



Phil Hadley (above) and Gordon Stadler (at right) share a cubicle with light and sound boards that is no bigger than four by eight feet. Recent innovations in the Players Barn designed and installed by Had-

ley connects the light and sound technicians with the stage manager on stage and the director in the audience. (Photo by Pat Bordman)



'Angel Street'

Curtain up—light the lights—it's showtime

(Editor's note: Pat Bordman continues her series on community theater as the Farmington Players count down to the opening of "Angel Street" set for Friday night.)

By PAT BORDMAN

The stage is ready but there is still one hitch to worry the crew of "Angel Street" in the Farmington Players Barn. The love seat is falling apart.

The love seat, a major piece of set furniture, has been repaired several times but the side seams do not want to hold together. The lead actors use the piece extensively and its demise in the middle of a performance would be embarrassing.

A backup couch seems to be the answer, if one can be found in time.

To distract the audience from any such flaws, to enhance the appearance of the actors and set the tone of the play, the make-up and costume committees work closely and diligently.

Hope Nahstoll's remarkable collection of costumes may account for the apparent nonchalance in the barn. Since the Players got underway, Mrs. Nahstoll, a founding member, has gathered clothing suitable for use as costumes.

Pieces have been collected at garage sales, rummage sales, antique stores and on vacation trips.

"It gives me an excuse to go into the stores when I'm on a trip," she says.

THE FROCK COAT Ron Turek wears in "Angel Street" was purchased in a shop in Georgetown, Colo.

"It's a custom-tailored frock coat and it's unusual to find an authentic coat in this condition," Mrs. Nahstoll says. "It adds to the play to have really good costumes. It destroys the whole image if a costume is incorrect."

To insure accuracy, she and Judy Storace spend considerable time repairing, renewing, altering and revising costumes. Sometimes pieces of one

will be used on another.

The pair found a blouse suitable for Carol Green to wear while playing the maid Elizabeth in the play. But Mrs. Green was too tall for the blouse.

It was let out at the waist and sleeves, and by dipping into their store of old materials, some velvet and ribbon was found to give the blouse cuffs.

"We don't have to go out to get stuff. You never know when a piece will come in useful so I always save pieces of costumes that have been retired," Mrs. Nahstoll said.

"The shirt the audience will see on Rough (played by Larry Novess)," Mrs. Nahstoll said, "is a modern pink one we had."

"We own two boxes of shirt collars, so we sewed a collar onto the pink shirt to give him the type of fancy shirt he needs."

"We're fussy about our costumes," Mrs. Nahstoll said.

THE PLAYERS are also fussy about

their make-up.

"Some cast members prefer to do their own make-up. Others want help," said Ellie Jorgensen, the play's director.

When help is desired, Kathleen Monticello is there to help them. The make-up is all worked out at the technical rehearsal, scheduled just a few days before opening night.

The saying about the roar of the crowd and the smell of the greasepaint is only half true in this theatre. The players use pancake make-up.

"Other than a bun for Sandy (Dittrich) and a wig for Sand (Rothenberg), there is really nothing special this time," Mrs. Jorgensen said. "Kathleen makes a chart and puts it on the dressing room wall. That way, the same colors are used every night of the play and the lights pick up the same colors."

As lights pick up the colors, so does the lighting set the atmosphere, and in some instances it is crucial that lights do their thing on cue.

Gas lights, for example, angling at both sides of the fireplace are controlled by Gordon Stadler at the light board and it is important that they flicker at just the right time.

THE LIGHT and sound boards are both in a tiny room high above the audience. There is just enough room there for the equipment, resting on narrow shelves, plus two stools for the workers who view the play through a glass window.

For many years that window was the only contact the crew had with the actors.

When Phil Hadley joined the group some changes were made. He is a former radio announcer who now works as a design engineer with Harmon International in Southfield so design and refinements come naturally to him.

The new sound system includes an intercom, speakers, and controls, most of which was installed by Hadley. The intercom connects the stage manager, or stage, with the shop behind the stage, with the light and sound booth high above the audience and with the director who is in the audience.

Now, during the actual performance the director can have an influence on the progress of the play.

Listening for cues is the most important part of the sound man's job. If one is missed, the actor may not know



With the Players new sound system, Ellie Jorgensen, director of "Angel Street," can give directions from a seat in the barn to the actors on stage without being heard by anyone else. (Photo by Pat Bordman)

when to proceed with the stage action. Or, an off-stage actor might be uncertain as to when to enter.

TO HAVE the precision required, the sound man listens as carefully as the audience hearing the play for the first time. Special microphones are hidden on stage and connected to the sound booth and the dressing rooms.

One of these mikes is at the end of the catwalk, a space that used to be the barn loft and connects the sound booth with the stage.

"It is the only link to the stage that we have, other than visually," Hadley said.

"This play is simple for the sound man," he continues. "Technically there are only four sound cues. Kind of boring for the sound man."

His only difficulty for "Angel Street" he said was producing a Big Ben sound.

THE ONE THING the players don't have any difficulty with is getting an audience.

Walter Jorgensen, stage manager, ticket chairman and husband of the director, reports that there are only 50 seats for each performance ever available to the general public.

"We have 1,780 seats for this run of ten performances," he said. "Eleven hundred of these are for season ticket holders. On top of that, 100 seats go to the members."

Jorgensen told of one incident where a player could not have his family see him perform on stage because the play had been sold out for its entire run.

Because the players have such a large and certain crowd, the group feels a responsibility.

"I feel we have to give them our best. It's a pride," Mrs. Jorgensen said.



Lead players in "Angel Street" are Sandy Dittrich and C.M. Novess III. Ms. Dittrich plays the troubled Victorian wife and Novess portrays the Scotland Yard inspector who comes to her rescue.

The thriller runs three weekends in Farmington Players Barn Theatre beginning Friday, Feb. 22. Tickets are available by calling the theater box office, 477-1066.



Hope Nahstoll stands in the storeroom surrounded by boxes filled with clothing that can be mixed and matched, renovated, altered or remodeled to

fit the play at hand. But there is no written catalog. It's all in her head. (Photo by Pat Bordman)