

NEW BOOKS

FROM SOONERS
AND THE O.U. PRESS

The Reviewer . . .
BILL CRAWFORD, '54
Reporter and Critic,
Lawton Constitution

The Author . . .
LONNY CHAPMAN,
'47bfa

His Work . . .



Louis Antonio with brother Jim (top left) and Maggie.

THE BUFFALO SKINNER

THE MAIL CLERK tossed me a normal-enough release envelope bearing a New York postmark. It was one of those days when news and deadlines were popping like mortars at nearby Fort Sill.

"I'll save it for a rainy day next year," I muttered as the demanding telephone jangled. The frightened envelope made its way to the back of a cluttered drawer.

A couple of rainy days later I once again spied the envelope during a hasty desk-cleaning spree.

The return address read: Linda Productions, 665 Fifth Avenue, New York 22.

The contents read like an old Holmberg Hall play cast, plus a proposal: a proposal to invest \$270 in an off-Broadway show written, produced, directed and acted by a talented crew of O. U. graduates.

It was a news item all right—but a news item for the day when they either went broke or made it. So I forgot I was a reporter for a moment, wistfully eyed the mimeographed sheets enumerating production costs for a play with music dubbed the *Buffalo Skinner*, and I tried to imagine myself as a financier. The dream of adventure blossomed . . . then faded as the epistle again filtered to the back of the messy drawer. Off-Broadway platters are notoriously laden with turkeys.

That was in December.

On February 19th, *Buffalo Skinner*, writ-

ten by O. U. graduate Lonnie Chapman, '47bfa; co-produced by O. U. graduate Monte Frierson, '53bba; set-designed by O. U. graduate Charles Rosen, '52bfa; and starring O. U. graduates Margaret dePriest, '53bfa; Lou Antonio, '55ba; and Lou's brother, Jim, '54bfa—in late February, this play, the play which could be tagged an alumni production of O. U.'s school of drama, opened in New York City's Theatre Marquee. Theatre Marquee is a small off-Broadway hall at 110 East 59th, but it is not so small nor so off-off-Broadway that such eminent New York drama critics as Brooks Atkinson of *The New York Times* and Walter Kerr of *The New York Herald-Tribune* couldn't find their way to aisle seats on the opening night. Also on the aisle was Dennis "Chester" Weaver, '48bfa, a close friend of Chapman's (they hitchhiked together to New York for a career in drama).

Not seated on the aisle, and—worst of all—not holding an interest in *Buffalo Skinner* was—*me*.

Worst of all, because the next reports which came from New York showed that *Buffalo Skinner* had won unanimous critical acclaim; that it was a hit; and that I could have done much worse than to invest the 270 bucks I didn't have in talent I had known and admired at O. U.

Lonnie Chapman, the playwright and di-

rector of *Buffalo Skinner*, is a native of Tulsa and a former O. U. track star. He is the best known of the O. U. group as he has acted in nine Broadway productions, including *Mister Roberts*, *The Glass Menagerie*, and *Come Back, Little Sheba*; also three movies, including *East of Eden*, and *Baby Doll*. In addition to playing the title role in last season's NBC series, *The Investigator*, Chapman directed the west coast production of *Career*, which starred Cliff Robertson.

Chapman's new success, *The Buffalo Skinner* (originally titled *Return to Pauls Valley*), is the story of a gun-touchy young man named Woody Royal (played by Lou Antonio) who has a tendency to sputnik off to nowhere for beatnik reasons. An unwilling incentive is his evangelist father who uses Woody and the family (including Jim Antonio) for collection-plate passing, hallelujahing, and other layings on of the Bible belt.

Handsome Woody rebels, roams easily through dough and women, but finds the religious training he received from his father is not as easy to lose as he figured.

It's doubly hard when he meets up with Lois Mae (played by Margaret de Priest) who is an angel in his father's heavenly choir. Woody's problems are nothing compared to hers.

Determined to convert him back to re-



ligion, she ends up telling him she loves him and will do anything he asks.

Afterwards . . .

She says she wasn't sorry; that she felt as religious in honest love as if there had been sanctions.

The title of the play is explained in interwoven songs: the pioneer buffalo hunter dared all.

