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The theatre of Adrian Hall

Woods, Jeannie Marlin, Ph.D.

City University of New York, 1989

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A

THE THEATRE OF ADRIAN HALL

by

JEANNIE MARLIN WOODS

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Theatre in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

1989

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Theatre in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

April 19, 1989
Date

Chair of Examining Committee

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This study developed out of a keen curiosity about the art of directing. My own experiences as a director only served to increase that curiosity and my desire to know how to solve the myriad problems that one confronts in directing a play. After studying the famous directors of the past, I determined that this ephemeral art was best studied as it happened, within the rehearsal hall. Then I was introduced to the work of Adrian Hall--one of the pioneers of the American resident theatre and generally conceded to be one of the greatest living American directors. From the first accounts I read about Adrian Hall's career I knew this was the man who could unlock many of the mysteries of the director's art for me. And so he has. It is therefore my hope that this study will serve to illuminate for the reader both this man's accomplishments and his artistic process.

I have endeavored to draw an accurate, precise portrait of this artist and his achievements by using three methods of research. First--and perhaps most

important in assessing a director's process--I was an observer at rehearsals for several productions, including the entire six-week rehearsal period for The Tempest at the Dallas Theater Center. That experience resulted in a detailed daily log of Hall's directing practice. It also served to inform the other research efforts, which included the reading and evaluation of what had already been written on Hall and his productions, the viewing of the few films and videotapes of his work and, of course, observing his new productions. The third method of recreating Hall's artistic profile and history was to conduct extensive interviews with Hall and the actors, designers and theatre staff who have collaborated with him throughout his career. Direct observation, thorough analysis of primary sources and personal interviews--these methods have resulted in the study that follows. In addition to the text, I have appended a comprehensive production history of Hall's professional work.

As for terminology, there are a few terms used in this study that require some explanation. The first is the title of "artistic director." Although often used interchangeably with the title "director," "artistic director" has come to mean the person who is responsible for making the artistic decisions of the theatre institution. Depending upon the theatre, these decisions may include

selecting the season of plays and the artistic staff, formulating the institution's public image, supervising other directors, and working with the board of directors or trustees and managing director. Although Hall was originally listed as simply "director" at Trinity Repertory, he has always functioned as artistic director there and also at Dallas since 1983. Hall also directs one or more of the productions every season at both theatres. For the balance of the seasons' offerings he uses associate directors (who are on the staff or members of the acting company) or guest directors (who are hired to direct a specific play). In general, when I speak of Hall's process as a director, I am referring to that work that goes on in the rehearsal hall to prepare a production for the public. When I refer to his work as artistic director, I am speaking of his activities as a manager--guiding and shaping the institution as an artistic entity. The terms do overlap, though, because the choices of Hall, the director, are dictated by what he can affect as artistic director.

Another term that can be misleading is "repertory." Hall has occasionally experimented with true repertory; that is, creating several productions which are performed intermittently throughout the season. Nevertheless, almost all of the Trinity Rep seasons consist of several new productions; each production runs uninterrupted for four

to six weeks and then closes as the next production opens. Occasionally Hall returns to a work (e.g., Brother to Dragons or The Threepenny Opera) and stages it again a few years later; but the productions are completely new, just like any other season offering, with new casts, designers and staff. So the word "repertory" in the name Trinity Repertory Company refers to the permanent acting ensemble rather than the method of scheduling productions.

Frequent references have been made in this manuscript to the regional theatre movement. While the history of the American theatre includes several distinct periods of decentralized theatre, the term "regional theatre movement," as I have used it in this manuscript, refers to the period from the early 1960s when substantial funding from the Ford Foundation, the establishment of the Theatre Communications Group, and the birth of the National Endowment for the Arts fostered expansion in the size and number of resident or regional theatres throughout the United States. Today one is apt to hear "resident theatre" or "indigenous theatre" used instead of "regional theatre." However, all these terms refer to this latest effort in decentralization rather than to the antecedents of that movement, such as the Federal Theatre Project of the 1930s, the Little Theatre movement of the 1920s or the earlier standing repertory companies.

In part 2, I have analyzed the director's process from four angles: text, spatial relationships, acting and production values. The phrase "production value" is Adrian Hall's terminology for the technical effects of lighting, sound, music, costume and stage properties. His term also encompasses such aspects of the director's art as pace, rhythm and imagery. Further definition of this term will be provided in chapter 8.

Additionally, the reader should note that in this manuscript I have decided to spell theatre with the "re" ending. However, when I have quoted an original source with the alternative spelling ("theater"), I have retained that spelling, as I have in proper names, e.g. the Dallas Theater Center. So I have been consistent within these parameters.

I should perhaps explain why I have entitled this work The Theatre of Adrian Hall, rather than Adrian Hall, American Director, or some other such title. In the pages that follow, I hope to demonstrate that this director's career encompasses much more that his exciting stagings of classic and contemporary dramatic literature. Adrian Hall has established a place for artists, both in time and space. With vision and determination he has shaped one institution, the Trinity Repertory Company, into an artistic home and is now duplicating that accomplishment at the Dallas Theater

Center. He has also developed an audience that shares his belief that theatre is a necessary force in our lives. The theatre of Adrian Hall is therefore more than the sum of his productions, more than the buildings and stages, more than the multi-million dollar corporate entities he has brought into being. It is all those things, but it is also one man's need for a life in the theatre and his continuing search for new definitions for this ever-changing art.

I wish to express my sincere thanks to all of the good friends and colleagues who have given me such encouragement and support throughout the life of this project. First and foremost has been Audrey Cooper, who set me on the path to graduate school and who first introduced me to Adrian Hall.

Then I must thank my advisor, mentor and the Chair of my supervisory committee, Dr. Vera Mowry Roberts, for always challenging me to do my best work. Professor Roberts has been a role model for several generations of students and continues to inspire all those who know her with her sincere love for the art of the theatre. To the other members of my committee, Professors Albert Bermel and Stanley Kauffmann, I express special gratitude for their insightful, constructive criticism. Professor Bermel has ever been instructive and supportive. I feel especially fortunate to have had Professor Kauffmann on my committee

because he provided an unique historical link to the work of Adrian Hall: when the professor was drama critic for The New York Times, it was his appreciation and recognition of Mr. Hall's work that fostered the young Trinity Repertory Company and led to the federal funding which assured the success of that institution.

I would also like to acknowledge the aid of the faculty and my colleagues in the Ph.D. Program in Theatre at The City University of New York. My thanks to Professor Daniel Gerould, Ph.D., and to my colleagues Judy Brussell, Faye Fei, William Sun, Jane House, Ph.D., Kathy Liepe-Levinson, Susana Powell, Ph.D., and Bevya Rosten. And special thanks to Brenda Gross, Ph.D., who gave me a hand each step of the way.

There are no words that can adequately express my gratitude to Adrian Hall. It is rare in life--even in artistic circles--to meet a true genius. So to have had this opportunity not only to meet one, but to spend many weeks observing him in the very process of creation has been of inestimable value to me, both as a scholar and as an artist. Adrian Hall has forever changed my concept of theatre. He has inspired an intense respect for an ancient craft and has shown me how to connect it to the realities of the modern age. It is hoped that what I have written in these pages will similarly inspire my readers.

I wish there was space to list each and everyone of the good people at the Trinity Repertory Company and the Dallas Theater Center who have assisted me on this project. Most of the artists will be found listed in the interviews section of the Bibliography, but I do express my thanks to you all, with special recognition of Rory Duvall, Kirsten Brandt and Beverly Jacob at the Dallas Theater Center and of Jeannie MacGregor and Jerry O'Brien at the Trinity Repertory Company. I also want to voice my appreciation for the time and the research materials which Richard (DeeDee) Cumming and Professor James Schevill so freely gave to me. And a most special thanks is extended to the incomparable Marion Simon, Mr. Hall's long-time assistant at Trinity. Marion, I could not have done it without you.

I'd also like to thank Ann Hamilton, Howard London and Leona Van Zandt for filling in so much of the early production history of Mr. Hall. And I wish to express my sincere appreciation to Harold N. Howard and Dr. Charles H. Rybeck for their encouragement and support of this project.

A special acknowledgment goes to the late Richard Kavanaugh, a Trinity actor since 1969, who took the time to share his thoughts on Adrian Hall while tackling the difficult role of Otto in Mensch Meier. Richard's death, just after the run of that play, greatly affected all of us who knew him.

Finally, my deepest and most sincere thanks to my husband, Dan, whose encouragement, love and patience have made possible any success I may find.

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Introduction

THE THEATRE OF ADRIAN HALL

In 1983, when the board of directors of the Dallas Theater Center decided to transform that institution into a world-class theatre, it conducted a search for an artistic director who could accomplish that goal. A multimillion dollar budget was available to create a Texas-size resident theatre and a "star" director was deemed essential. The board president William A. Custer explains that the board selected Adrian Hall for the job because the Dallas Theater Center had "searched the world and wherever you turned sooner or later the name Adrian Hall came up."[1]

Undoubtedly, Hall is recognized internationally as a passionate spokesman for the development of indigenous theatre in America. Hall, who has been described as a "tall, handsome, lanky Texan with a ready smile and a full head of slightly-greying brown hair," looks younger than his sixty-one years.[2] Since 1964 he has been the Artistic Director of the Trinity Repertory Company (TRC) in

Providence, Rhode Island.[3] In 1983 he assumed the same position at the Dallas Theater Center (DTC) in Dallas, Texas. For the last six years Hall has been the only director in America at the helm of two regional theatres. In September 1989, at the end of twenty-five seasons, Hall will leave his job at the Trinity Repertory Company and concentrate his efforts on his theatre in Dallas and on several independent artistic ventures.

Hall's reputation is built upon his unique contribution to American theatre in three areas. The first is his establishment and cultivation of permanent acting ensembles as the cornerstone of his theatres. Trinity Rep is recognized as one of the finest ensembles in America. Hall's company won the 1980/81 Antoinette Perry (Tony) Award for Best Repertory Theatre in America and in 1984 was the first recipient of the National Endowment for the Arts Ensemble Grant. Trinity's status is directly attributable to the stable artistic environment which has attracted and retained actors and artistic staff for as long as ten to twenty years of continuous ensemble work. By his insistence that the actor be placed at the center of the artistic operation, Hall has avoided the short-term employment policies of other resident and commercial theatres. Beginning with the 1987-88 season, he also established a permanent ensemble at the Dallas Theater Center.

Hall's second major contribution is his development of new American drama. Trinity Rep has presented thirty-four American and world premieres in its twenty-five year history, including plays by Sam Shepard, James Schevill, Julie Bovasso, William Goyen and Robert Penn Warren. Moreover, Hall has adapted a number of novels for the stage such as Billy Budd, Uncle Tom's Cabin, A Christmas Carol and All the King's Men and has created original stagings from documentary sources about the lives of Jack Abbott, Oscar Wilde, and Charles Manson.

Adrian Hall's chief contribution, however, has been his spectacular stagings of contemporary and classic drama in what has been described by Arthur Bartow in American Theatre as "an eminently American style that draws from vaudeville and the circus."[4]

Hall's theatrical style was developed as director of more than 180 productions over the past thirty-nine years. With a strong grounding in the American naturalistic style, Hall's early successes were intimate stagings of the dramas of Tennessee Williams, William Inge, and Lillian Hellman in which realistic atmosphere and character interrelationships were of primary importance. However, when he left the New York theatre scene to establish himself in regional theatre, this director faced new problems that challenged him to expand his idea of theatre.

The most significant change occurred in 1965 when Trinity Rep was invited to participate in the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project. This federal program, which the theatre called "Project Discovery," gave the theatre a three-year grant to provide forty thousand Rhode Island high school students an opportunity to see professional theatre. The small company took on the challenge by moving into a massive one thousand-seat proscenium auditorium.

It became immediately apparent to Hall that the students had no interest whatsoever in the kind of theatre they were being offered. They responded to "art" by cutting up the auditorium seats, tearing out the plumbing and throwing objects at the stage. Hall realized he could either admit failure and lose his substantial project funds, or he could discover how to engage his audiences in the theatre event.

The result was a series of innovative experimental productions in which Hall and his company were able to develop a viable definition of theatre. Hall describes it this way:

> "The theater" occurs when the actor confronts the audience and through this confrontation the door to the imagination of the audience is opened and he enters. It is sometimes entertaining, sometimes challenging, and almost always emotionally and psychologically engaging, <u>both</u> audience and actor must participate. If the audience fails to connect, then the actor fails. It is an event full of risk and mystery and danger for, at its best, it can change men's souls. The essential ingredients, then, in the event are the actor and audience.[5]

Hall's challenge has been to develop theatre for a media-oriented American audience of thirty thousand annual subscribers located in two culturally disparate regions. He and his staff create ten or eleven new productions at each institution every season, working within the restrictions of production methods and union regulations of the not-for-profit resident theatre. In both of his theatres Hall has battled with boards and managing directors to maintain an administrative structure that keeps the artist at the center of the operation and can accommodate his unusual working methods. Moreover, he has had to educate and condition his audience for his extraordinary kind of theatre.

Hall's fascination with the actor-audience relationship has moved him to experiment with the theatrical environment, with the dramatic text, and with production values and acting. His intent to keep the audience involved, moment by moment, has challenged him to solve the problems of each play in new and imaginative ways. This problem-solving function has also shaped his process as a director--influencing how he manages rehearsal time, his collaboration with actors and designers, and his specific creative choices.

The focus of this study is Adrian Hall the stage director--his philosophy and practice. However, to understand this director's process, one must also be

familiar with how that process evolved and developed. Therefore, this study is divided into two parts. Part 1 is an historical survey of Hall's career which aims to trace the fundamental principles which inform his process of directing. Part 2 investigates several of Hall's most significant productions to demonstrate that process and show how Hall has applied those principles in the areas of theatrical environment and staging, dramatic texts, production values and acting.

In 1986 Time observed that "within his profession, Hall...is a revered, almost legendary figure, esteemed both for the brilliance of his productions and for his odds-defying, inspirational leadership, but to most of the theatergoing public he is unknown."6 It is therefore my hope that this study will heighten the awareness of Adrian Hall's significant contribution to American theatre.

PART ONE: THE HISTORY

Chapter I

A LIFE IN THE THEATRE

I have spent most of my professional life in search of a definition of "the theatre experience," attempting to break it down to its basic parts, and continually redefining the essential ingredients. The reason is simple: I want to understand.
--Adrian Hall, "TV and the Stage"

Adrian Hall's career has been one man's journey to explore the landscape of art, to define and redefine for himself the nature of the theatrical event. At age sixty-one, he has not ceased questioning how theatre relates to life. His search began at an early age on his father's ranch in the little town of Van, Texas. Born December 3, 1927, he was one of three children, the only son of Mattie and Lennie Hall. With a love of art and drawing and a natural penchant for performing, Hall was keenly aware that his artistic sensibility set him apart from others in that little community out on the Texas plains.

Although he was extremely close to his mother ("Miss Mattie"), Adrian seemed to have little in common with his father, a gregarious "man's man," except for sharing an ability to talk anybody into anything. Lennie Hall was known as an East Texas storyteller--a talent highly regarded in Van--and Adrian Hall inherited his way with words and powers of persuasion. Miss Mattie hoped her only son would turn his loquacious talent to preaching but he was already aware of something called the theatre and was determined to pursue it. For the theatre was a place where artists were not on the outside looking in and Adrian Hall wanted to be connected with life and with artists like himself.

It was difficult at first. After graduating from Van High School Hall enrolled as a Speech Major in East Texas State Teachers College and managed a year later to transfer into the theatre program at the Pasadena Playhouse in California.[1] At the Playhouse he met several artists who would later work with him in New York and in regional theatre, including Robert Soule, Howard London, Paul Kielar and Portia Bohn. Six months later, when Hall's money ran out, he was forced to return to Texas. There he divided his time between teaching English and Drama at Stephen F. Austin Junior High School in Galveston, Texas and finishing his Bachelor of Science in Speech at East Texas State. He finally completed his studies in the Master of Fine Arts program at Pasadena in 1950.

Getting Connected

Hall's primary impulse at this stage of his career was to assemble a group of artists to share in his exploration of theatre. In Galveston in 1947, Hall met Ann Hamilton when they performed together in the Galveston Little Theatre production of Peg O' My Heart. The teenagers (he was nineteen and she was fourteen) became fast friends, and Hamilton recalls, "I used to go to his apartment and we would read Shakespeare together and he would talk of his dream. Even then, the Group Theatre, Moscow Art Theatre... that was his dream and that was the focus. It was not a dream to have a wife and children, the focus was the Moscow Arts, a family concept."[2]

In an interview in 1984, Hall talked about those youthful aspirations, saying "I think my upbringing, and the alienation I felt in Van, is probably the thing that made me ultimately search for an ensemble theatre company." What he hoped to create was "a family sort of thing. Something with some harmony."[3]

Hall's conviction that the ensemble must be the organizing principle for a theatre would be his philosophic touchstone in all his later work and would be the key idea in his personal definition of theatre. As early as 1950 he began to pull together an ensemble of actors who would work with him to explore the nature of theatre. It was then that Hall co-founded a summer theatre, the Holiday

Circle Players. It was Galveston's first theatre-in-the-round and there he directed and acted with Ann Hamilton and other friends. The following summer the group re-organized as the Summer Circle Theatre and a young actress by the name of Katherine Helmond came into the group. Both Hamilton and Helmond were to become Hall's leading ladies, and a few years later they would join Hall and his friends from Pasadena to form the nucleus of his New York ensemble for a number of years.

Before he left Texas, Hall had three experiences which profoundly influenced his view of what the theatre was and could become. The first such experience was his tour of duty in the United States Army. On the verge of shipping out to Korea in 1951, an accident on the rifle range temporarily deafened Hall in one ear. (He still suffers from a slight ringing and tends to talk over-loudly owing to this injury.) He was given his choice of duty and chose to go to Stuttgart, Germany, with an eye toward visiting the renowned European theatre companies. He was assigned to the Seventh Army Special Services unit where he managed to create a performing ensemble, the Seventh Army Repertory Company. At first they appeared on Armed Forces Radio, in a program called the "Pyramid of Stars," reading classics like Macbeth and Wuthering Heights. Soon, however, the group began to tour stage shows. Their repertory included a bill of one-acts: The Boor (Anton Chekhov), Hello, Out There

(William Saroyan) and The Long Voyage Home (Eugene O'Neill); the troupe also performed See How They Run by Philip King and Sidney Kingsley's Darkness at Noon. Hall also directed an original army musical, The Casbah. The ensemble traveled throughout Italy, France, Austria and Germany.

For Hall, the real value of these experiences was his exposure, at an impressionable age, to companies like the Berliner Ensemble and the Comédie Française. He was able to see theatre on a scale that was previously unknown to him and he witnessed, first-hand, what a permanent acting ensemble and subsidized artistic institution were capable of accomplishing. He also began to sense his own artistic heritage--something he had not known before. Hall says that the experience served to "make me feel connected to the fact that you [the artist] weren't just some aberration from mainstream society--that, indeed, you had been the crème de la crème in past history."[4] Hall's need to "feel connected" even prompted him to carry off the Army library's copy of To the Actor by Michael Chekhov because "I knew I could not live without that book. Somebody was speaking directly to me and so I just stole it!"[5] Perhaps the director was beginning to realize that a definition of theatre would have to come from within his own artistic nature; but this concept was still imperfectly formed. At this point, Hall's talent was hidden even from himself and he just followed his

instincts to affiliate with fellow artists whenever possible.

Hall's real talent began to emerge when he returned to the United States in 1953 and went to work for Joanna Albus at The Playhouse Theatre in Houston, Texas. At first Hall worked as an actor, performing again with Ann Hamilton and Katherine Helmond. At the Houston Playhouse he would also work with actors J. Frank Lucas, Clinton Anderson and Marguerite Lenert, all of whom would later become members of his company at Providence. Albus had been impressed with one of Hall's productions which he had directed at Galveston's Summer Circle Theatre. She therefore asked him to direct a musical at The Playhouse, The Walls Rise Up (book and lyrics by Frank Duane and score by Richard Shannon). Albus continued to encourage the young director, giving him the chance to direct Shakespeare's Twelfth Night, Design for Living by Noel Coward, Years Ago by Ruth Gordon and The Fourposter by Jan de Hartog. Albus thus gave Hall the practical experience he needed to develop as a director. She also influenced him through her commercial orientation. Albus was constantly on the phone with agents and producers from New York; she always worked with one eye on Broadway. By the time Hall left The Playhouse in 1955, he had gained solid experience in a commercially oriented operation that would prepare him for his future work in New York.

The third significant experience that Hall had during his early Texas period was getting to know Margo Jones. Hall had known Jones since he was a teenager in Van and it was Margo Jones who advised him to study at the Pasadena Playhouse. While he was working with Joanna Albus at The Playhouse in Houston, the company there used to take the train up to Dallas to see Jones' productions. Margo Jones is generally conceded to be the mother of the regional theatre. Her passion and devotion illuminated whole new worlds beyond the few square blocks of Broadway. Through her Dallas theatre productions (a number of which she took to Broadway) and her book, Theatre-in-the-Round, this indomitable woman inspired countless American artists to see the possibilities of a decentralized theatre. For Adrian Hall (who never fails to mention Jones' impact on his ideas about theatre) she was a living example of the viability of regional theatre in America.

Broadway Bound

It is ironic, then, that it was also Margo Jones who presented Adrian Hall with the opportunity to leave Texas and get to New York City, where he would spend almost a decade of his career trying to establish himself in commercial theatre. It happened that Jones' production of Inherit the Wind was to open in New York in 1955. After completing the season with Albus at The Playhouse, Hall

acquired a bit part in Jones' production and departed for the lights of Broadway.

Hall did not remain an actor for long. After almost a year of small roles in Inherit the Wind, during which he assiduously studied the great actor, Paul Muni, Hall turned to directing in the lively Off-Broadway arena. He began with a production of Lillian Hellman's Another Part of the Forest for the Equity Library Theatre. Over the next few years Hall staged several plays at ELT and other small Off-Broadway houses. These productions provided him with a forum to display his own directing talent and the talent of the actors he had now worked with for several years. However, what he really wanted was a life in the theatre and he was unsure how to secure it. So he again determined it was essential to establish a stable production unit, where the work did not end after each production.

Hall's first effort was to join forces with two friends from Pasadena, Howard London and Paul Kielar, and with Katherine Helmond. These four, with Dan Legant, became co-producers of a new summer theatre in the Catskills, the Phoenicia Playhouse, in Phoenicia, New York. The producers were joined by their friends from The Playhouse in Houston, including Ann Hamilton and Marguerite Lenert. In their third season, Robert Soule, then designing numerous productions Off-Broadway, joined the other alumni of Pasadena as the designer at Phoenicia. Hall was managing

director during the three summer seasons of 1957 to 1959 and he directed twenty-four of the twenty-eight productions, as well as acting in several of them. The Phoenicia seasons were frenetic and ambitious. Everyone did everything, putting up a show a week of plays like The Crucible, Pygmalion, and Macbeth.

Between the summers at Phoenicia, Hall and his fellow artists worked together frequently in small Off-Broadway theatres such as the Equity Library Theatre, the Greenwich Mews Theatre and the RNA (Riverside Neighborhood Assembly) Theatre. Although the group was not a permanent ensemble at this point, Hall could always rely on having several players available for the key roles in his New York productions. This informal ensemble was an essential factor in the character-oriented dramas that Hall was staging because Hall's choice of plays was strongly rooted in the American naturalistic tradition. Tennessee Williams, William Inge, Lillian Hellman and Horton Foote were, for these artists of the fifties, the epitome of what theatre was all about.

Through these early Off-Broadway productions, Hall began to come into his own. He developed his particular talent for creating stage truth on an intimate, personal scale. Hall describes how "the realism really worked for me on those postage stamps [stages]...with the audience on top of you and so forth. It was a real connecting time with

artists. I mean, I really did begin to understand that it wasn't my show alone."[6] As the story of Hall's later career unfolds, it will be evident that this kind of play reflected only part of Hall's directing talent; but Hall's skill in staging intimate, realistic drama was and is now a central and significant part of this director's talent.

In 1958, Adrian Hall was to begin working with another woman of the theatre who, like Joanna Albus and Margo Jones, strongly influenced his career. This woman was Stella Holt, an independent Off-Broadway producer. Holt, who was blind, was highly respected in Off-Broadway circles. Her productions were considered politically radical; she preferred to produce new plays over revivals, and she dared to cast across racial divisions long before cross-casting became a popular issue. (Hall would do the same a few years later at Trinity Rep.)

Stella Holt gave Hall his first professional directing assignment in New York in March 1958. It was Ramsey Yelvington's The Long Gallery, which was staged at the RNA (Riverside Neighborhood Assembly) Theatre in March of 1958. It was the beginning of a close relationship that would continue until Hall turned his back on New York for good. During the next two years, Hall was managing director for Holt's Greenwich Mews Theatre in Greenwich Village where he directed A Journey with Strangers, The Ballad of Jazz Street, Donogoo, and O'Casey's Red Roses for Me. Most

important, however, it was Holt who gave Hall the forum he needed for his most significant production Off-Broadway, Tennessee Williams' Orpheus Descending.

The genesis of Orpheus began in the summer of 1957, the premiere season at Phoenicia Playhouse. Hall cast Ann Hamilton in the role of Lady Torrance, and the production was so satisfying that they revived it in the spring of 1959 for a week at the Equity Library Theatre. Hall hoped to give the production a solid Off-Broadway run, but was unable to secure the rights to the play, which had been a failure in its Broadway debut two years earlier. The problem was solved by a member of the cast, Diane Ladd, who brashly telephoned Williams personally and invited him to see the cast perform the play in Hall's small apartment. Williams was impressed with the production and with Hall's ability, and he promptly released the Off-Broadway rights. Williams was to be an important catalyst in Hall's later career decisions.

You could say that Adrian Hall officially "arrived" on the New York theatre scene on October 5, 1959 with the opening of Orpheus Descending. On that date the production premiered at the Gramercy Arts Theatre, produced by Stella Holt. Critics praised the revival, saying that it redeemed Williams' play through its sensitive staging. The play was hailed in the Village Voice as a "beautiful, soft-burning, thrilling production" through which Off-Broadway

"magnificently justifies its existence."[7] It played through the next January and then moved to Holt's Greenwich Mews stage, continuing until late April of 1960.

The success of Orpheus was the culmination of three years of Hall's sacrifice and struggle to establish himself as a stage director and it moved him up to a new level in the Off-Broadway echelon. In 1960 he was invited to participate in the Directors Unit of the prestigious Actors Studio where, among other promising young directors, he prepared workshop productions for Lee Strasberg. That same year he was among a small group selected to direct for the CBS Television Workshop. Meanwhile he continued his work Off-Broadway, directing the New York premiere of Mousetrap at the Maidman Playhouse and a touring production of The Gazebo with Joan Bennett and Donald Cook.

Hall was quite aware that his star was on the rise. He was within a coterie of artists which included José Quintero, William Ball, and Word Baker, among others, who were led to believe that they would be the next generation of Broadway directors. As Hall explains, "one of the things which we all thought would happen, which always happens in the chain of being alive, was that the mantle of Broadway Theatre would be naturally passed from George Abbott, Harold Clurman, Elia Kazan on to the next group. And we were the next group in the commercial world. It had always happened and of course it would happen."[8]

Nevertheless, it did not happen. Imperceptibly, the economics of Broadway and Off-Broadway had been shifting. As the cost to produce a play on Broadway rose dramatically, so the risks increased of having an unseasoned director stage a Broadway show. Meanwhile, the success of Off-Broadway began to bring uptown producers downtown and the Off-Broadway theatres began to metamorphose into commercial houses with commercial standards. But Hall and his circle held on to the Broadway dream for a while longer.

Hall continued to work wherever he could. As an indication of his success, he was given more commercial opportunities. In the summer of 1961 he was hired to direct musicals with stars at the Charlotte Music Theatre in North Carolina. After working in ninety-nine-seat "matchbox" theatres, Hall suddenly found himself faced with an audience of approximately two thousand, a sixty-piece orchestra, and choruses of singers and dancers. He staged ten shows in ten weeks, working with stars such as Darren McGavin in The King and I and Betsy Palmer in Gentlemen Prefer Blondes. In short, he was totally immersed in the realities of commercial production.

Hall returned to New York to direct the national tour of Hellman's Toys in the Attic and to stage an O'Casey play (Red Roses for Me) for Stella Holt at the Greenwich Mews. During the summers of 1962 and 1963 he did not return to North Carolina, but went instead to the Hampton Playhouse

in Hampton, New Hampshire where he directed light comedies and intimate dramas like Lawrence Roman's Under the Yum Yum Tree and William Inge's Natural Affection. In December of 1962 he had great success with a new musical by John Jennings at the Actors Playhouse in New York. The show, Riverwind, played 433 performances and ran for over a year.

As Hall met with more commercial success, he seemed to lose his clear definition of theatre. Ann Hamilton observes that Hall's talent--so evident in the 1959 Orpheus Descending--was his ability to work with a small ensemble of actors to create a truthful world onstage by establishing a detailed atmosphere and mood which brought the audience into the world of the play.[9] However, even though he was within the "inner circle" of up-and-coming directors, he found himself with less opportunity to display his real gifts. He returned to the small New York stages but his casts were largely new actors with whom he had not previously worked. The directing opportunities that came his way were, more often than not, the standard popular fare.

The reality of the New York theatre scene alienated Adrian Hall from his earlier concept of a unified theatre ensemble. Tne reason for this, Hall declared, was that "people like Stanislavsky weren't able to point the way for people like me because we had no companies in this country, we had no way that you could spend a life in art. You tried to not try to understand yourself; you tried to understand

the system to make some kind of killing so you could be rich and famous."[10]

Hall understood the system sufficiently to know that in order to succeed as an American director you had to get a Broadway show. As he was carefully traversing the waters of commercial theatre, seeking the opportunity that would propel him onto the Great White Way, Tennessee Williams came back into the picture. Hall and Williams had remained good friends since the time of the acclaimed 1959 Orpheus Descending. Now, four years later, Williams offered Hall the chance to direct a revised version of The Milk Train Doesn't Stop Here Anymore. The play had made its Broadway debut earlier that year, but ran for only sixty-nine performances before it closed owing, in part, to a newspaper strike. The production of Williams' revised script was to be an out-of-town tryout at the Barter Theatre in Abingdon, Virginia, to prepare it for Broadway. It was September of 1963 and Hall believed (as did everyone else working on the production) that he would soon be making his Broadway debut.

Hall's staging of Milk Train was well received. Critics praised his innovative staging which signified this director's early efforts to break free of the restraints of realistic stage conventions. In lieu of the massive, multiple settings that had been used in the previous Broadway production, Hall adopted Oriental theatre

techniques. He staged the play with a simple set and two stage assistants who introduced stage properties as needed.

In spite of the merits of Hall's direction, the timing of the debut was disastrous. Just as the production was to open, Williams went into severe emotional crisis when his lover suddenly died. In the tumult that followed, Williams could not be relied upon. David Merrick, who attended the opening performance, quickly proposed a package deal: Tony Richardson would direct the play on Broadway with stars Tab Hunter and Tallulah Bankhead. Hall was out of the picture.

Providence at Last

The reversal of Hall's fortunes at this point can be viewed in retrospect as an essential and positive step in his development as an artist. At the time, however, Hall was extremely disillusioned and bitter. So it is not surprising that he turned his back on commercial New York theatre and began to look for another way to find his life in the theatre.

It was now 1963 and the cultural awareness of the nation had been heightened by the Kennedy administration. More significantly, the Ford Foundation had begun to provide some funding to small theatre groups around the country, such as the Arena Stage in Washington, the Alley in Houston, the Goodman Theatre in Chicago. Then in the spring of that

year, the Minnesota Theatre Company (the Guthrie) appeared on the horizon--a major performing arts center suddenly sprang up in middle America. Before long, the arts complex would become a civic necessity for many American cities.[11] Adrian Hall responded to this new atmosphere by reconsidering his goals. Broadway had proved a chimera and now there was the hope of an alternative. He had already seen the great European companies and he had experienced Margo Jones' zeal for the dream of a network of regional theatres where classics could be revitalized and new drama could find an audience. The revolution was at hand.

Hall got his first opportunity to test the regional waters only three months after Milk Train closed. In January of 1964 he was invited to Milwaukee to direct Brendan Behan's The Hostage for the Fred Miller Theatre (now the Milwaukee Rep). Immediately after opening that show, he found himself with Stella Holt in Hawaii, where the Ford Foundation had sent them to assess the potential for a professional regional theatre there. In the meantime, Hall had received a call from some people in Rhode Island who were forming a theatre group and wanted him to direct for them. Having fulfilled his commitment to Holt, he departed for Providence.

The Trinity Square Playhouse was founded by a group of Providence citizens, mostly theatre amateurs, who had great zeal and devotion. The organizers (who included

Milton Stanzler, Norman Tilles, Robert M. Kaplan, and Barbara Orson) had found an ideal space in the Trinity United Methodist Church on Trinity Square at the corner of Broad and Bridgham Streets. It was an intimate three-hundred-seat house (only five rows deep, plus a three row balcony) surrounding a semi-circular thrust stage. Since Hall was not available until May of that year (1964), the group had done two productions with other guest directors.

Hall chose Orpheus Descending as his first production at Trinity. He followed this with two Edward Albee one-acts, The Death of Bessie Smith and The American Dream. That concluded the first season of the Trinity Square Playhouse. Although the organizers of the group had envisioned a local community theatre, it was already apparent to Hall that in Providence he would have his chance to create the kind of theatre of which he dreamed. When, at the beginning of the 1964-65 season, he was offered the job of artistic director, he accepted but insisted that the company be established from the outset as a professional Equity theatre. He also wanted to bring in some of the actors and artistic staff that he had worked with over the years to form a nucleus for the company. The administration agreed because they realized that Adrian Hall was the kind of visionary that they wanted. Barbara Orson, who was an

Equity actress and member of the original group that invited Hall to Providence, talks eloquently of those days:

> It was quite the most amazing time of one's life because, needless to say, you knew--from the moment you worked with him--that this was a man of great passion, of extraordinary vision--stimulating, adventurous--all the things that we would be lucky enough to put our hands on for our director. You just knew it....All you had to do was just work or watch him work once--first rehearsal, almost--and you just knew that this was very special.[12]

The actors and staff of the Trinity Square Playhouse were selfless and hard-working. Nobody was in it for money or position; everyone sacrificed to make it happen; everybody did everything at first. Finally, Hall had the chance to really create an ensemble and regain the harmony that had been broken in New York. At his call he was joined by Texas artists, Katherine Helmond, J. Frank Lucas, and Marguerite Lenert and by Bill Cain and Richard Kneeland from the productions in New York and summer stock. Hall also asked Donald H. Schoenbaum (who had gone along on the Hawaii trip as Stella Holt's business manager) to come and serve as his managing director at Trinity.[13] Talking with Adrian Hall about those days, he exclaimed, "They were really glorious days--idealistic beyond anything you can imagine."[14]

Not only were they idealistic, but they were ambitious. The members of the first Trinity ensemble were not interested in producing just entertainment. Most of the actors who came into the company had had their taste of

commercial reality. They wanted something that would justify their intense devotion to their art. In an interview in 1969, Hall spoke of the challenge that they presented to their audience; his comments reflect his renewed belief in the value of the indigenous, artist-centered institution: "We must be accepted on our own terms--these are not Broadway terms, not the commercial theatre terms--we must be accepted on terms that will assure this theatre can grow out of this region."[15]

In order to establish some sort of identity, Hall selected a combination of classic and contemporary plays that were not shop-worn or overly familiar. They were works that could display the craft of the ensemble as well as develop that craft. In addition to another double bill of Edward Albee plays, (Zoo Story and The American Dream), the season of 1964-65 included Shaw (Don Juan in Hell), Anouilh (The Rehearsal), and O'Neill (Desire Under the Elms). That year Hall also presented The Caretaker, at a time when Harold Pinter was hardly a household name, an original play, All to Hell Laughing by Trevanian [Rod Whitaker], and Richardson and Berney's Dark of the Moon.

In the summer of 1965 some of those productions, as well as Tennessee Williams' Glass Menagerie, Saroyan's Time of Your Life, Ionesco's Rhinoceros, Beckett's Happy Days and LeRoi Jones' Dutchman were produced at the University of

Rhode Island. (Hall thus directed a total of thirteen productions at Trinity in the 1964-65 season.)

The following season reads like what today we call "standard regional theatre fare"--a Miller (The Crucible), a Molière (Tartuffe), an O'Neill (Long Day's Journey into Night), a new play (Gabriel Gladstone's dramatization of Dostoevsky's story, The Eternal Husband), and Genet's The Balcony. The only unusual aspect of the season's offerings was that the Genet was the "Christmas show"--a choice which proved to be less than popular. Nevertheless, it must be remembered that the Providence audience in 1964 had rarely seen productions of these authors--that was the void the regional theatre was just beginning to fill. Moreover, it was already clear that Trinity was establishing a repertory that was challenging for the director and actors, while making small inroads to new territory with unknown plays of known authors as well as American and world premieres. It was not the radical stage of André Gregory or Herbert Blau, but it was a far cry from Under the Yum Yum Tree.

Still, the best was yet to come. Hall had succeeded in getting connected. He was putting down roots and just getting ready for the next stage of his artistic journey. He didn't know it at the time. His career was most probably keeping him too busy for him to be aware of what was just around the corner. He was directing almost every show at

Trinity, and in January of 1965 and 1966 he returned to Milwaukee Rep to direct Uncle Vanya (1965) and Mother Courage (1966). But Adrian Hall was soon to experience the greatest shock in his career and it was to come from his audience.

Chapter II

CONFRONTATION

The power, violence and beauty of art is that it takes two to tango.

--Adrian Hall,
"Premises for a Contemporary Theatre"

By the close of the 1965-66 season, the Trinity Square Repertory Company was emerging as an artistic force in the Providence community. In the mid-1960s, the capital of Rhode Island had a population of almost 250,000 people, many of them blue collar workers in the costume jewelry and electronics industries. At one time the city had been a cultural center: between 1912 and 1919 eight new theatres opened there. These theatres had offered a broad range of popular entertainment--musical extravaganzas, traveling stock companies, silent films and then "talkies." However, the advent of television and the loss of industry in the 1940s had resulted in severe economic depression in the area. The theatres were given over to films or fell into disrepair with the general decline of the downtown area. By

the 1960s Providence was on the rebound, emerging as a leader in historical site renovation (such as the Benefit Street district) and the city proudly maintained a part-time Philharmonic orchestra. Additionally, the presence of four colleges within the city limits, including the "Ivy League" Brown University, afforded an intellectual climate that favored an increase in cultural offerings.

The emergence of Trinity Rep was therefore welcomed and encouraged by the devoted group of citizens who shared Adrian Hall's dream of an indigenous professional theatre for Providence. For Hall was no longer satisfied to secure a life in the theatre only for himself. He had long since realized that such a life was dependent upon having a secure artistic home for the other artists with whom he would work. Moreover, he was determined to instill in the community a belief that theatre was an essential element in their lives--as necessary as food or shelter. Hall's boundless energy and passionate devotion to the theatre inspired everyone he encountered. With his natural talent for persuasion, he preached to the converted and unconverted alike, urging them to claim their right to have art in their lives.

Trinity's subscriptions continued to grow--from eight hundred in the 1964-65 season, to eighteen hundred the following year, to thirty-three hundred the season of 1966-67.[1] Hall now had a small core of Equity actors,

augmented by part-time non-union players and designers. But the ambitious young director wanted a firmer, broader base for his fledgling company. If the theatre was really to serve the community, it had to attract people from all segments of Providence society--young and old, laborer and intellectual.

Hall was perfectly clear about his goal for Trinity Rep, as is evident from the comments of actor Ed Hall, who has worked at TRC since 1965. In recalling those early days at Trinity, the actor observed that a theatre's success depends upon "a single person who has a vision and that's what Adrian Hall had--he had a vision of what he wanted to do."[2] The actor became close friends with the director, who often remarked to him, "Ed, I am going to make this the most exciting theatre in the country in twenty years." Ed Hall went on to declare, "And he did!"[3]

Discovery

To realize his vision for Trinity Rep, Hall knew he would have to enlarge substantially the theatre's operational base. The opportunity developed through a series of events which were again connected to the growing cultural awareness in America. In March of 1965, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund published a report entitled "The Performing Arts: Problems and Prospects." This report called for a comprehensive nationwide program of private and

government support for the performing arts. The report recommended "that the artistic goal of the nation be the day when the performing arts are considered a permanent year-round contribution to communities throughout the country, and our artists are considered as necessary as our educators."[4] In other words, the report exactly agreed with Adrian Hall's vision for his theatre.

The report of the Rockefeller Fund and other publications on the late 1960s (such as the Twentieth Century Fund's Performing Arts: The Economic Dilemma, Julius Novick's The Quest for Permanent Theatres and Alvin Toffler's The Culture Consumers: A Study of Art and Affluence in America) served to increase interest in the resident theatre movement. New York drama critics, such as Henry Hewes of the Saturday Review and Stanley Kauffmann of the New York Times, began to visit regional theatres and write about what they saw. In 1965 and 1966 Adrian Hall received recognition for his fine productions as a guest director at the Milwaukee Repertory Theater. The Milwaukee reviews resulted in trips to the Trinity Repertory Company by reviewers from New York and Boston. This national coverage brought Hall into the spotlight at the very moment when the United States Department of Education and the newly-formed National Endowment for the Arts were being mobilized to deal with the challenge of the Rockefeller Fund report.

In January of 1966 Trinity Rep was selected for a pilot program, sponsored by the Rockefeller Foundation and the United States Department of Education to give twenty performances of Shakespeare's Twelfth Night for all forty thousand high school students in the state of Rhode Island. The performances were done in the dilapidated Albee Theatre, a cavernous remnant of Providence's earlier theatre boom.

The success of the pilot program, combined with Hall's growing reputation as a bright directorial talent, precipitated the chance of a lifetime. Trinity was selected to be one of three theatres to participate in the Educational Laboratory Theater Project.[5] The stated purpose of the project (as quoted by Kevin Kelly in The Boston Globe) was "to discover whether the study of dramatic literature can be made more meaningful to students when they are provided the opportunity to see plays brought to life by professionals in an actual theater."[6] Trinity was charged with presenting ten plays in three successive seasons for all forty thousand students from every public, parochial and private secondary school in Rhode Island.

The United States Office of Education and the National Endowment for the Arts funded the project. The budget for the first season, 1966-67, was $750,000 of which $340,000 went directly to the theatre for production expenses and salaries. The remaining $410,000 went for administrative costs, school busses and a variety of support

programs, including informal and prepared programs in school classrooms with Trinity company members, backstage tours and discussions, seminars for teachers of English and Drama, and Saturday morning workshop classes and lectures. It also paid for handsome study guides--packets for teachers which included scripts, essays and bibliographies on each play so they could integrate the classroom and theatre experiences. Administrative funds also were designated for an elaborate four year nationwide study of the project.[7]

"Project Discovery" was the name Trinity Rep gave to their unit of the Educational Theatre Laboratory Project. It was to have tremendous impact on the little company that was now entering only its fourth season. The first change was additional stage space. While the company maintained their three-hundred-seat theatre at the church, they also leased the thousand-seat auditorium at the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD auditorium) for the student performances. Four productions were to be produced at RISD the first season. For the student audiences there were to be eight performances a week in the mornings and some afternoons. In the evenings TRC could invite their subscription audience to RISD and charge the regular ticket price. The other three season productions would be staged at the small theatre for subscribers and the general public; students were also encouraged, through discounted ticket prices, to attend these shows. The student performances at

RISD would be underwritten for three years, with the hope that state and local sources would continue the program after the federal funds ceased.

Perhaps the most immediate benefit of Project Discovery was that it gave Adrian Hall the chance to enlarge the artistic and administrative staff--to make Trinity a fully professional company. He was able to pay union designers and to employ an acting ensemble of eighteen to forty-two actors in the first season of the grant. The long-range benefit of Project Discovery (which did garner state and community support to continue without abatement to the present day) was the development of an audience, conditioned to appreciate drama in performance and to view it as an integral part of life. Today's audiences at Trinity Rep always contain some of those first Project Discovery students (now in their thirties and forties) as well as those former students' own children, who have also been brought up on theatre in the Trinity style.

The most significant impact of Project Discovery, however, was the change it effected in Adrian Hall's approach to theatre. In a lecture at Columbia University in 1987, Hall described his attitude going into that first season of the project:

> I started off doing it exactly "right," I thought. I opened this season of madness with Saint Joan (Shaw--always good!), Shakespeare (A Midsummer Night's Dream), The Three Sisters (Chekhov), and, I think, that old warhorse, Mr. O'Neill's Ah, Wilderness! Okay?

> Now, what's wrong with a season like that? Can't go wrong, right? They can't criticize the plays--the plays are classics, they can't criticize the fact that these are good actors, because they came right from New York, right out of the commercial theatre.[8]

However, the students refused to recognize "good theatre." Bussed in at nine o'clock in the morning, seated in a thousand-seat, straight proscenium auditorium where the last rows were virtually a city block away from the stage, the students saw no reason to sit still for a four-hour Saint Joan. Jerry O'Brien (now a Providence writer and drama critic) was a member of those first Project Discovery audiences and he recalls how "you couldn't keep them in their seats. You couldn't even keep them in the building. It was that bad. Saint Joan was just an excruciating experience!"[9]

Finding the stage action a bore, the rowdy students entertained themselves. They tossed frisbies in the balcony, broke the mirrors and tore out the plumbing in the bathrooms and cut up the seats with knives. Worst of all, they realized the actors made excellent targets. Actor Ed Hall recalls that "it was very dangerous--they threw things at us--paper clips and pennies and everything. And after the show the Stage Manager would come out and sweep the stage and there would be piles of things....It was very dangerous. It was a very unpleasant experience."[10] Nevertheless, the actor goes on to stress, "Adrian said we

were like missionaries and we forged on--we never stopped--we went right on."[11]

The immediate problem of safety was handled by giving the actors the right to stop a performance and leave the stage, if necessary; another tactic was to raise the houselights a bit to limit the aberrant behavior. The prime solution, however, was to hire policemen, armed with guns, to keep order and prevent mayhem.

Adrian Hall was frightened--not so much because the project might fail--but because his idea of theatre was being so brutally rejected. For once, the problem was not money. Trinity had sufficient funds, ample staff, and all the things that usually hamstring a struggling theatre group. The auditorium seats were filled, but not with willing participants. Hall was being confronted by an audience unlike any he had known before.

Hall's attitude towards the audience and the part they played in the theatrical event had matured considerably since the days of the Charlotte Music Theatre (1961). Then, when he was faced with a mass of spectators, he viewed them as "that great unwashed audience out there" who either "didn't have a clue tonight of what was going on...or they loved it" but it was not connected to his artistic efforts in any real way.[12]

By the time he had settled into Trinity Rep, however, he was informing his spectators, through his

director's notes in the production programs, that they were the real participants or that "the theatrical experience is the unique creation of audience and actor joining together in an evening's ritual."[13] So it is clear that Hall had developed an intellectual conception of theatre as mutual participation of actor and spectator, but the realities of the performances at RISD auditorium clearly proved that communication was breaking down.

For a man who had devoted himself to a life in the theatre, the reactions of the Project Discovery students were a personal rejection which deeply affected Adrian Hall:

> The kids just behaved poorly; a thousand kids a day were just bored out of their little minds with that traditional so-called serious work....I saw it all suddenly on the wing and just flying away from me.
>
> It became a very <u>real</u> situation for us. We couldn't hang back and do what had been done, do polite productions of Shaw. I had to get in there and find out, go further. And it had to be full of hostility, and full of pain and anguish and beauty. And it had to be flung out there in ways that surprised them and shocked them and scared them. From that year on, <u>extraordinary</u> things happened![14]

Amidst that first "season of madness" Hall began to analyze the sources of his young audience's hostility. Well-meaning advisors encouraged him to amend the choice of plays--to balance out a Chekhov with something sure-fire, like <u>Mary, Mary</u>. But Hall insisted that you could only create an appetite for art in the young if you actually exposed them to art. To provide pablum to his youthful spectators was to undermine his whole vision. No, the crux

of the problem was to find a way to connect his spectators to the art he wanted to present to them. And that meant Shakespeare and other European and American classics and the best of contemporary drama, not just blithe entertainment.

So the director began by augmenting the classic script in two fashions. The first technique was to provide a social/historical context for the play. In Julius Caesar, the first Project Discovery production of 1967-68, Hall highlighted the political focus of the play with a prologue presented by a slight, white-haired lady (Marguerite Lenert) who was listed in the program as "A Contemporary Figure." She began by delivering a speech about political behavior; then she merged with the crowd and appeared throughout the ensuing scenes as a modern-day point of reference. This framing device was supported by Hall's secondary technique--a lavish use during the performance of slides of political leaders (Lyndon B. Johnson, Mao, Lincoln), film clips, posters, searchlights and drums.

This approach dealt squarely with one obvious problem that confronted Hall: the students, many of whom had never been inside a theatre before Project Discovery, found little in Shakespeare that related to their daily lives. By providing the contemporary figure and a recognizable political atmosphere, they were able to see themselves as part of the body politic. Additionally, posters and multi-media were art forms they naturally

understood. In short, Hall began to force a wedge into the young minds by using their own language to illuminate that of Shakespeare.

The most severe problem, however, was also the most apparent problem: the theatre space. A major portion of the audience was simply too great a distance from the stage action. So during the second Project Discovery season, Hall had his designers begin to encroach on the audience by building a small forestage beyond the proscenium. Nevertheless, Hall mainly had to rely on the dogged determination of his talented ensemble to hold the spectator's attention and somehow to make it through the season.

Collaboration

Project Discovery was the stimulus that forced Adrian Hall to discover his personal idea of theatre. Faced with this challenge, Hall rallied his actors and designers and began to experiment with theatre space, the theatrical text and every other aspect of the performance event. The result was an astounding series of productions in a visceral, theatrical style that captured and entranced the Providence audiences.

The experimentation with space began during the second Project Discovery season (1967-68). Up until that time, the RISD auditorium space had confined Hall's

productions within the narrow boundaries of nineteenth century theatre conventions. But real change was precipitated by the arrival in Providence of a young scene designer, Eugene Lee. Lee had studied in Chicago, at Carnegie Mellon University and at the Yale School of Drama. He had recently designed for Andre' Gregory's iconoclastic season at the Theatre of the Living Arts in Philadelphia.

Before Lee arrived, Trinity had used several scene designers. Robert Soule, who had worked with Hall since the 1940s at the Pasadena Playhouse, first came to Providence in 1968 and has been one of the resident designers at Trinity since 1978. Soule observes that Hall had been trying since their Off-Broadway days to break out of the confines of naturalism and the picture-frame stage, and that he was always "wanting to knock out walls whenever he could."[15] Hall also had a decided preference for real things on the set and avoided painting anything if possible. But he relied heavily on "atmosphere" which usually meant elaborate scenic detail. The problem was that he and Soule did not know how to get around the scenic conventions they had learned together at Pasadena. That is, not until the autumn of 1967 when Eugene Lee walked in with a model for the TRC production of <u>The Threepenny Opera</u>. Soule declares that "that was the marriage right off" because Eugene gave Adrian exactly what he had been looking for.[16] And it was a marriage--a marriage of two artistic sensibilities that were

uncannily attuned to each other. It was the beginning of a marvelous collaboration that continues to this day. Like Hall, Lee maintains a residence in both Dallas and Providence. Between productions for Hall, Lee designs for television (Saturday Night Live), for Broadway (he is best known for his Tony award-winning designs for Candide and Sweeney Todd), and he also designs for films and other stage directors, including Peter Brook.

In Lee's first season at Trinity Rep he designed productions only in the small Playhouse theatre, but it was clear at the outset that he was not a conventional designer. Although Lee had studied with the renowned designer, Donald Oenslager (whose work he greatly admired), Lee felt that he himself was not good at creating painted picture sets. Like Hall, he liked real wood or rusted tin or burlap; he was fond of the utilitarian--objects with both a function and a history. He favored the freedom of medieval and Shakespearean stages and viewed most contemporary design as unnecessary decoration that lacked a point of view. Hall, in the throes of the second season of Project Discovery and the fifth TRC season, found Lee to be "a strangely inarticulate little man. The only thing that I adored about him was that he seemed to be terribly angry to me. He just seemed so determined that on some level he was going to get the experience out there to them in the dark."[17] Hall was no less determined and together

they set out to solve the problems engendered by Project Discovery.

After The Threepenny Opera Lee and Hall next collaborated on an original script by Norman Holland, Years of the Locust. It was a fairly straightforward, somewhat sentimental tale of Oscar Wilde's experiences when he was imprisoned in Reading Gaol. It was to be one of the most important productions in Hall's career because it brought together four artists who would combine their efforts to explore the nature of the theatre event.

The artists who joined Hall and Lee on the production of Years of the Locust were Roger Morgan and Richard Cumming. Both had come to work at Trinity the previous year with the advent of Project Discovery. Cumming had first worked with Hall on the 1966 Mother Courage at Milwaukee Rep. An accomplished composer and pianist, he was invited to be TRC's first composer-in-residence and to supervise Project Discovery as Director of Educational Services. Still an integral part of Trinity Rep, Cumming has today composed more than sixty original scores and has appeared on the TRC stage at the keyboard in twenty productions. Furthermore, Cumming became Hall's frequent collaborator on original scripts and stage adaptations.

Roger Morgan had been a student at Carnegie Mellon where he had worked closely with Eugene Lee. Before joining Trinity as lighting designer, Morgan had been assistant to

Broadway designer Jo Mielziner. It was Morgan who suggested Lee for the design job in the 1967-68 season at Trinity. Morgan remained part of the creative team for eight years before deciding to relocate to New York City to found his own design firm.

Early in the new year of 1968, the artistic team of director, composer, designers and ensemble began work on Holland's play on the small Trinity Playhouse stage. They could not know what an odyssey they were beginning or the import of this particular play. As it happened, Hall was especially attracted to the material because it encompassed both the irrepressible Wildean spirit and the grim reality of nineteenth-century prison conditions in Britain. Moreover, Hall had a specially gifted cast, headlined by Richard Kneeland, who had been in the TRC ensemble since its first season. Lee contributed a grim, institutional environment of hard metal surfaces and rough wooden beams. The inhumane atmosphere was further enhanced by Morgan's dramatic lighting. Cumming offered an original score that was satiric, sentimental or lighthearted, as needed.

The success of Years of the Locust resulted in an invitation for the company to take the production to the Edinburgh International Festival in August of 1968. Not only did Trinity gain the distinction of being the first American company to appear at the Festival, but they also attained considerable national and international recognition

for their sold-out run. Hall's fascination with the content of Holland's play would lead him to return to the material four seasons later. Using more of Wilde's own writings and documentary sources, Hall and Cumming would create Feasting with Panthers for the 1972-73 season. The following year the Public Broadcasting System (WNET-TV in New York) would air a televised version as part of their "Theatre in America" series and this would again bring Hall and Trinity national acclaim.

In the following chapters, I will have more to say about Feasting with Panthers, but for now what is important is how the tour to Edinburgh contributed to the evolution of Hall's ideas on theatre.

Confrontation

The Edinburgh International Festival in 1968 had also invited the Polish Laboratory Theatre of Jerzy Grotowski to perform their adaptation of Wyspianski's Akropolis. Although Grotowski's theatre had been in operation since 1959, he was only beginning to come to the attention of the English-speaking theatre world, through performances of his company outside Poland and through the publication of a series of essays entitled Towards a Poor Theatre, which appeared in English translation in 1968.

In his production of Akropolis, Grotowski changed the locale of Wyspianski's play from Wawel Cathedral to a

modern-day concentration camp. The actors portrayed the camp's victims and acted out stories from the Bible and classical Greek legends. This production was one of several created in Grotowski's "poor theatre" period during which the Polish Laboratory Theatre explored the essential qualities of theatre by stripping away all nonessentials--sets, make-up, props, costumes, recorded sound, and so forth--in order to focus on what takes place during the actual theatre event in the interaction between actor and spectator.

In Akropolis the audience and actors shared the same space, the actors portraying the Auschwitz dead and the audience portraying the living who witness their stories. The actors were therefore extremely close to the spectators, but did not show any awareness of them. The spectator was therefore made part of the experience but not put on the defensive or embarrassed by being forced to participate. Moreover, the actors utilized only the simplest of props and set pieces--rags, stovepipes and the like--to create their stories. But the performance was vividly realized entirely by the actors' gestures and physicality, and by how they transformed the found objects into various elements to tell their story.

Adrian Hall had known nothing about Grotowski until he attended a performance of Akropolis in August of 1968. The impact on Hall was tremendous, as is reflected in his

comments in the Boston Globe two weeks after the Edinburgh experience:

> Look, what I'm telling you is that suddenly there was something of almost cataclysmic importance in my life as a director. I touched the core, the quivering center of what the theatre is all about, or rather can be about if only it's given the chance. Grotowski is phenomenal! For all these years all we've had is the by-wording of Stanislavsky and that's never been quite enough for me. What Grotowski attempts to do with the audience....is a whole, vital, new and meaningful perception about the audience and the actor.[18]

As we have seen, Hall had perceived, intellectually, the essential part of the spectator in the event. But until he sat among the actors of Grotowski's production, until he experienced the kinetic performance in which actor and spectator shared one space and one moment in time, he was unable to break free from the psychological barrier of the curtain line. Grotowski's production vividly sharpened Hall's artistic vision. The remainder of his career consists of unique theatrical experiments, exploring the new territory opened up for him after this point.

Perhaps it is worth noting here that Hall was not unfamiliar with the developments of the late sixties in the New York theatre. He has always kept up on theatre and theatre trends. So he was aware of the impact of Artaud on the avant-garde theatre. He was familiar with the work of the Living Theatre, of Cafe La Mama, of Schechner's Performing Garage, and with the recent productions of Hair and Tom Paine. He knew that the social conventions against

obscenity and nudity onstage and the sanctity of the audience's space were all being challenged at this time. However, he felt the shock treatment for audiences that was then prevalent on avant-garde stages was misguided in some way. Just tearing down conventions provided no clear-cut answers for the problems he faced. The challenge presented by Project Discovery was to find long-term solutions to engage a specific audience both intellectually and emotionally in the theatre event and to keep the spectators coming back until theatre became a part of their lives.

Therefore, Hall did not try to emulate the shock tactics of some of the avant-garde, nor did he attempt to create a Providence version of the Polish Laboratory Theatre. Instead, he proceeded to guide his artists through experiments in exploring text, theatrical space, and their own artistic sensibilities--to find the answers that related to their own time and place. Hall's art had to be connected to his own unanswered questions, or as he explains it, "It's about beginning to understand what you are and what art is about. It's an exploration of self and, of course, it's centered in your own kind of frustration and need to understand yourself in relationship to the world."[19]

Hall's exploration certainly did not begin in 1968, but it did take a new direction then. The experience at Akropolis helped Hall to see that the stage and the auditorium were not two separate, inviolable areas, but that

the actor and spectator shared a communal event in one room and that the event occurred in the present tense. To provide the spectator with a comfortable, plush seat, bolted down in front of a big picture, was to invite his passivity, to discourage his participation. Moreover, the familiar ritual of dimming the houselights to black, music in, curtain up, served to make the spectator even more secure and complacent. Hall assessed the lesson he learned from Grotowski in a 1970 interview, saying that "the one overriding factor seemed to say that it was possible in our day to experience and communicate only if you catch people off-guard sufficiently to get in there. I mean, if they can be thrown off-center sufficiently so the experience can happen to them."[20] Hall was to become a master at keeping his audience guessing--a skill that will be discussed in part 2 of this study.

What also impressed Hall were Grotowski's ideas of "poor theatre." As has been noted, both Lee and Hall had actively resisted the confines of realism and its stage conventions long before viewing Grotowski's work. However, the Akropolis performance proved to them the value of simplicity, of disposing of all non-essentials. Arnold Aronson observes in his analysis of Grotowski's influence on Lee's style of design that "Grotowski's company created total, audience-encompassing environments for each production. Grotowski also advocated 'poor theatre' which,

among other things, abolished the glossiness and illusionism of much contemporary theatre in favor of sets constructed out of found objects, illumination through simple white light and simple costumes."[21]

Akropolis did not alter Lee's or Hall's aesthetic but it did demonstrate quite effectively how the found objects and real textures could be integrated within a total environment, instead of displaying them in a distinct, separate stage space. Perhaps they realized, being freed from the need to decorate or illustrate the text, they could go further to achieve some essence of the text that was simpler, more direct than it had been before.

Thereafter, Hall's choice of production elements would be stripped down, minimized. A bed could represent any bed, a table could be all tables. No longer would it be necessary to have one table in the cafe scene and a very different table in the kitchen scene. The location could be communicated instead by the behavior of the actor, by a line from the text or a change in the lighting. The contemporary stage could retain the fluidity of the Shakespearean stage and, in so doing, make demands on the audience's imagination, serving to engage them more deeply in the play's meaning.

