Davey Marlin-Jones: Director, educator, visionary

Frances Jane Talley
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/rtds

Repository Citation
https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/rtds/219
INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.
Davey Marlin-Jones: Director, educator, visionary

Talley, Frances Jane, M.A.
University of Nevada, Las Vegas, 1992
DAVEY MARLIN-JONES;
DIRECTOR, EDUCATOR,
VISIONARY

by
Frances Jane Talley

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts
in
Theatre
Department of Theatre Arts
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
August, 1992
The Thesis of Frances Jane Talley for the degree of Master of Arts in Theater is approved.

Chairperson, Jeffrey Koep, Ph.D.

Examiner Committee Member, Jerry L. Crawford, Ph.D.

Examiner Committee Member, Ellis M. Pryce-Jones, M.F.A.

Graduate Faculty Representative, Michael L. McColloum, M.F.A.

Graduate Dean, Ronald W. Smith, Ph.D.

University of Nevada, Las Vegas
August, 1992
ABSTRACT

Davey Marlin-Jones has been many things in his lifetime: a magician, a playwright, an actor, a teacher, and a director. The focus of this paper is on his experience in professional and regional theatre as a director, and his collaborations, methodology, and philosophy which developed from his experiences.

Chapters I and II chronologically trace the life and directing experiences of Marlin-Jones, and in doing so reveal how his early exposure to the world of entertainment was instrumental in shaping his career and in forming a strong philosophy that would serve his work as well as his life.

A director's collaborative experiences are very important to the total production process. Marlin-Jones has been most effective in his collaborations with new playwrights and actors. His most difficult collaborations have been with designers. All three are discussed in Chapter III through interviews with artists from each area.

A director's rehearsal process is best understood through actual rehearsal experiences. For this reason, Chapter IV, Directing Methodology, follows the call-back auditions and first three days of rehearsal for *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*, by Bertolt Brecht, a play Marlin-Jones directed at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, in the spring of 1992. The chapter continues with Marlin-Jones's
method of directing as compared to other directors, but frequently returns to the Brecht play.

Chapter V reemphasizes Marlin-Jones's strong connection between his real life and his theatre life. It examines his philosophy in both areas, looks at his future plans, and summarizes Marlin-Jones as director, educator, visionary and person.

The methodology for this thesis has been for the most part primary research through interviews (both personal and telephone), lectures, and rehearsal sessions. Marlin-Jones's imaginative, and instinctive approach in directing are also evidenced in this research as a style which captures the essence of life, as Marlin-Jones sees it, and transports it to the stage. As an Associate Professor in the Theatre Department at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, in 1992, Davey Marlin-Jones has found another way to share his talents by guiding young actors, directors, and playwrights in their pursuit of theatre careers.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

APPROVAL PAGE . . . . . . . . . . . . ii
ABSTRACT . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . iii
PREFACE . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . vii

Chapter

1. EARLY YEARS AND MAGIC . . . . . . . . . 1
2. PROFESSIONAL AND REGIONAL THEATRE . . . . . 8
   NEW YORK CITY, FLINT MICHIGAN, WASHINGTON, D.C.,
   ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI
3. COLLABORATORS . . . . . . . . . . . . 28
   NEW PLAYWRIGHTS
   Lanford Wilson, Oliver Hailey, Red Shuttleworth,
   Playwriting Principles
   WORKING WITH ACTORS
   Margaret Winn-Jones, Joneal Joplin, Eric Oram,
   Difficult Actors
   DESIGNERS
   Ellis Pryce-Jones, Tom Bloom, Lois Carder,
   Peter Sargent
4. DIRECTING METHODOLOGY . . . . . . . . . . 67
5. PHILOSOPHY ........................................................................... 92

FUTURE THOUGHTS, SUMMATION

APPENDIX

PLAYS DIRECTED BY DAVEY MARLIN-JONES .......... 105

WORKS CITED ........................................................................ 119
PREFACE

When this author first considered a topic for a masters thesis, Dr. Jeffrey Koep, Chair of the Theatre Arts Department at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, suggested Davey Marlin-Jones and his life as a director in professional and regional theatre as a possible choice. The author had attended the 1987 Stage Directors Colloquium at California State University in Fullerton, and participated in the Jose Quintero weekend, but was unable to attend Marlin-Jones's weekend in 1988. Impressed with Quintero, and the fact that Marlin-Jones was comparable as a director, created an interest in the author to research and observe Marlin-Jones as a director. Also included in the decision was that nothing of this scope has been written about Marlin-Jones. Having this thesis on Davey Marlin-Jones in the library at UNLV is advantageous to students and faculty.

As a professional director on the East Coast and in the Midwest, Marlin-Jones has worked with many artists in professional theatre who have contributed or have had a major impact on contemporary American theatre. This fact along with Marlin-Jones's collaborations, his methodology, and his philosophy will be the endeavor of this thesis. His wide interests in life add color to his directing.

Marlin-Jones's love of magic, coupled with his strong Midwest family ties, have given him the confidence and integrity to shape his career. He has not been one to sit and wait for something to happen.
His remarkable energy and chutzpah have helped him in creating and sustaining directorial positions and consequently allowed him to earn his living as a free-lance director for most of his life. Thus, this thesis is not just about the life of Davey Marlin-Jones, but about how his life and philosophy have been major forces in the creation of a directing style in America theatre.

The success of a thesis using primary research rests on the subject's cooperation. Davey Marlin-Jones could not have been more cooperative; he granted the author 15 or more hours of interviews, the address, phone number and introductory letter to Lanford Wilson, and a complete list of his directing credits. I am gratefully appreciative for his very generous help in researching this thesis.

I would like to thank Dr. Jeffrey Koep, Dr. Jerry Crawford, and Professor Ellis Pryce-Jones for their guidance in the writing of a scholarly paper. Dr. Crawford also deserves special acknowledgement for his tireless effort in editing the first draft. Finally, I wish to thank my daughter, Wendy, for her research at the University of Southern California, Los Angeles Library; my husband, Rick, for his editing help; and Brett Lindemann, graduate office attendant, for the many hours he spent helping me at the computer.
CHAPTER I

EARLY YEARS AND MAGIC

Because of a Mickey Rooney/MGM attitude that I had been reared with, I thoroughly believed that all I had to do was work hard all my life, work on my magic act, be kind to my mother, marry Judy Garland and someday out of the darkness would come Paul Whiteman saying, ‘Say kid, you’ve got talent.’ I knew that was what was going to happen to my life. (Davey Marlin-Jones interview, 3 March 1992)

Duke Ellington’s Band Show was the first theatre Davey Marlin-Jones ever saw. It scared him because of the lighting effects. He remembers the entire area turning blue and disembodied saxophones floating in air; it was 1935, and Marlin-Jones was two years old.

Marlin Jones’s early life experiences viewing these Band Shows as well as performing as a magician helped determine his career. As his interest in the theatre increased, he enjoyed acting and writing plays. His experiences in writing and directing mini-plays for television during his college-days whetted his appetite for directing. Finally, his love of all the aspects of a production plus his desire to create a total effect guided him into the realm of the director.

Marlin-Jones’s home town, Winchester, Indiana, was about one hundred miles from any big city. Since legitimate theatre was considered expensive for the Jones family, they took Marlin-Jones to
Band Shows in Indianapolis, Indiana; Cincinnati, Ohio; and Dayton, Ohio. Duke Ellington, Benny Goodman and other big bands did one-hour shows six times a day in-between the movies. The shows consisted of big band music, tap-dancers, novelty acts, and comics.

Once Marlin-Jones reached elementary school age, he practiced routines he had observed in Band Shows. He convinced his teachers in Winchester Elementary School to let him perform before various groups at school. Occasionally, while performing a routine, he would forget it and have to "flesh in a new routine." (Marlin-Jones interview, 3 March 1992) As a result, Marlin-Jones was exposed to performance at a very early age.

Marlin-Jones's mother believed so strongly in her son getting into some form of theatre she actually patched up a riff in the family that had been at odds for generations so that her son could learn magic from a second cousin. This cousin was considered a professional magician in Winchester, and even though he was not a very good magician, he was a good teacher. Thus, Marlin-Jones learned magic, felt the warm response of his audiences, and created a style.

"Davey Jones, the World's Wackiest Wizard and his Circus of Magic" (starring Davey Jones assisted by the senior Marlin Jones) toured 40 states. His father was not experienced in magic shows, but he assisted his young son and did all the non-glory work. After a work day, the senior Marlin Jones would drive his son to a performance, assist him, and then drive him home. Sometimes when the performance was a great distance from Winchester, they would
not arrive home until as late as four in the morning. Marlin-Jones's father would rest a few hours and then go to work. He wanted his son to succeed in life and be happy, and he was willing to sacrifice to help him. Marlin-Jones was just 13 when he began his touring magic show, and he continued until he was ready to leave for college.

Marlin-Jones also became interested in "mental magic" when he was 13. "Mental magic" is another word for psychic entertaining, a simulated form of mental telepathy. Joseph Dunninger, a super star in the magic world, had a radio show on NBC that interested Marlin-Jones. He began to incorporate "mental magic" into his magic shows. However, Marlin-Jones recalls a difficulty he had in selling "mental magic." "It's very hard to be taken seriously as a "mental" magician when you're 13 years old." (Marlin-Jones interview, 26 June 1992)

When he wasn't working on magic routines or seeing Band Shows, Marlin-Jones was listening to the radio.

When I was three or four years old, I stretched out in front of the radio and got up when I was 18. I can still remember how my mother very quietly would slide pie plates of fudge into my concentration and of course disintegrated my teeth at a very rapid rate. (Marlin-Jones interview, 3 March 1992)

Rod Serling was a very popular writer during Marlin-Jones's high school years. Serling, a war veteran, graduated from Antioch College May 1950; Marlin-Jones entered the following September. His admiration for Serling was one reason Marlin-Jones chose to attend Antioch, a small co-op school in Yellow Springs, Ohio. He was very impressed with Serling's radio plays which frequently dealt with the "little people who were squeezed out," such as his plays Patterns and
Requiem For A Heavyweight. These were and would continue to be the kind of stories to which Marlin-Jones would be drawn. He was never to meet Mr. Serling, but he wrote him a letter and in the reply got the name of the head of the writing department at Antioch, Nolan Miller, who had taught Serling. Marlin-Jones attributes many principles he has used everyday of his life as being taught to him by this professor. One principle which helped him as a young playwright and which he uses today in teaching playwrights deals with “the whole business of inner surprise and the capacity to be surprised.” (Marlin-Jones interview, 20 March 1992) He feels that this principle translates particularly well into the theatre. (see Chapter 2, playwriting principles)

Just before his 18th birthday, Marlin-Jones had a book on magic published which included comedy techniques for professional magicians, tips on how to make standard tricks funny, and how one can invent funny tricks. He is completing another book in 1992 entitled, Magic Matters, published by Collector’s Workshop. Its subject is “rethinking what a magician does in an effort to communicate with the audience.”

Growing up during World War II had an affect on this young Quaker boy living in the Midwest, and though he was not very active in the American Friends Service Committee, he had always wanted to be a minister. By the time he left Winchester for college, he realized all the issues he did not want to take to the pulpit. One such issue was the Anti-War Acts which were sweeping the country at that time. He had an aunt who was from Germany, and even though she was an
American citizen she and her family were close to starving. His mother got involved by organizing food and clothing for this family as well as for other families. This was typical of the Jones family in that they always seemed to do unpopular, charitable things without overtly seeking conflict. Marlin-Jones has carried on this trait in the theatre, fighting for plays that offend somebody. Plays such as; The Gingham Dog, by Lanford Wilson, about an inter-racial marriage which Marlin-Jones directed at the height of racial unrest in 1969, and, The Wolves, by Robert Koesis, a play dealing with the subject of dope addicts (replete with obscenities). “Every theatre that I’ve ever run there’s been some chairman of the board calling me up on the carpet for doing the wrong kind of theatre.” (Marlin-Jones interview, 20 March 1992) Marlin-Jones believes that “artists are disturbers of a counterfeit peace. ‘Let well enough alone,’ says the philosopher. ‘Never,’ says the artist.” (Marlin-Jones, Stage Director’s Colloquium, 1988, p.38) Marlin-Jones is an artist.

After graduating from Winchester High School in 1950, Marlin-Jones’s plan was to go to college to work out the “kinks” in his magic act. His roommate was from New York and lived near Carnegie Hall. One semester Marlin-Jones saved his money (by eating only Spanish rice) in order to visit this roommate in New York and see some theatre. When he got to New York on March 28, 1951, Marlin-Jones saw four Band Shows, four stage productions and three or four radio and television shows within a four-day period. He saw the Band Shows of Russ Morgan and Guy Mitchell, with singer Patti Page and comedian Allen King. He remembers seeing the stage productions:
Arthur Koestler's *Darkness at Noon*, starring Claude Rains; Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur's *Twentieth Century*, starring Jose Ferrer; and the Cole Porter musical *Out of This World*, with Charlotte Greenwood. Without losing his love and touch for magic, his eyes had been opened to another bigger and brighter world of entertainment, the world of professional theatre.

Antioch College was a co-op school which meant Marlin-Jones only attended classes 20 weeks out of the year; the rest of the time he worked at jobs the school helped him secure. One such job the college helped him procure in 1954 was doing props for shows at a Dayton, Ohio television station, WLWD Crossley Broadcasting System. Marlin-Jones convinced the station to let him write for their live shows if he would also continue to do their props; before long he was also allowed to direct mini-pieces of theatre on the shows. At the age of 22, he began amassing directing credits which have grown to the present day number of 874 (see Appendix).

After the Dayton television job ended, Marlin-Jones found work at WTVN Television in Columbus, Ohio as host of the "Captain Davey Show." From 1954 until 1955, he was Captain Davey Jones, Skipper of the Good Ship Columbus. Each day on the show he would converse with Arthur Jacobs, a "talking giraffe." In real life, Jacobs had been a Dr. of Philosophy of Education at Michigan State. He had been fired during the educational purge in Lansing, Michigan for un-American activities brought about by the McCarthy hearings in the 1950s. This was only one of many situations in which Marlin-Jones would be exposed to the injustices of that era. Marlin-Jones always
remembered these discarded people and in later years would give them jobs in plays whenever he could.

Marlin-Jones's incredible energy and his ability to work several jobs at one time began to show up in his next job. He worked for a small advertising agency between 1955 and 1958 in Detroit, Michigan that was run by a man who allowed Marlin-Jones to pursue his work in theatre as long as it did not interfere with his work at the agency. A typical day for Marlin-Jones was to get up at five o'clock in the morning and put in a full eight-hour day's work at his regular job; then he would drive across the border into Canada and direct a summer stock show, drive back to Detroit, go to bed, and start all over the next day. He directed in Canada from 1956 until 1958, doing such plays as Twentieth Century, John Van Druten's Voice of the Turtle and George Axelrod's The Seven Year Itch (see Appendix). The second year Marlin-Jones was artistic director and he chose Tennessee Williams's The Glass Menagerie, Michael Gazzo's A Hatful of Rain, Oscar Wilde's The Importance of Being Earnest, and George Bernard Shaw's Pygmalion for the season. Once the agency grew to multimillion dollar capacity, Marlin-Jones was made vice president, and his salary was increased considerably. He realized if he did not leave then, he never would. Just before his 26th birthday in 1958, Marlin-Jones gave his notice, and shortly after he was on his way to New York to work in American professional theatre.
CHAPTER II

PROFESSIONAL AND REGIONAL THEATRE

NEW YORK CITY

Arriving in New York in 1958 was not the wonderful experience Marlin-Jones had imagined. Like many young people in the fifties, Marlin-Jones had gotten married right after graduation from college. The break-up of his first marriage occurred at the same time he arrived in New York, and it threw him into a deep depression. He sentenced himself to a kind of solitary confinement (during which he occupied his time writing plays), and other than going out to get food and the New York Times, he literally did not leave his apartment. His traditional attitudes about life experiences caused him to take all the blame for his failed marriage and not to question whether or not it was worth saving. One day a friend of his sent an Off Broadway director to his apartment to offer Marlin-Jones a stage manager’s job. He took the job which required him to run the show calling all the cues. Along with the stage manager’s position, Marlin-Jones acted as prop master. He already had his AFTRA (American Federation of Television and Radio Artists) card, and this job allowed him to obtain his Equity (stage actors union) card. Marlin-Jones was paid $15 a week during rehearsals and $40 a week once the play was in production. For salaries at the time, he remembers this as being a
pittance, but he was happy working in the theatre. Marlin-Jones believes that if someone hadn’t shown up at his door, “I might still be in that apartment because I was so down on myself. Theatre got me out of that. It literally dragged me into reality.” (Marlin-Jones interview, 20 March 1992)

After his first job in New York as stage manager and prop master, one thing led to another and Marlin-Jones had to choose between going back to Canada to direct summer stock or working for the New York Theatre Company (the Borscht Circuit), a collection of resort hotels and night clubs in the Catskill Mountains in upstate New York. Since he had no eastern directing experience, he chose the latter. He directed 90-minute versions of many of the popular plays of the time, and he credits much of his early training in directing to the Borscht Circuit, from 1959 to 1963, where he directed a lot of plays in a short period of time (see Appendix).

One very important principle Marlin-Jones learned working the Borscht Circuit was time management in regard to directing. He learned how to juggle his rehearsal periods in order to prepare several plays at one time within 30 hours (which was Equity regulation). He accomplished this task by working in increments of four hours. New groups of actors would be scheduled every four hours. The rehearsal schedule would go ten-to-two, two-to-six, six-to-ten, and ten-to-two. By his second year with the circuit, he was directing (what could be compared to) three equity repertory companies. When asked how he managed to keep this up, he replied, “I loved directing. I loved working, and the answer was as long as
one kept knocking out plays that didn’t bomb, they would let me keep directing.” (Marlin-Jones interview, 27 March 1992)

Another principle Marlin-Jones learned on the Borscht Circuit was that playing an action rather than talking about it kept all kinds of audiences interested. Two factors that helped him realize this were, one, his audiences were predominantly European and English was their second language; and, two, the plays were included for free in their vacation plan. If audiences became confused or bored, they would just leave. As a result, he taught his actors how to play an action every moment because the instant they started talking about something rather than doing it, the audience would leave.

That’s where I found The Big Knife by Clifford Odets, which has been one of my best friends ever since. It’s a classic example of a play that will play with an audience where they may not understand every word, but they understand every action, every purpose. (Marlin-Jones interview, 27 March 1992)

From the late forties though the seventies, Equity Library Theatre in New York City was a popular showcase for actors and directors. Everyone worked voluntarily except for five paying positions. One of these positions was managing director, and in 1963 Marlin-Jones was hired for this position. He held it for two years and even after that he continued to act as an advisor. Equity Library Theatre started right after World War II to provide another showcase for the influx of male actors returning from the war. Actor’s Equity and the library system got together and library basements were made available for Equity actors to do showcase productions of plays that had already been produced. Since producers used Equity Library
Theatre as a kind of employment source, Marlin-Jones’s position allowed him to get on a first name basis with producers and other theatre artists. It became relatively easy for him to sit down with Arthur Miller and get permission to do *A Memory of Two Mondays* or to call up Tennessee Williams’ agent and arrange to do *Suddenly Last Summer* without having to pay royalties on either play. As a result, Marlin-Jones was building associations and friendships with many artists in theatre that would be useful in later years in his career as a director. During his two-year stint at Equity Library Theatre, Marlin-Jones produced 42 shows. The breakdown was 11 shows one season, 10 the next and 21 Monday night productions. As a result, the connections he made while Managing Director at Equity Library Theatre proved to be a valuable source for Marlin-Jones in his future directing endeavors.

**FLINT, MICHIGAN**

The summer of 1966, before he went to Washington, D.C., Marlin-Jones got his first major musical theatre job. It was a 1700-seat house in Clio, Michigan, a small town outside of Flint, Michigan. His Borscht Circuit experience with “time allotment” proved invaluable when it came to putting together a big musical in one week. He continued to learn his trade by juggling Equity hours in order to avoid paying overtime. He was allowed 48 hours for a show, and 18 of those were to be performance; thus, he would actually put up full-scale musicals in just 30 hours. The way he accomplished this was to block a scene with the principle actors while the chorus
members were learning their music. When he was finished with the principles, he would block the chorus minus the principles.

After awhile one discovered that the management of time was at least 48 percent as important as the 52 percent of what you did. Just the act of managing time was an enormous part of producing big stock productions. (Marlin-Jones interview, 31 March 1992)

Marlin-Jones was learning his craft and becoming adept at time management.

