

ABSTRACT

Title: A SCENIC DESIGN FOR CARLO GOZZI'S
"THE GREEN BIRD", PERFORMED AT
THE CLARICE SMITH PERFORMING ARTS
CENTER AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND
Eric J. Van Wyk, Master of Fine Arts, 2007.

Directed By: Associate Professor Daniel Conway, Department of Theatre

The purpose of this thesis is to document and analyze the scenic design process of Carlo Gozzi's *The Green Bird* as it was produced at the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center at the University of Maryland in March of 2007. The role of the scenic designer is to physicalize the world of the play established by the vision of the director as well as the collaborative design team of the lighting, costume and sound designer. Chapter one of this thesis is an analysis of the script written by Carlo Gozzi, which was translated and adapted by Frederica Brunori Deigan and Leslie Felbain. This analysis covers a concise understanding of Commedia dell'Arte, which is the performance style of the piece, as well as Carlo Gozzi's theatrical views. Chapter two details the visual research process and manifestation of the phases of the scenic design in conjunction with the director, lighting and costume designer. Chapter three examines the selecting and approving of materials for the set and the construction and building process of the set design. Chapter four provides a critical analysis

of the process of designing the set, the creation of the set, and an evaluation of the final production in light of the collaborative design process with the other designers and the director. Finally, the appendices provide visual documentation of the design process from research to realization of the final production.

A SCENIC DESIGN FOR CARLO GOZZI'S "THE GREEN BIRD",
PERFORMED AT THE CLARICE SMITH PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

By

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Chapter 1: Textual Analysis

A textual analysis of the fantastical, epochal fairy tale of *The Green Bird* requires an in-depth understanding of the framework that sets *The Green Bird* up for flight. The three major components of this framework are the performance style of Commedia dell'Arte, the theatrical views and motivation of Carlo Gozzi and *The Green Bird's* dramatic structure and history as a fairytale. The performance style of Commedia dell'Arte forms a skeletal structure of improvisation, exaggerated emotions, and overt theatricality over which Carlo Gozzi stretches the fairytale of *The Green Bird*. *The Green Bird* as a fairy tale is a perfect extension of the larger-than-life quality of Commedia dell'Arte. The tale would falter under a naturalistic or realistic approach. The three interdependent elements of Commedia dell'Arte, Gozzi and the fairy tale of *The Green Bird* form a powerful framework to create a fantastical and moving tale. Understanding the genius and continued impact of *The Green Bird* as a theatrical story requires an appreciation of the history and depth of the three elements that comprise *The Green Bird* framework. I shall in this textual analysis detail each of the aspects of *The Green Bird* framework and explain each contributes to a nuanced appreciation of *The Green Bird* as a theatrical work.

The Performance Style of *Commedia dell'Arte*

Commedia dell'Arte forms the skeletal structure of *The Green Bird* as a performance style that dictates the overall theatrical nature of the tale. *Commedia* is a theatrical style that is vast in its history and could be considered foundational to Western drama because of the many ways it has influenced numerous theatrical styles, which shall be elucidated later in this section. As a textual analysis, this section will focus on the style of *Commedia dell'Arte*- its techniques, performance methods and relation to the text and the audience. Although my focus will not be primarily historical, some history development of the genre must be noted.

Commedia dell'Arte is a highly theatrical and improvised performance style that originated in the public spaces of Italy. The beginnings of *Commedia* can be traced to approximately 1550 in Italy, where it was first called Harlequin's theatre,⁷ since it was based around the character of Harlequin. The development of this style of theatre can also be identified in Flaminio Scala's *Il teatro delle favole rappresentative* written in 1611, which contained fifty dramatic pieces⁸. The *Commedia dell'Arte* style spread rapidly over Europe for its appeal as a theatrical art form that was "...a combination of language and action, not on pantomime alone."⁹ *Commedia dell'Arte* had three strains from 1700 to 1900; the first was newly invented *Commedia*, performed in Italy, the second was *Commedia* that was performed abroad but remained Italian, and the third was *Commedia* being performed in Italy by traveling companies from abroad.¹⁰ This cross-pollination of styles in *Commedia* was encouraged by the public nature of the performances in marketplaces and piazzas in Italy. *Commedia's* historical end as a movement is noted by scholars as happening in 1860, when Maurice Sand wrote *Masques et bouffons*. This compilation was a two-volume history of *Commedia dell'Arte* and symbolized the end of the traditional *Commedia*.¹¹

An important historical aspect of *Commedia dell'Arte* to be analyzed from the perspective of the set designer of *The Green Bird* is the manner in which set design played a role in *Commedia dell'Arte* performances. Giacomo Oregelia discusses the beginnings of *Commedia* sets: "At first the scenery was somewhat simple—a painted backdrop or two houses facing one another across the stage—but later it became more elaborate and the scenic

⁷ Allardyce Nicoll, *The World of Harlequin: A critical study of the Commedia dell'Arte* (University of Cambridge Press, 1963) 4.

⁸ Ibid 2.

⁹ Ibid 16.

¹⁰ Ibid 160.

¹¹ Ibid 217.

effects were quite remarkable.”¹² M.A. Katrinsky weighs in heavily on this subject by stating:

...that six overlapping categories of renaissance *commedia dell'arte* street entertainment and performances may be identified, of which the first two are cleared space staging and natural stages. The third category is definition of the performance area by means of a specially constructed unadorned raised platform, of which the trestle stage is one category. The fourth category is the stage with the curtain backdrop, the fifth is the architecturally enhanced curtained stage, namely supplementation of a platform stage with curtain backdrop by constructed openings in the backdrop and/or architectural side features. The sixth, and most sophisticated, category is the use of full perspective scenery.¹³

This quote reflects the myriad ways that *Commedia dell'Arte* was staged, as well as affirming that the roots of *commedia* were public performances, in places such as piazzas and marketplaces, or a found space or a raised platform (see fig. 2). Katrinsky also suggests “that visual evidence provided by drawings of *commedia dell'arte* in the late Italian renaissance suggest that these stages coexisted, rather than simply replacing each other in historical progression.”¹⁴ (s

The *Commedia dell'Arte* performance style is defined by Barry Grantham “as a comedy or other plays presented by skilled professional actors. *Arte* in Italian implies an artisan, a skilled worker, rather than a simple reference to a style.”¹⁵ Giacomo Oregelia describes the greatness of *Commedia* being “its virtuoso improvisation and scorn of the written text which created this powerful impassioned form of human expression.”¹⁶ Improvisation is therefore at the heart of the *Commedia* style. Grantham describes *Commedia* as a style that is broad, non-naturalistic, and visually weighted. The visual element is given serious attention, almost

¹² Giacomo Oregelia. *The Commedia dell'Arte* (Hill and Wang, New York, 1968) 15.

¹³ M.A. Katritzky and Christopher Cairns. *Scenery, Set and Staging in the Italian Renaissance* (Edwin Mellen Press, New York, 1996) 228.

¹⁴ Ibid 234.

¹⁵ Barry Grantham. *Playing Commedia, A Training Guide to Commedia Techniques* (Heinemann Publishing, Portsmouth, New Hampshire, 2000) 4.

¹⁶ Oregelia 4.

equal to the verbal element. As an overarching rule, *Commedia* is stylistically exaggerated, whether through ridicule, parody, or heightening the emotions of a character. *Commedia* as a style features a wide range between rude and sensitive, soft and loud, and everything in between. The importance of the visual pose of the performer, as well as mimed actions that coordinate with verbal delivery, create an effective, dynamic performance style.¹⁷

A typical *Commedia* performance is heavily interactive with the audience and overtly theatrical, with the blatant acknowledgement of the presence of the actor. Due to the public nature of the performance, *Commedia* players directly interact with the audience and bring them into the world of imagination by acknowledging the reality of the wooden stage upon which they are performing. The use of the aside, in which the actor talks directly to the audience, serves as a way to speak the inner thoughts of the character as well as to share private jokes. Grantham describes this technique through what Bertolt Brecht would label as “alienation,” a method in which the audience is continually reminded of their environment, and façade of the make-believe is peeled away.¹⁸

Grantham records that the rehearsal style of a *commedia* troupe is years spent performing shows in repertory, and days in practice in the performance techniques of *Commedia*. On the day of the performance, the *capocomico*, or *chorogus*, who is essentially the stage manager, relays to the troupe which show they will be performing that very night.¹⁹ He will then present the outline of the story to the company, as well as assigning the households to which the servants will belong. The progression of the play is written down as the *scenario*, which is then pinned up to the backstage area. The actors will refer to the *scenario*

¹⁷ James Fisher. *A Semiotic Perspective on the Commedia dell'Arte* (A Journal of the Southeastern Theatre Conference Vol. 1, 1993, New York, New York) 24.

¹⁸ Barry Grantham. *Playing Commedia, A Training Guide to Commedia Techniques* (Heinemann Publishing, Portsmouth, New Hampshire, 2000) 12.

¹⁹ Ibid 5.

throughout the day as they come to improvise their scenes, as well as figure out their *uscite* (exit lines) and their *chiuette* (endings) for their scenes.²⁰

At this time *lazzi* are prepared, but the actors do not know when certain characters may inject them. *Lazzi* can either be wordplay or a short section of physical comedy that can add contrapuntal comedy to a serious scene. *Lazzi* are always changing, reflecting the place and time period of the performance. Therefore, an older *Commedia* story can be made contemporary through *lazzi* jokes.²¹

The performance itself has a spontaneous quality due to the improvisational inventions that occur during the actual performance. This improvisation happens right in front of the audience every day because each performance was unique. The *Commedia* performer has to have a wide range of skills in music, mime, dance, acrobatics and spoken word to broaden the way the story can be told. The scenario, dictated by the *capocomico*, provides a framework that the *commedia* players could build from. Each actor has a comprehensive repertoire of material at their disposal to interject and create the play from.²² Facemasks can also be used to heighten the characters and provide a dominant visual component for identification. The masks were always half-masks to provide versatility for speech. The mask dictates the character and the manner in which it was performed and was exaggerated to attract attention in busy thoroughfares (see fig. 1).

The Theatrical Vision and Motivation of Carlo Gozzi

Carlo Gozzi's writing of *The Green Bird* is rooted in three inter-related factors. The first is his response to 18th century philosophy, Carlo Goldoni's theatrical writings and his

²⁰ James Fisher. *A Semiotic Perspective on the Commedia dell'Arte* (A Journal of the Southeastern Theatre Conference Vol. 1, 1993, New York, New York) 26.

²¹ Barry Grantham. *Playing Commedia, A Training Guide to Commedia Techniques* (Heinemann Publishing, Portsmouth, New Hampshire, 2000) 9.

²² *Ibid* 15.

views of *Commedia dell'Arte*. The second is Gozzi's view of fairy tales in relation to his views of society. The third ingredient is Gozzi's overt use of theatricality, which precludes the modern stage of both opera and theatre. Gozzi started to write plays because of a spark and what led to that spark.

Carlo Gozzi was born into an aristocratic Venetian family and was denied a rigorous classical education due to his large family's financial difficulties. Gozzi went to the military for awhile, and then ended up starting the *Accademia dei Granelleschi*. This academy "elaborated a doctrine of literary and linguistic purism,"²³ and attacked two famous *Commedia* Venetian playwrights: Carlo Goldoni and Pietro Chiari. Gozzi accused Goldoni of vulgarity and bad style, to which Goldoni "maintained that the popularity of his plays proved their worth." Gozzi took this as a direct challenge from Goldoni and replied "I thought to myself that if I could attract a large audience to a play that had a puerile title and the most frivolous, the most unrealistic of plots, then I could demonstrate to Signor Goldoni that the popularity of his comedies did not mean that they were good."²⁴ For both Goldoni and Gozzi, the theatre was a very serious artistic pursuit that became a platform for their ideas. John Luis DiGaetani states that "The theater was a weapon used to defend the purity of the Italian language; to define the authentic traditions of Italian theater; to protect the reputations of Italy's greatest actors; and finally, to project a truthful image of their society and their nation."²⁵

Carlo Gozzi's first theatrical work was *The Love of Three Oranges*, which was performed in 1761 and "championed the traditional improvised theatre of the *Commedia dell'Arte* against

²³ Ted Emery. *Carlo Gozzi-Five Tales For The Theatre* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago IL, 2005) 2.

²⁴ Carlo Gozzi. *Opere: Teatro e polemiche teatrali*, edited and introduced Giuseppe Petronio (Milan: Rizzoli, 1962) 1085.

²⁵ John Louis DiGaetani *Carlo Gozzi- A Life in the 18th Century Venetian Theater, an Afterlife in Opera* (McFarland & Company, Inc. 1994)2.

the realistic plays *Commedia's* would-be reformers of Goldoni and Chiari.²⁶ Gozzi fell in love with the exciting unpredictability and liveliness of the improvised style of *Commedia*. He said, “I see in the *commedia dell'arte* one of the glories of Italy.”²⁷ However, by the 18th century the spontaneous nature of *Commedia* became routine and dull to audiences. Additionally, the content became too vulgar and coarse for middle class audiences who preferred “morally instructive” plays. Goldoni wanted his plays to be a moral antidote to the improvised theatre, and a more realistic style of *Commedia* that limited the improvisation of the actors.²⁸ Gozzi viewed this realism as the death of *Commedia*.

A big reason why Goldoni and Gozzi were proponents of different styles of *Commedia dell'Arte* is that they had competing views of the social function of the theatre. Goldoni's realistic *Commedia* was idealistic charged with a bourgeoisie philosophy that supported the middle class rather than the aristocracy. Goldoni found that the realistic *Commedia* style supported a social view of constraint and realism that allowed for morally instructive plays-for the theatre to be a social mirror. This “legitimization of a middle-class view”²⁹ in Goldoni's plays was strongly countered by Gozzi's support of the hierarchy of society and of the aristocracy. Gozzi's *Commedia* style was more heightened, grandiose and emphasized the improvisational nature of the characters, which allowed for a more enchanting, theatrical tale for the audience. “Gozzi rejects this concept of theatre as a social mirror, undermines the empathy between audience and character, and substitutes a theatre of entertainment and fantasy...”³⁰ Gozzi' tales supported a hierarchical view of society through subtlety and whimsy. As Gozzi wrote his plays for the *Commedia* style he was reliant

²⁶ Ted Emery. *Carlo Gozzi-Five Tales For The Theatre* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago IL, 2005) 3.

²⁷ Carlo Gozzi. *Opere: Teatro e polemiche teatrali*, edited and introduced Giuseppe Petronio (Milan: Rizzoli, 1962) 1085.

²⁸ Ted Emery. *Carlo Gozzi-Five Tales For The Theatre* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago IL, 2005) 4.

²⁹ Ibid 6.

³⁰ Ibid 10.

upon the improvisational skills of Antonio Sacchi's *Commedia* company, who specialized in the highly improvisational and older *Commedia* style.³¹ This excellence in *Commedia* allowed for the heightened comedy and fantastical nature of Gozzi's plays to come alive.

In addition to protesting theatrical moralism, Gozzi used his tales and an exaggerated commedia style to attack what he viewed as the decay prevalent in 18th century philosophy in its support of reason over God. Specifically Gozzi proclaims in his *The Green Bird* that the twins Barbarina and Renzo "are the two protagonists of the play, are modern philosophers and are steeped in the pernicious maxims of Messrs, Helvetius, Rousseau, and Voltaire. They mock humanity by putting into a practice of self-love. ...when they become rich, they demand the impossible and refuse to accept the help from others."³² The twins encounter and are helped by the statue Calmon, who is a moralist, who becomes a mouthpiece for the theological views of Gozzi. For example in *The Green Bird* when Renzo is seeking the impossible apple that sings and later the Green Bird, Calmon berates Renzo for his "philosophy" and tells him "to look to the heavens for inspiration and not to be caught in the doubts of nothingness here on the earth."³³ This philosophy espoused by Calmon is Gozzi's view of an ideal world where future spiritual salvation from God overrides personal earthly injustices, and the laws of God overarch the laws of men. Gozzi is poking at the Enlightenment, with its tenants of humans being at the center of the universe, and human's rational thought superceding any spiritual laws. Calmon also decries the self-love of Renzo, a "vague notion of secular stoicism,"³⁴ and states that "self-love and human reason must guide men to the love of God."³⁵

³¹ John Louis DiGaetani *Carlo Gozzi- A Life in the 18th Century Venetian Theater, an Afterlife in Opera* (McFarland & Company, Inc. 1994) 6.

³² Ted Emery. *Carlo Gozzi-Five Tales For The Theatre* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago IL, 2005) 239.

³³ Carlo Gozzi. *The Green Bird* (Translated by Frederica Deigan, Adapted by Leslie Felbian and Kris Messer) 30.

³⁴ Ted Emery. *Carlo Gozzi-Five Tales For The Theatre* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago IL, 2005) 7.

³⁵ Carlo Gozzi. *The Green Bird* (Translated by Frederica Deigan, Adapted by Leslie Felbian and Kris Messer) 25.

Carlo Gozzi sought to debunk the major tenants of the Enlightenment by embedding his ideology in the fabric of his “seemingly escapist fairy tales.” Gozzi and Goldoni are similar in that their plays are mouthpieces of their ideas, albeit different. *The Green Bird* is one of these embedded fairy tales which Gozzi describes as a “piece of foolery.” Gozzi’s fairy tales plays are called *fiabe*, as a combination of theatre and a fairy tale.³⁶ Carlo Gozzi’s first *fiabe*, *The Love of Three Oranges* was based on a very famous fairy tale of the 18th century, and Gozzi saw the theatrical potential in this potent form of art. Gozzi’s plays were an anti-thesis to the realism of Goldoni’s plays because they introduced myth into Venetian drama in the 18th century. Gozzi became famous for this introduction of myth into Italian theatre and somehow knew that fairy tales would fascinate adults as much as they would children, as fairy tales had such a prominent place in homes and books already. The German poet Schiller, one of many of the German romantics who would later fall in love with Gozzi’s *fiabe*, states “Deeper meaning resides in the fairy tales told to me in my childhood than in the truth that is taught by life.”³⁷ Gozzi was certainly aware of theatrical potential of using fairy tales as frameworks for his plays, as well as the entertaining power that they would have over audiences.

