STRUGGLES AND TRIUMPHS:
THE CREATION AND PERFORMANCE OF
BARNUM'S AMERICAN MUSEUM

A Thesis
Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Master of Fine Arts in the
Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By
Michael Karp, B.F.A., B.F.A.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University
2000

Master's Examination Committee:
Assistant Professor Jeanine Thompson,
Adviser

Approved by

Dr. Tom Postlewait

Dr. Joy Reilly

Department of Theatre
ABSTRACT

_Barnum's American Museum_ was written in order to fulfill several self determined criteria. My purpose in enrolling in graduate studies at The Ohio State University, and, more importantly, in the New Works program of the Department of Theatre was to determine exactly how such a creation would be possible.

My primary objective in creating my own performance was to showcase the varied and unique skills I had accumulated over the course of my ever fluctuating theatrical career. I wanted to form a single theatrical presentation which included acting, clowning, magic, gag writing, sideshow arts, mime, juggling, puppetry, and improvisation. _Barnum's American Museum_ provided the opportunity to draw upon every resource, instructor, class, and production I had experienced over the last two decades spent in the theatrical world.

The second goal of _Barnum's American Museum_ was to create a piece of theatre which served as an excuse to entertain the public without messages, meanings, or questions. I have always sought out employment and theatrical expression which allowed room for joking and laughter over serious drama and educational value. I did not want to write a play in order to spark deep conversations and philosophical pondering amongst the audience members as they left the theatre. Instead I wanted people to walk away with was a smile and the memory of a fun time.
My final aim in writing *Barnum’s American Museum* was to create a piece of theatre which was flexible to change as my life and career progressed. I had to devise a play that would allow for seamless additions of new skills and deletions of others which grew old, out dated, or difficult to continue to perform.

The script, creation process, and performance of *Barnum’s American Museum* is the culmination of these agendas. I graduate from The Ohio State University with a theatrical work that reflects my entire life, provides a healthy dose of humor, and will continue to grow, modify, and transform, just as I hope my career does. On the basis of this work, I now carry the skills and knowledge to write, create, and perform additional theatrical experiences.
Barnum's American Museum is dedicated to:

My Mother Eileen, because she has endured my weirdness during my entire life, allowed me to follow the paths I have chosen, and been the smartest person I know.

And to the loving memory of my father, Terry Karp, 8/23/41 – 2/4/95. He always wanted me to go back to school and get my Master’s Degree.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Special Thanks to:

My beautiful, intelligent, and talented wife Robin for both putting up with my insanity and remaining creative herself. Jeanine Thompson — You brought me to OSU, introduced me to Robin, married us, and made all this possible. Can I ever thank you enough? Robert Post, for going out of your way to advise me on this project. Your notes and insight are invaluable. My stage manager John, for aiding in the set and everything else I needed. Roger Norfleet, your video work rocks...you deserve a raise!!! By the way ... did I ever tell you how much I hate you? Thank you Edna Mae Berkey for jumping in at the last minute to run the VCR. Vicky Christian and CATCO for aiding in promotion — I had a fantastic time serving as movement coach for The Anger in Ernest & Ernestine. Lesley Ferris for the opportunity to create and perform Barnum’s American Museum in this magical, under-used space. Julia Weiss for your sewing advice and help. Debbie McManus for donations of set pieces. Jessica “MsHotfeet” Wilt for her tap choreography-sorry it got cut! Mark Shanda, Matt Kari, Robert Kregy, Dennis Parker, Jim Knapp, Dan Gray, Mary Tarantino, and Rachel Barnes for all your assistance. My classmates — Carney, Carrie, Carole, Jessica and Robin. The long ride is almost over. Thank you Bridgette Davis for ironing when I did not want to. And to everyone on Nan’s lighting crew. Your work is definitely appreciated. And thank you to everyone that I left out. I am sure I forgot to list someone!
VITA

February 4, 1968 ................................................................. Born - Cincinnati, Ohio
1990 ................................................................. Bachelor of Fine Arts,
The Ohio State University
1990 ................................................................. Bachelor of Fine Arts,
Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey
Clown College
1997 - present ................................................................. Graduate Teaching and Research Associate,
The Ohio State University

Theatre

| The Singular Life of Albert Nobbs | George Mount Hall Theatre | The Ohio State University
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------
| May 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 2000 | Mount Hall Theatre 80 seat thrust style theatre | Dir. J. Briggs Cornier

| Barnum's American Museum (World Premiere) | original 2 man 10-in-1 sideshow Mount Hall Theatre 80 seat thrust style theatre | The Ohio State University
| Feb. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 (x5), 2000 | Mount Hall Theatre 80 seat thrust style theatre | Dir. Michael Karp
| Consultants: Robert Post and Jeannine Thompson |

| Anguis in America: Millennial Approaches | Rabbi Leader Chomelwitz, Henry, Martin Heller, Prior I | The Ohio State University
| May 15, 20, 21, 22 (x5), 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 1999 | Thurber Theatre 600 seat Continental house with a 35 foot proscenium | Dir. Woody King, Jr.

| Feral Music (World Premiere) | Hope Stadium II Theatre 250 seat thrust style theatre | The Ohio State University
| Feb. 17, 18, 19, 20 (x5), 24, 25, 26, 27 (x2), March 3, 4, 5, 6, 1999 | Stadium II Theatre 250 seat thrust style theatre | Dir. Leslie Ferris

| The Bacchae of Euripides | Slave Leader | The Ohio State University
<p>| Nov. 4, 5, 6, 8 (x2), 10, 12, 13, 14, 1999 | Stadium II Theatre 250 seat thrust style theatre | Dir. Ezekiel Kotoworola |</p>
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| The Man Who Came To Dinner  
May 20–30, 1993                                                        | Metz / Banjo        | Thuerber Theatre  
600 seat Continental house with  
a 35 foot proscenium | The Ohio State University  
Dir. Rex McGraw |
| The Most Excellent and Lamentable Tragedie of Romeo and Juliet  
Stadium II Theatre  
250 seat thrust style theatre | Romeo / Nurse       | The Ohio State University  
Dir. Robin Gordon and Michael Karp |
| The Cherry Orchard  
November 12–22, 1997                                                   | Firs               | Thuerber Theatre  
600 seat Continental house with  
a 35 foot proscenium | The Ohio State University  
Dir. Rex McGraw |
| Entertainment  
Tonight - Live  
April - October 1997  
4 - 5 performances daily                                                | Ed and Barney       | Paramount Theatre  
900 seat proscenium | Paramount's  
King's Island  
Dir. Troy Christian |
| Wings Of Wonder  
May - September 1993                                                   | Mike                | The Cincinnati Zoo  
900 seat outdoor amphitheater | Head Trainer - Gary Denzler  
Beechmont Players, Inc. |
| Noises Off  
600 seat proscenium house                                              | Frederick Fellows   | Madcap Puppet Theatre  
Connie/Abba-Dabba  
various | Madcap Puppet Theatre  
Dir. Mimi Richmond and Jerry Handorf |
| Go To Your Room  
January - May 1994  
tour of elementary and jr. high schools - OH, IN, IL, KY, MI, MO, PA, WV  
2 performances daily | Jack/Will O'Wisp  
various | Madcap Puppet Theatre  
Ivan | Madcap Puppet Theatre  
Dir. Mimi Richmond and Jerry Handorf |
| Spinnin' Yarns, Tellin' Tales  
May - December 1993  
tour of elementary and jr. high schools - OH, IN, IL, KY, MI, MO, PA, WV  
2 - 3 performances daily | Jamie/Aladdin  
various | Madcap Puppet Theatre  
Ivan | Madcap Puppet Theatre  
Dir. Mimi Richmond and Jerry Handorf |
| The Firebird  
January - May 1993  
tour of elementary and jr. high schools - OH, IN, IL, KY, MI, MO, PA, WV  
2 - 3 performances daily | Ivan | Madcap Puppet Theatre  
various | Madcap Puppet Theatre  
Dir. Mimi Richmond and Jerry Handorf |
| The Magical Travelin' Storyman  
May - December 1992  
tour of elementary and jr. high schools - OH, IN, IL, KY, MI, MO, PA, WV  
2 - 3 performances daily | Jamie/Aladdin  
various | Madcap Puppet Theatre  
Ivan | Madcap Puppet Theatre  
Dir. Mimi Richmond and Jerry Handorf |
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<td>Geniius</td>
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<td>Sir Benjamin Backbit</td>
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<td>The Caucasian Chalk Circle</td>
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**Film**

- **People Like Us**
  - Director: Doerger
  - Producer: Kennedy Productions Grp.
- **You Are There**
  - Director: Niles
  - Producer: Children's Defense Fund
- **OSU Business**
  - Director: Graduate Student
  - Producer: The Ohio State University
- **Spy Quest**
  - Director: Courier
  - Producer: Interactive VCE Game
- **Song Of The Ripper**
  - Director: Stoolie
  - Producer: The Ohio State University

**Directing**

- **Baraum's American Museum**
  - Asst. Director: The Ohio State University
- **Candid**
  - Asst. Director: CSU Tavern Theatre
- **The Long Christmas Dinner**
  - Asst. Director: State Thespian Conference
### Sound Design

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### Special Skills

- Puppetry: Hand, 2-Hand, Fullbody & Backpack
- Clowning: Mima, Slaps & Falls, Balloons, Diabolos, Juggling, Painter's Stilts, Magic
- Stage Combat: Rapier, Broadsword, Hand to Hand, Quarterstaff
- Bird Training: Parrots, Falcons, Crows, Emu, Ducks & others
- Side Show: Bed of Nails, Blockhead, Psychic
Acting

Voice

Movement

Clowning

Directing

Combat

SITI Residency @ OSU 1998, 1999

Master Classes

Education

Sue Ott Rowlands, Rex McGraw, Bruce Hermann, Susan Leigh, Joy Reilly, Marc Powers, Robert Moore

Phil Thompson, Izma Zelenka

Jeanine Thompson, Robert Post, Steve Smith, E. Reed Gilbert

Steve Smith, Glenn “Frosty” Little, Jeff Jenkins, Huel Spaight, Joel Heidtman, Jon Weiss, Randy Brake, Marge Talavera, Sue Ott Rowlands, Rex McGraw

Robert Behrens

Barney O’Harlow, J. Ed Araiza, Kelly Maurer

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

*Barnum's American Museum* is a two person, new-vaudevillian, ten-in-one sideshow based upon and inspired by the presentation style, outrageous publicity, bending of the truth, and pure entertainment value upon which Phineas Taylor Barnum created his vast fortune and mythical legend. Barnum purchased *The American Museum* in New York City in 1841, and retained its proprietor until it was destroyed by fire in 1868. Instead of creating a period piece, my intention was to see if the style and heart behind the type of show Barnum would have created could be successful more than a century after his death.

The script revolves around the colorful mix of characters and performers which Barnum discovered, displayed and profited greatly from as owner of the museum. Most of the characters in the script were adapted from Barnum's actual showcases, although these people never shared a stage in Barnum's time. The only things they had in common was Barnum himself and *The American Museum*. I saw *Barnum's American Museum* as an opportunity to discover what these same performers would be like today. After over one hundred years, they certainly would have picked up new tricks, new styles, and modern elements of spectacle. It also became apparent that the script needed to incorporate elements both textually and physically that reflected popular entertainment of the twentieth century.
One of the challenges of Barnum’s American Museum was the discovery, selection, and training of ten individual acts. I entered the process with a limited number of skills and realized quite early that my bag of tricks would not be sufficient to fill the project adequately. In addition, initial research into Barnum’s life indicated the need to incorporate various well-known performers. This, in turn, required the study of new and different skills than I had first imagined.

The original plan for the text was to reflect the history and performance of each act individually. However, Barnum’s life proved far too interesting to ignore. The text became a cut and paste collage of words written by Barnum himself, those written about Barnum and others dealing with the individual acts at hand. I tried to connect seemingly unrelated stories and anecdotes about Barnum’s life to the needs and presentation style of each persona appearing upon the stage.

1.1 BACKGROUND

It is difficult to pin down the exact moment of inspiration which eventually spawned Barnum’s American Museum. In the spring of 1996, approaching the end of a four-year B.F.A. actor training program, I made the decision to pursue Ringling Brother’s and Barnum & Bailey Clown College rather than attending a graduate school or pounding the pavement on one of the coasts. Perhaps, in the moment of time in which that decision was made, the wheels were somehow set in motion for a decade that rolled through an array of colorful forms of theatrical expression which have culminated with the creation and performance of Barnum’s American Museum.

Actually, years earlier when I was a high school thespian attending the annual festival in Muncie, Indiana I wandered into an afternoon workshop on clowning led by the Director of Ringling Brother’s and Barnum & Bailey Clown College, Steve Smith. I had never met someone so animatedly elastic who was at the same time more human and openly warm than any other person I had ever met, or have yet to meet to this day. I was sold.
Over the four years of actor training at Ohio State, I occasionally became distracted with an imagination run wild image of what a clown college could possibly entail. What type of classes would a clown encounter in a three-ring campus? Thoughts of dropping the B.F.A. degree entirely occurred almost as frequently as the bi-annual clown college auditions which coincide with the circus’ performance runs in Cleveland during late autumn and Cincinnati during the winter. Following the advice provided family and friends, I chose to finish what I had started, and earned my degree. However, the spring break preceding my final quarter luckily converged with auditions for the Clown College Class of 1990 in Cincinnati. By chance or mere coincidence, this particular audition was being led by none other than Steve Smith. A world of human cartoons was opened, and instantly I wanted nothing more than an opportunity to live there.

Clown College threw me headfirst into the world of physical comedy and sketch-writing. In addition to daily classes in acrobatics, juggling, mime, improvisation and gag writing, every Saturday night was a newly written and rehearsed full length clown show. I thrived under this tense schedule of physical stamina, non-stop creativity and performance energy. Surrounded by clowns and fun, my environment fueled my desire to make people laugh. After earning my second B.F.A. of the year, this one being a Bachelor of Fine Arts, I was lucky enough to hit the road for a year-long tour as a “First of May” Joey in the 121st Edition of Ringling Brother’s and Barnum & Bailey Circus.

In addition to spending an entire year with the Red Unit surrounded by some of the most physically talented, creative, and colorful performers and daredevils from all over the globe, I swallowed every opportunity to see and experience the world beyond Ohio. I was introduced to the magic and intimacy of a European single ring circus. In a yellow and white tent pitched in New York City’s Battery Park, Cirque du Soleil, featuring David Shiner’s Mr. Everyman clown, mesmerized every member of Clown Alley. Cirque combined the magic of the theatre so much better than we could hope
to accomplish in the cement colossus of Madison Square Gardens. Penn Gillette, a graduate of R.B.B.B Clown College's early classes, provided the entire Alley with front row tickets for *Penn & Teller's Refrigerator Tour*, then playing on Broadway. I left the theatre convinced I had seen real, honest to god magic on that stage. In San Diego, I followed the clowns to see some guy named Bill Irwin playing at the La Jolla Playhouse. I was awed by Irwin's physical, comical, and writing ability, and amazed by this place he created for himself that balanced somewhere between circus and theatre. I returned twice to see his *The Regard of Flight*. The rock-n-roll circus atmosphere of the first *Lollapalooza Tour* in Irvine, California gave me full throttle injection of modern day spectacle, hype and audience electricity.

At some point during that year, the idea of creating a solo piece was born in me. I realized there was a wide variety of entertainment forms that I had never explored in earning a traditional theatre Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from The Ohio State University. I also realized that I could entertain by using the skills I had learned as a clown. In addition, I gained the confidence to learn new sets of skills which stretched beyond traditional Stanislavski based training. My interest and appreciation for physical comedy, vaudeville, magic, juggling, sideshows, freaks, puppetry, animal acts, daredevils, and the art of spectacle was born. I began building a library of books and videos on circus, silent comedians, and physical comedy because the genre both fascinated me and fed into my dream of creating some sort of one-man vaudevillian performance.

I began to explore the myriad of questions I had concerning the piece which prevented me from creating it immediately. What type of acts should be in the piece? Do I have the physical skills necessary to perform this play? Where and how could I obtain those skills I did not possess? Should it be created in the traditional sense of vaudeville, follow the path of new vaudevillians, or be a creation unique and separate from either of those types of performance? Would there be an audience for this
type of work? Was it possible to perform such a diverse act as a solo piece? How do I tie all the elements of the piece together into a coherent work that would become a unified performance?

As I began searching for answers to these questions, I actively sought out theatrical employment which would answer some of the needs of this solo work. My first job after the circus was with Madcap Productions, a touring giant puppet theatre company. In the two years I spent with Madcap, I learned the skills of rod, hand, two-hand, full-body and backpack puppetry while performing in six different productions across twelve states. I thrived in the tightness of multi-character script delivered by two or three actors. The performances were high energy thrill rides. In addition to learning puppet manipulation, I also actively participated in puppet construction and joke writing. Performance became a laboratory in which to analyze each physical and verbal joke in order to maximize it’s full laugh potential. I gained a sense of reading different audiences and audience participants, how they would react to different parts of the show, and how to cater the performance to their needs. I also became adept at ad-libbing on stage. In an environment where your performance space changes twice daily and giant puppets compose most of the show, things do not always follow even the best laid plans.

I used much of the down time on the road to explore other skills and interests. I dabbled in the world of magic. I read books, watched magicians, and purchased tricks. I took my newfound knowledge of script writing and began to pen the on-stage banter of a magic act. Madcap provided me a new house every day to perfect the showmanship, character, and banter of my magician one trick at a time. I created a pre-show warm-up act to fill the time when the audience was taking their seats. Eventually, I had enough material to compile a full magic show which I still perform to this day.

Following Madcap, I explored various street performing and improvisational acting venues. I worked at the Cincinnati Zoo’s Festival of Lights and Halloween Spooktacular for several seasons performing many different characters while roaming the streets. I created many characters for
one-night performances while working for Accent on Cincinnati, a company that organizes all sorts of special events. I expanded my knowledge of believable characters while pushing them to the edge of reality through bizarre physical characteristics, mental prowess or the lack thereof, and witty repartee.

The Cincinnati Zoo gigs helped me land a role in *Wings of Wonder*, the zoo's exotic bird show. I was the first actor ever involved with their Summer animal acts. It was their belief that it would be easier to teach an actor how to train birds than it would be to teach a bird trainer how to act. Not only did I have the opportunity to learn to train birds and small mammals, but also was handed a script which I was given free reign to re-write. Keeping the emphasis on education, I added large doses of humor, both verbal and physical, to the show. I also introduced a fifteen minute audience warm-up act similar to the circus' 'come-in' and 'blow-off' which precede the show. That Summer, the *Wings of Wonder* show skyrocketed to the number two ranked bird show in the country.

I should also mention that it was during this time I became discouraged with the theatre and left it to pursue other, more profitable employment. I landed a position as manager for an advertising firm. I was not simply the manager, but also the sole employee in my region. My duties included selling the advertising space, designing the advertisement and marketing scheme, layout of the advertisement and publication of the printed product. At the time, I could not have thought how this type of work would tie into the creation of a one man show, or if I would even ever create that show. In retrospect, however, this knowledge of marketing and advertising would prove to be invaluable as the piece that pulled all the acts together into one definable work.

I have had the opportunity to see some wonderful performances and performers over the last decade, which, in turn, have helped feed the creation of this piece. *Cirque du Soleil* taught me ways that old art forms can be brought into the modern day, or even the future. Bill Irwin's *In Regard of Flight* and *Fool Moon* showed me that there were definitely ways of creating a theatre piece with
physical comedy as its basis. From The New Pickle Circus’ *Big Bang! And Other Rude Noises*, I took away the knowledge that a compilation of seemingly unrelated physical acts could be strung together on stage to convey a single story. Penn and Teller’s *Refrigerator Tour* and the *Recycled Tour* gave me a perspective on magic, and how to perform it, which I had not considered. Kiss, Lollapalooza, and Woodstock ‘94 showed me how effective spectacle and marketing can be in entertaining an audience.

This is the point I was at when I arrived at Ohio State to pursue a Master of Fine Arts degree in theatre in 1997. I had a loose idea of a show that would somehow encapsulate and tie my talents and skills into one definable piece. It would be vaudevillian in nature, but I had no idea how to create the show, what to put in the show, and how to unify the piece into one cohesive unit. The only element I had was an idea for the structure of the play, based upon the way a traditional side-show or freak-show was assembled. “The real name for the freak show is the Ten-in-One Show, and it’s called the Ten-in-One Show because you get ten acts under one tent for one admission price.”¹ I also had the idea that the show needed to be performed in a tent to have the true smell and feel of sawdust under your feet.

On a vacation to the west coast, I began reading about P.T. Barnum. Having toured with the circus, I was well aware of Barnum’s stake in the three-ring world. What I did not know was that Phineas Taylor Barnum, in his day, was the most masterful and ingenious purveyor and presenter of entertainment the world had ever seen. In his American Museum, once located in New York City, Barnum showcased his discoveries, dreams, schemes and performers who displayed a wide variety of talents. His oddities, curiosities, “humbugs,” hoaxes, entertainers and keen publicity attracted enormous audiences and fans worldwide, millions of dollars in revenues and a legendary status unrivaled in today’s world. Reflecting upon his meteoric rise in fame and fortune, one may wonder

¹ *SinCity: The Web Home of Penn & Teller*
http://www.sinCity.com/penn-n-teller/articles/fire-eating.html
whether P.T. Barnum was a genius of marketing strategy and a visionary of the type of show business
the world desired. Or could it be that P.T. Barnum was a man who was truly ahead of his time?

