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# Masks: A Viable Option for the Modern Stage

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# A Viable Option for the Modern Stage

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For Gary and our four children--by the grace of God,
all that I am or could be is due to your love.

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## Preface

It is the position of this paper that masks have a viable place on the stage today. As we look at the historical usage and at the present views of masks, we will see the mystical effect of masks has not changed. Although our technology has improved, masks still create a mystical illusion for the audience and for the actor. Learning of the many techniques and approaches to mask-making has been a delightful experience. I must thank Niki Juncker for the many times she has cleared my muddled thinking. Without her guidance I am sure this project would not have been completed. I must also acknowledge the encouragement I found in the writings of E. G. Craig in his book <u>On the Art of the Theatre</u>. "Did you think when the longing came upon you and when you told your family that you must go upon the stage that such a great longing was to be soon satisfied? Is satisfaction so small a thing? Is desire a thing of nothing that a five years' quest can make a parody of it? But of course not. Your whole life is not too long, and then only at the very end will some small atom of what you have desired come to you. And so you will be still young when you are full of years" (p. 8).

The Psychology of the Mask

To be able to understand the successful usage of masks on a stage fully, we must first examine why a mask works. Not human, it reflects humanity. "A mask is a weird, perfidious, and singularly perplexing object"(Benda, p. 1), just as people can be weird and perplexing.

The use of masks is as old as mankind. From the earliest cave drawings, man has attempted to understand who and why he is. The mask ritual is a part of this attempt. "From a psychological point of view the origin of the mask can also be explained by the more atavistic aspiration of the human being to escape from himself in order to be enriched by the experience of different experiences--a desire which obviously cannot be fulfilled on the physical level--and in order to increase his own power by identifying himself with the universal, divine or demonic forces, whichever they may be" (Monti, p. 9). Here is the beginnings of masks for the stage; in the desire for new experiences and to share the messages from the gods with others. "For the inspector of primitive rites, the masks . . . were proofs of the omnipresence of the supernatural and the proliferation of myths. Upsetting the peace of every day life, the masks' primal message retains so much power that even today the prophylactic insulation of

the showcase fails to muffle its communication" (Levi-Strauss, p. 5). As we view these masks of which Mr. Levi-Strauss speaks, we become aware that for thousands of years the mask has been used to communicate, first from the gods, and later from the stage for dramatic purposes.

The mask is, of course, inanimate but it possesses the ability to come to life at a moment's notice. It awaits the actor, and we in turn, anticipate life as we view the mask. This life, or power, of the mask comes from our own way of perceiving information. "The face of a man communicates what we want to know so when placed frozen on a mask we react to past knowledge because we believe the face to reveal truth and we transfer that belief to the mask" (Benda, p. 2). This statement then develops the direction we go as we seek to understand the mask. On the stage, the mask's power is not its own, but is a projection of the power we give it. A mask becomes a reflection of our imagination. That is why one actor will choose a mask, study it and build an improvisation in a certain direction because of his own perception and imagination. Upon seeing his performance we say, "Yes, that's who the mask represents." Then another actor, having chosen the same mask goes in a totally different

direction and we agree with that interpretation also. With this duality before us, it is easy to recognize the multiplicity of the mask and that its true power comes from the human imagination.

Another reason the mask works is the illusion that the mask changes expressions. This is caused by the movement of the actor's head, shoulders, and neck. As we see the mask at different angles and as the light strikes it differently the "expression" changes. "Though each 'nuance of movement' and subtle change in the tilt of the head, the mask can become radiant one moment and grief stricken the next" (Sivin, p. 11). We also react to the body movement and translate its communication to the mask. What a wonder to behold, this mystery of life in the mask! In our acceptance of what we see, the mask as an object is lost and only the persona is left in our memory. "We do not realize how little we actually see of the facial expressions of an actor when sitting in the last row of a theatre. What our physical eye really sees is body movements that express moods and feelings" (Benda, p. 3).

"Since it [the mask] is no longer [thought to be] a really living object, the mask has become a psychological disguise" (Monti, p. 9). The mask then becomes a safe place to hide, both physically and

emotionally. Such a disguise serves several purposes. First, in a non-realistic way, the mask is the character we wish to portray. The designer has very clearly set the boundaries that a given mask might well portray. Therefore an actor can be challenged to go beyond his realistic experiences and let the mask guide his imagination. Which brings us to an interesting phenomenon. We accept the mask to be the real person. "When a mask is put on and enacted by someone, this uncanny quality and the mystification it creates are intensified to the point where the real personality of the masquerader is totally obliterated from our perception; we see only the creature the mask represents" (Benda, p. 1). This emotional feeling allows the actor truly to go beyond his preconceived ideas of his own limitations. Freed to accept what the mask has to say, an actor chooses not what to say, but how to say it. If one would allow, the mask takes on some of the responsibility of communicating for the actor.

Hiding physically behind a mask frees the actor of many inhibitions. Fear of failure is lessened as the actor identifies with the character of the mask. That is to say the "character" might not communicate but the actor does not see this as his own responsibility. He

feels less threatened because his own personality has been enveloped by the character's personality. Many actors who have used mask report that their faces under the mask take on the features of the mask. This oddity helps to eliminate the actor's individual mannerisms. "The mask gives a sense of being at one with oneself" (Rolfe, p. 43). This freedom of self for the actor in a mask allows imagination to pour out through the mask. Being covered emotionally and physically by the mask combine to give an actor this freedom.

Another unusual freedom occurs with masks. The audience is removed one step further from the action on the stage, and is free to observe without feeling they are being observed. This extension of the fourth wall is created by the illusion that the mask the actor is wearing prevents him from seeing the audience. The audience is able to enjoy to a fuller degree, or be appalled by, what he sees. This fourth wall extension was readily seen in the 1989 St. Louis Fall Season production of Animal Farm. The audience was very vocal in showing its' displeasure during this performance. People who would have sat quietly though the first act and then left, if dissatisfied, talked as though no one on stage could hear them.

A mask works because it pulls us out of ourselves, either as a viewer or as an actor, and frees us. Etienne Decroux, a leading mask teacher in France, said, "One may be sublime with a mask, but not with a face. The face has something incurably realistic about it. It's there! But we change the body easily, because the body is made up of larger parts" (Leahhart, p. 58). This phenomenon of an actor separating himself from himself,and allowing his body and the mask to do the work for him, will translate to an audience in a believable and "sublime" way. Finding the "sublime" way is the goal of this project. Carole Sivin in her book Maskmaking stated:

> Today artists draw on centuries of mask making tradition, revitalizing ancient designs and creating new ones. Whether used in meditative silence or to the persistent drumming of instruments, whether simply hung or intricately lit, masks continue to conceal and reveal communicating the innumerable messages of culture world wide (p. 21).

## History of the Greek Mask

One of the strongest theories for the origin of drama is that drama grew out of the rituals of primitive worship. The use of masks in this worship and their later tie to Greek drama would substantiate this idea. For primitive man felt that to mask was to unmask, visually unleashing the powers of a greater life force (Corey, p. 3). Most tribes believed that spirits entered the mask (Brockett, p. 5). Either the spirits of the gods or the aspects of life that they wished to appease or control would enter the mask. Once the mask was put on, all doubt of its super natural powers was removed. Primitive societies felt that in this way the mask would help them take control of the life forces and this would benefit the whole tribe. "The mask maker is not motivated by a search for original expression, nor for expression of his own personality. Though he makes the mask he is doing so for the tribe. He translates for the group the message of the gods" (Vidrouvich, p. 19). These mask makers were greatly influenced by the religious leader of the tribe, even if the mask--maker was not a religious leader himself. "They rejected realism and used stylized planes and geometric shapes to express

universal ideas about fear, war, death, and the spirit world"(Corey, p. 3). Gradually some of the masks took on more human characteristics, although honoring the gods was still the chief function, especially in the beginnings of drama in Greece.

"According to Herodotus, the Dionysiac festival had its inception in Egypt and was transferred to Attica" (Freedley, p. 8). Evidence exists to support this statement in information and artifacts of Greek drama found in Syria dated approximately 1250 B.C. Clay tablets using the cuneiform alphabet were found in the Ras Shamra ruins and have a form of Attic drama. "These findings by Theodore Gaster, coupled with the similarity of Tammuz (Adonis) and Dionysus worship, suggest a possible road the drama may have taken in its journey from Egypt to Greece" (Freedley, p. 8). Perhaps it would be better to describe this as dramatic ritual rather than drama (Juncker).

According to Greek mythology Zeus, the chief god, had a son named Dionysus by a mortal, Semele. Dionysus was brought up by the satyrs and ultimately was killed, hacked to pieces and then resurrected. The more primitive aspects of Dionysus worship, intoxication, sexual orgies, and sacrifices (often human), were no

longer a part of his festival by the sixth century Brockett, p. 19).

In Attica the Greeks had four festivals a year to honor Dionysus. Drama is dated from the first recorded production at the City Dionysus festival in 534 B.C. although it occured before that time. W.T. Benda in his book Masks states, "Masks had a long history in Greece as everywhere else, but by the time Greece was rising to power the use of the mask in honor of Dionysus and Apollo was already well established. It held its place in religious drama and finally found application in classic tragedy and comedy" (p. 18-19).

Even though rituals often used masks, they were not a prerequisite. Consequently, Thespis did not have to use masks. According to Oscar Brockett in History of the Theatre, Thespis tried other types of disguises for his actors such as wine dregs and dangling leaves in front of the face (p. 34). It is hard to imagine a tragedy with this kind of "mask" being used. The white linen mask credited to Thespis, (Sivin, p. 10) however, leads one toward a functional mask for the stage. Phrynichus probably developed the first female mask. Painted masks were first used by Aeschylus (Brockett, p. 34). "The theatre masks is not a decadent form of

ritual masks. Dramatic function is inherent in its very nature" (Vidrovitch, p. 21).

None of the Greek masks has survived, as they were made of cloth, stucco materials, cork, or lightweight wood. Still we know the theatre had a tremendous influence on the Greek culture because of the bronze and marble replicas in statue form and in many vase paintings that do exist today. From these sources it is apparent the "masks were vigorously modeled and conventional in form; that they expressed various elemental moods such as grief, anger, horror, sadness, or joy..." (Benda, p. 19). Nina Vidrovitch stated in her article, "Introduction to the Mask," that "to terrify was the primary function of the masks among the Greeks, for whom the severed head of Medusa was the first mask." Certainly the replicas we have today all possess a commanding quality about them, but Vidrovitch was the only author to take such an extreme position. However, she later explained her statement in this way: "The Greek tragic mask expresses the terror of the protagonist before his own fate. The comic mask, on the contrary, expresses the scorn the same fate inspires" (p. 22). The early Greek plays told the stories of legendary characters and of the gods. The

mask did help to create the heroic grandeur and superhuman qualities (Hunt, p. 52).

By the fifth century all performers wore masks. The flute player may be an exception. The Greek, and later the Roman, actors undertook a long, silent communion with their mask before putting them on. There are a number of reliefs showing such a scene, thus indicating its importance (Rolfe, p. 14). This tradition continues today. One cannot fully grasp who the character is without seriously studying the mask. The Greek actor spoke through a large opening in the mask. Many scholars feel these masks had a brass megaphone in the mouthpiece which amplified the actor's voice, yet no author mentions the inherent acoustic quality of the Greek theatre. Was one necessary or did the sound carry well enough on its own? Since no reference in Greek art or literature is made to such a mouthpiece, why do we assume one existed (Juncker)? The "Greek actor spoke through masks but these were made to be spoken through. They were far from realistic but so was the actor's speech, which was a rhythmic recitation or chant. Thus the two artificialities harmonized well" (Benda, p. 43).

The Greeks demonstrated that the mask had a useful place in drama. Its distinctive stylization served a

purpose. It could communicate at a glance the character's personality. Since the Greeks used only one to three actors, it also became a useful way of introducing more characters to the stage for a given scene. Since the Greek mask covered the whole head, the actor could truly lose himself to the mask. Obviously, the Greeks discovered the basic premise of acting by using the mask: that of becoming who is being portrayed. Their tradition handed down through the centuries has established a place for masks on the stage for all time.

Analysis of The Trojan Women

Sophocles once said, "I represent men as they should be, Euripides represents them as they are" (Berthold, p. 138). The Trojan Women is one of the best existing plays that we have of Euripides. Most often played because of its vivid characterizations, and its strong anti-war sentiments, it presents itself well to a modern audience (Freedley, p. 21).

According to Bieber in The History of the Greek and Roman Theatre, Euripides' concept of drama differed from the mainstream thinking of his time (p. 30). Born c. 484 B.C., he studied painting and philosophy before he began writing. He first entered the dramatic contest of Dionysis in 455 B.C. By this time the structure of tragedy had been established. His style was somewhat different and he did not win a first prize until 441 B.C. Even then he had a hard time presenting his views. The Trojan Women or Troades lost to Xenocles in 415 B.C. Euripides' changes altered drama, and in a way, he was a forerunner of modern drama because his characters expressed mental action as opposed to physical action. Basically, he changed the beginning and ending of his plays. Traditionally the prologue started with the action of

the play. Euripides, however, used this first speech to give details of preceding events. It was often made by a god. The actors sustained the action instead of the chorus, although the latter continued to exist as a sympathizer (Bieber, p. 30). Euripides would treat the myths as new material and really build characters instead of just telling a story. In effect, he "humanized" the dramatic action (Bieber, p. 88). This meant that his conclusions might be contrived, for in the end, he had to return to the myth. A god might appear via the deus ex machina and set things right. Euripides also liked to use the eccyclema, a rolling platform that helped create the mise in scene (Bieber, p. 77).

