

Fall 2007

## Direction of the Play: Bus Stop

Brett Eshelman  
*Central Washington University*

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Direction of the Play: Bus Stop

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A project Report

Presented by

The Graduate Faculty

Central Washington University

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In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

Theatre Production

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by

Brett Eshelman

November 2007

Central Washington University

Graduate Studies

We hereby approve the project report of

**Brett Eshelman**

Candidate for the degree of Master of Arts

Theatre Production

APPROVED FOR THE GRADUATE FACULTY

12/7/07

date of  
signature

---

Professor Scott Robinson  
Committee Chair

12/7/07

date of  
signature

---

Professor Brenda J. Hubbard

12/7/07

date of  
signature

---

Professor Elise Forier

Please note:

The signatures have been redacted due to security reasons.

Abstract

PROJECT REPORT

Bus Stop

Central Washington University

Directed by

Brett Eshelman

October 2007

This project entailed the selection, background research and documentation, analysis, casting, directing, dialect coaching and post-production analysis of Boise High School's production of William Inge's Bus Stop. Documentation includes research and analysis of the play and an evaluation of the play as a production vehicle for the department of Theatre Arts at Central Washington University. The analysis also includes a discussion of the directorial vision of the production.

Graduate Studies

Final Examination of

Brett Eshelman

Central Washington University, 2007

For the Degree of

Master of Arts

Theatre Production

Committee in Charge

Professor Scott Robinson

Professor Brenda J. Hubbard

Professor Elise Forier

McConnell Hall

Room \_\_\_\_\_

Friday, November 30, 2007

2:00 PM

Brett Eshelman

Courses Presented for the Master's Degree

Course No.	Course Title	Number Of Credits	Instructor	Quarter Completed
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## BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Brett Eshelman

### Undergraduate Study:

Northwest Nazarene College, 1967-1971

### Graduate Studies:

Nazarene Theological seminary, 1980-1981

Ashland Theological Seminary, 1982-1983

Fuller Theological Seminary, 1985-1986

University of Idaho, 1996-1998

Central Washington University, 2002-2007

### Professional Experience

Public School Teacher, 1971-1980

Pastoral Ministry, 1982-1994

Public School Teacher, 1989-1998

Public school Administrator, 1999-2001

Public School Teacher, 2001-Present

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**GRADUATE COMMITTEE  
AND OPTION APPROVAL FORM  
CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY**  
(Submit the original and three copies)

*Scott Robinson*

Note: This form is to be completed as soon as the student has formed a committee and selected an option from the list below. Submit the original and three copies to the Office of Graduate Studies in Barge 305.

Student Name Brett Eshelman Birth Date [REDACTED]  
 Mailing Address [REDACTED] Student ID [REDACTED]  
 City, State, Zipcode [REDACTED] Date 07/16/2006

Check option: Indicate credits to be received for the thesis or option:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Written Exam*	TH 700	master's thesis	6
<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-Thesis Project	Course No.	Title	Credits
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Creative Project			
<input type="checkbox"/>	Studio Project	Course No.	Title	Credits
<input type="checkbox"/>	Portfolio Review	<u>MLA 6<sup>th</sup> Edition</u>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Thesis	Style Manual for Thesis or Project		

\*Students taking written exam option may omit items 1-5 below.

1. Proposed Title: Direction of the production of Bus Stop.

2. Purpose of Study: The production of the William Inge play, Bus Stop serves as the culminating experience in theatre arts graduate studies.

3. Scope of Study: Documentation based upon the preparation of pre-production research, post-production evaluation, the direction of the publication (including casting and rehearsal of actors, preparation of the Director's production book, and oral examination) shall benefit both the student and theatre arts department.

4. Procedure to be used: Three phases of study shall be included: 1) pre-production research and Thesis Documentatio in MLA style, 2: Rehearsal and direction of production, 3) Post-production evaluation and documentation.

5. Does the procedure involve collection of data obtained from  
 Human Subjects (Including use of surveys)? ..... Yes\*\*  No   
 Use of Animals? ..... Yes\*\*  No

\*\* If yes, your procedures must be approved in writing by the Human Subjects Committee or the Animal Care and Use Committee before you initiate your research.

Professor Scott Robinson 10/25/07  
 Committee Chair (typed or printed) Committee Chair (signature) Date

Professor Brenda Hubbard 10/30/07  
 Committee Member (typed or printed) Committee Member (signature) Date

Professor Elise Forier 10/29/07  
 Committee Member (typed or printed) Committee Member (signature) Date

Approved by: 10/25/07 11-5-07  
Scott Robinson Wayne S. Quirk Date  
 Dept Chair/Designee (signature) Associate VP of Graduate Studies

Students will be required to submit two copies of all motion picture film, film strips, sound film strips, slides, tapes, cassettes, pictures, etc. produced as part of the thesis. These are to be submitted at the time the thesis (three copies) is submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies and Research.

Please note:  
 The signatures have been redacted due to security reasons.

**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 Bus Stop

PLAYWRIGHT(S) [If musical, list lyricist/composer] William Inge

NUMBER OF ACTS 3 APPROXIMATE TOTAL PLAYIN TIME 1 HOURS  
35 MIN.

**CAST** (fill in with the appropriate numbers)

MEN 5 WOMEN 3 CHILDREN \_\_\_\_\_ OVER  
40 2

ROLES REQUIRING PEOPLE OF COLOR 0 ROLES COULD DOUBLE 0

TOTAL NUMBER OF CAST 8

OTHER CASTING CONCERNS: Some older age makeup for my young players

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

MUSICAL DIRECTOR \_\_\_\_\_ DANCE CHOREOGRAPHER \_\_\_\_\_  
FIGHT CHOREOGRAPHER \_\_\_\_\_ DIALECT COACH X SPECIALTY  
HIRE \_\_\_\_\_ (specify what kind) ORCHESTRA/BAND (specify what size) \_\_\_\_\_  
Will you be fulfilling any of the above? If so, which? Dialect Coach

Will a guest artist be fulfilling any of the above? No If so, which?

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

UNIT SET? YES NO (CIRCLE ONE) NUMBER OF SETTINGS \_\_\_\_\_  
HISTORICAL PERIOD 1950s GEOGRAPHICAL  
LOCATION Kansas

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SET CONCERNS OR SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:

The play will be produced in the Boise High School Little Theatre. This small acting space is only 13 feet by 13 feet. The set will approximate the interior of a small road-side diner (bus stop). There will be two tables with three chairs at each, a lunch counter with three fixed stools. There will be three exits, one main entrance; one that leads to the outdoors, restroom and the third is an entrance to the kitchen.

APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF PROPS 10 PERIOD 1950s

DIFFICULT OR UNUSUAL PROPS? YES **NO** (CIRCLE ONE) DESCRIBE:  
 Concern: All props (set and hand) will need to fit the desired time period and location

WEAPONS OR FIREARMS? HOW MANY None DESCRIBE:

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

APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF COSTUMES PER CHARACTER 1 (2 for Cherie)

HISTORICAL PERIOD Mid 1950s SEASON Later Winter

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS: Two waitress costumes circa 1955  
 Cherie requires a nightclub costume.

**JUSTIFICATION FOR CHOICE OF SCRIPT**

HAVE YOU SEEN THIS SCRIPT PRODUCED? YES **NO** (CIRCLE ONE)  
 In Ashland at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, April, 2006

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

I have not produced this play. I read it first when I considered taking students to Oregon

Shakespeare Festival in Ashland, Oregon. I liked the play and thought it might be a good play for our little theatre. After I saw the play in Ashland, I decided that it would be suitable for our venue. The only other involvement with the play is the general research required in TH 511 Analysis and Criticism. I used Bus Stop as a vehicle for analysis at CWU.

WHY SHOULD YOUR ORGANIZATION PRODUCE THIS SCRIPT?

It is a good play that my students can understand and appreciate. The research of parts and the period will be of educational value to my students. The small cast will work well in the black box theater. I have come to appreciate William Inge and am anxious to introduce his writing to my students.

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

The play is a little hard to classify in terms of production. It is humorous and yet not strictly a comedy. It is dramatic and yet not a tragic comedy or heavy drama. It is a realistic slice of life play with naturalistic overtones. It is a sophisticated dramatic/comedy which will be something of a departure from plays normally produced at Boise High School. While we pride ourselves in the quality of our productions there is a fear in trying something that is by its nature a little different.

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

**PLEASE INCLUDE A COPY OF THE SCRIPT FOR THE THESIS COMMITTEE TO REVIEW.**

SUBMITTED BY: (Printed Name) Brett Eshelman  
Date Submitted: \_\_\_\_\_

(Signature) \_\_\_\_\_

**Thesis Chair Approval:** Scott Robinson **Date Approved :** \_\_\_\_\_

**Thesis Committee Members Approval:** Scott Robinson **Date Approved :** \_\_\_\_\_

**Graduate Coordinator Approval:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date Approved :** \_\_\_\_\_

Please note:

The signatures have been redacted due to security reasons.

## SYNOPSIS OF THE SCRIPT

The play, Bus Stop, takes place in early March in a small town forty miles west of Topeka, Kansas, possibly Paxico or McFarlan, Kansas. The eight characters that constitute the entire cast are brought together by virtue of the fact that the bus is delayed at Grace's small diner in the middle of the night while road crews clear a section of the highway ahead that has been closed because of snow. Of the characters portrayed, three are residence of the small town, while the five others are on the bus including the driver. The play was written in a realistic manner with a bent toward the naturalistic. To this end the play will represent a slice-of-life from the American Midwest circa 1955. The entire play's three acts take place in a small bus stop diner whose owner, proprietor and cook is named Grace, hence it is Grace's Diner.

The action and complication in the plot centers around the relationship of Bo, a cowboy, rodeo star from Montana and Cherie, a nightclub performer, who is reluctant to continue the trip to Montana where she will be married to Bo. She alleges that Bo has taken her contrary to her will and forced her onto the bus. It is more plausible to conclude that she is simply having second thoughts about marrying Bo. Most of the characters are tied to this relationship and its resolution in one way or another. To the sheriff, Will, Cherie appeals for help that eventually has Bo and Will fighting in the street. Grace also attempts to help and advise Cherie, while Virgil, a kind of father figure, attempts to guide Bo. During the majority of the play, Dr. Lyman is too intoxicated to pay much attention to Bo and Cherie. He is more interested in developing a relationship with young Elma, the high school aged waitress employed by Grace.

In the end the young couple comes to an understanding and Cherie willingly accompanies Bo on to Montana. Virgil, decides that Bo and Cherie don't need a third wheel and he strikes out on his own. Dr. Lyman gives lip service to the possibility of seeking professional help for his indulgences and for Grace, Elma and Will life goes on as it always has in small-town, USA.

### Project Parameters and Schedules

Suggested dates for the production of Bus Stop are in the month of September preferably the last week. There is always an issue of exact dating because the homecoming week and homecoming football game are not scheduled until the previous spring. It is important that the play not conflict with this event. This play will be the fall event in terms of theater production. School begins in the last week of August. This will permit an eight week production schedule. Casting of the play will be accomplished in the previous May. Boise High School has a strong core of dedicated actors who will be very excited about being a part of this production. It is traditional for actors to have the summer recess from school as a time to work on material for the fall play. This helps build enthusiasm for the fall productions. Actual work on stage will begin shortly after Labor Day. The play will have around \$1200 budget. There is a strong parent support group who will aid in working with costuming, set construction and promotion of the play.

The venue for the play will be the Boise High School black box theatre (Stage Too). This small auditorium has an acting space that is sixteen feet by thirteen feet with an audience seating capacity of sixty-five. It is an intimate space in which the actors enjoy performing. The lighting has always been an issue in Stage Too. New lighting that will provide added benefit and versatility has been purchased during the summer of 2006. The low ceiling and two large support columns at the front of the stage present problems in terms of line of sight. It is a challenge for people seated on the far extremes of the small auditorium to see action in the (UR) and (UL) corners of the stage. The columns which hold up the entire building present blocking challenges but the issue is not insurmountable since many productions have been staged in this area.

The ticketing area and adjacent hallway will be converted into a street in downtown

wherever (forty miles west of Topeka), Kansas 1955. It is hoped that by beginning the theatre experience in the foyer it will help in the suspension of reality and the realism that we are hoping to create.



Authorizing Authority Approval Form

January 5, 2007

To Whom It May Concern:

Brett Eshelman has administrative approval to continue with his planned production of *Bus Stop* on September 28-30, 2007. I am aware that this production is part of his Master's Thesis Project at central Washington University, and he has my permission to use the black box theatre, *Stage Too* in order to complete this endeavor. Furthermore, Mr. Eshelman has permission to include activities for this project in the curriculum of his theatre classes at Boise High School.

Respectfully,

Ken Anderson  
Principal  
Boise High School

### Evaluation of Bus Stop by William Inge as a Production Vehicle

The play Bus Stop is compelling as a production vehicle for Boise High school by virtue of two considerations. First it is written in a contemporary, realistic fashion. In the past six years the productions at Boise High School have trended toward the classical, light comedy or Broadway musical. Though Bus Stop would be something of a departure from the normal carte du jour, it is time to try something different. In its appeal as a slice-of-life play the students will have an opportunity to explore what life was like a half a century ago in mid-America. William Inge stated that his inspiration and unofficial mentor was Anton Chekhov the great Russian, realistic/naturalistic author (Greenwald 1069). This trend in writing will provide an opportunity for students to learn about both movements in theatre, realism and naturalism. It will be the goal of both director and instructor for students to maximize the learning opportunity by exploring not only the other writings of William Inge but also those of Anton Chekhov and Henrik Ibsen.

Secondly, the play has a moralistic tone to it. There are valuable lessons to be learned in the pattern established by the neo-classicists. Students and audience will benefit from a glimpse of the past and the moral values that helped structure that period of American history. The lessons include examples of how law is maintained, how people are to be treated in public, how virtue is to be protected and how a debauched life-style will lead to disappointment and devaluation of a life in general. There is the gentle instruction of Grace for her young employee, Elma, which parallels the fatherly advice of Virgil for his young traveling companion, Bo. One strong lesson is seen in how the impressionable Elma is enticed into a near compromising rendezvous with the lecherous Dr. Lyman. Elma is a bright, high school aged; young woman whose life experience has not prepared her for someone like Dr. Lyman. Elma is impressed with the English professor's intelligence and background and even comments that she "had never met anyone so smart" (65). In her innocent naiveté she places herself in danger in considering

meeting Dr. Lyman in Topeka. At the end of the play it is Dr. Lyman who informs Elma that it is best that they not meet as planned. Grace takes a moment to explain to Elma that not all men are honorable in their intentions and that she needs to be more careful in potential relationships.

While being a slice-of-life play the author has woven into the plot one major theme and few minor ones that will be interesting for student/actors and audience to explore. The theme of love in its diverse patterns and applications will be interesting to follow. The English language is a little limited when it comes to using the word "love" in all of its nuances and shadings. To understand the particular, desired application of the word an illustration is helpful. William Inge has placed within this story a whole catalogue of ways to express love. For Elma it is new, a bit naïve, and more a dream than reality. It is love for the sake of being in love. For Grace it is an old need that is more physical than emotional and is perhaps a means to assuage the loneliness of her existence. For Cherie and Bo love is raw, sensuous and even a bit dangerous. In the end for the innamorata it becomes tender and even self-sacrificing. In the character of Dr. Lyman, love is twisted into something that is selfish, and evil. The audience will see that the true problem with Dr. Lyman is that he has lost his ability to fulfill any position of trust in society.<sup>1</sup> He is therefore of no value to anyone including himself. His avenue for existence is that of escape into alcoholism and depravity. For him this has become a world where all his love has been lost and there is little hope of finding it again.

A second theme is that of the "courtship ritual". Children often ask their parents how they met and how they fell in love. In this play the audience has the opportunity to see that moment when two people actually do fall in love and come to a determination that they will endeavor to spend a lifetime together. The relationship of Cherie and Bo is representative of so many people. Though they are different in background, temperament and even aspirations they are drawn together. At first it is a pure physical attraction but given enough time and the

willingness of the individuals involved a mature relationship is possible to emerge. There is no telling what will happen to Bo and Cherie when they reach Montana but at the moment of the conclusion of the play there is the possibility of a happy-ever-after result.

The third theme is the set-up of the play itself. Here is a little diner in the middle of nowhere when on a given night important decisions were made and lives were changed. One can't help but wonder who will be the next to step through the door of the diner and what their needs will be. Early in the play Elma remarks that the bus probably wouldn't be too crowded because of the bad weather. The author was able to introduce only the characters he needed in order to tell the story. For a short time there was a situation comedy on television called Bus Stop. Though humorous in its appeal, the show explored the lives of people who were employed at the bus stop and also those who happened to walk through the doors.

Bus Stop is an excellent play for the black box theatre at Boise High School. The black box theatre, Stage Too. Since the creation of this small theatre there has not been a full-length production in this theater. Though the space has been used repeatedly and is a popular venue with students, this play will afford an opportunity to use the space to its full measure. While it is exciting to think about producing the play in the little theatre there are some built-in obstacles that must be considered. First, since the seating is limited it will be necessary to pre-sell tickets to assure that the venue is not overcrowded. Normally tickets for productions are sold at the door. With the large, eleven hundred seat, auditorium there has never been a time when there was not seating available. In addition, not all of the seats are of top quality. At the front of the acting space there are too large columns which are central supports for the entire building. These columns can and will be decorated to fit into the set design but they still represent a line of sight issue for some of the seats in the tiny auditorium.