All at once the play came together. Barnum provided the thread I needed to tie my life's
education in one package. He also provided a much wider scope and vision for the show I had never
imagined. Barnum would have presented a play like this in his time, and he probably would have
presented it in his American Museum. All the skills I had learned, including advertising, plus all the
skills I wanted to learn could fit under the heading of Barnum. I could incorporate the historical side
of vaudeville, the circus, the side-show, and new-vaudeville under the title Barnum’s American
Museum in the form of “the shameless, self-aggrandizing spectacle”\(^2\) displayed by big budget
Hollywood, MTV and arena rock-a-roll. Barnum has influenced nearly every aspect of popular
entertainment that has emerged since his death over a century ago. The creation of this piece would
allow me to continue studying alternative forms of popular culture and theatre, learn a few new
skills, and discover the wonderfully rich and interesting life of a fascinating man.

1.2 CREATING A NEW WORK

Before entering the New Works track of graduate study in The Ohio State University's
Department of Theatre, I had never created an entire script on my own. While working with
Ringling Brother's and Barnum & Bailey Circus, I wrote many two-minute clown gags, but never a
full-length story. With both Madcap Productions and Wings of Wonder, I had collaborated with
writers, taking a finished story and doctoring the jokes and physical comedy. The task of creating a
piece of theatre from nothing was a daunting and untapped area which intrigued me. The New Works
program is the sole reason I chose to attend graduate school.

\(^2\) Beck, Aaron. "Two decades later, Kiss shtick still fun." Columbus Dispatch. 6 Dec. 1998: 3F.
Shortly after classes began, I found myself facing the challenges of creating short pieces of theatre within the confines of Jeanine Thompson’s movement courses. I was introduced to several methods of approaching the work revolving around ideas of staging and techniques such as Laban. I expanded this knowledge with groups like STT during their three-week master class workshop. I turned to books on the creation of solo work and vigorously took notes from artists’ lectures at The Wexner Center. The combination of knowledge and class assignments led to the creation of several short works, yet the thought of creating a full length, solo work still loomed ahead.

I realized that each artist, whether documented in a book or speaking in a master class, created his work in an individual way. There was no tried and true absolute method to create a new work. I decided to create Barnum’s American Museum in my own way, utilizing the knowledge passed on to me and ignoring any of the rules governing creation I had encountered.

1.3 METHODOLOGY

One-person shows generally fall into one of three categories. First, there are biographical shows that tell the audience about the life of a particular person; second, there are a growing number of autobiographical plays where performers discuss their own lives; and third, there are shows where a performer plays a variety of roles in a series of related or unrelated vignettes, sometimes seeking to dramatize a story or event.  

Taking these three methods only as three possibilities and not the only three, Barnum’s American Museum was created in a way that crossed all three lines. The fact that the play revolves around P.T. Barnum and his American Museum fills the first category. By bringing in skills from my theatrical career and stories such as the mime piece “Father’s Day,” I ventured into the second
category. The ten-in-one format of *Barnum’s American Museum*, often employed by the American sideshow, afforded the opportunity to create a new work within the guidelines of the third category.

I designed *Barnum’s American Museum* along the lines of a ten-in-one for several different reasons. First, it allowed me to write in much the same way I had done with both the circus and in classes at Ohio State. Many times in the past I had created short plays. I could write *Barnum’s American Museum* as a series of shorts, and figure out the transitions between them at a later date. Secondly, the ten-in-one was really the simplest way to both convey the world of P.T. Barnum and intersplice as many of my own acquired skills as possible. And finally, this format would allow me to grow with the piece long after graduation. I could continue to learn new skills throughout my career and insert them seamlessly into the script for years to come.
CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH

The research for *Barnum's American Museum* fell into three distinct categories, all related and dependent on one another. First, and most obviously, I acquired a vast amount of information on P.T. Barnum and his American Museum. That research led me to the second area, the individual performers and acts Barnum managed and displayed in the museum. With that knowledge, I then sought out information pertaining to the actual skills necessary to the performance of each act.

CHAPTER 2.1

P.T. BARNUM

'This is a trading world and men, women and children, who cannot live on gravity alone, need something to satisfy their gayer, lighter moods and hours, and he who ministers to this want is in a business established by the Author of our nature. If he worthily fulfills his mission and amuses without corrupting, he need never feel that he has lived in vain.' This is why Phineas T. Barnum became a showman.4

Phineas Taylor Barnum, the "entrepreneur, politician, journalist, impresario, museum owner and founder of *The Greatest Show on Earth*."5 was born July 5, 1810, in Bethel, Conn., the first child of Philo Barnum and his second wife, Irena Taylor. Before becoming a mythical showman of legend, he led a relatively normal and modest life as a shopkeeper and businessman. It was only by chance that P.T. Barnum entered the world of show business.

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5 The Barnum Museum
In 1835, Barnum was presented with the opportunity to witness a woman who claimed to be the 161-year-old nurse of General George Washington. The old, knotted woman displayed a vast array of personal knowledge about the first President of the United States and included paperwork authenticating her history. For a small sum and visions of higher profits, Barnum purchased Joice Heth, and set about promoting and displaying her. Audiences poured in, and so did their cash. Barnum soon realized he had a knack for promotion, press manipulation and show business.

For six years, he toured the country with various singers, dancers, jugglers and the like. By 1841, he had acquired enough wealth to purchase Scudder’s Museum in New York City. The five-story building which housed an interesting array of fossils, minerals, shells, and stuffed birds had fallen into relative obscurity following the death of its founder, John Scudder. Barnum cleverly beat out competitors for the property in a game of luck, timing, and skillful bargaining involving ‘Ivy Island’, a parcel of swampland he had inherited as a child. Barnum then embarked on turning it into the world’s most famous, most unusual, and most profitable museum of the time.

He scoured the globe for artifacts, animals, paintings, sculptures, oddities, memorabilia, and trinkets. Barnum would purchase and display anything if he thought someone might pay him to see it. He challenged puritanical law banning theatre by putting on performances in his Lecture Hall. It was here General Tom Thumb and the Siamese Twins Chang and Eng were first displayed to the world. “He exhibited medals, snuff-boxes, whale’s teeth, Seneca Indians, freaks (featuring a five-year-old girl who weighed two hundred and five pounds), copies of such old masters as Leonardo da Vinci, and a menagerie that included a calf with two heads and six legs, a rhinoceros, and an assortment of live tigers, rattlesnakes, and bears.” He became a master of audience manipulation and a shrewd advertiser. The crowds packed the halls of Barnum’s American Museum on a daily basis.

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Barnum quickly realized he could sell an audience on any fraud or hoax if he hyped it correctly because they wanted to believe. He billed half of a fish and half of a monkey, cleverly sewn together, as the 'Fiji Mermaid'. Patrons flocked to see the 'Egress', which was merely a well advertised set of stairs leading to the back exit of the building. Barnum delighted in fooling the public and proclaimed himself 'Humbug' and 'The Prince of Humbugs'. "There was his own type of playful humbug, developed in order to increase what he called his 'notoriety.' This consisted of 'putting on glittering appearance,' he wrote, 'by which to suddenly arrest public attention, and attract the public eye and ear.'" In no time, P.T. Barnum became a household name.

In addition to the museum, in 1850 Barnum introduced Jenny Lind, The Swedish Nightingale, to American audiences. The booking cost him $150,000, but in nine months time the tour turned a profit of over $700,000. He was instrumental in the expansion of the city of Bridgeport, Connecticut and served as its mayor in 1875. It was there he built one of the most unique and showy homes in the United States for $150,000. He called it Irannistan, a Turkish word for 'Oriental villa' or 'Eastern country place'. He wrote for his own weekly newspaper, The Herald of Freedom, and in 1855 published the first of many versions of his autobiography, Struggles and Triumphs of P.T. Barnum. In the first year 160,000 copies were sold.

The American Museum was destroyed by fire in both 1865 and 1868. Rather than rebuilding the museum, Barnum created P.T. Barnum's Grand Traveling Circus, Menagerie, Caravan and Circus in 1870. In its first year, the circus grossed over $400,000. Eventually, Barnum joined forces with his rival, James Bailey. The new Barnum and Bailey Circus, or 'The Greatest Show on Earth', "featured exotic animals, including one he advertised as 'the last mastodon on earth' (actually, Jumbo the elephant)."

\[\text{Biography}\]
P.T. Barnum introduced the world to the possibilities of popular entertainment. He understood that “everything depended on getting the people to think, and talk, and become curious and excited over and about the ‘rare spectacle’.” He set the standard for which advertising would play a part in the theatre. His style and influence can be seen in vaudeville, silent movies, radio, film, television, circus, as well as in almost all types of performance. He was a man truly ahead of his time, and a man for all time.

2.2 THE AMERICAN MUSEUM

In 1841, when P.T. Barnum had become a showman, he set out to find a permanent showplace. He purchased the five-story building which housed Scudder’s American Museum, located at the corner of Broadway and Ann Street. The building and its vast assortment of curiosities were valued at $50,000. A friend questioned him how he intended to complete such a transaction. “Brass, (Barnum replied) for silver and gold have I none.”

Using his five-acre ‘Ivy Island’ swamp as a security deposit, Barnum struck an ingenious financial deal which would allow him to make payments from the Museum’s own profits. Before closing, however, he almost lost out to Peale’s Museum Company “whose prime intention, Barnum soon discovered, was to combine the two museums, issue new stock, cut a plump melon of dividends, and leave the public with the rind.” Barnum used the power of the press to undermine the value of Peale’s stock, claiming that “such a speculation would be infinitely more ridiculous than Dickens’ ‘Grand United Metropolitan Hot Muffin and Crumpet-baking and Punctual Delivery Company.’” It

http://www.biography.com/cgi-bin/biomain.cgi
10 ibid, p. 22.
worked. On December 27, 1841, Barnum became proprietor of the museum. Five days later, on the first
day of January, 1842, the doors opened to the public under the name Barnum’s American Museum.

“Barnum’s American Museum. The Wonder of America! And, Unquestionably, from its
position, character, and popularity, the special place of family amusement for the United States.”

The transient attractions of the Museum were constantly diversified, and educated
dogs, industrious fleas, automatons, jugglers, ventriloquists, living statuary,
tableaus, gypsies, Albinos, fat boys, giants, dwarfs, rope-dancers, live ‘Yankees,
pantomime, instrumental music, singing and dancing in great variety, dioramas,
panoramas, models of Niagara, Dublin, Paris, and Jerusalem; Washington’s dioramas
of the Creation, the Deluge, Fairy Grotto, Storm at Sea; the first English Punch
and Judy in this country, Italian Pantocci, mechanical figures, fancy glass-
blowing, knitting machined and other triumphs in the mechanical arts; dissolving
views, American Indians, who enacted their warlike and religious ceremonies on
the stage - these among others were exceedingly successful. There was an automaton bird that flapped its wings, a robot, and a curious
mechanical knitting machine run by a dog. There were rows of stuffed animals,
contrasting with cages of living creatures that included an anaconda, an
orangutan, and an alligator. There was the gory arm of a pirate named Tom
Trouble. There was the waxwork depicting the pitfalls of intemperance, and then
the art gallery with paintings of famous Americans.

There was Benjamin Peleham, the great Paganini whistler, and Yan Zoo, the
Chinese juggler. There was J. Nataans, the serpent charmer, and Signor Vivaldi
with his moving mechanical figures. ... And there were the amazing ‘industrious
fleas,’ trained in Germany to submit to tiny harnesses and to pull vehicles ‘several
thousand times their weight.’ ... There were Mother Cary’s trained chickens, and
Mr. Cole’s ‘wonderful dog.’ ... Children and adults were fascinated by the bald-eagle
skin, and the set of medieval armor, and the plaster cast of Vendovi the cannibal
chief, and the huge, organlike musical instrument called the Melodean.

All told, Barnum had over 850,000 relics, curiosities, oddities, personalities and performers grace the
inside of his American Museum.

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13 Sketch of the Life, Personal Appearance, Character and Manners of Charles Stratton, The
p. 2.
15 Wallace, Irving. The Fabulous Showman: The Life and Times of P.T. Barnum. New York:
16 Kunhardt, Jr., Philip B., Kunhardt III, Philip B., & Kunhardt, Peter W. P.T. Barnum:
In the three years prior to Barnum’s purchase, the museum had grossed profits of $34,000. Under Barnum’s management and supervision, the next three years grossed $100,000. Barnum’s American Museum became a focal point of New York City and a major tourist attraction. It afforded him the opportunity to tour the world and to meet dignitaries and royalty. It provided an arena to stage his legendary hoaxes upon the public. In the museum, he had found a career which utilized his talents in business, advertising, and showmanship.

A group of Confederates attempted to burn down a dozen ‘Yankees’ landmarks in New York, including Barnum’s American Museum. When the plot failed, Barnum added a wax figure of the perpetrator to his collection. However, rumors soon surfaced of yet another plan to destroy the museum by fire. On July 13, 1865, fire broke out in three separate sections of the museum simultaneously. He rebuilt his museum later that year, only to have a second fire consume everything in 1868. The city lacked proper fire fighting equipment and had no municipal fire department. The overcrowded, dusty exhibits went up in flames like a funeral pyre. All at once, Barnum had lost “an assemblage of rarities which a half million dollars could not restore, and a quarter of a century could not collect.”

2.3 PROFESSOR ELOCUTOR AND MR. BONES

One of the most popular forms of theatre during the mid to late 1800’s was the minstrel show, in which black-faced whites caricatured the singing and dancing of Negro slaves. During its peak, minstrel shows ruled Broadway, headed by Christy’s Minstrels which ran 10 years with Stephen Foster writing most of the songs. The basic premise of the shows was divided into two parts. The first, done in semicircle, used the man in the center - The Interlocutor, in white face and formal attire

- making jokes with the two end men; Mr. Tambo (on tambourine) and Mr. Bones. This was
interpersed with ballads, comic songs and instrumental numbers, mostly played on the banjo and
violin. The second half, or Clio, was comprised of individual acts and concluded with a hoe-down. The
minstrel shows would prove to be a great influence on vaudeville, radio, TV and motion pictures of the
twentieth century.

2.4 ????? - THE MYSTIC

Baraum’s American Museum featured “a mysterious and beautiful gypsy girl fortune teller
with whom customers could consult privately for an additional fee” and “a professor of phrenology
who could read a customer’s future by feeling the bumps on his or her head.” Audiences to this day
remain amazed by feats of mind reading and telepathy in hopes that someone can truly divine the
future. The Psychic Friends Network and a score of other telephone mentalists advertise on television
and receive a hefty per-minute charge for their so-called abilities.

????? the Mystic became an early addition to the script. Not only could a mind reader
enthrall the audience, but the character also afforded the opportunity to stimulate audience
participation. Historically, there never was a mentalist named ?????. Research into actual fortune
tellers from the time period proved difficult. I found references to their appearance, but little
documentation of actual names. ???? remained in the script as I delved into the books in search of an
answer until my stage manager commented that ???? was a perfectly interesting and intriguing
name.

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18 Kunhardt, Jr., Philip B., Kunhardt III, Philip B., & Kunhardt, Peter W. *P.T. Barnum:
19 ibid p. 37.
performed two separate feats of mentalism, 'Change in Pocket #1' and 'Is The Person Alive or Dead?'. Neither involves actually reading of a mind, but fools the audience into thinking so through clever manipulation, misdirection and technical expertise.

'Change in Pocket #1'

The performer says he will make a prediction and writes down how many coins a designated audience member has in his pocket. After the volunteer counts his coins, he is asked to say the number aloud. The performer then shows him he has written the same number in his prediction. The performer pretends to write on an index card with a pencil. Once he hears how many coins the volunteer has in his pocket, he secretly writes the exact number with a thumb tip.\(^{20}\)

A thumb tip is a false thumb which fits over the performer's real thumb. It is made of plastic, rubber or aluminum, and it is used frequently by magicians to conceal or switch scarves, dollar bills or foam balls. For Change in Pocket #1, I inserted a pencil lead into the end of the thumb tip.

'Is The Person Alive or Dead?'

10 audience members are given a piece of paper on which they each write the name of a friend or a person unknown to the performer. One volunteer is chosen to write the name of a dead person, while others write the names of living people. The pieces of paper are dropped into a basket and mixed. By studying each name, the performer can reveal which one is the dead person. * It is easy to guess the name of the dead person because of the sharpness and lightness of the handwriting. Each person is given a soft lead point pencil, except for the one who writes the dead person's name; he gets the sharp point pencil.\(^{21}\)

'Is The Person Alive or Dead?' involves up to ten audience members, but for time's sake, that number was reduced to five in Barnum's American Museum. I used the hardest and the softest pencils available on the market, and the visible difference was remarkable. I have been told that some mentalists can feel the differing leads on the paper because the audience member with the hard pencil will have to press more firmly into the paper. Perhaps the paper I chose was too heavy because the success of the gag relied solely on eyesight.

\(^{21}\) ibid, pp. 24-25.
2.5 SIGNOR VIVALLA AND SIGNOR ANTONIO

After the death of Joice Heth and before purchasing The American Museum, Barnum discovered another act to fuel his newfound vocation as showman. He soon "engaged from the Albany Museum an Italian who called himself 'Signor Antonio', and who performed certain remarkable feats of balancing, stilts-walking, plate-spinning, etc." Barnum signed him to a year-long contract at a wage of $12.00 per week, and changed his name to 'Signor Vivalla' because it sounded more exotic.

"He spoke fluent English, but Barnum forbade him to do so and introduced the stunts himself -- a role he considered so important that it required italics in his autobiography: 'This was my first appearance on any stage.'"

While performing in Philadelphia, another juggler in the crowd, J.B. Roberts, heckled and hissed at each feat displayed by Signor Vivalla. Barnum issued a challenge of $1000.00 to anyone who could reproduce the entire act. The challenge was actually one of Barnum's early 'humbugs', because Roberts was in on the scheme. Barnum advertised the event heavily in the press, resulting in a packed house. The event was so successful, Roberts was contracted to challenge Vivalla for a month on the road.


In Barnum’s American Museum, the ‘contest’ was Signor Vivalla vs. Signor Antonio; one in
the same. Just as Barnum had done, I chose the name Antonio over Roberts for its foreign and exotic
sound. To make the event more visually stimulating, a scarf juggler was pitted against a diabolist.

The Webster’s New World Dictionary of the American Language defines a diabolo as: di*a*b*o*lo: (dé
ab’e lo”) n. [c. 1907; prob < Gr. dia- across + bolē, a throw < ballein, to throw, but associated with It.
diavolo, a devil] a toy consisting of a wooden spool which is whirled and tossed on a string tied to two
sticks held one in each hand. [see figure 2.1]
Figure 2.1: Diablo and handsticks
2.6 THE GREAT PROSCUITTO

The Great Proscuitto is the only 100% fictitious character in the ten-in-one sideshow of *Barnum’s American Museum*. A great many magicians graced the Moral Lecture Room of Barnum’s American Museum, but none with the reputation and recognition of a Houdini or Copperfield. Barnum, himself, occasionally filled in for performers as needed, including the role of magician. It seemed logical that the role of Barnum, although appearing only on the television in this production, should be the one true magician. The character chosen to appear on the stage as the magician was insignificant, serving only as the set-up for the trick.

Although many magicians from Barnum’s time were documented, very few of their actual tricks and secrets were revealed. Magicians have a code of secrecy to protect their art. I was forced to create my own illusion for Proscuitto. Due to a limited budget, the magic trick could not be dependent upon huge, elaborate props. In addition, in order to complete the illusion on the television screen the trick had to be simple. Finally, I wanted to incorporate audience participation into the gag, so the trick had to rely upon outside forces. Thus, a card trick was selected for Proscuitto.

The trick itself appeared to be a simple ‘Pick a card, any card’ type illusion. The chosen spectator was forced to select a three of clubs. “Forcing is a way to make a volunteer pick a particular object or card while he thinks he had chosen it freely.”24 I chose the three of clubs as a salute to the comical magicians Penn and Teller who almost always force that particular card. The audience member was then told to show the card to every person in the house, while Proscuitto shuffled the rest of the deck into a magic bag. The magic bag is a double sided velvet bag with a secret lever built into the handle to switch sides without notice.

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After showing the audience the card, the volunteer was directed to drop the card into the magic bag supposedly along with the other cards. The magic bag had been switched so that the three of clubs was placed into its own compartment with the rest of the deck in the other. Procuitto then attempted to reach into the bag to select the correct card. It was impossible to select the right card at this point because it was not included with the deck.

