

come blow your horn



encore

volume 7

number 1



Walter Johnson High School

The Senior Class of

WALTER JOHNSON HIGH SCHOOL

presents

come blow your horn

by Neil Simon

Produced and Directed by

Stephen Perialas

Mary Ellen Orvis, Student Director

Produced by special arrangement
with Samuel French, Inc.

November 20 and 21, 1970
Friday and Saturday

The Gymnasium
Eight-Thirty

neil simon : the man and the plays

"My idea of the ultimate achievement in comedy," says Neil Simon, author of Come Blow Your Horn, "is to make a whole audience fall into the floor, writhing and laughing so hard that some of them pass out." If Simon's plays don't have that effect on you, either there's something wrong with you or you are a critic. Regardless of the carping of critics, all the evidence seems to point to the fact that, with audiences everywhere, Simon's plays are always a success.

Neil Simon is the first playwright since Avery Hopwood in 1920 to have four plays (Barefoot in the Park, Sweet Charity, The Odd Couple, and Star-Spangled Girl) running simultaneously on Broadway. He is America's best-paid playwright (\$20,000 a week just on royalties), and he has been described as the country's "hottest writer of comedy," and the "king of all the theatrical jesters in the United States."

Neil Simon's training began in 1946, when he and his older brother, Danny, submitted a sample of their wit to Goodman Ace, and were hired as young writers at CBS. They prospered and ended

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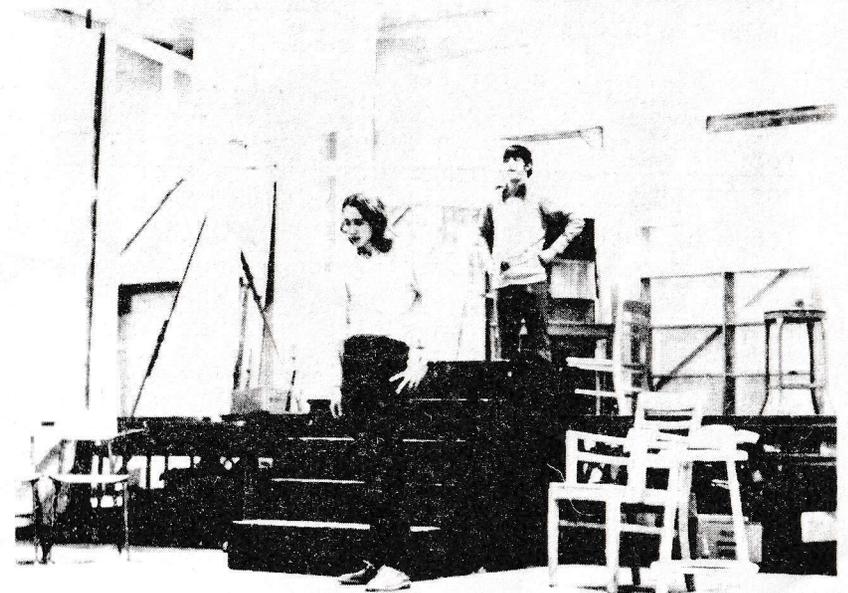
the cast

(IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)

Alan Baker	Steve Cahnman
Peggy Evans	Judy Gibson
Buddy Baker	Steve Mader
Mr. Baker	Pete Vaky
Connie Dayton	Joyce Boyd
Mrs. Baker	Erika Swedberg
A Visitor	Kim Corliss

UNDERSTUDY

Kim Corliss



NEIL SIMON . . . continued

up as TV writers for Jackie Gleason, Sid Caesar, and Phil Silvers. When Simon sold Come Blow Your Horn - and it took him three years to sell it - he gave up TV writing.