The most significant change, according to Margarete Bieber in The History of the Greek and Roman Theatre, was that "Euripides had destroyed the religious meaning of tragedy yet without being able to cast off the 'fetters of the cult'" (p. 34). Simply put, the chorus lost its religiously significant position and the actors became more important as characters than as worshipers (Bieber, p. 83).

The final scene between Hecuba, Menelaus, and Helen, is a fitting example. Hecuba spends a great deal of time discrediting Helen. Helen in turn,

pleads for her life with all the feminine charms and beauty she possesses. This is evident in Hecuba's lines that keep reminding Menelaus to beware of Helen and that a man once in love may well love again (Grene, p. 283). These lines and Helen's pleading show the difficult time Menelaus has in choosing death for Helen. Internal or mental action, it is easy to see, is Euripides' trademark.

I chose to use the Richmond Lattimore translation of The Trojan Women which is found in Greek Tragedies Vol. 2, edited by David Grene and Richard Lattimore. In choosing this final scene for my project, I used lines 860 though 1041. However I eliminated the chorus lines because they did not move the action of the play. I ended the scene with Helen's exit and Hecuba's warning to Menelaus.

Some definite choices in costuming are apparent for this scene. Hecuba describes Helen by saying, "she looks enchantment" and noting her "figure fastidiously arranged" (Grene, P. 283). Obviously she would wear the best chiton she had in hopes of swaying Menelaus. Hecuba, herself a queen and still with maids, would still be dressed fitting her station (Bieber, p. 163). Menelaus would be in battle gear since the fighting had just stopped. The myth makes Menelaus about sixty

years old at the beginning of the siege. Helen is approximately twenty-six. No part of the myth indicated what Hecuba's age would be, other than twenty-six years older than Helen. I chose Hecuba's age to be forty-five (Richardson, p. 257)

The action of this scene is out of doors. It is probably near the temple and yet not far from the port of Troy. We do not see Menelaus' aides when they are addressed, but they are fellow soldiers. The time is morning.

The Greek style of acting was presentational. The actors stood on the stage and spoke to the audience much as public speakers do today. Since our acting would be in a small space, the prospects of succeeding with the full face masks looked best if we used the presentational approach. I chose to use a triangular pattern for the blocking in this scene: first, to give balance and a pillar-like look but also to create some eye movement for the audience.

Berthold states that "Euripides allows his characters to be unsure", "they can scheme and plot" (p. 138). I felt this internal action would be better focused on by using the statue-like blocking and expressions on the masks and the presentational acting style. Our modern audience would find all of this very

different, not only because of style changes, but because we do not believe in the Greek gods. As Vidrovitch noted, "The stronger the belief of the spectators the simpler will be the masks, to the point of being neutral, as in Aeschylus. The weaker the belief becomes, the more realistic, or even expressionistic, the masks will be as in Euripides" (p. 21). It was my goal to have the masks carry a lot of the expression for the actors.

## The History of Commedia dell 'Arte

Commedia dell 'arte can trace its roots all the way back to Atellan itinerant performers whose comedy evolved into Roman farce. According to Baur-Heinhold, four of its main characters, Maccus, the greedy blockhead, Dossenus, the clever hunchback, Bucco, the braggart, and Pappos, the stupid old man, were forerunners to Roman characters and later revived in Commedia (p. 40). Certainly the idea of street performers carried though to the commedia troupes. Probably the idea of using masks also evolved with the characters. Kari Hunt in her book Mask and Mask Makers, suggest that the masked tradition was carried though the medieval period by the Catholic Church. The priest in the early Catholic Church wore masks for plays which dramatized Bible stories. However, in 1207 Pope Innocent III forbade the use of plays in the church so the plays moved outside and became mystery and miracle plays. Some characters such as the devil were always masked (p. 54). Recent research indicates that the use of masks in medieval theatre was much more widespread than first thought (Sivin, p. 18). Considering the course drama had taken to this point in time, it would seem logical to assume masks were used

more. Nothing I have found in any of my research that would explain a sudden elimination of masks as the main vehicle of visual communication of character of emotion. Rather a more gradual decline probably occurred, due in part to actor preference. This allows a traditional theatre approach to begin to develop which eliminated the use of masks, yet still allowed the growth of Commedia which did use masks.

"Commedia del 'Arte means the comedy of skill" according to Berthold in her book A History of World Theater (p. 443). Berthold explains that commedia was the embodiment of mimic art on the spur of the moment. Commedia characters had to be quick thinkers and light on their feet to perform the rough and comic scenes. Commedia based its characters on caricature of types and on conflicts and confusion. This lead to the stereo-typed character commedia is known for. Scenarios were established which allowed stock gags to be used in new ways. "In essence they were always changeable but ultimately unchanged" (p. 443). Masks were therefore a part of the character as well as a tool of the actor. A mask was a visual way of quickly letting the audience know who the character was and what he was like.

Once highly religious in nature, the masks of commedia were strictly theatrical. Even in the Middle Ages when masks were used in mystery and morality plays for the Catholic Church, masks were not religious objects. Another difference, noted by Benda in his book Masks, was the shape. Unlike the classical comedy masks, the commedia masks covered only half of the face (p. 19). This left the mouth and jaw freer than its predecessor. Nicoll noted that the commedia chose the half masks to allow for voice and to ease the transition to the unmasked character(p. 41). These masks then became standard yet not so far removed from the reality of the unmasked player.

The masked player's whole body was emphasized by virtue of having half of his face unchanging. Nicoll says, "The masks stressed the essential theatricality of the production itself" (p. 40). There was no attempt at realism.

Baur-Heinhold feels that "As early as the beginning of the 16th century, troupes of comedians had already been in existence for several decades and before the end of the century these masters of the impromptu had hauled their wagons across the Alps and appeared in Vienna and soon after in Munich" (p. 47). How incredible it must have been to spend that amount of

time and money to perform, yet they did for nearly two hundred years. Italy nurtured the growth of commedia (Russell, p. 288). Margarete Baur-Heinhold describes the commedia stage as surrounded by crowds of people ready to laugh and to fill any gaps in the illusions with their imaginations(p. 39). Baur-Heinhold also notes that "The commedia dell 'arte made a rich contribution to the theatre in every country they visited; where Italian was not understood they concentrated on pantomime and acrobatic agility and made greater use of music and singing in their programs" (p. 95).

To a large extent it was the characterizations that added much to commedia's success. The troupe usually contained about a dozen actors (Nicoll, p. 40). Each actor portrayed to same character for as long as he performed with the troupe. With this commitment to the character, much effort was put into its development. This arrangement made improvisations easier so all that was needed before the show was to agree to the plot for the day and the gags to be used. The plot line was simply based on intrigue, entanglement and solution.

The use of costume and mask made the audience immediately aware of who was on stage and what they

were like. They reacted to the character much as we react to the villain in a melodrama. We don't need a lot of exposition to place the character in his proper role. In the same way the commedia audience knew who Pantalone was and probably what he was up to. Margarete Baur-Heinhold said "One absolutely essential, never failing property was the mask. The comic characters wore half-masks of fine leather, appropriate to their stereotype, with forehead, eyes and nose but no expression. Laughter, weeping, despair and happiness were expressed by the actor's body, and if the mime was good the fact that half the face remained totally immobile actually increased the effect. The basic nature of the stereotype was fixed in the mask, and the body provided the variety of expression" (p. 67). The costume, too, became readily identifiable. Pantalone wore red tights or out of date baggy breeches and jacket with black cloak, black shoes, and black hat. He also carried a dagger and handkerchief in his belt. His mask was dark perhaps a natural leather color with a hooked nose. It also had graying hair and pointed beard and mustache (Hugill, p. 92). Dottore, whether a medical doctor or a doctor of letters, was always dressed in an academic robe. A ruff was added and endured until the end of commedia.

His half mask was either black or flesh colored (Hugill, p. 93). Columbine was a female Harlequin. She would be dressed in the manner of the day. Because the commedia did not wish to hide the beauty of its women members, they did not wear masks as the male Harlequins did unless they were following the custom of the day. Harlequin himself wore first patches which evolved into the diamond shape we associate with him today (Juncker). Isabella was one of the names for the female lovers. She too was unmasked usually (Russell, p. 288). Her costume would have been a dress of the day.

Commedia stayed popular for almost two hundred years in its traditional form. Gradually it continued the move into melodrama and the circus of today (Hugill, p. 98). Its influence is also evident in vaudeville and silent films.

## Analysis of Commedia dell 'Arte

Commedia dell 'arte was never very difficult to analyze. Its goal seems only to have been to entertain the people. Use of ridicule, slapstick, bawdy and sometimes naughty behavior were the norm for commedia performers (Hugill, p. 79-98). Our comedy improvisation was not based on a known scenario, but on one of our own invention. I chose to use Pantalone, Dottore, Columbine and Isabella as our four commedia characters. Later, as the program was put together, it became necessary to add Harlequin as a juggler preceding the action of the scenario.

The action of the improv is built around a letter from Fleshu, an unseen lover of Isabella. Pantalone, her father, intercepts Columbine's delivery of the letter. She convinces him the letter is from Dottore who is Pantalone's choice for a son-in-law. Columbine secretly loves Dottore and she and Isabella devise a way of winding up with their respective loves.

Since the success of this kind of action depends on characterization, I think the best way to analyze this scene is by examining the characters. Pantalone was a pretentious merchant who loved money. Although he tried to be in control of everyone and everything, he

was often outsmarted by his children and servants. Thus he cried a lot at being so mistreated (Hugill, p. 97).

Dottore was a man of letters, changing from medicine to law as the scenario required. He took an enormous amount of time to articulate what he could have stated in a brief sentence. He was also a miser and he loved to drink (Hugill, p. 98).

Columbine is a female Harlequin character. She often gets the best of her master (Baur- Heinhold, p. 65). She is also eager to help young lovers, especially if it is to her benefit. The Harlequin we added was used to depict the male character who was often used in acrobatic routines(Hugill, p. 85).

Isabella is one of the names for the amoratte characters. She is always used to represent the good towns people in the audience. She, like all the other women in the show, did not wear a mask unless she was headed for the theatre or carnival as was the custom of the day (Hugill, p. 98 and Juncker).

Commedia improvs had a lot of audience involvement (Mills). To use this devise, we chose to select a Fleshu from out of the audience. Also letting the audience in on the joke of the cue line, "I hope the

rain doesn't hurt the rhubarb," set up an opportunity for several asides.

Since commedia was a physical kind of humor, I wanted at least one fall in the action and, as it turned out, all of the comic characters wound up on the floor. Of the three scenes that were performed, I think the audience responded most to this one, not just because it was humorous, but because they were in on it. I'm sure this same appeal was true four hundred years ago, too.

History of Masks on the Modern Stage

Silence is golden--except when I was trying to find information on this section. The written history of masks on the modern stage is virtually no-existent. Most mask work is associated with mime and improvisations. Since neither of these dramatic art forms use written dialogue or direction, it is logical that nothing much would be written about their use of masks (Benjamin). What has been written deals more with masks as educational tools.

In 1913, Jacques Copeau started the Theatre du Vieux Columbier. The theatre's life was interrupted in 1914 by the First World War. This one season was well received. In 1917, Copeau brought his troupe to New York for two years. When he returned to Paris and reopened his theatre in 1919, Copeau's nephew Michel Saint-Denis joined him in his work. It was Saint-Denis who brought Copeau's ideas to the English speaking stage in a profound way. Two other students, Charles Dullen and Etienne Decroux also continued schools in the Copeau tradition.

Copeau was greatly influenced by Andre Antoine. "Copeau wanted to free the stage from Cumbersome machinery and showy effects; to concentrate his efforts

on development of a new school of acting; and to give first place to . . . dramatists" (Saint-Denis, p. 39). He felt much the same as Appia, Craig, Meyerhold, and Stanislavski ("Copeau, Jacques"). According to Brockett in The Essential Theatre, Copeau felt the director's function was to translate faithfully the playwright's script which he called "poetry of the theatre." He also thought the actor was the "living presence of the author" (p. 212). Looking at Copeau's philosophy, it is easy to see how important a part stage movement would play in his school. He used masks as a training tool for the actors in his company.

Decroux remembered that almost all of the improvs were done with masks. "They were inexpressive masks made by the students" (Leabhart, p. 55). He also noted, "the neutral mask has a form that permits the actor to portray all possible sentiments without being ridiculous" (Leabhart, p. 56).

In Copeau's school an actor was taught to treat the mask with respect. It was almost a ritual to hold the mask in the lest hand, elastic in the right, study it, then put it on in one motion. "In this way they kept freshly before them the importance of that object, and entered into a receptive state of mind and body" (Rolfe, p. 15).

Since I do not speak or read French, the books by Jacques Copeau did not help me. They are: Correspondance Jacques Copeau--Jules Romains: deuxtres en marche, Les registres du Vieux Columbier, Correspondance Jacques Copeau--Roger Martin du Gard, and Appels / Jacques Copeau; textes recueillis et tablis par Marie-Hl.

The most valuable source for this search of the possible beginnings of modern mask usage was Michel Saint-Denis' book, Theatre: The Rediscovery of Style. The text was transcribed from a series of lectures given when he first came to the United States. In it he deals with his philosophy of acting which he gained while studying with Copeau. From 1919 to 1929, Saint-Denis worked with Copeau in his school, Les Copiaux. In 1930 Copeau handed over the control of his school to Saint-Denis who continued to run it until he formed a new company, Compagnie des Quinze (Hartnoll, p. 245). Again a war interrupted the theatre's existence. Soon after the Second World War, Saint-Denis moved to London and became associated with the Old Vic Theatre. While there he established one of the world's fines acting schools. In 1958 Saint-Denis came to the U.S. for a lecture tour. When the English government stopped funding for the Old Vic school,

Saint-Denis accepted offers from the Juilliard School in New York City and concurrently the National Theatre School of Canada where he continued to teach until his death in 1971 (Brockett, History p. 710).