Another technique Marlin-Jones learned while directing musicals in Michigan was how to get producers to allow him to direct plays he wanted to by also agreeing to direct the plays the producers wanted to have done. He actually traded one Unsinkable Molly Brown for one Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? Mounting a very talky play with a small cast in a 1700-seat arena style theater was a challenge. Marlin-Jones met this challenge by choosing a clever concept. He had the designer create a set that resembled a prize-fighting ring. A big light was hung overhead and a bell was rung after every major beat break. "The whole thing was a kind of abstract prize fight." (Marlin-Jones interview, 31 March 1992)

It may have been asking a lot from audiences who were in the habit of watching a musical for two hours and then whistling show tunes as they left. After sitting for three hours and 15 minutes, the only tune they could whistle as they left was, Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? But Marlin-Jones loved doing all kinds of plays, and he made them work. "But, oh boy, do you build up friendships because suddenly you’re in a fox-hole together and you’re either going to die or
triumph. One just learns a lot of ways not to die.” (Marlin-Jones interview, 31 March 1992)

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Being a Quaker and a Midwesterner at heart, Marlin-Jones never fully acclimatized to the New York scene. He had been raised in a culture that taught the attitude of “turning the other cheek.” Although Marlin-Jones believes that he learned how to be “street smart” while in New York, “Going for the jugular, doesn’t automatically occur to me. I have to intellectually think of it.” (Marlin-Jones interview, 26 June 1992) The “it” he was referring to was collaborative negotiations with producers. When he had worked at Equity Library Theatre, he frequently would be recognized while walking down Broadway and around 47th street as if he were in his home town in Indiana. But the whole New York tension with “explosions” one day followed by “hugs” and “kisses” the next bothered him. “That man said I ruined his show. I probably ruined his show or he wouldn’t have said I ruined his show. And in some crazy way I think God kicked me 236 miles further south.” (Marlin-Jones interview, 4 May 1992) However, it was Marlin-Jones’s theatre experience and directing credits in New York that eventually made it possible for him to leave the city and continue directing in a city where he was more suited.

Phillip Stern, heir to the Sears & Roebuck fortune, had a foundation in Washington, D.C. to help improve its cultural life. In 1967 he had guaranteed to underwrite a year’s salary for an artistic
director in an attempt to put the Washington Theatre Club "back on its feet," and he hired Marlin-Jones for the job. Marlin-Jones arrived in his new office the day after Labor Day following a grueling season of summer stock in Michigan only to find out that there was no money for the season for which he had been hired. Marlin-Jones had to fly to New York (using his own money) in order to investigate the problem. He learned that because of all the mistakes made by his predecessors, the club was refused the right to post a bond for money. Marlin-Jones had an idea. He called Phillip Stern and made an appointment to see him. At this meeting, Marlin-Jones proposed that they take his salary out of escrow (to guarantee his being paid), and use it as capital for the running of the theatre. He bet Mr. Stern that by the time his salary ran out, the theatre would be operating on its own. Phillip Stern agreed, and that is how Marlin-Jones postponed the demise of The Washington Theatre Club until the year after he left in 1972. But it was not to be an easy road for the Theatre Club. It was constantly in financial trouble, and Marlin-Jones spent much of his time on the phone trying to create funding for his theatre.

In an effort to produce plays on a "shoestring," Marlin-Jones created his "Theatre of a Second Chance." The premise of his creation was to do a whole series of plays that had failed some place, but had done so because of reasons other than being poorly written. Marlin-Jones opened his season with Billy Dee Williams, John Hillerman and Sue Wallis, in William Hanley's, Slow Dance On the Killing Ground. The second play was USA, by Dos Passos, followed by a musical version of The Importance of Being Earnest called, Earnest in Love, by
Pockriss and Crosswell. These plays were inexpensive to produce and their royalties were minimal. Another way Marlin-Jones was able to save the Theatre Club’s money was to produce new plays by new playwrights. Richard Coe, retired drama critic for the *Washington Post* who reviewed The Washington Theatre Club, had this to say about Marlin-Jones’s choice of plays: “His taste in plays is rather extreme, and I happen to represent the audience in my work.” (Coe, telephone interview, 22 May 1992) However, since it was not popular to produce new plays in regional theaters at that time, Coe recognized that Marlin-Jones was innovative in this respect. During the time Marlin-Jones was at The Washington Theatre Club, they did 137 authors that were new to Washington, D.C. Coe also remembers that the year after the Washington Theatre Club received the Margo Jones Award, Marlin-Jones did nothing but new plays. Coe felt this was rather unrealistic of Marlin-Jones since Coe thought that “even the most skillful New York or London producer could hardly pick seven new scripts to be done in one season.” (Coe telephone interview, 22 May, 1992) Even though he felt that Marlin-Jones may have hurt the Washington Theatre Club’s chances for survival by his choice of plays, Coe was instrumental in making sure the Theatre Club and Marlin-Jones got The Margo Jones Award, an award given to play groups and producers who do new scripts.

I was on the Margo Jones Committee which gave awards to play groups and producers who did new scripts, and I saw to it that the Washington Theatre Club did get an award for having done several new plays in the course of the subscription season. (Coe telephone interview, 22 May, 1992)
Marlin-Jones was constantly working on ways to keep the Theatre Club alive. He realized that theatre was hard to sell in this city but theatre training was not, so he started teaching. Every day after rehearsals (when shows were running), he would teach a whole series of classes. Out of a concept that actors and new playwrights could survive in the same room, he taught an artist survival course in which he taught actors how to survive new playwrights, and new playwrights how to survive “bad” actors. A principle he taught new playwrights was; if they were concerned about the honesty of their play, a “bad” actor could help them. “If there is one phoney syllable in a scene, I guarantee that “bad” actor will scream that syllable to the rafters.” (Marlin-Jones interview, 31 March 1992) Marlin-Jones does not believe that a playwright should look for “bad” actors; they will find the playwright. A principle Marlin-Jones taught actors was; if they were having trouble with a scene providing action, he suggested they consider the environment. Marlin-Jones advised them to ask questions such as; “Where am I? What was my fear before? How does my fear change?” (Marlin-Jones interview, 26 June 1992) Marlin-Jones believes that the question an actor usually asks himself, “Who am I?” is too sophisticated for young and less experienced actors. He believes if an actor begins with the environment he will eventually find out “who he is.”

Mike Hinberg, a demographics man from Channel 9 in Washington, D.C., happened to take one of these classes. He was so impressed that he brought his boss to observe. Several weeks later, Marlin-Jones got a call from the secretary of the television station
asking him if he would like to audition for the drama critic position. Marlin-Jones declined on the basis that he would then have to critique his competitors. He felt that he would be very upset if they were reviewing his work. When Zelda Fichandler, founder of the 800-seat Arena Stage in Washington, D.C., was recently asked how she felt about this remark, her reply was, “believe me, he criticized his friends, and he said some pretty nasty things.” (Fichandler telephone interview, 26 May, 1992) Fichandler felt that Marlin-Jones was acerbically honest in his critiquing of plays and evidently this honesty was hard to accept by some people in the theatre community. Nevertheless, Fichandler realized Marlin-Jones’s worth to the community and expressed this feeling, “I liked Davey Marlin-Jones’s complementary [sic], complementary with an e, service to the community. He built his own nitch there. He was a force while he had the theatre.” (Fichandler telephone interview, 26 May, 1992) But the television network was persistent and managed to get Marlin-Jones to agree to be interviewed. Before he knew it, he was standing in front of a camera giving a sample review of the movie, *Tell Them Willie Boy is Here*, starring Robert Redford, and a lesser known actor named Albert Maltz, one of the Hollywood Ten, who had finally landed a job in which he was able to again use his real name. After Marlin-Jones’s critique, the director offered him a job. Marlin-Jones’s condition was that he would only review theaters to which he was invited. The director agreed, he took the job, and everyone invited him to review. Marlin-Jones embarked upon a television career with this network which was to last 18 years.
Critiquing plays on TV made Marlin-Jones a local celebrity, and it also helped sell tickets to the Washington Theatre Club. He loved being a drama critic even though it began as a free lance situation paying $70 whenever his spot was run.

Marlin-Jones had worked hard since taking on the responsibility of the Theatre Club in 1967, and his newly-added exposure as a TV personality helped his endeavor. By 1971, Marlin-Jones had been responsible for bringing three of Lanford Wilson's new plays to the Theatre Club (to be discussed in chapter three), and the company had moved into a new theater. The Washington Theatre Club and Davey Marlin-Jones were beginning to attract a lot of attention. This prompted PBS, Channel 13, in New York to arrange a documentary on the theatre and its director. Even with this added exposure, the Theatre Club was still not out of financial difficulties. Marlin-Jones was spending a good deal of his time trying to raise money to keep it functioning.

By 1978 Post, Newsweek and The Evening News Corporation of Detroit had traded television stations and Marlin-Jones was one of the conditions of the trade. The Evening News, who would then own the Washington station, would have to permit Marlin-Jones to fly to Detroit to also do reviews there. The deal was made, and Marlin-Jones worked at both stations for eight years from 1978 to 1986.

Marlin-Jones's work schedule in Washington, D.C. became very complicated; he directed six out of the eight shows every year at the Theatre Club; he directed opera in Washington, D. C. and on the West Coast; he traveled around the country lecturing; he ran a summer
stock operation in Detroit, Michigan for his friend Bob Adams; he directed at the John F. Kennedy Center and the Folger Institute as well as at various dinner theaters in the city; he worked for the television station as drama critic, and he was constantly raising money to keep the Theatre Club in business. But the theatre profession is not known for its security, and after five years of pell-mell activity in Washington, Marlin-Jones was to experience a sharp drop in his directing activity. The offers to direct were not being made.

Marlin-Jones’s experience with the Theatre Club for five years had generally been very positive, but the parting in 1972 was not. After doing the film, *The Rimers of Eldritch*, adapted from Lanford Wilson’s play (to be discussed in chapter three), Marlin-Jones was down to one job, drama critic for Channel 9. In the meantime, his family size had increased. He now had a second wife, Mary, and two little boys, Andrew, five, and Oliver, four. His television work was strictly a part-time job and not sufficient income for a young family. It was a frightening waiting period in Marlin-Jones’s life, waiting for the phone to ring or someone to knock on the door. The phone finally rang, and it was David Frank, newly made managing director of the Loretto-Hilton Repertory Theatre in St. Louis, Missouri. He asked Marlin-Jones if he would like to direct *Of Mice And Men*, opening play of the Loretto-Hilton’s new season. Frank had heard Marlin-Jones lecture in Baltimore, and according to Marlin-Jones, had been impressed by his directing work at the Theatre Club. It took him about four seconds to accept Frank’s offer. While he was directing a
show for David Frank in St. Louis, he was offered a job directing at a
dinner theater in St. Louis; then he received an offer from another
theater to do a play, and by that time David Frank had offered him
another play. Marlin-Jones was once again making a living as a free
lance director. David Frank and Marlin-Jones "hit it off" from the
beginning. Frank had a multi-million dollar budget to work with, and
he was in total accord with the type of plays Marlin-Jones wanted to
do. Frank even let him hire all those actors he had worked with and
respected.

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

Marlin-Jones opened the Loretto-Hilton’s season in 1973 with
John Steinbeck’s, Of Mice and Men. He hired Vance Sorrels, a folk
singer and song writer, to write Woody Guthrie-style music, and
connected the entire piece with this music. Marlin-Jones drew upon
his musical theatre experience from Clio, Michigan in staging this
play. He recalls, “the song writer would do a song. We would stage a
scene in an aisle while they were changing the set, and so the show
never stopped.” (Marlin-Jones interview, 4 May 1992) Although this
was not the first time Guthrie-style music had been used in this play,
still it helped create a memorable opening for the St. Louis company’s
season. The production received an excellent review from Joe Pollack,
drama critic for the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

Davey Marlin-Jones, directing with a fine sense of rhythm and a
feel for the action, brought forth some superlative
performances....If “Of Mice and Men” is an accurate forcast [sic]
of what is to come, the theater has opened its finest season.
(Pollack 1972)
The second show he directed for Frank was, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*. This was before the movie of the same name was made. Marlin-Jones embellished the Dale Wasserman script by including the chief’s dream sequences from Ken Kesey’s novel; as a result Marlin-Jones believed the piece was more theatrical. Even though Pollack remembers “Cuckoo’s Nest as outstanding,” (Pollack telephone interview, 8 June 1992) in his review of it in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, he was more critical:

> The fantasy scenes of the Chief add nothing to the dramatic impact or the growth of the play and appear to have been written merely to fill time and space....Marlin-Jones apparently felt the shortcomings of the script as he organized the play....In the present offering, everything is filled with flair and flash, with fast pacing and theatrical dynamics to disguise the flaws....To his credit, he almost makes it work. (Pollack 1972)

Before the year ended, Frank had offered Marlin-Jones a job as artistic consultant and director of half the season’s plays. Artistic consultant meant that he was an artistic director who didn’t have to be at the theater everyday.

Marlin-Jones continued working in St. Louis for the next eight years, the entire time David Frank was managing director. In the meantime, his salary for the two television jobs had tripled, and he continued to earn extra money directing at other places around the country. One such place was the John F. Kennedy Center.

Roger Stevens, founder of the John F. Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., and Marlin-Jones became friends during his years at the Theatre Club. Roger saw the first play Marlin-Jones directed at the Theatre Club as well as many others. “I always had a great
admiration for Davey. He’s a very confident person.” (Stevens telephone interview, 22 May, 1992) Trusting this confidence and on the basis of Marlin-Jones’s work with new playwrights, Stevens, who in 1973 was starting a new third-floor theatre for production of new plays at the Kennedy Center, asked Marlin-Jones to head it. Marlin-Jones launched the first season of this new program at the Kennedy Center with John Pielmeier’s, Mortal Coils, followed by Sam Taylor’s, Perfect Pitch, starring Tammy Grimes. The third-floor theatre is still very much alive today which is evidenced by the six to seven new plays that are done each year with a $500,000 allotment for their productions.

In the midst of this most successful period of Marlin-Jones’s life, he received devastating news. He was told by his eye doctor, Dr. Glenn Johnston, that he would be blind within 18 to 24 months. He had always had problems with his eyes. His left eye was injured at birth and his right eye had been his sight eye for years. When he graduated from college, the government had tested his eyes for selective service recruitment at which time he was told to cover one eye and walk until he could see the chart. Marlin-Jones remembers walking until he ran into the wall. Even though his eyesight had deteriorated, he at least had vision. Now he was faced with years of eye surgeries, and the possibility of losing his sight completely. He did not lose his sight, and almost 20 years later he is still working with the eye with poor vision while the eye with good vision has become almost completely visionless. The next surgery he faces is in July, 1992. It is a very high-risk operation, but, if successful, Marlin-
Jones could increase his vision to 20/50. The fact that the doctor’s prognosis in 1973 has not come true attests to Marlin-Jones’s strong inner strength and his positive attitude about life. Both attributes carry into his work in the theatre.

And also part of it, I know this sounds ‘klunky’, is pure will. It’s not going to happen! I will not let it happen!
I’ve spent a great deal of my life doing magic, and one of the things that I do is all kinds of quasi-psychic. I swear the final joke is that one is doing a real trick physically. (Marlin-Jones interview, 27 March 1992)

According to Marlin-Jones, even though he has outwitted the doctors for 20 years, it has not been easy for him. If he tries to watch a rehearsal from the back row in the theater, all he can really see is a “bunch of blobs” on stage. Uncomfortable as it is, he will sometimes sit in the back of the theater and watch a rehearsal.

Marlin-Jones believes that his prolific directing experience, as well as his sense of a character’s “center of action,” give him a sort of “sixth sense.” He believes the moment an actor’s posterior drops the least little bit, he can detect it. He knows that “eyes aren’t locking into eyes” (Marlin-Jones interview, 27 March 1992) and that an actor’s concentration is gone.

Through the psychic channel of the magic he loves, Marlin-Jones has developed a special sense which is his own avenue to inner feelings, or soul. The “soul” which Marlin-Jones speaks about so often is very important to him. It is an abstract term that he uses in teaching classes on directing, working with actors and designers, and in everyday life. Dr. Jerry L. Crawford, Head of the MFA Playwriting Program at UNLV, believes that Marlin-Jones is, “one of the few
people who can use the term “soul” and make it seem concrete.” (Crawford interview, 15 May 1992) Crawford believes Marlin-Jones does this through the use of many analogies and demonstrations. “Soul” is even found in his daily greetings to friends: “Hello! How is your heart and soul today?” Recently, after having met the son of one of his directing students, he expressed to the woman that he could tell her son had a great deal of “soul.” Crawford put it most aptly when he said, “Davey can tell you what it’s like to stand at the shore of an ocean and feel one with it in the way the 19th Century poets and Transcendentalists were able to do.” (Crawford interview, 15 May 1992)

In 1977, Marlin-Jones made a directing trip back to New York, this time to work for Joseph Papp. Papp had seen Marlin-Jones’s work in Washington at the Theatre Club and had spoken to Roger Stevens at the Kennedy Center about him. Papp hired Marlin-Jones to direct a play at his Public Theatre. The play was In the Well of the House by Charles C. Mark. According to Marlin-Jones, he had a good company and the play went well. Papp had been difficult to work with but had backed him one hundred percent throughout the rehearsals. Papp personified the tough New York attitude with which Marlin-Jones had never felt comfortable. An example of this: one day after seeing the first preview of the play, Papp talked incessantly to Marlin-Jones about it and when Marlin-Jones didn’t respond, Papp asked him what was wrong. “I said, ‘Nothing, Joe. I’m just listening.’ Papp said, ‘Don’t listen, agree!’” (Marlin-Jones interview, 4 May 1992)

Marlin-Jones and Joseph Papp continued to keep in touch with
each other after this initial collaboration. Papp would sometimes call Marlin-Jones and ask him for advice about something in the theatre. Marlin-Jones would give him what he thought was good advice, and Papp would usually tell Marlin-Jones he didn’t know what he was talking about, but he would sometimes use the advice anyway. Papp eventually directed a show at the Kennedy Center which Davey “panned” as drama critic, and that ended their relationship.

In 1987 Gannett decided that they didn’t want “Arts” coverage any longer on channel 13. After having worked for 18 years as drama critic for this television station, Marlin-Jones was released from his job. He once again faced a dark time in his career. Four days after his job ended, he checked into the hospital for another eye operation. His reason for this timing was that there wasn’t anything else pressing to do. He carried his adept manner of time management into his own life.

The pain of the operation was minimal compared to the pain he suffered when only two or three theatre friends called wishing him well. But his magician friends did not forget him. All those people Marlin-Jones had worked with or had helped in magic from all over the country, responded. “It was a terribly moving thing, that “klunky,” impractical feeling where 85 percent of the good ones [magicians] are bores. And as human beings, God, were they there when it wasn’t fashionable!” (Marlin-Jones interview, 23 April 1992)

In 1989, Marlin-Jones was brought to UNLV by Dr. Koep and Dr. Crawford for a two year position as Guest Artist in playwriting and directing. When Dr. Byers-Pevitts left the faculty in 1991 to become a
Dean at Northern Iowa University, Marlin-Jones applied for her position and was hired out of national competition, commencing in the 1991-1992 academic year. Marlin-Jones and Crawford had corresponded since the early 1970’s because of a play written by Crawford which Marlin-Jones had read and liked. They later met on a number of occasions at American College Theatre Festival events across the country and in Washington, D.C. Their friendship grew. Marlin-Jones met Jeffrey Koep at ACTF in 1979 for the first time. During 1980, Marlin-Jones served as ACTF Regional Respondent at festivals hosted by UNLV. (In 1989, Marlin-Jones served on the ACTF National Selection Committee for the Kennedy Center attending 55 plays within eight weeks.) It seemed to be a logical progression in Marlin-Jones’s career to be accepted for the UNLV position.

