

Summer 2010

Direction of the Play: Epic Proportions

David Franklin Crutcher Jr.
Central Washington University

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.cwu.edu/thesis_projects



Part of the [Theatre and Performance Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Crutcher, David Franklin Jr., "Direction of the Play: Epic Proportions" (2010). *Graduate Student Projects*. 49.

https://digitalcommons.cwu.edu/thesis_projects/49

This Graduate Project is brought to you for free and open access by the Archival Content at ScholarWorks@CWU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Student Projects by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@CWU. For more information, please contact scholarworks@cwu.edu.

Direction of the Play: Epic Proportions

A Project Report
Presented to
the Graduate Faculty
Central Washington University

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

by
David Franklin Crutcher, Jr.

July, 2010

CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Graduate Studies

We hereby approve the project report of

David Franklin Crutcher, Jr.

Candidate for the degree of Master of Arts:

Theatre Production

APPROVED FOR THE GRADUATE FACULTY

7/14/10
Date of
Signature

Michael J. Smith
Committee Chair

7/14/10
Date of
Signature

Christina Barrigan
Committee Member

7/16/10
Date of
Signature

George Bellah, III
Committee Member

ABSTRACT

PROJECT REPORT

Epic Proportions

Dobie High School

Directed by

David Franklin Crutcher, Jr.

April and May, 2010

This project entailed the selection, background research and documentation, musical analysis, casting, direction, vocal coaching, and post-production analysis of Dobie High School's production of Epic Proportions. 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 J. Frank Dobie High School. The analysis also includes a discussion as to the directorial vision of this production.

CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Graduate Studies

Final Examination of

David F. Crutcher, Jr.

B.A. University of North Texas, 1997

for the Degree of

Master of Arts

Theatre Production

Committee in Charge

Professor Michael J. Smith

Professor Christina Barrigan

Professor George Bellah, III

McConnell Hall

Room 117

Friday, July 9, 2010

10:00 am

David Franklin Crutcher, Jr.

Courses presented for the Master's degree

Course No.	Course Title	Number of Credits	Instructor	Quarter Completed
-----------------------	---------------------	----------------------------------	-------------------	------------------------------

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

David F. Crutcher, Jr.

Undergraduate Study:

University of North Texas, 1993-1997 (BA) & 1998 (Teaching Certificate)

Graduate Study:

Central Washington University, 2007-2010

Professional Experience:

J. Frank Dobie High School Theatre Arts Teacher, Technical Director	8/09-Current	Houston, Texas
Hebron High School Theatre Arts Teacher, Director of Theatre	5/07-6/09	Lewisville, Texas
Hebron High School Theatre Arts Teacher, Technical Director	8/06-5/07	Lewisville, Texas
The Woodlands College Park High School Theatre Arts Teacher, Department Co-Head	8/05-05/06	The Woodlands, Texas
TWHS McCullough Campus Theatre Arts Teacher	8/02-05/05	The Woodlands, Texas
Branch Crossing Junior High Theatre Arts Teacher	8/00-08/02	The Woodlands, Texas
McCullough Junior High Theatre Arts Teacher	8/99-8/00	The Woodlands, Texas

Table of Contents

Section

I	SECTION 1: PRIMARY INFORMATION.....1
	Copy of Committee and Option Approval Form1
	Copy of the Playscript Approval Form3
	Project Parameters and Schedule5
	Permission of Hiring Authority at the Producing Venue.....7
	Evaluation of the Play as a Production Vehicle.....8
	Concept Statement.....10
	Project Schedule.....12
II	SECTION 2: PRE-PRODUCTION ANALYSIS14
	Given Circumstances.....14
	Analysis of Dialogue.....22
	Analysis of Dramatic Action.....26
	Character Analysis.....70
	Ideas of the Play, Identification of the Main Ideas.....74
	Moods.....76
	Tempo.....89
	Tone.....89
	Summary of Previous Reviews.....89
	Research on the Playwright.....91
	A List of Learning Goals or Student Outcomes.....92
	Works Cited.....94
III	SECTION 3: POST-PRODUCTION MATERIALS.....96
	Production Journal.....96
	Final Self-Evaluation.....108
	Written Evaluations of Project Committee.....110
IV	APENDIXES.....113
	Appendix A- Nonprofessional License.....113
	Appendix B- Supporting Materials.....115
	Appendix C- Production Photographs.....125

**GRADUATE COMMITTEE
AND OPTION APPROVAL FORM
CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY**

(Submit the original and three copies)

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 David F. Crutcher, Jr. Birth Date [REDACTED]
 Mailing Address [REDACTED] Student ID [REDACTED]
 City, State, Zipcode [REDACTED] Date 07/26/2009

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

<input type="checkbox"/>	Written Exam*	<u>TH 700</u>	<u>Master's Thesis</u>	<u>6</u>
<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 7th edition</u>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Thesis	Style Manual for Thesis or Project		

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

- Proposed Title: Direction of the production Epic Proportions by Larry Coen and David Crane.
- Purpose of Study: The direction of the production Epic Proportions serves as the culminating experience in theatre arts graduate studies.
- Scope of Study: Documentation based upon the preparation of pre-production research, post-production evaluation, the direction of the production (including casting and rehearsal of actors, preparation of the Director's Production Book, and oral examination) shall benefit both the producing theatre company and its participants.
- Procedure to be used: Three phases of study shall be included: 1) Pre-production Research and Thesis Documentation 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.

Michael J. Smith
 Committee Chair (typed or printed)
Christina Barrigan
 Committee Member (typed or printed)
George Bellah, III
 Committee Member (typed or printed)

[Signature] 1/24/10
 Committee Chair (signature) Date
[Signature] 4/5/10
 Committee Member (signature) Date
[Signature] _____
 Committee Member (signature) Date

Approved by:
Scott Robinson
 Dept Chair Designee (signature) Date

Approved by:

 Associate VP of Graduate Studies Date

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

**GRADUATE COMMITTEE
AND OPTION APPROVAL FORM
CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY**

(Submit the original and three copies)

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.

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 Epic Proportions

PLAYWRIGHT(S) [If musical, list lyricist/composer] Larry Coen and David Crane

NUMBER OF ACTS 1 APPROXIMATE TOTAL PLAYING TIME 1 HOURS 15 MIN.

CAST (fill in with the appropriate numbers)

MEN 9 WOMEN 5 CHILDREN 0 OVER 40 0 GENDER FLEXIBLE 11

ROLES REQUIRING PEOPLE OF COLOR 0 ROLES COULD DOUBLE At least 10

TOTAL NUMBER OF CAST 8-35

OTHER CASTING CONCERNS: Very flexible casting.

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

MUSICAL DIRECTOR _____ DANCE CHOREOGRAPHER _____

FIGHT CHOREOGRAPHER X DIALECT COACH _____ SPECIALTY HIRE _____ (specify what kind)

ORCHESTRA/BAND (specify what size) _____
Will you be fulfilling any of the above? _____ If so, which?

Will a guest artist be fulfilling any of the above? _____ 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 1

HISTORICAL PERIOD 1930's GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION Arizona Desert

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SET CONCERNS OR SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:

A movie set in Arizona.

APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF PROPS 35 PERIOD _____

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

WEAPONS OR FIREARMS? Yes. HOW MANY 7 DESCRIBE: Daggers, swords, a whip, and an axe.

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

APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF COSTUMES PER CHARACTER 3 or 4

HISTORICAL PERIOD 1930's, Ancient Egypt, Ancient Rome SEASON Summer

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS: Roman and Egyptian costumes from a 1930's film studio.

JUSTIFICATION FOR CHOICE OF SCRIPT

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

saw it cut to 40 minutes for the annual U.I.L. One Act Play Contest in Texas in 2007.

HAVE YOU DONE THIS PLAY BEFORE? No.

WHY SHOULD YOUR ORGANIZATION PRODUCE THIS SCRIPT?

This play would suit Dobie High School well because it has a theatre department that is just beginning to come into prominence. It is a high-energy comedy, so student interest and involvement will be greater than in past productions. It is also a comedic style that is suited to high school students in general and the director of this project specifically. Finally, the script has great flexibility in casting and technical needs, which is important to a director in a new school community.

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

As I am newly hired at Dobie High School, there are a great many unknown factors. I know my co-worker, but I have never worked with her. I have never worked in the facilities or met the students.

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) _____ David F. Crutcher, Jr. _____ Date Submitted: 7/26/2009 _____

(Signature) _____

Thesis Chair Approval: **Michael Smith**

Date Approved : 1/24/10

Thesis Committee Members Approval: Christina Barrigan

Date Approved : _____

Michael Smith (for George Bellah)

Graduate Coordinator Approval: **Scott Robinson**

Date Approved : 4/5/10

Please note:

The signatures have been redacted due to security reasons.

Project Parameters

Proposed dates for *Epic Proportions* are April 30, May 1, 3, and 4th at 7:00 pm and May 2nd at 2:00pm. This will be the fourth and final production of the year at Dobie High School, which will give the newly hired director the bulk of the school year to adjust to new coworkers, administration, students, parents, and community. There will be seven weeks of rehearsal beginning on March 22nd. The budget will be approximately \$1000. I understand from my new co-worker that I can expect that 30 to 40 students will audition. They will have vastly varied levels of talent and experience. The labor pool for the production's technical needs will mostly be the students who are cast in the play. *The Constant Wife*, our One Act Play Contest entry, did not advance to the second round of competition, so the advanced students who were working on that production are now available to take leadership roles on the *Epic Proportions* crew.

My coworker, Aimee Small, will serve as Technical Director for the production (as I have for the productions she directed). She and I have been friends for several years and she has proven to be an excellent colleague this year. She is a very talented costumer and is an excellent bargain hunter. She is excellent at finding props in unlikely places. This is fortuitous as *Epic Proportions* will be a very costume and prop heavy show. I am also sure she will provide valuable feedback to me about the acting towards the end of the rehearsal process (we have done this for each other in each of the previous productions this season). Another personnel asset is Rick Burford. He is an equity actor who works as the permanent substitute teacher for Dobie High School. He will also provide valuable feedback throughout the production process.

The venue is well equipped, but rehearsal time there is precious. The facilities (both the auditorium and black box) must be shared with the other fine arts groups in the school, who all make frequent use of it. This production will be in the black box, which is a thirty by thirty foot

square that will seat approximately 90 people. There are curtains that travel 360° around the black box, so the audience and stage arrangements are very flexible. I intend to have the audience on three walls of the black box to form a thrust stage. There is no permanent sound system in the black box, but we do have an excellent travel sound system that is small enough to be out of the way (it is a small four channel board) but powerful enough to run the show. There is an ETC 48/96 Expression light board dedicated to the black box. A challenge will be the lack of ellipsoidal spotlights. There are precious few in the whole school, and the few that do exist are not available to be pulled from the auditorium. Even if they could be moved, they are the wrong throw for the black box. There are a seemingly endless supply of par cans, fresnels, and scoops. While not ideal, a suitable light plot should be feasible.



J. Frank Dobie High School

Principal

Steve Jamail

Assistant Principals

Chad Barrett

Donna Branch

James Golden

Marcia Griffin

John Lee

Franklin Moses

Michael Van Essen

Counselors

Jennifer Boushley

Jennifer Haynes

Jennifer Johnson

Andrea Longoria

Bernadette Marsh

Glenda Nicholson

Erin Thompson

Career Counselor

Kimberly Steele

Gear Up Coordinator

Stefanie McKinney

Athletic Director

Bobby Cotton

February 3, 2010

To Whom It May Concern:

David Crutcher has administrative approval to continue with his production of Epic Proportions on April 30, May 1, 2, 3, and 4th. I am aware that this production is part of his Master's Thesis Project for Central Washington University, and he has permission to use the facilities at J. Frank Dobie High School to complete this endeavor. Furthermore, Mr. Crutcher has permission to include activities for this project in the curriculum of the Theatre Production class at Dobie High School.

Respectfully,

Tanner Ledford
Orchestra Director and Fine Arts Administrator
J. Frank Dobie High School

Please note:

This signature has been redacted due to security reasons.

Evaluation of *Epic Proportions* as a Production Vehicle

I first evaluated *Epic Proportions* as a production vehicle for Hebron High School in the Lewisville Independent School district. The bad news is that I am no longer employed there. The good news is the play is very flexible, and will therefore be an excellent vehicle for J. Frank Dobie High School. The cast can be as few as eight or as many as fifty. This will be beneficial as the number of students who audition for plays at Dobie varies greatly from show to show. The set can be whatever space, labor, and resources allow. There are no elaborate effects called for in the script, though they will fit if the space and students are ready and able to execute them.

The play is a high-energy comedy with no profanity, so it will appeal to the majority of students and audiences. This spoof of the early Hollywood epic movie genre offers entertainment will play well at Dobie High School. Research on Ancient Egypt, The Roman Empire, and Hollywood and Arizona during the 1930's will lead to a rich production. The script is not very deep, the characters are relatively one dimensional, but a light comedy will be a fitting ending to a season that contained two British comedies (*Hay Fever* and *The Constant Wife*) and Don Nigro's *Paganini*. Enthusiastic, fearless students will make it fun to direct, crew, or watch.

A challenge for this production will be working with a new group of students. They have only worked on three shows with me before this production (two of which I tech directed and one that I directed). The "feeling out" process between us is far from complete. They are also a group that is green in general. This is Aimee Small's second year as department head. She and the students have made tremendous strides, but there is much to be done. They are still working to understand some basic theatrical practices. For example, they believe things like birthdays are valid conflicts to put down on the audition sheets. The advanced class is more production work than curricular, which helps solve short-term problems but does nothing to further the student's

growth as actors and technicians. Aimee and the Dobie students are also not used to having student designers. This year those who were interested have made great strides as student designers without the benefit of curriculum from a dedicated tech class. What the actors and technicians lack in experience and knowledge, they make up for with dedication, enthusiasm, and attitude. They are extremely sweet to each other and they always professional in their demeanor.

Concept Statement for *Epic Proportions*

Larry Coen and David Crane's comedy is set in the golden age of the film industry, the 1930's. The play is full of fast moving, witty banter. There will be three major design palettes within *Epic Proportions*: a Hollywood movie set in the Arizona desert during the 1930's, Ancient Egypt, and the Roman Empire (the latter two through the lens of the first).

With comedy, spoof, satire, the nature of the space chosen for the production, and the title in mind, this production will be decidedly small. There is comedy to be mined from the very idea of stuffing a large history of the world scale story into a black box. There is also humor to be found with a cast of 3,400 being portrayed by fewer than fifteen actors.

The world of the play is a jumbled mess. Comedy can ensue from this mess when the Hollywood, Hollywood Egyptian, and Hollywood Roman designs, which are distinctly different, are allowed to interact more and more as the action of the play progresses until we are left with delicious chaos. This clashing of design palettes will help to foster a genuine sense of danger for the characters under the comedy and keep the audience from assuming from the opening scene that there will be a happy ending.

I imagine *Epic Proportions* as cartoonish in the World War II era Warner Brothers sense of the word. These specific, time period appropriate cartoons are mired in spoof, satire, comedic violence, bad behavior, and fast paced, clever dialogue.

