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THE PAPER BAG PLAYERS, A THEATRE FOR CHILDREN, 1958-1982:
DEVELOPMENT, CREATIVE PROCESS, AND PRINCIPLES

DISSERTATION

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

By

Georga Larsen Parchem, B.A., M.A.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University
1983

Reading Committee:

Dr. George L. Lewis
Dr. Robert E. Jewett
Dr. Alan R. Osborne

Approved By

Advisor:
Department of
Humanities Education
Dedicated to the memory of Miss Mary Gwen Owen, former chairperson, Department of Speech and Theatre, Macalester College, an indefatigable Welsh woman, who gave me my vision of educational theatre.
First of all, I wish to thank Judith Martin and Judith Liss of The Paper Bag Players who so generously extended their time, thoughts, encouragement, homes, resources, and friendship during the course of this research. Of the many other people who contributed to this research, I am especially indebted to Irving Burton, Donald Ashwander, Shirley Kaplan, Remy Charlip, Betty Osgood, Edith Harnik, and Dr. Kellie McCaslin.

I am, of course, particularly in debt to my advisor, Dr. George Lewis, and wish to thank him for his guidance, criticism, and encouragement. I would also like to thank the other members of my reading committee, Dr. Alan Osborne and Dr. Robert Jewett for their criticism and support. I wish also to show my appreciation to Juanita Santoni, Lorryl Denny, Linda Marcin, and most of all, Eleanor Parchem, for their help in completing this project.

Most especially, I am grateful to and wish to thank my husband Al for his love, pride, encouragement, and support. Also included in my thanks are my children, Aaron and Alyssa, who despite their many interruptions, provided a source of inspiration to me throughout this project. Thanks also go to my extended family for their support: my parents, George and Vi Larsen; my husband's parents, Leonard and Eleanor Parchem; and my sisters, Mary Gilmore and Virginia Mitchell.
VITA

14 April 1944. . . . . . . Born - Crosby, North Dakota

1967 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . B.A., Macalester College, St. Paul, Minnesota

1967-1970. . . . . . . Teacher, Head, Department of Language
Arts, Milton High School, Milton, Vermont

1970-1972. . . . . . . Teaching Associate, Department of
English, University of Vermont, Burlington, Vermont

1972 . . . . . . . . . . . . . M.A., University of Vermont, Burlington, Vermont

1973-1974. . . . . . . Director of Adult Education, Heart of
Ohio Girl Scout Council, Zanesville, Ohio

1974-1977. . . . . . . Teaching Associate, Department of
Humanities Education, The Ohio State
University, Columbus, Ohio

PUBLICATIONS

"Contemporary American Children's Theatre--The Paper Bag Players," a
paper, National Speech Association Convention, New York, 16 November 1980.

"Judith Martin," in Women in the American Theatre, ed. Ellen Dowling
and Janet Horne (Washington, D.C.: University Publications of America,
Inc., forthcoming).

Press, forthcoming).

"The Paper Bag Players," a paper, 46th Annual American Theatre Associa-
FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Children's Theatre/Drama in Education

Studies in Speech/Theatre Education. Dr. George L. Lewis

Studies in Theatre. Dr. Roy H. Bowen

Studies in Communication. Dr. William R. Brown

Studies in Drama in Education. Dorothy Heathcote and Gavin Bolton
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CHAPTER I

THE STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Context of the Study

The Paper Bag Players merit an in-depth study both because of the excellence of their work and because of their role as an unique and original alternative form of American children's theatre. Founded in 1958, The Paper Bag Players were quickly recognized as innovators in their field, and they have become one of the most highly respected professional children's theatre companies in the United States. The recognition for their work comes from many levels. On the professional level, the American Theatre Association in 1966 gave their first annual Jennie Heiden Award for professional children's theatre to The Paper Bag Players, "for their delight, imagination, freshness, and artistry which has set a standard in professional children's theatre which will be very difficult to emulate."¹ They are the only children's theatre company ever to be awarded the Off-Broadway equivalent of an Oscar, the "OBie" award (in 1965), "for raising the level of children's theatre through

National leaders in the field of child drama commend them highly. Children's theatre historian Nellie McCaslin notes that their "immediate success" was due to their "imaginative and revolutionary approach to children's theatre," an approach which "set [them] apart from all other performing groups." McCaslin goes on to say that their work represents, "in the opinion of many the most imaginative work being done in children's theatre today." In an interview with the researcher, McCaslin updates and expands upon her concept of what makes The Paper Bag Players unique. She cites in specific terms some of the things which "from the beginning marked them off from other groups" performing professional children's theatre: their revue-style format; their use of simple materials and uniform costumes; their use of different ages and physical types among the performers; the stability and quality of their ensemble approach; and their excellent performing skills, high standards, and artistic integrity.

Another child drama specialist, Lowell Swortzell, also cites The Paper Bag Players as "the most notable innovative company" doing original work in contemporary American children's theatre. Swortzell believes


that there are very few examples in children's theatre of "genuine experimentation" and that the "Bags" are number one. As he says, "Anyone who has seen The Paper Bag Players knows to what original heights improvisation can be taken." Swortzell, however, goes on to commend The Paper Bag Players for being one of the even fewer examples of a company that goes beyond experimentation to present top quality theatre, noting that the company "distills concerned experimentation into carefully prepared entertainment." Here Swortzell points out one of the distinguishing characteristics of the company: while they develop their material in improvisational sessions, by the time that material is presented to an audience, it is in a set form, highly polished and professionally performed.

Another expert, children's theatre director, critic, and publisher Orlin Corey, calls The Paper Bag Players, "one of the cultural assets of the United States." He explains their magic as follows:

The Paper Bags! . . . Here is a genuine ensemble, a cohesive, deeply rooted, long growing theatrical company, since 1958. Fourteen years finds great subtlety, limber imaginations, facile skills and more--an inner 'patina' of theatre wisdom within these men and women. It is they themselves who conceive, devise, and develop their own materials. . . . The bright and wonderful lunacy they waken in their audience defies analysis. Autopsy is a simple act. This phenomenon of life is divine. From nothing or next to it, paper, they create everything necessary for unforgettable joy. Cloaked in imagination and discipline the Bags make universal vaudeville, pulsating with human comment.

and contradictions, punctuated by irresistible laughter.\(^7\)

In addition to such high commendation from national leaders in child drama, The Paper Bag Players have also been commended for their contributions to the community. In 1974 they received the New York State award "for a lasting contribution to the artistic form of children's theatre."\(^8\) Again, they were the first and only children's theatre group to be so recognized. In 1975 they received a citation from the city of New York which commended them on behalf of all New Yorkers for "their creative productions of original plays which have gladdened and stimulated the minds of countless New York City 'children'."\(^9\)

In addition to awards from supporters and peers, public and private support has recognized the value of the work of The Paper Bag Players. Almost from the beginning of the New York State Arts Council, The Paper Bag Players received their support. In 1968 they received a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts—the first such grant ever awarded to a theatre for children. Since that time the National Endowment has continued to support their work on a regular basis. New York city has supported them in free summer programs as well as in their extensive in-school work. Private grants from such groups as The Rockefeller


\(^8\)Malcolm Wilson, Governor, the State of New York, in a letter to Mrs. Anna Lou Aldrich, President, Board of Directors, The Paper Bag Players, 27 February 1974.

Foundation, The New York Foundation, and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation have also supported the original, imaginative, and unique work of The Paper Bag Players.

One criterion by which a group's prestige may be assessed is how well the critics attend to their work. Children's theatre as a whole is hardly ever reviewed by professional theatre critics. Occasionally an entire season of children's plays will be lumped together and reviewed, but even this concession to children's theatre is often done with evident disdain. In contrast to this norm, The Paper Bag Players have achieved a following and are regularly reviewed by major newspapers, magazines, and media critics.

An early review called them "probably the best, certainly the most original children's theatre group in this country."\(^\text{10}\) They have continued to receive awards and critical acclaim for their work throughout the past two decades: a later review called them "the most successful and enduring children's theatre troupe around," referring to their plays as "classics to be revisited in the company of children."\(^\text{11}\)

Their many awards and commendations recognize the creativity, excellence, and discipline The Paper Bag Players bring to their art as well as the importance of their unique work in the field of American children's theatre. They were pioneers who created a new form of children's theatre at a time that children's theatre was predictable and


The founders of The Paper Bag Players did not set out to create a new form of children's theatre. They came from the innovative world of modern dance, art, theatre, and music and they had all worked with children. While critics recognized them as tradition-breakers, the company itself did not set out to reject the established forms of children's theatre, but to create material that would entertain, amuse, and amaze children.

Out of the early collaborations of those founding members, however, a new kind of children's theatre did emerge, one that had very little in common with other children's theatre of the time, one that critics have recognized not only as the most innovative and long-lasting children's repertory theatre of its time, but also as an excellent example of quality contemporary Off-Broadway theatre.

The Paper Bag Players have continued to perform outside the established traditions of both adult and children's theatre. Though independent, they can be seen as part of the trend toward improvisational theatre groups which emerged during the late 1950's and early 1960's. Critic Clive Barnes of the New York Times sees The Paper Bag Players as part of a healthy thriving Off-off Broadway scene. In a commentary on the repeated omission of drama from the annual Pulitzer awards, Barnes notes the need to widen the definition of American drama. He cites three groups—La Mama, The Bread and Puppet Theatre, and The Paper Bag Players—as examples of groups which were "developing a new kind of
American theatre, partly improvisational and certainly freer. . . ."12

While the seminal nature of their experimental productions and the high respect they have been accorded make documentation of their work important, still another element that makes The Paper Bag Players significant in the field of child drama is the educational emphasis of their work. The Paper Bag Players have created a theatre form that truly involves the child audience and attempts to stimulate children's imaginations and creativity.

While those factors—the high quality, unique nature, and educational significance of their experimental work—outline the significance of doing in-depth research on The Paper Bag Players, several factors also make the study feasible. For one thing, they have performed on a regular, national, and long-term basis. Additionally, documents and records relating to their work have been kept throughout the twenty years of their history. This longevity and continuity to their work makes it possible to trace their development and appropriate to make a record of their concepts and techniques.

An additional important primary resource is the living presence of the founding members and all subsequent important members of the group who still live in New York and are active in the artistic life of the city. The company has maintained a continuity through several long-standing members, including Judith Martin, the artistic director who

was the founder of the group; Judith Liss, the administrator who has been in that position since 1962; Donald Ashwander, the composer-musician since 1967; and Irving Burton, the featured actor since 1960. Recently those older members of the company have felt a need to begin to document their work and extend it through publication. The maturity of several of the company members combined with the above factors made this an opportune time to examine in depth the work of The Paper Bag Players.

Past Research:

A Review of The Literature

When embarking on a children's theatre history study such as this, it is useful to have an overview of the scholarship in the field. Children's theatre in the United States has suffered from the attitude that it is unworthy of the attention of professionals, be they theatre practitioners, educators, or scholars. In part this attitude stems from the relative youth both of children's theatre as a performing art and of theatre as an academic discipline in the United States.

It is customary to date children's theatre in the United States from 1903, the year Alice Minnie Herts founded the Children's Educational Theatre on the lower East Side of New York. Likewise, it is customary to date the beginning of theatre as part of college curriculum offerings from 1905, the year George Pierce Baker began his famous English

\[13^{13}\text{McCaslin, } \textit{A History}, \text{ pp. 11, 15.}\]
Workshop at Harvard. Naturally there were precedents to both of those actions. However, it is clear that children's theatre as a performing art and theatre as an academic discipline were both twentieth century phenomena.

Children's theatre began as an amateur endeavor, practiced mainly through settlement houses, community and recreation centers, and community organizations such as The Junior League. Likewise, theatre on college campuses began as an amateur student activity. For the most part, theatre came in the back door at universities, attaching itself to other departments, such as English. Considering the amateur and rather recent beginnings of both children's theatre and theatre on college campuses, it is of little surprise that children's theatre as an academic discipline is a very young field.

Relatively few scholars have published in the field of children's theatre. The first dissertation in the field was that of Kenneth Graham in 1947. However, it wasn't until the past two decades—the sixties and seventies—that scholarly studies in the field began to proliferate. Despite this recent scholarship, however, published works in the field are still few. Orlin Corey, the editor of Anchorage Press, writing in 1980, sums up the situation in the child drama field as follows:

We have had only one history! Nellie McCaslin's. Only one genuine survey of the field--Davis-Watkins. Perhaps 7 anthologies worthy of the name--

plays. Perhaps five books of essays by practitioners of theatre for children. Possibly ten books of weight in creative drama, and perhaps 25 "how-to-be-creative in 5 minutes" books. The dissertations on our pioneers have barely begun—Ward, perhaps 3 now and possibly 2 more in the embryo; Chorpenning, perhaps 2 now + another in the embryo; Burger, 1. We approach our second general survey twenty years after the first.

Recently at the Southeastern Theatre Conference I had a conversation with a major theatre scholar in the United States. His point about books and children's theatre was pungent: "It seems to me," he said, "the field of child drama and children's theatre is still so small that it is almost a coterie. It is so new it still must discover its history. It does not really know its origins. It is fragmented by how-to books. It is fascinated with single, easily proven narrow theses. It awaits the one who can view and evaluate it all. It needs its own literature, and that is both plays and much more. In other words, it needs time to become itself and to understand itself." How wise.

Aiding child drama in its quest for identity are those scholars, however few, who have written historical, biographical, and critical perspectives on various aspects of the field. "Academic research in children's theatre is relatively young." Jed H. Davis, writing that statement in 1961, in an article entitled "Prospectus for Research in Children's Theatre," pointed out that only seven doctoral dissertations in the area of children's theatre had been written up to that point.

Those seven included two on the technical/production aspects of children's


theatre, that of Davis himself (Minn., 1958) and that of George L. Lewis (Denver, 1954); four on the history of children's theatre, including Nellie McCaslin's survey of the field (NYU, 1957), one on the history of the Children's Theatre of Evanston, one on children's theatre in Cedar Falls, Iowa, and one on children's theatre in Russia; and only one in the area of literature for children's theatre, that of Kenneth Graham (Utah, 1947) which attempted to set standards for writing or evaluating plays for children.17

Since 1961 there has been an increase in scholarly activity in the field of children's theatre. Numerous dissertations have been written in the area of creative dramatics and drama in education. This discussion, however, will be limited to the area of children's theatre. Twenty-eight more scholars have published dissertations in the field of children's theatre. Of those twenty-eight studies, eleven were historical-biographical studies, ten were critical/analytical studies of children's plays, five were creative studies, one was a technical study, and one was an educational study. The majority of the scholarship in the field thus divides equally between historical studies and literary studies. Since both have a bearing on this study of The Paper Bag Players, both will be discussed briefly.

Scholarship in children's theatre history in the United States begins with Nellie McCaslin's study (NYU, 1957). Updated and published as a book in 1971, her survey remains the most comprehensive in the field. Most other scholars have concentrated on in-depth scholarship on the

17Dissertations will not be cited individually. Refer to Appendix G for a complete listing of dissertations in the field of children's theatre.
pioneers of children's theatre and the theatres they helped establish or
the literature they created: Winifred Ward and the Children's Theatre of
Evanston (2); Charlotte Chorpenning and the Goodman Theatre (3); Sara
Spencer and the Louisville Children's Theatre (1); Edith King and Dorothy
Coit and the King-Coit Theatre (1); Isabel Burgher and the Children's
Theatre Association of Baltimore (1). In addition, several scholars have
written descriptive studies which shed light on American children's
theatre, including surveys of Russian children's theatre, Canadian chil-
dren's theatre, and European children's theatre, as well as studies of
operas for children and the approach of Britisher Brian Way. Currently
there are at least five more historical studies under way: one of the
Minnesota Children's Theatre Company; one of Karamu Children's Theatre in
Cleveland; two of the children's theatre of the Federal Theatre Projects
in the 1930's; and one of the background to children's theatre in the
United States from 1890 to 1920.

Scholarly studies on the literature of children's theatre begin
with Kenneth Graham's 1947 study which attempted to set standards for
writing and evaluating children's plays. Early studies followed Graham's
methodology of analyzing selected children's plays both to determine and
to verify the proposed standards. Lowell Swortzell (NYU, 1963) wrote
the first creative dissertation in the area, a study which proposed ad-
ditional criteria for children's plays and included several original
children's plays based on those criteria. Other creative studies have
followed his model. Recently there have been additional approaches to
the field. Several valuable studies analyze the contributions of
individual children's playwrights of note, particularly Coleman Jennings' study of the works of Aurand Harris (NYU, 1974) and Janet Rubin's study of the contributions of Charlotte Chorpennning (OSU, 1978). In addition there have been several studies which attempt to establish and analyze the developmental aspects of children's drama: notably Suzan Zeder's study of the child protagonist (FSU, 1978); Marci Woodruff's study of female sex-role models in children's plays (FSU, 1981); and Jeanne Hall's earlier study of the developmental values inherent in children's plays (Mich., 1966). Currently at least two additional studies in this mode are underway: one of children's play wishes reflected in children's drama; and one of the developmental considerations in children's theatre.\footnote{Dissertations in progress are included in Appendix G. Source: "Dissertation Projects in Progress in Theatre Arts," \textit{Educational Theatre Review}, May issue annually.}

It is clear from this survey of the research in children's theatre that much has been done to establish children's theatre as an area worthy of the attention and investigation of scholars and professionals. Research has given historical, biographical, and critical perspectives to children's theatre. Scholars have begun to investigate its' pioneers, analyze its' literature, and establish and criticize its' traditions.

The children's theatre reflected in academic studies, however, is for the most part the children's theatre established by our pioneers, a traditional approach which almost exclusively dominated children's theatre in the United States through the 1950's. In the past two decades, however, while the traditional approach has remained a major part of
children's theatre, there have also been a myriad of alternative approaches.

Few dissertations in the field of child drama reflect the changes, trends and alternatives to the traditional developed during the past twenty-five years. There are a few exceptions in the area of surveys/histories: Goldberg's survey of the European scene (Minn., 1969); MacKennon's survey of the Canadian scene (NYU, 1974); Muschamp's history of the Honolulu Theatre for Youth (Minn., 1974); and Wood's study of the theatre of Brian Way (FSU, 1976). The literary studies deal with the changes and innovations in children's theatre only in as much as those changes and innovations are reflected in children's playscripts.

However, many of the alternative approaches to children's theatre developed in the past two decades are not literary approaches, that is, they are not based on published scripted material. Many of them begin instead from improvisational sessions in which the company works out a script together or in collaboration with an author. Many of the innovations and alternative forms of children's theatre have escaped scholarly analysis precisely because scholars tend to rely so heavily on published scripts as the basis of their studies of children's theatre.

The Paper Bag Players are the ideal group to study to provide perspective on that alternative, non-scripted arena of children's theatre. Judith Martin, the central artist of the company, has become an expert in the field through twenty-five years as a director, actress, writer, designer, and choreographer. A study of the creative principles and practices of Judith Martin and The Paper Bag Players should prove instructive both in terms of the history of children's theatre and in terms
of providing a successful model of an alternative approach to children's theatre that is innovative at the same time it is excellent and long-lasting.

**The Methodology, Sources, Scope, and Limitations of The Study**

**Definitions: Focus and Limitations of The Study**

This study of The Paper Bag Players will focus on their work as a children's theatre company but will touch on their related educational work in the areas of creative dramatics, teacher workshops, recreational drama, and children's publications. It will be useful to define the terms involved in child drama as they will be used in this study.

The world of child drama includes both formal theatrical experiences and informal participatory experiences. On the one hand, there is creative dramatics, the informal participant-centered form of child drama, in which an adult leader guides children in improvisation and other process-oriented drama activities. The focus is on the development of the children who are actively participating in the drama activities. There is usually no audience except on an informal basis. On the other hand, there is the audience-centered form of child drama, children's theatre, in which adults perform live theatre for children. The focus is on clearly communicating with the child audience. While the child audience is never totally passive, the emphasis is not on their participation, but on their active observation and empathy through which they gain insight, understanding, enjoyment, enlightenment, and satisfaction.
There is not, however, an absolute clear-cut distinction between these two forms of child drama. As child drama expert Mary Jane Evans points out, "We used to be able to assert with stolid certainty that 'this is children's theatre and that is creative drama,' and while they were deemed to be mutually complementary, their philosophy, goals, and techniques were, for all practical purposes, mutually exclusive. That is no longer true."\(^{19}\)

Intersecting with these two dimensions in the world of child drama is the innovative form of participation or audience involvement drama, in which the children in the audience are asked by performers to participate in some active way in the children's theatre production. Audience participation can range from simple participation such as repeating a wish or singing a song to active physical participation in which the audience helps the actors create or complete the play. The more extensive form of audience participation theatre is close to creative dramatics. Also contributing to the multi-dimensionality of child drama is the area of recreational/educational theatre, where children themselves act out plays. Depending on the age of the children, training of the leader and children, and purpose of the program, recreational theatre can be closer to children's theatre or creative dramatics.\(^{20}\) Perhaps these interacting dimensions can be better understood through Chart 1, a visual model of the world of child drama.


\(^{20}\)This definition of child drama excludes totally those programs routinely put on by children for their parents at various school, church, and club functions.
CHART 1

THE WORLD OF CHILD DRAMA
In the case of The Paper Bag Players, the creation and production of professional children's theatre, designed to satisfy a child audience under the age of twelve, is understood to be the primary goal. The target audience is ages four through ten. An analysis of the eight published "Aims and Purposes" of The Paper Bag Players (see Appendix E) reveals two aims that relate to their primary purpose of providing excellent theatre for a child audience (1, 2); two that relate to their needs as artists (3, 4); three that relate to their desire to disseminate their work to a wider audience of adults (5, 6, 7); and one that relates to a broader humanitarian goal of providing free performances for the disadvantaged (8). In order to accomplish these aims and purposes, the company used all forms of child drama. While this study will focus on their use of children's theatre, in addition, both their use of other forms of child drama to help achieve their goals and the extent to which they accomplish or fail to fulfill their aims and purposes will be explored.

It is also important to define the term "improvisation" as it is used in this study. Webster's New World Dictionary (2nd college edition) defines improvisation as "the art of composing or simultaneously composing and performing on the spur of the moment and without preparation." In theatre, improvisation is commonly used to refer to exercises, rehearsals, or performances in which the actors work without a script, making the words and actions up as they go.

The first distinction to make in the case of The Paper Bag Players is that they do not improvise during performance. They perform polished "set" shows composed of original material which was created through an
improvisational process. The term improvisation will be used in this study mainly to refer to the creative process by which original material is generated and made ready for performance by the company. The most important distinction for the reader to make at this point is that the term improvisation as used in this study refers to the group process of evolving original material for performance but not to the actual performance of that material.

Research Methodology and Sources

This study examines the history, repertory, and creative practices and principles of The Paper Bag Players. Several steps were taken to assure that this study would not duplicate previous studies. A search was made of the literature and standard sources for relevant studies, such as Dissertation Abstracts, various bibliographies, and the (Educational) Theatre Journal's yearly report, "Doctoral Projects in Progress in Theatre Arts." Judith Martin and Judith Liss of The Paper Bag Players were contacted and their support, cooperation, and permission to proceed with the work was obtained as well as their assurance that no one else had received such support.

Those steps assured the researcher that the current study of the work of The Paper Bag Players would indeed be an original contribution to knowledge. One academic paper on The Paper Bag Players was discovered by the researcher. This paper was done by Betty Osgood, a former member of the group, for a course at New York University. Her paper, entitled "The Paper Bag Players: A New Concept in Theatre for Children,"
aims to "set down the record of The Paper Bag Players, and examine the progress of the company over a period of nine years during which they established and developed in New York city a professional theatre for children.\textsuperscript{21} Osgood lacks the objectivity to fully accomplish this aim, but the researcher is indebted to the text and appendixes of this paper as a source of original research material.

This study relies heavily on primary research done in New York city. The researcher began with the source material, both primary and secondary, gathered and saved by The Paper Bag Players and stored in their studio at 185 E. Broadway and their office at 50 Riverside Drive. Other locations at which materials on the company were found include The Donnell Film Library and the Lincoln Center Library of the Performing Arts, both branches of the New York Public Library; the Bobst Research Library at New York University; and the homes of present and former members of The Paper Bag Players.

In addition to relying on a thorough search of all available primary and secondary research materials, the study relies heavily on the method of interviewing. All important members of The Paper Bag Players, past and present were interviewed and the study is based significantly on their accounts of the history and work of the company. Such accounts were checked against available factual information.

The sources for this study include the following:

1.) Taped and transcribed interviews done by the researcher of all important members of The Paper Bag Players, past and present.

2.) Detailed field notes taken by the researcher at rehearsals and performances as well as the researcher's personal observations of and interactions with the company members, staff, plays, and audiences on the following occasions:

   a.) March 31, 1967 in Minneapolis, Minnesota and March 16-18, 1978 in New York city—performances observed;

   b.) May 1978 and September 1978 through May 1979—the researcher spent approximately two days per week in New York city doing primary and secondary research;

   c.) June 1979—a two-week visit to New York city and Southampton, Long Island, for purposes of interviews;

   d.) November 1979—a three week visit to New York city for interviews and to travel with the company on tour prior to their New York opening;

   e.) November 12-16, 1980 in Chicago, Illinois, and April 29-May 1 in Columbus, Ohio—performances and interviews;

   f.) August 14-18, 1982, New York city—researcher attended the American Theatre Association convention to present a paper on the company and interview company members.

3.) The personal files and scrapbooks of the company and company members, including:

   a.) theatre programs, posters, advertisements, and other performance records;

   b.) press releases, annual reports, minutes of the Board of Directors, and other financial and managerial records;

   c.) letters to and from the company;
d.) a photo and slide file, films, video and audio tapes, and scripted records of the company's productions;

e.) educational materials, books, and scripts, published and unpublished, written by and about the company;

f.) almost every newspaper and magazine article and review written about the company. (References to some of these articles will appear in the footnotes and bibliography without complete publication information, as they were filed.)

4.) The files on The Paper Bag Players in The Billy Rose Theatre Collection at The Lincoln Center Library of The Performing Arts including photographs, poster, programs, clippings, and press material.

5.) Films of the company's work located at The Donnell Film Library and the Dance Archives of The Lincoln Center Library of the Performing Arts.

6.) Other books, journal articles, and dissertations.

The Scope of The Study

This study provides description and analysis of the history, repertory, creative process, and the educational dimensions and values of the work of The Paper Bag Players.

One major aim of the study is simply to document the work of the company. Chapter Three provides a history of The Paper Bag Players covering major activities, aims and purposes, organizational growth and trends, personnel, productions and production trends, management, and awards and critical opinion. This is supplemented by Appendix A, "A Chronological Chart of the History of The Paper Bag Players" and Appendix C, "A Listing and Brief Description of the Scenes and Productions in the Repertory of The Paper Bag Players."
Chapter Two provides the pertinent background information necessary to an understanding of the artistic development of the group. Artistic biographies of the key members of the company are included in the chapter as well as an overview of the company's innovative work. The aim of this background chapter is to provide a context for the following chapters.

Central to this study is an analysis of the creative principles and practices of Judith Martin and The Paper Bag Players. Chapter Four details the five stage creative process as it is revealed in the practices and the repertory of the company. The researcher uses the terminology of the creative-problem solving process as described by E. Paul Torrance to analyse the company's work.

This study also examines the principles of children's theatre evolved by Judith Martin and The Paper Bag Players, those principles which enable them to effectively communicate with the child audience. Chapter Five also provides an analysis of the educational dimensions of their theatre work, also fundamental to their success, including an analysis of the philosophy of Judith Martin and a description of the ten major values conveyed to children through the work of The Paper Bag Players. Finally, Chapter Six is a summary of the discoveries growing out of this study, including conclusions, possible applications of results, and suggestions for further research.

Through an analysis of the creative principles and practices of The Paper Bag Players this study attempts to illuminate the methods by
which The Paper Bag Players involve and stimulate child audiences; address the major concerns about experimental work in children's theatre; serve as a model for a creative approach to children's theatre; and give perspective to both the traditional and alternative approaches to children's theatre.
CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND MATERIAL

This chapter first sets the stage for the appearance of The Paper Bag Players by detailing briefly the conventions of traditional children's theatre in America at the time. It then outlines the aesthetic background and influences that led up to the creation of The Paper Bag Players. Particular attention is paid to the modern dance movement in America, for it was out of this tradition that most of the founding members came. The chapter also points out the relationship of The Paper Bag Players to the innovations and trends occurring in theatre and children's theatre during their formative years.

Included also are artistic biographies of the founding and subsequent key performing members of the early ensemble. Against this background, one is better able to understand the nature of The Paper Bag Players' contribution to American children's theatre. Finally an overview of the innovative format and content of the company's work is included in this chapter to help give clarity and perspective to the history and in-depth analysis of the following chapters.
Traditional American Children's Theatre

Prior to 1960, the field of American children's theatre was dominated by established conventional forms of children's theatre production. A set of carefully prescribed principles and practices formulated by the pioneers in the field guided the children's theatre practitioner. Charlotte Chorpenning's scripts and her text, Twenty-one Years With Children's Theatre (1954), led in setting the standards for children's theatre productions.

As child drama specialist, Mary Jane Evans, writing in 1978, reflects: "Not too many years ago it was relatively simple to discuss theatre for children and to arrive at comfortable descriptions of the functions of all the artists involved in a children's theatre production. We held a fairly rigid and generally accepted definition that allowed us to operate from what seemed to be a stable philosophical and practical base."\(^1\)

Fundamental to almost all children's theatre productions in the 1950's was the script. As Evans notes, "The script was there, central to the project. The director worked from a conventionalized set of goals, moved with the company through a more or less prescribed series of rehearsal phases, and presented a production."\(^2\) Three decades later, in the 1980's, it is no longer possible to state that children's theatre practitioners operate from a commonly held set of assumptions. And certainly the script is no longer central to many children's theatre productions.

\(^1\) Mary Jane Evans, "Theatre for Children: Art Form or Anarchy?" in Nellie McCaslin, ed. *Theatre for Young Audiences*, p. 119.

\(^2\) Evans, p. 119.
Since scripted plays were the norm at the time of the founding of The Paper Bag Players, however, it is instructive to note what types of scripts were being widely recommended and produced at that time. From an analysis of children's theatre scripts recommended by leading college texts in children's theatre and a study of the production statistics, a picture of the typical production emerges.³

The standard children's production around 1960 was likely to be a fantasy based on a familiar story, usually a fairy tale or a classic from children's literature. It was probably written by the leading children's dramatist of the time, Charlotte Chorpenning or one of her followers. As such it would have a straight-through dramatic line of action and a strong conflict leading to a climax and a quick resolution. It was very likely performed with fairly elaborate staging and costuming on a proscenium arch or thrust stage. It was likely to have a strong, young, physically attractive hero or heroine for the audience to identify with, played by an equally attractive and young actor or actress. The story was almost certainly a fantasy and was probably also a comedy with a happy ending, a sense of poetic justice, and no confusion of right and wrong. At that point then there were very few original plays for children and even most of those followed the prescribed norm in content and form. There were almost no plays being produced for children at that time that were realistic, that were set in contemporary times, that dealt with modern social issues, or that reflected the complex situational

³See Appendix H for statistics on productions and recommended scripts.
ethics of the modern world. Against this prescribed norm, the innovations of The Paper Bag Players will be revealed more clearly.

Aesthetic Influences

As none of the founding members of The Paper Bag Players came out of a tradition or background in children's theatre, the motivation to establish the company came not from any desire to reform or change the conventions of that field. The founders of the company were all professional artists with a common background in modern dance and a common experience of working with children in their own artistic mediums. Their motivation came rather from a desire to work together as artists creating original materials and from a desire to escape the restrictions of the concert dance world. In addition, they shared an interest in children and the belief that performing for children would help them accomplish these two goals.

Modern Dance Movement

While each of the founders of The Paper Bag Players specialized in his/her own artistic discipline, all of them had modern dance training as part of their background. In order to understand this common background which drew them together and which was so influential on the early work of the company, it is important to understand the dynamics of that modern dance movement. Modern dance was a twentieth-century movement centered in the United States. Like their counterparts in other art forms, the dancers who forged the modern dance movement sought new forms of
expression less conventional than the established form, in this case, ballet. It began in the 1890's with the forerunners or pioneers of modern dance—Isadora Duncan, Loie Fuller, and Ruth St. Denis.  

It was, however, the major choreographic talents of the second generation of modern dancers—Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, and Charles Weidman—who were really considered the founders of modern dance. As one critic puts it, they forged "that special blend of serious theatrical dance that has traditionally meant 'modern dance'."  

That second generation, the historic three of modern dance in America, were all much more highly trained than the pioneers of modern dance. In addition, they danced not merely to entertain but to uplift, to instruct, to inform, and even to disturb. It was with those three founders of modern dance that the early members of The Paper Bag Players received their dance training.  

Though they all strived for a more natural style of movement based on body rhythms, each of those historic three in modern dance developed his/her own individual style of dance: Graham's was based on the in-out rhythm of breathing, on contraction and release; Humphrey's, on the fall from and recovery of balance; and Weidman's, on his mimic skills and humorous observations on life.  

For this account of the modern dance movement, the researcher is indebted mainly to Don McDonagh, The Rise and Fall and Rise of Modern Dance (New York: Outerbridge & Dienstfrey, 1970) and Don McDonagh, The Complete Guide To Modern Dance (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1976).  

McDonagh, The Rise and Fall, p. 24.
While Graham and Humphrey were revolutionary in their approach to dance, they were also intent on transforming modern dance into a respectable art form. To do this, each developed theories and techniques to teach other dancers. Thus, while developing a new form of dance in revolt against codified systems, they ended up setting up their own codified systems. Martha Graham, for example, taught her dance classes in a very rigid and highly structured format. As one critic puts it, "She invented and evolved a technique as rigorous and complex as the one that ballet required centuries to develop..." Martha Graham kept strong control over her dancers and students.

Many of the young dancers and choreographers chaffed under such control and restrictions. Several of the key members of The Paper Bag Players were a part of this third generation of modern dancers, a generation characterized by great diversity and individualism.

While the revolt of this third generation was heralded by the work of Merce Cunningham as early as the 1940's, it did not reach its' height until the great diversity of the mid to late 1960's. During the time when Judith Martin and the other founders of The Paper Bag Players were working in modern dance, the opportunities were very restricted.

During that time, the 1940's and 1950's, modern dance was controlled by a dance "establishment". There were very few places for modern dancers to perform and many of the major outlets for modern dance were administered closely by the previous generation of dancers who did not

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want to be repudiated. Toward the end of the 1950's, frustration was very high among the younger choreographers. Many of the festivals, people, and places that had helped foster modern dance had become rigid "promulgators of the fixed concerns of the earlier generation."$^7$

Several of the founders of The Paper Bag Players were motivated to leave the concert dance world because of the "closed" nature of this system. They were frustrated by the difficulty of finding audiences receptive to new ideas. The company was hopeful that by performing for children they could solve that problem, that the child audience would have less expectations as to what a performance "should be" and therefore would be more receptive to new ideas and approaches. Company member Betty Osgood, writing in 1960, expresses the attractions of children's theatre for that early group:

... they decided that they wanted to do a children's show built on the way children play. There were several reasons for this decision: there were opportunities to perform such a show, they were well qualified to do this and they were attracted by the freedom to experiment. ... In a practical sense, children's theatre has always presented opportunities for new ventures. There is an audience waiting and it is possible to try out new ideas in a theatrical situation without prohibitive cost. Looking back at our experience in concert dance and commercial theatre we remember how difficult it was to keep a company together for experimental work. Children's theatre offers a chance to experiment, develop a style and stay together as a group.$^8$

$^7$McDonagh, *The Rise and Fall*, p. 2.

$^8$Betty Osgood, "The Paper Bag Players," pp. 6-7. While the company has maintained their belief in the open nature of the child audience, over the years they have realized that the adult world in control of the child audience (parents, teachers, sponsors) is not as open to new ideas, making the field less open to experimentation.
Despite their frustrations with the modern dance world, the founders of the company were all greatly influenced by their training and work in that field. They were nurtured in the modern and avant-garde movements in art, music, theatre, and dance. They were a part of a time when aesthetic experimentation was in vogue. Company member Betty Osgood feels this common background had an important influence on the unique theatre that emerged from the collaborations of these founding artists:

As young professionals they were open to new ideas and forms; the dancers were eager to work with tradition breaking choreographers such as Graham, Humphrey-Weidman, Cunningham and others, who commissioned as collaborators, contemporary composers and designers. Not only did they share in the excitement of preparing new works, but they gained an unusual discipline and freedom of action. In the new tradition of modern dance which holds that the true dancer is a choreographer who creates new forms from his own ideas, they experimented and found a more personal artistic freedom in the free play of improvisation. On the bare stage of the modern dance theatre they learned to suggest much with little, to use abstraction and stylization, to use the materials of art for their own interrelationships and for inter-arts relationships. In the course of their own work and from the art exhibits and concerts of their colleagues and contemporaries, they became familiar with new techniques in music and art. The use of dissonances and collages, experimentations with sounds and silences and with "found objects", jazz improvisations and action painting were all part of their experience.  

The 1960's: Influences For Change

While the individuals who founded The Paper Bag Players were nurtured in the "tradition" of modern dance experimentation, because they chose to work in a theatrical format, they can also be seen as a part of

9Betty Osgood, p. 3.
the experimental theatre movements of the 1960's.

During The Paper Bag Players' formative years, they were part of what one critic calls "the most expansive, exciting, and (sometimes) puzzling and frustrating periods the theatre has known in modern times," a period when "virtually all theatrical practices and standards have been called into question, and many new techniques and subjects have been introduced."\(^1\)

The Paper Bag Players developed out of the same ferment that produced the "Off-off Broadway" movement and the improvisational, avant-garde experimentation of the early 1960's. While Off-off Broadway championed freedom from aesthetic restrictions, the more radical theatre movement sought either to change art and theatre through aesthetic experimentation or to change society itself through theatre that led to social action. Off-off Broadway was essentially a playwrights' theatre. It was in the more radical theatre that the script was abandoned in favor of improvisation. Some innovative theatre groups sought to change art (and perhaps society) through a complete aesthetic revolution. Other radical theatre groups believed not only in the possibility but the responsibility of art to help change society.

Some of the significant trends in alternative theatre to emerge from these more radical aesthetic and social theatre experiments were

- (1) the rejection of the literary value of theatre and the concurrent

movement away from the authored script and toward improvisation; (2) the rejection of the established theories on "aesthetic distance" and a concurrent movement away from the proscenium and toward more theatricalism and more audience involvement; (3) the rejection of the value of art for arts sake and the movement toward political and socially relevant theatre; and (4) the rejection of traditional technical approaches to theatre and a movement toward "minimal" theatre in which traditional costumes and scenery are minimized and the actor or actor-audience relationship is emphasized.

Two observations on these trends are in order: first it is important to point out the historical "footing" to these trends, and second; it will be instructive to show in what ways The Paper Bag Players were a part of these trends.

Without belaboring the point, it is clear that, in terms of theatre history, there was nothing new in these trends. They each have their antecedents in pre-realistic drama. While these trends can be seen as a part of the twentieth-century rejection of the dominance of 19th century realism in theatre, they can also be seen as the re-emergence of the older, more theatrical traditions. Even in the twentieth century, these modern movements away from realism had been in process throughout the century: the Russian revolution and the socialist movements during the 1930's in America had both led to experiments with political and socially relevant theatre while epic theatre and constructivism had experimented with aesthetic distance, and so forth.
Many of these ideas were carried to an extreme in the aesthetic experimentation of the 1960's, however. The Paper Bag Players can be seen as one of the more delightful, direct, simple, and effective groups to emerge from the 1960's experimentation. Briefly, they reflect these four trends as follows: (1) they use improvisation to create original material for their productions; (2) they use direct address, stylized props and costumes, audience participation, and other "alienating" or theatrical techniques, though for practical purposes they continue to use available proscenium stages; (3) they are committed to serving social purposes such as reaching underprivileged children through their theatre, but they reject political purposes or propagandizing; and (4) they rely on simple materials to create their theatre and place great emphasis on the actor-audience relationship.

1960's:  Changes in Children's Theatre

It was inevitable that all of this ferment, experimentation, and innovation in theatre would eventually affect children's theatre. Indeed, the question can be raised as to why children's theatre was immune to the changes in society and theatre for so long. One reason, of course, is society's attitude toward the child as needing protection from the harsh realities of life. Another is the attitudes of producers of children's plays who conservatively stick to familiar titles in children's plays. Another is the amateur nature of the children's theatre movement which did not encourage experimentation.

Though the leaders in child drama themselves had been asking for change for some time, the children's theatre world was slow to respond.
As early as 1939, Winifred Ward sought scripts which would "awaken ... young people to thought and emotions regarding urgent questions of the modern world." It wasn't until the 1960's that such questioning became a strong force. Sara Spencer, writing in 1964, in an essay entitled "Does Good Always Win?", requests playwrights to depart from the traditional fairy-tale stories and to "undertake to remove some of the insulation with which we have tried to protect our children." Spencer calls for "an occasional play that touches their innocence with awareness and presents them with the necessity of choice."

During the 1960's the attitude of serious reassessment that permeated American society affected children's theatre as well as adult theatre. As Nellie McCaslin observes,

For the first time in the history of the children's theatre movement, serious questions were raised concerning the relevance of traditional material in a time of social change, and efforts were made to find scripts with greater meaning for today's children. . . . there were some adults who spoke out against a diet of fairy tales and inevitable "happy endings." Why, it was asked, could there not be children's plays which dealt with contemporary themes? Why not sympathetic and realistic treatments of ghetto problems as well as stories of the privileged and beautiful? What about new staging techniques for an audience which has known professionalism on the television screen from birth?


The consequence of this introspection was the emergence of new forms, styles, and content for children's theatre. Mary Jane Evans sees as the primary change in children's theatre the fact that the script was no longer sacrosanct. This brought about more reliance on original materials, on improvisation, and on contemporary themes and forms. Obviously, The Paper Bag Players were in the forefront of these innovations and trends in children's theatre.

Artistic Biographies

Individual biographies of the founding members and other key performing members of The Paper Bag Players will further illuminate how the backgrounds of these artists led to their collaboration in creating a new form of theatre for children in America. The biographies, in order of their joining the company, include that of Judith Martin, Shirley Kaplan, Sudie Bond, Joyce Aaron, Daniel Jahn, Remy Charlip, Betty Osgood, Irving Burton, and Donald Ashwander. Extra emphasis is placed on the biography of Judith Martin due to her key role in the company's history.

Judith Martin

As the founder and main sustainer of The Paper Bag Players, Judith Martin has made a great creative contribution to the company as actress, dancer, designer, director, and author-creator. Martin was born in

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14 These biographies are based largely on interviews with individual company members. Only direct quotes to these interviews will be documented in the text. A full listing of all interviews conducted by the researcher is included in the bibliography. When available, information on the careers of these artists subsequent to their early association with The Paper Bag Players will be included in Appendix B.
August, 1918, and raised in Newark, New Jersey. Her grandparents were working class Russian-Jewish immigrants, but her parents had achieved upper middle-class status. The Jewish religion was not a significant part of Martin's upbringing, but the Jewish ethnic and cultural heritage was an important influence. Especially significant to Martin's development was a point-of-view inherited from her father, a sardonic sense of humor and feeling of strength derived from being outside the mainstream of society. Martin also sees as important the fact that she grew up during the depression. The experience left her a liberal with a sense of the precariousness of the economic basis of twentieth-century existence.

Martin remembers her early childhood as a lonely and isolated one in which she withdrew into a fantasy world. Her interest in drama stemmed from the realization that "fantasy is healthy only if it is acted out." While Martin was being educated in the public school system of Newark, she commuted to New York city to take dance and drama classes. After high school she studied for two years at The Neighborhood (Playhouse) School of Theatre where she worked with the noted Stanislavski acting teacher Maria Ouspenskaya (1881-1949).

15Judith Martin in Anne Hollister, "Judith Martin's Act Comes in a Plain Brown Wrapper, But It's Rated 'G' For Kids," People, 22 December 1975, p. 28.

16While The Neighborhood Playhouse, founded in 1915, closed doors as a theatre in 1927, it opened in 1928 as The Neighborhood School of Theatre, which "soon became and long remained one of the major professional schools in America." See Brockett and Findlay, Century of Innovation, p. 489. It was here that Maria Ouspenskaya continued to teach the Stanislavski method of acting that she and Boleslavski had made famous at the American Laboratory Theatre (1923-1930) in the 1920's. The training consisted of a problem-solving approach to acting.
Martin also studied dance and theatre elsewhere in New York. She and her friend Diana Merliss studied children's theatre under Lazar Galpern at The New Theatre School. Galpern was trained in the classic Russian approach to fairy tales, and Martin remembers being very impressed with Galpern's point of view on children's theatre. Children's theatre seemed to Martin, at that point, vaguely to be a romantic, creative outlet, "something with lots of singing and dancing and fantasy."  

After graduation from the Neighborhood School of Theatre, Martin worked as the director of the dance project of The National Youth Administration. She created America Dances for them which toured for two years throughout metropolitan New York. When the National Youth Administration folded, Martin and Merliss founded the New York Theatre for Children. They obtained a rehearsal space at the Henry Street Settlement House Playhouse. Their productions for the New York Theatre for Children were all based on original stories made up by Martin. Changes in Martin's personal life ended her first venture in children's theatre after just one season.  

After a brief first marriage, Martin returned to New York in the early 1940's and began to develop her serious interest in and commitment to modern dance. And it was in dance rather than theatre that she achieved her early professional success. For several years, Martin did concert and solo dance work in New York while studying dance. She studied under Martha Graham and was asked to join her company. Though flattered by the invitation, even at a young age Martin knew she could

never subordinate herself and her work completely to the strong technique, personality, and work of another artist. She did dance in several innovative companies, including the Anna Sokolow Dance Company and the Merce Cunningham Company. Subsequently (in 1950) she founded the Judith Martin Dance Company in which she was the choreographer, director, and lead dancer. The company had six members, and they gave full-length concerts at such places as the 92nd St. YM-YWHA, the Henry Street Settlement House, Masters Institute, and Cooper Union dancing such numbers as "On The Beach," "Ixtlan," "The World Is Round," and "Etoin Shurdlu."

As a solo dancer Martin won the dance auditions at the 92nd St. YM-YWHA in 1951, and it was as a solo dancer that she created a work specifically for children entitled "The Story of Dancy Feet." This was Martin's first work for a child audience since the New York Theatre for Children.

Martin recalls her early training in both theatre and dance as being very exacting. She was trained in the Stanislavski method of acting. Improvisation in this context was used only to solve acting problems. Her dance training was even more formal. As she recalls, "I had gotten my training... in dance technique under Martha Graham where it's very, very, rigid—it's more than rigid, it's a very exacting kind of technique, right down to the expression on your face and where your eye balls are focused and your finger tips are placed and so on and so on" (Interview, June 1979).

Concurrent with her dance career, Martin had a career teaching dance to both adults and children, a career spawned out of economic necessity. After graduating from the Neighborhood (Playhouse) School of
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Theatre, Martin worked as a creative dance and drama teacher in recreation
programs and settlement houses on the lower East Side in New York and at
the Union Settlement House in East Harlem.

Martin taught creative dance

for over twenty-five years at settlement houses and among others at
Adelphi College, the Turtle Bay Music School, the American Academy of
Dramatic Arts, and for eight years at the Ridgeland, New Jersey, YMCA.
Initially Martin resisted the idea of teaching, considering it to be
a compromise one turned to only if one couldn't make it as a concert
dancer:

"At one point, I had to take a teaching job to survive, which I

thought was the mark of failure.

It really altered my whole life.

discovered that children couldn't be

I

less interested in all those tor­

turous exercises.......................................................

I discovered that children were into exhuberance and freedom, not the
correct way to plie. . . . And I found that they have a real love of
stories."^®

I4artin admits that at first, but for the pressure of needing

a job, she probably would have given up.

But in order to keep everyone

coming back week after week (and thereby keep her job), Martin began to
experiment.
her classes.

She dreamed up little "dance playlets" for the children in
She used a lot of story narration and improvisation.

Gradually Martin became intrigued by her work with children.

The

improvisation she and her students did in those classes led to a

Judith Martin in David Richards, "Children's Theatre For the NowNow Land," Washington (D.C.) Sunday Star and Daily News, 8 April
1973, p. E-5; and Judith Martin in Sharon Schlegel, "Children's Theatre
Without Witches or Princes," Trenton (N. J.) Times, 4 January 1979,


breakthrough for Martin: "I found that what they [the children] did was so much more interesting and so much more lively and so much more personal and exciting . . . that I was really inspired by this other approach. I was inspired by the fact that people, just in approaching movement from their impulse or from some story that sets them up, would do these wonderful, original movements that you couldn't possibly have thought up and that to me were so much more interesting than any technical movement and so much more significant. . . . So I was in a state of inspiration for a few years—just the discovery of what people did based on their own creative impulses!" (Interview, June 1979).

It was therefore as a teacher of young children that Martin began to break away from her structured dance and theatre training and to experiment with improvisation. Martin's teaching experiences thus fed her own creative work and she steadily became more interested in improvisation both as a way of teaching her dance classes and also as a way of creating dance and theatre material for performance. It was also through her long-time work as a teacher of children that Martin began to understand what captures and holds the interest and imagination of children.

While Martin sees her teaching experience as probably the biggest impetus to her artistic development, she does recognize other influences. While Martha Graham's technique classes may not have inspired Martin, she did take one course from Graham that was very instructive. It was taught at The Neighborhood Playhouse where, as Martin explains it, Graham taught a different kind of course, "being hopeless about the Neighborhood Playhouse people ever becoming dancers" (Interview, June 1979). It was more of a choreography course and it taught Martin a lot about the importance
of a directorial eye and an eye that always sees things anew: "It was a really big experience for me—looking at something fresh. Martha had a wonderful eye about how people should work, what they really had, and I got a lot from that" (Interview, June 1979). Another experience Judith Martin remembers as important was an art course she and her friend Diana Merliss took from the surrealist painter, Kurt Seligman. According to Martin, Seligman also had this wonderfully keen eye and openness: "There were no rules in his class. He judged every painting according to what the person was trying to do" (Interview, June 1979). These two experiences at a young age were seminal to Martin's development because they taught her not to look for the obvious and not to give the surface response but instead to always strive to approach artistic creation with the fresh vision of a child.

In 1956, Martin's career paused briefly when she married Solomon Miller, an anthropologist who taught at Hofstra University and did field work in Latin America. Martin left New York for a year and a half to go with her husband first to Urbana, Illinois and then on an expedition to Peru.

Upon returning to New York, Martin's interest grew in creating a theatre form for children based on improvisation that combined her dance and movement background with her emerging sense of what would involve the child audience. So in 1958 she invited several other strong artists to join her in improvisation sessions which led to the formation of The Paper Bag Players.
Shirley Kaplan

Co-founder of The Paper Bag Players, Shirley Kaplan was a dynamic young artist whose career had already encompassed painting, sculpture, design, theatre, and teaching. Born in 1931 and raised in Norwalk, Connecticut, Kaplan started her successful art career as a teenager. She began to study painting at the Silvermine Guild of Art when she was just thirteen or fourteen, continuing her studies at Briarcliff College where she studied painting, sculpture, and design with Richard Guggenheimer. Kaplan had her first one-woman show in New York when she was just seventeen. As a teenager she won enough grants and prizes and sold enough paintings to afford to live and study in Paris for several years as a young adult. In Paris, Kaplan studied painting at La Grand Chaumiere with Zadkine.

While Kaplan had also shown an early interest in theatre, having apprenticed at the Westport Country Playhouse in Connecticut as a teenager, it was in Paris that her career as an artist first branched into theatre. Kaplan's friend Jack Lang, the Artistic Director of the Nancy International Theatre Festival, asked her to put a show together for the festival. Thus, when Kaplan came back to New York at the age of twenty-two, she had a degree in painting, sculpture, and design from L'Academie de la Grande Chaumiere in Paris, and additionally some experience in theatre.

In New York Kaplan worked for a while with the Theatre Guild and did a bit of acting. She also rented the loft directly beneath that of
Judith Martin, where she lived, taught, and painted. In her New York studio, she taught adult painting classes to help earn a living. Kaplan had previously worked with children, having instructed her first children's art classes when she was seventeen. It wasn't until after working with The Paper Bag Players, however, that teaching and drama began to develop as strongly as art in Kaplan's career.

In the early 1960's, while still with the Bags, Kaplan taught at the Bentley School where she combined art and theatre in a creative workshop. She had earlier originated an art program for children at the Silvermine Guild of Art and at the Ossing Recreation Center. During the time she was working with The Paper Bag Players, Kaplan continued her primary work as an artist with exhibitions at such places as the Newcomb, Macklin, Stable, and Salpeter galleries in New York.

Sudie Bond

Sudie Bond was born and raised in Kentucky. She attended private girls schools in North Carolina and Virginia from the age of twelve through high school. She graduated with a B. A. from Rollins College in Florida, after which she went to New York intent on becoming an actress. In New York Bond studied acting at the Herbert Berghoff Studio. She also trained in modern dance during this time. Bond knew both Remy Charlip and Judith Martin from her early modern dance experience. Later both Charlip and Bond performed in Judith Martin's dance company.

When Bond began to work with The Paper Bag Players, she was already an experienced actress. She had performed quite steadily in
Off-Broadway theatre such as The Circle in The Square. Bond had appeared with Charlip in the 1951 Living Theatre production of Gertrude Stein's *Dr. Faustus Lights The Lights* at The Cherry Lane Theatre. She had also opened in her first Broadway show, *The Waltz of the Torreadors* in 1956. Bond thus came to the group with a solid career and reputation as an actress. She was, in fact, the only professionally trained and experienced actress in the company.

Joyce Aaron

Joyce Aaron was raised as the only child of a New York family in the Bronx and Westchester. She was sent to a private girls' school in Danville, Virginia. When she graduated from high school, however, she immediately came back to New York intent on becoming an actress. Aaron studied acting with Sanford Meisner at The Neighborhood Playhouse where she completed their two-year acting course. Here Aaron received conventional Method acting training in how to approach a written script. Aaron did not receive any training or do any early work in improvisation or less conventional methods of theatre. She did, however, study modern dance. She studied at the Martha Graham school where she had such teachers as Jane Dudley and Eureko for dance and Louis Horst for choreography. Aaron's acting experience outside of school was limited to a small amount of summer stock theatre. She was the youngest and least experienced member of the early ensemble. She remembers that when she met Shirley Kaplan, who brought her into the group, she was just at the point in her life where she was beginning to try to get conventional
New York theatre work.\textsuperscript{19}

Daniel Jahn

Daniel Jahn came to work with The Paper Bag Players as an accomplished pianist with a special gift for improvising piano music to accompany modern dancers. He started playing for dance classes as an undergraduate at the University of Illinois where he combined accompanying with musical composition for modern dance. He studied under Ben Johnston at Illinois and Louis Horst and Norman Lloyd at Connecticut College.

In New York, Jahn quickly became a successful accompanist/composer for modern dancers, in demand at the major studios. As an early interviewer puts it, "Name any of the major studios and he has played there."\textsuperscript{20} Jahn then went to Connecticut to accompany Margaret Dietz. While in Connecticut he also arranged the score for Doris Humphrey's "Shakers" and received a commission from Humphrey to compose the score for Carol Scothern's "The Lazarite."

Jahn organized Orchesis Publications, Inc., a music publishing firm specializing in music composed especially for the modern dance. Jahn served as president of the firm which published works on technique,

\textsuperscript{19}Aaron was one of the original performers in The Paper Bag Players and as such she will be included in discussions of the early ensemble work. She will not, however, be considered to be one of the founding members of The Paper Bag Players. In this practice, the researcher follows the decision made by the company (Judith Martin, Judith Liss, et al.) to exclude Aaron from the list of founding members due mainly to her youth, inexperience, and brief career with the company.

\textsuperscript{20}Marcia Marks, "The Paper Bag Players: This is about the six who mix a magic brew to make a 'real' world for children," \textit{Dance Magazine}, June 1964, p. 56.
choreographic studies, and concert works by composers such as Eugene Hemner, Louis Horst, Hazel Johnson, Ben Johnston, Norman Lloyd, and Jahn himself.  

During this time, Jahn was accompanying Martin's dance classes. Jahn continued to compose music, but his talent was limited, his compositions more derivative than original. It was, instead, as an improvisor and accompanist for modern dance that Jahn was outstanding. While Jahn had already worked with some of the best dancers and the best modern dance companies, he was most inspired by his work with Martin: "Nothing compared to Judy's classes—they were the most original, the most demanding, the most exciting." So, when Martin asked him to be the musician for her newly forming improvisational theatre group, Jahn was thrilled to accept.

Remy Charlip

A native New Yorker, born in 1929, Charlip has been described as having a "polygamous relationship to the Muses." Indeed, he has proven to be something of a renaissance artist able to achieve success as an author, artist, dancer, choreographer, actor, designer, and director. Charlip originally studied art at Textile High School and

21 Marcia Marks, p. 56.


then at Cooper Union where he received a degree in fine arts, with a concentration in painting.

Charlip, however, was dissatisfied as a painter. As he remembers, he had always had "a back-of-the-mind wish to be a clown, a Chaplinesque funny-man." Then a dance performance by Kreutzberg focused his energies on dance: "What interested me about dancing was that I felt dancers were free spirits." Believing at the time, that "The one way [he] could be a free spirit was to study dance," Charlip stopped painting and began dancing. A friend suggested the New Dance Group Studio where his first dance teacher was Irving Burton, later a fellow collaborator in The Paper Bag Players.

Early in his career, Charlip also began to design for the theatre. He worked in residence at Reed College where he did the sets and costumes for productions of Cocteau, Yeats, and other unconventional playwrights and taught children's painting classes in return for dance lessons. When Charlip returned to New York, he began to dance professionally, appearing with a number of innovative modern dancers. One of the modern dancers he worked with was Judith Martin. He took a dance class from her and choreographed "The World Is Round" for her dance company. During this time, Charlip also met and began his long association with John Cage and Merce Cunningham.

Marcia Marks, p. 53.


While dancing, Charlip continued to support himself with his art work, doing such commercial work as designing textiles and illustrating book jackets. He recalls the idealism of those early modern dance days, when dancers gave their lives to a company for very little money: "In those days we'd go somewhere out in the Midwest to perform and Merce would hand us each this little envelope with $20 in it."27 Nevertheless, Charlip stayed with Cunningham's company for years (from 1950 to 1961)—dancing, designing costumes, doing the publicity, designing flyers, sweeping floors, and so forth. He also continued to study modern dance. Concurrent with his association with Merce Cunningham's company, Charlip was designing sets and costumes, choreographing, and acting for The Living Theatre.

Charlip is also well known as an author-illustrator of children's books. This career also began during the 1950's. In 1956 he published his first book, "Dress Up and Let's Have a Party."28 The idea of this book, in which children make costumes out of boxes, blankets, ropes, and other found materials ties into the later use of common objects by The Paper Bag Players to create their costumes and props. By 1959, Charlip had written and/or illustrated eight children's books.

Charlip also began teaching children during the late 1950's, just before he joined in forming The Paper Bag Players. Charlip continued to support himself as an artist, author, and teacher while working with The

27Remy Charlip in Marcia Marks, p. 53.

Paper Bag Players. He wrote and/or illustrated nine more children's books during that time, including two in collaboration with Judith Martin, *The Tree Angel* and *Jumping Beans*. Some of Charlip's books enjoy a symbiotic relationship to The Paper Bag Players: ideas and parts of his books became part of Paper Bag productions and likewise some ideas from the company's work found their way into his books.

Betty Osgood

Betty Osgood also came out of the modern dance milieu to join The Paper Bag Players. As a student at Radcliffe College, Betty remembers being persuaded by her roommate to take dance classes. Osgood thrived in modern dance and decided to study full-time. After graduating from Radcliffe with a B.A., Osgood went to Boston to study with dancer Jan Veen. She recalls the dedication of those days in an early interview: "Veen's professional workshop was a 9 a.m. to midnight proposition. Students took and taught dance classes, studied every phase of theatre art, and performed in elaborate productions with the Boston Pops Orchestra in Symphony Hall." While studying with Jan Veen for three years, Osgood met and married dancer Carl Morris, a fellow student in Veen's workshop. Then Osgood, Morris and Morris' brother, a musician, opened their own theatre-dance studio on Newbury Street in Boston where they began organizing cabaret concerts.

When her husband was drafted, Osgood went to New York to study at the Martha Graham Studio and at the Humphrey-Weidman Studio. She also

29Betty Osgood in Marcia Marks, p. 56.
studied classical ballet. Osgood continued the ballet study for the discipline, but quickly dropped Graham in favor of Humphrey-Weidman. For Osgood, working for Charles Weidman was like belonging to a large, extended family: everyone did everything, including Weidman himself. He would sew costumes and cook for the company—everyone was invited to Christmas dinner. And most of all, Charles Weidman, unlike Martha Graham, was able to look at the skills and talents of a person regardless of their physical type. As Osgood puts it, "And he found a place for me, a short, plump, very good dancer. I couldn't be used for a lot of things, but he found lots of things for me to do. And I could make a reputation with that group. And the same with The Paper Bag Players" (Interview, June 1979). Osgood soon became a featured dancer with the Charles Weidman Dance Company. She appeared with Weidman as a leading dancer in comic roles in New York and on five trans-continental tours. When her husband returned from the army, he too joined the Weidman company.

Osgood's comparison of the Graham and Weidman companies is most instructive in relationship to her later work with The Paper Bag Players. In Graham's company, Osgood found, like Judith Martin, that there was a constraint, a rigidity. There was also a lack of a sense of humor— one had to take oneself too seriously. And there was in Graham's company the need to fit into a particular ideal of physical beauty—a criterion which Osgood definitely did not fulfill.

Weidman, as already noted, could look at the uniqueness of each dancer. Though he had the same high standards for excellence, physical beauty was not a criterion of that excellence. He also had a marvelous
"rich and malevolent sense of humor," according to Osgood (Interview, June 1979). And in Weidman's company, Osgood also experienced the excitement of improvisation. This was unlike the structure of her ballet classes or the work with Graham. Weidman, according to Osgood, had an integrated arts approach to dance, often using spoken words and narration, an approach similar to that of The Paper Bag Players.

When not touring, Morris and Osgood worked other jobs in order to support themselves. Morris worked as a puppeteer with a New York city marionette group and Osgood worked as a calculator in the death claims department of Equitable Life Assurance Society. In addition they danced in a number of television spectaculars for Rod Alexander and also in the film Carousel. They also both began to teach in about 1950 and continued to teach and dance throughout the fifties. They choreographed for the Equity Library Theatre and for their own concert dance theatre group. While performing with The Paper Bag Players, Osgood continued to teach dance, to choreograph, and to study.

Irving Burton

Irving Burton, born in New Jersey in 1925, was described by an early interviewer as "the Baggiest Bag of all."30 Burton remembers his childhood and adolescence as a particularly lonely time because he was a severe stutterer who tried desperately to hide his affliction by not speaking. Because he had such a problem speaking, however, Burton became extremely observant of people's behavior. He also relied

30 Marcia Marks, p. 88.
constantly on movement and nonverbal signals to communicate, and had always wanted to be a dancer and performer.

In 1943, after high school, Burton enrolled in The New Dance Group Studio for modern dance lessons. He remembers being so self-conscious that he took his sister with to do the talking when he went to enroll in the classes. Dance was truly his communication medium, for as he puts it, "I came alive in dance class. I felt free for the first time in my life."31

Two years later, Burton began performing as a dancer. Burton studied and performed with many of the leading modern dancers of the time. He also studied technique at The School of American Ballet for one year. While the technique he learned was useful to him as a dancer, undoubtedly this experience helped shape Burton's career away from rigid structure and toward a more free form of dance.

Burton met Betty Osgood in 1949 when he studied and performed with The Charles Weidman Company for a short time. Osgood at that time was Weidman's lead comic dancer. Burton at this point loved dancing and moved with great strength and passion, but he had not discovered his own comic abilities as a dancer. Later he studied and performed with Sophie Maslow, Jane Dudley, and William Bales. They were the first to use him in a comic role. While he admits he had always been the company clown off-stage, it was a real revelation to him to realize his on-stage comic

Burton also danced with a number of other modern dance companies, and on television and on Broadway. He also performed and studied choreography and dance at Connecticut College with many major dancers including Louis Horst, Jose Limon, Doris Humphrey, and Martha Graham.

It was Graham who sparked Burton's interest in the "creation" and "composition" aspects of dance. He was "very excited by Martha Graham's work" and studied with her for five to six years (Interview, June 1979). When Graham finally asked Burton to join her company on a tour to Paris, Burton was overjoyed. He couldn't believe it, mainly because he wasn't the physical type for her company: "I mean, all of the men were like Greek gods—tall, handsome, and with hair! And here I was—short, stocky, Jewish, and with no hair! But I had this power and this dynamic energy" (Interview, June 1979). After making him the offer, however, Graham found she could not go through with it. Burton like Osgood would find his creative home in The Paper Bag Players, where physical differences were celebrated rather than scorned.

While dancing in companies, Burton had also been doing solo concert work since about 1951. In 1953 he had won the 92nd St. YM-YWHA dance auditions which gave him the chance to perform his solo work. He remembers choreographing a solo dance called "Broken Words" which was about his stuttering, and another intense dance piece based on Kafka's "Metamorphosis." It was his solo work, "Thus Spake Sarabelka," however, which

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proved to be a real breakthrough for Burton. In this dance, Burton dis-
covered both that he could speak on stage without stuttering and that he
could use his comic abilities on stage. Happily, this dance also received
the most attention, winning critical acclaim. As Burton continued to
speak on stage he made the wonderful discovery that while he remained a
stutterer off-stage, this problem disappeared on stage: "On stage I
don't worry about speaking. I know my lines. I've rehearsed. I'm
totally involved in what I'm doing. I'm moving my entire body. The
action, the rhythms just flow naturally. I have no fear I'll stutter
during a show."33

Then in 1954 Burton started his own company and school of dance,
The Irving Burton School of Contemporary Dance and The Irving Burton
Dance Group. Here he met his future wife, Maryan Frances, when she came
from Denison University to New York to study dance. Burton also continued
to teach at The New Dance Group Studio where he had started as a young
dancer. In addition, Burton also taught dance in public schools and
recreation centers and for the Brooklyn and Queens chapters of the Na-
tional Dance Teacher's Guild. When Burton saw the Bags perform, it was
love at first sight, so he was thrilled when he was asked to audition for
the group. While working for The Paper Bag Players, Burton continued
to teach dance.

Donald Ashwander

Donald Ashwander was born in 1930 in Hanceville, Alabama. As a youngster he studied at Sacred Heart Academy in Cullman. Ashwander likes to feel he started his musical training in "the heartland of American folk music," when he studied at Birmingham Southern College in Birmingham, Alabama. He continued his musical training in New York at the prestigious Manhattan School of Music.

From the beginning, Ashwander was an original composer and lyricist as well as a pianist. His music results from a cross-breeding between his classical European training and his natural affinity and ear for American music. His compositions have always been heavily influenced by such native American forms of music as ragtime, Sacred Harp, jazz, and other folk and popular music. Thus, like the other important members of The Paper Bag Players, Ashwander enjoyed the sting and the stimulation of being an outsider. For he admitted the influence of popular forms of music on his compositions only at the expense of the scorn of his teachers and peers.

After graduating from the Manhattan School of Music, Ashwander returned to live in Mobile, Alabama, where he pursued a varied musical career during the 1950's. Among other things, Ashwander played a jazz piano at clubs along the Mississippi coast and in Alabama as well as serving as a merchant seaman. While in Mobile, Ashwander's compositions

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ranged from a waltz which became the theme song of Mobile to compositions for the Mobile String quartet and the Mobile Civic Ballet. For the ballet, he composed "Hexapoda Holiday," a work commissioned by the company and given a full production with full orchestra. The waltz was composed as part of the musical score for the film, "Mobile, City of the Old South," commissioned by the Mobile Historic Society.

Ashwander returned to New York in the early 1960's to pursue his musical career, composing, playing, and working for films and television. He composed the first successful commercial jingle for MacDonald's restaurant. From 1960-64 he worked as a freelance music editor to support himself while he composed music. From 1964-66 he composed material for Dodie Goodman's appearances on the Merv Griffin Show and then toured nationally with her. Then in the fall of 1967, Ashwander joined The Paper Bag Players. Since joining The Paper Bag Players, Ashwander has continued to compose, publish, and record his original music.

The Paper Bag Players, Style and Content: An Overview

Working outside the established tradition in children's and adult theatre, The Paper Bag Players pioneered in creating a new form of children's theatre in America at a time that field was dominated by the traditional fairy-tale approach. In the format created by The Paper Bag Players, the conventional tightly-plotted character-development play is replaced by a looser style which joins together a number of separate dances, songs, and sketches, in the form of a comic revue. The separate pieces are enacted through a combination of singing, dancing, acting,
pantomime, and painting and drawing done on stage. They are unified by the extensive use of movement and music, by the highly theatrical and comedic acting style, and by the aesthetically pleasing transformations of paper bags, cardboard boxes, and paint into props and costumes.

