

Summer 2011

Direction of the Play: The House of Blue Leaves

Andrew Logan Fisher
Central Washington University

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Direction of the Play: *The House of Blue Leaves*

A Project Report
Presented to
the Graduate Faculty
Central Washington University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
Theatre Production

by
Andrew Logan Fisher
July, 2011

CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Graduate Studies

We hereby approve the project report of

Andrew Logan Fisher

Candidate for the degree of Master of Arts:

Theatre Production

APPROVED FOR THE GRADUATE FACULTY

8/1/11

Date of
Signature

Christina Barrigan
Committee Chair

9/30/11

Date of
Signature

Scott Robinson

10/1/11

Date of
Signature

Terri Brown

Please note:

The signatures have been redacted due to security reasons.

ABSTRACT

The House of Blue Leaves

Del Pizzo Performing Arts Center

Directed by

Andrew Logan Fisher

November, 2010

This project entailed the selection, background research and documentation, casting, direction, and post-production analysis of Cañon City High School's production of John Guare's *The House of Blue Leaves* by Andrew Fisher. Documentation includes research and analysis of the play and an evaluation of the play as a production vehicle for Cañon City High School.

CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Graduate Studies

Final Examination of

Andrew Logan Fisher

B.A. Adams State College, 1996

for the Degree of

Master of Arts

Theatre Production

Committee in Charge

Christina Barrigan

Scott Robinson

Terri Brown

McConnell Hall

27, July 2011

7:00 PM

Andrew Logan Fisher

Courses presented for the Master's degree

Course No.	Course Title	Number of Credits	Instructor	Quarter Completed
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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Andrew Logan Fisher

Undergraduate Study:

Adams State College, 1991-1996

Graduate Study:

Central Washington University, 2007-2011

Professional Experience:

Technical Director: 1996

High School Teacher: 2001- Present

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MASTER'S THESIS PROJECT PLAYSCRIPT APPROVAL FORM

(PLEASE MAKE SURE THAT YOU HAVE READ THE PLAY SELECTION CRITERIA SECTION IN YOUR GRADUATE HANDBOOK)

SCRIPT TITLE House of Blue Leaves

PLAYWRIGHT(S) [If musical, list lyricist/composer] John Guare

NUMBER OF ACTS 2 APPROXIMATE TOTAL PLAYING
TIME 1 HOURS 40 MIN.

CAST (fill in with the appropriate numbers)

MEN 5 WOMEN 6 CHILDREN 0 OVER 40 3

ROLES REQUIRING PEOPLE OF COLOR 0 ROLES COULD DOUBLE 0

TOTAL NUMBER OF CAST 11

OTHER CASTING CONCERNS: The role of Artie needs to be played by an actor who can play piano.

ARTISTIC STAFF (check those needed for this play or production idea)

MUSICAL DIRECTOR 1 DANCE CHOREOGRAPHER _____
FIGHT CHOREOGRAPHER _____ DIALECT COACH _____ SPECIALTY HIRE _____ (specify what kind) ORCHESTRA/BAND (specify what size) _____

Will you be fulfilling any of the above? NO If so, which? N/A

Will a guest artist be fulfilling any of the above? Yes If so, which? I will have a piano tutor for the part of Artie.

SCENERY/PROPS (check those needed for this play or your concept of the play)

UNIT SET? YES NO (CIRCLE ONE) NUMBER OF SETTINGS 2

HISTORICAL PERIOD October 4, 1965 GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION New York

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SET CONCERNS OR SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:

The biggest concern will be the kitchen. I will need to find a period refrigerator and stove. Also, a period television will need to be created or found.

APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF PROPS 60 PERIOD 10

DIFFICULT OR UNUSUAL PROPS? YES NO (CIRCLE ONE) DESCRIBE:

The pop top Coke cans will be tough. The New York Post newspaper will have to be created or copied. Box of Corn Flakes will also need to be recreated.

WEAPONS OR FIREARMS? HOW MANY 2 DESCRIBE: I will need a gun for the Military Policeman. I will also need a bomb.

COSTUMES (CHECK THOSE NEEDED FOR THIS PLAY OR YOUR CONCEPT OF THE PLAY)

APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF COSTUMES PER CHARACTER 2

HISTORICAL PERIOD 1965 SEASON Fall

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:

Military Policeman, Doctors whites, Choir boy outfit, and Nun outfits

JUSTIFICATION FOR CHOICE OF SCRIPT

HAVE YOU SEEN THIS SCRIPT PRODUCED? **YES** NO (CIRCLE ONE)

HAVE YOU DONE THIS PLAY BEFORE? BRIEFLY DESCRIBE YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN THE PRODUCTION:

I have not produced this show before. The only function I performed in this production was adding a light to the refrigerator.

WHY SHOULD YOUR ORGANIZATION PRODUCE THIS SCRIPT?

This show has several good attributes for Canon City High School and also for me as a director. It has comedy which always keeps the crowd engaged. It has historical significance because it is based around an actual event in history. The *House of Blue Leaves* also provides a plot that includes dramatic changes. The students will need to discover characters with multiple levels. Students will also need to develop an understanding of the period and importance of the historical event to each character. As a director it is challenging because it is not the typical comedy that I usually direct. It has the dramatic piece that will push my ability to direct and also allow me to utilize the education I have received from this Graduate Program. The community in Canon City is receptive to higher caliber performances which is what *House of Blue Leaves* represents.

WHAT ARE THE DRAWBACKS (IF ANY) TO DOING THIS PRODUCTION AT YOUR SCHOOL?

The only drawbacks to this production are the sexual references. One of the major plot elements is the affair between Bunny and Artie. Also, there are a few instances that the sex act is discussed.

PLEASE GIVE A BRIEF SYNOPSIS OF THE SCRIPT ON A SEPARATE SHEET OF PAPER AND ATTACH.

SUBMITTED BY: (Printed Name) Andrew Fisher Date

Submitted: 5/17/10

(Signature) _____

Thesis Chair Approval: Christina Barrigan Date Approved : _____

Thesis Committee Members Approval: Scott Robinson Date Approved : _____

Graduate Coordinator Approval: Scott Robinson Date Approved : _____

Please note:

The signatures have been redacted due to security reasons.

Brief Synopsis of the Script

The House of Blue Leaves by John Guare is a play about the search for fame and recognition. It opens with Artie Shaughnessy trying to play his piano at an amateur night. He is a struggling musician whose actual job is at a zoo. He wants to become a famous musician or composer. Artie is having an affair with Bunny who has worked in every job known to man on her way to become "Mrs. Famous". The only reason she is now with Artie is because she **thinks** he may have a shot at becoming famous. Artie's nemesis is his wife Bananas. Artie feels obligated to care for Bananas due to her episodes of mental illness. In reality she too is looking for recognition. She has lost Artie and is doing everything she can **think** of to get him back. After a quick look at Artie's lack of success the play moves to the interior of his apartment.

In Act I we find out the desires of each of the characters. Bunny wakes Artie and tries to convince him to bring his music down to the street so that the Pope can bless the songs. If Artie becomes famous then they can move to Hollywood together. As she is trying to convince him, Artie tells her how he has found a nice place to send Bananas. Bananas is reluctant to accept that Artie would want to place her in a mental health institution so she works towards winning back Artie by removing the threat of Bunny. Bunny begins to crack and convinces Artie to call his good friend and producer Billy Einhorn. Artie explains to Billy how he has met someone new. Artie also explains how he wants to come and visit Billy in Hollywood. Finally, Artie goes down with Bunny to see the Pope, which ends Act I.

In Act II we meet more characters and the action heats up. Ronnie, Artie and Bananas' son, explains how he has left the Army so that he can blow up the Pope. Then three nuns come in to watch the Pope on television since they missed him during the parade. The height of the action occurs when the struggle for tickets to the Pope's address at Yankee Stadium erupts.

Ronnie has to get the tickets so he can assassinate the Pope. The nuns want the tickets so that they can see the Pope in person. As they chase each other the Doctor from the mental hospital comes to take Bananas. A Military Policeman (MP) also arrives to arrest Ronnie. Finally, Billy has sent his girlfriend Corrinna for a visit to try and subdue Artie. Act II scene 1 ends with a bang as the assassination bomb goes off in the elevator killing two of the nuns and Corrinna.

The final scene starts with Billy mourning the loss of Corrinna and ends with the end of Artie's torment. Billy explains the reason why he cannot take Artie to Hollywood. Then he falls in love with Bunny's cooking and offers to take her to Australia. Artie is disheartened and is left in his same pathetic life of taking care of his wife, Bananas. And in the end he uses the only strategy he can that will allow him to become a famous musician.

The House of Blue Leaves reminds its audience how even the simple things in life are still important. The show demonstrates that even an occupation as unrewarding as a caregiver can still make someone famous in its own way. *The House of Blue Leaves* demonstrates how everyone has their place in the world. Therefore, fame and recognition may not come from being a star, they may come from just caring deeply for someone. Unfortunately, that is not enough for Artie.

CAÑON CITY HIGH SCHOOL

1313 College Avenue • Cañon City, Colorado 81212

PEOPLE TO PEOPLE: CREATING EXCELLENCE

1 June 2010

To Whom It May Concern:

Andrew Fisher has administrative approval to continue with his planned production of The House of Blue Leaves which will be performed by Canon City High School drama students during the fall of 2010. I am aware that this is part of his Master's Thesis Project and he has full permission to utilize the facilities at CCHS for this play. Since Andrew also teaches Drama classes at CCHS, he has permission to include this as a project within the curriculum of his Drama classes at Canon City High School.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bret L. Meuli
Assistant Principal
Canon City High School

Please note:

This signature has been redacted due to security reasons.

(719) 276-5870 • FAX (719) 276-5950

Clyde Tarrence
Principal

Jerry Schott
Assistant Principal

Bret Meull
Assistant Principal

Bob Trahern
Athletic Director

Mary Christensen
Guidance Director

Performance Parameters

The House of Blue Leaves will be performed during the week of November 8, 2010 through November 12, 2010. This is the week that the fall play is traditionally produced. The budget for this show will include \$700 for supplies and \$1200 for rentals. I will be the director and I will use the school accompanist for the musical instruction for the character of Artie. Auditions will begin the week of September 13, to allow for plenty of time to put the show together. There is a large Thespian troupe that includes many actors, as well as actors who are not a part of the troupe which will provide a variety of choices in casting.

The facility is the Del Pizzo Performing Arts Center, which is a 450 seat auditorium within the Cañon City High School. It has a fairly deep stage with wing space. It also includes a thrust section that extends 17 feet in front of the main curtain. Lighting the thrust is difficult due to the equipment and the position of the thrust in regards to the electrics. There currently is no way to hang down lighting on the thrust. Lighting must be done from the sides and from the front. The thrust also complicates the blocking, by requiring the action to be played to the left and right as well as to the front as you move upstage beyond the main curtain.

The auditorium is used by various groups outside and within the school. Two weeks before the performance it will be used for the staging of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* by the Fremont Civic Theatre (FCT). On November 15, 2010, the vocal music department will be presenting a fall concert. This limits the amount of set up time as well as the amount of strike. Set construction will have to be started but, will not be completed until the stage is available after the FCT has completed their strike. This does create a time crunch but there are plenty of student volunteers that will be building this set. Currently there are approximately 15 members of the stage crew and 12 members of the technical crew.

THE HOUSE OF BLUE LEAVES PRODUCTION SCHEDULE - Director: Andrew Fisher

	Preproduction	Week 1 (Sept. 13)	Week 2 (Sept. 20)
Performance	August: Script ordering, royalties and permission secured. Audition forms and parent information forms completed.	Auditions, casting, read through. Begin Character discussion.	Continue Character Discussion. General Blocking scene by scene.
Technical	July & August: Design set and create blueprints for Stage crew. Create property list. Create materials list. Find stage props. Create sound effects	Outline set with tape on stage.	Start Constructing of platforms and other large set pieces.
Marketing and Publicity	First of September: Create newsletter advertisement		Poster Design and Contact Newspaper and Radio
Facilities	May: Make sure calendar is clear. Fill out Building Use Forms		
Parents		Will receive Audition Form, fill it out and sign accepting the terms of participation	Letter to parents outlining student expectations. Ask for volunteers

This plan assumes Theatre Director

15 student workers for props, set, costumes, and stage management

12 students for sound and lights

Small Cast (11 cast) - ()

Unit set - platforms; flats from stock (need securing); Doors from stock (need Securing);

Furniture from stock and from summer finds; build platforms, counters, and 1 door frame.

Tech crew will do Tech work; Stage crew will build and manage set changes.

Parent volunteers to help with some costumes and feeding the actors before performance.

A budget of \$1900 for royalties, supplies, and party goodies

Daily rehearsal (5 days per week) for 2 hours, and rehearsals for 4 hours during tech week

History lessons and stylistic acting will be covered during first couple of weeks of rehearsal.

Production Schedule Continued:

Week 3 (Sept. 27)	Week 4 (Oct. 4)	Week 5 (Oct. 11)	Week 6 (Oct. 18)	Week 7 (Oct. 25)
Read and Walk through. Scene by Scene breakdown for Act 1	Lines Due Act 1. Scene by scene breakdown Act 2	Lines Due Act 2. Scene by scene refinement and run throughs for entire show.	Run Throughs entire show with solidifying.	Run throughs
Continue with set build and get all props ready. Start putting together sound effects.	Measurements for costumes. Get costumes found.	Make sure all props are ready for stage. Finish any large set pieces.	Finish all construction, paint what can be painted, Have everything ready for load in. Use props in rehearsal.	Re-Focus lights. Finish any odds and ends. Do fittings of costumes. Tech watch show.
Deliver Newspaper Ad	Put posters up around school and town.	Follow up on newspaper ad. Invite reporter.	Program developed.	Reporter view rehearsal. Print Programs.
	FCT	FCT	Fall Concert	
	Remind them about the upcoming show and get any volunteers.			Re-Invite Parents

Production Schedule Continued:

Week 8 (Nov. 1)	Week 9 (Nov. 8)	Week 10 (Nov.15)
Run Throughs and Dress Rehearsal	Final Dress Rehearsal, Performances, Cast Party, Strike	Evaluate, Return any items that were borrowed, Return costumes, Clean all areas.
Tech Rehearsal, include makeup during dress rehearsals	Dress Rehearsal, Performances, Strike the set.	
		Send out thank yous to newspaper and Donators
		Send out thank yous to Support staff. Pops Concert
		Thank you notes to parent volunteers.

Evaluation of *The House of Blue Leaves* as a Production Vehicle

The House of Blue Leaves is an excellent choice for Cañon City High School. Cañon City has a large performing arts community. In the high school there are approximately 250 students who participate in one of the three show choirs, the band, and the drama club. In the community there are several private groups who do theatre, and there is the Fremont Civic Theater that produces four shows per year. South of Cañon City in Westcliffe, there is another theatre group that brings in people from all over the country to perform in up to five productions a year. This results in a theatre rich area. What makes this play a good choice is it is a script that has not been produced in this area of abundant performing arts.

It is also a great choice because of its variety. The show contains lower middle class characters as well as high class characters. In Cañon City the population consists of all classes. There are groups of higher class citizens who participate in many of the artistic events in the area. Students from the lower middle class bring in family and friends when they perform in shows. It also presents a variety of character types including nuns. With the Holy Cross Abby in Cañon City one more group classification is addressed. *The House of Blue Leaves* includes comedic elements with dramatic elements. Comedy gives the audience a chance to laugh at someone else which is usually therapeutic. Drama reminds the audience of the truth in the action of the play. *The House of Blue Leaves* combines them both in a brilliant fashion. In addition there is variety in the ages of the characters that are presented. These ages range from eighteen to forty five. The older audiences will remember times gone by as the younger audiences will be able to relate directly with the characters and their struggles. Variety is required in today's technological society, to maintain interest in live theatre.

Another aspect that makes *The House of Blue Leaves* a great production for Cañon City is

the historical piece that it brings to the students as well as the older members of the audience. The play is set specifically on October 4, 1965. This is significant because it is the day the Pope came to New York to address the United Nations in order to stop the war in Vietnam. It gives the students a piece of history and an understanding of the magnitude of the American dream. It gives the older audiences a glimpse back at a time of change and a time of desire. The Cañon City audience will be able to relate at some level to this historical perspective. However, the historical piece is also where the challenges begin.

My first concern is the set for this production. Since the setting is specifically in 1965, the kitchen appliances and furniture will need to be period pieces. A 1950's refrigerator and stove may be difficult to find. I plan to talk to several of the house rental companies in the area first. Then I will expand my search to Craigslist and eBay. I will need to be careful, however, because I do not want to spend my entire budget on a 50's refrigerator. As for the furniture, I will follow the same path. In researching the furniture of the 1950's, I have found several items that would not be difficult to reconstruct. As for other set pieces I will be searching antiques stores in the area and my in-laws antique store in Durango. Once I have the set pieces, my next concern is the acting.

In John Guare's play there are three characters that are over the age of forty. I will be using students in these roles. I will spend several rehearsals specifically building characterization. I will train the actors on the subtleties, such as movement, style and tempo, to get a continuous believable character. It may not be ideal but, I believe that the students will be able to create a strong enough character that the audience will be able to relate to without being a distraction from the age of the character. Furthermore, I will need to start pre-audition preparation with the actor who will play Artie.

Artie is the lead character and poses several critical aspects to the production. The actor's size will be very important. If he is too big then the relationship between Artie and Bananas becomes one of physical abuse which is not the intent of the author. Additionally, if he is too small then he would not be able to control Bananas the way that Artie does. Artie is also a composer. Therefore the actor who gets the part should be able to play piano as well as be a strong actor. To help with the music training I have already acquired the services of the school accompanist. What's more, informal notice has been passed on to potential actors of the necessity of the musical talent piece. For auditions actors will be required to have a memorized monologue as well as a piano piece prepared. With Artie taken care of, Bunny introduces one more dilemma.

Bunny is a character that is not afraid to tell it how it is. In going through the script it has become painfully obvious that I will need to make some cuts to the script. To make this performance more suitable for a younger audience I will be cutting some of the language and a large section from one of Bunny's monologues. The intent of her not being good at sex will remain. However, her willingness to have sex on the spot will become more implied rather than presented in an abrupt fashion. The cut however, will not affect the author's intent it will just "sugar coat it" a bit.