The sound design should include full orchestra numbers that are as loud and violently moving as those found in epic movies of the thirties and forties and the Warner Brothers cartoons from the same time.

The set will be minimal. There is not enough room in the black box for a large set, and sightlines would be problematic with large set pieces since audience will be on three sides. Key

pieces like columns, cots, step units, etc. should help to differentiate the locations of the scenes.

With the set being minimal, the props become more numerous and important. The props must look period and the real props must be distinctly different from the movie props meant to be part of *Exuent Omnes*, the movie the characters are filming. For example the weaponry for the film can be obviously fake even in the intimate setting of the black box.

The costumes must fall into the distinct design categories as well. The audience must be able to immediately identify crew, Egyptians, and Romans from one another. Often in the same scene. With some students playing up to six different roles, quick changes must be made possible by the build of the pieces.

Casting can be very flexible since the script was written for eight actors, but roles can easily be split if the talent in the department warrants doing so. Casting will most likely be blind to ethnicity and possibly gender. This will be necessary since Dobie High School's student population is very ethnically diverse, and there are a great many more females in the after school theatre program than males. This type of casting can only serve the production well.

Production Schedule

January 2010						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
24	25 Auditions for Epic Proportions (3 leads only) and UIL OAP	26 Auditions for Epic Proportions (3 leads only) and UIL OAP	27 Call Backs	28	29	30

February 2010						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	No rehearsals in February					

March 2010						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1 Auditions for Epic Proportions	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29 Reh 3-5 Read Through	30 Reh 3-5 Blocking	31 Reh 3-5 Blocking			

April 2010						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1 Reh 3-5 Blocking	2 Reh 3-5 Blocking	3 Reh 12-6 Blocking

April 2010 (Continued)						
4	5 Reh 3-5 Blocking	6 Reh 3-5 Working	7 Reh 3-5 Working	8 Reh 3-5 Working	9 Reh 3-5 Working	10 Reh 12-6 Polishing, Crew
11	12 Reh 3-5 Polishing	13 Reh 3-5 Polishing	14 Reh 3-5 Polishing	15 Reh 3-5 Run 1 st half	16 Reh 3-5 Run 2 nd half	17 Reh 12-6 Run Show
18	19 Reh 3-5 Run Show	20 Reh 3-5 Run Show	21 Reh 3-5 Run Show	22 Reh 3-5 Run Show	23 Reh 3-5 Work trouble spots and Dry Tech	24 Reh 12-6 Wet Tech, Run Show
25	26 Reh 3-? Dress (No Hair or makeup)	27 Reh 3-? Dress	28 Reh 3-? Dress	29 Reh 3-? Final Dress	30 Performance #1	

May 2010						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1 Performance #2, 7:00 pm
2 Performance #3, 7:00 pm	3 Performance #4, 7:00 pm	4 Performance #5, 7:00 pm	5	6	7	8

Given Circumstances

Environmental Facts

Geographical Location

Epic Proportions takes place in the Arizona desert at a fictional spot called Molten Rock (Coen and Crane 6). Early in the play Louise Goldman, the Assistant Director of Atmosphere Personnel for the D.W. Dewitt production of *Exeunt Omnes*, describes the location of the film set as being “240 miles . . . across scorching desert” from the nearest town (6). The distance from civilization and the absence of buses isolates the cast and crew until shooting is scheduled to end (10). Being stuck in the middle of the desert gives the cast and crew of thousands (there are over 3,400 extras) plenty of hardships such as a softball league but no softball and only two bathrooms (6). The film crew has given Molten Rock a skyline dotted with sets of Ancient Egypt and the Roman Empire including the Temple of Osiris, the Oracle at Delphi, and pyramids (6, 9).

The Sonoran desert has been traditionally described as “20 miles from wood, 20 miles from water, and 40 feet from Hell” (Ives 147). The 1,000,000 square miles in and around the Sonoran desert only contains two major rivers, the Colorado and the Rio Grande, both of which originate in the mountains (147). Throughout the 1930’s, Southern Arizona’s average annual temperature was 70 degrees Fahrenheit and there was 10 inches of annual rainfall (148). This climate would make the Sonoran desert a logical location for a Hollywood film crew looking to reproduce the ancient Egyptian world on the cheap and near their own base of operations.

Date

The play is set in the 1930’s according to the title page (Coen and Crane 4). The play has an intentional vagueness as to the exact year in which the play is set, giving it a

generic 30's feel. When Phil enters, he is said to be dressed like someone straight out of the *Grapes of Wrath* (7). The play seems to take place over several weeks in the summer heat. Phil says to Benny, "You guys got that orgy last week, didn't you?" (20). While most scenes take place during daylight hours, scenes seven, ten, eleven, twelve, and fourteen happen at night and will require different lighting looks.

Economic Environment

The action of this play is set during the Golden Age of Hollywood and the Great Depression. Unemployment was rampant; soup kitchens could not keep up with demand. Banks were closed. Homes were foreclosed. The song "Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?" was on everyone's lips. The Great Depression "happened simultaneously over almost the entire globe . . . [and] was experienced directly, not merely through its repercussions, by the people of nearly every nation and social class" (Garraty 907). Even though the film industry enjoys a greater stability than other industries during times of economic hardship, there was still a great deal of fluctuation in demand for movies and the employment of those who make films (Dawson 345). Under President Franklin Roosevelt, the Works Progress Administration and the Public Works Administration (two newly created agencies) created jobs for workers constructing buildings, dams, bridges, schools, and countless other projects that are still around to this day (Garraty 909). These policies and labor camps were designed to keep American youths busy (910). Eventually, the outbreak of World War II led to full employment and massive economic expansion in all developed nations (944).

The relative immunity to economic hardships enjoyed by Hollywood is evident in *Epic Proportions* from the treatment of the production of the movie within the play, *Exeunt Omnes*. The production is being filmed on location, which is a rarity when

Hollywood executives are pinching pennies (Dawson 342). The scale of the technical aspects of *Exeunt Omnes* is massive as well. Louise Goldman says that it is going to be “the biggest epic ever made” as she addresses the 3,400 extras, and she refers to construction being done on over five hundred sets for the project (Coen and Crane 6).

Political Environment

Hollywood during the 1930's was desperate to please its audiences and keep attendance up, even conducting massive Gallup polls and tailoring productions to the information garnered from the public (Ohmer 144). The public was still weary of the war in Europe. According to a Gallup poll in June of 1941, 79% of the American public still favored neutrality (Chambers 44). As with all political debates, Hollywood was mired in it. Harry M. Warner of Warner Bros. said that motion pictures had the ability to “reach directly the heart and mind of the individual” and that they would “contribute to abolishing the war by engendering mutual understanding and empathy among the masses of every race and nation” (45). Peace organizations such as the National Council for the Prevention of War (NCPW) and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) realized the power of newsreels and movies to reach large audiences and worked hard to promote anti-war movies such as *All's Quiet on the Western Front*. While *Exeunt Omnes* does not come across as particularly pro or anti-war, it definitely is meant to (comically) “engender mutual understanding and empathy among the masses of every race and nation” (45).

Social Environment

Hollywood was under a great deal of pressure to conform to certain social standards in the 1930's, including the threat of litigation and congressional hearings. As a response, the Production Code of 1930 was adopted in order for the studios to self-

regulate the images, language, and ideas that they would present to the public (Jurca 4). Catherine Jurca cites a wonderful example of how eager Hollywood was to adhere to and, paradoxically, to shape the social environment of the day: A scene in MGM's *Hollywood Review of 1929* has Lionel Barrymore directing a straight version of the balcony scene from *Romeo and Juliet* when he receives a letter from the New York office telling him that the people do not want anything old-fashioned. Norma Shearer as Juliet chirps, "Now listen, boyfriend, you have a nice line of chatter, but how do I know you care for me in a big way [sic]" (3).

The goofy, stylized, stilted, and overly dramatic *Exeunt Omnes* dialogue is clearly satire aimed at the sanitized, meaningless, pandering dialogue that permeated so many movies of the 30's in order to be in compliance with the Production Code of 1930.

Religious Environment

The religious environment of the 1930's in the United States was very similar to the one that exists today. There has always been a very vocal group of people whose moral outrage must be acknowledged in some fashion. An article in the New York Times by J. Hoberman begins:

'I wish to join the Legion of Decency, which condemns vile and unwholesome moving pictures. I unite with all who protest against them as a grave menace to youth, to home life, to country and to religion.' So began a pledge written in the spring of 1934 by the Archbishop of Cincinnati, John T. McNicholas. Distributed in Roman Catholic churches across America, the petition garnered some four million signatures within a month. Racy and insolent, populated by dynamic, street-smart criminals and glamorous 'fallen women' in scanty lingerie, set in Art Deco

penthouses and skid row dives, predicated on breezy wisecracks and slangy double-entendres that confounded censors and offended less cosmopolitan audiences, the Hollywood movies of the early 1930's were a different world. Or were they? 'I condemn absolutely those salacious motion pictures which, with other degrading agencies, are corrupting public morals and promoting sex mania in our land,' the Legion of Decency pledge continued. (Hoberman "When the Spice...")

Epic Proportions contains a great number of Biblical references, especially in the form of scenes in *Exeunt Omnes*. Such scenes and references include the parting of the Red Sea, the burning bush, Shel being ordered to "Do Job," and Mr. Dewitt's final entrance dressed as Moses.

Previous Action

The most vital information we learn about previous action for the characters of *Epic Proportions* is that Benny has always dreamed of being a movie star. Benny's desire to act is the catalyst for everything that follows in the play.

- In the Narrator's opening monologue:

In the beginning, there was wasteland. But this wasn't very interesting to look at. And so in this barren desert was built the greatest civilization man has ever known . . . This is a story about a lot of things!

(Coen and Crane 5)

- Louise tells the extras that construction has already begun on over 500 sets recreating the ancient world (6).
- Benny and Phil's mother found an "extras wanted" flyer in Benny's room. Phil assumed that was where Benny was when he went missing (7).

- Phil took the last bus out to Molten Rock to find Benny. There will not be another bus until shooting is complete (7, 10).
- Benny read in a magazine that Lydia Saint Claire was discovered while she was an extra in *Love's Sweet Surrender*. She went on to star in two movies and then die (7).
- Benny says to Phil, "Tell them [mom and dad] to look for me up on the silver screen. Phil, I can't go back. This is my dream and if I sit around at home it's never going to happen" (7).
- The day before the action of the play begins, D.W. Dewitt handed his set designer, Shel, a note that said, "Do Job." He meant the Book of Job from the Bible (8, 9).
- Louise reveals that Mr. Dewitt likes a closed set (10).
- Louise reveals that no one talks to Mr. Dewitt (10).
- Jack says that no one is getting out of Molten Rock until the picture is in the can (11).
- Louise says the mob (minus Benny's group of fours) is one of the best mobs she has ever worked with (13).
- Phil was drum major of his high school band. He helped figure out the formations. They were all-state (16).
- Louise is from Kipper's Bay, Alaska (17).
- Admiral Spearing froze to death in Kipper's Bay, Alaska, on his way to the North Pole (17).
- Louise has no one left in Kipper's Bay. Her father was killed when the glacier moved (17).
- Six months after her father died, D.W. Dewitt came to Kipper's Bay to film *Vikings Away* (17).
- Louise was an extra in D.W. Dewitt's *Vikings Away*. She was so well-liked that Dewitt

offered her a permanent job. With nothing keeping her in Alaska, she accepted (17).

- All Phil ever wanted is to lead a marching band of his own (18).
- Benny took acting lessons for six months (20).
- Benny feels like he has been a *four* all of his life and that is all he will ever be (20).
- Louise reminds the Queen of herself when she was Louise's age (21).
- Mr. Dewitt has made dozens of pictures (26).
- Marching bands taught Mr. Dewitt how to read when he first immigrated to the United States. For three months he could only spell three words: Go, Team, and Cougars (26).
- An actress playing a Vestal Virgin, Lyla Pinkus, was impregnated nine months before the end of the play (31).
- Louise asks Benny what about her turned Phil into a jerk; Benny assures her that Phil was a jerk before he met her (33).
- Louise's life was simpler in Alaska. There was just snow, sky, and caribou (33).
- The Queen has kids and divorce papers to sign when she returns from Molten Rock (40).
- *Exeunt Omnes* was to be the Queen's comeback role (40).
- Louise tells Phil that he is the worst ex-boyfriend that she has ever had (41).
- Referring to growing up in Alaska, Louise says, "The Arctic Circle is no place for sissy girls" (43).
- In what is most likely a lie meant as a distraction during a physical altercation, Phil tells Benny that their mother once confessed to him that Benny was an accident (44).

Polar Attitudes

Benny:

- Beginning: "I'm not going [sic] Phil. This is my chance" (7). And "Tell them [mom and dad] to look for me up on the silver screen. Phil, I can't go back. This is my dream and if

I sit around at home it's never going to happen" (7).

- Ending: "If it takes me forty days and forty nights, I'll get us to Tucson!" (7). And "Louise . . . when we get across this desert . . . will you marry me?" (45).

Benny is driven by two things at the beginning of the play: he is determined to do what it takes to realize his dream of becoming a movie star and he is determined to stay in the desert and seeing *Exeunt Omnes* through to the end. By the end of the play, his dream has become to spend his life with Louise and to rescue the entire cast and crew of the film from certain death in the desert.

Phil:

- Beginning: "Come on, Benny. Look at those people. There's no way you're going to get discovered here" (4).
- Ending: "So Benny, can you really get us out of here?" (45).

At the top of the play, Phil is the dominant of the brothers. He is not above bossing Benny around, stepping in front of him, or even physically attacking him. By the end of the play, Phil realizes that he must let Benny be a leader and have the girl that he neglected. As an apology, he even offers to be Benny's best man when he and Louise are married (45).

Louise:

- Beginning: "What is it about me that turns nice guys into jerks?" (33).
- Ending: "Of course I'll marry you [Benny]" 45.

Louise falls for Phil at the beginning of the play, but quickly ends up with Benny after Phil proves neglectful and Benny proves himself truly in love with her. She has ended the cycle of falling for the wrong guy who treats her poorly and has begun what has the potential to be a very healthy relationship.

Dialogue

Choice of Words

Coen and Crane have created characters in *Epic Proportions* who use very common, simple, and short words in their speech. There are, however, instances when long, formal, and foreign words are used apologetically or incorrectly for comedic effect; especially during the scenes of *Exeunt Omnes*, the film being made within the story of the play. This has the effect of making the characters seem very stilted and stiff when they are acting in the film.

Louise's first line in the play contains the words "bout" and "huh" (Coen and Crane 6). These types of words are peppered through-out the entire play. In Phil and Benny's opening scene, there is only one word that has more than two syllables in the entire conversation- "discovered"- and they each only say it once (7). Mr. Dewitt's first two lines are just one word each- "Cut" (6, 10).

