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Designing the Theatre of the Deaf

Marie L. Collings

Designing for Theatre of the Deaf

by

Marie L. Collings

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fullfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Fine Arts.

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THE DEPARTMENT OF PERFORMING ARTS

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Upon the recommendation of the Department of Performing Arts, this thesis is hereby accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Fine Arts.

Associate Professor Bryan Reeder Bryan Reeder

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Associate Professor Ann Canale Ann Canale

Date: 20 Aug. '98

To Merle and Peg Wolff
who started a dream
with Marie Louise Island in *South Pacific*
and have supported it ever since.

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Theatre is and has always been a collaborative art; therefore, a production can not be accomplished without the aid of many others. This thesis production took many hours of time and talent and I would like to thank the following for their involvement in this enormous project.

First I must thank Florissant Valley Community College and Donna Spaulding, Department Chair, for their support. They provided the use of the theatre and the financial backing required to mount a show of this caliber. If it were not for all of their support I would not have been able to accomplish what I had intended to do-- not just design but design for Theatre of the Deaf.

Second, I thank Lisa Gale-Betzler for using her skills as a director, finding the energy and enthusiasm in the actors and the willingness of a friend to direct something she did not choose herself. She not only directed but took me, a beginning signer, and through countless meetings, without the use of an interpreter, let me sign my way though my thoughts and ideas. She taught me a little bit about deaf culture and a lot about patience. I owe her a lot.

Third, the three students who put in many overtime hours to create the set: Bryan Miller, Rebecca Holt, and Bryant "T" Williamson. They had all just begun their theatre careers, and had never even built a flat before this show. They should be proud.

Of course the wonderful cast of actors who gave it their all.

My supervisor Arlene Chapman, who also designed and built the costumes for this show including a replica of Jack-the-Ripper's coat that will always be a favorite costume of mine.

David Fahning, my special effects volunteer, who went many a night without sleep so that the body parts would look so incredibly real. His devotion went beyond that of a friend.

Byron Key, cast member, tutor and close friend, for his continuance insight into Deaf culture, his subtle ways of correcting my signs and introduction of numerous new ones helped me to not only communicate but to understand Deafness far beyond the scope of this project.

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Prospectus

To: Thesis Committee of Marie L. Collings:

Bryan Reeder, Donnell Walsh, Ann Canale

From: Marie L. Collings

Date: October 15, 1995

Subject: Thesis proposal

The design, execution, and written evaluation of the play Murderer by Anthony Shaffer will encompass a thesis project by Marie L. Collings. The production will be performed at St. Louis Community College, Florissant Valley, with approval from Donna Spaulding, Department Chair. The production will be scheduled into the regular theatrical season and will be mounted February 23, 24, 25, March 1 and 2 in the year 1996. The production will be in conjunction with Florissant Valley's theatre of the deaf and will be directed by Lisa Gale-Betzler, a deaf faculty member at Florissant Valley.

The play Murderer was chosen due to its many technical challenges. To name a few of the challenges: a women's body must be cut up in full view of the audience, teeth must be pulled from a persons mouth, a head must go into a wood-burning stove and come out charred, and in the end a death scene that confuses the audience into believing that the right person was killed. To add to these and other technical challenges the production will be performed as theatre of the deaf for three reasons: First, the script lends itself nicely to the necessary factors involved in producing a deaf production, including the first thirty minutes of the play being silent. Second, producing quality theatre of the deaf productions has become a long tradition at Florissant Valley. And finally, having participated in two

previous productions, I wanted to explore this area of theatre further while continuing this wonderful experience.

The written portion of the thesis will contain elements of the following:

1) Deaf theatre in the United States and how it arrived at Florissant Valley
2) Designing for Theatre of the Deaf
3) Special effects used in the production
4) Analysis of the completed production
5) Appendices of the set design, light design, story boards of special effects and photos of the production

Basic Terminology

A Note on Style

I have spelled the word "Deaf" with an uppercase "D" when referring to Deaf in a cultural or anthropological sense as in "Deaf community." It is only spelled with a lower case "d" when describing an audiological condition. I do so in agreement with the Deaf community who prefer it that way.

American Sign Language (ASL): A language with its own syntax and vocabulary separating it from other foreign languages. Its linguistic structure is different from English. Signs represent words, while non-manual cues such as facial expressions, head tilts, body movements, and eye gazes, can be incorporated to express specific grammatical functions in the language. ASL is not designed to use in conjunction with spoken English. Non-manual cues inherent in their language are used instead to convey important linguistic information. (Scheetz 75-76)

Deaf: from an audiological perspective it refers to those individuals with a severe to profound hearing loss who cannot hear speech through their ears, with or without amplification. Although they may hear some loud sounds they do not rely on their auditory mechanism as the primary channel of communication. (Scheetz 47)

FM Loop: A radio wave that is frequency modulated by an audio signal emanating form a microphone. The radio FM signal is transmitted to a receiver designed to detect the desired carrier frequency. This signal is demodulated, amplified, and delivered to a listener. In 1982, the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) authorized the

use of 72-76 MHz as the designated bands to be used by persons with a hearing loss. (Ross 73)

Hearing Aid: The basic function of a hearing aid is to amplify sounds, making them more intense or loud for the individual with a hearing loss. It operates like many other amplifying devices incorporating a microphone, amplifier, and receiver into its system. (Scheetz 256)

Rubella / German measles / Cytomegalovirus (CMV): prenatal rubella was at one time one of the leading causes of deafness. Annually, approximately 30,000 infants are born with CMV infection and about 4,000 will possess a hearing loss ranging form mild to profound in nature. (Sheetz 41)

Telecommunication Devices (TDD) / Text telephone Teletypewriter (TTY): machines that have the appearance of a small typewriter. They can be utilized with regular telephone handsets and allow deaf people to communicate with each other via typed words rather than speech. TDDs are made up of a typewriter-like keyboard, a telephone coupler, and some form of visual display. (Sheetz 285)

Chapter 1

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THEATRE OF THE DEAF AND ITS SUCCESS AT FLORISSANT VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Deaf Theatre in America: A Brief Look Back

Thomas Hopkis Gallaudet, a Connecticut clergyman brought sign language to the United States in 1817. Gallaudet had tutored a young deaf girl for approximately a year before he journeyed to Paris' Royal Institute to learn more about effectively teaching deaf children. Gallaudet studied with Laurnet Clerc, a teacher at the institute, who himself was deaf. Together they returned to the United States and founded the American Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb (later renamed the American School for the Deaf) in Hartford, Connecticut. This was the first school specifically oriented for giving Deaf individuals an education.

In 1837, Deaf education was brought to St. Louis by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet. The Sisters opened St. Joseph's School for the Deaf (today, St. Joseph Institute for the Deaf), the first Catholic Deaf school in America. Another school, Missouri School for the Deaf, (in Fulton, Missouri,) opened in 1851. Education for the Deaf continued to grow with a significant event taking place in "1864 when President Lincoln signed the Charter for the National Deaf Mute College in Washington D.C., later renamed Gallaudet College after Thomas Hopkis Gallaudet." (Heidger History 2)

Soon after Gallaudet College opened, small performance groups comprised of students formed which made presentations for friends or for the public in cafes. Due to these ambitious individuals, the college created a theatre class in 1940. Like many other colleges, class sizes over the years would fluctuate; likewise, the rate of enrollment dictated whether or not the class would or would not be canceled. From this humble beginning, the Theatre of the Deaf and for the Deaf began.

Theater of the Deaf and Theater for the Deaf are two different theatrical forms. How one differentiates depends on the selection of script and the audience for whom the production is presented.

> In theater *of* the deaf, which is also known as sign-language theater, scripts about the hearing world as written by mostly hearing writers are selected. English is translated into sign-language, sometimes stylized or theatricalized for expressive or artistic reason. Theater *for* the deaf, which is also called deaf theater, focuses on scripts about deaf people or deaf culture and utilizes deaf actors who use mostly American Sign Language. (Baldwin 38)

In 1940, the idea of plays involving a deaf character as part of the story line was not new as the first play written with a deaf character, *Warnings* by Eugene O'Neill, was first seen in 1913. However, the first play to use sign language as an expressive medium had yet to be written. It was not until 1959, when William Gibson created the dramatization of the story of Helen Keller and her relationship with her blind tutor, Annie Sullivan, that such an event occurred. In *The Miracle Worker*, the character Annie, portrayed by actress Anne Bancroft, "realizes that there is a good mind waiting to be rescued from the dark tortured silence of Helen, and in some very emotional scenes the process of drawing Helen out and teaching her to speak and love is revealed to the audience." (Salem 117)

After viewing Bancroft in the *Miracle Worker*, David Hays, a highly successful set designer, grew interested in the unconventional stage techniques of using sign on stage as a medium for language with deaf characters. Hays thought about how sign language might be expanded to focus on an entirely deaf cast which would perform for

both deaf and non-deaf audiences. At the time, he did not realize the scope of his thoughts as he began to pursue this unconventional theatre. He would later go on to become "NTD's (National Theatre of the Deaf) founding artistic director, a post he has held since the theater's beginning." (Baldwin 7)

> In 1966 Hays contacted Dr. Edna S. Levine, a well-known psychologist working with Deaf clients, who had previously aided Bancroft in her role as Annie Sullivan. They discussed funding for a larger project: a sign language theatre. Grant money was received in the amount of $16,500 from the Rehabilitation Services Administration of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare to cover the period of June 1, 1966, to March 1, 1967. (Baldwin 17)

In his search for actors, Hays worked closely with Bernard Bragg, a deaf performer with professional experience. Bragg had trained with the famous mime, Marcel Marceau and had previous television experience with his own show, The Quiet Man, in San Francisco, from 1958 to 1961 (Baldwin 28). Bragg was instrumental in the recruitment process of the first cast and brought in numerous actors, many having previous ties to Gallaudet. The birth of the National Theatre of the Deaf had occurred.

In February of 1967, NBC's one hour television program called "Experiment in Television" focused on the NTD. The program almost did not air due to an objectionable telegram from the Alexander Graham Bell Association, Inc. that was sent to NBC. In the telegram the association, who believed that the Deaf should learn to speak instead of learn to sign, stated their opposition to the public use of an artificial language. However, with the backing of the deaf community, Hays responded to the telegram by saying "such television programs bring enormous cultural benefit to the

deaf who are deprived of the theatre." Then he added "the program would show highly gifted deaf people working in a developed art form of great beauty." (Baldwin 21) NBC decided to allow the program to air, and, in the middle of taping the program, the network was awarded additional money from the Vocational Rehabilitation Administration (VRA) in the amount of $331,000. Hays immediately made plans for NTD's first Professional Theatre School and its first national tour which would occur the following fall. (America's) Now, thirty years later, "there have been 59 national tours with visits to all 50 states, 28 international tours to every continent except Antarctica, and over 7,000 performances, earning the NTD its place in theatrical history as the oldest, continually-producing touring theatre company in the United States." (America's)

The National Theatre of the Deaf may not have been the only influence in Deaf theatres springing up across the country but it was a major one. A more in-depth look into The History of Theatrical Activities in the Deaf Community of the United States can be found in the master's thesis by Dorothy Miles, Connecticut College, 1974 or in the master's thesis The Theatre of the Deaf in America: The Silent Stage by John Heidger, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, Illinois, 1979.

Florissant Valley's Theatre of the Deaf: The Beginning

With the success of the National Theatre of the Deaf, other schools started similar programs. One of them included a small community college in St. Louis, Missouri. The Florissant Valley Theatre of the Deaf (FVTD) celebrates twenty years of success as of this writing. It has received two proclamations from the office of the Mayor of St. Louis and one proclamation from the St. Louis County Executive for its contributing to living theatre that is relevant to the Deaf community, enriching the hearing community, and enlightening for all. Other major accomplishments since its

inception include: The establishment of a Deaf theatre studies curriculum; The Florissant Valley Little Theatre of the Deaf, renamed FV Sign Theatre in 1998, formed as a touring show designated for young audiences which remains the most sought after touring show at Florissant Valley; and finally, incorporating one interpreted performance for all non-deaf productions.

As the success of the company grew, many actors, directors, designers, and audience members would be touched by this unique form of theatre with "St. Louis' only theater of the Deaf providing yearly productions featuring signing deaf actors and hearing narrators from across St. Louis." (Armstrong 4)

One young deaf man, Ron Selinger, who was just eleven years old when he first stepped out on Florissant Valley's stage in *The Insect Play*, would go on to perform in six more productions at Florissant Valley, three at Gallaudet University, and four at Lindenwood College (now Lindenwood University). Selinger would later graduate from Lindenwood with a bachelor's degree in theatre and pursue a master's degree in directing. Daniel Betzler, a non-deaf actor and narrator in the early years would return to Florissant Valley to direct future Theatre of the Deaf productions and become one of St. Louis' and Chicago's finest theatrical sign interpreters. Alan Champion, a non-deaf actor and vocal narrator, like Betzler, would go on to interpret theatrical productions for Juilliard and Shakespeare in the Park in New York. Steven De Shetler, a deaf actor and Florissant Valley's second deaf director, would later extend his travels from California to London in search of the latest theatre performances by the Deaf. But most astonishingly would be the accomplishment of Lisa Gale-Betzler who was a student in the initial production and after twenty years of involvement in various theatres of the deaf would become the first deaf director at Florissant Valley during FVTD's fifteenth year.

Ideas of a Theatre of the Deaf at Florissant Valley initially began in January of 1977. John Heidger, a new employee at Florissant Valley, was hired into a large communications department as the theatre manager. He observed many deaf instructors signing in the hallways. "I had never met a deaf person before, I couldn't communicate, but I was fascinated by their use of sign language." (Heidger Interview) After learning to fingerspell, he was invited to view some skits and songs performed in the student center on Deaf Awareness Day by members of the Junior National Association of the Deaf. "It was silly stuff mostly. I saw a poorly produced effort that was filled with energy; I got an idea," Heidger remarked. (Heidger Interview) He contacted Geneva Sherburn, the Assistant Director of the Post-Secondary Program for the Hearing Impaired, and Cathy Atwood, the past Director of the Deaf Drama Club and graduate of the National Theatre of the Deaf's summer school. With department approval on a trial basis, the Florissant Valley Theatre of the Deaf began in September 1977.

