1991

Non-traditional casting in deaf-related theatre

Elisa L. Buckley
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Buckley, Elisa L., M.A.

San Jose State University, 1991

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NON-TRADITIONAL CASTING
IN DEAF-RELATED THEATRE

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the Department of Theatre Arts
San Jose State University

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

by
Elisa L. Buckley
December, 1991

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ABSTRACT

NON-TRADITIONAL CASTING IN DEAF-RELATED THEATRE

by Elisa L. Buckley

This thesis provides a theoretical analysis of non-traditional casting as it applies to deaf-related theater. The analysis begins by presenting the environmental and social context for the ensuing discussion. The terms "traditional casting," "non-traditional casting," "hearing theatre," and "deaf theatre" are defined. Causes and categories of deafness, recent technological developments, and the methods the deaf use to communicate are described and examined as they apply to deaf-related theatre. Five field studies are analyzed using the criteria of casting, blocking, lighting and costuming, interpreting, communications, audience response, and budgeting. The analysis focuses on the practical effects and consequences of non-traditional casting as it applies to producing deaf-related theatre. The analysis concludes with a summary of the main points and recommendations based on the research.

c 1991

Elisa L. Buckley

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CHAPTER 1

The Deaf in Society

Thesis Statement

This study examines the definition of non-traditional casting as it applies to the casting of deaf actors. The research is restricted in scope to field studies of five American productions featuring one or more deaf actors. The study reveals how casting deaf actors deepens the reader's understanding of non-traditional casting and performance.

The topic of non-traditional casting in deaf performance is worth studying because the topic is current, controversial, and unique. This research endeavors to analyze the concepts and definitions associated with deaf-related theatre and describe their application in the real world.

Organization of Thesis

The following is the thesis outline. Chapter 1 introduces the deaf in society, beginning with the ancient Greeks, and ending with legislation in the 20th century. Chapter 2 defines terms relevant to the study, such as "traditional casting," "non-traditional casting," "deaf theatre," "theatre about the deaf," and "integrated and hearing theatre," so that the reader has a common basis for the discussion. Chapter 3 examines causes and categories of

deafness, how the deaf communicate, and the relevance to non-traditional casting. Production factors introduced in Chapter 4 include casting, blocking, lighting and costuming, interpreters, communications, audience response and budgeting. Synopses of the five field study scripts are presented in Chapter 5. The field studies are then analyzed, using the casting determinants, non-traditional casting guidelines, and production factors. Finally, the results of the analysis are presented in Chapter 6.

Synopsis of Chapter 1

The analysis begins by presenting a brief overview of deafness and society; how deafened individuals have been perceived in the past from the Middle Ages to recent times; and the effects of recent legislation. This section culminates with a discussion of the current status of the deaf in American society. The discussion then presents a series of snapshots of how deafened individuals have been involved in the arts in America. The recitation begins with film and the early theatre, and focuses on the role of the deaf in modern American theatre.

The Deaf and Society: A Context for the Study

To understand the role of the deaf in theatre today, it is necessary to first understand the role of the deaf

in modern American society. This role has been defined by many forces, including culture, technology, and medicine. Of these forces, the most important is the culture in which the deaf find themselves. Culture, however, does not exist preternaturally. It is the result of evolution and the pressures of history. Therefore, the analysis begins by presenting a brief historical overview of the deaf and Western Society, which provides a context for the material that follows.

Prior to the Middle Ages, society rejected people with handicaps. The ancient Greeks posited deaf individuals as social outcasts ("Deafness" 8: 558). Many were "evicted from their families, often at birth, to die of starvation, exposure, or attack by wild animals" (9: 693). In the Middle Ages, many deaf persons found their way into "royal courts as jesters or personal servants" (9: 693). Toward the end of the Middle Ages, some were placed in "asylums and received minimal care" (9: 693). These past methods of treating individuals with handicaps did not recognize their individual potential and educability. Society viewed these individuals as "subhuman, devoid of feelings, with little or no potential for either their own or the common welfare" (9: 693). It is reasonable to expect, because of the exclusion of deaf individuals from mainstream society prior to modern times, that there were no dramatic roles

for the deaf.

The philosophy of the equality of all men, and its concomitant theory of worth, first appeared during the Middle Ages (9: 693). In the 16th century, Italian physician Geronimo Cardano of Padua "asserted that a deaf person could be taught with writing or with pictures. Cardano appears to have been the first person to promulgate the idea that it was possible to educate a deaf person" (8: 558). With the advent of education, deaf individuals had the opportunity to become contributing members of society. In Spain, Pedro Ponce de Leon (1520?-84) was the first person to educate deaf students, teaching them to read, write, and speak. His methods were followed by Juan Pablo Bonet, who wrote a book on the subject in 1620, which influenced the development of educational programs for the deaf in Europe ("Deaf Education" 18: 112). In France, Charles-Michel, abbe de l'Epee (1712-89) developed the first sign language of the deaf (18: 112). "His work was developed by the Abbe Sicard (1742-1822) and gave rise to the manual or silent method of teaching the deaf" (18: 112). In Germany, Samuel Heinicke (1727-90), and Friedrich Moritz Hill (1805-74) developed the oral method of deaf instruction (18: 112).

In America, during the 19th century, state and federal departments of education provided funding for public

schools, special handicapped programs, and bureaus for handicapped children ("Deafness" 9: 393). After studying at the Paris School for the Deaf in 1817, Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet founded the first private school for the deaf in Hartford, Connecticut (8: 559). In 1864, the school became "the first free public school for the deaf in the United States" (12: 247) when President Lincoln signed the charter for the National Deaf-Mute College in Washington D.C. Later, the college changed its name to Gallaudet, named after its first president (Miles 5). "In 1986, Gallaudet College was awarded university status by the U.S. Congress" ("Deafness" 12: 247).

In 1891, Gallaudet College established the first teacher training program for deaf educators ("Deafness" 8: 559). During the early 1900s, additional teacher training programs were established at Clarke School for the Deaf (Northampton), the University of Milwaukee, St. Mary's School for the Deaf (Buffalo), Central Institute for the Deaf (St. Louis), and Lexington School for the Deaf (8: 559). Hearing persons interested in teaching the deaf received stipends and scholarships from the federal government. "Over 38,000 deaf students were enrolled in schools for the deaf by the late 1960s. It is estimated that over 5,000 of these students were under the age of five and 19,000 were enrolled in public residential

schools" (8: 559). It was only after public funding became available through legislation, that a large proportion of the deaf population received education. Employment opportunities for the deaf occurred in conjunction with opportunities in education. "By 1958, there were 56 teacher training programs operating" (8: 559).

Deafened individuals were referred to in the past as deaf-mutes or "deaf and dumb," meaning "deaf and doesn't speak." Deaf-mutism is "the absence of oral language development as a direct result of deafness" (Deaf Education 28:104). According to Hyung Shik Lee, in her dissertation Broadway Goes to Hollywood: A Semiotic Study of Four Contemporary American Plays and Their Film Adaptations, "...the word 'dumb' signifies both 'speech impaired' and 'unintelligent,' the expression of 'deaf and dumb' serves to connect the image of deaf people with stupidity" (qtd. in Lee 212). In a recent article, "The Disabled Are Giving Up Euphemisms," Shapiro explains,

The importance of misused language is that it builds social stereotypes and contributes to the discrimination and minority status experienced by many disabled Americans. (7B)

The stereotype of deaf individuals as unintelligent persists in the 1990s. Shapiro confronts "the power of negative language" by advocating the use of the term "people with differing abilities" over "disabled" (7B).

Legislation Empowering the Handicapped

According to hearing-impaired Dorothy S. Miles, in her thesis A History of Theatre Activities in the Deaf Community of the United States, the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s "stressed the need for minority members to be involved in matters affecting themselves" (53). Samuel Zachary concurs with this in his dissertation, An Analysis of Deaf Issues and Their Social Setting as Dramatized by Representative Playscripts, stating "the change in attitude can be attributed to rapid organizational, linguistic, educational, legislative, and artistic advances made by hearing impaired people over the past 20 years" from 1964-84 (11-17).

According to Zachary, legislation implemented during the 1960s strongly influenced the current status of the deaf in American society. This legislation is summarized as follows:

Public Law 87-276(1961): Teachers of the Deaf, Training Act--Support to higher institutions of education for programs of preparing teachers of the deaf--enhancement of professional stature through involvement in peer review.

Public Law 89-10(1966): Handicapped Child Benefit and Education Act--Provided grants to the states for education of children in elementary and secondary schools, grants for the purchase of instructional materials, support of innovative programs, and policies to strengthen department in the special education area...There was also a statutory National Advisory Committee on Education of the Deaf established to advise on national policy specifically dealing with educa-

tion for the deaf.

Public Law 89-694(1966): Model Secondary School for the Deaf Act--Provided for the establishment of a Model Secondary School for the Deaf on the campus of Gallaudet College to serve students from the District of Columbia and nearby regions and to provide "models" for improving secondary education for the deaf, and also 91-587(1969) for the establishment of a model elementary school for the deaf (Kendall School) at Gallaudet College.

Public Law 90-538(1969): Handicapped Children's Early Education Assistance Act--Provided project grant funds for experimental preschool and early education programs for handicapped children.

Public Law 94-142(1975): Education for All Handicapped Children Act--Often associated with "mainstreaming," required education of all handicapped children in a "least restricted environment," and "individualized educational program" (IEP) determined by school people and parents, "due process" in case of difference of opinion, and auxiliary supportive help where needed. (qtd. in Zachary 16-17)

Perhaps the most important legislation for hearing-impaired individuals was Title V of the Rehabilitation Act, passed in 1973. Various sections ensure against discrimination, requiring equal opportunities in employment, education, health, welfare, and social services (17).

This legislation in turn paved the slow and arduous path leading to the recent passage of the American with Disabilities Act of 1989 (ADA). This bill requires that retail businesses and other private industries (that serve the public) provide access for disabled employees and patrons unless doing so would constitute an undue burden

or would not be readily achievable (Kennedy 294). Chairman Malcom C. Green of The National Association of Theatre Owners (NATO) opposed this bill, touting it as expensive, creating safety hazards, and restricting the smooth flow of business operating procedures (Kennedy 309-313).

Passage of these legislative acts increased educational opportunities and moved to prevent discrimination against the deaf. This in turn led to increased employment and vocational opportunities and improved status. Many schools for the deaf provide on-the-job training, such as the Rochester Technical Institute and the Rochester National Technical Institute, founded by the U.S. government in 1967 ("Deafness" 8: 560). There is little unemployment for deaf workers, although their salary range is lower than the national average (8: 560).

The increased status among deaf professionals and their struggle to obtain positions have been eagerly covered by the media. Examples include the recent appointments of deaf individuals into leadership positions such as deaf president I. King Jordan of Gallaudet University (Bragg 113) and deaf actress Julianna Fjeld to the post of associate artistic director at the National Theater of the Deaf (NTD). These employment opportunities can be seen to correlate with a gradual strengthening of the status of deaf within mainstream culture (Zachary 17, 22).

Society has changed. No longer are the deaf outcasts, but working, contributing members. Today deaf individuals can vote, drive, own property, work, and perform in the arts. Given the enculturation of the deaf into mainstream culture, the deaf also demonstrated their contribution to the arts, more specifically in film and theatre. This will be addressed in the following section.

Deaf in the Arts

According to the Gallaudet Encyclopedia, deaf artists have been making valuable contributions throughout history. John Brewster Jr. (1766-1854), a deaf traveling artist, painted portraits in the early nineteenth century and later became an educator (1817) at the Connecticut Asylum for Education and Instruction of Deaf and Dumb Persons (Van Cleve 1: 156). Gustinus Ambrosi (1893-1975) created sculptures in the classical tradition (1: 14), and was most famous as a master of the portrait bust. Morris Broderson (1928-) is a noted figure painter. Broderson's work can be seen in numerous public collections, including the Stanford University Museum of Art, and the Yale University Museum (1: 159).

Deaf in Film

Deaf actors emerged during the silent film era. "To many, this era represented a benchmark in the cultural history of the American deaf community. Even though the substance of the movies themselves often reflected insensitivity to both deafness and deaf people...Silent films through their technological limitation permitted the hearing and deaf audience to become one" (3: 275). Deaf actors did not have to speak, but were able to rely on facial expression and physical action to convey their message (3: 275).

During 1921-30, the American Film Institute (AFI) recorded as many as 12 films that included roles for deaf characters. Of these, five of the scripts included characters who feigned deafness or deaf people who were cured, usually by a blow to the head (3: 276). One deaf film actor, Emerson Romero, had his career cut short when Hollywood switched to talkies (3: 278). A multi-talented individual, he established the New York Theatre Guild of the Deaf and wrote, directed, and acted in playlets and skits with a minimum of dialogue and a maximum of acting and pantomime. Later, in the 1960s, Romero pioneered work that led to the federally funded captioned films for the deaf (Miles 22).

Granville Redmond, a deaf film actor, actually played

the role of a deaf-mute in the 1926 film You'd be Surprised (Van Cleve 3: 277). The film also portrayed some of the deaf stereotypes common to the times. For example, in the film, comedy star Raymond Griffith (hearing) shoots off a gun behind Redmond's head as a test of deafness. Even though a deaf person would have felt the shot (and reacted appropriately), Redmond made no response, convincing everyone of his deafness (3: 278).

Other deaf film actors of the period include Louis Weinberg, Carmen de Arcos, and Albert Ballin (3: 278). Weinberg became known as the Russian toe dancer. He portrayed an Indian prince in The Woman God Forgot (1917) with operatic star Geraldine Farrar (3: 278). Carmen de Arcos worked with Romero in a film called La Chica y El Gato (3: 278). Interestingly, Ballin "made a specialty of performing with hearing persons, who recited while he signed" (Miles 75). His contacts included famous movie stars of the era such as Neil Hamilton, Violet La Plante, and Victor Terry (75).

Silent films also allowed both deaf and hearing audience members to enjoy the same entertainment. Dorothy Miles comments that silent films were accessible, less expensive,

and more frequently renewed than any entertainment they (the deaf) had known...It was both an astonishing novelty and an educational experience --combining the wonder of motion itself with the

wonder of places, events and people captured in living picture and brought within the viewer's world. Or rather, expanding the viewer's world.
(13)

Miles believes that deaf and hearing audience members were drawn closer to each other, that they were able to "share...in a public response to an artistic experience--the closest many of them would ever come to the oneness a theatre audience feels at a live performance" (14). Not only did deaf and hearing audience members share the same theatre, but deaf and hearing actors performed together on screen. Silent film offered a brief window of opportunity for deaf actors.

When movies with sound emerged, these opportunities subsided. The advent of sound unintentionally excluded deaf audience members, unable to follow the story line due to the absence of dialogue. As a result, "Sound films shut deaf people off from the sense of full participation that silent films had brought" (Miles 21). Some deaf organizations "obtained their own projectors and continued to show silent films...for many years" (21). While the advent of sound excluded the deaf community, "the main effect...seems to have been to encourage more theatrical activity" (22). New theatre groups emerged to entertain deaf audiences, such as The New York Theatre Guild of the Deaf, New York's Union League Club of the Deaf, New York Hebrew Association of the Deaf, and the Chicago Silent Dramatic

Club (22-25).

According to Miles, with the advent of sound, "hearing actors played all small and large roles in film, regardless of the characters' nationalities or handicaps" (45). Deaf Life magazine comments that handicapped minorities were often stereotyped into submissive or subservient roles ("Deaf Culture" 24).

Even though many movies about deaf individuals emerged on screen, such as Johnny Belinda (1948, directed by Jean Negulesco), deaf actors rarely played a role. In this 1940s movie, Jane Wyman (hearing) portrayed deaf Belinda.

With the advent of William Gibson's The Miracle Worker (1956), the story of deaf and blind Helen Keller, millions met a mind behind the handicap. Helen Keller was played by hearing actress Patty Duke, who won an Academy Award for her performance. The Miracle Worker is significant because it was the most popular film to date about a handicapped individual. In the film, human potential is developed as Helen progresses from an uncivilized creature to an eager student. Teacher Annie Sullivan, played by Anne Bancroft, discovers and unlocks Helen's mind, showing viewers around the world Helen's wit, her willingness to learn, and her courage to become a valuable member of society. The film showed the needs of handicapped individuals and challenged misconceptions about their educability. The theme of the

film is also significant in its advancement of handicapped issues.

Perhaps the most influential film to date concerning the deaf occurred in 1980, with Mark Medoff's Children of a Lesser God. This film starred hearing actor William Hurt and deaf actress Marlee Matlin, who won an Academy Award for her performance. Matlin introduced millions to deafness and raised public awareness on the issues surrounding deaf communications.

Medoff's original script, as adapted for the Hollywood screenplay, ignored many of the themes of his Broadway play. The themes of the play dealt forcefully with the "deaf as a minority group, which is deprived of their rights as human beings" (Lee 208).

Children of a Lesser God conveys a different message from that of the play. While the play appeals directly to the audience with a message concerning the difficulties of the deaf, the film reduces the issue of deafness to one obstacle which prevents the couple's successful marriage. (282)

The Development of Deaf Enculturation

Into Theatre Arts

According to hearing-impaired Dorothy S. Miles, literary societies were established during the mid-1800s that catered to the deaf. The original purpose of these societies was the preservation of sign language, by pro-

viding a social environment for active communication (Miles 5-6). During this time, several literary clubs were established, beginning with the Clerc Literary Association of Philadelphia (1865); The Literary Society of Gallaudet College (1874); and the O.W.L.S. (1892), a women's literary club which later became the sorority Phi Kappa Zeta (6). The program content is described by Miles as similar to those offered in the hearing world, "except for the use of voice and music. There were poetry recitals, songs (rendered in sign), monologues, readings, story-tellings, skits, charades, and pantomimes" (6).

Deaf performances for deaf audiences are recorded in clubs such as the Xavier Deaf Mute Union (1892) and the Protean Society (1892) in New York, The All Souls Working Club (1894) of Philadelphia, and Pas-a-Pas Club in Chicago (7-8). In 1891, an all-male Gallaudet literary society named the Saturday Night Club presented Pygmalion and Galatea and The Bells (7). The women at Gallaudet formed their own dramatic club in 1895, naming it the Jollity Club (7). They attempted "classical tragedy, costume drama, sentimental melodrama, comedy, farce and vaudeville, all of which reflected forms of entertainment on the public stage. It is evident that deaf individuals were familiar with popular theatre, perhaps more so than they are today" (9). These performances were recorded in two

major newspapers for the deaf, The Silent Worker and The Deaf Mutes' Journal.

According to Miles, full-length deaf productions began at Gallaudet during the early 1900s with Little Miss Nobody (1900), "The Taming of the Shrew (1903); By Force Of Impulse (1905), She Stoops to Conquer (1906), The Rose of Eden, The Hessian, and Don Cesar de Bazan (1911-13)" (16). Miles points out there were no plays written or performed about the issue of deafness during this time (1900-1920), even though deaf authors such as Howard L. Terry, Albert Ballin, and Guie Leo Degligio were published (17). Miles goes on to say that

If deaf artists did not find deafness a suitable dramatic theme, it was perhaps a reflection of the standards and values of the time, encouraged by certain trends in education to think of deafness as a handicap to be overcome, rather than lived with. (18)

More recently, upon reviewing Gallaudet University performances from 1958-74, it is interesting to note that out of 30 productions, fewer than 4 percent dealt with the issue of deafness.

Deaf Life magazine asks the question, "Where were the talented actors during that time (1940s)? If they were given a place on stage at all, they were most likely performing at Gallaudet or in tiny deaf clubs--away from mainstream audiences" ("Deaf Culture" 24).

The Deaf in Modern Theatre

One of the most influential events for deaf theatre occurred in 1967, with the establishment of the National Theatre of the Deaf (NTD). Founder David Hays received a grant from the federal government. Working with Gallaudet University drama program member George Detmold (hearing) and George C. White (hearing), they created a professional theatre of the deaf as part of the Eugene O'Neill Memorial Theatre Foundation (Zachary 18).

Hays outlined his goals for the NTD to include:

- 1) Bringing better theatre to the deaf community;
- 2) Showing skillful, bright, and handsome deaf people;
- 3) Breaking ground vocationally for deaf artists by offering training and employment;
- 4) Exhibiting the beauty and expressiveness of sign language in order to encourage its acceptance by a hearing majority; and
- 5) Ultimately encouraging "Deaf Pride" in participants as well as in audience members.
(qtd. in Andrews 38)

During the past 25 years NTD has performed in all 50 states, touring abroad over 26 times to 30 countries, for 6,000 performances (NTD Brochure 1). According to Hays, the original goal of the NTD was and is artistic excellence,

The company has been ambitious--presenting a striking range of ideas and ideologies...And, while we did our work, this theatre and members of the company have become a leading social force --an integral part of the vast changes in opportunity and quality of life for deaf people throughout the world: we have introduced the lan-

guage, skills, and artistry of the Deaf to the hearing world; we have provided role models for deaf children throughout the world; we have been the inspiration, and, often, the impetus for other theatres of deaf artists in this country and abroad--. (32)

The NTD has not only inspired deaf artists, but hearing artists as well. One of the most commercially successful productions about deafness, Children of a Lesser God, was inspired by an NTD couple, deaf actress Phyllis Frelich and hearing designer Bob Steinberg. After meeting Frelich, Medoff produced the play in a workshop at New Mexico University in 1979. The play went to Broadway, where Frelich became the first deaf actress to win the Tony Award for Best Actress.