The first words spoken in the play are that of the Narrator, who uses numerous multi-syllable words to say very little to great comic effect. In his opening speech he drops the words "civilization", "majesty", and "homoerotic" (5). He proceeds to describe the story that is about to unfold as being about "lust and revenge and fate and destiny" only to apologetically conclude that it is about "a lot of things" (5). Louise's previously mentioned opening monologue also contains the words "Atmosphere Personnel", "Sphinx", "*Exeunt Omnes*", and "Osiris" (6). It is very common for Coen and Crane to have the characters use words like these in the same monologue, sentence, or even phrases as words such as "bout" and "huh." Large, formal, and foreign words are used apologetically and incorrectly in the movie scenes within the play almost as a rule. In the opening scene the Conspirators drop the names "Hecabedes", "Octavium", and "Homericus" (5). The Queen of the Nile's attendant uses the words "jests" and "befall" (22).

Choice of Phrases

The most striking characteristic of the phrases that Coen and Crane give the characters of *Epic Proportions* is the difference between the types of phrases used when they are speaking to one another and those used when they are acting out a scene in *Exeunt Omnes*. The phrases the characters use to speak to one another are very natural, short, flowing, and conversational. The phrases that are meant to be from the script of the film within the play are quasi-King James Bible-speak and are comically pretentious.

Jack and Shel demonstrate the natural, conversational phrases used when the characters are speaking to one another as Jack confronts Shel:

JACK. What's today, Shel?

SHEL. Friday.

JACK. And what did you promise me for Friday, Shel?

SHEL. Pyramids.

JACK. How's that?

SHEL. Pyramids. But, there's no way. (Coen and Crane 8)

The phrases "How's that?" and "no way" are both very good examples of the types of natural and conversational phrases used by the characters throughout the play when they are speaking to each other.

In a scene from *Exeunt Omnes*, a group of Egyptians have a conversation that perfectly illustrates the faux Bible speak commonly used in the film the characters are making. Second Egyptian asks his companions, "Was it not amusing today to watch our Pharaoh bandy words with that arrogant Israelite, Moses?" The answer from his companion is, "And oh yes, were we not all helpless with laughter when the bearded one did make his idle threat of Ten Plagues?" (18). It is also worth noting that the Narrator uses phrases in the bad Charlton Heston movie manner as well. When describing Benny and Louise's first intimate encounter he says, "And yay,

it was a good kiss!” (34).

Coen and Crane use the same juxtaposition gag of small words against longer, more formal, and foreign words in the use of phrases. Louise tells her extras that she wants to see the different groups perform “horror”, “fear”, “anger”, and “sardonic-amusement” in the same sentence (13).

Choice of Images

The imagery in *Epic Proportions* is all about the desert, sand and rocks. Things are described in the opening as “barren” and taking place in a “wasteland” (5). Benny and Phil “haul granite” (11). The desert and stone imagery is apt given the tremendous struggle all of the characters undergo in order to finish filming *Exeunt Omnes*. The other main reoccurring imagery is about the large scale of the production within the play. This begins with the title of the play. All manner of objects and actions are continuously described as “epic,” “sweeping,” “majestic,” etc. Epic undertakings are discussed with ease. Louise tells Phil, “Before you came, we were going to part it [the Red Sea] on the side” (17).

Choice of Peculiar Characteristics

The peculiar characteristics of the dialogue in *Epic Proportions* are in the lines that belong to the script within the play, *Exeunt Omnes*. They are pseudo-Biblical to the point of being silly. The Queen’s Attendant upon learning that she is afraid that death lingers near says, “Why surely my lady jests. Does not the golden sun still ripen the sweet dates that fall from the majestic palm? No, my beautiful Queen, no harm shall befall you on a day such as this” (23). Every line of *Exeunt Omnes* comes across as silly and peculiar.

Sound of the Dialogue

Epic Proportions uses a great deal of hard sounds and repetition for comedic effect. As an example of hard sounds being used in rapid succession: upon being asked to help create a

background life for an incidental slave, Louise answers, “Uh, you’ve always been a slave. The Queen doesn’t know you exist. And you’ve served in her bedchamber ever since you became a eunuch” (22). Almost every scene of *Exeunt Omnes* in the play is repeated. Octavius is stabbed several times, and most of those times he is accompanied by the same lines of the Conspirators. The “Queen of the Nile” scene is repeated ad nauseam before Benny is recast as Phil’s lead, and then it is played once more.

Structure of Lines and Speeches

The lines in *Epic Proportions* are short and natural, allowing for quick, comedic delivery.

Consider this exchange between Phil and Louise:

PHIL. You have a boyfriend back there [in Alaska]?

LOUISE. I don’t have anyone back there.

PHIL. No folks?

SHEL. Papa was killed when the glacier moved.

JACK. I’m sorry. (17)

The speeches, on the other hand are scenes within themselves. Louise and Phil each have speeches to the extras that are considerable in length and contain a great deal of information, punch lines, introductions, builds, and resolutions all their own. Louise’s first address to the extras on page six is an excellent example.

Dramatic Action

Detailed Breakdown of the Action

EPIC PROPORTIONS

Unit 1A
In the Beginning

Unit 1
"Octavius's Murder"

N. chronicles

C1 shares

C2 inquires

C3 admonishes

C3 frightens

C1 exacerbates

C2 pleads

C1 reminds

C3 enrages

C1 incites

Titles of the Units and Summary of the Action

- Unit 1A – “In the Beginning”
The narrator chronicles to the audience.
- Unit 1 – “Octavium’s Murder”
The Conspirators conspire against Octavium.
- Unit 2 – “Louise and Her Extras”
Louise welcomes the extras and the extras rally to Louise.
- Unit 3 – “Phil Finds Benny”
Phil finds Benny and Benny recruits Phil.
- Unit 4 – “Jack and Shel’s Production Meeting”
Jack attacks Shel and Shel retreats from Jack.
- Unit 5 – “Building the Pyramids”
Phil quits to Louise and Louise explicates to Phil.
- Unit 6 – “‘Octavium’s Murder’ Takes 2-5”
Louise directs to the extras and the extras achieve (ones, twos, and threes) and flounder (fours) to Louise.
- Unit 7 – “Later That Night in the Brothers’ Tent”
Phil brags to Benny and Benny mopes to Phil.
- Unit 8 – “Louise and Her Extras- Take 2”
Benny pitches woo to Louise and Louise ignores Benny.
- Unit 9 – “When in Rome . . . ”
Phil cozies to Louise and Louise responds to Phil.
- Unit 10 – “Benny Writes His Mother”
Benny vents to his mother.

- Unit 11 – “Band Geeks Get All the Girls”
Phil succumbs to Louise and Louise succumbs to Phil.
- Unit 12 – “Benny Finishes His Letter to His Mother”
Benny blusters to his mother.
- Unit 13 – “Plagues”
Egyptians revel with one another then succumb to the plagues.
- Unit 14 – “Phil and Benny Compare Days”
Benny complains to Phil and Phil confesses to Benny.
- Unit 15 – “Drama Behind the Scenes”
Jack controls the cast and crew and the cast and crew rebel to Jack.
- Unit 16 – “‘The Queen of the Nile’ Takes 1-3”
The Queen asserts herself to Louise and Louise directs the Queen.
- Unit 17 – “Dust in the Wind”
Shel laments to Louise and Louise comforts Shel.
- Unit 18 – “The Heart of Darkness”
Dewitt resigns to Louise, Phil, and Benny and Phil accepts to Dewitt.
- Unit 19 – “Phil in Charge”
Phil visualizes to Benny and Louise and Benny and Louise patronize Phil.
- Unit 20A – “And So a Boy Did Rise . . . ”
The Narrator chronicles to the audience.
- Unit 20 – “‘The Queen of the Nile’ Take 4”
The Queen condemns Ramadidis (Benny) and Princess Isis (Louise) and Ramadidis and Princess Isis defy Queen.
- Unit 21 – “Phil’s Directing Style”

Phil praises the company but neglects Louise and the company and Louise responds to Phil's praise and neglect respectively.

- Unit 22 – “Real Good Acting”

Louise succumbs to Benny and Benny succumbs to Phil.

- Unit 23 – “Don't Drink Out of the Red Sea”

Phil directs the crowd and the crowd cheers Phil.

- Unit 24A – “And Thus the King Ruled . . . ”

The Narrator chronicles to the audience.

- Unit 24 – “Phil's Surprise Birthday Party”

Louise caters to Phil and Phil spurns Louise.

- Unit 25 – “They Are NOT Real Good Actors”

Louise falls for Benny and Benny falls for Louise.

- Unit 26A – “Thus Began the Love Affair . . . ”

The Narrator chronicles to the audience.

- Unit 26 – “We Have to Stop Meeting Like This”

Louise succumbs to Benny and Benny succumbs to Louise.

- Unit 27 – “Fetch the Pencil, Big Boy”

Louise lies to Phil and Phil patronizes Louise.

- Unit 28 – “Everyone Knows But Phil”

The Queen confronts Louise and Benny, Louise and Benny deny to the Queen.

- Unit 29 – “The Queen of the Nile and Her Gladiators”

Benny kisses Louise and Louise kisses Benny. Publicly.

- Unit 30 – “A Confession is Made”

Louise and Benny confess to Phil and Phil condemns Louise and Benny.

- Unit 31 – “How Phil Will Move Forward”
Phil dictates to the cast and crew and the cast and crew refute Phil.
- Unit 32 – “Exeunt Omnes”
Phil captures Louise and the cast and crew fight Phil.
- Unit 33 – “Breaking Up is Hard to Do and Nude Does Not Equal Invisible”
Phil dupes a gladiator and a gladiator flirts with Phil.
- Unit 34 – “The Queen Un-Gags Louise”
The Queen rescues Louise and Louise seeks Benny.
- Unit 35 – “Louise Rescues Benny”
Louise rescues Benny and Benny seeks Phil.
- Unit 36 – “Brother Against Brother”
Benny attacks Phil and Phil ambushes Benny.
- Unit 37 – “The Return of Mr. Dewitt”
Dewitt lambastes Louise et al and Louise supplicates Dewitt.
- Unit 38 – “Benny Finally Takes Over”
Benny ignites the cast and crew.
- Unit 39 – “That’s a Wrap”
Benny proposes to Louise and Louise accepts.
- Unit 39B – “And So a Boy Did Lead . . . ”
The Narrator chronicles to the audience.

Characters

Benny:

Desire: Benny wants to be a Hollywood star and get the girl.

Benny runs away from the family farm to a movie being filmed in the middle of the

desert to accomplish this. He is willing to endure humiliation, physical abuse, plagues, and the wrath of his family. This has been a dream of his since he was a child and none of the aforementioned tortures dissuade him. Benny falls in love with Louise the first time he lays eyes on her. He has as much difficulty getting her to notice him as he does becoming a star. She has eyes for his brother, ignores him, and makes him a four (the group of extras who get the worst jobs).

Will: Benny has a nearly unbreakable will.

Benny faces all of these hurdles willingly. He seems perfectly happy to pay his dues in a tent in a desert playing an extra to be discovered. He does not give up on trying to impress Louise. Even when she is dating Phil, he makes himself available to her when she needs a friendly ear. The only time he waivers in his determination to be a star and get the girl is when it looks like Phil might beat him to both goals.

Moral Stance: Benny is gentle and giving in spite of being driven.

Benny is morally upright in every regard except when it comes to his desire. He does not lie, cheat, steal, or harm anyone unless it is to achieve his desire. He loves his family and wants to please them, but he abandons them to work on *Exeunt Omnes*. The most immoral thing Benny is guilty of is sleeping with his brother's girlfriend. Benny knows that this is wrong and regrets it very much, but does feel a certain justification on the grounds that he saw her first and Phil was neglecting her.

Decorum: Benny is a slightly awkward young man.

Benny does not demand a great deal of attention physically. He is invisible to Louise until she has been dating Phil for some time. Many of the other actors on set are intimidating to him. Benny is less attractive and weaker than his brother. He has to work much harder to get Louise's attention and he is only able to vanquish Phil in a fight with Louise's assistance.

Summary List of Adjectives:

Benny is driven, unwavering, gentle, and awkward.

Phil:

Desire: Specifically, Phil wants to finish the film. In general, Phil wants whatever is in front of him.

Phil has no direction of his own, but he is driven by a strong desire to possess whatever he is involved with from moment to moment. Upon arriving in the desert to take Benny back to the family farm, Phil is talked into working as an extra. Once Benny convinces Phil to stay, Phil takes over Benny's dreams of being a big shot in Hollywood and living happily ever after with Louise. When D. W. Dewitt reveals that he has no more interest in directing *Exeunt Omnes*, Phil immediately seizes the reins and quickly drives everyone crazy. His desire to finish the movie becomes all encompassing and completely consumes him.

Will: Phil has a violently strong will.

Phil's desire to finish *Exeunt Omnes* is so blinding and overwhelming that it costs him his relationship with Louise, his friendship with Benny, and the respect of thousands of cast and crew members. He is more than willing to strand everyone involved in Molten rock indefinitely in order to fulfill his desire. Phil literally turns to violence when his desire to finish the movie spirals out of control. He kidnaps Louise and attacks Benny with a sword.

Moral Stance: Phil is a Machiavellian with a heart.

Phil is willing to try anything to accomplish his goals. He lies to the extras to keep them in check. When Louise asks what he will do when his lie is discovered on Saturday he replies, "I don't know. We'll figure that out on Saturday" (Coen and Crane 41). The most morally reprehensible act that Phil commits is kidnapping Louise and attacking his brother with a sword. In the end Phil backs down and does the right thing. He supports Benny's effort to lead the group to Tucson and Benny's marriage proposal to Louise.

Decorum: Phil is an intimidating and handsome person.

Phil is a commanding presence physically. He is not intimidated by the other actors. He tells a Slavemaster with a whip, "I know where your tent is" (12). He attacks Benny and would have defeated him handily if not for Louise's intervention. While he is intimidating, it has more to do with attitude and demeanor than size. Phil is immediately attractive to Louise. She is initially interested in his help on the movie, but she is quite taken with his physical appearance from the moment she notices him.

Summary List of Adjectives:

Phil is possessive, violent, Machiavellian, handsome, and caring.

Louise:

Desire: Louise desires a man who will treat her like a queen.

Will: Louise has a gently resolute will.

Louise is a very sweet woman, but she has an iron will and is ready to fight when necessary. When she thinks that it is Phil who will treat her like a queen, she defends him to her superiors. When it is clear that it is really Benny that she belongs with, her will and determination to defend him knows no limits. She is able to resort to violence when backed into a corner. She even knees an actor in the stomach to prevent him from hurting Benny (43).

Moral Stance: Louise is a good person who is often guilty of giving in to passion.

Louise is someone who wants to do the right thing and be a good person, but she will not apologize for giving in to her passions. When her affair with Benny is discovered, she apologizes to Phil for the deception but not for her love for Benny. She also announces that she will not quit seeing Benny simply because she was committed to Phil first (39).

Decorum: Louise is an attractive girl next-door type.

Louise is mocked by the costume designer for her looks, but the boys are all enamored

with her. Benny even says (and Phil agrees) that she should be in the movies instead of behind the scenes (11).