It is this transformation of simple materials into innovative theatre that has become the trademark of the company productions. Their paper props and costumes are visually exciting enough to be exhibited in museums, yet they are at the same time, designed to reinforce the psychological truth of the production numbers and to come alive when moved by the actors on stage.

The company is noted for other technical innovations as well. They pioneered in performing in basic "uniforms" in front of a simple, curtained background. This practice, widespread during the late 1960's and the 1970's, was almost unknown in 1958 when the norm for children's theatre was elaborately-costumed traditional proscenium-arch productions. The company also challenged the existing stereotype that young audiences could identify only with youthful and beautiful protagonists, played by young and attractive actors. In the Bags' productions a basic company of unique individuals of all ages, sizes and physical characteristics plays all roles. Their assumption is that children can identify more readily with heros and heroines who share the looks, fortunes, foibles, and frailties of ordinary people. The Paper Bag Players were also early experimenters in the use of simple audience participation and in direct actor-audience relationships.
But it is the contemporary content of the company that is a key to the Bags' impact on child audiences and critics alike. The original content of their productions is developed improvisationally in the studio. Working sessions are then used to build and polish the evolving "script" for performance. What The Paper Bag Players have discovered is a way to abstract and express in a poetic, often humorous way, the psychological truth of a situation, exploring the child's inner, very real, perhaps even unconscious feelings. In the works which result, the classic stories and fairy tales are replaced by original contemporary skits, songs, and dances based on a child's own everyday experiences, sense of humor, and ideas of the world.

Summary

This chapter has provided an overview of the innovative format and content of The Paper Bag Players and shown how the company grew out of the artistic and social concerns of the times. The influences that fostered the development of The Paper Bag Players have been outlined. Artistic biographies of the key artists in the company, especially that of Judith Martin, have detailed how those influences shaped the individuals who in turn shaped the work of the company. Finally, an overview of the traditional established form of children's theatre has been provided, against which the reader can view more clearly the innovations of this important alternative children's theatre. Further chapters will explore the work of The Paper Bag Players in depth.
CHAPTER III

Introduction

For purposes of analysis, the history of The Paper Bag Players has been divided into four developmental periods: Period I, from 1953 to 1965, the early ensemble period; Period II, from 1965 to 1969, a transitional period; Period III, from 1969 to 1975, a period of artistic growth and financial security; and Period IV, from 1975 to the present, a period of continuity amidst creative and financial problems.

Within each of these periods, the following topics will be covered: (1) the highlights of the history, including major activities, organizational growth and trends; (2) the personnel of the company, including important changes and group dynamics; (3) a brief overview of the productions and production trends; (4) the organization, including management structure, finances, and support; (5) the extent to which the aims and purposes of the company were achieved, thwarted, or altered; and (6) recognition, including awards, honors, and an overview of critical opinion.

This developmental recounting of the history of the company will be supplemented by the details included in Appendix A, a chronological chart.
of the history of The Paper Bag Players. Appendix B will supply a list of the company members, management, and technical staff who have contributed to the group. Appendix C will provide a listing and description of the scenes and productions in the repertory of the company. By supplying such details in appendixes, the researcher will concentrate on an overview of the development and growth of the company.

Period I: The Early Ensemble, 1958-1965

During Period I, the founding members of the company developed an ensemble method of working, formulated their aims and purposes, created the unique style of the company, and produced four original productions. During this period, the company also achieved early critical acclaim as a fresh, creative alternative to traditional children's theatre in America.

Highlights/Major Activities

The Paper Bag Players, as previously noted, began in the fall of 1958 when modern dancer Judith Martin started to hold improvisational sessions with other artists in her studio. First Shirley Kaplan, then Sudie Bond, and then Joyce Aaron joined Martin. Later Daniel Jahn joined to improvise music for this all female group.

In the beginning the group had no immediate performance goal. As Martin recalls her motivation, it was primarily to have a place to do her own improvisational work: "At the time, I didn't think that the professional people—Shirley, and myself, and Sudie--did as interesting
things as the people in my class did. But the whole thing was— I had a
place to work, which I didn't have in my own classes" (Interview, June
1979). Sudie Bond remembers the great freedom of that early group, where
the emphasis was on the process of creating: "We had no deadline about
performing . . . and we just kept working on the material and then sud­
denly we felt that there was enough for us to begin performing."¹

By the fall of 1959, the group had rented their own studio on the
upper West Side where they rehearsed daily. They decided to begin hold­
ing previews of their work in their studio while arranging for other fall
and winter performance dates. As they prepared for their September studio
debut, Martin invited Remy Charlip to critique their work. It was a
common practice in modern dance groups at the time to have fellow artists
and dancers criticize new dance pieces. Charlip was invited to perform
that function but he became so interested in the work of this still un­
named fledgling performance group that he became a regular part of the
group, serving as a kind of director/consultant.

After their studio debut in September, 1959, the company began a sea­
son of local performances and workshops. Martin credits Charlip with
pushing the group from studio obscurity into the limelight of the experi­
mental, Off-off Broadway theatre world, when through connections he got
them an engagement to perform a Christmas children's matinee series at
The Living Theatre, 520 6th Avenue. Thus their official New York debut
of Cut-Ups was held at The Living Theatre on December 28, 1959. The
program for this engagement lists the first performance company as

¹Sudie Bond, phone interview with the researcher, Burbank, Ca., 24
February 1981.
Judith Martin, Shirley Kaplan, Sudie Bond, and Joyce Aaron, with "music by" Daniel Jahn, and with production "directed and staged by" Remy Charlip.²

During this first developmental period, The Paper Bag Players evolved their modus operandi: they established themselves as a touring children's theatre with a New York base. There were several advantages to being in New York: company members could support themselves with outside jobs; they could work at attracting the attention of the New York critics; and they could pursue their educational commitment to extend their knowledge to others and their moral commitment to perform free for the disadvantaged.

From the beginning the company was rooted in and preferred to work in New York city and the surrounding area. While they never acquired a theatre of their own in the city, throughout their long history a number of New York theatres provided space for the company, enabling them to produce shows in New York each season from 1959 on. The arrangements with each of this host theatres was different--some of them acted as a sponsor for the company, while some simply provided a leased or rented performance space. For their first three seasons in New York (1959-62), The Living Theatre provided such a performance space, with the company presenting a matinee series there each Christmas and Easter season.

²The Paper Bag Players program for Cut-Ups, performed at The Living Theatre, 28 December 1959. A fairly complete set of programs is available at the office and studio of The Paper Bag Players in New York city. This collection can be supplemented by the collections of individual company members, notably those of Betty Osgood and Remy Charlip.
In addition to their shows in New York at The Living Theatre, the company established an early tradition of local and regional touring through sponsorship by colleges, schools, and community groups with performances almost always scheduled on weekends and holidays.

Those first three seasons were ones of an expansion of activities. Their season grew to include an average of over 100 paid performance dates at theatres, colleges, schools, and community centers plus workshops and subsidized free performances. While their touring remained regional for the most part, they did go as far afield as Cleveland, Ohio. By their fourth season, the fall of 1962, the company was ready to attempt their first full New York season. They planned to rent the Pocket Theatre, 100 Third Avenue at Thirteenth Street, an East Village theatre which was being renovated and converted into a legitimate theatre by owner Lewis Lloyd. They were scheduled to open there in early December with Scraps and Group Soup in repertory, but the renovations were never completed.

Manager Judith Liss recalls the opening performance of that season: "That was the first year I was with the Bags. We had issued tickets and everything for The Pocket Theatre and it just wasn't ready [and there was a major newspaper strike]. And so I remember standing there in front of the theatre and sending them [the audience] over to The Living Theatre." Despite the innumerable problems encountered that season,

3 The Paper Bag Players, press release, 1 November 1962, in the files of the researcher.

the company did run a full New York season from the beginning of December 1962 through the end of April 1963. To accomplish that goal required abandoning The Pocket Theatre for The Living Theatre, then moving to The Masque Theatre and finally to The East End Theatre.

After the chaos of that season, however, the company searched for a host theatre that would provide a more stable performance space for them in New York. By the fall of 1963, the troupe had found such a space, The Henry Street Settlement House Playhouse, where they were engaged to perform for twenty weeks at an admission price of 20¢ to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the settlement house's "Saturdays at Three" children's series. The Henry Street Playhouse provided the first good theatre space for the company, with a stage that, because it was used mainly for dance, was "clear of sets, clean, and attractive." The company continued to perform at Henry Street for several seasons.

By the end of Period I, the company was performing on a regular basis and their annual budget had grown to around $35,000. At that point, the company was just on the verge of full-time commitment and full-time work for their actors. During this period The Paper Bag Players had performed live over 500 times for over 125,000 children. In addition, they

The Henry Street Settlement House on the lower East Side of Manhattan had been involved in children's theatre for years, providing "one of the outstanding examples of successful pioneering in the field of children's theatre." The Playhouse itself, a five hundred seat theatre constructed by Alice and Irene Lewisohn, opened in 1915. During the 1940's and 1950's an extensive program in dance was offered. "Saturday's at Three" was initiated to provide top quality children's entertainment at low cost. See McCaslin, A History, p. 21.

had presented a number of workshops for both children and adults. The company had established the tradition of a three part season which included a run in New York, regional touring, and a series of free performances in underprivileged areas of metropolitan New York.

**Personnel**

During this formative period, the five founding members all contributed their talents to the creation of The Paper Bag Players. As we have seen, the founders of the company were intense artists, recognized professionals in their own fields, who brought to the group discipline, technique, and training in their own art plus the desire for serious collaboration with fellow artists. In addition, all brought an openness which allowed them to believe that the collaboration of artists from different fields could be productive.

During those first few years when the style of the company was being formed, The Paper Bag Players attempted to work as a true ensemble with everyone in the group being equal. Shirley Kaplan, who continued to do ensemble work with other groups in her later career, feels that those early years in the Bags were as close to the essence of ensemble work as one can get, that the group was "truly collaborative in an organic way." Kaplan recalls that the company was very close—that they all lived near each other, worked together, knew each other's business, and were real friends, or as she puts it, they were "more like family than friends,

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7Shirley Kaplan, interview with the researcher, New York, 14 November 1979. Hereafter cited in the text.
with all the problems that family has" (Interview, November 1979). Martin too feels that while their different styles of working created an exciting, stimulating environment, that it also resulted in the intensive quarrels, struggles, and bitterness of a family unit.

In spite of their quarrels, the early ensemble members respected each other as artists and were excited by the work which emerged from their collaborative efforts. There was in that early group, a sense of give and take, a generousness and an acceptance of each other's strengths and weaknesses. They were excited about the work and were all developing as artists very fast through the group. So despite their differences, they could see the value of each other's contributions. As Judith Martin puts it, "Shirley could see what would happen when an idea became definite. Remy could see when an idea got out of his set pattern and got dynamic. And I could see the excitement of the paper and boxes even though as a dancer I hated their stiffness... So even though we were fussing and quarreling and upset with each other, we were also very close because we were all having the same feeling of being carried in some direction that we wouldn't have gone by ourselves" (Interview, June 1979).

The innovative style of the company was formed in this brief period when the individual egos of those strong artists were subdued by the excitement of the group creative process.

While company members had to support themselves with outside jobs, at the same time they were devoted to the group, rehearsing and creating new materials daily in their studio and performing on weekends. Daniel Jahn remembers the sacrifice it took to maintain the group: "Everyone
had to agree to work only part time on their own work, so that they could remain committed to the group. In a sense, each of us was a 'patron' of the group. It was really full-time commitment without full-time pay." The primary attraction to these artists was the process of working together: the process of creating exciting, funny, innovative, and effective theatre, the process of creating works of art that they could not have created alone.

As the company grew and matured, however, it changed from an experience into a theatrical company. Around the creative work a complex organization developed which inevitably interrupted and changed the creative experience. Commercial considerations and pressures took time away from creative work. As the demands of the company grew, the individual artists had even less time for their own work. And inevitably, as the company became more commercial, it also became more competitive—individuals began to define their contributions to the group and to demand recognition and credit for their work. This in turn, exacerbated the sense of competition in the company.

Thus, though the company attempted to work as an ensemble with everyone equal, a power hierarchy soon emerged with Judith Martin and Remy Charlip forming the creative and organizational nucleus of the company. While they were with the company, Shirley Kaplan and Sudie Bond were also strong creative forces.

Both Bond and Kaplan, however, left the company because they needed time for their own individual work as artists. Bond left for the opportunity to star in the premiere of a new Edward Albee play. When Kaplan left the group as an active performer, it was because she also needed to do more of her own work and because she wanted to be in control of the results of her efforts. Kaplan describes her frustration when she would create something for the Bags and then have it manipulated, changed, tampered with: "I would take a piece of paper and crinkle it up and make a mountain, you know, and do it in a minute. . . . Then if someone started cleaning off the edges of the mountain and putting masking tape on it for me, I would get upset . . . in my gut. . . . I know that you have to do that in order to take it to forty performances. But I didn't feel in control of my images in a way that I wanted to develop as an artist. . . . It was better to get out" (Interview, November 1979).

Consequently, during the company's second season, several important personnel changes were made. This break-up of the original ensemble was a time of bitterness and struggle. Despite their individual needs as artists, both Bond and Kaplan found it very difficult to leave the company which was their artistic family. Bond fought hard for the right to be able to come back and perform with the group while at the same time having the freedom to accept other career opportunities such as the Albee role. The rest of the company felt strongly that it was not fair for one member of the company to be allowed this freedom of coming and going; that they were all willing as artists to give up interesting career opportunities to further the work of the company; and that they
would always have to settle for second best in a replacement if the person were just looked on as a fill-in for Bond. So in the fall of 1960, Bond left the company and Betty Osgood was hired to replace her. Osgood remained with the company for over ten years as an important contributing member.

Shortly after Osgood joined the company, the second permanent replacement was hired to replace Joyce Aaron. Aaron had never been an integral part of the company. This may be due to her relative youth and inexperience in a company of strong individuals and professionals. Her replacement, Irving Burton, like Osgood, proved to be a wise choice. Highly talented and dedicated to the group, he remains with the company to this day. After Burton was hired as a performer (April, 1961), Remy Charlip also began to perform on stage. Prior to that the performance company was all-female. And finally by that same April (the Easter show at The Living Theatre), Shirley Kaplan was no longer performing with the company. She was replaced, when necessary, by actresses hired on a short term basis. Kaplan did not find it easy to leave The Paper Bag Players, however. The experience was so important to her that it took her years to wean herself from the company. She continued to come to some rehearsals and to help in creating material, performing occasionally when needed through 1965. Because she was no longer completely committed to the company, however, she assumed a more peripheral role.

At this point Martin and Charlip shared the leadership of the company, creating, designing, shaping, and directing the productions as well as performing in the company. They were the ones who were willing to
spend the time and commit themselves totally to the group. They were also both highly creative and highly motivated individuals. From the beginning a collaborative/competitive relationship had developed between the two of them. Although they were both strong forces within the company, however, from the very first program Charlip was billed as the director and Martin as a member of the acting company.

In the beginning when Charlip was billed as the director, it didn't matter that much. It was simply a title to give him since he was not performing. As he joined the performing company, however, the group dynamics changed. In Charlip's promotional work for the company, there was a certain element of self-promotion, whether conscious or not. Many of the newspaper articles and reviews contain long interviews with Charlip in which he is seen to be the director of the company and even in some cases the author of the material. As Charlip began to get more of the credit and publicity for the work, it became more of an issue, creating tension between Martin and Charlip and within the company. As Betty Osgood, an early company member expresses it, "Remy somehow became known as the director. And actually the real working director, the one who took the main responsibility for the show was Judy." ^9

As this power struggle continued, the power gradually shifted to Martin. As Betty Osgood notes: "The group gradually began to be Judy's


thing entirely. It had to be . . . to sustain itself. The egos bickering for their place in the sun, you know" (Interview, June 1979). Many of the company members were recruited by Martin and their allegiances were to her. Additionally, she was the one who did the worrying, the planning, the rehearsing, the fixing, the perfecting of the work. She was, in effect, the director. Osgood sums up the company members feelings about Charlip and Martin in one sentence: "It's one thing to have ideas and another thing to get them into production, into an actually usable theatrical state" (Interview, June 1979). So when the power struggle between these two strong individuals inevitably came to a head, Charlip left the group and Martin remained. After Charlip left the group, Kaplan filled in to help out, but by the end of the season she had withdrawn completely from the company. Ironically, Daniel Jahn, a big supporter of Martin, also left the group within the year, leaving only Martin from the original ensemble.

Productions/Production Trends

During this period, the original format of the company's productions was established. Their revue-style approach came partly from their modern dance backgrounds and partly from the fact that the group worked in short scenes in their improvisational sessions. For their first production, the company simply strung together a number of these short scenes, entitling the production Cut-Ups (1959). The numbers in this production were charmingly creative, simple and short. They were based mainly on ideas Martin brought to the group. Only one number had a story line, and
that was an original fairy tale-number.

The following three productions represented a development of the format already established in *Cut-Ups*. *Scraps* (1960) was more of an ensemble work created by the company together in improvisational sessions. Based on audience reaction, this production contained more audience participation numbers and they were more effectively developed. *Group Soup* (1962) and *Fortunately* (1964) were both developed under the co-direction of Martin and Charlip. Most of the ideas for these productions came jointly from them and were then developed by the company under their direction. Audience participation numbers continued to be developed more fully in these productions and, in addition, several longer story-line numbers were included along with the shorter selections. These two productions were also based lightly around a central theme or idea. These themes, however, were very understated, serving more as a stimulus to the creativity of the company than as unifying concepts for the audience. For the most part, as Board President JoAnna Rose observes, "the early material was very simple—just simple sketches, very fresh, very undemanding. The first four shows were really all individual sketches. These earlier shows didn't have as much plot or theme to them. You could appreciate them at a very young level" (Interview, November 1979).

The early ensemble work had a distinctive, highly visual style. The aesthetic look of the original group was very severe and stark. Everyone was dressed in black leotards and tights with black dance slippers against a black background. As Donald Ashwander observed: "The early work could have been French. Especially the early fairy tales"
(Interview, June 1979). The early visual look of the company was a style right for the time—a time of modern dance, the beat generation, the happening, the avant-garde. The visual images are from that time and yet are highly original, unexpected, surprising, even eccentric-looking. Appendix D includes photographs from this early ensemble period.

In addition to being unusual, the visual images from this period were small because the props, costumes, and actions of the company were small. Judith Martin recalls going to their first performance at The Living Theatre "literally with the costumes and props in two shopping bags" (Interview, June 1979). The work of this period, as Irving Burton puts it, was "very small and sweet" (Interview, June 1979). Dr. Nellie McCaslin describes these early productions as follows: "They had their very few props in the shopping bags. They just simply came out onto an empty stage and as they needed a prop, they'd pull it out of the shopping bag. That was The Paper Bag Players. They used items that were around the house and a few cardboard boxes" (Interview, November 1979).

The austerity and purity of that early aesthetic look was very important to the founders. Charlip remembers being a purist who wanted everything just so in the look of the productions. He was opposed to the use of colors, wanting nothing but the black accented by some white and the unadorned boxes and bags: "I thought that one of the best ways to see how something looked was to have a black background with black costumes. And that would silhouette all the props and then you'd really see that that was a paper box. It would be like a paper box floating in the air. And then everybody could see it as what it was which was a
paper box. But it was also a cat . . . or a princess" (Interview, November 1979).

In the early company, it was important that the objects, paper, and cardboard were used in their natural state. Nothing was transformed by paint or disguised in any way. Martin recalls that "At first we were very fussy that they all maintained their identity as packing boxes, that you could see their origins" (Interview, June 1979). There were several reasons for their insistence on leaving the materials unchanged. For one thing, it was part of the simple aesthetic look they had established. More importantly, to see the double image of what the item was (a purse) and how it was being used (a King's helmet) increased the humor and enriched the visual images of the work. And still more importantly, leaving the origins clearly visible gave the work a feeling of spontaneity, of inspired play, of improvisation. In addition, it tied into the company's educational philosophy of relating to and inspiring the creativity of children.

Daniel Jahn's music was a part of the overall mood and purism of the early production style. Jahn's music was very incidental to the productions, a kind of background music that, while very effective in accompanying the scenes, was not memorable in and of itself. Ashwander describes Jahn's music as "sort of wobbly, vague, impressionistic, and without too much of a beat" (Interview, June 1979). Jahn used the piano plus a variety of toy instruments and found objects—"an assortment of drums, gongs, children's toy instruments, tin cans, pots and pans, bird whistles, gym whistles, kazoo and a judicious selection of springs, nuts,
bolts, tweezers and combs." His idea was to supplement the piano music with "sounds from the world around you" (Interview, November 1979). It was part of the whole concept of using materials that children can find and use themselves.

**Organization/Management**

In the fall of 1959, the company hired Frances Schram of Briggs Management as their booking agent. Schram was the most experienced agent at the time dealing exclusively with children's entertainment and her firm, Briggs Management, was one of the two principle agencies in New York sponsoring professional entertainment for children.\(^1\) It was at her insistence that the group chose a name. They all tossed out suggestions and as Martin recalls it, they chose the name "Paper Bag Players," which was Shirley Kaplan's idea, without much thought. They chose it simply because they liked it and they needed a name immediately for publicity. It was not until after the name was chosen and they saw its potential, that they began to develop their use of paper as a design medium for their shows.

In the beginning, the company led a very marginal existence. As one interviewer notes, "The group started on a shoestring budget when the original members contributed $6 apiece for costumes."\(^2\) Judith Martin


remembers charging a fee of $10.00 for their first performance. As another illustration of how small and self-contained that early group was, Martin describes an early meeting of various children's theatre representatives at the 92nd St. YM-YWHA:

"And I went for The Paper Bag Players. And it was [a meeting of] representatives of each group saying what they needed on stage. And one group was going to come with a station wagon, and another group was going to come with two trucks, one was going to come with one truck, one had six boxes of scenery... and it went around the circle like that. And I was last. And I was just about to die because everything fit into two paper bags—two shopping bags. And it did get bigger, but everybody still folded up the scenery, everybody kept inventory, we all had our own little box to pack, and we prided ourselves on putting all the money into salaries, not wasting any money on frills: Daniel drove and we used Betty's car, and then we used my car, and so on..." (Interview, June 1979).

The early company was thus organized along egalitarian lines. Company members performed all functions—collaborating on new material, building, painting, and repainting props and costumes, providing transportation, loading and unloading, setting up, and performing.

Early company management was also relatively simple and uncomplicated. Other than booking agent Schram, all management functions were also performed by the company with Martin and Charlip doing most of them between them. As one early company member put it, their "amateur but resourceful" efforts as a management team served the company well in those early, less complicated years. The musician, Daniel Jahn, was designated as the bookkeeper. Early accounting procedures were simple—the
proceeds from any given production were divided equally among the com-
pany members with an extra portion set aside to cover all costs. It was
all very fair and equitable. The company performed mainly on weekends,
and Martin recalls that they got about $30.00 a day or as much as $75.00
for a two-day weekend in those early days (Interview, June 1979).

Funds came almost exclusively from box-office receipts, with some
small gifts and award money supplementing earned income. Ticket prices
varied in those early years, often being underwritten by such sponsoring
organizations as women's clubs, colleges, and recreation departments.
When they performed in public, however, their ticket prices were usually
90¢-$1.00 for children, $1.25-$1.35 for adults; and 60¢-65¢ per ticket for
groups.

On May 16, 1962, the company was officially incorporated as a non-
profit tax-exempt organization by the state of New York. That move had
several implications. At that point the management of the company became
more structured, partially in conformance with laws governing non-profit
organizations and partially out of necessity in order to deal with an
increasingly more complex organization. The company had to surround
their creative efforts with a business and management organization de-
signed to give them structure, stability, and fiscal responsibility and
accountability. Consequently a Board of Directors was formed with Anna
Lou Humes [Aldrich] as president, a position she held until she resigned
in 1979.14

14 In addition to Anna Lou Humes Aldrich, JoAnna Rose and Susan New-
house served on that early Board, continuing through to the present time.
While this ordering of their affairs undoubtedly helped The Paper Bag Players survive through the years, in the minds of some of the founding members of the company it also dampened and restrained the free-floating spirit of the original ensemble. There were obvious benefits, however, to be derived from their new non-profit status: the company did not have to pay federal taxes; they were eligible for government support from the recently formed arts council in New York state; and they were much more attractive to corporate and individual donors.

After incorporation, the company had ambitious plans. Together they produced a ten-page report which included background and history, aims and purposes, plans and projects, legal and financial reports, budget, projected profit and loss statement, biographical information, reviews and comments, and a projected 1962-63 season schedule. Part of that document is included in Appendix E.

For that 1962-63 season, they planned a New York season in their own theatre. While the company maintained Frances Schram as their agent for out-of-town bookings, they hired Judith Liss to book large groups for that New York season. The company hoped to break their reliance on Schram for their bookings by establishing a more solid New York support base.

The company's relationship with Schram had been fraught with difficulties from the beginning. As an agent representing children's entertainment groups, Schram had established connections with many sponsors of children's theatre. Schram was more interested in maintaining her relationship with the buyers of children's theatre than she was in her
relationship with the performers. The company also felt that Schram had little understanding or empathy with their artistic, educational, or social goals. Consequently, Schram never really considered the welfare of the company in her scheduling. She booked them all over the place, fracturing their energies. So while the company maintained Schram to book them on tours, they attempted to establish more continuity in their schedule through an extended New York run.

It was fortuitous that Judith Liss had been hired in the fall of 1962 as the company made their plans for their first New York season. Though Liss' responsibilities were minimal in the fall of 1962, she gradually assumed all management responsibilities for the company, serving as company administrator for over twenty years.

Liss had acquired management skills as a volunteer for the League of Women voters of Riverside (New York) and for the American Cancer Society. She had a long-time interest in theatre, having appeared on the Saturday radio show, "Let's Pretend," as a child and subsequently acted in amateur school, college, and community productions. She also had a personal interest in children, having served on the board of directors of the Garden Nursery School, as well as being the mother of two young children herself. In fact, Liss was at the point in life where her two children were now both in school and she was actively seeking a part-time job, paid or volunteer. Through a friend she heard of The Paper Bag Players who were interested in hiring someone to book theatre parties. So Charlip and Martin interviewed Liss and decided to hire her despite her lack of experience in theatre bookings.
Liss is described by an early company member as "quick, energetic, and full of initiative." Liss learned her job with dispatch and grew with the company, developing considerable skill as an administrator as well as a strong sense of loyalty and devotion to the company. Even more importantly, Liss developed a close, effective working relationship with Judith Martin and an empathy with the company's artistic, social, and educational goals. Liss remains with the company to this day, providing a stability in management that has undoubtedly helped the group survive for over two decades.

One of the ways in which Liss not only helped the company survive but helped them expand and grow, was to increase the financial support of the company. After their incorporation in 1962, the company received their first grant of $4,425 from the New York State Council on the Arts through their "Special Educational Projects Grants."

This was the beginning of government support for the work of The Paper Bag Players. Such government support, both direct and indirect, has played a major role in the growth and sustenance of the company throughout its career. In fact, the growth and flourishing of The Paper Bag Players corresponds with and parallels the increased government support for the arts during the 1960's and 1970's.

Concern for the arts in education is a twentieth century phenomenon in America. Support for the arts in education received its initial impetus from John Dewey and the Progressive Education movement; it was way-laid by the emphasis on science spawned by Sputnik in the 1950's; it

then flourished in the 1960's and early 1970's; and it has been waylaid once again both by inflation and by an emphasis on the "basics" and accountability in education during the late 1970's and early 1980's.

During the early development of The Paper Bag Players, however, both the arts and education enjoyed a halcyon time, a time of being both valued and supported by society. As the Rockefeller panel report on "the significance of the arts for American Education" points out, "unquestionably, the entrance of the government at all levels into the world of the arts was the big news of the sixties for the cultural community." The 1960's witnessed the first mandate in American history for direct government support of the arts. By the late 1960's and early 1970's, support for the arts in education was also a high priority.

During this early ensemble period, many factors led to the extension of the financial support which enabled the company to maintain themselves as a functioning and growing professional theatre with educational goals. These factors included substantial critical and artistic support, enthusiastic interest of parents, educators, and sponsors, incorporation as a non-profit organization, as well as the intrinsic merit of their original productions. During the first two periods of the company's history, however, it was in large part the New York State Council on the Arts which provided the support which enabled the company to achieve both their educational and social goals. So the coincidence of The New York State Council for the Arts in Education: Arts, Education, and Americans Panel, chaired by David Rockefeller, Jr., Coming To Our Senses, (New York: McGraw Hill, 1977), p. 45.

See McCaslin, A History, p. 207.
Council on the Arts and The Paper Bag Players being born around the same time and coming of age together has much to do with the early economic survival of the company.

**Aims and Purposes**

During this period, the company's goals were formulated and in 1962 they were expressed formally as part of a published document (see Appendix E). How the company successfully achieved their artistic goals of providing excellent children's theatre (aims 1, 2) will be discussed in later chapters. To what extent the company succeeded in achieving their personal artistic goals (aims 3, 4), their educational goals (aims 5, 6, 7), and their social goals (aim 8) will be considered briefly in relation to each period of their history.

During this period, the company began to implement their educational goals of extending their work to others through workshops (aims 5, 6, 7 and part of 1). They were most successful in developing workshops for teachers and educators and in working through teachers colleges such as Mills College. An outgrowth of their in-school performances was the establishment of The Paper Bag Festival (1965) in which junior "Paper Bag" troupes of children from the schools performed their versions of Paper Bag material or their own original material inspired by the work of the company. They also began to hold some workshops for children in school classrooms.

During this early ensemble period, the company was especially successful in beginning to fulfill their goal of providing free performances
for underprivileged children (aim 8). The Paper Bag Players' formative years coincided with the early 1960's, that time of social unrest with its injunctions on art to be politically activist or at the very least socially relevant. While the members of the company were humanists who responded to the pressures of their times, they were also artists with a keen sense of what would and what would not work for children. They avoided turning their theatre into a platform for politics or social reform. They did, however, commit themselves to serving a useful social purpose through their theatre, that of performing free for disadvantaged children.

One of the original company members expressed how he felt about this aspect of the company's work: "When I left The Paper Bag Players I felt devastated, because I knew that what I was doing was very special. If one is charging 20¢ for kids who have never seen theatre, then you really have a sense that you're doing good, and if you're not doing good, what are you doing? . . . It was hard for me to find another way of being that had those two elements, one of doing art, and the other of doing good."^®

The location of the Henry Street Theatre and the low admission price were seen as positive steps toward achieving a widely diverse audience. The house policy of no reservations in advance favored the children of varied backgrounds from the lower East Side neighborhood surrounding the settlement house. The productions were always sold out. Even though the

twenty cents admission fee didn't cover expenses, and their work had to be subsidized by sponsors and grant support, an early company member is quoted as saying, "When we see those faces out front, many of them hardly able to speak English, lapping up live theatre for the first time in their lives, it makes it all worthwhile."19

In addition to the performances at Henry Street, the company continued their practice of taking their performances to the deprived areas of the city, performing at Higher Horizons schools, All-Day Neighborhood schools, and hospitals.20 Their ability to maintain such philanthropic activities was largely due to the grants from the New York State Council on the Arts.

While the company did not succeed during this period in their goal of having their own permanent theatre, they certainly did succeed in establishing themselves as part of an artistic community doing "important experimental work" (aim 3, 4). In fact, their engagement at The Living Theatre pushed The Paper Bag Players into the center of the new directions in art and theatre. Theatre historians Oscar Brockett and Robert Findlay cite The Living Theatre production of Jack Gelber's The Connection as the point at which the "new directions" in theatre became evident in


20 The early years of The Paper Bag Players coincided with an experimental enrichment program offered by the New York City Board of Education designed to aid the disadvantaged "by alleviating inequities and enriching public education." From 1959-1966 certain schools were designated as "Higher Horizons" schools. Among other special services provided, performing arts groups were brought into those schools. The Paper Bag Players profited from that early connection to the public schools. See McCaslin, A History, p. 234.
There was an excitement in those early days which held the artists in the group. They felt like they were a part of an artistic community. Other artists came to see them and brought their children. The group felt themselves part of the elite who were forging new directions in theatre. As company member Kaplan expresses it, the company was "like an avant-garde, Off-Broadway group before those terms were popular" (Interview, November 1979). Being a part of that artistic community was very important to the early founding members of the company. As Charlip puts it, "Then we were a part of the avant-garde movement. I felt very much a part of the whole arts community. . . . It also gave me the feeling that I was in the right place at the right time--The Living Theatre, Merce Cunningham, and The Paper Bag Players" (Interview, November 1979).

Recognition

The company's first kudos came from the dance world. By the end of their first season, they had achieved enough of a reputation to be asked to perform at Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival where they "created a sensation by their extraordinary use of movement and mime." Recognition in the dance world continued with regular reviews in Dance Magazine. Then in 1961, they received the Dance Business Award "for maintaining the art


and profession of the dance on the highest possible level."\(^{23}\)

Recognition also came early from children's theatre specialists. By the summer of 1960 the company had appeared at the regional New York showcase of the Children's Theatre Conference. Nellie McCaslin notes that those children's theatre specialists like herself and Grace Stani-street who saw the group in their early days were all "just charmed with them. They seemed so fresh. They were bringing an entirely new concept of children's theatre. And not only that. They were very skilled performers too—skilled actors and dancers."\(^{24}\)

The attention of the media and critics, of course, is crucial to the success of any company. As early as the fall of 1960, The Paper Bag Players had achieved such public relations coups as the cover article in the Sunday New York Herald Tribune magazine section.\(^{25}\) That particular article was due to the efforts of Anna Lou Humes (Aldrich), then a volunteer and later the president of the Board of Directors. However, one of the company members who was especially helpful to the group in getting early press coverage was Remy Charlip. Charlip was a person with an enormous sense of publicity and organization. As Martin recalls, "He always knew people, and he was always getting things that nobody else could get in terms of publicity" (Interview, June 1979). Besides having


\(^{24}\)Nellie McCaslin, interview with the researcher, New York, November 1979. Hereafter cited in the text.

a great many contacts and connections, like the one that got them their engagement at The Living Theatre, Charlip also had the ability to conceptualize the work the company was doing and to convey its educational value. He especially understood the importance of the "paper" concept to their work and its educational and promotional potential. He had a vision of the work of the company which he was able to convey to others.

Through Charlip's connections the company began to get a scattering of reviews in major publications. In one such early review, Judith Christ referred to the "resounding success" of the company and to "its establishment as one of the most original and creative groups to enter the field of children's entertainment."26

Gradually The Paper Bag Players began to receive reviews in the major New York papers as well as such nationally distributed publications as The Christian Science Monitor and Life magazine. One critic touted their work as "some of the most inspired theatre for any age."27 Another observed that "These half-dozen dedicated people have established something that may well be of permanent importance in the theatre life of New York."28


27 Marcia Marks, "The Paper Bag Players: This is about the six who mix a magic brew to make a 'real' world for children," Dance Magazine, June 1961, p. 52.

An article in *Newsweek* magazine praised them, saying, "The Paper Bags in six years have built a following . . . whose enthusiasm might well be envied by our leading regional repertory companies. . . . Honest, witty, adventurous, unsentimental, they have opened up an imaginative realm accepted and enjoyed by both the most wide-eyed child and the most sophisticated grown-up. . . . The Paper Bag Players . . . give children's theatre the imaginative thrust and sense of surprise whose absence engulfs the legitimate stage." This high praise from a national publication was echoed in other reviews and articles and further capped off when the company was honored in May of 1965, as the first children's theatre ever to receive an "OBie" (Off-Broadway Theatre Critic's Award).

From 1960 to 1965 over forty-five articles and reviews were written about the work of The Paper Bag Players. Critics consistently noted the company's imagination and their ingenious use of paper and boxes for costumes and props; they praised the company's respect for their child audiences, often pointing out how their approach stimulates children's own imaginations; and they marveled at the group's equal appeal to young children and to adults. One critic even compared them to Paul Klee in that they are both child-like and sophisticated at the same time.

Period I (1958-65) ended with the paradoxical situation of the company finally receiving the recognition, praise, and awards due to their innovative work just at the point that the group of artists who had


founded the company and formed that innovative, tradition-breaking style was disintegrating.

Period II: Transition, 1965-1969

Period II, from 1965 to 1969, was a transitional period in the development of the company. With the original ensemble disbanded, Judith Martin was left to create her own company. The three productions of this period mark the transition from the earlier ensemble style to the newer style, molded by Judith Martin and composer-musician Donald Ashwander. This period also reflects the transition in status of the company from an avant-garde, Off-off Broadway troupe to a nationally and internationally acclaimed children's theatre company.

Highlight/Major Activities

During this period, The Paper Bag Players continued to operate in a four-part season: a New York run in a local theatre; touring; free performances for the disadvantaged; and workshops and other educational extensions of their work. Each of these areas was expanded and changed in various ways during this period.

In New York, the company continued their affiliation with the Henry Street Playhouse for two more seasons and then switched to the Hunter College Playhouse. Several problems had changed the nature of their relationship with the Henry Street Settlement House. Performing on Saturdays only began to be a problem as the company became a full-time endeavor. Difficulties had also arisen because of the playhouse's policy
of neighborhood service which prevented the Bags from holding reserved seats. The neighborhood around Henry Street was changing and becoming largely middle-class, which limited their audience. Without reservations, of course, they could hardly attract large groups from around the city to their shows. Hunter College offered a distinct advantage over Henry Street in that the company could perform on both Sundays and Saturdays and they could reserve seats for large groups. Switching to the Hunter College Playhouse expanded the company's New York audience. In 1966, they also acquired their studio at 185 E. Broadway on the Lower East Side which gave them a permanent New York base from which to produce their work.

They also expanded their New York audiences through television work and through a series of adult shows in their studio. Their expansion into the medium of television was more successful than their adult shows in reaching a wider New York audience. They appeared on various New York television shows and produced an hour-long television special, My Horse Is Waiting. This program was shown in 1965 as a Thanksgiving and Christmas special on Channel 13, an affiliate of National Education Television.

During this transitional period, the company basically maintained their New York focus through their New York season (at Henry Street, the Brooklyn Academy of Music, and Hunter College), their free school shows, and regional touring. This period is especially marked by growth in the company's free performances which expanded to over sixty free shows in the schools per season plus the addition of free shows in the park in the summer.
While they maintained this New York focus during the transitional period, The Paper Bag Players also expanded their work to a national and international level. Nationally they began touring in such places as Missouri (1966) and Minnesota (1967). Those tours were the first major tours outside of the eastern seaboard undertaken by the company, a practice which accelerated throughout the late sixties and early seventies. The company also began their first international appearances during this period, with two London engagements plus the filming of an international television series.

In fact, the highlight of this period for the company was their two London trips. Their first London engagement was at The Royal Court Theatre for the 1967-68 Christmas season, where they received rave reviews. In fact, the company's first London engagement was so successful that they returned during the winter of 1969 for more performances at The Royal Court and also to film a series of thirteen half-hour shows for Thames Television. This series, which contained scenes from every show in their repertory, was broadcast in Great Britain, Australia, and Sweden in the summer of 1969.

Through their television work, then, The Paper Bag Players began during this period to broaden their perspective and their audience from a local and regional one to a national one. Unfortunately, they did not really transform their work for this new medium, choosing instead to film live stage productions done in front of an audience. So while what remains of their television work from this period is excellent documentation of their theatre work, it does not translate that work into
effective children's television programming.

Despite their television work and despite the fact that their touring broadened to include both national and international engagements, the Bags remained rooted in New York during this period with most of their work done in the metropolitan area and the region surrounding New York, the northeastern states.

During this period, the company made the transition from a small avant-garde New York company, however, to a solvent, professional, touring children's theatre company able to support its company members on regular contracts. Those five seasons thus represent a continual and steady growth for the company: the budget nearly tripled from around $35,000 to around $100,000; the acting jobs in the company became full-time, salaried positions; and the level of performances and other activities increased correspondingly. They celebrated their 1000th performance in 1969, having thus performed more during those five seasons than they had during the first seven seasons.

Personnel

The four seasons from 1965 to 1969 served as a transitional period during which the restructured company adapted and found a new footing to continue without the genius of the original ensemble. Charlip and Kaplan were completely out of the company by the fall of 1965 and

Unfortunately, few of the films from that television series are extant. All but four of the film copies owned by the company were lost in a burglary of their studio. The researcher also learned that Thames Television recently erased their master copies of that series.
musician/composer Daniel Jahn soon followed suit. So by the spring of 1966, Judith Martin was the sole survivor of the founding members. From then on she served as the center of the company, functioning simultaneously as actress, director, author, choreographer, designer, and producer. It is clear that without Martin's genius and her continued commitment the company would not have survived.

At the beginning of this period, the company was still a part-time job for company members. Despite the precariousness of the company's position, Martin made the crucial decision to give up her teaching career and devote herself full-time to the company, aware that she could no longer do both successfully. This was a difficult decision for Martin, as she recalls: "I remember it was a very big move for me to give up my last teaching job which was two days a week.... It was a big move not only financially but emotionally, to put all my eggs in one 'Bag.' I never stopped missing the excitement of teaching, but I just couldn't do both, because the way I was teaching, anyway, there was so much preparation. And the way we do the 'Bags' we seem to be so slow...." (Interview, June 1979).

Gradually during this period, the level of activities of the company expanded to the point where all of the company—four performers, a musician, and a business manager—could be fully supported. They were even able to hire some part-time technical assistants for the first time.

Martin was helped during this transitional period by the strong acting support of Betty Osgood and Irving Burton who had been with the company since 1960. Even in 1964, with the original ensemble still
intact, Judith Martin had ranked Osgood and Burton as the top performers in the company. Both Burton and Osgood were wonderfully wild and funny performers, natural comics whose strength as performers grew with the demands placed on them.

From all reports, Betty Osgood was one of the strongest performers the company ever had. According to Judith Liss, Osgood was really the center of the on-stage company during the entire time she was with The Paper Bag Players (Interview, June 1979).

Physically Osgood was very unusual. Critics often commented on the simultaneous humor and appeal of her appearance, noting that "Just to look at Betty Osgood . . . is to anticipate laughter. Imagine a 4-foot, 11-inch clown, stuffed into a black leotard and smock, goggle-eyed and rubber faced, and topped with a mop of scouring pad hair." Actress Jeanne Michels also feels that much of Osgood's humor came from her physical appeal: "She's just incredible. She just walks on stage and people fall in love with her. And besides that, she's very funny. And she's funny looking. She has this wonderful funny little body with a huge bosom and tiny little legs and this adorable face with Teddy Bear eyes and a big grin of teeth and brillo pad hair, and you just fall in love with her immediately."

See Marcia Marks, "The Paper Bag Players: This is about the six . . .," p. 88.


But while Osgood used her unique physical features to her advantage in her acting, it was really her comic timing and her skill in acting and dance that made her an outstanding performer. Her peers describe her as a "wonderful warm comedienne" whose comedy was "very rare and wonderful and physical." Shirley Kaplan describes Osgood's hold on the child audience as follows: "Kids loved Betty Osgood.... I remember one kid yelling in 'Beans'. . .'cook the fat one!' I mean she was so believable . . . the kids would go crazy. She would just look at them and they'd go wild. I mean she had such direct contact with kids. And she's not a person who holds back as a performer. She's wild, funny, mesmeric . . . an extraordinary performer" (Interview, November 1979). Judith Liss says of Osgood that "Her enormous warmth and appeal and irresistible humor made her the epitome of a Paper Bag personality. She established for the Bags the sense that every performer had to be a strong personality.36

After Osgood's retirement in 1969, Burton became the featured actor of the company. Burton is also a very funny and rare performer. Physically he is a short, balding man with a prominent nose, who, like Osgood, uses his physical appearance in his comedy. Burton even more than Osgood is a very physical actor, a dancer who naturally physicalizes the action. Critics often describe him as having a "rubber face" or "rubber legs", or as Clive Barnes puts it, he seems to be "apparently rather carelessly


There is a sense in watching Burton that he is just barely under control—that at any moment his exhuberance and joy may make him rise to the ceiling like Uncle Albert's laughter in *Mary Poppins*. Shirley Kaplan describes Burton's acting as follows: "Irving is a natural clown, a true comic spirit. I think he added something absolutely unbelievable [to the company]. He was wild... and that is wonderful. He's like Chaplin... He's witty and funny and cuckoo and he does such great characters and he's so crazy and wonderful-looking" (Interview, November 1979). Critics agree with this rather subjective assessment of Burton. He has been called the company's "principal comedian"; "the funniest of the acting Burton's"; "an adept quick switch comic artist"; the player who "sets the pace" with his "great sense of timing"; and "a master at instant transformation" who has produced "singular moment[s] in the American theatre."  

Osgood and Burton, however, despite their comic genius as actors, did not offer Martin the kind of creative support she had received from Charlip and Kaplan. Daniel Jahn, one of the early members who worked with all of them had this insight: "Betty and Irving were marvelous but


not in the same way as Judy and Remy. Judy and Remy were 'genius' all around. Betty and Irving were 'genius' at performing. Judy and Remy together created the excitement of the Bags. . . . Betty and Irving could not have created that group, though they both contributed" (Interview, November 1979).

So despite the acting support Martin received from Burton and Osgood, she still had to find her own way in creating material with this newly structured company. And from this point on, there was a certain amount of constant turn-over in the acting company. From 1965 on, for example, the second male actor was hired on a yearly basis.

By far the most important event of this transitional period was the addition of Donald Ashwander as the company's musician/composer. When musician Daniel Jahn left the company, there was an interim period of two seasons during which Marcia Burr served as musician/composer. Then in the fall of 1967, Donald Ashwander joined the company adding first of all his considerable talent as a musician and composer. In Betty Osgood's estimation, "the work became much more important to me when Donald took over. He bolstered up the whole concept with music that was admirable. It was really marvelous music that gave the whole thing much more weight and solidity and more interest, more complexity . . . the work was lacking something until he came along. It became first rate art when Donald came" (Interview, June 1979).

Ashwander also proved especially important in the creation of new materials, assisting Judith Martin in this aspect of the company's work. Ashwander was a highly creative, original, and very talented composer.
His music and rhythms became a strong force in the new productions of the company. Additionally, he had a facility with words, often composing a great deal of the lyrics as well as the music and suggesting ideas and dialogue as well. In addition, he contributed to the stability of the company with his long-time commitment.

During this period, the company also began to hire their first technical assistants. Because of the informal, low-key approach of the company in their early years, an approach characterized by the fact that everyone did everything, The Paper Bag Players had little or no technical support for many years. They never hired their own technical staff but relied on the staff from the various theatres they performed in—The Living Theatre, Henry Street Playhouse, Hunter College Playhouse, and so forth. Despite such support, the company had little support on an on-going basis.

So in the fall of 1967, when the company was faced with a tour to London for which they had to repaint all of their old scenery for two shows, Martin hired a scenic technician, Danny Fennel. He was, as far as she remembers, the first hired technical help they had ever had. The company also hired their first stage manager that year for the London tour. When that stage manager irresponsibly quit in the middle of their London run, The Royal Court Theatre replaced him with a first class English stage manager of their own. This experience opened Martin's eyes to the value of and need for a good stage manager. Acquiring one, however, was a process which took a number of years.
Martin knew that what the Bags needed was a person who could be very flexible, performing a wide range of services for the company—someone who could be a good stage manager, organizing their productions and tours but who would also go get cardboard for them, repair, build and paint paper props for them, and drive them to their performances. A first rate stage manager wouldn't want to do all of those things yet an enthusiastic, devoted young person who would want to do all those things for the company would usually not have the experience necessary to organize a tour successfully. As a consequence of this dichotomy, the company went through a series of technical assistants and stage managers—always seeking the person who could meet their particular needs. What the company was doing more often than not was trying to assess and learn what those needs were. Martin recalls that it took years of trial and error in hiring technical help to become educated to exactly what they needed.

Productions/Production Trends

This period in the company's development served as a transition from the lyrical, delicate fantasy of the Martin-Charlip productions to the more contemporary, upbeat fantasy of the Martin-Ashwander productions. While the company created three new shows during this period, those shows were not typical of their earlier productions nor were they representative of their later work. Each of the three new productions of this period represents a step in the transition from one style to another. In My Horse Is Waiting (1965), the company relied heavily on their old style, with over half of the material in that show revived from Cut-Ups.
In Guffawhaw (1966), the company unsuccessfully attempted to break away from the past by doing a full-length narrative play plotted around one story. Additionally, it was their first production geared for older children, from ten to thirteen years old. When Guffawhaw proved a failure as a full-length show, however, the company quickly returned to their revue-style format, reducing the show to a twenty-minute piece and adding other short scenes to make a full-length production. Then in 1968, they produced Dandelion which has proven to be one of their most endearing and enduring shows. Dandelion, however, is also atypical, being the company's only show composed entirely around an educational theme or concept with all skits subordinate to and contributing to that concept. It is also their only show with a completely non-urban setting and theme. Dandelion, however, represent the first full-fledged Martin-Ashwander production.

This period also witnessed a transition in the design of the production. With the departure of Kaplan and Charlip, Martin was faced with the challenge of taking over the responsibility for the visual design of the productions. Martin had no training as a visual artist, but she had the experience from the early company of working on all aspects of the production. The first full-length production she designed for the company was Guffawhaw. While Guffawhaw was not a critical success, it did serve as a vehicle for Martin's apprenticeship as a designer and it was undoubtedly one of the company's most successful shows visually. The designs from this production and from the earlier pieces designed by Martin (such as "Deedle, Deedle, Deedle," and "Horace") show a clear transition from the earlier stark black and white visual style of the
company under Charlip's influence to the later more colorful, cartoon-like style developed by Martin. Though Martin continued to use mainly neutral colors—browns, grays, and blacks—in this production, she began to paint on cardboard and make much more extensive use of cardboard scenery.

The next production, **Dandelion**, can be used to illustrate the transition from one visual style to another. Almost all found objects were gone from this and all subsequent shows. The costumes, props, and scenery were built out of cardboard. There was much more reliance on scenic backgrounds (painted on cardboard flats) and on screens, maps, diagrams, and so forth. Much of the cardboard was still left unadorned at this point, but some was painted. The basic black uniform of the company was maintained throughout this period, though instead of leotards and tights, they wore specially designed black tunic-shirts and pants and sometimes black pants and sweatshirts. The actors now also wore colored dancing pumps in bright primary colors—red, yellow, blue and green. This practice had actually begun as early as 1963.

The music composed for the three shows created during this period also illustrates the transitional nature of this period. Daniel Jahn composed the music for **My Horse Is Waiting** which was played on the piano. Then Marcia Burr took over and played Jahn's music, later composing the music for **Guffawhaw**, again for the piano. When Donald Ashwander joined the company, he played the music of both Jahn and Burr, transposing it for the electric harpsichord, while adding some of his own. **Dandelion** was the first production which exclusively used Ashwander's original
compositions played by him on the electric harpsichord.

As previously noted, the event that most greatly influenced the company's work, in fact, was the hiring of Donald Ashwander. Ashwander added a much more contemporary emphasis to the work of the company, that contemporary feeling generated both by the style of Ashwander's music and by the instrument on which he played that music.

On the electric harpsichord, Ashwander produced a wide range of moods and sound effects for the company, but the overall effect was one of high energy, a bouncing, rocking sound with a driving beat. Ashwander supplemented the electric harpsichord with such instruments as a melodica, a chrome kazoo, a slide whistle, and an electric rhythm master capable of all sorts of percussive effects, becoming, in effect, a one-man band for the company.

Before Ashwander, music occupied a peripheral role in the productions of The Paper Bag Players. For one thing, there was much less music in the early productions. As Martin notes, "It used to be the music was pretty much accompaniment. Now Donald's music has gotten so very strong... a driving force. It often takes the lead, in fact, and the show rests on the music. Instead of having music which accompanies us, we have music which energizes us" (Interview, June 1979). In addition, Daniel Jahn had been physically positioned off-stage as an accompanist, either in the orchestra pit or on the floor of the auditorium. Though Ashwander began his career with the company positioned off-stage, he quickly moved on stage, where his music and his lively physical presence assumed a central role in the productions.
In addition to simply providing a lot more music, and music that was a presence in performance, Ashwander wrote music that gave more structure to the company's work. In many scenes, the music determined the pace of the scene, there was a definite beat the actors had to follow, and scenes were actually counted out with cues taken on musical counts. This made the material move very fast and gave the work a precision and pace unknown before.

Ashwander's influence went beyond his music, however. Ashwander was highly intolerant of sentimentality in the company's material for children, preferring to deal with today—with the concerns of kids in urban America. Martin recognizes this: "Donald more than anyone else always insists on it being contemporary. He's very interested in today's scene, what's new, and what's going on, and what people are talking about, and what somebody said on the bus, and so on. He doesn't go for the stock figures and fairy tales at all" (Interview, June 1979). So the addition of Donald Ashwander made the company's productions faster, louder, more contemporary, and more American.

Another event which greatly influenced the company's production style and content was their outdoor performances during this period. Artistically their first summer outdoor tour was a mixed success. They performed a production composed of pieces taken from five different earlier shows. No new material or props were created for this tour. The only change in material was the translation of "A Big Red Day" into Spanish. While the audiences were generally very receptive, even boisterously appreciative, the company learned that their material did not
transfer to the outdoor setting that easily. Everything was too small. The props were lost in that setting and the gray, black, and white colors seemed too drab.

In *Dandelion* there is a glimpse of the bigger, bolder, and more colorful designs which truly would come into their own in the productions of the next period. In this production, the team of Ashwander and Martin found their creative footing. This period was mainly transitional in terms of the repertory of the company. Before this period, the work created by Martin together with Charlip, Kaplan, and the rest of the early ensemble company as previously noted had the avant-garde flavor of the beat generation or of the early modern dance movement. Costumes were stark black leotards with some grays and white. Props were natural paper and boxes, generally unadorned. After this period, the work became more colorful, bigger, louder, and more contemporary. It took on the flavor of the electronic media generation. The electrification and amplification of the music connected it with the rock sound, though the music itself was far from rock. In addition, the issues dealt with after this transitional period were more contemporary.

**Organization/Management**

During this period, Judith Liss consolidated her position as the company manager, taking over all management functions. She worked with the total support and input of Judith Martin. The fact that Liss and Martin formed a close working relationship during this period contributed to the stability of the company. Under Liss' management, the company
began to take advantage of the growth in support for the arts.

The four seasons of Period II were ones of growth and expansion for the company. The sixties was the beginning of a period of phenomenal growth in support for the arts—both private and government. The Paper Bag Players profited enormously from that growth. Their annual budget had tripled during the three seasons prior to this period, going from just over $10,000 to $36,700. In the first three seasons of Period II, the company's budget almost tripled again, growing from $36,700 to over $100,000. This growth in budget was due in part to inflation, but it also reflects an expansion of the financial support for the company. At this time, The New York State Council on the Arts funded both the arts in education as well as projects which made the arts available to the culturally disadvantaged. Because the work of The Paper Bag Players was so excellent and also so admirably fulfilled those two goals, the state support for them continued to grow throughout this period.

The most significant financial event of this period, however, was the addition of the federal government as a source of revenue for the company. In 1965 the National Endowment for the Arts and Humanities was established, and in 1968 The Paper Bag Players received their first grant from the National Endowment, a $24,000 matching grant. This was also the first grant ever made by this granting body to a theatre for children. During the latter part of the 1960's, when federal support for their work was just beginning, The Paper Bag Players continued to receive major state and local government support.

Aims/Purposes

During this period, the company's fortunes also rose along with the growth of the arts councils—both state and federal. The sixties were a generous time, and this generosity extended to children, to the arts, and to the disadvantaged. By setting high standards of performing live theatre for children and by having as their main goal "low cost, available, excellent children's theatre," The Paper Bag Players were able to capitalize on that generosity of the decade of the sixties.

During this period, the company had become more and more committed to performing free in accessible places for the disadvantaged. Of course, this commitment was tied very closely to the growth of support for such activities at that time. The 1966-67 season could be considered a typical season during that era when such government support was available. During that season, the company gave sixty free performances at ten different locations. Those performances were attended by over 40,000 students and 1,400 teachers from approximately 800 schools, both parochial and public. A release at the time describes the procedure:

"In each of the areas in which free performances were to be given, the school that was the most centrally located and had the best auditorium facilities was chosen. Neighborhood schools were then invited to attend. The company gave two shows daily on several consecutive days, often spending a week in residence at the core school. As with the Henry Street Playhouse performances, this method enabled thousands of children

to see their first dramatic play."

It was during this period, then, that their free school show program expanded to include an average of sixty free performances a year in New York city schools, supported by special projects grants from the New York State Council on the Arts.

During this period, the city of New York, through Mayor John V. Lindsay's Urban Action Task Force, also began to support the company's work in the inner city by sponsoring the company in free summer outdoor performances. In the summer of 1968 in the first such city tour, the company gave thirty free outdoor performances on an open flatbed truck in parks, squares, playgrounds, and plazas. They performed throughout Manhattan, the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Queens mainly in disadvantaged areas that hot summer. Donald Ashwander remembers that in some places the players performed on the sidewalks and streets of the neighborhood in order to gather a crowd. As Ashwander describes it, the group would stroll along doing something unusual, like pushing a dilapidated baby carriage, while he trailed behind playing a noisemaker of some sort. Every so often they would stop and perform a short skit. They would soon have a crowd of neighborhood children trailing them back to their flatbed theatre. As Ashwander puts it, "It was like the old days when the circus came to town. Here was all this which had sprung up since morning in the kids familiar park." Free street theatre is especially accessible, and

\[^{41}\text{The Paper Bag Players, press release on the 1966-67 seasons, September 1966.}\]

through these outdoor performances the company expanded on their commit­ment to make their work available to the culturally disadvantaged.

In addition to finding new ways to reach the disadvantaged during this period, The Paper Bag Players also found new ways to extend their educational work. While The Paper Bag Festivals were discontinued, the company began to use the schools more as laboratories in which to create new material. This is particularly evident in the development of Dandelion, which was created and tested in the schools of Connecticut. In addition, this period also saw the establishment of the 2¢ press, a practice whereby the company published short playlets which were designed to be sold to the children for 2¢ a copy at the performances. Martin had also begun to publish articles on the company in the Scholastic publica­tions which reach elementary teachers and students. Efforts like this to extend their work will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

Recognition

During this period, the company was the first children’s theatre com­pany ever to win the following awards: the Jennie Heiden Award from the American Theatre Association; the American Federation of the Arts’ Poster Award; the first grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and Hu­manities; and the first to perform at Lincoln Center.

In terms of press coverage of The Paper Bag Players, Period II can be considered transitional, however. Company management of such organi­zational details as publicity had to adjust to the change of personnel. With Charlip gone, the press coverage of the company dropped from an
average during 1963 and 1964 of about twelve to fifteen articles per year to about three or four articles per season during 1965 to 1967.

While critical coverage of their work was at a low point at that time, the company's work was still receiving high praise from those critics who were attending their work. Even in essentially negative reviews of their production of Guffawhaw, critics praised their work, saying that the show contained some of "the best theatrical moments to be had in all of New York," and touting the company as "the most creatively American theatre in New York." By 1967 the coverage was beginning to pick up again. Critic Dan Sullivan of the New York Times called The Paper Bag Players tops in their field; claiming that "Good children's theatre in New York city begins with The Paper Bag Players," and that "to start at the top" one must begin with The Paper Bag Players whose "homemade vaudeville shows have a remarkably wide appeal. . . . [giving] everybody in the house as much pleasure as he can hold."

It was not until the company's first London tour in 1968, however, that the widespread coverage of the work of the company resumed. This was due mainly to the barrage of favorable criticism showered on

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the company by the London press. While over sixty articles on The Paper Bag Players appeared in magazines and newspapers during this transitional period, twenty-three of them, or over one third, were in British publications. Many of the articles in New York publications came as a direct result of the attention focused on the group by the London press.

In London, the 'Bags' were met with critical acclaim and treated with a respect as serious artists that had been denied them in New York. The London critics reviewing the work of the company treated them as serious theatre. One compared them to the innovative La Mama troupe. Another likened them to Arden: "The Paper Bag Players . . . pursue even further Arden's idea of recreating the theatre from its first principles and arrive by this means at precisely the kind of fantasy which children invent for themselves." Rave reviews called them "America's greatest gift to children since Mickey Mouse"; "the most successful children's show I have ever seen"; and even "the happiest discovery of the entire season." In general the British critics praised the company for their excellent rapport with both children and adults, for the elegant simplicity of their work, and for their role in extending and enhancing children's imaginations and their world of make-believe. Many British critics saw the work as fostering creative responses from the children after the production. Most critics used their reviews to castigate


British children's theatre in general, seeing the Bags as a breath of fresh air: "After the sickly sweet junket of wee furry friends and retarded fairies customarily slopped on to the pre-adolescent plate each Christmas, in the name of theatre, the 'Bags' are like oysters and champagne." The only negative comment came from one critic who loved their work but felt that "Everything is done at speed and is over too quickly to offer a real challenge to audiences. It tends to indulge."  

Upon their return to London the following season (1969), The Paper Bag Players performed a special "command performance" series of three midnight shows at the new Theatre Upstairs in The Royal Court Theatre. Their London season the year before had created a stir in the theatre world, and those performances were designed to allow their fellow actors in London to come and see their work. At those performances, the company received standing ovations and curtain call after curtain call from their peers in London. One performance received sixteen curtain calls, reportedly the highest number in the history of London's Royal Court Theatre. 

The company's triumphs in London succeeded in creating interest among critics at home: such critics as Jo Martin for the Daily News, Dan Sullivan for the New York Times, and Charles Marowitz for the Village Voice gave serious consideration to their work. In fact, Charles Marowitz wrote a feature report on the group from London in which he

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apologized for previously prejudging The Paper Bag Players as merely a children's theatre group and, therefore, not worth much attention. Marowitz goes on to praise the depth of their work:

The Paper Bag Players accomplish what every children's theatre I have ever seen has tried for and failed at—namely, to reach the child at his own level of consciousness; to play, in the infantile rather than the theatrical sense of that verb. . . . Although it may be considered too high-falutin' to invoke the name of Antonin Artaud in this context, the fact remains that the strength of The Paper Bag Players' work is its mythic content. In true Artaudian fashion, it employs objects, props, and totems which realistic in themselves, become transformed through usage into tangible poetic equipment. . . . [into] striking dramatic metaphors in which simple surfaces conceal inner depth.51


Period III, from 1969 to 1975, was a period of artistic growth and financial security. The three productions of this period mark the height of the collaboration of Martin and Ashwander, productions which reflect the company's new contemporary style and content. Those productions formed the core of the repertory of the company even in later years. This period is also marked by considerable financial security and by an accompanying expansion of the company's budget and activities with a shift in focus from the state level to a national perspective.

Highlights/Major Activities

During this period, The Paper Bag Players remained a small company by choice, stabilizing at four performers and one musician. The company expanded to the fullest extent possible within the limitations of that choice. At this point in their history, the company was torn between a natural preference to remain in New York as much as possible and the demand placed on them to tour. Several factors made touring attractive: natural demand for the company had grown and bookings were easy to obtain; the National Endowment, one of the company's main supporters, had a mandate to support work with a national perspective, audience, or importance; and it was still possible to make a profit while on tour.

So during Period III, the financial stability of the company was maintained in part through seasons of heavy touring. Regionally the company established long-time relationships with such theatres as The Grand Opera House in Wilmington, Delaware, and The McCarter Theatre in Princeton, New Jersey, returning year after year to perform there. Nationally the company toured to such cities as St. Louis, Pittsburg, New Orleans, and Seattle. Internationally, the company toured to London for the third time, performing at the Young Vic for three weeks.

The company also expanded their national audience through two extended tours to rural Kentucky (fall 1973; spring 1975). This was possible because of foundation support and support from the Kentucky Arts Commission. Because of their urban focus, the Bags were unsure of how rural audiences would react to their material. They found the
unsophisticated rural audiences in Kentucky very rewarding and enthusiastic: teachers, parents, and children alike loved them. Many of the people had never seen live theatre and people would come for miles to see their shows. Often they would have audiences that exceeded the population of the town.

Despite the success of their tours and the enjoyment the company derived from them, they still preferred to work in New York. Judith Martin especially disliked touring, preferring to remain in New York with her family. So the company continued to emphasize their New York season and activities. In New York, a number of theatres hosted the company during this period, among them, Alice Tully Hall in Lincoln Center; the 92nd Street YM-YWHA; Hunter College Playhouse; and the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM). When their attempts to purchase their own theatre failed, the company even rented a theatre in P.S. 41 (116 W. 11th Street, 11th between 6th and 7th Avenues).

The company planned an ambitious season of sixty dates in their rented theatre. Having their own rented theatre meant, among other things, that they could perform on both Saturdays and Sundays with two performances scheduled on both days. When playing in other theatres, this was seldom possible on an extended run. In addition, they scheduled six Friday night "family" performances.

Personnel

The biggest change in personnel during this period was the loss of Betty Osgood, who retired when she and her husband adopted two children.
This altered the company considerably. Instead of an ensemble, the company now consisted of a core group of older performers—Martin, Ashwander, and Burton—supplemented by a supporting actress and actor hired each season. Potentially, this meant a fresh approach and constant source of new ideas for the company. In actuality, it created considerable problems. The key early members of the company had combined unique personalities, dedication to the company, talent as artists, and skill in creating new material. From this time on, however, with half of the on-stage performers being replaced annually, it was difficult to find the right combination of necessary qualities. From her workshops and work with children, Martin had developed a strong belief in the creativity, freshness, and special quality that amateurs could bring to performance. The company consequently tried non-actors several times. They found, however, that most amateurs just did not have the technical skills necessary for the work. This became even truer as the company's work became more and more professional and as Ashwander's music demanded more and more precision in performance.

As a consequence, the company hired more actors who were trained not only in acting but in singing and dancing. Martin feels they often ended up, however, with actors who were technically competent but who lacked personality and/or commitment to the work: "It makes me so mad, because they are so far away from where my heart is and where my thoughts are. On the other hand, when I hire somebody from a class who's done beautiful work, or somebody's mother I know, or some lovely creative person, they just don't make it either. The company's become too
professional for that. And yet it's difficult to find a person who's very professional, who's learned all those things [singing, dancing, acting] and who still has that individual thing . . . that spark of personality our work needs" (Interview, June 1979). By and large, however, Martin stopped looking for people who could help her create new material and began simply to hire actors for the performing company. For the most part these actors and actresses came and went with little appreciable contribution to the company. Only four young supporting company members during this period contributed in a more substantial way than most to the company. They were Court Miller, Douglas Norwich, Jeanne Michels, and Pilar Garcia. Each of these four actors succeeded in their own way in becoming contributing members of the company, each committed themselves to the work, each stayed with the company over a period of time.

One of the problems the company faced in attracting excellent performers to audition was the reputation of most children's theatre. Children's theatre in New York was often seen by actors as a last resort, the refuge of the unemployed, offering poor working conditions, low pay, little or no artistic challenge, and virtually no career advancement or recognition from peers or critics.

Martin and Liss have worked hard to create an atmosphere and working conditions that are counter to that norm. They have always believed that their human resources are the most important resource the group has. A carry over from the early days of the company is the feeling of being part of a family where people really care about one another. Young actors and actresses who succeed in the group become a part of this
Jeanne Michels, for example, says "They are fabulous in that respect. They are absolutely the best company I've ever worked for. They are committed to you as a person" (Interview, June 1979). Or as Court Miller says, "It's a real family operation, I feel. I love them and to work with them is like going home, because we are so close. I have a great affection for them as people which makes it very special to go back."^52

The company avoids paternalism, however, by offering actors excellent pay and working conditions. During this period, salaries in the company were established at levels that were comparable to Off-Broadway and regional theatre and much more than other children's theatre. While Martin preferred the flexibility of staying out of Actor's Equity Union, they have always paid much more than the Equity minimum. Because of this, they have a special arrangement with Actor's Equity to hire union members on a "Young People's Guest Artist" contract.53

The working conditions of The Paper Bag Players, when compared with other children's theatre companies, are ideal. When they tour, for instance, the company is treated handsomely: they get a generous per diem and the most humane touring conditions possible. One of the reasons the company has never been able to get their bookings for tours through the normal channels such as booking agents or PACT (The Producers Association of Children's Theatre) is their insistence on maintaining such

52 Court Miller, interview with the researcher, New York, 26 November 1979. Hereafter cited in the text.

high standards and such optimal working conditions. The one time they did participate in the PACT Conference, Judith Liss was appalled at the attitudes of the other PACT producers. By sticking to the letter of the union regulations, those producers were able to maintain their Equity Union status, but beyond that they treated their actors as interchangable commodities from which to wring the most profit. As Liss observed their attitudes, they considered actors to be expendable and easily replaced. They would often hire actors one day to perform the next. A tour would be scheduled with little or no break time for the actors. The quality of the work was of little consequence to most of these producers who seemed intent mainly on making money. Liss remembers one example of how the PACT producers would conform to the letter of the union regulations while promoting their own interest at the expense of the actors and the work: The PACT producers were required to give their actors one day off a week, so what they might do to meet that requirement during a two-week booking was to give them the first and last days of the tour off and make them traveling days. As far as both Liss and Martin were concerned, these producers were always thinking of how they could make more money first and the last thing they thought of was the actors and the conditions they worked under or the quality of the work produced (Interview, June 1979).