The final concern I have is the lighting. In the Del Pizzo Performing Arts Center there is not a way to accomplish down light on the thrust. To overcome this I will be using side light and front light to the thrust portion. Another problem is the lack of instruments to light the stage. Currently, the auditorium contains just enough fixtures to put one light in each area. The areas are multiplied however, because the instruments are the wrong degree for the distance from the thrust. My solution is to try to repair old fixtures that have a larger pool and also to move

everything further forward so that I do not have to light as much of the stage.

The House of Blue Leaves is an excellent play. It has many attributes that will make it successful in Cañon City including its variations and its historical perspective. It will reach an audience of all age groups, and the challenges are not unattainable. Most everything that has presented itself in this production can be worked around with some patience and perseverance. It is an exciting opportunity to me as a director to take on the challenges and find ways to make this production the vehicle that Cañon City needs to reach audiences of all ages.

Concept Statement for *The House of Blue Leaves*

The House of Blue Leaves is a brilliant play by John Guare. It incorporates great comedic situations with the dramatic elements of unobtainable goals. Guare invites the audience to share in the expectation of greatness and the realization of failure to achieve that greatness. *The House of Blue Leaves* allows for a cathartic release of both pleasure and sadness in a short period of time. To produce a show of this caliber will take a specific setting, the perfect costumes and of course lighting that encompasses the changes of both time and mood as the show progresses.

My goal as director is to give the audience the opportunity to experience desire for fame as well as the agony of not reaching that status. I believe that the struggle of the characters for their “five minutes of fame” is what makes *The House of Blue Leaves* such an awe inspiring show. Each of the characters represents the desire in all of us to be accepted; the desire to acquire fame and fortune. Then the play changes to show how devastating life can become when that dream is not fulfilled. Guare has painted a picture that allows the audience to experience their own drive to succeed with the ability to understand that the consumption of the dream can be taken way too far.

My concept for the stage encompasses both the idea of comic elements of color and the

shabbiness of an apartment in Sunnyside Queens. I plan to incorporate bright fun colors that will create a sense of humor about the apartment. Using the brighter colors in furniture pieces and in the stage props will subtly create the lightheartedness that the play displays. The rest of the color scheme on the stage will reflect the age of the apartment. It must represent the wear and tear of a decade or two so that it does not seem new and trendy for 1965. The walls should be drab colors such as gray or light grayish green. The furniture will be from the 1950's and well worn. I also want to create a sense of closeness. I want the apartment to feel small and constricting. It should be very symmetrical and have the feel of being in a simple square hole in the great big world. To create this environment the back wall will be fairly short and will be brought down stage to make the room appear smaller. The smaller size of the bathroom will also be represented because the walls will be shown that encase it. Doors can squeak and may not latch for added ageing effect. Stage props will not be organized but more tossed around the stage to continue to demonstrate the lack of order. Finally, clothes will be laid in random areas around the stage.

For the costuming of this play I must consider both the 1950's and the 1960's styles. The costumes of Artie and Bananas will be shabby representation of the times. In Act I Bananas will be wearing a worn out nightgown and robe that she has had since the mid 1950's. Artie will be wearing a typical blue collar, drab, work outfit that looks exactly the same as the other 5 outfits he wears everyday. Bunny will be wearing early 1960's attire. Her outfit should be bright and colorful. Bunny is the pathway to what could be the American dream. Bunny's outfit should represent an attempt to look rich even though she is not. In the second act Corrinna and Billy will be representing the glitz of Hollywood, 1965 style. They are the only two characters who have money in this show. Also in Act II, to further the theme Bananas will come out in an evening gown from the 1950's. As we progress from scene to scene and the representation of the

progression to fame, we also change from early morning to late evening.

Lighting this production will require consideration of the time of day, the mood and the venue in which *The House of Blue Leaves* is set. In the beginning and the very end of the play the time of day is very late evening in a bar. There will be no representation of the bar with any scenery. Therefore, I will be using light as my scene change. The piano will be moved down center and a pool of dim light will be used to fill the piano area. The remainder of the stage will be in complete darkness. For the ending I will add a blue spot light into the mix. Once the prologue is over then the stage will be lit to represent early morning before the sun has risen. This will be done with some color, blues and purples, as well as a yellow light from the window. Then the lights will come up to represent the interior lights of an apartment building. They will not be at full intensity but, bright enough to see the actors. More ambers will be used to represent the older style of the lights in the lamps. As the scene progresses that light will intensify to represent the daylight. In Act II it will be mid day. The intensity will be high. A combination of light blues and ambers will create more of a white light from the sun coming into the room. In Act II scene 2 it will again be dark so which will bring back the lights from the beginning of Act I. At the end of this scene is where the dramatic piece of this show is accented.

For the final bit of Act II scene 2 a special light cue will be created. The lights need to begin to fade as Artie realizes his defeat. Darkness needs to spread onto the stage as it creeps into Artie's soul. Also, dark blues should be encompassing the stage as a single pool of white light encircles Bananas. This sets up Artie for his darkest moment which will then be incorporated by the dimming of the lights as Bananas dies. This will be a critical spot for fades and sequencing. It is also the culmination of the agony that is created by not fulfilling the American dream.

To represent *The House of Blue Leaves* successfully will take many aspects of specificity.

The setting will force the sensation of constriction that is caused by the small space and clutter that surrounds the actors and the shabby accommodations that the actors are trying to leave behind. The costumes will show the redundancy of the blue collar world that most of us live in. It will also lead us to the glamour of Hollywood that epitomizes the American dream. The use of lighting will increase the realization of the devastation that Artie feels when he comes to grips with the thoughts of never becoming famous. The creeping darkness that consumes his soul will fill the stage and hopefully the audience. With these elements in place the search for fame and the agony of not obtaining it will be evident. Furthermore, being able to share the brilliance of John Guare's accurate portrayal of the struggle to accomplish the American dream with my students and the Cañon City audience will create a priceless moment for all to share.

Given Circumstances

A. Geographical Location and Climate

The House of Blue Leaves is set in an apartment in Sunnyside Queens, New York. According to Guare, Queens is the “bedroom community for people on their way up who worked in Manhattan but wanted to pretend they had the better things in life until the inevitable break came and they could make the official move to the Scarsdales and the Ryes and the Greenwich’s of their dreams, . . .” (Barnes 311). Guare has placed Artie Shaughnessy since he desires that one big break. Queens was also along the path that Pope Paul VI traveled on his way to Manhattan in 1965 (312). As for the weather on October 4, 1965, it was a cool autumn day. According to Jeffrey Tongue of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration the high for the day was 53, the low was 41, and the winds were 15 to 20 mph from the Northwest.

B. Date

The date for *The House of Blue Leaves* is very specifically October 4, 1965. The play officially starts with the prologue on October 3. After a quick scene change to the apartment it is early morning, just before dawn on October 4. Act II scene 1 is later that afternoon and Act II scene 2 is late that evening. This date is very significant because it is the day that Pope Paul VI arrived in New York, and the first time any Pope had entered the United States. Guare stated, “I wanted to write about these people for a long time, but it wasn’t until I got that ‘envelope’ of the Pope coming to New York that everything pulled together” (McLaughlin 57).

C. Economical Environment

The economy of the 1960s was prosperous. The United States had just come out of the

1950s in which the economy had been on the rise. In fact, “The longest economic boom to date in U.S. history, it increased real per capita income by 41 percent during the ‘60s” (Brash and Britton 24). With the election of John F. Kennedy, the country was looking into a new era of young affluent businessmen that would carry the U. S. into a prosperous future. With President Kennedy’s assassination, President Johnson utilized Kennedy’s ideals for maintaining a prosperous economy, which helped to continue this rise in wealth. This policy for prosperity spread around the country and changed the American dream, to a dream of acquiring fame and fortune through entitlement rather than through hard work and thrift (Warshauer). This modification of the American dream is demonstrated by the objectives of Artie, Bunny, and Ronnie in *The House of Blue Leaves*.

Artie, Bunny, and Ronnie are trying to claim their perceived entitlement of fame and fortune. Artie is a lower middle class zoo keeper who doesn’t even have a nickel to ride the ferryboat (Guare 10), but he aspires to be a high class musical composer in the movies. All Artie needs is some help from his movie director friend, Billy Einhorn. Bunny gets by with whatever she can manage from the various odd jobs she has had in the past, “I know all the stars from the time I worked for that astronomer...”(10). She also is pushing Artie to call Billy so that they can both move to Hollywood and earn their fortune, together. Ronnie is planning to gain his fame in a more devious way, by killing the Pope. All three characters have their plans in place and are just waiting for their given right to be famous or even infamous.

D. Political Environment

The political environment of the 1960s varied in its high and low points. With the assassination of Kennedy the U.S. saw a moment of terror. However, Lyndon Johnson was

sworn in and continued to push forward the policies and principles set by President Kennedy. At home the U.S. was entrenched in the battle to end segregation. Martin Luther King, Jr. led non-violent protests all over the country, including the march on Washington, in 1963, that helped create a path for President Johnson to push civil rights legislation through congress in 1964 (Brash and Britton 26). In addition Betty Friedan published her book *The Feminine Mystique*, in 1963 which re-ignited the feminist movement (28). The goal for national equality was becoming a reality. However, a storm of magnificent proportions was beginning to brew abroad.

In 1964 and 1965 the U. S, became more extensively involved in a conflict overseas. In 1964 President Johnson had sent 23,000 troops to Vietnam. By March of 1965 that number grew to 154,000 (Daniel, Kirshon, and Berens 806). The U. S. went into the conflict believing that they could withstand any threat. As the years went by the casualty count increased, and the U.S. began to see the error in its ways. President Lyndon B. Johnson knew the end of his political career was coming, and chose not to run for re-election (Brash and Britton 36). In 1965 the Vietnamese war was escalating rapidly, which led the Pope to come to America and talk to the President and the United Nations about peace. This historical event brings us back to the play.

The characters in *The House of Blue Leaves* are more involved in themselves than they are in the politics of the nation. Artie is concerned about the cost of the Pope's trip to the U.S. not the political implications (Guare 11). After some consideration, however, Artie predicts that Pope Paul VI will be able to stop the conflict in Vietnam before his son Ronnie ever leaves the states. Artie is aware that something is going on and that his son will be shipped to Vietnam. His concern is more about his own personal gain. Ultimately, Ronnie's being away

at war removes one more obstacle for Artie to overcome on his quest for a one way trip to Hollywood. Yet, Ronnie has gone A.W.O.L. (Absent With Out Leave) so that he can make a name for himself by blowing up the Pope (48). The characters are aware of the politics that surround them but seem to be self-consumed. The world they strive for is the one without any turbulence, the world where the American dream is the ideal. These characters want fame and fortune that only America can provide, the America that is not in a war against segregation and a conflict overseas. The Mecca of dreams that come true, the America that was created at the end of World War II.

E. Social Environment

The social environment in this play is all about the desire to be famous. In Queens everyone is looking for the big break, that chance to win fame and fortune. Maybe they can be the next *Jeopardy* winner. Maybe they will create great folk music like Bob Dylan, or how about going from painter to starlet like Marilyn Monroe (Daniel, Kirshon, and Berens 796). In Queens, it was thought, that anything was possible, and that it was your birthright as an American (Barnes 311).

Music was still thriving as rock and roll continued to move the nation. Shortly after the Assassination of President Kennedy the Beatles arrived in America, which according to their manager Brian Epstein, the Beatles ““were the medicine man dispensing the balm for a very sick society”” (Brash and Britton 157). Bob Dylan was singing folk music that made the country think about the life and times they live. Television and movies were also taking the stage as predominant social stimuli.

In the 1960s the movies and television illustrated espionage, sex appeal, and the poor becoming rich. On television *Get Smart* was introducing the country to the evil ways of

Maxwell Smart's archenemy, Chaos, while James Bond was fighting off the bad guys with amazing gadgets and seducing the ladies. Elizabeth Taylor was making a run at the world of the glamorous with great success. And those hillbillies moved themselves right into the middle of Beverly Hills (Brash and Britton 82-90). So if the Clampetts could become rich and famous why not the Shaughnessys?

Artie, Bunny, and Ronnie all have one thing in common, which is, they want to be famous. Artie is struggling with his current identity in society, "I am too old to be a young talent" (Guare 12). Artie sees Hollywood as an opportunity for him. He sees Billy's movies and forms a desire to be a part of the business. Artie watches as people who were nobodies go to Hollywood to become somebodies. Even people from other countries are filling their wallets. Bunny can relate to Marilyn Monroe in that she has worked hard and now it is her turn to walk the red carpet. Artie is her ticket to Hollywood. Then there is Ronnie who tried to become Huckleberry Finn (35-37). It didn't work out for him. Now he has an opportunity to be bigger than all of them. He has seen James Bond blow things up. Here is his opportunity. He could even become bigger than Lee Harvey Oswald.

F. Religious Environment

Religion in the 1960s had two sides. First, President Kennedy was the first Catholic president in American History. This led to controversy as American voters became concerned whether he would follow the church or the Constitution. Kennedy helped alleviate this argument at his address to the "Greater Houston Ministerial Association in September 1960" when he stated that there are "real issues which should decide this campaign. And they are not religious issues" (Herzog 354). According to Herzog this down-playing of religion actually helped contribute to the decline of religion in the U.S. from the office of presidency

(354). Under Eisenhower and Truman, religion was a means of protection from the communist influence during the Cold War (354). Kennedy removed religion from the oval office and religion began to be less important to the average American. Not to mention the Civil Rights movement and the conflict in Vietnam had become larger issues in the 1960s. However, during the 1960s Catholicism was actually gaining in popularity. Following the Vatican II Council, changes in practices, such as changing the official language of Mass from Latin to English and promoting more laity involvement, created a more meaningful experience (Fineran). Also, Pope Paul VI started to travel the world and preach to the masses becoming the first traveling Pope. His first stop along the journey was New York.

The play is centered around the Pope's visit but, not the Pope's beliefs. It is evident at the beginning of the play that Artie is reluctant to see the Pope. "What I want to know is who the hell is paying for this wop's trip over here anyway—" (Guare 11). Artie knows how to pray and ask for gifts from the heavens while Ronnie was once an altar boy. However, the idea that the Shaughnessys practice strong Christian values does not seem to be evident at this point in their lives. For example, Artie is committing adultery and Ronnie is planning to commit murder. The Pope coming to New York only offers Artie another opportunity at achieving his desire for fame. Whether or not prayer really works is a mute point to Artie. It is the fact that he will try anything to become famous, even prayer because Bunny seems to believe in it and so does *Readers Digest*. "*Reader's Digest* has an article this month on how prayer answers things. Pray . . . The Pope can cure you. *Reader's Digest* don't afford to crap around" (32).

G. Previous Action

The previous action overall is pretty straight forward. Artie and Bananas live in an

apartment in Queens (Guare 8). Their son has been drafted into the Army to help the fight in Vietnam (17). Artie's best friend Billy is making movies in Hollywood (13). Artie has been to Long Island to inquire about a care facility for Bananas (22). Furthermore, Pope Paul VI has decided to come to the U.S. to talk to President Johnson and the United Nations about peace (6).

Artie Shaughnessy wants to be a famous composer. He plays piano and sings at amateur nights in the clubs around town. Artie is having an affair with Bunny, the lady who happens to live downstairs (Guare 11). He is making plans with Bunny to fly to Hollywood so that he can get his good buddy Billy to help him sell his music to the movie studios (12). Artie works as a zoo keeper at the Central Park Zoo (16). Billy and Artie have been friends ever since kindergarten (25).

Bunny Flingus lives in the apartment directly under Artie (Guare 11). She met Artie at a sauna where she was trying to lose weight (28). She has worked in various jobs which she describes throughout the play. She is an amazing cook (14).

Bananas is Artie's wife. She has had her five minutes of fame when she tried to get Bob Hope, Cardinal Spellman, Jackie Kennedy, and President Johnson to get in her car in the middle of Times Square (Guare 31-32). Artie takes care of her because he thinks she has mental problems based on some of the incidents that have occurred, including her standing in the snow on the edge of a roof for over 24 hours (31). Also, she received clothes from Billy's wife Georgina, before she died, that made Bananas feel rich (54).

Ronnie is the son of Artie and Bananas, who has been drafted into the Army (Guare 17). He tried to audition for Billy's movie *Huckleberry Finn*, but he was laughed at and regarded as mentally retarded (35-37). Ronnie has gone A.W.O.L from the Army (50), with the

intentions of making a bomb to blow up the Pope at Yankee Stadium (48).

Billy Einhorn is a famous movie director who got his start using movie clips that had been cut from the military pictures being filmed (Guare 25-26). He has been friends with Artie since they were in kindergarten together (25). He was married to Georgina who has died (25).

H. Polar Attitudes

1. Artie Shaughnessy

Beginning: Stuck in his humdrum life wanting to get out. “They talked all the way through it” (Guare 11).

End: Desperate and distraught which leads to him becoming destructive. “Bill! Bill! I’m too old to be a young talent!!!” (63).

2. Bunny Flingus

Beginning: Excited and hopeful of things to come. “There’s miracles in the air!” (10).

End: Content and satisfied that her life has turned out the way she wanted it to.

“Artie, I mean this in the best possible sense: You’ve been a wonderful neighbor” (63).

3. Bananas Shaughnessy

Beginning: Bananas is desperate for Artie’s attention and does crazy things to get it. “You hate me. You hate my looks—my face—my clothes—you hate me. You wish I was fatter so there’d be more of me to hate...Don’t say that! You love me” (16).

End: Excited about her new chance to be Artie’s wife again. “Artie, it’s like we

are finally alone for the first time in our life” (63).

4. Ronnie Shaughnessy

Beginning: He is radical, unpredictable and also he shows anger towards his family. “My father tell you all about me? ... How great I am! That’s how he is with you. You should hear him with me, you’d sing a different tune pretty quick” (35).

End: There is no change. “Pop, I’m going to blow up the Pope and when *Time* interviews me tonight, I won’t even mention you. I’ll say I was an orphan” (49).

5. Billy Einhorn

Beginning: Sad and distraught over losing his fiancé Corrinna. “My future is all ashes, Artie” (54).

End: Renewed, invigorated by the chance to keep working. “I see future tenses! I see I can go on! Health!” (60).

