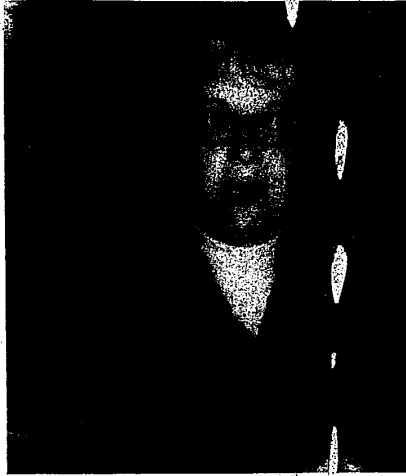




COMPOSER



LYRICIST



STAR

City's history told in music and dance

By LORAINNE McCLISH

"The Power Of It All," an original musical comedy that tells the history of Farmington, is in rehearsal for production at the end of July.

Spectators at the rehearsal in the Player's Barn this week were composer Charlene Slabey and lyricist June Rado who were seeing the characters they created come to life for the first time.

Both were obviously pleased with the casting that had been done for the parts by the Players, though once in a while Mrs. Rado would squirm in her seat and say, "This is weird."

"It's weird," Mrs. Slabey explained, "because these were all living entities to us while they still were on paper. We got to know Annabelle very well."

ANNABELLE is the lead character, played by Hope Nahstoll, a woman of the present who gets lost in the city in an attempt to write a history of the area. Matter of fact, the play until just recently was titled "Where Are You Annabelle?" and for a while, "Where Are You In Farmington Annabelle?"

Mrs. Nahstoll, a veteran actress and director, called the script "a little tricky to produce."

"I knew as soon as I read it we were going to have to get a director who was really enthusiastic about it." Scenes from the past are done either in dream or fantasy sequences all triggered by something a character in the present says.

"The easy way out is to write in a narrator," Mrs. Rado said, "but we didn't want that. It goes smoother this way." She added that she wrote out all of the stage

directions and "just hoped they worked."

"The Power Of It All" is the second collaboration for the lyricist and composer. Their first was entitled "Mackinac" written for the Farmington Musicals, also a musical comedy, which told how the residents coped ice-bound on the island.

Still, "The Power Of It All" was a different experience for them.

"WE HAVE A lot of good singers in the Musicals," said Mrs. Slabey, "but also a lot who had never been on a stage before, so we were writing parts with specific people in mind—writing parts to fit the singers. With this, we created the characters and they filled the parts with some of the most seasoned players from the barn."

Then too, with "Mackinac" the authors were only asked to write a musical comedy on any subject they chose, while "The Power Of It All" was commissioned expressly as a contribution from the Farmington Community Center to the city's sesquicentennial celebration.

Mrs. Nahstoll claims "The Power Of It All" as "my dream." A member of the Community Center board since its inception, she sold the board on the idea of commissioning the play as "something that would be useful in connection with the Founder's Festival as well as the Sesquicentennial."

The authors did their research "from every written piece of material we could find" and added as they could by talking with residents who were familiar with the city's history.

THEY BELIEVE they have in-

corporated all of the landmarks and all of the names that are important to the city's history in the dialog, if not in the scenes.

The play was commissioned in October, finished in April and went into production immediately to make the July 19-21 and 26-28 presentation dates.

It is directed by Bob Shaw, sponsored by the Community Center and closes with a grand finale that sees Governor Fred M. Warner's return to Farmington after his election win in 1904.



Evert
photos