Marlin-Jones has scheduled a lecture in Minnesota July, 1992, to occur shortly before his next eye surgery. One reason is his desire to help his magician friends. His other reason is because he will have the lecture to worry about and not the surgery. One might imagine that he is throwing focus from one thing to another in his own life. He will be addressing The American Psychic Entertainers Association. This field of magic is one in which Marlin-Jones has a particular interest. The title may sound pompous, but Marlin-Jones assures that the people are not. Psychic entertainers are not the new age laser magicians one sees in Las Vegas shows; instead, they are showmen that use the art of prestidigitation to create their magic rather than using beautiful girls in scanty costumes to pop out of boxes. They “sell the audience on ideas” rather than fascinate them with flashing
colored lights. Marlin-Jones will be lecturing the gathered men and women of magic in his particular field of expertise, “how to incorporate theatrical elements, and how not to be seduced by the tricks that they do.” (Marlin-Jones interview, 23 April 1992)

A psychic entertainer usually walks out on stage alone with only the things he can carry in his pockets. This is the “magic” Marlin-Jones loves. It fascinates him that alone on a bare stage one can create magic from nothing. It is not surprising that he carries this same premise with him onto another stage, that of a theater. This is something that drives him with incredible energy and a zest for life that has become his hallmark. What really matters in life to Marlin-Jones? “Ladies and Gentlemen, the tricks are the wheels and the wheels only take you some place if you have a destination.” (Marlin-Jones interview, 23 April 1992) Marlin-Jones’s destination is to go where he can direct the plays that he loves, “with eyes or without eyes.” (Marlin-Jones interview, 23 April 1992)
CHAPTER III

COLLABORATORS

NEW PLAYWRIGHTS

It is not an accident that playwright is spelled with “ght” as in shipwright, meaning a craftsman. (Marlin-Jones, Stage Directors Colloquium, 1988, p. 32)

Marlin-Jones often begins his classes on directing and play analysis with this statement. He realizes this largely because he was a playwright before he was a director. He loves to write plays, and he says that he will always write. He considers himself the first new playwright with whom he worked; however, it was his work with new playwrights at the Washington Theatre Club that caused him to believe, “original plays were my target in life.” (Marlin-Jones interview, 6 April 1992) This goal came about in a very practical way, according to Marlin-Jones. The Arena Stage, an 800-seat theater in Washington, D.C., could always out-bid the tiny 142-seat Theatre Club when it came to producing popular plays. Marlin-Jones began looking at new plays by new playwrights just as a way to help the Theatre Club survive rather than compete. His first new playwright of note at the Theater Club was Lanford Wilson.
Lanford Wilson

He’s an absolute wild man! I adore him. He has a great rapport with actors, and he can get just about anything out of them. He’s just a damn good director. (Wilson, Lanford telephone interview, 22 May 1992)

Marlin-Jones had been at The Washington Theatre Club for two years when he first heard of Lanford Wilson. Herb Sufrin, a New York friend, called Marlin-Jones one day and told him of a new script he had heard read. It was Wilson’s *The Gingham Dog* and the friend thought it was Marlin-Jones’s kind of play. Marlin-Jones read the script and decided to do it. Wilson was not unknown at this time; some of his one acts had been done at The Theatre Company of Boston which did experimental theatre similar to The Washington Theatre Club. But this was the professional premiere of *The Gingham Dog*. It had only been done in New York at The New Dramatist in a workshop. Once it opened in Washington, D.C., a New York producer flew in to see it and optioned it for Broadway.

According to Marlin-Jones, Lanford Wilson was the hottest thing at New York’s Cafe Chino in 1968. The Cafe was run by a man named Joe Chino whose untimely death temporarily halted Wilson’s career. However, Cafe La Mama provided a place for his plays staging the first productions of *Balm in Gilead* and *The Rimers of Eldritch*. Nevertheless, the first full-length professional production that Lanford received in America, outside of a few Equity waiver houses, was *The Gingham Dog* at The Washington Theatre Club, directed by Davey Marlin-Jones. (premiered September 26, 1968)

Marlin-Jones had a few fears in doing *The Gingham Dog*. One
fear was, it was the first time he ever sanctioned saying the “F-word” on stage. He chose to keep it in the play because he felt it was essential to the “inner life” of the piece. Nevertheless, he took a chance in keeping it in because The Theatre Club was a tiny 142-seat house and even those people sitting in the last row felt the “heat” of the word. Washington audiences were also not as receptive to new language in the theatre as New Yorkers were. “Well, I thought at previews, from the kind of shocked silence, that my career was over.” (Marlin-Jones interview, 29 May 1992) However, there were no repercussions once the play was running.

Wilson came to Washington for the first week of rehearsals of The Gingham Dog, and then Marlin-Jones, as was his custom when collaborating with playwrights, politely asked him to leave and come back for dress rehearsal before opening, which Wilson did. At these early rehearsals, Wilson was very helpful in analyzing the script, according to Marlin-Jones. Later when Wilson returned a few days before the opening, Marlin-Jones was having a problem with one particular page for which Wilson had the solution. The playwright said they had the same problem in the reading of the play in New York and had solved it by cutting the page. Marlin-Jones did as the playwright suggested, and the scene worked. That was the only major problem Marlin-Jones and Wilson had to address on their first collaboration. Wilson was pleased with the work Davey had done by dress rehearsal. “I sat next to him, and I only said a few words. There were only a few words to say. It was absolutely gorgeous.” (Wilson telephone interview, 22 May 1992)
During the dress rehearsal, Wilson made a minor suggestion which Marlin-Jones did not intend to use until an actor did something on stage to change his mind. It was in act one and Davey had one of the actors straightening a bracket on the wall, looking at it, and straightening it again. At one point, when the actor took the bracket in his hand and was walking around the stage, Wilson leaned over and asked Marlin-Jones if he thought the actor might stir the coffee with the bracket. Marlin-Jones started to say he didn’t think it was a good idea, but at the same moment the actor stirred the coffee with the bracket. Marlin-Jones agreed with Wilson at this point and decided to keep it. “He also takes suggestions from actors very well too, better than a lot of people.” (Wilson telephone interview, 22 May 1992)

However, it was the second act that sold Wilson on Marlin-Jones’s expertise as a director. “That second act, that second act, is every good relationship that went through hell, and as you’re looking through it you say, ‘Am I going to get it back?’ and sometimes you don’t.” (Marlin-Jones interview, 27 March 1992) Marlin-Jones’s way of achieving an exciting dramatic moment in the second act was by not having the actors touch until a certain point when they reach for something. It was the only time he allowed them to touch in the entire second act. “They never touched. They reached for the door knob and they touched and both of them drew back. It was electrifying.” (Wilson telephone interview, 22 May 1992) Marlin-Jones took this moment and went even further. Wilson had asked for five minutes of silence for the “fade-down” at the end of the
show, and Marlin-Jones held it close to 68 seconds with an extremely slow fade to black on the lights. His reason for the 68-second hold on this white man and his black wife, who were touching for probably the last time in their lives, is explained through visual imagery. “What happens is, when you watch a single image for 68 seconds and then turn the light out, it “burns” on your iris. You’re staring at darkness and she’s literally still on your eyeball.” (Marlin-Jones interview, 29 May 1992) Marlin-Jones was still not finished with the moment. As the audience was still sitting in darkness, he had the sound person play a recording of Dionne Warwick’s current hit song, which starts, ”You can have him, I don’t want him.” Davey recalls this as one of the most memorable moments he helped create on stage and it still gives him “goose bumps” to recreate it. The production was even successful in the eyes of Richard Coe. He reviewed it in the Washington Post saying, “The Gingham Dog, a work of clear and substantial values having its first production under Davey Marlin-Jones’s immensely satisfying direction.” (Coe 1970 [E])

The playwright and the director went on a talk-show circuit in order to promote The Gingham Dog. Marlin-Jones had to do most of the positive sales “hype” since Lanford had a difficult time being positive about anything including his play. Marlin-Jones did not see anything unusual about this:

Many playwrights are inarticulate people. Often they cannot say what their plays are about--they are too busy building plays to label them. Many playwrights can write a play, but not talk about it--Lanford Wilson is this way. (Marlin-Jones, Stage Directors Colloquium, 1988, p. 32)
The host of the talk show would ask Wilson to describe the new play. Marlin-Jones remembers:

He’d say, ‘Oh, it’s about a doomed marriage, a marriage that has no hope. They discover there’s no hope and split up forever.’ And I would then jump in and say, ‘Lance is talking about the incredible inner energy that does precipitate the things he’s just talked about, but one of the most exciting things about it is...’. (Marlin-Jones interview, 10 April 1992)

Wilson enjoyed Marlin-Jones’s positive outlook on life. On one occasion, Wilson was what he termed, “suicidally depressed.” He was just sitting in the middle of his living room in the dark being more and more depressed. He realized that he had to get out of this mood. “Who is the most wonderfully positive person I know, and I said, I haven’t talked to Davey in two years. I have got to call Davey Marlin-Jones, and he’ll bring me out of this.” (Wilson telephone interview, 22 May, 1992)

Another Wilson play premiered by Marlin-Jones at the Washington Theatre Club was *Serenading Louie*. It opened April 1, 1970. This was the longer version of the script that had many speeches delivered directly to the audience. Looking back, Wilson feels that this might somehow have been a better script. “I’m not sure it might be better. It was just so wild, and “thorny,” and interesting.” (Wilson telephone interview, 22 May, 1992) Even though Richard Coe liked Wilson’s play, calling it, “a worthwhile new script” (Coe, 1970 [E]), he felt it still needed some work as he indicated in his review of the play in the *Washington Post*. “There are sections where the format just doesn’t work, and it will be up to
director Davey Marlin-Jones to tinker about where the devices confuse rather than confirm.” (Coe, 1970 [E]) After this production, Wilson had another director for Serenading Louie in New York. The script went through many changes at this time and Marlin-Jones felt they made it weaker. It seemed to him that they either cut or changed all the parts that baffled them. “I swear, it’s like shrinking a play to the size of your imagination rather than stretching your own imagination to fit the size of the play.” (Marlin-Jones interview, 29 May 1992)

A story Marlin-Jones uses in his directing classes at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, comes from his collaborative experience with Wilson on Serenading Louie. He believes this example suggests the benefits of a director’s collaboration with a playwright. Marlin-Jones had been working on a particular scene in which the actor always sounded like a “victim.” He spoke to Wilson about this in one of their sessions, and Wilson suggested cutting 17 syllables out of the original 54 thus eliminating 11 breaths. Marlin-Jones tried it and it worked perfectly. It allowed the actor to “free” his emotional base and be the character, not a “victim.” He did Serenading Louie again at Temple University with MFA graduate students. Wilson visited for a few rehearsals, and he and Marlin-Jones again collaborated on several points in the production. However, Marlin-Jones never felt the script was as exciting as the original one he worked on at the Theatre Club.

Between The Gingham Dog and Serenading Louie, Marlin-Jones directed Wilson’s most autobiographical play, Lemon Sky, at The
Theatre Club. Following these early Wilson hits, Marlin-Jones directed *The Hot L Baltimore* for the Loretto-Hilton Repertory Theatre and again at the New Jersey Shakespeare Festival. Marlin-Jones’s image for this show was, “a culture going up in marble smoke.” (Marlin-Jones interview, 29 May 1992) His scenic designer had created a set which featured an old-looking mural of railroad lines which a Diego Rivera painting had inspired; the front of an elevator with a huge “Up” sign followed by an “Out of Order” sign; and a big curved staircase which appeared to be made out of marble, stretching up to a second floor foyer. The mise en scene spoke of a decaying hotel that had been majestic in its day. Joneal Joplin, an actor who was in the play, said it was easy to perceive how much Wilson was pleased with Marlin-Jones’s work on the play. “It was quite clear that when Davey was up there doing his magic, Lance would sit out in the audience and just beam. It was clear that he was seeing done what he wanted done.” (Joplin telephone interview, 29 May 1992)

When Channel 13, PBS in New York, wanted to do a film of Wilson’s *The Rimers of Eldritch* for “Theatre in America” special, the playwright asked for Marlin-Jones to direct. Marlin-Jones recalls:

> It was a typical experience with Lance. I talked through approach with Lance, and said, I hate to be a noodge, but I haven’t seen a screenplay. And as he walked out the door he said, ‘There isn’t one; you’ll think of something.’ (Marlin-Jones interview, 6 April 1992)

Marlin-Jones created the screenplay as he shot the film. This was not an easy task since all the actors are present on the stage at all times in the play version. Wilson had used this structure to facilitate
all the time-jumps he wanted in the script. Marlin-Jones had to come up with a through line that the film audience could follow. He accomplished this by telling the Junior/Eva story and the Walter/Cora story in chronological order. He alternated this story line with the other characters and their stories. Marlin-Jones also had to create some visual scenes with no dialogue. He wrote several 30-45 second scenes to add to the cinematic appeal.

PBS had done a documentary in the fall of 1971 on Marlin-Jones and The Washington Theatre Club. One year later he was hired to direct the film on The Rimes of Eldritch. This exposure supplied him with some leverage when he went in to talk to the producers. He presented them with two demands. First, he wanted one week of real rehearsal with the cast, to which they agreed; and second, he wanted final cut. This last demand gave them a jolt considering Marlin-Jones had no former experience in films. When it appeared that they would not give him what he was asking, Marlin-Jones thanked them and started to walk out. They reconsidered and said they would agree to his terms if he would allow the editor to sit with him on the shoot. He was given an assistant director and they shot 95 scenes and 140-some locations in 10 days, all in Pittsville, Maryland.

Among others, the film starred Susan Sarandon, Rue McClanahan, Will Hare, Frances Sternhagen and Kate Harrington. Marlin-Jones had been allowed to cast a few of the actors, and, as was his habit, he sought out those actors who had done good work for him in the past. He also took this opportunity to give work to
some very good actors who had been "black-listed" in the McCarthy years. One such actor was Will Hare who had once played Tom in the National Company's, The Glass Menagerie. Marlin-Jones did not have any problems casting these once "black-listed" actors at this time, but according to him it just did his soul good to do it, "besides, they were very good actors." (Marlin-Jones interview, 6 April 1992) Susan Sarandon played Patsy, Will Hare played Skelly, Rue McClanahan played Cora, and Earnest J. Thompson, played Walter.

Although Marlin-Jones had not graduated from a film school, he had no trouble directing behind a camera. He had grown up going to movies. "I knew what a camera was, and I knew what light was all about. In some ways, I knew far better than having to learn stage from the outside in. So I had some idea about what I wanted in a movie." (Marlin-Jones interview, 6 April 1992)

He worked off the published script he had purchased once Wilson asked him if he was interested in the job. In fact, he had not even read the play until Wilson first mentioned the project. Marlin-Jones's process was to divide the play into scenes that would tell the story of the play and last 88 minutes on the screen.

However, the script proved to be the least of his problems. The people of Pittsville, which had once been the strawberry capital of the world, hated these intruders on sight, and did not want this film to be done in their little hamlet. They felt it was an anti-religious story which probably should not have been written in the first place. Some of the townspeople tried to create a disturbance by running their lawnmowers during filming. They even went as far as shooting
at the actors and crew on occasion. According to Marlin-Jones, they were not trying to kill anyone; they were just venting their anger. Marlin-Jones laughs at this episode today and remarks, "In the words of the immortal Arturo Ui, 'Still it was very rude of them.'" (Marlin-Jones interview, 6 April 1992) Marlin-Jones, who was quite aware of the animosity of the townspeople, went so far as putting one of the town dogs in the film in an effort to help ease the tension.

After this experience in directing a film, his advice to anyone considering it is, "Don't keel over, because everything in your being will say all this pain will stop if I just have the common sense to collapse." (Marlin-Jones interview, 23 April 1992) He insisted on seeing the rushes everyday, but was so exhausted after getting up before dawn to catch the first sun, "I would literally fall off the stool asleep." (Marlin-Jones interview, 23 April 1992)

As well as doing the film version of *The Rimers of Eldritch*, Marlin-Jones has also done three stage productions of this play. "I kinda do Wilson in my sleep." (Marlin-Jones interview, 27 March 1992)

Marlin-Jones admires Wilson's style of writing. "Lance Wilson, whatever was right or wrong about him, didn't write the same play 15 different ways, in contrast to Sam Shepard who often writes about three plays in one." (Marlin-Jones interview, 27 March 1992)

Wilson disagreed with Marlin-Jones on the use of improvisation. Marlin-Jones does not use improvisation in his directing; he feels the text is sacred not the actor’s invented words. Though Wilson did not agree with Marlin-Jones on this principle, he did feel that he
benefited because Marlin-Jones did not use improvisation in rehearsals. “It suits me fine because you spend more time working on the text. He likes to make things work that are on the page. He may have changed, but with my text he just said, ok, lets make this work.” (Wilson telephone interview, 22 May 1992)

Marlin-Jones and Wilson had a very good collaborative relationship while it lasted. His opportunity to premiere two Wilson plays, to direct three other plays by Wilson, and to direct and adapt a Wilson play for film all afforded Marlin-Jones the chance to work closely with a Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright. It is evident that Marlin-Jones and Wilson became friends, and that Wilson liked the way Marlin-Jones directed his plays. If it had not been for Wilson’s friendship with director Marshal Mason, Marlin-Jones might have been Wilson’s choice to continue directing his plays. Marshal Mason, who now is Wilson’s collaborative director, had been Wilson’s college roommate at Northwestern University in Chicago, Illinois, and did all of Wilson’s early one acts at the Cafe Chino. Marlin-Jones believes that he always got what Mason did not want or couldn’t fit into his schedule. Nevertheless, he did a lot of early work with Wilson before the Marshall Mason/Lanford Wilson collaboration became what it is today, “one of the longest in the history of American theatre.” (Zinman, American Theatre 1992)

Oliver Hailey

According to Marlin-Jones, Oliver Hailey, who had a reputation in the theatre community as being a difficult playwright in
collaborations, was one of his favorite new playwrights. Marlin-Jones attributes his ability to collaborate with Hailey to his Socratic method of asking questions rather than telling him what to write. Marlin-Jones was able to successfully collaborate with Hailey on three new plays, namely: Father’s Day, Continental Divide, and the East Coast premiere of, Who’s Happy Now (at the Washington Theatre Club). He affectionately compared Hailey to a ballplayer who is a 20-game loser.

In order to lose 20-games, you’re got to be good enough that the manager honestly believes all year long either that you can win or that you’re better than all his losers. Oliver Hailey has had something like 12 or 13 plays produced on Broadway and not one has had a decent run. (Marlin-Jones interview, 6 April 1992)

Marlin-Jones remembers Hailey as a playwright who is produced frequently, but has never had a hit in the tradition of Lanford Wilson. Ironically, Wilson was responsible for helping Marlin-Jones obtain the rights to Who’s Happy Now. It was ironic because it precluded Wilson’s chances of having his play Lemon Sky done the season of 1968 since both plays deal with the same subject, “the coming of age as an artist.” (Marlin-Jones interview, 26 June 1992)

Marlin-Jones was able to get his biggest rewrite from Hailey on Who’s Happy Now. Marlin-Jones convinced Hailey to add a scene at the end of Act II. The scene included Faye Precious, Horse’s mistress, and Richard, Horse’s 16 year old son. Previous to this addition, in an effort to get his father and mother back together, Richard had asked Precious to marry him. In the new scene, Precious and Richard talk about their love, and through their dialogue the audience realizes that
they have slept together. At the end of the scene, Precious sends Richard away. This fits nicely into the beginning of Act III when Richard returns four years later, a successful song writer. Marlin-Jones believes that in Hailey’s original script, the character of Precious needed to rise above the stereotypical mistress. He also realized that Richard should be more than just a character to whom things happen. Thus at the end of the new scene, “Richard is more than a wimp.” (Marlin-Jones interview, 26 June 1992) Marlin-Jones intended the added scene to be, “about each of these characters giving the other something that they couldn’t find.” (Marlin-Jones interview, 26 June 1992)

According to Marlin-Jones, Hailey wanted to keep the new scene in for the New York production, but the producer vetoed it. As a result, the published script does not include this scene. However, it can be found in the archives at the George Washington University Library; it was donated by the Theatre Club.

In most collaborations between Marlin-Jones and Hailey, there were only minor changes in the script. According to Marlin-Jones, he would make these minor changes and then say to Hailey, “I’ve changed some lines. If you want them back in, tell me.” He [Hailey] would usually say, ‘I didn’t see where it happened.’” (Marlin-Jones interview, 26 June 1992) Marlin-Jones believes that this is the best approach in collaborating with playwrights; they will trust you, and not think you are trying to “pull anything fast.”

One reason Marlin-Jones did not do many rewrites with Hailey was because when Hailey worked on a new play with Marlin-Jones he
would talk to him on the telephone about the play. By the time the production was “up,” Marlin-Jones had already given Hailey a good deal of input into the play.

Marlin-Jones remembers Hailey as a “kindred soul” (Marlin-Jones interview, 26 June 1992) not only in collaborations, but as a friend too. He relates the story that when his youngest son was born, Marlin-Jones and his second wife, Mary, named their baby, Oliver, after their friend, Oliver Hailey.

Red Shuttleworth

Red Shuttleworth, a 1991 graduate of the MFA Playwriting Program at UNLV, teaches Drama and English at Big Bend Community College in Moses Lake, Washington. Marlin-Jones worked with Shuttleworth at UNLV the fall of 1988 on Crooked River, an original play by Shuttleworth. It was not an ordinary beginning for director and playwright. Marlin-Jones was not on campus; thus, for the first six weeks, the collaboration was via telephone. Everyday Shuttleworth read a scene and Marlin-Jones made suggestions regarding revisions and editing. It was the first of two major collaborations between Shuttleworth and Marlin-Jones.

From this collaboration, Shuttleworth learned that Marlin-Jones is a “blocking” director rather than an “organic” one. Shuttleworth believes that Marlin-Jones’s blocking in Crooked River was remarkable. A technique that Marlin-Jones used in blocking this play involved a play pattern from the Washington Bullets basketball team.