To provoke audience interest, "Shearburn secured a two-night engagement of the National Theatre of the Deaf performing their own version of *The Three Musketeers* in November 1977." (Heidger History 76) Heidger would later be invited to attend the Round Table of Representatives, a deaf organization that brought all the leaders from the various Deaf groups together. Here he would announce the upcoming production, circulate flyers and give a brief synopsis of the play. It was a quick way to disseminate information into the deaf community.

From the first audition announcement, seventeen aspiring deaf actors and seven equally aspiring hearing actors arrived. From this group of twenty-four, Heidger, the first director, would cast twelve deaf actors and six non-deaf vocal narrators for a scenario that he had created from Victor Hugo's novel *The Man Who Laughs*.

The company would follow the philosophy "follow the sign, but don't ignore the voice or try to hide it." (Heidger Interview) The production was performed on March 10 and 11, 1978 to capacity audiences. "Both performances were enthusiastically received. . . . Although the broadcast and print media had covered the events leading up to the opening with much anticipation, there were no reviews of the production." (Heidger History 77) The only measurable degree of success which was obtainable came from the college theatre department chairperson, B. Thomas Samples, who suggested sponsorship continue for an indefinite period of time.

The excitement of the first deaf production produced more than double the people at auditions for the following year for both casts. Daniel Betzler elaborated on what it was like being a part of something so new and different; "It was very tedious and time consuming, but you knew the whole time you were doing something incredible." He further commented on his experience by saying, "It was very humbling as an actor because you had to compromise on a character; always knowing the deaf actor took precedence. Exploring the dialogue with another actor forced you to understand how someone else saw the same character. The good part about it was it gave the character so much more dimension." Lisa Gale-Betzler, recalls being an excited young deaf actress, "it was like being a baby bird ready to jump. They [the hearing people] were learning about signing and Deaf culture, we [the Deaf actors] were learning about theatre as an art form. We were all learning so much about each other."

The Transition

According to an article found in the archives of Florissant Valley's Theatre Department, the enrollment of disclosed deaf / hard-of-hearing students in 1977-1978 was fifty-one. (Gordon) In 1998, the Spring enrollment for disclosed deaf students

was twenty-seven and disclosed hard of hearing students was seven for a total of thirty-four; this is a 44% decline. (Matthews) Numbers, however, were not the only changes that have occurred over time. Other significant changes that have occurred in twenty years include: the Deaf community is no longer as active as it once was nor is it as isolated from the hearing community; the Americans with Disabilities Act which strengthened the Civil Rights Act (section 504), passed in 1990, outlawing discrimination in private employment, public accommodations, transportation and telecommunications, thus expanding the opportunities for the deaf to view and participate in a greater variety of activities; Relay Missouri, a company based in Independence, Missouri which bridged the gap between the Deaf and the non-deaf over the telephone. While these profound changes occurred which assimilated the deaf into the non-deaf world, FVTD entered its adolescence.

This adolescence brought forward good and bad changes, some experimentation and some new directions. The most significant change was the attempt by the theatre department to continue to employ the efforts of deaf directors since the fifteenth anniversary. The most positive results of this change included a more visual script translation, more Deaf culture within the blocking, and the education of sign language interpreters as well as those deaf who are just learning to sign themselves.

Among the welcomed changes include the nuances of Deaf culture from the deaf directors which non-deaf directors unknowingly leave out. A deaf director will incorporate stomping the floor or tapping another actor's shoulder to get that actor's attention which is often disregarded by a non-deaf director who is accustomed to just speaking and having another actor respond. By adding the culture, however, typical theatrical staging may be sacrificed in order to view the communication thus creating a two-dimensional effect of actors standing in rows communicating with one another

instead of three-dimensionally as in real life. A major advantage, according to Daniel Betzler, is that "Deaf directors have no fear of technology, it is a part of their life, where hearing directors are often afraid to put it in. This is obvious when it comes to scripts containing numerous phone conversations, door bells or sound cues. The deaf director tends to figure out how to deal with technological challenges, as they normally do in everyday life, where the non-deaf director often disregards a script because they are intimidated by the technology.

The worst changes that have occurred to FVTD include a declining interest from the Deaf community to participate and patronize, a significant number of realistic plays dominating the stage, and, possibly, the tendency to hide the vocal narrators. It could be argued that individuals in the 1990's are less likely to commit themselves to anything including a long rehearsal time which could be said of the non-deaf population as well as the Deaf. The Deaf community prefers contemporary realistic plays because they make the most sense when translated into American Sign Language. The audience can relate to the experience of realistic theatre better and therefore enjoy it more. This trend may eventually swing back to the non-realistic pieces as the walls between the Deaf community and the non-deaf community grow thinner.

Hiding the vocal narrators tends to be a preference of the deaf directors with the rationale that the audience is there to see the beauty of the sign language not to listen or focus on the vocal narrators. For a non-deaf audience this can be very distracting. Heidger initially placed the voices within the action of the play. In the 1978 production of *Tartuffe*, for example, the voices were dressed as servants and mixed easily into the action of the play. Years later, in an attempt to associate the voice with the character but not place the narrators on-stage within the play, Daniel Betzler would try placing them above the action. The background behind each narrator matched the color of the

costumes for the character for whom they were narrating. Recently, in an attempt to place sole precedence on the signing actor, director, Lisa Gale-Betzler, and designer, Arlene Chapman, tried to hide the voices behind the walls. Although this experiment kept the audience focused visually, the voices became muffled. Non-deaf patrons, having the tendency to search for the source of the sound, missed crucial moments of the play as well as having difficulty understanding some of the lines.

Reflections

As various artists reflect on the history of Florissant Valley Theatre of the Deaf and how it affected their lives, they each paused and then reflected with a smile about the numerous tales of days long past. Each one recalled different experiences adding unique perspectives into how John Heidger's initial conception transpired into twenty years of memories.

As for favorites, Heidger proudly names *Rashomon,* the ninth and final production he directed. "That's where I finally got it. I received cards and letters stating it was not one of the best in St. Louis but one of the best ever anywhere." (Heidger Interview)

Lisa Gale-Betzler fondly looks back at *The Miracle Worker* and *Tartuffe* as strong collaborative efforts between narrator and signers. "People were so excited in the beginning; they really worked as a team."

Selinger reminisced over *Murderer.* "It was my favorite because of the variety of characters."

Daniel Betzler, who, along with Heidger, has been involved in, directed, or seen nearly every FVTD piece and had difficulty in choosing a favorite. His top three spanned the two decades. "*Tartuffe* had a unique style that moved each scene

from tableau to tableau in circular patterns simultaneously. It was extremely pictorial. *The Miracle Worker,* showed two clearly developed characters as well as how one actress from Irish St. Louis and one from the St. Louis Deaf community could come together and make it happen while not knowing each others language. And who could forget *Accommodations* because the comedy was so pure and physical and yet it had all the cultural aspects of deafness.

Outlook

The greatest threat to Florissant Valley Theatre of the Deaf is the lack of participation by the Deaf community. This reticence can be blamed on the lack of actors' commitment to the long rehearsal time or perhaps it is because more young people are trying to keep part-time jobs while going to school and, therefore, they just don't have the time to commit to a lengthy rehearsal process. This can be said of society as a whole in the ninety's, not just of the Deaf community. It is ironic that the Deaf community is outraged if a non-deaf individual portrays a deaf person on stage, yet they are not willing to get involved to become that person. According to Lisa Gale-Betzler, that's just how the Deaf community is in its behavior. Maybe after twenty years the newness has just worn off.

So the question was asked, should the program continue? Everyone involved with this project unanimously agreed, yes! "It should continue for the enjoyment and benefit of the community," Lisa Gale-Betzler said. "The Deaf can relate to themselves and the interpreters in training can learn about our culture."

The actions of the college demonstrate a support for the program's continuance. Currently the theatre is undergoing an extensive renovation process that includes accommodations for both Theatre of the Deaf and hearing impaired patrons. Ten, twenty-one inch color television monitors will be located throughout the building

including: dressing rooms, make-up alley, green room, ticket booth, and two back stage areas that will show actors, via remote cameras, what is happening on stage. A doorbell was installed for one entrance to the building with a flashing light so if actors are arriving, the Deaf can see the light and will know to answer the door. Electronic beepers were purchased for cueing deaf actors and the intercom telephone system includes flashing lights so that both a non-deaf and deaf actor who uses a hearing aid can intercept an incoming call from the stage manager. For hearing impaired patrons an FM loop will assist in the amplification of all sound within a production; this loop will also work with certain hearing aids that have a telephone amplifier.

Despite all these beneficial additions there is nothing to insure this once highly successful program will continue. What will become of FVTD in the future? Heidger remarked "Anyone involved in the initial production would never have believed it would have lasted twenty years. In the beginning we were in over our heads but kept plowing through, never knowing if we would get to do another one." (Heidger Interview) As with all adolescent trials and tribulations FVTD will persevere and hope to enter adulthood bringing with it an increased understanding between the deaf and the hearing worlds. Insured success will ultimately depend on an increased support from the deaf and non-deaf communities and the continued support of the school. Only then will the Florissant Valley Theatre of the Deaf travel onward into the next century.

Chapter 2

THE PRODUCTION PROCESS

Research

Knowing that I was to graduate in Summer of 1998 I needed to pick a project that would focus on my area of concentration scenic design and my interest, Theatre of the Deaf. I selected the lesser known of Anthony Shaffer's works, *Murderer*, not so much for the writing as for the extreme visual nature of the play. The first thirty minutes of the script is written with action not words, a perfect choice for a deaf play. The phone would only ring once in the play but the character would only be scared by the flashing light representing the incoming call and not have to actually use the phone because the caller hangs up. The show calls for only four actors, thus a fairly easy number of individuals to work with, keeping in mind that four actors means an additional four vocal narrators, totaling a cast of eight. The play is in the present which would assist in the costumes, furniture, and set design, making it a very workable piece.

In order to design *Murderer,* I began with several readings of the script. Taking copious notes, I assessed the given circumstances of the play. This included the location of Dorset, England, size and style of the interior of the central character's home, the time of year and time of day and how the characters might react within this given environment.

After several trips to various libraries, the plush countryside that embodies Dorset came to life in my head. Best described in Fordors: Great Britain 1986, Dorset of Great Britain is "a green and hilly country, very largely unspoilt and is, in fact, one of the last remaining corners of the old, rural England. . . . A country that the visitor

to Britain frequently passes through but overlooks, as though it were nothing more than a length of railway line or highway." (Gardiner 194)

While the people of Dorset prefer to maintain a high standard of living outside of their homes, their houses reflect a moderate lifestyle. Believing that the author's intentions were to have Norman's spouse, Elizabeth, a doctor, earn the primary income, I thought how fitting for Norman, a painter, to be the decorator of the home. Norman, a well-known professional artist, prefers to reside in a dark fantasy world. It is here that he recreates images of famous murders in his sculptures and paintings. The home in which they live should contain such images.

Norman's dynamic character is unveiled as the plot progresses. His strongest fascination is the recreation of famous murders. Knowing the mistakes that got the perpetrators caught, Norman tries to figure out how not to make the same errors should he be caught in a similar situation. Many of Norman's recreations are made up of fake body parts and stage blood. From these creations he begins to make mistake after mistake until the final scene where Norman is caught in his own murder.

Seeing the world through Norman's eyes, I chose to decorate the home with black, gray and blue-teal. According to Kobayashi, the color "blue-teal, being a suitable attractive color for men" (24) and by adding the black and gray a "more mature, sophisticated look is achieved." (126) With this as a color scheme, I went to St. Louis' Central West End and the Delmar Loop (the trendy areas of St. Louis). I wanted to see how these three colors might be coordinated into attractive patterns for interior decorating. I found a few combinations of such colors in painted walls or in paintings but none within the furniture itself. The walls that contained two or more of the color trio were mostly decorated with straight lines. The boldness of the colors seemed as strong as the lines within the walls. Not once did I see softness or curves

come from this combination. I liked the idea that Norman could surround himself in a linear world. Underlying the idea that he seldom deviated from his murderous creations, I wanted the scenery to emphasize this linear pattern, and therefore I tried to keep all aspects of the play designed with clean straight lines. I found more representations of furniture and walls painted with all straight lines within *Architectural Digest* and *Decor* magazines.

The ideas about decor that had formed from St. Louis' Central West End needed to be compared with that of England. According to Sotheby's Concise Encyclopedia of Furniture, "many designs [for furniture] since the 1940's have been taken from the United States." (Payne 190) With this information, I felt comfortable that other artistic designs may be carried over as well. It could be justified that one artist could easily carry over ideas from the United States, especially a well-known, respected artist whose spouse was a prestigious doctor.

Murderer was performed by Florissant Valley's Theatre of the Deaf (FVTD), so after the initial design concepts were formed, I had to add one more element: deaf culture. The reason for needing to know deaf culture is that in this production, FVTD performed as if the world in which the play exists is deaf, not deaf characters in a hearing world. This way all characters can be deaf and it is not something out of the ordinary, strange or different. Deaf culture, like any other culture, is defined as

> a set of learned behaviors of a group of people who have their own language, values, rules of behavior, and traditions: it consists of 3 subsets: (a) materialistic-- including material things such as food, clothing, other tangible items, (b) behavioral-- rules for behavior which can be observed, taught and learned, and (c) cognitive-- that "appropriate" behavior learned and developed as a child, which has

a deeper meaning and which is not easily observed or understood." (Humphrey 387)

Each of these subsets can be seen within the staging of the play to some degree. One of the most obvious behaviors is the use of American Sign Language (ASL) as the primary mode of communication. "ASL is a visual-gestural language which incorporates facial grammatical markers, physical affect markers, spatial linguistic information, and fingerspelling, as well as signs made with the hands. ASL is a distinct language with its own grammar and syntax which is not based on, nor derived from, a spoken language. As a complete and complex language, accepted as the natural language of the Deaf community, ASL is an integral part of Deaf culture." (Humphrey 383) For FVTD, vocal narration is blended with this visual language to make it easily understood by the non-deaf audience. The use of the Text Telephone Teletypewriter (TTY), which allows deaf individuals to communicate via the phone, shows the materialistic aspect and the stomping of the floor to get another actor's attention or the flashing of lights for the phone or the doorbell are related to cognitive area of the culture. It is therefore a theatre of the deaf but not exclusively for the deaf. The production team decided not to distinguish between the two forms; rather *Murderer* was designed to be enjoyed by all people.

