

IT'S CHILD'S PLAY ACTING



by Marilyn Jones

Education Junior

Home of the supporting actor. A boy 10 to 13 years old sits comfortably on the floor in front of the interviewer who is a girl of college age.

INTERVIEWER: Hi there, Terry. You were in Peter Pan weren't you? I'm curious as to why you tried out for the part.

TERRY: Yes, I was one of the little lost boys. I don't know why I tried out. (shrugs his shoulders) Sounded interesting. Anyway, I signed my name because I didn't think I would have a chance.

INTERVIEWER: I see. Something like playing a practical joke when you know you won't be found out. Now could you tell me something about the practice sessions?

TERRY: Ohhhhh. Let me see. They were lots of fun. One night we watched television. You know, one boy kept bringing records to play when we were supposed to be dancing. We went through a million steps, but I don't know how many we used. I called it modern folk dancing.

I learned my lines because we were told — "You can be replaced!" One of my lines I said from behind a tree. Oh yes — I couldn't get my hair cut for 2 months because of the part I played. It sure was long but some of the girls in my class liked it that way.

INTERVIEWER: Your mother told me you moped around the whole day after the play. I think you liked the play! What do you think you have gained from acting in it?

TERRY: Yes, I really enjoyed it. (hesitates, speaks slowly) I did fall down during one of the dances — (pause) — tripped over a rug and fell on my face. (begins to speak faster) No one saw me though — I got up right away. What did I gain? (has head tilted to one side, puzzled look on his face — begins to smile) I learned to dance. I'll be more prepared for another play. Did you know you can use Crisco to take off makeup?

EPILOGUE

The beginning of Iowa State College Theater Children's Theater, Department of English and Speech, came about 3 years ago. It originated because an instructor wanted to make his play production class more interesting. Since then there have been three productions, the lastest of which was Peter Pan. This was produced in connection with the Ames Junior Town Program.

Dorothy Green, the only person at Iowa State College with a minor in speech and drama, directed the first play. She said the children were greatly interested in their parts. Each child also worked on set construction for 4 hours in addition to his many practice sessions. "This was sometimes a chore," said Dorothy. "Their interest span for the jobs that they were capable of doing was so short that they were continually changing jobs."

Two interesting young actors who appeared in Peter Pan were Dick Gibbons and Kavin Woodward. Just talking with them you could catch their enthusiasm for acting. But actors need an audience and everyone who is a child at heart will enjoy watching Children's Theater.