Come Blow Your Horn was received rather indifferently by the critics. John McCarten commented in The New Yorker, "I can't blame the boys (Alan and Buddy) for wanting to leave an old homestead aglow with artificial fruit, but I don't think that their carryings on warrant our paying attention to them for three acts." And the Time magazine reviewer remarked, "Come Blow Your Horn seems the best of the season's many bad farce comedies. It must be grouped with the bad ones because it writes most of its scenes in duplicate, smudging some of them to boot; makes most of its jokes in triplicate, and should never make half of them at all." Yet even this critic did mention that the play manages to keep going and has some fresh and funny lines and some diverting scenes and characters. John Chapman, in the New York Daily News commented that the play was, "Warm-hearted and amusing in its achievements."

Simon did a lot better with The Odd Couple. Life said, "For sheer density and frequency of laughter, no comedy in years has topped The Odd Couple." The play is about Oscar, a sportswriter, and Felix, a newswriter, whose wives have left them because they're unfit to live with. Teaming up as roommates in Oscar's sloppy apartment, they prove unfit to live with anybody. What Simon winds up by saying, says Life, is that "what's wrong with most marriages is not crazy sex, but just crazy people." Newsweek said of Simon: "He writes at the top level of a gag writer's capacity, slipping now and then into hack, but mostly producing lines of freshness and bite, if not of deep comic wisdom."

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the scenes

TIME: The present.

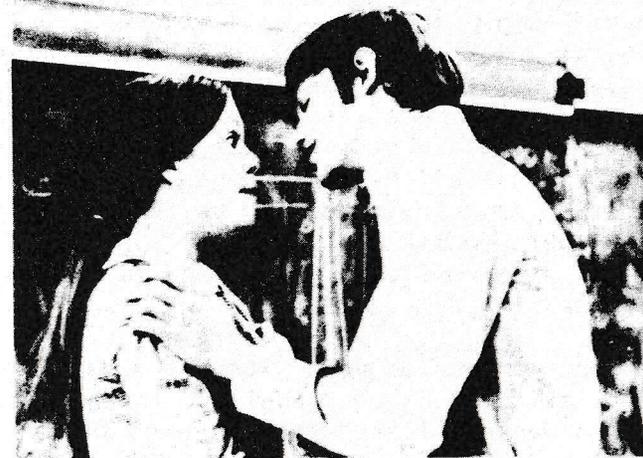
PLACE: Alan's bachelor apartment
in the East 60's,
New York City.



ACT I: Six o'clock in the evening.

ACT II: Immediately after.

ACT III: Late afternoon.
Three weeks later.



*State Law prohibits smoking on the school grounds.
In case of fire, walk, do not run, to the nearest exit.*

*Please refrain from taking flash pictures
during the performance. THANK YOU*

a look at broadway

While the word "Broadway" has now come to evoke images of burnt-out heroin addicts and pushers in dark sun-glasses, it should nonetheless be remembered for its more pleasant associations. Broadway has been, and continues to be, the focus of all American theater. For better or for worse, Broadway remains the only true creative center in American theater.

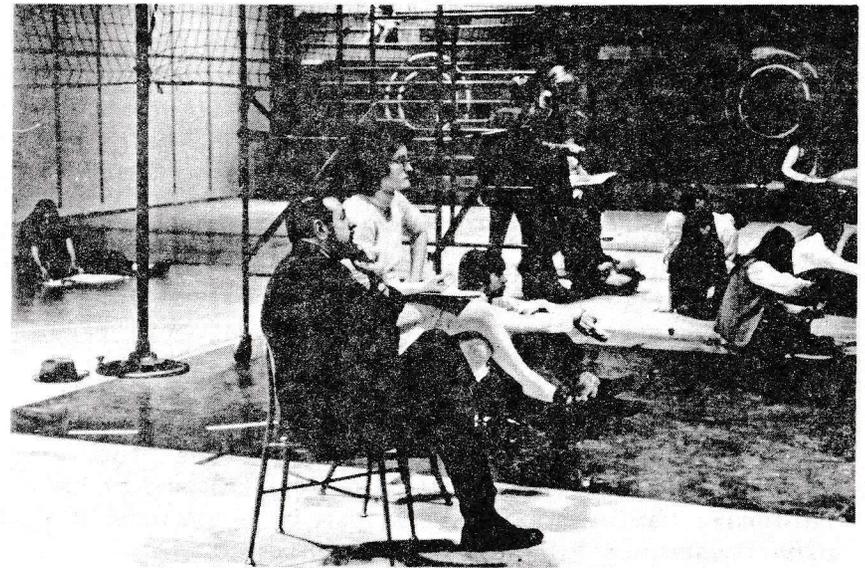
Since World War II a number of significant trends and major changes have been observed in Broadway productions. The first post-war writer to achieve Broadway stardom was Tennessee Williams, when, in 1945, his play, The Glass Menagerie, introduced him to New York theater audiences. One of the few plays which was as much admired by critics as by audiences, it is now established as one of the rare classics of American theater. Following Williams, and equal in stature, was Arthur Miller, whose melodramatic All My Sons opened in 1947. Two years later, Miller followed with Death of a Salesman, a play which while not unanimously accepted by critics, was a box-office success, and is now considered a classic.