Non-Traditional Casting Project

In 1986, the Non-traditional Casting Project (NTCP) was born. Their stated purpose as a not-for-profit organization is to eliminate discrimination in theatre, film, and television (NTCP Brochure 1). According to NTCP, there are 61 deaf and hearing-impaired actors and 4 directors in their Artist Files (Reiff 1). In 1991, deaf actors make up less than 2 percent of the total artists on file. According to correspondence with Beth Reiff, "We accept both union and non-union actors year round" (1). The artist files are updated periodically through contact with tri-union performers with disabilities committees in New

York, Los Angeles and Florida (1). These files are

the most extensive resource of their kind in the country, [they] contain the pictures and resumes of 3,700 ethnic, female and disabled actors... There is no charge to be included in the files or use them. They are available to the profession Monday through Friday by appointment. (NTCP Brochure 2)

Few Playscripts with Deaf Roles

Despite these recent accomplishments in deaf-related theatre, only a handful of modern American plays deal with deaf issues or contain deaf characters in leading roles. Presented below is a listing of such plays, based upon exhaustive research of the literature.

1. Johnny Belinda (1940) by Elmer Harris.
2. The Miracle Worker (1956) by William Gibson.
3. The Sound of Silence (1962) by Eric Malzkuh. The author was not able to obtain backing, so this play is not published by the Dramatist Guild (Miles 68; Van Cleve 3: 290-291).
4. My Third Eye (1971) by NTD (Van Cleve 3: 289).
5. Sign Me Alice: A Play in Sign Language (1973) by Gilbert Eastman. Written specifically for deaf theatre, based on George Bernard Shaw's Pygmalion (Van Cleve 3: 289).
6. A Play of Our Own (1973) unpublished play by Dorothy Miles. Originally performed by a Connecticut community group, the Hartford Thespians (Miles 69; Van Cleve 3: 289).
7. Parade (1975) by the NTD (NTD Brochure 3).
8. The Touch (1977), an adaptation of Butterflies are Free (1969) by Leonard Gershe (Andrews 245).

9. A Play of Our Own, Part II (1978) by Rico Peterson (Van Cleve 3: 291).
10. A Play of Our Own, Part III (1979) by Steve Baldwin (3: 291).
11. A Play of 1,000 Words, Deaf Pa What?, The Traveling Road Show, and ASL Festival presented by the New York Deaf Theatre (1979), and "written and directed by Mary Beth Miller" (3: 290).
12. Children of a Lesser God (1980) by Mark Medoff.
13. Runaways (1980) Off-Broadway Musical (Van Cleve 3: 290).
14. Tales From a Clubroom (1981) by Bernard Bragg and Eugene Bergman (3: 289).
15. Circus of Sign (1982) by Adrian Blue, Fairmont Theatre of the Deaf (3: 290).
16. The Kid (1983) an original play by William Moses, American College Theatre Festival V (3: 285).
17. The Hands of Its Enemy (1984) by Mark Medoff (3: 290).
18. The Signal Season of Dummy Hoy (1986) by Allen Meyer and Michael Nowak.

The NTD Brochure lists 43 productions during 1967-91, averaging close to 2 plays per year. Thirteen of the plays can be obtained through Dramatist Play Service, Inc. or Samuel French, Inc. Only 2 of the plays performed include deafness as a theme: My Third Eye and Parade. The 28 remaining plays appear to be original works or adaptations, since they are not listed in either play catalogue. One example of an adaptation is One More Spring written by Robert Nathan, and adapted for the stage by NTD director J Ranelli. Since NTD's adaptations and original works are

not listed in the play service catalogues, it is reasonable to conclude that these works are not available to the general deaf and hearing public.

A minute fraction of the plays published over the past 30 years include deaf themes and/or deaf roles. While the deaf community urges the casting of deaf actors, the situation remains problematic since the applicable scripts are limited to those mentioned.

Supporting Methodology

In order to examine the topic of non-traditional casting as it applies to deaf-related theatre, the following methodology is used:

1. To provide the reader with background information about deafness and how the deaf communicate.
2. To describe and summarize five field study stories. Synopses of 1) One More Spring 2) Children of a Lesser God 3) The Signal Season of Dummy Hoy 4) The Good Person of Szechuan* and 5) Quilters.
3. To identify and describe seven production factors that are affected by non-traditional casting. 1) Casting 2) Blocking 3) Lighting and Costumes 4) Interpreters 5) Communications 6) Audience Response 7) Budget

* The original title of Bertolt Brecht's play is The Good Woman of Setzuan. Berkeley Repertory Company produced the play in 1987, calling it The Good Person of Szechuan. For the purpose of consistency the play will be titled The Good Person of Szechuan for the remainder of this paper.

4. To analyze production factors within five field studies listed above.
5. To document discoveries.
6. To determine conclusions resulting from such an analysis.

This thesis examines the definition of non-traditional casting as it applies to the casting of deaf actors. It begins by defining three categories of deaf-related theatre: deaf theatre, theatre about the deaf, and integrated theatre.

Primary sources of support for the points made in this discussion include semiprofessional theatrical performances, written responses to questionnaires, personal and telephone interviews with deaf actors such as Bernard Bragg, deaf community members, artistic directors, interpreters, producers, hearing actors, audience members, and production staff members.

Secondary sources include dissertations, newspaper articles, theatre reviews of deaf and hearing performances, recent legislation, and studies concerning deaf issues.

CHAPTER 2

Concepts in Casting and Deaf-Related Theatre

Introduction

The following section presents a theoretical framework as a basis of discussion for the topic of traditional casting. It examines the different aspects of casting in detail, and presents the viewpoints of established professionals who have analyzed and published their findings on the topic. The following terms are defined: traditional casting, non-traditional casting, deaf and hearing theatre, theatre about the deaf, and integrated theatre. These definitions are necessary to establish the parameters for the subsequent discussion.

The Definition of Casting

Directors agree that casting is probably the most difficult and complex responsibility assigned to them. More importantly, directors view good casting as critical for a successful production. In his book, Play Direction: A Practical Viewpoint, John Counsell states, "It is not too much to say that the secret of any successful production depends first and foremost upon its casting" (67). Viola Spolin, in her book Theatre Games for the Classroom; A Teacher's Handbook, defines casting at its most basic

level as "selecting which actors will play which roles" (230). Professor John Dietrich defines casting in his book Play Direction as "fitting the actor to the role. A perfect match between the requirements of the role and the capabilities of the actor is ideal casting" (227). In The Director's Handbook, Frank McMullan of Yale University's School of Drama focuses on casting determinants. These determinants categorize and define various aspects of casting vis-a-vis the theme of the play, its characterizations, and the actors themselves. The analysis presented in this paper is in accordance with McMullan's presentation of these determinants.

There are many production factors that determine whether or not a show succeeds. Of these, casting is an essential element. Robert L. Benedetti, of the California Institute of the Arts, believes that a successful show is dependant upon good casting (87). However, there are many aspects to casting a show, and each director selects his approach according to the criteria he feels is most important. Despite the variety of approaches, casting determinants (components) fall into two generic categories. These two categories that are germane to the problem of casting are the type and style of the play, and the actor. The actor category is further divided into the following: physical type versus acting ability; vocal quality, dic-

tion and vocal flexibility; physical contrast and unity; vocal contrast; movement and timing; and cooperation and malleability (McMullan 9-10).

Traditional Casting Determinants

The Style and Type of Play

The type and style of the play refers to theatre genres, such as Shakespearean drama, Greek tragedy, comedy of manners, melodrama, expressionism, naturalism, romanticism, and realism (Glenn 182; Robert Cohen 232-234).

Which genre a director selects for his production will greatly influence casting. Harold Clurman, founder of the Group Theatre (1931-1941), states that, "any choice in casting becomes pointless unless one has determined how each of the characters is connected with the play's spine and style" (73). McMullan gives the task of selecting style and type of the play priority over the casting of actors (9). UC Professor Stanley Glenn provides an example of casting pitfalls associated with genres, stating that, "...excellent actors cannot successfully perform in certain styles, and their presence in a cast whose members are stylistically proficient may prove embarrassing and distracting" (182).

The Actor

Physical Type Versus Acting Ability.

Directors agree that an actor must look the part of the character he will portray. At the same time, directors avidly support choosing a "talented" actor, who also looks the part. An actor who does not look the part, but has acting ability, will be chosen over the auditioner who is unable to act (Counsell 63).

Casting an actor who looks the part may work for the first few minutes of a production, but certainly not the entire performance. Directors suggest casting actors who look the part, but at the same time warn that this will not always work. Clurman remarks, "An actor's looks will impress an audience initially, but after his first 5 minutes on stage it becomes aware of what (the actor) communicates or fails to communicate through acting" (69). Clurman observed that "there are beautiful women without sex appeal and plain ones aglow with it" (70).

According to UC Irvine Professor Cohen and UC Santa Barbara Professor Harrop, "when in doubt take a risk; go for the actor, not the type" (228).

Physical suitability must be a part of casting. It is usually safer, of course, to cast by type, as long as the director is sure of a minimal level of talent. Stanley Kowalski, for example, demands an actor with a strong physique and an obvious sexual magnetism, a donnish, puny Stanley would be laughable. (225)

According to Loyola University Professor R.H. O'Neill, "The strongest talent needs to be cast in the strongest roles" (256). Many directors agree on this point, to "cast the greatest skill in the most difficult parts" (Gallaway 242). "Often there is a choice between a candidate who is close to the required physical type and another who is less like the type but a better all around actor. On the average, I think it is better to choose the better actor..." (Canfield 261). Benedetti posits, "Always cast the best available actor, whether 'right' for the part or not. A good actor can make it right" (93).

Vocal Quality, Diction, and Vocal Flexibility.

McMullan notes the importance of vocal quality, diction, and vocal flexibility (9). Vocal flexibility avoids a "tendency toward vocal patterns...(such) repetition of the pattern could become monotonous and distracting to the audience" (Dietrich 234). According to Glenn, the director should know which of the characters requires extreme power, broad pitch range, and special qualities of voice and speech (179). Glenn goes on to write that

Certain characters require a predominant pitch...Othello may have to possess a low, deep, sonorous voice and Viola or Rosalind, voices in a relatively low register for women so that their male disguises do not excessively strain credibility...Nearly all major roles require [vocal] variety, but some run the gamut more than others. Cleopatra's infinite variety must be vocally expressed as she alternates between tenderness and rage, commanding and cajoling,

ecstasy and despair. (179-180)

Physical Contrast and Unity.

The third important factor when casting is physical contrast and unity (McMullan 9). Glenn suggests, "The director must consider the collective appearance...of his cast to achieve variety and unity as well as meaning in the ensemble" (Glenn 181). Clurman concurs, "A prime focus in casting...is that the process should not concentrate solely on individual parts but on the nature of the company as a whole. One might cast a play with actors, each one individually 'right,' yet not acceptable in conjunction with the others" (72). The traditional norm of good casting avoids this error, selecting actors that complement each other in terms of body size and vocal range.

It is extremely important to see that the company is well balanced. The actors must be credible together, they must reinforce each other to create the necessary unity of expression... size takes attention. A very large actor is hard to cast except in character roles. A big voice also commands attention and must be used where it will be helpful, not distracting. (Gallaway 242)

Dietrich asserts that "A tall leading woman playing opposite a short leading man would appear ridiculous, despite the fact most actors may play their roles capably" (237). In Play Direction, Professor John Dietrich comments that even if an individual actor is suitable for a role, "[the actor] cannot be cast because he is out of key with

other actors" (237). Professor August W. Staub of Louisiana State University concurs, "In casting a single role, much depends on the total ensemble. It wouldn't do to have a very tall Gertude if the only available talent for Claudius were middle-sized to short" (89).

Although some directors lean toward casting certain physical types for lead romantic roles, Professor Roy A. Beck of Western Michigan University shares how one director made an unexpected discovery by keeping an open mind. This particular director had seen the original Broadway production of Garson Kanin's Born Yesterday. In the movie, "Brock is a large bully-type man and Billie is a blonde broad with a Jersey accent" (Beck 233). When a 110 pound actor who was 5'4" tall read Brock with a taller, 5'8" southern Billie, the result was "electrifying. On-stage was one of the most uncouth bullies imaginable, and with him was a big blonde who was completely under his control" (233).

Vocal Contrast.

Vocal contrast is another important factor to consider when casting (McMullan 9). Do all the actors sound alike, or are their voices varied to match the character they portray? Dietrich believes that most directors will look for an actor who has a broad vocal range.

Voice is important in defining a character. The quality of voice is one of the prime means by

which an audience judges character. Light, thin voices connote a lack of vitality and brute strength. Coarse, rough vocal qualities are frequently associated with uncouth or violent characters. (229)

Dietrich recognizes that "the flexible actor should be master of the vocal variables of pitch, force, and rate. He should be able to produce different vocal qualities instantly" (233-234). University of Texas Professor Hodge elaborates, saying, "A cast with a variety of pitch differences will not only increase the hearability level, but will readily declare character qualities" (320). Professor R.H. O'Neill maintains that "Audiences respond to the voices and bodies of actors as well as their spoken words...The tuneful sound or melody, pleasing or congruent arrangement of voices when two or more people are talking onstage should harmonize" (257).

Movement and Timing.

How do the actors move on stage to suggest their characters? Directors must select actors capable of believable character movement. For example, an auditioner for the role of Cyrano may have the "exact physical requirements, but he is clumsy and uncoordinated" (Glenn 179). How can a director discover an actor's range of movement? Professors Cohen and Harrop propose the director find a way "to get the book out of the actor's hands for a while, so you (the director) can get a sense of their physical range" (228).

Every move an actor makes must match the character they portray. For example, "Ariel must be graceful and airy...Mame must do cartwheels" (Glenn 179). The actor's ability to move will determine whether or not he is cast. Professors Dean and Carra declare movement as "the stage picture in motion" (184).

An actor may have an inherent sense of timing or develop it through extensive performance. Dean and Carra reflect, "An actor may or may not have an inborn asset, a sense of timing, but long exposure in performance, especially in comedies, can develop acute sensitivity to audience response, which is an integral part of timing." Dean and Carra go on to say that, although timing is important, it will "mean very little unless other factors of control work together harmoniously" (241). Good timing enables an actor to emphasize important lines, hold for laughs, use the correct pitch and inflection, use an appropriate facial expression, coordinate business and line delivery, and apply contrasting tones that best express the humor (Dean and Carra 241-242).

According to Professor Dietrich, many actors do not have a good sense of timing.

[They]...have little awareness of the importance of time, the use of dramatic pause, the handling of stress and inflection, to express the impact of emotion in the speech, the ability to deliver the comic line. (234)

Cooperation and Malleability.

Professors Dean and Carra insist that after judging an actor's ability to play the role and make the right contribution to the ensemble, the director must consider his ability to work together with the group in rehearsal (316). O'Neill confesses that "many a production has declined in quality due to temperamental actors (who) resist direction, miss meetings...create havoc in the technical department by missing lines, entrances, or exits that influence lighting, sound, or other effects" (255). Is the actor flexible and does he have the ability to take direction? These factors are taken into consideration when casting.

Audience Reaction.

One important subcategory of acting not mentioned so far is how the audience responds to the character. Does the audience like the character the actor portrays? When playing a comedic character, does the audience laugh and find the character amusing?

The authors of Directing for the Theatre suggest that

The kind of empathic response which he [the director] desires the audience to have to the character may have a direct bearing on the choice of actors...The audience must like him, find him sympathetic and want him to win.
(Sievers et al. 255)

Summary

For the purposes of this paper, casting is defined as matching the ability of the actor to the requirements of the role (Dietrich 227). The two primary casting determinants include the type and style of the play, and the actor. The six subcategories related to selection of the actor include physical type versus acting ability; vocal quality, diction, and vocal flexibility; physical contrast and unity; vocal contrast; movement and timing; and cooperation and malleability (McMullan 9-10). These casting determinants are important components in the analysis of casting deaf actors in field studies.

Non-Traditional Casting

According to an Actors' Equity statement, non-traditional casting is defined as "the casting of ethnic actors in roles where race or gender is not germane to the character" (Granville and Shirley A4). The Non-Traditional Casting Project (NTCP) further defines non-traditional casting to include

the casting of actors of color (African American, Asian, Hispanic and Native American), actors with disabilities (blind or visually impaired, deaf or hearing impaired, and ambulatory disabled), and female actors in roles in which race, ethnicity, physical ability or gender are not essential to the characters' or play's development. In other words, casting actors on the basis of individual talent rather than how they conform to stereotypes.

Non-traditional casting expands creative possibilities in theatre, film and television through the inclusion of artists of color and artists with disabilities. Non-traditional casting is fundamental to creating an American theatre that accurately reflects the diversity of our society. (NTCP Brochure 3)

NTCP designates four types of non-traditional casting guidelines as originally defined by director Harold Scott. The four types are societal, cross-cultural, conceptual, and blind. According to Scott, Societal is the casting of ethnic, female and disabled actors in roles they perform in society as a whole, such as casting a Native American Moss and a Hispanic Aaronow (two real-estate salesmen) in Glengarry Glen Ross. Cross-cultural transports the characters from the world of the original playscript into a different culture, for example, transporting Shakespeare's Macbeth to Medieval Japan. Conceptual casting casts an ethnic, female or disabled actor in a role to give the play greater resonance. Blind casting is where the actors are cast without regard to race, ethnicity, gender or physical ability, where theoretically the best actor is cast in the role, for instance, a Hispanic Eliza Doolittle confronting an Asian Henry Higgins in My Fair Lady or a wheelchair-bound actor as the Stage Manager in Our Town (NTCP Brochure 3).

Some theatre professionals support an actor's right to play any part. Pan Asian Repertory Theatre Company's

artistic and producing director, Tisa Chang, points out that "In an ideal world, any artist can play any role for which he or she is suited" (Rothstein C15). Shirley Sun states that all actors should have "the opportunity to compete fairly and openly for a leading part" (H7). Harry Newman, former executive director of the NTCP believes, "An actor is an actor. If an individual is able to transform himself into a character, he'll transport us into that world" (Kaufman A10).

Artistic director John Dillon of the Milwaukee Repertory Theatre asserts, "I think too often non-traditional casting is placed in the context of affirmative action, redressing grievous past wrongs. But the real essence of non-traditional casting is having the widest pool of talent available for the role. Art ought to be about expanding your choices, not limiting your choices" (5). In the highly politicized Bay Area, "where non-traditional casting is certainly seen by many actors, at least partially, as an equal employment issue, Dillon's view might not be popular" (5). Nevertheless, his viewpoint is a valid counterpoint to prevailing attitudes which promote non-traditional casting as a means to increase minority casting and rectify past wrongs incurred by minorities.

Many view non-traditional casting as affirmative action, casting more minorities in roles. The Chairman of

the Committee on Racial Equality of Actor's Equity, Chuck Patterson, argues that "This (Miss Saigon casting controversy) is a moral issue...to correct decades of injustice to actors of all color" (Granville and Shirley A4). Executive Editor of The Washington Post, Benjamin C. Bradlee, acknowledged that "ethnic minority actors have long suffered from the widespread refusal of directors to cast them in any but specific minority roles" ("This is Equity?" A20). In a full page advertisement, The Association of Asian Pacific American Artists stated that the casting of Caucasian actor Jonathan Price in the lead role for Miss Saigon, "perpetuated the gross injustices Asian/Pacific actors have always faced...Not only are Asian/Pacific actors restricted to racially specific roles, but they routinely have been denied those roles--especially leading roles" ("True Equity Now" 82).

Robert Kelley, artistic director of TheatreWorks comments

When we did Two Gentlemen of Verona, we cast it black, Asian, and Caucasian. It was a successful production, and great fun. In the midst, we got a call from an irate patron who said she was Italian and couldn't believe that we didn't know that there were no Chinese living in Italy at the time (it was, by the way, a modern dress production)! It really shows who the enemy is--or the education that's needed to get past some of our preconceptions. (Schiffman 5)

Lee Sankowich, artistic director of the Marin Theatre Company, cast an array of multicultural actors as warriors

in a Zen story about a samurai warrior. The play took place in Japan centuries ago. As the cast moved toward (opening night) an Asian group protested, saying the cast should be totally Asian. Four of the 10 cast members were Asian. "We were picketed opening night, TV cameras and all" (5).

While many see non-traditional casting as a means to correct racial injustices and promote minority casting, the focus of this paper is to examine the definition of non-traditional casting as it applies to the casting of deaf actors.

Summary

For the purposes of this paper, the definition of non-traditional casting conforms to Scott's NTCP guidelines, with the scope limited to casting deaf American actors. The categories established by the NTCP of societal, cross-cultural, conceptual and blind readily apply to the casting of deaf actors. Within this definition, societal casting allows a deaf actor to portray a character like themselves. Cross-cultural casting transports a play into deaf culture. Conceptual casting allows a deaf actor to add resonance to a role, and blind casting allows a deaf actor to play any role he/she is capable of playing.

One example of non-traditional casting with deaf actors is a production of Our Town (9/8-10/20/91). Dillon

reveals that "half the cast will be hearing-impaired. The entire cast will sign. One family will be deaf; the hearing family will speak, and signers will sign for them. It will be like in a real town with two families, one deaf, one not...It's wonderful to approach this old chestnut with whole new ways available to me" (Schiffman 5).

Deaf-Related Theatre Terminology

Samuel Zachary defines four types of theatre. These theatre types include theatre for the deaf, theatre of the deaf, deaf theatre, and hearing theatre. According to Zachary's categorizations,

Theatre of the deaf joins together hearing and hearing impaired participants and strives to make plays equally accessible to all audience members.

Theatre for the deaf involves only hearing impaired actors and production staff members.

