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ELLIS RABB: A MAN OF REPERTORY

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By
Dorothy W. Laming, B.A., M.A.

* * * * * *

The Ohio State University
1972

Approved by

[Signature]
Advisor
Division of Theatre
PROLOGUE

A little boy of six stood alone on the great oak staircase that led down to his Grandmother's Victorian living room. It was just dawn on Christmas Day, 1939. The big grandfather clock ticked loudly. The room below was filled with wondrous objects; the unlit Christmas tree stood like a dark green shadow in one corner, and reached to the ceiling; the familiar room seemed invaded by strange things. The child advanced down the stairs towards the center of the large, old fashioned room as the sun cast odd glints of light on the many packages. The boy slowly revolved, absorbing the gift-packed floor around the tree. He approached each package separately, retreating when he saw his name. They all had his name on them, all the packages. All the gifts would be his as soon as the clock struck the next hour and the family arose to enjoy the child's delight. Slowly he moved back to the empty area in the middle of the room and sat down on the floor, listening to the ticking in the stillness and watching the sun glisten ever brighter on the walls. The little boy began to cry. The little boy was me.

As the clock struck the early morning hour in Helena, Arkansas, Mother came down the stairs. She was a Leo, whose especially bright, clear, blue eyes illuminated a face which was always pretty. Tall and slender with dark hair, her looks were dominated by the energy and determination of her personality. She was without any sense of defeat.
She must have been astonished to see me so early in tears, choking on the silver spoon of the only-child. I was the only child on either side of the family. They now gathered as the winter southern sun glistened on all my presents.

Great Gran smiled down from her chair with the carved lion-head arms. Her pale, print gingham gown flowed over considerable bulk. She was an Illinois Smith who married a very successful Mississippi lumber-business McCoy and her hearing was always turned off at family gatherings. My six foot four, country doctor grandfather was charming and humorous. His six foot three son, Mother's brother, had a young Lincoln good looks, blurred by an alcoholic smile. His wife, a professional southern beauty, looked lovely as usual, smiling calmly, careful not to ruffle a hair at such an hour.

My father's nickname was 'Happy'. It has stayed with him since childhood because it suits him completely. The rest of the group stood around waiting in anticipation: Emma, my big black nurse in a white dress, smiled down; Ed White, the black house-man laughed above me in his white starched coat; even Alberta, the unsmiling cook cracked a snerk at me as she placed the old silver coffee pot before Mama Zip, mother's mother, the head of the family, the Victorian child, and an only child, too. It was her kind look that made me realize my duty. Christmas Day was my day.

I believe there was a lot of cheering for me to open the sled first. It seemed futile as the day was autumnal. But I had to begin somewhere. At the far end of the room, through the double-doored
archway was Mama Zip's player piano. In front of it sat a red velvet box. Through the opening in the box I could see puppets hanging from strings. Slowly I moved toward it. The noise of the family laughter was behind me as I crawled into the little puppet stage and it collapsed around me in a heap. I had finally begun to inspect my presents. I had also begun a career.

No member of my known family has ever been in the theatre before. My mother's people were doctors, land-owners, lumbermen. My father's side of the family were in insurance and real-estate. Except for Mama Zip's player piano and my great aunt Florence's religious paintings, no member of my family is known to have had any artistic interests. The fall within the little stage among the puppets was the beginning of a new era. There followed a long series of back-porch presentations in front of discarded parlor draperies, with Ed White flashing old lamps for light.

It is perhaps significant that the porch dramas that followed were always for pay. I never charged less than a nickel even in the mid-thirties. My first experience with the black market came before the age of ten when my grandfather bought his way out of a performance by offering me a quarter not to attend. I accepted.

Ellis Rabb
undated
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express my appreciation to Mr. Ellis Rabb for his permission to undertake this study. Mr. Rabb offered both the official and also his personal files of APA for extensive research. Without his generosity and good faith, this exploration and documentation of his career would not have been possible.

For their support and interest in this work, I wish to thank the following individuals: Mr. T. Edward Hambleton, producer of the Phoenix Theatre; Conrad Susa; Keene Curtis; Norman Kean; Arthur Lithgow; Sidney Walker; Jack O'Brien; Edith Skinner and Jim Tilton. Their contributions to this study have been invaluable.

To the members of my committee I give my most heartfelt appreciation: Dr. George Crepeau, Dr. John Morrow and Dr. Roy Bowen. Their critical appraisal, scholarship and unflagging interest have made the completion of this work a reality.
VITA

June 5, 1917 .................. Born - Springfield, Ohio
1952-1962 .................... Professional actress
1967 .......................... B.A., Wittenberg University, Springfield, Ohio
1970 ......................... M.A., The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio
1968-1972 .................... Teaching Associate, Division of Theatre, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Theatre

Studies in Theatre History. Professors John H. McDowell and John C. Morrow (The Ohio State University).

Studies in Dramatic Literature. Professors Roy H. Bowen and John C. Morrow (The Ohio State University).

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INTRODUCTION

This is the story of a man and his theatre. It needs to be told. The contribution which Ellis Rabb, actor-manager-director, has made to the repertory movement in the American theatre is extraordinary. Yet the great repertory which he created met its demise after nine years, in the prime of its life.

The death of the Association of Producing Artists, known as APA, distressed many people; critics, actors, teachers of Shakespeare and other great classic playwrights, students of the theatre, students of all kinds from grade school through college, friends of the theatre, patrons and the average playgoer who enjoyed seeing repertory throughout the season, all puzzled over the unhappy ending. Here was an outstanding, experienced and enormously successful repertory company, housed in its own theatre\(^1\) maintaining a roster of fine actors, good taste in productions and providing a repertory of plays of all periods, yet unable to survive. This is somewhat reminiscent of the death of the Antioch Shakespeare Festival\(^2\) after six years, an earlier repertory company with which Ellis Rabb was associated in six summers of Shakespeare.

One purpose of this work is to record those incredible years of APA and thus a notable period in theatrical history. This exploration of the background and growth of the Association of Producing Artists will, however, also reveal the talent, vision and stamina of
its founder, Ellis Rabb, a dedicated man of the theatre, a dedicated man of repertory. Mr. Rabb had many successes; he had some failures; he made wise decisions; he also made some unwise commitments, perhaps at the expense of his own acting career. APA was his blazon. It lived for nine years under his banner, never faltering in the fulfillment of the true meaning of repertory. APA faced many complexities and fought for survival on innumerable levels, but it was always a repertory company in the old traditional sense: originating in England, the true Repertory Theatre is one in which a number of plays are ready for production; several plays can be performed weekly with new ones in preparation to be added when brought to performance level.

It is interesting to remember that in the early days of the repertory movement in England, the word was considered synonymous with failure. There is a much quoted story about Beerbohm Tree, who, on being queried as to just when a Repertory Theatre was not a Repertory Theatre replied somewhat cynically, "When it is a success." In those days most people considered repertory a theatrical venture constantly facing disaster in financial terms because it functioned in the provinces with little hope of much recognition. However the truth of the movement and its great value to theatre in the broadest terms came forth in the development of acting skills of those who participated. This training ground for young English actors has always been a point of envy to their American counterparts. Mr. Rabb offered this medium for growth to his acting company.

This study has been made possible by the generosity of Mr. Rabb
who opened the APA files of nine years to me. He has not involved himself in any other way in the research on this project. The data presented is from Mr. Rabb's personal files, reviews, letters, memorandums and other papers. With the exception of his own prologue and epilogue Mr. Rabb has carefully avoided any other affiliation with the work. The writer is totally responsible for any errors, misjudgments or distortions that may appear. However it must be noted that Mr. Rabb is a very verbal man; he has written prodigiously on many subjects. These writings from his personal files have been indispensible in forming some of the background to this work.

One of the last and saddest additions to the file was the following quote from the New York Times Sunday edition of March 23, 1969. This article by Walter Kerr was entitled, "Yes, Something is Rotten in Denmark." The full contents and general commentary revolved around an Association of Producing Artists production of Hamlet at the Lyceum Theatre in New York City. Ellis Rabb, who directed the production and played the leading role, came under heavy criticism. One particular passage from Mr. Kerr's review is worth noting:

The occasion is undoubtedly symptomatic of deeper difficulties. The evening walks in defeat, cannot nerve itself beyond a tired gesture. Has Mr. Rabb finally been worn down by the rather clear and painful evidence that the general audience is not interested in repertory as such? Or the knowledge that neither government nor foundation funds necessarily go to the groups that deserve them most? By a weariness and insecurity within the generally most able company, by a feeling that recent choice of plays has tended to invite disaster? The reasons for the APA's plight are many and complicated. But however well or ill understood, they are real and pressing to the people at the Lyceum. . . The company will surely be heard from again--louder, I hope. In the meantime, we can only regret both its leaving and the production with which it happened to say farewell.
Although the APA had not publicly announced its decision to abandon repertory at the Lyceum Theatre, perceptive patrons instinctively felt that the 1969 production of Hamlet signaled the end of the company, at least for the moment. Why this particular production heralded the end of the struggle for survival of this talented, dedicated organization is of little importance. Every repertory company has had its less successful moments. Even with its many triumphs APA ended after a nine year existence and an incredible battle against financial collapse. Although the critics had unanimously called this group the nation's best repertory company, such praise was not enough to sustain its life. The purpose of this work is to explore Mr. Babb's concepts and to examine the extent to which he achieved his aims.

The man whose life and efforts were totally dedicated to his company, whose artistic creativity and distinguished talents brought the APA into national focus, whose deep and abiding belief in repertory has never wavered is now an integral part of the professional theatrical world. Mr. Rabb moves from directorial chores at Lincoln Center, New York City to direct the American Conservatory Theatre (ACT) in San Francisco, to Europe to work out details and confer on an opera, then back to the States to direct the operatic production. He is deeply interested in films, in writing, in cooking and scuba-diving, in people. APA is over. Unless at some future time Mr. Rabb gathers his forces together, all of whom would join him again with the same dedication they have shown in the past, APA will simply become a legend.
in the minds and hearts of those who felt its particular magic.

Since one cannot separate APA from its founder and artistic director, this work will be somewhat multifaceted, covering the personal life and activities of a man whose earliest training began in the Antioch Shakespeare Repertory Company and culminated in the creation of his own organization which became one of the nation's outstanding artistic achievements. The only other group which shares this excellent standing is Eva Le Gallienne. The two repertory companies which she founded, the Civic Repertory Theatre and later the American Repertory Company, have been a beacon for Rabb's endeavors. Personally, Miss Le Gallienne contributed generously to the continuance of APA's productions both as an actress and directorially. Mr. Rabb cherished her guidance and friendship; he was deeply gratified by her immense contribution and interest in his company: her ideals and successes served as an example of what APA might achieve.

The need for a revival of repertory has been recognized by theatre critics since the early sixties: it was hoped this system would be a step forward in healing the ailing dramatic art of this country. After all, it was only about sixty years ago that American repertory theatre disappeared. During the last half of the nineteenth century New York City housed at least five great repertory companies: Daly's, Wallack's, Palmer's, The Standard Theatre and the Madison Theatre whose business manager in earlier days was a gentleman by the name of Daniel Frohman. Mr. Frohman later built the Lyceum theatre on 45th Street. This theatre was admirably suited for a repertory company.
Mr. Frohman had the foresight to build a living quarters area in which he lived and entertained for many years. Although it was not used for this purpose by its recent tenants, still the space for building sets, for dressing rooms, rehearsal space, areas for storing of costumes were all admirably suited to Mr. Rabb's needs: there was the space for a producing entity. Frohman opened his theatre on November 2nd, 1903. By the turn of the century the repertory company had been replaced by a new theatrical system, the combination company: a group of actors brought together for the purpose of producing a single play. Sixty-six years later, in 1969, Mr. Rabb closed the Lyceum. This theatrical system, the combination company, seemed to be still firmly entrenched.
FOOTNOTES

1. The Lyceum Theatre, 149 West 45th Street, New York City, New York.

2. The Antioch Shakespeare Festival, Yellow Springs, Ohio. This company was called Shakespeare-Under-The-Stars. The entire canon was produced during the years 1952-1957.


5. Eva Le Gallienne (1899- ) is an American actress and producer. She has contributed widely to the interpretation of Ibsen in America. By her work with APA she furthered her influence on Mr. Rabb; she, too, believed in repertory as the highest peak of good and intelligent theatre. She directed Cherry Orchard and played in Ghosts for APA.


7. The Lyceum Theatre on 45th Street, New York City, built by Daniel Frohman in 1902. This theatre was leased by the APA-Phoenix organization in 1966.
CHAPTER I

THE ANTIOCH YEARS

The Birth of the Festival

The Antioch Festival of 1952-1957, developed from the dream of its founder who became its artistic director, Arthur Lithgow; it was also the creative birthing place of Ellis Rabb. Here it was that Rabb saw for the first time how repertory could work. He saw a company grow from a small swirling island of chaos to a mighty contribution to the artistic world of theatre, all within five years, and all within the very small world of an independent college in midwest Ohio. Because of these beginnings and these influences the Antioch College Shakespeare Festival will precede the APA years and will form the introduction to Ellis Rabb's early development. Without the influence of Arthur Lithgow and Antioch there probably would have been less chance of APA developing so early in his career. This is the logical time to indicate some personal involvement in the work at Antioch. The friendship of the writer with Mr. Rabb stems from 1952 when each were members of the newly established Shakespeare repertory company. Much of the material of this first chapter has been taken from the personal impressions and memories of those early years.

The staff of the Antioch College drama department in 1952 consisted of Paul Treichler, chairman, a dedicated and beloved man with many years of professional theatrical experience; Meredith Dallas, a
brilliant actor and talented director; and Arthur Lithgow, a devotee of Shakespeare for many years, a visionary, a fine actor, and also an experienced actor both professionally and academically.

Arthur Lithgow, as an undergraduate at Antioch College, helped to found the Antioch Summer Theatre in the old Opera House of the village. Following his graduation in 1938, he was away eight years, doing radio and theatre work in New York City, directing dramatics at the Putney School in Vermont and taking his turn in the service. He returned to Yellow Springs in 1946 to act and direct in the theatre's eleventh season. He came back to Yellow Springs permanently in 1947 with a master's degree from Cornell and a contract with Antioch as professor of English. Mr. Lithgow was associate professor at the time of the Shakespeare Festival.

For some time Arthur Lithgow had contemplated the development of a Festival of Shakespeare based upon the presentation of the chronicle plays in a grand repertory cycle, an impressive theatricalization of a most important period of English History. In conferring with others in the drama department Mr. Lithgow found them to be responsive to the idea. The timing was right.

The drama program at the moment was in need of some new exciting developments. The projected plays were individual masterpieces: King John, King Richard the Second, King Henry the Fourth, Parts One and Two, King Henry the Fifth and King Richard the Third, contain some of the greatest of Shakespeare's poetry, tragedy, comedy and vivid dramatization. The three parts of King Henry the Sixth would have to
be condensed into one play; *King Henry the Eighth* was more a great pageant than a dramatic masterpiece (and of dubious attribution) but it was felt that both could be fitted into a full panorama which would be impressive and unprecedented in this country.

The plan was to begin the program approximately the first of July of that summer in 1952. One chronicle play would be added to the repertory each week. The series would become cyclical as the repertory was enlarged, so that by the end of August the total cycle of Shakespeare's Histories could be seen in one week of consecutive productions, including two week-end matinee performances. An added attraction for these productions, from the administration's point of view, was that the plays could be offered to the returning college community during the first week of school. After a great deal of planning and persuasion by Mr. Lithgow Antioch college agreed to underwrite the program. They voted an appropriation of $6300.00 as funds to underwrite the following tentative budget:

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<td>$200.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1465.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Breakdown of Salaries:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One promotion man</td>
<td>$75.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One secretary bookkeeper</td>
<td>$25.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ten members of an actor-director-stage manager staff at an average of $57.50</td>
<td>$575.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ten student staff at an average of $22.50</td>
<td>$225.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apprentices paying their own board and room</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$900.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These above figures were in anticipation of the following potential income:

Potential gross income weekly:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>550 seats at an average of $1.25 per seat returns</td>
<td>$787.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross per night</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross income per four nights</td>
<td>$3150.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opening night at .65 per seat</td>
<td>$357.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matinee at .65 per seat</td>
<td>$357.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$3865.00</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concession business at ten per cent of gross</td>
<td>$386.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gross total income</strong></td>
<td><strong>$4251.50</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The budget form is now broken down into the divisions of the percentage of capacity business which would be considered a successful
first year summer enterprise:

| Business at fifty per cent capacity: 225 patrons per night | $2125.75 |
| Weekly operating costs | 1465.00 |
| Profit weekly at fifty per cent capacity | $660.75 |

The break-even point was figured to be a little less than thirty-five per cent capacity or 193 patrons per night.

On June 21, 1952 the following letter was dispatched from the Antioch College News Bureau by Raymond Watts, Publicity Director of the Antioch Area Theatre. The release created great interest and brought the intended result. The general public became aware that something was happening in the vicinity which was out of the ordinary.²

To Her Majesty the Queen
Buckingham Palace
London, England

Madam:

On occasion of the first production in the United States of American of all the History plays of William Shakespeare in summer repertory, we the chairman of the Board of Trustees and the President of Antioch College, and the Directors of the Antioch Area Theatre, extend cordial and respectful greetings to Your Majesty, rightful and worthy successor to and living representative of the Britannic Majesty depicted in the mighty dramas which we so proudly present upon our outdoor stage.

We offer this summer's enterprise, Shakespeare's tribute to Britain's Crown, for Your Majesty's gracious commendation. We submit it as a token of the patriotic pride we and all Americans take in the greatness of our common heritage in England's history. We present these plays in the earnest hope that they will symbolize our nation's eternal friendship with the British Commonwealth. We enact them as a gesture of American respect for Your Majesty, and with the hope and expectation that your reign will fulfill the prophesy of Shakespeare ("King Henry the
Eighth". Act Five Scene Five) for an earlier Elizabeth:

In her days every man shall eat in safety
Under his own vine what he plants; and sing
The merry songs of peace to all his neighbors.
God shall be truly known, and those about her
From her shall read the perfect ways of honour,
And by those claim their greatness, not by blood.
Nor shall this peace sleep with her; but as when
The bird of wonder dies, the maiden phoenix,
Her ashes new create another heir,
As great in admiration as herself,
So shall she leave her blessedness to one,
(when heaven shall call her from this cloud of darkness)
Who, from the sacred ashes of her honour,
Shall star-like rise, as great in fame as she was,
And so stand fix'd.

We have the honour to remain, Madam,

Homer C. Corry, Chairman of               Douglas McGregor,
the Board of Trustees                        President

Arthur Lithgow       Merideth Dallas      Paul Treichler
                  Directors of the Antioch Area Theatre

On July 10, 1952, the following letter was received by
the theatre:

Gentlemen:

I have been asked by the Private Secretary to Her Majesty the Queen to thank you very much for your letter of 21st of June.

I am to say that her Majesty learned with interest and pleasure of your plan to produce all the historical plays of Shakespeare at Antioch College this summer, and that she greatly values your references to the spirit in which they will be enacted.

Her Majesty deeply appreciated your good wishes, so felicitously embodied in the quotation from "King Henry the Eighth", and sends to you her own good wishes in return.

Messrs. Homer C. Corry                        Yours Sincerely,
Douglas McGregor
Arthur Lithgow
Merideth Dallas
Paul Treichler
Antioch College, Yellow Springs,
Ohio

Alan Davidson
Private Secretary to
Her Majesty's Ambassador
The Festival Company

Mr. Lithgow had a company to gather together. He combed the universities of the surrounding areas, looking for talented actors. During the course of his search Lithgow went to Carnegie Mellon, then known as Carnegie Tech, to view the work of an actor who had been recommended. The production Mr. Lithgow attended was Hamlet; the actor who caught his attention was not the one he had come to see. Instead, Mr. Lithgow's attention was held by the performance of a young man as The Player King. Inquiries revealed the student still had a year of college to finish. However, the offer was made and Ellis Rabb eagerly accepted the job of an apprentice at the first Antioch Shakespeare Festival, publicized as Shakespeare-Under-the-Stars.

The anticipation with which Ellis Rabb arrived in Yellow Springs, Ohio was soon dispelled in clouds of disappointment and despair. His frame of mind during the first week of work was bent on escape at any cost; the past months at school had brought some complexities into his personal life which were deeply disturbing and unresolved. He was unhappy, spoiled and young, full of impatience for this fledgling company without money, attempting a program which seemed utterly ridiculous. Fresh from the organized, beautifully equipped drama school, Ellis was bewildered by the lack of technical staff; no costumer to design, flatter and fit materials to the needs of the production; no one to stop and listen to his immediate problems. The Festival was still coming out of its dream. It was still not organized, not sure of itself, not really anything. The first
production, of *King John*, rehearsed under the trees on the campus. As everyone in the play had many other responsibilities as well, there were moments when the necessary actor was off hanging lights or carrying some kind of equipment to the stage area.

Ellis Rabb wasn't remotely interested in the monumental efforts other apprentices were making; he was an actor and nothing else interested him. The organization from his perspective was a shambles; no good could possibly come from it; it had all been a dreadful mistake and Rabb wanted out. It was during this time that the writer was first made aware of the new apprentice. Approached by Mr. Rabb one hot afternoon, the conversation between us became at once highly secretive and involved. He wanted a fake telegram sent to him, demanding his immediate presence elsewhere. He was packed and ready to leave as soon as the way was open. The request was refused and the remainder of the afternoon and evening was spent in an attempt to have Mr. Rabb see some reason and good in the situation in which he found himself. That the effort was successful was well-proven in the following years. Mr. Rabb returned to Antioch for six summers, growing from an uncertain, hostile apprentice to become the Artistic Director in 1957.

Yellow Springs, Ohio was a friendly village. The actors who had been brought in were asked to many functions. Many of these actors including the apprentices from Antioch were at home in this bantering, social, party-time group of easy-going, relaxed villagers. Ellis was new, the actor Arthur Lithgow had presumably taken a chance upon one of the untried student apprentices. Alone and lonely,
basically very shy, he was thrust into an atmosphere of confusion he did not fully enjoy. It was a painful beginning.

The first company of twenty-eight players who gathered for the opening meeting were only dimly aware of the scope of the work which lay ahead. Some actors had been brought in from New York, others with former professional experience came from the surrounding area; still others were the drama students from Antioch College. This diverse group of young people and management met together with considerable uncertainty on both sides. It was not a union company this first summer. Special permission had been granted by Actor’s Equity Association to permit the professional actors to participate. When the enormity of the undertaking became apparent, Ellis Rabb was not the only member to feel panic. There was a general apprehension over the prospect of playing full productions of Shakespeare in weekly stock.

The General Staging

Arthur Lithgow’s Shakespeare-Under-The-Stars made theatrical history that summer of 1952. It was the first known time in this country the Chronicle plays had been presented in repertory, providing an opportunity of seeing all the plays in sequence during one week. On each week-end four performances (two matinees and two evening performances, each of a different play) were given. Kings, queens and courtesans, comedy and murder crowned the cycle of Chronicle plays. Never before had this tremendous narrative been told in one complete cycle, in one mighty pageant which covered three centuries of the most turbulent pages of English history. Horace Mann, the founder of Antioch
College, would have been amazed to witness the scenes produced at
the base of his beloved towers. The fact that any company so newly
formed and working on a miniscule budget would dare to undertake such
a venture was remarkable; furthermore, the plays themselves, as one
reviewer observed, had a three hundred year popularity rating about
equal to that of "Typhoid Annie". The platform stage was located on the front entrance to
the college's administration building, Mann Hall. Gothic-turreted,
the towers of the century-old building were silhouetted against the
moonlit sky and formed a striking background for the stage action. The
trumpet vines with their vivid blossoms climbed high on the brick
walls of the building; the curving walks and shrubbery provided a perfect
location for entrances, processionals and the battles of the histories.

The set, designed by J. Budd Steinhilber, presented a
dozen points for exits and entrances with seven levels and "inner
above" and "inner below" playing areas. It was curtainless except
for the addition of an "inner below" curtain which was drawn across
the small center area when needed. The design suited the sweep and
scope of the Chronicles; soliloquies delivered on the forestage were
within a few feet of the front rows of the 550-seat house.

Curtain time was 7:45, still daylight in the Elizabethan
manner. This afforded an early hour for the play to be over, and
avoided the late evening chills and damps. If all went well the early
hour also eliminated the hazard of the evening train which passed just
beyond the campus. Overly friendly engineers delighted in blowing an
PIATE I

ANTIOCH STAGE, 1952. PRODUCTION OF RICHARD II.
endless cheery greeting to the gathering. There were many times when the plays ran late and actors unfortunate enough to be on the stage at train-time were directed to freeze in position until the noise subsided, always to the delight of the audience.

Rabb's work this first season showed that Arthur Lithgow's instinctive decision had been right. It was always Ellis who received the detailed review. He played Lewis, the Dauphin of France in *King John*; Edmund of Langley, Duke of York, in *King Richard the Second*; Thomas Percy, Earl of Worcester, in *King Henry the Fourth Part One* and Shallow, a County Justice, in *King Henry the Fourth Part Two*; the Archbishop of Canterbury in *King Henry the Fifth*. The trilogy of *King Henry the Sixth*, edited by Arthur Lithgow, was condensed into one chaotic production. It has been said of this play that the real core of the action lay backstage. Actors were confused: eyes glazed with the effort of concentration as to which role they were to appear in at the moment. Because of the span of time, the play was using many actors over again, reappearing as the historical events rushed them on and off to don yet another costume. It was not one of the greater successes, but the audiences were loyal and devoted, valiantly trying to place the pieces of this history in some order in their minds. Many went home to dig out their *Complete Works* to find out what really happened that night. Rabb played Richard Plantagenet, in *King Henry the Sixth*, *King Richard the Third* saw Rabb as one of the murderers and *King Henry the Eighth*, Cardinal Wolsey; the latter role was his triumph of the season.
Cardinal Wolsey was more than just a role to Ellis that summer. It was the culmination of a steady growth in his work and of his personal handling of the somewhat disorganized first year. His reviews had been brilliant. The village took him to their hearts. No gathering, however small or informal, however casual was complete without him. Everyone loved him, admired him, wanted to be near him. His success had given him the confidence he required to show himself as he was. Not the sullen, somewhat arrogant, demanding young actor but a warm and generous human being with an outrageous sense of humor and an incredible talent. Ellis was clearly the focal point of the Festival.

The first season was not remotely successful in the beginning weeks. Audiences were sparse. Actors had been known to lurk in the bushes before making the first entrance of the play because they spotted a car parking across the campus; the opening lines were held until one more seat could be filled. There was a time when the closing notice was to be posted almost any hour. But the tide turned. The word of mouth spread. People came.

The Nature of the Festival Audiences

The Shakespeare Festival attracted a curious variety of people; people arrived with widely diversified backgrounds. For example, one of the more avid enthusiasts was the captain of a tug-boat in the New York Harbor. He and his wife took the evening train each Friday for Yellow Springs, remained to see the four plays on the week-end and returned on Monday. For five years these two made Yellow Springs
their summer week-end home. As a matter of fact, their familiarity
with the company grew to such an extent that it was quite common for
an actor to see the captain squatting down in front of the playing
area, for a camera shot; waving a cheery hello to whoever was on
the stage at the time, he would nod encouragement, stand up and walk
through the lighted area to his favorite tree where he leaned,
contentedly, listening to his beloved Shakespeare. As far as is known,
no one reprimanded him during the entire cycle. Others were stopped.
The captain continued on, happily unaware of his nuisance value. His
activities were tolerated like the evening train, the airplanes, the
wandering dogs; all simply hazards of outdoor Shakespeare. But no
one in the company that first summer remained untouched and less than
grateful for the faithful appearance of these two Shakespeare buffs each
week-end.

Ellis Rabb often likened the company to the Lord Chamberlain's
Company with which Shakespeare was associated. Like all Elizabethan
companies they were a repertory group; they gave six nightly performances
each week and during the day rehearsed the next play to be admitted
to the repertory. After that play was in, rehearsal began for another.
This was a concept of theatre life which Ellis understood and thoroughly
enjoyed; he functioned well under the playing-rehearsal schedule. The
stage, although not completely Elizabethan, incorporated the many levels
that composed the stage for which Shakespeare wrote; the versatility
demanded of the actors was certainly reminiscent of Elizabethan days:
not only did the actors play a different role in each production but
often more than one role in a single production. One Antioch drama major found himself playing five roles in a single play. The "dramatis personae" of Shakespeare's plays were often long. The company was small. In spite of the numerous problems presented by these circumstances, the actors met them with noble and ingenious efforts. The summer was filled with an aura of goodwill, with a selflessness, generosity and general helpfulness seldom seen in professional companies. This spirit seemed to encompass the audience as it overflowed from the stage.

The audiences were loyal and enthusiastic returning to the productions for the second and third time. The children of Yellow Springs, Ohio were one of the most exciting elements of the audience. They were allowed to attend the open air rehearsals if they remained seated. They became as familiar with the histories as with their favorite television program. They spoke knowingly together of Prince Hal and his friends, they loved Falstaff; many had their favorite actors and spent time following that individual around, running errands, chasing away the stage dogs. Ellis was a great favorite with all the children and he was enormously kind and patient with each one, although often it was taxing, especially on the opening night of a new play for the repertory.

Another section of spectators that summer was composed of workmen who were laying an extensive pipeline over the campus. They dug ditches all day in the broiling sun; when their work brought them near to the stage area one workman would invariably engage an actor
in conversation about the plays, ask some particular pertinent question. Finally it was discovered that the foreman of this crew of ditchdiggers was holding nightly sessions with his men and read the plays to them. The workmen came to the plays, listened avidly to the unfamiliar language questioned the actors about their role and the complex plot lines and followed the progression of the histories with intense interest throughout that summer of 1952. They were an inspiration to the entire company.

Finances

By the end of the season the twenty-eight players had presented sixty-eight performances, played to a total of 14,037 people and netted roughly $1,800.00. Newspapers from Chicago to New York carried critical praise of the Festival. President Douglas McGregor agreed that the good will and outstanding publicity which the college received "couldn't have been bought for $50,000.00." Research has uncovered the following memorandum to the Administrative Council of Antioch College submitted by Mrs. S. Vernet, Festival business manager. It was dated September 5, 1952, two days before the Festival closed.

The Area Theatre has had a cash income of $14,383.35 for the nine and one half weeks of operation this summer. The next two days are almost completely sold out. We are ordering an additional two hundred bleacher seats for Henry the Eighth.

In addition to the above income we have accounts receivable in the amount of $1,140. . . The total anticipated income for the ten weeks will amount to $15,873.35. . . As of to date the expenses total $17,071.76. All bills are paid through September seventh, our closing date. There will be an estimated cost of $600.00 for closing the season and minor expenses.
This means we will have an anticipated deficit of $1798.41 at the end of ten weeks. This is to be met out of the guaranteed working capital of $6300.00 with which the college underwrote this venture.

In addition the Shakespeare Festival has built up a capital inventory this summer of $2275.00. This includes an excellent wardrobe of versatile costumes, a re-useable set, and electric equipment, as well as a set of flexible platforms for seating that can be used for future functions.

We should like to note that of the total expenditures of the theatre this summer, with the one exception of the costumes which were purchased from Cleveland, Ohio, the entire amount was spent in the Yellow Springs area. Over $2100.00 were paid to... Antioch Press, Antioch College dining halls, Antioch College dormitories, AMPAC, the Music library and other services.

Because of the interest and success of the program, Antioch College felt it imperative to continue the Festival the second year, again assuming the role of producer. The three directors began their plans for 1953 almost before the summer season had closed.

Before ending the season of 1952, one news item seems worthy of inclusion: 9

A New York producer in Antioch's audience this week will be T. Edward Hambleton, head of Medea productions, who this summer had been trying out a new play at Stockbridge, Massachusetts. Hambleton is investigating the possibility of filming the Shakespeare cycle for television.

It is always curious to watch the intricacies of relationships form their patterns. T. Hambleton was a close friend of the head of the Drama Department, Paul Treichler. Hambleton had come to see the work in which Treichler was so involved. Twelve years later Ellis Rabb and T. Hambleton joined forces, presenting the APA for two successful season off-Broadway at the Seventy-Fourth Street Theatre and later as the APA-Phoenix took over the Lyceum. The Antioch Festival was the beginning
of many things for Ellis Rabb. It not only launched his theatrical
career, gave him wide and priceless experience, exposure and growth,
it also introduced him to the value of repertory; he pursued this medium
with dedication for many years.

The Graeco-Roman Cycle of 1953

Rabb graduated from college and returned to Yellow Springs
the following summer. When questioned about his decision to return
Rabb laughed and replied, "Habit is everything, said Shaw." But it
was more than habit. There were friends in the village who looked
forward to his return; he had made a place for himself in the community;
so it was with a great sense of security and expectation that Rabb
returned to Ohio in 1953. Arthur Lithgow had offered him roles which
were challenging; the season looked promising.

This was the centennial year at Antioch College. The one
major happening during the winter had been securing the sponsorship
of the American National Theatre Academy. ANTA, specifically, would
assist in screening talent, make facilities available for the New York
City auditions and find actors of high caliber for consideration. The
budget was increased and scholarships for twenty student apprentices
were offered. As a result, the overall performance quality of the
Festival was noticeably higher. The season was called the Graeco-
Roman cycle. Lithgow's concept of the series was clearly defined in
the 1953 Souvenir program:

... Misinterpreted for centuries, most of the Greek and Roman
cycle has been obscured to the public and forgotten by the theatre.
Most critics agree these plays were inspired by cynicism,
disillusion and despair over the nature of man. We wish to approach them with a fresh viewpoint for we find in them another inspiration. . . May they not be seen as highly stylized satires of a sort particularly favored by courtly audiences? If we assume that the obscured Greek and Roman plays are unacceptable as tragedies, then perhaps they are susceptible to a new and fresh interpretation, as satires.

Arthur Lithgow possessed an uncanny ability to place his theatrical concepts within the production itself. These were not simply words to fill up space in a program but personal convictions. His ideas filled Ellis Rabb's mind; together the two worked, planned, talked and argued into the night. Their friendship was becoming deeper; they were valuable sounding boards for each other. The assignments which Ellis received for acting roles in 1953 were the following: Troilus in Troilus and Cressida; a soldier in Coriolanus; Lysimachus, Governor of Tarsus in Pericles; Ventidius in Timon of Athens; Cassius in Julius Caesar; and Eros in Antony and Cleopatra. The concept which Arthur Lithgow evolved, approaching these plays as satires, did not include the last two. Obviously Julius Caesar and Antony and Cleopatra are tragedies and were directed as such in the season.

Ellis approached the role of Troilus with some misgivings. He dyed his hair blonde and struggled during the long hours of rehearsal in the hopes of finding the key to the character. He never succeeded. His image of Troilus and the work he actually accomplished were far apart. It was a disaster for him. The triumph of the first year was not to be repeated. After critics had outdone each other in the extravagant praise of Cardinal Wolsey and other roles which Ellis had played in 1952, they now seemed to rival each other for the most clever and
caustic comments. Rabb was totally unprepared for this sudden turn. He was nervous, disillusioned and his work showed the strain. He had not yet faced the ebb and flow of the actor's career. He had had no experience with failure. The one role that saved the season was Ellis's portrayal of Cassius in *Julius Caesar*. It was his only success.

At the end of the summer Arthur Lithgow spoke with Ellis at some length. The actor was deeply in need of an armor; he needed an objectivity about critics which he did not possess. Lithgow was a visionary. He had a strong will and a passionate dedication to the Festival project. Many problems were solved while sitting around the Lithgow kitchen table. Ellis has often quoted Arthur on this occasion as Arthur said; "Ellis, every man has a dragon in his life which he has to slay or be slain by. You must face your dragon."

It was on that note that Rabb departed for Yale University.

It was Rabb's intention to study at Yale for the winter. But after two and a half months, he moved on into New York City. That winter he staged a dramatic production of *The Beast in the Jungle* by Henry James which he had adapted. Later in the year he worked in Children's Theatre in Pittsburgh, then went to Europe. When word came that Arthur Lithgow wanted him to return to the Shakespeare Festival he was ready.

**The 1954 Season**

By 1954 the college community of Yellow Springs, approximately three thousand in population, had become the midwest theatre center of
Shakespeare for the eleven week summer season. Antioch College agreed to underwrite three more seasons making it possible for the Area Theatre to present all known works of Shakespeare in a five year span. This season seven romantic comedies were to be staged by a non-star repertory Equity company of forty. Ellis Rabb's roles were Gremio, in *Taming of the Shrew*; Speed, a clownish servant in *Two Gentlemen of Verona*; Capulet in *Romeo and JULiet*; and Bassanio in *The Merchant of Venice*. Ariel in *The Tempest* was finally won as a role for the final production of the season but not without a bitter fight. Lithgow was against Ellis playing the role but Ellis considered it vitally important that he play it. After months of argument and much correspondence Ellis announced that he would play Ariel or he would not come to Antioch at all. He played Ariel and received brilliant reviews. He had been right. This season was again the success his first year had been. His work was excellent, the reception of the critics was unanimously enthusiastic once more.

The Shakespeare stage was rebuilt in 1954 (see Plate II). The costumes became more elaborate as a costumer was on hand for knowledgable design work. The lighting developed further artistic dimensions complementing the nightly productions. A new awning covered the stage and audience and the ever present hazard of rain was solved. Earl Hyman was imported from New York to re-create his title role in *Othello* which had played seventy-five performances in New York at the Jan Hus Playhouse the previous season, the second longest run of *Othello* in the history of the New York stage. Clarence Derwent, then president
ANTIOCH STAGE, REBUILT IN 1954.
PRODUCTION OF OTHELLO.
of the American National Theatre and Academy, a veteran of the London and Broadway stages for more than fifty years, played his famous role of Shylock in *Merchant of Venice* and was a joy to his fellow actors and audience alike. This grand old man of the theatre came to Antioch for the Equity minimum salary of $60.00 per week. William Ball, Rabb's old friend and classmate joined the company that season and offered two memorable roles for the Antioch audiences: Puck, in *Midsummer Night's Dream* and Romeo in *Romeo and Juliet*.

The season ended with *The Tempest*. Ellis Rabb's Ariel was a thing of great delicacy and enchantment. He played the wistful creature that wished to be human with infinite creativity and depth; and those who saw his work that year recognized the excellent craft which was developing as the Festival proceeded on with its five year life.

One way to evaluate the growth of the Antioch Shakespeare Festival is by audience attendance. The College New Bureau Report of October 11, 1954 shows the attendance for the eleven week season totaled 36,861 as compared to approximately 20,000 in 1953 and 15,000 in 1952. The 1954 figure represents a seventy-eight per cent increase over 1953 and a hundred and forty-five per cent increase over 1952. Receipts were roughly, $50,000. This was enough to pay off substantial capital investment for lighting equipment, seats and stage construction.

The News Bureau Report showed these further statistics. During the four weeks of grand repertoire, some twenty-five states were represented by visitors on campus. The majority throughout the season, however, came from Ohio, with regular contingents from Indiana and
Kentucky, Columbus, Cincinnati, Dayton and Springfield. Substantial week-end audiences came from Toledo, Cleveland and Detroit.

The third season of 1954 found an entirely different approach to finances taking place in the college Bursar's office. Now positively committed to three more years of Shakespeare, Antioch College invested approximately $18,000 in staging and equipment. These costs were to be retired out of income during the next three years. Operating costs for the season, according to this above mentioned 1954 News Bureau Report, were estimated at about $30,000, exclusive of investment capital.