The post-war period also witnessed the revival of the popularity of Eugene O'Neill. In the 1920's O'Neill, who was considered the foremost dramatist in America, had been the recipient of Nobel and Pulitzer prizes. After spending twelve years away from New York, he allowed his play, The Iceman Cometh, to be produced in 1946. The critics were a hung jury, and the play was not a commercial success. But when, after O'Neill's death, the play was done again, this time off-Broadway, it was hailed as

production staff

Mary Ellen Orvis, Stage Manager
Jeremy Jacobs, Assistant Stage Manager

Crew Chiefs:
Abby Franklin, Costumes
Mike Thompson, Lights
Sally Wile, Make-up
Debbie Bean, Paints
Sally Freidman, Props
Mark Willcox, Sound
Keith Miller, Stage and Construction



Costumes Crew: Lyn Horton*, Tina Brubaker,
Kathy Douglass, Becky Fisher, Lynne
Hawkesworth, Mary Oakley, Pat Phillips,
Mary Ann Raftery.



O'Neill's major work, and led to the production of Long Day's Journey into Night (his last play). The huge success of this play led to a revival of interest in O'Neill's work. During this time, Williams had had good fortune with Cat on a Hot Tin Roof and Miller a mixed reception for The Crucible, and very little success with A View From the Bridge.

Since that time the emphasis of Broadway productions has shifted from drama (as Othello and Long Day's Journey are drama) to theater (as Maurice Chevalier and Carousel are theater), and very few major dramatists have been seen on Broadway. One of the few still writing drama is Edward Albee, who was first heard off-Broadway with his one-act The Zoo Story. In 1962 he had his first Broadway production, Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?. It was as successful as it was controversial. Many consider it destined for classic status. Critical opinion of Albee's subsequent plays has been mixed.

But all these are Broadway drama. In recent seasons theater has practically monopolized Broadway, and drama appears to be a declining art. Perhaps a quotation from Broadway critic Theophilus Lewis will clarify this distinction: "Drama grips us through its concern with spiritual conflict and travail while theater, whose scope includes the whole spectrum of human behavior, normal and aberrational, captures our enthusiasm by a variety of other means. . . . Drama has been diluted by entertainment; and the productions, as they stand are essentially a kind of circus - another word for theater." In other words, drama seeks to get beneath the surface and explore depths of understanding and motive. Theater seeks to entertain by reflecting and amplifying the surface. Thus, theater at best serves as a mirror.



production staff

Lights Crew: Jeannine Bierly, Ned Dodds, Carol Sirkis, Gary Weinstein, Graham Woodward.

Make-up Crew: Felicia Burdick*, Cindy Glass, Anita Krichmar, Rosellen Launi, Marcia Mintz, Julie Tang.

