

One-Night Stands *Oriental-Style*

SOONER BARNSTORMING COMBINES ENTERTAINMENT
WITH DIPLOMACY AND INTERNATIONAL GOOD-WILL

By Carolyn G. Hart, '58journ
photos by Frank Garner, '50ba



The late rehearsals, the long hours, the endless search for improvement—all this is forgotten as the first step in the journey begins. Mugging it up from the chartered bus ready to leave for the airport are Ted Pugh and Carol Gladstein.

THE SCENE: Will Rogers Airport, Oklahoma City. Milling throngs. A noisy hubbub with the buzz of flight announcements in the background.

THE TIME: 12:30 p.m., Monday, April 4. A cloudless blue sky and frisky wind—Oklahoma with its best spring foot forward.

THE CAST: Fourteen O.U. drama students, arrayed in their nicest, talking excitedly, and Rupel J. Jones, drama school director, busy with final red tape, looking faintly harassed.

THE PLOT: Departure of the 15 for the Orient and a seven-week tour of U. S. military installations to present a homespun American comedy to servicemen. First stop: Tokyo.

Plot summaries always skim the surface. Behind the boiled storyline is another story—one of backbreaking labor, problems compounding problems, but most of all, a story of delight, excitement, and disciplined ability.

Last July the University's School of Drama was notified that it was one of four university groups in the nation selected to tour the Pacific Command in 1959-60 and had been picked from 53 schools in 27 states applying for the honor.

The USO, American Educational Theater Association and the Department of Defense launched the overseas tour in 1958. All transportation except the initial jump to San Francisco is provided by Military Air Transport Service. To cover meals and lodging expenses, each tour member receives a per diem of \$7.

The per diem allowance is fine. However, it is not available until the end of the tour when cast members are repaid for their expenses. This posed the first knotty problem for Rupel Jones. The average drama student just wouldn't have the money to pay his way and then be reimbursed.

The University of Oklahoma Foundation came to Jones' rescue, providing as an interest-free loan the \$6,300 needed to match the per diem allowance. In addition, the Foundation gave \$700 to the troupe to cover extraordinary expenses of the trip.

Next came speculation on just where the troupe would play. Warned to expect some 35 one-night stands, the actors knew only that their first stop would be Tokyo, where they would receive a detailed itinerary.

However, the troupe is likely to follow the pattern established for similar touring groups. This calls for a final rehearsal in Tokyo before boarding planes for Korea where home-hungry servicemen traditionally provide a warm welcome. Returning to Japan, there are several performances at Army bases and Naval stations.

THE PLANE CARRYING 14 GLOBE-TROTTERING DRAMA STUDENTS IS WINGING ITS WAY OVER THE PACIFIC ON A DREAM TOUR OF U. S. MILITARY BASES. BUT BEFORE TAKE-OFF, DOZENS OF PERSONAL AND TECHNICAL PROBLEMS HAD TO BE SOLVED.

Next on the agenda is Okinawa where special attention is given to Marines on the northern tip who live in less-than-luxurious surroundings and are not permitted to have their families with them.

Three stops are likely in the Philippines, including Clark Air Force Base in Manila. Iwo Jima follows, then the sparkling jewel of the Pacific, Hawaii, and several days of rest before the long flight back to the Mainland and home. The tourers are expected in Norman around May 23.

Along with notification of its selection for the tour, O.U. received word that it would present the three-act comedy, "George Washington Slept Here," by Moss Hart and George S. Kaufman. This posed another problem.

Rule One for USO tours is that all properties, lighting and sound equipment and scenery must weigh no more than 800 pounds, including the weight of the boxes they are packed in.

Unfortunately, the plot of "George Washington Slept Here" is built around and depends upon the set. In the play, Newton Fuller, a New York businessman with a yen to return to nature, buys a run-down Bucks County, Pennsylvania, home. The story revolves around his efforts to renovate the house and then hold on to it when pressed by creditors.

As Rupel Jones points out ruefully, at least two sets would have been built if the play had been selected for a normal University Playhouse production. Two sets were out of the question if the 800-pound limit was to be observed and so the first test of ingenuity came.

RAYMOND D. LARSON, drama school instructor and technical director, came up with one set usable both as the renovated and unrenovated backdrop, and, in addition, constructed a set weighing only 120 pounds.