Deaf vs. Hearing

What does it mean to be deaf? According to Humphreys and Alcorn, the "Deaf" view of deaf and the "hearing" view of deaf are two completely different things. Deaf individuals view themselves with pride; they have a disability that is normal to them but sometimes inconvenient, just as a hearing individuals view the ability to hear as normal but sometimes inconvenient. However, a hearing individual's view of being deaf is quite different; focusing on the impairment and therefore use words such as loss,

impairment, deficit, or the degrees of the impairment (mild, moderate, severe, profound). Contradicting the negativity derived from hearing individuals, the deaf will use an uppercase "D" when referring to Deaf in a cultural or anthropological sense as in "Deaf community." It is only spelled with a lowercase "d" when describing an audiological condition. (Armstrong 2) In order to learn more about this community and culture I participated in a basic sign-language class. First I learned to fingerspell, then I learned the theatrical signs, only then did I start to learn to communicate. After the class finished, I was taken under the wing of a young deaf actor, Byron Key. Byron was born deaf due to rubella. He was initially raised orally but at age ten was sent to Missouri School for the Deaf in order to complete his education and learn sign language. Having experienced both the deaf and hearing worlds he could assist me not only with learning the language but also with the culture. With his assistance, I went to the library searching for the best books on deafness. The class had aided in building my confidence towards better communication skills and the books broadened my knowledge of deafness and Deaf culture but the daily sessions with Byron Key were the bridge I needed to reach beyond the statistics and gather the knowledge the Deaf community could provide.

During my second search I discovered many books on deafness, a few articles and books on the National Theatre of the Deaf, but nothing about designing specifically for Theatre of the Deaf. As the process began, I learned that all the design areas began with reading the script, but just as Deaf culture is to hearing culture, Theatre of the Deaf is to theatre in general, very different.

Since I was born with the ability to hear and was naive in this new world of deaf theatre, it took me some time to understand why John Heidger, the creator of FVTD and it's first director, had chosen Japanese Kabuki style productions, or classics

with large casts. Later I discovered the large casts and the Kabuki style would allow for the beauty of sign language to be presented and to have a hearing actor speak the lines on stage near their signing counterpart. Sets could be minimal or non-existent so as to emphasize the signs. Vocal narration of the signing provided by a hearing actor could be seen as well as heard, thus eliminating the hearing audiences need to know where the sound was coming from. Heidger directed a total of nine theatre of the deaf productions, more than any other director thus far. It wasn't until the 15th anniversary that a deaf individual was given the opportunity to direct. Lisa Gale-Betzler, having participated in numerous theatrical productions and commercials, accepted the role of director. She wanted to follow the wishes of the Deaf community who no longer wished to see the classics or poetry, but instead contemporary pieces (mostly comedies) with small casts, written by hearing authors. This idea would bring forth challenges never encountered before on Florissant Valley's stage.

A hearing author writes a play for a hearing world. A hearing world makes telephone calls, rings doorbells, shouts through walls and gets people's attention with noise or through vocal cues. The deaf world normally incorporates a TTY for information by phone, flashing lights for doorbells and obviously, most bang on floors or tables instead of shouting to get another actor's attention. If deaf actors use a TTY on stage then the audience can not tell what the actors are saying because instead of speaking the lines they would be typing them. If the director decides that the phone call is absolutely necessary to the intent of the author then the lengthy process of making a staged TTY call begins. First the actors sign to the audience what they will type into the TTY, second they type it into the TTY, wait for a response, then they must repeat in sign what supposedly the person to whom they are speaking just said, and the process

continues. This is not only boring to witness, it is extremely time consuming and unnatural for both audiences.

Common to many hearing plays is the lengthy but powerful monologue. To a deaf actor, delivering a monologue is often hard due to the enormous amount of signing that must occur. To a member of the deaf audience, a single signing actor alone on stage is often dull and lifeless even if he or she is moving; it can be hard on the eyes to watch and hard on the actor to sign for a long period of time. If the deaf actor has a hearing counterpart voicing, the two languages may not coincide with each other due to the language translation difficulties. This difficulty may throw off the timing and leave either the deaf actor signing when the voice has finished or the other way around.

The Tradition Continues

Murderer was chosen in partial requirement for this thesis project due not only to its very visual nature but because of its many technical challenges. The biggest attraction to this particular piece is how the first thirty minutes of the play is performed in silence. This silence was filled with action. However, not knowing if some, all or none of our audience had experienced Theatre of the Deaf before, the silence was noted in the program so that they wouldn't think the entire play would be without words.

From the beginning of this production the director and I worked closely together. Meetings occurred almost daily and changes were anticipated and worked through as rehearsals progressed. Lisa Gale-Betzler, according to federal regulations is considered deaf, and her primary mode of communication is through sign language; However, she was raised orally and reads lips. Working with a deaf director added new insight into deaf culture that the books I had read did not, as well as expanding my sign language skills immensely. By working so closely together we both made the extra effort to communicate without the use of an interpreter. At times, one or both of

us became confused in the meaning of each others words or signs but we worked to make each others points understood until we succeeded. We had both worked together on another production which was a big help to the overall success. Lisa Gale-Betzler prefers a team of designers that use sign language, "I can relate to them easier because the bond does not occur between the hearing person and the interpreter, instead it is with the deaf cast."

The design of this two-story home included: a cellar, kitchen, living room, upstairs bedroom, back patio, and an upstairs bathroom. According to the script the audience had to somehow see the action behind the walls of both the cellar and the bathroom. Other required set pieces included a wood-burning stove, an oven with a spit, and a window though which an actor could see the front door.

Instead of using a straight staircase, I designed a dog leg or 'U' return staircase so the actor could sign out to the audience at the half-way point. The hand rail going up on a standard staircase is thirty inches from the stair tread leading into a top horizontal rail of thirty-four inches above the floor. I changed the hand rail to twenty-four inches above the tread and the horizontal rail to thirty inches above the floor in order to see the signs above it. This careful measuring also ensured that the staircase would look visually appropriate to the audience's eyes. It was to our benefit that half of the audience in the Terry M. Fischer Theatre sits at an eye level below the floor height, thus the strong angle looking upward made the two foot rise height seem taller than it really was in perspective.

The swing of the front door was a point of major discussion. As both the designer and the stage carpenter, on a limited budget and with a small crew, I knew it would be easier and cheaper for me to have the door swing from the down stage side thus opening upstage. To a director of a deaf cast this will not work, especially if the

script calls for one actor to ask another if they may come inside. *Murderer* had such a line and with the door opening facing the audience the theatre's own brick proscenium was were revealed. Without spending any more money to mask the walls of the theatre I decided to light it as if it was the garage.

The cellar posed the problem of an off stage monologue. Again, a hearing actor would have just used projection to get the lines across, but a deaf/signing actor must be seen. Solving this situation involved both blocking the actor to sign on stage and lighting the unseen cellar. The actor's monologue was first broken into four separate chunks. He would sign the first section, descend the stairs, perform the necessary blocking, return to the stage, sign the second part, return to the cellar, etc. In order for this all to make sense, the cellar was back lit with a three inch fresnel lighting instrument aimed at a forty-five degree angle. The light was turned on as the actor descended the stairs, as if he turned on a light switch. Having the angle at forty-five degrees, the actor's shadow was projected upon a wall on stage that allowed the audience to see larger than life, thus "seeing" into the cellar. The light served a double purpose in cueing the actor to return to the stage for additional monologue or stage business.

The bathroom, a major focal point, must also show the audience what is happening behind the walls. To rectify this situation, the bath was positioned slightly off center, at the top of the stairs on the second story. A four foot by eight foot modernistic black on white painting, resembling a heartbeat going flat line was hung in front of the wall separating the living room from the bath. When an actor would turn on the light switch to the bathroom, the painting/window would become translucent to the audience (but not to the actors). This was accomplished by creating the painting/window out of a quarter inch thick four by eight sheet of clear Plexiglas. The

back was covered over with a medium thickness interfacing (used in dressmaking). So, similar to the cellar, the audience could only see shadows and not the actors themselves. It was backlit with a six inch fresnel mounted at a distance of ten feet away and at a height of three foot six inches from the floor of the bathroom. The actors then appeared only slightly taller than their normal height, but with this their shadows filled the space in the window. The painting on the front was linear to match the rest of the household, i.e., the heartbeat (see photo appendix I-5)

Once the action sequences were collaborated on and decided between the director and designer, then decor was chosen. Too light of a background color, too busy a wallpaper pattern or too many set objects can be hard on the eyes that are watching the hands for long periods of time.

The color scheme of black, teal and light gray enhanced the dark side of the artist and the eccentricities of his spouse's wealth and cleanliness. Some areas were spattered with larger than normal spatter spots to show that the place was decorated solely by the artist. To create symbolism, a multitude of small wood blocks painted in the same colors as the set were carefully arranged on the wall to form the hand shape of the sign for "kill." It was a subliminal statement only noticed by a few. Other small suggestive decorations added to the nuance of the place.

Designing the lighting for a basic two-story box set may not seem all that difficult, unless one wants to see every sign that is being signed. If this production had been designed for a hearing cast with a predominantly hearing audience, then the lighting would have been very dark and shadowy to add suspense to the piece. Since the opposite was true, the lighting needed to be brighter over all in order to cover every space the actor moved into, compromising the overall subtleties that could have been designed to see the signs. According to Heidger, this is the wrong way to think.

"Good lighting is good lighting. . . . There are times visibility should be sacrificed for mood and there are times mood should be sacrificed for visibility. . . . If one lights with high key lighting all the time they are not helping the director keep focus on the specific moment." (Heidger Interview) Lisa Gale-Betzler, disagrees, "It would be nice if you could use dim lighting but if you can't see the hands you miss so much." Daniel Betzler, trying to understand both sides, said it best, "A non-deaf director, having seen and heard it over and over in rehearsal might not realize that a person seeing it for the first time may not understand it, a deaf director would never allow that to happen, it's like saying I want you to do this monologue as big physically as you can, but whisper." Since I was working with Lisa Gale-Betzler, I designed the lighting with her wishes in mind. I tried to make the night scenes dark enough to aid the audience in understanding the time of day yet leave the stage bright enough to see the actors hands while he signed his lines. Daylight was an easier accomplishment as was when the actor hit the light switch and thus the room became automatically and purposefully bright.

Sound can or cannot be a part of a production by the deaf. It was used in a past FVTD production of Thorton Wilder's *Our Town.* The sound cues were a part of the show as called for in the script but the mime worked for the deaf audience and the sound was only there for the non-deaf audience. The only sound cue that did not have a visual accompaniment was the sound for the train. The director decided that the deaf characters should ignore it as they would not hear it in real life and would naturally ignore it anyway. For *Murderer*, sound was used only when the actor himself or herself made the sound; no specific cues were made by a technician in the control booth.

Technical rehearsals involving the lighting and sound for a Theatre of the Deaf production can take hours longer than for a non-deaf play. In a black-out, for example, a non-deaf director can tell a cast member to start over or continue on, but for a deaf production you have to turn the lights back on and tell them; the actor may continue signing, thinking it was a mistake or they may stop and wait for directions; either way it adds time. Another problem is coordination of the cues with the actors. If an actor takes an entrance off a light cue that follows a specific sign the stage manager must watch for the sign, call the light cue and hope that the actor wasn't looking down or changing a costume when it happened. If this happens the show must be stopped, the actor located, and questioned as to why he or she missed the cue. Then the situation must be corrected. Then the scene must be run again. A non-deaf director just yells. The timing can be so difficult.

Costuming has the smallest amount of changes but is not completely free of them. Clothing is based on the needs of the show and suited towards each character just as in a non-deaf play. Hands, of course, must be kept free and the pattern within the cloth itself must not be too strong or busy as this becomes very hard on the viewer trying to read the signs in front of it over long periods of time. Though the play took place in the winter, Norman's wife did not wear gloves since black gloves which matched her black coat would cause the audience difficulty seeing her hands. Byron Key, an actor feels "plaid is the hardest pattern to look at, and red should never be used as it hurts the eyes over time." Although I did not design the costumes for this production, I did become aware of the restrictions they can place on a signing actor and a deaf audience.

Hand props are a major obstacle. Again, comparing a non-deaf vocal actor to a deaf signing one, something held in the hand does not interfere with the ability of the

non-signing actor to communicate but it greatly interferes with a signer. *Murderer* calls for the wife to stab her husband in the final scene. After many trials, the scene finally took place first with the action, then the lines. Key commented by saying, "Do you know how stupid it looks when she holds a knife in one hand and signs with the other? In the real world of the deaf, the action always precedes the words." The scene worked, but once again, it took more time than it should have.

The last of all the challenges involved the vocal narrators. The common method used in the United States is to cast the narrators in the minor roles of a large cast. This method was not conducive for *Murderer* since it had a cast of four and the location was that of a single family home. So the last challenge was met with using a similar method employed by the Russian Theatre of the Deaf in which the speaking actors are placed in the audience or behind the stage, allowing them to watch the action while voicing but not being a part of the action. Advantages to the Russian method include less costuming and more visibility for the main actor. Disadvantages include some difficulty for the audience in hearing, difficulty in the speaking actors seeing their deaf actors' signs, and the feeling that the vocal narrator is not as important due to lack of visibility. I created two locations on stage in which the vocal narrators hid themselves. Two narrators were in a box on stage left that resembled a large storage bin. The vents were the windows for the narrators. On stage right I cut two openings in the set, one was covered with scrim and painted to resemble a painted fish tank, the other was unseen by the audience. This method worked; however, sometimes it was difficult to hear the voices when they changed location to see the on-stage actor.

All of these challenges make designing for Theatre of the Deaf an exciting adventure. From beginning to end, a hearing designer is exposed to a totally new world: the beautiful world of silence, sign and design.

