one-dimensional characters, "I want my villains to be villains, my heroes heroic, and my heroines in peril" ("Razors Edge"). Yet he goes on to say that the cast "conducts itself admirably." The collective opinion of the aforementioned reviewers suggests a production in which the actors presented broad drama with more dimension than the typical melodrama.

Oscar Brockett's interpretation of the acting style in the nineteenth century sounds much like the description of The Gaslight Company's acting style in The Razor's Edge. The American actor, Edwin Forrest (1806-1872), is described by Brockett in History of the Theatre as "physical and heroic" (482). Brockett also mentions the famous American actress Charlotte Cushman (1816-1876): "Cushman presented an energetic and physical style, but her intelligent insight and emotional control won her a more sophisticated audience than

her American colleagues" (482).

Brockett's comments further demonstrate the likenesses between the Victorian acting style and the style practiced by The Gaslight Players from 1977 to 1980.

The set and light design for The Razor's Edge made use of exciting visual effects, as did the nineteenth-century Grand Guignols. The Grand Guignols' format, which derived its storylines from news events, made use of clinical and chilling effects.

Although the early Gaslight employed a costumer and a lighting technician, Tom Benson (scenic designer and Gaslight financial partner) made the initial artistic choices. Benson's description of dimensions for the first Gaslight Theatre reveal the nature of the early Gaslight scene designs.

The original Gaslight Theatre was located in Trail Dust Town at Tanque Verde Road. The theatre seated one hundred-two people and had a small proscenium stage. In a written questionnaire, Benson recalls the proscenium was 16 feet wide and 10 feet 6 inches high. The backstage area included 10 feet of wing space onstage right and 5 feet wing space onstage left, with a 12 foot high grid. Benson approximates that the first sets cost \$500 to \$1000 depending on the show. The budget and size of the show forced Benson to depend on his artistic and creative abilities.

Benson said his use of perspectives helped him fit "big looking items into the theatre's proscenium." He further

states that he used a lot of small decorative detail, "Since you can't really do big profile pieces, and the scenery always sort of 'runs off the page' rather than standing clear of the masking wings." Benson says he painted depth into the drops because "scenes are often shallow" since they were stacked in front of the other to save moving time.

The set for The Razor's Edge, designed by Benson, included precise imitations of nineteenth-century wallpaper, a trick barber's chair with a trap door for unsuspecting clients. The scenic elements of the 1979 Gaslight production resembled the qualities inherent in a nineteenth-century Grand Guignol. Frank Rahill, in The World of Melodrama, described the latter productions as horrifying and quite realistic (144). Although electric lights were not in use, kerosene lanterns with colored gels could be used to change moods, though not as quickly or as effectively. Rahill's description of special effects in the early 1800s includes fire and explosions, which leads one to believe that fog and smoke were used in the nineteenth-century Sweeney Todd. In comparison, the Victorian special effects were much the same as the 1979 Gaslight production of The Razor's Edge.

Phil Baker, the light designer, made use of purple, red, and blue lights to depict the grotesque and chilling mood of the play. The level of brightness was kept to a minimum, even in the upbeat scenes, which added a sense of foreboding throughout the production. Benson added fog and smoke to the

action scenes, which Baker used to highlight and shadow.

The costumes for The Razor's Edge were patterned after nineteenth-century designs. Deana Straus built the costumes with Tom Benson's astute direction. Straus used the colors cranberry, brown, black, burgundy, and purple to complement the overall mood of the show. The hero and the heroine wore lighter colors which signified youth and purity.

The men wore dark morning jackets, cravats, vests, bow ties, top hats, bowlers, spats, and boot shoes. Outdoor apparel included capes, scarves, and overcoats. Tobias, the young boy, wore knickers, a vest, an open shirt, shoe boots, and a jaunty tam.

The women were costumed in fitted dresses with full skirts, long slips, bustles, long sleeves, and high necklines. The women's footwear included tights and black character shoes which proved to be easier to move in than the traditional high top shoes. Finishing apparel included mop caps, day bonnets, shawls, short jackets, and cloaks. The style and colors incorporated in the costume design helped create the desired mood of the show.

As stated earlier in the chapter, Tom Benson initiated the overall look of the show. In the early Gaslight years, Benson recalls spending fifty hours on the actual design and one-hundred hours building the scenery. He also spent a week reading the play and researching the era. Benson's time and unique talents did not go unnoticed.

Michelene Keating commented that the sets "had more detail than usual" ("Razor's"). The Green Valley reviewer stated that "The Gaslight displayed such extravagant and delightful sets, complete with a trick barber chair." He goes on to say that "The lights by Phil Baker add to the general excellence of the sets, bringing out steam, smoke, and grotesque make-up exceptionally well" ("Razors Edge"). John Peck confirms the other reviewers' opinions by stating that "The design for this production is no small accomplishment, and the technical aspects of the show are complex and smooth" ("Troupe"). With a small budget and an equally small stage, Benson managed to design a set which was functional and visually entertaining. Benson's early years foreshadowed the innovative set designs that would make the Gaslight theatre unique.

Melodrama derived its name from the melodies played throughout the dramas. Danny Griffith, the musical director, added Victorian flavor to The Razor's Edge with his intricate musical underscoring. Griffith played piano for the Imperial Hotel in Cripple Creek, Colorado. The world-renowned Imperial Players presented Victorian melodramas in their truest form; Griffith, who was their musical director for twenty-five years, acquired the fine art of underscoring.

Griffith developed his own method for accompanying a show. He studied the script to establish the overall mood of the piece, evaluated the characters, and developed a theme for

each character. Griffith's underscoring followed the action of the play; indeed, it sometimes initiated the action. His precise timing made it difficult to discern which came first, the motivating music or the scriptural action.

Griffith attended several full rehearsals and made notes on the pulse of the show. He understood dramatic and comic action. If the action was dramatic, the music built in intensity and speed; if the action was comical, the music became higher pitched and lighter. Griffith could gauge a particular actor's comic timing and add a sound effect that would coincide with a punchline. The actors began to depend on Griffith for their character motivation. He continued to play the summer season at the Imperial Hotel from 1978-1987. The writer recalls that during one of his summer absences, Rex Totty, a Gaslight Player, lamented that "he could not find the rhythm of the show without Danny's underscoring."

Griffith's music came from various sources. He researched the musical era of each show and used popular music of the period; he maintained a large library of musicals, vocalists, and classical music from which he could draw; and he wrote original music, which he used to join the pieces into a musical collage.

Griffith's source of music for The Razor's Edge evolved primarily from classical music and nineteenth-century romantic pieces. His dark and passionate underscoring created an atmosphere of impending doom. Griffith's underscoring was so

effective that the audience forgot he was playing.

Michelene Keating recognized his talents and commented that "Danny Griffith's piano is always a highlight at The Gaslight, whether he is entertaining before the show, providing musical background during the productions, or keeping the olio sprightly and on key" ("Razor's"). Griffith's underscoring played a crucial role in the style and mood of The Razor's Edge. Indeed, his musical talents helped the Gaslight Theatre achieve the success it enjoys today. (Griffith's pre-show entertainment and olio talents will be discussed further in Chapter VII.)

The Razor's Edge is representative of The Gaslight's last offering of the true melodrama form. The seven melodramas which preceded The Razor's Edge were directed by Bill Damron. Damron held a masters degree from the University of Arizona and had spent the last six summers building costumes for the Imperial Hotel, which influenced his directing style. Damron's direction steered clear of farce and focused on emotions, stage pictures, and effective movement. Polished productions, fluid movement and honest emotions characterized Damron's productions. Damron's last show, Cricket On The Hearth, preceded Billy The Kid, which was directed in the true Victorian style by Alex Christopolous. The Razor's Edge followed Billy The Kid and was the first of many to be directed by Michael Maines. Maines was also a graduate of the University of Arizona, and like the others, he continued the

Gaslight tradition and directed The Razor's Edge in the true melodrama form. However, Maines added more emphasis to the comic characters and choreographed energetic physical movement. The physical attributes, coupled with the actors' intricate character work, produced a polished and entertaining show.

John Peck said, "Michael Maines is the director. He has given 'The Razor's Edge' a sharpness that works it solidly from beginning to end" ("Troupe"). Michelene Keating comments that "the production is the most finished and best prepared we have seen at Gaslight" ("Razor's").

The Gaslight's production of The Razor's Edge (1979) integrated the various theatrical elements into a finely tuned Victorian melodrama. The overall picture one might envision after viewing The Razor's Edge (1979) is that of a Dickensian illustration of industrialized London, 1850.

Michael Maines' additional comic bits and physical action in The Razor's Edge foreshadows the move from Victorian melodrama to musical comedy melodrama. The next chapter will focus on the new phase and the people involved in making it happen.

CHAPTER V.

JUST A LITTLE BIT OF MAGIC

Chapter Five focuses on The Gaslight's new phase of melodrama, the musical comedy era, and the people involved in the shift from Victorian to musical comedy melodrama. The Gaslight's production of Just A Little Bit of Magic (1979), written and directed by Michael Maines and Eric Erickson, exemplifies the musical comedy era at its best. The particular play and production of Just A Little Bit of Magic will be analyzed for format and effectiveness.

The collaboration of Michael Maines and Eric Erickson will be examined for style and content, along with a description of the scenic aspects, costumes, music and acting style practiced during this period. In addition, a discussion of the actors' working schedule and daily ritual reveals the overall mood of The Gaslight theatre during the musical comedy phase.

Just A Little Bit of Magic represents the beginning of the Gaslight's musical melodrama era which lasted three years. The play marks the first time a show was set in a period other than the 1800s, and it possessed more of a musical comedy style than a melodramatic one. The overall tone of Magic is more upbeat than Victorian melodramas; Magic was the first Gaslight melodrama to have both villains presented in a comical fashion, yet the theme remains the same, with good

winning over evil. The Magic format works because it balances pathos with uproarious comedy in an entertaining yet intelligent fashion.

The synopsis of Just A Little Bit of Magic reveals its unique yet simple formula. A young orphan boy, Nicholas, sells newspapers during the Depression. Although he is poor, he maintains that good news is just around the corner. His friends, Ginger and Eddie, work as a waitress at an automat and an usher at the movie theater. Eddie and Ginger are both hoofers who dream of getting into a Broadway show.

Nicholas meets an old toymaker, Mr. Tubbs, who gives him a music box. Mr. Tubbs pretends that the music box is magic, and the boy believes him. The villains, Mr. Big and Roxy, attempt to steal the box. Nicholas makes two wishes on the box which come true. Mr. Tubbs gets a new coat, and Eddie and Ginger land in a Ziegfeld show. The villains kidnap Nicholas, and Mr. Tubbs, Ginger, and Eddie search for him. Nicholas makes his third and final wish, and his friends find him. Mr. Tubbs overcomes Mr. Big and Roxy. Nicholas forgives them because it is Christmas, "A time of forgiveness." They are touched by his gesture and apologize for their actions.