1955, The Fourth Season

Ellis Rabb was now returning for his fourth season in Yellow Springs. By now the quote from Shaw was a standing joke. Habit is all, habit is everything. Still there were roles to be played which were not to be taken lightly. In 1955, for example, Ellis played Shallow, a Country Justice, in *Merry Wives of Windsor*; Touchstone in *As You Like It*; Sir Andrew Aguecheck in *Twelfth Night*; an Old Man in *Macbeth*; Leontes, King of Sicilia in *The Winter's Tale* and Palamon in *Two Noble Kinsmen*. This 1955 season composed of Shakespeare's later plays "The Romantic Fantasies", were linked together in the following concept according to Arthur Lithgow's Director's Notebook: 12 "The buffoons of the last season are now intelligent commentators on the ways of the world: Falstaff of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Touchstone and Jaques of *As You Like It*, Feste, Fabian and Malvolio, Maria and Sir Toby Belch of *Twelfth Night*. *Macbeth*, the play that came at the mid-point
represents the fantasies of pure horror and near insanity which shook the late middle years of the poet and his plays. The last three plays of the season represent the happy blend of mind and heart which produced the lyrical fantasy of the later plays: Cymbeline, The Winter's Tale and The Two Noble Kinsmen."

**The Lear and Hamlet Companies**

Although the first year of the Festival with its presentations of the Histories were challenging and exciting, the summer season of 1956 brought the Festival to its peak of artistic endeavor. Ellis assumed his first directorial assignment, Measure for Measure. He had made good preparation. His work with actors was under the most careful control; the method of work was one of encouragement, patience and firmness. Actors felt a sense of ease, of security and in this atmosphere gave performances far beyond the usual expectations. One could not help but be impressed by Rabb's theatrical sensitivity and perception.

Two companies were formed this year: one to play in the 1900-seat amphitheatre of the Toledo, Ohio Zoological Gardens while the other performed on the home stage in Yellow Springs, Ohio. Then the companies exchanged places, moved alternately by bus between the two theatres; they never met, but played their productions at the two locations. Seven plays were chosen for this roughly $100,000 eleven week project including both Hamlet and Lear.

It came as a great shock that Ellis was not to play Hamlet. No one doubted but that this role was unquestionably his. But instead
SHAKESPEARE STAGE, TOLEDO,
OHIO ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS, 1956.
Lithgow imported Michael Higgins from New York. Ellis was asked, instead, to play King Lear. He was distraught. The decision had been made so quickly. He had great doubts. Rabb felt that Arthur Lithgow had taken leave of his senses. The outcome of this unexpected casting is now history. Ellis played Lear with such a touch of genius that Henry Hewes said in his review the performance had the technical brilliance of Sir John Gielgud. Lithgow had great perception in dealing with his actors, great insight in his knowledge of Shakespeare. He was never more true to these two gifts than when he joined the role of Lear to Rabb in 1956.

The two company system of that season brought over a hundred actors into the organization. The Antioch policy still held: the emphasis was on the play and on repertory performances. There was no star system. Those actors with better established reputations than others still came for the lower sums of money and less billing than they would have received in other areas. The opportunity to play Shakespeare in repertory was a beacon that flashed invitingly to any actor interested in classical work. This two-company system reduced the acting load and doubled the rehearsal time for each play. Actors did not have the psychological pressure created by limited rehearsal time and by the need to prepare three roles simultaneously in three plays. But there were other hazards. Henry Hewes wrote in The Saturday Review of September, 1956:

A few minutes past midnight of Wednesday night August 8, 1956, Arthur Lithgow became the first man ever to have produced all of Shakespeare's plays over five consecutive seasons. The event took place on the newly constructed Toledo Zoo Amphitheatre stage.
where Antioch has set up its second base of operations with a company that performs four plays. ..

But two nights later Mr. Lithgow did something even more astounding. He became the first man ever to have played the role of Hamlet wearing eyeglasses. Necessity rather than ambition mothered this second feat. For when actor Michael Higgens, who was playing Hamlet, came down with severe laryngitis Mr. Lithgow who had directed the production. .. decided to take a crack at it, holding the book in one hand for reference. But the fardel of fine print became too heavy and in the second act he entered wearing glasses appropriately rimmed in black.

The two companies who worked within the same management that year never met. No one in the "Hamlet Company", for example ever met an actor in the "Lear Company." Years later actors would find they have both been at Antioch that memorable season but had never met. The Toledo based group opened with Hamlet, followed by A Comedy of Errors, Love's Labor's Lost and All's Well That Ends Well. The Yellow Springs based company opened with Much Ado About Nothing, King Lear and Measure for Measure.

This 1956 season was a remarkable one for Ellis Rabb. He played Benedick in Much Ado with great success; he assumed the directorial duties of Measure for Measure and that production was very well accepted. Then he played the title role in Lear. Henry Hewes reviewed Lear by saying:15

... The twenty-six year old actor shows a Lear that, though it be something short of old age's pain and recalled experience, has all the technical finish, brilliance and intelligence of a Sir John Gielgud.

Mr. Rabb's Lear begins as a merry, decadent old man with a subconscious possessive attachment for his youngest daughter. Even after he has disinherited her for failing to say she 'loves' her father all', he continues to behave as an irresponsible member of the idle rich as he disrupts Goneril's household with his train of one hundred revelers.
PLATE IV

ELLIS RABB. PRODUCTION OF KING LEAR.
ANTIOCH, 1956.
When Lear crosses into madness, the effect of Mr. Rabb's 'Oh, fool, I shall go mad--agh,' is that of a boil softly erupting. . . Under Mr. Lithgow's purposeful direction the Antioch King Lear is certainly the best American production of the play in our time.

The Goal is Achieved

The five year cycle was now completed. The program had grown from its original first season audience of 15,000 to many times that number with the two-city plan. By the end of the fifth year Ellis Rabb had played innumerable roles in the entire canon, from Ariel to Shallow, from Benedict to Lear, from Cassius to Cardinal Wolsey. The problem now was what to do next. The following summer Ellis planned to join John Houseman at the American Shakespeare Festival in Stratford, Connecticut. It seemed sensible to him to return to a repetitive situation. If Ellis Rabb had a key to his lifestyle, it was change and growth.

This constant search for development, for advancement is deeply ingrained in Ellis Rabb and explains to some degree his apparently quixotic decisions on some occasions. In personal relationships Ellis maintains a loyalty and strong commitment. Professionally, Rabb is often demanding, often unreasonable, never dull, never less than exciting. His company in later years found the charisma which he exuded to be irresistible. They accepted him as a phenomenon, as indeed he was and still is.

In 1957 there seemed no reason for his work to continue at Antioch. Only to return to direct, to act? All the plays had been produced. It had been done. The 1957 season had been planned in two
sections. One was the lyric company, music oriented, whose Artistic Director was Benno Frank. Meredith Dallas was to head up the drama half of the season while Arthur took over the Lyric Company. Unexpectedly, Dallas was unable to accept the job leaving the position open. Lithgow asked Ellis Rabb to assume the responsibility of Artistic Director of the Shakespeare Company and this offer Ellis accepted. This gave him the full responsibility of the entire enterprise. This was the challenge he could respond to. There were four productions. Ellis played in *King Henry the Eighth*, recreating his Cardinal Wolsey under the direction of Alan Fletcher. William Ball returned to direct *Twelfth Night* and Ellis played Malvolio. He also staged *Julius Caesar* and a beautiful production of *Midsummer Night's Dream*. These four plays had been chosen for their previous popularity and the choice was wise. The audiences were delighted with the works and were supportive in their attendance.

The Lyric company did not fare so well. The musical programs consisted of *The Rape of Lucretia*, *Lost in the Stars* and a double bill of *The Soldier's Tale* and *Trouble in Tahiti*. The musicians were excellent, the voices were fine, but the audiences simply did not accept the change. The program did not catch fire until the end of the summer and by that time it was too late. The Shakespeare season could not carry the music half of the season. So Antioch found itself in a very difficult position. From blazing the trail for other Shakespearean companies, the Festival was now unable to sustain itself through this disastrous season. An unresponsive public was the
ELLIS RABB, YELLOW SPRINGS, OHIO, 1957.
ultimate downfall. The Lyric season did not prove popular. The Antioch administration was not eager to risk the next year's season. They did not look upon themselves as theatrical producers. Gradually, over a period of months filled with bitterness and recriminations, the Festival died; Arthur Lithgow left Yellow Springs to give his full attention to the McCarter Theatre in Princeton, New Jersey.

Before leaving these Antioch years, some placement of Rabb in the general theatrical world should be made. This does not mean in respect to the next job offer but to evaluate just what had happened to him, artistically. This last summer Ellis had taken a giant step toward his own dream, the dream of his own company. From the intense, shy, young apprentice he had developed into an assured actor and director. He had become the technicians' hero. They all admired his knowledge, his awareness of their problems. He won their respect. In the words of Stan Goldberg, one of the lighting men for the Festival, Rabb was heliotropic. He could walk on the darkened stage, playing the blind king, with closed eyes. He stood there alone, majestic, and when the lights came up he was quietly there in the focal spot. Ellis had developed perception and knowledge through these five years of repertory training that would soon guide him into his own company. APA was coming closer.

During the course of these six years, Rabb had graduated from college, worked in numerous off-Broadway productions and on CBS television. He had appeared in three plays with the American Shakespeare Festival at the Phoenix Theatre and had starred in Moliere's The
Misanthrope, for which he received the coveted annual Clarence Derwent award.

The end of the Antioch Shakespeare Festival was a sad and bitter affair. But for Ellis it meant release from the Ohio summers to think on other things. For him, it was a beginning.
FOOTNOTES

1 From the files of Antioch College Area Theatre, Yellow Springs, Ohio, graciously loaned by Office Manager, Marcia Overstreet.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 The full roster of players, plays and dates are listed in Appendix A.


7 Ibid.

8 The Antioch files.


10 The Souvenir Program, Summer 1953.

11 Mr. Ball has now formed the famous acting company, the American Conservatory Theatre (ACT) based in San Francisco, California.

12 The Souvenir Program, Summer 1955.


14 Ibid.

15 Ibid.

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CHAPTER II

THE BEGINNING YEARS

From 1957 to 1960

The years between the last season of Antioch, 1957, and the founding of the Association of Producing Artists in 1960 were busy and productive for Ellis Rabb. They were filled with a variety of experiences. In the fall of 1957 he played Sir William Davidson in Tyrone Guthrie's production of Schiller's Mary Stuart with Eva Le Gallienne and Irene Worth at the Phoenix Theatre, New York City. The spring of 1958 found Rabb back in Ohio, again. Under the auspices of the American National Theatre and Academy, Rabb agreed to guest star at Ohio Wesleyan University, Delaware, Ohio in their production of Hamlet, and to play the title role. In a personal interview, Professor R. C. Hunter, then director of the drama department, indicated the play had been very successful and well received. Professor Hunter had followed Rabb's career with great interest. "He was an exceptionally astute young player," Professor Hunter declared. "I knew even then he was going to contribute a great deal to his chosen work during his career and he surely has. I am proud we had Ellis for his first Hamlet."¹

In June of 1958, following this production, Ellis joined the American Shakespeare Festival in Stratford, Connecticut, for yet another production of Hamlet, starring Fritz Weaver and directed by
John Houseman. Rabb played the Player King. The same summer he also played Starveling in *Midsummer Night's Dream* and Camillo in *The Winter's Tale*.

In the autumn of 1958 Rabb went on tour with Katherine Hepburn in *Much Ado About Nothing* in which he played Verges and later Pedro. Back in New York City in March of 1959, Rabb appeared at the Henry Miller theatre as General Koschmadieff in Noel Coward's play, *Look After Lulu* directed by Cyril Richard. By the summer of 1959 Rabb had accepted an offer from Group Twenty, Wellesley, Mass. While there he directed Rosemary Harris as Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing*, played Octavius to Ms. Harris' Ann in *Man and Superman* and Smee to her Peter Pan. That same summer Rabb staged a production of *Streetcar Named Desire*. This was the summer which led to the formation of the IPT, the Institute of Performing Artists.

**Pre-APA**

A proposal for a Manifesto for a Civic Theatre: Before advancing on into the development of APA it is interesting to examine the following proposal. Although undated, it was written before Rabb's ties to Ohio ended, approximately 1958.

It is my belief that the words 'civic' and or 'community' are the only words which can be truly used to describe theatre. For the theatre is, and must be a communal experience. It can not become a business, nor simply a social function. It can and must be the total of an expression of the lives of the people it reflects... The theatre must be the answer to the audience just as the audience must be the answer to the theatre. The theatre should be one of our greatest teachers of the ways and means to harmony in our lives as citizens, as members of a great cultural body. The program for such a theatre can not be taken lightly.
It has become evident recently that the state of Ohio is fast becoming a very theatre-conscious, theatre-going, theatre-loving section of the country. The Miami Valley is the center of this movement, extending the influence into a large radius, embracing the larger communities such as Columbus, Cincinnati and Dayton as well as involving the smaller communities. It is a movement which has only recently begun, but it is definitely here. With this growth there must be greater organization and cooperation between the groups which are building this movement so the fullest and most rewarding results may be achieved for all. Each theatre in this section owes it to its members, participants and audience to educate and prepare to take its place in a greater movement.

Mr. Rabb explained his plan of a Civic Theatre. It included three basic elements: the Main Productions, a Workshop and a School. There would be a series of classes and lectures which would require the full time and energies of two salaried people, trained in the field, who would lead the group. It indicated two concerns: one, that Rabb was searching for ways to develop growth and a higher caliber of performance in community theatres; and two, that he was thinking along avenues to organize and solidify mutual theatrical endeavors. This manifesto was never presented. However, his concepts of 'community' became apparent in a few years as Rabb planned his own community of repertory actors.

In speaking with Rabb over a period of years one was aware that he harbored concrete thoughts on the conception of an acting company of his own. Rabb had long felt that acting talent was best developed in a company atmosphere. He was aware that building such a company would take time, talent and money. Nevertheless, his dream was to build a solid establishment of actors, one which was based on secure, economic foundations as well as artistic principals. Rabb was firmly convinced that the art of the theatre is the art of the actor.
As these convictions grew and matured the concept of the repertory company gradually took form. It was triggered into actuality in 1960.

Rabb has written of the actual moment when the idea of APA occurred:

During the summer of 1959 I met and worked with Rosemary Harris. We were married that December the fourth. It was not a simple ceremony. I had eight groomsmen and a best man in morning suits; Rosemary appeared alone in yards of pale lavender satin. Everyone was very pleased. That night I played a final preview of a Broadway flop, and one week later we left for Christmas at my parent's home in Memphis, Tennessee. On the plane I read Tyrone Guthrie's book, A Life in the Theatre. Guthrie said, 'But if they felt that their lack of this particular kind of experience were a serious detriment to their imaginative and technical development they would take more energetic action to remedy the existing situation.'

In my analysis, these were the facts that directly led to the formation of APA.

Memphis at Christmas is southern hospitality at its frantic best. A new and glamorous bride is bait for every attention possible. I recall Rosemary clutching her eardrum after it had been shattered by a particularly enthusiastic lady from behind, then recovering herself by pretending to be searching for a lost earring. There was also the dreadful moment, twenty parties later, when a decorated member of the gentry smiled at me and said, "Congratulations. We never thought you'd do so well." The instant before I struck her I was dragged away by a graciously, smiling Rosemary, now dressed in black velvet.

Upon our return to New York City we sent the first memo to seventy-eight people, including actors, directors, producers, and technicians...

The Year of Birth, 1960

When APA first announced its existence it did so by forming a Workshop movement. A group of Rabb's previous associates and a few others, whose work had been recommended to him, were asked to
attend a meeting to discuss the project. The following letter was sent:

December 17, 1959

Dear __________

What the theatre will be ten years from now will be what a surprisingly small group of people are today. We can see now the pool of theatre talents whose work displays shape and purpose from which the major influence will come.

It is my conviction that this potential will not be fulfilled unless we, at this time, make an effort to utilize and unite this force. It is my hope that I can interest you in joining an organization designed to make this possible.

Essentially, my purpose is to form a producing organization. It is an effort to restore to the creative personalities the greatest inspiration and responsibility for our theatre.

Some of you will have heard of these plans before; to some of you this letter will not be self-explanatory; I hope all of you will give me a chance to explain my conviction.

Our initial meeting will be Sunday, January 3, 1960, at 6:00 P.M., Chelsea Hall, 575 Sixth Avenue, sixth floor, Room 603. Let me know if you will be able to attend the first meeting. Please leave a message with my service.

Sincerely,

Ellis Rabb
77 Christopher Street
New York 14, New York

Fifty-one people attended the first meeting and a large per cent of those absent responded with a pledge of interest, even though their schedules prevented them from participating. At this time Rabb stated his determination to put into operation an organization to be called the Institute of Producing Artists, IPA. It was to be composed of those talents in the American Theatre who, having found the existing structure of the present commercial theatre preventive
to the advancement and maintenance of their creative lives, were willing to take upon themselves the responsibility of a new structure; one which would offer them the opportunity to grow individually, develop a productive relationship to each other and place them in a strong position in the commercial theatre.

"I believed, and I felt others joined me in this belief, that the responsibility for the artists and the practical life of our profession was directly up to us and on our shoulders." Rabb felt that the artists of the theatre had to find themselves in the central position of authority if their work was to have the meaning it should. They must throw off the mental attitude that they were essentially "employees" of a producing management, one who compensated the artist for his contribution. The artists of the theatre cannot meet their ultimate challenge in the framework of contributors. They must essentially be collaborators who together lead, guide and inspire the activities of their profession, Rabb felt.

"In my short career in the commercial market of theatre, as it is currently practiced in this country, I had heard a lot of legitimate gripes about the management and the workings of theatre. The only thing about these gripes is that no one did a thing about it." Rabb went on to sum up his convictions for the future plans of the Workshop.

If the theatre needs more employment, higher artistic standards, more rapid decentralization, the building of continuum companies, professional standards in community theatre, greater communication and outlet for better trained and experienced theatre students, greater opportunity for the young playwright, a recapturing of the greater audience throughout the nation, a utilization of the untouched facilities and assistance waiting for us throughout the country etc: etc: then someone had better get on the stick.
Today the actor is for the most part, a hired commodity, an employee whose job it is to do as he is told by his director and producer. I maintain that this essentially an unhealthy creative climate for the theatre's most powerful and central and only essential force to be in. I do not hold with the theory that an actor doesn't know what's best for him. The art of the theatre is the art of acting. All other elements of our profession serve this end. I include the playwright as a server in this end. .. The play should serve the actor. .. But the American theatre of today is so violently expensive to produce that the actor is at the mercy of big business men for employment and non-actor management has begun to account for much of the unimaginative commercialism of our theatre today.

Productions will be performed in a repertory situation: both from the point of view of the artist and the audience this is the most stimulating form of theatre production, as opposed to the long run and stock systems. When attending the theatre and when performing in it a sense of "occasion" must be present. This is not possible in the long run. A great play demands the atmosphere of repertory to fulfill itself. .. both, because it provides the actor with periods of contemplation between performances and gives him an extended period of time to develop in the role.

.. It is inherent to this company that it be free from the confines of a particular building, at a particular spot or a special audience at a specific time of the theatre season. .. As the company works together a "homebase" theatre plant will become a desirable thing but this situation should grow out of the working operation over a period of time. One of the major interests of this company would be to adapt ourselves to new opportunities and new situations.

The plays performed would carry a strong body of the classics. It would be our job to create in the company a wide range of playing styles to accommodate this variety. At the same time we would present modern works which offer new opportunity and an experience of some significance to our audience; however, our primary hope and ambition will be to develop playwrights to furnish us with material which will widen our horizons and make significant contributions to the theatre library.

We, ultimately, wish to aim for unity of style, ensemble playing, continuity in a permanent theatre library.

These were the aims set out for the audience of actors, directors, designers and writers who attended the January third initial meeting.
Rabb asked that the group be divided into four arbitrary sections. Each section would then bring to the next two meetings proposed scenes, cast within the section. There were file cards to make out with pertinent data, the number of the section, interests, information about known rehearsal space and so on. Each group was to choose one person as a center of communications so that members could keep up with rehearsal information. Listed below are some questions and answers chosen from a transcript of the first meeting. The dialogue was between Rabb and the individual.  

Q. If there are too many directors, designers, writers and so forth in any one group, can we switch?

A. Switches can be made, but I will do no more than help you make the switches.

Q. You speak of interresponsibility of four groups. What do you mean?

A. Groups are inter-responsible as to what will be produced.

Q. What is the time limit on scenes?

A. About thirty minutes and up to your discretion.

Q. You spoke of classical material. What do you mean?

A. I don't want to put a stamp on anything. Art is opinion. Classical does not mean old, but in terms of its proportion. Something we can all believe in and not the obvious commercial entertainment. I want to encourage the writing of new plays.

Q. Is it necessary to entertain in this first meeting?

A. No, you can forget the word if you want. The main thing is to get to know each other.

Q. But where is the leadership which we surely need.

A. Leadership comes in the proposals.
Q. Will this division into four groups continue?

A. Groups will be broken up by me and formed by me after the first meeting because we will need leadership.

Q. Suppose I can't cast a project within the group. Is it necessary to be limited? Am I stuck with the group?

A. At the present, yes. Later more people will be drawn into the group as the limitations and weaknesses show up. But for the first six weeks we must find out where we are before we draw more people in.

The group met for the two following meetings and presented their projects for the entire membership. Further projects were requested. The hope was that, ultimately, out of this core of work a production would develop which could be packaged, sold to a sponsor and thus launch the purpose of the Workshop. The arbitrary sections were disbanded after the third meeting and casting was opened to the entire membership. Members were calling, offering suggestions, asking advice, arranging for rehearsal space and scheduling their presentations. Mr. Bob Gold of the Sullivan Street Playhouse offered his theatre as a place to meet, an office for mailing, a place to work and perhaps a place for later productions to be seen. The dues of two dollars a month were asked to help defray mailing expenses. During the two February meetings play readings were scheduled. Members were asked to suggest scripts. By April the Workshop meetings were suspended during which time the summer session of the workshop was to be set up. The next Workshop meeting was scheduled for May. During the winter of 1960 fourteen meetings had been held, a mailing list of 225 persons established, $1,520.00 was received in donations. This money came in small contributions from Workshop attendees plus two substantial contributions from
The First Repertory Engagement

On April fifteenth APA went into rehearsal for its first production schedule. They were engaged by the Bermuda Theatre Guild, Ltd. of Hamilton, Bermuda to mount a repertory season of plays which would open the new theatre in their City Hall on May 12, 1960. Three plays were chosen: Anatol, which was a musical developed from Schnitzler's Dialogues, adapted by Tom Jones and Lilly Lessing with incidental music taken from Themes of Offenbach, directed by Ellis Rabb; The Seagull by Chekhov, newly adapted from Russian by Alex Szogi, also directed by Ellis Rabb; and Shaw's Man and Superman with the "Don Juan in Hell" scene, directed by Allen Fletcher. Having rehearsed in New York for two weeks the company left by plane on May 2nd for Bermuda. Anatol opened May 12th, Man and Superman, May 18th and The Seagull opened May 31st. The plays were rotated in repertory, changing every two days until the 18th of June. At this point the APA organization joined forces with the Bermuda Guild, their host sponsor, to present Shakespeare's Taming of the Shrew. This production was given at an outdoor theatre, opening July fourth and playing until July twenty-third.

For the entire summer APA received $30,000 as a fee out of which they budgeted sets, costumes, travel, rehearsal and salaries for the entire period. A substantial contribution and investment was made by the APA company and staff, making it possible to achieve a standard of work not normally allowed by such a small budget. The
company and staff drew a salary of $100.00 per week. The audiences were not large but built steadily during the repertory weeks. The plays were well received and a great deal was learned about the limitations and problems of theatre in Bermuda. The most important accomplishment was that APA paid all of its bills and built a three play repertory.\(^{16}\)

In retrospect, Ellis Rabb wrote his concerns about this first venture of APA:\(^{17}\)

There we were growing our limbs in our Workshop when we were 'untimely ripped' into production activity. Of course this prematurity accounts for some of the weaknesses we have suffered since. It also accounts in great part for the considerable confusion which has arisen on the part of those people who took an active interest in APA in general, either through Workshop participation and/or seasonal engagements with our production activities. I have often wondered whether APA should not have by-passed this first offer to 'produce' until we had, through the Workshop, arrived at our definition and purpose and had actually built through the Workshop the work we would initially produce. However no such thought occurred to me at the time. First, it was an irresistible opportunity to actually DO something. Finally, in looking back I feel 'there is a tide in the affairs of men' and maybe this was it whether we were ready or not. But at any rate, I see now that this tide which led us to the formation of our first company and season in Bermuda was a decisive move and one which absorbed nearly all the attention and certainly all of the real energy of myself and those most prominently in control of APA's movements at the time. At all events, APA became in the natural course of events a producing organization with myself at its head and the Workshop came under our patronage. Perhaps then and there was a time for definition. But there was one thing we didn't have time for: definition. The first year we only had the energy to struggle to some form of life.

**Repertory in Summer Stock**

On July 24th the company, staff, sets and costumes returned to the States. They opened at the Bucks Country Playhouse in New Hope, Pa., for a two week engagement of their newly formed repertory.
With this engagement Michael Ellis, Buck's County's producer, inaugurated a new and adventurous policy: classical repertory in summer stock. The company played to most rewarding houses; many performances played to standing-room-only. The group was invited to return another season.

Following this, the company moved to Mattunuck, Rhode Island for one week's engagement at the Theatre-By-the-Sea and on to the John Drew Theatre in East Hampton, Long Island for a week of repertory. At these theatres the fee was $3000.00 plus twenty-five per cent over the break even point. At Buck's County the group contracted for only the fee. The business at Mattunuck did not justify a percentage return but the group received a small return from the week in East Hampton. These figures were considered low but Rabb understood the management risk with such an unknown venture; he felt it only fair that APA make the risk as reasonable as possible until it had proven its worth. The John Drew theatre was negotiating with APA for the following summer before the group finished their engagement.

The First "In-Residence" Engagement

On September 14th, Apa went back into rehearsals. At this time they re-rehearsed Man and Superman, making some changes in the physical production, and Anatol received some cuts, some new costuming and some changes in concept. On September 24th they opened the two plays back-to-back at the new McCarter Theatre in Princeton, New Jersey. They played only five performances and were paid a fee of $4300.00 which covered their added rehearsal-production costs. The
response in Princeton was exceptional.

Milton Lyon, the producer of the newly formed McCarter Theatre, invited APA to mount their Fall Play Series of six productions which he had chosen as a study in varying styles of comedy. This made it possible for APA to be a central part of Mr. Lyon's plan of subsidizing the professional theatre through the participation of an educational institution; the institution would gain through a cultural-artistic stimulation, through the existance of a program of the performing arts in their community. APA therefore, reached a highly stimulating audience, provided its membership with exciting work and had the opportunity to experiment with new productions and new talent; and furthermore the McCarter Theatre offered adequate storage space for the repertory sets and costumes, and allowed APA to operate within a beautifully equipped theatre seating over one thousand people.

The plays which were performed at McCarter had ten days of rehearsal and ran through the weekends. They became a potential part of the repertory. The new talent became a part of the APA company and members of the Workshop. For this engagement APA entered into an arrangement with McCarter Theatre by which they paid for all of APA's production expenses plus an office charge of $240.00 per week. For this APA negotiated the season and continued the company and staff on the $100.00 weekly salary.

They performed Fry's The Lady's Not for Burning which Richard Easton directed; Pirandello's Right You Are If You Think You Are
directed by Steven Porter; George M. Cohan's *The Tavern* directed by Richard Baldridge. They also presented their production of *The Seagull* directed by Ellis Rabb. This was followed by an evening of farce consisting of *Scapin* by Moliere, *Box and Cox* by John M. Morton and *The Cat and the Moon* by Yeats, with Steven Porter, Michael Chase and David Wheeler as the respective directors. The last production was Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* directed by Allen Fletcher.

**A Personal Commitment**

The words of a charter member of APA are an example of the depth of belief in the organization. This letter has been chosen from the files to illustrate personal decisions which members of the first company were often forced to make. Keene Curtis, one of the charter members of APA, wrote to a producer, explaining his commitment to the new group. Mr. Curtis had been working successfully for some years as a stage manager in New York City, sublimating his earlier aspiration to become an actor. Through the Workshop activities his acting talent became recognized. He was accepted into the first acting company that performed in Bermuda. Now a lucrative position had been offered as stage manager for *Duel of Angels* with Vivian Leigh. He made the decision to remain with APA as an actor for their winter tour and for their Princeton season. In his letter of explanation, Mr. Curtis had this to say about APA:

> I do believe that I have been fortunate enough to be in a group that is of a calibre beyond most--idealistic but not impractical--visionary but producing--its membership made up
not of struggling would be union members, but established professional people. It has enormous potential and offers one the opportunity for expression in any direction. And what is of major significance to me—it is an attempt to break the dilemma of the present stalemated theatre situation. . . APA can only prove itself through its works. That so much is happening as a result of this summer is encouraging. We have all been taken by surprise by the attention we have been given and the acceleration with which vague plans for the future have been propelled into actuality. . .

The Princeton venture, as you know, would be a projection of the summer stock situation; but an admirable chance to bite the coin of our worth and give us, without pressure, the added time to develop our potential. In January, when rehearsals would presumably begin for the National Tour, the true test of all that will have preceded it will begin. And that is when I will know the true weight of the decision I am making now. But the time and the opportunity seem inseparable. That you have offered me, in juxtaposition, a spectacular alternative—and professed such faith in my ability to be of value to you, makes this decision of agonizing proportions, and has kept me in constant torment.

With all this said and done I must add what we all know—that I may be making the wrong choice. Only time will tell that. I can only hope and trust that it is the right one. If it turns out to have been an indulgence for me, forgive me.

Curtis Keene became one of the mainstays of the Association of Producing Artists as an actor. After the dissolution of APA he received the 1971 Tony award for his work in The Rothschilds.

A Compilation of Critical Comments on the 1960 Season

The critics who wrote about the work of APA during the first year were enthusiastic. Some excerpts from a random sampling used as a flyer for publicity purposes are presented below:

On August 20, 1960 Henry Hewes wrote in the Saturday Review of Literature: "The most significant explosion on the summer circuit is the travelling repertory company, APA. . . which, because it works
in continuity on a stimulating variety of material, has more quality and character than is found in the usual package. The company spirit is excellent and they all exhibit the sort of versatility needed for repertory work."

Elliot Norton wrote in The Boston Record on August 25, 1960: "These theatrical heroes and heroines of high ability are offering classics in place of conventional comedies... they move without error from rueful tragedy to antic-satire... to stimulate and delight the most discriminating playgoers. They will be welcome in Boston, where their ideals and their art are respected and they are admired."

August 5, 1960 brought the following comments by Henry Murdock in the Philadelphia Inquirer: "This latest company to answer that frequent plea for a repertory philosophy of theatre has combined group talent and individual skill... Having spoken of ensemble brilliance, let it not be implied that individual talent is subdued."

Clark Larrabee also wrote in the Philadelphia Inquirer, August 6, 1960: "It becomes a noteworthy event to see the same group of actors accommodate their art to each playwright and produce in every play something definitely above the commonplace... all are heartily recommended."

Earlier in the summer Frank Aston wrote for the World Telegram, June 4, 1960: "Hamilton, Bermuda is really hopping. Classical drama has the island atwitter. A lively team is at work... The newly formed Association has shown taste, pace and style."
A Summary

A summary of the accomplishments which this fledgling organization succeeded in fulfilling should begin with the Workshop itself. Since their first meeting the Workshop was now organized and had a fully established policy and procedure. There was a Workshop Coordinator and a New Script Department. A Workshop membership list has been compiled which included ninety-four people on the basis of their active participation in the Workshop or in actual productions. Other people on a "Potential Membership" list were invited to participate in certain meetings in order to associate themselves with the work and to become eligible for membership in the Workshop.

APA had succeeded in stabilizing an artistic policy as regards the type of material to be used in the Workshop and performed in production. This included classical plays, or works of enduring popularity and new scripts.

APA now had established a Board of Directors and an Honorary Board of Directors who often made practical contributions to the success of the group whenever possible. These were: Mr. Henry Boettcher, Miss Mary Duff, Mr. Allen Fletcher, Sir John Gielgud, Dr. Tyrone Guthrie, Mr. John Houseman, Miss Eva LeGallienne, Mr. Raymond Massey, Mr. Stark Young, Mr. Arthur Frommer and Mr. Howard Hausman.

The William Morris Agency was engaged to handle the bookings. They planned to deal with spot bookings of the current repertory for the late spring and assist in filling out the summer dates. They planned to
book the first major tour which was slated for September, October and November of 1961. This fall tour was to include a combination of week stands in major cities and split weeks at colleges and universities.

As well as touring and playing spot engagements, APA was also looking for a longer term "in Residence" engagement. In line with this aim of APA, they planned to return to the McCarter Theatre of Princeton during February and March of 1961 for a five play repertory of Shakespearean plays. McCarter wanted to capture the local school audience and APA welcomed the opportunity to explore its own function in relation to a local management. They would be billed as "APA at McCarter".

APA was now one year old. It was a non-profit corporation. Its membership was composed of approximately one hundred professionally recognized actors, playwrights, directors, designers, composers, technicians and management personnel drawn from Broadway, off-Broadway and leading classic repertory companies. APA's artistic and practical aims were directed towards building a consistent ensemble of style through the production of established and experimental theatre literature by an organization designed to establish a continuing artistic association on the part of its membership. During one year of production activity APA had built the following plays into its repertory: Anatol, The Seagull, The Taming of the Shrew, Right You Are,
Man and Superman, Scapin, The Cat and the Moon, Box and Cox, The Lady's Not For Burning, The Tavern, The Importance of Being Ernest, King Lear, Midsummer Night's Dream, Twelfth Night, As You Like It and Hamlet. The Association had been presented by the Bermuda Theatre Guild in Hamilton, Bermuda, The Bucks County Playhouse in New Hope, Pa., The John Drew Theatre in East Hampton, Long Island and Theatre-by-the-Sea in Mantunuck, Rhode Island. During the past fall APA had established a theatrical precedent by being the first professional company to go into residence on the campus of a university at the McCarter Theatre in Princeton, New Jersey under the patronage of Princeton University.

The Year of Survival, 1961

The year of 1961, although intensely busy, was not considered to be totally, artistically successful from Rabb's point of view. Mr. Rabb has written at some length about the spring season at the McCarter Theatre. His remarks concerning the opening production of King Lear are particularly interesting in view of the fact that this was the play and the performance in which Rabb won such acclaim in the Antioch Shakespeare Festival; Lear was primarily responsible for the launching of Rabb's professional acting career. Rabb has written his impressions of this season:

We returned to the McCarter Theatre in Princeton for a Shakespeare season in February of 1961. It was known as the Spring Season in spite of the fact that King Lear which opened the season brought with it enough snow to herald the ice age. We were forced to cancel the second performance. This was fortunate as it gave the cast an opportunity to adjust, as much as they could, to the fact that we had produced our biggest bomb to date. While
a good deal pointed in the direction of success during rehearsals, we were living in a fool's paradise.

Mr. Rabb felt that the company was generally a good one. He spoke of his previously successful performance at Antioch; Tucker Ashworth repeated his performance of the Fool from that same production. Other members of the cast had given previously successful performances of their same roles. Rabb wrote of Richard Easton's Edgar which had been played with Sir John Gielgud, of Thayer David's Glouster he had so successfully played at the Brattle Theater and of Steven Porter's previous work as director of two APA productions of distinction, Scapin and Right You Are. Mr. Porter directed King Lear.

Rabb described the staging as being an exciting one and newly designed:

It was basically a revision of the projected platform we had used the previous season only this time we came six feet further into the auditorium overtaking the second row. This gave us more intimacy and placed our entire playing space in front of the proscenium thus denying it altogether. It also gave us easier and more graceful access to the forestage from the pit. Upstage we had a permanent inner-below with a cantilever inner-above over it which could be approached from behind without disclosure or could be ascended to by two circular stairways from within either side of the below. It was quite exciting as we began to know how to use it all properly. The entire structure was backed by blacks which hung very far upstage so that there was no light spill on them, they successfully created a void within, giving the setting a feeling of being surrounded by gloom. The comedies, in turn, could achieve a feeling of lightness.

There was also a set of unit furniture throughout the season which Rabb claims worked quite well. He did not claim the same result about the costumes.

I fear we carried unity too far when it came to the costumes. The scheme had a disastrous effect on Lear. We all had a tendency
to look like refugees. The concept was not that of the designer but one imposed upon Miss Roth by the four directors of the season who were bent upon unity. The concept was an interesting one—which may have been part of the problem. If it had been properly carried through in execution it might have worked. The idea had come from Bill Ball who used it successfully in his off-Broadway production of Under Milkwood. However, out at Princeton we were wandering about in gray underwear and the ladies in gray matron dresses. The effect did not lend much dignity to our Lear efforts.

There were four directors that season who were collaborating on five of Shakespeare's most popular plays: Steven Porter was directing Lear and Twelfth Night; Allen Fletcher, As You Like It; William Ball, Midsummer Night's Dream and Ellis Rabb, Hamlet. They hoped to prove they could work together by a unity of point of view: to lay all the emphasis on the plays themselves and the actors. They hoped to achieve their effects through the acting and directing of the text. Mr. Rabb described the set and the costumes in further detail:

There would be one basic setting—the basic set of furniture included: throne, small throne, two chairs, court benches, rustic benches, rustic stools, rustic table, court table, flags, cushions and inter-changeable props from play to play. The basic lighting plot would not change. We were going mainly for illumination. And now to the costumes in more detail: they would be gray. Every actor would have HIS basic gray costume—for the men gray body tights, a top and a bottom; for the ladies, a fitted gray long sleeved bodice and a full gray skirt. We would then have a third element of clothing—a different one for each character we played. It would by its shape, color and texture say all else that needed to be said.

Yes. Well. Thayer David and Ellis Rabb without that third garment were a sight that would make listening to the text impossible. We were a vision to transfix the gaze. Occasionally, it looked as if the concept would work but the overall effect wasn't too happy.

Mr. Rabb continued on to speak more directly of King Lear:
The Lear bomb made the company quite nervous. It came close to finishing me. The part is absorbing and demanding and my various responsibilities before and during the season were depleting. I offer this as some excuse to those who saw or heard about my earlier effort at Antioch. I don't want that image totally shattered. We began enthusiastically but rather lost our way. I believe now that I depended too much in the early rehearsals on my previous experience with the role to carry me through or at least give me a foundation. I know now that was sheer folly. Take heed all ye who wish to repeat an earlier success. Start all over!

For about a week it lasted. I felt it all gushing back. I moved myself to tears all day every day. But now I have realized it wasn't acting it was reacting. It was a reaction to a memory of an experience which had been very real and had brought me great release and new confidence. But it was all four years old. And memory may be a stimulant but it cannot be a reality. For a week I wept and some of the new ideas coming from Steven... seemed to work. But one day I suddenly became conscious... that what I was involved in had nothing whatsoever to do with anyone else. In the scene with Goneril and Regan, the two present actresses were involved in a much more subtle revelation of characterization and emotional conflict than those of the previous production, due to Porter's production concept. I felt I had understood the concept before rehearsals began. But it meant I had to make an adjustment I wasn't aware of. I suddenly saw myself raging around in tears of anguish on a very broad scale for no apparent reason. It was a matter of style and approach. The terrible thing was that it was too late to begin all over... My confidence began to go and with it the company was unconsciously affected.

It was an extraordinary sensation to see and hear myself walking around, gesturing and speaking without any greater involvement than a feeling of hideous frustration. At least the next time I play Lear (I plan to) I'll have to start all over. I am under the impression that the production improved somewhat and my own misery didn't cancel out a number of other performances which were good.