Another element that opened up for Hall after Edinburgh was the dramatic text. As noted before, Hall had already tinkered with the Shakespearean text in Julius

Caesar. He also was apt to cut or amend scripts to make them more workable or more relevant for his audience. By 1968 he had already staged three world premieres at Trinity, often developing the text with his company during the rehearsal period.

In the 1968-69 season, Hall collaborated with American writer Robert Penn Warren to bring his poem, Brother to Dragons, to the Trinity playhouse stage. Also in that season Hall premiered an original adaptation of Melville's Billy Budd in RISD auditorium. Although Hall had resisted the sixties cry of "Burn the text!" (and, in fact, has always deeply respected the author's script), the prime consideration remained that the audience must understand the text. The meeting with Grotowski did not really affect Hall in his attitude toward the text. But dispensing with conventional methods of staging served to open up new possibilities for stage material. Hall would go on to dramatize poems, novels, short stories, and historical documentary materials. Whereas Grotowski drew upon sources of myths and archetypes of Catholic Poland, Hall found his own mythic roots in the voices of American writers (Edith Wharton, Robert Penn Warren, Harriet Beecher Stowe) and American anti-heroes (Jack Abbott, Charles Manson, Jim Jones).

One of the most impressive features in Grotowski's production was his acting ensemble. Again, Hall did not

attempt to adopt the Polish director's scientific theories on acting, but did realize that the Polish Laboratory Theater managed to place the actor at the center of the operation--something Hall deemed essential to its development of the artist. The focus on the actor instead of the trappings of the theatre provided Hall with specific solutions to the problems presented in the Project Discovery performances. Pertinent here are John Lahr's comments on Grotowski acting techniques--Lahr observes how the emphasis on confrontation affects the acting style:

> Grotowski's teaching emphasizes this playful immediacy. Performance theater breaks down the masks which make-up, elaborate costume, and conventional gesture impose on the theatrical event. The actor is exposed, not hidden behind props. Grotowski's minimal impulse emphasizes the existential fact of the actor: he is there. Theater comes back to game--the spectacle, the competition, the physical drama of the actor versus the demands of the text.[22]

Confrontation. That was the message. In the wake of Grotowski, Hall began to see a pattern in what was happening on American stages. Peter Brook's Marat/Sade had been seen in New York, Off-Off-Broadway had been storming the barricades of 1950s realism, and Hall realized that "in keeping with the times I began to see that here in America we, the artists, had been keeping ourselves apart and it was our responsibility to say to the audience, 'touch me, I'm real' or 'this is a real thing you are seeing.'...What we in the theatre were doing was demanding instant recognition of what was being seen, what was being done."[23]

In spite of the significant impact that Grotowski had on Hall's work, he was not the only influence and many of the aspects of Hall's idea of theatre were in place before 1968. Lighting designer Roger Morgan recalls that "we were all influenced by Grotowski. But the funny thing is that we were already doing it...it was already happening."[24] Adrian Hall had already realized that the spectator was half of the theatrical equation. His early exposure to the Berliner Ensemble had shown him the effectiveness of Brechtian stage techniques. And his work on arena stages (including the Playhouse in Houston, the Milwaukee Repertory Theater, and summer theatres in Galveston and Phoenicia) had proved to him that walls were nonessential and that settings and props could be both minimalist and effective.

Nevertheless, Hall believes Grotowski influenced him. In 1985 he declared that Towards a Poor Theatre would prove to be the single most important theatre book of the twentieth century.[25] So Grotowski gave Adrian Hall an impetus, showed him a new horizon. But it was up to Hall and his Trinity artists to define for themselves what their theatre was all about.

Hall was not alone among twentieth-century directors in questioning the received wisdom of theatrical production. Writing in 1968 in The Empty Space, Peter Brook predicted that "in America today, the time is ripe for a

Meyerhold to appear, since naturalistic representations of life no longer seem to Americans adequate to express the forces that drive them. Now Genet is discussed, Shakespeare re-evaluated, Artaud quoted: there is a lot of talk about ritual: and all this for very realistic reasons, as many concrete aspects of American living can only be captured along these lines."[26]

Was Adrian Hall the American Meyerhold? It is an interesting, if debatable, question. There are parallels, however, in that Meyerhold was reacting to the rigid limitations of Stanislavsky's realistic stage and Hall was reacting to the confines of American realism, which was itself the offspring of the Moscow Art Theatre methods.

Indeed, James Roose-Evans, writing in Experimental Theatre, says that the early twentieth-century experiments--Artaud's reaction to the rhetorical French stage, Brook's reaction to the formal, stylized British theatre--these experiments all shared one goal: "to shatter the static realistic stage of the nineteenth century."[27] These reactions therefore led Meyerhold, Brook, and Hall (among others) to return to earlier conventions of the popular stage, especially the Elizabethan and commedia stages. They adopted the elements of participatory theatre in which spectators were not impassive onlookers, as well as a physicality and athleticism, an irreverence, and a joy in

the actor's virtuosity. They rediscovered the thrill of the circus and carnival and the impact of sheer theatricality.

For Hall, the ideal parallel was found in (of all things) the Grand Old Opry in Nashville, Tennessee, where he had "the most harmonious art experience I've ever been involved in. One just leaves it trembling, because there is so much rapport and give and take between the people who are viewers and the people who are presenting the thing....It's exactly what Grotowski is talking about!"[28] So, like his contemporaries, Hall borrowed from past eras and found modern parallels, but he realized that his task was to find a way to marry the dramatic material with his own artistic sensibilities (and those of his fellow artists) and to connect it in a very real way with his particular audience.

The Season of 1968-69

When Hall and the Trinity ensemble embarked on the season of 1968-69, extraordinary things began to happen both in the Playhouse space and at the RISD Auditorium. The first production in the small theatre to feel the full effect of the new ideas was Robert Penn Warren's Brother to Dragons.[29] The play is set in rural Kentucky in the year 1811. For the setting, Lee stripped the stage, leaving a rough planked octagonal platform over which he constructed an open framework of rough timbers. The script combined the evocative Warren poetry with Richard Cumming's original

score which was rooted in traditional folk music themes. The ensemble worked as a collective storyteller to relate the dark tale of Isham and Lilburne Lewis, nephews to Thomas Jefferson, and how they inexplicably tortured and murdered a black slave for breaking a china pitcher.

The spectators, already close to the action in the eight rows surrounding the three-quarter thrust stage, were drawn into the story by the songs and dances and country games such as apple bobbing. Actors were used to represent trees blowing in the wind, cantering horses, and to portray everything from a moth at the window to an earthquake. By the time the story turned towards its brutal climax, the audience was thoroughly pulled into the action. It was then that Hall staged his most famous coup de théâtre.

Warren's long poem, based on historical fact, describes how Jefferson's nephew, Lilburne Lewis, took the offending slave out to the meathouse and tied him up on the wooden block. Then, forcing his brother and the other slaves to watch, he hacked off the slave's hands and then his feet and threw them into the fire, where he finally disposed of the rest of the corpse. Logically this was a scene impossible to stage realistically and difficult to realize merely through description.

Hall's solution was to offer a different kind of reality. An eighteenth-century engraving of a slave hung up in chains gave Hall an idea. The director had the actor

playing the slave (Ed Hall) hung up by his heels from a tower structure beside the cage-like set. Then actor Bill Cain, as the demented Lilburne, stood before an authentic butchering block and used an ax to viciously hack away at a real slab of meat while the slave writhed and screamed. The scene was played down center next to the first row of seats. Under a glaring fluorescent light, bits of bone and gristle flew into the front rows and the audience found themselves inextricably tied to the darkest realities of Warren's evocative poetry. It was a stunning moment in the theatre, described by New York Times critic Clive Barnes as "one of the most validly terrifying things I have ever seen in the theater;" and Henry Hewes, writing in The Saturday Review, acclaimed the production as "one of the resident theater movement's finest achievements."[30]

The artistic team hardly missed a beat before they threw themselves into the next project: Shakespeare's Macbeth. Determined to make real contact with the audience, Lee immediately began building out into the RISD Auditorium, to surround the students with painter's scaffolding dimly illuminated by the real flames in can lamps around the house. Onstage he constructed a high metal bridge across which Macbeth would be pursued by Macduff. Here Hall would stage another dramatic death: Macbeth was chased along the bridge, forced to go hand-over-hand along a metal pipe, until he dangled from a rope high above the

stage. When Macduff split the rope with an ax, Macbeth fell almost twenty feet into a pit in the stage where he was speared like an animal by Macduff's soldiers, who then triumphantly carried off his "decapitated" head.

The students' behavior suddenly changed. They were confronted--confronted with something totally new. Live music, noise, athletic actors--coming at them from all directions--no longer were they lulled by formal recordings of the Rhode Island Philharmonic played across the RISD sound system. Cumming had learned from Grotowski too--that one real onstage trumpeter was more effective than an army of disembodied brass.

Hall and his collaborative team knew they were on the right track. They were breaking through the malaise and getting the attention they wanted. But it was in Billy Budd, the third and final Project Discovery production that season of 1968-69, that they pulled out all the stops.

Hall, Cumming and the Trinity ensemble took the standard text of Melville's tale and deconstructed it to make it pertinent and engrossing for the audience. They began it with a bang--actually a theatrical presentation of the French Revolution, which sets the scene for Budd's story. With flags and banners and with Richard Cumming leading the lively music from an onstage harmonium, they established a feeling that something was going to happen.

For the setting, Hall and Lee knew they did not want the predictable picture of a ship or ship's deck. They visited the frigate USS Constitution ("Old Ironsides") in Boston Harbor to get a sense of what it was like to be on a huge frigate. Then they set forth to duplicate that sensation for their audience by turning the inside of RISD into one enormous ship. Centerstage there was a towering mast. Overhead was steel scaffolding, elaborate ship's rigging and sails that could and did billow forth on cue. The stage was extended out into the middle of the house by a ramp that ended with a huge capstan for weighing anchor. Heedless of authentic spatial relationships, Lee copiously filled the stage and all other available space with maritime equipment: hatches, a double ship's wheel, a crow's nest, even a practical bilge pump for sloshing huge amounts of water over the decks. The whole environment was activated in a sea battle that brought actors before, behind, within and above the spectators.

And then there were the cannon: a clear indication of Hall's determination to confront his audience in any way he could. Cannons were positioned at the edge of the forestage, aimed at the audience and fired, producing billows of smoke and deafening booms, courtesy of the technician below the stage firing shells into metal drums. Eugene Lee describes the effect: "We would roll big cannons out at the audience and they would climb out of their seats

because they knew the cannons were going to fire. I love to shake them up, see them on their feet and moving--theatre that's outside and inside at the same time."[31]

The cannon were so effective they were used frequently in subsequent productions. James Schevill (a playwright who has had several plays produced at Trinity) explains that the cannon "became a kind of symbol of Trinity--the cannon confronting the audience, being fired while everyone cowered and held their ears."[32]

Jerry O'Brien describes what he, as a student, experienced in the season of 1968-69:

> Then Macbeth and Billy Budd and those special kind of shows started to happen. And it was really clear that this was something brand new....and I'm talking about the average parochial school students enraptured by actors climbing netting, going across the fence, running up and down the aisle, cannons going off....When Billy Budd was hanged, they hanged him and he fell eighteen feet!...and this gasp went up. It was scary![33]

This last effect was another sensational coup de théâtre. The audience could not see Lee's clever break-away harness on the actor playing Billy Budd (Timothy Taylor). What they did see was Budd, with another sailor, climb up to a tiny perch, high atop the stage. Sailors lined the aisles of the auditorium, gripping ropes that were rigged with the men up above. At the signal they ran in groups--some up the aisles, some down the aisles--all pulling their ropes as Budd fell eighteen feet from the platform and then hung, limp, his body swinging out over the breathless audience.

By the close of the 1968-69 season, Hall and his company had succeeded in winning over their audience. During the seasons that followed a distinct "Trinity" style of performance would evolve, which would bring recognition and success to the company. The challenge of Project Discovery was met with hard work and determination and Hall and his company finally found their identity and point of view.

Towards a Definition of Theatre

According to eyewitnesses, the season of 1968-69 presented the audience of the Trinity Repertory Company with breathtaking moments in the theatre. But it was only the beginning of the daring experimentation Hall and his ensemble would continue for the next twenty years. For Adrian Hall, the season and all that had led up to it had resulted in a simple definition of the theatre event: theatre is the confrontation between the actor and the spectator. The term "confrontation," however, can be an ambiguous one when applied to theatre. So it might be helpful to refine the term a bit to assess exactly what kind of confrontation Hall desires.

It has been noted that Hall's vision for Trinity Rep was to create an indigenous theatre--that is, one which was closely linked to the community's cultural needs--and to create an audience for whom theatre would become an

essential part of life. Although Hall exhibits no specific political or religious bias in his work, he does have a deeply humanistic view, believing that theatre can change one's life. And he believes this is true for both the artist and the spectator. Therefore, Hall's goal in confronting the audience is not didactic nor is it intended to affect some specific social change (although he recognizes that theatre is certainly capable of both those things). Peter Gerety, an actor at Trinity since 1965, explains that Adrian's art "has much less to do with specific political issues and much more to do with the larger, broader range of human values and where society is going, and man's inhumanity to man and cruelty and social divisions. And you throw the social divisions up against the screen and take a look at them and present them in the most black and white confrontational way you can."[34] So Hall's aim is to confront society with itself, as it were.

Confrontation is necessary, Hall believes, because the typical American spectator is benumbed by daily life--information overload, media barrage, and strict social masks serve to close off emotions and the ability to respond freely. Or, as Robert Penn Warren describes it, "the disease of our time is the sense of being cut off from reality. Man feels that a screen has descended between him and nature, between him and other men, between him and the

self."[35] Therefore, theatre must have a certain amount of aggression or shock effect to catch the spectator off-guard, to get behind his automatic defenses. In an interview in 1969, Hall explained that "people are conditioned to too many sensory experiences, and words alone are not enough in the theatre;...Attack, assault, barrage the audience today; I believe anything is valid. We must use everything at our disposal to shock them, turn them upside down--or inside out."[36]

Nevertheless, one must be careful not to take Hall's comments too literally. He eschewed the aggressive tactics of avant-garde theatre in which shock for the sake of shock was the dominant aesthetic. Hall recognized that circumventing the spectator's defenses was more complex than that. He saw that the artist's constant challenge was to find new, unpredictable ways to make the connection. Where nudity or shocking language might work in one instance, it could also actually strengthen the barriers if taken too far or done too often. Sometimes an unusually beautiful image or poignant silence was the key. Hall realized that he had to work continually to define what he wanted from the audience, bearing in mind the ultimate goal. That goal was to get the spectator to become a participant--not literally, by getting up on stage--but through a willingness to use his imagination and emotional response.

So we can say that, in essence, Hall means "communion" as much as "confrontation," because as director he must open up the actor's emotional casing and, through his choices as a director in staging the play, he must affect the same openness in each of his spectators. Hall's missionary zeal to accomplish this communion/confrontation is clear in these comments from a lecture given at the University of Houston:

> Theatre is a concentrated shot in a world of media barrage. It is simplicity, it is essence, reaffirmation and education. Theatre is for giving REAL, emotional, involved experience. It is equivalent to a confrontation with another person.
>
> It is the most profound and shortest marriage that man has devised. Like the Christians and the lions, regardless of what happens neither walks out of the arena unchanged. No wonder it is a personally revolutionary experience! It's baring your soul and sharing it with those who are willing to take it.[37]

In formalizing his definition of theatre, Adrian Hall recognized that, in order to challenge an audience time after time, there could be no rules, no pat formulas, no ready-made answers. Each production, even a revival, presents unique problems to be solved in rehearsal, working with the full ensemble. The play's text, its environment, the production values of lights, costumes, sound, and the actor's presentation--each and every aspect of the performance must be tested by the one question: does this deepen the involvement of the audience or not?

In chapter 3, I will discuss how this seemingly simple idea of theatre--the confrontation between the actor and the audience--has motivated Hall to structure his institutions in Providence and in Dallas to cultivate his audiences. Chapter 4 will review Hall's repertoire and accomplishments and demonstrate how his work at Trinity is serving as a pattern for shaping the institution in Dallas. In part 2, I will discuss many of Hall's greatest successes and some of his failures, to demonstrate how the artistic process of this acknowledged genius of the American stage grows out of his idea of theatre: "It takes two to tango."

Chapter III

PROCESS VERSUS PRODUCT

The season of 1968-69 was a watershed year for Trinity Repertory Company. After that, Hall and his collaborative artists were to reach new heights in their theatrical experimentation. The company began to find a distinct Trinity style that was vibrant, immediate and visceral theatre.

While Hall and his company continued their artistic exploration, Hall as artistic director continued to shape Trinity as an institution. With the advent of Project Discovery, Trinity Rep had significantly expanded its operational base. By the end of that three-year federal project in 1969, TRC held a significant place in the cultural community of Providence. With a large, experienced acting ensemble, the company had two theatre spaces with a total of thirteen hundred seats and the community support to continue the educational program of Project Discovery even after the federal funding ceased. However, in order to

maintain momentum, the institution needed to consolidate operations into one facility.

Therefore, in what Adrian Hall has called a "bold, silly move," during the 1968-69 season Trinity purchased the superstructure and interior fixtures of the Washington Square ANTA Theatre which was going to be torn down in New York City.[1] Trinity moved the dismantled theatre to a Rhode Island warehouse until they could find a space for it. It was a gamble that did not pay off as expected. After more than three years of negotiating for land, threatening to move out of Providence, and so forth, the ANTA solution was abandoned.

Instead, a much more promising solution to the space problem came into view--one of Providence's great old vaudeville houses, the Majestic, became available. Built in 1917 by Burton and Alton C. Emery to be the most lavish theatre in Providence, the Majestic was home to vaudeville shows, road companies and musical revues. On its massive proscenium stage were seen Pavlova, John Barrymore, Al Jolson and Walter Hampden. A resident acting company, under the direction of Jessie Bonstelle, performed on the Majestic stage from 1921 to 1923 and then the theatre became a movie palace. By 1970 the Majestic had lost most of its movie audience to suburban cinemas.

Also by 1970, Trinity needed a new home and the company's status in the community was such that they were

able to garner enough support to purchase and renovate the Majestic into a double-stage facility. The Majestic Theatre was re-named the Lederer Theatre for Benedict Lederer, in honor of a major grant donated by the Benedict B. Lederer Foundation. This facility duplicated the intimacy of the original Trinity Square space in a downstairs, 297-seat house with a modified thrust stage. Additionally, a huge loft-like upstairs space offered completely flexible staging and the eight hundred seats needed for student performances and large-scale productions. (In the late 1970s the seats were made semi-permanent, losing much of that flexibility and reducing the seats to about 550.) The renovation of the Majestic, supervised by Adrian Hall and Eugene Lee, retained the beauty of the ornate Art Nouveau lobby, with its domed mezzanine of brilliant leaded glass. In 1972, a year before TRC moved in, the Majestic was entered into the National Register of Historic Places.

As Adrian Hall's idea of theatre crystallized, so his determination strengthened to shape his institution to his artistic vision rather than force the vision to conform to the institution. If the necessary ingredients of theatre were the actor and the audience, then the actor should stand at the center of the institution and the process of creating art should be the primary focus of that institution.

The Actor

Adrian Hall's ideal was to create and maintain a permanent acting ensemble. It has been shown how Project Discovery provided the means to expand and stabilize the Trinity ensemble. Nevertheless, the economic pressures of the institutional theatre just naturally oppose the ensemble ideal. Thus, through most of Trinity's history, the acting ensemble was, by definition, a close group of artists who were committed to working together in Providence, Rhode Island. The reality has been that almost all the actors and designers have had to supplement their income from Trinity with commercial work in Boston, New York and other regional theatres. They were a "permanent ensemble" through their joint commitment, not through annual contracts.

However, whereas other regional theatre directors have routinely hired and fired actors as needed on a per-show or seasonal basis, Hall has succeeded in retaining a large core group of performers and designers. He has accomplished this in several ways. In the first place, Hall's first Trinity artists included many old friends who shared the ideals of the regional movement. These included Katherine Helmond, Marguerite Lenert and Clinton Anderson (from Texas), Howard London and Robert Soule (from the Pasadena Playhouse), and Richard Kneeland, George Martin and Bill Cain (from summer stock). There were also actors from Providence, such as Barbara Orson and Peter Gerety, who

joined the ensemble in its first two seasons. As the theatre operation grew and the company expanded, some actors left, even as other friends came into the group. Hall also brought in young actors from regional auditions of the League of Resident Theatres and Theatre Communications Group, including Richard Jenkins, Jobeth Williams, Barbara Meek, Martin Molson and Timothy Crowe. Others, such as Richard Kavanaugh and Ed Hall found their own way to Providence. With the expansion of Project Discovery, Hall was able to diversify his company, bringing in character actors, promising young talent and black actors.

Hall's unusual success in retaining these actors was the result of his philosophy about the place of the actor in the institution. While he was unable to offer the security of annual or stable salaries (more than once the company went off payroll in hard times), Hall maintained that Trinity was a family:

> One of the things that has always appealed to me is the idea of a life in the theater. I mean, given the horrendous commercial world of Broadway, is it possible to live a rewarding and creative life in the theater, to make a reasonable amount of money, to be able to survive and do your work without succumbing to the hit-or-miss, now-you're-on, now-you're-off nuttiness--craziness!--that a life in the American theater has become?...That's really what Trinity is all about, a company of actors, a community of artists, living and working together.[2]

By providing an artistic home, Hall was giving the artist a place in society. It would prove to be a place that constantly had to be defended. During his career Hall

has been in the forefront of the battle, urging artists everywhere to take on the responsibility of demanding their due portion. This has frequently put Hall in an adversarial position, fighting the economic pressures from his boards and managing directors while responding as well as he was able to the artist's needs.

Against all odds, Hall held on to his ensemble at Trinity. Another reason for his success was his willingness to let his company members come and go, to follow other opportunities as they desired. This freedom made it possible for the artists to use Trinity as their home base. Of course the proximity of Providence to the commercial centers of Boston and New York and to a number of other regional theatres made this more feasible than it would be for a theatre in a more remote locale. Nevertheless, many of the artists have bought houses and raised families in Providence and performed at Trinity between appearances on Broadway and at other regional theatres. Moreover, the actors at TRC have become an integral part of the Providence community through their performances onstage and their personal appearances before student and community groups.

Hall's commitment to the actors also meant that he accepted the compromises that are part of having a permanent ensemble. That is, he usually resisted bringing in a star or a particular type of actor for a hard-to-cast role and relied instead on his core group of actors. Hall explains

that "you have to do type casting--or...cross-casting. You can't have the luxury of real prejudice in a permanent company. Sometimes you have to use a black actor for a so-called white part; sometimes you have to use a lady in her forties for a twenty-five year-old ingenue role; but you see, these are the types of compromises you have to make."[3]

It has been this commitment that has motivated so many of Hall's actors to stay with him in Providence. Black actors, such as Barbara Meek and Ed Hall, invariably praise Adrian Hall for casting them in a wide variety of roles which, they strongly feel, would not have been open to them outside TRC. For example, Ms. Meek, who has been with Trinity since 1968, has played a number of black roles, such as Ma Rainey in Ma Rainey's Black Bottom and Aunt Cat in Brother to Dragons, but she has also had the chance to portray Jenny in The Threepenny Opera, Claire Zachanassian in The Visit, Sharon Tate in Son of Man and the Family, Mrs. Eynsford-Hill in Pygmalion, Charlotta in The Cherry Orchard and even a white male abortionist in Eustace Chisholm and the Works. In addition to the black roles he has played, actor Ed Hall has starred as Scrooge in A Christmas Carol and has played everything from Irishmen to Russians. In staging the late William Goyen's play, House of Breath, Black/White, which is about a multi-generational family, Hall used a cast that cut across racial lines so that family members might be black or white. Hall has also frequently

cast men in female roles and sometimes he has cast women in male roles.

Adrian Hall has also found it stimulating to guide and develop the individual artist through a series of roles over a period of years. In order to challenge and stretch the performers, he often selected specific plays to explore new facets of the actor, finding that, "you could really experiment with things and you could kind of put people into things that they were insanely wrong for, that nobody would ever guess--and then suddenly you would see a side of that person that you had never seen before."[4]

The most significant factor, however, in retaining the Trinity actors has been the caliber of the work itself. As actor Peter Gerety explains, "I've been brought up for the past twenty-five years on an extremely visceral kind of experience that Adrian has given us" and Gerety sees no reason to give that up for something less exciting.[5] The Trinity repertoire has afforded actors the opportunity to play a broad range, from classic to contemporary, from epic to realistic styles. Through his policy of selecting plays to develop the talents of the company, the actors have been challenged even further. The challenges, coupled with Hall's method of involving the entire cast in every stage of the production process, has made the work satisfying for them.

Hall has maintained his idea of a permanent ensemble in the face of great opposition. He recognized early on that the creative process--the process of developing the play and of experiencing it with an audience--must be the focus of the theatrical institution. Process is more important than product because, Hall believes, theatre is comparable to a Mom and Pop grocery. That means, he says, that "it doesn't fit into any capitalistic idea of building a better mousetrap. It's one thing for McDonalds to turn out more burgers than Burger King, but those kind of capitalist rules just don't apply to the theatre;" and Hall is suspicious of the "theatrical quick fix which is 'More ads. More Madison Avenue. More sleekness.' Or the 'Cut it down. Make the costs smaller. Can't you do it for less?'"[6] Hall rejects all those attitudes because he believes they threaten the artistic process.

Hall's years of fighting to establish a true permanent ensemble were rewarded in 1985 when the National Endowment for the Arts selected Trinity Repertory Company to be the first recipient of a new grant: the Ongoing Ensemble grant. This five-year, $735,000 matching grant makes it possible to give annual contracts to Trinity actors, assuring them a base salary and a specific number of roles each season. Trinity was the first company chosen because of its proven commitment to the ensemble ideal.

Hall has continued his crusade to establish a place for the artist at the Dallas Theater Center. Beginning with the 1987-88 season, he established a core company of fifteen actors. Still, the director constantly exhorts artists to take up the fight themselves. Speaking at Columbia University, Hall described how "everybody admires it when all the actors give back their salaries and they survive and they read those stories about how they brought a can of beans over to the apartment and cooked it and they went out that night and gave the best show they've ever given, and so forth;" but Hall went on to warn that we "should stop laughing at those stories. The craft should survive and it should be taken back over by the artist."[7] But the artist must take responsibility for the fight.

The Audience

Adrian Hall made the acting ensemble the foundation of his institution at Trinity Rep. Nevertheless, his belief that the actor and spectator are the essential ingredients of the theatre caused him to have equal concern for the institution's role in creating the audience. Trinity has built a subscription audience of twenty thousand people; about sixty percent of the audience is comprised of subscription ticket-holders. Whereas most regional theatres have had substantial fluctuations in their subscriber base, depending upon external economic conditions, at Trinity

subscriptions slowly and steadily increased each year from 1964 to 1986.[8]

Since Trinity's inception, Hall has been outspoken in newspaper interviews, program notes and public appearances--describing the audience he wished to find in Providence. In 1971 he wrote: "We're building something here in Rhode Island and it's not just 'a building.' It's an audience. A truly indigenous audience. Like the Grand Old Opry in Nashville....It speaks directly to the hopes and aspirations of the people. That's what we want, you know. Creative people working and those who come to watch--working--and coming back time and time again because the performing arts are part of their lives."[9]

As Hall developed his personal ideas of theatre, he carefully developed programs to communicate those ideas to his audience. In a 1971 letter to the Ford Foundation, Hall outlined a four-part plan for developing an indigenous audience. His plan included the Project Discovery program for secondary school students, programs to attract college and university students, and a repertoire that "reflects our time and place in history" so it may satisfy "the hopes and aspirations of the people" of all social levels.[10] The fourth element of the plan was the new home at the Majestic, which Hall predicted would become a cultural center.

Project Discovery proved to be one of the most--if not the most--successful educational program in American

regional theatre history. Today it brings in twenty thousand students of all ages (not only high school) from throughout Rhode Island and the New England states to see several productions each season. The project naturally presented Hall with a golden opportunity to educate and condition his present and future audience. It was an opportunity that he seized and utilized to the fullest.

Richard Cumming, as Director of Educational Services, created the first study packets for Project Discovery which provided the English and Drama teachers with extensive information on the social and historical setting of each play. These packets also often included a timeline or chronology of the historical period or life of the author. Moreover, the packets frequently contained essays or interviews with Hall, the playwright, the composer, the designers or actors, which dealt with the experience of theatre itself. Teachers were urged to have the students read the play <u>after</u> seeing the production, rather than before, so they could come to the play with fewer preconceptions. Once they had experienced the live performance, they could explore the play as dramatic literature.

Through the Project Discovery materials, Hall was able to encourage expectations that theatre was a living, immediate experience which demanded the spectator's participation. He educated his audience to expect and

demand the unpredictable. So Hall was actually able to condition his student spectators to look for certain aspects in the ritual of attending the theatre--aspects they (and most probably their parents and teachers) had not previously expected from the theatre experience. This cultivation of an audience was extended even further by visits of Trinity actors to lead post-play discussions in the schools and by other Project Discovery activities.

Once Project Discovery was firmly established, Marion Simon (Hall's assistant since 1966) inaugurated a College Program to encourage attendance of students and faculty from the fourteen area colleges. Also, beginning in 1978, Simon was instrumental in establishing the Humanities Program. This program entitled "The Dramatic Work as a Historical/Cultural Document," produces a brochure of essays and offers a series of after-play discussions with scholars, historians and cast members of each TRC production. Funded by the Rhode Island Committee for the Humanities, the program received in 1982 the first annual Martin and Helen Schwartz Award for Best Humanities Program in America. The Humanities Program has attracted another kind of spectator to Trinity, whose interest lies in the intellectual aspects of the cultural or historical issues presented in the play. The program has provided another dimension--an additional way to communicate with the audience. Here again, Hall has been careful to supervise the program so that it conforms to

his precepts. The essays and discussions of the play are not to be critical assessments of the production or performance. They are, instead, to focus on the larger social issues and ideas suggested by the content of the play--to further the experience and understanding of the play's message.

Hall has missed no opportunity to express his idea of theatre. He has traveled throughout the country to speak before groups of college students, theatre organizations and to countless reporters about what the theatre experience should be. He also communicates his ideas through his production programs, which are filled with notes or open letters to his audience members. Jerry O'Brien (who worked in Trinity's publicity department through spring of 1988) explained Hall's view about program notes: "The worst thing program notes can do is tell people what the play is about or to direct people in any way toward an interpretation of the play or toward identifying the themes of the play. That's the worst thing you can do because you create expectations in the minds of the audience before the actors even get on the stage."[11] Instead, Hall wants information that will support the production, that will provide a context or frame of reference for the piece without spelling out a specific meaning for the play.

An example of how Hall has used the program to prepare an audience can be seen in the program for his

1971 production of Troilus and Cressida. The production was done at the Trinity Square Playhouse for both subscribers and the Project Discovery audiences. It was staged at the height of the Vietnam War and on the cover of the production program, Hall had cartoon figures--one was a toga-draped man carrying a sign reading, "Make Love Not War," a phrase that was then a popular anti-war slogan. The graphics were more in a style you might expect for A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum than for Shakespeare's anti-war play, but they were appropriate to the informal, irreverent atmosphere Hall achieved in the production staging. In addition to the cartoons, though, Hall supplied his audience with background information on how the judgment of Paris led up to the Trojan War and a summary of the history that followed the play's action. The commentary was newsy, accessible and amusing, not erudite or condescending in any way. Still, it was relevant and informative. There were also essays: "The Greeks" and "Shakespeare and Cressida," as well as a map of Greece and Troy.

Finally, Hall gave his audience a hint of his approach to the play:

> THE TIME is now, of course.
>
> THE PLAY begins in the seventh year of the Greek siege of Troy.
>
> THE PLACE ranges from inside the city of Troy to the Greek camps outside the walls.

Note that the reference to the time of the drama stressed that the play is happening now, although it occurs in another period of history. Hall's staging also served to link the present with the past. By adding a prologue to portray the judgment of Paris, Hall provided the historical context that his contemporary audience might not have. Moreover, this prologue was done as a modern-day USO camp show, with George Martin as a Bob Hope "top banana" comic and three soldiers in "drag" as the three goddesses. When Paris made his choice, the bombs started falling and suddenly it was war--the Trojan War--with soldiers dressed in everything from togas to Vietnam combat fatigues. The audience was connected emotionally and intellectually to the material.

The theatrical experimentation that grew out of Project Discovery resulted in radical changes for Hall's audience. While Hall utilized all the methods described above to communicate his motives to his audience, there were many spectators who felt defensive about the sanctity of the audience's space and who would have preferred that the actors stay in their place. Carol L. Newman is a critic who in 1969 responded to Hall's program notes for Billy Budd and wrote "I detect uncomfortable references to Beck and Grotowski in Hall's notion of the 'space relationship between the audience and the actor;'" the critic went on to

say that one had to maintain "some spatial and aesthetic distance" lest "drama ceased to be drama."[12]

Nevertheless, Hall persevered in his belief that if you did not challenge an audience, you could not build an audience. In the program for the first Project Discovery production in 1966, Hall wrote:

> If theatre is ever to become a dynamic force in our contemporary society, the obligation of a responsible theatre company must, therefore, be two-fold: To challenge, provoke, and disturb the infinitesimally small audience already familiar with and captivated by the theatrical mystique, while at the same time luring, intriguing, and tantalizing members of the vast and oblivious non-audience into a love affair with the theatrical experience. The Trinity Square Company began with the intent to challenge, provoke, and disturb. That remains a crucial part of our philosophy.[13]

At Trinity Repertory Hall's vision has been successful in attracting and enlarging an audience. Spectators often walk out during performance, but they have returned, or others have returned in their place, to sustain a steady growth in subscriptions. In order to break through the malaise engendered by modern life, it is as though a production must be disturbing enough to cause at least a few walk-outs. How else can the artist know he is getting through to them?

This point of view is a difficult one for theatre administrators to understand, however. Walk-outs are viewed as a negative reaction which can lead to poor returns at the box office. It is a problem that Hall has been able to overcome during his twenty-five years at Trinity, but he has encountered it anew in Dallas. By coming into an existing

institution with a permanent (albeit a somewhat superannuated and uninterested) audience, Hall had a formidable challenge. With the changing of the guard from the Paul Baker regime to Hall's exciting but radical theatrical ventures, the Dallas Theater Center lost half its audience. So Hall has had the complex task of re-educating the old audience and cultural community, as well as the institutional administration, while at the same time finding a new young audience that responds to his extraordinary brand of theatre.

One example of Hall's policies that rankles the administration is his philosophy of building and promoting a season. Since subscribers are the mainstay of the institutional theatre, managing directors and marketing departments focus their efforts on promoting products, i.e., the plays of the season. Each one is sold to the prospective ticket-buyer as a "once in a lifetime," "not to be missed" experience. This "event mentality" comes from perceiving the play as a product and the theatre as a factory where greater profits are realized by offering more desirable seats for a higher price. It is this better-mousetrap logic that Hall rejects.

Hall's philosophy of theatre--an experience shared between the actor and spectator at a given moment in time--is not conducive to a Madison Avenue approach. The director insists that the idea of the theatre experience

should be marketed, not a specific play or seat and that the process of live performance should be stressed over the product or specific play. The art of the theatre "is somehow hooking into the whole kind of emotional fabric of being alive," says Hall, and is not something that can be pigeon-holed into the Brecht slot or the Christmas show.[14]

During his twenty-five years at Trinity, Hall has employed a system of partially announcing the seasons. (TRC runs an upstairs season and a downstairs season. Most Trinity subscribers purchase both season tickets.) He announces the first few shows and gives the time slots for future productions, perhaps indicating there will be a new play or a Shakespeare without identifying the specific choice. Later in the season he puts out another announcement to reveal the balance of the slate of plays. This system affords the artistic director maximum flexibility, allowing him to take advantage of newly released properties or to select a play that is pertinent to what's going on in the world--such as in 1970 when Hall and his company created a play about the Charles Manson murders (Son of Man and the Family) while the trials were actually in progress.

Hall must constantly defend his position on promoting theatre at both his institutions. Forced to provide some idea of the season offerings, Hall will list productions, but always reserves the right to change them

and almost always does. Trinity subscribers, having been conditioned now for a quarter of a century, are accustomed to last-minute changes in schedules. For example, ticket holders to the 1987-88 season warmly received Hall's wrenching production of Franz Xaver Kroetz's Mensch Meier, even though their season passes had listed a very different play, the musical spoof Little Shop of Horrors, for that slot. Such flexibility is rare indeed in the theatre-going audience and it is a tribute to Hall's vision and understanding of the spectator's relationship to the art of the theatre.

Confronting the Institution

In the preceding pages, I have been discussing how Adrian Hall has endeavored to shape the institution of Trinity Repertory Company to fit his precept--that process is more important than product. However, a large institutional theatre is seldom solely the expression of one man's or woman's vision and Hall's views frequently placed him in an adversarial position with his board of trustees and managing director.

This problem is prevalent in the regional theatre because of the way the institutions developed. We have seen how Hall came to Trinity to set up an alternative to the commercial Broadway system. He wanted a new system that better suited the artistic process. In this way Trinity was

typical of many of the early non-profit theatres. Although the initial impulse of the regional theatre movement in America was reactionary--a concerted effort to establish an alternative to the commercial Broadway theatre--by 1965 this motive had begun to change. By that year, as Joseph Wesley Zeigler explains in his book, Regional Theatre, a subtle but significant change in the movement was evident as theatres that had been anti-Establishment actually became part of the Establishment: "Almost all regional theatres, then, chose a structure which their local Establishments already understood because it was like the structure of the university, the hospital, the symphony orchestra, and the community chest. Once the regional theatres gained acceptance as institutions, their movement from outsider to official status was inevitable."[15]

This trend naturally affected Trinity Repertory because it had, by 1969, experienced such enormous growth with Project Discovery. What began as a small theatre, with a close-knit, devoted following had become two theatres serving a large new audience. Also with Project Discovery, Trinity focused on its value as an educational service for the community. As community awareness increased, so did subscriptions and greater stability for the institution.

This increased community involvement presented new problems for Trinity, as it did for other similar institutions. According to Zeigler, the problem that now

arose was a "conflict between the artist and the Establishment as represented by the theatre's board of directors."[16] This conflict was the result of the tripartite organizational structure adopted by most not-for-profit theatres. In this structure there are two managers: the artistic director who oversees all artistic matters in the theatre, the managing director, who oversees all corporate administrative matters, and the board of directors or trustees which serves as liaison with the community and is charged with the responsibility of raising funds within that community to support the institution.

As a theatre experiences growth and expansion, it requires more influential board members to attract the funds it needs to sustain that growth. Powerful community figures, however, often have their own agendas and visions for the cultural future of the community and therefore conflicts are apt to arise between the board and artistic director. This tension is often aggravated by the constant struggle to balance aesthetic and economic concerns which pit artistic directors against managing directors. Thus, artistic directors are put in the position described by Todd London in The Artistic Home where artistic directors, "in addition to continually exploring, redefining and deepening their own visions, must constantly verbalize them for the theatre's staff, trustees and community; defend them against attacks; and sell them to the world-at-large."[17]

Hall's principal line of defense has been his insistence that the artistic concerns be central to the theatre operation, that process is more important than product. In a 1986 article in American Theatre, Hall admitted, "What I've done in some really selfish, very specific way is create a situation which exactly meets my needs, so that all my time can be spent just with the work. I don't even have a key to the building, nor do I want one. I don't have an office. I don't have a secretary. The reason I don't have all those things is that I really want a life in the theatre."[18] What Hall does have is a company and an administrative staff that are devoted to his philosophical precepts about theatre. His most essential supporter, since 1966, has been his assistant, Marion Simon. Simon has enabled Hall to focus his attention on artistic matters by relieving him of many of the difficult and routine tasks that would otherwise demand his attention and take him away from his artistic endeavors.

By refusing to compromise the art itself, Hall has redefined success and failure. For Hall, a play that does not sell is not necessarily a failure. Rather, the criteria used to judge success or failure, e.g., ticket sales, are wrong. He is critical of managers for whom success is calculated in commercial terms: "A play that goes to Broadway has succeeded, where a play that only engages, involves and changes ten thousand lives failed."[19]

Instead, the success must be judged in artistic terms, according to the value of the work for the individual artists.

Needless to say, Hall's philosophy goes against the grain of basic capitalism which judges success in dollars. It also has created stormy battles with a long line of managing directors, many of whom have not lasted even a year in Hall's institutions. It has also caused conflicts with his boards of trustees. Such problems are endemic to the regional theatre institutions because of their structures and because of the perception of theatre in America. Hall, however, has had the skill to win most of his battles. Speaking on a panel in 1973, he admitted the fight has been difficult: "I found, personally, that some of the toughest battles in staying alive and in trying to stay in touch with yourself...[have] been trying to politically maneuver away from some kind of top-heavy bureaucratic structure that does not work;" but Hall goes on to explain his success, saying, "I, being an inarticulate person sometimes out of my own choosing, have managed to devise ways in which I...keep my board of trustees in line. And most of that comes from being able to talk louder, faster, and meaner, and having a certain kind of survival snakeskin."[20]

Hall's most difficult battle with his board of directors at Trinity occurred during the season of 1975-76. In the summer of 1975, the organization that had founded the

original Trinity Rep, the Foundation for Repertory Theatre in Rhode Island, split into two entities. The Foundation retained responsibility for all financial obligations that had been incurred by June of that year, including the mortgage on the Lederer Theatre. The second entity, Trinity Personna Company, with Adrian Hall as President, was formed "to assume complete artistic, operational and financial responsibility for the performing company."[21]

The season of 1975-76 was the ninth season since the inception of Project Discovery. During that period Hall and his collaborative artists had been steadily pushing back the barriers of all kinds of theatre conventions and producing stimulating, provocative theatre in the process. The season of 1975-76 opened with a phenomenal theatre experiment, Cathedral of Ice, a new play by James Schevill about Hitler's rise to power. Hall's staging was environmental in the truest sense, with an ever-changing actor-audience relationship that challenged the spectators in thrilling new ways. The Schevill play was followed by two Lillian Hellman plays, Another Part of the Forest and The Little Foxes, performed in repertory, Shakespeare's Two Gentlemen of Verona, and a world premiere of Bastard Son. Hall had directed the Schevill and Hellman plays and he closed out the season with his own adaptation of James Purdy's novel, Eustace Chisholm and the Works. The final play was very controversial--with shocking scenes of an

onstage abortion, overt homosexuality and full-frontal male nudity; the language and behavior of Purdy's Depression-era misfits proved to the board that Hall had gone too far. (The board ignored the fact that Eustace had to be held over and that it sold more tickets than the harmless, sure-fire comedy Seven Keys to Baldpate the year before.)

The controversy over the season's plays was actually just part of the issue. Since the reorganization, the theatre had been experiencing financial problems because of several unsuccessful efforts to raise funds. Actor Peter Gerety recalls that Eustace Chisholm was a "lovely, evocative Southern play," but they knew it would be confrontational because "the atmosphere in Rhode Island was confrontational at the time"--the Purdy play was just "the straw that broke the camel's back."[22] The crisis resulted in an attempt by the Executive Board of Directors to oust Hall from his position as artistic director.

The American regional theatre has a long, distinguished list of ousted artistic directors, including André Gregory, William Ball and Alvin Epstein, to name only a few.[23] What is unusual about Adrian Hall is that he managed not only to fight the board and keep his job, but that he was able to replace the board with new members who shared his vision for Trinity Repertory Company.

The battle of the board in 1976 is today part of the Adrian Hall mystique. Hall claims he still gets asked to

tell the story at cocktail parties. However, Hall's victory was not as easy or simple as it sounds. It depended upon several factors, principally the commitment and devotion of his company and staff. The company members banded together to support Hall. They announced in a paid advertisement in the Providence Journal-Bulletin that they were refusing to go back to work in the theatre unless Hall returned and then they went door-to-door in a grassroots fundraising campaign that quickly proved that community support was behind the theatre. Hall also received votes of confidence from many of his colleagues throughout the regional theatre. Hall's commitment to his company and to his ideals saved both his job and his theatre.[24]

The 1976 attempt to oust Hall was not the first battle he had with his board. In 1970 the controversial production of Son of Man and the Family had provoked a similar but also unsuccessful effort when Hall scheduled this documentary drama about the Charles Manson murders during the murder trials and also during a theatre fund drive. So while the attempt to oust Hall in 1976 was his most severe conflict with management, it was not his first or his last. Hall continues to fight relentlessly for his vision of theatre in which process takes precedent over product. Donald Schoenbaum, a close friend and colleague of Hall's, described this particular ability of the director:

Geniuses are kind of crazy, I guess--they're hard on the people around them. You can love Adrian one minute and hate him the next. His willingness to take chances and risks exceeds the capacity of most other people. But he's very special <u>because</u> he can't be controlled. That's infuriating to some people....But when you're making theater, one person <u>has</u> to be in charge and it should be the artist, no question about that.[25]

Chapter IV

PAST AND FUTURE

Adrian Hall's career is best defined by the rich diversity of his stage productions. What he has accomplished in his quarter-century at Trinity Rep is therefore reflected in the Trinity repertoire and the recognition earned from such artistic endeavors. In the following pages I will provide an overview of this multi-faceted director's productions and the awards and honors they have earned him. The reader is also referred to the comprehensive production history of Hall's work in the Appendix.

There is no end to this history, however, because Hall has in no way ceased searching for his definition of theatre--in each new production he continues to probe, to explore and to question. In 1983 Hall expanded his territory by taking on the challenge of the Dallas Theater Center--to invigorate an institution mired in what Peter Brook has aptly termed "the deadly theatre." Hall is

meeting the challenge in Texas, even as he ends his tenure in Rhode Island. Thus, for Hall the past is prologue to the future.

Guest and Associate Directors

Before discussing Hall's own directing repertoire, it should be noted that he does not direct all the season offerings at Trinity Rep or the Dallas Theatre Center. During the early years at Trinity, Hall did direct all productions except for one or two a season. With the advent of Project Discovery in 1966, Hall more frequently employed guest directors (such as Larry Arrick, Word Baker, Tony Giordano, Jonas Jurasas, Phillip Minor and Stephen Porter) and in-house directors who developed out of the acting ensemble (including Richard Jenkins, George Martin, Peter Gerety, Melanie Jones and Timothy Crowe). The number of productions Hall directed at Trinity thus decreased from five a year to four and then to three a year.

This pattern reflects the growth of the institution and the increased administrative responsibilities that Hall assumed as the theatre expanded into RISD Auditorium and, in 1973, moved into the double-stage facility at the Lederer Theatre. Productions were often overlapped, requiring two directors staging plays at the same time. Hall also relied on other directors to handle the summer season offerings, which began in 1978.

Since 1983-84, when Hall began to divide his time between Trinity Rep and the Dallas Theater Center, he has averaged two shows a year at Trinity and two a year at Dallas. His associate director, Ken Bryant, directs most of the other productions at the DTC, although guest and company directors are employed as well.

As artistic director of both theatres Hall has, however, supervised all the stage productions. He has a reputation for allowing other directors a great deal of independence, but he also has frequently stepped in to polish or even radically restage a show before opening. In discussing the scope of Hall's directing repertoire, only productions publicized as "directed by Adrian Hall" have been included because Hall does not take credit for other directors' productions that he restages.

Repertoire

Since his arrival in Providence, Adrian Hall had talked about creating an indigenous theatre for that community. The repertoire that he developed at Trinity had to meet the cultural needs of a diverse audience but it also had to challenge the artists. Thus, Hall believed there had to be a thorough mix of classic and contemporary productions, offering the best of the American and European dramatists. But the productions must have relevance--in both their content and their performance--for the Providence

community. An analysis of the repertoire of Trinity Rep reveals that Hall's institution has offered Providence just such a rich array of dramatic literature. Trinity's seasons consist of ten to twelve productions and are well-balanced. However, unlike many regional theatres, the repertoire does not fall into patterns. Except for the ubiquitous A Christmas Carol (adapted by Hall and Richard Cumming in 1977, after which it became an annual favorite), each season offers drama and comedy, classic and contemporary, but in no predictable pattern.

The repertoire of productions directed by Hall at Trinity falls into two categories: intimate drama and epic drama. This division reflects the two sides of Hall's talent that developed through his career. We have seen how Hall's earliest successes were the American realistic dramas of such authors as Tennessee Williams, Lillian Hellman and Horton Foote. With the experiments that grew out of Project Discovery, Hall developed theatre on a larger scale: bigger casts, expanded stage space, presentational acting, narrative scripts--epic in scope and style.

Nevertheless, Hall did not forsake the intimate or realistic drama, but has easily moved back and forth between both styles. According to Don Shewey in an article in American Theatre, this range in Hall's work means that he cannot be categorized as an "auteur" or conceptual director, such as Andrei Serban, Peter Sellars or Lee Breuer. Nor is

he a mainstream director, such as Marshall Mason, Mike Nichols or Jerry Zaks. Instead, Shewey declares, Hall occupies a middle ground with such directors as Garland Wright, Mark Lamos and John Malkovich, who "commute freely from classical to contemporary scripts, who don't recognize the distinction between mainstream and avant-garde theatre, who see text-oriented naturalism and visual-oriented non-naturalism as aesthetic choices rather than ideologies--who patch up the rift between Meyerhold and Stanislavsky, so to speak."[1]

Shewey's comments are interesting because he categorizes Hall with directors who are all a generation younger than Hall--so it is clear Hall was ahead of his time in casting off the limitations of specialization in one kind of theatre. Also, if Hall does, indeed, "patch up the rift between Meyerhold and Stanislavsky," it is because he did not discard the virtues of realistic theatre in favor of the virtues of non-realistic theatre but was able to integrate them within individual productions as well as within the broad range of repertoire. When Hall decided to split his time between Providence and Dallas, William A. Henry observed in Time Magazine that "it has always been [Hall's] gift, whether dealing with the naturalism he grew up with or the European expressionism he prefers, to find life lurking behind the artifice. That talent, rare even in the grandest

theatrical setting, is what makes Hall a man important enough to be shared."[2]

After the successes of the 1968-69 season (especially Brother to Dragons and Billy Budd) Hall was intent upon finding plays that would really connect with his audience. The following season was therefore devoted to the "New American Drama." In his program notes for The Old Glory, the season's opening production, Hall tries to define what that is. He provides a brief sketch of the development of American drama and decries how "we seem to have moved away from the center--ourselves, America, the American Conscience."[3] Hall's motivation for producing American drama is linked to his principal goal: to bring together the actor and the audience. As he explained in a 1971 letter to the Ford Foundation:

> Our record suggests that we have excelled in production of new plays and it has been the single thing that has made the greatest contribution to our identity and recognition....
>
> Part of the basic tenet of such theatre is that it is pertinent, timely, politically radical, etc. These areas seem to flow more easily toward our ultimate goals of total involvement with our community and society.[4]

Of the twenty-five seasons of Trinity Repertory Company, eighteen have included at least one original play and many have had two or three--a total to date of thirty-one world premieres and three American premieres.

Among the world premieres that Hall has staged are All to Hell Laughing by Trevanian [Rod Whitaker] (1964-65),

The Eternal Husband--Gabriel Gladstone's dramatization of a story by Dostoevsky (1965-66), The Grass Harp--a musical adaptation by Kenward Elmslie from Truman Capote's novel (1966-67), Years of the Locust by Norman Holland (1967-68), Down by the River Where Waterlilies Are Disfigured Every Day by Julie Bovasso (1971-72), Seduced by Sam Shepard (1977-78), The Whales of August by David Berry (1980-81), and The Web by Martha Boesing (1982-83).

Moreover, Hall has brought playwrights into the rehearsals, to develop new scripts which he has then staged. The late William Goyen premiered two such works at Trinity: House of Breath, Black/White (1969-70), based on his novel, and Aimee (1973-74) about evangelist Aimee Semple McPherson. James Schevill also saw the debut of two of his plays at Trinity. The first, in the 1969-70 season, was Lovecraft's Follies which focuses on the science fiction writer H.P. Lovecraft and the predicament of living in the nuclear age. Schevill's Cathedral of Ice, which was a study of Hitler's rise to power, premiered in the 1975-76 season. Portia Bohn, Hall's former colleague from the Pasadena Playhouse, wrote The Good and Bad Times of Cady Francis McCullum for the Trinity company in 1970-71. And Roland Van Zandt premiered Wilson in the Promise [sic] Land in the 1969-70 season which portrayed the confrontation between several American presidents and a group of hippie youths. This

production was selected for performances in New York at the ANTA Theatre in 1970.

The first of several original scripts by Adrian Hall and Richard Cumming was the 1972-73 Feasting with Panthers about Oscar Wilde's imprisonment in Reading Gaol. The idea grew out of the plot line of the 1968 Trinity production of Years of the Locust by Norman Holland. But Hall and Cumming went to documentary sources about nineteenth century British prisons and utilized much more of Wilde's own writings to create a very different, original script. After the 1973 production of Feasting with Panthers, they re-worked the material through tours to Boston and Philadelphia and finally crafted it into the 1974 television version for the "Theatre in America" series on the Public Broadcasting System, Channel WNET-TV (New York).

Hall and Cumming also jointly adapted James Purdy's novel, Eustace Chisholm and the Works for the 1975-76 season. In 1977-78 they revised the Owen Davis and Donald Davis adaptation of Edith Wharton's Ethan Frome. The following year they premiered their version of Dickens' A Christmas Carol, which is now an annual occurrence both at Trinity and the Dallas Theater Center. In 1978-79 they again collaborated on an original production called Uncle Tom's Cabin, A History. Utilizing numerous historical documents and Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel, Hall, Cumming and the company created an epic pageant of American history

which explored themes of slavery and women's suffrage, the personality and philosophy of Stowe, theatre history, black stereotypes and the complex interrelationships of all these subjects.

Adrian Hall has also developed a significant number of original adaptations, working in collaboration with the Trinity ensemble as well as with other authors. Already mentioned were the world premieres of the 1968-69 season: Billy Budd, which was developed from the Melville novella and from documentary sources of the period, and Brother to Dragons, which was adapted for the stage from the long poem of Robert Penn Warren (using much of Warren's own stage version). Son of Man and the Family was a collaboration between Adrian Hall and Timothy Taylor about the Charles Manson killings which had its world premiere in the 1970-71 season. In the season of 1982-83 Trinity premiered Hall's adaptation of the book by the lifetime convict and murderer, Jack Abbott, In the Belly of the Beast: Letters from Prison. The next season, Hall and the ensemble collaborated with James Reston, Jr. on Jonestown Express a work about the Reverend Jim Jones and the mass suicide of his followers in Guyana. The play was based on Reston's book, Our Father Who Art in Hell. And most recently in the 1986-87 season, Hall and his acting ensembles--first in Dallas and later that same year in

Providence--collaborated on a new adaptation of Robert Penn Warren's All the King's Men.

In enumerating the new works that Hall has chosen to stage at Trinity, it is apparent that this director is attracted to characters--both real and fictional--who inhabit the fringe of society: Jack Abbott, the Manson Family, the Reverend Jim Jones and his followers, the syphilitic, would-be poet Eustace Chisholm, the solitary Ethan Frome. Hall recognizes this tendency in his work and explains that, because he is gay, "it's Outsider Status, no matter what anyone else says, and part of me really likes that. It keeps me on edge, keeps me aware of what it's like not being fully accepted, what it's like being scorned and thought less of because you're different. I identify with society's rejects. Always have. That's what my work's about."[5]

Nevertheless, Hall is also drawn to charismatic figures who can inspire or inflame society: Aimee Semple McPherson, Huey Long, Oscar Wilde and Adolf Hitler. This interest in larger-than-life characters has naturally attracted Hall to Shakespeare and Brecht. At Trinity, Hall presented Julius Caesar in the 1967-68 season, Macbeth the following season, The Taming of the Shrew in the 1970-71 season and Troilus and Cressida a year later. In the 1976-77 Trinity season, Richard Kneeland starred in King Lear with Peter Gerety as the Fool. And in the 1982-83

season Hall had great success with The Tempest, a play he staged also as the season opener in 1987 at the Dallas Theater Center. Hall's first staging of a play by Bertolt Brecht was Mother Courage, produced in 1966 at the Milwaukee Repertory. At Trinity he staged The Threepenny Opera in 1967-68 and again in 1970-71. And in the season of 1983-84 he staged Galileo at both Providence and Dallas.

Hall has also frequently staged the works of Henrik Ibsen. He first directed An Enemy of the People at Trinity in the 1967-68 season and returned to it again in 1976 when he staged it at the Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis. In the summer of 1974, Adrian Hall and Richard Cumming were invited to collaborate on Peer Gynt for the Missouri Repertory. They continued their exploration of Ibsen's epic, creating their own adaptation of it for the 1974-75 season at TRC. Hall returned to Ibsen in the Trinity seasons of 1977-78 and 1983-84, staging Rosmersholm and The Wild Duck. The latter production was re-staged in 1983-84 at Dallas.

In addition to the epic and classic repertoire, Hall has been equally at home with modern American classics, both realistic dramas and light comedies. As has already been noted, Hall's first seasons at Trinity included one acts by Edward Albee and The Time of Your Life by William Saroyan. In the 1969-70 TRC season he staged Thornton Wilder's The Skin of Our Teeth and the next season Kaufman

and Hart's You Can't Take It with You. George M. Cohan's Seven Keys to Baldpate opened in Providence in the season of 1974-75 and proved extremely popular, resulting in a tour and revival two years later. In recent seasons Hall has chosen to direct contemporary comedies such as Peter Nichols' Passion Play (1984-85) and Christopher Durang's The Marriage of Bette and Boo (1985-86), both staged at TRC and the DTC in those years.

Trinity's earliest years included three productions of Tennessee Williams' plays directed by Hall: Orpheus Descending in 1964, The Glass Menagerie in 1965-66, and A Streetcar Named Desire in 1966-67. Hall returned to Williams in 1979-80, staging The Night of the Iguana at TRC. As part of the premiere season in the new Lederer Theatre in 1975, he directed two Lillian Hellman plays, The Little Foxes and Another Part of the Forest; both plays concern the family of the Hubbards and Hall used the same actors, performing in rotating repertory, to portray the same characters at different ages. Other Hall productions of American realistic drama include the 1980-81 Inherit the Wind and, in 1985-86, the only play of Clifford Odets which Hall has directed, The Country Girl.

Hall's interest in character-related dramas has naturally attracted him to Chekhov, Gogol and Dostoevsky. In 1965 Hall staged Uncle Vanya at the Milwaukee Repertory Company and the following season he staged The Three Sisters

at Trinity, with Blythe Danner, Pamela Payton-Wright and Katherine Helmond as the sisters and Barbara Orson as Natasha. The 1988-89 season at Trinity opened with Hall's production of The Cherry Orchard starring Barbara Orson as Ranyevskaya. Hall directed a dramatization of Gogol's story, Dead Souls, for the 1981-82 season and a dramatization of Dostoevsky's story, The Eternal Husband, premiered in the 1966-67 season.

Hall revealed an early interest in Pinter, staging The Caretaker in the 1964-65 season and The Birthday Party in 1966-67. He also was very interested in Sam Shepard and directed the world premiere of Seduced in 1976-77. Hall explains his connection with these authors as follows:

> I like to think of that whole school of writing as simply "to the bone." Without trim. If you are willing to work as an artist, to work to the bone and not decorate, to not let the theatrical cliché come into it--if you are willing to do that, then Harold Pinter and Sam Shepard are the playwrights to do it with. I have been stunned at how close I feel to Pinter. And that closeness comes out of relating to his terrors....Shepard's work is special, very much his, and not at all unlike my background.[6]

Trinity's seasons have frequently included Pinter and Shepard plays. In addition to those listed above, Hall has directed Shepard's Buried Child for the Trinity season of 1978-79. (He directed the same play for the Yale Repertory Theatre earlier that year.) The 1986-87 season at Dallas included Hall's production of Shepard's A Lie of the Mind. Hall directed the American premiere of Pinter's The

Hothouse in 1981-82. That occasion brought the playwright to Providence to participate in rehearsals. In April of 1982, Hall's production moved to the Playhouse Theatre on Broadway with the Trinity cast, including George Martin and the late Richard Kavanaugh.

Just as Pinter and Shepard hold special meaning for Hall, so does the contemporary German playwright, Franz Xaver Kroetz. A few of Kroetz's plays have appeared briefly in New York, but the playwright is largely unknown in America. Hall tested the waters in Dallas in 1987 when he scheduled Through the Leaves for a two-week run in his seventy-five-seat experimental space, In the Basement, at the Dallas Theater Center. Under the direction of Hall's associate director, Ken Bryant, the play was extremely popular, in spite of its nudity and sexually explicit language, which usually offends the Dallas audience. Hall then selected Kroetz for his sole directing assignment in the 1987-88 season at Trinity Rep, when he directed Mensch Meier. Just prior to that production he declared: "We're on the edge of something very interesting....It could be that [Kroetz] is not a writer for the United States....but I don't believe it. Whether or not we get any attention out of this is not really as important as whether my colleagues know, yes--here's somebody we've really got to take into the American theatre."[7] Hall's risk resulted in a very successful run at Providence. The play was then slated for

the 1988-89 season at Dallas but had to be cancelled when Richard Kavanaugh--who had created the role of Otto--died suddenly of an apparent heart attack.