Analysis of Dialogue

A. Choice of Words and Phrases

Artie’s words are very literal and chosen with reason. He uses metaphors occasionally to help explain his point of view such as, “. . . two Rin Tin Tins taking a leak” (18). Artie also uses some vulgar terms, for example, “wop” and “dago”. When Artie utilizes the use of such terms there is always an underlying effort of manipulating someone into paying attention to him. Just as a child might do something wrong to get the parent to notice him or her.

Whenever Artie starts becoming crass, there is a “me” moment about to occur. When Artie is speaking to Bananas there are times when the phrasing is short and simple to make sure that Bananas understands him. “You need help. We—I found a nice hosp . . . By the sea . . .

'by the beautiful sea' . . . it's an old estate" (22).

Bunny's words and phrases are a reflection of her varied background. Bunny uses the word "got" in place of the grammatically correct "have" on many occasions. For example, "You bend my arm and twist my heart but I got to be strong" (13). She also replaces "nothing" with the slang term "nix". "I didn't work in Macy's Music Department for nix" (12). Both of these terms demonstrate her lack of higher education. However, she is continuously including references to places she has worked and the vocabulary she uses further proves how many jobs that she has held. "You'll be in Bellevue tonight with enough shock treatments they can plug Times Square into your ear. I didn't work for Con Edison for nothing!" (34).

Bananas' uses words and phrases that will strike a chord in some way. "You hate me. Don't say that! You love me" (16). "I'm glad you're making friends, Artie. I'm no good for you" (21). In both of these instances she says one thing and then follows it up with an opposite connotation. Throughout the play Bananas makes comments that contradict what she previously said. In some cases here words create comic relief and at other times they reinforce the tragedy of her life.

B. Sentence Structure

Artie and Ronnie both use a very similar structure. Both of them use fairly good grammatically correct sentences that are not too long but adequate. However, they both have a tendency to use more of a run-on sentence when they get passionate about a subject. For example, when Artie is telling Billy how he met Bunny:

It's kind of funny, a chimpanzee knocked me in the back and kinked my back out of whack and I went to this health club to work it out and in the steam section

with all the steam I got lost and I went into this steam room and there was Bunny—yeah, just towels—I mean you could make a movie out of this, it was so romantic—she couldn't see me and she started talking about the weight she had to take off and the food she had to give up and she started talking about duckling with orange sauce and oysters baked with spinach and shrimps in the . . . (28).

Another example of the run-on phrasing is in Ronnie's speech, "This room smelled of Ammonia and air freshener and these slipcovers were new that day and my parents were filling up the icebox in their brand-new cloths, filling up the icebox with food and liquor . . ." (36).

Bunny has a couple of instances where she uses a run-on sentence but primarily she uses sentences that are direct, complete, and to the point. When Bunny is speaking here sentences are not complex. "You're not the only one with connections. But she can't save them forever. Oh God, Artie, what a morning!" (10)

Bananas on the other hand, speaks streams of thought. Her sentence structure is more related to the length of the thought than whether or not she has accomplished a sentence. "Did you read in the paper about the bull in Madrid who fought so well they didn't let him die? They healed him, let him rest before they put him back in the ring, again and again and again" (23). Here she is set on the metaphor explaining her feelings about the shock treatments. Later, "I'd like to jump out right in front of the Pope's car" (24), Banauas uses a bold statement to try and interrupt Bunny and Artie. In both examples the structure is based on the thought at that moment which may be long or short.

C. Choice of Images

Artie is a dreamer and most of the imagery he discusses is that of a dream. "A hymn

couldn't be played unless it was mine and the whole congregation sang 'Where is the Devil in Evelyn,' but they made it sound like monks singing it" (18). Artie is convinced that he will be famous and spends most of his time dreaming about it. "I got panthers licking out of my hands like goddamn pussycats . . ." (24). Although this statement may actually be the truth he presents it in a manner that suggests that he is a god amongst the animals, which is still using a dream type of image.

Bananas creates images of struggle. "I can't go out of the house . . . my fingernails are all different lengths" (17). Everything in her life is a struggle as she tries to win back her husband. "Help me, Billy? . . . I stand in this corner and I remember laughing so hard. Doubled up. At something Ronnie did. Artie said. . . . Help me?" (56).

Bunny produces images of happiness and fame.

BUNNY. Within the next two years, you could be out there in a black tie watching for the lady—Greer Garson—to open the envelope and say as the world holds its breath—'And the winner of the Oscar for this year's Best Song is—' (*Rips a travel folder very slowly.*)

ARTIE. (*Leaning forward.*) Who is it? Who won?

BUNNY. And now Miss Mitzi Gaynor and Mr. Franco Corelli of the Metropolitan Opera will sing the winning song for you from the picture of the same name made by his good friend and genius, Billy Einhorn. The winner is of course Mr. Arthur M. Shaughnessy. (26)

Analysis of Dramatic Action With One Act Text Example

The House of Blue Leaves

to...
"

to...
"

Character Analysis

Artie Shaughnessy

Desire: Artie wants to become famous. His best friend Billy became a famous director and so now he wants to become a famous musician/composer. He desires the great American Dream.

Will: At the beginning of the play we see a man who has desires, but he is nervous about going after them completely. He needs to be persuaded. At the end he has the ability to try just about anything to become famous.

Moral Stance: Artie is all for the betterment of himself. He seems to be doing an honorable thing in watching over Bananas, but at the same time he is committing adultery. Bananas has become so burdensome that he is willing to just pass her off. He attempts to show her he cares by finding her a home where she will be given good care. But, the reality is that he has moved past his vows and has created a morality that is centered around himself.

Decorum: Artie is the average blue collar worker. He does not wear fancy suits or carry a briefcase. He wears work clothes that probably have stains. He does not walk around with his head held high and pride beaming from his every pore. Artie is just another guy with a name on his shirt trying to get by. He does not hang his head in despair but, he is unhappy with his life, with Bananas, and in general.

Summary List of Adjectives: depressed, desperate, hungry, excited, lustful, tired, competitive, threatened, blessed, in awe, and angry.

Bunny Flingus

Desire: Bunny wants to be famous through someone else. Her only real talent is

cooking. She knows that cooking will not make her famous, but she also knows that if she is calculating and manipulative enough she can convince a man who is famous to take her away to the world of her dreams.

Will: Bunny is driven to make her mark on society and, she is willing to try just about anything to reach her goals. This is evident in the numerous jobs that she has had.

Moral Stance: Bunny is another character that does not need morality in her life.

Morality will hinder her ability to become famous. Bunny is the woman that would sleep with the boss for a promotion, but in her case it may be more than just the boss.

Decorum: Bunny carries herself very well. She promotes herself as a strong, liberated woman who also has a sensitive side if it will make her more desirable. She stands up straight with her head held high. Her clothing is not overly expensive but it does contribute to her looking like she could have money. Bunny is not opposed to showing off her finer features either. Her one downfall in this is that she is a bit overweight.

Summary List of Adjectives: Spunky, manipulative, controlling, excited, disappointed, blessed, and vindictive.

Bananas Shaughnessy

Desire: Bananas wants Artie to love her again and to take care of her.

Will: Bananas knows what she wants and is not afraid to go after what she wants.

Bananas tries several strategies to win back Artie. In some instances she even tries to push him away so that he will be forceful with her. Although it seems unorthodox, the result is still the same; Artie is paying attention to her.

Moral Stance: Bananas comes across as the most moral person in the play. She tries to be helpful and caring. Bananas has to be “good” so that the audience will fall in love with her, or else the ending will lose some of its power as a tragic new balance. However, morality in *The House of Blue Leaves* is something that is hard to find. Even at her most helpful moment at Times Square, Bananas is still forcing people against their will into her car.

Decorum: Bananas should be frail and petite. She should look shabby with a tattered nightgown. Bananas should be slouched and at times completely oblivious to her surroundings. At certain points, however, she has to evoke childlike qualities.

Summary List of Adjectives: shabby, lighthearted, vindictive, pleasant, caring, spaced out, concerned, desperate, scared, frustrated, and happy.

Ronnie Shaughnessy

Desire: Ronnie has to be more famous than anyone in his family. He desires to put his name in the history books and beyond for years and years to come.

Will: There is no doubt that Ronnie is willing to do whatever it takes to accomplish his goal. He will stop at nothing to be successful.

Moral Stance: Morality was missed with Ronnie. He has no sense of right or wrong. He knows just what he wants to accomplish and how to accomplish it no matter what the consequences.

Decorum: Ronnie is thin and athletic. He is a soldier which includes the upright stance and crew cut. He will be wearing military gear as well as an altar boy outfit.

Ronnie is very energetic and motivated to accomplish his goal.

Summary List of Adjectives: Driven, wild, jealous, energetic, extreme, determined, and

obsessive.

Billy Einhorn

Desire: When Billy first appears on stage, he just wants to mourn. As the scene progresses he begins searching for a reason to go on in life.

Will: Billy starts off so upset that he doesn't believe he can go on with his life, but when he gets a new lease on life he returns to the strong man who was able to influence audiences and producers worldwide.

Moral Stance: Billy is very sensitive to the importance of a husband and wife and the marriage commitment. He has lost one wife and is ready to marry again to love and care for someone. With a second loss he idealizes Artie and Bananas for being together for so long. He takes Bunny with him to save Artie from breaking up his marriage with Bananas.

Decorum: When Billy first appears we see a man in great despair, slouched over and whimpering about his tragic life. However, Billy is a well dressed Hollywood big shot full of pride at the end. His posture is that of a prominent figure in society with the air of money surrounding him.

Summary List of Adjectives: Smart, distraught, renewed, successful, driven, and happy

Ideas of the Play

John Guare states that the main idea of *The House of Blue Leaves* is that of humiliation caused by the characters' dreams, loves, wants, and their best parts (Barnes 311). This theme is carried throughout the play. At the beginning Artie is struggling to fulfill his dream of making it in show business. As he tries to gain recognition, the audiences talk through his performance and he is forced to buy his own beers (Guare 11). Bunny describes her humiliation as she failed

the *Readers Digest* sex test, only to prove that she is terrible in bed (15). The humiliation continues with Bananas as she explains how she could not get her gypsy cab to go because it blew all four tires at the same time (31-32). Humiliation is represented in some way or other for every character as they dream of greatness, share their love, or try to reveal what makes each of them great in their own way. But, as the play reaches its conclusion the humiliation begins to fade for everyone except Artie.

Guare accentuates the humiliation factor in the final scene. Artie has the chance to realize his dreams while Billy is sitting right in front of him. Artie is trying to be a good friend and support Billy in his loss. However, Artie is also trying to get his ticket to Hollywood (Guare 53-54). Then Bunny comes in offering food, and Billy sees his future (60). This is the moment of conflict that brings Artie's desires to a screeching halt. Artie's ticket to fame and fortune, Billy, tells Artie that Artie is the reason that he creates the movies. "If I ever thought you and Bananas weren't here in Sunnyside, seeing my work, loving my work, I could never work again" (62). This confirms Bunny's line from Act I when she says, "When famous people go to sleep at night, it's us they dream of, Artie" (10). This is the moment when Artie sees everyone around him fulfilling their dreams as his dreams are destroyed. For example, the Little Nun is given Bunny's apartment and the job of taking care of Bananas (60). Ronnie is given a new assignment and released from the brig (58). Furthermore, Bunny is offered the ticket to Hollywood to cook for Billy (60). Artie's ultimate humiliation has happened and there is no way out. He is trapped in mediocrity, and left with his wife who promises to change and doesn't.

The title *The House of Blue Leaves* relates directly to the feeling of being trapped. The house is the trap, Artie's apartment in Queens is the trap. As mentioned before, Queens is the bedroom community where everyone stops on his or her way to Manhattan (Barnes 311). It is

also the place where everyone stays. Artie is stuck here. The blue leaves refer to the blue birds at the asylum that Artie wants to take Bananas too. Artie says “It was birds. Not blue leaves, but birds, waiting to go to Florida or California” (Guare 22). The birds represent Artie’s dreams of going somewhere else. But, like Artie, they are trapped also because when he gets to them they only go a couple hundred feet to another tree as they wait out the storm (22). Artie sees the birds as opportunities, but in reality the birds are just creatures looking for a change. So the title also continues the through line of humiliation by representing the trap that builds upon Artie’s misery.

Moods of the Play

See appendix for unit locations.

Unit 1

Adjectives: rough, tart, stinky, piercing, big

Image: The mood is like a short kid in a crowd of tall kids trying to get their attention.

Unit 2

Adjectives: chilly, acidic, musty, raspy, dark

Image: The mood is like a spy movie.

Unit 3

Adjectives: stormy, bumpy, rumble, bitter, tangy

Image: The mood is like almost getting caught while trying to steal a cookie.

Unit 4

Adjectives: swooping, breezy, loud, fragrant, spicy

Image: The mood is like saying “I told you so”.

Unit 5

Adjectives: crowded, gritty, snapping, sour, bitter

Image: The mood is like an old man grumbling.

Unit 6

Adjectives: contoured, tender, hushed, sweet, savory

Image: The mood is like kissing up to someone.

Unit 7

Adjectives: colorful, fluffy, melodious, fragrant, juicy

Image: The mood is like if someone had won the lottery, then...

Unit 8

Adjectives: graceful, cuddly, purring, fragrant, creamy

Image: The mood is like a bad porn film set up.

Unit 9

Adjectives: brilliant, uneven, sloshing, medicinal, peppery

Image: The mood is like a biography.

Unit 10

Adjectives: swooping, slippery, rustle, spicy, sticky

Image: The mood is like the mouse teasing the cat.

Unit 11

Adjectives: crooked, prickly, whine, stale, salty

Image: The mood is like a confession.

Unit 12

Adjectives: forked, stinging, harsh, bitter, sour

Image: The mood is like a cartoon that always has a happy ending.

Unit 13

Adjectives: stormy, sticky, raspy, burning, tart

Image: The mood is like a student who lost his homework.

Unit 14

Adjectives: grotesque, sharp, screech, chocking, bitter

Image: The mood is like Garfield belittling Ode.

Unit 15

Adjectives: motionless, tender, coo, fragrant, delicious

Image: The mood is like an Attention Deficit Disorder moment.

Unit 16

Adjectives: foggy, shaggy, groan, musty, gooey

Image: The mood is like the class clown that isn't that funny.

Unit 17

Adjectives: flickering, prickly, rustle, dusty, tart

Image: The mood is like watching a race, repetitive.

Unit 18

Adjectives: glowing, warm, murmur, sweet, savory

Image: The mood is like the opening of the Carol Burnett show.

Unit 19

Adjectives: contoured, share, hiss, burning, sour

Image: The mood is like a serial killer making a plan.

Unit 20

Adjectives: stormy, gritty, snapping, pungent, peppery

Image: The mood is like a Jerry Springer Show.

Unit 21

Adjectives: crystalline, chilly, crackling, smoky, tart

Image: The mood is like taking a date home to meet Dad.

Unit 22

Adjectives: distinct, stinging, growly, pungent, hot

Image: The mood is like a cat stalking a mouse.

Unit 23

Adjectives: forked, prickly, squeal, choking, bitter

Image: The mood is like a children's story.

Unit 24

Adjectives: billowy, cold, harsh, antiseptic, acidic

Image: The mood is like sitting in a lecture.

Unit 25

Adjectives: swooping, searing, groan, burning, sour

Image: The mood is like a dog begging for a bone.

Unit 26

Adjectives: big, icy, shrill, stinky, bitter

Image: The mood is like a teenager bartering for use of the car on Saturday night.

Unit 27

Adjectives: jagged, stinging, harsh, rotten, peppery

Image: The mood is like "I told you so".

Unit 28

Adjectives: glamorous, solid, booming, fragrant, sweet

Image: The mood is like a Mom giving a lecture.

Unit 29

Adjectives: fancy, warm, buzzing, fragrant, sweet

Image: The mood is like an encyclopedia salesman at the front door.

Unit 30

Adjectives: gigantic, tender, numble, rich, juicy

Image: The mood is like a kid getting what he wanted for Christmas.

Unit 31

Adjectives: elegant, silky, melodious, sweet, delicious

Image: The mood is like giving your girl chocolate on Valentines Day.

Unit 32

Adjectives: flickering, smooth, crackling, clean

Image: The mood is like telling a scared child kindergarten will be fun on the first day.

Unit 33

Adjectives: colossal, solid, echoing, pungent, tangy

Image: The mood is like a party after getting a substantial raise.

Unit 34

Adjectives: dark, uneven, raspy, stale, bitter

Image: The mood is like loosing your best friend.

Unit 35

Adjectives: crowded, sticky, booming, fresh, tangy

Image: The mood is like doing something fabulous but not getting the credit for it.

Unit 14: Andantino

Unit 15: Andante

Unit 16: Andante

Unit 17: Andante

Unit 18: Andante

Unit 19: Andante

Unit 20: Allegretto

Unit 21: Andante

Unit 22: Andantino

Unit 23: Allegretto

Unit 24: Andantino

Unit 25: Andante

Unit 26: Allegro

Unit 27: Allegro

Unit 28: Allegretto - *slower than allegro*

Unit 29: Allegretto

Unit 30: Allegretto

Unit 31: Allegro

Unit 32: Allegretto to Andantino

Unit 33: Vivace

Unit 34: Andantino

Unit 35: Andantino to Allegro to Adante

Unit 36: Allegretto

Unit 37: Allegro

Unit 38: Presto *very fast tempo*

Tone

The tone of *The House of Blue Leaves* is desire.

Previous Reviews

When *The House of Blue Leaves* first opened Off-Broadway in 1971 it had a good run. It opened in February and ended in December. It must be noted that the show was not stopped by poor reviews, it actually came to an end due to a fire that damaged the theatre where it was being performed (Curry 50). According to Curry, “*The House of Blue Leaves* was honored as the best American play of the season with a Village Voice Obie (Off-Broadway) award, New York Drama Critics Circle award, and Outer Critics Circle Award” (50). However, even though it was winning awards, it did not receive the best reviews.