Summary List of Adjectives: Regal, gentle, tough, passionate, and pretty.

Idea

Meaning of the Title

The title of *Epic Proportions* is a reference to the scope of the motion picture that the characters are filming during the action of the play, *Exeunt Omnes*. The title is quite humorous when compared to how simple the production aspects are and how the cast of thousands can be easily portrayed by a handful of actors.

Philosophical Statements

Coen and Crane make a variety of philosophical statements in *Epic Proportions*. Many of them deal with the apparent futility of effort against something much larger than yourself, and how in the end, the tremendous endurance required to stay the course are worthwhile.

NARRATOR. This is a story about lust and revenge and fate and destiny. This is a story about a lot of things! (5).

LOUISE. Well, let me just say that if we all work together, then we'll have something we can all be really proud of (6).

PHIL. There's no way you're ever gonna get discovered here (7).

BENNY. This is my dream and if I sit around at home it's never going happen (7).

BENNY. It was just a bad start. We'll get better (13).

BENNY. You just have to be in the right place at the right time. Of course it's hard to be in the right place when you're up to your neck in frogs . . . but them's the breaks (19).

DEWITT. Sweetheart, I'm old. I'm old, and I'm tired, and I'm old . . . A few days ago we were shooting the Ten Plagues. And I looked out at all of these people suffering.

But in the middle of them, there was this little man, refusing to give up. I couldn't take my eyes off him. And I thought, I don't need to see this. This is too sad . . . Enough is enough. (26)

PHIL. This isn't Mr. Dewitt's movie. And it's not my movie. It's our movie. This isn't about kings and queens and heroes. It's about us. And I think we owe it to ourselves to see it through. (41)

How Does the Action Lead Directly to the Meaning?

- Benny convinces Phil to stay and work on *Exeunt Omnes* (7-8).
- Phil and Benny each speak to Louise and are quite taken with her (9-11).
- Benny's group of extras is given brutal, menial, and gross tasks (12-13).
- Phil earns Louise's affection with his help on her scene (16).
- Phil convinces Benny to stay even in spite of his earning everything that Benny wants (19-21).
- Dewitt is in seclusion in the pyramid and Jack is killed in an accident (21-25).
- Dewitt refuses to leave the pyramid and puts Phil in charge. Phil recasts Benny and Louise as leads (25-28).
- Phil ignores Louise and Louise and Benny begin an affair (30-35).
- The affair is revealed (38-39).
- Phil attacks Benny and Louise and is chased by the cast and crew (39-44).
- Dewitt returns and chides all parties for their bad behavior (44).
- In his dream, Miguel finds his voice within and he defeats the soldier (34-35).
- Benny proposes to Louise and accepts the challenge of leading everyone across the desert to safety (44-45).
- Phil offers to be Benny's best man in a moment of penance (45).

Epic Proportions is Benny's story. All of the action revolves around his desire to be a Hollywood movie star and to get the girl. The desert, a wacky cast and crew, and his own brother Phil stand in his way throughout the play. After the frenzied climax, Benny may or may not be on his way to stardom, but he does get the girl and is a hero in the eyes of the thousands of people marching with him through the desert.

Moods

Mood Adjectives and Images

Unit 1A – “In the Beginning”

Touching: cold, spiky, dusty

Tasting: rich, flavorful

Smelling: leathery

Hearing: booming, bass, rattling

Seeing: red, orange, brown

The mood in this unit is like an extremely exciting movie trailer.

Unit 1 – “Octavium’s Murder”

Touching: smooth, clean, plastic

Tasting: bitter, floral, fruity

Smelling: floral, spring-like

Hearing: whispering, hushed, shadowed

Seeing: amber, sepia-toned, blurry

The mood in this unit is like a horribly foul bottle of wine.

Unit 2 – “Louise and Her Extras”

Touching: soft, spongy, hot

Tasting: cherry, wet, minty

Smelling: perfume, lotion, sweat

Hearing: cheery, bubbly, pleasant

Seeing: pretty, bright, easy

The mood in this unit is like winning money at a casino.

Unit 3 – “Phil Finds Benny”

Touching: rough, strong, abrasive

Tasting: salty, crunchy, medicinal

Smelling: sweaty, familiar, unwashed

Hearing: country, inflection, loud

Seeing: bright, understated

The mood in this unit is like taking bad-tasting medicine and instantly feeling better.

Unit 4 – “Jack and Shel’s Production Meeting”

Touching: jagged, broken, sharp

Tasting: sour, bitter, unpleasant

Smelling: foul, sweaty, angry

Hearing: loud, angry, harsh

Seeing: dull, red, glowing

The mood in this unit is like falling down a hole without end, like Alice.

Unit 5 – “Building the Pyramids”

Touching: gritty, grimy, damp

Tasting: musty, slimy

Smelling: dry, wind-blown, leather

Hearing: piercing, angry, shouting

Seeing: bright, huge, dusty

The mood in this unit is like being outside for two days.

Unit 6 – “‘Octavium’s Murder’ Takes 2-5”

Touching: crowded, hot, sweaty, dusty

Tasting: spit, dehydration

Smelling: body odor, dirty cables

Hearing: crowd whispers, titters, proclamations

Seeing: bright, blue, light brown

The mood in this unit is like being in a large crowd for hours longer than is comfortable.

Unit 7 – “Later That Night in the Brothers’ Tent”

Touching: cold, dirty, soft

Tasting: tomato, turkey, salty

Smelling: salty, rusty

Hearing: whining, shrill, empty

Seeing: blue, dim, starry

The mood in this unit is like your body at the end of an intense work out.

Unit 8 – “Louise and Her Extras- Take 2”

Touching: prodding, slapping, pounding

Tasting: hot, saliva, crow

Smelling: dust, body odor, fruit

Hearing: lecturing, crowd noise

Seeing: bright, amber, drab

The mood in this unit is like a bad workshop at a conference or convention.

Unit 9 – “When in Rome . . . ”

Touching: pounding, stampede, smashing

Tasting: crunchy, sour

Smelling: chaotic, coppery, warm

Hearing: loud, violent, soothing

Seeing: chaos, bright, amber, red

The mood in this unit is like the running of the bulls in Spain.

Unit 10 – “Benny Writes His Mother”

Touching: smooth, firm, cool

Tasting: woody, smokey, potato

Smelling: ink, canvass, leather

Hearing: hollow, silent, quiet

Seeing: dark, blue

The mood in this unit is like a nice warm blanket in the cold.

Unit 11 – “Band Geeks Get All the Girls”

Touching: warm, silky, soft

Tasting: sweet, cherry, ginger

Smelling: floral, copper, powder

Hearing: gentle, delight, flapping

Seeing: blue, dark, starry

The mood in this unit is like a cat alternating between rest and intense activity.

Unit 12 – “Benny Finishes His Letter to His Mother”

Touching: smooth, firm, cool

Tasting: woody, smokey, potato

Smelling: ink, canvass, leather

Hearing: hollow, silent, quiet

Seeing: dark, blue

The mood in this unit is like a nice warm blanket in the cold.

Unit 13 – “Plagues”

Touching: slimy, wet, tingly

Tasting: earthy, soggy, bloody

Smelling: algae, grassy, copper

Hearing: celebratory, panicked

Seeing: bright, amber, green

The mood in this unit is like a 70’s slasher movie.

Unit 14 – “Phil and Benny Compare Days”

Touching: rough, canvass, felt

Tasting: muddy, rubber, metallic

Smelling: canvass, sandy

Hearing: insects, quiet

Seeing: dark, blue, dingy, dirty

The mood in this unit is like relaxing after a dentist appointment.

Unit 15 – “Drama Behind the Scenes”

Touching: vibrations, tension, bumps

Tasting: tar, sand, rubber

Smelling: smoke, makeup, sweat

Hearing: chatter, activity

Seeing: costumes, amber, bright

The mood in this unit is like a beehive.

Unit 16 – “‘The Queen of the Nile’ Takes 1-3”

Touching: pain, violence, squishy

Tasting: sandy, bloody, hot

Smelling: sweaty, dangerous

Hearing: loud, angry, crazed

Seeing: fast-moving, amber, shiny

The mood in this unit is like schadenfreude.

Unit 17 – “Dust in the Wind”

Touching: ashy, broken

Tasting: tongue, salty, snotty

Smelling: cinders, sand

Hearing: panicked, weepy

Seeing: salty, snotty, broken

The mood in this unit is like dreaming about showing up to work naked.

Unit 18 – “The Heart of Darkness”

Touching: dusty, damp, slimy

Tasting: musty, rancid, warm

Smelling: moldy, thick

Hearing: dripping, hollowed, quiet

Seeing: blue, dark, slimy, dusty

The mood in this unit is like breathing in Jell-O.

Unit 19 – “Phil in Charge”

Touching: rushed, frozen, spongy

Tasting: musty, rancid, cool

Smelling: moldy, thick

Hearing: dripping, hollowed, quiet

Seeing: blue, dark, dusty

The mood in this unit is like a promise from a parent to go to Disney World next year.

Unit 20A – “And So a Boy Did Rise . . .”

Touching: cold, spiky, dusty

Tasting: rich, flavorful

Smelling: leathery

Hearing: booming, bass, rattling

Seeing: red, orange, brown

The mood in this unit is like an extremely exciting movie trailer.

Unit 20 – “‘The Queen of the Nile’ Take 4”

Touching: pain, violence, squishy, soft

Tasting: sandy, bloody, hot

Smelling: sweaty, dangerous, burned

Hearing: loud, angry, crazed

Seeing: fast moving, amber, shiny, amateurish

The mood in this unit is like watching an awful movie that everyone else loves.

Unit 21 – “Phil’s Directing Style”

Touching: scratchy, pinching, poking

Tasting: crunchy, medicinal, syrupy

Smelling: ripe, fungal

Hearing: cheering, French, condescension

Seeing: struggling, amber, bright

The mood in this unit is like being examined on a Petri dish.

Unit 22 – “Real Good Acting”

Touching: soft, luscious, tempting

Tasting: floral, coppery, wet

Smelling: floral, pheromones, exciting

Hearing: cooing, grunting

Seeing: beauty, temptation, forbidden fruit

The mood in this unit is like the dessert you can not have but take anyway.

Unit 23 – “Don’t Drink Out of the Red Sea”

Touching: firm, dry, even

Tasting: sugary, rich, overwhelming

Smelling: dusty, fishy, sweaty

Hearing: condescension, spin

Seeing: bright, amber, gold

The mood in this unit is like a political stump speech.

Unit 24A – “And Thus the King Ruled . . .”

Touching: cold, spiky, dusty

Tasting: rich, flavorful

Smelling: leathery

Hearing: booming, bass, rattling

Seeing: red, orange, brown

The mood in this unit is like an extremely exciting movie trailer.

Unit 24 – “Phil’s Surprise Birthday Party”

Touching: hot, razor sharp, painful

Tasting: salty, sugary, waxy

Smelling: matches, icing, salty

Hearing: crowds, disappointing, surprising

Seeing: blue, gold, dark, light, white

The mood in this unit is like a new state of the art TV that will not turn on.

Unit 25 – “They Are NOT Real Good Actors”

Touching: silky, warm, smooth

Tasting: honey, wine

Smelling: perfume, sweat, anger, passion

Hearing: rationalization, moaning, slurping

Seeing: beauty, desire, compassion

The mood in this unit is like sinking wonderfully.

Unit 26A – “Thus Began the Love Affair . . .”

Touching: cold, spiky, dusty

Tasting: rich, flavorful

Smelling: leathery

Hearing: booming, bass, rattling

Seeing: red, orange, brown

The mood in this unit is like an extremely exciting movie trailer.

Unit 26 – “We Have to Stop Meeting Like This”

Touching: velvety, silky, smooth

Tasting: honey, coppery, fattening, fruity

Smelling: floral, sweaty, fleshy

Hearing: angelic, cooing, laughter

Seeing: red, skin, sheets

The mood in this unit is like the aftermath of eating the forbidden fruit.

Unit 27 – “Fetch the Pencil, Big Boy”

Touching: tingly, tight, thick

Tasting: tongue, saliva, fear

Smelling: metallic, woody

Hearing: shuffling, spinning, covering

Seeing: panic, oblivious, nothing

The mood in this unit is like getting away with cheating on a test as the teacher watches.

Unit 28 – “Everyone Knows But Phil”

Touching: bristly, tense

Tasting: dry, spoiled, dairy

Smelling: smokey, manure

Hearing: gossip, wispy, clipped

Seeing: orange, upright lines, tension

The mood in this unit is like watching a trapeze artist.

Unit 29 – “The Queen of the Nile and Her Gladiators”

Touching: soft, hot, satin

Tasting: adrenaline, dusty, saliva

Smelling: perspiration, floral, perfume

Hearing: bravado, tenderness

Seeing: intimacy, carnal

The mood in this unit is like watching a late night Cinemax movie.

Unit 30 – “A Confession is Made”

Touching: firm, blunt, bruised

Tasting: bitter, sour, medicinal

Smelling: harsh, citrus

Hearing: nervousness, hurried, shame

Seeing: red, orange, blue

The mood in this unit is like realizing that a nightmare is actually reality.

Unit 31 – “How Phil Will Move Forward”

Touching: sharp, rough, sandy

Tasting: molasses, scones, liver

Smelling: sweaty, anger, tension

Hearing: rigidity, tension, anger

Seeing: red, amber, blue, green, tension

The mood in this unit is like expecting a bomb to go off any second.

Unit 32 – “Exeunt Omnes”

Touching: clamored, crowded, brittle

Tasting: hot, rich, putrid

Smelling: rancid, sweaty, filthy

Hearing: yelling, booing, cheering

Seeing: amber, red, yellow

The mood in this unit is like having 200% too much demand for your supply.

Unit 33 – “Breaking Up is Hard to Do and Nude Does Not Equal Invisible”

Touching: painful, twisted, pulling

Tasting: burning, vomitus, bile

Smelling: bile, vomitus, insecurity

Hearing: threatening, ugly, villainous

Seeing: red, amber, green, sharpness

The mood in this unit is like being prank phone called over and over.

Unit 34 – “The Queen Un-Gags Louise”

Touching: release, stretching

Tasting: orange, banana, water

Smelling: orange, banana, moisture

Hearing: conspiring, humanitarianism, self-preservation

Seeing: aide, friendship, escape

The mood in this unit is like receiving a gift from a loose acquaintance.

Unit 35 – “Louise Rescues Benny”

Touching: rough, sandy, intensely painful

Tasting: dusty, dry, vomitus

Smelling: leather, steel, vomit

Hearing: mumbles, screams

Seeing: violence, trickery, violence

The mood in this unit is like the most common gag in *America’s Funniest Home Videos*.

Unit 36 – “Brother Against Brother”

Touching: cutting, noogies, slapping

Tasting: spicy, Fruit loops, milk

Smelling: wash cloths, sweat, pheromones

Hearing: taunting, provocation, teasing

Seeing: violence, childish quibbling

The mood in this unit is like watching grown men play in a plastic wading pool.