Hall has been more inclined to produce American authors because his first concern is the material's relevance to its audience and his ensemble. However, he has fulfilled a certain responsibility to provide the best of European theatre as well. At Trinity he has directed Molière, Racine, Anouilh, Genet, Ionesco, Brendan Behan, O'Casey, Shaw and Duerrenmatt. The seasons at Trinity and Dallas have also been balanced by the productions of Hall's associate or guest directors, who have directed plays by Shakespeare, Pirandello, Georges Feydeau, Lanford Wilson, David Rabe, David Mamet, Caryl Churchill, August Wilson, and numerous other playwrights.

This brief overview is intended to give the reader some sense of the range Hall has demonstrated in his work and what kind of drama particularly interests him. But such a catalog does not reveal the remarkable innovation and creativity behind each of these productions. Adrian Hall's choice of repertoire at both his theatres has been designed to offer challenge on several levels. In the first place, it requires the actors to stretch themselves by playing a wide variety of genres and performance styles; often the actors are cast in multiple roles in a single production, further testing their creativity and innovation. In the

second place, Hall's repertoire challenges the spectator to continually re-define the theatrical experience. And finally, the repertoire challenges Hall himself to find new ways to reproduce this ancient ritual of theatre so it is always new, surprising and relevant.

Recognition

The efforts of Adrian Hall, in his dual capacity as director and artistic director, have uniquely shaped a theatre institution and a production style which emphasize the immediate experience of performance. In return, Hall and the Trinity Repertory Company have received significant national and international recognition--most notably the 1980/81 Antoinette Perry (Tony) Award for Best Repertory Theatre in America. In 1970 Hall and Trinity were honored for their production of new American drama by the Margo Jones Award. This award held special meaning for Hall because of the early influence Jones had on his ideas about theatre. Hall and Trinity also shared honors in 1982, receiving the Rhode Island Governor's Award for the national and international acclaim they had garnered for the state.

Hall has also received numerous individual honors, including four honorary doctorates, from Brown University (1972), Rhode Island College (1977), Roger Williams College (1982) and Bridgewater State College (1985). Hall was the recipient of the 1972 Academy Players Encore Award for major

contributions to theatre in Rhode Island and the 1976 Silver Jubilee Award from the Old Globe Theatre for his contribution to classic theatre. In 1976 he was awarded the New England Theatre Conference Award for outstanding creative achievement in the American theatre and NETC again honored him in 1980 with the Elliot Norton Award. In 1983 Hall was awarded the Person of the Year Award at the National Theatre Conference; he was inducted into the Hall of Fame of the Southwest Theatre Conference in 1986; and he received the Outstanding Achievement Award in Theatre from the Ohio Theatre Alliance in 1987.

Adrian Hall and Trinity have become known through the company's appearances outside of Rhode Island. In addition to being the first American company to perform at the (1968) Edinburgh International Festival, Trinity Rep has also often performed in Boston and Philadelphia. In 1981 the company toured Of Mice and Men and Buried Child for seven weeks through India and Syria, under the sponsorship of the United States International Communications Agency. Hall visited theatres in the Soviet Union in 1978 under the auspices of that same agency and he also was a delegate to the International Playwrights Conference in Budapest, Berlin and Warsaw in 1980 and was again a delegate to the International Theatre Conference in East Berlin in 1983. In 1986 he traveled to Moscow and Leningrad to discuss future artistic exchanges through Theatre Exchange International.

Moreover, Trinity Repertory Company and Adrian Hall have gained national acclaim for four television projects. The first two were the televised versions of Feasting with Panthers and Brother to Dragons, which aired on the Public Broadcasting System (WNET-TV New York) as part of the "Theatre in America" series in 1974 and 1975, respectively. In December of 1976, an original script by Adrian Hall and Richard Cumming, Life Among the Lowly, appeared on Public Broadcasting (KCET-TV Los Angeles). The last television production was House of Mirth, adapted from Edith Wharton's novel by Hall and Cumming, which featured Geraldine Chaplin and the Trinity ensemble and aired on WNET-TV in November of 1981.

Hall has also become known for his service with national theatre organizations. From 1968 to 1972 Hall was a member of the board of ANTA (American National Theater and Academy). He served as a Consultant to the Office of Planning and Analysis of the National Endowment for the Humanities in 1977 and was a member of the Policy and Grants Panels for Large Theatres at the National Endowment for the Arts from 1977 to 1979. During 1981-84 he served as a member of the Board of Directors of the Theatre Communications Group. He has also had several academic appointments and has lectured throughout the United States.

In spite of the accomplishments of Adrian Hall and the Trinity Repertory Company and in spite of the honors

they have received, it must be acknowledged that, outside regional theatre circles, Hall is largely unknown. Eugene Lee, who has continued to design for Hall while making his own mark in commercial theatre, stresses this point when he says, "The world at large has absolutely no idea of Adrian's work....In my case people just know me from my New York work, my TV work. The real work nobody knows anything about, or cares much about."[8] The reason for this lack of recognition is that Hall's successes have not occurred in the commercial New York theatre. When this director decided to focus his efforts on building an indigenous theatre outside the commercial arena, he also sacrificed the recognition that Broadway assures.

Hall has had only two opportunities to transfer a Trinity production to New York. The first was through a "Broadway showcase" presented by the ANTA Theater. This showcase was intended to bring in the best regional theatre productions for a short New York run. Trinity was invited to stage Roland Van Zandt's Wilson in the Promise [sic] Land and James Schevill's Lovecraft's Follies in the spring of 1970, the same season in which they had their world premieres at Providence. But Van Zandt's confrontational play was dependent on Hall's confrontational staging. When Hall refused to restage the production to accommodate the twelve-hundred-seat proscenium-style ANTA Theater, ANTA agreed to allow Hall and Eugene Lee to extensively renovate

the house by building over the orchestra seats. Thus an intimate, six-hundred-seat thrust stage theatre was created for the three-week run of the two plays. Wilson received the admiration of the critics, but failed to find its audience. Its run was curtailed after only a week and Lovecraft's Follies never made it to the boards at all.

Hall's second opportunity to work on Broadway arose with the 1982 production of Harold Pinter's play, The Hothouse. When TRC staged the American premiere of this early Pinter work, it attracted the attention of New York producer Arthur Cantor. Hall agreed to the transfer on the condition that the cast and design team be retained. The Trinity production thus transferred intact, making its debut at the Playhouse Theater on April 30, 1982. After much critical acclaim, The Hothouse was deemed a succès d'estime. Nevertheless, the production closed after a month's run.

Hall's limited success on Broadway is, to a certain extent, the result of his emphasis on process over product. Unlike Arvin Brown or Lloyd Richards, who have used their regional institutions to create new plays that move to Broadway (thus bringing those directors into the public eye), Hall has involved himself more in the process of creating indigenous theatre that meets his own needs rather than promoting the product of that creative endeavor. Thus, for all the original plays that Hall has fostered at Trinity

Rep, he has produced few dramas that have known a life after their Providence premieres.

Indeed, Hall has done little to protect even his own work. One example of this was his adaptation of Jack Abbott's book, In the Belly of the Beast. Hall believed he had obtained full rights for the book, but following the success of the Trinity production, two other productions followed: Robert Falls (of Chicago's Wisdom Bridge Theatre) staged it, and then Robert Woodruff (of the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles) further adapted the script and staged it. Although Woodruff admitted that his script was "ninety-five percent of Adrian's text," Hall had to share authorial credit with Woodruff.[9] So when the script won the 1984 Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Award for best literary adaptation, Hall had to share the award with Woodruff. Moreover, it was Woodruff's production--not Trinity's--that was invited to be presented in New York at the Joyce Theater in August of 1985.

It may be that Hall is just not effective in promoting himself or his creative properties. But his attitude is closely tied to his basic philosophy of theatre. Unlike his colleague, director Gordon Davidson, who has made the development of new playwrights and new dramatic literature the center of his theatre operation at the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles, Hall's theatre is centered

upon the actor. He explained his position before the Theatre Communications Group National Conference in 1980:

> I don't produce plays and direct plays and participate in the community of putting a play together in order to create a piece that will have a lifetime after me in the world of literature. That is not one of my goals....
>
> The problems are very immediate; what I have tried to do is to create a structure that will allow me to continue to work in ways that relate to me specifically, and that is all I am really interested in. By doing that I have broken down to the basic ingredients what the theatre experience is. It is, in its most simple terms, the confrontation between the actor and the audience. And then, when they confront each other, is what that experience is about.[10]

So in Hall's own terms, his lack of recognition in New York is of no real importance. He has been able to create amazing theatrical events because he has remained free of many of the concerns of commercial theatre. Thus he can stage a production like James Schevill's Cathedral of Ice with an ensemble of twenty-three actors and with staging that moved from an outdoor tent show to an empty theatre with multiple, moving stages that constantly redefined the playing area; and since Hall is not working with one eye on the lights of Broadway, he doesn't have to worry about the adaptability of such a demanding work to the commercial exigencies of New York.

Hall has been a pioneer in the regional theatre and has merited the respect and success he has found there. He may some day stage a Broadway hit or he may not. (He is currently refining his adaptation of All the King's Men for

possible production in New York under the auspices of Gregory Mosher and the Lincoln Center Theatre.) The important thing is that Adrian Hall has been persistent in working at his craft and constantly finding new avenues of artistic expression. Although he is not well-known in commercial theatre circles, his ceaseless effort has earned him wide recognition in the regional theatre arena. The Wall Street Journal stated that Hall is "a director unquestionably on the cutting edge of regional theater" and Kevin Kelly, critic for the Boston Globe, dubbed Adrian Hall "Regional Theater's Brilliant Maverick" and declared him to be "the single most adventurous American Director on the track. And the most selfless."[11]

New Directions

Hall's accomplishments during his quarter century at Trinity Repertory Company are serving as a model for his more recent challenges at the Dallas Theater Center. Since 1983 Hall has been dividing his time between the two institutions. Hall was attracted to Dallas because of his family (his mother and sisters still reside eighty miles away in Van, Texas). He was also curious to find out if his success in Providence was an anomaly, or whether it was possible to create a sister company, a second artist-centered institution, and develop an audience in a distinctly different cultural community.

When he first accepted the position at the DTC, Hall insisted that he must be able to stay with Trinity, believing he could guide both theatres, enriching them by the cross-fertilization of two ensembles and two different audiences. However, in 1987, he announced that he would phase himself out of the Providence theatre in order to focus his energies on Dallas and other creative opportunities. His successor at Trinity has recently been selected and he will direct his final production there in May 1989. After a quarter of a century of artistic leadership, Hall's tenure will end September 1, 1989, when Anne Bogart becomes the new artistic director of the Trinity Repertory Company.

Since 1983, when Adrian Hall began splitting his time between the theatres in Dallas and Providence, he has been diligently re-structuring the Texas institution on the Trinity model. He has established an ensemble and an audience development program, including Project Discovery and a Humanities Series. He has also more than doubled the stage space at the DTC in order to have the flexibility to produce the same range of drama as he has at Providence. After renovating the modified proscenium Frank Lloyd Wright stage, Hall (working with Eugene Lee) developed a tiny seventy-five to ninety-seat space, called In the Basement, below the mainstage theatre where more adventurous drama may be given a venue. (The Basement is already having an impact

on the Dallas audiences: Hall produced the first Kroetz play in Dallas in 1987 and already Kroetz has appeared onstage in at least one other Dallas theatre.)

The most exciting space, however, is the Arts District Theatre--a huge metal barn, constructed under Eugene Lee's supervision, in the heart of downtown Dallas. The ADT is theoretically a temporary structure until the Dallas Arts Complex is completed, but it has proven to be such a provocative setting, it remains to be seen whether Lee and Hall would really give it up. Most important, it has given Hall the number of seats and the alternate space that was essential to support the acting company. Moreover, it provides total flexibility because the seating arrangement can be changed for each production or season. In this way it recaptures much of the freedom the Upstairs Lederer Theatre offered before its seating units were made semi-permanent in the late 1970s.

Hall's efforts in Dallas have begun to earn him additional kudos. He was named Best Director of the 1987-88 season by the Dallas Observer and, for his 1987 production of The Tempest, he was named Best Director by the Dallas Theatre Critics' Forum.

Even as Adrian Hall is phasing himself out at Trinity Rep and is concentrating on the DTC, his vision for theatre has not changed. His goal is still to confront the audience and to bring them into the theatre experience. His

Dallas audience is much different from the Providence audience. In Dallas, Hall has to change the common belief that really good theatre only comes from New York. It is ironic that there, in the city where Margo Jones sparked the regional theatre movement, Hall is at work forty years later trying to convince the populace that extraordinary theatre can be made right at home. Nevertheless, Dallas also offers Hall a fresh opportunity to change society's perception of the artist and the art of the theatre. Not willing to rest on the laurels gathered at Trinity and around the world, Adrian Hall is back on the front lines, calling for revolution.

Adrian Hall also has his eyes on the horizon--moving into the areas of television and film are possibilities he is considering. He was commissioned by independent producer Michael Fitzgerald to write a screenplay of the Edith Wharton novella, Ethan Frome and expects to start shooting the film, which he will also direct, in the coming year. Nevertheless, it is hard to think of Hall without the theatre environment where he has developed his unique process and where he evolved his idea of theatre. It is to be hoped that he will find a way to integrate his interests in media and theatre in the years ahead.

Conclusion

In the preceding pages I have provided a brief history of Adrian Hall's career, to show how he developed the principles which inform his process as a director. As we have seen, Hall perceives the theatre event to be a confrontation between the actor and the spectator that has the potential to change one's life.

In part 2 I will explore the implications of Hall's emphasis on the confrontation between the actor and the audience and how that emphasis informs Hall's day-to-day directing technique: how he perceives and utilizes the dramatic text, how he manipulates the actor-audience relationship in the theatrical space, how he works with his actors to interpret the text through the style of performance and how he collaborates with designers to incorporate the other production values (lighting, costumes, properties and set pieces, sound, music and the special effects of coups de théâtre).

In order to show Hall's process at work, I have selected one of his most significant productions to serve as an example in each of the functional areas. I will also discuss other Hall productions in order to illustrate specific points. Chapter 9 will focus on Hall's 1987 production of The Tempest, at the Dallas Theater Center, and will aim to summarize this director's process by showing its application in one exemplary production.

PART TWO: THE PROCESS

Chapter V

THE DIRECTOR AND THE TEXT

> **One thing we seldom allow ourselves--it's not the luxury, it's the practicality--of any kind of exploration. Everybody is supposed to know the answers the first day of rehearsal, you know?...It's like there's got to be a dark period. It could lead us into the light, but that's the period when you don't know what you want. Just don't let anything get between you and the text and your sensibilities and how that thing can begin to open for you and begin to open for the author.**
>
> **--Adrian Hall, interview, 9 October 1987**

On March 24, 1987, Adrian Hall and the Trinity Repertory Company passed an important milestone in their shared artistic journey. On that evening, nineteen years after the memorable premiere of Robert Penn Warren's Brother to Dragons, the Providence audience witnessed another thrilling debut: Hall's theatrical staging of Warren's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, All the King's Men.

The story of this production and how it evolved is indicative of Hall's unique method of adapting fiction and documentary materials for stage presentation. The evolution of this work also reveals much about Hall's attitude toward the theatrical text in general (including classic, contemporary and original works) and how this director exploits the text to maximize the confrontation between the actor and spectator in the theatrical event.

The Development of All the King's Men

Ever since Adrian Hall's success in staging Brother to Dragons, Robert Penn Warren had urged him to adapt All the King's Men to the stage. Warren, the first poet laureate of America, had always hoped to see his characters come alive on the stage. He had, in fact, developed his 1946 novel from a verse play of his own (Proud Flesh, written in 1938) about the rise to power and the assassination of Louisiana Governor Huey Long. Warren's novel, which in 1946 earned him the first of his three Pulitzer Prizes, concerns a fictional character, named Willie Stark, who was modelled on that legendary despot. Stark's evolution from a well-meaning backwoods lawyer to a thoroughly corrupt political boss is chronicled through the parallel story of a newspaper reporter, Jack Burden, who rejects his aristocratic background to work for Stark and who risks becoming corrupted by that association.

In 1948 Warren again formulated his epic story in a play that was staged by Erwin Piscator at the Off-Broadway President Theatre in New York. Warren, however, felt that the novel was yet to be fully realized in dramatic form. By the time Adrian Hall decided to stage All the King's Men, there had been a movie (in 1949 with Broderick Crawford portraying Stark), subsequent New York productions, and an opera (Carlisle Floyd's Willie Stark, which had an undistinguished premiere at the Houston Opera House in 1981).

Hall decided to take on the formidable challenge of adapting Warren's lengthy masterwork for the stage in the 1986-87 season at the Dallas Theater Center. It was Hall's third year there as artistic director. Prior to that time, Hall had relied on restaging productions at Dallas that had originated in Providence and he had depended upon casting his key company members from Trinity in most of the principal roles in Dallas. By 1986, however, Hall had developed a corps of strong Dallas actors, and he wanted to utilize their talents in a production that would speak directly to his Southern audience. When All the King's Men premiered at the Arts District Theater of the Dallas Theater Center, it proved to be the ideal vehicle to showcase the actors and to display Hall's talent for adapting epic works to the stage. Warren's classic novel was staged in Hall's fluid, energetic style with songs from Randy Newman's 1974

Good Old Boys album. Its premiere in November of 1986 took the city by storm.

Four months after the premiere of All the King's Men in Dallas, Hall was in Providence, re-working the text and tailoring the adaptation to the Trinity company's needs. The revised text was produced in the spring of 1987 in the upstairs space of Trinity's Lederer Theatre. Hall is currently at work refining the text once more at the request of Gregory Mosher, Director of New York's Lincoln Center Theatre. Mosher wants Hall to direct All the King's Men as part of the Lincoln Center series at the Lyceum Theatre on Broadway.

This process of staging and re-staging a work is a typical feature in Hall's career. American theatres, unlike their European counterparts, operate under a system of production which does not usually allow the artist to refine a work over a great period of time. Hall, however, has managed to revive several works over a period of years in order to have this opportunity to refine and work more deeply into the material than is possible within a rehearsal period of only four to six weeks. For example, Brother to Dragons, premiered at Trinity in November of 1968, was restaged in 1973 at Trinity, and again the next summer for tours in several New England states, and in 1975 Hall adapted Dragons for television and the Trinity production

was filmed for the Public Broadcasting System's "Theatre in America" series on WNET-TV, New York.

The Literary Text Is Not Inviolable

Since Hall's perception of the theatrical text is rooted in his definition of the theatre event as a confrontation between the actor and the spectator, the actor--as opposed to the playwright--holds center stage in Hall's theatre. Therefore, the script, as well as the stage setting, production elements, and so forth, are made to conform to the needs of the performer and the performance event. And so, for Hall, the text is not inviolable, but is a mutable element to be exploited in the service of the theatrical confrontation. Hall's directorial philosophy thus emphasizes the performance text over the literary text, where the performance text is defined as a literary text adapted to the needs of the performance situation. So Hall's focus is on the theatrical structure and how the play functions through its staging before an audience. Speaking of this attitude towards the play, the critic Diana Cobbold observed that Hall believes that most people "don't differentiate between the performing experience and the literary experience, and they should. To illustrate this, [Hall] pointed out that O'Neill reads one way and performs quite another. People must be ready to accept the theatre as quite apart from other media, and the performers must

work to adapt anything they do into theatre's own terms; those terms are not like those of any other art form."[1]

In claiming that the theatre has its own laws and that those laws are not subservient to the laws of dramatic literature, Hall avoids the traps of trying to unearth the author's intent or of trying to reconstruct a text for a "museum" production of a given play. As Robert Brustein explains, "in grappling with the questions of the inviolability of the text and the desire for 'definitive productions,' Hall is going right to the heart of the problem confronting the contemporary theater artist in his relationship to the audience--the need to distinguish between an art frozen in time and one that is fluid, spontaneous, alive."[2] Hall chooses to create a living theatre which will constantly delve into the meaning a text may hold for us today, rather than attempting authentic reproduction.

The manner in which Hall adapted All the King's Men reflects his perception of the literary and the performance text. Working with two dramaturgs (Oren Jacoby and Marsue Cumming MacNicol) and his Assistant, Kimberly Cole, Hall and his cast developed the script from a five-hundred-page computer print-out of all the dialogue of Warren's novel. Beginning with about six hours of material, Hall refined the performance text down to about four hours. When the first preview audience in Dallas left before the last act began,

Hall gathered his troops for a marathon rehearsal, cutting out forty minutes of text and one intermission. The second night of preview performances the audience stayed to give the cast a standing ovation. Hall's constant concern throughout this unwieldy process was to translate the literary text into theatrical terms. When he restaged the work four months later at Trinity Rep, Hall again refined the text--adding and cutting lines and scenes and rearranging episodes.

The Director as Spectator

Adapting a novel or documentary material to the stage affords the director-adapter a great deal of freedom in choosing what to discard, what to retain and how to arrange the plot and character elements. Hall has also demanded this freedom to tailor the text to the performance situation when he is working with a classic or contemporary play. He is well known for his rearrangement and even deconstruction of playwrights' texts--something which does not often endear him to the playwright. This practice does not imply that Hall is contemptuous of the literary text. That is, he does not cut or rearrange a text just to make it different. For example, he was scrupulous in not changing a word in the Roger Downey translation of Franz Xaver Kroetz's script for Mensch Meier, and he had a German consultant (Gerhardt Schulte) on hand to elucidate difficult passages

in the text. Similarly, he exhibited extreme reluctance to change the text of Shakespeare's The Tempest: he altered only the most archaic phrases and, after great consideration, decided to omit the masque sequence, which is often done with this text.

So Hall is not disrespectful of the author's text. On the other hand, he is not a director such as Elia Kazan, who puts himself "in the author's shoes" or who tries "to be the author."[3] Instead, Hall places himself in the position of the audience. He tries to be the spectator. The difference in the vantage points of these directors is significant. Of course, any competent director must be concerned with both the truth of the text and how that truth is successfully communicated to the audience and so it is with Hall and Kazan. Nevertheless, the first priority for Kazan is the author and for Hall it is the audience.

Hall's concern, therefore, is not only that the text be fully realized on the stage, but that it is also effectively transmitted "across the footlights" and this means that it is presented so that the audience can hear and see it in a fresh, new way. And the choices Hall makes in communicating the text may or may not correspond to how the author expected his text to be realized in performance.

Moreover, Hall is aware that the communication of the text--and this is especially true of the classic text--is influenced by two important factors: (1) spectators

bring with them preconceptions based upon their memories of past productions and staging conventions and (2) the modern audience is inclined to think in visual images rather than language. As Hall explains:

> I do not advocate, nor have I ever advocated, burning the text....I <u>am</u> saying that before the text can be instrumental in the confrontation of those two elements [the actor and spectator] and helpful to you, it has got to have the dust blown off of it--have the cobwebs washed away. It has got to be presented in some kind of way that allows it to penetrate that other half of the artistic experience, the person who has come to participate. That person who, just like a crocodile, has built up all kinds of tough hides on itself by watching the same kinds of things being done in entertainment forms. You must get to that part of him that keeps him from putting the walls up and resisting you.[4]

The Episode and the "Clothesline" of Events

From Hall's vantage point--where he acts as surrogate for the spectator--a principal concern is that the story line is clearly articulated. It is more difficult, however, when the plot does not move forward in simple, linear time, but jumps back and forth in time and space as Hall's scripts often do. Much of Hall's rehearsal time is devoted to achieving the clarity of the story line. Hall breaks down his script into episodes and (like Brecht and Meyerhold) considers the episode as the unit of action rather than the act or scene. The episodes (or "events" or "signposts") are strung together on a "clothesline" of action. This "clothesline" is the organizing principle of the play's content. During the rehearsal period, the

episodes on the clothesline are subject to rearrangement. As the text is read and discussed throughout the rehearsals, Hall keeps his options open, always searching for the ideal arrangement that will most effectively communicate the human truths in the text.

On the cover page of Hall and Richard Cumming's original television script, Life Among the Lowly, they offer this quotation from Marcel Proust: "Life is composed of a series of isolated moments given meaning by their arrangement in the memories of the man who experienced them."[5] This idea relates to how Hall perceives the literary text in that the director sees his function as elucidating those "isolated moments" and, in the staging of the play, giving them meaning by juxtaposing them in the most effective way. For Hall a play's structure is, more often than not, more akin to the modern novel and film in which jump-cuts, flashbacks, scenes of memory, fantasy, and visions of the future can be strung together to create reality, as opposed to being arranged in strict chronological order.

In the previous adaptations of All the King's Men, Hall sensed that Warren's dual development of the character of Willie Stark and of the reporter, Jack Burden (who serves as the novel's narrator) were thrown out of balance. The charismatic character of Stark invariably stole center stage, and Burden's development was curtailed. In Hall's

adaptation he sought to rectify this imbalance. It was Jack's development that threaded together the action in Warren's novel, so that was the "clothesline" Hall restored to the dramatization. The result is a performance text that is much truer to its source than earlier versions and which therefore dismisses any idea that Hall does not respect the literary text. As in Warren's novel, Jack Burden and Willie Stark are seen to be two halves of a whole--the one not fully discernible without the other. The stage play presents Burden's experiences and observations of Stark's rise to power by beginning near the end of the story and, through memory and recollection, recalls the intertwined lives of Burden and Stark. Unlike the 1940s adaptation, the text does not begin with the assassination and then flash back to the beginning and work chronologically forward; Hall's version begins at the very end of Warren's novel--when Burden has acknowledged his connection to his fellow man--then it jumps back to Stark at the peak of his power, then to Stark before his rise to power, and so forth. As Proust describes, the isolated moments of the life of Jack Burden are invested with meaning according to how he arranges and recalls them.

Hall's early experimentation with moving back and forth in time and locale prepared him well for All the King's Men. One of his earliest experiments with stage time was in 1968 in the first Warren production, Brother to

Dragons. The stage version of the play retained the almost surreal sense of Warren's poem, which presents the action as a nightmare conjured up in the consciousness of Thomas Jefferson. The horrible deed that is the climax of the play was eerily foreshadowed with screams and the repetitive lines of the apprehensive chorus that foretold the disaster.

Hall has continued to experiment with non-linear dramatic action throughout his career. Feasting with Panthers is the best example of how Hall evolves a text through a series of productions and how the play's structure is honed during that process. As has been noted previously, this play was developed in 1973 by Adrian Hall and Richard Cumming from historical and documentary sources. The idea of the play grew out of a 1968 Trinity Rep production of Years of the Locust by Norman Holland. Holland's script was mostly a linear story which told of Oscar Wilde's two-year imprisonment in Reading Gaol on a charge of sodomy. There was one section, however, where the chorus of actors broke out of the very grim prison atmosphere with an irreverent song and dance in the style of a Gilbert and Sullivan operetta. In the 1973-74 season, when Hall and Cumming decided to create their own work about Wilde's incarceration, this scene was the key to their version of that historical incident.

Hall and Cumming focused their rehearsal exploration on primary source materials: actual prison rule books,

correspondence of the Marquess of Queensberry (who was instrumental in sending Wilde to jail), accounts of the prison system and Wilde's own works, including The Importance of Being Earnest, Salomé, The Portrait of Dorian Gray, The Fisherman and His Soul and De Profundis.

Holland's script began with Wilde's entrance into prison and moved forward in linear fashion, except for one fantasy sequence that occurred as an hallucination of Wilde during two weeks of solitary confinement. It was this scene that seemed to capture the Wildean spirit the best, so Hall and Cumming decided to structure their production subjectively, telling it from Wilde's point of view. Thus, the script for Feasting with Panthers indicates that the time of the play is "the Late Victorian Era, ranging forward and backward between 1880 and 1900" and the place of the play is "Reading Gaol and the mind, memory, imagination, fantasy and work of Oscar Wilde."[6] The production opened with Wilde playing his own caricature (Gilbert and Sullivan's character, Bunthorne, from Patience). The action of the play then moved fluidly back and forth through Wilde's experiences before, during and after his imprisonment. The prisoners portrayed all the men and women from his life, stories and plays. Only one actress, Jobeth Williams, was used in Feasting with Panthers. All the other roles, including Salomé, Wilde's mother and Lady Bracknell,

were played by actors who metamorphosed into characters in Wilde's real or fictional life.

Feasting with Panthers was further revised and refined on numerous occasions through tours around New England theatres. Its fluid, non-linear structure is typical of many works adapted and/or developed by Hall and the Trinity acting ensemble. In 1975 the critic Julius Novick, writing in the New York Times, described Hall's characteristic productions as

> hallucinatory, phantasmagoric, total-theater collages, shifting freely backward and forward in time and space, full of music and spectacle.... Unlike the hallucinatory fantasies of other directors, however, Hall's are firmly rooted in specific external realities--often in historical facts. Discernible within each of them, for all the time-shifts and fragmentations, is a story. As somebody once said about something else, Hall's productions always have a beginning, a middle, and an end, though not necessarily in that order.[7]

Mediation

Hall has developed a number of techniques for manipulating the text to enable his audience to keep up with his rapid shifts in time and space. One such technique is to mediate between the characters and the audience by using a narrator, a chorus, prologues, epilogues, and so forth. The narrator can link episodes together and also provide a point of view. In All the King's Men Jack Burden is both protagonist and narrator, as he is in Warren's novel. Other examples of narrators Hall has added to clarify a play's

progression include the "Contemporary Figure" which he added in his 1967 Julius Caesar, Mrs. Stowe in his 1978 historical collage of Uncle Tom's Cabin, A History, and Bertolt Brecht in James Schevill's translation of Galileo, staged at both Trinity and Dallas in 1983. In his 1976 production of An Enemy of the People, at the Guthrie Theatre, Hall deconstructed the text and began with Act Five, intercutting the other acts as flashbacks and tying them all together through a voiceover narration by the character Petra (Dr. Stockmann's daughter).

In addition to writing in the part of a narrator, Hall also utilizes his acting ensemble as a chorus that speaks, sings, and often plays musical instruments. To give just one of numerous examples, in All the King's Men Hall uses his ensemble of seventeen to nineteen actors and singers to serve as such a multi-functional chorus, representing the "haves" and "have-nots" of Louisiana in the 1930s. This chorus embodies a basic tension that Hall perceived in the novel and which provided the concept for the stage setting as well. The theatre was arranged like a football stadium, with spectators seated on two sides of a long playing area; at either end of the space there stood a structure--on one side there was a broken-down clapboard shack atop a muddy incline and opposite it stood a grandiose Statehouse facade of pale stone.

In productions such as All the King's Men, the ensemble serves as a kind of group storyteller which establishes a direct, personal relationship to the audience facilitating the time and locale transformations. Hall has also frequently used prologues in both his original works and appended to standard playscripts, either to get the audience into the spirit of the production by setting mood and atmosphere, to provide them with information on the history that led up to the play's action, or to delineate how the history of the play relates to the contemporary audience. In All the King's Men the ensemble enters and begins to sing Randy Newman's song, "Louisiana," a song about the floods of 1927 which presents a moving, soulful prologue about the poor man's struggle against the forces of nature. This prelude establishes atmosphere, introduces the ensemble and presents one of Warren's major themes.

As an example of how Hall prepares his audience for an historical play, in his 1973 production of The Royal Hunt of the Sun Hall provided his audience with information on the Incan civilization and Pizarro's conquest by means of little speakers--like those at drive-in movies--which were positioned by the spectators' seats and which offered pre-recorded lectures on the historical background. (The idea for the speakers and the set of scaffolding and bare light bulbs developed from a trip Hall had made to Mexico

where the Aztec ruins were surrounded by scaffolding and there were little meters for dispensing information.)

For his 1981 production of Inherit the Wind, Hall cut and re-arranged the twenty-five-year-old script of Jerome Lawrence and Robert Lee in order to draw parallels between the issues of the Scopes "monkey" trial and the modern day constitutional battle concerning creationism. Hall's text eliminated almost everything except the trial scenes and focused on the courtroom debate between Matthew Brady (William Jennings Bryan) and Henry Drummond (Clarence Darrow) over the issue of the teaching of Darwin's theory of evolution by Bertram Cates (Scopes). But Hall also added a prologue which examined the political issues of creationism (which was at that time being contested in the California Courts by a Moral Majority lawsuit). Hall's prologue incorporated an actual documented interview with President Ronald Reagan in which he favored allowing creationism to be taught in the schools along with Darwin's "theory," and a satire of a "Good Morning America" talk show dealing with cloning and test tube babies.

Connecting the Past and the Present

Hall's ceaseless concern for keeping his audience engaged means that he gives great importance to delineating how the past and the present are interconnected. As James Schevill points out, "What has made [Hall's] best work

distinctive is his ability to combine a sense of history and contemporary events. By the 'distance of history,' Hall means creating an awareness of how the past relates to the present, using the objective distancing of authentic, historical details to show how they relate to our current lives."[8]

This concern is certainly one of the reasons that Hall has been attracted to the work of Robert Penn Warren. The principal theme in All the King's Men is how each man's life is intertwined with other men's lives, which makes each of us responsible for those lives we touch. Or, as Jack Burden describes the lesson life has taught him: "I learned that the world is all of one piece--like an enormous spider web. And if you touch it at any point, however lightly, the vibration ripples out to the remotest perimeter and the drowsy spider feels the tingle and is drowsy no more."[9] Thus, Hall brought the Burden character back to the center of the text so the spectator would have a guide on the journey through history and myth, as he explained in an interview: "I think the heart of [All the King's Men] has got to be anchored in a contemporary man. Then the myth-sized character's behavior becomes something more than just eccentricity. If you were inside [Willie Stark], it seems to me that your shock and dismay and joy would not be nearly as great as it is if you're riding along with a person whom you understand totally."[10]

Most of Hall's original productions (and many of the scripts by other authors that he developed at Trinity Rep) have concerned real and fictional characters that have become American icons. And Hall has staged these plays in a forceful, theatrical style to confront the audience with its history and the myths surrounding that history. As Maciej Karpinski observes:

> Adrian Hall's theatre is an epic one by principle, and the production of All the King's Men was a significant example of it. It was not only that the director freely used the elements of the epic form like Brechtian displays and Piscator's projections which are well known from theatrical history. In Hall's epic theatre the universal memory of man took the stage to speak in its own voice. Voices of the dead are the voices of the past. If we do not listen to it, we will not be able to understand ourselves. The theatre is and should be the place where this voice is heard.[11]

The theatre of Adrian Hall thus attempts to bring the spectator into contact with himself and the icons of his society--to make him aware of his place in the skein of time. As Robert Penn Warren writes, "historical sense and poetic sense should not, in the end, be contradictory, for if poetry is the little myth we make, history is the big myth we live, and in our living constantly remake."[12]

Exploding the Text

Time, the artist and the audience, however, are constantly moving, changing. So it is Hall's belief that the director's process must also reflect this constantly shifting perspective. The inquiry into the text is ongoing.

In his director's notes on his deconstructed version of Inherit the Wind, Hall posed this question: "Why can't plays and play productions be standardized like an auto assembly line? The answer of course is because the elements that constitute the theatre experience: the text, the production values and the audience are all altered by time. And the theatre event always occurs right now!"[13]

Hall constantly stresses to his ensemble that theatre can only happen now, in the present tense, as actors interrelate with the audience. But Hall also applies this to the director's process, trying to start at point zero, with a clean slate. In an interview published in The Director's Voice, Hall declared this conviction:

> I like to think that the one thing you take into a rehearsal hall every day of your life--in addition to a cup of black coffee--is your ability to be a virgin all over again, your ability to be naive, to start at point zero. To find the essence of the theatre, one has to look continually at opposites. You never see white so clearly as when it's placed against black, and you never acknowledge laughter quite so clearly as when it breaks your heart....It won't happen unless you keep pushing all the elements together in ways that result in an explosion. Most of the time it doesn't happen and you've got to be able to pick up those pieces tomorrow and try to push them a little closer to something that comes alive.[14]

"Exploding the text" is an expression that holds special meaning for Hall's ensembles, but one that the director must constantly explain to those outside the rehearsal room. It is Hall's way of expressing the need to dig deeply into the text, to get past one's own

preconceptions, memories of past productions, and to find the meaning of this particular text at this particular point in time. It does not mean to destroy the text. On the contrary, it means to discover it. Richard Jenkins is an actor who has been a principal member in the Trinity ensemble since 1970 and who has developed a style of direction that clearly reflects Hall's influence. Jenkins understands "exploding the text" to mean that Hall is "just saying 'Don't take anything for granted in his text....Find out what this play means to you.' And that's what he means about exploding it. I mean, it's a scary term because it sounds like you have to find a different way of doing it. But what he's saying is you have to find your way of doing it."[15]

Hall's phrase, "to explode the text," purposely carries a connotation of violent disruption. This inference stems from Hall's belief that it takes a tremendous effort to break open and to excavate the inner truth of a text, just as it takes tremendous force to get under the spectator's psychological armor. Thus, after numerous revisions of the text and staging of Feasting with Panthers, Trinity's performance in Philadelphia prompted an explosive response. This response was particularly satisfying for Hall, who explains that "the Philadelphia experience was amazing because of the instant and almost violent reaction to the material. Many audience members walked angrily out.

The 'pro' critics wrote with as much fire and enthusiasm as those who did not like the production. I knew that we were on the right track, that the material had been broken into, exploded. The very essence of the drama--conflict--was there: naked, to be experienced, felt by the audience."[16]

Hall's process of exploring (or, as he would say, exploding) the text is three-fold: (1) he endeavors to get his creative ensemble to begin at point zero, in order to experience the text as if for the first time; (2) working with his fellow artists, he spends hours mining the secrets of the text, finding the connecting links between the author's words and the artists' shared experiences; and (3) he searches for unexpected, dynamic ways to bring that experience to his audience, so the spectator gets connected to the text as well.

The Director's Preparation

Working with Adrian Hall for the first time, one might think that Hall begins the rehearsals with little or no preparation. This perception usually changes during the rehearsal process, but Hall does establish an atmosphere of beginning at "point zero." He prefers not to distribute the playscripts until the first rehearsal and he frequently begins rehearsals without having cast the ensemble members in specific roles. In this way, the artists enter the

rehearsal room with a minimum of preconceptions and are encouraged to discover the play together.

When he was asked about his pre-rehearsal preparation, Hall said that in his early career he did extensive preparation: "I went through the phase of a prompt book with absolute detail about the direction you're going to go, all made out and ready by the time I started a production....That's the only way you get all those unanswered, unformed questions into something that makes it possible to come and work;" but now Hall feels "I can sometimes marry material in one day, if I can get into rehearsal and I can suddenly fall in love with that material."[17]

Hall used to make notes during his rehearsal preparation and extracts from these records appeared in occasional programs or materials for Project Discovery. Nevertheless, Hall always made it clear that such notes were for his use alone to help clarify his reactions in reading the play. For example, writing about his notes for the 1967 production of Julius Caesar, Hall declares that "the notes that follow are set down for my own use when I have read the play several times and are never communicated to the actors in the form they take in these early scribblings. Because of the complicated craft of acting, abstract ideas can become tools only when presented in concrete, objective terms."[18] Hall goes on to say that such notes are not meant

to provide a concept for the production since "that, too, comes with the daily searching and hammering away at just what is possible with these ideas, these words, these actors, this theatre and this time and atmosphere.... They are springboards and tracers for my own feelings. They lead me on and point to the objectives I hope to attain."[19]

Although today Hall claims that he does less formalized preparation than he did in the beginning, he still does his homework: he is a voracious reader, a student of history and a firm believer in visiting locales that may provide a tangible sense of the play's atmospheric qualities. Roger Morgan, who worked as Hall's lighting designer for almost ten years, beginning in 1967, said in an interview with the author that "you might think [Hall] wasn't very prepared for what he's doing sometimes--getting into the early stages of the production."[20] Morgan goes on, however, to describe numerous experiences of attending a production meeting at Hall's house only to find dozens of books spread all over the place and "he'd read them all. He's just a sponge. He's informed about this stuff usually far more than anybody imagines. It's disarming....He's done his homework. But he's not a guy who walks around and talks about it....Then I think he throws it all away. I think that's what the proper approach is in any creative field....That becomes background to your own interpretation of what the statement is."[21]

Morgan's description of Hall's preparation process is surely accurate. The diversity of sources Hall brings to the rehearsal room is exemplified in a rehearsal journal compiled during the 1983 production of The Tempest at Trinity Rep. The journal, which was produced by the Brown University-Trinity Dramaturgy Project, recorded that the following items were consulted during the "at table" exploration of the text: accounts of the Sir George Somers' expedition which was shipwrecked in the Bermudas in Shakespeare's time; information about the Elizabethan explorer, Gosnold, who discovered Cuttyhunk and Martha's Vineyard in the sixteenth century; notes of the French poet Aimé Césaire on his own adaptation of The Tempest; Jan Kott's essay, "Prospero's Staff;" The Formal Share, by French poet and Resistance leader René Char; and Leo Marx's The Machine in the Garden.[22] In Hall's next staging of The Tempest, at Dallas in 1987, the primary sources in evidence were Isaac Asimov's Asimov's Guide to Shakespeare and Jan Kott's The Bottom Translation. Hall's sources are not necessarily literary, however. For Franz Xaver Kroetz's play, Mensch Meier, which Hall directed in 1988, in addition to having a native German consultant (Gerhardt Schulte) on hand, the director had his production intern (Edward Sobel) research and bring in detailed demographic studies regarding German society between 1973 and 1978. The sources are determined according to the play at hand.

As noted, Hall also frequently goes to locations that might help realize the play's atmosphere or help the director feel more strongly connected to the text. Often the actors and designers go along as well. For example, for his prison plays, Feasting with Panthers, Son of Man and the Family and In the Belly of the Beast, Hall and his colleagues visited penal institutions where they talked with the inmates and got an authentic sense of the sounds and textures of the harsh metal environments, to aid them in developing both the sets and characterizations. For an authentic sense of the act of butchering (for the murder scene in Brother to Dragons), Hall and designer Eugene Lee went to butcher shops. For Billy Budd the director and designers visited the USS Constitution ("Old Ironsides") in Boston Harbor. This kind of field research, Hall feels, gives a director a sense for the material and stimulates an emotional response that can give the director the "hook" or personal connection to the material.

Whether Hall is developing an original text or working with a classic or contemporary author's work, his process is the same--to pull together a great mass of information which can be used to stimulate the actors in their exploration of the play's text and historical, sociological background. As Roger Morgan has suggested, however, once the materials are thoroughly reviewed, they

are set aside and Hall seeks his own connection to the world of the play.

Exploring the Text "at Table"

One of the most unusual features of Hall's rehearsal process is the time he spends "at table," that is, having the actors seated around work tables, reading and discussing the play, prior to blocking the play. Many directors, such as Marshall Mason, dislike spending more than one or two rehearsals reading the play, but prefer to do improvisations or begin blocking almost immediately.[23] For Adrian Hall, however, the time at table has gradually increased over the years so that, depending upon the text, he may spend from one and a half to three weeks at table.

For example, the three-person Mensch Meier was "put on its feet" after only about a week or thirty rehearsal hours. For Hall's second production of The Tempest (at Dallas in 1987), the actors explored the text at table for two and a half weeks (out of a total five-and-a-half week period) or approximately seventy hours of rehearsals. (Hall usually rehearses six days a week for five hours a day in the initial rehearsal period.) When Hall and his ensemble are adapting new material for the stage, the director schedules additional rehearsal time, most of which is spent exploring the text at table. Thus, All the King's Men had a six-week rehearsal period, of which three weeks were spent

at the table. Generally, therefore, Hall reserves approximately three weeks of rehearsals for staging the play and integrating the technical elements.

The time spent at the table exploring the myriad features of the play's text is crucial for this director. During this stage of rehearsal Hall formulates the production's specific problems and begins to search for solutions. He divides the director's tasks into two categories--the technical aspects, such as the number of sets, stage effects, and so forth and the problem of getting the actor to start with a clean slate.

For the technical matters, Hall has his designers sit in on rehearsals at the outset. When they cannot be present, their staff is on hand to take down any ideas that may be suggested during the workday. In lieu of regularly scheduled production meetings, the design staff (and the administrative staff) are accustomed to catching a few moments with the director during breaks or at the end of rehearsals. Designs, like the concept and ideas for the staging, are developed in "real time" during the day-to-day rehearsals. As much as possible, all the artists begin at "point zero" and collaborate throughout the rehearsal period.

Most theatrical designers do not favor this method of working. When Hall has directed outside his own companies (at the Guthrie Theatre, for example) he has found

that the designers expect his input as much as a month prior to rehearsals so they can meet their production deadlines. Hall has created a situation in his own institutions, however, where he and the designers build the production during the limited rehearsal period. Hall has been able to do this because his collaboration with the same designers has continued over many years and they have developed a mutual understanding of what they want to achieve and can utilize a verbal shorthand. Indeed, a "production meeting" between designer Eugene Lee and Adrian Hall may seem mystifying. While Hall may go on at length to describe a problem, sometimes he just raises a simple question, Lee makes a note in silence and a day or two later a solution appears on stage. More about Hall's collaboration with his design team will follow in later chapters.

Starting at Point Zero

The director's second task is to get the actor to start with a clean slate. Hall wants the creative ensemble to come together to find the meaning of the play that is truest for this audience, for these artists, at this point in time. So even if Hall is restaging a production originally directed only a few months or weeks before, he strives to approach the work (and to get his ensemble to approach the work) as an entirely new venture.

This idea of starting with a clean slate even influences his day-to-day rehearsal process, which he redefines according to the text at hand and its relationship to the world at large. As the actress Barbara Orson explains, "His process is always different. It's never the same. The material dictates to him, so you are on an adventure when you're approaching a piece. There's no one way Adrian approaches anything. That is the excitement of working with Adrian."[24]

Because of Hall's ever-changing approach to the text, it is difficult to delineate Hall's specific rehearsal techniques during this phase. Hall's only rule in directing a play is that there are no rules. He says, "A first-rate artist, or one who is moving forward in his life and continually trying to reach out, will not find an area of how to do and then continue to do that. He will continue to reach for the unknown....You need to get to yourself, to your interior self--your dream life, your actual life, your life in art that is terribly mysterious and unknown."[25] Richard Jenkins says that the idea that there are no rules is the most important thing about directing that he learned from Adrian Hall because "it gives you freedom and gives you some kind of personal heart."[26]

The exploration of the text at the table begins with the reading of the script and discussion about the play's milieu. Hall's first task is to create a working atmosphere

that allows the artist to explore the text freely and thoroughly. Hall therefore requires the entire acting ensemble to be present at all rehearsals, no matter how small the role may be for any actor. In this way, the company works as a cohesive, collaborative unit. Even if an actor has only one line in the play, he is expected to participate fully in all rehearsals. Actor Richard Kneeland describes how this creates a sense of family that unifies the acting ensemble; Kneeland explains that Hall "never does that thing that other directors do--of taking two actors off to work with them privately....everybody is asked to be at that table, whatever the size of their part...and that reinforces the company concept and feeling so that...you feel like you're part of it, no matter what size part you're playing."[27] While this is not always true (Hall occasionally worked with two or three principals during The Tempest while Richard Cumming rehearsed the music with the rest of the cast), it is true most of the time. Each member of the ensemble shares equal responsibility for communicating the story.

Hall also establishes an atmosphere that is highly stimulating but with a sense that there is plenty of time to explore. In the early rehearsals at the table Hall stresses to his actors that he does not want any "acting," no working for effect. If he finds an actor is too ready to cry or indulge in emotionalism, he will ask them to resist it until

they know more about the text and what is really wanted at that point. Mary Francina Golden, who worked with Hall for the first time in his 1988 production of Mensch Meier, described the early "at table" rehearsals like this: "The first week or ten days we just spent sitting around a table. He just wanted 'reality'--no acting--just talk--just get the ideas across....He started off very slowly, very slowly and just would throw out ideas all over the place. He was quick to discard what really would not work."[28]

Forging the Connection Between the Actor and the Text

During the weeks around the table, Hall and the ensemble repeatedly read the script and discuss every aspect of its content, and its political, historical and social setting. Everyone brings in books, articles, pictures and photographs--anything that might illuminate or elucidate the meaning of the play. A great amount of the rehearsal period is spent with Hall intently listening and eliciting his ensemble's ideas about the work. He expects the actor to contribute freely. As he said in an interview in 1984, "I don't see directing as a one-man thing. I feel about the theater the same way I feel about sex: it's just more interesting if both people are participating."[29]

The late Richard Kavanaugh praised Hall for this willingness to include the actor: "Adrian will sit at a table longer than any director....usually when we have a

long time at table I find that tremendously worth the time. By the time you get up there...it's surprising how much you've learned at the table. [Adrian] is very generous, he wants, begs, for contributions...he wants input from everybody and I think that's a great thing."[30] Lighting designer Roger Morgan concurs, saying that Hall is "enormously open to suggestions. He eats them--he'll inhale a suggestion right out of you and absorb it. And it becomes his own. I don't mean that in any negative way."[31]

It is important that the actor understand what is expected of him during the "at table" period of text exploration. Richard Jenkins comments that this time is valuable, not only for the director, but also for the actor--if the actor uses the time wisely: "If you sit at the table as an actor and you use that time to help him, you're in trouble. But if you use it as your time, that's what he wants. He wants everybody to get in there and figure it out so he can hear it."[32]

At the same stage of rehearsal when other directors are blocking the scenes or improvising the action of the play, Hall is spending hours at the table getting to know the text's deepest levels, especially when the ensemble is creating a new work, like <u>All the King's Men</u>. Hall does not use improvisation as a rehearsal technique. He conducts a thorough investigation into the ideas of the material. He constantly questions each actor, asking him why his

character might say what he does, where has this character been prior to this scene, what kind of transportation did the character use to get here--a limousine or the subway? Actor Peter Gerety describes the exploratory process at the table like this: "We spend a lot of time around the table talking and talking and just arguing about every psychological, social and whatever--all the ramifications... anything that might have any bearing on it....And it's a real fermenting--the ideas are flying hot and fast and he gets excited about it and then that inspires people and they get excited."[33]

Hall inspires his actors with an intensity and concentration that are astounding, even to actors who have worked with him for twenty-five years. When asked how he manages to maintain that intensity, Hall said that he was not sure, but added that "I do know the importance of <u>being there</u>...I know that the actors who come and are 'there' stand a better chance of finally asking the questions. And so, for me, I've got to really be there, constantly. And that means that there's no such thing as standing aside, impassively looking. You've got to be there."[34]

A visitor sitting in on an Adrian Hall rehearsal "at table" for the first time would be most impressed by Hall's passionate excitement about the text, the ensemble, and the challenge they face. As the actress Barbara Orson explains, "He makes you <u>believe</u> so strongly that this is just the most

important piece at this particular time in our lives."[35] Richard Jenkins agrees, saying that Hall approaches each production as though it were "the most important thing he can be doing at that time....But it's not a trick, it's the truth. It's the truth. He sees his life through that play while he's working on it....Everything that happens reminds him of what he's doing on the stage. It's all consuming. And you can see some time where it wears him out; it just wears him out because he's so committed to it."[36]

Hall's commitment expresses itself through a flood of words in a rapid, staccato, Southern-tinged speech that ever struggles to keep up with the ideas that rush through his mind. He often begins the morning rehearsal with an ardent oration--sometimes lasting an hour or more--on a particular aspect of the text. Just as often, however, the topic will be an item from the daily news which corresponds to the issues of the play, or he may lecture the actors on their place in history and their responsibility as performers of the ancient craft of theatre. The actor must understand his place in history and Hall often repeats what the actors affectionately call the "Two-Thousand-Year-Old-Craft Speech" to remind them of their responsibility to the art. James Schevill describes Hall's lectures about the theatre and says that "that's one way the actors become a little ashamed about being so self-centered

and they're inspired to work for theatre in general in a way I haven't seen other directors inspire actors."[37]

Hall also inspires his actors through his willingness to show his own vulnerability, as actress Barbara Meek describes: "Adrian weeps....It touches me very deeply. And in Brother to Dragons, there was a line...'Can the hope of the heart be lost?' And Adrian was just reading that...and he could not go on....Well, that makes you want to find out what that chord was that struck him so deeply...He has that passion, that humanity that I find so attractive and so exciting to work with. It's just terrific. Nobody else does it!"[38]

Hall's actors are constantly amazed at his ability to be so emotionally responsive to their scenes. Often, after a play has been running for weeks, Hall will still be in tears after a poignant scene. In fact, in rehearsals he opens himself to the character's emotional pain and the actor's fear and courage while taking on the role of the spectator--empathizing with the audience's experience. In a rare expression of what he goes through in this process, he told me during the grueling rehearsals for Mensch Meier (a play in which a family painfully disintegrates) that "sometimes you get to thinking, 'Well, I don't know if this is worth this kind of pain.' I mean I sit there in the bloody thing downstairs and I think, 'Now, I cannot sit here and sob like a child all afternoon. I mean, I've got to pay

attention to this play.' And yet it triggers it in you because you recognize yourself up there, you know."[39]

Hall's intent in the rehearsal is to make sure that his actors can also achieve this personal empathy with their roles. His ready vulnerability stimulates the actors to be vulnerable in their turn and to find their own emotional connection with the dramatic material. Rather than discussing the psychological motivations of the characters (which he deals with at a much later stage of the rehearsal), Hall helps the actor by ceaselessly drawing parallels between the action in the text and his own personal experience. The actor then responds by finding his own links. Throughout the rehearsal period he will urge them to "pull it closer to yourself." For Hall, this expression means he wants the actor to find a stronger personal connection with the character, to dig deeper within his own psyche to connect the play's action to something that affects that actor's own emotions.

In order to get the actor to be equally vulnerable, Hall methodically strips away the actor's ready techniques, old habits and preconceptions and challenges him to find a simpler, more direct route to the emotional level of the text. He wants the actor to dare to reveal his own emotional core. He carefully resists telling the actor what to do and focuses instead on helping the actor find his own solution. Hall explains his method, saying that "actors

over the years get so eager for you to tell them what to do. You can't do that. You have to continually challenge them so they make the decision about what to do with the character for themselves."[40]

Hall is a master at knowing when to wait and when to prod an actor to get him going in the right direction. He says, "The best director is the one that sits there with all the little nerve endings exposed. Raw, showing, listening, talking, nudging, sometimes being willing to really push somebody further than they want to go. I mean really being there, being there, being there. But also knowing when to pounce, you know? Knowing when to pounce."[41]

Connecting the Text to the Audience

Adrian Hall knows exactly what he wants in his production. He wants to create a situation in which the playwright's text is discovered anew for all the resonances it can possibly hold for the present-day artist and the audience. Hall, therefore, wants to remove anything that might interfere with the connections between the actor, the spectator, and the text. To this end, he utilizes the rehearsal: (1) to remove the obstructions in the actor--including old habits, preconceptions about the character, automatic emotional responses and psychological barriers and (2) to strip away any aspects of the staging

that might interfere with the communication of the text. Hall seeks to identify the essence of the text: "One has got to define what the problem is, then go to the essence of it. In the simplest terms the theatre experience is the confrontation between the actor and the participant. Any way that you can break that down so that it becomes a simpler, more direct experience, one that is not decorated with endless kinds of artificialities, is a way to build a bridge to that experience."[42]

As Hall and his ensemble continue their exploration, he begins to "hear" the images of the text and get ideas for how to realize them in stage action. This is one reason why he delays the play's blocking until he has thoroughly investigated the text. Otherwise, the inclination is to design the character's movements to illustrate the text in pictures rather than keying the stage action to the internal tensions between the characters. At the table Hall strives to "pull out all of the traditional production values...and see how pure the words are--whether they hold together or whether they don't hold. And if the image is in the words, then you've got it!...and if the image is not in the words, then you're going to have to help. One is going to have to build in the atmosphere."[43] Such an atmosphere is then created by Hall's choices in how he uses the theatrical space, his direction of the actors, and the other elements of lights, costumes, and so forth. In the following

chapters I will demonstrate how Hall continues to "explode the text," working with his ensemble to realize the primary images that emerge during the ongoing rehearsals.

The Efficacy of Hall's Method

Hall's use of rehearsal time is extremely efficient. For one reason, after the many days of rehearsal at the table, many of the actors will be "off book." That is, they will have committed their lines to memory, prior to beginning work on their movements and dealing with the technical effects. Moreover, during the time the actors are exploring the text, the scene designer is working out the play's environment. Thus, after one or two weeks, the actors can begin to explore the physical aspects of their characters unencumbered by scripts or unfamiliarity with the text. The stage action can therefore develop based upon a deep understanding of the characters' interrelationships.

Actors respond quite well to Hall's rehearsal techniques. Although most admit there is a point when it is rather frustrating to remain seated at the table, they all find it is time well-used. Richard Kneeland, who has been in rehearsals with Adrian Hall for twenty-six years, can still say: "I remember the first day of rehearsal--that was the most exciting thing that I've never forgotten and it has <u>never</u> changed--that he was the most <u>stimulating</u> director. He was just so excited about everything. It was perfect

that he said everything twice. I mean, he still talks the way he does now in rehearsal. But you never go to a rehearsal of Adrian's and are bored. It just is totally stimulating."[44] Actor Ed Hall agrees when he says "I have never, never, never been bored with Adrian Hall in a production. I mean, I've been with directors that you just want to say, 'Oh please go home and we'll just do it ourselves!' But with Adrian, it's just exciting coming and listening to him....And, if you listen very closely, he's a great teacher of the theatre and a great lover of the theatre."[45]

The rehearsals of Adrian Hall are intense, creative experiences that offer the artists great freedom to explore unfamiliar areas in the landscape of art. Certainly Hall's rehearsals have not always resulted in productions that amaze. Jonestown Express and Uncle Tom's Cabin, A History are two of the productions that it is generally felt did not live up to their promise. Nevertheless, Hall's techniques for exploring a text and the atmosphere he establishes for that purpose are unique. Hall's associate director at the Dallas Theater Center, Ken Bryant, described the rarified atmosphere of Hall's rehearsals as follows: "I think Tennessee Williams said something about 'the white-hot furnace of creation.' And Adrian truly has the gift of being able to create that white-hot furnace in rehearsal where things just start to metamorphose because there's such

heat. You know, he knows how to put pressure on a scene and on events so that they start to speak to you."[46]

By the end of two weeks or so, Hall and his actors move into the theatre space and begin a new kind of work. Exploration of the text continues, of course, but now the actors begin to deal with the physical aspects of their characters and the new environment.

Chapter VI

THE DIRECTOR AND THE THEATRICAL SPACE

Early in his theatrical career, Adrian Hall began experiments to discover the nature of theatrical space. In 1966, however, Project Discovery intensified his investigation (chapter 2). Speaking about his late 1960s experiments, Hall tells how "our stage designer, Eugene Lee, said...in a moment of despair, 'Adrian, men are on their way to the moon and we're still building flats out of canvas.' And I thought about that...and I began to examine why we always think in such visual terms. And what is space and why must space be divided in certain ways?"[1]

In the following pages I will discuss Hall's definition of theatre--as a confrontation between the actor and the audience--and the implications of that definition for the way this director perceives and utilizes the acting area. First, however, a word must be said about the relationship between the director and the designer, between Adrian Hall's philosophy and utilization of space and those

views of his principal designer, Eugene Lee. Since he began his collaboration with Hall in 1967, Lee has designed sixty-seven shows, or eighty-two percent of Hall's productions at Trinity Repertory and the Dallas Theater Center. (Most of the remaining productions staged at these two theatres since 1967 were designed by Robert Soule.) The influence of Eugene Lee on Adrian Hall's work cannot be underestimated and the reverse is also true. Because of this extended artistic collaboration, however, it is difficult to pinpoint exactly where the aesthetic or contribution of one artist ends and the other begins. These artists were drawn into collaboration because they shared common views about the nature of the stage, and that common understanding has nourished their artistic development.

The Theatre Space

Adrian Hall's numerous experiments with the theatrical space (which I define as the combined space of the acting areas and the areas for the spectators) reveal two underlying assumptions about his audience. The first assumption is that the audience is composed of individuals and that the theatre event is a one-to-one confrontation between actor and spectator. Thus, Hall dismisses any ideas of a "good house" or a "bad house" or other such expressions which reflect a perception of the audience as a cohesive

mass. Instead, Hall emphasizes to his actors that they are responsible for reaching every member of every night's audience, and he moves his actors about the stage space in such a way as to secure that personal confrontation.