Chapter 3

SPECIAL EFFECTS

Five main effects were needed for *Murderer* . These effects involved a wood-burning stove, a lighted cellar, a see-through bathroom wall, a body needing to be mutilated, and the pulling of one tooth. All the effects were created with the exception of the pulled tooth, which the director cut.

The easiest of the effects was the stove. Designed from a real stove (see appendix photo F-1) the fake one had only a few minor changes; the back opened up and it did not have the front screens to ventilate the heat. It was assembled out of 3/4" plywood but was painted to resemble metal. To create the fire inside, artificial logs were used from a basic department store facsimile and an extra three inch baby fresnel was added to brighten the glow when items were tossed into it. A fogger was used to create the smoke and with the aid of a technician it billowed out across the stage at the appropriate time within the show.

The lighted cellar was also fairly simple, accomplished by special lighting from another three inch baby fresnel. The fresnel was hung on the masking wall closest to the audience and focused on the wall far stage left above the stairs (the distance of throw: ten feet, zero inches). This one little light at the given distance was enough to cast a ten foot shadow of an actor standing in front of it upon the adjacent wall. The light came on instantly when any actor descended the stairs as if he or she pulled a chain or turned on a switch. The actor would then simply carry out the blocking in front of it, casting shadows on the wall. The audience could then "see" what was happening down in the cellar.

The creation of the body parts involved far more intricacies then the stove or the cellar. Four body parts were required for the play: two heads, both resembling the

actress but one needed to be charred by fire, one arm that must break every performance, and one leg that must bend in half at the knee joint.

The process from beginning to end involved the following construction.

Materials required: (for life mask) panty hose, Vaseline, one plastic drinking straw, two plastic medium size bowls, salt, one two quart pitcher of tap water at 50 degrees, 10 lb. deep rock crack filler, plastic bucket for mixing, one can wax furniture polish, one wooden paint stick, one pair disposable latex gloves, one cardboard box (approximately 2'-0"w X 2'-0"l X 1'-0" d), stack of rags, various sizes of rasps and files, one can of shiny acrylic spray, rubber spatula, two pieces of 4" X 4" terry cloth, two rolls plaster bandages, cheap paint brushes, X-acto knife, and one aluminum pipe (for stand).

Phase I: Creating the Life Mask, Part A: The Negative

1. Place panty hose over actress's head to cover the hair.
2. Vaseline the eyebrows, eyelashes, and any other facial hair as well as the edges of panty hose around the hair line.
3. Cut the straw into two two-inch lengths, and place gently into actress's nostrils.
4. Using the medium size plastic bowl, dump in 1/2 of the can of alginate.
5. Pour 1/4 pitcher of 50 degree water into plastic bowl with 1/2 can alginate, mix with rubber spatula to the consistency of toothpaste.
6. Apply the mixture to the actress's face (while sitting) working from above the hairline down to the collarbone to a thickness of 1/4". Use extreme caution not to block the air passages provided by the straws in the actresses nostrils. Note: it

must be smoothed on or the suction from your hand will pull it away from the face. If this happens you must start over, there is no going back.

7. Place one piece of the terry cloth over the eyes and bridge of the nose and the other one the neck directly beneath the jaw line. This must be done immediately after the alginate has been applied and before it has time to set up.
8. Let the alginate set up. Approximate time is ten minutes.
9. While the alginate is drying, take the second mixing bowl and add three cups warm water and mix in two tablespoons salt, let this dissolve.
10. Cut plaster bandages into strips of 1" X 6" and 1" X 3".
11. After the alginate has set up: Put the plaster bandages one at a time into water, slightly wring out and place onto gelled alginate, again avoiding covering the straws, apply the longer bandages first working from the center of the face outward, the smaller of the bandages being applied to the nose area for smaller jobs such as around the nostrils. Use at least one full roll of plaster bandage cut into strips, to ensure its strength. Double up the layers thickness around the edge of the face and neck so as to create a lip for stability.
12. Let the bandages dry completely. This process may be accelerated with the use of a blow dryer used on low heat. Be careful not to burn the actress.
13. When the mold is set, have the actress lean forward and slowly move the muscles of the face to release the alginate from the face. As this is happening, she should hold the mask cupped in her hands while the person applying the process helps to release the mold from around the ears and any sticking points. (This step was the hardest for our deaf actress, because she couldn't see our hands for explanation and naturally she couldn't hear our instructions. We had explained the process to her and showed her a video prior to applying anything so she wouldn't be

completely in the dark. When the mask got slightly stuck she had a moment of panic but other than pulling out a few hairs that were not sufficiently covered with Vaseline she came out fine.)

Once the mold is free from the actress, she is dismissed and the next phase of the process begins.

Phase I: Creating the Life Mask, Part B, The Positive

1. Mix up a tablespoon of alginate with warm water, and quickly push it through the nostril holes from the outside in, filling them. This mixture will set up almost immediately due to the temperature of the water.
2. Set the negative into the cardboard box, filled with rags, so that it sets level.
3. Take the bucket, spray it with wax furniture polish, add 2 inches of hot tap water.
4. Put the rubber gloves on and using your hands to mix, add deep rock slowly into the bucket, letting it absorb the water at its own rate until it reaches the consistency of ketchup.
5. Dipping a paintbrush into the deep rock mixture, paint in the first layer. This will show details that pouring in will not.
6. Slap the bottom of the bucket several times to release the air bubbles.
7. Pour deep rock into the negative, being careful not to let it overflow the mold. If you need to sculpt the back of the head or ears, an aluminum pipe must be inserted into the deep rock before it sets up to create a stand.
8. Let it cure until it is cold to the touch or overnight.
9. Remove it from the box, and peel alginate and mother mold off the positive.
10. Using the rasps and files trim any sharp edges from the positive.

11. Use the X-acto knife to trim off minute bumps or blemishes.
12. Fill in any irregularities due to air bubbles with extra deep rock.

When you are completely satisfied, spray the positive front and back with two coats of acrylic spray.

Phase II-Creating the Sculpture

Materials required: sculpting tools, Roma Plastilina oil based clay # 1, one can additional acrylic spray

1. Sculpt the back of the head, ears and eyes (as if they were open). Add any wrinkles or other facial features that are required.
2. Seal the sculpture with the acrylic spray

Phase III-Mold Making: The first head

Materials required: black magic marker, Vaseline, water based clay, acrylic spray, deep rock, bucket, warm tap water, burlap cut into 2" X 5" strips, deep rock, wax furniture polish, mixing sticks, throw away paint brushes, drill with 1/2" bit

1. Draw a line around the head bisecting it vertically, separating the front from the back, going behind the ears.
2. With the water based clay, create a three to four inch wide dike with three inch vertical lip on the line around the head.
3. Vaseline the dike on front side and edge.
4. Lay the head on a flat surface, back side down.

5. Pour 5" of warm water into bucket, mix in deep rock as mentioned before.
6. Take a paint brush and paint on the first layer of the deep rock mixture onto newly sculpted head.
7. Pour a 1/2" of deep rock over the sculpture.
8. Using the wet deep rock remaining in the bucket, dip the strips of pre-cut burlap and lay them on the wet plaster on the mold.
9. Pour more deep rock over the top until total thickness of two to three inches is achieved.
10. Let this dry until cold.
11. Turn the head over.
12. Remove one inch of clay (exposing some of the plaster) between sculpture and remaining clay so to create a solid mold with a cutting edge.
13. Build up other side of dike vertically to keep plaster in mold.
14. Drill six holes through remaining clay dike into set deep rock 1/2".
15. Spray all exposed deep rock with two coats acrylic spray.
16. Vaseline back side of dike and all exposed deep rock.
17. Repeat steps five through ten.
18. Gently pry molds apart.

Phase IV-Casting the Latex Skin

Material required: rags, water, acrylic spray, throw away brushes, rubber latex, blow dryer, mold bands, water based clay, Vaseline, baby powder

1. Clean the inside of the molds thoroughly with a damp rag.
2. Spray the insides of the molds with two coats of acrylic spray.

3. Put molds together making sure locking keys line up.
4. Secure molds with mold bands.
5. Reaching inside the molds through the neck, spread water based clay into the seam where the molds come together.
6. Spread a very thin layer of Vaseline over the clay seam.
7. Stand the mold up in a box with the neck portion facing up.
8. Using a paint brush, paint in seven layers of latex making sure each previous layer is completely dry, a blow dryer may be used to accelerate this process.
9. Coat the inside of the head with powder.
10. Peel the latex skin slowly, powdering between mold and latex as you go to prevent it from sticking.
11. Put the new skin back into the negative mold.

Phase V-Filling the Latex Skin

Materials required: Expanding Urethane Foam

1. Inject urethane foam into mold, filling it 3/4 full, do not overfill!
2. Let this cure for at least 24 hours.
3. Release head from the mold.

Phase VI: Finishing Touches

1. Airbrush the head with a flesh tone paint.
2. Airbrush the lips and eyes with color.
3. Airbrush highlights and shadows.
4. Hand paint the pupils, eyebrows, and nostrils.
5. The neck was cut up with a palette knife to give it a jagged or torn appearance.

6. The jagged edges were hand painted with red and burnt umber paint to resemble blood being dripped off.
7. Add a wig to the now bald head to resemble the real hair of the actress.

After the initial head is formed the charred one must be constructed in a similar fashion. To do this, repeat the steps of Phase III through Phase V to create an additional head then continue with Phase VII- Alternate Finishing Touches: The Second Head.

Phase VII- Alternate Finishing Touches: The Second Head

1. Tear away the latex skin in the desired area (for us this was the left side from the hairline down to the mid-neck, vertically and from the side of the nose to mid-cheek, horizontally.)
2. Dig out the urethane with a knife creating a skull like eye socket, cheekbone, and jaw line.
3. Paint as in Phase VI-1 following all steps 1-7.
4. Airbrush the excavated area black.
5. Pin pieces of burnt burlap to the head to look as if pieces from the bag it was placed in stuck to the head while it was burning.
6. Insert a piece of black Velcro into the eye socket.
7. A roll-on ball was painted with glossy enamel paint to resemble the actress's eye color and then another piece of Velcro was glued to the back (this allowed another actor to pop the eye out on cue.)
8. Real ashes were scrubbed into the charred area to add realism.

To create the arm and the leg the same initial procedure was followed for creating the molds and the latex skins. The difference in the finishing touches of the arm included opening up the elbow joint in the arm, carving out the joint and inserting a 1/4" dowel rod into the joint that was pre-cut 1/2 way through. This was a great effect when the actor took the arm and supposedly broke it in two to make it fit better inside a bag. The sound of the dowel breaking along with the visual shadow of seeing it happen made both the hearing and the deaf audiences cringe in their seats. In the leg the same opening was created at the knee joint but nothing was inserted, making it bend easily and quicker for insertion into the burlap bag.

Each of the body effects produced an unmistakable cry, moan, sigh or gasp from the audience, which told us that the parts looked real enough to pass for the world of the play. I was pleased with the outcome.

Chapter 4

ANALYSIS

The Survey

In order to obtain feedback from the audience in addition to gauging crowd reaction and speaking directly to friends and colleagues--who may be biased, I decided to use a sample survey. The survey was compiled of nine questions and was inserted into programs and given to patrons as they took their seats. A different piece of color-coded paper was used for each performance to alleviate confusion in tallying the final results. Questions were based solely on the set and its design. The only question I specifically left off the survey was "Are you hearing or hearing impaired?" At the time I felt it was not politically correct to ask and it shouldn't have an affect as to whether they liked the show or not . However, in writing the analysis after obtaining more knowledge pertaining to deafness and Theatre of the Deaf, I wish I had asked if each person watched the signing as part of their experience or listened to the spoken word. This knowledge of the individuals hearing ability would have allowed me to better understand why they either understood or misunderstood a specific action. I could then analyze if the misunderstanding came from the translation of the script into American Sign Language (ASL), if directing was at fault or if there was a set design flaw.

The following questions and answers represent a portion of the survey responses, with selected comments made by the audience on different nights. Irrelevant comments such as "Can't you turn down the heat," were omitted from the responses in questions one through eight; they were used in question nine so as to give an overall perspective of the performances which the audience saw and what a certain audience member's frame of mind might have been at the conclusion of the performance.

Questions and Responses

Question 1. What does Norman's home tell you about his personality?

Answer 1. Refined, status conscious, narcissistic, latent homosexual.

2. Artistic and modern, right-brained.

3. He has too much free time, quite dangerous for an eccentric person.

4. He has no direction in his life.

5. The hint of "murderous" objects were fun to look for. The staging was great! He's got murder on his mind.

6. He drinks too much and is emotionally unbalanced.

7. He is artsy, extravagant, and has a vivid, well defined imagination.

8. Very neat, but strange.

9. A macabre.

10. Grandiose ideas--obsessive. Black thoughts--projective beyond his own limits.

Question 2. Where does Norman park his car? (Note: the car was never seen. Only the headlights from the car shone through a window to give the illusion of the car coming and going)

Answer 1. In the driveway.

2. In front of the house.

3. Off stage.

4. Along side the house.

5. In a garage to which Norman goes for his grisly tools.

Question 3. What time of year is it? (Note: all four seasons were listed)

63% circled Winter

24% circled Fall

4% picked Spring

2% picked Summer

7% circled nothing, or circled more than one season

Question 4. Who spends more time at home? (Note: both Norman and Elizabeth's names were listed)

97% circled Norman

1% circled Elizabeth

2% circled nothing

Question 5. Where the lights bright enough to see the signs from the actors? If not, where was it too dark?

98% circled yes

2% circled no

Comments:
1. Slightly dark stage left
2. Right side dark
3. A little dark down left

Question 6. How did you feel about "seeing into the bath and cellar?" (Note: These two areas were back lit so only the actors shadows told the audience what was happening within the four walls.)

Answer 1. The cellar is so realistic and it is probable a light is turned on the stairwell when one goes downstairs.

2. Very good--The mind filled in details too graphic to show.
3. As long as it was in good taste.
4. It added to the illusion but, almost made me sick.
5. Cellar was ok--bath highly questionable.

6. A very interesting effect--enjoyed it.
7. Lighting the cellar was unique.
8. Squeamish!
9. Bath was uncomfortable, but gore always is.
10. Loved the use of shadows, very eerie!

Question 7. What did you like or dislike about Norman's decorating style?

