This scrapbook presents a picture of the Bennington Dance Group's 1949 tour. The articles were written by members of the group. Pictures and stage plans were drawn by Barbara Corey. The scrapbook was compiled and edited by Barbara Corey and Joan DuBrow.

The touring Dance Group of Winter Period 1949 was first organized in June 1948. All students interested in taking a concert program out gathered together with Miss Hill and Mr. Bales and proceeded to think up clans for the coming year. Due to the financial situation and the necessity to make money during non-resident term, we decided to spend most of the term on individual jobs along with rehearsals. The tour proper was set for March 1 through March 15. Patsi Birsh was elected chairman of the group, Doris Robbins was asked to act as both accompaniest and dancer, and Mancy Smith as technical director.

Letters to schools and colleges telling them of the prospective tour went out in September and October. After a few answers came in, we sent second letters out asking for transportation expenses, overnight accommodations, and a variable performance fee. With the aid of wires and phone calls we managed to set a few dates before Christmas vacation and settled on the personnel of the group which included: Patsi Birsh, Helen Cappel, Barbara Corey, Joan DuBrow, Allegra Fuller, Gail Greig, Betty Anne Gillett, Doris Robbins, Bert Prensky, special student in dance on the G.I. Bill, and Nancy Smith, technician.

By the middle of January the following dates were set:

March 2----Skidmore College-Saratoga Springs, New York

March 4---St. Margaret's School, Waterbury, Conn.

March 7----Cornell University, Ithaca, New York March 8----Spence School, New York City

March 9----Adult Education Society--Springfield, Mass.

March 10 --- Boston - (sponsorship of the Dance League)

March 11----Providence R.I. YWCA

March 15 --- Bergen Junior College, Teaneck, N.J.

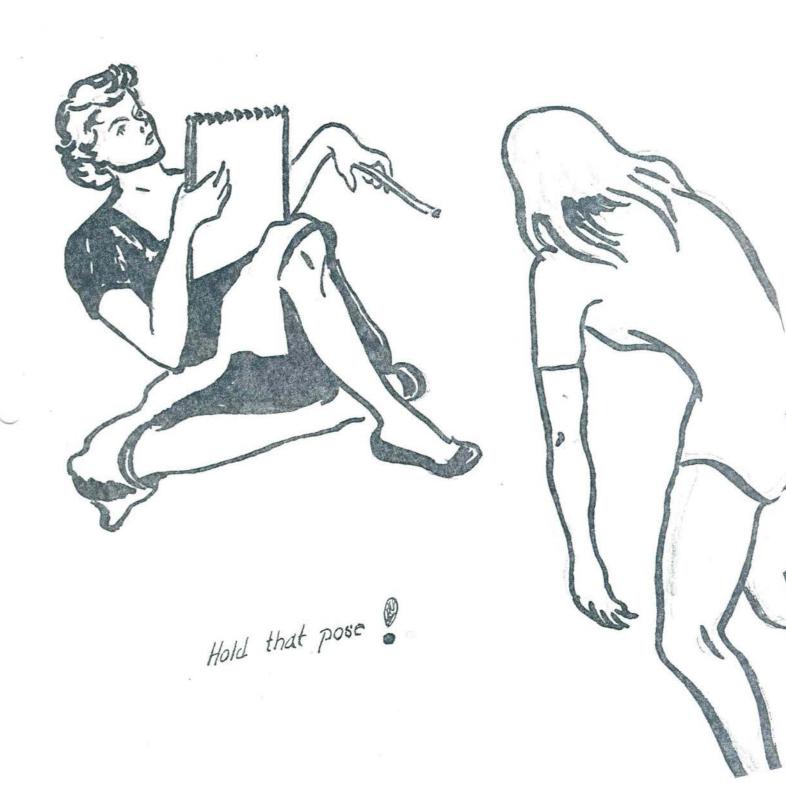
During this time, Chicky and Bunny were lost in the stacks of the public library, Borbie was in Kansas with the state architect, Joan DuBrow working for the Community Center in Santa Monica, Cal.,

Allegra at the World Travel Agency, Doris the smiling receptionist at RCA, Bert on tour with the Dudley-Maslow-Bales Group,
Gail was ushering and working for the Girl Scouts, and Patsi
ushered at the City Center and took care of business and correspondence.