After many mistaken card selections leaving the stage littered with cards, Procuitto relied upon pre-set props to complete the gag. A gun was fired to reveal the card, only to fail. In a last chance attempt, Procuitto reached far into his pants to pull out his boxers emblazoned with the Ace of hearts. Angry and frustrated, Procuitto stormed off the stage without completing the illusion and leaving the audience wondering how such a horrid act could have made it into *Barnum's American Museum*. Then, through the wonder of video tape, the character of P.T. Barnum magically revealed the three of clubs upon the screen.

2.7 GENERAL TOM THUMB

Charles Sherwood Stratton, better known as Tom Thumb, was born January 4, 1838, in Bridgeport, Conn., to Sherwood Edward Stratton, and his wife, Cynthia. In 1842, P.T. Barnum discovered Charles, who measured 25 inches and weighed 15 pounds, only six pounds more than his birth weight. Amazed by the Lilliputians, Barnum secured the boy's services from his parents for a one-year contract at three dollars a week. Eventually, fame and fortune accompanied the duo, and they ended up spending nearly forty years working together. "With this midget, Phineas T. Barnum became a giant."\(^{25}\)

"In countenance he is very pleasing, and in bodily proportion perfectly symmetrical. His action is remarkably graceful, and his power of mimicry really astonishing. Nature has apparently concentrated in a little body large and abundant gifts."  

For publicity's sake, Barnum renamed Charles Stratton to the more striking Tom Thumb. It was a reference based upon the legend of Sir Tom Thumb, a minuscule knight of King Arthur's round table. The title of 'General' was added for no other reason than the sheer ridiculousness of such a diminutive military leader. Furthermore, Barnum claimed the boy was an import from England, hoping to once again play on the public's amazement with the exotic.

"Barnum touted the child as an 11-year-old European marvel and taught him to sing, dance, mime and act. During their dealings together, they traveled around the world and met various leaders and royalty, including President Abraham Lincoln and Britain's Queen Victoria and Prince Albert."  

The public adored the miniature man, and General Tom Thumb soon became a household name.

"Barnum once estimated that his various attractions had sold a grand total of $2,464,000 tickets, and that 20,400,000 of them, or nearly a quarter, were to see Tom Thumb."  

The challenge I faced in Barnum's American Museum was how with my six foot frame to include this twenty-five inch wonder. The solution was the construction of a tiny puppet. I built a small body with articulated arms controlled by metal rods. There was no head on the doll. Instead, I attached a tie within the collar which fastened around my own neck. My face adorned the top of the

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27 The Barnum Museum  

puppet, allowing me to talk, sing, and include facial expressions to the act. My apparently oversized cranium also provided a wonderful sight gag within the miniature stage constructed for the sole purpose of this act.

2.8 SHAKESPEAREAN BURLESQUE

In addition to the acts involving feats of skill or daring and those involving the humanly bizarre, Barnum’s Moral Lecture Room of The American Museum hosted many of the great actors of the time. By 1850, Barnum had assembled a permanent acting company “for a constantly shifting array of melodramas and comedies and farces that graced the museum stage.”

For this act, my intent was to include a classical monologue in demonstration of the training I had received within the confines of acting classes at The Ohio State University. Some of the roles I considered tackling were Richard III, Hamlet, and King Lear. My only question was whether to portray the roles using modern techniques or in the style of oration popular during Barnum’s era.

While running early segments of Barnum’s American Museum during a showing before my thesis committee, I was questioned on my decision to include such an act. It had never dawned on me to incorporate any other style of acting besides classical. It was pointed out that such a monologue, no matter how it was performed, was not consistent with the intent of the rest of the show. I was pointed in the direction of the Shakespearean burlesques which were popular in the mid 1800’s.

I read many old scripts which were comedic takes on the classics. However, many of them relied upon a sense of humor and jokes specific to the time period and made no sense in today’s world. I believe some were not so funny even then. At this point, Quinn Carlson had been cast as Mr. Bones,

so the act no longer needed to be confined to just a monologue. Now this act could be performed as a
two-person scene, which opened up a much wider array of possibilities both textually and visually.

Eventually, I decided a spoof of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* would lend itself to the most
comic possibilities. The balcony scene is perhaps one of the most widely recognized scenes
Shakespeare ever wrote. The scene also allowed for comedic bits to arise from a male actor playing
the part of Juliet. Quinn Carlson would play the part of Juliet, and I tackled the role of Romeo.

I eventually landed upon *Romeo and Juliet: As The Law Directs* by Maraca Doweling from
1837 and *Romeo and Juliet: Travesty* written by Richard Gurney in 1812. Both scripts seemed to have
enough humorous content which would still play as funny before a modern audience, but neither one
totally pleased me. In the end, I selected the lines and jokes I liked best from both scripts and created
my own version of a Shakespearean burlesque. I kept the title *Romeo and Juliet: Travesty* because I
felt that truly captured the essence of the scene best.

2.9 JENNY LIND - THE SWEDISH NIGHTINGALE

Jenny Lind, known to the world as 'The Swedish Nightingale', was, perhaps, the most
famous singer in all of Europe. Kings, Queens and Princes throughout the continent were
overwhelmed by the beauty of her voice. In Vienna, "she had earned twenty-five curtain calls and
spectators had tried to unharness her horses so that they might draw her carriage."  
Although she
was a household name on the other side of the Pacific, no one in America had ever heard of her or
heard her sing. Barnum, himself, was only introduced to her while touring London with General Tom
Thumb. He was instantly mesmerized and knew a Jenny Lind tour in the United States would prove
quite profitable.

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Barnum contracted The Swedish Nightingale to perform in the New World with a generous contract worth $150,000. He advertised her arrival more than any other single event in his career as a showman. Barnum topped off the publicity with a song writing contest, with a $200 prize going to the winning song which was to be sung by Jenny Lind herself. Before she ever set foot in New York City, the town was abuzz with news of her arrival. Thousands of eager fans greeted her as her ship pulled into dock in anticipation of seeing her, and perhaps hearing her sing.

"On September 11, 1850, she made her American début in the Castle Garden, New York and sang opera arias and duets (with her old friend Giovanni Belletti) and folk songs from her native country."\(^{31}\) The concert ended with the winning ode, ‘Greetings to America’ written by Bayard Taylor and composed by her own conductor, Julius Benedict. “In a short time, everything in America, due to P.T. Barnum, was Jenny Lind. Gloves, bonnets, riding hats, shawls, sofas, cigars were bearing her name.”\(^{32}\)

Jenny Lind performed under Barnum’s management for 95 concerts throughout America. Barnum’s $150,000 investment made a profit of over $700,000 in a single year. When she left Barnum, Jenny Lind felt she was famous enough to make it on her own. However, without Barnum’s shrewd marketing, she quickly faded into obscurity. She retired to England and rarely performed for personal gain. She felt she had earned all the money she would ever need, and instead chose to share her unique talent with the church choir.

\(^{32}\) Ibid
2.10 PHINEAS & TAYLOR - VENTRiloQUIsm

I knew from the beginning of the project that ventriloquism would have to be included because it was such a popular art form during Barnum’s time. In fact, Barnum “had a gift for mimicry, and liked to imitate many celebrities he knew. He enjoyed practicing ventriloquism, at which he was poor.”

I, myself, have played at ventriloquism in the past, but I wanted to avoid the typical man and dummy routine. I wanted to modernize the act and to somehow include P.T. Barnum.

The solution was to allow the character of Barnum to be the ventriloquist. Since Barnum only appeared on the television screen during the performance, that left no other option but for me to play the part of the dummy. Not only had I reversed the roles of live and inanimate, but also eliminated the actual puppet from the act. While video taping the segment which was to play alongside my ‘dummy,’ I purposely directed Damien Bowerman, the actor portraying Barnum, to move his lips. I wanted my character of Barnum to reflect the real life Barnum, who also was a poor ventriloquist.

The dialogue used for this segment was a combination of quips made by Barnum and jokes taken from minstrel shows of the late nineteenth century. I tried to pick the kind of jokes I refer to as ‘groaners,’ in that they never really get a full belly laugh, only a mild chuckle. I eventually settled upon a few ‘afterpieces,’ which were ad-libbed stalls to following the acts to give time to reset the stage. The tendency was “toward ridiculous plays upon words and phrases and the exaction of comedy from absurd misconstructions.” A prime example of this type of comedy is Abbott and Costello’s “Who’s on First?” routine.

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P.T. Barnum called Joe Pentland "one of the Wittiest, best, and most original of clowns."  

He toured with Barnum's *Grand Scientific and Musical Theater* with Signor Vivalla and a handful of other performers around 1837. Barnum hired Pentland from Joe Turner, "an Englishman who had given America its first full-top-canvas circus."  

Unlike the rest of Barnum's troupe, Pentland was already a considerably famous performer of the time. "Besides being a capital clown, (Pentland) was celebrated as a ventriloquist, comic singer, balancer, and legerdemain performer."

"He first exhibited several dexterous tricks with cups and balls - swallowed apparently a pound of tow - blow fire from his mouth, and then drew many yards of various-colored ribbons from the same receptacle. These were followed by wonderful tricks with iron rings, strings and keys; he apparently swallowed a watch, and pulled an unknown quantity of cabbages, turnips and onions from the bosom of a verdant young countryman who volunteered to 'assist' at the performances."

The original intent for the clown or mime portion of the show was to feature Dan Rice. Rice is credited with being America's first clown. At the time, clowns were not decked out in colorful wigs, baggy pants, and red noses. His popularity was so immense, he once ran for the Senate. "Even though he never became President his political legacy lives on in the image of 'Uncle Sam,' a caricature of his goateed, top hatted visage."  

I felt the 'I Want You!' poster child of the U.S. Army might prove to be a distraction to the work on the stage, so Joe Pentland became the clown of choice. The slide announcing the act, however, was an advertisement for Rice with the words, 'Coming Soon' in bold letters. This was the only slide in the show that did not actually reflect the performer on the stage.

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The performance of the skit "Father's Day" was originally written a year before Barnum's *American Museum* ever hit the stage. It was a piece developed in Jeanine Thompson's mime class based on real events in a day of my own father's life. Although it was composed of mime techniques such as isolation and manipulation, I always considered it closer to a clown gag than a pantomime. Perhaps I was swayed by the comedic content of the piece. I realized mimes are not clowns, but clowns use an awful lot of mime.

2.12 ODDITIES AND CURiosITIES

"Bearded ladies, two-headed boys, a sword swallower ... circus sideshows from the turn of the century have boasted unbelievable oddities of nature and death-defying acts." 40 One of the staples of The American Museum of Barnum's era were the human oddities. "'Representatives of the wonderful,' he called them. One after another they appeared: an 'Albino Lady' of striking beauty, a tattooed man named O'Connell, a hairy child named Caspar billed as 'The Wild Boy,' a giant and giantess couple, the Randalls, and a German midget named Raddo Schauf - 'all that is monstrous, scaley, strange and queer.'" 41

A major challenge in creating *Barnum's American Museum* was the inclusion of the human curiosities under contract to P.T. Barnum. Death defying feats such as sword swallowing, fire eating and laying on a bed of nails were skills that could be learned. Anyone with the intestinal fortitude and determination could attempt these acts. However, recreating physical deformities such as the 'Siamese Twins' Chang and Eng, 'Lobster Boy' or a 'Pickled Punk' were near impossibilities.

I devised a 6' x 3' metal frame covered with white spandex. With this screen, I was able to enact a spooky, otherworldly effect similar to those seen in modern horror movies of monsters stretching through seemingly solid walls. By pressing our faces in combination with masks, juggling balls, and other body parts, Quinn Carlson and I were able to create wonderfully ghastly images protruding through to the audience. It was lit with a single red lighting instrument from the front, bottom side, so as to cast the most distinct shadow. This method did not faithfully recreate the exact replicas of known human oddities, but it did convey the sense of “the freaks, the wonders, the curiosities, the strange, the weird, the odd, the bizarre, the macabre, the unusual.”

2.13 SCLITZY, THE WHAT-IS-IT?

“There are only 2 kinds of freaks, ladies and gentlemen. Those created by God, and those created by man.”42 In other words, some people are born with physical deformities which lead them into the world of sideshow. Others bill themselves as ‘working acts’: men and women who possess some skill or perform a bizarre act to make themselves part of the freak show. These acts often include a bed of nails, snake charmers, contortionists, blockheads, eating things one should not, and animal wrestling. I knew from the outset that to create a climax in Barnum’s American Museum, I would have to perfect such an act.

Blockheads are known for hammering nails and spikes up their nose, piercing themselves with large needles, stapling things to their bodies, and having darts thrown at them. Of these acts, the needles and the darts actually break the skin and cause pain. Hammering a nail into a nostril

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and the staple gun are safer, and take less guts. Hammering the nail in the nostril is simply a case of anatomy and practice, and the staple gun is nothing more than an illusion involving glue or wax.

"A human blockhead is someone who pounds something - usually a spike or a nail - into his face. He takes advantage of the public’s general lack of anatomical knowledge. In each nostril there are two nasal cavities - one that goes up and one that goes straight back into the head. Blockheads use the second one."44 "A blockhead often starts with a small nail and roots around in his nose, familiarizing himself with the terrain. Once he gets over the watery eyes and desire to sneeze, he works his way up to larger nails."45

The illusion of stapling a five dollar bill to one’s skull is achieved through a manipulation of the currency. The staple gun is empty. The side of the money toward the head or skin has a coating of wax on it, and the pressure of the staple gun adheres it to the skull. For this production, we removed the mechanisms within the staple gun to remove all impact and chance to break the skin. Instead of wax, I used a product called Skin-Bond. It is a common medical adhesive used for colostomy bags, and often used by clowns to secure their noses.

Lying on a bed of nails is simply a physics equation. A 150 lb. man lying upon a single nail exerts 150 lbs. on that one nail. A 150 lb. man lying upon 10 nails breaks down to 15 lbs. per nail. A 150 lb. man lying upon 100 nails equals 1.5 lbs. per nail. 200 nails = .75 lbs/nail. 300 nails = .5 lbs/nail. The actual bed of nails will be 24" x 20". If the nails are spaced 1" apart, the surface will be covered by 480 nails. The ratio from my actual body weight (140 lbs.) to 480 nails is 0.29167 lbs./nail. If the nails are spaced 1/2" inch apart, the surface is covered by 1920 nails, which results in 0.0729167 lbs./nail.

I decided that in order to make the act even more outstanding, I needed to physically portray some sort of deformed freak as well. My first thought was to play the act like a gend. a wild man from Borneo eating live chickens.” 66 While looking in the mirror at my cleanly shaved head, accented by a set of Billy Bob “Austin Powers” Teeth, I realized the perfect freak was staring me right in the face. The “What Is It?”.

Few freaks in Barnum’s menagerie were as memorable, “created more sensation or talk at the time, than that peculiarly strange non-descript, demi-humano simiade specimen, called ‘What Is It?’” 67 Often, a What Is It is referred to as a pinhead, due to the shape of their skull. They are profoundly retarded microcephalics. They are born with an abnormally small head, resulting in “a congenitally small brain.” 68 Schlitz became one of the most widely recognized pinheads after appearing in Tod Browning’s classic 1932 film Freaks. “Although dressed and exhibited as a female, Schlitz the “pinhead” was, in fact, a man. His last name was Metz.” 69

68 On-line Medical Dictionary.
http://www.graylab.ac.uk/cgi-bin/omd/microcephaly
CHAPTER 3

THE PRODUCTION CIRCUMSTANCES

This section refers to all aspects of Barnum's American Museum which led up to both the rehearsals and performances. The New Works program involves much more than simply writing a script. For this production, I also served as set designer, set builder, costume designer, costume builder, sound designer, director, and actor.

3.1 PLAYWRIGHT

The vast majority of the script for Barnum's American Museum was based upon miscellaneous texts derived from many sources. There is a great deal written about and by Barnum. His museum as well as the acts and performers are well documented. As I researched, I found that Barnum's own words served my needs far better than anything I could write or interpret on the subjects. "Desiring publicity more than profit, Barnum put the book (Struggles and Triumphs) in the public domain, offering its contents royalty free to any publishers who wished to reprint it."50 I took that statement to heart and put all my writing efforts into the life of it.

Approximately 10% of the text was written as original material specifically for Barnum's American Museum. Much of these lines were created out of necessity of transitions and audience interaction. A great deal of this part of the text was developed through improvisations during the

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rehearsal process. Many of these lines were taken from pop culture references throughout the twentieth century, with an emphasis on those from the modern-day era of television.

I purposely left portions of the script unwritten in order to allow for true interaction with the audience. I prefer the ‘flying without a net’ approach to improvising on the spot. Much of my work in the past, such as the roving Christmas characters of the Cincinnati Zoo’s Festival of Lights, has been totally reliant upon improvised banter. It is a feature that not only keeps the performer focused on the moment, but also serves to keep the performances fresh, exciting, and unpredictable.

David Shiner of Cirque du Soleil summed up the art of improvisation in front of an audience in response to the two-man clown show he developed with Bill Irwin entitled Fool Moon. “That’s the only way you can work for that excitement, that spontaneity, that tension—when it becomes exciting for everybody, myself included. Because often I don’t know what’s going to happen.”

3.2 PRODUCTION MEETINGS

There were three production meetings for Barnum’s American Museum held on October 18, 1999, November 30, 1999, and January 18, 2000. These meetings with the producer and the design faculty were used to assess the technical needs and production assistance for the show.

Edna Mae Berkey, stage manager for Robin Gordon’s iphilo, proved to be an invaluable resource in preparation and attendance of these meetings. She had stage managed last year’s New World’s production of Whu is Cae by Giles Davies. She had encountered all sorts of difficulties and adversity in completing that project, and now knew how to approach this juncture as smoothly as possible. Long before the actual meeting, she ran all sorts of possible red flags and questions my way in preparation for a possibly difficult process. She even staged several mock production meetings.

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where she played the devil’s advocate for any and all ideas concerning *Barnum’s American Museum* and *ipidez*. We adopted the term ‘Red Flags’ for any of the difficulties we could foresee encountering.

When the first meeting date arrived, Robin Gordon and I were relaxed and ready for any pitfalls we might encounter. Preparation and planning in advance paid off because the meetings went smoothly and effortlessly. We were both prepared for every question thrown our way, and in most cases had written documentation on hand to back up our responses. Both productions were carefully thought out on the technical side and included stage diagrams, set designs, proposed budgets, costume ideas and prop lists.

Before the meetings ever began, I was aware that the faculty had some concerns about the safety of *Barnum’s American Museum*. This could have resulted in turmoil had I been caught off guard by such concerns. I made the decision to alleviate any fears within the department and adjusted my plans for the production before ever approaching the meetings. I eliminated the one act involving fire, which freed up the rest of the production to appear more dangerous than it actually was. (see Chapter 3.2.1)

### 3.2.1 SAFETY CONCERNS

“Art is not about real danger. Art is about make believe, and anyone who allows real danger in art is seriously immoral.”

Initially, the Department of Theatre had some concerns about my personal safety, as well as the safety of the audience for *Barnum’s American Museum*. The original project proposal included a fire eating act as the finalé instead of the bed of nails and blockhead routines. “Fire eating is entertaining because performers appear to defy the laws of nature. They do not, but they push these

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laws close to the limit. Fire eating involves the extinguishing of a lighted torch in the mouth. This differs from fire breathing, in which the performer expels flammable liquid in the direction of a torch, thus creating a large ball of fire in the air. There are risks involved with fire eating, burns being the most obvious. However, with thorough knowledge of the art form, meticulous practice, and respect for the flame, one can perform this act with minimal risk.

However confident I was with the safety of the trick, the Department of Theatre aired on the side of caution. Fire codes in theaters can be extremely strict, and it would have taken quite a bit of time and effort to achieve this part of the performance. In order to calm any uneasiness on the part of the producer and technical faculty, I eliminated all fire from Barnum’s American Museum.

With fire out of the picture, the process of introducing the blockhead and bed of nails routines into the script became easier. These feats involve no acknowledgment from the fire marshal, and pose absolutely no threat to the audience. I expressed confidence in my expertise in performing these skills, and insured the faculty I would be in no danger of serious bodily harm.

To insure the inclusion of acts which appear dangerous, I voluntarily signed a waiver of responsibility releasing the Department of Theatre from any blame in the event of an accident or injury involving the rehearsal and performance of Barnum’s American Museum. (Chapter 3.2.2) This not only calmed the faculty, but provided an extra bit of pre-show publicity. Although none of the acts were actually dangerous, they now appeared to be so.

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3.2.2 WAIVER OF RESPONSIBILITY

I have read this agreement, waiver and release, and agree to and accept its terms.

