

"Rainbow" Shines on NRHS Stage This Week

The year was 1947. *Life With Father* was in its eighth year, *Oklahoma* in its fourth and *Carousel* in its second. Other formidable Broadway competition included *State of the Union*, *Annie Get Your Gun*, and *The Iceman Cometh*. Then, on the night of January 10, *Finian's Rainbow* opened at the Forty-sixth Street Theatre. This

beguiling musical immediately received both critical and public acclaim. Weeks of rigorous preparation and hard work will culminate March 28, 29, and 30, in the musical spectacular *Finian's Rainbow*, under the direction of John Kissell. The former Broadway production is not new to New Rochelle High School: it was presented here with great success ten years ago.

Stars of '52 Return

Brooks Atkinson, *New York Times* drama critic, called *Finian's Rainbow* "an original and humorous fantasy." *Theater Arts* found it "entirely fresh and original" and praised the "many delightful bits and pieces in the multi-colored fabric of the show." According to *Time* magazine, "The wacky freshness in the idea of *Finian* is by no means lost in the working out. The book has humor, gaiety, moments of charm and a few neat satiric flings." *Life* observed, "For practically the first time on the American stage, *Finian's Rainbow* teaches racial understanding with a light touch."

Months of feverish preparation, of worry about costumes, and instruments, and stage props, and cues, of soul-searching over the interpretation of a role, of vacillation between hope and total despair — then the night of the performance. Wringing his hands, the director retreats to leave the cast alone in the spotlight. As the curtain rises, he is certain they have forgotten all their lines. They are scared stiff.

Mr. Kissell makes clear that although he is of Irish descent, his selection of a play with Gaelic elements was strictly coincidental. The comedy, he feels, is a significant one. Essentially, the play celebrates humanity; its view is affirmative.

Authors E. Y. Harburg and Fred Saily combined Irish dreams, a pot of gold, a leprechaun, American sharecroppers, and the evils of race discrimination in this satiric and social-minded fantasy. Mr. Harburg and Burton Lane, composer, created such unforgettable songs as the romantic *How Are Things in Glocca Morra?*, *Old Devil Moon*, and *If This Isn't Love*, the rhythmic *The Begat*, the satiric *When the Idle Rich Become the Idle Poor*, and the charming *When I'm Not Near the Girl I Love*.

Among the audience witnessing this moment of truth tomorrow night will be five people who will share it. They will have travelled from Connecticut, from Long Island, from Rye, New York. Except for their presence here together, they will have little in common; they include a doctor, a teacher, a salesman and an attorney. The five are the stars of NRHS's 1952 production of 'Finian's Rainbow', joined to wish the members of the cast of 1963 "Good Luck!"

Explaining that the satiric attacks in the play are directed against greed and bigotry, Mr. Kissell points out that "the character of Senator Rawkins might appear outlandish until we consider the behavior of some of the living Southern governors."

Dale Lott portrayed Finian. After leaving New Rochelle High School, he attended Wesleyan University, Connecticut, and then taught secondary school for five years. He is now studying for his Ph.D., and hopes to teach in a college next year.

The early stages of this gigantic production witnessed many auditions for acting, singing and dancing roles. Before Vicky Skurnick, Donald Doria, John Bendor, and Ethan Fein were selected to lead the cast and over twenty-five actors to support them, vocal tryouts were held for about fifty students. Selections for the acting roles were made from about one hundred pupils. Mrs. Belle Weiner, choreographer, and Mr. Kissell chose the dancers from a group of sixty.

Joan (Lambert) Morenstein, who played Finian's daughter Sharon, continued her interest in the arts by majoring in music education at Oberlin College. There she was active in musical and dramatic groups. In her senior year, she again played Sharon for a school production of the musical. Upon graduation Mrs. Morenstein taught vocal music. Married and the mother of two daughters, she now calls herself a homemaker.

At first, rehearsals were held separately so that chorus, orchestra, dancers, and actors would later be better prepared to coordinate effectively in ensemble rehearsal. Choral director C. J. Broadhead worked with the A-Choir during its regular sessions, and met with individual soloists after school. Bryant Minot, in charge of the instrumental branch of the play, met with the special orchestra selected for *Finian's Rainbow*. At the

Felix Grossman, who played the role of Og in the musical is now a practicing attorney in New York City. He is married and has one child.

