

The Hinman Little Theater

The story of the little theater that could began as most things do, with simple, humble origins. In the Fall of 1971 Stan Goldberg, a freshman accounting major, had an idea. In high school Stan had been very active in theater and wanted to continue with his acting. However, he was unable to actively participate within the university's theater department because he was an accounting major. More importantly, he, and many others like him, felt that the Binghamton theater department was too strict and sucked all the fun out of acting. Stan had a vision to change all that. Instead of being doomed to whatever the stuffy theater department wanted to do with a production, why not make a little theater within his own residence community. With this thought in mind Stan approached Bob Giomi, the Director of Academic Services for Hinman College, Head Resident of Lehman Hall, and one of the most influential people in early Hinman history. After speaking with Bob, Stan was given permission to form a community-based theater operation within Hinman where the actors and technical crew would all be Hinman residents. The Hinman Little Theater (HLT) was born.¹

News quickly spread of the creation of HLT. One of the earliest and most active members of HLT was Steve Young. Like Stan, Steve had been involved in theater in high school and thought that the theater department at Binghamton was too serious. Like Stan, he wanted to do something fun.² Years later, Steve would say "our philosophy was that the play was for the people in the cast rather than the people in the audience."³ It wasn't so much that they didn't care about the audience or their enjoyment. They were simply non-theater majors lashing out at the theater department for stifling something which they enjoyed so much.

As with any new institution there were many obstacles to overcome. One of the first was finding a suitable place to practice and perform their plays. At this time, the only viable location

to hold their rehearsals and their performances was in the Hinman Dining Hall. The Hinman Dining Hall at this time was very different than it is today. It was before the 2002-2003 renovation, and spatially it was very different from something a current Hinman resident would recognize. For starters there were three partitions that could be used to separate the different sections of the Dining Hall. During performances, these partitions were taken down to make room for the actors. There was no stage; lights were borrowed from the theater department. Cramped conditions made both viewing the production and acting in it all the more difficult. They were lucky that the Hinman Dining Hall allowed them to borrow a room underneath the Dining Hall, a room known as the Bumblebee Room, as a space where they could store their props.⁴

Any good actor will tell you that no matter the circumstances, the show must go on, and on it went. The very first production that HLT performed was a play entitled *You Know I Can't Hear You When the Water is Running*. With the success of this play, the following semester saw the performance of *You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown*. Despite its challenges, HLT survived and thrived and eventually moved on to a better location.⁵ The Hinman Commons were the next place that HLT would call home. This time, lights were installed specially for them, and now they had an adequate area for a stage and reasonable for an audience. With these improvements HLT began a rise that would make it one of the most popular pastimes in Hinman and even eclipse the university's own theater department.

In the Fall of 1972 production began on Neil Simon's *Plaza Suite*, the story of three sets of occupants of a suite in the Plaza Hotel. Unlike the professional play or the film version, HLT decided that the performances would feature three different leads. The play starred Stan Goldberg opposite Jill Slater as a couple who is experiencing fears and trepidations over the

prospect of marriage. Roy Abbot directed and Steve Young was in charge of the overall production. It would be the first play to be performed in the Hinman Commons. There was such a large turnout that not everyone who auditioned could be given a part in the play.⁶ Anticipations ran high as the debut neared. It appeared that HLT was on top of its game.

Plaza Suite, like its predecessors, was very successful. However HLT was not without its problems. Since the very beginning, HLT was about allowing amateur actors outside the theater department an opportunity to act. The main goal of HLT was to allow as many Hinmanites as possible a chance to participate in and experience theater. The production of *Plaza Suite*, however, did not accomplish that. As reported in an article in the *Hinman Halitosis* newsletter on February 7, 1973, the executives of HLT apologized for not allowing more participation in HLT. "...as the term progressed, our priorities switched to presenting a successful production. Due to total commitment to the play, all else was unfortunately pushed aside and our goal of involving as many Hinmanites as possible in various activities was lost. We sincerely apologize to those who felt lost in the shuffle."⁷ To remedy this situation HLT offered a theater workshop where amateur actors could hone their skill and encouraged those interested to not be discouraged and to contact HLT to get involved. Also in an effort to get more Hinmanite participation, the first annual Hinman Follies were announced. The Hinman Follies, though not as long lasting as HLT, would still leave a lasting impact on Hinman and a very memorable legacy for those involved in them.⁸

Riding high off its success and believing that it could keep its commitment for more resident participation, HLT announced two new productions to occur in the Spring of 1973. There would be *Celebration*, a musical with four lead roles and chorus for ten people, and *Happy Birthday, Wanda Jane*, a black comedy by Kurt Vonnegut with roles for nine people.⁹ It

appeared that HLT was on top of its game with the ambitious production of two plays simultaneously. Unfortunately this ambition would not come to fruition.

A few short weeks later, HLT would cancel both productions of *Celebration* and *Happy Birthday, Wanda Jane*. It cited two major reasons for this abrupt cancellation. A lack of sufficient response to tryouts, coupled with a desire to give HLT a new direction, caused the cancellation of these two shows. HLT was still having trouble living up to its promise of including more residents in its productions. With interest in the plays dwindling, HLT decided to take the semester to improve and expand upon its permanent scenery stock, to hold more acting workshops, and to devote themselves entirely to Hinman Follies. At the same time a plan to produce a series of one-act plays was put into the works. This was done in an effort to allow for increased participation in HLT and to have at least some traditional theatrical performance that semester.¹⁰

Eventually five one-act plays were placed into production. HLT would produce *Separate People* written and directed by current Hinman student Allen Lowe. Also to be produced would be *Hello Out There* directed by Steve Hershkowitz, *Adaptation* directed by Stan Goldberg, *Next* directed by Roy Abbot, and *The American Dream* to be directed by Jon Ostrove.¹¹ Previously, HLT had a difficult time drawing talented actors, especially since they were limited only to residents of Hinman College. Unfortunately, many who wanted to perform had absolutely no acting experience and their raw talent was not up to the level of what HLT was looking for. However, HLT had a secret weapon to combat this problem though. They found it in Hinman's very own Faculty Master, C.P. Gruber. Gruber was an English professor with an intense interest in theater and volunteered to run acting workshops to improve the raw, untried talent of the

would-be actors. With the help of Gruber, HLT was able to adequately train untried actors and to hone the skills of those already experienced in past theatrical productions.¹²

