

intensity. Because everybody there knew that the play had to go on that night . . . that they had to master all the changes in script and style by 8.00 that evening.

They worked frantically on all the parts that had fallen noticeably flat the night before. In fact, they worked frantically, period! Lunch was a snatched snack, eaten at some time when you weren't on call. And, if you were on call all day, then you ate as you worked!

Gradually, as they worked, the despondency of the first night flop vanished:

"It felt better just to think you were doing something about it," David explained. "It would've been really awful to sit around moping about it all day . . . This way you started to hope again!"

The enthusiasm built up towards the performance that night. And it was a definite improvement. They needed more time. The show they gave on that second night was in transition and the next morning again saw the entire cast assembled for more rehearsal, for more changes.

BACK TO SCHOOL

David had never, in all of his—admittedly limited—experience, come across a show that you built as you played it! It was like being back at the L.A. Workshop again . . . except there you'd done all your experiments before putting the play on in front of an audience!

"I sometimes wondered just what the folks in the audience thought about it," David told me . . . "I mean, I reckoned it was a bit rough—paying to be guinea-pigs!"

But, gradually, things started looking up . . . The audience was clapping as if they really meant it; the later reviews had some good things to say—in fact, they were positively favourable; everybody involved felt that the breakthrough had come . . . They were ready for Broadway!

And all this time, David had hardly had a single date! "That sure does prove how much acting meant to me!" he laughed. "I don't put that many things before girls!"

Of course, he told himself, once they'd got the play into an established run, these daytime rehearsals would slack off, leaving him plenty of time for long, leisurely lunches . . .

That thought saved him from a date-less despair.

Finally, after what seemed like years of confusing alterations to the play, it was: "Hallo, Broadway!"

So, what did Broadway hold for him? More rehearsals. (Enough said!!!).

Then, at long, long last: opening night on Broadway!

The tension backstage was so brittle that it felt as though one word out of place would have shattered the entire cast. Yet, underneath nerves and temperament, they had come to have a renewed faith in the show. They had put so much of themselves into it, that they couldn't bear to think of it as a failure.

But that was what it was . . . A pure and unadulterated flop!

They stuck it out for about five nights—David didn't bother to count, and he still can't tell you exactly how long the 'run' lasted! The zest had gone out of it. Nobody was going to come and see a show with that sort of reception. The bubble burst and the play folded.

What a hassle! And all for nothing . . . Those weeks of hard work, of sleepless nights and fun-less days— for nothing!

Was it worth it? David asked himself as he wiped off the stage make-up after the last show.

Although he did not realise it at the time, for him, personally, the answer *must* be 'Yes'. Right then it seemed the biggest disappointment of his life. But it had opened a door for him . . . A door to a future of fame.

You see, a guy from CBS had been there at one of the—admittedly few—shows. And, as he sat there, feeling rather bored by the play generally, he'd spotted talent.

There was a brilliant, and remarkably good-looking juvenile lead . . . Yes, that boy was definitely worth keeping an eye on.

Then one day the 'phone rang, and it was for David . . .

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