Hall's second assumption is that his theatres should be accessible to all spectators. By this I mean that his is a populist theatre which shuns the elitism often built into the nineteenth-century edifice. The first Trinity stage was a church meeting hall built before 1900 which Hall describes as "an absolute jewel [which had] one of the most fantastic spatial relationships between audience and actor that has ever been conceived by man."[2] The basic arrangement--eight or nine rows in a semi-circle around a half-circle thrust stage--was duplicated in the current Trinity downstairs space within the Lederer Theatre, except the three-row balcony of the original space could not be duplicated. These small stages retain the communal feeling of the meeting hall, with all seats commanding an almost equal view of the stage. They also recapture a sense of the ancient Greek theatres where religious and civic functions coexisted--a significant factor for Adrian Hall who constantly works to re-establish the theatre's fundamental place in society.

In the two large stage spaces at Dallas and Providence, Hall and Lee have attempted to incorporate maximum flexibility. Concerning the original design of the

upstairs Lederer space at TRC, which was conceived by Adrian Hall, Eugene Lee and the architect Dick Kuehl, Hall says that "we realized that if the challenge of how you confront the audience was to continue, there had to be an extraordinary lack of architectural imposition on [the space]....What Eugene and I actually wanted was a space that you can go both down and up in. In order to do that, we found, the entire space had to be trapped. We had to put in a sub-floor which could be broken down but which was always there."[3]

Unfortunately, fire laws and other considerations led to a renovation that effectively made the seating permanent--or at least limited its ability to be changed around. Designer Eugene Lee regrets the change because the space lost much of its flexibility and character. He says that at first it had retained a sense of the old vaudeville house's history with "funny, architectural things going on," but that "you get no sense now when you walk upstairs of what it looked like...it was a whole, fabulous space--a lot more like Peter [Brook]'s space [in Paris]... From a design point of view, it was a tragedy what they did."[4] Nevertheless, both spaces at the Lederer Theatre retain a sense of history and the edifice's popular theatre roots, with no proscenium arch, box seats or special chairs for the elite.

Hall's fourth space at Trinity, the Rhode Island School of Design Auditorium, was used for Project Discovery productions from 1966 to 1973. The problems with this space have already been addressed in chapter 2 and it is clear that the lessons learned in converting the barn-like proscenium structure served Hall and Lee well when they were able to design their own theatre spaces.

At Dallas, Hall faces a very different situation from that at Providence. When he agreed to become artistic director of the Dallas Theater Center, he had no choice but to direct in the only theatre designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. Formerly named the Kalita Humphreys Theater, the Frank Lloyd Wright is an attractive architectural sculpture, beautifully situated on the lush, landscaped banks of the Turtle Creek area in Dallas. But its spiral design makes the day-to-day operation of a theatre exceedingly difficult. Getting from one place to another in the facility is problematic, affecting both staff and actors. Constructing and moving set-pieces is also quite complicated. The wide apron stage is at the center of the spiral design. The auditorium is wide with a mezzanine level at the rear. The seating section is slightly fan-shaped so that the spectators sitting at the ends of the rows on either side get a very distorted view of the stage. Two large permanent planter boxes were built in on either side to flank the

stage. There is no proscenium arch, but the spectator's view is decidedly frontal.

Although it was refurbished when Hall joined the staff, the logistical problems of the workspace and the more serious problems of the actor-audience relationship remained so that Wright's theatre is known in-house as the "Frank Lloyd Wrong." Hall complains in his own colorful Texas fashion that Wright, although a world-famous architect, "just didn't know diddlysquat about a theater's needs. Maybe cared less. So we have this--this--this...place! A flat auditorium. No rake but--lemme tell ya--with lotsa interestin' wall planes....Eugene got crazy! Wanted to tear the place down."[5]

Although the rake was improved by a renovation, the auditorium retains the aura of elitism that the Center cultivated for twenty years prior to Hall's arrival. The useless planter boxes are now box-seats, making the auditorium space even more conventional. Moreover, the seats nearest the stage are reserved for subscribers, many of whom have routinely bought subscriptions because it was the socially correct thing to do, but they seldom attend the theatre. The actors are left with the unenviable job of trying to project their performances beyond the sparsely populated seats to the avid audience seated at the rear of the house.

Hall and Lee have found ways to effectively use the Frank Lloyd Wright Theater, but their principal response was to build an alternative stage that would more closely fit their needs. Hall took advantage of the need for a second stage (so that the theatre could feasibly support an acting company) and he and Eugene Lee proposed a temporary structure that would house the company until the planned Dallas Arts Complex (which will include a permanent stage for the DTC) is completed.

Hall was very sure of the kind of theatre he felt Dallas needed to have. He did not want a theatre like London's National Theatre: "I made it very clear in the beginning that I don't want that. Nothing that says 'elitist,' nothing that keeps people away. I would rather have a barbed-wire enclosure that people can hardly wait to get into than one of those architectural monuments."[6] Hall envisioned a rougher, more populist theatre. In an interview just prior to the opening of the Arts District Theatre, he declared: "I want the Dallas Theater Center to be a theater of passion, of ideas. I want it to be a place where people are excited, where they laugh and holler at each other. I want it to be a place where <u>everyone</u> feels involved--hillbillies, hippies, homosexuals, blacks, as well as ladies in evening gowns. This will not be a theater of neutral feelings and politeness."[7]

The result is the Arts District Theatre, designed by Hall and Eugene Lee and executed by Dallas architect Arthur J. Rogers. The ADT was constructed in only ninety days, opening on February 14, 1984. It is a totally flexible, hangar-like structure that reflects the buildings-in-progress that surround the theatre. Constructed of corrugated tin, the space is one hundred feet square and rises almost fifty feet high. It originally had a dirt floor, but this has now been paved over. The space is raw potential--just the kind of atmosphere Hall offers in his productions--with no hint of the elitism of the older theatre. The arrangement, the number and the type of seats may be drastically changed in every new production. Subscribers are, therefore, not assigned specific seats, but instead are admitted into the theatre and allowed to choose their seats before general admission ticket-holders do. There is great excitement in the lobby before the house opens, as the audience anticipates what they may discover when they enter the cavernous space. As the critic David Dillon observes, "in this strong, simple building, we can imagine something happening spontaneously, without the approval of a program committee or a consortium of land owners....[the new building]...is also a clear expression of Artistic Director Adrian Hall's desire to bring theater to the people."[8]

The third space available to Hall in Dallas is called "In the Basement." It is an open, flexible space reclaimed from former basement offices, seating from seventy to one hundred people. Hall hopes it will be a place to introduce works that he feels are important but might be unsuitable for the main stages. He says, "The principal goal of the Basement is not to educate, nor is the principal goal to entertain...but I would like some kind of forum, classroom, meeting place where people come together and give themselves over to the experience in a way that they don't immediately judge."[9] Hall stresses that, rather than considering this space as a kind of second stage for new plays, the Basement should be viewed as a scientific laboratory--a place for actors and audiences to take risks and to experiment with the craft of theatre itself.

In the Basement was the space Hall chose to introduce the work of Franz Xaver Kroetz to Dallas when he had his Associate Director, Ken Bryant, direct Through the Leaves in 1987. Also presented in this space, running concurrently with Hall's The Tempest on the ADT stage, was performing artist Fred Curchak's one-man version of the same play, entitled The Tempest, Stuff as Dreams Are Made On. Hall has not yet directed any productions in this space.

Theatre in One Room

The design of the Arts District Theatre reveals two very important aspects about the theatrical space of Adrian Hall's theatre. In the first place, the areas for actors and audience are mutable and transformable. Thus, Hall's productions in that space require not only a set design but a design for the entire environment. Indeed, although some of his spaces have more flexibility than others, all of Hall's productions are designed with the whole room in mind because he has come to view the theatrical space as one room that can be transformed for each production and can also be transformed during the performance.

The ADT also displays a sense of adventure, of spontaneity and of surprise. This spirit is realized through the designs of Eugene Lee which, as Laurence Shyer observes, "seem to create a sudden unexplainable sense of expectation. You are in the presence of something theatrical and something alive."[10] This sense of excitement characterizes every Adrian Hall production. What Lee achieves in the physical reality of the space, Hall achieves through a visceral connection to the text manifested by his actors in an intense, athletic style of playing.

Thus, for Hall the theatrical space is a single room in which the participants--actors and spectators--gather together to share the risks of each new theatrical adventure. In order to facilitate the confrontation of the

audience with the performance, the actors are brought into close proximity with the spectators. The spatial relationship between individual spectators and the actors evolves during the rehearsal period and is shaped by the themes and requirements of the text. Although Lee and Hall frequently have altered the arrangement and position of the auditorium seats, Hall prefers the term "atmospheres" to describe Lee's designs. As Shyer explains, "they have been concerned not so much with new spatial configurations or manipulating actor-audience relationships as with creating moods and essences, and even more, plunging spectators into the sensual and emotional world of the drama. Theirs is a theater of total immersion."[11]

"Atmospheric" is certainly a better term than "environmental" to describe Hall's work. Although the latter term has often been applied to Hall's productions, the term is not always applicable to this director. "Environmental theatre" is defined in detail by Arnold Aronson in his study The History and Theory of Environmental Scenography. The principal distinction Aronson makes is whether a stage is frontal or non-frontal: "Proscenium, end, thrust, alley, and arena stages are all frontal in that a spectator observing a performance rarely has to look more than forty-five degrees to the right or the left in order to view the whole production."[12] Aronson further states that

any other kind of staging--that is, non-frontal staging, can be described as "environmental."

Therefore, since three of Adrian Hall's five stages have a predominantly frontal seating arrangement, this director's staging is not, as a rule, "environmental." Even in the immensely flexible Arts District Theatre Hall generally adopts some form of thrust or in-the-round arrangement. (As for the other flexible space, In the Basement, Hall has not yet directed there.) Of course, Eugene Lee frequently varies the spatial arrangements by interspersing small platforms or ramps within the audience areas and some action may occur behind, above or around the spectator. But generally the spectator does not have to readjust his position in his seat constantly to view a major portion of the production.

Some Adrian Hall productions, such as Cathedral of Ice, Peer Gynt and Taming of the Shrew have been truly environmental, but they were so because Hall and Lee felt that such manipulation of the stage and auditorium areas was the best way to stage those plays. Their arrangement of the space and the movement within that space are simply the means for bringing together the participants in the performance. Thus, Laurence Shyer observes that Lee's scenic environments "are first of all about space, space as a means for discovery and exhilaration, and not about filling a fixed volume into which an audience looks."[13]

Cathedral of Ice

Certainly Adrian Hall's most radical experiment with theatrical space was his 1975 production of Cathedral of Ice by James Schevill. Schevill is a poet and playwright, and his play is based on his own experiences (he was visiting in Germany on Kristallnacht) and on historical research about the life of Adolf Hitler. Hall became fascinated by Schevill's theme of our fantasies of power: love, wealth and fame and the part such fantasies play in our national pastimes of sports, television, pornography, politics and films. Working with Schevill (who did revisions all through rehearsals), Adrian Hall deconstructed the text until it became a series of vignettes that were then linked with commentaries by television broadcasters and by the evocative, Kurt Weill-like music of Richard Cumming. The sketches, therefore, provided only a framework for Hall's wildly imaginative staging of a production that critics found to be a mixture of the Trinity style, of Brecht's Arturo Ui and of Mel Brooks' musical-within-the-film, Springtime for Hitler (from The Producers). Cathedral of Ice offers a fine example of Hall's use of the theatrical space in his epic productions.

Cathedral was staged in the upstairs, flexible Lederer space at Trinity before most of the seats were permanently installed. The theatre was at that time just an enormous room, like a gymnasium, that could hold up to

five-hundred spectators. Lee and Hall had seen the 1970 Italian production of Luca Ronconi's Orlando Furioso which was staged in New York's Bryant Park. In that production of the epic tale of chivalric adventures Ronconi used environmental staging and scenes were played simultaneously at various locations; staging platforms also were moved about, displacing the audience which stood to see the stage action. Hall decided to try a similar experiment with Cathedral of Ice.

Hall began the production with a pre-show in a large tent set up on Aborn Street, by the side door of the Lederer Theatre. This section of the performance, entitled "Under the Big Tent" was more than a clever warm-up for the audience, however. The production of Cathedral of Ice was part of a community project made possible by a grant to Schevill from the Rhode Island Committee for the Humanities. The project included the pre-show lectures in the tent, post-performance discussions, lobby exhibits and a series of symposia throughout Rhode Island after the production ended.

Hall wanted the pre-show (which was free and open to the public) to establish the atmosphere of the beer halls of pre-Hitler Germany and to focus the audience's attention upon the idea of power. Free beer and free soda were provided to the spectators while they listened to the ensemble sing "We're in the Money" and songs of power such as Pirate Jenny's song of revenge, "The Black Freighter,"

from Bertolt Brecht's The Threepenny Opera. Between the songs, local dignitaries, who had been invited to speak, gave ten to fifteen minute orations on "The Sources, Problems and Dangers of Power." This prologue successfully created the atmosphere of a German beer hall and of an American Chautauqua lecture.

Once this atmosphere was established, the actors led the audience into the upstairs space of the Lederer. There, around the perimeter of the vast open space, Eugene Lee had constructed a huge open steel framework which supported a four-sided arena with tiers of bleacher seats. Above the top tier of bleacher seats there was a platform which extended all the way around the arena. This platform held wooden folding chairs and also provided a walkway for the actors, like an aisle in a sports arena. Once the performance commenced, the central floor space would be instantly transformed with two to eight portable stages, which could be wheeled in and around the space to provide playing areas for the various vignettes.

From the rafters high above were hung huge photographs of people who had achieved power through either military or political means, or through use of their body or brains: Charlemagne, Hitler, Napoleon, Richard Nixon, Marilyn Monroe, John F. Kennedy, several popes and Martin Luther King, Jr. At one end of the arena there was a media booth for actors playing television broadcasters who would

provide commentary on the play's actions throughout. Below this booth composer Richard Cumming was seated at the piano to provide the musical accompaniment.

At the other side of the arena, opposite the media booth, there was a games section which included popcorn vendors, pinball machines and other games. The spectators were not yet allowed to sit in the bleachers surrounding the main area, but were encouraged to eat popcorn and play carnival games, like pinball and games of chance. There was "The Assassin's Game," in which a popgun could be aimed at images of Robert or John Kennedy; in another game a ball knocked down wooden pins which were painted with images of policeman in brown shirts (evoking Hitler's Brownshirts and also the uniforms of the Providence police department); in another you could "Sink the Pope." All the games were linked with murder and assassination.

The carnival atmosphere prevailed during the first act, entitled "The Mid-Way." During this segment the sketches from Schevill's script were played out on the various mobile stages, around which the spectators had to stand. There they could view actor Peter Gerety, as young Hitler, performing skits and songs about Hitler's dream of power, including his childhood, his struggle as a starving artist in Vienna where he encountered "The Great Jewish Whores" and was befriended by Neumann (who becomes the metaphorical Wandering Jew throughout the play). Other

episodes presented Hitler's service in World War I as a dispatch runner. A "dirty operetta" on the secret love life of the Fuehrer was presented on one stage where a sad little 1930s pornographic film projected onto the bodies of the singers. There was also a dramatization of Hitler's preoccupation with the fantasies of the American West through the stories of Karl May (whose hero, Old Shatterhand, exterminates the Indians and inspires Hitler to accomplish the same with the Jews in the name of "Manifest Destiny"). Some historical items were presented in song, such as Hitler's "Lebensborn" program in which unmarried German women were to bear "superior" German children by mating with "superior" SS men; Richard Cumming's lyrics perfectly captured the satirical spirit of Hall's production:

Girls: Rah! Rah! Sizzboombah! Sexual Utopia!

Boys: Bim, bam, thank you ma'am
Throw away your diaphragm!

All: We're procreating, propagating, recreating,
babymaking Lebensborn machines.
We're making our country purer
By coupling for the Fuehrer
Should Mother complain, assure her
We are Superwomen, Supermen
Who'd willingly have seven, eight, nine or ten
Super Children for the Super Race![14]

Near the end of the "Mid-way" sequence, a metaphorical shootout occurs between Karl May's Western hero, Old Shatterhand (played as John Wayne), and the Indian chief, Winnetou (played as a Marlon Brando/"Central Casting"

native). The players representing these characters appeared on stages at opposite ends of the arena--Shatterhand armed with his rifle and Winnetou armed with his bow and arrow. During the confrontation, their stages were rolled around and finally thrust together in the center of the arena as Old Shatterhand kills Winnetou with a single bullet. This encounter, laden with multiple meanings about Nazism and the myth of the American West, was detailed in satiric, matter-of-fact "sound bytes" by the three television broadcasters, two of whom were "on location" on the floor of the arena and wired to communicate with the commentator in the media booth. The audience, still standing, had to keep moving about the space in order to follow the moving stages and shifting action.

The final scene of "The Mid-Way" evoked the image of the "Cathedral of Ice" of Schevill's title. A "Cathedral of Ice" was the expression used by the British Ambassador to describe the effect of the shafts of light emitted from the 130 anti-aircraft searchlights pointed skyward--an effect designed by the architect Albert Speer as a setting for Hitler's tremendous outdoor rallies. Hall did not attempt to give a literal representation of this historical effect. He created a satirical representation instead, in the following manner: at the culmination of the first act, the portable stages were pushed together to form a runway for the actor, George Martin; isolated in a pin spot, Martin put

on the Hitler mustache for the first time and massive red swastika banners dropped from the ceiling. The actors lined the sides of the platform stages, with the audience standing behind them and the chorus sang the lovely "Hymn to Charlemagne," which evoked the angelic sound of a choir of German youths. As the music modulated up and reached a crescendo, the general lighting faded to black in the immense space, and the actor-singers all flicked on cigarette lighters, to form an ironic imitation of the "Cathedral of Ice"--the historic anti-aircraft lights being replaced by the column of actors, each in a "Flick my Bic" pose (evoking a popular advertising slogan of the time for Bic cigarette lighters). Martin's Hitler walked down the corridor and the Third Reich was born. On the final triumphant chord, all was plunged into darkness.

There was no intermission. The lights came up and the audience was allowed to wander about while the technicians grouped the platform stages into the center of the arena and added ropes along the sides to form a huge boxing ring. On the floor around this platform, technicians placed a number of folding chairs so the audience could finally sit down in these folding chairs or in the tiers of bleacher seats. Meanwhile, the television commentators continued to conduct interviews with the protagonists of the forthcoming battle of the Reichstag. This interval had the ambience of a football game at half time.

The next performance segment was titled "The Games--The Triumph of Will." Hall staged a wild burlesque of an athletic competition in which Hitler removes all the political impediments in his way. The action included giant puppet figures (made by one actor riding on the shoulder of another) who, representing the Nazi and Communist parties, slugged it out with plastic bats in a boxing ring confrontation. During the fracas, historical events were interpolated by means of short sketches. These dramatic conflicts interrupted the game to demonstrate the steps leading up to Hitler's seizure of power: the National Socialists fought the Bolsheviks, Ernst Roehm was purged as a pervert, the SA lost out to the SS, Rosa Luxemburg was shot, the Reichstag was set afire and old Hindenburg fell as Hitler was appointed Chancellor of Germany.

The ensuing segment was called "The Big Lie" and it amounted to a tap-dance production number. The ensemble danced and sang Richard Cumming's clever propaganda song. This song combined heroic slogans of history--"Cry God for Harry, England and St. George," "Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité," "War is hell"--with advertising slogans--"What's good for General Motors is good for the U.S.A." and "Duz does everything." The aim was to show how repetition and manipulation are the functions of both propaganda and advertising. The ensemble sang and performed an aggressive,

goose-stepping dance which ended in a counterpoint of "Deutschland über Alles" and "America the Beautiful."

This "big finish" was not, however, the finale. Schevill and Hall wanted to bring the performance down to a grimmer reality. This dramatic change in atmosphere was achieved with an effect created by Eugene Lee. The problem was to make a jump in time to get from the Madison Avenue glitz to the full horror of the concentration camps in a single moment. Lee provided the solution by trapping the entire ceiling. (Remember that Lee and Hall had required that the Lederer space have this capacity--to introduce actors, set-pieces or props from above or below.) At the proper moment, the brightly colored carnival lights that had hung above all the proceedings were obliterated by dozens of bodies--life-size dummies--which plummeted from the ceiling to about a foot above the spectators' heads. The effect was a stunning coup de théâtre; the bodies remained to overshadow the concluding scenes in which the Jews were sent to the ovens and the Wandering Jew returned to present "Night and Fog," an elegiac lament. Then as Hitler and Eva Braun shared their final moments in the bunker, he proclaimed that he would live on, immortal in the cathedral of ice.

After this final segment of the play ended, the audience was invited for a post-play discussion, entitled "Community Discussion--Is James Schevill Crazy?" Usually

about half the audience (250 spectators) remained to discuss the controversial issues of Schevill's play and Hall's staging.

The Characteristic Elements of Hall's Theatrical Space

Cathedral of Ice is the most "environmental" of Adrian Hall's productions, but it also demonstrates many characteristics of his use of theatrical space. It shows the parallel between Hall's view of the text as a mutable element in performance and his view of space as equally pliant. The author, James Schevill, was intimately involved in all rehearsals, doing revisions and consultations, and it is clear that the structure of the play was shaped for the performance. There is a printed script available of the play, but it hardly relates to the performance. Trinity Rep has at least two working scripts in its files, but compared to a recording made during the performance, they do not reflect the rapid and often radical changes Hall made during rehearsals. Fortunately, Schevill is a playwright who trusts Hall's instincts and was not overly proprietary of his written script. As he said in an interview, he "agrees with Hall, who has often said that a play does not exist on paper, that it comes to life solely as a relationship between actors and spectators."[15]

Schevill's working script, which was put into print before the production was built, carries a disclaimer

warning the reader that the printed version was not expected to reflect what would be created during the rehearsals. A glance at this script clearly shows how Hall and Lee translated Schevill's ideas into spatial metaphors. The setting for Act I, Scene One is described as follows: "As the audience enters the theatre they see the Dream Machine creating eerie comic and serious dream images. These dream images are taken from key scenes in the play.... Or the actors can improvise on images from their own dreams that fit into contemporary themes of power. The Dream Machine has a certain futuristic look, but it is also strangely archaic in appearance with obsolete, mythological panels and compartments pertinent to themes in the play."[16] Instead of creating a physical representation of the author's machine, the director and designer turned the theatre itself into a "dream machine" and even went out into the street, with the tent show, to encompass a larger sphere of reality and then to fill that sphere with the sensual, phantasmagorical images evoked by the poet/playwright's script. In Cathedral of Ice, therefore, the idea of the theatre being one room shared by actors and spectators was expanded beyond the walls of the specific theatre building and the "room" became the Providence community itself.

By transforming the "room"--that is, by requiring his audience to move from one space to the next and to view stage areas that moved, formed and then reformed their

spatial relationships--Hall tried to break down his audience's preconceptions and catch them off guard. His goal was to confront his audience with the human failing of being taken in by "the big lie" of propaganda and advertising. He wanted them to ask themselves how gullible they might be. The themes of the play are extraordinary in how they encompass both time and space. Hall did not want to present the life story of Hitler, nor did he wish to offer simple answers as to how a common man became invested with the power to epitomize the greatest evil. What Hall sought to achieve in his production was to create a theatre of dialogue, to bring together the community in an intellectual controversy that would elicit critical thought on the questions posed in the performance. In this he was entirely successful.

The Cathedral of Ice eliminated the barriers between the actor and the spectator. As Richard Cumming explains, "I think that was maybe the greatest space experience I've ever had. I've never seen theatre happen that way....I've never seen a situation where the separation of audience and performer has been so completely mutilated, broken down, destroyed."[17] Actors wandered among the large crowd, talking with them freely, interacting with them even within the dialogue of their scenes.

Not all of the audience was pleased with Hall's manipulation of the space, though. In the first preview

performance Hall's company encountered chaos. Once the audience had left the tent show prologue, they were taken upstairs for the "Mid-Way" segment of the performance. The spectators, who numbered about five hundred, were expected to walk about the open space at will, watching the sketches, playing games, munching popcorn, as at a fair. Although the ushers had roped off the bleachers, the barriers were soon breached as some spectators insisted on sitting down, rather than wandering from one stage to the next. Moreover, Hall had staged the vignettes to overlap and repeat one or more times, using the kind of simultaneity he had seen in Orlando Furioso. The audience, however, could not figure out what they were supposed to watch. By the second performance, Hall and his ensemble had learned that the audience needed more information about the part they had to play. So the bleachers were made accessible, but ushers were stationed by them to encourage the audience to walk about and explore the space, rather than to sit down. Hall also established a sequence to the scenes so the audience, with the guidance of the actors and broadcast announcements, moved from one stage to the next, as in a medieval passion play.

Nevertheless, Cathedral of Ice was threatening to some spectators, who felt nervous and unsure about what their role was supposed to be. It became easier for them in the "Games" sequence when they were seated in the bleachers

or in chairs on the floor space around the boxing ring--that was a familiar arrangement. The student audiences, however, readily accepted the rapid transformations of the space, probably because they could relate to the chaotic carnival atmosphere and did not care about getting an assigned seat.

Casting the Audience

One characteristic of Hall's use of space is his technique of casting the audience in a "role" by seating them in a certain kind of seat and/or in a certain relationship to the staging areas. In Cathedral, of course, the role kept changing--from being a beer hall patron, to a visitor at a carnival or fair, to a ringside spectator, to a discussion participant--Hall kept changing the rules even as he changed the way he filled the stage space. In each case he built an atmosphere within one room where the actors and spectators communally shared the performance experience.

In other Hall productions he has "cast" the spectator only in selected scenes. For example, in All the King's Men, the audience, seated in rising tiers of seats along two sides of the playing space, at times became the attendants at a political fund-raising barbecue or the spectators at the big football game. These "roles" were established by a few props and the way the actors presented their lines and related to the audience. At other times the

audience was put in a less specific role as listeners to the story told by the ensemble.

Hall often "casts" the audience for the entire performance through his use of the space and technical effects. For example, in his 1974 production of A Man for All Seasons, Eugene Lee's set replaced theatre seats with tiered wooden benches suggesting Westminster Hall, so the audience became members of the House of Lords, sitting in judgment on Sir Thomas More. And in Hall's 1981 production of Inherit the Wind the theatre space became a courtroom where the audience became the jury at the Scopes trial. In this way, Hall believes, the audience can more fully participate in the event. He explains that "before I saw this performance of Jerzy Grotowski's Akropolis, it had never occurred to me--you have to know how the audience is, why they're there and what relation they have to the theatrical event. The audience needs an identity and they need things to hang on to and it all depends on the signals you give them. Eventually they will go with you."[18]

Integrating the Actors and Audience

In the 1970 The Taming of the Shrew Hall turned the Rhode Island School of Design auditorium into an Elizabethan playhouse. This was the fifth season at RISD and by this time Eugene Lee had virtually gutted the auditorium there. Lee's design for Shrew called for a large platform stage,

surrounded on three sides with space for Project Discovery "groundlings" to stand. Tiers of bleacher seats surrounded the groundling space for the other audience members. In order to establish the atmosphere of the playhouse, Hall had large barrels of peanuts positioned around the floor for the spectators to enjoy. The ensemble came out distributing penny song-sheets and instructed various sections of the audience in the tune and words of a bawdy Elizabethan song. Once everyone was singing along and involved in the circus-like atmosphere, the play proper began. Petruchio entered on an enormous hobby horse, pushed by half a dozen actors and dispersing the groundlings as they went. The players divided their action between the main platform stage and ramps, drawbridges and small stages positioned throughout the RISD auditorium.

Hall and Lee have often employed ramps and secondary staging areas to break up the "house," to bring the actors into closer proximity to the audience, and to emphasize the sense of "one room." (Lee's name is often associated with such designs because of his design for the 1974 Broadway production of Candide, which utilized many of the techniques he developed at Trinity Rep.) For his 1974 production of Peer Gynt at Trinity Rep, Hall wanted a space that would enable the audience to feel they were going along with Peer on his travels. Lee created a small island stage, surrounded by an oval of ramps made of split logs that

connected to a larger stage platform. Within this oval, the student audience members sat on stools so they could re-position themselves as the action took place in front of them and around them. Other seats were placed on either side of the larger stage platform, outside the oval. With a generous use of stage fog, Peer journeyed through the mists to the various sites along the log ramps--Solveig's cabin, a farmhouse, and so forth. He also could move about by means of several mobile props (a boat, a hobby-horse "Arabian steed" and a giant pig) and the island stage could sink into the floor.

Another technique Lee often incorporates in his design is to extend the ceiling of the "set" out over the heads of the spectators (such as the acoustical tile with fluorescent light fixtures used in Mensch Meier) or to paint the walls of the scene the same color as the theatre walls (a technique he used when The Hothouse played on Broadway). In Jonestown Express (Hall's 1984 production about the mass suicide of the Reverend Jim Jones and his followers in Guyana) the audience sat beneath an extensive canopy of camouflage netting so that both the actors and spectators occupied the "urban jungle" and the jungle of Guyana. As described in chapter 2, for Billy Budd, Lee transformed the RISD auditorium into one big ship, as Richard Cumming eloquently describes: "When you walk into the theatre and there's a mast in the middle of it with, oh, masses of

sails, that finally did unfurl--sail upon sail upon sail--and that whole theatre took off across the seas, with the audience on it in the fight with the French frigate....And Eugene, of course, had the bilge pumps and the water was sloshing out and splashing and the cannons were booming...they made a huge roar!"[19]

Using these techniques to create a unified place for the theatrical event, Hall attempts to narrow the distinction between the actor and the audience. The spectator is not allowed to feel separate, secure or tremendously comfortable because, the director believes, the theatregoer will then feel passive and have no wish to participate. Sometimes, however, Hall and Lee have gone too far in expecting the audience to endure backless and uncomfortable benches. (Such extreme measures are not often taken now because Hall, who has a bad back, can sympathize with his subscribers' complaints.) Eugene Lee's philosophy, however, is "if they want to be comfortable, there's plenty of things they can do--they can avoid the theatre altogether."[20]

Adrian Hall apparently has a sixth sense of just how far to take the confrontation. According to the actors who have worked with him for at least two decades (such as Richard Kneeland, Richard Kavanaugh, Barbara Meek and Barbara Orson), although certain productions aroused considerable controversy over the years and perhaps certain

scenes pushed the audience to the breaking point, Hall always held the line right there--making the moment a peak experience without losing the involvement of the majority of spectators.

In a 1988 interview, Richard Kavanaugh related one instance when this "aesthetic distance" was insufficient for a certain theatregoer. The actor was a member of the ensemble in Hall's 1970 production about the Charles Manson cult, Son of Man and the Family. The production was controversial because it was staged while the Sharon Tate murders were still making front-page headlines. Eugene Lee's set consisted of metal scaffolding and walkways that extended up three levels on the stage before a backdrop of black and white images of the 1960s. Furthermore, the wire mesh walkways extended over the heads of the audience, running to the back of the RISD auditorium and to tower structures on either side. The spectators were therefore positioned within the prison set as the actors, wearing boldly striped convict uniforms, moved overhead and in and around the audience under the glare of the exposed, high-powered lights hung above. Since the audience was well aware of the plot, the environment Hall created was as menacing as any real prison would be. This prison setting also was transformed into the Manson Family commune and other locations, just as the actors metamorphosed into hippies or objective commentators. In one scene the

hippies were supposed to go among the audience and get them to join hands and to chant "om" together. One night Kavanaugh encountered a man who absolutely refused to take his hand. Again and again the actor quietly implored the spectator to join the circle, until he finally said, "Please, sir, if you don't give me your hand I'll lose my job." The man look startled, immediately took his hand and joined in the actor's game.[21]

Actress Barbara Meek describes a more intense audience reaction to Son of Man and the Family, saying that the spectators "stood up and screamed at us and hated us for doing it...I don't know, they cheered--you wouldn't forget it if you had seen it."[22] Nevertheless, whether it is the discomfort of proximity or the discomfort of the bleachers or wooden chairs, the audience is expected to be on guard for the unexpected. The message is clear that the performance can (and most likely will) spill over into the seats. There is a sense of danger, as well as a definite excitement, in being too close. Moreover, Hall's lavish use of technical effects: water, fog, fire, noise, music, lights, and so forth, escalate both the apprehension and the delight of his spectators.

Hall has a well-founded reputation for being willing to put anything on stage that will confront the audience with the truths of the text, to shake them up, surprise them, as long as it serves to make them respond to the story

both emotionally and physically. Peter Gerety tells how they planned (but decided not to use) a scene in Billy Budd in which actors staged a knife fight in a net hung over the audience. The effect was not missed, however, for Billy Budd had plenty of excitement, as Gerety describes: "The action and the violence and the fury--it was like being in one of those Errol Flynn chases. The [Project Discovery] kids went wild....It sucked them so much into the story and it got them so excited that then they were willing...to sit back in the second act and listen while we waded through all the intellectual argument."[23]

The environments or atmospheres created by Hall and Eugene Lee cannot be fully appreciated by looking at photos of the sets. There are two reasons for this. In the first place, because of the way Lee subdivides and integrates the auditorium and staging areas, there is no ideal or typical angle of view from which to see the set. Unlike the conventional nineteenth-century stage, where the royal box commanded the principal view and the wealthiest patrons commanded an almost equal view, Hall's theatre gives each spectator a personal vantage point that may differ considerably from that of his fellow audience members but that perspective provides an equally exciting and personal viewing experience. In the second place, as Richard Cumming observes, pictures are not capable of showing "how the manipulation of space, the turning around of space, the

changes and alterations of space, help to break down the 'traditional' barriers between audience and actor."[24]

Early in their experiments with space, Hall and Lee were curious to know why an audience responded differently to actors walking overhead than walking on the stage platform. What was the impact of an actor appearing behind or brushing extremely close to a spectator? The artists realized that by cutting space in new and unexpected ways, by creating a spare, neutral environment into which props and vehicles and actors could be introduced to transform the space--by these means they could keep their audience curious and inquisitive, and thereby guarantee their participation in the performance event.

As we have seen, Cathedral of Ice "cut space" in many startling ways. Instead of prop pieces being wheeled about, entire staging units were mobile and aggressively repositioned to transform the space. And the coup de théâtre of the falling forest of "bodies" was startling because it came from a hidden, unexpected direction, the ceiling. Virtually every one of Hall's productions has found vital new ways to cut and transform space. Hall's stage becomes a magic theatrical box--a space for discovery and delight. Hall's tenet is that conventional staging must ever be reassessed and refreshed so that the audience can see the familiar as if for the first time.

Hall's 1969 production of Macbeth offers ample illustration of how the director can find unconventional ways to define the performance space. Lee's design for the RISD auditorium used painter's scaffolding to create a two-story stage structure that wrapped around both sides of the audience, extending halfway into the house. The actors could further penetrate the "house" space by means of a wooden ramp, serving as a kind of hanamichi, which ran from center stage through the middle of the seats to the center of the auditorium. The great RISD cavern was a mass of murky shadows and pools of light from the fiery torches along the walls. The constant transfiguration of the scene through Hall's staging is apparent in these comments of the critic Samuel Hirsch:

> A cannon booms, great bells clang, witches with voodoo masks cackle and screech and mix devil's brew in a peddler's pushcart; a yawning cut in the center of the wide-planked stage floor belches smoke, apparitions descend in a cage from the ceiling or appear from under the stage....Actors climb the towers and ramps and ladders that hug the walls of the theater and thrust steel webbing across a bare stage jutting into the audience like a crude wharf. Their footsteps clang on the metal and bang on the wood. A king's throne is wheeled in on a platform; the portable barbecue for the banquet is a contraption of rusted tin and turning gears and smoke pots.[25]

The Actor within the Space

If Lee is the mastermind behind the shape and physical elements of the space, Hall is the master who sets Lee's machine into motion. Through a combination of

blocking the actors' moves, bringing on props and set-pieces to transport the audience to a new scene, and through calculating the speed and contrast of transitions from one scene to another, Hall's staging constantly challenges the audience's imaginative powers. Hall's staging is sometimes described as "cinematic" and it is his ability to establish a scene with the simplest, most carefully selected elements, and then to sweep it away and immediately replace it with another vivid image that equates Hall's staging with film. As Peter Gerety explains, "the visual impact has to be very clear and very precise--I mean, you have to know that, whatever you're looking at, that that is what it is and then it changes to something else in a flash....There's a lot of sense of editing or cuts or lap dissolve to the next sequence."[26]

A typical example of Hall's fluid, rapid staging was All the King's Men in which the numerous episodes in multiple locations were presented in a kind of kaleidoscopic array--beds rolled in and out to establish cheap hotels and fancy mansions; a pool table established the saloon, only to be pressed into service as a dining table for a celebrity ball; a steaming pit barbecue emerged from the wings for a political rally; a chair, an actor with a bottle of whiskey and a small black-and-white film represented a cross country driving and drinking binge. Hall constantly defined and redefined the space, carrying his audience along through the

epic, using the barest minimum to create time, place and mood.

This redefinition of space could be stunning in its simplicity. For example, the two-story stone facade of the set for All in the King's Men had an ornate entrance at its center. This facade served as both an exterior and an interior because, although it looked like the facade of the Louisiana Statehouse, it stood before the open stage space where a grand piano, a leather chair and other props could indicate the interior as needed. In a scene when Jack Burden and Willie Stark pay a visit to Judge Irwin, the actors approached the doorway, which was opened by a black servant. The positions of the actors established that we were at the exterior of the Judge's mansion. Then, the actor playing the servant stepped through the doorway, the other two actors turned around to face Judge Irwin, who was approaching them from the central platform--in one instant we were transported to Irwin's library, simply by the actors' shift in positions. This stage effect offers a brief jolt of delight to the spectator who must exercise his imagination to reconstruct the location in his mind to keep up with Hall's rapid metamorphosis in the staging.

In an Adrian Hall production, anything might emerge from any part of the theatre: wagons, moving stages, trolleys, carts, swings, aerial wires, elevators; and actors may appear or disappear via traps below and above, tunnels,

stairs, moving steps, winches, towers, ladders, catwalks, even cars (such as the vintage auto Aimee McPherson drives onstage in Aimee). By constantly creating the unconventional and by bringing in the new in place of the ordinary, Hall strives to stimulate and engage his audience. His "brand" of confrontation is a direct approach to get to the heart of the play, as he explained in an interview: "A lot of our work leans more to the Brechtian, head-on, direct way of saying what we want to say, and away from the old methods of nineteenth-century romantic theater. So much theater today is still caught up in meaningless decoration, which sets up defenses in the audience and gets in the way of real experience. We want to take off rather than add to. Our productions are much more to the core of what the play is about."[27]

Theatre in the Rough

Hall's point of departure for devising the play's atmosphere is to begin with only one chair or table, or open space and to add only what can be proved necessary--relying on the actor's ability to create the world of the play. This approach is minimalist, but not purely "poor theatre" in Grotowski's sense. Hall and Lee enjoy and make full use of the capabilities of their two large regional theatres. But their shared aesthetic is a lavish use of rough, authentic objects and structures that offer the potential

for action--especially the athleticism of Hall's energetic troupes. Both of these artists also value the real over the representational--such as actual rusted steel or weathered wood--which bring a sense of authenticity and history with them. It is a theatre, as Shyer observes, "of fragmented realism, of real architectural parts and pieces--such as we encounter everyday--jerked out of context and fitted together to form unreal, often fantastic structures. It is simultaneously primitive and technological, austere and extravagant, real and fantastic: a striking if odd synthesis of poor theater and rich theater."[28]

The atmosphere of an Adrian Hall production is, therefore, geared to stimulate the spectator's imagination and to manipulate his emotional response. Unlike a richly detailed painted setting, which provides specific iconographic information about time, place, character and mood, an Adrian Hall setting offers suggestions, possibilities. The spectator must discover the meaning of the objects as the play unfolds. Thus, for Hall's 1976 adaptation of James Purdy's novel, Eustace Chisholm and the Works, the novel's numerous Depression-era locations were achieved by a unit set which at times represented a bare and seedy room over a pool hall in Chicago, an Army barracks in the south, a mansion, and so forth. The first of twenty-five scenes begins with the cast tap-dancing under garish Christmas lights. Behind them is a large room with a

chair, a bed, a bench, a sink with exposed pipes and a table with a hot plate, which later is used to cook real scrambled eggs. It was a space that captured the essence of Chicago in the thirties, but it was non-specific and frequently transformed by a central prop--a bed on wheels. Peter Gerety describes the part the audience played when they encountered this set: "You didn't know where you were and so you came to it not with so much expectations, not with so much an emotional preparedness--you kind of came to it raw. And so it allows you to open up and accept it, or it forces you to think about it and work at it. And [Adrian] is a genius in making people work at it because then if [the spectators] work at it and they put the puzzle together and you don't solve it for them, well, then they've got a piece of gold."[29]

The Director and Designer Collaboration

In the previous chapter, I briefly discussed how Hall works with his designers during the first two weeks of rehearsal. To reiterate, the collaboration that arises out of those hours of exploration is hard to describe or analyze. Eugene Lee, however, gives an insight into how the design begins at "point zero," just as the exploration of the text begins at "point zero," when he asserts that "there are two general points of view about the theatre. The technologists, like George Izenour, believe that you can

change everything mechanically. The other point of view is that you start with a neutral space. The production should develop out of that space....When you start in a neutral space, the birth looks like something when it's born....What we want is a theatre that, when we know what the production is, we know how the space will work."[30]

Hall is well aware of the value of his collaboration with all his designers, especially Eugene Lee. In Arnold Aronson's book, Set Design in America, Hall is quoted as follows: "I would never have been able to fulfill myself as an artist without Eugene Lee. It is a communal art that we deal with. The structured text is not what the theatre experience is. So any amount of wishing that you had a good text still does not mean that you would have good theatre. The designer is an integral part of structuring that experience."[31]

Of course Hall has worked with a number of other designers; next to Lee, Hall's most frequent collaborator has been Robert Soule. Soule confirms that the process of developing a design for Hall begins with lots of research, looking at photographs, trying and discarding ideas throughout the rehearsal. Soule says that Hall "much prefers to do a work in progress. The other directors I work with [at Trinity Rep] want a floor plan the first day. Adrian could care less if he sees a floor plan for at least a week and a half after rehearsals begin--until he's

familiar with the play and how he's going to approach it--then you can start to work on it."[32]

Hall's collaboration with Lee is unique because they really share the same ideas about what a set's design should accomplish. Whereas other director-designer teams might discuss colors or contours, Hall and Lee talk about the atmosphere they want to create and what they are trying to do philosophically with the play. As Lee observes, Hall is "very different. He pretends to be like me. You have to work with other directors to understand how much they <u>really, really</u> care about how it looks...they will, like, kvetch over were there paper matches then? is the actor using a wooden match? was this the right detail?...I don't think that means anything. I mean, research is one thing and then using that research and copying it is another thing. I mean, Adrian Hall was a history teacher...but he's never had a big interest...in how it looks and that doesn't interest me much--how it looks."[33]

The collaboration between the director and designers continues throughout the rehearsal period as costumes, props, set elements, technical effects and lights are tried, and kept or discarded as the artists search for the best solution for realizing the text through space and design.

The Director, the Actors and the Space

By the time the ensemble leaves the rehearsal hall and begins work on the actual stage, Adrian Hall and his actors are both knowledgeable about and emotionally connected to the textual material. As they enter the emerging environment for the play, they must explore the new space and begin to find ways to take that personal connection with the script and to transmit it to their audience. Actress Barbara Orson describes it this way: "I always say you do two shows--one in the rehearsal hall and one in the big theatre. And the work you do in the rehearsal hall is intimate and close and very, very personal. And then you come [onto the set]...and somehow you just have to open up there because we've got a whole audience, we've got to cover the stage, people have got to see us, got to hear us."[34]

The first day on set the actors and director walk about on the stage as the stage manager and technicians explain how traps, elevators, entrances and other elements of the set will be positioned or will function. The actors try to get a feel for how close the audience is, how far they will have to project their voices, and so forth. The director consults his working ground plan and questions his designers about the location and function of each aspect. This phase of rehearsal is essential for all directors.

For Hall and his ensemble, however, they must deal with special problems which stem from his constant alteration of the actor-audience relationship. In most regional theatres, the actors move into an auditorium which has rigidly fixed boundaries and permanently positioned seats. The actor's concern is with the alteration of the stage space and perhaps minor changes (for example, an added ramp or forestage projecting into the auditorium space). Hall's ensemble, on the other hand, frequently encounters radical adjustments with respect to where the stage is located, where the audience is seated, which way they are facing and what kind of seats they will sit in. The horizontal and vertical angles of view may differ dramatically from the actor's last experience on any given stage. Therefore, he must explore the environment of both the stage and its relationship to the seating areas.

True to the dictum of starting at "point zero," actors from both Dallas and Providence stress that, even in the productions that were staged at both theatres (e.g., Galileo, The Tempest, All the King's Men), Hall enters the new performance space as though it were for the first time. For Hall, the familiar set elements do not often provide easy answers to the production. A new cast, a re-worked text, a different audience, all require the director to go back to the starting point and find the answers for this production, in this time and this place.

Hall's technique for blocking a play has little to do with "textbook" directing. He disregards any idea of strong or weak positions on the stage. Instead, he and his actors improvise movements as they work through the various scenes in rehearsals--actively exploring the spatial relationships between characters and audience. Roger Morgan comments that "Adrian has an innate visual sense, but he doesn't talk much about visual things. He's a director, and it is the director's job--I think, most fundamental job--to work with visual things."[35] Morgan went on to explain that Hall's innate ability to create a stage picture could be analyzed the way a Renaissance painting can be diagrammed, where no matter where you look in the painting, your eye is directed back to the point the painter wants you to see. In other words, Hall is a master at controlling the focus within each scene and thus creating powerful stage images.

These images are developed by Hall as he and his actors continue delving into the textual material and from such images the director will determine the stage action. As the actor Peter Gerety describes, "somewhere down the line...[Adrian has] an actual vision...he has a visual impression of how it should be. And then once he gets that, it's not that he gets locked into that, because he still remains open, but he is ruthless in getting it and he won't settle for less....Once he's decided that, yes, that's the journey we're taking, he's ruthless. He is <u>ruthless</u>....He

will just go for it like a pit bull. And sometimes it ain't fun."[36]

Hall's talent for composition is intuitive and is not his primary concern. He has a capacity for defining the important problem in a scene and he believes it is seldom the "effect" of an actor's position on the stage as he explained in this advice to young directors:

> I wouldn't pre-block a show if I were you....You really do have to learn to trust yourself and believe in yourself....The one thing that I have learned, dealing with this kind of freedom and trust with everybody else, [is that] it requires enormous confidence that it will happen and that the thing will be there. If a scene is about the mutilation of a human being, almost the least interesting problem is whether he is standing on stage left or stage right, or whether it makes a nice picture or not. That doesn't even get into the process.[37]

So Hall keeps his eye on the crucial factor in the scene--the emotional and intellectual content--and handles the blocking problems in the most direct way. Whereas another director might be unduly concerned about how to get an actor off after a scene or how to bring a set-piece on, Hall would just have the actor walk off while another scene begins or he would have an actor or technician walk on with the set-piece. He just declines to recognize such logistics as problems unless they affect the dramatic moment.

The real problem, Hall believes, is getting the audience to experience the text actively, which they will not do if the director completely illustrates it with the blocking. This is a particular problem with revivals of

well-known plays because the actors, director and audience come to the work with preconceived images and expectations. Hall believes the tendency is for the director to think pictorially and to visualize the play's action against a backdrop. Such two-dimensional thinking leads the director into merely illustrating the text, reproducing the preconceived images of past productions.

For that reason, when Hall's associate director, Ken Bryant, directed Tennessee Williams Cat on a Hot Tin Roof at the Dallas Theater Center in 1987, Hall advised Bryant to start rehearsals with no furniture at all. Hall's point was that the images of the play--Maggie in her silk slip, the big, ornate bed, and so on--are so ingrained in the memories of both actors and spectators, that the director must jettison all that baggage and start anew. He had Bryant rehearse at first with only one chair in order to encourage his cast to find just what set-pieces or props were really essential to communicate the story to the audience. Hall said to Bryant, "Don't start with anything. Allow yourself the crutch of one chair. I mean, put one chair out there in space and when Maggie says, 'Come get in bed with me,' she might be standing, fully clothed. And I want you to find the play before you let them sit and stand and try to work out some kind of picture of the thing."[38]

Hall's blocking is purposefully left rough and unpolished. It is part of his aesthetic that theatre should

retain the earthiness of its roots in popular entertainment. The sawdust, the noise, the vivid, kaleidoscopic images are as typical of an Adrian Hall production as of the circus or carnival. The end of one scene and beginning of another is not, therefore, neat or predictable. Hall believes theatre should never be predictable. So he has an aversion to a scene transition with the conventional slow fade to black, the two minutes in darkness while technicians change set-pieces and actors take their place, to be discovered as the lights come up. That whole pattern is guaranteed, Hall feels, to disengage the audience. Instead, Hall's scene changes are as imaginative and varied as his stunning stage images are.

One technique for changing the scene is to overlap the dialogue of the two scenes--that is, starting scene two even as scene one is ending and having the actors in the second scene walk into the space simultaneously. It is a technique often used in film--where the visual image remains on the first location, as a voiceover is heard for a line or two and then the camera catches the new speakers in the new scene. Hall's use of the technique is to avoid the conventional and to capitalize on the kind of fluidity that the medium of film offers. During rehearsals, Hall will "lace up" the scenes quite tightly--that is, he will overlap the transitions to the point where some information is lost to the audience. At that point, he will "relax" the

interlacing a bit, so that the ensuing scene doesn't start quite so early. Once the proper transition point has been found (so that the transition happens as rapidly as possible without losing the content of the scenes), he will "set" or finalize that transition.

Hall's most recent production of Chekhov demonstrates another of his imaginative scene changes. This production was the 1988 The Cherry Orchard at Trinity Rep. In this play there are four different "sets." Eugene Lee's design created the various rooms of the house and the outdoor scene without walls or scenic drops and instead indicated the locations with rugs, furniture and an outdoor shrine set-piece. For changing scenes, Hall used the servant characters in the ensemble to create a little brigade of furniture and prop movers. At the end of one scene, a character would blow a shrill whistle, music would begin, and set-pieces would be whisked away, danced in, whirled around until the new scene formed itself before your eyes. The transitions added a mood of whimsy and joy that worked in counterpoint to the melancholy aspects of the text.

This fluid metamorphosis of one scene to the other is characteristic of Hall's staging, just as sharp, black and white "jump-cuts" are also characteristic of his work. Whether he is working with a three-character, intimate drama like Mensch Meier, or a large-cast epic like Galileo, Hall

draws upon the technical riches of both the stage and the screen to come up with fresh images. As Hall says, "If we are to achieve the ensemble playing that distinguishes us from commercial theater, the actors must never be trapped in one space....Why must space be divided in certain rigid ways?...Theatrical space relationships should never be cast in iron. That's not the way we think and live. Theatrical space and the way actors use it should always be fluid and exciting to match the excitement and spatial effects of films."[39]

Hall's process of blocking the play continues from the time the actors begin working in the space right up through the preview performances. (Hall continues to rehearse the actors throughout the preview performances.) Because the actors have already memorized all or most of their lines (depending upon the size of the role) and because they are so thoroughly grounded in the text by the time they encounter the space, they are free to relate to that space and the other actors. In a more traditional rehearsal period, actors begin blocking almost immediately and often learn their lines in relationship to their position on the set. Hall's method of delaying the blocking forces the actor to learn his lines by linking them to the character interrelationships and the action of the text, rather than connecting his lines to his physical positions on the stage. In this method the lines are a bit harder to

learn, but the actor gains physical freedom. Moreover, the actors do not spend hours writing and rewriting blocking into their scripts, but are able to improvise action and business and further develop the psychological aspects of their characters.

Coda

Theatregoers and critics have both praised and condemned Hall for his manipulation of theatre space. Adrian Hall's quarter-century of imaginative, sometimes radical stagings at Trinity Rep have insured the growth and success of the theatre--a success he is repeating at the Dallas Theater Center. Nevertheless, Hall, in concert with Lee, definitely has tried the patience of many of their audience members, as the following letter (from a Trinity patron at The Taming of the Shrew) so vividly demonstrates:

> We arrived at the theatre last night and found that the whole place had again been torn apart--people milling about (groundlings, the ushers informed us) and way up back there were a few seats (although everyone who had bought tickets assumed they were getting seats). Well, my husband works all week and we do not go to the theatre on Friday night to stand! There were huge barrels of peanuts which the rowdies were cracking and, of course, throwing. A lady was hit in the face. I pulled the small veil down on the hat I happened to be wearing, thank goodness! No sooner had we sat down than we were pounced on by an actor in full makeup, desperately urging us to sing the lyrics of a dirty song. He said it was Elizabethan. I blush even now when I think of it. Well, we pretended we were singing because that was what we were told to do and suddenly, we were on our feet being rushed forward, meeting head on a mob of people rushing right at us, singing at the top of their lungs that same dirty

> song. I dropped my program and the song sheet but didn't dare try to pick them up for fear of being trampled to death. The play had begun--not on stage, but in the middle of the section where our seats had been. We never got to sit down again! Once my husband said "I'm tired," and we tried to sit on some steps but this huge horse being pushed by six men bore down on us and we gave up the steps and ran again. Mercifully, intermission finally came and we escaped.[40]

The letter quoted above was printed with other audience responses in a brochure entitled "Shakespeare at Trinity" which offered a retrospective of TRC's productions of the Bard over two decades. The fact that Hall included this quote reflects his satisfaction with disturbing the complacency and sense of decorum of spectators who cling to an isolationist view of the theatre event--that is, a view that actors should be isolated in their "place" on the stage and the spectators' space should be inviolable. But Hall's theatre is a theatre of adventure and discovery and it requires active participation from its audience. For some, such as this spectator who desired to retreat behind a veil, Hall's theatre will be too rough and disruptive. Her seat (or, more accurately, her place in the theatrical space) will be taken by those seeking something more than mild entertainment, something that is more challenging and unpredictable--a theatre of confrontation.

Chapter VII

THE DIRECTOR AND THE ACTOR

> **It has become evident, at least with Trinity Square Repertory Company, that to accept the dogma of psychological naturalism in acting would not allow us to solve our problems of dealing with the range of material that is necessary. We had to invent a new language of expressions. We could no longer paint our faces and do the old tricks. We know how far we have come, moved away from the limits of the commercial theatre. And it is evident when one sees this company that something more than just good acting and a good play is happening.**
>
> **--Adrian Hall, program for A Man for All Seasons**

Adrian Hall's reference to "something more" is, of course, the interaction between the actor and audience that occurs when both are actively participating in the theatre event. Hall's comments are from a program in the 1973-74 season at Trinity Rep. That season Hall was beginning his second decade at Trinity and by that time he and his company had developed a recognizable production style that stemmed from their experimentation with traditional and original scripts and with the theatrical space. Hall's

company had furthermore developed a distinctive style of playing--the "Trinity style."

This style developed because, as the quotation from Hall indicates, the broad range of dramatic literature that is essential in a regional theatre requires an equally broad range of performance styles. Moreover, in defining theatre as the confrontation between actor and audience, the relative importance and the identity of the actor are also defined. In the following pages, Hall's definition of theatre will be explored as it applies to the actor--his place in the theatre of Adrian Hall and his relationship to the director during the rehearsal process.

The Need for Range

The development of the American regional theatre during the last three decades has been aimed at creating both an alternative method of production (less constricted by commercial pressures) and an indigenous theatre (which serves the needs of a specific community). When Adrian Hall became artistic director at Trinity Rep in 1964, the Providence community had very little access to professional productions except by going to Boston or New York. Thus, the company had a certain responsibility to offer a balanced repertoire--what is today viewed as standard fare for regional theatres: European classics (Molière, Chekhov, Shaw and Shakespeare), American classics (Miller, Hellman,

Williams, and O'Neill), contemporary drama (Pinter, Ionesco, Beckett, and Albee) and one or two new plays each season.

Within a few seasons, Hall's experiments with scripts old and new began to create a remarkable kind of theatre that was in no way "standard." Nevertheless, the repertory remained just as diverse and became even more demanding upon the actor's skills. For example, in the 1967-68 season, Katherine Helmond played Jenny in The Threepenny Opera, Portia in Shakespeare's Julius Caesar, Oscar Wilde's wife in Years of the Locust, Gwendolyn in The Importance of Being Earnest and the title role in Racine's Phaedra. The season also included a production of An Enemy of the People. The Trinity actors were thus called upon to handle the rapid shifts of character and presentational "Brechtian" style as well as the psychological realism of Ibsen; to play the quicksilver wit of Oscar Wilde as well as the formal verse of Shakespeare and Racine.

Although both Hall and his actors had been trained in Stanislavsky acting techniques, the demands of the regional theatre repertoire challenged the company to find a style that could encompass both the realistic and the theatrical. By the time he came to Trinity, as we have seen, Hall was already questioning the conventions of 1950s theatre production and he was beginning to discard them. At the same time he began to question the acting conventions because he felt that the realistic acting style was not

always suitable for classical and recent plays. As Hall explains:

> We have been taught that only if the actor is in touch with himself and the material, and indeed feels it, can it be alive and true and real. There you are in trouble. Because you find out that in material supposedly for naturalistic acting that the naturalistic is not at all what is required. Example: George Bernard Shaw....We know that the Method school of acting is what is going on internally within us. How do you handle an idea by Shaw that cannot possibly be acted out? Maybe acting is far more mysterious and flexible than we suspect. Maybe it has something to do with the recipient.[1]

Hall's dissatisfaction with The Method did not lead him to reject a "realistic" acting style, however. If anything, the acting style developed at Trinity (and now being learned at Dallas) combines the truthfulness that we expect from the Stanislavsky techniques with the directness typical of Brecht's stage. Director Peter Brook observes in The Shifting Point that modern acting theory has tended to emphasize one part of the actor's abilities: Meyerhold and Grotowski emphasized the development of the actor's body, Brecht emphasized the actor's intellectual functions, and Stanislavsky emphasized the emotional participation of the actor. However, as Brook points out, the actor must actually utilize all these abilities.[2] Hall's experiments, like those of Brook, have led him to develop a style of playing for his ensemble that meets the needs of the diverse regional theatre repertoire. It is a style that may

incorporate methods of Brecht, Stanislavsky or Grotowski, within a season or even within a single production.

The "Trinity Style"

The "Trinity style" gives an identifiable stamp to Adrian Hall's productions. A principal characteristic is a bold theatricality that results from the directness of the actor's relationship to the spectator, from the exuberant physicality and energy of the actors who can transform themselves at will, and from a heightened realism that is achieved by Hall's direct and unadorned staging.

Instead of attempting to create a believable illusion of life, Hall seeks to create a reality that resides in the existential presence of the actor. As Timothy J. Wiles observes in The Theater Event, "many dramatists writing after Stanislavsky believe that the actor's closeness of feeling with the character he portrays does not represent the pinnacle of realism and 'truth to life' upon the stage. Far more 'true' is the fact that the actor is an actor and is performing in a theater, not living in the character's quarters which he has re-created so slavishly by means of affective memory."[3]

The theatre of Adrian Hall displays the actor's full range of talents and imagination. Hall's actors sing, dance, play musical instruments, perform daring feats such as climbing scaffolding to the rafters, diving into a

pit, or dangling from a rope. They are also known for transforming themselves like chameleons. For example, in Lovecraft's Follies Ronald Frazer played Adolf Hitler, Cheetah (Tarzan's ape) and J. Robert Oppenheimer as an Indian shaman. And in Feasting with Panthers, Richard Kavanaugh transformed himself from a prisoner in the jail to a Triton to Dorian Gray and to Salomé.

Such transformations are staged without technical trickery, using the actor's skill and spectator's imagination instead. The transformation from Dorian Gray to Salomé, as Richard Cumming describes it, was a sudden and vivid metamorphosis; Kavanaugh was already bare-chested and "it was an electrifying moment on the stage because he just took an eyebrow pencil and just circled the breasts and painted on these huge lips, like he'd kissed the side of a big red barn and then he did the dance of the seven veils to the tune of the 'Society Gavotte.'"[4] The dance was also simplicity itself--the actor used only one long veil, and held up one finger to indicate the first veil coming off, two fingers for the second, and so forth.