In contrast, as previously stated, the working conditions on tour for the Bags are ideal. Martin and Liss always insist on adequate travel time, set up time, strike time, and rest time for the actors. They will do no one-night stands outside of the New York area. They insist
on a minimum of two days per booking unless the engagement is within
easy driving distance of metropolitan New York. They prefer half-week
or week-long residencies for their bookings. In fact, their time require­
ments are so stringent that many companies would find them almost exces­
sive. However, they are part of the company's overall conviction that
top quality work must be maintained and human resources husbanded. One
young actor, Court Miller, sums up the pleasure of working for the Bags
by comparing them to other children's theatres he has toured with:

I find the Bags to be much more gratifying because
most of the material that other children's theatres
use is either such baby stuff that it has no in­
sights into the human condition, which is what the
Bags are all about it seems, or it's historical
which can get really superficial and boring. . . .
Or it's like a badly directed mini-Broadway musical.
. . . And again, most children's theatre touring
companies while they may start out to be of a cer­
tain quality . . . after a month or so, everyone is
just tired of it and laughing at it. There's no
personal investment at all (on the part of the
actors). I guess that's what happens to people
when they're not involved in something to begin
with, they just make fun of it after awhile. And
they're embarrassed by it. They're embarrassed by
the fact that they have to do it. And mostly
they're making $150 or $175 a week. Their pay is
worse than most other companies, which you're not
going to find in the Bags. Because Judy [Martin]
is there! That makes a big difference. . . . Notes
are given before every show. You block the show
out on the individual stage that you're performing
on with the Bags. With other companies you often
do two shows a day in two different places. It's
inhuman what other children's theatre companies
expect of their performers . . . Drive fifty miles
in the morning, do a show, pack up, drive another
hundred miles to get to the next show . . . The Bags
always maintain a certain standard. They know how
far they can stretch themselves. And Judy Liss
knows that too, so they're booked in a much more
humane way. They don't do one night stands. They
don't do things that tear people apart. So it's a real treat to work for them. You're taken care of very well because Judy [Martin] is going there too, and she doesn't want to shlep herself. Nor does Donald. Nor does Irving. They all know how much they can take and the way they want to live. It's a class act all the way. And then too the material is so interesting. It has so many strange twists, things that are exciting to perform. And you can invest a tremendous amount of yourself as an actor. Doing 'Wax Paper' for instance. There's such a feeling of being uplifted. I come back to the Bags for that uplift (Interview, November 1979).

Despite high pay, optimal working conditions, artistic challenge, and a good reputation in the theatre community in New York, however, the company never again succeeded in achieving the complete ensemble relationship they had in their early years. More and more of the responsibility for the company fell on Judith Martin. Gradually her role as director, designer, and creator began to conflict with her role as performer.

During this period Martin attempted several times to stay out of the performing company, at least for the touring dates. That attempt to direct only and not act in the company did not succeed, however. Pilar Garcia, the young actress with the company at the time, later commented on the difficulty of Judith Martin trying to step aside at that time: "That left only Irving with the original performance strength of the company. And it was difficult for Judy to step aside when she wasn't seeing that interaction that she had felt for all those years. And I suppose she felt, well, I have to stay unless we find another Betty Osgood . . . " (Interview, November 1979). So Martin continued to perform while at the same time assuming more and more responsibility for creating the material and for directing the productions.
Productions/Production Trends

Dandelion, created at the end of the second period of development, had marked the first successful production of the new team of Judith Martin and Donald Ashwander. During the third period of development, from 1969 through 1975, this creative team was at full strength, producing three strong shows, Hot Feet (1969), I Won't Take A Bath (1973), and Everybody, Everybody (1974). From this period on, those three shows together with Dandelion formed the core of the repertory of The Paper Bag Players. Individual pieces from the earlier repertory were often revived and added to productions. Occasionally an entire early show was revived (as with Group Soup in 1969-70 and My Horse Is Waiting in 1973-74), but those revivals were usually composed of at least half new materials. So essentially, there was a break in the repertory as the newer shows created by Martin, Ashwander, and company took over.

Under Martin, the scenery and costumes became more elaborate, more colorful, larger, and more stylized. The creation of Hot Feet marked a strong development and change in the company's work. This production was created for the company's second summer performing in the parks, and the company knew this production needed to be bigger and brighter. In fact, with Hot Feet, The Paper Bag Players exploded into colors and big sizes. Starting with Hot Feet and continuing through the two other productions of this period, everything became more colorful, louder, and bigger—the sound, the acting style, and the designs. Martin enlarged and simplified the design work so that visually the work began to resemble a combination of good children's art work and cartoons. While the
images are more predictable and controlled than those in the early work, many feel they are also more satisfying. As children's theatre specialist Dr. Nellie McCaslin notes, "I thought they were very refreshing in the beginning. But aesthetically I'm getting more pleasure out of them all the time, because I love color and what they're doing with color. Aesthetically I think they are changing and improving all the time" (Interview, November 1979).

After *Hot Feet*, the company began to use color in all of their productions, even redoing former productions in the new style. While earlier productions of *Dandelion* had used unadorned or partly painted cardboard props and scenery, in the revivals of *Dandelion* during this period, the cardboard is completely covered with brightly colored paint (See Illustrations in Appendix D). During this period, the company also began to use more color in their basic costumes. By 1973, (for the *Dandelion* tour), they were wearing plum-colored bell bottoms and shirts. By 1975 (the *Everybody* production), the costumes were even more colorful—bright red shirts and pants.

Throughout this period, Martin continually searched for and found ways of using the paper design medium in new and innovative ways. Under Martin the emphasis or function of the paper props changed. Martin became more interested in the theatrical rather than the aesthetic aspects of the paper props. Martin began to make a new demand on the prop pieces she created—that they could come alive when moved by the actors on stage. Martin gives two examples in the following quote of props that fulfill that new demand—the locomotive and the covered wagon from "Big Country"
(Everybody):

Take the black cut-out [see Appendix D] that makes Irving's locomotive. If you just saw that standing in the studio, you wouldn't think it was a particularly good prop. But the fact that he can put his face through just where the stage light comes, and that moving his feet gives it a motion that makes the prop alive, and that his face becomes the face of the locomotive and gives it a personality... There is another example from that same show—the covered wagon. Each actor holds his own piece of cardboard, one for the horse, one for the wagon, and two for the wheels. And as each actor moves his piece it really looks like a wagon jiggling down the road... And while they are all pieces of cardboard, I wasn't so fussy that they had the cardboard origin on them as the feeling that it became alive, that it had a life to it on the stage. It could move, it was surprising, and the audience could see the actors pick up the pieces, they could see it put together, it could happen right there on stage. This became more and more intriguing to me (Interview, June 1979).

Several types of designs grew out of this stress on the action that the prop could create. Martin began to create paper puppets. Before, the paper and cardboard had been used to clothe the actors, now it was used to mask them completely, turning them into paper and cardboard puppets. One style of paper bag puppets Martin created were larger-than-life paper bags on which colorful cartoon-like action figures had been painted (on both the front and back of the paper bags). These bags were placed over the actors so that only their feet showed. The first use of these Paper Bag "people" was in "Aunt Sally" (Bath). Another form of puppet figures created by Martin was the cardboard cut-outs held in front of the actors. Often these figures were over-sized giant figures (such as those in "I Won't Take A Bath"). The actors stood behind these cardboard figures manipulating them.
Martin began to experiment with pieces in which the scenery and visual elements were created on stage. Though they always had a story, in many of these numbers, the real action of the scene was the painting, drawing, tearing, or construction done on stage. In "Paintings", (Hot Feet), for instance, three separate scenes were enacted in which the actors painted the scenery on giant mural-size brown wrapping paper while one or more actor narrated the story they were illustrating. While the use of painting and drawing done on stage had precedents in the early work of the company (see "Madame Blanche," "Snow," and "Spots" in Scraps), Martin developed this idea in completely original ways and explored it much more fully.

In addition to these changes in design, the content of the productions became increasingly more contemporary during this period, focusing on the experiences of urban children in today's world. Hot Feet is about the exhuberance and the exasperation of living in a modern city, where, among other things, one has to deal with summer heat, street litter, leaky plumbing, inept plumbers, recorded messages on the telephone, pushing and shoving at the supermarket, and so forth. While the fairy tale fantasy was by now long gone from their productions, the company continued to stress fantasy in their work, albeit fantasy of a more contemporary nature. I Won't Take A Bath concerns itself with the problems of urban children, but the focus is on a modern fantasy world, a world where a huge pair of lips blown off a billboard can come to life and cavort with a giant ice cream cone and a bag of street wise garbage from Queens can help the lips escape the clutches of the garbage collectors.
and sign painters. In addition, the company began to use more educational content and themes in their material and even a certain amount of social satire. *Everybody, Everybody* explicates the theme of ethnocentrism, the faulty notion that one's own ideas are superior to those of all others.

**Organization/Management**

This was a period of financial security. Judith Liss continued to effectively handle all management functions. During this period she hired her first administrative assistant, Edith Harnik, who continued to serve the company for years on a part-time basis. The company thrived as the high level of government and private grants and support for the arts provided them with a comfortable financial base. Government and private grants flowed in to support their work and the company's annual budget swelled from around $100,000 in 1969 to around $250,000 in 1975. The early seventies were a highly inflationary period and much of this growth in budget reflects that fact.

The growth in the budget also reflects the availability of substantial grants, however. During this period the company was able to enjoy the most stable period of financing they have ever had: The Rockefeller Foundation provided a $100,000 grant distributed over a four-year period; the National Endowment grant rose to a steady annual sum of around $55,000–$60,000; and the list of private donors stabilized to a regular roster. This period was the most comfortable period of finances the company was to enjoy.
The company was able to remain "philanthropic" at this time mainly because this period in their history was one of such a comfortable level of grant support. The growth and flourishing of The Paper Bag Players corresponds with and parallels the increased support for the arts from educational and governmental bodies. In the case of The Paper Bag Players, this period saw a shift in government support for their work from a state to a national basis. Private foundation support for their work also increased during this period, with the Rockefeller Foundation leading the list of donors. But the most important financial news of this period for the company was the increased support they received from the federal government via the National Endowment for the Arts.

Throughout the early seventies, federal involvement in the arts in education increased. Indeed, the Rockefeller panel report notes that there was a four-fold increase in the numbers of projects related to schools and school-age youth supported by the Endowment between 1971 and 1975.\(^\text{54}\) In the case of The Paper Bag Players, support for the arts from the federal government benefited them directly and indirectly. Indirectly, their work was supported by Federal money involved in programs such as "Project Create" in Connecticut. Directly the company received support in the form of grants from the National Endowment.

In the government support for the work of The Paper Bag Players during this period, one can see the coming together of several trends:

one trend was toward more support for the performing arts as an integral and valuable part of society; another was the concurrent trend toward support for the arts in education and the lives of children; and still another was the trend toward support of compensatory cultural and artistic programs for those disadvantaged by physical, emotional, or socio-economic factors. During the late 1960's and early 1970's all government support for the arts seemed to be working toward similar goals. In addition to combining all of those goals, The Paper Bag Players presented an unusually high quality product in their field. Consequently, they benefited greatly from the rise in government support for the arts.

If we take The Paper Bag Players as a case study, the entrance of the federal government into the arts funding picture was a mixed blessing. Gradually as the federal government programs in support of the arts in education grew in number, size, and strength, state support for such programs lessened correspondingly. The State Council on the Arts in New York finally decided not to grant any money for use in the schools. Gradually they became less and less interested in projects of an educational nature even when done outside the jurisdiction of the schools.

By 1975, the New York State Council on the Arts refused to grant direct funds to the company though they were still included in the list of cultural attractions eligible for indirect council support at the community level. Ironically, the decision by the state to withdraw all funding followed on the heels of the company being honored by the Council as recipients of The New York State Award. So the thorn in the rose of financial security for the company during this period was the New York
State Council on the Arts, and the pull-out of all state support for their work proved to be the turning point in the financial health of the company. A discussion in Period IV in the company's history will expand on this point.

Aims and Purposes

The financial security of this period enabled the company to comfortably meet their artistic goals, to expand on their educational and philanthropic goals, and to make a concerted effort to achieve the one goal that had eluded them, that of owning their own theatre.

Through the husband of one of the members of the Board of Directors, The Paper Bag Players heard of a perfect building with a little theatre for sale and they began their campaign to acquire their own theatre, an endeavor which came just a hair's breadth from success. In newspaper article after newspaper article Judith Martin speaks of the company's desire to obtain their own theatre, stating that they live a nomadic life not by preference but by necessity.55

The theatre building that was their goal was located in Grammercy Park. At the time it was being used as a Friends Meeting House. Judith Liss describes the theatre space itself: "The theatre was perfect. It could have stayed exactly as it was. Children could have seen from all

over. It had about 700 seats, which was ideal. It was absolutely the best space possible." Not only was the theatre ideal inside, but it was located in a beautiful, quiet residential area and it had adequate parking space. The company only needed to raise about $150,000 to purchase the building and Patricia LaSalle had already pledged $75,000 with several other Board members pledging $10,000 each toward the purchase of the building. Their goal seemed to be in hand.

The Paper Bag Players had very ambitious plans for "their" theatre. They wanted to open a school and give classes, hold their regular New York season there, and invite other artists and groups to use the space when they weren't performing. They felt it could become a center for the community. In addition, they had already made connections with the Metropolitan Museum of Art about the possibility of having an extension of the Met—a children's museum—housed in the basement. Liss describes the basement space as follows: "It was a beautiful space with arches. At one time it had been a through-way for runaway slaves underneath Gramercy Park" (Interview, November 1979). Everything about the building was perfect, and the Board, the administration, and the company went all out to obtain the building.

In order to purchase the building, however, The Paper Bag Players had to deal with the Gramercy Park Neighborhood Association, including several wealthy men behind the Association. Liss remembers dealing with Ben Sonnenberg in particular. The Association denied them a contract.

for the building stating that they were considered a bad risk as a theatre, even though the company had been able to meet every financial criterion set up by the Association, including opening their books and proving where they would get their financing for the next five years. Judith Liss feels that the real reason they were denied a contract was probably that the Neighborhood Association envisioned a theatre for children bringing too much commotion to their quiet area of the city. Eventually the building was sold to a teacher's union and the theatre space remained unused. Though the company's dream of their own theatre was maintained for a few more years, this was really the last serious attempt to fulfill that dream.

Recognition

In 1974 The Paper Bag Players were selected to receive the New York State Award. That award had been established in 1966 by the New York State Council on the Arts "to recognize significant contribution to the material beauty and artistic life of the state of New York." They were also honored during this period by being one of five groups asked to perform at Lincoln Center for the First Annual New York State Theatre Fair for Children. This event was sponsored by the state arts council and the National Endowment.

The biggest kudos of the period came, however, when The Paper Bag Players were chosen to be one of six American children's theatre

companies to represent the United States at an international children's theatre conference to be held in Albany, New York, and Montreal, Canada, in the summer of 1972. The conference was sponsored by The Association Internationale du Theatre pour l'Enfance et la Jeunesse (ASSITEJ) which combined both professional and amateur groups performing for children and youth.

Commenting on the choice of The Paper Bag Players as one of the finalists, child drama expert Orlin Corey notes that "They are one of the cultural assets of these United States." While recognizing the honor of being chosen, The Paper Bag Players withdrew and chose not to perform that summer. They were asked not only to perform free but also to pay their own costs. This meant hiring a company during the summer months when their actors usually had summer theatre jobs. It meant paying them to rehearse to get the show up to top performing level and then paying their salaries and per diem expenses plus their transportation costs. Liss and Martin were both incensed at the apparent lack of understanding of the problems of maintaining a professional company on the part of people who were supposedly trying to promote excellence in children's theatre. And they were competing both with amateur groups willing to perform for nothing just for the privilege and also with heavily subsidized professional companies from the communist and socialist countries. Their decision not to perform was thus based both on

financial and on philosophical concerns.

If attention by critics is considered a measure of success in children's theatre, Period III can be regarded as the most successful period in the history of the company. During these six seasons, the company averaged around twenty-four articles in magazines and newspapers per season for a total of over one-hundred and forty-five articles. The coverage ranged from reviews by theatre critics for major publications to notices in the local newspapers in towns on their touring schedule. The company also received electronic media coverage ranging from international (their thirteen week series for Thames Television), to national (their NET special of Dandelion), to local (interviews on local radio programs such as AM Pittsburgh).

Critical attention to the company's work took on a new focus during this period, often attending to the content and ideas of the productions. While reviews during the 1960's had stressed the company's ingenious use of paper props and costumes, by this time that aspect of their work was pretty much taken for granted. Very few critics commented on the technical aspects of the company's productions except in passing. Occasionally a critic, like Burt Supree, would once again point to their "theatrical shorthand" as a key to their success: "It's still magic when they put three boxes together and say it's a city. You can see that it isn't, but, of course, you know it is."

Reviews during the sixties also emphasized how the company's work stimulates (and simulates) the imaginative play of children. During the early seventies, however, critics began to stress the values to be derived from the content of the company's shows. Several critics mention the importance of the Bags' contemporary content in helping children deal with everyday life in the modern city. Critics note that the themes and ideas of their plays are important ones, and that however light-heartedly they deal with them, the points are always clearly and passionately made, and the ideas are of common interest to children and adults.

Throughout this period, as in other periods, the company was held up by critics as an example of excellence, as a company which sets standards not met by other children's theatre, with critics making such statements as "the one striking exception to the generally unexceptional level of children's theatre is The Paper Bag Players," and "The Bags are everything most children's theatre isn't—witty, inventive, wildly intelligent."  


Besides praising them as among the best children's theatre companies around, ultimately many critics believe that The Paper Bag Players can stand "among the best of the best" in theatre without any reservations: "In appraising them one need not make special compensation for the fact that their performances are designed for children. The Bags are outstanding by any standard." Many critics feel that the company creates theatre which is quite remarkable in its' excellence: "The Players create bold, evocative, intelligent theatre—and that's all you could ask from children's theatre, or grownups' theatre, or anybody's theatre."

During this period, critics often singled out Ashwander's music for praise, stating that it "provides a beat and verve that is at the heart of the productions"; that it is "essential to the humor and innocence of the actor's performance"; and that "part of the high comedy of the performance is due to the music." Critics also comment on the contagious nature of Ashwander's rhythms and lyrics. Clive Barnes says that Ashwander's music is "as infectious as the common cold but much nicer."

After fifteen years, the attitude of most critics toward the company was that they were "better than ever," that indeed their plays


could be considered "modern children's classics." During this period, however, a small but steady voice of complaint was beginning to be heard among the critics. The most persistent complaint voiced about The Paper Bag Players was that they were apparently unwilling to go beyond their established style, that their material kept repeating itself, that the company "recently seems to rely too much on its own past, familiar material." While these critics feel that the company's latter work is not as imaginative as usual, in coming to their defense, Village Voice critic Burt Supree says, "Try to be funny, clever, ingenious, original, sophisticated, interesting, and beautiful for 15 years and see what happens. Theatre companies nowadays barely finish a season. But a decade and a half is something else. This durable troupe sustains because the sustenance is audience appreciation." For the most part the Bags were seen by critics as fresh, witty, imaginative and thoroughly entertaining theatre worthy of their attention and certainly a cut above other children's theatre.


Period IV: Continuity Amidst Crises, 1975-1982

Period IV, from 1975 to the present, has been a period beset by creative and financial problems. This period has been marked by a rapid decline in financial stability as increased costs, decreased funding, and decreased bookings all coincided to create a severe financial strain on the company. The company also faced some problems of artistic maturity. As they began to feel caught in a style and a reputation, they found fresh, new ideas and productions harder to create. The new productions in this period are fewer and less successful than those of the previous period. The period was also marked by constant searching for new ways for the company to continue to survive and to grow artistically. 70

Highlights/Major Activities

For the most part, the company’s seasons followed the three-part structure evolved prior to this period. Their working year generally ran from September to May and usually included a New York engagement and one or two tours. In addition they would work in their studio during this time, evolving new material, updating old material, and preparing productions for the boards. Often they also offered one or two extended workshops on their techniques. During this period, their seasons were sometimes supplemented and extended by international tours during the summers.

70 Because financial survival and artistic growth became the company’s main goal during this period, their aims and purposes will not be discussed separately.
The company's international tours, in fact, were a high point of this period. The period started out with one such tour, to the mid-east in August of 1975. Their mid-east itinerary included performances at the Festival D'Israel in Tel Aviv, Haifa, and Jerusalem with additional performances scheduled in Egypt and Iran. In Iran, the company performed under the auspices of the Empress Farrah Diba at the Niavarin Palace Park Theatre in Teheran. They also gave workshops for teachers at the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults. Though their performances in Egypt were cancelled due to political problems in getting their props through customs, they did give workshops in Egypt under the auspices of the Minister of Culture. Later, in 1977, the company appeared at The Canadian Child and Youth Drama Conference at Ottawa University. And in 1979 and 1980, they took their fourth and fifth tours to England. Then in 1982 the company completed their first far-eastern tour, centered in Hong Kong and the Phillipines.

International touring was a favored, if infrequent, part of the company's schedule. Touring, both regionally and nationally, however, continued to be a major part of The Paper Bag Players' seasons during this period. National touring continued with week-long residencies in such new places as Austin, Texas; Mobile, Alabama; Winston-Salem, North Carolina; Ames, Iowa; New Orleans, Louisiana; Lebanon, New Hampshire; and Los Angeles and Seattle. The company also made their third tour to rural Appalachia, this time to Kentucky and Virginia. Regionally, one of their last project grants from the New York State Council on the Arts took them on a tour of Suffolk County. On a whole, however, touring suffered as inflation made it impossible to tour in the manner in which
the Paper Bag Players were accustomed and still continue to make money while on tour.

In New York, the cutback and eventual demise of funding by the New York State Council on the Arts meant that the company's in-school performances were eventually almost completely eliminated. They continued to use such schools as P.S. 108 in East Harlem, with whom they had a long-standing relationship, to try out their new shows. But for the most part, such philanthropic goals as free or subsidized school shows were no longer possible to sustain.

During this period, several theatres in New York sponsored the company and provided public performance space for them: Alice Tully Hall in Lincoln Center; The Museum of Natural History; and the 92nd Street YM-YWHA. Each of those theatres had its' own problems, however. Lincoln Center usually booked the company only for a holiday show every other season. The Museum of Natural History booked them only once. When a bus strike created havoc with the audiences' and The Bags' production of Dandelion drew criticism from the museum's educational staff, this relationship ended. At the 92nd Street "Y", the fact that they could only perform on Sundays and not on Saturdays cut the company's earnings considerably as did extending their "Y" season to forty weeks. Often during this period, then, the company would simply produce themselves by renting a theatre in Manhattan. Two such theatres used by the company during this season were the Marymount Manhattan Theatre, 221 East 71st Street, and Town Hall, 123 West 43rd Street.
During this period, an effort was made to extend the work of the company beyond that of a limited performing company. The company spent considerable time on publications during this period: four of Martin's Christmas plays were published by Anchorage Press in a collection entitled *Christmas All Over The Place* (1977); Martin published a fifth Christmas play in *Early Years* Magazine (December 1975); the company published the script and score of *Dandelion* (1978) which was subsequently picked up by Bakers Plays for distribution; Martin published a collection of short skits—scripts and scores—suitable for performance by children entitled *Everybody, Everybody: A Collection From The Paper Bag Players* (Elsevier/Nelsen, 1981); and Coleman Jennings included the full-length play *Grandpa* in his anthology *Mature Plays For Children* (Univ. of Texas Press. due in 1983); and the short skit "Ma and The Kids" in his collection *Plays Children Love* (Doubleday, due in 1982).

The company also invested time and effort into media work: they produced several 45's and two L.P.'s themselves: in 1982 CMS Record Company in New York produced a record album of their songs entitled "Music for 4's, 5's, and 6's: Songs For Learning--Songs For Laughing"; they appeared on the Today show twice (in 1975 and again in 1982); and they continued to give television and radio interviews during this period. Even more significant was the fact that in 1982 the company received a grant to purchase their own video-taping equipment. This enabled them to experiment with television work in addition to recording and viewing their theatre work. Judith Martin worked hard with the company in an effort to translate their work into effective children's television
programming.

**Personnel**

Throughout this period, the stability of the company continued to be sustained by the core performers—Judith Martin, Irving Burton, and Donald Ashwander. Administrator Judith Liss provided managerial support to the company, while Peter Jablonski provided assistance as the company's first long-term stage manager. Martin continued to fill the performance company by hiring a young actress and actor each season. Those who provided the most steady and productive contributions during this period were Jeanne Michels and Douglas Norwich with Court Miller coming back occasionally to work with the group.

For years the company had maintained their season with 38-week contracts to assure stability for their actors. This was done mainly to keep the group intact by making the rewards of staying with the group worthwhile. Financial conditions dictated that this arrangement was no longer practical, but Martin and Liss were both reluctant to release actors from the stability of such contractual arrangements. They felt that Donald Ashwander's and Irving Burton's continued loyalty to the company was based at least in part on the financial security and relatively decent working conditions offered them. Martin and Liss were both aware of the danger of losing those long-time company members if their financial security could not be guaranteed at least on a seasonal basis. However, Martin and Liss made an interesting discovery. They had always felt that a season-long contract was what the younger actors desired too.
They learned, however, that for many of the younger actors, a 38-week contract was anathema to them, keeping them from doing other professional work. Many of those actors who had previously worked for the company expressed an interest in short term contracts which offered them a chance to work for the company while also doing other theatre work.

A more flexible arrangement was thus dictated by financial conditions. The solution was to guarantee a full season for Burton, Martin, and Ashwander, while hiring younger actors on short term contracts and/or being more willing to lay them off as conditions demanded. Such short-term contracts and layoffs were dictated by the financial pressures on the company. Thus, through flexibility, the stability of the company was maintained while some financial pressures were alleviated.

This period was also a period of crisis for the company as they faced the inevitable problems inherent in aging. After twenty years of creating and performing children's theatre in the same format, the company was beginning to find it difficult to meet the challenge of remaining ever fresh and imaginative without repeating themselves.

Judith Martin feels that the core of exceptionally talented people in the company have stayed for as long as they have not merely for financial security. Each is a talented and serious artist who confronts his own mortality with the desire and need to leave a creative legacy. Martin feels that in the final analysis, these artists have stayed because the work has kept on growing and they have kept on growing as artists. The fact that each one of them has been able to create exceptional material for the company is important. According to Martin, some of
Ashwander's most creative music has been written for the Bags; Burton has been freer, and more creative with the Bags that he could be alone or with another group; and Martin herself has done work for the Bags that she couldn't have done for any other company. For Martin, a serious problem with the latter years of the company has been the slowdown of the creative work of the company (Interview, June 1979). Ashwander, Martin, and Burton all expressed to the researcher the desire and the need to do more of their own work as artists as a consequence.

The company, particularly Martin and Liss, have engaged in serious discussions as to what direction the company could and should take in the future. Such discussions are prompted not only by financial pressures but also by the relentless passing of time. The company has always been centered around Judith Martin and discussions of the future of the company have to take this into consideration. So the crisis of the survival of the company involves the immediate future—what the group needs to do now in order to survive and continue. Such discussion also involves the ultimate question of immortality—will the group survive in any way past the life of the founder and sustainer, Judith Martin?

Productions/Production Trends

The past seven seasons (from 1975 to 1982) have not been the most productive in the company's life in terms of new productions. Only two totally new productions have been mounted—Grandpa (in 1977) and Mama's Got A Job (in 1979). Neither of those productions were unqualified successes, though each contained much good new material. As mentioned earlier, the creative output of the group had slowed down, and each of
those shows represented an attempt to find a way to stimulate the production of new materials. *Grandpa* was based on a theme—the theme of aging. *Mama's Got A Job* was an attempt to do a longer production around a socially relevant theme. The three seasons following the premiere of *Mama* represent the first time in the company's history that there have been no new productions in that amount of time. The company has, of course, continued to work on new material. Some of that new material has been performed under existing production titles, and in fact much of the new material that has been created, such as the new scenes in the 1981-82 production of *I Won't Take A Bath*, is very strong and effective. In addition, Martin is currently working on a new production for the 1982-83 season.

If one looks only at production titles, The Paper Bag Players have produced twelve shows in twenty-four seasons. This figure belies their actual output of material, however. Since they continue to add and delete scenes from their productions, another way to look at their creative output is on the basis of the total number of scenes added to their repertory. In these twelve productions, there have been a total of at least 215 scenes. Since an average production on stage runs about twelve scenes, their total output has been the equivalent of about 18 productions. And since titles and descriptions of many scenes have been lost, no doubt the output of the company has been even greater. One thing that remains clear, however, is the fact that the company's creative output has declined during this last period in their history. This is illustrated in Table 1.
### TABLE 1

PRODUCTION OUTPUT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERIOD</th>
<th># OF NEW TITLES</th>
<th># OF NEW SCENES</th>
<th>EQUIVALENT # OF PRODUCTIONS</th>
<th># OF SEASONS IN PERIOD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I EARLY ENSEMBLE</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>5 5/6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959-1965</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II TRANSITION</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>3 1/2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965-1969</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III PRIME YEARS</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>5 1/6+</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969-1975</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV CONTINUITY</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>3 1/2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADMIDST CRISSES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975-1982</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While one can see a slight decline in number of productions per year during the first three periods of their history, that decline is very slight. On an average, the company produced the equivalent of almost one production per season during that time. However, in Period IV, one can see a decline to an average of less than one production every two seasons.

Other trends in the company's repertory begun during Period III continued in this period. Martin continued to experiment with new ways of using the paper design materials and the content of the productions.
continued to have more themes, more messages, more social satire. In other ways, however, the company's work mellowed during this period. After trying the brightest possible costumes (matching shirts and trousers in different colors for each actor—bright orange, cerese, blue-green, and green-yellow), the basic costume that evolved was more conservative: black trousers, brightly colored rugby shirts, and colored dance pumps.

The material and the music also showed signs of becoming more mellow: a more lyrical feeling came back into some of the pieces and Ashwander's music also became more lyrical and more melodic with such numbers as "Changing" (Grandpa).

Organization/Management

The mid-seventies was the turning point in the financial health of the company. During Period III The Paper Bag Players had been in sound financial condition, able to grow and expand to meet rising demands and rising costs. From 1974 on, however, several factors combined to create grave financial pressures on the company. During a Board of Directors meeting on November 18, 1974, company administrator Judith Liss made it clear that the handwriting was on the wall—that the company's financial health was temporary and would change for the worse within a year and very drastically. Inflation meant that costs were increasing while at the same time funding and bookings were simultaneously decreasing. This devastating combination of factors eroded the financial health of The

Paper Bag Players and threatened the survival of the company. From the latter 1970's on, The Paper Bag Players lived a hand-to-mouth existence, surviving from year to year, mostly because of the continued support of the National Endowment for the Arts. From 1977 on, the minutes of the board meetings of the company are full of financial emergencies.72

The three main factors which threatened the survival of the company in the late 1970's and early 1980's were increased costs, decreased funding, and decreased bookings. As costs soared, the company's income did not keep pace with their expenses. In addition, money available for the arts was dwindling. That leveling off of grant money and support for the arts occurred simultaneously with a continued increase in the number of groups demanding such support. It appears that earlier government involvement in and support for the arts had spurred activity in the arts which peaked just as inflation began to erode the base of that support. Even more insidiously, inflation caused a retreat or a "back-to-the-basics" movement in which the arts were once again seen as frills, and available funding money was allocated to areas deemed more basic to society and education. So funding became more difficult for the company to obtain. As we have seen, the New York State Council on the Arts dealt a serious financial blow to the company in 1974 when they refused to grant the company funds for the season. The reason stated was that the company was not "in need." In other words, The Paper Bag Players had always had a balanced budget.

72See, for example, the minutes of the Board of Directors, The Paper Bag Players, 15 May 1978 and 18 October 1978.
In addition, more groups were demanding their share of the money. And of course, the Bags had been around for years asking for funds. Additionally, the New York State Council on the Arts had clearly shifted focus and was no longer interested in supporting art activities for children in the schools. In 1978, the council went even further and removed the name of The Paper Bag Players from their 1977-78 list of "Primary Cultural Institutions." Being included on that list meant that sponsors throughout New York state who received Arts Council funds could use those funds to support their work. This action effectively insured that The Paper Bag Players could no longer even receive indirect support from the state. Thus the steadfast state support the company had received for their work from the mid-sixties through the mid-seventies was gone. From that point on, state support was minimal, granted for special projects and later to help balance the budget.

In its place, the federal government had stepped in. From 1968 on, the National Endowment played a major role in the survival of the company. From the mid-seventies through the early eighties, their direct subsidy has amounted to around $60,000 annually or about 20-25% of an approximately $250,000-$300,000 annual budget. In addition, indirect


74 In the early eighties, when it was clear that the company could no longer balance their budget, the New York State Council on the Arts did intervene with some support to help keep them going.
support from the National Endowment often filtered down to the company. An example of this was their week residency at the University of Texas in Austin which was partially supported by the National Endowment and the Texas Commission on the Arts and Humanities.

The change of their base of support from a more local and state level to a national level has had several disturbing consequences for the company. While The Paper Bag Players had early developed a national and even an international perspective through their touring, that was always a minor though important aspect of the company's work. The company has always been firmly rooted in New York city with an urban, New York perspective at the heart of their work and a New York season as a base from which to operate.

Increased support from the National Endowment has of necessity eroded The Paper Bag Players local support base. An interview with Ruth Mayles, head of the Theatre Panel of the National Endowment for the Arts during the latter seventies, reveals the basis for the grants to The Paper Bag Players. As she explains it, the company received their grants, always assuming excellence of work, because first of all no one else was doing anything for that very young age level (4-8), and secondly because they were trying to extend their work to a national perspective.75

By continuing to be funded in large part by federal funds, The Paper Bag Players accepted a clear mandate, then, to try to extend their

75Ruth Mayles, phone interview with the researcher, November 1979.
work on a national scale. The results for the company have been mostly negative. At a time when the core members of the company are getting older, they have been forced to do a lot of touring. For Judith Martin, who is without a doubt the prime mover behind the company, the touring fragments her talents and energy at this crucial point in the company's life. By forcing her to expend energy on the physical requirements of touring, it dilutes the energy she can commit to other important goals such as the creation of new material or the dissemination of her techniques and material through publication, workshops, and so forth.

Certainly for a small, non-profit, children's theatre company doing non-standard work, government support for the arts has been crucial to their survival. Yet a close examination of such support reveals the mixed blessing which it bestows. Despite those mixed results, however, government support has been the only sustained support The Paper Bag Players have continued to receive.

Decreased funding was only one of the company's problems during this period. Inflation was at the heart of all of their financial problems. Eventually the company's income could no longer cover their expenses, and they began to use capital to meet those expenses. For example, the funds which had been set aside for the purchase of a theatre were transferred to meet operational expenses. Eventually those funds were depleted and the company operated on a year-to-year, grant-to-grant basis, often running a deficit. For example, their income for the 1976-77 fiscal year was $231,443 while their operating expenses were $237,544,
leaving a deficit of $6,100. The earned income for that fiscal year was $117,783, exceeding the unearned income of $113,660. So despite the fact that the company admirably earned about half of their income through box office receipts, sponsor's fees, and such additional revenue as book and record sales, they were still running a deficit.

As inflation affected grant sources, the job of obtaining funding for the company also became more and more difficult. The company's sole remaining large-scale donor was the National Endowment for the Arts. With the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980, however, the company could no longer feel comfortable relying on government support for the arts. But at the same time, grant support from private donors was also becoming increasingly more difficult to obtain. In fact, it was difficult just to maintain former grant levels for the company. Since inflation and increased demands for support were cutting into the available funds, grants shrunk in size. The grants given companies like The Paper Bag Players were often small ($500 to $2,000). This necessitated the expansion of the number of grants applied for and consequently of the time and manpower needed to obtain those grants. Grant support became more impersonal—fewer grants came from loyal supporters, more from banks and corporations interested in the return their dollar would bring. Fewer grantors assumed the value of the arts, especially for children. More demanded "hard" proof of the effect their dollars would have—proof of the impact of the

company on children or at least proof of the public relations value it could offer the corporation. The problems of fund-raising began to require full-time administrative attention. Starting in 1980, the company hired a part-time fundraiser (development director).

An increasingly important problem for The Paper Bag Players, during this period, was the difficulty of providing time and money to allow the company to do their creative work. It was always easier to get grants for special projects, such as publishing Dandelion. The real difficulty was to get money for "dark time"—time to work on new material and develop new shows. This in turn affected the company's creative output.

At this same time, in addition to an increase in costs and a decrease in funding, the company began to experience their first booking difficulties. Their position had always been to maintain low box office prices for children. Often the only way they could accomplish this was through subsidy by sponsors. In an attempt to hold their box office prices low while countering the effects of inflation and maintaining standards, The Paper Bag Players continued to raise their base booking prices for sponsors. Unfortunately, the same inflationary problems were besetting children's theatre sponsors—their costs were higher too and their funding to sponsor shows was likewise diminishing. Despite their reputation and their quality work, The Paper Bag Players soon began to price themselves out of the market.

To give an example of their fee schedule, their 1977-1978 brochure states that their touring policy is to accept no less than a three-day minimum booking at the same location. With two performances or one
performance and a workshop per day, this means a minimum booking of six performances. Their fee at that time for six performances was $7200, with transportation and travel costs being "additional and negotiated." They obviously lost many bookings because of their high cost. The company found that by the 1980's, in order to survive, they had to be more flexible and offer their services at lower fees.

It is clear from the preceeding account of the financial difficulties of the company that during this period the job of company administrator became increasingly complex and difficult. Judith Liss sees a cycle in her long history as the company administrator. When she joined the company, the various administrative jobs were distributed among company members, volunteers, and a booking agent. Gradually, Liss assumed responsibility for those various roles and was able to provide competent management almost single-handedly for many years. By the end of the 1970's, however, the job had grown so complex that Liss was forced to redistribute many of those jobs again. As early as 1972, an assistant manager had been hired. From the 1973-74 season on, Edith Harnik served as a part-time administrative assistant, able to fill in and help Liss in many capacities. By the 1976-77 season, Liss had three assistants in administration. Despite the added salary costs, such assistance became increasingly necessary. By the latter 1970's, the company had professional assistance in many areas: a payroll firm handled the intricacies

77 The Paper Bag Players, 1977-78 brochure listing touring policy and fees.
of the payroll, pension plans, welfare, and social security; a publicity firm, Jacksina and Freedman, made it possible for the company to keep up with the level of media saturation and the increased professionalism in that field; and of course an accounting firm kept them fiscally responsible. In addition, the company also hired a professional booking agent for a short time.

The case of the booking agent is instructive in regards to the financial problems of the company. In June of 1977, facing severe financial problems, the company hired M. L. Byers as a booking agent. They hoped this would help solve their booking problems and relieve the pressure on the company administrator who could then concentrate more on fundraising. But the agent simply added his own fee onto the already high fee of the company and the combined fee proved prohibitive to many sponsors. An example of how that fee schedule worked can be seen in the cost to sponsors for three performances given by The Paper Bag Players at Middleton, New York on April 29-30, 1978. The sponsor was charged $1,500 for three performances or $1500 per performance. Out of this the agents' commission was $900, or $300 per performance, and the costs deducted by the agent for publicity, share of advertising, and so forth were around $600, or $200 performance, leaving the company with slightly over $1000 per performance.78 The cost the company had to charge to sponsors was thus increased by one-half simply by hiring a booking agent. In addition, it was difficult if not impossible to get a booking agent

to understand the touring conditions necessary to sustain the company.

As has been shown, Martin had always insisted on maintaining high standards in the work of the company. One way she did that was by insisting on excellent working conditions and salaries for the actors in the company. While the financial consequences of maintaining such high artistic standards have impacted on the company's ability to compete with other commercial children's theatre, it is clearly an important aspect of the company's work. Those sponsors who hire them back year after year insist that the reason they do so is because, as Bill Lockwood of Lincoln Center points out, "They have such high standards that they absolutely will not vary from . . . they stick to them and will not budge or compromise."\footnote{Bill Lockwood, interview with the researcher, New York, 18 November 1979. While Mr. Lockwood is currently at Lincoln Center, he also booked the Bags for about ten years while at the McCarter Theatre in Princeton, N. J.}

Or as Omus Hirschbine points out, he hires the company again and again because their work "is on an incredibly high level, a professional level, that you don't see in children's theatre much. . . . The work is made with such incredible care."\footnote{Omus Hirschbine, interview with the researcher, New York, 27 November 1979. While Mr. Hirschbine is currently with the 92nd St. YM-YWHA, he also booked the Bags for years while at Hunter College.}

Recognition

During this period, the company received the New York city mayoral citation (1977). They were invited to appear at numerous festivals such as the Canadian Child and Youth Drama Festival where their work was

\footnote{Bill Lockwood, interview with the researcher, New York, 18 November 1979. While Mr. Lockwood is currently at Lincoln Center, he also booked the Bags for about ten years while at the McCarter Theatre in Princeton, N. J.}

\footnote{Omus Hirschbine, interview with the researcher, New York, 27 November 1979. While Mr. Hirschbine is currently with the 92nd St. YM-YWHA, he also booked the Bags for years while at Hunter College.}
acclaimed by child drama experts from all over Canada. Judith Martin was also honored in 1981 with an appointment to the theatre panel for the National Endowment for the Arts.

It seems inevitable that after twenty years of creating theatre for children in the same format, however, that the company would begin to have some problems. To avoid repetition and to remain ever fresh and imaginative is quite a challenge after all that time. For the most part critics during this period continued to praise the company, finding them up to that challenge: "One thing that never changes is the standard of excellence offered by The Paper Bag Players. . . . The appeal and staying power of the actors attest to the universal humor and inventiveness they bring to their craft. They're not older, just better."  

Critics continued to express their deep respect for the artistry of the company in a field so bereft of it. They were seen as a unique company who pioneered in forging new directions in children's theatre. One critic felt that not only children's theatres but many adult theatres as well have imitated their work. In their audiences now were many second generation fans who came as children and were now bringing their own children. One critic who saw them as a child felt that "like good wine, they improve with time."  

However, during this period, the critical attention accorded the company did begin to wane in volume and also somewhat in enthusiasm. In 1976 and 1977, the volume of articles written on the company remained at over twenty per year. However, over half of those articles were published in small local papers where often the press releases of the company were printed with little change. From 1978 on, the company has found it increasingly difficult to get critics to review their work. Their press coverage has continued to dwindle even though they have hired a press agent. This is due mainly to the fact that they are performing less. However, since 1979, in addition to being less frequent, the reviews have also been less ecstatic about the company's work. While most reviews still praise the work of the company, many reviews seem perfunctory, few could be termed "rave", and several give a hard critical look at the company's work.

For example, the reaction of the London critics in 1979 can be compared to the rave reviews of a decade earlier. For the most part the 1979 London reviews were polite, even positive, but none exhibit the ebullience of the 1968/69 reviews. Some reviewers even found the company somewhat passé: "The essential Paper Bag style has been appropriated here by such outstanding television programmes for children as Play School, Playaway, and all the rest of them. I imagine that, for a change, children would much prefer to have a spot of colour and mystery in the theatre." 84

The change in the attitudes of the London critics epitomizes the problems the company was having. They were no longer the bright, young new discovery whom critics could eagerly pass on to their readers. When the company came into being over twenty years earlier, their approach had been so innovative that literally no one in children's theatre compared to them. In the twenty intervening years, the field of children's theatre had changed considerably. As child drama specialist Mary Jane Evans notes, "Production modes have diverged . . . into a seemingly endless variety of forms and styles. We hear of and see story theatre, improvisational theatre, instant theatre, participation theatre, to name but a few. Although these are the broad end general categories into which much of the 'new' theatre for children falls, there seem to be as many departures from the conventional as there are producers." The use of a uniform costume and the use of simple props designed to stimulate the children's imaginations—both elements The Paper Bag Players pioneered in—were by now almost overused in children's theatre. Not only had children's theatre changed, but generations of children had grown up in an age of electronic media, where sophisticated adult entertainment had become part of their lives. Children's literature was dealing in depth with such topics as divorce, death, and drugs. A critic reviewing The Bags' Christmas show at Marymount saw their material as "often bland—pleasant but bland." That critic went on to say that "The dominant tone is chipper and hygienic—no depths, no heights. The skits on contemporary

85 Mary Jane Evans, "Theatre For Children: Art Form Or Anarchy?" in Theatre for Young Audiences, Nellie McCaslin, ed. (New York and London: Longman, 1977), p. 120.
life, 'Big Burger' and 'Mama's Got A Job' go for immediacy and relevance. They are dealing with the present in a humorous fashion, they are unobjectionable. They are also predictably dull. They leave you pining for the wolf.\textsuperscript{86}

Despite such comments, the majority of critics were full of praise for the company during this period calling them, among other things, "the barometer of excellence in children's theatre," "the leading U. S. repertory company for kids," and "the model for imaginative children's theatre in this country."\textsuperscript{87} Critics especially singled the company out for dealing with contemporary experiences children can relate to while also stretching their minds and giving them serious thoughts and messages to consider. For the most part, critics saw their longevity and experience as in their favor: "For nearly two decades, the award-winning Paper Bag Players have set the standards of quality children's theatre and their own approach is still as fresh as ever."\textsuperscript{88}

Critics and drama experts, in trying to explain the continuing appeal of The Paper Bag Players despite the repetition in their work, compare them to "a good book" or the "classics" of literature which


\textsuperscript{88} Barbara L. Archer, "Creating magical theatre," Bergen County (N.J.) Record, 6 August 1976.
stand the test of time and repeated readings or to a good opera production which gives more pleasure on repeated viewings. The Paper Bag Players can also be compared to a modern dance company. They keep the best, discard the weakest and constantly add new selections to their repertory.

And of course, to the new generations of children who are their audience, The Paper Bag Players are as fresh as they have even been. Children of all ages as well as adults, whether critics, teachers, parents, or fans, continue to find their work utterly absorbing, fascinating, and delightful. Writing during this period, Los Angeles Times Theatre critic Dan Sullivan tries to analyze the Bags' magic hold over audiences. He speaks of their genius for making "wondrous props" from found objects. He then goes on to say:

"But that's not their principle genius. Nor is it their bounce as performers so total sometimes that they seem to be made of one of those Walt Disney miracle substances, like flubber. The Bags' magic goes deeper than that. Remember Mary Poppins' mystery elixir, raspberry for Michael, peppermint for Jane? That's how a Bags' performance works. Whatever one's age, they seem to be speaking especially to you, saying they understand what it's like to be"


91 In attending a concert of the Twyla Tharp dance troupe in the spring of 1982, for example, the researcher saw a range of selections, some choreographed as early as 1968 and some as late as 1982. In attending the Bags' production of I Won't Take A Bath that same spring, the researcher also saw a range of material, some created as early as 1962 and some as late as 1982.
five or eleven or forty-three. Take their classic sketch, 'Ma and The Kids.' If you're a parent it's about Ma. If you're a kid it's about The Kids. . . . At the same time, they're hitting everybody's funny bone, our common delight in spills and squabbles and logic stretched so far that it's goofy. To weld an audience of kids and grownups together with laughter at the same time you're talking to all of them as individuals—not even Mary Poppins could do that.92

Summary

By 1980, The Paper Bag Players had performed live for over two million people in seven countries and eighty-nine cities in twenty-four states. In addition, through their television appearances, they had reached millions of children in the United States, Britain, Sweden, and Australia. From 1958 to 1982, for a quarter of a century, they had continued to provide top quality theatre for children. Clive Barnes assesses their stature fairly accurately when he says that The Paper Bag Players are "probably the best and certainly the most established and internationally acclaimed" children's theatre company in our country.93

Critic Dan Sullivan also gives accurate historical perspective to their work: "The Bags are pioneers. When they started, children's theatre meant tacky adaptations of 'Cinderella' performed by actors who couldn't get anything better. The Bags did original pieces about modern kids and their families, and each piece was polished in workshop until it gleamed. They respected children enough to give them their best shot.


93Clive Barnes, "'The Bath' comes out of the Bag," p. 57.
This was new. If the Bags seem less unique today, it's only because so many other groups . . . have found the same kind of joy and challenge in working for young audiences."94 Because of their longevity, The Paper Bag Players occupy a unique and somewhat paradoxical position of being both pioneers in innovative children's theatre and "Our classic children's theatre, the standard by which others are judged."95


CHAPTER IV: HOW A PLAY IS MADE:
THE CREATIVE PROCESS OF THE PAPER BAG PLAYERS

Introduction: The Five Stages of the Creative Process

Before beginning a detailed analysis and discussion of the creative process used by The Paper Bag Players, it is useful to reprint two documents in which company members describe that process. These two documents should give the reader a good sense of the creative process in operation.

The first document, a detailed recollection by a company member, describes the creation of one scene:

To give some idea of the way an idea or a sketch is made ready for performance I would like to trace as well as I can a sequence in which I can remember my own part. When I lived in Boston I heard a story about Koussevitsky, who, displeased with his orchestra, tapped his baton for silence and then singled out the erring violinist to demand, "What for you play deedle, deedle, deedle?" This image of an irate conductor occurred to me one day [many years later] and I suggested to the company during a party, that it might be a good idea for a sketch. Driving to the country I worked out a sequence in my mind in which four conductors would be embroiled in an argument about the way to play a piece of music and each would ask the audience to sing it.

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his way. The music, a half-remembered unidentifiable waltz, suggested itself. The first conductor led the audience in singing "Deedle, deedle, deedle ..." only to be interrupted by an adamantly different-minded person who conducted "Doodle, doodle, doodle ..." Whereupon he was confronted by the third who favored "Diddle, diddle, diddle..."--the fourth, coming into a raging, gesticulating argument would by some accident become a peacemaker when he by chance discovered that one of each would work, "Deedle, doodle, diddle..."--finding this acceptable with a kind of crazy good humor and relief, they all delightedly danced the waltz.

I tried out the sketch for everybody, doing all the parts and we decided to work on it. At first we tried foreign accents for each conductor. This proved to be beyond our abilities and in questionable taste. We improvised with various speeches and character-types for each conductor. Finally we arrived at an effusive, maternal, dogmatic hostess with a very slight Germanic flavor for Betty; for Irving, a highly volatile "Artiste" with Russian-tinged high blood pressure and for Judy, a finger-shaking horrified pedagogue with English overtones. For the fourth conductor, J. C. McCord tried and discarded an Italian maestro to whom we appealed and who forced us to compromise out of respect; an old man; a jazz musician and a talkative Frenchman. He and we finally settled on a very forthright outsider who simply came upon the argument, asked what it was all about, tried to settle it and during a rhythmic argument discovered the solution. A means to discover the solution without weakening the end has not been found to our complete satisfaction even though we have tried several reworkings over the last two years. However, we tightened, staged, settled on the exact form of the argument, arranged the dance at the end and settled on the music.

The big problem was costumes. I wanted to make paper wigs, but we already had them in *Ma and the Kids*; we tried a wig made out of colored pipe cleaners but nobody cared for the effect. We decided to go shopping together at Woolworth's to look at their wigs and to make a group decision. They looked funny so we bought them Judy got a blond one, mine was black, Irving's was red and J. C.'s was gray. At the end of the piece, which
we called Deedle, Deedle, Deedle, and with which we closed the show, we all bowed sharply so that the wigs fell to the floor with a surprising thump, exactly on the beat and we straightened up, wigless. Although the wigs were very amusing, we had doubts about them as they didn't seem to be in our style. Maida Burr, a friend of "The Bags", who designs and makes costumes, suggested that each figure wear sandwich-board signs which, as I understood it, would be decorated with advertising for decorative effect. This idea didn't appeal to me until Judy and Irving painted men's evening clothes on two sets of cardboard sandwich-boards; we all loved the effect and Judy and I, then, each painted our own evening gowns on our sandwich-boards. We each made cardboard headdresses and tall black hats. This idea gave the feeling of a gala occasion and an elegance which enhanced the whole proceedings and which contrasted with the manners displayed during the argument. It also suggested a setting for the piece as a place where a formal symphonic entertainment took place for fancy people in fancy clothes.\(^1\)

While this recollection describes the creation of a specific short scene, the second document, part of a grant proposal of The Paper Bag Players, gives a more general description of the overall creative method used to build an entire production:

There is no format in the Bags approach to creating new pieces or productions. Usually beginning with a rough idea, Judith Martin starts to work alone in the studio. Often she will work with Irving Burton to crystallize an idea in advance of its presentation to the cast. Donald Ashwander's musical ideas sometimes lead, sometimes follow the course of the action.

Beginning with Judith's ideas, props, or suggested dialogue, the cast starts to work in the studio, building a scene. Occasionally things develop in an orderly fashion: dialogue, music, movement—one evolving out of the other, growing eventually into a well-integrated whole. But more often than not the development is chaotic. The dialogue may not take shape, however, a costume idea will spur

the action. The song may be inappropriate, but a dance will emerge instead.

Slowly, with Judith's eye as the determining factor, idea builds upon idea and in a zigzag, backtracking way, the ideas take shape into an organized theatrical piece. Eventually, the various pieces are linked together into the proper dramatic sequence for a complete revue that can best be described as a theatrical collage.

At this stage several performances are given in the studio before an invited audience for its reaction. The show is then refined and made ready to be tried out on the public--preferably on children in the neighboring public schools. Since the studio is located in the Lower East Side of Manhattan, the surrounding elementary schools offer an ideal diversity of ethnic and language background. To hold the attention of this varied group is the acid test. If response to the action flags, if the audience participation numbers do not catch on, if a line of dialogue is not understood or if a visual effect fails, the show is reworked and the poorly executed skit changed or eliminated. When the piece finally jells, and is consistently well-received by different audiences, it is put into the repertoire and performed for the paying public.

In a sense, a Paper Bag play is never finished. After every performance, the company makes notes, critically evaluates each actors' contributions, may repaint the scenery or remake a prop, and, in innumerable ways, continually strives to perfect the production.²

From these descriptions of the creative process of The Paper Bag Players it is clear that the company has two creative problems to solve, that of building the individual scenes within a production and that of assembling the larger production. The format of the company's productions came from the dance concert, and there were many advantages to

²The Paper Bag Players, "Creating a New Show," part of the 1976 grant proposal to the National Endowment for the Arts, in the files of The Paper Bag Players.
this format of creating short pieces and then stringing them together.
As company member Betty Osgood puts it, "the children have a short attention span and so did we." As artists, they could create a piece very quickly and it would hold their attention until it was done. They could then go on to another piece. It was also possible, working on shorter pieces, to perfect them to the satisfaction of the group and to work on them until they were like finely honed short stories. From a practical point of view, it made a lot of sense to work on short pieces. When strengthening a production, the company could keep the strong pieces in, take the weak ones out, and continually change and perfect the show.
The only show with a long, plotted, character development story, Guffawhaw, was not very successful. This departure from the norm merely reinforced the value of working in smaller segments.

The company's creative effort is an on-going fluid process, one in which all company members are free to contribute and one in which even the audience plays a part. The company strives to maintain a balance between creativity and the discipline necessary to produce a viable work of art that communicates with an audience. They attempt to satisfy the needs of both the artists in the company and the children in the audience. Such an on-going creative process, one in which company members are all free to contribute and in which scenes and productions are continually changed may seem to defy analysis. One factor which contributes to the apparent chaos is the fact that while all the various steps of the

\[3\] Betty Osgood, interview with the researcher, Southampton, June 1979.
creative process are discernible in almost every creative act of the company, they may overlap, be abbreviated, be re-arranged, or even be cancelled. The creative act may appear to happen in a flash, with several steps of the process occurring in an artist's mind. Or the process may become bogged down and fail. Company members are unanimous in their statements that the material that actually gets on the stage is just the tip of the iceberg, that most of the material the company develops is eventually discarded. Another factor which contributes to the seeming chaos of the company's creative work is their openness, their willingness at all times to consider new observations and to try out new ideas.

The company's work may also appear chaotic because they may be working on several different scenes from a couple of different productions all at different stages of the creative process: they may be polishing a new scene for the current production, reworking an old scene to add to this production, and creating a new scene for a future production. Nevertheless, underlying the apparently chaotic method in which a scene or production evolves, there is an order, a discipline, which can be described.

The Paper Bag Players claim to have no exact formula for creating a scene or a show, but after twenty-five years of creating original material for children's theatre in the same style, they do have a discipline underlying their creative process. In studying how a scene or production evolves, the researcher discerned a number of stages in the creative process as well as a number of specific techniques used by the company to aid this process. In addition to relying on descriptions
and observations of the creative process in action, the researcher ex-
examined the scripted and recorded repertory of the company in detail to
discover how that repertory reflects that process. 4

Before studying each stage of the creative method used by The Pa-
per Bag Players, it is useful to first summarize that method: 5

4 Appendix C contains a listing and description of the scenes and
productions in the repertory of The Paper Bag Players. In the text,
when the title of a scene is given, it will be placed in quotation marks
to distinguish it from a production which will be underlined (italicized).
When a scene is discussed in the text, the production it comes from
will be included in parentheses. Appropriate short abbreviations will
be used to identify productions, such as Horse for My Horse is Waiting
and Bath for I Won't Take A Bath.

All quotations from the repertory of the company come from the
scripted material and audio and video tapes in the files of the company
and the researcher. Because none of the sources are published, page and
line references will not be included.

5 Though the following description and analysis of the creative pro-
cess of The Paper Bag Players is the researcher's own work, for her un-
derstanding of and insight into the creative problem solving process,
the researcher is indebted to the work of E. Paul Torrance. Torrance
describes the creative problem solving process in the following five
stages: 1) becoming sensitive to or aware of problems, bringing avail-
able information together in new relationships, defining the problem;
2) searching for solutions ("Diagnosing, manipulating, rearranging,
built on previous experience, making guesses and hypotheses");
3) testing, modifying, and re-testing solutions; 4) perfecting the cho-
sen solution "until it is logically and aesthetically pleasing"; and
5) communicating the results. See E. Paul Torrance, Encouraging Crea-
See also E. Paul Torrance, Rewarding Creative Behavior: Experiments in
Classroom Creativity (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1965);
and E. Paul Torrance and R. E. Myers, Creative Learning and Teaching,
The Paper Bag Players' Creative Process: A Summary

1. **Finding The Problem—Openness, Observation, Creative Brainstorming and Experimentation:** There is a period of observation, creative brainstorming and artistic experimentation during which the artist(s) is(are) open to all ideas. The artist(s) then focus(es) in on one idea, concept, or element of composition and experiments with that one idea or element, producing a stimulus which s/he then presents to the company to interest them in working on this problem [Pre-Rehearsal].

2. **Trying Out, Finding, and Testing Solutions—Experimentation, Disciplined Improvisation, and Development:** Together in rehearsal, the company experiments and improvises on this problem, trying out various solutions, until a pretty definite idea and a theatrically viable form for this idea evolves. The idea is then developed into a scene [Rehearsal: Building the Scenes].

3. **Testing and Perfecting Solutions—Finding an Artistically Satisfying, Polished Form for Scenes and Productions:** (a) each scene is further rehearsed, polished, perfected, and "set" for performance; (b) a number of scenes are strung together into a longer production according to certain principles of composition; and (c) the entire production is rehearsed, polished, perfected, and "set" for performance [Rehearsal: Polishing the Scenes; Building and Polishing the Production].

4. **Communicating Solutions—Sharing with an Audience:** The scene or production is shared with an audience in performance, formally or informally, in studio, school, or theatre [Performance].

5. **Continued Testing, Modifying, and Re-testing Solutions:** (a) Based on the audiences' and the company's reactions to the performance, changes are made in the production and/or individual scenes. Scenes may be deleted or new scenes created and added according to the needs of the overall production; and (b) Steps four and five are repeated over and over [Notes, Critique, More Rehearsals].
The Dynamics of the Group Process

Before beginning a detailed analysis of each of these five stages of the creative process of The Paper Bag Players, it is useful to give an over-view of the dynamics of the group process both in the early ensemble company and under Judith Martin's direction. This will enable the reader to understand the individual artist's contributions to the creative process and to perceive those factors which facilitated the creative process.

The Early Ensemble Group Process

The founders of The Paper Bag Players were all strong individuals, trained in different arts and each had a very different approach to the creative process. By joining together such diverse individuals, the early ensemble group may be considered to resemble the "synectics" approach to problem-solving as described by E. Paul Torrance: "The term 'synectics' is from the Greek and means joining together of different and apparently irrelevant elements. The synectics group approach seeks to integrate creatively a number of diverse individuals into a problem-stating and problem-solving group."6 By forcing such an integration, there is often a freeing of creative powers.

In the case of The Paper Bag Players, integrating artists from several different mediums brought not only a freeing of individual and

6E. Paul Torrance and R. E. Myers, Creative Learning and Teaching, p. 91.
group creative powers, but also a great sense of excitement as the individual artists attempted to work in each other's art forms. In that early group each artist brought to the group great skill in his or her own art form plus the desire or willingness to cross over and work in one another's mediums.

Company member Betty Osgood describes how this collaboration of the various artists in the group functioned to create a unique style of working:

> From the beginning a kind of total theatre began to develop: a theatre in which each artist found enjoyment and stimulation in the experience of working cooperatively with others of different backgrounds, trying his skill at all the arts of the theatre. It is a theatre in which the painter dances, the writer suggests musical ideas and the dancers dip into their paint cans. If the composer steps away from his instrument to join in the acting improvisations, he may find himself on the stage, dressed in a storekeeper's apron, saying lines, and playing not on his [piano] but on tin cans. . . . Ours is a theatre in which everyone rehearses everybody's part, everyone searches for the right cardboard boxes and paper bags, everyone cuts, pastes, tapes and constructs, and then everyone sits down to settle on the working version of the script.

One guideline followed by this early ensemble was the principle that all company members had to do everything. They insisted that in order to perform in a production, an artist had to take part in the creation of the material. Shirley Kaplan recalls this period as the closest she has ever come to working in a true ensemble. Kaplan suggests that the reason the early material was so strong was because the

ensemble process produced such "unexpected collaborative images" (Interview, November 1979).

While the biographies and history of the company have revealed much about the individual artists that formed that early ensemble, it will be useful to understand more clearly how those artists contributed to the creative process. Judith Martin remembers the early company as being "an enormously collaborative effort. Shirley Kaplan . . . had a fresh uninhibited approach to theatre and a special ability to improvise with materials, paper boxes, and found objects. Remy Charlip . . . first introduced the idea of using cardboard and paper for costumes and props. His highly disciplined visual sensitivity demanded that every scenic element read accurately to the audience. Sudie Bond . . . set a standard of first-rate acting that the company has since tried to maintain. And Daniel Jahn was a musician with the greatest devotion to the company." Martin herself brought to the group the impetus to work for children and the experience to do so. She also brought the nonverbal emphasis on movement and dance plus the natural style that set the tone of the Bags' productions. In addition, Martin brought most of the ideas to that early group and an understanding of how to develop those ideas through improvisation. Table 2 further illustrates the creative characteristics of the artists in that early ensemble.

One can see from this table that the artists who formed that early ensemble all worked in very different ways. Martin feels that together

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### Table 2

**Characteristics of Artists in Early Ensemble**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Where to Begin</th>
<th>Martin</th>
<th>Charlip</th>
<th>Kaplan</th>
<th>Bond</th>
<th>Jahn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- begin with specific ideas or stories</td>
<td>- begin with ideas or with materials</td>
<td>- begin from nothing (from the &quot;moment of disarray&quot;)</td>
<td>- begin from materials at hand</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How to Work (Approach)</th>
<th>Martin</th>
<th>Charlip</th>
<th>Kaplan</th>
<th>Bond</th>
<th>Jahn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- plan ahead</td>
<td>- work out ideas in detail—plan ahead</td>
<td>- do not plan ahead</td>
<td>- spontaneous creation</td>
<td>- improvising with materials (paper, paint, etc.)</td>
<td>- work from impulse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- bring specific ideas and suggestions to rehearsal</td>
<td>- create paper props and costumes to illustrate and reinforce content</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- improvise and develop ideas through acting and movement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Special Skills or Talents</th>
<th>Martin</th>
<th>Charlip</th>
<th>Kaplan</th>
<th>Bond</th>
<th>Jahn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- director's eye (analyze, refocus material, keep on track)</td>
<td>- strong designer's eye for detail</td>
<td>- free-floating fantasy</td>
<td>- broad imagination</td>
<td>- improvising music on piano</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- knowledge of what works for children</td>
<td>- good sense of finished form</td>
<td>- wild and creative imagination</td>
<td>- excellent actress (tasteful, noncompromising, and serious)</td>
<td>- following the action</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- creating and improvising with movement, space, and ideas</td>
<td>- strong verbal ability</td>
<td>- strong verbal ability (good with dialogue, poetry, etc.)</td>
<td>- bold and daring artist</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- strong non-verbal thrust (movement)</td>
<td>- creative ideas and artistic details</td>
<td>- strong verbal ability</td>
<td>- imaginative</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ordered, illustrative, exacting artist</td>
<td>- free-floating fantasy</td>
<td>- strong imagination</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Contribution</th>
<th>Martin</th>
<th>Charlip</th>
<th>Kaplan</th>
<th>Bond</th>
<th>Jahn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- contributing ideas for scenes</td>
<td>- giving visual form to ideas (perfecting and arranging details and adding finishing touches)</td>
<td>- the spontaneous creation of dramatic material</td>
<td>- ability to make each moment in a scene interesting and believable</td>
<td>- providing background /support music</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- getting ideas into theatrically viable form</td>
<td>- adding form and ideas</td>
<td>- leaving room for surprise and change in material</td>
<td>- developing continuity in a skit</td>
<td>- control element/cautious conservative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- making material very specific, theatrical, and focused for children</td>
<td>- creating props and scenery</td>
<td>- spontaneous creation with paper materials</td>
<td>- avoiding the trite and obvious</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Point-of-View/Artistic Needs</th>
<th>Martin</th>
<th>Charlip</th>
<th>Kaplan</th>
<th>Bond</th>
<th>Jahn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- need for clarity and simplicity in work</td>
<td>- need for neatness and precision; every detail in its place</td>
<td>- need to leave &quot;rough edges&quot; visible in creative work</td>
<td>- need to keep the material involving moment by moment and the acting honest and believable</td>
<td>- need to remain in the background—to make his music serve the group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- communication with audience is most important</td>
<td>- need for clear visual communication</td>
<td>- process of creation most important (art work ends with its creation)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- content (what the theatre says to children) is important</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
they formed an organic whole by each having strengths which compensated for each other's weaknesses; that by working in such different ways, they complemented, challenged, and stretched each other; and that to­gether they were able to produce something beyond their individual abili­ties.

The Group Process Under Judith Martin's Direction

Judith Martin has been the discerning eye and ear for The Paper Bag Players since 1965; it is she who brings most of the story ideas to the group; it is she who directs the creative process in rehearsal; it is she who ultimately decides what goes on stage.

Martin prepares for each rehearsal as one prepares to teach a class or direct a conventional play. When working on new material, she usually comes prepared with at least four very specific strong suggestions or ideas to work on, knowing that "some days the first idea will be so good you'll never get to the others, but that some days you'll go right through all four ideas" (Interview, June 1979).

Martin feels it is no longer possible to be as easy-going about the work as she could in the early days. She has to prepare thoroughly in order to produce the necessary amount of usable production material. As Martin observes, "Sometimes this business of waiting for things to happen is so uneconomical. You waste so much time. It seems to work best if I come in with a very strong notion, and then feel very easy about letting it go in another direction" (Interview, June 1979).
While Martin is clearly the creative spark, her ideas receive considerable development and refinement through the group process. As the only two other remaining core members in the company, Irving Burton and Donald Ashwander play important roles in that group process of building scenes and productions. The performance and production pressures of the company often force Martin to exclude the younger actors from the creative process in favor of the quicker method of working with her old-time colleagues. The company is still nurturant of these young performers, however, particularly if they show creative talent or potential. Martin uses suggestions that emerge from these young performers whenever possible. Martin is, however, highly intolerant of performers who are simply there to put in their time, who are unsympathetic to the company’s aims, or who are unable to perform up to par. Martin is also ruthless in cutting off any suggestions during the creative process which she deems not on track.