Rabb admits to one amusing memory of this difficult experience:

Mr. Ashworth and myself rehearsing our famous scenes together should have been a warning to us but it wasn't. We were very considerate of each other but if I stood up Tucker very kindly recalled that this was where we always knelt with me clutching his head and he weeping softly into my beard. Then I would stop to remind him that he didn't walk in front of me during my particular line but always knelt at my feet looking up. There was
some suggestion that we both always swayed in the wind here, but as we were now blocked in the inner above at its edge, and not on the nice flat forestage as before, this gave us blind two some insecurity which resulted in a clutching motion. None of my pauses were long enough for Tucker—apparently he had always done something or other during them. All of his pauses were too long for me, as I had absolutely nothing to do... We lived. I hope we learned.

The rest of the season at McCarter went reasonably well. The company found they had built an audience. They were beginning to sell out. Two extra performances were added to meet the box office demand for Hamlet. The first three productions had had their good points but As You Like It and Hamlet tipped the scales very strongly in favor of the repertory company. Both shows had benefited considerably by the previous experiences of the other three productions.

In looking back over the 1961 McCarter season Rabb writes:

The end of any season anywhere, when a permanent company had been employed, clearly illustrates the decided advantage and power of the ensemble effort in the theatre and thus proves APA's point that a continuing company is devoutly to be wished. Everyone has always said so, but they usually sight artistic reasons. I KNOW that it also has a very practical value: the cards are more securely stacked in the favor of success with any production... in a continuing company.

The remainder of 1961 was filled with bookings for the company and their reputation continued to grow in stature. They played at the Boston Arts Festival in June, presenting Twelfth Night and The Tavern; July found APA in Falmouth, Mass. at the Highfield Theatre with Twelfth Night and School for Scandal; The group returned to Bucks County Playhouse, New Hope, Pa. with three plays in repertory: School for Scandal, The Tavern and Twelfth Night. They also played a return engagement in August at the John Drew Theatre, East Hampton,
Long Island with School for Scandal, The Tavern, Twelfth Night and The Seagull in repertory. The summer tour ended at the Olney Theatre, Olney, Maryland with The Tavern and The Seagull.

In October the company accepted an engagement at the Fred Miller Theatre, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, extending from October 17th to December 23rd. The productions played in repertory consisted of Midsummer Night's Dream, The Seagull, The Tavern, School for Scandal and Fashion. This ended the year on a highly frustrating level. The midwest audiences were not yet ready for APA's somewhat classical fare. However, even the romp and farce of the Cohan play, The Tavern, seemed to only bewilder the Milwaukee theatre-goers. The quantity of attendance was negligible making those that did come somewhat self-conscious about giving themselves over to the comedy of the farce. Rabb wrote in some depth about this difficult engagement and of the audience's apathy:23

In spite of a responsive first night audience, we were soon to find our so-called vacation turned into a winter horror-land. Fewer people came than ever before. And here is an interesting and revealing point. Perhaps we HAD attracted what audience came on the basis that we were giving them 'culture'. Thus they weren't going to bother with anything labeled 'all in fun' . . . On the few occasions when we had a decent sized audience they behaved as though they enjoyed themselves. But with a less than half full house, farce is very difficult to play. Indeed, the shouting and stomping about, the slamming of doors, and endless crashing of thunder which had been so hilarious during the previous engagements was just a lot of silly noise echoing in a vacant room from which a few eyes stared in wonderment about what they were supposed to feel.

The sad part about the production in Milwaukee was simply the inability of the audience to see the point of view from which the work took its center.24 The Tavern is a very broad, comic fun-poking
farce, the old style of melodrama and the stock characters which peopled those productions. Cohan was having an affectionate laugh at such plays and at such characters. A reasonably sized audience is centrally important to the mutual expression of performers and audiences alike. Less than this would bring an uneasy feeling to any company, as if rehearsing to an enemy. The problem at the Miller appeared to be based on bad promotion and publicity. APA never promoted the star system. However, they did have a number of people in the company with quite impressive reputations. Rosemary Harris, for example, had been sharing star billing on Broadway for over three years. She could have been built into a strong box-office draw, but like others in the company, nothing was done to encourage an audience's awareness of just what reputable work they were being given. The heart of the failure of this season apparently lay in this area.

By the end of the season in Milwaukee the company was exhausted and eager to return to New York for a rest. APA was now two years old and was still playing in stock. Things were not getting easier. There was not enough time to prepare a high standard of work under the conditions they had encountered so far in the life of APA. The company was losing people because APA could not pay enough money on their low budgets; this meant a constant problem of recasting. The Workshop was collapsing for want of an organizational staff. It seemed pointless to continue the struggle.

Upon returning from Memphis where the Christmas holidays had brought some rest and time to seriously consider their next move, the Babbs found the following letter from Eva Le Gallienne awaiting
ROSEMARY HARRIS IN THE SEAGULL, 1961.
Dear Ellis Rabb and Rosemary Harris,

I was most touched and moved by your telegram. It means a lot to me to know that my work mattered to you. Many thanks. It is all the 'flash bulb' nonsense, and what it stands for, that makes me sometimes detest the theatre as it exists here, and wish I could get out of it for good and all, and live quietly in the country with birds and beasts and plants—and books, of course! But then—when I think of you two—I know that one must keep up with struggle and somehow carry on. I say 'you two' for as I started to write 'people like you', I realized that I just don't know of any others! There's an awful lot of talk about 'making sacrifices' etc. but you are the only ones I know of who have renounced easy 'success' for the difficult joy of service to the theatre one dreams of. I love and admire you both more than I can say. I would very much like to talk to you both—if ever we all of us get a breathing-spell at the same time, we must get together. Perhaps you could come out and spend a day here in the country where we could talk in peace.

I have been most grateful for this week's respite... God bless you both—I hope 1962 will be a fine and a happy year for you. Again, thank you for the telegram—it gave me courage.

With sincere affection,

ELG

The letter came at a meaningful time. For the state of minds of both Ms. Harris and Mr. Rabb were full of questions and discouragements.

The Year of Definition, 1962

The new year began with an attempt to find some answers to the problem: APA needed clarification.

In January of 1962 Rabb wrote a lengthy letter to his staff, Jack McQuiggan and Robert Alan Gold, the production stage manager and general manager, respectively. Excerpts from his letter show the confusions and doubts that presently existed:

... We are all three very sensitive to being asked the question: 'What is APA?'... We have done a job. We have done it to the best
of our abilities. We have accomplished a good deal. But I have quite a different question to ask. After careful and considerable thought I am convinced it is THE question. . . It concerns you two more than any other people connected with the venture. . . I do think that the three of us are THE structure, if one exists at all. Which brings me to my question. Is there an APA? Is there an association of producing artists? Hasn't there been only a producing artist? Let me put it another way: if I stated quite simply that I was willing to undertake the Artistic Director's responsibilities for the coming events of APA--but no other responsibilities--would there be any future events for me to artistically direct? Let me ask you this. If I resigned as Artistic Director would APA continue? Would it hire another? Is there an IT? Is there an APA? . . . What is APA but a small radius of people with whom I enjoy a happy and profitable association. We are not a producing organization, nor a management.

. . . I am not happy as the producer of APA. Why? It's too much work. I can, as I think you know, work longer hours than are good for any of us. But my artistic contribution suffers. I see no opportunity for my own growth. I see only the continuing pressures of trying to pass for a producer. In all honesty I do not feel equipped for the job. And frankly, I am not interested in it. . . I can't do it well enough.

I will undertake the artistic responsibilities of a summer repertory tour and the continuance of that unity into future projects if there is someone or a staff who will formulate the practical circumstances. If you are interested it is up to you to tell me what those practical circumstances are. In this way you will tell me if there really is in fact an Association.

. . . I will assemble casts and companies; I will engage designers, composers, directors and all the members of the artistic staff; I will select plays or guide their selection; I will direct plays; I will act in plays; I will provide artistic principals upon which a workshop will be founded; I will actively participate in that workshop. I will audition talent. I will make impassioned statements about the nature of publicity, promotion and public relations. I will offer suggestions about lobby displays. I will confer endlessly over business details and finance. I will listen to all problems of any member of the staff I have time to. I will give to APA whatever money I can lay my hands on.

I will do no more. At least I can't think of anything else I will do.

What do I want in return for this?
1. As good a salary as possible.

2. A circumstance in which I can do all this as effectively as possible.

3. Someone to tell me something I don't know.

4. Someone to ask me something I hadn't thought of.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellis Rabb

The problems stated in this letter were not immediately solved although the files indicate that more of the correspondence to seek bookings was taken over by another member of the staff rather than by Rabb. However, the basic frustrations of attempting to control the growing complexities of APA were not lessened.

Two things happened that winter that furthered the development of APA. One was Rabb's decision to seek an exposure of the repertory in New York City. A theatre on the lower east side became available, The Folksbiene, at 175 East Broadway. Both Ellis Rabb and Rosemary Harris had saved some money from the Milwaukee season. They decided to use this personal account to pay the expenses of mounting a limited engagement of repertory. Rabb felt that a giant step must be taken to prove the worth of APA and thus attract more professional attention; Otherwise, APA would die from attempting to survive too long at too slow a growth of opportunity. The Off-Broadway engagement of seven weeks proved enormously successful. The New York City reviews were excellent; everyone was pleased.

The second development was a completion of a contract with the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. The negotiations were with
Robert Schnitzer who had come to Ann Arbor in 1961 with his wife, Marcella Cisney. Sensing the need for a professional theatre program at the university level, President Harlan Hatcher had asked the Schnitzers to administer the plan. Robert Schnitzer had formerly established and administered the State Department's International Cultural Exchange Program. Ms. Cisney had directed for CBS, New York City Opera and regional and Broadway theatres.

Plans for APA to participate in this venture had been in progress even in Milwaukee. The New York City rave reviews helped to sell the subscription drive in Ann Arbor. Although the Ann Arbor contract provided some improved conditions and promised greater ones for the future, the company anticipated a very difficult schedule: one play a week for five weeks, preceded by only four weeks advanced rehearsal.

APA scheduled to present three of the existing productions for Ann Arbor and prepare one new production during the summer. For this reason the usual summer tour was limited to mounting only one new show, John Whiting's comedy, A Penny For A Song. APA played this production for three weeks at Bucks County Playhouse and the John Drew Theatre. The show was then ready for the fall season at Ann Arbor.

Rosemary Harris was not with the Association during the 1962 summer. She had accepted an engagement to play in England at the new Chichester Festival at the request of Sir Lawrence Olivier. Ms. Harris had been playing steadily with APA for its two year duration and had been in nearly all of their fourteen productions. This summer
was her "leave of absence", as Mr. Rabb explained in a letter to Miss Le Gallienne: "I urged her to accept this special opportunity to return home. Her family live only six miles from the theatre... She will return in early September to the company."

The Michigan season which lay ahead brought considerable misgivings to Ellis Rabb. His concerns were voiced in the letter to Miss Le Gallienne previously quoted. Mr. Rabb wrote:

I am at the moment rather frustrated over the contract offered us by the University of Michigan. Every one of these universities who decide to back patrons of the arts always think they're breaking new ground. However, I have been in on the creation and demise of three identical attempts and my current problem is to convince Michigan, via Mr. Schnitzer, to not only do it but to do it well. They have offered me a contract to bring the company there annually for winter and spring seasons. They are willing to guarantee this for three years. They are offering me a budget which guarantees twelve actors a decent salary during those seasons and have offered a skimpy but possible production budget. It is also a very nice theatre and is in the midst of a very intelligent community in a large population area. However, they want too many plays produced in too short a period of time in a grossly inadequate number of rehearsal hours.

It is my feeling that with this they puncture a very large hole in their balloon. I am convinced by my experiences with the Antioch Shakespeare Festival (Antioch College), The Group 20 Players (Wellesley College) and the McCarter Theatre (Princeton University) that each of these ventures suffered due to the fact that the university's backing could not create the circumstances for growth and development beyond a certain point.

I grow quite weary at the thought of beginning all over again in Michigan, no matter how much they tell me that conditions will get better when we have proved the success and desirability of the venture. I know that I am tired after the two years we have been through and maybe that accounts for my serious disenchantment over the conditions offered by Michigan. I just don't think that APA can grow in Michigan without their offering us better conditions than we have had before. However, their attitude is simply that we have done it in the past for this much money and even less, so why can't we continue to do it for them.
Mr. Rabb ended the letter by hoping the exposure in New York City would have had some future effect on negotiating power of APA since national sponsors and audiences were so deeply influenced by New York critics.

The Ann Arbor season opened on October 2, 1962 with APA's production of *School for Scandal*. The repertory continued with *We, Comrades Three*, an original work by Richard Baldridge, *The Tavern, Penny For A Song* and *Ghosts*. The latter play was in place of *The Seagull* which was originally scheduled for the season. This production was Mr. Rabb's modern dress version which caused some controversy. Michigan wished another production in its place. Although Mr. Rabb had intended to bring *The Seagull* into the Michigan repertory in spite of the negative reaction of the University, he was forced to cancel because of shifts in the company. In its place Rabb asked Eva Le Gallienne to join APA and to direct and play in her production of *Ghosts*. Miss Le Gallienne had been on the honorary board from the beginning and Rabb had long hoped for a more active relationship with her. It was a fortunate experience for everyone. All the productions of the repertory went well and were received with great enthusiasm by audience and critics alike.

The University season finished on November 4th and a few days later the company embarked on a two week winter tour of Michigan. The two productions were *School for Scandal* and *The Tavern*. The tour ended the middle of November; the first part of the Michigan season was over. After the first of the year the company would again meet
to begin the second part of their residency in Ann Arbor, the Shakespeare season.

This year in review had brought many changes to the APA. It had proved to be a year of definition. From the return from Milwaukee and the subsequent despair and discouragement, the APA moved to the triumph of the New York City engagement. The signing of the contract with Michigan University gave a three year guarantee for employment to the company for 20 weeks out of the year. Ellis Rabb and Rosemary Harris had both won the Village Voice Obie Awards, Ms. Harris for her distinguished performances in School for Scandal, The Seagull and The Tavern; Rabb was given the Award for conceiving and maintaining the Association of Producing Artists. Eva Le Gallienne played with the company; Rabb spoke of her performance as "truly thrilling. Without any doubt the woman is the greatest—truly the greatest. And the play was genuinely funny! and absolutely terrifying."

The Drama Desk presented the Vernon Rice Award to the Association of Producing Artists for outstanding achievement in the off-Broadway Theatre 1961-1962.

The problem that faced Rabb at this time was the same: budgetary. In Ann Arbor frictions developed between Schnitzer and Rabb. APA felt that Schnitzer should have fought for more money with the administration. Eventually, budgets did rise but not without a bitter struggle; it was not a happy relationship. Rabb found the same thematic point repeating itself: creative growth must be made. Monetary advancement was totally necessary for this forward thrust to take place. APA had begun by showing how much they could accomplish
on a low budget. It was a constant struggle to change this attitude for new producers, such as Ann Arbor. As Rabb had earlier predicted, 1962 was an exhausting and difficult season.

A Regional Repertory Company, 1963

By 1963, APA had become a regional repertory company based in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Through the University of Michigan's three year contract the organization had developed a link to a kind of pattern, purpose and security. The company offered a program of plays dictated by the interests of the University and its budget. For the winter season from January 14th to March 3rd the Shakespeare repertory was in full production: Midsummer Night's Dream, with Rabb playing Oberon and Rosemary Harris Titania; a modern-dress production of The Merchant of Venice and Richard the Second.

In addition to its Ann Arbor appearances, the APA followed the pattern of the previous year with their Michigan Tour. Midsummer Night's Dream went on a ten day tour from March 6th to March 16th playing one night stands in various towns throughout the state such as Grand Rapids, Alpena, Petosky, Flint and Bay City. Some additional stops for high school audiences were made as in the previous tour. Approximately 60,000 persons attended the performances in Ann Arbor and around the state. Considering the modest size of many of the auditoriums in which the company performed this was an astonishing estimate. Campus performances were often sell-outs. Tickets were priced from $1.50 to $3.50 with discounts for high school and college students.
The University of Michigan instigated a program of fellowships. A number of applicants were screened and seven qualified graduate students were chosen to study for an advanced degree while working with the professional company.

The University of Michigan was well pleased with their Professional Theatre Program as they came to the end of the second winter season although admittedly problems had been created. Clashes of temperament arose between the administration and the company over implications of the contract between APA and the University. Some indications of this difficulty were revealed in correspondence between Miss Le Gallienne and Mr. Rabb.

Miss Le Gallienne wrote to say she had been asked by Mr. Schnitzer to return for the fall season\(^31\) and had negotiated her salary for the coming season; she suggested that it would be a good thing for both herself and Rabb to continue their work together in Michigan; Miss Le Gallienne felt she might serve as a buffer in the rather explosive relationship which had developed between Mr. Schnitzer and Rabb.

The APA files contained Rabb's reply to Miss Le Gallienne's letter, dated March 14, 1963.\(^32\)

...I am very grateful for your letter and the consideration you have given our problem here. It is rewarding to me--to us all--to see you take such an active interest in our work in so short a period of time. That you would be willing to take on an even greater load on our behalf is a wonderful thing to know.

APA has now engaged Legal Council here in Ann Arbor to advise us about the differences which have arisen and to carry on further negotiations here in our behalf if necessary.
It would be a comfort to me to convince you that our official negotiations have been sane, honorable, careful and business-like. . . The combustible mixture you witnessed is the result of a pressure built up by our dealings with the Schnitzers. The meeting reflected far more of how they feel and the way they feel. We have never invited anything from them but the most business-like, defined and cordial of relationships. It has become increasingly clear that they could not have known what APA is or how it functioned when they engaged us; nor the implications of the contract between the University and APA. This basic misconception is perhaps the root of the problem. . . Perhaps the objective, dispassionate appraisal of our legal council will be able to sort out the facts in a clear light.

Our dealings here have been highly complex and confused by unfortunate personality problems affecting not only the APA staff but the University and local personnel and the entire community.

Mr. Rabb went on to say that he felt Miss Le Gallienne's position in APA should always be of a very special nature. He felt that however organic a part of their daily workings she might become, they would be of more value to each other providing Miss Le Gallienne's relationship was one in advising, and so would help Rabb to serve her talent better while forwarding the growth of APA. "You make a rare contribution to our efforts. No one else in this country could give what you can and we feel we must work to continue to deserve your interest and faith in us." Mr. Rabb continued to explain his position:

After the one display you have seen of my 'negotiating tactics' you have every reason to believe I am incompetent to handle APA's dealings. But I must continue to attempt to fulfill the goal I set and to accept the responsibility I sought in the formation of APA; otherwise I should never do it as well as I must. In spite of the generosity of your offer to 'buffer' the relations here and in the knowledge that you are far more experienced and wiser, I must continue to 'do my job'.

I am certain that you felt as deeply and personally about the formation, function and continuance of 'The Civic' as I do about APA. The organization of responsibility is a delicate matter. I started APA to accept the responsibility of artistic directorship.
I do not think that it is a responsibility that I could or should avoid, absolve or divide.

My gratitude to you is endless. My admiration for you is boundless. My desire to serve your talent and be served by it is sincere. . . I am looking forward to seeing you soon and discussing the matter in full.

This personality problem with the leaders of the Professional Theatre Program did not improve with the seasons. It was a constant source of friction. It always appeared to be a matter of money. The APA was asked to produce a great deal of work, with heavy schedules and to bear the burden of intricate scheduling. The money received for these services was not equal to the daily pressures of budgetary complexities. This was the root of the conflict at Ann Arbor. It was never completely solved.

At the end of the winter season the company disbanded to return to New York; most of them took other jobs for the interim time between the Ann Arbor seasons. Ellis Rabb went to the American Shakespeare Festival at Stratford, Connecticut to stage Caesar and Cleopatra. In August APA performed at the Boston Arts Festival in the production of Midsummer Night's Dream from the repertory of the winter at Ann Arbor. By fall APA was gathering its forces together to return to Ann Arbor.

One member of the company, however, was not to join the group until later. Rosemary Harris had accepted Sir Lawrence Olivier's invitation to guest star as Ophelia in the new National Theatre of Great Britain's opening fall production of Hamlet.

The fall season at Ann Arbor was composed of the following
productions: *Much Ado About Nothing*, *A Phoenix Too Frequent*, *Scapin*, *Right You Are If You Think You Are*, and *The Lower Depths*. The following Michigan Tour brought *Much Ado About Nothing* to the public outside of Ann Arbor.

The problem of keeping the company working together for as many weeks out of the year as possible was still unsolved. Rabb spent many hours seeking other outlets for the producing company. In December of 1963 he sent a letter to a number of colleges and universities explaining the program which was taking place in Ann Arbor; the main purpose was to locate another residence for the company with some permanence, augmenting the present program at Ann Arbor. 33

In the letter Rabb spoke of the increasing incidence of association between educational institutions and the creative arts. He expressed his belief in the partnership which gave a richness to the life of the campus as well as promising a healthy atmosphere for the arts in America; this brought a prestige to universities and colleges fostering the creative arts which was well deserved.

Mr. Rabb spoke of the APA's contract:

*APA is currently under three year contract to the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor as its resident company to produce twenty weeks of theatre each year. These experiences have led me and my fellow workers to a firm belief in the value of such associations. For while serving audiences of students, faculty and community, we have served the interests of the administrations of these institutions by giving them the distinction of a successful program. And all the while, we have ourselves grown and learned, becoming ever closer to the fullment of the promise of the program. Such patronage of the theatre can be the salvation of the art form in this country.*

Rabb went on to explain his purpose in writing this type of general
It has come to my attention that other educational institutions are interested in making similar moves but do not know how to go about involving themselves in the mysterious business of 'professional theatre'. As such interest and involvement is the lifeblood of APA, I hope that this letter will make the considerations clearer.

Rabb went on to elaborate on the problem of expense for such an undertaking:

A professional theatre is not inexpensive to run. . . However, we can create situations in which first class standards can prevail. . . by realistically viewing the costs of the venture and seeking to amortize them. The cost of operation is based on two elements: preproduction costs and operating costs. In a theatre of adequate size (our current season plays to a house seating just over 700) the operating-running costs should not be a problem, even considering low price scale, subscription reductions, and heavy reductions for students. The preproduction costs, those of rehearsal, costumes, properties and settings, are the ones which determine the quality of work and which greatly swell the overall cost. These costs could be drastically reduced if they were shared by more than one sponsor.

In further explanation of this last point Rabb offered the example of the development of the work which had been brought to Ann Arbor last season: the repertory was made up of productions which had played previous engagements, as well as productions mounted in Ann Arbor for the first time. These were presentations which no one institution or organization could hope to afford to mount during the operation of a single season with the budget available for such a run; there was also the additional advantage of the calibre of performances, the polished quality attained through their being kept active through performance in prior seasons. Rabb went on to say:

The more often a show is played and the longer the company and staff work together, the better the quality of the work. APA is a mobile organization with four years of successful
experience and a complete and functioning staff and company. There are obviously audiences eager for such a quality of theatre all over the country. We have the goods if we can reach our market; and I hope that this letter of introduction will put us on the right track.

Rabb went on to state the present position of the company. He explained the fact that APA would complete its current season in Ann Arbor on the seventeenth of December. From then on until their return the following year for the third season, plans were not yet set. (There were some detailed arrangements for a tour in England at this time which eventually failed to materialize). Currently, there were four productions playing in the repertory and five other productions remained active, waiting for an audience who had not seen them. Rabb stated that APA was ready to provide another campus with an active functional theatre program.

The two types of sponsorship which were of interest to the organization, Rabb wrote, would be the creation of a touring circuit of colleges and universities in which APA would play short runs of the repertory of one or two weeks, split weeks, possibly even a few days. "Of even greater interest to us at this time is finding another 'in residence' season of some duration on a campus under the sponsorship of a University, College or School... We are particularly interested in considering a residency during the summer months, to create a summer festival home for the company."

In closing this appeal Rabb wrote:

If you are interested in professional theatre for your campus, please let us know. Our work on stage best speaks for us, and we shall keep you informed as to where and when you can see it. I hope that we shall have the opportunity to document our claim
that we can be of value to you, and to the expanding cultural life of our nation.

The above letter has been used to illustrate the means through which APA sought its identity. The year of definition was at an end. Within this letter one finds the answer to the present reason for existence of the Association: APA had accepted the role of a regional repertory company

In a brief recapitulation of the four years of APA’s existence it is interesting and impressive to examine the record of employment. During the four years of the company’s existence it had been in active production and performance for an average of thirty weeks per year. In 1960, the first year of its life APA provided twenty-seven weeks of work for members of the company; in 1961 there was a total of thirty-seven weeks work; in 1962, twenty-six weeks and in 1963 twenty-nine weeks of employment. In a further breakdown of the presenters and sponsors of the Association the following listing shows the duration of engagements and the sponsors for which return engagements were played:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRESENTERS AND SPONSORS</th>
<th>DURATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bermuda Theatre Guild, Hamilton, Bermuda</td>
<td>Ten weeks - summer 1960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theatre-by-the-Sea, Mattunuck, R. I.</td>
<td>One week - summer 1960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Princeton University, Princeton, N. J., McCarter Theatre</td>
<td>Fourteen weeks - fall 1960, 1961</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Boston Arts Festival, Boston, Mass. Two weeks - summer 1960, 1963
Highfield Theatre, Falmouth, Mass. One week - summer 1961
Olney Theatre, Olney, Maryland One week - summer 1961
Fred Miller Theatre, Milwaukee, Wis. Ten weeks - fall 1961
Folksbiene Theatre, New York City, N. Y. Six weeks - spring 1962
University of Michigan, Lydia Mendelssohn and Trueblood Theatres, Ann Arbor, Mich. Twenty-three weeks - fall 1962, winter and fall 1963

APA had grown from its Workshop origins to a repertory company with some security for part of each year. After the first burst of enthusiasm, they fought for survival in 1961.

Disenchantment composed of exhaustion, frustration and confusion of motives followed the Milwaukee season in 1962. Questions were asked and identification was sought. Were they a roving regional repertory company? Was the organization to find roots? Or was their virtue in their rootlessness? It was impossible to grow in dimension with the continuance of small theatres and low budgets. The calibre of actors which Rabb sought could only afford such an investment of their careers for brief periods of time. It was frustrating to attempt to stretch the necessary standards in the short rehearsal times that could be afforded. The goal seemed to be to reach for an absolute definition of the value of APA.

To this end they displayed their work in the common market of New York City. The results were encouraging. Armed with the rave reviews of New York critics, the negotiations for the next season at the University of Michigan improved somewhat. Still the spectre of
inadequate budgets haunted the productions. Since APA's reputation had been built on high calibre productions at low salaries, Michigan saw no reason why the philosophy could not continue. There was permanence and some sense of security in the residency at Ann Arbor; but simultaneously, the undercurrents of dissatisfaction and frustration, of exhaustion and confusion still ran strongly through the repertory company. The total commitment had yet to be made.
FOOTNOTES

1 Professor H. C. Hunter, private interview in his home, Columbus, Ohio, January 1972.

2 John Houseman, present Director of the Juilliard Drama School, New York City, N. Y.


4 The name was later changed to Association of Producing Artists (APA).

5 From APA files, 1959.

6 From personal files of Ellis Rabb, undated.

7 Jolly's Progress, starring Eartha Kitt, Longacre Theatre, New York City, N.Y., December 5, 1959. Rabb played the role of Reverend Furze.

8 From APA files, 1959.


10 From Rabb's personal files, "My Story of APA Last Year."

11 Ibid.

12 From personal files, 1960.


15 Tom Jones and Alex Szogi were active members of the Workshop.


17 "My Story of APA Last Year."

Due to a production conflict, Mr. Ball did not direct Midsummer Night's Dream. David Wheeler directed in his place.

"My Story of APA Last Year."

Ibid.

Ibid.

Interview, July 1972.

From personal files.

Letter to Eva Le Gallienne, February 1, 1962.

Ibid.


From APA files.


From APA files, 1963.
CHAPTER III

THE MATURE COMMITMENT, 1964-1969

Points of view: T. Edward Hambleton and Ellis Rabb

In 1964, when the APA company returned to New York City, a new opportunity for development presented itself. The program under discussion involved an alliance with Mr. T. Edward Hambleton of the Phoenix Theatre.

The highly respected Phoenix Theatre was founded by Norris Houghton and T. Edward Hambleton in 1953 in a theatre at Second Avenue and 12th Street, New York City. The concept of the organization had always been to present plays that could not be done in other commercial theatres at prices which the general public could afford; and to continue their operation without bowing to the pressures of the necessity of a hit play that governed Broadway producers. After several seasons of annual loss the Phoenix turned to a money-raising corporation called Theatre Incorporated; this was a non-profit organization already in existence, whose interest and contacts were with foundations and other supporters and who were dedicated to the continuance of the performing arts in a non-commercial framework. During the course of the years, before APA became a potential part of the producing efforts, the Phoenix had occupied several homes; now they had their new theatre on East 74th Street and were committed to a subscription audience. As
usual, the organization continually faced the problem of rising

costs without the means of increasing their financial support.

During the life-span of the Phoenix Mr. Hambleton, as producer,
had tried varied methods of operation; he had attempted a resident
company which was widely acclaimed but the effort slowly disintegrated
because of low salaries and high production costs. The Phoenix
Theatre had been on East 74th Street for three years. The program
of new plays which had been produced during the past three years
still did not fulfill the long standing wish of Mr. Hambleton to
produce great plays of the past which could be offered to students as
well as to the general audience. It was within this framework that
the rights to War and Peace in the Piscator version came his way.
This was a production that needed a company. Mr. Hambleton’s
thoughts turned to Ellis Rabb and the APA. In a personal interview
in New York City, Mr. Hambleton spoke of the progression of events
leading up to the alliance of the two organizations:

Although Ellis had played at the Phoenix, we never really got
together after that. I never got to Ann Arbor nor to Princeton.
I was away during the Folksbiene season, so I heard a great
deal about APA but I had never seen it in action. Then they
came down to Baltimore and played two weeks in Olney; I
came over then and saw Seagull and also the Cohan play,
The Tavern.

Mr. Hambleton went on to explain that after he acquired
the rights to War and Peace he called Rabb on the phone to say he felt
this was a play for a company; and he suggested the two men get
together to discuss it. Hambleton said:

Rabb read it and liked it very much and said 'Let's do it.'
But Rabb felt that it was going to take too much time to
prepare. He suggested we should present the repertory of APA at the Phoenix that was already prepared from the Ann Arbor season; then do War and Peace next season. So that's what happened. The Phoenix presented the company in its 74th Street Theatre during the spring of 1964 in the current repertory: Scapin, Impromptu, The Tavern, Right You Are and The Lower Depths.

Since the Phoenix Theatre had moved from 12th Street to their present site at 313 East 74th Street, they had not attempted to increase their committed audience. Now Hambleton returned to subscription and using the old subscribers of 1961 as a base, the Phoenix Theatre sold 7,500 for the new season. Mr. Hambleton stated that the fund raising activities were held to a minimum while they undertook to demonstrate just what a repertory company could provide in excellent theatre.

Hambleton went on to say:

It was really very impressive. We didn't break any box office records, but we got by with our skins. Then we announced that there would be a season next year which would consist of War and Peace, Man and Superman and Judith. We managed to get the rights on Judith which took some doing to get. It was a Giraudoux play but the adaptation was by Christopher Fry. We managed to extract him from Giraudoux and do our own version with Rosemary Harris in the title role. The company broke up as I remember it, in June in repertory. They came together again and started rehearsing in July. They went out to Ann Arbor in the fall.

Towards the end of June, 1964, APA made an appearance at the Boston Arts Festival: on June 22nd and 23rd the company played their productions of Scapin and Impromptu at Versailles. After the summer of rehearsal APA opened their fall season at the Mendelssohn Theatre in Ann Arbor, Michigan with War and Peace, The Hostage, Judith and Man and Superman. For the annual Michigan tour, November 16th to November 25th, Rabb chose Man and Superman.
It seems wise to interrupt the flow of events at this moment in order to clarify just what was taking place between these two theatrical organizations. It was not always easy for either man to accommodate his particular system, his concepts of style, his choice of plays to another entity already in working condition, and to consider the needs of the whole enterprise. The APA files are crowded with detailed letters, memos and correspondence between T. Hambleton and Ellis Rabb showing their consistent efforts to work together. On November 4, 1964, for example, Rabb sent a long memorandum to Hambleton stating some of his convictions. In seeking for a definition of the APA-at-the-Phoenix alliance, Rabb wrote that it seemed to him to be a solid partnership between two organizations which were equally important; each had its own strength to offer the other. The Phoenix, said Rabb, had built up a practical, producing organization without being able to create a sufficiently artistic direction to give it the life or the purpose it sought. Whereas APA, Rabb went on, had spent five years of its life building up an artistic entity without a sufficient organization to administer its practical needs--needs of both maintenance and growth. Rabb further stated that he sincerely recognized that, in the theatre, as in any other venture, areas of responsibility and contribution overlap to a certain extent. The organizations and their various departments must work together all the way down the line; thus the partnership between the Phoenix and APA would appear to be a very sound one. Such a partnership should strengthen both organizations and make more effective service to other
sponsors, such as the University of Michigan. The continued communication
between the two men, although sometimes full of disagreements, never
destroyed the basic friendship which continues to the present date,
with respect and mutual affection.

Up until this time Rabb had always been working with the classic play. The APA files again offer a memo of March, 1964 in which Rabb
states his convictions about the classic style. It gives the reader
some necessary insights as to just why the plays were chosen, and
why they followed the classic pattern. Rabb chose all productions
himself, after careful consideration of the actors which he had available
and the type of play he wanted to represent the company at the time.
In the memo, Rabb states his belief that a repertory company must first
build its collaborative ensemble talents through the presentation of
established classics before turning the major concentration of energies
to the production of new scripts. Rabb wrote:

The instrument must first be strongly schooled and established
both individually and collectively before those talents can
be most successfully turned to the service and discovery of new
writing talent for the stage. The individual and ensemble
capacities should be well established before they can hope to
attract and properly serve the new writing talent. This is
why APA has devoted itself primarily to established works and
only very seldom to new plays. It is not our intention to rule
out new scripts, nor ignore them. I believe that the theatre
should be composed of a healthy balance between the maintenance of
established works and the discovery of new works. The art of the
theatre is, in my opinion, just as much--indeed, mainly, the
art of acting.

Mr. Rabb continued to develop his point: in the American Theatre the
art of acting was sublimated to the discovery of new writing talent
and to the perpetuation of personality performances. Rabb stated his
conviction that a new or established personality in a vehicle or the
arrival of a new play is "what we have, for decades, devoted our time and attention to." The result of this, Rabb wrote, was that "we have some very appealing virtuoso soloists and occasionally some promising or even completely exciting scores but we have no orchestra for a symphony nor even an ensemble to meet the challenge of a concerto."

It is to the actors, individually and collectively as an ensemble who must challenge and even welcome the writing talent of our generation, said Rabb. He went on to question the reason so much of the writing talent of this generation seemed to be short-lived, with only a play or two and produced before the playwright vanishes. The prolific writing of a Shakespeare, or of any established playwright of the past had a common bond: that they practiced their art. Thus their plays are full of quality coming from the quantity of writing; Rabb felt, as such, the classic play demands to be produced and enjoyed.

Rabb was in the process of growing and developing just as was his APA organization to which he gave his total and concentrated attention. So it comes as no surprise to read in a memo of November 4, 1964, earlier quoted, that Rabb now was restless under the bonds of classicism and wanted still newer concepts for his company. He had been thinking of a totally American Repertory season for the year ahead. Now he wrote that he had changed his concept, that the idea seemed somewhat incomplete. As he expressed his feelings about the artistic needs of the organization, Rabb said:

What I really want to do is to add a group of plays to the rep which are more obviously pertinent to our day, age and time.
The purely classical or established rep has served us well now for five years. We have schooled and built our forces on the strength of those texts but now I feel the need for us to stretch our legs in another way. I do not want either APA's muscles or reputation built on the idea of a purely revival atmosphere—or something that suggests art-for-art's sake, or the worthy cause, and certainly not anything academic in content or context. I want to put a looser definition on the category of plays selected for the next years additions. Call it 'American' and/or originals—and/or experimental. I hasten to add that this category must in no way preempt our basic and first consideration in selection that the art of the theatre is the art of the actor and we must choose only what we feel we can cast well. We must start with the actors first and then decide. Otherwise we lose our purpose and our vision.

Among the plays which were done after this commitment to the new policy were Krapp's Last Tape and You Can't Take It With You; both plays indicated Rabb's serious intentions.

Since Rabb spent a great deal of time in a directorial capacity, some introduction as to his methods of working appear to be in order. Again, in turning to the personal files of APA a memo was found which was dated only "before 1st Phoenix season". The piece was titled "A Method of Rehearsing--the first reading":

First let us discover the play in its totality. It's overall shape, structure, tones, basic colors and textures. The first reading and early rehearsals should tell us the form we are to fill in. Everyone should be attentive to the first reading. If we participate only in the parts we are to act in ourselves, we will lose the advantage of a first reading. We have all read the play privately--we have our personal reactions--we can all read--we can all read out loud--so these are not things we are to discover in a first reading. We are also not here to judge. We are here to begin to respond and create. We are to take our first collective step in the collaborative process. Let us listen to each other--be an audience for the play, its first audience. Let us respond and begin to react to each other.

Rabb continued by warning his actors not to begin to dig nor to inspect nor tear apart in the first reading. He asked his people to
try to respond to the tempos, moods, rhythms of the play.

Let your imagination begin to respond, not your critical mind nor your introspective creativity. That must come later during working rehearsals and private study. Begin by opening yourself up to the material and to any and all ideas coming to you from the text and each other. Avoid—cast off—self consciousness: we are all in the same boat—all starting in our way to bring one thing to life. We must share our mistakes, excesses and inadequacies sooner or later. Let the play absorb you. The further we get now the more we can grow from day to day. All of us are guilty—from fear and laziness—to commit ourselves early. The sooner we do the further we'll go together.

The directorial suggestions continued with a question which he felt might arise: would a beginning like this lead to some superficiality?

Rabb answered his own questions:

I do not think so. We shall deepen. We shall enrich. We shall build. We shall break down and construct. But we shall anesthetize our early, most basic and valuable response if we worry about detail too soon. Even with the first reading we must begin to stimulate our individual and collective imaginations; we must awake that instrument through which the creative process can take place. Let this first reading be an experience from which to build. Let it tell us something—even if it is the wrong things. For that will stimulate us and provoke the right discoveries. Let us begin to discover now. Let something begin to happen. Then the right things, the real things, the true things will come.

These statements of 1964 illustrate some of the directions Rabb was following in his artistic developments, not only in concepts on choice of plays but also in a directorial approach.

The company returned from their Michigan Tour and opened on December 6, 1964 in Man and Superman with Rabb playing Tanner; Judith followed with Rosemary Harris; the season ended with the planned production of War and Peace. The general feeling of the company was optimistic. Rabb's concepts were working well, not only from the actor's point of view but also from the press. The enthusiasm which
the repertory company aroused was supportive and positive. New York audiences were eager for the company to establish itself in the City. The press was responsive and generous in their reviews. For a first hand knowledge of the events which immediately followed we return to the personal interview previously quote, with T. Hamblton, as he spoke of this season:

When APA came back from Ann Arbor we opened the season. During that time it was so successful that we felt we'd managed to prove something—what repertory was all about and how it should work. We thought we should go to the Ford Foundation and say, 'Here it is; this is the way it can be done. We feel we want to share it with a few more people than we can in the 74th Street Theatre. We would like to go to the Lyceum at Broadway and 46th Street and establish our own, larger place to function.'

