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You're a good man, Charlie Brown: An analysis of compassion, friendship, and overcoming obstacles

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UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Greeley, Colorado

The Graduate School

YOU'RE A GOOD MAN, CHARLIE BROWN:
AN ANALYSIS OF COMPASSION, FRIENDSHIP,
AND OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

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College of Performing and Visual Arts
School of Theatre Arts and Dance
Theatre Education

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This Thesis by: Jessamyn L. Miller

Entitled: You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown: *An Analysis of Compassion, Friendship, and Overcoming Obstacles*

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ABSTRACT

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Since the late 1960s many things have changed. With the inception of the Internet, much of the world has gone viral—including newspapers. Children rarely find the same joy their parents found in a nostalgic printed Sunday morning comic strip. In addition, societal tragedies have increased with almost daily occurrences highlighted on the news. With an influx of recent tragedies too close to home, this thesis examines arts advocacy facts, anti-bullying campaigns, and the themes of friendship, compassion, and overcoming obstacles within a production of Clark M. Gesner's musical *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown [Revised]*. Charles M. Schulz's classic characters were brought to life by middle school thespians to inspire hope and heal a heartbroken community. As a result, students and audiences alike experienced a form of drama therapy throughout process and product, which was obvious through anonymous cast and crew journal entries and audience feedback. This thesis proves that happiness is contagious and theatre can heal.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Goal of Thesis

It is difficult to ignore the constant heartbreaks that face the world today. A school shooting in a nearby town, the first and second year anniversary of a movie theatre massacre in Aurora, Colorado, and terrorist threats towards the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics, are all events that occurred throughout the development of this thesis production. Current tragedies are not only violent, as other calamities such as extreme debt of the United States, the inability for the country to accept differences in sexuality, religion, and race, and social media turning personal face-to-face conversations into jealous assumptions through text messages, also plague the nation.

In times like these, even a musical revival can provide a pleasant escapist experience. In the 1999 revival version of Clark Gesner's musical *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*, the title character is iconic. Charlie Brown faces adolescent adversity, and audiences can easily relate to his lack of self-confidence. Spectators share his feeling of wanting success in life, but doubts and fears all too often get in the way. Upbeat musicals, like *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*, can actually help to combat depression after personal or wide-spread societal tragedy by reminding the mature members of the audience what life was like when they were growing up, and by convincing young audiences, and the performers and technicians involved, that happiness is always within reach.

“Watching *You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown* is like running into your old gang. You know, the kids you haven’t seen for years” (McGillicuddy). Although Charlie Brown seems to lead a lonely existence, friends do surround him, yet most are not supportive of his pursuit of happiness. Snoopy stereotypically represents “man’s best friend” for Charlie Brown, and yet Snoopy has his own existential struggles about the mundane life of a dog. Even though Snoopy is a canine, audiences relate to his resistance to the routines in his life. Sally Brown is similar to Snoopy in the sense that she attempts to find perfection in life, but does not want to work at it. Sally is a sweet-talker who is never satisfied with mediocrity—especially her brother’s. Most adults understand Schroeder and his obsession with his future career. He is always near a piano, talking about Beethoven, or attempting to lead his friends in a choir rehearsal. Adults sympathize with Schroeder because his personality represents the epitome of an overworked career man/woman. Linus Van Pelt remains a dichotomy within the *Peanuts* stories; he teaches the rest of the characters about security despite their constant berating of his need for a blanket. His security blanket reminds audiences that, whether positive or negative, many people are dependent on something or someone to make them happy. Lucy Van Pelt is the iconic bully of the *Peanuts* comic strip, and as such, hers is the most interesting character journey as she changes from demeaning and pompous, to questioning her entire rude existence through the results of a “crabbiness” survey. Once Lucy evolves—the climax of the play—it seems like all of Charlie Brown’s problems disappear as the cast realizes happiness is as easy as remembering the simple things in life.

“True, [these characters] haven’t changed much since the late ‘60s. They’re still obsessed with all the insecurities, doubts, and outright paranoia that childhood is heir to. But then—tell the truth—underneath it all aren’t you too?” (McGillicuddy). Even though the *Peanuts* characters point out recognizable problems, their main objective is to find happiness, and by the end of the last song, they do. Presenting their issues to an audience of various ages helps adults and children alike realize that perhaps some of their problems may seem large, but in reality, are child-sized. Leaving a production of *You’re A Good Man, Charlie Brown* without a catharsis is impossible. Audiences will most likely identify aspects of themselves, or someone they know, with the grade school characters. This thesis production proposed an interesting journey—to touch the hearts of audiences so they might find simple happiness to ease the pain in their own chaotic world. Lucy Van Pelt ended up embodying adversity and Charlie Brown, the face of recovery.

Choosing a musical from the past to accomplish this goal was imperative. The themes in *Charlie Brown*—compassion, friendship, and overcoming obstacles—are all too often forgotten in today’s theatrical atmosphere. It seems that many new musicals and plays written today are equipped with a “shock factor,” which is usually inappropriate for a school production. Finding suitable middle school plays that not only avoid monotonous and vague storylines, but also challenge creative minds, is an almost impossible task. With this challenge facing most public school theatre teachers, questions arose about the Sky Vista Middle School production of *You’re A Good Man, Charlie Brown*. The overarching questions remained: How can a musical brighten spirits through process and product? And throughout that process, how can a professional Broadway show be reimaged for a middle school stage? Also, will the necessity of expanding the

six-character cast into forty roles be successful and respectful to the original production? Finally, when the product is achieved, will a group of young student-actors be able to remind audiences about the importance of positive entertainment through an accurate portrayal of classic characters?

The overall goal of this thesis was to examine whether *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown's* childlike innocence and positive themes can help the participating students and audiences deal with real life struggles. Since the anniversary of the Century 16 Theatre shooting in Aurora, Colorado—the home of Sky Vista Middle School—is revisited each summer, not only does this musical provide an opportunity for educational entertainment, but also healing in a community that desperately needs positivity.

Purpose and Significance of Study

Directing at a middle school is a unique challenge. Middle school drama teachers do not want to rob their young actors from a rewarding and challenging experience by producing the Disney musicals that are all too often presented in theatrical marketing as the only viable option for middle school play seasons. This is not to say that Disney musicals are not topical and entertaining choices for schools to bring in large profits, but they leave little to the imagination. The main opposition to producing such musicals is the work the technicians and director must do to create a “wonderland” for the audience to buy into that resembles the magic of the movies they have seen multiple times. Budget constraints make these musicals almost unrealistic at the public middle school level.

On the other hand, often times it seems like the only other choice for a musical production is a “shock factor” show. In fact, school editions of racy musicals are becoming a reality. Patrick Healy's article, “Tamer ‘Rent’ Is Too Wild for Some

Schools,” highlights questions surrounding the new *Rent: School Edition*, which is now available for middle and high schools to perform. The Tony Award and Pulitzer Prize winning musical portrays “a group of artists, straight and gay, living in the East Village,” who are battling drug addiction, homophobia, and poverty (Healy). Healy points out that the issue of open homosexuality is the biggest concern for administrators, even more than the flagrant drug references. Many teachers who wish to produce this version of *Rent* want to make a statement that their community needs to hear, but just as quickly, superintendents and principals are canceling their productions. For example, Ron Martin of Corona del Mar High School wanted to produce *Rent: School Edition* to combat the “gay slurs” running rampant at his high school (Healy). Ultimately, his principal was uninformed and unwilling to compromise and the production was cancelled along with the opportunity for a meaningful conversation about respecting diversity.

Furthermore, the article “North Central High School’s Laramie Project Sparks Protests,” discusses the importance of performing *The Laramie Project*, which depicts the story of Matthew Shepard who was brutally killed because he was gay. This play assists in prompting needed conversations about gay rights and supports “an overall awareness of the injustices still suffered by homosexuals” (Diaz). In 2009, North Central High School, located in Indianapolis, produced *The Laramie Project*. The production was met with protests from the radically inappropriate Westboro Baptist Church, yet fortunately for the high school, the protests gained the production publicity and more audiences had the opportunity to see this groundbreaking play. Overall, school boards and directors will both have a battle as long as controversial musicals become available for secondary school populations.

Although important, even groundbreaking and amazingly entertaining productions of shows such as *Rent* and *The Laramie Project* are not age appropriate for the eleven to fourteen year olds at Sky Vista Middle School. Even the innocence of *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* has been targeted by authors who are unwilling to accept its pure message. *Dog Sees God: Confessions of a Teenage Blockhead* answers the question: what would the *Peanuts* gang be like if they grew up? Written by Bert V. Royal, Schulz's classic *Peanuts* characters have fallen under the same fate as many contemporary child stars that grow up too quickly and succumb to the world's temptations. Royalty owner, Dramatists Play Service, Inc., describes the plot as "drug use, suicide, eating disorders, teen violence, rebellion and sexual identity [that] collide and careen toward an ending that's both haunting and hopeful." Although a clever adaptation, when produced, audiences are reminded that innocence is a fleeting reality. In a community like Aurora that has been plagued with violence, even this adaptation scoffs at this director's purpose of producing *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*.

The themes of compassion, friendship, and overcoming obstacles have drawn directors, producers, and audiences alike to *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* for years. This director was specifically drawn to the possibility that the musical's childlike innocence could help students and their families deal with authentic challenging situations. As previously stated, initially, the musical was chosen as a way to combat the fear and sadness of 2014 Sky Vista students with the impending second anniversary of the shooting at the Century 16 movie theater nearby, thus dramatic or tragedy laced productions did not seem appropriate. The suspect, James Holmes, awaited trial for the 166 charges he faced, "including murder, attempted murder and weapons offenses related

to the July 20 [2012] rampage, which took place during a screening of ‘Batman: The Dark Knight Rises’” (Hassan). The civic support that arose after the shooting was immense, but did not revoke the anxiety the community felt about how suddenly life can be taken away. On the night the movie theatre controversially reopened to the community in January 2013, the chief executive officer of Cinemark, Tim Warner, said “recovery is an ongoing process, and we are glad to be with you tonight to acknowledge how far we have to come and how far we have yet to go” (Hassan). Unfortunately, tragedies like this one are not of the past. Since that fateful early morning of 2012, many more have occurred that also deprive children and students of their innocence and individuality including the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting in the same year. As a result, countless parents of the Aurora community now fear sending their children to a movie with friends or even to school.

Yet, as Tim Warner proposed, recovery is key; but how can recovery be accomplished when often times it seems like there is no hope? Just when a community is starting to mend, another tragedy is on the horizon. On December 13, 2013, another heartbreak occurred in the community. Sky Vista Middle School went on a “secure perimeter,” in which the exterior doors of the school are locked due to immanent danger to the surrounding community. Later, it became apparent that an Arapahoe High School student brought a shotgun into his school, targeting a teacher who was instrumental in his suspension. With this violence happening, again, so close to home, the Cherry Creek School District sent out an email to all staff about talking to students and children about tragedies. This was a reminder that teachers share the responsibility with parents of protecting children and making them feel safe. The talking points reminded this director

that children are not ignorant to the tragedies of the world; they will have questions about violence that emulate an immense maturity during a time of distress. Furthermore, in the digital modern world, constant exposure to tragedies through television and social media can “frequently have inaccurate information and children can be obsessed with tracking these exchanges” (“How To Talk” 2).

So, what is the best way for teachers to help their students move on from tragedy?

The talking points in the district-sponsored brochure, “How To Talk To Your Child About School Violence,” suggest making sure students understand that,

Violence is never a solution to personal problems. Students can be part of the positive solution by participating in anti-violence programs at school, learning conflict mediation skills, and seeking help from an adult if they or a peer is struggling with anger, depression, suicidal thoughts, or other emotions they cannot control. (3)

This advice reaffirmed the importance of choosing to produce *You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown* at Sky Vista Middle School. Since the drama program at Sky Vista preaches acceptance and respect, the advice from the district to encourage students to “[participate] in anti-violence programs at school, [learn] conflict mediation skills, and [seek] help from an adult if they or a peer is struggling . . . ” (3) seemed perfectly in line with the standards of the drama department. Goals were set to heal, inspire, and bring back a sense of normalcy for all involved.

Helping students enjoy school, on top of feeling safe, was another reason for choosing *You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown*. Drama programs are a secure place for growth and acceptance that encourage academic success for all students. Unfortunately, many districts cut theatre programs to save financially for new science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) focused curricula, but in doing so, they do not realize that

they are also eliminating a passion for school for a diverse population of students. Ill-advised cuts, already prominent in elementary schools, will no doubt reach middle schools if facts are repetitively ignored:

Major cuts in education have been directed toward the arts and humanities where millions of students are being deprived of these subjects and outlets. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), nearly 1.5 million elementary students are without music, nearly 4 million are without the visual arts, and almost 100% of them, more than 23 million, are educated without dance and theatre. (Richards)

Simply, an arts education helps many students connect with school. According to research conducted by the American Alliance for Theatre and Education, “involvement in the arts increases student engagement and encourages consistent attendance, and that drop-out rates correlate with student levels of involvement in the arts.” In fact, AATE’s research found that, “students considered to be at high risk for dropping out of high school cite drama and other arts classes as their motivations for staying in school” (“The Effects”). Obviously, it is imperative to hook kids on a subject they love to inspire their learning rather than pigeonhole students into programs that do not necessarily interest an entire school’s population.

Many school districts that are limiting or eliminating arts programs blame the No Child Left Behind law (NCLB) that went into effect in 2001. For example, Adams Middle School located in California’s West Contra Costa school district, is fighting to keep the arts alive at their school. Adams Middle School English teacher, Jamie Myrick claims,

With the push from NCLB to focus on testing, arts and education are treated as if they’re not compatible... People are forgetting that math is taught when a child is playing an instrument. English is taught when a child is reading or writing a script. Critical thinking is taught when a child is analyzing art. (qtd. in Holcomb)

Without programs, such as drama, as a lifeline for many students, Myrick says,

We're losing the ability to hook our students with what their joy is... That joy is a natural bridge that can transfer over to math, history, and science. The things that are complex and heavy in these subjects become clearer when students do work they have joy in. (qtd. in Holcomb)

Not all students have a desire for the STEM initiative that countless school districts are pushing. STEM ignores an entire population of students craving creatively focused classes that STEM cannot provide alone. Without a doubt, "the primary purpose of education is to enable students to make a living as adults; without this capability, everything else falls away" (Taylor). Without an arts integrated complete education, districts are even stripping away a student's ability to get a job in the future:

According to the Conference Board, there is an overwhelming consensus from superintendents (98 percent) and corporate leaders (96 percent) that 'creativity is of increasing importance to the U.S. workforce.' Of those corporate respondents looking for creative people, 85 percent said they were having difficulty finding qualified applicants with the creative characteristics they desired. (Levin)

These subjects, art and STEM, must work together toward a common goal. According to the Americans for Arts organization, "children involved in the arts are four times more likely to be recognized for academic achievement and four times more likely to participate in a math and science fair" (Richards). By eliminating arts programs at schools to provide more money for the STEM initiative, districts are telling kids that their passions are unimportant and that they should fit themselves into a certain technological convention, which is contrary to the purpose of education.

Besides, within diverse populations that exist in schools today, this forced "norm" could be life threatening. Middle school continues to be a difficult time for teens. Suicide, self-harm, and questions about sexuality are issues Sky Vista has dealt with for many years. During this production, some student-actors, who began to question their sexuality,

were affected by bullying. The conversation of sexuality as a major cause of bullying was prevalent at rehearsals and in class among the cast and crew. The fact is, “that for many gay youth, middle school is more survival than learning—one parent of a gay teenager . . . likened her child’s middle school to a ‘war zone’” (Denizet-Lewis). Unfortunately, all too often the hallways are a feeding ground for immaturity and ignorance. In anonymous student journals written by the cast and crew, a student admitted the hallway ignorance also began affecting his school work: “To top of this horrible day with a magnificent cherry, I was told a new assignment in science today, to teach brainless, apathetic, ignorant morons about 1 [sic] system in the human body” (Anonymous 11). This student’s journal was consistently filled with emotional retellings of constant bullying. For example, in one of his entries he stated, “not only does everyone in the school think I’m gay, but now their moms do too.” The bullying of this student apparently spread like wildfire to affect his schoolwork and reputation.

Middle school theatre programs can be strong advocates for promoting acceptance of sexuality. This production’s message about compassion is specifically important at a middle school because anti-gay bullying seems to be more common in middle schools than in high schools. Eliza Byard, executive director of the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network found that, “20 percent of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender high school students questioned in a 2007 school climate survey reported physical assault, while 39 percent of LGBT middle schoolers reported the same” (Noveck). This may be related to the fact that “evidence collected over the past few years indicates it’s at this age—11 to 13 or 14—when many youngsters realize they are gay and consider coming out” (Noveck). Students are not only dealing with changing schools, friends, and

routines, but many are deciding when it is safe to come-out as gay, while protecting their identity from relentless bullies who reject any atypical behavior.

Theatre programs across the country have attempted conversations about the acceptance of sexuality through producing plays such as *The Laramie Project*, *Rent*, *Angels in America (Millennium Approaches and Perestroika)*, *La Cage Aux Folles*, *A Chorus Line*, *The Children's Hour*, and *The Heidi Chronicles*. Many of these shows are available in school-friendly versions for brave theatre teachers who want to attempt conversations within their communities: “The New York producers of ‘Rent’ . . . said they hoped it would become a new, revenue-generating staple of the high school musical landscape, as well as a teaching tool that augments sex education” (Healy).

Unfortunately, as stated above, many are unattainable at the middle school level due to, what many believe is, inappropriate subject matter.

Yet, fortunately, *You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown* takes a stance on bullying that is appropriate and poignant, even though it may not specifically address issues of gay intolerance. In the scene titled “Quick Changes-Crabbiness Survey,” Lucy inevitably fishes for compliments as she asks the gang about her level of “crabbiness.” As the main culprit of the gang's troubles, due to her lack of empathy for others, Lucy is in for it; yet only if the gang is brave enough to speak up. Finally, Linus, Lucy's little brother, gives her an honest answer: a score of 95; which equates to her being an exceptional “crab.”

All at once Lucy realizes the error of her ways as she laments:

It's true. I'm a crabby person. I'm a very crabby person and everybody knows it. I've been spreading crabbiness everywhere I go. I'm a super crab. It's a wonder anyone will still talk to me. It's a wonder I have any friends at all—or even associates. I've done nothing but make life miserable for everyone. I've done nothing but breed unhappiness and resentment. Where did I go wrong? How could I be so selfish? How could. . . . (Gesner 54)

Even though Lucy expresses what the audience is thinking, her brother, Linus, reminds her that she has “a little brother who loves [her]” (54), and she of course melts at his example of empathy. Moments like this remind the audience of the simplicity of kindness, which assists in confronting the issue of bullying. Hopefully after seeing this production, the audience of peers and community members at Sky Vista questioned the way they treat one another, and their cathartic experience might soon result in ending the torment that many bullied young adults experience.

Review of Literature

It is essential to define tragedy two ways—“a very sad, unfortunate, or upsetting situation” or a “tale typically describing the downfall of a great man,” according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary. Dramatic tragedy deals with destiny or the suffering fate of characters to elicit a catharsis among audiences. Patrons attend dramatic tragedies for an opportunity to change and to feel better about their lives. Contrariwise, societal tragedy, existing in real life, is unpredictable, personal, and often not paired with a clear catharsis. These tragedies are as diverse as the stories and real-life events they represent. Although dramatic tragedy is often used to provide a release for audiences, highlighting societal tragedies too soon after the misfortune occurred can be detrimental to the healing process.

The themes of compassion, friendship and overcoming obstacles are often used as tools to conquer misfortune; fortunately, they also aided in creating happiness through Sky Vista’s production. Theatre is used worldwide as a way to combat adversity. Drama Therapy is a popular method for psychologists and social workers to promote healing. In an interview conducted by social worker Dorlee M. for her blog, psychotherapist and licensed drama therapist Noel McDermott describes drama therapy as,

the intentional use of the healing aspects of play, drama and theatre with a person's problems. Drama therapy works with these forms and helps people develop new insights into old problems, strategies for dealing with current issues, metaphors to give meaning, within an action-oriented therapy. This is maybe one of the differences from traditional talking approaches.

McDermott has worked with many different types of people such as refugees from the rape camps during the Balkans conflicts and adults who experienced traumatic events growing up, such as “parental violence, alcoholism, chaos, political violence, racism, poverty and neglect” (M.). He attributes drama therapy success to “play,” which is easily accomplished as a child, yet grown out of with age: “Play is so healing, as is laughter and joy. Playing allows us to take risks when we feel that we are too fragile to step into the world and take on new challenges” (M.). Through storytelling, role-playing, breathing exercises, and “play,” McDermott is able to reduce the “impact of secondary trauma and also re-traumatization” (M.) for his clients.

Likewise, students in the Master's in Applied Theatre Program at the City University of New York traveled to Rwanda to “incorporate drama at all levels of schooling . . . the idea was that theatre could help in the process of reconciliation following Rwanda's genocide” (Crowley). Then-student, Patrick Crowley shared his experiences of coaching Rwandan children through various plays, games, and performances. He writes of a young Rwandan girl who, following the days of her show-stealing performance, exhibited “real confidence and pride.” This result will occur, not only for families of the victims of horrific genocide, but also for children struggling with their own versions of societal tragedy here in America.

People react differently to real-life tragedy, but one thing is certain—parents and school faculty, along with therapists, are among those responsible to aid in the healing

process. According to University of Oregon's Counseling and Testing Center, dealing with a tragedy can come in many forms for students. Some students "will be more vocal or expressive than others with their feelings and thoughts. Everyone is affected differently and reacts differently" ("Dealing"). When societal tragedies occur, teachers are warned to expect certain behaviors within their classrooms such as "blaming," "memorializing the loss," and students desperately "[seeking] an explanation" ("Dealing"). According to the University of Oregon's advice in their article "Dealing with the Aftermath of a Tragedy in the Classroom," teachers must make accommodations for students to reflect and talk privately or in a group. Ultimately, teachers are a source of normalcy for students during a tragedy, and students need to feel safe and accepted in order to recover.

In fact, in the *Drama Education Network's* brochure on "The Benefits of a Drama Education," author, Jason Basom, shares that "research reveals the positive impact of drama on a student's physical, emotional, social, and cognitive development." Not only does Basom outline the obvious advancements in self-confidence, communication, and collaboration, but he also points to improvements in empathy, problem solving, relaxation, trust, and social awareness. All of these factors are essential for dealing with the calamities of life. The most relative impact drama has on students' development, Basom points out, is the availability of an "emotional outlet." He supports drama therapist Noel McDermott in that, "pretend play and drama games allow students to express a range of emotions. Aggression and tension are released in a safe, controlled environment, reducing antisocial behaviors" (Basom). The fact is, students involved in

drama programs, classes, or productions during or after a tragedy have a high probability of coping with sadness in a healthy way.

You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown presents a childlike innocence towards conquering real-life problems, which distinguishes it from many available scripts for school productions. Yet after the many tragic events in Aurora, unknowingly, the various high schools and middle schools in the area banded together to produce uplifting shows that could heal a community. Most theatrical artists may assert that *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* is simplistic, but truly, it is far from basic, one-dimensional, or naïve. Keeping the integrity of the *Peanuts* franchise was essential when choosing this musical. Although the *Peanuts* setting and characters are as recognizable as some of the Disney stories, the goal of simplicity could be achieved without sacrificing audience expectations. Charlie Brown and his friends remind audiences of their innocence, thus, this feel good, appropriate, family musical fit perfectly into what the community in Aurora hungered for.

Other directors or producers, however, might have tried to tamper with the original intention of Clark Gesner's adaptation, much like the Firehouse Theatre Project did in 2011. The Richmond, Virginia, theatre decided to produce both Clark Gesner's *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* and Bert V. Royal's *Dog Sees God* in repertory as an "interplay between the sociological imposition of class, gender, and sexual roles and its effect on adolescent identity formation" (Miller). Director Billy Christopher Maupin's vision centered around

[Juxtaposing] Sunday-morning's technicolor 'Peanuts' characters against scenic designer Adam Dorland's unrepentant, brooding black and white playground backdrop to emphasize that these young kids—who for the age of 5 have anxiety

disorders like Prozac-dependent adults with midlife crises—are out to examine the subjective meaning of their lives amidst an objective world. (Miller)

Although Maupin’s take on the classic characters is interesting, it focuses on negativity by psychoanalyzing and complicating the characters that Sky Vista, instead, utilized to bring forth simple answers to happiness.

Maryland-based theatre company, Olney Theatre Center, had a similar vision to Sky Vista’s. Stephen Nachamie directed this production with “sunshiny bravado” and influenced Sky Vista’s plan to use set designs that “look like blown-up version of the Sunday color comics” (Blanchard). Author, Jayne Blanchard, who reviewed this production for DCTheatreScene.com, discusses the company’s intended purpose: “. . . the charm of the *Peanuts* comic strip and musical lies in its timeless innocence and the marvel of its encapsulation—the sometimes anxious, always wondrous everyday lives of children, an entire universe contained within four little boxes.” In fact, Blanchard criticizes this performance for attempting to modernize the character, Sally Brown, into a “curiously sexualized and vampish” version who “[wears] a too-tight dress and [flashes] her underwear.” This sort of change would never be appropriate for middle school and indicates that some directors are convinced, even when their intentions are good, that innocence will never sell as well as sex. Avoiding the “shock factor” and sticking to the original goal of the musical’s childlike innocence remained the intention of the thesis production.

Ultimately, studies support the idea that theatre can help heal emotional wounds. In order to examine the healing process, one must begin by defining happiness and unhappiness, which is apparently difficult, yet a common textual theme within *You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown*. Unfortunately, many definitions are incomplete or verbose.

In *American Anthropologist*, scientists were asked to comment on the subject of happiness. Barbara Rose Johnson with the Center for Political Ecology put it best in her section “On Happiness and Transformative Change:”

For some, happiness is a sensory force that colors and shapes human evolution and experience. Key concerns include how human groups define and express *happiness*; the commonalities in the awareness, experience, and endeavor to achieve a state of happiness; and the myriad of ways that the expression of happiness sustains and shapes a sense of common experience, of community. Others consider happiness, or the lack thereof, to be a faceted reflection of the arrangements in society, voicing critical concern over how we humans operationalize this notion as a social or political construct and the relationship between societal priorities and the material, social, and cultural conditions that sustain or inhibit happiness. All recognize the power and potential of happiness as a motivating and sustaining force.

Johnson argues that unhappiness is often affected by society, politics, and culture. The unhappiness affecting the community of Aurora deals greatly with: the ever-present reality of violent action toward innocent people; the government’s mishandling of money; and the culture of social media that now affects everyday interactions greatly, as stated above in “Goal of Thesis.” Johnson also acknowledges that, “happiness is a sensory force,” and theatre performances are definitely no exception.

Additionally, author Bonnie J. McCay, from Rutgers University, pinpoints a connection, in her section, “Happy as a Clam: A Comedy,” between happiness as it relates to comedy:

A more promising entrée to this challenging topic is to connect [happiness] to comedy. Although like the Greeks and Romans we tend to think of comedies as performances with happy endings . . . Tragedy is about individuals and inexorable destinies; comedy is about social groups and surprising outcomes.

