

## **EDUCATIONAL THEATRE: A DEFINITION**

**Educational theatre is a creative, practical activity.** Its participants learn the dignity of human labor through a variety of tasks. They master the techniques of handling tools, electrical equipment, paint, lumber, and sewing materials. They learn to sell tickets, to make and upholster furniture, and to launder clothing. They draw upon their knowledge of mathematics, physics, speech, art, journalism, music, English, dance, history, literature, industrial arts, psychology, homemaking, and foreign languages, and combine all these to produce a play.

**Educational theatre is a creative, culturally enlightening activity.** Its participants learn to appreciate the great literary masterpieces of Moliere, Shakespeare, Shaw and the Greeks as well as noted contemporary playwrights. Art appreciation is engendered through study of good literature, music, dance and visual arts.

**Educational theatre is a creative, democratic activity.** Students learn the principles of democracy and civic responsibility through working in close harmony. The natural bonding which occurs during rehearsal periods, crew responsibilities, meeting deadlines, settling differences with tolerance, leading and being led; these aspects of a functional democracy always present in a free society are inherent to play production.

**Educational theatre is a creative activity that has personal and therapeutic values.** Students develop self-confidence, poise, initiative, resourcefulness, self-discipline and independent thought while appreciating the abilities and efforts of others. They learn the importance of orderly procedure, and detailed planning. Students experience keenly a sense of belonging in the midst of an outlet for physical, emotional, and mental concerns. Theatre provides a defined purpose for staying in school while paying closer attention to scholastic pursuits.

**Educational theatre is a creative activity that provides a basis for success in any avenue of the student's future.** Training in theatre prepares young people for a variety of careers and for the skills necessary for a rich personal life.

Therefore, educational theatre is a creative segment of academic life that becomes more than an extracurricular activity, more than a medium of entertainment, and more than just a class play.

—Based on writings by Dr. F. Loren Winship