We talked with MacNeil Lowry, the head of the Foundation; and later we spoke with his right hand man who wasn't as knowledgeable as MacNeil, nor as helpful. Still, we thought we were getting along with things as the season rolled along. By this time Ellis was so exhausted everyone felt it imperative that he get away for awhile. It was just shortly after he left that Lowry called me in and said, 'Sorry, we just don't have enough confidence that it would work and that's as far as we're going to go at this time.' That was a bitter blow. We had been all set to go to the Lyceum after the Michigan fall season in 1965.

Rabb returned from a shortened vacation and although discouraged, he prepared to rehearse the company for their remaining commitment at Ann Arbor.

The press was clearly disappointed at the set-back which the APA-Phoenix was forced to face at this time. Howard Taubman wrote an article for the New York Times on June 13, 1965, titled, "The Importance of Subsidies", in which he voiced his disappointment at this sad development in the affairs of the New York based repertory company.
Mr. Taubman said that on the strength of what APA had accomplished he felt it deserved the financial support the company sought. The critic claimed that APA served not only New York but also the University of Michigan Professional Theatre Program; he observed that the impetus for the founding of residential professional theatre companies in the United States showed no sign of declining, and that it was too easily forgotten that a solid permanent company can not be expected to be self-sustaining. Mr. Taubman declared that it was not enough to give only support at the outset of such an undertaking as repertory theatre, there should be continual backing. Taubman spoke of the value that such a system as repertory brought to the artistic growth and that some small measure of security was needed for those who wanted a stage career with continuity. The community as a whole must assume the responsibility, the critic declared, if admirable companies like the APA-Phoenix were to be kept alive and well.

Another example of the deep concern expressed by critics is indicated in the following article by Stewart Little. Mr. Little offered his column as a voice for Rabb's comments on the situation:

Ellis Rabb, Rosemary Harris and the members of the somewhat reduced Association of Producing Artists are looking into a question filled future. They wind up the season at the Phoenix Theatre with Sunday's performance of Man and Superman and will remain in the city for two more weeks rehearsing three plays to take to the University of Michigan. . . . Thereafter the continued life of this five-year-old institution, which has made so strong an impact on New York theatre in just two seasons, is a series of question marks.

. . . Rabb refuses to blame the Ford Foundation for present difficulties. 'It would be wrong to blame them. It is easy to make the foundation the scapegoat for all our problems but this is emphatically not true'.
He's concerned about strengthening his company. He is worried about conserving the energies of a company such as his and adequately compensating actors living within the strenuous repertory situation--always performing and always rehearsing.

... 'We take the talent we've got and we wear it out, we burn it up,' said Rabb... He cited Sydney Walker as an example. 'The number of hours he's worked and the number of parts he's played over the last three years is a phenomenon in his profession. We're like the parent who tells his child he can wear his shoes for another year', Rabb continued. 'But his feet are beginning to hurt, and in the end he will wind up with club feet or as a basket case.'

Continuing the personal interview, Hambleton gave his concepts of the situation:

Well, it looked like the end of everything. We had put all our eggs in one basket and the basket didn't work out, and we had no alternative at all. We went around to all the people we thought might help. We had hoped for $300,000.00 from the Ford Foundation and felt that this could be matched with $300,000.00 from our own resources. But without the Ford Foundation, it was obvious that it couldn't be. The only thing that kept us in was what we felt was a moral obligation to Ann Arbor for the following plays: You Can't Take It With You, The Wild Duck, Herakles and Krapp's Last Tape.

The company gathered itself together and proceeded to Ann Arbor to fulfill the fall season as stated by Hambleton. Rabb was continuing to work hard with his actors, demanding the highest performance level during rehearsal. It was during this time, that he wrote the following memo, which was found in the APA personal files, and carried only the indication that it was written during the Ann Arbor season, '65. At this time, Rabb observed:

I now believe that the most important part of an actor's work is his HOMEWORK. Most important because it is usually ignored, forgotten, not done. Perhaps we rehearse long in the course of a rehearsal day so that the actor is too tired for this additional work. But there must be time for absorption, digestion, evaluation and inspiration. The actor I admire and like to work with is the one who returns to every rehearsal not just to repeat or recall
and polish what has been done but the one who extends himself through his digestion and returns with new values, new ideas and new inspiration. This progress must not necessarily lead to endless daily discussions, but to a 'doing', a 'happening' on the stage as a result of the digestion period. This way the director can truly see and evaluate the new discoveries as they should be incorporated into the building of the character and the preparation of the actor.

Rabb went on to emphasize his point as he wrote:

The actor should be prepared to surprise the director through most of the rehearsal process and the director prepared to stimulate anew the actor in his progress and growth, up to a point. At a certain point, let us say, run-throughs, we should work to perfect what we have built together and chosen. Up to that point, however, there must be a process between each and every rehearsal. He must digest, absorb all of what has been done and that extends him into new discoveries and thoughts and understandings and expressions of his imagination.

The production of You Can't Take It With You was an immediate success in Ann Arbor that season. So successful, in fact, that Mr. Hambleton was determined to bring the play into New York and present it as a single production. The producer put into motion all the money-raising forces at his disposal, and succeeded in obtaining approximately $40,000.00, according to Hambleton's figures. The play opened at the Lyceum Theatre on November 18, 1965 for its preview week, and to the critics for the first performance on the 23rd. The notices were excellent. Although Hambleton gave full and admiring credit to the excellence of Rabb's direction and to the luminous performances of Rosemary Harris and the company, there was another asset which contributed to the overwhelming response: for there was a great reservoir of good will that provided a special welcome from all of New York; APA had made it to the Lyceum against all odds.
The reviews quoted below show the enthusiasm of the critics:

For example, Walter Kerr wrote:  

How generous, how kindly, how entirely intelligent the APA has been in deciding to play 'You Can't Take It With You' for keeps. By, for keeps, I mean not for gags, not for pace, not for all the headlong racousness we too readily associate with thirty-year old farces. Instead of making most of firecrackers in the basement, Ellis Rabb's repertory company has chosen to make even more of shy smiles in the living room, and the result is captivating... All are concerned with making 'You Can't Take It With You' survive as a memory survives--with a shine around the edges, contentment at its heart, hilarity hovering over it like an echo that won't go away until you are touched by it.

George Oppenheimer wrote for Newsday:  

Last night at the Lyceum Theatre there were two happy events--the APA Repertory Company returned to New York and it brought back a revival of You Can't Take It With You...  

It is good to have the Sycamores with us again and in the capable and loving hands of the APA. Ellis Rabb has directed his company with even more than his customary skill and if some foundation or groups of individuals know what's good for our theatre, they will help to provide a permanent home for the APA. Such was the plan originally, but unhappily the Phoenix Theatre, its sponsor and producer could not raise the necessary money. Maybe and hopefully this fine production will turn the trick.

Norman Nadel, New York World-Telegram and Sun, began his column by stating:  

That settles it. By every possible means, including periodic showers of money, we must keep the APA--the Association of Producing Artists--in New York, for at least part of each year. I hereby remove myself from the sidelines and pledge my puny services to that project.

It wasn't just last night's boisterous revival of You Can't Take It With You which firmed up my resolve, even though that is one of the happiest offerings any theatre company has bestowed on New York this year. It was the sharp sense of loss some time ago when we learned that APA couldn't present a season here, and gratitude at the later word that they staged this play. Plus the fact that everything they've done, fine or faulty, had been fired by a grand spirit.
PLATE IX

THE LYCEUM THEATRE, NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK.
•COURTESY DAVID GAHR.
If the APA is going to belong to anybody, let them belong to New York. Or let New York belong to them, which sentimentally speaking, is the way things were last night at the lyceum.

With the success of this production to give them encouragement another attempt was made to gain recognition and financial support from the Ford Foundation. There was the repertoire and the production schedule which had already been submitted in 1965 to prepare the way. What the group now needed was a way to support the season as planned and to make additions to the company to provide greater strength for the productions. The Ford Foundation still did not see a way to support the project. The National Endowment for the Humanities had just been put into operation by an act of Congress. On June 28, 1966 Roger L. Stevens, head of the National Endowment, happily announced that he would match a grant of $125,000 if this grant could be matched from other contributor sources. At this announcement, The Avalon Foundation, The Old Dominion Foundation and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund all generously came through with funds. With the help of other individuals, Hambleton's fund raising was finally able to match the National Endowment grant. It appeared that the APA could launch its repertory season at the Lyceum in the fall of 1966 without the help of the Ford Foundation. The company was jubilant.

In preparation for this new challenge a number of things began to happen simultaneously. It must be remembered that the Association of Producing Artists were no longer a single entity. They were now a commodity, an organization which was being produced by the Phoenix Theatre. When the decision was made to have a season
at the Lyceum, Mr. Hambleton and Mr. Rabb agreed to call the joint effort the APA-Phoenix Theatre. The underlying fear that was a constant shadow on the apparent upswing of fortune, was Mr. Rabb's conviction that the identity of his own organization was severely endangered by the larger and more powerful Phoenix unit of production. At this time, however, the momentum of developing events was enough to push these forbodings into the background.

As the APA had been moving from one producing organization to another, in the years before the Phoenix alliance, there were many people who wished them to perform in their area. Now that time was needed to prepare the schedule for the Lyceum opening in the fall of 1966, it was necessary to take the company out of New York to continue their payroll. Their first engagement which the Phoenix management booked, was under the sponsorship of the Greek Theatre Association in Los Angeles. The company appeared at the Huntington Hartford Theatre for eight weeks with their repertory of *You Can't Take It With You*, *School for Scandal*, and *Right You Are*. After Labor Day the group moved to the Greek Theatre itself to present *War and Peace*.

The Association of Producing Artists carried with it the problems that formed the core of any production. In California the plays faced the normal decisions on design, costuming and even the scoring of original music. It is interesting to note, from personal communications with members of the company, (which are fully developed in the last chapter of this work), that Rabb's continual drive was for new approaches to works in the repertory. His interest in the fresh approach was a
HELEN HAYES, SIDNEY WALKER, RIGHT YOU ARE,
LYCEUM THEATRE, 1966.
source of challenge and stimulation to all members of his company.

When the engagement was completed in California the group moved to Ann Arbor, Michigan for their fall season. In addition to the repertory which had played in California, an evening of one acts was offered to the Michigan audiences: Three Mysteries with Two Clowns and The Flies. The repertory traveled to Toronto for a stay at the Royal Alexandra Theatre and finally returned to New York to begin a thirty week season of repertory in their own theatre, The Lyceum.

In the meantime, plans were continuing at the Phoenix offices for an extended fund drive to finance the coming season. The APA-Phoenix was now under the management of the Theatre, Incorporated which handled all of the subscription complexities. As the earlier reference to this organization implied, Theatre, Incorporated was the title of the money-raising Board which Mr. T. Hambleton used as a basis for his operation. It was to this board that APA was now responsible. Any developments which affected the APA-Phoenix alliance were discussed and solved during the meetings between the Board members and the co-producers of APA-Phoenix.

Rabb's participation in the complexities of the producing problems which occupied the time and energies of the Board of Directors of Theatre, Incorporated were never completely comfortable. The artistic control of his company was an area in which he was totally at ease. The problems of fund-raising, the concern about financial deficits, the planning of budgets were always of a seemingly endless nature and became a point of considerable strain and antagonism.
as the relationship continued. These facts must be noted now, for they proved to be an insurmountable obstacle at the end of the APA-Phoenix alliance.

The subscription plays were to be We Comrades Three, The School for Scandal, The Wild Duck and The Merchant of Venice. Continuing in repertory on a non-subscription basis was You Can't Take It With You, Right You Are and War and Peace, a total of seven productions. Describing the schedule for the new season, Mr. Hambleton wrote:

... We found that the complexity of the repertory season made subscription selling difficult and that we were well below our goal. However, we felt that the rotating repertory ideal was most important and should not be compromised. We opened School for Scandal and Right You Are successfully back to back on November 21-22, 1965. We Comrades Three, which opened December 20th, proved a disaster and was immediately taken out of the repertory and replaced for our subscribers with Right You Are. The Wild Duck followed after the first of the year.

The physical concept of production for the season at the Lyceum was designed on the basis of a unit set. This proved to be only partially successful according to Hambleton's evaluation. He felt that it worked for The School for Scandal and We Comrades Three and later with War and Peace. But it did not work with Right You Are nor with The Wild Duck. It became necessary to re-do the physical production of the plays formerly in the repertory so that they would have the impact necessary at the Lyceum. Unfortunately, this meant additional expense over that which was estimated in the budget. The cost of the season was far above the budget. The plan had been to place The Merchant of Venice as the fourth subscription production but
HELEN HAYES, DEE VICTOR, KEENE CURTIS IN
YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU,
LYCEUM THEATRE, 1966
as Hambleton bluntly stated: "We were short of cash and just couldn't swing it."\textsuperscript{13}

The company was tired. The unit set presented problems. Rabb decided to return to War and Peace. This opened on schedule in March and was very well received. In spite of the problems, there was a most enthusiastic attitude toward the repertory and the alliance of APA-Phoenix.\textsuperscript{14}

The Lyceum season closed with You Can't Take It With You on June 17, 1967. After a two week vacation the company again met in Los Angeles at the Huntington Hartford Theatre to open a new season with The Wild Duck on July 10th for two weeks. It was at this point that the Ford Foundation decided to support the APA-Phoenix in establishing a repertory in New York City; they gave a grant for $300,000.00 for each of three years on a matching basis of 1 to 1 1/2. Naturally the news gave the company great confidence and a renewed hope for the future.\textsuperscript{15}

The opening plays were followed by Right You Are, beginning June 24th for a week; The Show Off was the first new production of the season, starring Helen Hayes, who had joined the company the year before; this play opened on July 31st. Pantagleize opened August 21st for a week and Exit the King opened September 1st.

Even though the notices for the season were good, business did not reflect the notices, according to Hambleton. Of the entire repertory, the two plays which brought in business comparable to the previous season were The Wild Duck and The Show-Off.
RICHARD EASTON, EXIT THE KING.
LYCEUM THEATRE, 1967
The 1967 season in California ended when *Exit the King* completed its last week on September 18th at the Huntington Hartford. Now the company faced its usual problem of gaining further time before facing the fall season in New York. At this time APA embarked upon the most complicated and exhausting touring schedule. They first journeyed to Ann Arbor to present a two week run of *Pantagleize*. Ellis Rabb starred in this work; John Houseman directed. The production suffered somewhat from the combination of these two forces. Rabb had originated the concept, according to a taped interview with Jim Tilton, APA designer, (See Chapter Four). Houseman changed the original concept, and it was not until the production reached Ann Arbor that Rabb again took over the helm, bringing about some basic decisions which brought unity to the work and released company tensions which had built during the previous California engagement. *Right You Are* and *You Can't Take It With You* followed in repertory.

The company had been invited to appear in Montreal for Expo '67, sponsored by the U.S. Department of State and the later two productions opened there on October 9th; *You Can't Take It With You* went on from Montreal to play in Toronto for two weeks.

Now *The Show-Off*, with Helen Hayes, played two weeks in Ann Arbor, beginning October 30th, while *Right You Are* opened in Toronto. At the same time, the Ann Arbor theatre saw *Exit the King* as the last offering of its season. Finally, Toronto audiences received the productions of *Pantagleize* on November 6th, *The Show-Off* on November 13th and *Exit the King* on November 20th.
When the APA company returned to New York City after this grueling schedule, their season began almost at once. Ellis Rabb opened in Pantagleize December 4th and Ms. Hayes in The Show-Off, December 5th.

The reviews of the press were excellent. Walter Kerr wrote an interesting comment about the direction APA was taking in the acceptance of Ms. Hayes into the company. Titled, "Well Met: Helen Hayes and APA," Mr. Kerr wrote:

My admiration for the theatrical intelligence that lies behind APA seems to increase not only with each new production but with each news release. The latest information given us on forthcoming plans for the repertory group is that Helen Hayes is to join it in the fall as a regular member of the company. By regular member I mean that Miss Hayes, for as long as she stays with the company, will play roles that suit her--large or small--as they happen to come along.

. . . The APA is a new, reasonable cohesive, organization composed mainly of comparative youngsters; certainly, with the possible exception of Rosemary Harris, it has had no 'star' cachet to function as box office insurance. It has principally been interested in playing a range of materials--dipping back at least to Moliere--and not in mounting one-shot commercial successes.

. . . The question that must pop up in doubting Thomases is this: what has the star-conscious, commercially built presence of Miss Hayes to do with the exploratory investigations of a band of irregulars bent on submerging themselves and their separate theatre identities in the demanding, diverse, not noticeably commercial styles of Pirandello, Gorki, Chekhov and Sheridan?

My own answer . . . is that APA has now taken one more essential step toward making repertory theatre meaningful in the American theatre.

Mr. Kerr continued to develop his thesis: the two points he based his observations upon were what he called 'the nature of a genuinely distinguished, genuinely representative acting company'.
and the extraordinary waste of already developed talents that he felt were characteristic of the American theatre. Kerr said further that the repertory company that finally will be developed will not be composed of newcomers learning to act but of trained actors. He observed that although Helen Hayes had never "busied herself with the specific problems of playing Goldsmith or Gorki, my best guess is that she can learn to master Sheridan rather more quickly than a raw beginner can conquer Coquette; and having one or more sources of abundant technical knowledge bouncing about in a company is apt to expedite matters considerably." Mr Kerr continued:

A sound acting company is not really composed of equals. Equals tend to blur, and for a time not to budge. . . . What is wanted in an acting company is not the dead level of eternal quality but the tension that comes to exist between mentors and aspirants. Not that the most experienced member need function as a teacher. . . . he simply needs to exist as a force to be challenged, and if possible matched.

One of the severest burdens facing those who would form repertory groups in this country is their utter inability to entice the most able new generation actors into the fold. . . . To put the matter crudely, playing repertory must be worth it to the already trained young performer, and only the presence in the company of still more highly trained performers can ever guarantee that. . . . Adding Miss Hayes to the APA troupe, most of whose members are well past being neophytes, is only a first step toward creating a blend in which respect for past achievement plays a titillating part. . . . But it is a sound step.

Mr. Kerr was echoing the most basic convictions which Rabb held and which were the source of great frustration: he longed to obtain the best people for the roles and to draw the talented established actor into the organization. Ms. Hayes' presence and enthusiasm was a constant source of satisfaction and inspiration to him. T. Hambleton made the following observations on the curious developments in the
In spite of the excellent notices which were received by *The Show-Off*, a production made notable by the glowing performance of Miss Hayes, and *Pantagleize*... splendidly played by Mr. Rabb and company, these plays failed to establish themselves, to exploit the audience support which they had earned with their reviews and word of mouth. This seemed due to the repertory system, which remained foreign to the American audience. When performances were sufficiently pre-sold, either by subscription or through single ticket advance, all went well; but if, for any reason, the advance was lacking, the audience could not be kept aware that APA-Phoenix had a hit, and the effect on business was disastrous. It was determined that a schedule for the new season would offer plays for a week at a time to allow them to establish their own strength and also to cut down the stagehand costs of changing the settings.

The 1968 season continued with *Exit the King* joining the repertory in January. Rehearsals were begun at this time for Eva Le Gallienne's production of *The Cherry Orchard* with Uta Hagen. There had been some production problems with the latter play which opened to mixed notices. Also *The Cherry Orchard* had not had the advantage of the out of town seasoning which the other plays had enjoyed. The production continued to improve in repertory, however, and gained strength both in the quality of its performance and in its box office receipts. It played out its subscription performance to a high percentage of capacity by the end of May.

The planning for the new season of 1968-1969 began in the fall of 1967, but lacked the ardor that was hoped would come with the security of the substantial Ford grant. There was still the problem of a high deficit to solve; the Board decided to borrow $250,000.00 in early March, 1968, and this insured a commitment to the coming season. A tentative list of plays announced included *The Misanthrope*,

box office sales at this time: 18
HELEN HAYES, GWYDA DON HOWE IN THE SHOW OFF,
LYCEUM THEATRE, 1967
The Cocktail Party, The Latent Heterosexual, and Marlowe's Edward II. According to the records, The Misanthrope was put into rehearsal for three weeks in January at the same time that Cherry Orchard was being prepared; A Midsummer Night's Dream rehearsed in March and April, and The Misanthrope resumed for two weeks in April. The Cocktail Party began rehearsal in May and played several previews in mid-June.  

Plans for the production of The Latent Heterosexual were sidetracked and finally dropped altogether. The story behind this unfortunate situation is interesting for it indicates just how the evaluation of critics can change the course of a play, even before it has had its chance for the intended presentation.

One of the basic criteria of APA was its wish to be used for the development of writers, although this function of the repertory group was never fully realized. If a play remains in a company over a period of years, it becomes a living thing; it was this possibility that made Paddy Chaysfsky determined to allow the APA to produce The Latent Heterosexual for their 1968-69 season.

According to the facts as described by William Goldman in The Season and corroborated by Rabb in personal discussions, Chaysfsky was disenchanted with Broadway; he was deeply interested to see the life of his play take shape in a repertory over a period of years. The APA was his ideal of a perfect medium for the production to take shape and grow. He wanted to see its development.

The play had been actually written for Zero Mostel and since
Mostel was available, Chayefsky allowed the Dallas Theatre to do a trial run before APA began the New York production. There were troubles with the work in Dallas as recasting became necessary. Still, the reason for choosing a regional theatre was to escape the hazards of Broadway. In spite of all efforts to discourage them, Broadway critics traveled to Dallas to review the play. It was not a successful production and was not intended for such critical comment based on a regional theatre presentation. As a result of the press, Chayefsky found it to be a very unhappy experience. The production was removed from the 1968 APA schedule.

The season ended June 22, 1968. An additional three weeks had been added of The Show-Off, Pantagleize and previews of The Cocktail Party. The first two productions were considered hits, but business was poor, and it failed to improve.

Again the company was booked into California. The summer season opened at Stanford University in Palo Alto, California on July 8, 1968 with Pantagleize, Exit the King, The Show-Off and The Cocktail Party. The Toronto booking had been arranged after the poor Lyceum showing in June; Rabb felt that September in New York would be a stronger month with Pantagleize and The Show-Off. This did not prove to be the case; which was doubly frustrating since Ms. Hayes played the following fourteen weeks on tour with The Show-Off to double or triple the Lyceum grosses.  

The company opened the Ann Arbor season with The Misanthrope then came into New York to begin previews with the same show on October 1,
1968. Repertory began with *The Misanthrope* and *The Cocktail Party*, each production playing eight straight performances. The former play was well-liked while *The Cocktail Party* failed to please most critics. The subscription had increased to 18,500 and carried both productions through Christmas. *The Misanthrope* was the money-maker of the New York season.

Hambleton had the following comments to make about this season:

Things were running slower than they should have. We were having trouble trying to pick plays. So it was pretty much *The Misanthrope* with Dick Easton and *The Cocktail Party* with Nancy Walker. Because of difficulties in deciding what to do we only announced two plays and went ahead with them; we were still arguing about what to do next, up until December. It turned out to be *Cock-A-Doodle Dandy* and a production of *Hamlet*. Personality problems forced Ellis to be both director and play the title role. But the money had become a great problem in early fall because the National Endowment announced they were not going to give us any grant--and we were short and running considerably over our budget and this was weighing heavily on Ellis. But during the last year the vital forces were in short supply. Ellis and Rosemary had been divorced and there was a general feeling of despondency and tiredness all around. Plans for the next season were way off schedule. Ellis' insecurity was a danger to the enterprise and his decisions were made almost by default in choosing the final two plays. It was almost with relief that the company was advised of Mr. Rabb's arbitrary decision not to continue past 1970, but the Board of Theatre, Incorporated determined the break should come on April 26, 1969.

In his final evaluation of the APA-Phoenix Theatre enterprise, T. Edward Hambleton wrote for the *American Theatre*:

The decision to terminate the APA-Phoenix union was a shock to all those who had watched the move to the Lyceum Theatre with joy and anticipation. It had seemed in the fall of 1968 that suddenly it was possible to do what no one had done since Le Gallienne's Civic Repertory: to establish a company devoted to great theatre in repertory, old and new, in New York City. Looking back to 1965, many reasons for the termination were already
present when we left 74th Street and others developed during the first repertory season, 1966-1967; but these might have remained latent if sufficient artistic vitality had developed within the company to share the load and regenerate the artistic leadership of Ellis Rabb. There was no substantial recruitment of fresh, new members to the company after 1966.

Our inability to lay out in advance programs, to choose plays and find the artists to act, direct and design was certainly complicated by the constant struggle with low box office income, slow contributions and ever increasing costs. We might have found a middle ground by limiting our operation and placing ourselves in a healthy financial situation, which might in turn have contributed a greater vitality to our creative efforts. Hindsight is never very satisfactory, particularly when one takes into account the precarious state of the theatre in America and the general over-confidence in 1967 and 1968 as to the amount of money available to the performing arts from all sources—government, foundations and individuals. We were aware then, as we are aware now, of the magnitude of development necessary to provide a vigorous theatre audience as well as company and management for America in the 1970's and 80's.

We attempted to strike a substantial blow for the theatre that we hoped would develop as we went along. Although we were not successful in establishing the APA-Phoenix, we issued a challenge and showed that the ingredients for success are present.

A copy of Hambleton's article for American Theatre was given to Rabb for his approval. Rabb's letter of reply began with the following paragraph:

While I find most of your narrative brief and to the point, I think your interpretations of certain factors, particularly towards the end, are either a mistake for inclusion in such a factual paper or they need further comment if this record is to be fair to me and to any assessment of the facts that led to our success and defeats... I would therefore be grateful if you would just include this letter with your report. If I occasionally offer contradictions to your interpretations, that in itself illustrates one of the major facts of our ultimate break.

Rabb continued by questioning the statement made in Hambleton's report that Cock-a-Doodle-Dandy and Hamlet were both included in the Lyceum "by default". He claimed that the former play represented a major expenditure of time, energies and money from the beginning.
of the planning and was a definite part of the program. As to

Hamlet, Rabb wrote:

Hamlet was included at the last minute because nothing else
had been prepared. We were in the midst of a financial crisis
which I attempted to help with by cutting back on the size of
the company and by suggesting other managerial cuts. You will
remember that the Board of Directors had approved a budget
that permitted me a larger company of approximately forty-six
actors. I cut the company to twenty-two. Money and time had
been spent on my production of Hamlet both during the summer and
in Ann Arbor.

Rabb addressed himself to the paragraph in which was stated,
'This unresolved financial battle had its effect on Ellis Rabb.
His insecurity became a source of danger to the enterprise.' Rabb
declared that from his own point of view he would have worded it
another way: 'The constant unresolved financial battle was a source
of insecurity to the entire enterprise.' Rabb wrote:

It certainly had its effect on me and on every member of the
organization proportionate to the individual's responsibility
to and for the enterprise. While it was not my responsibility
to raise funds and to administer the budget, my constant
concern and increasing lack of faith in my associates in these
areas began to seriously undermine my confidence in the enterprise.

Rabb went on to acknowledge that he had never been in
accord with the advertising and promotional techniques. He had
always fought the 'four-play subscription' formula since he felt that
it locked them into a self-defeating use of the repertory system.
The formula, Rabb stated, was expensive to operate and disallowed
a flexible scheduling of performances. Rabb observed:

This is certainly the basic economic principal of the
repertory system. One plays more performances of the saleable
productions. The four play subscription season also limits one's
artistic choices since one must attempt to find four plays of
equal drawing power. In other words, Exit the King... would
never have had as large an audience potential as . . .
You Can’t Take It With You. While APA-Phoenix was committed
to an adventurous program of play production, we were tied to a
’success formula’ method of operation.

Hambleton and Rabb had never come to grips with their
disagreement over the budgetary discrepancies, wrote Rabb. He said
others agreed that far too much money was being spent in the front
office operation.

We lacked confidence in the style, methods, and ultimate
'know-how' of the business and general management. These
unanswered questions and basic distrusts existed between us
since our days together off-Broadway at the 74th Street Theatre
in 1964. But we went on together since all of us felt that
much good had come of our association from a public point of
view and that in time we would mutually solve our differences.
We didn’t. We only avoided and evaded them. Our first unsuccessful
season (68-69) was the straw that broke the camel’s back, by
bringing into the open the problems that had existed from the
beginning.

Rabb questioned another quote from Mr. Hambleton’s article
in which Hambleton said: 'It was almost with relief that Mr. Rabb
decided arbitrarily against continuing past 1970 and the Board of
Theatre Incorporated determined the break should come on April 26,
1969.' Rabb wrote:

I guess the relief you speak of was for me like discovering
one has a disease that is finally pronounced terminal. In that
sense, I must agree with you that there was relief for all
concerned. The six years of battle, wondering if one would
continue, and if so how, and if so what—was at last over. But
I am confused why you think that I decided arbitrarily against
continuing past 1970. There was certainly nothing arbitrary
about my decision. A six year disagreement over the subscription
program technique, a distrust of personalities and know-how
of our general business management were major, specific
dissatisfactions and frustrations. I therefore must deny that
my decision was arbitrary. I realize that there is an easy and
thus popular assumption that my actions at that time were
heavily governed by my frustration over Hamlet, which I both
directed and played the title part. But I will defend myself--however unbecoming that may be--by saying I went on with the Hamlet production in order to fulfill our obligation to the subscription audience for a fourth play; I also believed that the play itself was a fitting climax to a series of plays that were attempting to state the necessity of our theatre to recognize the importance of poetry and the spoken word. I still believe that directorially my production was not only valid but exciting and that my major mistake was in attempting to play the part myself. Why did I make such an organic mistake? Because, as in the past ten years when faced with insuperable tasks I had the insanity to say, 'Never mind, I'll do it myself.' The company had survived in the past off this sort of chutzpa. I miscalculated my own energies in this instance. I also miscast the part.

Rabb went on to speak of the attitude of the Board of Directors and stated his frank assessment of their action:

My frustration over the failure of Hamlet was nothing compared to the atmosphere of panic that surrounded the Board of Directors. Their 'determination that the break should come one year in advance of our contractual period' was a breach. I tried on numerous occasions to make clear that because of long term problems, APA would not want to continue in association with the Phoenix on an exclusive basis after our legally contracted period, which was the spring of 1970. You and the Board then informed me that if we (APA) would not agree to a continuation past that point, you (Phoenix-Theatre, Inc.) did not want to fulfill the obligations of the current contract as there would be 'no future' in it. The Phoenix and Theatre, Inc. broke the contract that existed with APA.

Rabb went on to explain that he tried to give Hambleton one year's notice of the intention of seeking activities outside the Phoenix structure after the current contract with the Theatre, Incorporated expired. He wrote that APA did not resist the break one year in advance as it would have been a nasty legal battle and Rabb was just as relieved to have the battle brought out into the open then. He went on to say that all of the foregoing statements were in no way a final defense or explanation; it was only a partial indication of the fact that
problems existed from the beginning. Rabb said:

The problems were ones of temperament and style as much as fact and statistics. Perhaps if I could have remained indifferent and ignorant of the practical problems that existed I would not have drained my energies in that direction. I think this says something about the entire process of creating and building an important repertory company in this country at this time. We not only need energetic, informed, determined, imaginative and original leadership on an artistic basis, but we need practical, imaginative, business leadership of those artistic resources that make for confidence and trust.

Rabb went on to state the real core of the personal conflict between the two men, actor-director and producer:

You see it is a constant, however subtle, disagreement. You think you could have found the resources of money and support and ultimately fulfilled the aim if the artistic resources had been more disciplined and more constant. I, on the other hand, think that if you (and others like you, in your position) were more imaginative, more challenging, more confidence-making, more orderly, more frank, more explicit, then we (the creative resources) would be less distracted and more self-regenerative.

The letter came to a close with this final paragraph:

The failure of APA-Phoenix to continue past the spring of 1969 should not deny or diminish what positive things were accomplished. What was learned is that the seeds of our ultimate dissolution were planted from the beginning in our personal inability to communicate on the subtle and deeply sensitive level such an association requires. It wasn't that there wasn't enough money, or enough talent, or enough audience interest. The final and real failure is that you and I never could agree on the basic and fundamental level that such an association requires.

While recording the statistics of value of the creation and existence and continuation of an enterprise, we must account for the personal factor. I never trusted your managerial accumen. You never found the ability to cope with my concerns—whether they were artistic or managerial.

I could no more approve your assessment of the facts than I could recognize your view of the facts as facts.

We were not meant for each other. And that is a fact. And in my opinion the most important fact. Sad. But true.
The following comments of T. Edward Hambleton, in a personal interview, indicated still more clearly, the chasm that separated the two men. Hambleton elaborated on a more personal level in the interview, stating his honest evaluation of the relationship:

There was a great feeling of frustration and not any bitterness on anyone's part—but frustration, that with the amount of momentum we had been able to develop, we hadn't been able to provide a more viable structure to do the job. It worked for a while, really very well. When everything seemed to be lost we picked it up again with You Can't Take It With You.

Mr. Hambleton went on to say that this was an ambivalent time for Ellis Rabb. Hambleton felt that he, personally, had never been entirely clear as to how Rabb felt about him, nor what he could do about it. There was always the problem of unity. Hambleton said that the two men could never finally put their heads together and provide a united front towards building up what, basically, had to be done. It seemed to be a chemical thing between the two personalities. This difference in approaches between Hambleton and Rabb is more clearly defined in the words of Mr. Keene Curtis, a charter member and actor in APA throughout the life-span of the Association. Mr. Curtis opinions are quoted in detail in the fourth chapter of this work and will not be developed at this time. Hambleton brought the problem of identity into the interview saying that Rabb was always uneasy about the possibility of losing the quality of identity of APA to the Phoenix organization. Rabb was not clear, according to Hambleton, as to just how this feeling of separateness could be maintained. The producer went on with further comments:

Ellis was really exhausted toward the last. He was in a
state of despair at the time of Hamlet. His personal attitudes were deeply affected by his divorce. It would have been better if we had said no to Hamlet. But our relationship was such that he wouldn't have listened. Our relationship was bad, in any case and there was no one in the company that Ellis could turn to, no one he would allow to take over the control. The whole drive of the company was in Ellis. He made all the decisions, chose the plays, directed all the artistic elements. But he was never able to bring anyone along with him who could operate effectively. If we had ended the season with Cock-a-Doodle-Dandy we would have skipped Hamlet, and frankly, that seemed to me to be too bad for the subscribers.

Hambleton felt that the fatigue which Rabb carried was at the base of many of his problems in dealing with the present circumstances. He went on to say that as far as repertory went, he felt one needed a great deal of money to do it. Again, Hambleton returned to the topic of Rabb and the company:

The problem with APA was that it was Ellis' from the beginning. He built it up, built it without any lieutenant to take over. He acted as surrogate for the company and everyone in the company was happy to have him do it. Ellis was the charisma figure and no one else, except Rosemary, had word one. . . I still feel a great problem was the fact that there was no way for Ellis to rest and regenerate, no way for him to recharge his batteries. There was always the fatigue. Theatre is not a democracy, its autocratic. What you need is not only a great creative talent which Ellis had, but extraordinary vitality to carry it off; he ran out of that towards the last.

The interview with Hambleton ended on this note.

It is important for the reader to keep in mind, that although this section of the chapter apparently deals with the break-down of relationships between the two men, the actual outcome of the complete and honest verbalization of their differences did not in any way destroy their friendship nor mutual respect. The present relationship is in no way diminished in stature because of the demise of the APA-Phoenix partnership. Both Hambleton and Rabb have maintained an integrity and
objectivity in reviewing their partnership together. However, in an effort to clarify the actual break between APA and the Phoenix theatre, and to deal fairly and equally with the problems which both organizations faced in this difficult situation, the following excerpts are presented. The words are those of Ellis Rabb, taken from a transcript of a company meeting on March 8, 1969. Mr. Rabb opened the meeting by saying:

The reason I thought we'd just talk is because certain things have become clear in my numerous talks with Mr. Hambleton and with Mr. Stern, as head of the board of directors of Theatre Incorporated who sponsor us. I thought we should discuss this all at one time. There are a few things I want to tell you and then invite you to discuss them with me at some later date, particularly the future and your feelings in general. The problem that we face is that repertory operation in New York City on Broadway is, as we knew, but did not really know, catastrophically expensive. It is so expensive that it would appear that the quantity of money needed to provide a New York City-based home in a major theatre for a repertory company on a year-round basis is prohibitive.

Rabb went on to explain that although everyone knew it was going to be expensive, no one knew just how expensive three years ago, because no one had done repertory in New York City, much less on Broadway. But now it had been discovered that the expenses of the operation were completely out of proportion to the amount of money with which the enterprise was currently associated:

It is therefore apparent that Theatre Inc. cannot be responsible any longer for raising more than a certain amount of money. The amount is, I would say, between $600,000.00 and $750,000.00 a year. The fact is that we have been losing between a million and a million and a quarter. There are debts that have to be paid off that go back two years, as well as a loan that was taken out to keep the season from closing short of its announced subscription.

According to Rabb's explanation this situation could not be
righted unless one of two things were to happen: The APA must have all hits; and even with hits like the Show-Off, Pantagleize or War and Peace, the company still were not able to reach their audience.

Rabb went on:

Whether this is the fault of our subscription, publicity department or our lack of imagination here or there is all a separate thing. The fact is that we have not sold, whether we've had successes or flops, significantly past our subscription. In this country at this time we have no form of permanent European subsidy available; the generosity of the Ford Foundation is the only thing that exists in this country on any major scale. As you know, they have given us over $300,000.00 a year for a three-year period, almost a million-dollar grant, the largest that has ever been given to a theatre of this kind in New York City. Their generosity expires at the end of next season. Thereafter Theatre Incorporated would not only be responsible for raising the matching funds, which currently amount to $450,000.00 (since we match on the basis of $1.50 for each Ford dollar) but the actual grant amount as well. Mr. Stern has made it clear that the Board does not think they can raise over $750,000.00. In order not to lose only that amount of money, no matter how successful we may be, we must seriously curtail our activities.

Mr. Rabb explained the second point: two major items in the budget would have to be curtailed: they would lose their permanent home, the Lyceum Theatre... and there must be a shortening of the subscription season. In other words, as Rabb put it, $130,000.00 in the budget ($100,000.00 for rent and $30,000.00 for utilities) was a sum of money the organization simply did not have and therefore could not spend. As for the subscription season, it would be shorter than ever before. Rabb felt the APA would simply have to live with that fact. He continued:

Now it seems to me that the Association of Producing Artists signed a three-year contract with Theatre, Inc. two years ago with options for renewal: a three-year contract for the duration of the Ford grant. We agreed to collaborate, with the Phoenix
providing the management and APA the artistic services for the presentation of three years of repertory on Broadway. As artistic director of the company and as president of the corporation, we should honor, fulfill and take full advantage of the opportunities, challenges and obligations of that contractual commitment. We should collaborate with them next season to produce as exciting a season as possible within the limitations they enforce, because of circumstances beyond their control. They are forced to face them and so must we.

An outline of a possible season was made at this point. It included a four week season in Chicago, six weeks in Ann Arbor, then New York City, playing a curtailed subscription season of three plays at a theatre to be determined for approximately three and one half months. This would take the company up to February, 1970.

The Board did not feel they could allow more extensive plans at that time. Rabb continued with his explanation of events which had transpired:

Mr. Stern has indicated such a season would be feasible. They do not feel, in all fairness to us, that they can come up with more money to allow more extensive plans at this time.