Deaf theatre...refers collectively to companies or productions previously defined as theatre of the deaf or theatre for the deaf.

Hearing theatre is that with which most playgoers are familiar. Unless special accommodations are made by the addition of signing interpreters, spoken dialogue is inaccessible to hearing impaired spectators. (9-10)

According to Zachary, the National Theatre of the Deaf and Fairmount Theatre of the Deaf are examples of theatre of the deaf, while theatre for the deaf "appeals to hearing-impaired viewers and is most likely to be staged by

deaf community theatres or deaf clubs" (9). Zachary combines the two terms, theatre of the deaf and theatre for the deaf into one term, deaf theatre. Conversely, he states hearing theatre "dramatizes a multitude of subjects, including those related to deafness" (10).

In their publication on Sign-Language Theatre and Deaf Theatre: New Definitions and Directions, Dorothy Miles and Louie J. Fant, Jr. discuss the similarities between the two styles and how they differ from conventional spoken theatre. According to Miles and Fant, sign-language theatre (SLT) is "any production which begins with a text originally written for spoken theatre, such as Hamlet, Death of a Salesman..." (4). They go on to affirm that the actors in SLT can be hearing, and the theme of the play does not necessarily deal with deafness (5).

Miles and Fant concur there is some "confusion between the phrases, theatre of the deaf and theatre by the deaf" (4). Miles and Fant seek to inform the public by combining the terms into either sign-language theatre or deaf theatre. They define deaf theatre as "the type of production that contains some or all of the following elements" (6):

1. Material taken from a) existing texts for conventional theatre, adapted in such a way as to allow for a realistic portrayal of the deaf experience, or b) texts developed directly from the lives and experience of deaf persons, living or dead, and presented

either realistically or as a fantasy.

2. Onstage acknowledgment of the actor's deafness or normal hearing as a trait of the character he is portraying.
3. A logical explanation for the presence of narrators for the use of sign language by hearing characters, where applicable. (6)

The following definitions will be used for the remainder of this paper. Deaf-related theatre encompasses deaf actors, deaf leading roles, plays whose themes deal with deaf issues, and the use of deaf actors playing hearing roles in productions. These definitions are refined in the following sections.

Deaf Theatre

There is some disagreement among scholars regarding the terminology associated with deaf theatre. Deaf theatre is not defined as scripts written by deaf writers, performances by an all-deaf cast, or plays performed only in sign language for deaf audiences. Deaf theatre does not refer to hearing theatre, where occasionally an interpreter is hired to communicate with deaf audience members using sign language.

Deaf theatre is theatre performed by deaf actors and interpreted simultaneously by hearing actors. In deaf theatre, hearing actors play minor roles, focusing energy and attention on leading roles played by deaf actors.

Hearing actors who interpret are integral to the play, because they interpret line-by-line for their counterpart deaf actors. Hearing actors match deaf actors' signs with corresponding vocal tones and inflections to accurately reflect the deaf actor's meaning and emotion. Deaf theatre can include interpreters in their performance as minor characters, but more usually and more importantly as the voice for deaf actors.

Theatre About the Deaf

Theatre about the deaf is defined as theatre that deals with deafness as a central theme. For example, the primary focus of productions such as The Miracle Worker, Children of a Lesser God, and The Signal Season of Dummy is to examine issues related to deafness, issues of acceptance, acculturation, discrimination, and isolation.

Theatre about the deaf refers to plays identifying these issues. Theatre about the deaf provides acting roles for deaf actors and has increased public awareness of related deaf issues such as diminished social status, communication difficulties, the controversy surrounding different instruction methods, (deaf) handicapped stereotypes, and job discrimination.

Integrated Theatre

Integrated theatre is an uncommon occurrence, where deaf and hearing actors appear on stage in major roles as equals. The integration of deaf and hearing actors in a theatrical production creates a new and unique category combining two artistic worlds. Deafness as an issue is not included in the playscript.

This rare event occurred in two Bay Area productions, the first at Berkeley Repertory Theatre in their production of Brecht's The Good Person of Szechuan, and the second in Hillbarn's production of Quilters in Redwood City. In both productions, hearing and deaf actors communicated with each other using American Sign Language (ASL). Throughout these performances, actors used this manual form of communication.

Hearing Theatre

The definition of hearing theatre used in this analysis will adhere to Zachary's definition. Hearing theatre is defined as "that with which most play-goers are familiar. Unless special accommodations are made by the addition of signing interpreters, spoken dialogue is inaccessible to hearing impaired spectators. Hearing theatre dramatizes a multitude of subjects, including those related to deafness" (10).

CHAPTER 3

Deafness and Deaf Communication

For any theatre to be effective, it must communicate to an audience. While sets, costumes, and lighting set the mood, it is the actor's expressions, speech, and tone that provide the primary vehicle of communication. The deaf actor's methods of communication are far different from the hearing actor's. Before discussing these methods, however, the causes and types of deafness must be understood, since they directly affect how the deaf individual communicates.

Definition of Deafness

This study would be incomplete without a brief description of deafness and the impact various degrees of hearing loss can have on an individual. The Conference of Executives of American Schools for the Deaf define a deaf person as "One whose hearing is damaged to the extent... that precludes the understanding of speech through the ear alone, with or without a hearing aid" (qtd. in Zachary 3). According to a recent article in Soviet Life, "The number of people of all ages with defective hearing all over the world exceeds 220 million" (Platch 53). The Journal of the American Medical Association reveals that, "Close to 28 million Americans experience hearing loss... 10 million

are a direct result of acoustical trauma, referred to as noise induced hearing loss" ("Noise and Hearing Loss" 3185).

Causes of Deafness

There are many causes of deafness including epidemic cerebrospinal, presbycusis, Alport's Syndrome, otosclerosis, Meniere's disease, vertigo, and primary spinal or viral meningitis.

Other possible causes of deafness can be linked to childhood illnesses or occupational hazards. Individuals in occupations most likely to experience hearing loss include military personnel, fire fighters, factory workers, and rock musicians. Whenever physical trauma occurs, such as a loud explosion or a blow to the head causing unequal pressure on the eardrum, deafness may follow.

Categories of Deafness

There are two ways to categorize deafness: by age of onset and by degree of loss. Congenital deafness (also called pre-lingual deafness) occurs when a child is born deaf. A congenitally deaf child has never heard the spoken word, thereby becoming deaf before acquiring language. Adventitious deafness (also called post-lingual deafness) occurs sometime after birth, typically after some language

has been acquired. The degrees of hearing loss range from the profound, those who are unable to hear at all, to the hard-of-hearing, who have limited hearing abilities.

The causes of deafness relate to the categories of deafness. If a child is born deaf, he is less likely to speak than a child who loses hearing due to illness and has had the opportunity to hear speech. Individuals deafened by occupational hazards may still be able to speak and possibly hear with the use of hearing aids. Hard-of-hearing individuals, in general, may be able to speak and use lipreading to supplement the hearing they have.

Recent Technological Developments

Modern medicine and computer technology have made communication more possible for some members of the deaf community. Such inventions and related services include cochlear implants, telecommunications devices for the deaf (TDDs), the California Relay Service, a graphic communications device (GCD) system, local area networks (LANs), dynamic orometry (speech viewer), and the National Captioning Institute for Television (NCI). These are described in the following sections.

Cochlear Implant

The cochlear implant is a surgically implanted device that stimulates nerve fibers, and enables deaf individuals

to hear. The National Institute of Health "found that fewer than one percent of the 15 million Americans with significant hearing impairment are candidates for a cochlear implant. Manufacturers estimate that 250,000 to 300,000 people might be helped" (Brody B8). Some candidates are rejected for the implant due to a "bond growth in the cochlea or congenital absence of the cochlea, (which) may render the device useless" (Brody B8).

There are difficulties associated with the cochlear implant. They include adjustment to understanding their static-like sound (Clark 73); avoidance of contact sports, which may damage the device; and limiting the recipient to one implant, so that the individual is protected against the possibility that surgical complication could cause the loss of whatever residual hearing they have (Brody B8).

Despite these limitations, the cochlear implant may provide additional opportunities for the deaf actor to perform. The implant may allow a deaf actor to distinguish sounds and understand their meaning, without the aid of visual cues or signs. This could allow him/her to perform in either a deaf or hearing role in hearing theatre, as well as deaf theatre.

Telecommunications Device for the Deaf

A TDD is a device that allows deaf and hearing-impaired individuals to communicate via phone lines with

others who have a similar device. For the system to work there must be a sender and a receiver. Both parties must have a TDD. TDDs are portable and include features such as a keyboard, printer, and interface cable. To use a TDD, an individual connects a phone to a TDD and dials the phone number of a friend. The sender types in the message on a TDD keyboard, then transmits it. The receiver reads the message as it appears on their TDD screen or printout. After the message is received, the receiver responds by typing a message and re-transmitting the information back to the sender. One advanced model features "8k character memory, direct connect, programmable auto answerer, memory dialing, and electronic voice announcer" (Low 446).

Telecommunication devices are widely used within the deaf community, allowing them to communicate with each other using the phone. While TDDs allow for deaf intercommunication, most hearing individuals are not aware of the device. Unless the individual's profession involves interaction with the deaf, and/or communicating with a deaf family member or close friend, most hearing persons have no occasion to use one. TDDs are rarely used in theatre performance. An exception is an adaptation of Butterflies are Free called The Touch (1977), which used a TDD attached to a Braille printer. This allowed the actor playing the leading character Ed, who is deaf and blind,

to communicate with his mother using the phone (Andrews 248).

California Relay Service

The California Relay Service (and similar services in other states) allows any hearing caller to communicate with a deaf person by dialing a special 800 number. This service allows deaf and hearing individuals to communicate with each other through specially-trained operators. A deaf consumer can order a pizza, schedule a dental appointment, or make reservations for their vacation.

Early difficulties with the system prohibited more than one call per phone number. For example, if a deaf person ordered room service at a hotel using the relay service, they could not make another call asking the bell hop to assist with baggage. This restriction was eventually removed (Bragg 195).

The California Relay Service allows deaf patrons to purchase theatre tickets and hearing persons to receive their tickets orders. A statistical breakdown of business use, including theatre companies contacted by the deaf using the California Relay Service, is currently unavailable.

Graphic Communications Device System

The GCD system allows transmission of typed messages and graphics via phone lines, using special software to

encode and decode the information. The system is designed to be portable and simple. According to Professor Waldron of Engineering Graphics at Ohio State University, "We have designed it so that users can just turn it on and start communicating without worrying about software, which is contained in the computer chips. The idea of the system is essentially to use the telephone for fun. This is something that we take for granted, but the deaf never have" (Murray 141).

This device has three components; a modem, a display monitor, and a microcomputer (140). Primary use of the GCD may eventually be by professionals such as doctors, architects, and civil engineers (141), although work has begun to make the system more useful to the deaf community by including a sign language dictionary to be stored in the computer's memory (141).

Local Area Networks

LANs are networks of personal computers that share files, applications, and communications software. Gallaudet University has installed a LAN that allows deaf students to learn about literature and develop their writing skills during classes. Each student has access to a computer connected to other students in the class. Students can interact with the lessons on screen, as well as with each other and the instructor. Usually English literature

is discussed using sign language, but the LAN allows an instructor who does not know sign language to interact with deaf students by keying in important information on the LAN. According to instructor Batson, "Those students who used the network for a year made greater gains on a writing test than those who weren't on the network" (Strom C4).

The LAN system is ideal for classroom use. Whether it is applicable to the theatre remains to be seen. One possible application could be to have deaf actors type their lines into a computer, which in turn would transmit the lines to an overhead screen, a translation similar to that used in opera. An obvious restriction of this approach is that sign language, a major method of communication used by the deaf would be eliminated. The deaf actor would use his hands to either type or sign a message for the audience to see.

Dynamic Orometry

Dynamic orometry is a computer program under development that displays what speech looks like on video screen (Carden 24). The program emphasizes vowel sounds and consonants using a "glossometer-- a thin plastic plate...fits snugly on the roof of the mouth" (24). The result is a mirror image which appears on the monitor allowing the student to see the exact placement of the tongue during

speech. Students compare the mirror image with their own placement and make the necessary adjustments, thereby learning proper tongue placement for good pronunciation.

This system is still in the research and development phase. According to Dr. Samuel Fletcher, chairman of the biocommunication department at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, it will be available for purchase sometime within the next five years (Carden 24).

The speech viewer may be helpful to post-lingual deafened adults. Deaf actors who speak can be cast in hearing as well as deaf roles. The deaf actor's ability to speak will allow a director to cast him/her in a broad range of roles.

National Captioning Institute for Television

NCI began March 16, 1980, with 10 hours of programming a week, and has expanded in recent years to include most types of programming including daytime serials, children's programs, music videos, live newscasts, sports events, and political conventions (Hickey 26). A decoder is attached to the television, and NCI produces and distributes these television programs with captions the deaf can read. According to Hickey, "more than 20 million Americans are hearing-impaired, and another 350,000 are deaf, (yet) only 275,000 have purchased a decoder... Surprisingly, many people buying the decoders are not deaf, but immigrants

trying to learn English, or semi-literates trying to improve their reading ability" (26).

NCI allows deaf and hearing to view modern programs. There is little application for NCI to theatre performance, except perhaps if a deaf audience member viewed a captioned theatre performance he planned to attend. NCI programs could also be used by deaf actors to view a particular performance in order to glean ideas for an upcoming audition. This method is sometimes used by hearing actors as well.

Benefits of Technology

These inventions offer benefits such as increased independence and employment opportunities, and sometimes, in the case of the cochlear implant, the ability to hear. These inventions allow the deaf to communicate more fully, both with each other or with hearing individuals. Each device enhances communication; the TDD allows a story to be told; the cochlear implant brings with it new sounds and the possibility of speech; the NCI reveals societal views, world news, and modern customs through programs and commercials. Most of these inventions can also be used as broadcast devices. Possible applications of these devices to theatre performance are conjecture at this point.

Methods of Communications Used by the Deaf

American Sign Language

One of the most widely accepted manual methods of communication in the deaf community is American Sign Language (ASL or Ameslan). In fact, ASL is the third most used language in the United States (Hood 19). ASL is a combination of hand signs, fingerspelling, and facial expressions that enable the deaf to talk with each other, as well as hearing signers conversant with the language. For example, hearing parents can reciprocally communicate with their deaf child using sign language.

ASL is a legitimate language and a visually expressive one. "ASL is the only sign system in the United States recognized by linguists as a language complete with its own grammar, syntax, and formation rules" (Andrews 29). ASL is a visual language, where a single sign can describe complex thoughts that "possesses connotative and denotative values (similar to)...the spoken or written English word" (Zachary 5).

The hand movement range of ASL will vary according to the style of each signer. The signing area, sometimes referred to as the "articulation space" (Zachary 6), begins at the top of the head and extends to the knees of the signer. Male signers generally sign in the lower torso area (Jon Carroll 79), compared with females, who sign

closer to mid torso. The body, especially the torso, is used as a backdrop for the signs.

Actor Bernard Bragg (hearing-impaired) promotes ASL saying, "ASL is a conceptual language that lends itself to abstractions, just like English...sign language is a highly advanced language. It is part of deaf culture. It's a way of life for us deaf people, very much a part of who we are" (Bragg 208-209). The integrated combination of facial expression, body position, and sign convey an articulate message.

It takes some time to learn sign language, according to the Deaf Counseling and Referral Agency (DCARA). The time projected to learn ASL is a 2-year study program of homework, practice, and regular class attendance. This is the same amount of time most high schools and universities require to learn a foreign language. Yet, the question is an individual one. Hand-eye coordination, more difficult for some, may come easily to others. One major limitation of ASL is that "it is primary language with no practical secondary written code" (Andrews 31, 42).

Sign language varies from state to state, similar to dialects or accents. The word Easter, for example, has 13 different signs in 30 states (Gustason et al. 76).

Deaf actors use ASL as the primary method of communication in theatrical performance (Zachary 7). Some of the

signs may need to be expanded, thereby modified, for audiences to see. Perhaps the most well known example of signing in theatre are the productions of the NTD. Interpreters may also use ASL when translating hearing actors' onstage dialogue to a hearing/deaf audience. Many audience members comment about the beauty of sign language bringing an added visual element to a theatrical production through the use of signs.

Signing Exact English

Signing Exact English is more commonly referred to as SEE sign. In SEE sign, each English word has an individual sign, which is presented in English syntactical order. SEE sign implements the syntax of English visually, including inflection, suffixes, and prefixes. Webster defines inflection "to include the change in the form of a word showing its case, gender, number, person, tense, mood, voice or comparison" ("Inflection" 265). The sentence, "I am studying hard to learn sign language," can be easily translated verbatim in SEE sign.

SEE sign concentrates on a word-for-word translation, which takes more time and effort when compared with ASL. SEE sign is taught with ASL at most colleges and universities, and is usually part of the core curriculum for majors in special education and rehabilitative services.

One advantage of using SEE sign instead of ASL is the

ability of the speaker to sign and talk simultaneously. The syntax of ASL is grammatically different from English. In everyday English, a person could say, "The woman should give me the telephone number." This same information can be translated several ways using ASL, such as, "Telephone number woman she-give-me should she; or, Telephone number woman should she-give-me she; or, Telephone number woman should she-give-me should she" (Humphries et al. 98). This same sentence is signed word-for-word when translated into SEE sign.

SEE sign is used occasionally in hearing theatre, when a SEE sign interpreter will translate an actor's dialogue for the hearing/deaf audience. When an interpreter translates a script using ASL, sentences may be combined into a few ASL signs, while SEE sign adheres to a verbatim translation.

Fingerspelling

Another method of communication for the deaf is fingerspelling, which uses hand configurations to signify the 26 letters of the Roman alphabet. Most signers use fingerspelling for names and places that cannot be easily signed in ASL or SEE sign. Fingerspelling is used when an "English word needs to be expressed but no sign is available" (Shroyer 4).

Fingerspelling can be used by interpreters and

deaf/hearing actors to communicate information. An interpreter will fingerspell character names or places when translating the actors' lines, so deaf audience members can follow the story line. A deaf actor may fingerspell the location where a particular event occurs during the play. An interpreter must fingerspell accurately and rapidly in order to follow the actors' speech.

Instead of spelling out first and last names during an introduction, a nickname can be used. Sign language instructor Cathy Furnal, a 10-year veteran of the Santa Clara Adult Education Program, explains that "One sign can be used for a person's name. For example, I sign my name with the gesture meaning "teacher" using the first letter of my name "C." This is much easier than fingerspelling the five letters of my first name" (Interview).

Pidgin Sign

Pidgin sign English uses ASL in English syntax. This system maintains the concept, not words, of the ASL signs. Pidgin sign combines speech and sign using English word order, making it possible for an individual to both speak and sign.

The use of pidgin sign in theatre performance is undocumented as a separate method of communication. This may be because pidgin sign is used in conjunction with other methods of signing.

Oralism

The oralist tradition began during the late 1800s, when schools for the deaf were established by the government. The philosophy of oralism promotes lipreading (speechreading) and voice, excluding any form of manual communication (Moore 10). "The goal of the oral program was to assimilate the deaf population as much as possible into the hearing world...Education was taken out of the hands of deaf educators. Because deaf adults could take no part in the education of deaf children in an oral program, they could neither share their experience nor provide role models" (Cohen 70). Mistakenly, many such children grow up believing they will become hearing (Levesque 2).

A criticism made by the deaf community for decades has been the absence of role models in a school system dominated by hearing administrators and teachers. "Absence of hearing impaired role models...or the support for the use of manual language denies students any claim to individuality" (Zachary 184). Even as recently as 1974, "only 12 percent of the teachers of the deaf were deaf themselves" (qtd. in Andrews 89).

Oralist Teaching Techniques.

Students placed in oralist schools were forbidden to use manual communications, such as sign language (Andrews 18). Punishment for using signs to communicate was swift

and severe. Students "had their hands...placed in brown paper bags...Still others were made to sit on their hands to keep them from going astray and forming signs" (Zachary 91).

Mark Medoff, (hearing) playwright of Children of a Lesser God, tells about a conversation he had with Phyllis Frelich (hearing-impaired) early in their friendship about oralist teaching methods. "Phyllis told me [Mark Medoff]...the fact that when she was in school there were kids whose hands were tied behind their backs and were forced to speak" (Zachary 36). The oralist position is clear; sign language is strictly forbidden (Powers 83; Bragg 13-14).

In fact, many deaf children, who were convinced by their oralist teachers that their speech is intelligible, became incensed when they discover their speech could not be understood by the hearing majority (Zachary 47-48).

Even now this deceit is still widely practiced among speech and lipreading teachers, who, being used to their pupil's pronunciation, unwittingly encourage them to believe that, once they graduate and go out into the hearing world, their speech can be understood...the sad part is that such an enormous amount of time was and still is being spent on teaching deaf children how to speak and lipread. Most of these deaf children never learn to speak and lipread adequately, and their speech remains harsh and unaccented to the ear of the hearing. Most of that time could have been spent more profitably on teaching them to read and write well. That is why deaf children are less literate than their hearing counterparts. (Bragg 13)

Deaf persons who were brought up in the oralist tradition may not be able to sign. These deaf individuals may be able to speak, but this depends upon when their deafness occurred. Such actors may participate in deaf theatre, yet their lack of signing skill could prove to be a difficulty when communicating with other deaf actors whose primary means of communication is sign. Deaf individuals who learn to speak through oral training can perform in hearing and deaf theatre. A deaf actor who can speak and sign will have more opportunities to perform, because there are more roles available.