When it first came out many critics had some issues with *The House of Blue Leaves*. Harris Green of the *New Leader* said that he “Would like Guare to demonstrate more discipline in his writing and avoid direct audience address, . . .” (Curry 126). Catherine Hughes of *Plays and Players* remarked, “Guare sees ‘the humour in tragedy’ but does not show enough concern for the victims” (127). And Edward Hip stated in the evening news, “*The House of Blue Leaves* is a one-joke play without enough material for a full-length play. Good cast makes the most of what Guare has provided” (127). The most notable attack on the play came from Julius Novick in the article, “‘Very Funny—Or a Long Sick Joke?’” in the *New York Times*. “In *The House of Blue Leaves* Guare attempts the ‘treacherous genre’ of black comedy, but unfortunately seems to ask the audience to abandon their humanity in order to laugh at the suffering characters” (129).

In 1986 *The House of Blue Leaves* was revived to a better critical response. “The ‘dark

farce punctuated by random mayhem' does not seem dated in this energetic revival" (Curry 170). "Residents of Queens will enjoy the local color in the latest successful production of Guare's play, which provides many laughs and a 'sad commentary on people's unfulfilled dreams'" (171). As the show gained in popularity it moved from Off-Broadway theatres and onto the Broadway stage. Because of its success, it was nominated for a Tony Award as Best New Play, which caused a controversy due to it being a revival (50). In the end, it was determined that since it never made it to a Broadway stage in the original run, it would still be eligible for the award (232). It did not win, but, ". . . *The House of Blue Leaves* won Tony awards for director Jerry Zaks, designer Tony Walton, actor John Mahoney, and actress Swoosie Kurtz" (51).

The Playwright

John Guare came into this world on February 5, 1938 as the only child to Edward and Helen Guare of Jackson Heights, Queens, New York (Curry 6). He attended mass daily with his mother, as his father worked as a clerk on Wall Street. As a child he did a lot of entertaining in his family circle that included his parents, his parent's friends, and his great aunt. John also attended Broadway shows quite often. According to Guare, "At seven, when I entered the theatre, I just felt at home" (Plunka 24). In 1949, Guare decided it was time to become a playwright.

After seeing many great Broadway plays John decided he needed something to do during his summer vacation. "That summer, when young John and his best friend, Bobby Shlomm, were on vacation in Atlantic Beach, Long Island, they read a story in *Life* about ten-year-olds who made an 8-mm film of *Tom Sawyer* during their hiatus from school" (Plunka 25). John decided to write three plays that would be performed in Bobby's garage. Because John was already learning the skill of marketing, he made a few calls to help promote his plays.

The week before the performances of his plays, Guare disguised his voice and telephoned Time-Life informing the operator that an eleven-year-old had written a drama that was soon to be staged in Atlantic Beach. The operator hung up. After Time-Life showed no interest, Guare called *Newsday* and told them that the proceeds of the plays were going to be donated to the orphans of Atlantic Beach. The trilogy, titled *Universe*, was performed in Bobby's garage for a week; . . . On the last day of the performances, a black car drove up and out stepped reporters from *Newsday*. They published a story on the garage performances giving John his first theatrical review complete with photographs (25).

After seeing his name in the paper Guare knew that he had to be a playwright. His parents, who wanted to be supportive, went out and bought him a "Royal portable typewriter to pursue his newly chosen career" (25).

Guare continued to write and research plays. On special occasions he would attend the theatre with his parents. Every Saturday he would also attend the matinee performances. Guare was learning all about dramatic structure. After viewing many musicals and reading the album covers for them he determined, "that usually the second production number was a 'want' song, providing impetus for a character's motivation" (Plunka 25-26). John Guare said:

And then I realized that, in a sense, that was no different from page one of *The Three Sisters*: 'I want to get to Moscow' There is always this searching at the beginning. And this operates much more powerfully in a play than any other form. I think there's a connection between *The Three Sisters* and even a play like *Waiting for Godot*: 'I want to get to Moscow' and 'I want the man with the answers to arrive.' In both cases the wants are not fulfilled. And the failure of

that expectation creates the dramatic energy and is extraordinary (McLaughlin 23).

At 14, Guare had realized the structure of a good play. He had learned the importance of the Aristotelian model. Guare continued his research on structure and development throughout his school years.

Guare attended a private school until his family moved from Jackson Heights. This move created a problem for his father as far as his son's schooling was concerned. The school John was to attend did not recite the Pledge of Allegiance every morning. So he stayed enrolled in the St. Joan of Arc school in Queens, but he was home schooled and only sent his work to the nuns at the school (Curry 6). This gave him more time to read and study plays. Guare spent hours upon hours watching, reading, and studying plays. John also received his first job at one of the movie theatres, and attended many movie performances before he moved on to Georgetown University in 1956 (6).

At Georgetown, John kept himself busy with playwriting and other ventures. John wrote a play a year to compete in a playwriting contest for students. His second play, *She Conqs to Stoooper*, earned him a second place (Plunka 26). His third play:

Thirties Girl, set in Hollywood when the first "talkies" were making silent films obsolete, was performed at Georgetown in 1959. The play whose songs were later incorporated into *The House of Blue Leaves*, owed a lot to the musicals Guare enjoyed, particularly *Singing in the Rain* (26).

During John's senior year, he also found himself a job as the assistant to the manager for the National Theatre. John did jobs such as mailings, selling juice, and checking coats, but he was thrilled to be a part of a theatre even if it was only a small part. After receiving a B.A. in

English, John Guare moved on to an M.F.A. in playwriting at Yale University.

Guare did get his degree, but he did not get much from the playwriting side of theatre. John spent more time in the technical aspects of theatre. He learned to appreciate the design process. This was mostly due to his opposition to the head of the playwriting department, John Gassner. Gassner was more interested in the traditional dramatic structure (Curry 7). Guare was looking at writing from another perspective. He was more interested in straying from that traditional structure. Although he continued to write, he spent more time reading and working as an usher for the Shubert Theatre in New Haven (7). John's desire to break from tradition led him to a new type of theatre; Off-Off Broadway.

In the 1960s Off-Off Broadway writers started a new theatre movement, and John Guare was among these writers. "In 1958, a new coffeehouse, Caffè Cino, opened at 31 Cornelia Street, in Greenwich Village" (Crespy 33). Cino thought that it would be nice to have a place where plays could be written and performed while people ate sandwiches and had cake. He did not know at the time that this would start an entire movement. Guare would sit around the café and write with the other prolific writers and then they would perform their pieces right there in the Café. It gave Guare an opportunity to work alongside great playwrights like Edward Albee, William Inge, and Eugene O'Neill. Having coffee and sharing ideas at the Caffè Cino, helped give him the connections and insight he needed to move his shows into the Off Broadway venues.

One of the most prolific playwrights that frequented Caffè Cino was Edward Albee. Albee was making a name for himself downtown and he spent a lot of time at the cafe and at the venues that were producing the Off-Off Broadway playwrights (Crespy 31). Albee's first big one-act was *The Zoo Story*, which set the tone for many of the playwrights. *The Zoo Story* was a

simple play only using two characters. However the depth of the characters and the awe inspiring climax made its audiences take notice of the struggles of life. Guare was greatly influenced by the play, “When he went home to Queens and excitedly recounted the plot to his parents, they found him so totally absorbed by the story that they initially thought he had killed someone himself” (30). Guare utilized the concept of true to life, terrifying realism in several of his plays, including *The House of Blue Leaves*.

Guare was successful in the Off Broadway venues, however his aunt had given him \$10,000 so he used that money to began a tour of Europe and Egypt (Curry 7). His first Off-Off Broadway production, “*To Wally Pantoni We Leave a Credenza*, was produced by the Albee-Barr-Wilder Playwrights Unit in February of 1965” (7). Guare then took his tour. John actually arrived in Rome on October 4, 1965. Since he had been raised in the Saint Joan of Arc Grammar School, Guare thought he should see the Pope while he was in Rome. Unfortunately, that was the same day the Pope was in New York. Guare had come all the way to Rome with plans to at least stop by and see the Pope and he was in John’s hometown of Queens. His parents wrote to him and explained just how thrilled they were about the event. The letter finally caught up with him once he reached Cairo. “And I started thinking about my parents and me and why was I in Egypt and what was I doing with my life and what were they doing with theirs, and that’s how plays get started” (Barnes 312). That was the day John Guare began writing *The House of Blue Leaves*.

The play is autobiographical and took several attempts before Guare was satisfied with the second act. First, Guare admits in the author’s forward for *The House of Blue Leaves* that Artie is a zoo keeper because John’s father, “worked for the New York Stock Exchange but he called it a zoo” (Barnes 312). He also proclaims that the speech that Ronnie gives in Act II scene

1 is, “an exact word-for-word reportage of what happened between Billy and me at our first meeting” (312). This Billy is of course the Hollywood director friend of Artie and also John’s real Uncle Billy Grady. With Act I conceived overseas, John began work on Act II in 1966. After several readings and several rewrites, a frustrated Guare attended two performances in London in 1969. Upon seeing Strindberg’s *Dance of Death*, followed directly the next night by Feydeau’s *A Flea in Her Ear*, Guare came up with a solution. “I think the only playwriting rule is that you have to learn your craft so that you can put on stage plays you would like to see. So I threw away all the second acts of the play, started in again, and, for the first time, understood what I wanted” (312). With that *The House of Blue Leaves* was finished and produced. Guare then continued his writing with several Broadway and Off-Broadway productions.

John Guare’s history since 1971 has included success in both theatre and in the movie industry. His first Broadway production was *Cop Out*. The play inspired by events that occurred during a Vietnam protest did not receive good reviews and was stopped after just 4 performances (Plunka 31). John was then asked to help Mel Shapiro with an adaptation of Shakespeare’s *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, which was a huge hit and gave John high acclaim (33). Between 1973 and 1979 Guare wrote the plays, *Marco Polo Sings a Solo*, *Landscape of the Body*, and *Bosoms and Neglect* (34). 1978 saw John as an adjunct professor at Yale University teaching playwriting, and in 1979 John wrote the screenplay for Louis Malle’s movie *Atlantic City* (35). The 1980s marked a change in John’s writing. After moving to Nantucket and meeting his wife Adele Chatfield-Taylor, John took a new direction creating a tetralogy.

John Guare made a change from the black comedy that was typically his forte and began a string of plays about realism and melodrama. According to Guare, “I wanted to make sense out of family myths, overheards and recriminations and family legends and half-understood events

that happened before I was born in 1938” (Plunka 36). John stepped away from his New York influences and wrote the tetralogy *Lydie Breeze*, *Gardenia*, *Women and Water*, and *Bulfinch's Mythology* (37). Although he wrote them out of order, they are all about the events that occurred from 1861 to 1875. He dedicated these plays to his wife (36). Following the success of these plays, *The House of Blue Leaves* returned to the stage creating a stir that led Guare to write *Six Degrees of Separation*.

Six Degrees of Separation was the beginning of an intense time for John Guare. The play opened in 1990 to rave reviews, earning it the “New York Drama Critics’ Circle Award for Best Play, an Obie Award, and a Hull Warriner Award” (Plunka 39). The film version was released in 1993 starring Donald Sutherland, Stockard Channing, and Will Smith. Unfortunately, it led to death threats from David Hampton. David Hampton claimed that the plot was based on his life. After several threats David Hampton took John to court for civil damages (40). In the end, Guare won because the courts determined that the play was a tale of fiction. Guare came out of the whole scenario very well receiving an honorary doctorate from Georgetown University. Guare continued teaching and helping to create new and promising playwrights.

John Guare has some strong beliefs about the art of playwriting. Early in life he was inspired by a scene from *Tamburlaine the Great* by Marlowe,

Tamburlaine stood on the stage of the Winter Garden Theater, unrolled an enormous map of the world, and strode across it. That one image so overwhelmed me that I could no longer watch TV miniatures like the original *Marty* set in living rooms like mine. I despised plays with people sitting at kitchen tables pouring their hearts out and the people in the audience oohing when the people in the play turned on the faucet and the real water came out. The kitchen sink. That

was what I hated the most (Guare vii).

Guare also saw something else when he watched John Osborne's *The Entertainer*, "the shock was Olivier played up front to me as if I was not in New York It was the first time I realized that the audience could play a role in the play" (viii). Both of these events influenced his writing tremendously. In examining his earlier plays such as *The House of Blue Leaves*, a viewer can see the lack of the working kitchen sink because it is not instrumental to the story. Guare also has most of his characters talk to the audience during his plays. Every character in *The House of Blue Leaves* talks to the audience at some point. Guare took a chance with combining absurdity with the ideas of farce and black comedy, and he turned them into a career in theatre and the movies.

John Guare has had a great career, and *The House of Blue Leaves* is just one of the many accomplishments he has achieved. Guare had to work his way up from the depths of being an usher, to prize winning student playwright, to awe inspiring Off Broadway master, to screenwriter, and finally to the halls of professorship as a playwriting teacher. He took a chance by continuing a genre that was not overly popular at first, and watched as his popularity grew. John Guare continues to be an inspiration to playwrights everywhere.

Learning Goals or Student Outcomes

As an educator I need to consider the State Standards of Colorado as well as my personal outcomes for my students. Below are the State Standards followed by my desired outcomes for the students at Cañon City High School.

Standard 1. Students develop interpersonal skills and problem-solving capabilities through group interaction and artistic collaboration.

Standard 2. Students understand and apply the creative process to fundamental skills of acting, playwriting, and directing.

Standard 3. Students understand and apply the creative process to skills of design and technical production.

Standard 4. Students understand and relate the role of theatre arts to culture and history.

Standard 5. Students analyze and assess the characteristics, merits, and meanings of traditional and modern forms of dramatic expression.

Standard 6. Students know and apply connections between theatre and other disciplines.

Outcome 1: Students will have an understanding of history and its effect on characterization, plot, and the theme of a play.

Outcome 2: Students will be able to create realistic characters through movement, emotion, and action.

Outcome 3: Students will be able to apply construction skills with set design and function.

Outcome 4: Students will understand the function of the Aristotle model within the structure of the play and how it affects the outcome of the play.

Outcome 5: Students will be able to apply lighting to create an emotional response.

Outcome 6: Students will understand the collaborative process through acting, directing, and technical application to the production as a whole.

September 13, 2010

Today I held auditions. I was fairly disappointed because I thought that I would have more students audition. However, since I offered two days for the audition process the majority of the students chose to sign up for the second day. This could be a precursor to the amount of dedication the students may put forth if they are cast in the show. The auditions were announced two weeks in advance through posters and announcements. I also had preview copies of the script for anyone interested in auditioning. By offering these incentives, I believed that I would have a good turn out. Hopefully tomorrow will be better.

September 14, 2010

Second day of auditions has come and gone. Today was much better. I was surprised at the talent among the freshman this year. There are some real bright spots in the ranks. The part of Artie may be difficult with only three students actually preparing a musical piece for the audition. I have decided to call back all 30 students who auditioned. I will use a monologue for Bananas and Ronnie, and scenes that include the characters, Artie and Bunny, Artie and Billy, and Artie and Corrinna, to see if I can narrow down my options.

September 15, 2010

The first day of call backs went relatively well. I may have created a more difficult selection process; several students stepped up and gave excellent readings. I have two candidates for the part of Artie. One was great in the Artie and Bunny scene, but terrible in the Artie and Corrinna scene. The other student is exactly the opposite. The real hang up is that one of the students has had some reliability issues, which makes the fact that he is the better piano player even more of a challenge in the decision making process. As for the girls, I have

narrowed down the actresses to about 3 for each character. I will hold one more call back day to verify my choices. Maybe with one more day I will see the correct matches.

September 16, 2010

Today helped and confused me more. I found some chemistry that I had not expected. I also found a two students that looked enough alike that they could be related. First, I had the student I had pegged as Bananas read Bunny, the chemistry between her and the actor that played Artie was great. Second, I had two students that resembled each other enough that upon seeing Ronnie the audience may wonder about the true nature of relationship between Billy and Bananas. Again there was some great talent from the underclassman. Two other students that I had hoped would step up and deliver did exactly that. They are both students who don't get much notice, but are moldable. With each opportunity their performances greatly improved.

After some discussion with my confidant (my wife), I have narrowed down the cast. I will offer two understudy roles to two seniors, who will probably be fairly upset. However, they deserve the opportunity if an opening should occur. Besides I cannot over look the chemistry between the other choices. I also have decided to add a Military Policeman (MP). He will not have lines but will have some action in Act II Scene 1. I think this will be a strong cast. Plus, I have more trust in this group than I do for some of the other options. It will be hard to post tomorrow. But, the auditions reaffirmed my desire to get another show on stage during the year to showcase the talent that exists at Cañon City High School.

September 20, 2010

The first rehearsal was today. I started off by congratulating the cast. I lost one member who declined the understudy part which I had predicted would happen. We went over the expectations for the show as far as the rehearsal process, and any requirements that would need

to be met. I went over some of the Given Circumstances of the play with the cast. Then we read through the Act I stopping occasionally for discussion of the dialogue and character implications that coincide with the theme of the play. I also made it clear to the actors that we will need to be very careful when using the innuendos within the show. Furthermore, I informed the actors that we will need to be very careful when presenting the abusive nature of the characters. I stressed that I did not want it to be a play about an abusive husband. Artie needs to be toned down so that he is not too overpowering.

I was able to get a stage manager today as well. I ran into a girl who I had wanted to stage manage last year. With all of her other commitments she was unable to devote the amount of time required. This year she has more time. When I offered her the position she was very excited and began reviewing the script almost immediately. She will be a great asset to this production.

September 21, 2010

Today's rehearsal was all about the second Act. We discussed some more of the given circumstances and the set design. Then we read the second Act, again stopping at various times to discuss any implications that the dialogue presented. The cast agrees that the ending is a powerful moment. I discussed with them the vision I have for the final scene and we agreed that it will have a grand effect.

September 22, 2010

Today we worked with character analysis and met with the school accompanist. I gave the cast a character analysis worksheet that I created several years ago. I went over the list explaining the importance of the questions and how they affect the character. On the worksheet the actor must answer questions about walking, standing and sitting which brings in the specific

movement of the character to help the students understand the character. It also includes socioeconomic status for the character and how that may affect the attitude and the actions of the character. I then explained the idea of polar attitudes and dramatic action. We went over several specific lines to help them grasp the idea. Towards the end of rehearsal we went to the choir room to meet with Mrs. Watson the school accompanist. Mrs. Watson played through all of the songs for us so that the actor playing Artie could get a grasp of the songs, and so that the other actors could hear the melodies that they would be working with throughout the play

September 23, 2010

Today we began blocking Act I. I went through the first 20 pages with the actors giving them the general locations I want them to be in at specific times. They struggled somewhat because the stage was not marked out. We looked at the sketch to give them an idea, but I found that the sketch doesn't translate as well as I had hoped. The walls on the sketch will never line up the same once it is scaled to the actual stage. I will have to make some minor changes to the scaled ground plan. Once I finished the general overview I had the students run through the blocking to get them started with the muscle memory. I need to get the ground plan completed so that we can mark the stage temporarily. Unfortunately, with everything else that is going on in the auditorium I can not leave the stage marked out.