It is helpful, when discussing the creative process of The Paper Bag Players, to further explain the term improvisation as used by Judith Martin. For Martin, improvisation primarily gives performers the freedom to develop material without preconception, to have "the experience of working, of moving, of seizing on something, of being surprised by something" (Interview, June 1979). Martin also believes, however, that improvisation must be disciplined. She feels that most directors today use improvisation very self-indulgently, that it is used merely as a process of letting go, a freeing process for the actors. Martin, on the other hand, feels that improvisation is "a discipline where you
establish something and where it develops, and where you have a commitment to share and shape what you have said as a way of getting to something very important" (Interview, June 1979).

For Martin there must be a constant interplay between the spontaneous creative process and the discipline necessary to turn ideas and material generated through this process into finished works which will communicate effectively with children in a theatre performance. The balance may tilt in one direction or another, depending on the purpose of a particular improvisational session. In a workshop or class situation, the emphasis may be on the more open creative process of generating ideas, whereas in a rehearsal the emphasis may be on the more disciplined process of perfecting material for performance. Likewise, in the early stages of building a new production, the emphasis may be on creating, whereas in the later rehearsals it may be on polishing. Both elements are always simultaneously present in some form, however. Because the younger actors do not always understand Martin's approach to improvisation, they can sometimes feel frustrated and cut-off from the creative process. This is one of the changes that has occurred in the creative process of the company. Because Martin has so much more responsibility than any of the artists in the early ensemble company, and because the company is so much more of a business and a full-time occupation than it was in the early years, many changes in the creative process have followed.

During the past few years, the creative process of the company has evolved to the following procedure. Martin usually works alone on new
ideas. During the summer, she often works in her studio in Southhampton
developing new material. As her new ideas get more concrete, Martin
will work with Burton (for non-musical numbers) or Ashwander (for musi-
cal numbers) whenever she can in advance of presenting them to the com-
pany. Once the company goes into their fall rehearsal schedule, the
ideas for any new scenes need to be pretty definite. The company mem-
bers usually only have a few weeks of rehearsal before they begin a full
performance and touring schedule. Sometimes, when she can hire a com-
petent replacement, Martin will even stay home from tours to continue
to work on new material.

One problem with Martin working alone to develop new material is
that she is not a playwright. Martin prefers a situation where she can
work with others, where she can take something that someone else does,
and build on it, develop it, color it. It is the artistic interaction
that really stimulates Martin. She really needs to work with other
creative artists in order to develop scenes and plays. While the com-
pany no longer works in true ensemble fashion, the group process is
nevertheless extremely important.

Martin likens the group process of building a scene and a show to
that of "a giant erector set," in which she, Burton, and Ashwander work
together to construct the whole. 9 As she puts it: "The show evolves.
One person's idea builds on another. Rehearsals are chaotic, but when
something works, it has an excitement, it lets out sparks. The form

9Judith Martin in Claire Berman, "The Paper Bags Don't Kid Around
develops from the idea. Martin insists that while she is the director of the company, the productions are still created by the entire company: "By the time we're done, these aren't my stories any more; they're our stories."

Next to Martin, Donald Ashwander is most important in the creative process, providing all of the music, much of the lyrics, and many ideas. Ashwander's music, because it has become such an integral part of the productions, has influenced the creative process in several ways. The company has become much more of a musical theatre: many more production numbers are song and dance pieces which feature the music. In these numbers, the music determines not only the style and the form of the scene but even the movement and the pace.

In addition, Ashwander's music has often influenced the creation of material. In the creative sessions, sometimes the music will lead and sometimes it will follow. But it is always a strong element in the creation of a new scene. In fact, the music is so strong that it can hinder as well as aid the creative process. On pieces where Martin does not want the music to lead, she prefers to have creative sessions without Ashwander: "I like to have some rehearsals without Donald because in the first place, he's very facile. He's much faster than we are, and sometimes he picks up an idea that you don't want to pursue, but

10 Judith Martin in Marcia Marks, "The Paper Bag Players: This is about the six," p. 53.

11 Judith Martin in Claire Berman, "The Paper Bags Don't Kid Around with Kids."
he's phrased it in such a funny, witty way that you go along with it" (Interview, June 1979). In addition, Martin and Ashwander have a different style of working. Ashwander is very impatient to get things formulated musically. He wants to move on to rehearsing and polishing a new piece very quickly. Martin, on the other hand, gets upset if a new scene is pulled too quickly into a form. She never wants to rehearse and clean up a piece unless she is certain that the content in the piece is going right.

In creating song pieces, however, Ashwander always takes the lead. Usually Martin will supply him with an idea for a song, as in "Move Over" and "Hot Feet" (both from Hot Feet). Ashwander then takes the idea and composes not only the music but often most of the lyrics as well. As Martin notes, "Donald has a very strong wonderful sense of words, like all those funny words in 'Hot Feet'—'Take the chicken out, I'll eat later, Put my feet in the refrigerator.'—all those things are his. He has a very funny sense of humor. And he likes simple things, so his music and words are very good and very strong" (Interview, June 1979). Ashwander also has a good sense of what children will remember musically, and composes songs they can sing at home long after they have seen the production.

Irving Burton is also a strong influence on the developing scenes. Burton's special contribution is an excellent sense of what will work on stage. He helps keep things very simple, direct, physical, and theatrical. As Martin points out, "When Donald's words get too fussy or when an idea is getting too complicated, Irving more than anyone
else will say, 'Donald, nobody will sing that . . . Nobody will remember those intricate, fussy words'" (Interview, June 1979). While Burton doesn't often contribute the ideas for scenes, he is so responsive and so enthusiastic to them, that his enthusiasm carries Martin along in the creative process. Burton has the ability to get into an idea completely as an actor. He is most helpful in keeping the creative process intense and in helping to supply the stage life—the physicalization and stage business—for an idea.

While it is useful to understand the individual artist's contributions to the group creative process and the dynamics of that process, a full understanding of how ideas are generated and how those ideas are then turned into usable theatrical material requires a more detailed analysis and understanding of the creative process of the company. During the remainder of this chapter, therefore, the researcher analyzes each of these five stages of the creative process of the company in detail, noting those special creative techniques, methods, and/or principles used by the company.

**The First Stage in The Creative Process: Finding The Problem—**

**Observation, Creative Brainstorming, and Experimentation**

A common problem of creativity is the feeling expressed in the phrase, "Where do I begin?" From students to playwrights to actors to directors to companies trying to create original material, when one is faced with a blank page, a new beginning, there is at least the fear that one will not be able to generate original concepts and ideas worth
working on. Here The Paper Bag Players can provide an especially useful model. One thing all company members interviewed expressed agreement on was the wealth of ideas and material they always had to work on. And of course, one element of the company's work that critics often stress is the originality of the material they perform. An analysis of some of the ways in which they continue to generate this unique material could provide a useful model for other creative artists or students wishing to produce their own original material.

In order to stimulate a quantity of unique ideas, it is necessary to have a period of receptivity, a period during which these ideas are taken in, a period during which, in fact, no ideas are rejected, a period during which an open, receptive, uncritical mind is maintained. This is the first stage of the creative process of The Paper Bag Players, summarized as follows:

There is a period of observation, creative brainstorming, and artistic experimentation during which the artist(s) is (are) open to all ideas. The artist(s) then focus(es) in on one idea, concept or element of composition and experiments with that one idea or element, producing a stimulus which s/he presents to the company to interest them in working on this problem.

This stage includes the period before an idea is successfully presented to the company for them to work on. This is the period during which the artist generates ideas for scenes and/or productions, focuses in on an idea or element (sound, movement, paper etc.) and experiments with that idea or element. Often this experimenting will be done with the paper materials—paper, cardboard, and so forth—or with
common household objects. The artist aims to produce a stimulus—a prop, a piece of music, an idea, some rough dialogue, part of an action, a costume, and so forth. The stimulus should be defined enough to be interesting and yet open enough to interest the rest of the company in working on that particular problem.

This first stage in the creative process can be done by one artist working alone, by any combination of artists, by the entire company, or it can be stimulated by people outside the company such as friends, spouse, parents, teachers, and children. The three processes involved in this first stage—observation, creative brainstorming, and artistic experimentation—can be used alone or in any combination. For purposes of analysis, however, the researcher finds two main divisions in order: (1) observation and creative brainstorming and (2) artistic experimentation.

**Generating Ideas Through Observation and Creative Brainstorming**

While observation (the act of perceiving or taking in ideas) and brainstorming (the act of unrestrainedly offering up those ideas to others) are two separate procedures, in the creative process of The Paper Bag Players, the distinction between those two actions is blurred. They often occur simultaneously or are at least organically interconnected. Therefore, the researcher uses them as one category in this analysis of the ways the company generates ideas. This category of observation and creative brainstorming is divided for purposes of analysis into three subcategories: (1) ideas stimulated by a single artist;
(2) ideas stimulated by several artists or the company working together; and (3) ideas stimulated by outside sources.

Before discussing each of these three categories, it is useful to briefly note those factors which make the company especially successful during this stage of generating new ideas. These factors could almost be called pre-conditions for creativity, factors in the artists themselves or in the atmosphere they create which allow ideas to flow more freely.

Certainly attitudes or abilities shared by the artists in the company facilitate the creative process and make them especially good at the skill of observation. One such attitude is an openness, awareness, and sensitivity to the daily world around them. As Judith Martin notes, "Ordinary situations and objects are very much alive and full of special poetry for us." Another is their rich sense of humor which allows them not only to see but to laugh at the incongruities of the ordinary world. Still another is the belief that the most mundane conversation or daily occurrence has this "special poetry" and can provide interesting and humorous dramatic material. As Shirley Kaplan comments, "I feel this is a strength of Judy's and of mine too—the ability to see the humor and the drama in the small things, like the grocer putting an apple instead of a tomato in the bag. I mean, small, dumb things can be really funny and seem to us to be part of the magic of it all" (Interview, November 1979).

While these factors facilitate creativity by increasing the receptivity of company members to ideas, other factors facilitate the group process of sharing those ideas openly with one another. The most important of those factors is the caring atmosphere fostered by The Paper Bag Players. Within the context of their work (they are definitely not communal as some early articles indicated),[13] the company members laugh together, eat together, play together, and work together. At its best, the company provides an atmosphere of trust in which individuals can feel accepted and open enough to be spontaneous and to share even their most absurd thoughts, observations, and fantasies with one another. What this atmosphere of trust does is to allow the company (or individual artist) to be able to observe and sense problems and ideas at the same time that they are able to defer judgement long enough to generate a quantity of ideas, some of which are unique. This is the objective of creative brainstorming. The company is able to provide at least a brief period during which the four rules of creative brainstorming are followed, however unconsciously, on their part: criticism is ruled out (acceptance); quantity is desired (fluency); combination and improvement of ideas are sought (hitchhiking); and unique, original ideas are welcomed (freewheeling).[14]

A Single Artist Generates Ideas.—While many other individuals have provided both inspiration and ideas, as previously noted, Judith


Martin is the source of most of the ideas for the company. Martin, in turn, gets most of her ideas through her observational skills, through her interaction with others, and through her long time association with the company. A few examples will illustrate this.

Many ideas for skits come from friends of the artist, but it is the artist's creative imagination that sees the dramatic potential in the story. Martin relates the origins of "It's Just Not Fair" (Grandpa) as such an incident. Martin was having coffee with a teacher and mother, Ruth Grinspoon, and Grinspoon related how she had become so exasperated at the breakfast table with her daughter's whining and complaining--"I want this, I want that, I want more, I want less"--that she had very calmly dumped an entire bowl of cereal over her daughter's head (Interview, June 1979). Martin recalls laughing so hard at this story not because it was so funny but because it hit her with such truth--as a moment in which those feelings of frustration are suddenly revealed in a very concrete way. So always it is the artist's imagination and openness which see the potential drama in everyday occurrences.

Another important source of ideas and inspiration for Martin and the company are the classes and workshops which they teach to artists, teachers, and children. Much of the early production material came from Martin's dance classes for children. They were pieces Martin invented to use with these classes, pieces such as "The Jumping Bean Story" (Cut-Ups) and "The Tree Angel" (Scraps). A good example of an idea which came out of a later workshop is the idea of tearing paper on stage. This idea came out of something a student, Charlotte Hinsman,
did in one of Judith Martin's adult classes. Martin recalls that Hinsman did a scene where she tore her outfit out of paper and then put it on. Though the story in this scene was not very interesting, to Martin the tearing of the paper itself was absolutely fascinating to watch. Martin remembers she kept thinking about wanting to use this idea of tearing paper in a scene: "And I just sat there and thought and thought and thought until I came up with a story where I could tear the paper---the bed and the cookies" (Interview, June 1979). "Cookies, Cookies, Cookies" (Bath) was thus inspired by the work of others, but the brainstorming that produced the idea for the scene was done in the mind of the artist.

Often when one artist does the observation and/or creative brainstorming, an idea may seem to appear from nowhere as in a flash. Such inspirational flashes are a commonly reported experience of creative artists who are often not really able to articulate the sources of their ideas nor the steps of their creative process. Judith Martin reports the creation on "Little Litter" (Hot Feet) in this manner. She recalls that she had the idea of using wax paper in the back of her head one day in the studio and then she got the idea for this skit and they put it together in the studio all in one day and never changed it. She speaks of it as "one of those inspired moments when something good just comes together in a moment" (Interview, June 1979).

Usually, however, even an idea that appears to come spontaneously from nowhere has been germinated by ideas which have incubated in the

mind of the artist for some time. In the case of "Little Litter," for example, on further questioning Martin recalls that someone in one of her classes had created a piece in which two very ominous and mysterious people in a subway overpower a little fellow. This was the germ of the story idea for "Little Litter." The other inspiration for this piece was the wax paper itself which led to the marvelous wax paper dance in which the two mysterious gentlemen do what is close to a Chinese scarf dance with wax paper and end up encasing the street worker in the wax paper. Determining the inspiration for this use of wax paper, however, was not as simple as determining the source of the story idea. The paper materials themselves are often the source for the most inspired Paper Bag scenes, and a scene such as this one is based on years and years of working with those paper materials. Remy Charlip, in a discussion with the researcher, pointed out several precedents for the use of the wax paper in this particular scene. One such inspiration was Shirley Kaplan's early improvisations with wax paper, recorded in photographs (1960), in which she created, among other things, a skirt and hair out of wax paper. Later the company used this wax paper costume to dress the good witch in "Witch Switch" (Group Soup) (1962). But it wasn't until later when Martin began to emphasize the movement of the paper materials that a direct precedent was created. Martin choreographed a dance sequence for Slow Jim Fitch's dream in Guffawhaw (1966) in which she used moving wax paper. Thus when Martin came to the studio that day and had the inspiration which resulted in "Little Litter" (1969), while she said she simply had the "idea of wax paper in my
head," in addition, she also had years and years of experience working with the paper materials.

Often the problem or idea for a scene comes directly from life, from things the company members do or see or hear. One example of this is when Betty Osgood heard the story about Koussevitsky which later became the idea for "Deedle, Deedle, Deedle" (Horse). In this case, the idea was stored in the artist's memory for quite some time before it emerged as a possible problem to work on (a period of incubation). "The Real Me" (Bath, 1982) is an example of a recent scene inspired by an interaction between Martin and her teenage daughter Daisy. In this case, when Daisy came home one day from a good friend's house in a state of shock, having just seen her friend's mother throw a tantrum, she exclaimed to Martin, "Mother, I finally saw the real Mrs. ________ ."

When a single artist is the source of the idea for a scene, there is usually little record left of the process which led up to that idea. Martin herself keeps a notebook, but it is just a jotting down of ideas, dialogue, and so forth. There is very little recording of the creative process. One exception to this is the case of Remy Charlip. Charlip has kept his notebooks from the time he was with the company and often these notebooks do record the creative process in action. In an interview with the researcher, Charlip produced several documents of that creative process. One such document was, appropriately, a brown paper bag on which he had written at the top "things that can become other things." This was followed by a list of such things as "a little house becomes a big house or a skyscraper; a cupcake becomes a wedding
cake; a cup becomes a bathtub; and so forth. Charlip had also doodled on this paper, drawing out several of these transformations of one thing into another. Charlip recalls that out of this list the group developed the skit "Cupcake" (Group Soup).

**Several Artists or The Entire Company Generate Ideas.**—Often the idea for a scene will come out of a group process of brainstorming together or improvising together. Sometimes such creative brainstorming or improvisation is done by a couple of artists working together. Shirley Kaplan recalls the motivation for "You're Gorgeous" (Scraps) came from observing Joyce Aaron who was "the beauty of the group": "'You're Gorgeous' was something Judy and I did for Joyce because we used to laugh when she looked in the mirror all the time. And one day we said to each other, something like, would you change the way you look?" (Interview, November 1979). Based on this idea, Kaplan and Martin did an improvisation about what they did or did not like about their faces and the scene came out of that improvisation.

Sometimes the entire company will begin brainstorming together spontaneously in an actual life situation and it will lead to a scene. Martin recalls the inspiration for the giant Claus Oldenberg-style "Sandwich" in *Hot Feet*: "It was based on an actual incident. The company was ordering sandwiches, and we all said we wanted a ham sandwich, and somebody said, 'with lettuce,' and somebody else said, 'with tomato,' and so somebody else said, 'and a little pickle . . . and so we went on and on with this joke" (Interview, June 1979). Out of this joke, however, came the inspiration for a scene.
Sometimes an individual artist will relate a life experience to the company and the company will then pick up on this as an idea for a scene and brainstorm around it together. Irving Burton recalls describing to the company (or in Burton's case it was probably more like acting it out) the scene at his family dinner table with all four of their children demanding first this and then that until by the end of the meal he and his wife were completely exhausted. From this idea, the company then brainstormed ideas that eventually resulted in "Ma and The Kids" (Fortunately).

Sometimes the company will use a theme to generate ideas for a scene or even for an entire production. Many of the ideas in _Group Soup_, for example, were based on the idea of transformation, of one person or thing being transformed into another person or thing. This was inspired, in part, by the company's transformation of objects and common materials into props and costumes. It was mainly two artists, however, Charlip and Martin, who did the creative brainstorming together to produce most of the ideas for this production. Martin recalls that the two of them would have what she calls "think sessions" and would come up with as many ideas as they could based on that theme. From this the company improvised together to come up with the actual scenes.

Sometimes the company will use a creative concept or idea rather than a theme to generate ideas. _Hot Feet_, is a good example of a production inspired by a single concept—rather than a theme—the theatrical concept of "big". Everything in _Hot Feet_ was big. Martin recalls that "It was exciting to work on _Hot Feet_ because we had this
idea that really set us all up—big, colorful, loud, raucous—and it immediately gave everything that sort of related style" (Interview, June 1979). **Hot Feet** was inspired by the company's work in the city streets and they decided to base the production on the city: "We were very excited about being in the city, and because we kept visualizing the street and the city and the neighborhoods, and because we wanted something that would project, it got us into something big. And we did our first big scenery, and we did our first real slapstick—yelling and screaming and running around. We had the notion of it being like street theatre. And we broke into a much broader kind of thing with **Hot Feet**, and just because we kept visualizing the city and thinking big" (Interview, June 1979). The ideas for the scenes in **Hot Feet** thus came out of a group process of working together on the theme of the city and the idea of "big." "Move Over," for example, was developed mainly out of the idea of the pushing and shoving one has to put up with in a city, but it was the idea of "big" that gave this skit its special twist at the end.

**Generating Ideas With the Help of Outsiders.**—Examples have already been given of ideas that were inspired by others ("Cookies," "It's Just Not Fair"). In these examples, it was the artist's ability to perceive the potential in the idea and use it as a source for creative brainstorming that generated the idea for a scene. Sometimes outside sources are used more directly or outsiders actually become participants in the creative brainstorming process.

Examples of material that were inspired by family living have already been given ("Ma and The Kids", "The Real Me"), but in the case of
Judith Martin, the family becomes not only an important source of ideas and inspiration, but also in some cases, the family members become part of the creative brainstorming process. "Bathtub" (Bath, 1982) is an example of a recent scene inspired by a game that Martin used to play with her daughter Daisy when she was a little girl. Martin remembers that Daisy and her kitty would be on the bed and she would stroke the little girl and help her stroke the kitty while chanting "And the Mommy pats the baby and the baby pats the kitty and the kitty goes, meow meow." Later she and Daisy made up many verses to that game. And much later Martin's recall of that game inspired a new scene.

In the development of Dandelion it was Martin's husband Sol Miller who was an important part of the creative brainstorming process. Because Dandelion was based on the concept of evolution and because Miller is an anthropologist, Martin used him as her partner in developing ideas for scenes for this production. Martin recalls that the two of them would discuss the ideas and Miller would clarify them until they were simple enough for her to understand, and then she would translate those ideas into examples that would be dramatically interesting and which children could appreciate. Following is a transcript from an interview with the researcher in which Martin gives examples of this process:

I'd say to Sol, "Well, what separated man from animals, what's the real thing." And he'd say "culture." And I'd say, "What do you mean? What is culture?" And then he'd explain it, "It's like something you do because you've learned it, as opposed to instinct." And then I'd say, "Like a fox learns something from its mother?" And he'd say "no, that's not what it's like. It's like a weapon. You hit something and you know what that stick is and then you tell your child to hit
something." And so then I would say, "would it be like an umbrella?"... Or I'd say to Sol, "what made the fish come out of the water?" And he'd say, "Well, I don't know, but probably there were too many fishes and the waters were crowded and they were isolated into these little places." And so I would almost simplify his explanation, like "Too many fishes, too little water." It was almost a direct simplification. It was almost how I could understand the complex scientific concept...but Sol himself understood it well enough to make it simple enough for me, and then I would further reduce it. Sol practically made up the dinosaur thing, because we had a very hard time with the Dinosaur, and he said, "Well, it's very simple," I remember him saying, "Well, they got cold and their eggs got cold..." That scene is practically Sol's exasperated final explanation to me (Interview, June 1979).

From these examples one can also see that the creative brainstorming process is not something that stops at this first step. Rather, the creative brainstorming process is often used throughout the creation, building, and polishing of a piece.

While the vast majority of the material of The Paper Bag Players is original, a few of their skits are derived from or inspired by books, songs, and jokes. Sometimes, this material is used almost as is by the company. As example of this is the two jokes told to the company by children, "Fortunately" (Fortunately) and "Mr. McGuire" (Horse).

Betty Osgood recalls that the joke "Fortunately" was told to the company by two ten-year old boys, Ned and Claude, who visited with the company for awhile after one performance. In this case the company used almost the same form employed by the children. Osgood also relates the joke "Mr. McGuire" from "Minute Movies" (My Horse Is Waiting)
came directly from a piece called "Old Jokes" that was presented by a class in The Paper Bag Festival at P. S. 108.

Usually, however, when a piece is derived from another source, the material is changed considerably. A good example of how the company transforms a source into the inspiration for their own material is the piece "The Meatball Song" (Group Soup). This was based on the Tom Glazer song, "On Top Of Spaghetti," but only two of the original verses from the song were used and the company added fifteen additional verses plus dialogue, action, props and costumes. In the humorous and original Paper Bag version, it becomes the saga of the narrators' search for his "true meatball" in which the meatball has such adventures as becoming a movie star, an unidentified flying object, and a world champion skater.

Generating Ideas Through Focus On and Experimentation With One Element

Another way in which the company generates creative ideas is to encourage exploration, experimentation, and play. Judith Martin feels that an important inspiration for her and the company has been "free-associational sessions of play and improvisation." In fact, Martin feels that they began to work for children partly "because children are close to the thing we feel is important in the theatre--play"; and because "a sense of fun and play are important in releasing the energy and imagination of both actors and children"; and because it is very

important for actors to stay in touch with this child-like part of
themselves." Indeed much of the strength of the Bags' material and
ideas comes from the actors clowning around and from their delight in
the unique ideas they come up with.

For The Paper Bag Players, a special and very important part of
the creative process is the materials themselves—paper, cardboard, and
common objects. As Judith Martin points out, "We're very much into
everyday urban life. . . . Our starting point is the ordinary object,
often discarded, that we find around us everyday, if we look." In
fact, the creative process often begins with the artist(s) focusing on
and experimenting with the paper or cardboard boxes at hand. Here the
creative brainstorming is the process of the artist(s) interacting and
experimenting with the paper materials. Sometimes an artist will be­
gin with a particular dramatic element such as color, or shape, or
movement, or sound.

Often the artist will already have the idea for a new scene, but
experimentation with one element will provide the stimulus that gives
that idea life. "Little Litter" (Hot Feet) is an example of a scene
where experimentation with paper, wax paper in this case, was an equal

17 Judith Martin in Suzanne Boorsch, "Paper Bag Players Score Bang,"
Manhattan East, 9 August 1968, p. 9; Judith Martin in Barbara Cloud,
"Teachers Dancing Through Workshops: Lose Inhibitions in Creative Ex­
cercises," Pittsburgh Press, 1 April 1977, p. A-16; and Judith Martin
in "The Lively Arts," unsigned article, The New York Herald Tribune,
14 April 1963.

18 Judith Martin in "The Paper Baggers . . . spring vacation show,"
unsigned article, The New York Herald Tribune, 14 April 1973, sec. 4,
pp. 1, 9.
partner with the idea itself in creating a new scene. In many cases, however, it is the materials themselves which inspire new ideas. An example already given of this is when Judith Martin sat down and created "Cookies" from the idea of tearing of paper.

Shirley Kaplan was instrumental in establishing improvisational sessions with paper materials as an important part of the early improvisational process of the company. It was Kaplan who insisted that they needed their own studio equipped with lots of boxes and paper so that they could readily improvise with those materials. Kaplan also insisted that they have a session in which they improvised with the materials on hand while a professional photographer photographed them. From this session came many ideas for early production numbers. But also, because the unexpected and surprising images from this session were captured in photographs, they could be used to inspire costume and prop ideas much later. Charlip cites two images created by Kaplan as examples— one picture showing Kaplan covered with rope-like spaghetti predates the images of "The Meatball Song," and one picture showing Kaplan with wax paper hair and dress, as already noted, predates the company’s later use of wax paper.

Two scenes which emerged directly from this early photographed improvisational session were "Where'd You Get Those Funny Clothes?" (Cut-Ups) and "What's The Message?" (Scraps). Though both of these scenes were inspired by the unusual images which emerged from this improvisational session, in both cases, ideas interacted with materials to produce the scene. For example, the company already had an idea
that they wanted to do an audience participation piece in which the children in the audience would be given a message in segments. So in this case, the improvisation with materials fed into an idea and they came together in "What's The Message?" On the other hand, the idea for "Where'd You Get Those Funny Clothes?" came directly from the materials, as actors developed crazy costume ideas and then created dialogue to go along with them. The process went both ways however, and in some cases, as the dialogue developed or an idea took shape, the materials and costumes were evolved to fit that concept or dialogue. In the evolution of almost any Paper Bag scene, the paper materials and the ideas constantly feed each other and interact in the creative brainstorming.

Spontaneous Use of The Paper Materials in the Creative Process.--

One important method of creative brainstorming which grew out of the company's early work, and out of their insistence on having a lot of miscellaneous material on hand, was the use of the paper materials. Many ideas were inspired just by the moment and the materials at hand. As Martin comments, "Someone might grab a frying pan and say, 'This is the sun,' and we'd take it from there. The formation of the earth sequence ['Earthshake' from Dandelion] just happened one day when one of the actors [Irving Burton] got to fooling around with a huge piece of wrapping paper. You could never sit down and actually think that up."¹⁹

"Earthquake" is thus an example in which just the right box or bag suggested a skit to the company. However, it was the company interaction which actually produced that scene. Martin recalls that they had a giant crumpled brown paper bag lying around the studio (one that had previously been used to encase the entire company). One day in the studio, Burton simply got inside the bag and started moving around and dancing inside it. Burton recalls that after he started moving around, Martin then began to describe what he was doing as the creation of the world, and then Ashwander began to play music appropriate to both the movement and the narration.

"Two Long Lost Relatives" (Cut-Ups) is one more example where the idea for a scene came out of playing with the materials in the studio. Martin recalls that at that time there were garment bags available which were big heavy paper bags with little cellophane windows in them so you could look in and see your clothes. They had several of those bags in the studio and one day the actors got into those bags and began to move around the studio, improvising dialogue as they bumped into each other or peered out the cellophane windows at one another.

**Deliberate Use of the Paper Materials in the Creative Process.**—Out of the spontaneous use of paper materials, a somewhat more codified use of those materials developed. Martin gradually began to use the paper materials in a more deliberate way, to provide a stimulus to the creative process.

The dance "Shoes" is an example of a scene in which the cardboard box props were created spontaneously but then used somewhat deliberately
to provoke the creation of a piece. Martin recalls how she created the
stimulus which led to this scene:

I was in the studio one night, and we had a lot of
boxes around as Shirley thought we should, and I
don't know what got into me, but I painted a big
shoe, and then I painted a little shoe, and it
just sort of amused me so much. And it turned out
that we had enough boxes so that, knowing we were
going to have a rehearsal the next day, I made
these two huge shoes and these two little shoes,
and it even then struck me as funny. I remember
all by myself, I was laughing in the studio
(Interview, June 1979).

Martin then left these two sets of cardboard box shoes in the middle of
the studio floor to see what creative response they would provoke from
the company in rehearsal the next day.

Eventually, Martin deliberately set out to create and use paper
props, people, and costumes to provoke the creative process. She would,
for example, during the summer months while working in her own studio
create a set of cardboard or paper bag people which she would then use
with the group to create a scene. "Twins" (Mama) is a good example of
this. For this piece, Martin created a group of characters drawn on
giant paper bags in cartoon-style. These were presented to the group
and together they created an appropriate skit to use them.

"A Paper Box Story"—Integration of the Paper into the Creative
Process.—It will be useful to give a final example of how the paper
materials are integrated into the creative process. "A Paper Bag Story"
(Group Soup) began in an improvisational session in which the company
developed costumes and then improvised around them. From this session,
Martin and Charlip had the idea of making huge stylized masks out of
cardboard boxes. They wanted to do a story based on these masks which would be performed in a stylized Kabuki-like fashion. Charlip, who was very skilled in adding details in art work, had the idea of using the natural flap on the cardboard boxes to enable the masks to change expression. He made the masks and drew a smile on one side of the flap and a frown on the other so the characters could raise or lower the flap to express sadness or happiness. Martin then took that idea and developed it into a story. In fact, the entire story was based on that one technical devise. As the story and characters developed, more masks were made. From this example, it is easy to see how spontaneous improvisation with the paper materials and the deliberate use of those materials both play an important part in the creative process of The Paper Bag Players.

Experimentation With Music As Part of the Creative Process. — As noted previously, Donald Ashwander's music is often an integral part of the process of creating scenes. We have already seen how music played a part in the creation of "Earthshake." In that case, Ashwander simply followed the lead of Martin and Burton and provided appropriate music for the actions. Often, however, the music is a more forceful element in the process of building scenes.

An example of how the music can take the lead in the creative process occurred in the evolution of the scene "Shoes" (Hot Feet). Earlier a description was given of the four pairs of shoes--two large, two small--created by Judith Martin from cardboard boxes one night in the studio. When the cast came to rehearsal the next day, they were
greeted by these cardboard shoes. Martin describes what happened next, how this stimulus idea was built into a scene:

When they [the company] came in everybody loved them [the cardboard box shoes]. And they put them on right away and they started to fool around with them. We were just doing steps. And then Donald was amused, and he started to play this rag, so we decided we had to have a number with them. We tried a few things. We tried walking on saying, 'Oh, my feet hurt, my feet hurt, want to trade shoes?' And of course, when Donald's around, you don't tend to do talking things, because his music is there, and everything is better with his music. So we got this dance going, this very simple plot about these two people dancing with big shoes, and they keep clunking into each other, and then along come these two people with little shoes, and they're doing just beautifully. And then the big shoe man cuts in, and the little shoe man is very annoyed, but then he sees the big shoe woman, and so they exchange partners and they dance off happily. But that was one place where the prop came first, and we stumbled around trying to get an idea for it, and Donald's music was there, so we took off with that— and the story was just sort of a vehicle (Interview, June 1979).

From this example, one can see that the element of music is another important part of the creative process of The Paper Bag Players.

The Second Stage in The Creative Process:

Disciplined Improvisation—Building,
Developing, and Rehearsing Scenes

Short scenes are the building blocks of the productions of The Paper Bag Players. After the first stage of creative inspiration, when the company gets the ideas or finds suitable problems to work on, the next stage is to take those ideas or problems and give them a form that will work theatrically. This stage is summarized as follows:
Stage 2: **Trying Out, Finding, and Testing Solutions**
---Experimentation, Disciplined Improvisation, and Development: Together in rehearsal, the company experiments, and improvises on this problem, trying out various solutions, until a pretty definite idea and a theatrically viable form for this idea evolves. The idea is then developed into a scene.

For Judith Martin this stage of the creative process is the most challenging—the attempt to capture the power of the spontaneous creative moment and the ability to put that moment on stage in a form that retains the original power while communicating with an audience. Martin comments on this challenge:

That creative process is what sets me up. One of the most interesting and elusive things is to catch that and to freeze it or crystallized it so that it can be put in the theatre. In teaching class after class, people you would never think would do anything that was good, and they would do something that was so terrific, and you'd say, 'Now why can't we get that on the stage? Why is that so difficult to put on the stage?' It is a very elusive thing . . . and what we finally ended up with on the stage was not as interesting as what happened in the creative session. . . . Once in awhile you have a terrific dramatic moment on the stage, but so often these wonderful things that happen in classroom improvisation that depend on particular timing or a particular, wonderful movement juxtaposed against another unexpected movement, and an enormous statement that would be hard to verbalize is made, and try as you will, you can just never get it on the stage. That's one of the frustrating things about working in a loose, creative situation. Often what you end up with is not--doesn't come near--the power of the creative moment you had (Interview, June 1979).

Despite the frustration and difficulties acknowledged by Martin, The Paper Bag Players are highly successful in this stage of the creative process, giving individual scenes an appropriate dramatic form.

One factor which contributes to that success is the mind-set of the
company, a mind-set in which they are free from an imposed formula, a
mind-set that encourages them to explore, experiment, play, test out
ideas, even to fail.

In order to be creative one must be flexible. Flexibility enables
the creator to "bring together in new relationships available existing
information" through "the use of many different approaches and stra-
tegies." In order to do this The Paper Bag Players have sought to be
free from a formula, imposed structure, or tradition as to how to deve-
lop a scene. From the beginning, however, they also reserved the right
to use traditional forms, such as a waltz or a tightly-structured short
drama, when they were appropriate. They sought always to let the form
of the scene come from the idea, to maintain the ability to shift
easily from one form to another as well as from one subject to another,
and to use any combination of the performing and visual arts appropriate
to communication of the idea.

To say that The Paper Bag Players remain flexible during this stage
of the creative process does not imply that they create in a void, out
of chaos. It implies rather that they seek to maintain the balance be-
tween the openness to creative ideas and the discipline necessary to
produce a viable work of art that communicates with an audience. Since
the company is so successful in maintaining this balance, and in parti-
cular in maintaining creativity during this stage it will be helpful to
further analyze how a scene gets from a rough idea into a theatrically

20E. Paul Torrance, Encouraging Creativity in The Classroom,
pp. 1, 60.
viable form.

One method they have for aiding their creative work is to set limitations for themselves. All artists work within limitations, whether of time, materials, or form. Many artists will also force creativity by setting specific limitations and then exploring all creative avenues within those limitations. In the case of The Paper Bag Players, the materials used, for instance—the paper and cardboard—have dictated much of the style of the company. Setting such limitations or parameters on a creative problem can serve to facilitate and stimulate creativity. Staying within the limitations of the paper materials, in fact, has proven to be the company's most useful way of forcing creativity.

Another example of how limits are placed on the creative problem is the size of the company. Being forced to work within the limits of a company of four actors sets practical parameters on their work, facilitating the creative process: in "Deedle, Deedle, Deedle" (Horse), there are four conductors; in "Shoes" (Guffawahaw) there are two couples; in "The Kings" (Bath), there are four kings, and so forth. The scenes take shape much more quickly when the company works within such practical limitations. Sometimes, the company is even stimulated to push against such limitations. In "Horace" (Horse), for example, one actor plays a family of seven people while in Guffawahaw, the four actors play an entire town of over forty people.

In addition to setting large parameters to their creative work, the company often uses specific limitations to force creativity within a particular scene. In "The Tree Angel" (Scraps), for instance,
everything was done in rhymed couplets. Or in "The Jumping Bean Story" (Cut-Ups) the actors playing the beans were dressed in pillow cases, forcing them to make interesting movements without the use of their arms.

While this technique is useful to the company, it is not exclusive or unique to them. The researcher was, however, able to identify six unique techniques used repeatedly by The Paper Bag Players to extend their material, to expand on basic ideas, to build scenes. The remainder of the discussion of this second stage of their creative process will be devoted to an illustration of these six specific techniques through examples from their repertory.

**Special Techniques Used By The Paper Bag Players To Develop Ideas and Scenes**

An analysis of the creative product of The Paper Bag Players can reveal much about their creative process. The researcher, through such an analysis of the scripted and recorded repertory of the company found at least six creative problem-solving techniques that are used consistently by the company to extend and develop ideas and scenes:  

1. pushing a concept to its extreme;
2. analogies to make the familiar strange and the strange familiar;
3. elaboration (unusual or novel use of objects, people, and ideas);
4. simplification (including repetition and the use of a literal action);

21 The researcher is indebted to E. Paul Torrance and his discussions of the creative problem-solving process for her understanding of these techniques. See in particular Torrance and Myers, pp. 22-24, 78-82, 91-93; and Torrance, *Encouraging Creativity in the Classroom*, pp. 1-8, 81-90.
(5) combining contradictory elements; and
(6) play with language.

It will be useful to examine each of these techniques in detail, noting how they have been applied, both consciously and unconsciously, to help create original dramatic material. It is through these creative problem-solving methods that the company has been able to continue to turn out unique material for over twenty-five years. Examples from scenes and productions will be used to illustrate the company's use of each technique.

**Pushing A Concept To Its' Extreme.**—This is a technique that has been used over and over by the company, that of carrying out an idea to the fullest extent of its' possibilities, or pushing a concept to its' extreme logical conclusion. Within a skit, this technique is often used for comic effect. For example, in "Sandwich" (Hot Feet), the idea of someone ordering a sandwich and then adding one ingredient after another is carried to the extreme of having the Sandwich end up larger than the waitress.

This technique is often used with the paper props and costumes. In "Cow" (Everybody) the use of paper is carried to its' logical extreme, with surprising and funny results, when an actress milks a cardboard cow and gets a cardboard carton of milk in return. In this and other skits, the interplay between the symbolic and real nature of the cardboard and paper figures is played upon. The company will often allow the cardboard figures to accomplish physical feats that ordinary humans cannot, such as the ballet dancer in "Stunt" (Everybody), the boy in "Disco Skater" (Mama), or the little girl in "Daisy" (Bath). The
result of this extreme behavior is often funny, but somehow also poetic and lyrical. By allowing the cardboard figures to do things that it is logically possible for them to do, but not possible for the human figures they represent, the cardboard figures can shift between being symbols of reality and fantasy, often fulfilling daydreams and fantasies children (and adults) have about accomplishing impossible feats such as flying, or skating like an Olympic star, or folding up a so-so dancing partner and putting him away when a better one comes along.

Another way Judith Martin has used this idea of pushing a concept to its extreme is to simply see how far she can carry a particular use of paper. In "Cookies" (Bath), the audience is delighted with the extent to which the company is able to carry out the idea of drawing the scenery and action on paper. All the scenery and props are drawn as the scene evolves on a big cardboard flat covered with layers of white paper: when Aunt Judy bakes cookies, she draws large circles on the paper; the children later steal these "cookies" by tearing off the paper; when Aunt Judy wants to know what time it is, she draws a clock, when she wants to take a nap, she draws a bed, when she wants to know where the children are, she draws a window; when Aunt Judy teaches the children how to bake, they draw the ingredients as she lists them, they mix them up by scribbling all over the paper, and then get them ready for the oven by tearing the paper off and crumpling it into a big ball. Again the humor comes from the juxtaposition of the real with the imaginary, and from seeing just how far the "drawing concept" can be taken: the children "sit" on drawn chairs; Judy "sleeps" in her
drawn bed; she "makes the bed" with masking tape; and Judy draws a clock and then is surprised at how late it is.

In another skit, "Stolen Sneakers" (Grandpa), this concept of drawing the scenery on paper is given another dimension, that of a competition between the actors (characters). In this skit, Maggie has stolen Virgil's sneakers and he has chased her up a tree and cornered her. While the actual actress is up above a drawn tree, the rest of the cast draws out on the paper below her a struggle in which Virgil tries to keep her in the tree and Judy and Irving try to help her get out of the tree: Judy draws a ladder for her to climb down; Virgil counters by drawing a mean dog to keep her in the tree; Irving then draws a mean cat to chase away the dog; they then each draw cages around each other's animals; and so forth. In this scene, this concept of carrying an action to its extreme is played out in a fashion similar to the child's game of "I Dare You"--in this case it's "I dare you to come up with something to top my last drawing."

Sometimes the idea of carrying out an idea to its full extent provides the entire basis of a scene. Such was the case in four short scenes under the title "I've Been Thinking" (Cut-Ups). These four short scenes are all variations of creative thinking, of the kind of imaginative extensions of thoughts that children (and child-like persons) might have. They are each a kind of creative "tall-tale". In "Chocolate Covered Thoughts," for instance, the narrator starts with the simple statement "I would like a chocolate covered cherry." His chocolate-covered thoughts are extended to such improbabilities as
"chocolate-covered spaghetti" and such absurdities as "a chocolate-covered bicycle." The other three scenes are different variations of this technique of taking one idea and extending it, of playing a kind of creative child's game with the idea.

Often this technique is used by the company in the form of a joke extended beyond normal expectations. In "The Visit" (Fortunately), for example, the old joke about the two friends who visit each other at the same time is carried to such an extreme. After missing each other time after time, and finally getting notes (simultaneously) to wait for each other to return, the two friends wait at one another's houses, and they wait and they wait, patiently sitting out the changing of the seasons and the passing of an entire year. The extreme to which this joke is carried elicits both much laughter and much spontaneous audience participation.

Sometimes The Paper Bag Players use this technique in a more conventional way. In its conventional dramatic usage, this concept is simply one of theatrical exaggeration. In "Ma and the Kids" (Fortunately), for instance, the plight of the harassed mother is exaggerated to an extreme both to make it theatrically interesting and farcical and also to underline the essential truth of the situation. Likewise, in "Subway Squash" (Bath), the plight of the 'squashed' subway commuter is extended theatrically by having four such commuters inextricably linked together and forced to live a kind of Siamese-twin existence. Rarely, however, does this more conventional usage of this technique result in the freshness or originality of the more extreme uses of the technique.
In an interesting variation of the concept, the ordinary theatrical manner of compressing time is exaggerated and extended. In "Old Friends" (Group Soup, Grandpa), the characters age twenty-five years in the space of a minute or two. They circle slowly round the stage to music, stopping to relate the passing of time and to don appropriate costume or prop pieces to symbolize the aging process. In "Bow Wow" (Dandelion), when the cast is given the task of illustrating the invention of language, they don't focus in on one simple act, such as the use of picture drawing. Instead, they use a wide-angle lens and telescope much of history into this short scene. First, through a series of confusions within a cave dwelling family, they show the need for a written form of language. They then show the invention of picture-drawing, and then the invention of the alphabet and number system. But even that is not enough. They go on to show each of the members of the cave family speculating about the endless ways they could use their new invention—to write "a letter...a poem...the story of my life...a history of the world." In The Paper Bag Players' world, infinity can be condensed into a few short sentences.

The Use of Analogy To Make The Familiar Strange and The Strange Familiar.--Another technique used continually by The Paper Bag Players in both their content and the visualization of that content is the use of analogies. An analogy is a comparison of two things which are in most ways very dissimilar. The comparison can take something that is familiar to the audience and through the comparison make it strange or it can take something that is strange and make it familiar. The
theatrical use of analogy is not the same as the literary use, however. In literary terms, the analogy often takes the form of a figure of speech such as a simile, a metaphor, or personification. In theatrical terms, the analogy is most often done directly, through action or visualization.

The most common use of analogy in The Paper Bag Players is their use of found objects and paper in making their costumes and props. In most cases, they take familiar objects and use them in highly unusual, unfamiliar and creative ways. The result is both funny and inspiring. Though the list of ways The Paper Bag Players have used this technique is endless, a few examples are as follows: a woman's purse worn upside down becomes a king's battle helmet and a ruler becomes his sword; egg cartons become fancy shoes, a coffee can becomes a muff, a lampshade turns into a hat, plastic spoons and paper cups are used as earrings; the Sunday comics turn into a queen's coronation robe or an ostrich's plumes; cardboard boxes turn into mountains, cities, icebergs, dancing shoes or a knight's medieval armor; a paper bag can become a giant puppet, a witches hat, a water puddle, or a huge nose. In each case, part of the pleasure comes from the double image of recognizing both the familiar object and the ingenuity of how that object has been used.

The company also uses direct analogy as the basis for some scenes. One example of this is the scene "Box Talk" (Bath). In this scene, the talk between two parcel post packages is compared directly to the courtship of two young people: two large boxes meet, get acquainted, argue, fight, make up, get married, and re-enter with two baby boxes.
The indirect use of analogy is more common in the content of The Paper Bag Players scenes, however. In this form of analogy, the strange is made familiar by a kind of implied comparison. In "The Jumping Bean Story" (Cut-Ups), for instance, when the jumping beans rebel against being cooked in the pot by the woman, they are really like children rebelling against authority or at least good-naturedly tricking their teachers, parents, and so forth. Likewise, when the "Cupcake" (in Group Soup) wishes to be a strawberry shortcake or a birthday cake or a wedding cake, she is really like a child wishing to be a fireman, a movie star, the President or a princess.

Because the actors portray the objects or animals in these skits, this is a form of personification, where the objects or animals are given human characteristics. The comparison is never directly made, however, but absorbed through the action. For example, in "Conversations" (Guffawhaw), the actors portray objects entirely through mime, body work and dialogue with no use of props or costumes. In this scene there is a series of very clever and funny imaginary conversations between closely-related objects. Each conversation involves a conflict of interest: the pickle does not want to get in the jar with the other pickles; the foot is uncomfortable in the shoe; the can does not want to be opened by the can opener; the hamburger does not realize he is about to be eaten by the mouth; the ice cream is helplessly melting on cone; the hammer keeps missing the nail who mocks him; the dust keeps cleverly avoiding the broom; and the dog tries to keep his unruly fleas under control. In each case, the conflicts of these objects are made
familiar through personification. For example, the hamburger is like
the person who blissfully enjoys today, never thinking of the conse­
quences until it is too late as she sensuously enjoys the blanket of
ketchup poured all over her, discovering at the last minute that she
is about to be eaten. Likewise, the nail is like the little guy against
the big guy, a kind of Till Eulenspiegel of a nail: "Seemingly de­
fenseless before the onslaught of the hammer, he cunningly avoids the
descending blows."22

A more complex example of this personification process can be seen
in the skit "Lettuce" (Dandelion). In this skit, the company was faced
with illustrating the concept of man evolving out of monkeys. They
personified the monkeys, making them like young children and they fami­
liarized the concept of man evolving from monkey by turning it into a
series of children's games: first one monkey discovers by accident
that she can stand on two legs (much in the way a new skill is often
discovered by a child) and then this discovery forms the basis of sev­
eral familiar games. The elements that children would recognize in­
clude the following: the pure joy of a new found skill; the game of
"See what I can do, can you do it too?"; the game of "Catch me if you
can"; and the defiance of "I will not do what you order me to do."
Through these familiar elements, the unfamiliar and rather complex
evolutionary concept is made accessible to children.

22"'Paper Bag' Children's Theatre," unsigned article, New York
Elaboration.—As a technique for building scenes and extending material, elaboration is one of the most commonly used devices of The Paper Bag Players. In elaboration, objects, people, and ideas are used in unusual or novel ways; new alternatives and new combinations of ideas are produced; or the tables are turned and an unexpected point of view or new perspective is shown. Part of elaboration is to avoid the obvious. For example, in Dandelion, when the company tries to get across the concept of man inventing culture in order to survive, they do not use the obvious inventions as examples—fire, the wheel, and so forth. With the exception of the weapon, the company make their point and make it humorously by choosing less obvious examples, such as the umbrella and cat food. If the company uses the obvious, trite, or clichéd, it is for a humorous point, or to turn it around to give it a new perspective.

The unusual use of objects is, of course, one of the staples of the creativity of The Paper Bag Players. This has already been discussed as part of the technique of analogy, though it could very well also be included here. What will be included under this technique of elaboration instead is instances when the unusual use of found objects and paper props becomes the entire point of departure for the creation of a scene.

A good example of elaboration in the creation of a scene is "Lost and Found" (Hot Feet). Elaboration works on many levels simultaneously in this scene. On the first level, familiar objects are used in unfamiliar ways: two little old bag ladies enter dressed in trash-can treasures—a coffee can muff, a lampshade hat, plastic spoon
earrings, and so forth. Almost immediately, these objects are trans­formed and used in another way: the two ladies decide to have tea and proceed to take off their trashy clothes and make a tea-setting with them—"A skirt becomes a table; a shawl, a table cloth; paper cup earrings become teacups; a hat becomes a picture frame; a rolled up cardboard coat becomes a lampstand; a hat, a lampshade; a muff, a vase; earrings, saucers and teaspoons; and a purse, a chair." Shortly thereafter, the garbageman carts the ladies tea setting/clothes away as trash only to have them retrieved by the ladies who dress up in them again. What the props do in this instance is reinforce the unusual and sudden changes in perspective in the scene. In this scene the unex­pected or unusual perspective is presented as the norm. The two ladies are portrayed as perfectly normal. Then, when the usual perspective in­trudes on this—when the garbageman carts away their clothes which really are trash—it provides the contrast. At the end, there is an­other contrast in perspectives when the garbageman, now searching for his missing trash, asks a young man passing by if he has seen it, and the young man replies that all he saw was "Just two ladies. But they were very well dressed."

In many instances, the technique of elaboration involves a sudden or unexpected change of perspective. In "A Great Big Kiss" (Grandpa), for instance, a daddy sings to his little baby girl, "Let the little baby give her great big daddy a great big kiss." Suddenly the tables turn and the baby's tiny cardboard costume extends to reveal long legs.

23 Annette Kuhn, "Kids," The Village Voice, 16 April 1970.
As she stands up, the daddy shrinks down, and she sings to him (in a
deep, sexy voice), "Let the great big baby give her little daddy
a great big kiss." While this sudden change in perspective is humorous,
it also provides a deeper pleasure and satisfaction from the child's
recognition that his/her turn is coming too.

Another example where an unexpected point of view provides the
humor and the point of a scene is in "Dazzling" (Everybody). In this
scene, a man is waiting for his date who is late to go to a party. He
speculates that she is probably trying on outfit after outfit, because
she is "so fussy about her clothes." When she enters, dressed to the
teeth in a flour sack, a paper shawl, and a cardboard hat, his response
is the expected, "You've got to be kidding. You can't go to a party
looking like that!" When she indignantly asks what's the matter with
the way she looks, he replies that she cannot go to a formal party wear­
ing only one glove. She immediately dons the other glove (a large man's
work glove) and the man exclaims rapturously that she looks "Dazzling."
In this short scene, the company plays on our expectations as to what
the man's response will be. By having him give the expected response
and then turning that around, giving a different meaning to that re­
response, it adds even more humor to the number.

This technique of playing on the audience's expectations and then
giving them a totally unexpected point of view is often used by The
Paper Bag Players. The scene "Spider" (Mama), for instance, has the
trappings of a fairy tale: a little girl is sitting eating when a
giant spider larger than her appears beside her. The audience quickly
learns that the spider is a man under an evil spell and that the girl can release him by kissing him. In this scene, the young children in the audience probably expect a fairy tale ending, while the older children and adults in the audience, already keyed in to the style of the company, probably expect a modern story in which a liberated little girl somehow becomes the heroine. Neither expectation is met—instead, the little girl turns the spider back into a man, but when the man proves to be an obnoxious, greedy bully who eats all her food, she very calmly turns him back into a spider again.

Sometimes the technique of elaboration takes on a totally fantastic approach as in "The Cat's Meow" (Scraps) and "The Pill" (Horse). In "The Cat's Meow" Betty feeds her cat a dog biscuit by mistake and she begins to bark like a dog. In "The Pill," a man takes a pill for a headache and shrinks to about two feet tall. His wife frantically calls the doctor for help, but when she finds out he doesn't make house calls, she solves the problem herself by taking a pill too and shrinking down to her husband's size. Such a sudden, unexpected point of view provides much of the humor of these pieces and is a technique used frequently by the company.

Simplification.—The technique of simplification, of focusing on one or a few elements and of translating ideas into a format that will communicate very directly with the audience is a constant in the productions of The Paper Bag Players. This technique assures that the very young child (ages 3-5) will understand the material; it also in many instances means that the company can communicate very well with
special audiences, such as those who do not understand much English or audiences of retarded or developmentally delayed children.

The biggest way the company uses the technique of simplification is by focusing on fewer elements in a given scene. If the visual costume and props are the focus, for example, then the dialogue is usually sparse or the piece may be non-verbal. In "Twins" (Mama), for instance, the actors are totally covered by fantastic paper bag puppets with colorful cartoon-characters drawn on them in action poses. These characters do no talking at all, instead they dance and a simple story is told through their dance. On the other hand, if the words are the focus, the props may be cut to a minimal. In the song number "Noises" (Mama), for example, the lyrics are more complicated than in most Paper Bag songs. In this scene, there are only a few props and they are very small. The movement is used to reinforce the words of the song. Likewise, in "Conversations" (Guffawhaw), where the focus is on the characterizations and the dialogue, no props and very little movement is used.

In addition to this general use of the technique of simplification, The Paper Bag Players use several special devices of simplification—repetition, the deliberate use of a dense person, and the literal representation of an action. These techniques are used simultaneously for humor and clarity.

Repetition.—A major technique of simplification used by the company is repetition—repetition in dialogue, in song lyrics, in concepts, in stage movements, in dance steps, and so forth. The lyrics to the sing-along songs, for instance, are always very simple are repeated
over and over so that the children can easily learn them, have the plea-
sure of singing them, and remember them.

Within a scene, repetition is often used in the same manner a good
story teller uses it. In "The Jumping Bean Story" (Cut-Ups), for
example, the beans jump out of the pot three times. Each time the
woman discovers them out of the pot, she repeats the same ritual of
lighting the pot, even to repeating the same words and the same action,
"Well, now, I'll just light the stove, and get the water boiling, and
go about my housework." Finally the third time the beans jump out of
the pot, the woman catches them. Each time the scene is repeated, the
tension builds until the climax when the "beans" are caught. The num-
ber three has always been the most widely used number in traditional
stories, and the company often relies on this device. In fact, this
use of repetition is very similar to the use of repetition in a fairy
tale or any tightly structured short story, and in the scenes which are
little mini-dramas with traditional dramatic structure, such as "Plumber,
Plumber, Fix My Sink" (Hot Feet) and "Blown Off The Billboard (Bath),
the traditional use of repetition building to a climax is always em-
ployed.

In "Plumber, Plumber, Fix My Sink," for instance, the plumber
returns three times, to pull out first the kitchen sink, then the bath-
tub, then the shower. Within each scene there is much direct repeti-
tion of lines and actions. The repetition is used to build the pace
of the scene: each time the plumber comes in, he is wilder and fiercer;
each time the leak attacks he becomes more menacing; each time, the
woman reacts with more panic; and each time, the audience's calls to the plumber are louder. This is an example of the most traditional use of repetition used by the company.

Often in illustrating a complex concept, the company will employ another style of repetition: the same idea will be explored in several different skits. In the production Group Soup, for example, each scene explored in different ways the theme of transformation. The opening scene in Everybody, Everybody is a good example of the use of this type of repetition. In this scene, there are four skits which all illustrate the concept of ethnocentrism, the fact that everyone looks at things from their own point of view, the fact that everyone feels their way of doing things is the right way, the best way, the only way. The action of these skits show several different points of view: different ways of greeting (handshakes vs. kisses); different eating habits—how to eat (slob vs. perfectionist), how much to eat (fat vs. thin), what to eat (rattlesnake steak vs. pigs ears); and different ways of resolving conflicts (fists vs. words). Through these variations of the same theme, a complex idea is communicated to very young children. The song provides further repetition to ensure communication: the skits are all linked together by the song "Everybody, everybody, everybody, everybody, everybody thinks they're doing it right (repeat)." Each time the actors repeat this song, they also use the exact same movements.
Another form of repetition is employed by the company strictly for humor. In this form of repetition, a variation of the repetition produces the humor. An example of this is the song number "La, La" (Everybody), in which each actor enters singing a simple tune. One after another the first three actors, who can all sing beautifully, enter and repeat the same song and motions. Then Judith Martin enters singing the same song off-key. She is blissfully unaware of how off-key she is and even gets carried away in a long solo until she literally has to be carried away (off the stage) by the other actors. Later on in this production, there is a reprise of this same song number with still more variations of the basic joke. This time the audience joins in the singing and all three of the other actors imitate the spirit if not the off-key nature of Martin's singing.

This last scene also illustrates a very standard musical comedy form of repetition that the company employs, the reprise. In the reprise, used consistently by the company in their later productions, the theme song (or songs) of a production is repeated in a different way at the end of the production. *Hot Feet* provides a good example of this. In the final number of this production, "Move Over," the audience sings along in a reprise of the two theme songs of the production, "That's Good" and "Hot Feet." Both of these songs, however, are used in a totally different context than when they were first used. Originally "That's Good" was used by a teacher to praise a pupil, here it is used humorously by each character to make the best of a bad situation. Likewise, "Hot Feet" originally referred literally
to feet sweltering in the hot summer sun as it beats on the concrete. Here it refers to the relief of warming one's feet up in a cold city apartment with no heat. Thus, though they use the reprise in original ways, in using this form, the company follows standard theatrical uses of repetition.

A special form of repetition used by the company occurs in all of the audience participation numbers. Since chapter five will include a discussion of audience participation techniques, only one example—the song "Dandelion"—will be given here to illustrate how repetition is used extensively in these audience participation numbers. In this song, the cast is illustrating the concept of the life cycle to Judith Martin. Martin plays a "not-so-bright" little girl who tries hard to understand this idea but just can't quite get it. So the cast explains the concept over and over using different examples of the life cycle each time: the dandelion (flower-fluff-seed-plant); the kitten-cat; the caterpillar-cocoon-butterfly; the chicken-egg; the frog-egg-tadpole; the mother-child. Each time one of the actor's explains this cyclical process, s/he walk/dances in a circle on the stage, literally illustrating the never-ending nature of the life cycle. In addition, each time a new example of the life cycle is given, it is done in a kind of rhythmic chant punctuated by the chorus—"Dandelion, dandelion, same old story every time" (repeat)—sung by the actors and the audience. Here repetition of every kind is used: the concept is repeated for clarity, and the movement, speaking, and singing are repetitive, all reinforcing the concept. In addition a special device is used—the deliberate use of a dense person on stage. This accomplishes several things at the same
time: the concept is made clear through the repeated explanations to
the "dense" person; the children are put in a superior position of
knowing more than the dense person and therefore in a position of being
able to help that person out (which they usually do very loudly); and at
the same time, the use of repetition is made believable, acceptable,
even delightful.

Use of A Literal Action.—A second major form of simplification
used by The Paper Bag Players is the literal representation of an action
on stage. Examples will show the various ways this technique is em­
ployed by the company.

Often a word or a concept will be literally acted out by an actor.
In "On The Road To Culture" (Dandelion), for example, when the cave
woman comes upon a raging river, an actor waving a blue plastic shower
curtain literally impersonates a raging river. This happens time and
time again. In "Plumber, Plumber, Fix My Sink" (Hot Feet), an actor com­
pletely covered with a mottled painter's cloth literally represents a
persistent and increasingly menacing leak in the plumbing.

The elements of nature are often represented physically by the
actors and props in the Paper Bag theatre. In "A Big Red Day" (Scraps),
for instance, the actors and props represent the sunny day (sun, moun­
tain, red house, white cloud) and the storm (gray cloud, thunder, light­
ing, and rain). The rain, for example, is danced by a person carrying
a bag hung with long strands of Christmas tinsel which shimmer as they
move. In "Knock, Knock" (Bath) a hurricane is enacted by the actors
who swirl around on stage using the paper in a literal representation
of the storm.

Emotions are often given literal expression in the Paper Bag skits. In "Aunt Sally Shakes The House" (Bath), for example, Aunt Sally literally shakes with anger. In fact, she shakes the house until it collapses on top of her. In "the Apartment" (Horse) a woman describes how she would like to furnish her apartment. The other actors, who literally portray the objects of her desire as she describes them, end up graphically illustrating first the woman's indecision and then her greed.

Sometimes a mental process is illustrated literally in The Paper Bag Players' productions. An example is the opening number in Grandpa which is done in four scenes. In each scene the major character learns a lesson about growing up by literally having a message thrown on stage and reading the lesson from the message. In other scenes a physical process is illustrated literally. Often the process of aging is represented literally, as in "Changing " (Grandpa) when, with the help of cardboard costumes, the little girls and boys change into grandmas and grandpas in the space of a few seconds. In "A Very Little House" (Everybody), the passing of a work day is shown by the rising and setting of a cardboard sun.

A final very common use of the technique of literal action by The Paper Bag Players is the literal representation of language. In "Big Boy" (Horse), for example, a literal and humorous representation is given to the clichés often mouthed about babies, such clichés as "My, he certainly is a big boy," and "He's growing by leaps and bounds." In this visual joke three actors behind a cardboard screen make the
baby appear to be about ten feet tall. In "Colors" (Bath) the emotions associated with various colors are enacted literally by an actress wearing six different colored sweaters one on top of another. As she pulls off each sweater she literally changes emotions with each color becoming in turn, white with fright, in a black mood, green with envy, oh so blue, in a purple rage, and in the pink of health.

A final example of the technique of using a literal action is one in which both language and emotion are represented literally. In this scene, "The City" (Horse), two people are walking along a city street. As they walk along, they talk about how they feel about the city using all of the cliché's about being "hemmed in," "pressed down," and "closed in." As they walk and talk, they are literally being pressed down to the ground by the city, a cardboard cut-out of skyscrapers which presses them to the stage floor. The humor of this piece is increased by the fact that neither of the two characters notices the literal action, they simply accommodate their bodies to the action and keep on walking and talking.

**Combining Contradictory Elements.**—As a technique for developing material, this device of combining contradictory elements has been used repeatedly by The Paper Bag Players. The juxtaposition of apparently unrelated, irrelevant, or diverse elements is a constant in their creative process, and the technique is used in various ways.

On the simplest level, this technique juxtaposes two opposing points of view. In "The Sinking Ship" (Cut-Ups) one observing fish is a mistrustful, cynical pessimist while the other fish observer is a
wide-eyed, compassionate, optimist. The ship herself is a rather take-it-as-it-is realist. In "Hedge Pledge" (Bath) one neighbor is the neat, precise orderly type—"I like my hedges neat and clipped"—while the other neighbor is the disorderly, back-to-nature type—"I like my hedges growing wild and free and bushy." In "I Won't Take A Bath" (Bath) this contrast between two points of view becomes a kind of joyous ritual or game between the children in the audience or "everyone who hates baths") and mothers and fathers in the audience or "all those who believe in baths"). While this use of contrast is very effective, it is the most elemental use of this technique.

Another way this technique of combining contradictory elements is used in many Paper Bag skits is in the juxtaposition of fantasy and reality. In "Laundry Day At The Castle" (Cut-Ups), the title gives an indication of how these two elements—fantasy and reality—are constantly held in tension. The characters in this skit are those from a fairy tale—a prince, a princess, and a witch. While these characters retain their magic and symbolic powers, at the same time they live in a very real world. After the introduction of the characters the play begins in the princess' garden as she shows the audience her favorite tree (which she builds out of boxes): "This is my favorite tree. It has oranges in the morning, bananas in the afternoon, and pecans in the evening. And there goes a butterfly." The fantasy of that opening line is immediately broken by the exit of the prince who trips over the imaginary clothes line. The princess then tells the audience that "Today is laundry day at the castle" and she proceeds to hang out the clothes—"Father's shirt... Brother's socks... Mother's petticoat"—only to be
plunged back into fantasy by the entrance of the witch."

Almost all of the fairy tale stories (from the early ensemble period) use this technique of combining contradictory elements from outside the fairy tale world to give them a totally different flavor. Many of them combine symbols from the past and the present. In "Laundry Day at The Castle," the princess introduces herself to the audience with the line "I'm the princess in this play. I'm the only princess on my block." At once she is both the princess and the child next door playing, as she proceeds to build her garden out of boxes. In Guffawhaw the chant used by Slow Jim Fitch to get rid of witch Hazel combines Indian and modern elements: "Rampopo, Stereo, TV Dinner, Buffalo (repeat 2 times); Pocahontas, Mississippi, Laundromat and Delaware; Minnesota, Minneha, Sauerkraut, and Wash 'n Wear; Broken Arrow, Chattanooga, Tennis Shoe, Potato Chips; Saratoga, Mineola, Chocolate Soda, Filter Tips."

The Paper Bag Players also combine contradictory elements in many small ways in their skits. For example, in "Feet Treat" (Hot Feet), the humor comes from the juxtaposition of unrelated sizes. A giant ten-foot tall foot painted on a paper flat enters; a regular actor's hand sneaks out from under the paper and tickles the foot; and another actor's head appears above the giant foot to laugh hysterically.

The main use of this technique of combining contradictory elements, however, comes from their use of paper, cardboard boxes, and found objects for their props and costumes. In their design work, they constantly combine reality and fantasy in an interesting tension. Sometimes the tension is between the one-dimensional cardboard figures and
the actors. In "Daisy" (Bath), for example, a cardboard figure of a little girl and that of a balloon are held by two actors who are constantly visible. The company combines real objects, paper representations of real objects, objects drawn on paper on stage, symbols, and mimed objects with no insistence on consistency, in fact, with deliberate inconsistency, or with the inconsistency of a child at play. In fact, part of the charm and pleasure of watching the company comes from it's resemblance to imaginative child's play done on a professional level.

Sometimes the company plays on the contradiction of the paper and the real actors. In "Cookies" (Bath), for instance, when Aunt Judy draws her bed on the paper, carefully tears back the covers and gets in (obviously still on her feet) she exclaims "It sure feels good to get off my feet." At the end of this scene, the children's statements of the lessons they learned come from both the real stage action and the imaginary stage action—one learned how to draw and another learned how to bake.

Many times the contradictory elements combined in a skit allow for more complex emotional tone or message. "The Queen's Coronation" (Scraps), for example, combines the elegance of a Queen's coronation—the absolutely formal manner of the attendant and so forth—with the outlandish use of a gibberish language and paper and cardboard for the coronation robes. The humor comes from the elaborate and elegant dressing of the queen in such materials as comic papers, brown cardboard boxes, and adding-machine tape and from the regal manner in
which the queen speaks total gibberish, translated in an even more pompous manner by her attendant. As one critic comments, "The image of the queen has somehow been created and it manages to be rather splendid as well as superbly funny."\(^{24}\) Judith Martin believes there is a real satisfaction in the way that they treat the shiek and the rich with such irreverence, using such obvious and cheap materials. On the one hand, they bring the powerful down to an accessible level and on the other hand as Martin puts it, "To go from the mundane to the shiek puts style within the reach of all of us."\(^{25}\)

**Play with Language.** A final technique used by the company in developing their scenes is language play. Actually this is part of their overall sense of play, but this element has particular significance in giving aesthetic form to the individual scenes in their productions.

One use of language play that has already been pointed out is the company's use of clichés. They may take a cliché and illustrate it literally as in "Big Boy" from *My Horse Is Waiting* ("He's growing by leaps and bounds") and "Lost and Found" from *Hot Feet* ("One man's trash is another man's treasure"). Or they may point out the absurdity of a cliché. In "Old Friends" (*Group Soup*) the friends age over thirty years on stage with the use of such props as a long paper beard and a shawl. Here the company literally and humorously illustrate the cliché "Time


certainly does fly" while at the same time they point out the ridicu-
ousness of such clichés as "I'd recognize you anywhere" and "You haven't
changed a bit."

Often the company will use poetry or the contrast between poetic
speech and colloquial speech in forming their scenes. In "The Tree
Angel" (Scraps), for example, the good guys (the angel and the trees)
all speak in rhymed couplets and in very lyrical fashion while the bad
guy (the wood chopper) speaks in ordinary conversational prose and a
very gruff manner. In many of the earlier productions, in fact, poetry
is often used when a scene enters the realm of fantasy. The witch's
spells in "Laundry Day at The Castle" (Cut-Ups), for example, are done
in a rhythmic poetic chant. Another very clever use of poetry occurs
in the climactic scene of "Laundry Day at The Castle" (Cut-Ups). In
this scene, the prince, aided by the princess cleverly uses memorized
snatches of schoolboy poems to ward off the evil spells of the witch.
Parts of such poems as "Under the spreading chestnut tree the village
smithy stands" and "I sprang to the stirrup" and "The boy stood on the
burning deck" are rendered dramatically during a chase scene that ends
with the climax of the prince stealing the witches shawl (her source of
power).