Even in Hall's most grandiose, epic stagings, there are intimate, honest moments which reveal the inner man, the individual's crisis within the larger issue. And of course, Hall still directs many works of the realistic/ naturalistic dramatists. In such productions, the daring theatricality is less apparent and there is a sincerity and

truthfulness that is true to life in the strictest "Stanislavskyan" terms. But it is less ornate, more distilled and direct in its approach, just as the text and setting have been expressed in the most simple, direct way. As Hall explained in the program for the 1986 production of The Country Girl, "this play is very realistic, and we have to move it out of the standard method-acting realism of the period. You know, with everyone kind of standing around in 1940s overcoats in a tableau. I want a more archetypal thing, a Brechtian thing. I want it to be a heightened realism that is very clear and concise dramatically."[5]

The "Trinity style" is an outgrowth of Hall's desire for confrontation between actors and audience, as is clear in this exhortation by Hall:

> When bullfighters come into the arena, or when the football team comes onto the field, my God, the crowd goes crazy! Why? Because you're about to participate in a communal event. That's why I think we've got to recapture the theater. Here come these extraordinary, professional, exciting people who are willing to die in front of you, who are willing to love in front of you, who are willing to commit themselves in front of you on the most intimate, personal level. I just want my actors absolutely attuned to coming into that arena and making life or death happen--to be saying to the audience, "We're really going to try. We're going to give it all we've got." And then the audience gets into that frame of mind.[6]

The Actor and the Audience

As Hall developed his conception of theatre as a confrontation between the actor and the audience, he began to use his ensemble in new ways. In his premiere production of Brother to Dragons in 1968 (his second production after Hall's meeting with Grotowski at Edinburgh), Hall utilized his actors to serve as setting and atmosphere. An earthquake was staged with some actors sitting on the shoulders of others, jangling a chandelier and swaying their bodies to create the earth tremors. Actors represented cantering horses and a river barge passing in the night, and a dozen hands fluttering together created a moth beating against the window.

In the program for that production, Hall explained the experiments to his audience: "Our respect for the sacredness and absolute infallibility of the text has caused us to castrate ourselves as actors. If all energy goes to illustrating or indicating exactly what the text is saying, then doesn't the whole idea of play 'acting' become cumbersome and awkward--an appendage tacked on to the main body which is art itself: Then this approach is a search for a method with other than naturalistic-linguistic means."[7]

Hall's first experiments at reaching the audience were more aggressive and less subtle than they later would become. Initially, actors were running through the aisles

and actually touching the spectators in an effort to engage them in the performance. This practice quickly became predictable and was changed so that actors might freely go through the space, but the confrontation was less specifically targeted at one spectator. What developed was an acting style that allowed the actor to assume a character or to simply serve as a storyteller and, because the ensemble often functioned as one entity, it also worked as a group storyteller.

During those experiments in the late 1960s at Trinity, according to Richard Kavanaugh, Hall "was dealing with the company as a whole. There might be a lead, but it would be rare. You might play one part, but it would be rare--you'd probably play five."[8] Barbara Orson tells how she was cast in Hall's original production of Brother to Dragons as "Woman #1" and "Woman #8." The actress withdrew from the cast because "in those days...you just had to have a name so you could fabricate a sort of life."[9] Before long, however, she heard how exciting and innovative the production was going to be, and so she asked to join the cast again. Hall accepted her back and gave her character a name. Orson adds that "of course we don't need that anymore. I mean, he's stripped that away."[10]

Hall was not only forging a sense of ensemble (that is, a common vocabulary and mutual trust among the players), but he was also developing a manner of

communicating a script through the actions of fifteen to twenty actors who together could tell a story and create a performance event. In many productions, the actors never left the stage, but remained onstage or in the house providing sound effects, serving as props or set-pieces, portraying a crowd--always in some way contributing to the overall effect. In 1981, the Royal Shakespeare Company delighted Broadway audiences with this same kind of staging in the RSC production of The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby. At that time Hall had been using those techniques at Trinity for fifteen years.

The development of the "Trinity Style" was recorded by James Schevill, author of Cathedral of Ice and Lovecraft's Follies. During the rehearsals for Lovecraft's Follies in 1973, Schevill described the new acting style that was then beginning to emerge in the Trinity company:

> Rather than an actor working towards character, and then being placed in relation to other actors, and movements--the movements and group actions begin the work...On the whole, character is subordinated to a larger effect....we're getting away from the story of a man at the center of a drama--it's still there, but not as the main thrust....One notices teamwork more than one to one confrontation. One sees events, large brimming events, events with social and political significance, rather than personal.[11]

The Trinity Style and The Method

In chapter 5, I examined how Adrian Hall explores the theatrical text at the table with his actors during the first weeks of rehearsals. Instead of concentrating on the

psychological or emotional life of the characters, Hall uses these early rehearsals to focus on the thoughts and ideas engendered by the text. As the actor Richard Kneeland explains, "very little of our time is spent saying what you're supposed to feel during this moment or where you get that. Most of our time is spent dealing with the history of the period, what the scene wants, what the playwright is trying to say with that or what Adrian's feelings are."[12]

Kneeland goes on to explain, however, that Hall only delays this emotional aspect of character development until the last week or two of rehearsals and then he may spend hours exploring the emotional content of the scenes. In this way, Hall subverts the actor's tendency to play a kind of generic emotion or to incorporate an emotional response in the scene that may be hard to extricate later. Hall will encourage an actor to resist playing for effect and warn him not to make choices too quickly. By this method the director gives the actor time to get to know his character thoroughly before he tackles the emotional highs and lows of the role.

Only when the actor is ready to grapple with the emotional side of his character will Hall encourage him to delve into that aspect of his role. Because Hall delays the psychological investigation, his approach is almost the opposite of a Method director's technique. It is interesting to note, however, how Hall's early training (in

the Stanislavsky techniques at Pasadena Playhouse and in the Strasberg Method at the Actors Studio during its heyday in the 1950s) still influence his working process.

Early in his directing career Hall grew suspicious of the emotional excess that often resulted from the American Method. Hall describes seeing Arthur Penn direct an actress in a scene from Toys in the Attic in which he drove the actress into hysterics and says "that was the kind of thing that we used to do at the Studio by the hour and day and week, where people examined their own inner torment in the confines of a play, to the extent that there was always hysteria and violence and real eruption. Today I have become extraordinarily suspicious of it, of the tools of neurosis applied to the very rigid demands of art."[13]

Nevertheless, although Hall definitely dismissed the excesses of the American Method, an observer at Hall's in rehearsal reveals his strong foundation in the vocabulary and techniques of Stanislavsky. While he does not analyze a play to find its spine or the superobjective (as a "Method" director such as Harold Clurman or Elia Kazan would have done), Hall frequently does what he terms "a little craft thing" and clarifies an actor's objective in a scene or a section of a scene. For Hall and his actors, these techniques are just part of the actor's craft and, like a singer doing his scales, the actor builds his character according to his own method of training and skill.

Hall has developed his own vocabulary and method of working, which his actors have come to understand. Whereas another director might guide his actors through emotional memory exercises in order to produce a real emotion that can be then connected to the emotional situation in the scene, Hall exhorts his players to "pull it closer to yourself" and spends hours of rehearsals getting the actor to find his own intellectual and emotional connection to the scene. In a way this technique removes the need for emotional memory exploration because, as director Robert Lewis explains, "if you have automatic emotional references...if something is happening in your part and you understand it in your own experience you have either lived through it or read about it and therefore you have an automatic emotional reference for it, you don't have to do anything....You don't have to go into all that digging that we used to do in the Group days; the old emotional-memory exercises."[14]

Hall's technique is similarly aimed at getting the actor to discover his own emotional reference points. In a 1988 interview, Richard Kavanaugh described it like this:

> The A Number One primary acting lesson, <u>acting lesson</u>, that Adrian repeated over and over and over and has taught me and it's never out of my mind, is to keep bringing it closer to yourself, keep bringing it closer to yourself. And that means something very important and I understand that, so in doing Otto [in <u>Mensch Meier</u>] the more of myself that I invest in that or recognize in that, the truer it's going to be....Now that doesn't mean every part you do should be exactly alike and exactly like yourself...it's the internal, it's the heart, the spirit.[15]

Presentational Acting

Hall's use of theatrical space is based on the idea of theatre in one room. The actor in that space, therefore, must relate not only to his fellow actors, but also to the spectators who share that room and who are recognized to be part of the performance event. Hall accomplishes this communication with the audience by directing his actors in a presentational style, focusing towards the audience rather than pretending they are not there. Of course, it was the artificial presentational acting of the nineteenth-century Russian stage that prompted Stanislavsky to develop his acting techniques for creating truth on the stage. What distinguishes the traditional presentational style and that of the Trinity (and Dallas) actors is the relationship of the actor to the spectator. Hall's actors are aware that they share the same space as the spectators and their task is not to orate or posture, nor to act behind the "fourth wall," but rather to perform so as to bring their listeners into a story. It is much closer to a Brechtian acting style--but not always as direct as that.

Hall establishes this relationship by allowing very, very few scenes to be played "profile," that is, with two actors speaking and focusing on each other. Hall rigorously limits his actors on how much they are allowed to look at each other and has them direct their speeches to the

spectators. The degree of directness varies according to the specific play. For some plays, such as a work by Brecht, the address might be more directly targeted at selected viewers; for a Chekhov or Ibsen, the focus might be more general. Indeed, in some productions, the audience is probably unaware that the actors are being presentational at all. Hall also uses the space between the actors to enhance the sense of a shared experience. For example, in a two-character scene, the actors may be positioned at opposite sides of the stage space--in their communication with one another, the whole audience is taken into the scene as well.

Hall's rationale for requiring this direct focus is that in life we seldom continuously focus on those we are speaking to--so the realistic convention is not really true to life. More important, the audience must not be excluded and put into the position of mere spectators--they are to be participants and it is essential that they get the information needed to follow the story and emotional line of the play. Moreover, having the face open to the audience allows the audience to see into the eyes of the player, to share the emotional life of the character, giving the spectator the effect of a close-up shot in a film.

Peter Brook's experiments with the actor-audience relationship proved to him how various changes in the size or physical configuration of the theatre space could alter

the effect of the theatre event. But Brook also observed that "the difference may be superficial: a more profound difference can arise when the actor can play on a changing inner relationship with the spectator. If the actor can catch the spectator's interest, thus lower his defenses and then coax the spectator to an unexpected position or an awareness of a clash of opposing beliefs, of absolute contradictions, then the audience becomes more active."[16] It is this "changing inner relationship with the spectator" that Hall manipulates, through the acting style and all other aspects of his staging, in order to keep the audience active and participating.

It should be apparent by now that the "Trinity style" is not an acting style in the same sense as is, for example, the "Heroic style" or the "Restoration style" in which actors are trained in the diction and physical gesture appropriate to the dramatic literature of a specific period. The "Trinity style" is not something that can be studied or objectively played. Rather, it is a term to describe an attitude towards the relationship between the actor and the spectator that stems from Hall's conception of theatre as a confrontation between participants. The "style" gives the player the flexibility to appear as a player, as a character, to shift to another character, to directly address the audience, and so on.

This manner of acting in no way hampers the Trinity actor's ability to fit into the cast of another production; on the contrary, the flexibility and range of the actors in Hall's ensembles prepare them for virtually any kind of performance situation. Ed Hall, who recently created the role of Bynum Walker in the Broadway production of Joe Turner's Come and Gone, declares that

> I wanted to do the classics and everything and Adrian has given me the opportunity to do that--Shakespeare and Chekhov, Shaw, the Irish playwrights--I mean it's just been amazing....and being able to do that, when I get into a play like Joe Turner--which is akin to me because it's a black play--I mean, I just sailed through that play....and I only did that because I've expanded my whole craft playing all these various roles--roles I would never, never in life get an opportunity to play if I had stayed in New York.[17]

The Trinity Rep ensemble is now so adept at the "Trinity style" and at integrating the presentational and naturalistic styles, that the shift from one to the other is perfectly seamless. The key for the actor is to be able to justify his motivation for not looking at his partner in the scene, just as he might justify any other motivations. Barbara Orson describes how Hall directs the actors in this style:

> He will say "I can't hear you." "I can't see you." And he wants you to look out. He wants you to look directly at the audience. And it doesn't mean that it can't be natural and realistic--you can still do that--[you] find a way to do that for yourself so the audience sees and hears you and are confronted with that face, your face, and who you are and what you're saying at that particular time.

> And so the actor resists that a lot because we think we have to look into each other's eyes, but you don't. You don't....and I think as years go by that you incorporate that so completely in your style of work that you don't even think of it twice.[18]

Nevertheless, this straightforward focus takes a great deal of courage because the actor and character are both revealed. If the actor lacks confidence in the inner life of his character, he cannot hide behind artful glances and gesture. The spectators can see his eyes, and he is aware that they can perceive his emotional insecurity. On the other hand, if his character is well-formed, seeing the eyes of the actor/character allows the audience to share in the intimacy of the emotional moment.

The actors in Hall's newly formed ensemble at the Dallas Theater Center are learning to deal with the demands of the "Trinity style," but there is some confusion about how it works and some resistance to it. Dee Hennigan says that "there's more responsibility on our part as actors because we have to look at [the audience], we have to engage them."[19] Randy Moore admits that "it's very hard to do because we're not used to it," but he goes on to say that he believes that the Dallas actors are "going to have to make it our personal problem as to how we do that--getting the face [turned] out--of getting the information out--and still be able to relate to each other."[20]

The benefits of the "Trinity style" are still being learned at Dallas, as Hall's associate director, Ken Bryant,

explains: "[Adrian's] style is so different from what most American actors grow up with...actors will often complain way into rehearsal about how hard it is because they can't contact the other actor because Adrian won't let them look at each other. And so they sit there and just struggle and struggle. But as with most things, it's in the struggle that you get the most energy."[21] From their struggles the Dallas actors will learn what the Trinity actors already know--the joy of performing with an audience instead of simply for an audience, as Ed Hall observes:

> What has evolved for me as an actor over the years here is that the audience is also part of the production. I love playing to the audience--I absolutely love it--because you can control them. You know, when you hear that silence, you can hear a pin drop when you say a certain line...or a gasp or something, then you know they are with you. The audience becomes an entity and part of the whole production....as much a part of the production as we are...but I just play right to them and I just love it, I just love it![22]

Mensch Meier

In the Spring of 1988, Adrian Hall introduced the work of Franz Xaver Kroetz to his Providence audiences when he directed Mensch Meier at the Trinity Repertory Company. The production is significant because it represents Hall's continuing effort to bring into the mainstream modern dramatists that this director feels are important. In the past, Hall has been a pioneer in bringing Harold Pinter and Sam Shepard to the stage; Kroetz is the most recent dramatist who Hall believes should be given a voice.

Kroetz's play is also an example of the more intimate, character-oriented dramas that balance such epic productions as All the King's Men and Cathedral of Ice in Hall's directing repertoire. Mensch Meier also is one of Hall's many productions that investigate family relationships and so shares a kinship with his productions of Ethan Frome, Buried Child, House of Breath, On Golden Pond and his stagings of the plays of O'Neill, Williams and Hellman. Staged on the semi-circular thrust stage of the downstairs Lederer theatre, Mensch Meier is a more realistic drama and is a "fixed" script (as opposed to being a script developed during the rehearsal period).

For these reasons, I have chosen to use this production to illustrate the process of Adrian Hall in his work with the actor. Mensch Meier is also an interesting choice because the three-person cast included a veteran Trinity actor, the late Richard Kavanaugh, a young actor trained in the Trinity Conservatory, Michael Cobb, and a newcomer to the company, Mary Francina Golden.[23] Thus, a range of experience is evident within the small cast.

In chapter 5, I examined the process of the director and actors exploring the text during the first weeks of rehearsal. That process--which consists of Hall bringing his actors to "point zero," to start with a clean slate, guiding them through the problems of connecting to the text, and then finding ways to connect the audience to the

material--continues from the earliest rehearsals right up to opening night. In this chapter I will examine how Hall brought the actors through this process during the rehearsals for Mensch Meier.

Kroetz's play is a stark, almost surgical study of the dissolution of a family. Otto Meier is a laborer on an auto assembly line in Germany in the 1970s. His wife, Martha, is a likeable, frumpy hausfrau who gets by in life on Pollyanna platitudes and a veneer of cheerfulness. Their teenage son, Ludi, is an earnest but ordinary boy who is unable to realize his parents' dreams of upward mobility. Kroetz's play examines how the pressures of modern life come to bear on the family. When Ludi cannot find a job that is acceptable to his parents ("How about a dental technician?" his mother suggests), he steals some money from them to go to a rock concert and in the family crisis that follows is forced to leave home. He then takes the only job he can get--as a bricklayer's apprentice. The expulsion of the boy reveals a chasm between husband and wife. As Otto caves in to the pressure of fears of losing his job, Martha forfeits her dreams of a better life for her child and realizes she must depart also, leaving Otto alone with very little grip on reality.

Mensch Meier is structured in three acts. The first act offers a rather sweet picture of the blue-collar family, struggling to keep going day after day, fueled by their

dreams of something better. The departure of Ludi and the subsequent departure of Martha fills the cataclysmic second act. The third act represents the fallout as the individuals try to come to terms with their choices.

These actions are represented in twenty-seven short scenes which take place in the family's one-bedroom apartment in a government housing project, in the single room Martha escapes to, and in a beer garden, a cafe, a grocery store, and Ludi's job at the brickyard. Eugene Lee designed a unit set of the family's apartment--it was an impersonal, stark landscape made up of unfinished plywood walls, a small kitchenette, a sofabed and chest of drawers--all other scenes were created by the actors' behavior and props or small set-pieces introduced into the main space. So, in spite of the realistic structure and dialogue of Kroetz's play, Hall still used his fluid, Elizabethan-style staging to transform the time and place with a minimum of embellishment.

Mensch Meier - Starting at Point Zero

Kroetz's play, in Roger Downey's translation, is subtitled "a play of everyday life." Indeed, the opening lines of scene one reflect that ordinary routine as Martha calls, "Time to get up! Early bird gets the worm!"[24] On the surface, it seems a straightforward realistic drama. Nevertheless, Hall's work with his actors--to get them to

start at point zero--begins with a stripping away of the actor's habits in building a character. Peter Brook makes a distinction between the idea, inherent in the Stanislavsky techniques, that one builds a character; instead, Brook says, "preparing a character is the opposite of building--it is demolishing, removing brick by brick everything in the actor's muscles, ideas and inhibitions that stands between him and the part, until one day with a great rush of air the character invades his every pore."[25] Hall's method, then, is much closer to this stripping away process and he begins it from the earliest "at table" rehearsals.

Richard Kavanaugh, having worked with Hall since the late 1960s, was accustomed to this process. The actor observed that "you can see that the way [Adrian] works, there's a great kindness-- he's generous in so many ways. Yet he can be very strong and get in there--my first year I used to go home and weep...I had been so stripped down."[26] During the rehearsals for Mensch Meier, Kavanaugh constantly questioned how his own gestures and vocal habits were or were not suitable for Otto. Hall and Kavanaugh decided that the actor's gestures needed to be restricted. Kavanaugh, who was an athlete before he was an actor, was known for being very free, physically, on the stage. But for Otto, a little man whose life consisted of the screws he fastened eight hours a day, Hall and Kavanaugh sought a more rigid physical gesture that would embody the social restrictions

under which Otto labored. Kavanaugh even suggested tying down his hands during rehearsal to make himself aware of how enclosed the character was. Hall helped the actor delete the excess gesture by restricting Otto's movements and stage business. In the end, Otto was realized in the most subtle of movements--a slight shrug, a nod of the head--and because of that simple directness, his words came across like poetry.

Hall's determination to get to the actor's core precipitated an intense personal drama for the actress playing Martha, Mary Francina Golden. Golden had never encountered a director like Hall. Indeed, directors in New York and regional theatres had often commended her for her competent technique. During the rehearsals for Mensch Meier Hall stripped away old habits and artifice and brought the actress to a new level of playing. It began in the rehearsals at the table--Hall encouraging his actors to not work for effect. The director told his cast, "in the commercial world we have to put the results up front... having to indicate something."[27] (This is quite true; on Broadway an actor has only a few days to produce tangible results or, legally, he can be fired.) Hall went on to say that, in a play like Mensch Meier at Trinity, the aim for the actor is to open up, to reveal himself.

Hall accomplishes much of the process of stripping away by cutting out embellishments added by the actors,

what actors call "filling the moment." Perhaps the major challenge for Golden came near the end of Act II. In that act the boy and his father have a brutal argument which results in the boy leaving home. That scene is followed by an evening of steely silence between the parents that explodes when Otto can no longer make sense of his own life, and with teeming hostility and murderous intent, Otto destroys the apartment, demolishing the table and chairs, the lamp, the television and even his prize creation, an intricate model airplane he had patiently constructed; he tries to put his fist through the wall and is stopped only by the abject fear and astonishment on his wife's face.

The demolition scene is followed by an extended scene of silence in which the couple picks up the pieces and restores order. Then Otto begins an outpouring of feelings and thoughts he has never expressed--fears of childhood, fears that maybe he is just a machine that thinks it is human, that he doesn't really go home at night, but is just switched off and shown a movie of the wife and kids. During these remarkable confessions, Martha must realize that she doesn't know this man at all and, indeed, never has known him. She must realize that she must leave home. Kroetz writes in only a few responses for her during Otto's revelations, and then the playwright indicates a three-minute silence. At the end of that pause Martha must leave.

During rehearsals, Golden brought great authenticity to Martha's growing realization of the situation. She was innovative and technically proficient, but Hall wanted to get to a deeper reality. In the silence that followed the demolition, for example, Hall eliminated all "meaningful" or incriminating looks between the couple--any overt indication of anger or regret. The action of putting the apartment back together spoke for itself. Similarly, during Martha's three-minute pause, Golden played the moment convincingly, but Hall didn't want the actress to play the moment, he wanted her to live the moment. During the hours of rehearsals, he carefully stripped away all the "decoration" until the actress was left with her own visceral response. As Golden explains:

> He just got to the bottom of my bag of tricks so quickly--my theatrical tricks. What the man did, basically, was cut away every theatrical--and I use that in the pejorative sense--every theatrical trick I have been relying on. He just cut it away. He just cut to the bone, to the marrow, and had me discard all that and start basically at the bottom and build up again.
>
> He was like a surgeon...he knew exactly what he was doing...and what needed to be pared away to get at the good part. And no one has ever done that to me before....Living through it--it was the worst experience I ever had in rehearsal. And he got the best results out of me I've ever seen. It was worth every single minute of it.[28]

Mensch Meier - Making the Connection with the Text

Throughout the rehearsals, Hall continued this process of stripping away the unnecessary ornamentation. At

the same time, though, he was guiding the actors through the problem-solving process to allow them full expression of their characters. Hall's basic method is to encourage his ensemble and designers to bring in any and all ideas, to try things, to see things, whether it is a piece of business, a costume, a lighting effect. He strives to keep things flexible as long as possible, to allow for creativity. Hall tells his actors: "I really do want you to talk. If something worth dealing with is thrown in the pot but none of us know how it fits in, well, we can just pass on and keep coming back to it, keep drawing that chestnut out. I think original impulses are so important to actors. You should be your most vulnerable when you first come to the jungle here. Lost between now and the moment, we can clearly see the image on the tapestry."[29]

During the rehearsals for Mensch Meier, Hall employed his various techniques for building a bridge between the actor and his text. He traced the threads of the story every day or so, defined the events and how they fit into the whole, and clarified the emotional development of each character. In analyzing the structure of the dramatic text, Hall works much like a concert musician. Just as a musician might follow a certain musical strain throughout a piece and then go back and integrate it into the whole, Hall isolates parts of the text, exploring a specific episode, or single plot line, to define how it

functions on its own and within relationship to other parts. Thus, he may ask the actors to take related scenes and read them in sequence (omitting all the other scenes) in order to trace the actions that provide the emotional arc for those characters within the larger text. He may also do this with one character's lines, omitting all extraneous lines. Working through the play this way, he clarifies for himself and the actor the inner workings of the story or the "clothesline" of action so that it becomes clear what information must be communicated to the audience.

In a further effort to get the actors to connect with the text, Hall tells stories that evoke his connection with the play's themes, and gets the actors to do the same. For example, the director tells about a science program that shows how an elephant can be retained by a little rope by simple conditioning; then he relates that to Martha and Otto's social conditioning that has brought them to their crisis. Hall brings up our fear of vulnerability--how even after a car accident, we wonder "do I look all right?" (Hall was in a serious accident a few years ago and recalls the moment vividly.) Hall's comments about Otto's personal struggle with the corporation are linked to Hall's struggle with the institutions he has created.

Hall does not, however, expect his actors to respond emotionally to his own experiences; his technique is to get them to bring up their own personal experiences which will

connect them to the problems of their characters, so they may be able to sympathize deeply with these fictional people. In the opening scene Hall has the boy carefully place each of his personal articles--his wallet, his cigarettes, his clothes, his cassette tapes--in a neat semi-circle around his bed, which he then methodically clears away. The business is telling--Ludi is a good boy, a neat boy, with a few precious belongings and a German sense of order that he is struggling to maintain. The business causes Hall to recall his aunt, who carefully laid out all her precious things around a well before throwing herself down the well to her death. Hall's recollection provides a graphic human parallel that brings a visceral response.

Hall also encourages the actors to find their connection to the text by asking leading questions. Hall resists giving answers to actors, but prods them along to continually explore at deeper and deeper levels. As actress Barbara Orson exclaims, "part of his genius and his passion, you see, is that he makes you work."[30] During Mensch Meier Hall posed thousands of questions to the actors. For example, "What makes Martha snap when she does?" "How long has Otto been here at the start of this scene?" "Where is the 'hook' for this line?" "Why does he say that?" "Why is that line there?" "What time of day is it?" "Where are you?" "Is it hot or cold?"

It will be evident to anyone familiar with the rehearsal process that the answers to Hall's questions would either be found in the script or not indicated at all. So Hall could provide his own answers to these questions. That is not, however, how he perceives the director's function. Hall believes that his job is to find a personal connection with the text and to get the actor to do the same thing. And just because the text has indicated some information does not mean that the actor has sufficiently thought about it and worked out how it might affect him at a given moment. In the theatre it is common, in rehearsals for a large-cast play, to find that an actor playing a small role may be shocked to find out, late in rehearsal, that he is present in a scene where he has no lines. So a director cannot assume that the actor has truly considered the myriad aspects of a scene except by methodically working through them in the rehearsal. Hall's technique, therefore, is to take the actor step by step through that exploration.

Hall's efforts to connect the actor, intellectually and emotionally to the text, do not stop at any point in the rehearsal. During the rehearsal the day of the first preview performance of Mensch Meier, Hall talked for an hour about emotional devastation and how it affects us. Another director would, by that point in rehearsal, be giving notes on pace, corrections on blocking, and other specific notes concerning technical matters. Although Hall would certainly

clear up any technical problems the actor might have at such a rehearsal, it is characteristic of Hall that the details of staging are never as important as inspiring his actors to dare to reveal themselves through their art.

Working with the Actor

About the third week into the Mensch Meier rehearsals, Hall begins to push for a greater intensity of emotional involvement in his actors. He directs Michael, playing Ludi, to begin experimenting with the sobbing that culminates the argument scene with Otto. He offers encouragement to the young actor by telling him it doesn't matter how it looks or sounds at first, just to experiment with it.

The atmosphere that Hall establishes, in the rehearsal hall and on the stage, always has this sense of openness--as in a workshop or laboratory, the actors and director take the time to really explore. Hall maintains this sense of ease, even as the opening night draws near. Hall decides as he goes what scenes will be worked on in a given rehearsal period. (This is possible because all the cast is required to be present at every rehearsal.) There is no feeling of having to get through the third act or else. Hall instills a great deal of trust in his actors and the production seems to grow organically.

Hall also is adept at getting the actors to contribute freely and to create. In the rehearsals for Mensch Meier, it was apparent that Kavanaugh was much more accustomed to Hall's process than the other actors. He knew to take the time to work out each detail and carefully crafted a most remarkable character out of an ordinary man. One day in rehearsal, at the end of Act III, scene five, Kavanaugh exhibited an inkling of his inventiveness. This scene consists of a short monologue of Otto at home, after which he says, "Just go to bed, now, like a good boy." Hall's blocking called for the actor to take a blanket and go to sleep on the sofabed. One day Kavanaugh took the blanket and a small throw pillow and curled up to sleep under the kitchen table. It was a touching moment which brought into focus how helpless and childlike this man was--it was this kind of humanity that Richard Kavanaugh brought to the role of Otto to balance out the brutality that is also in Kroetz's character.

In an interview during Mensch Meier, the actor gave Hall the credit for creating a situation where such invention can occur: "Adrian allows me and allows others to experiment and if you don't, you don't come out with anything. If the director says 'it's gotta be that,' well, maybe it does 'gotta be' but, to quote Otto, 'How do you know, unless you work it out for yourself?' There might be a better choice, a much more interesting choice. Some

directors go right by the book, 'it says there: cross left.' So [Adrian] allows that much more."[31]

Kavanaugh gave an example of Hall's willingness to experiment. It was a wild idea that came to him during rehearsals for The Tempest at Trinity in 1983. Kavanaugh was playing the part of the monster Caliban, and he and Hall were struggling to find some way to create the monster without resorting to a fish suit or other such trickery. At the time Kavanaugh was reading a book about the Masai--African warriors of Kenya who, in their ritualistic lion dances, exaggerate their stature by jumping to great heights. Kavanaugh got the idea of strapping a small stool to each of his feet to give him stature and make him different--something others might consider monstrous. Hall said, "Let's try it." Immediately they put it into practice by attaching boots to a couple of two-foot high stools. The result was an entirely original Caliban that could stride across the bogs and swamps of Prospero's island to do his master's bidding. The stools were retained in performance --not covered up or changed in any way--and Kavanaugh used his considerable athletic ability to make his "monster" fall, roll, and then rise up to a magnificent stature.

Hall knows that no one thing works all the time. His method is a combination of the work atmosphere that he establishes, the questions he puts to the actors, the clarifications of story line, objectives and motivation, and

the emotional arc of the characters, the endless stories and discussions that dig out the secrets of the play, the vulnerability that he displays and inspires in his players. When it is evident that the actor is in trouble, Hall says he tries "to open up the possibilities around the problem. When an actor is involved in a speech and it's not working, in the sense that it is not doing what is required of it for this particular piece in the whole puzzle, then sometimes you have to brutally face the actor with, 'I don't know, I don't believe it.'"[32] Such a challenge will frequently press the actor to identify what the speech requires or why it occurs at that place in he text and, through that problem-solving process, it will become evident to him what he is not doing.

Hall stresses, though, that challenging and pressing the actor has to be done carefully: "If he will and can, in his explanation to you, begin to understand what is required, it is best if you can stop the rehearsal that day or don't have to come back to that exact point. If you go right on, he has to turn around and act it and show that he was wrong. That's a very hard thing, a punishing way to direct plays. You are not there to punish."[33]

Hall exhibits great compassion and affection for his actors, but he will push them if that is what they need. After her experiences in Mensch Meier, Mary Francina Golden described Hall by saying that "he won't let go. He's like a

pit bull....He makes you go the extra mile--he just pushes you. I was very upset because I took it personally. But it's a very impersonal process. He is not angry with you....It's a line of purity or something. He truly focuses on the work itself--what is good for the play. And, as I said, he is relentless."[34]

Mensch Meier - Connecting the Actor, Audience and Text

As Adrian Hall continues to work with the actors, he is also working on the problem of how the play will be communicated to the audience. During rehearsals, Hall sits in virtually every seat in the house, constantly assessing whether the emotional and intellectual messages will effectively reach each spectator and keep him engaged in the performance. Through his choices in staging, Hall controls the rhythms, focus, and emotional levels to keep the audience on a tether. As he mentions one day in Mensch Meier rehearsals, "you don't have to trick people all the time, but you have to stay ahead of them, to turn the screws."[35]

A significant part of Hall's genius for directing lies in his ability to stay ahead of the audience by identifying the problems that might negatively affect the production. This is more difficult than it sounds, since the myriad problems one encounters in any production can seem, at the time, equally important and equally formidable.

Hall, however, has a special talent, as described by Mary Francina Golden, in that "he's wonderfully poetic and intuitive and gets to the heart of the matter, but on the other hand he has a wonderful blend of that and pragmatism because he knows what works and what does not work. And he always has one eye and half his mind on the audience."[36]

Another aspect of this talent is that Hall has a knack for pinpointing the crucial issue and just ignoring the others. Jerry O'Brien observes that "Adrian's real funny. I've noticed that when confronted with all these problems...he just redefines them...What would be a problem to another director--a series of multiple entrances and exits, for example--he'd just say, 'Well, that's not the focus of the scene...The way the person comes in or how we get the person off is not the problem in the scene. The problem is what's happening to that character's situation.'"[37] Hall can isolate the central question because he keeps his focus on the performance; he is always asking himself, how will this improve/impede the actor-audience confrontation?

Just as important as staying ahead of the audience, however, is making sure the audience is able to keep up with the changing scene. The minimalist staging of Mensch Meier, presented a special challenge. To keep the audience's interest, Hall began each of the twenty-seven scenes in a different way, altering the actors' positions, the

atmosphere of the room and the rhythm of the scene transition. He also used projections and film that offered a larger social context for Kroetz's play, such as black-and-white photographs of German housing projects, men and women at work and play. In Act II, when Otto and Martha are watching television, an old black-and-white western film was projected on their faces and bodies as they stared out at the audience.

In keeping the set elements to a bare minimum, Hall must use his actors to rapidly establish time, place and mood. For example, during Act II Martha leaves home and in the last scene of the act Kroetz shows her just settling into a shabby rented room. There are no lines in the scene. Kroetz's script establishes the place by having Martha appear in another set where she unpacks her suitcase, has trouble with the stove, makes a cup of coffee and sits down in tears. With the unit set, Hall had to establish the new location within the apartment unit set. He accomplished this by staging the scene in a narrow shaft of light. The door opens and Martha wheels in a table with a hot plate. The whole room is established by this simple set-piece: an institutional green table on little porcelain wheels, with an old gray metal hot plate and dirty coffee cup on it. When Martha sits down in tears, she sits on the suitcase alongside the table--a line drawing, rather than a portrait--that, nevertheless, tells the whole story.

Another example of how Hall uses the actor to set the stage occurs earlier in the same act. Martha and Otto Meier are in the check-out line at the supermarket, only to discover that their son has stolen the grocery money and they haven't the cash to pay for the purchases that have already been rung up. After a tense argument, Otto leaves Martha in the lurch. The next scene follows immediately at the Meier's home, with Martha crying, and the father staring at his son in silent fury. The transition from one scene to the next, therefore had to be fast and efficient. Utilizing the unit set of the Meier's apartment, Hall avoided changing sets by having Martha wheel an already-filled grocery cart into the middle of the living room. The actors' behavior, plus the grocery cart and the disembodied voice of the cashier, clearly established the market location. After the end of the grocery scene, Martha simply took off her hat and sat down at the table, crying. The grocery cart remained where it was and during the scene the groceries were unloaded onto the kitchen table. Hall simply ignored any concerns about the logic of grocery shopping occurring within the apartment or of the cart being out of place in the scene at home.

Both of these scenes are good examples of Hall's claim that the theatre makes its own rules and that an audience, if it clearly understands the content of the

scene, is capable of following the scene without undue concern for logic or authenticity.

While Hall is calculating how the scenes will come across to the audience, he is also monitoring the actors' focus to ensure that the audience is not excluded. Mensch Meier was an interesting production from the viewpoint of acting style. Since the play was staged in the small Lederer theatre, the actors did not have far to project their performances. Nevertheless, the acting style combined both presentational and representational elements, as the actors were clearly presented "in character" and as actors. The scene transitions were not played in character. When a scene ended the actor just moved to his next place, and went ahead on cue. Because Otto, Martha and Ludi are so ineffectual at communicating with one another, it was not hard to justify how little they really looked at one another.

One way that Hall ensures the spectator's involvement with the material is by maintaining the dramatic tension through a process of distilling the emotional content of each scene. As the Trinity actor Timothy Crowe explains, Hall has "always said it's more interesting to see a person trying not to cry than to cry on stage. And that is true. The interest for an audience is the tension between what we're feeling and what we're showing....There is a hesitancy to portray a full emotion outright. To an

extent, you've shot your wad. Once again, the audience gets ahead of you and they can feel comfortable...as opposed to keeping them in there saying, 'What's going to happen?'"[38] Hall frequently warns his actors not to "give up all their pearls" too early in the performance. When they do let go, however, Hall's actors seem to go from zero to a hundred in no time at all. By that I mean these actors are capable of explosive emotional scenes that are stunning because they come out of a subtle tension that has been carefully built and is released at the right moment.

Richard Kavanaugh was especially adept at this kind of theatrical dynamism, as was evident in the scene in Mensch Meier when Otto destroys the apartment. The act begins with Otto slightly drunk and beginning to succumb to the pressures at his job and at home. Each scene brings him closer to the breaking point until he is moved to tear apart the very possessions he fears to lose. Hall orchestrated the emotional build of the demolition scene so that it was convincing but not predictable. Rather than orchestrate a steady rise in the level of tension, Hall had the actor group the actions so that two or three items were thrown or broken, followed by an ominous silence, followed by more action and silence. The scene was fascinating, like watching a huge animal out of control, not knowing which way it would go or what it would do. The spectators could not

tell where the peak of the crisis was going to occur, so their attention was held right up to the end of the scene.

Adrian Hall orchestrates his productions to keep the spectator off-balance and intrigued. That is the reason he can be so persistent in getting what he wants from a scene. The director's task is to define what he wants. As Hall explains, "you'll come so much closer to putting a play together by really defining what you want out of a scene and not trusting on anything vague. It's got to be what you want out of that scene."[39] Once the director defines his objectives, then he can begin to orchestrate the order and rhythm of the scenes. Hall adds that "then you put all that together like a piece of music. By starting it here, carrying it through and taking it to there, you'll have a line that will go all the way through that play. Whatever is meaningful in that play will depend on how you've accented that line. If you shoot the works in the first five seconds, you're lost. Or if you wait until the third act before you give the audience enough to hold on to, they may have left at the end of the second [act]."[40] This process of orchestration continues throughout the entire rehearsal period as Hall calculates the effect of all the performance elements.

As the production develops, Hall likes to deliberately insert contradictions into the actor's business or the scene's images. A skilled actor knows always to

consider the opposite reading of a line and Hall uses this technique as well. As he explains,

> sometimes, when you tell about crying, it's better to laugh as you're telling it. When you talk about sitting down, it's better to stand up. Sometimes when you talk about being quiet, you should shout. Sometimes the very opposite of the word will make the image vivid for the people as opposed to the literal...which is just for decoration....So what we have evolved or what we are saying about images, to the actor is: "If you say it, don't do it and if you do it, don't say it."...If [the spectators] understand when you say "house" and then you pantomime "house," forget it. You've bored them. The actor is doing it all and the audience is doing nothing.[41]

These contradictions are just another way that Hall strips away the layers of stage convention. If an actor's behavior can establish a place, why build another set? If the set establishes a certain mood, why repeat it in the lights? If you say "This is Illyria, lady," why add a gesture or a prop that says the same thing? To do so is to underestimate the intelligence of the audience and is certain to have a negative effect on their willingness to participate in the performance event. So Hall constantly urges his actors not to "kiss and tell." The point is that overstatement makes it too easy for the audience, whereas contradictions make them exercise their imagination--and that is Hall's ultimate goal.

Actor and Director: The Personal Relationship

In the preceding pages I have endeavored to identify Hall's process of working with the actor. What may not be

evident is the personality of this artist. Hall will admit that he somewhat falls in love with all of his actors: "I do the whole family thing every time I do a play. I gather people around me and yes, you do function as Mama and Papa and the whole thing. But then, only if they can be moved into loving the family do you get the best out of them. I mean, you get the absolute best."[42] Perhaps because Hall was an actor himself he has a genuine understanding of the actor's fears and needs.

Hall's rehearsals, like his productions, inevitably are full of humor. Even in the midst of the grueling Mensch Meier rehearsals, Hall cheerfully promised all present that the performance would have plenty of laughs. And, indeed, Hall found the true humanity in Kroetz's play so that there was legitimate humor. In the first act, the audience laughed as they recognized themselves in the day-to-day routine of the family; later, they found humor in the irony of the family's predicament even as the group disintegrated.

The production of Mensch Meier revealed a leading characteristic of Hall's personality and artistic viewpoint, his inclination to select dramas with a decidedly grim view of life. But Hall finds the human, positive qualities hidden in the text. He has also taught his audience to look beneath the surface. In 1978 Hall directed the world premiere of Sam Shepard's play Seduced. This play was the first Shepard seen in Providence, and it was not well-

received by the critics. Hall vowed to never produce another Shepard at Trinity. Instead, the next year, he directed Shepard's play Buried Child at the Yale Repertory Theatre and received rave reviews. After much cajoling, Hall directed Buried Child at Trinity for the 1979-80 season. It was so popular, it was revived in 1981 and toured (on a double bill with Of Mice and Men) to India and Syria. The reviews of these productions of Buried Child indicate that Hall's version of Shepard's play was not overly dark or gruesome, as other productions have been. He says that Buried Child "is a very optimistic and upbeat play about the fact that we are all part of the human endeavor and that, indeed, we are connected. It has to do with life-cycles and rebirth-- enormously optimistic."[43] In a similar fashion, the final scene of Mensch Meier left one with a feeling that the cataclysmic upheaval of the family somehow could mean positive changes in the lives of the characters.

Another aspect of Hall's personality is his earthy sense of humor which lightens the work at rehearsal and often makes for colorful copy in the news. Hall is especially known for his mixed metaphors and malapropisms. No one seems to know whether Hall creates them to amuse his actors or because his mind is so quick and so focused on the play at hand he doesn't realize what he's saying, but he is apt to tell an actor something like "Don't let them pull the

blanket over your legs" or "He dies in this scene, just like a Kamasutra pilot."[44]

In rehearsal Hall always commends before correcting. He also often works with an actor or two just sitting in the theatre seats, or sitting together on the stage, carefully working through the difficulties in an intimate, personal way. This is in marked contrast to the director who sits off in the dark behind his table with technicians at every side, who shouts to the actor on the stage just to forgo the questions and do the scene. Hall is either in the house, playing the part of the ideal spectator, or he is at the side of the actor, sensing what he's going through, helping him find the way.

In spite of the fun, though, Hall is demanding. He makes the actor work rigorously and, especially in a drama like Mensch Meier, the experience can be grueling. Mary Francina Golden was extremely grateful for the encouragement and support of her co-star, Richard Kavanaugh, who advised her about Hall's method of working with the actor. Kavanaugh told her, "Look, I know it's rough. But trust him! He knows exactly what he's doing. He knows exactly what he can get out of you."[45] Golden goes on to say "and, by God, he did....It was the truest performance I've ever given. It was not a performance, it was just being. It's ideally what acting should be and rarely is because, as I've said you're posturing, or you're thinking ahead in the

play...and the way Adrian worked with me, I didn't do any of that in performance."[46]

An Actor's Company

The theatre of Adrian Hall is centered on the work of the actor. He respects his actors and they, in return, offer him trust and loyalty. This mutual admiration is the principal reason so many of his actors have remained in his Trinity company for ten, fifteen or twenty years. Hall has never lost his enthusiasm and commitment to the work and this zeal is always evident in his rehearsals and his productions. The "Trinity style" (which is rapidly becoming the "Dallas style" too) is characteristically intense and full of life.

This spirit is created by Hall's rehearsal process, as Barbara Orson explains: "Our theatre is very, very extraordinary. I don't mean to sound boastful, but we are an actors' company. We care a great deal about each other. When we go into rehearsal what differentiates us from other companies is we're not there to impress a director so that he'll hire us for another show....What we're there for is to achieve what the script has asked us to effect and what that director wants and to find it all together. And the work just never stops."[47]

Chapter VIII

THE DIRECTOR AND THE PRODUCTION VALUES

We have seen how Adrian Hall, in collaboration with the playwright, the set designer and the actors, crafts the theatrical performance. There are, however, additional elements within the province of the director: the technical effects of stage properties and set-pieces, costumes, lighting, music, sound and special effects. And the combination of all these elements produces the less tangible qualities of pace, tension, rhythm and imagery that characterize the director's work.

Adrian Hall uses the term "production values" when referring to these additional elements. And they are values in that the effect of any one of them, or any combination of them, has a relative impact on the overall scene or play. For example, if the actor is isolated in a pin spot, the scene is affected quite differently from when he is illuminated with a general wash of light. Or, if the lights are kept on in the audience space once the performance has

begun, it elicits a different response from spectators in semi-darkness. In each case, the technical element of light establishes a certain mood and relationship between the actor and spectator.

Chapter 8 will be an exploration of how Hall's production values underscore his choices regarding the text, space and actor and achieve the confrontation between the actor and audience.

The 1968 premiere of Brother to Dragons was the first production at Trinity Repertory Company to reflect the impact of the Grotowski theories. Using Robert Penn Warren's own dramatization of the poem as a point of departure, Hall had ample opportunity to experiment with text, space, acting technique and especially with the production values. Brother to Dragons was followed that same season by Hall's stagings of Macbeth and Billy Budd. In the four seasons that followed, some of Hall's most innovative productions were seen at the Trinity Playhouse and at the Rhode Island School of Design Auditorium. These productions included: . Lovecraft's Follies, Son of Man and the Family, The Taming of the Shrew, Troilus and Cressida, and Feasting with Panthers. The season of 1973-74 opened in the new Trinity home--the renovated Lederer Theatre. The first production was a revival of Brother to Dragons. By the time Hall came back to the Warren material in 1973, many of his opinions about production values had been formed. In

order to examine those views, I will therefore use the first production from this era, the 1968 Brother to Dragons as the prime example and some of the other productions as secondary examples.

Truth Versus Authenticity

The Trinity seasons of 1966-67 and 1967-68 were shaped by the shock waves induced by the first Project Discovery performances. During that same period, Hall's artistic team came together, with the arrival of composer Richard Cumming, lighting designer Roger Morgan, and set designer Eugene Lee. From then on, each of Hall's productions became an experiment that posed new questions about the nature of performance. If the overriding question was "how can we effect the confrontation of the actor and the spectator?"--then the question of the production values was "how do lighting, costume or sound aid or inhibit the spectator's participation?" In production after production Hall and his fellow artists would explore those questions and search for answers.

We have seen how Hall moved away from realism in his use of the stage space and acting style. In doing so, he chose to stress the reality of the actor and the spectator in the theatre in lieu of a pretense of authentic character, time and place. Hall thus became interested in what constitutes "truth" or "reality" for the spectator, and

many of his experiments with the production values have been designed to create a reality that is truer than realism, or as Laurence Shyer says, "to strike deeper than realism, to shake the audience up a little and shock them out of their complacency."[1]

Realism became the dominant style of production in the nineteenth-century theatre. Since the Italian Renaissance, with the development of the proscenium arch, production design had aimed at creating effective illusion, or a literal replication of place and time. With the rise of the director in the nineteenth century came an increased interest in creating an authentic, even photographic representation of life on the stage as viewed through the imaginary fourth wall. From the armory that produced genuine armor for the productions of the Duke of Saxe-Meiningen, through the embellishments of Stanislavsky's stage with its chorus of crickets, frogs and birds, to Belasco's sunset in The Girl of the Golden West, the ideal was to create a believable illusion that would transport the viewer into another world.

Nevertheless, theorists and practitioners were quick to question the conventions of the naturalistic stage. In Paris, the naturalism on the stage of the Théâtre Libre, a theatre which had been founded by André Antoine in 1887, was challenged by the stages devoted to the plays of the symbolists: Paul Fort's Théâtre d'Art, founded in 1890, and

Aurélien Lugné-Poe's Théâtre de l'Oeuvre, founded in 1893. Of greater significance were the theories of Adolphe Appia and Edward Gordon Craig which exerted a tremendous influence on theatre practice in Europe and America in the early twentieth century. Designers adopted expressionistic or suggestive, three-dimensional settings in lieu of literal representation and this trend prevailed after World War I. Peter Brook says "there is an interesting relationship between Brecht and Craig--Craig wanted a token shadow to take the place of a complete painted forest and he only did so because he recognized that useless information absorbed our attention at the expense of something more important. Brecht took this rigour and applied it not only to scenery but to the work of the actor and to the attitude of the audience."[2]

Brecht's theories were, of course, an important influence on Hall, who saw the work of the Berliner Ensemble in Germany between 1951 and 1953. And like Brecht, Adrian Hall's concern has always been to create a theatre with the potential to change people's lives. So Hall realized that the trappings of naturalism and realism diffused the intellectual response of the spectator.

More important for Hall, however, was the fact that all those scenic embellishments interfered with the spectator's visceral, emotional response to the performance. Hall reached two conclusions: (1) If the spectator is put

in the position of pretending that the fake thing is real, by being offered a trembling flat in place of a real wall or a rubber knife in place of an actual weapon, when the action of the play offers real pain or emotional danger, the spectator is let off the hook and can retreat into a safe corner because it has been established that this is only make believe. (2) If the spectator is presented with a highly decorative, literal presentation of reality, the images have been so completely defined by the director and his designers that there is nothing left for the spectator to do but sit back and watch the passing spectacle; he is therefore discouraged from participating emotionally in the event.

Thus, Hall's dictum became "less is better" because, Hall explains, "the only way as a performer I can get the audience to share the experience is to let them do their part. If I over-illustrate, over-indicate, over-state my part, you quite naturally begin to pull away from me. One of the cardinal sins of being in the theatre is to not stay ahead of the person with whom you are sharing the experience. If you stop for one moment to enjoy it yourself, most likely that audience gets ahead of you."[3]

In order to stay ahead of the spectator, to keep him thinking and committed to the action, Hall and many of his contemporaries adopted the tactics of Brecht and Grotowski and began creating a stage reality that was rooted in the

confrontation of the actor and spectator rather than the pretense of reality typical of the realistic stage. Like Brecht, they discarded colored lights and exposed the source of lights and sound, they removed the "teasers" and "tormentors" (whose very names reflect the part they played in the theatre of trickery), and they adopted an acting style which forced the spectator to adjust his intellectual stance frequently and to acknowledge his own reactions to the text. Following Grotowski, they broke down the artificial barriers between the participants by altering the theatrical space, integrating the spectator into the scene, and creating theatre with the actor and little else.

The theatre of illusion was stripped of its tricks and reduced to bare essentials. In place of an elaborate, decorative representation of life, artists searched for a way to create a more immediate reality on the stage. Hall's inquiries into this problem proved to him that, just as the director has to dig deeply into the text to define the essential truths therein, each production value selected for the play must also contain an intrinsic truth--a reality that did not lie. Hall developed a rehearsal process where he painstakingly analyzes and probes the text to get to the core of the material, to find a common humanity in the characters and situations that he can convey to the audience. At the same time, Hall searches for the right combination of production values that will most directly and

most truthfully translate to the spectator the sensations created at this emotional core.

Richard Jenkins, an actor in the Trinity Rep and a director trained in Hall's method, explained the process of getting to that reality in this way: The director begins by asking "How can you do it so I feel something emotional that touches me here [in my heart]?" and the answer will lie in finding "the essence of what that is--to try and distill it into something real. Not authentic. Real. The difference is the truth of it, not the authenticity."[4]

Lies That Tell the Truth

The way to achieve a reality that is true varies with every scene and every play. There are, however, certain things that an audience acknowledges as real--for example, live animals, fire and water. These things are what they seem, and an audience recognizes and appreciates that lack of pretense. Hall has occasionally used live animals on his stage. An actor in Macbeth carried a crate with a live chicken (named Sheila); she escaped during one performance, creating the kind of apprehension and immediacy that one always tries to create onstage, preferably with the skill of the actor. The witches dropped small wriggling creatures into their "steaming" cauldron in the same production. Hall tried to use a live snake in Phaedra, but found the difficulties outweighed the advantages. And with

the premiere of the Adrian Hall-Richard Cumming adaptation of A Christmas Carol in 1977, Trinity Rep established a tradition of using a dog in the annual production; a new dog is obtained each year from the animal shelter and then adopted by an audience member at the end of the run. The reason for using these animals is to surprise and delight the audience.

Hall is even more fond of using fire, water and smoke in his productions because they offer a reality that does not lie. If the object is to create a sense of danger and unpredictability there is nothing like fire onstage to assure that response. Similarly, water is fascinating to the spectator because it is what it seems to be (i.e., it is a real, not a pretended thing) and, like fire, it is unpredictable. In plays such as Billy Budd and The Tempest, Hall has used gallons of water sloshing over the decks, to the delight of his audiences. And in his 1977 production of King Lear, Hall says "I wanted water for the scene on the heath. There was a bathtub that was a part of the set so Eugene [Lee] rigged up a little shower and during the storm the Fool stood under this shower with an umbrella. Eugene is so direct it sometimes embarrasses me."[5]

Fire and water induce an immediate, visceral response because of their very presence on the stage. But what if the desired response is more complex than that? What about the sensations of a storm and an earthquake, such

as the scene in Brother to Dragons? This scene in Warren's play uses the unusual events of the year 1811, the annus mirabilis or year of wonders, as a metaphor for the unnatural deeds of man that are the subject of the play. In that year, America was rocked with earthquakes, rivers overflowed their banks and whole forests of trees were felled. In Warren's script, an earthquake and storm foreshadow the heinous crime that is the center of the play's action. How do you stage such a scene where the cosmos is out of joint?

Hall believes it is the director's task to break down the complex experience into components and define the specific sensations. An earthquake or a big storm evokes fear because it is disorienting--as walls crumble, one's surroundings change shape, there may be the sound of breaking glass, thunder and blowing wind and people run about in panic. Hall's process is to identify all these ingredients and then to create theatrical action to convey each sensation. Thus, to produce the storm and earthquake in Brother to Dragons, Hall says he used

> a wind machine, planted downstage, and a thunder sheet. One person would run down and start the wind machine, and someone would run down and tell about the storm, and another would start the thunder sheet. As it was described, various things would happen. People did tumbles, rolls, somersaults, spills; several hanging lights in hanging cages were whirled by people standing on someone's shoulders, so you (the audience) were caught up in it as well. It became representational, mimed--not illustrated, but using the onstage elements themselves--sound, physical behavior that was erratic.[6]

The combined components of action, image and sound created the "reality" of the storm and earth tremors through imagination instead of illustration.

Hall's process works only if the artist probes deeply enough to get to the real essence of the moment. Moreover, his solution for Brother to Dragons would not necessarily work for another play with an earthquake scene. The solutions must arise from the collaborative exploration of the problem--an exploration that is conducted by the director in the days and weeks of rehearsals. Hall declares that this constant search for the essence of the moment is the director's challenge: "CREATION! Creation is MAKING LIFE HAPPEN! It's breaking down the components again and again and again! It's reaching deeply for the specifics of living rather than hiding behind the easy generalities. That's why it has to be a constant evaluation of yourself--of why experience happens. Theater is not adding to--it's taking off!"[7]

The reality that Hall creates onstage is therefore achieved through the process of disciplined selectivity. It is a reality that occurs only in the mind of the spectator as he responds--intellectually and emotionally--to the images, ideas and sounds presented to him. Richard Cumming explains this phenomenon as it applies to music on the stage. In Hall's production of Julius Caesar, Cumming had musicians play one drum and one trumpet to represent

legions. Those two actual instruments were, Cumming says, a lie that told the truth because "as Picasso said, 'Art is a lie that tells the truth.'...it's up to the audience to provide the truth from the lie which we have supplied them because the sound is not a lie, the sound is real."[8] In the examples that follow, I will demonstrate how Hall applied these precepts in Brother to Dragons and other productions.

Collaboration

Hall's manner of working with his artistic team to determine the production values does not differ from the kind of collaboration already described in this study. Each artistic area (props, costumes, lights, set) is represented by someone on the design staff at all rehearsals and decisions are made throughout the rehearsal period. Hall makes a distinction between his organic process and the usual commercial practice: "There's just a difference in the way it's done. For instance, the designer comes to the rehearsal and makes decisions. The costume department is there and they make decisions and they go back to the shop and...by the time we get to the first dress rehearsal, there's absolutely nothing that the actors haven't worn. And that's very different from the old commercial way of the set going into the shop and you're not literally seeing the set until about three days before you open. That's a horrendous way of dealing with it."[9]

Hall's designers concur that the process commences with no preconceptions. Bill Lane, the costume designer at Trinity Repertory for the last ten seasons, says that Hall "comes in wide open....He really likes dialogue, and likes talking--sometimes you think, did you read the [play]?... but it's just that openness, that there's nothing preconceived."[10] Lane explains also that Hall does not work from renderings, but does like to look at pictures from the historical era of the play. Hall will often get an image that he wants to realize in a particular scene and Lane has learned how to translate this into practical terms. There is never any formal costume parade since the costume pieces are integrated into the rehearsals as they become available.

Composer Richard Cumming often begins rehearsals with no music written beforehand. Just what music or sound will be required is determined only in the daily exploration of the textual material. Also, Cumming prefers to write for the specific voices and musical talents of the cast and that often is not known beforehand. He also frequently gets ideas for unusual instruments to produce music or sound during the rehearsal process. Speaking of the long-term collaboration with Hall and Lee, Cumming says "that's where all three of us work so well together. Adrian will come up and say, 'What would happen if she sang that?' 'What would happen if there were a piano onstage all the time?'"[11] From such inquiries come fresh ideas, such as the decision to put

a piano on wheels to move about the space in All the King's Men.

In an attempt to describe the unique collaboration with Eugene Lee and Adrian Hall, Roger Morgan said

> I don't know why Eugene, I, and Adrian could go to a restaurant...in Providence and sit there and have supper and talk about the show and never seem to really talk about it and yet to seem to come out of it with something better than we went in with... [with Adrian] you can talk about a look, about a sense of something and get an engaged, contributing colleague out of it. You will start by suggesting something and, at the end of a half-hour discussion, what you agree on will be different than either of you went into the thing imagining--that is, after all, the vitality of collaboration.[12]

From that remarkable collaboration during those experimental productions of the late sixties and early seventies, Hall and his artistic team developed certain precepts about production values and their function in the theatrical event. In the following pages these precepts will be identified and examples will be given to show how Hall and his team applied them in actual production to create an identifiable Trinity style. As Morgan explains, "I always felt that Eugene and Adrian and I made a special combination in terms of the visual stuff. And there was a sort of 'look' that came around up there that we kind of developed together. It started with Brother to Dragons."[13]

Brother to Dragons

Brother to Dragons has already been mentioned many times because it is one of Hall's most important

productions. In addition to the premiere production in 1968 and the revival in 1973, Hall also toured it through the New England area, each time refining the material and the staging. Hall also selected Dragons as his second production to be filmed for the "Theatre in America" series on the Public Broadcasting Service (WNET-TV, New York).

With the first production of Brother to Dragons, Adrian Hall began to develop his own techniques for achieving a kind of reality onstage that was not based on verisimilitude. The plot of Brother to Dragons followed a true historical incident: the senseless murder of a black slave by Lilburn and Isham Lewis, nephews of Thomas Jefferson. Robert Penn Warren's narrative poem concerns this incident and the enigmatic reaction of Jefferson, who maintained a life-long silence on the subject. The action of the play is a nightmarish confrontation between Thomas Jefferson's vision for man and the reality of human fallibility, as evidenced by the violence and brutality of his own kin.

The setting of the action is the estate and slave quarters of Charles and Lucy Lewis in the wilderness of Kentucky in 1811. Eugene Lee's set was a construction of rough wood beams forming a kind of skeleton of a house above a raked saucer-shaped platform. The overarching structure was reminiscent of an old country barnraising and the texture of the wide wood planks suggested the roughness of

the frontier without denoting a specific location. Suspended above the stage on one side was a pulpit, with an American eagle figurehead, from which Thomas Jefferson could address the audience. At one side stood a tower, with a gibbet. The only other set-piece was a coffin.

At the start of the play, an enormous silk banner hung before the stage. On it was the image of a Negro slave, bound and dangling from a rope. The image on the banner was a copy of an actual print or engraving of the period, and it served as an emblem of Warren's poem. As the banner was raised, the cast was revealed sitting formally, as though posing for a family portrait. In the foreground sat Lucy Lewis (sister to Thomas Jefferson), Dr. Charles Lewis, her husband, and their sons, Lilburn and Isham Lewis. In the dark surrounding them, shadowy figures moved furtively. These shadows were the family slaves, including the old nurse, Aunt Cat, and John, the servant who would be the victim of Lilburn's insane violence.

The acting ensemble included Richard Kneeland as Thomas Jefferson, Marguerite Lenert as his sister, William Cain as Lilburn, Barbara Meek as Aunt Cat and Ed Hall as John. The cast of nineteen actors also included Martin Molson, James Gallery, Robert J. Colonna, Barbara Orson, William Damkoehler, James [Ethyl] Eichelberger, and Peter Gerety. The critical acclaim for this production and the interviews with those who were involved in it strongly

indicate that this production of Brother to Dragons was one of the greatest successes of ensemble acting in Trinity's history. The actors played specific characters and also functioned as a chorus, ever-present on the stage, in the aisles, in every visible corner of the intimate space, to create the performance experience.

Set-Pieces and Properties

Brother to Dragons presented the actors with new challenges because, except for a few pieces of furniture and several significant properties, the atmosphere, time, location, and action was created by the actors. Hall viewed Warren's poem as "a confrontation of the American dream (shaped and guided by Thomas Jefferson) and the actuality. It is an exploration of that area--that dark, frightening place between the dream (American) and the reality (human)."[14] He wanted, therefore, to capture both the unreality of a nightmare and the very real fear a nightmare instills in us.