Secondly, in consideration is the matter of budget for the play. In order to break even in

terms of potential box office receipts the budget can not be more than \$1200. Even if every seat was sold at \$5.00 per seat, for the four shows planned that would amount to \$1300. A little more money will be raised through intermission concessions. This will not be a financial boon to the drama program at Boise High School. Of course productions in high school are not all about money, but it is something to consider. Normally the fall production earns enough revenue to help in the production of subsequent plays throughout the year. The first concern will always be the educational value for students involved in the production.

Thirdly, the play uses a small (eight person) ensemble cast. The small cast is a benefit in many respects that will bring the best actors at Boise High School to audition for parts. At the same time it is a liability in that the drama club is very large. Normally plays are selected that give maximum opportunities to student actors. It is not unusual to have more than twenty people in the cast with support staff and acting staff exceeding thirty. Hopefully the play with its small cast will generate excitement that will involve all of the students in making the play a great success.

In summary the play Bus Stop is a good choice for the actors and audience at Boise High School. The students are ready to explore a play of this nature and the work in presenting it will be of educational value to both students and their potential audience. Though there are obstacles that will need to be overcome, they are not insurmountable and their resolution will prove to be a benefit. Harold Clurman who directed Bus Stop in its Broadway premier, observed that, "Inge . . . is one of those playwrights whose work acquires a body on stage not always apparent in the 'book'" (Clurman 51). Plays are not to be read or studied as literature. They come to life on the stage. Boise High drama is dedicated to finding truth on the stage and learning through the vehicle of production. One of the last things William Inge said before ending his own life was that he hoped that future generations would see value in his work (Voss 267). In this play I as

director and teacher will work hard to see that my students enjoy and value the contribution to theater that was made by William Inge.

## Working Concept Statement

The Play Bus Stop takes place in early March in a small unnamed town about thirty miles west of Topeka, Kansas, possibly Paxico or McFarland. The eight characters that constitute the entire cast are brought together by virtue of the fact that the bus is delayed at Grace's small diner in the middle of the night while road crews clear a section of the highway ahead that has been closed because of snow. Of the characters portrayed three are residence of the small town, while the five others are on the bus including the driver. The play was written in a realistic manner with a bent toward the naturalistic. To this end the play will represent a slice of life from the American Midwest circa 1955. The entire play's three acts take place in a small bus stop diner, Grace's Diner.

The action and complication in the plot centers around the relationship of Bo, a cowboy, rodeo star from Montana and Cherie, a nightclub performer, who is reluctant to continue the trip to Montana where she will be married to Bo. She alleges that Bo has taken her contrary to her will and forced her onto the bus. However in later statements in the play this seems a little unlikely. It is more plausible to conclude that she is simply having second thoughts about marrying Bo. Most of the characters are tied to this relationship and its resolution in one way or another. To the sheriff, Will, Cherie appeals for help that eventually has Bo and Will fighting in the street. Grace also attempts to help and advise Cherie, while Virgil, a kind of father figure, attempts to guide Bo. During the majority of the play, Dr. Lyman is too intoxicated to pay much attention to Bo and Cherie. He is more interested in developing a relationship with young Elma the high school aged waitress employed by Grace. William Inge has said that it was his hope to give an example of each kind of love. The earthy love, the purely physical attraction of the bus driver for the woman who runs the restaurant. There's the corrupt

attraction of the old man for the young girl. ... They all kind of play into a pattern. (Inge x)

The classically read Mr. Inge understood in his examination of love what the ancient Greeks needed three distinct words to express. In the character of Elma, love is seen as being new, exciting though frightfully naïve. It is seen as an alternative to loneliness in the relationship of Grace and Carl. There is an element of brotherly love and kindness in the characters of Will and Virgil. In addition, love is sordid in the character of Dr. Lyman, while love is sensual, lustful and wild in the relationship of Cherie and Bo. No one in the play escapes the varied expressions of love. It takes a play like Bus Stop to explore the definition of love in American culture. The Greeks could accomplish the task better by their three words which in English we translate as love: ἀγάπη (agapē) φιλεῖω (philio), and ἐρῶσ (eros) (Machen 143).

Eros love is sensual and sexual love. It is selfish, lustful, physical and self-serving. In the play this is the type of love demonstrated by Grace and Carl who sneak away for a few moments of mutual satisfaction, and in the character of Bo in his pursuit of Cherie. This type of love is the besetting sin of Dr. Lyman whose selfish pursuit of personal pleasure took him through three wives, the loss of teaching positions of respect, deep into alcoholism and brought him to the attention of the legal establishment because of his pedophilic proclivity to pursue encounters with young impressionable women.

The second word for love is philio. It is brotherly love (hence: Phila - delphia is the city of brotherly love.) The play demonstrates this type of love in the big-brotherly watch-care of Will Masters, the sheriff, and Virgil the traveling companion, partner, counselor of Bo. Virgil is a balancing force in Bo's life and a very sympathetic character. Grace is more than just a supervisor to young Elma, her employee. There is also a level of philio love in her instructions, patience and kindness directed to Elma.



The highest form of love is the god-like, self-sacrificing agapā. This form of love is at its heart the highest aspiration of human emotion. It takes a long time for Bo to come to realize that this is what he is seeking. It is not just a moment of pleasure but a life of giving and sharing. It is also this level of self-sacrificing love that moves Virgil at the end of the play to leave Bo and Cherie so they are better able to find happiness together.

Since it was the stated objective of the author to explore these relationships the casting, blocking and general staging will focus on portraying these aspects of love in a realistic and believable manner.

The play Bus Stop is a perfect play to be performed in the black box theatre at Boise High School. The small, intimate theatre provides seating for sixty-five audience members. The close proximity of the audience to the actors provides a level of intimacy that is lacking in the eleven hundred seat main auditorium. Designing for the play will call for research into the period so that fixtures, hand props and set pieces are consistent with the period. The play will consist of a unit set with at least two tables and a breakfast counter at which at least three stools will be placed. The stage in the black box theatre (here after referred to as Stage Too) is only thirteen feet by thirteen with the possibility of extending an additional five feet off of the platform toward the first row. The space is compact but the facsimile of the diner can be approximated in the space.

In terms of a color pallet for the play the realistic design will need to be bright though not exactly cheery. The furnishings should have a vinyl luster with chrome finish in one of the colors that was popular in that time (lime green, pink, yellow, bright blue, red or orange). Ideally the vinyl chair coverings will match the seats of the three bar stools. The word for the design is functional. The floor will be covered in either hardwood or black and white tile. Since it is a bus stop/diner the walls will be decorated with a combination of daily specials, as well as time tables

for arriving and departing buses and aged posters depicting exotic ports of call.

The set design will feature three exits/entrance doors: main exterior (UL), kitchen (UC), exterior door to outdoors restroom (UR). A counter with three stools will extend out from rear the kitchen door. There is a service window behind the bar. The diner will include two other small tables with three chairs at each table. Along the far wall (L) will be a small bench where people can wait for busses. Once the color pallet has been determined table clothes matching the color design will be made to fit the tables.

The period of the 1950s was a time of formality in terms of those in service professions. It will be necessary to dress both Grace and Elma in waitress uniforms with small hats. In addition, Carl, the bus driver, will need a uniform with hat as well. All of the people in the play need only one costume with the exception of Cherie, the nightclub performer, who changes into her nightclub costume when the cast stages an impromptu talent show. Dr. Lyman will wear a suit with an overcoat, which has seen better days. Bo and Virgil clothing includes: blue jeans, western or plaid shirts, heavy jackets, cowboy boots and western hats. Will, the town sheriff, also wears western clothing with a heavy winter coat, winter hat with earflaps.

Makeup challenges include aging the character of Dr. Lyman and Sheriff Will to about forty to forty-five years of age and Grace, Carl and Virgil to about thirty five. Elma is high school age while Cherie and Bo are in their early twenties. The performers in this play will all be high school age. There will be no attempt to place older actors in the roles. It will be a challenge for the players to be realistic in the roles they are playing. The makeup and work in acting styles in terms of age will increase the believability of the people playing the parts.

Lighting in Stage Too is somewhat limited. There are only sixteen lighting instruments. This includes six par 56s, four mini pars, four fresnels, and two source four ellipsoidals. Since the acting space is small this will be a sufficient light source for the play. The exact deter-

mination as to how the lights will be focused and gels used will be resolved when the color pallet is selected. Lighting trees will be placed on both stage right and left to produce a better wash of the stage.

Sound design will include music from the mid-1950s. Since the location of the play is in the Midwest, western music of the era will be used. Of the few sound cues needed every time the exterior doors are open the audience should be able to hear the storm that is raging outside. In addition, the sound of the bus arriving would add a hint of reality to the play. One challenge in terms of sound will be the fact that Virgil plays the guitar and sings. Hopefully the character selected for the part will be able to play the guitar and sing. Virgil also accompanies Cherie in her rendition of *That Old Black Magic*. If the character of Virgil can not play the guitar, the guitar will need to be recorded.

The five seating/acting spaces (i.e. Hodge) will be accomplished with the two or three stools at the lunch counter which according to plan will be fixed in their place in a straight line perpendicular to the audience (appendix A). This could create a line of sight problem which will be resolved by the blocking. In addition to the bar stools at the counter there will be three moveable chairs at each of the two tables. One additional seating area will include a small bench by the exterior door. The total acting area is small so it will be necessary to spread the actors out as much as possible.

The key to directing the play is realism. All of the props used in the play must be, or appear to be to real and functional. The food used on stage must also be real. When Bo consumes three hamburgers, the character will actually eat them. The audience should be able smell the coffee while it is being brewed. The acting style must be also realistic including dialect coaching. The ensemble cast blends together with their varied relationships and objectives to create one complete picture.

Since the play is to be produced in September a stage manager will be selected no later than March. Production meetings will begin in April. (Note: Students serving as committee heads, lighting, sound, costume, makeup, sound, design, and publicity, are appointed in the spring and serve for an entire school year. The director along with the stage manager and the committee heads constitutes the design team. Parent volunteers supplement the student design team in key areas including makeup, set construction, costuming, makeup and publicity.) All of these key positions must be determined no later than April.

## Production Schedule:

April through October 2007

Audition Scripts Available	April 27
Auditions (call backs, casting)	May 16-17
Casting Posted	May 18
First Read-Through	May 28-30
Blocking	
Act One	August 27-29
Off Book	August 30
Act Two	September 4-7
Off Book	September 10
Act Three	September 11-14
Off Book	September 17
Set Construction	
First Work Day	September 15
Second Work Day	September 22
Technical rehearsals	September 20-21
Dress Rehearsals	September 24-25
Performances	
Preview Night (final Dress)	September 26 (7:00 P.M.)
Performances	September 27-29 (7:00 P.M.)
Strike	October 1, 2007

### An Initial Response

If there can be such a thing as a traditional play, perhaps Bus Stop by William Inge is that play. It contains eight colorful characters, a single interior set, with a romantic plot line that depicts a group of strangers forced to spend a night together in a small diner while road crews clear the snow-blocked, westbound highway ahead. It is a low-class romance, comedy with a certain amount of drama thrown in. The story climaxes with an impromptu talent show that result in a fist-fight that is taken into the street (off stage). The fight brings about a serious moment of soul searching as the central characters of the play come to understand their mutual needs and see the possibility of a life to be spent together. Yes, it's a love story. In addition it is a story of chance meetings, budding relationships, the ending of relationships and honest searches for fulfillment. The characters interact in a way that betrays their weaknesses and strengths and examines their motives.

There are classic reversals in the plot. In the beginning of the play Cherie is adamant about not going to Montana with Bo. By the end of the play, Cherie boards the bus with Bo while Virgil, Bo's partner, traveling companion and friend realizes that, perhaps, three really is a crowd, and it might be time for him to go his own way. Dr. Lyman, plagued by his excesses in his debauched lifestyle also seems to change direction at the end in realizing that he must seek help to deal with his myriad of sins and bad habits. He knows that his problems are bigger than he can handle by himself. Along with these reversals are the themes of love, marriage, hope, faith, and loneliness are addressed by this representative group of everyday people. The issues of relationship and even love are approached in a language that is reflective of the 1950s rural America.

The play opened on March 2, 1955, and represented life in that time, and the sociological milieu of lower middle classed western Americas. The dialogue is full of local color with its

colloquialisms, allusions and slang. Throughout the play the language is simple and straight forward with a certain western quality. For example, many of the lines are written phonetically. In one place Cherie is complaining that Bo was been pester her. To which Bo responds, "Oh, is zat so, Wall, I jest ain't one to be pesterin' any woman with my affections (Inge 56). The colloquialisms and slang adds to the realism of the play.

Inge has stated that the great realist author Anton Chckov was his model and mentor (Greenwald 324). The bent toward realism is obvious in this play and most of the Inge compendium. Although the dialogue is realistic the characters tend to be stereotypical in composition. There are two rodco cowboys from Montana, a small town police officer, a bus driver, a lecherous drunken professor of English literature, (This could be an autobiographical reference to the author.) a diner waitress, the owner of the diner, and a nightclub performer. Each of these characters are to cooperate with each other in unique ways due to the circumstance that has drawn them together. The characters come from different backgrounds with diverse experiences yet they are thrown together into a situation where they are forced to interact with each other, find common ground and survive a night in a small diner during a raging snow storm. Because of the realistic style of the play it should have an appeal for audienccs at Boise High School

It is not a difficult play in terms of composition or themes. The themes revolve around relationships, some wholesome and some unwholesome. These themes are illustrated in the lives of the characters. When people are free to express what they are truly feeling the result can be life changing. There is also the idea that one should stop deluding oneself and seek help when the problems become so large that they are personally destructive. This is best illustrated in the character of Dr. Lyman who in the end at least appears to give lip-scrvice to seeking help for his dissolute lifestyle. In addition, this self-revelation and need for action is reflected in the

character of Bo in his admission that beneath his demonstrations of will and sexual desire is a deeper need to be wanted, appreciated and even loved. The feelings of lostness or loneliness are strong themes in the play. The audience will identify with the personal turmoil represented in the lives of the characters. These universal storms one finds in their life is a reflection of the real storm that is occurring outside of Grace's diner throughout the play. It is the storm that arrests the intention of the characters and forces them into a place where they must deal with the issues they brought with them off of the bus.

There is a predominant metaphor represented in the circumstances that finds the characters stranded together. The storm that has delayed their progress is also a blessing for during this time the characters take a personal account of where they are and where they are going. Bo is at war with understanding himself, Cherie is also in conflict regarding her feelings, and Dr. Lyman's stormy existence has reached a new low. At the end of the play Grace, the owner of the diner, says to Virgil, "Sorry mister, but you're just left out in the cold" (Inge 67). This is figurative and literal in terms of what happens in the story for it does seem that Virgil a sympathetic character in the play is left out in the cold as the others all move on. Based upon his understanding of what has transpired he has come to a crossroad or life passage where he makes it clear that it is time to seek a different direction in his life. However, that direction seems a bit obscure as the curtain falls on the final act. Though the action centers on the romance of Cherie and Bo the play requires an ensemble cast. The characterizations, costumes, set design and dressing will present interesting challenges for the students presenting the play.

The play is hard to classify and as such it doesn't fit into a particular genre. It is humorous in places though it is not a silly comedy or farce. It is dramatic though lacking in dramatic tension and complication. There is a hint of the moralist in the writing and yet it is more cautionary than purely moralistic. Some have criticized the author for being a mere



reflection of a great writer like Tennessee Williams. The characters are not as tragic as those of Williams or O'Neil yet there is a place for the sympathetic characters Inge has created in this play. There is less information and dialogue in the play for the supporting cast of, Grace, Elma, Carl, Virgil, Will and Dr. Lyman. It will be a challenge for young performers at Boise High School to understand these characters and bring them to life on the stage.

The author has indicated that it was his intention to explore the depth of love from what is initial, innocent and natural to the darker aspects of love including, corruption of the young, and even lustful sexual intention. Individually the characters are not strong enough to represent the stereotypes they are suggesting. The play needs to be taken as a whole in order for the juxtaposition of the diverse characters to be appreciated in terms of message. As a result the desired focus of seeing love in all its diagnostics, as the author has suggested, is a difficult challenge. The fear of the director is that the audience will not have sufficient information from the text to catch the nuances of the characters and make the application desired by the author, actors and director. In addition to these concerns, there are matters of setting the intended mood and sustaining the believability of the action on the stage. The entire action represented in the play takes place in the span of a few hours. There will be little opportunity to change costumes, setting or lighting. The acting must move the play, not dynamic staging or technical effects. There is a need for intimacy that must extend from the stage into the audience. To achieve this Bus Stop will be produced in the little theater at Boise High School.

At Boise High School there are two potential acting spaces: the main stage with its traditional proscenium stage and eleven hundred seat auditorium, or the little theater (called Stage Too). The little theatre is more intimate in feeling having seating for sixty-five. The little theater has the advantage of close proximity of the players to the audience. The audience should almost feel like they are in Grace's Diner just west of Topeka on a cold March morning during a

snowstorm. To extend the naturalism of the play the audience should smell the coffee and see the steam rising from the coffee cups. To help this suspension of reality the theme will begin at the ticket counter bus stop. Leaving the ticket counter the audience will enter the door into the little theatre and be caught in the atmosphere of the play. The primary acting space in the little theatre features a sixteen foot by thirteen foot stage.