This form may be photocopied.
I, the undersigned, know that Barnum's American Museum is a potentially hazardous activity and I perform it out of my own free will and choice. In choosing to perform Barnum's American Museum and any related events, I fully accept and assume all risks, whether before, during or after Barnum's American Museum and its related events. These include, without limitation, physical injury, mental injury, emotional distress, trauma, sickness, illness, death, and equipment failure. All risks are known and appreciated by me. I waive any and all specific notice of the existence of the risks. I shall assume and pay my own medical and emergency expenses in the event of injury, illness, or other incapacity regardless of whether I authorized such expenses. I realize that Barnum's American Museum requires physical conditioning and I represent that I am in sound medical condition capable of participating in the performance without risk to myself or others. I have no medical impediment which would endanger myself or others. I understand and agree that a situation may arise during Barnum's American Museum which may be beyond the control of the sponsors, promoters or organizers. I will be solely responsible for the condition and adequacy of my props, illusions and sideshow acts. I will perform safely within the limits of my own abilities and my equipment and in a manner so as not to endanger either myself or others. Knowing these facts and in consideration of my performance and/or participation in Barnum's American Museum and its related events, I for myself and anyone acting on my behalf, release, waive, discharge, covenant not to sue and agree to hold The Ohio State University and the Department of Theatre and affiliated entities; harmless from any and all claims, demands and actions of any and every kind I have, may have or may hereafter accrue against the released parties directly or indirectly arising out of or relating in any respect to my performing or participating in Barnum's American Museum and its related events. My waiver and release of all claims, demands, actions and liability shall include without limitation, any injury, damage or loss to my person or property which may be (a) caused by any act, or failure to act, by the above-identified persons and entities or (b) sustained by me before, during or after Barnum's American Museum and its related events. I agree to abide by all Barnum's American Museum rules and regulations. I further agree to indemnify and hold the parties released above harmless from any and all losses, damages, claims and expenses, including attorneys' fees, arising from or relating in any respect to my participation in Barnum's American Museum or its related events or my breach of this agreement.

Michael Karp

Date signed

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3.3 DIRECTOR.

I found it terribly difficult to direct myself and another actor while appearing on the stage almost 100% of the show. All directing I had done previous to Barnum's Americas Museum had followed conventional wisdom of the separation of the roles. Due to the circumstances of creating a piece of theatre involving myself and directed by myself, I had to approach the project in a way much differently than I had been trained.

A great deal of the blocking was done on paper before either myself or Quinn Carlson touched the stage. Entrances and exits were mapped out in advance on paper to expedite the process during the rehearsals. Stage pictures were also created beforehand using techniques learned in Sue Ott Rowland’s directing class involving focus and levels. I attempted to choreograph as much of the production as possible within the confines of my head long before I walked into the rehearsal room.

The rest of the blocking was created by myself, Quinn Carlson (Mr. Bones), and John Leahy (the stage manager). At the first rehearsal, I offered the production team the concept of sharing the responsibilities of creativity. Each one of us had the opportunity to give input on situations of staging based on our own previous experience, outside resources and gut instinct.

Personally, I relied heavily upon notes from Jeanine Thompson's movement classes concerning staging and the audience's interpretation of those movements (see figure 3.3). The diagram illustrates a wide variety of entrance points and movement patterns on the stage, as well as the intended or inferred significance of each. These principles were introduced to me the very first quarter of graduate school, and I have referred back to them often.
Another aid in the directing and staging process focused upon the Viewpoints training I encountered as part of the two SITI residencies which occurred in 1998 and 1999 at Ohio State.

*The Viewpoints* are a philosophy of movement translated into a technique for 1) training performers and 2) creating movement on stage.

*The Viewpoints* are the set of names given to certain basic principles of movement; the names constitute a language for talking about what happens or works on stage.

*The Viewpoints* are points of awareness that a performer or creator has while working.\(^\text{54}\)

There are nine viewpoints which are basically separated into two categories of time and space.

Viewpoints of time include tempo, duration, kinesthetic response, and repetition. Viewpoints relating to space involve shape, gesture, architecture, spatial relationship and topography or floor pattern.

These nine categories and their subcategories have proven to be an invaluable resource for the creation of vivid and exciting work upon the stage.

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A: Neutral
B: The Golden Square - one of the most powerful places
C: Neutral walking (crossing) pattern
D: Regression on audience
E: Aggression on audience
F: Entrance - distance/space to read, perceive, build
G: Entrance - more aggressive; jarring
H: Entrance - history; psychological train
I: Entrance - comedic
J: Offense
K: Defense
L: Singular intention - straight line
M: Psychological manipulation/deviation/content - curvilinear line
N: Strongest entrance - crosses all lines, exits near heart
O: Circle - time/journey/ritual
P: Spiral - coming to a culmination/end

Figure 3.1 - Staging Diagrams
3.3.1 DIRECTOR'S CONCEPT STATEMENT

Phineas Taylor Barnum, in his day, was the most masterful and ingenious purveyor and presenter of entertainment the world had ever seen. In his American Museum, once located in New York City, Barnum showcased his discoveries, dreams, schemes and performers who displayed a wide variety of talents from 1842 until the museum burned down in 1865. His oddities, curiosities, "humbugs", hoaxes, entertainers and keen publicity attracted enormous audiences and fans worldwide, millions of dollars in revenues and a legendary status unrivaled in today's world.

Similar to the ghost ships and ghost trains of legend that appear and vanish mysteriously in the harbors and train yards of the world, so too does Barnum's American Museum. Over one hundred years since Barnum's own death, the legendary performers and curiosities which once graced the Moral Lecture Room of his American Museum continue to exhibit themselves in random theatre spaces.

The set is a scaled-down proscenium arch, modeled after Barnum's own stage from which each act makes its entrances and exits. It is a welded steel frame which breaks down into seven small units that a single person can assemble in a short time. The framework is covered by a painted canvas which is representative of the type of stage once in the Moral Lecture Room. Built into each side of the proscenium arch are two television sets which are used for the appearances of P.T. Barnum as well as several of the acts. The set has a feel of antiquity and history from its design and function, but gains a modern edge from the introduction of video and contemporary color scheme.

The script draws from Barnum's own writings, as well as the numerous sources about the man and his attractions. Barnum's American Museum is in some respects a historical piece which has evolved throughout the years in its many manifestations. The show draws upon many of the legendary acts which Barnum had acquired throughout his life, and the performance is loosely
structured on the styles of Vaudeville and the ten-in-one sideshows which Barnum ultimately influenced. Each of the acts is based upon the actual performers hired by Barnum, yet each has updated their skills and acts to reflect the learning and advances of the last century.

For instance, Signor Vivalla, the famed Italian plate spinner and juggler now utilizes a black light and a diabolo in this millennium version of the tour. Barnum was the master of mass marketing and popular entertainment, so he now appears to the modern audience via the television screen. The other acts include: a mentalist or psychic, a magician who's trick is completed on the television, a tap dancer, a puppet rendition of General Tom Thumb, a classical actor, a singer, Barnum himself as a ventriloquist, a mime or clown routine, a shadow display of freaks and oddities, and a human pincushion and blockhead act.

Each of the acts is costumed simply. Each performer is delineated from one another through the change of hat, wig or jacket. This serves to both keep the costs down on clothing for ten acts, and gives the actor the opportunity to make rapid costume changes. The costumes themselves will be inspired from original photographs, drawings and accounts of the actual acts, but will have the flair of color and spectacle one might expect from a Las Vegas revue.

The lighting, too, takes a historical arc. The play begins lit simply. Amber and white are the main colors used to illuminate the acts. However, as the play progresses (depending on the individual act), the lights become more modern in their color and rock concert style of rapid changes. This evolution in the lighting will help serve the journey of the piece from introduction to climax.

The play opens with the mentalist addressing the audience while performing various tricks of mesmerism. While conducting a seance, the spirits of P.T. Barnum and his American Museum are swept into the space in a whirlwind of sound and light. From that moment on, the actor on stage channels or becomes each of these acts as the characters attempt to prove that their brand of entertainment is valuable, viable, accepted and needed a century since their inception.
Each of the acts quickly replaces one another under cover of a taped voice over introduction. The order of the acts is determined not so much by chronological or historical significance but by the necessity to keep the show interesting to the audience. The acts are spaced so that no two acts follow one another based upon technical criteria which make them similar. For instance, the tap number and the song are separated by a couple of acts because both involve music. Tom Thumb and the freaks are separated because both involve a form of puppetry.

3.1 STAGE MANAGEMENT

I have always admired John Leahy as a stage manager, and have regarded him as one of the most talented stage managers in the department. In past productions working with John, I have always enjoyed the process and performances when he was in charge. So, last year during Angels in America: Millennium Approaches, I considered it a great honor that John would request to stage manage my thesis show. I was certain I would be assigned either an inept stage manager who was doing the show because he/she had to, or that I would get someone completely incompatible with myself. In John I got gold. As much as he would like to dismiss it, he is a very talented stage manager.

When John was granted the assignment to work on Barnum’s American Museum, a huge weight was lifted off my shoulders. I knew instantly that I had someone I could count on to fill the stage managerial shoes admirably, someone who would go above and beyond the call of duty, someone who was interested in the work, and someone who I could relate to personally outside the professional arena.

I realized that our process would be different than traditional productions at Ohio State. At times, the lines were blurred, and John was no longer just a stage manager. Being the control freak that I am, I took some of those responsibilities upon myself. At the same time, John expanded his
responsibilities to go beyond his normal duties. He served as my outside eye, telling me what he felt
looked best or coolest. He served as an assistant set designer, letting me know what was and was not
possible. He worked in the scene shop to bring those designs to reality. John helped to build the freak
screen so that it could perform as I had envisioned and could withstand the stress we would put on it.
He single-handedly designed and built the bed of nails, a project I would love to see him act out and
submit to a theatre journal or magazine. He took extra time outside the rehearsals to talk over the
script, the cues, and the set. He also took extra time to accompany me to the store so that the
hardware and set pieces we chose would work best.

When others dropped the ball on their responsibilities, John jumped right in to get the job
done. For instance, I had requested of the sound GFA that my television be hooked up to the speakers
in the theatre so that the audience could hear it at the same levels as my other sound cues. After a
couple of months passed, and she still had not done it, I began to get irritated. Finally, when she
refused to do it because she was "too busy with Mississippi Stories", John climbed into the grid to run
the coaxial cable to the booth. He then went a step further and made sure the booth monitor was
working properly. Apparently it had been busted for some time and had eluded or had seemed of little
consequence to stage managers in the past.

John also worked creatively with myself and Quinx Carlson, the actor cast as Mr. Bones. I
let him know from day one that this show would be nothing like any other show he had ever stage
managed, in that he could yell 'hold' at any time if he had an idea he would like us to try. At times,
John would jump up and say, "Can I try something?" In that way, all three of us were part of the
creative process. We were a team. In the final version of the script, John not only appeared on stage
to say a line, but also wrote and performed dialogue which became instrumental to Schitzky's antics
with the bed of nails and blockhead routines.
Although I had always appreciated John as a stage manager in the past, I now have an even greater appreciation of him. I know him not only as a stage manager, but as a designer, a technical director, a master electrician, a confidant, a creative force and a friend. If I had to do it all over again, John Leahy would certainly be the first one I would call.

3.5 AUDITION / CASTING PROCESS

In order to cast an actor in the role of Mr. Bones, I had to attend the Department of Theatre's unified auditions for *The Hostage* and *Mississippi Stories* rather than holding one specifically for *Barnum's American Museum*. This involved two consecutive five hour evenings of two minute monologues by every student in the acting program.

At first, the auditions seemed to be a waste of time. I was informed that my production was of the lowest priority in the department, and therefore would receive the bottom of the barrel as far as talent was concerned. I was also strongly encouraged to cast a student in need of a 435 credit, thus limiting the selection process further. I entered the two evening event quite discouraged.

I took the auditions as an opportunity to cast the extensive list of recorded voice overs planned for the script. The recording phase would take only a few minutes of anyone’s time, so they would not conflict with any other casting options. I was able to select from the entire talent pool to fill the voice over spots. For the most part, I concentrated on unique and interesting vocal qualities which I felt would record clearly instead of seeking specific types of voices. To my surprise, I ended up with a list of names much larger than I could possibly use for a single production.

After the Department of Theatre had cast *The Hostage* and *Mississippi Stories*, I was amazed to learn four young men I had considered for the part of Mr. Bones were uncast and still available. Quinn Carlson, Donato Wilkinson, Mark Rhodes, and John Price were invited to the callback audition.
for Barnum's American Museum. In the callback, the actors were required to participate in three
different segments: an improvisation game, a cold reading from the script, and an interview.

The improvisation was the only interaction the four had as a group. The interview and cold
reading were done solo. I chose one of my favorite improvisational games/exercises, "Conducted
Experts," in order to loosen the actors up and to see how quickly they worked on their feet. The actors
are given suggestions of fields of expertise. Playing the conductor, I make a rolling motion with my
hands, and everyone starts their lecture at once. The conductor draws a horizontal line in air, cutting
everyone off, and then points to one person. He or she continues the lecture. Points from person to
person. The last word that one person says is the kick off word for what the next person says.
Nothing is carried over from speech to speech except the kick off words. If you are conducting, try not
to cut people off in the middle of a word. (Finish your word if you get cut.) Try to cut people in the
middle of a sentence. It's sometimes harder to start a new sentence than to finish one. Each time you
are selected, you are at a different place in your lecture. You will usually be able to plug these ideas
in. Sometimes you will get an unusual kick off word and you have to be ready for that. The conductor
points to each person 2-3 times, then rolls his hands in the air again, signaling everybody to talk at
once and finish their talks. Conductor makes one more horizontal line, points to each expert one at a
time. Each expert makes one short statement summarizing his or her talk.

The cold reading consisted of a monologue taken from Barnum's American Museum. It was
actually Juliet's monologue from Romeo and Juliet, Travesty, the Shakespearean burlesque I had
chosen to include in the performance.

He thinks that I don't see him; he's mistaken,

So I'm resolved to shun, and smoke his bacon.

Oh, Romeo! -- Romeo! perhaps you're not to blame,

But it's a very shocking, ugly name;
Go to your god-father, and refuse to wear it,
Or if you won't, be but my love, and swear it;
And I'll leave home, and go and live with you,
And be young Mistress Romeo Montague.
The name is not so bad -- what's in a name?
A Rose if Garlick call'd would smell the same.
I wish he was but here --

This monologue allowed me to see how the actors dealt with complex text, and whether they were able to commit to strong, comedic choices. It also gave me an opportunity to get a feel for how each actor might feel about playing a woman on stage.

3.5.1 Callback Questionnaire

1) Tell me a little about yourself....

2) What year are you?

3) What do you know about this project?

4) Are you interested in participating in this project?

5) Are you aware that by accepting this role, you may be called upon to work on iphelCa as well?

6) What experience have you had with puppets?

7) What experience have you had with video equipment?

8) What is your availability over Christmas break?
9) What is your schedule like next quarter?

10) Do you need a 405 credit?

11) If you are cast in the touring show, would you be able and/or want to commit to this show as well?

12) If cast, would you have a problem signing a non-disclosure agreement?

13) If cast, would you have a problem signing a release form?

14) Does the thought of me with a nail in my nose make you queasy?

15) Do you play a musical instrument?

16) It is possible that this show may be booked out after the February premiere. What is your availability and/or interest in participating in these performances in late winter quarter, spring quarter, and summer?

17) This show rehearses and performs on west campus. Is transportation a problem?
BARNUM'S AMERICAN MUSEUM

Cast List

The role of Mr. Bones will be played by:

Quinn Carlson

I will contact you about rehearsal information and get you the latest copy of the script.

Thanks so much to Mark, John and Donato. You guys were fantastic, and made it very difficult to choose. I wish I could have written a show that required casting all of you. I would, however, like to record each of you for voice-over spots in the show. I will be in touch.

Thanks again. Michael Karp

\[\text{Signature}\]
3.6 SET DESIGN

The final set design for Barnum's American Museum was an extremely scaled down version of the first two concepts. My original intent, and hope for the future, would be to perform the play in a one ring circus tent (Figure 3.1). The Department of Theatre required the production take place in the Mount Hall Studio Theatre, so that idea was scrapped early in the process. The next set of plans called for the construction of a portable proscenium arch with a working curtain (Figure 3.2). In the end, this proved to be both too costly and time consuming to build. In the end, the set was constructed from donated portable clothing racks and some shelving units, all disguised to appear and be used in different ways.

What finally appeared on the stage for Barnum's American Museum was a star spangled backdrop composed of five elements, each serving a specific purpose. A large steamer trunk sat upstage right. This was used as both a lectern for delivering lines and a prop depository for rapid exchanges on stage. Stage left of the trunk was what we referred to as the 'Freak Screen.' One of the clothing racks was fitted with a spandex sheath which was used in the Oddities and Curiosities act. For more information on the construction of that screen and its usage, see Chapter 2.12. Next in line was the shelving unit. The television monitor used for Barnum's several appearances was placed here. Because of the size, shape and durability, this unit also served as Juliet's balcony in the Shakespearean Burlesque act. The next unit was another clothing rack modified as a working miniature stage. It had a working curtain built into it that could be raised to reveal the puppet used for Tom Thumb. And finally, the last rack in the line was built similar to the 'Freak Screen,' only it was covered with white muslin instead of spandex. The only purpose for this piece of scenery was for rear projections of slides which introduced each of the ten acts.
The set was built to be portable and easy to set up. I planned the design so that the entire show could fit inside the cab of my pick-up truck, so I could tour *Barnum's American Museum* inexpensively. I also wanted the set to be small enough to allow a wider range of venues in which the show could be booked. By keeping the set simple, two cast members and a stage manager could load the show in or out in under an hour. If a tour does happen with *Barnum's American Museum*, I might consider rebuilding some of the pieces to insure long term durability. For the time, however, the design suits the production perfectly.
Figure 3.2: Original Set Design Plans
A one ring circus tent.
Barnum's American Museum
"We Serve To Please"

Figure 3.3: Original Set Design Plans
A 25' x 20' portable proscenium arch with a working curtain and two 21" TV's mounted on the sides.
3.7 SOUND DESIGN

Before making any decisions about the sound design for *Barnum’s American Museum*, I had only one concern: once the production was removed from the educational setting, how would current copyright laws affect the design? I had no intention of creating a sound-scape for the show that would cost me money every time it was performed.

I consulted D. West, the sound designer for the Saratoga International Theatre Institute, for advice. He let me know I basically had three options. First, I could pay a small royalty fee for every performance based upon the amount of material being used in the show. Second, I could petition the particular recording artists involved to make a one-time payment to cover the run of the production. Third, I could ignore the law and hope to not get caught. I concluded that the easiest way to get the sound I wanted was to use sources that were either in the public domain or originally created specifically for *Barnum’s American Museum*.

For the public domain music, I listened to hours upon hours of vinyl LP’s in the library, searching for just the right moods and energy to suit certain acts. I recorded a lot of wonderful music including operas, concertos, burlesque, and vaudeville tunes that never made it into the final cut. What I did find, much to my surprise, was an old recording of Jenny Lind songs which included “Greetings to America,” the song I had selected for her act. It was not really her singing, but it did allow me to hear what she might have sounded like.

I turned to some of my friends who are musicians for the rest of the songs. A couple of former band members from Ringling Brother’s and Barnum & Bailey Circus either allowed use of existing music or recorded tracks that appear exclusively in *Barnum’s American Museum*. The original tracks were used for *The Great Proscuitto* and *Schlitz*. I believe these were the most effective songs to appear in the production.
The rest of the show consisted of various sound effects and noises. I mixed these myself using Cool Edit, Sound Forge, and New Beat Trancemission. The original sources for these sounds were varied, but all remained copyright free. A great deal of the sounds were electronic compositions, such as might be used in a video game.

The cues were written into the script from the first draft onward. Beginning with the first rehearsal, sounds were included. Many of the cues were either actor driven or timed to specific events occurring on the stage. By including the sound effects and music early in the process, we were able to nail the timing down instinctually by opening night.

3.9 VIDEO DESIGN

In the production, the character of P.T. Barnum serves as a throughline, host, commentator, magician and ventriloquist. His image appears pre-recorded on a 21" color television center stage. Damien Bowerman was cast to portray the video taped role of Barnum, who chimes in several times throughout Barnum's American Museum.

Roger Norfleet, head of media at The Ohio Historical Society, contributed to the pre-production planning, taping, editing, computer graphics, sound mixing and sequencing of the video taped segments in Barnum's American Museum. Mr. Norfleet holds a degree in television and radio broadcasting from Northern Kentucky University, and has worked in the field of video production for the Cincinnati NBC affiliate and/or The Ohio Historical Society for almost a decade.

The video segments were shot in a single day with a digital camera. Damien was recorded wearing all black against a black background in order to achieve a floating head effect. I directed him to deliver his lines to three locations, so that he would appear to be speaking to all areas of the house in the finished product.
Post production of the video sequences were all done on computer. All residual images of Damier's body were digitally erased to complete the floating head effect. His head was then sequenced to float around the screen as its own entity. Each segment was then layered with video effects including moving backgrounds, colorful auras, extreme close-ups, and text. The final process involved syncing sound effects to the video. The entire process took a couple of weeks and over fifty hours of computer rendering.

3.9 COMMITTEE SHOWINGS

My thesis committee consisted of Assistant Professor Jeanine Thompson, Dr. Joy Reilly and Dr. Tom Postlewait. Each member contributed to the production of Barnum's American Museum in unique and irreplaceable ways. Jeanine Thompson served as an overall guide on the creation of the piece, a reassuring focuser, and a keen observer of the movement details. Joy Reilly had been my acting instructor from undergraduate school. She drew upon her knowledge of my strengths, weaknesses and capabilities as an actor. Both Jeanine and Joy have created new works on their own, so their input came from a place of first hand knowledge. Tom Postlewait added the critical aspect from the side of history and literature. He is, himself, a fan of P.T. Barnum and was able to point me in all sorts of directions to find the research necessary to create the piece.