He told me later he used the Washington Bullets play
book. When I looked at the blocking for *Crooked River*, some of those transition moments between past and present were just literally human swirls. You could see that what he had was five men at the key [the area between the free-throw line and the basket] just moving around. (Shuttleworth telephone interview, 26 June, 1992)

Marlin-Jones is a sports fan, and the Washington Bullets is a favorite team of his. Barry Kyle, former associate director of the Royal Shakespeare Company in Great Britain; now Head of the MFA Program in Directing at Louisiana State University, believes that being a sports' fan is an important activity for a director. “A director should attend formal sporting events because they are organized and executed very similarly to theatre events.” (Kyle, Stage Directors Colloquium, 1986, p. 13) Marlin-Jones not only is a sports enthusiast, but he sees movement patterns for blocking in basketball plays.

Although Shuttleworth may not always agree with Marlin-Jones, he still respects him as a director and attributes much of his recent growth as a playwright to Marlin-Jones’s tutelage. One way Shuttleworth has profited by collaborating with Marlin-Jones is in working with “beats,” “the distance from the beginning to the end of an intention.” (Crawford 1991, p. 108) “I think I owe him an enormous debt for *Crooked River* for making sure every beat drove the play forward.” (Shuttleworth telephone interview, 26 June 1992)

Another way Marlin-Jones helped Shuttleworth as a playwright was in writing “tighter” dialogue. Marlin-Jones will frequently state in playwriting classes at UNLV, “If you know how a play ends, then you know how it doesn’t begin.” Marlin-Jones helped Shuttleworth apply this same principle to scenes and beats. Shuttleworth
interprets this: "The whole play is a journey for your characters. They can’t remain the same." (Shuttleworth telephone interview, 26 June, 1992)

Marlin-Jones also helped Shuttleworth work slower. Shuttleworth recalls a trick Marlin-Jones taught him to use in rewriting which has helped him accomplish this:

Assign a piece of hard candy to each of your characters. Suck on the candy as you’re typing the dialogue for that character. Then you’ve got to get the candy out of your mouth to type another character. By the time you get the next piece of candy in your mouth, you have listened tremendously to what the other character said. On a rewrite it’s invaluable. That reflection is necessary. (Shuttleworth telephone interview, 26 June 1992)

Shuttleworth uses this technique in his writing now and considers it indispensable.

Marlin-Jones’s early "table" work, when he asks penetrating questions, is very helpful to a playwright, according to Shuttleworth. Although he believes Marlin-Jones has formed strong images prior to "table" work, and has already worked out the play in his head involving these images, his questions are still helpful to a playwright.

The questions he asks then and the questions he asks in the three weeks preceding rehearsal when you can still do some serious rewriting, are awfully helpful, awfully challenging, awfully perceptive. You can go to the heart of something. (Shuttleworth telephone interview, 26 June, 1992)

On the other hand, Shuttleworth believes Marlin-Jones does not give enough consideration to the playwright’s stage directions and design recommendations. By doing this, Shuttleworth believes that
Marlin-Jones at times "violates" a script.

In describing Marlin-Jones as a director, Shuttleworth offers strong judgements.

He's what I could call an 'auteur' director. ["The point of view and its implementation come almost entirely from a director, not from a writer." (Wilson, 1991, p. 122)] He will look at a script and find those elements that he will identify with and direct towards those elements. (Shuttleworth telephone interview, 26 June 1992)

However, if the occasion would arise to work with Marlin-Jones again, Shuttleworth would accept, "because I know he'd give me a quality production." (Shuttleworth telephone interview, 26 June 1992)

PLAYWRITING PRINCIPLES

Two principles that Marlin-Jones emphasizes when he teaches new playwrights are "inner surprise" and "secrecy." The first principle was learned from Nolan Miller, his professor at Antioch College. "Without surprise there can be no sense of immediacy." (Marlin-Jones interview, 23 April 1992) Marlin-Jones explains "immediacy" in an analogy:

An actor makes it clear that he has to leave rehearsal at 6 o'clock; that is when his job begins. A casting agent comes up to the actor and says, 'You're beautiful. I can make a star out of you in New York. What do you think you'll need to bring with you?' The actor says, 'I'll have to tell you later. I have to leave at 6 o'clock; that's when my job begins.' (Marlin-Jones interview, 26 June 1992)

Thus, "The inability to use unexpected elements keeps one from acknowledging the immediate." (Marlin-Jones interview, 26 June
Marlin-Jones believes a play needs "inner surprise" to be entertaining. In order to find this surprise, a playwright must ask three questions about his play; "What do I want it to do? What must happen? How can I create a sense of surprise?" (Marlin-Jones interview, 23 April 1992)

One way to create a sense of surprise is through the revelation of secrets. Marlin-Jones believes a playwright needs secrets in his plays; they allow the audience to make eventual discoveries:

It is that exact thing that creates desirability whether it's in a laundry detergent or a sex symbol. Not everything gets revealed. The possibilities become more important than the event that already exists. (Marlin-Jones interview, 23 April 1992)

The desirability Marlin-Jones speaks of is best explained in his idea of how to play sex on stage using his Heinz Ketchup [sic] theory. Just as one anticipates the flow of catsup from the Heinz bottle, the audience should be able to anticipate sex (when it is called for in the script) on stage. When it is played out in front of them, (kissing, touching, petting) then there is no anticipation, no discoveries for the audience. Marlin-Jones believes it is these secrets, these discoveries, that keep readers reading a play and audiences interested in them.

Marlin-Jones's method in working with a new playwright and his new play is similar to that employed by most directors. He likes to have the playwright present at the casting, the read-throughs and "table work" (the early readings and analysis of a play). He believes the playwright is invaluable in assisting analysis of the play at these
early rehearsals, provided the author does not try to literally dictate or direct. After this process, Marlin-Jones prefers the playwright to leave and not return until about five days before opening, "so that there is time to make minor repairs." (Marlin-Jones interview, 26 June 1992) If major repairs such as deleting a scene or changing a character are needed, Marlin-Jones is on the telephone with the playwright as soon as possible giving him time to reflect on the change. Marlin-Jones also believes that the time between "table work" and the five days before opening is the time when the company discovers the distinction between script problems and production problems.

WORKING WITH ACTORS

He can have a terrible beat and look like nothing on earth, but if he is a great conductor every man in the orchestra will give, under his baton, not only a better performance than he would under another conductor, but a better performance than he knew he could give. (Guthrie, Tyrone, "An Audience of One," Directors On Directing p. 256)

This quotation by Tyrone Guthrie, comparing a great director to a great conductor, tends to describe Davey Marlin-Jones. He has been called an "actor's director" by actors, designers and even critics. In simple terms, this means one who works in all ways to enhance the actor. Possibly one reason for his being called an "actor's director" is the fact that Marlin-Jones began his work in theatre as an actor. His touring experience as a magician put him on stage at a very early age making him aware of the wonders and difficulties of being an actor.
He also learned some principles as a young entertainer. "You need energy and joy....If need be, jump up and down before an entrance and repeat, 'I love my audience!' If you do, you will." (Marlin-Jones, Stage Directors Colloquium, 1988, p. 32) He uses this joy and energy when working with his actors. When he was 19, Marlin-Jones was cast as the first gardener in Richard II in a Shakespearean stock company. However, Marlin-Jones was not satisfied with being an actor; he chose to be the artist that guided and directed all those involved in the production of plays. Regardless, his love and understanding of the actor has always been paramount in his work with collaborators.

Margaret Winn

Margaret Winn, an Equity actress and now Margaret "Maggie" Winn-Jones, the wife of Marlin-Jones, worked with him at the Washington Theatre Club and at the Loretto-Hilton Repertory Theatre. She has done over 30 plays with Marlin-Jones. She worked with him long before they became close, giving her the opportunity to understand him as a director. "I think the thing David does so well is let you know right up front that he respects you as an actor. He has high respect for your gifts and high expectations of your gifts." (Winn-Jones, interview, 27 May 1992)

Marlin-Jones frequently gave her the opportunity to "stretch" her talent as an actress because of his high expectations. He cast her as Gladys in Arthur Miller's A Memory of Two Mondays. At the time, Winn was in her early 30's and the character, Gladys, was 60, a
considerable "age stretch." Another time Marlin-Jones cast her as Dotty Otley in Michael Frayn's *Noises Off*. The character of Dotty was older than Winn, had a British accent, and was extremely forgetful, all of which were foreign to Winn. One of the toughest roles Marlin-Jones gave Winn was Nurse Ratchet in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. This character was so contrasted to her, she could not "pull the roll together until two days before opening." (Winn-Jones interview, 27 May 1992) Winn-Jones believes her success in creating this role was a direct result of the trust Marlin-Jones placed in her. Further, he never told her how to play the role. "He watches the actor's choices through the rehearsal process, selecting what is working, and then directing those choices." (Winn-Jones interview, 27 May 1992)

In this respect, Marlin-Jones is the kind of director William Ball advocates in his book, *A Sense of Direction*:

> The only real reason a director is needed in rehearsal is to perform the following function: persistently to draw the actor to a more meaningful and appropriate choice of objectives, and then to persuade the actor to lend his full commitment to those objectives. This is the purpose of the director. (Ball 1984, p. 81)

Winn-Jones recalls *Eccentricities of a Nightingale* as a good example of Marlin-Jones working as an "actor's director." His vision and direction of that vision helped her immensely in creating the character, Alma. "David’s vision of the show was sound, creatively, in terms of incorporating all of the elements. Sometimes his imagination is just limitless." (Winn-Jones interview, 27 May 1992) Peter Sargent, lighting designer for the play, agreed with Winn-Jones when he said, "The final look was a 'wispiness,' a 'glow' that Williams has in that
play, that mysteriousness that allowed Maggie to create within it.”
(Sargent telephone interview, 8 June 1992) Sargent reaffirmed that
Marlin-Jones created an environment to benefit and enhance the actor:

Whether it’s technical or costume or just in terms of blocking and “beats,” the choices are always made to enhance the comfort of the actor on stage, and to enhance the mental or thought process the actor needs to make the “beat” work. He allows it to come out through an organic process. (Sargent telephone interview, 8 June 1992)

Another challenge Marlin-Jones gave Winn occurred in the play, The Hot L. Baltimore, in St. Louis. Winn is five-feet-eight in her stocking feet. Marlin-Jones instructed the costumer to put her in five-inch heels and a six inch pink Afro wig. “That’s 11 added inches. I was close to seven feet tall on stage. The whole third act my character spent running up and down curved marble staircases with suitcases.” (Winn-Jones interview, 27 May 1992) Winn-Jones uses this experience to teach young actors about directorial challenge; it is the actor’s responsibility to achieve the challenge if possible.

When discussing the difficulties of a husband and wife working together in the theatre, Winn-Jones spoke of the most famous husband-wife team in the theatre, Alfred Lunt and Lynne Fontaine. Winn-Jones recounted the story that Fontaine often told about the time she was asked by a talk show host if she had ever considered divorce. Fontaine replied, ‘Divorce never, murder daily.’ Winn-Jones believes there are occasional drawbacks to being the wife of the director; however, “When we are clicking, it is the best of any
theatrical experience I’ve ever had.” (Winn-Jones interview, 27 May 1992)

Joneal Joplin

Joneal Joplin, an Equity actor in residence at the St. Louis Repertory Theatre (formerly the Loretto-Hilton Repertory Theatre), worked with Marlin-Jones at the Washington Theatre Club, the Loretto-Hilton Repertory Theatre, and in Clio, Michigan. Joplin recalls how Marlin-Jones’s “genius” worked for and against him:

He was probably the closest thing to a genius that I’ve ever worked with. And that has its double side too, because that meant when the genius was “on,” you had a show that just absolutely soared beyond anybody’s comprehension, and when the genius was on the “dark side,” you’d get the clinker. (Joplin telephone interview, 29 May 1992)

However, Joplin believes the “genius” experiences far out-numbered the “clinkers.”

Joplin remembers learning something about acting from Marlin-Jones which has remained with him all these years, namely, what Marlin-Jones calls his “stripping away process.” (Marlin-Jones, Stage Directors Colloquium, 1988, p. 36) Joplin was first exposed to this process in 1966 working with Marlin-Jones on the musical The Unsinkable Molly Brown in Clio, Michigan. They had been working a scene over and over for an exceptionally long time when Joplin recalled Marlin-Jones telling him to “get rid of the gestures.” Joplin asked if he meant all of them. Marlin-Jones told him to think about all the gestures he had been using and “choose one.” Joplin interpreted this to mean, “He wanted me to reexamine everything I
was doing and get rid of all the crap.” (Joplin telephone interview, 29 May 1992) Robert Benedetti discusses this process in *The Director At Work*. He refers to Stanislavski’s use of this process, “Stanislavski sometimes encouraged his actors to cut eighty percent of what they were doing in an effort to distill the performance to its essence.... eliminating extraneous elements and impediments.” (Benedetti 1985, pp. 170-171) Benedetti continues:

This is the result of a rigorous evaluation of the usefulness of every choice, every movement, every detail.... The underlying assumption here is that less is more. If one thing can do the job of two or three things, that one thing is more powerful and meaningful. This applies to physical details - movements and gestures, but also to psychological details like choices and emotional transitions. (Benedetti, 1985, p. 171)

Joplin believes Marlin-Jones is responsible for his career as a working Equity actor. “He was one who would give you the chance and have faith in you, and after a while you got hopefully as good as he thought you could be.” (Joplin telephone interview, 29 May 1992) Joplin claims he would, “travel anywhere to do a play with Marlin-Jones.” (Joplin telephone interview, 29 May 1992)

**Eric Oram**

Eric Oram, a 1992 Theatre Arts graduate from UNLV, remembers being very discouraged about the quality of work he was doing as an actor until he met Marlin-Jones. Oram was a Sophomore in 1989 when he auditioned for *Crooked River*, which Marlin-Jones directed. At the call-backs, Oram was reading a love scene which concluded with a kiss. He and his partner, Destiny Esposito, felt it was going
fairly well until Marlin-Jones interrupted. Oram remembers that Marlin-Jones was very careful when he stopped them, being sensitive to what they had established. Oram vividly remember his comments.

'Sex in theatre, Eric, is not so much about being intimate. It’s about bridging the gap between distance and intimacy.' Right away this giant light bulb went off. In one sentence there was so much theatrical wisdom. (Oram interview, 24 June, 1992)

Oram and Esposito replayed the scene. This time they used physical distance at the beginning and gradually closed the distance as the scene progressed. By the time they reached the kiss, they felt they had earned it. This was the first of many times that Oram was to experience Marlin-Jones's sparse but specific direction. Unlike a few of his classmates in theatre, Oram valued Marlin-Jones’s remarks. “I know people that don’t feel comfortable with him...because he is bluntly critical. There’s a lot of people that don't understand that criticism is your best friend.” (Oram interview, 24 June, 1992)

Criticism is something Oram learned about in “Martial Arts.” He has been a student of the “Arts” since 1980. “You don’t learn by someone patting you on the back and saying job well done. You learn by discovering your weaknesses. By eliminating your weaknesses you become stronger.” (Oram interview, 24 June, 1992) Oram was aware of Marlin-Jones’s wealth of experience in professional and regional theatre. He felt this made Marlin-Jones’s criticism all the richer.

Although Oram believes that he learned from his experience working with Marlin-Jones in Crooked River, it was not all positive.
He did not like the play or his character. This caused him to question his performances and again be confused about his career choice.

In the fall of 1990, he was cast in Pip’s Trip; a joint effort of the playwrights at UNLV to adapt the novel by Charles Dickens to the stage. Marlin-Jones worked with the playwrights on this project and wrote transitional scenes. Oram’s memory of this experience was, “Davey was so scattered with this play. He was trying to deal with so many different things that I didn’t get much specific direction.” (Oram interview, 24 June, 1992) Oram began to highly consider choosing another major.

Not until his junior year did Oram finally feel that theatre was the right career choice for him. He took a play analysis class taught by Marlin-Jones and for the first time understood clearly the structure and workings of a play. According to Oram, this was due to Marlin-Jones’s analysis of a play using “beats” as the basis structure. Oram was fascinated with the break down of “beats,” and the fact that each “beat” is responsible for precipitating the next “beat” resulting in a domino effect. Marlin-Jones teaches “beats” using the domino effect theory as described in David Ball’s book, Backwards and Forwards:

Stand a domino on end. Stand another domino next to it. Push the first domino over and it will, if cleverly arranged, knock down the second. A play is like a series of dominoes: one event triggers the next, and so on. (Ball 1983, p. 13)

The next two years of theatre classes under Marlin-Jones culminated in Oram’s senior year when he was cast in the leading role
of The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui by Bertolt Brecht. This experience proved to be an all-time high for Oram as evidenced in a detailed journal he kept throughout rehearsals and performances. In this journal, Oram quotes Marlin-Jones about Arturo Ui having three sides to his character, "the child, the desperate fear (the intensification of insanity/madness), and the learning business man." (Oram interview, 24 June, 1992) Oram believes that this character note was instrumental in his characterization of Ui because it was so vivid and the fact that it was given early in rehearsals.

Another valuable bit of direction Marlin-Jones gave Oram dealt with Ui's final speech to the Cauliflower League. It begins, "Men of Chicago and Cicero, Friends, fellow citizens, and all without!" (Brecht, The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui, 1972, p. 124) The speech is patterned after Mark Antony's "Friends, Romans, Countrymen" speech from William Shakespeare's play Julius Caesar and posits Hitler, as depicted in Ui, coming into power. According to Oram, Marlin-Jones's astute advice about Ui in this speech helped him tremendously. Oram again referred to his personal journal for Marlin-Jones's advice, "'Arturo's lungs are full for the first time. Take that further. He discovers what this can do for him. He discovers his ability.'" (Oram interview, 24 June, 1992)

One thing that surprised Oram in Marlin-Jones's direction of him came after four weeks of rehearsal. He was working with a particular set piece for the first time, a large, high-back armchair. It occurred in scene 13, Ui's suite at the Mammoth Hotel, in a confrontation between Ui and his "henchmen." Ui is literally caught in the middle of a broil
between two factions. Before the large chair was added, Ui was clearly seen. After it was added, Oram felt that it masked him from about 60 percent of the audience. After rehearsal, Oram was surprised not to receive any notes from Marlin-Jones, so he spoke to him. "I was really scrambling out there tonight trying to figure out what to do with the chair. Do you have anything to add to that?" Marlin-Jones replied, "Just keep going." (Oram interview, 24 June, 1992) Oram attributes this seeming lack of direction to the trust Marlin-Jones has for him. He believes that he has earned this trust over the previous three years working with Marlin-Jones. Oram entered this incident in his journal drawing this conclusion, "There was a freedom. He let me loose. I had to earn it, and it took a long time. It was a liberating experience." (Oram interview, 24 June, 1992)

Oram is aware that not all the student actors had such a positive experience working with Marlin-Jones on The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui. He believes this was due to the fact that student actors are insecure and have fragile egos; more so than the professional actors with whom Marlin-Jones had previously worked. Oram states:

We’re getting our feet wet, and we’re a little nervous about going into the water. When we take that step into the water and he’s [Marlin-Jones] right there telling us why that first step was wrong, some won’t want to go back into the water again. (Oram interview, 24 June, 1992)

Oram always accepted any feedback or direction from Marlin-Jones as positive, “even the negative experiences were alternately positive, because they made you rethink your position.” (Oram interview, 24 June, 1992)
In Oram's final analysis of his association and of his collaborations with Marlin-Jones, he had this to say, "I've learned more about theatre from Davey Marlin-Jones than any other single source in my life. It's a constant learning experience with him. Nothing with him is ever stagnant, it's always moving forward."
(Oram interview, 24 June, 1992)

DIFFICULT ACTORS

Not all the actors Marlin-Jones has worked with carry fond memories. After directing John Pielmeier's play, Mortal Coils, at the Kennedy Center, Roger Stevens asked Marlin-Jones if he would like to direct Sam Taylor's new play, Perfect Pitch. Marlin-Jones answered in the affirmative. Stevens cautioned him not to answer so quickly because whoever directed the play would have to work with "Her." The reference was to Tammy Grimes, an actress with a reputation for being difficult to direct. Nevertheless, Marlin-Jones accepted the job and was subjected to her "difficult" reputation the first day of rehearsal. Marlin-Jones was doing his usual table work and had given everyone a break after the first hour of work. When he returned to the table and the center chair in which he had been sitting, Grimes was sitting in his chair. He had to make a quick decision whether or not to call her bluff. Instead of having a confrontation or taking another chair and submitting to her "power," he stood directly behind her as he spoke to the other actors. The next day she was back in her original chair. However, he had not won the entire "battle" because she frequently continued to confront him and
question his directing choices. On opening night, the stage manager told Marlin-Jones that just before curtain he had seen Grimes on stage changing small props (such as ice cubes and candy) needed for certain cues. Marlin-Jones concludes, "she is one of those people I never want to see again." (Marlin-Jones interview, 4 May 1992)

Recently Marlin-Jones encountered a difficult actor while directing at UNLV. Crawford recalls an incident when the actor, overcome by a problem with alcohol, came to a rehearsal inebriated and attacked Marlin-Jones "with fists flailing." (Crawford interview, 15 May 1992) Although Marlin-Jones had limited vision, he was still able to ward off the blows of his aggressor with his ever-present briefcase and his vaudevillan agility until someone came to assist him. Crawford says the remarkable outcome of this incident was that Marlin-Jones never pressed charges. "He did just the opposite; he went out of his way in many instances to help that person." (Crawford interview, 15 May 1992)

When asked at the 1988 Stage Directors Colloquium in Fullerton, California, "Does liking an actor help a director?" Marlin-Jones responded, "It might, but it's no guarantee. Talent or ability is always the final test." (Marlin-Jones, Stage Directors Colloquium, 1988, p. 39) Four key words have helped Marlin-Jones maintain his rapport with actors: "RESPECT, CURIOSITY, KINDNESS, CHARITY" (Marlin-Jones, Stage Directors Colloquium, 1988, p. 45)

DESIGNERS
The word, "collaborate" according to Websters Dictionary.
means, "To work jointly with others...especially in an intellectual endeavor." (Websters Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary 1983, p.259)

Working together with different personalities in a common work task can present problems, but to do so with an intellectual or creative objective is very complex. A director must be able to collaborate with many different artists during his work on a production, and some will be more intellectual and creative than others. Marlin-Jones has had some difficulties with designers relative to communication and the term, "intellectual." Marlin-Jones uses images to present concepts to designers; these images are often rooted in metaphors. Not every designer is able to comprehend or grasp his images or metaphors.