McCay is of course referencing dramatic tragedy as a genre for plays and novels. If the genre of comedy is directly related to happiness, then *You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown* has an excellent chance of producing a feeling of happiness in any audience due to

the simple genre of the text, exhibiting positive, cellphone free “social groups,” and “surprising outcomes” with Lucy’s empathic transformation.

Overall, experiencing personal, real-life tragedy, can leave an individual without hope or tools to overcome grief. Much like tragedy, drama can be defined two ways: as a tool for healing therapy or as a form of entertainment. These definitions merge together when a powerful piece of comedy can incite a positive catharsis, which ultimately encourages a hurting community towards recovery. Through what McDermott calls “play” as a form of therapy and Johnson’s acknowledgement that happiness is “a sensory force,” the process of producing *You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown* had all of the potential possible to provide the students involved with an outlet for progressive recovery and provide a passage to happiness for a heartbroken community.

Methodology

Conceptually, Sky Vista’s production attempted to keep the integrity of Charles Schulz’s *Peanuts* franchise. The goal was to create a replica of the classic stories through familiar costumes, adding in famous characters to the chorus, and designing with bold lines as if the stage sets had been drawn by Schulz himself. This production was not unique in that the characters, stories, and even the settings, are famous, so choosing a concept that deviated from the original look would have ultimately confused audiences. This fact left little to the imagination, but the simplicity and familiarity of the set fortunately allowed the focus to be on the actor’s work and the message of the play.

There were many obstacles that arose while searching for a production for Sky Vista’s 2014 musical. Many factors played into the decision to choose a musical as described above, including assessing the talent within a program. Fortunately, Sky

Vista's theatre program has upwards of 150 students audition for each semester's show. While previous shows had casts of thirty to fifty students each, this production presented the challenge of offering only six speaking roles, so seniority played a large role in casting decisions. Knowing that the sixth and seventh grade students would have another full year or two of opportunities, the casting team chose to look specifically at the eighth grade talent. While a powerhouse eighth grade class graduated last year, this year's eighth graders seemed a smaller force to contend with, which worked perfectly for a smaller cast. Only two eighth graders stood out to capture leading roles. This left the other leading roles available for outstanding seventh grade talent, which helped develop greater talent for next year's shows.

Another factor that complicated the decision to choose this musical was the fact that Sky Vista audiences are used to *Jr.* versions of plays specifically formatted, through Music Theatre International, for middle schools. The *Jr.* versions are shorter and only last about one hour. To maintain this expectation, cutting the script was essential. Thankfully, Tams-Witmark Music Library, Inc., the owner of the rights, allowed the cast and crew to make customized decisions concerning the length of the show due to the vignette-style scene distribution. They expressed, "You may, at your option, perform your choice of scenes from the show provided that the total running time for your performance (without intermission) is no less than forty-five (45) minutes" ("You're a Good Man"); thus another obstacle was avoided. With an uplifting message, classic and recognizable characters, a diverse cast, and some flexibility with the licensing agreement, *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* was contracted, and just as quickly, conceptualized.

First off, costume requirements for the production were effortless because the characters' uniforms were already made famous through Schulz's comics. Costume design was as simple as searching the Internet for the iconic characters. With the help of a few crafty mothers and tech crewmembers, costumes were made to replicate the comic strip with primary colors and the famous shapes, such as Charlie Brown's shirt's zigzag print. Most of the costumes were hand made or found within the students' home closets. Staple black shoes and shorts were fitted for the boy characters and a variety of colorful knee length dresses were created for the girls.

Props were created to appear larger than life so that the actors would appear younger. Even though the *Peanuts* characters were played by middle school kids in this production, they still were not young enough to be the actual primary school ages of five and six. All of the set pieces were re-imagined from old sets from different previously performed plays at the school, and each was outlined with bold black lines to suggest illustrations. Snoopy's famous dog house was painted the appropriate "fire engine" red with outlined panels, which looked like it was pulled straight from Schulz's Sunday morning illustrations. A backdrop was planned, but after research, the design team decided to save money and paint previously built flats to be reminiscent of the memorable cartoon white clouds in a bright blue sky. Once the flats were spaced apart they created the perfect setting for all of the vignette scenes. The concept for the set design was to remind the audiences of the classic comic.

The announcement of the spring musical was surprisingly well received among the young theatregoers at Sky Vista. Some fear emerged since students knew that paper versions of newspapers were almost extinct thanks to the accessibility of the Internet, but

nonetheless, the timeless entertainment of the *Peanuts* characters shined through. As preparations for auditions began, not only were the students excited about the imminent opportunity, but so were their parents. Often times, teaching seems like a customer service position when it comes to parents, but with this musical easily pleasing their pallets and not a single questioning phone call received, this director felt more confident in this choice of musical.

With the community on board, audition preparations began. Soon it became apparent, due to multiple audition script options available, that most of the females desired the role of Sally Brown. Kristin Chenoweth, who made the character of Sally famous with her energizing rendition of “My New Philosophy” in the 1999 revival, had inspired an entirely new generation of girls who were not even born at the time of the revival’s debut. Despite the fact that Sally Brown’s character has less stage time than Lucy Van Pelt’s, the girls still wanted to shine in the role, just as Chenoweth had done. Students were considered for all roles based on their animation and memorization of the dialogue. They were also given the traditional sixteen bars of a song to sing with a partner. After three audition days, callbacks were announced, so that, along with the professional help of the school’s choir teacher, final decisions about casting could be made. The chosen students were tasked with memorizing and performing a solo song in front of the director, choir director, and the rest of the students called back. Once cast, the actors took to their roles immediately.

CHAPTER II

DRAMATURGICAL PROTOCOL

Glossed Playscript

All pages below refer to the Tams-Witmark Music Library, Inc. script of *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown [Revised]*, music and lyrics by Clark Gesner; based on the comic strip *Peanuts*, by Charles M. Schulz. Additional dialogue by Michael Mayer. Additional music and lyrics by Andrew Lippa.

First Responses

Pluses

1. Gesner's musical *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* is the perfect show for a conservative community. There are no controversial topics or words that might upset an audience.
2. Stylistically, this show is perfect for a middle school setting, and features young characters battling growing pains. The eleven- to fourteen-year-olds at Sky Vista Middle School are able to directly benefit from the message.
3. Adults can also relate to the lessons taught. An audience catharsis is probable, along with lessons learned about life and how to treat one another from the perspective of eloquent, youthful characters.

4. The opening number, “You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown,” ideally introduces the characters and the plot with solo performances, and the sadness surrounding the main character becomes apparent.
5. The script is divided into vignette-type scenes, and according to the owner of the royalties, the Tams-Witmark Music Library, scenes may be excluded that do not fit the overall theme, message, or time constraints.
6. The character of Charlie Brown is extremely heartbreaking, yet also uplifting.
7. The classic “good vs. bad” theme is represented in the character of Lucy, who loves nothing more than herself, and to bully Charlie Brown. This theme set up an opportunity to teach about the effects of bullying.
8. The revised version of the play includes the Sally Brown hit, “My New Philosophy,” that received rave reviews during the 1999 Broadway revival. This song is high energy, funny, and educational, with a simple message of, when life hands you lemons, you throw them right back in life’s face!
9. The final song, “Happiness,” leaves the audience remembering that the simple things in life should not be forgotten, such as “pizza with sausage” and “tying your shoe for the first time” (Gesner 65). Charlie Brown’s final line in the song leaves the audience with a good feeling: “For happiness is anyone and anything at all that’s loved by you” (66).

Minuses

1. The show consists of many concepts that young people do not normally discuss and large words that are often not used in youth conversations. For example, Lucy says, “Linus. A survey that is not based on honest answers is like a house that is

built on a foundation of sand. Would I be spending my time to conduct this survey if I didn't expect complete candor in all the responses?" (Gesner 53).

2. The small main cast of six characters needs to be increased so that more students are able to participate. Redwood Middle School in California added roles:

The version Redwood Middle School staged is based on the 1999 revival (which added characters like Peppermint Patty) and was augmented by director Gary Fritzen, who added dialogue from "Peanuts" comic strips in order to give the expanded cast of 26 children ample opportunities to recite lines and contribute to the ensemble songs. (Ginell)

3. The "comic strip" style scenes seem thrown together and do not particularly enhance the plotline. The audience may search for a storyline as opposed to enjoying each scene as its own vignette.
4. A challenge exists concerning characterization with novice actors as they battle the adult language while portraying young children. Encouraging overacting must be avoided, and many rehearsals dedicated to characterization may be a necessity.
5. Portraying Lucy as a violent and rude character is difficult because she is popular with fans of the comic strip. To discourage bullying, directing the "slugging" and verbal insults as non-humorous might be a good approach, and in doing so, her scripted catharsis at the end of the play should come across as more meaningful.
6. The costumes could be difficult to recreate, so renting them might be the best option. It might also be problematic to make the costumes fit the students so they look like five year-olds.

Questions

1. How can the script be cut in order to maintain the Tams-Witmark length requirement of forty-five minutes while keeping the integrity of the show?

2. How could the show be advertised to illuminate the comic strip style plotline?
3. Which characters should be included to expand the cast size? Is it okay to add characters that were not originally from the *Peanuts* comic strip?
4. How can actors be educated on the importance of the *Peanuts* comic strip to America; especially during 1967 when the show was first produced?
5. What are the exact ages of the characters?
6. What is the importance of Charlie Brown's self-pity? How can this be portrayed in a non-annoying way?
7. What arrangements can be made if the most qualified actors available have a hard time singing the songs as written?
8. How can the anti-bullying campaign associated with this production reach out farther than just the audience that sees the show? What can the actors and technical crew do to promote the campaign in an effective manner?
9. Why is Charlie Brown so depressed? Did something tragic happen in his life? What is his backstory?
10. How can the absence of adults be portrayed in a creative and humorous way? Should the muffled voices ("wa wa wa") be used that correspond with the television shows and comic strip?
11. What is the reasoning behind Lucy's bullying? How can the reason be conveyed when it is not directly apparent in the script?

Clues

1. The first scene of the play gives the audience a clue into how the other characters feel about Charlie Brown. This series of lines explains Charlie Brown's low self-

image. Sally's first line of the play especially gives the audience a clue about her relationship with her brother. She blatantly lays out her opinion of his flaws by saying, "The only thing wrong with my big brother Charlie Brown, is his lack of confidence . . . His stupidity his clumsiness, his inferiority and his lack of confidence . . ." (Gesner 5).

2. The opening song "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown" seems paradoxical because the characters of the play are giving Charlie Brown compliments, despite the opening scene where they protest doubt about his abilities.
3. Lucy's insecurities around Schroeder's inability to return her feelings of love give the audience a clue into why she bullies Charlie Brown. Lucy's frustrations manifest into bullying potential while she picks out the weakest link among the gang. Charlie Brown is an easy target because of his low self-esteem and kind heart.
4. Snoopy is the voice of reason for the children, but he battles his innate desire to be a wild animal in the song "Snoopy." He also struggles with his mundane existence by contemplating, ". . . why is it I always have my supper in the red dish and my drinking water in the yellow dish? One of these days I'm going to have my supper in the yellow dish and my drink water in the red dish. Life's just TOO short not to live it up a little" (29).
5. Charlie Brown has a life-long struggle with the Little Red-Haired Girl whom he has an affinity for, but he is afraid to let her know how he feels. Much of Charlie Brown's anxiety comes from his lack of self-esteem and his inability to approach her, which contributes to his lack of confidence. Schulz wrote aspects of himself

into Charlie Brown: “[Schulz] still pines for the little red-haired girl whose presence often dominates Charlie Brown's school yard and heart” (Holt).

6. Although Schulz was an apolitical man, Gesner added some arts-supporting subliminal messages into the text when Schroeder exclaims, “Money? Who cares about money? This is art you blockhead. This is great music I'm playing and playing great music is an art. Do you hear me? An ART! ART! ART! ART! ART!” (Gesner 30).
7. Sally and Lucy are the most inherently mean characters. They are the only two characters that are outright cruel without a clever fact to back up their comments. This is evident during “My Blanket and Me” when they call Linus a baby for having a blanket and during “The Baseball Game” when the girls are extremely rude to Charlie Brown about being an inadequate manager. The boys, Linus and Schroeder, always offer a witty solution to Charlie Brown’s flaws, but the girls ignore reason and proclaim outlandish comments that would bruise any ego.
8. Charlie Brown confides in many of his friends, but one reoccurring friend that never has cross words or a nasty comment in return of his confessions lays in Charlie Brown’s far away Pen Pal. After a horrible loss at his baseball team’s “biggest and best game of the season” (45), Charlie Brown writes to his Pen Pal. In classic *Peanuts* comic strips, Charlie Brown never receives a response from his Pen Pal, but “in a series of strips from 1994, the Pen Pal is revealed to be a girl from Scotland named Morag. Charlie Brown fantasizes about a future romance with Morag, but his plans are crushed when he learns Morag had sixty other pen pals” (“Peanuts Wiki”).

9. Lucy puts on a façade of intelligence. This gives the audience a clue into her character because she acts like she can do no wrong, and yet she uses the word “undemocratic” (Gesner 22) wrong when talking about a monarchy. Also, when introduced to Socrates’ theory “Know Thyself” during the “Crabbiness Survey” scene, she calls him a “her” (50). Finally, the entire premise of the song “Little Known Facts” delineates Lucy’s ability to convince her brother of useless and erroneous knowledge. However, she is so convincing and intimidating that she is rarely corrected or else ignores those corrections completely.
10. Snoopy’s character has many lines and songs in *You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown*, but it is unclear whether or not his human owners or friends can understand him. They never respond to his orations directly, but instead respond to his behavior. For example, right before the “Suppertime” ballad, Snoopy gives a long monologue about starving to death while Charlie Brown watches. Charlie Brown responds by saying, “Hey, Snoopy. Are you asleep or something? I’ve been standing here a whole minute with your supper” (61). Charlie Brown seems to ignore the dramatic soliloquy altogether as if he does not hear Snoopy’s long-winded woes; he only responds to Snoopy’s action of playing dead.

Imagery

1. The Little Red-Haired Girl is a consistent image of Charlie Brown’s wants and desires who exists just out of reach because of his lack of confidence.
2. Living life to the fullest and addressing life’s challenges is forever present in the script. Charlie Brown says:

Some days I wake up early and watch the sun rise. And I think how beautiful it is. How my life lies before me. And I get very positive feeling

about things . . . Like this morning for instance, the sky is so clear and the sun is so bright. . . How can anything go wrong on a day like this? (*alarm clock rings*) I'm late!! (7)

All of the characters develop their own interesting philosophies on life as well.

3. Beethoven exists as an image throughout the show. Not only does his biggest fan, Schroeder, use the musician's life as an example for his own, but also an entire song, "Beethoven Day," is dedicated to the late composer.
4. Security is an image that is represented in many forms: Snoopy has his doghouse, Lucy has Schroeder, Schroeder has Beethoven and his piano, and Linus has his blanket. An interesting fact surrounding this image is that "'Peanuts' also popularized the term 'security blanket'" ("Charles Schulz's").

Concretes

1. The big, red doghouse is Snoopy's stage.
2. Friendship is as important as family.
3. If Charlie Brown stood up to his bullies, the story would cease to be syndicated.
4. Sometimes objects are more comforting than people.
5. Sally Brown is not very good at school and is disgruntled about having to attend.
6. Bullies have their own insecurities, which contribute to their behavior.
7. Happiness is simple.

Supplements to the Playscript/Areas of Inquiry

Source Studies

Clark Gesner's influence for the musical *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* was derived from Charles Schulz's *Peanuts* brand. Gesner used Schulz's themes, plotlines, and dialogue to create his witty version of the show: "When Gesner first began working

on ‘Charlie Brown,’ he had problems obtaining permission from the strip’s syndicator to use the characters in a show. So Mr. Gesner contacted Mr. Schulz directly sending a five-song demonstration tape” (McKinley 12). With Schulz’s blessing, Gesner achieved recognition for the upbeat 1967 musical.

In 1999, Andrew Lippa, modified the revival of the show to include the additional songs, “My New Philosophy,” and “Beethoven Day” (“You’re a Good”). He also co-authored a new version of the opening song, “You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown,” with Gesner. Both men give credit to Charles M. Schulz and his Sunday cartoon for the show’s success.

Glossary

Compiling a glossary is particularly important so that middle school students can completely understand the high-level language and context within *You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown*. All quotes are documented in a “character, scene title” format since the page numbers are obsolete due to the adaptability of the show. The definitions were found using the online Merriam-Webster dictionary at www.merriam-webster.com.

Act I

Inferiority: of poor quality (Sally, “You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown”)

Marvel: causes wonder (Schroeder, “You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown”)

Consistency: agreement or harmony (Schroeder, “You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown”)

Humility: being humble (see *humble* below) (All, “You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown”)

Nobility: being noble in character (All, “You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown”)

Dull: mentally slow (Lucy, “You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown”)

Vacant: not put to use (Lucy, “You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown”)

Instance: as an example (Charlie Brown, “You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown”)

Conceive: to have an opinion (All, “You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown”)

Solitary: all alone (Lucy, “You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown”)

Adversity: continued misfortune (All, “You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown”)

PTA: abbreviation for “Parent-Teacher Association” (Charlie Brown, “You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown”)

Embroidered: decorated with a design through needlework (Lucy, “You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown”)

Fleeting: not lasting (Linus, “Schroeder”)

Futile: pointless or useless (Sally, “Schroeder”)

Blockhead: a stupid person (Lucy, “Schroeder”)

Remarkable: extraordinary (Snoopy, “Snoopy”)

Advancement: raising to a higher position (Snoopy, “Snoopy”)

April Fool’s Day: April 1; a day many people like to play practical jokes (Lucy, “Snoopy”)

Retrieve: to go and bring back (Linus, “Snoopy”)

Sanctuary: something that provides protection (Linus, “My Blanket and Me”)

Self-Reliant: trust in one’s own abilities (Linus, “My Blanket and Me”)

Demonstration: an explanation (Linus, “My Blanket and Me”)

Intend: to have a plan (Lucy, “My Blanket and Me”)

Inherited: to have handed on to one by someone else (Linus, “My Blanket and Me”)

Lineage: the ancestors from whom a person is descended (Linus, “My Blanket and Me”)

Reining: control (Linus, “My Blanket and Me”)

Monarch: a person who reins over a kingdom or an empire (Linus, “My Blanket and Me”)

Loophole: a way of escaping something (Lucy, “My Blanket and Me”)

Undemocratic: not favoring social equality (Lucy, “My Blanket and Me”)

Correspondence: communication by letters (Lucy, “My Blanket and Me”)

Queendom: a play on the word “Kingdom”(Lucy, “My Blanket and Me”)

Good Greif: an exclamation made famous by Charles Schulz’s characters (Linus, “My Blanket and Me”)

Transmit: to allow passage (Sally, “My Blanket and Me”)

Establishment: a place of business or a place to live (Sally, “My Blanket and Me”)

Garments: clothing (Sally, “My Blanket and Me”)

Lucid: clear-minded (Charlie Brown, “The Doctor Is In”)

Stickball: baseball played on the street with a broomstick and a lightweight ball (Charlie Brown, “The Doctor Is In”)

Thoroughly: careful about detail (Charlie Brown, “The Doctor Is In”)

Utterly: complete in extent (Charlie Brown, “The Doctor Is In”)

Blah: lacking interest or excitement (Charlie Brown, “The Doctor Is In”)

Superficial: shallow (Lucy, “The Doctor Is In”)

Delve: to search carefully for information (Lucy, “The Doctor Is In”)

Distinction: something that makes a person or thing special or different (Lucy, “The Doctor Is In”)

Reverential: showing honor (Schroeder, “Beethoven Day”)

Publicity: making publically known (Lucy, “Beethoven Day”)

Commercialized: to use for profit (Schroeder, “Beethoven Day”)

Recital: a public performance (Schroeder, “Beethoven Day”)

Philharmonic: a symphony orchestra (Schroeder, “Beethoven Day”)

Polyphonic: music with two or more independent melodies (Schroeder, “Beethoven Day”)

Humble: modest or low in status (Schroeder, “Beethoven Day”)

Injection: to put into one’s body or mind (Schroeder, “Beethoven Day”)

Up and attum: slang for “get up and get going” (Sally, “Beethoven Day”)

Game: animals taken by hunting (Sally, “Beethoven Day”)

Act II

World War One: The First World War centered in Europe and lasted from 1914 to 1918.
(Snoopy, “The Red Baron”)

Red Baron: aka Manfred Albrecht Freiherr Von Richthofen, a German fighter pilot who flew a bright red airplane during world war one. He was credited with shooting down eighty enemy planes (“Who’s Who . . .”). (Snoopy, “The Red Baron”)

Sopwith Camel: an aircraft built by Great Britain to attack their enemies during WWI. The plane was known for shooting down 1,294 enemy aircrafts. It was also known for killing its own people due to the difficulty of flying the machine (“Sopwith F.1 Camel”). (Snoopy, “The Red Baron”)

Flying Aces: a German award given to fighter pilots who shot down at least five enemy aircrafts (“The War in the Air . . .”). (Snoopy, “The Red Baron”)

Fokker triplane: Red Baron’s WWI plane (Snoopy, “The Red Baron”)

Ça va, bonjour: French meaning, “Okay, hello” (Snoopy, “The Red Baron”)

Philosophy: a person's basic beliefs about the way people should live. (Sally, "My New Philosophy")

Guarantee: a pledge (Sally, "My New Philosophy")

Forfeit: to lose the right as a punishment (Lucy, "Before Baseball")

Clout: a blow with a baseball bat (Charlie Brown, "The Baseball Game")

Morale: group enthusiasm (Charlie Brown, "The Baseball Game")

Fortitude: the strength of mind that helps a person to meet danger with courage (Charlie Brown, "The Baseball Game")

Vowed: to make a promise (Charlie Brown, "The Baseball Game")

Enable: to make possible (Lucy, "Crabbiness Survey")

Ballot: the system of voting (Lucy, "Crabbiness Survey")

Objectionable: offensive (Lucy, "Crabbiness Survey")

Abstention: opting to not vote (Charlie Brown, "Crabbiness Survey")

Intoxicating: to excite to enthusiasm (Lucy, "Crabbiness Survey")

Self-awareness: being aware of one's personality (Lucy, "Crabbiness Survey")

Foundation: the support upon which something rests (Lucy, "Crabbiness Survey")

Candor: sincere and honest expression (Lucy, "Crabbiness Survey")

Adagio con brio: Italian meaning "slowly with enthusiasm" (Schroeder, "Glee Club Rehearsal")

Seldom: not often (All, "Glee Club Rehearsal")

Discouraging: to lessen the courage or confidence of (All, "Glee Club Rehearsal")

Stifle: to keep in check with effort (Lucy, "Glee Club Rehearsal")

Leisurely: not in a rush (All, "Glee Club Rehearsal")

Enigma: something hard to explain (Lucy, “Glee Club Rehearsal”)

Chain of Command: a line of authority (Sally, “Glee Club Rehearsal”)

Interfere: to get in the way (Charlie Brown, “Little Known Facts”)

Idly: having no worth (Charlie Brown, “Little Known Facts”)

Withering: to lose liveliness (Snoopy, “Suppertime”)

Hollow: an empty space (Snoopy, “Suppertime”)

Carcass: a dead body (Snoopy, “Suppertime”)

Bleached: removed of color (Snoopy, “Suppertime”)

Behold: to look upon (Snoopy, “Suppertime”)

Brimming: full (Snoopy, “Suppertime”)

Forth: forward (Snoopy, “Suppertime”)

Flagon: a container for liquids (Snoopy, “Suppertime”)

Joyous: a feeling of great happiness (Snoopy, “Suppertime”)

Geographical References and Place Names

“Let’s imagine it, that glorious hour filled with emotion yet inspired with power and we
all honor the man we adore on the day we place the newest face on Mount
Rushmore . . .” (see fig. 1) (Schroeder, “Beethoven Day”).

“Here's the World War One flying ace high over France in his Sopwith Camel, searching
for the infamous Red Baron” (see fig. 2) (Snoopy, “The Red Baron”).

“Here's the World War One flying ace back at the aerodrome in France” (see fig. 2)
(Snoopy, “The Red Baron”).

“I can see the woods of Mont Sec below . . . ça va, bonjour” (see fig. 3) (Snoopy, “The
Red Baron”)!



Fig. 1. Menard, Ed. Full View of Mount Rushmore. *nps.gov*. The National Park Service, 2012. Web. 16. November 2012. <www.nps.gov>.



Fig. 2. Map: France. *Infoplease*. Pearson Education, 2000. Web. 16 November 2012. <<http://www.infoplease.com/atlas/country/france.html>>.



Fig. 3. Wagons going forward on the hills NE of Montsec in the guard advance. *Histomill.com*. Phpbb, 1918. Web. 16 November 2012. <www.histomill.com>.

Pronunciations

Schroeder: SHRO der

Linus: LY nis

Snoopy: SNU pi

Fokker: FA ker

Ça va, bonjour: SAH VAH BOHN zhoor

Adagio con brio: ADA joe con BRE-O

Mont sec: MON sick

Abstention: ob STEN chen

Sociological: SOH see oh la gi cal

Benevolent: ben EV oh lent

Literary Allusions

“Did you know Charlie Brown has . . . never successfully punted a football” (Schroeder,

“You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown”)?

“Well, I’ve always wanted to be called Flash. I hate the name Charlie. I’d like to be real athletic so that everybody would call me Flash. I like to be so good at everything that all around school I’d be known as Flash” (Charlie Brown, “Schroeder”).

“Don’t tell me my life isn’t a Shakespearean tragedy” (Sally, “The Doctor Is In”).

“I think Socrates was very right when he said that one of the first rules for anyone in life is ‘Know thyself’” (Schroeder, “After Baseball”).

“Man cannot live by bread alone” (Schroeder, “My New Philosophy”).

References to the Natural World

“Some days I wake up early and watch the sun rise. And I think how beautiful it is. How my life lies before me. And I get very positive feeling about things . . . Like this morning for instance, the sky is so clear and the sun is so bright. . . How can anything go wrong on a day like this” (Charlie Brown, “You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown”)?

“You are kind to all the animals and every little bird . . . ” (All, “You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown”).

“Beethoven used to be fond of taking long walks in the country. He was always inspired by the beautiful sounds of the country side” (Schroeder, “Schroeder”).

“I know every now and then I what I wanna be, a fierce jungle animal crouched on the limb of a tree” (Snoopy, “Snoopy”).

“Little birds come and cheer me, every day sitting here on my stomach with their sharp little claws which are usually cold and occasionally painful . . . ” (Snoopy,

“Snoopy”).

“I think I'll ask her to sit by me and then I think I'll tell her how much I've always admired her . . . I think I'll flap my arms and fly to the moon” (Charlie Brown,

“Snoopy”).

“April fool! Just like shooting fish in a barrel” (Lucy, “Snoopy”).

“Come on Snoopy. Up and attum! It's a magnificent day for chasing rabbits. The air is clear, the sun is shining, the fields and woodlands lie open and inviting” (Sally,

“Beethoven Day”).