To achieve one set masquerading as two, Larson used two simple devices making a world of difference visually. The set shows the interior of the farmhouse living room. As the play opens disuse is clearly indicated by cracked windows and aged curtains with patches. The next scene reflects thorough housecleaning and renovation. How? Between scenes the set is transformed by bright and shiny windows and

new curtains, which simulate an early American wallpaper pattern. Quick scene changes are possible because the new curtains back up the old ones and all that is required is a deft swing of the curtains over their rod and, presto, the new side is up.

To achieve the lightweight set, Larson decided to build the flats of plywood. Normally, flats are constructed of Douglas fir or white pine, ranging from 1-by-3 to 1-by-4 inches in thickness. The plywood flats are three-eighths of an inch thick. Because of the way in which the plywood is cut, minimum thickness provides maximum strength.

DECISION on construction material didn't solve all of the set problems. Regulations are clear-cut on the size of boxes and bags permitted aboard military craft. Nothing can be more than 4 feet long, 2 feet wide or more than 18 inches in depth.

Now sets, particularly sets with walls and a fireplace, can't easily be built just four feet tall. The answer—hinges, hinges everywhere. Each flat is constructed so that removal of one pin starts a folding-in process, and the flat ends up as four units one on top of the other, ready for packing. The flats not only pack and unpack easily, but the hinge system makes setting up the set a simple process.

Jerome Coray, director of the USO entertainment department, flew in from New York for a campus performance March 25. He was so impressed by Sooner ingenuity in planning the set that he raised O.U.'s weight limit to 950 pounds, thereby removing any worries of keeping under the limit.

The Sooners had already been busy paring down the weight of their lighting and sound equipment, the heaviest items of all. Heeding warnings from previous tour groups, the O.U. troupe took along all lighting and sound equipment necessary for a performance because auditorium facilities just can't be counted on.

The troupe took along 12 high-wattage lamps, which are broken into sets of three each. One set is clamped to each "batton." (A batton stands 15 feet high and is composed of a tripod base, topped by a pole

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One-Night Stands Continued



Nofle McClanahan, who doubles as stage manager and the bold, bad villain, gets a helping hand in readying the flats from Comedienne Carol Wilson. With everything in its proper place, the set can be erected in 28 minutes.



Putting up curtains is not a novelty for newlyweds, but in the case of John and Linda Belt, this domestic chore is part of their work on the set. The two talented cast members squeezed their wedding in between rehearsals to combine the tour with a honeymoon in the Orient.



Hands can tell a tale of their own. The worry and concern, the tense concentration generated in rehearsals are reflected in the gestures (from left) of Ken French, Carol Gladstein, John Belt and Marilyn Sue Garrett. Ken and Marilyn Sue are cast in the two lead roles.



Standing in the wings can be a nerve-wracking business for cast members waiting for cues to provide the play with lights, sound and action.

Taking pains with eye makeup is Carol Gladstein. An experienced actress, she appears as the actress-wife of an off-stage Romeo.



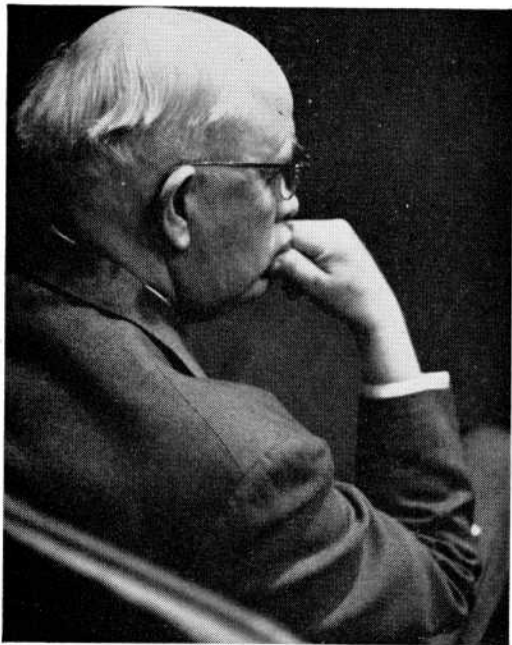
Ted Pugh, who shines as the unhandy handyman, takes time out to help Mary Kate Denny make up for the role of the brattish nephew.