Concurrently with the one-act plays, HLT was also spearheading a brand new endeavor, Hinman Follies. Hinman Follies was pitched as a competition between the various halls of Hinman, each of which would basically put on a skit. The best one would win. Stan Goldberg came up with the idea much as he had in HLT. As a high school student in his hometown of Lindbrook, Long Island, Stan had what was called a class night, when the different classes performed musical skits and competed against one another. Taking the idea to Bob Giomi, Stan was given permission to pitch the idea of Hinman Follies to the halls, and with the help of the tireless Giomi, four of the residence halls competed. In the Follies, a theme would be given, lyrics of popular songs would be adapted, and musical numbers usually, with elaborate dancing and choreography, would be arranged. All of the participants-and there were many from each hall-worked tirelessly to make Follies a possibility. Years later Stan Goldberg would reflect, “It was amazing. People took time out of school to rehearse. They gave up all of their time. They didn’t do it because they had to do it, they did it out of love.”¹³ The day of the event, a truck was borrowed and numerous trips had to be made to bring props from the halls down to the Women’s Gym, which current Binghamton students would recognize as the East Gym. It was truly a tremendous undertaking, surpassing even the highly complex and organized rehearsals of HLT.¹⁴

The theme of the first annual Hinman Follies was “Hinman at the Movies,” with a notice that all “Hinman Activities, procedures, staff, resident assistants and services are comically and musically attacked.”¹⁵ The various halls announced their movie parody skits as follows:

Smith Hall	“Wizard of Ours”
Lehman Hall	“West Side Suny”
Cleveland Hall	“Hinderella”
Hughes Hall	“R*A*S*H”

Roosevelt Hall was strangely absent from the first annual Hinman Follies. This is probably because the building now known as the Hinman Library and Commons was still under construction and many of the area administrative offices such as the Area Coordinator's office and the Faculty Master's office were located in Roosevelt. Hinman Follies was slated to begin at 8:00 PM on Sunday, April 8, 1973 at the Women's Gym.¹⁶

Hinman Follies was a resounding success. The night of April 8 saw the Women's Gym packed with Hinman residents and students from across campus to view the musical parodies that the individual halls had created. It was a riot. Nothing was held sacred in Follies as the students lampooned everyone and everything, including the beloved Hinmanite Bob Giomi. Following the performances an unofficial string of awards were given out known as "the Grubies," in honor of Hinman Faculty Master C.P. Gruber: Best Original Character, Best Choreography, Best Impersonation, and Best Musical Number and many more. A special recognition was given to Bob Giomi for his tireless efforts in making Hinman Follies a possibility. The first annual Hinman Follies was even commemorated in a poem by the Follies chairmen Stan Goldberg and Steve Young.¹⁷

Sung to "The Yellow Rose of Texas"

Oh, thank you all the chairmen
To you we tip our hats
And thank you Gary Brennan
For helping fix the flats.

And thank you Pete Lorenzi
For doing all the sound
And thank you Johnny Sutton
For driving us around.

Yes, thank you Mrs. Rogers
Whose typing was not slow
And gee thanks Hinman Council

For giving us the dough.

But thanks most Bob Giomi
You really are the top
Without you Hinman Follies
Would have been a flop.¹⁸

Hinman Follies was a resounding success and would continue on for a few more years, always with great success. In many ways its success revitalized a stagnating theater group who, after initial successes, began to lose focus on what they really wanted, which was to include as many people as possible in a creative undertaking that would be fun not only for the audience but also for the participants. In that way, Hinman Follies was an enormous, immeasurable success. Hinman Follies was one event of just a few that was part of what was then called Hinman Weekend. For those who were around at the time, Hinman Weekend with the Hinman Follies as the capstone was something unique to Hinman, something that the other residential communities could not say they possessed. None other than Faculty Master C.P. Gruber said it best when he stated, “Hinman weekend was one of the happiest weekends of my life as Master.”¹⁹

With Hinman Follies over, Stan, Steve and the rest of the HLT crew could concentrate on their theater work. Although Follies had been a huge success, HLT simply did not have the resources to produce both Follies and all the one-act plays that they were planning on performing. The productions of *Next* and *Separate People* were canceled. Productions of *Adaptation*, *The American Dream*, and *Hello, Out There!* would continue. The plays were scheduled to appear on May 3, 4, and 5 with all three plays being presented in one grand show on the final day.²⁰ No review exists for these three one-act plays. However, it is known that they were performed to nearly sold out crowds. HLT had done the impossible. Not only had they lived up to their promise of greater student involvement, as seen by Hinman Follies, but they also stayed with their original mission and had completed a regular theatrical production in the midst

of all this the chaos surrounding Follies. By May of 1973, HLT had survived its first two years of existence and looked eagerly to another year of fun-filled theatrical antics.

By the Fall of 1973 HLT was in its third year of production as a “completely student run alternative to the highly structured Theater department.”²¹ Unwilling to fall into stagnation, the members of HLT decided to up the ante and stage a musical production for the fall semester. In the year’s very first issue of the *Hinman Halitosis*, HLT solicited help on their plans for an upcoming musical and even began preparing for the spring semester’s *Hinman Follies*.²²

It was announced on Oct. 25, 1973, that that semester’s production would be the musical *Guys and Dolls*. That issue of the *Hinman Halitosis* found HLT pleading for students to audition for roles in that musical production. One of the major problems of this production, and nearly every production that came before and followed thereafter, was finding talented people willing to act in the plays. HLT lost a great asset that semester when one of its founding members, Steve Young, studied in Washington, D.C. that semester. Steve’s leadership along with that of the rest of his dedicated E-board was what kept HLT afloat even through all of its problems that it suffered through for the previous two years. With Steve gone, leadership vested on the shoulders of other HLT veterans like Stan Goldberg. However, there was now a role in the production of *Guys and Dolls* that needed to be filled.²³ That role was filled by a young freshman music major who would later become not only Hinman’s most famous graduate, but also Binghamton University’s most famous and successful graduate. That man was Paul Reiser.