“You should be ashamed of yourself, wasting a perfectly good day like this. The scent is fresh, the trail is clear. Let's get out there and track us down a big ol' rabbit”

(Sally, “Beethoven Day”).

“It's bad enough to have to fight the Red Baron then to have to fly in weather like this”

(Snoopy, “The Red Baron”).

“Ah, the sun has broken through. I can see the woods of Mont sec below . . . ça va,

bonjour” (Snoopy, “The Red Baron”)!

“Augh! He's diving down out of the sun. He's tricked me again” (Snoopy, “The Red

Baron”)!

“I don't deserve to breathe the air I breathe. I'm no good, Linus. I'm no good” (Lucy,

“Crabbiness Survey”).

“I'm no good, and there's no reason at all why I should go on living on the face of this

earth” (Lucy, “Crabbiness Survey”).

“Oh give me a home where the buffalo roam and the deer and the antelope play . . . ”

(All, “Glee Club Rehearsal”).

“ . . . and the skies are not cloudy all day” (All, “Glee Club Rehearsal”).

“Oh give me a land where the bright diamond sand . . . flows leisurely down the stream”

(All, “Glee Club Rehearsal”).

“There the graceful, white swan goes gliding along . . . ” (All, “Glee Club Rehearsal”).

“Did you see this tree? It’s a fir tree it’s called a fir tree because it gives us fir coats. It also gives us wool in the winter time” (Lucy, “Little Known Facts”).

“This is an elm tree. It’s very little but it will grow up into a giant tree . . . an oak. You can tell how old it is by counting its leaves” (Lucy, “Little Known Facts”).

“And way up there those fluffy little white things, those are clouds, they make the wind blow. And way down there, those tiny little black things . . . those are bugs and they make the grass grow” (Lucy, “Little Known Facts”).

“See that bird? It’s called an eagle. Since it’s little it has another name, a sparrow. And on Christmas and Thanksgiving we eat them” (Lucy, “Little Known Facts”).

“And way up there, the little stars and planets make the rain that often showers. And when its cold and winter is upon us the snow comes up! Just like the flowers” (Lucy, “Little Known Facts”).

“After it comes up, the wind blows it around so it looks like it's coming down, but actually it comes up out of the ground, just like grass. It comes up, Charlie Brown, snow comes up” (Lucy, “Little Known Facts”)!

“Clouds can make the wind blow bugs can make the grass grow, there you go these are little known facts that now you know” (Lucy, “Little Known Facts”)!

“Here I lie, a withering hollow shell of a dog and there sits my supper dish . . .”(Snoopy,
“Suppertime”).

“I believe that is a star. But you know it could be a planet. Or maybe even a satellite”
(Schroeder, “Suppertime”).

“Happiness is . . . climbing a tree . . .” (Schroeder, “Happiness”).

“Catching a firefly. Setting him free . . .” (Schroeder, “Happiness”).

“Happiness is morning and evening, daytime and night time too . . .” (Charlie Brown,
“Happiness”).

References to the Social/Political/Cultural/ Ideological World of the Play

Social

“After all, science has shown a person's character isn't really established until at he's at
least five years old” (Linus, “You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown”).

Political

“What are you trying to do? Stifle my freedom of speech” (Lucy, “Glee Club
Rehearsal”)?

“Your ballots need not be signed and all answers will be held in strictest confidence”
(Lucy, “Crabbiness Survey”).

Cultural

“Or even Frere Jacques. Beethoven’s nice too . . .” (Lucy, “Schroeder”).

“I think Socrates was very right when he said that one of the first rules for anyone in life
is ‘Know thyself’” (Schroeder, “After Baseball”).

“Yes. As in, Ludwig Von Beethoven, composer. Born 1770 died 1827. The eldest of three sons, Ludwig's mother was the daughter of the chief overseer of the kitchen . . . ” (Schroeder, “Beethoven Day”).

“That's great, Sally, but I have to go practice Chopin's ‘Nocturne in B-flat Minor’” (Schroeder, “My New Philosophy”).

“Sally, anything that takes only a minute can't be very lasting. For instance, Beethoven took over two years to complete his brilliant ‘9th Symphony’” (Schroeder, “My New Philosophy”).

“That other team was trash talkin' us Charlie Brown. I got even with them though. I said you think you're so great? Mozart was writing symphonies when he was your age. That really shut 'em up” (Schroeder, “My New Philosophy”).

Ideological

“D’ya know something Schroeder? I think the way you play the piano is nice. D’ya know something else? It’s always been my dream, that I’d marry a man who plays the piano” (Lucy, “Schroeder”).

“Happiness is a fleeting thing, Sally, but I think that a man can come closer to it by directing the forces of his life to a single goal that he believes in. And I think that a man's personal search for happiness is not really a selfish thing, either, because by achieving happiness himself, he can help others to find it. Does that make sense to you” (Schroeder, “Schroeder”)?

“I feel every now and then I gotta bite someone. I know every now and then I what I wanna be, a fierce jungle animal crouched on the limb of a tree . . . ” (Snoopy, “Snoopy”).

“Apparently you haven't read the latest scientific reports. A blanket is as important to a child as a hobby is to an adult. Many a man spends his time restoring antique automobiles, or building model trains, or collecting old telephones, or even studying about the Civil War. This is called playing with the past” (Linus, “Snoopy”).

“Linus, do you know what I intend. I intend to be a queen. When I grow up I'm going to be the biggest queen there ever was. And I'll live in a big palace with a big front lawn and have lots of beautiful dresses to wear. And, when I go out in my coach all the people . . . ” (Lucy, “My Blanket and Me”).

“Was I being judged on what I have learned about this project? If so, were then not you, my teacher, also being judged on your ability to transmit your knowledge to me? Are you willing to share my ‘C’” (Sally, “My Blanket and Me”)?

“Why is it I always have my supper in the red dish and my drinking water in the yellow dish? One of these days I'm going to have my supper in the yellow dish and my drink water in the red dish. Life's just TOO short not to live it up a little” (Snoopy, “The Doctor Is In”).

“I think Socrates was very right when he said that one of the first rules for anyone in life is ‘Know thyself’” (Schroeder, “Team”).

The Authors and Their World

As in many cases with authors and their plays, the musical *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* takes bits and pieces from the life of author Charles M. Schulz to create a juxtaposition between comedy and the pains often associated with growing up. It is no secret that Schulz based the main character, Charlie Brown, on himself and the common

trials he experienced when he was young, yet composer and author, Clark Gesner, had the idea to make Schulz's comics into a musical. After researching, it is evident that to delve into the world of the musical and Charles M. Schulz is to delve into the psychology and times influencing the famed characters of the *Peanuts* comic strip, as art often imitates life.

Born on November 26, 1922, to parents Carl and Dena in Minnesota, Charles Monroe Schulz grew up to be a young man who was too smart for his own good. He excelled quickly in school, but his youth and short size made him an easy target for bullies, due to his being "smallest in his class" ("Charles M." 38). Although potentially traumatic, the struggles he faced as a child became fodder for moral lessons and encouragement for his audiences later on. Similar to Schulz, Charlie Brown is often "self-effacing" (Holt) and emulates many troubles children meet growing up, that adults relate to as well. For example, the very first *Peanuts* comic strip ever published in the early 1950s shows the classic struggle between Charlie Brown trying to kick a football and his nemesis Lucy consistently pulling it away. This situation is "a good example of why 'Peanuts' was so well-liked. Most people have some experience with failure, so readers identified with Charlie Brown and admired his willingness to try to kick the ball yet another time" ("Charles Schulz's" 393). This endearing spirit of Schulz's characters exemplifies why his comics earned him "about a million dollars per month" (Holt).

Before Schulz worked for newspapers, he was drafted into World War II and emerged as a sergeant, "imbued with Christian beliefs" ("Charles M." 38). His strong faith prompted him to work for a Catholic magazine, which assisted in keeping his characters pure. He lived the rest of his life deeply focused in his faith: "He never

smoked and doesn't drink and his metaphors are as home-spun and sweet as you'd expect from someone who made a fortune with the sentence, 'Happiness is a warm puppy'" (Holt). This continued positivity earned Schulz a reputation of cooperation, humility, and optimism throughout his lifetime.

In the beginning of his career, Schulz's developed a comic strip titled *Li'l Folks*, which began to gain popularity in various small newspapers. Eventually *Li'l Folks* was picked up by *The United Feature Syndicate of New York* in 1950, but was forced to be renamed *Peanuts*. Schulz was not a fan of the new title and is quoted as saying, "Say it: Peanuts! I can't stand to even write it. And it's a terrible title" (qtd. in "Charles Schulz's" 397). This fact contributed to naming the musical, which contains no *Peanuts* reference in the title, and instead matches the heading of many of Schulz's stories and videos outside of his newspaper publications. The original name change was the last time Schulz let his boss tell him what to do with his comic. In fact, Schulz was revolutionary when he introduced his first African American character into the comic strip. The character, Franklin, caused an uproar when he became friends, and even went to school with, the other characters:

Schulz says he's apolitical yet stood his ground when a newspaper syndicate editor worried about Franklin, the black child Schulz introduced to the strip in 1968. "Did Charlie Brown have to invite (Franklin) directly into his home?" the executive asked. You bet, said Schulz. (Holt)

This sort of confidence in his decisions, and his comic sense, made Schulz an obvious hero for the proverbial "little guy" in his audience.

Schultz was married twice and had five children. He also received many awards, including an Emmy for his nostalgic classic, *A Charlie Brown Christmas* ("Charles M." 39). He died from colon cancer in February 2000, yet his legacy continues to live on in

his syndicated comic strip, Broadway musical, and various books and videos featuring the classic friends of Charlie Brown.

Clark Gesner, composer and lyricist, considered his most acknowledged accomplishment to be *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*. This fact is most obvious through his obituary titled "Clark Gesner, 64, the Creator of 'Charlie Brown' Musical," written by Jesse McKinley. Although this is his biggest accomplishment, the musical's popularity is nothing to scoff at:

‘You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown’ was the breakout hit of 1967, opening at the 179-seat Theatre 80 in the East Village and going on to run for nearly 1,600 performances. It spawned six national tours and countless productions at high schools, colleges, and community theatres across the country and the world. (McKinley 12)

The musical boasts fourteen original songs credited to Gesner. Its popularity became so great that Gesner was monetarily comfortable for the rest of his life.

Gesner's beginnings are as impressive as his accomplishments. He was born in Augusta, Maine, in 1938, and eventually continued to Princeton for college where he "became an actor, writer and composer at the Triangle Club, the undergraduate theatre troupe known for its often ribald and tuneful revues" (12). After Princeton, Gesner began working on the musical before Charles M. Schulz was ever involved. Finally, needing access to the rights to continue his project, Gesner wrote Schulz "directly, sending him a five-song demonstration tape" (12). Schulz gave Gesner his permission and the musical that resulted was first imagined on a concept album, then performed off-Broadway, as national tours, as a Broadway show, and as a two-time Broadway revival, once in 1971 then again in 1999. Just like Schulz's comics, the musical also appeared on November 6, 1985 as an animated prime-time television special. Gesner continued to act and write, but

never achieved the fame again that *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* brought him. Clark Gesner died of a heart attack at sixty-four years old in 2002.

While researching the era of the *Peanuts* comic strip leading up to the opening of the popular musical, it became apparent that the “happy-go-lucky” world Schulz seemed to live in was not the same for all of America. According to an archived broadcast from a radio program through *Voices of America*, “Nineteen sixty-eight was a presidential election year in the United States. It was also one of the saddest and most difficult years in modern American history. The nation was divided by disputes about civil rights and the war in Vietnam” (“1968”). America was stuck in a difficult time of inequality and violence, while Robert Kennedy and Eugene McCarthy battled for their party’s nomination to take the place of Lyndon Johnson as President. To make matters worse, on April 4, 1968, Martin Luther King was shot to death in Memphis, Tennessee. Soon after, Robert Kennedy gave a speech about this devastation and was quoted saying:

What we need in the United States is not division. What we need in the United States is not hatred. What we need in the United States is not violence and lawlessness, but is love and wisdom. And compassion toward one another. And a feeling of justice toward those who still suffer within our country, whether they be white or whether they be black. (“1968”)

Relaying the message of this quote is what Gesner achieved with his musical through Schulz’s characters. The characters in *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* work to sort out their differences in an innocent manner. Sometimes children can teach adults how to act through their simplistic look at life and conflict. It seems as though Robert Kennedy was making a plea for this message to come through in everyday life, and Gesner’s musical answered appropriately. Kennedy ultimately suffered the same fate as Martin

Luther King Jr. in Los Angeles, in a celebratory speech after beating McCarthy for his party's nomination.

Many people have used entertainment as an escape from reality for centuries and many would turn to Schulz's comics to help ease the pain of the world around them. Schulz was again the voice of positivity the people of America needed. Simple Charlie Brown never gave up. The troubles he faced seemed incomparable, but Schulz's comics took on the role of psychologist during this tormenting time with lessons about not giving up and standing up for individual beliefs. It is not a surprise, then, that *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*, the musical, had immense popularity during its opening. This upbeat and innocent show most likely brought theatergoers back to the days of their childhood when the problems of the world did not concern them, which was also a goal of this modern thesis production.

Even though the musical was an off-Broadway show during this turmoil, the topics *on* Broadway spoke to *remind* America of the times, and not to escape. According to the Internet Broadway Database, the winner of the 1968 Tony award for best musical was *Hallelujah, Baby!*, which centers on an African American singer who must overcome inequality to achieve her dreams. In addition, the controversy surrounding the Vietnam War had to inspire Schulz's comics and Gesner's thought process behind the musical. With America taking sides on the handling of the war, those who had the power to speak through art often did. Going along with Schulz's claim to be non-partisan, Snoopy famously remarks, "there is no sense is doing a lot of barking if you don't really have anything to say." The character seems to be speaking to both sides of the Vietnam War argument.

Furthermore, newspapers were extremely popular during the late nineteenth-century and the early twentieth-century “due to a number of factors, including a drop in production costs, an increase in advertising revenue, the development of national syndicates, and an increase in leisure time for the middle class” (“Charles Schulz” 393). However, after the early 1900s, in the “post war era” newspapers began to decline in popularity because of new entertainment inventions such as the radio, the television, and the increased popularity of cinema: “In 1950-98 average readership of a weekday paper plummeted from 78% to 59% of the adult population” (Norris 4). Comics, such as the *Peanuts* strip, had to find ways to stay relevant in the entertainment sector. Even today, the printed newspaper must compete with the popularity of online resources; many people now obtain their news and other pertinent information from the Internet. Instead of quitting the fight, Gesner embraced the challenge to recreate the comic for modern day audiences. *You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown* brought the popular *Peanuts* characters to a new generation of kids who needed encouragement and to adults who wanted to relive the past.

World of the Play

Connections

Making a connection with the *Peanuts* clan is second nature. Perhaps reading the physical newspaper today instead of an online source is obsolete, but when I was young, the Sunday morning paper came with an abundance of hilarious comics including the *Peanuts* comic strip. Most audiences welcome a connection with this musical as I do in order to remember their past when life was simpler; a time when Sunday morning was not spent trying to plan for the rest of the week’s dinners and schedules.

As much as I loved the simplistic comic strip, I grew to love the musical even more. As always with reading, it is difficult to place one's own inflection on the author's words. Seeing the characters and their classic situations brought to life on stage, however, plays a more significant role in one's understanding of Schulz's meaning behind the comic. Not often enough are musicals produced for the sheer enjoyment of the audience, nor are they meant to show the simplistic nature of life. Through children, Schulz and Gesner helped me to connect with the potential of my students as well as forced me to remember how much fun it was to be a kid.

Another connection I made with this musical was through the opportunity to perform the breakout classic, "My New Philosophy," during a musical theatre class at The University of Northern Colorado. Separated into groups of three, we were assigned to instruct and direct each other in a musical theatre performance. One of these scenes chosen was from *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*. With great pleasure I took on the role of Sally Brown, who spends the entire song ranting to Schroeder about a bad grade and shares phrases that make her feel better. Never claiming to be a Kristen Chenoweth of singers, I realized I had a long way to go if I ever wanted to play this character again. Through this experience, I realized how far I had come from being a carefree child, and much to my surprise, tapping into that realm was extremely difficult. I could not wait to give my students this challenge. Middle school students/actors have an easier time acting like children because they are closer to the actual ages of the characters.

A final connection I made to this show emerged through the research for this thesis. Blindly picking the show because of the cute dialogue and classic songs did not assist me in actually producing the show. As I dove deeper into the context of the plot,

characters, history, and verbiage of the script, I realized the numerous opportunities to teach the acting techniques I loved throughout college. Through acting practices such as Michael Shurtleff's "Mystery and Secret," Francis Hodge's "Polar Attitudes," and Rudolf Laban's Movement Analysis, I can give my young student-actors a full toolbox of techniques that are transferable throughout their careers. Overall, *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*, provided many opportunities for creative and advanced directing choices.

Relevance for a Contemporary Audience

You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown's lessons are as timeless as Shakespeare's. Adults and children alike must unfortunately deal with hardships, bullying, and lack of self-confidence. Schulz and Gesner depict these problems in a way that makes them seem trivial and slight when portrayed through the eyes of a child. The characters have ways of saying the exact right thing at the right time to ease any audience member's heart and a catharsis is guaranteed. For example, in the first scene, Charlie Brown says, "I'm not good. I'm not bad. I'm something in between," and his cast of friends immediately responds through song, ". . . with a heart such as yours you could open any doors, you could go out and do anything. You could be a king, Charlie Brown, you could be a king!" (Gesner 10). These encouraging words are understood by audiences of all ages. Who would not want to hear that they have the ability to do anything they desire with their life?

Locally, Aurora, Colorado, has seen its fair share of turmoil over the past years. Many high schools and middle schools in the area have unknowingly joined together to produce upbeat productions because the last thing the community needs is another traumatic tale. *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* aids greatly in the recovery of spirits

in this community. There was never a more relevant need for a show with an innocent message and a martyr-like character such as Charlie Brown who overcomes immense troubles in seas of doubt.

Updating

The version of *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* produced at Sky Vista was the revival version. The original was created by Gesner in 1967 and revived on Broadway in 1999 ("You're a Good Man"). Background knowledge of some of the situations in the dialogue is crucial, such as Snoopy's fight with the Red Baron at the beginning of Act II. A glossary of advanced terms the characters use was provided, which helped the younger patrons better understand the story. Schulz's characters and lessons are timeless. Audiences for years to come will be able to understand and enjoy Gesner's words and songs set to Schulz's comic.

Explorations

Philosophical ponderings surrounding the unanswerable question of "what is the purpose of life?" aid with the overall understanding of the play. Audiences who arrive with a mind clear of precise answers to life's most troubling inquiries are more able to fully delve into the esoteric and eccentric situations that the characters discuss.

In Sky Vista's production, the audience was immediately reminded of the original comic strip with exact replicas of the original images through costuming, set design, and props. Staying true to the vision of Schulz was Gesner's goal, which in turn was the goal of the drama department when producing this musical.

Finally, there are numerous postings on social media concerning the Broadway revival and other amateur productions of the play produced at schools and in community

theatres across the country. Any actor cast in this show is met with an overabundance of online media resources to sort through. Not only is each full song recording listed on *YouTube* for potential auditioning purposes, but so are many original cartoon adaptations of the comic strip. These videos help the director and actors understand how to bring the animated characters to life. Additionally, the entire technical crew can benefit from this online filing cabinet. Advancements in social media have made it possible to locate set design ideas, costume plots, lighting designs, and sound effects from various colorful renditions for schools to adapt for a future production (see figs. 17-19).

Production History

Finding production history information on *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* became increasingly difficult after realizing that co-author Charles M. Schulz had so many other successes using the same classic title with credits in television, books, movies, and of course the musical. No wonder this musical grew to be such a triumph; the audiences most likely desired to revisit childhood innocence, or memories of the Sunday morning newspaper. Additionally, during the inception of this musical, America was bracing for a historic election while trying to bandage its citizens' wounds from the Vietnam War. Times in the late 1960s were not perfect, but a musical like Gesner's was just the cure for people who wanted to forget their troubles. The misfortunes surrounding the character of Charlie Brown helped audiences root for the underdog during this time in history. Much of the success and popularity of the musical can be attributed to the unfortunate fact that turmoil exists in the world and people often find an escape through art.

Interestingly enough it seems that every time this musical is performed it is for a different purpose. For example, as stated previously, the owner of the rights, Tams-Witmark Music Library, proposes one very simple idea:

Please note that for *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* you are not required to perform the entire show. You may, at your option, perform your choice of scenes from the show provided that the total running time for your performance (without intermission) is no less than forty-five (45) minutes. All of our shows other than *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* (Revised) or *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* (Original) must be performed in their entirety.

Potential directors of the show have an option to use what they need from the script, which is an uncommon luxury. This idea is thrilling because when one produces the show, the scenes can be tailored to fit the needs of students, time limits, and a simultaneous message: an anti-bullying campaign, for example. A great concern in performing this show is the fact that middle school students might have a difficult time grasping some of the intellectual concepts the characters comically talk about as children. For example, the characters discuss advanced concepts surrounding the psychology of crabbiness and the philosophy of Socrates, while most middle school students have never taken a psychology or philosophy class, let alone have the ability to discuss these subjects in-depth. Also, stepping out of producing *Jr.* versions of musicals, so a director does not overwork novice actors and crew with a lengthy show, can be daunting. Realizing that the show can be reshaped makes one more confident to produce the musical.

Furthermore, after researching the production history, it became apparent that many directors had the same idea about changing the show to fit their needs. In fact, the original 1967 off-Broadway version helped the director, Joseph Hardy, receive a Drama Desk-Vernon Rice Award ("You're"). There is an endless amount of possibilities to a show that gives directors the freedom to focus on certain scenes that benefit their

purpose. This type of show would be an attractive choice for any theatre due to its adaptability.

The first show also won The Outer Critics Circle Award for the production as a whole, and soon the successes of the off-Broadway show caught the attention of Broadway producers. The first Broadway production of *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* was performed at the John Golden Theatre and ran from June 1 to June 27, 1971. Dean Stobler played the famous yellow-shirted Charlie Brown and was directed by the original director, Joseph Hardy ("You're").

More recently, *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* was revived on Broadway in 1999. Kristin Chenoweth, who played Charlie Brown's sister Sally Brown, won "Best Featured Actress in a Musical" at the 1999 Tony Awards. The production also was nominated for the Tony that same year for "Best Revival of a Musical" along with a nomination for Michael Mayer for "Best Direction of a Musical." The revival played at the Ambassador Theatre from February 4 through June 13, 1999 ("You're 1999").

Despite the vast amount of nominations and awards, the New York critics seem to have mixed feelings about the revival. According to Fintan O'Toole of *New York Daily News*, the show "[managed] to be more two-dimensional than the comic strip" because it, "[fails] to answer the basic questions. What story are they telling? And how do you get the double take of children who are really scaled-down adults?" On the other hand, O'Toole does give some credit to the actors, "especially Roger Bart (Snoopy), Kristin Chenoweth (Sally) and B.D. Wong (Linus) are extremely talented. They create smart, skillful and precise impersonations of Schulz's characters." David Lyons of the *New York Post* agrees with O'Toole's opinions: "The production hits an occasional false note, but

mainly it keeps a miraculous and moving balance between joy and pathos, the so-called infantile and the so-called adult. Like Schulz himself, it blends the two ages together in a lovely, weird mix.”

The critics also agree that new additions to the original musical added immense entertainment value to the initial show: “The original, with music, book and lyrics by Clark Gesner, had 42 sketches, about half of which have been replaced with newly adapted Schulz material. Two new songs have been added” (Lyons). Audiences and critics appreciated the new additions that closely follow more of Schulz’s newspaper cartoon. In addition, O’Toole adds, “There are two new songs by Andrew Lippa. One of them, ‘My New Philosophy,’ written for the new character Sally, is smarter than any of Gesner’s remaining numbers.” This song is catchy, funny, and a great singing and acting challenge for a female student-actor.

If one has mostly directed non-musical plays, confusion concerning how many people are involved in writing, directing, and producing a revival is inevitable. Conversely, having two options of script choice was welcome. The revival gives Andrew Lippa an author credit because of his two added songs, and due to the fantastic reviews of his new material, producing the revival version was preferred.

In casting the revival version, it is difficult to forget the amazingly talented revival actors. Finding student-actors who can play spitfire kids with vocals to match is a daunting task in the puberty-packed time known as middle school. Eleven to thirteen year olds must play characters whose ages are younger than their own, and the director must make sure that the integrity and comedy remain intact. Young actors, most likely, have an easier experience tapping into the youth of the *Peanuts* characters since they are not far

removed from their ages, unlike the adult Broadway actors were in the 1999 revival. Less character work is required for children to play children.

Thankfully, *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*, translates well on any size stage.

Battling a small budget with a performance space to match, the show can still be entertaining and thoughtful. According to dramaturg, actor, and writer, Matthew McMahan, in the article, "Producing 'You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown,'"

This play has been very well received in the regional and community theatre market. It's small, intimate oeuvre make it suitable for smaller houses. Also, given the perennial influence Charles Schulz's *Peanuts* have had, children and adults can enjoy this show with a similar sense of wonder.

McMahan also talks of the audience accessibility of the show, which is attractive to a drama teacher. The simplicity also translates onto any stage, even an affectionately named "cafetorium" (auditorium in a cafeteria) stage space.

Before choosing a show for a middle school, a director must make sure that the show is suitable for the intended participants. After much research, it was surprising to find that many middle schools have successfully performed the play, including Redwood Middle School in Ventura County, California. Cary Ginell speaks highly of the production in her article, "Redwood Middle School presents, *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*," stating that the performance was "touching and whimsical." She vouches that middle school is a great setting for such a show and expresses her sadness that "in today's world of infinite distractions, children don't seem to pay much attention to the funny pages anymore." Over and over again, Ginell notes a problem in the production of this play: current young students are not be familiar with the *Peanuts* comic strip. Ginell proves this issue through an assessment of the seventh grade lead at Redwood: "It's amazing how effective he is, despite the fact that, as his father informed me during

intermission, he was not familiar with the comic strip.” To work around this problem, dramaturgy-based lessons for the students were essential to familiarize them with the history and popularity of the multi-million dollar industry behind *Peanuts*.

The Performance Now Theatre Company also produced *You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown*, at the Lakewood Cultural Center in 2012. The online portal of *The Denver Post*, YourHub.com, describes the show as “a day made up of little moments picked from all the days of Charlie Brown, from Valentine’s Day to the baseball season, from wild optimism to utter despair, all mixed in with the lives of his friends . . .” (“Performance”). The show was well publicized and many articles concerning the show spoke of the “cuteness” factor that is the *Peanuts* brand: “Who doesn’t remember the wonderful characters beloved for decades by young and old alike? Very important life lessons are learned through this cute little group of friends, and of course—the meaning of “happiness” (hint: it’s more than just two kinds of ice cream . . .)” (“Performance Peanuts”). Communities in Colorado and across the nation continue to present this musical with young actors, which speaks volumes about the relevancy and accessibility of the script.