The mask was a tool to these men. Whether either of them used masks on the stage in their productions is impossible to determine at this point. Certainly the neutral full-faced mask would not lend itself to use in traditional productions. Saint-Denis did value the mask greatly. Since Copeau felt the script was "poetry for the theatre" and since one of his major accomplishments was simplifying the stage for a non-realistic style, it would seem logical to me that he might have used masks on the stage. Certainly the following passage from Saint-Denis shows the importance of the mask in his training program:

> We believe that an imaginative actor will never forget the kind of satisfaction he felt while improvising, if he has fully experience it. With a little help he will be able to bring the benefit of this creative experience to the interpretation of a written text. . . . This silent improvisation culminated in the use of masks, full-faced masks of normal human size, simple and harmonious masks representing the four ages of man: the adolescent, the adult, mature middle-age, and old-age. In getting the students to wear masks, we were not aiming at aesthetic results nor was it our intention to revive the art of mime. To us, a mask was a temporary instrument which we offered to the curiosity of the young actor, in the hope that is might help his concentration, strengthen his inner feelings, diminish his

> self-consciousness, and lead him to develop his powers of outward expression. A mask is a concrete object. When you put it on your face you receive from it a strong impulse which you have got to obey. But the mask is also an inanimate object which the personality of the actor will bring to life. As his inner feelings accumulate behind the mask, so the actor's face relaxes. His body, which is made more expressive by the very immobility of the mask, will be brought to action by the strength of inner feeling. Once the actor has acquired the elementary technique that is demanded by wearing a mask, he will begin to realize that masks dislike agitation, that they can only be animated by controlled, strong, and utterly simple actions which depend upon the richness of the inner life within the calm and balanced body of the performer. The mask absorbs the actor's personality from which it feeds. It warms his feelings and cools his head. It enables the actor to experience, in its most virulent form, the chemistry of acting; at the very moment when the actor's feelings are at their height, beneath the mask, the urgent necessity of controlling his physical actions compels him to detachment and lucidity. Submission to the lesson of the mask enables an actor of talent to discover a broad, inspired and objective style of acting (p. 103-4).

With all of this emphasis on good mask work in training, a very natural step would be for mask to begin to be seen of the stage. We know that a few plays in our modern times call for masks, such as <u>The Great God Brown.</u> Others would lend themselves to mask use, such as <u>He Who Gets Slapped</u>. Recently a production of <u>Around the World in 80 Days</u> used masks. The modern theatre is open to the use of masks now more than ever and it is due to the work of Jacques Copeau and his followers. Saint-Denis said, "I have always

encouraged my students to join me in discovering new ways of stimulating their creative imagination and an approach to their interpretative which could give reality to style" (p. 18). As Saint-Denis closed his lecture he quoted Arthur Miller, who said, "I am not asking for anything new, but for something as old as the Greek drama" (p. 110). Perhaps what ties the old with the new is the mask.

## Analysis of He Who Gets Slapped

The first two decades of the twentieth century found a lot of intellectuals disenchanted with intellectualism. This seemed to be especially true in Russia. By the time Leonid Andreyev (1871-1919) wrote He Who Gets Slapped in 1915, He had attempted suicide twice, left and returned to school, married and lost his first wife, and remarried (Newcombe). He loved people and entertaining on a grand scale. His interest varied greatly. But whatever he became interested in, that interest consumed him. According to K.I. Chukovsky, "This is the reason why there is so much divergence of opinion about Andreyev." People saw different aspects of his personality. "Each one thought that what he saw was Leonid Andreyev. They all forgot that they saw before them a great artist, who carried in his soul hundreds of masks, and yet sincerely, full-heartily believed each of the successive masks was his face" (p. 788).

We do not know too much about Andreyev's methods. We do know that he wrote at night and that he was consumed by his ideas until they were finalized. Chukovsky noted that "His works were extemporaneous improvisations by their very nature" (p. 779). Once he

finished a piece, he became indifferent to it (Chukovsky, p. 779). Andreyev was a man of great passion. "He did not simply write his works; his subjects always seized him as with a flame. Each subject would burn up everything in him....Each thing that attracted his attention and became a subject of interest, carried him away entirely, became a mania that would last for some time and fill his whole being" (Chukovsky, p. 777). This quality had been a part of Andreyev all of his life. He suffered from many ills and depressions in his early years. Although marriage brought stability and happiness, he seemed preoccupied with the writing of tragic subjects.

At first Andreyev was a realist. He was always popular, but as he progressed into his symbolic style his popularity increased. According to Brockett, the Moscow Art Theatre "encouraged Leonid Andreyev, Russia's foremost nonrealistic dramatist" (p. 577-8). Andreyev was a part of the Wednesday Night Circle which also included Chekov, Gorky, Skilatetz and Kryprin (Chukovsky, p. 777). The others in this group were realists. This group met weekly to read their works to each other and gain constructive criticism and advise. Often Andreyev would be the only one to read a new story or play. Gradually his style changed and he

became more and more a symbolist. He felt that the psychology of what was happening was more important than the actions. Andreyev asked in "Letters on the Theatre" published in a 1913 Journal, Maski, "Is action, in the accepted sense of movements and visible achievements on the stage, necessary to the theatre?" (Rickert, p. 371). This extreme position mellowed somewhat be the time he wrote He Who Gets Slapped and he had achieved a good blend of psychology and action.

"Andreyev suggests in 'At the Window' that people cannot hide away from life and reject all spontaneity; if they try to do this then life will avenge itself upon them" says Newcombe in her biography of Andreyev (p. 24). This might well be the foundation for Andreyev's play He Who Gets Slapped. "He" is the story of a scientist or intellectual who was betrayed by his wife and student. In a desire to escape he runs off and joins the circus. Billed as a clown who gets laughs by allowing himself to be slapped, He communicates the psychological defeats he feels as a person (Newcombe, p. 92). The play is set in a circus wagon. Much of the physical action of the play is never seen. What is seen would be uninviting were it not for Andreyev's ability to express within the dialogue the souls of his characters.

Many authors of this period were fascinated by the circus (Juncker). Harold Seigel stated, "To the Neo-Romantic mind, the circus was a sort of contemporary refuge from the ugly reality of the bourgeois world. THe circus performers were artist in their own right and they had succeeded in creating a special world of their own, within the borders of society, yet at the same time distinctly apart from it and openly contemptuous of it. The circus as an environment exerted an irresistible charm on the Neo-Romantics. It was a part of their own reality yet offered a romantic escapism similar to 'the long ago and far away'" (Rickert, p. 383). Andreyev's setting his play in a circus readily evoked the symbolic recognition from his reader. Janko Lavrin stated in A Panorama of Russian Literature that "He" is vaguely allegorical. "Here a former intellectual luminary has become a circus clown, celebrated for the prodigious amounts of slaps he is able to endure. Intellect itself, in the garb of a clown, is being lustily slapped in a circus to the delight of a gaping and laughing crowd, such is the hidden meaning of this play" (Rickert, p. 381).

There are few modern plays that lend themselves so readily to masks as does He Who Gets Slapped. I chose

two separate scenes and joined them as one because I felt that together they reflected the irony and tenderness of this play. All the characters I used have hidden segments to their personalities that worked well in masks. He is obviously a clown and I felt he would go for the traditional face of a clown. The other circus performer also would be in somewhat traditional garb. The Gentleman would be dressed in the manner of the day in 1922. The poetic language Andreyev uses added to the believablity of this symbolic play and made it a viable vehicle for masks. Generally, when masks are used in this play only He wears one. Since I wanted a more mask-oriented production, I built masks for each character. In the analysis process, I conceptualized each of the masks. He would be in clown white with a big nose; Consuelo would have large innocent eyes; and the Gentleman would have a face twisted with guilt and unhappiness. It was with this last mask that I experienced what Charles Dullin meant when he said, "a mask has a life of its own which is not always the one the sculptor wished to give it. There is often something that escapes the creator" (Vidrovitch,
p. 20). Before the Gentleman's mask was even painted, it seemed to reflect all the agony Andreyev sought to

put into this character. I personally feel this mask best reflects the visualization of the analysis process.

## Building the Masks

Masks can be made from anything. Nina Vidrovitch in her article "Introduction to the Mask" states: "Masks are made of diverse materials: wood, metal, lattice work, basketry, paper, textiles, beads, shells, etc. They come in all sizes. They may cover the whole body or just the face. All have been created, from the first, to be seen in action" (p. 19).

I found, as I planned my masks, that each section required its own research for its time period. The Greek masks all are depicted as grotesque and large. The 1/2 masks of Commedia dell 'Arte use exaggerated characteristics of stereo-typed people. The modern masks have fewer limitations but are still bound by certain criteria. Mr. Leabhart in his interview with Monsieur Decroux, a famous mask French mask expert, quotes: "No matter what the stylization or desire or fantasy or change, the eyes must be where the eyes are, the nose where the nose is and probably the mouth where the mouth is. There is a reality that commands us. Maybe we'd like to have a high forehead for a mask but this might interfere with the actor's actions" (p. 56).

The basic duality of mask making is combining the aesthetic with the practical. W. T. Benda, one of the world's foremost authorities on the art of mask making, said in his book Masks: "Maskmaking is a peculiar kind of sculpture where one must at the same time consider the aesthetic and the practical side of it, the exterior and the interior of the mask, the character it is intended to represent and the fitting to the head of the wearer" (p. 21).

There are steps in maskmaking as in all other areas of design. First was choosing the subject. In this case I've chosen three distinct periods in history to demonstrate the viability of masks on the stage. Each of these groups demanded a different approach to the second step which is visualization. Next is planning the manner of execution and finally constructing the masks.

Choosing the subjects for this thesis was not difficult. Masks have played such an intricate part in the history of the theatre that Greek drama was a logical place to start. The masks of Commedia dell 'Arte also presented an opportunity to use masks in an improvisational setting. The logical third step was to use masks in a more modern play.

Masks have a goal of being functional rather than just decorative. "The mask is the vehicle of an idea, material shaped by method and technique," according to Vidrovitch (p. 19). So the second step is to break down the choices into internal visible units. Not forgetting what Benda's comments were, that "even the most fantastic concepts must have roots in principles of rhythmic coordination and must be based on the persistent and introspective side of nature" (p. 22). "The further he strays from realism the more he has to adhere to these principles" (p. 23).

There is a balanced harmony to the face and as I visualized each mask and sketched it, I became aware of how important maintaining this "rhythmic coordination," or balance, was. One misshapen feature left unbalanced would give the mask an incongruous look (Benda, p. 50). The visualization step posed some problems, but many solutions, because of all the options that are available today. As Benda said, "The modern maker of masks [has] freedom and necessity to create his own style and types; he is not ruled by primitive traditions, since the use of masks and the art of making them have long ago lost their significance and have been forgotten among the peoples of the western

world" (p. 53). Once the "vision" of each mask was in mind the next step was to develop ideas of execution.

Originally I had planned to use historical techniques and materials for the Greek and Commedia masks. But as I considered my premise, that masks do work on the modern stage, I realized I needed to stay within the framework of a modern design situation. Therefore, all of the masks I have built have been constructed from "Fabricform", a product of Unnatural Resources. I ordered the fabricform and made a test mask for the 1989 Lindenwood College production of Christmas Carol. I had also purchased Jeltrate Plus to use in building life masks of the actors, and plaster to use for casting. Other purchases for the masks included airbrush supplies, gesso, elastic, paints, and other decorative pieces.

Before any of this was done, however, it was necessary to project the affordablity of this project. I also considered what the actors comfort might demand and whether this technique would accomplish these goals. In theatrical mask making, both the artistic (exterior) and the practical (interior) sides of a mask must balance. First and foremost, is the mask going to be comfortable and light weight? Are the eye apertures placed so the actor can see approximately twelve feet

of the floor in front of him? Are openings, eye, nostrils, and mouth, large enough to allow adequate air flow? Is the mask off the ear so it doesn't interfere with hearing (Benda, p. 44)?

Next to consider, is the material used affordable? For my purposes it looks like it will be. I will return to this point after the project is completed to assess the affordablity in a traditional theatre setting. I project the cost to be under $100 for the masks I am building, including life mask supplies, and that this technique might be used for one or two masks affordablity in the "real world", but that for a show demanding many masks, other techniques or combinations of techniques would be better.

As I planned what each mask from each scene should look like, I sought to combine the analysis of the play, the character profile and the physical properties of the mask so that the aesthetic might be revealed in the practical.

<u>The Trojan Women</u>

Hecuba is a queen, a captive, a mourner. She seeks vengeance and justice. I feel her face should show a little age and bitterness, yet she is not so consumed by her guilt that she is ugly.

Helen is young, beautiful and very much aware of the fact. She is pleading for her life but has a "never let them see you sweat" air to her. I feel her face would be a grotesque kind of beauty that is found on the stone work left from ancient times. This may well prove to be the hardest mask to paint.

Menelaus is a warrior. He is determined, yet still influenced by Helen"s beauty. I want his age, approx. sixty, to show and confusion in his face to off set his words of determination.

The Commedia Characters

Dottore was inspired by the Bissell porcelain figurines.

Pantalone was inspired by drawings in A History of World Theatre (Berthold, plate 7).

Isabella and Columbine will wear masks only in the tradition of the period as though going to the theatre. Women in Commedia were not masked otherwise.

He Who Gets Slapped

"He" is tired of a world that betrays and eager to make a mockery of it even at his own expense. I wanted heaviness and sadness under the clown paint of his mask.

The Gentleman is guilt-ridden and yet proud. He seems to be seeking forgiveness while also defending

himself. I wanted twisted lines on his face for that reason.