Total Communication

Some proponents for the deaf advocate a total communication approach which combines sign language and lipreading. This method supposedly allows for clearer communication than lipreading alone. Playwright Mark Medoff said, "I had nothing against total communication. In fact, I think that total communication is wonderful and that at some point a deaf individual has a right like anyone to speak or not to speak or to sign or not to sign" (Zachary 37). Medoff goes on to talk about the reaction he received while traveling in Europe.

I was met by a great deal of anger from the deaf education people, who wanted to fight with me all the time. Over there, they force children to speak and don't let them sign. They really were angry and wanted me to somehow change my mind

and see that what they were doing was legitimate. (37)

Medoff concludes by qualifying his stand on total communication saying,

I don't want to masquerade as an expert on the subject, but it seems legitimate as a learning device, but one of the points in the play...is that people must have the right to choose to be what they can be--what they want to be within the realm of what they can be and what is possible for them. It cannot be prescriptive. (37)

The Ability to Speechread

Some deaf people may not be able to master speechreading. According to Lynn S. Liben (hearing), "The best speechreaders (lip-readers) understand only about one-fourth of what is said even in didactic conversations..." Liben goes on to say that, "In English, only about 40 percent of the sounds are visible on the lips... Consequently, much of speechreading depends on filling in the gaps in available information. In turn, this filling-in process depends on a firm grasp of the vocabulary and syntax of the language being spoken. For the deaf person, this semantic and syntactical knowledge must be derived from impoverished visual information in the first place, thus closing a vicious cycle" (qtd. in Zachary 57).

The Interpreter

An important method of communication, not previously discussed, is that of the interpreter, who conveys infor-

mation to both deaf and hearing.

Interpreting is the act of conveying one person's (sender) message to another (receiver). A spontaneous interpreter signs and mouths the message of a speaker. Facial expressions and natural body movements may also be used as appropriate. (Caccamise et al. 2)

The Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID), was established during a workshop for communication "helpers" held at the Ball State Teachers College in June of 1964. The original purpose of the organization "was to promote recruiting and training of more interpreters and to maintain a list of qualified persons" (Caccamise et al. 6). According to the RID Code of Ethics, an "interpreter... shall render the message faithfully, always conveying the content and spirit of the speaker using language most readily understood by the persons whom they serve... Interpreters shall not counsel, advise, or interject personal opinions" (12). An interpreter must listen to the signs communicated by a deaf person and then repeat the exact message, to a hearing person. Next the interpreter listens to the response of the hearing person and signs the exact message back to the deaf person.

The role of the interpreter is a privileged one. An interpreter relays the message, but is not responsible for the content of the message. Sometimes, an interpreter's role is confusing to a hearing person. For example, if a deaf person is annoyed and signs "Why don't you hurry up,"

the interpreter must repeat the exact message. A hearing person may mistakenly think the interpreter is speaking, when in effect, the interpreter is only repeating whatever message the deaf person has signed.

In her dissertation, Lee comments that prejudice and misunderstandings occur between deaf and hearing people due to the difference in sign systems.

Hearing people use primarily audible and verbal signs as well as visual signs, while the deaf rely on visual and manual signs in their communication. This limitation of the deaf in the use of sign systems makes hearing people possess the prejudice that the deaf are retarded and intellectually inferior to them. (212)

There are four general methods of interpreting according to Caccamise:

1. Oral Interpreting (spoken mode)-- the interpreter mouths what the speaker is saying (without using his/her own voice).
2. Manual Interpreting (sign mode)-- the interpreter signs what the speaker is saying.
3. Simultaneous Interpreting (spoken and sign mode)-- the interpreter mouths and signs what the speaker is saying.
4. Reverse Interpreting
 - a) Voicing (spoken mode)-- the interpreter speaks (voices) what a person is signing and/or speaking.
 - b) Manual Reverse (sign mode)-- the interpreter signs what another person is signing and/or speaking.
 - c) Simultaneous Reverse (sign and spoken mode)-- the interpreter signs and speaks what another person is signing and/or speaking. (Caccamise et al. 8)

For the purposes of this paper, these methods of interpreting are used as guidelines when discussing deaf communication methods in the theatre. In most cases, an interpreter translates deaf actors' messages to a hearing audience, since most hearing audience members are not familiar with sign language. An interpreter is needed to translate deaf actors lines when an audience contains both deaf and hearing members. For example, in the production of NTD's One More Spring, deaf actors depend on voicing (reverse interpreting) to communicate their message to a hearing audience, while most deaf audience members understand what the deaf actor signs. A hearing actor will use manual reverse interpreting or sign his own message in order to communicate with the deaf actors and audience members.

How the Deaf Communicate in Theatre

The first section of this discussion examines deaf communication methods in theatre from the perspective of the deaf actor to a deaf, hearing, or mixed audience. The second section examines deaf communication methods in theatre from the perspective of the director to the deaf actor during rehearsal. The final section of this discussion focuses on the perspective of the deaf actor to fellow deaf and hearing actors, and technical staff positions

such as the stage manager.

How a deaf actor communicates depends upon his educational training (oralist or manualist). The deaf actor may be able to sign his lines or speak them. The latter is contingent on the cause and type of deafness, as discussed earlier.

A hearing director communicates with deaf actors using one of several options. He may learn sign language, hire an interpreter, or select deaf actors who have residual hearing and/or have the ability to speak. A director may cast deaf actors with residual hearing for expediency, as he may not have the time to learn sign language or the budget to hire an interpreter. The method of communication selected will vary according to the background and capabilities of the director.

A deaf actor communicates with fellow deaf actors using a combination of sign language, speech, pantomime, or written correspondence. A deaf actor can communicate with hearing actors and production staff members using sign language, speech, an interpreter or written notes. A hearing actor, who is familiar with sign language, will be able to sign a message to the deaf actor.

CHAPTER 4

Production Factors

Every play has production factors, which make it distinct from any previous performance. Artistic choices made by directors, producers, designers, and actors greatly influence the final result. Production factors important to this study include casting, blocking, lighting and costumes, interpreters, communications, audience response, and budgeting. How these factors diverge and/or compare with traditional artistic choices expands the reader's understanding of non-traditional performance as it applies to deaf-related theatre.

Casting

Casting is the selection of actors for a particular role. The selection is based on the type and style of the play and the actor including: physical type versus acting ability; vocal quality, diction, and vocal flexibility; physical contrast and unity; vocal contrast; movement and timing; cooperation and malleability; and audience reaction. These determinants were discussed thoroughly in Chapter 2. In this section, the discussion focuses on how they apply to deaf actors. The emphasis is on the practical aspects, rather than the theoretical.

Development of Deaf Actors

According to Timothy Near, past member of the NTD and current Artistic Director for San Jose Repertory Theatre, deaf actors are a rarity. One reason for this is the lack of available training. Many deaf actors receive training at Gallaudet University and Rochester Technical Institute, but they are the exception rather than the rule. According to Near, most members of the NTD are first-time performers from Gallaudet Theatre Summer School program (Interview).

Near also mentioned that minimal performance opportunities for deaf actors exist, other than Gallaudet University, Rochester Technical Institute, and NTD. (Interview; Miles and Fant 26). Near proposes that many deaf performers are not living up to their potential in the theatre arena for these reasons. According to Near, most professional hearing actors are continually auditioning, and just like an athlete are ready to perform. Deaf performers tend to split their efforts by working full-time and performing only occasionally. Deaf actors' performance training standards tend to be lower because acting is not their primary focus. Professionalism demands that an actor have a prepared monologue. This may not be top priority for a deaf actor, thereby making it difficult for him to compete (Interview).

The Casting of Deaf Actors

The casting of deaf actors in deaf roles limits deaf actors to those 18 playscripts mentioned in Chapter 1. Deaf actors have more opportunities to perform in playscripts that do not deal with deafness, simply because there are more scripts.

The skill level of an individual is considered when casting a deaf actor. A director may look at the actor's education and training. The decision to cast a deaf actor depends also on the degree of deafness, whether or not the actor has residual hearing, whether the actor can lip-read, sign, and/or speak. Directors may choose a deaf actor who speaks over a deaf actor who is unable to speak if the role requires it. For example, the roles of Lydia and Orin, in Children of a Lesser God require two deaf or hard-of-hearing actors who can speak. A director may choose an actor who does not speak for a lead role and use another actor to shadow that actor and speak their lines while the deaf actor signs, as was the case in The Good Person of Szechuan, when Sharon Omi shadowed deaf actress Freda Norman. (Omi spoke while Norman signed.)

San Jose Mercury News theatre critic Judith Green writes that in 1979, when Mark Medoff wrote Children of a Lesser God,

Critics spilled much ink over the question: Now what? So we have a play about deaf people, with

a plum role for a deaf actress. What else is there for them to do?

In other words, why encourage a hearing-impaired person to be an actor? There is only one play in which he or she can have a part.

Here on the stage of Berkeley Rep is what "they" can do: They can be a full working member of any acting company with the vision to see that a handicap needn't be a theatrical handicap. Norman...communicates in ASL, but also uses her hands and features and body as any good actor uses them, as dramatic instruments, tools of her trade. (25)

Green points out that deaf performers are interested and willing to play many parts. The only limitation may be in the minds of hearing directors who overlook their (deaf actors') talents.

Blocking

Blocking is simply the movement by the actors on the stage. Felner elaborates on this definition saying, "Blocking is the term used to describe the process by which stage action and movement is developed and set" (239). It is "the pattern of movement on the stage" (250). Directors plan these movements and then relay this information to actors early in the rehearsal process. Sometimes, but not always, a director will give an actor motivation for this movement.

Felner advocates that although blocking may be a director's responsibility, an actor must create personal

motivation for the on-stage movement. "Directors... determine what the ultimate blocking of a play will be, actors are active participants in the process. Learning to make action choices and justify movements is a vital part of your (the actor's) job" (239). An actor is expected to memorize and adhere to this blocking during all future rehearsals.

Body Positions

According to Dean and Carra, there are five body positions in relation to the audience; full-front, quarter, profile, three-quarter and full-back (35). Body positions are listed from strongest to weakest. The full-front position is the strongest since "the greatest emotional contact with the audience comes from the full-front body and face, and this emotional contact diminishes as the position of the body breaks contact with the audience" (95). These body positions are further expanded to positions in relation to other actors, such as shared, (one slightly upstage) shared, profile, given, and (head in profile) given (37).

The Purpose of Blocking

Good blocking directs audience focus towards an important moment in a character's life. "One of the functions of blocking is to keep the actor visible when he has lines or important reactions" (Sievers et. al. 96). Another

function of blocking is to create stage pictures and give the audience something interesting to view. Most importantly, the purpose of blocking "is to help the audience understand the play's action. It can do this by stage arrangements, which clearly indicate the psychological relationships between characters" (Canfield 120).

Blocking in Deaf-Related Theatre

Standard blocking must be adjusted in deaf-related theatre for signing to be seen by the audience. Body positions used frequently in hearing theatre, such as profile, three-quarter, and back position cannot be used. This limits directors' choices and interferes with the creation of stage pictures necessary to direct the audience's attention. Since blocking reinforces on-stage character relationships, eliminating body positions could create confusion for the audience.

Blocking is affected when deaf and hearing actors interact on stage. For sign language to be seen by the audience and both deaf and hearing actors, conventional blocking body positions, such as a three quarter and full back position, must be disregarded. Characters must face each other in a quarter position while speaking, or face the audience in an open (downstage) position. For example, "as the signing actor moves around the stage, his signs must remain visible to the audience and to all or some of

his fellow actors" (Miles and Fant 40). Deaf actors' positions in relation to the other actors include the shared position where both actors angle downstage toward the audience. However, the shared position where one actor is slightly angled upstage is unacceptable, since this would hide the deaf actor's signs from the audience's view. The profile position allows deaf and hearing actor to see each other's signs, but obscures these same signs from a hearing or deaf audience's view. The given position allows one deaf actor to face upstage, thereby obscuring his signs from the audience. Signing actors' blocking positions are somewhat limited to keep signs visible to the audience.

Characteristic Gestures

Gesture is defined by Webster as "a movement usually of the body or limbs that expresses or emphasizes an idea, sentiment, or attitude" ("Gesture" 212). Felner stipulates that gesture reveals personality in small movements. Her examples include habits such as nail biting, pacing, and playing with hair. Sometimes a character's use of a prop can tell the audience much more about the character than dialogue. Felner vividly recalls a production meeting where one lighting director consistently manicured his fingernails with a large hunting knife (226). Characteristic gestures according to Felner,

should be used sparingly to enhance a character portrayal and must grow out of a thorough understanding of the character...They should relate...to the ongoing dramatic action. (226)

Deaf actors may use characteristic gestures. Difficulties arise because some signs and gestures look the same. Signs and gestures must be specific and distinct for the audience and other on-stage actors to understand what the deaf actor is signing, as well as what he is communicating with a characteristic gesture.

Gestures, Blocking, and Deaf-Related Theatre

The concept of gesture in theatre is drastically altered for all three categories of deaf-related theatre. Deaf theatre uses ASL and theatrical signing, as well as character gestures, but both are rarely used simultaneously. Theatre About the deaf allows the deaf and hearing actor to gesture whenever the actor is not signing. Integrated theatre uses more signs than gestures, because communication occurs primarily in sign language. There is less gesticulation with the hands, so the actors can sign to each other. A gesture amid signs could interrupt the dialogue flow, affecting the rhythm and tempo of the play. Due to signing, hand gestures are restricted during active dialogue where both hearing and deaf actors sign.

Love scenes can be particularly difficult for the director to block, because signs must be visible to each actor and the audience. Most signs require both hands and

space around the body, sometimes called the window or "articulation space" in which to communicate (Zachary 6). For example, the characters John and Mary are dating. If John places his arm around Mary in a romantic manner, he ceases to sign, although his nonverbal gesture communicates much. Directors must block romance into the scene in such a way as to allow the signs (dialogue) to continue throughout the scene (unless of course dialogue ceases).

Deaf actors articulate signs using their characters' subtexts and superobjectives. Signs can resonate much like pitch and tempo. By expanding or contracting the size of the sign, and the position of the sign in relationship to the body, a sign matches the emotion conveyed.

Gesture and Communication

Actors must establish communication with their partners regardless of hearing capabilities. Deaf actors who sign with their hands to talk, use their eyes as ears to see responding signs. Hearing and deaf actors must listen and take in messages from other actors whether their lines are spoken or signed. The message must be heard and a response given. Felner reiterates that

The dramatic situation must touch us, the words must be meaningful, we must have strong inner images if we are to successfully communicate the feelings of our character. (115)

Lighting and Costumes

Lighting and costumes are designed according to the director's concept of the show. According to Play Production in the High School, there are four purposes for lighting the stage "visibility, mood, time, and special effect" (Beck et al. 142).

The main purpose of lighting is to make the actors visible to the audience, so that the actors' expressions can be seen. Next, lighting adds ambiance to the scene. A festive occasion may use bright lights, while a sinister murder plan could take place in the dim corner of a room. Good lighting enhances the scene and should not be observed by audience members, due to gradual shifts in lighting levels. Lighting gives the audience a sense of the time when onstage action occurs. If the scene takes place at high noon versus a midnight rendezvous, lighting will establish the time without a specific script reference (Canfield 49-50). Lastly, lighting can be used for special effects, such as the lightning used to enhance the dramatic tension of the murder of Caesar during Shakespeare's Julias Caesar.

Unlike hearing audiences, many deaf audience members sign to each other throughout productions. The house may be lit to allow them to communicate or ask questions of their neighbors during the show. This deaf audience con-

vention is mentioned by Professor Hilary U. Cohen in her article about the Tenth Congress of the World Federation of the Deaf in "Theatre By and For the Deaf."

There was also a great deal of signing in the audience during the performance, both to provide explanation to companions and as commentary on the activity. Lighting permitting, conversations could actually take place at quite a distance, several rows apart or even from the ground row to the balcony, although those long-distance conversations usually took place at pauses in the proceedings. (78)

This audience convention of signing during a performance was also observed during performances at the California School for the Deaf in Fremont, NTD's One More Spring, and Stanford Kresge Auditorium, even when the lights were dimmed (Bragg 1 Mar. 1991).

Costuming

A director will costume the show around a concept that connects all production factors. For example, during a 1991 Oregon Shakespeare Festival production of The Merchant of Venice, the actors wore modern business attire. How the actors were costumed, whether in a \$400 suit or designer jean jacket, told the audience much about each character's status or lack of it.

Some productions demand extraordinary costumes. For example, in the play Through the Looking Glass (And What Alice Found There) by Lewis Carroll, a fantasy story about a young girl's adventure, the costumes need to reflect the

imaginary qualities of each character. Similarly, if the play is about a Wall Street takeover, such as Other People's Money by Jerry Sterner, the characters must dress in the modern business fashion.

Lighting and Costuming for the Deaf Actor

The lighting and costumes in deaf-related theatre differ from those in hearing theatre because of the emphasis placed on the signing hands. The deaf actors' hands must be lit at all times for deaf audience members and other deaf actors to understand the signs. "Lighting should be set up to avoid shadows" (Caccamise et al. 76).

Costumes should be designed to keep the sign movement visible. Interpreters usually wear a smock which is "a solid skin-contrasting color, and presents a uniform background for greater visibility of the lower arms and hands. Some people also believe that the smock significantly lessens eye strain..." (45). Deaf actors must be costumed similarly, in order to insure accurate communication with the audience. The deaf actor must wear a solid color that contrasts the background, in order to avoid blending in with the scenery. In addition, "Jewelry should not be worn, since the reflections may be distracting" (77).

Costumes must allow for signer flexibility. Sleeves should not interfere with signing. Solid colored tops are suggested for most costumes, opposed to busy prints,

stripes, or lettering which could render signs unintelligible to deaf audience members.

Interpreters

The interpreter, as mentioned in Chapter 3, is the most common link between deaf and hearing individuals. Without an interpreter, communication is often limited to written correspondence and lipreading. Deaf individuals who speak may still need an interpreter in order to understand or translate a spoken response.

The Role of the Interpreter

The role of the interpreter in deaf theatre is threefold. He acts as the translator, the deaf actor's voice, and as an actor in his own right. Perhaps the most common role for the interpreter is in hearing theatre, where an interpreter uses manual reverse signing, to convey the character's dialogue for deaf audience members. An interpreter can also translate the signs of deaf actors and speak for them using voicing. Lastly, an interpreter can perform as an actor, using the reverse interpreting method, voicing, and/or simultaneous reverse signing. This method allows the hearing interpreter/actor to sign and speak at the same time, thereby communicating the dialogue to hearing and deaf audience members.

Deaf actors deliver their lines in ASL, and are inter-

preted by hearing interpreters, who must follow their lead. In other words, interpreters may know the lines that the deaf actor will sign, but wait to interpret the lines either as the deaf actor signs the sentence or after the actor has finished signing. For example, what would happen if the deaf actor forgot a line and signed another one? If the interpreter didn't follow the signing actor, a misunderstanding could result for both the deaf and hearing audience. Interpreters have to pace their speech, because while two actors may be able to sign at the same time, two interpreters cannot speak at the same time and be understood (Colbourne, Near Interviews).

Interpreters for deaf actors should match their performance in "stance and facial expression" (Caccamise et al. 81). A deaf actor will sign a character's name sign instead of using fingerspelling. "Name signs can often incorporate some attribute of the character and therefore enhance understanding" (81). Deaf audience members familiar with the use of name signs, will be able to follow the story line. A name sign can be signed quickly and is easy to see and remember as compared to fingerspelling, which "is difficult to read at long distances" (81).

One of the most frequently asked questions put to NTD is about ASL or their "language,"

People are very curious about their (NTD's) fast-moving fingers, and whether they are form-

ing individual letters or entire words. The answer is neither and both. The signs that are formed with the hands represent concepts rather than words. Since many of the words in the English language have more than one meaning, there may be a different sign for each of these. Words that are synonymous, or interchangeable in their use, may have the same sign. (Powers 81-82)

NTD interpreters speak clearly using a wide vocal range to match the signs and emotions of the deaf actor (Colbourne Interview). NTD uses one interpreter for several deaf actors, to sign the entire show. Interpreters wear costumes and interact in minor roles, while appearing on stage with other deaf actors.

Audiences and Interpreters

Many hearing audience members cannot distinguish between the deaf actor and their interpreter, saying, "If the interpreter was eliminated, I could still understand the play. This is just not true. It would be similar to watching the 6 o'clock news without sound" (Near Interview). Of course, a basic understanding of the plot would be discernable without sound; but the nuances, subtleties, and fine points would be missing. The interpreter is the communications link between deaf and hearing actors, and audience members. Without an interpreter, actors' motivations, character revelations, and vital plot information would be lost.

According to Dorothy S. Miles, most "deaf actors and

play producers no doubt prefer to ignore their deafness on stage, and chose themes that were entertaining or impressive regardless of the applicability to their own lives" (18). Since most deaf actors ignore their deafness on stage, this may lead to audience confusion. The hearing audience may perceive wrongly that the deaf actor is playing a deaf character, when in fact the deaf actor is portraying a hearing one (Near Interview).

Theatrical Signing

NTD interpreters and deaf actors use a sign system that is slightly different than conventional ASL, called "Theatrical Signing." This signing uses broader and more flowing signs, in order to be seen by a large audience and to increase its dramatic impact.

The visual language created by the NTD can be described as being to normal sign language what song is to street speech. As audiences watch the language created in the air, they find a suddenly sharper, clearer understanding of the spoken word. The actor's whole body becomes a word, a thought, an emotion-sculpture in the air.
(NTD Brochure 2)

In her article, "Theatre By and For the Deaf," Professor Cohen defines theatrical signing as "the alteration or expansion of conventional signs for dramatic effect. The goal of theatrical signing is to create a more dynamic sign or one that incorporates miming of the concept behind the sign" (Hilary Cohen 68).