The compact acting space demands a unique approach to set design, staging and blocking. In terms of design a unit-set representation of Grace's Diner will be employed. There is a need for at least two tables and a counter with bar/type stools. It is a café but also a bus stop and as such there will be posters (albeit, old ones), on the walls depicting exotic location, arrivals and departure time/tables, and a large chalk board advertising the daily special. It is night throughout the play with the windows darkened and the interior of the café brightly lighted. The tables will be covered with traditional checkerboard or gingham patterned tablecloths. One of the tables could be placed on the floor in front of the stage. This acting area is frequently used and helps by lengthening the acting space and adding depth to the set. To help create the illusion that the play is taking place in a blizzard in early March, every time the exterior door is opened the sound of the wind is heard. House music and interior sound cues and sound effects will include music of the early fifties of a country and western variety. All design planning including lighting, sound, set, costume and makeup will be completed prior to casting.

The play will call for a six-week rehearsal schedule, which is standard for full-length plays. Casting will be concluded in mid-May with rehearsals beginning in September. It is not uncommon to cast in the spring and give the student actors the summer to work on their lines and character studies. Production dates will be mid-October. The play will run for three days which will feature four performances, including a Saturday matinee.

This play is a departure from the type of productions previously endeavored at Boise

High. It will challenge student actors, student designers and director to make this show believable. Yet it is a worthy challenge which when completed will bring the pride of accomplishment to all who participate in the project. There is an Idaho connection to the play Bus Stop which adds an interesting note to the presentation. On the wall of the Galena Lodge just north of Sun Valley, Idaho there is a picture of Marilyn Monroe in the part of Cherie with the accompanying story that the 1956 movie Bus Stop though set in Arizona was actually filmed at the Galena Lodge in Idaho. So much of the great play Bus Stop was omitted, altered or destroyed by the movie it makes little difference where the film was made. What matters is being true to the script and true to the vision of the author who created this story.

### The Impact of William Inge's Life on His Works

In 1955 the name, William Inge, was nearly synonymous with theatre success. In a relatively short time this Midwestern, small town English professor had become a name to be associated with the greats of the theatre of the time, Arthur Miller, Eugene O'Neill and even Tennessee Williams. His plays are filled with realistic characters and settings that are symbolic of his Midwest upbringing and his careful eye for detail.

William Inge was born in 1913 in Independence, Kansas the last of five children of Luther and Maude Inge. The rural setting of his childhood home gave little promise of one who would one day light up Broadway with the names of his plays and see his name emblazoned across movie screens from shore to shore. His life was the pallet from which the colors and shadings of his characters were drawn. His plays tend to be so autobiographical in nature it is sometimes hard to distinguish the real from the fictional. The characters are permitted to add voice to the emotions, feelings and hidden truths that Inge never felt free to express in terms of his real life. Ralph Voss, William Inge biographer, provides this point of view on his writing:

(Inge) . . . always did write out of intensely felt personal experiences; in his work many autobiographical characters appear in greater or lesser roles and shadings . . . Doc. Delaney in Look Back, Little Sheba, Rosemary Sydney in Picnic, both Professor Lyman and Virgil Blessing in Bus Stop, Somy Flood in Dark at the Top of the Stairs. ( A Life 201)

As a young boy Inge was noted for his ability to memorize and recite with enthusiasm things he had learned, to the point that he was frequently called on to entertain civic clubs and recite for teachers, classmates and at formal school functions. Though he did not find fulfillment in athletics or other traditionally male endeavors, and was considered a "Momma's

boy”, he did find fulfillment and satisfaction in being a bright and clever student. During his childhood his father was frequently absent, and with the early, tragic death of his older brother, Luther Boy, William was protected and surrounded by a household filled with sisters and mother. The contact with his mother provided the basis for his keen understanding of the mother-son relationships that he portrayed with knowing insight in plays such as the Dark at the Top of the Stairs, A Loss of Roses, and Natural Affection (Shuman 3).

Dark at the Top of the Stairs is certainly the most autobiographical of all of his works. In the play the protagonist comes to grips with many of the psychological problems that he faced during childhood and early adolescence. Inge in commenting about the play suggested that this play was, “his first attempt to examine his past and find meaning in it” (3).

In high school and college Inge frequently resorted to working in and around the theatre. College and graduate school furthered his interest in literature and theatre, though it did curtail his interest in being a performer. While he was in college and teaching college he began to indulge in alcohol abuse to the point that he eventually had to seek professional help. For five years after receiving his Masters Degree (1938) he taught at Steven College for Women in Columbia, Missouri. Since he did not own a car he would ride the bus to St. Louis where he could drink and emerge himself in city life. Not only did he carefully observe potential characters on the bus but he himself was something of a character out of which he would reproduce the drunken English professor, Dr. Lyman in Bus Stop.

The play Bus Stop was originally written as a brief one act play entitled, People in the Wind (1950). In the closing scene of the play Elma, the young waitress, comments about the people on the bus saying, “Gee, sometimes I think I’d like to write a play about the people you see” (Summer Brave 147). This is what Inge has done in his plays. The characters he saw and with whom he interacted became characters in his plays.

Had it not been for World War II, there may not have been a William Inge in the way he is remembered in terms of his plays. For a period of three years from 1943-46, he was a reporter for the St. Louis Star-Times. Up until this time the longest thing Inge had ever written was his college thesis. During his time with The Star he wrote 417 reviews on a wide range of topics. He became adept at writing clearly and quickly, turning out finished copy against pressing deadlines. Not only were his skills as a writer enhanced but he also had the opportunity to interview Tennessee Williams in the fall of 1944 (Shuman 7). Tennessee Williams' success in writing plays was an encouragement for Inge to continue to write. For many years William Inge and Tennessee Williams were good friends. Their backgrounds and even sexual preferences were very similar.

One of the most salient facts regarding William Inge is that he was a homosexual. His struggle with his sexual identity drove him toward personally destructive behavior and his debilitating insecurities brought on nervous collapses on more than one occasion. He actually seemed to be most at ease with himself when he was institutionalized and in psychoanalysis. In Bus Stop Dr. Lyman after waking from his drunken stupor tells young Elma that friends have been hinting that he should get psychoanalyzed. Certainly the lecherous, alcoholic English professor needs the kind of help that Inge found for himself in places like the Riggs Center in Stockbridge, Massachusetts that he frequented (Voss 282), for William Inge understood what it meant to be drunken, depressed professor of English.

When considering the impact of his personal life on his character development in his individual plays, Dark at the Top of the Stairs, provides the best insight. In the opening scene Rubin Flood and his wife Cora are discussing his impending road trip. Rubin is a traveling salesman, not unlike William's father. In the dialogue Cora begs Rubin to settle down and help provide a steady home for his children. She reminds him of how old the children are becoming

and how much they need a father at home. There is no need for Rubin to be preparing to leave home at 5:00 in the afternoon, clean shaven and smelling of Bay-Rum. One can only wonder where he is planning to spend the night. In one of the well-guarded secrets from the Inge family, William's father inflicted his wife with a sexually transmitted disease after one of his road trip. This incident confirmed what Maude Inge had suspected but could not confirm. Both children of the Flood family, Sunny and Reenie, are reflections of William Inge. Sunny collects pictures of movie stars and keeps them in a scrapbook. William also did this while he was a boy about Sunny's age. In addition Sunny performs recitations before the public just like William in real life. In an interesting bit of analysis Cora says to Sunny, "You're a funny mixture, Sunny. In some ways, shy as your sister. In others ways, bold as a pirate" (Four Plays 290). William Inge was notorious for being shy when it came to meeting people and attending social gatherings. It was almost impossible for him to attend opening night performances or any other social gathering. He would be so nervous that he would become physical ill (Voss 115). The nervousness is reflected in the character of Reenie the sixteen year old girl who was so withdrawn that when she had to attend a party at the country club with other teenagers she made herself physically ill prior to her blind date (Four Plays 262). This is also an apt description of Helene, William's older sister. The character of Reenie is a thinly veiled depiction of Inge's older sister, Helene. She too had to overcome excessive shyness as teenager (Four Plays 13).

William Inge chose to end his life in June of 1973 rather than continue in his painful, lonely existence. He had visited the hospital, checked himself out and tried to arrange for treatment or therapy but decided that even with the reduction of physical pain his life was filled with inner turmoil, frustration and disappointment (Voss 282). The times in which William Inge lived represented a difficult period for those who were homosexual, or had homosexual tendencies. This was not a time for understanding or tolerance. In society homosexuals were

ostracized. It was best to maintain at least an appearance of being “normal” in terms of sexual proclivity. Even actors as well known as, Rock Hudson and Richard Chamberlain chose to hide their homosexuality for fear of the reaction of their fans and potential in terms of continuation of their careers. This was a life-long struggle for William Inge. As life progressed with its built-in disappointments and frustrations, he reproached himself for his weakness and sought refuge in alcoholism and life in sanitariums which he frequented, rather than admit who and what he was. Of course that admission would have meant the end of his career and possibly even trouble with the law since in many places Sodomy was against the law.

The way Inge chose to end his life is reflected in his writing. In commenting about the fact that the young Jewish boy, Sammy, in Dark at the Top of the Stairs takes his own life, Inge wrote:

Some people felt . . . that the announcement of the suicide came as too much of a shock; but every suicide I ever heard of came to me in the same way, with no preparation. I have never heard of a suicide that I expected. We always find the reasons for such events after they happen; in exploring the characters to find motivations we had previously overlooked. (Four Plays)

Many have sought to understand why he would take his own life and after the fashion, in which he wrote of Sammy, found reasons or tendencies that led to his suicide. There were certainly the seeds of depression and despair at almost every point in his life. Even at the height of his fame in the heady days when he had shows on the stages on Broadway he was deluged by self-doubt and inner turmoil. Though friendly he was a notorious loner. By June of 1973 when he took his own life he had no close friends. Even his family remained distant though supportive.



In considering the events of his life, one is left with the impression that what made him great also were the seeds of his destruction. His powers of observation were sharpened by the insular life he chose to live but left him with no one with whom he could share his pains, sorrows and personal misgiving. He was able to illustrate the common pains, fears and apprehensions of his characters because in his mind they were his and his alone.

### William Inge's Bus Stop, Production History and Place in Time

The play Bus Stop first appeared as a one act play entitled, The People in the Wind in 1950 (Voss 140). In his preface to Summer Brave and Eleven Short Plays William Inge comments that his short plays are . . . "fragments or sketches that I have written in exploration of characters for larger works that I may or may not develop in the future" (Summer 1). Some of the characters from People in the Wind found their way into Bus Stop while others disappeared. A few of the characters from People in the Wind are listed only by title or gender. It took the expansion into a full length play for, "man" and "girl" to become Bo and Cherie, the "drunk" to become Dr. Lyman, and the bus driver to be given the name, Carl. Bus Stop eliminates the two old women of People in the Wind and adds a town sheriff, named Will. There is no record that People in the Wind was ever performed for a public audience. This may have been one of the plays that Inge recalled in an interview in 1964 where he indicates that some of his short plays serve as a form of note taking (Voss 144).

The 1950s was a busy time for William Inge. He put together a string of public-pleasing, commercially successful Broadway plays and Hollywood movie including, Come Back, Little Sheba (1950), Picnic (1953), Bus Stop (1955), Dark at the Top of the Stairs (1957). Many one act plays Inge wrote during the 1940s were later crafted into full-length productions. Bus Stop is a bit of a paradox in terms of realism. The question always remains as to why, after the conflict with the ending of the play Picnic in which Inge fought so tenuously for the more realistic ending, did he turn around in his next play and write a true comedy? The conflict centered on the ending to the play. Inge had originally written a very realistic, albeit, sad ending to that play, only to have his director, Joshua Logan, and his cast protest that the audience would not tolerate an unhappy ending. He had to rewrite the third act and acquiesce to the people performing the play. Now his very next play is a true love story with a near fairytale quality to it. Inge's

biographer, William Voss, asks three interesting questions in this regard and then poses an answer to his own questions:

Why would such a realistic-minded playwright present such near-cartoon characters as Bo Decker and Cherie? And why would he conclude their story with Cherie's willingness to abandon (admittedly unrealistic) dreams to go with Bo to his Montana ranch, (also unrealistically) to be wed and presumably live happily ever after? (Voss 154)

Voss at this point speculates that Picnic made it clear that the mid-fifties audience liked to see romantic resolutions (155). This was a period of great social change. Before the 1950s, there had been nearly twenty years of economic stagnation, thanks to the Great Depression and World War II. The depression and the war made life very difficult. People did what they had to do in order to survive. With the end of the war and the return of soldiers, America was entering a period when it was permissible to have fun. This was also a period of great expansion in population, mass transit, motor commuting and the development of the sub-urban lifestyle.

The advent of television had a huge impact upon society in the 1950s. In turn this new American pastime had an effect upon all forms of popular entertainment. In 1945 there were less than seven thousand (7,000) televisions in private households in the United States and only nine (9) channels. By 1960 the number of televisions in private homes topped 60 million (Genova). By the time Bus Stop appeared on stage the half hour, I Love Lucy Show had been on the air for four years and Gunsinoke, soon to be the most popular show on the air was in its first year of production (Genova). The viewing habits of audiences and potential audiences were changing. This could account for the change in writing and even the approach to the realistic dramas/comedies of William Inge.

Bus Stop was A-typical of William Inge. In terms of a Broadway production the pre-life of the play was rather brief. In 1954 Inge took his new play to Robert Whitehead and Roger L. Stevens with the hope that they would consider producing the play. The success of Inge's first two shows on Broadway, Come Back, Little Sheba and Picnic, was recommendation enough for the producers and in short order they determined that Harold Curlman, the scholar and theatre critic was just the man to direct the show (Voss 155).

On March 2, 1955, at New York Music Box Theater William Inge's play Bus Stop opened to a packed house. Kim Stanley starred in the role of Cheric with Albert Salmi playing Bo. The reviews the following day all declared that Bus Stop was a well written play that was extremely well cast and well directed and destined to be a great, long running show. Typical of the reviews were those of Robert Hatch in The Nation,

This is William Inge's third Broadway play . . . and his third Broadway success. He is probably not a great writer (at least, I doubt that anything he has done thus far will be included in the archives of our century), but he is an acute, compassionate, and amusing observer who has trained himself to write approximately perfect theater. (Nation 245)

The critics were right. Bus Stop ran for 478 performances on Broadway with road shows throughout the country followed the New York run. While the show was still running on Broadway Inge made a trip to New York to speak with Twentieth Century Fox about the possibility of a movie version of Bus Stop. Though Fox was interested in the project and had Marilyn Monroe in mind for the leading role, the fly in Inge's ointment, was that they wanted Joshua Logan, Inge's long-time menace from the days of putting Picnic on the stage in New York, as potential director. It was Logan who changed the ending to Picnic much to the chagrin of William Inge (Shuman 12). Before the end of the year the movie rights to Bus Stop were sold

and it became a major motion picture that did, indeed, star Marilyn Monroe. The movie opened across the nation in 1956.

Eventually the “Midas Touch” that seemed to bless Inge’s earlier plays gave way to frustration, disappointment and discouragement. Though he tried in the late fifties and sixties to mount another play for Broadway his plays were rejected and for a brief time very few of his plays were produced. After his death in 1973, the Contemporary Theater in Los Angeles produced three of William Inge’s plays as a tribute to the recently deceased author. One of those plays was Bus Stop. From this revival of the play Bus Stop received five Los Angeles Drama Critic Circle Awards. Not a year has past since 1973 that Bus Stop, Picnic, Come Back, Little Shcba or Dark at the Top of the Stairs has not been produced.

In 2006 Bus Stop made its debut in the New Theatre at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. In her lecture notes to the cast Libby Appel the Artistic Director for OSF commented that she had seen Kim Stanley in the Broadway production of the show. In bringing the show to Ashland Ms. Appel states,

Bus Stop is an endearing play, deceptively simple, not at all sentimental. It involves lives that are changing, and it does it with warmth and humor, and best of all, with the music of the text. I am privileged to bring Mr. Inge to the Oregon Shakespeare festival (Appel).

The plays of William Inge represent a marvelous theater legacy. It is with humility that the Washington Street Players from Boise High School purpose to bring this play to their “Stage Two”, black box theatre in the fall of 2007.

### A History of the Critical Reviews of the William Inge's Play, Bus Stop

William Inge's presentation of the 1955 production of Bus Stop was heralded by critics and audiences as "an instant classic" and a resounding hit. In truth this was Inge's hat trick in that it followed two previous artistic and commercial successes, Come Back Little Sheba (1950) and Picnic (1953), and preceded a fourth well-received play, Dark at the Top of the Stairs (1957). Harold Clurman, who directed the first production of Bus Stop, referred to Inge as "Dramatist of the Ordinary." Clurman is quoted as saying of Inge, "he plumbed no great depths, but this limitation does not negate the honesty or genuineness of his endeavor" (Playbill 25).

The story about ordinary people and the author's ability to portray them in a realistic and believable fashion was applauded by both audiences and critics. On the day following the play's opening, March 2, 1955, Walter Kerr in the New York Herald-Tribune raved about Kim Stanley (playing Cherie) and pronounced, Bus Stop "the best play we've had all season" (Kerr 346). Richard Watts' headline expressed his delight with Inge's latest play, "William Inge Achieves It Again" in the New York Post he went on to claim that, in Bus Stop, Inge "has, written a romantic comedy about ordinary people that was humorous, simple, steady entertaining and vastly endearing" (Watts 347). Brooks Atkinson from the New York Times wrote, ". . . having written a wonderful play (Picnic), two years ago, William Inge has written a better one . . . The performance is glorious" (Atkinson).