The most valuable contribution made by my committee in the early stages of Barnum's American Museum dealt with the character of P.T. Barnum. I was asked if my intention with the performance was to claim my spot in history as the next Barnum. That was not the case with this show. I wanted to salute Barnum and recognize his influence upon all forms of popular entertainment which followed him. This one question helped shape the play more than any other. In evaluating the production, I decided to cast Damien Bowerman in the role of Barnum rather than myself to dispel any misconceptions by the audience.
Another point about the character of P.T. Barnum was then brought about in the next showing. Why was the character of Barnum even in the show? I had incorporated a couple of video segments utilizing the character, but only out of necessity. At this stage, Barnum was to only appear to introduce the show, to perform the magic trick, and to work the ventriloquist dummy. If the show was to be entitled *Barnum’s American Museum*, his character should have more of a presence. I wrote several more monologues for Barnum. This enabled the character to serve more as the ringmaster or narrator for the piece. By involving Barnum more often, I was also able to use the video segments as transitions between several of the acts.

My committee had concerns early in the process that the production of *Barnum’s American Museum* should be more outwardly educational in dealing with P.T. Barnum and his cast of performers. They wanted to know more details involving his life and career than I was willing to commit to. I feared the production would turn into a lecture about Barnum rather than a celebration in the flavor of Barnum.

I learned a valuable lesson from the *Wings of Wonder* bird show at the Cincinnati Zoo. That show’s intent was to educate about wildlife. However, we spiced it up with enough comedy that the audiences never realized they were learning because it was so fun. Parents let me know how much their children knew about the speed of a Lanner Falcon and the intelligence of the Eurasian Eagle Owl because of the comedic routines which revolved around the information. The year we infused comedy into the production, the show went from relative obscurity to the number two rated bird show in the country.
I also turned to advice given to Barnum himself by his friend Horace Greeley. "Audiences came to his museum chiefly to laugh, and that Barnum's production's were 'most successful when most ridiculous.'" My intent with Barnum's American Museum was similar to Barnum's philosophy, which earned him a fortune. The public was hungry for entertainment. If my audience learned a thing or two about Barnum and his cohorts based upon the content of the show, that would be fantastic, but the main intention and focus of the play was to entertain.

3.10 PRE-SHOW HYPE AND SECRECY

Secrecy must be preserved. The attractiveness of magic is due largely to the fact that there is an air of mystery around it. People cannot understand how it is done. The real secret of magic is in the presentation and misdirection. Once someone learns the secret working of the trick it ceases to become magic. ... Remind yourself that if the secret were known there would be no success.

Barnum's American Museum from the beginning contained several illusions which needed to remain secret in order to maintain the integrity and entertainment value of the production. The tricks performed within the show were kept as a need to know basis only. If audience members crossed the line from knowing what was being done to knowing how it was being done, major segments of the script would have to be cut or altered. In addition, the secrecy shrouding the production ultimately served to generate curiosity months before the initial curtain.

On the first day of classes in the fall, I arrived at Ohio State with a cleanly shaved head. My altered appearance was designed to generate interest in the project. By shaving months in advance, even before rehearsals had begun, I had created sort of a walking billboard for the show. When curious onlookers questioned my decision to go sans hair, I merely replied, "Come see Barnum's American Museum in February."

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Shortly thereafter, I began to leak information regarding the show itself. Classmates and faculty soon learned the show would include magic, mind reading, a bed of nails and hammering a nail into my nostril. Practically everyone wanted to know how I planned to achieve these feats, to which I replied, "Come see Barnum's American Museum in February."

As soon as production meetings began taking place, I needed to ensure the secrecy of the project. Taking a cue from David Copperfield, I required the signatures of all involved on a non-disclosure agreement (Chapter 3.12.1). All illusions were to be kept confidential until both this document was written and I had graduated. This, too, served to generate publicity for the production.

Finally, the fact that rehearsals were held in Mount Hall secured the mystery surrounding the production. Being far removed from the confines of Drake Union, I was able to work out specifics involving the illusions without fear of disruption by wandering eyes and ears. At this point, many people knew about Barnum's American Museum, and many had heard what to expect from the production. However, only a select few knew exactly what was happening and how we were going to achieve success.
CONFIDENTIALITY AND NONDISCLOSURE AGREEMENT

In order to protect certain administrative, financial, or trade secret information hereinafter called "Proprietary Information" which may be disclosed between Michael Karp (the Discloser) and The Ohio State University Department of Theatre (OSU), the Discloser and OSU agree that:

OSU acknowledges that they may be exposed to confidential and proprietary information of Michael Karp.

Confidential Information does not include (i) information already known by OSU, (ii) information in the public domain through no wrongful act of OSU, or (iii) information received by OSU from a third party who was free to disclose it.

OSU agrees not to use, commercialize, or disclose any Confidential Information to any person or entity except as the Discloser approves. The Discloser acknowledges that OSU may share some of the information with third parties for the purposes of engineering design and pricing but only if OSU has on file a signed nondisclosure agreement from the third party specifically regarding this project. OSU agrees to use at least the same degree of care in safeguarding the Confidential Information as they use in safeguarding their own confidential information.

The Discloser retains all rights to the material sent. OSU agrees to return all materials upon The Discloser’s request.

No copies will be made or retained of any written information or prototypes supplied without the permission of the Discloser.

At the conclusion of any discussions, or upon demand by the Discloser, all confidential information, including prototypes, written notes, photographs, sketches, models, memoranda or notes taken shall be returned to the Discloser.

This agreement covers only Proprietary Information which is disclosed between the dates October 19, 1999 and June 11, 2000.

The Discloser warrants that it has the right to make the disclosures of the Proprietary Information described under this agreement, and all such disclosures are at the sole discretion of the Discloser.

All additions or modifications to this agreement must be made in writing and must be signed by both parties. This agreement is made under and shall be construed to the laws of the State of Ohio.

AGREED AND ACCEPTED BY:
Date:___________

By_________________________ Title:_________________________

By_________________________ Title:_________________________
### 3.12 REHEARSAL SCHEDULE

#### January & February 2000

**BARNUM'S AMERICAN MUSEUM**

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<td>1:00 - 5:00 Video Shoot with Damen and Roger</td>
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<td>7:00 - 10:30 Review/Video Design</td>
<td>7:00 - 10:30 Review/Video Pages 13-16, 31-35 Rehearsal Photos</td>
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<td>Video 1st Draft Due</td>
<td>Set &amp; Costume Build</td>
<td>3:30 prod. meeting</td>
<td>7:00 - 10:30 Review Run-Thru Final Poster</td>
<td>8:45 WOSU Radio Interview</td>
<td>No reh. – See The Anger in Ernest and</td>
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<td>7:00 - 10:30 Review Run-Thru Display Case</td>
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<td>7:00 - 10:30 Dress Rehearsal</td>
<td>7:00 - 10:30 Final Dress</td>
<td>7:30 Opening Night!</td>
<td>8:00 Performance</td>
<td>8:00 Performance And Photo Call</td>
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<td>2:00 &amp; 8:00 Performances Strike</td>
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3.13 PRODUCTION SCHEDULE

Tuesday, February 1 - 7:30 pm - Opening Night.

Wednesday, February 2 - 8:00 pm

Thursday, February 3 - 8:00 pm - Actor Talkback immediately following performance.

Friday, February 4 - 8:00 pm - Photo call immediately following performance.

Saturday, February 5 - 2:00 pm

Saturday, February 5 - 8:00 pm - Set strike immediately following performance.
CHAPTER 4

THE REHEARSAL PROCESS

Although I personally worked on Barnum's American Museum for approximately a year, including research and development, script writing, and rehearsals, the team of Quinn Carlisle as Mr. Bones, John Leahy the stage manager, and myself physically staged the entire production in one month. Quinn and John worried that we had too large an undertaking to accomplish a polished work in that short a time span. I confidently assured them that I was not worried in the least, and that we had more than enough time to reach our goal. Working with a deadline often serves to focus and energize a production in order to take it to the next level.

4.1 ORGANIZATION

Until Barnum's American Museum reached the point of full runs throughs and preview performances, the show was rehearsed out of sequence, as if each of the acts were its own entity regardless of order within the show. The process covered three distinct stages over a four-month span from initial script to opening night.

In the beginning, I was rehearsing a two-man show alone in the studio. For the most part, I found this a hindrance to progress. I discovered that working without another person is not conducive to my needs. First of all, staging scenes written for two actors ends up becoming little more than a mind exercise when only half that duo is present. I could only imagine what may or may not happen during the acts until Mr. Bones became involved. Also, I am spontaneous during rehearsals and find
quite a bit through improvisation. When working alone, improvisation is more difficult. You cannot improvise off of and throw ideas at yourself without getting predictable results from yourself as your partner.

When Quinn Carlson and John Leahy arrived on the scene in January, the pace of creativity and accomplishment multiplied exponentially. Most of the work focused on the two person scenes since I had been working alone for so long. I also felt little need to waste valuable studio time rehearsing the solo acts which I could develop at other times of the day or at home. In fact, scenes such as Joe Pentland's 'Father's Day' pantomine were never seen by the cast and crew until days before opening.

It was not until the end of January that Barnum's American Museum hit the final phase of rehearsals. Only when we reached the point of completed set, prop, video, and costume design did we attempt to run the show as a whole instead of juggling the pieces. Transitions between the acts were so reliant upon the technical aspects of the show, it made little sense to worry about them until all the elements were in place.

I feel Barnum's American Museum benefited from this process. It would have been physically tiring and mentally exhausting to attempt full runs any earlier in the process. The delay in combining all the acts also provided us with a goal to look forward to achieving. Once the show was pieced together, there was an air of excitement and satisfaction which carried through all the performances. At that point, we all knew we had something special on our hands and couldn't wait to share it with the world.

4.2 COLLABORATION

At the first rehearsal, I informed Quinn Carlson and John Leahy that rehearsals for Barnum's American Museum would be different from any other experience they had ever had in the
theatre. Although I wrote, directed and starred in the show, I never considered it my show. I stressed the importance of teamwork as the only way we could achieve the level of success I expected.

On this project, the traditional boundaries of each person’s role were blurred. All three of us had the opportunity to give both performance and technical notes to one another. We took the time to understand each person’s responsibilities and aided one another in their completion as much as possible. At any point, we were all allowed to stop a rehearsal and input creative ideas and direction. There were even times John Leahy, the stage manager, contributed with acting and movement ideas of his own.

The goal with Barnum’s American Museum was not individual successes, but the overall success of the piece as a whole. The process was based upon the notion that making each other look good would invariably make us all look good. We all set out to make Barnum’s American Museum the best, most exciting, most unique, and funniest piece of theatre any audience had ever seen. The process worked tremendously well, and proved to be one of the most enjoyable rehearsal periods I have ever experienced.

4.3 MR. BONES

The role of Mr. Bones did not exist in the original plans for Barnum’s American Museum. The premise from the start was to create a solo performance of a ten-in-one sideshow. Adding a second cast member came after a few initial drafts of the script based on two different needs.

The first thought of casting an additional actor was due primarily to technical concerns. Early in the process I learned the New Works were being provided with only a single crew member designated to run the light board. This left no one backstage to move props, change costumes and run the video segments. By casting another person, an actor instead of a technician, I was able to work
around that regulation. At that time, the character had no name. His only purpose in was to serve
the production in a technical capacity backstage, with a few lines thrown in here and there.

Shortly after casting, the part grew into the character called Mr. Bones. The auditions and
callbacks provided more talent than I expected. I felt guilty wasting the time and skill of an actor
only to accommodate the technical aspects of the show. I decided to write in a few lines for the actor
in an attempt to make the role more worthwhile.

As the writing process continued, the role Mr. Bones played in it grew immensely. The
‘acting’ segment of the show had changed from a classical monologue to a Shakespeare burlesque
scene. The magic act called for some type of assistant. The juggling scene became reminiscent of the
duel between Signor Vivalla and Mr. Roberts. Mostly, I realized the show could be more visually
stimulating the more I used Mr. Bones. Stage pictures could be created more creatively when
expanded beyond the repetitive action of a single performer on the stage.

Ultimately, *Barnum’s American Museum* became a two-man, ten-in-one sideshow. When
the entire package was put together, the decision proved to be the best one. Mr. Bones created
opportunities to improvise during the rehearsals to further the script development, as well as
providing ideas, lines and staging alternatives to my way of thinking. The most important result of
the second character was not apparent until opening night grew closer. Mr. Bones created moments in
the show for me to rest, breathe and refocus. Without that character, I am uncertain if I would have
had the endurance to pull it off alone.

4.4 THE OUTSIDE EYE

As opening night rapidly approached, *Barnum’s American Museum* had grown to a point
where I had to begin to shed my multiple roles to focus solely upon the performance. Tasks involving
script development, set building, costume construction, sound mixing, and video editing had all been completed. The only responsibilities I needed to fulfill at this point were as actor and director.

In any theatrical situation, it is difficult to direct a show from the inside. For the most part, the show is guided by instinct and a sphere of awareness over the director's eye. With Barnum's American Museum, the difficulty of directing was magnified further by the pace and energy of the show coupled with the amount of time I actually spent on the stage. By the time we had entered full run-throughs of the script, my only option was to trust that all the decisions I had made were effective and appropriate.

It was at this point that we were lucky enough to receive notes and input from solo artist Robert Post. "Post combines elements of physical comedy, absurdist theatre, dialects, mime and a spontaneous dialogue with the audience to present a truly original form of entertainment that he calls 'illegitimate theatre'." Over the span of his career, Post has performed his solo shows in 36 States, Canada, Mexico, Japan, and on a nationally televised PBS broadcast.

His rapidly paced multi-character performances are constructed in a similar fashion to Barnum's American Museum. On two separate occasions, Mr. Post graciously volunteered to watch the show and provide critical input. His detailed and specific notes drawn from his years of experience of creating and performing his own work proved to be an indispensable asset to the production. With his encouragement and guidance, I had the opportunity to focus strictly on the performance aspects of the show. His input confirmed what elements of Barnum's American Museum were working and provided the means to make other parts even better and funnier. I am extremely thankful to have had the opportunity to collaborate with such a unique and talented performer.

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57 Penn State Lehigh Valley Cultural Events Calendar
http://www.lv.psu.edu/culteven.html
CHAPTER 5

PERFORMANCE NOTES

Over the course of the six performance run, *Barnum’s American Museum* continued to grow and improve in pace, comfort level, skill, comedic value, and command over the audience. A process which began with little perception of audience reaction culminated in a cheering, standing room only house. Not only did I learn a great deal about myself as a performer during this run, but I also discovered a thing or two about myself as a person.

5.1 FOLLOWING *iphelOa*

From the start, I was aware of the fact that *Barnum’s American Museum* would be sharing the bill with Robin Gordon’s new work, *iphelOa*. With that knowledge, we both considered the evening as a whole piece of theatre rather than two separate shows which happened to be performed on the same nights. Everything from set design, seating charts, program copy and advertisement were planned in conjunction with one another’s creation in mind.

My only concern dealt with how the two radically different pieces would conform thematically as one unit. Whereas *Barnum’s American Museum* was a spectacle laden, comedy laced form of popular entertainment, *iphelOa* emerged as a darker, minimalist reflection on the issues of teenage angst, regret, and suicide. It was decided very early that *iphelOa* would be performed first on the bill. We both felt audiences would respond better to *iphelOa* if it did not follow the mania of *Barnum’s American Museum*.
I feared that decision might adversely affect my piece. I was not sure if the audience would be prepared or willing to laugh at my show following a possibly depressing topic of performance. I thought, perhaps, it would take the audience more time than was allotted at intermission to make the adjustment from one piece to the other. I was concerned the early acts of *Barnum's American Museum* would get little reaction and serve as a warm up for the rest of the show.

In the end, I had no reason to worry. Although each piece, *iPhelOs* and *Barnum's American Museum*, occupied opposite ends of the spectrum thematically and visually, they joined together to form a singular, cohesive evening of entertainment. There was never a problem closing the performance after *iPhelOs*. Audiences never entered *Barnum's American Museum* with the depression I feared, and, instead, responded with an unexpected level of intensity, focus, and enthusiasm from the show's opening moments onward. After opening night, I was confident we had made the proper choice concerning performance order and never gave the matter another thought.

5.2 ENDURANCE

I have always thrived in situations where everything is moving at light speed, and I am responsible for multiple tasks. Ringling Brother's, Madcap Puppets, and the zoo's *Wing's of Wonder* show all worked in this manner. I have never had a problem keeping up with such a pace until *Barnum's American Museum*.

For this production, I spent weeks working extremely long hours attempting to fulfill all the roles I had assigned myself. I worked late into the night sewing costumes, mixing sound effects, rewriting the script, building set pieces, learning lines, constructing props and puppets, and planning the staging. I survived on a diet of adrenaline and coffee in place of sleep and regular meals. This might have worked when I was twenty, but ten years later it caught up with me.
During one of the final rehearsal runs through's, I fell ill. The show was almost over, and I thought I could make it to the end. In the middle of Joe Pentland's "Father's Day" pantomime, I had to excuse myself from the stage and vomit. I was terrified. At that moment I felt as though I had put too much on my plate and would never accomplish what I had set out to do. All my hard work had culminated in a performance I was not able to complete.

As a result, several changes were made, both in the production itself and in my life to assure I could fulfill the motto: "The show must go on!" Mostly, I had to allow myself to slow down. The hard part of creating the show was done. All I had to do now was enjoy the ride. I realized that I was extremely dehydrated, which was not helping the situation. For the rest of the run, I stopped all intake of caffeine and increased the amount of water I was drinking. I found places in the script which allowed me to stop for a moment backstage and breathe. I also found the time to fully change costumes, so I was never wearing several layers at a time and overheating. Edna Mae Berkey, the stage manager for iphe102, volunteered to run the video equipment, freeing Quinn Carlson and myself from that duty.

All the adjustments helped tremendously. I had more energy during the performances and had the time to enjoy what I was doing. The pace of the show actually sped up a couple of minutes, even though it seemed to run at a slower, more calm pace. Most of all, I learned a valuable lesson. Rest, a healthy diet, and proper hydration are essential. Once those elements were in place, I had no problems the rest of the run. Even on the final day, when we performed a matinee and that evening, I could have pulled off a third show with little strain on my health.

5.3 AUDIENCE PARTICIPANTS

I wrote three opportunities for audience participation in Barnum's American Museum. The first two revolved around ????/ - The Mystic and his ability to read minds. Six people were selected
from the audience for involvement, although they never left their seats. The third instance of participation actually brought an audience member on stage to assist The Great Prosuito in a magic trick.

At the end of *prosuito*, I was stationed in the grid to facilitate the scenery change over during the intermission. From that vantage point, I was able to assess the audience and make selections for the mentalism act. I based my ‘volunteers’ upon their involvement and interest in the performance of *prosuito*. I looked for people who were actively engaged in the show. I also gauged seat locations in order to misdirect focus for one gag and speed up the other.

‘Change in Pocket #1’ usually went off without a hitch. I always chose a man for this part of the act. Men more often wear pants with pockets and are more apt to have coins in them. The selection of this participant was as far away from the steamer trunk as possible. This allowed me to shift the audience focus to the highest degree, thus concealing the secret of the illusion. Luckily, I never selected a person who had either no money or too many coins.

‘Is The Person Alive or Dead?’ proved to be more of a challenge. This illusion required five participants at the same time. In order to keep the pace of the show intact, I had to select a group of people in the same row. This meant I never got to select the exact people I wanted, but rather had to settle for the best possibility. Often, the participants misunderstood the commands and wrote names of people obvious to guess. The very first night I performed this act, one of the responses written on the paper was William Shakespeare. It does not take a psychic to figure out who the dead one in the bunch is. The other problem was performing for audiences filled with family and friends. Occasionally the participants included a last name which was the same as their own. This eliminated any anonymity between the five participants.

The guest chosen for Prosuito’s magic act was selected at random by a ticket drawn out of a hat. This was written into the script in a reflection of Barnum’s penchant for lotteries. It also
provided the challenge of never knowing what to expect from the participant. For the most part, this act went off smoothly. The only problem encountered was due to performing before a house full of actors. One thing I have learned is to never select a performer to come join you on stage. All too often they attempt to steal the spotlight and ruin the act. Only once did this happen to Procuitto. However, due to his vulgar and crude behavior, it was easy enough to humiliate the participant into submission.

5.4 TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES

The script for Barnum’s American Museum was written to rely heavily on technology. The show contains numerous sound cues which are often actor driven and must occur with split second timing. Lighting effects play an enormous role on the ability to perform several scenes. A television monitor provides video segments necessary for the completion of some acts and serves as useful transitions between others. Slides are projected announcing the titles of each act so that introductions are not a necessary part of the text. Surprisingly, with so much technological involvement, there were very few mishaps which resulted from faulty equipment.