He accomplished this dual sensation by using the ensemble as a kind of Greek chorus in homespun. They could portray specific characters, and they could also represent the social conscience of the community. Additionally, they served as living scenery, establishing an atmosphere of time and place by bringing on props and set-pieces and by physically portraying objects. Hall says that "we found

that by inventing parallel situations we could act truthfully--games (apple bobbing, making an earthquake, being trees, horses, etc.) that would not contradict the text, but indeed illuminate, support. Add reality to the text--but not indicate with false tricks."[15]

The best example of how Hall used the actors in lieu of props or stage tricks was in the scene where a keelboat is seen passing along the riverbank. Such a scene is always troublesome because it cannot actually be done on the stage. Solutions such as the river raft on rollers used in the Broadway musical, Big River, seem just to call attention to the limitations of the live stage.

Hall solved the problem by the process described earlier: he broke down the scene into components. He and his actors explored the question of what would it be like, standing on a riverbank, when a keelboat passed in the night? The answer was a combination of sensations: (1) sound--"Keelboat comin';" (2) then perhaps music and families singing together softly; (3) a light in the distance gliding by, faces in the darkness slowly moving past in the faint light. From these basic components, Hall devised a scene in which the image was realized entirely by the voice and gestures of the actors and by the spectator's imagination.

The scene commenced with the sound of the faraway cry of "Keelboat comin'" and then came the soft crescendo of

the harmonica and the folk song, composed by Cumming to evoke the image of the lonely sound of a train whistling in the night. The picture of the families on the boat was achieved by the action of the singers: women kneeled and mimed holding babies in their arms while men, standing at their side, mimed poling down the river. Another actor carried a torchlight aloft to illuminate the grouping. As the women slid along on their knees, the men also silently advanced across the stage so that the image emerged from the darkness and melted back into it, a dream-like phantom in the night, giving a real sensation of an experience.

Actor Peter Gerety, who was in this scene, observes that Hall will "usually reduce things to one element and then the human being. And it is stronger than if you had built an entire keelboat...because, once again, you would have been doing all the work for your audience. An audience looks at it and they see an abstract--like an abstract painting--they see an abstraction and they see an element that they can hang onto and that element is so clearly what it is that they, in their mind, create the reality of the boat and river and water and the night."[16]

Perhaps what Hall's experiments reveal is that our sense of reality is not only made up of the visual and aural stimuli that we process as information. Our reality is derived from the mental associations we make and also from the feelings prompted by the experience. Hall manipulates

these associations and feelings by his selection of the production values.

Hall actually uses three kinds of set-pieces and props. One might be called "generic." This category would include the functional pieces--such as a table and chairs or cups and saucers--that aid the actor in establishing time and place in the fluid stage space. These properties are carefully chosen to provide a sense of atmosphere and period, but they can metamorphose into other things. For example, in a production of Journey of the Fifth Horse, which Hall directed in 1982 at the American Repertory Theatre, he used a bed in this way: "the bed becomes a garden and then a floor of grass, remaining physically a bed, but theatrically something else. Zoditch sits on a bed, reading; that's one reality. Then somebody comes in from another reality, and the bed is a park bench."[17] Such "generic" properties or set-pieces are common on Hall's stage. They are non-specific and serve only to aid the actor's creation of the scene.

The second kind of prop or set-piece Hall uses is symbolic. These are authentic items, taken from their original site and relocated on the stage to evoke a certain emotional response. Like his designer, Eugene Lee, Hall finds an intrinsic value in a rusted tin sign, a battered wooden wagon. A sign or wagon, built and painted to look weathered may duplicate the image, but the man-made

reproductions are without history. They are not the objects of past owners, former times and places. They are lies, stage tricks that can only approximate the real thing. Lee is known to litter the stage with icons of other times and places, such as the maritime equipment in Billy Budd, or the hill of rusted tin signs, crates, and farm implements that created the world of the have-nots in All the King's Men. Such authentic relics of civilization do not create a stage picture so much as they do an essence or atmosphere that arises from the emotional responses they induce.

Hall has often used what he calls a "super-prop." This is a set-piece or property that epitomizes a place or situation and often it serves as a commanding image for the play. In Years of the Locust, Hall's first production about Oscar Wilde's imprisonment, Lee's set for Reading Gaol called for a "wall" of jail bars that could be dropped down, like a guillotine, or pulled up out of the way. This one super-prop quickly established whether Wilde was in jail or in a fantasy or memory and its sound and rhythm created atmosphere. When Hall and Cumming created their own production about Wilde's incarceration, Feasting with Panthers, the super-prop was a long bench with coffin-like backs, divided into seven compartments. This set-piece commanded center stage and visibly reflected the isolation and regimentation of the prison environment. This prop also

offered the practical advantage of compartments for storing small props and costume pieces.

For the Trinity Rep tours to India and Syria in 1981, Lee had a huge banner painted and used it as a backdrop for both productions, Of Mice and Men and Buried Child. The banner depicted a smiling girl amidst a bounteous display of California fruits, like a billboard from the 1930s. This super-prop symbolized the abundance of the land and thus related to the themes in both plays.

In Brother to Dragons, the "super-prop" was the butcher's table where William Cain, as Lilburn, hacked away with an ax at a side of meat. I have described this scene in chapter 2, but it bears repeating here because it is a prime example of how Hall combines the production values and orchestrates the rhythm of the scene to create a stunning theatrical moment. The action of the scene, as described in Warren's poem, is the mutilation of the black slave, John. Jefferson's nephew, Lilburn (who has been mentally unbalanced since the death of his mother) is enraged when John breaks the mother's favorite china pitcher. Lilburn orders the slaves out to the meathouse to witness the punishment of John. Lilburn's brother, Isham, is made to go along as well, but does nothing to stop the dismemberment of the slave. Lilburn places John on the block, takes an ax and cuts off John's hands and feet. He throws them in the fire, finally burying what remains of the carcass.

The problem for Hall was how to create the reality of those actions. Again, Hall broke down this crucial scene into the basic components of the experience. During their exploration of the text, Hall and his ensemble had to consider how much energy it took for Lilburn to hack through human bone. Their research showed that he kept the slaves and his brother there long enough to get the ax through the bones of both feet and both hands. They asked themselves, how long did it take the butcher to complete the job? How long was it before John would have died? After this careful probing of the horrible deed, they began to look for contemporary equivalents for the actions. Through the textual exploration and visits to butcher shops, Hall and his collaborative ensemble identified the present-day elements that we associate with butchering--slaughterhouses, butcher blocks, cleavers and glaring neon light. Working with his marvelous team of designers, Hall was able to create sound, image and action that were so truthful as to be genuinely horrifying.

Roger Morgan, who described this scene in an interview, stressed that it was not only Adrian's specific choices of the scene's components that made it so effective, it was the suddenness of the violence, a transition that was "pure Adrian!... Nobody gets you from one scene to another like he does!"[18] In one moment several actors grabbed Ed Hall, who was playing the slave, and trussed him up by the

ankles on the gibbet at one side of the stage. At the same time, a very real chopping block was pushed to center stage, almost to the first row with a four-foot slab of horsemeat on it. Simultaneously, a huge fluorescent light dropped suddenly from the ceiling to illuminate Lilburn and the audience, leaving the slaves in the shadowy background. In the few moments as the old light sputtered on, the general lighting was taken out and in the flashing light of the fluorescent, the audience heard the creaking of the winch as it pulled John up, they heard the ax as it cleaved through bone and then the screams of the slave. As the glare of the light fixture stabilized and the spectator's eyes adjusted, the full horror of the deed was fixed before his gaze. Bloody bits of meat flew from the ax, the tortured man cried, and the chorus of slaves provided the sounds of the hissing fire consuming the severed limbs. At the climax of the brief scene, the room was plunged into total darkness.

Light

The use of the fluorescent light in the murder scene of Brother to Dragons is interesting for several reasons. In the first place, the combination of fluorescent light and the actual chopping block gave the spectator a jolt of recognition. Of course fluorescent light is an anachronism in a play that takes place in 1811; but the point for Hall was the symbolic value of the fixture which, when juxtaposed

with the actual butcher's block, ax and the very real action of hacking meat, afforded a very real sensation of the act of butchering. This image, coupled with the screams and torment of the slave, provoked a visceral response to the whole scene.

Moreover, the fluorescent fixture afforded a unique experience for the audience because, unlike incandescent lamps which take several moments to cool down to a complete blackout, the fluorescent stopped in one-sixtieth of a second and thus achieved an immediate blackout. Roger Morgan comments that "the audience really has not seen that before in their experience. They're not accustomed to that and nobody uses fluorescent light much onstage...so when that picture went away, it went away almost as if you woke up from a dream. It was a horrid moment and it was instantly gone. And I've got to tell you something--it was a fascinating moment!"[19]

This scene also reflects Hall's method of simplifying and stripping away unnecessary technical elements. Brother to Dragons was lit with a neutral wash that was somber and atmospheric. Against this background Morgan and Hall devised several bold strokes, such as the swinging bulbs for the earthquake (which dimmed down to candleglow to light the minuet of the scene that followed) and the butcher scene just described. Morgan tells how the ideas on lighting developed at Trinity during this time:

> I then for a period of time started paring down the number of lights that I used. I even went to the point of using one light if I could--for the whole show. I never actually succeeded in that, but it became the objective, in a way. And the reason for that is that I said that in nature we tend, on a sunny day, to get one shadow for every object that we encounter. Onstage we have this terrible tendency to create an enormous number of shadows all over the place by using multiple lighting sources. And it actually deprives the mind of the kind of information it's used to working with.
>
> So, I started backing up and saying, "Let's get rid of all of this s---" and see if I can make the picture more readable so that it can go into the mind a little more directly....our job as designers and directors is to make the information flow easily.[20]

The lighting in Hall's productions is typically bold and calculated to maximize the spectator's comprehension of the play. Thus, actors are illuminated with bright, white light much of the time so they can be clearly seen and heard. In 1987, Roger Nall designed his first production for Adrian Hall; it was The Tempest at the Dallas Theater Center. Nall explains Hall's preferences in lighting as follows: "you have a bunch of two-thousand-watt fresnels and white light out front--just a whole bunch of white light. It's not modelled, it's not pretty, it's not artistic in that sense--but it illuminates such that you can see clearly. And you can't hear if you can't see."[21]

Scenes illuminated only by a single light bulb or candles are often used by Hall, but only once or twice in a production so that, when they are used, they will carry the maximum effect. For a scene in Troilus and Cressida where

Priam meets with his sons to discuss the war, the properties manager Sandra Nathanson brought in a big wooden platter, shaped like an antenna dish. She filled this dish with sand and planted forty or fifty big white candles in the sand to light the scene. Nathanson also created a prop which produced a sound effect for the Trojans to complement the ram's horn and trumpets Cumming had chosen for the Greeks. This prop consisted of several dozen wooden blocks, suspended on strings from a bamboo pole. As the pole was carried in, the movement produced unique musical resonances. The effect of this scene was primitive and exotic, owing to the combination of the production elements. The scene was played only in the candlelight, to the rhythms of the wooden chime. Priam's words resounded as the shining flesh of the heroes' nearly-nude bodies glistened in the candleglow.

This scene demonstrates how Hall uses the value of light for maximum effect. Most of the scenes in Troilus and Cressida were staged under bright overhead light, filtered through the camouflage netting of Lee's wartime setting. Thus, the deep shadows and candlelight of the war council scene had maximum visual impact. For similar reasons, Hall rarely uses colored light, except for a specific effect. He particularly dislikes the conventional warm and cool gels for basic illumination.

Hall also dislikes using blackouts to hide changes in the set or actors' positions because he feels such

transitions are a holdover from the theatre of illusion. Instead, actors just move in the light to the next scene. Blackouts are used, however, to provide shifts in rhythm and mood; in that case, the actors move as the lights come up for the next scene. Nall observes that "the lighting fits with everything else...the simpler the better. And always, when lighting for Adrian and Eugene, that tends to be the case. What is effective is a big broad stroke--one 5K from the back or one light from underneath the deck or a light bulb....subtlety doesn't buy them anything."[22]

Music and Sound Effects

The other production values in Brother to Dragons were as carefully chosen and specifically targeted for effect as those already mentioned. Composer Richard Cumming composed songs on American folk themes for harpsichord, guitar and harmonica. The music was produced live onstage because Cumming and Hall had discovered by their second season with the Project Discovery students that one live musician was more effective than the amplified recordings projected over loudspeakers. Cumming had used the entire brass section of the Rhode Island Philharmonic for the recorded fanfares for Saint Joan in 1966. By the following year actors who could also sing and play instruments were in the ensemble and Hall and Cumming began to make use of their talents.

As Hall began to question the conventions of the stage, he examined how music was used and could be used to affect the confrontation in the event. He and Cumming (who is still his resident composer) determined that music should never just provide background or mood, as it does in film. Nor should it be used as "fill" between scene changes. It could be effective, though, for punctuating a moment or underscoring a scene. If performed live, songs could be used as actual behavior of the characters, such as the song Lucy sings at the harpsichord in Brother to Dragons.

Songs are also a way to condense the meaning of a scene. In Peer Gynt, for example, Ase has a long speech excusing Peer's behavior. Cumming says they were able to condense this twenty minutes of script into a three-minute song because "you can do so much in a song. Since it's not a natural mode of communication, people tend to listen, really listen...and it's just a wonderful way to get in a lot of information, especially as to character."[23]

What was essential, most of the time, Hall and Cumming found, was that the source of the music be live. According to Cumming, the amplified sound distracted from the reality of what the actor was presenting and interfered with the communication with the audience, whereas live sound, like real fire and water on the stage, "took on such an immediacy. It wasn't lying."[24]

In addition to Cumming's atmospheric music, Hall used the production value of sound to punctuate and underscore the action in Brother to Dragons. The dying screams of the murdered slave were heard as echoes from the meathouse, as though his restless ghost haunted the estate. The actors invented sounds, like the hissing fire consuming the slave's severed limbs, the fluttering moth at the window, and so on.

Hall's productions almost always use sound effects created by the improvisation and collaboration between Hall, Cumming and the actors in rehearsal. For example, in Macbeth, on the line "Macbeth has murdered sleep," actors were located in the dark throughout the RISD auditorium. They created an unidentifiable sound which generated a deep uneasiness through a soft finger-snapping motion. Or in Billy Budd, a grate in the floor was pulled up and an actor was tied to it, stripped to the waist and flogged with a foam rubber lash. Actors were again in the aisles, portraying sailors watching the punishment, and they verbally created the sounds of the lash. Such effects have a directness that rings true because they allow the imagination to create the reality.

Music and sound are often suggested or generated by the real textures of wood and metal that Hall likes to have in his sets. Richard Cumming declares that "so much of the music that I do for the theatre is triggered by something

Eugene Lee does with the set. The way the set sounds is so marvelously important. The way that wood or metal can be used for specific sounds. He did a set for Phaedra in which the [stage floor was covered] with blazing white pebbles, so that when people walked there was a crunch sound that was just as much a part of the musical texture of the score as it was part of the texture of the set."[25] Laurence Shyer provides another example from Hall's production of Years of the Locust, set in Britain's Reading Gaol: "Trinity's small theater rang with the harsh, oppressive sounds of Reading Gaol--iron doors clanged open and shut; guards clattered relentlessly over the wire-mesh walkways, the metal surfaces ringing crudely under their boots; keys turned in locks, wooden floors were scrubbed and bolts could be heard flying open offstage."[26]

As for amplified sound, Hall has not been able to avoid its use completely, but he makes it a rule, whenever possible, to generate the effects with the actors or technicians rather than through mechanical means. In Billy Budd he used a recording of the creaking of the ship's boards as an atmospheric background to sustain the feeling for the audience of being on the ship (instead of just observing a ship). The recording was in progress when the spectators entered so they immediately experienced the ambience of the ship's deck. All the songs and other sounds were, however, generated by the actors and musicians. In

Son of Man and the Family Hall used recorded voices that bawled instructions from loudspeakers to create the dehumanized world of the maximum security prison.

In Brother to Dragons Hall used a recorded voiceover for a similar purpose. After Jefferson said "I tried to envisage the human possibility" a derisive laugh came from a speaker positioned in the audience, as if a heckler were responding to Jefferson's claim. In that case, Hall was making use of an electronic device to capitalize on its artificial quality. Hall's feeling about pre-recorded sound is that "if you're going to introduce a mechanical device, the limitations of introducing that element are very specific. It can be used to irritate or annoy or to force that audience to listen all the harder, or as a surprise. Don't use it to restate something that you can restate another way. That really is the trick....Or else it is going to make your participant so lazy that ultimately he comes to the place that he has got to be told that the cavalry is coming, even when he sees it coming over the hill--he's got to be told that musically."[27]

Costumes

When it comes to costuming, in a period play Hall seldom has the option of appropriating something real, as he does for the set-pieces. In this case, Hall insists that the costumes should look like clothes rather than costumes.

As costumer Bill Lane explains, "the baseline is it has to look real....If it looks real, the audience will believe it and if it looks like a costume, I think they're going to look at it like a costume, which is one reason why we really don't do 'period' period things."[28] In other words, Hall expects costumes to be true to the personality of the character and he is not concerned with such things as authentic Civil War buttonholes.

Such ideas extend to make-up as well. There is a great reluctance among the Trinity actors to use fake noses and other such artificial means of transformation. Hall and his actors prefer to use the actor's skill in gesture and voice to affect metamorphosis.

In Brother to Dragons, costume designer John Lehmeyer provided clothing that was suggestive of the period and appropriate for the characters' class and social roles. There was one exceptional costume and that was Jefferson's coat. Although it was faithful to the period, Lehmeyer emblazoned it with slogans, such as "Truth" and "Action" and scraps of sentences. These Jeffersonian maxims appeared to be scrawled on paper and pinned to the coat. This coat provided a direct message and conveyed a surreal quality appropriate to the play's nightmarish action.

The costumes in Hall's productions reflect his concern that the performance is fully communicated to the audience. His productions are usually staged in a recent

time period (from the late nineteenth century on to present day), or they may cover a span of history and be deliberately anachronistic or eclectic.

The costumes for Troilus and Cressida, designed by Betsey Potter, demonstrated Hall's premise that costumes should be tied to character more than to a specific historical period. The costumes were eclectic in the extreme--G.I. fatigues, Greek tunics, and everything in between. Together they represented all wars from ancient Troy to Vietnam. (Hall staged the play in 1971, at the peak of the Vietnam conflict.) The play began in a modern Army camp with a prologue to explain how the Trojan War came about from the judgment of the goddesses by Paris. Richard Cumming describes this prologue as one reminiscent of "those wretched Bob Hope camp shows, USO shows, with the G.I's doing the three goddesses with mops on their heads and coconut boobies--one of them had a crown with forks and spoons sticking up."[29]

After the prologue, the bombs began to go off, and the soldiers ran for cover, donning battle gear from all wars. George Martin portrayed a leering Master of Ceremonies, as well as Pandarus, so he remained costumed in a derby, striped suit and two-tone shoes. The Juno of the prologue transformed himself into Menelaus, arrayed as a Cossack general. Old Nestor was costumed as a lunatic Napoleon. Ulysses was dressed like Rommel, the Desert Fox

of World War II. The "scurrilous Greek" Thersites wore yellow long-johns with a drop seat, a World War I aviator helmet, parachute harness and construction boots. Ajax came across as a stupid football "jock" in his windbreaker, football shoulder pads and green beret. Richard Kavanaugh, as Hector, was a classic Trojan prince in a loin cloth, but with gun belts across his chest. Agamemnon looked like Field Marshal Montgomery in kilts and with a chest full of medals. Only the lovers, Troilus and Cressida, wore facsimiles of Trojan garb. The costumes thus extended the satiric mood of the prologue and implied that war is forever--a sentiment true to both Shakespeare's play and the times in which Hall staged it.

Troilus and Cressida is one of the most extreme examples of the mixing of period and contemporary costume pieces in Hall's productions. (The costumes designed by Franne Lee for Hall's 1977 King Lear were also notable in this regard. Lee mixed nineteenth and twentieth-century dress to reveal the personalities of the characters in modern symbols ranging from hillbillies to gray flannel suits.) Nevertheless, Hall does use straightforward period dress in some productions--for example in The Wild Duck and in Dead Souls, which takes place in Russia in 1860. The costumes were historically correct, but slightly caricatured --Bill Lane says they were "period, but not pretty period."[30] The distinction is important because Hall

dislikes any hint of a decorative or romanticized view of the past. There are exceptions, of course. Sometimes Hall surprises his audience by not offering the unexpected. His 1988 production of Les Liaisons Dangereuses utilized "pretty period" costumes and set-pieces; but this was atypical of the majority of his productions.

In other recent productions of plays set in the distant past, such as The Tempest or Brecht's Galileo, Hall has selected a more modern period, the late nineteenth century, for the basic "look" of the clothes and, at least in The Tempest, combined that period with both classic and contemporary elements. The advantage of this shift to a more recent time period is that it allows a clearer frame of reference. The modern audience can read the codes of the clothes and understand such subtleties as class differences better than if the period were more remote.

Hall also stresses the importance of costumes as clothes in his rehearsal process. Because the costumes are brought into the rehearsal and used as early as possible, there is nothing the actors have not worn before the final dress rehearsals. The actors have had days and even weeks to become accustomed to their character's "clothes" and are therefore much more comfortable and natural in their costumes.

Special Effects

Throughout his career, Adrian Hall has continued to find innovative solutions to staging problems. Theatre is an art that consumes reality. Thus, what is novel today is mundane tomorrow. The theatre artist must therefore constantly search for new ways to reach the spectator--a spectator who is bombarded with information day in and day out. The result of this media overload, as a prominent Japanese advertising executive observes, is that "in this age of excess information you have to be direct. The consciousness of the client is changing."[31] Hall has maintained a keen sense of his audience and how far he needs to go to stay ahead of them. His approach is always the direct approach. As Roger Morgan explains, "Audiences are harder and harder to divert and you do have to grab them and sort of shake them now and then and say, 'You're there, aren't you?' 'You didn't feel that before, did you?' And that's what Adrian, I think, just aces--there's nobody I know that does that as well as he does."[32]

Hall uses every element available to the director in order to surprise, shock and delight his audience. In addition to what has already been described, Hall has tried numerous techniques to force a new way of experiencing the theatrical event. From his earliest productions he used Brechtian placards and projections to get information directly to the audience, but even there he used them in

unexpected ways. In Wilson in the Promise Land, several actors played Woodrow Wilson at different ages, but Hall did not have a young actor for Wilson at age six. His solution was to hang a placard on the smallest actress which read: "Woodrow Wilson, age six." The audience readily accepted the idea and it confirmed Hall's belief that the simplest choice is often the best choice.

Hall has often used film, although he is aware that it tends to split the spectator's focus between the screen and the stage. He tried using it in the Trinity production of The Tempest, but discarded that idea when he restaged the play at Dallas. In Buried Child he used a film of rain that was projected over the bodies of the actors as well as on the set.

In All the King's Men at Trinity there were several film sequences, but the method of projection enhanced rather than detracted from the stage action. One scene, entitled "The Trip West," portrayed Jack Burden who, after learning that his girl has become his boss' mistress, goes on a drinking binge, driving for days down endless highways. The actor playing Burden, Peter McNicol, sat in a chair with a bottle and said, "Well that fact was too horrible to face. So I went West to a cheap motel in Long Beach, California. West is where we all plan to go someday. West is where you go when you get that letter saying: 'Flee, all is discovered.'"[33] Meanwhile, on a small screen (perhaps four

feet square) a film was shown. It was murky black-and-white footage of an old country highway, speeding by as the car drove along and the chorus sang a blues song about the merits of drowning one's troubles in drink. The combination of the elements of song, film and actor created both a sense of period and of mood. In a later scene, Hall achieved a similar effect when he used the chorus and the audience as spectators at a football game while black-and-white footage of a vintage 1930s match was projected on a small screen (made from a sheet of fabric) which was pulled down from the ceiling.

There is hardly any effect that Hall has not, at some time, tried. In Feasting with Panthers he had fantasy costumes made in the style of the Beardsley drawings for Salome'. He also used puppets in that production to create Oscar Wilde's children's story, "The Fisherman and His Soul." In The Tempest he had puppets made in the style of the Bread and Puppet Theatre. A huge straw man was operated by half a dozen spirits and there were haystacks that seemed to grow. In Macbeth, Hall gave the three witches fantastic animal masks, which had tentacles of gauze hanging down. They carried these bizarre masks on long poles. At one point, the witches took the masks off the poles and hooked them to cables, which extended the length of RISD auditorium. Suddenly, the masks flew over the heads of the

spectators, who shrieked and jumped to avoid the creepy gauze that dangled over their heads.

Even more surprising was an effect Hall staged in Lovecraft's Follies. It occurred in the scene where Lovecraft delivers his Maxim of Law, a parody of T.S. Eliot's "Wasteland." Playwright James Schevill describes how "the actors were behind the audience...and they had a long thread or string which had feathers on it and they drew that down over the backs of the audience...to simulate the terror of that feeling, of the rats in the wall. The audience really loved that."[34]

Hall's invention is at its best in his staging of scenes of violence and murder. Since these are peak moments, Hall's staging often amounts to a real coup de théâtre--a vivid instance of unforgettable, sensuous imagery. "In the theatre, violence has to be sudden--has to take me by surprise," Hall says.[35] In his early days at Trinity, he used stage tricks and the athletic abilities of his actors to create stunning moments onstage. Of the 1968-69 Macbeth, the critic Samuel Hirsch exclaimed, "Violent death is staged with bold, Gothic strokes. Banquo is stabbed and his throat cut by three hulking brutes in murky shadows; Lady Macduff and her sons are murdered by a swarm of assassins against the glare of dozens of strip lights and, as they struggle like chickens being torn by

marauding foxes, bells clamor, blood drips and the sounds of death shudder in their throats."[36]

The violence in Macbeth (which had been preceded by that shocking premiere of Brother to Dragons) was matched by equally energetic mayhem in the next Project Discovery production, Billy Budd. When Billy was to be hanged, he was made to climb up to a small platform high above the stage; then he was pushed off the perch and his apparently lifeless body swung out over the stunned spectators' heads. Richard Cumming describes the effect this stunt had: "It just scared the bejeezus out of the audience because it just looked like they were just hanging him! He was on the stage and the people pulling the ropes went down the two aisles. So when they pulled, he just swung out over the audience. It was very frightening."[37]

In his notes on the 1967-68 season, Hall expressed his ambivalence over using such frankly theatrical tricks: "Max Reinhardt has said: 'Life is the incomparable, the most valuable possession of the theatre. Do not spare stage properties and machinery where they are needed, but do not impose them on a play that does not need them.' And yet I am psychologically at war with myself as a director. Can I deny the effectiveness of the gimmick of hurling Cinna the Poet over the ramp, allowing him to swing in mid-air to the mad drum beat in Julius Caesar? The theatrical trick is sometimes the way life on the stage becomes real."[38]

Nevertheless, Hall has used any trick in the book, and has invented many of his own, and he has no compunction about using any one of them if it meets his criteria: (1) the trick must offer surprise to catch the spectator off-guard and (2) it must provoke a real sensation of danger or other strong emotional response appropriate to the text.

In order to get to the reality of violence, Hall has had to lead his actors into fearful territory. They viewed Holocaust films to prepare for Lovecraft's Follies. They visited prisons and saturated themselves in the transcripts of Jack Henry Abbott's trial for In the Belly of the Beast. They spent countless hours studying the photographs and documentary evidence of the Charles Manson Family murders for Son of Man and the Family. At one time Hall seriously suggested bringing in a live goat or pig to kill, so the actors could experience the reality of what it takes to slaughter a live thing. (Hall and his actors never went quite that far; Hall claims the actors refused, but the actors claim they would have done it if he had asked them to do it.)

Hall did not use a stage trick to re-create the murders of the Manson Family. This production was staged while the trials were still in progress and the audience was highly sensitive to the material already. Hall therefore adopted a more symbolic staging: the victims were covered in white pillow cases and the assailants squirted them with

blood--still a horrifying scene because of the context of the overall production.

In Eustace Chisholm and the Works Hall caused great controversy with his staging of a back-alley abortion. Hall put the actresses behind a scrim, so the scene was really created by the shadowy silhouettes and the spectator's imagination. Barbara Meek, who played the role of the male abortionist, explains that "you couldn't see anything...but I had ladles (I didn't have medical tools) that you could see in silhouette. It looked like a soup spoon, like a ladle--it didn't even go with the reality of it, but [with] her legs up and the shadow going in--people would say, 'I'm having one tomorrow, do I have to sit through this today?' I mean, it was that personal for the audience....But that's the kind of reaching out--making you think about what's going on around you [Adrian does]."[39]

Meek's comment is astute. It is Hall's ability to make the text a personal experience for each spectator that makes his stage direction so stunningly effective. From his tireless probing of the text, where he finds the personal connection to the material, until the final expression in which he translates and transmits those complex responses to his audience, Hall never stops seeking for fresh ways to create the scene in the minds of the audience.

In Troilus and Cressida, Hall staged the death of Hector entirely without swordplay (which Hall finds fake and

ineffective on the stage). The scene is evening. Hector, all alone, takes off his armor and prepares to rest after the day's battle. The mood was set by a boy walking through the camp, playing a melancholy air on a flute. Richard Kavanaugh, as Hector, took off the pieces of the armor, until his pale, athletic body was almost nude. He was in a pool of light in the center of the Trinity Playhouse stage. Achilles and the Myrmidons crept along a small walkway that had been built around the semi-circular ledge of the balcony. Ignoring Hector's pleas, they killed the Trojan prince by throwing balls--sponges soaked in a thick red syrup--over the heads of the audience and at Hector's naked white body. From the audience's viewpoint, they saw the defenseless warrior as his body was struck by the unseen assailants; as splashes of red broke out all over the white body, dying Hector seemed to bleed from a dozen wounds at once; his figure slowly crumpled and fell. It was an effective solution--sudden and surprising--and typical of Hall's inventiveness.

Combining the Production Values

Hall constantly exhorts his actors and designers to strip away the decorative trappings of the theatre, to abide by the dictum "less is better." Yet Hall's stage imagery is rich and complex, not spare or stripped down. This richness is a result of Hall's process: Hall strictly limits his

choices in each area, whether it be text, costumes, lighting effects, or whatever; but then he combines these specific, striking elements for maximum effect. His disciplined selectivity enhances the importance of each object or effect he does choose to use. Actor and director Richard Jenkins declares that "it becomes so much more complicated--not complicated but rich, layered, alive--by simplifying."[40] Peter Gerety who, like Jenkins, has learned directing under Hall's tutelage, says Hall has taught him that "if a character or a scene has a certain emotional value, you need to take it all the way to the end and not segue, 'bleed' one into the other....He takes the thing all the way to the end, strong and then clearly stops it and clearly starts something new. And then, whatever that is, he gives it its full value....He may overlap, but if he overlaps, both values are clear and distinct and strong."[41]

Gerety's comment reflects Hall's absolute commitment to each moment of the play. The transitions in a Hall production are precisely choreographed and planned to intensify the effect of the scenes they connect. In Hall's production of Mensch Meier there were twenty-seven scenes, some only one line long or with silent business. Early in the rehearsal process Hall observed that: (1) the transition might well be complicated, but it must look simple, (2) the start of each scene must clearly and simply establish place, time and mood, (3) the more detail done

between the scenes, the more it resembles a shifting scene, (4) some scenes can work like a film shot, where the focus is on one character downstage (giving a close-up) and the image becomes a long shot as the upstage character begins speaking, and (5) blackouts must be used carefully and sparingly because in a total blackout the audience enters a new reality.

This summary reveals what a knowledgeable craftsman Hall is. He clearly knows what works and what does not and yet his process is to search for the new, untried solution. He stresses the importance of finding an original image to get from one place to another:

> You know what we're still doing in the theatre? And God knows, if the people sitting in this room don't change this, you should be punished everlasting....We say unless it's ongoing when we start the story, they won't understand it. You know? Back at the turn of the century we used to do violins and blue lights and sometimes smoke and that meant "The past."...And yet the novel writer, for thirty, forty years has been able to, in one sentence talk about right now and in the next sentence talk about thirty years earlier. Okay? Without explaining. Television does it.
>
> It's only in the theatre that we feel we constantly have to explain ourselves....Do you know something? It's amazing how many of those people outside these walls have as much information as you have and do you know it is amazing how quickly they will relate? It's only we in the theatre that feel the barnacles are important--that maybe they're not going to understand.[42]

Hall dares to make dramatic leaps from one scene to the next because he is confident that an audience accustomed to the radical shifts and jump-cuts of television and music videos

are quite capable of keeping up with his transitions. Moreover, he is convinced that the standard transition (slow fade to black, one minute for scene change, lights up, lines begin) is a certain way of losing your audience.

Hall's transitions are only one part of his talent for orchestrating his productions. Roger Morgan, who has designed for many Broadway and regional theatre directors, says that Hall "is the best person in the world to carry the audience through the scene observing exactly what they should be observing at the right time and leaving a place at the right time...if you can't do that you may as well not do anything else. I mean, if you can't direct an audience through the progress of a play and have them see--among all the things that it is possible for them to see--the things that matter, then you are not exactly there. And this is one of [Adrian's] enormous abilities."[43]

Hall very carefully weighs the value and impact of each segment of the production. Then, through a combination of tempo, pace, sound, energy, he orchestrates each part of the action and then sets each moment as a jeweler setting a jewel. Even then he remains flexible, open to change, always responsive to new impulses. It is not unusual for him to make radical changes in the text and staging even after the show begins previews. If the production does not pass the acid test--if it does not confront and move the spectator--Hall makes whatever changes are required.

In combining the production values with the other elements of the text, space and actor, Hall purposefully avoids a cohesive unity. His aesthetic is much closer to the unresolved contradictions of Shakespeare's stage. Indeed, contradictions are the most discernible earmarks of an Adrian Hall production. Fellow artists, such as Eugene Lee, believe contradiction is central to Hall's personality. Ken Bryant, associate director at Dallas, said that "it's all about contradictions. I mean, I think that's what [Adrian's] spirit is about--that you really can't nail it down because it's such a contradictory thing going on. The moment that you think he's going this way, he veers off the other way. There's no way to second-guess it."[44]

Whether it is his nature or whether it stems from his desire to keep his audience guessing, contradiction governs the way Hall juxtaposes the elements of his stage productions. Like Brecht, he has no interest in blending the elements for some sense of unity or synthesis. He prefers a jarring of externals that forces the audience constantly to reassess what they are viewing. This aspect of Hall's stage is one of the reasons his work has never become dated. Hall's sensitivity to American culture has allowed him to respond to shifting cultural changes. This director's taste for the eclectic, for mixing periods, styles and cultures, and for dramatically juxtaposing opposites, ties him to the current wave of postmodern art.

In The Director's Voice Arthur Bartow asked Hall what characterizes an "Adrian Hall work" and Hall replied: "In a production of mine you always see the warts."[45] Hall frequently reminds his actors that he wants the production with warts. This simple expression holds fairly complex implications. On the one hand it means to Hall that people should behave truthfully--in Mensch Meier, for example, there are several earthy, very human scenes: in one scene Martha and Otto are interrupted while having sex when Otto stops to complain about the loss of his favorite ballpoint pen; in another scene Otto, abandoned by his family, reads a pornographic magazine and masturbates. Hall did not pull any punches in either of these scenes. They were honest and direct and also intensely human--the first scene evoking sympathetic laughter of personal recognition and the second bringing tears of sympathy. The "warts" in this case were left in place in that the scenes were not made pretty or artfully presented. The people were real, the action was extremely close, personal and truthful.

To Adrian Hall, a theatre "with warts" also means a theatre that directly confronts the human condition and forces the audience to ask important questions. Hall's theatre is not a theatre in which everything is resolved. It is rougher, more provocative. It doesn't make it easy for the spectator. As Eugene Lee observes,

> There's one thing about [Adrian's] stuff in general--it's never really polished. It's that

> aspect of not making it polished that probably has not made him successful, commercially....That's why they can take All the King's Men and do it at Arena Stage and it gets better reviews than it's gotten either place we did it.
>
> But we didn't like it the way they did it....But the real world likes it better...they like it more tied up, polished. And that's true for design, lighting and sound and every aspect of those things....It doesn't interest me, doesn't interest him. And maybe that's why we like each other.[46]

The unresolved contradictions, the "warts," the juxtaposition of blacks against whites combine to make the rough-around-the-edges theatre of Adrian Hall. It is a special theatre that can irritate, stimulate the mind, and warm the heart. It cannot be any more polished and refined without losing some of its effect and, for Hall, there would be no purpose in such a diluted version of art. To aspiring directors, this is Hall's message:

> Theatre is not predictable....I'm saying that I think that surprise is your major tactic in the theatre. I think if you let them get settled comfortably in their seats all facing one way, with the red velvet curtain and the curtain warmers, and the overture, and so forth, I think you're inviting non-participation. They pull the portcullis right down. It really is fun to encourage people to go out and spend money and have a nice dinner before they go to the theatre--it's deadly for the theatre. Deadly for the theatre.
>
> You need people that are hungry, you need people that want something. [That is] the reason they are coming. If it's a dreary social ritual, it is of no value to you. You are in the theatre to change the world, and don't tell me you're not! Because if you're not, baby, we don't need you. Okay? They cannot be indifferent to us, they cannot be indifferent to this art![47]

Chapter IX

THE TEMPEST: A CASE STUDY

Introduction

Adrian Hall first directed The Tempest at the Trinity Repertory Company during the spring of 1983. Hall's staging of Shakespeare's play was one of the most theatrical and vigorous productions the Providence audiences had seen for some time at Trinity. Four years later, Hall selected The Tempest to open the 1987-88 season at the Dallas Theater Center. As was noted in the beginning of this study, my research on Adrian Hall has been informed by direct observation of the rehearsal process. That observation began with a six-week residency at the DTC in 1987 to observe rehearsals for The Tempest. This chapter, therefore, will focus on that specific production, examining Hall's process on a week-by-week basis. In this way, I hope to demonstrate how Hall applied his precepts concerning the theatrical text, the space, production values and acting style to a single production.

It is important to reiterate at this point that Adrian Hall has no rules or typical rehearsal method. He approaches the rehearsal as a period in which problems are solved, so the manner in which Hall arrives at those solutions is as varied as are the problems. The Tempest rehearsals were unusual because Hall had just selected fifteen actors for his first permanent company at the DTC and this was the first production cast with company members. This play was also the first Shakespeare and the first classic that Hall had staged at the Dallas Theater Center.

In the pages that follow, all references to The Tempest (unless specifically indicated otherwise) refer to the Dallas production and not to the former Trinity production. The source for all quotes and observations is the daily log of the author--a 360-page journal written during rehearsals.[1] For specific citations from the journal, I have identified the source by the date of the rehearsal in parentheses after the statement. Any citations from sources other than the journal are, of course, indicated with standard endnotes.

The Process Begins: Auditions

Adrian Hall began his work on The Tempest in an unusual way, by holding auditions. Hall customarily works with a permanent company and therefore makes casting decisions either just prior to rehearsals or during the

first week's exploration of the text. He cast the principal roles in The Tempest prior to the rehearsals, but still had to cast several non-Equity actors as mariners and spirits of Prospero's island--roles he referred to as "mudmen." (He called them "mudmen" because they first appear as writhing bodies emerging from a primordial ooze of stage fog when Ariel gathers his fellow spirits.)

Hall held the first auditions in a small rehearsal hall in the Kalita Humphreys Theater on August 31st, the day before the onset of The Tempest rehearsals. The auditioning actors were graduate students from Southern Methodist University and they were there to participate in an internship program. Hall expected to cast the actors in three shows that season, including The Tempest. Present at the auditions were Hall, his composer (Richard Cumming) and his stage manager (David Glynn). The basic process was as follows: Hall asked the actor to perform a prepared scene; Cumming had the actor sing a short song to test his vocal quality (during which time Hall perused the actor's resume); Hall then interviewed the actor.

Hall's technique for conducting auditions was consistent with standard theatre practice. Nevertheless, the auditions did reveal Hall's temperament and manner of relating to the actors. Hall gave the actor his full attention and asked a number of pertinent questions. He seemed genuinely interested in the actors and was in no way

condescending or intimidating. Indeed, the mood he established was casual and friendly. The director carefully screened these young actors to be sure that they knew what the mudmen roles involved--including shaving their heads, a great deal of physical activity and at times performing in only a loin cloth. (Hall qualified these conditions somewhat when he discovered several actresses were among the interns. At the same time, he discussed with his staff how he might change his image for the spirits to include the women.) Hall's general questions were aimed at finding out what the actor's favorite role had been or what kind of role he would like to play.

Between the individual auditions, Hall explained to the staff that he looked for actors who have a good sense of who they are. He also outlined the three conditions facing him at the Dallas Theater Center: (1) the median age of the audience is "about ninety-five;" (2) there has been no concentrated effort to get students involved in theatre (the internship was a part of that effort); and (3) although the public schools are sixty to seventy-percent black, so far he had no black or Chicano actors in his company, because of the small talent pool in Dallas. Therefore, he was holding special calls for black actors. (Three black actors would eventually be cast in The Tempest.)

Hall told his auditioning students that he needed "courageous actors" who could be very physical. By

physical, he told them that he did not mean "Martha Graham;" the skills he was looking for were closer, he said, to working construction. This information was pertinent for his needs because the actors playing the spirits would have to handle many of the props and set-pieces. But he typically requires actors with courage and physical agility for the athletic staging that he devises.

The auditions were fairly standard, except for an exercise Hall asked one actor to perform. After hearing his monologue, Hall asked him to repeat it while standing with his back and arms against a wall. This exercise was intended to get the actor to drop the artificiality of his gesture and to concentrate on his speech rather than illustrate the text. Hall explained later that, if he had wanted to work with this actor, he might have had him do something physical while working with the speech. The result of the exercise was a much clearer text in that it was stripped of the illustrative gesture that had hampered the actor's first reading. Hall used similar techniques with other actors during The Tempest rehearsals.

At the end of each actor's interview, Hall asked the person to join the company the next day for the first reading. Although still concerned with how he might use the female actors for mudmen, Hall was now done with auditions and ready to commence rehearsals. Beginning on September 1st, the next six weeks would encompass more than

two hundred hours of rehearsal and five preview performances before the official (press) opening on October 13, 1987.

Week One

The first two and a half weeks of rehearsal were held in a large studio upstairs at the Kalita Humphreys Theater. The company arrived to find several big folding tables and about twenty-five chairs arranged in a large circle, with Hall and his stage manager, David Glynn, seated at one table in the circle. On Hall's table were two books that he would refer to frequently during the rehearsals: Isaac Asimov's Asimov's Guide to Shakespeare and Jan Kott's The Bottom Translation. (As was noted in chapter 5, Hall had extensive reference works in evidence during the rehearsals for The Tempest at Trinity; but he said he did not need to do so much reading for a revival like this. He mentioned that Kott's writings have always influenced his approach to a Shakespeare text.)

All the actors were called for the five-hour rehearsal. Hall's schedule was as follows:

5 hours a day for 14 days

6 hours a day for 13 days

8 hours a day for 2 days (technical/dress rehearsals)

10 hours a day for 2 days

5 hours a day plus a preview performance for 5 days

Of course, there were the usual short breaks and meal breaks, as required by Actors Equity, so these blocks of time were broken into smaller work units. The total hours of rehearsal numbered slightly over two hundred for this production. This schedule was unusually long because of the demands of the classic text and the technical requirements of this play.

The cast for The Tempest included actors from Hall's newly established permanent ensemble: Dee Hennigan as Miranda, Allen McCalla as Trinculo, Randy Moore as Prospero, Martin Rayner as Ariel, Sean Hennigan as Sebastian, John Morrison as Stephano and Jack Willis as Caliban. The other roles were performed by actors hired for this production: Melvin O. Dacus as Alonso, Lynn Mathis as Antonio, Willie H. Minor as Adrian (a nobleman), John Rainone as Ferdinand, Ryland Merkey as Gonzalo, and Kurt Rhoads as the Boatswain. The remainder of the cast of nineteen was made up of the six actors who played the mariners and spirits of the island.

During the "at table" exploration, all the actors convened at this circle of tables. As the work progressed during the week, additional reference books and textual and visual sources were brought in to be shared by all. The sources included various versions of The Tempest text, annotated guides to Shakespeare, books on elves and fairies, and so forth. Actors were free to take a break between

their scenes, but more often they stayed close to the table, absorbing the free-flowing ideas that emerged from the "at table" discussions.

Week One: The Process

The rehearsals almost always began with an introductory monologue by Adrian Hall. The first rehearsal (September 1st) began with a speech by Hall that included introductions of the cast and staff and an overview of the work process. Hall explained how he liked to work at the table to explore the text--the purpose being to discover the material's inner meanings. He then gave a quick summary of theatre--this was the "Two-Thousand-Year-Old-Craft speech" --which was intended to give the artist a sense of his place in history. The production must cut across time, Hall said, and their shared goal must be to find the truths in the play that connect us to Shakespeare's world.

Hall also used this monologue to dismiss the idea of trying to apply psychological realism to Shakespeare. He pointed out that attempting to nail down Freud on top of Shakespeare was extremely difficult. Instead, he stressed the importance of the story: "Every actor's goal is to contribute to the telling of the story."

Hall then went on to say that in the coming days he wanted them to search for contemporary reference points that would make the magic real for the actor and for the

audience. Hall gave examples, such as Prospero being deposed and a modern-day military coup. He emphasized that he "would not like this piece to have the sense of a fairy tale." Instead, the magic had to have a scientific basis, so the audience could accept it as a real possibility.

Hall's opening speech then was directed towards the acting style, which would be presentational to get the spectator to participate actively in the event. "Theatre is now," Hall stressed. He then cautioned the actors to begin slowly and not to expect to be able to give a hundred percent every day. In the coming days and weeks of rehearsal, however, Hall himself would always give a hundred percent. His energy and enthusiasm never failed. Rehearsals are invariably boring and tiring at some point, but Hall never divulged when he reached that point. Like his actors at Trinity Rep, the Dallas actors were constantly amazed at the pace Hall sustained and at his unquenchable zeal throughout the rehearsals.

During the first week, the process was the same. Hall made his opening remarks and established an atmosphere that was warm and friendly but strongly focused on the work. Then the actors began to read the play. Most of the time Hall did not interrupt during the scene (and he never bothered to stop an actor for a simple mispronunciation or

other minor detail). Before he offered a suggestion to an actor, he commended him.

Between the reading of the scenes, Hall led the exploration into the mysteries of the text. This exploration (the "exploding of the text" in Hall's parlance) consisted of (1) getting the actors to tell the story, (2) peeling away the merely decorative mannerisms or other embellishments of character made by the actor, and (3) establishing the character relationships and grounding them in reality.

Week One: Administrative and Technical Matters

Also during this first week of rehearsal, Hall was juggling several administrative matters. On the first day of rehearsal, Hall had announced to the press that he was intending to phase himself out of Trinity Rep within the next two to five years. This announcement precipitated dozens of calls from the newspapers and from Providence. It seemed to come out of nowhere, so no one was prepared for it. Hall did not bring the issue into the rehearsal room, but the situation elevated the external tensions. The next day, the student actors hired for the parts of the mudmen withdrew en masse from the show and Hall had to schedule new auditions to replace them.[2] On the third day of rehearsal, the actor playing Antonio, Lynn Mathis, was offered a good role in a film. In spite of the setback

that presented, Hall was sincerely pleased at the actor's good fortune and immediately released him from his obligation to the show--in accordance with his standing policy. Mathis, however, elected to stay because he felt he had much to learn from Hall.

In spite of these crises, the only one that affected the mood in rehearsal was the withdrawal of the student actors. On the second day of rehearsal Hall explained that the students had failed to grasp the concept of a permanent company--they had expected to be cast in roles that were necessarily assigned to company members. So Hall's morning address on the second day of rehearsal was directed towards explaining that concept--that you use the actors in the company before you use outsiders.

Continuing his concern with getting students involved with the theatre, Hall also talked about the significance of the Project Discovery program, which also was being expanded this season at the DTC. He said the Catholic Church had to be the model--one had to get the audience at a young age (preferably age ten to twelve) and regularly condition them to appreciate theatre. Also in this oration, Hall expressed the need for theatre critics who would enlighten the public about the realities of the craft of theatre. As usual, this multi-faceted monologue was delivered in Hall's particular rapid-fire, stream-of-consciousness manner.

The third kind of problem which arose during the first week of rehearsals for The Tempest was that of the technical matters. This production was an interesting one to observe because Hall had staged it at Trinity only five seasons before. The set designer, Eugene Lee, and composer Richard Cumming had worked on that production. So had the costume designer at the DTC, Donna M. Kress, who was then assistant costume designer at Trinity. Therefore, Hall did not exactly begin at "point zero" on the DTC version of the play.

Several primary ideas were carried over from the Trinity production. One such concept was the idea for the mudmen, the spirits of the island (who double as mariners and extras). Hall wanted to retain the image for the spirits, who had been played by young actors, with shaved heads and almost nude. The departure of the student actresses simplified that decision, as Hall was able to hire actors to play the roles as he had envisioned them.

The other dominant idea Hall carried over was the function of the setting: at Trinity a huge stage platform had the capability to rock from side to side, spout water, and also provide a ship's hold whence the characters could emerge. Since Eugene Lee's other commitments kept him from joining the rehearsals until the second week, he sent designs for the set to be constructed in the Arts District Theater. This practice was unusual in that Lee is usually

on hand to develop his ideas for the set along with the ensemble's exploration of the text. But Lee and Hall had apparently agreed to retain these basic functions. The set in the Arts District Theater was still very different from the Trinity set because the audience seating could be arranged in the most desirable pattern in the flexible Dallas space. Only the idea of the rocking platform was carried over from the earlier production.

Except for these two concepts, Hall really did begin with a clean slate and work from scratch. Cumming's music was also written (or possibly revised) during the rehearsal period, using the talents and vocal qualities of the new cast. He also incorporated new instruments, like a piano without keys or a damper, which was played with mallets and produced a marvelous, indefinable sound. Similarly, Kress's costumes differed from the Trinity costumes. From the first day, Hall stressed "if we know the answers [already], we won't find new things" (September 1).

One concept that Hall was not sure about was the solution to Caliban which the Trinity actor, Richard Kavanaugh, had provided. Kavanaugh had played Caliban with wooden stools strapped to his feet. It was the actor's creative solution to finding a kind of monstrosity that was not mundane or decorative. It was intriguing to see how Hall dealt with this idea, which had been so effective in the first production. In Dallas, the role of Caliban was

played by Jack Willis. Although Hall had been pleased with how the stools had worked in the first production, from the first day, he assured Willis that he did not wish to impose Kavanaugh's solution, unless Willis felt it would be helpful. During the first week of rehearsal, Hall had Willis experiment with standing on tables when he read, to get a sensation of whether he would want to use the stools. By the second week, Willis was ready to try the stunt and he did, indeed, use it because the physical challenge helped him deal with some of the difficulties of the verse. The actor did not, however, feel Hall unfairly imposed this solution on him.

Hall employed his usual process of developing the ideas for the technical effects during rehearsal--representatives were present to take down notations of any needs for costumes, music, sound, props, lights or set. At the end of the rehearsal (and often during breaks), Donna Kress or Jenny Davis (properties designer) caught a moment with Adrian Hall to discuss ideas. Hall responded to sketches and pictures Kress brought in at the end of the day during this first week. Generally, he wanted a kind of late nineteenth-century colonialism to be reflected in the dress of the courtiers. For the inhabitants of the island, Hall felt that everything should have the look of having been crafted from materials on the island--gourds, straw and the like. He also told Kress that he wanted the costume tied to

the function, e.g., Prospero's cape should relate to his scientific brand of magic. Hall's main concerns were the costumes for Caliban and for Ariel, a character whose image eluded him.

During this first week, various musical instruments mysteriously appeared in the rehearsal hall. There were kettle drums, a pole of bells, a steel string lute, and an African thumb piano called a "kalimba." In the coming weeks more objects would appear, whenever needed. Within a few days actors began singing songs Cumming had given them. All in all, it was an organic process, just as the exploration of the text was.

Week One: "Exploding" the Text

From the very first rehearsal, Hall emphasized the need to tell the story. He told the cast that they must not confuse action with activity because in Shakespeare the action is found in the words. When you see a production of a Shakespeare play and cannot understand it, Hall said it is because you have missed some of the threads at the beginning of the story. Hall's process, then, especially during this first week of textual exploration, was to define the "threads" or important lines that the audience must comprehend in order for the story to make sense.

Hall's process was to identify the significant events or information in a scene of the play by having the

actors read a scene, discuss and enumerate the important keys, and then have them read the scene again to see if it was clear. For example, near the end of the first week Hall did this with the actor playing Ferdinand. The actor was having difficulty with the ornate verse of the young lover, so Hall had him reiterate the major steps in the scene where he meets Miranda: (1) Aha! She speaks English! (2) Her father knows I'm from Naples! (3) My father is drowned. Once the events were determined, Hall had the actor read the verse again to hear if the ideas/events were clear to the audience.

In defining these "events," Hall was effectively breaking the scene down into "beats," as a "Method" director might do. From time to time Hall might use Stanislavsky terminology, such as "sense memory" or "objective." But he more frequently used his own vocabulary, telling the actor to "pull it closer to yourself" or "concentrate on the intent." Apparently Hall adopted whatever vocabulary seemed most useful for guiding the actor.

He also kept recapitulating the story line that led up to this point in the play. As he told the cast, their goal in these first days must be to identify the "threads in this tapestry and not generally, but specifically" (September 4). Thus, the work consisted of carefully sifting through every scene, identifying the key events and points of information.

Another approach, which was quite effective, was Hall's technique of having the actors read related scenes without the intervening scenes. During this week, for example, Hall had the noblemen read all their scenes in the play in sequence, without any of the Ariel, Prospero or Caliban sequences that did not involve them. This technique illuminated and clarified the through-line or inner structure for those characters. When the scenes were then integrated back into the whole play, they were much more cohesive and the characters' motivations were much clearer. Hall tried this process with a number of scenes: the clowns, the lovers, and so forth.

This process had the effect of identifying the structural elements, but it also highlighted the special rhythms and moods of each component of the play's story. When the various plot lines were integrated into the whole, the play began to divulge its musical variety, as these contrasting rhythms and moods were synchronized into the harmonic whole.

Similarly, Hall applied this method to particular scenes, removing interjections or asides that broke up the main line of thought. For example, in the scene when the noblemen have just been washed ashore, he cut out the satiric comments of the two conspirators, Antonio and Sebastian, and had the actors read only the lines of the main action. When the interjections were added later, they

became more of a counterpoint and rhythmic punctuation, rather than an interruption to the flow of the scene.

While he traced and retraced the threads of the story, Hall also emphasized the importance of saying the names clearly. The director pointed out that if the names in Shakespeare are not understood, the audience is apt to get lost in the story. The danger of the epic, he said, was that the audience would get confused about who was who. The remedy is to establish the identity of each character so that the audience will recognize him when he shows up a few scenes later.

Hall also altered the text in order to elucidate the story line for the audience. The director was cautious about cutting or amending the text, but he had no compunction if doing so helped the storytelling. His amendments to the text fell into three categories. First, he cut lines that were repetitive, explaining to his cast that Shakespeare restates many things unnecessarily. An example of this was the retelling of the Sycorax story in the final scene of the play. Hall also made minor changes in archaic words, such as when Shakespeare uses "liquor" to mean "water" or "wrack" for "wreck." For the archaic jokes about the bald jerkin in the clown's sequence in Act IV, scene one, Hall referred to his Asimov guide and the annotated sources at hand. Rather than updating or cutting the text, he worked with the actors to find a way to convey

the ribald humor (through intonation and action), so that the effect of the scene carried, even when the words did not communicate.

Hall reserved judgment on the masque sequence in Act IV where the three goddesses appear for the wedding of Miranda and Ferdinand. He did not decide to cut it until the second week of rehearsal. When he could find no way to make the scene work, he did cut it and transposed the "We are such stuff as dreams are made on" speech from Act IV to the very end of the play.

Week One: Stripping Away Decoration

Just as Hall had clarified the thoughts of the text through the methods described above, he also endeavored to remove everything that might muddy or divert attention from that clear story. He was particularly concerned at the outset with the character of Ariel, the airy spirit who serves Prospero. Hall felt that he had not found the key to this character in the earlier production. (In Providence, he had filmed Ariel's first scene; but he felt that was unsatisfactory.) Indeed, Hall approached this production with great curiosity and naivete, as though it was the first time he had encountered the play. Hall often says that it is sometimes easier to identify what a scene or character is <u>not</u>, than to say what it is. So, with Ariel, played by Martin Rayner, Hall stressed that he wanted

to get away from the conventional image of a female or dancer-like Ariel and try to discover a realistic base for this elusive character.

During the first week, Hall and Rayner explored a number of ideas. Ariel proved to be a key character because so many of his speeches contain the information of what occurs offstage. Hall worked with Rayner to strip away any tendency to illustrate those stories, saying "almost anything you do in the way of illustrating it keeps me from buying it...the simpler the better" (September 6). He cautioned the actor about the danger of playing an attitude.

One day, while exploring how Ariel feels if he cannot experience human feelings, Rayner suggested that perhaps there is something childlike about the spirit, because children are not sentimental. Hall encouraged Rayner to work in that direction and the actor began to bring to the role an intelligent simplicity that was stripped of artifice. Rayner also discovered a way to play the sprite's airy omnipotence--working with Randy Moore (Prospero), the actors developed a communication based on not looking at one another, as though Ariel and Prospero were invisible to each other, as if they inhabited different dimensions. It was not only interesting because it was unusual, but also because it freed the actors to speak to the audience directly.

Another example of how Hall stripped away the actors' "embroidery" of their parts was his work with the actors playing Antonio and Sebastian (Lynn Mathis and Sean Hennigan). These actors developed their parts rapidly during this first week and Hall was quick to direct them onto the right path. These characters are the villains of The Tempest. Antonio has usurped Prospero's throne and he and Sebastian begin plotting murder the minute they survive the shipwreck. During the work "at table," Hall checked the actors' inclination toward melodrama or overt villainy. He urged the actors to "keep it nice and clean" and to play all their knavish asides like jests--offhand and light (September 5). By getting the actors to play these opposites, Hall stripped away the explicit illustration and built in more surprise for the audience. Hall advised them that "the acting problem is to surprise me...in truth, it's acting that seems dangerous--that's when it's exciting for everybody" (September 3).

Hall worked in a similar fashion with all the actors, helping them to arrive at truthful, complex and intriguing characterizations. He often said, "Don't kiss and tell." By that he meant that the actor should not both say a thing and illustrate it in action. To John Rainone, playing Ferdinand, he suggested that "if you tell me you're in a trance, you don't have to show me" (September 6). In

this way, Hall distilled the actor's work into something which was richer, but easily comprehended.

Week One: Connecting the Actor to the Text

The exploration of the text at table also involved the task of getting the actor intellectually and emotionally connected to the text. Hall urged the ensemble to search for a realistic base for the magic of the play. Hall observed that we live in cynical times, but also in the scientific age, so the existence of magic is hard to accept. The spirits of Prospero's island must therefore be linked to our own mysteries--such as our fascination with physics or outer space. To this end, Hall continually told stories which drew parallels between the action in the text and contemporary times. This was to give the actors a realistic reference point--a point of entry into the reality of the text.

The first scene in The Tempest is the sinking of the ship which brings the noblemen to Prospero's island. Hall brought up image after image to inspire his actors to connect with the reality of that: what it is like to be in a plane crash, the ship from Close Encounters of the Third Kind, World War II, the Titanic. Hall's images were meant to inspire similar images in the mind of his actors and he told them that "until this becomes alive for us, one must

continually draw parallels that hook the thing to you" (September 4).

This process--of drawing contemporary parallels and getting the actors to do the same--continued throughout the weeks of rehearsals. By asking questions, sharing personal experiences, Hall forged a link between the actors and the text. Again and again he urged the actor to "pull it closer to yourself." "We used to think acting was putting on the attitude....if you can do it in a way that's totally naked, that's really extraordinary" (September 1).

Another technique Hall used was to guide the actor towards the contradictions in the characters--the untidy human flaws that make a person unique and interesting. He was especially concerned that Prospero's vulnerability be apparent--otherwise, there was no surprise possible. Look for the guilt or compulsiveness of Prospero, Hall suggested to Randy Moore. He added that "It's the warts that make me interested in somebody. It's what I share with them" (September 2).

In the first week of rehearsals (a total of thirty hours) Hall's process was to read and discuss the text, as described above. At the same time, actors were learning their lines and developing their characterizations. On the fourth day of rehearsal, Hall suddenly moved several actors away from the table. Among them were the actors playing Antonio and Sebastian. Hall was at that moment working to

remove the melodramatic villainy, to find something more subtle that would still communicate across the large theatre space. He placed the actors against the bare wall of the rehearsal room and restricted them from looking at each other. (Hall had observed that the actors were beginning to depend upon exchanged looks for their emotional cues.) By having their movements and glances restricted, the actors were forced to deliver their speeches to the front. This technique allowed us to see the characters' faces and to recognize a subtle deceit in them which their off-hand, satirical delivery contradicted.