Business during this time consisted of setting of dates, prices, questionnaires on theatre facilities, publicity press book, (with three stories-educational, general, who's who), glossy photos, rehearsal scheduling, and transportation, which was landled by Allegra.

Rehearsals started formally on February 15. During this week we worked evenings and beginning with the 22nd during the day from 9 to 6 try ng to leave evenings free. Long blocks of time worked out best, since it gave us the chance to work intensively on a few groups and run through others as well.

We got a block of studio space at the Ryder-Frankel studio which gave us a home base and used the Humphrey-Weidman studio, Dance Players, and Vila Wolff Studios as well. After a dress rehearsal at the High School of performing arts, and a dismal run through brightened by words of advice and cheer from Mr. Bales, we packed up and started off for our first date, Skidmore.





Our first performance was at the High School of Performing Arts on Friday, February 25th.Our as yet unorganized little group had a dress rehearsal at the school Thursday, from three to seven o'clock. We ran through the numbers in performance order, with Ir.Bales fortunately present to criticize. Our run-through took a good deal of time: Nancy found the victrola to be inadequate, the stage was very shallow and we kept bumping into two large pillars, placed for some unknown and disturbing reason on either side of the stage. However, we managed to get through the afternoon with a pep talk by Ir.Bales as the climax.

The next morning we arrived at the school at nine o'clock in the morning; our performance was scheduled for eleven o'clock. We pressed what costumes we could, set up our make-up kits in the dressing room, which was fairly adequate with long dressing tables and mirrors but a surfeit of lights, and ran through the program for spacing, entrances and exits. The unhappy vic kept getting out of order; Allegra and Helaine, whose dances depended on the proper functioning of the vic, were in a cold sweat at the end of the rehearsal.

However, nothing daunted, we gave a performance. Nancy introduced each number with an informal talk. We tried to keep the entire performance on this plane, that is, informal, and explained to the audience that our performance was in the nature of a dress rehearsal. This was perhaps unwise! Our performance was a trifle disorganized but our audience was very enthusiastic. We got the impression that, although many of them, or rather most of them, did not understand entirely the content of our program, they liked it just the same. One disconcerting factor however, was that fully one third of the audience was composed of students who took dance, mostly ballet; we felt that these students viewed us with a critical and carping eye?

After the performance, we were invited to lunch by Miss Hill, Elizabeth Goode and Eve Gentry, heads of the dance department. At The luncheon we met a few of the dance students, and had an opportunity to discuss Bennington and its dance program with them. Some of us stayed to watch part of Eve Gentry's class; the rest hurried downstairs to pack the costumes.

On the whole, we felt that we gave a tolerably good performance, considering the nature of the stage, the bad vic, no lights, etc. At any rate, we experienced for the first time an audience reaction, which was stimulating, to say the least!

Joan DuBrow



Do they HAVE to paint EVERY room in this building?



But, I've got to stay healthy!

were en route to Saratoga Springs, and a performance at the Skidmore College. We arrived at Saratoga at 1:48, and were met at the station by two students. After leaving the bags at our Mid-Victorian rooming house (Bert occupied the entire third floor) we preceeding directly to the theatre.

We immediately hung up the costumes and started to press. Mancy found herself with a wonderful and willing stage crew, and took charge of the technical details. We had a run through for spacing, entrances and exits, and light cues from 3:00 until 6:00. The dressing room was excellent, with individual lights for each person, and adequate costume space. The theatre was small, with a rather bumpy floor, and a huge blue cyclorama, separated from the stage by a rather inconvenient little ditch, into which we almost fell several times during the run-through. The recording facilites and piano were excellent and the stage crew most helpful.

After our run-through we ate dinner with the students in one of the dining rooms and went back at 7:00 to begin out make-up. We had ample time to make-up and have a 20 minute warm-up afterwards.

Our performance was not as high as it might have been, but we felt, that for a first performance, it was fairly good. There were one or two bad costume waits, and the curtain proved recalcitrant one during the performance. Our dressing room was blessed with a Peeping Tom, who made his appearance at several unscheduled intervals! The audience was large and enthusiastic.