Answer 1. Liked the way it paralleled his mental methodology and psychological pallet.

2. His decor is very classy, intact, and artistic, however the green vines seem not to go at all with the setting.
3. Ok for Norman, but not for me.
4. Sorry, but I'm more traditional, don't care for his artsy look.
5. Too modern for England.
6. The mural over the window, Wow!
7. The black was too overpowering, especially the black roses!
8. I liked the bathroom picture (flat line).
9. Disliked the design on the upstairs window.
10. I'm not fond of black and white but it does make a statement.

Question 8. On a scale of one to ten, with ten being the best, how do you rate the design of this production?

22% circled 10	23% circled 9	31% circled 8
12% circled 7	5% circled 6	2% circled 5
0% circled below 5	5% circled nothing	

Question 9. Do you have any additional comments? (Note: Here I included a variety of responses so the reader will understand that not all patrons answered the questions based solely on the set design.)

Answer 1. Male English accents are awful and Elizabeth overacts.

2. The hands distract from the voices.
3. A very difficult play for "hearing" actors--astounding how the speaking actors are timed to the sign language. My husband and I enjoyed every bit of the show and will talk about it to everyone!
4. Could the actors move their lips just in case, so we can understand, in case we don't know sign language?
5. I liked smelling the coffee and the refrigerator light going on and off.
6. The set was well built and produced many good visual effects.
7. From my seat (front left center) the furniture sometimes obscured my view of the kitchen activity. Not enough to prevent me from following the play however.
8. Best set I've seen in a local production.
9. Too lengthy and murder scenes too descriptive.
10. Too much murder already for real. We do not need murder for entertainment.
11. I feel it was not a good choice of plays. I've seen much better.
12. First half hour could have been condensed into fifteen minutes.
13. My first deaf play. Very good.
14. I found the voicing to be very distracting.

15. Excellent use of acting areas as blocked for constant dynamic of emotions. The blocking explored the set and pulled it together a truly "worked" environment.

Audience Response

Every night I sat with the director, Lisa Gale-Betzler, in the back of the house. I would listen to the audience's reaction and sign the response to her. We sat in anticipation of their reaction each night to several spots in the script which should have drawn a response. The opening scene with its diabolical but fake murder taking place brought early crowd reactions such as "oh. . .gross," "What is he doing?' and "He's not doing that is he?" As the initial murder progressed almost every crowd either shifted constantly in their seats or had the opposite reaction and were motionless with total silence. When Norman, our lead character, cut off a limb, all but one audience gasped, the other laughed.

It wasn't until the moment the inspector came to investigate, found the fake body in the stove and popped it's eye out did the rest of the motionless audiences laugh or exhale a sigh of relief. The strength of the final reaction depended on where the fake eye landed.

The end of Act One brought stillness as another murder took place. As the lights came up for intermission we could hear the murmurs of the crowd wondering if what they just witnessed was another of Norman's games or a real murder. At the end of the performance, Norman gets what is coming to him, his own murder. A climactic end with a double murder, using the full set, did not bring as strong of a reaction as the first two murders, on any of the nights. Again I can not say if this was due to directing, script translation, or desensitization from the other murders. Whatever the reason, every audience reacted similarly.

Personal Response

My overall response to this Theatre of the Deaf production was one of incredible growth. Each day brought new challenges. Having built the scenery and having served as Technical Director for two previous Theatre of the Deaf productions helped but did not provide me with a full understanding of all the aspects involved with mounting such a large undertaking.

The set design in the space provided I felt worked extremely well. The actual construction of it could have been improved with a more experienced crew. Erecting a two-story set primarily with the help of three students with limited knowledge (none had built a single wall before this production) was not beyond our capabilities but was certainly a stretch.

The lighting worked very well for the piece. The specials worked exactly as I had intended, displaying both the action of the cellar and the bathroom even though the audience was separated from the actors by a wall. The general illumination of the set was without shadows or dark areas. The night scenes made sense with the use of blue Gel, and the exterior car headlights that projected through a window. The day scenes were brightly lit as if interior lighting was used.

Costumes for all the characters were not part of my design project; however, I must say they added a sense of continuity to the piece. The only piece I did not like was the sweat pants Norman wore in Act I, Scene I, because they were beyond tight and did not flatter the actor, nor did they need to be that tight to convey his character's personality. The "Jack-the-Ripper" style coat Norman wore at the end of Act I, Scene II was fantastic!

From an audience member's perspective, I would have to say the acting was not among the best I have seen presented at Florissant Valley, mainly due to the slowness

in pacing and one actress who in addition to being hearing impaired had a lot of difficulty walking due to another disability.

Growth Beyond *Murderer*

Since the production of *Murderer* was mounted, I have designed again for Florissant Valley's Theatre of the Deaf. *Accommodations*, by Nick Hall, presented at Florissant Valley in 1997 far exceeded my previous designs in both lighting and set. I decided to show the vocal narrators instead of hiding them, used more angles with the walls, and most importantly, learned from the mistakes and changes required in the past. It is amazing what having students with a year of experience, no visible seams between walls, a stronger and more experienced cast, and better signing skills by the designer can do for a deaf production. Dr. John Heidger, the founder of the Theatre of the Deaf at Florissant Valley, came back stage immediately following a performance and said "This is one of the best productions Theatre of the Deaf has seen in years."

Conclusion

The experiences I have been fortunate to be a part of with Florissant Valley's Theatre of the Deaf have been both rewarding and enriching. Knowing the improvements I have made in my designing for theatre of the deaf since *Murderer* have made this project worthwhile. Now as I finish this thesis I can say I have experienced an aspect of theatre that is truly unique. A world so similar to the "hearing" world, yet so different. One that requires special attention to details that are not highlighted within the script. A beautiful language of pictures that few hearing people will have the pleasure of experiencing, unless Theatre of the Deaf continues. I hope to be among those who make that possible.

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Appendix A

Letter requesting permission for use of first edition of *Murderer*

3400 Pershall Road
Ferguson, Missouri 63135
U.S.A.
January 12, 1995

aser and Dunlop (scripts) LTD.
Regent Street
ndon, W1R 8RU

ar Sir or Madam:

We are in possession of a book club edition of the script Murderer by Anthony affer that was published in 1979. The script indicates we should request formance rights from your agency.

When we requested a new copy from Samuel French, Inc. in New York, we iced significant differences between the two scripts. We much prefer the earlier ion for our performances. When we contacted Samuel French, Inc. they indicated y only held the rights to their edition of the script.

Please inform me how I may apply for the rights through your company. We uld like to mount this production in February of 1996. We are an educational itution and cast our shows with college students and community residents. Our atre seats 357 and there is no charge for admission to our performances.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Donna M. Spaulding, Chairperson
Communications Dept.

AUDITIONS...

for the Florissant Valley Theatre of the Deaf production of

MURDERER

By Anthony Shaffer

Directed by Lisa Gale-Betzler

Signing actors
p.m. November 9

Vocal actors
7 p.m. December 12 & 13

Roles available for 2 men and 2 women

actors please prepare a one-minute monologue. For further information and to n appointment call the secretary at 314/595-4477 (voice) or 314/595-2120 (TTY).

Performance dates:
February 23, 24, 25, March 1, 2

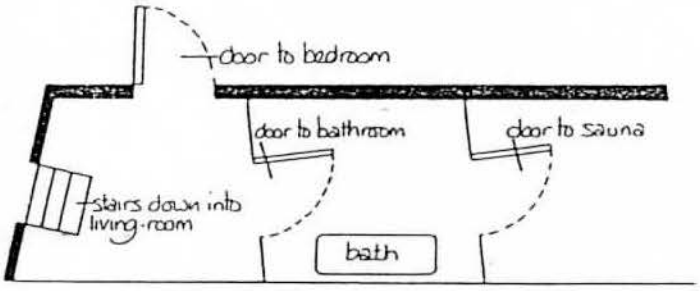
Community College is an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution. Special accommodations ble for persons with disabilities by calling 314/595-4477.

St. Louis Community College at Florissant Valley
3400 Pershall Road • St. Louis, MO 63135-1499

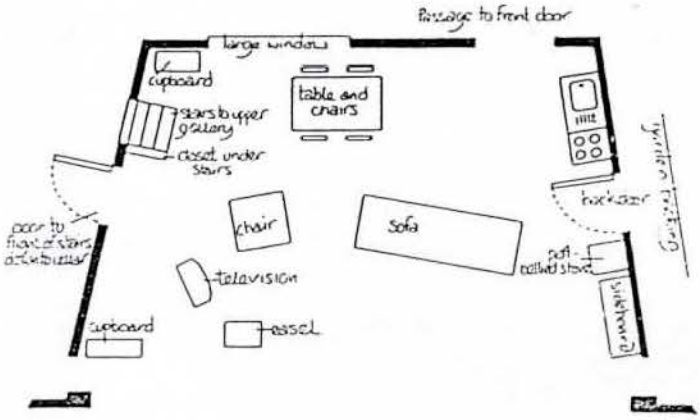
Appendix C

Suggested set diagram from revised copy of *Murderer*

FURNITURE AND PROPERTY LIST

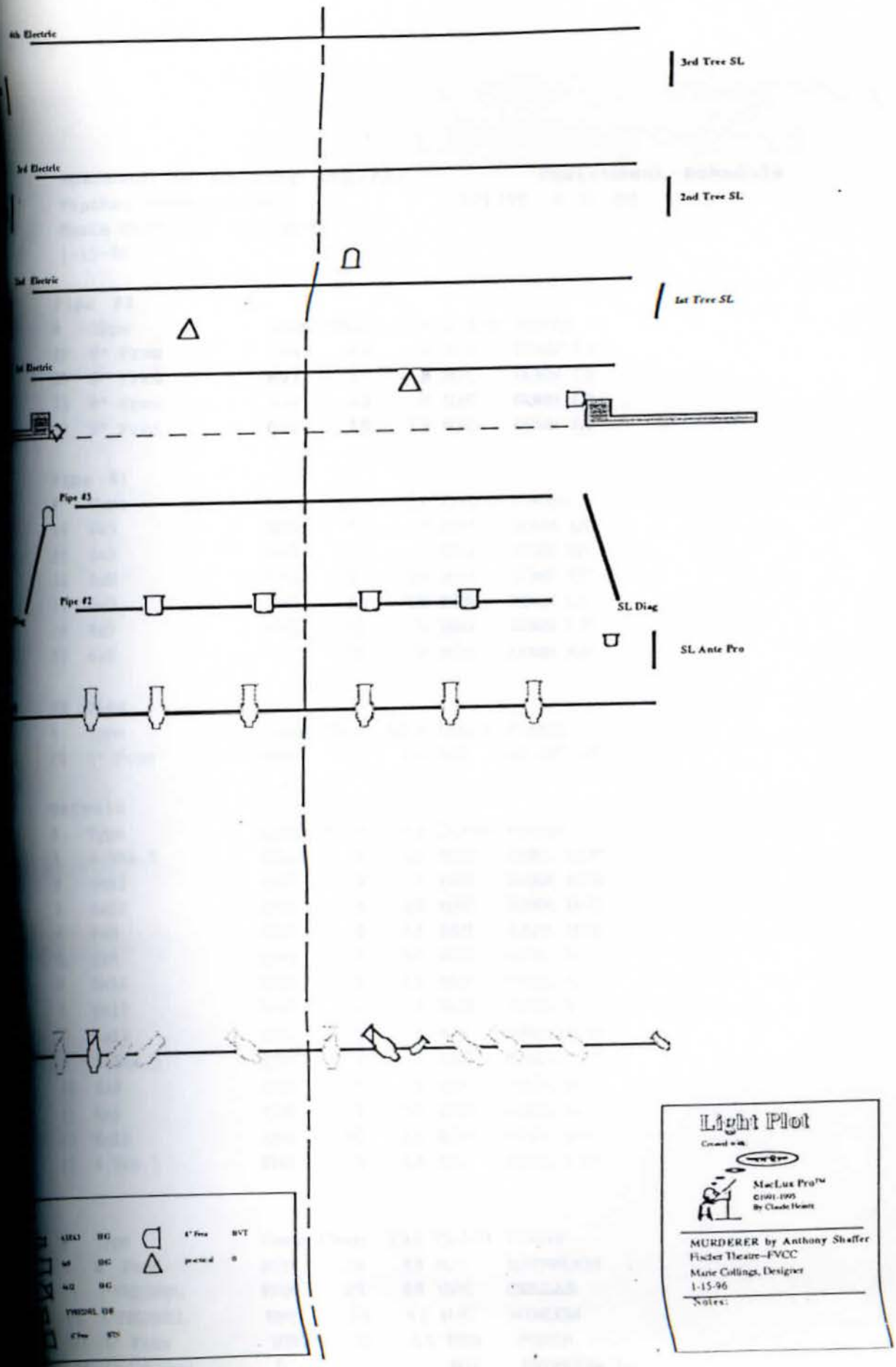


UPPER GALLERY



LIVING ROOM

Appendix E
Light Design-1
Simplified Light Plot



Appendix E
Light Design-2
Instrument schedule

MURDERER by Anthony Shaffer — Instrument Schedule
Fischer Theatre--FVCC — 2/1/98 6:14 PM
Marie Collings, Designer
1-15-96

Pipe #2

#	Type	Lamp	Chan	Cir	Color	Focus
20	8" Fres	BVT	16	3	N/C	DOWN LT
21	8" Fres	BVT	17	8	N/C	DOWN LT
22	8" Fres	BVT	18	2	N/C	DOWN LT
23	8" Fres	BVT	19	19	N/C	DOWN LT

Pipe #1

#	Type	Lamp	Chan	Cir	Color	Focus
14	6x9	EHG	11	7	R60	DOWN LT
15	6x9	EHG	12	9	R60	DOWN LT
16	6x9	EHG	13	18	R60	DOWN LT
17	6x9	EHG	13	18	R60	DOWN LT
18	6x9	EHG	12	9	R60	DOWN LT
19	6x9	EHG	11	7	R60	DOWN LT

SR Diag

#	Type	Lamp	Chan	Cir	Color	Focus
24	6" Fres	BTN	21	42	R80	NIGHT LT

Catwalk

#	Type	Lamp	Chan	Cir	Color	Focus
1	4.5X6.5	EHG	3	16	R80	AREA C/F
2	6x12	EHG	4	4	R60	AREA D/G
3	6x12	EHG	8	12	N/C	AREA D/G
4	6x9	EHG	9	11	R60	AREA H/E
5	6x9	EHG	1	10	R60	AREA B
6	6x12	EHG	2	14	R60	AREA A
7	6x12	EHG	5	5	R60	AREA I
8	6x12	EHG	6	6	N/C	AREA A/B
9	4.5X6.5	EHG	7	1	R80	AREA C/F
10	6x9	EHG	9	11	R60	AREA H/E
11	6x9	EHG	1	10	R60	AREA B
12	6x12	EHG	10	13	R60	AREA H/E
13	4.5X6.5	EHG	3	16	R80	AREA C/F

#	Type	Lamp	Chan	Cir	Color	Focus
	6" Fres	BTN	24	44	N/C	BATHROOM
25	3"FRESNEL	EHF	25	48	N/C	CELLAR
26	3"FRESNEL	EHF	23	41	N/C	WINDOW
27	6" Fres	BTN	22	43	R80	PORCH
28	practical	0			N/C	BEDROOM L...
29	practical	0			N/C	PATIO LIG...