Consuelo is beautiful and innocent yet in a way unfeeling also. I wanted elements of eternity displayed in an innocent, wide eyed face which is also doll like and unreal.

This is the plan. I'm sure some, if not many alterations will have to be made. Comments on changes will be found in the afterward.

Because all of the departmental life masks had been destroyed in a move, and because I wanted the actors to be as comfortable in my masks as possible, my first step was to build a life mask of each one of them. On Feb. 16, 1990, Scott Debroux, Wendy Brotherlin, Sue Crain and Rodney Whatley helped me set up an area to use in the shop for building the life masks. Each member cut a hole in a box lid for his or her own face to fit through. This would be the surface the Jeltrate Plus would adhere to in order that it could be inverted into a box pre-filled with styrofoam pellets from a bean bag chair.

The Jeltate Plus had a scoop to measure the powder and a vial to measure water in it. I pre-measured 36 scoops of Jeltrate Plus into a bowl and 12 vials of water into a large glass. Sue went first because she is

claustrophobic and wanted to get it over with. Sue wore a skull cap to protect her hair. We applied cold cream lightly to her face and exposed area of skull cap so the Jeltrate would release quickly. She laid on the shop cutting table with a small dressmaker ham under her head for support. Once I had visually squared the frame to her face, She held it in place. I put a small piece of plastic drinking straw into each nostril. Scott acted as timer and hand holder. Scott gave me the count for mixing the Jeltrate and water. In each instance more water was required than the multiplication factor indicated. Mixing time was 45 seconds. Scott called out time in 15 second intervals. Wendy helped me apply the Jeltrate mixture. I applied the Jeltrate mixture under the straws in her nostrils first to give them support.Then we filled in around her nose and chin area. Next to be covered was the cheek and forehead area. I left the eyes for last so Sue would feel closed in for as little time as possible. Jeltrate Plus sets up in three minutes beginning from end of 45 second mixing time. We carefully lifted the mold off of her face, much to her relief. I then inverted the box lid frame into a box filled with styrofoam pellets. The mold gently moved and settled into the pellets. I had pre-measured five cups of

plaster of paris and at this point added two and a half cups of water. It was a little thin but workable. Scott helped me pour the plaster. First we poured a small amount into the nose area and stirred out the bubbles. Then we filled in the rest of the mask. I repeated this process for each of the other actors. Getting set, applying Jeltrate, mixing plaster and pouring it required thirty minutes per mask. Masks were left in their molds over the weekend. Each required some smoothing bumps and filling in air holes, but all in all they were good castings.

After the dampness had left the surface of the life masks, I covered them with aluminum foil. Next I used plastacina modeling compound to build up the shapes I wanted on each of the masks. Once I was satisfied with the design, I covered the plastlalina with foil. Next I roughly cut out the shape and amount of fabricform that I needed. I placed this piece into a sink and immersed it in very hot tap water. The fabricform was very pliable after just a few seconds and was ready to be placed on the mask form. I worked from the nose outward and pinned the fabricform in place as needed as I went, reheating the plastic with a hot air gun as necessary. I might point out that fabricform is a medium weight plastic bonded between two pieces of

cheese cloth and is very easy to work with. It will stick firmly to itself but can be pulled apart when reheated. It took approximately an hour to build each mask.

I then painted a single coat of gesso inside and out. After it was dry, I applied a second coat to the outside. W. T. Benda paints the inside of his masks red then applies a gold leaf finish. Although they are truly beautiful when finished this way it is not cost efficient for the stage. At the suggestion of Nancy Benjamin of Illinois State University, I painted the inside of the mask black. If a mask should fall off during a performance, black on the inside would reveal nothing of the substance the mask was made from, therefore maintaining a certain degree of illusion for the mask. I also glued black felt inside the mask at pressure points for added comfort and air flow. The procedure up to this point was the same for all the masks.

Painting the masks presented several options. Some of the masks were easy to visualize. The masks for the modern scene were the first. I knew I wanted a traditional clown face for He, with white as its base and bright colors to accent the nose (red) and eyes (blue, yellow and black). The Gentleman was the next.

As I stated earlier, his was a twisted face. I wanted the paint to have a decaying look about it so after a flesh colored base, I haphazardly applied a mixture which resembled charcoal gray, allowing some flesh tones to show through. The last step was to rub and buff the highlights in with a very light gray. Consuelo was a caricature of innocence with wide eyes and pearly smooth skin. The base coat was a pink flesh tone with light rose circles on her cheek. This technique was typical of drawings in the twenties. I painted large white eyes with the eye aperture edged in blue. Her thin eyebrows and definite eyelashes were in medium brown. I attached a rose to the mask as a tie to the baron, an unseen character.

The next set to get painted were the commedia masks. Once I had chosen the costumes, the ladies masks were painted. Isabella was red to match her dress. We have some wonderful red feathers edged in black, so I used them and carried the feather edge look throughout the mask. I was delighted the red dress fit Wendy, because I had visualized this mask and built it to hold feathers. Columbine was next. As a servant, I felt her mask should be simpler. I mixed paint to match her bluish purple dress and highlighted it with silver. I painted intertwined silver lines for her

eyebrows and silver dots along the edge. When we added Harlequin at the end, I quickly made a mask to match her costume; a small domino mask painted with silver and gold diamonds. Dottore was in sallow flesh tones with shadows in a raw umber mixture. He had bulging white eyes with outlined sockets in pure raw umber. Because he was known for his fondness of drink, I painted his hooked nose a little pink. He also had a dark brown mustache. Because he seemed sad instead of plump, I remade Pantalone and put him in a pink base. At first he was too realistic so I changed the accent colors to bolder shades of burnished pink and red. He had gray fuzzy eyebrows and a messy beard.

The last set of masks to be painted, and the most difficult, were the Greek masks. After studying some of Niki Juncker's work with Greek masks in a production of Antigone, I chose to paint the masks in the same colors as the costumes. Menelaus had a tan base with brown accents. Hecuba was blue with light and dark blue accents. Helen was in salmon. They all seemed too bright for our small downstage space, so I repainted them and toned them down by lightening up the shades of paint. At this point I was pleased with Hecuba and Menelaus. Helen, however, still looked sunburned, so I lightened the salmon another step. This time it looked

too realistic. Niki suggested a metallic wash might help. I used gold since that was the trim on he dress. I accented her eyelids and lips in darker gold. I then went back and put a silver wash on Hecuba, her dress was trimmed in silver, and a bronze wash, which looked copper, on Menelaus.

The final step was to drill holes for the black elastic to go through. After the elastic was in place, I fitted each mask to the appropriate actor. Now we were ready to go and it was an exciting feeling to have the masks finished.

## Putting the Show Together

The process for putting this show together began in September, 1989 when Suzanne Mills, acting chairperson, suggested I consider a project concerning masks. After listening to some of her experiences and talking to Niki Juncker, our costume designer, the idea of researching masks and developing a program seemed very appealing to me. Not often does a design thesis project get to be based solely on the designer's ideas. Usually a director will determine the direction a designer must go.

After weeks of research, I focused in on two periods which used masks effectively: the Greek theatre's use of masks saw the beginning of drama; Commedia dell 'Arte artists brought mask use to a fine art of characterization. I also noticed a lack of information concerning the use of masks, even as a teaching technique until about thirty years ago. The obvious directorial choice seemed to me to be to use the presentational style of Greek drama, the melodramaic style of commedia, and a somewhat stylized realism for a modern play. Choosing a play from each period seemed overwhelming at first. I knew I needed to stay with three or four cast members because of my

budget, so each scene I chose needed to use fewer than five people.

After consulting with Niki Juncker, I chose The Trojan Women for the Greek. As I became thoroughly familiar with the play, I was convinced the most exemplary scene was the final one between Hecuba, Menelaus and Helen.

At first I was going to use part of an existing scenario for the commedia scene. However, as I explored another option, i.e. writing our own scenario, I became convinced that would be more fun and practical. There was no way that I, as an inexperienced director, could teach these four actors enough about commedia to present a scenario that was historically accurate. I was then able to choose the characters I wanted to use. I chose Columbine, Isabella, Pantalone, and Dottore. Later, during the rehearsal process I added Harlequin. Her act as a juggler added time for the others to make their costume change from the Greek into the commedia costumes.

The last scene was actually chosen first. I had read He Who Gets Slapped for another class and it seemed to be a wonderful vehicle for the modern scene. I chose two separate scenes, containing the Gentleman with He and then Consuelo with He, switched the order

and joined them into one piece. Even with all this maneuvering, I felt the emotions and storyline were best communicated in this way.

Gregg Hillmar, set and lighting designer, challenged me to develop concrete connective reasons for choosing these scenes. After thinking about it and sounding out ideas with Suzanne Mills and Niki Juncker, I realized my approach was based on an idea. Although masks are "not human-they reflect humanity" (Benda, p. 1). Because of my background, that phrase became a picture of Body, Soul and Spirit. After that choice was made there was more than an historical reason that the most logical arrangement for the scenes was Greek, Commedia and Modern.

The Greek influence in art and philosophy seemed best matched to the Body aspect of the mask. The lines of the masks were hard and definite yet simple, much as the photographs of Greek statues and vase paintings I had seen. I took the advice of Margarete Beiber who thought it best to "imitate" the Greek dress (p. 268). She also said "the tragedy of Euripides had a strong influence on new comedy" (p. 92). I interpreted this to mean the masks had lost some of their grotesque qualities (Beiber, p. 22) in connection with Euripides' stylized realism.

My choice then for costume and mask for the Greek scene was to use the ionic and doric chitons with a leather breastplate and greaves for Menelaus. Both ladies had their hair pulled back. Helen had a tiara and Hecuba had a bun roll with silver trim at the back of her neck. The women were barefoot and Menelaus had sandals. I had to build these costumes as none were available from stock.

Helen was in a salmon colored doric chiton made from Calcutta cloth (100% cotton). The weave of this fabric gives it a natural wrinkled pleat look. Unfortunately the fabric was a little heavier than I realized so it hung with a weighted look on their bodies. I had dyed the fabric in a sink of hot water with a half package of dye. The material took the dye very well. In fact, at first I thought it too bright. But after seeing it under the stage lights it seemed better. For trim I used the Greek key pattern in gold at the hemline with a straight gold edging on loose edge of her bodice. Pearl circles marked the closure on the shoulders. I used a white braided rope belt, highlighted with gold to finish off Helen's costume.

Since I was committed now to a brighter salmon, I dyed the material for Hecuba's costume blue with a similar intensity. I stenciled a wave pattern in

silver glitter paint on the bottom of her ionic chiton and edged the openings in the sleeve with the same paint. Her belt was a silver covered cord from stock.

Menelaus' fabric remained white under the leather gear. This breastplate and greaves turned out to be my poorest choice. Although I was accurate in design, my choice for the "metal plates" could have been much better. In an effort to save money, I used some celastic I had on hand for these plates. The bronze paint I had chosen to use to paint the plates, looked much more like copper than bronze. They also did not adhere to the vinyl very well. I also chose to fit the girdle separately. This posed no problem visually, but made one more move necessary in changing clothes. Fortunately, this was not this actor's fast change. Each mask was color coordinated with its respective costume.

The next scene was to represent the Soul of the mask; the personality that was revealed by the shape and colors of the mask. Since commedia's success was built around the caricatures of various people, it seemed the best choice for Soul. As the scenario for the commedia scene developed, I realized I needed help with directing. Suzanne Mills graciously agreed to come in and "doctor" this scene and the Greek scene.

Her experience proved to be of great value. Much of the slapstick is due to her advice.

Fortunately, we had costumes in stock that I could use for the Commedia scene, so I did not need to buy or build anything extra for our improv. Basically I chose the costume that worked best for the character. Pantalone wore a baggy doublet and canons. Dottore was in black tights and academic robe. Isabella was in a red dress of the period with a French hood on her head. Columbine wore a blue dress of the period. Her hair was pulled back into what later would be called a snood.

The fabric was heavy and stiff so the "clowning around" of the actors was even funnier. The juggler's costume was a pink broadcloth painted with gold and silver in a diamond pattern. I had built this costume for another show so it did not add any expense to this production. All of the characters wore slippers. The ladies, masks matched their respective costumes. Pantalone and Dottore had masks that were a blend of historical information and imagination.

The final scene was from <u>He Who Gets Slapped</u>. This scene carried with it the task of visualizing the most elusive quality of the masks, its Spirit. The choices in directing were simplified by "He's" character. He

was a clown, therefore, any move could be believable. Consuelo, a bareback rider, went from one "pose" to the next much as she rehearsed for her act. The gentleman's actions were heavy, unhappy and guilt-ridden, involving few movements.

The costumes again were "givens". Consuelo was waiting to go in to the ring so she needed to be in "costume". The tutu has been a favorite of bareback riders for over a hundred years, so using the pale mauve tutu we had in stock worked for her and added no extra expense. Because He was an intellectual and turned his back on that life, I felt the garb of a doctoral academic gown and hood would add to the bitter mockery of his character. He also wore a fool's cap with tassel and bells. The gentleman was dressed in a double breasted, black suit with boiled collar and dark tie. He wore, and then used as a prop, a gray fedora.

These choices then were the beginnings of pulling a show together. The cast I had originally chosen included Wendy Brotherlin, Susan Crain, Scott Debroux, and Rodney Whately. Due to some scheduling problems, it was necessary to replace Rodney with James Freund.

The rehearsal process began in the dance studio, four weeks before our performance. The first three sessions we worked only with masks and improvs. Some

of what I had learned in my research was easy to teach-- some was not. At this point in time I had not painted my masks so that I could use them as universal or neutral masks. According to Rolfe, "The universal mask is a teaching tool, developed from the work of Jacques Copeau. Its aim is to help the actor to develop an expressive body, to play economically, using only essential movements because of the heightened dimension of the mask." (p.41).