Theatricalism is at the heart of Gozzi’s *fiabe*. This theatricalism is tied to the *Commedia dell’Arte* style that the *fiabe* were performed in, as well as the fantastical nature of the fairy tales that Gozzi incorporated. Gozzi labels his tales as “tragicomic tales for the theatre,” because of the heightened melodrama and the serious attributes of his tales.³⁸ Gozzi’s subversion of realism can also be seen in his presentation of serious and comedic characters on the stage together as well as in his exotic spectacles and special effects. Gozzi,

³⁶ John Louis DiGaetani *Carlo Gozzi- A Life in the 18th Century Venetian Theater, an Afterlife in Opera* (McFarland & Company, Inc. 1994) 3.

³⁷ Ibid 114.

³⁸ Ibid 9.

desired his theatrical fantasies to be convincingly real. Emery cites Gozzi's *Turandot* as one tale in which he sought to create a believable theatrical illusion with incredible moments of magical transformation.³⁹ The transformative, magical themes are made more theatrical in Gozzi's *fiabe* in which his exotic fairy tale settings reference the real world of eighteenth-century Venice, as well as in *The Green Bird* in which familiar Venetian statues from around the city, i.e. Calmon and Pompea, came alive in the tale.⁴⁰

The Dramatic Structure of The Green Bird

Carlo Gozzi was fascinated with fairy tales because he was interested in their power to entertain and create a magical theatrical world that the audience could believe in. In the eighteenth century, fairy tales were becoming very popular in Europe and being used in unique way. Kenneth McKenzie states: "In the Middle Ages, as in the eighteenth century, fables were used in at least four ways: (1) as rhetorical exercises in education, (2) for ethical instruction, (3) as a vehicle for satire, whether political or social, (4) as a form of literary composition for its own sake."⁴¹ Gozzi was therefore aware of the power of fables and fairy tales in Italian society. The Green Bird, before it was one of Gozzi's *fiabe*, was a fable that was told to children. A fifteenth century letter from a Venetian named Andrea Calmo attests to the Green Bird fairy tale being told: "...jugs and crusts of bread are passed around. And everyone sits around swapping the most stupendous tall tales, nonsense, and fanciful stories in the world: they tell of Mother Goose, of the Piper, the Green Bird, the Wooden Statue..."⁴² Another historical reference about the Green Bird fairy tale is Giambattista Basile's *Lo cunto de li cunti overo Lo trattenemiento de peccerille* ("The Tale of Tales", or

³⁹ Ibid 8.

⁴⁰ Ibid 9.

⁴¹ Kenneth McKenzie *Italian fables of the Eighteenth Century* (Italica- Bulletin of the American Association of Teachers of Italian. Volume XII, June, 1935, No. 2) 25

⁴² Nancy L. Canepa *Basile's Lo cunto de li cunti and the Childhood of the Literary Fairy Tale* (Marvels & Tales 17.1, The Wayne State University Press, 2003) 38.

“Entertainment for Little Ones”), which was published in 1634. The work contains the first set of written fairy tales in Europe, and includes The Green Bird. These fairy tales by Basile have been described as a “sophisticated range of rhetorical figures in showy metaphor, which are drawn from the registers of both literary tradition and oral culture.”⁴³

The Green Bird fairy tale can be traced to the oral culture in southern Spain as seen in the written work of folklorist Cecilia Bohl de Faber who wrote *Stories of Enchantment* in 1877. In her *Stories* one such oral folk tale is *El Pajaro de la Verdad* (The Bird of Truth) where there is a unkillable bird that epitomizes truth and is held captive by a giant in a castle. The giant is controlled by an evil witch who tried to kill the twins and who has kept the former queen contained between two walls, though the Bird of Truth has kept her alive. The twins however were saved by being placed in a glass box in the river and retrieved by a fisherman. The boy grows up and ends up setting the Bird of Truth free. He brings it to the king so that the king may learn the fate of his wife and children.⁴⁴

The Bird of Truth folk tale certainly is the basis of the Green Bird fairy tale, as can be seen by the numerous parallels between the two tales. In Gozzi's *The Green Bird*, the Green Bird represents hope, transformation and truth. He is held captive by the ogre at his mountain, and he keeps the former queen Ninetta alive in the drain. The twins are also saved in Gozzi's work, but they are saved by the Pantalones and the sausage sellers Truffaldino and Smeraldina. Moreover the twins do grow up to set the Green Bird free, hear the truth and see their world transformed. Gozzi used the main thread of the oral folk tale and transformed it through increasing the comedy and pushing the melodrama through the introduction of new characters such as Calmon and Pompea- talking Venetian statues. Gozzi captolized on the transformative oral tale by adding more transformations in *The*

⁴³ Ibid 52.

⁴⁴ Caballero, Fernan *The Bird of Truth* (Marvels & Tales - Volume 16, Number 1, The Wayne State University Press, 2003) 75.

Green Bird, such as The Green Bird becoming a prince, and Barbarina awaking Truffaldino and Smeraldina with a feather from the Green Bird.

The power of transformation is a central idea to the dramatic structure of *The Green Bird*. The Green Bird himself says in regard to the world of the play "...this is a place where transformations are possible."⁴⁵ The centrality of transformation in *The Green Bird* is evident in the numerous transformations that occur; i.e. the awakening of Pompea and Calmon from statues, the arrival of a new palace in front of the old palace (transformation from poor to rich), an apple tree that comes alive, the Green Bird into a prince, the twins revealed as children to the King Tartaglia and the Queen Tartagliona turned into a turtle. Gozzi uses transformation to bring out the enchantment and fantasy in the fairy tale and to heighten the theatricality of the play. Gozzi's *fiabe* have numerous transformations also because Gozzi feels that it reflects the changing nature of society: "I watched women become men, men become women, women and men become monkeys, as they all immersed themselves in new discoveries, especially the inventions and the innumerable follies of fashion."⁴⁶

Transformation for Gozzi was a way to understand the truth of who people are.

Similar to many of Gozzi's tales, *The Green Bird* is a conflict between order and disorder, self-love and love of the other, which is manifested predominantly in the character journey of Renzo and Barbarina. They find themselves ordered in their rational philosophy at the beginning of the play. Later, they become orphans and are given a magic pebble by Calmon which makes them rich, but causes disorder and unbalance in their lives. Their greed pushes them to gain the singing apple and to set free the Green Bird from the Ogre's mountain. Renzo and Truffaldino have become frozen trying to set free the Green Bird, and Barbarina, through the help of Calmon (the voice of God), is able by a heroic act to set the

⁴⁵ Carlo Gozzi. *The Green Bird* (Translated by Frederica Deigan, Adapted by Leslie Felbian and Kris Messer) 25.

⁴⁶ Carlo Gozzi. *Opere: Teatro e polemiche teatrali*, edited and introduced Giuseppe Petronio (Milan: Rizzoli, 1962) 1080.

Green Bird free from the Ogre's Mountain and transform Truffaldino and Renzo from statues. Order is then restored to Renzo and Barbarina's life through their act of sacrifice over rationality. This heroic act brings a set of transformations into effect, which returns the royal court of Monterontondo to a state of balance. The balance can be seen with the Green Bird setting Ninetta free to be united with Tartaglia, the evil Tartagliona transformed into a turtle, and finally the Green Bird being revealed as a prince. The overt balance presented at the end of the play with all the couples reunited seems partially over melodramatic, but its presence offsets the comedic twists and turns that the play contains.

Carlo Gozzi's Influence on Theatre and Opera

In its incorporation of myth, fairy tales, and a improvised *Commedia dell'Arte* form as well as its blending of comedy and tragedy, Gozzi's work has had lasting impact on the development of Western theatre and opera. Gozzi's breaking down of the fourth wall between the audience and the characters undermines any empathy. This subversion of realism influenced Bertolt Brecht's alienation theory and *Verfremdungseffekt* theory of serious characters found alongside comedic ones.⁴⁷ In 1912 Edward Gordon Craig stated "in the *commedia dell'arte* the Italians of the late 16th century gave to future generations a hint as to the possibilities of the art of the theatre."⁴⁸ James Fisher also states that "Craig, Pirandello, Meyerhold, Reinhardt and Copeau looked to *commedia dell'arte* as they sought liberation from the pervasiveness of naturalism as well as from the stale remnants of elaborate spectacles..."⁴⁹ Gozz's juxtapositions of comedy and tragedy in a fantastical setting also prefigure the modern comedy of the Theater of the Absurd.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Ibid 9.

⁴⁸ James Fisher. *The Influence of Commedia dell'Arte Scenari on the Modern Stage* (A Journal of the Southeastern Theatre Conference Vol. 1, 1993, New York, New York) 36.

⁴⁹ Ibid 38.

⁵⁰ Ibid 40.

The plays of Gozzi would also have lasting effect on opera.⁵¹ For example, by the end of the 18th century, a Gozzi revival had begun in Austria and Germany that inspired the Viennese magic plays and singspiels such as Mozart and Schikaneder's *Die Zauberflöte*. DiGaetani connects this opera to Gozzi's surreal images of woman as destroyer and the noble male as the savior of mankind.⁵² Another opera connection to Gozzi is his *The Love of Three Oranges* which certainly inspired Mozart's *The Magic Flute* with its fairy tale atmosphere and mythical qualities.

The German Romantics also fell in love with the fantastical works of Carlo Gozzi. Schiller translated *Turandot* and Karl Von Weber composed the music to become a very famous operatic piece.⁵³ Wagner was also strongly attracted to Gozzi's *fiabes* and after translating Gozzi's *La Donna Serpente* into his own opera *Die Feen*, cited how "the attraction of mythic art can create an art for all times."⁵⁴ Probably the most famous operatic version of Gozzi's writings is Puccini's *Turandot* which premiered at *La Scala* in 1926.⁵⁵ Prokofiev's operatic version of *Turandot* in 1921 also was immersed in the fairy tale fantasy of Gozzi's writings, as well as Vakhtangov's famous 1922 production of *Turandot*.⁵⁶ Recently, Gozzi's work has found its way into theaters into North America with Julie Taymor's influential production of *The Green Bird* in 1996 at the New Victory Theatre in New York. Another company that found Gozzi's theatrical tales compelling is Theatre de la Jeune Lune in Minneapolis, Minnesota who did a production of *The Green Bird* which was a blending of Kabuki and *Commedia* theatrical styles.

⁵¹ John Louis DiGaetani *Carlo Gozzi- A Life in the 18th Century Venetian Theater, an Afterlife in Opera* (McFarland & Company, Inc. 1994) 110.

⁵² Ibid 3.

⁵³ Allardyce Nicoll, *The World of Harlequin: A critical study of the Commedia dell'Arte* (University of Cambridge Press, 1963) 219.

⁵⁴ John Louis DiGaetani *Carlo Gozzi- A Life in the 18th Century Venetian Theater, an Afterlife in Opera* (McFarland & Company, Inc. 1994) 111.

⁵⁵ Ibid 5.

⁵⁶ Ibid 6.

Chapter 2: The Design Process

Design Concept

On September 8, 2006, was the design concept meeting for *The Green Bird* to be performed in March of 2007 in the Kay Theatre at the University of Maryland in College Park. Present at this meeting was Leslie Felbain- the director, Ana-Marie Salamat- the costume designer, Larry Zoll- the lighting designer, and our three faculty advisors for the show- Daniel Conway, Helen Huang, and Harold Burgess. In order to have an in-depth knowledge and competently discuss *The Green Bird* I had spent a number of weeks before the meeting preparing for it. I read the play numerous times and charted and dissected the play to understand its structure, images and action. The scene breakdown chart separates the play into acts, scenes or beats depending on what is appropriate for the show. For each scene or beat prominent images, the action of the scene and the subtext of the scene are written down. The chart thereby records metaphors, which characters are onstage, business of the play and analyzes the undercurrent and atmosphere of the scene. I had done this scene breakdown chart at the University of Maryland in my scenic design classes with Daniel Conway and my dramaturgy class with Susan Haedicke as a way to closely analyze the text.

The scene breakdown and familiarity with *The Green Bird* script gave me a solid base to discuss the conceptual ideas with the director and the other designers. Leslie Felbain began the design concept meeting by having us walk down to the stage of the Kay Theatre. She remarked as we were looking at the blank stage of the Kay, “that this is an empty space that we can do whatever we want with and is full of exciting possibility.” She cited the theatre theories of Peter Brook in his book *The Empty Space*, stating the way an actor or object enters a space to activate it. Also, Leslie emphasized the collaborative nature of theatre as we began the process of conceiving *The Green Bird* into flight.

Leslie emphasized that this production of *The Green Bird* was to be rooted in the *Commedia dell'Arte* performance style, which she had studied in Italy. This attribution of human emotions to human movements was also an extension of her training in Jacques Lecoq movement training. She enunciated that *Commedia* is a very improvised style with a heavy emphasis on the visual pose of the performer and the strength of the ensemble of the performers. Leslie transitioned by saying that the design elements need to partner with the *Commedia* performance style by allowing for the improvised characters to have room to breathe and play, while being closely related to the shapes on the stage. For example, she cited how a shape on the character's costume can be linked visually to a similar shape on the set. She also stated that an interactive relationship between the space of the set and the Kay Theatre would encourage the breaking down audience/actor barrier-an idea that was also rooted in *Commedia*.

Leslie then started to speak about how she viewed *The Green Bird*. The play was a slightly dark, phantasmagorical fairy tale and at its heart was a spiritual tale. The spirituality of the tale emphasized love rather than the rationality of Rousseau that Gozzi was writing against. Leslie spoke of the power of the transformations within *The Green Bird* and wanted to find ways to support those transformations. For example, she wanted the character of Calmon to come alive out of the set and be larger than life, i.e. with platform shoes or stilts.

In terms of a visual style, she referred to the look of the show as being an adult children's illustration: a revolving storybook that wherever the audience looks there would be visual elements. These visual styles were not time period based, but were a classical look to the play. A few visual artists that she mentioned were Hieronymous Bosch and Marc Chagall for their whimsical, fantastical views of heaven and earth.

Leslie described the space of the play as an environment where the characters never leave the space and are onstage for the whole time. This idea was rooted in *Commedia* where the characters are onstage, either in or out of focus. She transitioned this idea to the space of *The Green Bird* as being full of both moving and unmoving statues. This environment was at its base a piazza or a public space that was a playground for the characters: a very physical, active space that allowed for a lot of levels and movement. The environment of the space and the style of the play were based in the performance style of *Commedia* and Leslie cautioned that the poetic revelations within the script didn't overpower the *Commedia* performance style.

This previous discussion happened as a verbal brainstorming session with the collaborative design team asking clarification points to Leslie and agreeing with points such as the moving storybook or the phantasmagorical nature of *The Green Bird*. This discussion could be distilled into a core, succinct concept of *The Green Bird* being a phantasmagorical and transformative storybook that had a piazza base which was an interactive playground for the characters.

The initial design concept meeting became a springboard for beginning to see *The Green Bird* take flight in the development of visual research and ideas. A few days into the visual research process, a question that came up among the design team was how much of the play was *The Green Bird* and how much was *Commedia dell'Arte*? Was there one that dominated and superseded the other? We ended up having an informal meeting with Leslie to clarify this idea. She stated that *Commedia* was the skeleton that *The Green Bird* was strung over and similar to Gozzi's theatrical views, you could not take the overtly theatrical nature of *Commedia* out of *The Green Bird*. This understanding of the skeleton of the piece helped us proceed with an accurate sense of the performance and visual style of *The Green Bird*.

In this meeting Leslie clarified also that the characters would each have a space. Leslie wanted each character to have a location in the environment and the importance of the relationship of the characters to each other. In discussion with Leslie this meant that the show did not have massive complete set changes for the different locations, but rather acts of revelation to organically reveal spaces in the environment.

Design Research

The next stage of the design process of *The Green Bird* was the design research phase which was extremely exciting and somewhat nebulous with tangential tracks that overlapped and co-existed. Since I started the Master of Fine Arts in design at the University of Maryland three years ago, my abilities in visual research for the theatre have been amplified greatly. This occurred under the tutelage in scenery and costume design classes taught by Professor Daniel Conway and Professor Helen Huang. I learned to find specificity in visual research, to analyze it in-depth and to critically state why a certain piece of research works for a show. These design classes also taught me how to find research images and where to look for them in terms of visual style and history. This ability to research with specificity formed a solid base to begin the research for *The Green Bird*.

I began the research process by writing out a textual map of ideas, styles and artists that I wanted to look into. Some keywords that I wrote down were *Commedia* stages and characters, piazzas, Italian architecture, fairy tales, fantasy, storybooks, surrealism, Bosch, Chagall and Chihuly. From there I proceeded to start researching at the University of Maryland Art and Architecture Libraries as a starting point. A side note is that as a design team we researched physically together at the same time in the library, which benefited us to be able to share ideas with each other immediately. One of the main tracks of my research was *Commedia* and Italian piazza research. I found visual research in books that had

engravings of *Commedia* characters in their various poses and on different, as well as engravings of famous piazzas (see fig. 1). I also found a number of modern photography books of current piazzas which showed their sense of space, light and details such as tile patterns (see fig. 9).

A second track of the research was the fantastical, fairy tale, expressive. The summer before *The Green Bird* I had viewed an exhibition at the New York Botanical Gardens of Dale Chihuly's work who was a prominent glass artist that creates whimsical, stunning works of glass that twist and spiral. I began researching the Chihuly work as a gut response to *The Green Bird* as a place to begin visually understanding fantasy. The material of glass also suggested the spiritual, surreal nature of *The Green Bird*. The juxtaposition of the glass sculpture to its surroundings also became an interest to me (see fig. 8).

Chance is a big part of the research process. To quote Pascall via Raye Leith, an adjunct figure drawing professor at the University of Maryland, "Chance favors a prepared mind." I certainly found this as I stumbled on the artist Luis Gonzalez, whose surreal paintings were a blend of *Commedia* characters, classical settings and fantastical images (see fig. 5 and 6). Gonzalez's work became a way to blend ideas in a concise way. Another such artist that was a chance find was the graphic artist Dave McKean and his collage artwork about a Punch and Judy show with strong theatrical images (see fig. 7). Artists such as the illustrator Maurice Sendak, Hieronymous Bosch, Remedios Varos and James Christenson's work also became examples of dark fairy tales, fantasy and color palette ideas (see fig. 10 and 15).