Unit 37 – “The Return of Mr. Dewitt”

Touching: prickly, hairy, porous

Tasting: manna, dew, remorse

Smelling: clarity, freshness, remorse

Hearing: scolding, apologies

Seeing: power, authority, genuflecting

The mood in this unit is like an effective teacher scolding her entire class.

Unit 38 – “Benny Finally Takes Over”

Touching: electric, energizing

Tasting: water, cool, renewal

Smelling: confidence, cleanliness, excitement

Hearing: motivation, confidence, heroism

Seeing: shiny, blue, gold

The mood in this unit is like winning the Super Bowl.

Unit 39 – “That’s a Wrap”

Touching: welcoming, warm, soft

Tasting: mashed potatoes, cinnamon, cake

Smelling: cinnamon, cake

Hearing: celebration, relief, contrition

Seeing: red, gold, purple

The mood in this unit is like a walk through an amusement park.

Unit 39B – “And So a Boy Did Lead . . . ”

Touching: cold, spiky, dusty

Tasting: rich, flavorful

Smelling: leathery

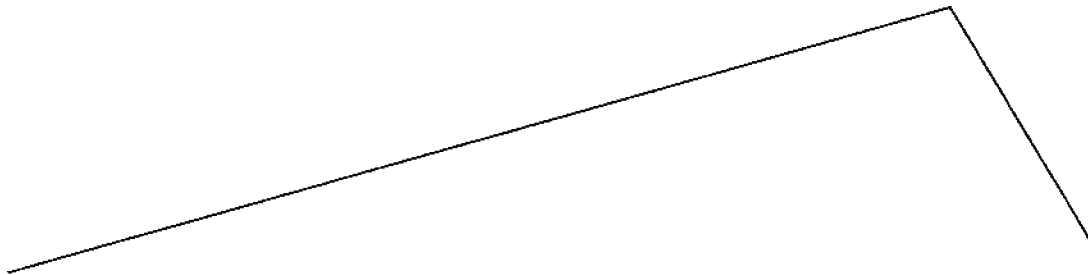
Hearing: booming, bass, rattling

Seeing: red, orange, brown

The mood in this unit is like an extremely exciting movie trailer.

Tempo

The overall tempo for this production will be fast paced with a build toward a frenzied climax, and slowing down through the resolution. Each unit will have moments of a slightly slower pace, a pause, or stillness to hold the interest of the audience and to add variety. The overall tempo will look like this:



Tone

- Heeding the call of destiny.

Previous Reviews

The original Broadway production of *Epic Proportions* was at the Helen Hayes Theatre on November 30, 1999 and starred Kristin Chenoweth as Louise Goldman (Coen and Crane 3). Terry Byrne of *The Boston Herald* was quite taken with the production:

Chenoweth is so energetic, and goes so far beyond what could have been a flat character, that when she entreats the crowd to shout with horror, fear, anger or even sardonic amusement, you'll be ready to join right in. Chenoweth is also a master of comic timing, and whether she's taking an extra moment or two to position herself in a revealing gown, or reacting with one of her amazing facial

expressions, she dominates the stage. (Byrne “You’ll Be Entertained . . .”)

He goes on to praise director Jerry Zaks and the designers:

[Director Jerry Zaks] drives the action with the pedal to the metal (a planned intermission has been eliminated and the show runs about 80 minutes), which helps keep the comedy frothy. David Gallo's orange, cartoon-style sets are bright and breezy, and in spite of the two male actors, Coen and Crane's jokes deliver some wonderful payoffs. (Byrne “You’ll Be Entertained . . .”)

Byrne was mostly glowing, but there were as many negative reviews (Byrne “A Début . . .”). The following is an excerpt from an extremely unflattering review by Chris Taylor for “Short Takes” in *Time*:

This epically unfunny Broadway comedy takes place on the desert set of a Hollywood extravaganza, as two brothers fight for the hand of a perky assistant director. Kristin Chenoweth, a Tony winner for last season's revival of *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*, is cute, if a bit overcooked, as the Kewpie-doll A.D. But the jokes are bad, the physical comedy repetitious, and the Hollywood satire 40 years outdated. Co-author Crane was one of the creators of *Friends*. If this is what TV people think Broadway needs, the theater is in more trouble than we imagined. (Poniewozik, et al.)

Equally unimpressed was Ben Brantley of *The New York Times*:

Ms. Chenoweth, bless her heart, is imprisoned in a relentlessly unfunny cartoon, and all the charm and luminosity in the world aren't going to raise the dampening clouds that hang over her . . . The eight-member ensemble, which Mr. Zaks appears to have left mostly to its own devices, must deliver lines as old as vaudeville, supplemented with grimaces and stiff, stagy postures that seem less to

have been thought out through rehearsal than improvised in desperation . . . All the performances need reining in; on the other hand, without the mugging, there would be nothing to command the attention, except for William Ivey Long's costumes and David Gallo's sets. (Brantley "Parting the Sea With Slapstick")

The New York Times was not always sour on *Epic Proportions*, however. A review of a 1986 off-Broadway production at the Judith Anderson Theater received praise:

Under Paul Lazarus's inventive direction, which includes a couple of adroitly arranged fight scenes that mock every technique used by Hollywood heroes to get out of tough spots, the entire no-star cast pitches in with verve and smart timing to draw optimum humor out of the incidents and asides tossed their way. Restraint is not the script's style. You can be sure that one of the vestal virgins will be discovered to be pregnant. On the other hand, it's diverting to hear that the Trojans are refusing to lose . . . With its big theme, big narration, big music, big screen and its great big offstage crowd of extras, *Epic Proportions* is the biggest little show in town and a rollicking start to the new season of Manhattan Punch Line. (Goodman "Spoof of Movies . . .")

Playwrights Larry Coen and David Crane

Larry Coen works as an arts educator and actor in Boston. He has performed with Commonwealth Shakespeare and the Lyric Stage Company. Coen on acting:

It's all about playing. When you're a kid and you're playing with Matchbox cars or dolls and you create an entire world around them, that's narcotic.

You're . . . listening to the audience, playing a character, reacting to the actors onstage with you. It's about being fully engaged. (Byrne "From KidStage . . .")

Coen is the associate director of the nonprofit City Stage Company and says of his work there:

In the middle schools we're trying to help kids become deeper readers by asking them to think like actors. We ask them to write something that shows what a character in a story is thinking at a particular time. By asking them to participate and be creative, there's no wrong answer and the kids find much more meaning in the literature. (Byrne "From KidStage . . .")

Most noted for being the co-creator of NBC's hit television show *Friends*, David Crane has written and produced episodes of numerous sitcoms. He has been nominated for four ACE Cable Awards and won one, and received seven Emmy nominations with one win. He has written episodes of *Everything's Relative*, *Sunday Dinner*, *The Powers That Be*, *Couples*, *Crashendo*, *Dream On*, *Veronica's Closet*, *Friends*, the spin-off *Joey*, and *The Class* (IMBd.com, Inc.).

Learning Goals for the J. Frank Dobie High School Theater Department

- **Vocal Clarity:** I want the students to project and articulate. I also want them to use appropriate dialect. Many of these native Texan students pronounce, "get" as "git" and "any" as "eeny." This is clearly inappropriate for Midwest farmers, Hollywood film personnel, and an Alaskan in 1930.
- **Characterization:** Most students in this department have an excellent sense of character. All but three in this play will be playing several different characters, and I hope to see each character played by one actor become distinctly different from one another.
- **Comic timing:** While this group has an extremely sharp sense of character, they do seem to struggle with timing. The Production Class (the advanced students who are in all of the after school productions) wrote and performed a comedy showcase in the fall. Each and every skit had a superb premise and well-drawn, fully developed characters. Each skit also tended to wander around the punch lines and struggle to achieve an appropriate pace.

I hope to help the students achieve a strong sense of timing for this show.

- **Time management:** I hope to use this production as a tool to teach the students time management. In the fall productions, we had a great number of rehearsals missed for doctor appointments, out of town trips, and birthday parties. According to my coworker, Aimee Small, this is down significantly from last year, and I hope to keep this trend moving forward. I want the students, and just as importantly their parents, to understand that being involved with the play is a commitment to a great many people and requires planning and sacrifice.
- **Discipline:** I also hope to use this play to teach the students discipline. By Texas State Law, they may not participate in any extra curricular activity if they are not passing all of their classes. Ironically enough, this law is called “No pass- no play.” The “play” in that phrase refers to sports, but it is a nice pun for our department. All of these students are involved in extra curricular theatre because it is something they want, and many would never put forth the effort to pass classes they have no interest in if it were not required to be part of the play. They are instructed to seek tutorials when necessary and to let me know as soon as they know of a grade problem so they can fix it or be replaced in a timely manner.

Works Cited

- Brantley, Ben. "Parting the Sea With Slapstick." *New York Times* 1 Oct. 1999, Late Edition (East Coast): ProQuest Newsstand, ProQuest. Web. 31 Jul. 2009.
- Byrne, Terry. "A Debut of 'Epic Proportions'." *Boston Herald* 19 Nov. 1999, ProQuest Newsstand, ProQuest. Web. 31 Jul. 2009.
- Byrne, Terry. "From KidStage to Gold Dust Orphans." *Boston Globe* 27 Apr. 2007, ProQuest Newsstand, ProQuest. Web. 31 Jul. 2009.
- Byrne, Terry. "You'll Be Entertained In 'Epic Proportions'." *Boston Herald* 1 Oct. 1999, ProQuest Newsstand, ProQuest. Web. 31 Jul. 2009.
- Chambers, John Whiteclay. "The Movies and the Antiwar Debate in America, 1930-1941." *Film & History* 36.1 (2006): 44-57. *Academic Search Complete*. EBSCO. Web. 31 Jul. 2009.
- Coen, Larry and David Crane. *Epic Proportions*. New York: Dramatist Play Service, Inc., 1986.
- Dawson, Anthony. "Patterns of Production and Employment in Hollywood." *Hollywood Quarterly* 4.4 (Summer, 1950): 338-353. JSTOR. Web. 27 Nov. 2009.
- Garret, John A. "The New Deal, National Socialism, and the Great Depression." *The American Historical Review* 78.4 (Oct. 1973): 907-944. JSTOR. Web. 27 Nov. 2009.
- Goodman, Walter. "Spoof of Movies in 'Epic Proportions'." *New York Times* 10 Dec. 1986, Late Edition (East Coast): ProQuest Newsstand, ProQuest. Web. 31 Jul. 2009.
- Hoberman, J. "When the Spice of Choice Was Sin." *New York Times* 15 Aug. 1999, Late Edition (East Coast): ProQuest Newsstand, ProQuest. Web. 18 Dec. 2009.
- IMDb.com, Inc. "The Internet Movie Database". IMDb.com, Inc. 31 Jul. 2009.
<<http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0186331/>>.
- Ives, Ronald L. "Climate of the Sonoran Desert Region." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 39.3 (1949): 143-187. *Academic Search Complete*. EBSCO. Web. 31 Jul.

2009.

Jurca, Catherine. "What the Public Wanted: Hollywood, 1937-1942." *Cinema Journal* 47.2

(Winter, 2008): 3-27. *Academic Search Complete*. EBSCO. Web. 31 Jul. 2009.

Ohmer, Susan. "Speaking For the Audience: Double Features, Public Opinion, and the Struggle for Control in 1930's Hollywood." *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* 24 (2007): 143-169. *Academic Search Complete*. EBSCO. Web. 31 Jul. 2009.

Poniewozik, James, et al. "Short Takes." *Time* 154.15 (1999): 91. *Academic Search Complete*. EBSCO. Web. 31 Jul. 2009.

Rehearsal Journal

Monday, January 25

Auditions for Benny, Phil, and Louise

Today we held cold reading auditions for *The Constant Wife* and for the roles of Benny, Phil, and Louise in *Epic Proportions*. For *Epic Proportions*, the girls read Louise's first monologue on page six, and the boys read the Benny and Phil scene on page thirteen. With a shorter rehearsal period than usual, the actors will be expected to be off book after the read through in March. This should not be a hardship for anyone since the three leads are being cast so early. *The Constant Wife* is our University Interscholastic League One Act Play Competition piece. As a measuring stick of that production's importance to the J. Frank Dobie Theatre Department, it should be known that it is the only production of the four in our season that the principal will attend. Having said that, Aimee Small was very generous in sharing key personnel.

Gilbert Martinez, who will play Benny Goldman, must also serve as the light operator for *The Constant Wife*. I do not "pre-cast" shows, but he is not one I had in mind to play Benny. He so clearly ran away with the role in the cold readings that Aimee, Rick, and I joked that he IS Benny. Gilbert is talented and funny, but he is scatterbrained. He is not a very hard worker, but has shown improvement in the last productions. Gilbert is a senior and intends to major in Theatre at Sam Houston State University or the University of Houston.

Ian Lewis will play the role of Phil. Ian is a freshman this year and performed a mid-sized role in my production of *Paganini* in December. He was on time, off book early, and a pleasure to have in the cast. He is getting a larger role than I am normally comfortable giving a freshman, but he has earned it. He and Gilbert have a nice chemistry. He has a good sense of timing and character. He would be excellent at speech tournaments; interpretation is his forte.

Louise Goldman will be played by Swedish foreign exchange student Eleonor Poka. She humbly served as an understudy for our first production and had an excellent role in *Paganini*. She is an excellent student and talented actress. Her comic timing is outstanding. Going into the auditions I was worried about her ability to be the lead in a comedy in her second language, but she quickly put those fears to rest as the auditions began. Her English has improved markedly over the course of the few months she has lived in the States. As her grasp of English has grown, she has become significantly less gullible and more profane in her peer interactions. Working with Eleonor will be a delight.

Monday, March 1

Auditions

All are cold reading Jack and Shel on pages seven through eight and the Queen and Attendant on page twenty-two.

Auditioners:

Laura Gutierrez- Not at all energetic or grounded.

Marissa Escalona- very natural and excellent. Great attitude. Queen? Very good reading as the queen.

Kirsten Marshall- good energy. No interpretation in either reading.

Bryan Rodriguez- Physically stiff. Good interpretation.

Erik Olmos- Low energy. Ok interpretation. Great Attendant voice out of nowhere!

Liz Sonnier- Great interpretation of dialogue. Ok energy.

Olivia Maslonka- Excellent energy and interpretation of lines. Excellent comic timing.

Paris Nichols- Fantastic Queen!!!

Brittany Stoude- No. Nice physical choices as Jack.

Jose Cantu- Good physicality and timing.

Justin Thomas- Great, deep, manly voice. Very natural. Nice comedic timing.

Janie Silva- Nice choices and voice. Good energy. Nice attitude for Jack.

Tuesday, March 2

Call Back Auditions

In addition to the posted call back list, two students who were not able to make Monday's audition (Elisa Gomez and Brenton Hamilton) joined the group. After cold readings at the original audition, I decided to do ensemble and improv exercises for the call backs.

For the first exercise they were divided into groups of three or four to create an improv scene of a 30's movie about the history of the world.