Appendix E
Light Design-3
Color List

MURDERER by Anthony Shaffer Color List
Fischer Theatre--FVCC 2/1/98 6:05 PM
Marie Collings, Designer
1-15-96

Pipe #2

Pipe #1

R60	7.5"	: 6

SR Diag

R80	7.5"	: 1

Catwalk

R60	7.5"	: 8
R80	1147	: 3

R80	7.5"	: 1

Color List Totals

R60	7.5"	: 14	=	3 sheets
R80	7.5"	: 2	=	1 sheet
R80	1147	: 3		

Appendix E
Light Design-4
Circuit location chart

Circuit Locations for the Terry M. Fischer Theatre*

Catwalk	1, 2, 3 ,4, 5 ,6 ,7 ,8 ,9 ,10 ,11 ,12 ,13 ,14 ,15 ,16 (four of each 1-4, two of each 5-16)
Stage Left, Ante-Pro	17,18,19 (One of each)
Stage Right, Ante-Pro	20,21,22 (One of each)
1st Electric	23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40 (Two of each)
1st Tree, stage left	43, 44 (Three of each)
1st Tree, stage right	41,42 (Three of each)
2nd Electric	45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58 (Two of each)
2nd Tree, stage left	59, 60 (Three of each)
2nd Tree, stage right	61, 62 (Three of each)
3rd Electric	63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68 (Two of each)
3rd Tree, stage left	81, 82 (Three of each)
3rd Tree, stage right	83, 84 (Three of each)
4th Electric	69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80 (Two of each)
Pots in floor of stage	
Upstage Left	87, 86, 85
Upstage Center	90, 89, 88, X (no longer working), 92, 91
Upstage Right	87, 86, 85

*Note: The summer following this production the architectural lighting of the theatre was renovated and all circuit locations were changed.

Appendix E
Light Design-5
Light Cue Sheet

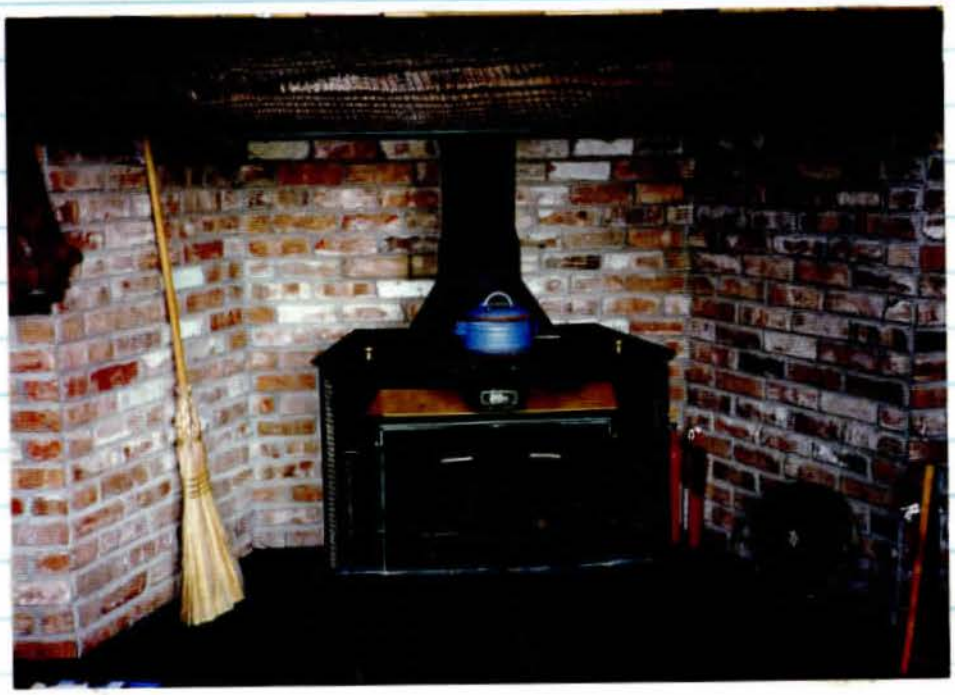
Light Cue Sheet

Cue #	Title or Purpose	Fade time	Page #
1.	Preshow	5	3
2.	House to half	5	3
3.	House out	5	3
4.	Black out	5	3
5.	Act I up	5	3
6.	Celler light on	0	3
7.	Celler light off	0	4
8.	Bathroom light on	0	4
9.	Celler light on	0	4
10.	Cellar light off	0	4
11.	Car headlights on	3	4
12.	Car headlights off	3	6
13.	Phone light flash	m	7
14.	Bathroom light off	0	7
15.	Doorbell light flash	m	7
16.	Dorrbell light flash again	m	15
17.	Bathroom light on	0	15
18.	Bathroom light off	0	34
19.	Celler light on	0	34
20.	Celler light off	0	40
21.	Black out	5	40
22.	Act I, Scene II	5	42
23.	Car headlights on	3	42
24.	Light switch cue	0	43
25.	Black out	3	43
26.	House lights up	5	43
27.	Intermission lights up	5	47
28.	House to half	5	47
29.	House out	5	47
30.	Black out	5	47
31.	Act II	5	47
32.	Bathroom light out	0	48
33.	Cellar light on	0	48
34.	Cellar light off	0	48
35.	Car lights off	0	48
36.	Doorbell light flash	m	49
37.	Doorbell light flash again	m	59
38.	Cellar light on	0	60
39.	Bathroom light on	0	60
40.	Doorbell light flash	m	61
41.	Cellar light off	0	61
42.	Bathroom light off	0	69
43.	Bathroom light on	0	69
44.	Bathroom light off	0	69
45.	Bathroom light on	0	77
46.	Cellar light on	0	82
47.	Bathroom light off	0	88
48.	Doorbell light flash	m	89
49.	Black out	3	89
50.	Curtain call	2	

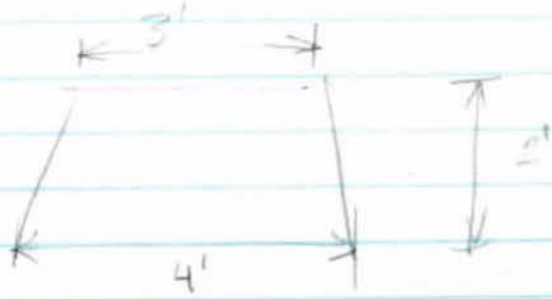
51.	Black out	5	89
52.	House lights up	5	89

Note: Fade time is indicated by a numeral representing seconds or an (m) denoting a manual fade cue.

Appendix F
Photo and Sketches for Special Effects-1
Inspiration for wood burning stove



IDEA FOR STOVE - FOUND MAY '95



3' high

Appendix F
Photo and Sketches for Special Effects-2
Severed Head

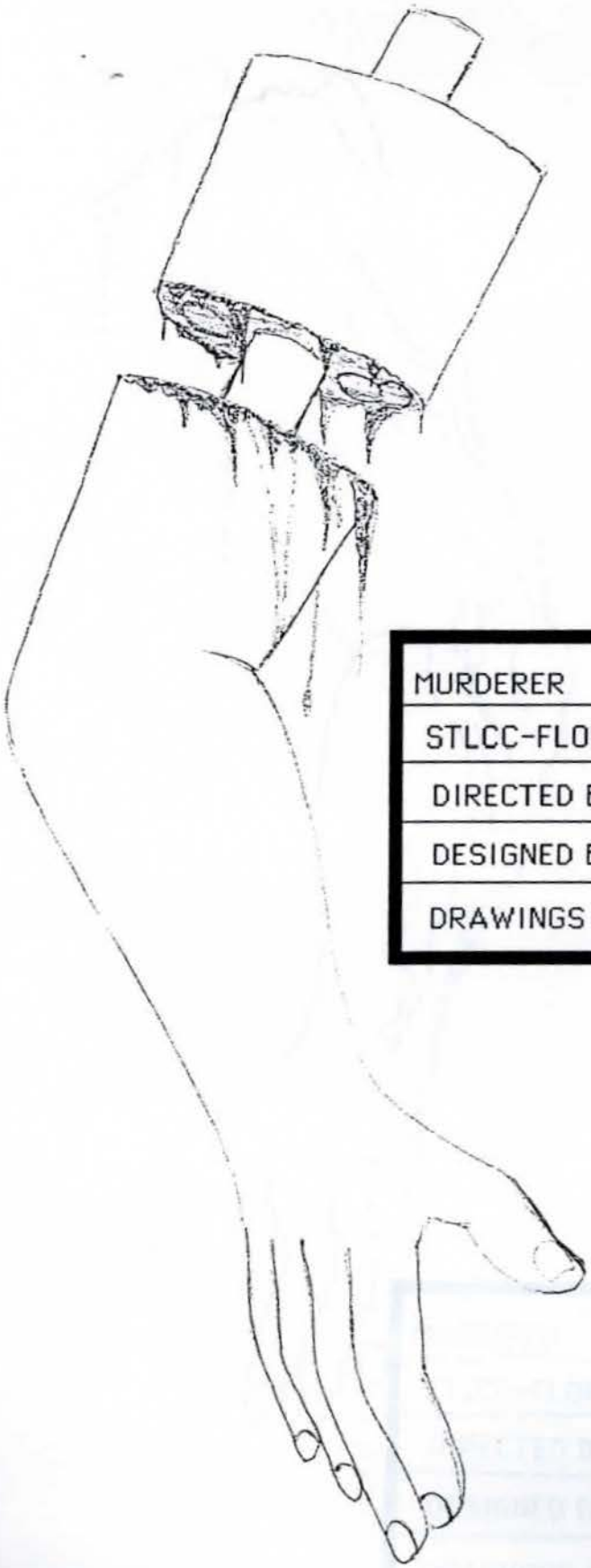
MURDERER	12-95
STLCC-FLORISSANT VALLEY	
DIRECTED BY: LISA GALE-BETZLER	
DESIGNED BY: MARIE L. COLLINGS	
DRAWINGS BY: DAVID FAHNING	

Appendix F
Photo and Sketches for Special Effects-3
Charred Head with removable right eye

REMOVEABLE EYE
ATTACHED WITH VELCRO

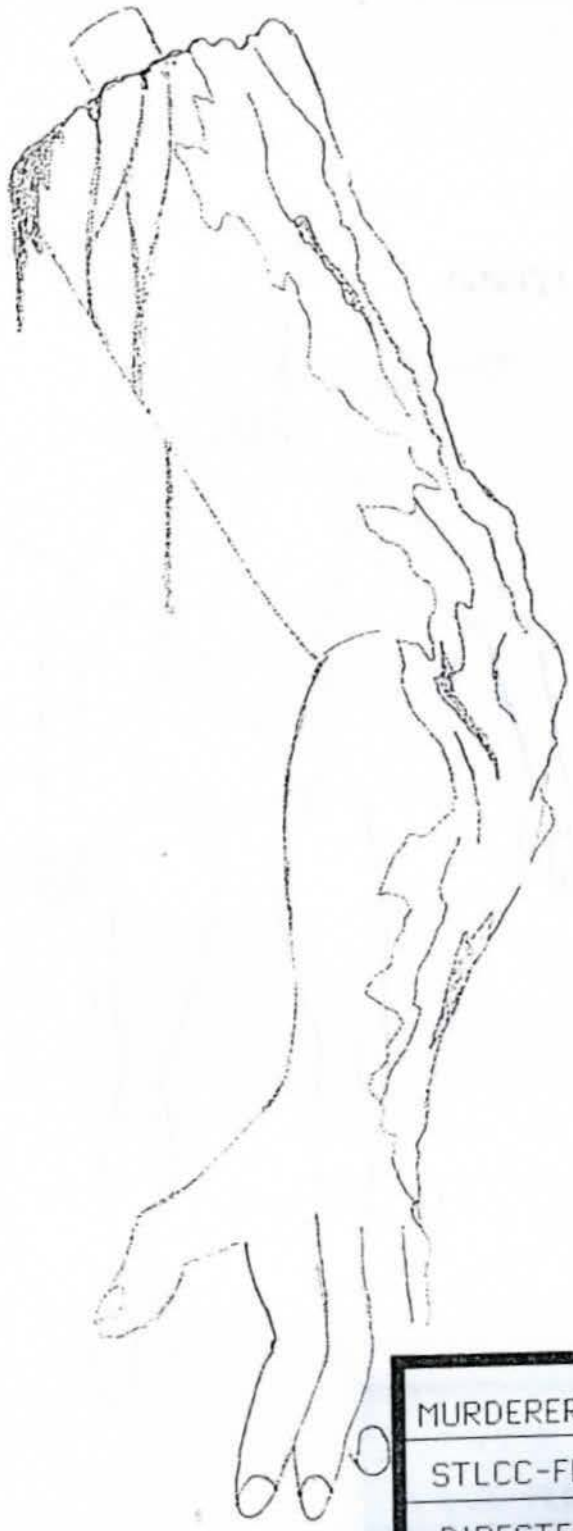
MURDERER	12-95
STLCC-FLORISSANT VALLEY	
DIRECTED BY: LISA GALE-BETZLER	
DESIGNED BY: MARIE L. COLLINGS	
DRAWINGS BY: DAVID FAHNING	