The major idea in Just A Little Bit of Magic is revealed in the lyrics of the song "Magic is in the hearts of those who perceive it." An example of the major idea can be found in the dialogue between Nicholas and Mr. Tubbs:

NICHOLAS: But what's the matter, Mr. Tubbs,

don't you believe in magic?

MR.TUBBS: Well, it isn't that simple, Nicholas. You see, well, a man of my age . . . of course I believe, Nicholas. If you say it's so, it's so. (1.2.18)

The "magic theme" also appears in Nicholas' song at the end of the show:

Magic isn't found in little wooden boxes,
 Magic can't be stolen, bought or sold.
 It's in the hearts of those who will just
 perceive it.

If you believe it, it can be so. (2.5.77)

The secondary idea comes from the Victorian melodrama that good always overcomes evil. Dialogue from Mr. Big's speech at the end of the show proves this point: "Hey, kid, I want you to know I never would have plugged the old guy. Shoot, my gun ain't even real. It's licorice. I got a sorta sweet tooth" (2.5.76).

The dialogue is simple, colorful, and structured for a quick pace. There are Brooklyn accents in the dialogue and a 1930s slang. Eddie and Ginger's dialogue in the automat gives one an insight into 1930s trends:

EDDIE: It's freezing out there.

GINGER: I don't want the kid to alk-way ome-hay lone-ay, O.K.? (1.3.27).

Dialogue from the radio announcer reveals a gangster-like Al Capone flavor: "Mr. Big, alias Bugsy the Breaker, Bernie the Bender, and Buster da Buster." The colorful dialogue in Magic played a major role in creating the mood.

Just A Little Bit of Magic creates nostalgia for a time when people pulled together to overcome the Great Depression. A family, gathered around a radio eating popcorn, presents the image one might envision after watching Just A Little Bit of Magic. The simple, well-crafted characters are entertaining on a spiritual and humorous level. Just A Little Bit of Magic follows the melodrama format in which good prevails over evil, but the language is less formal than the Victorian melodrama. In addition, the musical melodramas were less violent than the Victorian melodramas. And though the plays appeared to be naive, it was the dialogue rather than spectacle which proved to be the most effective element in the play.

Michael Maines and Eric Erickson were fellow Thespians at the University of Arizona during the early 1970s. They both graduated with B.F.A. degrees from the University of Arizona and moved to other pursuits: Mike Maines to his directing career in New York, and Eric Erickson to procure a law degree from the University of Arizona. In 1978, Maines returned to the University of Arizona to work on his Masters Degree in theatre. Bill Damron, the resident director at the Gaslight, moved to Los Angeles to work as a professional costumer, and Tony Terry, the producer, enlisted Maines to direct and

possibly write for the Gaslight Theatre. Eric Erickson played a leading role in The Razor's Edge, which was Maines' first directing project for the Gaslight. During the course of the show, Maines and Erickson discovered they had a talent for creating scripts. Terry commissioned them to write their first script, which was to be a western set in Tucson, Arizona. Dirty Deal at The Lucky Lady opened in the summer of 1979 to critical acclaim from the local papers and positive response from the Gaslight audiences.

Although they collaborated, for the most part Maines wrote the scripts and Erickson wrote the score. The action of Lucky Lady revolved around a saloon, which is the stake of the action, and an annual card game. The score sounds much like the music in the 1978 Broadway hit, The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas. Lucky Lady had a hillbilly pop country style that involved the audience and kept the pace of the show moving. Maines added visual effects in the show such as a moving, ten-foot train which crashed through the bar during the climactic card game. The moving scenic prop proved to be so effective, that Tony Terry incorporated moving props in all of his productions. Terry was impressed with the Maines/Erickson collaboration and commissioned them to write a Christmas melodrama. They had eight weeks to write the show, which would be named Just A Little Bit of Magic.

The company involved in the production were: Danny Griffith, musical director; Tom Benson, technical director;

Phil Baker, lighting designer; Linda Mauriello as Nicholas; Jane Merrifield as Ginger; Richard Hanson as Eddie and Choreographer; Brad Myers as Mr. Tubbs; Rex Totty as Mr. Big; Glenda Young as Roxy; and Tim Gilbert as Johnny the Apple Seller. With the exception of Linda Mauriello, who was contracted in New York to play the role of Nicholas, all the cast members attended or received a degree from the University of Arizona.

The players had developed a comraderie which influenced the timing and energy of the show. The audience picked up on the infectious energy of the actors and joined in the holiday spirit of the play. Michelene Keating, from the Tucson Citizen, commented on the company teamwork, "By now the Gaslighters play together so expertly they provide a level of performance that makes for complete uniformity. It is less the individual than the whole that sparks these winning shows" ("Little").

The acting style used for Just A Little Bit of Magic had its origin in the Victorian era, in that it was larger than life, but the spirit of the play was freer and a bit more realistic. The era in which the play was set and language of the 1930s lent itself to a more relaxed style of acting. The actors enjoyed the new form of melodrama for several reasons: the dialogue proved easier to memorize, a character could be comical and serious (not the norm for Victorian drama), the music had a Broadway flavor which was exciting to perform, the

shows contained more song and dance, there were more comic bits, the pace was faster, and the scripts allowed the actors to develop their own personas which became recognizable to the audiences. Comments such as, "Isn't it nice to have the audience actually listen to what you are saying," made by Brad Myers (Mr. Tubbs), and, "I am just thrilled to play this part. Who wouldn't be?," made by Glenda Young (Roxy), exemplify the attitude the actors shared about the Maines/Erickson shows. The Gaslight players enjoyed the new era because the audience was more involved in the storyline than in heckling the actors. Although audience participation was encouraged during the Victorian phase, it often occurred at inappropriate times. The actors believed the lack of attention was due to the passé and stilted language of the Victorian melodramas.

The actor's job at the Gaslight was not an easy one. The early Gaslight shows (1978-1980) ran eight weeks with four weeks of rehearsal. Rehearsals began at 10:00 a.m. and ended at 4:00 p.m. Actors reported back to the theatre at 6:00 p.m. on weekends and 7:00 p.m. during the week. The show ended at 10:00 p.m. on weeknights and 11:30 p.m. on weekends. The theatre was dark on Monday and Tuesday, except during Christmas when the theater remained dark on Monday only. There were seven shows a week, with two on Friday and Saturday. Because of the rehearsal schedule, it was difficult to find employment during the day. The Gaslight Theatre provided the sole income for most of the actors. Salaries

ranged from \$75 to \$200 per week, depending on the actor's experience and ability to negotiate with the producer.

Although the work was hard and the pay minimal, the mood at the Gaslight was festive. Actors enjoyed one another's company on stage and off. Backstage, the actors ribbed each other, played cards, and engaged in a Hollywood association game called "Botticelli." An actor would name a film such as Casa Blanca and the next person had to name something or someone associated with the film, such as Humphrey Bogart. Botticelli, which continued for hours on two-show nights, kept the actors entertained and alert. On stage, the actors maintained control, for the most part. On evenings when the audience appeared to be sleeping, or during a late show when the actors were tired, subtle antics were employed to energize the show. One particular antic included a game in which the actors chose a word, such as "commotion"; they were to use the word throughout the show in context without breaking character. This game was employed sparingly. Other antics included teasing a fellow actor about a noted weakness while on stage. Dick Hanson (Eddie), well-known for his tapping ability, realized that Jane Merrifield (Ginger) missed half the tap sounds in their duet. One evening Hanson pointed to Merrifield and said, "Take it Ginger!" Breaking character or changing the show did not occur often during the early Gaslight years, in fact, it was frowned upon. Later, onstage gags become an integral part of the shows. In fact, it was

the added appeal of improvisation and spontaneity which drew the larger crowds to The Gaslight. The above antics have been cited so that the reader can gain insight into the prevailing mood at the Gaslight. The company did have their share of in-house conflicts. But, overall, the company members enjoyed their work and had a positive rapport with each other, the producer (Tony Terry), and the audience.

Tom Benson played a large part in the musical comedy phase. Not only was he scene designer, but he shared in the business decisions. Terry's decision to move to original musical plays had to be Benson's decision as well. In answer to a questionnaire, Benson states that "Maines' whole approach to the plays became more fun—we had more freedom—a wide variety of genres and periods to use as sources and references" (Interview).

Just A Little Bit of Magic gave Benson the opportunity to design a radio set, which included a full-size radio and four roll drops depicting an automat, a toy store, a New York street scene, and a warehouse. Since Magic focused on storyline rather than moving props, Benson attempted to make his sets visually entertaining, without using special effects (in Chapter III, Benson discusses his use of perspectives and decorative detail to make the set interesting). The detail in Just A Little Bit of Magic presented a magical yet realistic quality. Benson mentions the Automat backdrop in which he

used forced perspective, "Rex Totty did a shrinking bit in the first Just A Little Bit of Magic to fit the backdrop scene" (Interview). (Totty actually bent down to match the smaller perspective.)

The intricate and colorful artwork Benson used in the toy store scene created a child's idea of "Toyland." Just A Little Bit of Magic employed simple techniques, such as a radio announcer, acting freezes, and spotlights, to engage the imagination of the audience. Benson recalled that "Maines is very visual in his thinking and always wanted a visual style for each production. But the story and characters always came first over bits and special effects." Benson's artistic sense allowed him to meet Maines's visual expectations, which included beautiful art work and creative set pieces.

Benson comments that "Maines and I frequented Disneyland looking for special effects to steal." He also relates that with Maines, Terry and Benson could suggest "setting ideas" which Maines would put into his scenes. Maines used these interesting set pieces to further his plot. In later years, the Gaslight would develop plots around set pieces.

Benson's set for Just A Little Bit of Magic (1979) produced a nostalgia for radio days and the great depression. Michelene Keating remarked that "Tom Benson's sets create a colorful era-flavored background" ("Little"). John Peck, from The Arizona Daily Star, stated that "Tom Benson's sets are sharp and alluring" ("Class").

Light and sound designer Phil Baker continued to create effects which helped establish the mood. Phil made use of spotlights for freezes and solos and employed flashing lights for chase scenes involving the "good guys" and the "villains." He used blue tones for the sentimental scenes and amber hues for the action scenes. The radio announcer was subtly employed throughout the show in conjunction with spotlights. Baker complemented the 1930s mood of the set without disturbing the flow of the production.

Musical Director Danny Griffith acquired the task of developing a 1930s olio and arranging Erickson's musical score for Just A Little Bit of Magic. Although Erickson was an excellent songwriter, he was primarily a guitarist, so his score did not include a piano arrangement.

Erickson would sing the piece for Griffith, and Griffith would fill in the accompaniment. Erickson described the style he preferred and Griffith experimented on the piano until he found a sound which met Erickson's approval. The process took many hours and required that the pianist be musically astute and experienced in various styles of music.