Deaf Audience Reactions.

Many deaf audience members complain they cannot understand the signs being used, stating that although intended for them, theatrical signing actually distracts and confuses the message of the play. Many are concerned about the poor quality of "signing" when it is available. During earlier NTD productions, deaf audience members expressed disappointment because the signer either did not use correct signs, signed too rapidly to follow, or misused signs, thereby confusing the meaning of a sentence (Miles 61).

Props

The use of props presents a special problem in deaf-related theatre, because normal stage business is excluded when the deaf actor's hands become the actor's voice. The use of props is difficult and often impossible for this reason. If the deaf actor chooses to use a prop it must be timed and executed during another actor's line, so as not to upstage the other actor. The prop is then set aside prior to signing.

In her discussion of props, Sun Sign Company founder McGee discusses the difficulties of using props:

Walking, standing, sitting, using stage props, or any other stage business can direct focus or interfere with signing. If an actor does a gross movement, focus or attention is drawn to that person. If this focus is intended, good. If not, then it is upstaging and interferes with

the proper focus. An example of this is an actor who enters, or one who stands or sits or walks, this movement interrupts the action. If this is the intent it works, if not it doesn't. An object or prop can also interfere or add to signing. An actor who is holding something may not be able to sign clearly. This distracts from the signs. If he puts it down he can draw attention to himself or add visible emotion to his characterization. These aspects of stage business are the responsibility of the actor and the director to develop and use correctly. It is the responsibility of the director to watch any misuse of stage business. (22-23)

Interproduction Communications

The ability to communicate well is important in any team effort, and especially in theatre, which requires the coordination of several artistic groups; costumes, lighting, set design, publicity, sound, and props. Vocal communications is the primary means of communication for most interactions, although some written information is used. Written communications for a play includes cast lists, rehearsal and technical production schedules, scene and costume designs, cast and production phone numbers, programs, publicity flyers, tickets, and newspaper reviews.

Verbal communication is the primary source of conveying information in hearing theatre. The director speaks with his staff, cast, crew, and audience members. The actors speak with each other, to the director, and to the audience when performing. The staff members speak with each other, and to the cast, crew, and audience members.

The Communication Process

Verbal communication using the sender and receiver model is not always accurate due to individual frame of reference (Athos and Gabarro 137-144). Verbal information must be constantly clarified for misinterpretation of messages, whether or not the message is straightforward (433-434). Verbal information can be easily misunderstood and acted upon. Miscommunications influence the performance result.

The introduction of additional variables into a production, such as interpreters and deaf actors, can further complicate the communication process. Messages conveyed verbally must be signed and understood. Clarification of verbal and signed communications can be time consuming, yet it is necessary for messages to be understood and acted upon.

There is a need for improved deaf and hearing communications. Conflicts can arise due to different methods of communications. For example, miscommunication occurred in Berkeley Rep's production of The Good Person of Szechuan, when codirector Sharon Ott asked deaf actress Norman to walk and sign facing upstage. Norman resisted this request because sign language etiquette demands that the signers face each other while signing.

Another miscommunication occurred when Scott Williams,

director of Children of a Lesser God, requested Cathy Haas (hearing-impaired) play the lead role of Sarah Norman. Williams learned through an interpreter at Stanford that Haas rejected the role, when in fact, Haas said she was never contacted by Williams (Shumway 3; Tran 1B). Where did the breakdown in communication occur? The answer remains a mystery.

Audience Response

According to Professors Kirk and Bellas "There is an additional cast member on opening night: the audience" (136). An audience is important to theatre for two reasons. The audience is an integral part of performance and supports the theatre financially. Audience reactions vary as much as the individuals in it. Some may laugh, applaud, cry, leave the theatre, recommend the show to other patrons, return to see the show several times, or advise others to miss the show. How an audience responds decides whether or not the show succeeds.

One major criticism of NTD by deaf audience members is that the actors who sign cannot be easily located on stage. A deaf audience member must know where to look on stage in order to see the signer, and thereby see the signs to "hear" the deaf actors' lines. If the deaf audience member does not look at the character who is sig-

ning, the deaf individual will miss part or all of the dialogue. When this happens, the individual can become frustrated and give up watching the actors, or misunderstand the plot because information was missed during signing.

The Composition of the Audience

The main audience for deaf theatre is hearing. "Only 10 percent of NTD patrons are deaf...but a vital 10 percent" (NTD Brochure 1). The deaf community has had little or no exposure to hearing theatre, since most productions are not interpreted or, if they are, their publicity is sporadic and inconsistent.

An audience convention unique to deaf theatre is the show of appreciation. Both hearing and deaf audience members wave their hands above their heads to show the actors their appreciation (Nathan 20 Oct. 1990). In 1987, Professor Cohen attended the 10th World Conference of the Deaf, where she viewed numerous theatre performances. Cohen observed that

While many sounds were made during performances (by deaf audience members), no sound occurred afterward. Instead of the conventional clapping, the audience waved their hands overhead, a visible demonstration of their appreciation.
(78)

During a performance by Bernard Bragg at Stanford University on March 1, 1991, Bragg actually suggested that the deaf audience members try something new, clapping

their hands, while the hearing audience members continued waving their hands above their heads in a show of appreciation. Bragg's suggestion to vary the everyday convention where hearing audiences clap their hands and deaf audience members wave their hands overhead, constitutes a non-traditional demonstration of audience appreciation (Bragg 1 Mar. 91).

Deaf Actors Speak Out

Deaf actors communicated continued support for combining hearing and deaf actors in theatre productions. A limited number of questionnaires received for this study revealed that three deaf actors supported combining deaf and hearing actors in productions, whether the roles are for deaf or hearing actors (Bragg, Bronson, Yu questionnaires).

When actor Jim Bronson (hearing-impaired) was asked if integrated performances should be interpreted, he responded, "This is not so important as the attitude. Sometimes communication is possible (between deaf and hearing actors) without an interpreter. But an interpreter should be at the performance (to sign a production) as part of deaf awareness" (Questionnaire).

Bernard Bragg, a world-renowned deaf actor, "was one

of the 10 percent of deaf children born to deaf parents" (Powers 6). In her biography, Signs of Silence, Helen Powers notes that Bragg worked with David Hays to establish the NTD (116). Bragg performed with the NTD as an actor for over 10 years. Here Bragg refined his acting skills, yet his requests to direct a NTD production were always denied. In Bragg's autobiography, Lessons in Laughter, he laments,

During my 10 years at NTD, only once, and partially at that, was a play ever staged by a deaf director, and after I left this happened only rarely. When I once asked David Hays for the chance to direct a play, he replied that the choice of director was "his prerogative."
(190-191)

Bragg believes that deaf-related theatre must include hearing audiences. Bragg coauthored an all-deaf production called Tales of a Clubroom (1981). After this experience, Bragg discovered that

...deaf audiences are simply too small, the deaf being too small a minority, to sustain a thriving deaf professional theater. To survive, plays about the deaf must be geared to hearing audiences by focusing on universal experiences and conflicts between the hearing and the deaf worlds. (193)

During his recent guest performance at Stanford University in March of 1991, Bragg applauded the recent NTD's appointment of deaf actress Julianna Fjeld to the position of Associate Artistic Director (Bragg 1 Mar. 1991; "Julianna Fjeld" 1).

Deaf Community Response

Reactions to NTD by the deaf community vary. On one side, deaf community members support NTD and their efforts to improve the status of the deaf. Marilyn Gustas (hearing-impaired) said she was "very moved by NTD...the deaf community is very proud of it" (Questionnaire). On the other side is Eric Malzkuhn (hearing-impaired), the first person to adapt plays for the NTD (Zachary 51). Malzkuhn believes that the plays selected by NTD are too verbose, and difficult for the deaf audience to follow stating

Deaf people don't like NTD...Plays are for hearing people. Most schools for the deaf don't have plays, period...So, these kids, can't sell them on going to the theatre. All of a sudden you have NTD for deaf people. Okay, they go. What do they get? Gertrude Stein!...they couldn't read Gertrude Stein! Don't understand it...Why give deaf people that on stage? The choice of plays is tremendously bad. (qtd. in Zachary 51)

Deaf community members react strongly to the casting of a hearing actor in a deaf role. These sentiments were demonstrated during the Los Altos Conservatory Theatre's (L'ACT) production of Children of a Lesser God, when director Scott Williams cast hearing interpreter Alicia Davidovich* in the lead deaf role. The deaf community's nightly picket protest lasted from opening to closing night (Tran 1B).

*Alicia Davidovich performed under her maiden name of Delgado in The Signal Season of Dummy Hoy and Children of a Lesser God. For the purpose of consistency, her married name Davidovich, will be used for the remainder of this

paper.

This is not an isolated incident according to research. In 1979, Sun Sign Company founder Barbara Rae McGee experienced similar criticism and reactions during a production with an integrated cast. Director McGee received numerous complaints against the production by a vocal deaf minority, in spite of the fact that McGee knew sign language and cast deaf actors in the play. McGee expressed a bittersweet disappointment with the deaf community's attempts to nullify her efforts.

While still at California State University at Northridge I learned a lot of Ms. Miles' philosophy in regards to deaf and sign language theatre. I learned that deaf theatre is a realistic presentation of deafness on stage and that sign language theatre is usually established by hearing people. I recall her saying to a class of predominantly deaf people that the majority of the hearing world was not prepared to deal with deafness, yet in time they will be. Until that time, we deaf must allow hearing people to pave the way for us. This concept impressed me very much and since then it has been my goal to work with the deaf theatre company established by deaf people...offering my skills and talents fully.

It was not until I began my own company to keep working in the field that I became aware of the depth and hatred and anger in Ms. Miles' statement. As it happened she was at one of the first Sun Sign performances. I felt proud to say that she taught me much of what I know. Then several weeks later, I learned that she felt the show was terrible and would not recommend Sun Sign Company, or me to anyone. In fact she would encourage people to avoid us and not trust us. To this day I have not had the opportunity nor the courage to confront her about this. I have no concept of her justification for such com-

ments. Since that time my eyes have been opened to more opposition which because of my background I cannot brush aside. Many questions have been posed some answered, some never to be answered. 'What right do I have to establish a Sign Language Theatre Company? Because I am hearing, am I taking advantage of ASL? Do I have enough knowledge of the language to competently translate into it? Should my company operate without deaf members?' (McGee 36-37)

McGee's questions reflect another issue; the lack of trust by the deaf community towards the theatrical hearing community. McGee's motives and efforts were not only questioned, but judged unworthy. A general prejudice appears against this hearing director who cast hearing and deaf actors together.

Budget

Most theatre companies have income forecasts. Projected income includes: projected ticket sales, actual season tickets, actual subsidy, projected program advertisement, and projected concessions for a production (Stern 170-172).

Most theatre companies' production costs include: scripts, costumes, lighting, scenery, props, audio design, makeup, publicity (tickets/programs), petty cash, overhead (rental of the theatre space and labor), and transportation. These projected costs vary with each company, depending on the level of professionalism. The difference between actual revenue and incurred expenses is net profit

or loss. Additional costs result from the need for interpreters in deaf-related theatre. An interpreter's hourly rate can range from \$12 an hour to \$50 an hour, based on experience, skill level, certification, and technical knowledge (Branney, Furnal Interviews).

CHAPTER 5

Field Study Analysis

To this point, the thesis has presented a theoretical framework work to analyze non-traditional casting as it applies to deaf-related theatre. Chapter 1 presented a societal and historical context, Chapter 2 defined the concepts that are the foundation of the analysis, and Chapter 3 described the mechanism of deafness and the relationship between methods of communication and deaf-related theatre. Chapter 4 presented production factors important to the field study analysis in this chapter.

Five field study synopses are presented each followed by an analysis of the play, using traditional casting determinants and non-traditional casting guidelines. How the casting of deaf actors affects production factors for deaf-related theatre types is discussed for deaf theatre (One More Spring), theatre about the deaf (Children of a Lesser God and The Signal Season of Dummy Hoy), and integrated theatre (The Good Person of Szechuan and Quilters).

Criteria for Field Study Selection

The five field study productions were chosen for the following reasons:

1. The productions included both deaf and hearing actors.
2. Each play is full length, complete with plot, sub-plots, leading and supporting characters, conflict and resolution, climax and denouement.
3. Interviews were obtained with artistic directors, producers, lead actors, production staff members, hearing and deaf actors, and audience members.
4. Critiques of the performances were available. These provide documentation germane to production factors and the casting of deaf and hearing actors.
5. The productions are examples of deaf theatre, theatre about the deaf, and integrated theatre as defined in Chapter 2.

One More Spring

Introduction

One More Spring (1990) was adapted by J Ranelli, based upon the novel titled One More Spring by Robert Nathan. The NTD performance took place at Santa Clara University on October 20, 1990. The play is about man's struggle to find purpose and meaning in life.

One More Spring is an example of deaf theatre because deaf actors performed leading roles, while hearing actors played minor characters. Hearing actors interpreted (voiced) the deaf actors' signs, matching vocal inflection, emotion, and facial expression.

Synopsis

One More Spring is the story of two penniless men, Otkar and Rosenberg, who meet in the height of the Depression in New York City and form an unexpected friendship based on need. Otkar owns only an antique bed. Rosenberg's only possession is his violin, which he plays for tips. With these meager tips they buy food.

The two men find temporary shelter in Central Park with the help of the park cleaner, Mr. Sweeny. Rosenberg exchanges violin lessons with Sweeny for shelter in his park storage shed. The two men learn to survive in new ways: Otkar kills a pigeon and steals food from a local shop. Rosenberg protests these acts, but relents to avoid starvation. Both men have difficulty appropriating their old values to this new situation.

Rosenberg is upset when a third person arrives on the scene, amateur prostitute Elizabeth. He strongly objects, and Elizabeth promptly faints from lack of food. She recovers and helps to maintain their home by performing household chores. The not-so-happy trio form an unlikely family.

When Mr. Sweeny arrives for his violin lesson, he discovers Elizabeth. Taken aback, he plays poorly, and leaves the lesson early. After discussing the situation with his wife Mary, Sweeny decides to allow the three to

continue to live in his park shed.

Christmas arrives and the trio celebrates with the Sweenys. After dinner, Rosenberg entertains the group with a violin concerto.

Otkar discovers bank manager Sheridan in the park lake, stuck knee-high in mud. Sheridan was trying to commit suicide because he misused bank funds and lost investors' money. Otkar carries a sick Sheridan back to the shed. Elizabeth nurses Sheridan back to health, selling herself to purchase aspirin and supplies.

When Sheridan returns from hiding to attend church on Easter Sunday, a vindictive crowd tries to kill him. Elizabeth, caught in the cross-fire of a flying brick, receives a serious head wound. Rosenberg carries her to the Sweenys. It is at this moment, as Otkar pleads with Elizabeth not to die, that he realizes his love for her.

Elizabeth lives, and Otkar finds he does believe in something, their love. Rosenberg receives a patron, bank manager Sheridan, who has been reinstated to the bank's board of directors. Rosenberg attends a concert and plans what he will play for his debut, assured of his success.

One More Spring shares "the struggle between what life promises and what it delivers" (NTD Brochure 8), in a world where it is difficult to hold onto cherished dreams and beliefs in order to survive. The three leading

characters discover the fulfillment of their dreams.

Analysis of Casting

One More Spring was performed by the NTD at the Louis B. Mayer Theatre, located on the Santa Clara University campus. Eighty percent of the actors in this production are deaf, and performed with hearing actors. The deaf actors performed leading roles, while hearing interpreters spoke for them in the background.

Chuck Baird played Otkar, the antique dealer, in this production. Baird, an eleven year veteran of NTD, studied painting at the Rochester Institute of Technology. All Baird's theatre experience has been with NTD. Camille L. Jeter, who played Elizabeth, has performed minor roles for NTD. Jeter has worked with the Fairmont Theatre of the Deaf and the Pilobolus Dance Theatre, both NTD affiliates. Violinist Rosenberg was played by Nat Wilson, a Gallaudet University graduate with a B.A. in Drama. Wilson attended NTD's Professional School, performed in 14 NTD productions and has appeared with the Little Theatre of the Deaf on "Sesame Street." Performers with NTD work on a yearly contract, and are selected by artistic director Hays. The three lead actors' primary experience is with NTD. The casting of deaf actors in leading roles shows that deaf actors have the ability to portray a role not related to deafness.

The Style and Type of Play.

Casting determinants in Chapter 2 discuss the importance of the style and type of the play. One More Spring is an example of realism. According to Professor Robert Cohen realism is "the theatre form which seeks to simulate--in scenery, costumes, acting, and dialogue--ordinary life" (233). For example, "costumes worn by characters in the realistic theatre follow the actual dress of "real" persons of similar societal status, dialogue is prized as it re-creates the cadences and expressions of daily life" (175).

The Actor.

Physical Type Versus Acting Ability-- Actress Jeter, a lovely young blonde was cast in the role of heroine Elizabeth. Both Baird and Wilson are handsome middle-aged men with acting talent.

Vocal Quality, Diction, and Vocal Flexibility-- All three leading characters are deaf and used manual reverse interpreting (voicing through an interpreter) to convey their lines. None of the deaf actors spoke in this performance of One More Spring.

Physical Contrast and Unity-- All three characters looked good together on the stage. Baird who is approximately 6', was a nice contrast to Jeter, who is about 5'4", and Wilson, as the middleman, stood approximately

5'7"-5'8" in height. Both men are of sturdy build as this was important to the play's action. The men carried the antique bed around the stage several times. It had to be disassembled, lifted, carried, assembled, and reassembled several times until they discovered Mr. Sweeny's park shed.

The bed became the central focus during several scenes. Both men were able to fit comfortably on the bed. The physical contrast of Jeter's petite stature magnified her frailness when she joined these two stocky characters, Baird and Wilson on the bed. Jeter appeared like a small child sleeping, when sandwiched between the two.

Vocal Contrast-- Once again the deaf actors relied on hearing interpreters to vocally convey their message. Only occasional sounds were made by the deaf actors. For example, when, Jeter was struck by a flying brick, she gasped, moaned, and then fainted. Interpreter Tommy Cheng voiced for Baird and Wilson, while interpreter Kymberli Colbourne voiced for Jeter.

Movement and Timing-- The actors' movements were carefully choreographed and well-timed. For example, a "bit" was made out of assembling and reassembling the bed, piece by piece, that demanded strict coordination. A possible mishap always seemed seconds away. The slapstick humor with the bed seemed to help the characters as they

sought to rebuild their lives after losing everything. Both Wilson and Baird enjoyed this process of assembling and reassembling the bed, as well as the challenge it seemed to provide.

The three leading characters had excellent body coordination and believable interaction. Wilson mimed playing the violin, while an onstage violinist played. Working together, it was believable that a deaf actor was playing the violin. The audience accepted Wilson (Rosenberg), as the concerto virtuoso.

Cooperation and Malleability-- The actors worked together well as an ensemble. For example, the actors picked up their cues, shared the stage, and planned their entrances and exits carefully.

Audience Reaction-- Deaf and hearing audience members waved their hands overhead in a show of appreciation for the performance. Many stayed after the play to sign with friends and meet the actors. Everywhere in the auditorium, signing could be seen. NTD actors took time to sign with audience members, autograph programs, and answer audience members questions.

Summation.

According to the casting determinants outlined in Chapter 2, this play fits the definition of traditional casting, except for the sections on vocal quality and contrast. These two determinants are not a part of a deaf actor's performance, unless the deaf actor speaks.

Because deaf actors play roles similar to their roles in society, the casting for One More Spring can be called societal non-traditional casting. A deaf antique dealer and a prostitute are realistic roles for deaf individuals during the Great Depression. Many people took on new skills during this time in order to survive. Although a deaf musician is a stretch of the imagination, deaf actor Wilson pantomimed playing the violin like a master.

For these reasons the NTD's production of One More Spring meets the traditional casting determinants outlined in Chapter 2 as well as the non-traditional guidelines for societal casting established by Harold Scott.

Blocking

Blocking for a deaf theatre production differs from standard blocking found in most hearing productions. In NTD's production of One More Spring, interpreters used reverse interpreting to voice what the deaf characters signed for a mixed deaf and hearing audience. Deaf audience members watched the deaf actors' signs to under-

stand the dialogue and hearing audience members watched these same deaf actors' signs while listening to the interpreter's words. This is sometimes called simultaneous characterization, since one actor signs while the another actor speaks (Fry 532).

Deaf actors maintained continuous eye contact with each other while signing. Rarely did they turn away from each other during conversation, because they would miss their signed cues. Standard blocking allows hearing actors to break eye contact throughout a scene, perhaps to avoid intimacy with another actor, or to face out toward the audience, thereby revealing their subtext through facial expression. In NTD's One More Spring, the deaf actors did not turn their backs to the audience while signing, because this would have prohibited deaf audience members from seeing their signs (Near Interview). By contrast, this is a common practice when directors block hearing actors.

Lighting and Costumes

Lighting is an important element of any production, but especially for deaf actors who use their hands to sign their lines. Special effort is taken by deaf actors to keep their hands visible at all times. Deaf actors' hands must remain in the light. A parallel situation with hearing actors is the avoidance of dark pockets on stage.

If a hearing actor walks into an unlit or "dark" stage area, his facial expression will be lost to the audience, and possibly the meaning of the play. In order to hear the deaf actor speak, his hands must be seen.