Much-praised Miss dePriest first scored in the leading feminine role of Abigail in a successful 16-month off-Broadway revival of the cast to join *Buffalo Skinner*. She of Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* before leaving also appears in TV shows *True Story*, *Frontiers of Faith*, and *Armstrong Circle Theater*.

Before going to New York with her husband, Glen Kezer, another O. U. drama graduate, she had her own TV show for several years in Dallas (*Maggie and Her Friends*). Incidentally, Kezer has been with the cast of *My Fair Lady* since the hit opened three years ago in New Haven.

TV, summer stock, a Canadian film role, teaching at Theater Studio of New York, and off-Broadway productions have occupied Lou Antonio's time since he arrived in Gotham in 1955. Among the shows in which he has acted was a short-lived engagement with Shelley Winters in *Girls of Summer*.

James Antonio, who concentrates on writing for the theater, has been in New York two years. He has had good reviews for work in summer stock.

Rosen has designed several imaginative and critically acclaimed productions, including *The Clandestine Marriage* and Giraudoux's *The Apollo of Bellac* and *Virtuous Island*.

For two years, he designed the sets for the San Antonio, Texas, Opera Company, and his many TV credits include his current assignment, *The Jack Paar Show*. Rosen designed sets, lights and costumes for *The Buffalo Skinner*.

Frierson, an O. U. business school graduate, was east coast manager for the Stratford (Ontario) Canadian Players and has been associated with The Theatre Guild and The American Shakespeare Festival. Last summer, he was treasurer of St. John Terrell's Music Circus.

Incidentally, his childhood ambition as a stage-struck youngster in Bristow was to some day produce a Broadway show starring his playmate, Margaret dePriest.

This enterprising group of Sooners manufactured its own way in the big time. Their names look good on theater marquees—and on news releases which no longer drift to the back of my desk.

RECOMMENDED: By Walter Kerr . . .

"A little play on a familiar theme; that of the youngster who must go all the way round the world to find his way home . . . The amber-tinted mood, wonderfully supported by . . . (a) distantly rumbling score and Charles Rosen's chalk-streaked settings, never breaks. It never even falters,

really . . . (a journey) every inch beautifully charted, though winding up a long way from home . . . Author Lanny Chapman has done his wayside listening well. The pious inflections of a carnival-tent preacher who cannot keep his disbelieving son from becoming 'a well-known sinner' are not simply echoes of all the Bible-belt bravura that literature has already had so much fun with. They are curiously straightforward and free from cant . . . When the grizzled American-Gothic figure of the father forces a reluctant boy to his knees for a bout prayer, you realize that—whatever horror wells up in the lad—the old man is honest granite . . . As the restless son, Lou Antonio bids his straight-backed mother an abrupt goodbye and hooks onto the nearest freight, the sights and sounds of all 'dusty deserts and dry ravines' that flicker past are just as accurate—and evocative enough to make you watch out for mosquitoes . . . As his own director, Mr. Chapman has done better still. Mr. Antonio, urgently driving a knife into the trunk of a tree or staring in prolonged silence at a girl who is all repose, brings fresh and engaging vitality to a part that one would have thought had been copyrighted by Ben Gazzara.

By Brooks Atkinson . . .

"Lou Antonio anatomizes life with a good deal of gusto and good sense . . . (Miss dePriest is in) two or three tenderly written and sweetly acted scenes."

By me too . . .

Soaring with Ambition

SHOW Biz is a tough biz to make good in, but the soaring young Sooners pictured on the opposite page are apparently soaring right on up to that ether where stars are born:

1.) Loella Sansing, '55m.m, Italian opera companies; 2.) Edgar Springer, '57bfa, Boston stock; 3.) Ronnie Claire Edwards, '55bfa, Dallas, Cleveland, Memphis stock; 4.) Kenneth French, '55bfa, '56m, Colorado and California stock; 5.) June Ericson, standby for Judy Holliday in *Bells Are Ringing*, New York nightclub acts, stock and tour companies; 6.) Glenn Kezer, '50bfa, '51m, with *My Fair Lady* since its opening, TV bits; 7.) Clint Kimbrough, '51-'52, off-Broadway parts, roles in *The Strange One* and *Hot Spell*, TV bits;

8.) Jack Ging, '54bba, movie bits; 9.) Camilla Duncan, '48-'51, '53, own TV show in Dallas, appearances on Godfrey and Welk TV shows; 10.) Donald May, '49bfa, off-Broadway and TV roles—including MC on *West Point* series; 11.) Clyde Bassett, '52bfa, Broadway show tour companies; 12.) Helen Richardson, '56m.m., opera and concert work in Germany; 13.) Josephine Landsittel Holtzschue, '35bfa, stock and TV roles; 14.) Monte Aubrey, '56bfa, Colorado and Michigan stock, New York night club acts; (15.) Kathryn Sadlo, '46bfa, '47m, American opera.

