

The applause dies, the lights fade, the final curtain falls. Suddenly you find yourself alone on a bare stage, gazing into the empty blackness of the auditorium. The wave of excitement and exhilaration which, only moments ago flooded through you, has given way to a feeling of despondency.

Your mind wanders back over the weeks of preparation: the doubts and uncertainties, the late rehearsals, the setbacks, the mistakes, the chaos and despair of the final weeks, the problems ... was it all worth it? So much time, so much energy, so much of yourself has been poured into the production. You've spent weeks creating something, transforming words, into people that live and speak and feel. You've been successful, certainly—the audience told you that. But the play, the living thing you created, is dead, and sadly, can't be resurrected. Unlike the novelist, the artist or the composer, you have no record of your achievement, nothing to which you can later refer with affection and pride. All you have is a tattered script. And you think, how sad a medium theatre really is.

But you do have a record of achievement—not a tangible one, it's true, but nonetheless a worthwhile one. Think of the effects that being involved in the production has had on you. Certainly what you created has ceased to exist, but the efforts required to produce this creation have brought about a very definite change in you.

Those first rehearsal days—what were you then? An individual, merely one of a group of people in which there was no unity, no cohesion, no common factor other than the somewhat vague desire to “put on a play”. As the rehearsal period progressed, you retained your identity as an individual—in fact you reaffirmed it, for you learnt how to employ and develop your

individual talents to their full potential. You were called upon to make use of your imagination and creative abilities.

At the same time you learnt to discipline yourself, to suppress your own desires and wants for the overall good of the production. You found that co-operation, teamwork and the ability to work effectively with others was the very essence of drama. While remaining an individual you became a member of a unified team.

When rehearsals grew tedious, when the problems multiplied, when the fears and anxieties arose, you learnt endurance, tolerance. You realised that success required considerably more than talent and willingness.

Above all, as the production began to take shape and form, you learnt to become enthusiastic, to become interested, to derive enjoyment and satisfaction from your own achievement. And finally, during performance, you experienced the pleasure of transmitting that enjoyment to an audience, of providing them with entertainment.

This then, is your “record”. A souvenir that is lasting, useful, an experience that is worthwhile for it has provided you with opportunities to develop the skills and techniques necessary for living, not only as a member of society, but as an individual.

And you realise your time, your efforts and your labours have not been wasted. **It has been worthwhile—every minute of it.**