David Hays, artistic director for NTD received his MFA from Boston University. Hays has since received many awards for his technical work as a set and lighting designer (NTD Brochure 6). Judith Green, San Jose Mercury theatre critic compliments his design work, writing,

...Hays' very beautiful lighting. Without it, we would have missed such magical touches as the jeweled starry sky, a campfire and the intangible close quarters of the tool shed, with wet clothes drying and soup on the hob. (12B)

Costumes for One More Spring were simple and plain, apropos for the Great Depression. The costumes worked well to make the deaf actors' signs easy to see by deaf audience members.

Baird wore a solid color top accented with suspenders. Wilson's coat had a small checked pattern that did not interfere with his signing. Jeter's dress had a simple collar and short slightly puffed sleeves which allowed for liberal arm movements required to sign.

Interpreters

Interpreters play a key role in NTD productions. Sometimes they shadow the actor, by remaining physically close to the actor who is signing. Sometimes, an inter-

preter will blend into the scene. For example, in One More Spring, a single interpreter sat by a make-shift fire located near the proscenium arch on stage right. This was an appropriate action for a penniless beggar during the Depression.

Interpreters, Tommy Cheng and Kymberli Colbourne, voiced the deaf actors' lines throughout the performance. Both interpreters matched their voice and facial expressions to those of the deaf actors. The climax of the play occurred when Elizabeth was close to death. At this point, deaf actor Baird pleaded with Elizabeth, crying out for her "not to die!" Cheng's vocalization equaled Baird's signs and facial expressions of anxiety, concern, and helplessness.

Audience Response

Critic Judith Green, avoids any direct criticism of sign language in One More Spring, saying only,

It produces inventive adaptations in which ASL is so limber and mimetic, however, that non-signers can enjoy watching it for the way the actors shape the air with their expressive hands and faces. ("Troupe Gives" 12B)

Ms. Green dismisses One More Spring as overly sentimental, supporting her belief the

Troupe gives voice to the wrong words: Theatre of the Deaf (NTD) needs more good plays. The play borders on tedium...and the jokes are sepia-toned...One sighs to see so good a cast squandering its energy on such bland stuff. ("Troupe Gives" 12B)

Green does not address the acting skills of the performers or the difficulty of producing plays easily translated into ASL, nor does she suggest ideas for where such plays would come from or who would write them.

Deaf audience members signed to each other across the auditorium before the performance. The auditorium was filled with deaf and hearing signers. The noise level of this pre-show deaf and hearing audience was quieter than usual, since the majority of the deaf audience members were signing, and not speaking, to each other.

Budget

Basic funding for NTD is received from the U.S. Department of Education, Grant #H026E80001-90 (NTD Brochure 15). One More Spring was performed last October (1990) to a sold out house of 500 people. The ratio of hearing to deaf audience members (60 percent to 40 percent) was higher than average for this performance. According to David Hays, Artistic Director of NTD about 10 percent of their total audience is deaf.

Children of a Lesser God

Introduction

Children of a Lesser God by Mark Medoff, was first performed on April 25, 1979 in a workshop production at New Mexico State University. It was performed locally at

the Los Altos Conservatory Theatre on May 4, 1989.

This production of Children of a Lesser God is an example of theatre about the deaf, according to the definition in Chapter 2. The playscript deals with deafness as a central theme, with two surrounding issues: the controversy about the correct method of communication for the deaf and job discrimination against the deaf.

This play revolves around deaf Sarah Norman and her hearing instructor James Leeds. In Children of a Lesser God, Medoff explores the theme of relationships between deaf and hearing people, presents the controversy surrounding methods of deaf education, and examines issues of job discrimination.

According to Zachary, "the theme of the play is that no person has the right to deny another person the opportunity of being who he/she is or what he/she might wish to be" (34). Zachary writes that

Three main issues...contribute to the development of the...theme: 1) Disagreements over the use of language modes by hearing impaired people, 2) Contrasting feeling toward the importance of deaf cultural involvement, (and) 3) Family difficulties when the parents are hearing and the child is hearing impaired. (35)

Medoff creates realistic characters. The Oralist position for lipreading and speaking is supported in the character of James Leeds, while Sarah Norman represents a large majority of hearing-impaired individuals who choose

not to speak.

Synopsis

The play opens with Sarah explaining that she had to leave James, to think for herself. James laments that he isn't sure why Sarah left him. The scene shifts to his first day on the job, teaching a boy named Orin (hearing-impaired) how to speak. The school principal, Franklin, enters and begins to tell James about a special student he would like James to work with. Franklin is referring to Sarah, a bright young lady in her mid-twenties, who is deaf from birth. Sarah is working as a maid in a School for the Deaf, even though her test scores show she is exceptionally bright.

James meets Sarah when Principal Franklin directs him to give Sarah speech lessons in his spare time. Their first meeting goes rather poorly, until James realizes Sarah doesn't lipread. As James begins to sign to her, Sarah criticizes his slow signing ability saying, "If you do not sign faster, the hour will be over before you finish your opening speech" (Medoff 12). Sarah leaves the lesson before its conclusion.

During their second lesson, James asks Sarah out to dinner. Sarah is irritated with his attempts to be funny. James accuses her of not wanting to laugh because she's afraid she might lose something (15). Another student

Lydia (hearing-impaired) enters the scene laughing at his joke. Sarah storms out after signing "screw you" to James.

James and Sarah eventually start dating. On their first date, they dine at an Italian restaurant, where Sarah asks James to talk about himself and how he used to pretend to be deaf (19). James describes his parents' relationship and how it was easier not to hear what his mother said. The date ends with a handshake.

Later in their relationship, Sarah reveals that her father, unable to accept her deafness, deserted the family. Mrs. Norman blames Sarah as a result. Sarah discloses past experiences of sexual abuse. She has decided it is easier not to have feelings at all. James responds initially with shock, and then with sensitivity and understanding.

Lydia and James discuss his psychology book during her lesson. Lydia asks him questions, indicating she likes him and would like to go out with him. James is oblivious to her interest.

Sarah and James eventually fall in love and marry. Their romance is troubled with objections from Principal Franklin, Orin, and Lydia. Franklin objects to their romance because of school policy, Orin objects because he wants Sarah to become the spokesperson for his petition

to hire more deaf instructors, and Lydia objects because she is secretly in love with James.

Their marriage is a struggle, because Sarah feels caught between two worlds. James reminds her that they are a team, and unbeatable (43).

Sarah agrees with Orin to speak to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) about the school's hiring practices. Sarah meets with lawyer Edna Klein in a preliminary discussion. Unfortunately, Klein makes several social blunders such as calling Sarah "deaf and dumb," instead of "deaf and doesn't speak" (55).

When Sarah writes a speech about her life, James accuses her of wanting people to feel sorry for her, punctuating the fact that she refuses to speak. In the climax of the play, Sarah erupts in a volcano of unintelligible speech, the only time she speaks throughout the play, and flees to her mother's house. James is moved by her verbalization.

The play concludes with Franklin hiring two additional deaf staff members to accommodate Orin's EEOC petition. Lydia tries unsuccessfully to seduce James during Sarah's absence. James finds Sarah at her mother's house, and both agree to not try and change the other. The play ends with James saying, "I'll help you if you help me" punctuated with the sign for "join" (70).

Analysis of Casting

In this L'ACT production, a hearing actress Davidovich played the role of Sarah. Two hearing-impaired actors, Amy Yu (Lydia) and Jim Bronson (Orin) were cast in hearing-impaired roles. Yu, pre-lingually deaf, is able to speak, and Bronson, post-lingually deaf, can speak clearly with the use of hearing-aids. The rest of the cast was hearing. Davidovich signed Sarah's lines, while David Wood, hearing actor for James Leeds, translated Sarah's speech for the audience.

Director Scott Williams cast hearing actress Davidovich to play the role of Sarah Norman even though Medoff "insists that in any professional production of this play the roles of Sarah, Lydia, and Orin be performed by deaf or hearing-impaired actors" (4). Williams' casting of a hearing actress led to a protest by the deaf community. Deaf community activists wrote letters of protest and picketed every performance. Williams stated that his efforts to discover a local deaf actress for the role were unsuccessful (Interview). Williams obtained Medoff's permission to produce the play with Davidovich, who is also a state-certified interpreter, in the leading role (Zinko A1).

Williams admitted to having known only a little sign language prior to directing Children of a Lesser God.

Williams' sign language experience is limited to one course attended with actor David Wood. Williams confessed that he cast two novice deaf actors, Yu and Bronson, in minor roles because both are able to speak, sign, lipread and/or possess residual hearing (Interview).

When Williams was asked why he didn't cast a deaf individual in the role of Sarah, he said "It would have been condescending to cast someone who was not qualified for the role just because she was deaf" (Shumway 3). Williams disagreed with the deaf community's argument, saying

Acting is about portraying something that you aren't...If you followed their principle, one would have to be a murderer to play Macbeth, or deaf and blind to play Helen Keller. (Lapin 5B)

The Style and Type of the Play.

Children of a Lesser God is another example of realism, even though the play takes place in the mind of James Leeds. The play introduces characters, who become "friends; fellow travelers on the voyage of human discovery with whom we can compare thoughts and feelings" (Robert Cohen 175).

The Actor.

Physical Type Versus Acting Ability-- Davidovich was selected for this role based on her previous experience with L'ACT's productions of Godspell and The Country Girl. According to director Williams, "L'ACT is a reper-

tory company that uses a company of actors for its productions" (Shumway 3).

Davidovich is of medium build and stands 5'. She is an attractive young lady in her mid-to late-twenties with brown hair, a mischievous smile, and interpreter expertise. Critic Scott Peeler, complimented her performance saying "(she) is superb in the role. Her Sarah is both angrier and more tender than other interpretations, including that of Oscar-winner Marlee Matlin" (4). Peeler compliments the couple, saying "together Davidovich and Wood are intense, convincing and moving in their struggle to find a means of true communication" (4). Peeler continues his accolades saying "Also outstanding are Jim Bronson as the militant Orin..." (4).

Vocal Quality, Diction, and Vocal Flexibility-- Davidovich did not speak in this production, although Wood, who played Leeds, has excellent diction and expression. Wood's performance showed his vocal agility as he moved from Sarah's speeches to his own with great ease. According to Peeler "deaf student Amy S. Yu as the love-struck Lydia, is difficult to understand, but manages to convey what she means in her mannerisms and voice pitch" (4).

Physical Contrast and Unity-- Wood is good-looking and stands approximately 5'8." A perfect match for the small, yet fiery Davidovich. Together they made an

attractive couple. Lynda Marcum who played Sarah's mother Mrs. Norman, is in her early forties. Marcum is a matronly woman with frosted hair, and is approximately 5'7" tall, enough to tower over her shorter daughter. Principal Franklin, played by William Davidovich is 6'3", a suitable height for an authority figure. Both Yu and Bronson are slender and somewhat small in stature. Their body types worked well when contrasted with Wood (Leeds) and William Davidovich (Franklin), and added to their believability as students.

The set was raked, allowing shorter actors to increase their stature by standing on the platform. The cast was diverse in height and body type. It is reasonable to conclude that physical contrast and unity worked well in this production.

Vocal Contrast-- All characters in this production spoke their lines except for Davidovich. She signed and Wood interpreted.

Movement and Timing-- Davidovich and Wood showed an ability and ease as they worked together. Their synchronous use of signs and emotions blended into a most believable love story.

Cooperation and Malleability-- The cast members seemed to work well together. In a telephone interview, Marcum commented "It was one of the most special cast

experiences I've ever had, and I've been in over 40 shows. This was one of a handful of shows where I can honestly say I truly enjoyed everyone in the cast" (Interview).

Audience Reaction-- The relationships established during this two hour production were real and believable. Davidovich's performance was convincing, and the fact that she could hear, did not interfere with her performance.

Deaf community members picketed the L'ACT production. Berkeley linguistics professor Susan Rutherford, the executive director of D.E.A.F. Media, a private non-profit group, declared that "the deaf community feels hearing people mirror stereotypes of deaf people in their performances" (Shumway 3).

Summation.

The casting of Children of a Lesser God met the casting determinants in Chapter 2 and also the non-traditional guidelines for societal casting established by Harold Scott. Both Yu and Bronson are hearing-impaired in real life and were full time students. The characters they portrayed were students at an Oralist school, while Yu and Bronson were mainstreamed and attended public high schools. The casting of hearing actress Davidovich into a deaf role can be seen as blind non-traditional casting

because of Davidovich's experience as an interpreter and actress. It is reasonable to conclude that this production meets both traditional casting determinants as well as societal and blind non-traditional definitions of casting.

Blocking

According to hearing actress Lynda Marcum, who played Sarah's mother Mrs. Norman, all the actors used standard blocking, including the profile position. Marcum signed in profile position using ASL. Marcum stated that "when-ever Sarah and James signed to each other, they used a profile position" (Interview).

Lighting and Costumes

Lighting for Children of a Lesser God kept the actors' hands visible throughout the production. Special spot lights were added for the first and last scenes of the play. These two spot lights focused on Norman's hands and Leeds' face. The final lighting effect joined both spots with the final sign "join" (Marcum Interview). House lights were dimmed during the performance.

The actors wore solid colored clothing for this production. Plain colors included beiges, and earth-tone browns and reds. Actors wore their own clothes, without patterns.

Interpreters

The show was interpreted 4 times using ASL. SEE sign or Pidgin sign was not used at all (Marcum Interview). The interpreter for the show was not mentioned in the play program. Even the additional news coverage due to the casting controversy neglected to include the dates when the play would be interpreted.

Communications

Rehearsals for the show were suspended for a week, after L'ACT received letters protesting the casting of Davidovich. When rehearsals resumed, the cast became very close as a result of the surrounding controversy (Davidovich; Marcum; Yu; Interviews/Questionnaire).

Audience Response

For every letter protesting the use of a hearing actress in the deaf role of Sarah Norman, another letter would praise Williams' selection. According to Davidovich, "While protesters picketed every performance, none of them ever attended the show" (Interview). This may not be accurate, since Bronson's parents, who are hearing-impaired, did attend the show (Marcum Interview).

One protester rejected a hearing actress in a deaf role stating, "Its time for deaf people to play deaf roles" (Tran 8B). Cathy Haas, who is a deaf faculty member in the Linguistics Department at Stanford University

stated, "I believe strongly only deaf people should play deaf roles" (Interview). Marilyn Gustas, a local deaf community member, expressed a similar sentiment, responding in a written statement, "The only thing I'm against, is that hearing people use hearing actors to play deaf-- cuz they really don't know nothing about deaf culture" (Questionnaire).

Actor Yu agrees that the deaf community wants to see deaf actors in deaf roles because of their intimate understanding of deafness and deaf-related issues. Yu points up the deaf community's fear of losing control to hearing decision makers who lack this knowledge. She writes that there is

resistance from the deaf community-if a hearing actor takes up a deaf role without great knowledge or care for the deaf culture. Sometimes the deaf culture is too scared to let the hearing person be involved with the deaf role in a way to get "Control" of the deaf community. (Otherwise, it wouldn't be such a problem). (Questionnaire)

The audience response from the deaf community to L'ACT's production of Children of a Lesser God was negative according to Yu. She writes that it was

not a 100 percent negative...at the beginning, when Williams chose Davidovich to play the role of Sarah, the deaf community won't accept that. (Naturally...) they would have to make/force us (L'ACT) to cancel the play. But in a way, Williams made a deal with them and they cooled off a bit...There were several deaf audience (members) during the final performance, and they loved it. So, that's why I cannot say it's 100

percent negative. (Questionnaire)

Deaf community members picketed the L'ACT production of Children of a Lesser God because they wanted a deaf actress to play the role of Sarah Norman, despite the casting of two hearing-impaired actors, Yu and Bronson, in major supporting characters, Lydia and Orin. Picketers protested Williams' choice of a hearing actress without acknowledging these actors.

By protesting L'ACT's right to cast a hearing actress in a deaf role and ignoring the two hearing-impaired cast members, the picketers alienated themselves from the theatre group that made an effort to include them. Their demand for a deaf actor to play Sarah Norman had a negative effect. In a telephone interview with L'ACT artistic director Dr. Doyme Mraz, he stated that

The door is closed. I have tried to work with the Deaf Community and all I get is trouble. I'm not a fool. I don't keep banging my head against a wall. Frankly, I don't want to have anything to do with them. (Interview)

Budget

According to L'ACT artistic director and producer Doyme Mraz, Children of a Lesser God was less expensive to produce than The Signal Season of Dummy Hoy (Interview). Children of a Lesser God sold very well, due to increased publicity surrounding the controversial casting of a hearing actress. According to Davidovich, "Public-

ity is publicity. Even the negative publicity helped to sell the show" (Interview).

According to Davidovich, she received \$500 for her performance, which included teaching the actor who played James Leeds (Wood) how to sign (Interview). The cost of interpreting the show 4 times, totaled approximately \$240-300.

The Signal Season of Dummy Hoy

Introduction

The Signal Season of Dummy Hoy (1986) by Allen Meyer and Michael Nowak was performed by Los Altos Conservatory Theatre on September 21, 1990.

This production is an example of theatre about the deaf, because it provided an acting role for a deaf actor and deals with deafness as a central theme. Surrounding deaf issues were addressed in this production such as acceptance, discrimination, and isolation.

This play is the story of William Hoy, a deaf baseball player, who is credited with the development of umpire hand signals use in baseball today. The theme of the play deals with issues of acceptance for the deaf in society and the courage demanded to pursue a chosen career.

Synopsis

The play begins at the tryouts for the team in Oshkosh, 1886. Manager Selee warns his team members that the new center fielder is different. While searching for the right words, William Hoy arrives. When the team members discover Hoy is deaf, they are skeptical of accepting him on to the team until he demonstrates his skill as a ball player. William Hoy is nicknamed "Dummy" by his teammates because he doesn't speak.

Speaker Hoy emerges to talk with Dummy. She is Dummy's conscience, challenging him to pursue his dreams, drown his fears, and make peace with close family members. She and Dummy discuss his every plan. Dummy worries about his ability to make friends, when Tommy, the right fielder, appears and asks if he would like to room with him. The pitcher Press begins to learn sign language so he and Dummy can communicate (Meyer and Nowak 20).

Shortstop Tyler, a loud mouth member of the team, dislikes Dummy because of his baseball skill and his deafness. Tyler's side kick, Mutt, half heartedly follows his lead.

Trouble begins when the umpire, named Judge, objects to having a deaf ball player in the league: "We got rules" and exits with "I'm telling ya (Selee). He (Dummy) don't belong here" (29). Dummy is allowed to play, but

Judge does everything he can to discourage him. Judge holds his call, whether the pitch is a ball or a strike, until the last moment. This causes Dummy to strike out, or miss the next pitch, since Dummy has to look at Judge's mouth to lipread the call.

While trying to help Dummy receive the correct information from the umpire the team members come up with the system that is used today for baseball signals. Dummy's playing improves and the team goes to first place in the league.

A local reporter named A.C. arrives to do a story about William "Dummy" Hoy. She believes her readers would be interested in learning about Dummy, the new center fielder. She and Dummy communicate with pen, paper, pantomime, and a few ASL signs.

Tyler purposely hits Dummy during batting practice with a pitch. Eventually, manager Selee fires Tyler from the team due to his drinking problem, coupled with his poor treatment of Dummy. The play ends with Dummy teaching Judge the signs for two balls and two strikes. Next Dummy shows Judge the sign for 'You're Out!,' and "You're Safe!" Judge builds each phrase, climaxing with the exuberant arm movement for "You're Safe!"

Analysis of Casting

In order to appease the deaf community's demand for a deaf actor in a deaf role, Scott Williams promised to rectify this in a future L'ACT production (Interview; Yu Questionnaire). Williams chose The Signal Season of Dummy Hoy, a story about deaf baseball player William Hoy, to keep his promise. L'ACT produced the show which ran from September 6-22, 1990. The eleven performances took place in the Foothill College Little Theatre, which seats approximately 125 audience members.

Director Scott Williams cast deaf actor Dean Patrick Cannavino in the title role for this production. Cannavino performed with NTD for two years and was the recipient of the Jeffery Joseph Citation as best actor in Chicago in 1987 (The Signal Season of Dummy Hoy Program 2). This L'ACT production marked Cannavino's third performance in the title role (Richards 28). According to Williams, Cannavino did an outstanding job and was easy to work with. Williams depended on interpreter Davidovich for the majority of his communications with Cannavino (Interview).

The Type and Style of the Play.

The Signal Season of Dummy Hoy is another example of realism, presenting the "audience with an abundance of seemingly real-life 'evidence' and permits each spectator

to arrive at his or her own conclusions" (Robert Cohen 175).

The Actor.

Physical Type Versus Acting Ability-- Cannavino is an attractive young man in his early thirties. He is in good physical condition and portrayed a believable Dummy Hoy.

Vocal Quality, Diction, and Vocal Flexibility-- Cannavino did not speak in this production, but signed his lines. Other hearing cast members spoke their lines. The team members were easy to understand, and their vocal qualities matched the roles they portrayed. For example, Mutt, has a soft tenor voice, which made him seem more vulnerable and reliant on his friend Tyler. Shortstop Tyler was the biggest team member, at approximately 6' and had the strongest voice. His strong physique and vocal capabilities contrasted with other team members, who were generally shorter in size. Since Tyler played the "bully," his physical and vocal qualities worked well to establish his tough character.

According to cast member McCaw, "Dean can lipread and talk, but he is not easily understandable" (Interview).

Physical Contrast and Unity-- Davidovich was able to transform herself believably into Dummy's Mother. The team members were physically fit, slender young men in their early to late twenties.