Paints Crew: Susan Baldwin*, Andrea Doty, Sue Goodwin, Carol Fanning, Barbara Fine, Lynne Hawkesworth, Marcella Montes de Oca, Storry Norman, Ann Poritzky, Mary Ann Raftery, Peggy Sodee, Joan Stolz.

Props Crew: Carol Sirkis*, Joe Broderick, Annette Brown, Susan Cramer, Lucia Deheiris, Mike Hull, Holly Huyck, Debbie Irvine, Marilyn Laut, Toni Pineau, Jill Wakefield, Nancy Venditti, Riley Williams.

Stage and Construction Crew: Bill Casson, Matt Landon, Pat Loftis, Fred Miller, Mike Wineberg, Chris Westfield.

Sound Crew: Steve Sommer*, Dan Jablonski, Peter Willcox.

* - Assistant Crew Chief



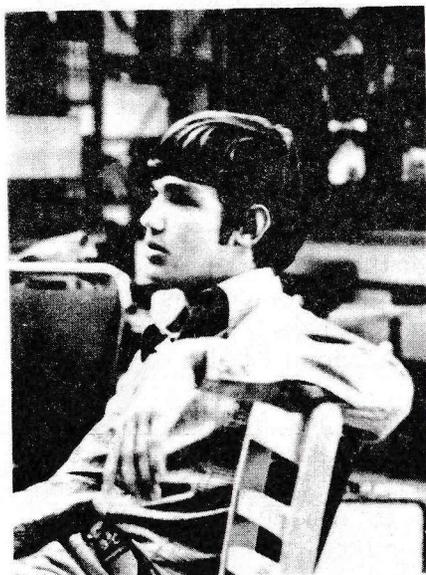
business staff

Marc Gudelsky, House Manager
Dave Gerson, Publicity Manager

Publicity Crew: Debbie Dodderidge, Marc Gudelsky, Margaret Keller, Barbie Parris.

Ushers: Wendy Ahearn, Bob Bond, Cheryl Collins, Debbie Dodderidge, Graham Lamson, Janis Marshall, Bob Moses, Pier Stock, Bill Williams, Beth Winter.

who's who



STEVE CAHNMANN (Alan Baker) Alan Baker is Steve's second big endeavor on the Walter Johnson stage; his first was a starring role in the Apollo of Bellac. Steve has been studying drama for about two years in professional theater and plans to major in Communications at Ithaca College in New York. The main difficulty in portraying his character, Steve says, "is making the character believable."



STEVE MADER (Buddy Baker) Steve feels his role of Buddy is much more difficult than that he had as a pirate in Peter Pan because this time he has lines. Steve really likes his role "because the play is fantastic and the lines are hilarious." The only regret he has is that he isn't in any of the love scenes. As for the future, Steve plans to work for a year and then attend college in Germany.

who's who



JOYCE BOYD (Connie Dayton) Joyce feels the character of Connie is a difficult one to play because she "is so many things simultaneously"; however, with the help of Mr. Perialas as director, Joyce feels she can master the role. Next year Joyce would like to enter the premed program at Stanford and possibly minor in drama.



KIM CORLISS (a Visitor) Kim has a walk-on part in Come Blow Your Horn, but she finds her job as understudy of all the girls in the show most difficult. She has to learn all the girls' lines. Last year, Kim played Gloria Upson in Mame. She hopes to attend the University of Arizona and perhaps major in English.



JUDY GIBSON (Peggy Evans) Judy is also of Apollo of Bellac fame and was recently in the Walter Johnson production of Peter Pan. In Come Blow Your Horn Judy is facing the new experience of playing a character that has a totally different personality than that of her own; the character being "anything but innocent."

who's who



ERIKA SWEDBERG (Mother) Erika's previous stage experience was acquired in school in Germany. The difficulty of her role, Erika feels, lies in, "projecting age." Erika maintains correspondence with pen pals in seven countries, among them, Taro Yamade, a friend of Yoko Nakato who was an exchange student at WJ last year.