Afterwards, we all went out to "Mother Goldstein's" for a bit, and then back to cold baths and bed. Next morning we left on the 12:30 bus, en route to Waterbury. This, by the way, marked the beginning of our troubles with the bus company. Due to our 24 bags, we held the Albany bus up for ten minutes!

Joan DuBrow

And listen with cut.... tention (That elusive G chord 1) - Chickie



"Plant Life above timberline or

did you bring your hair vibbons

for Fuller's group?"



Skidmore College

000

On March 3, a weary little group stepped out of the bus and found themselves in Waterbury, Connecticut. We were scheduled to give a performance the next day at St. Margaret's. Pat, Bunny, and Mancy went directly to the school to investigate the stage, and to find out our rehearsal hours, while the rest of us proceeded to the Hotel Elton. After a short rest period, we all went out to dinner and then to a movie, which provided a needed break in our daily routine of travel.

The next morning Joan, Bunny, Pat, and Nancy went to the school at 9:30 to unpack the costumes and set up the dressing room; the rest of the group arrived at 12:30. We ironed the costumes, set up the dressing room, and were kindly provided with a sumptuous snack of dozens of crackers and milk. After a short break, we ran through the numbers in performance order for spacing, entrances and exits.

Our facilites at St. Margaret's were not very good. We dressed on the stage, behind curtains, and had to drape the costumes on the backs of chairs, for want of hanging space. There was only one mirror in which to make up; however, since we were performing in the gym, we used street make-up only. The school provided us with screens for our entrances and exits, at either side of the gym. There were no lights, and we were literally in the audience's face! The floor was very slippery, and several of the girls had to perform barefoot, rather than take the chance of slipping in ballet shoes. We had no curtain, and were forced to walk politely across the stage when we finished each dance.

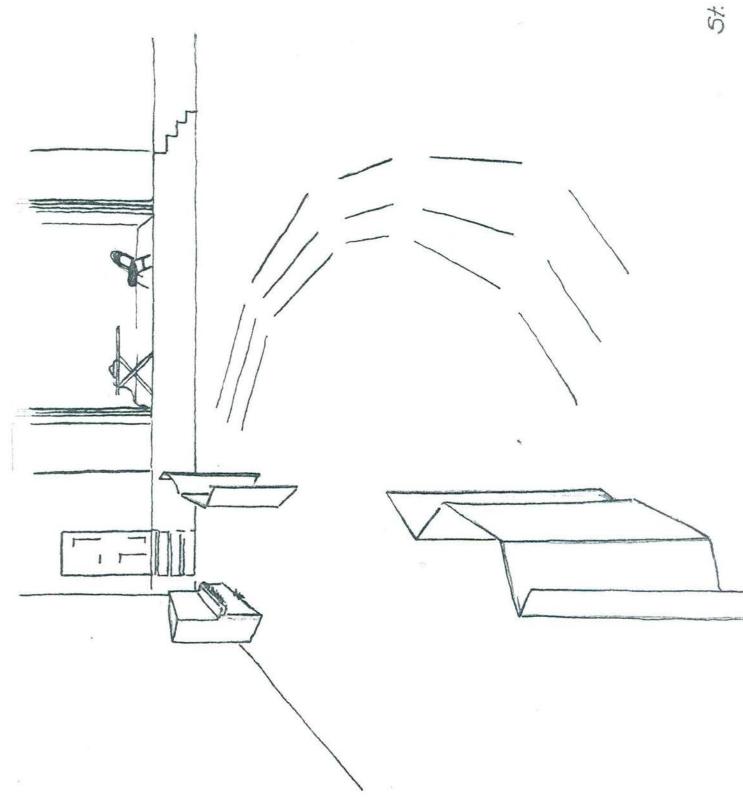
Our performance began at 4:00. The audience consisted

mainly of school children, interspersed with a few faculty members. Our performance was not too high, but we were very enthusiastically received.

After the performance we all went into a private dining room and had dinner at 5:30. Needless to say, Bert elicited much attention from the girls at St. Margaret's!

The school provided us with a truck, in which to ride to the station. We all sat.in the back of the truck, clutching it, each other for dear life, and singing lustily! We caught the 6:43 and arrived in New York at 9:05.