A third research track was into specific staging and visual ideas. One such idea, suggested by another member of design team, was that Truffaldino could have a bicycle cart in which he sold his sausages from which could roll out on the stage. I researched bicycle

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cart shops in Asia for info about that staging idea (see fig. 14). Other specific staging ideas were sculptures and fountains for the characters of Pompea and Calmon, as well as mountains, orchards for those specific scenes in the play (see fig. 11, 12 and 13). To research the playground ideas for the play I looked at modern installation sculptors for inspiration of ways to organize the space (see fig. 16 and 17).

Before we showed the research to the director, we as a design team showed our images to our design faculty as a process check. When we laid out all of our loose images, we could see the tremendous amount and range of visuals and ideas. This is an exciting part of the research process because an extensive amount of research gives the designers options as if research is a table full of dishes to choose a little bit of each. The design faculty approved our images but also pointed us to select a few dominant images to be the basis of the play to build the design and to present to the director.

At the final research meeting, we presented five dominant research images which became the main thrust of our design process. The Chihuly sculpture near the stone piazza amidst the dark forest and the glass marbles in the old ruins in Jerusalem visually showed the fantasy, the fairy tale and the piazza base concepts (see fig. 3 and 4). The Gonzalez images became a way into the surreal and classical elements of the show, while the Dave McKean graphic novel detailed the theatrical, whimsical and storybook quality of the show. Interspersed among these images were the historical *Commedia* figures, which were the skeleton of the play. Leslie and our design faculty responded enthusiastically to our design team's collaborative presentation of our research and felt that we presented succinctly in organically integrating the skeletal framework of the *Commedia* style of the framework with the transformative, dark fairy tale nature of *The Green Bird*.

The result of the advanced research meeting was having research images that supported the core concept of a transformative, phantasmagorical storybook space with a piazza base as an interactive playground for the characters. The research images that carried me the most into the design process were the McKean collage of the copper and the moon, as well as the Chihuly sculpture next to the piazza with the surrounding trees. These images spoke to me on both an intellectual and aesthetic level in terms of directly supporting the conceptual ideas and a direct path to the drawing board.

Preliminary Design

I started the daunting task of translating the design from a series of core research images into the physical space of the Kay Theatre. The base idea of the piazza and the fairy tale environment became my starting point. Tangentially, part of the preliminary design process was to solve the practical elements of the show in an artful way in terms of the necessary locations for characters and places. I referred back to the scene breakdown chart and the subsequent discussions with Leslie and the design team to define which locations were needed in the space. The space needed an old palace with two levels for Tartaglia and Tartagliona which connected to a drain for Ninetta to be stuffed in and a house for Smeraldina and Truffaldino, as well as a sausage-selling cart. The space needed an alcove of sorts for Calmon, a fountain for Pompea to stand/sit upon and a new palace that had to magically appear for the twins. Also in the space was an apple orchard for Serpentina to live in and lastly an Ogre's mountain where the Green Bird was confined to.

This clearly was a lot of specific needs on the space that needed to be artfully composed and presented. At this point in the design process I started to consider the idea of using a revolving set to create a revolving picture that moved in front of the audience's eyes. The design team and I felt that using a revolve strongly contributed to the revolving

storybook and was an artful way to reveal different characters and locations. Since I had never designed with using a revolve, I received technical advice on a revolve from Daniel Conway and David Kriebs, our senior design technical advisor. I asked such questions as how fast can it go, can scenery and people be placed on it, can extensions come off of it, how many places can it move to and are there limits to the degrees that it can turn to? The answers to these questions freed me up my imagination in realizing the versatility of the revolve. Another crucial piece of info that I learned at this point was that the University had a revolve in stock that was 28 feet 0 inches in diameter and had a height of one foot, two inches. This revolve could either be turned by tire drive motor underneath the revolve, or a motor pulling a chain that was inset on the outside rim of the revolve. The economy of using this revolve would help keep the realized design in budget and the size seemed to be a perfect fit for the Kay Theatre.

I began the drawing process envisioning both the possibility and the impossibility of a revolving stage that could reveal different aspects of the world. The drawing process started with drawing the Kay Theatre in perspective. This method of drawing in perspective was taught by Daniel Conway, as well as a loosened yet accurate drawing style from Helen Huang and Raye Leith. Drawing in perspective requires working in both the views of the front of the stage and a top view of the stage. These two views are gridded out and the horizon lines dictated where the vanishing points are. The perspective drawing of the Kay Theatre became my base to draw from by laying transparent sheets of design vellum over to draw out my ideas within the theatre space.

A tangential part of the drawing process was a concept sketch that I drew early in the preliminary design phase as an artistic response to the research, conceptual discussions, and the show (see fig.18). This conceptual drawing was a loose sketch that was partially inspired

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by a chance event while I was drawing one morning in my basement apartment. I looked out the window to see a small bird climbing through the diamond pattern in a chain-link fence. This image struck me as a metaphor of *The Green Bird* and as a staging idea for the Green Bird to interact in the set as well as to create a curved cage framework that characters and locations could move in and out of. This initial drawing became the basis for my design and was warmly responded to by Leslie, the design faculty and the design team.

The next step was drawing the piazza and pushing it out into the space of the Kay Theatre to create an interactive relationship between the characters and the audience. Inset into the piazza was a café that I placed in the downstage edge of the stage which gave characters a place to relax. The café also was an organic place to situate the live orchestra which had to fit into the world of the design. From there I drew a curved portal to frame the way the design was viewed. The curves in the design became a way to suggest the fantastical and whimsical fairy tale elements of the show while also creating a compositional theme to unify the design. From that curved portal I drew a curved diamond façade wall that was a framework for the Green Bird and a visual way to organize the old palace, garden and fountain. The revolve itself I drew in as a series of steps and levels that with the framework and other elements started to create a playground for the characters to play upon. The curve of the revolve elements allowed for the old palace and garden to be on one half of the revolve while the apple orchard and the ogre's mountain were on the upstage side of the revolve, to be revealed as the revolve turned around.

These sketches (see fig. 19) translated into a quarter inch scale shirt cardboard working model for the preliminary design meeting. This model is created out of brown shirt cardboard which allows for an economical way to place the design into the theatre. Quarter inch scale means that the model is a 25% version of the actual spatial reality. Adding to the

model, I experimented at this point with a curved scrim wall behind the diamond façade wall which allowed for the upstage area to be masked. I began placing fantastical trees underneath a curved sky to suggest a mysterious forest around the environment which hinted at the unknown. The space developed with the addition of a moon inset in the portal and a Chihuly-esque sun that was suspended upstage.

I also began to explore placing the old and the new palace in totally different architectural styles to amplify their difference. One way was to make the new palace look hip and modern. A slick sofa became one way to define the new palace as well as a nouveau riche Italian moderne look of the 1950s. The sharp rectilinear lines of the new palace were in contrast to the old textured Renaissance style of the old palace and the diamond façade wall. The new palace would also come onto the stage in a different way than the rest of the design by being flown and tracked onstage to create a magical effect.

The preliminary design meeting consisted of the design team collaboratively presenting our rough designs of *The Green Bird* to Leslie and to the design faculty. Leslie immediately responded to the levels of the scenic design, its integration with the Kay Theatre space, the playground nature of the space for the *Commedia* style of *The Green Bird*. She connected to the staging idea of the curve diamond wall as a framework for the Green Bird to climb through. She agreed with the curves of the design as being a fitting way to embrace the fantastical, storybook quality of the show. She embraced the curved proscenium portal with the inset moon to underline the theatrical nature of the show and as a unique frame to view the unfolding storybook that the rotating revolve afforded us. Leslie felt that the revolve was an exciting solution to get to the revolving locations of the story. She was hesitant in making sure that during the tech and performance time that it was technically reliable. I of course agreed.

Ana Marie and I presented our designs together which meshed our ideas of character and location being connected. One such instance of an organic relationship was in the character of Calmon, whose costume silhouette was meshing with the pedestals and a prominent placement on the set. Another instance is the costume silhouette of Pompea and the shape of that meshing with the fountain that she was to stand upon. In both form and placement on the stage, the costumes and the scenery began to form a common language of unity to start to bring *The Green Bird* into flight.

The result of the preliminary design meeting was a strong sense of encouragement of the overall sculpture of the design organically growing out of the team's conceptual ideas which supported the performance and visual style of *The Green Bird*. At this point there were some questions from the technical peanut gallery as to the function and the idea behind the scrim wall behind the diamond façade wall. Daniel Conway suggested the idea of merging the scrim wall with the curved sky idea, which I strongly agreed with. Leslie had questions about making some adjustments on where characters could live and how close they were to each other. This discussion would continue after the meeting for the next week as I continued to tweek the design. Two direct results of these conversations was Ninetta's drain being placed directly under the old palace, as well as Truffaldino and Smeraldina's house being a compositional frame on one side of the proscenium portal and Calmon's alcove existing on the other side of the proscenium portal.

Transversing into the final design my main focus was to edit and distill the ideas of the main sculpture in terms of the curved surround and adjust the character spatial relationships. Also, I needed to flush out the color palette and world of the show while also defining the materials to be used for texture and finish.

Final Design

Since the preliminary design was a cardboard rough model, one of my main steps forward to a final design was deciding on the color palette to discern the color relationships between the characters and apply this to a final painted model. The artist and illustrator James Christensen had been a key part of the visual research process for the design team. Ana-Marie and I both found a fitting color palette in Christensen's work that was sophisticated and organic in its relationship with the figures to their background. This organic relationship of background and figure was a pivotal part for all of the characters in *The Green Bird*. Christensen's work became an entry point for us both of us to pick out from his different illustrations the color relationships for each character and their background. We assigned colors to the overall sculptural world of the play and to each character area. For example, we started with an illustration for the base piazza and the sky surround. From there we would select a character such as Calmon and discuss his color so that he would organically fit into his background. Calmon, as well as my initial research influenced me to create the curved proscenium portal out of copper and paint it with oxidized colors. The old palace was given a cool palette of greys, slate blues and light oranges that correlated to Tartaglia, Tartagliona and Brighella. With this sophisticated color relationship map established partly by Christensen in conjunction with Ana-Marie, I proceeded to paint the final working model.

Alongside the color defining process, I was modifying the design elements that needed editing. One such example is eliminating the excessive platforming around the revolve that made the stage too high. This choice forced me to come up with other ways that the new palace wagon tracked on and to add a ramp for the sausage cart. I reduced the overall height of the old palace by three feet, as well as reduced the diamond façade wall height down as well. I then unified the idea of the upstage scrim wall and the curved sky. I

decided on no scrim wall but rather filling half of the diamond shapes with scrim and then having a curved sky surround that held the design. The curved sky surround brought more curves into the design as well as depth by being able to have a curve white cyc upstage of the curved sky. Larry and I were excited about the lighting possibilities of having two planes to light and create depth with. The curved sky suggested both sky and land, as a place where heaven and earth meet to resonate with *The Green Bird* as a spiritual tale. To support the curved sky I introduced a series of fantastical trees and columns that would hold the design and support the initial idea of the mystery of the forest and the city surrounding the environment of the play.

All of these elements started to come together in the final model, alongside the draftings and the painters renderings. In the final model I figured out the patterns of each location and the piazza base. I referred back to my visual research to find an offset diagonal tile pattern for the piazza base, a marble tile pattern for the old palace, and then repeating that pattern in the garden. During this phase of finishing the final model, many informal discussions with Leslie and the design team occurred which resulted in small design questions being answered and explored while I continued to think and adjust the final composition.

I also embellished and pushed the areas of the design that needed to be pushed. One such element was the new palace. Technically, I had to figure out a way that a tracking wagon with a beautiful chaise lounge could track onto a revolving stage. Would it butt up against or overlap it some how? In correlation to this a metal façade was to come down from the sky with glass sculptures placed over it to show the twins' new found wealth. After a discussion with my Daniel Conway, we felt that this idea needed to be pushed more. I

added more glass sculptures and a large funky chandelier to enhance the space, as well as a sheep rug underneath the chaise to make it more ostentatious.

I explored the design elements of the Ogre's mountain with the idea of the Ogre's mountain possibly flying down into the space after the revolve had turned for the Green Bird to climb onto it for his final transformation. The mountain would then fly out into "heaven." The mountain base I kept to a simple idea of a series of geometric planes that actors would climb up to the mountain. The mountain shape itself I was inspired by an Adolph Appia design as well as the Green Bird as a metaphor of the Christ figure on the cross. The apple orchard was situated next to the mountain. Ann-Marie and I early in the research process had found images that suggested using actors as the tree, and the tree itself being a framework to frame the "tree-actors." We employed this idea in the design and found that it could be an exciting way to have the tree and the singing apple come alive.

The final design presentation consisted of presenting the final color working model (see fig. 20, 21 and 22), most of the draftings and the painter's renderings, to Leslie, the design team, the design faculty advisors and to the Clarice Smith Performing Arts production staff. The meeting consisted of the design team collaboratively presenting the designs for *The Green Bird*, and walking through each character and scene and what the design for each was. Leslie responded very enthusiastically to the design with many verbal utterances of excitement. A couple of adjustments in color were asked about, as well as practical questions about the timing of how things would come on and move.

The main issue that came up was the question of the transformation of the Green Bird into a man and maybe needing a bigger idea in the production, one that did not require an actor to be flown in, which was not safe. One idea was using silk fabric as wings to

represent the spirit of the Green Bird which would fly up into “heaven.” We as a team decided that a fabric test was needed to see if this idea could physically work or not.

Through collaboratively presenting the design we as a design team showed *Commedia* as a skeletal frame that *The Green Bird* fantastical fairy tale was stretched over, as well as the playful environment in which the characters fit into the revolving storybook.

Chapter 3: Design Realization

Drafting and Costing

After the final design had been presented and approved by Leslie and Daniel Conway, I began working with the production shops to see if the show was able to fit in the budget allotted for *The Green Bird*. The first step was that I handed in my fourteen plates of draftings of the show on the following Monday to Kim Deane, the scene shop manager and to Steve Crosby, the master carpenter, via the Production Manager, Tina Newhauser (see fig. 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, and 33). I had been drafting the show from groundplan up since the preliminary design phase. The drafting plates showed the groundplan of the set, the various positions of the revolve, and all of the elevations of the scenic elements. The draftings were drafted in the computer program Vectorworks 12.5. The draftings then became the basis from which monetary figures could be attributed to the scenery, paints and props. While I waited to hear the full cost out, my time was spent finishing the remaining painter’s elevations to give to Ann Chismar, our resident scenic painter.

The result of the preliminary cost out was that I was roughly \$5,000 over budget in scenery, \$3,500 under budget for props, and over the paint budget by \$2,000. To get the scenery cost into the appropriate budget Daniel Conway and I sat down and went through the itemized list to figure out ways to slim down the cost of the set. We started first with all of the flexible mouldings that were for the old palace, the edge of the revolve as well as the

edges of the old palace and the café steps. I called the Flex Mould company and compared different mouldings and their prices to find similar, but cheaper, mouldings to the ones that I had drafted. Through this, we were able to cut about \$1200 in moulding costs. The next step was that we found a more economical use of muslin for the curved sky surround by changing the seam direction from horizontal to vertical. This freed us up and allowed us to use less muslin and save about \$1100. Other budgetary decisions were made in terms of using stock capitals that the University had in the theatre warehouse, rather than buying new ones, which also saved about \$500. Another significant budgetary change was that Daniel Conway provided an additional \$2000 out of his design slush fund to put the set under the budget. To get props into budget I was able to borrow a tricycle for Truffaldino's sausage cart at a local theatre company. Also some prop items were placed under the scenery budget but to be built by the props shop. To get paints into budget I agreed to minimizing the amount of jaxsan texture on the floor to 1/4" high, as well as using less copper leaf in the proscenium portal and more copper paint.

The biggest difficulties encountered in the final approval process was adjusting the elements to fit into budget, coupled with the time needed to physically produce the show. The production staff felt that due to the amount of moving parts, high craft in detail and the breadth of the scenic pieces, that there was not enough time or skilled labor to produce the show. Daniel Conway assured me that significant changes were not needed in my design and to let the problem work itself out. At the final approval meeting, the component budgets were finally all under the total possible main budget. This happened also because a significant mistake in the budget allotment had occurred on the final budget sheet, with items being billed under both scenery and props. When this was noticed and adjusted, the budgets were all under. The time issue was solved by one of the main units of

scenery, the curved sky surround, being built faceted as a series of planes that were set to a curve, rather than a solid curve.

Build

The next part of the realizing of the design was to manage the development of the design as it was being created and that my drafting, scale and design choices for paint and props were being honored. Also, if there was any information needed from the shops to facilitate the design process, I needed to respond quickly and accurately. The shops began building the show in late December and then in full swing in early January. Tangentially, as this was beginning, the rehearsals for *The Green Bird* began in late January. My task now was to simultaneously track the design through the shops as well as to how the show was unfolding in rehearsal under Leslie's direction and if the design needed to be adjusted at all.

Some of the design materials that I needed to select was carpet for the palace garden, finding a faux metal texture for the proscenium portal and finding creative elements to create the Chihuly-esque glass sculptures on the wall. I needed to pick out a new palace chandelier, and select the sheepskin rug and fabric for the chaise lounge. While on a class puppetry trip in late November in NYC, my design faculty advisor told me that the Canal Plastics store in Chinatown might have plastic parts suitable for the Chihuly-esque chandeliers. At that store I found colored plastic tubes, balls and spirals that, fitted together, could realize the chandeliers. On another trip to NYC with fabric samples from Ana-Marie, I was able to buy the needed upholstery fabric for the chaise lounge. When purchasing fabric, I kept in mind Daniel Conway's advice about fabric being able to be read from a distance away from the stage. I selected a golden fabric that had a repeating raised dot pattern that read very well from far away and fit the color palette. I selected the garden carpet at an architectural salvage yard that had green indoor/outdoor carpeting. Carpeting

was used to provide traction for the actors, in addition to looking more real than turf grass, as well as having a great under layment texture that could be inverted in the tiles to create a better pattern. The new palace chandelier was a 1950's lamp that was a series of three textured glass balls bought on eBay, but provided the perfect look for an flamboyantly garrish lack of style.