Rolfe also noted, "Michael Saint Denis, who belonged to the school of Copeau, and who later established some of the world's most prestigious acting schools, summarizes the purpose and the effect of the mask in Theatre: The Rediscovery of Style: 'To us, a mask was a temporary instrument which was offered to the curiosity of the young actor, in the hope the it might help his concentration, strengthen his inner feelings, diminish his self-consciousness, and help him to develop his powers of outward expression.'" (p.9).

One of my goals was not design oriented at all. It simply was to try and encourage a new depth to my actors' level of skill. Using some techniques I had read about and some I had learned at an A.C.T.F. workshop, conducted by Richard Nichols of the University of Pennsylvania, I feel I succeeded. Our

procedure was simple. First, each one studied a mask for several minutes, thinking of what the mask might be saying. All of us come from different backgrounds and oddly enough a mask has a different look on each person (Appel, p. 16). This studying process achieves several goals as suggested by Libby Appel in her book Mask Characterization: An Acting Process. One goal is that masks stimulate an actor's imagination. At first I saw four people groping for "what in the world do I see here". Gradually though, ideas occurred and improvisations were possible. The second goal is to place a greater emphasis on body movement. This physical action needed to be big enough to communicate to an audience. The third goal was for every part of the whole body to reflect the character. Fourth, it is a goal of the mask to rid the actor of self conscious mannerisms (p. xiii). In an interview with Meridith Taylor of Webster University, she stated, "When an actor puts on a neutral mask, every little idiosyncratical movement is magnified." Working with masks leads to self-revelation about such mannerisms and leads to their elimination when necessary.

After this neutral quiet time with the mask, I had them put on a mask and study themselves in the mirror. Bari Rolfe said, "Good mask work demands respect for

the mask" (p. 15). The actors who helped me were eager to learn and what might have seemed silly at first, soon became a healthy respect for the mask. Ernest Fenollosa and Ezra Pound concurred. "The longer you look at a good mask the more charged with life it becomes" (Sivins, p. 87). We followed this procedure for all rehearsals.

Next, we worked in an improv situation with the masks. I would suggest some action, they would individually or collectively respond. Most suggestions made body movement choices clear. However, some suggestions were more obscure and made movement choices more difficult. For instance, I suggested to one actor to steal. He was able quickly to build a scenario with a beginning, middle, and ending. Yet my suggestion to another actor that he had a toothache was not an active kind of suggestion and his response was less connected.

After our improv sessions, we began working from the scripts. We talked about concept, style and characterization before any work began. Since each scene was totally different, each character approach needed to be different. I think these four actors did a wonderful job in changing both their approach to and delivery of their lines. They performed as an

ensemble, working together and succeeding as a team. I am really proud of the job they did.

Another consideration for any production is cost. An account sheet can be found in Appendix I. I broke the cost into four categories: Life Masks, Masks, Costumes, Programs and Reception. I was able to make two life masks off of each mold so the total cost of $57.95 can be divided by eight for an individual cost of $7.95. The total cost for the masks was $52.19 for eleven masks. The cost per mask was $4.75. The total cost for costumes was $33.61, an average of $11.20 each. The reception cost $44.72 and the programs, invitations, envelops and postage cost $17.72, with a total for this category of $62.44. The theatre department paid a $15. fee for rights for <u>He Who Gets Slapped</u>. The total of all listed expenses is $221.19.

As I consider all the comments I heard, or heard about, concerning the production, I am convinced the audience felt the masks worked very well, even on a small intimate stage. The conclusion I have come to is that masks should be used more. They are a viable part of the theatre today.

MASKS

Arlene:

Good evening ladies and gentlemen. I'd like to welcome you to our theatre this evening as we look at Masks and how they work on a stage. Masks are perplexing objects. Not human, they reflect humanity: body, soul, and spirit. They can be made of anything- wood, fabric, paper, beads shells- anything. They come in all shapes and sizes and they cover the whole body or only the face. They may have been created for primitive worship or for use on a stage, but "all have been created from the first to be seen in action" (Vitrovitch, p. 19).Tonight I thought it might be fun to build a mask together, sort of. We'd like to share with you three scenes from three different time periods that reflect the physicality of the mask- its body, the emotion it evokes- its soul, and the abstract entity of the mask-its spirit, that allows us to believe what we see on the stage.

First, to build the body of a mask, we must look at its physical elements-its lines and shapes and textures. Our first scene is from ancient Greece where drama has its roots. The mask allowed a poet and later actors to represent the gods or legendary heroes in a more physical way. The style of the acting was presentational- much as I am speaking to you. The art

and architecture of Greece reflected the glorification of the human body and that of the gods. The lines were defined and simple. The masks were probably also made in this manner. Since no mask actually exist today, we must make our judgments from what we see in sculpture and vase paintings. These representations of the Greek mask would indicate that they were larger than life. Masks made facial features more visible in the large amphitheatres of the day and were therefore very practical. Even though they were unrealistic, they reflected reality on the Greek stage. Euripides play, Trojan Women, won second place in the Dionysis festival of 415 B. C. One of the few tragedies to survive, Trojan Women is popular today because of Euripides Characters. Troy has fallen. All of the Trojan men have been killed and soon all of the women, including Queen Hecuba, will be taken to Greece as slaves. Menelaus has come to kill Helen, the wife who betrayed him and ran off with Paris, Hecuba's son. The scene we have chosen occurs near the end of the play as our three main characters meet.[lights out, exit]

The Trojan Women

Hecuba.....Wendy Brotherlin

Menelaus...Scott Debroux

Helen.....Susan Crain

Menelaus:

O splendor of sunburst breaking forth this day, whereon
I lay my hands once more on Helen, my wife. And yet
it is not, so much as men think, for the woman's sake
I came to Troy, but against that guest proved
treacherous, who like a robber carried the woman from
my house.
Since the gods have seen to it that he paid the
penalty,
fallen before the Hellenic spear, his kingdom wrecked,
I come for her now, the wife once my own, whose name I
can no longer speak with any happiness,
to take her away. In this house of captivity
she is numbered among the other women of Troy, a slave.
And those men whose work with the spear has won her
back
gave her to me, to kill, or not to kill, but lead
away to the land of Argos, if such be my pleasure.
And such it is; the death of Helen in Troy I will let
pass, have the oars take her by sea ways back to Greek
soil, and there give her over to execution;
blood penalty for friends who are dead in Ilium here.

Go to the house, my followers, and take her out;
no drag her out; lay hands upon that hair so stained
with men's destruction. When the winds blow fair
astern
we will take ship again and bring her back to Hellas.

Hecuba:
O power, who mount the world, wheel where the world
rides,
O mystery of man's knowledge, whosoever you be,
Zeus named, nature's necessity or mortal mind,
I call upon you; for you walk the path none hears
yet bring all human action back to right at last.

Menelaus:
What can this mean? How strange a way to call on gods.

Hecuba:
Kill your wife, Menelaus, and I will bless your name.
But keep your eyes away from her. Desire will win.
She looks enchantment, and where she looks homes are
set fire;
she captures cities as she captures the eyes of men.
We have had experience, you and I. We know the truth.
(enter Helen)

Helen:
Menelaus, your first acts are argument of terror
to come. Your lackeys put their hands on me. I am
dragged
out of my chambers by brute force. I know you hate
me; I am almost sure. And still there is one question
I would ask you, if I may. What have the Greeks
decided
to do with me? Or shall I be allowed to live?

Menelaus:
You are strictly condemned, but all the army gave
you into my hands, to kill you for the wrong you did.

Helen:
Is it permitted that I argue this, and prove
that my death, if I am put to death, will be unjust?

Menelaus:
I did not come to talk with you. I came to kill you.

Hecuba:
No, Menelaus, listen to her. She should not die
unheard. But give me leave to take the opposite case;
the prosecution. There are things that happened in
Troy
which you know nothing of, and the long drawn argument
will mean her death. She never can escape us now.

Menelaus:
This is a gift of leisure. If she wishes to speak
she may. But for your sake, understand, that I give
this privilege I never would have given to her.

Helen:
Perhaps it will make no difference if I speak well
or badly, and your hate will not let you answer me.
All I can do is to foresee the arguments
you will use in accusation of me, and set against
the force of your charges, charges of my own.
First then!
She mothered the beginning of all this wickedness.
For Paris was her child. And next to her the old king,
who would not destroy the infant Alexander, that dream
of the firebrand's agony, has ruined Troy, and me.
This is not all; listen to the rest I have to say.
Alexander was the judge of the goddess trinity.
Pallas Athene would have given him power, to lead
the Phrygian arms on Hellas and make it desolate.
All Asia was Hera's promise, and uttermost zones
of Europe for his lordship, if her way prevailed.
But Aphrodite, picturing my loveliness,
promised it to him, if he would say her beauty
surpassed
all others. Think what this means, and all the
consequence.

Cypris prevailed, and I was won in marriage: all
for Greek advantage. Asia is not your lord; you serve
no tyrant now, nor take the spear in his defense.
Yet Hellas" fortune was my own misfortune. I,
sold once for my body's beauty stand accused who should
for what has been done wear garlands on my head.
I know.
You will say all this is nothing to the immediate
charge:
I did run away; I did go secretly from your house.
But when he came to me-call him any name you will:
Paris? or Alexander? or spirit of blood
to haunt this woman?-he came with a goddess at his
side;
no weak one. And you -it was criminal- took ship for
Crete
and left me there in Sparta in the house, alone.
You see?
I wonder-and I ask this of myself, not you-
why did I do it? What made me run away from home
with the stranger, and betray my country and my hearth?
Challenge the goddess then, show your greater strength
than
Zeus'

who has the other gods in his power, and still is slave to Aphrodite alone. Shall I not be forgiven?
Still you might have some show of argument against me. When Paris was gone to the deep places of death, below ground, and the immortal practice on my love was gone, I should have come back to the Argive ships, left Troy.
I did try to do it, and I have witnesses,
the towers' gatekeepers and the sentinels on the wall, who caught me again and again as I let down the rope from the battlements and tried to slip away to the ground.
For Deiphobus, my second husband: he took me away by force and kept me his wife against the Phrygians' will.
O my husband, can you kill me now and think you kill in righteousness? I was the bride of force. Before, I brought their houses to the sorrow of slavery instead of conquest. Would you be stronger than the gods?
Try, then. But even such ambition is absurd.

Hecuba:
First to defend the honor of the gods, and show that the woman is a scandalous liar. I will not believe it! Hera and the virgin Pallas Athene could never be so silly and empty-headed

the Hera would sell Argos to the barbarians,
or Pallas let Athenians be the slaves of Troy.
They went to Ida in girlish emulation, vain
of their own loveliness? Why? Tell me the reason Hera
should fall so much in love with the idea of beauty.
To win some other lord more powerful than Zeus?
Or has Athene marked some god to be her mate,
she, whose virginity is a privilege won from Zeus,
who abjures marriage? Do not trick out your own sins
by calling the gods stupid. No wise man will believe
you.
You claim, and I must smile to hear it, that Aphrodite
came at my son's side to the house of Menelaus;
who could have caught up you and your city of Amyclae
and set you in Ilium, moving not from the quiet of
heaven.
Nonsense. My son was handsome beyond all other men.
You looked at him, and sense went Cyprian at the sight,
since Aphrodite is nothing but the human lust,
named rightly, since the word of lust begins the god's
name.
You saw him in the barbaric splendor of his robes,
gorgeous with gold. It made your senses itch. You
thought,
being queen only in Argos, in little luxury,
that once you got rid of Sparta for the Phrygian city

where gold streamed everywhere, you could let
extravagance
run wild. No longer were Menelaus and his house
sufficient to your spoiled luxurious appetites.

So much for that. You say my son took you away
by force. What Spartan heard you cry for help? You
did
cry out? Or did you? Castor, your brother, was there,
a young
man, and his twin not yet caught up among the stars.
Then when you had reached Troy, and the Argives at your
heel
came, and the agony of the murderous spears began,
when reports came in that Menelaus' side
was winning, you would praise him, simply to make my
son
unhappy at the strength of his love's challenger,
forgetting your husband when the luck went back to
Troy.
You worked hard: not to make yourself a better woman,
but to make sure always to be on the winning side.
You claim you tried to slip away with ropes let down
from the ramparts, and this proves you stayed against
your will?
Perhaps. But when were you ever caught in the
strangling noose,

caught sharpening a dagger? Which any noble wife
would do, desperate with longing for her lord's return.
Yet over and over again I gave you good advice:
"Make your escape, my daughter; there are other girls
for my sons to marry. I will help you get away
to the ships of the Achaeans. Let the Greeks, and us,
stop fighting." So I argued, but you were not pleased.
Spoiled in the luxury of Alexander's house
you liked foreigners to kiss the ground before your
feet.
All that impressed you.
And now you dare to come outside,
figure fastidiously arranged, to look upon
the same air as your husband, O abominable
heart, who should walk submissively in rags of robes,
shivering with anxiety, head Scythian-cropped,
your old impudence gone and modesty gained at last
by reason of your sinful life.
O Menelaus,
mark this, the end of my argument. Be true to your
high reputation and to Hellas. Grace both, and kill
Helen. Thus make it the custom toward all womankind
hereafter, that the price of adultery is death.

Menelaus:
All you have said falls into line with my own thought.
This woman left my household for a stranger's bed

of her own free will, and all this talk of Aphrodite is for pure show. Away, and face the stones of the mob.

Atone for the long labors of the Achaeans in the brief act of dying, and know your penance for my shame.

(Helen drops before him and embraces his knees.)