Appendix F
Photo and Sketches for Special Effects-4
Cut away right arm



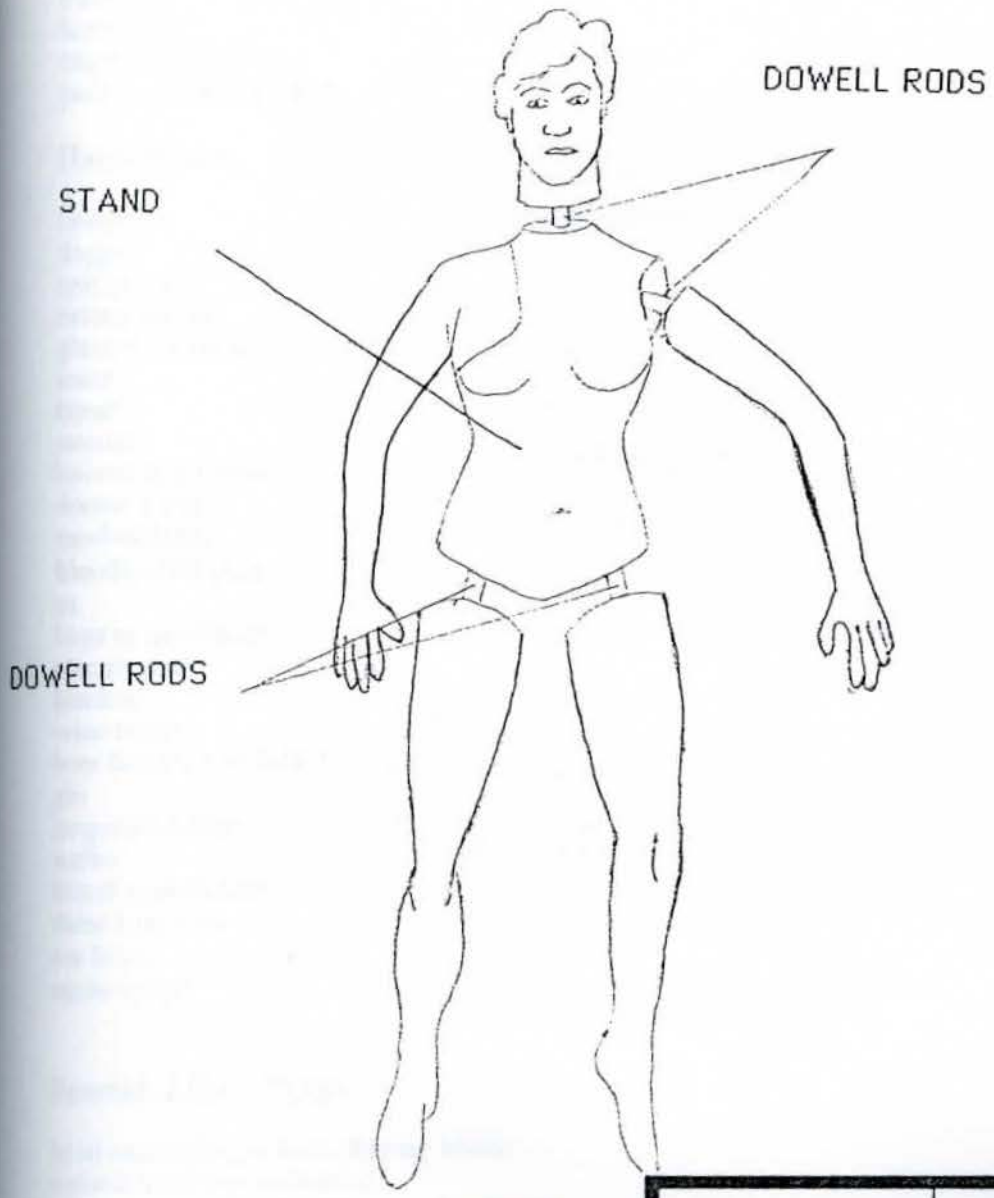
MURDERER	12-95
STLCC-FLORISSANT VALLEY	
DIRECTED BY: LISA GALE-BETZLER	
DESIGNED BY: MARIE L. COLLINGS	
DRAWINGS BY: DAVID FAHNING	

Appendix F
Photo and Sketches for Special Effects-5
Charred left arm



MURDERER	12-95
STLCC-FLORISSANT VALLEY	
DIRECTED BY: LISA GALE-BETZLER	
DESIGNED BY: MARIE L. COLLINGS	
DRAWINGS BY: DAVID FAHNING	

Appendix F
Photo and Sketches for Special Effects-6
Corpse with all uncharred parts attached



MURDERER	12-95
STLCC-FLORISSANT VALLEY	
DIRECTED BY: LISA GALE-BETZLER	
DESIGNED BY: MARIE L. COLLINGS	
DRAWINGS BY: DAVID FAHNING	

Appendix G

Prop List

Set Props

Wood burning stove
sofa
recliner
small kitchen table with two chairs
fireplace tools
trash can
lawn chair
easel with painting
paint cups and brushes

Hand Props

towels
dagger
spit in oven
rubber tubing
glasses on shelf
roast
bread
mustard
knives of all sizes
doctor's bag
sandwich bag
bloody sandwich
ax
bags of quicklime
electric saw
blanket
wine bottles
beer bottles with beer
gin
sergeants badge
wallet
blood soaked bags
three suitcases
car keys
stethoscope

Special Effect Props

head resembling actress playing Millie
second head that is charred
two arms, one that breaks, one that bends
one or two legs
torso
dagger that squirts blood

Appendix H
Postcard mailed to patrons

The Florissant Valley Theatre of the Deaf
presents

MURDERER

By Anthony Shaffer

Directed by Lisa Gale-Betzler

Feb. 23, 24, March 1, 2 at 8 p.m.
Feb. 25 at 2 p.m.

The best in free theatre

Tickets are FREE but reservations are requested by calling 314/595-4488 (TDD callers through relay services).

This play contains adult language and violent situations. Children 10 and under will not be admitted to this production.

Special accommodations are available for persons with disabilities by calling 314/595-4477.

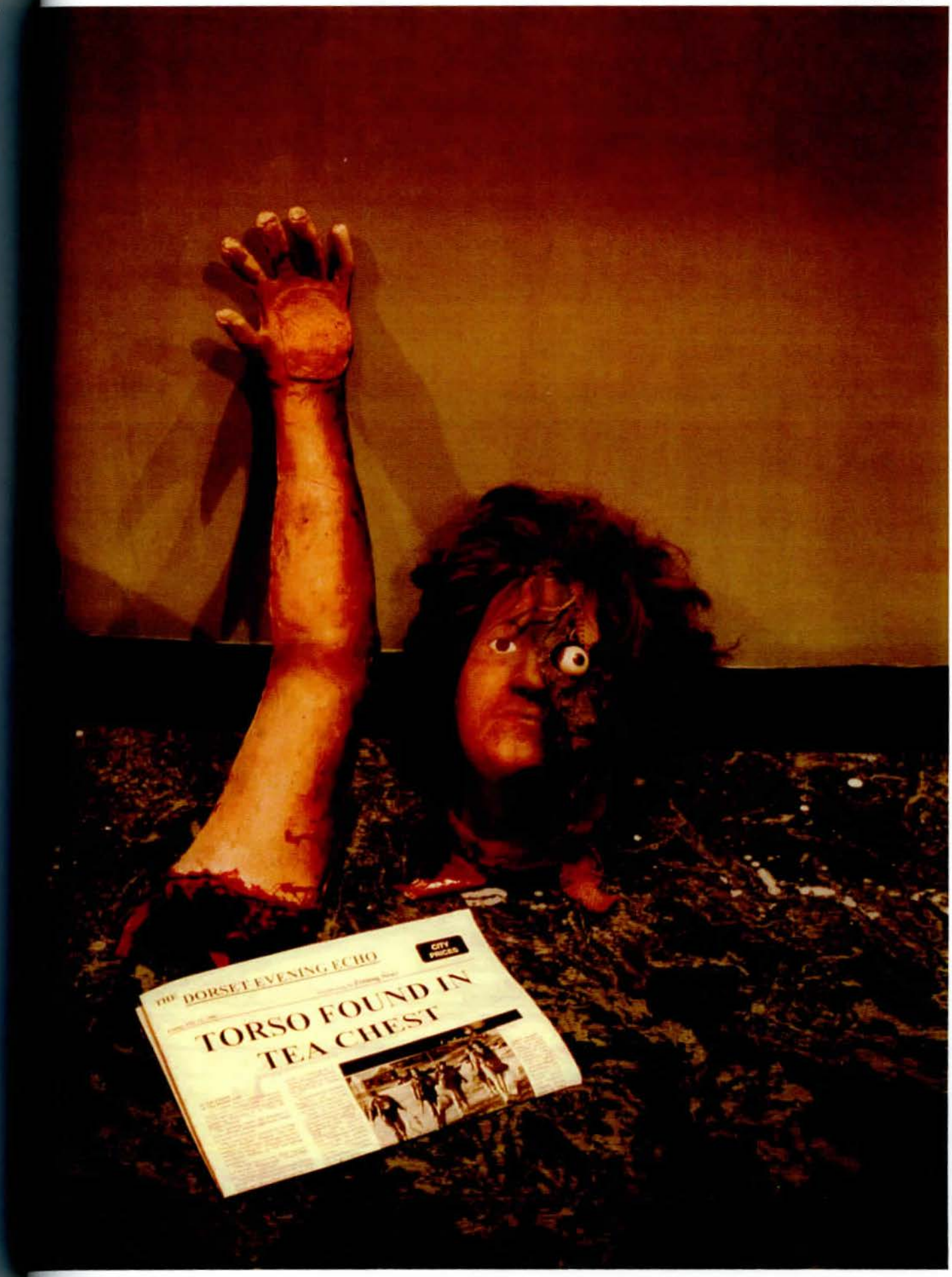
St. Louis Community College at Florissant Valley
3400 Pershall Road, St. Louis, Mo. 63135-1499

Appendix I Production Photo-1 Finished set

Appendix I Production Photo-2 Close-up of recreated stove

Appendix I Production Photo-3 Replica of actress's head and leg

Appendix I Production Photo-4 Charred head, severed arm and newspaper



Appendix I Production Photo-5 Close-up view of window

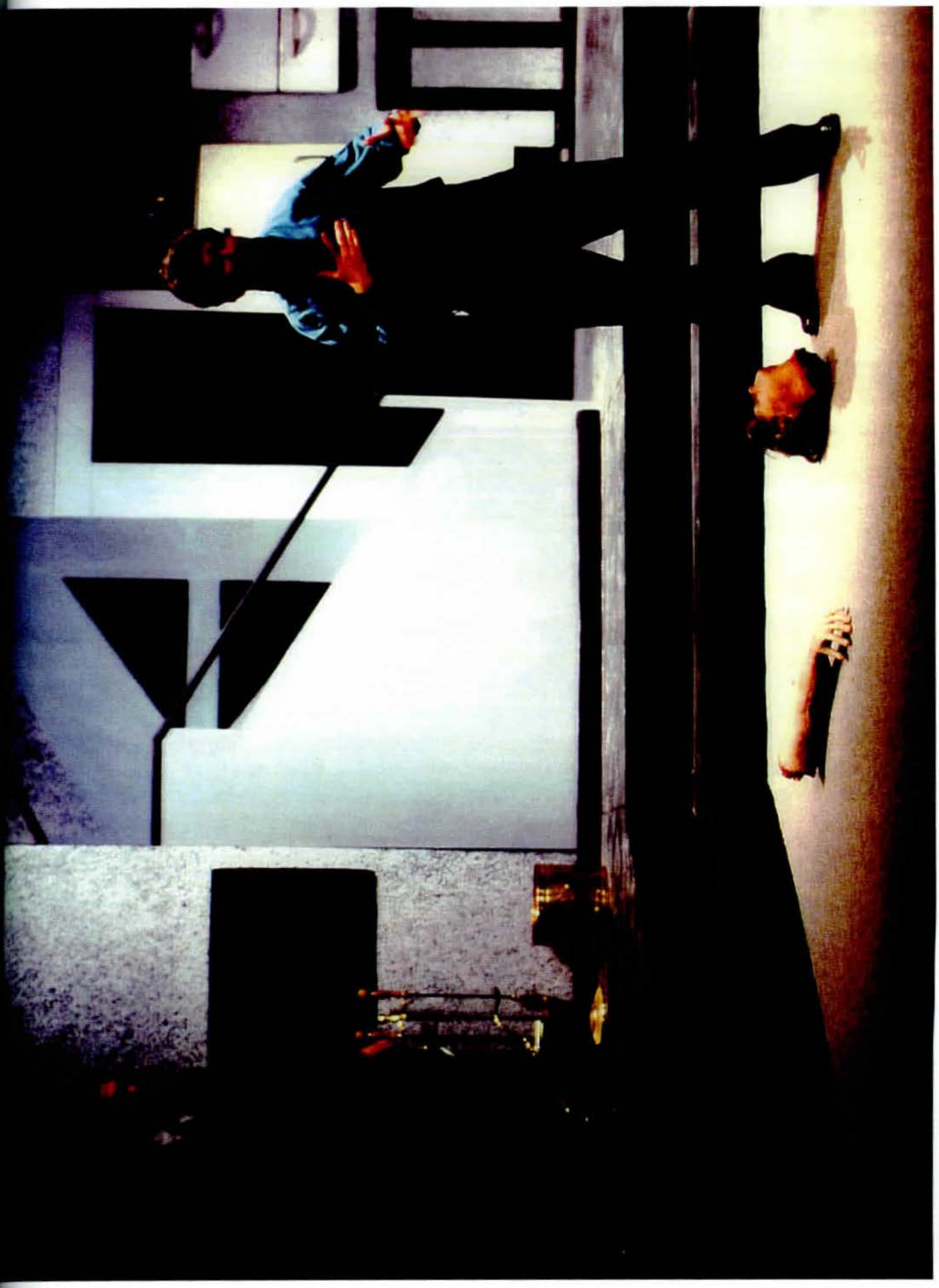
Appendix I Production Photo-6 Lay out of body parts behind the window

Appendix I Production Photo-7 How the window was back lit

Appendix I Production Photo-8-a Final Dress Rehearsal /The fake murder

Appendix I Production Photo-8-b Final Dress Rehearsal /The cops discovery

Appendix I Production Photo-8-c Final Dress Rehearsal /The explanation



Appendix I Production Photo-8-d Final Dress Rehearsal /The final murder

The design of this production is a portion of the requirements for Marie L. Collings' master thesis project through Lindenwood College. Marie would like to thank the members of her committee: Brian Reeder, Donnell Walsh, and Ann Canale for their assistance and support.