PETE VAKY (Father) Pete's role as the father is his big debut on the Walter Johnson stage. Pete says he enjoys his part because "the lines are really funny and sarcastic." Pete is also a columnist for the Pitch. After graduation Pete plans to attend Georgetown University and major in either law or political science.



MARY ELLEN ORVIS (Stage Manager) Mary Ellen came to WJ in her junior year and has several productions to her credit, including Fantasia, Opera Night, and Mame. The major complication in this production, Mary Ellen claims, "is achieving a really contemporary atmosphere." Mary Ellen also enjoys playing the recorder and collecting African stamps.

A LOOK AT BROADWAY . . . continued

Many other changes have occurred along with the emphasis on theater, though not always in a strict cause-effect relationship. Since production has become the most important part of Broadway, the director and producer have replaced the author as the people who make the final decisions. The audiences have changed too, rejecting the penetrating, if not always entertaining products of the modern European theater (Brecht, Beckett, Sartre, and Frisch have all failed on Broadway) in favor of the familiar musical comedy formula and occasionally artistic musical plays. Also partly due to the emphasis on production is the spiraling cost of staging a Broadway play.

While many people see these and other trends as revealing the stagnation of Broadway, there are critics with hopeful words. To quote Elliot Norton: "One of these days, perhaps, the tide will turn and a new wave of great young playwrights will appear, to find waiting for them on Broadway an alert, discriminating and responsible young audience. It has happened before; it can happen again."

- David Kosofsky

credits



wardrobes	Franklin Simon
chandelier	Atlantic
props	The Hecht Company
lounge chair	Home Furniture and Appliance
lumber	Mizell Lumber and Hardware Company
pole lamp	Modern Design, Inc.
paints	Paramount Theatrical Supplies
hardware	People's Hardware
glass bricks	Samuel C. Boyd

the bachelor fling

The typical young bachelor stands in a class alone. He is independent of his parents but not yet tied down to a wife. His is a swinging world of girls, parties, nightclubs, nightcaps, dining, dancing, and four-day weekends at the ski lodge.

There are, however, two major threats to his freewheeling existence: his parents and his fiancée-to-be, both of whom want him to marry and settle down. And so, if he is not careful his future is planned for him. As Jane Austen remarked in Pride and Prejudice, "It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife." It is usually the woman who interferes, gently but persistently, with the "bachelor dream." As Connie puts it, in Come Blow Your Horn: its "just being honest with each other." Ogden Nash just shakes his head and explains that "a woman's mental processes are harder to understand than those of a cannibal, an angel, or an elf." Henry Higgins, a "confirmed old bachelor" in George Bernard Shaw's Pygmalion, flatly states, "Women upset everything. When you let them into your life, you find that the woman is driving at one thing and you're driving at another."

The "healthy, normal, American boy" - as Connie's Alan calls himself - wants to have a "bachelor fling" before he settles down to the "disadvantages" of matrimony and steady employment.



It takes real strength for a bachelor to resist committing himself to his favorite girl. Perhaps Samuel Hoffenstein has hit on the reason when he says in Poems in Praise of Practically Nothing:

I do not question Woman's place:
She's entered in the human race;
She has a natural turn of mind
For propagation of her kind.

- Kim Corliss



the music

Stage Band:	Stan Corfman*	french horn, trumpet
	Bill Glaser	trumpet
	John Dawson	organ
	Pete Barr	trombone
	Jeff Ziskind	guitar
	Brad Heck	bass guitar
	Dave Hiller	drums

Introduction: Overture from the rock opera Tommy - by The Who

Intermission: "Does Anybody Really Know What Time It Is?" and "Beginnings" from Chicago Transit Authority. "Make Me Smile" and "Color My World" from Chicago - by Chicago

In Star-Spangled Girl, a "pair of post-Ivy League rebels share a 'dropout of an apartment' with penurious satisfaction until a girl who looks like a whipped-cream frappé shows up to curdle their joy." Time called it another hit for Simon, even though other critics didn't quite agree. John McCarten, in The New Yorker, said the play was "a rickety vehicle, and its comic content is meagre." Yet his criticism was again qualified by admiration for Simon's wit.

