

Pat Bordman continues her series on community theater following the Farmington Players, on-stage and backstage, preparing for the opening of "Angel Street."

## Farmington Players Setting the stage

By PAT BORDMAN

Things are tense in the barn. Opening night of "Angel Street" is Feb. 22, and the focus is no longer on the actors. It seems certain they will be ready.

In suspense now is the empty stage, without color, walls or furnishings to assist in interpreting the play's meaning. The actors depend on those physical elements.

Usually the playwright describes various aspects of the setting and stage paraphernalia, but to insure accuracy, the library is used as a resource. And, since the play is a period piece, the Players want to insure that details such as tones, drapery, picture hanging methods, or carpeting are all according to the demands of the Victorian era.

For "Angel Street," gas lights and iron grill work was checked out during a visit to Greenfield Village, made expressly for this purpose.

All this checking insures that the audience is not distracted or upset by any obvious flaw in the setting.

"We put a brace behind the flats so that when you slam doors, things don't shake. We try to add some character to the set," said Don Briggs, a board member and former president of the Players.

Overall is the effort to make the stage believable so that the audience is transported through fantasy and imagination to the time of the play.

THE FARMINGTON Players Barn has a stage that is small by most standards. For most productions, its size is only a minor annoyance. For "Angel Street," it is a major disadvantage.

Briggs, who marked off the floor of the basement for blocking the play, takes care of major set construction and has a sense of what it takes to make the stage look authentic.

Building a set is similar to building a room but certain liberties are taken.

In "Angel Street," quite a bit of action takes place near the fireplace, so Briggs, with director Ellie Jorgenson, established a 'sight line.' This is the optimum angle at which the audience can observe the action. This is done by 'raking' or arranging the flats, or walls, at a given angle.

Now raking has created another problem. The stage area is considerably lessened, so the illusion of a larger stage is created by making the flats 12 feet high.

Set decorating chairperson Joanne Kaman develops the illusion another step by using contrasting colors to add depth.

A fireplace, a sliding door, and a circular staircase, all constructed by Briggs, are testimonials to his pride of workmanship.

Standards is important so the actors feel secure. MS. KAMEN says of her job in the barn, "I make

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Thursday, February 14, 1980

(F)13C



Elaine Wilson juggles and keeps track of the working props and the stage props for "Angel Street." (Photo by Pat Bordman)



Don Briggs, a former GM manager of International Technical Support Group, takes full charge of set construction. (Photo by Pat Bordman)

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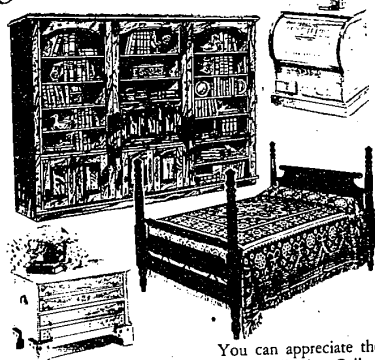
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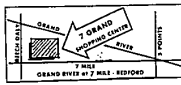


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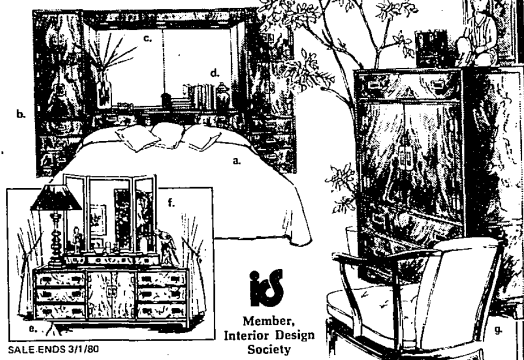
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