Marie's usual responsibilities as Florissant Valley's technical director include the building and painting of the sets and training of student crews. In addition to these responsibilities she has designed the set, lights and props for this production.

We would like to ask you to respond to her design by answering the following questionnaire. If you would, please give it to an usher at the conclusion of the performance. Thank you.

* *

1. What does Norman's home tell you about his personality?

GRANDIOSE IDEAS - OBSESSIVE
(BLACK) THOUGHTS - PROJECTIVE
BEYOND HIS OWN LIMITS

2. Where does Norman park his car?

OUTSIDE IN FRONT OF THE HOUSE

3. What time of year is it?
SPRING SUMMER (LATE FALL) WINTER

4. Who spends more time at home, Norman or Elizabeth?

(NORMAN) ELIZABETH

5. Were the lights bright enough to see the signs from the actors?

YES NO

If not, where was it too dark? A LITTLE DARK DOWN LEFT.

6. How did you feel about "seeing into the bath and cellar?"

VERY GOOD - THE MIND FILLED IN DETAILS TOO GRAPHIC TO SHOW

7. What did you like or dislike about Norman's decorating style? LIKED THE WAY IT PARALLELED HIS MENTAL METHODOLOGY AND PSYCHOLOGICAL PALLET

8. On a scale of one to ten, with ten being the best, how do you rate the design of the production?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

9. Do you have any additional comments about the show?

EXCELLENT USE OF ACTING AREAS AS BLOCKED FOR CONSTANT DYNAMIC OF EMOTIONS. THE BLOCKING EXPLORED THE SET AND PULLED IT TOGETHER AS A TRULY "WORKED" ENVIRONMENT.

Appendix K
Review from St. Louis' Riverfront Times
February 28-March 5, 1996

MAKING THE GRADE

BY BOB WILCOX

THE VIEW FROM HERE
By Margaret Dulaney
Meramec Theatre

MURDERER
By Anthony Shaffer
Florissant Valley Theatre of the Deaf

More local academic theater programs showcased work this past weekend. Here's a report from two of the campuses of the St. Louis Community College.

Both Meramec and Florissant Valley chose little-known plays and gave them what are, to my knowledge, their first productions in this area. That's always a valuable service of educational theater, even when, as in these cases, the plays themselves are less than perfect. Margaret Dulaney, who wrote the Meramec piece, is hardly a household name. Anthony Shaffer, on the other hand, had a major hit with *Sleuth*, which may have influenced Flo Valley to try another murder mystery from his pen.

Dulaney's piece, *The View from Here*, carries a whiff of the playwriting class with it: Give your protagonist an obstacle to overcome, surround her with eccentric characters and see what happens. Fortunately, some of what happens in *The View from Here* is pretty enjoyable stuff, though the lightweight material can wear thin when stretched over a full evening.

Fern's obstacle is agoraphobia. It hit her one day at the supermarket, and she hasn't been out of the house since. Her sister Maple suffers near-catatonic despair over her failure to have a child. Fern's friend Carla is, thanks to the tabloids and her police scanner, a connoisseur of disasters. Fern's neighbor Arnold may be the most stable of the lot. He's merely so obsessed with golf that his wife has left him, taking all their furniture except the baby's crib — with the baby still in it. Arnold even becomes the play's *raisonneur*, handing Fern a sparkler and hope in an Independence Day twilight at the final curtain.

If these whimsical characters sometimes seem too patly whipped up, the cast at Meramec — Krissie Luke as Fern, Lisa Pepper as Maple, Natalie Lawson as Carla and Joe Hitti as Arnold — give them a commendable degree of reality. Under Jim Greer's sensitive direction, each actor finds the right rhythms for each character. David Wassilak's stark, forced-perspective set and harsh lights exactly express Fern's paranoia, and Mary Allen's costumes for Carla and Arnold feature one delirious joke after another.

No doubt the absence of dialogue in the first 30 minutes of *Murderer* appealed to Flo Valley's Theatre of the Deaf, in which nonspeaking actors on stage sign their lines while others speak the words from offstage. Director Lisa Gale-Betzler and her cast handle these opening moments and other physical activity, including some violent tussles, with aplomb.

Unfortunately, playwright Shaffer also saddles them with almost endless forays into the protagonist's obsession with famous murders. This dialogue, although mildly amusing in small doses, soon grows tiresome, and it gives those signing it little opportunity to do the kinds of things sign language can do so brilliantly onstage. Nor does Shaffer give us reason to care about his characters, all rather unpleasant people.

As the murder-obsessed protagonist, Byron Key carries the burden of the evening, with Steve Garrett speaking his lines. Debbie Miles, with Kelly Scaggs speaking, is his wife; Trisha Nolan, with Rachel Allen speaking, plays his mistress; and Ron Selinger, with Ryan Holshouser speaking, portrays a long-suffering police sergeant.

Marie L. Collings' set is an ingenious marvel of nooks and crannies and translucent walls on which nefarious deeds are silhouetted. Arlene Chapman designed the costumes, with special effects by David Fahning.

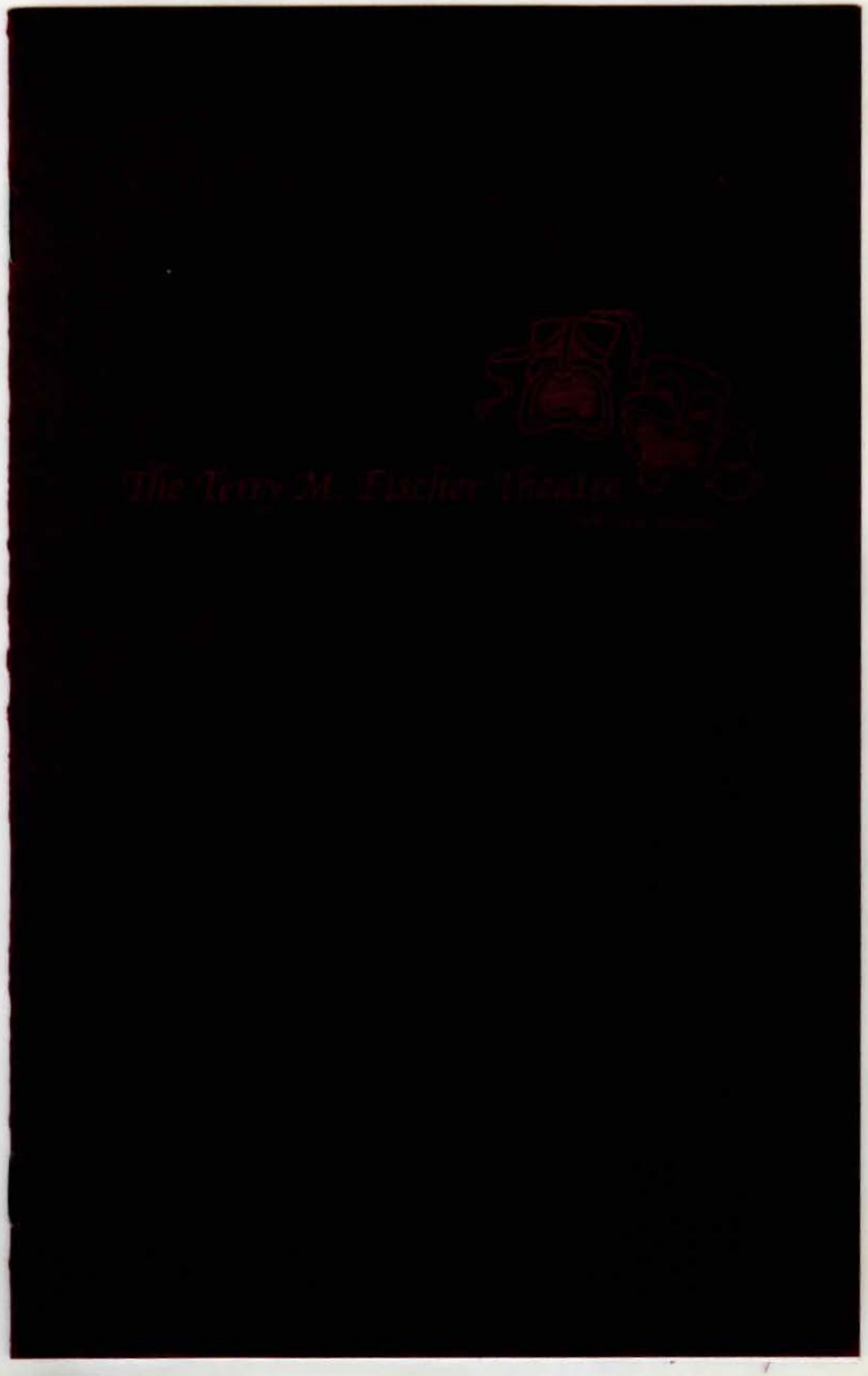
Appendix M

Florissant Valley's Theatre of the Deaf Production History

#	Production	Director	Year(s)
1	The Man Who Laughs	John Heidger	1978
2	Tartuffe	John Heidger	1978 / 1979
3	Three Cuckolds	John Heidger	1979
4	The Insect Play	John Heidger	1981
5	Our Town	John Heidger	1982
6	Little Theatre of the Deaf (LTD)	John Heidger	1984
7	Children of a Lesser God	Ron Eldringhoff	1984
8	Oriental Interludes	John Heidger	1985
9	The Miracle Worker	Donna Spaulding	1986
10	Animal Farm	John Heidger	1987
11	Rashomon	John Heidger	1988
12	Spoon River Anthology	Daniel Betzler	1989
13	The Glass Menagerie	Donna Spaulding	1990
14	In A Room Somewhere	Daniel Betzler	1991
15	Alone Together	Lisa Gale-Betzler (first deaf director)	1993
16	Run For Your Wife	Steven De Shetler (second deaf director)	1995
17	Murderer	Lisa Gale-Betzler	1996
18	Accommodations	Lisa Gale-Betzler	1997
19	Deathtrap	Steven De Shetler	1997

*Little Theatre of the Deaf had a touring production called "Reflections" which performed at various dates for grade schools throughout the state of Missouri from 1978 to 1983.

Appendix N
Program



Appendix N
Program

MURDERER

By Anthony Shaffer

Directed by
Lisa Gale-Betzler

Production designed by
Marie L. Collings

Costumes by
Arlene Chapman

Special effects by
David Fahning

CAST

	Actor	Voice
Norman Bartholomew	Byron Key	Steve Garrett
Sergeant Stenning	Ron Selinger	Ryan Holshouser
Millie Sykes	Trisha Nolan	Rachel Allen
Elizabeth Bartholomew	Debbie Miles	Kelly Scaggs

The action takes place in the home
of Norman and Elizabeth Bartholomew
in Dorset, England.

– There will be one 15-minute intermission. –

NOTE: Approximately 30 minutes will elapse before the first sign or spoken word.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Produced by special arrangement
with Samuel French, Inc.
45 West 25th Street, New York, NY 10010

PRODUCTION STAFF

Technical Director ..... *Marie L. Collings*
Stage Manager ..... Bryan Miller
Assistant Stage Manager ..... Rebecca Holt
Voice Coach ..... Dan Betzler
Assistant to the Director ..... Eric Driskill
Properties ..... David Fahning
Building Assistants ..... Bryant Williamson
Terri Harper

Director's Note:

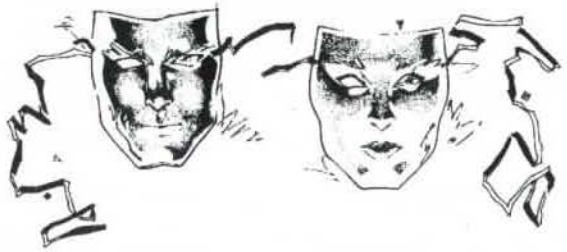
We human beings seldom cross the line between sanity and insanity…fantasy and reality…right and wrong. When these lines are crossed, there is a price to pay, but the cost will continue to be a mystery.

"Do not continue to play with death. I know beyond a shadow of a doubt that most murder victims spend all their lives searching for their murderers. Be warned. You do not know the game you play at all well. Stop in time."

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Special thanks:

Janine and Jerry Kennedy, Steve DeShetler, Niki Juncker



Where can you find outstanding music and drama? Free of charge? Right here, at the Terry M. Fischer Theatre. Why not take advantage of Florissant Valley's rich cultural life? Don't miss these outstanding performances.

St. Louis Community College at Florissant Valley
Terry M. Fischer Theatre Upcoming Productions

Florissant Valley Orchestra Directed by Ivy Allen	March 10 at 3 p.m.
"Broadway Bound" by Neil Simon Directed by Donna M. Spaulding	April 26, 27, May 3,* 4 at 8 p.m. April 28 at 2 p.m.
Spring Concert Directed by Bertram Ward	May 12 at 3 p.m.
Florissant Valley Orchestra Directed by Ivy Allen	May 19 at 3 p.m.

**Sign Interpreted*

Theatre Policy: Children under ten will not be admitted to theatre productions not specifically labeled for children.

Our regulations prohibit drinking, eating, and the taking of photographs–flash or otherwise–during the performance. The Fischer Theatre is a smoke-free facility. We request that patrons turn off pagers and cellular phones during the performance as a courtesy to our performers. Please check your belongings before leaving, as we are not responsible for lost articles.

Box Office: For your convenience, tickets may be requested 24 hours a day by calling our box office voice mail at 595-4488 or 595-2120 (TTY).

Special accommodations are available for persons with disabilities by calling 595-4477.

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