Ellis Pryce-Jones, Costume Designer

When Ellis Pryce-Jones, Professor and Costume Designer at UNLV, first knew he would be working with Marlin-Jones on a university production, he experienced, "some trepidation because Marlin-Jones is extremely bright and (for some) often intimidating." (Pryce-Jones interview, 2 June 1992) Pryce-Jones compared Marlin-Jones to those directors with whom he had worked when he was a student at Yale. Pryce-Jones noted that students often have difficulty matching the "intellectual wave length" (Pryce-Jones interview, 2 June 1992) of some directors. He believes this can present a problem if the designers have not been trained to communicate on that level. Not all designers communicate comfortably on metaphorical levels. According to Pryce-Jones:

Many young designers are very practical, and
unfortunately take a technical approach to the art. ‘You want a window, ok, here’s a window.’ I believe that excellence in graphic arts is essential to the designer and that - once drawn or created in a mode - a design is a visual contract with the director. (Pryce-Jones interview, 2 June 1992)

Pryce-Jones recently worked with Marlin-Jones on *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*; much of the design work focused on merely technical matters rather than artistic ones. The production presented challenges in the collaborative process in effecting the metaphor presented.

Prior to ever collaborating with Marlin-Jones, Pryce-Jones had heard he was “difficult to work with and very demanding; if demands were not met or were not what Marlin-Jones expected, he could be difficult.” (Pryce-Jones interview, 2 June 1992) In the final analysis, Pryce-Jones believes the demands Marlin-Jones makes "certainly serve the needs of the playwright in terms of the message of the play.” (Pryce-Jones interview, 2 June 1992) He understands that when Marlin-Jones suggests an idea and that idea is unusual, there may be a problem. Aside from creating the overall production concept, the top concern of Marlin-Jones, according to Pryce-Jones, “is to accomplish a task within a given time, budget and personnel; his demands are made in the right way to serve this concern and never at the expense of the text.” (Pryce-Jones interview, 2 June 1992)

Pryce-Jones believes Marlin-Jones is uncommonly gracious and genuine in working situations. On occasions, Marlin-Jones makes trips to the costume shop to look at work-in-progress. “When he is happy with something he says so and means it. It is not merely, ‘Oh I’d
better go in and say something nice.’” (Pryce-Jones interview, 2 June 1992)

“It’s very easy to tell when Davey is at an impasse or bored and the people around him are not matching his intellectual level” (Pryce-Jones interview, 2 June 1992) According to Pryce-Jones, the best way to avoid displeasure from Marlin-Jones is to work and work hard toward his expectations. If one is well-read and well-prepared to work on a production with Marlin-Jones, then the collaboration is rewarding. Pryce-Jones says, “Working with Davey is sheer pleasure because one can be spirited along through the sheer pleasure of our creative involvement together.” (Pryce-Jones interview, 2 June 1992)

Tom Bloom

In the summer of 1990, Marlin-Jones was hired to direct Moss Hart’s Light Up The Sky for the Hope Summer Repertory Theatre in Holland, Michigan. Tom Bloom, Associate Professor of Theatre at the University of Michigan, Flint, designed the set for Marlin-Jones. Bloom has been designing sets for the Hope Summer Repertory Theatre for the past 15 years. He designs sets for one or two plays each summer. Bloom recalls the beginning of his collaboration with Marlin-Jones as being unusual compared to the way he was in the habit of working. Bloom and Marlin-Jones collaborated via the telephone and the facsimile machine (fax) prior to the three-week rehearsal period. Although Bloom believes it was difficult to be visually unified during this long-distance communication, he attributes Marlin-Jones’s articulation of images to the success of this
process, and recalls that, "many images were crystalized." (Bloom telephone interview, 24 July 1992)

Bloom felt the most important aspect of his collaboration with Marlin-Jones on this Moss Hart play developed from their discussions on comedy. Bloom's initial drawings were symmetrical and congruous. These changed as Marlin-Jones discussed his concept of comedy with Bloom. "Comedy begins off-balance. When the world is restored by the actors, then it is brought back into balance." (Bloom telephone interview, 24 July 1992) Afterwards, Bloom adjusted his design to be somewhat asymmetrical, more in keeping with the incongruity of the world in the play. In this respect, Bloom felt he learned more about comedy through this collaboration.

Bloom recalls the image of the play, as expressed by Marlin-Jones, was visualized as sunbursts. He believes it was most effective in the resolution of the play when life took on a "renewed outlook" from the original "stilted despair." At this point, the bright lights and the sunbursts in the set combined to suggest, "a new life, a phoenix." (Bloom telephone interview, 24 July 1992)

In the program notes Marlin-Jones referred to Light Up The Sky as Moss Hart's love letter to the theatre. Bloom believes that Marlin-Jones is exemplified in his own notes. "Davey is a love letter to the theatre. He is in love with theatre and the people in the theatre." (Bloom telephone interview, 24 June 1992)

Lois Carder

Lois Carder, costume designer, has worked with Marlin-Jones on

According to Carder, Marlin-Jones approaches a play as a group project. He comes to the collaboration with strong ideas, but refrains from telling the other artists what he wants. Instead he says, “‘Let’s talk about this character.’” (Carder interview, 27 June 1992) He explores, with the designers, questions about the play, such as: What is the meaning of the play? What does the play mean to them as human beings? Who are the characters? and, Why are the characters in this particular place at this particular time? After the initial session, Carder leaves with the desire to research the play and the characters. “Davey’s a springboard. You leave the meeting wanting to design it [the play].” (Carder interview, 27 June 1992)

Another aspect of the collaborative process which Carder appreciates in Marlin-Jones is his approach to the budget. She is aware that he is sensitive to the time and the skills of the stitchers. When she has informed him that something could not be done because of time or money, he has replied, “‘What else can we do.’” (Carder interview, 27 June 1992) His practical attitude, in this regard, is helpful to Carder.

Carder recalls a difficulty that arose between Marlin-Jones and Ira Autelis, the producer/composer of Just One World. According to Carder, Autelis was a first-time producer, and he was having
difficulty understanding why the play was not progressing faster. He was accustomed to recording music in his studio and completing it the first time. Carder realizes that theatre is not this way. Rehearsing a play, scene by scene, is sometimes a slow process as compared to recording music in a studio. Thus, the difficulty resulted, according to Carder, from Autelis not knowing when to be a part of the business end of the play or when to be a part of the artistic ensemble. "When it got down to the end, he [Autelis] was nervous about the money. He would push in not a good way, in a desperate way. Davey handled that very well." (Carder interview, 27 June 1992) Carder observed that Marlin-Jones, in handling this difficulty, became an educator. He helped Autelis understand the responsibilities of a producer.

Carder always looks forward to the opportunity of designing a play with Marlin-Jones. It is his "collaborative spirit" (Carder interview, 27 June 1992) that she looks forward to the most.

Peter Sargent, Lighting Designer

Peter Sargent, lighting designer for the St. Louis Repertory Theatre, worked with Marlin-Jones between 1972 and 1980 at the Loretto-Hilton Repertory Theatre. He remembers Marlin-Jones as "a wonderful director with a great sense of stage pictures and the whole dramatic tension." (Sargent telephone interview, 8 June 1992) He also recalls that Marlin-Jones, "was wonderful at giving imagery through metaphors." (Sargent telephone interview, 8 June 1992) One such metaphor used for the company's 1976 production of Eccentricities of a Nightingale was: "sunlight streaming through a stained glass
window and bouncing off a brass chandelier.” (Sargent telephone interview, 8 June 1992) Sargent was able to envision this very clearly. With Marlin-Jones’s guidance, the designers created a cocoon-like effect using a network of scrim and mesh. Sargent believes that he and Marlin-Jones “were almost always visually unified.” (Sargent telephone interview, 8 June 1992)

Sargent recalled another special production experience with Marlin-Jones regarding Of Mice and Men. In this production, Marlin-Jones used sound and silence to enhance the text. One way he accomplished this, according to Sargent, involved farm hands playing horseshoes. Marlin-Jones arranged the game of horseshoes behind a scrim during a scene. Marlin-Jones had the actors execute clinking sounds with the horseshoes hitting the post; these sounds occurred on certain acting beats. Sargent believes Marlin-Jones’s television experience promotes cinematic approach to stage direction. “But it’s never a theatricalism at the expense of the text.” (Sargent telephone interview, 8 June 1992)

One of Sargent’s greatest experiences working with Marlin-Jones involved, “that element of the process before we got into the theatre regarding lights.” (Sargent telephone interview, 8 June 1992) Sargent thinks many designers and directors do not truly understand the art of collaboration, but is convinced that he and Marlin-Jones do. In referring to Marlin-Jones, Sargent states, “He wants the interchange; he wants the collaborative process; that’s what makes him so wonderful.” (Sargent telephone interview, 8 June 1992) In this respect Marlin-Jones is like Zelda Fichandler, founder of The Arena
Stage in Washington, D.C. as quoted in Benedetti's, *The Director At Work*:

There's too much for any one person to bite off, and the most illustrious directors in history have always had people they share their work with... 'collaborator' is a really wonderful word; it means 'to labor with.' (Benedetti 1985, pp. 5-6)

Sargent recalls another designer, Grady Larkin, who also worked well with Marlin-Jones. Larkin designed sets for Marlin-Jones for *Of Mice and Men*, *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest*, *The Hot L Baltimore*, and many more at the Loretto-Hilton Repertory Theatre. "They were almost always visually unified." (Sargent telephone interview, 8 June 1992) Marlin-Jones remembers telling Larkin that he was confused by the fact that his sets always came in under budget. He asked Larkin how this could be possible? "'Simple, said Larkin, 'doors are expensive, imagination is cheap.'" (Marlin-Jones interview, 6 April 1992) Imagination is not something Marlin-Jones lacks. He gives life to his imagination through metaphors and symbols. Designers who can function on this level will have a successful collaborative experience with Marlin-Jones.

Considering the interviews presented in this paper, it would not seem that Marlin-Jones has difficulty with designers. This is true if the designer comes to the collaborative process with an artistic endeavor to work hard and serve the play. However, designers who separate themselves from the artistic ensemble and approach the collaborative process in a merely technical way can expect problems with Marlin-Jones.
CHAPTER IV

DIRECTING METHODOLOGY

The first rehearsal sets the track rules. One of the things we subliminally are sending out is, ‘madness is welcome here.’ Madness means rejecting what the outside world calls sanity, and that probably has a place in what we do on a day by day basis. If we find out what’s really happening here and make our madness as relative as we can, then we are going to be friends and we are going to get through this. (Marlin-Jones interview, 10 April 1992)

Once Marlin-Jones knows the play he is to direct, he reads it many times over a period of weeks or months depending on the amount of time he has for preparation before rehearsal. He suggests to students that they let some time pass between readings. This is time they need for thinking about the play and allowing images to form in their minds. The first time Marlin-Jones reads a play he asks himself the question, “What’s doing?” (Marlin-Jones, Stage Directors Colloquium, 1988, p. 30) He eventually searches for conflicts and for the “spine.” “The term must have suggested itself because the body’s spine holds the vertebrae in place, and these might be compared to all the smaller actions and dramatic divisions in the play.” (Clurman, 1972, p. 28) But Marlin-Jones does not search for the “spine” before he is very clear about what is happening in the play. Marlin-Jones also suggests reading the play with a pencil and pad of paper nearby. When his interest begins to lag, or when he feels the need to stop for
a Coca-Cola, he indicates this in the script. He believes these are places in the script that will need extra work in rehearsals. When Marlin-Jones reads a script he lets it appeal to all his senses. He is aware of colors, smells, sounds, and textures as well as images. Marlin-Jones asks himself many questions. One question is; What is special about the people and about this particular place?

In *Of Mice and Men*, note that men in a cathouse have the privilege of sitting in comfortable chairs, but bunkhouse men never have chairs with backs. Such men sit on crates and barrels, which are temporary, even as the men who sit on them are temporary. Further, ask who are these people?...Does each character remind you of someone you know?...Why is this character here now in this play? (Marlin-Jones, Stage Directors Colloquium, 1988, p. 31)

Marlin-Jones believes questions about the environment, the people, and the needs of the people unlock the "spine" of the play. As a result of this analysis process, Marlin-Jones has a clear understanding and a strong concept of the play before his first collaborative meeting with the designers and long before the first rehearsal.

The rehearsal process is a good way to observe a director's methodology. For this reason, a play recently directed by Marlin-Jones, *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* by Bertolt Brecht, will be the focus for the greater part of this chapter.

In December, 1991, the University of Nevada, Las Vegas Theatre Department held auditions for *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*. Marlin-Jones required the auditioners to prepare a two-minute monologue from a Brecht play. After the first cuts, the selected
actors assembled at the callbacks; director Marlin-Jones greeted the student actors with a hearty, “Hello! How are you!” (Marlin-Jones, Rehearsal notes, 7 December 1991) His hat had been off as the actors entered the Little Theatre, but he put it on as he greeted them. Just as an author brings his life experiences and his personality to his work, so does a director bring these same things to a rehearsal. A part of Marlin-Jones’s persona is his manner of dress, his three-piece suit and hat. He would take his hat off and put it on again numerous times throughout the evening. It would be used as a rope by Marlin-Jones and an actor in a tug of war game to suggest a character not wanting to give in to another; and another time, the hat would be thrown on the floor or placed on an actor’s head to indicate a change of focus.

Davey Marlin-Jones has worked with a hat for as long as he can remember, but when he was directing in the musical tent theater in Clio, Michigan, his hat was indispensable. He was required to put shows up in 24 to 30 hours in Clio; whenever he could, he used his hat. “Every single picture that could tell a story, could usually save me some time.” (Marlin-Jones interview, 10 April 1992) Another example of Marlin-Jones’s use of his hat was when he explained the inner action of a scene from Sam Shepard’s Buried Child to a directing student. He instructed the student to grab one side of the hat and pull. Marlin-Jones pulled the other side to equal the students pull. After this brief pulling contest, Marlin-Jones explained, there’s a lot of that going on in the scene. By this example, Marlin-Jones was using a physical object, his hat, to help the student
understand the power struggle within the scene.

Marlin-Jones is constantly using his hat to physically express throwing focus. In his early directing days, he used a "yo yo." If an actor in a scene was not looking at another actor when he "gave focus," Marlin-Jones would flip a "yo yo" in the direction the focus should go. As a teacher and director at UNLV he uses his hat in place of a "yo yo." Marlin-Jones is rarely seen without a hat, but actors he has worked with know it is more than just part of his clothing; it is a very practical tool he uses in teaching and directing.

As noted, Marlin-Jones always treats his actors and everyone involved in a production with respect and kindness. He takes a personal interest in each one. Equity actor Joplin remembers how Marlin-Jones usually opened the first rehearsal.

The first day of rehearsal he always introduced everyone in the room, not just the actors, but all the technicians, all the front of house people, all the administrative people, and he did it without notes. He introduced every single person in the room by name. I'm sure it's an old magician's trick. None-the-less, he was quite good at it, and it was quite impressive. (Joplin telephone interview, 29 May 1992)

On the other hand, Marlin-Jones may have seemed chameleonic at times when he would use his "stage-jumping" antic to get everyone's attention. Joplin referred to him as, "Mr. Long Legs," and said he was famous for "taking a running leap down the aisle and onto the stage." (Joplin telephone interview, 29 May 1992) Marlin-Jones, who admits he is not athletic, but was "a fair high jumper" in junior high school in Winchester, Indiana, attests to the fact that the first thing he did in the past in a new rehearsal/production space
was practice his running leap onto the stage. He wanted to make sure that he could do it before he tried it in front of his cast. However, he only practiced in an empty theater. It was a trick that never failed to get the attention of everyone.

After greeting the assembled actors for *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* audition and giving them a brief conceptual explanation of the play, Marlin-Jones assigned them parts to read from the script. While the actors read, he moved about the room with his head down listening to them read; then he asked them to switch roles and continue reading. In keeping with Brechtian spirit, he planned to switch gender in some of the roles, using women in men's roles and men in women's roles. He had basically two reasons for doing this. One, the biggest and best roles in the play were created for men, so in order to be more equal in the distribution of male and female roles, Marlin-Jones decided to cast women in men's parts. Second, he had seen a production of this play at Western Illinois University in 1987 with cross-gender casting. Although Marlin-Jones didn't feel the production was exceptional, he remembered the production and liked the idea. "The idea of two artificialities making a reality" (Marlin-Jones interview, 26 June 1992), was the Brecht attitude that Marlin-Jones wished to capture in the production. He explained this idea with the analogy, "If you know me as a liar, and I say I always lie, what do you know? I sometimes tell the truth." (Marlin-Jones interview, 26 June 1992) He only cast one male in a female role because of the previously discussed need for more female parts.

As the readings continued, Marlin-Jones called out scenes and
roles without looking at his script. Judging from the fact that he had never done this play before, one surmised that he had done his preparatory work quite well. Occasionally he would stop the reading and give direction to an actor; in one particular case, an actress was reading a male role. “Don’t hunch over, stand up! You’re tall, use it!” (Marlin-Jones, Rehearsal notes, 7 December 1991) Marlin-Jones continued to have actors switch roles and try different things, all the while he was pacing, smiling, snapping his fingers, and sometimes shaking his head, but never reprimanding. He complimented the first group and asked them to remain and watch the next group. Then he greeted the new group and went through the same procedure of a brief conceptual explanation, followed by reading in groups. While this new group readied itself, Marlin-Jones walked around personally greeting all the individuals who were observing for some reason or another. The next group was now ready to begin, and he cautioned them that, “These are real people, not cartoon characters. They have sharp edges.” (Marlin-Jones, Rehearsal notes, 7 December 1991) Marlin-Jones explains “sharp edges” as, “clean definitions from one interchange to the next.” (Marlin-Jones interview, 26 June 1992) After this group read, he politely dismissed some and reassigned roles, never wasting anyone’s time. He continued to watch the actors and move about the room. Occasionally he would offer direction, always polite, yet firm and extremely organized. He frequently reassured those who had not yet been on stage that he would soon hear them read. As the evening wore on and energies began to lag, he stopped those who were
reading to give them a pep talk. He energized them by snapping his fingers and clapping his hands. Throughout the evening, he had never failed to dismiss any actors without placing a gentle hand on the women’s shoulders or giving a warm handshake to the men. He personally thanked them all for coming.