Another form of language play often used by The Paper Bag Players
is the deliberate use of a common saying or expression (idiom) changed
for a new context. For example, when the company members are playing
animals in a skit, they often change such common sayings to suit their
animal characters. In "Too Many Fishes" (Dandelion), for example, when
the fishes are getting crowded, they argue in human terminology changed for their fishy nature, saying such things as "Watch your tail, will you?" and "Who's breathing down my fin?" Another example of this is in "Lettuce" (Dandelion), when Betty the monkey replies to her mate, "I'm not getting back down there 'til bananas turn purple." Another example of this use of language play is when an egg says to a chicken, "I feel first way down in the bottom of my yoke" ("Which Came First?" from Fortunately).

Another favorite form of language play used by the company is the use of puns and words with double meanings. In "The Chicken and The Egg" (Fortunately), for example, there is a lot of this language play: one egg agreeing with another says "eggs-actly" while one chicken commenting to another chicken about the eggs, says "Don't take them seriously... they're cracked." The entire scene of "Where'd You Get Those Funny Clothes?" (Cut-Ups) is based on puns. The actors all don outrageous costumes one after another, and the conversations that ensue go like this: "Say where'd you get that hat?"—"Manhattan!" or "Where'd you get those pants?"—"Pantsylvania!" One actor explaining why another can't talk says, "He's got a horse in Detroit and Kentucky" (a hoarse throat and can't talk). Another example of such double talk occurs in the scene "Box Talk" (Bath). In this skit, every line has a double meaning, referring on one level to the characters being packages in a post office and on another level to their being two lovers court-ing.
The Paper Bag Players use language play in a very special way in naming and describing characters in their scenes. Often pompous characters are given very literal names: the two kings in "The Dragon's Tale" (Scraps) are Ruffentuff and Hoppenpopup; the king in "A Paper Box Story" (Group Soup) is Bad King Sorehead; the stockbrokers in "Mama's Got A Job" are Muddle and Puddle. Likewise, the likable characters are often described in the dialogue or lyrics in very specific, endearing, descriptive terms. The dragon in "The Dragon's Tale" is not just an ordinary dragon. She is a red spotted dragon with a see-through stomach, a pacifist who loves to eat yellow daisies, chase butterflies, and sing songs.

Everything is given form through the use of language in the Paper Bag scenes. In "Hands Off! Don't Touch!" (Horse), for example, the animals are all described in ways that play on scientific terminology while at the same time being fantastic: the birds are "a yellow-bellied nutcracker" and "a red-headed hoodwinker"; the flower is "a double-deckered cornucopia with stamen and pistols"; the butterfly is "a supercholesterol ruby-winged monarch"; and the lion is "a two-legged man-eating Leo Furioso." Another example of such language play occurs in "On The Road To Culture" (Dandelion). When the cave woman, out for a walk, invents certain items to help her survive, she gives these items very clever names: the first umbrella she calls a "rain stopper"; the weapon is a "snake knocker"; the first portable bridge is a "water crosser"; and a lure for a lion is "cat food." Through such imaginative use of language, the scenes in The Paper Bag Players' productions are
Further Observations On The Dynamics of The Creative Process

in Stage Two and A Summary of That Stage

Obviously, as with any group or individual, the creative process sometimes flows smoothly and work is produced quickly while at other times the creative process is tedious and time-consuming. The researcher found certain common elements in those scenes that were developed quickly and also in those scenes where the development came more slowly.

Work that comes quickly is often the nonverbal pieces where dance, mime, and/or music are the predominant elements. Once the idea is generated, most of these nonverbal pieces are very simple to work out. An example cited by Martin is "A Long, Long Dress" (Bath). Donald Ashwander had the idea for this scene, and it was then worked out in the studio in one day. Often, these pieces--pieces such as "Little Litter" (Hot Feet) and "Bicycle Race" (Bath)--are the most creative and inspired pieces in the company's repertory. They are particularly appealing to the actors themselves and also especially successful with the adults in the audience. "Bicycle Race," for example, was created whole in the studio in a very short time. Martin remembers that when she brought the idea for this piece to the company, the current stage manager picked up on this idea and began to give lots of good suggestions. Then the company improvised and Donald Ashwander began to improvise music and the entire scene was created right then and there (Interview, June 1979).
On the other hand, the scenes with extended dialogue and a more traditional dramatic form are developed much more slowly by the company. An example of a highly successful scene which was very difficult, slow, and laborious in development is "Blown Off The Billboard" (Bath). Martin recalls that it took such a long time to develop this piece, with everybody in the group, including the stage manager, contributing. Martin remembers that they had what seemed to be a million versions before they finally settled on the final version of the story. In fact, she recalls that one morning, after they had been working on it for several weeks, she finally walked in and said, "Here's the story. Now let's work it out!" (Interview, June 1979).

Despite such variations in the dynamics of the company's process of developing an idea into a scene, there are a number of techniques commonly used by the company in this stage of the creative process. In fact, stage two of the creative process of The Paper Bag Players can be summarized as follows.

Though the company uses many general techniques to develop scenes in rehearsals and improvisational sessions, six specific techniques are used repeatedly by the company to build their scenes. These six specific techniques, identified by the researcher through an analysis of the company's repertory, include pushing a concept to its extreme; analogies to make the familiar strange and the strange familiar; elaboration; simplification, (including repetition and the use of a literal action); combining contradictory elements; and play with language. Through these techniques the company is able to continually take the
ideas generated in phase one of the creative process and turn them into scenes for the stage, scenes which are not only theatrically viable but also original. At their best, through the use of these six techniques, The Paper Bag Players have developed a comedic form in which the reality of the moment-by-moment unfolding of a scene is important, and in which they are able to avoid punch-line endings, obvious developments, and trite conclusions.

The Third Stage in the Creative Process: Polishing Scenes, Building and Polishing Productions

Once the short scenes have been developed from an idea to a rough workable scene, the next stage is to put various scenes together into an effective production and to polish both the scenes and the production for performance. This stage is summarized as follows:

Stage 3: Testing and Perfecting Solutions—Finding an Artistically Satisfying, Polished Form for Scenes and Productions: (a) each scene is further rehearsed, polished, perfected, and "set" for performance; (b) a number of scenes are strung together into a longer production according to certain principles of composition; and (c) the entire production is rehearsed, polished, perfected, and "set" for performance.

The Paper Bag Players develop a new show slowly over a period of time that averages about two years. While this may seem like a long time, child drama specialist Nellie McCaslin feels this is one key to the quality of their work. In an interview with the researcher she states that one of the things which sets the Bags apart from other children's theatre groups is the fact that "They would never show
something until they felt that it was ready to be seen. And if it meant that there wasn't a new show in a season then it meant there wasn't a show... they never sold out just to make money or to give more performances. They've always wanted time to create. Not to throw something together and hope that it was going to be good... The Paper Bag Players started out with great integrity, that they would give the performances they felt were good... So I think that's one reason you always feel the energy behind the show and the enthusiasm behind it" (Interview, November 1979).

This third stage in the creative process of The Paper Bag Players is crucial to their success. While many companies that create their own material can generate ideas and scenes, few have the objectivity to edit their own work for effective audience communication. In fact, most of these companies and artists are quite self-indulgent when it comes to their own material. Judith Martin, on the other hand, truly believes that clear communication with the child audience is the company's main goal, and Martin knows that the child audience will not put up with any self-indulgence on the company's part. Consequently, she becomes ruthlessly critical and objective during this phase of the creative process, testing each line and action against her knowledge of the child audience, making sure that each bit of stage business or dialogue or prop communicates clearly with the audience. As Martin notes, "The whole thing has no foundation unless what you've done is very clear and very precise" (Interview, June 1979).
The discussion of this third stage in the creative process of The Paper Bag Players will be divided into three separate sections: polishing and perfecting scenes, building productions, and polishing productions. Each of these phases is crucial to the company's successful communication with an audience.

**Polishing and Perfecting Scenes**

During this stage of building and polishing scenes, two processes are occurring simultaneously. First of all, the company continues to add those details necessary to give the delightful specificity characteristic of the Bags' work. This includes language details, movement and stage business details, and especially those details of the paper props and scenery. At the same time that necessary details and specifics are being added to flesh out a scene, the company is also paring down and simplifying scenes. Here the critical eye takes over, as every unnecessary line or fussy detail is cut. All of the actors interviewed were unanimous in their belief that the key to Martin's success is her concern with precision and clarity as well as the attention she pays to details of the production. It will be useful to give examples of both the simplification and the specification process.

**Simplification.**—One characteristic of The Paper Bag Players is that they constantly pare down and pare down until what is left is the essence of the scene, only that dialogue and those details necessary to make the point of the scene, to communicate clearly and effectively. One method used by the company to achieve clarity is to make the
dialogue as spare as possible. A good example of this process occurred in a short scene from Group Soup entitled "Red and Checkers." This scene was originally quite spare to begin with, consisting of a mere thirty-six lines of dialogue with the longest line containing only eighteen words. Eventually, however, this scene was cut almost in half, down to just twenty lines with the longest line containing only eight words. From the two versions of this scene (reprinted in Appendix E), one can easily see that the point of the scene is just as effectively communicated in the second, much shorter version.

Another example of this process of simplification involves the plots of the scenes. Sometimes as originally conceived (and even occasionally as originally performed) scenes have rather complex and involved plots. Usually these plots are simplified for clarity and the result is a much stronger scene. Two examples of this occurred in "Plumber, Plumber, Fix My Sink" and "Move Over," both from the production of Hot Feet. An early version of "Plumber, Plumber" had a Romeo and Juliet-style plot in which Juliet's daddy is a New York plumber. In this version, Romeo, in order to see Juliet alone, contrives with the audience to shout "Plumber, plumber, fix my sink," whereupon Juliet's daddy rushes off to find the customer, leaving Romeo and Juliet to each other. In addition to being too complicated, this plot involved romance, a tricky subject to handle with child audiences, and it also focused on the wrong issue. The newer version eliminates the Romeo and Juliet characters, changing the focus to an unfortunate but representative woman beset both by increasingly menacing leaks in her plumbing
and a rampaging plumber whose philosophy is "If you can't fix it, pull it out." In this version, the conflict is more direct and the scene much funnier. It also focuses on a universal problem of modern urban living—things constantly breaking down and the poor repair service one gets. It also eliminates the focus on the romance which is a weak one for a child audience.

An earlier version of "Move Over" is "about an unsuccessful loner who tries to escape the crowd at the supermarket, on the beach, on the freeway, and who even loses out when, after a mass collision, she wakes up in heaven to the shouts of her former earthlings to 'move over'."\(^\text{26}\) In this case, the plot obviously goes on too long to make a simple point. In the revised versions, only the first two scenes—the supermarket and the beach—remain. This version is more effective and more to the point.

**Specification.**—Despite their process of simplification, one characteristic of The Paper Bag Players' skits is that the details which do remain are generally very specific. In a Paper Bag scene, it is unlikely one will encounter an ordinary ice cream cone, for example. One is more likely to meet a helplessly melting pistachio ice cream cone ("Conversations" in Guffawhaw) or a "tutti frutti, What a cutie, Creamy rich and so delicious" ice cream cone ("Blown Off The Billboard" in Bath). In the Paper Bag theatre, scenes are short and characters come and go very quickly. In a theatre where so much happens so quickly,

a few very specific details help the actors establish the characters or mood very economically. They also add to the humor of the scene.

So the details that are included in a Paper Bag skit are mostly very specific and often humorous. One example of this occurs in "Guffawhaw": when Witch Hazel, running away from Salem and the Witch hunters, stops to take stock of her remaining possessions, she finds an old parking ticket, a can of tuna, and three remaining curses, one of which she uses to turn herself into a tree. Another example is the robber in "That's Good" (Hot Feet), who is an alligator just escaped from the zoo who needs $12.59 for bus fare back to the Everglades. Another example is the shoppers in "Move Over" (Hot Feet) who buy such things as "crunchy granola, sudsy toothpaste, and the chicken-neck special." The lyrics to The Paper Bag Players' songs often contain such clever specifics also. A good example is the following verse from "Hot Feet":

Hot Feet! Hot Feet!
Hot feet on the hot concrete.
They're so hot I really think
I'll put them in the kitchen sink.
Take the chicken out, I'll eat later
Put my feet in the refrigerator.

Stage Business.—This is the part of the creative process during which the movement and stage business are planned and practiced to achieve precision. When it comes to planning and executing stage business, The Paper Bag Players are masters. Although they retain a certain feeling of spontaneity, they are really highly disciplined. As one critic says, "The nut-house cavorting that goes on at performances
is all planned and choreographed with the skill and discipline that comes only from years of theatre experience."  

The Paper Bag Players have kept very few written records containing detailed directions for stage business or movement. Their scripts contain the dialogue and a description of what is happening on the stage. The researcher did find a few hand-written notes which indicate the exact nature of the stage movement. Appendix E contains two samples of those notes: one details an actress's entrance in one piece which is timed precisely to the music; the other is a diagram of the stage movement of another piece which looks almost like a maze. From these two documents one can easily see the exact precision with which the movements and stage business in the Bags' productions are rehearsed to perfection.

**Props and Costumes.**—During this stage, the company also works out the final form the props and costumes will take. Up to this point, they may have used various things found around the studio. Sometimes, in fact, just the right prop may be found very quickly and spontaneously. Irving Burton recalls that happening in the development of "The Building and The Statue" (Fortunately): "I remember we were all in the studio with boxes all around us on the floor, and we said, 'We need a car.' So we just cut a hole in the box, we lifted up the flap, stepped inside, and began to run around in the box . . . and it was very funny and absolutely perfect for the skit" (Interview, June 1979).

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On the other hand, props are often made and remade until just the perfect form for that prop is found. An example of this is the locomotive in "Big Country" (Everybody). Martin recalls making one train after another until just the right train emerged. The problem in this case was that Martin wanted the prop to come alive when moved by the actor and she continued to experiment until she was completely satisfied with the results.

During this stage of polishing scenes for production, Martin looks very carefully at the visual aspects of the production, creating and perfecting paper props and costumes which reinforce the content of the scenes. While there is an overall consistency in their use of paper, the company is not overly concerned with that consistency. As previously noted, they combine real objects, paper representations of real objects, objects drawn on paper in front of the audience, symbols of objects, and mimed objects. The main point is not to achieve a forced overall consistency, but to use the paper materials in a way that is intrinsic to the ideas of each scene.

Martin feels she learned much about the need for the paper props and the function of those paper props from early designer Remy Charlip. She recalls that when Charlip first joined that early group, they were using no props or costumes to speak of. Charlip objected, insisting that they were asking too much of the audience, that they needed to supply at least minimal visual cues to involve the children in the content of the material. Martin recalls Charlip's original design contribution (for "Laundry Day at The Castle"--Cut-Ups): "I was a princess
and I was locked up in a castle. Well, Remy insisted this was wrong. He said I was asking the audience to take for granted that it was a castle, and he got a refrigerator box and cut holes in it for the castle. . . . And he got another cardboard box and cut holes in it for the suit of armor. And then he took a lace table cloth and put it between two hoops for the princess' dress" (Interview, June 1979).

Martin feels she learned much about the function of the paper props and costumes from Charlip: "The thing I learned most from Remy was illustration, not in the sense of drawing something [not in the techniques of illustration], but in the sense of the audience--of giving them visual cues, of not asking them to take everything for granted" (Interview, June 1979).

It has already been shown how these paper props play an important part in the creative process from the beginning. While both Charlip and Martin feel that the paper materials and the content of the Paper Bag scenes are intrinsically related, they each view that interrelationship from their own perspective. As a designer, Charlip feels that the ideas, characters, and concepts emerge from working with the paper materials and from the intrinsic properties or special nature of those paper materials: "There was a feeling for materials, and a feeling for structure that would come out of what we were doing. It wasn't so much that there were ideas and then you found out how to costume them, as it was that the ideas would be intrinsic in the material itself, or the material would give you a way to deal with the character, or a piece would work only if the material and the character or idea were
one. . . . It became more like the material and form was the structure or the character or the concept" (Interview, November 1979).

Martin more often talks about this interrelationship from the point of view of a playwright, noting that the design work grows out of the concepts and reinforces the psychological meaning of the scenes. She speaks in terms of examples, such as the cardboard box which works well as a castle because it symbolizes the castle as enclosing or the paper box armour which encases the prince and restricts his movements, literally forcing him to be upright and rigid. Sometimes Martin uses the paper props to alter or give a different meaning to a scene. In "Horace" (Horse), for instance, the entire family is eaten by a bear. But because the Bear is so loveable and very much alive while the family is so very dead (they are all paper boxes), the effect is humorous rather than disturbing. What Martin does during this phase of the creative process is to make sure the design of the props, costumes, and scenery are contributing to the meaning of a scene and functioning in the manner she desires. In this aspect of the creative process, as in all others, Martin has a sense of perfectionism. As she observes, "It looks simple, but that sense of great originality emerges from a continuous struggle. . . . We worked for months to design the duck outfit, an open cardboard box and glasses with an orange beak [used in Dandelion]."\(^{28}\) To be effective in performance, the props must function simply, effortlessly, and in a manner organic to the scene.

Building Productions

When the company puts a number of scenes together to form a longer production, it is not done haphazardly. Like all of the company's creative work, though the process may appear chaotic and spontaneous, it is really highly disciplined. The company has developed certain principles over the years by which they construct their productions. While Judith Martin uses these principles of composition, she uses them almost unconsciously, having never articulated them in any formal way. Through an analysis of the available scripted and recorded production material, however, the researcher identified six major factors which determine how scenes are arranged in a production. Those six factors include three basic compositional elements—sound, movement, and shape (in the use of paper)—and three additional factors important to the overall composition of a production—expected audience response to a scene, length of a scene, and tone quality of a scene. These six variables seemed to be the factors most important to the overall composition of The Paper Bag Players' productions. A final consideration in the arranging of scenes into a longer production is the practical matter of designing entrances, exits, and transitions between scenes. This calls for some ingenuity as there are no curtains, blackouts, or intermissions in a Paper Bag Players' production. In addition, the company spends

29 The element of lighting, usually an important element of composition in theatre, needs no discussion in relation to The Paper Bag Players, other than to note that warm, bright lighting is used throughout the production with lighting pre-set before the show, and generally not changed during the show.
considerable time designing effective opening and closing numbers for their productions. These factors are of minor importance, however, compared to the six major variables of composition. It will be useful to briefly define each of these six variables before showing how they are used to put together a production.

The element of sound includes all vocal sound (dialogue, narration, direct address, laughter, singing, and so forth and all instrumental sound (piano, children's instruments, electric harpsichord, rhythm master, and so forth). Since most of The Paper Bag Players' skits do not involve complex narrative plots or character development, the use of dialogue, narration, and language is generally sparse, simple, and conversational. As a variable of composition, vocal sound ranges from nonverbal scenes to those participatory scenes where the actors and audience are singing and shouting. The music is another variable in the use of the element of sound, with scenes ranging from those containing no music to those where the music predominates. The element of sound is manipulated along a continuum from silence to loud sound. Varying the sound level and type of sound used from scene to scene is one thing Martin takes into consideration when designing a production.

The element of movement includes all natural body movement (walking, sitting, running, and so forth) and all stylized body movement (mime, choreographed movement, dance, and so forth). Movement also includes the use of the space on the stage by the actors—whether they stand in one place or cover the entire stage area, for example. Betty
Osgood has described the typical use of movement by the company as follows:

Characters are portrayed in physical action, but that action is outlined, suggested, spare as in a dance. Pantomime and dance are not elaborately choreographed but movement is used freely throughout the show. We make use of techniques like those employed in silent movies and vaudeville which depend on rhythmic action and visual effect. Although most of us have been dancers we use dance in the service of an idea rather than for its own sake. . . . The free use of running, jumping, falling, lifts and tricks, natural and expressive movement, all give the show a style of vigor and exhuberance.30

While Osgood attempts to describe the overall effect and the typical use of movement by the company, there is obviously much variation in the way movement is employed by the company. In their productions, movement is manipulated along a continuum of movement to stillness, stylized movement to natural movement, tightly controlled use of space (i.e. an in-place mime) to extensive free use of space (i.e. a chase scene). Varying the amount and type of movement from scene to scene is another thing that Martin takes into consideration when designing a production.

The element of shape is basically the use of the paper materials (and all other design materials) to form the props, costumes, and sets of The Paper Bag theatre. Shape is mainly manipulated along a continuum from the extensive use of paper (and other materials) to no use of paper at all. The amount of paper used and the texture, color, size,

and function of the paper props and costumes in addition to the amount of space used by these paper props are considerations Martin takes into account when she designs a production.

The researcher identified, in addition to these three basic compositional elements, three additional elements which are manipulated to achieve balance and contrast and to maintain audience attention during a production: the length of the scenes, the tone quality of the scenes, and the audience response to the scenes. The length of the scenes range from under one minute to ten minutes with a few longer scenes extending up to twenty minutes ("Guffawhaw" and "Mama's Got A Job"). The emotional tone quality of the scenes ranges from thoughtful and serious to lyrical and poetic to cheerful and humorous, even farcical. The audience response ranges from silence to loud participation, laughter, cheers, and so forth. Prior to audience testing, the scenes are arranged according to expected audience response. Actual audience response sometimes results in a rearrangement of scenes.

In order to determine how these major compositional elements were used by the company in designing their productions, the researcher arranged each of these six compositional elements—sound, movement, the use of paper (shape), length of scenes, tone quality of scene, and audience response on a continuum (See Table 3). This continuum was then used to analyze the overall composition of three of The Paper Bag Players' production, Hot Feet, I Won't Take A Bath, and Everybody,
### Table 3

**Continuum Designed to Analyze Compositional Elements Used in Productions of the Paper Bag Players**

#### Length of Scene (Number of Minutes)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SHORT</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LONG</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

#### Tone Quality of Scene

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DARK</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LIGHT</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- serious, lyrical, cheerful
- thoughtful, poetic, "up," some
- dream-like

#### Expected Audience Response to Scene

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PASSIVE</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACTIVE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- silence, some
- interest, laughter
- absorption
- lots of

#### The Use of Sound in a Scene

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SILENCE (QUIET)</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SOUND (LOUD)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- predominantly louder
- instrumental vocal,
- sound only vocal
- music accompaniment vocal
- sound participation

#### The Use of Movement in a Scene

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STILLNESS</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MOVEMENT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- no movement
- natural
- through
- movement
- large space

#### The Use of Paper (Shape) in a Scene

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NO USE</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EXTENSIVE USE OF PAPER</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- no paper
- slight use of paper
- of paper
- or paper used in background
- or paper scene
- paper of scene
These three productions were chosen because they are the strongest of the Ashwander-Martin productions, and because they have been the major productions in the company's repertory for the past twelve seasons. It was assumed that they would, therefore, reflect most clearly the principles of overall composition used by the company.

The researcher analyzed each scene from the four selected productions using the continuum in Table 3. The results are tabulated in Table 4. In addition to listing the scores for each scene, this table also summarizes the special characteristics of each scene. From Table 4 one can see that the company employs rhythm, balance, and contrast in the use of these six basic elements when assembling their productions. A simple glance down the columns of this table will reveal that while there is no exact formula for putting a production together, there are consistent factors in each production. In addition to providing variety and contrast, these six basic elements of composition are manipulated and used to hold the audience's attention, and to achieve an aesthetically pleasing sense of proportion and balance in the production, one which satisfies the audience.

The researcher was interested in ascertaining to what degree and in what proportion these elements are used in The Paper Bag Players'

31 There are many versions and arrangements of these productions. The researcher chose to analyze the scripted unpublished versions copyrighted by the company. In addition, the most recent production (videotaped in 1982) of I Won't Take A Bath was also analyzed.

32 In the listing of special characteristics (Table 4), solicited audience participation is abbreviated to "A.P."
**TABLE 4: TABULATIONS OF ANALYSES PERFORMED ON SELECTED PRODUCTIONS OF THE PAPER BAG PLAYERS USING TABLE 3**

### PRODUCTION: HOT FEET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCENES</th>
<th>Time/Minutes</th>
<th>Tone</th>
<th>Audience Response</th>
<th>Sound</th>
<th>Movement</th>
<th>Use of Paper</th>
<th>SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Hot Feet</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1. song/movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Sandwich</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2. argument/no music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Plumber</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3. A.P./chase/drama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Little Litter</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4. nonverbal/dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Telephone</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5. transition/no music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Move Over</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6. song/chase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. That's Good</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7. A.P./song/chase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Paintings</td>
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</tr>
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<td>9. Handball</td>
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<td>9. transition/no music</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10. no music/no lines</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Puzzle</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11. nonverbal/dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Come On Over</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12. A.P./song/reprise</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### PRODUCTION: I WON'T TAKE A BATH (scripted version)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCENES</th>
<th>Time/Minutes</th>
<th>Tone</th>
<th>Audience Response</th>
<th>Sound</th>
<th>Movement</th>
<th>Use of Paper</th>
<th>SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Knock, Knock</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1. long opening/chase</td>
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<td>2. Cookies</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2. drawing on stage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The Kings</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3. nonverbal/movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Billboard</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4. drama/chase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Box Talk</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5. no music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Noses</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6. argument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Bicycle Race</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7. nonverbal/drawing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Aunt Sally</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8. chase/paper puppets</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Subway Squash</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9. dialogue/nine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Bath</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10. A.P./song</td>
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### PRODUCTION: EVERYBODY, EVERYBODY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCENES</th>
<th>Time/Minutes</th>
<th>Tone</th>
<th>Audience Response</th>
<th>Sound</th>
<th>Movement</th>
<th>Use of Paper</th>
<th>SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Everybody</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1. A.P./song/argument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. A Lot Alike</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2. drawing/no music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. La, La</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3. song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Little House</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4. song (reprise)/A.P.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. La, La, La</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5. no music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Dazzing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6. argument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Big Country</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7. movement/music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Cow</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8. no music/one line</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. I'm From Chi</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9. no music/dialogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Scoop</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10. nonverbal/dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Nothing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11. song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Big Burger</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12. drama/chase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Stunt</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13. nonverbal/props</td>
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</table>

### PRODUCTION: I WON'T TAKE A BATH (1982 version)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCENES</th>
<th>Time/Minutes</th>
<th>Tone</th>
<th>Audience Response</th>
<th>Sound</th>
<th>Movement</th>
<th>Use of Paper</th>
<th>SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Let's Go</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1. opening/song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Cookies</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2. drawing/no music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Shoes</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>3. nonverbal/dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Billboard</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>4. drama/chase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Heise Pledge</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5. A.P./argument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Daisy</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6. song/props</td>
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<td>7. Noises</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7. song/argument</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Bathtub</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>8. song/props</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. The Real Me</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9. song/movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Ma &amp; The Kids</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11. no music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Two Friends</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12. A.P./song</td>
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**Table 5: Summary of Results of Analyses Performed on Selected Productions of the Paper Bag Players, Based on Table 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELEMENT 1: TIME</th>
<th>Time: 1-3 minutes</th>
<th>Time: 4-6 minutes</th>
<th>Time: 7-10 minutes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HOT FEET</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>33%</td>
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<tr>
<td>I WON'T TAKE A BATH</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVERYBODY</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BATH (1982)</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVERAGE</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>26%</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HOT FEET</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I WON'T TAKE A BATH</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVERYBODY</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BATH (1982)</td>
<td>28%</td>
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<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVERAGE</td>
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<td>33%</td>
<td>37%</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELEMENT 3: AUDIENCE RESPONSE</th>
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<th>Rating: 4-5</th>
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<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>EVERYBODY</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BATH (1982)</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVERAGE</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>26%</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HOT FEET</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I WON'T TAKE A BATH</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVERYBODY</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BATH (1982)</td>
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<td>45%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>HOT FEET</td>
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<td>33%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I WON'T TAKE A BATH</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HOT FEET</td>
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<td>25%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>10%</td>
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<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVERYBODY</td>
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<td>28%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BATH (1982)</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVERAGE</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
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</table>
productions. Table 5 shows the results of calculations based on the
statistics contained in Table 4. The researcher grouped the continuum
responses into three major divisions for each of the six elements of
composition. The percentages of scenes in each production that fell in
the range of each of these three major divisions was then calculated
for each of the six elements. Finally, percentages from all four pro­
ductions were averaged in each category. The results of these calcula­
tions are listed in Table 5.

The statistics in Table 5, together with Table 4, reveal that while
these six elements are manipulated to achieve balance and contrast in
the productions of the company, the extent to which they are manipulated
varies considerably. As expected, the element of time (length of scenes)
is very important in providing variety from scene to scene. Table 4
reveals that the majority of the scenes in a Bags' production are short
and the action moves quickly from one scene to the next. However,
variety is achieved by interspersing longer scenes within the produc­
tion. These longer scenes provide a necessary element allowing the
children to concentrate on a story or an extended action.

Because the Bags are a comic theatre, it is of little surprise
that an average of 75% of their scenes are cheerful to farcical in tone
(3-5 on the scale), and that 75% of the scenes elicit at least some
laughter (2) on up to the more vociferous type of audience response (5).
What is interesting to note is the approximate 25% of scenes with a
serious thoughtful tone and the 22% of scenes where the audience re­
sponse is silent absorption. These scenes provide an antidote to the
In the company's use of the element of sound, Donald Ashwander's music predominates with over 70% of the scenes having instrumental music as a major element (3-5). Approximately 40% of the scenes in a given production are loud scenes (4-5). These scenes are balanced, however, by the inclusion of quieter scenes (an average of 28%), scenes which are either silent or very quiet with little or no use of music (1-2 on the scale). On an average, 30% of the scenes in the company's productions use instrumental sound only (3). Though they all rank a three on the continuum (Table 4), these scenes can vary from quiet lyric scenes to loud raucous ones. The tone quality or mood often interacts with sound to provide for more variety than is evident in these statistics.

The company's use of movement is the most balanced of all the elements: about one-third of the scenes in a given production are very active physically (4-5 on the scale), about one-third use more controlled choreography or stylized movement (3), and about one-third use little or very confined types and amounts of movement (1-2). The use of paper as a moving element interacts with and contrasts with the use of the human body, providing variety in the use of the element of movement.

The company's use of paper is the least balanced of all of the elements: paper is used as an integral element in over 80% of the scenes (3-5). This is not surprising considering that it is a major focus of the Bags's style of theatre. The company does provide contrast and balance to their extensive use of paper with an approximate 20% of scenes where either no paper is used or where the paper is used

loud, fast, pace of much of the Bags' production numbers.
simply as a minor background element. Within their use of the element of paper, the company also provides a great deal of contrast in their use of color and size as well as in the active vs. passive use of paper (paper as action or as a moving element vs. paper used for scenery and costumes).

In addition, certain types of scenes have become characteristic of most Paper Bag productions (see special characteristics in Table 4). In addition to the six elements already discussed, a Paper Bag Player's production will be likely to contain the following elements:

1. an average of twelve individual scenes totaling 55 minutes;

2. at least two audience participation numbers, one of which will be a sing-a-long number and one of which will require vocal response, such as giving advice, passing messages, helping the characters, and so forth;

3. at least two song numbers in addition to the audience participation songs and the reprise;

4. opening and closing scenes that each have a song. (The opening scene rarely requires participation, but the closing scene always has audience participation and often contains a reprise);

5. at least one longer number where the scenery is created on stage (drawn, painted, and so forth);

6. an average of two nonverbal numbers, numbers which usually consist of dance or movement to music, sometimes with paper or cardboard props or people;

7. an average of three scenes with dialogue or mime only (no music);

8. at least one big argument between characters in a scene;

9. at least one chase scene, often two; and
10. at least one very long scene (around 10 minutes) which is a little mini-drama complete with characters and a traditional dramatic structure.

Despite the diversity in scenes and the use of contrast between the scenes, there is an overall unity to each production. Generally there is a theme which loosely unifies the production numbers in content. The three productions included in this analysis have themes that are very general, and there is no attempt to subordinate all production numbers to the theme: *I Won't Take A Bath* deals very loosely with childhood problems and fantasies; *Hot Feet* is a celebration of the problems and joys of urban living; and *Everybody, Everybody* deals with how to accept and live with the differences we find among people. More recent productions attempted to use themes in a more controlling way: *Grandpa* was written to help children deal with the life process of growing, changing and aging, while *Mama's Got A Job* was written to deal with and comment on the changing nature of the American family. Martin has found, however, that these more topical themes are less useful than the earlier, more general ones. In *Mama*, for instance, the entire production was supposed to be about changing family relationships. The company had worked out some other topical material for this production. They had, for example, composed a piece in which twins, a boy and a girl, are treated in very different ways by their parents, showing how different expectations on the basis of sex shape different behaviors in boys and girls. But Martin felt that placing that scene in the production before the scene "Mama's Got A Job," gave the production too heavy and too obvious a feminist message: "You see it coming. You get
the message before you get the message." Martin feels distinctly uncomforable when scenes are predictable, political, or too obviously didactic. When "Mama's Got A Job" is performed with other unrelated material, Martin feels it is "more surprising, more jolly, and more charming" (Interview, June 1979).

What unifies The Paper Bag Players' productions more than a theme is their overall style, a style based on the energetic acting, the effervescent music, the use of stylized movement, and the extensive use of paper for props and costumes. The Paper Bag Players' style has been compared to many things—to British music hall; to American vaudeville; to good circus clowning and visuals; to a tongue-in-cheek cartoon; to the style of Peanuts, A. A. Milne, and James Thurber; to animated cartoons; and to the old silent movie style. Despite such comparisons, The Paper Bag Players have a unique style, a style which may have elements of any of the above but which fuses them in an original manner.

The Paper Bag Players also have a style which, while highly professional, incorporates the more positive aspects and freshness of an amateur production. Critic Dan Sullivan, in trying to express this dual nature of a Paper Bag show, which is at once sophisticated and childlike, refers to their "elegantly home-stitched children's shows," calling their

style, in the best sense, a kind of "home-brewed vaudeville."

Polishing and Perfecting Productions

The work and effort which go behind creating a successful Paper Bag production are never obvious in performance. The point of this final stage of rehearsal prior to performance is to completely submerge the chaos of the creative process. Indeed, by performance, the work must appear simple and effortlessly easy to create and perform. During this final stage before performance for an audience, the entire production is rehearsed, polished, perfected, and "set" for performance. This polishing procedure involves such standard theatrical practices as perfecting and timing all entrances and exits, working out such practical problems as where the props are set on and off stage, and who is responsible for handling each prop and costume piece during performance, devising an effective opening and closing for the production including curtain calls, and timing each part of the production to assure an effective overall pacing and rhythm to the production. These procedures will not be discussed, however, since they are not exclusive to the company. Instead, the researcher will briefly describe a polishing rehearsal which she attended, noting those elements which are characteristic of Martin during this stage of the creative process. This particular rehearsal (Friday, April 8, 1979) was a polishing


On entering the studio of The Paper Bag Players (153 E. Broadway), the researcher was immediately struck by the mirrors—one wall of the performance space in the studio is covered with mirrors. This partially answered an obvious question as to how Judith Martin is able to simultaneously act in and direct the shows. Since the group performs on proscenium stages, the mirrors become the fourth wall and the actors (and director) are able to see all of their actions in the mirrors as the audience will see them during performance. The researcher then noticed that Martin had taped up on the wall a list of production numbers they would be rehearsing that day: "Everybody; Slim and Fat; Your Kind; La, La; A Little Litter; This Man; Bicycle Race; Scoop; Mama; and Nothing."

The atmosphere of the rehearsal was relaxed yet rigorous. The rehearsal moved at a brisk pace. The attitude was very professional and business like, yet at the same time friendly. Everyone seemed to feel free to contribute their suggestions and comments yet all kept those comments to the point. Martin listened to suggestions and incorporated appropriate ones. Yet it was obvious that Judith Martin was in control, making most of the suggestions and all of the decisions.

The most striking thing about the rehearsal was the precision with which the company worked. Nothing was sloppy—everything was done precisely and exactly. The movements were timed to the music and were often counted out to the beat of the music in exact detail. For example,
in the skit "Big Country," the four actors form a moving circle as they walk in a modern airport. Each entrance and each movement is timed to the music. The company work with the precision required of musical comedy and dance choreography. In another skit, "A Lot Alike" (This Man), the two male actors draw the stage action on paper and their movements are timed first of all to the music and secondly to each other.

The most striking thing about Judith Martin's direction during that rehearsal was her sensitivity to details. For example, in "The Bicycle Race," the four players enter one at a time to music and begin to draw a bicycle on a large cardboard rectangle covered with white paper. While they start drawing their bicycles at different times, all four complete them at the same time. During rehearsal, Martin was concerned that some of the bicycles were nice and dark while others were too light. She wanted them all to end up equally dark. Since the actors all have different amounts of time in which to draw their bicycles, each one will have to adjust to their time limit and compensate by drawing either harder or lighter. In another scene, "A Lot Alike," Martin suggested several minute improvements in the two men's drawings; she changed the way the young actor drew the arm of the businessman and improved the way Burton drew the relatives of the Indian. It became very clear to the researcher during this rehearsal that Judith Martin has a strong eye for detail. Martin wants the work to be very precise and very clear and at the same time aesthetically pleasing to the audience. As a director she often makes very directive suggestions to the actors about such details as their facial expressions, body reactions, and so
forth. The Paper Bag Players have always presented to children only their best work, meticulously crafting that work to perfection. Critics, educators, and child drama specialists alike have cited this aspect of their work as outstanding. In the words of one critic, "Perhaps one reason for the Bags' success in a field often deemed unworthy of notice by critics is the exceptional care and time they take in preparing their work."35

The Fourth and Fifth Stage of Creation:

Performance, Critiques, Rehearsals,

Further Performance.

Once a production has been polished and set for performance, it is shared with an audience. On the basis of that sharing, it is changed before the next performance. These two final stages of the on-going creative process of The Paper Bag Players are summarized as follows:

Stage Four: Communicating Solutions—Sharing with an Audience: The scene or production is shared with an audience in performance, formally or informally, in studio, school, or theatre.

Stage Five: Continued Testing, Modifying, and Re-testing of Solutions: (a) Based on the audiences' and the company's reactions to the performance, changes are made in the production and/or individual scenes. Scenes may be deleted or new scenes created and added according to the needs of the overall production; and (b) steps four and five are repeated over and over.

The audience has always been a part of the process of creating a Paper Bag production. As Judith Martin expresses it, "Audience participation is enormously important to the Bags. The audience actually propels the writing in the developing stages, and we go into the public schools and take the children's reactions very seriously. I can't tell you how often we've thrown something out or revised it--children have pushed us into making our material more clear, more visual, more vivid, more precise." \(^{36}\)

A characteristic of The Paper Bag Players has always been their ability to switch from the totally non-critical, receptive phase of the creative process to the objective phase. Once a production is in performance, the company is particularly critical of their own work. As Nellie McCaslin describes this process:

> They would never have something set in concrete so that it didn't undergo any changes. They would try it out on the children . . . and they would always discuss how this audience reacted as compared with another, and certain places where they seemed to always lose the audience or where there would be restlessness. They would honestly question what went wrong there--what needs to be tightened up, or does something need to be eliminated. And then, even more importantly, they would make the necessary changes. So that I think there's always been a process of criticizing their own work while they were creating their work" (Interview, November 1979).

From the beginning, the company has constantly changed their shows--adding, subtracting, improving, rearranging the pieces to get just the right mix in a production. For example, the production

\(^{36}\) Judith Martin in Holly Hill, "Bagging the Musical 'Dandelion'."
Dandelion originally ended with a sophisticated, clever song, "Rocks, Rocks, Rocks," which Ashwander still claims is the best piece of music he has ever composed for the Bags. In this number, the four actors are rocks who themselves have never changed, though they have witnessed the changes in the earth around them. The song was a summing up of the changes in the world that have happened over time. But, despite how strong this song was, it did not really work as an ending for this production. It was too static, too sophisticated, too sardonic. Ending the production with a reprise of "Dandelion" was much more effective, providing both a circular form and the right note of optimism on which to end this production. As Martin observes, "It takes about two years to elaborate a show so that it really works. Much as I hate to admit it, when a child fidgets, it's because the script has let him down or a note of patronization has crept into the performance. We're always tightening and reworking our material." 37

Over the years, of course, Judith Martin and the company have become more adept at creating material which they know is already going to be successful with the child audience. More often they use the audience to help refine the pieces, to make them even more successful. There is, however, always the danger of being self-indulgent as artists — of falling in love with the material to the extent that you can't see its shortcomings, or of working so hard on a particular number that you are unwilling to give it up. Sometimes, without that child

audience feedback, disaster can strike. Ashwander remembers that they tried Guffawhaw out at the Eugene O'Neill Center in Connecticut for a group of teachers. The teachers loved it and thought it was very clever and wonderful, as did the company. However, when they took it to a normal Saturday show for children in New Jersey, according to Ashwander, it bombed completely with the children (Interview, June 1979). The company worked hard to save Guffawhaw, reducing it and adding other numbers. Eventually, however, they simply dropped it from their repertory.

Manager Judith Liss recalls another example of how, without the child audience feedback, the company can go wrong with their material. In the number "Aunt Sally" (Bath) the paper bag characters created for the number were so spectacular that the company worked out the entire number in the studio. In this instance, the costumes made the piece look so adorable, that the cast was oblivious to the shortcomings of the complicated plot and they ignored the fact that the costumes made the dialogue both difficult to hear and impossible to concentrate on. From their audience, the company learned that in order to successfully use these spectacular paper bag costumes, they must be used in simple non-verbal dance or movement numbers (such as "Twins" in Mama). As Judith Liss concludes, "I can't tell you how important it is for the company to do the material in front of a child audience again and again and again" (Interview, May 1979).

The researcher had the opportunity to observe first-hand how this process of using audience feedback to improve a production works. During November and December, 1979, she traveled with the company on tour
and observed several performances both on the road and in New York, including an in-school show at P.S. 108 in East Harlem. The production observed was *Mama's Got A Job*, prior to the company's New York Christmas engagement at Lincoln Center.

What the researcher observed was a constant process of changing and improving the production. Each individual number was worked on. "Home-work," for example, had a very weak ending and got very little audience response. This was changed by editing and shortening the scene and adding one line at the end, "Thanks, Dad," which elicited laughter from the audience and made the ending much stronger. Likewise, in "Bananas," Martin deleted a more complicated ending, simplifying and tightening the piece.

The audience participation numbers were especially weak at the beginning of the production tour. In "Bananas," for example, the participation was forced and very unnatural. Gradually, however, little changes were made in the lines and in the performance, until the participation began to work. In the case of the scene "Birds," however, the audience participation never did work. The children were not ready to sing along with the company in this scene and the song "Friends, Friends," which was very weak, did little to catch their interest. In an effort to save this number, Martin replaced that song with a reprise of "The Best of Friends." When this failed to interest the audience, however, she deleted the number from the production.

In place of "Birds," Martin inserted an old production number, "Old Friends" (*Group Soup*). Two of the new numbers in the production,
"The Spell " and "My House," were done more in the style of the company's older work, a quieter, less predictable style. Adding another piece in the older style helped counter the majority of the numbers, which were done in the newer, more highly polished, song-and-dance style, pieces such as "Twins," "Bananas," "Stop That Noise," and "Disco Skater." While on the road, Martin also developed and added an entire new piece to the production. This piece, "Wrap Around," was a transition piece that developed into a longer piece, proving quite successful with the audience.

In the title production number, "Mama's Got A Job," which was twenty minutes long, the company tightened the scene, making cuts to hold the audience's attention. The middle section in particular (the stockbroker scene) was cut considerably, making the entire production more effective. Some changes Martin tried in "Mama" proved to be ineffective, however. For example, Martin tried having the cast members do the narration as well as play their characters. This proved confusing, however, and the original method of having the narration done in radio-style announcements was resumed. Changes continued, however, and by the time the production reached Lincoln Center it was a much tighter, more effective production.

Making audience feedback an important part of their creative process has had several consequences for the company. For one thing, productions take longer to develop and, in fact, they are never really completed. What this means for the company is that either before or after every performance Martin gives notes. She is also apt to call
for a rehearsal to rework material at any time. This is true no matter how long they have been performing a show. It is also true no matter where they are—in New York or on the road. Martin feels there is always something that can be improved: "You keep saying, well, this could be richer or this could be funnier. In a sense it's like a vaudeville act that keeps getting better year after year after year" (Interview, June 1979). Martin will even be thinking of ways to improve a production when there seems to be no possible reason—after, for example, the last performance of the season.

While the younger actors sometimes resent the extra rehearsals and continual changes in the material, for the older members of the company such perfectionism is one of the ways they maintain their interest in the material. Ashwander, for instance, when asked how he can keep playing the same music over and over and over again, replied: "Well, it's mine, you see. The music is mine." He then went on to explain that "the great pleasure in playing your own composition is in constantly finding minute ways to improve it... to embellish, to simplify, to clarify, and so forth" (Interview with Judith Liss, May 1979). This attitude of never being satisfied, of never resting on their laurels, is one of the things that over time has continued to make their work excellent. This attitude also assures that the creative process of The Paper Bag Players is an open-ended, dynamic one.
CHAPTER V

CHILDREN'S THEATRE PRINCIPLES:
HOW THE PAPER BAG PLAYERS COMMUNICATE
EFFECTIVELY WITH THE CHILD AUDIENCE AND
WHAT THEY COMMUNICATE TO THAT AUDIENCE

The Paper Bag Players are primarily a performance company. Their main goal is to provide excellent, imaginative, original theatre for children. From the beginning, however, their theatre had an educational potential recognized by critics, educators, parents, and child drama specialists alike. This chapter will explore, first of all, the principles of children's theatre evolved by Judith Martin and The Paper Bag Players, those principles which enable the company to effectively communicate with their audience. A major portion of the chapter will then explore the educational dimensions of the company's work. In this section, the author will elucidate the overall messages and enumerate the specific values projected to the child audience through the productions of The Paper Bag Players.
The Principles of Effective Communication Evolved By

Judith Martin and The Paper Bag Players

Educators have long recognized the special and universal appeal of The Paper Bag Players, an appeal which crosses barriers of age, ability, language, and deprivation, reaching all children. Here is what two educators at inner-city elementary schools have to say about the company's ability to reach even the most unreachable children:

Reams could be written on your influence on the children of MES 146. As you know, children in deprived areas find it difficult to verbalize, but a viewing of any of your performances open up a flood gate in every child of all sorts of wonderful descriptive vocabulary which otherwise might remain stored away. Our TMR Group (teachable mentally retarded) still perform 'What Came First The Chicken Or The Egg?' And they constantly ask "When will the show come back?" Your performances are a special treat for our NE (non-educable) children. It is one time when they are an integral part of the group--fun and laughter belong to no one language.¹

I have always been aware of the special quality of impact and involvement which The Paper Bag Players have had on our children. A short conversation I had with a child on the morning of their arrival in our school dramatized for me their unique ability to reach all children. I met Emilio, a 9-year old boy who is in a class for retarded children and he asked excitedly if the Players were going to give another show. When I asked him if he remembered them, he said, "Sure, remember, when I was in the 2nd grade (two years before) they did that thing about the chicken and the egg." This from a child who has difficulty in retaining academic learning from day to day.

These brilliant, dynamic, and sensitive people inspire children, especially children like ours who for the most part are exposed to limited experiences outside their school and home community.²

Because the Bags' target audience is the very youngest of child audiences (4-10), they are also especially effective in reaching and stimulating special audiences of children—children who cannot speak English, for example, or who are retarded, or language deficient, or culturally or economically deprived. Both the subject matter and the style of the company's productions is so immediate, so clear, so direct, that it becomes accessible to a wide range of children. In addition, the company uses a lot of nonverbal elements in their theatre, such elements as pantomime, dance, and movement; colorful, simple props and costumes; and physically exciting music which surrounds and energizes the audience. All of these elements help them reach across communication barriers. But the content in their productions is the main key to their appeal.

The Bags' material works because it is both very specific and also universal. The best of their work is grounded in a specific reality but deals with a concern that transcends barriers of age, language, geography, and so forth. Judith Martin gives a specific instance where this was true: "In Iran, where we performed one summer, audiences thought we'd written one of our numbers, 'Plumber, Plumber, Fix My Sink,' especially for them. The Iranians have a terrible problem with faulty appliances and finding competent repairmen. We got

the identical reaction from Israeli audiences. And from American children in Appalachia. Of course, the idea was born of our New York experience. If your material is true, audiences will recognize its honesty and respond to it.\textsuperscript{3}

During their twenty-five years of performing for and observing child audiences, Judith Martin and The Paper Bag Players have become experts at communicating with the child audience. The principles which they follow can be extracted from their work and their own observations in interviews with the researcher. It is useful to summarize those principles before examining the specifics of each.

**Judith Martin's Principles of Creating Material For Children's Theatre**

1. **Respect For The Artists' Integrity and Respect For Children:** It is important that all material and ideas appeal first of all to the company members as artists and adults. Therefore, children should be regarded as intelligent human beings, capable of responding with understanding and a sense of humor to important themes, to a wide range of human emotions, and to the ideas that appeal to the artists in the company.

2. **Recognition of The Special Needs of The Child Audience:** It is equally important that the productions be accessible to and clearly understood by the children in the audience. Therefore, all ideas in a production must be expressed in terms a child can understand and appreciate and in a form which aids such understanding and appreciation. All ideas must be given specific, concrete details recognizable by the child.

3. Use of Special Techniques To Assure Clear Communication and Involvement of The Child Audience:

Though the artists are in charge of shaping the material, the child audience is considered to be central to the production and children should be involved both in the creative process and during performance. In addition to working with and observing children to assure that the material will genuinely involve and interest them, this implies employing special techniques useful in aiding clear communication with and involvement of the child audience, such techniques as humor, repetition, simplification, and especially audience participation.

Respect For Artist's Integrity and Respect For Children

One of Judith Martin's basic premises is that if her work isn't first of all good theatre, then it will never be good children's theatre. In the Bags' theatre the integrity of both the artist and the child are paramount and a balance is maintained that satisfies the needs of both. Thus even though the material is consciously shaped for the child audience, there is never any patronizing, or belittling the perceptions of children. As Betty Osgood puts it, "There is no Pollyannaism, or cuteness, no talking down, no baby-talk and no need to throw up on 'Mr. Floor'."  

The company insists that there be no double standard--no talking up to the adults or talking down to the children in the audience. In The Paper Bag Players' productions, as stated earlier, children are regarded as intelligent human beings capable of responding to the same ideas that appeal to the artists in the company. Adults are also

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regarded as intelligent human beings, capable of recognizing the value of the child-like (not childish) aspects of the company's work and capable of responding with humor and enthusiasm to the material that satisfies the child audience and the artists in the company.

Judith Martin and other major artists in the company insist that the key to effective communication with both adults and children is to do material that appeals first of all to them as adults and artists. As Judith Martin notes, "We don't do things that embarrass us. We do things that we think are funny. We never say, 'Oh, the kids will love this.' We put something in a show because we like it. We laugh a lot at rehearsals" (Interview, June 1979). The artists involved expressed a strong sentiment that this is their own poetic statement that they are making and it is important to them that they continue to get artistic satisfaction from their work. Martin prefers to compare the company's work to good children's literature than to other children's theatre. She feels that like any good author, they simply get into a situation that intrigues them as adults and stay with it and develop it. Martin uses Charlotte's Web by E. B. White as an example of a book written without any sense of compromise on the part of the author, a book that is very interesting both to adults and to children.

While Martin recognizes the importance of respecting her adult sensibilities and perceptions, she matches this with an equal concern for protecting and respecting the child's sensibilities in the use of material and humor. As early company member Betty Osgood notes:
With the fullest respect for their audience, The Bags have felt from the beginning that they are engaged in a concept of theatre which is generic, not in an isolated subdivision called "Children's theatre." While the material for a show evolves, The Bags feel a definite responsibility that children must be able to understand and enjoy it, but the various ideas upon which the show is built do not particularly occur with children in mind. The Bags keep their artistic integrity by following their own tastes and interests and by simultaneously keeping in mind that they play for children. The show can be enjoyed by adults but not at the expense of children; that is, not at the expense of clarity, not at the expense of good taste, and not at the expense of the child's dignity.  

Judith Martin has confidence in children's innate wit, intelligence, sensitivity, imagination, and sense of humor. She respects children, accepting them as they are while at the same time working to stretch their imaginations and help them to grow as responsible, reflective human beings.

**Recognition of The Special Needs of The Child Audience**

**Implications For Content.**—A pledge to maintain the child's integrity while shaping material to meet his needs has several implications, both for the production style and content. In content, it implies eliminating those adult topics and perceptions which are alien to the child's world and sensibilities. It obviously means eliminating, for example, sex, obscenity, and unnecessary violence. Nothing is ever done to shock, to frighten, or to be outrageous. For the most part, the company also avoids overt moralizing and preaching, nostalgia, and

sentimentality, all of which are adult attitudes about what children should learn or should feel or should know.

In the Paper Bag world, many topics which would be considered adult and therefore alien to the child's world are not eliminated, however. What Martin and the company do instead is to take such serious adult themes and make them accessible to children. In Grandpa, for instance, the company took the theme of the life process of growing and aging. Martin searched for a way to make this theme appeal to and interest children. She remembers thinking, "Well what does a kid care about getting older?" and being driven by that thought: "I began to think, 'Well, what is older for a kid? ... older for a kid means that he can do things, life can get better, he can do things he couldn't do before, he can go places he couldn't go before, he has more power. And then I began to think of contexts in which that would mean something to a child, like the kid playing baseball and how his attitude changes as he gets older" (Interview, June 1979). Martin knew she had to find the humor and child interest in the theme in order to make it work for children.

Martin recognizes that working for children does limit somewhat the topics chosen but insists that the key is in finding the child's interest in the topic, not the adults: "If you do a story on a divorce, for example, you can't expect the child to be involved in or interested in all the inequalities of a divorce. The thing the child wants to know is that no matter what happens he's loved, and he'll be taken care of. You have to say that no matter what happens, the fact that parents split up doesn't mean you'll be unloved, in fact, you may be more loved.
And you have to reassure the child that he's not weird or a creep, that it doesn't happen only to him, that it happens to a lot of kids. They don't care what the mother gets for a settlement or doesn't get for a settlement... So you have to always work from a child's point of view" (Interview, June 1979).

Staying tuned to the child's perceptions, in addition to eliminating certain topics or forcing one to at least shape those topics, also eliminates certain attitudes such as ennui, cynicism, nostalgia, and sentimentality. These adult perceptions are very alien to the child's world and to his cognitive and emotional needs. Martin feels that cynicism and paranoia—a belief that the world is your enemy—are especially destructive and do not belong in children's theatre: "What we do is to present the child with a world that is not overwhelmingly evil... I think that's very important for a child... I think you must feel that the world is not your enemy. You can't grow up feeling that the world is your enemy, even in an urban society where it seems very brutalized... you must find rhythms, you must find colors, you must find characters that you feel give you strength. I think it takes away from your strength to feel that the world is so hostile" (Interview, June 1979).

Martin finds that to work well with children, especially very young children, material must be simple, clear, and straightforward. It is important to be clearly understood by the audience at all times. Nothing should depend on the audience knowing something else. This eliminates such forms as satires, spoofs, parodies, and camp take-offs.
Both Martin and Ashwander feel that such forms, which are done a great deal in children's theatre, are very facile, easy to do, and totally irrelevant to children. All of these forms rely on the audience sharing knowledge of something outside of what is being presented on stage. With children one cannot count on the audience sharing such common background information. So one is forced to deal with the here and now, making no reference to past or future events. It is important to concentrate on what is real and what is funny on the stage at that very moment. As Martin explains:

I like things to be very clear, and I know you can't make any assumptions about the audience. For example, that's why satire doesn't work [for children]. Because when you're satirizing something you must understand that everybody knows what you're satirizing, and you can't make that assumption with children. So that immediately forces you into a direct relationship with material. So if you're showing a woman taking a bath, say, well you can't do a take-off on other people taking a bath or movies about people taking a bath or commercials about bath products, because you're never sure what they've seen and what they haven't, so you're forced to do something that's funny right then and there about a woman taking a bath. And you can't do a take-off on a song about taking a bath because nobody's heard the song, so you have to do a funny song. It has to be all right then and there. It can't relate to something that you know or you think they know. Much adult theatre and even much children's theatre deals with something that has happened somewhere else or that you already know about. But when you're forced to deal with what's there—that immediately puts you in some very direct communication with the event on the stage . . . . (Interview, June 1979)

The temptation to do adult material at the expense of the children is great. Martin constantly guards against the intrusion of overtones and material which is irrelevant to the children. One example she cites
is from *Mama's Got A Job*: "Donald [Ashwander] wanted Biddle and Boodle [the two stockbrokers] to be a tapdance team. And I said, 'Nobody will understand that. I mean you think it's funny for two stockbrokers to tap dance, but the children won't even understand stockbrokers. All they'll understand is if we make the characters eccentric enough so that they think they're two funny men.' And we have this argument over and over again" (Interview, June 1979). Martin's insistence that the material remain relevant to the child's world is the company's best safeguard against self-indulgence.

For Judith Martin, clear communication with the child audience is of paramount concern. Critics often cite this aspect of the company's work. In noting how clearly the company explained the various complex concepts of evolution, for example, one critic stated that "Will and Ariel Durant would have been jealous," another that "Margaret Mead could not have explained it with more clarity and charm." Despite such clarity, however, the material is not simplistic. It is ingenious in appealing equally to the sophisticated and the naive, the adult and the child. As one critic notes, the secret of their "catholic" appeal is the fact that they "combine the imagination of the 'theatre of the absurd' with comprehension."7

**Implications For Style.**—In addition to changes in content, recognition of the special needs of children has implications for the

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7Sally Quinn, "The Earth Was a Brown Paper Bag."
style of the company's work. Again, everything must be accessible to children and communicate clearly with them. Judith Martin's experience with children was very instrumental in forming the style of the company's productions. From teaching children, Martin learned that children look for pleasure and enjoyment, that they look for a story or situation or character to interest them, and that "for very young children, what we call 'mixed media' is very normal. That is, you dance a little, talk a little, sing a little." These lessons were all incorporated into the style of The Paper Bag Players, a style based on a child's sense of fun and fantasy, fashioned after the way children play and create, "shifting easily and quickly from one subject to another, using whenever necessary, pantomime, stories, dancing, songs, and even drawing—sometimes abstract, sometimes literal."^8

In addition to structuring their content in a way which communicates directly with children, the company's use of commonplace objects and familiar materials for props and costumes, their use of electronic music, and their acting style all aid in making their work accessible to children. Their acting style, in particular, is a key to this accessibility. The actors are very friendly, familiar and natural: they address each other and the children directly; they call each other by their first names; the language they use is familiar, even colloquial. The acting is upbeat, stylized, and presentational yet at


the same time very simple and straightforward. While it is entertaining and definitely theatrical, the overall effect is to make the children feel comfortable, facilitating their involvement in the production. As Betty Osgood notes, even though "the experience is heightened in the theatrical situation, when we are successful we can establish a contact with the audience which is as direct as conversation."^10

Maintaining The Audience's Attention, A Concern. — The Bags follow standard children's theatre practice in order to meet the child's physical needs. Everything in their production is the appropriate length to hold the attention of the children in the audience. In addition there is an excellent sense of pacing and rhythm in the production. The upbeat musical tempo and brisk overall pacing of the show as well as the short length of individual scenes and the overall production, all help sustain audience attention and interest.

One concern of critics, in fact, is that the pace of The Paper Bag Theatre's productions may be too fast. The Paper Bag theatre is not a character development theatre, with a long story or characters for the children to identify with and follow. Because of this and because they are a comic theatre, one criticism leveled at the company is the fact that everything goes by at too quick a pace, that there is no time for children to really grab onto any meaningful message. Educator Ruth Grinspoon, an elementary school teacher in New York who repeatedly brings her classes to see The Paper Bag Players, disagrees. Grinspoon

feels that the Bags format is especially good both for holding the children's attention and also for encouraging active listening and involvement. In an interview with the researcher, Grinspoon praised The Paper Bag Players' format while condemning that of Sesame Street: "I happen to feel that Sesame Street is very poor for children . . . that it encourages a short attention span. You feel it is just based on the principles of television commercials . . . Nothing can be more than two minutes long and it's supposed to shock you or stun you to keep watching—passively. I don't equate this kind of theatre with Sesame Street at all. I think they [The Bags] just pick the length of time that works best for children. The Bags vary their pace and include a number of slow-paced pieces. . . . They truly encourage active listening and involvement."

Child Audience Needs—Limiting or Freeing?—Martin feels that the company is limited somewhat in choosing topics to deal with, in that many topics of interest to adults are of very little interest to children, political topics such as the feminist movement, or the ramifications of international monetary systems, for instance. For the most part, however, Martin feels that "work for children is a permissive, a freeing force. What might seem otherwise daring doesn't seem so when you're doing it to make a child happy, to touch a child. . . . Ours is a lovely field to work in. It compels you to do something more basic, more fun-loving, and more joyous. It is a great support for your

imagination, not a limitation."  

**Use of Special Techniques To Assure Clear Communication And Involvement of The Child Audience**

Judith Martin has evolved some very specific techniques to assure clear communication and involvement of the child audience. Keep in mind that The Paper Bag Players work with the very youngest of child audiences. Their target audience is 4-10 year olds and they play very well even to 3 year olds.

**Humor.**—One way Martin involves her audience is through humor. Martin feels the theatre experience should first of all be fun and that these would be lost without the sheer enjoyment that both children and adults derive from the performances. She wants their theatre to provide true entertainment for children: "Not in the superficial meaning of that word as simply passing time away, but in the sense of having a truly good time, of being buoyed. I just think humor and having fun is too often put down, while for kids, particularly, suffering is glorified. Why shouldn't school and learning be fun? And while we hope our theatre brings something to kids that enhances their life and reinforces the values of kindness and feeling for others, why shouldn't it be fun too?"

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12 Judith Martin, in Marcia Marks, p. 53; and Judith Martin in Rose Grant, "Paper Bag drama," Teacher, 16 February 1979.

We are all motivated by that which causes us joy and pleasure. An important element of the work of The Paper Bag Players is to serve as a model—for teachers and parents as well as children—that laughter and entertainment are important and can be an effective aid to teaching and learning. Martin recalls that, for example, "The school teachers of Appalachia were delighted that Darwin's theory of evolution can be funny and entertaining. . . . They said it opened up a whole new world of teaching." The Paper Bag Player's promote a kind of total participation and involvement, of which pleasure is a part. Their premise seems to be that only when children are intensely involved will they be open and receptive to the learning experiences being offered to them.

**Simplification and Repetition.**—Beyond entertainment, Martin cites three aspects of their work that help them appeal to very young children: the directness and clarity of their work (simplification), repetition, and audience participation. Since the techniques of simplification and repetition have both been discussed under creative method, only the technique of audience participation will be discussed here.

**Audience Participation.**—Judith Martin feels that the key to the success of the company with very young children (and perhaps with all of the child audience) is the fact that it is clear from the beginning that the show is being done for them, that they are a crucial part of the production, and that the actors really want them to understand, to enjoy, and to participate. Martin especially feels that audience

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participation is the key to this involvement: "I think the audience participation is crucial, because I always feel that no matter how good your ideas are, no matter how beautiful your show is, the kids come to life when they participate. Then the show is theirs. And I think that audience participation gives the show a tone. Something is established right from the beginning where you make some admission that it's their show" (Interview, June 1979).

The audience in a Paper Bag Players' production is made to feel right from the beginning that they are a part of the production. Audience involvement begins the moment Donald Ashwander sits down to play his electric harpsichord as the kids (and parents too) begin to tap and sway to the beat of the music. Then, in the opening number, the actors come on stage and introduce themselves to the audience, calling each other by their first names and speaking directly to the children in the audience. But it is the audience participation numbers that cement this direct relationship. At it's best the Bags' audience participation (which always remains very simple—on a level of verbal response) involves the children in an integral way in a scene. Since the company is so successful in the use of limited forms of audience participation, it will be useful to examine the techniques they use to involve the child audience in such a natural way.

Before doing that, however, it will be necessary to further define the various levels of audience participation. First of all there is "spontaneous" participation and planned participation. Actually both types of audience response are planned, but in "spontaneous"
participation, the (char)actors on stage do not directly solicit audience response. Instead, a situation is set up on stage in such a way that the children feel obliged to participate, to shout out warning for example, or to try to help someone, to correct a misunderstanding, and so forth. In spontaneous audience participation, then, the actors structure for spontaneous responses (other than laughter and applause). In planned audience participation, the (char)actors directly request the audience to participate in some way. Both spontaneous and planned audience participation can be divided into verbal responses and physical responses. Verbal responses are the normal form for children to respond spontaneously, by warning a character of something about to happen, and so forth. The verbal response elicited by direct requests range from simple to complex: yes-no responses to questions; more complex individual responses to questions; chanting/or singing; vocalizing sounds for the scene; passing on information; taking part in an argument; informing/explaining; giving suggestions; helping characters solve problems; making decisions; manipulating, initiating, or actually becoming the action in the play. Physical responses elicited by direct request also range from simple to elaborate: sounds/gestures; facial expressions; internal thinking (i.e. to make a wish) accompanied by (appropriate) physical action; pantomime (in-place); coming up on the stage to help act out a scene; pantomime through space in audience; manipulating real objects; becoming the action of the play.

While The Paper Bag Players use both spontaneous and planned audience participation, with only a few exceptions, The Paper Bag Players
have limited their audience participation to verbal responses, preferring to remain in control of the production and to maintain the production as theatre, rather than depart into creative dramatics. The point of the audience participation in the Bags' productions is to involve the children and let them know that they are a part of the production. The Paper Bag Players do not feel that audience participation which attempts to have the children do creative dramatics serves this function. Rather, this alienates the children who either feel silly and get out of control or give responses which are anything but creative. In the Bags participation, having the children participate is not considered a way for them to be creative, but a way for them to be involved, to take part in a ritual with the performers. At the same time, the audience participation numbers naturally give the children a chance to be more active, to move around in their seats as they sing and shout. They thus serve the same function as the older device of actually having exercise spots built into the children's theatre production. The participation numbers allow for a release of energy so the children will be ready once again to concentrate on the theatrical moment at hand. At the same time that they allow for a release of tension and unused energy, they also involve the children in the production.

The Paper Bag Players started out with audience participation in their productions from the very beginning. Martin recalls that from the beginning they had confidence that if the children did something themselves, they would get more involved in the show. But while the company used audience participation from the beginning, it took a few
mistakes before they evolved a successful form for that participation. They found out very quickly that asking the children for physical responses was very uncomfortable for them. An early example of unsuccessful audience participation was "A Message On The Ceiling" (Cut-Ups) which came straight from Martin's pre-school dance classes. In this scene the actors would get the audience members to find messages in various places, repeat the "imaginary" messages, and then follow the directions contained in the messages. For example, they would say, "There's a message for you. Must be it's in your sleeve." And then they would get the children to take the message out of their sleeve (in mime) and the message would say something like "Sneeze Twice" and the audience would be asked to follow the directions. Martin observes that this kind of audience participation was not successful because the children were uncomfortable and "the actors were even more uncomfortable with getting the children to do things--it seemed so contrived and babyish" (Interview, June, 1979). By their second show, Scraps, the company had begun to find the key to successful and comfortable audience participation. For them this meant limiting the participation to a form that let the audience and the actors remain comfortable and comfortably within the bounds of presentational theatre. While limiting the form of audience responses mainly to the verbal, the company found it was important to really make the participation more integral to the production. Rote responses were not enough. They found that the key to doing this was to give the children a task or a function to fulfill within a scene. When three actors hide in boxes and a fourth actor can't find them,
"where's Everybody?" the opening number in Scraps), for example, the children can very naturally and will very generously try to help him out. And of course, while the children understand that it is a game they are playing with the actors, they are delighted to play it. And the scene really cannot continue until the actors are found.

The company made great strides forward toward effective audience participation with "S.O.S." and "What's The Message" in Scraps. In both of these numbers, the children are asked to help the characters in the scenes in a way that is fun and in a way that is very integral to the scene. "S.O.S.", for example, puts the children in the position of aiding a character in distress—a little tugboat who is about to sink in the middle of the ocean. The children all help by shouting "S.O.S." until a big ship comes to rescue her. The children naturally identify with the little boat, who is like a rather likable little child, and are relieved when she is rescued. They are especially delighted that they could help her out. Part of the joy of this piece comes from the rather ritualistic chanting done by the audience. The company continued to use this technique of putting the children in a position of being able to help out the characters in need in such later scenes as "Dot and Dash" (Fortunately), "Hands Off! Don't Touch!" (Horse), "Bow Wow" (Dandelion), and "Plumber, Plumber, Fix My Sink" (Hot Feet).