Ana (Berliant) Glick, who danced in *Finian's Rainbow* as Susan the Silent, a mute girl unable to express her feelings except through dancing, attended Bennington College. Although originally a music major, she changed her major to science in her sophomore year.

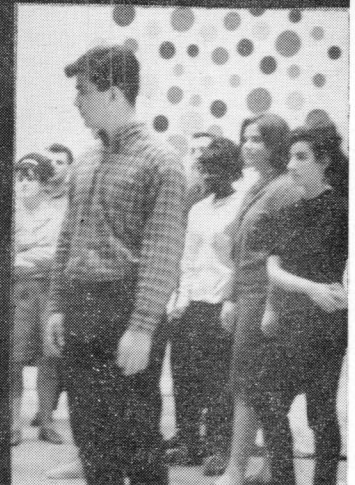
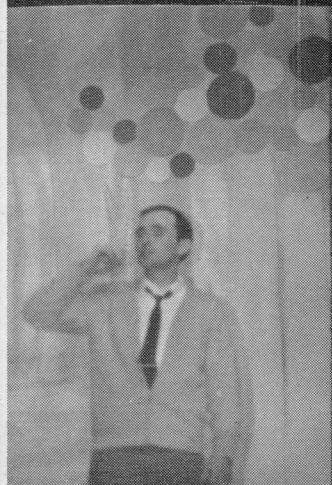
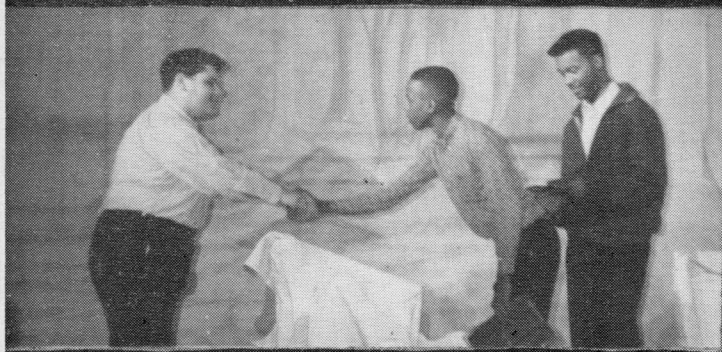
At present she is a senior medical student at New York Medical College. Upon her graduation, she will leave for San Francisco, California, where she will spend her internship while her husband continues his residency in psychiatry.

Joseph Hanchrow, stage manager and actor in the play, is now a salesman for a manufacturing concern in New York City. One of his main interests is music: he attended Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore, Maryland, and played the tuba and the string bass in his Marine band.

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Music, Dancing Add Color To 'Finian's Rainbow'

"There is definitely nothing quiet about this show," says C. J. Broadhead of *Finian's Rainbow*. "It has a lot of sock!" When the fantasy opens here next week three branches of the music department will combine their efforts to give that "sock" an impact.

Mr. Broadhead, musical director of the 1952 production of

CAST

(In order of appearance)

Sonny Richard Stein
Buzz Collins .. Steven Goldstone
Sheriff Andrew Stone
1st sharecropper Michael Greene
2nd sharecropper Lawrence Roth
Susan Mahoney Barbara Weiner
Henry Ainsley Sigmund
3rd sharecropper .. Totlee Dixon
Finian McLonergon

Donald Doria

Sharon McLonergon

Victoria Skurnik

Woody Mahoney

John (Bourkaff) Bendor

4th sharecropper

Mari Lynne Harrison

Og, a leprechaun ... Ethan Fein

Howard Robert Patterson

Senator Billboard Rawkins

Jeffrey Troodler

1st geologist .. Richard Adamson

2nd geologist .. Barry Gutterman

Diane Sally McAvoy

Jane Arlene Ornstein

John the Preacher

Theodore Ackerman

Mr. Robust Peter Evans

Mr. Shears ... Kenneth Kelson

1st Passion Pilgrim Gospeleer

Augustus Summer

2nd Passion Pilgrim Gospeleer

James Carlos

1st Deputy Jonathan Jacobs

2nd Deputy ... Matthew Wagner

3rd Deputy Robert Rosas

David David Reitman

5th sharecropper

Barbara Hochberg

RAINBOW

(Continued from page 1)

same time, Mrs. Weiner instructed twenty dancers in the faculty lunchroom, while Mr. Kissell worked with the actors and stage chorus in the faculty lounge. The stage was not vacant at this time, as Paul R. Watson and the stage crew were building sets there.