Paul Reiser would eventually become an incredibly successful comedian, actor and writer, appearing in such diverse and varied films as *Diner*, *Aliens*, *Beverly Hills Cop I and II*, and *Bye, Bye Love*, to name just a few. He would later go on to pen his first original screenplay for the 2005 critically acclaimed film *The Thing About My Folks*, where he would star alongside

Peter Falk, Olympia Dukakis, and Elizabeth Perkins. He would also write the *New York Times* bestsellers *Couplehood* and *Babyhood*. However, he is probably best known for starring opposite Helen Hunt in the hit NBC sit-com *Mad About You*, which at its peak was one of most popular television shows in the country. *Mad About You* would garner him Emmy, Golden Globe, American Comedy Award and Screen Actors Guild nominations for Best Actor in a Comedy Series. He would also compose the theme song for *Mad About You* entitled “The Final Frontier.”²⁴ However, in 1973 this was all yet to come. For now Paul was simply a student living in Hinman, believing that he would enter the workplace as a writer of corporate jingles (a practical use for his degree in Music), with only a passing interest in acting and theater. That was about to change with his involvement in HLT.

Like every semester before, there were many obstacles to overcome in order to put on such a large production as *Guys and Dolls*. HLT, like its successor HPC, and virtually every other student group on campus, was working with a limited budget. Thus, HLT foresaw that it would be financially impossible for them to either create or make all the appropriate costumes for the play. They solicited people to loan them any 1940’s-era style clothes, including 1940’s-era hats, pinstripe or wide lapel jackets, ‘40’s style dresses and skirts, ladies accessories such as pearl necklaces, button earrings, chokers, clutch pocketbooks, white gloves, and cigarette holders. They also asked to borrow any 1940’s-era type props that could add atmosphere to the play.²⁵ Even as late as December HLT was still looking for props, costumes and even someone to play the drums for a musical number.²⁶ As a result of all these pressures, recognizing that the show would not be ready before the semester was out, the directors decided to postpone the show until the beginning of the spring semester.

Following the winter break, HLT saw a newly appointed director for the production in Steve Hershkowitz, with Ronna Bernstein taking care of the musical numbers, and Gary Brennan and Gerri Miller also taking on difficult production roles. The cast featured Vincent Pantuso as Nathan Detroit, Marcy Mashioff as Adelaide, Gary Levine as Sky Masterson, Sue Glass as Sarah Brown, and Stan Goldberg as Benny Southstreet.²⁷ Also in the cast as the piano player for the production and as the character Big Julie was Paul Reiser in his very first acting role.²⁸

There was a huge build-up to the show. It seemed as though the whole of Hinman was poised on the edge of their seats in anticipation for the very first musical to grace the Hinman Commons stage under a newly installed lighting system, a system that would sustain HLT until the emergence of HPC in the early 1980's. As the day of the show neared the cast and crew worked even harder and more ferociously to perfect their parts and get their lines down pat. Late nights and long afternoon rehearsals promised to blossom into another entertaining show, the biggest that had ever been seen to date in Hinman. The weekend performances sold out less than ten minutes after tickets were first offered, forcing HLT to offer another show the following week. This would be another first for HLT: the possibility of six-full house performances.²⁹ It seemed as though everyone was waiting for the show to begin. Students made their trek to the Hinman Commons clutching their tickets. Expectations ran high for HLT's rendition of *Guys and Dolls*. All the hard work and intense preparation led up to this. Only one question remained: could HLT pull it off?

The answer to that question was a resounding yes! *Guys and Dolls* played to packed houses and won critical acclaim from nearly everyone who attended a showing. Even though the flats were changed at the last minute, they still appeared to be constructed in a professional manner by technical crewmembers Garry Brennan and his assistants Randi Jenkins, Vicky

Robinson, and Leon Borden among others. The performances of Gary Levine, Stan Goldberg, and Steve Hershkowitz (who acted in and directed the play) were praised. Levine should be given extra credit for during the last show he came down with laryngitis and had to virtually whisper all his lines and the musical numbers.³⁰ Sue Glass was praised for her performance as Sarah Brown and Stan Goldberg's performance was described as "nothing short of fantastic. Goldberg's mimics had the audience rolling on the floor."³¹ Most praised of all those was the climactic musical number "Sit Down You're Rocking the Boat" where Steve Sammond in his role of Nicely Nicely Johnson rocked the audience with his performance. Even Bob Giomi had a small role as a newspaper boy. Also, in what may be his very first acting review, Paul Reiser was given an excellent rating in his role as Big Julie. Peter Lorenzi, *Halitosis* editor, wrote, "Paul Reiser played this humorous role very well and set the tone for the rest of the delightful gamblers."³² Even though Paul was a newcomer to both Hinman College and HLT who initially had little interest in acting, it was he who outshone and upstaged the cast. In his role as Big Julie, Paul hammed it up at every available moment, pulling Twinkies out of his guitar case, making the humorous role hilarious and completely upstaging the veteran HLT performers. In short, the young, wet-behind-the-ears freshman music major stole the show of the biggest most ambitious HLT production to date. Years later, looking back on the whole production, Steve Young noted that "*Guys and Dolls* was what made Paul Reiser want to get into acting."³³