Through researching the past productions of this musical, a fondness arises for the family of actors, directors, producers, and technical professionals that have given their hearts to this uplifting show. Whether its produced off-Broadway, on Broadway, for a national tour, or in the “cafetorium” of a middle school, *You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown* is an excellent and flexible option.

Problems—Perceived and Otherwise

Problematic Moments or Scenes

1. Developing Charlie Brown's character in the first scene, "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown," might be difficult because his character needs to exhibit weakness without demanding pity from the audience.
2. Adding a chorus of characters proves problematic because the songs, which previously only required the six characters in the original script, would now include upwards of thirty students. Providing interesting acting areas for a large number of students is difficult.
3. The image of "security" reoccurs often and the goal is to help the audience remember a comforting object in their lives. To help with his recollection, focus was put on helping the actors bring life to Linus' security blanket, Schroeder's piano, and Snoopy's doghouse.
4. Many of the scenes include advanced vocabulary that young students do not know. In their scripts, the actors should circle any of the words they do not understand and implementing a dramaturgy day full of research into the advanced themes could be arranged. For example:
 - a. Scene 2, "Schroeder," includes references to Beethoven and the song "April Showers."
 - b. In Scene 4, "My Blanket and Me," Sally delivers a long monologue about the inconsistencies of her teacher's grading methods. She tries to convince her teacher that her grades not only reflect her efforts, but the efforts of the teacher and her parents as well.

- c. Scene 6, “The Doctor Is In,” contains difficult psychological jargon that Lucy utilizes when trying to diagnose her friends and herself.
- d. Scene 8, “Book Report,” includes a monologue from Linus with complex words that must definitely be highlighted:

In examining a work such as *Peter Rabbit*, it is important that the superficial characteristics of its deceptively simple plot should not be allowed to blind the reader to the more substantial fabric of its deeper motivations. In this report, I plan to discuss the sociological implications of family pressures so great as to drive an otherwise moral rabbit to perform acts of thievery, which he consciously knew were against the law. I also hope to explore the personality of Mr. Macgregor in his conflicting roles as farmer and humanitarian. *Peter Rabbit* is established from the start as a benevolent hero. (Gesner 38)

- 5. Scene 8, “Book Report” has a violent undertone as Schroeder retells the story of *Peter Rabbit*: “Down came the staff on his head smash! And Robin fell like a sack of lead crash! The sheriff laughed and he left him for dead Ha! But he was wrong” (39). Thinking back to the tragedy at a movie theatre close to Sky Vista, reconsidering using violent undertones in any play presented to a sensitive community must be considered. With permission from Tams-Witmark, scene 8 can easily be cut from the show.

Problematic Actions

- 1. Act II begins with a monologue from Snoopy about World War I and the Red Baron. Snoopy’s actions are supposed to be comedic, and must come from the truthfulness and integrity of mimicking the plane fighter.
- 2. The actor playing Schroeder must play the piano very well. If he cannot, then he must at least look like he is a prodigy.
- 3. The children characters are meant to be younger than the actors themselves.

4. The difficulty behind Snoopy's character is playing the part of a dog that often exhibits human qualities. Knowing when Snoopy is Charlie Brown's furry companion versus a scholar with advanced vocabulary and perceptions is crucial.
5. Lucy often "slugs" Charlie Brown, so stage combat training is necessary to keep both actors safe.
6. Scene 11, "Team," portrays the characters playing a baseball game. Challenges exist in blocking a realistic game on stage.
7. Scene 12, "Glee Club Rehearsal," consists of short and abrupt lines, which are interjected in between song lyrics. Lucy and Linus fight over who is at fault for stolen pencils and crayons and the focus should be on the action of the fight, not the words of the song.

Problematic Character Interpretations

1. Why is Lucy so mean? How can she be relatable to the audience?
2. Will Charlie Brown's self-pity come off as annoying over the course of the show?
3. Can Sally teach a lesson through her inability to respect authority, or is her purpose to relate to the children in the audience?
4. Can the traits of dog and human coexist in Snoopy?
5. Lucy has a transformation in Scene 11, "Team," when Schroeder, the object of her affections, says to her:

I'm sorry to have to say it right to your face, Lucy, but it's true. You're a very crabby person. I know your crabbiness has probably become so natural to you that you're not even aware when you're being crabby, but it's true just the same. You're a very crabby person and you're crabby to just about everyone you meet. (50)

This moment is important in Lucy's life. Does she really change?

6. In the next scene, Lucy fights with her brother; is this the moment of climax in the vignette-style show?
7. At what point is Charlie Brown's transformation into self-assurance? Is it continuous throughout the play or is there be a specific moment? Which choice is most effective?

Problematic Character Interpretations Caused by Previous Actors

The portrayals of Schulz's famous comic strip characters allude to the purpose of the musical. One problem exists in the wide popularity of the Broadway revival; many of the characters have been made famous by a previous performance. For example, Kristin Chenoweth and the song, "My New Philosophy," made the character Sally Brown famous. Then again, many current middle school students were not alive when the 1999 revival became popular, but there are many videos from other schools productions online. Encouraging actors to watch the videos so that they might adapt a quirk to their own acting style should be considered.

Problems Posed by Casting Difficulties

Only six roles make up the cast of *You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown*. Adaptation of the cast size to accommodate any growing theatre department is essential. Including other characters from the *Peanuts* comic strip as non-speaking roles preserves the intent and integrity of the script. A director should also remember that all six of the main roles are demanding for actors with great singing ability and creative acting choices. Characterization and humor are essential for actors in the cast.

Problematic Representations of Race, Gender, Religion

Scene 8, “Book Report,” contains one religious representation. Linus says, “Amen” (40) to show his glee about a book report presentation being over. The context of the “Amen” is used to show sincere appreciation, which adds to the comedy of the scene. The exclamation does not offend because it is not used in a strictly religious connotation. This scene was cut from the final production. In considering race, Franklin, the only African-American character in *Peanuts* history, remains a contender to add to an expanded cast. To cast an African-American student in this role keeps historical integrity of the brand. Even though Franklin is the only African-American character in the original *Peanuts* characters, race of the original characters is not a factor in casting. In fact, in the 1999 revival African-American actor Stanley Wayne Mathis played Schroeder (“You’re”).

Problems Posed by the Theme of the Text

Once cast, the students at Sky Vista embarked on an anti-bullying campaign to show the atrocities of Lucy’s consistent berating of Charlie Brown and his self-loathing as a result. The end of the play represents Lucy’s transformation from bully to admitting she has a problem: the first step. Also, a shift in Charlie Brown’s character is clear as he changes from a self-loathing six-year old to realizing he should find happiness in the little things in life in the finale song, “Happiness.” Although the changes are concrete, the most important theme represented in the change is *the journey*. Charlie Brown’s search for happiness remains the twine that weaves the vignette scenes together into one plot; yet questions remain: How can one get from self-loathing to happiness? And, is everything going to be okay in the end?

Problems Posed by Genres

The musical represents more than one genre. The genre of “comedy” is obvious and crowd-pleasing. Conversely, the “comedy” of the piece affects the ability to represent Lucy’s bullying tactics as negative. Making a “bad guy” persona out of a cute and funny little girl is a challenge for supporting an anti-bullying message. Also, *You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown* has a unique “comic strip” genre. Audiences may attend the show expecting similarities to the Sunday morning comic strip they know and love. Attention to detail surrounding the integrity of Schulz’s work is essential in retaining audience trust.

Problems Posed by the Status of the Text

Cutting the script is a first priority. Modifying the scenes creates an opportunity for a discussion concerning of what is important to the play and the messages in the script. Once the cuts are made, a final script can be provided to the actors and technical crew.

Problems Posed by Dialects

No dialects are necessary in this musical. A carefully placed, youthful lisp may be added to symbolize the youth and innocence of the characters.

Problems Posed by Pronunciation

Every character must say difficult words. “Superficial characteristics,” “deceptively simple,” “substantial fabric,” “sociological implications,” “thievery,” “humanitarian,” and “benevolent hero” are a few words and phrases that exist in just one of Linus’ monologues (38). The rest of the play’s language is similar. A dictionary and

thesaurus assist student-actors on their journey to memorization of these advanced expressions.

Problems Posed by Need for Adaptation

The only adaptations required exist in molding the play to fit time constraints and to expand the cast into a chorus of actors. The problems associated with these changes have been discussed previously above.

Problems Posed by Unusual Linguistic or Rhetorical Styles

Specifically, the characters of Linus and Sally are thoughtful and are intelligent beyond their years. The humor in their intelligence comes through in their accuracy of advanced thoughts and language. The rhetoric in these instances must be perfectly pronounced to achieve the comedy.

Problems Posed by Music or Need for Musical Score

If a production lacks an orchestra to play the music for the musical, finding an instrumental vocal score that the student vocalists can follow is imperative. Often, young actors cannot match the notes of the instrumental vocal score CDs provided with the rights and scripts. Casting students who are able to sing with the vocal CD should be a priority.

Problems Posed by Scenic Requirements and Special Effects

The main issue in staging the production is keeping the original integrity of the comic strip. Instead of building a set out of a director's vision, following the comic strip staples, including the big red doghouse and Lucy's makeshift psychology office, are important. Fortunately, due to the multitude of scenes, the sets can be minimal, and a bare

stage often suffices. No special effects are needed, so the simplistic and pure nature of the original comic strip can be represented.

Problems Posed by the World of the Play

You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown takes place in present day, "Anywhere America." The success of the comic strip is due to the fact that people from all over the country can put the characters in their town and in their time period. Audiences are able to relate to the characters and their situations because they do not need background knowledge to understand the story. Therefore, the musical can be set in any town or state.

Furthermore, the characters are relatable because when they play "make believe" they discuss adult situations. They have a childlike take on all of life's most difficult situations as they discuss death, marriage, the meaning of life, and love. The conversations surrounding these big ideas are comical, accurate, and topical. Gesner's scenes involve life themes that continue with time. Accessibility to all audiences is central to the success of the message.

Applications

Technical Preparations: Limitations and Advantages of the Venue

This director has used the stage for this production four times a year for the past three years, so there were few surprises in the way of performance space. Luckily, the cast and crew were able to rehearse on this stage throughout the entire process. Furthermore, many of the students involved had experience working with and on this stage in their previous years at Sky Vista (see fig. 5). Conversely, one reoccurring limitation in the space remains that the stage shares space with the school's cafeteria. The "cafetorium," which the space has been lovingly nicknamed, creates sound and light

barriers for each production attempt. Large windows lighting the cafeteria create restrictions during rehearsals, especially during the time of year when the days grow longer and the sun does not set until mid-evening (see figs. 4 and 6). Unavoidably, the final dress rehearsals and shows in April began when the sun was starting to set.

Sound is also a consistent issue. Microphones are required because of the vast space the actors need to fill with their projection (see fig. 4). Young students and expensive, wireless, lavalier microphones often prove to be a bad mix. Furthermore, the school's sound receiver is only set up to handle ten wireless microphones. With a cast usually consisting of thirty to fifty actors, including *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*, switching microphones during the shows creates a hazard for sound levels, and causes wear and tear on the microphones. Thankfully, *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* only consists of six speaking roles, and so the usual stress of switching microphones did not exist. This fact was another reason this director was attracted to the show. Overall, the limitations of the "cafetorim" are expected, but provide learning opportunities for progress each year.

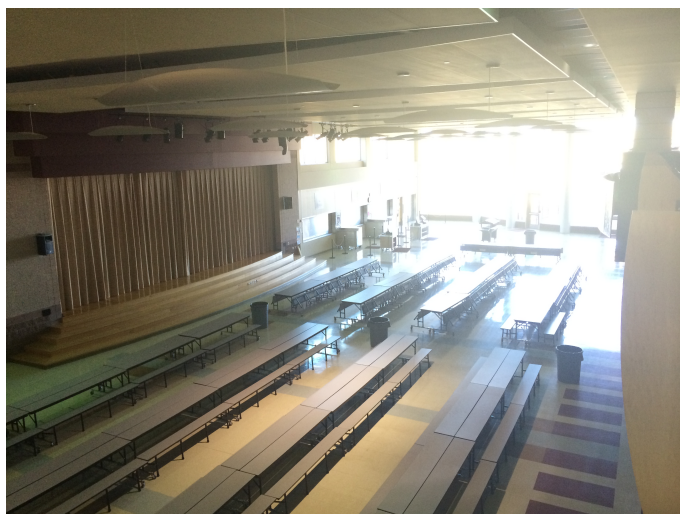


Fig. 4. Full view of Sky Vista Theatre/cafeteria Aurora, Colorado. Photo by Miller.



Fig. 5. View from the light booth of Sky Vista stage. Photo by Miller.



Fig. 6. Shared cafeteria windows, Sky Vista Middle School. Photo by Miller.

Stage Floor Plan

Using the educational version of Vectorworks, a scale floor plan of the performance space was created (see fig. 7). The floor plan includes the backstage areas, along with the props closet and exits.

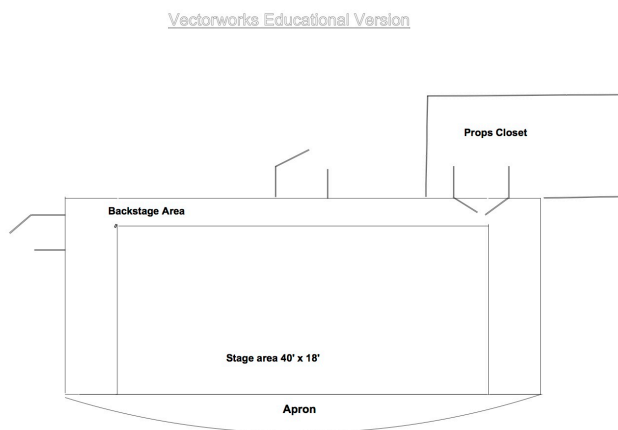


Fig. 7. Vectorworks scale floor plan of Sky Vista performance space. Photo by Miller.

Lighting

The lights complemented the vignette-style scene changes with brief blackouts between each scene. The lights also aided in the comedic relief of the show and often got a laugh when the audience expected the lights to move quickly between the scene changes, but instead lingered on an awkward moment. The Sky Vista stage has nine zones for lights, each following the McCandless theory with two front lights at forty-five degree angles varying between warm and cool Roscolux gels, along with a backlight system containing a Roscolux lavender gel. The light board is set up with a soft patch, which allows for one channel to pull up one zone of lights. The light board also contains sub masters (or sliders) that are usually attached to specific gobos, which were sporadically moved up and down to simulate bombs and airplane gunshots during Snoopy's "The Red Baron—Melodrama." Accompanied by gunshot and bomb sound effects, this scene seemed as real for the audience as it was for Snoopy.

The scenes of *You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown* outline a passage of time, which was decided upon as one day. Using the controllable properties of light—intensity, distribution, and color—the audience was taken on a journey through the average day of a *Peanuts* character; the beginning scenes had a pink hue, the middle scenes were of full intensity, and the final scene used shadows from the light distribution to emulate night. The light plot (see fig. 8) outlines Sky Vista's lighting system. The colors on the plot represent where special red, green, blue, and amber (represented by yellow) colored gels are placed.

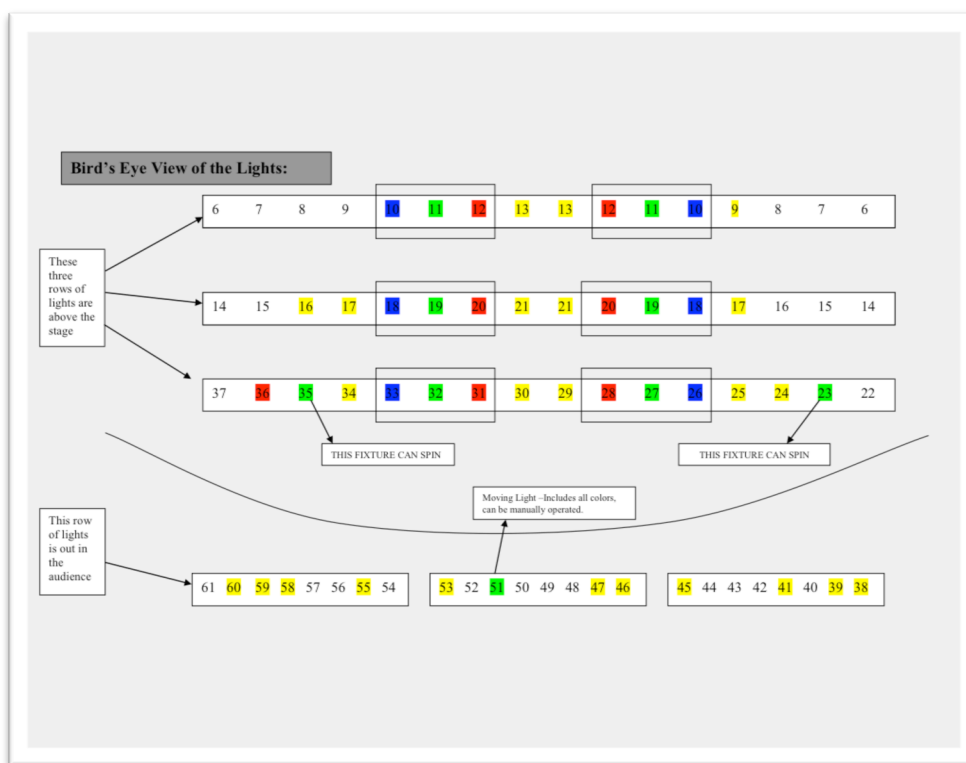


Fig. 8. Light plot diagram for Sky Vista Middle School. Photo by Miller.

Students run the lights and soundboard for every Sky Vista production. They are in charge of recording cues for the design, calling the cues during the show, and striking the cues after the final performance. Unfortunately, Sky Vista does not have a catwalk for

easy access to the lights, or else the students would change gobos and gels and reposition the fixtures as well.

Table 1
Lighting Cues

| Cue | Lighting Action |
|---|---|
| At open house | Curtain warmer on full |
| Curtains Open | Downstage right and center stage zones on 80% |
| p. 5 “You’re a good man, Charlie Brown” Sung | Add downstage left zone on 80% |
| p. 6 “You’re the kind of reminder we need.” | Add upstage right zone on 80% |
| p. 6 “I think Charlie Brown has nice hands.” | Add center stage left zone on 80% |
| p. 6 “You’re a prince, and a prince could be king.” | Add upstage left zone on 80% |
| p. 7 “I’m late!” | All zones on full 80% |
| p. 11 “You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown” Song ends | Blackout |
| p. 11 Scene change music ends | Center stage zone on full |
| p. 11 “I wasn’t here when it happened.” Sally skips off stage | Blackout |
| p. 11 Activity settles on stage after the scene change | Downstage center zone on full, the rest of the zones on 50% |
| p. 13 “I wonder why she never looks at me.” Slight pause | Blackout |
| p. 13 Chorus is cleared off stage. Schroeder and Lucy are settled on stage | All zones at full intensity |
| p. 14 “My aunt Marion was right, never try to discuss marriage with a musician.” Slight pause | Blackout |
| p. 14 Schroeder and Lucy offstage, Linus and Sally onstage | Downstage right zone on full |
| p. 14 “We had spaghetti at our house three times this week.” Slight pause | Downstage right off, center stage left zone on full |
| p. 15 “Hey, Frieda!” | Add downstage right zone on full, then off when Lucy runs offstage with the girls |
| p. 15 “I was jumping rope, everything was alright and suddenly it all seemed so futile.” Slight pause | Add downstage right zone |
| p. 15 “I think I’m losing my flavor!” Schroeder walks off stage | Blackout |
| p. 15 Offstage voice, “Hey, Snoopy, we’re home from school.” | All stage left zones and center stage zone on full |

Table 1, *continued*

| | |
|--|--|
| p. 16 "Rats!" | Add red special on cyc |
| p. 17 "I'd pounce! I'd pounce! I'd..." | Fade out red special |
| p. 17 "Howl!" | Blackout |
| p. 17 Scene change, Charlie Brown center stage | Center stage zone on full |
| p. 18 "I think I'll flap my arms and fly to the moon." | Center stage off, center stage left zone on full |
| p. 18 "There's just so little hope of advancement." Slight Pause | Center stage left off, downstage center on full |
| p. 18 "Just like shooting fish in a barrel!" | All zones on full |
| p. 20 "I actually thought I could do it..." | Fade in red special on cyc |
| Chorus enters the stage | |
| p. 21 Linus walks off stage right | Blackout |
| p. 21 short pause | All zones on full |
| p. 22 "Yes, your majesty." Slight Pause | Blackout |
| p. 23 Short pause | All downstage zones on full |
| p. 23 Charlie Brown and Snoopy exit stage right | All zones off except downstage center zone on full |
| p. 23 Sally skips offstage left | Blackout |
| p. 27 Activity settles on stage after the scene change | All zones on full |
| p. 29 Charlie Brown exists stage right | Blackout |
| p. 29 Activity settles on stage after the scene change | Downstage center zone on full |
| p. 29 "Don't tell me my life isn't a Shakespearean tragedy..." | Downstage center zone off, downstage right zone on full |
| p. 29 "It's hard to believe he was once a human being." Slight pause | Downstage right zone off, center stage left zone on full |
| p. 29 "Life is just too short not to live it up a little." | Blackout |
| p. 29 Short pause | All zones on full |
| p. 31 Snoopy and Woodstock enter stage right | Add green special on full on cyc |
| p. 34 "Beethoven Day" song ends, slight pause | Blackout for intermission |
| After curtains close | Curtain warmer on full |
| As curtains open | Center stage zone on 80%, red and green specials on sliders fade in and out sporadically on cyc to represent gunshots and bombs. |
| p. 42 "Curse the evil that causes all of this unhappiness!" | Stop red and green specials |

Table 1, *continued*

| | Blackout |
|--|---|
| p. 42 "Someday, someday I'll get you, Red Baron!" | |
| p. 42 Activity settles on stage after the scene change | All zones on full |
| p. 45 "And that's my new philosophy!" | Blackout |
| p. 45 Activity settles on stage after the scene change | All zones on full |
| p. 47 "Dear Pen Pal..." | Downstage left zone on full, all other zones on 60% |
| p. 48 "Huddle up" | All zones on full |
| p. 49 "I shouldered my bat and I swung..." | Downstage left zone on full, all other zones on 60% |
| Collective groan | |
| p. 49 "Your friend, Charlie Brown." | Blackout |
| p. 50 Activity settles on stage after the scene change | All zones on full |
| p. 54 "Every now and then I say the right thing." Slight pause | Blackout |
| p. 54 Activity settles on stage after the scene change | All zones on full |
| p. 58 Snoopy exits | Blackout |
| p. 58 Activity settles on stage after the scene change | All stage left zones and center stage zone on full |
| p. 59 Sally stomps off stage | All zones on full |
| p. 61 Lucy bows | Blackout |
| p. 61 All stage left zones and center stage zone on full | Center stage zone at full, all other zones at 80%, red special fade in on cyc |
| p. 63 "Now wait a minute, Snoopy." | All zones on full |
| p. 63 So what's wrong with making mealtime a joyous occasion?" | Center stage zone at full, all other zones at 80%, red special fade in on cyc |
| p. 63 "Suppertime" Song ends, slight pause | Blackout |
| p. 64 Activity settles on stage after the scene change | Downstage right and downstage center zones on 80%, blue special fade in on at 60% |
| p. 64 "I'm going over here to get a closer look." | Blackout |
| Short pause | Center stage left zone on 80% |
| p. 64 "In my opinion, that's exactly what it needed." | Center stage left zone off, center stage zone on full |
| p. 65 "Happiness is finding a pencil" | Add center stage left zone on full |
| p. 65 "Pizza with sausage" | Add downstage right zone on full |
| p. 65 "Happiness is being along ev'ry now and then." | All zones on full |

Table 1, *continued*

| | |
|--|--|
| p. 66 “For happiness is anyone and anything at all / That’s loved by you” | Center stage zone at full, all other zones at 50% |
| p. 66 Charlie Brown and Lucy exit stage left | Blackout |
| When bow music starts | All zones on full |
| After curtains close | Curtain warmer on full until house is clear |

Sound

Besides the use of the six wireless microphones mentioned above, the sound was minimal for this production. Usually, a musical at Sky Vista would have many sound cues due to the performance CD; however, due to the royalties contract through Tams-Witmark, the music of *You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown* must be performed live. To meet this requirement, an extremely talented local high school student was hired to play live piano for the show.

A few sound effects were used to help create setting, such as a school bell ring for “Before Lunch Hour” and a cheering sound effect for “The Baseball Game.” Similar to the light effects, many of the sound effects were used to add to the comedy of the show. An indistinct cartoon voice sound effect was used to mimic the classic *Peanuts* teacher’s voice featured in the television specials. This voice sound was used during Sally Brown’s “Coathanger” [sic] monologue in which she is relentlessly complaining about a low grade on a coat hanger sculpture she made. The teacher’s unintelligible voice pacifies her complaints, thus making the audience assume her wit got her out of yet another mess.

Table 2
Sound Cues

| Cue | Sound Action |
|--|---|
| p. 7 “How can anything go wrong on a day like this?” | Track 1: Play Alarm Clock Ring |
| p. 13 “I wonder why she never looks at me.” | Track 2: Play School Bell Ring |
| p. 23 “ Should they not share my C?” | Track 3: Play Cartoon Voice Muttering |
| p. 42 Start of Act II- Curtains open | Track 4: Rapid Fire- War Sound Effects |
| p. 42 “Someday, someday I’ll get you, Red Baron!” | Fade out Track 4 |
| p. 45 Lights up on “The Baseball Game” | Track 5: Crowd Cheering at a Minor League Baseball Game |
| p. 45 “All right, gang” | Fade out Track 5 |

The Set

Besides the previously mentioned concerns about the lighting and sound limitations, other concerns surrounding the set pieces soon emerged. With the themes of compassion, friendship, and overcoming obstacles as the goal, this director also wanted to mirror the Sunday morning comic that gave this musical its origin. Soon, brainstorming began about how to best emulate the art of the comic strip. Usually, backdrops are rented to create a setting that is economical for the drama budget that clarifies the world of the play is relied upon. However, after researching countless backdrops, none seemed to capture the true design imagined. Instead, previous built flats were reimagined to rival the classic *Peanuts* comic. Many images of Charles Schulz’s artwork were used to create the bright blue skies, fluffy white clouds, and forest green foliage of Charlie Brown’s world. The final touch to the set design was framing everything in a dark black outline to mimic Charles Schulz’ hand-drawn artistic style. The design was specific and ended up creating a comic effect when the four flats were spaced apart to delineate a passage of time such as the Sunday morning comic’s frames (see fig. 9).



Fig. 9. Comic strip-style flats. Photo by Miller.

Next, Snoopy's red doghouse was a specific challenge. Safety was the number one priority because the actress playing Snoopy had to climb on top of the doghouse to dance, sing, and fight off rival airstrikes. The doghouse also needed to be on wheels so it could move off stage, to create a larger space for the large group numbers such as "Beethoven Day" and "The Baseball Game." The doghouse also had to be large enough for a human to fit inside. This director decided to have a custom doghouse built. Then it was painted red, outlined in black to carry on the design, and, finally, wheels were added with locks for mobility with safety. The final project looked so authentic, this director got offers from audience members to buy it for nostalgia purposes (see fig. 10).