Griffith's fifteen years of experience playing the hotel circuit, in which he played everything from Gershwin to Sondheim, proved to be invaluable to Erickson. The score which evolved sounded much like the Broadway musical, Annie, which, like Just A Little Bit of Magic, is based on an orphan in the 1930s.

Griffith's underscoring contained a mixture of popular 1930s music, musical themes from the Magic score, and music he developed himself to tie the changing moods of the show together. The olio Griffith created continued the 1930s theme of Just A Little Bit of Magic with authentic songs such as, "Million Dollar Baby," "Buddy Can You Spare A Dime," and "We're In The Money." The music played a major part in setting the mood for the whole production. One left the theatre humming old radio tunes, wishing tap dancing would come back in style. Michelene Keating commented that: "Danny Griffith is back for his third winter season at the Gaslight's ragtime piano and his is always a welcome return. His expertise has a way of giving the production an added dimension" ("Little"). John Peck commented that "Danny Griffith is back from Cripple Creek at the Piano for this third season with Gaslight, providing the zest and center upbeat nature (sic) that makes the whole thing move musically" ("Class").

Patti Gawne, the resident costumer, came to the Gaslight during the show which preceded Just A Little Bit of Magic, and at the time of this writing, remains there today. Before Gawne arrived at the Gaslight, various seamstresses were contracted to costume each show with guidance from the scenic designer and the director. Gawne, who graduated from The University of Michigan with a B.A. in Clothing and Textiles, gave The Gaslight costumes a professional look.

In an interview on October 4, 1994, Gawne discussed her role in the Gaslight Theatre, the progression of styles and her method used to costume each show. Gawne stated that the early Gaslight "had one rack to pull from and a very small costume budget." Gawne depended on thrift shops, wholesale fabrics, and creative costuming to build the early shows. Gawne said, "Maines had a clear idea of what he wanted each character to look like, yet he allowed me artistic freedom to create the final product." Gawne said she preferred a director who had clear ideas about the costumes, since the director is the unifying force for all the theatrical elements in the production.

Gawne's method for designing a show followed the standards inherent in a professional costumer's procedure. Gawne began costume work four weeks before Just A Little Bit of Magic opened. Gawne recalls that Magic was her favorite Maines' production because the show "tugged at her heartstrings." She also enjoyed costuming Magic because "the characters were a lot of fun." Gawne helped create the mood by making the orphan boy look ragged and unkempt: "The audience wanted to take care of him." Gawne presented the other characters in a unique style which depicted the era and their occupation: Ginger wore a pink waitress dress; Eddie wore an usher's uniform; Mr. Big wore a pinstriped suit; Roxy wore a clinging red dress and a fur piece; Mr. Tubbs wore brown slacks, cardigan sweater, and bow tie; John wore a

trench coat; and Nicholas wore knickers, vest, and a tattered tam. The women wore knee-length dresses which fit at the waist and hung loosely at the hem line. The men wore loose-fitting pleated slacks, vests, sweater vests, wide ties, jackets, and fedoras. Gawne provided wigs for the women which were styled in the 1930s "marcel" look. The men wore their hair parted on the side and combed back. The footwear included wingtips for the men and short-heeled shoes with squat heels for the women. The costumes for the dance team and the show girl were bright; all others had a muted color to symbolize the depression era. Gawne's use of red, pink, and blue juxtaposing browns, black, and grey harmonized with Benson's backdrops which incorporated a "Babes in Toyland" look on one drop and overtones of poverty and depression on another. Gawne's costumes reflected her appreciation of the touching storyline in Just A Little Bit of Magic and helped create the charming atmosphere of the production.

Michael Maines and Eric Erickson wrote shows with strong story lines, interesting melodies, and fast-paced action. Their shows attracted larger audiences which appreciated the new form of melodrama. The Arizona Daily Star box office poll from 1988 found Just A Little Bit of Magic listed as the third favorite entertainment vehicle in Tucson, following Disney on Ice and Ice Capades. In 1988, 19,550 people attended 102 sold out performances of Just A Little Bit of Magic ("Skinner Family").

Opening night of the Gaslight's Just A Little Bit of Magic included a preshow production of searchlights, stagedoor broadcasts, and the actors dressed in tuxedos and mink stoles arriving in post-World War II vehicles: a fitting introduction for the dynamic collaboration which was to follow.

The local critics praised Maines and Erickson, applauding them for their wit and style: "The heroes are the creators of this festive and celebratory work. There can be no denying that the language, the music, and the lyrics all combine to an exciting and refreshing production" ("Family"). Peck goes on to praise the work of Maines and Erickson calling them "a duo with a predictably greater renown down the road" ("Little").

Maines and Erickson collaborated on seven more scripts but The Contender, which was presented at Gaslight's third location at 7000 East Tanque Verde Road, proved to be the best. The Contender took place in the 1920s and involved a boxer, a manager, and evil gangsters. The music had a ragtime style with Broadway melodies, and the dialogue included 1930s slang, much like the musical Guys and Dolls and the clever children's movie, Bugsy Malone. The play was a success at the box office and in the papers.

Maines continued to direct at the Gaslight through 1993. He moved to Los Angeles where he continues to write and direct for Disney productions. Eric Erickson remains in Tucson, practices law, and on occasion writes music for commercial ventures such as Disney productions. Their collaboration

initiated a new form of melodrama which is the precursor of the unique form of entertainment The Gaslight Theatre presents today.

The next chapter focuses on the talents of Peter Van Slyke and the new phase of melodrama which integrates the musical comedy phase with a vaudeville comic style.

CHAPTER VI.

SECRET AGENT MAN

The comedy spoof era began to evolve in 1984 when Peter Van Slyke became Artistic Director/Playwright for The Gaslight Theatre. This chapter examines the newly developed phase with the intention of revealing the complex nature of a misunderstood art form. The chapter will focus on Peter Van Slyke, the Gaslight Company and the 1988 production of Secret Agent Man, which exemplifies the typical play produced at The Gaslight during the comedy spoof phase.

Van Slyke was an original member of The Gaslight's early years (1977-1978). In 1983, he returned from his acting pursuits in New York and joined The Gaslight Troupe. Michael Maines, the artistic director for the musical comedy phase had moved to Los Angeles, leaving The Gaslight in a holding pattern. Van Slyke replaced Maines in 1984 and instituted a satirical form of melodrama.

Van Slyke based his scripts on a variety of entertainment venues such as classic novels, movies, adventure books, comic books, folk heroes, and cartoons. Secret Agent Man mocked the highly successful "007" movies, which began in the late 1960s. Secret Agent Man combined 1960s music, vaudeville jokes, slapstick, ad-libbing, and special effects with a melodrama format.

Victor Vector, head of C.R.I.M.E., plans to take over the

world by planting a bomb at a peace conference of world leaders. He intends to destroy crucial military stations with his radon beam and infiltrate the world with computerized robots. He is aided by Venus Envy, his evil girlfriend, and Koto, his Japanese bodyguard. Secret agents Alex Starr and Emma Singleton have been assigned by S.B.U. (Secret Bureau of Undercover Agents) to discover and put an end to Vector's evil plan.

Singleton and Starr follow Vector to a Swiss chalet where the peace conference is being held. The agents foil Vector's plan to blow up the chalet. Vector escapes, and they follow him to Mount Rushmore, where he has placed his radon beam in President Jefferson's cigar. As the beam is about to destroy the crucial military stations, Starr convinces Honey Dew (one of Vector's robots) to turn the beam on Vector. She does so, and Vector is destroyed. The play ends with Singleton and Starr kissing.

The given circumstances in Secret Agent Man reveal the exaggerated form inherent in a spoof, and the line of action shows that the Victorian ideal directs the actions. Victor Vector (evil) attempts to rule the world, and Alex Starr (good) endeavors to stop him. Vector challenges the Victorian theme in one of his later scenes: "They thought they could stop C.R.I.M.E., but they'll soon find out nobody can. Nobody!" (2.1.1). A line delivered by Quill, the head of S.B.U., proved that good does conquer evil: "You did it, Agent

sb-248! You've saved the world!" (3.2.10).

The dialogue in Secret Agent Man is simple, humorous, filled with puns, and charged with action. Some of the speeches are long and detailed, while others are short and to the point. The play uses vernacular to create a mood. Dialogue between Starr, Singleton, and Quill is short, simple and used the comedy law that two repetitions creates a strong punch line. The following punch line is an old pun, which the audience can easily recognize:

STARR: What happened to the last agent?

QUILL: He was killed.

STARR: And the one before him?

QUILL: He was killed?

STARR: And the one ...

QUILL: He was killed.

STARR: So everyone's dying to do this job.

(1.1.5)

Dialogue between Vector and General Potemkin illustrates Van Slyke's use of detailed and lengthy passages. His use of the longer monologues breaks the pattern of the shorter sequences and gives the play more variety:

VECTOR: We will use the large radon projector which is hidden here (he points) in the center of the United States. I will set it (He does. This can be a digital alarm clock) for exactly 11:17 tomorrow

morning. Remember that time, General, for that is precisely when C.R.I.M.E. will begin to rule the world! (2.1.3)

Dialogue with Honey Dew and Vector at the beginning of the play satirizes the "007" movies.

HONEY DEW: Mission number 8762-6, neutralize S.B.U. Agent 347, completed 7 April 1965, as per orders. (1.2.5)

Singleton's dialogue in the middle of the play was created to charge the action: "There it goes! We'll be buried under an avalanche! Look at it!" (2.2.8). The dialogue in Secret Agent Man is witty, energizing and farcical.

The characters in Secret Agent Man represent the stock characters used in the Victorian melodramas: Victor Vector (villain), played by Stewart Gregory; Alex Starr (hero), played by Armen Dirtadian; Venus Envy (villainess), played by Jane Merrifield; Emma Singleton (heroine), played by Chris Quatraro; Koto (villain's sidekick), played by Nick Sievert; Honey Dew (villain's sidekick), played by Donna Davis; General Potemkin (hero's sidekick), played by Tim Gilbert; and Inspector Quill (hero's sidekick), played by Peter Van Slyke. The character format in Secret Agent Man makes use of the comic sidekick in Victorian melodramas, but also allows the major characters comic moments. The overall mood of Secret Agent Man is bright and silly.

Peter Van Slyke, the artistic director, actor, and playwright (1985-1991), played a multitude of roles at The Gaslight. In the early Gaslight productions, he played heroes; when Van Slyke returned to The Gaslight, he cast himself in character roles which he played in a humorous, laid-back manner. Van Slyke graduated from the University of Arizona with a performance degree and pursued his acting career at Arizona's resident equity theatre, Arizona Theatre Company, and at various theatres in New York City. His experience working in other genres helped him write insightful spoofs. He began his playwrighting career with a witty spoof of the Mexican hero, Zorro (1983). Zorro won Van Slyke critical accolades, and he went on to write 22 more plays—not an easy thing to accomplish when one is acting and directing.