I also had a meeting with my stage crew today. It seems we will have between 8 and 12 students helping out. They are excited to get to work. After seeing the sketch they were even more excited. Things are starting to come together.

September 27, 2010

Blocking Act II was scheduled for today. I worked primarily on Scene 1 because it has the big chase scene and more characters. As the rehearsal started I double checked that I had

everyone's permission slip. Then we worked through the blocking for the first scene. Once I gave them all of my notes, they ran through the scene. The actress playing the second nun is having some trouble with her attitude toward others but, it is not a major problem yet. I will need to keep an eye on her. The other actors are trying hard. We mocked up the chase scene, but I ran into a problem when I started transferring the sketch to the actual scaled ground plan. So we worked with a tentative arrangement until I can get a better grasp on the actual set design.

September 28, 2010

Blocking of Act II Scene 2 was on the menu today. I handed out the schedule for the run of the show. We worked our way through the blocking. The actor playing Artie is having a rough time with the final moment in the play. He is finding it very hard to kill his friend especially since she creates a very cute dog impersonation. The good news is I can probably utilize this later in the rehearsal process. We spent some time discussing the usage of "blue" within the play. I had not given it much thought so I put it down as something to look for when I had a chance.

September 29, 2010

Not a lot going on today. We ran through Act I giving the actors a chance to feel their way around the set. I did remind them to consider the actions that the characters would use. The actors stumbled through the process and are finding interesting additions to the subtext. Not all of them are appropriate, but I will let them explore for now. If they come across something I think adds to the action without being distracting I will allow it to stay in the play. At this time it is still just experimentation.

September 30, 2010

A quick run through of Act II was scheduled for today. The actor playing Ronnie is taking himself too seriously. He needs to tone down the anger. The Second Nun is having too much fun. I played with the concept that Corrinna is yelling out her lines more after she loses her transistors. I think that it will be a usable addition to the character. The actress playing the little nun is doing a great job. I will need to work more with the actress playing Bananas because she is not quite understanding the intentions of her lines.

October 4, 2010

Some scheduling mishaps created an interesting scenario. A meeting had been planned in the auditorium today which was cancelled at the last minute. I had scheduled a read through for the rehearsal since we were going to be unable to use the stage. Then I found out that it was not going to be a problem after all. So I changed the schedule to a run through for Act II. We were successful, and after doing some research on the term "blue" I informed the cast of my findings. Blue is a color of soothing or comfort. If that is related to the monologue in which Artie explains the hospital to Bananas it makes perfect sense that the blue leaves were blue birds and that they didn't fly away they just moved to the next tree. Artie is trying to soothe Bananas so that she will be more willing to accept the hospital. It makes works, however I don't feel that that is the reason that the title has blue in it. I still believe that the feeling of entrapment is the leading idea of the play. Consequently, the meaning of "blue" does make sense within the monologue.

October 5, 2010

An Act I run-through was off and running today. We worked our way through it. The actors are beginning to memorize some of their lines which is good. I need to modify some of the blocking to see if I can clean up a couple of problem areas. Over all it is looking good. It

will be much better once we see the real stage. It is very hard to utilize the set design when others will be using the stage and when the ground plan is still a bit shaky.

October 6, 2010

The choir teacher takes over again. At Cañon City one of the big draws is the show choir. Although a partner in the musical, the instructor is a bit greedy with his students and their time. Since I have 5 of his choir students in my show I lost most of them to his rehearsal today. It is a bit frustrating, but I am fairly flexible. We did manage to work our way through Act II again. I also was able to get the ground plan worked out so that we could place stand-in furniture in place until the real items are available. It helped to have the items in place so that the students who were there were able to better visualize the actual stage for this production. It is a little smaller than they thought.

October 7, 2010

Today we worked on Act I. While the students rehearsed the scene with the official set dimensions, I found some answers to some word questions. I had been asked about the term "Loew's". I found in a Google search that it is the name of a movie theatre in Brooklyn. It was opened in 1929 and closed down in 1977. I also found out the official punctuation of "kowtowing" which is kou tou ing. I also caught a connection between some lines that I had overlooked somehow. Bunny says "chalk it up to experience" and Artie replies, "The blackboard is getting pretty full".

October 8, 2010

The actors have started to get a handle on the characters. This group is doing a great job of understanding the script and the underlying subtext. We are struggling with getting everyone

to rehearsal. I have one student who has been out this whole week. I may need to replace him. Hopefully it is not something major. Overall, I am still positive about the process.

October 11, 2010

Today was the first day off book. Act I was to be memorized by today. It seems that the extra week to read and work out some of the characterization was helpful. For the first day off book it was probably one of the best line rehearsals that I have been a part of. The students did a really good job even in the lengthy monologues. I was pleasantly surprised.

October 12, 2010

Act II was up once more. As I watched the first time I was noticing some characterization problems. After scene 1 I stopped the cast and had them try again, with some coaching of course. The most important note I gave was to visualize what was being said. The second time there was a definite improvement. The actor playing Ronnie finally started to get what he was saying and the implications of what is being said. Tomorrow we will see how the cast does the second day off book.

October 13, 2010

The cast and stage manager are doing well with the lines. Artie is still working on the music. I am not sure if he will be able to learn the music in time. I chose this student because of the chemistry that he and the actress playing Bunny had during call backs. I am not sure how we will work the music piece but, I still have faith in my actor. Also my stage manager is doing an amazing job giving line cues. Many times a stage manager will try to predict what the actors know or try to give them too much which causes tension among the actors. This stage manager is giving just enough and being patient with the actors as they work through the lines.

October 14, 2010

Today we added the television, phone table, and piano to the set. It created some sight line issues from the front rows of the theatre. As long as I don't sell out we can block off the front rows to avoid most of the issues. Also it gave the actors some new obstacles to contend with. I will have to change the chase scene to accommodate the set and to make it more interesting, but I will do that once I get more set pieces in place. The platforms are going to be very important to this process.

October 15, 2010

Some great moments are beginning to come together. There were several instances where the blocking had been changed by the actors. One in particular changed the meaning of Bunny's character. I made sure that it was changed back, and explained how it would completely change the relationship of Artie and Bunny. It will always amaze me how something as subtle as a cross can completely alter a meaning.

Something else that has been bothering me for the past couple of weeks is the idea of whether Bananas' speech is a dream or a reality. Originally I felt that it was very probable. In my research I read that it was a dream. Depending on which way I take it changes several details. If Bananas has actually lived the event at Times Square, then she has one up on Artie, if she hasn't then it takes away one of the reasons for him killing her at the end. I initially believed that it really did happen. Today the actor recited the part and I began to wonder about it again. If a person starts the monologue two lines into the speech it comes across as more of a dream. If you start at the beginning it still seems that it is probable.

In the end I believe it is entirely possible for Artie to kill her either way. I feel that there is enough evidence from the dialogue that proves his capability and desire to be rid of her as a

burden. I will definitely make a decision on the truth in the writing, and whether it is a dream or reality. I am just not entirely sure which angle to take at this moment.

October 18, 2010

Today was the first off book rehearsal for the second Act, but I have other concerns today. I have to share students this week with the All State Choir Rehearsals. It is hard when the talented students are overly involved. We will plug away this week, however. Rehearsal went pretty smooth other than the chase scene. It is still not producing the proper effect. Plus, with loose platforms it is too dangerous to get too carried away yet. The platforms are ninety percent finished. My stage crew is going to come in again tomorrow to continue work. I am concerned about my time frame for completing the set. I am unable to put pieces together because of the annual fall concert on Monday the 25th and Tuesday the 26th. Once that is finished I can, hopefully, get caught up. The poster is looking good with just a few minor edits to make. I just have to remember to stay calm.

October 19, 2010

Today we ran Act I. I began stopping the scene today to work on specific details. The actors have begun to just flow and are missing the details. After frequent starts and stops I believe that the show is beginning to come back to the author's intent. We spent time on several specific areas that needed attention. One was a cross from downstage center to center stage that was very awkward for the actor. After several attempts I modeled how it should look and the actor finally gained an understanding of how it should feel. I also found that we are going to have to make some more blocking changes once the platforms are complete and in place. The actors are liable to stumble if we don't work it out soon.

Another concern has come up in regards to the publicity. Several years ago I rated a show so that young audiences would not attend mostly because I didn't want my show to be their babysitter. I received numerous calls from concerned parents and community members about the content of the show being too mature for high school students which were completely based only on the poster saying PG 13. The concerned citizens did not believe that it could be appropriate if it was being rated. These concerns were irrelevant once the production opened and the community was able to see the reasoning for the rating. I am trying to avoid that dilemma with this show. However, some of the content is definitely more mature. So in an effort to come up with the best way to warn the general public I consulted several administrators. Hopefully, by tomorrow I will be able to narrow down the proper way to address the community on this issue, and avoid the calls from concerned citizens.

October 20, 2010

Act II was rough without scripts, but it could have been much worse. There are a couple of actors who still need to work on their lines. I changed the delivery of a few lines for flow. I modified the blocking a bit in a couple of places. The biggest change today was the dying swan routine. I did a little research and found a YouTube clip of an actual performance of the "Dying Swan" from *Swan Lake* as performed on Ed Sullivan in 1970. It then came to me that it could be a nice sight gag if the actor actually attempted a ballet type bow to imitate the dying swan that Ronnie had seen, but did it rather poorly. I attempted to model it and told the actor to take a look at it on YouTube. I then want him to do something creative with it. I am really looking forward to seeing what develops.

October 21, 2010

This was the first rehearsal I was able to really concentrate on Act I. I stopped them several times to fix some things. The actor playing Artie was dropping the emotion in a couple of places where it was crucial that he be in the moment. Also, the blocking in a couple of areas became more jumbled with the addition of spike tape outlining the walls and appliances. The good news is that some of my original blocking looks much better now that the set pieces are more pronounced. It took the actors some time to get a handle on the actual locations of these obstacles. The show is becoming more about the detail which is always good. Costumes were one of these details.

I had my Head of Wardrobe (HOW) and my costumer in today to start pulling costumes. Since our wardrobe is well equipped we found several costumes. Unfortunately, it was difficult to work with my HOW. She is a student that is still coping with the loss of her favorite teacher and the change of me taking that teacher's place. We have not found common ground yet, however it was a great opportunity for me to teach. The student believed that she would just grab clothes and we would put the actors into them. After several attempts at explaining what I needed for the characters she finally began to realize that time period and climate really do matter. One particular discussion concerned a pair of contemporary camouflage pants. She thought that if it was green it would work as Army fatigues. After going over the finer points of the historical significance, she realized what was needed and went to wardrobe and found a perfect costume. It is always a great day when a student learns something.

October 22, 2010

What a chaotic mess! Today we were missing four actors, so the rehearsal was not as efficient as it could have been. We did get through the rehearsal with some more changes due to added set definition. The actors have been cheating a little without the walls being marked

properly. When they realized where the walls were really supposed to be they stopped in their tracks. We did get it worked out, which also makes the blocking look better. For the actors it was a great opportunity to work through some details to make the play clearer. We also took measurements on some of the actors we had missed on Thursday and found a couple more costumes. But, I am looking forward to next week so that I can really breakdown the scenes. I should have all of my actors for most of the rehearsals even though we are only rehearsing 3 days due to the fall concert, and the end of the quarter. But, I will get a great set day next Friday.

October 26, 2010

Read through was a success. Today I had the cast bring in their scripts for a read through. We read through the script to get an idea of lines that were commonly being missed during the rehearsals. It also helps the students get one more reading in case they are not doing their homework.

October 27, 2010

We had a set back today. I had planned to tear apart Act I and give it a complete once over, but unfortunately I was unable to do that with my actress playing Bunny out sick. I was able to go through some scenes with Artie and Bananas, and do some character work, but it was not as successful as I had hoped.

October 28, 2010

We are getting down to it. I was able to work with Billy today. There are several instances where Billy needs to really react to Artie's treatment of Bananas. I had the opportunity to start and stop the actor several times to get a few looks at the specific angle to approach each scene; very productive for the actor.

Also, we narrowed down the costumes. We have taken care of the Nuns, Corrinna, Ronnie, the White man, MP 1, and Bananas, I still have a few items to finalize Bunny and Artie. MP 2 is going to be a tough one to finish. Fatigues for a larger young man will be difficult to get a hold of. I should have thought this through better. I will have to come up with a new plan on this one. Maybe our ROTC program might have something.

November 1, 2010

The first half hour was dedicated to setting up props. Once the actual rehearsal started the T.V. placement became a major issue. Its location is blocking the action on the couch. After several attempts at changing its position I decided to move it to downstage center. After some deliberation it was moved back to its original location. The television is still a sight line issue. I will probably move it down a step to see if that will help with the sight line problems.

Another question arose about the line "what else am I going to call a little Italian girl." After some research I was unable to find a solution. It has to have some kind of significance. I will continue to research this item.

The set is still not complete. We had a great set day Friday, but Saturday was not as successful. Too many tired and cranky students made it difficult to get things accomplished. Also, the lingering effects of a non-technical theatre teacher are still creating a problem. The student Master Carpenter is falling into the old mentality that since he is the lead he can dictate, and he doesn't have to do the jobs which he considers below him. This is another instance where taking over for a 27 year veteran who allowed students to run everything with little to sometimes no supervision, remains a struggle. I will continue to try to show by example the necessity of teamwork and try to remove the cancer of manipulation and dictatorship in the department. The

lack of energy from working so hard on Friday was also a large contributing factor. Hopefully things will change after we have all received some sleep and stepped away from the situation.

November 2, 2010

Fine tuning a show is always preferable in advance of the opening of the show. The actors are doing well. Just minor issues are popping up that are easily remedied. The lead actor is struggling with the piano. I am beginning to second guess my choice in actor. However, looking back at the choices I feel that based on character I have picked the most talented actor. Although he is still not where he needs to be on the piano, he is working diligently and is by far the best fit for every other part of the character. The actress playing Bunny is a bit of a let down at this point. I expected more out of her. She is having health issues, but I still need to see more. Her phrasing is off and so are her lines. She has a general understanding of lines; however she needs to spend more time on truly understanding what she is saying.

November 3, 2010

The show still needs fine tuning. There are some light bulbs coming on and characters are growing. The actors are getting very close to needing an audience. Tech on the other hand is still incomplete. Tomorrow we bring in the Tech crew so that they can get an idea of what will be happening in the show. Hopefully tomorrow I will be able to get the remainder of the set finalized and built. But, I have been introduced to a semi-major issue.

It seems that the community band is scheduled to hold a concert on our stage this Sunday. No one seems to know anything about this concert except that they will need the stage that currently is loaded in with the set of *The House of Blue Leaves*. This will change both the lighting and the set construction if this concert is to be held in the auditorium. This could put my

crew into a major time crunch. I am hopeful that this may be resolved with grace and understanding.

November 4, 2010

With the need for costumes, publicity, and the removal of the set, it has been another one of those days. The costume parade revealed that some of the costumes needed repairs, as well as some costume pieces are still missing. It will be necessary to make the MP arm bands, and the name tag for Artie's uniform. I currently have two seamstresses that can take care of this for me. But overall the costumes are looking very much like the 1960s era clothing. Today was also a photo call. The local paper sent over a photographer to take pictures for the article coming out on Saturday. The interviews will be tomorrow. Also, 6 actors and the stage manager attended a booster's luncheon today to help sell tickets for the show. However, as everything was moving the play forward, it took a major hit in the set building process. At some point an administration glitch occurred and the auditorium was over booked. It seems that the Canon City Community Band is supposed to bring their 50 to 60 piece band in for a concert on Sunday. They are asking that we move the set out of the way. This will be quite an undertaking since it is mostly just one large unit. The real dilemma is that I will have to wait and focus lights on Monday rather than tomorrow. It is looking more and more like a personal day may be in order. The best news is that the Metal Shop class is cleaning up the refrigerator and making the bars for the windows. The final dress rehearsal may be quite an experience.

November 5, 2010

Today was the first technical rehearsal. There is a need for several modifications to the light hang that is currently in place. However, with the impending concert I am unable to actually make the changes. The set will continue to be worked on this weekend. The sound

effects seem to be working well except for the voice of the Pope from the T.V. I have been unable to find the Pope's mass at Yankee stadium in audio form. It has come time to try plan B.

Costumes are looking good all the way around. The Stage Manager, HOW, and myself set down after rehearsal to determine what props and costumes we still needed. The HOW lost the ability to use her sewing machine so we shifted the responsibility to the acting Assistant Director and myself to finish any alterations. We should have everything for the official final dress on Monday.

As for the acting, we still need some fine tuning. There are just a few areas that are not completely solid. Some lines are still foggy, so the students are modifying lines. After a brief explanation of the importance of the text and that it is not ok to change a line because they will change the meaning of the play, the students assured me that they would definitely be taking a look at their scripts over the weekend.

November 8, 2010

The final dress rehearsal was a success. We had a few minor issues with costumes. Plus our makeup is still not in. As for the acting it is coming along well. Tonight we decided to not actually wet the tea bags in Act II scene 2. The actor playing Billy really struggled with them creating an irritation in his eyes. Furthermore, they would completely ruin his makeup had we been able to try it out. The actor was not reacting accurately as well. When Bananas enters he is supposed to see her and then react by calling her Georgina. The actor was not looking at the actress when she entered. After some directorial discussion he made the change to watch her cross down to center stage. Beyond that I feel the actors are ready for an audience. They are ready for the reactions only an audience can give.