Working with the shops became crucial in discussions such as an initial one with Ann Chismar, the scene painter, to approve a floor texture sample so that the basing of the floor could begin. Leslie, as well as the costume shop, was concerned that the texture would ruin the costumes and hurt the actors. Once I had approved a sample pattern that resembled stucco and did not stick up very much, these fears were alleviated. I worked closely with the prop shop to create the fantastical trees that surrounded the space. I oversaw their creation with a metal base which was applied with foam, chicken wire, and lastly draped in muslin in an organic diagonal movement. I also had many conversations with the prop shop about the construction of the apple tree in making sure that its proportions and its shape turned out organically, and using a new material called Nike fabric, a sportswear fabric. The process of building the sun was one of selecting clear acrylic and textured Dacron (used in the bottom of fluorescent lights) and then we experimented with different treatments to color it- orange shellac ended up looking the best.

One of the big changes to the design came during the design run-through were Leslie was describing the pre-show action of the play, with the actors in the audience in character selling object as a historical reference to *Commedia*. After the actors gathered onstage and sang, the house curtain rose up behind them to reveal the set. As a design team we were shocked by this statement as none of us were aware of the house curtain being used that way. After the run we discussed it with Leslie and realized that somewhere along the

way the communication had broken down, but it became clear that artistically it was a very big issue. I spent the next couple of days trying to solve the issue and see if the curtain could indeed fly out (it did not have to fly back in). The main issue was whether the proscenium portal could move upstage a line set or two, to make room for the house curtain. After many discussions with Larry, Rick Weinard, the scene shop supervisor, and Tina Newhauser, the production manager, we were able to make enough room for the curtain to fly out. This allowed for the show to artistically progress as it was without a major shift in approach. Also, certain aspects of the scenery required me to re-measure and change in order to fit the action of the play. One such unit was Calmon's pedestal, which once the height of the actor's shoe extensions were defined, I could define the heights of his pedestal to allow the actor to be in the correct position. These new measurements were then relayed to Fisher Theatrical who was contracted out to build Calmon's alcove, Truffaldino's house, the fountain and the curved diamond wall. Working with a professional, non-academic scene shop was a unique experience for me, and a challenging one as well. The difficulty was that the initial building discussions were clear, but the finished product was built in a quick way, and painted in a hurried manner. What was also challenging is that the burden of communication of monitoring the design fell upon my shoulders because they certainly did not feel obligated to. Other design modifications were needed in terms of adding handholds for the Green Bird on the diamond façade wall after consulting with the circus expert that Leslie brought in. Lastly, adjustments to the positions for the revolve had to be adjusted and confirmed so that the mechanism turning the revolve could be set with stops.

A few weeks before the load in of the set began was an update meeting for the status of the design production of the Green Bird. A major question that came out of this meeting was if the white cyc extensions were needed on the sides behind the curved sky surround.

After an intense discussion with Larry as well as Daniel Wagner, the lighting design chair, I supported the initial design idea which needed the cyc extensions to create space around the design, as well as not have black underneath and above the curved sky surround.

Load-in

Two weeks before the tech of *The Green Bird* the set was loaded in, beginning with the floor, the revolve and the smaller free standing units such as Truffaldino's house and Calmon's Alcove. In terms of progression, the schedule was beginning to look overloaded for all of the scenery to get done and in place for first rehearsal, as well as all of being painted by the tech rehearsal of the show, possibly even the opening of the show. The bad weather received had closed the university for a couple of days and this had adversely affected the load-in as well. It was at this point that Daniel Wagner made the decision to extend the opening of the show from March 2nd to the 3rd. This gave the production crews an extra day.

During the load-in I began to focus on the finished look of the scenery, making sure that it had the correct texture and color as rendered. A couple of conversations with my design advisor Daniel Conway cautioned me to not allow the color palette to get too broad. This excellent piece of advice guided me until the opening of the show to keep unifying the color palette, as well as giving the show depth and life. This discussion was directly linked to the copper patina painting of the proscenium portal. With the help of Ann Chismar, the scenic artist, I developed the base texture out of taking muslin soaked in a white glue and water mixture, placing that on luan, and then scrunching it up into wrinkles that were laid flat with a brush. This texture was then based out in the dark copper colors, then the copper leaf and metallic paint, and then lastly the turquoise patina color. We began to pull more of the metallic paints into the portal, to give it more life and not let it get too heavy. I started to pull in the copper colors more into the set as well as the diamond façade wall to gain the

depth and unity the design needed. I began to help directly paint the set daily in areas such as toning down the fantastical surround trees, and giving more depth and life to the scenery that came back from Fischer Theatrical. Scenic elements such as Calmon's alcove I worked directly with Ana Marie to match the costume to the scenery, and vice versa, so I added more of the dark greens as well as gave the alcove more drips and texture.

The rehearsal process was gearing up to get into the space. One of the issues that had to be solved was the fabric wings of the Green Bird that had to fly out during the Ogre's Mountain scene. Previously, we had decided that the mountain unit could not fly out, so we as a design team with Leslie came up with the idea of a bird puppet, roughly suggesting a crow, could fly in with two line sets which would fly the fabric wings out. We had done a test of this a few weeks earlier in the Kay Theatre and felt that the idea would work. I began to build the bird puppet so that the actor would get familiar with operating it and giving it life. The puppet was a simple enough mechanism that allowed for one person to hold the base of the puppet, near its tail, while the other hand held two control rods that pivoted the wings up and down. The base was a rod that also could turn the head of the puppet. I used cane and wire to rough out the lyrical form, and then finished the form with fabric and feathers. The first form I made looked too small of the Kay stage, and so I doubled its size to get it to read onstage. However, when all of the set was loaded and a test of the fabric was done with the actors, it proved to be too technically complex, and visually looking weak because there was not enough space between the mountain and the diamond façade wall, as well as the large number of people on stage that inhibited the movement. A simpler ensemble acting moment was settled on, but the bird puppet would stay because it could still come alive out of the Ogre's mountain.

As a result of the first rehearsal on the stage, issues such as units not tracking very well because of their casters, or not all of the scenic elements in place yet had to be dealt with. Also, the railing of the old palace scale wise was too high, as pointed out by Daniel Conway, and it was also a sightline issue for the actors. Another issue with the railing was that some of the balustrades were in the way of people's faces when they went down into the trap in the drain, as well as being a general sightline issue. I asked a big design change at this point in the process which was that the railing needed to be lowered 6" and the center balustrades to be removed. This was needed to simplify the look of the railing and make the sightlines better for the actors in the old palace. Another change in the design was needed in that the opening of the drain turned out to be not wide enough for the Leslie's preferences to see Ninetta. I opened the front of the drain more by designing a grillwork of pipes that sat in the front, which was dressed with rags and bits of old filth.

The benefit of having early rehearsal on the stage was that issues with the revolve, the tracking of Calmon's Alcove, and the new palace wall and wagon movement could be dealt with right away. All of these elements were tweaked and adjusted so that when the tech week started, these issues had been worked through by Leslie and I.

Tech Week

At this point in the design realization process of *The Green Bird* all of the designers, actors and the director come into the theatre and tech through each moment of the show. Teching through each moment means adjusting the lights, sound and scenery for each moment. This is an exciting and challenging period of the matriculation of the show in working to maintain the integrity of the design. One of the main jobs facing me as the scenic designer was writing down notes for the set, props and paints. The notes are taken in such a way were I would prioritize them as to what was most important. Though the

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rehearsal had been occurring on the set, a number of important scenic elements such as the ogre's mountain, the header on the curved diamond wall, and the mouldings on the old palace and the steps, were missing. Obviously, these elements were at the top of my list to get done.

An important part of the tech week is the cohesiveness of the production coming together in terms of an organic whole comprised of the actors, costumes, scenery, props, lighting and sound. In a sense, the tech week is about setting the show on its feet and lifting it up to hopefully fly. An important cohesive element that I paid very careful attention to was the color of the costumes, set and the lights. Seeing the costumes on the stage made me realize certain painting details had to be adjusted, or more depth and texture was needed in the paint to correlate with the depth that was in the costumes. Certain aspects of the set could easier be adjusted with paint to match a costume, rather than changing the color of the costume. Also in the tech process I kept my professor's advice in keeping the color palette unified. To also keep the look of the show unified, I worked closely with Larry to make comments and suggestions of color and lighting choices that he was making. By continuing to think about shaping the show with light to unify it, I talked both formally and informally with Larry during the tech week process. I found that I had to challenge Larry to think more about the idea of the scene, and what was occurring emotionally, intellectually within that to support it with light. An important dimension of the scenic/lighting designer relationship during this tech process was sculpting the play with light by highlighting and selectively revealing the environment of *The Green Bird*.

Once the actors began wearing their full costumes on the set, a number of realizations occurred. A major change was when the apple tree was in its correct position and the apple chorus was grouped around the tree with their apple headdress on, that the

apple tree itself dwarfed them and essentially looked redundant for the idea. The initial idea was that the apple chorus organically came out of the tree to dance and move- so Ana Marie and I had collaborated to create an overall unified form for the apple tree. However, Leslie had serious artistic revulsion to how the tree inpassed the movement of the actors. I realized that the idea was stronger in its simplicity with the actors as the apple tree and the tree became extraneous. So the apple tree was cut. Another important decision happened was when Daniel Conway asked if the scrim filling the alternating panels on the diamond façade wall was actually needed. As we looked at the whole picture of the setting, with how beautifully the curved sky was reading, we decided that the simpler and more effective line of the diamond façade wall would be better. Leslie agreed with this decision as well, because it would allow the Green Bird to move freer on the wall.

As the tech week progressed, I continued to physically help to get the painting of the set done, as well as take detailed notes for how all of the elements needed to progress. Besides painting the set, I was also sculpting the header of the diamond façade wall and the window unit of the old palace. Both of these elements were put in during the middle of the tech week, and were essential to giving a finished edge to the show. The tech week process also challenged you to push certain elements of the set that needed to be stronger. The new palace façade needed to be made more ostentatious and flamboyant. I changed the base of the new palace wall from golden yellow to a valentine pink, as well as went out and found some beaded curtains that we painted silver and strung from the windows in the new palace façade. These beaded curtains provided more flash and sparkle needed in that transformative moment of the show.

The tech week culminates in the final preview performance where there is a photo call with a professional photographer who comes in to take photos of the show while it is

being performed. The photo call gives the design team and the department of theatre a chance to visually document the show with pictures for our portfolios and documentation. As with most theatre shows, there was a big push from all of the shops to get as many of the notes done before the photo call. This was especially true in terms of the paint notes of the finishing details as well as just getting some elements such as the moulding painted to where I had rendered it. On the day before photo call the shops put forward a Herculean effort to get the needed notes done, of which I am still grateful to this day for. The day after the photo call is a day to finish the final notes and touch up any last details.

On opening night I sat in the theatre filled with a mixture excitement, pride and wonder. On one hand I was glad that the show was up on its feet, and that it told a wonderful story in a dynamic, visually organic way. On the other hand, I mentally and emotionally was so close to the design, that I still made notes in my head of things that could be pushed more- painting details, adjustments in props that had never happened, as well as all of my compositional choices. That enquiry therefore leads into chapter 4, where I more closely analyze the process of the design.

Chapter 4: Production Analysis

The Design Process

For me, the most exciting moment in theatre is when you are a collaborator on a production, and there is that moment that sends chills down your spine of when you see the production as a living, breathing work of art. I felt that moment on the final preview of *The Green Bird*, when the set, paints and props had finally gotten into the detailed stage, and the lighting had found a balance between focus on the scene and the environment. In that moment, I looked back to when *The Green Bird* was just an idea, a script and then a number of artists gathered in a room to discuss what can we do with these words and images. That process of beginning to end of the development of the design is amazing, and yet I wonder what I could have done better and where the process, depending on the choices I made, led me to.

Overall, I really enjoyed the challenging process of designing *The Green Bird*. The fantastical quality of it as a fairy tale allowed the visual design of the work to be very creative and imaginative. I embraced the creative, imaginative side of the show while strove to keep the core concept of a piazza environment that was a transforming playground for all of the characters as if they were in a revolving storybook (see fig. 35). During the design process I began to realize that *The Green Bird* was not dominated by a heavy emotion, but rather an organic environment that the characters were inherently linked to. When Leslie first stated that the characters never left the stage for the whole show, it shocked me a little bit, and I wondered how all of these elements would flow together. Yet, the focus of this challenge during the process of design became a magical synthesis of character and environment in a flowing storybook world. By retaining the *Commedia dell'Arte* skeleton of *The Green Bird*, the design process was about striving to create an active space for the characters. While

designing the active space of the set, I also kept in my mind the “jewel box that held the jewel,” to quote my design advisor Daniel Conway. The jewel box was based in a sweeping curve of a skyscape that gave the design depth, space, and curved arms that embraced the active sculptural aspects of the design (see fig. 47). Once in the middle of the design process, I began to embrace the curves of the storybook and employ them in the curved portal, the curved diamond wall and the curved front edge of the stage and this helped me keep the composition unified.

Another strong element of my design process is that I strove to listen very attentively to my design team, to Leslie the director as well as to Daniel Conway, my design advisor. This attentiveness led to a finished design that was visually strong, as well as very organic in the staging of the play, with all of the tracking scenery and the movement of the revolve. Staging ideas such as the Green Bird being able to climb on the diamond façade wall became a compelling visual action during the play (see fig. 37). One such area I was not attentive, as well as showing my inexperience as a designer, was listening closer to the critique from Leslie and Daniel Conway about the railing on the Old Palace. They mentioned that it might be a sightline issue, as well as being too visually busy. In the process, I did adjust the scale of the railing and reduced a number of the balustrades, but in the final product, a number of the balustrades still had to be cut and the railing lowered for sightlines. Scale continues to be a challenge for my path as a designer, though I worked hard to have a concise sense of scale in *The Green Bird*. For example, in the process of designing the old palace, the diamond façade wall and the curved sky surround, I lowered all of the down in scale in the model, because my gut told me that the scale might be too large when it would be actualized in the theatre. It was a good design to lower the scale down of all of the units, but what I needed to do more of was reduced some of the scale of the individual parts of the units, namely parts of

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the old palace where the moulding was a little too dominant, and the bases of the columns as well.

One aspect of the design process that I feel as a designer I need to improve on is my economy of time while designing. This was evident in the draftings being delivered a day late to the scene shop, as well as the painter's renderings being handed over late to the scenic painter Ann Chismar. This aspect of the process I am confident I can improve on in my future path as a designer as the skills of drafting, painter's elevations will improve in economy and succinctness. Also, by getting better at solidifying the design earlier in the process, the draftings and painters' elevations will come in sooner into the process. Similarly, by drafting alongside the model building process (more so than I did), will prevent the draftings from being started too late. However, with that being said, all of the draftings and the painters elevations were handed in, and I feel confident in saying that they were done to the best of my abilities, which was reflected in there being minimal issues with building in terms of the drafting, and the scenic painters being able to effectively render on a large scale what I had painted.

The Design Realization Process

The process of realizing a scenic design, especially a show that had the scope and detail of *The Green Bird*, was a large endeavor that required me to keep a bird's eye view of the whole process, while also paying close attention to the details of the trees. Overall, I think I was able to organize myself better than the previous three designs I had done at the University of Maryland. One important aspect of organization is that I tried to maintain a positive working relationship with the shops to maintain good dialogue in our working relationship. I also relied a lot on the tutelage of Daniel Conway, my design advisor to advise on materials choices, as well as advice on the painting and the overall color palette on

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the set. Professor Conway gave advice such as placing glazes between layers of paint to increase the depth of color in the proscenium portal, the old palace marble floor and the texture piazza floor. When selecting the fabric for the new palace chaise lounge, I kept in mind Professor Conway's advice on selecting fabric that would read well from the stage in terms of the pattern. His teaching about pattern also helped inspire me to use both the front and back of the green outdoor carpeting in the garden, which created a variegated pattern of dots and grass texture which read very well from the stage.

One of the biggest challenges I faced when approving the items in the shops was to realize the effect that small little design changes would have on the whole world of the design. A perfect example of this was when I approved using stock capitols in the design to save time for the shop, and yet I didn't measure how this scale changed would affect the wooden bases on the columns. In the realized design, the bases on the columns looked clunky and out of scale. Another example was when the trees that were at the base of the sky surround were made unable to wrap around the metal base on the sky surround, which resulted in the metal pipe being seen from the audience.

Tangentially, while the design was being realized by the shops, I also strove to keep a working relationship with Leslie- the director, to respond to the way the show was developing in the rehearsal process. While working with Leslie, I connected with her organic style of theatre and I tried to always support the work with the design. One moment that was difficult was when a miscommunication happened between her and the design team was where she wanted the main show curtain to be down for the pre-show, and then fly out for the show, of which the design team did not know about. Somehow, in our design meetings and subsequent conversations the pre-show idea of the curtain lifting up did not get transferred from Leslie to us. When we did talk about the curtain, it was in regards to using

it later in the play. We were able to shift the proscenium portal upstage two line sets, which allowed for the main curtain to be flown out. So in the end, the practical manner was solved. I wished however that Leslie had shared that concept of why the curtain was needed there in the first place because it made sense to have this theatrical unveiling of the space, as well as setting up the transformative believability of the statues.

Overall though, realizing *The Green Bird* design with Leslie was an exciting collaboration in which I felt she was an excellent collaborator and valued my input for spacing and visuals for *The Green Bird*. She was also very exciting to work with, as she responds enthusiastically to ideas and staging possibilities. As a director she is very flexible and was willing to listen to many ideas. Not only that, she was also not afraid of implementing ideas to see if they would work. For example, staging ideas such as the Green Bird climbing on the diamond façade wall, the café where characters could hang out, and the pedestals for the character silhouettes on the sides all were embraced.

With ideas such as using fabric to suggest a spiritual set of wings that would fly up to heaven, Leslie was willing to try it onstage to see if it would work. The resulting look of it did not work. Here is a part of the process I think that Ana-Marie and I failed a little bit on. For if the fabric wings were done earlier and implemented into the rehearsal process, I think they could have worked, because they could have been a central idea to that scene, rather than trying to add a big idea later on when there were a lot of bodies on the stage that did not allow for the central idea to actually work. Another idea that I feel that could have been conjoined better between Leslie and I was Truffaldino's sausage cart. It was a great piece of scenery that was onstage for about 7 minutes. When looking at the finished product, I had the impulse that Truffaldino's house with the doors could have been a stoop for Smeraldina

to hang out on and Truffaldino's cart could have been parked next to it on a ramp or something, with a roofline arch above to keep the compositional frame.