With "Hedge Pledge" (Group Soup), the company discovered two more excellent devices to get the children involved: one was to have two or more characters get in an argument and turn to the audience for help of some sort; and the other was to allow the children to know more than
the characters. In "Hedge Pledge," two neighbors who are not on speaking terms engage the children to pass messages back and forth. Thus the children serve a function in the scene and when the two neighbors misinterpret the messages, the audience is motivated to try to correct the misunderstanding. Both of these devices became major ways the company used to get the children really involved in the audience participation numbers. Setting up a conflict or argument or contest on stage and then allowing the children to participate and perhaps help solve that conflict was used many times by the company, in such scenes as "Deedle, Deedle, Deedle" (Group Soup); "Noses" (Bath); "It's Just Not Fair" (Grandpa); "I Won't Take A Bath"; "Big Hands, Big Feet" (Everybody); "Bananas, Bananas" (Mama). Here the children can act as go-betweens, help resolve the conflict, judge the competition, take part in the argument, or just be asked to see both sides of the dispute.

The other device, that of putting the children in a position of knowing more than the actors or characters on stage has been used in planned audience participation pieces as "Dandelion," and "That's Good" (Hot Feet), and such spontaneous participation scenes as "At The Studio of the Famous Madame Blanche" (Scraps) and "The Visit" (Fortunately). This technique has several variations: one is the "Emporer's-New-Clothes--syndrome, in which the characters feel they know a lot, but the children actually know better ("Madame Blanche") and the other is the deliberate use of a dense or not-too-bright character ("Dandelion," "That's Good").
The situations set up by the Bags to elicit spontaneous audience participation often use these two variations of having the children know better. In "Madame Blanche," for instance, a rather haughty narrator takes us on a tour of the studio of a famous painter. In the studio, the painter is painting a white on white picture which the narrator describes. The children can see that what the narrator is describing so rapturously is really invisible and they try to set him straight (the "Emperor's-New-Clothes-technique). In "The Visit," two friends pay each other a visit at the same time. They keep repeating the same error of missing each other time and time again. Finally each leaves a note at the other's house to wait for them to return, whereupon the two friends proceed to stay at each other's houses for an entire year (the deliberate use of a not-so-bright character). Both of these techniques create a situation in which the children very naturally want to try to help the characters out or set them straight.

A major form of audience participation in the Bags' productions is the songs in which the audience is asked to join in. Sometimes these are just sing-a-longs, but more often the same devices are used to involve the children that are used in the other audience participation scenes. The first successful audience participation song was "Hands Off! Don't Touch!" in which the audience helps a butterfly and a flower escape from a collector by singing the theme song. Then when the collector is about to be eaten by a hungry lion, the audience also come to his rescue with the same song.
It was really not until after Donald Ashwander joined the company, however, that audience participation songs became a significant part of each production. Ashwander composes tunes and lyrics which are not only catchy and easy to remember, but which can be taken home, changed, and sung. Ashwander himself is always interested to see how children take his songs and use them or adapt them to their own situations. He recalls being amused after one performance at Henry Street by two bus-loads of children, crowded four to a seat, singing "Too Many Fishes, Too Little Water, Something's Going To Happen Soon" (Interview, June 1979). One critic, watching his daughter splashing happily in the tub after a performance, singing "I won't take a bath, I won't take a bath, I won't take a bath today," was inspired to write about the audience participation in the Bags' shows:

Anyone who's ever seen The Paper Bag Players doesn't need to be told they're unsurpassed in getting kids involved in the show. You never for a moment feel bullied or intimidated to join in, or begged to rescue a faltering scene; on the contrary, the performers seem to be giving them a chance to share in the fun. So when Peter and the kids sing, "I won't take a bath, I won't take a bath," and Mommy and the parents answer, "You will take a bath, you will take a bath," they're setting up a game in which conflict between kids and parents becomes a kind of joyous ritual.15

Through the years, then, The Paper Bag Players have found several techniques which help make their audience participation numbers natural, comfortable, and successful. These include songs that not only have catchy tunes and lyrics but also involve the children in an integral

way; scenes which put the children in a position of being able to help out characters or actors; scenes which set up a conflict or argument on stage and then allow the children to participate; and scenes which put the children in a position of knowing better than the actors or characters on stage including both the "Emperor's-New-Clothes technique" and the deliberate use of a naive or dense person on stage.

The Paper Bag Players' skit "Bow Wow" (Dandelion) can be considered a classic in planned audience participation. In this skit a sleeping family of cave dwellers wake up one at a time, crawl out of their cave, and talk to the audience. Each leaves (exits) intent on an errand and each in turn asks the audience to pass on a message to the rest of the family if they should wake up. Naturally each message gets misinterpreted and chaos ensues until the family solves the problem by inventing writing. The audience is an integral part of this scene and in addition to the planned participation of passing on the messages, they also spontaneously participate, trying to straighten out the mistakes each character makes. The audience is able to identify with the characters and their dilemma at the same time they are put in the superior position of knowing more and being able to help them out. The scene is fun to participate in and keeps the audience at the edges of their seats.

A Paper Bag skit which could be considered a classic in eliciting spontaneous audience participation is "The Bicycle Race" (Hot Feet). In this scene, the four players draw bicycles on cardboard rectangles. They then proceed to have a bicycle race with their paper bicycles which is so believable that the children in the audience cheer on the
underdog as if they were at a real race.

The Paper Bag Players limit audience participation mainly to verbal responses. As actors, they stay firmly in control of the production. Although all audience participation manipulates the child audience in order to get them to respond, in the Bags' productions the children respond gladly because what they are asked to do is natural, fun, integral to the production, and does not in any way demean them or make them feel or act silly. In their audience participation numbers, The Paper Bag Players allow the children in the audience to have fun and to be generous, to give of themselves. At their best, these audience participation numbers help the children identify with the actors/characters and the dilemmas they are caught in. As Judith Martin observes, "When we ask the audience to participate, it's in some moment of despair, like, 'I've got to go but will you please take this message'. . . . The Paper Bag Players are sort of like everybody else, slightly befuddled and slightly confused. So it's an easy identification. We're in the same boat as they are" (Interview, June 1979).

Educational Dimensions of the Work of The Paper Bag Players

The aspects of The Paper Bag Players' work discussed thus far, including their universal appeal, the enjoyment derived from their work, their respect for children, the recognition of the special needs of the child audience, and the specific techniques they have for use with the child audience, all these aspects of their work are principles and methods the company has devised to effectively communicate with the
child audience. What they communicate to that child audience—the content of their productions—provides the educational dimensions of their work. To Judith Martin, the content of their productions, what they actually say to children, is the most important aspect of the work of The Paper Bag Players. These educational dimensions of their work can be divided into three areas: the company encourages and reinforces creativity and resourcefulness in children by providing a model of creativity accessible to children; they encourage children to think by providing serious themes and thought-provoking ideas on a level children can appreciate; and they provide emotional support and encourage children to care about and believe in themselves, others, and the world around them. These three aspects of the company's work are all a part of the over-all value system projected through the work of the company. In addition to exploring each of these three educational dimensions of their work, it will be useful to examine the ten major values projected to children through the work of The Paper Bag Players.

Encouraging Creativity and Resourcefulness in Children.—This is the educational aspect of the company's work that has been stressed the most by critics and educators alike. Review after review in the company's twenty-five years cites their ability to inspire and reinforce the fantasy, creativity, and imagination in children's lives. The company's work is designed to encourage creativity in several ways. First, they try to get children to respond actively rather than passively and to use their imagination during the performance. They also provide a model of resourcefulness in their use of common materials. In addition
they hope that the theatrical experience they provide children "will be vivid enough to carry over into creative play, to reinforce and stimulate their [the children's] natural use of imagination."\textsuperscript{16} And finally, their work provides a model of "how to make a vital theatre by using simple ideas, materials, and commonplace objects that are available to everyone."\textsuperscript{17}

A critic has described Judith Martin as "a tiny but unyielding bulwark against technological encroachment in children's theatre."\textsuperscript{18} The theatre of The Paper Bag Players shares a common goal with readers theatre and other forms of theatre in which minimal staging requires the audience "to develop a theatrical imagination through suggestion rather than by spelling everything out with elaborate sets and costumes."\textsuperscript{19} The minimal staging used by The Paper Bag Players encourages children to be active rather than passive viewers and to use their imaginations. Or, as company member Betty Osgood puts it, "The child's imagination easily transforms the everyday real environment into a world of fantasy. We want to stretch that imagination and at the same time make the child aware of the fun and beauty in the real world of people, objects, and events. We want to involve him in our theatre by leaving room for him


to fill out with his own imagination what we suggest in our simple theatrical style; we want to invite him to share in our theatrical fantasies and in the poetry, humor and sense of the absurd through which those fantasies are achieved."\textsuperscript{20}

The Paper Bag Players hope to go further in stimulating children's creativity, however. Because they make their theatre "out of the stuff any kid sees around him everyday" one critic sees them as "a perfect antidote" for other children's entertainment such as "the Nutcrackers and Coppelia and Disneyland products which build a make-believe world by using the utmost technical skills and resources of the theatre."\textsuperscript{21} Most children's entertainment dazzles children with visions of glory. Inspiring as these visions are, they seldom relate to the child's own world. The Paper Bag Players use of paper and cardboard is very specific—it relates directly and immediately to the child's world. The Paper Bag Players bridge the gap between the visions offered children on the stage and what they can invent for themselves.

To many children the company offers a reinforcement or verification of their own imaginative play. To the child who may not have been encouraged to develop his/her imagination, however, the company offers an accessible model of creativity. This is why, in the early period of the company's development, they felt that the commonplace objects and materials which they used for props and costumes should remain undisguised and easily recognizable.


In theory The Paper Bag Players' model of creativity works as follows: they ground their work in present reality—characters, scenes, and themes that children recognize from the world around them; they use that reality and recognizable objects to create a fantasy world that both stretches children's imaginations and expresses their secret wishes, fears, fantasies, and so forth; and they allow children the idea that they can do the same. As Board Member Susan Patricof expresses it:

They [the Bags] relate to the child's (and also the teacher's) environment and cause him to see new ways of using or extending that environment. The company's message to children (and teachers) is that theatre can be made out of the stuff they see around them everyday. That they can do it themselves. They don't need to have four million dollars, or elaborate frou-frou costumes, or be able to swing through the air. It's there all around them. They can go home and do it, if they want to. And even if they don't want to do it—the feeling is still there. That it isn't overwhelming. That it's within reach. It causes a great feeling of comfort and ease.22

This potential ability to inspire creativity in children is the aspect of the company's work stressed most by educators, and indeed, emphasized by the company itself in the early years of their history. Judith Martin, however, feels this aspect of their work has been overemphasized, that as they have become more professional their work has also become less accessible. Martin prefers, instead, to emphasize other educational aspects of the company's work, namely their ability to present serious themes and ideas in a form appropriate and accessible to young children.

Encouraging Children To Think.—In addition to their inspiration to creativity, educators and parents appreciate the humanistic values and intellectual ideas in The Paper Bag Players' work. One elementary school principal noted, after having the group perform at his school, "What was indeed gratifying was the underlying serious themes and thought-provoking ideas that were the essence of the production. They literally provided food for thought in class lessons which followed."23

The Paper Bag Players encourage children to think about important ideas by presenting those ideas on a level that children can appreciate.

In projecting their serious ideas and messages to the child audience, for the most part The Paper Bag Players avoid didacticism and overt political messages. By remaining firmly a comic theatre, the company projects their messages indirectly through the exaggeration and theatricalization inherent in their comedy:

Without really trying to, we show what is ridiculous in human foibles, customs, and traditions. The cupcake is overcome with a kind of Dale Carnegie self-improvement drive ["Cupcake" from Group Soup]; two ladies argue about their hedges, overwrought at each other's violation of neighborly behavior ["Hedge Pledge" from Group Soup]; and the vagaries of government officials are shown with cartoon-like directness ["The Building and The Statue" from Fortunately]. Without having contrived to do so we see that there are many situations in which we point with humor to human vanity, pride, arrogance, self-delusion, beligerance, greed, stubbornness, close-mindedness, and other small social faults. There is an overall morality which comes through unplanned and which is based on our particular way of looking

at the world; our intuitively serious use of humor and the relationship of our personal aesthetic and social values to the aims of our theatre. 

As The Paper Bag Players throughout their history have become more and more a theatre under the direction of one woman, Judith Martin, the morality projected by the company has become more reflective of Martin's particular way of looking at the world. Martin is a humanist who believes that man can and indeed must attempt to deal with the problems of this world without the expectation of supernatural intervention. Martin feels strongly that the most important message their theatre can give children is the idea that they can affect the world around them in positive ways. Martin is especially sensitive to the child's vulnerability: "Children are poor, and they do sense themselves as poor—powerless. They have a sense of impotence in a situation, especially if they have parents who are uncaring, or are themselves so upset that they are destructive to the kids" (Interview, June 1979). Within the limitations of their humorous review-style format, the company attempts to address this sense of vulnerability on the part of children: "What we do is to present the child with a world that is not overwhelmingly evil. . . . I think that's very important for a child. I think you must feel that the world is not your enemy. You can't grow up feeling that the world is your enemy, even in an urban society where it seems very brutalized. . . . You must find rhythms, you must find colors, you must find characters that you feel give you strength. I think it takes away from your strength to feel that the

world is so hostile" (Interview, June 1979).

Martin hopes that their theatre gives children a realistic sense of their own power and resourcefulness. She rejects contemporary politics as a subject area for her children's theatre because it offers a point of view that increases rather than decreases one's sense of powerlessness. Martin feels that the whole area of politics is beyond children. In order to explore a political issue in theatrical terms, such as women's rights, you have to take a provocative point of view and usually that point of view is irrelevant to children. For refusing to take a political stance in her theatre, Martin has been criticised by some of the more radical voices in contemporary children's theatre. One German critic who advocates the value of political activism in children's theatre even suggests that The Paper Bag Players remain apolitical or "ideologically bland" because they depend on the government and upper class foundation presidents for their support and therefore are unwilling to deal with themes which might be offensive to their benefactors.25 Martin feels, however, that most political theatre (children's and otherwise) has three fundamental problems: it projects an attitude of moral superiority to the audience, it projects a simplistic, black and white view of the world, and it for the most part projects a world in which political systems and forces control individual lives. As Martin expresses it, what value is there to a child in

"knowing that your landlord is a crook who's cheating the city which in turn is filled with officials who your mother voted for but then who should she have voted for because they said they were going to do the right thing? . . . To me this is a very negative message" (Interview, June 1979).

Even though she is opposed to didactic or political theatre for children, Martin has always been interested in what she calls "visual education," the theatre that shows, that demonstrates, that teaches. She is indebted to the German theatre, the theatre of Bertolt Brecht and Erwin Piscator. She was intrigued by the socialist theatre of the thirties, particularly The Living Newspaper. But though Martin embraces the idea of a teaching theatre and has been influenced by Brecht's theatrical techniques, she rejects both his sense of moral superiority and his set categorization of morality. While Brecht castigates and condemns his audience, Martin chooses instead to caress and care for her audience. As Martin observes, "I think we treat the audience better. We're not so superior. We're not so sure that we know not only what we should do but what they should do . . . But Brecht always knows better. . . . I think he assumes, and assumes wrongly, the limits of his audience . . . . He's too superior and too didactic" (Interview, June 1979). Martin feels that children need to be able to see different points of view. Much children's theatre gives a very limited and set morality, often projecting, for instance, the message that parents (or older people) are bad while children (or younger people) are good. Martin believes that for all children parents are both good and bad and in The Paper Bag
theatre parents are portrayed not only as good and bad but also as funny and overwhelmed and human. To Martin, one must strive to increase a child's sense of care and concern and empathy for others as well as his own feeling of well-being. The point of view in The Paper Bag Player's theatre is always humanistic. Rarely is their theatre didactic or political.

Martin rejects the use of traditional fairy tales in children's theatre for much the same reasons she rejects politics as appropriate subject matter. Martin's strong viewpoint against the use of fairy tales evolved slowly, however. As Martin notes, "I guess we first started with the already accepted idea of a simple story or a traditional story as what you just did for children" (Interview, June 1979). Many of these early stories had the structure and symbols of fairy tales—witches, princesses, dragons, and castles—even though the material was treated in a non-traditional fashion. Gradually, through the years, the company's material has become more contemporary, with the symbols of urban America forming the basis for their fantasy. Martin feels it is not so much that children have changed as that her awareness of children's perceptions has changed: "We have gone beyond such stereotyped notions of what we think the child wants. Nowadays, I don't think we would dream of doing such things [as fairy tales]. Now the myths and fables we are constructing have to do with the present--the pair of lips that jump off the billboard, the cow that gives a carton of milk."26

Martin recalls that as they tried more contemporary materials, it was the audience's reactions that convinced her of the value of this approach: "I guess as we went along, we got the confidence, because the material that the children liked the best was not the kings and queens. I mean, adults loved that—even Betty's Queen [in "The Queen's Coronation"] who was so wonderful, the adults were splitting their sides—but the children were just sort of remotely interested. But then when we did "Edna, The Sea Monster" or the spy story, it was obvious that they got much more out of that" (Interview, June 1979).

In addition to a growing awareness of the children's preference for more modern material, Martin also began to become aware of the datedness of the traditional material in light of the social changes taking place in the sixties. She recalls a particular encounter with a young audience member as a significant experience:

One day I was playing the princess in one of those stories where the princess gets locked up in a castle by a witch. As I was coming off stage a little girl about five came over and said to me, "Next time you meet that witch, fight back!" It forced me to think about what kind of stories we were doing. I realized as I looked at them that all the princesses were helpless victims, rescued by hero princes. None of it seemed terribly relevant.27

Martin's viewpoint gradually strengthened to today's adamant stand against the use of fairy tales on the stage. Martin believes that fairy tales perpetuate and reinforce anachronistic symbols, class-bound and sexist symbols of a feudal period, symbols which are no longer useful in

nourishing today's children and which are even potentially destructive. An example is the 'wicked stepmother,' a character who, with the rise in the number of divorced and blended families, Martin feels is a stereotype best left in the past. Martin also objects to the world view such tales offer, one in which powerful outside forces or events control individual destiny. She feels it is important to provide instead a gentler viewpoint—one in which there is no overwhelming evil, one in which individuals, even children, can influence the world around them. As she notes, "We don't have any free-floating evil in our shows, no ghosts and witches who can get you. We want children to feel that they can mobilize their own resources to deal with situations."28

Martin has not come to her position on fairy tales without thought. Recently she read Bruno Bettelheim's paean to fairy tales, The Uses of Enchantment which she found very interesting and challenging. A thorough reading of Bettelheim reveals several points on which Martin would agree with Bettelheim: she would agree that children respond better to indirect, unconscious messages than to didacticism; she would agree that optimism rather than pessimism is the point of view appropriate for children; she would agree that for children pre-rational thought and animism are the norm; and she would agree that children need fantasy in order to understand and deal with reality. Martin would also be in accord with Bettelheim's statement that "if we are to live in true consciousness of our existence, our greatest need and most difficult achievement is to

find meaning in our lives" and that "To find deeper meaning, one must become able to transcend the narrow confines of a self-centered existence and believe that one will make a significant contribution to life." But while Bettelheim sees the fairy stories as the perfect vehicle for fostering self-understanding and growth in children, Martin sees these stories as too out of touch with the child's world (especially that of the disadvantaged child), to really affect him. Martin would contend that one must capture enough of the child's present reality to allow him to identify with the situation and to foster self-awareness and growth.

While Martin concedes that Bettelheim as a Freudian can make the fairy tales appear to be rich and deep in psychological meaning, she feels he ignores several factors which to her are critical. First of all he ignores the fact that it is generally parents who nostalgically choose the fairy stories for their children rather than the children who choose them. As she notes, "I think this business of children's theatres doing fairy tales is somehow in the same vein as adult companies thinking that if they do Shakespeare it's good. You know, somehow the past is venerable, and refined, and cultured, and if you present the past you're presenting culture. I think that is absurd." Martin also feels that Bettelheim ignores or only weakly addresses the many unmistakably negative messages of these tales. While Bettelheim sees


30 Judith Martin, interview with the researcher, Columbus, Ohio, 1 May 1982.
the fairy tales as important transmitters of cultural values, Martin questions many of the values they transmit, particularly the classism, sexism, and elitism. Even more importantly, Martin feels that one can only "believe that one will make a significant contribution to life" if one feels a sense of potency—that a person must believe they have the ability to affect their life and work in small but positive ways. Martin feels the fairy tales, by allowing outside evil and benevolent forces to control one's life, rob children of this feeling of potency.31

The Bags' strength lies in dealing with everyday experience in a fun, humorous, fanciful, poetic and meaningful way. As Martin points out, "I don't live in the unreal world of fairy tales, and neither do children. I think Pinnochio reflects a whole point of view that is not contemporary. I don't like the stereotypes of evil found in most children's fantasy stories. I like to start with a concept that's real—a child fussing over taking a bath, for example—and build on it, find the humor in it, and the humanity."32 The company's use of contemporary

31The researcher also feels that Bettelheim's arguments can be seen as support for a position against the use of fairy tales on the stage. Bettelheim argues that the fairy tales should be told to children in an intimate setting, that they should not be read to them, that definitely no illustrations should be used, and that the stories should never be bowdlerized, prettified, or simplified in any way. According to Bettelheim, these tales "lose all value . . . even the elimination of seemingly insignificant details will make a fairy tale lose its deeper meaning." Bettelheim believes that illustrations rob the child of his contribution to the telling process, they reign in his imagination and divert his projections of his own fears, wishes, fantasies, and meaning onto these tales. While Bettelheim never mentions staged versions of fairy tales, surely such staged versions run counter to all of Bettelheim's conditions. See Bettelheim, The Uses of Enchantment.

32Judith Martin, in Claire Berman, "The Paper Bag Players Don't Kid Around With Kids."
materials instead of the traditional fairy tales means that children can relate to what they see on stage. It's close enough to their own reality so that their lives and their world is given new meaning, new humor, new poetry. As Judith Martin observes "It's a wonderful thing to see your own experiences on the stage. It makes your self more important, and it seems to extend your own experience in some way, and I think that's what theatre is. You go to the theatre and you see something on the stage which you relate to and which expands your point of view of the world" (Interview, June 1979). The Paper Bag Players share a common goal with much theatre, literature, and education—to help children become reflective rather than reflexive human beings.

**Encouraging Children To Care.**—In addition to fostering cognitive growth through presenting children with serious themes and thought-provoking ideas, the theatre of The Paper Bag Players provides emotional support for children by presenting to them a model of caring. They present a caring, comforting world and encourage children to emulate their model. They do this first of all by showing that they really understand children and care about them.

The Paper Bag Players express the inner world of children. They become the voice for children—expressing their inner dreams, wishes, fantasies, anxieties, hopes, and fear. As Judith Martin observes, "It [our material] doesn't deal so much with the everyday world but with projected fantasies [of children], with the things children are really involved with. For example, growing . . . as when we show a caterpillar turning into a butterfly. Or changing from one kind of a person into
another, like when our cupcake becomes a wedding cake. Or a cup that grows up to be a bathtub. In a fantasy a child imagines he can do it himself, he sees he can imitate adults." In Group Soup a series of short scenes humorously and literally portrays the universal fantasy or desire to be someone other than oneself such as the desire of the tall person to be short and the short to be tall or the desire to be someone else, to trade identities. The company often manages to capture the unique perspective of childhood. In "Twins," for instance, two actors (very different in physique) fantasize about the changes in one another necessary to turn them into twins. While we all share the desire to be like someone else, only in childhood does this desire seem so natural and so possible. The "twins" in this case are quite matter-of-fact and both express delight and a true belief in the possibility of their transformation. Besides being able "to see things through a child's eye," the Paper Bag Players bring to this inner world of children the insights of intelligent adults and the ability to express those insights in words, movement, and humor unavailable to children themselves. In "You're Gorgeous," when the two girls take their ideal (paper) features out of a bag and put them on, children can recognize both the reality and the absurdity of the desire to be someone other than oneself. They can see the desire as ridiculous, can laugh at it and yet recognize the truth of the wish. As one critic puts it, the company points out the humor and


The company explores issues, feelings, conflicts, and relationships that are important to children. They aim to reach the real world of the children in their audience and to show children that adults care about them, understand them, and share their feelings and concerns. While the children watching a Paper Bag performance may very well leave with one or more intellectual (cognitive) messages, it is essential that they leave with an emotional (affective) message—a sense of well-being, happiness, joy, a feeling of being cared about. The company provides a feeling of comfort and care. As one critic expresses it, "If a child can say (or think) about an adult—[as they can while watching a Paper Bag Players' performance] . . . 'He understands, really understands. He's just like me. I'm just like him.'—then the child is happier, is more at home in the world, is, in an important and active way, more relaxed."36

One of Martin's main aims in her theatre is to give succor to the child—to show him the humor, beauty, poetry and rhythms in life. Or as she puts it, "It is important to give the child some kind of confidence in the world around him. The child has to come out of the theatre feeling a little stronger than when he went in. We don't want to paint a pink and blue world. We try to show things as they are but at the


same time to do something, to give something, that will help the child
growing up in the contemporary world."³⁷

Donald Ashwander's music reinforces the positive, humanistic views
of the material. It is an upbeat, lyrical, positive music. Ashwander
himself feels strongly that his music is an important part of the group's
message:

I try to keep it [the music] melodic and lyrical,
so that it kind of bathes the scene with that kind
of mood, which is psychologically what children
should have. . . . it should be that we're saying
"Well, you know, the world may be one thing or
another, but it's not terrifying. You shouldn't
be terrified about it." . . . And if there's lyri­
cal music, you can say almost anything, and that
soothing emotion will be there. . . . it can even
be scary but if it's scary, it should be fun scary.
To my mind the music should always have a lyrical
feeling. . . . and that's what I set out to do.
When it's successful, that is what my music deals
with (Interview, June 1979).

The overall message The Paper Bag Players project to children is
that they care about them, or as one critic puts it, "The real mes­
 sage . . . is that 'you are in a place now where we think children, and
childhood, are very precious things and we want to make you feel that'."³⁸

While Martin agrees that the affective message of their theatre is
important, Martin feels the appeal of the company's work lies primarily
in the content: "I think our theatre more than a lot of theatres is
concerned with content. What we're saying to children is important"

³⁷Judith Martin, in John Beaufort, "The everyday world jumps out
of a paper bag,"

³⁸Bill Doll, "Paper Bags, boxes deliver joyful fare," Cleveland
Plain Dealer, 7 May 1978.
(Interview, May 1982). In order to determine exactly what The Paper Bag Players are saying to children through their productions, the researcher analyzed all scripted and recorded production material for the values projected in them. Following is an analysis of the major values projected to children through the productions of The Paper Bag Players.

The Major Values in the Productions of The Paper Bag Players

The major values expressed in the content of The Paper Bag Players' productions can be divided into two categories, individual values and social values. The message to the child as an individual in The Paper Bag Players' plays could be stated as follows: "Even as a child, you can affect the world around you, you can change it, you can create your own world. And if there is something you can't change, you can learn to cope with it." According to The Paper Bag Players, the keys to surviving (and thriving) as an individual in the modern world are resourceful adaptation, a realistic eyes-wide-open optimism, a sense of humor, self-reliance and self-assertiveness, a feeling of self-worth, and a creative response to the world.

The message to the child as a member of society in The Paper Bag Players' plays could be stated as follows: "We're all in this world together and you need to learn not only to tolerate but to appreciate the differences in your fellow man. We can all be different, keep our differences, and still recognize our common bonds (our brotherhood) and learn to get along." According to The Paper Bag Players, the keys
to surviving (and thriving) as a social being in the modern world are
tolerance and acceptance of differences, adaptation, cooperation and
compromise, and generosity toward others.

While the productions of The Paper Bag Players express these
themes, one must remember that their theatre is always a comic theatre
and all content is colored by that fact. In their productions, the
Bags express a point-of-view that is at once both funny and kind. As
former Board President Anna Lou Aldrich says, "The Bags are like a good
New Yorker cartoon. They capture a kind of comic truth, point up our
human foibles, and then help us laugh at them and accept them." 39

The researcher determined ten major values projected through the
work of The Paper Bag Players. 40 Before examining them in some detail,
it is useful to summarize those ten values:

1. the value of the creative, child-like response to
   life (play, creativity, imagination, fantasy, poetry,
   beauty, a sense of wonder);

2. the value of resourceful adaptation (the ability to
   adjust to life, to adapt, to cope);

3. the value of a realistic, eyes-wide-open optimism;

4. the value of a sense of humor;

5. the value of self-reliance and self-assertion;

39 Anna Lou Aldrich, President, Board of Directors, The Paper Bag
   Players, interview with the researcher, New York, 26 November 1979.

40 The researcher determined that these values are in the mainstream
   of the values stated by educators as desirable outcomes of education.
   See Jeanne Lucille Woodruff Hall, "An Analysis of the Content of
   Selected Children's Plays with Special Reference to the Developmental
6. the value of self-worth (of accepting one's own frailties, shortcomings, and differences, while learning to value one's self);

7. the value of appreciation and tolerance for others (empathy, the ability to see different points of view, non-discrimination);

8. the value of accepting the prevailing natural order and man's place in that natural order, and an understanding of the contributions of man's culture;

9. the value of cooperation and compromise (the importance of social relations and the value of common consent rather than the use of power, authority, and violence); and

10. the value of generosity toward others (kindness, comfort, care, courtesy and thoughtfulness) and the appreciation of family as our main model and source of nurturance.

**The Value of The Creative Child-Like Response.**—The child-like response to the world values play and playfulness, creativity, imagination, fantasy, play with language, and a sense of wonder. These values are projected through every aspect of the company's productions—the originality of the material, the style, the acting, and especially the sets and costumes.

Play and playfulness are highly valued in the work of The Paper Bags. Though the actors work is highly disciplined and precise, they appear to be very spontaneous, they appear, in effect, to be playing on stage. Martin comments on the relationship between how the group "plays" together to create their theatre and the messages that come across in their theatre: "I think that theatre is play and that art is very close to play, and when one plays, one plays with someone. Play is based on a kind of relationship that is harmonious or sympathetic.
in some way. We have a gentle point of view about life that comes from play. People who play together have some basic kind of feeling for each other. I guess this comes across.\(^1\)

Many of the scenes in their productions stress the delight and value of play. In "Ma and The Kids" (Fortunately), for example, after Ma tucks the kids into bed, they sneak out and proceed, in a delightful sequence of mimed play, to turn the bedsheets into everything from a matador's cape to a jump rope to a swing to superman's cape to a rope for tug-of-war. This scene conveys very directly the pleasure of the child's world of play and fun as opposed to the adult world of rules and responsibilities.

The child's world, like that of the actor, is (or should be) a world where everything seems possible. The Paper Bag Players convey the value of a child-like world of infinite possibilities: people are transformed into other people, or animals, or animated objects; objects become other objects, inanimate objects come to life, and so forth. As one critic notes, "What the four players have done is to find their way back to the imaginative world that normally fades with reason. It is a world of primary response of colour, movement, heat, and cold; and a place where anything can come to life--trees walk, houses gossip, a postman dreams he is a butterfly and wakes to wonder if his human life is also a dream."\(^2\)


The Paper Bag Players express the essence of the magic of theatre, equating it with the magic of child's play: "... they open up tantalizingly the possibility of metamorphosis. If a man can step into a box, pull it around his waist, move his flaps, and become a bird, then mystery and magic are not something to be gazed at from the outside in awe but something that is within ourselves to create."\(^3\) Or as a ten year old child, describing a Paper Bag show, put it to his classmate, "It's a riot. A man plays an old lady. And an old lady plays a little kid." As a Newsweek critic notes, "Nothing simpler yet more accurate has been uttered about the eternal fascination of the stage, where man can be many more things than himself, the capacity he once, indeed, had --as a child."\(^4\)

**The Value of Resourceful Adaptation.** --From The Paper Bag Players' viewpoint, it is important to be able to get along in this world; to make do with what is available in terms of resources, space and so forth; to be able to adapt to whatever conditions or situations one finds oneself in.

In Dandelion, mankind is seen as part of the larger natural world, where those who adapt to their environment survive while those who fail to do so die and many even become extinct as a species (like the dinosaur). Man is portrayed as being especially adept at adapting to his environment: in "Dark Skin, Light Skin" the different racial characteristics evolve in response to environment; in "On The Road To Culture" a


cave women invents culture in order to master her environment; and in "Bow Wow" mankind invents language in order to communicate effectively and survive.

A more prevalent way this theme of resourceful adaptation is carried out in the Paper Bag material, however, is in showing mankind adapting to the modern urban environment. A scene which illustrates this adaptation to the urban environment is "A Very Little House" (Everybody), a scene about surviving in an over-crowded and over-priced city. In this scene, four people share a very tiny one-room apartment together (the apartment is, in fact, a refrigerator carton). In this "box" they sleep, exercise, shower, dress, eat, read, and so forth. Everything they need is stashed neatly away in a series of pockets in this cardboard house and everything is very tiny: they eat on tiny plates (Ritz crackers) with tiny forks (pretzels) and so forth. Each and every move they make is choreographed precisely so that they can keep out of each other's way. But the four friends are not upset by the limitations of their world. On the contrary, they cheerfully and positively sing their way through the entire scene. As Judith Martin notes, "Their accomodation to the tiny house is complete. Suddenly the landlord raises the rent. They cheerfully decide to search for an even smaller apartment with smaller rent." This number is a satirical commentary on the inhumane systems and conditions modern man must cope with, but at the same time it presents a very positive viewpoint on how

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45 Judith Martin, statement about The Paper Bag Players, written to be used with a Guggenheim grant proposal, in the files of The Paper Bag Players.
man can adapt and remain on top of it all despite these conditions.

An additional way this theme of resourcefulness is carried out in the company's plays is through their use of common materials and cast-offs to make their props and costumes. As Judith Martin notes, "In this affluent society, there's something interesting about using the throw-away. I was thinking the other day how many of our skits have to do with rubbish. Something that somebody else has thrown away."

In "Lost and Found" (Hot Feet), for example, two little old ladies in New York manage to make quite elegant wardrobes and a very proper tea setting out of what appears to others to be nothing but trash. In "Ghost Story" (Bath), a ghost turns his friend into a series of vegetables by mistake. When he finally undoes his bad magic and gets his friend back, they decide to make vegetable soup from the leftover vegetables. The company says to their audience that it is thrifty, wise, and even fun to use our resources wisely.

The Value of a Realistic Eyes-Wide-Open Optimism. One of the keys to resourceful adaptation seems to be the positive attitude of the characters. In the world of The Paper Bag Players, people take the knocks in life with a cheerful shrug and then go on (as in "A Very Little House"). A valued survival trait in contemporary urban America, they seem to say, is a kind of gutsy, down-to-earth optimism, the ability to rebound, the ability to see the positive aspects in any given situation. As dance critic Don McDonagh notes, "The Paper Bag Players remain upbeat.

and optimistic without being Goody Two Shoes. They would rather observe that a glass was half full than half empty and celebrate the fact. In their new show, Grandpa, they even made the prospect of growing older not as menacing as it is in our youth-intoxicated culture."

The Paper Bag Players exude an attitude of pure delight in life and in the absurdities of modern living and the situations one finds oneself in. In the Bags' world, a positive attitude assures that one can always find the best in even the worst of circumstances. In "Come On Over," for example, each character, when given a negative reason why s/he may not want to come on over to Irving's apartment (such as there is no food or heat), manages to turn that into a positive reason to come on over (such as she's on a diet or she'll get a chance to try out her new blankets).

The Bags make no attempt to sidestep reality. Underneath their humor there is a strong recognition of man's inhumanity to man and a recognition of how the institutions created by man can often be dehumanizing and victimizing: schools can often make children suffer indignities, and rob them of their dignity and common sense ("That's Good"); the machines man invents to serve him can begin to control him ("Telephone" in Hot Feet and "Clock" in Grandpa). There is even a suggestion that modern man may be unable to cope with his problems, that mankind may be barely holding on by the skin of his teeth and that in fact the culture and man-made world which keeps us from chaos may be barely under

control: the litter may very well inundate us ("Little Litter" from *Hot Feet*); or our plumbing may break down completely ("Plumber, Plumber" from *Hot Feet*); or we may no longer be able to cope with the crowding and noise of the city ("Noises" from *Mama*, "Little House" from *Everybody*, "Move Over" from *Hot Feet* and "Subway Squash" from *Bath*). Even the ever resourceful street cleaner in "Little Litter" eventually succumbs, lies down, and is buried in mounds of paper litter. Yet despite all of these problems, the message in the company's plays is always very positive, even bucolic. Currently Judith Martin is working on a new show to premier in their twenty-fifth anniversary season. The tentative title, *Reasons To Be Cheerful*, points out the company's basic attitude toward life. They are very optimistic about life and about mankind. Whatever happens, they seem to say, life will go on and mankind will continue to cope and even make improvements in life. In "Dandelion" when they are explaining the cycle of life to Judy and she asks "Is this the end?", the reply is "No, there is no end!" As one reviewer notes, "I didn't receive a message quite so deep and comfortingly optimistic in the whole course of *The Nutcracker*."

*The Value of a Sense of Humor.*—A sense of humor is a key ingredient of the Bags' optimistic outlook on life. They seem to say to their audience --you know, life's problems can be looked at with a humorous eye, laughed at, perhaps even enjoyed. Life in a city, they say for example, can be humorous. It all depends on one's point-of-view: even the heat which engulfs city dwellers rising from concrete, bricks, and pavement,
even the garbage which overwhelms the city, even the overcrowded overpriced apartments can all provide humor. As Judith Martin points out, "like 'Hot feet in the city streets,' it's not very fun, but if you can think of the heat as something which is funny as well as oppressive, it helps you cope" (Interview, June 1979).

Martin is insistent that the humor in their shows is a primary ingredient in their outlook and a very necessary one for communicating more serious themes: "Everything has to relate to children's experiences. Humor helps. It doesn't matter how important the lesson is. It's got to be clear and amusing. We wanted to do a show about aging [Grandpa]. But at first it turned out so sad. The kids couldn't have been less interested. Finally, we combined the poignant, lyrical part with a good deal of humor."

The Value of Self-Reliance and Self-Assertion.--In the Paper Bag world, the characters depend on their own common sense, wit, and resourcefulness. Generally such self-reliance is sufficient, but when necessary, self-assertion is valuable. Judith Martin recognizes the powerlessness of children and her productions usually include at least one scene in which the little guy stands up to the big guy and wins (accompanied by cheers from the audience of children).

The Paper Bag Players show an appreciation for the good-natured delight the child receives from outwitting and tricking adults such as parents and teachers. They recognize the child's need to test the

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49 Judith Martin, in Joe Adcock, "If the kids don't yawn, it's in the 'Bag'," Philadelphia (Pa.) Bulletin, 22 March 1979, pp. BK-17, 19.
waters by tricking adults in benign ways. Because their theatre is not a theatre of character development, they often use allegory and the children are represented by animals or inanimate objects. In "Jumping Beans" (Cut-Ups), for example, the beans rebel against being put into the pot to be cooked and in "The Tree Angel" (Scraps) the trees revolt against being cut down by the woodchopper. As the beans and trees are played by actors, the allegory that these are children becomes very clear.

Obviously when the authority figure represented is more oppressive, the need for the child to assert herself against that authority is more urgent. There is a recognition that children, who are especially vulnerable, are often forced to suffer indignities in power-oriented institutions. In "That's Good" (Hot Feet), the young girl Judy is made stupid by the institution (school) and the authority figure (the teacher). Irving's teacher captures the essence of that slightly crazy paternalism of the person who while smiling on the surface is barely holding his anger and hostility under control. Under his watchful eye, Judy believes she is quite stupid and is forced into dishonesty (getting the audience to give her the answers so that she can pass her exams). When faced with a "real life" crisis, however—being held up by an alligator who has escaped from the zoo—Judy is able to think quite clearly. She uses her common sense (natural intelligence) to save both herself and her teacher, who is quite unable to cope.

In the world of The Paper Bag Players, the little guy often gets the reward, as in "The Bicycle Race" when the underdog (mightily rooted
for by the audience) wins the race. Also in the Bags' world, those who abuse power get their just rewards too. In "Hand's Off! Don't Touch," for example, a lion tries to "collect" the man who is trying to collect the butterfly and flower. It is interesting to note that many of the pieces in which the little guy is pitted against the big guy are audience participation pieces in which the children in the audience are involved in helping the little guy out. Because the morality in the Bags' productions is very benevolent, however, usually the audience ends up helping out the victimizer as well as the victim. As Judith Martin observes, "There's an underlying good feeling about people in our shows. There are no real villains, no meanness. Our villains are people you can cope with in some way, if you can run fast enough or have enough brains or ingenuity. That's what's so undesirable about fairy tale--the evil force at the center. It's essential for children to feel they can cope with this world. Adults, too, for that matter."

The Value of Self-Worth.—An important message conveyed by The Paper Bag Players is the value of liking oneself while accepting one's frailties, shortcomings, or differences. They say to children and adults alike, "you know, you're O.K. the way you are--fat or thin, tall or short, plain or beautiful, old or young." There is, in their work, a recognition that it is hard to be content with yourself, as when in

Group Soup the various characters try out different identities, fulfilling wishes and dreams to change aspects of themselves. There is also a recognition that it is very natural to want to be like others or to want others to be like us as when everybody tries to convince everybody else that their way is the right way (in "Everybody"). But the message is that it is always better to be content with yourself as you are.

There is a recognition in the material that each person has both good and bad in him, that we are all different people under different circumstances. There is also a recognition of the fears we all have of rejection. In "The Real Me" (Bath), for example, the painfully self-conscious fear that 'if they only knew the real me they would never like me' is portrayed very humorously and literally.

The Bags cherish the differences in people. The most important and obvious way they do this is through their casting. Dr. Nellie McCaslin, in an interview with the researcher, commented on the fact that at the time the company was beginning, all of the children's theatres were very traditional and that heroes were all "young and beautiful—stereotypic characters," played by young attractive actors. Then the Bags came on the scene and they always had both older people and younger people, and they always had very interesting-looking people (not standard beauties) in their company.

From the beginning, the image of the company was set and the message was clear: "It's O.K. to be different. You can even have a lot of fun, like we do. You can even like yourself. You don't have to be one of the 'beautiful people'." As Betty Osgood puts it, "Madison
Avenue beauty standards are ignored. We have always felt we can all be princes and princesses." As Judith Martin recalls, "I was the original princess, and that was a big joke . . . but it worked very well for us because the typical princess is the blonde, long-haired girl with the turned-up nose, you know, the sort of baby Hollywood star. And the fact that I was such an unlikely princess, really immediately put it in a certain real world . . . and lots of people said that to us--that it was so great to have their children see that you could have the part of the princess without being a Hollywood star. This is very good on some psychological level" (Interview, June 1979).

Later in the history of the company, as Burton and Martin got older, they placed more value on their age. As Burton notes, "It's important for the kids to see someone who is in his 50's who can still run, jump, dance, sing, play--who still has a zest for life." Burton sees himself as a role-model not only for children but for adults as well: "Children don't see adults playing very much. Adults don't even see adults playing very much. But they see me. Here I am. Short. I don't have any hair. I have a big nose. 'My God,' they say, 'If he can do it, so can I'."


The Value of Appreciation For and Tolerance of Others. -- The Paper Bag Players place a high value on non-discrimination, on appreciating and tolerating others, on accepting the differences in the world, on learning to see the value in other points of view. One of the major ways the company attempts to convey this value of tolerance to children is through constantly asking the audience to see more than one person's point-of-view.

The entire production of Everybody, Everybody was built around this theme of tolerance for others and acceptance of differences. Everybody, Everybody says, among other things, that it's all right to be different, that despite differences people have a lot in common, that there are many different ways of doing things, that usually no one way is right, and that we can all learn from one another by sharing our differences. It is, however, a very lighthearted piece, in which laughter and fun prevail. As one critic puts it, "Typical of their work, it [Everybody, Everybody] has no heavy message, no painting history pink. Basically it is about diversity. And that, they say, is what America is about. Nothing more, nothing less. 'Everybody, everybody,' they sing 'thinks they're doing it right!' Different ways of greeting each other, dealing with hostility, eating—they are all there. . . . In one scene an American Indian is horrified to see a self-satisfied white woman pushing a baby carriage. 'So far away from you,' he comments, 'the baby will get so lonely.' The word 'babysitter' horrifies him. 'Why, we would never think of sitting on our babies.'"

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54 Anita Page, "Theatre," Amherst (Ma.) Advocate, 5 May 1976.
Tolerance of other cultures and other races is very important in the Bags' work. "Light Skin, Dark Skin" was included in Dandelion specifically in Martin's words in an "attempt to lessen hostilities and encourage understanding" between the races. "Big Hands, Big Feet" (Everybody) illustrated graphically to the child audience the absurdity of discriminating against one another on the basis of a superficial physical characteristic. In that skit, which contained some of the only physical audience participation in the Bags' work, children from the audience were asked to volunteer to come on stage where they put on either big paper hands or big paper feet. The children were then, in turn, discriminated against because of their newly acquired physical features.

In The Paper Bag Players' world, the children are encouraged to have a wider perspective, to look beyond their own time and place, to be tolerant and appreciative of others. They are shown that being different is just that, different, not bad. The Paper Bag Players believe, in the words of one critic, that "if you approach the child on his own level, he can be enchanted with the visions of tolerance, the infinite variations possible to themselves or to be recognized in others."  

The Value of Accepting The Prevailing Natural Order and Man's Place in the Order.--There is a sense of the continuity, beauty, and serenity of the rhythms and cycles of life, be they those of nature or of man, 


in the world of The Paper Bag Players. This continuity and flow of life is often portrayed very simply and directly with no commentary or moralizing at all. Such is the case in "A Long Story" (also called "Chalk Talk" from Grandpa). In this scene, Martin narrates and draws the story of the life of one man on a chalk board, accompanied by Donald Ashwander's music. The story starts out with the man alone, reading a newspaper. The man then gets married and acquires a family and all of the things that go with that—home, children, possessions, and so forth. As time passes, however, all of these things and all of these people gradually disappear from his life, until the man is left as he was in the beginning, alone, reading a newspaper. As the man's life fills up, the chalkboard fills up with drawings and as these things depart from his life, the drawings are erased one by one. There is nothing particularly sad about this piece but there is a deep satisfaction in watching it. As one critic notes, "I loved the chatty way this chalk talk breezed through the enormous changes that families and individuals undergo, without climaxing, without moralizing, without concentrating on conflict. I liked the focus on the long rhythms of life." 57

The Paper Bag Players express the point of view that we are all a part of the cycle of life, that the natural order prevails, and that man must accept and can even celebrate his part in that natural order. The entire production of Dandelion and much of Grandpa are based on this theme.

Grandpa deals with the anxieties of changing, growing up, and even with the inevitability of old age and death. Because there is no central character and because it remains a comedy, these themes are dealt with in a light and humorous fashion. Nevertheless, Grandpa has a very comforting, very sane message. The fact that "everyone everywhere is getting older every minute of every day" is not seen as menacing or threatening but rather as natural, comfortable, inevitable. The theme song, "Changing" sums it up as follows:

Everything in the world keeps changing
Everything in the world keeps growing
All the growing and all the changing
Has got me to thinking...

That maybe changing is what life's all about.
We never end up the way we started out.

If we're lucky we'll all be happy.
Maybe even we'll all get smarter.
One thing certain we'll all get older.

Just like a grandpa! Just like a grandma!

I guess that changing is what life's all about.
We never end up the way we started out.

In Dandelion, man is seen as mastering his environment through his ability to adapt and change. Nature's ways are portrayed in a matter-of-fact way so that the violence and death involved in the natural world are seen as a routine part of the natural cycle—the caterpillar does get eaten by the bird, and so forth. There is no use in feeling sad about nature's ways, we are told, they are simply inevitable. Underlying the apparent cruelty of the life cycle is the optimism of the fact that the cycle is just that—a cycle which therefore never ends. In
"Bow Wow" (Dandelion), for instance, the limitlessness of the creativity of mankind is suggested as the cave family invent language and then go on to discover that they can write letters, and poetry, and even a history of the world. The production ends with this scene and then a reprise of "Dandelion." We are left with the optimistic and positive view that there is no end—that even though we (mankind as individuals) are finite, mortal, limited, that because we are a part of nature and the cycle of life which goes on and on, we (mankind as a species) are infinite, immortal, unlimited. While all animals and plants propagate and continue to survive through the cycle of life, mankind can do even more. Through the culture which man invents and passes on, he achieves a kind of immortality.

The Value of Cooperation and Compromise.---Because the ego-centric nature of mankind is so obvious in The Paper Bag Players' productions, the need to cooperate in order to survive becomes a major theme in their work. The value of cooperation and compromise rather than confrontation is stressed.

The skits in the Bags' productions are full of conflicts—conflicts with family members, peers, neighbors, people in one's apartment building, people in the subway, the supermarket, at the beach. The absurdities of people's disagreements are humorously portrayed, especially the "my way is better" or "I'm better than you" arguments. Sometimes arguments can be solved, they say, simply by realizing that there is more than one point of view and that no one is right or wrong: the two men in "Noses" (Bath) recognize that they both have magnificently large
noses and neither is bigger or better; the people in "Everybody" come to a recognition that some people like to be fat while others like to be thin (or at least the audience comes to that realization). Often conflicts are presented as unresolvable in the Bags' work. The characters agree to disagree—they persist with their own point of view, and they don't resolve their conflict, but it's all right because they learn to live with it. Sometimes, however, arguments can be solved through a compromise. In "Deedle, Deedle, Deedle," for example, a solution is found that includes a portion of each person's point of view, a solution that is acceptable to all parties.

While generally the Bags' stress that there are many equally valid points of view and no one way is right, on the topic of conflict resolution they take the stand that conflicts are resolved more effectively through words than with fists, that it is necessary to compromise and not be inflexible. They value common consent rather than the use of power, authority, or violence.

Sometimes the need for cooperation is made evident to the audience simply by showing them characters who never do learn to cooperate. For example, in "Move Over" (Hot Feet) everyone looks out for "number one" (him/herself). The message of this skit is that if you only look out for yourself and push other people around in the process, you'll get what's coming to you—there is always someone (or something) bigger, faster, louder, or stronger than you who can push you around too.

The Bags often use allegory to convey the interdependence of individuals. In "The Long, Long Dress" (Hot Feet), for example, two
women are wrapped together in a sixty-foot long paper dress. They are like the two ends of a long paper scroll; as one unrolls from the dress, the other rolls up. Try as they might, they cannot get separated from the dress or from each other. Finally, realizing that they have to learn to live together, they meet at the middle to begin the process of cooperation and compromise. The Bags project a point of view to children that it is important to learn to live together, especially in today's highly interdependent urban society.

The Value of Generosity Toward One Another. -- If the characters in the Bags' productions depend a great deal on their own resourcefulness, they also depend on the generosity of others. As an extension of the value of appreciation for others and the value of cooperation with others, the value of caring for others is a major theme in the work of The Paper Bag Players. There is an appreciation for the brotherhood of man and a recognition that we all need comfort, care and emotional support from one another. Throughout their productions, the children see many examples of people helping each other out. Often the little guy (child) is helped out by the big guy (adult), as in "S.O.S." (Scraps) in which a little boat about to capsize is rescued by a large boat. The children in the audience often play a special helping role in the Bags' productions. In "S.O.S.," for example, the little boat asks the children to help call for someone to come rescue her.

In the productions of The Paper Bag Players, a great deal of attention is given to the relationship between adults and children. For the most part, the authority figures in their productions are kind and
helpful to children. While there are authority figures who do harrass children, they are seen as human and open to change. Even the teacher in "That's Good" (Hot Feet) recognizes Judy's heroism and common sense and rewards her in the end. Aunt Judy in "Cookies" (Bath) is probably the ideal adult figure in the Paper Bag world. She obviously likes children, is kind, and most of all, she understands children and remembers what it is like to be a child.

Special attention is paid in the Bags' productions to the parent-child relationship. The parents in the Bags' productions are a little harrassed, bumbling at times, at times over-protective and smothering, at times inconsiderate, but for the most part well-meaning and loving. Sometimes the love of a parent for a child is exaggerated for humor. The bear in "Horace" (Fortunately), for example, is like the bad little boy who does unspeakably terrible things and is constantly forgiven by Pa. While "Horace" is a fantasy, "Ma and The Kids" portrays this same feeling on a more realistic level. In this scene it is both funny and very comforting that ma will always love you no matter what. For the most part mothers are shown as just people, like the rest of us, people who often need their children's understanding and help.

There is also a recognition in the productions of The Paper Bag Players of the special care that children need. Even a simple non-verbal piece such as "The Disco Roller Skater" (Mama) conveys this feeling: an actor rolls out a giant (10'-12') cardboard cutout of a young boy skater and proceeds to manipulate him to skate to Ashwander's music. As he gets better at skating, the boy also gets more daring until he falls.
In comes a tiny cardboard ambulance driven by another actor who rescues the boy. Helping him get up, she puts a giant bandaid on his knee and assures the audience that "He's going to be all right!" (the only words spoken in the piece). As Board member and mother Susan Patricof notes, "It deals with getting hurt and having someone help you. That's important to children, that's something that they do everyday, sixteen times a day. It's something very common for children—getting a bandaid. And the giant-sized bandaid is wonderful. The Bags take very little parts of life and let children say, 'Oh, yeah. That's right', that's how it is'" (Interview, November 1979). There is an appreciation in the Bags' productions of the family (and the adult) as the main source of comfort and care in the child's world. Nurturance, care and compassion are valued emotions in the Paper Bag world.

While there are many educational dimensions to the work of The Paper Bag Players, Judith Martin feels that no matter how exaggerated or fantastical it is, the important thing is "that the work is based on psychological truth. That is essential to the work. For example, . . . 'Ma and The Kids,' it's not that it's an exaggeration of family life. It is family life. What reaches the kids is the truth of it. And I think what pleases them and what pleases the adults in the audience too is its truthness [sic]. . . . What our work does—and I'm talking about when it's good, so it doesn't always do this—but when it achieves what it can, it abstracts a situation . . . what it does is explore something that the child feels only on an unconscious level, say, and it's this expression of the child's inside and very real
feeling that makes it satisfying. . . . It is this expression of a reality, of a psychological truth, that's the strength of the Bags."

Judith Martin, phone interview with the researcher, March 1981. Though the company's main goal has always been to provide top notch children's theatre, and to communicate their values through theatrical performances, they have, from the beginning, extended their work and educational goals beyond performance. The various educational extensions of the work of The Paper Bag Players are enumerated with examples in Appendix F.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

The Paper Bags: From nothing or next to it, paper, they create everything necessary for unforgettable joy. Cloaked in imagination and discipline the Bags make universal vaudeville, pulsating with human contradictions, punctuated by irresistible laughter.¹

The Paper Bag Players are brilliant and limited in what they can do. In twenty-five years of performing theatre for children, Judith Martin and The Paper Bag Players have become experts at one unique style of children's theatre, what critic Dan Sullivan calls their "home-brewed vaudeville,"² a revue-style format originated and developed by them. They have also become experts at working with the simplest of materials--paper, paint, crayons, and cardboard--in ways that are theatrically effective, symbolically evocative, and aesthetically pleasing. They have also become experts at communicating with the child audience, particularly with the youngest of child audiences (ages 3-8). They have discovered, rediscovered, evolved, and developed principles and techniques of communicating with the child audience, principles and

²Dan Sullivan, "The Paper Bags: Good and Funny."
techniques which are valid beyond their specific and limited revue-style format of children's theatre. They have become experts at a style of theatre that involves the child audience, and attempts to stimulate children's imaginations and creativity. They have also become experts at a particular form of comic dramatic sketch— one which does not rely on the punch-line ending or obvious and trite developments, but which concentrates on the humor and reality of the evolving moment on the stage. They make their statements without relying on either traditional dramatic thrust or character development. They have become experts, then, at developing the content of their material in original ways. In fact, one of the most important things the company does is to develop content— important ideas, themes, and values— in a way that truly works for both adults and children. They are one of the few examples of a children's theatre where the delight is shared on an equal basis.

Summary

The basic premise of this study is that there are valuable lessons to be learned from the work of Judith Martin and The Paper Bag Players. In addition to simply documenting the history of The Paper Bag Players, a goal which the researcher feels is valuable in and of itself, this study delineates the form and content developed by The Paper Bag Players, shows how they go about creating material and productions in that format, and examines the principles, techniques, and values-system they have evolved. This study focuses, then, on four aspects of the work of The Paper Bag Players: their historical development; their
creative process; the principles they have evolved for creating children's theatre; and the role model they provide children as well as the specific values they project to children. This chapter will summarize the major findings of this study before drawing conclusions and giving suggestions for further research.

Historical Development

An analogy can be made between the growth and development of The Paper Bag Players and the growth and development of an individual, with the periods in the company's history resembling the various stages in a person's life. In this analogy, the first period in the company's history is compared to youth and early adolescence: a time of freedom from responsibility; a time of exhuberance and excitement; a time of joy, intensity, spontaneity, creative sparks; an ego-centric time of power struggles, turbulence, bitterness, and moodiness; a time also of sharing, collaboration, group camaraderie and peer importance; a time of flexibility, easy experimentation, and high productivity; a time of learning and growing.

The second period in the company's history is compared to older adolescence and young adulthood: a time of transition from childhood to adulthood; a time of accepting responsibility; a time of purposeful experimentation; a time of struggling to find a mature outlook; a time of establishing support networks and mature relationships; a time of learning what works, a time of building a solid, successful approach and establishing a modus operandi.
The third period in the company's history thus becomes the adult or middle-aged years: a comfortable time of financial security and stability; a time of conscious choices for maturity, adulthood, professionalism, and responsibility; a time when one is in top form—and most in control of one's life and career; a time characterized by a loss of some of the vitality and easy spontaneity of youth, but a gain in stature and professionalism; a time of artistic growth, high quality productivity, and mature works.

The fourth and current period in the history of the company is thus compared to the mature, older years of a person's life: a time of finding solutions to the problems inherent in aging; a time of frustration, of a decline in financial stability and creative output; a time of maintenance, of finding a slower, steadier approach; a time of living up to one's reputation and others' expectations; a time of philosophical reflection; a time of concern for one's legacy, and for the lessons and values imparted to others. In making this analogy, the researcher hopes that the future and final stages of Judith Martin's professional career with The Paper Bag Players will be a period of sagacity, a time of sharing her knowledge with others.

In looking more specifically at the artistic development and changes over time in the work of The Paper Bag Players, one can distinguish between two distinct styles, the early one developed by the founders of the company and the later one developed by Martin and Ashwander. While the company's work has remained of a kind, maintaining
enough consistency over time so that a viewer would still recognize them as the same group, the differences between the two styles are still arresting (see Appendix D for photographs). It is useful to compare the earlier and later work of the company in the areas of content, design style, acting style, and use of music.

In content, the company moved from delicate, lyrical fantasy material to material with a contemporary, urban focus, from more traditional fairy-tale fantasy to fantasy based on the everyday lives of modern kids and their families. The earlier material included more simple, short pieces without much plot or theme (non-content, modern-dance style pieces), while the later material included more pieces with longer, more complex plots. Themes and educational content also became more important, with some attempt made at social relevance.

In style, the company moved away from a rather avant-garde, modern-dance, beat-generation look to a modern, pop-art, cartoon-style look. In design style, the company moved from a stark world of black, gray, and brown, with flashes of white and color to a bright vibrant world filled with primary colors. In design materials, they moved from the use of simple, unadorned cardboard boxes and paper, house-hold objects, and simply designed costumes and props to more elaborate, more stylized scenery and props, built from cardboard and paper, transformed by design and the use of paint. In design size, they moved from very tiny paper props that they would wear or hold in their hands to big bold paper creations. In design function, they moved from an emphasis on the origins of the paper and the cardboard materials toward an
emphasis on both the movement the props can create on stage and the process of creating the designs on stage through drawing, painting, ripping, and moving paper.

In approach to acting, the company moved away from the use of unique personalities and individual artists not necessarily trained in theatre toward a more professional approach of using trained actors on stage. As a consequence, the acting became less individualized, more stylized, more polished, more presentational, more "up," and more energetic. Those changes in the acting style were also due in part to the changes in the music over time. In their use of music, the company moved from rather impressionistic piano music played as background accompaniment to upbeat electric harpsichord music with a strong beat, music that energizes and controls the productions. They moved from music that was peripheral to the productions to music that was central to the productions.

Despite these changes and developments in the work of The Paper Bag Players, there is a great deal of consistency over time in that work. As children's theatre historian Dr. Nellie McCaslin pointed out in an interview with the researcher, "They have changed and at the same time they have remained true to a concept and to a format, and I think part of the reason for this is that Judith Martin who was the founder-director-performer has been with them all those years. And although there certainly have been changes in the company, there have been fewer changes than in any company that's existed during this period of time" (Interview, November 1979). Judith Martin and The Paper Bag Players
have grown within a framework, within a format, within a values-system that remains consistent over time. In fact, one of the hallmarks of the company's work is this consistency over time. Martin has a definite point of view—she has things to share with children and a way of sharing them both of which are both grounded in a consistent philosophy and way of perceiving the world.

Creative Process

While Judith Martin has been involved in creating material with The Paper Bag Players for twenty-five years and can give specific examples of the creative process in action, examples of how they create both individual scenes and overall productions, she cannot articulate an overall discipline to that creative process. In this study the researcher determines that discipline, outlining five stages to the creative process of The Paper Bag Players.

The object of the first stage of the creative process of the company is to generate both a quantity of ideas for scenes and also to generate usable stimuli to spark the creation of scenes. This stage includes the period before an idea is successfully presented to the company for them to work on. This is the stage of the creative process during which the artist generates ideas for scenes and/or productions, focuses in on an idea or a single element (such as music, movement, paper), and experiments with that one idea or element. The aim is to produce a stimulus to present to the company to interest them in working on the idea. The stimulus can be the idea itself, a prop, a piece
of music, some rough dialogue, part of an action, a costume, and so forth. The Paper Bag Players are very good at consistently coming up with innovative ideas for scenes, and the researcher identified in this study some of the methods they use to help stimulate original, fresh, usable ideas for scenes.

During the second stage in their creative process, the company takes an idea generated in stage one, experiments and improvises on the idea, tries out various solutions, and then either discards the idea or settles on a pretty definite content and a theatrically viable form for the idea. The idea is then developed into a rough workable scene. The Paper Bag Players are also quite effective at this stage of the creative process and the researcher identified six specific techniques used repeatedly by the company to build their scenes. These six techniques include (1) pushing a concept to it's extreme; (2) the use of analogy to make the familiar strange and the strange familiar; (3) elaboration; (4) simplification, including the use of repetition and the use of a literal action; (5) combining contradictory elements; and (6) play with language. As pointed out earlier, through these techniques the company is able to continually take the ideas generated in phase one of the creative process and turn them into scenes for the stage, scenes which are not only theatrically viable but which are also original, scenes in which the moment-by-moment unfolding of the scene is important, and scenes which avoid punch-line endings, obvious developments, and trite conclusions.
During the third stage of their creative process, the company uses certain elements and principles of composition to assemble various scenes into an effective production. Then both the individual scenes and the overall production are rehearsed, polished, perfected, and set for performance. The researcher determined that there are six main variables used by the company in assembling their productions: the three basic compositional elements of sound, movement, and shape (or the use of paper) and the three additional elements of the length of a scene, the tone quality of a scene, and the expected audience response to a scene. This study includes an analysis of how these six variables are used in the three productions from the mature third period of the company's repertory (Hot Feet, I Won't Take A Bath, Everybody, Everybody), productions which remain the core of their repertory. In addition to providing variety and contrast, these six elements are manipulated to hold the audience's attention and to achieve an aesthetically pleasing sense of proportion and balance in their productions. The researcher additionally identified the type of production numbers one can expect to find in any given mature Paper Bag production, what one might call their "formula for success," determining such things as the amount and kind of scenes which contain audience participation, songs, music with no words, words or mime with no music, scenery as action, mini-drama structure, arguments, and chases.

The creative process of The Paper Bag Players is an on-going process, one of which one could truly say, "There is no end" (Dandelion). Stages four and five of that creative process include performance before
an audience, critiques, changes in the work, more rehearsals, and further performances. The audience is an integral part of the creative process. The company continually makes changes in their work and audience feedback is essential to that process. The company avoids self-indulgence both by being ruthlessly self-critical of their work and also by listening carefully to their audience.

**Creative Principles**

While Charlotte Chorpenning, after twenty-one years in children's theatre, wrote her major treatise *Twenty-One Years With Children's Theatre* (1954), outlining her philosophy and principles of children's theatre, Judith Martin after twenty-five years with The Paper Bag Players is still trouping on the stage, still acting, still directing, still choreographing, still designing, still creating new production materials. Martin has not taken the time to articulate in any formal way her principles and philosophy of children's theatre. In this study, the researcher determined Martin's philosophy of creating theatre for children, through a series of lengthy interviews with Martin in addition to an analysis of other primary and secondary sources.

In addition to the basic approach of using humor, Martin's philosophy includes three main principles of effective communication with the child audience: (1) a respect for the adult perceptions and aesthetic sensibilities of the artists in the company and a simultaneous respect for the sensibilities and intelligence of children; (2) a recognition of the special needs of the child audience; and (3) the use of specific
techniques to assure clear communication with the child audience, such
techniques as repetition, judicious simplification; and most importantly,
audience participation.

Martin begins with the assumption that children are intelligent
human beings, capable of responding with understanding and a sense of
humor to important themes, to a wide range of human emotions, and to the
ideas that appeal to the artists in the company. She adds to this the
perception that those ideas and themes must be expressed in terms that a
very young child can understand and appreciate and in a form which aids
such understanding and appreciation. All ideas must therefore be shaped
by the child's world and be given specific, concrete details recognizable
by the child.

Martin perceives two equal responsibilities in performing for chil­
dren. On the one hand, one must protect and respect the child's sensi­
bilities in the use of material and humor, eliminating adult topics and
perceptions which are or should be alien to the child's world. At the
same time, one must respect the intelligence of the child and challenge
and stretch the child with serious themes and sophisticated concepts.
One must strive always to find the child interest in the topic, however,
not the adult's. The temptation to do adult material at the expense of
the child audience is very great, and Martin's insistence that the ma­
terial remain relevant to the child's world is the company's best safe­
guard against self-indulgence.

Beyond entertainment, Martin cites three aspects of their work
that help them appeal to very young children: simplification, repetition,
and audience participation. In their use of the technique of simplification, The Paper Bag Players do not make their material simplistic, but rather strive to pare a scene down to its essentials, focusing for instance on only one or two elements in any given scene. In their use of the technique of repetition, the company uses many of the same devices as a good story-teller—the cumulative tale, for example, or the use of exact repetition with variations, or the use of several different examples to illustrate a point. It is their use of audience participation, however, which is the key to their success in performing for very young children. From their use of colloquial language to their use of direct address to their specific audience participation techniques, the Bags are masters at involving the child audience.

At its best, the audience participation in productions of The Paper Bag Players helps the children identify with the (char)acters and the dilemmas they are caught in. The key is to give the children a task or a function to fulfill within a scene that is integral to the successful completion of that scene. The focus is always on the stage and the theatrical moment at hand, however, and the participation is limited to verbal responses. The company tried and rejected audience participation that solicits more physical responses from the audience, finding it uncomfortable, contrived, and forced.

The techniques they use which make their audience participation numbers natural, comfortable, and successful include the following: songs that not only have catchy tunes and lyrics but which also involve the children in an integral way in the scene; scenes which put children
in a position of being able to help out the characters or actors; scenes which set up a conflict or argument on stage and then allow the children to participate; and scenes which put the children in a position of knowing better than the actors or characters on stage, including both the "Emperor's-New-Clothes technique" and the deliberate use of a naive or dense person on stage. To Judith Martin and The Paper Bag Players, communication with the child audience is of paramount concern, and the various techniques and principles they have evolved throughout their career assure that that communication will be clear and effective.

Values-System

What they communicate to the child audience--the content of their productions--has also been a central concern to Judith Martin. Throughout their history, the company has projected a relatively consistent values-system and provided a model for children that has remained true to that values-system. The researcher divided the messages projected to children through the productions of The Paper Bag Players into three developmental areas: (1) the company encourages and reinforces creativity and resourcefulness in children by providing a model of creativity accessible to children; (2) they encourage children to think by providing serious themes and thought-provoking ideas on a level children can appreciate; and (3) they provide emotional support and encourage children to care about and believe in themselves, others, and the world around them by providing a model of caring behavior. These three aspects of the company's work are part of the over-all values-system
expressed through the productions of The Paper Bag Players. The researcher determined that The Paper Bag Players project the following ten major values to children: (1) the value of the creative, child-like response to life; (2) the value of resourceful adaptation; (3) the value of a realistic eyes-wide-open optimism; (4) the value of a sense of humor; (5) the value of self-reliance and self-assertion; (6) the value of a feeling of self-worth; (7) the value of appreciation and tolerance for others; (8) the value of accepting the natural order and man's place in that natural order; (9) the value of cooperation and compromise; and (10) the value of generosity toward others. The researcher also explored in this study the rationale behind Judith Martin's rejection of both contemporary politics and traditional fairy tales as appropriate subject matter for children's theatre.