Barefoot in the Park, Simon's play about a newly-wed pair trying to organize their life in an unfurnished apartment that has only a large skylight to recommend it, was also received lukewarmly by critics. It was called a "simple, shapeless, and resolutely amiable exercise. Mr. Simon's comedy is pretty jolly. . . It is all rather fluffy stuff, but Simon gives it a very warm glow."

Last of the Red Hot Lovers, Simon's latest play is about a middle-aged man who decides to have an extra-marital affair. "Behind the laughs," says Time, "is Simon's most serious play. In his later plays Simon is saying a dead-serious thing; that the Judeo-Christian ethic as applied to a husband and wife relationship is bankrupt. Simon ought to risk more seriousness. The wine of wisdom is in him, and he ought to let it breathe longer between the gags." But Brendan Gill, in The New Yorker, commented, "Simon holds the play to be something new for him; he calls it a serious comedy, and I fear that he intends to display a still greater degree of seriousness in the future. It is a grave misreading of his gifts, for Simon's so-called seriousness has a banality of insight not easily to be distinguished from that of soap opera."



When he tries to dramatize his deep-felt emotions, he rises with difficulty to the level of a high-school essay. This is a very funny play, and when you go to it you will laugh your head off, but it is also synthetic, and compassion and breadth of vision would have been thoroughly out of place in it."

Neil Simon apparently is a playwright extremely popular with audiences, but not so greatly admired by critics. Critic Jack Kroll has said that the core of Simon's popularity lies with the "vast audience that telegraphs for show tickets from Shiny Chinos, Wyoming, the instant they hear the announcement of a new Neil Simon play on Broadway."

- Margaret Rapp



backstage chatter

Nothing Is Impossible

Creating a contemporary atmosphere was the greatest technical problem of Come Blow Your Horn. The set, built by Keith Miller and his construction crew, is a very modern New York apartment. Building the slanted ceiling, the second ceiling ever hung over the WJ stage, was the biggest feat. "It'll work," he promised. Added Mike Weinberg, one of the crew members, "I wouldn't want to stand underneath it!"

But because of the ceiling, Lights Crew Chief Mike Thompson and his crew had to work out an off-stage lighting system. Hanging from the constructed ceiling are a swing and a stereo-bar, two other "firsts" for WJ. A professional painter's job was needed to give the set what Paints Crew Chief Debbie Bean calls "a really finished look." All the crews have worked hard for the past month to turn the stage into a realistic \$364-a-month apartment and to make the cast look like the sort of people who might drop by.



Franklin Simon's Generosity

To obtain the latest in fashion for the costumes, Crew Chief Abby Franklin arranged to borrow clothes from Franklin Simon in Washington. The clothing store generously loaned about one thousand dollars of sophisticated outfits. Each girl cost about two hundred dollars to costume.



backstage chatter

Wildwood Summer Theater

The Wildwood Summer Theater Board is meeting at Christmastime to decide on this summer's production. Stage Director will be Joe Douglass, and Orchestra Conductor for this year will be Stan Corfman. The producer will be Tom Murphy. Possibilities for the show include Cabaret, Carnival, and Bye Bye Birdie.



Opera Workshop

La Perichole by Offenbach will be performed by Opera Workshop the last weekend in January. Choral Director will be Mr. Walsh. Mr. Perialas will be Stage Director.



One Acts

Mr. Fess will be in charge of the One Act Play Tournament this year. Students submit their own productions and enter them in competition.



Semanon

Semanon, WJ's backstage crew, has chosen its new cadets.



Encore seeks DAMP award

Encore, WJ's musical and dramatic arts program has entered into the annual program contest, sponsored by the National Association for Dramatic and Musical Programs (popularly known as DAMP). The Regional contest will be held in December at Skaggsville's old convention center.