Van Slyke came to The Gaslight at a time when Tony Terry was beginning to push jokes and special effects, so his scripts have a farcical style to them. However, Van Slyke managed to create comedies which relied on wit as well as physicality. Some of his better works incorporated dramatic emotion into a comedy format. Phantom of the Opera (1988), based on the Lloyd Webber 1987 Broadway hit, is considered by most to be Van Slyke's best. In a 1991 questionnaire, Tom Benson states the Phantom of the Opera is "arguably Peter's best." The company members involved in the production agree with Benson's statement. In a recent interview with Armen

Dirtadian, the actor who played the "Phantom", Dirtadian commented that Phantom of the Opera was enjoyable to play in because it involved emotional pathos as well as witty comical elements. Indeed, a 1988 Tucson entertainment poll listed The Gaslight's Phantom of the Opera as the fourth most popular show that year, with Just A Little Bit of Magic, Disney on Ice and Ice Capades leading the way ("Skinner Family"). However, Phantom of the Opera was not the normal offering during The Gaslight's comedy spoof era because the play involved realistic characters as opposed to presentational ones.

Secret Agent Man represents Van Slyke's purest form of comedy spoof and model for the unique Gaslight style which followed. The local reviewers approved of Van Slyke's clever spoof. Scot Skinner, from The Arizona Daily Star, commented that:

The Gaslight Theatre has a brand new show, and it is easily one of its most high spirited and entertaining. It is hard to imagine the kind of person who would not get a kick out of "Secret Agent Man," a 60's spy spoof full of the kind of winking, sexual innuendo indigenous to the genre. ("Secret")

Van Slyke had a flair for creating witty, comical spoofs, but the actors at The Gaslight had the experience and talent to make them work.

A core group of Gaslight players in Secret Agent Man were

present during The Gaslight's Victorian phase. The original players were Tim Gilbert, Jane Merrified, and Peter Van Slyke. The other players included Stewart Gregory, Chris Quatraro, Armen Dirtadian, Nick Seivert, and Donna Davis. With the exception of Chris Quatraro, the actors had performed together for several years. Most of the actors held performance degrees and had gained the experience required to perform in comedy. The actors understood each other's style and personal quirks, which created a precise rhythm invaluable to comic timing. Because they worked so closely, ad-libbing became an integral part of the scripts. For instance, one of the actors might veer from the script and begin to describe an audience member; the others would join in the exchange which would continue until the audience grew tired of the distraction. Some ad-libs lasted for more than five minutes. The audiences began to attend shows partially because of the ad-libbing sessions.

The nature of spoof inspired individual actors to develop their own stage personas. Tim Gilbert became "the guy with the eyes"; Jane Merrifield, "the girl with the weird faces"; Donna Davis, "the girl who talks fast"; Nick Seivert, "the blaster"; Armen Dirtadian, "romantic hero"; etc. The company which evolved during the spoof phase has been compared to the actors on the Carol Burnett Show and Saturday Night Live, both of which allowed ad-libbing and advocated individual character development. The local critics held a high regard for the

troupe's comic abilities. Scot Skinner of The Arizona Daily Star commented, "Let's just say these eight people are the most consistently funny group you're likely to encounter in this city at this time" ("Secret"). The troupe that evolved during this phase set a precedent which Gaslight actors would continue to emulate.

John Staniunas, the director/choreographer of Secret Agent Man, had choreographed and performed in previous Gaslight productions and was not unfamiliar with the Gaslight style. Staniunas graduated from the University of Arizona with a B.A. and an M.F.A. in theatre. His focus on musical theatre and dance proved to be valuable to the Gaslight formula. Staniunas choreographed entertaining rock numbers for Secret Agent Man which satirized 1960s dance steps. Staniunas researched the 1960s and came up with a dry and witty directing style which worked well for a "007" spoof.

The show had an abundance of special effects, therefore, much of Staniunas' direction revolved around the use of properties. Staniunas' direction was fast paced and clever, yet he allowed the actors freedom to develop their own comic bits. Staniunas possessed the musical and comedy expertise necessary to direct a show at The Gaslight Theatre. Under his guidance, the creative elements in Secret Agent Man were united into a polished and highly entertaining production. Staniunas contributed his directing talents to The Gaslight once a year, which allowed the artistic director a well-

deserved break.

The scenic designer, Tom Benson, recalls that when Van Slyke began to write for The Gaslight, "Terry was pushing jokes and special effects." Benson said Terry would give Van Slyke a list of special effects to put in his plays and Van Slyke would do so, "even if they looked silly." Benson said it began to be fun because, "eventually Peter would write in an effect, no matter how impossible, and we just had to find a solution." Benson goes on to say that "a lot of Van Slyke's shows, such as Mega Man and Secret Agent Man, looked like the cartoons they were."

The sets become more extravagant when The Gaslight moved to their second location at Sabino Canyon Road. The backstage area was bigger, which enabled set pieces to be stored while in wait for the next scene. The dimensions of the new theatre included a 20 foot wide, 11 foot 6 inch high proscenium, with 10 feet of wing space on each side and added two side stages. The new Gaslight had about 30 feet more stage space than the first Gaslight and included 106 more seats.

The larger theatre, larger budget, and growing interest in special effects changed the focus of Benson's work. Benson continued to research the play and emphasize the art work, but he had the added dimension of creating believable special effects.

With the aid of James Blair and Robert Murray, Benson created ingenious special effects. James Blair was the stage

manager, and Robert Murray designed the lights. Both played an important part in building the set and designing the special prop pieces. During the '80s, Benson worked in various theatres in the Eastern United States, so he sent his designs ahead three weeks before he arrived; Blair and Murray began constructing the large set pieces and developing ideas for the special props. Blair later became the scenic designer and artistic associate at the Invisible Theatre in Tucson, whose small stage requires creative design techniques, and Robert Murray went on to design movie sets year round. Benson supervised the final set construction and painted the roll drops. His procedure included an all-night painting spree with himself and a roll drop; "The best time to concentrate," Benson said.

The Gaslight developed a distinct visual style that became part of the whole package. Benson said he became comfortable with The Gaslight format because he knew the "scale" of each production, how much could be stored backstage, and what he could expect from the actors/stage hands (the actors helped move sets at The Gaslight). He said, "The style is very literal and simple, not quite cartoon-like, colorful, witty (I hope)."

Benson said his goal is to avoid repetition. He searches for new pictures and effects or new ways to use old effects. Over the years, he developed a storehouse of techniques: revolves, travelers, drops, cut-outs, puppets, which he can

rely on with a degree of certainty. Benson says the special effects work best when they poke fun at specific effects from popular movies, plays, or genres. Secret Agent Man afforded him the opportunity to poke fun at the '60s genre, James Bond special effects, and the "007" film series which was a cult classic in itself.

Secret Agent Man included an undersea crime office, snowy Alps (which moved to make the onstage actors look as if they were moving), airplanes, snowmobiles, Mount Rushmore, and miniature helicopter and dolls (which flew across the stage). The combination of beautiful back drops, moving props, and Bobby Murray's clever light design, which included disco colored lights, spots and a laser fight on Mount Rushmore, produced a visually exciting show.

Scot Skinner said, "Tom Benson's sets and special effects are characteristically ingenious . . . Secret Agent Man is the most inventive and ambitious technical show Gaslight has done in a long time. It's a breathless delight" ("Secret"). Tom Benson said, "special effects have become a required ingredient" at The Gaslight. Some might argue that Tom Benson is the required ingredient crucial to The Gaslight's artistic success.

Patti Gawne designed the costumes for Secret Agent Man. She had previously designed thirty-nine Gaslight shows and played a part in The Gaslight's three different artistic eras. Gawne recalls that her designing procedure remained the same

throughout each artistic change. She researched the play and era, presented designs to the director, and chose the fabric for each design.

Gawne said that Peter Van Slyke gave her general ideas but relied on her artistic judgement for the major costume decisions. Gawne said she enjoyed doing Van Slyke shows because they were fantastical and she could create her own style. Buzz Corey and the Red Planet of Doom (1988) remains one of her favorites because the designs originated in her imagination; each costume had to be built from scratch. Secret Agent Man allowed her that same type of freedom.

In a 1994 interview, Gawne said her ideas for Secret Agent Man came from studying James Bond movies and "bad '60s styles." Gawne recalled that the mood of Secret Agent Man was "suave silliness." Her costumes included Nehru jackets, lime-green hip huggers, beetle wigs, black tuxedos, love beads, turtle necks, spike heels, boxy knit suits (for the heroine) and tight ski pants. The costumes created a colorful spoof of the 1960s fashions. The overall effect of Gawne's costumes added to the amusement of the show.

Danny Griffith spent his last summer accompanying for the Imperial Hotel in 1987. Dan Steenken had taken Griffith's place for the last two summers and continued to do so for Secret Agent Man (1987). Steenken was a piano major at the University of Arizona with a focus on classical music. Steenken composed music for several Gaslight productions,

including Scooter Wells (1985) and The Sheik (1985). His musical offerings possessed quirky, complicated rhythms and tones which worked well for comic presentations. Although he relied on a classical format, his musical ability allowed him to play various styles.

Steenken researched the 1960s and came up with a sound that incorporated the suave style of James Bond with the rock sound of "Paul Revere and The Raiders". He joined his talents with Nick Seivert (who played electric guitar) for the musical numbers in the show. The duo created a "Hulla Balloo"-like mood which kept the show moving and the audience laughing.

The production of Secret Agent Man (1987) did not pretend to be anything other than pure entertainment. The storyline, characterizations, and technical effects were designed to create a comic effect. The efforts of all those involved in creating Secret Agent Man resulted in a slick, humorous, and entertaining production. Scot Skinner's closing line from his review reveals the audience response to Secret Agent Man, "Set your homing device on The Gaslight Theatre and get ready to laugh. 'Secret Agent Man' is sensational" ("Secret").

The Gaslight's comedy spoof era was a natural evolution which integrated elements of the Victorian and musical comedy phase into a unique art form which can only be found at The Gaslight Theatre.

The next chapter focuses on The Gaslight "olio," the aftershow entertainment which had its origins in early

melodrama.

CHAPTER VII.

THE OLIO

LITTLE ANTHONY'S DINER

The Gaslight olio found its origins in early Graeco-Roman theatre which the Greeks called "mime." Mime presented short subjects dealing with everyday life, from a satiric or comical point of view (Brockett, History 68). Later these mime subjects developed into variety shows, including singing, dancing, juggling, tightropes, and so on. Roman emperors and nobles had their own troupes and debated over which possessed the most talent. Similar kinds of musical interludes allowed for scenic and costume changes during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The interludes increased in popularity. In fact, the famous 1660s actress, Nell Gwyn, began her career dancing a jig at The King's Theatre (Brockett, History 69). During the 1800s, "olios" were developed because of the Licensing Act which did not allow non-patented theatres to present serious dramas.