However, as great as the production was, there were problems in its aftermath. In the course of producing the show, the Hinman Executive Committee (the forerunner of the HCC E-board) allowed HLT use of the Student Government Room. The room, designated for the use of student government, became a place for HLT to store some of their props and costumes. It also appeared that some members of HLT had abused their privilege by leaving empty cups, plates,

and hair on the room's floor, while coffee and soda stained and coated the floor. Empty bags were stuffed in desks, and hair clips, bills, memos and vouchers were strewn around the whole room with absolutely no attempt to clean up and organize the space. What really pushed the student government over the edge, however, was not the sloppiness of some HLT members, but HLT's complete carelessness with security. One member of HLT had placed numerous notes around the room reminding the student government representatives who used the room to lock it after they were done. Yet when one member of the Executive Committee came to the room, he found the door wide open with no one inside. Eventually an HLT member returned to the room, but from outside the building and over five minutes later. Left unattended in the room was \$545 collected from ticket sales to a Joni Mitchell concert, along with \$10 of petty cash, as well as costumes worth over \$250, a typewriter, ditto and mimeo machines, chairs and other furniture. What added insult to injury was that one HLT member had placed tape over the lock, much in the fashion of the Watergate burglars, thereby making it impossible to lock the door. In a nasty letter to the editor of the *Hinman Halitosis*, the Hinman Executive Committee wrote out their grievances against HLT and ended by stating, "It is conceivable to understand the last week hassle of putting on such a performance, but this does not justify certain Little Theater members' behavior. It is only a few that this letter is directed at, maybe only two or three, but it is the few that spoil it for the many. The ability is there, the brains are not."³⁴

Rushing to the defense of HLT was none other than Bob Giomi, who published a letter in the following issue of *Halitosis*. He stated, "I'm not particularly concerned with the individual performances or the off-stage problems. What interests me is the fact that a Little Theater group, with only one declared theater major, no faculty assistance or guidance, and a lot of technical and physical problems, managed to produce successfully a major musical that provided enjoyment to

over 700 students, faculty, and staff.”³⁵ Giomi went on to link HLT to the rest of Hinman’s groundbreaking traditions, including Co-Rec football, *Halitosis*, Bus Stop, the liberal pet policy, the cooking dorm (Roosevelt Hall), Hinman Follies and many others. He went on to praise Gary Brennan for his efforts on the production end and Steve Hershkowitz, who “took a cast with low morale and boosted them in ten days to deliver the fine performance that each one achieved.”³⁶ Giomi also cited the decision that HLT made to increase the number of shows when tickets were sold out, something that placed a huge strain on the already overburdened actors.

Also in an interesting twist, Hinman President Stan Rushkowski wrote a letter in praise of HLT. He stated, “I have yet to see such a group put so much of themselves into a production; everyone seemed to be emotionally psyched for Sunday night’s performance that you literally brought the house down. You were all fantastic, and I’m really proud to know that you’re all part of Hinman College.”³⁷ Even Prof. Micheal Starzak of the Chemistry Department and Hinman Faculty Fellow noted in a letter that he and his wife attended a performance and found it to be thoroughly enjoyable and noted how pleased he was to be affiliated with Hinman after seeing the performance.³⁸ Faculty Master Vito Sinisi, the successor of recently retired Faculty Master Pete Gruber, noted that *Guys and Dolls* was “one of the most enjoyable nights my family and I have had on this campus. If I were a bell, I’d be ringing...The Little Theater and the Follies are contributing to a style and spirit which is uniquely Hinman’s.”³⁹ With the support of the Faculty Master, the Director of College Programs, a Faculty Fellow, the Hinman College president, and the vast majority of Hinman residents, it appeared that HLT had weathered the storm.

The firestorm of controversy surrounding HLT, along with its tireless efforts to produce the play led an anonymous author to pen this poem in tribute to “The Guys and Dolls of Hinman College”:

Runyan Land, the first great scene
Was performed as well as slapstick
 on the screen.
We knew our loves had come along
When Sarah and Sky sang their song.

As Uncle Arvide gradually aged,
Miss Adelaide could not bear still
 being engaged.
At the mission, Benny got in his kickings,
While on the farm, the cows and chickens
 went to the dickens.
Good ‘ole Nathan, with his auto-made-up face,
Had “plenty trouble fellas,” trying to
 finda place.
Let us not omit those behind the scene,
Whose workmanship was proven to be dynamically
 Keen.
All of you guys and dolls, you know who you are,
Each of you were born a “natural star.”⁴⁰

The first order of business for HLT following the open-door scandal was to return all its borrowed props and costumes. It solicited help once again from *Halitosis* readers by placing an ad in the newsletter requesting anyone who was driving to the New York City area for the weekend to drop off rented costumes that came from Mineola, Long Island. The driver’s gas would be reimbursed for their trouble. This request would be repeated for some time since there were many, many props and costumes that were borrowed or rented for the production.⁴¹

In typical HLT fashion, the actors and stage crew members moved on to their next challenge, seemingly unfazed by all the unscripted drama that had recently occurred. That challenge was to be the Second Annual Hinman Follies. That year’s theme was announced as “Hinman In Literature.” Follies chairmen Stan Goldberg and Dave Florin announced the theme

as well as the budget, which would total \$400, with each hall receiving \$40 to help pay for the expenses incurred by producing Follies. The remainder of the budget would go to renting the gym space and other Follies-related expenses.⁴²

Running concurrently with Hinman Follies were the new productions being considered by HLT. On March 13, 1974, HLT announced plans for “‘A Night of Sex and Love in Hinman in Three Separate Acts’” to be produced and directed by Gary Levine, the only theater major in HLT.⁴³ The plays being considered were *Madly in Love* by Paul Abelman, *The Love Company* by A.R. Gurney, Jr. and *Where Are You Going, Hollis Jay?* Each of these plays were one-act plays based on real experiences involving relationships. Once again, there was an open casting call for the plays.⁴⁴

Hinman Follies for 1974 would be held once again in the Women’s Gym. The individual halls skits were as follows:

Smith Hall	“The Exorsmith”
Cleveland Hall	“Hinmalian”
Roosevelt Hall	“Catch 2.0”
Hughes Hall	“The Hinman Heritage”
Lehman Hall	“Rob ‘n Shtup” ⁴⁵

Once again Hinman Follies was a resounding success, garnering many different “Grubie” Awards. Peter Lorenzi remembers one of the hit songs of the evening came from the Roosevelt Hall team. The lyrics went “Go tell Cheryl Eller/I’m a happy feller/I’m a Roosevelt dweller.” Cheryl Eller was then the Head Resident of Roosevelt Hall and at the time was married Al Eller, also Head Resident of Roosevelt and would eventually become Coordinator of all of Hinman.⁴⁶ Stan Goldberg did a show-stopping number as he impersonated beloved Hinmanite Bob Giomi. Once again, Hinman Follies proved to be an entertaining evening for all involved.⁴⁷