As for the Technical issues of the show, we were able to finish the majority of the set on Saturday. The doors were put into place and the windows were set. The paint was applied and then came the real fun. After a full day of work the stage crew and a few tech crew students moved the entire set to the back of the stage for the concert. It took all 15 of us but the set did move. Then came further stress related information. I had stayed later to finish up some odds and ends that I needed for Monday when the Principal found me and informed me of a pending playoff football game that may be played on Friday. This would interfere with my audience so he offered to move the date to Saturday. With my Thesis Chair arriving on Friday and the scheduling of a close friend's wedding on Saturday I was unable to make the change. The Principal said that we would just have to make it work. It is good to have support from the administration.

November 9, 2010

Tonight we did a quick run through because of a conflict with the counseling department who had a college night scheduled in the auditorium. I had considered canceling but, decided it would be better to do a run through than to not rehearse at all. It worked very well since we were able to practice the technical pieces once more. Plus, it helped the actors fine tune some of their reactions and timing.

November 10, 2010

Opening night went well. We had a fairly small crowd, but the actors picked up the pace of the show because of the audience's energy. A sound cue was just a bit late, but it did happen eventually. The actor that is playing Bunny has really started to shine. Her acting is back to what it was in the audition. She has really struggled with life and has not really been putting in a

100 percent. I did not worry too much because she has a lot of talent. She is turning it on just in time.

With an audience we realized that the ending was too rushed. We had a lot of people laughing while they should be realizing that Bananas is dying. I wanted it to be a sweet moment that led to a tragic end. Unfortunately, it went far too fast. I made some changes that would slow it down. Hopefully that will create a more favorable response.

The former Director of Dramatics approached me after the show and thought that I should change my curtain call. I had put some thought into the curtain call and after a couple of attempts I had put Corrinna coming out just before Ronnie, Bunny, and Billy coming out together. The former director thought that I should have given the actress playing Bunny her own curtain call. Even though I am struggling to get out the former director's shadow, I did agree with her. So during the notes I made the change. Corrinna and Billy will come in together followed by Bunny, Bananas and finally Artie.

The lighting cues were also finalized today or so we thought. My light technician and I set the final cues for the show and added in the backlight for the curtain behind the windows. After trying a couple of ideas to light the curtain we determined that the best location was going to be directly above and behind the curtain. What we also determined was that just two lights will not produce the effect that we were going for. Tomorrow we will add in a third light for the final two shows.

November 11, 2010

The night started out interesting. The actress playing Bunny arrived in tears. She was very upset about several things including the past relationship with the actor playing Billy. After working on her makeup she was better. Her performance was the best so far. I attempted to

congratulate her during the intermission; however she was talking to the ex-boyfriend. After some consideration I decided not to interrupt.

The new ending was accepted better by the audience. It took longer to build to the strangulation, which in turn gave the audience an opportunity to keep up with the scene. We still had a few laughs but I was able to explain to the actors that it was more of an awkward laugh because the audience did not know how else to react from the shock of the moment.

The lighting change made a difference. Having three lights on the back curtain allowed for more color saturation. The light tech also added in a few changes that also heightened the time of day throughout the play. Overall, I had no complaints on the lights. In fact, I am excited that he took the initiative.

Finally, the curtain call change was also a good choice. It was good to see the actress playing Bunny get the added recognition for a job well done. It also worked out better because of the relationship issues between she and the actor playing Billy. Hopefully, that piece will become less of an issue by tomorrow.

November 12, 2010

The final show showed me the flaws that I had missed. As I watched the show I noticed some more details that I should have considered earlier in the run. In the beginning Bunny takes off her coat and then opens the window to let in some fresh, cold air. That doesn't make much sense. Artie was still having some issues with deciding when to talk to the audience and when to talk to Bananas. I noticed too that Artie was struggling a little here and there with lines. However, overall, I was very impressed with the show and thought that it was successful.

It was also reassuring to have my Thesis Chair talk to the actors after the performance. First, she was a hit because the students really appreciated the praise and constructive criticism.

She also alluded to items that students had put time and effort into so that the work did not go unnoticed as is the case with uninformed audiences. For me she helped to solidify, in the eyes of my Asst. Director and the students, that I do know what I am talking about and that the research paid off in the end.

**CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
THEATRE ARTS GRADUATE PROGRAM**

THESIS PROJECT/ PRODUCTION PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

STUDENT- Andrew Fisher

SS#- 529-21-8390

UNDER CONSIDERATION IS DIRECTION OF: *The House of Blue Leaves*

EVALUATOR'S NAME: Christina Barrigan

TITLE: Associate Professor

PLACE OF PERFORMANCE: Del Pizzo Performing Arts Center in Cañon City High School

DATE OF VIEWING: 12 November 2010

DESCRIPTION OF PERFORMANCE VENUE:

The Del Pizzo Performing Arts Center in Cañon City High School is a 450 seat auditorium that is proscenium stage with an exaggerated apron or small thrust. The stage is quite wide and deep with adequate wing space. The audience seating is slightly raked so the stage floor can be a viable scenic element. The stage is lit by two cove positions, two front-of-house positions and three over stage electrics. The sound system is adequate for playback of music.

DESCRIPTION OF CONCEPT:

Andrew expresses a desire to have the audience feel the desperate need for fame and then the agony of not being able to achieve it. His ideas regarding the environment are meant to underline the characters' economic and emotional state. This would be achieved by a careful balance of bright colors selectively in the settings, properties and clothing with more drab colors for most everything else. This combination of brightness and shabby drab is intended to illustrate the balance of hilarious comedy with the ultimate tragedy of Artie's life.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTUAL PRODUCTION DIRECTION AND/OR REALIZED DESIGN OF SETS, PROPS, COSTUMES, LIGHTING, SOUND:

Sets – The setting is Artie's apartment. A box set showing us the living room, dining area and kitchen. Also visible were doors to the bathroom, Ronnie's room, Bananas' room and the front door. There was a working double-hung window upstage center with a small cyclorama behind it. The walls were a drab green with brown doors, the dining area and kitchen were up a level from the living area. The walls and kitchen floor (platform area) were textured to reflect patterns of the material, in this case, wood grain and linoleum. The kitchen was furnished with delightful appliances: the refrigerator and stove were the appropriate period and all the conveniences of a kitchen were present. The sink in the island with dishes drying next to it was particularly appealing.

Props – Delightfully careful attention was paid to props! The furniture was all believably from the 1950s or 1960s including the chairs around the dining table. Hand props such as Bunny's camera, binoculars, and even the telephone and TV were carefully selected to support the time period. There was wonderful food-stuff in the refrigerator when it was opened! Usually with shows like this, there is some singular

prop that is noticeably from Target or Wal-mart (and thus 2010) because it was difficult to find, but there was nothing on stage that appeared jarringly contemporary.

Costumes – Were likewise carefully selected to support the time period and enhance each character’s personality. Bunny’s pink dress (sleeveless in the cold, brrr!) and plastic boots and Bananas’ blue bathrobe, helped contrast their vivid personalities with Artie’s tiredness and defeat that was reflected in his zoo-keeper’s khakis. Corrinna and Billy were both suitably, beautifully dressed although Billy’s bright red turtleneck under a blazer was the most contemporary looking costume on stage. The nun costumes seemed very synthetic and perhaps a bit ill-fitting. I was also impressed that the Jr. ROTC helped with the MP costumes.

Lighting – For the most part was adequate. There were some unfortunate dark spaces on stage, causing uneven effects, but Andrew was able to convey a sense of interior, morning, day, and night with the light. The small cyclorama that was upstage of the window was a help to this sense of time of day too. The only pity was that it was not pulled tight and so there were obvious drape wrinkles, changing the effect of “sky”. I particularly enjoyed the drastic shift in light from a realistic to a highly psychological space when Artie kills Bananas.

Sound – It was lovely to have a live piano throughout the play and having the actual recording of the Pope’s address from his 1965 visit to New York City was a wonderful touch. Preshow music was soft and romantic from the time period, intermission was peppier, TV show themes and music from the period.

HOW DID THE PRODUCTION DIRECTION OR DESIGN IMPLEMENT THE IDEAS EXPRESSED IN THE CONCEPT STATEMENT?

The overall effect of the setting was that of shabbiness, and tiredness with pops of color. The setting may not have felt constrictive or small, but it did feel oppressive. Artie’s performance communicated a world weariness that only lifted when he was talked into Bunny’s vision of the American Dream. The settings and clothes very ably communicated the economic status of the characters as well as their various professions and psychological states.

APPROPRIATENESS OF CHOICE OF SCRIPT FOR ABILITIES OF PERFORMERS, AUDIENCE, VENUE, AND/OR ACADEMIC SETTING?

While this script may not have the immediate impression of appropriateness for a high school, it offered Canyon City High School’s drama department the opportunity to craft some very unique and specific characters. Most of the characters in *The House of Blue Leaves* struggle with issues of wanting something they cannot quite achieve, loss, and frustration that is probably fairly accessible to teenagers. Andrew’s students created successfully human characters and a well-considered and complete environment for them to live in.

ADDRESS THE FOLLOWING IF APPLICABLE: CLEAR DELINEATION OF UNITS OF ACTION, MOTIVATED BLOCKING, VISUALLY INTERESTING COMPOSITION, VISUAL EXPRESSION OF METAPHOR, USE OF PICTURIZATION IN STORYTELLING, CLEAR AND BELIEVABLE CHARACTERIZATION, ADEQUATE USE OF BODY AND VOICE, UNITY OF PRODUCTION ELEMENTS, CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING.

The staging, overall, was solid. Actors allowed their characters’ interest in the space lead them around it while being careful not to upstage or block each other. This script has an interesting challenge in that the characters have lines that alternately interact with the other characters and then address the audience with expository information. It was clear this was a challenge for the students to make a strong differentiation

between these two styles of lines as then were not always successful in making it clear that they were addressing the audience. Blocking, while largely motivated, was a bit static, the actors needed to use more of the stage and deliver more of their lines to each other. The constant "cheating out" is what muddled the differentiation of lines delivered to the audience.

It was clear that Andrew has students of varying skill levels in his cast, and he correspondingly cast the larger parts with the more skilled actors. The Nuns, and the MPs were less experienced students and they did a good job with remembering their lines and blocking while attempting the emotions of their characters. The MPs are blocked in a crazy Benny Hill-type chase where they successfully remember their blocking, but seem to forget their objective of catching Ronnie. Artie plays the piano several times throughout the show, and Joshua McBride who played Artie, can. His diction suffered frequently, but highlights of his performance were the piano playing, his portrayal of tiredness and his intensity when he kills Bananas. There were many wonderful moments on stage: Bunny Flingus' (acted by Katie Garcia) accent was delightful, funny and consistent. Clearly, the actress committed fully to that choice and it helped define her character. Bananas and her mental illness was a challenge met by Shannon Angelo-Serber, who took us through her confusion and had a wonderful discovery moment about her fingernails which lead into her potentially non-sequitur line about them. Corrinna, played by Anna Carochi, is hard of hearing and part of the action of the play is reliant on her difficulty in hearing. The actress resisted the urge to over-play this aspect of her character and seemed to work the difficulty on a smaller, more personal level. I really appreciated her efforts to hear the other people in the room without seeming too obvious. She also found wonderful business for herself in-between her few lines.

Andrew's young actors tackled this play with a lot of sensitivity to the humanity of the characters which allowed them to create a wonderful night of theatre. The range of skill in his cast illustrates the students have opportunities to grow within his program. As they are young, they still need to work on diction, maintaining their objective in the scene and perfecting realistic acting techniques. Andrew, as a director, needs to continue to help his students find ways to speak and listen to each other and help them find ways to use the set for motivation to use more of the stage. He should consider what the distance between actors does in a scene and how it can change the intensity of a scene.

WITHIN THE CONFINES OF THIS PARTICULAR PERFORMANCE VENUE, WAS THIS PRODUCTION SATISFACTORY OR UNSATISFACTORY?

This production was extremely satisfactory within the confines of this performance venue, community and school. Andrew has taken a relatively difficult play and guided his students through the expression of the humanity of these characters and their struggles.

Self-Evaluation

The Cañon City High School production of *The House of Blue Leaves* by John Guare was very successful. The set was functional even though it did not turn out exactly as it was envisioned. The lighting worked to create the changes of both day and night and changes in mood. The costumes fit the period well and helped to discern between the various characters in the play. The props and set pieces also did their part to create the world of the Schaughnassy's in 1965. Finally, the actors did an amazing job of bringing the highs and lows of this tragic-comedy to the stage. Overall, I feel that my expectations were reached and in some cases exceeded. However, as in every production, evaluating it from the beginning through post production is the only way to get a clear picture of its success.

The set for *The House of Blue Leaves* was one of the major strengths of this production. It started out as a struggle as I tried to create a sense of the interior of a high rise apartment complex that would fit onto the Del Pizzo Performing Arts stage. The challenge to create a box on a triangular stage took some creative thinking. Also, trying to pin corners and add obstacles was very thought provoking. As I began working with my crew I realized that my assumptions, that the crew was ready and had the necessary skills for the building process, were inaccurate. The students were not as well versed in the ways of construction as I had assumed, and they were amazed by the accurate set pieces that I had acquired. Building the set became an important educational tool due to the construction and historical nature of its design. It gave the crew an insight on how to create objects and designs that would give the audience a true sense of 1965. It also allowed me to use the set as a model for my Drama I class who was engaged in a unit on technical theatre. The set became an influential, educational piece for the crew, the Drama class, and the actors.

The actors found the set to be influential in their character development and movement. In the beginning, the actors had a general idea of where walls were and where they would be stepping onto platforms eventually. They struggled with the real sense of the set for the first two or three weeks because spiking the stage was out of the question with the Fremont Civic Theatre play and the Fall concert both being performed on the stage during the early part of rehearsal. When the platforms were added a new sense of closeness began to overcome them. Furthermore, when the walls were added the level of tension grew even more. The actors themselves felt confined by their surroundings which aided in their character development. The set was very instrumental in helping to create the sense of entrapment that I believed Artie felt throughout the play and especially at the end.

A second strength to the production was the lighting at the end of the show. I had originally wanted to engulf the stage with blue light. As I worked with my lighting technician in setting up the cues for the show he began to realize how powerful lighting can be. We worked through the show scene by scene and he noticed the variations that a subtle change could make on the emotion of the show. We had not changed out the red gels from the Fall concert, which gave the light tech a great idea. As we reached the strangulation scene he began experimenting with the reds to see what it would look like. When he showed and explained his theory on using red in the background and having the blue wash the front of the stage, he created a new dimension to the play. This change in the color helped to create an even more awe inspiring ending for the audience and for the actor playing Artie.

Even though it was a struggle I felt that I picked the best actors for this production. I had two options for the roles of Artie and Bunny. Option one were two seniors who had professed animosity towards me and also expected to be given roles because of who they were. Option two

was two actors that were trustworthy but would take some work. During the audition process I realized that trustworthy would be my best option. During the rehearsal process I began to question this choice. The actress playing Bunny has been a top notch performer in every instance that I have witnessed her. But, during the rehearsal she was struggling with personal issues including family and her health. There were times I had felt that she may not be able to play the part of Bunny successfully. The actor playing Artie was also worrying me with his lack of piano playing ability. As the show grew closer, however, I realized they were the perfect choices. The actress playing Bunny began to demonstrate all of the qualities that I had observed, and the actor playing Artie began plunking out chords and notes on the piano. In the end they received the recognition they deserved for a job well done.

The other strengths to the play were the costumes and props. Thankfully, most of the costumes were found in our wardrobe room. The Assistant Director and Head of Wardrobe completed any work that was needed to repair those costumes. We were also able to borrow two ROTC uniforms for the MP outfits. In the props department I was able to acquire a 1949 refrigerator, a 1950 television, and a 1951 electric stove. Each of these items dressed the set perfectly for the time period. A last minute idea, using a white dish pan for the sink, solidified the kitchen. As the show moved into tech rehearsal the students on the stage crew took on the job of prop's masters. They stepped into this role and found more props and even created a few for an added realism. These students did an amazing job of cluttering the stage enough to create a mess but not overwhelming the stage. They also made sure that the food for Act II scene 2 was prepared each night and that all the props were put away for the next night.

The final strength to this production, that I must address, was the Stage Manager and Assistant Director. The Stage Manager for this show was a student I had found last year who

seemed to be a student in need of a purpose. When I approached her about the position she was very excited. She worked very hard and diligently throughout the production. The Assistant Director is the Art teacher here at the school. She had always been the Assistant to the former director so she became my Assistant as well. I have found that our definitions of assistant director are not the same. Even though she did not attend rehearsals and did very little directing at all, she was a valuable asset to the costumes and props. She made sure everything was mended and helped locate many of the hard to find props that we needed for the show. The Stage Manger and Assistant Director did a great job of moving the concept of this show forward. Even though this show had some great attributes, it like many other shows had some areas that created stress.

The blocking at certain points and Artie's piano playing were two problematic areas within the production. At Cañon City High School there has been a large show choir and musical push for many years. Stepping into the role as Director of Dramatics at Cañon City has been a complicated venture. It is the practice of directors in this community to have their actors move down stage as often as possible and to speak or sing full front to the audience. The use of angles is not a practiced part of the acting and performing in Cañon City. However, the stage being angled and brought out into the audience allows for more realistic blocking so that students can interact with each other and also perform to the audience. There were several instances where the habits overrode the direction which caused awkward movement from the actors. Artie had trouble with this awkwardness on several occasions. He did improve as the rehearsals moved forward, but he never was completely comfortable. I also felt that the actor playing Artie could have worked harder on the piano playing. There were obvious moments where he was uncomfortable as the actor singing and playing at the same time. However, I had a choice

between acting ability coupled with desire in one actor and strong piano skills and not very reliable in another. If I had the choice to make again I would still pick the desire over the piano skills.

Another weakness brings me to the venue's limitations in lighting. I knew from the beginning that it would be a struggle to light the stage the way I would have liked. I was able to create a light plot that utilized the changes in time of day and gave a great ending moment for the production, however there were still dark spots in important areas on stage, and we started out with no lighting behind the window. I readjusted several fixtures in an effort to rid the stage of the dark areas without success. The more I adjusted, the more I found that with the difference in instruments I was also getting a wide variety of brightness. After discussion with a professional, I should have used the cove lighting to help with the dark areas. As for the window, my light technician and I played with several ideas until we finally came up with a solution to the problem. We tried a group of flood lights followed by two ellipsoidal fixtures, which finally led us to using three ellipsoidal fixtures and a white sheet directly behind the windows. It still did not provide the desired effect completely, but it did give the illusion of night changing to day.