A last-minute check and Nancy Stewart is ready to take the stage as the Fullers' pretty daughter, plagued by a severe case of "heart" troubles.



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One-Night Stands Continued



Keeping weather eye cocked at final rehearsals, Jones watches as the finished product begins to take shape.



Weary Leading Lady Garrett waits patiently for her cue to return to stage. She is before the audience almost continuously from curtain to curtain.

"George Washington Slept Here"



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which is crossed by a bar on which the lights are clamped.)

There are two battons. One is placed in front of the stage to the left and the other in front to the right. Another ingenuity test was passed when the battons were so designed that they telescope into pieces three feet long.

Two other sets of lights are clamped to parts of the flats used for bracing, not scenery, on either side of the stage. These four sets of lights, focused properly, provide illumination for a performance. The light-holders were designed and built in lightweight aluminum by A. Laurence Mortensen, associate professor of drama.

Cables running from the sets of lights are plugged into a special switchboard designed and built especially for this show by Charles C. Suggs, associate professor of drama. The control panel contains switches controlling all the lighting and the sound. A tape recorder carrying a sound track is spring-mounted above the control panel.

When the crew sets up shop to give a show it is only necessary to plug the light cables and the loudspeaker into the switchboard then hook the switchboard into a handy outlet.

Although bewildered and bedeviled by questions of sets, lighting and sound—all technical problems—Rupel Jones didn't forget that the play is the thing.

Immediately after the announcement of O.U.'s selection excitement spread like a wheat fire through the drama school. Everyone wanted to go.

Jones needed not only to find competent and outstanding actors and actresses, he had to have youngsters willing to work hard together and to look upon difficulties and inconveniences as part of a great adventure. There can be no prima donnas on a 20,000-mile tour. The cast had to be stable, steady, and talented, long on co-operation and short on temper.

Casting slowly, only a few roles at a time, Jones picked with a sure hand.

Work together they did. Night after night. There were 7:30 to 10:30 p.m. rehearsals at least five nights a week for five weeks preceding the campus performance. All the actors came and they all worked, and at least one real romance reached its culmination during those arduous hours of make-believe.

John Belt, a handsome drama senior from Norman, and Linda Bennett, pretty dark-haired voice major from Oklahoma City (the only non-dramatist in the troupe),

met when they appeared in "Twilight Time" summer musicals during high school days in Oklahoma City. They rediscovered one another at O.U. when John returned here after completing service in the armed forces. Having dated steadily for the past three years, marriage was definitely part of their plan for the future. When both were selected for the cast they decided to combine the acting jaunt with a honeymoon.

"After all," John shrugged, "how else could we afford a honeymoon in the Orient?"

Their decision to marry on March 12, however, meant real sacrifices in the time normally allotted to planning a wedding. Linda fought off a bout of flu, made every rehearsal and at the same time seized free moments, scarce as they were, to spend on wedding plans.

Typical of their schedule was the fact that they rehearsed as usual from 7:30 to 10:30 p.m. on Friday, the night before their marriage, and were both back on the Holmberg stage Sunday afternoon and evening for rehearsals.

In the lead role of Newton Fuller is Kenneth French, a candidate for his master's degree from Wilburton. Determined to stay on the stage, French returned to O.U. from several years in Santa Ana, California, where he worked as a librarian but spent every free moment in the community theater. He has had roles at the Pasadena Playhouse, Hinsdale Summer Theater (Illinois), and Cripple Creek (Colorado) Theater.

French plays the role of Fuller to perfection, projecting the image of a New York Cityan trying desperately to go native, with laughable results. Yet, French also wrings commiseration for all without roots.

Fuller's city-happy wife, Annabelle, who finds the country distinctly uncomfortable yet is finally won to rural ways, is played in depth by Marilyn Sue Garrett, Purcell senior. A petite five-foot four inches, Marilyn Sue is a winsome lass with black eyes. Although she hopes to go on professionally in acting, as all the tour members do, Marilyn Sue plans to take a back seat to her husband's career after her marriage next summer to a drama graduate student at Kansas University.