Joan DuBrow





St. Magg's Chariot

When rehearsal halls were hard to get, and expensive to boot, we asked Viola Wolff if she would like us to give a performance at her studio, in exchange for three mornings of rehearsal time. That's how we got out forth performance date on Friday, March 5th. Since we were already in New York, there was no travelling problem.

The performance was set for two o'clock, so we arrived at one from Patsi's house, which was two doors away. We had pressed the costumes there, and after a quick lunch(about the forth one Mrs. Birsh had very kindly given us) we hoisted the costumes on hangers over our shoulders and flew next door. We dropped all our clothes in one room, and after a quick technical run-through on exits and entrances, the girls went back to the room, from which Bert was promptly removed by Mrs.Wolff. He was to have a private dressing room!

Since there were no lights, we wore street make-up. There were approximately forty people present, mostly young students of Mrs. Wolff's. Some were accompanied by their mammas. All of the children were so very polite that no one laughed, even when we tok a high dive on the well polished floor with a concrete base.

The performance was, on the whole, a bit strained and not deep enough, but we managed to pull through. We suggest that touring groups in the future make this kind of arrangement; it is very worth while and saved us a good deal of money.

Bunny Gillett





erris dog Cedric-always in the way!

On March 6 all of us met at the dismal hour of 7:30 A.M. at the Greyhound Terminal to start for Cornell. After a seven hour trip to the bus terminal at Ithaca plus fifteen minutes of chaos in two cabs to the college, the girls ran for their beds at Balch Hall, and Bert was ushered to a Fraternity house. At six we went over to Willard Straight Hall to have dinner with members of the dance club, Miss Atherton, and sponsors. After dinner we took a short trip over to Miss Atherton's studio to look at some dance pictures, and by 11 all were asleep.

Up again for breakfast at 7:15 and rehearsal in Miss Atherton's studio at 9. We started out with a rather painful warm up and then concentrated on groups. At 11 we literally hauled everything over to the theatre in W S Hall and started pressing and organizing rehearsals. Time out for a quick lunch and then back again for a spacing rehearsal while Mancy worked out light plots feeling like a queen with her inter-communications system. During this time, all idle ones were directed toward the iron. By 4:30 all the dances were spaced and we were ready for a run through with lights, curtain, music, and all. Supper in the cafeteria at 6:30, make up at 7, warm up at 8, and at 8:20 we were on.

The house, which seated 350 was packed full due to the wonderful publicity all over campus which included a banner stretched between two trees, countless posters, press releases, and pictures. The admission price was \$1.20.

The fecilities in the theatre were very good. The lights, flexible, the ground cloth adequate, and the space, very good.

Nancy had a good crew helping her, and the lights were done well. We had two dressing rooms, one for Bert one flight up from the stage, and one for the girls two flights up. The prop room adjacent to the stage was used for quick changes. All the costomes were pressed and hung, and the backstage organization as well as intensive technical rehearsing helped make it a smooth performance.

The program was extremely high at Cornell. We were all very excited by the publicity and hospitality at the school, and were 'etermined to make it a good show. The audience was very responsive, there were no mishaps, and the pace of the show was too fast if anything.

After packing up, (Thanks Joan and Chickie) we left the thratre in time for a hamburger and a short beer on the way to the train. At 11:59 we were en route to New York and then it was "All night long, choo choo until 8 A.M., when a very grimy group of ten, plus twenty five suitcases, were deposited unceremoniously by the Lehigh Valley Line at Penn Station.

"To were invited back to do a new show, and suggest that future groups try to make it a definite date.

Pat Birsh

CONCERNING BENNINGTON COLLEGE ---

a four-year college for women, in Bennington, Vermont...
whose curriculum includes not only the performing arts,
drama, dance, and music, but also the accepted academic
fields of the social sciences, natural sciences and mathematics,
literature and languages, and the visual arts...
the ten week period from the first of the year to mid-March
is called

THE NON-RESIDENT TERM

a systematic part of the student's whole college program, when she complements her college study with a very different kind of experience...a job, with pay if possible...students work in all kinds of enterprises--factories, stores, government or social agencies, research laboratories, hospitals, schools, offices...sometimes travel, technical study, or academic work of a specialized nature is substituted for a job...one project undertaken by Bennington students this year is the

