

IES 2007

“The Angst-Free Show” Handout

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## “THE ANGST-FREE SHOW”

### A. SETTING THE STAGE --- THE SCENE

1. Places where groups of people gather
2. Places where emotions run high: *a train station, an airport*

### B. SETTING THE STAGE --- REPERTOIRE

1. Look at your repertoire. Identify the theme of each song and make a list:  
*friendship, love, revenge, patriotism, comedy*
2. What kinds of stories do the songs tell?

### C. SETTING THE STAGE --- CHARACTERS

1. Who are the characters?
2. How many characters are there?
3. Determine the “back story” of each character
4. Develop each character
5. What is the character of the chorus?

### D. SETTING THE STAGE --- DIALOGUE

1. Determine how the characters would speak
2. Write “natural” dialogue
3. Chorus’ dialogue

### E. SETTING THE STAGE -- NOTES

1. Analyze the repertoire and decide WHERE the songs might fit: a reunion, a wedding shower. *Let the songs suggest a story line.*
2. The plot should be simple. Do the songs move the plot, or does the plot move the songs? *Plot driven shows are easier to write.*
3. Limit the number of principal actors to three or four.
4. Think ACTION, not only conversation.
5. Think exposition, conflict, resolution.
6. Keep the dialogue simple and plot “close to home”. *Do not do “Gladiator” your first time out.*
7. Hire a professional director.

## "TERMINAL LOVE"

### SONGS:

I can Dream Can't I? ---- love, ballad  
I'm In Love Again ----love, up tune  
Side By Side ---- friendship, up tune  
Look Me Up When You're In Dixie ---- travel, up tune  
Why Haven't I Heard From You? ---- comedy/down and dirty  
Goody Goody ---- revenge, up tune  
Ac-cent-u-ate The Positive ---- cheerful advice, up tune  
Rhythm Of Life ---- inspirational, up tune  
Dream ---- encouragement, ballad

### SETTING:

A busy airport

### CHARACTERS:

Liz: cautious, protective  
Sally: (Liz's sister) impulsive, emotional  
Friends on the risers: of every possible description  
Harassed Mom: (with child)  
Southern Belle: (accent, big hat, the works)  
Dizzy Woman: (confused, excited)

Curtain is open, lights up, typical airport hustle and bustle. There are signs showing location of gates, ticket counters, etc. People are running in different directions, announcements are being made in several languages. The chorus uses all this time to get on risers: harassed mom chasing child, start things off. Mom is obviously having a tough time with fussy child. "Dizzy" woman is looking for her gate. People are talking on cell phones -- some crying, some laughing. Some of the women getting on risers walk over to listen to conversation with Belle.

**Riser woman #1:** ...he said that to you? And then what on earth did you say?

**Belle:** Well, honey, you know me, I just looked him right in the eye and I said 'some other time, sugar - I have a plane to catch!' (*Laughter from the group*)

**Riser woman #2:** No, did you really?

**Riser woman #1:** What did he do? I can't believe it!

**Belle:** He started to protest and I just pretended to wipe a tear from my eye and said...'y' all be good, hear?' (**PITCH**) 'And if you ever get back there, well, darlin', be sure and look me up!'

### LOOK ME UP WHEN YOU'RE IN DIXIE

Chorus waves and follows her movement off stage as she runs to catch her plane (*or joins chorus members on the risers, still laughing, hubbub resumes.*)

### The following all happen at once:

**Mom** chases child from SL to SR. Several of the women in the chorus take notice, talk about it. **Two people** cross SR to SL on cell phones, talking to each other. **Dizzy woman**, still searching for gate.

**Sally and Liz:** enter pulling their luggage. Chorus sees them, waves, call out “hello” to both of them. Sally and Liz in deep conversation.

**Riser #3:** Uh oh, Sally’s got that dreamy, lovesick look on her face.

**Riser #4:** Yeah, and Liz has that ‘Oh please, not again’ look on her face.

**Riser #3:** I’ll bet Sal’s done it again.

**Riser #5:** (*doom and gloom—deadpan*) she’s gonna be miserable.

**Sally:** I know it sounds crazy, Lizzy, but the minute I saw him, I knew something special was happening...and (*to chorus, too*) I know what you’re thinking! I haven’t known him long, but listen, really...

**Liz:** Sal, I believe you, I really do. I’m just saying, I can see, that this is another one of those times when you’ve fallen hard.

**Sally:** I know - I get carried away. I’m a hopeless romantic, a pushover, a sap -- you can stop me anytime, you know.

**Liz:** I will when you get to something I don’t agree with. (*Chorus friends respond*) Look, Sal, he’s adorable, he’s great...I know all that, and I know that you really like being with him - but I just don’t trust him.

**Liz:** Sally? (**PITCH**)

**Sally:** (*but S is looking at a picture of the guy, not paying any attention to Liz’s dialogue...dreamy and lost in her reverie....chorus reacts with Liz*). Sally starts the song, chorus joins in....

## **DREAM A LITTLE DREAM OF ME**

**Liz:** Sally, I’m worried about this -- look, what do we know about this guy really?

**Chorus:** (*ad libs*) what, Sally...tell us! What do you know? Yeah, Sal... Leave her alone!...

**Sally:** Well, OK. OK. Just a minute....let’s see, he’s cute, he’s a pilot, from somewhere in the mid-west....I think....and we have a great deal in common: he likes basketball, and animals...and he loves steak and Chianti....