Following up on Hinman Follies, HLT showcased their one-act plays as “A Night of Lascivious Entertainment...in Three Separate Acts,” opening on May 10, 1974. The plays would be directed by Gary Levine and would include *Where Are You Going, Hollis Jay?* which starred Paul Reiser and Rita Rigano as his love interest, and examined the differences between a young man’s thoughts and actions when confronted by a member of the opposite sex. Also included in the line-up that evening was the play *The Love Course*, starring Debbie Vines and Martin Zeichner as two literature professors whose fanatical intercourse deeply affects their students, played by Janet Krulick and Steve Fialkoff. Not to be forgotten was the play *Madly in Love*, a comedy where a sexually deprived poet played by Steve Hershkowitz visits a girl, played by Ellen Murray, who is suffering from an extreme obedience complex and he masquerades as her psychiatrist, played by Rich Maggio.⁴⁸ Lacking the name recognition that *Guys and Dolls* had, the plays themselves were much more difficult delving into character studies and the deep emotional nature arising out of difficulty forming relationships. Although not as popular as *Guys and Dolls* or as big and extravagant, the “Night of Lascivious Entertainment” gave a welcome break to the all those involved in HLT, worn out by their exertions on *Guys and Dolls* and Hinman Follies. It may not have had the audience appeal, but the cast certainly had fun performing these little known, but genuinely interesting plays.

The Fall of 1974 saw a new start for the men and women of HLT. Janet Krulick had taken over the responsibility of managing the day-to-day activities of HLT. It was the senior year for both Stan Goldberg and Steve Young, the founding members of HLT, and even though both men had given so much to their creation, both realized that they were members of the old guard and had to make way for a new generation to take the reins of the little theater that could. Thus, a call was put out to anyone interested in joining the ranks of HLT. Each and everyone of

the old guard hoped and prayed for a response so that what they had invested so much into could continue on.⁴⁹

The response came, but too late to put on a show for the fall semester. Realizing that this would be their last year as students at the university and their last year in Hinman, Stan Goldberg, Steve Young, and the rest of the HLT old guard decided to go out with a bang. Like the previous year, the cast and crew of HLT decided to produce a large musical show that would rival the scope and success of *Guys and Dolls*. The musical that was decided upon was the popular Broadway musical *Kiss Me Kate*, a play based on Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*. The play would be directed by Debroah Vines and produced by Janet Krulick. In keeping with the founder's promise of student involvement set down four years earlier, over sixty cast and crew members would be involved in the production of the play-the largest undertaking in HLT history!⁵⁰

As described in the promotional material, *Kiss Me Kate* would have a repertoire of talented cast members, both old and new. Members like Stan Goldberg, Steve Young (who played the gangsters) and Steve Fialkoff (as Fred Graham) all had previous experience and many were battle-hardened veterans who honed their trade during the strenuous days of *Guys and Dolls*. There were new cast members. Laurie Kieffer was given a leading role, and Ann McGough was the supporting female lead. Bob Levine would also prove his worth in a supporting male role. The director, Debbie Vines, had experience in one of HLT's one-act plays but this was her first attempt at directing. Janet Krulick, HLT's chairperson that year, had appeared in three previous HLT productions and was now trying her hand at producing the show. The now infamous Stephen Sammond, who made the crowds leap to their feet in rounds of applause for his rendition of "Sit Down You're Rocking the Boat" during *Guys and Dolls*, was

now in the role of assistant director. Danny Frieberg, another HLT regular, arranged and conducted the now famous Cole Porter musical scores for the play, along with the musical director Holly Skinner. Marcy Mashioff, who charmed the audiences as Adelaide in *Guys and Dolls*, now directed the choreography.⁵¹

True to HLT form, the play was another resounding success. Months of hard work, determination and a never-give-up attitude allowed the members of HLT to put on their best and most ambitious show to date. *Guys and Dolls* astounded the audience with its professionalism and spectacular performances by theater amateurs, but *Kiss Me Kate* blew all of that out of the way. Once again the Hinman Commons played to sold-out audiences, as students, faculty and staff rushed to obtain the coveted tickets and enjoy a night of pure golden entertainment. The review following the show noted the fine performances by Laurie Kieffer and Steve Fialkoff. The two freshman performers, Bob Levine and Ann McGough, also were given sweet praise, especially Ann for her charming rendition of “Always True To You In My Fashion.” Also praised were the musical and choreographic abilities of Marcy Mashioff, Holly Skinner and Danny Friedberg, as were the numerous minor supporting roles and the highly professional technical crew.⁵² Faculty Master Vito Sinisi heaped praise upon the cast and crew, calling them “Wunderbar!!” and reiterated that HLT was a beautiful and unique institution to Hinman.⁵³

Though much praise was given to the above-mentioned individuals, the finest accolade was given to two men who played relatively minor roles in this play, but whose presence had been a part of HLT tradition since the very beginning. Stan Goldberg and Steve Young were described as being what “the Little Theater is all about...they are the epitome of it.”⁵⁴

The very moment these two stalwarts walked on the stage the audiences burst into applause. Agreed, both have great theatrical talents as displayed in their thoroughly entertaining number, “Brush Up Your Shakespeare,” but it’s really more than that. Stan and Steve are the embodiment of the Little Theater ideal of producing shows involving

those dedicated to its function of bringing together actors and crew in a completely enjoyable atmosphere where characters come to life off stage as well as on. Although it's only January, we are already aware of Hinman's loss when these two and other HLT veterans graduate. We will ever be indebted to their perseverance and faith which put Little Theater on its road to success...⁵⁵

Through all the years of hard work, set-backs, no money, props or costumes, grueling hours, and countless other hassles not including their required academic work, Stan and Steve were finally recognized as the true student leaders and tireless individuals which they were. Above all other members of HLT, these two embodied the spirit of the Little Theater that could. With no reward other than the enjoyment that they gained from putting together a quality show for an audience of students, both men, along with the entire Hinman community, began to see that the end of what can only be said was a golden age of community theater was in sight. *Kiss Me Kate* was the culmination of so many things for both founding members of HLT. It finally achieved what back in the Fall of 1971 had been said to be impossible. They had found a way that a completely student-run theater group with no budget, inadequate lighting and stage area, and without the "true" talent of the theater department could produce and perform not only simple one-act plays, but also elaborate musicals with huge sets and complicated choreographic scenes. The sense of fulfillment and coming full circle could not have been lost on these two towering figures of HLT. Over thirty years later, looking back on his times in HLT and in particular on his performance in *Kiss Me Kate*, Steve Young would say, "It was a really good time...*Kiss Me Kate* was one of the greatest moments in my life."⁵⁶ Steve would not be alone in his beliefs. Hinman community-based theater would have profound and lasting effects on many students for years to come.