BEHNINGTON DANCE GROUP

composed of ten of the dance students, introducing centemporary dance to those unacquainted with it, and presenting to those who know the dance as example of what one group of young dancers is doing today...all of the dances in this program were composed by students during their study in the past two years...the Dance Group this season has engagements under the auspices of celleges, schools, and other groups in New England, New York, and New Jersey... under the supervision of two well-known teachers of the dance, william Bales, of the Dudley-Maslow-Bales Trio, and Martha Hill, who also directs the work in dance at New York University, the program of

STUDIES AT BENTINGTON

for the dance students includes technique, composition, stageeraft, dance history and criticism, and participation in the
weekly and semiannual workshops...teaching at Bennington is done
by the method that will best serve the subject matter...lectures,
discussions, conferences and tuterials are all used...direct
communication between teacher and student is maintained by many
small classes and numerous conferences...each student sees her
counselor once a week...in these meetings, the counselor can unify
the student's program, pace it correctly, and by gauging her
progress at short intervals, indicate to her the most immediate
tasks...in all fields the aim is to teach the student how to deal
directly with materials...this is achieved in the sciences by
laboratory experimentation, in the arts by performances, and in all
fields by a critical approach which necessitates independent
thinking.

SPENCE SCHOOL

On March 8 we arrived at Pennsylvania Station at 8:00 AM after an eight hour trip from Ithmica, New York where we had performed the night before at Cornell University. After breakfast in the station we went directly to the Spence School for girls. We arrived at 9:15, were met by Miss Port, saw the stage, unpacked the costumes and ironed them. We then proceeded to space the dances. At 11:00 we left the school in order to go home to rest. We returned at 1:45.

The stage at Spence was very small, the back of it was curved in shape like an arc, and the floor was slippery. The school furnished us with a phonograph and a grand piano which was situated on the auditorium floor at the side near a widow. What few lights we had were reds, blues, and whites and offered little variation. The dressing room which had one long mipror was up one flight of stairs.

The performance was not good for these reasons: (1) We had acquired little sleep the night before on the train, (2) the fuse of the phonograph blew out in the middle of a dance necessitating a quick change of program. Solos with piano accompaniement were sandwiched inbetween while a new phonograph was found. Such a change caused much confusion and waits inbetween dances because of unavoidable costume changes.

The audience was small and knew little about dance. On the whole the dance group was depressed with the performance.



On March ninth, the Bennington Dance Group gave a performance in the auditorium of the Technical High School in Springfield, Massachusetts

This was an afternoon performance, and therefore required time in the morning for ironing of costumes, arranging the dressing rooms, and setting up the lights. In order to save wear and tear on the majority of the group, three of the girls:Bunny, Joan, and Mancy, elected to go to Springfield on March eighth, so as to take care of the necessary details. The rest of the group arrived at 12:30 p.m. on the ninth.

We were first taken to lunch by Miss Ruth Evans, director of Physical Education in the Springfield public schools, after which we rehearsed and spaced dances until 2:30. There was no time for an organized warm-up, so each member of the group warmed-up individually.

The performance began at 3:30, with the audience marching in to the music of the high school band. There were an estimated 1200 in the audience, which was composed mainly of school children. Even though there were a few adults in the audience, it was definitely an uneducated one, as far as dance was concerned. There was a great deal of laughing at Chickie's and Bert's solos and the group dances of Bunny and Allegra. The performance as a whole was fairly high.

After the performance, we all had dinner at Bunny's house and the good time there served to relieve the tension of the past hectic days. We were all put up at various neighboring houses,

d the next morning we took the 10:30 a.m. train for Eoston.

Probably our highest performance was the one we gave in Soston. This program was under the sponsership of the Dance League, a newly formed organization of dance teachers, and those from the Boston colleges who were interested in dance.

We arrived in Boston at one o'clock from Springfield, after a two and a half hour train ride. We debarked at Back Bay station and were met by Allegra's cousin, into whose car all the twenty four bags were stowed. The Y.W.C.A. however, was in walking distance, so we all trooped there on foot.