Rehearsals on stage began March 4, and the orchestra and A-choir joined in the combined sessions the following week. After a full day of school the participants remained on the stage until at least 5:30 P.M. This week the rehearsals last as late as 8:30 at night. MILLER

STAFF FOR THIS ISSUE

Editor Christopher Friedrichs

Business Manager Marjorie Gelb

Advisor Miss Chrsianthe Carozzi

An Irish-American Fairy Story

Finian's Rainbow is the story of the Irish farmer Finian McLonergon (Donald Doria), who arrives in the mythical American state of Missitucky accompanied by his daughter Sharon (Vicky Skurnick) and the crock of gold he has stolen from the leprechauns. They settle on the farm of Woody Mahoney (John Bendor), one of several sharecroppers involved in a land fight with Senator Billboard Rawkins (Jeffrey Troodler). To add to the confusion, Og (Ethan Fein), a most beguiling leprechaun, arrives to retrieve his clan's treasure and thereby restore reason to Ireland.

How Sharon falls in love with Woody, how Og falls in love with Woody's mute sister (Barbara Weiner), and how the magic of gold turns the bigoted Senator into a Negro and thereby reverses his opinions of others all form an engaging and compelling story, embroidered by refreshing and witty songs. SPITZ

BROADWAY

(Continued from page 1)

Donald Richards. David Wayne won the distinction of being the first visible leprechaun in the history of the American theater. And Anita Alvarez danced the role of Susan, the mute who expressed her thoughts in movement. SPITZ

STARS OF '52

(Continued from page 1)

"I find it impossible to comment objectively on the quality of the play," apologized Mr. Lott in response to queries by the *Huguenot Herald*. "We loved it too much." Joseph Hanchrow tore himself away from his fascination long enough to deem *Finian's Rainbow* "a beautifully written musical. The plot, characters, and lines are marvelous."

"The theme of the play," Mrs. Morenstein added, "is an extremely timely one. *Glocca Morra*, the utopia the characters dream of, reminds us that we too can strive for a world of understanding. And who knows," she said wistfully, "maybe someday racial discrimination will truly be a thing of the past."

Like the cast today, the actors of 1952 had their trials. Felix Grossman recalls that "the preparation was exhausting, the presentation exhilarating and the letdown after it was over was tremendous."

A few days before the show to be presented, nearly all the cast members in key roles were stricken by a virus. "It is a miracle the play ever got produced!" Mr. Hanchrow declared.

"But somehow," reminisced Mr. Lott, "the night of the performance, everything seemed to jell. Perhaps it was the lights that hid our flaws, perhaps the makeup that hid our worried faces. Perhaps it was our determination to succeed. We were like the Greenbay Packers under pressure, only more panicky."

In any event, the play was a huge success, grossing over \$2500 and pulling the General Organization out of the red and into the Irish green. Indeed, when John Kissell chose to produce *Finian's Rainbow* this year, he acted on the premise that no other musical could rival the success of last year's play, *Brigadoon*.

In 1952, as now, the entire school worked together—orchestra, choral groups, dancers, actors, and singers. To Dr. Glick, the eager cooperation of all the groups seemed "one of the secrets of the success and spirit of the production." BREZAK

Finian's Follies: Stage Crew Story

Suzanne Rozell mixed blue paint with her hands and then discovered there was no paint remover.

* * *

Keith Long proposed a stage crew physical-fitness club but met with little success and a few threatening gestures with a hammer.

* * *

William Riss hammered a huge wooden something on the side of the stage.

"What is it?" I asked.

"A tree."

"But that doesn't look like a tree," I protested.

"It's made of wood, isn't it?"

* * *

Sounds like fun, doesn't it? It was. For these blithe spirits, however, all was not play on stage as the set for *Finian's Rainbow* was being constructed during the weeks before the show. The crew, under the direction of Henry Berger and William Paxton, with Andrea Gelman in charge of props, have constructed the set, painted flats, and built logs, a well, and exploding tree stumps.

There are ten scenes demanding two different sets. Rainbow Valley is a pastel panorama of rolling purple hills rising above green and gold fields. The Senator's house is a "typical" Southern mansion, high, white, and handsome. BRANCH

5 W's

Who: You.
 What: Finian's Rainbow.
 When: March 28, 29 and 30,
 8:15 P.M.
 Where: NRHS Auditorium.
 Why: Because tickets are only
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 \$2.00 Reserved, and the play's
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