The Finished Design

I respected the way that Leslie made decisions to create a performance of *The Green Bird* that was seamless, organic and had a strong correlation between design and the action of the play (see fig. 34). This overarching idea came out in many ways, but in one way that it came out was finding ways that are simple to achieve a scene or an idea, which I completely agree with and am trying to embrace as a designer. This came up when the apple tree that I designed was placed in the space and when the actors gathered it, Leslie hated it. And, I kind of agreed. The tree compacted the action of the actors, making the idea of the apple chorus coming out of the apple tree too complex and clunky. The simpler idea and the stronger idea became just the apple chorus as the apple tree (see fig. 41). Along these lines however, the question of simplicity in performance can be a fine line. For example, one specific moment that bothered me a little bit is the moment in *The Green Bird* where we go to the twins' New Palace for the second time, only the wagon and the chandelier came onto the stage, not the façade wall with the Chihuly-esque chandeliers. I asked twice about if it seemed anachronistic for the wall to not fly in the second time, and Leslie said it was too complex to have an actor guide the wall in a second time, and that it was simpler with fewer items. Partially I agreed with her, but partially I still felt it was anachronistic to not have the wall return. This was one moment where I felt that a simpler solution is not necessarily the best solution.

The collaboration of the realized and finished design with my fellow design team members of Ana Marie Salamat on costumes and Larry Zoll on lighting, was overall a very inspiring and growing process that was firmly based in organic collaboration. One good

example of this is that as a design team we collaboratively presented together at the design presentations, rather than segmenting into different areas. During the realization of design, the dialogue between the three designers was kept open and honest, as well as informing the other design members if anything changed at all. The collaboration with Ana Marie on color and integrating the scenic and the costume elements was a strong source of inspiration for me. By selecting the color palette together, we always had a strong base to refer back to during our process. One particularly vivid collaborative moment between Ana Marie and I was when she was helping paint the costume of Calmon and I was helping paint Calmon's Alcove. We shared images of copper patina pictures and charted a painting technique that would unify the Alcove and the character of Calmon. This resulted in a dynamic, organic living sculpture of the character of Calmon (see fig. 36). The color relationship of the character's costume to their environment was prevalent in other areas of the set as well. For example, the way that Smeraldina's color costumes correlated to her house, or how Renzo and Barbarina's gold base costume, coalesced and was supported by the gold and orange of the New Palace Chaise and the valentine pink wall (see fig. 38). Overall, the coolness in the blue sky surround and the warmth of the terracotta piazza base strongly supported the color palette of Ana Marie's costumes. The close relationship of shapes between the set and the costumes could be seen in the old palace window which framed the diamond shaped head of Queen Tartagliona (see fig. 37), as well as in the new palace clothing of Renzo and Barbarina which referenced the Chihuly-esque sun and glass sculptures.

One area of critique that I would say is that because both the set and the costumes had beautiful lines as well as a lot of detail, that the two began to compete a little bit, of where the focus should be. Though I embraced the idea of the characters and the costumes as being pieces of scenery that organically fit into the environment, i.e. Calmon, Pompea and

her fountain, the chorus silhouettes, and the apple chorus, I could have embraced it more so the two would perhaps not begin to fight for focus. I don't think the focus was a major problem, but somewhere I should have taken some of the detail out of the set in certain areas, or compositionally unified it with a similar line. One area that I feel this is true is in the Old Palace, where spatially the silhouette of the costumes of Tartaglia, Tartagliona and Brighella needed a little more visual space to breathe, as well as less detail in the set to compete with. To be honest, Ana-Marie and I did not fully know what the full visual result would be when all of the characters were living on the stage. I think in hind sight we would have both pulled back a little bit, not a lot, to have the visual detail go down just a little bit.

My collaborative process with Larry was good overall, but at times I felt it hard to interject when I knew that through the tech process and up until opening, he was swamped by people talking to him. I of course kept a dialogue with him nonetheless, but I feel that it took Larry the full week to find a striking balance between emphasizing the place and feel of the scene while treating the overall sculptural of the environment. By the photo call, I felt that Larry had found that balance. I feel I helped him the most in regards to getting him to think about ways to use the depth of the curved sky surround and the white cyc with warm and cool colors to relate closer to the scene that was ongoing on the stage. I think the challenge of the lighting designer is always keeping a sense of what exactly is going on in the scene, and understanding that subtext to support a lighting idea. Some of Larry's lighting ideas were excellent- of Calmon, the beach and of Pompea to name a few. Yet I feel that the lighting could have been pushed more for the transformative scenes such as the New Palace coming in, as well as the Ogre's mountain transformation.

As a design team we talked a lot about focus amidst a sculptural environment, and of revelation, and I think because Ana-Marie and I both pushed our design with a lot of strong

shapes, lines and detail, we needed the lighting to be the glue that held us together.

Generally, I think the lighting did a sufficient job to hold the design together, but I thought it could have been pushed to a higher level that I know Larry is capable of.

The evaluation of the final design for myself is a strong feeling of accomplishment and excitement of the scenic design for *The Green Bird*. Through the stretching process of designing *The Green Bird* my capacity as a theatrical scenic designer has increased through the dimension, scale and the organic layers of the show. My capacity has been broadened in designing while using theatrical conventions such as a revolve, flying elements as well as designing in a proscenium theatre, all of which are firsts for me as a theatrical designer. My capacity has grown through designing a playground type space for the performance style of *Commedia dell'Arte*, as well as the concept of the theatre as an environment where all of the characters have a location within that space and never leave. Through designing a fantastical, fairy tale revolving storybook that has whimsy, a dark edge and a spiritual aspect to the design has stretched my capacity. The realization of this design has improved my ability to see a large, sophisticated show in detail and in color through the shops as well.

My capacity as a designer to arrange composition and scale on the stage has grown as well, though this is the area which I need perhaps the heaviest critique. As I have mentioned before, scale issues such as the height of the railing, the number of balustrades, the scale and design of the pipe were somewhat alleviated in the tech week process, but still in the final lacked in specificity and proportion would they could have had. Part of the challenged as an emerging designer is learning to make those correct proportional designs in the drafting, rather than relying on one's eye in the model to only determine the scale. This is also true in a few smaller places in terms of moulding. Though the moulding around the revolve and steps was proportionally perfect, the moulding on the old palace was a little large and made

it more dominant than it needed to be, while the moulding on the café steps and Truffaldino's house was a bit thin.

Unity in composition is also something I need to work on as a designer. I have tendency to want to have a lot of ideas on the stage, both visually and theoretically. One such example is the fact that I chose to have both fantastical trees and columns descend down on the sides of the stage underneath the curved sky surround to suggest both a diminishing forest and a city. In the sketches and the model it seemed like a witty idea that would be visually interesting on the stage. However, with all of the characters on the stage, having all trees would have been a good compositional unifier. Along those lines is perhaps by having Truffaldino's house roofline go all the way to meet the proscenium portal (like the way that Calmon's Alcove does on the stage left side), then compositionally it would have unified the frame of the composition, rather than have an open space between Truffaldino's house and the portal.

In terms of proportion, there was a number of unnecessary design aspects to the old palace. One, it did not need its own platform on top of the revolve for it added six inches of height. Also, the overall height of the old palace platforms and the curved steps did not need to be as high and could have dropped 8 inches. The original design of the drain had to be modified because it closed the sightlines to see Ninetta. In hindsight I would have the drain just be out of bars. The older palace needed to be "older"- with more texture and paint, for more contrast to the New Palace. I wondered if the old palace should have integrated with the diamond façade wall to become a continuous composition.

Overall the spacing of the character locations to each other in the fairy tale environment was very strong and organic for the action of the play to unfold. The most complex character relationship was the old palace and the new palace dialogue, with the

garden and fountain sandwiched in between. The scene where Tartaglia is wooing Barbarina in the garden next to the new palace had a strong diagonal. However, the space between the old and the new palace was not as much as it proportionally needed to make the new palace stronger visually. The placement of the new palace was strongly dictated by the practical constraints of where the flying façade could come in, as well as the tracking onstage of the wagon with the chaise on it. In hindsight the chaise wagon would have tracked down center stage and the façade would have flown in more downstage.

The strongest elements of *The Green Bird* design were its unified and fantastical color palette that was organically linked to the characters on the stage. The final design contained beautiful, sweeping curves that revolved in front of the audience (see fig. 40). As a design, it was a sweeping spiritual landscape that was transformative in its nature and became an environment that revealed the characters within it. The design in an artful way supported the telling of the story in an artful and unique way, which good set design does (see fig. 42 and 43).

As I find myself reflecting on theatrical set design, my graduate school experience and path as an artist, I would like to postulate that excellent design and art comes at the meeting place of the artist's gut, heart and mind. This spiritual place allows one to design with intellectual specificity as to where the design takes place, how it physically works in the space, also with a heartfelt response to how the design feels, and making decisions for staging and character understanding through our gut response. I feel that *The Green Bird*, as a design and as a production comes close to landing in that spiritual place between the gut, heart and the mind, and that is why I am proud of it.