Helen:

No, by your knees! I am not guilty of the mind's infection, which the gods sent. Do not kill! Have pity!

Hecuba:

Be true to the memory of all your friends she murdered.

It is for them and for their children that I plead.

(Menelaus pushed Helen away)

Menelaus:

Enough, Hecuba, I am not listening to her now.

I speak to my servants: see that she is taken away to where the ships are beached. She will make the voyage home.

Hecuba:

But let her not be put in the same ship with you.

Menelaus:
What can you mean? That she is heavier than she was?

Hecuba;
A man in love once never is out of love again.

Menelaus:
Sometimes; when the beloved's heart turns false to him,
Yet it shall be as you wish. She shall not be allowed
in the same ship I sail in. This was well advised.
And once in Argos she must die the vile death earned
by her vile life, and be an example to all women
to live temperately. This is not the easier way:
and yet her execution will tincture with fear
the lust of women even more depraved than she.
(exit)

Arlene:
The physicality of the Greek mask was impressive. It commanded your attention. Yet even with its rigid lines, the emotion of the character was visible. Adding soul to the mask was an intricate part of the style of commedia dell 'arte. Although the face on a commedia mask has no expression, it does reflect the emotion of the scene. The same mask can evoke happiness and laughter from the audience one minute, and sadness and tears the next. Commedia was the theatre of the people during the Renaissance. Comedy

of skill is the literal translation and that it was. Although commedia was an improvisational art form, some things always stayed the same. Amazingly over commedia's 200 year existence, the characters remained very similar. This was due in part to the mask. The actor portrayed the same character for as long as he performed with the troupe. But it was the mask that offered the audience an immediate recognition of the character. This was true even if the troupe was preforming in a foreign land. The mimed routines were always enhanced by the masks. Only certain characters wore masks. The zannies were the truly comic characters. In fact they could be said to be the forerunners to the circus clowns. The women in commedia did not wear mask unless it followed the custom of the day.

In our improv today, as we add soul to our mask, we give a 20th century nod to commedia dell 'arte. We have attempted to follow the format of commedia. A scenario has been established. Point A will lead to point B. However the method we take is different every time and will be tonight also. I think that is why commedia lasted so long. Never changing, it was always changeable. It was as if the face of the mask did move.

Always expressing the emotions in their actions, the actors used the masks to communicate to the audience. [lights out, exit]

The Letter-A Commedia Style Improv

Dottore.....Scott Debroux

Pantalone.....James Freund

Isabella.....Wendy Brotherlin

Columbine.....Susan Crain

The action of the improv is built around a letter from an unseen lover for Isabella. Pantalone, her father, intercepts Columbine's delivery of this letter. She convinces him the letter is from Dottore, who Pantalone wants his daughter to marry. Dottore arrives. Columbine secretly loves Dottore. Your job is to pass the letter around in such a way as to have Pantalone happy to have his daughter marry her unseen lover and Columbine and
Dottore together.

Arlene:
Everyone loves a clown. The emotion of the commedia clowns with their slapstick made us laugh. The Stereo types of Dottore and Pantalone as pretentious old men and Columbine as a willy servant became the main stay characters of the commedia. Some clowns, however,

evoke pity and sadness. As we approach adding spirit to the mask, that entity that allows us to see a spark of life in the mask, we are faced with a part of life we do not fully understand. Psychologist tell us we all wear masks. But often on a realistic stage where the psychological mask is displayed, physical masks are ignored. That is a shame. For it is in the real mask that the hidden masks of our personality can be released. Since realism became the main approach to theatre, masks have been noticeably absent. It has only been in the last 25 or 30 years that we have rediscovered there usefulness. In our final scene we deal with these hidden masks by wearing real masks. He Who Gets Slapped was written by Leonid Andreyev, a 20th century Russian playwright, who started out as a realistic writer. As his style changed and moved toward symbolism, his popularity increased. The main character in this play is a nameless man who was betrayed by his wife and student. In his pain, he rejects the intellectual world and joins the circus. On the stage our clown is called He Who Gets Slapped. In a way, He is allowing the slaps he endures to be his attack on the world he once accepted. Within this unreal world of the circus, He has found a beautiful, young bareback rider. Consuelo, innocent and pure, is everything He longs for in life. Yet he would rather

see her die than be spoiled. He would rather die also.

[lights out, exit]

He Who Gets Slapped

He.....Scott Debroux

Consuelo.....Susan Crain

Gentleman....James Freund

He:
Consuelo.

Consuelo:
Is that you, He, dear?

He:
Where did you learn that pose? I have seen it only in marble. You look like Psyche.

Consuelo:
I don't know, He. It's all so sad here, to-day.

He:
How beautiful you are, Consuelo.

Consuelo:
Like Eve? [smiles]

He:
Yes, Consuelo. And if the Baron asks you to be his wife, will you accept?

Consuelo:
Certainly, He. That's all Father and I are waiting for. Father told me yesterday that the Baron will not hesitate very long. Of course I do not love him. But I will be his honest, faithful wife. Father wants to teach me to play the piano.

He:
Are those your own words-"his honest and faithful wife"?

Consuelo:
Certainly they are mine. Whose could they be? He loves me so much, the poor thing. Dear He, what does "love" mean? Everybody speaks of love....What a boring evening this has been! He, did you paint the laughter on your face yourself?

He:
My own self, dear little Consuelo-

Consuelo:
How do you do it, all of you? I tried it once, but couldn't do a thing. Why are there no women clowns? Why are you so silent, He? You, too, are sad tonight.

He: No, I am happy tonight. Give me your hand, Consuelo, I want to see what it says.

Consuelo:
Do you know how? What a talented man you are! Read it, but don't lie, like a gypsy. [he goes down on one knee and takes her hand. Both bend over] Am I lucky?

He:
Yes, lucky. But wait a minute-this line here-funny. Ah, Consuelo, what does it say here! [acting] I tremble, my eyes do not dare to read the strange, fatal signs. Consuelo-

Consuelo:
THe stars are talking.

He:
Yes, the stars are talking. Their voices are distant and terrible; their rays are pale, and their shadows slip by, like the ghosts of dead virgins-their spell is upon thee, Consuelo, beautiful Consuelo. Thou standest at the door of Eternity.

Consuelo:
I don't understand. Does it mean that I will live long?

He:

This line-how far it goes. Strange! Thou wilt live eternally, Consuelo.

Consuelo:

You see, He, you did tell me a lie, just like a gypsy!

He:

But it is written- here, silly-and here. Now think of what the stars are saying. Here you have eternal life, love, and glory; and here, listen to what Jupiter says. He says: "Goddess, thou must not belong to any one born on earth," and if you marry the Baron-you'll perish, you'll die, Consuelo. [Consuelo laughs]

Consuelo:

Will he eat me?

He:

No. But you will die before he has time to eat you.

Consuelo:

And what will become of Father? Is there nothing about him here?

He:

Don't laugh, Consuelo, at the voice of the stars. They are far away, their rays are light and pale, and we can barely see their sleeping shadows, but their sorcery is

stern and dark. You stand at the gates of eternity. Your die is cast; you are doomed-and your Alfred, whom you love in your heart, even though your mind is not aware of it, your Alfred cannot save you. He, too, is a stranger on this earth. He is submerged in a deep sleep. He, too, is a little god who has lost himself, and , Consuelo, never, never will he find his way to heaven again. Forget Alfred--

Consuelo:
I don't understand a word. Do the gods really exist? My teacher told me about them. But I thought it was all tales! [laughs] And my Alfred is a god?

He:
Forget Alfred! Consuelo, do you know who can save you? The only one who can save you? I.

Consuelo: [laughing]
You, He?

He:

Yes, but don't laugh! Look. Here is the letter H. It is I, He.

Consuelo:

He Who Gets Slapped? Is that written here , too?

He:

That , too. The stars know everything. But look here, what more is written about him. Consuelo, welcome him. He is an old god in disguise, who came down to earth only to love you, foolish little Consuelo.

Consuelo: [laughing]

Some god!

He:

Don't mock! The gods don't like such empty laughter from beautiful lips. The gods grow lonely and die, when they are not recognized. Oh, Consuelo! Oh, great joy and love! Do recognize this god, and accept him.

Enter Gentleman and exit Consuelo

Gentleman:

Good morning, sir.

He:

Ah! It's you.

Gentleman:

I am not late. You look as if you did not expect me. I hope I am not disturbing you? You fixed this time yourself, however, and I took the liberty--

He:

No manners, please. What do you want? Tell me quickly, I have no time.

Gentleman:

I expected you would invite me to some other place...to your home.

He:

I have no other home. This is my home.

Gentleman:

But people may disturb us here.

He:

So much the worse for you-talk faster. [silence]

Gentleman:

Will you allow me to sit down?

He:

Sit down. Look out! That chair is broken.

Gentleman: [looks around for a safe place to sit]In this suit, and with this face, you make a still stranger impression. Yesterday it seemed to me that it was all a dream; today...you...

He: You have forgotten my name again? My name is He. You are determined to go on talking...Decidedly so-But you are squandering your time...hurry up.

Gentleman:

I really don't know...Everything here strikes me so... These posters, horses, animals, which I passed when I was looking for you... and finally, you, a clown in a circus! [with a slight, deprecating smile] Could I expect it? It is true, when everybody there decided that you were dead, I was the only man who did not agree with them. I felt that you were still alive. But to find you among such surroundings-I can't understand it.

He:

You said you have a son, now. Doesn't he look like me?

Gentleman:

I don't understand?

He:

Don't you know that widows of divorced men often have children by the new husband, which resemble the old one? This misfortune did not befall you? [laughs] And your book; too, is a big success, I hear.

Gentleman:

You want to insult me again?

He: [laughing]

What a restless, touchy faker you are! Please sit still; be quiet. It is the custom here to speak this way. Why were you trying to find me?

Gentleman:

My conscience...

He:

You have no conscience. Or were you afraid that you hadn't robbed me of everything I possessed, and you came for the rest? But what more could you take from me now? My fool's
cap with its bells? You wouldn't take it. It's too big for your bald head! Crawl back, you book-worm!

Gentleman:

You cannot forgive the fact that your wife...

He:

To the devil with my wife!

Gentleman:

I don't know... But such language! I confess I find difficulty in expressing my thoughts in such an atmosphere, but if you are so... indifferent to your wife, who, I shall allow myself to emphasize the fact, loved you and thought you were a saint--[He laughs] Then what brought you to such a ... step? Or is it that you cannot forgive my success? A success, it is true, not entirely deserved. And now you want to take vengeance, with your humbleness, on those who misunderstood you. But you always were so indifferent to glory. Or your indifference was only hypocrisy. And when I, a more lucky rival...

He: [with a burst of laughter]

Rival! You - a rival!

Gentleman: [growing pale]

But my book!

He:

You are talking to me about your book? To me?

Gentleman:

I am a very unhappy man.

He:

Why?

Gentleman:

I am a very unhappy man. You must forgive me. I am deeply, irreparably, and infinitely unhappy.

He:

But why? Explain it to me. [walking up and down] You say yourself that your book is a tremendous success, you are famous, you have glory; there is not a yellow newspaper in which you and your thoughts are not mentioned. Who knows me? Who cares about my heavy abstractions, from which it was difficult for them to derive a single thought? You--you are the great vulgarizer! You have made my thoughts comprehensible even to horses! With the art of a great vulgarizer, a tailor of ideas, you dressed my Apollo in a barber's jacket, you handed my Venus a yellow ticket, and to my bright hero you gave the ears of an ass. And then your career is made, as Jackson says. And wherever I go, the whole street looks at me with thousands of faces, in which- what mockery-I recognize the traits of my own children.

Oh! How ugly your son must be, if he resembles me!!

Why then are you unhappy, you poor devil? The police haven't caught you, as yet. What am I talking about?

Is it possible to catch you? You always keep within the limits of the law. You have been torturing yourself up to now because you are not married to my wife. A notary public is always present at your thefts. What is the use of this self-torture, my friend? Get married. I died. You are not satisfied with having taken only my wife? Let my glory remain in your possessions. It is yours. Accept my ideas. Assume all the rights, my most lawful heir! I died! And when I was dying [makes a stupid pious face] I forgave thee! [bursts out laughing]

Well here we are. At the end of our program and we have built the mask. Its body with its rigid lines and shapes. The soul added color and movement. And finally its spirit-an entity we can't explain, yet can't deny exists. I hope you have enjoyed our little project. Before you go I want to introduce you to the cast who have been so supportive. Wendy Brotherlin, is a senior majoring in communications. Susan Crain, a senior in theatre. Scott Debroux is a graduate student in performance. And Jim Freund, a sophomore in dance.