Fig. 10. Snoopy's doghouse. Photo by Miller.

To save money, as previously mentioned, many formerly used set pieces were reimagined. For example, a couple of two-dimensional trees, from a previous production of William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, were already the perfect color and with the added black lines they were comic strip ready in no time (see fig. 10). Also, papier-mâché, wood, and chicken wire tree stumps, from the 2011 production of *Into the Woods*, created a perfect pitcher's mound for Charlie Brown during "The Baseball Game" (see fig. 11). Stock benches, that were used for a 2013 production of *Seussical, Jr.*, were already the perfect bright colors of pink and yellow, so a few strokes of touch-up paint they were ready for the stage. These benches were used for "The Baseball Game" and "Before Lunch Hour."



Fig.11. “The Baseball Game” pitcher’s mound. Photo by Miller.

Finally, Lucy’s “psychiatric help” stand was another previously built flat, repainted purple. This flat was used for the “The Doctor Is In” scene (see fig. 12). All of the flats had wheels fixed on them so they could move easily, but the “The Doctor Is In” flat was the only one that had to move on and off stage. Painting the set took the most effort and time, but with a large tech crew of dedicated future artists, the set came together quickly without eating up much of the budget money.



Fig. 12. “The Doctor Is In” flat. Photo by Miller.

Costumes and Makeup

Much like the set design, the costumes were pulled straight from the comic strip. There are variations of colors for each character's costume in the comic strip, but the overall style was simple to copy. This director wanted the costumes to make the characters as recognizable as possible so that the audience would have scaffolding for the characters from the start. For example, even though Charlie Brown is seen wearing other colors of the same shirt in many editions of the comic strips and television specials, audiences are expecting to see his trademark yellow shirt with the singular brown chevron stripe. Sally Brown's dress was expertly made by a mother of one of the cast members, and was bright pink with white polka dots. The same costumer made Lucy's dress. She was dressed in a blue dress with a black collar. Linus' and Schroeder's shirts are very similar in the fact that they both have bold stripes. Linus' shirt ended up being red with white stripes and Schroeder's shirt was purple with black stripes. These colors were chosen because of the research from the comic strip, but also because the five main characters were now all in different and bold colors. Although the costumes were handmade by costuming moms, the costume crew, made up of students ages eleven to fourteen, was able to paint the lines and dots on the clothes. This director did not feel the need to demand perfection of those lines and dots, because the characters' clothes always appear hand drawn with a touch of flaw.

Some of the chorus members were chosen to look like a specific character from the *Peanuts* stories. These actors represented classic characters such as Peppermint Patty, Franklin, Frieda, and Pig-Pen. The other chorus members were asked to bring in brightly

colored shirts and dark colored pants or skirts to blend in with the primary colors already costumed.

Woodstock and Snoopy's costumes were not as easy to as the other main characters'. It is difficult to make a human look like an animal, but the costume crew devised a plan to create these costumes out of everyday kid's clothes. Woodstock's entire outfit was made out of yellow basketball shorts, a yellow hoodie, and yellow tights. A simple Mohawk of yellow hair was sewed into the top of the hoodie to add an animal look. Snoopy's costume was made out of white sweatpants, a white long-sleeved shirt, two pieces of circular black felt for the black spots on the stomach and back, and a stuffed white tale sewn into the back of the pants. One of the costume moms created a hood with ears that snapped into place beneath our actress's chin. A piece of red felt was sewn onto the collar of the shirt to create the look of a dog collar.

One difficulty in costuming was to make middle school kids, who are growing tremendously each year, look like five year olds. This director decided to make the clothes modestly bigger in size than the actor's needed. This was to create the effect that the actors were smaller. This design concept ended up being difficult to keep consistent with our tight budget and large cast.



Fig. 13. *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* Cast costumes. Photo by Miller.

Neutral stage makeup was all that was required for these characters. Since the characters were so young, none of them needed their stage makeup to resemble real makeup on stage. A neutral makeup design was chosen with various matching foundations, blush, highlights, and shadows. The design also included extra highlights on cheeks, chin, and foreheads to create the healthiness of a child's immature skin that has not been affected by the elements or gravity.

Furthermore, all of the female actors were required to find a picture of their character to emulate their hairstyle at home. The males made an assembly line in the green room (the choir room) to get their hair gelled to the side by a parent volunteer. The actress playing Sally Brown had brown hair, so a short, blond curly wig was purchased so she would look more authentic to the comic strip character (see fig. 19).

Props

Although minimal, it was necessary for the small number of props, much like the costumes, to help define size proportions. Props were made to be much larger in size than

usual to keep consistent with the design and to help the middle school kids look smaller. A large pencil was the initial find that inspired sizing for the rest of the props (see fig. 14). As with the set, many props were reused from previous Sky Vista productions. A small piano was purchased for the Cat in the Hat during the 2013 production of *Seussical, Jr.* This piano was perfect for Schroeder's character to bring on and off stage (see fig. 15).



Fig. 14. Large pencil prop. Photo by Miller.



Fig. 15. Schroeder's Piano. Photo by Miller.

Other props, created by the props crew, included Woodstock puppets used to torment Snoopy during “Snoopy” (see fig. 16) and Sally Brown’s coat hanger sculpture fashioned, to purposely look ugly, out of multiple coat hangers (see fig. 17). Finally, large amounts of colorful fleece fabric was purchased to create not only Linus’ classic blue blanket, but to cut twenty other blankets for the cast and part of the chorus to dance with in Linus’ dream-like song “My Blanket and Me” (see fig. 18). The rest of the props included Snoopy’s yellow and red dog bowls, Charlie Brown’s basketball (see fig. 19), Sally Brown’s jump rope, and bats and gloves for “The Baseball Game.”



Fig. 16. Woodstock puppets. Photo by Miller.



Fig. 17. Sally Brown’s coat hanger sculpture. Photo by Miller.



Fig. 18. “My Blanket and Me” blankets. Photo by Miller.



Fig. 19. Charlie Brown’s Basketball, Sally Brown’s jump rope. Photo by Miller.

Auditions

Auditions for musicals at Sky Vista are always conducted in the same format. Students are given a short sample of the script to memorize and perform with a partner on their audition day. They are also given sixteen bars of an all-cast song to memorize and sing, with the same partner. Unfortunately, our drama program does not have an abundance of male performers to choose from, but the males who received the parts of Schroeder and Linus are dedicated choir students who also happen to be talented actors. These two boys were seventh grade students whom this director wanted to give this

opportunity to, not only because they earned it, but to inspire other seventh and sixth grade boys to participate. The male student who earned the role of Charlie Brown had been in every show since his sixth grade year. He was extremely dedicated and easy to direct in previous shows, thus was cast as this lead role based on talent and preceding merit.

The role of Lucy was given to an eighth grade girl who was the definition of dedication to the arts. She also had been in every show since her sixth grade year. Not only was she a model Sky Vista student, but she also mastered the “ugly” singing on pitch that is often impossible to find for the character of Lucy.

Sally Brown’s character was more difficult to cast. Sky Vista’s drama and choir departments have many talented singers. It came down to three female students at the callbacks for this lead role; all three of these students were seventh grade girls. It was decided that because of Kristin Chenoweth’s famous performance, audiences were expecting a powerhouse singer for this role. The part was finally given to the strongest singer of the three girls although her script audition was not as strong. By April, this seventh grade girl not only had the singing ability, but the comedic timing and acting ability as well. Many audience members said she “stole the show.”

Snoopy’s character was given to a new student at Sky Vista. Due to the lack of boys who sing in the department, this role was given to a strong female singer. Snoopy’s accomplice, Woodstock, was added to the roster of characters as a silent, Charlie Chaplin style sidekick for Snoopy. This role was given to a seventh grade male student who showed excellent physical comedy capabilities in his audition and callback.

Featured chorus roles were given to students who showed excellent promise in their auditions, but who did not win one of the six leading roles. These featured roles represented classic *Peanuts* characters: Franklin, Fredia, Peppermint Patty, Shermy, Violet Grey, Pig-Pen, Marcie, Rerun Van Pelt, and Eudora. The remaining chorus members were chosen based on talent and availability. With the cast finally complete, rehearsals began.

Rehearsal Journal

Week 1: December 16-20

With casting decisions made and Winter Break fast approaching, it was essential to schedule two read/sing throughs. With the cast list posted on Monday, we scheduled our first read/sing through on Tuesday for one hour after school in the choir room. However, time was a factor as we had important documents to hand out to our large cast including rehearsal schedules and cast contracts. Once the usual first rehearsal business concluded, we were able to read/sing through most of act one. Read throughs are vital to the rehearsal process so that the entire cast knows exactly what the objectives of the plot are.

Next, the themes of compassion, friendship, and overcoming obstacles were discussed as goals for the production to encourage happiness in the surrounding hurting community. Students were given the opportunity to share their feelings about the movie theater shooting that happened not far from our school. Many students expressed fear, but also hope that our production could inspire optimism.

Thursday was our final rehearsal before break, so we decided to finish our read through, which we did. Students were told to use this break to look up the *Peanuts* comic

strips or television specials featuring their characters. This was especially important for the supporting cast members who were cast as specific characters because those characters, although less familiar than Charlie Brown and his gang, would be remembered by the audience who read the Sunday morning comic weekly.

Week 2-5: January 6-31

After a long rehearsal process for the fall production, this director and the choir director decided it was best to start rehearsals for *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* with singing rehearsals for solo and group songs. The choir director took the reins and scheduled rehearsals with each one of our six leads to practice their solo and group songs, then scheduled the entire cast to learn the large group numbers such as "Beethoven Day" and "Happiness." Rehearsals ran for one hour, after school in the choir room, on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and sometimes Fridays. There were no rehearsals on Wednesday afternoons due to weekly professional development meetings for teachers. Also, rehearsals can only run for one hour because Sky Vista's late bus takes students home from after school activities at 4PM. These singing rehearsals made it easier to do the subsequent blocking rehearsals because the actors could sing along with their songs when they were moving around on stage for the first time.

Week 6: February 3-7

As February began, this director and the choir director came up with a game plan to utilize every second of our short daily rehearsal time. The six main characters, Charlie Brown, Sally, Lucy, Schroeder, Linus, and Snoopy, were required to come to every rehearsal to either block a scene or to rehearse a song. With the choir room attached to

the stage rehearsal space, it was easy to share these main characters between singing and blocking rehearsals. Each day this week was scheduled to block three to four pages.

All rehearsals began with the eighth graders leading the rest of the cast in warm-ups; these warm-ups were designed as a ritual for classes and rehearsals. Each year the eighth graders automatically assume this leadership role, which helps the cast get focused on our rehearsal ahead. The sequence for the warm-up is as follows:

1. The warm-ups begin with the actors spelling out the alphabet with each foot.
2. The “power stance” is a popular new addition this school year. This move is inspired by a lunge, but all actors are required to have their hands in fists in the air. This stance inspires strength and confidence and is a silly take on the classic lunge.

3. The actors circle their hips to loosen up their core.

4. The same circle motion is continued with arms to loosen up shoulder muscles.

The students often challenge each other to circle their arms opposite directions, which takes immense focus and coordination.

5. Next, “pet the puppy” is when all actors to stretch their right ear toward their right shoulder without tensing the shoulder. The left hand then stretches towards the floor, as if trying to pet a puppy, to create a light stretch on the left side of the neck. Then the actors switch their stretch to pinpoint both sides of the neck. The actors continue to stretch the neck forward and backward with the commands “look at your shoes” and “look at the sky.”

6. The actors then give two thumbs up and bring them together so that their knuckles are touching. They then massage their tongues underneath their jaws gently with their thumbs.
7. The next exercise is called “Lion Face, Prune Face,” which many introverted students absolutely loath because it forces them to make a silly face, which they spend all day trying to do the opposite. On the other hand, many of the avid theatre students love this facial exercise. The actors are required to open their mouths and eyes as big as they can for “Lion Face.” “Prune Face” is the exact opposite with the actors attempting to make their faces as small as they can. The actors’ bodies are also required to get as big or as small as they can for the corresponding command.
8. Now that their bodies are warmed up, vocal warm-ups began. Specific characters are used to help these student-actors recognize the sounds each resonator makes. The first exercise focuses on the stomach resonator in which the students emulate a sumo wrestler getting ready for a fight as they deeply and repeatedly say “ho.” The next resonator is in the chest, and the actors are told to act like a prince or princess by saying “ha,” using their chest voices, and slowly waving to their adoring subjects. The third resonator is the nasal resonator, so the actors must slump over and say “he” as if they were a menacing, evil elf. The final resonator is the top of the head and students are instructed to say “ho,” using their head voices, as if they were a singing diva at the top of their vocal range. To start, the actors touch the top of their heads and, as the sound drops, their fingers come off

the top of their heads and aim down towards the floor. The goal is to feel the vibrations in each resonator.

9. The final warm-up exercise is to focus on the articulators. The actors say the following tongue twisters for this exercise:

a. “The tip of the tongue, the roof of the mouth, the lips, and the teeth”—

This exercise also helps them know what the articulators are.

b. “Red leather, yellow leather”

c. “Blue bugs, black blood”

d. “Irish wristwatch”

e. “You know you need unique New York”

f. “Clearasil deep clean cream cleanser”

g. Sometimes volunteers are asked to lead the actors in other tongue twister they know

h. Once rehearsals have progressed, difficult lines from the show are incorporated

This warm-up sequence is specific because it prepares the actors from the ground up. The voice is also the last thing warmed up so that the actors are focused on clarity and projection. Warm-ups, on average, take about five to ten minutes at the beginning of rehearsal. After warm-ups, students are instructed to get their scripts and pencils and to take a seat for announcements.

On Monday, students were told to think of two descriptive words that would represent their “polar attitudes” which Francis Hodge proposes in his play directing analysis. The first descriptive word they chose represented their character’s emotional

state at the beginning of the play and the second word represented the character's ending emotional state. The director and cast talked in depth about how to show that change throughout the action on stage in subsequent rehearsals.

Furthermore, since Monday was the first blocking rehearsal, the students were told about the impending plans for the set so that they could imagine their surrounding. Then, the first scene of the show was blocked including stage movement, signing, and choreography for the opening number. At the end of rehearsal Monday, the actors were given a glossary (see *Glossary* above) of the advanced terms these characters used. By the end of the week, pages five through seventeen were completely blocked including the Quick Changes scenes and the songs "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown" and "Snoopy."

Week 7: February 10-14

Blocking and choreography continued throughout this week. Having the actors discover their characters is often a difficult task, until they know where they are moving on the stage. Also, the Quick Changes scenes were becoming a difficult task to direct. Moving the main characters and the chorus members on and off of stage with our tiny wing space and helping the actors find their characters' motivation for entering and exiting, all while holding the comedic timing intact has been more challenging than this director imagined.

Another challenging task presented itself on Tuesday while choreographing the blanket dance within the song "My Blanket and Me." The choreography included the characters' swinging their blankets in the air and off to the side, which collided with the hanging microphones and various actors' faces. Some actors volunteered to not

participate in this dance to create space for the choreography. By the end of this week, another ten pages were blocked including the “The Doctor Is In” scene/song between Lucy and Charlie Brown.

Week 8: February 17-21

Due to Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, and the Cherry Creek School District’s corresponding end of first semester, there was no school on Monday or Tuesday of this week. Rehearsals commenced again on Thursday with a run through of the pages that were blocked the previous week. This semester, three stage managers were chosen to help write down blocking notes, which greatly helped during this run through when some of the actors had missed writing down where they were to move.

Friday’s rehearsal included blocking and choreographing act one’s final number “Beethoven Day.” Thanks to Tams-Witmark, and according to the royalty contract, the rest of the scenes in act one were cut so that the act could end with this catchy number. This rehearsal was high energy and one of the most fun rehearsals so far. All of the actors were focused and excited about featured roles added into the dance, which highlighted specific actors’ talents. For example, there are many talented dancers cast and they were given roles to choreograph their own movement across the stage during the chorus. Another student, playing the added character Franklin, was incredible at backflips, which he showcased in the last measure of the song. Everyone left feeling excited about next week’s rehearsals.

Week 9: February 24-28

Blocking for act two began on Monday of this week. After warm-ups, “Beethoven Day” was rehearsed to promote the same high-energy feeling felt during Friday’s

rehearsal. Next, Snoopy's monologue opens the act, but the actress playing Snoopy missed today's rehearsal. She has also been late to many rehearsals, which warranted a conversation between herself and this director. Middle school students often are not aware of the commitment it takes to be a part of a show. Often times, students are kicked out of the show due to their lack of commitment to rehearsals.

Friday marked the first rehearsal day for tech crew. Each crew met with their crew lead and discussed the projects for March. Tech crew met each Friday from this point on. Their meetings began meeting every rehearsal day starting in April. The tech crew students are the unsung heroes of the program. They are incredibly creative, motivated, and dedicated to Sky Vista drama.

By the end of this week we had blocked through page fifty-six including "The Baseball Game," which took all of rehearsal Tuesday and Thursday. There are so many moving parts to this scene/song. Many of the chorus members were only told were to stand for now, so that the blocking of the main characters moving around the bases could be set. After a few more run throughs of this scene, more character choices were given to the chorus members, which made them more than just a backdrop for the scene.

Week 10: March 3-7

With Thursday and Friday off for parent/teacher conferences, Monday and Tuesday's rehearsals were essential to finishing blocking the second act. After blocking "The Baseball Game," these final scenes were a piece of cake.

With the impending memorization due date, Tuesday's rehearsal was filled with questions about specific words and allusions made within the dialogue. The *Peanuts* characters are known for their grandiloquent vocabulary and knowledge of advanced

themes, but this director's student-actors are not, even with a glossary provided. After conversations about specific terminology and references, the show became richer because the actors now had the scaffolding to play the sometimes-presumptuous characters. This new knowledge of advanced facts only made the moments of real childlike problems, such as Lucy's obsession about her stolen pencil during the "Glee Club Rehearsal" scene, more hilarious. At the end of rehearsal on Tuesday, the cast and directors cheered because blocking rehearsals were complete.

Week 12: March 10-14

This week's focus was on running all of the group choreography. As the choir director ran rehearsals, this director filmed the dances so that the actors could watch them later on our school's private YouTube channel. After Monday's rehearsal, many students were disappointed in themselves because of how little of the choreography they remembered from previous rehearsals. This director and the choir director offered up our classrooms for rehearsals before school, after school, and during lunch to make sure everyone was caught up. Many students took advantage of this extra rehearsal time and by the end of the week the dances seemed to be coming together.

Week 13: March 17-21

Monday was the memorization deadline for all songs and lines. No scripts were allowed on stage and a stage manager was tasked with staying on book in case an actor called for a line. In past productions, this rehearsal is notoriously a headache because the actors realize how drastically unprepared they are. However, Monday's rehearsal was a huge success. Lines were called for only once or twice as we ran through most of act one. On Tuesday, we ran through almost all of act two. After rehearsal I praised the cast for

their efforts, and a female cast member pointed out that the play was so catchy and familiar that it seemed like it was easier for her to know her lines and blocking.

Originally, Thursday's rehearsal was scheduled to run through act one again, which was impossible because the rest of act two took up the entire hour. Friday's rehearsal had to be refocused since running the show was taking longer than previously anticipated. It was decided to start with act one from the beginning again, because it had been the longest since the first time those scenes were blocked.

Week 14: March 24-27

The goals this week were simple: to run through the entire show and conduct a character rehearsal before spring break next week. After Monday and Tuesday, the first goal was accomplished. The entire show ran a little under two hours, which would require some attention after spring break, but finishing a full run, that had been scheduled as such, felt great.

Thursday's rehearsal was dedicated to making specific character choices. During this character rehearsal, the Laban Movement Analysis was utilized to help students find their characters objectives through movement:

Laban breaks down the way we move using three different areas of analysis: space, weight and time. Space can be either direct or indirect. Weight can be strong or light. Time can be sudden or sustained. When you put these all together, you end up with eight efforts that classify styles of movement, as well as something of the personality of the person making that movement. (Hopkin)

Students practiced the eight efforts by floating, gliding, flicking, dabbing, wringing, pushing, slashing, and punching in order to find their character's specific movements and frozen tableaux positions utilized throughout the production to depict the frozen positions the comic characters assumed. Due to the familiarity of the characters, movement was an

extremely important acting method to explore. The young age of the characters also played into the development of movement for the actors, because children move more freely than the teenagers who were cast. Specific characteristics and character choices were also made based on the stereotypes of the characters from various YouTube shorts of the original animated productions of *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*.

Students were also instructed to fabricate a secret that only their character knows and to keep that secret from their fellow cast mates until the end of the final performance. To make sure the actors are actually thinking of a secret, they are instructed to write down their secret and turn it into this director. This exercise has become a tradition within the drama department as was inspired by Michael Shurtleff's Guideposts in his book *Audition*. Guidepost twelve is "Mystery and Secret." Shurtleff suggests that "the most fascinating acting always has a quality of mystery to us" (131) and that "no matter how we explain ourselves to someone else, no matter how open we are, there is always still something inexplicable, something hidden and unknown in us, too" (131-132). The addition of "Mystery and Secret" to this part of the rehearsal process always yields positive results in characterization and performance.

Week 15: April 7-12

Returning from a weeklong break is always stressful because a director never knows for sure how much work the actors put into their characters, lines, or songs while not at rehearsal. This week was dedicated to running the entire show as many times as possible to incorporate the characterization discovered on the Thursday before break and to get the show's runtime down to less than an hour and a half.

Monday and Tuesday's rehearsals were difficult because so many cast members were missing from prolonged family vacations that started over break. By Thursday the entire cast was back, and the run throughs started to look like a full show. Monday was also the first rehearsal with the high school pianist. Thankfully, this pianist was extremely talented and well rehearsed. The actors did a great job of adjusting to his playing versus the choir teacher's.

This week was also a very long week because of the Saturday rehearsal scheduled for April 12. The rehearsal runs from noon to four in the afternoon so that all of the technical elements can come together. The set change assignments were finally given to the run crew. Difficulties arose around bringing on and off the choir risers for the "Glee Club Rehearsal" scene. Sky Vista has such a small backstage area that getting the risers on and off stage took some maneuvering. After practicing the scene change a couple of times, it seemed to be running smoother.

Furthermore, the run crew had trouble with a handmade cardboard school bus that would not stay attached together. No matter what the crew did to try to fix the bus it was just too flimsy and unreliable. After numerous attempts to make the bus work, it was thrown out and frame for a car that was made for a previous show was brought out of storage, painted yellow, and became the new school bus.

Running the show twice was planned on this Saturday rehearsal, but that did not end up happening. Through adding in lights, sound, costumes and props, the four hours flew by too quickly.

Week 16: April 14-18

This week began tech week. Rehearsals were scheduled from three to five o'clock each day after school. The two-hour rehearsals provided ample time to run the show in full dress rehearsal mode. Monday was the first day to practice with stage makeup. The stage makeup crew was there to help, but the actors did a great job of being self-sufficient with the neutral stage makeup design for each character. By Friday, this director was able to give specific notes about character choices since the blocking, singing, and dancing were sound.

Week 17: April 21-25

This week was show week, and the process was going rather quickly. Monday and Tuesday's rehearsals were also two hours and began right after school. Run throughs on these days went smoothly in full costume and makeup.

Due to the intensity of the afternoon natural light in our "cafetorium," the Wednesday rehearsal before the show is always scheduled as a night rehearsal so that the light design can be fully realized and tweaked in the actual lighting that will affect the show. Wednesday's rehearsal also has a no stopping rule so that an accurate final runtime can be achieved. At the end of Wednesday's rehearsal, no notes are given and no matter how successful the rehearsal went, the vibe is positive and celebratory. Thankfully, the final rehearsal was a success and the show was ready for an audience.

The Thursday school day was full of buzz from the students' involved promoting the show to everyone and anyone who would listen. In the afternoon, many teachers brought their students down for a traditional preview show. Our first preview show presented "The Baseball Game" scene. The sound was not turned up loud enough for the

actors to hear the music. They quickly got off tempo and struggled the rest of the scene. With the first preview show behind us and another one on the way, a quick rehearsal was held along with a check of the sound system. It turns out that the volume issue was human error from one of the sound crewmembers not adjusting the sound level for a now full “cafetorium.” The second preview show consisted of “The Doctor Is In” and “Beethoven Day” and was a huge success. All elements came together perfectly and the response was positive from the school.

Finally, it was the show night. All actors and crew began showing up at 5:30PM, and preparations for the show was underway. At 6:30PM we began our classic warm-ups and got into places for the start of the show by 7:00PM. As the curtain opened and the show began, a calm surrounded this director. The show was now the actors’ and technicians’. Live theatre is incredibly scary, and for a director, watching in the wings inspires the utmost helpless feelings. Thankfully, all of the kinks were worked out early in the day and the show went well. After the show, many compliments were given as the actors and technicians were ushered out the door so they could get some sleep for our school day and final performance on Friday.

Traditionally, after warm-ups on the night of the final performance, the eighth graders give their final words because this show is their final show at Sky Vista. Many of these students spoke about how this theatre program gave them confidence and a family of friends they would never forget. Many tears are shared and legacies are left during this final circle each year.

Finally, it was time to touch up stage makeup and get into places for the final show. The show went flawlessly and this director felt immense pride for what these middle school kids had accomplished. Their talent and maturity is far beyond their years.

Week 18: April 28

At the final rehearsal the entire cast and crew are called to tear down the set, put away props, and clean and box up costumes. The final strike rehearsal is a great way for the cast and crew to relive the glory of the production and to symbolically finalize the show.



Fig. 22. Author, Clark Gesner. *Clark Gesner*. *Last.fm*. Last.fm, 12 March 2010. Web. 8 Nov. 2012. <<http://www.last.fm/music/Clark+Gesner>>.



Fig. 23. People Used as Models for Characters #1. Hancock, Scott. *'Supertime' from 'You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown.'* Mytvmoments.com, n.d. Web. 8 Nov. 2012. <<http://www.mytvmoments.com>>.



Fig. 24. Kristen Chenoweth (Sally) and Roger Bart (Snoopy). *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*. Tams-Witmark.com. Tams-Witmark Music Library, 2000. Web. 8 Nov. 2012. <<http://www.tams-witmark.com>>.



Fig. 25. People Used as Models for the Characters: Charlie Brown, Sally, Linus, Snoopy, Lucy, and Schroeder. Cmsmith. *Matthew Finn charms as Charlie Brown*. *The Boston Theatre Review*. World Press, 2009. Web. 8 Nov. 2012. <<http://www.bostontheatrereview.com>>.



Fig. 26. Examples of Setting #1. *Front 3/4 view of a typical North American school bus.* Wikipedia. Wikipedia Foundation, 14 Mar. 2012. Web. 8 Nov. 2012. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/School_bus>.