Vocal Contrast-- Davidovich has an alto range compared to soprano Molly Stickney, who played reporter A.C.

Movement and Timing-- The pantomimed movements for the ball players included realistic pitches, catches, runs and slides. Although the stage space was much smaller than an actual playing field, the movements were well executed and timed.

Cooperation and Malleability-- The cast performed as a team, both off and on the stage. Cast members went bowling after rehearsal and performances. A cast reunion was recently held in July, 1991 (Draper Interview).

Audience Reaction-- The audience seemed thrilled to be a part of Hoy's story. The show sold out every performance (Williams Interview).

Summation.

Dummy Hoy is an example of traditional casting and meets the guidelines for conceptual non-traditional casting. Deaf actor Cannavino is an avid baseball player, and his portrayal of deaf William Hoy gave the play a greater resonance. Whether or not a deaf actor portrays the character William Hoy, the message of the play remains the same. Deaf actor Cannavino as "Dummy," enlarged the hearing cast's perspective of the deaf world. Several of the cast members learned to sign as a result of this interaction (Draper, Hoffman Interviews).

Blocking

Standard blocking was used in this production. Deaf actor Cannavino signed several times to Speaker Hoy using a profile position. One interpreter signed the show using manual reverse, (the interpreter signs a hearing actor's speech). The interpreter did not sign Cannavino's lines. Since deaf audience members were not able to see the signs, it is reasonable to assume that the meaning of his dialogue was lost since the profile position limits the audience's ability to see the signs. Team member Woodrow, played by Jeff Draper recalls, "I only sign one line in the play. I signed it using a profile position" (Interview).

Lighting and Costumes

House lights were dimmed during the performance.

Alicia Davidovich played the character of Speaker Hoy voicing Cannavino's signs for hearing audience members during each performance. Davidovich recalls trying on over half a dozen blouses to find the "right" one. As with any interpreter, the blouse or shirt needs to be plain for the signs to be clearly seen and thereby communicated. "We finally settled on a plain black blouse, featuring a simple neckline with elbow length sleeves. Many signs take place between the wrist and the elbow, so this area needs visibility for signs to be seen by deaf

audience members" (Interview).

The team members all wore beige uniforms with green numbers and letters (Draper, McCaw, Williams Interview).

Interpreters

The Signal Season of Dummy Hoy was interpreted for 4 performances. The interpreter used manual reverse interpreting for hearing actors, which means the interpreter signed the conversations of the hearing actors for deaf audience members. Davidovich, as Speaker Hoy, used reverse interpreting, voicing for deaf actor Cannavino's monologues.

The interpreter was always visible to the audience. She followed the hearing actors who were speaking and became part of the onstage action. Sometimes the interpreter stood or walked directly behind an actor on a raised platform to sign their dialogue. The interpreter wore neutral colors, but never black (Draper Interview).

Act I ends with two separate, yet concurrent onstage dialogues: manager Selee argues with umpire Judge to give Dummy a fair shake, and team members disagree whether Dummy should continue to play on the team. In order for the dialogue at the end of Act I to be communicated to a deaf audience, two interpreters were needed. Since L'ACT chose to use only one interpreter for their signed shows, it is reasonable to conclude that deaf audience members

were unable to completely understand the dialogue at the end of Act I. While hearing audience members could observe, although not hear every word spoken, deaf audience members would not be able to understand multiple dialogues without the addition of another interpreter.

Without proper interpretation, deaf audience members were unable to follow the story line. The addition of another interpreter or modification of this scene (by sequencing one section of dialogue after another) would have corrected this problem.

Communications

The majority of cast members socialized throughout the rehearsal period. Cannavino, waited until he got to know the cast members before he spoke with them. According to Derek McCaw, who played catcher D.S., Cannavino is not completely deaf. "He has 20-30 percent hearing in his right ear" (Interview). McCaw said, he could talk with Cannavino if he directed his voice toward him at a certain angle (Interview). Two staff members, stage manager Carol Ann Hoffman, and house manager Mark Hager began attending sign language classes as a result of their interaction with Cannavino (Hoffman Interview).

Publicity for this production failed to include the dates of interpreted performances, and the names of the interpreters were not included in the play program. It is

reasonable to conclude that many deaf community members, who were interested in such productions, may have missed the show.

Audience Response

Within the first 5 minutes of the show, a group of eight deaf audience members left the theatre. They expressed discontent with the on-stage signing. According to stage manager Carol Ann Hoffman, the prologue was staged behind a scrim. This introductory prologue masked the interpreters' hands, making it impossible for deaf audience members to see the signs, (hence understand the story). Since the deaf audience members were unaware that the remaining play took place in front of the scrim, they exited after what seemed to them a reasonable amount of time (Interview).

Director Williams expressed disappointment with the group's impatience, and admitted that stronger lighting could have made the signs easier to see. Williams chose to stage actors onstage for the prologue and Scene 1. The actors for the prologue appeared behind the scrim and spoke, while the actors for Scene 1 were frozen in a preset position. Immediately after dialogue in the prologue ended, Scene 1 began. Williams was reluctant to draw attention to these characters by bringing the lights up and taking the focus away from the prologue newscast.

Williams later admitted it was a poor decision that could have been easily rectified by stronger stage lighting (Interview).

Budget

According to L'ACT producer Dr. Doyne Mraz, The Signal Season of Dummy Hoy made money, but it cost more to do the show, so we (L'ACT) broke even" (Interview). Director Williams concurred with this, saying, "The show sold very well" (Interview).

Cannavino received a salary for his performances, plus housing for the entire rehearsal and performance schedule, although he was not paid actor's equity rate (Williams Interview). According to Davidovich, Cannavino also received reimbursement for his translation of the script into sign language (Interview).

The Good Person of Szechuan

Introduction

The Good Person of Szechuan, by Bertolt Brecht, was performed by Berkeley Repertory Company during May and June of 1987. It is an expressionistic drama, written during 1938-1940, stressing the subjective, romantic, and visionary. Brecht combines satire with music in this production.

The Good Person of Szechuan is an example of inte-

grated theatre because deaf actress Freda Norman played the dual lead role of Shen Te/Shui Ta, with hearing actors in the other lead roles. The issue of deafness was not included in this play production. Throughout these performances, both deaf and hearing actors used ASL to communicate.

Synopsis

The story takes place in a half-westernized province of China. The play theme is the struggle between the desire to make a profit and the costs of doing good.

Three gods are looking for a place to stay for the evening. Water seller Wong leads them to the house of prostitute Shen Te. Wong exclaims, "She can't say no." (Bentley 409)

Shen Te debates between paying her rent by taking in a customer for the evening or assisting the gods. She relents, taking the gods in for the night. The gods repay her kindness with a thousand silver dollars.

Shen Te purchases a tobacco shop and is immediately besieged by greedy relatives. An overpriced Carpenter demands payment for shelves he installed in Shen Te's newly acquired tobacco shop. Shen Te is unable to pay what he asks, after spending all of the gods' money to purchase the shop. Shen Te transforms herself, during a speedy costume change, into her business-wise male cousin

Shui Ta, who rids her of the carpenter. Shen Te cannot seem to control her relatives, but disguised as her male cousin Shui Ta, she can.

The gods continue on their journey and occasionally ask Wong the news about Shen Te. Meanwhile, the carpenter returns for the remainder of his payment. Shui Ta pays him a fraction of their worth and escorts him to the door of the tobacco shop with the aid of a local policeman, who suggests to Shui Ta, that Shen Te marry for money to solve her problems.

Shen Te resolves to marry the rich widower Shu Fu, when she meets a handsome unemployed pilot Yang Sun, who is busy trying to kill himself, but without much success. They fall in love and Shen Te becomes pregnant.

Wong reports to the gods how Shen Te has become "the angel of the slums" (439). She gives rice to the poor and sometimes provides them with tobacco at no cost. The gods are saddened by her cousin Shui Ta's treatment of the carpenter.

Shen Te borrows \$200 from two friends, the Old Man and Old Woman, to pay the shop's rent. When Shen Te discovers the only obstacle to Yang Sun becoming a pilot is \$500, she donates the old couple's money to Yang Sun when he promises to marry her.

Yang Sun visits the tobacco shop and talks about Shen

Te with Shui Ta, not recognizing her disguise. Yang Sun reveals he doesn't love Shen Te, he only wants her money to become a pilot.

Even when Shen Te knows her beloved Yang Sun is untrue, she forsakes the old couple to marry him. When Shui Ta does not arrive at the ceremony with the \$500, Yang Sun refuses to marry Shen Te.

The gods appear to water-seller Wong in a dream. Wong pleads with them to help Shen Te, but the gods refuse, believing everything will turn out and they should not interfere. Shu Fu, the wealthy widower, comes to Shen Te's rescue by writing her a blank check so she can pay the shop rent.

Yang Sun goes to work for Shui Ta, pays off his \$500 debt, and eventually tries to buy the shop. Shen Te is now able to repay the Old couple. When Yang Sun is unable to find Shen Te, he has Shui Ta arrested for murder. Shen Te disguised as Shui Ta is lead to prison by the police.

Wong approaches the gods. They are tired from their journey. "The first (god) no longer has a hat, the third has lost a leg, all three are barefoot" (Bentley 484). Wong pleads with them to help him find Shen Te, thinking Shui Ta may have murdered her.

Shui Ta is brought before the magistrate, who are the gods disguised as judges. Shui Ta has the courtroom

cleared, where she confesses that she is both Shui Ta and Shen Te. As both, she can fulfill her mission in life, to share with the poor and continue her profitable business venture.

The gods are overjoyed at finding Shen Te, but protest helping her, stating they are leaving on the next cloud. Shen Te alone must decide her fate. The gods depart, leaving Shen Te alone and crying for help.

Analysis of Casting

The Berkeley Repertory Company produced The Good Person of Szechuan, codirected by current artistic director Sharon Ott and Timothy Near. This show had an extensive run of 43 performances which took place from May 15th through June 28, 1987. Near cast deaf actress Freda Norman in the lead role of the prostitute Shen Te. Near was familiar with Norman's performance capabilities, having worked together in NTD. Near, in fact, had been looking for a play for over 14 years, that could use an actress like Norman and a script by Brecht, to express style and politics simultaneously (Interview; Tully F3). "What better way to make Brecht palatable, by joining his message with symbolic signs" (Interview).

Norman played the dual role of Shen Te/Shui Ta in Berkeley Rep's production. Hearing actress Sharon Omi voiced Norman's lines as she signed. Actress Omi sha-

dowed Norman throughout the performance, following her blocking. The rest of the cast was hearing and simultaneously signed and spoke their lines, giving Norman her cues. All actors signed and spoke except Norman, who signed, and Omi who spoke.

Critic Jon Carroll, of the San Francisco Chronicle, asked Norman in an interview, "Has it gotten easier for deaf performers?" Norman responded, "Certainly. Until very recently, they wanted us to play, you know, poor little deaf people. Pathetic roles. What I want to do now is comedy; I want to be silly on stage. I am not a poor little deaf person. I'm just a deaf person" (79).

San Jose Mercury News theatre critic, Judith Green highlights Berkeley Rep's casting as non-traditional.

The decision to give the title role to a leading actress from the NTD is just one more instance of non-traditional casting in a production that takes the concept for granted. But it may be the most important one. (25)

Near with her NTD background was able to lead and coordinate the necessary elements for a successful production. Near taught cast members to simultaneously act and sign, and directed interpreters who in turn signed to Norman. Near also coordinated the time-consuming script translation of The Good Person of Szechuan into ASL. It was important that hearing actors give accurate cues to Norman. The greatest difficulty of such

a translation, as mentioned earlier is that ASL lacks a written secondary code for signs.

The Style and Type of Play.

According to Professor Robert Cohen, The Good Person of Szechuan, is an example of "the theatre of alienation, or distancing...the sprawling, socially engaged 'epic' Theatre of Alienation (which) concentrates on man's potential for growth and his capacity to effect social change" (Theatre 195). Cohen goes on to explain Brecht's alienation technique, writing,

the actor was asked to alienate himself, or distance himself, from the character he played-- to demonstrate his character rather than to embody that character in a realistic manner. (196)

The Actor.

Physical Type Versus Acting Ability-- According to Critic Elliot Smith, "Norman is a powerful actress and even conventional drama would be enhanced by her presence" (6). Editor Leo Stutzin compliments her, saying, "Norman is brilliant...communicating vividly through sign and gesture while her words are spoken by Sharon Omi..." (C3).

Vocal Quality, Diction, and Vocal Flexibility-- Critic David Armstrong states that "Omi is superb in the speaking version of the lead role...her face and voice are marvelously expressive" (F1).

Physical Contrast and Unity-- According to critic

Judith Green, "the show is a victory for color-blind casting, in which a mixed company of white, black, and Asian actors play roles irrespective of ethnic background" (Living). Green goes on to say,

The production's cast includes, among its 24 members, 4 black actors, 2 Asian Americans, an American Indian, and a deaf performer in the title role. (25)

Vocal Contrast-- Norman signs for the dual role Shen Te/Shui Ta and Omi voices. Critic Marshall Fine elaborates, writing that Omi "...uses a different voice for each character, with Norman changing her body language to play the male cousin" (D1). Critic Jon Carroll in an interview with Norman, discovered the placement of signs varies for men and women, when Norman explained that "men always sign with their elbows out...They rarely touch their bodies, in fact blue color men tend to sign very low...but that's just not appropriate for the theatre. But the gestures must be more abrupt; Shui Ta is a man of action" (79).

Movement and Timing-- Critic Lawrence Enscoe, complimented Omi, translator for Norman, writing that "(Omi) has developed the ability to nearly disappear...her feet whisper across the stage and through action without notice. She is tied to Norman like a shadow, and her powerful delivery captures the fluidity and snapping intensity of Norman's signing."

Cooperation and Malleability-- There was a reluctance on the part of many hearing actors to sign and speak. Due to the addition of signing, more time had to be spent for script translation and teaching hearing actors to sign (Near Interview).

Critic Marshall Fine mentions, that the "combined efforts of Norman and Omi shine so strongly that the evening seldom drags. Together they convincingly portray the split character of Shen Te/Shui Ta" (D1).

Audience Reaction-- For the most part critics praise Freda's performance, although some expressed dislike for the hearing actor's signing, stating that is "threatens to produce information overload" (Armstrong F1), and it is "a noble experiment but it doesn't work (De Pinto 13).

Summation.

Casting a deaf actress in a dual lead role for The Good Person of Szechuan is an example of blind non-traditional casting according to NTCP guidelines, casting the best actress for the role of Shen Te/Shui Ta. Casting deaf actress Norman in the lead role is also an example of conceptual non-traditional casting because Norman gave the play greater resonance. It is also an example of cross-cultural non-traditional casting because hearing actors signed their lines, placing them into the deaf culture, where signing is an everyday method of communi-

cation.

Blocking

Blocking is somewhat modified when using a deaf actor, because the audience as well as the other actors need to see the signs. When codirector Sharon Ott asked Norman to face upstage and sign her lines, Norman refused, saying "A deaf person would never walk away and sign; it just isn't done in deaf conversation, no matter how strong the disagreement" (Near Interview). Codirector Near acted as an arbitrator for the situation to modify the blocking, so Norman's signs could be seen and codirector Otts' blocking instructions followed.

Norman varied the position of her signing to reflect the difference between her male character Shui Ta, and her female character Shen Te.

Lighting and Costuming

San Francisco Chronicle theatre critic Bernard Weiner disagreed with the directorial choice to

light the audience throughout--it may be someone's idea of a Brechtian alienation technique, but it's so self-conscious and annoying as to be self-defeating. (95)

The reason to light the house throughout the performance was explained by Norman in an interview with Jacqueline Tully of the San Francisco Chronicle. Norman revealed that "it helped me to see the audience. A deaf person needs continual eye contact. Fortunately, the

theatre is not completely blacked out during the show, so I can see the audience" (F3).

Another reason to keep the audience house lights on throughout the production was to enable deaf audience members to see the signs more clearly. Miles and Fant disclose that

hearing persons, who can allow their eyes to wander during a presentation, may not realize how tiring it is on the muscles of the eye when a person has to maintain a constant focus on the stage. Dim lighting blurs the edges of the signs, and adds to the strain, particularly since actors tend to speed up the pace of their signing on stage. (44)

Norman was costumed in a solid color short sleeved top, which allowed for maximum arm movement.

Interpreters

Two full-time interpreters were chosen to work during the entire rehearsal period for The Good Person of Szechuan. Interpreters signed for a maximum of 1-2 hours before requiring a break to rest their hands. Since a regular rehearsal period may last as long as 4 hours, both interpreters could break at different times, allowing for a complete rehearsal period.

By using the same interpreters, a consistent method of communication was provided for lead actress Norman. In addition, since most blocking builds on previous rehearsals, interpreters could reference earlier information without redundant input from directors. Consistent

interpreting kept the rehearsal process on schedule. Finally, this method allowed the interpreters to become an integral part of the cast, understand the play; its characters, and work with the director's concept of the play. Unfortunately there is no mention of the interpreters (names), who worked so closely with this production in the play's program or even in the 22 critiques obtained. The only Bay Area newspaper to mention signed performance dates was the San Jose Mercury News (Green 12B; Morrison C6; Runion D9). The play was interpreted once in SEE sign (6/24/87) and twice in ASL (5/31 & 6/5/87).

Communications

According to Berkeley Repertory Theatre business manager Paul Tetreault "an extra week of rehearsal was added for the actors to learn ASL" (Interview).

Near discussed some communications difficulties in a candid interview. The main problem was providing adequate time for hearing actors to learn sign language. According to Near, some of the actors refused or were unable to learn the signs for their lines. Other actors had great difficulty signing and speaking simultaneously. Just as some actors have the ability to sing and dance, others do not. Actors at Berkeley Repertory Theatre Company were no exception; either the actors picked up sign language

easily, or they did not and required extra coaching.

According to expert signers, the time required to become a proficient signer averages 1-2 years. Near's expectation for the actors to learn sign in such a relatively short period of time can be seen as overly ambitious.

San Francisco Chronicle critic Bernard Weiner, stated that many of the actors appeared awkward in their use of sign:

They do not use ASL, but some odd kind of inconsistently applied shorthand. Indeed one could even question the necessity for this signing ...All that gesturing and motion soon becomes superfluous, distracting, annoying and finally, overkill...The other actors talked their lines and made a few hand signals, certainly not enough for the deaf character to comprehend the meaning of the speeches. (95)

This example highlights the lack of understanding by the general public of ASL. Because Weiner did not know sign, he drew an erroneous conclusion based on an equally erroneous assumption; the number of signs equals the same number of words. (ASL is often able to communicate complex sentences and meanings with one sign).

Although Weiner admits the need for Norman to receive her cues from other actors, he remained adamant on a more realistic form of communication, where hearing actors gesture naturally. "...I admit that it's quite possible I'm missing the forest for the trees, that I'm so hung up

on theatrical logic and realism that I can't suspend my disbelief and just let go for a semi-Brechtian device" (95).

Norman could not receive or respond authentically to cues given with only a single sign. Granted, the sign language level of the hearing actors varied, but to have only proficient actors sign is not the answer, since this would create confusion for the audience. Either all the actors sign or they don't. (Near Interview)

In an interview, Near stated that if Norman had been required to take her cues from a flashing pen light operated by the stage manager, Norman most likely would not have been able to perform in the show. If Norman received such cues, she would be miss the on-stage actors' expressions, and her response would be rote, instead of reactionary. Most performers feed off each other's energy to gain and give the reactions necessary for their performance on stage. If Norman could not focus on the other hearing actors who were signing, her routine reactions would lack the spontaneity which makes theatre so exciting and alive.

How an audience reacts to on-stage actors will affect their performance. Hearing actors are used to holding for laughs, by listening for audience laughter, pausing just before it crests, and then saying their next line. This

potential problem for the deaf actor was handled uniquely by Norman who disclosed

I was able to hold for laughs by following the onstage hearing actors' eye contact. I have to deal with the other actors; if there's a laugh, they look away from me until the laughter is finished, then they re-establish eye contact, so I know I can go on. (Carroll 79).

One difficulty Norman experienced with hearing actress Omi, was that Omi would often voice the lines before Norman signed them. It was disconcerting to Norman to have the spoken lines precede her signs. Usually, a voice interpreter will follow the lead of the main speaker, in this case signer. Since Omi memorized the lines Norman would speak, she often jumped ahead of Norman's signs (Near Interview). One Critic who evaluated Omi's performance wrote, "Omi...does a terrific job here, matching her lines to Norman's actions" (Morrison C6). Another Critic Judy Richler comments that "...Omi delivers her lines with the appropriate emotions, yet doesn't intrude upon Norman's interpretation. It's a fine line Omi treads with precision and certainty" (Section B). These critics, unfamiliar with sign language, inaccurately reviewed the quality of Omi's voicing (reverse interpreting), as seen in differing accounts of performance. What Norman experienced and what the critics saw, differs greatly.

Audience Response

Deaf audience attendance was greatest on the weekends. Current business manager for Berkeley Repertory Theatre Paul Tetreault reiterated, "The deaf community works during the week, just like hearing people, and attend the bulk of their social activities on the weekend. The production was well received by the deaf community" (Interview).

One audience member, Virginia Drake, theatre arts instructor at West Valley College in Saratoga, was spellbound by Norman's signing. However, it was only Norman's signing that was memorable. Drake did not recall the other actors' signing (Interview).