The following excerpt from Mr. Rabb's transcript appeared to be the point at which the negotiations from the Board's point of view became less positive:

I said to Mr. Stern in the presence of Mr. Houseman and Mr. Hambleton that it is, of course, a two-way street: we are all constantly talking about the need for continuity, security for advanced planning. It is impossible for me as artistic director to ask you, individually, to make commitments to the organization beyone those the organization can make to you; though it is, I'm sure, a hope on the part of Mr. Hambleton of a determination to continue, which is rare in this day and age and that there will be something in the offing after that point. I pointed out to Mr. Stern that most members of our profession--actors, directors, designers--begin to plan because of the nature of our profession, their next batch of work months in advance. To wait until the beginning of December to contemplate what we would be doing after February would mean that
I would become highly skeptical that I could entice... anyone to commit himself to us longer than we can make commitments with him. We all have to make a living at this profession, after all. We can all hope that one of our subscription shows would develop into a wild, sensational hit that we could extend for a five-year run, but we do not know that that will happen. It is a gamble on both sides.

Mr. Rabb then stated that, after long and careful consideration, he planned to advise Theatre Incorporated that APA would have to bow to their survival instinct; they must contemplate soliciting from other managements and sources of backing further residences and engagements; this would perhaps take them to other towns, foreign countries or even into other media such as television, radio and movies. Rabb elaborated:

APA began in 1960, ten years ago--and it stands in our charter, and I quote: that we are 'a service-providing organization'. We do not set out to be fund-raisers or producers in that sense of management. We intend merely to provide a service that would be backed, bought, sponsored either commercially or non-commercially. Our work can take us--like gypsies--anywhere, any place. We have certainly enjoyed and learned a great deal from our residence in New York City, in its theoretically firm, secure atmosphere, for three or four years now. I hope that New York City, which most of us regard as our home, will someday be able to provide us with a really secure home and foundation... But that kind of money is simply not available now, in this country, at this time.

Rabb went on to say that he was convinced the Board of Theatre Incorporated and Mr. Hambleton had done everything in their power to provide the Association with a home at the Lyceum or some other comparable theatre. Rabb went on to say:

My point is then two-fold: it is my vote and my opinion that we should honor our commitment for a season in New York City next year, even though seriously curtailed; and that we should do everything in our power to make it a stimulating one for all concerned. We must... continue in the absolute
direction that we have been moving in for the last three years. My last point is to reiterate that is my opinion that if APA is to survive, independant of Theatre, Incorporated, we must begin--we are forced to--entertain the possibilities of an association with other forms of management and sponsorship at the conclusion of the third year of the current contract. That is the whole story. I think I have told you everything.

The members of the company had some questions at this time, a few of which brought forth further information:

Q: Are those three plays in New York to run in rotating rep?

Rabb: Yes. I have proposed to Mr. Hambleton that we consider playing eight performances of a show in a stretch running from mid-week-to mid-week. In that way we alternate weekends and the beginning of weeks. The more lavish we make the schedule of repertory the more formidable, indeed impossible, becomes the expense. The great problem of Theatre Incorporated--I trouble you to understand--is that they must go out every season to get us the three quarters of a million dollars to continue at the same time they're asking for money to pay off our outstanding debts. So this becomes a most groping, grabbing problem. Last season's debts have been kept somewhat in abeyance by the cleverness of Mr. Hambleton and his associates, but they remain a fact. Even at capacity business we would still be losing an incredible amount of money.

Q: There was talk of extending the season two weeks. Is there still talk of that?

Rabb: No. The extension was, in my humble opinion, a hallucination of Mr. Hambleton's. I think the extension could only have been made if Hamlet had been a great commercial success, at which point we could hopefully have buoyed up both Misanthrope and Hamlet to have played together two more weeks at the end of the season. Even if Hamlet had been a great hit I doubt seriously the wisdom of an extension. After all, one would have thought a return engagement of Pantagleize and The Show-Off, two of our great successes, one of them with one of the most loved of American actresses would have proved profitable; but as you know our business was in the vicinity of $9,000.00 a week, approximately one third of our capacity. Whether this represented deficient showmanship or publicity, it seems to me we don't have the wisdom to exploit the present repertory.
Q: Am I to understand then, Ellis, that when we close here on April 27th that we are officially out of the Lyceum Theatre?

Rabb: Well, that's what I understand.

Q: What about the University Tour?

Rabb: The university tour one day is on, one day is off. The last I heard there was the possibility of touring our productions of *Exit the King* and *The Misanthrope*.

Q: The same time as the season would be on here?

Rabb: Yes. The same idea as *The Show-Off* tour. Except this would be bus and truck. November, December and January. Three weeks off at Christmas. Playing to universities.

Q: But this would in no way benefit APA?

Rabb: Yes, it can. Those tours can make a considerable profit if they are carefully booked. If there is much space between the engagements you cannot hope to make money. And if the booking is tight, it's conceivable, particularly if we keep the physical productions light. For example, I would consider doing *Exit the King* with just the thrones and lighting.

There were further questions from the company pertaining to the desirability of a bus and truck tour as compared to the National Tours of the past; the time element as to when the final word would be available was questioned, the ten week lay-off period and whether contracts would be negotiated before that moment. To all of these questions Rabb offered as much information as he had at the moment. The contracts, he said, would be negotiated just as soon as the season was settled which would be within the following two weeks.

On March 14, 1969, *The New York Times* carried the announcement of the break between the two organizations:

The relationship between the Association of Producing Artists and the Phoenix Theatre is being dissolved, according to well-informed sources. The decision to terminate the arrangement at the end of the season took place this week at a meeting of the
The collapse of the APA-Phoenix would bring to an end the project for which great hopes had been entertained when it began three years ago. The repertory company, based at the Lyceum Theatre was the first in the Broadway district in years. Dissolution of the APA-Phoenix would not mean the end of the APA repertory company itself, which will probably revert to making its own arrangements for appearances elsewhere. ... The Apa’s departure would leave the repertory company at the Vivian Beaumont as the only major one in the city. Actually the Repertory Company of Lincoln Center does not operate in the traditional repertory manner. Unlike the APA, which scatters performances of a particular work throughout the season, the Lincoln Center troupe ... presents its productions in succession.

T. Edward Hambleton, managing-director of the APA-Phoenix could not be reached yesterday. Ellis Rabb, of the APA repertory company, would not comment on the report last night. ...

Mr. Rabb revealed to the APA company the progression of events in a letter dated March 14, 1969. Rabb wrote:

After our company meeting of Saturday, March 8, 1969, a transcript of which is attached, I wrote a letter which informed Mr. Hambleton, Mr. Alfred Stern, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Theatre Incorporated, and Mr. MacNeil Lowry of the Ford Foundation, of my decision not to pick up our 'option' for a future association between the two organizations at the conclusion of our currently contracted three-year period which would end after NEXT season, i.e., the 1960-70 season. I told them in the letter that I wished this fact known to them at this time so there could be no misunderstanding in the future and that such a period of time would permit both APA and the Phoenix operation to make sufficient advance plans to continue productively our activities independently after the 69-70 season.

I had hoped and expected that we would continue the collaboration, as contracted, through our 1969-70 activities, and thus that we would jointly execute the planned four-week season in Ravinia, the six week season in Ann Arbor, the University tour booked by the William Morris Agency, and the shortened New York season at a theatre other than the Lyceum, during which time we would present three of the productions built in Ravinia and in Ann Arbor on subscription.

Rabb continued to state that he was informed by Mr. Hambleton a few days earlier that the Board of Directors would not want to
attempt to raise the money for the next season (69-70) on this basis. Rabb stated that Hambleton felt that unless the Board could regard the '69-'70 activities as a link to the future... there was no point in continuing the association beyond this current season, ending April 26, 1969. The Board would find it difficult, if not impossible, to raise the needed funds without an assurance of a continuance.

The fact was, that at the conclusion of the current season, the company would have to forego the Lyceum as a home base of operation; Rabb stated that the organization could not expect the Board of Directors and Mr. Hambleton to go out any further 'on a limb' than they already had.

Rabb went on to say: "It was clear to me that APA would have to function once again, as it did when it was founded. We would have to operate with a very low, minimal business management that could afford to present us."

The letter concluded by saying:

We would have to pray for the day in which the City of New York, the State of New York and/or the National Government built us or bought us our own theatre in New York City and were dedicated to helping us maintain its operation. We could no longer--we can no longer--plan on hopes and dreams. Nor can we dream or hope about plans.
It will take a little time for us all to gather our thoughts and reorganize. But I am totally confident that APA will find a way to 'carry on'. I am also confident and hopeful that the Phoenix will once again rise, as it always has, from its ashes or its flames.

After the season ended in New York City several key members of APA participated in the San Diego Shakespeare Festival. The company
then departed for a fall season in Ann Arbor, Michigan, where they mounted Rabb's production of *Macbeth*, a double bill of *Play* by Samuel Beckett and De Ghelderode's *The Chronicles of Hell*, followed by *Private Lives*. After the end of the season in Ann Arbor, the company separated with the *Private Lives* production going on to play engagements in Toronto, Boston and Washington; the remainder of the company completed a seven-week tour of colleges and universities with *Exit the King* and *The Misanthrope*. *Private Lives* later came into New York under the auspices of David Merrick.

These productions marked the end of the organization. Unfortunately, during the 1970 season of operations APA faced a very serious financial crisis due to the mishandling of tax funds by the new executive director. Everything had to be liquidated at that time to meet the financial pressures. Rabb spent many months doing everything in his power to raise the money to pay off the debt. The scenery was auctioned off in New York as well as the costume stock. The members of the company disbanded and APA became dormant, awaiting the availability of funds. Until the mismanagement of tax monies forced the company into its demise, APA took well-deserved pride in their last year of production: they finished the year after the break with the Phoenix, by being totally self-supporting; they were succeeding without benefit of subsidy.

In a recapulation of the life of this repertory company, with its six year association with the Phoenix management, one can only try for some sense of objectivity; the failings of the organization seem to point to a very sad comment on the sickness which besets the theatre.
scene in general. APA floundered by the very nature of its existence. Repertory is new to this country. It may be that America is simply not theatrically educated to the acceptance of the medium, or to the full support that a repertory company must achieve, through popular and unpopular productions. For it is inaccurate to suppose that the APA-Phoenix collapsed under the weight of a heavy deficit, as a result of a poor season or any particular flop. The Association had been steadily sinking for three years at the Lyceum, even during its most successful season, from the standpoint of critics and audience alike. There is an undeniable reality gap between the amount of money it takes to operate a true repertory situation in New York City and the amount of money available in our country to support such a venture. A full fledged repertory operation will only be able to exist, it would seem, when the times change, when the need demands that it happen.

The personal files of Ellis Rabb have produced a piece which has been chosen as a fitting close to this chapter. Written by Rabb, undated, the piece is titled: Ellis Rabb is Alive and Wondering in New York City.

It has been eight months since the close of the last APA-Phoenix season at the Lyceum, which also marked the dissolution of the six year association between the APA Repertory Company and the Phoenix theatre management. While APA has managed to remain alive and active, I have personally had time to read and to observe.

APA was ten years old this January. The creation and maintenance of a repertory company is rather like entering a monastery. It requires complete dedication and the walls grow higher every year. But the current transition in the life of APA gave me time to take a look at the greenness of the grass outside the walls. It is all far browner than I thought it would be.
Other regional repertory companies are swamped with similiar artistic and economical problems that beset APA. Attendance at Broadway and off-Broadway evokes too little envy. The time to read all those new scripts yields hardly more than it did when there was no such time.

Reflecting on what APA should or could be in the future leads me to an analysis of what it has been so far. Where were the mistakes in vision and where the mistakes in execution.

The scrap book reveals there were critics who basically liked us and those who didn't... In the areas where it counted to our survival we were more admired than not. The dissenters were consistent: to them APA lacked a definable 'purpose'. I refused to state, and our programming did not reveal, a definable identity with any political, social or philosophical point-of-view. Our 'style', or lack of it, was without a coherent form that tied the work together. We were not 'about' anything that was 'relevant' to the world of 'revolution' in which we live. Some admitted we were 'best at a sort of lyric nostalgia but even at the best the contribution was ultimately very minor.'

If I seem morbidly obsessed with the fact that 'the evil that men do lives after them and the good is oft interred with their bones', I confess to the morbid fascination as a means of understanding the past in order to project a better future. I take satisfaction with the majority of good things that were said, done, accomplished and that remain on the record.
FOOTNOTES


3. MacNeil Lowry is the Director of the Foundation Program in Humanities and the Arts, 477 Madison Avenue, New York 22, New York.


11. Ibid., p. 76.

12. Ibid.

13. Hambleton, interview.


15. Ibid.


19 Ibid.
20 Hambleton, The American Theatre, p. 78.
22 Ellis Rabb, interview, July 6, 1972.
23 Hambleton, The American Theatre, p. 79.
24 Hambleton, interview.
26 Letter from Ellis Rabb, undated.
27 Hambleton, interview.
31 Personal APA files, undated.
CHAPTER IV

AFTER THE FACT

Voices of APA

What the Association of Producing Artists was can best be understood by some knowledge of those people who made up the organization. Any artistic endeavor is ultimately based on the response of the human beings who devote their time and energies to the common cause. With this in mind, requests were sent to several members of APA, asking for thoughts and comments on their association with Ellis Rabb and APA. The response has come through their letters, through their mailed tape cassettes, and through taped personal interviews. Due to the interest which greeted the request, it is possible to present a more human concept of the organization. The voices which will be heard cover a wide range of subjects since the members were from different areas of production. The material represents diversified viewpoints. However, APA was built on the ideal of an association of artists; the artists' personal participation is therefore important to the accurate and detailed completion of this work.

Sidney Walker came to APA in the winter of 1962 from the Broadway production of Becket, and a season touring with Eva Le Gallienne and the National Repertory Theatre. Like Rabb, Walker was
dedicated to the repertory system. In the following letter Sidney Walker compares his experiences with two repertory companies.¹

"Of some twenty-seven years of experience in American Theatre, the two by far most memorable and enriching periods were those spent as a member of a repertory theatre: the first, the Hedgerow Repertory at Moylan, Pennsylvania, under the guiding hand of founder-director Jasper Deeter; the second, the APA Repertory, founded in New York City by Ellis Rabb. I was associated with the former in my formative days as an actor, from 1941-42, and again from 1946 through 1949. I was happily reunited with the repertory experience through the APA association in the period 1962-1969.

It is interesting, in retrospect, to see the similarities in the two organizations, and in the approaches of the two men who founded and guided these two rare enterprises, Deeter and Rabb; approaches which were responsible in large part for the success of the two endeavors. In the best sense of the term, both men could be described as 'benevolent despots'; the democratic process was somewhat more encouraged by Deeter at the Hedgerow, yet essentially, spiritually, both were autocratic enterprises. The final decisions in casting, the selection of new works for the repertory, the overall aesthetic of the theatre lay in the hands of the guiding force in each instance. Both Jasper Deeter and Ellis Rabb had the great gift of making you, as the individual member of the repertory family, feel that this was your organization. One did not 'work for' the APA or the Hedgerow; rather one was a part of a total entity which, together, expressed
itself as the APA, the Hedgerow. The APA was unique in that it existed in the so-called 'commercial theatre' climate completely free of the boss-employee psychology which is the norm. This was possible because in the main the economics, the financial management duties were assumed by a producing team while the aesthetic of the product lay entirely in the hands of the Association of Producing Artists themselves, with Mr. Rabb as the spiritual head of that Association. There were problems, there were compromises, yet one got the overall impression that the one (management) seldom interfered with the other (the artistic product).

In the creative process of play production one felt unparalleled freedom to experiment because the role and the part it played in the overall production was truly made to feel 'yours'. In the directing process, again both Deeter and Rabb acted out of the same psychological process: each invariably got the kind of performance he wanted from the actor that best contributed to the whole, yet the guidance was so gentle, so supportive and enthusiastic, so artfully indirect, if you will, that the actor inevitably arrived at the feeling that he had created every moment of the part himself, and that it was completely 'his' work; anyone who has had the responsibility of giving dozens of performances of a particular role will understand how supremely valuable it is to have this great feeling of security about what he is doing as a performer.

The fully useful, creative, valuable actor in a repertory situation is a rarity. I feel that repertory is valuable to the actor
and that actor valuable to the repertory, only after the actor has come to terms with his identity to some appreciable degree. One doesn't get very efficient teamwork from a member who is subconsciously (sometimes consciously) expending his energies in being noticed, singled out, dreaming of his name being in lights above the title! The concept of the repertory 'family' must come first, the total play, not the individual performer, is the thing. When an actor has legitimately arrived at this way of regarding his work and contribution, then I feel repertory can bless him with immense satisfaction, and he can be of true service to it for so long as he is in the experience.

The artistic and psychological advantages of performing roles in a rotating repertory over a period of time are inestimable. One gets the rare opportunity to exercise the whole of his emotional, psychological, and often his physical equipment as an artist. The palette of colors is challenged and used to its utmost; the total person grows and is enriched in the process. If my statistics serve me correctly, I spent six and a half mostly uninterrupted years with and as a part of APA, playing some 1441 performances of twenty-three different roles in New York City; Los Angeles and Palo Alto in California; Ann Arbor, Michigan; Toronto and Montreal in Canada, and a fleeting, exciting night in the East Room of The White House. The roles were in great works of master dramatists: Shakespeare, Moliere, Pirandello, Gorki, Tolstoi, Giraudoux, Shaw, Ibsen, Sheridan, Chekov, O'Casey, Eliot, Kaufman and Hart. The Hedgerow experience, which began my career, was incidentally, very similar: the four post-war years with
that company found me playing some sixteen roles in an alternating rep. of again, Shakespeare, Shaw, Dreiser-Piscator, Chekov, Riggs, Goldsmith, Brecht, Goldoni—a great and liberal education over the years.

Ellis Rabb has sometimes paid me the compliment of saying, 'You can play anything'. The repertory experiences it has been my rich privilege to enjoy under Mr. Rabb with APA and under Jasper Deeter in the Hedgerow days made such a compliment possible, and gave me the growth and confidence I needed to agree with him."

Mr. Walker was one of the mainstays of the APA group. His recognition of the advantages of the system allowed him to function well in APA; the benefits from the incredible variety of roles which he played were shared equally by APA and in the constant development of the actor's versatility.

Edith Skinner, one of the most beloved members of the APA company, was officially the voice and speech coach. It was her job to try and bring a uniform pattern of speech to each member in order to achieve the unity of style which was important to the ensemble work. Professor Skinner taught at Carnegie-Mellon University at the time both Rabb and his old friend, William Ball (ACT) attended Carnegie; both men admired her greatly. Professor Skinner wrote:

"I am most grateful to Ellis Rabb for giving me the opportunity to work with him, T. Edward Hambleton and Stephen Porter—and all the actors of that closely knit group in New York City and California. That time was the highlight of my life and in my career in the field of
voice and speech. I know from talking with many, many drama students, who were in high school in New York and New Jersey when Ellis Rabb and his APA Repertory Company were playing in New York, that this company which they followed religiously, became the turning point in their lives, and that they were saddened by the demise of the group.

As a senior drama student at Carnegie Tech (now Carnegie-Mellon University) Ellis wanted to play King Richard II, but ended up with the role of The Player King in *Hamlet*. Nevertheless, he was the most outstanding Player King that I had ever seen. I remember that Henry Boettcher, who was then head of the Drama Department at Carnegie Tech, once told Ellis that he shouldn't think of continuing in the theatre because of his skinny frame and being rather odd-looking; he would be having difficulty in being cast. The theatre should be grateful that Ellis did not heed this advice, which by the way, Mr. Boettcher reneged on, and became a backer and great friend of Ellis'.

I recall when Ellis Rabb and William Ball graduated from Carnegie Tech, they presented me with a copy of *Shakespeare's Complete Works*. Each of them had written reference lines of Voice and Speech from various plays on the clear pages of the book. Unfortunately, someone took that book. It was my prize possession. The APA Repertory should have become the great Repertory Company of the East Coast, just as William Ball's ACT Repertory has done on the West Coast of the U.S.A.

Along with the precious quality, humility, which was synonymous with Ellis Rabb, he kept a firm hand in control of the APA Repertory
Company. I recall one afternoon in a run-through before an opening of a play, an actress of note arrived late and missed her cue; and she had the audacity to casually walk down the aisle, smoking a cigarette, and on to the stage, from the front of the theatre; then she had difficulty in finding a place to dispose of the cigarette and at the same time trying to relate to the other actors. What did Ellis do at this appalling action? Nothing at that moment. He let the actors complete the act, then asked them to come and sit down in the theatre. At this dramatic moment, since an extremely unprofessional attitude had been shown by one of the APA members, Ellis in complete calm, did not chastise that member, but told a story which must have made that member want to drop through the floor. When Ellis finished he said, 'Now we will begin with Act I.' The play began over and those actors gave, probably, the outstanding performance of that play.

Ellis had a real gift of inspiring his actors and getting the most from each of them. I remember that one day he told them that he was glad he had studied at Carnegie Tech because one worked with many directors of varying opinions, and that this fact had made him more flexible as a person and as an actor. The willingness to do one's best and the desire to succeed in a major or a minor role, seemed to permeate from Ellis and each member of his Repertory group."

The story content to which Miss Skinner referred has remained a mystery! In addition to her work with the APA actors, her teaching responsibilities at Carnegie Mellon, Professor Skinner also taught Speech at the Julliard Drama Division, Lincoln Center, New York City.
She is still active in the two schools of Drama. Rabb has spoken of her work with the company with profound respect and gratitude.

Another one of the more valuable members of the APA group was its musical director Conrad Susa. Mr. Susa was one of the original members of the 1960 APA Workshop days when he was a student at Juilliard School of Music. He received a Ford Grant the following year and also conducted the premiere of his first symphony with the San Diego Symphony who had commissioned his work. Mr. Susa has presented a perspective on APA and on Rabb which was available from no other source; for his point of reference is music. It is absorbing to learn of the detail which went into the score of the APA productions. Mr. Susa wrote:

"Sometime during the winter or fall of 1953, when I was a freshman at Carnegie Tech, I saw the tallest, oddest person ever. He swooped his way through the corridors of the Fine Arts building with extraordinary grace, radiating more energy than anyone I had ever seen. The picture stayed in my mind. . . The following summer I went to visit a friend at his home in Dayton, Ohio. He took me to see the Shakespeare plays at Yellow Springs, not far away. . . There I saw Ellis again, playing Ariel in The Tempest. I saw no more of Ellis until the spring of 1960 when he and Richard Easton and Tom Jones came to my apartment to discuss music for the forthcoming APA season in Bermuda.

It was Allen Fletcher who first called to ask if I were interested in doing some music for Ellis' company. Allen and I had
already worked together at Tech in *Cymbeline* (1957) and at San Diego. Bill Ball and he had brought me out there in 1959. So Allen knew my work. Being very poor and becoming excited at the prospect of going to Bermuda, I immediately accepted.

... We got to the business of discussing *Anatol*. My job was to put Offenbach's music to Tom's words. All I really had to do was to work up an accompaniment and clean up the voice parts. They wanted to know if I could make the music sound like a music box. I did. A waltz? A snowfall? I did this, too. Everyone seemed satisfied so Ellis promptly said I would do. A week later I was in rehearsals... As we worked on the show various weaknesses of the lyrics and music became painfully evident. Ellis, Richard Easton and I spent many hours in our rooms working on new lyrics to what I felt were better tunes. One of them began, 'Here comes Jack Frost with pick and shovel'. I was pushing for a richer score with more ensembles and was dissatisfied with these rather thin lyrics. Some of our changes were incorporated in Bermuda, with further improvements in Princeton. I played the piano from the wings. It was great fun.

The next show, I believe was *Man and Superman*. For this, I had to locate some local musicians (in Bermuda). The assignment was to use Shaw's musical directions in the script. We found a very obliging guitar player who did the recording. I think I played some organ music, too.

*Seagull* was next. For this Ellis wanted 'a symphony of Nature', composed of animal sounds--crickets, birds, etc. This was an interesting
assignment, but I felt it needed some music, too. Having written something of a fete champêtre, a Pastorale for triple string orchestra at Juilliard for a competition for 'quiet music' which won the prize, I planned to use this as background for the birds and crickets. It has a nice impressionistic-mystical atmosphere and, if my memory does not play me wrong, worked fairly well. There was also the use of Debussy's La plus que lente woven into the score.

When Princeton materialized my weekly salary was given an increase of $25.00 to $75.00. For this amount I was to provide music for the season. Here is a summary of what I did:

New Music:

The Lady's Not for Burning
Box and Cox
The Cat and the Moon
Right You Are
The Importance of Being Earnest

Music I wrote for the Globe Theatre, used in Princeton:

King Lear (drawn from Henry IV, part I)
As You Like It

For Hamlet, Ellis used music written by John Duffy for Henry VIII (Antioch) and some Bach (The Art of the Fugue); Dream used the original Barrie music for Peter Pan. For The Tavern, I followed Dick Baldridge's idea of using the music of Edward MacDowell. This was played on an organ at a funeral parlor. The room still heavy with the smell of carnations from a funeral and recorded at that time by Brooks Jones who worked in the office and later became the director of Playhouse in the Park, Cincinnati, Ohio. Brooks also played and sang in the Cat and the Moon.
... Ellis plays the piano after a fashion, his specialties being 'Softly, as in a morning sunrise' and 'Chaconne' by Auguste Durand. This last piece he plays with curious stops and starts resulting in something very characteristically Ellis. When I did The Importance of Being Earnest score I parodied his pianistic style in the opening cue. It gave particular meaning to his lines about playing with much feeling even though the notes aren't right. I can't remember the lines right now.  

Mr. Susa continued in his account of his work with APA in Princeton while he was still a student at the Juilliard School of Music, New York City.

"The $75.00 allowance also covered my budget, which meant that I had to cajole my friends at Juilliard to play for nothing, or almost nothing. I turned out a score a week, squeezing the composing in with my studies and compositional duties at Juilliard. I learned to work fast in a variety of ways. I can't say that the music was high art, but we all knew that it couldn't be under the difficult circumstances of short money and little time. Generally, I could say that I was learning a lot about plays, a lot about working with different directors, and husbanding my own energies. Being a professional composer while still a student was a great boost for my self-respect, and the income raised my spirits considerably. All through this time my relationship with Ellis deepened considerably, especially during the work on Hamlet when I began to see how his style was developing... There was trust and understanding and even when we had differences, it was always upon
this foundation of mutual help that we built, so that our differences of opinion never seriously damaged our friendship.

... I would like to mention the production of Judith in 1965 at the Phoenix on 74th Street. This was a particularly difficult assignment. My part was hard because of the stylized nature of the play, the large amount of music Ellis wanted, and my total lack of knowledge of Hebrew music. This lack was in part corrected by long sessions with a musicologist who almost drowned me in musical examples. She spoke at least ten languages and often lapsed into one or more of them during my indoctrination. I decided I could not approximate these examples and chose, instead, to invent a style of my own based upon the sonorities of Carl Orff. We had long rehearsals with the priests and soldiers on the musical problems. These were supplemented with some classes that Ellis had me give on musical improvisation. We did the recording in Ann Arbor. The orchestra, of pianos and percussion and voices, consisted of students at the music school. The music came out a little more MGM than I thought it would, but Ellis liked it. Later on, the vocal things were simplified, though the rest of the music was retained.

... We did a revival of the Cat and the Moon in Ann Arbor for which I completely recomposed the score from the earlier Princeton production. I layed it out for wood blocks and Swiss bells. The players were seated on benches on either side of the stage. The action took place between them. Myself and the actor, who played the Saint and sang the songs, were seated behind a curtain of cotton bailing in the
The cotton bailing made us sneeze for days. It was finally sprayed down. The show had a crystalline purity that was tremendously affecting—something between a medieval morality play and a Noh drama. It is one of the best things I feel I ever did.

I must have been going through some sort of spiritual crisis, because when we came to do Exit the King, I discovered that my dreams and education and aspirations all seemed to be bound up with making this production the most meaningful of my life. Not only is the play great, but Ellis himself seemed deeply touched by its strange life.

Los Angeles is not the best place to work and I had some difficulties fighting the climate. Finally, I started with the great funeral march and worked backwards to the beginning and forwards to the end. I kept in mind that Ellis wanted it to sound like the organ he heard at the cathedral in Barcelona—rude, strange, medieval, penetrating—and I wrote what was a series of variations on the opening cue for organ solo. I combined many electronic sounds with this score, spending a lot of time in various Los Angeles studios, getting to know the engineers and how they worked. The recording sessions at RCA studios were one of the most exciting of my life. I had players from the Los Angeles Philharmonic... The players liked the music and applauded when it was over. Richard Easton, who played the King, claimed that the music showed him something entirely new about the play.

There were many fine moments in this production but the finest of all was at the very end when the Queen says, 'Now you can take your place.' At this she disappears, leaving the old King on his throne, looking
like a puppet. A great plastic curtain descended and was turned to broken glass by powerful spotlights. At the same moment the tremendous fanfares of the final variation sounded over the speakers. I cannot recall another instance where a production built so powerfully to the very last moment. It haunts my mind.

In the 1968-69 season I began working on The Misanthrope, which was to open in Palo Alto, California in the summer of 1968. This was the first Moliere I had ever done. I was particularly eager, after seeing the set and costume designs, to do something smart and grand. Strings, I decided, would produce the effect I had in mind, plus a careful transmutation of Lully and Rameau. The score was to be, besides a series of transitions, an anthology of the dances and devices of the music of that time.

I began working on the piano in the lounge of the fraternity house we were lodged in, right near a window where swallows were nesting under the eaves, making innumerable trips back and forth to their young. My constant companion was a very pregnant cat who I called Maxine. She would loll about, fat belly in the air, almost gyrating to my halting gavottes and rigadons. I never worked harder on a score, and never looked forward as much to the recording session. This took place about two weeks later, at the Golden State Recorders in San Francisco. Once again, I had a terrific ensemble of about ten or twelve strings plus harpsichord, all from the San Francisco Symphony. . . . The session went swimmingly, in spite of having to wait an hour for the tuning of the harpsichord, and the score made a good companion to the
acting and visual elements. I still enjoy the score as a piece of music in its own right.

My work on *Cherry Orchard* was to help Miss LeGallienne find appropriate Russian music for her play. This was difficult to do and she became extremely irritated that I was not able to meet a certain deadline. Actually, I produced the music later in the day, but the damage had been done. She was needlessly sarcastic. I have nothing further to say about the production.

... *Hamlet* was my final assignment and, of course, APA's final production. Ellis' style had by this time grown very cinematic and dreamlike, offering rich possibilities for a composer. With the modern, non-specific settings, the leather costumes, and severe cutting of the text, I decided that a jazz score would best convey Ellis's intentions. The score was difficult for me, particularly the recording session, conducted because of short funds, in a small studio on 58th Street. Musicians ran in and out between other jobs. One thing that stands out in my mind was producing the sound for the line 'Let the doors be shut!' This was done by ramming a laundry cart loaded with music stands into a large gong. The resulting boom was slowed down to half speed. Jerry Bruck, later president of the Mahler-Eruckner Society, was the extremely gifted engineer who did the session and helped solve the problem of creating the voice-overs for the ghost scenes.

From the earliest days Ellis was always flamboyantly free in describing what he needed musically. Often he had a piece of music in mind when he wanted a score, making my work difficult if I did not see
it the same way. Ellis would call and say, 'Let's have lunch and talk about it'.

While he lived on Christopher Street the lunch was usually a breakfast, with white wine, served amid a waterfall of flowers while Speed the dog, Lenny the cat, Rosemary the wife and Tony the maid all went about their business. The assignment was described with great sweeps of arms, movements about the room, elaborate descriptions of the costumes. Indeed, I could almost hear the music he needed on the spot, the actor in him described the impending production so vividly. He was never at a loss for words and so enjoyed what he was about to bring into the world that these sessions, often lasting for several hours, were more like games than work.

When he moved into 57th Street (after the divorce) there was still the white wine, although pets and wife were absent. Ellis, being a good cook, often served something he cooked himself. It seemed as if he needed to create everything, food, room, atmosphere, even the music. I often felt that I was really more of a midwife, helping him deliver his score.

Unfortunately, I often felt, that although he was intensely musical, he lacked a broad knowledge of music. Even his use of technical terms made me wince at first. But as I grew to understand him more and more I could hear beyond what he literally said, and I could begin to visualize (or auralize) what he was trying to say. He always had the greatest respect for my opinion and bowed to it when it came to a matter of choice. He felt that I, like Nancy Potts (his valued
and brilliant costumer) or one of his actors, was to be treated as a professional, which is to say that he valued another person's knowledge and experience.

Our talks continued on as long as there was time, often days beyond the initial meeting, and often far into the night. I often told him that he taught me more about music than I learned at Tech and Juilliard because he demanded that I invent a technique for him. And so it came about that my ten years of work with him was an unending search for the proper musical gesture, the telling sound that would uncover his purposes. I was not submerging myself: on the contrary, Ellis maintained that one could be useful to him (or anybody) only after the self was fulfilled, after one's personal standards were met. One worked for him by being true and severe with oneself. He demanded and got totality.

This is all best understood, perhaps, if it is remembered that he brought APA into existence against all advice. He had the bearing and vision of a messiah. Only impossible things interested him. Therefore he was better at originating than at maintaining. APA was easy to invent for him, hard to keep running. With his ever present vision was a constantly expanding sense of creation. He never went back to a show; he always pushed on. The old solutions weren't good enough today, though they worked four years ago. He always wanted the new and the fresh and he felt, at least up until his divorce, confident that he could produce it. His energy was what held APA together. 'I am the Deluge', he once quipped, parodiying Louis XIV. To not be in
daily contact with Ellis was to be away from the pulsebeat of the organization. Because he could not really delegate authority, everything depended on him. He was the source of renewal. To be away from him was to be denied the chiepest pleasure of working with APA. The strengths and weaknesses of this structure are obvious. He was APA and wanted it that way. He often claimed that he could not quit because there was nobody above him to hand his resignation to. So in an odd way he was Olympianly above everything though his technique for management was on a one to one basis.

Happily our association has continued beyond APA. In 1969 we worked on a ballet together, Love-In, based on the music of Handel, for the Kansas City Art Festival. We still talk, drink white wine and cook together whether it is in San Diego, Athens, Paris or Greenwich Village. I still have in me an ultimate score, a tremendously sweeping work that will send him swirling about the room once more saying, 'now, that's what I mean by music!'"

Mr. Susa has written at length of his experiences with Rabb and APA. He was in the unique position of being affiliated with Rabb from 1960 until the final production. This has given him great knowledge of the progress of events and an awareness of the development in his own career within the organization. The pattern of personal growth which members of APA enjoyed can be seen through the narration of their own experiences.

The next personal documentation presented is that of Jack O'Brien. Mr. O'Brien has taken a great deal of time and effort, as
indeed many members of the APA have done, to explain in details his impressions of APA. What is most notable about the narration is that it is a repetition of Mr. Susa's experience. O'Brien began his relationship with APA as a student at University of Michigan and grew from an errand boy and taker of notes to a director of stature. He was deeply admired by the company for his directorial work and his talent as a writer as well. O'Brien is a recipient of a Hopwood Award for Drama. Again, here is another example of the development of an artistic talent and potential within the confines of a repertory system and fostered by the perception of Ellis Rabb.

"Ellis Rabb and the APA Repertory crossed my consciousness concurrently in the Spring of 1962. I was completing my first year of graduate studies in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts at the University of Michigan. I was playing leads in various productions, involved with affiliated Greek societies, and Copy Editor of the yearbook all at the same time. I was, in my own modest admission, something of a 'star'! Consequently, I was sought out by Robert Schnitzer and his wife, Marcella Cisney, as a likely target to galvanize student support behind the new Professional Theatre Program that had arrived to head. This I was happy to do, especially since it entitled me to audition for Mr. Rabb in hopes of securing one of the several Fellowships offered by the University. I presented myself to his Christopher Street apartment one afternoon in wet Spring, and as Rosemary Harris discreetly disappeared to walk their dachshund, Speed, I rattled through a grand guinol melodramatic monologue from a recent University premiere, and
a breathless, jerky Benedick complete with hysterical laughter.
As I recall, the phone rang, and Ellis talked all through Benedick,
smiling encouragement over his shoulder as I railed away, and obviously
not hearing a word. I attribute that fact as the cornerstone to our
friendship, one that would not have ensued had he indeed heard the
audition. At its conclusion I told how excited the campus was to
receive this distinguished professional troupe and how halcyon life
could be in the rarified atmosphere of Ann Arbor.

When I first saw the APA Repertory in full bloom, it was
opening night of The School for Scandal, its first production under
the auspices of the University of Michigan. It was, as they say, a
triumph, and I was in as good a position as any to judge that, since
I was the reviewer for the Michigan Daily that evening—the campus
newspaper. In a cast that glittered with talent, beauty and enthusiasm,
the evening was dominated by Will Geer, Rosemary Harris, and Ellis
himself, whom I called 'an eighteenth century cucumber'.

To those of us steeped in academic theatre of the mid-west,
where productions stretched from proscenium to shining proscenium,
and the only 'do not' in the canon was to have one actor up or downstage
of another, we had never seen anything like this company. They acted
on a raked platform, six-sided, that was suitable for traveling, and
appeared no larger than a postage stamp. Obviously, Ellis understood
music, color, design, and balance, for the production folded and unfolded,
in and out, behind a veiled scrim used for scene changes where animated
liveried servants gossiped, bobbed, and weaved. . . and actors ploughed
effortlessly through each other in a kind of glorious, choreographed
ease that was unknown to any of us. In the productions... there was always the sense of event, of panache and attack, and of a company passionately dedicated to this broad, flamboyantly theatrical style of production, regardless of the quality or success of the specific production."

Mr. O'Brien graduated from the University and moved to New York; he took a teaching position at Hunter College in the Department of Speech and Theatre, keeping his contact and interest in APA through letters and occasional attendance at rehearsals when the company was in New York. O'Brien had written a play for APA and he was working closely with Rabb on its development, even though he was not at that time a member of the Association. In the fall of 1964, he flew to Ann Arbor to confer with Rabb about details of the script. This was the season directly preceding the move to the 74th Street Phoenix Theatre. In Ann Arbor, rehearsals were in progress. O'Brien continued his impressions of the situation at that time:

"The week-end I arrived in Ann Arbor to confer with Ellis on my new script was hardly a fortuitous one for a fledgling playwright... The production of Judith was becoming something of a stumbling block. It bore the brunt of all the collective tensions in the company to that time. Ellis and Rosemary had been separated from each other during her stay in England for longer than was good for either of them. The strain of their reconciliation then was further augmented by Ellis choosing a role for his wife that was perfect casting, but it came at a time in her own development when she had
never yet taken such responsibility. Rosemary Harris to that date was famous for scoring in the minor role—Helena in *Uncle Vanya* or Ophelia in *Hamlet*. But Judith was the lead and that responsibility was a difficult one for Rosemary to assume, given the exhausting repertory schedule, and the early strain of dissent within the marriage itself.

Here may I attempt a small footnote concerning this extraordinary marriage, and all it meant to APA. It is useless to try to separate the climate of the relationship between Rosemary and Ellis from the growth and development of APA itself. Had it not been for Rosemary—had she not met Ellis, and had they not fallen in love—there would have been no APA. I have always believed it to be his gift to her; conceived as it was as a showcase for her considerable beauty and extraordinary gifts as an actress. But these people, for all their mutual respect and admiration, and devotion, were highly complicated and volatile personalities. It is useless to attempt a systematic analysis of the personalities, or to pretend to assay a cause and effect of their private lives, and to do so would be in dubious taste, and I believe, shed little light on the events themselves. But as often is the case with talented, imaginative people, the very thing that compels the attraction in the first place is practically the seed of its self-destruction. Here two special and considerable egos were vying, not so much with each other, really, as with some image of what they were to be to each other, and to others as well. It was not a unique situation, and as such, it was perhaps inevitable that irrevocable strain and tension would develop, their interdependence,
and the sheer importance of the relationship to each of them made
the parting a slow and often painful one, and the fact alone
stretches over the several years that I spent with both of them
before the end of APA. In cataloguing my immediate impressions, it is
necessary, therefore, to refer to this or that period of strain, but
I do not intend my remarks to disparage the character of either
person, or to in any way diminish the happy times we all shared, and
the considerable joy they radiated more often than not to their
fellow-workers..."