It wasn't over yet though. With the realization that the end was near, Stan, Steve, and the rest of the HLT seniors hastily began preparation for one last hurrah! Auditions for a new

production of the popular Woody Allen story *Play It Again Sam* was announced. It appeared that HLT, a student-run organization that was still very young, but already with a rich and varied tradition, was about to go out with nothing less than a show stopping bang!⁵⁷

As the weeks all too quickly progressed, The *Hinman Halitosis* newsletter decided to do its absolute best to document one final piece of history in the making: the production of *Play It Again Sam*, a play by Woody Allen which centers around the character Allan Felix, a zany neurotic and insecure man who seems to have horrible luck with women. The main narrative of the play focuses on his attempts to seduce members of the opposite sex with the help of the great Humphrey Bogart (who appears only to Allan) who guides him along like a lover's muse in an attempt to overcome his debilitating inferiority complex. Of course, hilarity ensues. Rounding out the cast of *Play It Again Sam* were Stan Goldberg as Allan Felix, Debbie Vines as Linda Christie, Paul Reiser as Dick Christie, Fran Rotfus as Nancy, Cliff Gardner as Humphrey Bogart, Laurie Greenwald as Sharon, Ellen Murray as Dream Sharon, Holly Glick as Barbara, Janet Krulick as Intelligent Girl, Judy Schoolman as Gina, and Sue Glass as Vanessa. Once again, a well-rounded cast of newcomers and veterans promised to make *Play It Again Sam* a truly special performance.⁵⁸

As with every other HLT production of the past, the budget was limited, so in an effort to cut costs, the producers sent out an appeal to Hinman residents to lend any old magazines that they might have. Of special interest were the magazines *Film Quarterly*, but also *The New Yorker*, *Saturday Review*, *Cue*, *Esquire*, and *Playboy*, the last of which the producers assured would only be used for its articles. Also requested was a set of four coffee mugs and a set of small bowls, large plastic or throw pillows for the couch, taper candles and candle holders, a toy gun and dagger, a water pitcher, frozen TV dinner trays, and a plastic or stuffed animal,

especially a skunk, which anyone who has ever seen *Play It Again Sam* realizes is crucial to the plot.⁵⁹

Standing behind its promise of more in-depth coverage of the behind-the-scenes action going on, *Halitosis* provided some rather funny articles about the process of producing a play under the time, budget and talent constraints that HLT was under. Unfortunately, many of the cast members had poor eyesight and wore corrective lenses. Paul Reiser was, but Bob Giomi believed that in order for the character of Dick Christie to truly shine through, Reiser had to remove them. Reiser himself stated that he was not so much afraid of bumping into a wall he couldn't see; rather he was terrified of "kissing the wrong person."⁶⁰ Stan Goldberg wanted to wear a style of glasses that looked more like the pair that Woody Allen himself wore but didn't have the money in the budget to afford them. Debbie Vines absolutely refused to wear her glasses onstage, but could not wear her contact lenses because she needed a new prescription.⁶¹

Eyeglasses and improper vision weren't the only problems that struck the cast and crew of HLT. There was no room in the budget to purchase costumes, so many of the actors planned on using clothes from their own wardrobe. Problems arose, however, when Laurie Greenwald, who played Sharon, Allan Felix's first date after his break-up with his wife, made Stan "look like a leprechaun" because she only had one pair of heels, which caused her to tower over Stan. More problematic, though, the raincoat that Bogart was famous for wearing in nearly all of his movies would have to be substituted for the closest thing in Cliff Gardner's (the actor who would play Bogart) closet: an army trench coat.⁶² True to HLT form, though, none of these set-backs would break the spirit of the Little Theater that could.

The following issue of *Halitosis* saw interviews with the cast and crew. Cliff Gardner was asked how he felt about playing the role of the matinee idol Humphrey Bogart. Gardner

replied, “I would always have loved to be Bogart; he’s one of my idols. It’d be great to be as cool as he is.” When asked, if today’s modern woman would still fall for a “Bogart approach like a slap in the face or a slug from a .45,” Gardner replied unequivocally, “Sure they will. Dames are simple.”⁶³ Stan Goldberg, who played the bumbling hero of the play, Allan Felix, when asked if his real-life mirrors that of the unlucky in love Felix retorted, “Everyone sees me that way or pretends to see me that way already, but the fact is, I’m not. To confuse me with Allan Felix would be like confusing Fialkoff with Petruchio (of *Kiss Me Kate* fame). We all know what a stud Petruchio was.”⁶⁴ All these anecdotes only helped to build more demand and suspense over the upcoming play.

Although the cast and crew worked hard and diligently, *Play It Again Sam* was rushed somewhat so that it would not interfere with the upcoming Hinman Follies, and unfortunately it showed. Critics argued that at times the flow of dialogue seemed unnatural and that it dragged at certain stages. Also in attempt to make Cliff Gardner look more like his alter ego, Humphrey Bogart, too much make-up, which “could not do justice to the bride of Frankenstein,”⁶⁵ was applied, distracting the viewer from an otherwise fine performance. None of these shortcomings, though, could detract from an otherwise outstanding performance on the part of the cast. The set design was described as exquisite and the dead-on performance of Stan Goldberg as Allan Felix made everyone wonder who was better in the role: the original played by Woody Allen himself, or Hinman’s very own Stan Goldberg. Bob Giomi was also given great compliments in his role as producer-director. Though perhaps not as grand or as great as *Kiss Me Kate*, HLT’s production of *Play It Again Sam* was still a sight to behold and a final triumph for the veteran cast members of HLT.