Erik, Marissa, and Paris were very creative and abstract. Their scene was musical and nonlinear. Delightful. Brian, Olivia, and Elise began with ape-men creating fire, then Indians, and finally WWI. They utilized a time travel device. Fantastic. Ended with a teenager in the same position in which the ape-man began. Justin, Laura, Brenton, and Jose started with Adam and Eve. Hysterical.

In the second scene they were to improv a scene where they are in a production meeting of the same movie. Olivia, Elisa, and Brian went first. Elisa could not be understood. She was not articulating at all. The scene was very creative and energetic. Justin, Jose, Laura, and Brenton had a slow-moving scene of people arguing. The characters were interesting. Marissa, Erik, and Paris had a similar idea. Interesting characters but the scene and argument were slow.

Next they were each asked to create tableaux for Ancient Egypt, Rome, and Arizona. All groups came up with very creative body pictures.

Finally, they were asked in their best "movie guy" voice to introduce *Exeunt Omnes*.

Justin really shined with this exercise.

Monday, March 29

Read Through

The cast and crew heads introduced themselves and the role they were playing. We went over the policies of the production company and finished the read through at 4:58 p.m. The company seemed very excited about the script. Their only complaint was that “goddamn” and “asshole” must be cut.

Tuesday, March 30

Blocking Rehearsal

The upper classmen lead the cast through warm-ups (as is the custom in all of our productions). The energy is high among all of the cast members. They are excited to do this show, about each other, and even my thesis process. We began blocking at the top of the show. We moved through what I consider to be a large amount of text to block in two hours, but it did not seem rushed. It is, after all, only a skeleton that will be filled out in working rehearsals.

Wednesday, March 31

Blocking Rehearsal

Blocked another large section of text today. I handed the cast characterization sheets to fill out. Those who have multiple characters are to fill it out multiple times; those with one character are to include much more detail.

Thursday, April 1

Blocking Rehearsal

We spent about thirty minutes talking about some of their characterization work sheets. They seem to have a good understanding of where they are going and what they are doing with

their roles. Energy is still high. This is a cast that genuinely enjoys being around each other and revels in each other's success. That will serve them well.

Monday, April 5

Blocking Rehearsal

The show is now roughly blocked. Everything is in the SM's promptbook. We are ready to begin working the show off book tomorrow and tackle stage combat.

Tuesday, April 6

Working Rehearsal

We began by working through pages five through twenty. They seem to be struggling a bit with the pacing needed for this production. The other productions this season have done nothing to prepare the students for fast-paced comedy. Aimee made the choice to direct the British comedies *Hay Fever* and *The Constant Wife* at a leisurely pace. The students and I gave *Paganini* wild and nightmarish changes in pace. Nothing this year has approached the speed needed for *Epic Proportions*. For the last thirty minutes, we revisited the Queen of the Nile scene's fight choreography. They ran it at ten percent speed (which is great for rehearsing combat, but not comedy).

Wednesday, April 7

Working Rehearsal

Today we worked pages twenty through thirty-four. The pacing was a little better. I am trying to get them to a fever-pitched pace now in order to find moments to pull back later. Some students are still struggling a bit with lines. I informed them we really have no time to spend on that anymore. The last half hour was spent on the fight scenes between Benny and the Gladiators and Benny and Phil at ten percent speed.

Thursday, April 8

Working Rehearsal

Today we worked pages thirty-four through forty-two. The boys wore very short rehearsal skirts in order to learn how to move in togas and tunics. They blushed and laughed and had a great time admiring their own legs. And each other's legs. The girls took pictures. The characters and timing continue to be fantastic. They knew their lines much better today.

Friday, April 9

Working Rehearsal

We began today with an exercise for the benefit of those playing multiple characters. I gave the cast ten minutes to prepare a brief performance in which they were to present a frozen pose, a walk, and a voice (one line) that was radically different for each character that they play. Only one actor struggled with this. Unfortunately, it was José Cantu, who plays more characters than anyone else. I asked him privately after rehearsal to work on this exercise further at home. We worked pages five through twenty-five. They were off book enough for me to let the scenes run and take notes to give at the end of rehearsal. They all diligently wrote down the notes. Most are doing well being off book. Eleonor is the only one who is consistently struggling, and I have a feeling she will be finished struggling tomorrow. It is difficult to be too angry with her for struggling with so many lines in a second language.

Saturday, April 10

Rehearsal was from 12:00-6:00 p.m. We had a bit of a late start due to the fact that an orchestra event was twenty minutes late finishing with the black box. We continued the work through from page twenty-five through forty-five. At that point, I gave notes and we took a fifteen-minute break. After break, I had the actors work on a new character analysis sheet while

the prop, light, and costume crews worked in the black box. After crew/character analysis time, we began another work through and hit pages five through twenty-two. Three company members had approved conflicts to leave at 5:00, so from 5:00 to 6:00 we worked on tech again. The lights are seventy percent focused. Junior Samantha Castillo, the lighting designer, had become accustomed to being at the light board and sending her boyfriend (Gilbert Martinez, who is playing Benny) up on the Genie lift to focus. Gilbert is the most experienced student on the lift, so I trust him to operate it while I am on the ground. He was one of those who left early, so with me at the controls Samantha was forced to make her first trip to the black box grid. She was extremely nervous, but very brave.

Monday, April 12

Worked pages twenty-two to forty-one. The lights are all hung and focused except for the scoops that will be used for red and blue washes. For areas created by par cans, they look pretty tight and stop at the waists of the front row of the audience. There are five areas, each with five lights (two front, two back, and one top). There is a warm and cool light from the front and from the back of each area. I am excited to see them with the gels that Samantha cut today.

Tuesday, April 13

Today we worked page forty-one to the end of the show and then the top of the show to page eighteen. Warm ups started late, and I had a heated reaction. The pacing is coming together. There are now even nice moments where the show slows down appropriately. They are really getting and enjoying the humor. We took time to revisit slowly working the fight choreography at the end of the show. When they are at full speed, I think they will look pretty sharp. They seem to have trouble with body control. Specifically, it seems difficult for them to isolate body parts and areas. I have mixed feelings on the lighting gels I chose. I have a wide variety of skin

tone in the cast, so I selected R01 and R4360 for my warm and cool. The African-Americans and the pale Swede look fantastic. The Hispanics and Caucasians look good until they are in a spot that has a little too much cool R. Samantha and I are going to play with that tomorrow during production class.

Wednesday, April 14

During production class Samantha and I discovered that as long as the lights were not at a higher intensity than eighty percent, Hispanics and Caucasians look fine in our gels. In this intimate space the lights should not be hotter than that anyway, even for the effect of noon in the desert. In rehearsal we worked from page eighteen to the end. Warm ups began and ended five minutes early after being corrected yesterday. However, the cast was a bit sleepy, sick, and spacey today. There was a tremendous amount of breaking character and giggling for the first time in this rehearsal process. Everyone except Eleanor took a step backwards today. Perhaps it's a full moon? After warm ups, Gilbert and Ian worked hard on the fight choreography and it is beginning to come together. Tomorrow we are running the show from top to bottom and without line calls for the first time. I am curious to see how that will go.

Thursday, April 15

Gilbert and Ian have made the fight scene the last part of their daily warm up routine and are having fun with it. It may actually end up being the climax of the show that it is written to be. It does not look sharp, but it at least looks safe now. Today was the first full run of the show. The cast was not allowed to call for lines for the first time; the stage manager handed them paper slips with their line notes on them at the end of the rehearsal. There were some stumbles, but only one dead stop. The dead stop only lasted eleven seconds or so. The timing, energy, and intensity were all much better today. Ian Lewis (Phil) is in very real danger of failing French.

Today I had Drake Williams, a production student who was the male lead in the UIL One Act Play, sit in on the rehearsal and write down all of Phil's blocking. We will find out on Monday if Ian is eligible to be in the play or not. I am really not sweating. Drake is very talented. He filled in for another failing student in my fall show and was a pleasure to watch work. To Ian's credit, he took a quantum leap forward in the role once he realized why Drake was sitting next to me in the house with a script. I hope it motivates him academically as well.

Friday, April 16

The cast and crew ran the entire show today. I had to pick up my fiancé from the airport, so I missed the first third of the run. Rick Burford started the run and took notes. There was not a huge step forward today other than some good experimentation with voices by Justin (D.W. DeWitt) and José (Jack). The show ran one hour and fifteen minutes, which is approximately what the final performance should run. I accidentally let Ian leave without interrogating him about his French test. Tomorrow we will rehearse from noon to six. Aimee will have students in the Home Economics room sewing. The light, sound, and prop crews will also be working all day.

Saturday, April 17

There were numerous absences today. All were legit, and ninety percent of them were expected. I should have realized what a skeleton crew I would have today. The day was salvaged by putting all available hands on costume duty. The home economics lab was at our disposal, and Aimee kept all of the students busy. I helped Samantha finish her magic sheet and light plot. Kirsten Marshall, sophomore sound designer, finished her sound cue sheet.

Monday, April 19

Ian failed his French test. We found out around 10:00 a.m. This was helpful because

Drake Williams was in our fourth period Production class at 10:15, so he was able to begin rehearsing immediately. During seventh period when Ian has Theatre I, he agreed to come to rehearsal for the rest of this week and lead Drake around and feed him his lines. I think Ian has accepted this turn of events as the learning experience that it is, and is a better person for it. If only he had learned this tough life lesson earlier in the year or even earlier in this production process. I am totally confident that Drake will do a wonderful job. The run through today was very slow to accommodate Drake doing the blocking for the first time. The run did not end until 4:50, so I had the students put away the props and rehearsal skirts. I will begin tomorrow's rehearsal with today's notes.

Tuesday, April 20

I must be very tired. I laughed out loud for ten minutes at the stupid diarrhea joke Benny makes at Louise's expense. The students are tired too. It was a very scatterbrained and unfocused run today. The cast seems to be sliding back to be with Drake instead of pulling him up to where they are. I hope they all get plenty of rest.

Wednesday, April 21

The run was MUCH better today. Great energy and they are playing and experimenting again. Justin (D.W. DeWitt) has been struggling a bit with character. He made a break through today. He came on in his last scene like a freight train and took over. It was really fun to watch. Drake is off book for the first half of the show. Ian is still doing the honorable thing by showing up to rehearsal and leading Drake around. He is also "shadow feeding" him his lines in the scenes where he needs it. The light and sound cue sheets are being tinkered with daily. The wet tech should be fairly smooth on Saturday. The crew seems well prepared.

Thursday, April 22

Today I am a little worried about props and costume changes. We will not have actual props until Saturday because of the finance office. March and April are big spending months for all of the organizations at Dobie, so the Business Office has to ration the cash flow. We have pretty good rehearsal props for everything. I am worried about the number of quick costume changes this show requires. Luckily, we will have a week to rehearse them.

Friday, April 23

Half of the risers and seats are now in place. It seemed to make the rehearsal a little more formal since the black box now looks like a performance space. The pacing lagged today (run time was a full four minutes longer than yesterday), but the characters and relationships took a quantum leap forward. I got to take some detailed notes. That is always exciting a week from opening.

Saturday, April 24

Today was wet tech. From noon until about 1:05 the cast and crew set up, warmed up, and made some last minute adjustments and preparations. The wet tech lasted until about 5:15 with breaks. We spent about twenty-five minutes on the opening, and then everything else was relatively smooth. At the first break, the stage manager expressed concern about how things were going. This is her first time stage managing, so she was afraid she was doing it wrong since we had to do the opening cues so many times. I assured her that a slow start was par for the course on wet tech rehearsals. The lights and sound added so much depth! I was very pleased with how they looked and sounded. My friend Craig Mertens, who used to be a radio DJ, sent in recordings of the Narrator's lines and they were fantastic!

Monday, April 26

This morning I found out that due to the TAKS (Texas Assessment of Knowledge and

Skills) testing this week we could not rehearse after 4:30 p.m. This is a horrible thing to find out the Monday of production week. Luckily, the show is running one hour and fifteen to twenty minutes, and rehearsals start at 3:00 p.m. My typed notes will be on the callboard tomorrow, and each student will have to sign by his or her name every time it appears by a note. This week I do not consider putting away set pieces, props, and costumes part of rehearsal time. Those things must all be taken care of after rehearsal and the stage manager will release the students once she is satisfied that all items are stored properly. Thank goodness this show is not a three-hour musical. I might have been fired.

Tuesday, April 27

Today's run went very well. Everything is coming together nicely. I did have a problem with the actors being too slow to get ready to start the dress rehearsal and for wandering into the house after Laura Gutierrez, the sophomore stage manager, had called them to places. Other than that, this dress rehearsal was very smooth. We are still using just a few rehearsal props, but that should no longer be the case tomorrow. The notes from today are posted again. Most of the cast and run crew stayed and initialed by their notes before leaving.

Wednesday, April 28

I was delighted to be able to take some very specific notes again today. We were not really at that point during production week for the first three shows this year. There were, of course, some glitches. For instance, at least one costume was left crumpled on the floor. Tomorrow there will be a check out sheet with the student in charge of costumes. Overall this is a group that is doing an excellent job of concentrating and using common sense to solve problems backstage and onstage. I am very proud of the work they have done, and I am looking forward to putting it in front of an audience. In spite of the best efforts of the TAKS test.

Thursday, April 29

I told the cast before we started today that I do not believe in the old adage of a bad dress rehearsal leading to a good performance. I think that a bad dress rehearsal is simply a sign of a bad dress rehearsal. Today went very smoothly. There were the odd miscues, but everyone stayed focused and in the world of the play. I am used to rehearsal periods that last a week or two longer than what we do here at Dobie, but this company is ready for an audience. I had several actors stay for about thirty minutes after the mandatory 4:30 release and work some specific moments. As I dismissed them, I told them that I was proud for this production to be my thesis and ready to show it off. Like Gene Hackman's character in *The Royal Tannenbaums*, as I said it, it occurred to me that it was true.

Self Evaluation

The J. Frank Dobie High School Theatre Department's production of *Epic Proportions* was a success as a production in educational theatre. The show highlighted the talents and worked the weaknesses of the students involved. The students are proud of the work they did, and there seems to be a general consensus that this was the most successful production of the season.

One of my goals for the actors was to improve vocal clarity. I think they made huge strides in this area. It helped that this was one of only two shows this year that did not require dialect work and that it was the only show that was in the black box. This allowed the student actors to concentrate on articulation, projection, and good vocal habits without having to fret about filling an auditorium with their voices.

The students also did an excellent job with characterization. I sacrificed precious rehearsal time to have the students write out character analysis work. This was the first

production in which they were required to do so. I think it paid off. Carla Parker, a valued colleague who was an audience member, commented upon seeing the cast photo from the production shots that she would have bet money there were twice as many students in the cast as there actually were. They were successful in creating numerous distinct characters.

The comic timing of the show was strong. They did not always understand how to share focus, but the final performance is evidence that they did understand the structure and pace of the humor in the script. If I had it to do over again, I would work to put in even stronger variation in the pace.