As mentioned in Chapter II, Victorian theatre owners began to add musical underscoring to serious dramas as well as in-between shows, or intermezzi, which included comedy, singing, dancing and novelty acts. These added entertainments became so well-liked that they emerged as a separate entity and remained popular into the early 1900s when a bawdier form of intermezzo called "Burlesque" emerged. Burlesque included

the striptease, as well as the variety acts which were more off-color. In the 1890s, the producer, Tony Pastor, eliminated the risqué elements, and a tamer form of Burlesque, vaudeville, moved to the forefront and continued to be the most popular form of American entertainment until the late 1930s (Brockett, History 531). The Gaslight olio shares elements inherent to a 1920s vaudeville show.

The olio, which derived its name from the 1890s "olio roll drop" (a drop with painted advertisements), continues to be a popular form of entertainment at The Gaslight Theatre. Audience members often remark that the olio show is the main reason they attend The Gaslight Theatre. In fact, when The Gaslight experimented with eliminating the olio for Little Mary Sunshine, the audiences complained loudly, and attendance dropped off substantially. Since that incident, Tony Terry has maintained a strong emphasis on the Gaslight olio.

The early Gaslight olios included a variety of acts with no particular focus. When Michael Maines arrived, he began creating "theme" olios, the first of which was a depression olio. The format received positive feedback from the audience and the reviewer, and from that point forward, The Gaslight presented "theme" olios. Michelene Keating, from the Tucson Citizen, commented on the Just A Little Bit of Magic olio (1979):

The olios for this one are comprised of a group of songs that were written during the depression

period. They used this format in the last production, and I think it works better than a mishmash of vaudeville routines. ("Little")

The olio for The Lost City or Safari So Good (1987), a Van Slyke spoof of Raiders of the Lost Ark, represents a theme olio at its best. Van Slyke wrote a mini-script for the Lost olio and named the show Little Anthony's Diner (Terry's suggestion).

Little Anthony's Diner Olio took place in a late '50s diner, and the songs revolved around a storyline. Tom Benson created a backdrop with a jukebox on a flooring of black and white block tiles. The set included two diner tables and a soda bar. The storyline revolved around Doc and his wife, Madge, an older couple who owned the diner; the other characters included two waitresses and four college boys. Peter Van Slyke wrote a skeleton script with vaudeville jokes, and the cast filled in the rest. Danny Griffith researched the era, came up with songs to fit each cast member and accompanied the cast. Griffith played a solo piece in each olio which highlighted his voice and piano techniques. For this particular olio, all of the action took place in front of one drop.

The order of the olio proceeds as follows: "We Go Together" sung by the cast; "My Guy" sung by Donna Davis; "Splish Splash, I was Takin' A Bath" sung by Tim Gilbert; "It's Raining on Prom Night" sung by Jane Merrifield; "All

"Shook Up" sung by Stewart Gregory; "The Dentist" sung by Nick Seivert; "Stand By Me" sung by Margaret Knight; "Rockin' Robin" sung by Danny Griffith; and the cast closed with a reprisal of "We Go Together". The musical numbers originated in the late '50s with the exception of "We Go Together," "It's Raining on Prom Night" (which came from the musical Grease), and "The Dentist" (which originated in Little Shop of Horrors). All of the presentations possessed a spoof quality except for Margaret Knight's rendition of "Stand By Me." As mentioned in Chapter V, the cast members had developed their own personas which the audience began to anticipate. The olio gave the actors more leeway to experiment with their characters.

"We Go Together" incorporated the '50s Hand Jive and the jitterbug choreographed by Nancy Laviola, a member of The Gaslight company whose strength lay in singing and dancing. Nancy's style was hard-hitting and fast, which worked well for the '50s. Although the cast members delivered the same steps, their "personas" could be evidenced by the manner in which they presented themselves. For example, Tim Gilbert presented a wild-eyed, stiff-kneed style which the audience found hilarious; and Peter Van Slyke had a "Groucho Marx", laid-back quality which was equally humorous. The women developed characters but maintained quality singing and dancing. The actresses teased the men that the women carried the olio, because they always put forth their best effort; the men

replied that they carried the comic obligation because they were funnier. The assumption that the men were funnier infuriated the women. However, the actresses' gibe did not affect the men, since they had no intention of putting forth more energy. As far as the writer knows, this argument continues currently.

The show included an abundance of jokes such as:

PETER: Hey Nick, what's wrong . . . you look tired?

NICK: I am. I keep dreaming I'm a tee-pee one night and a pup-tent the next night. Back and forth, back and forth . . . it's driving me crazy!

PETER: You know what's wrong with you Nick?

NICK: No, what?

PETER: You're too tense ("two tents").

The vaudeville jokes separated each song, followed by lead-in dialogue for the next solo. The actors kept the pace flowing and the energy high so the audience had little time to focus on the simple storylines and jokes. The olio revealed the versatile talents of The Gaslight Players; they impersonated, sang, danced, harmonized, played guitar, and delivered old jokes. The following description of the musical numbers reveals the style and polished nature of The Gaslight actors. The solo numbers possessed a more polished look since the numbers focused on the actors' strengths.

Donna Davis, a Gaslight regular, had a subtle, fast-paced delivery and a silly quality which rivaled Mary Tyler Moore. She received a theatre degree from the University of Arizona in 1982 with a focus on the performance of comedy. As a child, she attended dance classes and was especially proficient in tap-dancing. Her chorus experience and piano lessons made her one of the few players who could harmonize with little practice. Davis' rendition of "My Guy" was both humorous and soulful. Her voice took on a smokey quality, but her tall, thin frame presented a gawky teenage image. Donna was backed up by Merrifield and Knight who added a Motown style with their simple harmonies and moves. Davis' "My Guy" left the audience with a feeling of contentment.

Tim Gilbert, known as "The Guy with the Eyes," graduated from the University of Arizona with a theatre degree in performance in 1976. His emphasis was comedy, but his training also included classical acting which gave him the skills required to create his various voices and characters. Gilbert's dance training was limited, but he accommodated by creating crazy faces and a loud delivery. His interpretation of "Splish, Splash, I Was Takin' A Bath" involved a muscle-bound interpretation of the twist and a full-front delivery to the audience (he often addressed members of the front row). His blue eyes twinkled in a wide-eyed stare which caused the audience to laugh. The audience anticipated "The Guy with the Eyes" solo, and they were never disappointed.

Jane Merrifield, "The Girl with the Weird Faces," had also graduated from the University of Arizona with a theatre degree in performance. Her choral training in high school and college gave her an edge when it came to harmonizing, and although she had no formal training, Merrifield's involvement in entertainment groups gave her a basic knowledge of theater dance. Merrifield prided herself in character work, namely voice interpretation, character movement, and facial expressions. Her rendition of "It's Raining On Prom Night" included a studied separation of words, Ra--aa--ning (such as you might hear in an old '50s tune), bug-eyes, which crossed for effect, and soulful projection (an imitation of Connie Francis). The audience appreciated Merrifield's comic sense and complete integration into her various characters.

Stewart Gregory, "The Matinee Idol," gained his experience through high school and community work. His emphasis was musical comedy: he had a resonant, baritone-tenor voice which could be likened to Steve Lawrence. When he came to The Gaslight in 1984, he played heroes. Van Slyke discovered his talent for character work and imitation and allowed him to play more character parts (Gregory's interpretation of the bald German spy in Secret Agent Man was especially memorable). Gregory's impersonation of Elvis' "All Shook Up" included gyrating hips, close-mouthed lyrics which ran together, and sultry expressions. Knight, Davis, and Merrifield contributed to the song by screaming at the

appropriate moments. The audience looked forward to Gregory's solo numbers, and his interpretation of "All Shook Up" left them begging for more.

Nick Seivert came to The Gaslight in 1985. Seivert had a B.F.A. in performance from the University of Arizona with a focus on comedy. Seivert's strength lay in a stand-up comedy style which hit punch lines and included ad-libbing. Although Seivert was capable of playing heroes, his stand up comedy style made him a perfect candidate for comic side kicks (his portrayal of Koto, the Ninja-like bodyguard in Secret Agent Man, caused the actors and audience to laugh). Seivert's rendition of "The Dentist" included a white-smocked Seivert with dental instruments tormenting the background singers and the front row with a screaming delivery much like a madman. Seivert played lead guitar for several rock bands in high school and his rock experience gave him the crazy edge required to make "The Dentist" work. The audience enjoyed his highly energetic style and excellent comic timing.

Margaret Knight, also a theatre graduate from the University of Arizona, received training from the drama department as well as the opera department. Knight joined The Gaslight for The Razor's Edge (1978) and stayed through the 1981 season. She returned to play the dark-haired villainess for The Lost City. Knight had a talent for playing comic sidekicks and evil temptresses. Knight was a consistent and polished player. Her role as "Madge" in the Diner olio was

comical and touching.

Knight's lead in for "Stand By Me" involved a conversation with her husband in which they discuss their financial problems with the diner, and Madge assures Doc that no matter what happens, she will always love him. Knight's interpretation of "Stand By Me" was both warm and powerful. Her voice soared from low alto to high soprano, with highs and lows in intensity and with good use of dramatic pauses. Knight's movements were minimal and her emotions sincere. Dramatic songs were not the norm at The Gaslight; however, by the end of the first verse, the audience had forgotten their aversion to sentimental solos. The audience responded to Knight's number with a long and resounding ovation.

Danny Griffith provided pre-olio, intermission, and pre-show entertainment, as well as underscoring and accompaniment for the singers. He also researched the olio themes, assigned solos, and rehearsed with actors. Olio rehearsal took 50% of the four-week rehearsal time and required quick memorization on the actor's parts as well as the accompanist's. Griffith had the job of teaching the cast members their music, which required drilling the cast for harmony problems. Olio rehearsal was often scheduled in the afternoon and by the end of the day, the actors were tired. The writer recalls that in one particular rehearsal, the actors repeated a number twenty times before Griffith was satisfied with the harmonies. Typical dialogue for such a rehearsal sounded something like

this:

DANNY: Someone is off.

CAST: Not me.

DANNY: Tim, don't sing. Let's try it again.

Griffith's sarcastic humor created a playful bantering which made the hard work enjoyable.

Griffith's number in the Diner olio, "Rockin' Robin," allowed the actors to change costumes and gave Griffith a chance to display his amazing talents. His warm-up entertainment provided background music for on-going conversation. Although audiences appreciated Griffith's ragtime music, their focus was distracted with waitresses and full house lights (rather than a spot on Griffith with the house in darkness). Because of the house arrangement, Griffith felt the audience did not enjoy his music, however, the writer recalls that audience members often commented on the "fantastic" piano player.