Please join us now for some refreshments in the lounge area. And thank you for coming. God bless. [exit]

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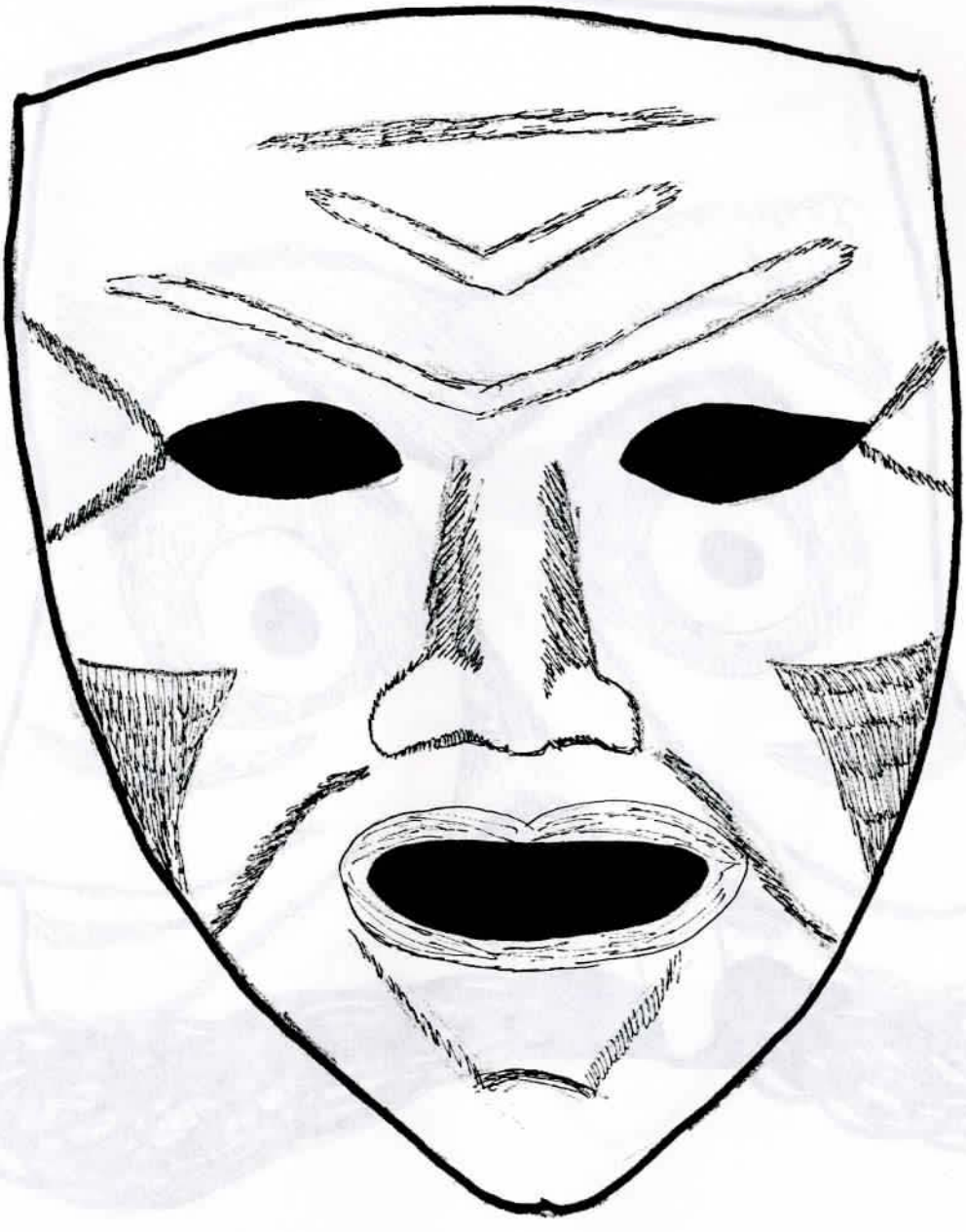
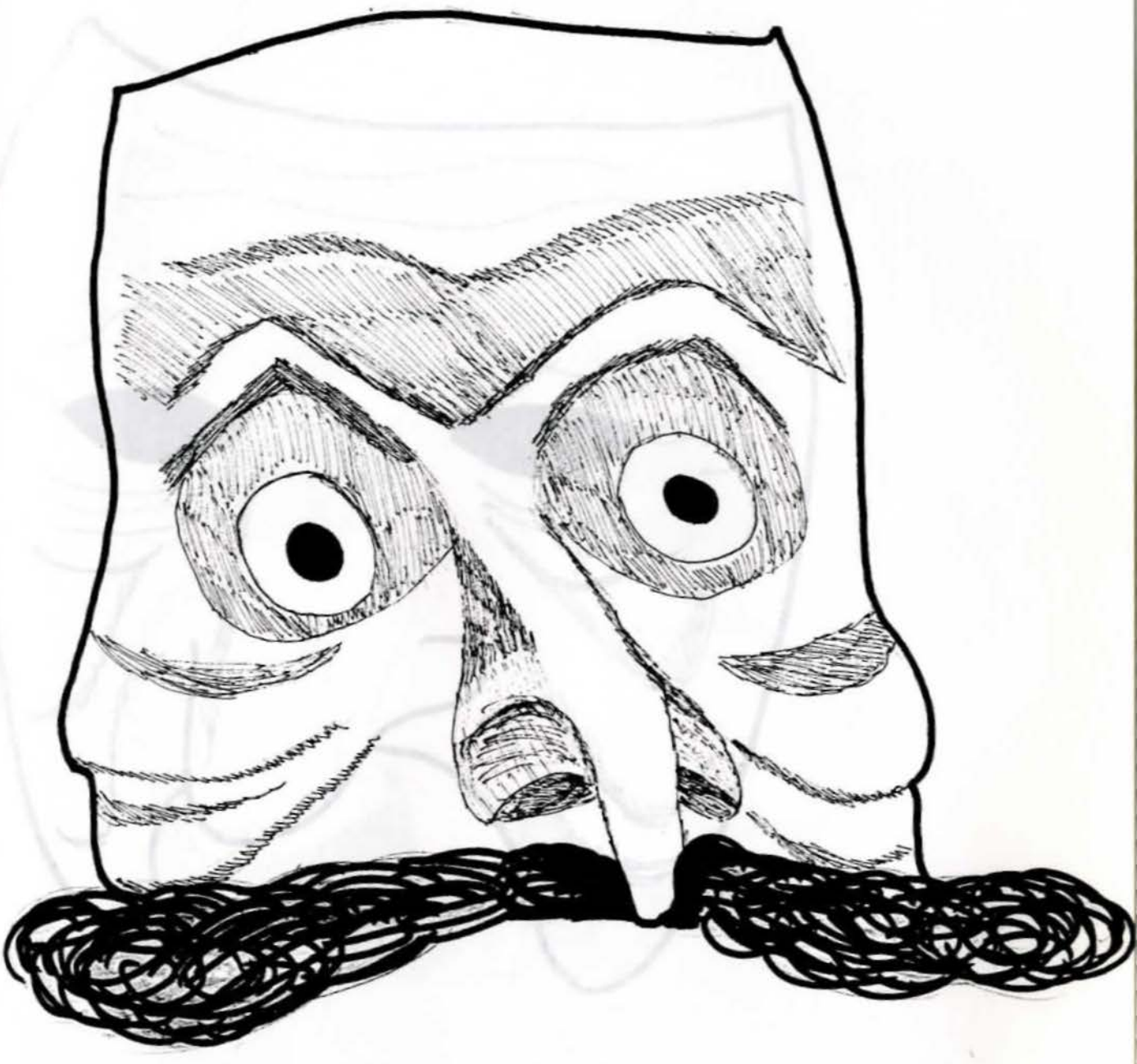
# APPENDIX I