The cast and crew with one exception did an excellent job with time management and discipline. There were absences, but they were valid. They did an excellent job of not asking to miss rehearsals for concerts, birthdays, or other unacceptable conflicts. The only student who did a poor job with time management and discipline did not miss rehearsals; he failed to manage time to study for his academic classes. The cast and crew sacrificed a great deal of time to make the production something special.



CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Epic Proportions

By Larry Coen and David Crane

Written Evaluation of David Crutcher Thesis Production

May 17, 2010

Epic Proportions, a play written by Larry Coen and David Crane, is a slapstick comedy set in the Arizona desert in the 1930's. It was presented at Dobie High School in Houston, Texas and was viewed on May 1, 2010.

The play opened on Broadway in 1999. It featured Jerry Zaks' direction and Kristen Chenoweth in the leading role of Louise Goldman. The show was presented without intermission and encompassed 85 minutes and 93 performances.

This production was directed by David Crutcher in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Theatre Production.

Presented in a classroom that doubles as a black box space, Epic Proportions featured a play-within-a-movie format, spoofing both screwball comedies and the Cecil B. DeMille biblical epics of the 1930's. It moved quickly from scene to scene and location to location, and ran approximately 90 minutes sans intermission. Featuring multiple scenes and locations, David smartly opted for a minimalist set, relying mostly upon creative staging, simple and mostly effective costumes, furniture, props, and area lighting to establish location.

With audience seating on about 2 ½ sides of the space, the staging was appropriate for this modified thrust configuration. David created a backstage and some additional entrances by utilizing the curtains (which track 360° if necessary) for the other 1½ sides. The curtains split in several places (center, left center, right center), which helped to expedite ingress and egress of characters, furniture, and props. In addition, there were entrances/exits through a door located in the down right vom as well as a door located behind the audience seating up left.

With twenty par cans, five fresnels and 4 scoops, student Samantha Castillo managed to create multiple environments, good coverage, and even establish time

Theatre Arts

400 East University Way . Ellensburg, WA 98926-7460 . Office: 509-963-1750 . Fax: 509-963-1767

EEO/AA/TITLE IX INSTITUTION • TDD 509-963-2143



CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

of day. Costumes were period and character appropriate, props were serviceable, and the hair styles were well-researched and effective. The pre-show music appropriately consisted of music from *Ben Hur* and *The Ten Commandments*.

This was a comedy that depended on broad physical humor: sight gags, slapstick, lots of stage violence and pratfalls, overwrought film acting, etc.. Timing is everything in this brand of comedy, and the enthusiastic high school cast obviously enjoyed themselves in this scenery-eating style of acting. Their effectiveness in grasping the style, though ardent, was more miss than hit. This is to be expected of actors at this stage of development. David countered the cast's unrefined comic skills with a lot of high jinks reminiscent of *The Three Stooges*.

Brothers Phil and Benny (played by Drake Williams and Gilbert Martinez, respectively) were well-cast and mostly believable. Eleonor Poka, featuring a delightful Swedish accent (she's from Sweden), held her own throughout and possessed some good comic timing. Justin Thomas was an understated D.W. DeWitt, and Paris Nichols played a suitably self-absorbed, narcissistic Queen. The remaining twenty-four smaller roles were energetically enacted by four actors (Jose Cantu, Olivia Maslonka, Erik Olmos, Bryan Rodriguez).

Overall, there was an excellent group dynamic and energy. They worked well together, and obviously enjoyed the piece and playing off one another. However, focus was not always clear, as background characters periodically (but repeatedly) stole focus from the leads. Perhaps they might have been encouraged to adopt the less-is-more axiom, as more acting is on the whole not better acting. Also, some of the stage combat was borderline dangerous, and would probably not pass muster with George. However, other than a few cringes, I never felt at any time that the actors were in mortal danger.

David made strong use of the space. He bounced the action all around the stage, employed strong diagonals, compelling stage groupings, and a creative use of physical levels. The scene changes were quick and efficient, and the cues were called with a fair level of consistency and continuity. The pre-recorded narration was handled expertly by Craig Mertens. The curtain call was clean and energetic. A pre-show lighting problem was handled with aplomb by the director and TD (co-

Theatre Arts

400 East University Way . Ellensburg, WA 98926-7460 . Office: 509-963-1750 . Fax: 509-963-1767

EEO/AA/TITLE IX INSTITUTION • TDD 509-963-2143



CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

worker Amy Small). It held up the show by a good ten minutes, but no one came unglued because of it and the show went on afterwards with nary a glitch.

David managed to create a winning production out of a skimpy script and a rather raw cast. He guided the production with a sure hand, and obviously created an esprit-de-corps that translated into an energetic, mostly amusing romp through Pompeii via Arizona.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Smith
Professor

CC Committee:
Christina Barrigan
George W. Bellah III

Theatre Arts

400 East University Way . Ellensburg, WA 98926-7460 . Office: 509-963-1750 . Fax: 509-963-1767

EEO/AA/TITLE IX INSTITUTION • TDD 509-963-2143

NONPROFESSIONAL LICENSE

5/6/2010

Aimee Small
J Frank Dobie High School
10220 Blackhawk Blvd
Houston, TX 77089

Tel. 713-740-0370
Fax 713-740-4181
asmall@pasadenaisd.org

PRINT FOR YOUR RECORDS. INCLUDE A COPY WITH
PAYMENTS SENT BY REGULAR MAIL.

Applicant Type: EDU
Number of Performances: 5
License Period: 5/27/2010 – 5/31/2010
Invoice Number:
Customer Number:
Purchase Order Number:
Total Amount Due: \$375.00

Payment Due Date: 5/13/2010

All fees must be paid in U.S. funds. You may pay by check, money order or cashier's check or by credit card online at www.dramatists.com.

Title(s): EPIC PROPORTIONS
Author(s): Larry Coen and David Crane

Note: The above Total Amount Due does not include shipping and handling fees for required or optional scores, sheet music, CDs, DVDs or other items. Shipping and handling charges will be included on your invoice, which will be emailed or mailed to you shortly.

The nonexclusive nonprofessional stage performance rights to EPIC PROPORTIONS are hereby granted to J Frank Dobie High School Aimee Small for the period 5/27/2010 through 5/31/2010, contingent upon payment of the performance royalty fee and subject to the following conditions:

(1) The play(s) must be presented only as published in the Dramatists Play Service, Inc. authorized acting edition(s), without any changes, additions, alterations or deletions to the text and title(s). These restrictions shall include, without limitation, not altering, updating or amending the time, locales or settings of the play(s) in any way. The gender of the characters shall also not be changed or altered in any way, e.g., by costume or physical change.

(2) The author(s) shall receive credit as sole and exclusive author(s) of the play in all programs distributed in connection with performances of the play(s) and in all instances in which the title(s) of the play(s) appears for purposes of advertising, publicizing or otherwise exploiting the play(s) and/or a production thereof; the name(s) of the author(s) must appear on a separate line in which no other name appears, immediately beneath the title(s) and in size and prominence of type equal to 50% of the largest letter used for the title(s) of the play(s).

(a) All programs must include any additional acknowledgments set forth on the copyright page of the Dramatists Play Service authorized edition under the paragraph entitled SPECIAL NOTE.

(b) All playbills and programs must include the following on the title page: "[TITLE] is presented by special arrangement with Dramatists Play Service, Inc., New York."

(3) Performances must take place on the dates specified above and in the location designated. Any proposed changes in the dates, venue or number of performances must receive prior written approval by Dramatists Play Service, Inc. in order to be effective. If you cancel any performances you must advise us in writing or else you will be billed as if the performances took place. Payment must be received in full by the due date, or this account will be considered in default.

(4) This authorization applies to nonprofessional stage performance rights only. All other rights of every kind and nature, including but not limited to television, video or audio taping, in whole or in part, or any other form of mechanical or electronic reproduction, such as information storage and retrieval systems and photocopying, are reserved by the author(s) and are not included in this authorization. Reproduction of any kind, including for personal use, is also strictly prohibited.

(5) In addition, amateur leasing rights for this production or for any of the plays listed in our Catalogue may be withdrawn at any time. Any fees previously paid will be promptly refunded, and Dramatists Play Service, Inc. shall have no other financial or legal responsibility with regard to such withdrawal.

Additional Conditions:

See acknowledgments set forth on the copyright page of the Dramatists Play Service acting edition under the paragraph entitled SPECIAL NOTE.

SPECIAL NOTE

Anyone receiving permission to produce EPIC PROPORTIONS is required to give credit to the Authors as sole and exclusive Authors of the Play on the title page of all programs distributed in connection with performances of the Play and in all instances in which the title of the Play appears for purposes of advertising, publicizing or otherwise exploiting the Play and/or a production thereof. The names of the Authors must appear on a separate line, in which no other name appears, immediately beneath the title and in size of type equal to 50% of the size of the largest, most prominent letter used for the title of the Play. No person, firm or entity may receive credit larger or more prominent than that accorded the Authors. The following acknowledgment must appear on the title page in all programs distributed in connection with performances of the Play:

EPIC PROPORTIONS was produced on Broadway at the Helen Hayes Theatre by Bob Cuillo, Brent Peek, Robert Barandes, Mathew Farrell, Mark Schwartz with Philip and Patricia Barry Productions and Robert Dragota.

Originally produced by Manahattan Punch Line Theatre, 1986.

Cue	Page	Event	Song	Effect	
A	5	SM call	playlist epic 1	House music	Sound Cue Sheet for <i>Epic Proportions</i>
B	5	SM call	"In the beginning"	Narrator	
C	5	Conspirator 1 speaks	the basket	Soundtrack music	
D	6	"Cut"		Soundtrack music stops	
E	9	"granite and logs"	first encounter	Soundtrack music begins	
F	10	"Cut"		Soundtrack music stops	
G	11	"Action"	first encounter	Soundtrack music begins	
H	15	"...Ready...and...go!"	Victory parade	parade music	
I	15	"Hold it! HOLD IT!"		Parade music stops	
J	16	"She's terrific"		Crickets	
K	18	"Your loving son, Benny."	Burning bush	Egyptian music	
L	18	"ten plagues"	Frogs	Frogs croaking	
M	22	"And...Action."	the chase	Soundtrack music begins	
N	22	"Cut"		Soundtrack music	
O	22	"And...Action."	the chase	Soundtrack music begins	
P	23	"Cut"		Soundtrack music stops	
Q	23	"And...Action."	the chase	Soundtrack music begins	
R	24	"Cut"		soundtrack music stops	
S	27	"Action"	"And so a boy did rise"	Narrator	
T	28	Lights up	the chase	Soundtrack music begins	
U	28	"Cut"		Soundtrack music stops	
V	32	Lights down	"and thus the king ruled"	Narrator	
W	34	"Hmmm"		Crickets	
X	37	"And...Action."	Written in stone	Soundtrack music begins	
Y	38	"Cut"		Soundtrack music stops	
Z	45	"Exeut Omnes!!!"	"tuscon"	Narrator	

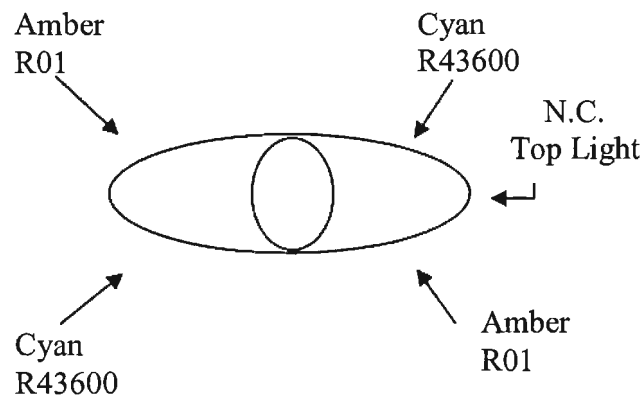
Area	Cyan 4360 HR Channels	Amber R01 HR Channels	Cyan 4360 HLB Channels	Amber R01 HRB Channels	N.C. Top Light Channels
1	1	11	21	31	41
2	2	12	22	32	42
3	3	13	23	33	43
4	4	14	24	34	44
5	5	15	25	35	45

R25
Red Wash
61
62

R3220
Blue Wash
51
52

Sub-masters

1	Area 1
2	Area 2
3	Area 3
4	Area 4
5	Area 5
6	Cyan wash
7	Amber wash
8	Blue wash
9	Red wash
10	Top light wash
11	Full stage
12	Full stage w/ R&B wash



Dobie Black Box Magic Sheet
Lighting Designer: Samantha Castillo
Master Electrician/Director:
David Crutcher

Epic Prortior ght Cue Sheet

Event	Effect	Time Up	Time Down	Page #
Announcements	Sub 5 @ FL	5	5	
Narrator "In the beginning..."	blackout	5	5	5
Narrator "there was wasteland."	Sub 11 @ FL	5	0	5
Narrator "...not very interesting to look at"	blackout	0	0	5
Narrator "...a lot of things!"	Ch.2,12,22,32,42 @ 40%	5	5	5
Conspirator 3"...address the mob.	Sub 11 @ FL	5	0	6
Dewitt"Cut!"	Group 5 @ FL	0	2.5	6
Louise "...your granite logs."	Sub 8 @ 10%	2.5	5	9
Slavemaster "work!"	Sub 11 @ FL	5	0	9
Dewitt"Cut!"	Group 5 @ FL	0	0	10
Dewitt"Action!"	Sub 11 @ FL	0	2.5	11
Slavemaster " Good work!"	Sub 8 @ 10%	2.5	5	12
Conspirator 3" But should Homericus..."	Ch.2,12,22,32,42 @ 40%	5	5	12
Conspirator 3"...address the mob."	Sub 11 @ FL	5	0	12
Dewitt"Cut!"	Group 5 @ FL	0	0	12
Louise"Do you mind?"	Sub 11 @ FL	0	0	12
Louise"No."	Group 5 @ FL	0	0	12
Louise"Wally?"	Sub 11 @ FL	0	0	13
Louise"Okay."	Group 5 @ FL	0	0	13
Louise"Wally."	Sub 11 @ FL	0	0	13
Louise"No!"	Group 5 @ FL	0	2.5	13
Louise"Wally?"	Sub 8 @ 10%	2.5	5	13
Phil"Hey, what happened..."	Group 2 @ FL	5	2.5	13
Phil"It had a skin."	Sub 8 @ 10%	2.5	5	13
Louise"Okay quiet down..."	Group 5 @ FL	5	2.5	14
Louise"All right, people."	Sub 8 @ 10%	2.5	5	15
Roman General" People of Rome..."	Sub 11 @ FL	5	2.5	15
Benny"I guess you're right."	Sub 8 @ 10%	2.5	5	15
Louise"Okay, the breakdown..."	Group 5 @ FL	5	2.5	15
Louise"...my assistant here."	Sub 8 @ 10%	2.5	5	16
Benny"Dear Mom..."	Ch.3,33 @ 40%; 43 @ 5%; 51 @ 65%	5	5	16
Benny"She's terrific..."	Ch.4,34 @ 40%; 44 @ 5%; 51 @ 65%	5	5	16
Phil"Oh Louise!"	Ch.3,33 @ 40%; 43 @ 5%; 51 @ 65%	5	2.5	18