On the final preview performance, the slide projector failed. The lamp had burnt out. Unfortunately, we were unaware of the problem until approximately five minutes before the house opened, and we were not equipped with a spare. We had to run the performance without the use of the slide, thus eliminating any references to the names of the acts. Luckily, this had little to no impact on how the show was performed, and no act relied upon the projector for its completion.

The other problems were minor, and can be dealt with for future productions of Barnum’s American Museum. The speakers in Studio Theatre are not of the best quality and are positioned in an odd configuration within the space. For the two songs that I had to sing, it was often difficult to hear the music accompanying me. The video segments contained a ten second leader used to cue the tapes.
Since we were not using state of the art video playback systems, these leaders proved more annoying than helpful. It was nearly impossible to cue the video tapes to the exact spot night after night. Eliminating the leader and beginning the tapes in blackout would correct this problem.

5.5 PERFORMING ON MY BIRTHDAY / ANNIVERSARY OF MY FATHER’S DEATH

February 4, 1996, my father passed away of a sudden heart attack. It was my birthday. Ever since that day, I have had difficulty celebrating the joy of my birth. Family and friends respect my decision to honor the memory of my father. They know not to buy cakes and presents. It was my deepest desire that this project would be performed at any time during the year with the exception of the week containing my birthday. However, as luck would have it, the department scheduled the New Works during the one week I had requested off. I had no choice but to perform.

My father's dying wish was for me to attend graduate school and earn a Master's Degree. That is a major reason I am here, and why I created *Barnum’s American Museum*. It is a show my father would have adored. The mime piece, “Father’s Day”, was based upon a true incident in my dad’s life. He was now part of the show. In the end, I dedicated the performance to him, and gave him a salut à la Sammy Sosa at the end of each curtain call.

As if performing on this day was not difficult enough, my mother, grandmother, sister, step-sister and countless friends all drove in for the February 4 performance. I now had a huge reminder of family, and the hole in my family, all sitting in the front row. I remained focused on the task at hand, and put all thoughts of the date and its relevance in the back of my head. It was the only way to get through the show without breaking down in uncontrollable tears.

It was not until the curtain call and looking my family in their eyes that the moment hit me. I kissed my fingers, tapped my heart twice and pointed to the sky for my father. That gesture had never carried so much meaning from the deep recesses of my heart as it had at that moment. I
was thankful I had made it through the show, and felt my father would have been beamingly proud of me. The tears began to creep into the corners of my eyes, and I quickly ducked backstage to hide.

The evening was not over, though. Over the applause I heard my stage manager, John, announcing that today was a special day. My heart sank. I looked to my left and there was my wife Robin with Quian and Edna holding two beautiful cakes aglow with candles. I completely lost all control. The audience began to sing Happy Birthday as I wept backstage. This was a moment I certainly did not want to face, but had no other option. It seemed like an eternity had passed after they had completed the song before I re-entered the space. It took everything I had to blow out those candles.

I spent the next ten to fifteen minutes in a ball backstage weeping uncontrollably, while the audience dined on the cake in the lobby. I did not want to make an appearance, but knew I had to. It was one of the most uncomfortable moments of my life. I was literally forced to celebrate, and forced to do so in front of an audience. I was not happy with the course of events, and everyone, audience and performers, knew it.

I understand now that no disrespect was meant, and that the gesture had no malicious intent. Everyone was happy for me. I just was not, and am still not ready to be happy myself. I miss my father incredibly. He was 54 when he died. I was sure he would have been around to celebrate many more of these birthdays with me. Someday, perhaps, I will actually reclaim this day as my own. Right now, though, it is still more the anniversary of losing my dad than the celebration of my birth.

5.6 CLOSING NIGHT

Wow! What a rush! I have never felt energy and enthusiasm from an audience as I did on closing night. The house was jam packed, standing room only with friends and colleagues from the department. Practically every moment got a reaction from the crowd. Laughter and screams filled
the air. Knowing this was the final performance, Quain and I were already jazzed, and this only served to juice us even more. We were prepared give the audience a memory for a lifetime.

Highlights from the evening included people dancing in front of their seats during the rap song. People literally fell out of their chairs during Tom Thumb. Fruscito ripped into friends with careless abandon, and the audience roared. Schlitz had people screaming and twisting in their chairs, hoping not to vomit or faint. You could feel the electricity and hear its buzz.

This is exactly how I had imagined the show. People enjoy morals and education, but they love to be entertained. This audience absolutely reveled in the fact that they could sit back and not think for an hour. Apparently laughter is the best medicine. If that is true, then this group walked away healthier than any theater audience ever.

It was wonderful to feel the sense of accomplishment, finally. I had remained so wrapped up and focused on the show all along that I lost sight of just letting go and having fun. As it was coming to an end, I knew all the work, all the hype, all the planning had paid off. I created a show that people could really enjoy. P.T. Barnum would be overjoyed to see such a happy audience.
CHAPTER 6

EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION

Once the dust settled and I had an opportunity to catch up on much needed sleep, I was able to look back upon Barnum’s American Museum with an objective eye. I can state with confidence that the show was a success. I feel I was able to attain the goals I had set out to achieve, and in some ways went far beyond even my own expectations. I figured out how to write and perform a show which reflected the gamut of my own theatrical history and tastes. I conceived a concept for production which is portable and tourable, as well as flexible enough to grow and change throughout the rest of my career. Most importantly, I created a piece of theatre which the audience left feeling good. I was able to entertain and humor an audience to laughter with an hour’s worth of material. For that, I am most proud.

6.1 DROPPED TEXT AND SCENES

Various portions of text and entire scenes were eliminated from this production of Barnum’s American Museum for a number of reasons including departmental safety issues, lack of confidence and/or ability, cost, relevance to the project, time, and discovery during the rehearsal process. Some elements will remain omitted from the play, while others may find a place in future productions of the show.

The most significant change in Barnum’s American Museum was realized very early in the process. My goal from the outset was to create a solo piece, in which I took the ten acts in one show a
step further by doing all the acts by one person, or a ten-in-one-by-one. Logistically, this was a nightmare. It left no time to change costumes and characters, and would have been exhausting. Some acts, such as the magician, practically required an assistant. Also, stage pictures could be a lot more interesting if a second person is participating on stage. I let go of the solo idea, and set out to create a two-man show.

The earliest draft of the script called for a gypsy fortune teller to open the show. I had hoped to simulate a seance complete with ghostly sounds and floating object. However, very early on I came to the conclusion that this gypsy, although interesting and entertaining, would not coherently fit within the confines of a ten-in-one sideshow. A seance more likely would occur as a separate, self-contained operation outside the stage of Barnum’s Moral Lecture Room. This scene eventually evolved into Professor Elucidor and the Mystic.

I had hoped to guide the spectators on a virtual tour of Barnum’s Museum, as if they walked in the front door and walked to the Lecture Room. By combining lighting effects with mime metamorphoses, I would have assumed the shape of statues, relics and oddities that a patron may have seen along that path. Mime metamorphosis is a “transformation, as by magic. To metamorphose is to change in appearance, character, condition, or function.”58 In mime, the performer achieves this morph before the audience within a rotation, beginning as one entity and emerging as another. Research into inanimate curiosities proved difficult, leaving me with only minor distinctions between poses to offer an audience.

I had hoped to recreate three of the large panoramas which decorated the walls of the museum by utilizing audience involvement. Placards preset under each seat would combine to create large murals unique to each audience section, much like crowds at a sporting event such as Ohio

58 ArtLex - dictionary of visual art
http://www.artlex.com/
State's 'Block O'. I was cautioned about relying so heavily on the audience for such a minor effect. Audiences may not be full, leaving large gaps in each painting. Cards could become mixed up, disrupting the unity of the diorama. And finally, on tour, I may not always have the opportunity to play on a thrust stage.

I wanted to juggle and diabolo in black light. The only thing the audience would see would be the juggling equipment rather than the manipulator. Technically, this proved difficult. Simply providing a black light, and a black light with enough power may have been a difficult task to accomplish in Mount Hall. If such an instrument were hung, I would not have the opportunity to rehearse in the dark until technical rehearsals began. I simply could not wait that long to see if I was talented enough to achieve the trick, and if the gag would appear to the audience as I had pictured it in my head. It was also pointed out that relying on such a black light would pose difficulties later on when touring.

The original diabolo sequence was backed by an educational soundtrack about the history of the diabolo. The text, taken from Todd Strong's *The Diabolo Book*, was as follows:

In Greek, the term diabolo means to throw across. It comes from a combination of dia meaning across or through, and bolla which means to throw. The diabolo fits into the large family of gyroscopic toys. People throughout the ages have found pleasure and amusement in spinning things. From the tops and yo-yos where you do the spinning to the large Ferris wheels and merry-go-rounds where you are spun, circular motion seems to hold a universal fascination. A diabolo set consists of two handsticks attached by a string, and a diabolo, the two wheeled thing connected by an axle. Spinning a diabolo is considered a type of juggling. It is one of the few juggling skills that is non-symmetrical. Like all basic toys, the exact origin of the diabolo has been lost. It apparently appeared in China during the Han
Dynasty, 206 B.C. - A.D. 220. The diabolo first began appearing in Europe in the 1790's. At that time the governments of Europe were very interested in developing increased trade with the Orient and other parts of the world. Lord George Earl Macartney was head of an English expedition in 1794 whose purpose was to try to set up an embassy in the interior of China for eventual improved trade relations with the entire country. After only 57 days, the party was asked to leave by the emperor. Macartney's failure to establish an embassy was so dismal, that social critics jokingly said the introduction of the diabolo to England was the most worthwhile result of the expedition. The diabolo died out as a popular sport only to be revived shortly after the turn of this century. Parker Brothers sold a version of diabolo with instructions that are copyrighted in 1907. More recently Parker Brothers again made and marketed a diabolo in 1967. Since then it seems to have fallen into relative obscurity, kept spinning by jugglers and handed down through their tradition of sharing skills and otherwise keeping each other frustrated with new tricks to learn. Will the diabolo craze return? Will the diabolo ever again become popular? I know I'll be spinning mine.

From day one, I had hoped to include a tap dance routine. I felt that a vaudevillian style show must include a tap number. Never having tapped before, I enrolled in Tap I for two consecutive quarters. I kept the routine as part of the script as close to opening as possible. However, I made the decision to drop the act before opening the show. I was nowhere near capable enough as a dancer at that time to step in front of an audience. On top of that, my intentions of speaking while tapping proved much more difficult than I had ever imagined. Here is the text which once accompanied the tap number:
Here, day after day, have I reveled and run riot among thousands of acres of ripe luscious grapes, the very sight of which is enough to make anybody but an infernal, cold-hearted rascal drop on his knees, and offer up sincere thanks to Heaven for its unbounded munificence!

Upon a square wooden trough stands three of four men with bare legs, all stained with purple juice, dancing and trodding down the grapes as fast as they are thrown in, to the tune of a violin. The labor of constantly stamping down the fruit is desperately fatiguining, and, without music, would get on very slowly. A fiddler, therefore, forms part of every wine-grower’s establishment, and as long as the instrument pours forth its merry strains, the treaders continue their dance in the gore of the grape, and the work proceeds diligently....

I made a barrel or two of wine yesterday, having taken off my stockings, rolled up my trousers, and joined a couple of others in treading down the grapes to the tunes of the violin. The fiddler gave us the Polka, but we soon found that we were getting too much of a good thing, and that dancing the Polka was not what it is cracked up to be, especially when the dancer is up to his knees in ripe, bursting, bleeding and delicious grapes!... I can truly say I never was so happy in my life as I have been in attending the vintage at Médoc!

I have every intention of reclaiming this act and inserting it in future productions of Barnum’s American Museum.

The ventriloquist act turned out much different on the stage than I had first imagined and written it. I wanted to build a large, two-hand, full body puppet that would serve as both the ventriloquist and the dummy. The irony of the piece would be that the dummy would actually appear to be the ventriloquist, while I appeared as the dummy. This eventually evolved into a single puppet
attached to the television, using a face on the screen as the head, and again, myself as the dummy.

Time ran out, and the puppet never got built. I still performed the act alongside the television, but the effect was lost. I feel this was the most unsuccessful piece in the show. I feel it may have been more impressive and satisfying to the audience if the puppet were included.

The Shakespearean Burlesque was not included in the original plans. Instead, that scene called for a traditional approach of a real Shakespeare monologue. I was never fully taken with this, but research revealed evidence of many actors gracing Barnum’s stage. As an actor, it seemed only logical to include a classic portrayal of Hamlet or Richard III. Once the character of Mr. Boses was added, this act changed from a monologue to a scene, but still remained classical. Under the guidance of committee members, I was urged to research the burlesque instead, and I could not be happier to this day.

The mime piece, “Father’s Day”, was to be accompanied by a sound effects track which would reflect the mime illusions. Sounds of sprinklers, lawnmowers, weed-eaters and more would fill the ears of the audience as I physically portrayed each event, much like Robert Post had done in his show, *Here in America*. The addition of sound really turned the performance from that of a clown into a real, human cartoon. In the middle of this segment, I had included a rewind and slow motion instant replay of the climax of the scene. Well, finding the individual sounds, mixing them and timing them to the piece turned out to be a much more daunting task than I had thought. Robert Post pointed out that his act took years to perfect rather than weeks. On top of that, the rewind/replay bit served to dissipate the climax rather than illuminate it. Here is the original text of that section, as if were being called by sportscasters on ESPN:
Let's see that one again.

Boo-ya!

Take it from there.

Steerike one.

Steerike two.

Good!

He ... could ... go ... all ... the ... way!

En fuego!

Call him 'Butter' 'cause he's on a roll!

The finale of the show was to include fire-eating. This posed a tremendous problem. Departmental faculty feared my safety, as well as that of the audience. Many misunderstood the difference between fire-eating and fire-spitting. On top of that, fire codes in the theatre proved to be much stricter than I had thought. It would be possible, perhaps, but would entail more work than it was worth. I decided to relieve everyone's fears and eliminate all fire from the production. In the end, I knew this would help speed the acceptance of things such as the bed of nails. I will definitely include a fire-eating act in Barnum's American Museum at some point in the future.
6.2 THE FUTURE OF *BARNUM'S AMERICAN MUSEUM*

*Barnum’s American Museum* is a show I hope to continue performing for many years. It was designed so that the show can evolve and change with my interests and skills. From the start, the play was written in the form of ten shorts. That format would allow me to add and drop segments throughout my career as I learned new skills or became physically unable to perform old ones. The beauty of P.T. Barnum and his museum as a through line is that it affords the opportunity to include absolutely any type of entertainment into the show.

Immediate plans for *Barnum’s American Museum* include upcoming performances in Cincinnati and Columbus. The play was designed from the outset to be portable, so hopefully more performances and touring will be next in line. It is my desire to one day perform the show at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and in Las Vegas. I feel confident *Barnum’s American Museum* is well suited for both those audiences. “My whole pride lies centered in the museum.... I am determined to [make it]... the most attractive and valuable establishment of the kind in the world ... and am prepared to make every kind of improvement that could suggest itself to my mind.”

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Appendix A - *Barnum's Americas Museum: The Script*

"the theater's official motto: "We study to please."

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<th>Role or Talent:</th>
<th>Quian Carlson</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Bones</td>
<td>assistant</td>
<td>video-taped Damien Bowerman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professor Elocutor</td>
<td>introduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>P.T. Barnum</td>
<td>magician, ventriloquist, host</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>?????</td>
<td>mystic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signor Vivalla</td>
<td>juggler</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Great Proscuitto</td>
<td>magician</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Tom Thumb</td>
<td>miniature man</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romeo (Sylvester Sleeker)</td>
<td>actor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juliet</td>
<td>played by Mr. Bones</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenny Lind</td>
<td>singer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe Pestland</td>
<td>clown / mime</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schlitzty</td>
<td>pincushion and blockhead</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Various voice-overs</td>
<td><em>The Vocal Talents Of:</em> Quian Carlson, Chris Dickman,</td>
<td>Bryan Foley, Kathleen Gonzales, Robin Gordon, Tom Greer, Anthony Peeples</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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F/X | NOTES | TEXT
---|---|---

| Pre-Show / Come-In |
|---|---|

15 min. before house opens.

Starting from the back door of the theatre, a masked man walks out carrying a brick. He carries it around to the ticket table. He places that brick down, and picks another up which he carries to the far windows. Again, he places that brick down, and picks another up which he carries to the second floor vending machine area. Once again, he places that brick down, and picks another up which he carries down the steps, out the door. Placing that brick near the ashtray, he picks up a final brick which he returns up both flights of stairs and disappears with into the front door of the theatre. This sequence is
SO-A-TRACK 1

When the audience enters, they see an amber, somewhat ghostly, dimly lit stage. A large circus style trunk sits upstage. Behind it is a portable coat rack with a large banner above it. Spanning the width of the space from stage left to right are; a sideshow banner, a fortune teller machine holding a television, a tiny stage with a curtain, and a rear projection screen used throughout the show for identifying each act. The trunk is lit brightly.

Audience enters the space.

Upon entry, each member of the audience receives a double-roll ticket. At the trunk sits an old man, Professor Elocutor, reading books to himself. Mr. Bones continues his routine as the audience enters the space. His first pass is with a brick, followed by a hat which he places center stage, which is then followed by a sign which reads "Enter Here" with an arrow pointing down to the hat. He then returns to the bricks.

Blow-Off

reads to himself from the book using the spot-lighted trunk as a lectern. Mr. Bones with a brick enters from the DSL door. The Professor does not notice Mr. Bones.

The man carrying the brick moves through a diminutized version of his route in a grid-

< Professor Elocutor >

I gave him five common bricks. 'Now,' said I, 'go and lay a brick on the sidewalk, at the corner of Broadway and Ann Street, by the Astor House; put down the fourth on the sidewalk, in front of St. Paul's Church, opposite; then with the fifth brick in hand, take up a rapid march from one point to the other, making the circuit, exchanging your brick at every point, and say nothing to anyone. ... and to assist me properly you must seem to be deaf as a post; wear a serious countenance; answer no questions; pay no attention to anyone; but attend faithfully to the work, and
like floor pattern mirroring city blocks. He crosses diagonally DSR to C picks up the hat full of tickets and the sign. He exits upstage behind the banners, leaving the “Enter Here” sign USC as the Professor snaps his book shut.

Professor Elocutor addresses the audience

Professor Elocutor stands in the dark bewildered for a moment, finds his new light \{the golden square\} and continues.

During these voice over sound cues, Professor Elocutor appears to channel the spirits \{derived from SITI residency Suzuki training - Speaking Statues\} stereo-typed possession pose

at the end of every hour, by St. Paul’s clock, show this ticket at the Museum door; enter, walking solemnly through every hall in the building; pass out, and resume your work.

Hello. Welcome. Thank you for coming. Welcome to Barnum’s Grand Scientific and Musical Theatre Lecture Series. P.T. Barnum was born in Bethel, Connecticut on July 5, 1810. He held a series of diverse jobs as a youth, including selling theater tickets. Barnum did not yet know that his lifework would be ... be in the amusement field and that, by his own admission, he ‘fell into the occupation.’

SQ-B-TRACK 2

Light Cue: spot USR@trunk fades out, and a spot DSL rises

Light Cue: During these voice over sound cues, lights flicker and fade in ghostly ways

SQ-C-TRACK 3

Of all the men whom I met
in those days, Mr. Barnum . . . was by far the honestest and freest from guile or deceit. . . .

In 1835 Barnum exhibited Joice Heth, an old black woman he claimed to be the 161-year-old nurse of George Washington.

Light Cue: lights flicker
**SO-D-TRACK 4**
He was a genius like Rabelais, but one who employed business and humanity for material instead of literature.

Light Cue: light returns to single spot

The Thinker

rotating - looking for source of voices and behavior

He then became head of a traveling company of performers, acrobats, freaks, and wild animals. In 1841, Barnum purchased the American Museum in New York City for $12,000 and set about making it the most unusual museum in America.

Light Cue: lights flicker
**SO-E-TRACK 5**
His stage seemed nothing like any ordinary theater. Naming it his "Moral Lecture Room."

Light Cue: light returns to single spot
**SO-F-TRACK 6**

**Light Cue:** spot DSL fades out, and a spot USR@trunk rises

---

**SO-G-TRACK 7**

**Light Cue:** spot USR@trunk fades out, and a spot C rises

---

**What was once ...**

---

**Professor Elocutor** moves to new light

---

**What was once a ...**

---

**Professor Elocutor** stands in the dark bewildered for a moment. He jumps into the circle of light as if to hold it there. He is speaking very rapidly

---

What was once a fairly ordinary upstanding museum was transformed into a veritable freak show encased within permanent walls. The evidence of its success was the making of Barnum's incredible fortune. The public eagerly thronged to the American Museum to view the strange things that Barnum had to show them.

---

According to biographer A.H. Saxon, ...

---

**Light Cue:** lights flicker

---

**SO-H-TRACK 8**

-- The titles of 'humbug,' and the 'prince of...
"humbugs," were first applied to Barnum by himself. He made these titles a part of his 'stock in trade.'

**Light Cue:** light returns to single spot

**SO-I-TRACK 9**

His goal was to awaken a sleeping sense of wonder, to help open the eyes of his fellow citizens to the amazing diversity of the human and natural world.