None of the critics immediately after the first performances complained, as others will years later, about the well-used plot device of building a story around a group of strangers stranded together, or underdeveloped/stereotyped characters. There was no mention of the predictability of the storyline, even though the audience knows from early in the play that Bo with his \$6000 in the bank and Cherie with her dead-end nightclub act will end up together when the curtain falls. The critics at the time of the original show opening were uniform in praising

the brilliance of the directing and the acting. In the words of William Inge biographer, Ralph Voss,

By any yardstick, Bus Stop was a hit. It would run for four Hundred seventy-eight performances . . . The great popularity of Bus Stop helped to solidify Inge's reputation as a "can't miss" playwright, and its sale to Hollywood was inevitable . . . Inge was the hottest playwright in America as 1955 progressed. (157)

In the mid-1950s Inge stood among the great playwrights of the time. His work was touted along with that of Eugene O'Neill, Tennessee Williams, and Arthur Miller. Yet within three years his star status would begin to fade and now fifty years later he is relegated to the ranks of being a lesser known, lesser talented author. Very few anthologies bother with even mentioning Inge. Except for a few footnotes, text books avoid him altogether. A reappearing criticism of his contribution centers on the fact that as an author he created nothing new for the theatre. Though well-crafted and well-written his stories had little staying power. Although the relationships and societal problems he explored in his storylines contain universal truths; this was not enough to sustain him as a great writer for the ages.

From his birth William Inge was a fragile individual, unsure of his own sexual identity and from his earliest days considered a "momma's boy" or a "sissy." It was always easier for him to run from his problems than confront them. As a young boy he hid behind his mother's skirts, as a young adult he hid himself in alcohol, as an older adult he merely withdrew to the comfort of sanitarium life, psychoanalysis, AA, and drug therapy.

In the end the critics proved to be too great a challenge for him to overcome. The first of the scathing criticism of his work occurred in 1958, by Robert Brustein of Harper's Magazine. The whole article was a calculated ambush from which Inge never fully recovered. In the article

Brustein referred to Inge as being, “a fiddle with only one string.” The article in *Harpers* was a shot at the idea that all of Inge’s characters are the same and all of the plots, settings and theories are also the same. Brustein suggests that each story is merely reworked with different character names and trotted back out to the public and the Broadway/Hollywood institutions who care little about art and more about money use the vehicle of an Inge play to line their pockets (Shuman 67).

Admittedly this was a cheap shot that authors even as respected as Tennessee Williams had to endure but Inge did not have the temperament to withstand severe criticism. In his early days Inge survived childhood and formal education by being a people pleaser. He pleased his mother and family with his clever recitations and equally clever impersonations of people. As a writer he continued to survive as long as what he was doing appeared to be acceptable and pleasing to his audience and to the critics. In the end, the critics challenged the fabric of Inge’s life-long endeavor to please others in suggesting that his work was, somehow, second rate and pedestrian. The tragedy is that Inge was unable to withstand the criticism but took the criticism to heart and believed that he was inadequate. Many had praised him for his greatness, ingenuity and talent. Unfortunately, he chose to believe the negative about himself rather than the positive.

The praise and the criticism still remain. The chief criticism centers on the development of characters. In the play Bus Stop the critics still complain that aside from the characters of Bo and Cherie the rest of the cast suffer from being under developed; serving as window dressing for the more significant development of character and relationship represented in the two main characters. In 2005 in a review regarding The Marin Theatre Company production of the play the critic from the San Francisco Chronicle took this shot at William Inge:

Inge is a fairly limited writer with a streak of sentimentality that undermines the seeming robust naturalism of his Midwestern



scenes and acute observations of American loneliness . . . his plays have both marketable name recognition and idiosyncratically drawn characters, the type of parts that many an actor would just love to play. (Daily Datebook E4)

“Fairly limited writer,” another way of suggesting that the writing and character development leaves room for improvement. Inge had long standing battles with directors and producers over his scripts. When Picnic was produced for the stage (1953) he had to rewrite the ending at least four times because the director, Joshua Logan, and the actors wanted an ending that they thought the audience would appreciate. Inge finally knuckled under but held a grudge against Logan until the day he died (Voss 127). To his chagrin Logan also directed the movie version of Bus Stop. Many of the significant characters from the play were dropped and other characters woven in (159).

In Bus Stop, Inge does not argue that his characters represent types. This was part of his purpose in writing the story in the way he did. He wrote the play as a love story which examines aspects of love that people find in relationships. All of his characters in the play have issues in their lives that concern the nature or reality of love. As such all of them are important in developing the myriad aspects of love. Inge wrote the following concerning his play:

Actually Bus Stop is the closest thing to fantasy that I ever wrote . . . The characters are typed but I was experimenting a little – trying to give an example of each kind of love. The earthy love, the purely physical attraction of the bus driver for the woman who runs the restaurant. There’s the corrupt attraction of the old man for the young girl. There’s a kind of homosexual feeling that the older cowboy has for the younger, although I never thought of them as

physical lovers. They all kind of play into a pattern. (Four Plays x)

Shortly before his death Inge granted a final interview to Lloyd Steele, a reporter from the Los Angeles Free Press in May of 1973. Steele asked Inge what he thought the judgment of history would be upon his work. Inge replied, "Oh Lord. I've absolutely no idea. The following generation may find some value in my work." The interviewer followed with the question of whether the opinion of another generation mattered, to which Inge responded, "Very much. More than anything else, I suppose" (Voss 266).

The truth is America never got tired of William Inge or his plays. Every year his plays are produced by amateur and professional companies and his movies are still in circulation. There is a revival of interest in the work of William Inge as new generations discover his compelling stories and realistic characters. The beauty of his plays is that because they so realistic they provide a window into the lives of ordinary people from the mid-twentieth century. Oregon Shakespeare Festival recently produced the play Bus Stop. The Artistic Director of OSF, Libby Appel, summarizes the interest in producing the play in this way,

Fifty years have passed and today Inge is probably not considered to stand among the pantheon of the greats. He is written about as a 'minor' American playwright. However I will always believe that his is a special voice that connects us to the inner decency of ordinary people and his plays remain a unique and revealing of a time and place in our history. (Appel 28)

In the early morning hours of June 6, 1973 William Inge, like so many sensitive artists before him, took his own life. His sister shortly after his death wrote that the only thing William ever felt good about was his writing (Shuman 67), but the critics even took that from him. On that June morning, the world lost an articulate voice and keen observer of the fabric which

constitutes the American people, for few have rivaled William Inge's ability to find pathos in the simple and universal truth in the ordinary.

William Inge, Bus Stop, The Form and the Influence

A work of art does not appear out of nothing. It is the product of influences that help shape it into the form it eventually takes. William Inge was a product of his time, education, and experiences, and his play, Bus Stop reflects those influences. He was a proponent of the school of realism to which his self-proclaimed mentor, Anton Chekhov, subscribed (Greenwald 324). As a result his audiences are not surprised to find realistic and naturalistic elements in his play. However, realism had its precedence in earlier philosophies, movements and models and so does the play, Bus Stop.

There is a formalism in the play Bus Stop that is not unlike the plays that emerged during the neoclassic Italian Renaissance. For example, there is verisimilitude represented in the characters in their realistic portrayal of life in the mid-twentieth century. Certainly this chance encounter of a group of travelers in a way-side diner is an event that has been played out in real life on more than one occasion. The plot is not so contrived that it could not have happened. The characters speak in a realistic manner without the aid of unnatural stage devices like soliloquy or asides. Even the violence of the play, a fist fight, is taken off stage in the neoclassic fashion. In the neoclassic tradition there are moral lessons that emerge in the telling of the story on stage.

In the sixteenth century the Italian neoclassic idealist, Julius Caesar Scaliger, declared in his writing that theatre had an obligation to not only provide an example of truth but also to teach moral lessons. He consolidated the concepts of decorum and verisimilitude as aspects of imitation that contribute to moral edification (Living 155). Bus Stop, as a realistic, slice-of-life, comedy/drama has within its text moral lessons that range from how people are to conduct themselves in public, how men are to treat women, how naïve girls should be aware of potential danger from older men, to the vivid example of how excesses in the debilitating indulgences in

alcohol lead to moral decay which destroys a promising life.

Lodovico Castelvetro a contemporary of Scaliger taught that characters in a stage production need to approximate actuality as closely as possible in order to be persuasive and not appear to be implausible in their conversation or action. The principle of “The Unities” is traced to this period and to Castelvetro in particular (156). The neoclassicists insisted on Unity of Time. A play should represent a time frame of not more than twenty-four hours, with twelve hours being even better. The whole time frame represented in Bus Stop is not more than eight hours. In addition, Unities demand that the action of the play be restricted to one place. Again the action of the play takes place in a single night in a single place. Finally the Unities call for a restriction of the number of character in the play. Bus Stop is a small cast that supports a single major story. Though William Inge probably did not set out to adhere strictly to the neoclassic model, his play, in his realistic fashion, does contain many of its precepts. The Inge brand of realism with its feet rooted in the neoclassic tradition stretched the model to find a form that was conducive to his view of life and truth.

Inge molds his story around a plausible event, and combines believable characters to present a naturalistic representation of humanity. Here his play has in the terms of Friedrich Hegel, “reached a perfect harmony between idea as spiritual individuality, and the form as sensuous and corporeal reality” (Philosophies 526). There is, indeed, a physical reality represented in the play. According to the author’s stage directions, the play is to portend an actual diner in the mid-1950s. The costumes, stage and hand props also fit the period, as does the conduct, mannerism, and speech habits of the individual characters.

Hegel goes on to say that in the classic form, “the spirit as a free subject is determined by and for itself, and in thus determining itself, it finds in its own essence its appropriate outer form (527). William Inge has found in Bus Stop the appropriate outer form through which his

audience is able to view life. In his adherence to the naturalistic instinct the play's essence and story dictates the form. There is no need to hold fast to an arbitrary set of rules or forms like those of Aristotle or the neoclassicists when the object is to represent life as it is truly lived. The essence has created the form. The play is as long as it needs to be and contains just those characters necessary to represent the author's view of life from his unique standpoint.

In endeavoring to understand the essence of the written word as represented in art, Carl Jung is careful not to psychoanalyze the artists but does not hesitate in examining the artist's motivating factors by tracing the artistic impulse to its primordial roots. These deeply ingrained impulses or primordial archetypes he labels as the "collective unconscious." In the play, Bus Stop, there are at least four examples of the collective unconscious. First, there is the courtship ritual. The central issue in the play is represented in the courtship of Cherie and Bo. Though misguided, awkward and sometimes humorous, the pairing of this young couple is a representation of the process of selection of mate for the general procreation of humanity that has been played out since the dawn of time. Secondly, there is the fundamental issue of man versus nature. It is the subservient frailty of humanity when faced with the power of nature which forces the passengers aboard their westbound bus to seek refuge from the violent storm that has arrested their progress. Humanity has always needed resourcefulness to survive in a world where nature is both friend and foe. Thirdly, and akin to the issue of man versus nature, is the representation of the dominant primordial reality, survival of the fittest. In the primordial world of both man and beast there is what Jack London, called, "The Law of Club and Fang" (Call 15). In this world the strong survive while the weak and ill-prepared perish. In the Inge's play, Bo is strong of will and muscle, yet he is bettered by a man who is stronger and more skilled in physical combat. The will of the stronger man's prevails over that of the weaker. As a result the weaker man acquiesces to the determination of the stronger. The fourth, more obscure,

example of the collective unconscious is the idea of the quest, or the fundamental search. In the case of the play the quest takes on a variety of forms, but in general terms it is what Victor Frankl called, “man’s search for meaning” (Meaning). In the case of Dr. Lyman, his life has ceased to have meaning. There is a faint glimmer of hope for him in the end of the play but the depths to which he has sunk has dimmed the possibility that meaning and purpose for his life will be found. He is the tragic character after the pattern of the Aristotelian model. Young Elma is also seeking for meaning and understanding as she views the world with wide-eyed fascination and optimism. Virgil at the end of the play comes to realize that the meaning and purpose which he had, perhaps, taken for granted needed to be refocused. In addition to these primordial archetypes there are fundamental urges and emotions represented in the play that also stretch back to the foundation of humanity as we know it including: love, fear, regret, remorse, and loneliness. These fundamental emotions are portrayed in naturalistic terms, through the instrumentality of William Inge’s perception of reality.

It is clear from reading the author’s lengthy stage directions that he views the production of Bus Stop in realistic/naturalistic terms. His directions include: how the walls should be painted and decorated, what the lighting should be and where they should be placed, what items should be on the counters of the diner, how the actors should appear, speak and react (Inge). Although Bus Stop is not a scientific or clinical study of humanity, the author wishes for the play to be viewed as true to the sociological science. Emile Zola, the unofficial father of the theory of naturalism, stated that,

. . . in the present era of experimental science, the artist should emulate the science in both method and aim, the method being the careful study of objective phenomena, the aim an exact analysis of man. (Theories 274)

In the naturalistic world of theatre the audience becomes secondary to occurrences on the stage. The role of the audience is that of an observer who is free to experience vicariously what the actors are expressing, understanding and experiencing. Along with the entertainment provided to the audience, the realistic play affords opportunities for giving vent to sympathy, understanding, and learning. There is a strong feeling that with or without the audience the story goes on, and because of its nature it is played out in hundreds of locations in multiple lives, for this is the story of humanity and not an isolated, significant event with earth changing results. In praising a play for its naturalistic tendencies, Zola commented,

...the audience did not seem to exist for them [the actors]...They turned their backs to the orchestra, entered, said what they wished to say and left naturally, without the least effort to attract attention to themselves. This doesn't seem like much, but it is enormous for us in France. (277)

Bus Stop does not pretend to be a great tragedy or a great comedy. It is life with its built-in tragedies, ironies and even coincidences. Arthur Miller has pointed out that in our society tragic characters are those of the lower, middle class (Greenwald 1200). We can not identify with kings who fail to actualize their right to rule a land but we can identify with the clumsiness of a young man who, though deep feeling, can not express his true emotions, or a man of great potential reduced to riding a bus to escape his own reality as a result of his debauched lifestyle. In this play the audience is not left to wonder what might have happened if the central character had not had a tragic flaw of character, as in the case of Oedipus. The audience is free to speculate as to what might happen to the characters in a world that is not unlike their own, where the tragic flaws are already built into the fabric of an unfair world.



One of Zola's adherents, Jean Jullien, added to the understanding of the naturalistic theories two dictums. In the first dictum he encouraged actors and playwrights to look at theatre as being, "a slice of life on the stage of art" (Carlson 279). In addition, it was Jullien who encouraged actors to consider the proscenium opening as a "fourth wall, transparent for the public, opaque to the actors" (280). Through this fourth wall the audience is free to view but not free to interact. To be anything other than observer would constitute an invasion into the reality that is being created on stage.

Though realistic and even naturalistic in composition there are elements of the melodrama in the way Bus Stop ends. The old formula (boy meets girl, boy loses girl, boy gets girl) is played out, for the boy does get the girl in the end. However, there is a disquieting notion left with the audience that perhaps the fairytale ending for Bo and Cherie and the others may have ugly twists and dangerous curves in the road ahead. The "bus stop" was just that, a moment in time where significant life-choices were made. But this is only one moment in the lives of people, William Inge made real for a time. Their story and outcome is yet to be determined but that would require still other slices be taken from their lives.

Like real life, one is left at the end of the play satisfied that Bo and Cherie are together, Dr. Layman might seek professional help, Elma won't be meeting the doctor in Topeka, Carl will probably stop in again to visit Grace and Virgil is left out in the cold. "Virgil" is an interesting choice for a character name. It may be that the well-read Mr. Inge selected the character name as a playful reminder of Dante's Divine Comedy. It was the Roman philosopher, historian and poet, Virgil, who guided Dante into the inferno and through the nine circles of hell. In Dante's conception of hell the lowest depths were very cold rather than being very hot. It was in the ninth circle of hell that Dante saw the old dragon, Satan, frozen in a lake composed of hate, jealousy, pride and the other deadly sins. Leaving the lower depths of hell, Virgil guided Dante

on into purgatory but Dante's journey did not end in purgatory. He was destined to go on into heaven. Virgil, a pre-Christian, could not ascend into heaven with Dante. Beatrice, the pure and perfect, picked up the role as guide and took Dante on to heaven. Perhaps Inge's Virgil after guiding his youthful protégé through the circles of earthly love and the purgatory of courtship, it was time for Bo's own Beatrice (Cherie) to conduct him on into the heavenly realms of marriage. Virgil is always left out in the cold at the end of the journey.

The play though amusing in its own right is something of an object lesson revealing what Confucious (551-479 B.C.), the great Chinese teacher, said . . . "What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others" (Times), or what western cultures influenced by Christianity would call, "the Golden Rule." When people are treated with respect and mutual deference the result will be satisfying. For the Dr. Lyman's of the world the Golden Rule needed to be applied on a personal basis. He need to treat himself in a way that was not self destructive. The audience has beheld a living testimony to the power of human compassion and the ability of love in all of its facets to find a way for people to experience satisfaction.