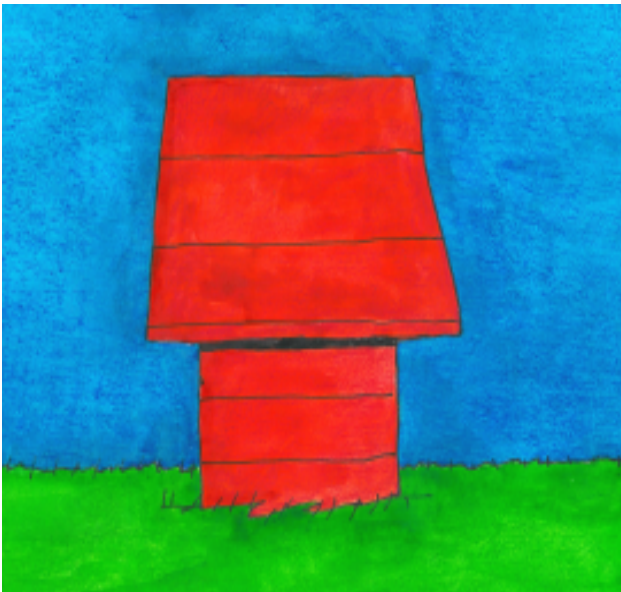


Fig. 27. Examples of Setting #2. *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown Poster.* The Summer Place Inc. Summer Theatre Place, 2012. Web. 8 Nov. 2012. <www.summerplacetheatre.com>.



Fig. 28. Examples of Setting #3. Earley, Laura. *Baseball diamond in Lions Park*. *FunCityFinder.com*. msWoods Real Estate, 19 Mar. 2014. Web. 3 May 2014. <<http://fun-cityfinder.com>>.



Fig. 29. Examples of Setting #4. *You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown*. *Hope Summer Repertory Theatre*. Hope College, 2000. Web. 8 Nov. 2012. <<http://www.hope.edu/hsrt/>>.



Fig. 30. Costumes and Objects from the Period #1. *Charlie-Brown*. Springville Center for the Arts. Springville Center for the Arts, 2012. Web. 8 Nov. 2012. <<http://www.springvillearts.org>>.



Fig. 31. Costumes and Objects from the Period #2. *Blue Double-Layer Organic Receiving Blanket*. Bambino Land. Bambino Land, n.d. Web. 8 Nov. 2012. <<http://bambinoland.com>>.



Fig. 32. Costumes and Objects from the Period #3. *AZ Piano News*. Google Blogger, 2012. Web. 8 Nov. 2012 <<http://www.azpianonews.blogspot.com>>.



Fig. 33. Design Inspirations #1. Von Tiedemann, Cylla. *Kevin Yee and Amy Wallis as Linus and Sally*. *Robyn's Reviews*. Google Blogger, 2012. Web. 8 Nov. 2012. <<http://www.reviewsbyrobyn.blogspot.com>>.



Fig. 34. Design Inspirations #2. Bedell, Mark. Charlie Brown Set. *The Academy of Stage Combat*. The Academy of Staged Combat, 2010. Web. 8 Nov. 2012. <<http://maineacademyofstagedcombat.org>>.



Fig. 35. Design Inspirations #3. Fisher, Shawn. Set design for *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* at the Old Lyric Repertory Company. *Behance.net*. Behance, 2012. Web. 8 Nov. 2012. <<http://www.behance.net/gallery/Youre-a-Good-Man-Charlie-Brown/793565>>.

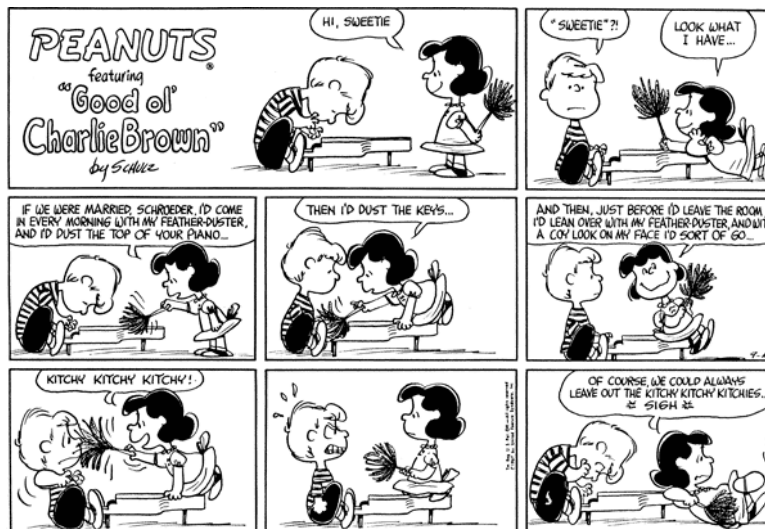


Fig. 36. Inspiring Art from 1967. Schulz, Charles M. *Peanuts featuring 'Good Ol' Charlie Brown.'* GoComics.com. Universal Uclick, 1976. Web. 8 Nov. 2012. <www.go-comics.com/peanuts/1967/09/10/>.

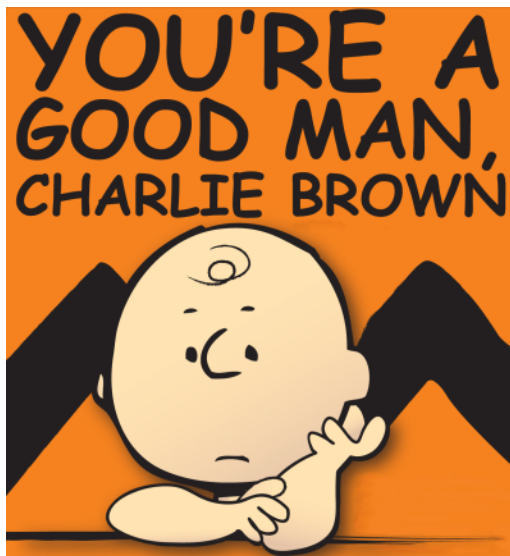


Fig. 37. Contemporary Production Example #1. *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* Poster. The Barn Players Theatre. The Barn Players Community Theatre, 2008. Web. 8 Nov. 2012. <[http:// www.thebarnplayers.org](http://www.thebarnplayers.org)>.

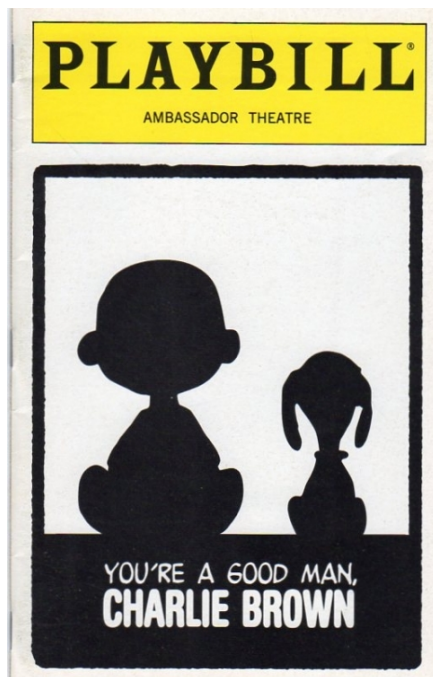


Fig. 38. Contemporary Production Example #2. *Playbill Cover for 'You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown' at Ambassador Theatre. Playbill Vault. Playbill, 4 Feb. 1999. Web. 8 Nov. 2012. <<http://www.playbillvault.com/Show/Detail/Cover/976/628/Youre-a-Good-Man-Charlie-Brown>>.*



Fig. 39. Contemporary Production Example #3. *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown Poster. Snead State Theatre. Andante Music, 2012. Web. 8 Nov. 2012. <<http://www.snead.edu/theatre/>>.*

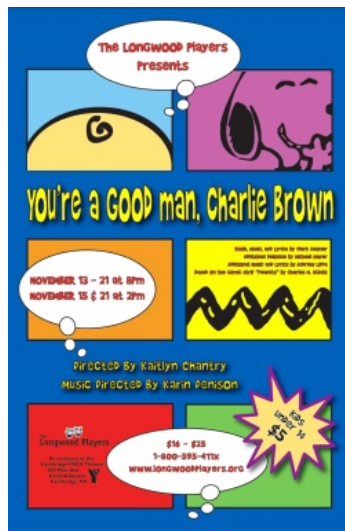


Fig. 40. Contemporary Production Example #4. *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* Poster. *The Boston Theatre Review*. World Press, 2009. Web. 8 Nov. 2012. <<http://www.bostontheatreview.com>>.

CHAPTER III

PROMPTBOOK

Given Circumstances

Environmental Facts

Geographical Location

The vignette-style musical, *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*, has a peculiar lack of specific location. Despite having various settings in Charlie Brown's own backyard and school, the geographical location lacks a precise state or country. According to the "Peanuts Wiki," sponsored by the site Wikia, the exact location of Charlie Brown's adventures is in dispute. Many fans assume original creator Charles Schulz meant for his characters to live where he grew up, near Minneapolis, Minnesota. This location would support the mentioning of snow within the song "Little Known Facts." Others argue evidences found within the *Peanuts* comic strip: "In the early 1960s, a character named 5 was introduced whose last name, 95472, was the zip code of Sebastopol, California (where Charles Schulz's office was located)" ("Peanuts Wiki"). Then again, "in a comic strip from February 15, 1957 it is stated they live in Hennepin County, which is in Minnesota" ("Peanuts Wiki"). The inability to pinpoint an exact location adds to the ability of audiences to connect with these characters. These characters are timeless and uncontainable.

Date: Year/Season/Time of Day

Much like the geographical location, the exact year of *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* remains difficult to pinpoint. The original version of the musical was first performed on Broadway in 1967, but there are no political, social, or specific references to that time period. When the revival of the musical premiered in 1999, updates, including the popular addition of "My New Philosophy" created a more modern and upbeat feel, but once again did not limit the musical to a time period. The characters seem to continue living eternally as five years old.

As for the season, Lucy Van Pelt makes a reference to bugs making the grass grow and trees with leaves in the song "Little Known Facts," thus alluding to spring or summer. Before this song, she plays yet another trick on Charlie Brown and mentions that it is April Fool's Day, which occurs annually on April first. Furthermore, many scenes take place within the character's elementary school including the songs "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown" in which the characters board a school bus and "Glee Club" in which the characters are practicing singing for an upcoming assembly. Finally, Charlie Brown and his friends participate in a competitive game of baseball during the song "Baseball Game." According to LittleLeague.org, a baseball organization providing programs for boys and girls ages four to eighteen, states that their season starts in March (in most states) and continues at least through June. Taking into consideration all of facts above, it is safe to say this musical takes place in the spring, while traditional school is still in session.

The time of day fluctuates due to the vignette-style scenes. The scenes seem to take place over one full day beginning with Charlie Brown realizing he is late for school

and ending with his recognition that “it hasn’t been such a bad day after all” before the final song “Happiness” (Gesner 64).

Economic Environment

Although all of the characters within *You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown* are around five years of age, they have an incredible grasp on adult worries. Assuming that all of the characters live in the same town, this director imagined that they all have similar socio-economical statuses. Other than this assumption, talk of money only exists in Lucy’s fantasies and bullying techniques. During the scene “Queen Lucy-Melodrama,” Lucy rants to her brother Linus about her dream of becoming a Queen with a “big palace with a big front lawn and [having] lots of beautiful dresses to wear” (21) Lucy also famously offers psychiatric help for only five cents. Finally, Lucy berates Schroeder about their future together by inquiring how much money pianists make. Schroeder’s answer classically puts an end to the money conversation: “Money? Who cares about money? This is art, you blockhead” (30)!

Political Environment

For these five-year olds, their parents, teachers, principal, and peer pressure rule their lives. They live unbothered by the troubles of politics besides Lucy’s claim that her inability to become Queen is “undemocratic” (22). Although a trivial issue, Lucy uses the word correctly in the sense that in America a democracy is defined as being governed by the people, although she forgets that queens belong to monarchies. This mistake adds to the comedy of the musical.

Social Environment

The eternal five-year olds have existed for over sixty years. Although they have touched the lives of a diverse group of people, they themselves seem devoid of socio-economic status. Often with kids, their social background is determined by their parents', but in the world of *Peanuts*, grown ups are only represented by the monotone vocal pattern "wa wa wa." The only social determinants the gang follows are those of social hierarchy. Lucy Van Pelt seems to be the leader of the group because of her demanding attitude and brute force; the rest of the gang falls in line.

Religious Environment

Charles Schulz determined the *Peanuts* character's religious environment due to his own religious affiliation. Schulz worked for a Catholic magazine after he served in World War II and declared having a "firm [belief] in Jesus Christ" (Taube). Although specific religions are never mentioned, Schroeder alludes to a belief in Christianity when he mentions the biblical quote from Matthew 4:4, "Man does not live by bread alone" in the song "My New Philosophy" (44). Lucy also mentions celebrating Christmas with a cooked "sparrow" in "Little Known Facts" (60). Besides these examples, religion is not deeply discussed within the musical.

Previous Action

1. Charlie Brown doubts his own purpose in life. This is indicated from the very beginning:

LINUS: I really don't think you have anything to worry about, Charlie Brown.

After all, science has shown that a person's character isn't really established until he's at least five years old.

CHARLIE BROWN: But I am five. I'm more than five (5).

2. Charlie Brown's friends doubt his abilities. This is also indicated from the very beginning. Sally, Charlie Brown's sister, states, "the only thing wrong with my big brother is. . . his stupidity, his clumsiness, his inferiority, and his lack of confidence" (5). Also, Schroeder points out, "did you know Charlie Brown has never pitched a winning baseball game, never been able to keep a kite in the air, never won a game of checkers and never successfully punted a football? Sometimes I marvel at his consistency" (6).
3. Charlie Brown has had a crush on The Little Red-Haired Girl for a long time and she hardly notices him:

CHARLIE BROWN: She's not looking at me. I wonder why she never looks at me (13).

4. Linus has had his security blanket for a long time, which is indicated by the word "habit" in the following lines:

LINUS: You give me back my blanket.

LUCY: No! I've got it and I'm going to keep it. This is just the start you need to help you break this disgusting habit (18).

5. Linus and Lucy have a grandfather, which is indicated by Linus' saying, "Today's my grandfather's birthday" (29). They also have a grandmother, which is indicated when Lucy is giving Charlie Brown a pep talk during a baseball game:

LUCY: All right, Charlie Brown, we are all behind you- sort of. I mean this kid can't pitch. He pitches like my grandmother, Charlie Brown (49).

6. Sally Brown does not get good grades in school. This is indicated by the “C” she received on her coat hanger sculpture and a “D” she got on “last week’s homework” (43) from her teacher Miss B during the song “My New Philosophy.”

7. The gang participated in a baseball season. This is indicated by Charlie Brown’s pep talk before their championship game:

CHARLIE BROWN: All right, gang. I want this game to be our biggest and best game of the season, and I want everyone out there playing with everything he’s got (45).

8. Charlie Brown has a Pen Pal, whom he writes to in “The Baseball Game” about the terrible loss his team suffered (47-49).

9. Schroeder has been holding choir rehearsals for an assembly, which is indicated by all the characters knowing the words to “Home on the Range” and by the following line:

SCHROEDER: If we don’t rehearse we can’t sing at the assembly tomorrow (55).

10. Lucy stole Linus’ crayons, so he stole her pencil:

LUCY: Gimme that pencil, you blockhead!

LINUS: No! Not until you give me back my crayons (55)!

11. Linus called Sally an “enigma” to Lucy behind Sally’s back:

SALLY: What did he call me?

LUCY: He said . . . He said you were . . . an enigma (57)!

12. Charlie Brown found The Little Red-Haired Girl’s pencil:

CHARLIE BROWN: I’m so happy. That little red-haired girl dropped her pencil. It has teeth marks all over it. She nibbles her pencil. She’s human! It hasn’t been such a bad day after all (64).

13. Sally plays the drums:

SALLY: Happiness is playin' the drum in your own school band (65).

Polar Attitudes

Charlie Brown

At the beginning of the musical, Charlie Brown is contemplative about his hopelessness. Even in the first scene, his friends outline his faults and he is almost late for the school bus. He remains pessimistic as he sits alone at lunch and admires his crush from afar. His nemesis Lucy constantly reminds him of his failures and bullies him into a tormented and defeated child.

At the end of the musical, Charlie Brown has found some optimism. This instantly happens when he finds a nibbled pencil from his crush, The Little Red-Haired Girl. Once he realizes she has nervous habits, like he does, his whole day turns around. He becomes hopeful for the future and content with the simple things that make him happy.

Lucy Van Pelt

Lucy begins this musical, as she does with all of the *Peanuts* comic strips, as confident and defiant. She is always on the lookout for an opportunity to make one of her friends look stupid. As the antagonist of the play, Lucy seems almost to live by the failures of her friends.

Making the biggest change, Lucy transforms almost completely by the end of the play. A crabbiness survey, which she conducts, opens her eyes to her aggressive behavior. She instantly becomes regretful of her attitude towards her friends. With some

sweet words from Linus, her little brother, about how much he loves her, Lucy changes from a grumpy bully to remorseful.

Sally Brown

At the beginning of the musical, Sally is pessimistic about everything from school to jump roping. She is in denial about her own faults and cannot accept responsibility for her own shortcomings in school and in relationships with her friends.

At the end of the musical, she continues to have confidence in herself, but in a more positive way. She discontinues her manipulations to get her way and seems happier in the simplistic joys of childhood. She abandons looking too deeply into complex adult themes such as defining her own philosophy. Sally finally finds and embraces her inner-child.

Snoopy

Snoopy begins the musical much like Sally Brown. He continually questions his mundane existence as a dog and obsesses over supertime. Snoopy is disappointed with the simplicity of a dog's life and is desperate for something more.

Supertime changes Snoopy's entire outlook on life. Once Charlie Brown feeds Snoopy, he changes back into a relieved and content dog.

Schroeder

Schroeder's personality at the beginning of the play is almost as obsessive as Linus' love for his blanket. Schroeder always strives for perfection and mediocrity is inexcusable. He is focused in his work as a pianist and frustrated by his friends' inability to focus.

By the end of the play Schroeder has (sort of) successfully led a Glee Club rehearsal, convinced his friends to support his idea to create a Beethoven Day, and helped Lucy see her crabby ways. He is relieved that another day has passed, yet anxious about the next day to come.

Linus

At the beginning of the musical, Linus is contemplative. Like Schroeder, Linus is burdened with a wealth of knowledge, but, being the youngest of the group, has a hard time getting his ideas taken seriously. His obsession with his blanket does not help his credibility.

Throughout the musical, Linus remains the most consistent of all of the characters. He has one instance of potential change when he challenges himself to leave his blanket and walk away. After he fails miserably at the task, he decides to be content the way he is. Linus' relationship with his sister Lucy does change immensely. He goes from being afraid of her to being her biggest supporter. Linus remains the most consistently hopeful and optimistic character throughout the musical.

Dialogue

Choice of Words

Schroeder

The *Peanuts* gang is famous for their illustrious vocabulary. All of the characters have a childlike innocence as they discuss concepts far beyond their years. The words used by these characters represents a college education, yet the comic strip and the musical imply they are barely out of kindergarten. Schroeder, for example, not only proves his accomplished musicians vocabulary through words such as “philharmonic,”

and “polyphonic,” but also displays an advanced intelligence with words such as “reverential” and “commercialized.” Although, he does sometimes contradict himself when he utilizes large words such as “adagio con brio,” which literally means slowly with vigor. Nevertheless, his vocabulary is very formal and is rarely compromised by his age. The other characters have various moments that remind us of their juvenile disposition, yet Schroeder seems void of youth.

Linus

Although Schroeder has an obvious mastery of English and musical language, Linus Van Pelt is by far the most intelligent five-year old in the play. Utilizing vocabulary that alludes to science, psychology, and history, thumb sucking, blanket-carrying Linus is the paradox of the group. Linus is definitely a rambler. Once he starts with a history lesson about a topic, the rest of the group seems to shut him out. With words such as “self-reliant,” “foolish,” “lineage,” and “enigma,” Linus is often met with confused looks from his peers.

Lucy Van Pelt

Linus’ sister Lucy has the same wit in her speeches, yet her vocabulary is used to invoke pain in her peers. With a mix of hubris and harassment, Lucy’s choice of words makes her the hilarious antagonist of the musical. “Solitary,” “undemocratic,” “correspondence,” and “superficial” exhibit her intelligence along with her demeaning nature. Lucy is also responsible for coining such terms as “Failure Face” and “blockhead,” which are used to torment Charlie Brown.

Sally Brown

Sally Brown also exhibits a demeaning vocabulary toward her friends. Within the first moments of the play, Sally describes her brother as “inferior,” “clumsy,” and “stupid.” Sally Brown’s language choices show a great intelligence, but also a great manipulation of her peers and adults alike. Sally famously talks her way out of a “C” on her coat hanger sculpture with words such as “transmit knowledge,” “creation,” “quality,” and “garments.” Sally, like her brother, questions the meaning of life. She calls jump roping “futile” and attempts to come up with her very own life “philosophy.”

Snoopy

Snoopy definitely portrays the life of a dog. While Snoopy waits for suppertime and for his owners to come home from school, he entertains himself with fantasies of flying in WWII and of becoming a wild animal. Of all the imaginative characters, Snoopy is the least practical with his visions. He describes himself as a “withering hollow shell of a dog” as he rambles on dramatically while he waits for his supper. Snoopy also uses imagery and alliteration to aid in his imaginative circumstances such as “brimming bowl” and “flowing flagon.”

Charlie Brown

It is obvious that Sally, Snoopy and Charlie Brown are a part of the same family. They all question life as they know it and use advanced vocabulary to do so. Charlie Brown contemplates his purpose on the planet through self-deprecating word choices such as “coward,” “stupid,” “moody,” and “blah.” Charlie Brown’s friends do not help his lack of self-confidence through their belittling descriptions of this title character such as “dull,” “inferior,” “failure,” and “hopeless.” Overall, Charlie Brown is the simplest of

all the characters. He does not speak of advanced allusions, historic happenings, or future dreams.

Choice of Phrases and Sentence Structures

Schroeder

Schroeder's phrases and sentence structures vary. When he is imparting knowledge upon his comrades he is verbose with long and complex thoughts that formally and intelligently express information. Contrarily, when Schroeder comes to his wits end with the incompetence of his friends, his sentences become choppy and declare his true feelings about their five-year old attention spans. This especially happens when they interrupt his piano playing or fail to understand his obsession with Beethoven.

Linus

Although determined the most intelligent of the group, Linus' thoughts often go unappreciated and unheard. His sentences are long and complex sounding as if he has a college degree. Linus, like Schroeder and the rest of the gang, has his moments of phrases that depict emotion, but Linus' lines are mainly information motivated. Often times, Linus has all the answers his friends need, but they are too impatient to hear him out.

Lucy

Lucy speaks often. This fact adds to her character trait of self-centeredness because she constantly wants everyone's attention at all times. In addition, Lucy likes to speak about advanced themes using big words, albeit sometimes they are used inaccurately: "Nobody should be kept from being queen if she wants to be one. It's undemocratic" (22). She also likes using clichés that are often directed at Charlie Brown as a form of insult: "Just like shooting fish in a barrel" (18). Her phrases and sentences

are far less advanced than Schroeder's and Linus', but while their speeches are used for positive purposes, Lucy's run-on and choppy sentences are often abstract, dream-like, and used for evil.

Sally Brown

Sally Brown is intelligent, but like Lucy, she sometimes uses her manipulative speech patterns for evil. Many of Sally's sentences end in a question, but her questions are mostly rhetorical. This is most apparent when she talks her way out of a "C" she received on a coat hanger sculpture she obviously threw together at the last minute. When her sentences and phrases are not a question they are short and sweet. This is evident within the song "My New Philosophy" as she cycles through inspired new life philosophies: "'Oh, yeah? That's what you think!' 'Why are you telling me?' 'No!' 'I can't stand it!'" (45). Finally, Sally has abstract moments as she contemplates mundane childhood activities: "I was jumping rope, everything was all right and suddenly it all seemed so futile" (15). Sally's phrases and sentence structures are as complex and varied as the character herself.

Snoopy

Snoopy, like Sally, also uses abstract phrases and sentence structures as he worries about the lack of excitement in his life. It is also not clear if the *Peanuts* gang can hear Snoopy's speeches or not. They never respond to his lines directly even when he is rolling around on the ground expressing the overdramatic possibility of starving to death without supper: "There will be nothing left but the dried carcass of the former friend who used to run and play so happily with [Charlie Brown]. Nothing left, but the bleached bones of . . ." (61). Overall, his sentences are well thought out and careful especially

when they allude to the past as in his “Red Baron” monologue at the beginning of Act II. His fantasies are amazingly descriptive and historically accurate for a domesticated animal.

Charlie Brown

Charlie Brown has the most affected phrases and sentences. His ideas are not advanced, but full of emotion and imagery. Like Linus and Schroeder, Charlie Brown’s thoughts are not often taken seriously or listened to. When Charlie Brown is talking to himself or his Pen Pal, his sentences are long and careful. Awkwardly, when he is around his boisterous friends his insecurities often get the best of his careful sentences, and they become much more choppy and simple just so he can get a word in.

Choice of Images

You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown has many images that mirror the *Peanuts* comic strip. The musical numbers “The Baseball Game,” “The Doctor Is In,” and “Schroeder,” just to name a few, create familiar images Sunday morning audiences of the comic can relate to and find endearing.

Additionally, the musical carries on the tradition of Charlie Brown’s obsession with “The Little Red-Headed Girl.” She never actually appeared within the popular comic strip, so this production also chose to keep her invisible. She is a symbol of Charlie Brown’s hope and insecurities.

Finally, the finale song “Happiness” uses the individual character’s idea of happiness as a metaphor to evoke childlike memories in audiences: “Happiness is / morning and evening, / Daytime and nighttime too. / For happiness is anyone and anything at all, / that’s loved by you” (65). This song is an appropriate ending to the

musical, because it shows the dream ending of all of the characters—to find happiness within themselves.

Choice of Peculiar Characteristics

Since their start in 1950, the *Peanuts* characters are responsible for coining the famous term “blockhead,” which was often used by Lucy to bully Charlie Brown. Additionally, the gang, also with the help of Charles Schulz, created the onomatopoeia of exasperation “Aarrgggha” although variations of the expression of vexation do exist. Finally, the most famous and commonly used *Peanuts* phrase is “good grief,” often used by Charlie Brown and his friends to express annoyance with a situation. All three of these famous terms are used within the musical.

The Sound of the Dialogue

The musical has a variety of sounds of dialogue. When the children’s characters are speaking maturely and with advanced word choice, their speech is frequently refined and smooth. It is in these moments audiences forget the characters are of primary school age. Their vocal work must match the verboseness of their speech so that the audience can hear and understand each idea.

Conversely, the characters continually have moments of childlike frustration that remind audiences they are actually juveniles. These moments are defined by the fragmented style of dialogue as they try to reason with one another in a youthful manner. Also, the characters, like a stereotypical child, are inquisitive. Repeated questions about the world around them create a need for a question-like tone. Many times the characters are also unsure of their own answers so even a statement of knowledge carries a question-like undertone.