After the last actor left the Brecht audition, Marlin-Jones turned to the remaining few in the room, the assistant director, the vocal coach, and the stage manager, and discussed casting the play. He asked questions and listened with interest to all suggestions; then he proceeded to cast. After about 45 minutes, most of the roles had been agreed upon. Marlin-Jones again thanked his fellow collaborators and said he would have the list ready for posting by noon the next day. He does not feel that a play hinges upon its casting. Marlin-Jones appears to be in the minority in this belief when considering most directors’ appraisal of casting. Robert Benedetti, in preparation for writing his book on the director, sent a questionnaire to directors he admired, asking specific questions about directing methodology. According to Benedetti, the results of this survey suggested that most directors agree with a sign he has hanging over his desk. The sign reads, “Directing is the art of correcting the mistakes you made in casting.” (Benedetti, 1985, p. 86) Benedetti quotes three directors on casting, first; Mark Lamos, director of The Hartford Theatre Company, “Correct casting is 90 percent of a successful production.” second; Jack O’Brien, director of the Old Globe Playhouse, “with the wrong casting, you are reduced to “making it work” in spite of itself.” and third; John Dillon, director of
The Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, “putting the right combination of people together in a room for four weeks of rehearsal may be sufficient genius to breathe life into a production.” (Benedetti, 1985, pp. 85-86) Marlin-Jones on the other hand believes, “The ‘right cast’ is not sacred. Perhaps being cast wrong may turn out better. The idea, ‘Is he or she cast right?’ is dangerous.” (Marlin-Jones interview, 10 April 1992) Marlin-Jones reinforces his belief with a story of casting a 307-pound actor as Willie Loman in Arthur Miller’s Death of a Salesman. The actor had difficulty sitting in regular-sized chairs so the designer had to redesign the furniture to fit his size. It was also hard for him to move as much as most Willies, and so Marlin-Jones let him sit more, and once he sat he relaxed and created an interesting Willie. The unusual casting worked so well that Marlin-Jones wondered why more 307-pound actors weren’t cast as Willie Loman. Nevertheless, Marlin-Jones appears to be one of the few directors who does not believe correct casting is imperative to a successful production.

Rehearsals for The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui did not begin until February. In the meantime, actors were assigned to research the historical period of time for the action of the play as well as the historical counterparts for some of the characters. The reason for starting rehearsals later than usual was because Marlin-Jones was directing Just One World, an original play by John Wood, premiering in Chicago, Illinois, on February 1, 1992. As he approached his 60th birthday, Marlin-Jones was continuing to juggle productions just as he had done in his earlier directing days.
At the first Brecht rehearsal, Marlin-Jones introduced the other staff collaborators, the set designer and the costume designer. They both presented their conceptual designs for the production, elaborating on the concept Marlin-Jones had discussed at the beginning of the evening. Afterward, a movie depicting the rise and fall of Adolf Hitler was shown to help the actors understand the mood and history of the time. (Sometimes Marlin-Jones will have music playing, with costumes and an occasional prop scattered around the theater, to create an ambiance for the first rehearsal.) Finally, all the actors converged around a long table, (for even-though Marlin-Jones had triple-cast most of the roles, this was still a large cast of 21) and the first read-through began.

Peter Brook, the famous English director, believes, “The purpose of anything you do on the first day is to get you through to the second one.” (Brook, The Empty Space, p. 105) However, Marlin-Jones thinks that the first rehearsal is very important. He feels that, “Actors must hear each other and encounter the entire play together. They may not fully listen, but the effort must be made.” (Marlin-Jones, Stage Directors Colloquium, 1988, p. 40) He also believes that it should not be a “show and tell” (Marlin-Jones, Stage Directors Colloquium, 1988, p. 40) situation as far as the designers are concerned. The actors need to see who is creating their environment and why, and the designers need to see for whom they are creating the environment and why it is necessary. Marlin-Jones believes that if communication between cast and crew begins early in a production, it may help prepare everyone for the dreaded technical
rehearsals. “Designers and technicians should not be strangers who drop in only for a run-through or at tech time! Everyone should be organically involved as much as possible.” (Marlin-Jones, Stage Directors Colloquium, 1988, p. 41) This is not always the case, even for Marlin-Jones’s productions, but it is the way he would like all of his productions to begin.

The initial phase of a Marlin-Jones rehearsal period begins with this coming together of all those involved in the collaboration for discussion or “table” work. This phase continues for a week to 10 days. During this time, the script will be read many times and many discoveries will be made. When Marlin-Jones directs Equity productions, he goes over the necessary business matters and establishes the ground rules at the first rehearsal. He makes sure contracts are signed and severance rules are clarified. For the first read-through of The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui he told the cast to read for meaning, and not to act or superimpose emotion or characterization. He ended this first rehearsal with a question for each actor to ask himself, “What is different about each scene and what do I do? What makes me different than all the others, and how does that help tell the story?” (Marlin-Jones, Rehearsal notes, 4 February 1992) It is Marlin-Jones’s habit to end rehearsals with a question, motivating the actors to continue to think about the play. He will also set the goals for the next rehearsal; he calls these goals his “grocery list.” (Marlin-Jones, Rehearsal notes, 4 February 1992)

At the second rehearsal for the Brecht play, Marlin-Jones invited the actors to stand and to talk with each other if they felt like
it. He normally might not have put actors on their feet so early in the rehearsal period, but time pressures necessitated it. His “table” work procedure adjusts with the script, the experience levels of the cast, and other special circumstances. At this reading, he began to tell the actors what they would be doing at different points in the play. He also offered ideas for scenery and props which reinforced the reading and clarified how something would happen later. At one point during a rather lengthy reading, an over-eager actress jumped her cue; Marlin-Jones quickly replied, “It’s hard to get good help these days.” (Marlin-Jones, Rehearsal notes 5 February 1992) The cast relaxed and had a good laugh. This is something he does frequently when actors are tense. He ended the session by explaining his “off-book” rule which is, “We rough out a scene, then we work it. Once the scene has been blocked and you know what you’re doing, then next time you must be off-book.” (Marlin-Jones, Rehearsal notes, 5 February 1992) This line memorization rule of Marlin-Jones is not in keeping with William Ball as he states in A Sense Of Direction:

One puts a pebble in an actor’s shoe by asking him to memorize before he understands. The ideal is for the memorization to be effortless or almost unnoticeable. You should run through the material so many times that the words all seem necessary to the achievement of the objective. The books just slide out of their hands. (Ball 1984, pp. 114-115)

Marlin-Jones believes that his week to 10 days of “table” work should began the memorization process. If the actor does not use this important time to start learning lines, then he will be rushed and this
will slow down the whole rehearsal process.

His final words to the cast: “Everyday bring in a thought which is relevant to the play.” (Marlin-Jones, Rehearsal notes, 5 February 1992)

On day three of The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui rehearsals, Marlin-Jones instructed the actors to play through full intentions in one speech before starting another, thus helping them finish the end of their words and improving articulation. Playing through an intention is explained by Marlin-Jones in the following example: Imagine that a male actor’s action in a scene is to walk into an empty room and get a Coke from the refrigerator. Suddenly a beautiful woman comes into his line of vision. The actor must first lose his need for the Coke before he can cope with the beautiful woman. “It’s that second or two or three of the pursuit of the previous intention that makes a transition possible.” (Marlin-Jones interview, 26 June 1992)

He followed his playing an intention advice with a rule he likes all of his actors to follow once the initial read-throughs are finished: “If you blow a word, do not correct it; drive through. All you lose is the word. If you go back and correct it, you lose the rhythm.” (Marlin-Jones, Rehearsal notes, 5 February 1992)

After the third reading, Marlin-Jones asked the stage manager to time the reading with no interruptions. During this reading, everyone was asked to speak directly to each other and look away from the book more and more. Marlin-Jones asked everyone to examine the beginning of the play prior to the next rehearsal and
think about how the ending was "earned." He also asked everyone to choose an animal they thought their characters would be if they were animals. Just before dismissal, Marlin-Jones walked around the table and asked each actor in turn to explain what discoveries he or she had made about his or her character thus far. This ended the first stage of rehearsals.

The second phase in Marlin-Jones's rehearsal process involves "getting people on their feet," which means blocking. For him, blocking is not just a way to move actors around on a stage, but rather to, "use space to make discoveries.... That begins by knowing the environment, locale, what's up, and what's wanted." (Marlin-Jones, Stage Directors Colloquium, 1988, p. 43) This is another reason Marlin-Jones places a great deal of importance on "table" work; questions are answered and discoveries are made. It is also a time to begin creating a trust between actors, designers, and the director. "Put actors on their feet at once and they become more frightened than when at table." (Marlin-Jones, Stage Directors Colloquium, 1988, p. 38) Thus, Marlin-Jones's belief of a solid "table" work period facilitating blocking and putting the actors more at ease is in accord with William Ball, who writes in A Sense Of Direction, "Before getting on their feet the actors need an opportunity to explore their scripts." (Ball 1984, p. 104)

Each director brings his own method of blocking to rehearsal. With the increased popularity today in organic directing, in which the actor is encouraged to create his own movement, blocking is not the norm. Certainly the director who sets blocking early is frowned
upon by most modern directors. Robert Benedetti explains organic blocking in *The Director At Work*:

> Since blocking is the spatial manifestation of the action, and since the action lives through the relationships and specific transactions of the characters, the evolution of the blocking will arise as an integral part of the actors’ exploration of their roles; their movements and spatial relationships should have an organic connection to their reactions, choices, and objectives. For this reason, it is preferable for the blocking to emerge from the actors’ impulses rather than for it to be imposed a priori from your premeditated design. (Benedetti 1985, p. 145)

Marlin-Jones's philosophy of blocking may be compared to those directors who still believe that providing an actor with movement patterns gives him a framework in which to work.

> I think an actor needs to know where he’s going in order to buy him more freedom, not less. If the actor wanders around outwardly, he wanders around inwardly. So I believe blocking should be set relatively early. (Marlin-Jones, Stage Directors Colloquium, 1988, p. 34)

Because the movement patterns in *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* were complex, Marlin-Jones began blocking the actors as soon as they were on their feet. His procedure was to place the actors on stage at the top of each scene and then give them their movement as they walked through the scene. For example, in scene seven, Ui’s suite at the Mammoth Hotel, Marlin-Jones blocked Ui center stage in a large chair, placing Givola left of him. He had the two bodyguards escort The Actor in from upstage right and stop right of Ui. The scene began with this stage picture, but as the dialogue was engaged Marlin-Jones looked for instinctual movement from The Actor and Ui to bring life to the scene. However, if Marlin-Jones saw a need for a
move, he blocked it. This blocking with an organic sense worked in the scenes with few characters and with the more experienced actors. The scenes with large numbers of actors on stage were given more exact blocking by Marlin-Jones.

A blocking technique Marlin-Jones teaches his directing students is called, "walking through furniture." (Marlin-Jones interview, 6 April 1992) He uses his early training in magic to arrive at this technique in which he combines movement and focus:

You throw your focus directly to where you’re going, and provided you can do a relaxed enough angle, you do not walk around things because you’re looking through the piece of furniture at the goal; And all that happens is that you shift a step or two to your left or right from the very beginning so you don’t have to walk around anything. Your focus has remained the same, and your body creates something close to a ‘direct line’ to that object. (Marlin-Jones interview, 6 April 1992)

Marlin-Jones used this technique frequently in The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui. When a chair or a table was in an actor’s path of movement, he made sure focus was set before allowing the actor to move. Then it was just a matter of adjusting to the right or the left of the set piece to carry out this technique.

Whenever a scene is not working for his actors, Marlin-Jones will use blocking to help them out. An example which provides insight into his creativity in blocking (as well as into his ready wit in the face of chaos) is noted in a story he tells about a 1968 experience he had directing the musical, Calamity Jane, at the Detroit Institute of Art in Detroit, Michigan. Just before opening, one of the love scenes in the middle of the production was not working at all. In an effort to give the scene some secrecy and enliven it a little, Marlin-Jones
asked for three, two-dimensional trees; the two lovers could use these to play a kind of hide-and-seek behind:

Each time a build line was said, one of the two lovers would say it and disappear behind the tree and the other actor would pop out from the other side of the tree; the whole scene was between two people and a tree. (Marlin-Jones interview, 31 March 1992)

By Sunday before a Tuesday opening, Marlin-Jones still did not have his trees. He spoke to his stage manager and said, “Walter, if I do not have those trees by five o’clock, there will be blood in the streets.” (Marlin-Jones interview, 31 March 1992) In less than an hour, the rehearsal was interrupted by a Captain of the Detroit Police Department; he walked onto the stage and announced to everyone that there were major racial disturbances occurring in the city; there were tanks and snipers in the streets. Furthermore, he announced that all activity in the city would be closed down in an hour and a half. Marlin-Jones looked at his stage manager and said, “Walter, all I asked for was three trees.” (Marlin-Jones interview, 31 March 1992)

Another technique Marlin-Jones relies upon involves using “magic rope” (wine rope) to demonstrate the way two actors are connected. Marlin-Jones is a very visceral director, constantly talking to actors about their center and their base. Thus, if he has two actors who are supposed to be close and are having trouble demonstrating it, he will have each one hold an end of rope to his midsection and play the scene physically connected to each other from the center, the base of inner feeling. Marlin-Jones suggests using about a six-foot piece of “magic rope” since it is more supple
and is easier to work with than regular clothes-line rope. But when Marlin-Jones directs, he usually uses his suit jacket for the simple reason he often forgets his "magic rope."

A very tall, young male actor, Eric Kaiser, was having trouble with his blocking in The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui. Marlin-Jones asked the young actor if he had ever played basketball. Much to everyone’s surprise, he said no. Marlin-Jones walked onto the stage at this point and proceeded to show him how to pivot, using his upstage foot as the pivotal point. Kaiser, whose feet were rather large, always seemed to be on the wrong foot. Using the pivot principle, he was able to utilize the same area he had been using without taking extra steps; it also pulled his downstage foot out more and opened up his body to the audience. Marlin-Jones agrees with director/producer Harold Clurman when it comes to demonstrating for an actor. Clurman discusses this point in his book On Directing.

Should the director suggest his ideas or personally demonstrate them by "acting" them out? I believe such demonstrations dangerous. Yet they are inevitably resorted to. The peril in demonstrating to an actor how something is to be done is that it leads to imitation on the actor’s part. If the director is a poor actor the result may be grotesque. If he is an excellent actor,...the actor becomes "crippled," hopeless of matching the director’s brilliance. (Clurman 1972, p. 113)

Marlin-Jones, like Clurman, usually does not show actors how to execute something on stage, but he feels if there is trust between actor and director, it can be safely done.

Marlin-Jones likes sharp movements from his actors in their entrances and exits, and if they don’t execute the latter, he terms it
“oozing.” In explaining “oozing,” Marlin-Jones says actors enter and exit many times during the life of a play and they must “take the audience with them....Oozing is when you refuse to cleanly leave one room and fully enter another. You sorta leave one room and you sorta enter another.” (Marlin-Jones interview, 29 May 1992) At this point in his explanation, Marlin-Jones picks up a can of Coke he has been drinking and says, “Enough with this bottle of Coca-Cola, I’m through with it.” Then he looks at the person sitting next to him and says, “Now let’s talk about you.” (Marlin-Jones interview, 29 May 1992) However, his focus returns to the Coca-Cola can, and then back again to the person. He cannot commit to the Coca-Cola or the person; he “oozes” between the two. Marlin-Jones feels “oozing” can be observed frequently in the theatre, and it is the result of “sloppy” acting and directing.

After blocking, Marlin-Jones enters the third phase of his rehearsals in which he works on connecting actors with the play’s environment. Marlin-Jones continues to ask questions, and encourages his actors to do the same. He probes and discusses character wants and needs, but is always very careful not to tell the actors what to think. Marlin-Jones uses this approach in teaching his directing classes at UNLV. Recently he was observing a student-directed scene from A. R. Gurney’s The Dining Room. The student had blocked the father to sit at the dining room table early in the scene. Marlin-Jones, in his attempt to get the young director to understand why the father would avoid sitting at the table for as long as possible, discussed the social background of upper-middle
class society in Philadelphia at the time of the play. He used the background to help the director realize that by the father’s postponement of sitting at the dining room table, he was also postponing a confrontation with his married daughter about her moving back home. Sometimes the urge to tell an actor or a student director how to do something may be great, especially with young actors who are not as verbal or as articulate as experienced ones, but Marlin-Jones warns his directing students to beware of this “trap.” Marlin-Jones prefers to explore and question with the actors, sometimes learning with them. Again he is in total agreement with William Ball in this respect. Ball discusses the questioning process in A Sense Of Direction:

A director thrives when he puts his ideas in the form of questions. You have known directors to come into rehearsal crying, ‘I want this. I want that. I see it this way.’...He blocks the path of creative flow by forcing his own ideas, his own solutions, and his own decisions, when he should be inviting their creative suggestions. It is preferable for a director to do his ‘creative homework’ and then abandon it and ask the actors questions. (Ball 1984, pp. 51-52)

A problem usually arises within this phase of rehearsals. Actors forget the table work and their previously-analyzed inner goals. In an effort to get the actors “back on track” Marlin-Jones will usually have them sit down and, “just sit there and look at each other and talk to each other again. So that one never forgets why we learn things, why we learn words, why we’re moving into space.” (Marlin-Jones interview, 10 April 1992)

As discussed earlier, a strength of Marlin-Jones is found in his
work with actors. "One of the things I feel most comfortable with is a whole bunch of actors creating a reality, an environment." (Marlin-Jones interview, 23 April 1992) To work with the actor and help create this environment, Marlin-Jones relies heavily on the ideas of William Ball's teachings in his book, *A Sense of Direction*. Ball stresses the actor's goal in terms of "wants" in his chapter, "Objectives." "Wants are what create drama. Wants are what give life to the character. Wants are what the waking individual is never without." (Ball 1984, p.76) Like Ball, Marlin-Jones expresses these wants with "verbs," Verbs are actable, whereas nouns and adjectives are not. In an effort to help guide the actor towards discovering his "wants," Marlin-Jones continues to ask questions and elicit answers. He questions actors about their needs and wants until he gets a desired response in the form of a verb.

Marlin-Jones is a firm believer in frequent rehearsal rest periods to keep his actors fresh. In his early professional directing experiences, he had to follow Equity rules. One such rule was regular rest breaks. The rule required the actors to be given 10-minute breaks after 80 minutes of rehearsal, or five-minute breaks after 60 minutes of rehearsal. Marlin-Jones rests his actors regularly according to this system. He feels this also keeps the play "fresher" for a longer period of time.

Marlin-Jones has his own ideas about the use of improvisation in rehearsal and they differ from Constantin Stanislavski. "I'm not crazy about anything that is in improvisation that demeans or sets aside the text and the music of the play. Usually I think it's a way of
hiding from the responsibility of the material.” (Marlin-Jones interview, 6 April 1992) He doesn’t object to actors using improvisations preceding an entrance or following an exit, since it does not impede the text. What he does object to is substituting words for those in the text. He feels this is probably because he is also a playwright and realizes how much time and effort is put into the writing of a play. Again referring to William Ball in *A Sense of Direction*, Marlin-Jones is in agreement with Ball with the use of improvisation for off-stage purposes.

Let us give our attention to the first purpose of improvisation, that is, the offstage life of the characters...It is most profitable in naturalistic or realistic plays....awakening the imagination of the actor and filling in many colors....We do not improvise material that has already been written by the author. That is to say, we do not paraphrase the text...What we do select to improvise is what we call the offstage life. (Ball 1984, pp. 177&119)

Robert Benedetti, on the other hand, subscribes to Stanislavski’s use of improvisation. He explains this in *The Director At Work*:

I have sometimes encouraged actors to use their own paraphrase of the text in early rehearsals (rather than reading from the book) until the action starts to make itself felt. The use of paraphrase also forces the actors to become clear about the thinking behind the lines, and to own those thoughts by speaking them in their own words and voices. (Benedetti 1985, p. 114)

Another director who treats a text as sacred is Jose Quintero. At the Fullerton Stage Directors Colloquium, Quintero referred to Jean-Louis Barrault as his mentor in teaching him a lesson about violating the script. “Barrault was adamant that the script stood before all--then the actor.” (Quintero, Stage Directors Colloquium,
Marlin-Jones creates a kind of unique improvisation through the use of objects or clothing to help the actor reveal the subtext without having to substitute words for those in the script. For example, when he was directing *Of Mice and Men* at the Loretto-Hilton Repertory Theatre, the actress in the role of Curley's wife kept playing a scene in rehearsal as a sexy seductress. According to Marlin-Jones, this is the antithesis of her scenes. It was winter in St. Louis, and Marlin-Jones got all the actors' coats and piled them on the actor playing Lenny. He told the actress, "very gently take a coat away everytime you say a line." (Marlin-Jones interview, 26 June 1992) He recalls that the actresses' physical act of taking the coats away was "sexual" without being "sexy," and resulted in, "the actress using her words to match her 'inner feelings.'" (Marlin-Jones interview, 26 June, 1992)

Another Marlin-Jones improvisation is: if a scene becomes stagnant, he has actors run in place. He feels that this not only gets the blood pumping in actors, but it reminds them that characters are never standing still; inwardly, they are running toward a destination.

