

UNIVERSITY THEATRE:

If somebody publishes a University of Missouri Coloring Book this year, be sure to color the University Theatre new, because that has become the Theatre's key word. New shows, new actors, new set designs, new students, and new courses.

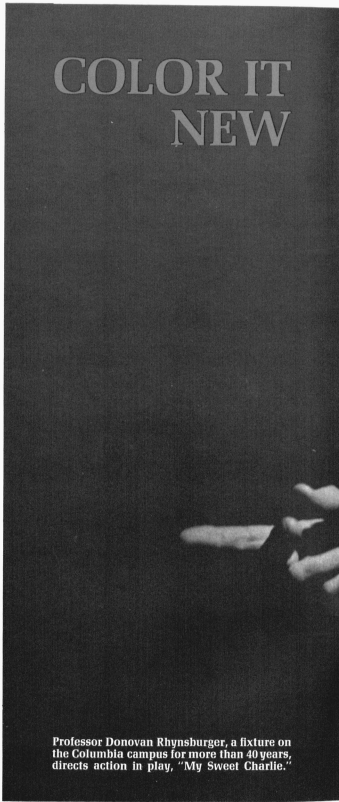
There couldn't have been anything much more up-to-date than the recent production of *My Sweet Charlie*. Recommended to the Theatre's director, Professor Donovan Rhynsburger, by Henry Hewes, drama critic for the *Saturday Review*, the play deals with the contemporary race problem in a dignified, honest, and respectful manner. The University Theatre's production of the play was the first performance it has had outside New York City. It was so fresh that printed scripts were unavailable.

In keeping with the Theatre's goal of education, what Professor Rhynsburger calls "helping people realize the realm of theatre," the cast members of *My Sweet Charlie* were all appearing in their first major production. The set too was a first. Conceived and executed by one of technical director Lewis Stoerker's undergraduate students, the design was sent to the company publishing the play with the privilege of including it in the playbook. The successful combination of these creative activities is demonstrated by the fact that the play was held over for an extra weekend.

Besides contemporary American plays, other new forms are being presented to players and audiences on the Columbia campus. Under the direction of Dr. Larry Clark, last year's performance of Moliere's classic comedy, *Tartuffe*, not only brought high comedy style to the stage but introduced a recent translation of the play by the noted American poet, Richard Wilbur. Freidrich Durrenmatt's contemporary European drama, *The Visit*, was performed last month.

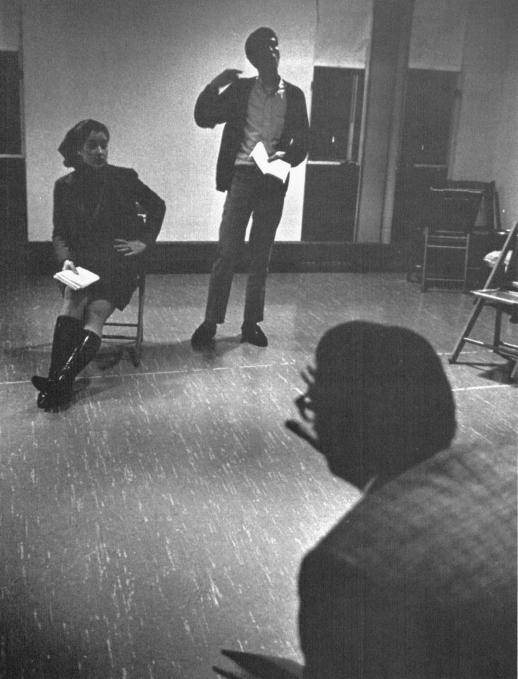
In addition to the three major dramatic productions in the regular school year, there

COLOR IT NEW



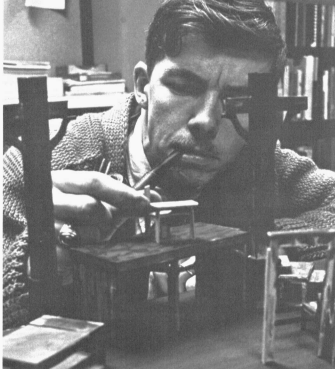
Professor Donovan Rhynsburger, a fixture on the Columbia campus for more than 40 years, directs action in play, "My Sweet Charlie."





Even while "My Sweet Charlie" is in dress rehearsal stage, Dr. Larry Clark starts work on the Theatre's next production, "The Visit." Student-actors, above, are Shella Farmer and Donald Hager. Pictured below are leads in "Charlie," Marco Howell and Clare Sebelski.





Working on model set for "The Visit" is graduate student Thomas A. Fallén. Both classroom and practical experience are available at the University in all phases of the theatre.

are other activities open to interested students. The Missouri Workshop Theatre, a student organization, provides a training ground for beginning actors, directors, technicians, and playwrights. The Workshop concentrates on new and experimental work, giving talented students an opportunity to try out their ideas in an actual theatre situation. Each spring the Workshop sponsors an original one-act play contest, producing the best plays submitted as well as awarding cash prizes.

Also in the spring, the Department of Speech and Dramatic Art unites with the Department of Music in the presentation of a full-length opera. Another "happening" is the yearly Reader's Theatre production. Working under the supervision of Dr. Frances McCurdy, students in oral interpretation present a major work of literature. Using both manuscript and memory, readers take the parts of narrators and characters and enhance their work with theatrical effects such as lighting and movement. Last year's presentation was James Agee's *A Death In the Family*, and the upcoming production will be Jesse Hill Ford's novel, *The Liberation of Lord Byron Jones*.

Now a doctoral candidate in oral interpretation at the University, R. E. Smith has degrees from Harding College and the University of Oregon. While at Oregon he received a Ford Foundation travel grant and spent one summer in Tokyo, studying Japanese theatre.

Summer, too, is an active time for the University Theatre. In the short space of the 1967 summer session, there were two full-length plays produced by graduate students. For coming summers, a repertory theatre is now in the planning stages.

All this production does not mean, though, that the academic side of theatre is being neglected. The classroom aspect of drama has expanded tremendously in just the last year. At the beginning of the fall semester of 1966, there were only five graduate students enrolled in theatre, one doctoral candidate and four master's students. This fall there were 23 enrolled in the department, 12 working toward the doctor's degree and 11 toward the master's.

Coupled with the increase in students is an expansion in the curriculum. In addition to noted courses such as Professor Rhynsburger's theories of dramatic production, there are five new courses this year. On the lower level, stage make-up is being offered, and on the upper division and graduate levels there are courses in development of the American theatre, a two-semester survey of theatre history, a seminar in theatre history which each term studies a certain period in depth, and a seminar in advanced directing. The new concern with history is due primarily to Dr. Clark, who has a special interest in the historical aspect of theatre. Students are being urged not only to do work in theatre history but also in the related field of theatre aesthetics.

One student is attempting to define the elements of comedy and then to see how these elements are used by two modern playwrights. Another is translating a Dutch treatise on tragedy. Already in its second paperback edition in Holland, the book has yet to be published in America. This student has secured all rights for translation in the United States, and work on the piece will be an integral part of his doctoral program.

Alive and growing, the University Theatre offers students a broad spectrum of experiences. From the theories of the classroom to the practicalities of production, it attempts to educate in numerous ways as it makes drama a vital and lively part of the University of Missouri. — R. E. Smith