Appendix A: Research Images



Fig. 1, Historical Commedia Figures

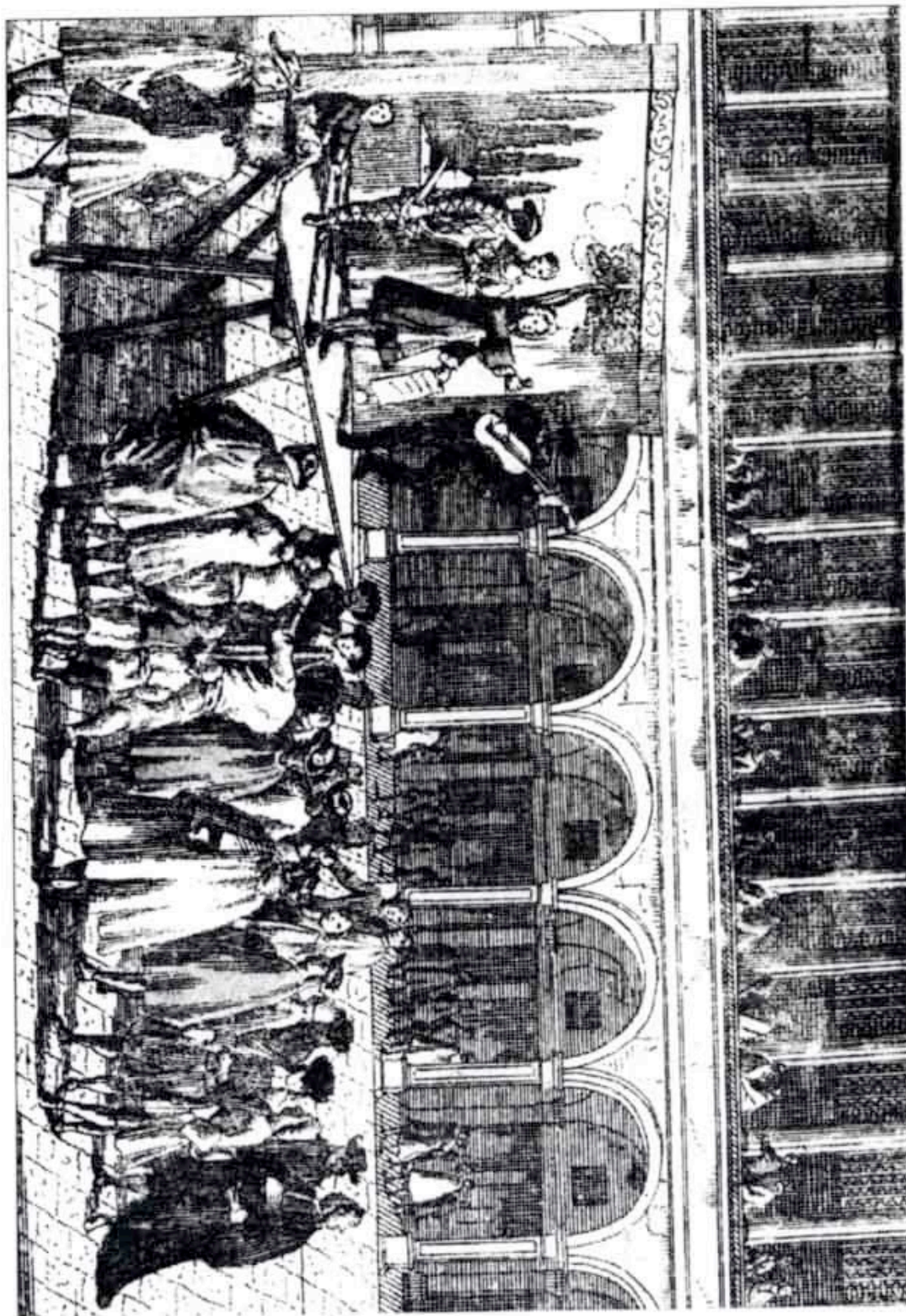


Fig. 2, Historical Commedia Staging



Fig. 3, Dale Chihuly Glass Sculptures in Jerusalem



Fig. 4, Dale Chihuly Glass in Japan

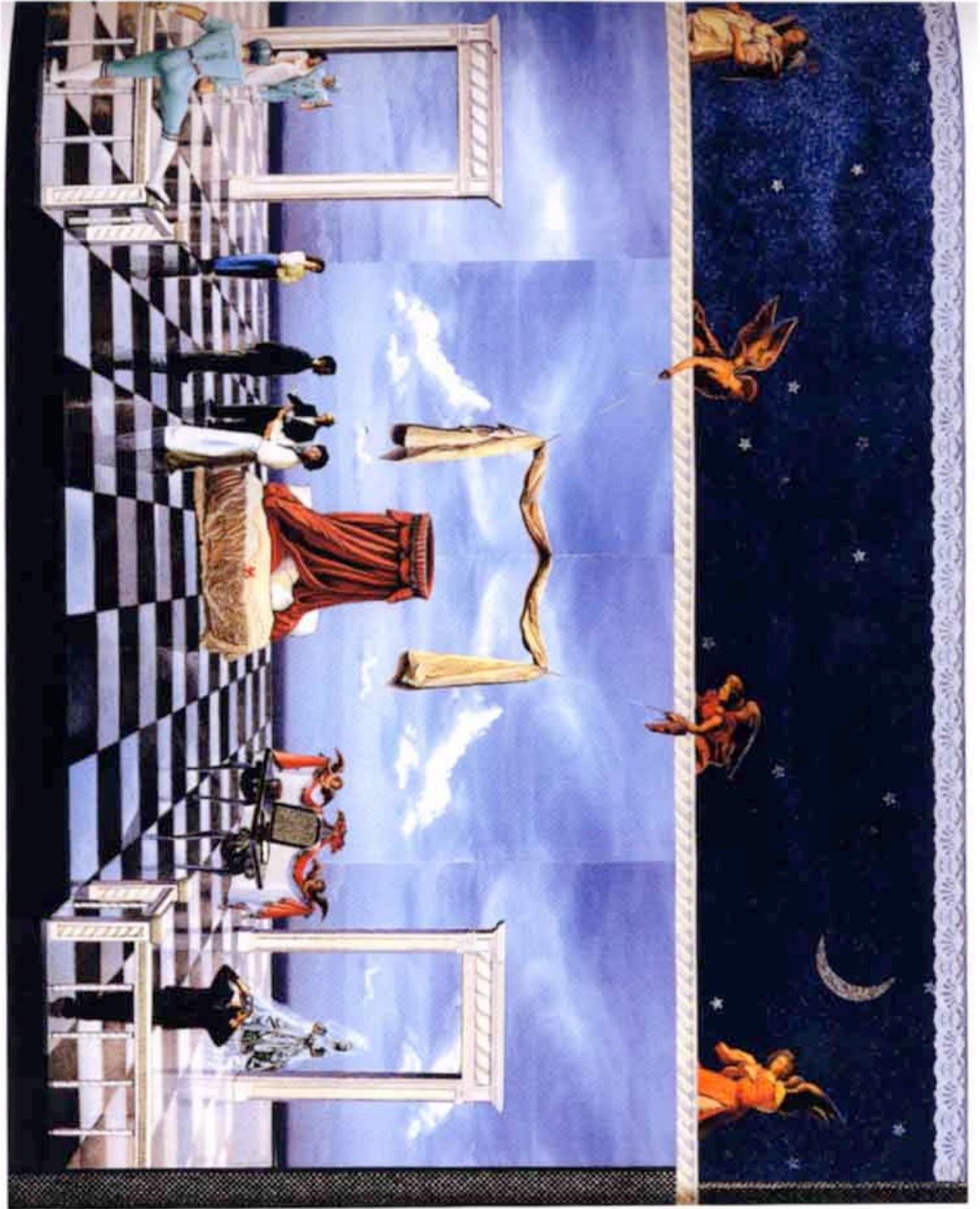


Fig. 5, Luis Gonzalez, Surrealist Painter

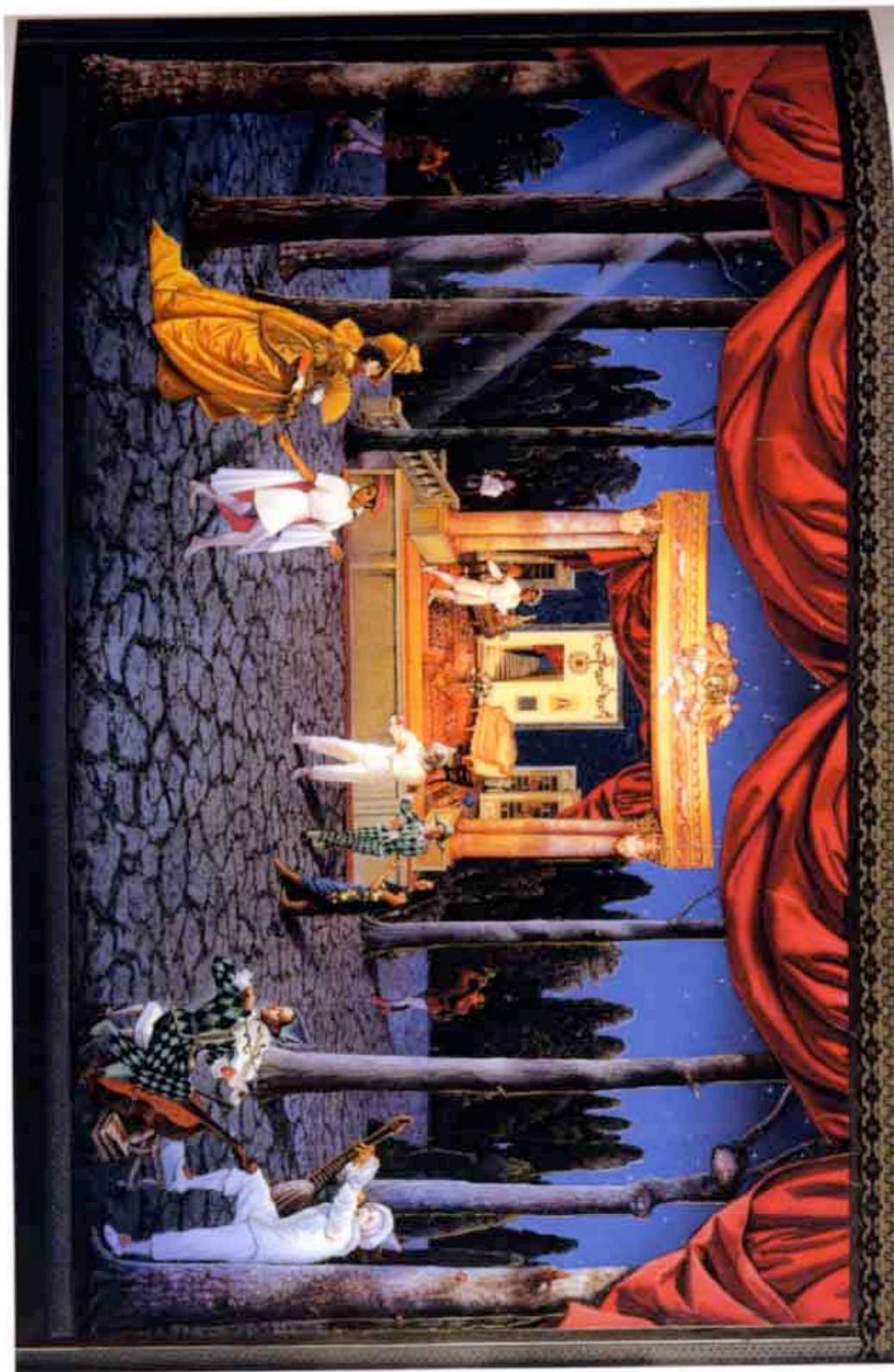


Fig. 6, Luis Gonzalez, Surrealist Painter

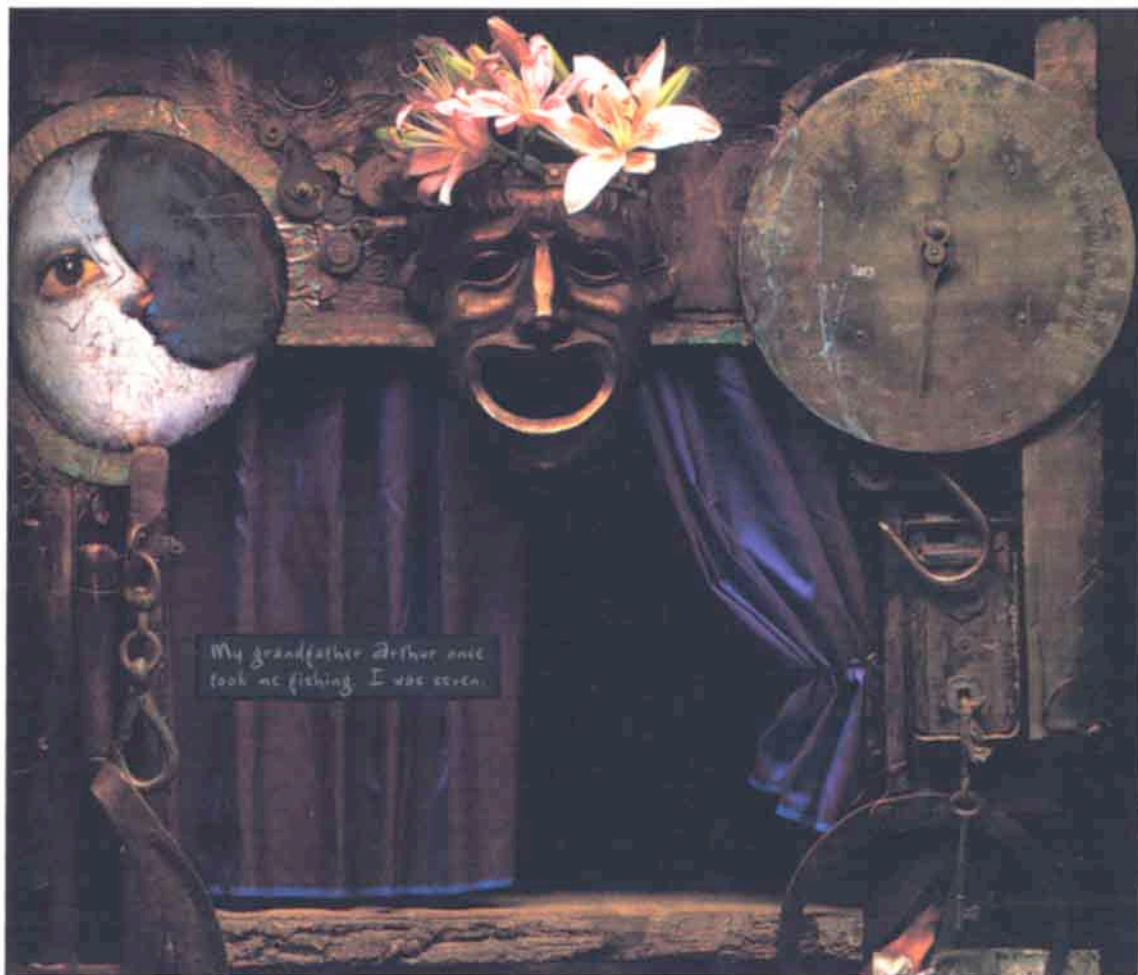


Fig. 7, Dave McKean, Graphic artist

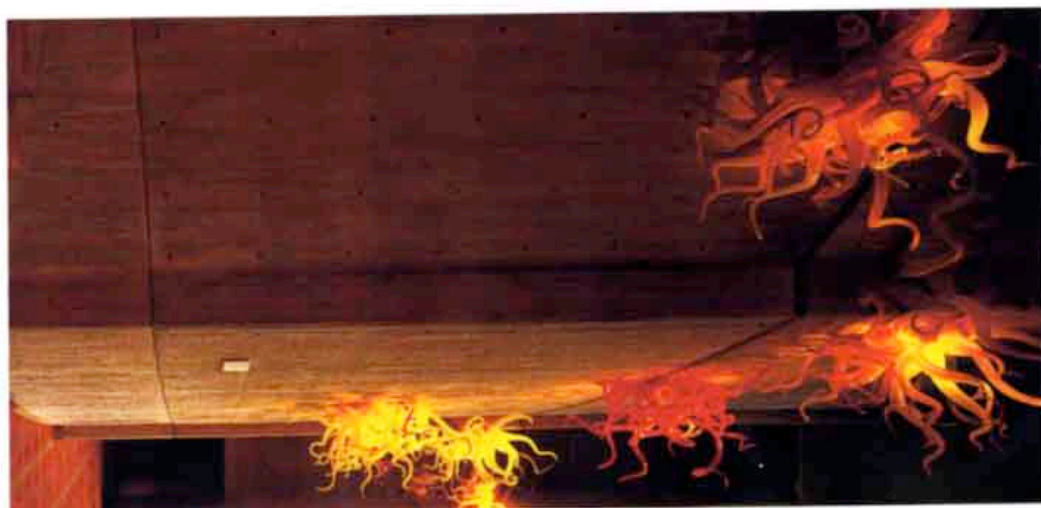
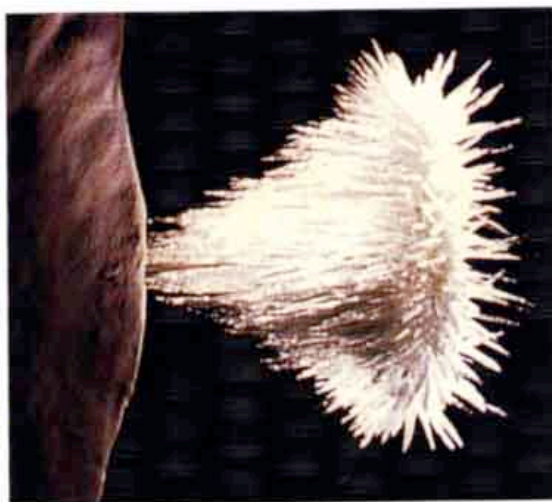
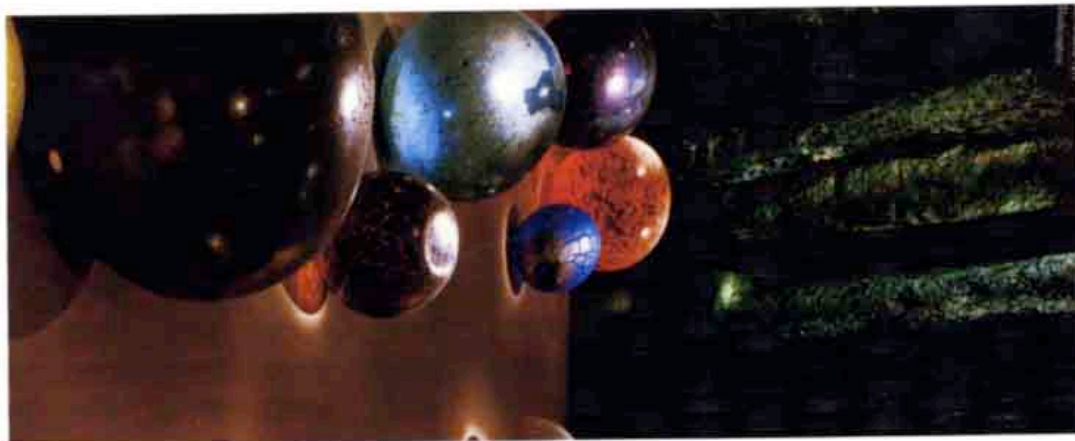