When we arrived at the "Y", we all suffered quite a shock, for Allegra, who had drived over with the baggage, said breathlessly, "They changed the program to two o'clock! It's on the bulletin board." All hearts all stopped- it was now me-fifteen. A performance would be impossible! But there it was on the bulletin board: "2:00-Bennington College Dance Group" Patsi, full of trembling, asked at the desk and fortunately it turned out to mean that we had the use of the theatre from two o'clock until the time of the performance.

We then proceeded to the theatre and dressing room on the second floor. The dressing room was a large meeting room adjoining the theatre, which gave us plenty of room to dress in, but made the job of make-up quite difficult. We set up two long tables with chairs on eitler side, so that everybody had plenty of room, but there were no mirrors and the only lights were four dim over-head ones. Before the performance we were provided with one more standing light; this did not really help but only caused deeper shadows. We were not able to make up in the "john" as it was a public one and frequently used, as we found out later furing the performance.

We hung up the costumes on a big clothes rack immediately. Since we could not use the theatre until two o'clock, we all



So we'll tand in the basement, so what?

departed for lunch. We ate in a very poor cafeteria in the building, feturning at two o'clock to the theatre. On our return, Pat found a note from Mrs. Greene, our hostess so to speak, saying that she had stepped in while we were out. This was the first reception we ad gotten. A few minutes later Joan Hunt Bushnell arrived, saying that the arrangements seemed to be going very well and that Simmons, Bouve, Sargent and Radcliffe had all been given seats to sell, and all of them had been sold and there were requests for more so it looked like a good audience- pause for breath:

This news spurred us on. We started pressing right away with an iron and ironing board provided by the "Y". We did not start a run through until about three o'clock as Nancy was forced to take up the whole stage, fixing the light jells. However, we examined the stage and spaced out numbers during this time. The stage was small, with more width than depth. There were awo doors for entrances. A tan velvet curtain covered the side walls and formed a back drop. The floor was highly polished during the afternoon run-through. There were both over-head and foot-lights and a spot from the balcony. The stage itself was about five feet off the auditorium floor. The seats were merely camp chairs on a level floor. The seating cpacity was 500 people.

From three o(clock until six o'clock we were able to do a straight run-through with a little extra time spent on Bunny's dance.

At six o'clock, we all went out to dinner, most of us eating at a drug store, and returned a little before seven. We stated making up right away. Our excitment was at a high pitch at the thought of a large audience, which Mrs. Greene told us included Margaret Lyold, of the "Christian Science Monitor." Unfortunately, Miss Lyold did

not come, but since we did not know this until after the performance, the adrenalin was there just the same. We were also a bit nervouswby the thought that we were the first organization to be sponsored by the Dance League, and on our performance depended the fate of the League. (Anyway it made us have high performance energy!) This was also a financial gamble, as we had relinquished all profits, and had even loaned the League \$25 out of our own money to help out.

By 7:45 our make-up was completed and we all had a good 20 minute warm -up.

We were ready to start at out scheduled time of 8:15, but the performance was delayed until 8:25, as people were still coming in.

We were more norvous than we had been in any other performance. There was a bit of confusion to begin with as we suddenly realized we had not made arrangements to announce the cancellation of the first number.

Barbie, in her "Out of the Skein" was finally elected. This somewhat threw off Barbie's singing in the first number, but as we began to feel the audience was very much with us, we settled down and gave a good performance straight through, with warmer applause at every number. The numbers that we had had most trouble with as far as the comprehension of the audience went: Allegra's group, Bert's and Chickie's solos and Allegra's solo, were taken very well, with no laughs on the first three, and may laughs on the last. The real treat of the evening was the "Blues" which required five minutes for thunderous applause, with many demands for encores.

After the performance many people streamed back-stage, including the Dance League, individual friends, and Bennington girls in Boston. Everybody seemed very excited; some of the Bennington girls said it was better than any work shop they had seen, and Mrs. Greene promised that if we would come back next year, they would get us a bigger and better theatre.

By 11:15 the costumes and we each departed to individual

homes, satisfied with the evening's work.

Allegra Fuller



"Bunny, what is your I.Q.?"

We were to meet at Grand Central
8:45 A.M
the Upper Level

Retort; " That's right! Penn. Station 10:30 p.m. Lower Level.