Marlin-Jones is proud of the fact he can work with any company of actors, regardless of their talent or experience. When he was to direct *Indians* by Arthur Kopit in 1974 for the Loretto-Hilton Repertory Theatre, Marlin-Jones hoped he would find actors with circus skills. After final casting, this did not seem to be the case. Marlin-Jones decided he would have to manage with the talent available. He placed a box with some juggling balls and Indian clubs
in the Green Room at the theater. Next he erected a tight rope about eight inches off the floor. “I didn’t say a word. By the time we opened I had three actors who could juggle and walk a tight rope....so often, good directing is creating toys.” (Marlin-Jones interview, 10 April 1992) Like Marlin-Jones, Quintero also likes to create an environment in which actors may be creative, discover, and play.

I do like to set things up--place a coat or props on the set before actors arrive. Then I watch to see what they do with them. These lead to movement and action, of course. Discoveries are usually superior to beginning concepts. (Quintero, Stage Directors Colloquium, 1987, p. 43)

Props and costumes can both aid actors and get in their way the first time they are added to a rehearsal. Therefore, Marlin-Jones prefers to have props available early to help tell the story of the play. He also feels working with costumes early in rehearsals is a necessity, particularly in certain plays. It was imperative in The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui that the actors use oversized coats, hats, jackets, and shoes as early as possible to literally help them look and feel like their characters. Actresses wearing oversized men’s shoes particularly needed extra time to learn to walk in them. Ellis Pryce-Jones, costume designer for this play, supported Marlin-Jones in his desire to have actors work in costumes early; many costume pieces were available by the third week of rehearsal. For Eric Oram, the actor playing the character Ui, it was particularly helpful to have a huge coat in which to work in order to create his Hitler prototype character. Pryce-Jones used the review of the Berliner Ensemble’s production in Germany to help Oram create his character. In the
1964 production, Ekkehard Schall, the actor playing Ui, wore a military “greatcoat” in which he would “hide” inside and at other times, “fill it out completely.”

Marlin-Jones has a theory he abides by which helps him realistically access each rehearsal period for a play; he calls it, “The Three-Day Theory.” (Marlin-Jones interview, 6 April 1992) He chooses the three most important days of rehearsal and classifies them:

The first day is when you set the track rules. The second day is somewhere about half to two-thirds through rehearsal where you take a very cold look at what’s not going to get done. The third day is when the last set of notes are given trying to pull everybody back into focus and rethink their beats. (Marlin-Jones interview, 6 April 1992)

Marlin-Jones uses this “theory” consistently and believes that it keeps him focused in the rehearsal process.

Once the play reaches the point of run-throughs, Marlin-Jones uses “note-takers.” He prefers to have two assistants, one for technical notes and the other for actor notes. During the note-taking period, he encourages the actors to bring journals to record their notes. This prevents them from getting the same notes each rehearsal. When Marlin-Jones gives an actor the same note several times, it greatly distresses him. He also suggests that his student actors and directors keep journals to record discoveries, mistakes, successes, and ideas about the play in rehearsal. Marlin-Jones, like other directors, believes these journals are invaluable for future reference.
When the play Marlin-Jones is directing opens, he departs. (He does this in professional theater, but rarely in educational theater.) He returns only to remove any "improvements" the cast may have made. "Usually, the key is playing time. If a production lengthens or shortens drastically, something is wrong." (Marlin-Jones, Stage Directors colloquium, 1988, p. 35)

The directing methodology of Marlin-Jones is not unlike that of many directors relative to auditioning and "table" work. However, his idea about "there is no right casting" is rare with most directors. When considering his approach to improvisation, line memorization and blocking, Marlin-Jones is more of a traditional director than an organic one. His familiar hat, three-piece suit, and occasional use of magic techniques are unique. Above all, Davey Marlin-Jones possesses old-fashioned graciousness and genuine love for his fellow artist, qualities which make him seem special.
CHAPTER V

PHILOSOPHY

If you sit and make a wish and that wish has something to do with what touches your soul, there’s probably a way of carrying it out....And I think so much of the time what one’s life is really about is forming an environment that makes your wishes possible rather than waiting for somebody to call. (Marlin-Jones interview, 3 March 1992)

The Marlin-Jones philosophy of directing mirrors his philosophy of life. He has spent the greatest part of his life forming an environment in which to direct the plays he loves. His jobs with Equity Library, The Borscht Circuit, the Washington Theatre Club, the Loretto-Hilton Repertory Theatre, and UNLV all reflect this.

A particular passion of his is to direct those plays which “got lost in the shuffle the first time.” (Marlin-Jones interview, 4 May 1992) It was this passion that prompted him to create “Theatre of the Second Chance” at the Washington Theatre Club. An example, A Memory of Two Mondays holds, “one of the great dramatized moments in modern theater.” (Marlin-Jones, Stage Directors Colloquium, 1988, p. 36) It’s the moment toward the end of the play when the windows are washed. As they are washed, “the dirt of years fades, sunshine and light increase - - things are brighter and cleaner. It is a stunning dramatic moment on stage.” (Marlin-Jones, Stage Directors Colloquium, 1988, p. 36) This moment literally brings
light onto the set and resolves a theme of “life without hope.” It is this kind of moment Marlin-Jones looks for in plays and often finds in ones that have been shelved.

Out of his love for forgotten plays, also comes what Marlin-Jones describes as, “The play that talks to me most...The play about poetry, and lyricism, and being in unexpected places...about losers who win and winners who lose.” (Marlin-Jones interview, 6 April 1992) One reason The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui appealed to him is the fact that it is about, “this insignificant schlep who gets hurled into significance.” (Marlin-Jones interview, 6 April 1992) Marlin-Jones believes the play dramatizes why we end up making the choices in life that we do. Marlin-Jones summarizes his feelings about these “lost in the shuffle” plays in this statement: “It’s not original or not overtly exciting, but it’s what I love in theatre, and I’ll look for those [plays] everytime.” (Marlin-Jones interview, 6 April 1992)

An example of his concern for the striving individual is clearly seen in Marlin-Jones’s personal life. He is a music lover, particularly of classical music. Whenever he purchases a piece of classical music, he makes sure he also buys a contemporary piece as well. The reason for this somewhat unusual habit is, “I am helping pay somebody’s grocery bill....I feel very strongly about being curious about people who haven’t made it.” (Marlin-Jones interview, 4 May 1992) This is yet another example of Marlin-Jones’s charitable nature, especially when it involves an artist.

Another passion of Marlin-Jones is developing new plays. He feels so strongly about this passion he admits to it being his “calling
in life." In addition to those early days in New York and Washington, D. C. with new playwrights, his present position on the teaching staff at UNLV focuses on new play development. According to Crawford: "His professional career as a director is clear. What isn't so clear and visible to the public is that his educational mission as a director and as a professional was largely in new script development." (Crawford interview, 15 May 1992)

Marlin-Jones believes everyone is blessed with different gifts and talents: if these gifts and talents are pooled together, they can create something far more exciting and wonderful than one person could ever hope to do. This happens only if all these people create an environment together, and it "demands the stretching of one's skills." (Marlin-Jones interview, 6 April 1992) This is why Marlin-Jones hates classes on "the creative process." (Marlin-Jones interview, 6 April 1992) He feels the creative process is merely people working together in an artistic environment and coming up with a finished product by a given time for which everyone involved can be proud.

An environment not conducive to Marlin-Jones's expectations is one which exists only for monetary reasons. This is a tenet he works to instill in his directing students. "If you do something for money, you will always be underpaid. You have to have something for the soul." (Marlin-Jones, Directing Class, 6 March 1992) He tells his students they must love what they are doing, for if they do not, it will affect their work, and they will be unhappy. There was one time in Marlin-Jones's life in which financial circumstances dictated taking a job for purely monetary reasons.
My previous wife and I were desperate for a washer and dryer. We had two tiny children, and our washing machine couldn’t be repaired anymore; so I took a job on a show that I didn’t like. It’s the worst thing I’ve ever done. (Marlin-Jones interview, 3 April 1992)

He still has nightmares about that play, Goodby Charlie by George Axelrod. Although he believes his work was not up to his standards, he remembers that the production was still successful. The production made a big profit and attendance for the run was exceptionally high. However, he felt he had breached his artistic integrity. Benedetti takes a practical view of this situation. “It may be that purely financial or career considerations will be sufficient motivation to support your work.” (Benedetti, 1985, p. 13) He believes that the director must weigh each situation and decide if remuneration is sufficient to risk one’s ideals.

While Marlin-Jones is somewhat anachronistic, Crawford says he is also “worldly-wise; he’s street-wise through theatre experience.... He has the sophistication and the wisdom of both classical and contemporary plays.” (Crawford interview, 15 May 1992) However, critic Joe Pollack notes that Marlin-Jones was, “at his very best when it came to American realism and I thought he fell short in some other areas when he tried to do classics....His Mice and Men was excellent and his Cuckoo’s Nest was outstanding.” (Pollack telephone interview, 8 June 1992). Marlin-Jones is convinced that directing American classics such as Of Mice and Men, The Iceman Cometh, and The Resistible Rise Of Arturo Ui help him as a director of original plays.

I am now convinced that I can stay a much better
director of original plays if I will do a classic every year and a half or every two years. Because doing real heavyweight material makes it much easier to go back and teach. (Marlin-Jones interview, 6 April 1992)

His singular sense of “soul” and his emphasis on a character’s “center and base” classifies Marlin-Jones as a truly visceral director.

Crawford, who has observed him in both directing and teaching situations, concludes:

He speaks viscerally through his body and animation....as he places his hand on his own abdomen or diaphragmatic area in the rib cage and says; from the center; he releases an energy which indeed seems soul-sent. (Crawford interview, 15 May 1992)

In this way, Marlin-Jones can again be compared to Jose Quintero.

Both directors admire and recognize the genius and the poet in dramatist Eugene O’Neill. Quintero has devoted much of his life to directing O’Neill plays. When Marlin-Jones was asked at the Fullerton Colloquium if O’Neill would have been a better novelist than a playwright, he answered, “O’Neill was a dramatist because he provided us access to the human soul.” (Marlin-Jones, Stage Directors Colloquium, 1988, p. 35) Both directors are aware of the great affinity O’Neill had for man’s “soul” and are drawn to him as a result. Quintero advises students: “Try to find poetry in the commonplace....Perhaps my whole lesson about directing is contained in that one statement about poetry in the commonplace and having something to cling to under stress.” (Quintero, Stage Directors Colloquium, 1987, p. 44)

Marlin-Jones also searches for poetry and for “something to cling to” when under stress as noted, he often finds this in classical music. Sometimes he picks a piece of music to match the rhythm of a play
before he does anything else with it. On one such occasion, he was driving his car listening to an all-night station and heard Czechoslovakian composer Janacek’s, “Sinfonietta.” He felt it sounded very “water-like” and thought that was unique since the country of Czechoslovakia is not touched by any body of water. Somehow this music seemed to fit the Eric Overmyer play, *On The Verge* which Marlin-Jones was about to direct. The music evoked “what it must be like to live on water, which seemed perfect for those three women writing in their journals.” (Marlin-Jones interview, 4 May 1992) Marlin-Jones admits to being partial to Czechoslovakian composers who “speak to him” of isolation and loneliness.

I guess that incredible loneliness of the artist and how one says, ‘Am I a lonely artist or am I just bloody anti-social’...because that music says, ‘Davey you are not alone! You are not alone! Other people have felt this pain and have lived through it. It is okay. It is okay. (Marlin-Jones interview, 4 May 1992)

Davey Marlin-Jones, like Jose Quintero, searches for poetry and for the soul of man and finds them in dramatists like O’Neill, Miller, Williams and other American playwrights. Marlin-Jones also finds poetry and “soul” in the environment he works to create in theatre and in life.

**FUTURE THOUGHTS**

Andrew and Oliver Jones, sons of Marlin-Jones, are proof of the phrase, “artists spawn artists.” In the spring of 1992, Andrew Jones, the older son, teaches English and American poetry and composition at the University of California, Davis. Oliver Jones is a junior at
Hampshire in Amhurst, Massachusetts; he is a poet. His sons Andrew and Oliver, his wife Maggie, and his father and friend, Marlin Jones Sr., form the immediate family of Marlin-Jones and are all very precious to him, as he is to them.

When asked about his future, Marlin-Jones remarked that while most of his friends are thinking about retirement being a few years away, he knows, "if I ever retired, I'd die." (Marlin-Jones interview, 4 May 1992)

You see from the very beginning, and it's not just being a child of the depression because one learns at 18 or 19 that 92 percent of Actor's Equity is unemployed. So that means that 92 out of every 100 people who carry active union cards can't get work. Consequently, the whole business of being given a chance to do what you want to do, the idea of, oh boy, someday I can stop, someday I don't get to unwrap presents anymore, that doesn't sound like an incentive to me. (Marlin-Jones interview, 4 May 1992)

Marlin-Jones could not retire; he is too busy living.

Like most directors, Marlin-Jones is happiest when he is needed and when he has a problem to solve in the theater. At the time this thesis was written, spring, 1992, he was needed to suddenly replace an ill colleague and direct an original play at UNLV. He had been directing almost non-stop since fall and was looking forward to a few free months. Nevertheless, he accepted the responsibility to direct The Clown, The Penguin, and the Princess by Bob May, MFA graduate student in the Playwriting Program at UNLV. It was ready to open by the designated date, and exuded magic, mystery, and lots of energy. Marlin-Jones is uniquely able to transfer energy to others.
“So much of a director’s work is igniting and exciting other folks and then shaping that heat.” (Marlin-Jones interview, 29 May 1992) Quintero said basically the same thing when also talking about a director’s responsibilities. “A cast must burn to bring a play alive. The director is key to motivating this fire. There is no method to it; it comes from the person, the passion.” (Quintero, Stage Directors Colloquium, 1987, p. 42) Quintero could have been referring to his contemporary, Marlin-Jones.

Marlin-Jones felt particularly close to the production of *The Clown, The Penguin, and the Princess*. It reminded him of *The Adventures of Punk and Charlie*, an original play he wrote in college. He had the privilege of directing his play at Antioch College in 1954, Detroit, Michigan in 1957, and again in North Conway, New Hampshire in 1963. In May’s play the protagonist is a child, Teddy, who has two imaginary friends, a clown and a penguin. In a world of fantasy, Teddy finds refuge from the real world and from his father’s alcoholism. The Clown and the Penguin assist Teddy on his adventures. Marlin-Jones’s play also has a child protagonist, Charlie. His wizard friend, Punk, accompanies him on adventures. Charlie, like Teddy, lives in a fantasy world in an effort to avoid growing up and facing the realities of an adult world. There is a special line in the play that Marlin-Jones fondly remembers. A friend sent him a telegram the night of his first big opening, quoting it: “Once we get that treasure, the witches won’t dare bother us.” (Marlin-Jones interview, 29 May 1992) In a strange way, this line personifies the playwright’s life. Davey Marlin-Jones has had many witches to fight
in his life and in his career as a director, but nothing has deterred
him from seeking his treasure in the theatre.

SUMMATION

Davey Marlin-Jones has been called many things in the context
of this paper. In summation, it is the endeavor of the author to
address the questions of Marlin-Jones as; a visionary, a person, a
director, and an educator.

A visionary person is thought to be imaginative, idealistic, but
impractical. He also has an innate power to foresee things that others
do not. These are, for the most part, qualities that one would expect
a magician to possess. Marlin-Jones not only has a remarkable
interest in the world of magic but he also loves to perform magic. As
was noted in chapter I, Marlin-Jones was first a traveling magician
and performer before becoming interested in directing. His interest
in magic has not waned over the years. He speaks at magic
conventions, and he performs feats of magic, on occasion, for friends
and admirers. His love of creating something out of basically nothing
on a bare stage speaks to his creative imagination. “Traditionally
realistic scenery just bores me to death.” (Marlin-Jones interview, 4
May 1992) This imagination is at best when directing a play such as
The Clown, the Penguin, and the Princess. The stage directions in this
play call for special effects which include flying, disappearing, and
creating fire; all are difficult and dangerous to execute, and require a
large budget. Marlin-Jones used his imagination and magic training
in accomplishing all of these special effects, and he did it on a very
small budget. For example, by having the villain’s costume white in front and black in back, he could disappear merely by turning his back to the audience. Another example, the script calls for fire as the magic power increases. Marlin-Jones instructed Greg Gaskill, his prop master, to glue gel (which glowed) onto gloves and sleeves. These became torches that would go on and off with the use of lights.

Marlin-Jones is idealistic, as is evidenced in his early “MGM” romantic attitude about life. He uses this attitude in directing “up” as opposed to “down” endings. In other words, Marlin-Jones always looks for hope at the end of his plays. He instructs his student directors and actors to “inhale” at the ending of plays, indicating hope, not to “exhale,” indicating futility.

Marlin-Jones has been seen as impractical by some for his selection of plays. His self-imposed quest in life has been to support new plays and their authors. As has been noted, Richard Coe believes this was carried to extreme by Marlin-Jones. However, this author believes if it were not for those directors who encourage new playwrights, theatre would become stagnant and the issues of the time would not be confronted. Like the famous English director Joan Littleword, who established the Theatre Workshop in London in 1945, Marlin-Jones believes theatre is for the present.

If the theater is to fulfill its social purpose it is contemporary and vital material which must make up the dramaturgy, and its theme must be important to the audience. Theater must be in the present tense. (Littlewood, Joan, “Working With Joan,” Directors on Directing, 1985, p. 390)

Marlin-Jones’s work with new plays and their authors is important in
effecting this attitude.

Marlin-Jones has been presented throughout this thesis as a gracious individual who genuinely cares about his fellow artist. Lois Carder, costume designer, believes that, “Davey is sometimes too sensitive. His concern is about everyone in a human way.” (Carder interview, 27 June, 1992) On the other hand, Marlin-Jones has occasionally been referred to as a demanding director. When Carder was asked if Marlin-Jones was demanding, she replied, “Of course he is. A good director is demanding.” (Carder interview, 27 June, 1992) The author of this thesis is in total agreement with Carder. If a director is not demanding, then the production will suffer. Definitively a director guides all the artistic elements towards a production. If the director is confident and believes in his concept, he should expect all involved to work toward the good of the production.

Davey Marlin-Jones is thought of first as a director. He has earned a living for most of his life as a free-lance director. This in itself is an accomplishment. The fact that he has amassed 874 credits as a director is a legacy to the theatre world. Research presented in this thesis suggests he has succeeded in both the above accomplishments because of the success and quality of his productions, and because of his ability in “time management.” A credo Marlin-Jones lives by is: having 17 jobs is better than not having any. He formulated his work ethic in the 1950’s when one considered it a privilege to work.

What makes one director different from another? What makes
Davey Marlin-Jones unique as a director? To answer these questions one must once again look at Marlin-Jones, the person. Jose Quintero believes that a director must bring his personal life into his directing. “Directing is not just a job or profession; it is a total emersion of self, a total revelation of self.” (Quinero, Stage Directors Colloquium, 1987, p. 38) Marlin-Jones’s “emersion of self” is found in his incorporation of his interests (such as sports, music and art) as well as “soul” into his productions.

Marlin-Jones brings his curiosity of life to directing. “A director who is not curious has no right to demand it from an actor.” (Marlin-Jones, Stage Directors Colloquium, 1988, p. 38) This curiosity is explored in a character’s wants, needs and environment in his plays. He guides and directs his collaborators in this exploration not by dictating to them but by using the Socratic approach. Again, these methods are not unusual, but when presented by Marlin-Jones, a performer at heart and embued with remarkable energy and zest for life, they may seem unique.