What The Paper Bag Players do is to take material from the very real world familiar to children and use that material to explore issues, feelings, concerns, conflicts, and relationships that are important to children. They become, in a sense, the voice for children expressing their inner dreams, wishes, fantasies, anxieties, hopes, fears, and so forth. They do this, of course, with full recourse to their own adult perceptions, insights, and experiences, with a level of verbal ability and sense of humor unavailable to most children.
Suggestions for Further Research

While completing this study on Judith Martin and The Paper Bag Players, the researcher discovered several areas which, while beyond the scope of this study, nevertheless merit further consideration. Within the topic of The Paper Bag Players, additional research could explore more thoroughly the problems encountered and lessons learned in managing a professional non-profit children's theatre for over twenty-five years. Perhaps a comparative study might be done using The Paper Bag Players and other children's theatres of longevity. Such a study could limit itself to touring children's theatres or could compare touring children's theatres such as The Paper Bag Players to those with their own theatre base, such as The Minneapolis Children's Theatre Company. In addition to examining management and financial problems and solutions, such a study could also explore the particular problems inherent in being a children's theatre and the solutions various children's theatre have found to those problems.

Also within the topic of The Paper Bag Players, it would be instructive to do an in-depth analysis of the design work of the company, determining for instance, the various ways in which the designs work both theatrically and psychologically, and what elements combine to make basically uneesthetic elements aesthetically appealing. Such a topic could also lend itself to a comparative study with other children's theatres performing in the alternative arena of children's theatre, such as Metro Theatre Circus (St. Louis), Theatre Beyond Words, The Potato People (Toronto), or Mark Taper Forum's
Improvisational Theatre Project (Los Angeles). Continued documentation and analysis of alternative children's theatre approaches is important, especially when those approaches are not being disseminated through published scripts.

As the researcher noted in the introduction to this study (see pages 13-15), few of the studies in children's theatre reflect those alternative, non-scripted approaches to children's theatre developed in the past two and a half decades. It is difficult, in fact, to assess to what extent innovations in children's theatre are reflected in the actual practices of contemporary children's theatres. It is possible to assess the extent to which innovations and trends in children's theatre are reflected in published scripts, by comparing, for example, the various catalogues of a major publishing house such as Anchorage Press over time. It is also possible to determine to what extent the published plays recommended by experts in the field reflect such innovations and trends by comparing, for example, those scripts listed in the appendixes of the Davis and Watkins-Evans children's theatre texts of 1960 and 1982 (see the statistics on this in Appendix H). It is even possible, as many researchers have done (see Hall, Michigan, 1966; Zeder, FSU, 1978), to determine the most popular and most produced of the published scripts through access to the records of the various publishing houses, and then to assess the extent to which these popularly produced plays reflect innovations in children's theatre. All of these statistics, however, would be based solely on published scripts. Obviously many of the innovations in children's theatre do not use or
produce published scripts, however, and therefore would not be reflected in these studies any more than they have been in past scholarship in the field. While this study provides a detailed analysis of one form of innovative children's theatre, other such studies are warranted.

There is little objective knowledge of nationwide production practices in children's theatre. There is no national survey of producers of children's theatre like that of the International Thespian Society, which each year since 1938 has polled its high school member troupes to find out what plays are being produced most frequently. In children's theatre we rely on occasional critical articles or on national and regional festivals and showcases to keep us informed on production practices and trends. While results of a 1968 survey by Wesley Van Tassel (Denver, 1969) did report the sixteen plays most produced by his sample group, there have been no such reports in the ensuing fifteen years.

One study, therefore, which would be invaluable to the field would be a survey of national production practices. The researcher envisions a comprehensive survey conducted in two phases: in phase one a simple, very basic survey would gather production statistics from all high school, college, university, community, and professional theatres on their children's theatre productions, if any. In phase two, an in-depth survey of selected companies producing mainly children's theatre would provide detailed information on production practices—on the types of scripts or alternative materials being chosen for production, and the types or modes of productions being used in children's
theatre today. Such a survey would be able to determine, for instance, the extent to which the children's plays being produced today are based on published or unpublished plays; scripted or nonscripted plays; familiar or unfamiliar titles; and the extent to which innovations in content and/or form are reflected in the plays actually being produced.

In addition to the lack of objective knowledge of nationwide production practices, there is at present no comprehensive study of published children's dramatic literature available in the United States. The researcher would like to see a comprehensive survey and critical analysis of the available dramatic literature for children comparable to the many surveys in the field of children's literature. An additional topic of interest is the use or misuse of fairy tales in children's theatre. A study in this area would need to address concerns raised by the work of Bruno Bettleheim, concerns briefly pointed out by the researcher in this study.

**Historical Perspective**

The Bags are pioneers. When they started, children's theatre meant tacky adaptations of 'Cinderella' performed by actors who couldn't get anything better. The Bags did original pieces about modern kids and their families, and each piece was polished in workshop until it gleamed. They respected children enough to give them their best shot. This was new. If the Bags seem less unique today, it's only because so many other groups . . . have found the same kind of joy and challenge in working for young audiences.³

³Dan Sullivan, "Paper Bag Players In Songs, Skits."
The Paper Bag Players were, as Dr. Nellie McCaslin notes, "genuine innovators" in the field of children's theatre (Interview, November 1979). They offered a fresh, new approach in format, content, and design style at a time that children's theatre was predictable and tradition-bound. They originated, developed and perfected their revue-style format for children's theatre, matching the originality of the form with the originality of the content of their comic sketches. They successfully challenged the existing stereotype that young audiences can identify only with youthful and beautiful protagonists, played by young and attractive actors. They were early experimenters in the use of simple forms of audience participation and indirect actor-audience relationships, developing techniques that allowed them to play successfully to the youngest of child audiences. They pioneered in performing in basic, uniform costumes and in using simple materials to create their props and costumes. As Dr. Nellie McCaslin points out, "I think they may have been the first ones to really educate theatre groups to the idea that they could perform in a uniform. That it wasn't necessary to go into complete costuming. Now practically everybody is doing it and this is not an original idea any more. But I'm inclined to think we could give The Paper Bag Players credit for that. Certainly they were the first group that I saw use the uniform and then add the significant piece of costume to it to suggest who they were" (Interview, November 1979). And finally, as both McCaslin and Sullivan noted, they offered a quality ensemble approach and level of artistry and integrity that was uncommon in children's theatre.
In the twenty-five years since the founding of The Paper Bag Players, there have been vast changes in the field of children's theatre. Jed H. Davis and Mary Jane Evans, commenting on these changes in the preface to their 1982 children's theatre text, *Children, Theatre, and Youth*, note that "...yesterday's prevailing practices have been largely set aside... Diversity of approaches is the order of the day..." They go on to note that "Even as society as a whole questions its traditions and value systems, so does the theatre as it breaks connections with the conventions and traditions that are felt to constrict and inhibit communication... Artistic priorities change as continuous experimentation with non-standard dramatic forms breaks all established conventions."

The Paper Bag Players were forerunners of much of the artistic experimentation in children's theatre. Because the founders of the company came from the experimental world of modern dance, art, music, and theatre, the work they created was more reflective of trends in those worlds than it was of the children's theatre of the time. While The Paper Bag Players retained some traditional elements in their work in that they performed on proscenium stages and the content of their productions remained non-political, upbeat, and comic, they were forerunners or early experimenters in many areas. In fact, their work is reflective of many of the significant trends in contemporary experimental American children's theatre: the trend toward improvisation as a

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4Jed H. Davis and Mary Jane Evans, *Children, Theatre, and Youth*, pp. iii, 35.
method of creating original material for performance and away from reliance on authored scripts; the trend toward a frankly theatrical production style and away from theatrical realism; the trend toward a theatre where the actor and the actor-audience relationship is emphasized and consequently toward experiments in the use of audience participation; the trend away from elaborate theatrical spectacle and the technical aspects of theatre and toward a minimal approach to design; the trend toward more use of music and dance; the trend toward the use of contemporary content, content reflective of the moral uncertainties and ambiguities of the real world and away from traditional happy-ever-after content; and a trend toward a variety of looser, more episodic formats and away from the tightly-plotted, character development play.

In describing the essence of the new theatre styles, Davis and Evans could very well be describing The Paper Bag Players: "... much of the new theatre was essentially child-like in conception and performance, borrowing from childhood the exhuberance of game-playing, of frank engagement in make-believe, the charm of instant transformation, all in an atmosphere unencumbered by traditional stage trappings."^5

**Final Considerations**

A final consideration which must be addressed in relation to The Paper Bag Players is the question of whether they are a theatre with a technique that anyone can learn to do or simply a performance company, a group of unique individuals, an act which will end with their

^5 Jed H. Davis and Mary Jane Evans, *Children, Theatre, and Youth*, p. 35.
particular performing lives. The question is whether or not they have created a viable form of children's theatre that can be useful to others.

Within the company itself opinion on this issue varies. While Board member Anna Lou Aldrich feels that the Bags are Judith Martin and will end with her performance life, Board member JoAnna Rose disagrees, stating that she sees this issue as the number one priority of the Board of Directors, "To be sure that the Bags exist beyond the particular performing life of Judy Martin. . . . to make them realize that they are more than just four people doing an act, that this is an idea—an idea of simplicity, originality, freshness, that must not end" (Interview, November 1979).

While the researcher feels that the final verdict is out on this issue, at this point in their history the company remains essentially an acting company, one that has developed and perfected an original form of children's theatre. In fact, they are that form of children's theatre. They have become so closely linked with their own work that it is impossible to separate the players from the plays. Because they themselves are so closely linked with their work, they have limited the effect of their work beyond the scope of the group.

Some effort has been made toward achieving immortality for the work of the company through publishing their material. One full length script, Dandelion, has been published and is available for production by other children's theatre groups while two collections of their short skits are available for teachers and children: Christmas All Over The
Place: Four Holiday Plays For Children To Perform (Anchorage Press)

and Everybody, Everybody: A Collection From The Paper Bag Players (E. Nelson). But the company has not really fully resolved the issue of whether or not they will extend their performance lives by publishing scripts and scores.

One of the main ways the company has of becoming immortal is, of course, to publish their works in a form which will allow other groups to continue to perform them. The problem is getting the company to agree on what form that should be. Both Donald Ashwander and Judith Martin, who between them would do all of the work for publication, both feel strongly that they should publish their works, but they disagree as to how and for whom they should be publishing. Martin is a non-elitist—she wants the work to be used by children and teachers in community settings. Martin feels strongly that:

This is material which is basically something that anybody can do. There's something about it that's very accessible. I honestly feel that there are so many people who would like to do plays—teachers, and mothers, and kids who want to do a play. And it would be good if they don't get stuck in the same old Cinderella . . . I think most people could make up plays, if they knew they could, but they don't, and they look around for a play, and they want to give out parts. And our plays are ideal for that, because there are parts, you don't have to be pretty, you don't have to be tall, you don't have to learn a lot of words. And it lends itself to someone who's inexperienced and wants to do a play (Interview, June 1979).

Ashwander, on the other hand, would like the work to be mainly available to groups who want to perform children's theatre—from community theatres to professional theatre groups. He feels that while their
work can be "a useful community-type thing," it can also, if properly published, provide a contemporary alternative for groups doing children's theatre. He feels the Bags could establish an alternative tradition in children's theatre in America, something that would have "its own particular American mythology and creativity" (Interview, June 1979).

The first major publishing effort by the company, the script and score for Dandelion, published in 1978, show that this conflict has yet to be resolved. The main controversy centered around the music. In order to publish the music so that it could be done by other groups at all, Ashwander needed to rewrite the score for piano (rather than the electric harpsichord). Ashwander was determined, however, to publish the music in a form which would come close to the power and presence of the original electric harpsichord score. So what he did was to re-write the score for two people playing one piano ("one piano, four hands, melodica, slide-whistle, rachet"). In this way Ashwander was able to assure a sound that would have the strength he desired.

Martin, however, was never satisfied with this compromise. Having a score that required not just one but two accomplished piano players conflicts with and thwarts her aim of having the work accessible to all. Actually, Martin feels that even having Ashwander's music in a full score published with the script, structures the work in a way that makes it inaccessible to many groups:

Once you write it for Donald's music, even if you make it a piano version, you end up saying, "And then this girl hits the snake four times" because Donald has four beats there. But who wants to be bothered. If you get that kid to give the snake
one big smack, you're lucky, if you're the director. So on the stage we have this difficult kind of acting which gives the sense of great freedom and yet is very precise and required a good person to do it. . . . If you have professional actors and you have somebody chase somebody around the stage, you keep them going four times, and you find this variety and this fun. But if you have amateurs, you just chase them around the stage once and that does it. And you have to give the director that kind of freedom or else they won't want to do your play. But if the music goes on for thirty-two measures, what do you do during that time? (Interview, June 1979).

Obviously no satisfactory solution has been found to this dilemma. Martin would like to just give the script with basic stage directions and the tunes to the main songs, and "then let them get any talented person in the community to supply the rest" of the music (Interview, June 1979). Of course, this is not satisfactory to Ashwander. And until this conflict is resolved it is unlikely that any major scripts will be forthcoming. In addition, in order to publish scripted versions of their plays for performance by other companies, they also need to resolve another problem: how to adequately represent the stage action. Many of their non-verbal and even their dialogue scenes when written down are very slight, almost non-existent. When performed, they take on a richness that just isn't in the scripted versions. The work is very tenuous and it does require the richness of strong performance personalities. Despite this tenuousness and the problems involved in trying to publish it, the results would be well worth the effort.

The researcher hopes that Judith Martin will disseminate the work of The Paper Bag Players both through published scripts and scores and also through further workshops and even publications on the principles
and techniques of The Paper Bag Players. Finally, however, even if Judith Martin and The Paper Bag Players could and would go about teaching others to work in their format of children's theatre, it is doubtful that it would ever become a mainstream form of children's theatre. There are limitations in both the episodic and the comic nature of their work, limitations which do not allow, for instance, for depth exploration of serious themes or the development of characters and problems over time. Their work remains a brilliant but limited alternative.

In fact, part of the brilliance of The Paper Bag Players is due to their limitation. They have dared to explore one medium—paper—and one format—the revue—to their fullest extent. The very act of exploring one medium and one format for over twenty-five years has led Judith Martin and The Paper Bag Players to discover and rediscover principles and techniques of effective children's theatre, principles and techniques which are applicable beyond their limited revue-style format. The Paper Bag Players have avoided many of the pitfalls of other experimental children's theatre and they can serve as a model of effective innovation.

 Probably the most valuable lesson other groups and individuals can learn from The Paper Bag Players is how to generate ideas and turn them into usable material for children's theatre. The researcher documented, analyzed, and gave examples of this creative process of the company in this study. The student of theatre and the teacher or leader of children, can learn many things from the creative process of The Paper Bag
Players. One of the most important things the company does well is to take an idea or a theme and find the child's point-of-view in relation to that idea, to find the child interest in a given topic. They have discovered how to shape material for the child audience while at the same time maintaining their adult interest in the topic. They avoid the pitfalls of self-indulgence, condescension, and easy relevance. Judith Martin herself feels that their method of adapting content and developing material may be their most useful contribution to others. As she observed to the researcher:

I have an idea that one of the more useful things we have done is to find a way of working easily with themes that are close to people [and adapting them successfully for children]. If I were a teacher or a beginner just coming to the theatre, I would be more interested in that aspect of The Paper Bag Players, you know, how you can pick up a theme, or how you can do a story about Christopher Columbus, or transportation, or water conservation, because somehow our technique makes all that possible. I think I'd be most interested in that (Interview, May 1982).

The researcher feels an even more useful contribution of the creative process of The Paper Bag Players is their method of developing and extending ideas in ways that are both theatrically viable and original. The best of their work does not rely on the usual dramatic structure, nor does it rely on the usual gimmicks of comedy. Probably one of the more useful things this study does is to delineate the various methods The Paper Bag Players have both for generating ideas and for extending and developing those ideas. To understand how they develop material in such original ways should be useful to others. Martin, in an interview with the researcher, stressed her feeling that it is this aspect of the
content of their work which is a key to their success: "I know that the idea, the content, has to be right. And I do think the theatre should be a place that you get a surprise—maybe that's too simple a word—but where you see something fresh or learn something new" (Interview, May 1982).

In addition to specific techniques and principles of effective and innovative children's theatre, part of Judith Martin's legacy is the careful attention and serious concern with which she regards both children and the work she does in children's theatre. The work of Judith Martin and The Paper Bag Players, while it challenges and stretches children's theatre, reaffirms the values of respect for children and concern for genuine involvement of and communication with the child audience; ruthless self-criticism and careful attention to audience response; and high standards, excellence of performing skills, and artistic integrity. The work of The Paper Bag Players reaffirms the belief that good children's theatre is first of all good theatre, and that in order to be good theatre, the artists involved must believe in the value of their work.

Judith Martin and The Paper Bag Players have remained true to an artistic concept, a vision, and a values-system in their theatre. Martin, after twenty-five years, continues to find her work a source of joy and inspiration:

It holds one. It isn't that we've stuck to it out of a sense of good character. It holds one. There are so many possibilities. And it's a creative home for us. It's a place where you can always do something else. And where every time you do something else there are three or four of us who applaud and get
excited. And you have such power. You can make up anything no matter how fanciful. We could do a history of the world. . . ."  

In addition to an understanding of the specific techniques and principles of effective and innovative children's theatre which one can gain from an in-depth look at the work of The Paper Bag Players, one is left with an inspiration, with both a vision and a model of creativity.

6Burt Supree, "'We Could Do A History Of The World'," p. 81.
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APPENDIX A

A CHRONOLOGICAL CHART OF THE HISTORY
OF THE PAPER BAG PLAYERS
## APPENDIX A: A CHRONOLOGICAL CHART OF THE HISTORY OF THE PAPER BAG PLAYERS

### PERIOD I: THE EARLY ENSEMBLE, 1958-1959

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRODUCTIONS</th>
<th>COMPANY MEMBERS</th>
<th>MAJOR ACTIVITIES/THEATRES/TOURS</th>
<th>OTHER ACTIVITIES/HONORS</th>
<th>MANAGEMENT/FINANCES/NOTES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1958-1959:</td>
<td>Judith Martin</td>
<td>Martin asks first Kaplan, then</td>
<td>No theatre; met in Martin's</td>
<td>no management structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>studio</td>
<td>Shirley Kaplan</td>
<td>Bond to improvise with her.</td>
<td>dance studio</td>
<td>no name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>improvisations</td>
<td>Sudio Bond</td>
<td>Then asked Jahn to accompany.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Martin-organizer and Founder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>early pieces:</td>
<td>Daniel Jahn</td>
<td>Kaplan invited Aaron to sessions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Fairy Tale&quot;</td>
<td>Joyce Aaron</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Beans&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Messages&quot;</td>
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<td>(no official</td>
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<tr>
<td>company)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1959-1960:</td>
<td>Remy Charlip</td>
<td>Rented studio on West Side</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>CUT-UPS</td>
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<td>(later moved to East Side)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(premiere)</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;That's Us&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Punny Clothes&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Orders From The President&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Look, Word&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Jumping Bean Story&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Chocolate Covered Thoughts&quot; (Bug, Little House, Song)</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Two Who Were Thinking As The Ship Was Sinking&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Long Lost Relatives&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;Help! Help!&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Sunday Comics&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Witch's Tells&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;We're Off&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other skits:</td>
<td>&quot;The Tree Angel&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;The Witch's Tale&quot;</td>
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### 1ST SEASON: 1959-1969

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MAJOR ACTIVITIES/THEATRES/TOURS</th>
<th>OTHER ACTIVITIES/HONORS</th>
<th>MANAGEMENT/FINANCES/NOTES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/59: Studio Debut by company</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10/59: Road show debut at The Children's Theatre in Washington, DC</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/28/59: Official Debut of the company in CUT-UPS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christmas Season at The Living Theatre: 530 6th Avenue. 12/28/59 - 1/3/60</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ticket prices at Living Theatre: $1.25 - adults $0.90 - children $0.60 - groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faster season at Living Theatre: 4/18 - 4/23 Brought back for Saturday performances at The Living Theatre through May</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### EARLY ROOTS: 1958-1959

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MANAGEMENT/FINANCES/NOTES</th>
<th>MANAGEMENT/FINANCES/NOTES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finances very casual: a simple split among company members to begin with; later added an extra portion for expenses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRODUCTIONS</td>
<td>COMPANY MEMBERS</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>CUT-UPS</td>
<td>CUT-UPS Company: Martin, Kaplan, Osgood, Jahn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCRAPS (primer)</td>
<td>&quot;Where is Everybody&quot;&lt;br&gt; &quot;Whispering Pines&quot;&lt;br&gt; &quot;Tree Angel&quot;&lt;br&gt; &quot;Hey Is For The Horses&quot;&lt;br&gt; &quot;Dragon's Tale&quot;&lt;br&gt; &quot;Shadow&quot;&lt;br&gt; &quot;What's The Message&quot;&lt;br&gt; &quot;Parade&quot;&lt;br&gt; &quot;The Queen's Coronation&quot;&lt;br&gt; &quot;You're Gorgeous&quot;&lt;br&gt; &quot;S.O.B.&quot;&lt;br&gt; &quot;Edna The Monster&quot;&lt;br&gt; &quot;A Big Red Day&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX A

### PRODUCTIONS COMPANY MEMBERS MAJOR ACTIVITIES/THEATRES/TOURS OTHER ACTIVITIES/HONORS MANAGEMENT/FINANCES/NOTES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRODUCTIONS</th>
<th>COMPANY MEMBERS</th>
<th>MAJOR ACTIVITIES/THEATRES/TOURS</th>
<th>OTHER ACTIVITIES/HONORS</th>
<th>MANAGEMENT/FINANCES/NOTES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SCRAPS</td>
<td>Martin, Charlip Osgood, Burton, Jahn, Mahaffey (Kaplan)</td>
<td>Fall touring season of over 100 dates in N.Y., N.J., Long Island, Pa. (Westchester) (7 Eastern states)</td>
<td>UNICEF benefit at Hunter College to launch UNICEF drive 10/21/61</td>
<td>Francis Schram—booking agent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Martin-Charlip Co-directors</td>
<td>New York State Teacher’s College at Corning (10/61)</td>
<td>Featured in Fall ’61 Junior Art Gallery in Louisville, Ky.</td>
<td>John Carbone—selling tickets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Planned by Martin/Charlip; developed with Osgood/Burton/some collaboration with Kaplan</td>
<td>Tour to Cleveland, Ohio (Byron Jr. W.S. in Shaker Heights) 12/61</td>
<td>Workshop demonstrations at among others NYU graduate school and Conn. College</td>
<td>Anna Lou Humes—publicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GROUP SOUP</td>
<td>Company: Martin, Charlip, Jahn Osgood, Burton (Kaplan), (Mahaffey in SCR SCRAPs only)</td>
<td>GROUP SOUP: Premiered 4/24/62 Christmas season performed at the Bronx House Auditorium</td>
<td>THE TREE ANGEL published Alfred A. Knopf, 1962</td>
<td>Daniel Jahn—bookkeeper and driver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Premier)</td>
<td>Co-directors: Martin/Charlip</td>
<td>Spring touring season</td>
<td></td>
<td>Martin and Charlip functional managers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Opening&quot;</td>
<td>Easter season at The Living Theatre 4/21/61-4/28/61</td>
<td>Dance Business Award for 1961 &quot;for maintaining the art and profession of dance on the highest possible level&quot; a grant</td>
<td>Bronx House tickets: $75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Red and Crackers&quot;</td>
<td>SCRAPS and GROUP SOUP in repertory</td>
<td>Other grants included a gift from the Katherine Cornell Foundation</td>
<td>Isabelle Fischer—publicity in 4/62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Hi-Lo&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Daniel Jahn—tickets</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|             | "Twins" | | | The Living Theatre tickets-
|             | "Voices" | | $1.50 - children $2.00 - adults | |
|             | "Faces" | | | May 16, 1962: Officially incorporated as a non-profit, tax-exempt organization by the state |
|             | "Cupcake" | | | Board of Directors formed Ann Lou Humes, President |
|             | "The Wild West" | | | |
### PERIOD I  
#### 4TH SEASON: 1962-1963

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRODUCTIONS</th>
<th>COMPANY MEMBERS</th>
<th>MAJOR ACTIVITIES/THEATRES/TOURS</th>
<th>OTHER ACTIVITIES/HONORS</th>
<th>MANAGEMENT/FINANCES/NOTES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| SCRAPS      | Company for GROUP SOUP: Martin, Charlip, Osgood, Burton, (Kaplan)  
Samir Elias - musician | Season: 11/1/62 - 5/18/63  
Planned first full New York season at The Pocket Theatre: announced 22 weekends plus Christmas and Easter week  
Tour in such places as Brooklyn, Long Island, N.J., Ct., Pa., N.Y. | Performances at settlement houses and schools in disadvantaged neighborhood throughout New York such as Union Settlement and P.S. 108 in East Harlem | Projected budget: $10,338  
Judith Liss joins to book special group parties for Pocket Theatre season  
Francis Schram - booking agent for all but N.Y.  
Isabelle Fisher, press agent |

GROUP SOUP in repertory  
additions:  
"Hot and Cold"  
"Fast and Slow"  
"The Postman's Dream"  
Company for SCRAPS: Martin, Charlip, Osgood, Burton (Kaplan)  
Jahn - musician  
Co-directors: Martin/Charlip | Planned to open at The Pocket Theatre--100 3rd Ave. (at 13th). Theatre not ready.  
Opened at The Living Theatre 530 6th Ave. 12/1/62  
Moved from Living Theatre to The Masque Theatre, 42nd St., to continue season 2/16/63  
Moved to The East End Theatre, 85 E. 4th St., to continue season 3/2/63 - 4/27/63  
Successfully completed first full New York season, running weekends and holidays in repertory: SCRAPS and GROUP SOUP 12/1/62 - 4/27/63  
Easter show was GROUP SOUP, 2 shows daily, 4/15 - 4/20, East End Theatre  
YM-YWHA Theatre Conference 3/19/63  
Summary of early grants from 1958-1963:  
Katherine Cornell Foundation  
Lansing Foundation  
Aaron K. Norman Foundation  
Kaplan Foundation  
New York Foundation  
Heckscher Foundation  
Dance Business Group of America  
Beginning to get major reviews | Ticket prices for season: $1.50 - children  
$2.00 - adults special group gates  
Have performed over 300 performances plus New York season at this point. |
### PERIOD I
#### 5TH SEASON: 1963-1964

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRODUCTIONS</th>
<th>COMPANY MEMBERS</th>
<th>MAJOR ACTIVITIES/THEATRES/TOURS</th>
<th>OTHER ACTIVITIES/HONORS</th>
<th>MANAGEMENT/FINANCES/NOTES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **SCRAPS**  | Company for SCRAPS: Martin, Charlip, Osgood, Burton, Jahn (Kaplan) | Season: 10/12/63 - 4/25/64 | 10 free performances for the Higher Horizons schools and the All-Day Neighborhood Schools. | Annual Budget: $12,065  
Base Salary: $60, per week  
Producers: Martin and Charlip |
| *New Titles:* | | | | |
| "The Spy Ring" | | | | |
| "The Beauty Skit" | | | | |
| "The Yellow Sun and The Silver Rain" | | | | |
| **GROUP SOUP** | Company for GROUP SOUP: same as for SCRAPS | GROUP SOUP: Oct.  
SCRAPS: Nov. - Dec.  
Henry Street added performance on demand-continued through 4/64  
THE PAPER BAG PLAYERS RIDE AGAIN (FORTUNATELY) Premiered: 3/7/64 | Henry Street: "Saturday at 3"  
20 weeks at 20¢ admission to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the series  
Martin and Charlip serve as consultants to NYU's school of Education Workshop in the Arts | Henry Street tickets:  
20¢ - children  
60¢ - adults |
| (some rearranging) | | | | |
| **THE PAPER BAG PLAYERS RIDE AGAIN** | Company for New show: Martin, Charlip, Kaplan, Burton, Jahn (Osgood out of this show until the following) | Local touring and school shows (no record of tour) | | Approved by the New York State Council on the Arts (sponsors can now get Arts Council $ to support the Bags) |
| (later called FORTUNATELY) | | | | |
| "What Came First" | | | | |
| "The Building & The Statue" | | | | |
| "Fortunately" | | | |  
GRANT FROM THE NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS ($4,425.), began in 11/63  
 Performances at Henry St. for the disadvantaged plus workshops in their schools  
School work at Henry Street Playhouse and in the schools K-4, reaches over 30,000 children through this program alone |
| "The Bakery Skit" | | | | |
| "Call That Dancing" | | | | |
| "The Visit" | | | | |
Special Educational Grant: 1/64  
Arts Council |
<p>| &quot;Me and The Kids&quot; | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERIOD 1</th>
<th>6TH SEASON: 1964-1965</th>
<th>APPENDIX A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRODUCTIONS</td>
<td>COMPANY MEMBERS</td>
<td>MAJOR ACTIVITIES/THEATRES/TOURS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GROUP SOUP (same show)</td>
<td>GROUP SOUP Company: Martin, Charlip, Osgood, Burton, Jahn, (Kaplan) Martin/Charlip, co-producers</td>
<td>Henry Street Settlement House Playhouse Season: planned 20 Sat. shows; 12 free school shows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FORTUNATELY</td>
<td>FORTUNATELY Company: the same</td>
<td>expanded to every Sat. 10/64 - 4/65 public shows every Thurs. Free shows added some Fridays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;The Chicken or The Egg&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;The Building &amp; The Statue&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Fortunately&quot; &quot;Dot and Dash&quot; &quot;The Bakery&quot; &quot;Ma and The Kids&quot; &quot;Call That Dancing?&quot; &quot;The Visit&quot; &quot;Far, Far Away&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCRAPS</td>
<td>SCRAPS company: Martin, Kaplan, Osgood, Burton, Jahn, (Charlip)</td>
<td>Touring minimal due to heavier schedule at Henry Street. Performed at such places as Hartford, Ct., Mills College, 92nd St. YM-YWHA, Masters Institute, Union Settlement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary of Season: 55 performances in NY city for over 29,000 children from 68 schools 32 Sat. Matinees at 20¢ to sold-out houses at HSSHP 1st Annual Paper Bag Festival Easter at Bloomingdale's OBIE Award 23 lecture demonstrations

Summary to Date: over 500 performances for over 225,000
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Company Members</th>
<th>Major Activities/Theatres/Tours</th>
<th>Other Activities/Honors</th>
<th>Management/Finances/Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GROUP SOUP</td>
<td>Martin, Osgood,</td>
<td>1965-66 Henry Street Settlement</td>
<td>10/30/65: on NBC's new TV</td>
<td>Annual Budget: $36,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MY HORSE IS</td>
<td>Burton, Jahn, J.</td>
<td>House Playhouse season:</td>
<td>show &quot;Profiles on the Arts&quot;</td>
<td>Producer: Judith Martin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WAITING</td>
<td>C. McCord</td>
<td>&quot;Saturday's at Three&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Channel 13&quot; with Nat Hentoff</td>
<td>Manager: Judith Lisa</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Charlip gone</td>
<td>10/9/65 - 4/30/66 (22 weeks)</td>
<td>(30 minutes)</td>
<td>Studio home: 1 Orchard St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kaplan gone</td>
<td>GROUP SOUP, then FORTUNATELY,</td>
<td>11/25/65: Channel 13, NET</td>
<td>Henry Street ticket prices:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Martin-producer</td>
<td>then new show, MY HORSE IS WAITING</td>
<td>affiliate</td>
<td>20¢ - children</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>(new show: 2/5 - 4/30)</td>
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<td>60¢ - adults</td>
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<td>86 school shows in East Harlem,</td>
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<td>Average age of audience:</td>
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<td>Brooklyn, the Bronx</td>
<td></td>
<td>nine years</td>
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<td>i.e., 11/3 - 11/5, 6 free shows</td>
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<td>at P.S. 175 in Harlem (2,500</td>
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<td>children from 7 schools attended)</td>
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<td>i.e. P.S. 108, East Harlem,</td>
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<td>6 free shows, 3/2 - 3/4</td>
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<td>i.e. in 12/65 a special tour of</td>
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<td>Harlem, 12 free shows in 2</td>
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<td>schools in 6 days, over 3,700</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>children attended</td>
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<td>Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Martin, Osgood,</td>
<td>4 shows per month, Nov., Feb.,</td>
<td>American Federation of the Arts</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Burton, J. C. McCord</td>
<td>April, May - 16 sold-out shows</td>
<td>Poster Award: 4/66</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marcia Burr- pianist</td>
<td>(Feb. - May: MY HORSE IS WAITING)</td>
<td>artist Red Grooms commissioned to design poster for Bags</td>
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<td>4/8/66 performed for all-adult</td>
<td>(for the 66-67 season</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>audience at home of Susan and</td>
<td>first children's theatre</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Donald Newhouse</td>
<td>group given this award</td>
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<td>Paper Bag Festival: P. S. 108 5/13/66</td>
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<td>Grants and donations:</td>
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<td>N.Y. State Arts Council:</td>
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<td>$10,000</td>
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<td>Dr. and Mrs. Edmundo Lassalle:</td>
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<td>Anonymous donor: $5,000</td>
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<td>Kaplan fund: $7,000</td>
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<td>N.Y. Foundation: $1,000</td>
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<td>Sol Kitty: $1,000</td>
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<td>Misc.: $7,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>PERIOD II:</td>
<td>8TH SEASON: 1966-1967</td>
<td>APPENDIX A</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRODUCTIONS</td>
<td>COMPANY MEMBERS</td>
<td>MAJOR ACTIVITIES/THEATRES/TOURS</td>
<td>OTHER ACTIVITIES/HONORS</td>
<td>MANAGEMENT/FINANCES/NOTES</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### PRODUCTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall:</th>
<th>GUUFFAWHAW</th>
<th>SCRAPS</th>
<th>FORTUNATELY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Opening&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>&quot;Guffawhaw&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Molly Wiggle&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>&quot;Conversations&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>&quot;Pickle and Jar&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>&quot;Foot and Shoe&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>&quot;Can and Opener&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Hamburger and Mouth&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>&quot;Cone and Ice Cream&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>&quot;Dust and Broom&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;Nail and Hammer&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;Smoke and Stack&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Earthshake&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>later additions:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;The Shoes&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>&quot;Big Hands, Big Feet&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>&quot;The Painter's&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>&quot;Migratory Birds&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Summer Was Here&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Genesis&quot;</td>
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<td>SCRAPS: Ct. tour</td>
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<td>GROUP SOUP: London</td>
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<tr>
<td>MY HORSE IS WAITING</td>
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<tr>
<td>London</td>
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<tr>
<td>HORSE, GUUFFAWHAW:</td>
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### COMPANY MEMBERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall Company:</th>
<th>Martin, Osgood</th>
<th>Burton, Maxwell</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Donald Ashander Joins, plays old music on electric harpsichord</td>
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<tr>
<td>Danny Peral-hired as first technician (stage manager for Ct. tour)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peter Sibley-stage manager (Bill Frank left in London)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring (Hunter) company:</td>
<td>Martin, Osgood</td>
<td>Burton, Cy Young</td>
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<td>David Kelman-technical</td>
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### MAJOR ACTIVITIES/THEATRES/TOURS

- **Fall**
  - GUFFAWHAW
  - SCRAPS
  - FORTUNATELY

- **Opening**
- "Guffawhaw"
- "Molly Wiggle"
- "Conversations"
- "Pickle and Jar"
- "Foot and Shoe"
- "Can and Opener"
- "Hamburger and Mouth"
- "Cone and Ice Cream"
- "Dust and Broom"
- "Nail and Hammer"
- "Smoke and Stack"
- "Earthshake"

- **GUFFAWHAW (new version)**
- "Opening"
- "Guffawhaw"
- "Molly Wiggle"
- "Conversations"
- "Pickle and Jar"
- "Foot and Shoe"
- "Can and Opener"
- "Hamburger and Mouth"
- "Cone and Ice Cream"
- "Dust and Broom"
- "Nail and Hammer"
- "Smoke and Stack"
- "Earthquake"

### OTHER ACTIVITIES/HONORS

- **Season:** 9/9/67 - 4/27/68
- **Over 60 free weekday school shows (NY Arts Council)**
- **Fall tour of GUUFFAWHAW and SCRAPS in Ct., N.J., N.Y., & Pa.**
- **Philadelphia debut on 10/15/67, sponsored by the Arts Alliance and The Theatre of the Living Arts**
- **Project CREATE tour in Ct.: 10/24 - 11/2: 6 Ct. cities-workshops and shows**
- **London company: Martin, Osgood, Burton, Maxwell Ashander**
- **Peter Sibley-stage manager (Bill Frank left in London)**

### MANAGEMENT/FINANCES/NOTES

- **Artistic Director:** Judith Martin
- **Business Manager:** Judith Liss
- **Producer (London tour):** Michael White
- **William Morris agency hired for contemplated television for London**
- **Ticket prices:**
  - Henry Street: 20¢, 60¢
  - Hunter: $1.75, $2.00
  - London: 7/6, 1/6, $5

- **Major Grants:** Rockefeller Found. $14,000 Lassalle's $10,000 Other Grants: "New York Found.
  - Kaplan Found.
  - "Billy Rose Fund.
  - Warren T. Weber
  - Louise Ottinger Trust

- **Henry Street Settlement Mouse Playhouse series:** 10/23 - 12/16 GUUFFAWHAW/FORTUNATELY

- **Hunter College fun sponsored by Mitzi E. Newhouse**
- **Hunter College fun sponsored by Mitzi E. Newhouse**
- **Hunter College fun sponsored by Mitzi E. Newhouse**
- **Hunter College fun sponsored by Mitzi E. Newhouse**
- **Hunter College fun sponsored by Mitzi E. Newhouse**
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<th>MANAGEMENT/FINANCES/NOTES</th>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Summer, 1968&quot; (a composite show)</td>
<td>Outdoor summer company: Martin Osgood, Burton, Ashwander, Christopher Allport, James Shearwood-technician</td>
<td>Summer 1968 In the Parks and Streets: outdoor city tour done in an open flatbed truck 6/19/68 - 7/19/68: 30 free performances in parks, playgrounds, plazas, streets touring in disadvantaged areas of Manhattan, Queens, Brooklyn, and the Bronx</td>
<td>Sponsored by Mayor John V. Lindsay's Urban Action Task Force Coordinated by August Hecksher, Administrator, Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs Honor: a $24,000 matching grant from the National Endowment on the Arts and Humanities, the first ever awarded to a theatre for children</td>
<td>Annual Budget: around $100,000 Artistic Director: Judith Martin Manager: Judith Liss</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Who, What, Where&quot; &quot;Hot &amp; Cold&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td>Project: touring DANDELION to nine Ct. cities 11/68 - 12/68 First performance - DANDELION in public 12/4/68</td>
<td>Project CREATE: 14 week period prior to Christmas touring in schools working to create a new show (DANDELION)</td>
<td>Project CREATE: Funded by $14,000 grant from Rockefeller Foundation, a commission from Ct. Arts Council, and a gift from Dr. and Mrs. E. Lassalle</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Chicken &amp; Egg&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td>Christmas holiday season at Hunter: SCRAPS: 12/26-28 BAKED ALASKA: 12/29-31 GUFFAWSHAW: 1/4-5</td>
<td></td>
<td>Other grants: a $28,000 grant from city of N.Y. (for summer touring)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Statue &amp; Building&quot; &quot;Shoes&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td>London: Theatre Upstairs at The Royal Court Theatre--a special series of adult shows 2/27-3/1</td>
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<td>New York State Council on the Arts-supported the public school tours</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Jumping Beans&quot; &quot;Hands Off!&quot; &quot;Call That Dancing&quot; &quot;Un Gran Dia Todo Roja&quot; (A Big Red Day)</td>
<td>Fall Company: Martin Osgood, Burton, Ashwander, Christopher Allport, James Shearwood-technician</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Other funding: New York Found. Kaplan Found</td>
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<tr>
<td>BAKED ALASKA (later DANDELION) (premier)</td>
<td>London company: Martin Osgood, Burton, Ashwander, Charles Leipart</td>
<td>London: Thames Television Ltd. filmed a series of 13 half-hour shows Series shows in UK, Sweden and Australia, Summer 1969</td>
<td></td>
<td>Total performances: over 1000 since 1958 (and media appearances)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCRAPS, BAKED ALASKA, GUFFAWSHAW</td>
<td>Stage Manager: Lee Guilliant</td>
<td>Spring school tour, 3/69 - 4/69 included 6 shows at P.S. 108, 4 shows at P.S. 146, 8 shows at P.S. 122 Spring public tour included such places as McCarter Theatre, Princeton, N.J. 2/12/69</td>
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</table>

Additional notes:
- Summer, 1968: a composite show
- London company: Martin Osgood, Burton, Ashwander, Charles Leipart
- Project CREATE: Funded by $14,000 grant from Rockefeller Foundation, a commission from Ct. Arts Council, and a gift from Dr. and Mrs. E. Lassalle
- Other grants: a $28,000 grant from city of N.Y. (for summer touring)
- New York State Council on the Arts-supported the public school tours
- Other funding: New York Found. Kaplan Found
- Total performances: over 1000 since 1958 (and media appearances)
### PERIOD III: THE PRIME YEARS

**APPENDIX A**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRODUCTIONS</th>
<th>COMPANY MEMBERS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HOT FEET (premier)</td>
<td>Summer company: Martin, Osgood Burton, Ashwander, Charles Leipart (later Chris Alport)</td>
<td>Summer in the Parks: 7/1 - 7/20 18 free performances HOT FEET created for the streets</td>
<td>British Television series featuring the Bags ran for 13 weeks, beginning 7/22/69</td>
<td>Artistic Director: Judith Martin Manager: Judith Liss</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Plumber, Plumber&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Stop and Go&quot;</td>
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<td>Producer for Lincoln Center: David Dretzin</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Handball&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Little Litter&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;Telephone&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Feet Treat&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;That's Good&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Daisy&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;Move Over&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Lost and Found&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;Puzzle&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;Come on Over&quot;</td>
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**DANDELION**

| "Intro. & Before"            | Fall company: Martin, Burton, Joseph Medalis Pilar Garcia | Free school performances in New York City--over to Christmas season at LINCOLN CENTER, at Alice Tully Hall, DANDELION 12/20-27 GROUP SOUP 12/28 0 1/h Major spring tour of Manhattan schools--free shows PLUS public touring-eastern seaboard Spring season at Riverside church, Claremont Ave. at 129th St. DANDELION/HOT FEET - Saturdays 2/7 - 4/29 Spring season at 92nd St. Y: Sundays (2 shows daily) in February DANDELION | British Television series featuring the Bags ran for 13 weeks, beginning 7/22/69 | Artistic Director: Judith Martin Manager: Judith Liss Producer for Lincoln Center: David Dretzin Ticket prices: Lincoln Center tickets: $3.00, $4.00 ($2.50) Riverside: $35 for children |
| "Earthquake"                 |                                                        |                                                     |                                                                                        |                                                |
| "Too Many Fishes"            |                                                        |                                                     |                                                                                        |                                                |
| "Dinosaur"                   |                                                        |                                                     |                                                                                        |                                                |
| "Nature's Ways"              |                                                        |                                                     |                                                                                        |                                                |
| "Mother Duck"                |                                                        |                                                     |                                                                                        |                                                |
| "Caterpillar/Worm"           |                                                        |                                                     |                                                                                        |                                                |
| "Fox/Phaasant"               |                                                        |                                                     |                                                                                        |                                                |
| "Lettuce"                    |                                                        |                                                     |                                                                                        |                                                |
| "Dark Skin, Light Skin"      |                                                        |                                                     |                                                                                        |                                                |
| "On the Road to Culture"     |                                                        |                                                     |                                                                                        |                                                |
| "Bow Wow"                    |                                                        |                                                     |                                                                                        |                                                |
### PERIOD III

**12TH SEASON: 1970-1971**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRODUCTIONS</th>
<th>COMPANY MEMBERS</th>
<th>MAJOR ACTIVITIES/THEATRES/TOURS</th>
<th>OTHER ACTIVITIES/HONORS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>HOT FEET</strong> and <strong>DANDELION</strong> in repertory for season</td>
<td>Fall company: Martin, Burton, Ashwander, Douglas Richardson, Pilar Garcia, Danny Rosenfeld - stage manager</td>
<td>Fall of 1970 began workshops in the studio: &quot;The Paper Bag Players Workshops&quot; 10 week sessions beginning 10/6/70 on: Techniques, Constructing Theatre pieces, and construction of props and costumes</td>
<td>Artistic Director and Producer: Judith Martin Manager: Judith Liss Annual Budget Salaries: $11,000 a year for actors; $15,000 a year for administrators Touring: sponsored by local and regional arts councils (i.e. the Wash. State Cultural Enrichment Program and Junior League of Seattle) Major support: govt. National Endowment New York State Council on the Art Patricia LaSalle: $15,000 Other support: All the usual ones plus Dance Business Group Louise L. Ottinger Trust Mr. &amp; Mrs. Warren T. Weber</td>
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<td>Winter-Spring touring company: Burton, Ashwander, Pilar Garcia, Janel Mackenzie, Douglas Richardson Martin - Director (not in touring company)</td>
<td>Winter-Spring touring season: very heavy touring schedule 2/71 - 4/71 including Fed.-McCarter Theatre, Princeton March: New Orleans, La. a week residency, weekday shows for school children (over 5000) public shows-weekend March: Seattle Center Playhouse a week residency, school performance plus public April: St. Louis, Mo. - a week residency at Webster College's Loretto Hilton Center full schedule of other touring dates</td>
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<td>Holiday season at Hunter College 2 week run, 2 shows daily 12/19/70 - 1/3/71</td>
<td>HOT FEET/DANDELION</td>
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</table>
## PERIOD III
### 13TH SEASON: 1971-1972

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRODUCTIONS</th>
<th>COMPANY MEMBERS</th>
<th>MAJOR ACTIVITIES/THEATRE/TOURS</th>
<th>OTHER ACTIVITIES/HONORS</th>
<th>MANAGEMENT/FINANCES/NOTES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>HOT FEET</strong></td>
<td>Fall company: Burton, Garcia, Richardson, Mackenzie, Ashwander Martin-directing not acting</td>
<td>Fall tour on the Eastern seaboard plus New York school shows tour in November</td>
<td>Series of adult workshops in the studio (ten week session began in Oct.) working on new show</td>
<td>Artistic Director and Manager: Judith Martin Manager: Judith Liss</td>
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<td></td>
<td>total of 43 free shows in 6 different schools for over 30,000 children from many schools</td>
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<td>Christmas season in London: three week run at the Young Vic 12/20/71 - 1/8/72 <strong>DANDELION</strong></td>
<td>&quot;The Runaway Presents,&quot; an original Christmas play developed for Women's Day 12/71 issue</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>DANDELION</strong></td>
<td>London company: Martin, Burton, Garcia, Richardson, Ashwander (now on stage)</td>
<td>Winter/Spring tour, mainly on East coast no records of tour, except week residency at McCarter Theatre in Princeton, N.J. (10 shows)</td>
<td>Spring: a series of 2 separate workshops (each 10 sessions) began in 3/72</td>
<td>Major contributors: The National Endowment The Rockefeller Foundation N.Y. State Arts Council Mellon Educational Trust other state arts councils Patricia LaSalle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GROUP SOUP</strong></td>
<td>Winter/Spring company: Martin, Burton, Ashwander, Garcia, Richardson Garcia left toward end of season (Hot Feet fun still on) Osgood filled in</td>
<td>Winter/Spring tour, mainly on East coast no records of tour, except week residency at McCarter Theatre in Princeton, N.J. (10 shows)</td>
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<td>April tour of New York schools free school tours</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>HOT FEET</strong></td>
<td>2 stage managers during year Daniel Rosenfels Adam Perl</td>
<td>Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM) 9 school shows at BAM for over 10,000 children from 65 public and parochial schools in met. New York area 12 public performances at BAM on Saturdays for over 14,000 children 3/12 - 4/29 (12 weeks)</td>
<td>One of 5 Finalists chosen to represent the United States in ASSITEJ*Conference in Montreal/Albany (the International association of children's drama specialists)</td>
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<tr>
<td>PERIOD III</td>
<td>COMPANY MEMBERS</td>
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<td><strong>DANDELION</strong></td>
<td>Fall company: Martin, Burton, Ashwander, Jeanne Michols, David Bates Jim Ray—technician Jack Flala—prod. stage manager</td>
<td>Fall full tour of schools in November and spring tour for a total of 80 free school performances for over 56,000 children from 50 schools (public and parochial) in low income areas December—public touring of DANDELION; i.e. week residency in Pittsburgh (11/27-12/2) at Carnegie Music Hall—9 schools shows for over 14,000 4th graders plus public shows; 3-day residency in Worcester, Ma. (12/27-12/29), 6 shows for over 12,000 children (sponsored by Ma. Council on the Arts)</td>
<td>Workshops in studio: fall of 1972 2 different workshops: 1. for teachers/educators 2. for experienced theatre practitioners (students came from 5 states) Several workshops in conjunction with touring, such as the one in Pittsburgh for Carnegie Mellon students A Christmas play in Women's Day—&quot;Wiggle Worm's Surprise&quot; Repeat of NET special—DANDELION for Christmas</td>
<td>Artistic Director: Judith Martin Manager: Judith Liss asst: Edith Harnik asst: Michele Brustein</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GROUP SOUP</strong> (revised)</td>
<td>GROUP SOUP Company: Martin, Burton, Osgood, Ashwander, John Armstrong</td>
<td>New York season at Hunter College: Hunter College Theatre, E. 68th St. between Park and Lexington, extended run of 48 shows, Sat. and Sun. at 1 and 3 p.m.</td>
<td>Ticket prices: tickets at Hunter: $1.00 — children/groups $1.50 — children $2.00 — adults</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>DANDELION</strong></td>
<td>BATH company: Martin, Burton, Ashwander, John Armstrong, Jeanne Michols Gary Gilbert—stage manager Daniel Rosenfeisle—technician</td>
<td>Spring tours included such places as a week residency at the Smithsonian's Baird Auditorium Washington, D.C., 4/11 - 4/15, 10 shows for over 7,000 people</td>
<td>Premier of BATH on 3/17/73</td>
<td>Major Grants: 7/72: major grant from Rockefeller Foundation $100,000. ($25,000. a year for 4 years) (enlarged poverty program, increased support staff)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>BAGS-lst title (later</strong> TO THE RESCUE (later I WON'T TAKE A BATH (premier)</td>
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<td>National Endowment: $35,000 Patricia LaSalle: $15,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>PERIOD III</td>
<td>15TH SEASON: 1973-1974</td>
<td>APPENDIX A</td>
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<td><strong>MANAGEMENT/FINANCES/NOTES</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>DADELION</td>
<td>Touring company: Martin, Burton, Ashwander, Jeannie Nichols, Court Miller, Joseph Medalis Jim Ray-stage manager</td>
<td>Tour of Rural Kentucky: 10/1 - 10/22 (sponsored by the Kentucky Arts Commission &amp; The New York Foundation) DADELION day school shows HOT FEET evening public shows toured Louisville, Berea, Bowling Green, Owensboro, Frankfort, Jackson, Hindman, Whiteburg, &amp; Lexington</td>
<td>School performances: this season the company gave 54 free performances for over 25,000 children from underprivileged areas</td>
<td>Artistic Director: Judith Martin Manager: Judith Liss Executive Sec.: Edith Harnik</td>
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<tr>
<td>HOT FEET</td>
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<tr>
<td>MY HORSE IS WAITING</td>
<td>Company: Martin, Burton, Ashwander, Court Miller, Jeannie Nichols, Peter Jablonski-stage manager Burton listed as &quot;assistant director&quot; Mac Kerr-tech.</td>
<td>15th Anniversary Season in New York: produced themselves for first time--rented a theatre in P.S. 41, 116 W. 11th St. (between 6th and 7th Ave.) 1/18 - 2/24: BATH (new) 3/1 - 4/7: HORSE 60 performances on weekends, Sat. and Sun. at 1 &amp; 3 p.m., plus 6 Friday family nights Spring tour of I WON'T TAKE A BATH, included performances in Springfield, Ill.; Winsted, Ct.; and a week residency in Indianapolis at Clowes Memorial Hall Touring 4/7-4 - 5/7</td>
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<tr>
<td>I WON'T TAKE A BATH --new show (order from premier)</td>
<td>&quot;Knock, Knock, Knock&quot; &quot;Cookies&quot; &quot;The King's&quot; &quot;Blown Off the Billboard&quot; &quot;Box Talk&quot; &quot;Noses&quot; &quot;The Bicycle Race&quot; &quot;Aunt Sally and the Bear&quot; &quot;Subway Squash&quot; &quot;I Won't Take A Bath&quot;</td>
<td>1974: still artists-in-residence at Hunter College (in the drama dept.) The New York State Award: received this award from Governor Wilson for &quot;lasting contribution to the artistic form of children's theatre&quot; on 5/16/74 in Buffalo, N.Y. Creating a new show-(Everybody) Teachers workshops as part of touring &quot;Christmas All Over The Place&quot; published in Women's Pay, 12/74</td>
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<td>Ticket price for public performances at P.S. 41: children - $1.50 adults - $2.00 groups - $1.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>I WON'T TAKE A BATH</td>
<td>Fall company: Martin, Burton Ashwander, Douglas Norwich, Sharon Watroba, replaced by Leslie Flanders Peter Jablonski, stage manager Mac Kerr, asst. stage manager</td>
<td>Fall tour of BATH included the 5 boroughs of New York: Wilmington, Del.; Winsted, Ct.; Pittsburgh, Pa.; Dayton, Ohio; among others Tour 9/23 - 12/29</td>
<td>Many college workshops this season, including a workshop at Queens College, Hunter College, Berea College, and so forth</td>
<td>Artistic Director: Judith Martin Manager: Judith Liss Annual Budget: around $250,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>EVERYBODY, EVERYBODY (premiere)</td>
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<td>EVERYBODY previewed at P.S. 155 12/17 - 12/18 EVERYBODY premiered at Grand Opera House in Wilmington, Del. 12/28/74 - 12/29/74 (sponsor-Delaware Center for the Performing Arts)</td>
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<td>&quot;Everybody&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;A Beautiful Body&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;La, La&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;Little House&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;Scoo&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;Big Country&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;I'm From Chicago&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;Cow&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;Best of Friends&quot;</td>
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<td>EVERYBODY, EVERYBODY</td>
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<td>Spring tour of Appalachia: Kentucky and southern Indiana 3-week tour: 4/13 - 4/19 in Kentucky: Louisbille, Lebanon, Danville, Lexington, Berea in Indiana-Indianapolis, among others</td>
<td>Workshops for teachers part of touring this season, included those at Winsted, Arpingfield, and Riverhead</td>
<td>New York State Arts Council refused to grant them funds this season; company appeals decision &quot;turning point in financed&quot;</td>
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<td>Other Eastern tour dates</td>
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</table>

**SUMMARY TO DATE:**
- performed in 25 states plus DC; 4 tours to London and mid-eastern tour
<table>
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<tr>
<th>PRODUCTIONS</th>
<th>COMPANY MEMBERS</th>
<th>MAJOR ACTIVITIES/THEATRES/TOURS</th>
<th>OTHER ACTIVITIES/HONORS</th>
<th>MANAGEMENT/FINANCES/NOTES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EVERYBODY, EVERYBODY</td>
<td>Touring company: Martin, Burton, Ashawander, Douglas Norwick, Adrienne Doucette, Peter Jablonski-stage manager</td>
<td>Mid-East tour: 8/75 Israel: 8/3 - 8/7 at &quot;Festival d'Israel&quot; (Tel Aviv, Haifa, Jerusalem) Iran: 8/10 - 8/15 invited by Empress Farrah Diba--at the Niavaran Palace Park in Tehran (shows and workshops) Egypt: scheduled performances cancelled--props and costumes &quot;lost&quot;</td>
<td>Workshops in Iran, Israel, and Egypt for professional actors Workshops for the teachers for the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults in Iran Workshops for the Egyptian Ministry of Culture</td>
<td>Annual Budget: $226,520 Deficit (revenue-$178,765) Artistic Director: Judith Martin Administrator: Judith Liss Asst. Administrator: Nancy Lloyd Baron Coordinator: Edith Harnik</td>
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<tr>
<td>EVERYBODY, EVERYBODY</td>
<td>Company remained the same.</td>
<td>Fall tour: (rewrote part of EVERYBODY) toured 9/75 - 12/75 tour of East coast plus free school show tour in 12/75 also toured to Pittsburgh; Dayton Ohio; Princeton, N.J. (McCarter Theatre) and Wilmington, Del. (Grand Opera House) 92nd St. YM-YWHA Season: 2/76-3/77 2 shows every Sun. for 10 weeks Jan.-returned to McCarter Theatre, Princeton, N.J. and Grand Opera toured throughout spring, including a tour of Suffolk Country (Southampton, Riverhead, Bayport, Smithtown, Sayville, Bayshore, Tarrytown); Westchester; Week residency at Louisville (Ky.) Children's Theatre (also in Berea and Mayville, Ky.) Week in Newport News, Va. and surrounding area</td>
<td>9/75-began work on GRANDPA 12/75: 3rd TV special: a 20 min. segment of EVERYBODY on TV--on the TODAY show with Barbara Walters &quot;Homage To The Bag:&quot; Bag art at The Museum of Contemporary Crafts in N.Y. (10/75-1/76) &quot;A Christmas Present&quot;: the 5th Paper Bag Christmas play in 12/75 issue of Early Years magazine Working on publishing DANDELION and the other Christmas plays in script and book form Developed and produced 1st 33 1/3 record-EVERYBODY 1/76 Began to solicit touring dates through such devices and the ACCUCA and PACT conferences</td>
<td>Advertised for ages 4-12 Tickets for &quot;Y&quot; season $1.50 - groups $2.00 - children $3.00 - adults Funding included: National Endowment Rockefeller Found. Andrew Mellon Found. New York Found. Ford Found. Patricia &amp; Hilary Barrett Brown, etc. New York State Arts Coun. Council 5000 'bags' from Equitable Bag Co. Summary: 30 week season 2 productions (none new) 147 performances 1976: have played to 1 million children</td>
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<td>PRODUCTIONS</td>
<td>COMPANY MEMBERS</td>
<td>MAJOR ACTIVITIES/THEATRES/TOURS</td>
<td>OTHER ACTIVITIES/HONORS</td>
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<td>EVERYBODY, EVERYBODY</td>
<td>Company for the Season: Martin, Burton, Ashwander, Jeanne Nichols Virgil Roberson Director: Judith Martin Musical Director: D. Ashwander Featured Actor: Irving Burton Stage Manager: John W. Lloyd Asst. Stage Mgr: Jack Andrew Scenic Technician: Debra Schechner</td>
<td>A season of less local performances and much more touring. Full fall touring schedule, including Washington, D.C.; East Stroudsburg Pa.; Auburn, N.Y.; a week residency in Dartmouth, N.H.; and a southern tour. 10-day Southern circuit tour: based in Winston-Salem, N.C. booked for 17 performances through the Southern Children's Theatre Circuit plus they booked other performances on their own GRANDPA: Previews 1/7 - 1/8 McCarter Theatre in Princeton; 1/9 New Jersey State Museum, Trenton, N.J. 92nd St. YM-YWHA Season: GRANDPA premiers 1/23/77 runs through 1/27/77--2 shows each Sunday (also school shows at Y) Winter tour of N.Y. area: 2/1-4/12 including SUNY in Alfred, Alfred Univ., Great Neck Arts Center Auburn Civic Center, etc. Spring National Tour 3/29 - 5/22. including week in Pittsburgh, Pa.; Dayton, Ohio; Cleveland, Ohio; week residency at Univ. of Texas at Austin; Lebanon Opera House, Lebanon, N.H.; week residency in Mobile, Al.</td>
<td>Company chosen to open the new Performing Arts Children's Series presented by the Alliance for Arts Education and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts (in the Chautauqua tent--for the bi-centennial) ACCUCA conference and FACT conference in N.Y. WCAU-TV (CBS Affiliate) in Pittsburgh-taped and aired a half-hour special of EVERYBODY Paper Bag Playground at the &quot;Y&quot; Received New York city Mayoral Citation at opening of GRANDPA Workshops at colleges and univ. such as S.U.N.Y. in Alfred, Alfred Univ., Hofstra, Univ. of Texas at Austin, etc. 1/25/77--a gala event to honor Donald Ashwander, the hometown boy, in Mobile, Alabama 5/22/77--2 shows at the Canadian Child and Youth Drama at Ottowa Univ. Funding included: National Endowment, Patricia LaSalle, Ford Foundation New American Plays Program, various state arts councils, etc.</td>
<td>Artistic Director: Judith Martin Administrator: Judith Lisa Assistant Administrator: Nancy Lloyd (full-time) Coordinator: Edith Harnik Susan Baerwald Judith Lisa and Nancy Lloyd attended the &quot;Performing Arts Management Institute Seminar&quot; 1976-1977 Fiscal Year: operating expenses: $237,544 income: $231,443 earned income: $117,783 unearned income: $113,660 June 1, 1977: Signed a 3-year booking contract with M. L. Byers as booking agent Season Summary: 30 week season 2 productions (one new) 165 performances</td>
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<td>PRODUCTIONS</td>
<td>COMPANY MEMBERS</td>
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<td><strong>I WON'T TAKE A BATH</strong></td>
<td>Fall company: Martin, Burton, Ashwander, Virgil Roberson, Jeanne Michols</td>
<td>Fall tour from 10/77 - 12/77 extensive touring on East coast plus the following: 11/77 - Toronto, Canada at the Young People's Theatre; A week residency in New Orleans, La. 12/5 - 12/9 (performed for over 7,000 school children plus public performances)</td>
<td>Recorded second L.P. 10/77-opened the new children's floor at Macy's with show &quot;Growing Up&quot;—selection from GRANDPA</td>
<td>Artistic Director: Judith Martin, Administrator: Judith Liss, Asst. Administrator: Edith Harnik</td>
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<td><strong>EVERYBODY, EVERYBODY HOT FEET</strong></td>
<td>Lincoln Center company: same as fall company plus Douglas Norwich as &quot;guest artist&quot;</td>
<td>Winter tour: local shows plus the following: McCarter Theatre, Princeton, N.J. (1/10); New Jersey State Museum, Trenton, N.J. (1/11); Music Hall Center, Detroit, M1. (1/13-14)</td>
<td>Paper Bag Lobby School shows for over 8200 children bused in</td>
<td>Artistic Director: Judith Martin, Administrator: Judith Liss, Asst. Administrator: Edith Harnik</td>
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<td>92nd St. YM-YWHA Season: 1/29 - 4/19 Sundays, 2 shows Kaufman Concert Hall also gave 10 (almost) free school day shows</td>
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<td>Coordinator: Eleanor Rogosin, Asst. Coordinator: Susan Baerwald, Projected budget: $286,200, Press Representatives: Gurtman and Murtha Associates, Booking Agent: M.L. Byers (out of contract this fall—fulfilled bookings)</td>
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<td>Spring tour included the following: Bermuda, N.Y.; Rye, N.Y.; Babylon, N.Y.; Hofstra Univ., Hempstead, N.Y.; Syracuse Civic Center, N.Y.; Carnegie Music Hall, Pittsburgh, Pa.; Middletown, N.Y.; Montgomery, N.Y.; Lebanon Opera House, Dartmouth College, N.H.; and Cleveland, Ohio.</td>
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<td>Season Summary: 38 week season reached audience of over 100,000 New York season Lincoln Center and &quot;Y&quot; Mainly a touring season</td>
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<tr>
<td>PERIOD IV</td>
<td>COMPANY MEMBERS</td>
<td>MAJOR ACTIVITIES/THEATRES/TOURS</td>
<td>OTHER ACTIVITIES/HONORS</td>
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<td><strong>MAMA'S GOT A JOB</strong></td>
<td>Fall company: Martin, Burton, Ashwander, Douglas Norwich, Carolyn Yeager, Peter Jablonski-stage manager for the year</td>
<td>Christmas show: &quot;A Musical Revue for Children featuring 'Mama's Got A Job'&quot;</td>
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<td>Christmas company: Martin, Burton, Ashwander, Norwich, Yeager, plus guest appearances by Douglas Norwich</td>
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<td><strong>DANDELION</strong></td>
<td>Company changes: Bruce Fuller replaced Douglas Norwich</td>
<td>Fall touring included local shows and the following national shows: Univ. of Iowa: 11/10-12 West Coast tour: Univ. of Ca., Berkeley, 11/25 Ambassador College, Pasadena, Ca a week residency 11/27-12/1 Seattle Center Playhouse half-week residency 9/9-12</td>
<td>Published DANDELION, script and score</td>
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<td><strong>EVERYBODY, EVERYBODY</strong></td>
<td>International touring company: Martin, Burton Ashwander, Carolyn Yeager, Court Miller</td>
<td>Christmas season in New York: produced themselves at the Marymount Manhattan Theatre, 221 East 71st St.</td>
<td>Working on new show MAMA</td>
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<td>Spring touring included the Annenberg Center, Philadelphia; Brooklyn College; Cleveland (Ohio) Art Museum;</td>
<td>Winter touring included &quot;The Best of The Bags&quot; at McCarter Theatre and DANDELION at the New Jersey State Museum, Trenton</td>
<td>Financial condition grave: Major contributor: The National Endowment--$60,000 Sample of other contributors: Urus Brothers: $2,000 Lauder: $1,000 Mobil: $1,000 Gilman Found.: $500</td>
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<td>Spring New York season: DANDELION at the Museum of Natural History, 79th St. and Central Park West 2/27 - 3/18 weekends plus over 8,000 bused in for school shows (despite busing strike)</td>
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<td>Press Representatives: Jackson and Freedman Booking Agent: M. L. Byers--Bags broke contract with him fulfilling the engagements he booked</td>
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<td>Tour of ENGLAND/SCOTLAND: 4/17 - 6/8 4th London appearance: 1st time in Scotland; 8 week tour included 24 shows at Riverside Studios in London plus shows in Reading, Glasgow, Sterling, and Manchester</td>
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<td>Board of Directors: Anna Lou Aldrich resigned as President, replaced by JoAnna Rose</td>
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<td>Tickets at Marymount: $5.00 Tickets at Museum: $1.00</td>
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<td>Summary: 38-week season played for over 125,000 people in over 126 shows</td>
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## PERIOD IV 21ST SEASON: 1979-1980

### APPENDIX A

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<th>PRODUCTIONS</th>
<th>COMPANY MEMBERS</th>
<th>MAJOR ACTIVITIES/THEATRES/TOURS</th>
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<tr>
<td>MAMA'S GOT A JOB</td>
<td>Fall company: Martin, Burton, Ashwander, Patricia Brodhead, James Lally</td>
<td>Local touring and school try-out shows in the fall; including P.S. 108 and P.S. 166 in Harlem (several schools bused in)</td>
<td>Other fall touring, included: 11/16-17—Annenburg Center, Philadelphia—school and family shows; 11/18—Grand Opera House, Wilmington, Del.; 11/24-25—Keene College, N.J.; 12/11-12—Bayonne, N.J.; 12/11-2—Syracuse, N.Y.; and 12/15—Princeton, N.J.</td>
<td>Artistic Director: Judith Martin</td>
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<td>Stage Manager: Peter Jablonski</td>
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<td>Christmas In New York: Lincoln Center 12/26-12/31</td>
<td>Administrator: Judith Lies</td>
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<td>MAMA'S GOT A JOB—official premiere 12/26/79-Alice Tully Hall—Lincoln Center</td>
<td>Press Representatives: Jacksina and Freedman</td>
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<td>New York season: Town Hall, 113 W. 43rd St.</td>
<td>Lincoln Center tickets: $5.75</td>
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<td>England touring company: Burton, Ashwander, Court Miller, Jeannie Nichols, Pat Brodhead (Martin did not tour)</td>
<td>2/22 - 3/7 school shows at 10:30 plus family performances</td>
<td>Summary to date: the company has performed live for over 2 million people in 89 cities in 24 states and 7 countries plus reaching millions through TV shows</td>
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*Information on the last four seasons is minimal as the researcher completed most research in New York by the end of 1979.*
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<th>PERIOD IV</th>
<th>22ND SEASON: 1980-1981</th>
<th>APPENDIX A</th>
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<td><strong>PRODUCTIONS</strong></td>
<td><strong>COMPANY MEMBERS</strong></td>
<td><strong>MAJOR ACTIVITIES/THEATRES/TOURS</strong></td>
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</table>
| HOT FEET | Company for the season: Martin, Burton, Ashwanter, Jan Maxwell, Buck Hobbs, Susan Rosenstock | Fall: local touring and school shows  
P.S. 20 10/7 - 10/11  
P.S. 11M 10/29-30  
P.S. 16M 11/5-7 | Fall regional touring included:  
Newburgh, N.Y.—10/26;  
and a tour of Massachusetts  
11/1 - 11/10 with shows in  
Lexington, Marlborough,  
Groton, Newton, & Brookline | Artistic Director:  
Judith Martin  

Administrator:  
Judith Liss |
| HOT FEET | Company changes: hired Pilar Garcia to replace Judith Martin for this tour | Fall national touring included:  
a Southern tour, 10/18-10/24  
with shows in Raleigh, N.C.;  
Rock Hill, S.C.; and Winston-Salem, N.C.; Wilkes-Barre, Pa. 11/22-24; and Chicago, Ill, National College of Education 11/12-16  
a week residency with school and family shows | ACTIVITIES CONTINUED:  
Christmas Season in Mamaroneck, N.Y.  
New York season in Town Hall:  
1/27 - 3/15 school shows  
Tues.-Fri.; public shows Sat. and Sun.  
Spring touring: National and Regional included:  
Pasadena, Ca.—3/18-20  
Northeast tour 4/1-11 | Board of Directors:  
JoAnna Rose, President  
Susan Patricof, V. Pres.  
Barry S. Cohen, Secretary  
Florin Rogosin, Treas.  
Anna Lou Aldrich  
Susan Grad Baerwald  
Patricia Barrett-Brown  
Nanci Bronsteen  
Sondra Glieman  
Evelyn Lauder  
Michele Mazzola  
Susan Newhouse  
Janet Robinson  
Linda Sanger  
Loulse Westergard |
| HOT FEET | Town Hall: spring/winter touring company: Burton, Ashwanter, Jan Maxwell, Buck Hobbs, Susan Rosenstock | | | |
### PERIOD IV 23RD SEASON: 1981-1982

<table>
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<tr>
<th>PRODUCTIONS</th>
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<th>MAJOR ACTIVITIES/THEATRES/TOURS</th>
<th>OTHER ACTIVITIES/HONORS</th>
<th>MANAGEMENT/FINANCES/NOTES</th>
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</table>
| **I WON'T TAKE A BATH** | Company: Martin, Burton, Ashwander, Brenda Cummings, Tom Robbins | Fall touring included such local shows as Brooklyn, Setauket, Staten Island, Frendonia, etc.  
Canadian tour: included performances at Alberta (10/15-17), Calgary (10/20-24), and a tour of Ontario (11/20-21)  
Christmas Season: 12/26-12/30 Mamaroneck, N.Y.  
Winter touring in Jan. and Feb. included Wilmington, De.; Rockland County, N.Y.; West Orange, N.J.; Springfield, Ma.; and Valley Forge, Pa. | Winter touring included: Tour of Michigan, 12/1-13, shows in Flint Youth Theatre in Flint; Greenville, Grand Rapids, Benton Harbor, and a week in Detroit (12/8-13); plus local and regional touring included shows at Benton, Ma.; 12/31; Princeton N.J.; and Wilmington, De.; in Jan. | Artistic Director: Judith Martin  
Administrator: Judith Liss |
| **BATH plus "Tree Angel"** | Town Hall company: Martin, Burton, Ashwander, Jan Maxwell, Tom Robbins, Brenda Cummings (Martin not performing)  
Peter Jablonski-stage manager | New York season: Town Hall public shows: 2/13-3/7  
Saturdays and Sundays school shows: 2/9-3/5, weekdays  
Regional Spring touring included: Poughkeepsie, N.Y.; Westbury, N.Y.; Princeton, N.J.; Trenton, N.J.; Rochester, N.Y.; Babylon, N.Y.  
Massachusetts tour in March and April included Marblehead, Newton, Fitchburg, Brookline, Groton, Dorchester, and Boston | 2/19/82: appeared on The Today Show; interview plus performances of new material from BATH—"Bathtub" | Coordinator: Edith Harnik |
| **BATH** | | National: Columbus, Ohio 4/30-5/1 | | Town Hall ticket prices: public shows: $7.00  
school shows: $2.00 (many free admissions) |

Advertised for ages 4-10
**PERIOD IV**

**APPENDIX A**

**PRODUCTIONS**

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<th>PRODUCTIONS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reasons To Be Cheerful (a composite show)</td>
<td>Fall company: Martin, Burton, Brenda Cummings, Tom Robbins</td>
<td>Fall regional touring; as usual including Trenton, N.J.; Wilmington, Del.; Boston; National: included a week residency in Broward (Miami), Florida performed for over 24,000 at Parker Playhouse</td>
<td>working on new show: &quot;Reasons To Be Cheerful&quot;</td>
<td>Artistic Director: Judith Martin, Administrator: Judith Liss</td>
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<td>&quot;Let's Go, Let's Go&quot;</td>
<td>State managers: 1st-Robert Burris, 2nd-Tom Mangen, 3rd-Peter Jablonowski</td>
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<td>Florida tour sponsored by: Toys R Us - $5,000, MacDonalds - $5,000, Air Florida-donated transportation, Story Theatre Presentations: donated theatre</td>
<td>Approximate Budget: $325,000</td>
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<td>&quot;La, La I&quot;</td>
<td>Changes in company: Tom Robbins replaced by Jan Maxwell</td>
<td>International Tour: Far Eastern tour, included performances in Taipei, Taiwan 12/11-12; Manila, Philippines 12/14-16; Hong Kong, China 12/21-24</td>
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<td>Groller 1983 National Annual Supplement included an article on The Paper Bag Players</td>
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<td>&quot;Jumping Beans&quot;</td>
<td>Company: Martin, Burton, Cummings, Maxwell (1 man, 3 women)</td>
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<td>&quot;La, La II&quot;</td>
<td>Christmas season at Mamaroneck, New York</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Reasons To Be Cheerful&quot;*</td>
<td>Town Hall--New York Season planned for February</td>
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<td>&quot;Long Dress&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;Plumber, Plumber, Fix My Sink&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;Mama, Baby, Kitty&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;Little Litter&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;Chills and Fever&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;Painting&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;Snow&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Summer Is Here&quot;</td>
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*new material
APPENDIX B

PERSONNEL/THE PAPER BAG PLAYERS
PERSONNEL/THE PAPER BAG PLAYERS

**Founders:** Judith Martin, Shirley Kaplan, Sudie Bond, Daniel Jahn, Remy Charlip.

**Original Performing Company:** Judith Martin, Shirley Kaplan, Sudie Bond, Joyce Aaron, with Daniel Jahn accompanist and Remy Charlip, consulting director.