After this first move from the table, Hall allowed the actors to work standing or moving, if they felt inclined to do so. He did not, however, block the play or set any moves. He experimented with character relationships by moving actors further apart or having someone stand on the table or sit on the floor. Hall explained to the ensemble that the movement would be discovered once they got into the stage space. (Indeed, at this point, Hall did not have a ground plan in hand and he was not at all sure what the spatial configuration would be.) He told the actors that "blocking is really nothing. It'll do itself when we set up the circumstances" (September 6). Instead, Hall used the time in the rehearsal room to set up the circumstances and to experiment with the character relationships.

At the end of the first week, Hall told his actors how pleased he was with the work. He urged them to continue learning their lines and to concentrate on the intent of each scene.

Week Two: Character Relationships

The second week of rehearsals began with Adrian Hall's usual address to his cast. He outlined the goals for the week as follows: (1) to commit the play to memory, (2) to identify the character relationships in the play, and (3) to identify the physical surroundings in each scene that influenced the characters. Hall also allowed his actors to begin to explore the physical aspects of their characters and moved them to a higher emotional level than before.

Beginning with rehearsal number seven, on September 8th, the actors with the smaller roles were "off book"--that is, they had learned their lines and had begun to move away from the table, to play the scenes around the rehearsal room. Gradually the tables were moved back so the actors would have space to explore. On this day, Hall was referring to a blueprint of the set for the Arts District Theater, so he knew the basic design for the actors' exits and entrances. Three days later Eugene Lee arrived, and Hall frequently conferred with the designer over the space and technical matters.

During this period (throughout the entire rehearsal period, in fact), Hall continued to trace the events of the story. As he became more concerned with the communication of the text, he began to watch the actors more than the script and to play the role of the spectator. He allowed the actors to remain at the table, if they were more comfortable there. But most of them were ready to get on their feet and play the scene's action as well as the words. The physical exploration of this week's rehearsals was not blocking, in the conventional sense. Hall stressed that he wanted them to explore their interrelationships as people in the given atmosphere or circumstance, but he did not want an illustration of the text.

During this period, Hall explained the importance of realizing that in Shakespeare's day theatre was verbally oriented, and today it is visually oriented. For that reason we have to find ways of leading the audience into the text and avoid merely illustrating it. As the actors began to move and experiment with gesture, Hall would stop them when he felt they were illustrating. For example, when Stephano discovers Trinculo and Caliban and takes them for a strange fish, Hall instructed him not to kick their legs when he says "Four legs!" but to do it before or after that line. In other words, "Don't kiss and tell."

Hall also trimmed away the actors' attempts to illustrate the text by overdoing their descriptive passages.

"Keep it clear and clean." It should be "free of attitudes so it can be heard;" he cautioned, "you've got to let me, the audience, do the work" (September 9).

Since almost all the actors were on their feet now, trying gestures and movements for their characters, Hall began suggesting rough positions for them. He explained that this should be completely flexible and that the positions did not relate to positions on the stage. Instead, he wanted the players to experiment with how the character relationships were affected if one was standing high on a table, or one was separated across the room. Hall told the cast that the "whole concept of environment is bringing together people in new and different ways" (September 11). By this he meant bringing together the actors with each other and also with the spectators. (Note that on some productions Hall does begin blocking within the rehearsal room; on a production like this, however, with its large cast and environmental setting, he delayed that process until the ensemble had access to the theatre space.)

The most interesting work of the week, in regard to the character relationships and space, was the development of Caliban and the clowns, Trinculo and Stephano. For two days, Jack Willis stood on stools to get the effect of Caliban's great height and pride. By the third day, the technicians had bolted the boots to the stools, so Willis could begin learning to walk on his unwieldy stilts. The

stools were wooden, about two feet high. Willis took a nasty fall almost immediately, and it was apparent that, if he could learn to manage walking on the stools, there would be a built-in sense of danger. The atmosphere in the rehearsal room was charged with expectation as Willis tried again. Padded mats were brought in, so Willis and the clowns could explore the physical aspects of their scenes--how can Caliban kiss Stephano's foot? What happens when they get the monster drunk? The costumer supplied arm and knee pads, used in karate, to give the actor as much protection as possible.

Throughout the week, Willis grew accustomed to the strange "shoes" and began to show a sense of arrogant dignity in his character. By opening night Caliban had grown into a monster of huge stature and palpable danger. Although he learned to fall and roll and stalk across the stage platforms, there was always a sense of peril in the physical act of walking on stools that infused Willis' Caliban with daring and bravura.

By the end of the second week and a half in the rehearsal hall, the various character relationships (Miranda and Prospero, Ferdinand and Miranda, the conspirators, the monster and clowns) were all coming into focus. Ariel and Prospero's interrelationship was coming along too, as Randy Moore and Martin Rayner continued to explore the physical possibilities of inhabiting one space, but two different

dimensions. Ariel moved behind and around Prospero, who seemed to address the air. It became more and more interesting to watch as the actors found ways to relate this multi-dimensional circumstance.

Week Two:

The Relationship between the Actor and the Audience

As Hall observed the actors in their exploration of the physical space and character relationships, he also began to work with the actor's and character's relationship to the audience. The best example of this step in the process was his work during the second week with John Rainone and Dee Hennigan, who played the lovers, Ferdinand and Miranda.

It appeared to this observer that Rainone was an intellectual actor who looked at things literally. He also seemed apprehensive about tackling Shakespeare. Hall endeavored to put the actor in touch with the joy and exaltation of the young prince and to discard the concerns of logic and psychological motivation. He also helped the lovers discover surprising, unhackneyed ways to play the youthful romance--the hardest kind of scene to make fresh and new. One way Hall accomplished this was to restrict the actors in looking at one another. He urged them to approach their scenes with the idea that their feelings were so strong that they did not dare look at each other. It was

similar to the idea that seeing a character trying not to cry is more interesting than seeing him cry--the struggle and the tension spark the scene.

He placed the actors up against the back wall and had them look out to the "audience." The actors had great difficulty at first and tended to close their eyes, look at the floor or the ceiling. But they gradually were able to play the scene looking out to the audience. Near the end of the scene, Hall told them to take each other's hands and let them steal one look at each other. In performance, this scene became electric as the pent-up feelings of the passionate youths was freed by that simple gesture. Hall had distilled the scene of first love to its essence.

During this week, as Hall worked with Rainone to push him to a higher state of emotional intensity, he had the actor do toe touches, give his lines standing on a table--anything to release the emotions. As the rehearsals continued, these scenes developed into thrilling instances of first love, devoid of the artifice of a conventional love-scene.

Hall also identified places for the other characters to deliver their speeches to the audience, using a presentational style (which is inherent in Shakespeare's theatre anyway). It was also evident why Hall selected Shakespeare for the Project Discovery audiences--there was great opportunity to reach out and grab the spectator,

especially with the direct-address and with the technical effects the director was planning. The result, in performance, was an exciting, personal production that missed no opportunity to connect with the audience.

Week Two: Creating the Atmosphere

The third element of the rehearsals during this week was the identification of the atmosphere of each scene. The new mudmen joined the cast on September 8th and they were immediately sent to work with Richard Cumming, who began to teach them the songs and sound effects they would do. All through the week, Cumming integrated more songs, sounds, and instruments and the island began to come alive.

Hall also talked vividly of the specific circumstances the actors must realize in each scene: the discomforts of the rocking ship, being kept in the hold, being chased through a bog. He also began to describe the images of certain scenes. For Prospero's final incantation of magic, which leads to the entrance of the spell-bound nobles, Hall explained that there would be a ritual (along the lines of appeasing the fire-gods) with a procession, the drawing of a magic circle, fiery torches, and so on. He also referred to huge puppet figures and how Ariel's harpy table would appear and disappear. It was impossible to determine how many of these images might have carried over

from Hall's first production of the play, but he remained open to discoveries and suggestions.

Hall's descriptions of the scenes prompted the actors to experiment on their own during these last days in the rehearsal room. Actors freely ran in, jumped on stools or tables, fell prone--whatever seemed right for the scene. Hall frequently asked them to take a certain position or try a movement or gesture, but it was all improvisational and nothing was recorded or set. The moves would be determined only when the actors could work with the environment.

During this second week, the technical elements continued to be integrated as they became available. Kettle drums, xylophone, wood blocks, and so forth, arrived in the rehearsal hall and were used to accompany the songs that also appeared like magic. Makeshift costumes materialized as well--a long cloak for Caliban, swords and military jackets for the noblemen.

Props were brought in as Hall requested them, but they were seldom introduced in a scene strictly for atmosphere. He preferred that the actors work without any object that might illustrate the scene. Only when an object was needed to make the thought clear was it added--for example, a medallion for Prospero when he cast a spell to put Miranda to sleep (which was needed because Shakespeare's verse is fairly obscure).

Week Three: Continued Exploration of the Text

The exploration of the text and of the physical aspects of character continued through two more days in the rehearsal hall during the third week. Hall persisted in focusing the rehearsals on the telling of the story and the exploration of the theatre space as one room shared by the actors and the audience. With the same boundless energy, Hall guided his players in their discovery of the play.

As he had done all along, Hall also continued to experiment with the text--trying minor cuts and amendments. As a rule, the director preferred to work with the actors to get across the sense of a phrase without amending the text. Sometimes this simply meant getting the actors to speak a bit faster and disregard the punctuation and to read through to the end of the line to communicate the sense of the passage. At other times he asked the actors to return to the tables to read through a scene, identify the key events again, and clarify the story.

By the end of the fourteenth day of rehearsal, on September 16, all of the actors had memorized their lines and were free of their playscripts. They were also plainly ready to tackle the new environment. The rehearsal room had become confining for the physical demands of the large cast. By this time (after seventy rehearsal-hours) the various characters were well-defined: individuals and groups of characters were beginning to display a fine

proficiency in ensemble acting. Their next challenge was the environment which Eugene Lee had been creating with his staff over at the Arts District Theater.

Week Three: The Environment

The cast of The Tempest moved into the cavernous Arts District Theater on September 17th, the fifteenth day of rehearsal. For the ensuing two weeks, rehearsals would last six hours a day, with one session from 11:00 to 2:00 and another from 3:30 to 6:30. The first four days in this space (the remainder of Week Three) were devoted to blocking.

When the actors arrived at the ADT they discovered the new environment that had been under construction while they were undertaking the work at table. Within the great metal barn of the ADT they found a huge platform stage, about five or six feet high, in the center of the space. This stage was the centerpiece of the playing space. The stage was not symmetrical--the bare boards ended unevenly at the sides, giving it a natural, rough look (which would later be enhanced with a "weathered" finish). This platform was suggestive of the Shakespearean stage because the seats for the audience surrounded it on three sides, with a narrow pit in between.

Behind this central platform was a long upstage platform that extended on either side, parallel with the

wall and running along the edge of the side sections of seats. The three big sections of the audience area were cut in half by aisles, creating six smaller, irregularly-shaped areas. Moreover, this U-shaped seating area was divided in half by a U-shaped aisle, perhaps five feet wide, which connected to the upstage platforms at either side. This aisle was also a staging area which allowed the actors to make a complete circuit, from the upstage platforms, around and through the audience, and back to the upstage area on the other side. On the down-left and down-right corners of the main platform, there were two ramps which connected the mainstage and the U-shaped aisle-stage.

The subdivision of the audience area by the wrap-around aisle-stage and the two ramps thus divided the approximately five hundred seats into intimate viewing areas of fifty to sixty seats. This arrangement also gave the spectators in the sections near the stage an "environmental" (i.e., non-frontal) view through parts of the performance.

The central platform was designed to serve as the ship's deck for the opening scene. It contained several traps and a "hatch" for the entrance of the mariners and noblemen during the tempest. Built on huge rockers, the entire platform could be rocked back and forth, simulating the rolling deck of a storm-tossed ship. For the rest of the play, it was a stable platform.

Hall's opening remarks at this first rehearsal in the space addressed the concept behind the rocking deck. He explained to the cast that the play's environment was intended to provide them with "true space." The distances across the large platforms meant the actors would have to use real volume to be heard; a large industrial fan (with a blade about eight feet across) would provide real wind, so they would have to react to that; and the moving deck would mean they would have to make an effort to stand upright. Thus, their acting task was to focus on reacting to the true rather than just the imagined stimuli. In the tempest sequence the entire theatre would be a ship and the audience would feel they were there, on the deck, within the storm. This sensation would be achieved by the combination of the verse and the scenic elements. Hall explained that the huge fan, the musical instruments, the people who rocked the boat, and so on, would all be in view of the audience because "I hate scenic elements that don't do something...I like it to be whatever it looks like it is and then use it however you need to" (September 18).

As the actors began to explore their new environs, Hall introduced them to other set-pieces that would be used in the production. There were two moving staircases at the center of the upstage platform. These could be revolved and rolled together or apart to provide several levels to vary the stage picture. The central platform contained several

traps for entrances from below: there was a central, raised opening that operated like a ship's hatch when opened (actors could enter from below) and as a bench or small platform when closed; there was a large trap for Caliban's cave, down left, and a trap with an elevator for Ariel, down right; and on both sides of the central hatch there were smaller traps for the entrance of the spirits. And there was an overhead track for the flying sequences of Ariel. One sensed that Hall's configuration would offer opportunities to discover the earth and air dualities of Shakespeare's play.

The process of rehearsal on this day and for the next four days was the same: the actors played the scenes in stop-and-go fashion as Hall moved them into positions about the space. The play was blocked in only four days of rehearsal. What was unique about this process was that the actors had all memorized their parts, so there was no need for the tedious hours of writing in movements in one's script and erasing them and writing in new ones. The stage manager, David Glynn, or his assistants were the only ones to keep a record of the moves. The director and actors were able to experiment freely with the possibilities of the environment. During this period other acting concerns (such as the meaning of a passage or the motivation for a line) were given secondary importance. The actors did not need to focus on them because of the intensive character and textual

work that preceded the blocking rehearsals. Many of those questions had already been addressed, and others would be handled once the basic moves were sketched in.

There were, at this point, still three weeks of rehearsal before the first preview performance. Hall stressed that the blocking should be considered flexible and nothing was "set in concrete." Indeed many, many changes were made during the ensuing weeks' work. Hall had not blocked the show beforehand, but used this time to move the actors through the space and judge the effectiveness of specific positions.

Nevertheless, it was apparent to this observer that many of the physical relationships between the characters had carried over from the experimentation in the rehearsal hall: the warm affection of the father-daughter relationship of Miranda and Prospero, the subtle collusion of Antonio and Sebastian, the rustic camaraderie of Stephano and Trinculo. For example, since Antonio and Sebastian no longer had a back wall to languish against as they hatched their murderous schemes, Hall had them stand or sit on the staircases upstage--as the other courtiers rested downstage. And thus the basic image and spatial relationships of the earlier rehearsals carried over to the actual stage picture. The point is that the time in the rehearsal hall was not lost or ill-used, even though no specific blocking had been determined. The tensions

between the characters had developed into gesture and movement during those rehearsals. Moreover, there was little indication of any slump or set-back in the actors work, which often happens when a major shift in the focus of rehearsal occurs.

While the actors adjusted to the new moves and the theatre environment, Hall also worked with them on the acting style. They experienced mild to acute frustration when directed to play speeches to the audience. Hall, however, insisted that the actors deal with the presence of the audience. He explained a trick of blocking one character behind another (on a higher level). This position, in the three-sided arena, provided a "close-up" of both characters' faces. It was hard for the actors to play without looking at one another, but it was quite natural to the audience because this physical arrangement is frequently used in film.

At times, Hall staged scenes with a natural logic for these positions. In Prospero's story to Miranda in Act I, Hall had Prospero sit on the hatch centerstage, with Miranda at his knee, also facing front; as he told her the story of their past, it seemed natural that Miranda was sharing in his visualization of the tale. At other times, Hall used the double close-up positions to create a multi-dimensional locale in which two characters seemed to inhabit different spaces, although they were close together

onstage. Thus, when Ferdinand first sees Miranda, he stands downstage, looking front and Miranda stands upstage with Prospero, looking at Ferdinand. As the prince exclaims, "Most sure, the goddess on whom these airs attend," his face registered seeing the girl as a light came up on her face. The effect was as though he had seen her in a mirror and it allowed all the audience to share in the delight of the immediate attraction between the pair because both reactions were in full view.

By the end of Week Three, Hall had roughly blocked the entire play and was ready to begin integrating the technical effects and to fine-tune the performances.

Weeks Four and Five: Production Values

The rehearsal schedule of The Tempest was typical of an Adrian Hall production in that there was no date set for a cue-to-cue technical rehearsal or a costume parade. Hall prefers to integrate elements slowly throughout the rehearsal period, so that the cast and crew can absorb them gradually. This saves the nightmare of final technical rehearsals. Of course, the extra week of rehearsal allotted to this production also minimized the technical pressures.

During Week Four Hall integrated several major elements, including the functional staircases (which could roll or be locked into place), the flying apparatus for Ariel, and a number of major properties: a huge wardrobe on

wheels (instead of a clothesline) for the garments Ariel presents to the clowns, and the cart for Prospero, a fanciful prop that developed through the week into a portable "cell" for the magician. For this prop, Lee placed a brass-bound trunk on a wooden cart; to the top of the trunk he strapped huge old books, chemist's vials, and a brass scale; he added a pole to the cart where Prospero hung his magic cape--a marvelous mantle of bark and feathers --and there were places there to secure Prospero's whip and Miranda's tattered silk umbrella.

Property designer Jenny Davis had also provided some "dummy" props (for use in rehearsal) for the logs Ferdinand is forced to carry for Prospero--several medium-size cardboard boxes. But Hall liked the look of them so much that he decided to use them in the production as well. At first, sitting upstage, they appeared to be cargo for the ship. Later, the dozens of boxes served as a visible symbol of Ferdinand's labor as he wheeled them in on a wheelbarrow and stacked them nose-high in the centerstage trap. As Miranda begs to be allowed to help her loved one, she causes the boxes to collapse into the hole. Hall staged this little trick simply to delight the audience and, indeed, it presented a joyful moment of adolescent angst. He asked Davis to keep the boxes neutral, not painted or labeled because he felt they went well with the unadorned staircases and big fan and the bare backdrop of the ADT theatre, with

its pipes and wires and metallic walls. The whole production had a skeletal, "with warts" aesthetic.

By the Fifth Week technicians had hung a huge square of plastic above the upstage platform to serve as a sail in the tempest and they installed an elevator in the down right corner of the movable deck to facilitate Ariel's sudden appearance as the harpy. Every day crews added more lights and integrated new special effects in lighting and sound.

Donna Kress provided costumes beginning in Week Four, and Hall encouraged the actors to use them thereafter, to get the sense of the apparel as the clothes of their characters, rather than costumes. The designs were very eclectic and very personal--roughly late nineteenth-century. (When Prospero changes back to his old clothes to return to the court, he changed into a frock coat and top hat.) The characters of Ariel, Caliban and Miranda presented the greatest design challenges. Since Dee Hennigan's Miranda had developed into a charming and vivacious child of nature, Kress dressed her in a white one-piece shift that seemed to have been sewn from Prospero's old nightshirt. She was barefoot and bare-legged. When Miranda adorned herself for Ferdinand, she placed flowers in her hair and put on a fringed shawl. The effect was fresh and enchanting.

Caliban wore a blue work-shirt, which stressed his servile position, and a furry vest with a pair of form-fitting taupe trousers. He donned a princely cape of

animal skin and, of course, his boots on the stools. In Act III, when Stephano gets Caliban drunk, the "monster" removed the stools, which visibly diminished his power and defined the stools as a device for Caliban's treading across the bogs rather than natural appendages.

Hall's first concern in costuming had been the appearance of Ariel. He wanted something far removed from the usual airy spirit image and closer to the energetic, vigorous character of Ariel that actor Martin Rayner had created. Kress's solution came out of discussions of what apparel would be possible on a tropical island. Beginning with an idea of a white suit and Panama hat, Kress evolved a kind of silky white jumpsuit for Ariel. Over this he wore his leather flying harness. Sometimes the actor wore white ankle-weights over his white shoes to provide control for his aerial gymnastics. Ariel also wore various disguises. For the sea nymph he plays in Act I he donned a vest of net with seashells and a dorsal fin of coral. During the tempest, he wore a long, curly wig which he then removed, establishing at the outset his knack for transformation. None of the actors used any special make-up, but Ariel had a very subtle forelock of feathers attached to his head, which enhanced the bird-like gestures of this spirit.

Weeks Four and Five: Problem Solving

Hall continued to refine the movements of the play as these technical elements were added. The stage action he created was devised to clarify the events in the scenes. For example, he wanted a way to realize visually that the nobles have been put under a spell by Ariel in Act V, scene one. So he had the actors, shrouded in cobwebs, parade by Prospero, who described each one; then they formed a tableau on the left aisle-stage. The mock cobwebs linked them together, justified their slow return to full awareness, and gave the actors an action to play as the rather complicated denouement ties up the multiple plot lines. In another scene, Hall had Prospero free Ferdinand from shackles (since the lines do not clearly indicate that his labors have ended). No properties were added simply to decorate the scene, however, only to illuminate the action of the story.

During these two weeks, Hall also refined the focus, tone and rhythm of each scene and the play as a whole. He overlapped the scenes and kept the action going, giving particular attention to the three spectacle scenes of the play: the opening tempest, the banquet where Ariel appears as a harpy, and the Act V ritual in which Prospero gives up magic and resolves the play's action.

Hall observed that the technical effects of the storm and the shouting of the lines in the first scene of

Shakespeare's play tended to make the scene difficult to understand. For the tempest itself, Hall utilized techniques that dated back to his productions of Billy Budd and Brother to Dragons. To give the audience the sensation of being on a ship, he combined the following elements: stage fog began to billow around the platforms and the huge fan was turned on, causing formidable wind and mists; suddenly, the stage started to move back and forth, causing a brief sense of vertigo; a great square of plastic became a sail, with the mariners struggling to tie it down; a huge scoop light, hung above the center platform, was swung back and forth throwing crazy shadows all over the ADT; a sound of great creaking beams was heard; and finally, the silhouette of Ariel, blowing a conch shell, cast a huge shadow upon the white sail.

It took a minute for the spectator to put together what was happening, but the realization created excitement and delight. As the mariners shouted their orders, the nobles struggled to get on deck and stay on their feet. At the cry of "we split" the creaking sound reached a crescendo, and little fountains of water spurted up between the floor boards of he deck. Men ran for their lives, and suddenly all the wind and sound stopped for Gonzalo's last line which came across crystal clear. In performance, this scene was extraordinarily exciting. While Hall did not succeed in making every line clear (there was a lot of noise

and a lot of action), what he did accomplish was making the characters of the noblemen distinct and therefore recognizable later on. Moreover, the event of the tempest was clearly established and theatrically communicated.

The harpy sequence was the trickiest in the play. Ariel's speech is complex and difficult to realize in action. The scene requires the appearance of spirits or "shapes," the mysterious arrival of a banquet, the disruption of the table by the harpy and so on. Hall used the seven mudmen, dressed in their loin cloths, to create the weird music and to operate a huge straw puppet to amaze the courtiers. These mudmen also carried in (and removed) the banquet table. Ariel appeared by coming up through a trap under the table, which had a break-away surface.

Hall wanted to make this sequence really frightening, a hard task in these days of graphic film and television. He did, however, offer great spectacle and real surprise. After trying about six different kinds of prop fruits for the "viands" of the banquet, Eugene Lee offered the suggestion of tennis balls. After more experimentation, they settled on those bright green tennis balls with "Spalding" printed on them. Little leaves were attached to the balls and about two hundred of them were piled up on a table designed to break away. The appearance of Ariel was more than a shock, it was great fun. As he bolted up and through the break-away table, the tennis balls scattered all

over the stage and into the pit and into the house. They did little to illuminate the text of Ariel's speech, but afforded a proper motivation for the nobles who have to exit as madmen, distraught by what they have seen. Apparently that was the main event in the scene for Hall.

This scene was a technical nightmare. Hall had to use recorded music because every available "spirit" and technician was involved in the scene to create the spectacle. (The other music was, of course, produced live.) Also, the elevator which carried Ariel up through the spring trap in the floor was not operating correctly right up to the first preview performance. Even when it operated correctly, it tended to get jammed with a stray tennis ball. Moreover, the dozens of tennis balls had to be removed quickly for the next scene. Apparently, though, Hall felt the solution for the "viands" was the best choice. He managed to clear the stage by having the mudmen re-enter as gatherers and put the "fruits" in burlap bags as Prospero began his next speech. It was a rather untidy solution but, as has been noted, Hall is not one for polishing up the edges. The advantages outweighed the disadvantages.

The third challenge was the final ritual scene and denouement. Hall worked long and hard to find a suitable finish for the play. For Prospero's marvelous incantation in Act V ("Ye elves of hills, brooks, standing lakes..."), Hall covered the central platform with stage

mists, and Prospero knelt down-center in the darkness, illuminated only by a hand-held spotlight carried by a mudman. The other spirits played the strange instruments and sang Richard Cumming's exotic music as they entered in masks, bearing fiery torches. This ritual scene had the desired effect in performance--it was beautiful and strange. In rehearsals Hall had used the image of a cobra to get his actors to imagine the scene, and the scene did, indeed, have that kind of fascination.

For the denouement of the play that follows this scene, Hall cut many of the lines that reiterate so much of the earlier plot (since the audience already knows all that information). His artful staging both speeded the play to its end and brought the mood back to one of celebration and harmony, with the reunion of the families, the unveiling of Miranda and Ferdinand and the freeing of Ariel.

Weeks Four and Five: Process

Throughout these weeks of technical work, the actors continued to sharpen their characterizations. Hall never stopped emphasizing the importance of the storytelling. He continued also to have the actors relate directly and personally to the audience. In between the scenes, the actors often dropped their characters and became actors getting into place for the next scene. The functional and energetic persona of the actor greatly facilitated the rapid

transformation of scene, as there was no need to be concerned about the character's motivation or attitude during such transitions. At the end of the play, each actor dropped character and resumed his or her own persona.

Regarding the presentational style, I should mention that there was a noticeable range in the acting style. Hall was much more stringent about the frontal delivery with Ferdinand and Miranda than he was with Stephano and Trinculo. His reasoning was the differences in their speeches. The verses of the lovers have their action within the text, whereas much of the action of the clowns is inherent in what they do physically. Thus, the speeches of the lovers needed a delivery which would allow the audience to hear the images of the text in the most direct way possible. But the clowns had to clarify action that was often complicated by the archaic, topical humor in the text--which their physical interaction was meant to achieve.

Also, as Hall further refined the production, he deliberately challenged the audience by putting in some blatant contradictions. For example, he had Miranda sit down before Prospero gives his line telling her to do so. He had Antonio deliver a line "And yet, methinks I see it in thy face," without looking at Sebastian. Hall explained that "I love making the audience deal with what they're hearing--say 'I'm going to stand up' and sit down. [You] have to challenge the audience" (September 30). These

little "snap-outs" served to keep the audience alert and listening to the text.

Hall's daily orations continued. He never missed an opportunity to initiate his ensemble into his convictions about the nature of theatre. On October 24, he talked with them about the myths of Shakespeare: that Shakespeare is noble, or formal, that Shakespeare is all in the rhythm, that the text is sacred. Instead, he called Shakespeare sensual, funny, alive. On October 26, his topic was the relationship with the audience. Hall told his cast that he was especially pleased with the intimacy of the audience in this production's configuration, that they should continue to explore that personal relationship with the spectators. On October 29, Hall's address was a defense of his emphasis on process over product; he ardently spoke of the artist's need to experiment, and the need for artists who take responsibility for making art happen.

As the final week of rehearsal neared, the fantastic images of Hall's production took shape. It is not necessary here to describe them all--a few examples will serve. One such image was the first appearance of Miranda. Her first speech is an elaborate description of the tempest (which Hall had just viscerally depicted in the opening scene). As the sail collapsed, the wind machine was turned off, and the noblemen fled for their lives, the scoop light was taken out and general lighting came up. It revealed a

beautiful girl in a damp shift, wearing great black galoshes, and huddled under a tattered umbrella. Dee Hennigan, as Miranda, stood beneath a deluge of rain that fell on her alone. The real water made her complex imagery of the tempest very tangible and the simplicity of the stage picture let you concentrate on the descriptive poetry.

Her enchanting image was contrasted with the threatening entrance of Caliban a scene later. The general illumination was removed as a large light bulb dropped from the light grid. Prospero, armed with a bullwhip, noisily threw open a big stage trap, releasing a great cloud of steam. Already the bright light and open pit evoked the sense of something from the bowels of the earth. Then the insolent head of Caliban emerged from the hole. As Prospero goaded him, he climbed up out of the hole, with the stools on his feet. Slowly he turned around, nearly eight feet in height, a magnificent and malevolent creature.

In another startling image, Ariel disguises himself as a sea nymph and lures Ferdinand to Prospero. Hall again covered the stage in fog (it was used in only three scenes). Ariel entered in his vest of seashells and coral, flying over the fog bank on the platform below him. Sounds of frogs and unknown creatures were heard and legs and arms and buttocks of the mudmen appeared through the fog as the spirits writhed on the floor to Ariel's song. The scene was dimly lit, except for Ariel, who was caught in a follow-spot

as he hovered over the murky fens. The image was bizarre and beautiful.

Week Six: Performance

Week Six began on October 6th, the second day of the long rehearsals that last ten out of twelve hours. The goal of these rehearsals was to refine all the technical elements and to run the show for continuity. On October 7th, the actors had an afternoon rehearsal and a final dress rehearsal for an invited audience. Then for the next four days, Hall held afternoon rehearsals and the cast performed for preview audiences in the evening.

Hall made only minor adjustments to the production during this final week. (Although he is known for making radical changes if he deems it necessary.) The show was fine-tuned in response to the audience reaction, which was extremely favorable. Following the preview performance on October 8th, there was a post-play discussion. This was part of the Humanities Program, "Dialogue," which the Dallas Theater Center conducts.

Two comments from this discussion are exemplary of the general response to the performances. The first comment was from a lady who had seen several productions of The Tempest; she said that she had never really been able to hear the production before, but in Hall's production she had no trouble following the text. Another commentator said

that she felt as though the play had been played just to her.

These responses reflect the two aspects Hall stressed the most in rehearsal--the telling of the story and the personal relationship with the audience. These are the touchstones of Hall's theatre, the ancient roots of the craft that he continually endeavors to discover. As he said during this same discussion period (October 8th), as a director "I am simply there to guide--not to tell the actor what and how to do it. It's awakening in them what the joy of this ancient craft is."

That joy, which Adrian Hall inspires, imbued the final scene of The Tempest, when Prospero finally releases Ariel from his servitude. This last moment was especially lovely, as Ariel removed his flying harness and the harness alone was flown aloft and away while the actor watched, resuming his own persona. The play came to a close with Prospero's speech (moved from Act IV, scene one):

> Our revels now are ended. These our actors,
> As I foretold you, were all spirits and
> Are melted into air, into thin air;
> And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,
> The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,
> The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
> Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
> And, like this insubstantial pageant faded.
> Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
> As dreams are made on, and our little life
> Is rounded with a sleep.

As Prospero completed the verse, he and the other characters became actors once again, and the lights faded to black.

AFTERWORD

This study of the theatre of Adrian Hall began in the spring of 1987--in the midst of Hall's very lively career. During the two intervening years, Hall reached a major crossroads in that career: he chose to leave his position as artistic director of the Trinity Repertory Company. His final production as artistic director of TRC will be Peter Barnes' play, Red Noses, which is scheduled for May 1989. Red Noses will be Hall's ninety-sixth production at Trinity and will conclude a quarter of a century of artistic leadership there.

Hall's departure from Trinity does not, in any way, signal a retirement from the stage. Now sixty-one, he plans to focus his efforts on the Dallas Theater Center and independent projects. Indeed, Hall's decision was prompted by his need to free himself of the enormous responsibilities of running two institutions in order to have more time to devote to his art. As he explained in a recent interview,

> I came at a time when you could join the revolution and get out there and say that we are going to change things; the American theater is going to have

> a place in our society; we will not go by the back door anymore; we will not sit in the back of the bus. And I truly have fought the good fight. Life is better for the artists in this country than it was twenty-five years ago, when we began. I would like now in the time that's left, in a very selfish way, to concentrate on myself as an artist.[1]

Adrian Hall has always been more involved in his immediate artistic ventures than in looking back over past accomplishments. Nevertheless, his departure from Trinity has elicited reflection about what he has achieved there. Hall believes his greatest legacy is having firmly established a place for the artist. In securing his own life in the theatre, Hall has also given a life in the theatre to dozens of other artists. He has maintained a large permanent ensemble of actors. Many of these actors have spent virtually all their careers at Trinity Rep, playing the greatest roles in dramatic literature and evolving from juveniles and ingenues to character actors within a close, supportive artistic community.

In a recent meeting with his new ensemble of actors at the Dallas Theater Center, Adrian Hall explained that he could not promise to make these actors rich or famous, but he could offer them a life in the theatre. In these times in America, when to be rich and famous seems the only legitimate goal, a life in the theatre may not sound like much. To the true artist, however, it is both fundamental and exceedingly rare. Hall has managed to create the fertile ground where the artist can not only bloom, but also

thrive year after year. No one in the American regional theatre has achieved this with as many artists for so long a time. Surely, Hall's legacy is of great significance in the history of the American theatre.

What Hall has done for the artist has come about through his vigilance and determination in shaping the theatrical institution. The artist has been the keystone of Adrian Hall's theatre, and he has constantly pushed back the tide of capitalistic thinking that persistently threatens the artist's place. The crux of the matter, Hall feels, is "whether an institution is artist-centered or it's not. Some of the most successful arts institutions in this country are run the way IBM is run. People are brought in and let go. The permanent part is the institution itself. What I would like to have happen in the American theater is for the artists to remain always at the center."[2] Will the artist remain at the center in Trinity Rep? Only time will tell whether Hall's philosophy is more lasting than the institution he leaves behind.

Adrian Hall's success in Providence is often measured by the tremendous growth in his subscriber base, which is near its peak of twenty thousand people. Much more significant, however, is how Hall has shaped the idea of theatre for those thousands of people. Getting them to buy a ticket is one matter; getting them to share in your vision of theatre is quite another. Hall's theatre is a theatre of

importance, a theatre which deals with the unanswerable questions that must, nevertheless, be asked about the human condition. The theatre of Adrian Hall has always striven to reach new heights and has always dared to risk failure. As the late actor, Richard Kavanaugh, observed: "It's not that I thought that it was all good. I thought some of it was terrible....But it was still monumental in its scope and in its grasp, in its trying."[3]

Trinity Repertory Company has made its mark on its artists and on its audience. Drawing on the impulses of Grotowski, Brecht, Artaud and Stanislavsky, Hall created a unique kind of theatre--the Trinity style. Yet it was an indigenous theatre which related to the people of the community of Providence. For every spectator who took umbrage with the Trinity style and left never to return, many more spectators came in to find out what all the excitement was about. Through the Project Discovery program, Hall was able to develop a home-grown audience that responded to the visceral, theatrical, irreverent stagings he devised. Jerry O'Brien, who was a member of the first Project Discovery audience, declares that "my introduction to serious theatre came from Adrian Hall and his company. And it put me on a track that I will have for the rest of my life. I will always love the theatre because of him."[4]

Hall has taken steps to make sure the Trinity style of theatre is not forgotten. He has established the Adrian

Hall Research Center on the second floor of the Lederer Theatre. When completed, the holdings of this facility will document the role of Trinity Rep in the history of the American theatre. Plans are under way to collect and organize the photographs, promotional materials, Project Discovery materials, newspaper items, scripts and promptbooks, and recorded media of all Trinity Repertory Company productions. These archives will then be made available to theatre scholars and practitioners.

Adrian Hall is still pursuing his life in the theatre. He is still searching for new challenges in his craft and other media. In 1983, Hall began serving as artistic director at the Dallas Theater Center. Hall was attracted to Dallas because it meant he could see more of his family; but he was also attracted by the challenge the community of Dallas presented. Here was a community where the idea of indigenous theatre was very undervalued. Broadway road shows were still considered the epitome of taste and fashion. Stardom was the natural goal of all theatre performers. In Dallas, Hall perceived an opportunity for making an impact through his art. To a certain extent, by 1983, Hall had already accomplished his goals in Providence; but Dallas offered him the chance to prove his convictions once again.

The six years at the helm of the DTC have been encouraging for Hall. He has managed to establish a

permanent acting ensemble, a humanities program and Project Discovery. He has also diversified the Center's theatre offerings by the addition of the remarkable Arts District Theater and the tiny In the Basement space. And he has begun to change the audience--the young, upwardly mobile Dallasites are finding their way to the Center. And they are particularly attracted to the very kind of works that prompted massive walk-outs of the old guard audience only a few seasons back. Hall has achieved this by making the work only minimally accessible. That is, "experimental" works (a word Hall dislikes) are given a limited run in the limited space of the Basement theatre. Tickets are hard to get, and the work is often controversial, so it naturally attracts the young and curious. But Hall's plan for the Basement is to open the eyes of his audience, to get them accustomed to the new. Hall believes that the Basement is an essential factor in nurturing the artist as well as the audience at the DTC. By providing a place for the artist to experiment, without the onus of having to succeed at the box office, Hall intends to have a venue for riskier ventures that can dare once again to test the boundaries of art.

Hall's plans for In the Basement show that he does not feel he has found definitive answers in his artistic sojourn; rather, he has discovered that one must constantly question the nature of art. It is this quest that gives the artist his vitality. And so Adrian Hall is trying to push

himself beyond the limits of the stage, into the areas of film and television. He would like to "jump into filmmaking, head over heels, and just do it and let nobody even mention my name for several years until I just do one after the other, after the other."[5] He hopes to find out whether he can achieve the confrontation of the actor and the audience through the medium of film. Hall is scheduled to begin filming his own adaptation of Edith Wharton's Ethan Frome within the year for independent producer Michael Fitzgerald. How successful he will be in media remains to be seen, but the favorable reception of his four television films shows promise.

Hall will, however, continue his exploration in theatre. He has frequently been asked to direct in Russia and other places around the world, but his dual schedules have not permitted it. In the last year Hall has been approached about directing A Christmas Carol and All the King's Men in New York. His high status in the world of American regional theatre is sure to mean requests to direct productions around the country. He also hopes to return to Trinity Rep as a guest director from time to time. In other words, Hall will not be resting on his laurels.

Adrian Hall is frequently called a revolutionist and, indeed, he is one of the most significant figures of the 1960s revolution in decentralized theatre. Hall is still calling for revolution. He has no illusion that the

war has been won. He is, if anything, more suspicious and concerned than ever about the artist's place in the non-profit institution and in American society. As he redirects his own life to focus on artistic expression, he passes the gauntlet to the next generation of artists. He urges them to participate on the boards, to take their stand and be vigilant to protect their place at the center of the institution. Hall explains the situation like this:

> I just think that we've got to have a place. You know, maybe I'll never be able to deal with myself as an artist. I don't know, that remains to be seen. But you see, I am so motivated by what I see as the injustice done to the artist or the way the artist is manipulated in the cause of capitalism, that I just wish that what I could do is to be the kind of father to making us aware. And then other people can take that up and finish that and change that.
>
> And it has to be done every time. I mean you can lose your place in the world just by doing nothing, as we find in The Cherry Orchard...and so it seems to me that there's a real revolutionist inside me, but it's really born out of a deep belief that we have a place.[6]

The theatre of Adrian Hall is more than the sum of its parts. While he was developing an institution, nurturing an acting ensemble, and while he explored his own definition of theatre, Hall also managed to change the way hundreds of people perceive the theatre event. So perhaps Hall's greatest legacy is how he has prepared the way for those who follow. In 1986, Peter Sellars--one of the most prominent members of the new generation of American directors--praised Hall, saying he was a kind of father

figure for this younger generation: "The only reason that any of us are around today is because of a few people like Adrian.... Adrian made it all possible. After all these years, he's still got more passion than any of us."[7]

NOTES

Introduction

1. William A. Custer is quoted by William K. Gale in "Hall May Get Job in Dallas," Providence Journal-Bulletin, 5 April 1983.

2. Marion Simon, letter to the author, 14 March 1989.

3. The Trinity Square Repertory Company has also operated under the names Trinity Square Playhouse and Trinity Square Repertory Company. To avoid confusion, I have used the name Trinity Repertory Company (at times abbreviated to Trinity Rep or TRC) throughout this manuscript.

4. Arthur Bartow, "Double Jeopardy," American Theatre, February 1986, 12.

5. Adrian Hall, "Program Notes," Dallas Theater Center Playbill for A Christmas Carol, 1984, n.p.

6. William A. Henry, III, "A Man for Parallel Seasons," Time, 17 March 1986, 86.

Chapter I: A LIFE IN THE THEATRE

1. East Texas State Teachers College, located in Commerce, Tex., is now East Texas State University. Hall graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Speech on 22 August 1948.

2. Ann Hamilton, interview with the author, Providence, R.I., 30 March 1988.

3. Hall quoted by Rick Abrams and Jeremy Gerard in "High Profile: Adrian Hall," Dallas Morning News, 10 April 1983, sec. 3.

4. Adrian Hall, interview with the author, Providence, R.I., 15 April 1988.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

7. Jerry Talmage, "Theatre: Orpheus Descending," Village Voice, 14 October 1959.

8. Adrian Hall and Richard Cumming, "Premises for a Contemporary Theatre," ed., Burnet M. Hobgood, unpublished transcript of the Directors Colloquium, Univ. of Ill. at Urbana-Champaigne, 1975, 39.

9. Hamilton, interview with the author, 30 March 1988.

10. Adrian Hall, interview with the author, 15 April 1988.

11. There are over 250 non-profit theatres throughout America and they employ the majority of theatre artists in this country, according to Todd London, The Artistic Home, Discussions with Artistic Directors of America's Institutional Theatres (N.Y.: Theatre Communications Group, 1988), 1.

12. Barbara Orson, interview with the author, Providence, R.I., 14 April 1988.

13. Donald Schoenbaum's wife, Gerre Schoenbaum, served as costumer for the theatre. Hall had met the Schoenbaums a year earlier when he staged The Playboy of the Western World for their theatre, The Repertory Players of Omaha, Neb.

14. Adrian Hall, interview with the author, 15 April 1988.

15. Hall quoted by Don Wilmeth in "The Trinity Square Repertory Company," Players Magazine, August-September 1969, 234.

Chapter II: CONFRONTATION

1. James T. Kaull, "Amateur Actors at First...," Providence Journal-Bulletin, 9 June 1967.

2. Ed Hall, interview with the author, Providence, R.I., 11 September 1988.

3. Ibid.

4. The Performing Arts: Problems and Prospects, Rockefeller Panel Report on the Future of Theatre, Dance, Music in America (N.Y.: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1965), 49.

5. The other project sites were New Orleans, where Stuart Vaughn established a company that lasted for three years until the federal funds ceased, and Los Angeles, where André Gregory ran the program for one year.

6. Kevin Kelly in "Providence No Longer Just a Train Stop," Boston Globe, 19 March 1967.

7. Results of that study were published in Final Report, Educational Laboratory Theatre Project, 1966-70, St. Louis, Mo.: Central Midwestern Regional Education Laboratory (CEMREL), 1970.

8. Adrian Hall, address at the Columbia Directors' Forum, Columbia University, New York, N.Y., 10 June 1987.

9. Jerry O'Brien, interview with the author, Providence, R.I., 14 April 1988.

10. Ed Hall, interview with the author, 11 September 1988.

11. Ibid.

12. Adrian Hall, interview with the author, 15 April 1988.

13. Adrian Hall, director's notes, program for Saint Joan, Trinity Rep, 1966-67 season, n.p.

14. Hall quoted by Beth Taylor in "Adrian Hall, Act II," Providence Journal-Bulletin, 27 May 1979.

15. Robert Soule, interview with the author, Providence, R.I., 10 September 1988.

16. Ibid.

17. Adrian Hall, Columbia Directors Forum, 10 June 1987.

18. Hall quoted by Kevin Kelly in "Hall Observes Lag in Theater," Boston Globe, 23 September 1968.

19. Adrian Hall, interview with the author, Providence, R.I., 11 September 1988.

20. Hall quoted by Samuel Hirsch in "Some Crazy Things Happened to Me," Boston Herald Traveler, 15 February 1970.

21. Arnold Aronson, American Set Design (N.Y.: Theatre Communications Group, 1985), 72.

22. John Lahr, Astonish Me, Adventures in Contemporary Theater (N.Y.: Viking Press, 1973), 52. Lahr's comments refer to Andre' Gregory's production of Alice in Wonderland.

23. Hall quoted by Fred Bouchard in "Adrian Hall on Theatre in Providence," The Boston Phoenix, 5 September 1972, Boston After Dark section.

24. Roger Morgan, interview with the author, New York, N.Y., 7 October 1988.

25. Hall quoted by William K. Gale in "Feisty Hall Looks to Next Season," Providence Journal-Bulletin, 11 June 1985, sec. 4.

26. Peter Brook, The Empty Space (N.Y.: Antheneum, 1987), 27.

27. James Roose-Evans, Experimental Theatre from Stanislavsky to Brook (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984), 79.

28. Adrian Hall, address at seminar, "Producers on Producing," Brooklyn College of the City Univ. of N.Y., 1 May 1973, unpublished transcript, 98.

29. The first production of the season was a rather straightforward O'Casey drama, Red Roses for Me, directed by Hall and designed by Robert Soule for the RISD space. Brother to Dragons was the second offering of the season.

30. Clive Barnes, "Warren Play Is Vividly Staged in Providence," New York Times, 8 December 1968, sec. 1. Henry Hewes, "The Theater, Resident Report," Saturday Review, 28 December 1968, 26.

31. Lee is quoted by Arnold Aronson in "Contemporary American Designers: Eugene Lee," Theatre Design and Technology, 18 (Summer 1982): 4.

32. James Schevill, interview with the author, Providence, R.I., 8 April 1988.

33. O'Brien, interview with the author, 14 April 1988.

34. Peter Gerety, interview with the author, Providence, R.I., 14 April 1988.

35. Robert Penn Warren, "Literature and Crisis," PTA Magazine, January 1971, 36.

36. Hall quoted by Diana Cobbold in "Adrian Hall of Trinity Square," Sippican Sentinel, 5 June 1969.

37. Hall quoted by Beth Taylor in "Adrian Hall, Act III," Providence Journal-Bulletin, 3 June 1979.

Chapter III: PROCESS VERSUS PRODUCT

1. Hall quoted by Wilmeth in Players Magazine, August-September 1969, 234.

2. Hall quoted by Kevin Kelly in "Horse Has a Hallmark," Boston Globe, 21 January 1982.

3. Hall quoted by Joan Lautman in "Adrian Hall on Dallas and Jonestown," (New York) Stages, May 1984.

4. Adrian Hall, interview with the author, 11 September 1988.

5. Gerety, interview with the author, 14 April 1988.

6. Hall quoted by Lautman in Stages, May 1984, 18.

7. Adrian Hall, Columbia Directors Forum, 10 June 1987.

8. Trinity's subscriptions dropped in 1987 and 1988, possibly in response to increased ticket prices--which have risen considerably (21 percent in 1988)--or possibly in response to Hall's departure. However, individual ticket sales have more than compensated for the reduced subscription sales.

9. Adrian Hall, director's notes, program for Child's Play, Trinity Rep, 1971-72 season, n.p.

10. Adrian Hall, letter to the Ford Foundation, Trinity Rep files, 1971, 3-4.

11. O'Brien, interview with the author, 12 April 1988.

12. Carol L. Newman, "Trinity Square Adapts Billy Budd: 'Please Ignore the Director's Notes,' (Providence) Pembroke Record, 25 March 1969.

13. Adrian Hall, director's notes, program for Saint Joan, Trinity Rep, 1966-67 season, n.p.

14. Hall quoted by Beth Taylor in "Adrian Hall, Act I," Providence Journal-Bulletin, 20 May 1979.

15. Joseph Wesley Zeigler, Regional Theatre, The Revolutionary Stage (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minn. Press, 1973; reprint ed., N.Y.: Da Capo Press, 1977), 171.

16. Ibid.

17. Todd London, The Artistic Home, Discussion with Artistic Directors of America's Institutional Theatres (N.Y.: Theatre Communications Group, 1988), 5.

18. Bartow, "Double Jeopardy," 17.

19. Adrian Hall, Columbia Directors Forum, 10 June 1987.

20. Adrian Hall, "Questions About Resident Theatre," photocopy of unpublished transcript of a 1973 panel with Hall, Zelda Fichlander and Peter Zeisler, Trinity Rep files, 120.

21. "A Challenge: Rhode Island Are You Listening?" Trinity Repertory fundraising brochure, n.d., n.p.

22. Gerety, interview with the author, 14 April 1988.

23. For a more complete list of ousted artistic directors, up to 1981, see Robert Brustein, "The Strategies of Adrian Hall," New Republic, 25 April 1981, 22.

24. For more information about the attempt to fire Adrian Hall, the following sources are recommended: Carolyn Clay, "Bring Me the Head of Adrian Hall," Boston Phoenix, 15 June 1976; Kevin Kelly, "Decision Day at Trinity Square," Boston Globe, 22 July 1976; Kevin Kelly, "For the Trinity, A Victory of Sorts," Boston Globe, 19 September 1976; Ron Winslow, "Trinity Square Board Votes to Evict Hall, Troupe," Providence Journal-Bulletin, 21 May 1976; and Ron Winslow, "Renewed in Spirit, Trinity Reopens," Providence Journal-Bulletin, 21 November 1976.

25. Donald Schoenbaum quoted by Beth Taylor in "Adrian Hall, Act III," Providence Journal-Bulletin, 3 June 1979.

Chapter IV: PAST AND FUTURE

1. Don Shewey, "A Boot in Two Camps," American Theatre, October 1986, 14.

2. William A. Henry, III, "Parallel Seasons," 86.

3. Adrian Hall, "The New American Drama," program for The Old Glory, Trinity Rep, 1969-70 season, n.p.

4. Adrian Hall, letter to Ford Foundation, 1971, 1-2.

5. Hall quoted by Kevin Kelly in "Regional Theater's Brilliant Maverick," Boston Globe, 13 July 1983, Sunday Magazine section.

6. Hall quoted by Bartow, "Double Jeopardy," 15.

7. Adrian Hall, interview with the author, 15 April 1988.

8. Eugene Lee, interview with the author, Providence, R.I., 6 April 1988.

9. Woodruff is quoted by Bill Gale in "Feisty Hall Looks to Next Season," Providence Journal-Bulletin, 11 June 1985, sec. 4.

10. "Towards Expanding Horizons and Exploring Our Art," the proceedings of the Theatre Communications Group (TCG) National Conference, Princeton Univ., Directors Panel, 18-24 June 1980.

11. Edwin Wilson, "A Director in Demand," Wall Street Journal, 5 December 1986; Kevin Kelly, "Regional Theater's Brilliant Maverick," Boston Globe, 13 July 1986, Sunday Magazine section.

Chapter V: THE DIRECTOR AND THE TEXT

1. Diana Cobbold, "Adrian Hall: Coherent Visionary," Sippican Sentinel, 6 May 1971.

2. Robert Brustein, "The Strategies of Adrian Hall," New Republic, 25 April 1981, 24.

3. Elia Kazan quoted by David Richard Jones in Great Directors at Work, Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of Calif. Press, 1986, 171.

4. Hall and Cumming, "Premises for a Contemporary Theatre," 53.

5. Adrian Hall and Richard Cumming, Life Among the Lowly, 1977, unpublished script in the Trinity Rep files, cover page.

6. Adrian Hall and Richard Cumming, Feasting with Panthers, 1974, unpublished script in the Trinity Repertory Company files, iii.

7. Julius Novick, "Trinity Square Repertory Adapts Brightly to Home Screen," New York Times, 16 February 1975, sec. 4.

8. James Schevill, "Edith Wharton and 'The House of Mirth,'" East Side/West Side, 23 November 1979.

9. Robert Penn Warren, All the King's Men, adapted for the stage by Adrian Hall, 1987, script in Trinity Rep files, 2.

10. Hall quoted by Susan Edwards in "Hall Drawn to People on the Edge," (New London, Conn.) Day, 20 March 1987.

11. Maciej Karpinski, "The Memory of Theater," Sightlines, February 1987, 8. N.b. This publication is a newsletter published by the Dallas Theater Center for its patrons.

12. Robert Penn Warren, forward to Brother to Dragons, New York: Random House, 1953; reprint ed., 1979, xiii.

13. Adrian Hall, director's notes, program for Inherit the Wind, Trinity Rep, 1980-81 season, 6.

14. Hall quoted by Arthur Bartow in The Director's Voice (N.Y.: Theatre Communications Group, 1988), 143-44.

15. Richard Jenkins, interview with the author, Providence, R.I., 16 April 1988.

16. Adrian Hall, "Television and the Stage," Promise and Performance: The Arts, ACT's Guide to TV Programming for Children, ed. Maureen Harmonay, vol. 2 (Cambridge, Mass.: Ballinger Publishing Co., 1979), 51.

17. Adrian Hall, interview with the author, Providence, R.I., 11 September 1988.

18. Adrian Hall, director's notes for Julius Caesar, 1967, Project Discovery materials, Trinity Rep files, n.p.

19. Ibid.

20. Roger Morgan, interview with the author, 7 October 1988.

21. Ibid.

22. Brown University-Trinity Dramaturgy Project: Nelson Ritschel, Ann Lopes, Barbara Bejoian, James Schevill, The Trinity Process, ed. James Schevill, 1983, photocopy, property of the editor, 2-3.

23. Arthur Bartow, "Marshall Mason," The Director's Voice (N.Y.: Theatre Communications Group, 1988), 199-203.

24. Barbara Orson, interview with the author, Providence, R.I., 11 September 1988.

25. Hall and Cumming, "Premises for a Contemporary Theatre," 20.

26. Jenkins, interview with the author, 16 April 1988.

27. Richard Kneeland, telephone interview with the author, 16 September 1988.

28. Mary Francina Golden, interview with the author, New York, N.Y., 13 October 1988.

29. Hall quoted by Carolyn Block in "Adrian Hall," Theatre 15 (Spring 1984): 19.

30. Richard Kavanaugh, interview with the author, Providence, R.I., 6 April 1988.

31. Morgan, interview with the author, 7 October 1988.

32. Jenkins, interview with the author, 16 April 1988.

33. Gerety, interview with the author, 14 April 1988.

34. Adrian Hall, interview with the author, 11 September 1988.

35. Orson, interview with the author, 14 April 1988.

36. Jenkins, interview with the author, 16 April 1988.

37. James Schevill, interview with the author, 8 April 1988.

38. Barbara Meek, interview with the author, Providence, R.I., 18 April 1988.

39. Adrian Hall, interview with the author, 15 April 1988.

40. Hall quoted by Michael Janusonis in "Birth of Trinity Play Follows a Five-Week Labor of Love." Providence Sunday Journal, 16 October 1977.

41. Adrian Hall, Columbia Directors Forum, 10 June 1987.

42. Hall and Cumming, "Premises for a Contemporary Theatre," 4.

43. Adrian Hall, Columbia Directors Forum, 10 June 1987.

44. Kneeland, interview with the author, 16 September 1988.

45. Ed Hall, interview with the author, Providence, R.I., 11 September 1988.

46. Ken Bryant, interview with the author, Dallas, Tex., 10 September 1987.

Chapter VI: THE DIRECTOR AND THE THEATRICAL SPACE

1. Hall quoted by James Schevill in Breakout! In Search of New Theatrical Environments (Chicago: Swallow Press, 1973), 364.

2. Hall quoted by Don Wilmeth in "The Trinity Square Repertory Company," 236.

3. Hall quoted by Robert Freeman in "Repertory Distinguished from Commercial Theatres," Federal Design Matters (newsletter of the National Endowment for the Arts Design Arts Program), Spring 1980, n.p.

4. Eugene Lee, interview with the author, 6 April 1988.

5. Hall quoted by Kevin Kelly in "Regional Theatre's Brilliant Maverick," 36.

6. Hall quoted by Carolyn Block in "Adrian Hall," Theatre, 18.

7. Hall quoted by Dan Hulbert in "Adrian Hall Sees Theater Center on Eve of a Bracing Future," Dallas Times Herald, 15 January 1984, 1.

8. David Dillon, "A Blue-Collar Building for Arts District," Dallas Morning News, 12 February 1984, sec. 3.

9. Adrian Hall, rehearsal notes, The Tempest, Dallas Theater Center, 29 September 1987.

10. Laurence Shyer, "The Theater of Eugene Lee," Theater 14 (Winter 1982): 78.

11. Ibid, 57.

12. Arnold Aronson, The History and Theory of Environmental Scenography (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1981), 1-2.

13. Shyer, "Theater of Eugene Lee," 75.

14. The source for all song lyrics from Cathedral of Ice is the score of composer Richard Cumming; used with his permission.

15. James Schevill quoted by Bobby Clark in "Nazi 'Nightmare' Led Him into Writing," East Side, 9 October 1975.

16. James Schevill, Cathedral of Ice, ed. Peter Kaplan (Woods Hole, Mass.: Pourboire Press, 1975). N.b. The best written record of Cathedral of Ice, as it was actually performed, is the final report by James Schevill, "Cathedral of Ice, A Report to the Rhode Island Committee for the Humanities," 1975 typescript, property of its author.

17. Richard Cumming, interview with the author, Providence, R.I., 9 April 1988.

18. Hall quoted by Oren Jacoby in "Silent Partner," Sightlines, November-December 1986, 17.

19. Cumming interview with the author, 9 April 1988.

20. Eugene Lee, interview with the author, 6 April 1988.

21. Richard Kavanaugh, interview with the author, 6 April 1988.

22. Barbara Meek, interview with the author, 18 April 1988.

23. Peter Gerety, interview with the author, 14 April 1988.

24. Richard Cumming, "Celebrating the Theatre Experience, A Presentation by Trinity Square Repertory Company," promotional brochure for Trinity Rep, n.d., 16.

25. Samuel Hirsch, "Nightmare Comes Alive in 'Macbeth," Boston Herald Traveler, 24 January 1969.

26. Gerety, interview with the author, 14 April 1988.

27. Hall quoted by Giles M. Fowler in "'Opening Up' Ibsen Fantasy," Kansas City Star, 28 July 1974, sec. 7.

28. Shyer, "Theater of Eugene Lee," 76.

29. Gerety, interview with the author, 14 April 1988.

30. Eugene Lee, "A Note on the Designs for the New Trinity Square Repertory Company," in Breakout! In Search of New Theatrical Environments by James Schevill, (Chicago: Swallow Press, 1973), 410.

31. Hall quoted by Arnold Aronson in American Set Design (Clifton, N.J.: James T. White & Co., 1976), 71.

32. Robert Soule, interview with the author, 10 September 1988.

33. Lee, interview with the author, 6 April 1988.

34. Barbara Orson, interview with the author, 14 April 1988.

35. Roger Morgan, interview with the author, 7 October 1988.

36. Gerety, interview with the author, 14 April 1988.

37. Hall and Cumming, "Premises for a Contemporary Theatre," 29.

38. Adrian Hall, interview with the author, 9 October 1987.

39. Adrian Hall, program for Galileo, Dallas Theater Center, 1983-84, 52.

40. Letter from an anonymous theatregoer, reprinted in "Shakespeare at Trinity," a promotional brochure of the Trinity Repertory Company, n.d. (@ 1983), n.p.

Chapter VII: THE DIRECTOR AND THE ACTOR

1. Hall and Cumming, "Premises for a Contemporary Theatre," 18.

2. Peter Brook, The Shifting Point (N.Y.: Harper & Row, 1987), 233.

3. Timothy J. Wiles, The Theater Event, Modern Theories of Performance (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1980), 26.

4. Cumming, interview with the author, 9 April 1988.

5. Adrian Hall, program for The Country Girl, Trinity Rep, 1985-86, 20.

6. Hall quoted by Susan Edwards in "Hall the King's Man," Boston Phoenix, 17 March 1987.

7. Adrian Hall, "Dragons Log," program for Brother to Dragons, Trinity Rep, 1968-69, n.p.

8. Kavanaugh, interview with the author, 6 April 1988.

9. Orson, interview with the author, 14 April 1988.

10. Ibid.

11. James Schevill, Breakout! In Search of New Theatrical Environments (Chicago: Swallow Press, 1973), 369.

12. Kneeland, interview with the author, 16 September 1988.

13. Hall and Cumming, "Premises for a Contemporary Theatre," 56.

14. Robert Lewis quoted by Charles Marowitz in Prospero's Staff (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana Univ. Press, 1986), 83-84.