We took an 11:00 train out of Boston and arrived in Providence around 12:30. We went immediately to the Y.W.CA. where our performance of March 12 was to be given. After putting vaway our bags, and making sure that Bert had a room for the night at the Y.M.C.A. we went out for a quick lunch and returned at 2:00.

During the afternoon we all took turns pressing the costumes. Chickie, Joan, and Gail set up the dressing room and we all were on call for spacing rehearsals of the numbers. At 5:30 we had dinner at the "Y" and returned to run-through exits and entrances.

We performed in the gym of the "Y" and had as much space as we needed. The stage was decorated tastefully with a gold lame sequinned curtain and black screens for our entrances and exits! The curtain undoubtedly stole our glory as the sequins must have attracted everyone's attention during the performance! The lighting was most inadequate and we had to retire in undignified haste at the end of each number in complete darkness, for we had to have a blackout between each dance. We used the locker room to dress in and for once each person had an individual cubby hole in which to put her costumes!

Rehearsing our entrances and exits with the blackout took so much time, that we could not have an organized warm-up; we barely got our make-up on in time for the performance, which began at \$:15. In spite of these difficulties, our performance was quite high; we were determined not to have a let down after our successfull Boston performance. The audience was large and enthusiastic.

After the performance, the dance group had coffee and doughnuts with its sponsers, members of the board of trustees of the "Y". And after this, naturally, we repaired to a near by diner for heavier refreshment!

We left the next morning at 9:30 for New York. Our bus trin was pleasant; we all got a dose of culture that day by reading True Story, Fortune, Cosmopolitan, and Physical Culture magazine all the way down to New York!

Joan DuBrow

Our last performance was given at Bergen Junior

College in Teaneck, New Jersey, on March 15. We met on the

afternoon of the 14th and proceeded, via the subway and

bus, to the college for a rehearsal. Pat, Barbara, and Gail

had gone over a little earlier in the afternoon, and had

ironed the costumes and set up the dressing. We had a rather

desultory rehearsal for spacing, which was constantly interrupted

by students running in and out of the gymnasium.

The next morning we met at the college at 9:00 for another rehearsal. We ran over entrances and exits and had time for an organized warm-up. Our friend Cort Drake, whose particular function we have not to this day determined, made himself helpful in various small ways, and announced the program.

The stage was rather shallow, but had a fairly smooth floor. We did not have much lighting and poor Doris had to play on a piano which had certainly seen better days.

Mr. Drake announced the program and warned us to be prepared for laughter, as the students had not seen much modern dance. I don't think however, that we were prepared for so much laughter! The students seemed to think that the whole program was one big joke and got hilarious at the most serious dances. Our performance was not very high, partly due to 'an inadequate rehearsal. However, despite the laughter, several students came up to us afterwards and told us how much they had enjoyed the program, so perhaps we made a few converts to modern dance after all!

Our performance began at 11:00 and ended about 12:30. We packed the costumes and straightened the dressing room, a little regretfully. Then we each headed for home to begin preparations for school the next day.

The end of our tour had come.

Joan DuBrow

as Stuge Menager "All in a day's work."





Wed March 2nd

Lv. New York 9:15 AM Grand Central Station Av Saratoga Springs 1:487M

Thurs Murch 3rd

Lu. Saratoga Springs 12:25 A.M. Advordach Trailways Bis

Ar. Albany 1.15 Pm

Lo. Albany 1.40 Pm

Arrew Lines Bus

Ar. Viterbury 5,10 PM

E. Murch 4th

Lo. Waterhay 6:43 P.m

Ar. New York 9.05 P.M Pernsylvana Status

Sat Murch 5th in New York

Sun Murch Lth

Lu. New York 8,00 AM Crayhound Bus Tarm 8" Me+50"

4. Illaca 4.49 PM

Mes. Much 7th

Tura Much 8m

Ar. Now York 8:00 A.M Pennsylvania Stution

Wed March 9th

Lv. New York 9.10 frm Grand Central Station

Ar. Springfield 12:20 AM.

Thus March 10th

Lu. Springfield 10:30 Am

Av. Boston 12:55 AM South Station

Fr. Murch 11th

Lu Boston 11:00 Am South Station

Ar. Prindure 11:55 Am

62 March 12th Lu. Providence Hi po Am Ar Am Tich Cito Pin in hand to