The unhandy handyman, Mr. Kimber, is the doleful prototype of all slow-moving, provoking workmen. Anadarko senior Ted Pugh brings a drawling, cover-alld Mr. Kimber of life. Tall, lean and blue-eyed, Ted has a genuine flair for comedy and is

a regular prizewinner in such roles at O.U. He gained summer stock experience with the Cape Playhouse, Cape Cod, in 1957 and in 1959 studied at the Neighborhood Playhouse in New York City.

Another major role is that of Uncle Stanley, the crochety "rich" uncle who parlays a reputation for wealth into a life of ease by concealing his pauperism and playing upon his nephews' will expectations. John Belt is a scene stealer in the role, presenting to perfection the facade of an old man within whom, however, the fire of cupidity and vitality burn bright. John is a veteran of 11 major O.U. productions.

Midwest City junior Nancy Stewart, a slender, black-haired, brown-eyed beauty, is Madge Fuller, Newton's daughter. Oklahoma City graduate student Harry Scott, '57bfa, a handsome, lean six-footer, is Madge's boyfriend, Steve Eldridge.

Linda Bennett Belt is fusty Mrs. Douglas, a matronly neighbor of the Fullers whose interests are bounded by her garden and the local historical society.

Burneyville senior Eldon Hallum, another lean six-footer, is actor Clayton Evans who hovers around Madge Fuller although endowed with a wife himself, actress Rena Leslie, who is portrayed by McAlester senior Carol Gladstein.

The villain of the piece, Mr. Prescott, an unpleasant neighbor and bank director who wants to foreclose on the Fullers, is effectively played by Healdton senior Nofle McClanahan, who has a Gary Cooperish physique, standing at six-foot, two inches and weighing 155 pounds.

Contrary to Shakespearian custom, a girl portrays a boy, and a very brattish one. Mary Kate Denny, pixyish 19-year-old sophomore from Tulsa, didn't blink an eye at sacrificing her curls for a hoydenish haircut. Mary Kate is a creditable Raymond, the little louse of a nephew visiting the Fullers.

Cushing junior Carol Wilson, a wry comedian offstage, is tremendously effective onstage as Hester, the gawking maid.

Rounding out the cast are Oklahoma City sophomores Dave Spradling and Jean Sorrell, who descend upon the Fullers as guests of Madge at the same time Uncle Stanley puts in an appearance.

The cast members' responsibilities extend far beyond their roles, however, for they must serve as their own stagehands, property men and wardrobe caretakers.

Soft-voiced and even-tempered Nofle McClanahan carries a heavy load as stage man-

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ager. It is his responsibility to see that the play goes without a hitch. Carol Gladstein must see that the wardrobe, designed by Mrs. Helen Lauterer, associate professor of drama, is pressed and ready for each performance.

Lighting is under Dave Spradling's supervision while Eldon Hallum handles the sound.

All cast members work under the direction of Nofle to set up the scenery before each performance and strike (dismantle) it after a show. This too was rehearsed before the exodus to the Orient and, working as closely together as show horses in harness, the troupe cut the time for setting up to 28 minutes and striking time to 10 minutes.

The job doesn't end with striking, however, for the sets, costumes, props and lighting and sound equipment must all be packed away, ready for tomorrow's move. Then the troupe members are likely to head for the officers' or enlisted men's clubs, perhaps to offer a variety show which the cast put together in between rehearsals in Norman.

Although entertaining servicemen is their goal, the cast members are under no illusion that entertainment is the only product of their tour. Perhaps even more important, they realize, is the impression they are leaving behind them in their travels.

In shopping and sightseeing tours, in personal contacts with natives of the countries they visit, these 14 young Americans and their director are leaving behind pictures of America and Americans.

It is almost a certainty that this picture is a good one for these young people bent all their energies and enthusiasm on the trip, many finishing 12 hours of classwork in eight weeks in order to go.

As for tact—this troupe has it.

The original script leans heavily for humor upon the inundation of the hapless Fullers by every variety of insect imaginable, with particular emphasis on those pesky Japanese beetles. Willing to take a giant step in tact to avoid even the suggestion of offense to Orientals, the troupe now has a heck of a time with those dratted Mexican beetles.

Mrs. Goggin (the former Georgia Baird, '51ed) have a son, David Jon, 4.

MARRIAGES: Miss Caroline Wiest, '58ba, Lawton, and Jerome J. Cavanaugh, Austin, Minnesota, were married February 23 in the Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church, Lawton. They are living in Fort Lewis, Washington, where Cavanaugh is an artillery officer.