Not to be forgotten was that year's Hinman Follies, whose theme was "Hinman in the World of Cartoons and Comics." As with all other previous Follies, the individual halls worked tirelessly day and night to produce a comical and entertaining show. The particular halls picked these themes:

Roosevelt	"Superman"
Smith	"Archie and his Pals"
Hughes	"Star Trek"
Cleveland	"Rocky and Bullwinkle & Fractured Fairy Tales"
Lehman	"Top Cat"

Like all the previous Hinman Follies, this one too was a success. Both the beloved Bob Giomi and Faculty Master Vito Sinisi were lampooned, all in good fun of course, during the course of the evening. Various areas of Hinman life were mocked as well such as the ever popular Co-Rec football.⁶⁶ What should be noted, though, was that it was not done out of spite or hate or even dissatisfaction with life in Hinman, but because the student body as a whole loved Hinman and all its institutions. Even though Hinman may have been a young community at that time, it had already proven itself to be something special in the eyes of those who had lived there.

With the end of the semester approaching rapidly, some members of HLT moved quickly to throw together one last play. They chose Agatha Christie's *The Mousetrap*, a popular and familiar play to theatergoers and to mystery novel fans alike. Many new members of HLT participated in his endeavor, though there were veteran cast members such as Steve Young (playing Mr. Paravicini) to help with guidance. Al Eller, a Head Resident (a title now known as Resident Director) at the time, even took time out of his schedule to act and to help build the sets. *The Mousetrap*, though small and hastily put together, was still a successful and

entertaining play.⁶⁷ Bob Giomi would praise the direction of Steve Sammond and entire cast for putting together an excellent play on such short notice.⁶⁸

The semester was now virtually over, and basic end-of-the-year housekeeping tasks were in need of completion. Realizing that the proverbial torch needed to be passed onto a new generation, an appeal was sent out through the *Halitosis* newsletter to anyone interested in becoming the next year's chairperson for HLT. The only two requirements were that the person had to be involved in at least one HLT production and that they really cared about the Little Theater and everything it stood for.⁶⁹

For veteran cast members like Stan Goldberg, the individual responsible for starting HLT, and Steve Young, the other person most responsible for the success of HLT, it was a bittersweet moment. It was the end of their college careers, and the end of an era for HLT. The organization to which they had devoted so much of themselves for four long, happy years was now being placed in new hands. Memories of their time in HLT would stay with them long into the future, and the leadership roles and the responsibility of running HLT had taken two young men and molded them into adults. Now, it was time to move on and allow a new generation to take the reins of the institution that they created. HLT would continue on for a few more years, eventually morphing into a new organization with a slightly different set of rules, but the legacy of both Stan Goldberg and Steve Young would continue to echo down through the years every time a play was performed in that special and sacred space called the Hinman Commons.

Even with the loss of many veteran performers, including two founding members, HLT was far from over. The following year started off with a new generation of HLT members gearing up for the play *You Can't Take It With You*, the story of young woman from an eccentric family who becomes involved with young man from a conservative wealthy family. In the cast

of HLT, and now one of its more influential and leading members with the departure of Stan Goldberg and Steve Young the previous semester, was the fledgling student actor and future celebrity, Paul Reiser. In a promotional advertisement for the play from *Hinman Halitosis*, Sharon Schwarzwald had a sort of mock interview with Mr. Sycamore, the character that Paul played in the play. The following is part of a transcription of the mock interview:

Me (Sharon Schwarzwald): Mr. Sycamore, would you be surprised to know that here in 1975 kids often sleep together after the first date?
Him: (Paul/Mr. Sycamore): I find that disgusting, crude, and could you tell me where I can meet them?⁷⁰

You Can't Take It With You debuted in early December and was met with mixed reviews. The comedy was not lacking for laughs; however, the story itself was not as entertaining as many would have hoped. Director Lori Greenwald was commended for doing an excellent job with sub-par material. HLT members such as Al Eller, Steve Ault, Geoff Magee, and in particular Paul Reiser were commended for the work that they did on the play. Newcomer Steve Cohen was given special attention for stealing the show as the Russian dance teacher Kolonkhov. Although perhaps not as popular as previous HLT shows, *You Can't Take It With You* proved to audiences, and most importantly to the new members of HLT, that even without the paternal guidance of Stan Goldberg and Steve Young, they could put on a play and have it be successful.⁷¹

The spring semester of 1976 saw a return to the thing that made HLT famous, the musical. This time HLT would tackle the smash Broadway hit *Bye, Bye Birdie*. This was a play centering around a rock 'n roll singer Conrad Birdie (a character similar to Elvis Presley) who is drafted into the army. His manager then devises a plan to have Birdie say farewell by giving one lucky American teenage girl a kiss while singing a song that will, given the unusual

circumstances, make everyone involved filthy rich. Mike Baumgarten would direct with assistance from Elli Barasch and the very important musical numbers would be credited to the talent of Holly Glick. Even though the veteran talent was no longer there, the same burning desire to produce a good show was. *Bye, Bye Birdie* was poised to put HLT back on track.⁷²

Like the previous musical fares of HLT performances past, *Bye, Bye Birdie* soared into the hearts of the audience. Bob Levine, in the role of Albert Peterson, the manager who plans to get rich off Conrad Birdie's (Steve Aspros) conscription, put in a strong and memorable performance, as did newcomers Carolyn Dow and Irene Siegel. But the true star of the show was Steve Aspros, who brought the role of Birdie to life. Holly Glick's choreography and the musical direction of Rich Ossias were also excellent additions to a highly professional musical adaptation of the popular Broadway musical by HLT. *Bye, Bye Birdie* proved once and for all that HLT was not some has-been organization. It was here to stay and thrive within the Hinman student community.⁷³

Not to be forgotten, though, was Hinman Follies. The 1976 Hinman Follies theme was announced in the March 6, 1976, issue of Hinman Halitosis. The theme for that year would be Hinman Through History. This broad theme would allow for the maximization of creative talent. The inside jokes, the bad impersonations, and the lampooning of all things Hinman were poised to be exceptional for that year.⁷⁴