16.) Phelps Manning, '50bfa, '51m, New York stock; 17.) Jerry Langenkamp, '53bfa, Robert Shaw Chorale; 18.) Larry Swanson, '49bfa, '51m, off-Broadway roles, Carnegie Hall recitation; 19.) Janey Price Goeb, '38bfa, Hanya Holmer dance group; 20.) Dick Dial, '49, '50, '53 movie roles; 21.) Arthur Bartow, '57bfa, '58m, Kansas City musicals, stock work.

Not pictured, but just as active are: Madgel Hart, '42-'44, New England stock; Tom Hatcher, '52, on and off-Broadway roles; Harold Hahn, '57bfa, '58m, California and Colorado stock; Bill Seay, '55-'57, Colorado and Pennsylvania stock; Bob Harris, '47eng, *Perry Como Show* chorus; Don Crabtree, '53bfa, TV and off-Broadway roles, currently in Broadway musical *Destry Rides Again*; Bob Barr, '48-'50, TV roles; Minnie Jo Curtis, '41bfa, TV roles; Diana Rivers, Broadway roles; Ron Thompson, '57bfa, '58m, New York stock; Bob Minton, '48-'50, off-Broadway roles; Bob Short, '54ba, Dallas stock.

O.U.'s BILLBOARD GREATS

JIM GARNER

BRET MAVERICK of TV's MAVERICK

Movie roles in Darby's Rangers, Sayonara, Up Periscope



'52



Amzie

Strickland

'40bfa

Leads in Inner Sanctum, Mr. D. A. Ford Theater and Playhouse 90

THE GREEN HORNET

Jack

SWINEFORD

'38bfa

DENNIS

Chester in TV's Gunsmoke



WEAVER

Several Broadway parts '48



Joe Callaway

'41bfa

Shakesperean Actor

ALICE HOSTLEY

'41-3

Broadway, TV, Nightclub
COMEDIENNE

New Faces of '52's Boston Beguine Girl
Many other Broadway leads

Emily

STEPHENSON '34bfa

Broadway Musicals - I'd Rather Be Right
Movies - Desert Song, Marco's Millions
radio, TV, concert work



BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR AWARD
for role in
Johnny Eager
Philadelphia Story on Broadway,
Many movies including Tap Roots,
Shane, Tempest

VAN HEFLIN

'32ba

roles in Italian ma
Paisan, To Live in

Gar

moon



'43

ISH
(Wesley)

NIGHT

S



Lonnie

CHAPMAN

'47bfa

TV and Broadway roles

FRANCES

Broadway and London



'37-8

H
pla

NKY
 MLIN
 34
 ect of My
 n, composer,
 er, actor

giuseppe

(JOE BENTON)
 '20ba, '21bfa, '41ma

BENTONELLI



European and American opera companies
 including the Metropolitan
 Drama, Radio, and Concert Work

Concert Pianist
 ERL
FREELAND '32ba

Ivan
 ehrer
 '23bfa
 Pianist

MOBLEY-LUSHANYA

'25

MIRIAM DEARTH

'32 & '36bfa's

The Bon Vivant in many
 movies and Broadway
 productions



Eric Rhode

'27ba


SINGERS

MYERS '33ba
 Children's Recordings for RCA

'31bfa **POPEJOY**
 The Hollywood Singers

HUGHES '36-9
 Freddy Martin Vocalist

'34ba **COTTON**
 Pot O'Gold Singer



Norris
GOFF
 '23-4
 ER of radio and movies'
 LUM and ABNER

sophisticated comedy roles
 in many movies and plays

LOUISE



ALLBRITTON

'35-8

O.U.'s BILLBOARD GREATS