Griffith had a unique style of piano playing which was entertaining to watch. His hands arched to an extreme, his fingers bent back, as if they were double-jointed, and he slapped the keys in a relaxed manner, the whole time twisting his body to face the audience. Griffith hit the keys with an electric force which energized the audience. His dynamic ragtime music rivalled Max Morath (a famous ragtime pianist and acquaintance of Griffith's). The writer also recalls his emotional interpretations of sad songs, such as "My Buddy," a

World War I song. Griffith's musical talents included playing various styles of music. He had a large collection of 45 rpm records from the 1950s and could play the "boogie" rock style required for late 50s tunes such as "Rockin' Robin."

Griffith's rendition of "Rockin' Robin" included Merrifield, Davis, and Knight on backup vocals. Danny possessed a strong voice which cut through the music in a clear, electrifying tone. He projected loudly, slapped the keys in a boogie rhythm, and beamed at the audience as if to say "try not to get involved." Griffith's charismatic style drew the audience to him. Griffith's number was a show-stopper which involved the whole audience.

The Gaslight olios continue to entertain audiences in an energetic, professional fashion. The combination of Gaslight audience regulars and longtime company members makes for a unique interaction which is exciting to the actors and the audience. The Gaslight olio, which shares commonalities with Greek mime, has progressed into a new style of theatre, perhaps even a theatrical icon, which is practiced in a unique form at The Gaslight Theatre.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CONCLUSION

Tony Terry's Gaslight Theatre continues to be a successful theatrical phenomenon. When long-time audience members are asked to describe the shows at The Gaslight, they find it hard to respond: "Well, it's not really a play . . . you go there to have fun . . . you can talk to the actors, boo and hiss them . . . they sing and dance . . . it's great entertainment . . . yes, it is a play . . . I guess . . . it's just not for people who do not have a sense of humor." The writer has heard these comments a hundred times over. The confused description reveals the various dimensions involved in a Gaslight production. The Gaslight is not for " humorless people," however, The Gaslight does offer entertainment for all ages and all levels of intellectual pursuits. The purpose of this thesis is to validate The Gaslight's form of entertainment in the American theatre structure.

Tony Terry began his theatre experience with a simple purpose, "presenting good family entertainment." He reached his goal with The Mighty Moose Melodrama, but he was unable to reach enough patrons. The Gaslight Theatre in Trail Dust Town gave him a base in familiar territory, his hometown, Tucson, Arizona. Terry's familiarity with Tucson allowed him to create that missing entertainment link. The early Gaslight

audiences were too surprised by the format to become participants in the show, however, they knew they wanted to come back.

The Gaslight's Victorian period tried to capture the essence of successful melodrama theatres in Colorado, and although The Gaslight's creative team (Bill Damron in particular) presented polished Victorian melodramas, there seemed to be a piece missing. Danny Griffith's arrival brought a more professional tone to The Gaslight, but the formula was not yet complete.

Tucsonans had never experienced melodrama theatre, so their reaction to the art form was different from Colorado audiences. For instance, they did not realize that they needed to listen to the dialogue in order to react at the appropriate place, and they were not sure when to laugh because of the stilted and unfamiliar language. The audiences began to entertain themselves rather than the actors. Terry and the actors knew this was not the kind of theatre experience in which they wanted to be involved. Michael Maines' arrival moved the focus away from the audience and back to the actors and directed The Gaslight towards a path which eventually led to success.

The Maines and Erickson scripts did not involve heightened language or complicated storylines, yet the scripts contained all the elements of a well-written play. The audience wanted to listen to the actors, and their responses

came at the appropriate times. The work of Tom Benson, Patti Gawne, Danny Griffith, and the core group of actors made the new musical comedy era a success. The company knew they were on a new adventure, and they happily engaged in the journey.

Tom Benson's influence on the musical comedy phase was in part due to Michael Maines' creative use of moving props and Terry's new fascination with special effects. Benson had the ingenuity to create property pieces, but it was his superb artistic sense which made The Gaslight sets a visual performance in themselves. Intricate detail, shadows, and forced perspectives made The Gaslight sets seem larger than the twenty foot wide proscenium which framed them. Benson appeared to delight in the challenge of creating sets which would fit The Gaslight's first two stages yet look as if they were in a much larger proscenium.

Patti Gawne arrived at the end of The Gaslight's first year and began to build the costume elements into an integral part of The Gaslight shows. Her costuming procedure included research, designs, revamping old costumes, and building new costumes. Her creative shopping and integration of old costumes proved to be quite valuable for the meager, early Gaslight years. She credits herself for imaginative costume design but maintains that a strong director, such as Michael Maines, provided her with specific ideas on which she could quickly build. Gawne became a part of the creative team during the early years; she shared their ideas and grew with

them as The Gaslight expanded.

The original acting troupe (1978-1979) shared a common educational background which made them a unit before they arrived at The Gaslight. They trained in the classics and the Comedy of Manners which is dependent on physical technique and comic timing. The University of Arizona Drama Department provided the perfect training ground for actors involved in a melodrama company. The department educated their students in a variety of performance techniques such as accents, impersonation, dance, singing, fencing, stage combat, dramatic acting, and slapstick comedy. The company began to build a core of stock characters from which they could pull. The actors enjoyed the creative license the theatre allowed them and, according to the author and others involved in the early Gaslight troupe, the mood at The Gaslight was one of camaraderie and pride in accomplishment.

When The Gaslight moved to the 7000 East Tanque Verde Road location, the shows took on a more polished look, partially because of a bigger budget and partially because Terry's theatre experience originated in set design, and he enjoyed the wide range of creative possibilities involved in the art form. Special effects, such as a full ship with mast for Treasure Island, furthered the plot and added visual entertainment. The special effects, though grander, had their origins in the plot lines. As the theatre grew, the emphasis on storyline would take a back seat to special effects.

Michael Maines moved to Los Angeles, California, in 1982; other directors replaced him, but the musical comedy style continued to dominate the shows, in part because the theatre continued to use Maines/Erickson scripts. Peter Van Slyke arrived at The Gaslight in 1982 and began directing and writing in 1983. He used his training to write intuitive spoofs of various art icons. His clever spoofs changed The Gaslight shows from musical comedies to comedy spoofs with music.

The writer recalls that Van Slyke believed serious melodrama to be a lesser art form (the dark period of drama). His opinion of melodrama made it possible for him to satirize the art form to the fullest extent. His satirical offerings played on two levels: a physical level which would reach children and young-hearted adults, and an intellectual level for those able to recognize the similarities to other art forms. The shows naturally progressed to the Carol Burnett format, partially because satire lent itself to ad-libbing and partially because Van Slyke enjoyed breaking through the "fourth wall" and directly contacting the audience. The audience enjoyed the informal nature of the shows as evidenced by the full houses 90% of the year.

The new format brought greater success, but the core acting troupe made the satires work. Not only did the actors sing, dance, impersonate, and do prat falls, but they had to learn how to improvise dialogue. Professional stand-up

comedians spend years developing audience repartee; the Gaslight actors had one year. Some had a natural talent for ad-libbing, but all of the company members learned to respond quickly when challenged by an audience member or another actor (trying to upstage them). The actors developed their own personas and every audience member had a favorite actor. The interaction between actor and audience at The Gaslight is a personal and unique activity which continues currently.

Danny Griffith's talent had more impact on The Gaslight than any other contributor, except, perhaps Tony Terry. Griffith's extensive knowledge of musical styles and his exceptional piano playing gave The Gaslight Theatre, as Terry said, "that professional edge." His intuitive underscoring and accompaniment inspired the actors and the audience to become fully involved in the performance. Griffith's olio research and direction created an after-show which was authentic and slick, and his preshow warm-up, which included (what seemed to be) every ragtime and World War I and World War II number written, entertained the audience and revealed the professional nature of the upcoming show. The audience began to anticipate Griffith's clear-cutting voice and "flying fingers" (a term created by an unknown reviewer); they knew his charismatic style would not disappoint them. It was common knowledge that a reviewer from Denver called Griffith "The King of the Melodrama Pianists"; although Griffith died on August 10, 1993, in the hearts of his loyal audience

members and friends, he still remains "The King of the Melodrama Pianists."

Tony Terry, the man with the golden touch, as the actors called him, declares that he is a day-by-day planner. Yet, he owns a five million dollar company. His businesses evolved out of need, but his ingenious mind and willpower made them happen. The writer recalls waiting to move into the second theatre; the actors had not been paid and were concerned that they would not be paid for two consecutive weeks. Terry made the move with a loan from his uncle, and funding remained tight. Terry met with hurdle after hurdle—building codes, fire marshals, and food and beverage problems (the actors were certain the theatre could not open for another month). Yet Terry defied the laws of nature and opened the theatre just one week later than his original opening date. From that point forward, the actors knew they would always have a home in which to perform.

Not only did Terry take on business challenges, but he controlled the artistic style and quality of The Gaslight Theatre. He met with the directors, came to rehearsals, and made changes if he did not like the product, and a great majority of the time, the alterations produced a better result. Terry had a pulse on mainstream America which directed his decisions.

The author recalls that Terry made an effort to come

backstage several times a night to greet the actors, compliment their efforts, and join in the backstage antics. As is the nature of any theatre, actor/producer conflicts did occur, and Terry was a strong manager, yet he had a fierce loyalty for his core troupe. He offered actors employment (no matter how often they left the fold), he gave them financial loans, and in 1985, he began to offer health insurance to season players. Terry even continued to pay Griffith's salary during his illness, he took care of his business complications, and he visited him daily at the hospital. Terry has described himself as "a simple guy," but the author contends that Terry's complex nature accounts for The Gaslight's financial and artistic success.

Currently, The Gaslight Theatre presents musical spoofs to full houses year round (Terry Interview). Nick Seivert directs and writes the shows, as well as performs in them. The core group includes Joe Cooper, Nick Seivert, Tim Gilbert, Armen Dirtadian, James Gooden, Donna Davis, Nancy Laviola (Moore), Cameron Martin, Glenda Young, Dave Sullivan, Arlene Toohey, JoDee Kaser, Tom Benson (scene designer), Gerard Kelty (stage manager), Dave Darland (light/sound designer), Rob Stevens (assistant stage manager), Patricia Gawne (costumer), Davina Hammond (assistant costumer), and Cindy Merritt (assistant costumer). The Gaslight team continues to present professional shows which are entertaining, clever, and comfortingly familiar. Chuck Graham from the Tucson Citizen

described a recent show in this fashion, "Popcorn on the high seas is now the order of the evening at Gaslight Theatre, presenting lots of singin' in the riggin' with 'Sinbad and the Secret of Scheherazade . . . or Allah is Fair in Love and War'" ("Sails").

Terry's objective, "To present good family entertainment," is currently practiced at The Gaslight Theatre. The author maintains that good family entertainment involves a multifaceted formula. The Gaslight presents shows which stimulate thought on two levels, a cognitive level and an emotional level. The Gaslight Theatre inspires television watchers to attend theatre and to perhaps become supporters of a still struggling art form.