## Summary and Conclusions

There is a simple beauty and a simple truthfulness in the play Bus Stop. The critics when it first opened in New York in 1955 universally saw its quality, as did the patrons who kept the show on the boards of the Music Box Theatre for four hundred and seventy-eight performances. It was years after the first Broadway run that critics started to berate the legitimacy of the play as good theatre and to question the author's writing ability. It seems so odd that a play and author that had already stood the test of audience approval would be treated in such a cavalier manner by people (critics, and academics) who would never mount a play on Broadway, let alone three within a period of less than five years.

William Inge is not William Shakespeare. The beauty in Bus Stop is not in the delicate diction or precise pentameter of the Bard. It is in the naturalistic truthfulness of the story and the realistic portrayal of people of a particular period in American history that the play is most palatable. From the first words of dialogue the audience is drawn in by the simple process of identification with the characters and even the situation which binds them all together. Few people of the modern age could identify on a social or emotional level with tragic heroes like Oedipus or King Lear. Arthur Miller pointed out that a tragic hero is not the exclusive territory of the high and affluent only as Aristotle suggested, but is the province of the common person in their plight to survive in a world that is at its core unfair (Greenwald 1000). Bus Stop is filled with tragic, heroic and noble characters for the faces of the characters are our faces, and their emotions, feelings struggles and discoveries are ours as well.

William Inge is an interesting study in and of himself. Though he worked hard to escape his rural roots in the Midwest and run away to the large city, he never really lost those rural underpinnings, since his most successful plays are all set in the location he best understood, rural America. His characters are composites of the people he also understood best from his

childhood and school days spent in small-town USA. There was a time during his glory days in New York that he was embarrassed about the fact that he came from rural Kansas (Voss 142) but with success came a certain pride in his rural roots. In fact, there was a kind of fascination in the fifties with the Midwest and Kansas in particular by the general public. Another small town boy had also left his home to become a great military leader and the president of the United States. If Dwight Eisenhower wasn't ashamed of Kansas than certainly William Inge would not be either. In 1970 on the occasion of Independence, Kansas's centennial celebration, William Inge wrote concerning his appreciation of his small town, rural American roots

I've always been glad that I grew up in Independence, because I feel it gave me a knowledge of people and a love of people. I've often wonder how people raised in our great cities ever develop any knowledge of humankind. People who grow up in small towns get to know each other so much more closely than they do in cities. Independence I'll always remember as a beautiful little town with enormous shady trees and lots of fine spacious homes. I'll always remember the celebrations of Halloween and the city park there with its winding drive around the sad old Verdigris River . . . Independence lies at the very heart of our country, and so maybe its people have more heart in human affairs. Big people come out of small towns. (Inge)

As a young boy growing up he was frightfully shy and yet he could stand in front of an audience and recite Shakespeare, poetry and prose. It is interesting to note how many people who can stand on a stage and perform are in their everyday life frightfully introverted. In this regard I write from personal experience. I feel that emotionally I understand William Inge. In

addition, I feel that I as the director, designer, producer of the production I will bring something of the heart of the “big man who came from a small town.”

In starting research on the play and the author everything came as a surprise. Previously I had very little knowledge of the playwright, though I had read two of his plays, Picnic and Dark at the Top of the Stairs. In preparing to take students to Ashland to the Oregon Shakespeare Festival I read the play Bus Stop. I found the play to be interesting and perhaps a perfect prospect to produce in our small theatre at Boise High School. The first surprise came in discovering that William Inge was able to write three successive plays that all were hits on Broadway within a five year period. His success was astounding. In addition I was surprised to find that even though successful he was hounded by critics who literally chased him off the stage and out of New York (Shuman). Inge never recovered from the back-hand slaps of the critics. He took each rebuff as a personal insult. In his career William Inge went full circle from being a college professor to the bright lights of Broadway and Hollywood back to being a college professor.

William Inge was a man who struggled with his sexual identity. The fact that he was homosexual living and working in a time when the homosexual lifestyle was something to be concealed and not lived openly led to a number of personal crisis including, excess in alcohol, constant bouts of depression and debilitating frustration and loneliness. Though he had homosexual tendencies one of the great regrets of his life was that he did not marry his life-long friend, Barbara Baxley? She had been a great friend and in the end of his life Inge felt that she would have been an understanding companion (Voss 266). As it was when the depression became too much for him to bare and with no one with whom he could confide in the summer of 1973 he took his own life.

The play will be a challenge to produce for many reasons. First, there is the challenge of

making the play believable in terms of characterization. The people playing the parts in the production will be of high school age. If this was a professional theatre, it would be appropriate to use actors of the approximate age of the characters they are representing as designated by the author. Theater education at Boise High School is a vehicle by which students learn about theatre from its historical roots to the multiple stages, ages and trends. The first job is to teach, the second is to make the production as near professional as possible. It may be possible for adults to play the parts of the older cast members but this would take away opportunities for students to study and work on characterization, dialect and acting styles. There is a potential for great learning for students willing to accept the challenge. It will be important for characters to carefully study the age of the characters they are playing and the makeup artists to accurately approximate age.

In consideration of the first challenge, the second challenge seems almost insurmountable. The second challenge is to make the play as realistic as possible. In addition to character study and makeup, costuming and set design will help the audience suspend reality for a little while. As previously discussed the play will be in the little theatre. The seating in this small venue is restricted to sixty-five people. The smallness and the intimacy of the space will add to the believability of the realism that William Inge wrote into almost every line of dialogue in the play.

### Expected Student Goals and Outcomes

Taken From the Idaho Department of Education, State Standards for Theatre Production

1. Identify concepts essential to theatre.
  - a) Interpret and perform scripts to convey story and meaning to an audience.
  - b) Research and apply physical, emotional, and social dimensions in creating character,
  - c) Analyze theatrical elements of a dramatic performance.
2. Communicate through theatre, applying artistic concepts, knowledge, and skills.
  - a) Show how artistic choices can affect performances and formal productions.
  - b) Construct imaginative scripts that convey story and meaning to an audience.
  - c) Interpret/perform a work respecting the intent of its creator.
3. Communicate through theatre with creative expression.
  - a) Develop and sustain a character that communicates with the audience.
  - b) Organize and conduct rehearsals for production.
  - c) Plan and develop original set designs that support a dramatic text
  - d) Create a dramatic work that expresses personal understanding, opinions, and beliefs.

### Additional Goal and Objectives

4. By producing and acting in a play that is realistic in nature and tone students will be able to distinguish this genre in theatre production from other forms.
  - a) To aid in this goal the works of Chekhov and philosophy of Zola and the naturalists will be taught and discussed.
  - b) Students will have hands-on experience with elements in set design and dressing that will aid in creating an environment for the play that is very realistic and reflective of mid-America circa 1955.
2. Students will gain an experience in playing particular character types including regional

differences in characters, age and dialects, and general movement.

- a) To aid in the process dialect tapes will be used and practiced by all students in the drama class.
- b) Detailed research will be conducted for each of the characters.
- c) Actors will make careful studies of people of the age group they are playing
- d) (Example) The two actors playing the Montana cowboys and Sheriff Will, will be expected to wear cowboy boots everyday for three weeks prior to the show.



Given Circumstance

From the script Author' stage directions

Takes place in a street-corner restaurant on small Kansas town (5)

One A.M. on a night in early May (5)

There is a blizzard outside (5)

The westbound bus is expected (5)

Elma

Elma is of high school age (6)

Has studied French (17)

Has a sister in Topeka (13)

Grace

Grace owns the restaurant and is the cook (6)

Grace is separated from her husband and is lonely (7)

Will

Sheriff, (6)

A religious man and a deacon in the church, was a little (8)

Wild as a youth got in trouble for stealing horses, A good man corrected him and help him straighten out his life. (54)

Cherie

from the Ozarks with a Southern accent (9)

Cherie worked as a nightclub performer in K.C., (10)

Says she was abducted by Bo (11-12)

Was 2<sup>nd</sup> place in a singing contest, refers to sister by name but none of the other members of her family. (17)

Bo

With the rodeo (10)

Bo in his early 20s (20)

Owns a ranch in Montana, (23)

Has \$6000 in the bank (54)

Dr. Lyman

A well-educated drunk, concerned about being in another state. On his way to Denver. A man about 50 years old. (11-12)

He has been married three times, (15)

A former college professor, scholar – graduated Magna Cum Laude, studied at Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar and has a Ph d from Harvard (30)

Carl,

Bus driver, (12)

Knows about Grace's apartment (15)

## Analysis of Action

### (Smiley Model)

- Balance:** It's a night in early March the highway is closed between Topeka and Kansas City because of a late-winter blizzard. At a small Bus Stop the westbound bus must layover for a period of time while road crews work on clearing the road ahead. There are three towns' people awaiting the arrival of the bus.
- Protagonist:** Bo and Cherie carry the story. The rest of the individual plots rotate around this central story
- Disturbance:** Cherie has been forced on to the bus by Bo. He plans to take her to Montana and marry her. She doesn't want to go with him.
- Plan:** She wants to hide until the bus leaves. Bo is asleep on the bus. With a little luck he might sleep right through the bus stop and not realize that Cherie is missing until he is far away.
- Complication:** The bus is not stopping for just a few minutes. This layover is of an indefinite length as a result of the road being closed. At that time of night and because of the cold there is no where for Cherie to go and hide.
- Plan:** Cherie enlists the help of Will, the town sheriff, to protect her and help prevent Will from taking her to Montana
- Complication:** Bo insists on taking her with him
- Obstacle:** Cherie doesn't want go, Will is not going to allow, Bo to take her against her will.
- Plan:** Virgil tries to settle Bo down lest he end up in jail, He also talks to Bo about how to treat a lady. A spontaneous talent show brings up amorous feelings in Bo. In his enthusiasm he interrupts her performance and in the end get a slap and harsh word from Cherie.

- Plan:** Bo plans to take Cherie by force.
- Crisis:** Will intervenes confronting Bo and they take the argument into the streets. Bo is beaten by Will
- Plan:** Bo a bit more contrite is forced to apologize to Cherie, Virgil encourages Bo to talk to Cherie.
- Climax:** Bo gives money to Cherie so she can return to K.C. he asks if he can kiss her good-bye. This kiss is more sincere. Bo asks her to marry him, she agrees.
- Complication:** Cherie and Bo plan to leave on the bus, Virgil tells them that he is not going to go with them. (Three is company).
- Resolution:** Bo and Cherie leave on the bus. The Bus Stop closes, Elma goes home, Virgil is left out in the cold.

### **Sub Plot #1**

- Balance:** Grace is admittedly lonely. The arrival of Carl, the bus driver, is anticipated.
- Disturbance:** The disturbance is a benefit for Grace. A snow storm blocks the road the bus has to layover at the bus stop much longer than the normal twenty minutes, This permits the relationship between Grace and Carl to move beyond mere flirtation.
- Plan:** Grace and Carl plan a little alone time in Grace's apartment. Grace feigns a headache while Carl says he is going for a walk.
- Complication:** The fight between Bo and Will brings Grace and Carl back into the diner.
- Plan:** They will meet again when Carl comes through again.
- Complication:** The issue of whether Carl is already married is not resolved. –
- Resolution:** With the anticipation of Carl's return, Grace is a little less lonely.

- Subplot #2** Elma is a young girl who is bright and well read but naïve

**Disturbance:** Dr. Lyman an articulate drunk is a predator of young women

**Complication:** Dr. Lyman seems to go out of his way to impress Elma, She is easily impressed by his background and learning

**Plan:** Dr. Lyman purposes that He meets Elma in Topeka in a few days and go to the symphony and dinner.

**Complication:** Dr. Lyman is getting progressively more drunk, Carl is aware of Lyman's appetite in young women and tells Will.

**Plan:** When morning comes, after a drunken stupor Lyman a bit more sober thinks better of his plan and tells Elma that they c should not meet in Topeka

**Resolution:** Grace takes time to tell Elma that not all men (even well-educated one) are honorable, Elma is somewhat pleased that a man thought of her in a sexual way (even though Lyman was an old drunken, lecherous reprobate).

### A Look at the Progress in the Play in Terms of Polar Opposites

Beginning of the Play

At the end of the Play

Grace - Alone	Grace - Anticipating Carl's Return
Elma - Naïve	Elma - Understanding a little more about men
Cherie - Trying to escape from Bo	Cherie - Willing going with Bo to Montana
Bo - Taking Cherie to Montana, regardless of Cherie's reluctance	Bo - Go to Montana with Cherie,
Will - Solid as a rock	Will - Solid as a rock
Virgil - Going to Montana with Bo	Virgil - Setting out on his own, recognizing that three is company, Bo and Cherie need time to be alone
Carl - Hoping to get a little lucky with Grace	Carl - T.D. anticipating his next trip to Grace's diner
Dr. Lyman -- Drunken, lecherous, Reprobate	Dr. Lyman – Ditto –a few hours later in his wretched existence

## Bus Stop Analysis of Casting

**Grace: Leah Harf**

Senior –Advanced Drama Student. Distinguished and recognized for placing 3<sup>rd</sup> in the State of Idaho in Ensemble Pantomime.

**Credits Include:** Being cast in:

<u>Midsummer Night's Dream</u>	Hula Halau
<u>12<sup>th</sup> Night</u>	Pirate
<u>Boughser, Too Proud Tree</u>	Squirrel
<u>Can't Take It With You</u>	Donna

**Strengths:** Strong presence on stage, powerful vocal instrument, ability to interpret materials, dedication to the art of acting and performing

**Challenges:** (with respect to casting): She is playing a woman 20 years older than she is. She will have credibility problems. She is young and attractive and must become early middle aged and a woman who is a little rough around the edges.

**Assignment:** Carefully observe women who are in their late thirties and early forties. Observe how they move, speak and communicate. Find pictures of women in this age group from the 1950s. Watch video or movie from this time period. Find one woman to use as a model and then copy them.

**Elma: Kat Boylan**

Senior –Advanced Drama Student. Distinguished and recognized for placing in the final State of Idaho in Solo Pantomime, Recently honored as becoming the year-long custodian of the drama club mascot, Crack. As thus she is the inspirational leader of the club and is responsible for leading warm-up prior to

each production. Awarded the Supporting Best Actor in a comedy award 2007 for her part as Mrs. Paddy in Curious Savage.

**Credits Include:** Being cast in:

<u>Midsummer Night's Dream</u>	Hula Halau
<u>Curious Savage</u>	Mrs. Paddy
<u>Free Ice Cream</u>	Ensemble Cast

**Strengths:** Strong presence on stage, powerful vocal instrument, Very flexible in interpretation. Great Comic timing, ability to use dialects and memorize quickly

**Challenges:** (with respect to casting): She is playing a young woman who in the script is close to her own age. Physically she fits the part but she will need to become more naïve and rural in her carriage and demeanor.

**Assignment:** Her research must take her back fifty year to what that young woman from mid-America would be like. Work on mid-continent accents that are believable and not over done.

**Will: Andrew Hardee**

Senior –Advanced Drama Student. Distinguished and recognized for placing in the final State of Idaho in Ensemble Pantomime in both 2005 and 2006. He is the president of the drama club. Awarded Best Actor in a Classic Role 2007 for her part as Sir Toby Belch in 12th Night.

**Credits Include:** Being cast in:

<u>12<sup>th</sup> Night</u>	Sir Toby Belch
<u>Free Ice Cream</u>	Ensemble Cast

**Strengths:** Strong presence on stage, powerful vocal instrument, Very flexible in interpretation. Great Comic timing, ability to use dialects and memorize quickly.



He is physically large and commanding on stage. He is a master at physical comedy.

**Challenges:** (with respect to casting): He is playing a man 25 years older than he is.

He will have credibility problems. He is a good looking young man who must become a small town sheriff. His physical size makes him believable but his soft easy manner and baby face will need make-up. On the small stage the audience is so close to the actors too much make-up merely looks artificial and unbelievable.

**Assignment:** Carefully observe men who are in their early forties to fifties. Observe how they move, speak and communicate. Find pictures of men in this age group from the 1950s. Watch video or movie from this time period. Find one man to use as a model and then copy them.

**Cherie: Allison Dykman**

Senior –Advanced Drama Student. Student Body President Boise High School, Member of Foul Puppets improve. Troup.

**Credits Include:** Being cast in:

Curious Savage

Nurse Willie

Wizard of Oz

Stage Manager, Munchkin Wrangler

Free Ice Cream

Ensemble Cast

**Strengths:** Strong presence on stage, powerful vocal instrument, Very flexible in interpretation. Great Comic timing, ability to use dialects and memorize quickly. She is charming on stage is creative and thinks fast on her feet.

**Challenges:** (with respect to casting): She is playing a young woman who is not too much older than her chronologically but decades older when it comes to hard life and experience of the seedier parts of life. She must become believable as a low

grade nightclub performer from the 1950s. She is also required to sing, Old Black Magic.

**Assignment:** Her research must take her back fifty year to what that young woman from mid-America would be like. Work on Arkansas accents that are believable and not over done. Find a recording of Old Black Magic and work on performing the number accompanied by guitar.

**Bo: Chris Canfield**

Junior –Advanced Drama Student. Distinguished and recognized for placing in the semi-final State of Idaho in Solo Humorous in both 2006. Awarded Best New Comer to Boise High 2007, Received the distinction to have lettered in drama as a sophomore.

**Credits Include:** Being cast in:

<u>12<sup>th</sup> Night</u>	Pirate
You Can't Take it With You	Tony
Talent Show	Greater Tuna
Wizard of Oz	Cowardly Lion

**Strengths:** Strong presence on stage, powerful vocal instrument, Very flexible in interpretation. Great Comic timing, ability to use dialects and memorize quickly. He is physically large and commanding on stage. He is a master at physical comedy. Potentially One of the best actors produced at Boise High, with a proven record in his sophomore year.