Structures of Lines and Speeches

Throughout the musical, the characters are almost fighting to get a word in, even within the songs. However, all of the characters have moments when they get the spotlight for a monologue. For example, Sally rants and manipulates her friends and teachers bluntly, Lucy's speeches are self-fulfilling and forceful, Schroeder and Linus impart advanced knowledge on the audience and their friends, while Charlie Brown has moments where he is seemingly talking to himself during pauses in the action on stage. In these moments, Charlie Brown lets the audience into the psychology behind his depression while "writing" to an unseen Pen Pal. Charlie Brown's speeches wander from a recollection of another bad day to dreams about his crush, The Little Red-Haired Girl. Snoopy also has lines that go unheard. This director decided Snoopy's thoughts are just that, silent and personal. Snoopy's monologues are wondering about what the future holds and dreamlike about the past he never lived.

Dramatic Action*Units and Summary of Action*

1. Unit 1: "Failure Face" (pages 5 to 13)
 - a. Charlie Brown: To lament his insufficiencies.
 - b. Lucy: To awaken Charlie Brown to his failures.
 - c. Sally: To demean her brother.
 - d. Linus: To encourage Charlie Brown.
 - e. Schroeder: To point out the obvious.
 - f. Snoopy: To help Charlie Brown out the door.

2. Unit 2: “Never discuss marriage with a musician” (pages 13 to 14)
 - a. Lucy: To flirt.
 - b. Schroeder: To ignore the entire situation.
3. Unit 3: “Flash” (pages 14 to 18)
 - a. Charlie Brown: To surrender to Lucy.
 - b. Lucy: To embarrass Charlie Brown.
 - c. Sally: To overanalyze.
 - d. Linus: To teach.
 - e. Schroeder: To reminisce.
 - f. Snoopy: To come back down to earth.
4. Unit 4: “Playing with the past” (pages 18 to 21)
 - a. Charlie Brown: To support Linus.
 - b. Lucy: To force Linus to admit he has a problem.
 - c. Sally: To support Linus.
 - d. Linus: To convince Lucy his blanket habit is normal.
 - e. Schroeder: To support Linus.
5. Unit 5: “Queen Lucy” (pages 21 to 23)
 - a. Charlie Brown: To elude Snoopy.
 - b. Lucy: To justify her dreams.
 - c. Sally: To manipulate her teacher to raise her grade.
 - d. Linus: To crush Lucy’s dreams.
 - e. Snoopy: To convince Charlie Brown it is suppertime.

6. Unit 6: “That’ll be five cents, please” (pages 27 to 29)
 - a. Charlie Brown: To lament about his shortcomings.
 - b. Lucy: To convince Charlie Brown he’s unique.
 - c. Sally: To gain pity.
 - d. Linus: To impress his friends with his grandpa’s age.
 - e. Snoopy: To take a risk.
7. Unit 7: “This is art, you blockhead!!” (pages 30 to 34)
 - a. Charlie Brown: To offer a solution.
 - b. Lucy: To encourage Schroeder.
 - c. Sally: To make her ideas heard.
 - d. Linus: To teach.
 - e. Schroeder: To uphold his artistic integrity.
 - f. Snoopy: To spite Schroeder by over commercializing Beethoven’s birthday.
8. Unit 8: “Someday, someday I’ll get you, Red Baron!” (page 42)
 - a. Snoopy: To recreate a battle with a WWI flying ace.
9. Unit 9: “Clearly, some philosophies aren’t for all people” (pages 42 to 45)
 - a. Sally: To make excuses for her lackluster performance.
 - b. Schroeder: To shed light on a situation.
10. Unit 10: “Billion-to-one chance” (pages 45 to 49)
 - a. Charlie Brown: To boost the spirits his team.
 - b. Lucy: To reassure Charlie Brown’s confidence.
 - c. Sally: To doubt her brother’s abilities.

- d. Linus: To think outside the box.
- e. Schroeder: To insult the other team.
- f. Snoopy: To cheat.

11. Unit 11: “Know Thyself” (pages 50 to 54)

- a. Charlie Brown: To avoid Lucy’s questioning at all costs.
- b. Lucy: To question her friends.
- c. Sally: To threaten Lucy.
- d. Linus: To cheer up Lucy.
- e. Schroeder: To force Lucy to accept she’s a crabby person.
- f. Snoopy: To bully Lucy.

12. Unit 12: “Where seldom is heard a discouraging word” (pages 54 to 58)

- a. Charlie Brown: To insert himself into the situation.
- b. Lucy: To blackmail to get back her pencil.
- c. Sally: To gain knowledge through stealing.
- d. Linus: To blackmail to get back his crayons.
- e. Schroeder: To run a choir rehearsal.
- f. Snoopy: To encourage Schroeder.

13. Unit 13: “ Why is Charlie Brown banging his head against that tree?” (pages 58 to 61)

- a. Charlie Brown: To correct Lucy.
- b. Lucy: To teach Schroeder.
- c. Sally: To disgrace Snoopy.
- d. Linus: To learn from his sister.

- e. Snoopy: To annoy Sally.

14. Unit 14: “Suppertime” (pages 61 to 63)

- a. Charlie Brown: To redirect Snoopy.
- b. Snoopy: To honor suppertime with a song.

15. Unit 15: “Happiness is anyone and anything at all, that’s loved by you” (pages 64 to 67)

- a. Charlie Brown: To find a new reason to live.
- b. Lucy: To find her happiness.
- c. Sally: To find her happiness.
- d. Linus: To revel in the simple things.
- e. Schroeder: To find his happiness.
- f. Snoopy: To find her (Snoopy was played by a girl in this director’s version) happiness.

Characters

The following characters were chosen to highlight because they are the opposing characters in the musical.

Charlie Brown

1. Desire. At the beginning of the play, Charlie Brown represents his classic self, depressed and self-effacing. His desire is to find out why he remains unlike his friends in confidence and luck. Charlie Brown is almost desperate for happenings in the musical to work out in his favor, but they rarely do. By the end of the play, Charlie Brown finds hope in the possibility that his crush, The Little Red-Haired Girl, is not flawless because she, humanly, nibbles on her pencil.

2. Will. Despite Charlie Brown's bad luck, his will is strong. He continues to live and fight on with vigor even though it seems the world is out to get him. He is encouraging of his friends even when they berate him. Ultimately, his strong will aids in his pursuit of happiness until he finds a glimpse of hope in the pencil at the end of the play.
3. Moral Stance. Charlie Brown has a high level of morality. He sees the good in everyone and even in the face of adversity only judges himself. Lucy, the antagonist, constantly makes fun of Charlie Brown in front of the others and yet he never puts her down or calls her out for her bullying. Some audiences may consider this fact a weak character flaw, as Charlie Brown never stands up for himself. For example in the "The Doctor Is In" scene Charlie Brown pays Lucy five cents for her "psychiatric help" during which she calls him "moody," "self-centered," "stupid," and "dull." During the song "Little Known Facts" Charlie Brown tries to get confrontational with Lucy as she teaches Linus facts that are obviously incorrect. The scene ends in Charlie Brown's frustration, Lucy's winning yet again, and Charlie Brown banging his head against a tree.
4. Decorum. Charlie Brown's presence reflects his attitude towards life. He has moments of hope and confidence that are represented in his interjections in conversations that usually go ignored. These moments are extremely important to help audiences root for Charlie Brown, otherwise his character would be horribly depressing and unbearable to watch. Charlie Brown wears his usual yellow t-shirt with the iconic black zigzag. The irony of the sunny disposition represented by his

clothing is that his personality often does not match. His self-effacing dialogue creates a dichotomy between his appearance and reality.

5. Summary Objectives.

- a. Hopeful
- b. Encouraging
- c. Unassuming
- d. Depressed
- e. Frustrated

6. Initial Character—Mood Intensity.

- a. Heartbeat—Charlie Brown heart is in the right place, but, because of his bad luck, his heartbeat is elevated throughout the musical. He is either excited, frustrated, or trying to insert himself into a situation, which requires a brisk heartbeat. Most of all, his anxiety level is high due to his lack of confidence and inability to fit in.
- b. Perspiration—Charlie Brown's sweat matches his anxiety level. Even when Charlie Brown has brief moments of hope he quickly is brought back to earth by Lucy. Anytime she is around his perspiration level heightens.
- c. Stomach—His stomach is always in knots. His anxiety in situations like "The Baseball Game" scene proves that he gets his hopes up and then is constantly disappointed. Due to the constant entanglement within, Charlie Brown slumps his shoulders and walks with his eyes towards the ground.

- d. Muscles—He is an anxiety attack waiting to happen. He is nervous and wound tight. Charlie Brown holds most of his stress in his shoulders and hands. He paces, but is quick on his feet like a five-year old.
- e. Breathing—Only when Charlie Brown is writing to his Pen Pal does he find a relaxed moment. It seems his Pen Pal is the only driving force of his hope. In those scenes, Charlie Brown is able to take a deep breath and reflect. Other than those few moments, Charlie Brown's anxiety causes him to remain out of breath. He also stresses about getting a word in with his talkative friends, which leaves him constantly full of breath ready to speak.

Lucy Van Pelt

1. Desire. Lucy Van Pelt desires control. She wants to be right, in charge, and looked up to. Lucy exhibits her desire for control through bullying her friends and brother, while taking specific moments to give compliments so that her peers remain confused about her objectives. Lucy also controls the conversation when she is on stage. She is the loudest and most outspoken of the group.
2. Will. Lucy has a strong will. She will do whatever it takes to get what she wants no matter if she has to hurt her friends in the process. In addition, Lucy demands compliance from her friends. No one dares contradict Lucy for fear of physical violence or harsh words.
3. Moral Stance. Lucy has low morality. She purposely manipulates her friends, especially Charlie Brown, for her own personal gain, entertainment, and power. For example, she approaches Charlie Brown and asks him about his dreams about

a new first name. Once she finds out Charlie Brown's fantasy is to be called "Flash" she immediately makes fun of him to her friends and calls him this name later in the musical to continue the embarrassment. In addition, Lucy purposely degrades Linus, her bother, for his obsession with his blanket. Lucy is not satisfied with her own pleasure in these moments, as she usually calls for backup from her peers to laugh along.

4. Decorum. Lucy desires to be Queen, thus she walks around with her head held high looking down on her peers. Her posture represents her overconfidence in all situations. Her straight posture and her convincing tone create a force to be reckoned with. Lucy's classic blue dress paints her as a sweet young girl, which adds to the comedy when she gets violent and spews hatred at Charlie Brown.
5. Summary Adjectives.
 - a. Abrasive
 - b. Determined
 - c. Influential
 - d. Romantic
 - e. Intimidating
6. Initial Character—Mood Intensity
 - a. Heartbeat—Although Lucy maintains her control throughout the musical, she is always looking for the next opportunity to get ahead. This pursuit requires her to be focused and ready for any moment to arise. Her heartbeat quickens as these moments approach. She emulates a predator searching for prey as she prowls around the stage.

- b. Perspiration—Lucy’s perspiration is light. Since she is always alert and ready for the next opportunity to take control, her body has become use to the constant heightened state of awareness and she no longer sweats profusely.
- c. Stomach—Lucy is a professional at bullying, so her stomach no longer reacts negatively to her actions. On the other hand, Lucy does daydream consistently about becoming a queen, and this director assumes her desperate desire forces a butterfly effect of excitement in her stomach. She probably feels the same excitement as she is degrading Charlie Brown once again.
- d. Muscles—Lucy’s reign centers on her ability to keep control over her friends. She uses brute force through threats of physical violence to keep her friends under her control. She often raises her fist with intent to punch a peer, which requires tense and flexed muscles.
- e. Breathing—Lucy, like Charlie Brown, is a vibrant five-year old. Her energy is unending and she is rarely out of breath. She does have a chance to take a deep breath of reflection once Charlie Brown, Linus, Schroeder, Sally, and Snoopy help her realize she is a “super crab” who “[spreads] crabbiness everywhere [she goes]” (Gesner 54). This climatic moment contributes to the very last line of the play when Lucy, finally and honestly, says, “you’re a good man, Charlie Brown” to her most consistent victim (66).

Idea

Literal Meaning of the Play's Title

You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown, the musical, was named after the common phrase used in many of Charles Schulz' comic strips. Most importantly, the very first *Peanuts* comic strip, published on October 2, 1950, alludes to the famous saying as well the typical tone of resentment towards the main character (see fig. 41). The characters of the musical use this phrase to encourage Charlie Brown within the beginning song, with the same title, and at the end in Lucy's final words to her once enemy and now friend.

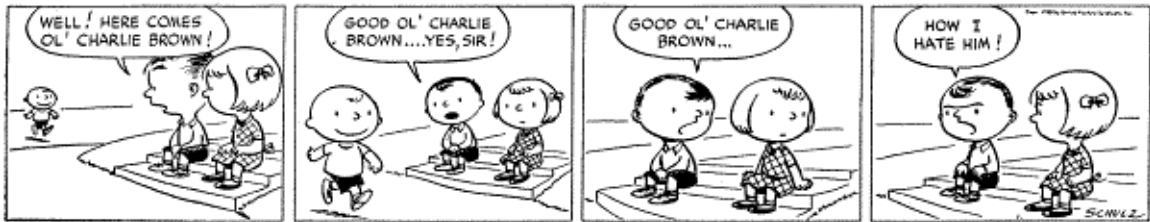


Fig. 41. "First *Peanuts* Comic." Schulz, Charles M. *The first strip*. 1950. *Peanuts*. *Wikipedia*. Web. 19 April 2014. <<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peanuts>>

Symbolic Meaning of the Play's Title

The title, *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*, represents Charlie Brown's true nature. Although his friends sing this phrase of encouragement at the opening of the musical, they do not back up this belief throughout the rest of the play. It is almost as if the books, music, and lyrics author Clark M. Gesner wanted to contradict the actions and words of the characters who come in contact with Charlie Brown to remind audiences that even when the going gets tough to keep your head up and remember that deep down all people are good.

This title also represents the transformation antagonist Lucy Van Pelt achieves through her crabbiness survey. She asks her peers a multitude of questions to determine

her crabbiness rating and finally hears the truth. This sparks an emotional catharsis about her bullying ways. The audience has no reason to believe Lucy has actually changed, due to her history of violence and rudeness, until the last line of the play in which she approaches a lonely Charlie Brown and says, “you’re a good man, Charlie Brown.” This final sentence concludes the over sixty years of torment Lucy has inflicted on Charlie Brown through Schulz’ comics, television specials, and now this musical.

What is the Play Literally About?

You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown was written to immortalize some famous scenes from the *Peanuts* character’s history. The play begins with a monologue from Charlie Brown at lunch about his infamous crush on the unattainable Little Red-Haired Girl. As the show continues audiences hear recognizable phrases such as “blockhead” and “good grief” as well as familiar scenes such as the gang at baseball practice, Snoopy’s search for life’s purpose, and Lucy offering up misguided psychiatric advice for a small fee. The play follows the gang throughout a day in their lives which consists of lunch, recess, school work, chores, hopes, dreams, and, finally, looking up to the stars at night.

What is the Moment of Climax in the Play?

The moment of climax comes when Lucy figures out the results of her crabbiness survey and finally realizes how horribly she treats her friends and family. Despite her best efforts to sway the results, she must face the reality that she is a “super crab.” Lucy begins to doubt her self-worth and in this critical moment, Linus comforts his sister and tells her that the reason she must continue to live on the planet is because she has “a little

brother that loves [her]” (54). Lucy then bursts into tears, which is the first time she becomes emotional in the musical. This emotion leads to Lucy’s desire to change.

*Why Does the Character Make
this Climatic Choice?*

Lucy Van Pelt thoroughly enjoys being in control and bullying her friends into submission, but she has never taken time to reflect on her choices or the consequences they may have on her peers’ self esteem. Schroeder, the object of Lucy’s romantic obsessions, suggests that she should take Socrates’ advice and “know thyself.” Appalled, Lucy finds a crabbiness survey and intimidates her friends into participating. It is not in Lucy’s character to expect negative results and yet when she does tally up her detrimental score, she has a moment of catharsis that audiences have been awaiting for sixty years. Lucy’s acceptance of the score is most shocking because she is not one to reflect on her behavior. This catharsis is necessary because it leads to the moment at the end of the play in which Lucy finally admits Charlie Brown is a “good man.”

*What is the Result of the Climatic
Choice on the Other Characters?*

Immediately, Lucy’s decision to reflect on her crabbiness results in Linus’ ability to comfort his sister. They are able to connect on an emotional level, which does not happen often due to Lucy’s abrasive nature. Charlie Brown also directly benefits from Lucy’s reflection by her comfort at the end of the play. Finally, Charlie Brown gets to hear something positive about himself within Lucy’s last line, “you’re a good man, Charlie Brown.” Thanks to Lucy’s encouragement, audiences know Charlie Brown will live another day knowing that things can and will improve.

Moods*Mood Senses and Mood Image*

1. Unit 1: “Failure Face” (pages 5 to 13)
 - a. Sight—A chorus of characters preparing for school.
 - b. Sound—Loud children’s voices.
 - c. Taste—Peanut butter sandwiches.
 - d. Touch—The cold metal of the school bus and lunch boxes.
 - e. Smell—Grass and fresh air.
 - f. Image—Lunchtime Tableaux.
2. Unit 2: “Never discuss marriage with a musician” (pages 13 to 14)
 - a. Sight—A girl stalking a boy with a piano.
 - b. Sound—Off tune singing.
 - c. Taste—The chemical taste of cleaning supplies.
 - d. Touch—The black and white ivory piano keys.
 - e. Smell—Preteen perfume.
 - f. Image—Desperation leaning on a miniature piano.
3. Unit 3: “Flash” (pages 14 to 18)
 - a. Sight—Chaotic movements across the stage, then a single light on a red doghouse.
 - b. Sound—Overdramatic dog whining.
 - c. Taste—Dog food and fur.
 - d. Touch—The rough edges of splintering wood.
 - e. Smell—Newly cut lumber.

f. Image—A clear spring day with clouds on the horizon.

4. Unit 4: “Playing with the past” (pages 18 to 21)

a. Sight—A tug of war between pink and blue.

b. Sound—Elevator music.

c. Taste—Salty skin from sucking on a thumb.

d. Touch—The softest fleece baby blanket.

e. Smell—Laundry detergent.

f. Image—Waking up after sleeping in late on a Saturday morning.

5. Unit 5: “Queen Lucy” (pages 21 to 23)

a. Sight—A dream bubble about to burst.

b. Sound—A child telling a very long story.

c. Taste—A burst of air after holding one’s breath.

d. Touch—Fingernails digging into a hand.

e. Smell—Newly sprayed cheap air freshener.

f. Image—A forgotten pot of water on a stove about to boil over.

6. Unit 6: “That’ll be five cents, please” (pages 27 to 29)

a. Sight—A psychiatrist’s couch.

b. Sound—The wailing of a single violin.

c. Taste—Salty tears.

d. Touch—Cold nickels and dimes.

e. Smell—Pencil shavings.

f. Image—A one-sided chess game.

7. Unit 7: “This is art, you blockhead!!” (pages 30 to 34)
 - a. Sight—A circus act with multiple performances at once.
 - b. Sound—Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony.
 - c. Taste—Bake sale items such as cotton candy, brownies, and cupcakes.
 - d. Touch—Biting nails born out of anxiety.
 - e. Smell—The sweat of excitement.
 - f. Image—Elementary school recess.
8. Unit 8: “Someday, someday I’ll get you, Red Baron!” (page 42)
 - a. Sight—World War I flying ace battle.
 - b. Sound—Machine gun fire, bombs dropping and exploding, airplanes diving from a high altitude.
 - c. Taste—Severe dry mouth.
 - d. Touch—The genuine leather steering wheel of a Sopwith Camel.
 - e. Smell—Blood and gunpowder.
 - f. Image—A high-speed police chase in which the suspect gets away.
9. Unit 9: “Clearly, some philosophies aren’t for all people” (pages 42 to 45)
 - a. Sight—An almost empty school hallway.
 - b. Sound—Negativity and complaining.
 - c. Taste—The after taste of school lunchroom food.
 - d. Touch—Thin computer paper.
 - e. Smell—Floors freshly mopped with Clorox.
 - f. Image—A father chasing after his young child.

10. Unit 10: “Billion-to-one chance” (pages 45 to 49)

- a. Sight—A little league baseball game.
- b. Sound—Cheers of a large baseball stadium.
- c. Taste—Grass and dirt.
- d. Touch—The sweaty inside of a baseball glove.
- e. Smell—Overwhelming and salty perspiration.
- f. Image—Clowns entertaining an audience with physical comedy.

11. Unit 11: “Know Thyself” (pages 50 to 54)

- a. Sight—Desperation.
- b. Sound—A pastor preaching at a mega church.
- c. Taste—A mouth filled with saliva and unable to swallow it all.
- d. Touch—Skin rubbed raw out of uneasiness.
- e. Smell—An overused eraser.
- f. Image—Customers avoiding eye contact with an overbearing salesperson.

12. Unit 12: “Where seldom is heard a discouraging word” (pages 54 to 58)

- a. Sight—A choir classroom.
- b. Sound—Kids who do not know the words to a song singing horribly out of tune.
- c. Taste—The remaining flavor of minty gum that was recently spit out.
- d. Touch—Hands suffering from a cold sweat.
- e. Smell—Metal from musical instruments.
- f. Image—A bad American Idol audition.

13. Unit 13: “Why is Charlie Brown banging his head against that tree?” (pages 58 to 61)

- a. Sight—Charlie Brown’s backyard on a sunny day with blue skies.
- b. Sound—Tree leaves rustling.
- c. Taste—A citrusy fruit.
- d. Touch—Rough tree bark.
- e. Smell—Newly mowed grass.
- f. Image—A puppy following his owner around faithfully.

14. Unit 14: “Suppertime” (pages 61 to 63)

- a. Sight—A Vaudeville number.
- b. Sound—The howling of a dog.
- c. Taste—Meaty dog food.
- d. Touch—The pains of hunger in a stomach.
- e. Smell—Smelly dog breathe.
- f. Image—Open mic night at a jazz club.

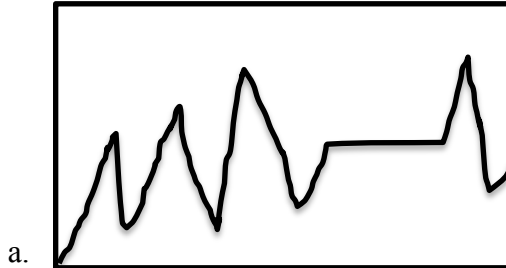
15. Unit 15: “Happiness is anyone and anything at all, that’s loved by you” (pages 64 to 67)

- a. Sight—Friends holding hands.
- b. Sound—A familiar melody.
- c. Taste—Dessert.
- d. Touch—The warm embrace of an old friend.
- e. Smell—A warm summer’s night.
- f. Image—A family at the dinner table telling stories about their day.

Tempos

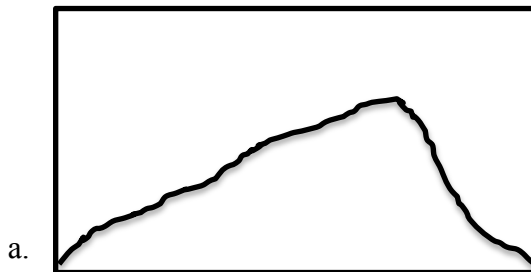
Tempo Charts and Descriptions

1. Unit 1: “Failure Face” (pages 5 to 13)



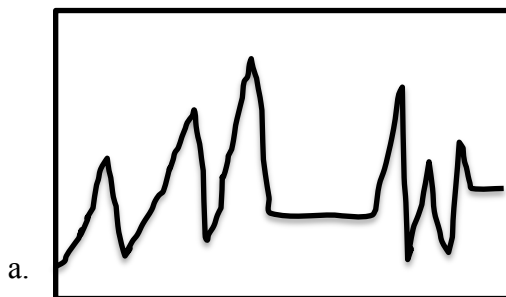
- b. Back and forth at first, then there is a lull in the action when Charlie Brown laments about his life, then the back and forth picks up again with bullying from Lucy.

2. Unit 2: “Never discuss marriage with a musician” (pages 13 to 14)



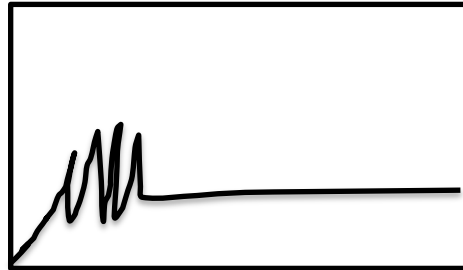
- b. The scene gains momentum with Lucy’s dreams, but they are quickly dashed by Schroeder not cooperating and the scene’s tempo is halted.

3. Unit 3: “Flash” (pages 14 to 18)



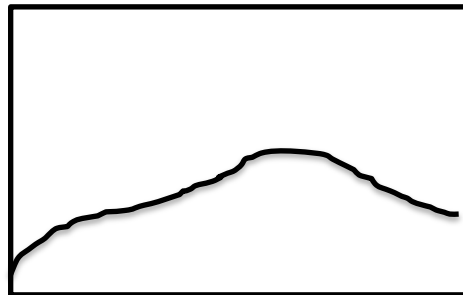
- b. The Quick Changes create slight peaks in tempo, then Snoopy's song "Snoopy" goes from slow and steady to quick and vicious then back to slow and steady.

4. Unit 4: "Playing with the past" (pages 18 to 21)



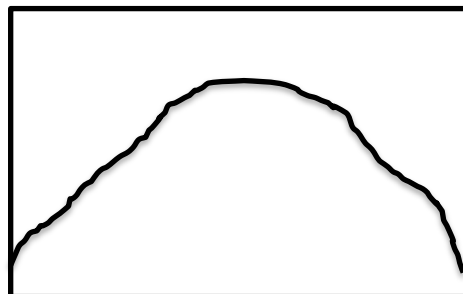
- b. The scene starts with a fast paced fight between Lucy and Linus, then becomes a slow melodic dream world.

5. Unit 5: "Queen Lucy" (pages 21 to 23)



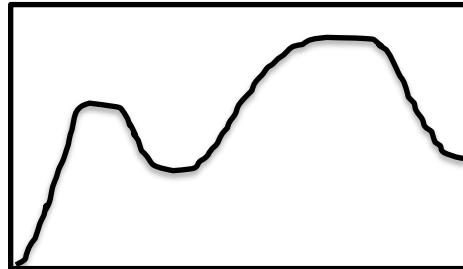
- b. Slow and steady at first, then the tempo picks up as Lucy gets angry.

6. Unit 6: "That'll be five cents, please" (pages 27 to 29)



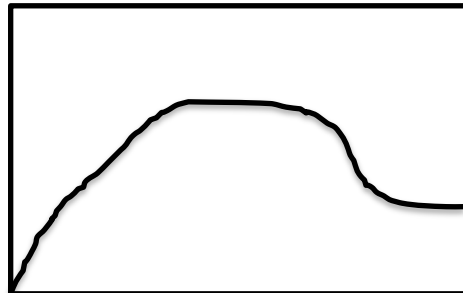
- b. Medium and casual with a slow rise in tempo as Lucy insults Charlie Brown, then back to medium and casual at the end.