Most importantly, The Gaslight offers a refuge from the chaotic world of the '90s. The writer recalls one woman who attended every opening night at The Gaslight Theatre. She was a single mother, raising two teenage children on the sole income of a minimum-wage secretary. After the show one evening, she took the author aside and confided, "My life is so stressful. I live from check to check, and some days I don't think I can make it. But I always save some money to come to the opening night of every Gaslight show, because it makes me and my kids laugh . . . I just want to say thanks."

The Gaslight provides an immeasurable contribution to the Tucson community and to the theatre community at large. Perhaps the core of its success can be found in the Victorian

melodramas. David Grimstead states in his study of 1890s melodrama that the reason melodrama gained popularity was because ". . . [i]ts appeal was great and understandable. It took the lives of common people seriously and paid much respect to their purity and wisdom" (489). Tony Terry states it more simply, "It's good family entertainment."

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A.
A History of
The Gaslight Theatre's Productions

A HISTORY OF THE GASLIGHT THEATRE'S PRODUCTIONS

WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

Gold Fever Directed by Howard Allen
 Skagway, Alaska - May 25, 1977 - Sept. 4, 1977
 Unknown Olio
 Playwright/Howard Allen

1978 SEASON

Gold Fever -or-
Danger at Bonanza Creek . . . Directed by Bill Damron
 Unknown Olio
 Playwright/Howard Allen

Orphan of the Storm -or-
A Foundling in the Forest . . Directed by Bill Damron
 Vaudeville Olio
 Playwright/Dion Boucicault

The Sally Kathleen Claim -or-
All that Glitters is Not Gold Directed by Bill Damron
 Banjo Olio
 Playwright/Lillian De La Torre

Flower of the South -or-
Nipped in the Bud Directed by Bill Damron
 Unknown Olio
 Playwright/Lillian De La Torre

The Fate of Frankenstein -or-
The Monster's Revenge Directed by Bill Damron
 Start/Finish Olio
 Playwright/Susan Stringer

My Partner -or-
Till Death Do Us Part Directed by Bill Damron
 20s Olio
 Playwright/Bartley Campbell

The Cricket on the Hearth Directed by Bill Damron
 Christmas Olio
 Playwright/James A. Hearne

1979 SEASON

- Billy the Kid Directed by Alex Christopolous
Freedom Olio
Playwright/Bartley Campbell
- The Razor's Edge Directed by Michael Maines
1930s Olio
Playwright/William Dibdin Pitt (adapted by Michael
Maines)
- The Vampire -or- He Loved in Vein Directed by Michael Maines
50s Olio
Playwright/Michael Maines
- Dirty Deal at the Lucky Lady . . Directed by Michael Maines
Barnyard Olio
Playwright/Michael Maines and Eric Erickson
- Under Two Flags Directed by Michael Maines
WWI Olio
Playwright/Louis de La Rameé
- Just A Little Bit Of Magic . . . Directed by Michael Maines
Depression Olio
Playwright/Michael Maines and Eric Erickson

1980 SEASON

- The Drunkard Directed by Michael Maines
Southern Olio
Playwright/William Smith (adapted by Michael Maines)
- Lady Audley's Secret Directed by Michael Maines
Gay 90s Olio
Playwright/
- Little Mary Sunshine Directed by Michael Maines
No Olio
Playwright/
- The Contender Directed by Michael Maines
20s 30s Olio
Playwright/Michael Maines and Eric Erickson
- Sally Kathleen Claim -or-
All that Glitters is Not Gold
. Directed by Michael Maines
Cowboy Olio
Playwright/Lillian De La Torre
- Orphan of the Storm Directed by Michael Maines
50s Olio
Playwright/Dion Boucicault
- A Christmas Carol Directed by Michael Maines
Winter Olio
Playwright/Michael Maines

1981 SEASON

- The Cowboy's Bride Directed by Howard Allen
Cowboy Olio
Playwright/Michael Maines
- Treasure Island Directed by Michael Maines
Unknown Olio
Playwright/Michael Maines
- Flower of the South -or-
Nipped in the Bud Directed by James Goodman
River Boat Olio
Playwright/Lillian De La Torre
- Shoot Out at Back Canyon City -or-
The Legend of Dogbite Hoover . Directed by James Gooden
Buffalo Bill Olio
Playwright/Michael Maines
- The Lost City Directed by James Gooden
South Seas Olio
Playwright/Michael Maines
- Danger in Alaska Directed by James Gooden
Gold Rush Olio
Playwright/Howard Allen
- Just A Little Bit Of Magic . . . Directed by Michael Maines
MGM Olio
Playwright/Michael Maines and Eric Erickson

1982 SEASON

- Doc Holiday Directed by Michael Maines
 Collegiate Olio
 Playwright/Michael Maines
- Sherlock Holmes and
 the Lost Rose of Egypt . . . Directed by Michael Maines
 Vaudeville Olio
 Playwright/Michael Maines
- The Razor's Edge Directed by Michael Maines
 Summertime Olio
 Playwright/William Dibdin Pitt (adapted by Michael
 Maines)
- Buzz Corey and
 the Red Planet of Doom . . . Directed by Michael Maines
 60s Olio
 Playwright/Michael Maines and Eric Erickson
- Brick Brack Private Eye Directed by Michael Maines
 Radio Show Olio
 Playwright/Michael Maines
- A Christmas Carol Directed by Michael Maines
 Broadway Olio
 Playwright/Michael Maines

1983 SEASON

- Dirty Deal at the Lucky Lady . . Directed by Michael Maines
Cowboy Olio
Playwright/Michael Maines and Eric Erickson
- Robin Hood Directed by Arnie Krauss
Vaudeville Olio
Playwright/Michael Maines
- Pancho Villa Rides Again -or-
No Arrest for the Wicked . . . Directed by Arnie Krauss
Medicine Show Olio
Playwright/Michael Maines
- The Pirate King Directed by Michael Maines
South Seas Olio
Playwright/Michael Maines
- The Vampire -or- He Loved in Vein . Directed by Arnie Krauss
Ed Sullivan Olio
Playwright/Michael Maines
- Angel on My Shoulder Directed by Arnie Krauss
Bing & Bob on the Road to the North Pole Olio
Playwright/Bobbie Joyce Smith

1984 SEASON

The Sword of Zorro -or-
From Z to Shining Z . . . Directed by Peter Van Slyke
 Cowboy Olio
 Playwright/Peter Van Slyke

Rex Stampede Singing Cowboy -or-
Swing Low Sweet Lariat Directed by James Blair
 Swing Era Olio
 Playwright/Peter Van Slyke

Arizona Smith and the Molten Mountain -or-
Lava Me Tender Directed by James Blair
 Ned Hack Amateur Hour Olio
 Playwright/Peter Van Slyke

The Buzz Corey Space Cadets vs.
The Crabmen Directed by Arnie Krauss
 Summertime Olio
 Playwright/Peter Van Slyke

Sherlock Holmes and
the Hound of the Baskervilles Directed by James Gooden
 College Olio
 Playwright/Peter Van Slyke

A Christmas Carol Directed by James Gooden
 Winter Olio
 Playwright/Peter Van Slyke

1985 SEASON

- Shoot Out at Black Canyon City -or-
The Legend of Dogbite Hoover . Directed by Arnie Krauss
 Saloon Olio
 Playwright/Michael Maines
- Calamity Jane Directed by Peter Van Slyke
 30s Olio
 Playwright/Peter Van Slyke
- Scooter Wells Boy Detective and
The Secret of Skull Cove . Directed by Peter Van Slyke
 Rock-n-Roll, Soda Shop Olio
 Playwright/Peter Van Slyke
- The Skeik Directed by Peter Van Slyke
 By The Sea Olio
 Playwright/Peter Van Slyke
- Frankie's Bride -or-
The Girl of My Screams! . Directed by Jane Merrifield
 and James Blair
 Dixieland Showboat Revue Olio
 Playwright/Peter Van Slyke
- Just A Little Bit Of Magic Directed by Dick Hanson
 U.S.O. Holiday Olio
 Playwright/Michael Maines and Eric Erickson

1986 SEASON

The Life and Times of Laredo Spur . Directed by James Blair
Lester Burns Vaudeville Olio
Playwright/Peter Van Slyke

Peril of the Dark River Directed by Peter Van Slyke
1956 Prom Night Olio
Playwright/Peter Van Slyke

Treasure Island Directed by Dick Hanson
Roy and Dale Celebrity Dude Ranch Olio
Playwright/Michael Maines

The Adventures of Mega Man . . . Directed by John Staniunas
Hollywood Surprise Olio
Playwright/Peter Van Slyke

A Christmas Carol Directed by John Staniunas
Merry Christmas Olio
Playwright/Michael Maines

1987 SEASON

- Daniel Boone and
the Foggy Mountain Feud . . Directed by John Staniunas
 1920s Speakeasy Olio
 Playwright/Peter Van Slyke
- The Lost City -or- Safari So Good
 Directed by Peter Van Slyke
 Little Anthony's Diner Olio
 Playwright/Peter Van Slyke
- Secret Agent Man Directed by John Staniunas
 South Seas Paradise Olio
 Playwright/Peter Van Slyke
- The Three Musketeers Directed by Peter Van Slyke
 Beach Blanket Bingo Olio
 Playwright/Peter Van Slyke
- Buffalo Bob's Big Holiday Round-Up Directed by Bob Burroughs
 Vaudeville Olio
 Playwright/Peter Van Slyke

1988 SEASON

Buzz Corey and
the Red Planet of Doom . . . Directed by Peter Van Slyke
 Wild West Olio
 Playwright/Michael Maines and Eric Erickson

Fighting G-Men -or-
Gangsters Away Directed by Peter Van Slyke
 Fabulous Olio
 Playwright/Michael Maines

The Sword of Zorro Directed by John Staniunas
 Western Olio
 Playwright/Peter Van Slyke

The Phantom of the Opera . . . Directed by Peter Van Slyke
 1930s Musical Revue Olio
 Playwright/Peter Van Slyke

Just A Little Bit Of Magic . . . Directed by Bob Burroughs
 50s/60s Christmas Olio
 Playwright/Michael Maines and Eric Erickson

1989 SEASON

Sherlock Holmes and
the Lost Rose of Egypt . . Directed by Peter Van Slyke
Wild West Olio
Playwright/Peter Van Slyke

The Contender -or-
Hope on the Ropes Directed by Peter Van Slyke
Vaudeville Olio
Playwright/Michael Maines and Eric Erickson

Gnatman vs. The Legion of Evil Directed by Peter Van Slyke
Ed Sullivan Show Olio
Playwright/Michael Maines

The Vampire -or- He Loved in Vein Directed by John Stanionas
Do Ho Show Olio
Playwright/Michael Maines (adapted by Peter Van Slyke)