Fig. 8, Dale Chihuly Glassworks

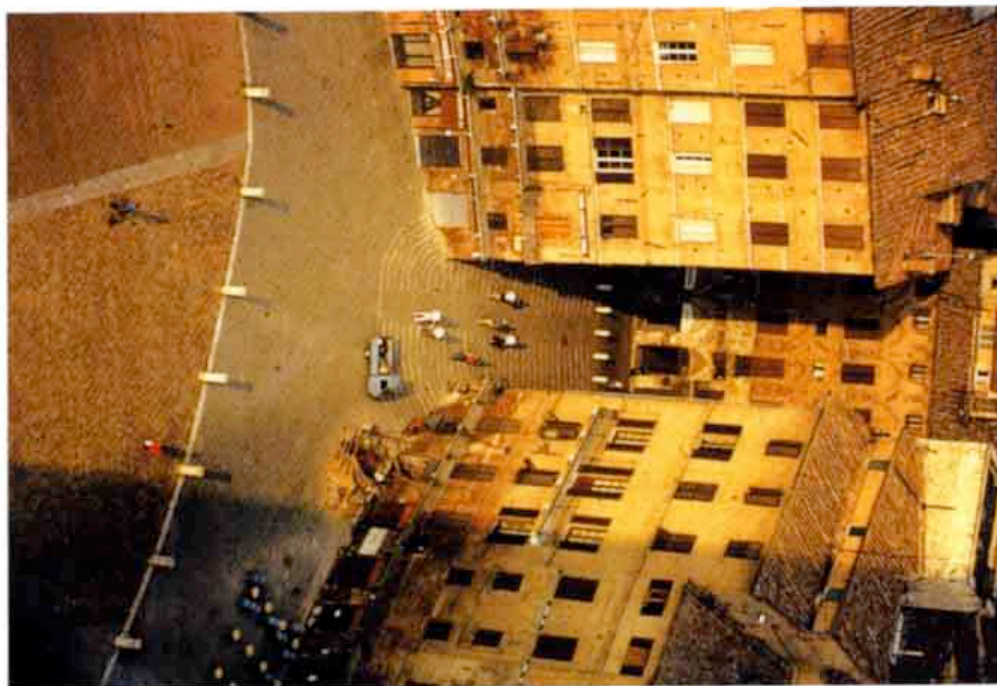


Fig. 9, Realistic Piazzas



Fig. 10, Maurice Sendak, Illustrator



Fig. 11, Piazza Sculptures

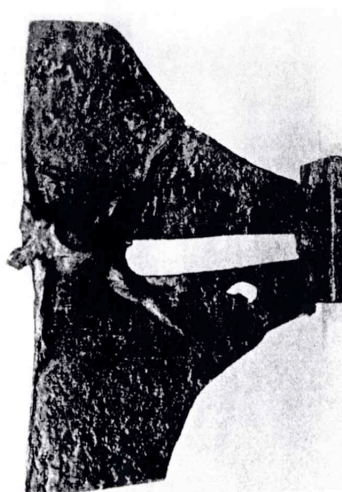


Fig. 12, OGRE'S Mountain Research

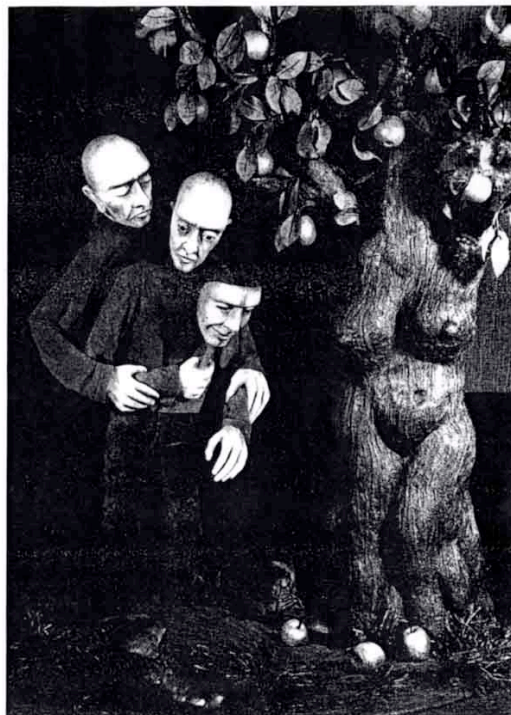


Fig. 13, Apple Orchard Research



Fig. 14, Truffaldino's Sausage Cart



Fig. 15, James Christensen, Illustrator

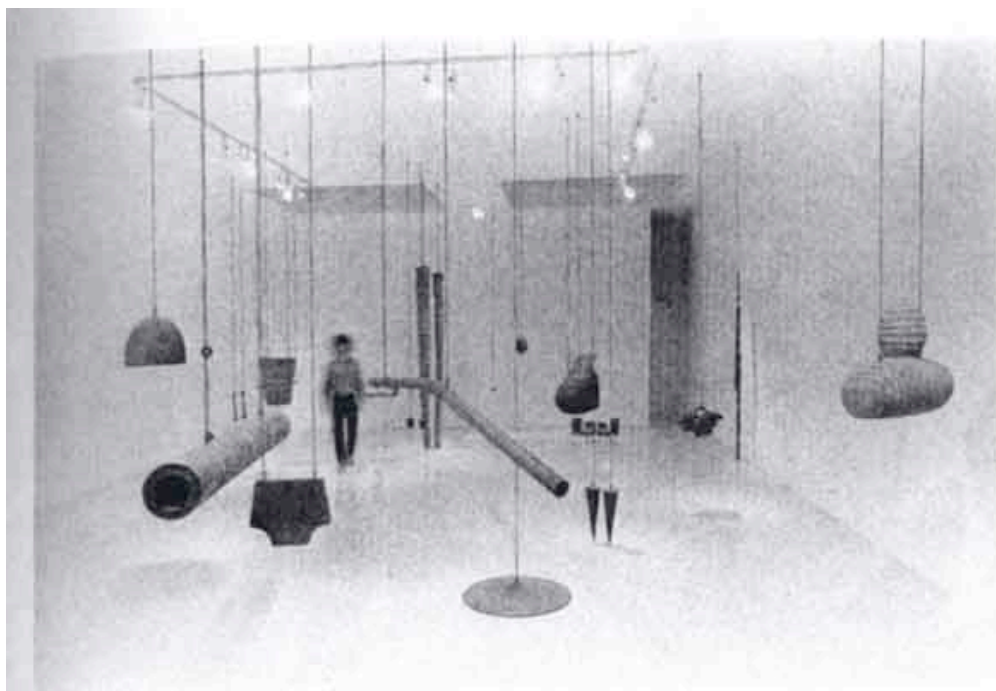


Fig. 16, Modern Installation Sculpture

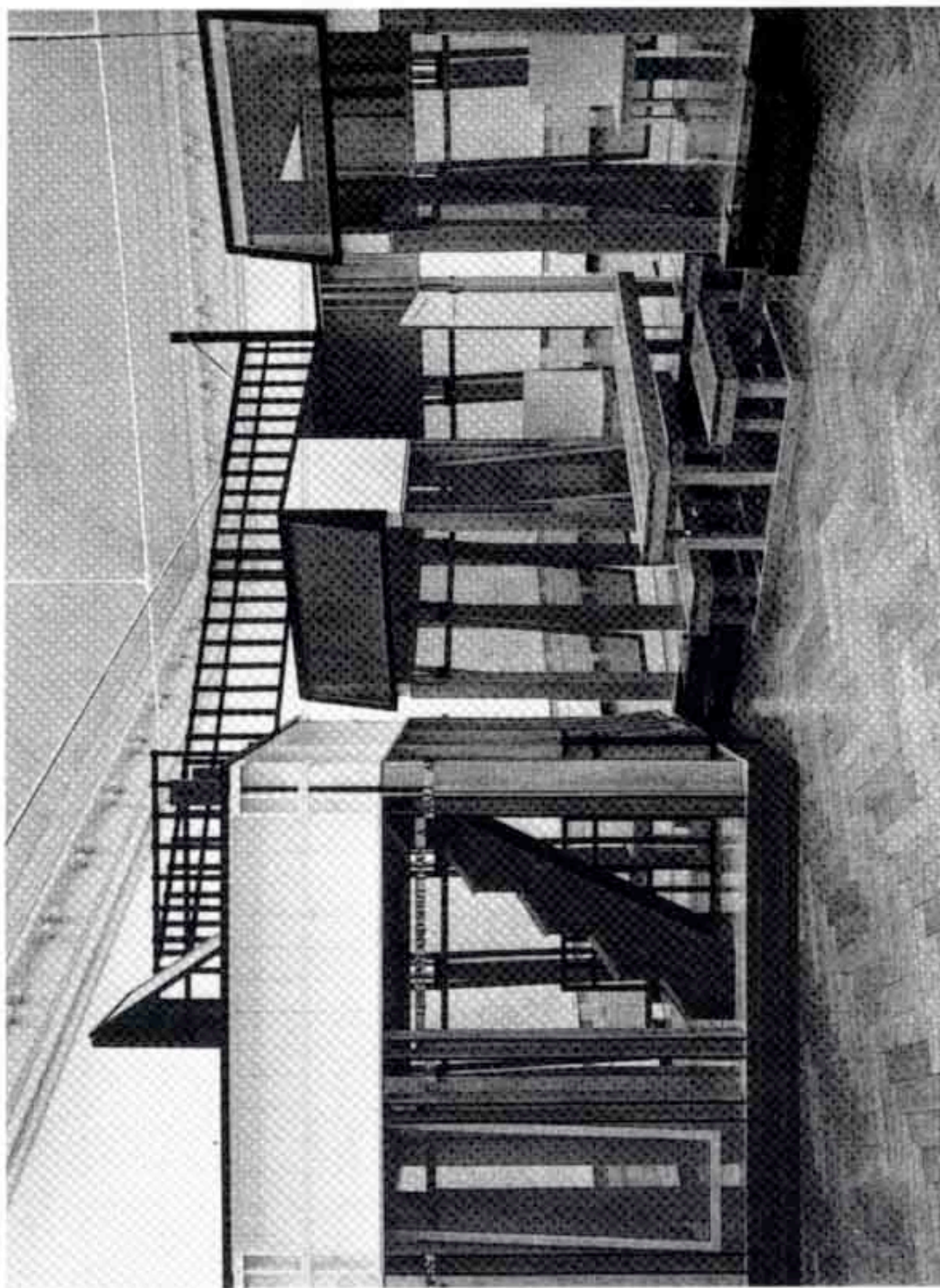


Fig. 17, Modern Installation Sculpture

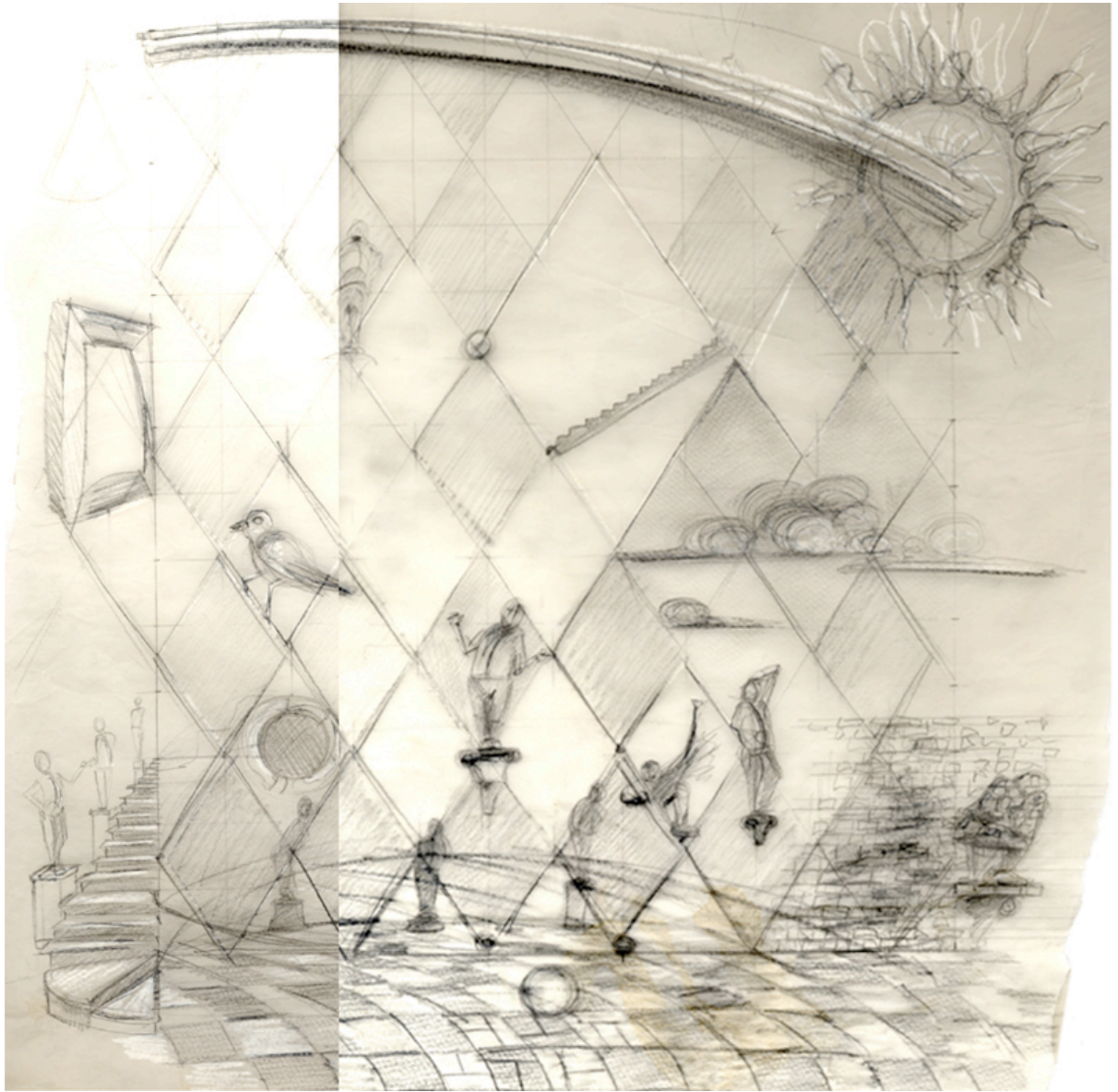
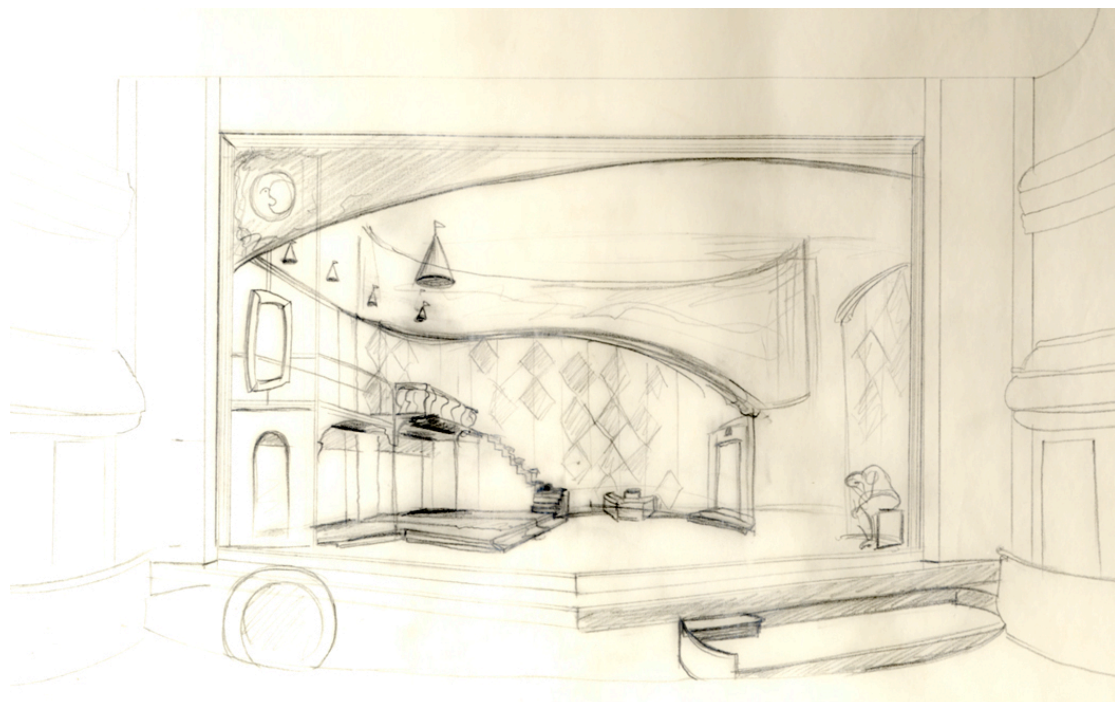
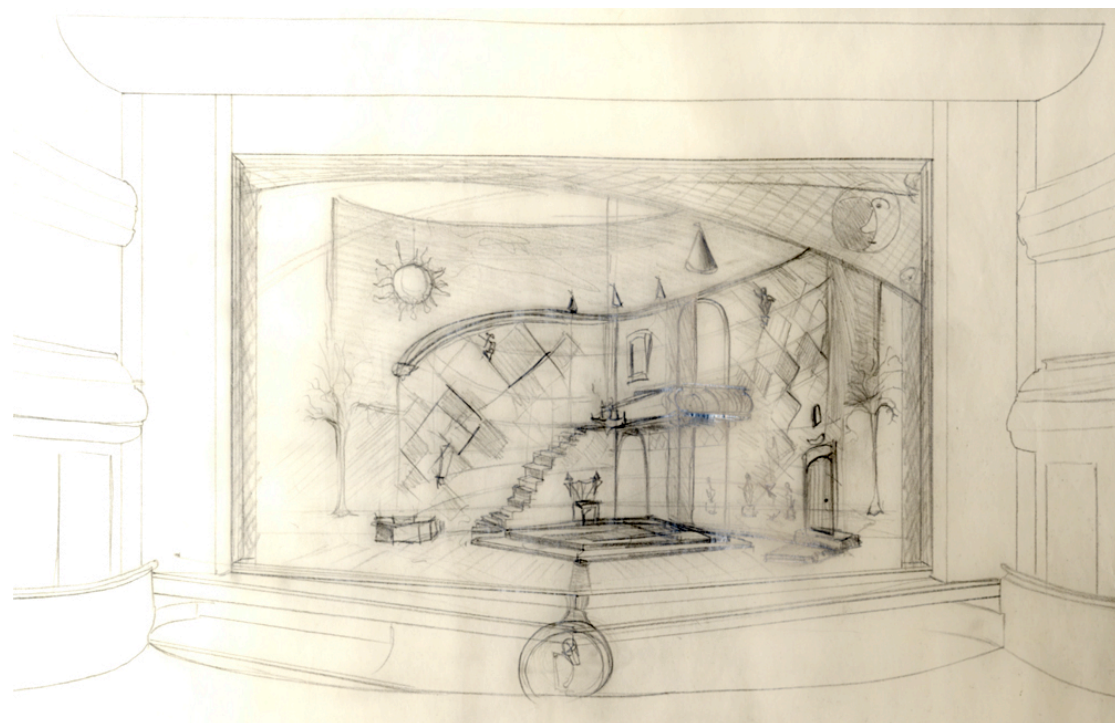


Fig. 18, Concept Sketch

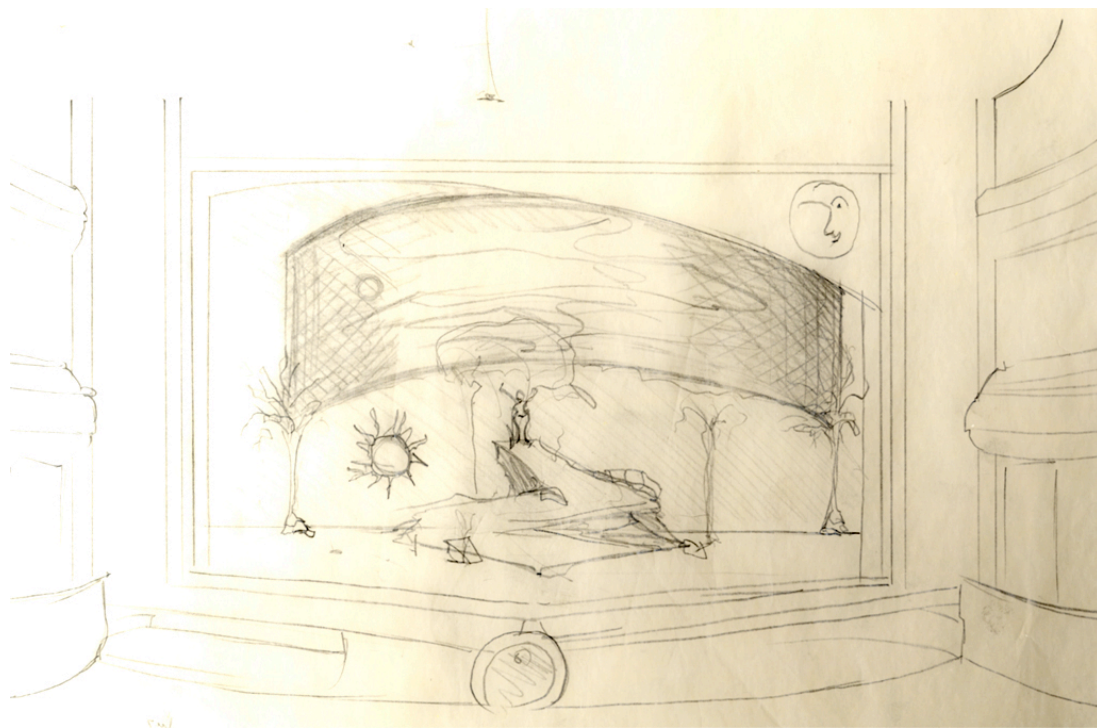


a.



b.

Fig. 19, a and b, Preliminary Sketches



C.