**Challenges:** (with respect to casting): He is playing a rodeo cowboy who is about seven years older than he is. He will have credibility problems. His physical size makes him believable but his soft easy manner and baby face will need make-up.

His problems are not unlike those of Andrew playing Will. Physically he is large to be a rodeo cowboy.

**Assignment:** Attend a rodeo or watch rodeo cowboys on T.V. Wear cowboy boots almost exclusively during the four weeks prior to production. Work on Montana accent (western – not southern).

**Carl: Joe Davidson**

Junior –Advanced Drama Student. Participated in District drama receiving an award for excellence. Nominated for Supporting Best actor in a comedic role.

**Credits Include:** Being cast in:

Curious Savage

Titus Savage

Wizard of Oz

Citizen, Winkie General

**Strengths:** Strong presence on stage, powerful vocal instrument, Very flexible in interpretation. Great Comic timing, ability to use dialects and memorize quickly. Outstanding commitment to acting. He is quick to learn and takes direction well.

**Challenges:** (with respect to casting): He is playing a playing a character who is in his late thirties or early forties. He is the male counter part to Grace. His part is that of the bus driver. He and Grace have a romantic relationship.

**Assignment:** Watch older men how they move and communicate. Become at ease in talking to Leah. The relationship needs to look real. Find pictures of bus drivers from the 1950s. Research what it meant to have a job like that.

**Virgil: David Thompson**

Junior –Advanced Drama Student. Nominated for Best Supporting actor in a comedic role.

**Credits Include:** Being cast in:

Alias Smedley Pewtree

Smedley

Wizard of Oz

Uncle Henry, Green Show - Introduction

**Strengths:** Strong presence on stage, powerful vocal instrument, Very flexible in interpretation. Great Comic timing, ability to use dialects and memorize quickly. Outstanding commitment to acting. He is quick to learn and takes direction well. Able to play the guitar and sing. Very excellent in working in the technical areas of sound and video.

**Challenges:** (with respect to casting): He is playing a character who is in his late forties. He is a cowboy and friend of Bo's. He is a father figure to Bo. He has led a long and sometimes austere life. He is a little care-worn though still strong from his ranching/cowboy life-style.

**Assignment:** Watch older men how they move and communicate. Wear cowboy boots during the four weeks prior to the show. Find an arrangement of Old Black Magic learn to play it and teach it to Allison.

**Dr. Lyman: François Justice/Durham**

Senior --Advanced Drama Student. Advanced from District to State drama in the area of Solo Humorous. Nominated for Best Supporting actor in a comedic role.

**Credits Include:** Being cast in:

Romeo and Juliet

Balthazar

Curious Savage

Samuel Savage

Free Ice Cream

Ensemble Cast

**Strengths:** Strong presence on stage, powerful vocal instrument, Very flexible in interpretation. Great Comic timing, ability to use dialects and memorize quickly. Outstanding commitment to acting. He is quick to learn and takes direction well.

**Challenges:** (with respect to casting): He is playing a playing a character who is in his late forties or fifties. The man is a lecherous drunk. François's tall frame may be an advantage but he must not appear to limber or young.

**Assignment:** Watch older men how they move and communicate. Study what people who are in a state of near constant inebriation might function (no experimenting with foul substances). This is a sober exercise which must be approached very seriously.

## Section III

## Production Notes

April 27

Audition scripts were made available today.

Notes: Audition scripts were made available. The audition scene consisted of Act III page 59-60 In this short scene Bo and Cherie finally talk and he tells her that as he understands that he truly loves her. (Appendix A) Students were expected to also bring their portfolios or fill out a complete audition application. In addition they were to present a one-two minute audition monologuc. We are producing two plays in the fall, Bus Stop and Merry Wives of Windsor. Students are free to audition for one or the other or both

May 16

Notes: First day of auditioning. This evening after school twenty-six students auditioned. I was aided in the audition process by my stage manager, Jenna Knobbloch and Marc Ewing who will be directing Merry Wives. Jenna is a senior advanced drama student who has a talent for organization. She managed one show as a junior and received the best stage manager award at our annual awards dinner. Marc Ewing is a recent graduate from Albertson's College of Idaho. He is an alumnus from Boise High School with many credits to his name. Before going off to try his hand on the big stage in New York he is taking time to try his hand at directing. We saw some impressive auditions. The part of Cherie is very hotly coveted. Bri Wickland, who was brilliant as Dorothy in the Wizard of Oz was very good. I also liked François Justice/Durham for the part of Dr. Lyman. He wants the part. I asked him how much of his unruly long hair he'd be willing to part with if I gave him the part. He said, "take it all." Andrew Hardee I can see in the part of Will, Marc also liked him for Falstaff. We may have to arm-wrestle or maybe he can do both.

May 17

Notes: Second night of auditioning – We saw thirty-four additional students. That is an even sixty students who auditioned. Between the two plays we have twenty-six parts. We will do a little doubling for Merry Wives. Allison Dykman was wonderful as Cherie. I gave Bri to Mark for the part of Anne Page in Merry Wives. The surprise was Jessie Dealy who tried out for Bo. He looks the part and did have a good audition. I argued with myself for a long time about giving him the part but he is such an unproven quantity in the end I had to go with Chris Canfield. Chris isn't as convincing in appearance but he certainly is one of my most dedicated actors. Kat Boylan was a natural for Elma. I've had my eye on her for the part for a long time David Thompson is able to play the guitar and sing so he will do the part of Virgil. The Cast will be posted tomorrow. Oh Woe, day of anguish and delight.

May 18          Casting Posted

Notes: People were delighted and disappointed. (I hate casting.) Students picked up their scripts. Initial meeting: Bus Stop May 28, Merry Wives June 4.

May 28

Notes: Initial meeting and first reading. (3:30-6:45) I took time to explain the thesis project to the cast. I fielded questions, showed them the calendar and a model of the set. We dove into the play and continued reading through the first act. I knew we wouldn't get all the way through the play. A little after 5:00 my wife and I took the entire cast to dinner at local Chinese restaurant. This was a time of bonding and dreaming about the show. The students are excited and began to think about what the set and play will be like. Allison mentioned that they had recently renovated their basement to look like a 50's diner. She said we could borrow tables, stools and chairs. Judging from their level of excitement this is going to be great.

May 29

Notes: We continued reading in class today. No rehearsal after school.

May 30

Notes: We continued reading in class today. No rehearsal after school.

June 4

This is the last day of classes. We read briefly in Act Two. Summer assignments have been given. Two of the students, Chris and David have been chosen as apprentices at Idaho Shakespeare. They will be very busy working for Idaho Shakes. I have no fear they will come back to school knowing their parts well even if they are not totally off book. I have their E-mails and cell phone numbers. Sometime in mid August I will contact them and we will work on the set. I want the set in place by the first day of school.

June 10

Notes: I spoke with Dave Leman about helping me with the construction of the set. I showed him my model. He is a retired builder with many years of experience. He indicated that he thought it would be fun to help in the construction. He has some knowledge of surplus building materials. He has promised that while I am at CWU he will check into these items.

July 7

Notes: What a lucky day, 07/07/07. Today in thinking about the play I decided to list each of the characters in terms of their accomplishments, strengths and weaknesses and suggest an assignment for them once we return to school on August 27.

August 17

Today was the first day of set construction. Seven drama students helped bring platforms from the main stage. The back wall which will form the restraint wall was set in place. The frame for the counter was also completed. The hope is that by the time we start rehearsal the entrances and exits will be ready for blocking. The basic outline of the set is in place. It does appear that we



will have enough room to enter and exit in front of the pillars at the rear of the stage. The side walls were connected to the back wall and the openings for the doors were created.

August 18

David Lehman and I worked on stage. Dave hung the doors, one of which he made for the stage, while I worked on the counter and frame the window for the back wall. Three students came and worked on painting the pieces of the stage that are in place. After experimenting with a number of colors we settled on a light green trimmed in pink. The colors do selected fit the color pallet selected in the planning stages (appendix E).

August 19

The stage has come together to the point that we are ready to begin rehearsing. The kitchen doors were set and the window to the kitchen cased.

August 27

This is the first day of school. Students reported in and excited about getting started in rehearsing. The first rehearsal is set for after school on September 5

September 5

First Rehearsal: This first week we will work on act one. Today was a read-through. Kat already has her part memorized as does François. Everyone is very excited about the play.

September 6

We worked on initial blocking. There is a problem in using just the small stage. We are going to try an experiment and see if we can broaden out the stage and create two areas in front of the big pillars. The idea is that perhaps the stove, bench and magazine rack could be out in front of the pillars. The pillars instead of being painted black and pretending they are not there would be painted like the rest of the restaurant walls and become part of the restaurant.

September 7

The idea of the new space on the sides seemed to work well as long as the actors cleared the black-hole spaces created by the way the pillars block the entrances and exits for some of the audience. Andrew was not in rehearsal. He is a great actor but a bit irresponsible at times. The actors worked through Act One

September 10

We have a major problem. Boise High's Homecoming has been moved to the 28<sup>th</sup> of September with the dance on the 29<sup>th</sup>. This is a direct conflict with our production dates. I had a meeting with the principal and I will see if it is possible for Scott to come a couple weeks later than planned. Today we worked on act two. This was a read-through of the act. Andrew was missing again.

September 11

We are going to be able to move the production to open on the 11<sup>th</sup> -13<sup>th</sup> of October. Scott will be able to be with us for just the one day October 13. That will be closing night and will hopefully be a good performance. Today I spoke with Andrew and he is going to drop out of his part. He is also playing the part of Falstaff in our November production of Merry Wives. He thought that the two parts represented too much work for him. Of course I asked him this very question before he accepted the part. Tomorrow I will ask Matt Dominick if he would like to consider the part. At least Matt would be considerably taller than Chris playing Bo. We need someone large enough to be convincing as the sheriff.

September 12

I talked to the cast about Andrew's departure. Allison (Cherie) said that she talked to Daniel Olson about doing the part. Daniel has potential but he has never had a major part plus

physically he is slight of build though he is taller than Chris. I will try him out in rehearsal tomorrow. We continued reading and began initial blocking for Act Two.

September 13

Both Daniel and Matt were in rehearsal this afternoon. Matt is playing the part of Slender in Merry Wives. Daniel read well and remarkably had most of Act Two memorized. I think Allison coached him. Daniel has a very strong voice and the text of the script makes mention of the fact that it is not how strong a person is that determines if they are a good fighter. Will makes the distinction between the fighter and the bully. Daniel is thinner and smaller than Chris but I think he will be able to do the part. Reading continued in Act 2

September 14 – No students at school – teacher In-service

September 17

All of the students were off book in Act 2 except Cherie and Virgil. She is about 60% on lines he is about 80%. The blocking is beginning to make sense. We will need extra time Monday to work on blocking the fight scene. With the little counter bar at the back it is hard for Dr. Lyman and Elma to talk in a convincing way and keep his back from facing the audience. I moved the R. table further upstage to give him more room to move to the counter. It does seem to be helping.

September 18

We blocked the fight scene at the end of the act, and bringing Grace back on to stage. If we do it right (and we will) she should get a big laugh out of her, “What the hell is going on?” line. We brought in the stove this morning. That thing was incredibly heavy but we got it in place so now the blocking can be adjusted to account for its presence. We worked through the entire second act.

September 19

Today in drama class the students performed the entire first act of the play. They did a very nice job though they dropped a few lines here and there. They haven't been on Act 1 for a while so my little surprise in having them do it raised the stakes. Tonight after school we started working on Act 3. This was a read through. I'm not sure if all of them had actually read to the end because as we read the part about Virgil being left in the cold the actors were saddened by the strange anti-climatic ending. The kiss scene is going to take some work though I'm sure Chris and Allison will handle it with maturity.

September 20

Blocking of Act 3; The blocking with the use of the side sections is making everything work easier. People seem to have assigned or claimed space that works for their character. Kat seems to be a little quiet in her delivery. I'm not sure what is going on. It may be that this has something to do with how she sees her character but it's not working for me.

September 21

We continued working on Act 3. We are going to take the intermission after act two which will give Maggie enough time to put the bruising and black eye on Chris. Short rehearsal - Monday we'll do a complete run-through of Act 3

September 24

Francois and I picked up furniture from Allison's home. This included three stools and four chairs that fit the period very well. We also got an old 12 pane window for the fake window on the side of the stage behind the bench and magazine stand. We did a complete run-through of Act 3.

September 25

We started running the play from the beginning and bogged down in Act Two. We worked the act twice and called it a day. Students are heavily involved in homecoming. It is a bit of a problem since Allison is student body president.

September 26.

We picked up where we left off in Act 2, reinforced our efforts from the previous day and got into Act 3. Saturday will be our final tech. day. Today I hung extra lights to try to address the problem of the shadows on stage. I hung three fresnels on the back wall. It did help brighten the sides and the spots right in front of the pillars.

September 27

This is the final rehearsal this week. Tomorrow is homecoming and all of the kids are doing something related to homecoming. Tonight we cut things short as students went to work on floats and things for the homecoming parade. We worked in Act 3 but students were distracted. We need to get homecoming out of their systems. We rehearse at 10:00 on Saturday with tech. rehearsal beginning at 8:00 and the actors joining us at 10:00. We ran the whole show and we are all greatly encouraged.

September 29.

This was a tech. day. We worked painting the set and running the show with all tech in place. The actors came at 10:00 and we ran up until 1:00. The play is coming together. Daniel is very impressive as Will. This is a big, but delightful surprise. I really like his dedication. Chris and Allison (Bo/Cherie) continue to improve in terms of on-stage chemistry.

October 1

One of my sophomore drama students told me earlier that her grandparents owned the ranch up out of Hailey, Idaho where the movie was filmed. The movie was filmed in the old Galena Lodge (which no longer exists). The opening sequences were taken on what was purportedly Bo

Decker's, Suzie Q. Ranch in Montana. The grandparents are going to send copies of photographs from the ranch and from the movie (see appendix C). Prior to rehearsal we brought in the chairs and stools we will be using in the show and also the individual table service, including: salt and pepper shakers, napkin holders, plates glasses, etc. The play is really intensive when it comes to food. The actors are constantly eating and drinking which makes sense since the play is set in a diner.

October 2

This is the last rehearsal until Sunday afternoon. We worked on Act Three. The blocking is a little rough. Bo and Cherie worked themselves up for the "infamous kiss" what they don't know is that there are two. We blocked both kisses and they handled them with maturity. We worked through the scene twice. All lines are passable, only a missed word here and there.

October 7

We rehearsed this afternoon at 2:00 in costume. All of the characters were present except for Daniel. It was a very good rehearsal. In fact had Daniel been in rehearsal we would have blocked the curtain call. The cast has certainly earned their curtain call. I blew fuses again even after I rerouted the second electrical into a different circuit. The lights are still an issue. Today we added two Fresnels to the back wall to try to address the shadows on stage. It helped but there are still shadows. I will move the mall lights to focus on each of the doors

October 8

We officially have entered production week. We rehearsed tonight at 7:00 P.M. We ran the whole play and timed it without the intermission at one hour and forty-five minutes. Tonight we practiced with real food on stage and in full costume. The two actors who wear facial hair tried on beards and mustaches. I think the only thing the students need now is an audience. They are ready.

October 9.

The show is still coming out at about an hour and fifty minutes. The actors are scared to death because the reality is, tomorrow is our opening night. We have billed it at preview but it is beginning to look like we will have a large audience. (That is large in terms of the small stage.) We blew fuses but I think I know how to route the wiring into different circuits.

October 10

This goes down as a first for the WSP. We sold out opening night. The show was wonderful. The audience was delighted. I asked the audience at the end of the show whether they felt we were ready for opening night. They responded with a thunderous applause.

October 11

The show is sold-out for all performances. There are many people who are not going to be able to see the show. I will talk to the principal tomorrow to see if he would consider allowing us to put the show on one more time next week. Since it is in our little theatre it will not conflict with other activities. The show tonight was a hit. The kids were great.

October 12

The show was sold out again. We turned people away at the door. The production was amazingly good. Scott comes tomorrow. I hope the students don't let up now.

October 13

Scott came tonight and watched the show. His comments were very uplifting to the students. They were proud of their work but felt that the show Friday night was better. They did seem to be a little off their pace but it wasn't bad. It will be interesting to see how they do after a lengthy break and going back up again on Wednesday night. I will pull them together for a brief rehearsal Tuesday after school.

October 15

No rehearsal, students rested. We will do a quick brush-up tomorrow just so they don't let up.

October 16

Students did a line through as fast as they could. They made it through act one and then the exercise degenerated into nothing. I thought it better to send them home and let them rest.

October 17

Another sell out and another great performance. I wish this show could go on for a month or two. It has truly been great.

October 18

All good things must come to an end. We ran out of vintage soda at this last sold-out show so I guess we've got to stop. It's been a great show and a great run. This is the longest running show since I have been at Boise High. We received rave reviews from parents and students alike.

October 19

We didn't have the heart to tear down our set. We will wait until Monday.