It is only natural that the demonstrative personality of Marlin-Jones guided him toward finding a home in the theatre. “I also went into the theater because I wanted the biggest family on earth.” (Marlin-Jones, Stage Directors Colloquium, 1988, p. 32) He felt the happiest with the family he found in professional, regional, and university theatre ensembles. Quintero also feels a strong love for ensemble. “Great teams are great ensembles. Theatre should be that way. The group-oriented theatre is what I miss most today. To some degree it can still be found in a college or university.” (Quintero, Stage
Directors Colloquium, 1987, p. 43) Perhaps that is one reason Marlin-Jones found his way to a college campus in Nevada. It seems fitting that this is the right place for Marlin-Jones to share his genius and his love of theatre through stories and experiences. Dr. Jerry Crawford learned from a mentor “story teller” of his, Howard Stein, retired Professor from Columbia University:

The great teacher teaches by story and example, not by lecturing, not by note cards. The great teacher teaches ‘naked’....Naked in their vocabulary and in their energy and in their dynamic. They are education themselves as great role models or mentors. Davey is all of that. (Crawford interview, 15 May 1992)

Finally, Marlin-Jones is an educator. He was an educator even before he was hired by UNLV to teach playwriting and directing. Whenever he shared his experiences and knowledge through analogies, he was an educator. His legacy is also passing on these experiences to aspiring directors, playwrights, designers, and actors at UNLV or wherever he may toss his hat.
APPENDIX

DIRECTING CREDITS OF DAVEY MARLIN-JONES (874)

1950-1955  Antioch College; Yellow Springs, Ohio

   The Live Wire by Davey Marlin-Jones
   Paddy-Cake, Paddy-Cake by Davey Marlin-Jones
   Fernando by Davey Marlin-Jones
   On The Wings of Mime by Davey Marlin-Jones
   The World's Wackiest Wizard by Davey Marlin-Jones
   Six Moons High by Davey Marlin-Jones, & co-directed
   by William Breska
   The Adventures of Punk and Charlie by Davey
   Marlin-Jones
   The Third Time Around by Davey Marlin-Jones
   The Erring Young Man by Davey Marlin-Jones
   Giraffe by Davey Marlin-Jones
   Only an Orphan Girl by Henning Nelms

1954  Live Works Television; WLWD-Dayton, Ohio

   Romeo and Juliet Revisited, Expecting, The
   Wrestler, and 21 other 6-18 minute mini-plays by
   Davey Marlin-Jones and other writers

1954-1955  Live Works Television; WTVN-TV, Columbus, Ohio

   The Captain Davey Show & Comedy Caravan (374
   episodes)
   The Greatest Earth on Show: The Cornish Hen, and Oog
   & Ooog (Emmy award-winning series for PBS),
   and 37 other sketches and plays
1955-1958  
**Stage Centre;** Detroit, Michigan

- *My Three Angels* by Sam & Bella Spewack (co-directed with Leonard Yorr)
- *Death of a Salesman* by Arthur Miller (co-directed with Leonard Yorr)

1956-1958  
**Sun Parlor Playhouse;** Leamington, Ontario, Canada

- *Twentieth Century* by Ben Hecht & Charles MacArthur
- *Voice of the Turtle* by John Van Druten
- *The Seven Year Itch* by George Axelrod
- *The Fourposter* by Jan de Hartog
- *The Rainmaker* by Richard Nash
- *Bell, Book, and Candle* by John Van Druten
- *Champagne Complex* by Leslie Stevens
- *The Glass Menagerie* by Tennessee Williams
- *The Importance of Being Earnest* by Oscar Wilde
- *A Hatful of Rain* by Michael Gazzo
- *Pygmalion* by George Bernard Shaw

1957-1958  
**The Detroit Theatre;** Detroit, Michigan

- *Misalliance* by George Bernard Shaw
- *LioLa* by Luigi Pirandello
- *Punk and Charlie* (the musical) by Davey Marlin-Jones
- *Portrait of the Ladies* (one-person play) numerous authors
- *The Stronger* by August Strinberg
- *Don Juan in Hell* by George Bernard Shaw

1959-1963  

- *The Girl on the Via Flaminia* by Joseph Hays
- *The Gonif* an adaptation by Davey Marlin-Jones of Moliere’s *The Physician in Spite of Himself*
- *The Physician in Spite of Himself* by Moliere
- *A View From the Bridge* by Arthur Miller
- *The Fifth Season* by Slyvia Reagan
The Diary of Anne Frank (dramatized by Frances Goodrich & Albert Hackett)
Jacabowsky and the Colonel by S.N. Berman
The Man by Mel Denelly
Silk Stockings; book by George S. Kaufman, Leueen MacGrath, & Abe Burrows, music & lyrics by Cole Porter
The Country Girl by Clifford Odets
A Song for Small Voices by Davey Marlin-Jones
The Bobby Weil Revue by Bobby Weil
What is This Thing Called Love assembled by Davey Marlin-Jones
A View From the Bridge by Arthur Miller
Suddenly Last Summer by Tennessee Williams
Goodbye Charlie by George Axelrod
Fair Game by Sam Locke
The Glass Menagerie by Tennessee Williams
Make a Million by Norman Barasch & Carroll Moore
The Big Knife by Clifford Odets
The Fourposter
U.S.A. by John Dos Passos and Paul Shyre
Five Finger Exercise by Peter Shaffer
Compulsion by Meyer Levin
Toys in the Attic by Lillian Hellman
The Matchmaker by Thornton Wilder
A Taste of Honey by Shelagh Delaney
They Knew What They Wanted by Sidney Howard
Desire Under the Elms by Eugene O'Neill

1959-1962
Lyric Theatre International; Hollywood, California (touring company)

Hansel & Gretel (the opera) by Engelbert Humperdinck (Music Box Theatre, Hollywood, California)
Hansel & Gretel, (Arizona tour)
Hansel & Gretel, (Southern California tour)
Hansel & Gretel, (Northern California tour)
Hansel & Gretel, (New York tour)
1960  

*Jan Hus Theatre*; New York, New York

The World We Live In by Josef & Karel Capek,  
an adaptation by Owen Davis

1960  

*Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park*; Cincinnati, Ohio

**Compulsion**  
The Cave Dwellers by William Saroyan  
Death of a Salesman by Arthur Miller  
Androcles and the Lion by George Bernard Shaw  
Orpheus Descending by Tennessee Williams  
Our Town by Thornton Wilder  
Caligula by Albert Camus

1961  

*The Seven Cities Theatre*; Cincinnati, Ohio

Highly Improbable by Davey Marlin-Jones (directed  
and performed 62 separate plays, sketches &  
pantomimes)

1962-1963  

*Eastern Slope Playhouse*; North Conway, New  
Hampshire

Strawberry Blonde, an adaptation of the James Hagen  
play One Sunday Afternoon  
Critics Choice by Ira Levin  
See How They Run by Philip King  
Once in a Lifetime by Moss Hart  
Write Me a Murder by Frederick Knott  
Where's Charlie by Frank Loesser (a musical comedy  
  based on Charlie's Aunt)  
Compulsion  
Caesar and Cleopatra by George Bernard Shaw  
Life With Father by Howard Lindsay & Russell Crouse  
  (based on the Clarence Day novel)  
Say Darling; book by Abe Burrows & Richard Bissell,  
  lyrics by Betty Comden & Adolph Green, music by  
  Julie Styne  
Last of the Red Hot Gremlins by Davey Marlin-Jones  
  (a Punk & Charlie revision)
1963-1965  *Equity Library Theatre*; New York, New York

*Gods of the Lightning* by Maxwell Anderson & Harold Hickerson

*The Trial* by Andre Gide & Jean Louis Barrault, an adaptation from the Kafka novel

*The Devil's Disciple* by George Bernard Shaw

*The Devil's Disciple* (New York State Council on the Arts, tour)

1966  *New York Y.M.C.A. & Y.M.H.A.*

*On the Shoulders of Giants*, author unknown

1965-1967  *Flint Music Tent*; Clio, Michigan

*Student Prince*: book and lyrics by Dorothy V. Donnelly, music by Sigmund Romberg

*Stop the World—I Want To Get Off*: book, music & lyrics by Leslie Bricusse & Antony Newley


*Irma La Douce*: book & lyrics by Alexandre Breffort, music by Marguerite Monnot (tour)

*Student Prince* (tour)

*Stop The World I Want To Get Off* (tour)

*A Funny Thing Happened On The Way to The Forum* (tour)


*My Fair Lady*: book & lyrics by Alan Jay Lerner, music by Frederick Loewe

*Kiss Me Kate*: book by Mark Bramble, lyrics by Michael Stewart, music by Cy Coleman

*Calamity Jane*: adaptation by Charles K. Freeman, lyrics by Paul F. Webster, music by Sammy Fain

*Gypsy*: book by Arthur Laurents, lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, music by Jule Styne

*Oklahoma*: book and lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II,
music by Richard Rogers
The Unsinkable Molly Brown; book by Richard Morris, 
music & lyrics by Meredith Willson
Barefoot in the Park by Neal Simon
Anatomy of a Murder by Elihu Winer
Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf? by Edward Albee
Camelot; book and lyrics by Alan Jay Lerner, music 
by Frederick Loewe
Bye Bye Birdie; book by Michael Stewart, lyrics by 
Lee Adams, music by Charles Strouse
Funny Girl; book by Isobel Lennart, lyrics by Bob 
Merrill, music by Jule Styne

1965-1967 Northland Playhouse; Detroit, Michigan

Student Prince
How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying
The Unsinkable Molly Brown

1965-1967 Moshi Moshi; California Japanese Cultural Touring
Company (directed 43 sketches, plays, pantomimes)

Moshi Moshi, (New York touring company)
The Theatre of Japan, (short pieces) (Texas tour)
Little Girl With Riding Hood of Red by Davey Marlin 
       Jones (Kabuki-style fairy tale) (Texas & Arizona 
tour of elementary schools)
Kyogen Comedies, (tour)
La Cucaracha & Friends, (California tour)
Pancho’s Magic Bus, (California tour)
Pancho’s Magic Bus, (Texas tour)
Pancho’s Magic Bus, (New York tour)

1967 Washington, D.C. Opera

Die Fledermaus by Johann Strauss
Andrea Chenier; by Umberto Giordano, libretto by 
Luigi Illica

**U.S.A.**

*Romeo & Jeanette* by Jean Anouilh

*Earnest in Love* by Pockriss & Crosswell (the musical based on Oscar Wilde’s *The Importance of Being Earnest*)

*The Birthday Party* by Harold Pinter

*Eccentricities of a Nightingale* by Tennessee Williams

*Spread Eagle*, a political revue

*My Sweet Charlie* by David Westheimer

*Eh* by Henry Livings

*The Knack* by Ann Jellicoe

*Hughie* by Eugene O’Neill

*The Fantasticks;* book & lyrics by Tom Jones & Harvey Schmidt

*Tiny Alice* by Edward Albee

*The Killer* by Eugene Ionesco

*No Man’s Land* by John Williams

*Caligula*

*Five Evenings* by Aleksandr Volodin & Adriadne Nicolaeff

*Son of Spread Eagle*, a political revue

*Mr. Tambo, Mr. Bones* by Alex pandas

*The Lion in Winter* by James Goldman

*The Marriage of Mr. Mississippi* by Friedrich Durrenmatt

*The Basement* by Murray Schisgal

*The Gingham Dog* by Lanford Wilson (premiere)

*Who’s Happy Now?* by Oliver Hailey (premiere)

*The Bus Rider* by Kenneth O’Donnald

*Curse, You, Spread Eagle*, a political revue

*Spread Eagle IV*, a political revue

*Exit the King* by Eugene Ionesco

*Before You Go* by Lawrence Holofcener

*Continental Divide* by Oliver Hailey

*The Wolves* by Robert Koesis

*Serenading Louie* by Lanford Wilson (premiere)

*A Fifth of Spread Eagle*, a political revue

*Lemon Sky* by Lanford Wilson

*Father’s Day* by Oliver Hailey
The Deadly Delilah by Raleigh Bond
Animal by Oliver Hailey
Luv by Murray Schisgal
The Last Sweet Days of Isaac by Nancy Ford & Gretchen Cryer
The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds by Paul Zindel
The Web and the Rock by Delores Sutton (based on the Thomas Wolfe novel)
All Over by Edward Albee
Coffee Lace by John Bowen
Trevor by John Bowen
Washington Square adaptation by Jerome Waldman (based on the Henry James novel)
Use the Morning (musical of Chekov’s The Boor)

(21 Monday Night specials which included premieres by Irvin Shaw, Edward DeGrazia, David Starkweather, & Robert Cohn)

1968

Detroit Musical Theatre, Detroit, Michigan (located in the Detroit Institute of Art)

Oklahoma
Kiss Me Kate
Funny Girl
Guys and Dolls; book by Abe Burrows, music & lyrics by Frank Loesser
Brigadoon; book & lyrics by Alan Jay Lerner, music by Frederick Loewe
Carousel; book & lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein, music by Richard Rogers
Finian’s Rainbow; book & lyrics by E.Y. Harburg & Fred Saidy, music by Burton Lane

1968-1969

Beverly Music Circus, Beverly, Massachusetts

On a Clear Day You Can See Forever; book & lyrics by Alan Jay Lerner, music by Burton Lane
Student Prince
Milk And Honey book by Don Appell, music & lyrics
by Jerry Herman

1968-1969  *Hyannis & Cohasset Tours, Cohasset, Massachusetts*

*On A Clear Day You Can See Forever*
*Student Prince*
*Milk And Honey*

1971-1987  *The Wayside Theatre, Middletown, Virginia*

*Stop The World-I Want To Get Off*
*Irma La Douce*
*A Streetcar Named Desire*
*Vanities* by Jack Heifner
*Round and Round the Garden* by Alan Ayckbourn
*Noises Off* by Michael Frayn
*Earnest in Love*
*Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* by Tennessee Williams
*Kiss Me Kate*

1972  *PBS: Theatre in America* (film)

*The Rimers of Eldritch* by Lanford Wilson

1972-1979  *Loretto-Hilton Repertory Theatre, St. Louis, Missouri*

*Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck
*One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* by Dale Wasserman
*Detective Story* by Sidney Kingsley
*The Hot L Baltimore* by Lanford Wilson
*Irma La Douce*
*Indians* by Arthur Kopit
*Caesar and Cleopatra*
*Lu Ann Hampton Laverty Oberlander* by Preston Jones
*A Memory of Two Mondays* by Arthur Miller
*Brandy Station* by Davey Marlin-Jones
*Eccentricities of a Nightingale*
*Desire Under the Elms* by Eugene O’Neill
*Old Times* by Harold Pinter
*The Front Page* by Ben Hecht & Charles MacArthur
Have I Stayed Too Long at the Fair? by Davey Marlin-Jones & Company
Desire Under the Elms (tour)
The Mud Show, an historical musical revue (tour)
Big Muddy, an historical musical revue (tour)
Along the Mississippi, an historical musical revue (tour)
The Iceman Cometh by Eugene O'Neill

1972-1985

The Hayloft Dinner Theatre, Manassas, Virginia

Play it Again Sam by Woody Allen
Harvey by Mary Chase
Ginger in the Morning (author unknown)
See How They Run by Philip King
Poole's Paradise by Philip King
Goodbye, Charlie
Deathtrap by Ira Levin
Who Done It, Darling (author unknown)
Cactus Flower by Abe Burrows
Lock Up Your Daughters by Bernard Miles

1973

The John F. Kennedy Center (new play program)
Washington, D.C.

Mortal Coils by John Pielmeier

1973

The Eisenhower Theatre (The Kennedy Center)
Washington, D.C.

Perfect Pitch by Sam Taylor

1973-1978

Long Wharf Playhouse, New Haven, Massachusetts

1973

Candida by George Bernard Shaw
Candida (tour)

1978

The Recruiting Officer by George Farquhar
1975  The University of Washington, Seattle, Washington

Much Ado About Nothing by William Shakespeare

1975-1986  The New Jersey Shakespeare Festival, Madison, New Jersey

1975  Uncle Vanya by Anton Chekov
Private Lives by Noel Coward
The Hot L Baltimore

1986  Noises Off
A Streetcar Named Desire
On the Verge by Eric Overmyer

1975-1976  Purdue Summer Theatre, West Fayette, Indiana

The Imaginary Invalid by Moliere
The Show Off by George Kelley
Dulcy by George S. Kaufman & Marc Connelly
Salvation Nell by Edward Sheldon

1976-1978  Stage West, Springfield, Massachusetts

A View From the Bridge
Night of the Iguana by Tennessee Williams
Tooth of Crime by Sam Shepard
Tooth of Crime (tour)


In the Well of the House by Charles C. Mark

1977  Cricket Theatre, Minneapolis, Minnesota

And If That Mockingbird Don’t Sing, author unknown
1977-1978  Temple University Theatre, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Serenading Louie
Another Part of the Forest by Lillian Hellman

1978  Virginia Educational Network: (five productions)


One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest
Ah Wilderness! by Eugene O'Neill
The Miss Firecracker Contest by Beth Henley
Rhino Fat (an original company play)


Anna K. by Eugenie Leontovich, adapted from the Leo Tolstoy novel, Anna Karenina
The Rimers of Eldritch by Lanford Wilson
Alice in Wonderland by Eva Le Gallienne & Florida Friebus
The Heart of Tennessee by Davey Marlin-Jones
(from the works of Tennessee Williams)
Welcome to the Theatre, a revue
Telemachus Clay by Lewis John Carlino
King John by William Shakespeare
The Shoemaker's Prodigious Wife by Garcia Lorca
Ballad of the Sad Cafe by Edward Albee (tour)
Ulysses in Nighttown by Marjorie Barkentin & Patrick Cullum
The Trial
Suddenly Last Summer
The Queens of France by Thornton Wilder
A Woman of No Importance by Oscar Wilde
The Shrewing Up of Blanco Posnet by George Bernard Shaw
Collision Course (evening of mini-plays)

The *Timothy Rice Show* (greater D.C. area)
The *Dianne Gardner Show* (New York Cabaret)
The *Diaan Ainslee Show* (New York Cabaret)

1982-1987  *Totem Pole Playhouse*, Fayetteville, Pennsylvania

1982  *Romantic Comedy* by Bernard Slade

1987  *The Dining Room* by A.R. Gurney


*She Stoops to Conquer* by Oliver Goldsmith

1986  *The Wolftrap Center for the Performing Arts*,
    Maclean, Virginia (Virginia National Park)

*Susannah* by Carisle Floyd (a musical drama)

1987  *Studio Theatre*, Washington, D.C.

*Stars Out Tonight* by Mark Berman

1987  *Green Plays*, Upstate New York

*Over Mother's Dead Body* by Lynn Adams

1988  *Mountain Playhouse*, Jennerstown, Pennsylvania

*Rough Crossing* by Tom Stoppard
*Bedroom Farce* by Alan Ayckbourn
*The Elephant Man* by Bernard Pomerance

1989-1992  *Judy Bayley & Black Box Theatres*, The University of Nevada, Las Vegas

*Crooked River* by Red Shuttleworth
*Revenge of the Psychic Sketch Writers* by a compendium of writers
More Stately Mansions by Eugene O'Neill
The Ball Turret Gunner by Jerry Crawford (a staged reading)
Broadway Bound by Neil Simon
Picnic by William Inge
Lost in Translation, by Davey Marlin-Jones
The Rimers of Eldritch
The Dining Room
Savage Love and Irreverant Verses by Sam Shepard & E.Y. Harburg
Pip's Trip by Davey Marlin-Jones and new playwrights (based on Great Expectations by Charles Dickens)
West (an evening of one-act plays from UNLV's Playwriting Program)
The Children's Hair Turned White by Red Shuttleworth
Altered Bats, One Dog Leash To Go, and The Day Elvis Died by Red Shuttleworth
Scattered Kingdoms by John D. Newsom
Cabaret: book by Joe Masteroff, lyrics by Fred Ebb, music by John Kander
Outward Signs by Charles Supin
The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui by Bertolt Brecht
The Clown, The Penguin and the Princess by Bob May

1990
Hope Repertory, Holland, Michigan

Light Up the Sky by Moss Hart

1992
Organic Theatre, Chicago, Illinois

Just One World by John Wood
WORKS CITED


Marlin-Jones, Davey, Associate Professor of Theatre Arts, UNLV. 1992. Directing I class. March, UNLV. Author’s notes.

________________, Associate Professor of Theatre Arts, UNLV. 1991. Director of The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui by Bertolt Brecht. Rehearsal. 7 December, UNLV. Author’s notes.

________________, Associate Professor of Theatre Arts, UNLV. 1992. Director of The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui by Bertolt Brecht. Rehearsal. 4 February, UNLV. Author’s notes.

________________, Associate Professor of Theatre Arts, UNLV. 1992. Director of The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui by Bertolt Brecht. Rehearsal. 5 February, UNLV. Author’s notes.
121

1992. Interview by author. 3 March, UNLV. Tape recording.


1992. Interview by author. 27 March, UNLV. Tape recording.

1992. Interview by author. 31 March, UNLV. Tape recording.

1992. Interview by author. 3 April, UNLV. Tape recording.

1992. Interview by author. 6 April, UNLV. Tape recording.

1992. Interview by author. 10 April, UNLV. Tape recording.

1992. Interview by author. 23 April, UNLV. Tape recording.

1992. Interview by author. 4 May, UNLV. Tape recording.

1992. Interview by author. 29 May, UNLV. Tape recording.

1992. Interview by author. 26 June, UNLV. Tape recording.


______, drama critic, St. Louis Post-Dispatch, St. Louis Missouri.


Sargent, Peter, lighting designer, St. Louis Repertory Theatre. 1992 Telephone Interview by author, 8 June, Las Vegas, Nevada. Tape recording.


Stage Directors Colloquium. 1986. Department of Theatre and Dance, California State University, Fullerton.

Stage Directors Colloquium. 1987. Department of Theatre and Dance, California State University, Fullerton.

Stage Directors Colloquium. 1988. Department of Theatre and Dance, California State University, Fullerton.