Miss Patricia Ann Walker, '58journ, Chickasha, and Charles Stuart Wallace, Jr., Houston, Texas, were married February 27 in the First Christian Church, Chickasha. The Wallaces have established a home in Houston.

BIRTH: Bill Rosen, '58, and Mrs. Rosen, '58, El Paso, Texas, have chosen the name Donna Lynn for their daughter born in January.

1959

Laurence B. Benton, '59, Tulsa, was commissioned a navy ensign at the Naval School of Pre-Flight, Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida. Ensign Benton has been assigned to the Saufley Field Naval Auxiliary Air Station, also in Pensacola.

John T. French, '59, Erick, recently completed the 30-week officer's basic course at the Marine Corps Schools, Quantico, Virginia.

Amos R. Reed, '59, Duncan, recently completed the 30-week officer's basic course at the Marine Corps Schools, Quantico, Virginia.

Jerry Williams, '59bus, Wilburton, is attending The George Washington University School of Law. Williams is employed in the office of U. S. Senator Robert S. Kerr.

Lt. Theodore K. James, '59eng, Washington, has completed the nine-week ranger course at The Infantry School, Fort Benning, Georgia. James entered the army in May, 1959.

Terry West, '59, former editor of the *Ada Weekly News*, has joined the public relations staff of Sunray Mid-Continent Oil Company, Tulsa.

Lt. William S. Thompson, III, '59eng, recently completed the 30-week officer's basic course at the Marine Corps Schools, Quantico, Virginia. Thompson is from Amarillo, Texas.

MARRIAGES: Miss Louise Allen Rucker, Bartlesville, and James William Connor, '59Law, Tulsa, were married February 27 in St. John's Catholic Church, Bartlesville. They are living in Bartlesville where Connor is assistant county attorney of Washington county and Mrs. Connor is associated with radio station KWON.

Miss Nancy Fulmer, '59bus, and Daniel Reynolds Japhet, both of Houston, were married February 20 in the First Methodist Church, Idabel. The Japhets have established a home in Houston. Japhet is a graduate of the University of Texas.

Miss Sally Jo Anderson, '59h.ec, and Lynn M. Geyer, Jr., were married recently and are living in Tulsa.

Miss Rosalie Vivian Patterson, '59, Ponca City, and Charles Thomas Cross, '59, Houston, Texas, were married February 27 in the First Presbyterian Church, Ponca City. They are living in Houston.

1960

Joe Rector, '60, Oklahoma City, has joined the sales office of Uarco Business Forms. Rector is a native of Muskogee and was a co-captain of O.U.'s 1959 football team.

Roger Lambert, '60, has accepted a position as instructor in the history department at the University of Wichita, Kansas. Lambert is now a candidate for the Ph.D. degree in history at O.U.

Frank Richard Harris, '60ba, Cushing, is enrolled as a student at the American Institute for Foreign Trade, Phoenix, Arizona. Specializing in Latin America, Harris is taking the school's intensive training course in preparation for a career in American business or government abroad.

MARRIAGES: Miss Lynnda Lee Wolford, '60, and Stanley Edward Porch, '60, both of Oklahoma City, were married February 20 in Watchorn Chapel of St. Luke's Methodist Church, Oklahoma City. Both are seniors at O.U.

Miss Linda Lackey Bennett, '60, Oklahoma City, and John Lampton Belt, '60, Norman, were married March 12 in the home of the bride's parents in Oklahoma City. The Belts are living in Norman. They are both members of the O.U. production of "George Washington Slept Here," which went on a 20,000-mile tour of U. S. military installations in Asia and the Pacific in April.

Miss Patricia Ruth Osborne, '60, and John Don-dore Cies, '60, both of Oklahoma City, were married March 18 in Ingham Chapel of the First Methodist Church, Oklahoma City. The couple has established a home in Norman, where both will continue their studies at O.U. Cies is working toward his master's degree in economics.

BIRTH: Peter J. Ristuben, '60, and Mrs. Ristuben, Norman, have chosen the name Peter John for their son born March 16. They also have a daughter, Ann, 20 months. Ristuben is a graduate assistant in the history department at O.U. at present and has accepted a position in the history department at Pacific Lutheran College, Tacoma, Washington.

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