October 22

Today we began our strike. It is my determination to leave the back wall of the diner for a time and perhaps even the two side sections. There is no hurry to strike. Students are bringing their pictures of the show. We have some really good ones of dress rehearsal, I hope we have equally good ones from the show



**CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY  
THEATRE ARTS GRADUATE PROGRAM**

**THESIS PROJECT/ PRODUCTION PERFORMANCE EVALUATION**

**STUDENT-** Brett Eshelman

**UNDER CONSIDERATION IS DIRECTION OF:** Bus Stop by William Inge

**EVALUATOR'S NAME:** Scott R. Robinson **TITLE:** Chair and Professor

**PLACE OF PERFORMANCE:** Boise High School

**DATE OF VIEWING:** October 13, 2007

**DESCRIPTION OF PERFORMANCE VENUE:**

The space is a small black box space recently created from part of the classroom areas for the school. Two large pillars are situated stage right and stage left. Audience is set in a modified proscenium lay out.

**DESCRIPTION OF CONCEPT:**

The production was envisioned in a contemporary realist style, the way the play was written. The space was used to incorporate the actual limitation of the space. The acting space wrapped somewhat around the front of the audience.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTUAL PRODUCTION DIRECTION AND/OR REALIZED**

**DESIGN OF SETS, PROPS, COSTUMES, LIGHTING, SOUND:**

The sound played during preshow set a nice mood. The announcer had some very nice effects lending to the idea of a radio playing. It would have been nice to have the music have the same FX attached to it to keep in the radio flavor of the sound.

The set was well dresses with very appropriate pieces for a diner and very appropriate to the period, even accurately dated calendars. The pillars that were architectural to the facilities were well integrated into the scene, though troublesome for blocking. The setting carries into the

lobby and creates a great atmosphere right down to the vintage bottled Orange Crush and Coke for refreshments over intermission. One item I questioned was how the coffee pot stays hot for the several hours sitting on the shelf without a warmer tray.

Over all the lighting was good, for the space and the fixtures available, with two hotspots that at times seem rather deadly. It is problematic to have different style of light fixtures lighting the areas in the same way. It may have been cleaner to swap the light fixtures for the back of the house for the one closer to the stage. I might also suggest using the non-dim lighting units closer to the stage and the dimming lights from the back of the house. It may also have been appropriate to work the opening scene into opening the café and having the non dims come on with the actors turning on the lights.

Makeup for this space was nicely done it could very easily be overdone. I wondered about the amount of white add to hair. Seem contrived and too even.

Costumes were lovely and created nice characters, defined the time period and set an appropriate tone to each part.

**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 script was well suited to the actors level. They had to reach but overall did admirable jobs. Perhaps the weakest was the portrayal of the character Elma. Of all the actors she was less convincing. Overall the ensemble work was well done and well delivered. Of note

was Cheri. She was able to catch the character and play the intentions most successfully. Virgil was a fine musician. Will also did an admirable job for coming into the process late.

Perhaps the largest weakness was lack of motivated action for the characters. Intentions were not well defined and passed on to the audience. This was first demonstrated with the sweeping of the floor by Elma at the top of the show. It was unclear as to what she was doing other than creating a dust storm. Actors not involved in the scenes did focus on the action of the scene but I was unsure at times why. If you are in the kitchen cooking eggs why follow the action in the diner. If you are playing cards why watch what is being ordered on the other side of the room.

To continue this theme it was unclear as to severity of the storm outside. Several actors went out without their coats on however the text indicates a lion of storm raging outside as does the sound effect.

The pillars caused some problems with sight lines but overall were well worked around. They also assisted in following the Hodge model of direction. They forced the development of very distinct acting areas as well as forced the pinning of the corners. The use of acting space down stage and slightly beside the audience made some of the scene in those areas difficult to catch all the action. I understand new house chairs arrived just as the show opened and did cause some changes to sight lines.

One of the well performed moments of the play was the control of drunkenness/sickness of the doctor. I really felt he had complete control over that moment and knew his limitations. It is so easy for young actors to over play both sick and drunk. He should be commended.

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

Very satisfactory!

## Self Evaluation

Bus Stop

In purposing Bus Stop as a production vehicle there were a number of goals which needed to be achieved along with questions that also needed to be answered. In a sense the play was experimental in many respects. First, the play is a departure from the typical play produced at Boise High. The themes, language and characterizations would stretch the student actor's ability to be believable in their characterization especially since the very nature of the play tends toward realism. In addition there was a question as to whether the audience would appreciate what we were trying to do on stage. We have proven that we can entertain an audience with Shakespeare, musicals and light comedies but this play was a departure from our normal productions. Another question that needed to be answered was whether it was possible to produce a full-length play in our little theatre. We have created a black box theatre that seats sixty-five people. The stage is very small and dominated in the front by two building-supporting pillars. Though we have produced one-act plays and reviews in this small space a full length play in this space has never been attempted.

The play exceeded all of our expectations in terms of audience appreciation and attendance. The play was originally scheduled for three nights of production preceded by a preview night. With the preview night the stage was set for sold-out performance for ever night of the production including the preview night. The appeal was so great the play was held over for two more shows the following week which were both sold out. We proved that we could do a play like Bus Stop and delight an audience with a very polished (near-professional) production. I have taken the liberty of including a few student reviews of the play (see Appendix D).

The obstacles to the production were solved as the set was placed on the small stage. A major correction in set design which broadened the acting area out into two acting areas at the

side of the stage in front of the “Pillars of Hercules” (as the students refer to the support pillars) helped with blocking and believability. This correction was not part of the original set design or drawing (See Appendix B). When the stage was broadened out the pillars became part of Grace’s restaurant. They were painted to match the interior décor and the blocking plan changed to accommodate the alteration in the interior of the restaurant.

In terms of set dressing the parents of the students contributed greatly to help decorate the set to be an authentic 1955’s diner. It was the goal of the set dressing to have the audience spend the fifteen minutes prior to the show looking at the minute details on the set. Since the furthest audience seating is less than twenty feet away the audience was able to inspect the details incorporated into the set with great care. The closeness of the audience made it necessary to stage action in a believable way. The coffee was hot, the food on stage real, the costumes believable.

Personally I was pleased with the production and proud of my student actors. If not the best play we have produced it was certainly among the best. It didn’t have the glitz of some of the Broadway musicals we have produced or the massive sets we have placed on our main stage but it was unique in terms of overall production. The goal of setting the stage in the foyer and ticketing area was achieved by creating a bus depot window (ticket booth), a gas station, posters and signs that helped tell the audience that it was now 1955. The theme continued into the intermission where pastries used in the play, along with coffee and vintage soda in a tub filled with ice was irresistible to the audience.

In terms of the play being a monetary success. We spent \$729.15 in materials, advertising, food etc. In ticket sales we brought in \$1485.34, which means that we made \$645.37. In my original estimation I felt that we would do well to break even in this enterprise. The fact that we actually made money is exceedingly surprising but appreciated.

In responding to the adjudicator's observations, I would agree with each point. In the experiment with the little theatre the weakness I observed and felt could have been better were the lights. We will do extensive work on lighting. When we have used the space we have always lighted only the small 13' X 16' stage. Expanding the size and configuration of the area to be lighted created huge problems including: shadows, hot spots, and dim spots. The controls need also to be centralized with additional dimmer packs purchased and designated circuits wired into the system. We proved we can do a show in the space now we will turn it into a legitimate theatre. The sad part is, the show is over. I wish we could start all over and do it again but this is impractical. So it's on to the next project and the next show.

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## APPENDICES

## Appendix A

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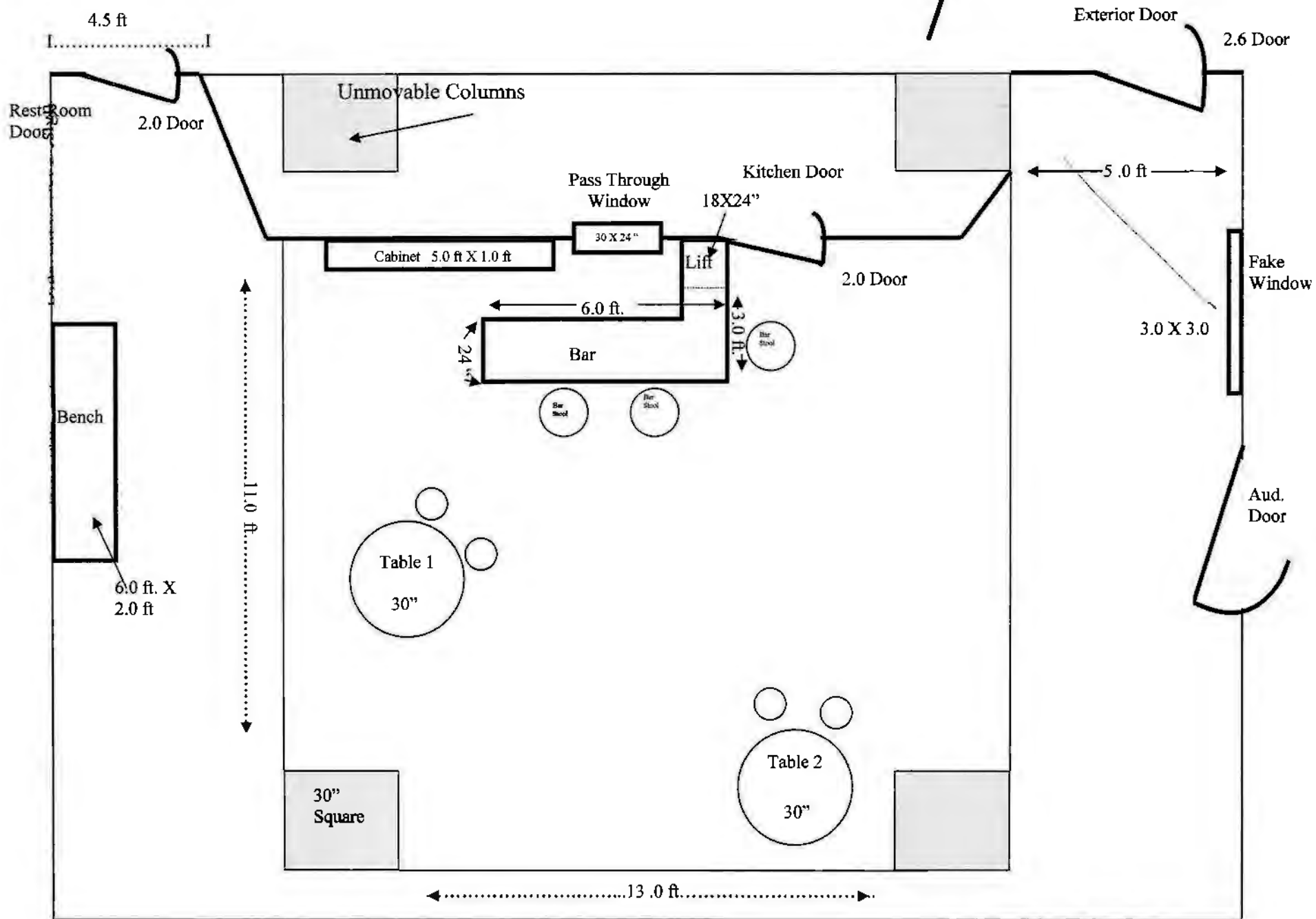
Appendix E	Auxiliary Materials	Unnumbered
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Seven Student Reviews

Play poster

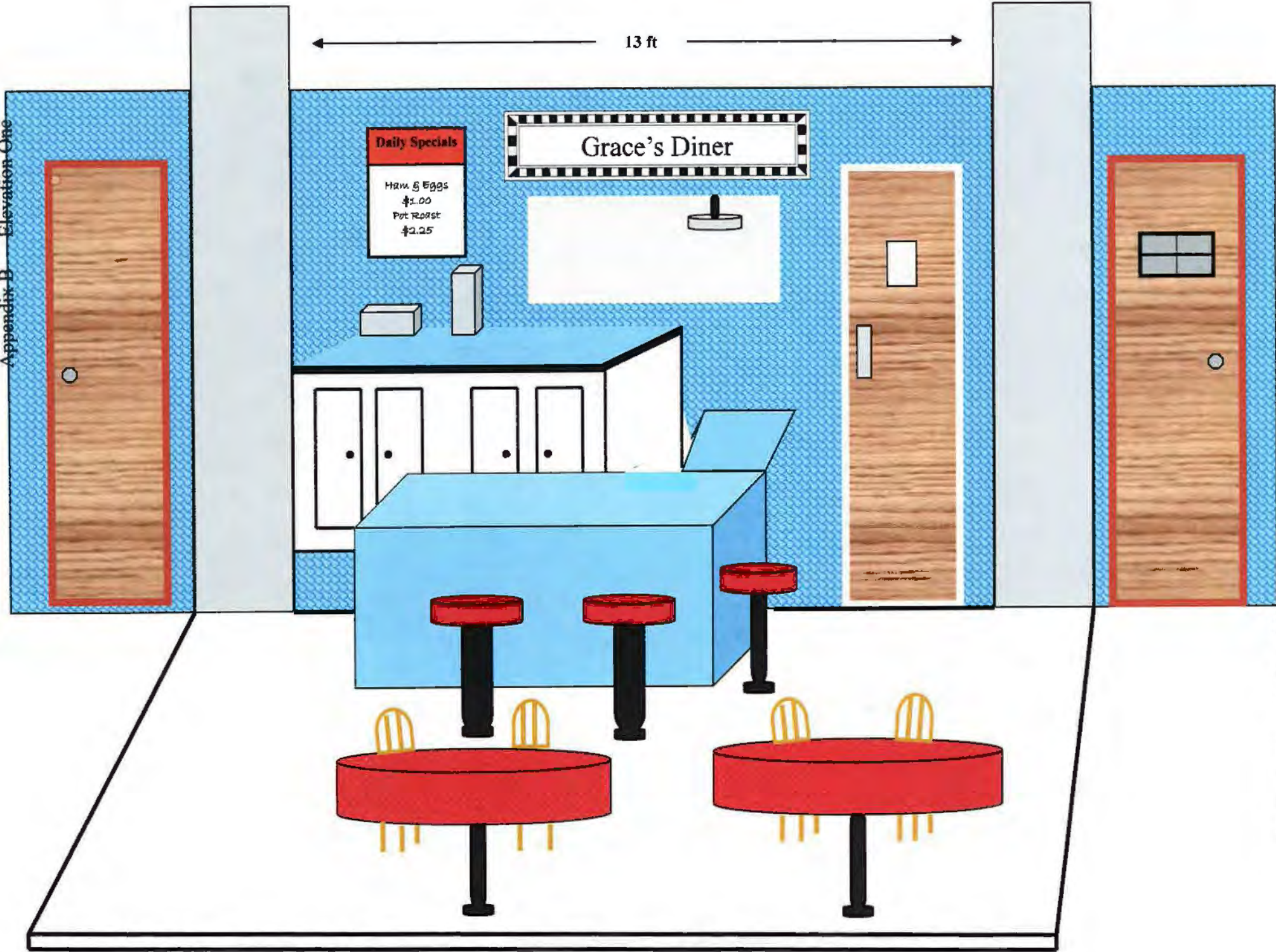
Play program

Video (DVD) of Play

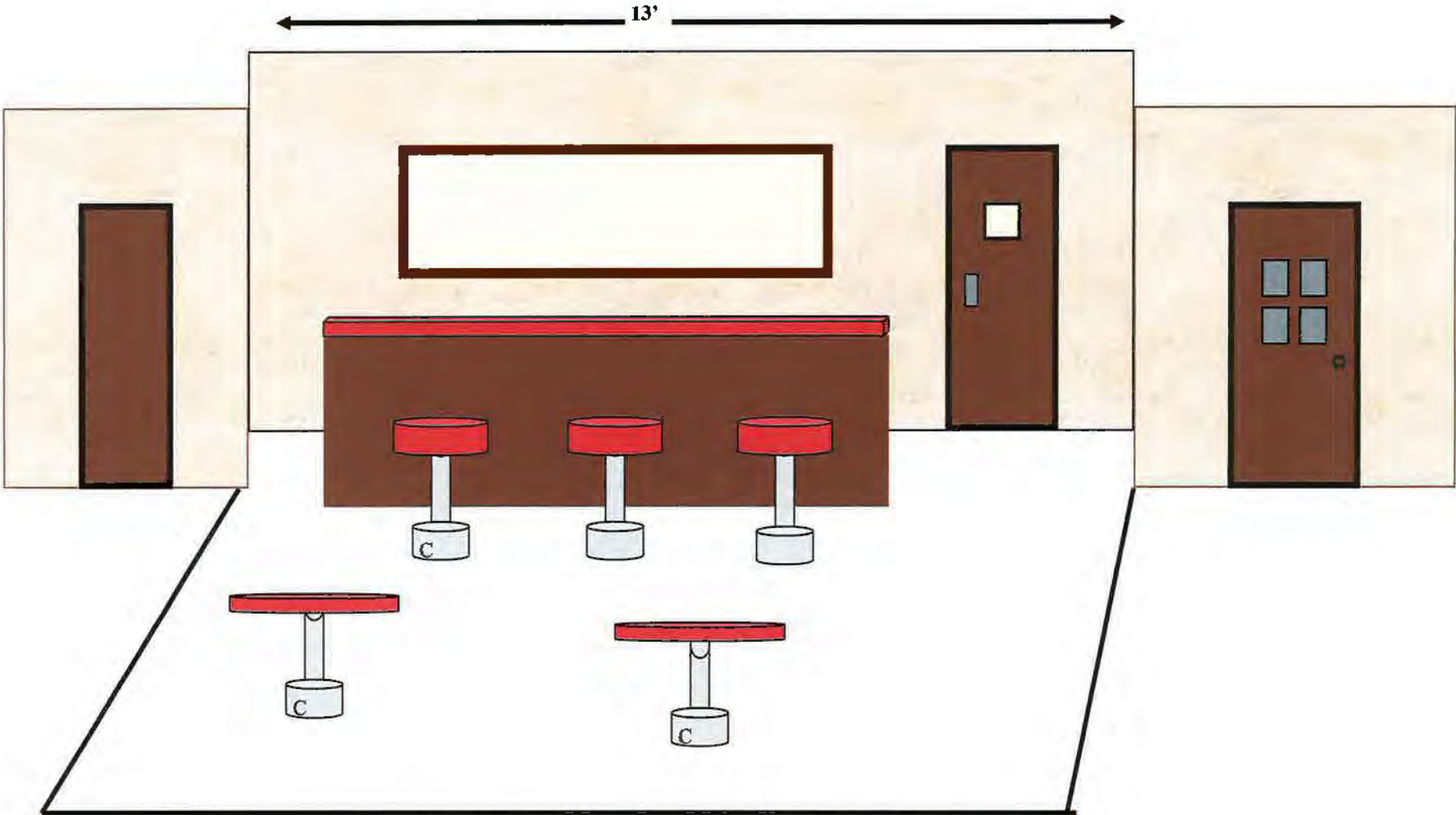


Appendix B Elevation One

13 ft



Appendix A Elevation One



# First play a big hit

Appendix B

School Newspaper Review, November 5, 2007

## Katie Meinhardt News Editor

The magic that is Boise High theatre all began at 7:00 P.M. on Wednesday, October 10th, in front of a packed audience.