To arrest public attention; to startle, to make people talk and wonder; in short to let the world know he had a museum.

As you walk through that canvas threshold you are walking into another world:

**Professor Elocutor** catches his breath and looks around **Professor Elocutor** decides to go along with the ride, and calls on the spirit voices for more.

fall to knees C

run DSC "startle" then walk backwards to USC - arms outstretched

**Professor Elocutor** takes to the audience, removes his glasses, picks up the "Enter

P.T. Barnum was interested in fame, fortune and the entertainment of the American public.

He decided early in his life to promote the genre of the sideshow, preying on the public's insatiable appetite for exposure to the weird.

His peculiar talent was to know instantly what he liked when he saw it, and then to go after it.
another dimension... another dimension... another dimension... another dimension...

VQ-1: P.T. Barnum #1
I am not half so cute nor cunning nor deep as many people suppose.

Hurry, hurry, hurry. Step right up. Welcome to Barnum's American Museum. The Wonder of America! And, Unquestionably, from its position, character, and popularity, the special place of family amusement for the United States.

Here" sign, and exits.

Costume Change:
MK: lose: wig, glasses, jacket, tie
add: CD-robe, silver1/2 mask, silver bead wig
props: white ring, black ring, pad of paper, pencil, 2 rigged thumb-tips

slide #1 - The Mystic

Act I: ???? - The Mystic

A robed Mystic appears from the other side of the banner the Professor disappeared.
**SO-J-TRACK 10**
Who would be willing to close the career of mortality in the very act of displeasing his maker?

**SO-K-TRACK 11**
Enter **Mr. Bones**
Change in Pocket #1
{mental trick: involving 1 DSC audience member; pad of paper; pencil; rigged thumb}

**Sound:** out

**SO-L-TRACK 12**
@ “bright little girl”

**SO-M-TRACK 13**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Costume Change:</th>
<th>&lt;Mystic&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mr. Bones:</strong> add - overcoat w/ X-mas lights, 1/2 mask</td>
<td>&lt;nasal&gt; For decades, under the influence of a puritanical clergy, American society had remained deeply suspicious of the theater. &lt;chest&gt; One early pamphlet claimed that the Richmond Theater fire of 1812, killing 76 persons and maiming hundreds more, was a judgment of God.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mystic</strong> crosses DSL to DSR</td>
<td>&lt;whisper&gt; the harsh pamphleteer warned.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<pharyngeal> Henry Ward Beecher, following in his father’s strict footsteps, called theater “an expiring evil,” warning young men to avoid it like plague.

(Improvised text with audience around Change in Pocket gag.)

<rp> It devolved upon me to open a mesmeric performance, and accordingly I engaged a bright little girl. She learned her lesson thoroughly, and when I had apparently put her to sleep with a few
behind Mr. Bones; gestures
Mr. Bones raises hands, falls
to floor, rises as if on
command by Mystic.

Is The Person Alive or Dead?

{mentalist trick: involving 5
SL audience members; 5
pencils, 5 pieces of paper; hat}

gesture dance {derived from
SITI residency Viewpoints
training}
two times:
right hand watch look 4
counts
hands circle above head &
back 4 counts
superman left 4 counts
right greased lightnin 4
counts
shift left 2 counts
snap together 1 counts
hold 1 counts
right hand grab head and
rotate 4 counts
disco point 1 count
slide right foot 7 counts

Mr. Bones stands still through
final 2 gestures of 2nd time

passes, she seemed to be duly “impressed” as I desired;
raised her hands as I willed; fell from her chair to the floor;
and if I put candy or tobacco into my mouth, she was duly
delighted or disgusted.

(Improvised text with audience around Alive or Dead? gag.)

Leaving the girl ‘asleep’, I called up someone in the
audience, promising to put him ‘in the same state’ within
five minutes, or forfeit fifty dollars. Of course, all my
‘passes’ would not put a man in the mesmeric state; at the
end of three minutes he was as wide awake as ever. ‘Never
mind,’ I would say, looking at my watch; ‘I have two
minutes more, and the meantime, to show that a person in
this state is utterly insensible to pain, I propose to cut off
one of the fingers of the little girl who is still asleep.’
*Sound:* out @ "edge"

**SQ-P-TRACK 16**

Mr. Bones - lights out

Mr. Bones & Mystic curvilinear crossing pattern to C ending back to back w/ Mystic L and Mr. Bones R like a Vaudeville duo arm hook and spin with each line until end of scene

I would then take out my knife and feel the edge, and when I turned round to the girl whom I left on the chair, she had fled behind the scenes, to the intense amusement of the greater part of the audience, and to the amazement of the mesmerists who were present.

<\*W.C.*\> ‘Why! where is my little girl?’ <\*rp\> I asked, with feigned astonishment.

<\*Mr. Bones\> ‘Oh! she ran away when you began to talk about cutting off fingers,

<\*MYSTIC\> <\*rp\>’ said the man on whom I was experimenting. <\*W.C.*> ‘Then she was wide awake, was she?’

<\*Mr. Bones\> ‘Of course she was, all the time.’

<\*MYSTIC\> <\*rp\> ‘I suppose so; and, my dear sir, I promised that you should be “in the same state” at the end of five minutes, and as I believe you are so, I do not forfeit my fifty dollars.
**SO-O-TRACK 17**

**VQ-2: P.T. Barnum #2**
I never said that! I called Mr. George Hull's discovery of The Cardiff Giant a fake when I displayed my own copy. In an attempt to sway crowds to pay for his 'authentic' giant, Hull made that remark. There's a sucker born every minute was credited to me, and followed me through history. I never denied it. I don't believe in 'duping the public', but I believe in first attracting and then pleasing them.

**Mystic & Mr. Bones exit USC**

**Costume Change:**
- **Mr. Bones:** lose light coat, mask, hat
- add - blue velvet shirt, red sparkle wig
- props: 3 silk scarves

- **MK:** lose robe, sequin wig, mask
- add - red velvet shirt, blue sparkle wig
- props: diabolo, sticks

<Together>
There's a sucker born every minute.

**SO-R-TRACK 18**

slide #2 - *The Juggler*
Enter Signor Vivalla
USR with diabolo

sling shot poses (2x), ground poses (2x), sl roll, spin, x dsl,
Enter Mr. Bones
USL with scarves

Exit Vivalla
Costume Change:
MK: lose velvet shirt, wig, mustache
add - tux jacket, glasses, wig props; decks of cards, magic bag, “Bang!” gun, boxers

Act III: The Great Proscuitto

slide #3 - The Magician
Mr Bones selects a member of the audience via Barnum’s own penchant for lotteries. The audience member is selected by the drawing of a ticket stub which was dropped in the hat at the beginning of the show.

Barnum conceived the idea of a lottery in order to rid the shop of a large quantity of tin-ware which had been in the shop for years and a wagon-load of green glass bottles, for which he paid in unsaleable goods at very profitable prices. The highest prize was twenty-five dollars, payable in any goods the winner desired. There were fifty prizes of five dollars each, one hundred of one dollar each, and three hundred prizes of twenty-five cents each, payable in goods designated in the scheme. It is unnecessary to state that the minor prizes consisted mainly of glass and tin-ware; the tickets sold like wildfire, and the worn tin and glass bottles were speedily turned into cash.

Tonight, we’re going to have our own lottery, except we won’t be giving away any money, because... well, we don’t have any. But we will be giving away an experience. So, I am going to draw a ticket out of this hat and the holder of
**SQ-S-TRACK 19:** drumroll

**SQ-T-TRACK 20**

Enter Magician
The winning person becomes the participant in the magic trick and picks a card. Any card. Shows that card to the entire audience. Everyone except magician. This person then replaces the card to the deck and shuffles it away. Magician proceed to attempt to guess the card. Each guess is worse than the previous.
Magician keeps missing it & finally exits in frustration

that ticket will you please come join me on stage. Can I have a drum roll please?

The number is _______ (from ticket). Hi. What’s your name? <response> Everybody say Hi to (name). <audience response> (Name) say hi to everyone. <response> (Name), are you ready for your fifteen minutes of fame? Then let’s welcome, The Great Proscuito!

< The Great Proscuito >

Improvised text - a flurry of nasty insults directed toward audience members
- pick a card, any card, etc.

I can’t work with you amateurs. I can’t work under these circumstances. I cannot do it.
There is no such word as 'cannot' in the English language. Never say you 'can't' do a thing - and never cry 'broke' till you are dead.

Filling in for defecting performer's over the winter of 1837, I became an acceptable blackface singer...

...hi-dee-hi-dee-hi-dee-hi.....

and a better-than-fair magician.

**Costume Change:**

MK: tux jacket, glasses, wig
add - Tom Thumb puppet, eye patch, helmet, black gloves

Correct card magically appears on the TV screen

**slide #4 - General Tom Thumb**

Mr. Bones exit behind Tom Thumb curtain

**<Both>**

hi-dee-hi-dee-hi-dee-hi........

**<Mr. Bones>**

Barnum could never let evidence speak for itself. He liked to dress it up, give it a spin all his own. The tiny man was not allowed to be just plain tiny, he had to be a comic, too, a dancer, singer, mimic, quick-change artist, bon vivant, and lover-boy all rolled into one. It made a better story that way.

---

**Act IV: General Tom Thumb. The Miniature Man**

**SO-U-TRACK 21** entire length of Act V

A small curtain opens revealing **General Tom Thumb**: a 25” rod puppet body w/ a live actor's head.
Mr. Bones operates various rod puppet legs and arms which interact with General Thumb and make him appear smaller.

<General Tom Thumb>
I am but a Thumb, though a very good hand
In a general way, you must all understand;
I alone am the General - see the proofs all around -
Such recruits or supplies are not easily found.
I'm great while I'm small, so I don't want to rise,
But remain always General Tom Thumb in your eyes;
Your grasp will be friendly, whenever they come,
And welcome the hand as you've welcomed the - Thumb.

Light Cue: Lights flash as if it were a press conference.
<Reporters> (overlapping)

General Thumb! Mr. Thumb! Excuse me, Tom! etc.
General Thumb, is it your intention to marry?

To how many are you betrothed?

But, Mr. Thumb, I heard you are reputed unfaithful.

Certainly!

Eight!
General, in England you were very much courted by the ladies, and allowed them to kiss you?

How many times have you been kissed?

“Yankee Doodle Dandy”

Quite true Madam.

It was only to oblige them.

I have kissed upwards of a million ladies. No more questions, thank you.

I’m General Tom Thumb, just came to town
Yankee Doodle Dandy
I’ve paid a visit to the crown,
Dressed like any grandee.
The Queen has made me presents rare;
Court ladies did salute me;
First rate I am, they all declare,
And all my dresses suit me.
Yankee Doodle loves you all
Yankee Doodle Dandy
Both young and old, and short and tall
Declare that I’m the dandy.

Curtain open and closes as General Tom Thumb bows.

Light Cue: BLACKOUT

VO-3: P.T. Barnum #4
Although I can make more money with General Tom

Costume Change:
Mr. Bones: add - wig
props: flashlight
Thumb in two months than I can in the American Museum in a year, yet my whole pride lies centered in the museum. . . . I am determined to [make it] . . . the most attractive and valuable establishment of the kind in the world . . . and am prepared to make every kind of improvement that could suggest itself to my mind.

MK: lose - puppet, helmet, gloves, eye patch
add - wig
props: flashlight

Shakespearean Burlesque
slide #5 - The Tragedie of Romeo and Juliet
Enter Sylvester Bleeke, a classical actor, as Romeo. He tumbles in the darkness CS. Enter Mr. Bones over banner in drag playing Juliet.
R - ON
J - ON @ face

< Romeo>
He jests at scars that never broke his head--
What light is that? 'tis Juliet going to bed.

Arise, fair sun! and put the moon to shame:
I saw her faint as soon as e'er you came.
See how she leans her cheek upon her knuckles.
Her cheek that's shining like my best brass buckles.
Were I her glove, I'd give it such a smack!  
Her eyes shou'd sparkle with delight.

<Juliet>
Alack!  Alack!
Oh, my!  I wish that nice young man would come!

<Romeo>
She speaks!  a sign she isn't deaf and dumb.

<Juliet>
He thinks that I don't see him:  he's mistaken,  
So I'm resolved to sham, and smoke his bacon.

Oh, Romeo!  -- Romeo!  perhaps you're not to blame,  
But it's a very shocking, ugly name;  
Go to your god-father, and refuse to wear it,  
Or if you won't, be but my love, and swear it;  
And I'll leave home, and go and live with you,  
And be young Mistress Romeo Montague.  
The name is not so bad -- what's in a name?  
A Rose if Garlick call'd would smell the same.  
I wish he was but here --

<Romeo>
And here I am!

<Juliet>
Ah!
R - OFF

R - XDSL

J - lights searching for R

R - dodging lights DS L & R
R - stop DSR - ON - face

R & J - lights SL & SR
R - OFF

J - light CS

R - XCS into light
(stepping out of character)

SM - stepping out of booth
R - light @ booth

<Romeo>

What didn’t you see me, or was it all a sham?
If you will be my sweet heart then I’ll promise,
That you may always call me John or Thomas?

<Juliet>

Ah! who is that the other side the wall?
What man art thou?

<Romeo>

I an’t no man at all.
’Tis me! ‘tis I -- not Romeo -- call me Jack!

<Juliet>

Ah!

<Romeo>

But don’t squall out so loud, and I’ll go back.

<Juliet>

’Tis Romeo’s voice! I know it by the sound!

<Romeo>

Line!

<Stage Manager>

That’s a good reason, faith, and most profound.
<Romeo>
Thank you!

That's a good reason, faith, and most profound.

<Juliet>
But tell me, pray, how could'st thou venture here?
The garden walls are high -- I'm sick with fear;
If seen -- my character is gone eternally;
My cousins too will thrash you most infernally!

<Romeo>
Love urged me, dear, those walls to scamper over.

<Juliet>
Love! -- 'tis indeed a fine leap for a lover!
Swear that you love me!

<Romeo>
By flat-faced moon, I --

<Juliet>
Hush!

It is quite ridiculous by her to swear;
She changes every month, and much I fear
Thy love would change a hundred times a year.

<Romeo>
What shall I swear by?
<Juliet>
That which I love best;
Namely, thyself, swear, then I'll go to rest.

<Romeo>
Upon my honor.

<Juliet>
Yet, upon my soul,
I think you'd better far not swear at all.
Romeo, another word; you'll come back again?

<Romeo>
You may depend on't, with the next new moon.

<Juliet>
Not till next month? you'd better leave me quite.

<Romeo>
There'll be another moon to-morrow night.

<Romeo>
Romeo!

<Juliet>
My dove!

<Romeo>
To-morrow at what hour
Shall I send to thee?

<Romeo>
Let me think: at four.

<Juliet>
No, that's too early.

<Romeo>
Then, sweet mistress mine,
If you think proper, it shall be at nine.

<Juliet>
But Romeo!

<Romeo>
Yes!

<Juliet>
Why dreary me, good lack!
I do forget why I did call you back.

<Romeo>
'Tis almost morning, and it is not fit
That I stand here till you remember it.

<Juliet>
Good night, my dear, you really love me still --
You'll come to-morrow?
### Act VI: The Swedish Nightingale

**Light Cue:** fade up

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>SQ-W-TRACK 23</strong></th>
<th><strong>SQ-X-TRACK 24</strong> entire Act VII</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R - XCS - lights @ face</td>
<td>Jenny Lind (man in drag) is standing C. Mr. Bones is @ trunk. A turntable is there. Mr. Bones begins the record, and Jenny Lind proceeds to lip-sync very seriously.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(calling off) R &amp; J - 'blow out' lights w/kiss - exit slide #6 - <em>The Swedish Nightingale</em> Costume Change: MK: lose - cape, wig add - dress, wig Mr. Bones: lose - dress, wig add - shirt, glasses, hat</td>
<td>&lt;Jenny Lind&gt; I greet with a full heart the Land of the West, Whose Banner of Stars o'er a world is unrolled; Whose empire o'ershadows Atlantic's wide breast, And opens to sunset its gateway of gold! The land of the mountain, the land of the lake, And rivers that roll in magnificent tide - Where the souls of the mighty from slumber awake, And hallow the soil for whose freedom they died!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Light Cue:** rock concert-like

**Jenny Lind** exits, removes her wig replaces with a backwards ballcap and rips dress off revealing hip hop clothes to become **D.J. Neelind**. Mr. **Bones** scratches the needle across the record, and finishes the song as a modern day rap.

Exit D.J. Neelind USC  
**Costume Change:**  
**MK:** lose - hip hop clothes  
add - dummy clothes, hat  

**Light Cue:** illuminating TV and banner area only  

slide #7 - *The Ventriloquist*  
Mr Bones cleans up props / costumes from last act  

---

**<D.J. Neelind>**

Thou Cradle of empire! though wide be the foam  
That severs the land of my fathers and thee,  
I hear, from thy bosom, the welcome of home,  
For song has a home in the hearts of the Free!  
And long as thy waters shall gleam in the sun  
And long as thy heroes remember their scars,  
Be the hands of they children united as one,  
And peace shed her light on thy Banner of Stars!

---

**<Mr. Bones>**

For Barnum the title “humbug” described two very opposite characters. On the one hand there was the outright swindler - the snake-oil salesman, the con man, the fraud, and the charlatan. ... On the other hand, there was his own type of playful humbug, developed in order to increase what he called his “notoriety.” This consisted of “putting on glittering appearance,” he wrote, “by which to suddenly arrest public attention, and attract the public eye and ear.” With ticket sales tapering off for Joice Heth, the 161 year old slave who had tended George Washington, Barnum himself wrote to the press charging Heth was a fake. She was a curiously constructed automaton, made up of whalebone, India-rubber, and numberless springs, and that the exhibitor was a ventriloquist.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VQ-5: P.T. Barnum #5</th>
<th>Enter Dummy at TV</th>
<th>&lt;Dummy&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>200 pounds?</td>
<td></td>
<td>I killed a hog today. How much do you suppose it weighed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300 pounds?</td>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500?</td>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well, how much did it weigh?</td>
<td>rim-shot</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The three o'clock train? Why it goes out exactly sixty minutes past two o'clock.</td>
<td></td>
<td>I don't know. I haven't weighed it yet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well, you won't miss your train, anyway.</td>
<td>rim-shot</td>
<td>What time does the three o'clock train go out?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why, the other side of the street is just across the way.</td>
<td></td>
<td>That's funny. The man at the station told me it went out exactly sixty minutes before four o'clock.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Excuse me, which is the other side of the street?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>That's funny. I asked the fellow across the street and he</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Well, you can’t depend on everything you hear.

The first is a thorough knowledge of human nature, which of course included the faculty of judiciously applying soft soap.

It is the faculty to please and flatter the public so judiciously as not to have them suspect your intentions.

*Light Cue:* BLACKOUT

Give me a man who can laugh, and laugh heartily - not one who ‘grins horribly a ghastly smile,’ but one who laughs in earnest, as though it came from the heart - and a hundred to one that he is a whole-souled, liberal-minded and charitable fellow. I now give

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>rim-shot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

said it was over here.

What exactly are the qualifications of a good showman?

And what it “soft soap”?

Exit Dummy

*slide #8 - The Clown

*Costume Change:*

MK: lose - dummy clothes, hat
add - baggy pants, floppy hat
you Joe Pentland - one of the wittiest, best, and most original of clowns.

