

FOSTER: And here the documentary and the Walkman worked well together.

HARDMAN: Right. But when I started working on *Artery*, as I said before, I tried to gather documentary material on detectives and it was just not giving me anything I could use. Meanwhile, the Walkman was opening up a whole new world of possible relationships between the audience and the theater. By having the hi fi sound score going directly into the audience's head, and having the audience move through a real environment, or sculptured environment, or some combination of the two... well, there are huge possibilities. Working those out is what I'll be doing for the foreseeable future.

POSTSCRIPT

Chris Hardman has continued his explorations with Antenna Theater into the theatrical uses of Walkmans, developing a theatrical form of his own which he calls Walkmanology. These explorations have ranged from the highly structured to the almost random. In *Artery*, each individual member of the audience, guided by the taped soundtrack which also contained the entire story of the play, walked alone through a created environment constructed in a maze-like pattern. The text for the play was a mystery and the listener, as the perpetrator of the crime, was the only actor.

In *Amnesia* (1983), performed at the 1984 Olympic Arts Festival in Los Angeles, four separate soundtracks guided a number of audience members simultaneously through four stories within the same room—each listener following a separate path, guided by the taped narration. In this piece each audience member interacted with masked actors during the course of following each story. *Adjusting the Idle*, created by Hardman for the Mark Taper Forum/Museum of Contemporary Art *Carplays* festival (1984), used some thirty separate tapes to which audience members had access at random. Audience members could simply observe the action, or could participate in it by following the instructions on one of the tapes. As in *Vacuum*, the texts on the tapes were developed through the interview process.

In 1984, Hardman and Antenna Theater also branched out into radio drama with a series of programs aired on Berkeley's Pacifica station, KPFA. Here, too, though in a far more modified fashion, listeners were given instructions to follow. *Russia* (1985), Hardman's most recent work, returns to the format first explored in *Vacuum*, developing a text from audience-elicited interviews.

—Robert Hurwitt

Twenty-Four Hours

INTRODUCTION

Twenty-Four Hours was developed by the Playwrights Lab at the Back Alley in Los Angeles. The lab began in 1981 when Laura Zucker and Allan Miller, producers of the theater, invited a dozen playwrights based in Los Angeles to develop a workshop, hopefully to create new plays that might ultimately be produced by the Back Alley. From its original dozen playwrights, the group had grown to an active 75 members at the time of this production (all of whom could find seats at sessions as long as at least ten didn't show up), with a long waiting list. *Twenty-Four Hours* was devised as a project to unify the group, each playwright asked to write a piece of approximately five minutes in length with two restrictions: each play should involve no more than four actors, two men and two women, maximum, and each should be set at a specific hour of the day or night.

Ultimately over one hundred plays were written, most being labbed at the Back Alley prior to production. On a given lab night playwrights were asked to see and then comment on as many as sixteen new plays. Finally fifty plays were chosen to be submitted—without the names of their authors—to the seven directors who had agreed to direct them. The directors read and scored the plays. The thirty plays that scored highest were then put into rehearsal. Six were eliminated during the rehearsal process, primarily because of casting problems rather than script.

Though the plays had been created so that four actors might conceivably play all the roles, the abundance of acting talent in Los Angeles made this restriction seem foolish. Ultimately sixteen very gifted actors were chosen for the fifty roles that comprise *Twenty-Four Hours*. It had also been thought in the beginning that the plays might all be done in a single evening. However, as several were longer than five minutes and almost none briefer, it was decided to play the plays in two evenings—or, ideally, as a matinee and an evening.

Though mounting twenty-four individual plays at first seemed like a somewhat Herculean effort (it was labeled a mini-*Nicholas Nickleby*), production proved to be relatively simple thanks primarily to a unit set with only basic pieces of furniture that allowed the plays to flow easily and rapidly. While a bed was essential to the plays in *A.M.*, it was discovered during rehearsals that all of the plays in *P.M.* could be performed without a bed, allowing for additional variation in staging. The blackouts between plays were

kept to an absolute minimum with brief musical inserts used to bridge the darkness.

Acting roles were juggled so that performers rarely moved directly from one play to the next. Props were also kept to a minimum, the actors usually bringing on and also carrying off their individual props. Where sinks or other complicated set pieces were needed, they were pantomimed. It was also found that the bed worked better stripped of its coverings, using only the bottom sheet with the actors pantomiming their coverings as needed.

It is, of course, possible to juggle the order in which the plays are presented. However, as time sequence is the game, it is hoped that the order will not be violated. It is also hoped that producing *Twenty-Four Hours* will bring as much excitement to your group as it did to the Playwrights Lab at the Back Alley.

— Oliver Hailey

Twenty-Four Hours: A.M.
Daniel Gregory Brown
Pamela Chais
Michael Leeson
Jeff Levy
David Link
Jerry Mayer
Allan Miller
Christine Rimmer
Susan Silver
Terry Kingsley-Smith
Lee Thomas
Bonnie Zindel
Paul Zindel