7. Unit 7: “This is art, you blockhead!!” (pages 29 to 34)



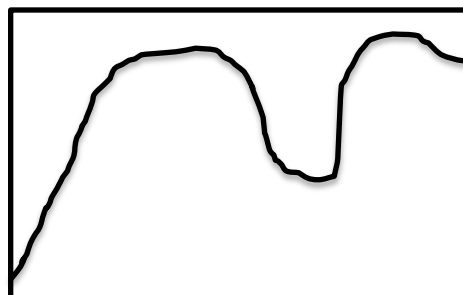
- a.
- b. Schroeder’s anger and excitement creates spikes in tempo.

8. Unit 8: “Someday, someday I’ll get you, Red Baron!” (page 42)



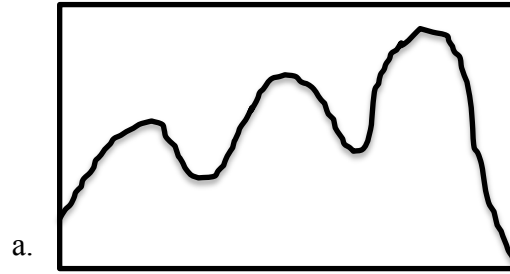
- a.
- b. Snoopy’s war dream creates a fast paced tempo which calms after he admits defeat.

9. Unit 9: “Clearly, some philosophies aren’t for all people” (pages 42 to 45)



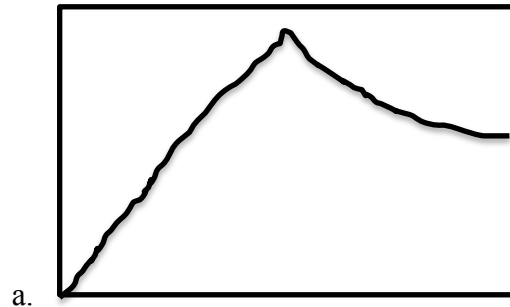
- a.
- b. Sally’s anger creates the first spike in tempo and Lucy’s anxiety causes the last.

10. Unit 10: “Billion-to-one chance” (pages 45 to 49)



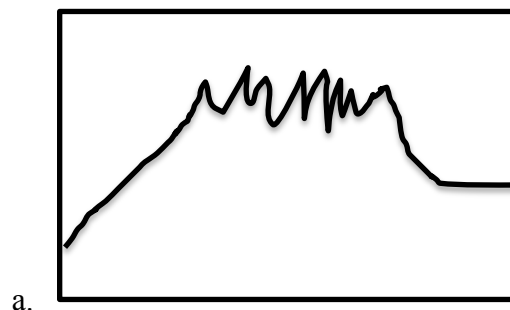
- b. The heat of competition creates moments of fast paced tempo, but Charlie Brown’s failed attempt at victory halts the tempo abruptly.

11. Unit 11: “Know Thyself” (pages 50 to 54)



- b. The plot thickens until Lucy’s climatic moment of realization, then Linus’ encouraging words cool down the emotional moment.

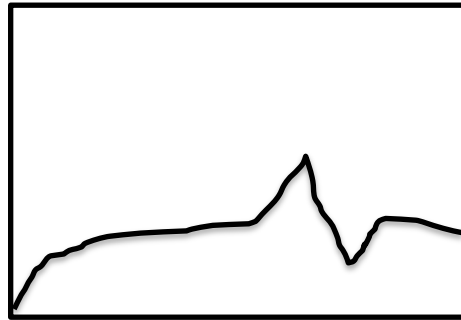
12. Unit 12: “Where seldom is heard a discouraging word” (pages 54 to 58)



- b. Schroeder's worry creates an initial spike in tempo and then the gang's fight creates a neurotic pace, which is calmed by the characters leaving the situation one by one.

13. Unit 13: "Why is Charlie Brown banging his head against that tree?" (pages 58 to

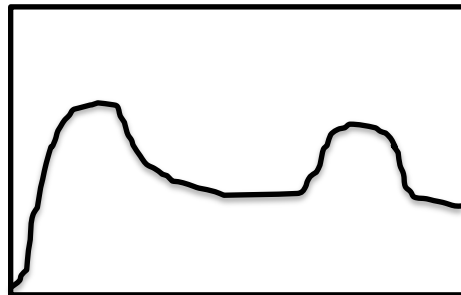
61)



a.

- b. Medium pace until Charlie Brown's burst of anger.

14. Unit 14: "Suppertime" (pages 61 to 63)

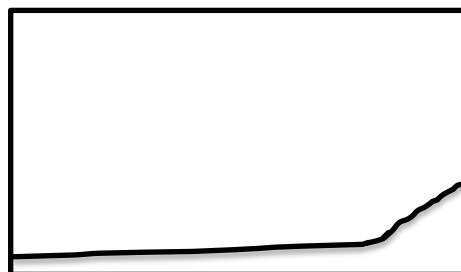


a.

- b. Snoopy's dramatic whine starts the scene at a heightened tempo. Once he is fed the tempo calms, but is later interrupted by scolding from Charlie Brown.

15. Unit 15: "Happiness is anyone and anything at all, that's loved by you" (pages 64

to 67)



a.

- b. The tempo remains calm, collected, and consistent until a pivotal moment between Charlie Brown and Lucy, which creates a bit of a dramatic spike.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

Existentialist philosopher, Soren Kiekegaard once said, “life can only be understood backward, but it must be lived forward.” This director could have never imagined the impact of experiences producing this musical would have on everyone involved. This production began with an awareness of the immense importance of affecting Sky Vista students’ lives in a positive way after a horrible tragedy left them confused and vulnerable. That awareness developed into a pure purpose: to help audiences and the students involved find happiness in a chaotic world. Through research, much more was discovered such as new fodder for arts advocacy, potential conversation starters with diverse students, examples of drama inspired therapy happening all over the world, and coping strategies that will help the students and community involved cope with definite future societal tragedies. Directing *You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown* developed into much more than a chance to grow as a teacher and director through the University of Northern Colorado’s Theatre Education Intensive. Throughout this process, countless opportunities for research turned into cathartic moments of reflection. Inevitable and palpable change spread through the performed words of Charles M. Schulz and Clark M. Gesner, out into the audience, and, thus, into the community of Aurora, Colorado. The result of producing this powerful musical is much more meaningful looking back than ever could have been predicted.

In the end, *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* was met with rave reviews from the community. As a means to collect qualitative data, the audience was asked to anonymously respond to the following question: How can musicals, theatre, plays, etc. help improve moods and raise spirits in a complicated world? The responses received were varied, yet consistently positive and poignant. They also provided insight into the minds of the audience as well as answers to many of the proposed initial questions.

Many of the comments came from family members who had grown up with the Sunday morning *Peanuts* comic: "Children and young adults have always directly related to the *Peanuts* gang" (Anonymous 1). Other adult audience members had flashbacks to a simpler time: "I am [sixty-three] years old and I was an avid band booster for [twelve years] while my [three] children were in school. Never did I see an unhappy child after a performance" (Anonymous 2). This same patron went on to highly compliment the performance and performers:

I was able to see a college performance of 'Charlie Brown' that was nowhere near the caliber of this performance . . . Each and every character was really into their part . . . I can tell that you really taught each and every performer, no matter what the part, how important they were to the entire production.

Many other patrons, and possible parents or guardians, expressed their gratitude for theatre in their children's lives with comments stating, "being involved in something like theatre gives kids an outlet for expressing themselves and for finding their niche in a crazy time of adolescence" (Anonymous 3). Another patron praised theatre as a "wonderful opportunity to work as a team in a 'safe' environment, where imagination, expression and creativity are encouraged" (Anonymous 4).

Predicted responses simply answered the question, "How can a musical brighten spirits through process and product?" These comments included, "[theatre] gives patrons

an opportunity to socialize with other patrons with similar interests” (Anonymous 5), and dressing up to go to the theatre makes you “feel good because you get to look good” (Anonymous 6).

However, some of the responses of the initial question were philosophical, one audience response stated, “As humans we are self-aware; this is what makes us different from intelligent animals and technology. But being self-aware scares us because it shows all that we are . . . flawed beings . . . Theatre allows self-awareness without fear” (Anonymous 7). In addition to this assessment, another patron stated that “storytelling, sharing and expressing self are very important to being human . . . When a person is isolated, he no longer shares or listens to stories of life. Theatre can show how the individual character can also be an important part of the group chorus” (Anonymous 8). Many responses were personal theatre stories that directly affected audience members’ lives growing up, but another response, received from a cast member many days after the final performance, seemed like more of a confession:

Personally, my own experience, theatre quite literally saved my life. I was in a dark, suicidal place and theatre became my escape, my home, my life. It took me away from reality for a bit into a magical world. And as I learned more and grew more, my confidence and my leadership, my mood, my happiness, my willingness to live increased. Being a member of a cast or crew provides a home and a family for everyone...who’s [sic] real families may not be the family of the year... it is the reason I go to school . . . [Theatre] is a natural anti-depressant. It becomes your heart and soul and something that will never leaves [sic] you . . . ”
(Anonymous 9)

This response was arguably the most important received because it perfectly outlines the feelings towards recovery this director hopes to create for all students involved. Although an unlicensed practitioner, this director observed evidence of drama being used as therapy at every rehearsal. Additionally, an adult patron agrees with the student and says,

“the arts are a lifeline to sanity” (Anonymous 10). Through these responses, it is undeniable that the objective of audience and student recovery is consistently achieved through the process and product of any theatrical production.

Other pertinent responses came from the students involved in the cast and crew. Anonymously, students wrote journal entries regarding their rehearsal experience. No specific directions were given about when the students should write or what they should write about. In the beginning stages of rehearsals, students were excited and ready to inspire the community with their talents. For example, a student wrote, “I know this journal is just to tell about rehearsal, but [I want] to let everybody know I can be something, create something, spark something” (Anonymous 11). Another shared, “Day One: I learned that musicals and plays can bring happiness and sadness to an audience” (Anonymous 12). Some complimented the process by writing entries such as, “[she] expects [sic] our questions and comments or ideas and takes them into consideration” (Anonymous 11). Another added praise by writing, “today we were doing the baseball scene and I had to write a lot! But when I think about [the director’s] role, I feel much better” (Anonymous 12). It is always satisfying to know the efforts one puts forth as a leader of a group of kids is recognized.

Along with the compliments, one student candidly wrote about some of his tough days as well in which bullying in the halls of Sky Vista became too much to bear: “. . . play practice helped a lot for me day! But this is, most likely, in the top 5 status for Worst Day of My Life. I had to deal with other people calling me horrible names, I dare not write in this life” (Anonymous 11). Thankfully, the positivity of play practice helped this young student avoid an overall bad day.

Initially, concern mounted over keeping the integrity of the original production. This director had decided early on in the process to change a few essentials from the original Broadway production including expanding the cast from six characters to over forty. The concern surrounded making sure the chorus members had enough rehearsal and stage time to make their experience valuable. One student wrote, “I think its amazing how differently I intrepret [sic] the text from the way the director intreprets [sic] the text. This was one of those days where I came to rehearsal without much knowledge on my character, and left with a better developed understanding of her . . .”(Anonymous 13). Without a date specified, it is hard to know when exactly this actress felt this way, but, overall, this comment proves that knowledge of how to take direction and vital character development was established in the students’ young minds. By the end, each character in the musical had a clear character supported by objectives, obstacles, tactics, and secrets, which produces expectation exceeding quality stage business among the chorus members and leads.

Although at times hard to read, the responses received from the audience and the students involved were vital to determine if participants experienced a catharsis from the production. This director, cast, and crew are profoundly changed by the ability to produce this musical through the compassionate traits gained from Schulz’s message. The Dalai Lama simply said, “If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion,” and truer words have never been spoken. Human nature is almost impossible to predict, but more often than not happiness is as easy as going to see a musical with a positive message; even if sorrow returns, at least the moment of figuratively losing oneself in a familiar story distracts from reality.

It is true that a musical cannot keep people from committing unspeakable acts, and, unfortunately, inevitably more communities will feel the same pain as Aurora, Colorado, in the future. Although happiness cannot be measured quantitatively, it is this director's hope that the cast, crew, and community surrounding Sky Vista Middle School left this experience with encouragement that the world is not tragedy-laced and that the benevolence from one group of creative people can spark a revolution of compassion. Writer, Gretta Brooker Palmer said, "Happiness is a by-product of an effort to make someone else happy." The cast and crew of Sky Vista Middle School's production of *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* definitely succeeded in the attempt and through audience and cast/crew responses, proof is obvious of community catharsis.

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Anonymous 4. Personal interview. 25 April 2014.

Anonymous 5. Personal interview. 25 April 2014.

Anonymous 6. Personal interview. 25 April 2014.

Anonymous 7. Personal interview. 25 April 2014.

Anonymous 8. Personal interview. 25 April 2014.

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APPENDIX A
CITATIONS FOR PICTURES, MAPS,
AND ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure

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4. Full view of Sky Vista Theatre/cafeteria Aurora, Colorado by Jessamyn Miller
5. View from the light booth of Sky Vista stage By Jessamyn Miller
6. Shared cafeteria windows, Sky Vista Middle School by Jessamyn Miller
7. Vectorworks scale floor plan of Sky Vista performance space by Jessamyn Miller
8. Light plot diagram for Sky Vista Middle School by Jessamyn Miller
9. Comic strip-style flats by Jessamyn Miller
10. Snoopy's doghouse by Jessamyn Miller
11. "The Baseball Game" pitcher's mound by Jessamyn Miller
12. . "The Doctor Is In" flat by Jessamyn Miller
13. *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* Cast costumes by Jessamyn Miller
14. Large pencil prop by Jessamyn Miller
15. Schroeder's piano by Jessamyn Miller
16. Woodstock puppets by Jessamyn Miller
17. Sally Brown's coat hanger sculpture by Jessamyn Miller
18. "My Blanket and Me" blankets by Jessamyn Miller

19. Charlie Brown's basketball, Sally Brown's jump rope
20. Non-Literal Collage By Jessamyn Miller.
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APPENDIX B

**INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
APPROVAL LETTER
NARRATIVE
SCHOOL PERMISSION LETTER
MINOR ASSENT
PARENT CONSENT**



Institutional Review Board

DATE: January 25, 2014

TO: Jessamyn Miller

FROM: University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB

PROJECT TITLE: [549516-2] You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown: Master's Thesis

SUBMISSION TYPE: Revision

ACTION: APPROVED

APPROVAL DATE: January 24, 2014

EXPIRATION DATE: January 24, 2015

REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

Thank you for your submission of Revision materials for this project. The University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB has APPROVED your submission. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

This submission has received Expedited Review based on applicable federal regulations.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the project and insurance of participant understanding. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require that each participant receives a copy of the consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this committee prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office.

All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must be reported promptly to this office.

Based on the risks, this project requires continuing review by this committee on an annual basis. Please use the appropriate forms for this procedure. Your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date of January 24, 2015.

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years after the completion of the project.

If you have any questions, please contact Sherry May at 970-351-1910 or Sherry.May@unco.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

Jessamyn -

Hello and thank you for providing a clear revision of your IRB application materials. The first reviewer, Dr. Latham, has approved your revisions. I've subsequently reviewed your revised application and have no further requests for any modifications.

Please be sure to use the revised materials in your actual data collection process. Don't hesitate to contact me with any IRB-related questions or concerns.

Best wishes with your research.

Sincerely,

Dr. Megan Stellino, UNC IRB Co-Chair

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB's records.

Title: *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*: Master's Thesis
Narrative for UNC-IRB Application
By Jessamyn Miller, M.A. Student in Theatre Education

A. Purpose

1. The purpose of my thesis is to produce Clark Gesner's musical *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* to heal the wounds of the recent violent events in Aurora, CO by examining the themes of compassion, friendship, and overcoming obstacles. Locally, Aurora, Colorado has seen its fair share of turmoil over the past years. Many high schools and middle schools in the area have unknowingly joined together to produce upbeat productions because the last thing the community needs is another traumatic tale. *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* aids greatly in the recovery of spirits in this community. The play will be performed as our school's spring musical in 2014. The students will begin rehearsing the show spring of 2014. Rehearsals will continue until the final show dates, April 24 and 25, 2014. I hope for the students and audiences alike to make connections through Charles Schulz' uplifting characters, such as Sally Brown and Snoopy, and the themes listed above. There was never a more relevant need for a production with an innocent message and an idealist character such as Charlie Brown who overcomes immense troubles in seas of doubt. Not only does this musical provide an opportunity for entertainment, but also recovery in a community that desperately needs positivity.
2. I am applying in the category of Expedited because I do not plan to conduct any experiments or research activities beyond rehearsal observations and weekly student journals. I do not plan on interviewing my students either. Only weekly journals will be obtained from a randomly selected pool of actors and crewmembers. I plan to continue my job as an educator and director as usual to produce a performance for the community as I do every semester. My students are minors, so my research falls into the Expedited category instead of exempt.

B. Methods – Be specific when addressing the following items.

1. Participants: My participants will consist of middle school students ranging in grade level from sixth to eighth grade. These grade levels include student ages of 10 to 14 years old. Stage crew will also consist of the same pool of middle school students. There is no fee or minimum grade point average to participate. Any student may choose to audition for a role in the cast. The technical crew is also optional and no student, with continuous attendance, is exempt from participating. School wide intercom announcements will be made to prepare students for auditions. Consent forms will be distributed to students cast and students involved on the technical crew.
2. Data Collection Procedures
 - a. Students will rehearse four days a week from 3 to 4pm. The cast will meet Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday afternoons for sixteen weeks. In the last two weeks of the rehearsal process, the rehearsals will change to five days a week and will run from 3-5pm.
 - b. There will be one Saturday rehearsal from 12-4pm for all cast and crew.

- c. At each rehearsal, performers will rehearse their lines and stage movement. They will also participate in a character rehearsal where, as a group, they will develop their character's specific walk, body positions, and objectives.
 - d. Technicians will work together in groups (Lights/Sound Crew, Costume/Props Crew, and Stage Makeup Crew) to create the initial designs for the performance. They will start coming to rehearsals at eight weeks into the process to create the final set pieces, painting projects, and costume/prop creations.
 - e. Students will perform one preview show for the school the Wednesday before our production opens. Coming to see this preview show is optional for the school.
 - f. Students will perform two night shows in our school's cafeteria/auditorium at 7:00pm.
 - g. Cast and crew are required to attend the "Strike" rehearsal the Monday after the final performance to clean up the stage area and take down the set pieces.
 - h. I will be using observations from rehearsals and the final monetary total to determine the success of the show.
 - i. Randomly selected students will be asked to complete a weekly journal about their experiences. If information from those journals is used, their names will not be included. They will be referred to as their character name or crew title.
 - j. If I decide to include any images from the production, I will ask the students and their parents or guardians to sign a consent form giving me permission. If I include images of costume, set, or action, I will have their permission to do so. I will also provide a copy of the form to each parent and student for his or her own keeping.
3. Data Analysis Procedures: My data comes from observations only. No interviews will be conducted. Only the observation notes from rehearsals, my daily rehearsal journals, and the weekly journals from the randomly selected students will be used for analysis. There will be no interviews or information to store other than my own notes taken during rehearsals and performances. The students will be returned to the students after my analysis and I will not make copies of any of the pages. Pictures of the show will be stored for use in my final thesis.
 4. Data Handling Procedures: Any data will be stored in my play files on my computer. Any physical (non-electronic) notes taken will be shredded after proper assessment for my thesis. I will not identify the students by anything other than character name or crew title. The image files will be saved in a computer file as I have done for the school's previous shows that I have directed.

C. Risks, Discomforts and Benefits

I do not foresee any possible risks in this thesis. The show has appropriate language and subject matter. No students are required to come into contact with one another and no stage combat is required. There is always a risk in casting since, usually, upwards of 150 students audition for the biannual productions. With the ability to cast only 20-40 students, friction between the students who are cast and who are not is typical. The choir teacher and myself will be available for conversations with disgruntled students. I always have chaperones backstage

during the show nights and night rehearsals. Chaperones greatly deflate the risks involved as there are more adult eyes watching the number of kids backstage.

D. Costs and Compensations

There will be no compensation to the participants and the cost to the participants will be their time.

E. Grant Information

There is no grant funding for this research project.

Greg Connellan, Principal
Sky Vista Middle School
4500 South Himalaya St.
Aurora, Colorado 80015
720-886-4716
gconnellan@cherrycreekschools.org




December 9, 2013

To Whom It May Concern,

I am aware of and give permission for Mrs. Jessamyn Miller, Drama teacher at Sky Vista Middle School, to conduct research for her master's thesis for the University of Northern Colorado through the work she does here at Sky Vista. I know and understand that her current students will be asked to write a weekly journal about their experiences. I understand that information shared in those journals may be included in the published thesis, but that no identifiable information on specific students will be included. I understand the journals will be returned to the students after Mrs. Miller has used them for her research.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,


Gregory P. Connellan
Principal
720-886-4716



ASSENT FORM FOR HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Actors & Technicians,

Congratulations on making it into the cast and crew of *You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown*, this year's spring musical. This particular production also happens to be the focus of my thesis as I attempt toward obtaining my masters in Theatre Education at the University of Northern Colorado. I plan to work very closely with each of you as we dive into this classic play inspired by the *Peanuts* comic strip. By signing this form, you understand that my observations of your progress and performance will be used in my thesis. In addition, I would like to use photographs taken during the process to show costuming, set, and action that may include you in them.

If at any time you feel uncomfortable, please take the time to talk with myself or the Choir/Band teacher, Mrs. Polmateer, and we will work with you through it as best we can. Theatre is a place for fun and entertainment, but most importantly for safety and comfort. If during the process you feel the need to no longer participate in this study please feel free to let me know. Participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate in this study, and if you begin participation you may still decide to stop and withdraw at any time. Your decision to take part in this study is solely up to you and your families and will not hurt our working relationship with one another.

If you are ready and willing to participate in my research of *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*, I am excited to have you a part of the journey. If you have been chosen to participate, that means your audition proved your talent with character work, memorization, and music or your skills with backstage technical aspects. Having read the above and having had an opportunity to ask any questions, please sign below if you would like to participate in this research. If you have any concerns about your selection or treatment as a participant, please contact me, Jessamyn Miller, at Sky Vista Middle School, (720) 886-4906 or at jmiller101@cherrycreekschools.org.

You're parents have already said it's okay for you to be a part of this research, so If you are willing to participate, agree with the requirements of being a part of this cast, and do not mind me using my observations of your performance or photographs that may include you, please sign below. If you do not wish to participate in my research, you may still be a part of the production and I will not use pictures of you or use any information about you in my research. I look forward to working with each of you as we move forward.

Please return this page to Mrs. Miller a.s.a.p.!

A copy of this form will be given back to you to keep for future reference.

Student Name
Date

Student Signature

Researcher Signature



CONSENT

FORM FOR

HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Project Title: *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*: Master's Thesis
 Researcher: Jessamyn Miller, School of Theatre Education
 Phone: (720) 886-4906 E-mail: jmiller101@cherrycreekschools.org
 Advisor: Dr. Mary Schuttler Phone: (970) 351-1926 Email: mary.schuttler@unco.edu

Parents & Guardians,

You are receiving this letter because your student has been chosen to participate in Sky Vista Middle School's spring musical *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*. This particular production also happens to be the focus of my thesis as I endeavor toward obtaining my masters in Theatre Education at the University of Northern Colorado. I plan to work closely with each of your students as we dive into this classic play inspired by the *Peanuts* comic strip. The process for selection included announcements over our school wide intercom about week-long auditions held after school from 3-4pm. Students were required to memorize a duo script or monologue and 16 bars of the opening number "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown." There was also a required memorized song for a select group of students during a Callback session, which allowed for Mrs. Polmateer and me to see a couple of students again before we made our final casting decisions. Tech Crew members are selected based on their willingness to sign up for a specific crew and teacher recommendations turned in during or before our first informational meeting.

The purpose of my thesis is to produce Clark Gesner's musical to heal the wounds of the recent violent events in Aurora, Colorado by examining themes of compassion, friendship, and overcoming obstacles. *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* will aid greatly in the recovery of spirits in this community. Furthermore, I hope for the actors, technicians, and audiences to make connections through Charles Schulz' uplifting and hilarious characters. There was never a more relevant need for a production with an innocent message and an idealist character such as Charlie Brown who overcomes immense troubles in seas of doubt. Not only does this musical provide an opportunity for entertainment, but also recovery in a community that desperately needs positivity.

If you grant permission and if your child indicates to us a willingness to participate we will rehearse on our school's stage in the cafeteria four days a week from 3 to 4pm. The cast

will meet Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday afternoons for sixteen weeks. In the last two weeks of the rehearsal process, the rehearsals will run from 3-5pm. There will be one Saturday rehearsal from 12-4pm for all cast and crew. Please refer to the cast schedule for specific dates and times. At each rehearsal, performers will rehearse their lines and stage movement. They will also participate in a character rehearsal where, as a group, they will develop their character's specific walk, body positions, and objectives.

Technicians will work together in groups (Lights/Sound Crew, Costume/Props Crew, and Stage Makeup Crew) to create the initial designs for the performance. They will start coming to rehearsals at eight weeks into the process to create the final set pieces, painting projects, and costume/prop creations.

Students will perform one preview show for the school the Wednesday before our production opens. Coming to see this preview show is optional for the school. Students will perform two night shows in our school's cafeteria/auditorium at 7:00pm. Cast and crew are required to attend the "Strike" rehearsal the Monday after the final performance to clean up the stage area and take down the set pieces.

I will be using observations from rehearsals and the final monetary total to determine the success of the show.

Randomly selected students will be asked to complete a weekly journal about their experiences. If information from those journals is used, their names will not be included. Instead numerical identifiers will replace names. In fact, the names of subjects will not appear in any professional report of this research. I may videotape or take pictures of the rehearsals and performances to back up the notes taken during research. Be assured that I intend to keep the contents of these tapes private, unless you give permission below for their use as an aid in my master's courses at UNC.

I foresee no risks to subjects beyond those that are normally encountered while rehearsing a musical.

Having read the above and having had an opportunity to ask any questions, please sign below if you would like to allow your student to participate in this research. If you have any concerns about selection or treatment of your student as a participant, please contact me, Jessamyn Miller, at Sky Vista Middle School, (720) 886-4906 or at jmiller101@cherrycreekschools.org. If you do not wish to allow your student to participate in my research, they may still be a part of the production and I will not use pictures or any information referring to them in my research. Thank you for assisting me with my research.

Sincerely,

Jessamyn Miller

Participation is voluntary. You may decide not to allow your student to participate in this study and if (s)he begins participation you may still decide to stop and withdraw at any time. Your decision will be respected and will not result in loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Having read the above and having had an opportunity to ask any questions, please sign below if you would like to participate in this research. A copy of this form will be given to you to retain for future reference. If you have any concerns about your selection or treatment as a research participant, please contact the Office of Sponsored Programs, Kepner Hall, University of Northern Colorado Greeley, CO 80639; 970-351-2161.

Child's Full Name (please print)

Child's Birth Date (month/day/year)

Parent/Guardian's Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date

If you give permission for Mrs. Miller to use videotape or pictures of your student's performance for instructional purposes in her masters Theatre courses please initial here:

Initials