15. Kavanaugh, interview with the author, 6 April 1988.

16. Peter Brook, The Empty Space, 128-129.

17. Ed Hall, interview with the author, 11 September 1988.

18. Orson, interview with the author, 14 April 1988.

19. Dee Hennigan, interview with the author, Dallas, Tex., 30 September 1987.

20. Randy Moore, interview with the author, Dallas, Tex., 19 September 1987.

21. Ken Bryant, interview with the author, Dallas, Tex. 10 September 1987.

22. Ed Hall, interview with the author, 11 September 1988.

23. For this role, Hall cast outside the company because the Trinity actress who would have played the role was not available.

24. All references to lines in this play are from Mensch Meier by Franz Xaver Kroetz, trans. Roger Downey, vol. 8, Plays in Progress (N.Y.: Theatre Communications Group, 1983).

25. Brook, The Shifting Point, 7-8.

26. Kavanaugh, interview with the author, 6 April 1988.

27. Adrian Hall, rehearsal notes, Mensch Meier, Trinity Rep, 9 April 1988.

28. Golden, interview with the author, 13 October 1988.

29. These remarks were made by Adrian Hall to his cast for All the King's Men at the Dallas Theater Center, but they are typical of the speech Hall makes at the first rehearsal. This quotation was recorded by Oren Jacoby in "Silent Partner," Sightlines, November-December 1986, 17.

30. Orson, interview with the author, 14 April 1988.

31. Kavanaugh, interview with the author, 6 April 1988.

32. Hall and Cumming, "Premises for a Contemporary Theatre," 56-57.

33. Ibid.

34. Golden, interview with the author, 13 October 1988.

35. Adrian Hall, rehearsal notes, Mensch Meier, Trinity Rep, 7 April 1988.

36. Golden, interview with the author, 13 October 1988.

37. O'Brien, interview with the author, 14 April 1988.

38. Timothy Crowe, interview with the author, Providence, R.I., 13 April 1988.

39. Hall quoted by Richard Cumming in Project Discovery materials for The Threepenny Opera, 1970-71, 5.

40. Ibid.

41. Hall quoted by Cora J. Weller in "Conversation with Adrian Hall," Anyart Journal 2 (1976): 12.

42. Adrian Hall, interview with the author, 9 October 1987.

43. Hall quoted by Dolores Courtemanche, "The Guru of Regional Theater," Telegram (Bridgeport, Conn.), 20 September 1981.

44. The author is indebted to Marion Simon, Adrian Hall's Assistant at Trinity Rep, for these examples of Hall's wit.

45. Golden, interview with the author, 13 October 1988.

46. Ibid.

47. Orson, interview with the author, 14 April 1988.

Chapter VIII: THE DIRECTOR AND THE PRODUCTION VALUES

1. Shyer, "Theater of Eugene Lee," 61.

2. Brook, Empty Space, 75.

3. Hall and Cumming, "Premises for a Contemporary Theatre," 6.

4. Jenkins, interview with the author, 16 April 1988.

5. Hall quoted by Shyer in "Theater of Eugene Lee," 70.

6. Hall and Cumming, "Premises for a Contemporary Theatre," 25.

7. Hall quoted by Beth Taylor in "Adrian Hall, Act III," Providence Journal Bulletin, 3 June 1979.

8. Cumming, interview with the author, Dallas, Tex., 29 September 1987.

9. Adrian Hall, Columbia Directors Forum, 10 June 1987.

10. Bill Lane, interview with the author, Providence, R.I., 7 April 1988.

11. Cumming, interview with the author, 29 September 1987.

12. Roger Morgan, interview with the author, 7 October 1988.

13. Ibid.

14. Adrian Hall, "Dragons Log," n.p.

15. Ibid.

16. Gerety, interview with the author, 14 April 1988.

17. Adrian Hall, "Adrian Hall Talks on Journey, on Theatre, Etc.," The A.R.T. News, 2 (January 1982): 5.

18. Morgan, interview with the author, 7 October 1988.

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid.

21. Roger Nall, interview with the author, Dallas, Tex., 9 October 1987.

22. Ibid.

23. Cumming, interview with the author, 9 April 1988.

24. Cumming, interview with the author, 29 September 1987.

25. Hall and Cumming, "Premises for a Contemporary Theatre," 47.

26. Shyer, "Theater of Eugene Lee," 64.

27. Hall and Cumming, "Premises for a Contemporary Theatre," 50.

28. Lane, interview with the author, 7 April 1988.

29. Cumming, interview with the author, 9 April 1988.

30. Lane, interview with the author, 7 April 1988.

31. Hideyuki Kaneko, quoted by Damon Darlin in "Japanese Ads Take Earthiness to Levels Out of This World," Wall Street Journal, 30 August 1988, 11.

32. Morgan, interview with the author, 7 October 1988.

33. Robert Penn Warren, All the King's Men, adaptation for the stage by Adrian Hall, 1986, Act I, scene 1, p. 76.

34. Schevill, interview with the author, 8 April 8.

35. Adrian Hall, rehearsal notes, The Tempest, Dallas Theater Center, 3 September 1987.

36. Samuel Hirsch, "Nightmare Comes Alive in Macbeth," Boston Herald Traveler, 24 January 1969.

37. Cumming, interview with the author, 9 April 1988.

38. Adrian Hall, notes on Enemy of the People, Project Discovery materials, Trinity Rep files, 1967-68, n.p.

39. Barbara Meek, interview with the author, 18 April 1988.

40. Jenkins, interview with the author, 16 April 1988.

41. Gerety, interview with the author, 14 April 1988.

42. Adrian Hall, Columbia Directors Forum, 10 June 1987.

43. Morgan, interview with the author, 7 October 1988.

44. Bryant, interview with the author, 10 September 1987.

45. Hall quoted by Arthur Bartow in The Director's Voice, N.Y.: Theatre Communications Group, 1988, 143.

46. Lee, interview with the author, 6 April 1988.

47. Adrian Hall, Columbia Directors Forum, 10 June 1987.

Chapter IX: THE TEMPEST: A CASE STUDY

1. The Trinity Repertory Company production of The Tempest was also well-documented. Professor James Schevill supervised the Brown University-Trinity Dramaturgy project with students from Brown University (Nelson Ritschel, Ann Lopes, Barbara Bejoian). The result of this project was an extensive record of the rehearsal process entitled, The Trinity Process.

2. The specific reasons why the students withdrew from the production were never made public. Apparently, the students had different expectations of the internship than Hall did. Two days after their withdrawal, they changed their minds and wanted to come back. Hall, however, had already hired their replacements.

AFTERWORD

1. Hall is quoted by Carolyn Clay in "Up the Hall and Out the Door, What Direction for Trinity Rep?" NewPaper (Providence, R.I.), 8 September 1988.

2. Ibid.

3. Kavanaugh, interview with the author, 6 April 1988.

4. O'Brien, interview with the author, 14 April 1988.

5. Adrian Hall, interview with the author, 9 October 1987.

6. Adrian Hall, interview with the author, 9 November 1988.

7. Sellars is quoted by Dan Hulbert in "Survey Hails Hall as Father-Figure of Regional Theatre." Dallas Times Herald, 12 January 1986.

Appendix

PRODUCTION HISTORY

Information Included. This production history includes the names, playwrights, performance dates, theatre locations, and designers of all professional productions directed by Adrian Hall. All available information has been listed, with the following exceptions: 1) For summer stock productions, dates have been omitted and 2) no information has been found on Hall's summer theatre productions in Galveston, Texas with the Holiday Circle Players in 1950 and with the Summer Circle Theatre in 1951 and 1954.

This listing does not include productions at Trinity Repertory Company or Dallas Theater Center directed by staff or guest directors other than Adrian Hall.

Dates of Performance. The opening date listed here is the date of the first public performance, although the theatre may have considered this a preview and have listed a later date for press or official opening. For productions that were toured, information is subsumed under the original production unless there were significant changes in artistic staff in which case the later production is listed separately.

Names of Theatres. As in the body of the text, productions at the Trinity Repertory Company have been listed under that name, although the theatre was at times called the Trinity Square Playhouse or Trinity Square Repertory Company. The particular theatre space has been indicated as the Playhouse (the original Trinity theatre at Broad and Bridgham Streets), RISD (Rhode Island School of Design) Auditorium, and Lederer Theatre (upstairs or downstairs). Productions at the Dallas Theater Center have similarly been identified as either the Frank Lloyd Wright Theater (formerly named the Kalita Humphreys Theater) or the Arts District Theater; Hall has not directed any productions at the In the Basement theatre space.

1951-53

Seventh Army Repertory Company
U.S. Army Special Services, Germany
See How They Run by Philip King
Darkness at Noon by Sidney Kingsley
The Boor by Anton Chekhov
Hello Out There by William Saroyan
The Long Voyage Home by Eugene O'Neill
The Casbah - original musical, music by Peter Fuchs; author unknown

1954-55

The Playhouse
Houston, Texas
Twelfth Night by William Shakespeare
Years Ago by Ruth Gordon
Design for Living by Noel Coward
The Fourposter by Jan de Hartog
The Walls Rise Up - book & lyrics by Frank Duane; score by Richard Shannon

1956-57

Another Part of the Forest
Equity Library Theatre - Lenox Hill Playhouse
New York, New York
November 14 to November 18, 1956
Author: Lillian Hellman
Set Design: Robert Motley
Costume Design: Warren Travis

Summer 1957

Phoenicia Playhouse
Phoenicia, New York
Set & Lighting Design: Robert Motley
Teahouse of the August Moon by John Patrick
Years Ago by Ruth Gordon
Dark of the Moon by Howard Richardson & William Berney
Orpheus Descending by Tennessee Williams
Strange Bedfellows by Florence Ryerson & Colin Clements
The Children's Hour by Lillian Hellman
See How They Run by Phillip King

1957-58

The Trip to Bountiful
Equity Library Theatre - Lenox Hill Playhouse
New York, New York
November 20 to November 24, 1957
Author: Horton Foote
Set Design: Allan Egly
Costume Design: Marion Homelson
Lighting Design: Robert Motley

The Long Gallery
RNA (Riverside Neighborhood Assembly) Theatre
New York, New York
March 9, 1958; closing date not available
Author: Ramsey Yelvington
Set & Costume Design: Robert Soule
Lighting Design: Norman Blumenfeld

The Time of Your Life
Equity Library Theatre - Lenox Hill Playhouse
New York, New York
May 6 to May 11, 1958
Author: William Saroyan
Set Design: Robert Soule
Lighting Design: Norman Blumenfeld

Summer 1958

Phoenicia Playhouse
Phoenicia, New York
Set Design: Joe Cuthbert; Dulcy Zetterstrand
Lighting Design: Robert Schmidt

The Matchmaker by Thornton Wilder
Separate Tables by Terence Rattigan
Visit to a Small Planet by Gore Vidal
Cat on a Hot Tin Roof by Tennessee Williams
No Time for Sergeants by Ira Levin
A Streetcar Named Desire by Tennessee Williams
My Sister Eileen by Joseph A. Fields & Jerome Chodorov
Based on stories by Ruth McKenney

1958-59

A Journey with Strangers
Greenwich Mews Theatre
New York, New York
November 26, 1958 opening; closing date unknown
Author: Richard Lortz (Based on a novel by Anne Parrish)
Set & Costume Design: Robert Soule
Lighting Design: Larry Parker

The Trip to Bountiful
Equity Library Theatre - Theatre East
New York, New York
February 26 to May 18, 1959
Moved to Greenwich Mews Theatre May 18 to May 24, 1959
Author: Horton Foote
Set & Costume Design: Robert Soule
Lighting Design: Wayne Brown

Orpheus Descending
Equity Library Theatre - Lenox Hill Playhouse
New York, New York
April 7 to April 12, 1959
Author: Tennessee Williams
Guitarist: Mike Simon
Set Design: Jack H. Cornwell
Lighting Design: Al Wagner

Summer 1959

Phoenicia Playhouse
Phoenicia, New York
Set Design: Robert Soule
Technical Director: Robert Clayton
Costume Design: Victor Shargai and Thelma Malone

Private Lives by Noel Coward
Summer and Smoke by Tennessee Williams
Auntie Mame by Jerome Lawrence & Robert E. Lee
Macbeth by William Shakespeare
Who Was That Lady I Saw You With? by Norman Krasna
The Crucible by Arthur Miller
The Diary of Anne Frank by Frances Goodrich & Albert Hackett
Pygmalion by George Bernard Shaw
Champagne Complex by Leslie Stevens
Dracula - Dramatization of Bram Stoker's novel by Hamilton Deane & John L. Balderston

1959-60

Orpheus Descending
Gramercy Arts Theatre
New York, New York
October 5, 1959 to @ February 10, 1960 when it moved to Greenwich Mews Theatre (see listing below)
Author: Tennessee Williams
Music: Jesusillo de Jerez
Set & Costume Design: Robert Soule
Lighting Design: Lewis M. Steele

The Ballad of Jazz Street
Greenwich Mews Theatre
New York, New York
November 8 to November 29, 1959
Author of book & lyrics: Norton Cooper
Music: Nat Pierce
Set Design: Jack H. Cornwell
Costume Design: Bill Hargate
Lighting Design: Gerald Feil

Orpheus Descending
Greenwich Mews Theatre
New York, New York
February 10, 1960 to April 24, 1960
Author: Tennessee Williams
Adapted for the Greenwich Mews Theatre by: Frank Meottel
Set & Costume Design: Robert Soule
Lighting Design: Joseph Caron

The Gazebo
National tour
Opened June 1960 in Beverley, Massachusetts
Closed August 8, 1960 in Saratoga Springs, New York
Author: Alec Coppell
Starred: Joan Bennett & Donald Cook

1960-61

The Mousetrap
Maidman Playhouse
New York, New York
November 5, 1960 to February 12, 1961
Moved to Greenwich Mews Theatre
February 15 to April 23, 1961 (192 performances)
Author: Agatha Christie
Set, Costume & Lighting Design: Paul Morrison

Donogoo
Greenwich Mews Theatre
New York, New York
January 18 to February 12, 1961
Author: Jules Romain [Louis Farigoule]
Translator: J. B. Gidney
Music: Denis Jeffrey Blood
Set Design: Robert Soule
Costume Design: Domingo A. Rodriguez
Lighting Design: Jules Fisher

Summer 1961

Charlotte Music Theatre
Charlotte, N.C.

Mr. Roberts by Thomas Heggen & Joshua Logan
The King and I by Richard Rogers and Oscar Hammerstein
Destry Rides Again by Leonard Gershe & Harold Rome
Plain and Fancy by Joseph Stein & Will Glickman
Gentlemen Prefer Blondes by Anita Loos & Joseph Fields; Jule Styne & Leo Robin
The Student Prince by Dorothy Donnelly & Sigmund Romberg
West Side Story by Arthur Laurents & Leonard Bernstein
Annie Get Your Gun by Herbert & Dorothy Fields & Irving Berlin
Where's Charley? by George Abbott & Frank Loesser
Song of Norway by Milton Lazarus & Edvard Greig; musical adaptation by Robert Wright & George Forrest

1961-62

Toys in the Attic
National tour
Opened September 27, 1961 at The Playhouse, Wilmington, DE
Closed February 10, 1962 at The Biltmore, Los Angeles
Author: Lillian Hellman
Music: Marc Blitzstein
Set & Lighting Design: Howard Bay
Costume Design: Ruth Morley

Red Roses for Me
Greenwich Mews Theatre
New York, New York
November 18, 1961 to April 29, 1962 (176 performances)
Author: Sean O'Casey
Songs & Music: Peggy Stuart
Choreographer: Rebecca Kramer
Set Design: Robert Soule
Costume Design: Polly Platt
Lighting Design: Jules Fisher

Summer 1962

Hampton Playhouse
Hampton, New Hampshire
Set Design: David Houston

Under the Yum Yum Tree by Lawrence Roman
Who Was That Lady I Saw You With? by Norman Krasna

1962-63

Riverwind
Actors Playhouse
New York, New York
December 12, 1962 to January 5, 1964 (433 performances)
Author: Joseph Benjamin (based on a story by John Jennings)
Music & Lyrics: John Jennings
Musical Arrangements: Abba Bogin
Musical Direction: Joseph Stecko
Musical Staging: Ronald (Ronnie) Fields
Set & Costume Design: Robert Soule
Lighting Design: Jules Fisher

Playboy of the Western World
The Repertory Players
Ballroom of the Blackstone Hotel
Omaha, Nebraska
March 19 to March 23, 1963
Author: John M. Synge
Costume Design: Geraldine Cain

Summer 1963

Hampton Playhouse
Hampton, New Hampshire
Set Design: Steven Fredrics
Mr. Roberts by Thomas Heggen & Joshua Logan
Come Blow Your Horn by Neil Simon
Sunday in New York by Norman Krasna
Natural Affection by William Inge

1963-64

The Milk Train Doesn't Stop Here Anymore
Barter Theatre
Abingdon, Virginia
September 16 to September 21, 1963
Author: Tennessee Williams
Set Design: Robert Soule
Costume Design: Walta Beatty
Lighting Design: Albin Aukerland

The Hostage
Fred Miller Theatre (Milwaukee Repertory Theatre)
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
January 29 to February 16, 1964
Author: Brendan Behan
Costume Design: Treon
Lighting Design: Vern Huntsinger

Orpheus Descending
Trinity Repertory Company - Playhouse
Providence, Rhode Island
May 8 to May 30, 1964
Author: Tennessee Williams
Set Design: Arthur Torg
Costume Design: Edith Brown
Lighting Design: Thomas J. Aubin

The Death of Bessie Smith and The American Dream
Trinity Repertory Company - Playhouse
Providence, Rhode Island
June 5 to June 20, 1964
Author: Edward Albee
Set Design: Richard L. Peterson and Carol Ravenal
Costume Design: Edith Brown
Lighting Design: Thomas J. Aubin and Catie Calvo

1964-65

Dark of the Moon
Trinity Repertory Company - Playhouse
Providence, Rhode Island
October 14 to November 7, 1964
Author: Howard Richardson and William Berney
Music Composed and Directed by: Robert M. Kaplan
Dance Director: Doris Holloway
Square Dance Consultant: George Miller
Set Design: Morris Nathanson
Costume Design: Gerre Schoenbaum

The Rehearsal
Trinity Repertory Company - Playhouse
Providence, Rhode Island
November 11 to December 5, 1964
Author: Jean Anouilh
Translators: Pamela Hansford Johnson and Kitty Black
Set Design: Marc S. Harrison
Costume Design: Gerre Schoenbaum

The Caretaker
Trinity Repertory Company - Playhouse
Providence, Rhode Island
December 9, 1964 to January 2, 1965
Author: Harold Pinter
Set Design: Patrick Firpo
Costume Design: Sunny Warner

Uncle Vanya
Milwaukee Repertory Theatre
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
January 6 to January 24, 1965
Author: Anton Chekhov
Translator: Robert W. Corrigan
Music: Michael Hammond
Set Design: Robert Soule
Costume Design: John Lehmeyer
Lighting Design: James W. Hook

Desire Under the Elms
Trinity Repertory Company - Playhouse
Providence, Rhode Island
February 3 to February 27, 1965
Author: Eugene O'Neill
Set Design: Robert R. Troie
Costume Design: Dana Martin
Lighting Design: Tom Aubin

Don Juan in Hell
Trinity Repertory Company - Playhouse
Providence, Rhode Island
March 3 to March 27, 1965
Author: George Bernard Shaw
Lighting Design: Tom Aubin & Gene Jalesky

All to Hell Laughing - World Premiere
Trinity Repertory Company - Playhouse
Providence, Rhode Island
April 2 to May 1, 1965
Author: Trevanian [Rod Whitaker]
Set Design: Marc S. Harrison
Costume Design: Sunny Warner
Lighting Design: Tom Aubin & Gene Jalesky

Zoo Story and The American Dream
Trinity Repertory Company - Playhouse
Providence, Rhode Island
May 5 to May 29, 1965
Author: Edward Albee
Set Design: Abe Nathanson
Lighting Design: Tom Aubin

Summer 1965

Trinity Repertory Company in residence at the University of Rhode Island, Kingston, Rhode Island
Stage Design: Morris Nathanson
Technical Director: David Christian
Costume Design: Meredith Gowell
Lighting Design: Michael Tschudin

July 1-4	Don Juan in Hell by George Bernard Shaw
July 8-11	The Caretaker by Harold Pinter
July 15-24	The Glass Menagerie by Tennessee Williams
July 25	Zoo Story and The American Dream by Edward Albee
July 29-Aug 7	Rhinoceros by Eugene Ionesco
Aug 8-22	Zoo Story and The American Dream by Edward Albee
Aug 12-21	The Time of Your Life by William Saroyan
Aug 26-29	Happy Days by Samuel Beckett and Dutchman by LeRoi Jones [Imamu Amiri Baraka]

1965-66

The Crucible
Trinity Repertory Company - Playhouse
Providence, Rhode Island
October 14 to November 6, 1965
Author: Arthur Miller
Set Design: David Christian
Costume Design: Rosemary Ingham
Lighting Design: Michael Tschudin

Tartuffe
Trinity Repertory Company - Playhouse
Providence, Rhode Island
November 11 to December 4, 1965
Author: Molière
Translator: Richard Wilbur
Set Design: John Braden
Costume Design: Sunny B. Warner
Lighting Design: Michael Tschudin

The Balcony
Trinity Repertory Company - Playhouse
Providence, Rhode Island
December 9, 1965 to January 1, 1966
Author: Jean Genet
Original Music: Robert Revicki
Set & Costume Design: John Braden
Lighting Design: Michael Tschudin

Mother Courage
Milwaukee Repertory Theatre
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
January 13 to January 30, 1966
Author: Bertolt Brecht
English version: Eric Bentley
Set & Light Design: Charles Dox, Jr.
Costume Design: John Lehmeyer

Long Day's Journey into Night
Trinity Repertory Company - Playhouse
Providence, Rhode Island
February 3 to February 26, 1966
Tour: February 18, 1966 to Memorial Auditorium for the Boston Winterfest, Boston, Massachusetts
Author: Eugene O'Neill
Set Design: Michael Scott
Lighting Design: Michael Tschudin

The Eternal Husband - World Premiere
Trinity Repertory Company - Playhouse
Providence, Rhode Island
March 3 to March 26, 1966
Author: Gabriel Gladstone (dramatization of Constance Garnett's translation of the novella by Fyodor Dostoevsky)
Set Design: Michael Scott
Costume Design: Sunny B. Warner
Lighting Design: Barry Kearsley

1966-67

Saint Joan
Trinity Repertory Company - RISD Auditorium
Providence, Rhode Island
October 11 to October 29, 1966
Author: George Bernard Shaw
Music: Richard Cumming
Set Design: Lynn Pecktal
Costume Design: John Lehmeyer
Lighting Design: Roger Morgan

A Streetcar Named Desire
Trinity Repertory Company - Playhouse
Providence, Rhode Island
November 8 to December 10, 1966
Toured area high schools May 10, 12 and 16, 1967
Author: Tennessee Williams
Music: Richard Cumming
Set Design: Lynn Pecktal
Costume Design: John Lehmeyer
Lighting Design: Roger Morgan

The Grass Harp - World Premiere
Trinity Repertory Company - RISD Auditorium
Providence, Rhode Island
December 26, 1966 to January 14, 1967
Book & Lyrics: Kenward Elmslie (from the novel by Truman Capote)
Music: Claibe Richardson
Musical Direction: Theodore Saidenberg
Orchestrations: Jonathan Tunick
Asst. Conductor & Dance Arrangements: Richard J. Leonard
Choreographer: Zoya Leporska
Set Design: Lynn Pecktal
Costume Design: John Lehmeyer
Lighting Design: Roger Morgan

The Questions and Dutchman
Trinity Repertory Company - Playhouse
Providence, Rhode Island
February 16 to February 25, 1967
Toured area high schools May 9, 13, and 17, 1967
Authors: John Hawkes; LeRoi Jones [Imamu Amiri Baraka]
Set Design: Lynn Pecktal
Costume Design: John Lehmeyer
Lighting Design: Roger Morgan

The Birthday Party
Trinity Repertory Company - Playhouse
Providence, Rhode Island
March 14 to April 8, 1967
Author: Harold Pinter
Set Design: Lynn Pecktal
Costume Design: John Lehmeyer
Lighting Design: Roger Morgan

The Three Sisters
Trinity Repertory Company - RISD Auditorium
Providence, Rhode Island
April 26 to May 6 and May 23 to May 27, 1967
Author: Anton Chekhov
Translator: Robert W. Corrigan
Set Design: Lynn Pecktal
Costume Design: John Lehmeyer
Lighting Design: Roger Morgan

1967-68

The Threepenny Opera
Trinity Repertory Company - Playhouse
Providence, Rhode Island
October 5 to November 4, 1967
Book & Lyrics: Bertolt Brecht
English Adaptation: Marc Blitzstein
Music: Kurt Weill
Musical Direction: Richard Cumming
Set Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: John Lehmeyer
Lighting Design: Roger Morgan

Julius Caesar
Trinity Repertory Company - RISD Auditorium
Providence, Rhode Island
November 16 to December 9, 1967
Author: William Shakespeare
Music: Richard Cumming
Set Design: Kert F. Lundell
Costume Design: John Lehmeyer
Lighting Design: Roger Morgan

Years of the Locust - World Premiere
Trinity Repertory Company - Playhouse
Providence, Rhode Island
February 8 to March 2, 1968
Author: Norman Holland
Music: Richard Cumming
Set Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: John Lehmeyer
Lighting Design: Roger Morgan

An Enemy of the People
Trinity Repertory Company - RISD Auditorium
Providence, Rhode Island
March 21 to April 13, 1968
Author: Henrik Ibsen
Adaptation: Arthur Miller
Set Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: John Lehmeyer
Lighting Design: Roger Morgan

Phaedra
Trinity Repertory Company - Playhouse
Providence, Rhode Island
April 25 to May 18, 1968
Author: Jean Racine
Translator: Robert Lowell
Music: Richard Cumming
Set Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: John Lehmeyer
Lighting Design: Roger Morgan

Years of the Locust
Trinity Repertory Company at Church Hill Theatre
Edinburgh Festival, Edinburgh Scotland
August 19 to August 24, 1968
Author: Norman Holland
Music: Richard Cumming
Set Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: John Lehmeyer
Lighting Design: Roger Morgan

1968-69

Red Roses for Me
Trinity Repertory Company - RISD Auditorium
Providence, Rhode Island
October 17 to November 16, 1968
Author: Sean O'Casey
Music: Richard Cumming
Set Design: Robert Soule
Costume Design: John Lehmeyer
Lighting Design: Roger Morgan

Brother to Dragons - World Premiere
Trinity Repertory Company - Playhouse
Providence, Rhode Island
November 21 to December 21, 1968
Author: Robert Penn Warren
Music: Richard Cumming
Set Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: John Lehmeyer
Lighting Design: Roger Morgan

Macbeth
Trinity Repertory Company - RISD Auditorium
Providence, Rhode Island
January 2 to January 25, 1969
Author: William Shakespeare
Music: Richard Cumming
Set Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: John Lehmeyer
Lighting Design: Roger Morgan

Billy Budd - World Premiere
Trinity Repertory Company - RISD Auditorium
Providence, Rhode Island
March 20 to April 12, 1969
Author: Herman Melville; adaptation by Hall and Trinity ensemble
Music: Richard Cumming
Set Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: John Lehmeyer
Lighting Design: Roger Morgan

Exiles
Trinity Repertory Company - Playhouse
Providence, Rhode Island
April 24 to May 24, 1969
Author: James Joyce
Set Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: John Lehmeyer
Lighting Design: Roger Morgan

1969-70

The Old Glory
Trinity Repertory Company - RISD Auditorium
Providence, Rhode Island
September 30 to November 1, 1969
Author: Robert Lowell
Music: Richard Cumming
Set Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: John Lehmeyer
Lighting Design: Roger Morgan

House of Breath, Black/White - World Premiere
Trinity Repertory Company - Playhouse
Providence, Rhode Island
November 4 to December 6, 1969
Author: William Goyen
Music composed & arranged by: Richard Cumming
Set Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: John Lehmeyer
Lighting Design: Roger Morgan

Wilson in the Promise Land - World Premiere
Trinity Repertory Company - RISD Auditorium
Providence, Rhode Island
December 9, 1969 to January 10, 1970
Author: Roland Van Zandt
Music: Richard Cumming
Set Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: John Lehmeyer
Lighting Design: Roger Morgan

The Skin of Our Teeth
Trinity Repertory Company - RISD Auditorium
Providence, Rhode Island
January 20 to February 21, 1970
Author: Thornton Wilder
Set Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: John Lehmeyer
Lighting Design: Roger Morgan

Lovecraft's Follies - World Premiere
Trinity Repertory Company - RISD Auditorium
Providence, Rhode Island
March 10 to April 11, 1970
Author: James Schevill
Music: Richard Cumming
Set Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: John Lehmeyer
Lighting Design: Roger Morgan

Wilson in the Promise Land
Trinity Repertory Company
ANTA Theatre, New York, New York
May 26 to May 30, 1970
Author: Roland Van Zandt
Music: Richard Cumming
Set Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: John Lehmeyer
Lighting Design: Roger Morgan

1970-71

You Can't Take It with You
Trinity Repertory Company - Playhouse
Providence, Rhode Island
October 14 to November 14, 1970
Authors: George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart
Associate Director: William Cain
Set & Lighting Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: John Lehmeyer

Son of Man and the Family - World Premiere
Trinity Repertory Company - RISD Auditorium
Providence, Rhode Island
November 18 to December 19, 1970
Authors: Timothy Taylor and Adrian Hall
Music: Richard Cumming and Terence Vesey
Set Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: John Lehmeyer
Lighting Design: Roger Morgan

The Taming of the Shrew
Trinity Repertory Company - RISD Auditorium
Providence, Rhode Island
December 30, 1970 to January 30, 1971
Author: William Shakespeare
Music: Richard Cumming
Set & Lighting Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: John Lehmeyer

The Good and Bad Times of Cady Francis McCullum and Friends
World Premiere
Trinity Repertory Company - Playhouse
Providence, Rhode Island
February 17 to March 20, 1971
Author: Portia Bohn
Music & Lyrics: Richard Cumming
Production Design: Eugene and Franne Lee

The Threepenny Opera
Trinity Repertory Company - RISD Auditorium
Providence, Rhode Island
March 24 to April 24, 1971
Books & Lyrics: Bertolt Brecht
English translation: Marc Blitzstein
Music: Kurt Weill
Musical Direction: Richard Cumming
Set & Lighting Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: John Lehmeyer

1971-72

Child's Play
Trinity Repertory Company - Playhouse
Providence, Rhode Island
September 21 to October 23, 1971
Revived February 2 to February 19, 1972
Author: Robert Marasco
Set Design: David Jenkins
Costume Design: John Lehmeyer
Lighting Design: Roger Morgan

Troilus and Cressida
Trinity Repertory Company - Playhouse
Providence, Rhode Island
November 2 to December 11, 1971
Author: William Shakespeare
Music: Richard Cumming
Set Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: Betsey Potter
Lighting Design: Roger Morgan

Down by the River Where Waterlilies Are Disfigured Every Day - World Premiere
Trinity Repertory Company - Playhouse
Providence, Rhode Island
December 20, 1971 to January 22, 1972
Author: Julie Bovasso
Music: Richard Cumming
Set Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: A. Christina Giannini
Lighting Design: Roger Morgan

School for Wives
Trinity Repertory Company - Playhouse
Providence, Rhode Island
March 1 to April 1, 1972
Two complete companies alternated performances at the Playhouse and on tour, giving more than 100 performances through five states including performances at the Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park (April 6-23, 1972) and at the Phoenix, Arizona Summer Theatre Festival (June 5-17, 1972).
Author: Molière
Translator: Richard Wilbur
Music: Richard Cumming
Set Design: Robert Soule
Costume Design: A. Christina Giannini
Lighting Design: Roger Morgan

1972-73

The Royal Hunt of the Sun
Trinity Repertory Company - Playhouse
Providence, Rhode Island
January 10 to February 17, 1973
Author: Peter Shaffer
Music: Richard Cumming
Set Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: A. Christina Giannini
Lighting Design: Roger Morgan

School for Wives
Trinity Repertory Company - Playhouse
Providence, Rhode Island
February 28 to March 17, 1973
Tour: Walnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
June 19 to June 24, 1973
Author: Molière
Translator: Richard Wilbur
Music: Richard Cumming
Set Design: Robert D. Soule
Costume Design: A. Christina Giannini
Lighting Design: Roger Morgan

Feasting with Panthers - World Premiere
Trinity Repertory Company - Playhouse
Providence, Rhode Island
April 18 to May 19, 1973
Tour: Walnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
June 26 to July 1, 1973
Authors: Adrian Hall and Richard Cumming
Music & Lyrics: Richard Cumming
Set Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: Betsey Potter
Puppets & Fantasy Costume Designs: Robert D. Soule
Lighting Design: Shirley Prendergast
N.b. some sources list this play under the titles of Oscar or The Love That Dare Not Speak Its Name, both of which were a working titles for the piece.

1973-74

Brother to Dragons
Trinity Repertory Company
Lederer Theatre - downstairs
Providence, Rhode Island
October 24 to November 18, 1973
Additional performances for Trinity Repertory Holiday Celebration December 28, 1973 and January 5, 1974
Tours: Walnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
June 18 to June 30, 1974
White Barn Theatre, Westport, Connecticut
July 3 to July 7, 1974
Wilbur Theatre, Boston, Massachusetts
September 2 to September 14, 1974
Author: Robert Penn Warren
Music: Richard Cumming
Set Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: James Berton Harris
Lighting Design: Richard Devin

Aimee - World Premiere
Trinity Repertory Company
Lederer Theatre - upstairs
Providence, Rhode Island
December 6, 1973 to January 27, 1974
Additional performances for Trinity Repertory Holiday Celebration December 26, 27, 29, 31, 1973 and January 3, 4, 1974.
Book & Lyrics: William Goyen
Music: Worth Gardner
Musical Direction: Richard Cumming
Set Design & Environments: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: James Berton Harris
Lighting Design: Richard Devin

A Man for All Seasons
Trinity Repertory Company
Lederer Theatre - upstairs
Providence, Rhode Island
February 21 to March 31, 1974
Tours: Walnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
June 4 to June 16, 1974
Wilbur Theatre, Boston, Massachusetts
August 19 to August 31, 1974
Author: Robert Bolt
Set Design & Environment: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: James Berton Harris
Lighting Design: Roger Morgan

Peer Gynt
Missouri Repertory Theatre, University Playhouse
Kansas City, Missouri
August 8 to September 11, 1974
Author: Henrik Ibsen
English version by Christopher Fry, based on a literal translation by Johann Fillinger
Music & Lyrics: Richard Cumming
Set Design: John Ezell
Costume Design: Douglas A. Russell
Lighting Design: Marc Schlackman

1974-75

Well Hung - American premiere
Trinity Repertory Company
Lederer Theatre - downstairs
Providence, Rhode Island
October 31 to December 1, 1974
Author: Robert Lord
Set Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: Betsey Potter

Peer Gynt - World premiere
Trinity Repertory Company
Lederer Theatre - upstairs
Providence, Rhode Island
January 7 to February 16, 1975
Author: Henrik Ibsen
Adaptation: Adrian Hall and Richard Cumming
Music & Lyrics composed and directed by: Richard Cumming
Set & Lighting Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: James Berton Harris
Belly Dancing & Troll Choreography: Sharon Jenkins

Seven Keys to Baldpate
Trinity Repertory Company
Lederer Theatre - downstairs
Providence, Rhode Island
April 22 to June 15, 1975
Author: George M. Cohan
Set & Lighting Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: James Berton Harris

1975-76

Cathedral of Ice - World Premiere
Trinity Repertory Company
Lederer Theatre - upstairs
Providence, Rhode Island
October 10 to November 2, 1975
Author: James Schevill
Music & Additional Lyrics: Richard Cumming
Dances: Brian R. Jones
Set Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: Franne Lee and Betsey Potter
Lighting Design: Mark Rippe

Another Part of the Forest
Trinity Repertory Company
Lederer Theatre - downstairs
Providence, Rhode Island
November 4 to December 7, 1975
Author: Lillian Hellman
Set Design: Robert D. Soule
Costume Design: James Berton Harris
Lighting Design: John Custer

The Little Foxes
Trinity Repertory Company
Lederer Theatre - downstairs
Providence, Rhode Island
December 2, 1975 to January 25, 1976
Author: Lillian Hellman
Set Design: Robert D. Soule
Costume Design: James Berton Harris
Lighting Design: John Custer

Eustace Chisholm and the Works - World Premiere
Trinity Repertory Company
Lederer Theatre - downstairs
Providence, Rhode Island
April 2 to May 2, 1976
Author: Adrian Hall's and Richard Cumming's adaptation of the novel by James Purdy
Set Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: Betsey Potter
Lighting Design: Mark Rippe
Dances: Brian Jones

1976-77

An Enemy of the People
Guthrie Theater
Minneapolis, Minnesota
August 30 to December 3, 1976 (30 performances in repertory)
Author: Henrik Ibsen
Translator: John Patrick Vincent
Set & Costume Design: Sam Kirkpatrick
Lighting Design: Duane Schuler

Seven Keys to Baldpate
Trinity Repertory Company
Lederer Theatre - downstairs
Providence, Rhode Island
September 14 to November 14, 1976
Author: George M. Cohan
Set Design: Robert D. Soule
Costume Design: James Berton Harris and Betsey Potter
Lighting Design: Mark Rippe and Sean Keating

Of Mice and Men
Trinity Repertory Company
Lederer Theatre - upstairs
Providence, Rhode Island
November 19 to December 19, 1976
Revived May 12 to May 21, 1977
Author: John Steinbeck
Production Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: Betsey Potter

King Lear
Trinity Repertory Company
Lederer Theatre - upstairs
Providence, Rhode Island
February 25 to April 3, 1977
Author: William Shakespeare
Production Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: Franne Lee

1977-78

Ethan Frome
Trinity Repertory Company
Lederer Theatre - upstairs
Providence, Rhode Island
October 7 to November 6, 1977
Author: Owen Davis & Donald Davis, from the novel by Edith Wharton
Set & Lighting Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: Ann Morrell

Rosmersholm
Trinity Repertory Company
Lederer Theatre - upstairs
Providence, Rhode Island
November 22 to December 8, 1977 and January 10-22, 1978
Author: Henrik Ibsen
Adaptation: Adrian Hall and Richard Cumming
Set Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: Ann Morrell
Lighting Design: Kevin Sean Keating

A Christmas Carol - World Premiere
Trinity Repertory Company
Lederer Theatre - upstairs
Providence, Rhode Island
December 16 to December 31, 1977
Authors: Adrian Hall & Richard Cumming, from the novel by Charles Dickens
Original Music & Lyrics: Richard Cumming
Choreographer: Sharon Jenkins
Set Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: Betsey Potter and Ann Morell
Lighting Design: Kevin Sean Keating

Seduced - World premiere
Trinity Repertory Company
Lederer Theatre - downstairs
Providence, Rhode Island
April 21 to May 21, 1978
Author: Sam Shepard
Set & Lighting Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: James Berton Harris

1978-79

Uncle Tom's Cabin, A History - World premiere
Trinity Repertory Company
Lederer Theatre - upstairs
Providence, Rhode Island
October 27 to November 19, 1978
Authors: Adrian Hall and Richard Cumming
Music arranged & directed by: Richard Cumming
Choreographer: Sharon Jenkins
Set Design: Matthew Jacobs
Costume Design: Vittorio Capecce
Lighting Design: Eugene Lee

A Christmas Carol
Trinity Repertory Company
Lederer Theatre - upstairs
Providence, Rhode Island
December 1 to December 31, 1978
Authors: Adrian Hall & Richard Cumming, from the novel by Charles Dickens
Original Music & Lyrics: Richard Cumming
Choreographer: Sharon Jenkins
Set Design: Robert D. Soule
Costume Design: Ann Morell
Lighting Design: John F. Custer

Buried Child
Yale Repertory Theatre
New Haven, Connecticut
January 19 to February 7, 1979
Author: Sam Shepard
Set Design: Adrianne Lobel
Costume Design: Judianna Makovsky
Lighting Design: William H. Warfel

1979-80

Buried Child
Trinity Repertory Company
Lederer Theatre - downstairs
Providence, Rhode Island
February 1 to March 9, 1980
Author: Sam Shepard
Set Design: Robert D. Soule
Costume Design: William Lane
Lighting Design: John F. Custer

The Night of the Iguana
Trinity Repertory Company
Lederer Theatre - upstairs
Providence, Rhode Island
March 14 to April 13, 1980
Author: Tennessee Williams
Set Design: Robert D. Soule
Costume Design: William Lane
Lighting Design: John F. Custer

1980-81

On Golden Pond
Trinity Repertory Company
Lederer Theatre - downstairs
Providence, Rhode Island
December 5, 1980 to January 25, 1981
Associate Director: Peter Gerety
Author: Ernest Thompson
Set Design: Robert D. Soule
Costume Design: William Lane
Lighting Design: John F. Custer

The Whales of August - World Premiere
Trinity Repertory Company
Lederer Theatre - downstairs
Providence, Rhode Island
February 13 to March 22, 1981
Author: David Berry
Set Design: Robert D. Soule
Costume Design: William Lane
Lighting Design: John F. Custer

Inherit the Wind
Trinity Repertory Company
Lederer Theatre - upstairs
Providence, Rhode Island
March 20 to April 19, 1981
Authors: Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee
Set Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: William Lane
Lighting Design: John F. Custer

1981-82

Buried Child
Trinity Repertory Company
Lederer Theatre - upstairs
Providence, Rhode Island
September 8 to September 16, 1981
Tour: September 18 to October 24, 1981; performed in India (Bombay, Calcutta, Jamshedpur, Madras, and New Delhi) and Damascus, Syria.
Author: Sam Shepard
Production Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: William Lane

Of Mice and Men
Trinity Repertory Company
Lederer Theatre - upstairs
Providence, Rhode Island
September 12 to September 17, 1981
Tour: September 18 to October 24, 1981; performed in India (Bombay, Calcutta, Jamshedpur, Madras, and New Delhi) and Damascus, Syria.
Author: John Steinbeck
Production Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: William Lane

Journey of the Fifth Horse
American Repertory Theatre
Loeb Drama Center
Cambridge, Massachusetts
January 22 to March 21, 1982
Author: Ronald Ribman
Set Design: Kevin Rupnick
Costume Design: Rita Ryack
Lighting Design: James F. Ingalls

The Hothouse - American premiere
Trinity Repertory Company
Lederer Theatre - downstairs
Providence, Rhode Island
March 2 to April 18, 1982
Author: Harold Pinter
Set & Lighting Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: William Lane

Dead Souls
Trinity Repertory Company
Lederer Theatre - upstairs
Providence, Rhode Island
March 26 to April 25, 1982
Author: M. Bulgakov's dramatization of a story by Nikolai Gogol; translated and adapted by Tom Cole
Music: Richard Cumming
Set Design: Robert D. Soule
Costume Design: William Lane
Lighting Design: John F. Custer

The Hothouse
Playhouse Theater
New York, New York
April 30 to May 30, 1982
Author: Harold Pinter
Set & Lighting Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: William Lane

1982-83

The Web - World premiere
Trinity Repertory Company
Lederer Theatre - downstairs
Providence, Rhode Island
October 1 to November 14, 1982
Author: Martha Boesing
Music Director: Richard Cumming
Set Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: William Lane
Lighting Design: John F. Custer

The Tempest
Trinity Repertory Company
Lederer Theatre - upstairs
Providence, Rhode Island
March 11 to April 10, 1983
Author: William Shakespeare
Music: Richard Cumming
Production Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: William Lane

In the Belly of the Beast: Letters from Prison - World Premiere
Trinity Repertory Company
Lederer Theatre - downstairs
Providence, Rhode Island
April 13 to May 22, 1983
Author: Adrian Hall, from the book by Jack Henry Abbott
Production Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: William Lane

1983-84

Galileo
Trinity Repertory Company
Lederer Theatre - upstairs
Providence, Rhode Island
October 14 to November 13, 1983
Author: Bertolt Brecht
Music: Richard Cumming
Production Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: William Lane
Dramaturg: James Schevill

The Wild Duck
Trinity Repertory Company
Lederer Theatre - downstairs
Providence, Rhode Island
November 18 to January 1, 1984
Author: Henrik Ibsen
Set Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: William Lane
Lighting Design: John F. Custer

Galileo
Dallas Theater Center
Frank Lloyd Wright Theater
Dallas, Texas
January 12 to February 26, 1984
Author: Bertolt Brecht
Translation and Adaptation: James Schevill and Adrian Hall
Music: Richard Cumming
Production Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: William Lane and Donna M. Kress

The Wild Duck
Dallas Theater Center
Arts District Theater
Dallas, Texas
February 11 to March 18, 1984
Author: Henrik Ibsen
Translator: Michael Meyer
Production Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: Donna M. Kress
Lighting: Roger Morgan

Jonestown Express - World Premiere
Trinity Repertory Company
Lederer Theatre - upstairs
Providence, Rhode Island
May 18 to June 17, 1984
Author: James Reston, Jr.
Musical Direction: Daniel Birnbaum
Choreographer: Sharon Jenkins
Production Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: William Lane

1984-85

Passion Play
Trinity Repertory Company
Lederer Theatre - downstairs
Providence, Rhode Island
October 12 to November 18, 1984
Author: Peter Nichols
Production Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: William Lane

A Christmas Carol
Dallas Theater Center
Arts District Theater
Dallas, Texas
November 27 to December 30, 1984
Authors: Adrian Hall & Richard Cumming, from the novel by Charles Dickens
Music & Lyrics: Richard Cumming
Set Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: Donna M. Kress
Lighting Design: Marcus Abbott

Passion Play
Dallas Theater Center
Arts District Theater
Dallas, Texas
January 31 to March 10, 1985
Author: Peter Nichols
Set Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: Donna M. Kress
Lighting Design: Marcus Abbott

Good
Dallas Theater Center
Frank Lloyd Wright Theater
Dallas, Texas
February 28 to March 31, 1985
Author: C. P. Taylor
Musical Direction: Richard Cumming
Production Design: Eugene Lee

Costume Design: Donna M. Kress
Lighting: Marcus Abbott

1985-86

The Marriage of Bette and Boo
Trinity Repertory Company
Lederer Theatre - downstairs
Providence, Rhode Island
September 20 to November 10, 1985
Author: Christopher Durang
Music Direction: Richard Cumming
Production Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: William Lane
Lighting Design: John F. Custer

The Marriage of Bette and Boo
Dallas Theater Center
Frank Lloyd Wright Theater
Dallas, Texas
January 23 to February 23, 1986
Author: Christopher Durang
Music Direction: Richard Cumming
Production Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: Donna M. Kress

Kith and Kin
Dallas Theater Center
Arts District Theater
Dallas, Texas
February 27 to March 29, 1986
Author: Oliver Hailey
Production Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: Donna M. Kress
Lighting Design: Linda Blase

The Country Girl
Trinity Repertory Company
Lederer Theatre - upstairs
Providence, Rhode Island
April 25 to May 25, 1986
Author: Clifford Odets
Music Selected and Edited by: Richard Cumming
Production Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: William Lane

1986-87

The Visit
Trinity Repertory Company
Union Train Station
Providence, Rhode Island
September 26 to October 26, 1986
Author: Friedrich Duerrenmatt
Adaptation: Maurice Valency
Set Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: William Lane
Lighting Design: John F. Custer

All the King's Men
Dallas Theater Center
Arts District Theater
Dallas, Texas
November 13 to December 21, 1986
Author: Robert Penn Warren; adapted for the stage by Adrian Hall
Music Composed by: Randy Newman
Musical Direction: Richard Cumming
Set Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: Donna M. Kress
Lighting Design: Natasha Katz
Dramaturgs: Marsue Cumming MacNicol and Oren Jacoby
Cinematographer: Coby Asaff

All the King's Men
Trinity Repertory Company
Lederer Theatre - upstairs
Providence, Rhode Island
March 20 to April 26, 1987
Author: Robert Penn Warren; adapted for the stage by Adrian Hall
Music Composed by: Randy Newman
Musical Direction: Richard Cumming
Set Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: William Lane
Lighting Design: Natasha Katz
Dramaturg: Marsue Cumming MacNicol

A Lie of the Mind
Dallas Theater Center
Arts District Theater
Dallas, Texas
April 23 to May 17, 1987
Author: Sam Shepard
Set & Lighting Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: Donna M. Kress

1987-88

The Tempest
Dallas Theater Center
Arts District Theater
Dallas, Texas
October 8 to November 7, 1987
Author: William Shakespeare
Music: Richard Cumming
Set Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: Donna M. Kress
Lighting Design: Roger Nall

Mensch Meier
Trinity Repertory Company
Lederer Theatre - downstairs
Providence, Rhode Island
April 15 to May 29, 1988
Author: Franz Xaver Kroetz
Set & Lighting Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: William Lane

1988-89

The Cherry Orchard
Trinity Repertory Company
Lederer Theatre - upstairs
Providence, Rhode Island
September 9 to October 9, 1988
Author: Anton Chekhov
Translator: Michael Frayn
Music: Richard Cumming
Choreographer: Sharon Jenkins
Set & Lighting Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: William Lane

Les Liaisons Dangereuses
Dallas Theater Center
Frank Lloyd Wright Theater
Dallas, Texas
October 21 to November 20, 1988
Author: Christopher Hampton, from the novel by Cholderlos de Laclos
Music: Richard Cumming
Set Design: Eugene Lee
Lighting Design: Natasha Katz
Costume Design: Donna M. Kress

Red Noses
Dallas Theater Center
Arts District Theater
Dallas, Texas
March 30 to April 23, 1989
Author: Peter Barnes
Music: Richard Cumming
Set Design: Eugene Lee
Lighting Design: Natasha Katz
Costume Design: Donna M. Kress

Red Noses
Trinity Repertory Company
Lederer Theatre - upstairs
Providence, Rhode Island
May 5 to June 4, 1989
Author: Peter Barnes
Music: Richard Cumming
Set Design: Eugene Lee
Costume Design: William Lane

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

The sources listed here are arranged as follows:

Section I: Books with information on Adrian Hall or his collaborative artists, selected published plays directed by Hall, published reports and a few works which concern the art of stage direction.

Section II: Periodicals, newspapers and other published sources about Hall's theatres and his work as a director.

Section III: Selected archival sources from the files of the Trinity Repertory Company and the Dallas Theater Center. These sources include programs, in-house publications and miscellaneous unpublished materials. Also included in this section are films and videotapes and miscellaneous archival materials.

Section IV: Interviews the author recorded with Hall and the artists and theatre staff who have worked with him.

Section V: Selected reviews and articles concerning Hall's productions, categorized by name of production.

This bibliography, while not comprehensive, is representative of the sources available concerning the work of Adrian Hall.

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Safford, Edwin. "A Man for All Seasons Opens at the Lederer." Providence Journal, 22 February 1974.

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Adcock, Joe. "Trinity Square Back at Walnut and with Beef." Philadelphia Evening Bulletin, 5 June 1974.

Bykofsky, Stuart D. "An Excellent Man at the Walnut." Philadelphia Daily News, 5 June 1974.

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Seavor, Jim. "Home Again, Home Again: Adrian Hall Looks Back." Providence Journal-Bulletin, 20 September 1985.

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Hulbert, Dan. "A Wedding of Laughter and Pain." Dallas Times Herald, 30 January 1986.

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Clay, Carolyn. "Mensch Mire, Adrian Hall Finds Gold in the Kroetzian Mind." Boston Phoenix, 29 April 1988.

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Israel, Bob. "Mensch Meier, Of Human Bondage." NewPaper (Providence), 27 April 1988.

Kelly, Kevin. "Mensch: A Flawless, Painful Family Portrait." Boston Globe, 6 May 1988.

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Gale, William K. "Of Mice and Men Is Staged, Acted Beautifully at Trinity." Providence Journal, 24 November 1976.

Kelly, Kevin. "Steinbeck's Mice Revived." Boston Globe, 15 December 1976.

Safford, Edwin. "Of Mice and Men Goes to the Heart of Steinbeck Country." Providence Journal-Bulletin, 27 November 1976.

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"Barter Theatre Will Do Williams' Revised Train." Variety, 11 September 1963.

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Scheibe, Fred Karl. "Tennessee Williams Makes People Think." Journal-Virginian, 17 October 1963.

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Monfried, Walter. "Brecht Drama Team's Success." Milwaukee Sentinel, 14 January 1966.

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Crist, Judith. "The Mousetrap." New York Herald Tribune, 7 November 1960.

Funke, Lewis. "Mousetrap Arrives." New York Times, 7 November 1960.

Herridge, Frances. "Agatha Christie Mystery Bows Here." New York Post, 7 November 1960.

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_____. "Trinity Staging of Iguana Is Powerful but Unbalanced." Providence Journal, 19 March 1980.

Lioce, Tony. "Adrian Hall Finally Has His Night." Providence Sunday Journal, 9 March 1980.

Safford, Edwin. "Iguana a Light on Life's Dark Corners." Providence Journal-Bulletin, 21 March 1980.

The Old Glory - Trinity Rep

Atwood, Lois. "Lowell's Uneven Trilogy Remains Uneven at Trinity Square's Show." Rhode Island Herald, 10 October 1969.

Kelly, Kevin. "Old Glory a One-Third Hit." Boston Globe, 12 October 1969.

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Bookbinder, Bernie. "Vintage Williams." Newsday, 14 October 1959.

Calta, Louis. "The Theatre: Orpheus Descending." New York Times, 6 October 1959.

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McClain, John. "Excellent Job by Gifted Cast." New York Journal American, 6 October 1959.

Talmage, Jerry. "Theatre: Orpheus Descending." Village Voice, 14 October 1959.

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Holmberg, Ted. "Orpheus Descending" Put on by Repertory Theater." Providence Journal, 9 May 1964.

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Kelly, Kevin. "Passion Play a Stunning Experience at Trinity Square." Boston Globe, 31 October 1984.

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Gerard, Jeremy. "Lighting Love's Dark Corners." Dallas Morning News, 6 February 1985.

Hulbert, Dan. "Baring a Dallas Controversy." Dallas Times Herald, 10 February 1985.

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Fowler, Giles M. "'Opening Up' Ibsen Fantasy. Kansas City Star, 28 July 1974.

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"New Shows in Stock, Peer Gynt." Variety, 11 September 1974.

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Eckert, Thor Jr. "Provocative Ibsen at Trinity Square." Christian Science Monitor, 9 January 1975, sec. 4.

Norton, Elliot. "Classic. Peer Gynt on Providence Stage." Boston Herald American, 10 January 1975.

Swan, Bradford F. "Peer Gynt Offered by Trinity Square." Providence Journal, 8 January 1975.

Wilson, Edwin. "With Henrik Ibsen as a Collaborator." Wall Street Journal, 17 January 1975.

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Atwood, Lois. "Tragic Phaedra 'Magnificently Played' by Katherine Helmond at Trinity." Rhode Island Herald, 3 May 1968.

Swan, Bradford F. "Trinity Square Repertory Offers Racine's Phaedra." Providence Journal, 26 April 1968.

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Kountze, Denman, Jr. "Director, Repertory Cast Charm in Synge Playboy." Omaha World Herald, 20 March 1963.

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Crist, Judith. "Red Roses for Me." New York Herald Tribune, 28 November 1961.

Davis, James. "O'Casey's Red Roses Is for Me--and for You." New York Daily News, 28 November 1961.

Herridge, Frances. "O'Casey Drama Revived Off-Broadway." New York Post, 28 November 1961.

McClain, John. "Red Roses Have Faded." New York Journal American, 28 November 1961.

Nadel, Norman. "O'Casey Play Is at the Mews." New York World Telegraph & Sun, 28 November 1961.

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"Red Roses for Me Glows with the Flame of Truth." Women's Wear Daily, 25 November 1961.

Taubman, Howard. "Theatre: Sean O'Casey." New York Times, 28 November 1961.

"Theatre: Red Roses for Me." Village Voice, 7 December 1961.

Red Roses for Me - Trinity Rep

Hirsch, Samuel. "Trinity Company's Red Roses Is a Fine Bouquet to O'Casey." Boston Herald Traveler, 21 October 1968.

Kelly, Kevin. "O'Casey Beats a Drum in Providence." Boston Globe, 3 November 1968.

Safford, Edwin. "Red Roses for Me Staged by Trinity Square Company." Providence Journal, 18 October 1968.

The Rehearsal - Trinity Rep

Holmberg, Ted. "Trinity Square Playhouse Presents The Rehearsal." Providence Journal, 12 November 1964.

Riverwind - Actors Playhouse

Gross, Jesse. "Riverwind John Jennings Off-B'Way Do-It-Yourself Musical Production." Variety, 20 March 1963.

Maddocks, Melvin. "Riverwind Wafts Off-Broadway." Christian Science Monitor, 14 December 1962.

Oliver, Edith. "Off-Broadway: Nice and Neat." New Yorker, 22 December 1962.

"Riverwind." Variety, 19 December 1962.

Smith, Michael. "Theatre: Riverwind." Village Voice, 20 December 1962.

Taubman, Howard. "Theater: Riverwind." New York Times, 14 December 1962.

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Clay, Carolyn, "If There's Smoke, There's Incest." Boston Phoenix, 6 December 1977.

Eder, Richard. "Stage: Rosmersholm Twice. New York Times, 13 January 1978.

Gale, William K. "Trinity Square Repertory Troupe Offers Ibsen's Rosmersholm." Providence Sunday Journal, 27 November 1977.

Kelly, Kevin. "Trinity Square 'Improves' Ibsen." Boston Evening Globe, 9 December 1977.

Lioce, Tony. "Set Goes Up--and Down." Providence Evening Bulletin, 18 November 1977.

Safford, Edwin. "Unwanted Snickers, Awkward Moments." Providence Journal-Bulletin, 2 December 1977.

The Royal Hunt of the Sun - Trinity Rep

Gale, William K. "Royal Hunt of the Sun Absorbing, Total Experience for Trinity Square." Providence Journal-Bulletin, 13 January 1973.

Kelly, Kevin. "Royal Hunt of the Sun at Trinity Square." Boston Globe, 28 January 1973.

Norton, Elliot. "Revive Royal Hunt at Trinity Square." Boston Herald American, 13 January 1973.

Safford, Edwin. "Even on a Small Scale Royal Hunt Is Stunning." Providence Journal, 14 January 1973.

Swan, Bradford F. "Trinity Square Presents Royal Hunt of the Sun." Providence Journal, 11 January 1973.

Saint Joan - Trinity Rep

Hirsch, Samuel. "Providence Repertory Group Readies Ambitious Season." Boston Herald, 12 October 1966.

Holmberg, Ted. "Trinity Repertory Opens Season with St. Joan." Providence Journal, 13 October 1966.

Kelly, Kevin. "Direction Tops Talent." Boston Morning Globe, 13 October 1966.

The School for Wives - Trinity Rep (1972)

Swan, Bradford F. "School for Wives Staged by Second Trinity Group." Providence Journal, 3 March 1972.

Swan, Bradford F. "School for Wives Staged by Trinity Square Group." Providence Journal, 2 March 1972.

The School for Wives - Trinity Rep (1973)

Swan, Bradford F. "School for Wives Returns to the Trinity Playhouse." Providence Journal, 1 March 1973.

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Gale, William K. "Seduced Is a Circus, but Not the Best in Town." Providence Journal, 26 April 1978.

Gussow, Mel. "Stage: Sam Shepard's Seduced." New York Times, 28 April 1978.

Kelly, Kevin. "Trinity Sq. Makes Best of Shepard's Seduced." Boston Globe, 5 May 1978.

Kroll, Jack. "Crazy Henry." Newsweek Magazine, 8 May 1978.

Safford, Edwin. "Trinity Square's Seduced Gives Pause for Thought." Providence Sunday Journal, 30 April 1978.

"Seduced." Variety, 24 May 1978.

Seven Keys to Baldpate - Trinity Rep (1975)

Barnes, Clive. "Seven Keys to Baldpate Shows Age (62)." New York Times, 26 May 1975.

Seven Keys to Baldpate - Trinity Rep (1976)

Janusonis, Michael. "George M. Back in Providence." Providence Journal, 15 September 1976.

Safford, Edwin. "Unlocking Laughter with Seven Keys to Baldpate." Providence Journal-Bulletin, 18 September 1976.

Son of Man and the Family - Trinity Rep

Gottfried, Martin. "Son of Man and the Family--Charles Manson in Rhode Island." Women's Wear Daily, 23 November 1970.

Hewes, Henry. "The Family That Slays Together." Saturday Review, 26 December 1970.

A Streetcar Named Desire - Trinity Rep

Swan, Bradford F. "Trinity Offers Revitalized Streetcar Named Desire." Providence Journal, n.d. [@8 November 1966].

The Taming of the Shrew - Trinity Rep

Hirsch, Samuel. "The Taming of the Shrew." Boston Herald Traveler, 1 January 1971.

Norton, Elliot. "Cain, Raising Cain, Can't Save Shrew." Record American (Boston), 5 January 1971.

Swan, Bradford F. "Trinity Company Presents The Taming of the Shrew." Providence Journal, 31 December 1970.

Tartuffe - Trinity Rep

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