**Administrator:** Judith Liss, manager and administrator (1962- ).

**Musical Directors:** Daniel Jahn (1959-1965), Donald Ashwander (1967- ).


**Musicians:** Donald Ashwander (1967- ); Marcia Burr (1966-1967); Samir Elias (1962-1963); Daniel Jahn (1959-1965).

*Underlining indicates the person was of some importance to the company due to the length and/or quality of service or special function fulfilled.

**"I" after a date indicates that the person was with the company intermittently during those years rather than an uninterrupted tour of duty with the company.
Management Staff: Susan Baerwald, coordinator (1976-1978); Charlotte Bandler, Secretary (1978- ); Michele Brustein, assistant manager (1972-1973); Judith Felsenfeld, development director (1980-1981); Edith Harnik, executive secretary to associate administrator (1973- ); Chari Lewis, development director (1982- ); Jan Liss, audience development (1979); Judith Liss, school show bookings to administrator (1962- ); Nancy Lloyd, assistant administrator (1975-1977); Gina Rogak, assistant (1981- ); Elinor Rogosin, coordinator (1977).


APPENDIX C

A LISTING AND BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SCENES AND PRODUCTIONS IN THE REPERTORY OF THE PAPER BAG PLAYERS
THE REPERTORY OF THE PAPER BAG PLAYERS

CUT-UPS (1959-1961, revived in 1965)*
SCRAPS (1960-1968)
GROUP SOUP (1962-1973)
FORTUNATELY (earlier called THE PAPER BAG PLAYERS RIDE AGAIN, 1964-1967)
MY HORSE IS WAITING (part CUT-UPS revised, 1965-1968)
GUFFAWEM (1966-1968)
CLARETTON (earlier called BAKED ALASKA, 1968-)
HOT FEET (1969-)
I WON'T TAKE A BATH (earlier called TO THE RESCUE, 1973-)
EVERYBODY, EVERYBODY (1974-)
GRANDPA (1976-1977)
MAMA'S GOT A JOB (1979-)

A LISTING OF THE PRODUCTIONS AND SCENES OF THE PAPER BAG PLAYERS

CUT-UPS**

Premier: 12/28/59 The Living Theatre

THAT'S US
WHERE DID YOU GET THOSE FUNNY CLOTHES? (FUNNY CLOTHES)
ORDERS FROM THE PRESIDENT
LOOK, WORD
THE JUMPING BEAN STORY (BEANS, THE BEAN MAN)
I'VE BEEN THINKING...
   CHOCOLATE COVERED THOUGHTS (I WOULD LIKE)
   A SMALL PIECE OF STRING (BUG)
   LITTLE HOUSE (I'VE BEEN THINKING)
   THERE WAS A LITTLE BOX (SONG)
TWO WHO WERE THINKING AS THE SHIP WAS SINKING
   (THE SHIP THAT'S BEEN EVERYWHERE, THE SINKING SHIP, THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA)
LONG LOST RELATIVES GET CAUGHT IN A REVOLVING DOOR (TWO LONG LOST RELATIVES)
HELP! HELP!
SUNDAY COMICS
MAKE A FACE
A STORY ABOUT A WITCH WHO FELL UNDER HER OWN SPELL
   (FAIRY TALE, THE WITCHES TALE, LAUNDRY DAY AT THE CASTLE)
WE'RE OFF

[IS THIS THE MOON?] [MESSAGES (A MESSAGE ON THE CEILING)]
[DOLL (RAG DOLL)] [OFF TO OUTER SPACE]

*The dates following each show indicate the years that show was included in the repertory of The Paper Bag Players. An open-ended date signifies the show is still in the active repertory in 1982.

**Order taken from the 1959 program. For the following productions, the order of scenes is taken from the scripted version as available in the files of The Paper Bag Players and the researcher. When no scripted version is available, the order of scenes is taken from the original program or another source, and will be so indicated. Alternate titles are enclosed in parentheses. Additional scenes included in the production and not listed elsewhere are listed at the end and enclosed in brackets. For clear reading, all scene titles will be capitalized in this appendix.
SCRAPS
Premier: 12/19/60 The Living Theatre
OPENING
THE TREE ANGEL (THE WHISPERING PINES)
The Cat's Meow
THE DRAGON'S TALE
SHADOW
WHAT'S THE MESSAGE? (THE SPY RING)
THE QUEEN'S CORONATION
YOU'RE GORGEOUS (THE BEAUTY SKIT)
S. O. S.
EDNA, THE MONSTER (HERMAN, THE MONSTER)
A BIG RED DAY (THE YELLOW SUN AND THE
SILVER RAIN, UNA GRAN DÍA TODO ROJA)
WHERE IS EVERYBODY
PARADE (A BIG PARADE) [MANNERS]
[AT THE STUDIO OF THE FAMOUS MADAME
BLANCHE]
AROUND THE WORLD) [SNOW] [SPOTS]
Fortunately
(THE PAPER BAG PLAYERS RIDE AGAIN)
Premier: 3/7/66 Henry Street Playhouse
THE CHICKEN AND THE EGG (WHICH CAME FIRST?)
THE BUILDING AND THE STATUE
FORTUNATELY
DOT AND DASH
THE BAKERY
MA AND THE KIDS
CALL THAT DANCING?
THE VISIT
FAR, FAR AWAY
[WHAT EVER THE WEATHER]
MY HORSE IS WAITING
Premier: 2/5/66 Henry Street Playhouse
BAGS
FUNNY CLOTHES*
JUMPING BEANS
HAND'S OFF! DON'T TOUCH!
LAUNDRY DAY AT THE CASTLE
MINUTES MOVIES
THE PILL (HEADACHE)
FYRE MAGUIRE (MR. MAGUIRE)
BIG BOY
THE CITY
THE SUBWAY
FISH SONG
HORACE
DEEDLE, DEEDELE, DEDE
[MORE MINUTE MOVIES]
THE APARTMENT (FURNITURE)]
[SEARCH]
[THE MOTHER
[THE MOTHER]
[IT'S BETTER THAN THE TIME]
* Revivals

GROUP SOUP
Premier: 4/24/62 The Living Theatre
HOT OR COLD?
RED AND CHECKERS
HI! 'LO!
FAST AND SLOW
VOICES
PACES
TWINS
CUPCAKE
THE WILD WEST
HEDGE PLEDGE
THE MEATBALL SONG
OLD FRIENDS
TEA TIME
THE POSTMAN'S DREAM
WITCH SWITCH
A PAPER BOX STORY

GUFFAWHAW**
Premier: 10/8/66 Henry Street Playhouse
GUFFAWHAW
MOLLY WIGGLE
CONVERSATIONS
PICKLE AND JAR
POOT AND SHOE
CANN AND OPENER
HAMBURGER AND MOUTH
CONE AND ICE CREAM
DUST AND BROOM
NAIL AND HAMMER
SMOKE AND STACK
EARTHSKAKE MUSIC
SHOES
THE PAINTERS
MIGRATORY BIRDS
GENESIS
SUMMER WAS HERE
[CONVERSATION--DOG AND FLEAS]
** Order from 1968 audio tape

DANDELION
Premier: 12/4/68
INTRODUCTION AND BEFORE
EARTHSKAKE
TOO MANY FISHES (CHARLIE THE FISH)
DINOSAUR
DANDELION
NATURE'S WAYS
PART I: MOTHER
PART II: THE CATERPILLAR AND THE BIRD
PART III: FOX AND PHEASANTS
LETTUCE (SPINACE)
DARK SKIN, LIGHT SKIN (YELLOW, WHITE, AND
BROWN)
ON THE ROAD TO CULTURE
BOW WOW
[SHORT HISTORY] [ROCKS]
HOT FEET

Premier: 1/1/69 Summer in the Parks

HOT FEET
SANDWICH
PLUMBER, PLUMBEB, FIX MY SINK
LITTLE LITTER (WAX PAPER DANCE)
TELEPHONE
MOVE OVER
THAT'S GOOD, THAT'S GOOD
PAINTINGS
PIGEONS
SHOW
SUMMER WAS HERE
HANDBALL
FEET TREAT
PUZZLE
COME ON OVER
[STOP AND GO] [COLD FEET]
[CLOUDY WITH SHOWERS]
[LOST AND FOUND] [DAISY]
[FISH STORY]

EVERYBODY, EVERYBODY

Premier: 12/28/71 Grand Opera House

EVERYBODY, EVERYBODY
OPENING
EATING SKIT
FAT AND THIN SKIT
FIGHTING SKIT
A 'OT ALIKE
LA, LA
A VERY LITTLE HOUSE
LA, LA, LA
DAZZLING
BIG COUNTRY
COW
I'M FROM CHICAGO
SCOOP
NOTHING
BIG BURGER
STUNT
THE BEST OF FRIENDS
[A BEAUTIFUL BODY]
[BOX]
[BIG HANDS, BIG STOMACHES
(BIG HANDS, BIG FEET)]

MAMA'S GOT A JOB

Premier: 12/26/79 Lincoln Center

THE BEST OF FRIENDS
TWO FRIENDS (MY HORSE)
TWINS
BANANAS, BANANAS
WRAP AROUND
ENGLISH COMPOSITION (HOMEWORK)
NOSES (STOP THAT NOISE)

I WON'T TAKE A BATH

Premier: 3/17/73 Hunter College Playhouse

KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK (ANYBODY HOME?)
COOKIES, COOKIES, COOKIES
THE KINGS
BLOWN OFF THE BILLBOARD
BOX TALK
NOSES
THE BICYCLE RACE
AUNT SALLY AND THE BEAR
SUBWAY SQUASH
I WON'T TAKE A BATH
[AUNT SALLY SHAKES THE HOUSE]
[GHOST STORY] [SHIRTS]
[BALLOONS] [TOWER TALE]
[SWITCH SWAP]
[A LONG, LONG DRESS (WRAP AROUND)]
[COLORS] [THE REAL ME 1982]
[BATHTUB 1982]
[LET'S GO 1982]

EVERYBODY, EVERYBODY

Premier: 12/28/74 Grand Opera House

EVERYBODY, EVERYBODY
OPENING
EATING SKIT
FAT AND THIN SKIT
FIGHTING SKIT
A 'OT ALIKE
LA, LA
A VERY LITTLE HOUSE
LA, LA, LA
DAZZLING
BIG COUNTRY
COW
I'M FROM CHICAGO
SCOOP
NOTHING
BIG BURGER
STUNT
THE BEST OF FRIENDS
[A BEAUTIFUL BODY]
[BOX]
[BIG HANDS, BIG STOMACHES
(BIG HANDS, BIG FEET)]

MAMA'S GOT A JOB

Premier: 12/26/79 Lincoln Center

THE BEST OF FRIENDS
TWO FRIENDS (MY HORSE)
TWINS
BANANAS, BANANAS
WRAP AROUND
ENGLISH COMPOSITION (HOMEWORK)
NOSES (STOP THAT NOISE)

MAMA continued

OLD FRIENDS**
DISCO SKATER
THE SPELL
MAMA'S GOT A JOB
[BALL-transition]
[BIRDS]

*Order from Lincoln Center program.
**revival
DESCRIPTIONS OF SELECTED SCENES FROM THE PRODUCTIONS
OF THE PAPER BAG PLAYERS

SCENES FROM CUT-UPS

FUNNY CLOTHES: A scene which is like an extended vaudeville joke. The players appear one after another over and over in new outfits made of common household objects. Each new appearance is met with a pun, such as "Say where'd you get that hat?" "Manhattan."

THE JUMPING BEAN STORY: A woman goes to a store to buy some fresh beans for supper. They turn out to be rebellious Mexican jumping beans who can't stay in the cooking pot and cause the woman lots of trouble.

I'VE BEEN THINKING: This is a series of four short scenes done one after another as a group. Each is narrated or sung or enacted by one actor. Each one is a kind of creative tall-tale. In "Little House," the person describes an ever increasingly diminutive world he is thinking about. In "Chocolate Covered Thoughts," the narrator thinks of all the usual things one might like covered with chocolate and extends this to such absurdities as "chocolate covered bicycle" and such improbabilities as "chocolate covered spaghetti." "A Small Piece of String" is a variation of "The Old Woman Who Swallowed A Fly" joke, and in "Song," a woman sings about the never-ending possibilities of what could be inside a little box.

THE SINKING SHIP: Two fish at the bottom of the sea watch as a ship sinks. They contrast in personality and observations.

TWO LONG-LOST RELATIVES: The actors are encased in giant brown paper garment bags with cellophane windows. An extended joke in which they keep missing and finding each other.

HELP! HELP!: A short piece in which someone is trapped in a giant paper bag. With the help of the audience, she punches her way out.

LAUNDRY DAY AT THE CASTLE: A longer story which uses the traditional fairy tale structure with some modern touches. A witch captures a princess, puts her under a spell and transports her in a magic journey to her castle. A prince rescues the princess and steals the witch's shawl which contains her magic powers. This traditional story is given very unusual treatment. The princess builds her garden out of nested stacking boxes, much like a child would, for instance.

SCENES FROM SCRAPS

OPENING: An audience participation number in which the players are hidden in boxes on stage and Remy enlists the aid of the children to find them.

THE TREE ANGEL: A Christmas skit in which three pine trees, felled by the woodchopper, are granted their wish by a guardian angel. They are given feet so that they can escape their fate. Done in rhymed couplets to very lyric music.

THE CAT'S MEOW: A woman gives her kitty a dog biscuit by mistake and the kitty turns into a dog.

THE DRAGON'S TALE: A humorous original fairy tale in which two kings set out one after another to slay a dragon. The dragon, a shy pacifist who loves eating daisies, watching butterflies, and singing songs, swallows the kings by accident. Eventually the kings escape and the dragon is left in peace.

SHADOW: Two players shadow one another in this scene, each asking the other "Are you my shadow?"

WHAT'S THE MESSAGE?: This scene is a take off on spy stories. One after another, the actors come out on the stage, each more absurdly disguised. They leave coded secret messages with the audience. All together the codes spell out one big message.
YOU'RE GORGEOUS: Two women fantasize about how they would like to look. They exchange paper bags, open them, and delightedly don their ideal features. Looking like grotesque clowns, they declare each other "gorgeous."

S. O. S.: An audience participation piece in which a little ship, sinking in the middle of the ocean, enlists the help of the audience to call a big ship to her rescue.

EDNA, THE MONSTER: A song and dance number in which the actors form a four-headed monster by donning a bedspread.

THE QUEEN’S CORONATION: A royal attendant announces the coronation of the queen. To great pomp and circumstance, the queen is robed by two attendants. She is robed, however, in things such as brown cardboard boxes, comic strips from the newspaper, and adding-machine tape. The queen regally speaks a kind of gibberish Slavic sounding language, solemnly translated by her attendant.

A BIG RED DAY: A narrator relates the simple story of a day: the sun comes up one morning, a cloud appears, rain falls, the rain stops, the sun sets and night comes. The actors play all of the elements in dance-pantomime-narration.

**SCENES FROM GROUP SOUP**

The opening eight scenes are a series of transformations.

HOT OR COLD?: Two hot people encounter two cold people. The hot people thankfully take off all of their voluminous layers of outer clothing which the cold people gratefully put on.

RED AND CHECKERS: Two people start out by exchanging hats and end up exchanging names and identities.

HI! 'LO!: A tall and a short person change sizes.

FAST AND SLOW: A very fast walker and a very slow walker compromise so they can get together.

VOICES: A man exchanges voices with a woman so that she can have a new voice to go to a party.

FACES: One mime is very sad while another is very happy. They trade faces and attitudes.

TWINS: Two people who are very different imagine how they would each have to change in order for them to look exactly alike and be twins.

CUPCAKE: A cupcake watches the transformation of a seed into a tree and a caterpillar into a butterfly. The cupcake sighs and longs to turn into something else. A godlike voice assures her that she can and she is transformed into first a strawberry shortcake, then a birthday cake, and finally a wedding cake. She urges the cupcake to think big and become perhaps a bathtub.

THE WILD WEST: A longer scene which is a take-off on the Western. There are the bad guys—Jake and McGraw—who are bank robbers. Then there are the two Indians and the sheriff. The plot is a "set up for a keystone chase which goes round and round a mountain made of paper boxes of various sizes" (Betty Osgood, p.13).

HEDGE PLEDGE: This is an audience participation piece about two neighbors who are not on speaking terms. They engage the children in the audience to pass messages to one another.

THE MEATBALL SONG: The children's song "On Top of Spaghetti" is expanded. It becomes the saga of the narrator's search for his true meatball who becomes among other things, a world champion skater and an unidentified flying object.
OLD FRIENDS: Two friends say goodbye. On stage they age 30 years with the help of paper props and costume pieces. When they meet again, hardly recognizable, they exclaim, "You haven't changed a bit!"

TEA TIME: Three people having tea are held up by a robber. They turn out to be policemen who chase the robber off to arrest him.

THE POSTMAN'S DREAM: The postman delivers letters to two housewives. Tired, he falls asleep and dreams he is a butterfly. The housewives, who are also the houses, unfold the letters and turn them into butterfly wings. They dance. The postman, housewives, and audience are left wondering if this was a postman dreaming of butterflies or if it was a butterflies dream.

WITCH SWITCH: Two witches, one a good fairy godmother type, one the wicked type, are transformed and switch personalities and roles.

THE PAPER BOX STORY: The story is a simple traditional story in which a princess on her wedding day is waiting for her prince to come. A bad king enters demanding that she marry him instead. When she refuses, he puts a spell on the land, taking away all of their happiness. The princess sets out with her cat to try to get the spell broken. The prince follows to assist her. It is performed in Kabuki-like stylization. The actors wear large masks made out of paper boxes which cover most of their bodies and they move and talk in greatly exaggerated, stylized, drawn-out gestures and voices.

SCENES FROM FORTUNATELY

THE CHICKEN AND THE EGG: A philosophical song-and-dance argument between the chickens and the eggs as to "Which came first?"

THE BUILDING AND THE STATUE: Urban renewal threatens a building and a statue who save themselves from being demolished by flattering the mayor and the governor.

FORTUNATELY: An original rendition of the popular children's game in which two people make up a story by alternating sentences beginning with "Fortunately" and "Unfortunately."

DOT AND DASH: An audience participation number in which short fat Dot (a female) and tall thin Dash (a male) are looking for one another. They enlist the help of the audience.

THE BAKERY: Based on a Valeska Gert nightclub act in which a very obliging baker encounters a very demanding customer. The customer orders a very special cake and over and over again he makes the baker redo it, adding details until it is just right. When the cake is perfect, the customer eats it right there on the spot in front of the horrified baker.

MA AND THE KIDS: This scene explores with humor and truthfulness the everyday hassles encountered by a harassed mother trying to get her children to eat their supper, do their homework, get to bed, and get up and off to school in the morning.

CALL THAT DANCING?: A song and dance argument about whose way is the best way. Each of the four actors demonstrates his/her style of dancing as the only way to dance. They are all very exaggerated. The last dancer also sings, which starts a new argument as to what really is singing.

THE VISIT: In this piece the old joke about the two friends who visit each other at the same time is carried to an extreme. They miss each other again and again, finally waiting at one another's houses for an entire year.

FAR, FAR AWAY: A fantasy piece which celebrates nature's cycle and the power of the sun. The characters are night, stars, snow, sun, wind, the figure of doom, and a human being.
SCENES FROM MY HORSE IS WAITING

HAND'S OFF! DON'T TOUCH! An audience participation piece in which the tables are turned on an indiscriminate butterfly and flower collector. Aided by the children in the audience, a butterfly and flower escape the collector's clutches. When a lion enters and tries to catch the man, he also uses the children to help him escape.

MINUTE MOVIES: This was a series of quick vignettes or black-out scenes done in front of a giant paper box background. It included the following six scenes.

THE PILL: A man takes a pill for his headache and shrinks down to about two feet high. The woman calls the doctor. When the doctor says he is not making house calls, the woman solves her own problem by taking a pill herself and shrinking down to her husband's size.

FIRE MAGUIRE: The fireman tells Mr. Maguire that his house is on fire and the tension builds as the fireman calls for his equipment and Mr. Maguire calls out about his family and possessions. Suddenly he stops, realizing that he is not Mr. Maguire.

BIG BOY: Two women discuss a baby in cliched terms such as "He certainly is a big boy," and "He's growing by leaps and bounds." This is a visual joke in which three actors portray the boy with their heads, hands, and legs sticking out from the background box, so that the boy appears to be about ten feet tall.

THE CITY: Two people walking in a city street talk about the city using all of the cliches about feeling hemmed in, pressed down, etc. As they walk the cardboard box city is literally pressing them to the ground.

THE SUBWAY: Rush hour in the subway. Judy cannot get off at her own stop but is carried off at another stop.

THE APARTMENT: Judy is in her new empty apartment fantasizing about how she would like to furnish it. The other actors become the furnishings she describes.

HORACE: This piece was adapted from a book by Alice M. Coats. The characters in this story are a narrator, a lovable pet bear named Horace, and a large family of paper boxes, with Ma and Pa being the only "peopled" boxes. One by one Horace eats up the members of his paper family. Pa is furious each time, but always forgives Horace, until finally no one is left but Horace.

DEEDLE, DEEDLE, DEEDLE: An audience participation piece in which three conductors disagree as to how a piece of music should be done. Each one teaches the children to sing the song his way. Finally a fourth person stops the argument by arriving at a perfect compromise which uses some of each person's song. They all wait to their song.

SCENES FROM GUFFAWHAW

GUFFAWHAW: A thirty minute drama which begins with the witches of Salem being expelled. They ride off on a horse but Witch Hazel soon loses her friends. Witch Hazel then goes on a long journey. She is beset by many Indians, bears, and witch hunters. She finally turns herself into a tree in order to escape. Many years later the town of Guffawhaw is founded around the tree. Eventually Witch Hazel gets angry at all of the young lovers who carve their initials in her tree and she puts a curse on the town so that no one can ever get married there. Many years later Slow Jim Pitch comes to town, falls in love with Dancy Bright, and through a dream discovers how to break the witch's curse. Witch Hazel's friends come by on a modern train and they are off to new adventures. Very innovative staging.

MOLLY WIGGLE: A song piece about a silly family composed of Molly Wiggle, her husband, Mr. Straight, and their daughter, Minnie Shake.
CONVERSATIONS: A grouping of humorous imaginary conversations between closely related objects. Each conversation involves a conflict of interest: the pickle does not want to get in the jar with the other pickles; the foot is uncomfortable in the shoe; the can does not want to be opened by the can-opener; the hamburger enjoys the sensuous blanket of catsup so much she forgets the mouth is about to eat her; the ice cream is melting on the cone; the hammer keeps missing the nail who mocks him; and the dog tries to keep his unruly fleas under control.

SHOES: A dance number in which a couple with giant cardboard box shoes enter dancing. They have some trouble avoiding each other's big feet. Enter a couple with little cardboard box shoes, dancing very nimbly. They trade partners and everyone dances well.

SCENES FROM DANDELION

INTRODUCTION AND BEFORE: The players introduce themselves and, with the help of cardboard props, they take the children back in time . . . way back to the beginning of the world.

EARTHSHAKE: A dance to narration and music. An actor, enclosed in a giant, paper bag dances the beginning of the world and the formation of the earth.

TOO MANY FISHES: A dance and song number in which the fish pond gets overcrowded and Charlie, the fish, is forced out of the pond to become a frog (in a mere million years).

DINOSAUR: A giant 15-foot long paper bag painted with a dinosaur skeleton enters. The actor inside the bag opens a window and narrates a piece about how the dinosaur became extinct.

DANDELION: An audience participation song number. The cast tries, over and over, to explain the life-cycle to Judy, who just doesn't get it. They use the following examples: the dandelion, the cat-kitten, the chicken-egg, the caterpillar-butterfly, the frog-egg-tadpole, and the mother-child. The audience helps them sing the song.

NATURE'S WAYS: A three part number about how nature works in mysterious ways to protect and propagate the various species. In Part I, a mother duck, a mother turtle, and a mother fish compare their methods of caring for their children. In Part II, the bird eats the caterpillar. This is done in pantomime with cardboard puppets in front of brightly colored cardboard scenery. In Part III, the mother pheasant escapes the fox with the help of her husband. She uses her protective coloring to hide while the male pheasant uses his bright colors to attract the fox.

LETTUCE: This skit shows in a humorous way how the monkeys adapted to their environment and evolved into bi-pedal creatures (with the implication left that they eventually evolved into man).

DARK SKIN, LIGHT SKIN: This skit is a visual explanation of how the various racial characteristics evolved. In this skit, the actors are covered with paper cut-outs in the shape of human figures that change colors and features as they adapt to the various climatic conditions on earth.

ON THE ROAD TO CULTURE: This skit shows how people invented "culture" as they needed it to meet the demands of their environment. In this skit, a cave lady is walking along. As she walks along, she encounters various life-threatening situations and she responds by inventing something to get herself out of them. Done with narration, music, pantomime, and dialogue.

BOW WOW: An audience participation piece about the invention of language. The actors are a cave family who try to leave messages for one another through the audience. After many hilarious mix-ups, they finally invent a written language in order to communicate more effectively.

REPRISE: The play ends with a reprise of the audience participation song DANDELION.
ROCKS: A former ending in which the rocks, who have seen all and yet remain unchanged themselves, sing about the changes they have seen.

SCENES FROM HOT FEET

HOT FEET: In this opening song number, the actors sing the song "Hot Feet" while moving across the stage a seemingly endless roll of paper on which are painted giant feet in hot pink, red, and orange. In the end, the paper engulfs the actors.

SANDWICH: In this scene, a woman gets carried away when she orders a sandwich and the waiter enters carrying a giant Claus Oldenberg-style sandwich. A comic scene evolves from this situation.

PLUMBER: This scene is an audience participation number and a tightly-plotted mini-drama which lasts about 15 minutes. Mrs. Miller, beset by leaky plumbing, menaced by a giant puddle personified by an actor, enlists the help of the children to call the plumber. Now Mrs. Miller is beset by an ever-increasing puddle of water and the plumber who destroys, one by one, her kitchen sink, her bathtub, and her shower.

LITTLE LITTER: A dramatic dance number with no dialogue. A street cleaner and two well-dressed, respectable litterers perform a kind of ballet or Chinese scarf dance with long rolls of wax paper.

TELEPHONE: A short scene which conveys the annoyance of recorded telephone messages and the futility of arguing with them.

MOVE OVER: A song and dance number in two scenes which conveys the problems of always getting pushed and shoved in the city. Scene one is at the grocery store and scene two is at the beach. In the end, a giant beach ball pushes all the people off the beach. It, in turn, is kicked off the beach by an even more gigantic foot.

THAT'S GOOD, THAT'S GOOD: An audience participation number. In this scene, Judy is paralyzed by exams and she uses the children in the audience to help her get all A's. When the teacher finds out he changes her A's to F's. Just then an alligator who has escaped from the zoo enters. The teacher is immobilized by this real life crisis, but Judy uses her common sense to save them both.

PAINTINGS: In this number three separate scenes are narrated and drawn to musical accompaniment. A large brown paper easel covers the stage and the paper is turned over to a musical interlude between the scenes. "Snow" is a simple story about an old woman on her way home who encounters a snow storm and loses her way. Her husband puts a light in the window to help her find her way home. One actor narrates the scenes, one actor paints the scene, two actors play the old man and woman. The painted "snow" covers not only the background easel, but the paper costumes on the old man and woman as well.

In "Summer Is Here" a narrator describes the approach of summer. Each actor paints one part of summer—blue sky, green grass, yellow sun, and flowers. As summer gets closer, the drawings get bigger and bigger, filling the canvas when "summer is here." The remaining scene is chosen from three other scenes: "Pigeons," a story about three pigeons in search of their daily food in Manhattan; "Migratory Birds," a story in which three migratory birds start out at the North Pole and migrate south past various landmarks; and "Genesis," a reading of the creation from the Bible.

HANDBALL: A nonverbal transition piece in which a giant cardboard hand chases a giant cardboard ball. The ball is caught and one line of dialogue "Got It" ends the scene.

FEET TREAT: A giant paper foot, topped by a tiny actor's head, is tickled. The head laughs.

PUZZLE: A nonverbal dance piece in which each of the four actors carried two giant brightly colored cardboard pieces—one attached to each hand. The four actors do a dance together and the dance ends up with them all fitting their cardboard pieces together in a giant puzzle.
LOST AND FOUND: Two street ladies are dressed to the nines in cardboard and paper trash-can costumes. They turn their costumes into a tea setting, have tea, help a young street musician, lose their treasures to the trash man, rescue them from the dump, and dress up again.

COME ON OVER: In this scene Irving lives in a cardboard apartment beset by many problems—no heat, no food, no furniture, not much room. One by one the various players invite themselves over, turning all of the negatives into positives—they can lose weight, etc.

DAISY: A lyric daydream song about a little girl who is wandering around missing something. She finds a balloon tied to a string, takes the string, and floats away. The scene is enacted with giant cardboard puppets manipulated by the actors.

SCENES FROM I WON'T TAKE A BATH

KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK: A long opening number in which boxes and giant paper bags are preset on stage with actors hidden in them. They suddenly begin to chase one another and the scene evolves as a series of jokes grow one out of another all connected by the refrain, "Knock, knock, knock, anybody home?"

COOKIES: A scene in which Judy narrates the story and draws all of the scenery and action on a giant paper easel. Aunt Judy bakes some cookies and her visiting nieces and nephews steal the cookies and eat them all. Aunt Judy teaches them a lesson without the usual moral platitudes about stealing.

THE KINGS: A nonverbal dance piece in which four kings parade. The actors enter as one king, split into two kings, and then into four kings. They dance and then one by one merge into one king again.

BLOWN OFF THE BILLBOARD: A tightly structured little mini-drama. An urban fantasy in which a giant pair of lips is blown off a billboard. She runs away in search of adventure, pursued by two sign-painters who want to put her back on the billboard. She is befriended by a street-wise pile of garbage from Queens and a walking, talking, singing, tutti-fruity ice-cream cone.

BOX TALK: A short scene in which two boxes meet, get acquainted, argue, make-up, get married, exit and re-enter with baby boxes.

NOSES: A loud argument between two actors, bedecked with giant paper bag noses, over who has the largest nose. The audience joins in the argument.

BICYCLE RACE: A mimed piece done to music, narration, and sound effects. The four actors enter with large pieces of cardboard covered with white paper, draw bicycles on the paper, and proceed to have a mimed bicycle race. The audience becomes the crowd watching the race, the underdog.

AUNT SALLY AND THE BEAR: In this scene, the scenery and the characters are all giant paper bag puppets worn by the actors. A very complex plot in which a mother and a daughter go to visit Aunt Sally, leaving the family dog, Byron, behind. A bear escapes from the zoo pursued by a zookeeper, but it is the little girl, and her dog (who has followed them) who save the day.

SUBWAY SQUASH: In the first part of this scene, mimed to narration and music, the four actors create the Monday morning rush-hour in the subway. The four subway riders are squashed together into a permanently intertwined quadruple existence. In the second part of this scene, done in dialogue, they discover how to cope with their new condition.

I WON'T TAKE A BATH: An audience participation piece in which a bathtub and a bar of soap, who take their jobs very seriously, try to persuade a recalcitrant boy to take a bath. The boy is not convinced until his mother (a 25 foot tall cardboard giant) enters, whereupon he jumps quickly into the tub. The audience takes sides for or against baths.
A GHOST STORY: An audience participation piece in which a ghost story is told with the help of the children in the audience. Through a mistake the ghost's best friend is turned into a series of vegetables and finally restored. When the ghosts leave, the narrator decides to make vegetable soup with the leftovers.

A LONG, LONG DRESS: Two women are wrapped together in a long, long dress which is like a scroll in which they are the ends. As one unrolls the other rolls up. Try as they might, they cannot separate, so they meet at the middle, and decide to go from there.

THE REAL ME: Two awkward, shy young people dance together very properly. Each fears the other would never love their less proper side—the "real me." In turn, they literally demonstrate this cruder, ruder, wilder side of their personalities. Delighted with each other, they turn once again into the meek, mild, couple.

BATHUB: A vaudeville-style song and dance number. The actors hold cardboard costumes and dance behind them. In this song, everything the mother does to the baby, the baby does to the kitty. This is fine until the bathtub enters and its time to give the baby a bath.

SCENES FROM EVERYBODY, EVERYBODY

EVERYBODY, EVERYBODY: The opening number consists of four scenes linked by the song "Everybody, everybody, thinks they're doing it right." The actions of the skits shows different ways of greeting one another, different eating habits, different concepts of beauty, and different ways of resolving conflicts.

A LOT ALIKE: The two actors illustrate the differences and similarities between an American Indian from earlier days and a modern American businessman. They do this by drawing pictures of themselves, their families, and the things they value most.

LA, LA: One actor after another saunters on stage singing the same tune, then Judy appears, singing off-key.

A VERY LITTLE HOUSE: The four actors live in a tiny apartment together—in fact, in a refrigerator carton. In a tightly choreographed song-and-dance number, they "manage very well" exercising, showering, dressing, eating, etc. together in such a small place. Then the landlord raises the rent and they go off to look for an even smaller apartment.

LA, LA, LA: A reprise of LA, LA in which the audience joins in.

DAZZLING: A man waits for a woman to go to a party. She arrives dressed to the teeth in a flour sack, paper cape, and so forth. The man is horrified that she is not wearing gloves and delighted when she dons a pair of men's work gloves.

BIG COUNTRY: In this scene a narrator describes the growth of the U.S.A. from East Coast to West Coast, from horse to covered wagon to train to jet plane. The actors illustrate this piece both by building the scenes with boxes and by becoming the various types of transportation.

COW: An actress milks a cardboard cow and gets a cardboard carton of milk.

I'M FROM CHICAGO: An American Indian woman from days gone by and a modern American woman compare ways of caring for babies.

SCOOP: An actor pushes a "magic" box around the stage, scooping up and depositing actors in various frozen positions. The effect is partly magical and partly like the children's game "statues."

*These descriptions based on a handout of The Paper Bag Players.
BIG BURGER: A typical American family goes on a trip to the Grand Canyon. On their way they meet a talking sign who lures them on a search for their "Dream Hamburger Come True." When they finally find it, they unwrap and unwrap the enormous burger only to find a very ordinary tiny one inside mounds and mounds of paper.

STUNT: Judy is a cardboard cutout ballerina who does beautiful but physically impossible tricks.

THE BEST OF FRIENDS: A song story of a bossy woman with no friends who learns to mend her ways with the help of a talking crow and a little boy.

SCENES FROM GRANDPA

OPENING: In four opening scenes the company illustrates the concept of how one's perspective changes as one gets older. The scenes are tied together with the song "Must be getting older."

WORRYING: Two babies in a hospital nursery have a conversation. One is calm and content. The other is about to go home and is hysterically worried about all the changes that are going to take place in his life. The nurses are giant 10' high cardboard cutouts, the babies stand behind bassinets with just their heads showing.

STOLEN SNEAKERS: In this scene, most of the scenery and much of the action is drawn on paper. Maggie has hidden Virgil's sneakers and he has cornered her in a tree hoping to get her to tell him where they are. Judy's friends try to help her get down while Virgil tries to keep her in the tree. Eventually a compromise is reached.

A LONG LONG STORY (CHALK TALK): In this scene the narrator tells the story of a man's life and illustrates it by drawing on a chalk board. The man starts out living alone. Gradually his life fills up with a wife, children, and so forth. As time passes, however, all of these things and people disappear from his life and he is left as he was in the beginning, alone, reading a newspaper.

CHANGING: A vaudeville-style routine of the theme song "Changing." The two actresses enter behind two cardboard cutouts painted like children. They travel across the stage singing. They then open up the cutouts to reveal their cutouts of two grandmas and children. They repeat their routine and song with appropriate voice changes.

IT'S JUST NOT FAIR: An audience participation number which illustrates the different perspectives of a mother and a child. The audience is made to see both points of view and to sing along with both the mother and the child "It's just not fair."

BUBBLE GUM: A short transition piece. A little girl enters with a giant wad of pink bubble gum on her shoe. She calls for help to get the gum off her shoe and a large mouth enters, removes the gum, and exits chewing it, pursued by the little girl who wants her gum back.

WHEN YOU ARE OLDER: A scene between a mother and a son. The mother's standard answer to her son whenever he asks her when he can do something is "When you are older." The son turns the tables on the mother by using the same response to such questions as "When are you going to do your homework?"

A GREAT BIG KISS: A vaudeville-style routine. Enter a little baby and her big daddy. They shuffle-dance across the stage while the daddy sings, "Let the little baby give her great big daddy a great big kiss." Then the baby’s tiny cardboard costume extends to reveal long legs. As she stands up, her daddy shrinks down. They go across the stage again, this time with the daughter singing, (in a deep sexy voice) "Let the great big baby give her little daddy a great big kiss."

MUZZBEE: A song and dance audience participation piece. In several scenes a bee is able to point out to the other characters that they "Muuzbee getting older."
OLD FRIENDS: A woman calls three friends to get them together, but the first time they can all make it is 25 years later. To music, they all age twenty five years on stage. They keep their appointment. This time they begin by mouthing the cliches that they haven’t changed a bit but end up admitting that they have all changed a great deal. This leads into a reprise of “Changing.”

MR. KURTZ: A scene which shows how city neighborhoods and buildings keep changing just like people. The scene is set in one store which becomes over time, Mr. Kurtz’ shirt store, Rosie Katz’ hat store, Mike’s bike store, and Mr. Frisch’s fish store. The same woman comes to the store, first as a little girl, then as a young woman, then as a mother, and finally as an old woman.

SCENES FROM MAMA’S GOT A JOB

THE BEST OF FRIENDS: An opening number in which the audience is asked to join in a song.

TWO FRIENDS: Two friends share a cup of coffee (which they each pull out of their coat pockets). Judy (who is very short) invites James (who is very tall) over to her house (which is a tiny, thin cardboard box). James squeezes in, finds the house a perfect fit, stands up, and walks off with the house.

TWINS: Two sets of giant paper bag puppet twins dance together.

BANANAS: A vaudeville-style song, dance, and dialogue number with audience participation. Three hillbillies enter a song competition. They get the audience to help them sing their song, “I’m Going Bananas,” and the governor gets the audience to help judge the contest.

WRAP AROUND: One after another, the actors get trapped inside a roll of brown corrugated paper. The last actor is left on stage seemingly trapped forever. Mysterious music starts and the paper begins to move, becoming a kind of living sculpture. Finally the actor is freed.

HOMEWORK: In a monologue, a boy does his English assignment to write a 200 word essay about his father. The father mimics the composition.

NOISES: A song and dance number illustrating how the noises in a city apartment building can “drive you crazy.”

DISCO SKATOE: A giant cardboard boy on skates is manipulated to skate to Donald’s music. As the boy gets better on the skates, he gets bolder, until he falls. In comes a tiny cardboard ambulance driven by another actor who rescues the boy, helping him up and putting a giant bandaid on his hurt knee.

THE SPELL: A little girl enters and sits down to have her lunch. There is some frightening music and a big hairy spider appears. The little girl is not frightened, however. She thinks he has a cute face. She touches the spider, breaking the spell and turning him back into a man. The girl is disappointed with the man who is very greedy and eats her lunch, so she turns him back into a spider again.

MAMA’S GOT A JOB: A longer production number in which the typical American family is threatened and sent into a “panic of helplessness” when the mother gets a job. Eventually they all learn to share the responsibility of caring for one another.
APPENDIX D

PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE PAPER BAG PLAYERS*

* Photographs are reproduced with the permission of The Paper Bag Players who retain the rights to their use and distribution.
Plate I: Early ensemble company, as listed. Promotional photo taken at improvisational session with photographer.

LEFT TO RIGHT: REMY CHARLIP, SHIRLEY KAPLAN, MARNI MAHAFFAY, IRVING BURTON, BETTY OSGOOD, DANIEL JAHN AND JUDITH MARTIN

THE PAPER BAG PLAYERS
Plate II: Original all-female performing company in "Funny Clothes" from Cut-Ups. From left: Joyce Aaron, Sudie Bond, Judith Martin, Shirley Kaplan.

Plate III: Original performing company in "The Witches Tale" (later "Laundry Day at The Castle") from Cut-Ups. From left: Judith Martin, Sudie Bond, Shirley Kaplan.
Plate IV: Betty Osgood in "The Queen's Coronation" from *Scraps*. 
Plate V: "A Dragon's Tale" from Scraps. From left: Betty Osgood as the Dragon, Irving Burton as King Ruffentuff and Gary Maxwell as King Hoppenpopup.
Plate VI: Judith Martin as the Princess and Remy Charlip as Good Prince Charlie in "A Paper Box Story" from Group Soup.
Plate VII: Judith Martin as the Princess caught in the cardboard box castle, Irving Burton as the Prince, and Betty Osgood as the Witch in "Laundry Day at the Castle" from Cut-Ups.

Plate VIII: Remy Charlip, Judith Martin, Marni Mahaffey, and Betty Osgood in "The Tree Angel" from Scraps.

Color Plate II: Judith Martin and Betty Osgood in "You're Gorgeous" from Scraps.
Plate IX: The Paper Bag Players in productions from the transitional period. Clockwise from top: "The Building and The Statue" from Fortunately; Judith Martin in "Hand's Off! Don't Touch!" from My Horse Is Waiting; cardboard players in "Horace" from My Horse Is Waiting; and Irving Burton as Ma in "Ma and the Kids" from Fortunately.

Color Plate IV: The Paper Bag Players in "Deedle, Deedle, Deedle" from Fortunately. From left: Betty Osgood, Gary Maxwell, Irving Burton, Judith Martin. Note the use of more paint and colors on the cardboard.
Plate XII: The Paper Bag Players in scenes from productions of Period III. Clockwise, from left: Judith Martin and Pilar Garcia in "Lost and Found" from Hot Feet; Adrienne Doucette in "Cow" from Everybody, Everybody; and Judith Martin in "Blown Off The Billboard" from I Won't Take A Bath.
Color Plate V: The Paper Bag Players in "Puzzle" from Hot Feet, performed outdoors, summer 1969. Note the use of black costumes still and the cardboard with very little paint.

Color Plate VI: A later version of "Puzzle" from Hot Feet. Note the change to brown costumes and brightly colored cardboard.
Plate XIII: The Wax Paper Dance in "Little Litter" From Hot Feet.
Plate XIV: "I Won't Take a Bath" from I Won't Take A Bath. An example of the use of large-scale cardboard cut-outs.
Plate XV: "Aunt Sally Shakes the House" from I Won't Take A Bath. An example of the use of large paper bag puppets which encase the actors. Note the house which is a paper bag puppet also.
Plate XVI: "Big Country" from Everybody, Everybody. An example of how the props, in this case a covered wagon and horse, can be animated by the actors.
Plate XVII: Scenes from Everybody, Everybody. Left: Irving Burton and Douglas Norwick in "A Lot Alike." An example of on-stage drawing, in this case on cardboard perioktoi. Right: Judith Martin and Irving Burton in "I'm From Chicago." An example of a mixture of cardboard and real prop and costume pieces.
Color Plate VII: Judith Martin and Irving Burton in "Fat and Thin" from Everybody, Everybody. An example of the company's later use of brightly painted cardboard costumes.

Color Plate VIII: "Nature's Ways" from a later production of Dandelion. An example of the use of brighter costumes and painted cardboard scenery.
Color Plate IX: The Paper Bag Players in "A Very Little House" from Everybody, Everybody. From left: Judith Martin, Irving Burton, Virgil Roberson, Jeanne Michols. This represents the height of the use of color by The Paper Bag Players.
Plate XVIII: Irving Burton and Jeanne Michols in scenes from *Grandpa*. Clockwise from top: "Can You Tell Me What Happened To Kurtz?"; "A Great Big Kiss"; and "It's Just Not Fair."

The Paper Bag Players enact a scene from "Grandpa," one in a repertoire of skits on perspectives of different ages of people.
Plate XIX: "Stolen Sneakers" from Grandpa. From left: Irving Burton, Judith Martin, Virgil Roberson, Jeanne Michola. An example of on-stage drawing of scenery and action.
Plate XX: "Worrying" from Grandpa. An example of the oversized cardboard cut-outs.
Plate XXI: Scene from "Mama's Got A Job." From left: Carolyn Yeager, Douglas Norwick, Judith Martin, Irving Burton.
APPENDIX E

MISCELLANEOUS DOCUMENTS OF THE PAPER BAG PLAYERS
AIMS AND PURPOSES

1: To experiment, develop, create and perform original material in the field of children's theatre and to show children as well as adults working with children how to make a vital theatre by using simple ideas, materials and commonplace objects that are available to everyone.

   By working with children themselves — gathering material that is part of their own folklore, experience and sense of fun and fantasy.

   By making the theatre experience something they can feel a part of, by seeing ideas that they are genuinely involved in and situations they can closely identify with, find full expression.

   By presenting a theatre they can enjoy by identification and active audience participation.

2: To coordinate the expression of the child's needs in a totally theatrical medium so that they can enjoy dance, music, drama and the visual arts on the highest artistic level in a lively theatrical atmosphere.

3: To maintain a professional adult company whose main interest and joy is to perform for children.

4: To be part of a permanent theatre where this important experimental work may have constant viewing and continuity.

5: To make our knowledge and experience available to the general public, teachers, parents, educators and community theatres so that others working in the field may develop and flourish.

6: To have a workshop where professional artists of various fields, writers, dancers, actors, painters, designers and musicians may come together and develop techniques of a theatre art for children.

7: To further develop a lecture-demonstration workshop presentation for educational schools and teachers colleges.

8: To continue to give special free performances for hospitals, underprivileged children and homes for the aged, and eventually become part of a regular school program and have a permanent place that would be available to a school system so that an artistic theatrical experience can be part of every child's education.
Two Versions of "Red and Checkers" from GROUP SOUP

VERSION I

RED: CHECKERS!
CHECKERS: RED!
RED: That hat is simply stunning.
CHECKERS: You like it?
RED: Oh yes, I think that's the best hat I ever saw.
CHECKERS: Well why don't you take it. Here...
RED: It's a present?
CHECKERS: Yeh sure.
RED: Try mine.
CHECKERS: Thank you. Oh that's beautiful.
RED: I love this.
CHECKERS: Hey I like your scarf.
RED: You like this scarf?
CHECKERS: Yes I think it's terrific.
RED: Let me give it to you.
CHECKERS: Here let's trade.
RED: This is good.
CHECKERS: That's very nice.
RED: Those gloves, they're the last word. Oh they're great. I love those gloves.
CHECKERS: Here take them.
RED: See if these fit you.
CHECKERS: They're a little small.
RED: I think they'll stretch.
CHECKERS: Oh they're great. Oh you look terrific except that coat. You know it doesn't go with what you're wearing.
RED: I know. I wish we could change coats.
CHECKERS: Well sure, let's change coats.
RED: Change coats?
CHECKERS: Oh boy... and you know another thing, I've always like your name. RED...I think it's so beautiful.
RED: You like the name Red? I don't like it. REDDDD Sounds awful. I like the name Checkers.
CHECKERS: Oh no RED is so poetic, Red.
RED: I like the name Checkers...that's a cute name.
CHECKERS: Well let's trade names.
RED: Call me Checkers?
CHECKERS: Call me Red!
RED: Thanks Red.
CHECKERS: Goodbye Checkers.
RED: So long Red......

VERSION II

RED: CHECKERS!
CHECKERS: RED!
RED: Say that's a great hat.
CHECKERS: You like this hat?
RED: Oh yes, it's great.
CHECKERS: I like your hat.
RED: BOTH: Let's trade.
CHECKERS: Say Red I like your scarf.
RED: I like your scarf.
CHECKERS: Let me give it to you.
RED: Here let's trade.
CHECKERS: Those gloves, they're the last word. Oh they're great. I love those gloves.
RED: Here take them.
CHECKERS: See if these fit you.
RED: They're a little small.
CHECKERS: I think they'll stretch.
RED: Oh you look terrific except that coat. You know it doesn't go with what you're wearing.
CHECKERS: That's a keen jacket.
RED: That's a keen jacket.
CHECKERS: Let's trade.
RED: Say Red, I like your name. Red...
CHECKERS: I think it's so beautiful.
RED: You like the name Red? I don't like it. REDDDD Sounds awful. I like the name Checkers.
CHECKERS: Oh no RED is so poetic, Red.
RED: You like the name Red? I like the same Checkers...
CHECKERS: Well let's trade names.
RED: Call me Checkers?
CHECKERS: Call me Red!
RED: Call me Red! So long Checkers.
CHECKERS: So long Red......
Sample Notes on Stage Movement

Sample 1: Note how each movement is counted out exactly and timed to the beat of the music.

![Diagram](image1)

Sample 2: Note how exacting and precise the movement patterns are.

![Diagram](image2)
APPENDIX F

EDUCATIONAL EXTENSIONS OF THE WORK OF

THE PAPER BAG PLAYERS

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Some Samples of Educational Extensions

Hand-outs for Teachers.—One of the most direct ways the company uses to extend their performances immediately is by hand-outs given out either preceding, at, or after those performances. Sometimes study guides are given to the teachers either to help them prepare the children for the performance or to suggest follow-up activities. The company has always kept such hand-outs simple, with the belief that teachers will be more apt to read and therefore to use them if they are limited to one page.

A Sample Teaching Guide

Teaching Guide for HOT FEET

Background Information: The Paper Bag Players are a theatre group who, as their name implies, use paper bags as props, scenery, and costumes (they also use cardboard boxes, and other papers.) Their shows combine music, dance, and funny routines.

Language Arts:
We suggest that many of the ideas used in our play be used as a study plan, for we have found that if the audience is acquainted with the subject matter before they see the show, they are more likely to grasp the wit and fun of The Paper Bag Players theatrical treatment.

EVERYBODY, EVERYBODY: Each of us has special likes and dislikes. What happens when we are not tolerant of each other's differences?

PLAYER, PLUNKER: Think about how dependent we are on sinks, bathtubs, and showers. What would you do if they all broke on the same day?

BUILDING AND THE STATUS: How do we treasure our important buildings and landmarks? Where are they in your city? Is there a landmark preservation society in your city? What do you know about it?

MOVE OVER: All of us are pushed and shoved in our everyday life. How do you handle it? How can we make crowded situations more pleasant?

LITTLE LITTER: Are you careful about disposing of litter in your neighborhood? Who is responsible for keeping your streets clean?

THAT'S GOOD: Sometimes students can help teachers solve problems. Can you think of examples?

WRAP AROUND: Sometimes it helps to anticipate a solution to a problem before acting upon it. What problems have you avoided by thinking ahead?

FORTUNATELY: Most situations have a good side and a bad side. Think about one example from your life. What were the good effects and the bad effects?

After the Play:
Use the situations from the above dialogues for dramatic improvisations.

One of the main objectives of The Paper Bag Players is to say to children and teachers — You Can Do It Too! Plan a 10 to 15 minute play using paper and cardboard for costumes and base it on one of the experiences that you discussed. Don't plan to share it with others at first — emphasize the joy of creating dramatically — and the concept that the process is more important than the product.
Hand-outs For Children.—One of the simplest and most delightful extensions of their work are the hand-outs the company gives to the children in the audience. Programs or flyers often take the form of masks or puppets that the children can use after the performance. Often the programs have taken the form of a paper bag; such paper bag programs may even have inserts, such as suggestions for making a puppet out of the bag, or the lyrics and music to the songs in that production.

A SAMPLE PAPER BAG PUPPET PROGRAM

THE PAPER BAG PLAYERS
ARE BACK IN TOWN!!!

JUDITH MARTIN • REUTY CHARLIP • DANIEL JAHN • SHIRLEY KAPLAN
BEETY OSGOOD • IRVING BURTON • MAHI MAHAFAY
EASTER WEEK AT THE LIVING THEATRE
SATURDAY APRIL 21 TO SATURDAY APRIL 28
AT 1 AND 3 P.M. (NO PERFORMANCE SUNDAY)
SPECIAL PERFORMANCE MONDAY EVENING AT 8
"SOLACE" APRIL 21 TO 25 (MONDAY MATINEES SOLD-OUT)
NEW SHOW "GROUP SOUP" APRIL 26 TO 28
TICKETS $1.75 • FOR SPECIAL GROUP RATES,
RESERVATIONS AND MAIL ORDERS CALL OR WRITE
DANIEL JAHN • 319 WEST 10 STREET • CHICAGO 3-3337
PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO THE PAPER BAG PLAYERS
BOX-OFFICE OPENS 10 A.M. SATURDAY APRIL 21
THE LIVING THEATRE • 530 6TH AVENUE • CHICAGO 3-4840
A C A M P L E  P U P P E T  M A S K  P R O C R A M

SPONSORED BY MAYOR JOHN V. LINDSAY
& URBAN ACTION TASK FORCE
& PARKS, RECREATIONAL AND
CULTURAL AFFAIRS ADMIN.
Hans Heckscher, Administrator

THE
PAPER BAG PLAYERS

Plate XXII: Children using puppet mask program, summer 1968.
The 24 Press.—As a further extension of the idea of direct handouts at the performances and in response to innumerable requests for copies of their skits, the company established the 24 press. Through the 24 press they published skits and sold them for 24 a copy after the performance. The early skits were printed on both sides of sturdy cardboard and inserted in brown paper bags. They contained the words and music for the scenes, sketches for simple sets and costumes, and suggested stage directions. The skits were designed to be used by children with minimal preparation. The first publication of the 24 press was such a cardboard hand-out of "Mans Off! Don't Touch!" (Horse). It was published in January of 1966 and by April of that year, over 5000 copies had been sold.

A SAMPLE 24 PRESS PUBLICATION

MA AND THE KIDS
BY JUDITH MARTIN

INTRODUCTION

The skits are in a side. Each one is separate and
entirely different in a unique point tone.

CHARLIE

MA

BETTY

AND

JUDY

KIDS

The skits are put together to make one side. Each side is in the order given below.

MA

BETTY

AND

JUDY

KIDS

The skits are inserted in brown paper bags and sold for 24 a copy. The skits are printed on both sides of sturdy cardboard and inserted in brown paper tags. They contain the words and music for the scene, sketches for a simple set, and suggested stage directions. The skits were designed for children with minimal preparation.

MA

BETTY

AND

JUDY

KIDS

A SAMPLE 24 PRESS PUBLICATION

MA

BETTY

AND

JUDY

KIDS

Originally printed on both sides of 8" x 11" white poster board.
The Paper Bag Lobby.—The point of the hand-outs and publications done by the company is to reinforce the idea that children can themselves do what the company does. Most of the extensions discussed so far, however, were in written and therefore cognitive form. One attempt to provide a hands-on activity to reinforce the creative model demonstrated by the company was The Paper Bag lobby, established in 1974. For their major New York productions, the company would transform the lobby of the theatre into a cardboard and paper environment where children could play before and after the performance. They began by covering the walls of the lobby with brown paper and attaching crayons and colored chalk to them to make "graffiti walls" where children could draw, doodle, and write. The company then filled the lobby with a paper bag and box playground for the children which at various times included the following: a large cardboard village with play houses and make-believe stores [made out of boxes]; a paper box maze which children could crawl through, over, and under; paper box cars to drive around in; peep hole theatres inside boxes; oversized games such as hopscotch marked out on the floor; colored tape leading from riddles to their answers; a shadow screen theatre set up for children to do their own shadow plays; and colorful paper box monster costumes for dress up. In the background Donald Ashwander's lively music provided a mood for play.

In this paper environment, children could experience directly and immediately the joy of playing and creating with paper and cardboard boxes. The idea was very successful and the company continued it for several years for their major New York shows. When they toured, they encouraged local groups such as Junior Leagues, PTA's, Girl Scouts, and so forth to construct the Paper Bag Lobby.
Extensions Beyond Performance: Working With Children

Workshops With Children.—The company has always been interested in providing a good role model to teachers in how to work creatively with children using dance and drama. Though they do this primarily through their performances, they have also worked directly with children in the schools.

During the mid to late sixties, particularly, the company members did a number of workshops with children in the schools. Usually the children would already have seen a free Bags' production when they came into their classrooms. Sometimes the company would do workshops together in a classroom, but more often they would each work in individual classrooms. For the most part, however, having the company members themselves work directly with one class of children was limited, dependent on grant money to support such work and on the limited time of the company members. More often, the teachers and the children in a school would develop their own creative work inspired by performances of the company.

The Paper Bag Festival.—At The Paper Bag Festival, an event of the mid-sixties, children from a number of schools in New York city got together to perform their own skits inspired by the work of The Paper Bag Players. The original impetus for the Festival came from one school, P.S. 108 in East Harlem. Judith Martin recalls a teacher from that school calling the company one day to invite them to a performance of The Madison Avenue Paper Bag Players. When the company went to the school, they found a lively troupe of Junior Paper Baggers who did both original skits and their versions of the company's skits. She remembers both the child audience and the Bags "laughing their sides off" at a Spanish version of "Mama and the Kids" with an irate Spanish mother slapping her kids around and chasing them all over the stage (Interview, June 1979).

Martin then had the idea to get kids from all over Manhattan together who were doing their own work inspired by the Bags and to hold a festival at which they could share their work. An invitation was sent
out to selected Manhattan schools (selected to provide ethnic and socio-economic diversity) inviting them to participate in the first Paper Bag Festival. All of the children who participated in the Festival had already seen free performances by The Paper Bag Players. In addition, members of the company gave demonstrations and workshops in their classrooms during which they stimulated ideas, helped the children give form and structure to their ideas, and gave practical advice on the children's props and costumes. In all, the company gave twenty-one such classroom workshops in preparation for the first festival.

At the Festival, which was sponsored by the East Harlem Committee for Community Planning, The Paper Bag Players performed several short skits and the children performed their skits for one another. For most of these children, it was their first experience at creating and performing a play. The children's work was successful because they used the Bags' style merely as a take-off point to create their own material. For Martin and the other company members, the thrill of the festival was an understanding of how their work could really spark children's own creativity. Martin recalls that even when they did versions of the company's skits, they were "such humorous and wonderful translations of this material to their own world." She recalls, for example, a grand-scale adaptation of "Hands Off! Don't Touch!" which employed a cast of about 100. In this black and Spanish version, the flowers were African daisies doing a hot black dance number; the butterflies, gorgeously attired in colorful paper bag tutus (girls and boys), performed a ballet; and the hunter was "a Razz-Ma-Tazz Spanish Harlem type" (Interview, June 1979).

In addition to the performances, the children created an exhibit of paper constructions, paper and cardboard statues, paper box masks, and art work all inspired by the work of The Paper Bag Players. Martin recalls that the most original work of the festival was a series of huge paper sculptures done by the students of an art teacher from P.S. 42. At the second Festival the members of the audience also participated in a parade wearing their own paper bag costumes. And of course, they all brought paper bag lunches.
Plate XXIII: A classroom workshop with The Paper Bag Players.
Plate XXIV: Children in classroom workshop
Publication for Children.—It was a natural extension of the press for the company to begin to publish for a wider audience of children. As early as 1962-1963, Remy Charlip and Judith Martin collaborated on two books for children, "Jumping Beans," and "The Tree Angel." They were published both in hardback (Alfred A. Knopf) and in paper back (Scholastic Books). These books included simple suggestions for the staging of these stories as plays by children.

The Scholastic publications, which are distributed through schools, was an ideal system through which the company could reach large numbers of children directly. Their short plays for children were all reprinted in various Scholastic magazines (see bibliography). Numerous short articles, all written by Judith Martin, were also published by Scholastic between 1962 and 1975. Most of them are simple short articles designed to stimulate the children's imaginations, to encourage them to use paper and common materials, and to urge them to put on their own homemade plays.

Publications for Parents and Educators.—The company naturally attempted to reach a wider audience of parents and teachers too, publishing articles and plays in Parent's Magazine, a variety of women's magazines, Sunday magazine newspaper supplements, church magazines, and numerous teacher's publications (see bibliography). Many original short plays designed to be performed by children were published by Martin in women's magazines. Many of them were written especially for holiday celebrations, such as Christmas, Halloween, and other holidays.

Many other articles do not contain scripts but rather focus on how children can do plays from the ideas and materials around them. In fact, the aim of all of the articles published in these magazines is to show those who work with children both the value of playmaking for children and the simplicity and ease with which children can do plays. What Martin often does, is to give parents in very simple language the rationale and benefits of using the creative dramatics approach with children. Even when a script is included, it is very simple and suggested ways to change it are always included. Plays are illustrated with lots of drawings or photographs and suggestions for simple props, scenery and costumes. The articles urge parents and educators to allow, expect, and encourage children to create their own plays and to create with material
APPENDIX G

DISSERTATIONS AND WORKS IN PROGRESS IN

CHILDREN'S THEATRE, A LISTING


* Excluding all studies in the area of creative dramatics and drama in education.


DISSEMINATIONS IN PROGRESS IN CHILDREN'S THEATRE


Farmer, Katherine J. "Developmental Considerations in Children's Theatre." Brigham Young University, 1979.


APPENDIX H

CHILDREN'S THEATRE STATISTICS
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FAMILIARITY OF TITLES*</td>
<td>74% familiar/semi-familiar titles 26% unfamiliar titles</td>
<td>45% familiar/semi-familiar titles 55% unfamiliar titles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOURCE OF PLAY**</td>
<td>82% derivative 18% original</td>
<td>48% derivative 51% original</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BREAKDOWN OF ORIGINS OF DERIVATIVE PLAYS</td>
<td>Source</td>
<td>% of Derived</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>自有 tales et al.</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classic Literature</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADDITIONAL STATISTICS:</td>
<td>Set in Modern Times or Deal with Modern Concept such as evolution: Plays by Charlotte Chorpenning: Innovative Staging Noted:</td>
<td>8% modern setting or theme 22% Charlotte Chorpenning plays 33% innovative staging noted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Familiar titles include titles most parents would have heard, such as "Cinderella," "The Wizard of Oz," and so forth. Semi-familiar titles include plays where the title or author is still a big draw. This category included titles with familiar-sounding fantasy elements, such as "The Land of the Dragon" and the less familiar titles of famous authors such as "The Thirteen Clocks" by James Thurber. Unfamiliar titles are those titles most people would never have heard, such titles as "Radio Rescue" and "The Japanese Twins."

**Derivative plays are those based on another source, the most common sources being the following categories: (1) fairy tales, folk tales, myths, legends, fables, and so forth; (2) classic and modern literature; and (3) history and historical periods.