The other major venue limitation is involved with the scheduling of the auditorium. It is a well used school and community auditorium. During the rehearsal process of *The House of Blue Leaves* there was a Fremont Civic Theatre (FCT) production, a fall choir concert, and a community band concert. Working around FCT was not very difficult because they were using the auditorium during the beginning of the rehearsal process. The Fall concert was scheduled for the Monday and Tuesday two weeks before tech week. This complicated the set construction because we had to take down the platforms that we had previously placed. We also could not adjust the lighting until after the concert which put us behind in that department. Then I was

notified that the Sunday before tech week the administration office had scheduled a band concert and had not informed the school. This scheduling created a very interesting situation. The majority of the set had to be finished on Saturday. If I put the set up, there would not be room to accommodate the band. The final solution; build the set and push it back as far as we could in the space. It took fifteen strong teenagers but the entire set was pushed back far enough to accommodate the band. It was a stressful situation but we did overcome it. The lighting was again postponed but the tech crew put in some extra hours and we were able to get the lighting and the cues finished before the opening show.

The students involved in the production process did meet the outcomes based on the final product that the production provided. During the first week of production the actors were asked to do a character analysis and to read through the play in an effort to determine the plans and complications that lead to the culminating final moment of the play. In doing this table work the actors were able to put together the plot structure and grasp the meanings of the play sooner in the rehearsal process. This understanding of the storyline outlines the coverage of State Standard 5 and Outcome 4. The actors were also able to gain an understanding of the historical nature of the play and differences that the given circumstance created in the development of each character. This understanding demonstrates the use of State Standards 2, 4, and 5; and Outcomes 1 and 2. The actors proved that they could work together, play together, and create an artistic work that was professional and complete. This accomplishment meets Standard 1 and Outcome 6. The students who worked on the set, props, costumes, and lighting, were able to understand the historical and emotional aspects of the play to develop a specific moment in time, which coincides with Standards 1 and 3 and encompasses a bit of Standard 6. It also includes Outcomes 3, 5, and 6. Students were able to meet all of the Standards and Outcomes that were

set forth. However, it is important to note that not all Standards and Outcomes were addressed as well as they probably could have been, but they were met at some level.

Overall the Cañon City High School's Tiger Theatre production of *The House of Blue Leaves* by John Guare was successful. The actors worked diligently to create a complete depiction of John Guare's work. The set crew worked many hours and to create a set and props that fulfilled the research and historical time period of the play. The process involved in the lighting was very educational to both students in the CCHS tech crew as well as the students who helped out because they had a free block. The costumes were a joint effort of teachers, students, and my wife, who were able to find, mend, and create a great visualization of the characters and their personalities. Everyone that had a hand in this production gave a 100 percent effort. Furthermore, based on the reaction of the audience, colleagues, and professionals, *The House of Blue Leaves* was able to create a thought provoking, discussion starting, and emotion producing review just as it did in 1971 and again in 1986; a tribute to a job very well done by the writer, actors, and the production staff that brought it together for this run in Cañon City, Colorado.

This has been an educational, exhausting, and exhilarating experience. My teaching and directing are incalculably better. This production met my expectations across the board. As in any situation I believe we are never perfect. There were instances in the production that needed to be handled differently or could have been changed to make them clearer. Some details failed to be realized, some were realized too late, and some were never realized. That is the nature of the process. We try to incorporate everything but none of us are perfect. This was by far my best production in many aspects, but it is also just a step in the process of creating theatre at a professional level every time a director takes on a script. I look forward to seeing what the next production will bring.

Other Documentation

Research Images

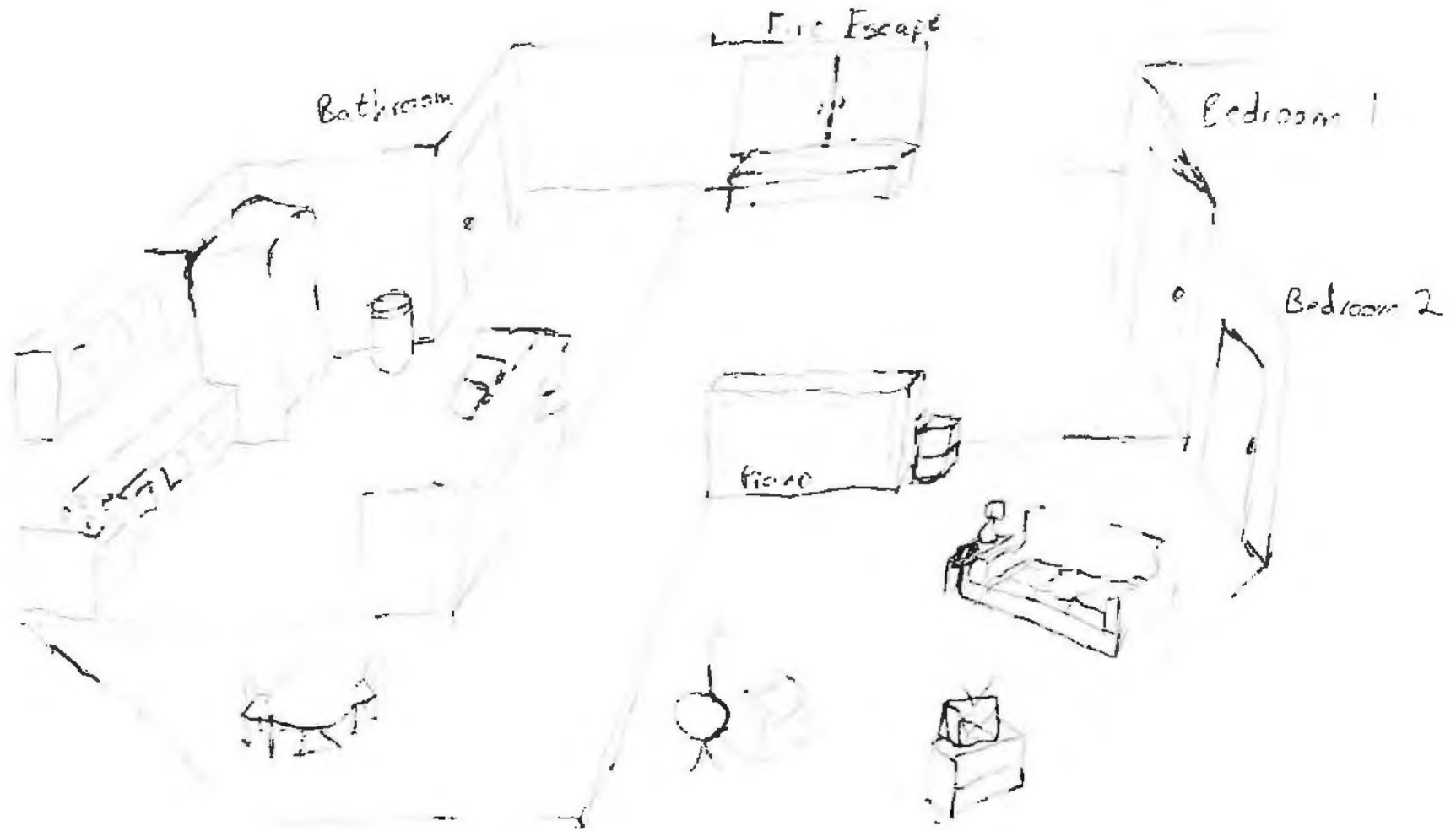
1950 Crosley 10-401 10" (USA)

© 2002 TVhistory.TV

Pope Paul VI

Annette Funicello

Set Design Sketch The House of Blue Leaves



30 Rendering "House of Blue Leaves"

By Andrew Fisher

April 2011

For CCHS

48 62 61 63 64 65 66 67 68 48 62 61 63 64 65 66 67 68 48 62 61

Red Blue Green



Back Window

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Special
(Leaves)

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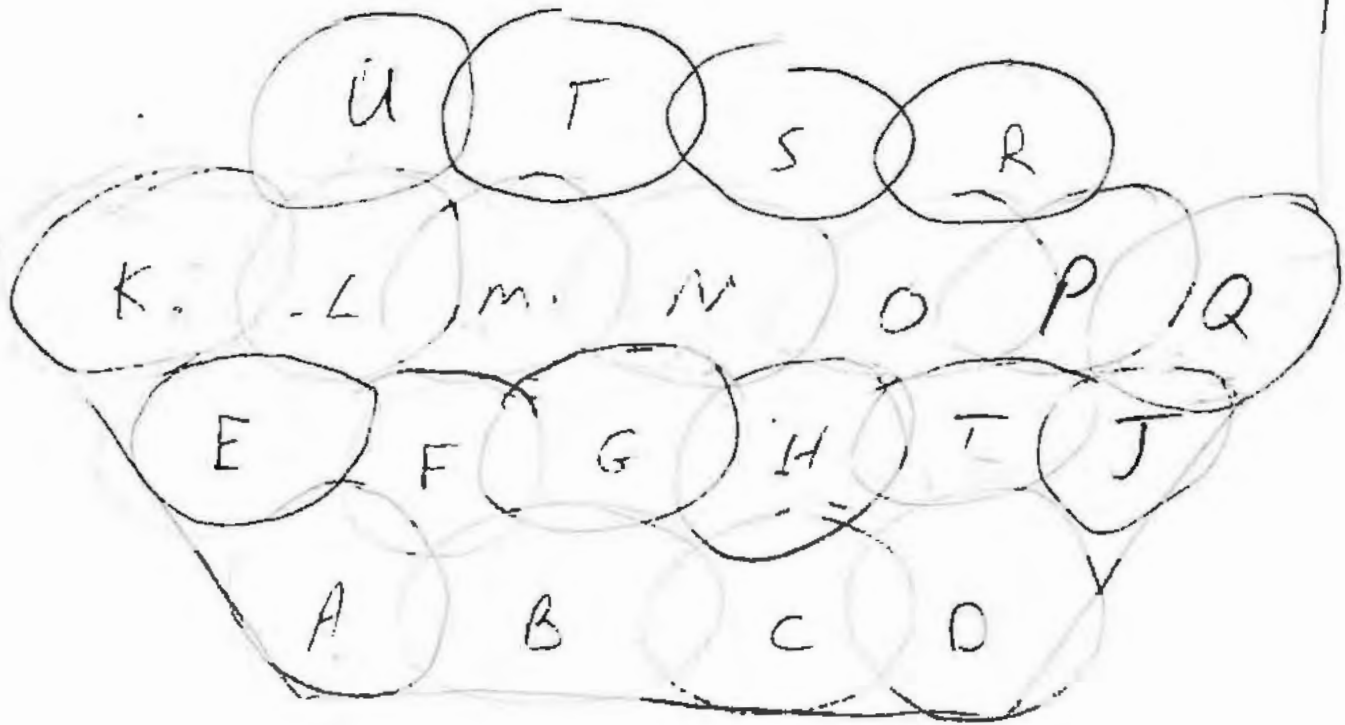
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: Special

Show: House of Blue Leaves
 Date: 11-10-12-10
 Crew: Kamron Prody Katie
 Design by: A Fisher



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Appendix A- Units Act I

The House of Blue Leaves

Unit 1

Act I

Appendix B-Supporting Materials

THE HOUSE OF BLUE LEAVES

Cast List

The first rehearsal for all cast members will be Monday, September 20, 2010 at 3:00pm in the Room 105.

Artie:	Josh McBride
Bunny:	Katie Garcia
Bananas:	Shannon Angelo-Surber
Ronnie:	Ryan Dufresne
Billy:	Nick Grayson
Corrinna:	Anna Carochi
Little Nun:	Kendra Lords
Middle Nun:	Allison Mills
Older Nun:	Friederike Haensch
MP 1:	D.J. Cochran
MP 2:	Jeremy VanGelder
White Man:	Barrett Robertson
Understudy: (Artie, Billy, Ronnie)	Richard Farrar
Understudy: (Bunny, Older Nun, Little Nun)	Alex Bivens

The House of Blue Leaves: Rehearsal Schedule

Conflicts and questions should be discussed with Mr. Fisher

October, 3:00-5:00pm

Friday, 1st – No Rehearsal

Monday, 4th – Line Through
Room 105

Tuesday, 5th – Act 1
4:00pm

Wednesday, 6th – Act 2

Thursday, 7th – Act 1

Friday, 8th – Act 2

Monday, 11th – Lines Due, Act 1

Tuesday, 12th – Act 2

Wednesday, 13th – Act 1

Thursday, 14th – Act 2

Friday, the 15th – Act 1

Monday, 18th – Lines Due, Act 2

Tuesday, 19th – Act 1

Wednesday, 20th – Act 2

Thursday, 21st – Act 1

Friday, 22nd – Act 2
All State

Monday, 25th – No rehearsal

Tuesday, 26th – Line through w/ Scripts

Wednesday, 27th – Act 1

Thursday, 28th – Act 2
Plan Ahead, Madrigals

Friday, 29th – No Rehearsal

November

Monday, 1st – Full Show

Tuesday, 2nd – Full Show

Wednesday, 3rd – Full Show

Thursday, 4th – Full Tech
3:00–9:00pm

Friday, 5th – Full Tech
3:00–9:00pm

Saturday, 6th – Keep Date Open
In case of rehearsal

Monday, 8th – Full Dress Rehearsals
3:00–10:00pm

Tuesday, 9th – Full Dress Rehearsals
3:00–10:00pm

Wednesday, 10th – Matinee Fundraiser
4:00pm

Thursday, 11th – Opening Night
7:00pm

Friday, 12th – Performance
7:00pm

Saturday, 13th – Strike
10:00am

Letter to Parents

CCHS Tiger Theatre

2010 Production

The House of Blue Leaves

***By
John Guare***

Congratulations! You have been cast in the CCHS production of *The House of Blue Leaves*.

You have been selected for a chance to be a part of a memory filled experience that will require hard work and dedication. As your director, I am excited to work with you to make this a professional and top quality production.

Rehearsals for this production will be scheduled Monday through Friday from 3:00-5:00 p.m. beginning September 20th until November 3rd. Beginning November 4th, we will begin scheduling longer rehearsals. Rehearsals will be extended from 3:00-9:00 p.m. where kids can bring snacks or dinner. Also, the cast must keep Saturday November 6th available for an extended rehearsal if needed.

On Monday, November 8th, and Tuesday, November 9th, we will have full dress rehearsals with all of the costumes, sets, lights, sound and make-up coming into play. On these two days, rehearsals will also start at 3:00pm but may run as late as 10:00 if necessary. **If that happens no cast or crew member will ever be penalized in any way for leaving at 9:30pm from any rehearsal.**

Performance Week:

**Wednesday, November 10th - Matinee Fundraiser 4:00 p.m. Thursday,
November 11th - Opening Night Performance 7:00 p.m. Friday,
November 12th - Performance 7:00 p.m. Saturday, November 13th -
Strike at 10:00 am**

Obviously, not every actor will be working on stage at the same time. **This provides a wonderful opportunity to get homework done.** ©!! I will make every effort to release students from rehearsals when they will not be needed on stage. A rehearsal schedule will be forth coming.

If you are absent from school the day of rehearsal, you must leave a message for Mr. Fisher in the office informing us of the reason for your absence and when you expect to join us again. [REDACTED] In an emergency situation where you cannot reach the office leave a message on Mr. Fisher's phone [REDACTED]

Although being part of this production is in itself a wonderful educational opportunity, I also feel strongly that your daily class work must come first. Therefore, I will be monitoring your progress in your classes and continually assessing your eligibility to continue in our production. As this is the beginning of a new quarter of classes, we have established the following guidelines for determining eligibility now and throughout the production:

- If you have just earned 3 credits at the end of 2nd quarter then you are currently eligible for the production.
- If not, you may still join our production, but you will be immediately put on probation. This will be explained as you read further.
- Your names will be added to a weekly eligibility list where we will be able to monitor your progress.
- If at any time it appears that you are not passing at least 3 of your classes you will also be put on probation step two. Again, this will be explained as you read further.

Probation:

1. You will return a weekly progress report to Mr. Fisher on Friday of each week.
2. If you receive a report that says that you are not passing at least 3 of your classes, you will be given **one week to raise the grades**.
3. If you receive two consecutive reports indicating you are not passing at least 3 of your classes you will be removed from the production.

You must be responsible for your time. If you are at a rehearsal, and you are not needed on stage, ask yourself, "Is there some schoolwork that I can be doing during this time?" Students who utilize time well during rehearsals will have the best experience this program has to offer.

Another note, all cast members will also be required to buy a stage makeup kit that will range from \$20 to \$50. It will be theirs to keep. Cast members may also be required to find their own shoes for this production.

Parents: Please take the time to read this entire letter with your student. I want to eliminate any misunderstandings about the expectations during this production. I know that putting on this show can and will be a very rewarding experience for everybody involved. Please **call at anytime with your concerns**. I can be reached during the day at 276-5897. We want to work with you to provide a caring and nurturing environment for your student's artistic and academic growth and development. As always, thank you for sharing your kid!

Sincerely,

Andrew Fisher, Tiger Theatre

Name _____

CCHS Tiger Theatre
2010 Production

The House of Blue Leaves

By
John Guare

Parent/Guardians and Students: Please return this sheet with the requested information and signatures indicating that you have read all of the information. We will need easy access to phone information if there is any emergency during rehearsals. Thank you!