Epic Prortion ght Cue Sheet

Benny"...Benny."	Sub 8 @ 10%	2.5	5	18
First Egyptian"More wine!"	Sub 11 @ FL	5	2.5	18
Egyptians"Plagues!"	Sub 8 @ 10%	2.5	5	19
Phil"Boy, do you look..."	Ch. 2,3,5,32,33,35 @ 40%; 42,43,45 @ 5%; 51 @ 65%	5	2.5	19
Benny"...falling on."	Sub 8 @ 10%	2.5	5	21
Stagehand 1"Set up for..."	Group 5 @ FL	5	5	21
Louise"And...Action."	Sub 11 @ FL	5	0	22
Louise"Cut!"	Group 5 @ FL	0	0	22
Louise"...Action!"	Sub 11 @ FL	0	0	22
Louise"Cut!"	Group 5 @ FL	0	0	23
Louise"And...Action."	Sub 11 @ FL	0	0	23
Louise"Cut!"	Group 5 @ FL	0	0	24
Shel blows ash	Sub 8 @ 10%	0	0	25
Louise"Hello?"	Ch.3,5,33,35,43,45 @ 20%	5	5	25
Dewitt"Over here."	Ch.1,31,41 @ 20%	5	5	25
Dewitt"Go!"	Ch.3,5,33,35,43,45 @ 20%	5	2.5	27
Phil"Action!"	Sub 8 @ 10%	2.5	5	27
Narrator"... where it left off."	Sub 11 @ FL	0	0	28
Phil"Cut!"	Group 5 @ FL	0	2.5	28
Louise"...real good."	Sub 8 @ 10%	2.5	5	31
Phil"Thank you."	Group 5 @ FL	5	2.5	31
Phil"It's all yours!"	Sub 8 @ 10%	2.5	5	32
Louise"Hey, you guys."	Ch.1-5,31-35 @ 40%; 41-45 @ 80%; 51,52 @ 60%	5	0	32
Shel"Kill the lights!"	Ch.1-5,31-35 @ 40%; 51,52 @ 60%	0	0	32
Mob"Surprise!"	Ch.1-5,31-35 @ 40%; 41-45 @ 80%; 51,52 @ 60%	0	2.5	32
Benny and Louise kiss	Sub 8 @ 10%	2.5	5	34
Louise>About last night..."	Ch.2-4 @ 15%; 12,13,15 @ 25%; 22,23,25 @ 25%; 32,33,35 @15%; 42,43,45 @ 5%	5	2.5	34
Benny"Yeah."	Sub 8 @ 10%	2.5	5	36
Phil"Now, before we begin..."	Group 5 @ FL	5	5	36
Phil"And...Action!"	Sub 11 @ FL	5	0	37
Phil"Cut!"	Group 5 @ FL	0	0	38
Queen"Spread out!"	Sub 8 @ 10%	5	5	41
Louise"You know..."	Group 5 @ FL	5	5	41
Narrator"And so it was done!"	Sub 8 @ 10%	5	5	45

Epic Prortion ght Cue Sheet

Curtain Call	Sub 11 @ FL	5	5
After curtain call	blackout	5	5

Costume Plot for Epic Proportions

Page Entrance #	Character	Costume	Actor	Page Exit #
5	Conspirator #1	Shabby toga	Jose C.	7
5	Conspirator #2	Shabby toga	Erik O.	7
5	Conspirator #3	Shabby toga	Olivia M.	7
6	Octavium	Purple toga	Bryan R.	7
6	Louise	Pants, a Shirt	Eleonor P.	7
7	Phil	1930's Farm clothes, hat like Grapes of Wrath	Ian L.	8
7	Benny	Shabby Roman toga	Gilbert M.	8
8	Jack	Dress Pants, Dress Shirt	Jose C.	9
9	Shel	Dress Pants, Dress Shirt	Erik O.	9
9	Benny	Egyptian Tunic, harness of rope	Gilbert M.	12
9	Phil	Egyptian Tunic, harness of rope	Ian L.	12
9	Slavemaster	Egyptian Tunic, headdress, whip	Bryan R.	12
12	Louise	Pants, Shirt	Eleonor P.	13
13	Benny	White Toga	Gilbert M.	
13	Phil	White Toga	Ian L.	
14	Louise	Pants, Shirt	Eleonor P.	
15	Roman General	Red Toga	Jose C.	15
15	Phil	Tunic	Ian L.	15

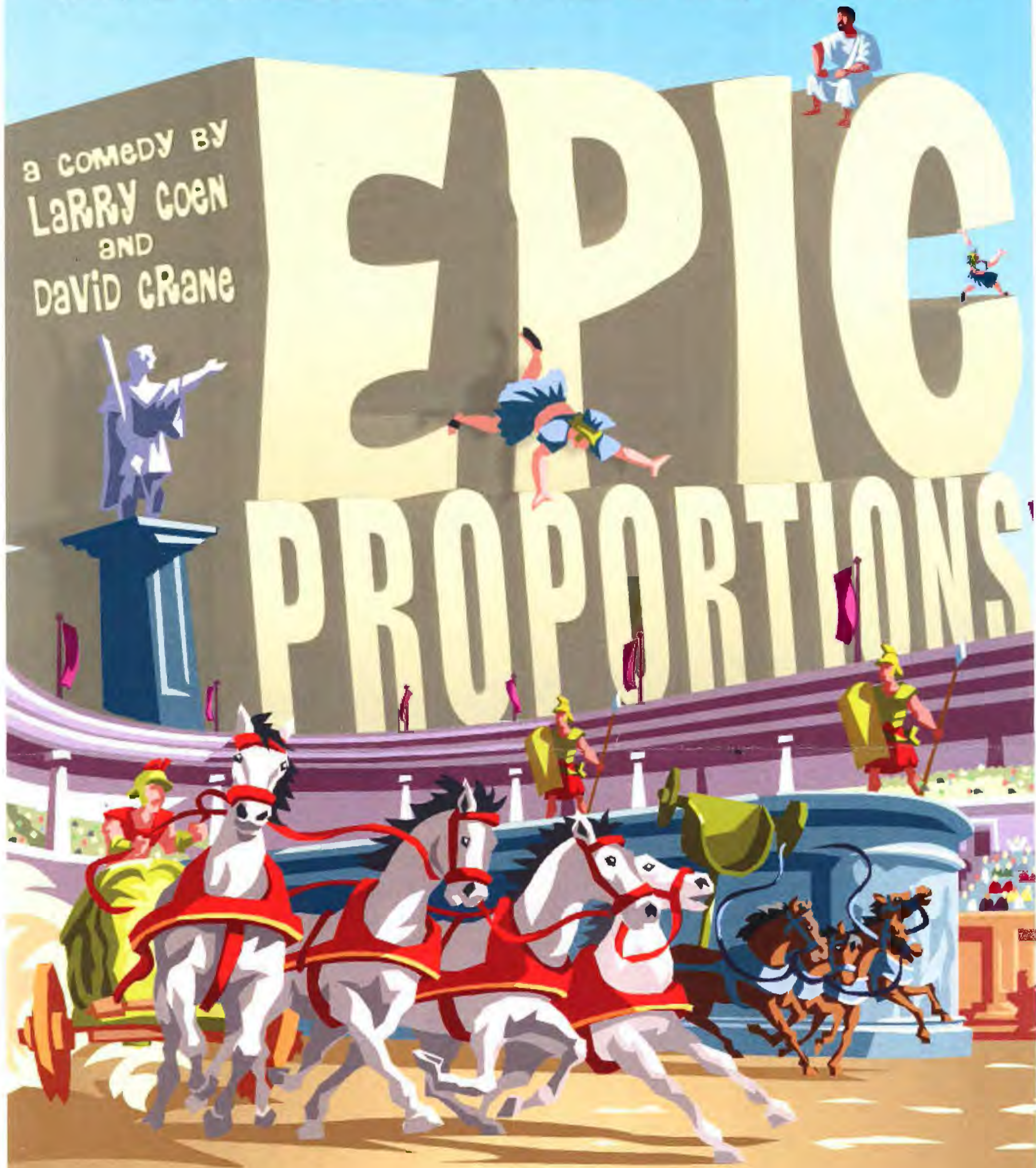
16	Phil	Roman Peasant	Ian L.	
18	Egyptian 1	Egyptian Tunics	Bryan R.	19
18	Egyptian 2	Egyptian Tunics	Erik O.	19
18	Egyptian 3	Egyptian Tunics	Jose C.	19
18	Dancing Girl	Belly-dancer Outfit	Olivia M.	19
19	Benny	Tunics	Gilbert M.	21
19	Phil	Tunics	Ian L.	21
21	Stagehand 1	Exit Omnious	Jose C.	
21	Stagehand 2	Exit omnious	Erik O.	
21	Stagehand 3	Exit omnious	Olivia M.	
21	Queen	Cleopatra Clothes	Paris N.	
21	Jack	Dress pants, Button down pants	Jose C.	
21	Louise	Same pants, different shirt	Eleonor P.	22
22	Guard 2	Tunics (helmet)	Jose C.	24
22	Attendant	Tunics (many tunics)	Bryan R.	25
24	The Executioner	Black hood, with cape, enormous axe	Ian L.	25
24	Shel	Ash and Soot (same)	Erik O.	25
25	Phil	Tunic	Ian L.	
25	Louise	Same	Eleonor P.	

25	Benny	Shirt, pants	Gilbert M.	
25	Dewitt	Silk robe, pajamas, house slippers	Justin T.	27
28	Louise	Egyptian Princess	Eleonor P.	31
28	Queen	Same	Paris N.	30
28	Benny	Tunic	Gilbert M.	28
28	Attendant	Tunic	Bryan R.	28
28	Extra	Black Cape		28
28	Phil	Director's Clothes	Ian L.	
29	Brady	1930s Clothes	Jose C.	30
29	Cochette	Audrey Hepburn wear	Olivia M.	
29	Costume Assistant	Dress pants, pink shirt	Bryan R.	
29	Shel	Same	Erik O.	
32	Louise	Dress, birthday hat	Eleonor P.	
32	Brady	Same	Jose C.	
32	Cochette	Same	Olivia M.	
32	Assistant	Same	Bryan R.	
32	Shel	Same	Erik O.rr	
32	Benny	Dress shirt	Gilbert M.	

Costume Check In/Out

Actor	Item	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday
Gilbert	White Toga w/ belt						
	Gray toga w/ belt						
	Purple cape						
	Black pants						
	Green shirt						
	Neckpiece						
Drake	Overalls						
	White shirt						
	White toga w/ belt						
	Tan toga w/ belt						
	Flower shirt						
	Pants						
	neckpiece						
Bryan	Blue toga w/ belt						
	Lt. green toga w/ belt						
	Cream toga w/ belt						
	Purple drape						
	Slacks						
	Purple shirt						
	Scarf						
	Black toga w/ belt neckpiece						
Erik	White toga w/ belt						
	Green toga w/ belt						
	Blue shirt						
	Light pants						
	Dirty blue shirt						
	Neck piece						
	Stagehand shirt						
Jose	White toga w/ belt						
	Red toga w/ belt						
	Black cape neckpiece						
	Black pants						
	Yellow shirt						
	Stagehand shirt						
Olivia	White toga						
	Stagehand shirt						
	Big skirt						
	Bra						
	Teal jacket						

DOBIE HS Theatre DEPARTMENT AND ThESPIAN TROUPE 1790 PRESENTS



DOBIE HIGH SCHOOL BLACK BOX THEATRE

APRIL 30, MAY 1, 3, & 4TH @ 7:00 PM

MAY 2ND @ 3:00 PM

TICKETS \$4 ADVANCE, \$5 AT THE DOOR

FOR RESERVATIONS CALL 713-740-0370 EXT.04173

For those new to the theatre experience, here are some reminders on how to behave in a small theatre as well as an auditorium.

- ❖ No audience member is allowed backstage. It is for the cast and crew only.
 - ❖ No Food or Drink in the audience.
- ❖ As the house lights dim, talking should stop.
- ❖ Please do not put your feet on the seat in front of you even if no one is sitting there, or rock back in your seat, or hang on the rails.
- ❖ Arms, legs, and personal items should be kept out of the aisle during the show.
 - ❖ It is against the law, harmful to the actors, and disruptive to the rest of the audience to take pictures or videotape during the show.
- ❖ It is extremely disruptive to leave during the show. If you decide to leave, you will not be able to return to your seat until intermission or until after the show is over.
 - ❖ If you wish to give cast members flowers, it is customary to wait until after the show and then you can meet with the actor in the hall.

Upcoming Events:

May 6 – Officer Leadership Mtg, @ 2:45 p.m.
May 12 – New Officer Election Day @ 2:45 p.m.
May 14 – Production Class Auditions
May 28 – Banquet/Thespian Inductions @ 6:00

E p I c Proportions



April 30th, May 1st, May 3rd, May 4th @ 7:00 p.m.
May 2nd @ 3:00 p.m.
Black Box Theater

Cast

Conspirator #1, Jack, Roman General, Egyptian #3,
Guard #2, Brady, Gladiator #1.....Jose Cantu

Conspirator #2, Shel, Extra #2, Egyptian #2,
Guard #1, Executioner, Gladiator #3.....Erik Olmos

Conspirator #3, Extra #3, Egyptian Dancing Girl,
CochetteOlivia Maslonka

Octavium, Slavemaster, Extra #1, Egyptian #1, Queen's
Attendant, Gladiator #2.....Bryan Rodriguez

Louise Goldman..... Eleonor Poka

Benny Bennet..... Gilbert Martinez*

Phil Bennet..... Drake Williams*

The Queen.....Paris Nichols

D. W. DeWitt.....Justin Thomas*

Narrated by Craig Mertens

YOUR AD HERE!

To have your ad in the program
for the 2010-2011 season call:

713.740.0370 ext. 04173

Production Staff

Director	David F. Crutcher, Jr.
Technical Director	Aimee Small
Stage Manager	Laura Gutierrez
Asst. Stage Manager	Brittney Staude*
Light Designer/Board Operator	Samantha Castillo*
Sound Designer/Board Operator	Kirsten Marshall*
Props Manager	Katie Posey*
Costume/Hair/Makeup	Chelsea Graham
	Elisa Gomez
Publicity Manager	Chris Nickelson*

2009-2010 Officer Board

President	Rebecca Reyes*
Vice President	Gilbert Martinez*
Secretary	Theresa Greene*
Business Manager	Chris Nickelson*
Publicity Manager	Samantha Castillo*
Historian	Kirsten Marshall*
Points Manager	Katie Posey*

Special Thanks To:

Rick Burford, Jane Dimico, Verna Anderson, Craig Mertens,
Michael Smith, Christina Barrigan, and George Bella, III

This show serves as the director's thesis project. Upon completion of a successful oral defense of this production and coursework, Mr. Crutcher will be awarded a Master of Arts in Theatre Production from Central Washington University in Ellensburg, Washington.

*Denotes members of the International Thespian Society



















Epic Proportions.

memorex

DVD+R