When the company returned to New York in December of 1964, they
began their season at the Phoenix Theatre on 74th Street. War and
Peace opened to an enthusiastic press, according to O'Brien, and Man
and Superman was to follow. O'Brien continued:

"But the spectre of Judith was still to remain, and no matter
how often Ellis and Rosemary tried to lighten the tone, no matter
how many pacts were made, no matter how many promises were offered,
it was going to be grueling. For one thing, it had not gone
particularly well in Ann Arbor. The look of the show, decidedly Hebraic,
was being changed, and even Rosemary's look was to receive an overhaul.
(When Ellis asked her to play it with a red wig, rather than the dark,
curling one she had used in Ann Arbor, Rosemary stood in the middle
of their enormous bed, hopping up and down, and cheering, 'I can
play it if my hair is red! It all makes sense, then!' This was one
of the more spectacular truces and 'beginnings' that occurred daily
as the rehearsals drew closer and closer.)
It was just past Christmas of that year when my life direction made its major turn. I was in a somewhat precarious position as instructor at Hunter College. Now with the rehearsal period of Judith approaching and Ellis about to play one of the more difficult and demanding parts of his career in the Shaw play (Tanner, in Man and Superman), he aimed a long finger my way, and berated me for hiding on the sidelines with my alleged scripts, when I could be slugging it out with the rest of the company in the main arena. But how? As his assistant. He obviously could not handle everything that was coming his way—rehearsals, schedules, organization, correspondence, . . . he needed someone. I was making a very decent salary at Hunter. They could not match that. . . The Phoenix finally paid me $85.00 a week and Ellis, for a few weeks, brought the amount up to $125.00. Eventually, the Phoenix graciously absorbed my entire expense but not until I proved useful. . . I saw myself as an apprentice Kenneth Tynan, perhaps. . . But when Ellis was asked for my duties, all he would say was, 'Jack will cope'. It was a word I learned soon to loathe, since it usually meant carrying the laundry, or sitting in a parked car for hours on end while Ellis or Rosemary or both, visited, say, Christopher Plummer in the hospital. I never visited with Christopher Plummer. At least, not that year. . .

While Ellis was absent, for whatever reasons, I 'coped' . . . But with the position of being Assistant to the Artistic Director, came a certain amount of true professional work as well. I soon became expert at balancing the check book. . . I drove the car, helped order
food, when the housekeeper was not available, walked the dog or dogs, depending on the year, answered all correspondence; took dictation, or in certain instances, simply developed a series of form letters to be used on numerous occasions; took notes in the theatre during the technical rehearsals; ran for coffee and/or cigarettes; deciphered what sandwiches might be passed through to be consumed, so deadly were they as mid-day fare; mixed cocktails at the drop of a hat, and in general, attempted to be as positive and cheerful as I could. I was apparently quite successful in these endeavors, for the first year went off beautifully.

Judith premiered at the Phoenix Theatre in March of 1965. The production got rave reviews from the critics, although it must be said in all consciousness, that it was as tense and fraught a period of rehearsal as APA ever faced. Rosemary wanted to do anything but emerge from her residual cocoon, and become the lustrous, imperious, monumentally proud Jewish beauty. Instead, she wore the inevitable gray v-necked sweater, black straight skirt, her hair pulled severly back into a small, tight bun at the back of her neck, and since it was dead winter, a pair of black zippered cloth galoshes, which no amount of pleading on Ellis' part would let her give up. In fact, during one particularly intense set of rehearsals, I happened to be riding with Rosemary as she searched for a cabinet maker to do a project for their apartment. In the car, as she drove through mid-day traffic, she suddenly presented me with the real production concept for Judith. Since it was written by Giraudoux during the Nazi occupation, it should be
in its own period, with Judith herself coming from the hospital with a scarf tied around her head, in khaki slacks, and not surprisingly, combat boots. It must be said here, that Rosemary was equally persuasive in her points of view as Ellis in his, and although she stopped stark still in the middle of wailing Twenty-fourth Street to relate all this, so effective was she in convincing me that I heard no more of the traffic horns than she did. I vow to this day that she would love to direct a production of Judith in that period.

But slowly, bit by bit, Ellis got his way. He was not an endlessly patient man, even when dealing with one of the greatest actresses of two continents, and there were many afternoons when he simply threw up his hands and bellowed, 'That's it Do it any way you want to!' and stalked mightily out of the East 74th Street Theatre, usually around the corner to Vasata, the excellent Czech restaurant, where Rosemary often joined him to make up over dinner. And to her credit, he often forced his hand considerably.

The final scene in Judith is a perfect example. Beaten into almost an intellectual catatonia by the Rabbi, Judith has no alternative but to accept her fate, in fact, to welcome and celebrate it. Ellis had a cape of black china silk created for Rosemary to wear, which completely hid the flaming red wig, and when unfurled, covered the entire East 74th Street stage. It was flatly refused on its first appearance, and a flood of tears ensued. With the music playing, Rosemary sobbed; with the material covering the stage, there was no need for her at all. Anybody could act the end of the act with those props, and she wanted
none of it. But eventually she consented to try it. Characteristically and predictably she couldn't make the cape move properly. It fouled, it snagged, and it looked perfectly awful. Still Ellis wheedled, and still he coaxed. Impatiently Rosemary stamped, 'Oh well, you try it, if you're so good at it!' Without a word, Ellis rose from his seat in the theatre, sprang to the stage, put on the cape and talking softly to her in an undertone, turned one way, sweeping upstage and off, with perfect rhythm and timing, the cape swirling after him like black fog. The company burst into spontaneous applause, and Rosemary, her cheeks still burning with indignation, had to laugh in spite of herself. 'Yes,' she countered, 'but you're twice as tall as I am! That makes all the difference.'

Ellis' way of working with delegating responsibility was unique. It was not a case of my working with him, and then him telling the company that I would be giving notes, or working on any given revival. It happened very organically. Often, in the first years of working with Ellis I asked him to say something to the company about my checking on performances when he was away. I begged him to interfere on my behalf, but he always said when I was ready to take over, the company would know. I wasn't anything he could do, or hand me, it had to be something that I had earned. It happened then, during the next fall, 1965.

Ellis had left the company for a period of a week or so and I was left to my own devices. Up to that time, I had tried to be as helpful as possible, relating Ellis' direction, communicating those
notes he didn't have time for. I was always careful to limit my functions to the more technical aspects of any given production, and let Ellis deal directly with the more personal relationships. However, as I learned his work better and better, I often caught notes that he no longer noticed, or had often neglected for a more recent fault, and I began to see the productions through his eyes. During the fall of 1965, I was assigned the job of assisting Alan Schneider on Herakles. Alan has just directed, I believe, Entertaining Mr. Sloane on Broadway, and after his fairly recent blockbuster of Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?, he was something of a superstar himself, and it was a real coup to have obtained his services. However, in all fairness to Alan, he had had minimal time to prepare the production. Ellis disagreed with Alan's interpretation and just before Ellis was to leave for this period of time he wrote Alan a long detailed letter full of the objections he felt warranted in Alan's work. But with characteristic insight, and the grace of a true professional, Ellis never sent the letter. He respected Alan as a director and knew that Alan must direct as he saw it. This was the policy Ellis was to employ again and again. However successful or difficult that production might be, Ellis always defended the director's choice and his right to that point of view. I offer this as specific proof as to the kind of professionalism, and the climate of fair play and gentlemanliness with which Ellis treated all professionals. Ellis left Ann Arbor for a brief time and Alan Schneider left soon after.
The production had opened to respectful if hardly jubilant reviews, and with other commitments to meet, Alan was not able to stay longer. He left the production in my hands. I was timid, if determined. The company was unsettled in the production, nervous and jumpy in that crucial period before the production really 'settles', and very tentatively and carefully I began, almost apologetically, to offer my suggestions. In every case these suggestions were taken enthusiastically and with great seriousness by the members of the company. Emboldened, I became more specific, and somewhat more demanding, and the results were always the same—total acceptance with enthusiasm and gratitude by the company. Ellis, it appeared had schooled me well. I saw things with his sense of the visual, and yet he had given me through those first two years of close work, a deep and lasting respect for the actor and his process, which I believe has stood me in good stead since and I pray will always do so.

It was Ellis' uncommon sense of being personal that created what we called the 'APA spirit', something that no gathering of two or three original members can dispel. Ellis' natural elegance, the sincere politeness with which he conducts all his relationships, made one feel special, protected, apart. He reserved that quality on a personal level for a few very good friends, and it was something that the remainder of the company reacted to with considerable jealousy. On stage, in rehearsal, he was close, comforting, eager, kind and thoroughly involved in whatever an actor had to say. Off stage, he could
be patient, but often distant to those with whom he was not on intimate terms. But I would venture to say that no other director of our generation inspired his company to such loyalty, and probably no other director deserved it as much. APA was as much a frame of mind as it was a combination of talents. And often, when the tide could run against one, and it could, it was painful. I found it so when I was temporarily replaced or supplanted as Assistant to the Artistic Director. Actors found it true when plans that over cocktails seemed to sparkle with special excitement and promise, never materialized, for whatever reasons. Sidney Walker always threatened to have buttons made up reading, 'APA Will Break Your Heart.' But only very fierce devotion and belief creates that opposite reaction, and it was this spirit, and quality, and sense of event that those of us privileged enough to be a part of it will miss, and will look forward to, and long for as long as we are involved in the professional theatre."

Through the eyes of Mr. O'Brien the personalities of APA have become alive. With his daily inter-relationship with the company, and between Rabb and Ms. Harris; with the increasing of responsibilities and with his final step into assuming directorial tasks a clear statement of growth is shown. The organization was there to be used. It was up to those who participated just how deeply they benefited in their careers.

In meeting with Keene Curtis, in New York City, to talk of his impressions of APA, Mr. Curtis presented a copy of an article which had been printed at an earlier date in a Canadian paper. Curtis felt the work indicated his dedication and belief in the repertory system. With
his permission the article is offered below:

"Repertory is a term often misapplied. Doing a series of plays in succession, finishing one before beginning another, is not repertory; it is stock. It is well to understand the difference because repertory and stock do not make the same demands of the actor. Being a member of APA-Phoenix meant a steady, if not remarkable income and lots of hard work fifty-two weeks of the year.

Our rehearsal process was never ending. We rehearsed five hours a day on days when we had an evening performance, and it was not uncommon to be rehearsing two or three shows a week--two new plays, perhaps, and one old one for which one was being groomed as an alternate. There might be also a brush-up rehearsal for a play that had been out of the repertory for four or five weeks; and possible an hour's private session with either Edith Skinner, our voice coach who was attempting valiantly to establish a uniform method of speech for the company--or Rhoda Levine, our movement coach, who was trying to make us aware of our bodies, both our misuse of them and our extension of them. Neither was an easy task, particularly for American actors who tend to neglect both.

Wouldn't it be easier, my friends asked, to do a single Broadway show where once your rehearsing is over, your time was your own, you have only one part to learn, and where you probably would make a great deal more money per week? Well, I was with APA since its founding in 1960, granted a choice, the answer was obviously no. Why? I can best explain by going back to the beginnings of APA and the
reasons for its founding.

Ellis Rabb, the founder of APA and many of his fellow workers including myself, nearly all of us active in the Broadway theatre—as active as it was possible to be in a gradually diminishing area of activity—found that the chance to develop our craft was becoming increasingly difficult if not impossible. The commercial aspect of theatre diminishes daring. The lack of daring breeds mediocrity. And mediocrity breeds dull theatre. A by-product of this is a theatre which only sporadically takes chances and rarely innovates. Actors, as a result, usually remain that which they were in the beginning. Let me explain.

On Broadway, as a rule, any actor who makes a 'name' for himself is stamped as a commodity—boxed, labeled and advertised as that which he appeared to be at the moment in his career when he first received noticeable public and critical acclaim. As with any commodity a good seller bears repeating or at least copying. The actor, therefore, is usually called upon to repeat or copy himself whereupon his image becomes 'set' in the eyes of the public, the producers, the directors, and not infrequently himself, until the point is reached where the pattern is irreversible. The dumb blonde is called upon to play all the dumb blondes, the good-looking juvenile all the Romeos, the villain of this play will surely be hissed at in the next, if you make an audience laugh doing pratfalls you'd better invest in a foam rubber cushion for your dressing room. You'll be needing it ever after.

If your commodity stays in favor you stand the chance of making lots of money, having your image stamped in gold in Hollywood, living
happily ever after. But if your commodity falls out of favor or is not needed this season you will be neatly left upon the shelf collecting dust and unemployment until you are needed or forgotten forever.

APA was specifically formed as an antidote. Ellis Rabb, the motivating force behind APA was prompted by a paragraph in a Tyrone Guthrie book which said that if American actors were tired of the prevailing situation they should stop screaming and do something about it. He did.

So much for the 'why' of APA. What about the 'how'. To develop our craft we must work with the best tools, in our case, the great plays, both past and contemporary. Without great roles you cannot have great actors. With the Broadway emphasis on musicals and domestic sex comedies the opportunities to stretch one's self there are limited. Three years of John Loves Mary may put money in the bank but it won't add a great deal to your ability.

I don't mean that John Loves Mary is not worth doing. It can stand up and be counted in any respectable company. But while you are doing a John Loves Mary you'd better take a serious look at the big league boys, Shakespeare, Chekhov, Pirandello, Moliere, Shaw, Gorki, Sheridan, Giraudoux, yes, and Kaufman and Hart, Williams, Miller, Albee, Ionesco, DeGhelderode, Pinter, etc. They are the ones who will test your strength, give you a field of vision beyond your own, excite you to exploration, demand dimension.

How successful you are varies from character to character,
and play to play; but hopefully you improve from season to season.
We didn't do a play once and then shelve it. It remained in the
repertory two or three seasons, or it might be done one year,
dropped for two, and re-done the fourth. We have done four different
productions of *Midsummer Night's Dream*, three of *The Seagull*, two of
*Man and Superman*, three of *School for Scandal*—sometimes with different
directors, nearly always with variations in casting. We ourselves
might play different roles in the same play from season to season. It
would not be uncommon for us to juggle three or four different roles
in each play. In a season consisting of six productions it is
likely that you would have to be on top of an average of eight to twelve
roles, not counting the new ones you might be rehearsing for the
coming season.

Another consideration in Repertory is the fact that you
work with the same people over an extended period of time. This
can be an enormous advantage in the preparation of a new play.
As Rosemary Harris pointed out when she did a Broadway play outside
the APA-Phoenix—the first week of a rehearsal is spent getting
acquainted, proving to your fellow actors that you are worthy to be
in their company; the second week discovering how they work. Only in
the last two weeks do you settle in to a concentrated, productive
rehearsal period. In repertory, all the preliminary falderal is
eliminated. You know how your fellow actor works.

Also there was no star system in APA-Phoenix, and there was
range in size of parts you were asked to play—Rosemary Harris would
play the lead in War and Peace one night and a ten line walk on the
next in Right You Are. Helen Hayes would play Signora Ponza in
Right You Are juxaposed to the much smaller part of the Grand Duchess
in You Can't Take It With You. There was no competitive axe to
grind. Efforts were concentrated in making the play work rather
than in upstaging your fellow actor.

Did it all work as planned? Well, the first miracle of APA
was its survival. It was a long, sometimes tortuous path with obstacles
so formidable we could see no way over or around them. I can't tell
you how many times we laid the bier for APA, gathered the flowers and
lit the candles. But somehow, some way, there was always a rescue.
Like the Perils of Pauline serials, we managed to survive for another
reel. We grew both individually, as an ensemble, and as an organization.
We made no formal statement of policy, no platform to expound, we
stood on no political forum. What we were is what we did."

Mr. Curtis revealed, in the informality of the following
interview,¹⁰ that he had attended the first meeting of APA as a
professional stage manager but with a deep-seated desire to fulfill
his acting ambitions. He seized upon the opportunity presented to him
through the 1960 Workshop and tried his wings as an actor and was
encouraged by the response of Ellis Rabb; through the opportunities
presented to him by APA (he was a member of the first company which went
to Bermuda), Curtis found the outlet to develop his artistic craft as
an actor to its present level. The personal growth which transpired
through the years, Mr. Curtis emphasized, was due to the encouragement
and training fostered by Rabb and the repertory system. Speaking in retrospect of APA and of Rabb's leadership Mr. Curtis said:

"Ellis from the very beginning was not interested in the producing business of the theatre. That's why his original ideas were to set up the product, the actors and the play; then if someone wanted to produce them, fine. He said there was no point in knocking yourself out over something you didn't enjoy. Because, after all, that was what life was all about, too. We were always looking for someone to produce us... When the liaison began with T. Hambleton, T. moved very slowly and I think methodically. I believe T. was wary of innovation. He just didn't want to go too fast. I guess T. triple thinks everything out.

I know Ellis' constant plea at the Lyceum was to be able to go to T. and say 'this is what I need.' T. would say 'yes'. Then the next week Ellis would return and say he had not got it and was he going to have it? The answer was always yes, yes. But a week later it still wouldn't be done. Ellis could never find out where he was with T. Did he have the money to do a set? Did he not have the money? Can we or can we not hire this extra actor? What Ellis really needed was a producer that was running as fast as Ellis, one that could feed him ideas, that was ahead of him. One that was very precise. Ellis needed a computer man who could say there was $28,000 for a set and no more. Ellis could always work within restrictions, artistically, because he had a vivid imagination. We did our first season in Bermuda with just four boxes, twenty-five cents per set.

So he could always do it; but with T., I don't think he ever
quite knew what he had and what he didn't have. He kept being
dragged into the money searching process and Ellis was never very
good with Chairmen of the board. Ellis always felt that T. was
off the track somewhere, that everything was being held back. The longer
this went on the more Ellis became frustrated, angry and discouraged.

When the money stopped, when all the arts grants were
cancelled, Ellis was really in a very self-destructive state. We
all felt that he was making some choices which would finish the
organization. I think, actually, that year Ellis was really trying
to find a way to slip out from underneath T. He said to me that
he had either to find a producer who would go with us, work with us,
clear up all the confusion or he simply didn't feel it was any longer
worth it. It wasn't only due to him. It was an accumulation of things
that had built up to the point where it didn't work any more.

I don't know if the public, not the subscriber's, ever really
caught on to the repertory thing. They didn't know what was playing
when; they just came to the box office. And the New York public is
also very fickle. You would have a smash hit one year that you couldn't
get a ticket to, like Helen Hayes in The Show Off; then you'd bring it
back for the beginning of your next season for two special weeks and
nobody came. So it's just strange; New York audiences are not tuned
in to this kind of operation. I think they are learning. Perhaps they
could be trained. For the people who came in from out of town, it worked
well. They could see three shows in one week. It certainly works in
One of the joys of working with APA was the kind of family feeling. The people who came in, like Le Gallienne and Ms. Hayes, were overwhelmed by the friendly feeling and felt totally relaxed in a day or two; they became part of us without any pretenses. That is why Ms. Hayes kept liking to come back. She said she felt for the first time in her career over many years that she could just relax and do a good job. First, she didn't have forty people depending on her alone, she was not sustaining a production herself. She said it was nice to work with people she could respect and who respected her for what she was, knowing she was going to have just as hard a time as they were getting a part under her belt—finding it, discovering it. She didn't feel she had to be up there demonstrating for the other forty people that she was a star.

Ms. Hayes also said that for the last few years she had either directors who were in awe of her and wouldn't tell her anything, which left her totally insecure; or one that would say, 'I've got Helen Hayes and I'm going to change her image so it will reflect on me'. This prevented her from doing her natural style and that made her insecure. Ellis worked with her beautifully, as did the other directors. Ellis's idea was always for the good of each member of the company as well as for the company itself. He had hoped to get the best people he could to join us, and allow those in the company to go out and do other things. He felt that leaving the company would enrich you; you'd return broadened. This was a conscious attempt to bring the best people he could find into the company, if they
in fact, would.

Ellis is at home in repertory. He thrives in it. But he is a genius anyway and a little mad. I think all great directors are. The kind of people who are driven by this urge, this sweep, this vision have to have everything else subservient. Certainly one's private life, as it was with Ellis, suffered because the main drive was theatre, and making it all work. He was happiest when he was doing that. One needs the power, the charisma to attract people. You also have to be a good director. Ellis was. He is also very fair and honest. You talk to him and you know where you are. That is an art in itself: to be able to collect the people and make them work well together.

The divorce with Rosemary really shook him. It was a very bad time for him. It destroyed him during the last period of time. Who knows, if that hadn't happened maybe Ellis would have said that we'd have to charge on as we did before and find a way; he might have led us out by cutting back the company. But at that particular time he just didn't have the strength.

If I hadn't had the repertory, I wouldn't be doing all the things I am doing now. And I wouldn't have had the success in them. Repertory has had such an effect. I did a movie in which I played four parts, total repertory. I did four parts in The Rothchild's. They were all culled from that vast experience in the repertory company. I would never have known how to handle the characterizations. You see, there you do stretch, reach, play old men, young men in a wide variety
of plays where playwrights have given you a lot of depth such as Shakespeare, Shaw and Moliere. So your equipment is in tune and ready to go.

What repertory can do is to develop what hopefully will be our great actors; it is an actor's theatre. But also what repertory can accomplish and achieve is to keep alive, for succeeding generations, the truly great plays. Otherwise they would have no chance of really knowing because you can't tell what a play is like by reading it on the page. You have got to see it. If it is done well, there is nothing more exciting. I think it is the most exciting way for a theatre to be; unfortunately, it is also the most expensive.

Many people who were in APA are now working, generally, constantly; even a lot of the younger people we brought into the company. It's endless. I think it has a great deal to do with their experience with APA, if not all to do with it."

Jim Tilton joined APA as designer in 1963. He remained with the company until 1970, one year after the break with APA and the Phoenix. Tilton brings still another interesting viewpoint into the development of our knowledge of Rabb. Through Tilton's designer's eyes we are able to see Rabb in a working capacity, and recognize his unique qualifications for his theatrical career.11

"APA was a good chunk of my professional career. In fact 90% of it I'd say—over the past 9 or 10 years; whatever it's been, it is difficult to think objectively about it. The demise of APA was a terribly difficult thing for a lot of us. I feel however, that it
was to everybody's advantage, not necessarily the advantage of repertory in this country but certainly to the people involved in APA. There are those of us who have been involved in APA since the early 60's. I needed to get away from APA simply because I had become so comfortable working with the same people all of the time. We all knew each other so well. We knew what our chief assets were, what our liabilities were. We hardly had to speak to one another when we were planning a production. So after I left APA, it was a big transition for me to learn to work with directors that were not as brilliant as others. It was very difficult for me to put up with the whims and caprices of actors who were insecure simply because I had been spoiled by the sheltered existence of APA. So I found it personally good for my career to break away from the APA or for the APA to break away from me as it were.

I think the APA was a terribly exciting thing for everybody involved including the audiences. I don't think that we fully realized everything that was potentially there. It would be hard to say that we realized more than 50% of the potential of the company. But that 50% was very worthwhile indeed. I don't think that anybody can fault us for the contributions that we made to the theatre of the 60's. Except in the respect that we had a great deal more potential and maybe had we continued we would have gradually come to realize some of that potentiality. I think the fact that we were all tired of one another would have made that difficult; but on the other hand who knows whether or not within a year or two we would have overcome that
lethargy and reorganized the company in some way to exploit the potential there. I don't think that the mark was made. I don't think that the mark APA made was all that great looking back over the years that we were on Broadway, as well as prior to the Broadway exposure, but I think that it certainly will be just like the Mercury Theatre experience: something that will be remembered. I think it has given a lot of people an exposure to the possibilities of a repertory company in this country. The financial aspect of theatre in this country is difficult—that until it becomes considered like a library or any other public institution and receives full support of the community, we won't be able to have a full-blown theatre.

The only person today who is even remotely giving the country a wide variety of theatres is Joe Papp. He is doing it strictly by fund raising, by scraping every possible barrel; any penny that is available. The commercial situation is so disastrous in terms of artistic merit, simply because the economics play the foremost part. It is going to be a long time before this country sees anything as worthwhile as APA was unless something radically changes.

As far as my favorite set is concerned, I think I would have to vote for Pantagruel. It really was, I think, the most theatrical of all our productions. Probably the most unified of our productions and although it didn't seem to be very heavy scenically, it was probably the most demanding production I ever worked on at APA for several reasons, actually. Any time Ellis decided that we would do a bare stage production, I knew I was in for trouble and a great deal of
work and that we would be spending a great deal of money. That proves always to be the case. The simpler the production the more difficult for everyone concerned. Of course this is due to the fact that it was always the kind of production that had to flow; the scene had to be set with the minimum of physical elements and the lighting plays extremely heavy part in it. We'd go on for endless hours writing lighting cues naturally but they always seemed to work the best; I think that's because of all the problems and techniques. I found in designing for the stage, the better the actors the less scenery they needed. APA was the only company that I could get away with "a bare stage." Ellis understood the use of the bare stage better than anybody else in the country, and still does for that matter.

Pantagleize was probably the most challenging production, primarily, because Ellis decided that he needed the help and collaboration of John Houseman. Ellis was doing the starring role and felt that it was the only way to get an objective viewpoint from the audience's point of view. But I feel that John Houseman caused the production a great deal of grief. This is certainly not due to anything that John did on purpose, by no means; it's just that once Ellis and I had discussed the basic concepts and approach of the show, and once Ellis had set the tone of the production, he essentially turned it over to John so that he, Ellis, could concentrate on his role which is all well and good. But then John seemed to not understand Ellis's concept; consequently John started making all sorts of changes and Ellis,
concentrating fully on his role, allowed him to do it. By the time we arrived in Ann Arbor after kind of a shaky, to say the least, opening in L.A. the whole company was up in arms. The production was going badly; it wasn't unified in any sense of the word and we were in big trouble. Finally, Ellis realized that what John was doing was not working out and took over the helm again. In the two weeks or so that we were in Ann Arbor with Pantagleize Ellis was able to make some basic decisions about the performances and about the look of the show which made it work. That whole period was, of course, for all of us, extremely difficult. We were constantly being torn from end to end. Houseman's concepts of a busier production on one side, and Ellis having established a production scheme that was very simple and very straightforward on the other. It all worked out. I think it was the most satisfying production of all APA's productions because the final product was unified; it was dramatic and, I think, visually very stunning. We frequently, thereafter, used many of the techniques that we discovered in Pantagleize in other productions, simply because they were so successful and seemed to work out so well.

I think the biggest disaster of my APA career was The Cocktail Party. Ellis had decided The Misanthrope and The Cocktail Party were two ideal productions to open the season with. He had planned to direct one of them and Stephan Porter was to direct the other one. Then he decided that he really couldn't direct The Cocktail Party. He asked Philip Minor to direct. We had again talked very briefly about the possibility of creating a kind of unit set within which two or more
productions could work with relative ease, and still accommodate all our other shows. We talked about using a unit set specifically for The Cocktail Party and The Misanthrope. The idea was that both of them were essentially drawing room type productions, in that they required an interior set; and even though they were different periods that could provide the basis for unit. Well, it all sounded very good and on that basis Philip agreed to do the productions. I set about designing "a unit" and came up with a semi-circular cornice and columns and a series of plugs between the columns; one style for Misanthrope and another more realistic for Cocktail Party. Everything was going along well. I thought I had gotten approval on everything from Philip: wall fabric, color schemes, and furniture. We got into the theatre and suddenly Philip decided that he didn't like it. I said 'what don't you like about it?' He said: 'It's too light; I want it darker, I want it heavier looking.' He decided that the fabric on the walls was too busy. There were a whole series of things. He insisted, against my most strenuous objections, that the wall fabric be a dark brown and that the woodwork be a dark rich wood color. I said, 'you're really asking for trouble because it is going to all blend together and it is going to look like a mess but if that's what you want that's what I'll give you.' Well we did it. The first day I saw it up on the stage I said to Philip: 'I refuse to allow it to be seen this way. I'm going to recommend that we throw out all the wall pieces and use only the furniture and do it against the black.' That's what we did; I felt very badly about it because
it cost a lot of money. But on the other hand, I felt that Philip hadn't really done his homework; in a sense he really hadn't. I don't know whether it was personal taste or what but he just didn't have a feeling for what I was trying to do, nor did he respect my recommendations when he wanted to change it. Consequently, it was a disaster. And as it turned out the show itself wasn't all that brilliant; so, I think that qualifies in my book as the biggest disaster for me.

One of the things that repertory does to a designer, and it certainly did it to me, was to make you extremely aware of all the problems and possibilities of providing technical support for more than one show. I think more than anything else after so many years of working with at least two if not six or seven shows in the repertory, I began to long for the possibility of having one show and one set in one theatre without having to worry about any other show. I used to go to other productions and think, 'Oh, that's great; I wish I could do that. But then it's impossible. I couldn't possible do it and have another show to work.' You soon learn to accommodate a great many things; scarcity of space, which is something most designers who don't have that repertory requirement never learn. In fact many designers have trouble fitting scenery onto a stage properly let alone scenery for six or seven shows. I think that is one of the most valuable things that working in repertory gave to me. But again, it was pretty frustrating as well.

The other thing that repertory did for me as a designer was
that it taught me a great deal about economics of scenery, and although on Broadway engagements we had budgets, they were very ample. I never felt that we couldn't do something because we didn't have the budget for it. Although several times there were productions talked about that would have required extensive projections or some physical element of that nature, which were discarded because of the obvious expense. But in terms of a normal production we always seemed to have, if not plenty of money, at least enough money to make it work. But I had always been, I felt, economical as a designer; particularly in our early years, when we didn't have any money.

I remember my first season which was '63 in Ann Arbor, we did Much Ado About Nothing, A Phoenix Too Frequent and Scapin on a double bill; Right You Are and The Lower Depths. It was fortunate that The Lower Depths was last because by the time we got to it there was no money left. Luckily I could use things I could find like old crates, cheap burlap and old gunny sacks, practically anything I could beg borrow or steal. It fit in perfectly. In fact, one of the best things that came out of that production was a kind of collage curtain hanging in back of everything, put together out of every odd scrap of drapery fabric and old ripped curtains that I could find in the Ann Arbor theatre basement. Ellis thought it was the most creative element in the show. Had it not been The Lower Depths I would have been in trouble.

My relationship with Ellis I think is unique. I don't believe
there are many designers who have had, or have the opportunity to work with someone who is such a brilliant director or theatre technician; to feel that they truly collaborate. In my first season with APA, Ellis of course did not direct any of the productions. So I only knew him as an actor. I had no idea what he was like. I had the feeling, during that season, that he didn't like me or like my work. Anyway I was very insecure. It wasn't until we had opened the last show that he paid me and Nancy Potts (the costumer) a very great compliment. We were at a cast party toward the end of the season. Ellis was making a little speech about the season, and how he felt about it; he said Nancy and I had reaffirmed his faith in designers; that he was most happy and hoped that we could continue to work together. Of course we have. Until that point, I'd thought he really didn't respect my work or like it. But after that, I knew that we obviously had done something right; and since that time our relationship has grown to the point where we didn't have to talk about a production. We both knew what to expect; we both knew what we were going to do.

I'll never forget sitting on Ellis's bed one evening, fiddling with the model for *School for Scandal* which was our first show on our basic unit. It was a series of folding screens that were attached to the basic inner above unit, which pulled out to form the various sets; it pulled out and revolved. We spent, I think, fourteen straight hours fiddling with that model, working out all the shifts, all the transitions (since the actors shifted the scenery). I feel that
Ellis knows more, as a director, about technical elements of production, than any other director I've worked with. He knows how to read a ground plan; he knows how to read a sketch; he knows how to read a model; he's very good with all the physical elements; he knows what lighting can do and what it can't do. He makes it very easy to design for him and he's both very specific and very cooperative. Many times he will have a concept that is vague and will describe it to me in terms of a feeling, the sort of effects he wants to create. After we would talk about it for two or three hours we would evolve a very specific production scheme. Rather than me going away and coming up with something, we truly collaborated with most of our shows.

It's a very tricky thing to collaborate so closely with someone. I've always felt that the total production was what was important. I never felt that a production that required elaborate costumes and only lighting was a less demanding show than any other production. I've never, somehow, felt the need to pull out all the stops and do all sorts of tricky things, strictly for their own sake. Many designers seem to get upset about something that's struck or something that's changed. Their concept is violated by a director. But I think that's wrong. I think that they must allow the production to be a collaboration. They must always defer to the director because ultimately the total production is his responsibility. The designer is only responsible for his part in it. I just don't agree with the premise of insisting that your way is the only way.
Consequently many people have said at various times that they thought that Ellis designed all the shows, and that I just executed his ideas. That's just not true. I think that Ellis would be the first one to tell you that. A lot of things that our productions ultimately ended up being were due directly to the result of our collaboration. Individually they wouldn't have been as exciting. I think that is an unusual thing. I have been since spoiled by it, in working with other directors. I expect them to be the same way and they aren't. Very few directors have Ellis's gifts for unifying a production, giving the production his total commitment. I have been very fortunate to work with Ellis and I hope to work with him frequently again.

The basic company of APA, I think, was extremely strong. All the people were really excellent actors, particularly the ten or twelve that started the company and stuck with the company over the whole period. I think that's what made APA's productions great. There was a sense of unity and company ensemble playing. Everyone at the end, seemed tired and dissatisfied; this came from the fact that we didn't have any method for integrating new blood into the company. Occasionally we had guest artists, like Uta Hagen in *The Cherry Orchard* and Eva Le Galliene. But a training program, would have provided us with a company with greater depth and taken the load off some of our main actors and allowed them to do outside work. This would have kept their interest in APA stronger. Not that they were not totally committed to APA; but under our
production schedule it was virtually impossible to allow anybody
to do any more than a one shot thing with a movie or something else.
No one could be afforded the luxury of two or three or four months
off. The company needed everybody they had. I think more than
anything else was that the reason that everybody was so dissatisfied
and tired by the end of our association. I think that plus the money
thing were the two most critical factors in APA's demise."

This chapter might well be entitled, simply, "Growth". The
purpose of this section has been to prove the major influence APA
exerted on the lives of a few of those who participated in the project.
Not only did APA contribute to the artistic world of theatre, and
worked to develop an audience for the classical repertory in New
York City where none had existed; it also brought to the actors who
formed the company a system of growth and development which grew
beyond their personal expectations. For the actor as well as for
the audience, the artistic and psychological advantages of the rotating
company are very worthwhile.

In summary, the words of Mr. Rabb's credo comes to mind: the
art of the theatre is the art of acting. To this end he built an
artistically complete producing unit and dedicated it to a backbone
structure of classical plays. He attempted to restore the classical
theatre to popularity and to a commercial existence. He extended and
developed to the fullest the theatre talents of the APA company by
the stimulation of their association and their influence on each other
in a working situation. He wanted to develop actors who believed in
ensemble playing, who found in their craft a pride, and
continued to strive for better goals.

At its best, APA was a successful venture but about such
things there is a mystique. To the outside world the definition
of the organization might seem more obvious or simple; but to those
who were caught up in its process, perhaps it was more like living
life which is impossible to define, as no truth seems to be the real
truth.

At its simplest, APA was a group of dedicated actors who liked
to work together on material which was of mutual interest to them
and for which they hoped to find an audience to share their pleasure.

The personal files of Mr. Rabb contain many small pieces of
writing, letters never sent, phrases developed into prose and some
into poetry. I should like to end this chapter with the following
undated piece, taken from these files; the words are not lifted out
of context for there was no further text to which they belonged.¹²

"By the time this reaches print and them the hands of those
interested in reading it, the future I speak of will be recorded
history. So it is in the life of the theatre. The moment is its
only value. It has been said to me that the theatre must be
an inferior art form as it does not endure. This is certainly
a relative evaluation and rather limited in its point of view.
The power of the theatre is the directness and personalness
of its communication. This dynamic may be our limitation and
the price we pay for the power of our dimensions; but so do
buildings crumble, paintings crack and fade, so do sounds lose
fashion. People, however never cease to feel and to think. However
the world may change, the human being in direct communication
with other human beings renews and reaffirms our need and
ability for love, laughter, tears, applause. However times
change, nothing will alter the basic human need to tell a story
and find new ways of telling and retelling the old ones. They
affirm existence. We need not lament the death of the actor and the absence of any record to posterity. His posterity, his tradition, is renewed in the continuance of man's need to reenact what is most meaningful to him. That there are new ways and new forms is the glory of our profession."
FOOTNOTES

1Letter from Sidney Walker, June 27, 1972.


3Letter from Conrad Susa, July 14, 1972.

4Richard Easton was a charter member of APA and a brilliant leading actor. A close friend of Rabb’s for many years, he shared Rabb’s commitment to repertory theatre.

5Richard Baldridge was a former member of APA, author of We Comrades Three. Deceased.

6The lines from Oscar Wilde’s Importance of Being Earnest to which Mr. Susa is referring are those in the opening scene of Act I:
   Algernon: Did you hear what I was playing, Lane?
   Lane: I didn’t think it polite to listen, sir.
   Algernon: I’m sorry for that, for your sake. I don’t play accurately—anyone can play accurately—but I play with wonderful expression. As far as the piano is concerned, sentiment is my forte. I keep science for life.


8Ms. Harris played these roles at the National Theatre, London, England.


10Keene Curtis, interview, New York City, July 11, 1972.


12Personal files of APA, undated.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION: AN EVALUATION OF REPERTORY

The purpose of this study has been to explore the career in repertory theatre of Ellis Rabb, actor-manager-director. This exploration has led through the birth and death of two repertory companies: The Antioch Shakespeare Repertory, Yellow Springs, Ohio where Rabb began his career as an apprentice and developed artistically to assume the position of Artistic Director for the last and sixth year of the Festival; and the Association of Producing Artists that Rabb created and guided through ten years of growth; during these years he provided creative stimulus and fulfillment to countless numbers of actors, directors and technicians who developed as artists under his guidance and who learned to share his deep conviction and dedication to the system of repertory.

The development of the Antioch Shakespeare Festival was an achievement which deserved the national acclaim it received in theatrical circles from coast to coast. In its brief life, 1952-1957, all the works of Shakespeare were produced. They began with the presentations of the Chronicle plays the first year and ended with a two company system that played individual programs in two locations: Toledo, Ohio, and their home base, Yellow Springs. The experience that this afforded Rabb in his artistic development was two-fold: he learned through personal observation and involvement to work under the rigors of
repertory; he was also able to absorb the advantages and opportunities for perfecting his acting techniques which the repertory system offered. These were significant years that formed the foundation of Rabb's future career. After these six years with the repertory system of theatre, Rabb's commitment to the value of this system was firmly established. The inevitable result was a formation of his own repertory company, The Association of Producing Artists.

The story of APA, its birth and its death, has been chronicled in the preceding chapters. In the process, the files of the APA first had to be brought into an order that was manageable. The pressure of time and the intricacies of the organization had prohibited an orderly recording of events while the APA was still producing. In addition to the detailed investigation of the APA files, considerable time was given to the personal writings of Ellis Rabb. Why? Because this work has not only been devoted to the organization that Rabb created and that made an artistic mark in theatre history of the highest caliber, but because it is also a personal history of the artistic talent of its founder.

No artistic organization can be judged fairly without some effort being made to investigate the human qualities which are inherent in the group. To this end, informal interviews were held with members of APA and commentary letters were asked for and received, all with the intention of bringing a sense of life and immediacy to the study. The enthusiastic response of those contacted and the sincere regrets of those whose schedules did not permit their participation were a further
indication of the influence and impact that the APA experience created for its members.