Parent/Guardian Name _____ Phone: _____

Signature _____ Cell: _____

Parent/Guardian Name _____ Phone: _____

Signature _____ Cell: _____

Parent/Guardian Name _____ Phone: _____

Signature _____ Cell: _____

Student Name (Please Print) _____

Student Signature _____ (Cell)

Name: _____

Character Analysis

1. Who are you?
2. What is your nationality?
3. How old are you?
4. Are you single, married, or divorced? If married or divorced, how many children do you have?
5. Do you dress neatly or carelessly?
6. How do you walk? (Be Specific)
7. How do you rise and sit? (Be Specific)
8. Do you use any characteristic voice tones or dialects? (Please Specify)
9. Are you in good health? If not, what is the cause of your illness?
10. Are you rich, poor, or middle class?
11. What education have you had?
12. In what kind of home do you live?
13. What do you do in your spare time?
14. What is your intention in this scene?
15. What is your obstacle?
16. What emotions are you experiencing? (List All)

Music Not Provided in the Script

8

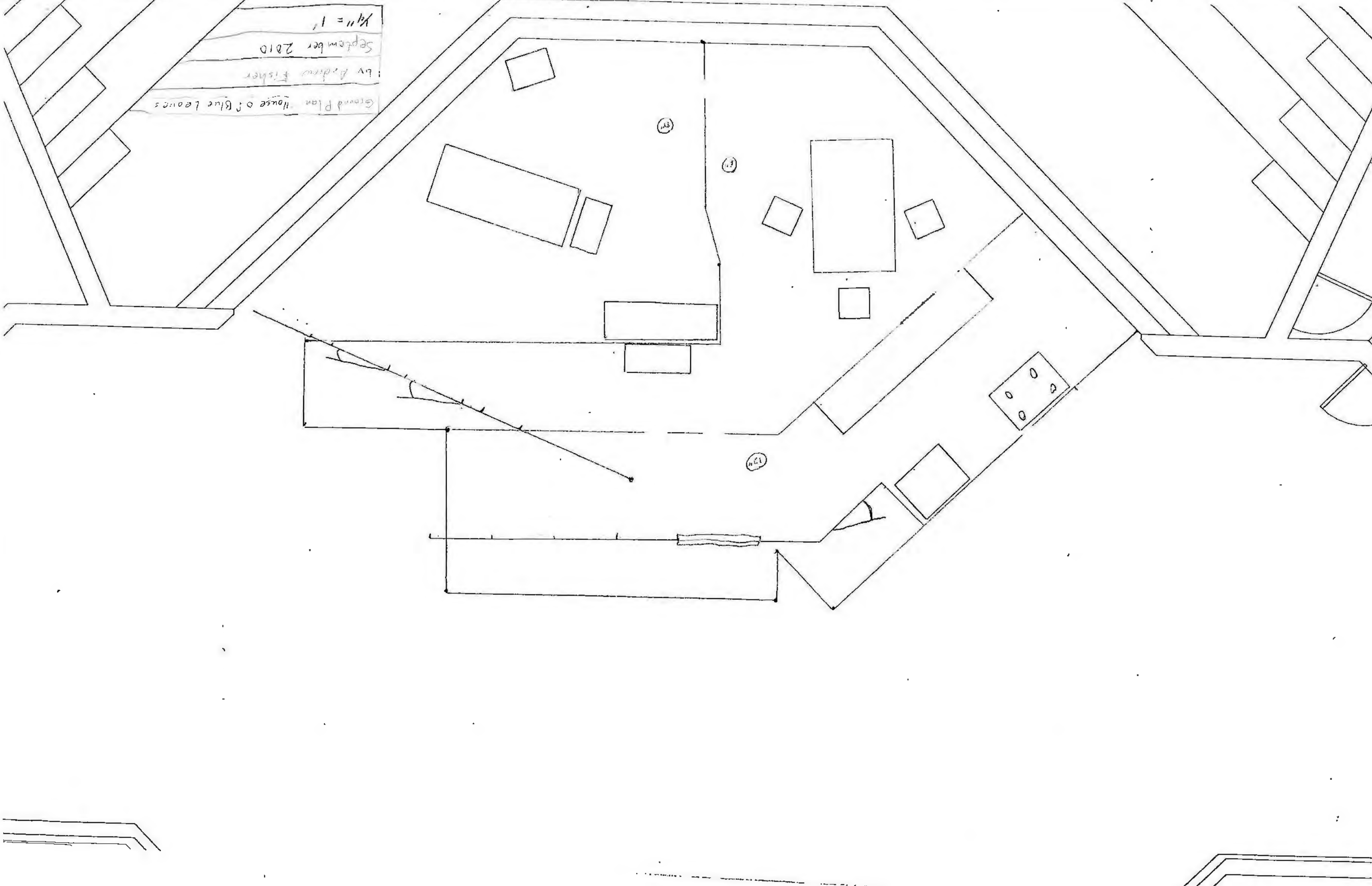
There's A Broken Heart For Every Light On Broadway

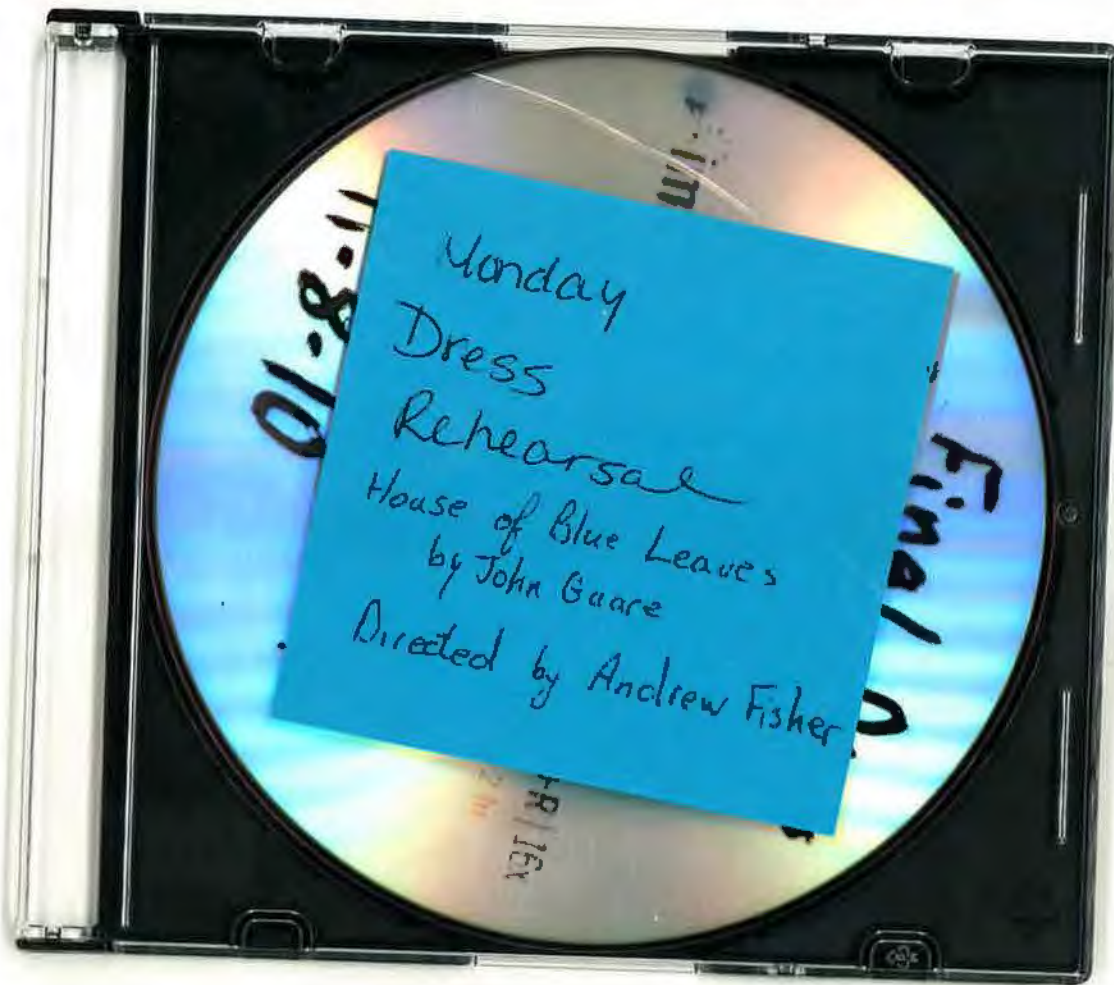
Words by
HOWARD JOHNSON

Music by
FRED. FISCHER

Copyright MCMXV by LEO. FEIST, Inc. Feist Building, New York

Ground Plan House of Blue Leaves
by Andrew Fisher
September 2010
1/4" = 1'



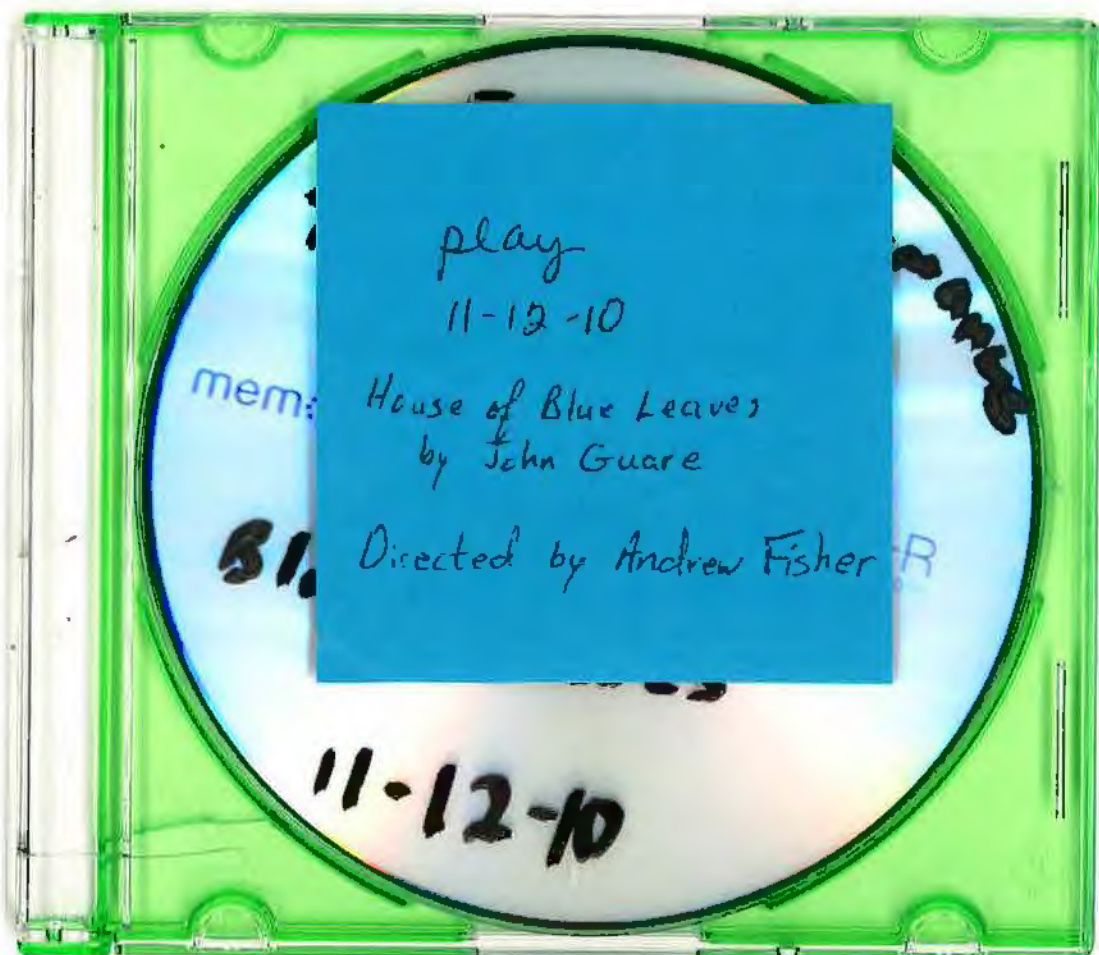


Monday
Dress
Rehearsal
House of Blue Leaves
by John Guare
Directed by Andrew Fisher

11-8-10

Final

R 16



play
11-12-10
House of Blue Leaves
by John Guare
Directed by Andrew Fisher

mem:

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11-12-10

panels

R

Quirky Comedy

Performances for
fall production
begin Wednesday

Karen Lungu

The Daily Record

LAY

CONTINUED from page A1

But Wait!



The stove that is on the set is for sale. It does work and needs a good home. There is a bid sheet that will be out every night. Once the bid reaches \$50, 30% of the sale will be donated to the Canon City Tiger Theatre. So please place your bids soon and often.



The House of Blue Leaves

Directed by.....Andrew Fisher

Assistant Director.....Charme Krauth

Head of Wardrobe.....Alexandra Bivens

Stage Manager.....KC Calmi

Lights.....Kameron King, Katie Romano

Sound Crew.....Brady Theis

Master Carpenter.....Ryan Darrow

Publicity.....Alexandra Bivens

Props:Charm Krauth, Tonya Fisher, Kayla
.....Rouselle, and Kara Hayward

Stage Crew:Alyssa Braden, Kara Hayward,
.....Cindy Shoeman, Spencer Dallas,
.....Jayson Huckaby, Devin Ruff, Barrett
.....Robertson, Tiffany Brandsoy, Alexa
.....Ashley, Kayla Rouselle, The Drama I
.....Class, Keilah Herndon, Christina Neal,
.....Stephanie Provost, and Caitlyn Craig.

The Cast



Joshua McBride (Artie Shaughnessy)

I'm the son of Michelle McBride and am very involved in the arts, I was in Cinderella as a member of the Chorus, I was in Mumbo Jumbo as Pee Wee Smith, Guys and Dolls as Lt. O'Rannigan, and The House of Blue Leaves as Artie! I'm so excited to be in this production and am looking forward to further adventures in the dramatic arts. I've been involved in Drama at the high school for the last three years and have truly enjoyed my time here, I am extremely blessed to have such a great theater family and to have the support of my biological family.

"Words define nothing and numbers define nothing, life and actions define who we are.. anything else is a pitiful attempt."



Shannon Angelo Serber (Bananas Shaughnessy)

Hi I'm Shannon, and I'm a Senior here at CCHS. I have been in shows since about 5th grade. Here are some from the past year: Mumbo Jumbo, a Christmas Carol, Guys and Dolls, and Willy Wonka. I have a passion for acting and I hope to make it my career someday, because whenever I perform I get a rush of adrenaline and joy that nothing else can beat. I hope you enjoy this show as much as I do performing in it. Was it the veal?



Katie Garcia (Bunny Flingus)

Katie Garcia is a senior at Canon City High School this year, and besides her post as President of Drama Club, has been cast in every single fall production and spring musical since her freshman year, from being cast as Carol Blanca in Up the Down Staircase to Tweety in Mumbo Jumbo, to a Hot Box dancer in Guys and Dolls, Katie has thoroughly enjoyed her high school acting experience, and hopes to continue it with a major in Dramatic Arts with a minor in Vocal Music.

It was totally the veal.

The Cast



Nick Grayson (Billy Einhorn)
My name is Nick Grayson and I'm a senior at Canon City High School. I've been an active member of Thespian Troupe 981 since Freshman year and have been in Encore! since Junior year. I've been in Cinderella, Mumbo Jumbo, and Guys & Dolls. I also did drama in middle school.

"When you give a mouse a cookie, it will ask for a glass of milk."



Kendra Lords (Little Nun)
My name is Kendra Lords and I'm a senior at Canon City High School. I've been in Tiger Ladies for two years and am now participating in Encore. I've been in Seussical, Cinderella, Mumbo Jumbo, and Guys & Dolls as well as various middle school plays. I'm excited to be finishing out senior year in a production.



Barrett Robertson (White Man)
I'm a sophomore in high school and will be inducted into Thespian Troupe 981 this year. I've never performed in a CCHS production but I'm happy to participate in The House of Blue Leaves. I hope to continue to perform until I graduate.

"The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt with the heart."

Hellen Keller

The Cast



Friederike Haen (Head Nun)
My name is Friederike Haensch and I'm a foreign exchange student from Germany. Last year I was a main character in the play for 10th graders in my school in Germany.

"Fear of Failure must never be a reason not to try something."

Frederick Smith



Jeremy VanGelder (M.P. 1)
This is my first year in drama so I really have no accomplishments in drama. I have gotten Division I rating in all Solo and Ensemble competitions I have competed in. I have been a drum major and a section leader in band. I have won the Military Order of the World Wars award in JROTC for outstanding leadership skills, great initiative, and amazing dedication. I have also been a platoon leader in JROTC.

"The truth is that our finest moments are the most likely to occur when we are feeling deeply uncomfortable, unhappy, or unfulfilled. For it is only in such moments, propelled by our discomfort, that we are likely to step out of our ruts and start searching for different ways or truer answers."

M. Scott Peck



Donald Cochran Jr. (M.P. 2)
DJ is a senior in high school. In 8th grade he was in the musical The Great Ghost Chase. He played Detective Pepperday. He was in Drama Club his sophomore year in Missouri and is in drama club presently.
"Never Surrender Hope."

The Cast



Anna Careochi (Corrinna Stroller)

I am in my second year of Tiger Ladies and have continuously participated in show choir productions including *Guys & Dolls*, in which I was a Hot Box Girl. I went on a week long mission trip to San Antonio that was truly amazing this summer. I was also Anne Frank in *The Diary of Anne Frank*.



Allison Mills (Second Nun)

I have been acting since 4th grade in various school and FCT plays. I am also in my second year of Tiger Ladies. I have also been involved in musicals in FCT and in the high school.

When life gives you a hundred reasons to cry, show life you have a thousand reasons to smile.



Ryan Dufresne (Ronnie Shaughnessy)

My name is Ryan Dufresne and I have been involved with Key Club, FCCLA, Speech and Debate, and theatre for the past four years.

Use in action, that evil in itself, assault, murder, white shoes after labor day.

Elle Woods (Legally Blonde)

Special Thanks



Kayla Ke Caimi (Stage Manager)

This year has been a big hit for me! I've been in stage, and the drama troupe's shadow worker through my whole high school career. No joke, there was no job I wouldn't help out on. So, it feels great to be Stage Manager my senior year!
"A truth is not a truth if it is a lie. Though a lie has all the power to be the truth."

Also Thanks To:

Mr. Bradbury's Welding Class
Merlino's Belvedere
Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church
Charme Krauth
Treasures by Therese
Ron & Jacque Fisher
Deb Crockett
Justin Kitch
Hallie Hightower
Shannon Owens
Kim Gore
Kenya Dodson
Custodial Service
District and High School Administration
Elaine Blain
Mrs. Watson
Shelley Hearn

CCHS Tiger Theatre Presents:

The HOUSE of BLUE LEAVES

by: John Guare

Nov. 10 @ 4:00 (All Tickets \$5)
Nov. 11 and 12 @ 7:00 p.m. (Students \$4, Free With Pass, Adults \$5)
Del Pizzo Performing Arts Center

Some Mature Content

Produced by special arrangement with Samuel French Inc.