Although critic Bernard Weiner regaled the hearing actors' signing, he was fascinated with actress Norman. Weiner wrote,

Norman is a most expressive actress, making great use of gestures, grimaces, eyes, and non-verbal sounds--she's especially effective as the tough Shui Ta, with her pinched face and "masculine" movements. (95).

Critic David Armstrong complained about the addition of signing to the performance, "the sometimes cumbersome mechanics of having actors speak and sign simultaneously--the 23 hearing actors also make some use of sign--threatens to produce information overload" (F1).

Budget

When asked whether The Good Person of Szechuan was a financial success, present business manager Tetreault responded, "We are a non-profit organization and technically do not make a profit" (Interview). He politely declined to provide a budget breakdown, although he did reveal that "the cost of the interpreters was \$400 per show, totalling \$1,600 for performances alone" (Interview). This cost did not include the 6-7 week rehearsal period scheduled with both actors and interpreters (Near Interview).

According to Tetreault,

There were 4 signed performances with a house capacity of 400. Approximately 50 seats were reserved for deaf audience members per performance. There was 1 weekday and evening performance, and 2 evening performances; which sold out. The weekday matinee and evening did not sell as well, only around 95 percent of the tickets sold. (Interview)

The additional cost of interpreting can be a deterrent to producing integrated theatre. Near, codirector for The Good Person of Szechuan, comments,

It cost a lot of money. It was very expensive. Norman wanted to have, and rightly so, an interpreter there all the time. Norman was playing the lead, so she needed an interpreter there to tell her what was happening 8 hours a day. We usually had two interpreters a day...I know Berkeley Rep wouldn't do this type of production again. The production was costly and a huge hassle. The time demands for the interpreter

were burdensome. I just remember the business manager saying at the time, and I quote, 'Never again. Don't talk to me about using deaf actors.' (Interview)

Near laments the limited pool of deaf performers available for such productions, and the prohibitively high cost of interpreters. Whenever Near would discuss a similar the possibility of producing another show utilizing deaf and hearing actors with the resident business manager, the response, due to the interpreter costs, was the same, "Never again" (Near Interview).

Quilters

Introduction

The musical Quilters (1986), by Molly Newman and Barbara Damashek, opened at the Jack Lawrence Theatre in New York City on September 25, 1984. This musical was directed by coauthor Barbara Damashek, who also wrote the music and lyrics. The Author's Notes specify that seven actresses portray Sarah McKendree Bonham and her six daughters: Jenny, Margaret, Lisa, Dana, Jody, and Jane (Newman and Damashek 6). Sometimes the women play different characters within a scene unless specified. This performance took place at the Hillbarn Theatre in Redwood City during July of 1990.

Quilters is another example of integrated theatre because deaf actress Amy Yu played a leading role with

six hearing lead actors. The issue of deafness was not included in this play production. Throughout these performances both deaf and hearing actors used ASL to communicate.

Quilters tells a fascinating story of pioneer women who traveled westward to Kansas in covered wagons, and claimed their homestead. Their stories match the patchwork found in these quilts of different colors, fabrics, and textures. A firsthand account of the hardships and difficulties are told while sewing on a quilt. These seven women also reveal their struggles while performing everyday chores from cleaning house to harvesting crops.

Synopsis

The play begins with a story of how quilting is a part of these women's lives. Patterns of family life from birth to death abound in these quilts. Sarah explains the pattern in her quilt is called a shadow block, "I'll set off my bright patterns with a solid dark block of fabric with no design to it at all" (16).

Throughout the play these seven women enact shadow blocks as "essentially nonverbal representations of the darker sides of women's rites of passage" (16). The first is the act of childbirth and the second a song of childhood.

Songs, dialogue, and monologues are intersperse

throughout the play. Some of these recount humorous events juxtaposed with tragic ones. One song recounts the windmill daddy built. One story recalls the Baptist preacher who bought an entire bolt of red calico, so his daughters could make quilts. Another story tells the trauma of a young mother who roams the streets with her two children; a skinny and starving daughter and her dead 9-day old baby brother.

Next, the McKendree family shifts through life passages; childhood, adolescence, marriage, and motherhood. Many young women believed that marriage would bring adventures, but discovered more housework brought about by an evergrowing family.

Sarah reminisces about the pine log house built by her husband. "Every room has a window and a door and there's a dandelion carpet growing through the floor" (47). Sarah remembers her 25 years of marriage, singing "Never Grow Old" (50).

Each daughter has a story to tell. Katherine reveals her inability to have children and Cassie vividly recalls her husband's death, and how it was quilting that helped her through her grief. All the women join in a doxology prayer, singing "The Lord Don't Rain Down Manna in my Yard" (52).

The "Crosses and Losses" section shows the women

fighting the forces of nature, and describes how prairie fires could destroy lifetime achievements in a matter of seconds.

In the final segment of the play, Sarah presents a legacy quilt, which is passed from generation to generation. Together the women sing, "Pieces of lives, all the inspiration, emotion, devotion of our lives" (58). The play ends with a song containing a quote from Proverbs 31, "Give her the fruit of her hands and let her own work praise her in the gates." The final stanza of "Hands Around" encourages these women to hold fast to each other for courage and support, so that "at evening time, there shall be light" (59).

Quilters' theme proclaims the sisterhood of women and the importance of this relationship.

Analysis of Casting

According to director Scott Williams, open auditions were held for both the hearing and deaf community at large. Williams received little response from the deaf community, so he cast deaf actress Yu by default (Interview). Williams had directed Yu previously in L'ACT's production of Children of a Lesser God. Yu was interested in joining the cast of Quilters. According to Williams, Yu has residual hearing and is able to communicate without an interpreter. Yu signed the majority of her lines.

The rest of the hearing cast signed enough to give Amy her cues. Several of the songs were signed.

Actor Yu was one of seven cast members in the musical Quilters. The script assigns one role; the mother Sarah, while remaining roles are selected at the discretion of the director. Many of the songs and events that occur during the production, such as the covered wagon journey, find the women playing multiple roles, such as a team of horses, a prairie fire, or celebrating a wedding with a barn square dance. All the actors participated in choreographed movement. Sometimes the actors mimed the actions of animals or inanimate objects, such as horses or a wagon. Yu fully participated in this all-female production, signing her lines and songs.

The Type and Style of the Play.

Quilters is a combination of realism and musical theatre. The actors told their story using monologues, dialogues, songs, and signing. The play is also a musical documentary, based on the oral history of pioneer women (Robert Cohen 47).

The Actor.

Physical Type Versus Acting Ability-- The actors in this production all have extensive musical training and/or musical comedy experience, except for Yu, who signed throughout several musical numbers.

Vocal Quality, Diction, and Vocal Flexibility--

Critic Helen Glaser noted, "Barbara Aschenbrenner's musical direction was impeccable" (27). Glaser notes the women sometimes played male roles, "tying up (their) long skirts to simulate a cowboy's trousers and lowering their voices" (27).

Physical Contrast and Unity-- According to publicity photographs the women established a similar look, using costumes and makeup.

Movement and Timing-- Critic Janice Riese compliments the musical staging by Davidovich (12). Another critic, Angela M. Owen notes that "everything is in constant flux, one scene flowing smoothly into the next, until the audience is caught up in the quilting and the fascination of placing each careful stitch to help the work progress" (12).

Cooperation and Malleability-- Director Williams complimented the cast, saying he enjoyed working with them (Interview).

Audience Reaction-- Glaser noted that Williams' "idea to cast Amy Yu proved most successful" (27).

Summation.

Quilters meets the traditional casting determinants as well as the guidelines for societal non-traditional casting. Deaf actress Yu played the role of a deaf daugh-

ter, a role she plays in society. The casting can also be viewed as conceptual non-traditional because Yu gave the play a greater resonance.

Blocking

This production took place in-the-round (arena staging) with a house capacity of 200 patrons. According to Sun Sign Company artistic director Barbara McGee, this type of staging makes it difficult for the audience to see the signs. McGee writes,

In order for sign language to be understood, it must be seen. Therefore, arena, theatre in the round, or thrust, audience seated on three sides of the stage, does not suit a sign language theatre. In both these styles, the actor's back is turned to one part or another of the audience almost at all times. I'm not saying that a signing actor can never turn his back on the audience-doing so can be a very effective technique. But it is hardly desirable for an entire production. (22-23)

By using arena staging for this production, the deaf audience members' need to see the signs, in order to understand the dialogue, was ignored. Even though an interpreter was provided, deaf audience members were unable to see all actor Yu's signs. More thought should be given to the "sight lines" of deaf audience members. Just as in hearing theatre, a director must be aware of how blocking interferes with or adds to a production, and readjust or focus the audience's attention with stage pictures. Although this may not have been an intentional

oversight on the part of the Hillbarn Theatre Company, it once again points up the fact that when casting a deaf actor, attention must be given to blocking, making sure the signs are understandably visible to deaf audience members.

Lighting and Costumes

House lights were dimmed during the 14 performances.

Costumes were "completely authentic" according to Helen Glaser of the Weekly News (27). The Peninsula Times Tribune pictured Sarah and four of her daughters in front of Greg Comb's handsome Legacy Quilt (Glaser 27; Riese 12). All costumes pictured were monochromatic and of simple design. Only one daughter, Laura Donovan, adorned a small checked print.

Interpreters

Davidovich signed 5 performances of Quilters using ASL. Reviews of this production included upcoming dates for signed performances and a TDD number for those deaf community members interested in purchasing tickets. In a telephone interview Davidovich stated that she was constantly lit during the entire performance (Interview).

Communications

Williams spoke highly of actress Yu saying,

The cast just adored her. Amy is a physically warm person, who added a beautiful chemistry to the production. We were very lucky to have Amy work with us, she added a lot. Amy and I could

communicate very well. Amy reads lips. I could sign very little, but could still communicate with her. Amy, as with most deaf people I know, is very willing to teach. (Interview)

According to Weekly News correspondent Glaser, "To include this charming young girl, the cast learned sign language (27). Yu responded to the question, what preparation is required of the director/actors to make a fully integrated production a success? Yu wrote that,

As long as hearing actors are willing to take their time to learn the alphabet of ASL and a few sign words to communicate with those deaf actors, who may have no oral/lipreading skills. Same for the director because he/she may have important things to point out to the deaf actors such as mistakes, movements, and some announcements. To keep up the pace is important to deaf actors as well as hearings (actors) to do the play. (Questionnaire)

Yu supports such non-traditional casting saying that,

With time and patience both worlds can develop friendships; both get the benefit of being aware of both sides/issues; and experience the (open) opportunity to perform in a non-traditional production. (Questionnaire)

Audience Response

According to research, there were no protests for or against this production by the deaf community. Hearing critics who reviewed Quilters spoke positively about this production. Helen Glaser, critic for the Peninsula Weekly News, complimented William's idea to include deaf actor Yu, saying it

proved most successful...(She delivered her lines, despite her handicap.) To include this

charming young girl, the cast learned sign language. (27)

Critic Janice Riese, for The Times Correspondent, wrote

Williams' casting of a deaf person as one of the players is the fulfillment of the theater's commitment to include the deaf community during the current season. (12)

Angela M. Owen, a critic with The Peninsula Times Tribune, praised Yu as Sarah's deaf adopted daughter writing that she was

"marvelously played by deaf actress Yu" (12).

Budget

Once again Williams hired interpreter Davidovich, to sign for opening night August 11th, and 4 additional performances (Interview). Davidovich was paid \$200 for script translation and interpreting performances, and an additional \$200 for her musical staging (Interview).

"This production was made possible by a generous grant from The Peninsula Community Foundation, which has aided Hillbarn's effort at culturally inclusive theatre all season long" (Quilters Program 3). The grant in the amount of \$5,000 dollars was used to produce this show. The grant stipulated that the money would be spent to promote a deaf theatre project. Williams specifically cast Yu as one of the sisters to meet the grant requirements (Interview). Williams goes on to say "Our goal with

this play was to continue our efforts towards becoming a theatre of inclusion" (Quilter's Program--Director's Note).

CHAPTER 6

Results of the Study

Review

Chapter 1 began with a brief overview of perceptions of the deaf in society, ranging from the Middle Ages to modern times. The discussion included a survey of the current status of the deaf in American society with particular emphasis on education and civil rights legislation. This led to a review of how the deaf have been involved in the arts, beginning with film and early theatre and leading to the role of the deaf in modern American theatre.

Chapter 2 presented definitions of important terminology. It discussed the definition and components of traditional casting including the style and type of play and the actor. The six subcategories related to selection of the actor included: physical type versus acting ability; vocal quality, diction, and vocal flexibility; physical contrast and unity; vocal contrast; movement and timing; cooperation and malleability; and audience reaction. Next the definition of non-traditional casting was presented, including differing viewpoints concerning what non-traditional casting is and how it should be applied to actual productions. Finally, the different kinds of deaf-related theatre were examined.

Chapter 3 defined deafness, looked at its causes and

categories, recent technological developments, and methods of communication, including the role of an interpreter. The chapter concluded with examples of how personnel involved with productions can communicate with each other.

Chapter 4 examined production factors. These factors included casting, blocking, lighting and costumes, interpreters, communications, audience response, and budgeting. Production factors were important to the field study analysis in Chapter 5, since they relate to the casting of deaf actors in deaf-related theatre.

Chapter 5 introduced the five field studies. A synopsis of each play was presented. The casting of deaf actors, and their influence on production factors, was discussed for the three types of deaf-related theatre; deaf theatre, theatre about the deaf, and integrated theatre. Traditional determinants and non-traditional guidelines were examined for each of the five field studies.

Director/Producer Reactions to Casting

This thesis examined the definition of non-traditional casting, applying it to the casting of deaf actors. Five field studies were examined, revealing the practical implications resulting from such a decision, thus broadening the reader's awareness of non-traditional casting as

it applies to deaf actors.

The casting of deaf actors in theatrical productions in America is a relatively recent historical phenomena, since professional deaf theatre companies have occurred only in the past 25 years. Interviews with directors and producers of the five field studies reveal several benefits to casting deaf actors.

Non-traditional casting of deaf actors in hearing roles provides opportunities for deaf actors to perform in lead roles without depending upon the few playscripts with deaf roles. This was particularly evident with the casting of deaf actress Norman in the dual lead role Shen Te/Shui Ta in The Good Person of Szechuan.

One More Spring was cast predominantly with deaf actors portraying hearing characters. Not only did the actors introduce sign language to hearing audiences, they showed deaf individuals functioning in society.

Effective casting in theatre about the deaf provides hearing audiences with an introduction to sign language and deaf culture as seen in Children of a Lesser God and The Signal Season of Dummy Hoy. These productions revealed both current and historical perspectives about deafness, deaf education, and the interaction of deaf and hearing people.

Casting of deaf actors allows for interaction between

hearing and deaf individuals, who may not otherwise come in contact with each other. The casting of deaf actor Cannavino in The Signal Season of Dummy Hoy provided a catalyst for several staff members to learn sign language.

The drawbacks to casting deaf actors noted by directors and producers are the high costs of interpreters, the limited pool of deaf actors, and the negative feedback from the deaf community.

The inclusion of signing deaf actors with hearing actors in an integrated theatre production, automatically creates the need for interpreters during rehearsals and performances. This budget constraint may make such a production impossible. This was evident in the comments made by Berkeley Rep's Business Manager after their production of The Good Person of Szechuan.

The lack of training available for deaf actors limits the pool of deaf actors. The only professional theatre training program for deaf actors in the U.S. is a one month (4 week) training program offered by NTD and held at the Hazel E. Stark Center in Chester, Connecticut. Therefore, in order to cast the most qualified actor, blind non-traditional casting of a hearing actor in a deaf role, such as in Children of a Lesser God, may be necessary.

Because of deaf issues, such casting of hearing actors in deaf roles, is seen by the deaf community as an attack

on them. This was evidenced in the picketing protest at L'ACT's production of Children of a Lesser God. While the additional publicity due to the controversy increased ticket sales, it also led to the artistic director's decision not to include the deaf in future productions.

The Ripple Effect

While the guidelines established by Harold Scott promote casting actors of all types, production factor adjustments required when casting deaf actors are ignored. The non-traditional casting of an actor of color calls for little or no change in production factors. However, the decision to cast a deaf actor or actors in deaf-related theatre initiates the "ripple effect."

The non-traditional casting of a deaf actor will influence all other aspects of production, from play selection to budgeting. This influence is similar to tossing a pebble into a still pond. Just as the pebble creates ripples which move and change the pond, so casting a deaf actor will move and change a production from start to finish.

The ripple effect begins when a director and/or producer decides to produce deaf-related theatre. Additional budget expenditures for interpreters need to be included in the projected budget. Producers must plan ahead to hire

and schedule expert interpreters for the entire rehearsal and performance period.

A special public relations position may need to be added to the production staff to keep both deaf and hearing communities informed and up-to-date. Auditions publicized in local papers must include the deaf community's network, such as local deaf newspapers, schools and clubs. Press releases featuring deaf actors should be prepared in advance, targeting both deaf and hearing patrons, and including schedules of interpreted performances. Play programs must credit interpreters' contribution by including them among the production staff members listed.

Depending on how a deaf actor is integrated in a production, it may be necessary for hearing actors to learn sign language to cue the deaf actor. Time and financial resources must be allocated for this purpose. In addition, it may be necessary to translate scripts into ASL. The budget must include additional space rental costs should the rehearsal period be extended.

The ripple effect impacts lighting, costumes, and blocking because the signs must be visible to be understood and to clearly communicate the message of the play. Lighting must keep the signing actor's hands visible and free from shadows. Costumes must provide contrast and not inhibit the clarity of the signs. Blocking positions which

allow the most visibility include full-front, quarter, and shared. These three factors challenge the director to work creatively to meet the communication needs. Designers must plan their work to compliment and feature the deaf actor's hands avoiding pitfalls such as those experienced in The Signal Season of Dummy Hoy and Quilters.

Of the three deaf-related theatre types examined in this paper, integrated theatre can be seen as the most non-traditional. The two field studies, Quilters and The Good Person of Szechuan, had hearing and deaf actors performing as equals on stage. Certainly such a combination is a rare occurrence, which requires additional skills from the director, an increased budget to support interpreters and script translation, and an exceptional commitment to communication on the part of every cast and production staff member involved.

Critics of Deaf Theatre Criticized

Critics appear to inaccurately review deaf performances. Their knowledge of deaf culture and sign language is inadequate and readily admitted. Critics tend to shy away from any direct evaluation of sign language, possibly because they have no basis for criticism. Such critics can hardly be expected to provide the public with an accurate evaluation of deaf performance. Most critics can be

divided into two general categories: either they overflow with accolades or find fault with the existing scripts. Critic Bernard Weiner is an exception, since he focused on the signing in The Good Person of Szechuan.

A suggestion to rectify this situation is to hire a deaf journalist or a sign language expert, who would then review local deaf activities, report on deaf issues, and critique deaf cultural events. In the Bay Area, a possible pool for potential deaf critics might be found with the staff of the Deaf Counseling, Advocacy, and Referral Agency (DCARA). Theatre reviews written by deaf staff writers could then be shared with regional papers such as the San Jose Mercury News, Oakland Tribune, and San Francisco Chronicle. Increased coverage would bring more attention to issues sometimes overlooked by hearing writers.

Hiring such a critic to review deaf theatre would provide more accurate performance criticism. If the goal of criticism is to improve deaf performance then this criticism should accurately address the weakness of deaf theatre performance and provide feedback for improvement.

Non-Traditional Casting

A strict definition of non-traditional casting may not be possible since the term itself has come to mean more

than casting against expectation. Some see non-traditional casting as a means to correct discrimination against minorities. Others see it as an opportunity to have women step into men's roles. Many see non-traditional casting as a means to open roles to all races, regardless of the time period, location, or age of the character. For this reason a chameleon-like definition of non-traditional theatre seems appropriate.

Minorities have every right to demand equal treatment in the work place and on stage, yet non-traditional casting is not designed to right the wrongs incurred by minorities. Non-traditional casting may be a victim of terminology, a term in the wrong place at the wrong time. Many minorities have used the term 'non-traditional casting' to support their particular viewpoint, while losing sight of its supposed original meaning, to cast an actor in a part or in a role previously played by only actors of a particular type.

A non-traditional approach to casting allows a Caucasian to play a slave, an Asian to portray Henry V, an African American to star as Donald Trump, or a deaf actor to play a hearing character. Non-traditional casting throws casting rules to the wind, and possible uproar ensues. Playwrights demand adherence to their scripts or they pull the rights to perform the play. Producers, such

as Cameron Mackintosh, choose their stars or cancel their own show. Equity tries to force producers to cast minorities, resulting in reverse discrimination.

Conclusion

Non-traditional guidelines established by Scott apply to the three deaf-related theatre types; deaf theatre, theatre about the deaf, and integrated theatre. While the term can be easily applied to the five field studies, the traditional casting determinants apply as well. It is reasonable to conclude that the two terms are not mutually exclusive. A director may cast non-traditionally, but will operate within the framework of traditional casting determinants, casting the best actor for the role.

Only when directors/producers take risks and cast against expectation can casting be called non-traditional. For example, Ms. Near and Williams cast against expectation. Ms. Near cast a deaf actor in the hearing role of Shen Te/Shui Ta and Williams cast a hearing actor in the deaf role of Sarah Norman.

Casting a deaf actor may add resonance to a role, as evidenced when Freda Norman portrayed Shen Te/Shui Ta. Audience members and critics alike applauded her performance and her sign language contribution. Then perhaps the most important point is that a deaf actor is not limited

by his deafness, just as Wilson played the violin in One More Spring. Deaf actors are capable of playing any roles as long as non-traditional casting provides them the opportunities.

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