**Act VIII: Joe Pentland, One of America’s Funniest Clowns**

**Light Cue:** lights up

**Joe Pentland** USR

**“Father’s Day”**

*In this Mime section of the script, this column denotes the subtext or thought patterns motivating the physical movement.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action/Thought</th>
<th>Subtext</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Open sliding shed doors</td>
<td>Let’s get down to business.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step out into Summer sun</td>
<td>Life is good.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breathe in fresh air</td>
<td>The weather is perfect today.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey the landscape</td>
<td>What a great day for yard work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turn on sprinkler (L. 3x)</td>
<td>On. Just a trickle. High pressure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch sprinkler (3 passes)</td>
<td>I love this thing. This is sooo cool. That should do it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turn off sprinkler (R. 3x)</td>
<td>High pressure. Tinkle-tinkle. Off.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey the landscape</td>
<td>Boy, this grass grows fast. It could use a mowing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turn and enter shed</td>
<td>I love this job.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pull out lawn-mower</td>
<td>La, la, la. A mowing I will go.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pull rip cord (3x then frenzy)</td>
<td>Start you bastard!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study lawnmower</td>
<td>Why won’t it start?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idea</td>
<td>Aha! It’s probably out of gas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open gas cap (L. rotate 3x)</td>
<td>I’m sure that is the problem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer inside tank</td>
<td>Yeppers. It is as dry as a bone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return to shed</td>
<td>I should have thought of that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lift gas can</td>
<td>Holy cow! This thing is heavy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carry can to lawnmower</td>
<td>I’m going to give myself a hernia!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task</td>
<td>Thoughts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savor the aroma of the gas</td>
<td>I love the smell of petrol in the morning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replace can in shed</td>
<td>This thing is still heavy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return to lawnmower</td>
<td>I'm burning daylight.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replace gas cap (R. rotate 3x)</td>
<td>Time to get to work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pull rip cord</td>
<td>That oughta do it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawnmower starts</td>
<td>Good - good - good - good vibrations!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Push lawnmower</td>
<td>A mowing we will go, a mowing we will go, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notice weeds along fence</td>
<td>Damn-it-all!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stop lawnmower</td>
<td>Why can’t they make a mower that will cut those?!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kneel down by the fence</td>
<td>Oooof!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pick the weeds (3 blades)</td>
<td>I hate this part.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey length of yard (L &amp; R)</td>
<td>I’ll never finish at this rate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idea</td>
<td>By jove, I think I’ve got it!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remove clippers from belt</td>
<td>Snip-snip you pesky weeds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trim a la haircut (3 snips)</td>
<td>Just a little off the top</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey length of yard (L &amp; R)</td>
<td>I’ll never finish at this rate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idea</td>
<td>By jove, I think I’ve got it!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Put on goggles</td>
<td>Safety first!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grab weed-eater</td>
<td>I knew I bought this thing for a reason</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examine fishing line (long)</td>
<td>Everything seems to be in order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pull rip cord (3x then frenzy)</td>
<td>Start you bastard!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study weed-eater</td>
<td>Why won’t it start?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idea</td>
<td>Aha! It’s probably out of gas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set weed-eater on ground</td>
<td>I shoulda’ thought of that after the lawnmower and all. Duh!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remove goggles</td>
<td>I can see! I can see!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open gas cap (L. rotate 3x)</td>
<td>I’m sure it’s outta gas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer inside tank</td>
<td>I knew it. Dry as a bone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return to shed</td>
<td>I should’ve checked that first.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task</td>
<td>Response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lift gas can</td>
<td>Heaby-heaby-heaby!!!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carry can to weed-eater</td>
<td>Uh-huh. Hernia city.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fill tank</td>
<td>I love that sound!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savor the aroma of the gas</td>
<td>Mmm-mmm-good!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replace can in shed</td>
<td>You'd think this thing would be getting lighter!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return to weed-eater</td>
<td>That should do it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replace gas cap (R. rotate 3x)</td>
<td>Time to get to work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Put on goggles</td>
<td>Safety first!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grab weed-eater</td>
<td>Time to kick some weedy ass.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pull rip cord</td>
<td>It's gonna start. I know it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weed-eater starts</td>
<td>Bingo!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weed-eater flies (L-R-L)</td>
<td>Whoa there fella! Wboa! When I say Whoa, I mean Wboa!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get weed-eater under control</td>
<td>Gotcha!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attack the weeds (3 bounces)</td>
<td>Cut -- Cut -- Cut damnit!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turn off weed-eater</td>
<td>Why are there still weeds there?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examine fishing line (short)</td>
<td>I hate these things!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Throw weed-eater away</td>
<td>Screw you and the horse you rode in on!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remove goggles</td>
<td>I can breathe!!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study the weeds</td>
<td>You're worse than cockroaches!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idea</td>
<td>I got you this time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return to shed</td>
<td>I'm gonna kill some weeds. I'm gonna kill some weeds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lift gas can</td>
<td>Oooof!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pour gas along fence</td>
<td>I will never have another weed in this yard again</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empty gas can on weeds</td>
<td>This thing is finally light!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savor the aroma</td>
<td>Who needs beer?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dab gas behind the ears</td>
<td>A little dab' I do ya'!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Throw away gas can</td>
<td>I won't be needing this anymore today.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remove matches from pocket</td>
<td>This will be a nice, slow blue flame.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take out a match</td>
<td>Why didn't I think of this sooner?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strike match - no luck</td>
<td>Gotta light?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strike match - no luck</td>
<td>Gotta light?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strike match - fire</td>
<td>Aaaahhhhh! Pretty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Throw match at fence</td>
<td>There.......she.........goes.....</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explosion</td>
<td>Holy Schmoly! Look at that mushroom cloud!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch fire</td>
<td>Uh-oh!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panic</td>
<td>Criminy!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Run to sprinkler</td>
<td>I'm gonna get in big trouble for this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turn on sprinkler (L. 3x)</td>
<td>C'mon. C'mon! C'mon!!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch sprinkler (3 passes)</td>
<td>Hurry! Go out! Ahh, it's working.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turn off sprinkler (R. 3x)</td>
<td>Thank God that's over with.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey the landscape</td>
<td>What have I done to my beautiful yard?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return to shed</td>
<td>Let's start at the very beginning, it's a very good place to start.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pick up seed and water-jug</td>
<td>Oh-man!!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walk to fence</td>
<td>I could've been killed. I'm stupid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Look at dirt</td>
<td>Waaaaaaaaa.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kneel at fence</td>
<td>I don't wanna do this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open seed packet</td>
<td>And away we go....</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blow in packet</td>
<td>I didn't need to do that, I just like to do that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant one seed and water</td>
<td>Grow fast little seed. Have a drinky.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant second seed and water</td>
<td>Join your brother seed. Drink up Shriner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Almost plant third seed</td>
<td>What on Earth am I doing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey length of yard (L &amp; R)</td>
<td>I'll never finish at this rate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take to the audience</td>
<td>Portrait of an idiot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return to seeding (repeat)</td>
<td>I should finish this by next Summer.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Light Cue:** slow fade to black

**Exit Joe Pentland** in blackout

**Act IX: Oddities and Curiosities**

**Light Cue:** Lights up on freak show banner.

**slide #9 - Freaks**
SO-Y-TRACK 25
Tonight, Ladies and Gentlemen, we invite you to see the most bizarre, the most strange and the most unusual attractions that have ever been seen here before. Women and small children may want to take this opportunity to leave the theatre and visit some of the 'safer' exhibits on display.
This is a show you will talk about and remember for the rest of your life. And I don't care if you live to be 100. I don't care if you see 1000 of these shows. This is the show. These are the people that will remain in your memory forever. The freaks, the wonders, the curiosities, the strange, the weird, the odd, the bizarre, the macabre, the unusual. A Panorama of beauty and splendor as it unfolds before the eyes and dazzles the
The lights reveal a sideshow banner lit by a single white light directly above it. As the barker (voice-over) spins the yarns of oddities such as the Siamese twins, lobster boy, the mule faced man, legless and armless, obese and other freaks. The distorted, shadowy, ghost-like images will fade and disappear within the screen. The screen is made of spandex which has been painted to look like an blank sideshow banner. The only words that appear on it are 'Why?' and 'Alive!' By pressing things like puppets, stuffed animals, masks, my face, and who knows what else into the spandex, both performers will in some way reference the many oddities that thrived under Barnum. The effect here is similar to a very popular computer generated effect that many
imagination. Representatives of the wonderful, all that is monstrous, scaly, strange and queer. There are only two kinds of freaks, ladies and gentlemen. Those created by God, and those created by man. Who is to decide when doctors disagree?

Costume Change:
MK: lose - baggy pants, floppy hat
add - false teeth, wig, shirtless props: hammer, nails, bed of nails, stapler, money
Mr. Bones:
props: apple

Act X: DO NOT TRY THIS AT HOME!!!

VQ-6: P.T. Barnum #6
The pleasure often is as great of being cheated as to cheat. The public actually enjoyed being deceived, as long as they were, at the same time, being amused.

VQ-7: The assistant will be running a closed circuit camera displaying the audience’s reactions on the television.

Light Cue: Rock concert colors and flashing.
Pincusion & Blockhead
This act consists of (A) hammering nail into head, (B) lying on a bed of nails, (C) using a staple-gun to attach a $5.00 bill to head.

<Mr. Bones>
spoken @ random intervals to audience
If you faint easily, turn away now!
Do not put your hands inside the cage!
That is a real spike. That is a real hammer. That is a real head.
Where there is no brain, there is no pain.
Do not try this at home! Your Mother will not like it!
That’s gotta hurt!
That’s gonna leave a mark!
VQ-8: P.T. Barnum #7
Amusement [may not be] the great aim of life, but it gives zest to life and makes a grand improvement in human character. Ladies and Gentlemen, I have but one favor to ask of you - and that is, that I may be allowed to sink... into utter insignificance. ... Where is Barnum? ... Barnum is nowhere! ... Ready to return, and to make, if possible, another fortune.

SQ-44-TRACK 27

Curtain Call

-fin-
### Appendix B - Prop List

#### Pre-Set
- 5 bricks
- 'Enter Here' sign
- hat
- 100 double sided entry tickets

   scattered in lobby area  
   center stage  
   center stage  
   handed to audience by house manager

#### Pre-Show / Come-In: Professor Elocutor
- 3 books (one covered in baby powder 'dust')

   backstage

#### Act I: Mysterious - The Mystic
- 2 juggling rings
- rigged thumb tip
- pencil
- pad of paper
- 4 soft lead pencils
- 1 hard lead pencil
- 5 pads of paper
- 40 batteries

   black & 1 white  
   trunk - top drawer  
   trunk - top drawer  
   trunk - top drawer  
   Mr. Bones’ costume  
   Mr. Bones’ costume  
   Mr. Bones’ costume  
   lights within Mr. Bones’ costume

#### Act II: Signor Vivalla vs. Signor Antonio
- 3 juggling scarves
- diabolo
- diabolo sticks

   red, yellow, green - TV stand  
   SL - costume rack  
   SL - costume rack

#### Act III: The Great Prescuitto
- hat from pre-set
- magic bag
- deck of cards
- 'Bang!' gun
- Ace of hearts boxers

   now filled with tickets  
   trunk - middle drawer  
   tuxedo pocket  
   tuxedo pocket  
   in pants

#### Act IV: General Tom Thumb, The Miniature Man
- Tom Thumb puppet
- eye patch
- helmet
- black gloves

   miniature stage  
   miniature stage  
   miniature stage  
   miniature stage

#### Act V: The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet
- 2 flashlights
- 2 flashlights
- 8 AA batteries

   miniature stage  
   TV stand  
   in flashlights

#### Act VI: The Swedish Nightingale
- vinyl record
- clock necklace

   trunk - middle drawer  
   trunk - middle drawer
| Act VII: Phineas and Taylor | none | p/a |
| Act VIII: Joe Pentland, One of America's Funniest Clowns | none | p/a |
| Act IX: Oddities and Curiosities | camel mask | spandex 'Freak' screen |
| | monkey mask | spandex 'Freak' screen |
| | 3 bean bag juggling balls | spandex 'Freak' screen |
| | Styrofoam wig form | spandex 'Freak' screen |
| Act X: Schlitzky, the What-is-It? | hammer | trunk - bottom drawer |
| | 2" nail | trunk - bottom drawer |
| | 10x4 piece of wood | trunk - bottom drawer |
| | rigged $5.00 bill | trunk - top drawer |
| | staple gun | trunk - bottom drawer |
| | bed of nails | backstage right |
| | apple | TV stand |
### Appendix C - Costume List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Michael Kary</th>
<th>Quinn Carlson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pre-Show / Come-In:</strong> Professor Elucitor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gray wig, black glasses, brown coat, khaki pants</td>
<td>black satin jacket, ‘clear’ mask</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Act I: ????? - The Mystic</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>silver CD coat, beaded silver wig, silver half mask</td>
<td>gray ‘light’ coat, white half mask</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Act II: Signor Vivalla vs. Signor Antonio</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>red velvet shirt, blue tinsel wig</td>
<td>blue velvet shirt, red tinsel wig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Act III: The Great Proscuitto</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>black tux jacket, black wig, gold glasses</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Act IV: General Tom Thumb, The Miniature Man</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Act V: The Tragedie of Romeo and Juliet</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>white pageboy wig</td>
<td>black heavy metal wig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Act VI: The Swedish Nightingale</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>blue dress, blonde wig, baseball cap</td>
<td>vest, black glasses, brown hat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Act VII: Phineas and Taylor</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>red, white &amp; blue shirt, propeller cap</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Act VIII: Joe Pentland, One of America’s Funniest Clowns</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>baggy pants, striped shirt, black hat</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Act IX: Oddities and Curiosities</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Act X: Schlitz, the What-Is-It?</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>flame pants, false teeth</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Karpo's Big Top

presents

Barnum's American Museum

In accordance with numerous and urgent solicitations,
The World's Greatest Showman, Entrepreneur, Politician, Journalist, Impresario, & Museum Owner,
Phineas Taylor Barnum

presents a cavalcade of visual, aural, magical and mystical delights

in the form of a traditional ten-in-one sideshow

staged in the Lecture Hall of Barnum's own American Museum.

February 1 - 5, 2000
MFA New Works

BARNUM'S AMERICAN MUSEUM

by Michael Karp
Barnums Museum
@aol.com

by Robin Gordon
Ipheloa
@aol.com

Mount Hall Studio Theatre
February 1 at 7:30 pm
February 2 - 5 at 8 pm
February 5 at 2 pm

Contact the University Theatre Box Office at 292-2205 or theatre-ticket@osu.edu for tickets. Also available at the Wexner Center and all ticket outlets.
Appendix G - Publicity Postcard

MFA NEW WORKS
February 1 - 5, 2000

A journey through the wisdom, angst, & mysteries of today's teens by Jenny, a present day Ophelia

Robin Gordon

Michael Karp

BARNUM'S AMERICAN MUSEUM

The Ohio State University - Mount Hall Theatre
For Tickets & Directions Call: (614) 292 - 2295

Postcard used in pre-production mailings and as a program stuffer for CATCO's production of The Anger in Ernest & Ernestine
# Appendix H - Program

## SEEN FOR THE FIRST TIME IN AN AMERICAN ARENA !!!

**25¢**

February 9 - 12, 2000
Santa Maria, California

Naturally there have been several attempts by others to produce this performance. Others are cheap imitators.

BarnumsMuseum@aol.com

## BIGGER, BETTER, GRANDER THAN EVER !!!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FEBRUARY 1 - 5, 2000 COLUMBUS, OHI0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barnum's Grand Scientific and Musical Theatre: a lecture with Professor Blicot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>mystic ???? MYSTIC:</strong> He sees all. He knows all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signor VIVALLA vs. Signor Antonio Brilz $50 WINNER NIGHTLY!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Great Prosciutto</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GENERAL TOM THUMB</strong> 25 inches small!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romeo &amp; Juliet - Travesty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Swedish Nightingale</strong> JENNY LIND Limited Engagement !!!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>JOE PENTLAND</strong> One of the Wittiest, best, and most original of clowns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coming Soon:</strong> Uncle Sam Dan Rico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ODDITIES &amp; CURIOSITIES</strong> schlity &quot;WHAT-IS-IT ??&quot; DO NOT TRY THIS AT HOME!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OFFICIAL PROGAM</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>A New Work created by: Michael Karp in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Fine Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Bones is played by: Quinn Carlson</td>
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<tr>
<td>John Leahy Stage Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My thesis committee: Joanne Thompson, Chair Dr. Joy Reilly Dr. Tom Postlewait</td>
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<tr>
<td>Featuring the voices of: Quinn Carlson, Chris Dickman, Bryan Foley, Kathleen Gonzales, Robin Gordon, Tom Green, Anthony Peoples</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special Thanks to: My beautiful, intelligent, and talented wife Robin for both putting up with my insanity and remaining creative here. Joanne Thompson - You brought me to OSU, introduced me to Robin, married us, and made all this possible. Can I ever thank you enough? Robert Post, for going out of your way to advise me on this project. Your notes and insight are invaluable. My stage manager John, for aiding in the set &amp; everything else I needed. Roger Nordset, your video work rocks…you deserve a raise!!! By the way … did I ever tell you how much I hate you? Vicky Christian &amp; CATCO for aiding in promotion — I had a fantastic time movement coaching The Anger in Ernest &amp; Ernestine. Everyone reading this should go see it! Lesley Farris for the opportunity to create and perform Barnum's American Museum in this magical, under-used space. Julia Weism for your sewing advice and help. Debbie McManna for donations of set pieces. Jessica &quot;MaidOfOrion&quot; Will for her tap choreography—sorry it got cut! Mark Shanda, Matt Kari, Robert Krueger, Dennis Parker, Jim Ennap, Dan Gray, Mary Tarantino, &amp; Rachel Barnes for all your assistance. My classmates — Carnay, Carrie, Carol, &amp; Jessica &amp; Robin. The long ride is almost over. Thank you Bridgette Davis for ironing when I didn’t want to. And to everyone on Nan’s lighting crew. Your work is definitely appreciated. And thank you to everyone that I left out. I am sure I forgot to list someone!</td>
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This show is dedicated to:

My Mom Eileen, because she’s endured my weirdess my entire life, allowed me to follow the paths I have chosen, & she’s the smartest person I know.

And to the loving memory of my father, Terry Karp, 8/23/41 — 2/1/95. He always wanted me to go back to school & get my Master’s Degree.

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130
Personal experiences inspire grad students’ premiere plays

by Megaa Braasch
Lantern staff writer

Two Ohio State students are performing their own plays on campus this week as part of their master’s degree thesis work for the Department of Fine Arts.

Every year graduate students are chosen to put on their own play, and the projects are collectively called the MFA New Works. Inspired by unique personal experiences, Robin Amy Gordon and Michael Karp each wrote and produced their own play for this winter’s productions.

Gordon, an actress from Santa Maria, Cal., trained as a student for four years with the Saratoga International Theater Institute. She has also had extensive dance and mime training. Gordon began planning and writing her play “iphe10a” approximately one year ago. The play is a story of a girl named Jenny who has the typical teenage problems of fitting in and being accepted by her peers.

According to Gordon, Jenny does not seem to know where her emotions are taking her or how to deal with them. The only option she sees is to run away “where she can choose to be.”

Jenny sees her life as having a connection with the character Ophelia in Shakespeare’s “Hamlet.” She decides to follow Ophelia out of existence into a world that she can have control over. She achieves this by drowning herself in a waterfall.

In Jenny’s unconscious state, she speaks with Ophelia about life and realizes that she controls her own destiny. Gordon wanted Jenny to walk in Ophelia’s footsteps as Ophelia sinks deeper into depression.
Gordon said she was trying to create “a fictional reality of someone who would follow her (Ophelia) down and what she would find where she went.”

Gordon was inspired with the idea after working with the OSU Young Scholars Program where she taught students who were 14-17 years old. She was frightened by the way students would talk about death and dying in such an insignificant manner. She wanted to explore the fascination of youths to just want to slip away and not be seen.

According to Gordon, her concern about teen consumerism and the media’s negative influence on society also affected the production of this play.

The second play, entitled “Barnum’s American Museum,” was done by Michael Karp.

Karp received his bachelor’s degree in fine arts from OSU in 1990. After graduation, he attended the Ringling Brother’s Clown College and toured as a clown for a year.

“What I wanted to do with this show was figure out a way to tie my whole life together, put all of my training into one piece,” Karp said.

Barnum’s American Museum burned down in the 1860’s and P.T. Barnum died in the 1890’s. According to Karp, the idea for the show was to have the spirits of all these performers come in and show off the new tricks they have learned in the past 150 years.

“I wanted to recreate the spectacle. He (Barnum) was all about spectacle, excitement and overplaying everything,” he said.

The excitement is recreated in this play through audience participation and outrageous sideshow renditions.

The MFA New Works are running every night through Saturday at 8 p.m. with a Saturday matinee at 2 p.m. in the Mount Hall Studio Theatre.
Appendix J - Slides Used Within the Production

Slide #1
?????? - The Mystic (mentalist & mind-reading)
Slide #2
Signor Vivalla vs. Signor Antonio (jugglers)
THE
GREAT
PROSCIUTTO

Slide #3
The Great Proscuitto (the magician)
General Tom Thumb

Slide #4
General Tom Thumb (miniature man)
Slide #5
Romeo & Juliet Travesty (Shakespearian burlesque)
JENNY LIND
the
SWEDISH NIGHTINGALE

Slide #6
Jenny Lind - the Swedish Nightingale (singer)
Slide #7
Phineas & Taylor (ventriloquist act)
COMING SOON

UNCLE SAM

DAN RICE

Slide #9
Joe Pontland (clown)
DO NOT PUT YOUR HANDS INSIDE THE CAGE!!
WARNING
DO NOT TRY THIS AT HOME
WARNING

Slide #10
Schlitzry, the What-Is-It? (blockhead & bed of nails)
Appendix K - Publicity Photos

Quinn Carlson & Michael Karp
Signor Antonio & Signor Vivalla
posed with ????? - The Mystic’s costume
Quinn Carlson & Michael Karp
Signor Antonio & Signor Vivalla
posed with ???? - The Mystic's costume
Michael Karp & Quinn Carlson
????? - The Mystic with his assistant
Michael Karp
as ????? - The Mystic
Michael Karp & Quinn Carlson
Schlitzky, the Human Blockhead & ????? - The Mystic's "Bright Little Girl"
Quinn Carlson & Michael Karp
Barnum's "Bright Little Girl" and ????? - The Mystic
Michael Karp & Quinn Carlson
Signor Vivalla vs. Signor Antonio
Michael Karp
General Tom Thumb
Michael Karp & Quinn Carlson
Jenny Lind, The Swedish Nightingale and D.J. Neelind
Michael Karp
Schlitzky, the What-In-It?