Comedy met intelligence and wit as *Bus Stop* appeared on the drama room stage the following three nights.

Those involved in the play got more than they could've hoped for when sold out audiences packed the Black Box Theatre down in the basement. The show was so successful that they were asked to put on two more performances the following Wednesday and Thursday, which they did with enthusiasm.

The audiences were solidly excited as actors passionately played the parts that seemed made for them.

However, what really made *Bus Stop* a good show was its intimacy and reality. It was easy for the viewers to connect to.

Boise's theatre is always "[focussed] on performing really good shows and getting good audience turn out," said Leah Harf (who played the hysterical character Grace Hoylard, owner of the actual bus stop).

This was the first time a full length performance has ever been put on in the Black Box Theatre which showcased it's new lighting and new seating for sixty-five.

It was an experiment to see if a formal performance would actually work down there. "We proved it's more than possible," said Mr. Eshelman, the theatre arts teacher.

The drama department will put on as many performances as possible this year, including Shakespeare's *Merry Wives Of Windsor* November 15th through 17th, both *Our Town* and *The Night Therau Spent In Jail* in February, *Sulky: The Christmas Cloud* in December at the Grove (which was written by Mr. Eshelman) and the senior production, *Pygmalion*, in May.

"We're really trying to do as many performances as we can and display everyone's talents," said Kat Boylan. She played the young and thoughtful Elma Duckworth in *Bus Stop*.

Boylan says her favorite part of acting is "putting on a face that is so completely different and convincing people to suspend reality."

Becca Maguire, who helped build the set for *Bus Stop*, said, "We work well together and it shows in our plays."

So far, Boise High theatre is off to a great start.

Appendix C

Don Murray , who played Bo in the 1956 version of the play—

Don Murray and my drama student's grandfather, owner of the Suzie Q. Ranch

Suzie Q. Ranch sign - Out of Hailey, Idaho

Please note: Content on this page was redacted due to copyright concerns.









## The Unexpected Bus Stop

First off, Bus Stop caught me completely off guard. I had never been to a school play until now. I decided to try something new. I came with my ticket in hand, surprised by the legitimate entry system. After being situated, within a few minutes, the lights went out and the noises ended. Leah's accent was the next major detail I noticed. It, as well as all of the other accents, was very distinct and fit perfectly. The next aspect was the story each character had. They were always doing something, under the spotlight and not. It struck me as several separate lives instead of actors. The best example I saw of this was Will and Carl playing checkers off to the side. Another feature was how detailed the stage is. This includes everything giving the room a feel of that diner back in the day, such as the old magazines and ages tunes. I didn't expect to be the laughing way I did, but the humorous situations made it impossible for one not to laugh. At the same time, the end of this play left the audience feeling very sorry for Virgil, with no answer for him.

There is much more to comment about this play, like how well the make-up was done, but I should probably be leaving room for other students' input. Being said, this play is fabulous. I definitely plan on attending more. Thank you!

# Bus Stop

review by:

Well lets start off with the stage. The stage was beautifully done. The atmosphere was that of an actual diner. It was hard to tell that it was fake expect the fact that it stood in the middle of the room. Now for the rest of the show.

Characters. The characters were great. I have trouble memorizing a 16 line poem and your actors did an entire play that was flawless! The biggest thing i liked about the characters was the diversity of them. The hot head cow boy and the best friend, the young and innocent, show girl, a creepy doctor, two older lovers, and the good sheriff. Allison Dykman and Christopher Canfield were amazing; the stars of the show to me. I very much liked Cherie because she was funny. Not to bright but took great pride in the fact that she was a singer in the blue dragon. Also her history and liking her cousin funny but wrong. The drunk, Dr. Gerald Lyman was a very interesting character. I have not gone to many plays that have had a creepy guy that likes younger girls for a character, but it was a nice change that definitely brought a bigger verity of people to the stage.

The other big point that i would like to tell about is the maturity of the play. What definitely set the atmosphere was when Carl said that he was "going out for a walk" that was a great line and it caught me off guard because I was not expecting that in the play. But why not have it in the play? We (the students) are old enough for that kind of mature talk and it just makes things better in my opinion for a play or something. It makes things more comfortable and more enjoyable to watch instead <sup>now they</sup> have boundaries.

The main topic of the play seemed to be about love. And is love real? A lot of the characters where were getting or were planing to get some love in one way or another.

The ending was good. What I liked about it was that it did have a happy ending for Bo and Cherie but it also portrayed real life were a lot of people don't have happy endings. This example would be Vigil Blessing. Unfortunately for him he get left alone outside in the weather. That part sold the show for me.

Mr. Eshelman

Bus Stop Review

19 October 2007

### Bus Stop Review

First of all, I'd just like to throw it out there that if it weren't for the extra credit, I probably wouldn't have gone to the play last week. But I'm glad to say that I was happy I went after all. Besides the fact that Katie's phone accidentally went off and completely embarrassed us, the play was a ton of fun and very cute! I was so impressed by all of the characters and the amazing jobs they did. I do have to say though, that "Cherry" was my favorite. As soon as she frantically ran out onto the stage and into the diner, I knew Allison was the perfect person to play Cherry's part. I have no idea how the actors are able to keep a straight face when they are to say such hilarious lines; especially when the audience is laughing. I know I could never do it. I guess it'd be kind of like someone with no athletic ability coming out to one of my softball games, seeing a homerun being hit and just thinking, "Wow! I could never do that." For attending the play on the first night I thought the play was outstanding. I'm sure the characters and directors were able to find flaws within their performances and improve them throughout the rest of their shows and make it even better. I thought I was a lucky viewer, so I can only imagine how lucky this week's audience is. It was neat being able to see friends and acquaintances while watching a play put on by our very own drama class. One more thing to add, I thought the intermission was cute, with the glass soda bottles and donuts. Perfect for the atmosphere!

Per 3

Mr. Eschelman

I thoroughly enjoyed Bus Stop. The play was entertaining and fun. I particularly loved Francois's part as the older man from the bus. He did an excellent job portraying his role to the audience. Francois seems to have a good sense of acting and I hope he follows that when he gets to college and perhaps beyond there.

The other characters were good also. Allison played her part well also. She didn't seem to mess up a few of her lines like some of the others did. The rest of the actor's names I can't remember but Bo were played VERY well. Virgil was excellent in his part, filling the role perfectly.

Another of the characters that really stood out for me was Virgil. He had a sad ending but he was a good foil to Bo. Yes they were friends but they were very different. Virgil was a quieter guy, more reserved, only speaking when he thought it was needed. I didn't like how he was left out at the end, but everything cant happen the way you'd like it to.

I really liked the set of the play, it was beautiful. The hard work put into it really showed. The sound when to door opened was a little buggy, but it was a very nice touch. Another cool part was the radio in the beginning talking about the storm, I wonder if you guys created that yourselves? The painting of the walls, acquiring of the old 1900's furniture and magazines, and the clothing were all done perfectly. I was very impressed with the detail put into this work, and I will admit I was expecting anywhere near the

# 5

Eshelman 1

Bus Stop Review

15 October 2007

Bus Stop

After seeing this play in Ashland two years back, I immediately fell in love with it. So naturally, I was very enthused to see Bus Stop on our own Stage Too. There were many, many things that I really enjoyed about the play, from costume and makeup, to set design, to the acting itself.

The costume and makeup was very well done. The costumes looked believable and were very fitting to the play. The facial hair on Will was excellent; although I am sure Daniel had a hard time removing it afterwards. The cowboys were so decked out in western attire that it was easy for the audience to see they weren't city boys and they were headed straight for the ranch in Montana. Grace's hair really aged her and the use of the graying hairspray was definitely beneficial.

Oregon Shakespeare Festival's production of this play was put in the new theater where an intimate setting could be applied. For this very same reason, our little Stage Too worked perfectly. As I walked in the door, I truly felt as though I had just stepped into Grace's Dinner. I think bringing the set out onto the sides, on the left and right, really made the set three-dimensional and encompassed the audience. The old fashioned bus station outside, along with old fashioned sodas at intermission, really put the finishing touches on a great set.

Mr. Eshelman

English 12

17 October 2007

### Bus Stop Review

I attended the WSP production of *Bus Stop* Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday of last week, and found it to be not only extremely funny but extremely professional. The actors truly got into their characters, portraying them not only through lines but also through actions and pantomimes during other characters' conversations. The dynamic between Dr. Lyman and Elma was especially well done, in my opinion. The Dr. was appropriately creepy and drunken, while Elma was believable innocent and naive. However, all the actors worked well together, feeding off of each other and flawlessly covering any mistakes, turning them into a new part of the play. While the acting was fantastic, the thing that really set this production apart from other little theatre plays was the set. Even from the front row, almost touching the stage, it looked exactly like a functional fifties diner complete with a jukebox, coffee, and jam for the toast eaten by one of the characters in the third act. The layout of the set (which almost surrounded the audience by extending onto the two sides of the room) allowed the most of the characters to remain on stage for the majority of the performance, which added to the realism- they interacted with each other as if they were in a real diner, and not just reciting lines on a stage. All in all, *Bus Stop* was the most heartfelt and believable play I have seen put on at Boise High.

Mr. Eshelman  
Bus Stop Review- Extra Credit  
October 22, 2007

### Bus Stop

As I stepped through the door of the theatre room, I was immediately taken back by the strong detail of the set. A little stove on the right, checkers on the table, and Leah Harf with her gray hair and all. Bus Stop was a great performance and I thoroughly enjoyed myself. This play exceeded all of my expectations and I am very proud of our drama department here at Boise High.

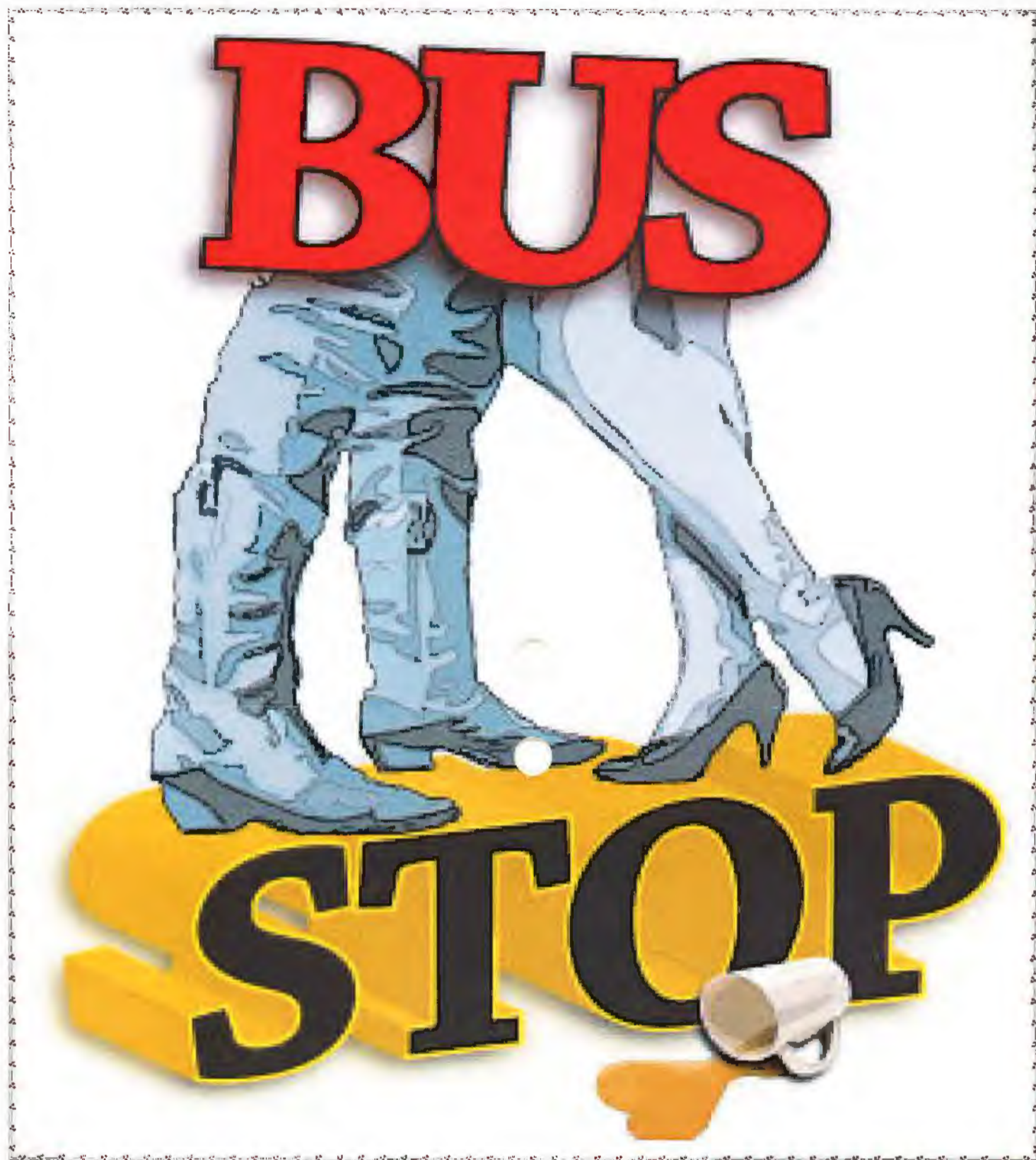
The set was spectacular. I never knew that all of this was back behind my simple English class. The set was extravagant with all of the small details like real hamburgers and an old time radio. A lot of hard work was obviously put into the making of this stage and I congratulate the tech people on a job well done.

All of the actors that were in this play I see everyday passing me in the halls. Walking by them one could never guess as to the extraordinary talent they showed in Bus Stop. I can barely memorize the short poems required of my in English with this being said, I was stunned that these kids could memorize an entire play. All of the characters were very believable and I liked how they all had their own stories.

Bus Stop was a great play any way you look at it. I am so glad that I went to see it. A big congratulation goes out to all of those that put time and effort into the production of this play, including the actors, the tech and makeup personnel, and the director, Mr. Eshelman.



Boise High School's  
Washington Street Players  
Present



Boise High Black  
Box Theatre

7:00 p.m.

October 11-13

For Tickets

854-4310

Adults \$6.00

Students \$4.00

Coming Attraction

Boise High School's  
Washington Street Players  
Invite You To:

**Grace's**



November 15-17



**DINER**

Black Box Theatre  
October 11-13

# BUS STOP

By William Inge

## Direction

Brett Eshelman - Director

Jenna Knobloch - Stage Manager

### Act One

*Grace's Diner: A street corner restaurant in a small Kansas town about thirty miles west of Kansas City. It is 1:00 A.M. on a snowy early March morning.*

### Act Two

*Only a few minutes have elapsed since the end of Act One. The people in the restaurant pass the time as best they can.*

15 Minute Intermission

### Act Three

*It is now 5:00 A.M. the storm is beginning to clear*



Elma Duckworth

**Kat Boylan**

Grace Hoylard

**Leah Harf**

Will Master

**Daniel Olsen**

Cherie

**Allison Dykman**

Dr. Gerald Lyman

**François Justice-Durham**

Carl

**Joe Davidson**

Bo Decker

**Christopher Canfield**

Virgil Blessing

**David Thompson**

## Technical Crew

Lights: Annie Staats

Sound: David Thompson

Costume: Allison Dykman

Makeup: Maggie Allen

House: Jenner Horton

## Big Thanks

*(We couldn't have done it without you.)*

<i>in Green &amp; Deb Angel</i>	-	<i>Set Dressing</i>
<i>Dixie Dykman</i>	-	<i>Set Dressing</i>
<i>Mr. &amp; Mrs. Allen</i>	-	<i>Set Dressing</i>
<i>David Lehman</i>	-	<i>Set Construction</i>



As a courtesy to the players on the stage and audience members, please, silence your cell phones and pagers. Thanks you and enjoy the show.

MAGNAVOX

RW  
REWRITABLE

BUS

STOP

DVD+R

16X DATA • 120 MINUTES  
VIDEO 1-16X SPEED

80508

57