The story of APA is the history of a theatrical venture that carried within its life the inevitable qualities of human strengths and weaknesses. Within this documentation the aim has been to demonstrate more than a factual collaboration of professional people, more than the difficulties faced in the maintenance of a company, more than an evaluation of what APA actually accomplished in its remarkable ten years of existence. It is to be hoped that the reader will also recognize the personal significance of Rabb's vision, unique talents, and charisma.

The ideal of repertory theatre brings to a community drama of depth, richness and variety that commercial theatre with its long runs or its immediate closings cannot match. Repertory is associated, primarily, with the classics. However, contemporary drama can be equally advantageous. The basic tenet for repertory success is that the company be disciplined, cohesive and include performers who are free of the egoism and drive for stardom that we normally find in commercial theatre. The success of the repertory demands a considerable span of time and experience; it cannot be developed in one year, even two years. Rabb feels that it takes actually ten years to develop a company to its full potential. It is ironic that the APA lost its momentum in its tenth year when it reached the peak of its capabilities.

One of the concepts that Rabb demanded from his repertory company was the importance of traveling. He felt that a repertory company
should not remain in one place, nor play consistently to one type of audience. He went even further in his conviction that members of the company should not remain indefinitely without interruption, without reaching out for contact with other companies. In this manner they would broaden themselves by bringing a sense of freshness and vitality when they returned. Rosemary Harris, for example, left APA to return to her native England to work with the National Theatre. She left the group again when she assumed the starring role in Lion in Winter, a Broadway production of 1966. She learned from these experiences and returned fresh with new ideas.

These concepts in themselves are valid and commendable. However, in order for them to work to the advantage of the entire company two things must be in evidence: time and money. APA had neither. Their schedule was such that the touring weeks were exhausting marathons of pure endurance. Not only were the actors playing performances each night, they were also rehearsing during the day; preparing productions for the repertory never ends. Either the production is new, to be introduced into the repertory, or it is one that had been dormant and needs re-rehearsing; sometimes a span of time is needed for the cast member new to the role, because an assimilation of the play by the old-new elements takes time. Ensemble work in acting does not happen in one rehearsal. Actors must acclimate themselves to their fellow-actor's methods, their moods and their work patterns.

APA, by the very nature of its hand-to-mouth existence had to survive by constant public presentations of their work, although they
sought engagements that would afford some permanency, such as their contracted months in the Professional Theatre Program in Ann Arbor. There was never enough time. The contract called for a certain number of productions for the season. This in turn put an inhuman amount of pressure of combined rehearsal hours and performance hours on the company. The theory was commendable. The actuality of achieving the high standard of performance that APA demanded, was fraught with nerves and fatigue.

The second of the two hazards that this company faced was money. If their producers could have afforded salaries that enabled the acting ensemble to be enlarged, or even to be sustained for a longer preparatory period before their production schedule began, there would have been some relief from the heavy working schedule. Such was not the case. APA had formed itself into a cohesive acting company in its early years without benefit of backing nor financial security in any form. Rabb began the company in the early Workshop days with nothing but determination. The early years of extensive traveling for short engagements were accomplished only by the sacrifice and dedication of a small nucleus of actors. The members worked together and sustained themselves on minimal salaries. The reputation of the company grew, but in the process their continued engagements came from producers who recognized the quality received but were unable to raise the standard of financial production costs. The fact is that a producer may hire actors for a repertory of three plays; because each play brings its own production costs the box office does not reflect income from twenty-four performances throughout the week. It reflects the
income from only eight performances, which is the usual weekly schedule. It is a built-in hazard that the nature of repertory brings. This constant frustration over production costs for APA did not ease with time. It only grew in complexity as the APA’s reputation for brilliance and style in their artistic endeavors increased.

The aim of Ellis Rabb’s Association, the initial concept of APA, was to build an artistically complete unit that would be dedicated to a backbone structure of classical plays as well as to the encouragement of new plays of promise. He hoped to restore classical theatre to popularity and to a commercial existence through repertory. Rabb was convinced that in this manner he could develop the abilities of growing theatre talents; in other words, actors, designers and directors would be stimulated by the process of their association and their influence on each other in a working situation. Rabb offered to the company members an exciting, stimulating and profitable means of growth and development in work that was of their own creation.

To the commercial producer he offered a totally functioning artistic unit of the highest standard. It must be remembered that the members of APA were not young, inexperienced, untrained actors, but people who had been in the profession for some time, and during the years many had grown dissatisfied with the opportunities offered in the commercial theatre for personal growth and an opportunity of continuance. This concept of becoming an independent packager of a theatrical event, of simply marketing a creative product of classical proportions was an inspiring and powerful ideal for all those who were dedicated to theatre and yet frustrated by its limitations for creative
One of the most familiar cries in today's theatre is the constant call for something called "unity of style" or "ensemble playing" or even "a permanent theatre company." It would seem that the answer to these needs would be a group of actors who might band together with a discipline and dedication as theatre artists to bring a unified and professional program of permanence to the public. Such a group was formed. Such a group existed and then died. The battle was never won over the ever-present crisis of the economics of the movement. Where does the fault lie? Could it be that the product being sold, in this case the Association of Producing Artists, is itself at fault? Or is it simply that the unity, the ensemble, the continuity, the permanence has not yet taken on the shape and definition that will sustain a prospective audience?

Judging from the evidence presented in this work, the fault does not lie with the caliber of the organization. In the years in which exposure to the audiences of New York City, an intelligent, theatre-minded people, was taking place, there was general support and enthusiasm from the press and audience. Nevertheless, the unhappy fact of the matter existed: the full house, the popular play, the moneyed reviews could not carry the financial cost of the operation. APA was slowly but surely sinking at the peak of its successful years at the Lyceum Theatre. When an audience did not support a previously successful production, presented again in the repertory manner, the loss could not be sustained.
The last season was admittedly unsuccessful. The choice of plays, perhaps, was unfortunate. However these problems were external ones that could have been solved in forthcoming seasons. The internal problems, the unseen and unpublicized machinations of the APA-Phoenix alliance were the cause, in the long run, of the demise. There was the constant strain of appearing to have joined in the Broadway family with a successful theatrical enterprise, while in reality, APA faced a monumental deficit which was increasing year by year. In addition to the continual effort to present the solid, unified front, Rabb was finding it increasingly difficult to sustain a working rapport with his producing partner, T. Hambleton.

The daily differences of opinion, the mistrust of advertising techniques, the vastly different rhythms of the two men were becoming hurdles that were increasingly insurmountable. Add to these, the build-up of ten years of fatigue and one's judgment and tolerance for seemingly insoluble differences. Rabb's emotional commitment, his dedication, and inspiration, perhaps his vision and judgment wavered in the last months. He longed to begin again with another set of circumstances, another producer who would be better geared to Rabb's swift pace. APA seemed to have run its course, under the present circumstances. It does not appear that Rabb had any intention of allowing the organization itself to end. But under the then present alliance, the effort appeared to be no longer valid.

The basic flaw in the relationship between the two organizations of APA and the Phoenix Theatre was simple: Mr. Hambleton had an
already formed, well established and highly respected working unit of which he was the head. Until the Ford Foundation grant became a reality, a great majority of the underwriting and subsidy of the APA-Phoenix was Hambleton's own personal subsidy. Therefore it was evident that Hambleton's decisions were the final ones. He held the purse strings.

However, there was never any indication that this division of authority entered into the artistic realm. The differences appeared to occur in the style or manner of presenting the company to the public; the choice of a publicity promotion by an advertising company who had made their reputation by the promotion of foreign cars rather than a theatrical company was a case in point.

The wear and tear caused by these basic differences of approach over a period of years became stronger and more intolerable. The success of the enterprise lay in the success of the box office. Even though Rabb's interests and responsibilities were basically involved with the development of the production, it was not possible to detach himself from the concerns of an unsuccessful box office which, Rabb felt, was often the fault of the style of promotion. For, in effect, that is where the life and death struggle of survival takes precedence over all other elements of production.

Another factor which developed the last season was the announcement of Hambleton's that he wished to curtail productions for the following season, give up the Lyceum and discontinue the repertory method of presentations. It was doubly taxing on Rabb to recognize the implications of this decision: the third year of the Ford Foundation
grant would be in great jeopardy.

The purpose of the grant was to give APA a thirty week season in their own theatre in New York City in which to produce their season of repertory. To return to the Foundation with the announcement that the Association would not be playing in the same theatre, continually, nor would they be playing in the repertory medium, would be an admittance to the failure of fulfilling the basis of the grant. Now the future seemed uncertain; the company was exhausted and Rabb was filled with an oppression which he carried through the last production of the 1969 APA-Phoenix season, the ill-fated Hamlet.

It is the general feeling among artists of the theatre world, those interested and concerned with the development of a sustained and secure continuity of theatrical work, that the only hope lies in the government subsidy. Even the support of the Ford Foundation grant was not sufficient to keep the APA from financial distress. Where does one go for funds after the Ford Foundation? Private donations and other Foundation supports are available on a limited basis, but the limitations are not enough to support a fully developed professional repertory group.

It is a well known fact that Lincoln Center, with all its prestige and connections, is having difficulty raising money. The repertory system in this country appears to be too expensive to survive. The director of the Repertory Company at Lincoln Center, Jules Irving did the highest amount of box office business in the history of Lincoln
Center, Rabb said. This program consisted of only four productions, not played in repertory, but on a basic six week stock system. The latest report which Rabb received from Mr. Irving was the possibility of a considerable reduction by the Board of Directors of Lincoln Center for next season. Theatre costs continue to rise. There appears to be a considerable chasm between the need for artistic development in this country and the means by which to achieve it.

Basing one's judgment on the rise and fall of the Association of Producing Artists, one may observe that, at present repertory is apparently an outdated and obsolete form of play production in America. It is, ironically, also the only system of theatre through which acting can be practiced as an art form and through which acting as a career can be built and maintained.

The artistic losses which have been sustained for want of financial subsidy during the past years include the innovative and exciting years of the Mercury Theatre with John Houseman and Orson Welles, 1937-1938. The experiences of the Mercury seemed to have a startling similarity to those of the APA, although it only lasted a little over a year. The Group Theatre can be included in the casualty list as a band of dedicated, visionary theatre people, who contributed a style of acting which has been an influence on actors ever since. Like the APA, the Group Theatre lasted ten years, 1931-1941. Other attempts at continuity have been made; none have survived for any length of time.

One cannot help but look wistfully upon the European attitude towards the arts. Sweden, for example, a country half the size of
Great Britain, has its National Theatre subsidized for approximately three million dollars. In our great, wealthy country, the necessity for a permanent repertory theatre company needs to be considered as a contribution worthy of national financial responsibility. Only then can another association of artists hopefully undertake the task of making their creative art of the theatre live again.
I find it difficult to make any sort of objective comment about the life and death of the APA Repertory Company. I cannot view those ten years of my life with objectivity. I remember incidences with pride, others with shame. Aspects of the experience haunt me with a sense of failure. Other memories are nostalgically merry and often amusing. The documents in the files of APA tell one story; but however revealing some of those papers may be they only tell part of the tale. The inner motives, the inner workings are what may be most revealing about the nature of the successes or failures of the organization. But I find myself at a point in my life where I am too close and yet too far away to make any conclusions by which I could stand in the future. I do know that my motives in starting APA were very personal.

Since my earliest experience in the theatre I was convinced that repertory was the one and only system through which the actor could practice his art. Repertory did not exist in the United States at that time. It is currently a system employed by only two professional companies, ACT and Guthrie Theatres. It was an act of youthful will power, a conviction close to an obsession, that motivated me to attempt such a project when there was no reason to believe that it could easily succeed.

Also in any true account of my motives, APA could easily turn
into a kind of love story. In 1959 my energies had become focused by
my marriage to Rosemary Harris. APA became the expression of a
very personal confidence and happiness. It also became the frame­
work in which Miss Harris and I could work together. I suspect
the ups and downs of APA were in many ways a reflection of Miss Harris
and my own often stormy and often joyous relationship. It is an
unavoidable fact, that my personal involvement and commitment to APA
ended a year and a half after my divorce. This topic is not the
subject of my current remarks. But I certainly must note that my
personal motives in beginning APA and my focus on continuing it
were deeply rooted in the movements of my private life. This does
not seem to me astonishing or unique. It does seem to me worth
remembering, while reflecting upon the nature of such a complex
institution as APA became during its near decade of existance.

While I cannot hope to be objective about APA, specifically,
I believe I have learned two facts about repertory itself: one, it
cannot be afforded in our society today; two, it is the only system
through which an actor can develop his full talent. I also believe
that the true repertory system provides the audience with the most
exciting kind of theatre event by removing the probability of mechanical
performances which are imposed on the nature of the long run system.
I can only draw one conclusion: that the art of acting, or acting as
an art, is seen very little in America today. Furthermore, very
few of our talented actors develop anywhere near their full potential
in the 'hit-flop', or 'long run or close the next night' system so
readily accepted nowadays. Finally, the audience attending the living theatre performances are not attracted by the sense of occasion they must have if they are to continue to fight to go to the theatre, when so many other media of entertainment are so much more acceptable and less expensive.

I continue to believe that the art of the theatre is the art of the actor. The fundamental attraction of acting as a means of communication is that it be practiced in the highest and most irresistible form. It cannot be practiced over any significant period of time in anything but the repertory system. Has the American Theatre produced an important actor in the last few decades? If so, who? Is he acting today on the stage? If so, when did he last appear on the stage? How much of his time is occupied with appearing on TV or in Films? How many roles has he appeared in on the stage in the last ten years? Or the last five years? If he is a successful and popular artist is it likely that he will be appearing with any consistency during the next ten years? Talents will appear. Careers will blossom. Stars will be made overnight, they will come and go. Will their going only be a stage in their coming again, or will they be lost after two flops? How much can a human being learn about acting a role when he has to play it eight times a week, week after week, month after month, even year after year, if it's a hit?

Actors are now brainwashed into accepting the long-run slavery as the only means of being in a success. Audiences even accept it now as the criterion of what is worth attending in the theatre. Producers, knowing the formidable costs of producing in repertory, no longer
consider it a viable system; even non-commercial producers now accept the madness of such a method. It is a dream from the past. A dead form. It no longer exists. And as we all sit back and sit by and accept these facts, the art of the actor--acting as an art--is also a dead issue.

Whatever APA's faults, and there were many, it was an attempt to restore to the theatre the only system through which the art of the actor could be realized, could be practiced. Perhaps I was the wrong man for the job. Perhaps I chose the wrong plays, the wrong actors. There was a period in the long haul when it appeared to me and to others that I had made a sound choice. But the organization only lasted about a decade. It takes more than ten years to develop talents into a company, to develop talents into anything like their full potential. The job must be done. It is waiting there to be done.

I would like to remember the ten years of APA as a creative period in my life that was a part of the going events of our city and our country's way of life. The happy memories of those years, the remembrance of a sense of progress and accomplishment far outweigh the disappointments, frustrations, and problems that were daily with us. But those happy memories are of an event which was a unique success, too unique. No new repertory companies more vital in vision, more learned in method have come along to replace that ten year life. No new repertory companies have come along at all.

APA bloomed like some exotic plant which lived through the cultivation of a mad scientist. The petals may be pressed in the book
of memory but the scent is gone. The color has faded. The life is over. Every time I re-open the book to remember the life, a little of the fossil disintegrates. However, I would like to point to APA's history as an accomplishment with reverberations: a movement that in its cycle of life made way for new life. I would like to think of it as a Movement, a part of a body of work. But I don't. The very success of APA seems too positive a proof that repertory has become a rare oddity in the life of the American artist and of the American audience. Can we change this fact? Can we alter the course? Can we accomplish the impossible? We can fly to the moon. But we cannot end a futile war. Would I try again? Yes.

Ellis Rabb
July 1972
# APPENDIX A

## 1952 PLAY CAST  SHAKESPEARE UNDER THE STARS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bill Adams</th>
<th>King Henry the Fourth</th>
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<tr>
<td>Falstaff's Army</td>
<td>Part I</td>
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<td>Traveler</td>
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<td>Part I</td>
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<td>Gower, of the King's Party</td>
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<td>Walt Bonnett</td>
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<td>William de la Pole</td>
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<td>Cardinal Bourchier</td>
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<tr>
<td>Servant</td>
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<td>Rex Barger</td>
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<td>Reignier, Duc D'Anjou</td>
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<td>Garter-King-at-Arms</td>
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<td>William Brescka</td>
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<td>Paul Cooper</td>
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<td>Attendant</td>
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<td>Barrie Dallas</td>
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<td>A Young Daughter of Clarence</td>
<td>King Richard the Third</td>
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Meredith Dallas
A Citizen of Angiers
King Richard II
Henry Percy, Hotspur
Snare, Sheriff's Officer
Silence, Country Justice
The Duke of Exeter
Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick
The Duke of Buckingham
Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury

John Dawson
Trumpeter

Michael Dean
Lord Talbot
The Earl of Salisbury
King Henry VI Coffin Bearer
Sir Richard Ratcliffe
Lord Abergavenny
Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester

Nicholas Dewey
The Infant Elizabeth

Pat Dorsey
Lady of the Court

Percy Fast
One of two Beadles

Jackie Feldenkreis
Citizen of Barfleur
Margery Jourdain
An Apprentice
Anne Bullen

King John
King Richard the Second
King Henry the Fourth
Part I
King Henry the Fourth
Part II
King Henry the Fourth
Part II
King Henry the Fifth
King Henry the Sixth
King Richard the Third
King Richard the Third
King Henry the Eighth
King Henry the Eighth

King Henry the Sixth

King Henry the Eighth

King Henry the Eighth

King Henry the Fourth
Part II
Tom Fess

The Lord Bigot
The Bishop of Carlisle
The Bishop of Lincoln
A Servant

Jem Filler

Falstaff's Page.

A. Jose Garces

Lymoges, Duke of Austria
Henry Percy, Hotspur
Gadshill
John of Lancaster
John of Lancaster
The Earl of Cambridge
Michael Williams, Soldier
Young Clifford
Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond
Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond
Brandon
Cromwell

David Gold

Chatillon
Melun
Bushy
Owen Glendower
Lord Mowbray
Fluellen
King Henry VI
Sir Robert Brakenbury
Lord Lovel
The Ghost of King Henry VI
Cardinal Campeius

Donald Granger

Bulcalf--Recruit
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Payne Hewlett
Philip, King of France
Thomas Mowbray
The Abbott of Westminster
Edmund Mortimer
The Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench
The Bishop of Ely
The Constable of France
Edmund Mortimer
Lord Clifford
Louis XI, King of France
Lord Hastings
A Surveyor to the Duke of Buckingham
Griffith

David R. Holdridge
Hubert de Burgh
Traveler
Archbishop, Earl of Douglas
Lord Hastings
Lord Scroop
Jamy
Roger Bolingbroke
King Henry VI Coffin Bearer
A Murderer
A Tailor
A Messenger

David Hooks
Philip the Bastard
Lord Willoughby
The Groom of the Stable
Henry, Prince of Wales

Henry, Prince of Wales
King Henry V
An Old Shepherd
George, Son of the Duke of York
George, Duke of Clarence

King John
King Richard the Second
Part II
King Henry the Fourth
Part II
King Richard the Second
Part II
King Henry the Fourth
Part II
King Henry the Fifth
Part II
King Henry the Fifth
Part II
King Henry the Sixth
Part II
King Richard the Third
Part II
King Richard the Third
Part II
King Henry the Sixth
Part II
King Henry the Eighth
Part II
King Henry the Eighth
Part II
King Henry the Eighth
Part II
King Richard the Third
The Duke of Buckingham
Capuocius
David Huber
Falstaff's Army
Mouldy--Recruit

David Jones
An Attendant
Peter of Pomfret
A French Messenger
A Gardener
Servant
Francis
Sir Michael
A Porter
A Drawer
Fang, Sheriff's Officer
Davy, Servant to Shallow
Attendant in French Court
John Bates--Soldier
John Beaufort, Earl
King Henry VI Coffin Bearer
Thomas Rotherham, Archbishop of York
A Bishop
Sir Thomas Lovell

Mario Kamodino
Attendant

Bernice Kelmanson
Blanch of Spain
Lady Mortimer
Isabel, Queen of France
Lady Bona
An Old Lady

King Henry the Eighth
King Henry the Eighth
King Henry the Fourth
Part I
King Henry the Fourth
Part II
King John
King John
King John
King Richard the Second
King Richard the Second
King Henry the Fourth
Part I
King Henry the Fourth
Part I
King Henry the Fourth
Part II
King Henry the Fourth
Part II
King Henry the Fourth
Part II
King Henry the Fourth
Part II
King Henry the Fifth
King Henry the Fifth
King Henry the Sixth
King Richard the Third
King Richard the Third
King Henry the Eighth

King Henry the Fifth

King John
King Henry the Fourth
Part I
King Henry the Fifth
King Henry the Sixth
King Henry the Eighth
Robert Kelso
A Serving-Man
Peter, The Armorer's Man

Marcia Kidder
Citizen of Harfleur

Walter Kron
A Musician
A Drummer
Sir Christopher Urswick

Dorothy Laming
Constance, Mother of Arthur
The Queen to King Richard
Lady Percy, Wife of Hotspur
Lady Percy, Hotspur's Widow
Eleanor Cobham
The Duchess of York
Queen Katherine

Arthur Lithgow
Henry Bolingbroke
King Henry IV

King Henry IV
Chorus
The Duke of Burgundy
A Serving-Man
Thomas Horner
Tutor to Rutland
Sir James Tyrrel
The Sheriff of Wiltshire
King Henry VIII

David Lithgow
Edmund, Earl of Rutland
Edward, Prince of Wales
A Boy

King Henry the Sixth
King Henry the Sixth

King Henry the Fifth

King Henry the Fourth
Part II
King Henry the Sixth
King Richard the Third

King John
King Richard the Second

King Henry the Fourth
Part I

King Henry the Fourth
Part II

King Henry the Sixth

King Richard the Third

King Henry the Eighth

King Henry the Eighth
Robin Lithgow
Richard, Duke of York  
Richard, Duke of York

Frances Oliver Loud
Lady Falconbridge
The Duchess of York
Mistress Quickly
Mistress Quickly
Pistol's Wife
Elizabeth Woodville
Elizabeth, Queen to Edward IV
Lady of the Court

John McQuiggan
An English Messenger
Robert Falconbridge
Sir Stephen Scroop
A Keeper
Servant
Poins
A Messenger
Poins
A Messenger

A Boy
Basset
The Duc d'Alencon
Edward, Prince of Wales
The Ghost of Prince Edward
Secretary to Wolsey
A Servant
A Gentleman

Allyn Moss
Lady in Waiting
Doll Tearsheet
Alice
Joan la Pucelle
Lady of the Court

King Richard the Third
King John
King Richard the Second
King Henry the Fourth
Part I
King Henry the Fourth
Part II
King Henry the Fifth
King Henry the Sixth
King Richard the Third
King Henry the Eighth

King Henry the Eighth
King Richard the Second
King Henry the Fourth
Part I
King Henry the Fourth
Part II
King Henry the Fifth
King Henry the Sixth
King Henry the Eighth
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King Henry the Eighth
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<td>David Park</td>
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<td>Irma Pascal</td>
<td>A Servant, Katharine, Page, A Spirit, An Apprentice, A Messenger, Lady of Court</td>
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<td>Petie Payne</td>
<td>Queen Elinor</td>
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<td>Ellis Rabb</td>
<td>Lewis, the Dauphin of France, Edmund of Langley, Duke of York</td>
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<td>John Ott</td>
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<td>David Park</td>
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<tr>
<td>Irma Pascal</td>
<td>A Servant, Katharine, Page, A Spirit, An Apprentice, A Messenger, Lady of Court, King Henry the Fourth Part I, King Henry the Fifth, King Henry the Sixth, King Richard the Third, King Henry the Eighth</td>
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<td>Falstaff's Army, King Henry the Fourth Part I, King Henry the Fifth</td>
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<td>Petie Payne</td>
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<td>Lewis, the Dauphin of France, Edmund of Langley, Duke of York, King John, King Richard the Second</td>
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<td>The Lord Mayor of London</td>
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Albert Schoemann

James Gurney Green
The Earl of Westmoreland
A Sheriff
The Earl of Westmoreland
The Earl of Westmoreland A Keeper
Sir John Fastolfe
Southwell, Wicked Priest
The Earl of Westmoreland
The Lieutenant of the Tower
The Lord Chancellor

George Siefert

Shadow—Recruit
Attendant

Frank Sieburth

Lord Grey

Charles Snyder

The Earl of Essex
The Earl of Salisbury
The Earl of Northumberland
The Earl of Northumberland
The Earl of Northumberland
Humphrey of Gloucester
Humphrey Duke of Gloucester
The Earl of Northumberland
Lord Stanley
The Duke of Norfolk

King John
King Richard the Second
King Henry the Fourth Part I
King Henry the Fourth Part I
King Henry the Fourth Part II
King Henry the Fifth
King Henry the Sixth
King Henry the Sixth
King Henry the Sixth
King Henry the Sixth
King Henry the Eighth

King Henry the Fourth Part II
King Henry the Fifth

King Richard the Third

King John
King John
King Richard the Second
King Henry the Fourth Part I
King Henry the Fourth Part II
King Henry the Fourth Part II
King Henry the Sixth
King Henry the Sixth
King Richard the Third
King Henry the Eighth

King Henry the Fourth Part II

George Spelvln

A Beadle

King Henry the Fourth Part II
Budd Steinhilber
Captain Pistol
Pistol

Edwin Strout
An Attendant

Harry Tarsky
A Beefeater
Falstaff's Army

Thomas Taylor
Arthur, Duke of Bretagne

Katchie Torrence
Lady in Waiting
Rumour
Lady Anne

Paula Treichler
A Young Son of Clarence

Demaris Velie
Page

Norman Wilson
A Beefeater
Attendant in the French Court

Pauline Womacks
Trumpeter

King Henry the Fourth
Part II
King Henry the Fifth

King John

King Henry the Fourth
Part I
King Henry the Fourth
Part I

King John

King Richard the Second
King Henry the Fourth
Part II
King Richard the Third

King Richard the Third

King Henry the Sixth

King Henry the Fourth
Part I
King Henry the Fifth

King Henry the Eighth
Arthur Zucker

The Ambassador of France
Montjoy, a French Herald
Vernon
A Messenger
Lord Hastings
The Marquess of Dorset
John Morton, Bishop of Ely
Sir Henry Guildford

King Henry the Fifth
King Henry the Fifth
King Henry the Sixth
King Henry the Sixth
King Henry the Sixth
King Richard the Third
King Richard the Third
King Henry the Eighth
1953 PLAY CAST  SHAKESPEARE UNDER THE STARS

Jack Bittner

Thersites  Troilus and Cressida
Tullus Aufidius  Coriolanus
Simonides  Pericles
Flavius  Timon of Athens
Casca  Julius Caesar
Domitus Enobarbius  Antony and Cleopatra

Richard Blofson

Conspirator with Aufidius  Coriolanus
2nd Citizen  Julius Caesar
2nd Soldier to Antony  Julius Caesar
Candidus  Antony and Cleopatra

J. David Bowen

Diomedes  Troilus and Cressida
Volscian Guard  Coriolanus
1st Fisherman  Pericles
Pirate  Pericles
Alcibiades  Timon of Athens
Decius Brutus  Julius Caesar
Varro, servant to Brutus  Julius Caesar
Agrippa, friend to Caesar  Antony and Cleopatra

John Brachitta

Ajax  Troilus and Cressida
Roman Senator  Coriolanus
Leonine  Pericles
Knight  Pericles
2nd Senator  Timon of Athens
Flavius  Julius Caesar
Varro, servant to Cassius  Julius Caesar
Scarus, friend to Antony  Antony and Cleopatra

Betty Brack

Gentlewoman  Coriolanus
Marina  Pericles
Partia, wife of Brutus  Julius Caesar
Handmaiden  Antony and Cleopatra
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<tr>
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<td>2nd Fisherman</td>
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<td>Pirate</td>
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<td>Luciliius</td>
<td>Timon of Athens</td>
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<td>Soldier</td>
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<td>Marullus</td>
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<td>Philo, friend to Antony</td>
<td>Antony and Cleopatra</td>
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<td>Taurus</td>
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<td>Metellus Cimber</td>
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<td>Clitus, servant to Brutus</td>
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<td>Painter</td>
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<td>Marcus Antonius</td>
<td>Julius Caesar</td>
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<td>Antony</td>
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<td>Sicinius Velutus</td>
<td>Coriolanus</td>
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<td>Antiochus</td>
<td>Pericles</td>
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<td>Octavius Caesar</td>
<td>Antony and Cleopatra</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amazon</td>
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<td>Handmaiden</td>
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Ralph Drischell

Ulysses
Junius Brutus
Pandar
A Fool
Jeweller
Publius
Dardanius
3rd Citizen
A Soothsayer

Troilus and Cressida
Coriolanus
Pericles
Timon of Athens
Timon of Athens
Julius Caesar
Julius Caesar
Julius Caesar
Antony and Cleopatra

William Duncan

Menocrates, friend to Sextus
Pompeius

Antony and Cleopatra

Jackie Feldenkreis

Andromache
Daughter of Antiochus
Amazon
Phrynia
Iras

Troilus and Cressida
Pericles
Timon of Athens
Timon of Athens
Timon of Athens

Tom Fess

Servant
Roman Senator
Servant to Antony
Alexas, attendant on Cleopatra

Troilus and Cressida
Coriolanus
Julius Caesar
Antony and Cleopatra

Kelton Garwood

Nestor
Coriolanian Senator
Serving Man to Aufidius
Cleon
1st Senator
Cinna
Messala, Friend to Brutus and Cassius
Menas

Troilus and Cressida
Coriolanus
Coriolanus
Coriolanus
Pericles
Timon of Athens
Julius Caesar
Julius Caesar
Antony and Cleopatra

James Goldswig

Margarelon
Bandit
Servant to Octavius

Troilus and Cressida
Timon of Athens
Julius Caesar
Harry Gracey

Alexander
Citizen of Antium
Knight
Titus
Claudius, servant to Brutus
4th Citizen
Thyreus, friend to Caesar

Joseph Hamer

Helenus
Deipholus
Serving Man to Aufidius
Knight
Flaminius
Papilius Lena
Young Cato, friend to Brutus
and Cassius
Euphronius
Messenger from Antony

Betty Hellman

Valeria
Lychoerdia
Lady
A Page
Amazon
Lady to Octavia

David Holdridge

Conspirator with Aufidius

David Hooks

Hector
Caius Marcius
Gower
Poet
Maecenas, friend to Caesar

Jean Hooper

Octavia
<table>
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<td>Dolabella</td>
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<td>Amazon, Handmaiden</td>
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<td>Joan Shoemaker</td>
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<td>Martha Shoemaker</td>
<td>Cupid</td>
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<td>Charles Snyder</td>
<td>Calchas, Roman Senator, Escanes, Lucullus, Bandit, M. Aemil Lepidus, Lepidus</td>
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<td>Boult, Cobbler</td>
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<td>Tom Taylor</td>
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Stranger
Servant to Caesar
Silius

Timon of Athens
Julius Caesar
Antony and Cleopatra

Charles Vicinus

Antenor
Coriolian Senator
Knight
Philotus
Stranger
Ligarius
Varrius, friend to Sextus Pompeius
Diomedes, attendant on Cleopatra

Troilus and Cressida
Coriolanus
Pericles
Timon of Athens
Timon of Athens
Julius Caesar
Antony and Cleopatra
Antony and Cleopatra

Donald Weightman

Priam
Aedile
Helicanus
Sempronius
Strato, servant to Brutus
A Soothsayer
Demetrius, friend to Antony

Troilus and Cressida
Coriolanus
Pericles
Timon of Athens
Julius Caesar
Julius Caesar
Antony and Cleopatra

Ruth Wilder

Cassandra
Diana
Timandra
Amazon

Troilus and Cressida
Pericles
Timon of Athens
Timon of Athens

Mary Winters

Lady

Pericles
1954 PLAY CAST  SHAKESPEARE UNDER THE STARS

William G. Ball

Vincentio
Romeo, son of Montague
Puck
Old Gobbo
Montano, a gentleman of Cyprus
Trinculo, a Jester

The Taming of the Shrew
Romeo and Juliet
A Midsummer Night's Dream
The Merchant of Venice
Othello
The Tempest

Rex Barger

Peter, servant to Petruchio

The Taming of the Shrew

Jack Bittner

Gremio
Duke, father to Silvia
Friar Laurence
Quince, a carpenter
Monsieur Le Bon
Brabantio
Caliban

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The Two Gentlemen of Verona
Romeo and Juliet
A Midsummer Night's Dream
The Merchant of Venice
Othello
The Tempest

Richard Blofson

Boatswain

The Tempest

James Bolle

First Musician

Romeo and Juliet

William Brescka

Old Capulet
Friar John
Starveling, a tailor
Clerk

Romeo and Juliet
Romeo and Juliet
A Midsummer Night's Dream
The Merchant of Venice

Julie Couillard

Peaseblossom, a fairy

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Michael Dean

Servant
Antonio, father to Proteus
Balthasar, servant to Romeo

The Taming of the Shrew
The Two Gentlemen of Verona
Romeo and Juliet
Duke of Venice
Senator of Venice
Gentleman of Cyprus
Master of a ship

Clarence Derwent
Shylock

Patricia Dorsey
Cobweb

Sonia Dorwitt
Scullery Maid to Petruchio

Ralph Drischell
Baptista, a rich gentleman
Panthino, servant to Antonio
Apothecary
Gregory, servant to Capulet
Snug, a joiner
Salarino
Gratiano
Adrian

Thomas Fess
Stephano, servant to Portia

Vera Fusek
Helena
Miranda, daughter to Prospero

Mary Gamson
Hostess
Servant, to Portia
Bianca, mistress to Cassio

Kelton Garwood
A Pedant
Montague
Snout, a tinker
Salanio

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Othello
The Tempest
The Merchant of Venice
A Midsummer Night's Dream
The Taming of the Shrew
The Taming of the Shrew
The Two Gentlemen of Verona
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The Merchant of Venice
Othello
The Tempest
The Merchant of Venice
A Midsummer Night's Dream
The Merchant of Venice
Othello
Duke of Venice
Francisco

James Goldswig
First Huntsman

Erle Hall
Lucentio
Second Outlaw
Paris, a young nobleman
Lysander
Lorenzo
Lodovico
Ferdinand

Paul Harris
Senator of Venice
Gentleman of Cyprus

Keith Harrington
Hortensio, suitor to Bianca
Proteus, a gentleman
Benvolio, a nephew to Montague
Flute, a bellows-mender
Antonio
Gonzalo

David Hooks
Christopher Sly, a tinker
Mercutio
Bottom, a weaver
Neapolitan Prince
Balthasar, servant to Portia
Iago

Jean Hooper
Lucetta, waiting-woman to Julia

Earle Hyman
Tranio, servant to Lucentio
First Outlaw
Tybalt

Othello
The Tempest

The Taming of the Shrew

The Taming of the Shrew
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Othello

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Othello
Oberon, King of the fairies  
Prince of Morocco  
Othello

Kate Kelley  
Second Musician

Bernice Kelman  
Second Musician

Dorothy Laming  
Second Musician

Susanna Lane  
Third Musician

H. E. B. Lantz  
Second Musician

Arthur Lithgow  
Second Musician

John Lithgow  
Second Musician

A Midsummer Night's Dream
The Merchant of Venice
Othello

Romeo and Juliet

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The Merchant of Venice
Othello
The Tempest

The Taming of the Shrew
The Two Gentlemen of Verona
Romeo and Juliet
A Midsummer Night's Dream
The Tempest

A Midsummer Night's Dream
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<tr>
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<td>Robin Lithgow</td>
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<td>The Taming of the Shrew, Othello</td>
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<td>Frances Oliver</td>
<td>Widow, Julia, beloved of Proteus, Lady Capulet, Nerissa, Iris, Goddess</td>
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<td>Arthur Oshlag</td>
<td>Curtis, servant of Petruchio, Launce, Chorus, Prince Escalus, of Verona, Tubal, friend of Shylock, Prospero</td>
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Alvin Radin
Nathaniel, servant to Petruchio
The Taming of the Shrew

Jacquelynn Reaver
Servant, to Baptista
The Taming of the Shrew

Tim Reynolds
Bartholomew
The Taming of the Shrew

James Rose
Servant, to Antonio
The Merchant of Venice

Gwen Sheffey
Juliet
Romeo and Juliet
Titania, Queen of the fairies
A Midsummer Night's Dream
Ceres, Goddess
The Tempest

Kenneth Sleeper
Lord
The Taming of the Shrew
A Tailor
The Taming of the Shrew
Thurio, rival to Valentine
The Two Gentlemen of Verona
Peter
Romeo and Juliet
Philostrate
A Midsummer Night's Dream
Gratiano
The Merchant of Venice
Roderigo
Othello
Antonio, Prospero's brother
The Tempest

Paul Sparer
Second Huntsman
The Taming of the Shrew
Valentine
The Two Gentlemen of Verona
Demetrius
A Midsummer Night's Dream
Shylock
The Merchant of Venice
Cassio
Othello
Alonso, King of Naples
The Tempest

Budd Steinhilber
Launcelot Cobbs
The Merchant of Venice

Tom Taylor
1st Servant, to Petruchio
The Taming of the Shrew
Second Watch
Romeo and Juliet
Seth Velsey
Gentleman of Cyprus

Richard Webber
Biondello, servant to Lucentio
Third Outlaw
Leonardo

Othello

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The Two Gentlemen of Verona
The Merchant of Venice
Collins J. Bell

Ford, a gentleman dwelling at Windsor
Duke Senior
Valentine, attending on the Duke
Scotch Doctor

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As You Like It
Twelfth Night
The Tragedy of Macbeth

Nancy Berkey

Second Queen

The Two Noble Kinsman

Jack Bittner

Sir John Falstaff
Sir Toby Belch
Macbeth
Belarius, a banished lord
Time, as Chorus
Doctor

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Robert Blackburn

Page, a gentleman dwelling at Windsor
Orlando
Orsino, Duke of Illyria
Duncan, King of Scotland
Third Murderer
Posthumus, husband to Imogen
Casmillo, a lord of Sicilia

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The Tragedy of Macbeth
Cymbeline
The Winter's Tale

Roger Evan Boxill

Amiens, attending Duke Senior
Sebastian, brother of Viola
Malcolm, son of Duncan
A Spaniard
Arviragus
Florizel, prince of Bohemia
Wooer, of the Jailer's daughter

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Cymbeline
The Winter's Tale
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Jacqueline Brookes

Lady Macbeth
Queen
Mopsa, a shepherdess
Jailer's Daughter

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Nancy Brougham

Celia, daughter of Frederick
Viola
Gentlewoman, attending Lady
Macbeth
Emilia, attending on Hermione
Emilia, sister of Hippolyta

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Jane Burnet

Tabourer

Nell Burnside

Anne Page, Page's daughter
Phebe, a shepherdess
Second Witch
Perdita, daughter of Hermione
Waiting Woman to Emilia

The Two Noble Kinsmen

Julie Couillard

Third Queen

The Two Noble Kinsman

Meredith Dallas

Host, of the Garter Inn
Charles, wrestler to Frederick
Hymen
Malvolio, Olivia's steward
Macduff
First Gentleman

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Leslie Diamond

Dennis, servant to Oliver

As You Like It

Ralph Drischell

Ford, a gentleman dwelling at
Windsor
Duke Senior
Valentine, attending on the Duke
Scotch Doctor
A Frenchman
Caio Lucius, Roman General
Antigonus, a lord of Sicilia
Gerrold, a schoolmaster