A Christmas Carol Directed by Bob Burroughs
Olio
Playwright/Michael Maines

1990 SEASON

- Calamity Jane Directed by Nick Seivert
Grand Ole Opry Olio
Playwright/Peter Van Slyke
- The Secret of Skull Cove Directed by Nick Seivert
Going Hollywood Olio
Playwright/Nick Seivert
- Surfin' Safari Directed by Nick Seivert
Rock and Roll Olio
Playwright/Nick Seivert
- Robin Hood Directed by Nick Seivert
Slappy White's Happy Troupers Vaudeville Olio
Playwright/Michael Maines
- Angel on My Shoulder Directed by Nick Seivert
Bing and Bob Olio
Playwright/Bobbie Joyce Smith

1991 SEASON

- Wade O'Hurlihan, Singing Cowboy . . Directed by Nick Seivert
Western Olio
Playwright/Nick Seivert
- Sheena, Queen of the Jungle Directed by Nick Seivert
1940s Kay Kaiser Olio
Playwright/Nick Seivert
- The Sheik Directed by Nick Seivert
1960s Rock and Roll Diner Olio
Playwright/Peter Van Slyke
- I Was A Teenage Wolfman Directed by Nick Seivert
Vaudeville Olio
Playwright/Nick Seivert
- A Christmas Carol Directed by Nick Seivert
Snowbound for Christmas Olio
Playwright/Michael Maines

1992 SEASON

- Dirty Deal at the Lucky Lady . . . Directed by Nick Seivert
Country Hayride Olio
Playwright/Michael Maines and Eric Erickson
- Blackbeard the Pirate Directed by Nick Seivert
Hawaiian Vacation Olio
Playwright/Nick Seivert
- The Adventures of Hot Rod Lincoln . Directed by Nick Seivert
Gay Nineties Olio
Playwright/Nick Seivert
- The Three Musketeers Directed by Nick Seivert
American Bandstand Olio
Playwright/Peter Van Slyke
- Just A Little Bit Of Magic Directed by Nick Seivert
Christmas Jubilee Olio
Playwright/Michael Maines and Eric Erickson

1993 SEASON

- The Lone Stranger Directed by Nick Seivert
Las Vegas Olio
Playwright/Nick Seivert
- The Road to Tangier Directed by Nick Seivert
1940s salute to Armed Services Olio
Playwright/Nick Seivert
- The Buzz Corey Space Cadets vs.
The Crabmen from Planet X . . Directed by Nick Seivert
Summercamp Olio
Playwright/Peter Van Slyke
- Arizona Smith and
the Lost Temple of Time . . . Directed by Nick Seivert
Laugh-In Olio
Playwright/Michael Maines
- I'll Be Home For Christmas Directed by Nick Seivert
50s Prom Night Olio
Playwright/Nick Seivert

1994 SEASON

The Sword of Zorro! -or-

From Z to Shining Z! Directed by Nick Seivert
 Salute to Branson Olio
 Playwright/Peter Van Slyke

A Confederate Yankee! -or-

Oh, Susannah! Won't You Spy for Me?
 Directed by Nick Seivert
 Vaudeville Olio
 Playwright/Nick Seivert

Sebastian Reel, Super Sleuth! -or-

Waiter, There's a Spy in My Soup!
 Directed by Nick Seivert
 Flower Power Olio
 Playwright/Nick Seivert

Sinbad! Directed by Nick Seivert

Caribbean Olio
 Playwright/Nick Seivert and Dave Sullivan

A Christmas Carol Directed by Nick Seivert

Christmas Olio
 Playwright/Michael Maines and Eric Erickson

APPENDIX B.

Gaslight Theatre Promotional Pamphlet

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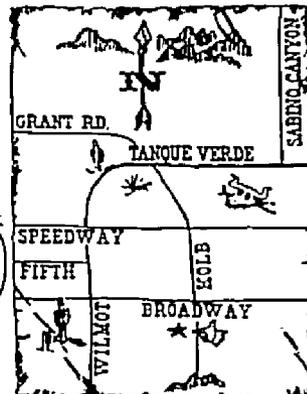
Join us for a trip back to the fabulous 50's! Great food, great service, great prices, great fun! Little Anthony's features such delicious entrees as burger baskets, sandwiches, pizza and great soda fountain desserts! We have a special Children's Menu, too! Great for birthday parties before the show! The diner is open Monday through Thursday from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m., Friday and Saturday from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m., and Sunday from Noon to 10 p.m. Now serving Breakfast! Saturday from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and on Sunday from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

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APPENDIX C.

Promotional Photo

of

The Razor's Edge

(1978)

Sweeney Todd (James Wiers)

Mistress Lovett (Jane Merrifield)



APPENDIX D.
Promotional Photo
of
Just A Little Bit Of Magic
(1988)
Roxy (Donna Davis)
Mr. Big (Tim Gilbert)
Nicholas (Janet Higgins)
Mr. Tubbs (James Gooden)
Eddie (Lee Gossage)
Ginger (Jane Merrifield)
Johnny (Peter Van Slyke)



— JUST A LITTLE BIT OF MAGIC —
1988

APPENDIX E.
Promotional Photo
of
Secret Agent Man
(1987)

Dr. Victor Vector (Stewart Gregory)

Venus Envy (Jane Merrifield)

Honey Dew (Donna Davis)

Koto (Nick Seivert)



APPENDIX F.
Program
for
Secret Agent Man
(1987)

GASLIGHT GAZETTE

VOL. XI, NO. 12

TUCSON, PIMA COUNTY, ARIZONA TERRITORY

JUNE-AUGUST 1987

THE GASLIGHT PLAYERS

Present in Strict Accordance with
Historical Propriety & Dignity

Secret Agent Man

Written by Peter Van Slyke
Directed and Choreographed by John Stanikunas
Musical Direction by Dan Steenken
Scene Design by Tom Benson
Costume Design by Patricia Gawne
Lighting Design by Robert Murray

CAST OF CHARACTERS (IN ORDER OF THEIR GLORIOUS APPEARANCE)

DR. VICTOR VECTOR, the head of C.R.I.M.E.	Mr. Stewart Gregory
KOTO, his manservant	Mr. Nick Seibert
MISS HONEY DO, an android	Miss Donna Davis
MISS VENUS ENVY, a model turned criminal	Ms. Jane Merrifield Gregory
POTEMKIN, a Russian general	Mr. Tim Gilbert
DIRECTOR QUILL, the head of the S.B.U.A.	Mr. Peter Van Slyke
MISS EMMA SINGLETON, an S.B.U. agent	Ms. Christine Quatraro
ALEX STARR, the Secret Agent Man	Mr. Arnen Detaction
UNDERSTUDIES	Miss Lynelle Glasgow Mr. Howard Belenken

TIME: 1960's

ACT I

Scene 1
The Underwater Headquarters of C.R.I.M.E.
"My World"

Scene 2
The Headquarters of S.B.U.A.
"Secret Agent Man"

Scene 3
The Lobby of a Swiss Ski Chalet
"Venus"

Scene 4
High Above the Alps

Scene 5
Another Part of the Alps
"Secret Agent Man" Reprise

ACT II

Scene 1
An Airplane in Flight
"Come Fly With Me"
"Nobody"

Scene 2
Somewhere in the Bermuda Triangle

Scene 3
The Underwater Headquarters of C.R.I.M.E.
"I'm Your Puppet"

Scene 4
Mount Rushmore, South Dakota

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Malts \$1.75	Ginger Ale
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Ice Cream Sodas \$1.75	WINES
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76¢ single scoop, \$1.00 double scoop. Hand dipped.	Chablis
Lots of flavors! Ask your waitress.	Riesling
REFRESHING WINE COOLERS \$1.75 Sangria	Burgundy

Corn \$1.25	Lewisham Dark \$1.75
Dudweiser \$1.25	Pilsener \$1.75
Red Lite \$1.25	Mombasa \$1.75
German \$2.00	Des Zygis \$1.75
Strak's \$1.60	Michelob \$1.60

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THE GASLIGHT STAFF

JOHN STANUNAS - (Director/Choreographer)
This is John's fourth show directing and choreographing for the Gaslight. He previously worked on *Daniel Boone*, *A Christmas Carol* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, John recently completed productions of *Joseph and The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* and *Follies* for the Theatre Concord in the San Francisco Bay area. He will be returning to Concord this summer and most of next year to work on productions of *Forum*, *My Fair Lady*, *Darmstadt*, *Doby* and *Chicago*. He holds a B.A. and M.F.A. from the U of A and was an assistant professor at the University of Florida for two years.

JAMES BLAIR - (Stage Manager)
Need we say more?

ROBERT MURRAY - (Technical Director)
Also known as our chief lightbulb changer and sawdust maker, Bob was born and raised at the Gaslight and maintains a small apartment underneath the stage. He has worked on construction of our sets for the past 43 shows and has also worked for the Arizona Theatre Company, the Arizona Opera Company and the Imperial Hotel's Melodrama Theatre in Cripple Creek, Colorado. Bob is responsible for the beautiful lighting of our shows and, by this time next year, he hopes to be at the top of the PGA tour.

TOM DENSON - (Scenic Designer)
Tom's beautiful sets have amazed and delighted our audiences since the very beginning of the Gaslight. He has designed sets for many other Tucson theatres, as well as the Imperial Hotel's Melodrama Theatre in Cripple Creek, Colorado. Tom received raves for his outrageous costumes for the U of A's spring production of *California* and will be returning there as a visiting lecturer this fall. The Gaslight just wouldn't be the same without the creative genius and hard work of Tom Denon, who, along with Tony Terry, designed and built the theatre at our present location.

PATRICIA GAWNE - (Costume Designer)
Pat has personally been responsible for keeping Hancock Fabrics in business for the past 7 years now. With one exception, she has designed the costumes for all the shows since August 1979. Pat is a graduate of Michigan State with a degree in Clothing and Textiles and a passion for costume history. When she's not busy designing costumes, you can find Pat working as a teller at First Interstate Bank.

GINA MARGOLIS - (Assistant Costumer/3rd Grade Teacher/Dining Room Manager/Concert Chorus Director/Walrus/OP/C Dingley/Gaslight Window Dresser) -
Fiddiculous... isn't it?



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TUCSON IS THE HOME OF UP WITH PEOPLE, THE INTERNATIONAL EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL PROGRAM SHOWING AROUND THE WORLD FOR THEIR DYNAMIC MUSICAL PERFORMANCES!

Up With People will bring to 1987-88 world tours here in Tucson for the throughout consecutive summer from July 18 through August 31. \$3000 more money than 70 countries will be in Tucson to witness and enjoy the most upcoming band, which will feature the all new show, "I'm 7 in the Mask."

Your family can join in on the excitement this summer by buying an Up With People ticket. (quantity a pair of the world without leaving home. Call or write for more details.)

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HOUSE RULES

1. Audience participation in the form of boos, hisses, and cheers at APPROPRIATE TIMES is welcome. Please refrain, however, from making individual comments or jeers to the players as it interrupts the flow of the play and therefore mars the theatrical experience we are bringing you.
2. Please refrain from throwing anything onstage or among other audience members. It is dangerous.

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