Helen

Hecuba



Menelaus



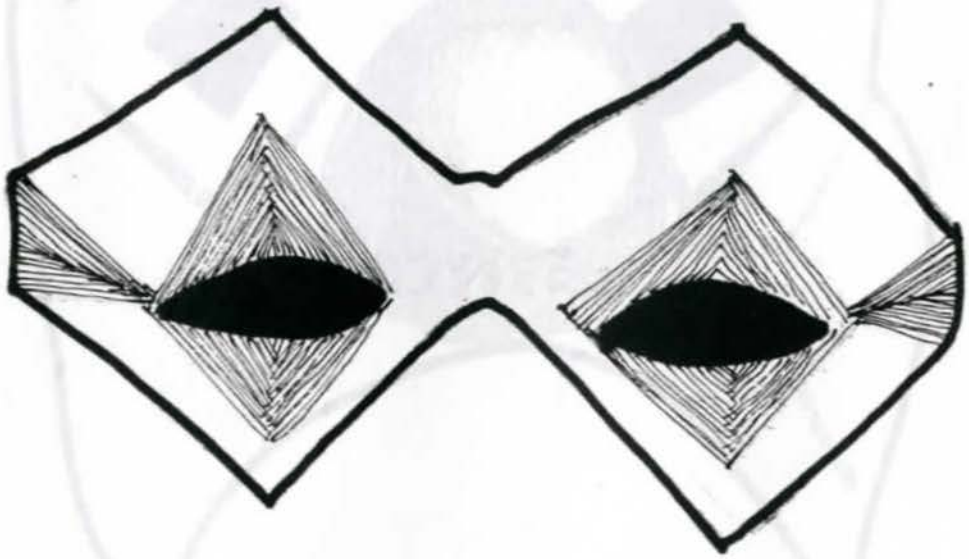
Dottore

1st
Pantalone
Rejected

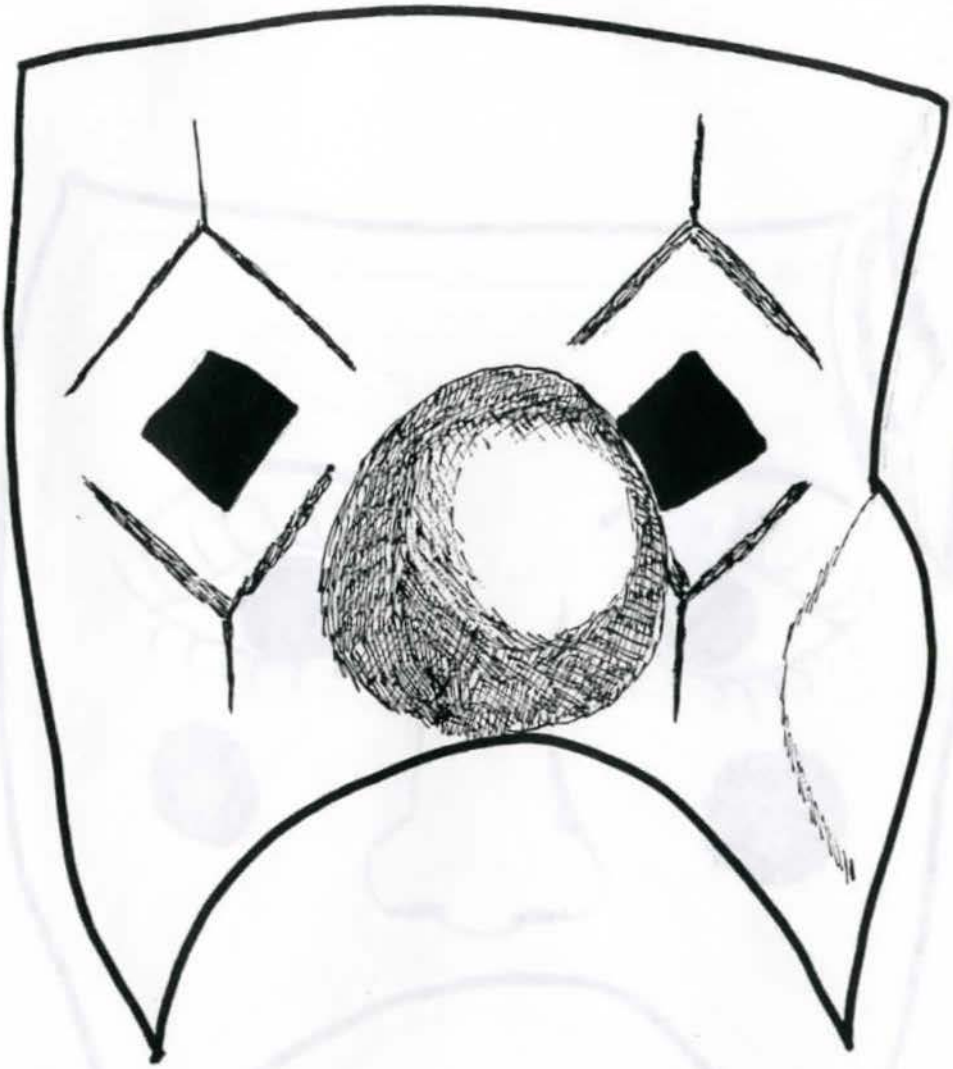
Pantalone

columbine

Isabella

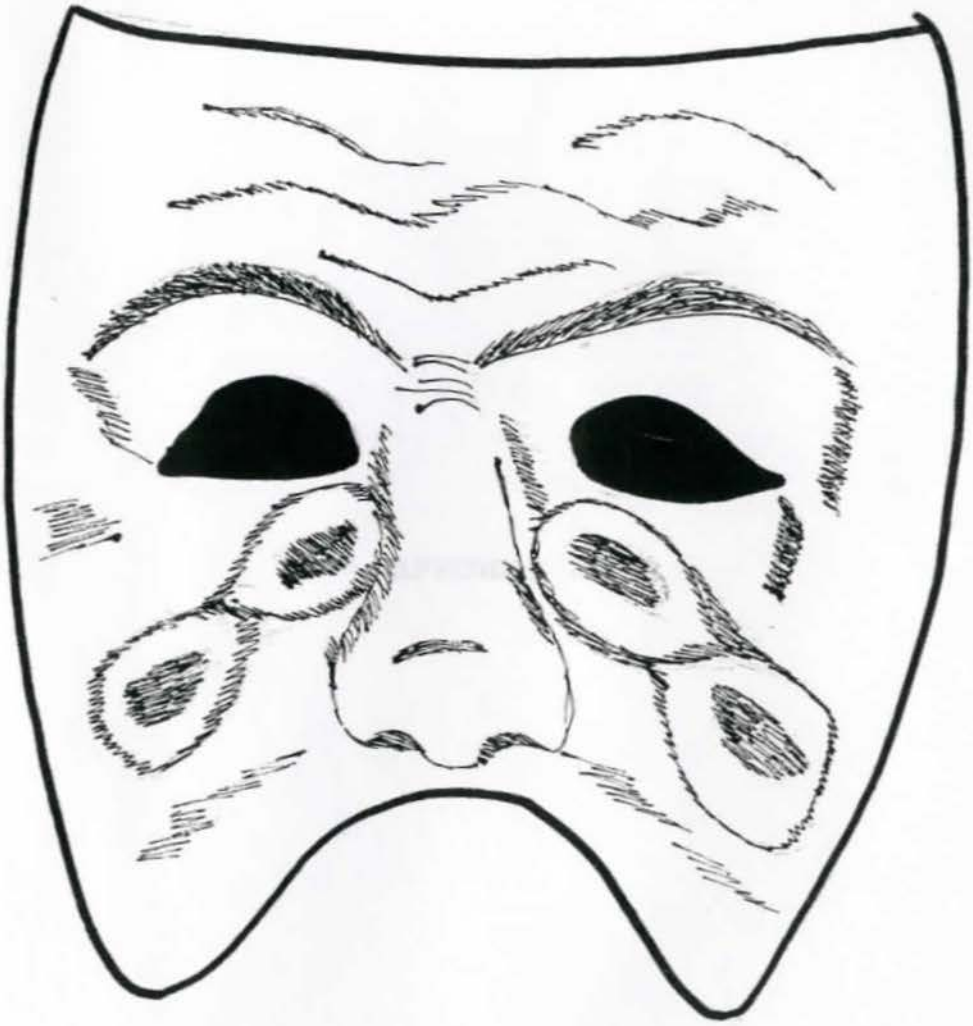


Harlequin



He

Consuela

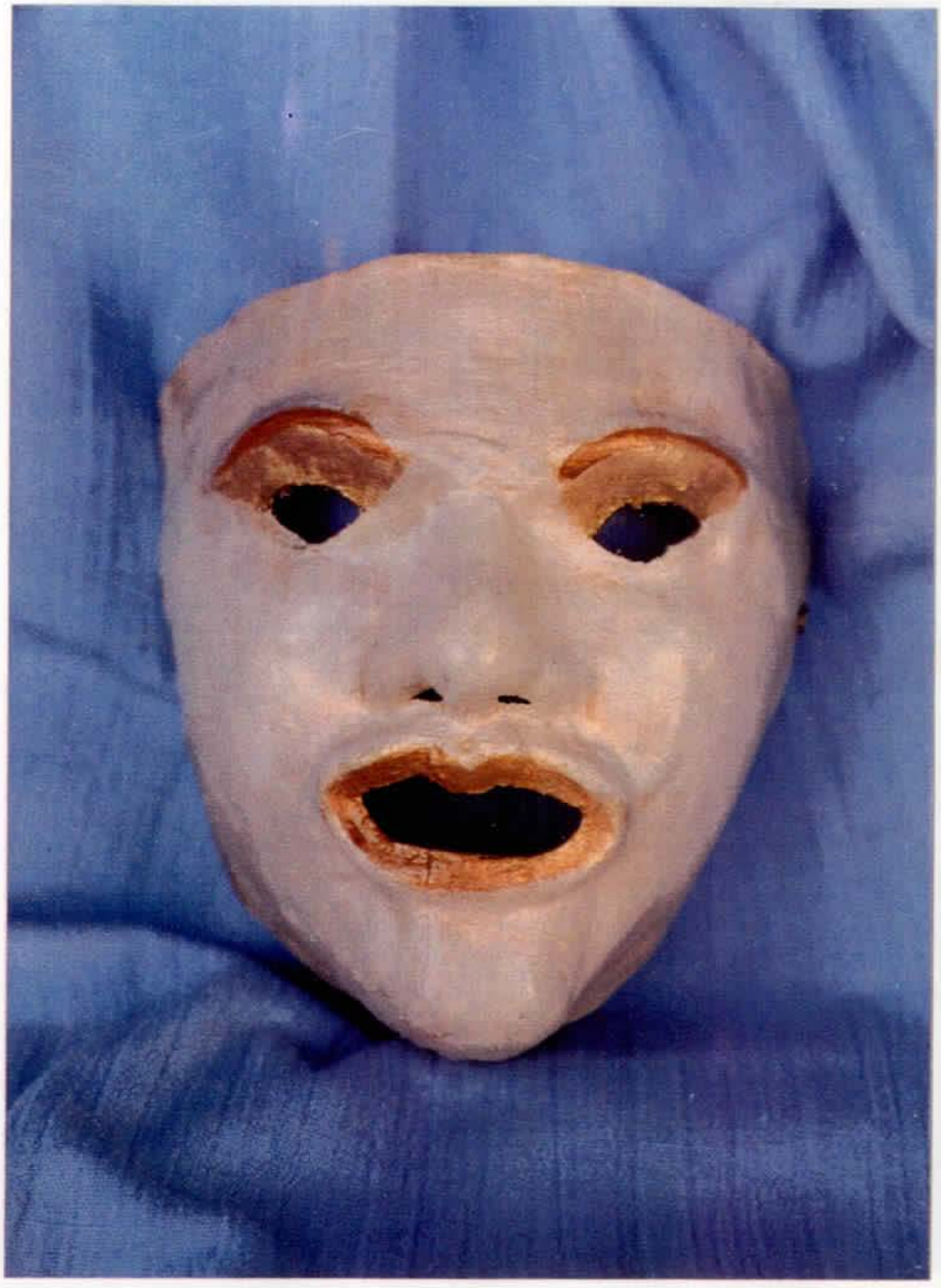


Gentleman

# APPENDIX II

The Trojan Women

Helen

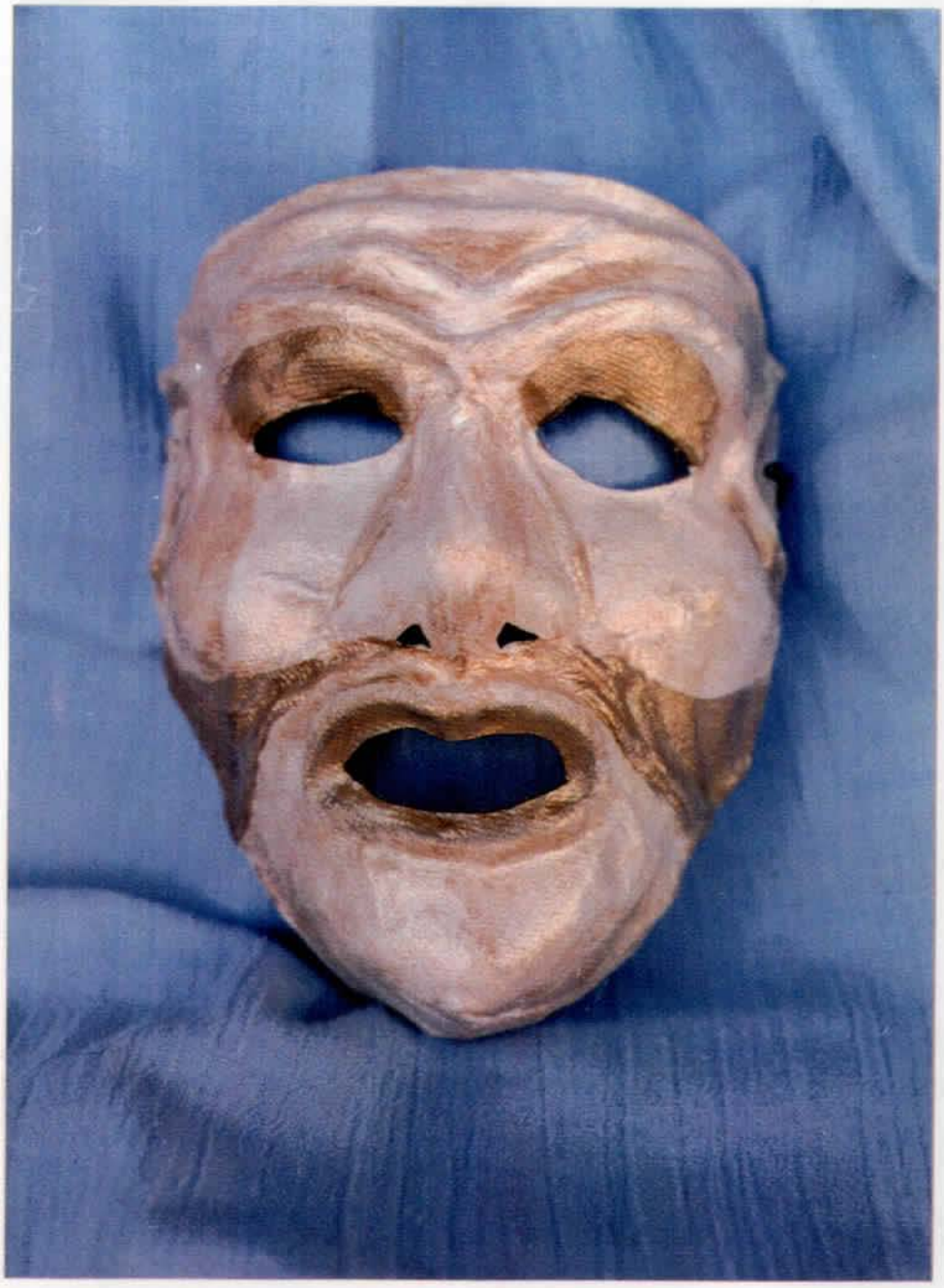


The Trojan Women

Hecuba

The Trojan Women

Menelaus



Commedia Improv

Dottore

Commedia Improv

Pantalone

Commedia Improv

Columbine

Harlequin Isabella

He Who Gets Slapped

He

He Who Gets Slapped

Consuelo

He Who Gets Slapped

Gentleman

# APPENDIX III

Expenses

| Life Masks | |
|---|---|
| Jeltrate Plus | |
| 3 @ $9.00 | $27.00 |
| Plaster | 10.99 |
| Bean Bag Chair | |
| (pellets) | 19.96 |
| | 57.95 |

| Costumes | |
|---|---|
| Fabric | |
| 9 yds. @ $1.60 | $15.00 |
| Ribbon 6 yds. for | 2.00 |
| Velcro 3 yds. for | 3.00 |
| Braid 3 pkg. @ $1.38 | 4.14 |
| Elastic 3 yds. for | 1.47 |
| Vinyl 1yd. | 6.00 |
| Hair Bun | 1.99 |
| | 33.61 |

| Masks | |
|---|---|
| Fabricform | $20.00 |
| Insulation | 1.39 |
| Gesso | 6.45 |
| Spray Sealer | 4.95 |
| Paint | 12.74 |
| Elastic 3 yds. for | 1.47 |
| Pearls 1 yd | .89 |
| Glass mirrors | 2.59 |
| Silk rose | .99 |
| | 52.19 |

| Reception and Program | |
|---|---|
| Paper | $ 4.97 |
| Envelops | 4.75 |
| Postage | 8.00 |
| Cake ingredients | 5.06 |
| Nuts 3 jars @ 1.99 | 5.97 |
| Mints 2 pkg. for | 1.98 |
| Tableware | 22.90 |
| Soda 6 @ .59 | 3.54 |
| Jello 6 for | 2.00 |
| Sherbert | 3.27 |
| | 62.44 |

Total cost $206.19

# APPENDIX IV

# MASKS

YOU ARE CORDIALLY

INVITED TO

MASKS

A THESIS PROJECT DESIGNED BY

ARLENE CHAPMAN

PRESENTED

ON THE DOWNSTAGE THEATRE

OF

LINDENWOOD COLLEGE

APRIL 6, 1990 8:00 P.M.

Reception following

# MASKS

"Did you think when the longing came upon you and when you told your family that you must go upon the stage that such a great longing was to be soon satisfied? Is satisfaction so small a thing? Is desire a thing of nothing that a five years' quest can make a parody of it? But of course not. Your whole life is not too long, and then only at the very end will some small atom of what you have desired to come to you. And so you will be still young when you are full of years." by E. G. Craig (p. 8).

Special thanks to my committee, Niki Juncker, Suzanne Mills, and Ann Canale, and to the cast, crew, and Gregg Hillmar for ideas, encouragement and support.

# MASKS

A Thesis Project Designed by Arlene Chapman

Scene from The Trojan Women by Euripides
Menelaus.....Scott DeBroux
Hecuba.....Wendy Brotherlin
Helen.....Susan Crain

Scene in the style of Commedia dell'Arte
Isabella.....Wendy Brotherlin
Columbine.....Susan Crain
Pantalone.....James Freund
Dottore.....Scott DeBroux

Scene from He Who Gets Slapped
by Leonid Andreyev
Consuela.....Susan Crain
He.....Scott DeBroux
Gentleman.....James Freund

DIRECTORAL ASSISTANCE.....Suzanne Mills

CREW

Stage Manager.....Heather L. Glenn

Lights.....Nicole Schleuter

Dressers.....Diane Swartz
.....Kim Hurley

Department of Performing Arts

Faculty & Staff

Suzanne Mills.....Professor and Chair
Groff Bittner.....Associate Professor
Niki Juncker.....Associate Professor
Gregg Hillmar.....Assistant Professor
Terry Martin.....Assistant Professor
Kristana Weiler.....Assistant Professor
Arlene Chapman.....Graduate Assistant
Scott DeBroux.....Graduate Assistant
Rodney Whatley.....Graduate Assistant

**********

COMING EVENTS:

THE BIRTHDAY PARTY

Downstage Theater. Directed by Bryan Reder
April 12-14 8:00 pm.

Special thanks to Barb Samuels
for being our juggler

Costume Crew

Terry Jansen
Kim Hurley
Nicole Schueter
Susan Crain
Wendy Brotherlin
Jim Freund
Scott Debroux

Set Crew

Barb Samuels
Susan Crain
Jonathan Becker
Heather Glenn
Rob Bingham
Jerry Meurer
Shelley Miller
Sara Bourgault

## APPENDIX V

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Perry Cartwright
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