The Merry Wives of Windsor
As You Like It
Twelfth Night
The Tragedy of Macbeth
Cymbeline
Cymbeline
The Winter's Tale
The Two Noble Kinsman
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<th>Le Beau</th>
<th>Third Lord</th>
<th>Third Countryman</th>
<th>Knight to Arcite</th>
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<th>Mistress Page</th>
<th>Rosalind</th>
<th>First Witch</th>
<th>Imogen, daughter of Cymbeline</th>
<th>Hermione, queen to Leontes</th>
<th>Hippolyta, bride to Theseus</th>
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<td>The Winter's Tale</td>
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<th>Kelton Garwood</th>
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<th>Charles, wrestler to Frederick</th>
<th>Silvius, shepherd</th>
<th>Malvolio, Olivia's steward</th>
<th>Sergeant</th>
<th>Old Siward, Earl of Northumberland</th>
<th>Cloten</th>
<th>Old Shepherd</th>
<th>Jailer</th>
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<th>Kay Gish</th>
<th>Angus, nobleman of Scotland</th>
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<th>Herald</th>
<th>Brother to the Jailer</th>
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<th>Friend to the Jailer</th>
<th>Knight to Palamon</th>
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<p>| Judy Goldman                     | Dennis, servant to Oliver  |                                 |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|                                 |
|                                  | As You Like It              |                                 |</p>
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<td>Audrey, a country wench</td>
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<td>Maria, Olivia's woman</td>
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<td>Lady Macduff</td>
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<td>Fabian, servant to Olivia</td>
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<td>Caithness, nobleman of Scotland</td>
<td>Cornelius, a physician</td>
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<td>First Lord</td>
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<td>Roman Captain</td>
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<td>A Mariner</td>
<td>The Winter's Tale</td>
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<td>The Two Noble Kinsman</td>
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<td>Gentleman</td>
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<td>Sir Oliver Martext, a vicar</td>
<td>First Lord of Cymbeline's Court</td>
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<td>Sea Captain</td>
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<td>Pisanio, servant to Posthumus</td>
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<td>Theseus, Duke of Athens</td>
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<td>Arthur Lithgow</td>
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<td>William Page, son of Page</td>
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<td>Sir Hugh Evans, a Welsh parson, Jaques, Ross, nobleman of Scotland, Philario,</td>
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<td>friend of Posthumus, Gaoler, Polixenes, king of Bohemia, Arcite, nephew to Creon</td>
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<td>Joseph McGonagle</td>
<td>Servant to Leontes, First Countryman, Knight to Palamon</td>
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<td>Neila Miller</td>
<td>Lady attending of Hermione</td>
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<td>Frances Oliver</td>
<td>Mistress Ford, Olivia, Third Witch, Dorcas, a shepherdess, First Queen</td>
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<td>Ava Parks</td>
<td>Bavian</td>
<td>The Two Noble Kinsman</td>
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Eugene Picciano
Fenton, a gentleman
Corin, shepherd
Antonio, a sea captain
Banquo
Iachimo, friend of Philario
Autolycus, a rogue

Ellis Rabb
Shallow, a country justice
Touchstone, a clown
Sir Andrew Aguecheek
An Old Man
First Gentleman
Leontes, king of Sicilia
Palamon, nephew to Creon

Kit Rohmann
Robin, page to Falstaff
Fleance, son of Banquo
Boy

Paul Rohmann
Clown

James Rose
Nym, attending on Falstaff
Curio, attending on the Duke
Young Siward
Guiderius
Friend to the Jailer
Knight to Arcite

Budd Steinhilber
Host, of the Garter Inn

Eli Swetland
Boy, son of Macduff

The Merry Wives of Windsor
As You Like It
Twelfth Night
The Tragedy of Macbeth
Cymbeline
The Winter's Tale

The Merry Wives of Windsor
As You Like It
Twelfth Night
The Tragedy of Macbeth
Cymbeline
The Winter's Tale
The Two Noble Kinsman

The Merry Wives of Windsor
The Tragedy of Macbeth
The Two Noble Kinsman

The Winter's Tale

The Merry Wives of Windsor
Twelfth Night
The Tragedy of Macbeth
Cymbeline
The Two Noble Kinsman
The Two Noble Kinsman

The Merry Wives of Windsor

The Tragedy of Macbeth
Charles Vicinus

Jacques de Boys
Donalbain
Menteith, nobleman of Scotland
Archidamus, a lord of Bohemia
Friend to the Jailer
Knight to Palamon

As You Like It
The Tragedy of Macbeth
The Tragedy of Macbeth
The Winter's Tale
The Two Noble Kinsman
The Two Noble Kinsman

Ronald Wallis

William, in love with Audrey
Second Countryman
Knight to Arcite

As You Like It
The Two Noble Kinsman
The Two Noble Kinsman
1956 PLAY CAST  SHAKESPEARE UNDER THE STARS

**Jack Aronson**
- Don John
- Edmund, bastard son of Gloucester
- The Provost
- Much Ado About Nothing
- The Tragedy of King Lear
- Measure for Measure

**Tucker Ashworth**
- Verges, a headborough
- Fool
- Elbow, a constable
- Much Ado About Nothing
- The Tragedy of King Lear
- Measure for Measure

**Eugene Bacon**
- Sexton
- Old Man
- The Justice
- Much Ado About Nothing
- The Tragedy of King Lear
- Measure for Measure

**William Bassett**
- Second Lord, attendant to King
- Second Merchant
- Longaville, Lord attending the King
- Voltimand, courtier
- All's Well that Ends Well
- The Comedy of Errors
- Love's Labour's Lost
- Hamlet, Prince of Denmark

**Jack Bittner**
- King of France
- Angelo, a goldsmith
- Sir Nathaniel, a curate
- Claudio, King of Denmark
- All's Well that Ends Well
- The Comedy of Errors
- Love's Labour's Lost
- Hamlet, Prince of Denmark

**Robert Blackburn**
- Don Pedro, Prince of Arragon
- Earl of Kent
- Vincentio, the Duke
- Much Ado About Nothing
- The Tragedy of King Lear
- Measure for Measure

**Betty Brack**
- Lady
- Lady
- Kate Keepdown, a tart
- Much Ado About Nothing
- The Tragedy of King Lear
- Measure for Measure
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role(s)</th>
<th>Plays</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Nell Burnside</strong></td>
<td>Diana, daughter of Widow Katherine, lady attending the Princess</td>
<td>All's Well that Ends Well</td>
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<td><strong>Edward Payson Call</strong></td>
<td>Duke of Florence</td>
<td>All's Well that Ends Well</td>
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<td>Dromio of Ephesus</td>
<td>The Comedy of Errors</td>
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<td>Holofernes, a schoolmaster</td>
<td>Love's Labour's Lost</td>
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<td>Second Clown</td>
<td>Hamlet, Prince of Denmark</td>
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<td>Marcellus, an officer</td>
<td>Hamlet, Prince of Denmark</td>
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<td><strong>William Cannon</strong></td>
<td>Messenger</td>
<td>Much Ado About Nothing</td>
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<td><strong>Grace Chapman</strong></td>
<td>Widow of Florence</td>
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<td>Adriana, wife of Antipholus</td>
<td>The Comedy of Errors</td>
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<td>Rosaline, lady attending the Princess</td>
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<td>Player Queen</td>
<td>Hamlet, Prince of Denmark</td>
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<td><strong>Albert Corbin</strong></td>
<td>Conrade, follower of Don John</td>
<td>Much Ado About Nothing</td>
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<td>Oswald, steward to Goneril</td>
<td>The Tragedy of King Lear</td>
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<td>Lucio, eccentric</td>
<td>Measure for Measure</td>
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<td><strong>Harry Curtis</strong></td>
<td>Third Watch</td>
<td>Much Ado About Nothing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Soldier</td>
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<td>Varrius, an attendant</td>
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<td><strong>Katherine Davies</strong></td>
<td>Lady</td>
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<td>Francisca, a Nun</td>
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<td><strong>Ralph Drischell</strong></td>
<td>Parolles, a follower of Bertram</td>
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<td>Aegeon, a merchant of Syracuse</td>
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<td>Osric, a courtier</td>
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<td>Bernardo, an officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name</td>
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<td>Jack Drummond</td>
<td>Second Gentleman, Jailer, A Forester, Attendant, Cornelius, courtier, A Gentleman</td>
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<td>Robert Fields</td>
<td>Claudio, young lord of Florence, Edgar, Claudio</td>
<td>Much Ado About Nothing, The Tragedy of King Lear, Measure for Measure</td>
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<td>Pauline Flanagan</td>
<td>Ursula, gentlewoman attending Hero, Coneril, daughter to Lear, Isabella, a Novice</td>
<td>Much Ado About Nothing, The Tragedy of King Lear, Measure for Measure</td>
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<td>Helen Fox</td>
<td>Mariana, friend of the Widow, Luce, servant of Adriana, Moth, page to Armado</td>
<td>All's Well that Ends Well, The Comedy of Errors, Love's Labour's Lost</td>
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<td>Kelton Garwood</td>
<td>Lafeu, an old lord, Dromio of Syracuse, Don Adriano de Armado, Ghost of Hamlet's father, Gortinbras, prince of Norway</td>
<td>All's Well that Ends Well, The Comedy of Errors, Love's Labour's Lost, Hamlet, Prince of Denmark</td>
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<td>David Gilbert</td>
<td>Leonato, governor of Messina, Duke of Cornwall, Escalus, a Lord</td>
<td>Much Ado About Nothing, The Tragedy of King Lear, Measure for Measure</td>
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<td>Joan Goodman</td>
<td>Attendant</td>
<td>Love's Labour's Lost</td>
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<td>David Gordon</td>
<td>First Watch, Soldier, Barnadine, a dissolute prisoner</td>
<td>Much Ado About Nothing, Measure for Measure</td>
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Frank Groseclose

Steward to Countess of Rousillon
Solinus, Duke of Ephesus
Dull, a constable
Rosencrantz, courtier
First Clown

All's Well that Ends Well
The Comedy of Errors
Love's Labour's Lost
Hamlet, Prince of Denmark
Hamlet, Prince of Denmark

Jane Groves

Hero, daughter to Leonato
Cordelia, daughter of Lear
Mistress Overdone, the bawd

Much Ado About Nothing
The Tragedy of King Lear
Measure for Measure

Roger Hamilton

Lavache, a clown to Countess
First Merchant
Berowne, Lord attending the King
Laertes, son of Polonius

All's Well that Ends Well
The Comedy of Errors
Love's Labour's Lost
Hamlet, Prince of Denmark

Michael Higgins

Mercade, a Lord attending the
Princess
Hamlet

Love's Labour's Lost
Hamlet, Prince of Denmark

David Hooks

Antipholus of Ephesus
Polonius, Lord Chamberlain

The Comedy of Errors
Hamlet, Prince of Denmark

Dorothy Laming

Countess of Rousillon, Mother
of Bertram
Amelia, Abbess of Ephesus
Princess of France
Gertrude, Queen of Denmark

All's Well that Ends Well
The Comedy of Errors
Love's Labour's Lost
Hamlet, Prince of Denmark

Robert Laurie

First Lord, attendant to King
Doctor Pinch, a conjurer
Boyet, a Lord attending the
Princess
Francisco, a soldier
First Player

All's Well that Ends Well
The Comedy of Errors
Love's Labour's Lost
Hamlet, Prince of Denmark
Hamlet, Prince of Denmark
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<td>Rebecca Lombard</td>
<td>Violeta, friend of the Widow Courtezan, Jaquenetta, a country wench</td>
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<td>Gerald Lukeman</td>
<td>Friar Francis, Soldier, King of France, Doctor, First Gentleman, eccentric</td>
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<td>William Macy</td>
<td>Antonio, brother of Leonato, A Chamberlain, Abhorson, an executioner</td>
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<td>Jack McQuiggin</td>
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<td>Balthasar, attendant on Don Pedro, Herald, Curan, Friar Peter</td>
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<td>Eugene Picciano</td>
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<td>Benedick, young Lord of Padua</td>
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<td>Kit Rohmann</td>
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<td>A Boy</td>
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<td>Ted Runyeon</td>
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<td>Borachio, follower of Don John</td>
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<td>Helena, a gentlewoman</td>
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<td>R. Derek Swire</td>
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<td>Dorothy M. Whitney</td>
<td>Robert Wilkins</td>
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<td>Beatrice, niece of Leonto</td>
<td>Margaret, gentlewoman attending</td>
<td>First Soldier</td>
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<td>Hero</td>
<td>Antipholus of Syracuse</td>
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<td>Juliet, beloved of Claudio</td>
<td>Lady</td>
<td>Dumain, Lord attending the King</td>
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<td>Mariana, betrothed to Angelo</td>
<td>Horation, friend of Hamlet</td>
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<td>Much Ado About Nothing</td>
<td>Much Ado About Nothing</td>
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William Bassett

Marcus Antonius
Valentine
Starveling, a tailor
Duke of Suffolk

Julius Caesar
Twelfth Night
A Midsummer Night's Dream
King Henry the Eighth

Dennis Brite

Servant to Octavius Caesar
Sailor
Attendant
Sir Henry Guildford
Crier

Julius Caesar
Twelfth Night
A Midsummer Night's Dream
King Henry the Eighth

Grace Chapman

Portia, wife of Brutus
Viola
Helena, in love with Demetrius
Old Lady, friend of Anne

Julius Caesar
Twelfth Night
A Midsummer Night's Dream
King Henry the Eighth

Clayton Corzatte

Decius Brutus
Pindarus, servant to Brutus
Feste, a clown
Oberon, King of the Fairies
Earl of Surrey

Julius Caesar
Twelfth Night
A Midsummer Night's Dream
King Henry the Eighth

Chase Crosley

Soothsayer
Countess Olivia
Titania, Queen of the Fairies
Anne Bullen

Julius Caesar
Twelfth Night
A Midsummer Night's Dream
King Henry the Eighth

Neil Curnow

Octavius Caesar
Member of Orsino's Court
Attendant
Gardiner

Julius Caesar
Twelfth Night
A Midsummer Night's Dream
King Henry the Eighth
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actor</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Play</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Katherine Davies</td>
<td>Attendant to Olivia, Hermia, in love with Lysander, Patience</td>
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<td>Pauline Flanagan</td>
<td>Calpurnia, wife of Caesar, Maria, Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons, Queen Katherine</td>
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<td>James Frawley</td>
<td>Marullus, tribune, Lucilius, servant to Brutus, Sailor, Snug, a joiner, Duke of Norfolk</td>
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<td>Kelton Garwood</td>
<td>Cassius, Sir Andrew Aguecheek, Flute, a bellows-mender, Cranmer</td>
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<td>David Gold</td>
<td>Ligarius, Volumnius, servant to Brutus, Philostrate, Master of the Revels, Cardinal Campeius</td>
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<tr>
<td>Edward Grover</td>
<td>Servant to Marcus Antonius, First Officer, Dr. Butts, the King's physician, Porter</td>
<td>Julius Caesar, Twelfth Night, King Henry the Eighth, King Henry the Eighth</td>
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<tr>
<td>John Hawkins</td>
<td>Cinna, a poet, Another Poet, Member of Orsin's Court, Attendant, Messenger of Queen Katharine</td>
<td>Julius Caesar, Julius Caesar, Twelfth Night, A Midsummer Night's Dream, King Henry the Eighth</td>
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</table>
Patrick Hines
Julius Caesar
Sir Toby Belch
Bottom, a weaver
King Henry VIII

Judy Kanner
Attendant to Olivia
Second Fairy
Lady attendant to the Queen

Ann Kingsbury
Attendant to Olivia
First Fairy
Lady attendant to the Queen

William Larsen
Casca
Antonio
Quince, a carpenter
Lord Chamberlain

Sam Lloyd
Flavius, tribune
Messala, servant to Brutus
Priest
Snout, a tinker
Sir Thomas Moore
Surveyor

Ray MacDonnell
Marcus Brutus
Orsino, Duke of Illyria
Theseus, Duke of Athens
Duke of Buckingham
Capucius, Ambassador from Spain

William Macy
Trebonius
Strato, servant to Brutus
Sailor
Egeus, father of Hermia
Thomas Cromwell
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Play</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Play</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jack McQuiggan</td>
<td>A Carpenter, Member of Orsino's Court, Servant of the Duke of Buckingham</td>
<td>Julius Caesar</td>
<td>Twelfth Night</td>
<td>King Henry the Eighth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julian Miller</td>
<td>Lucius, servant to Brutus, Fabian, Puck, or Robin Goodfellow, Chorus</td>
<td>Julius Caesar</td>
<td>Twelfth Night</td>
<td>A Midsummer Night's Dream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Oyster</td>
<td>A Cobbler, Sergeant</td>
<td>Julius Caesar</td>
<td>King Henry the Eighth</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Del Parker</td>
<td>Cinna, Young Cato, servant to Brutus, Curio, Lysander, in love with Hermia, Lord Abergavenny, Griffith</td>
<td>Julius Caesar</td>
<td>Julius Caesar</td>
<td>Twelfth Night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellis Rabb</td>
<td>Malvolio, a steward, Cardinal Wolsey</td>
<td>Twelfth Night</td>
<td>King Henry the Eighth</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Alex Szogyi</td>
<td>Popilius, Bishop of Lincoln</td>
<td>Julius Caesar</td>
<td>King Henry the Eighth</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Robert Wilkins</td>
<td>Metellus Cimber, Titinius, servant to Brutus, Sebastian, Viola's twin brother, Demetrius, in love with Hermia, Sir Thomas Lovell</td>
<td>Julius Caesar</td>
<td>Julius Caesar</td>
<td>Twelfth Night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harry Williams</td>
<td>Lepidus, Second Officer, Lord Sands</td>
<td>Julius Caesar</td>
<td>Twelfth Night</td>
<td>King Henry the Eighth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B

PROSPECTUS
FOR
ASSOCIATION OF PRODUCING ARTISTS, INC.

prepared by: Richard Easton
Bob Gold
Jack McQuiggan
Ellis Rabb

Submitted: February 15, 1960
ASSOCIATION OF PRODUCING ARTISTS

APA is a non-profit corporation whose purpose is to encourage and foster the production of plays within the artistic policy set forth in this prospectus, utilizing the membership as a talent pool.

* The membership of APA is made up of actors, playwrights, directors, designers, composers, technicians, and management personnel.

* From the membership APA will package plays and book them for a fee: it will perform a service to organizations wishing to sponsor a theatrical event: either as the fulfillment of an organized policy, or as a policy establishing organization for the sponsor.

* APA is also set up to create the theatrical situations in which its work can find an outlet.

APA is dedicated to the formation and maintenance of a permanent and continuing artistic unit.

* Realizing that the theatre is an art form representing the collaborative efforts of many talents serving one end, we are convinced that only through the formation of a realistic permanent structure in which those artists can build a responsible relationship, will an artistic policy of any validity or excitement be established and productively maintained.

* The formation of strengths as a working unity is a guarantee of accomplishment as in any other venture requiring a
co-ordination of efforts—as in an insurance company, a factory or a hospital.

APA provides its membership with:

* A sense of purpose and obligation, which will be a source of inspiration in their work.
* A secure structure in which to shape a career.
* An outlet for their most creative efforts through their association with a recognized entity by which their original concepts can be realized.

APA will establish and maintain a Workshop for the Membership in which it can explore the possibilities of material and solidify its unity of expression.
ASSOCIATION OF PRODUCING ARTISTS

ARTISTIC POLICY

APA is dedicated to a kind of theatrical event best described as "classical"—offering the following definition—"that work which, transcending Time, Place and Nationality, becomes permanent and universal."

* The recognized classics—those works of Shakespeare, Moliere, Chekov, Wilde, Ibsen, the Restoration playwrights, the Greeks, et cetera, which have proven their enduring popular appeal.


APA is dedicated to building an organization of experience which is capable of producing this kind of event in our theatre lives.

* Believing that a vital and enthusiastic popular audience exists for "great" plays when there is a body of talents suitably experienced to produce them.

* Expecting our new playwrights to turn out work of classic value when there is an encouraging atmosphere for their work—an existing theatrical organization capable of executing
the demands of an ambitious script.

While APA is concerned with the work of any playwright of classical stature, it is also eager to devote itself to any situation or locality which can provide an outlet for its work or where the work will be stimulating and useful.

The work of APA is available for presentation in the form of:

* National or International tours
* Summer Festivals
* Winter Stock
* Broadway
* Off-Broadway et cetera.

APA will not only encourage, but make it possible for the artist in the theatre to assume the responsibility for the creation of the work he does.

* Raising the level of integrity, ambition and purpose of the work performed.
* Providing the theatre with a producing body whose major aim is artistic rather than wholly commercial.
* Enlarging the scope of the artist, thereby stimulating our audience, by capturing its imagination and providing a new leadership of its taste.
ASSOCIATION OF PRODUCING ARTISTS

LEGAL STRUCTURE

APA is formed as a non-profit corporation under the laws of the State of New York.

* To provide a legal structure within which the ideals of APA can be translated into actuality.

* To act as the responsible party which can negotiate contracts for the presentation of the products arising out of the organization.

Membership:

* As soon as is practical, the control of the organization, as represented by the Corporation, will be invested in the membership.

* Each member, possessing one vote, will be entitled to participate in the election of the Board of Directors. Through its annual election of the Board—which will control day to day policy—the members of APA will control the organization. At the same time, a centralized governing body will be established for periods of one year, able to carry out its policies without interference or check.

* Membership will be stabilized on the basis of participation. Admission to membership will be granted to productive members who will annually elect their Board of Directors.

To guarantee the continuance of the Artistic Policy an over-all
Artistic Director will be hired on a long-term (five year) contract at a token salary ($1.00 per annum.)

All artists involved in a specific project will draw remuneration for the work for which they are contracted.

The Officers of the Corporation will include a President, Vice-President and Secretary-Treasurer who, with the Board of Directors, will be designated annually.
ASSOCIATION OF PRODUCING ARTISTS

FINANCING

APA is set up as a non-profit organization.

Patronage will be attracted in the form of:

* Donations—which we have every reason to expect will be tax-exempt.**
* Loans—which can be specifically earmarked.
* A fee payable to APA for services rendered.
* Services rendered to APA without charge—in lieu of a cash contribution.
* Special contract with a sponsor of a specific event in which a percentage of profits from the event is donated to APA.

Monies will be used:

* To furnish space for the activities of the Workshop.
* To furnish the minimal administrative expenses necessary to provide a mailing address and an office.
* To subsidize artistic ventures in which APA would be participating as a guarantee of standard.
* To produce work entirely from within the corporate structure of APA.
* To provide a monthly "progress report" to the membership workshop participants, donors and previous sponsors.
* To advance pre-production costs, publicity, bonds, travel
expenses, rehearsal salaries and physical production.

** Application for qualification as a tax-exempt organization is presently pending before the Internal Revenue Service.
ASSOCIATION OF PRODUCING ARTISTS

THE WORKSHOP

During the months of January and February, meetings of the potential membership have taken place at which the setting up of APA was discussed and a series of projects prepared for the Workshop. Four sessions are scheduled for the month of March.

In order to get started, the participants were arbitrarily divided into four groups responsible for bringing a program to the following two meetings—the selection of material and leadership of the group being entirely up to the group itself. A wide variety of material was shown:

Ionesco's "The Lesson"
Thurber's "If Grant Had Been Drinking at Appomattox,"
and "The Last Flower"
A song from "Under Milkwood"
An original sketch by Tom Jones
Capote's "Breakfast at Tiffany's"
The last act of "The Importance of Being Earnest"
A group improvisation
A soliloque from "The Matchmaker"
A Chamber Theatre reading of "An Angel in a Saloon."
Various poetry readings
Scenes from "Yerma," "Love for Love," and "Henry VI"

Now that the Workshop is under way we have seen production sketches in the form of staged readings of John Masefield's "Good Friday" and
Milton's "Samson Agonistes."

Exploratory work is now being done in the form of scene work or readings on the following material to be seen at coming meetings:

"Faust" by Marlowe

"Othello"

"The Madwoman of Chaillot"

"Man and Superman"

"Death of a Salesman"

"The Affairs of Anatol" (original musical adaptation)

"The Show-Off"

"Design for Living"

"The Seagull"

The meetings took place either at a rented hall or at the Sullivan Street Theatre through the generosity of its owner. Also at that theatre, space has been donated for a small office and a mailing address.

All financing to date has come from donations by the potential membership.
ASSOCIATION OF PRODUCING ARTISTS

LIST OF POTENTIAL MEMBERSHIP

TUCKER ASHWORTH - actor, speech coach
WORD BAKER - director
PATRICIA BARNARD - actress, dancer
LAURINDA BARRETT - actress
PATRICIA BARRETT - actress, management
BARBARA BARRIE - actress
WILLIAM BASSETT - actor
JACK BITTNER - actor, singer
ROBERT BLACKBURN - actor, playwright
RICHARD BLOFSON - production stage manager, technician, manager
JACQUELINE BROOKS - actress
JEAN BRUNO - actress
NELL BURNSIDE - actress
ED CALL - actor, director, stage manager
TOM CARLIN - actor
GRACE CHAPMAN - actress
MICHAEL CHASE - production stage manager, director
CLAYTON CORZATTE - actor
SUSAN CORZATTE - actress
CHASE CROSLEY - actress
KEENE CURTIS - actor, production stage manager
THAYER DAVID - actor
KITTY DAVIES - actress
DONALD DAVIS - actor, producer, director
RAY DIFFEN - costumier
JOHN DODSON - actor
M'EL DOWD - actress
RALPH DRISCELL - actor
OLIVE DUNBAR - actress
RICHARD EASTON - actor, director
JOYCE EBERT - actress
MICHAEL EBERT - actor
LOUIS EDMONDS - actor
JOAN EPSTEIN - actress
PAULINE FLANAGAN - actress
ALLEN FLETCHER - director
BARRY FRANK - stage manager
CHRIS GAMFEL - actor
ROBERT GOLD - business manager
JAMES GOLDSMITH - actor
GEORGE GRIZZARD - actor
TED GROVER - actor, technician
JANE GROVES - actress
ROSEMARY HARRIS - actress
DONALD HARRON - actor, playwright
MARIETTE HARTLET - actress
HURD HATFIELD - actor
BETTY HELLMAN - actress
GIL HEMSLEY - lighting designer, technician
MICHAEL HIGGINS - actor
PATRICK HINES - actor
HAROLD HUMES - playwright
CAVATA HUMPHREY - actress
JULIET HUNT - actress, dancer
TOM JONES - playwright, lyricist
JEROME KILTY - actor, director, playwright
DOROTHY LAMING - actress
JUNE LARSEN - actress
WILLIAM LARSEN - actor
LOUISE LATHAM - actress
AL LEHMAN - costume designer
DAN LEVIN - actor
SAM LLOYD - actor
MARIANNA LLOYD - technician
RICHARD LONGMAN - actor
RAY MCDONNEL - actor, director
DAVID P. MOGOWAN - technician
JACK MOQUIGGAN - actor, management-secretary
NANCY MARCHAND - actress
NAN MARTIN - actress
PAUL MEYER - playwright
JOHN MAXTONE-GRAHAM - production stage manager, director
JULIAN MILLER - actor, dancer
DAVID O'BRIEN - actor
MARThA ORRICK - actress
JIM OYSTER - actor, management
STEPHEN PORTER - director, playwright, producer
ELLIS RABB - actor, director, management
JOHN RAGIN - actor
WILLIAM ROBERTS - playwright, designer
ANN ROTH - designer
HARVEY SCHMIDT - composer, illustrator
HIRAM SHERMAN - actor
PAUL SPARER - actor
BRONIA STEPHAN - actress
FRANCES STERNHAGEN - actress
ALEX SZOGYI - playwright, actor
SADA THOMPSON - actress
DEE VICTOR - actress, publicity management
GEORGE VOGEL - stage manager
TED VAN GRIETHUYSEN - actor, designer
SASHA VON SCHERLER - actress
TOM WHEDON - director
DAVID WHEELER - director
MARY WEAVER - designer
ANGELA WOOD - actress
CLAude WOOLMAN - actor
ELLEN WOOLMAN - actress, playwright
ASSOCIATION OF PRODUCING ARTISTS

CURRENT NEGOTIATIONS

The following resume of current negotiations is offered as an example of the practical workings of APA:

The Robin Hood Theatre—Arden, Delaware.

Mr. Richard Blofson, a potential member of APA, has been offered this theatre for the coming season at a nominal rental. It is in an area of the country with which he is familiar. He has suggested that the theatre's operation form an outlet for the activities of APA and that it mount the season. Funds are being solicited to do so.

It is proposed that the limited partnership, which will be set up as the sponsoring organization, hire APA, at a fee, to provide the artistic production.

APA has proposed a Festival Season, in which five plays of distinction be built into a repertory.

A budget of thirty thousand dollars ($30,000) is set forth to underwrite an eight week season with a two week pre-production period. In the two week pre-production period there will be an intensive renovation of the theatre and the surrounding grounds in order to create a permanent plant for many of the activities of APA. The proposed season calls for only one "royalty" play and a small company and a crew of top calibre at a "living wage" who are willing to make the necessary sacrifices to establish a reputation for APA.
The physical productions would be planned around an effective unit set, with major attention given to costumes and lights. Small-cast plays will be selected and a substantial publicity budget is involved.

**Antioch Summer Festival--Yellow Springs, Ohio.**

Ellis Rabb, Artistic Director of APA, has been associated with the Antioch Summer Festivals for six summers. He was a member of the acting company, directorial staff and finally General Artistic Director, during their presentation of the entire works of Shakespeare (1952-57). Last season he returned to perform a one-man-show in their series. His long standing association—along with that of many other APA members—with this organization has caused them to make serious consideration of his proposal that APA "package" a production, or a series of productions, into their coming season. The fee for this service will be determined by the length of engagement and the number and type of productions taken there. It is possible APA will draw from its Arden repertory.

**Toledo Summer Festival Association--Toledo, Ohio.**

Again, Mr. Rabb, together with many APA members, has been previously associated with this organization, having formed the greater part of the company for their two seasons of Shakespeare in 1956-57. APA has been sought as the artistic unit to mount their coming summer season.

We have proposed bringing them the five plays mounted earlier in the season--at Arden--for a period of five weeks at a fee of
twenty-five thousand dollars. This fee is considered, at this stage in negotiations, adjustable; on the basis that it was arrived at without compromise. Production expenditure can be cut by compromising technical aspects or reducing the number of productions, or in the reduction of travel expenditure due to an interim booking at a close proximity to our previous engagement.
The following statement explores some of the problems facing our theatre today and implies how APA will be instrumental in finding solutions to them.

The American Theatre has become a business venture. The artist in the theatre has become an employee, without responsibility or authority, who only supplies the demands of the commercial market.

Without the leadership of inspired and responsible artists, the theatre fails to fulfill its function as a socio-cultural influence.

The popular audience has turned from the living theatre to television and the cinema which provide, at a much cheaper price, an almost identical experience as that presently provided by the theatre.

There is a kind of event which only the theatre can create. Its dimension lies in the active participation of the audience, and its nature is to show life on an extraordinary level. It is to move us, humorously or dramatically, to a new objectivity by associating personal experience with that of all mankind. Plays which have come to be known as "classical" achieved this status because of their enduring popularity. While their particulars may reflect a past ago, their pertinence lies in the fact that the playwright found within his age a basic and continuing human truth.

An art form which seeks to express such truths must have serious and dedicated practitioners, people of responsibility and authority; for these talents form the leadership of public taste.
The living theatre has been deeply affected by the advent of the cinema. It attracted the mass audience, and influenced the type of expression found in the theatre. As the theatre became more "representational" and more naturalistic in its stylization, it found in the camera a perfect means of expression. However, in seeking to compete with the new medium of the camera, the theatre began to copy. But topical and documentary realism had found its most successful outlet in the other media.

The theatre must rediscover its own expression. It has a kind of event to offer that television and the cinema cannot. It alone can build a work of art out of time and space itself—a work of art in which the process of creation is inseparable from its communication—a work of art in which man himself is the instrument of expression.

The art of the theatre is the art of the actor. Even the playwright is dedicated to the actor's art as the process of expression. The actor's imagination, enhanced by that of his fellow workers, creates out of human experience a mutual involvement of immediate communication. And yet this powerful instrument of expression is limited today.

The living theatre would have a mass audience if only it would provide that audience with theatre-worthy events.

Many of the plays written today would make better movies than theatre-pieces. Their style and content is better suited to the techniques of the camera. Their effect depends on a literal depiction of the familiar, the topical and the ordinary. The theatre should illuminate with clarity and distinction the universal. It should reveal a mystery; enlighten the participant; give us the courage to laugh or
weep together in the knowledge that all men share this power. If the theatre does not do this its audience will seek, as it does today, a better servant: a cheaper one; or one that does not pretend to be other than a diversion. The theatre should be a revelation.

While the theatre has become "big business" it is not a sound business venture. Its risks are based on the exigencies of creative temperament. The artist cannot certify his success. He actually cannot even consider it. His inspiration is his major asset and its effect cannot be calculated. How then can monetary investment in the theatre be a sensible business risk? The most that can be done is to make a sound and realistic investment in a structure in which all those various talents will be stimulated to a fulfillment. This stimulation can only come from their working relationship and the confidence that they are doing something in which they can have faith. Only the power of the artist can attract a popular audience. And only when the theatre is a popular art form will it be a sensible investment.

The theatre art is the ideal means to express our need for mutual experience—a communication of interest, a collaboration of efforts; but it cannot be so as long as it continues to be the subject of exploitation by interests which are mainly commercial. It cannot assume the leadership of taste or be a source of inspiration until the talents who dedicate themselves to the work accept the responsibility for producing it. If there seems to be little joy or inspiration in the theatre today, it is because the artists involved have so little at stake. Their commitment to the work they do is minor. They are forced to
believe that they are lucky someone gave them the job and their only obligation is to keep it. This attitude is antithetical to the true nature of their work.

I do not suggest that the present powers now running the theatre are obligated to give to the artist the authority he requires—I suggest that it is the duty of the artist to reassert himself and prove, through his efforts, that he is the leader of the work he does—capable of shaping the destiny of his profession. Only through such conviction will that work become the healthy and attractive influence it should be in the lives of the popular audience. Theatre talents today—most particularly actors—have allowed, and even encouraged, themselves to be brainwashed into accepting the premise that they must work for somebody else. The artist can only shape something of worth when he has conviction that his work is a statement of his own creative instincts and drives. He cannot assume that it is someone else's job to provide him with circumstances in which this is possible. Yet actors today wait for a producer to back a play, wait for their agent to submit them for the job, wait for the director to approve their talent, wait for him to tell them how to act, wait for the acceptance or disapproval of the critics; and when the job has come and gone he begins the same process all over again. The only audible expression of his frustration is heard in moments of back-stage temperament, dressing-room intrigue or complaint to the officers of his union.

I do not honestly believe that every person calling himself
an actor, or any other theatrical worker's title is necessarily an "artist". I would calculate that only a very small minority are even sensitive to what the term implies. But I firmly believe that a sufficient number of such distinguished talents exist in our generation to bring about a true renaissance in the art of the theatre.

I believe that I know many of these people and I invite them to use the structure of APA to lead the way to that renaissance.

APA's greatest, indeed only, asset is the mutual strength of such talents gathered together with this one aim. The knowledge that such power can exist by this association will, I believe, inspire them to accept the responsibility of making their profession one in which they can believe. Their collaboration and continuing relationship with each other and with highly accomplished material will enliven our theatre with an artistic policy rooted in tradition and dedicated to exploration.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellis Rabb
# APPENDIX C

Association of Producing Artists Repertory Company  
1960-1970

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Play</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anatol (musical)</td>
<td>City Hall Theatre, Hamilton, Bermuda</td>
<td>April and May, 1960</td>
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<tr>
<td>Man and Superman</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Seagull</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Taming of the Shrew</td>
<td>Outdoor Theatre, Bermuda</td>
<td>July, 1960</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anatol</td>
<td>Bucks County Playhouse, New Hope, Pa.</td>
<td>First half August, 1960</td>
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<tr>
<td>Man and Superman</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Seagull</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Anatol</td>
<td>Theatre-by-the-Sea, Matanuck, R.I.</td>
<td>Last half August, 1960</td>
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<tr>
<td>Man and Superman</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Seagull</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Anatol</td>
<td>John Drew Theatre, East Hampton, N.Y.</td>
<td>End of August, First of September, 1960</td>
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<tr>
<td>Man and Superman</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Seagull</td>
<td>McCarter Theatre, Princeton, N.J.</td>
<td>September, October and November, 1960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Lady's Not For Burning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Right You Are (If You Think You Are)</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Tavern</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Seagull</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scapin</td>
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<td>Box and Cox</td>
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<td>The Cat and the Moon</td>
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<td>The Importance of Being Earnest</td>
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</table>
King Lear
A Midsummer Night's Dream
Twelfth Night
As You Like It
Hamlet

Twelfth Night
The Tavern

Twelfth Night
School for Scandal

Twelfth Night
School for Scandal
The Tavern

"Twelfth Night
School for Scandal
The Tavern
The Seagull

The Tavern
The Seagull

The Tavern
The Seagull
School for Scandal
Midsummer Night's Dream
Fashion

The Tavern
The Seagull
School for Scandal

A Penny for a Song

A Penny for a Song

The Tavern
School for Scandal
A Penny for a Song
We, Comrades Three
Ghosts

McCarter Theatre, Princeton, N.J.
February and March, 1961

Boston Arts Festival, Boston, Mass.
One week June, 1961

Highfield Theatre, Falmouth, Mass.
One week July, 1961

Bucks County Playhouse New Hope, Pa.
Two weeks July and August, 1961

John Drew Theatre, East Hampton, L.I.
August 1961

Olney Theatre, Olney, Maryland
One week August, September; October, 1961

Fred Miller Theatre, Milwaukee, Wisc.
October, November, December, 1961

Folksbiene Playhouse, New York, New York
March and April, 1962

Bucks County Playhouse, New Hope, Pa.
First half August, 1962

John Drew Theatre East Hampton, N.Y.
Last half August, 1962

Mendelssohn Theatre, Ann Arbor, Mich.
September, October, 1962
The Tavern
School for Scandal

Michigan Tour:
Bay City, Detroit,
Petosky, Alpena,
and Grand Rapids

November, 1962

Midsummer Night's Dream
The Merchant of Venice
Richard the Second

Trueblood Theatre
Ann Arbor, Mich.

February, 1963

Midsummer Night's Dream

Michigan Tour:
Port Huron, Grand Rapids,
Detroit, Midland,
Niles, Flint and
Adrian

March, 1963

Midsummer Night's Dream

Boston Arts Festival,
Boston, Mass.

July, 1963

Much Ado About Nothing
A Phoenix Too Frequent
Scapin
Right You Are (If You
Think You Are)
The Lower Depths

October, November, 1963

Much Ado About Nothing

Michigan Tour:
Grand Rapids, Muskegon,
Flint, Adrian, Kalamazoo,
and Port Huron

December, 1963

The Tavern
Scapin
Right You Are (If You
Think You Are)
The Lower Depths
Impromptu at Versailles

Phoenix Theatre,
New York, New York

March, 1964

Scapin
Impromptu at Versailles

Boston Arts Festival,
Boston, Mass.

One week
June, 1964

Man and Superman
War and Peace
The Hostage
Judith

Mendelssohn Theatre,
Ann Arbor, Mich.

September,
October,
1964

Man and Superman

Michigan Tour:
Jackson, Detroit,
Flint and Grand
Rapids

November, 1964
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<td>Man and Superman</td>
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<td>The Wild Duck</td>
<td>Huntington Hartford Theatre, Los Angeles, California</td>
<td>July thru August, 1966</td>
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<td>Krapp's Last Tape</td>
<td>Mendelssohn Theatre, Ann Arbor, Mich.</td>
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<td>Pantagleize</td>
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