**Liz:** Steak and Chianti. Great. So does Hannibal Lechter. Listen, what does this guy do when he’s on the ground? Do you know if he’s involved with someone? Is he...married?! Do you know? You only just met him! You know what your problem is? You love being in love!  
*Chorus responds with many different reactions, it gets a little heated; some side with S, A “quartet” who is on S’s side comes DSC with her and begins the song.*

**Sally:** You’re right. I do love being in love, what’s wrong with that? (**PITCH**) (*S says to the chorus:*) What’s wrong with that?

## **I’M IN LOVE AGAIN**

**Riser #6:** (*earth mother*) *Sal*, you have to protect yourself!

**Riser #4:** (*knows how Sally feels*) Oh leave her alone! she's in love.

**Riser #3:** Yeah, that's the look all right.

**Riser #5:** She's gonna be miserable!

**Sally:** What can I do? I know you're all just looking out for me, but I really like the guy.

**Liz:** Look, it's none of our business (*to chorus*) right? (*chorus reacts in character*) Maybe this time it'll all work out. And if it doesn't (*A look between S and L and the chorus*) **(PITCH)** well, you always have us, right?

### **SIDE BY SIDE**

**Sally:** (*looking off SL*) Oh! Wow! I don't believe it - he's here! What is he doing here? I think he's looking for me --- Lizzy, watch my bags! *She speaks to him as she exits...*"hi, you came to see me off?" (*She runs off, bumps into Dizzy woman on the way back across the stage, who is increasingly frantic*).

**Riser #6:** Well, if you ask me, she's looking for trouble with that guy.

**Riser #4:** (*to #6*) what do you know about him?

**Riser #6:** I don't have to know him...I know his type!

**Riser #2:** Well who knows what his story is - and in the mean time, Sally's putting all her eggs in one basket, if you get my drift.

**Riser #3:** I can see the handwriting on the wall...right now she's singing love songs, but pretty soon she'll be singing a different tune. **(PITCH)**

**Riser #5:** She's gonna be miserable.

### **WHY HAVEN'T I HEARD FROM YOU?**

Enter mom and child.

**M:** (*between her teeth*) Didn't Mommy let you ride on the luggage cart? And didn't Mommy get you a lollypop even after you knocked over that old man in the Premier Lounge? Mommy's just about at the end of Mommy's rope, OK? *They Exit*

*Chorus all react to Mom. Sally enters and we know that nothing good happened while she was gone, she is crying and upset.*

**Voices from the chorus ad lib and women run down to console her:**

Sally, what happened? Are you OK? She looks awful...Tell us! Liz, make her tell us! *Etc.*

**Liz:** Uh oh, hon, what happened?

**Riser #5:** (*I knew this would happen*) she's miserable.

**Sally:** (*Starting to cry - to Liz*) You were right and don't you dare say 'I told you so'....

**Liz:** Men! You can't live with them and you can't shoot them. (*Chorus nods in agreement and murmurs.*) Sal, (*puts her arm around S*) you're not the first woman this has happened to and you won't be the last. Look, I never told you guys this, but the same thing happened to me a few years ago.

**Chorus:** (*ad libs*) what happened?? It did? Liz! *Etc.*

**Liz:** Well, let's just say that romance is sweet, but revenge is sweeter.

**Chorus** (*ad libs*) what does that mean? Ooo this sounds juicy! Tell us! *Etc.*

**Liz:** Remember Roger? (*all react*) Remember how mad and hurt I was when he dumped me?...boy was I mad. Well, I called an old high school girl friend of mine.... her *stage* name was "Wildcat Va-Voom". Are you getting the picture? The two of us planned the whole thing -- boy, was she something - he fell for her like a ton of bricks. I knew he would, the slime bucket. And just as we planned, she dumped him like a ton of bricks.

**All:** What happened??

**Liz:** (*maniacally, rubbing her hands in glee*) **(PITCH)** Bricks everywhere!

## **GOODY, GOODY!**

*L and S with chorus during this as riser friends are consoling both of them*

Crazed mom enters this time with a smile. Child is fast asleep on the luggage carrier.

**(PITCH)**

**Mom:** (*Shushes the pitch*) Sh-h-h-h!

**DREAM** (*begun by Mom and chorus joins in, very quietly, as lullaby*)

**Sally:** (*coming out of chorus*) Well, I guess I can live for the moment when I know he'll be as miserable as I am. It isn't much, but it'll do for now. Thanks everybody. I feel better. Not great, mind you. But better. (*The chorus and L have that sympathetic, hangdog look on their faces...*)

**Sally:** What? What is that look? That's the "you are pathetic and we are really sorry for you" look. **(PITCH)** Oh, no, are you going to sing a really cheerful, happy song?  
Ad libs: yes! We sure are! Just listen! You know you love it! *Etc.*

## **AC-CENT-U-ATE- THE POSITIVE**

Dizzy woman (*who runs on and off several times during dialogue*) runs on again, **(PITCH)** and in frustration, tears up her ticket and joins the chorus.

## **RHYTHM OF LIFE**