Fig. 20, Final Model- beginning of show

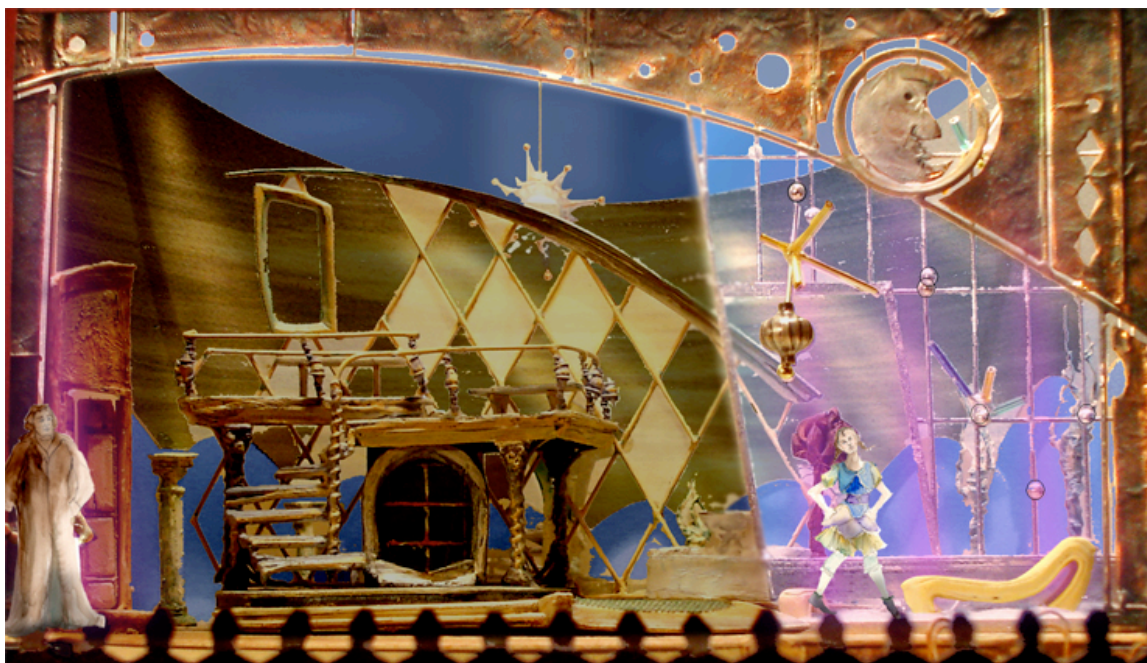


Fig. 21, Final Model, New Palace



Fig. 22, Final Model, Apple Orchard

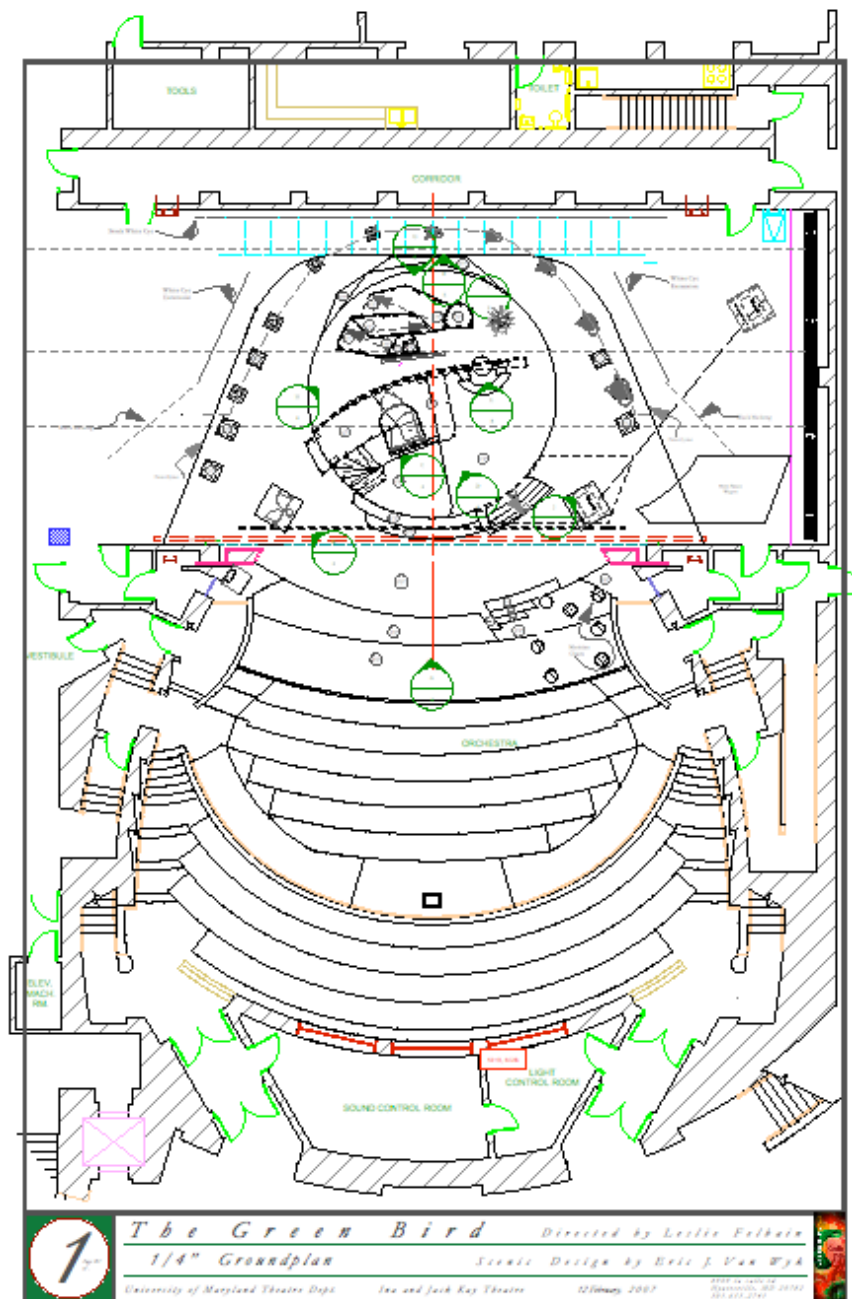


Fig. 23, 1/16" Groundplan

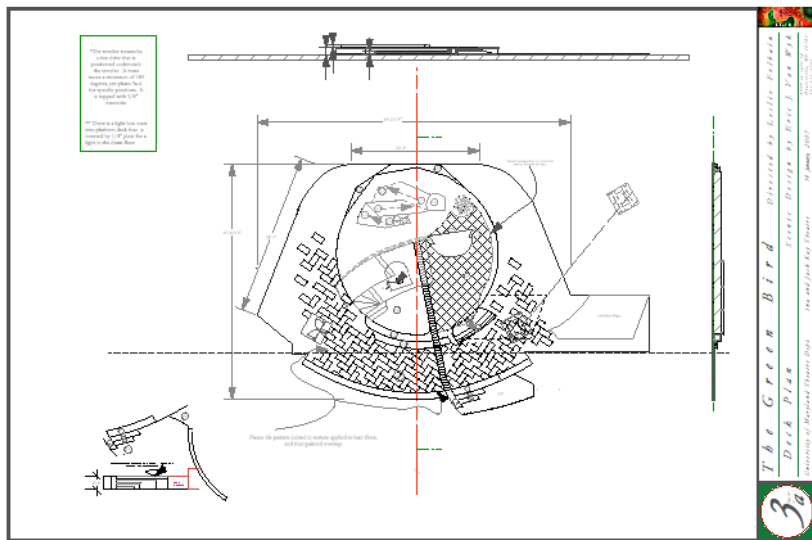
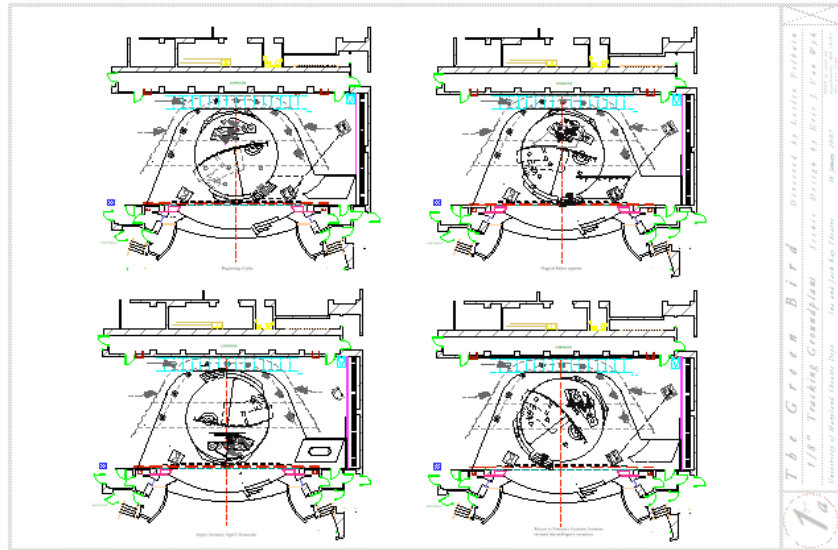


Fig. 24 and 25, 1/16" Tracking Groundplans, Deckplan

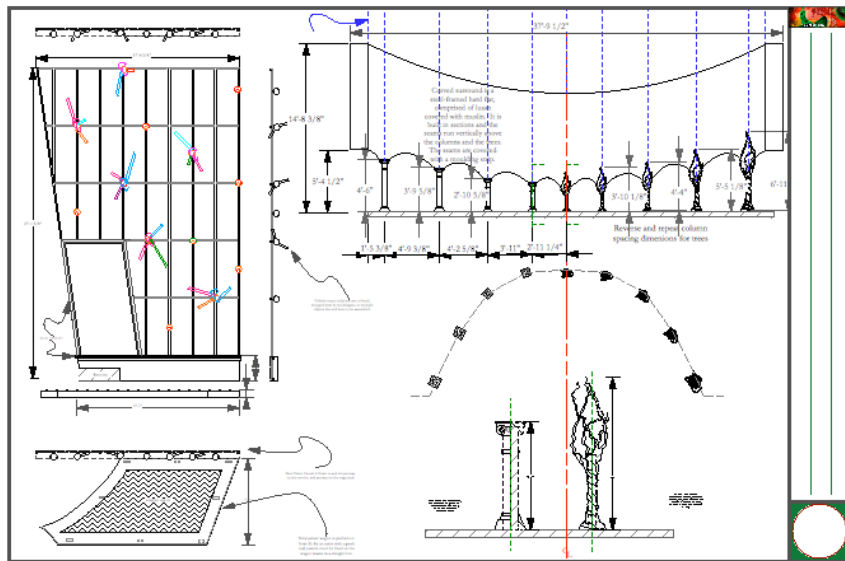
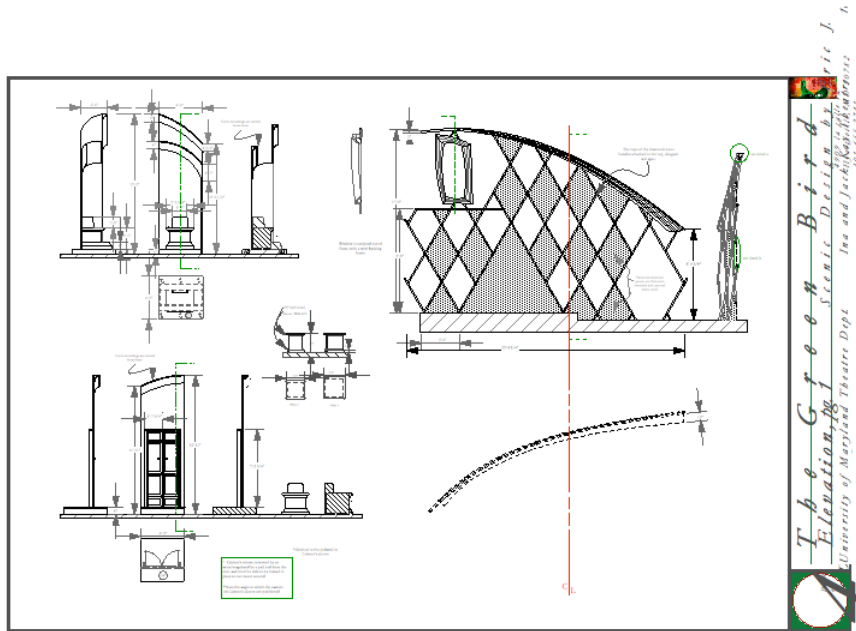


Fig. 26 and 27, Elevations

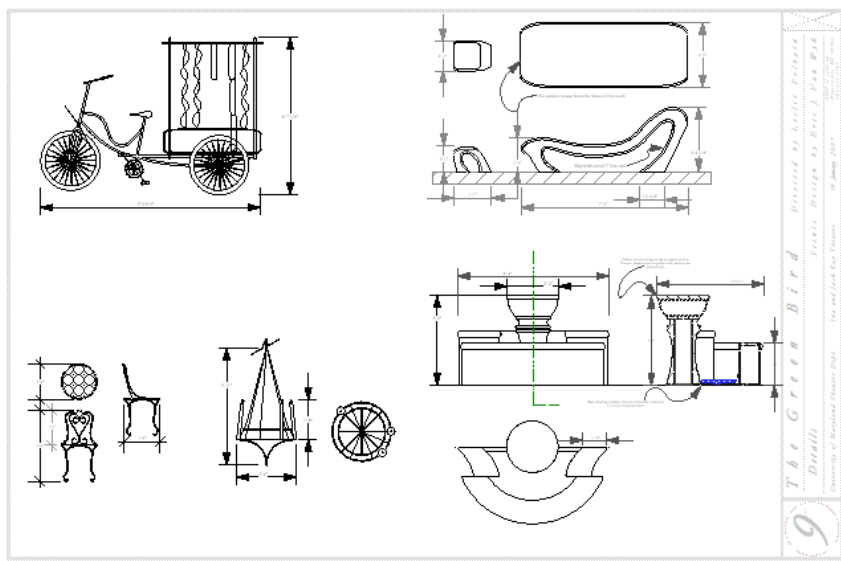
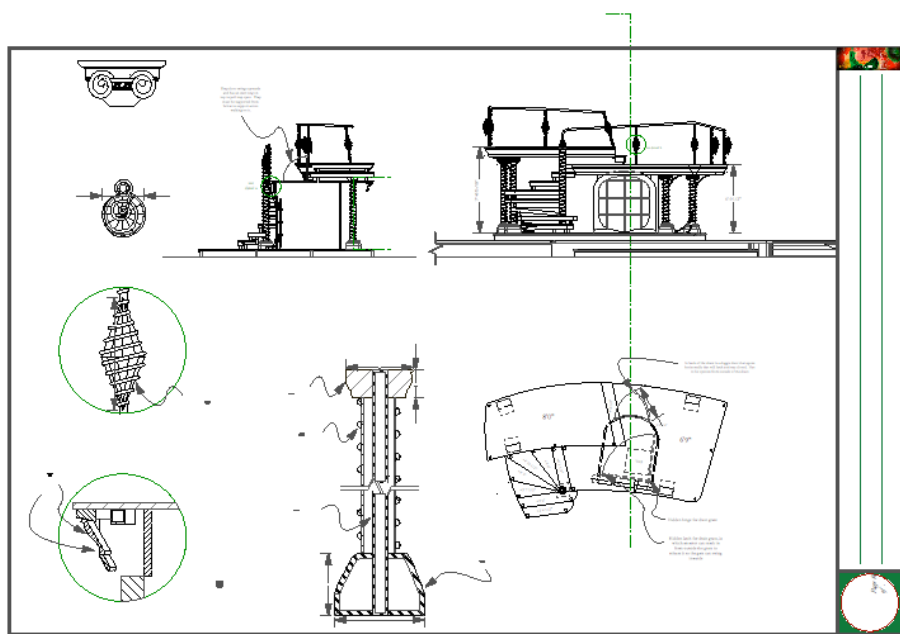


Fig. 30 and 31, Old Palace, Details

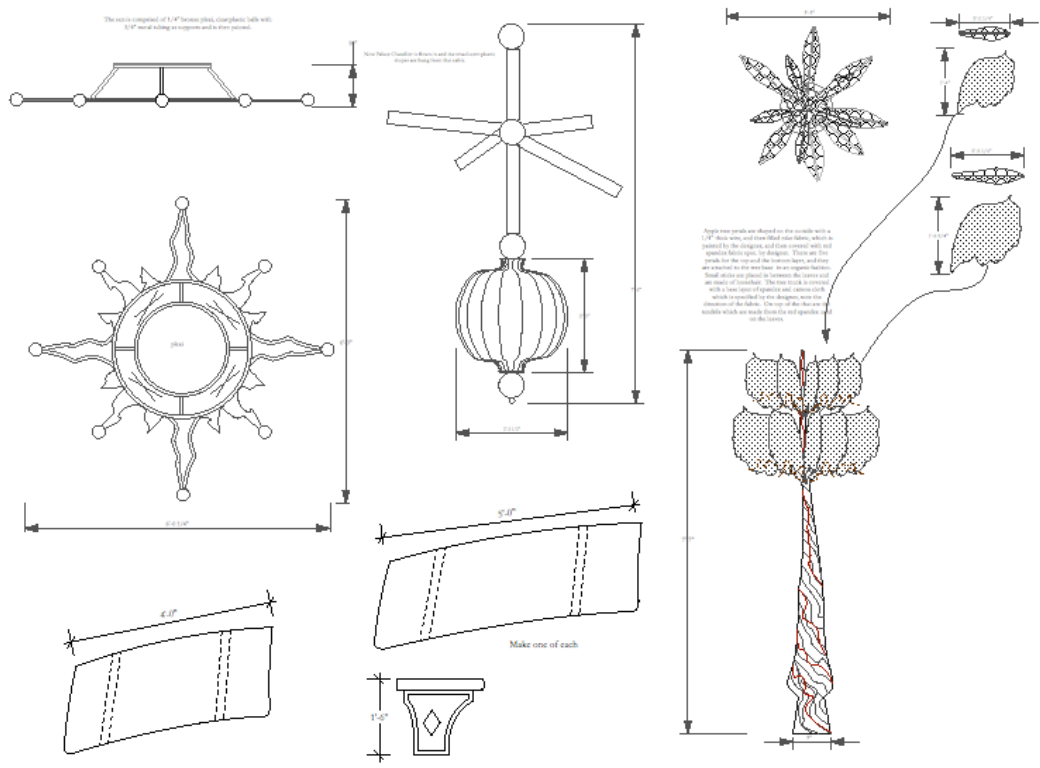


Fig. 32, Details

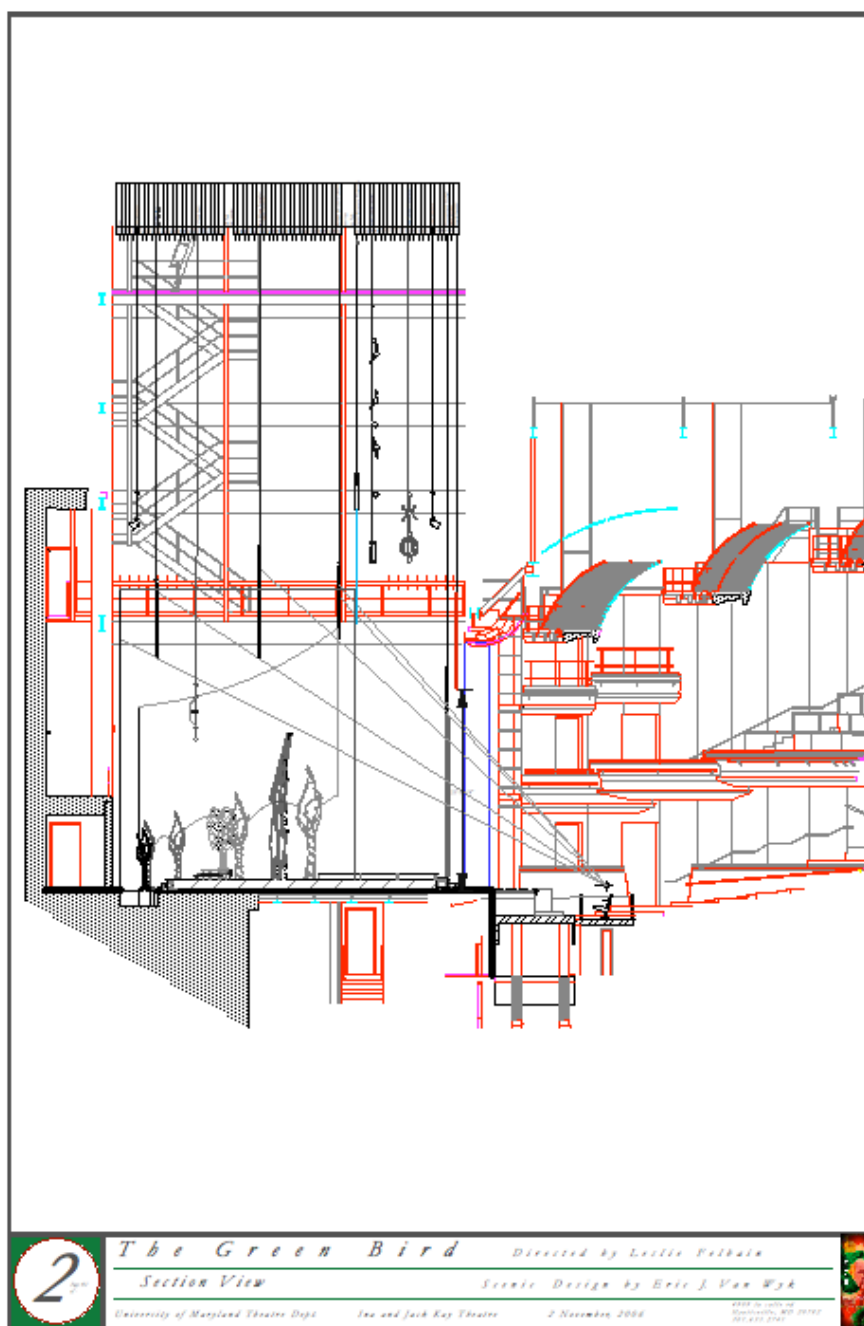


Fig. 33, Section



Fig. 34 and 35, Production Photos of top of show, 'Truffaldino's Sausage Cart'



Fig. 36 and 37, Production Photos, Calmon and Old Palace



Fig. 38 and 39, Production Photos of New Palace



Fig. 40 and 41, Production Photos of Apple Orchard



Fig. 42 and 43, Production Photos of Old Palace and Pompea's Fountain



Fig. 44 and 45, Production Photos of OGRE'S MOUNTAIN



Fig. 46 and 47, Production Photos of Ninetta's Drain and end of show

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