A short time later the individual buildings announced their themes for Follies. Smith Hall would lampoon Prohibition, Lehman would focus on the Civil War, Cleveland would tell a new tale of the origins of the world by focusing on Creation, Hughes would give Hinman an offer it couldn't refuse by portraying the Mafia in the 1940s, and Roosevelt would give a Tribute to Our Bicentennial, which would occur on July 4th later that year.⁷⁵ Smith Hall's era of

Prohibition would take a humorous slant on what would happen if Hinman banned beer. Cleveland Hall would take the audience back to the story of Genesis in “The Garden of Hinman.” Roosevelt Hall would take a humorous look at uber-patriotism in America’s past and present in its tribute to the Bicentennial. Hughes Hall’s story would center around an illegal pizzeria called Giomio’s, which dominates the Hinman scene. This would clash with the new racket in town headed by Gabe Yankowitz, who creates “Pizza de Action” and ruins the monopoly. A turf war ensues with hilarious effects. Lehman’s show told the story of what would happen if Lehman Hall seceded from Hinman.⁷⁶ As always, Hinman Follies was a success with the 4th Annual Grubie Awards being doled out to many members, including Paul Reiser, who received an award for best original character.⁷⁷

Running concurrently with Follies was HLT’s presentation of Story Theater, a collection of eleven skits based upon popular fairy tales and directed by Steve Fialkoff, who also played guitar and sang in-between the skits. All but two of the skits were comedies and many HLT performers strutted their stuff and showed off their acting abilities in these short but enjoyable skits. There was no scenery and very few props, but the small cast, each of whom had multiple roles, produced a show that conveyed both humor and warmth.⁷⁸

Following up on Story Theater was the production of Sanford Wilson’s *Hot L Baltimore*, the story of an old Baltimore hotel about to be torn down. The Hot L refers to the broken neon sign lacking the ‘e.’ Still the old hotel is inhabited by an assortment of oddball characters including hookers, cranky old men, and a retired waitress. *Hot L Baltimore* received good reviews, with older HLT members like Holly Glick and Stew Cohen getting special accolades for their performance. Also involved were numerous new faces including Howie Popowitz, Laura Schnall, Audrey Danker and many others. Also making an appearance were Faculty Master Vito

Sinisi who played Lou Illiano. Bob Giomi, no newcomer to HLT performances, played a bit part as one of the prostitute's unsatisfied johns. The set designs were fantastic, completely recreating what the interior of a decaying inner city hotel would look like, and the direction of Stew Ault assisted by Stacy Lidell was impeccable. *Hot L Baltimore* was an excellent play, adding another notch to the HLT belt.⁷⁹

The Fall semester of 1976 saw HLT return to its roots by restaging their very first play, *You Know I Can't Hear You When the Water Is Running*. However, for reasons unclear it never went into production. In fact, HLT did not produce a single show that semester. This disappointment rippled through the entire Hinman community. Never before had HLT produced nothing, let alone seemingly made little or no effort to produce a show. This unfortunately was the first of what would become a long, slow downward spiral for HLT; it nearly sounded the death knell for Hinman community-based theater.⁸⁰

Shortly after the student body returned from winter break, HLT put the past behind them and announced the latest upcoming production, *Anything Goes*. *Anything Goes* is a musical comedy, the bread and butter of HLT, which is set aboard a ship and features the zany romantic frolics of the crew. It promised to involve plenty of singing (to classic Cole Porter tunes), dancing, romance and fun. The play presented an opportunity for hungry newcomers to shine, including Audrey Danker who played the singing, dancing nightclub star Reno Sweeny. Bruce Barney played the English gentleman, Sir Evelyn Oakleigh. Young Hope Harcourt was played by Debbie Suchoff and her mother was portrayed by veteran HLT player Fran Rotfus. Iris Sokolow played Bonnie and Billy the Scamp was played by Tony Salese. Gabe Yankowitz, one of Hinman's finest staff members, played public enemy #13, Moon Face Martin. Among the popular songs to be performed were the hits "Anything Goes," "I Get a Kick Out of You" and

“You’re the Tops.” The show was sold out after only a single day of ticket sales, so the cast decided to add another show to accommodate the huge interest in the production.⁸¹

None of the problems that seemed to have bogged down HLT in the fall semester seemed to be present in *Anything Goes*. The acting, set design, choreography, music and everything else blended together to create a grand success on the scale of earlier HLT musicals such as *Guys and Dolls*, *Kiss Me Kate*, and *Bye, Bye Birdie*. The performances of Bruce Barney, Iris Sokolow, Tony Salese and even Gabe Yankowitz were hailed. The song and dance routines were magnificently done and the crowd pleasers “Heaven Hop,” “Anything Goes,” and “Blow Gabriel Blow” were thoroughly entertaining and rich. Special thanks were dolled out to Phil Hershkowitz and Alecia Lane for assisting with the direction. Kudos were also given also to Holly Glick and Pam Brown who organized the dancers, Tom Raff the technical director, and the six-piece orchestra consisting of Dan Benscher, Eric Schwartz, Irene Knapp, Josh Weitman, Charlie Shapiro, and Rich Ossias.⁸² *Anything Goes* certainly was a tremendous undertaking, and considering all the problems associated with it, it is surprising that such a classy and professional production could have been pulled off.

Following the success of *Anything Goes*, HLT decided to stick with tried and true territory by staying in the musical genre. They picked the popular musical *Grease*, which a year later would be made into a soon to become classic starring John Travolta and Olivia Newton-John. Difficulties arose when two of the cast members, Jay Worona and Neal Lerner sustained knee and heel injuries while practicing the show’s elaborate choreography, forcing them to use canes to get around. This did not prevent the show from going on. Both actors toughed out their injuries and the director Sue Glass assured everyone that the leads Tony Salese and Debbie Suchoff were fine. Rich Oassis, music director for the show, wrote one song and composed

additional music for the show along with the five-piece band featured in the performance. Like previous musicals before it, ticket sales were enormous, so big in fact that those who had purchased tickets and had later decided not to go were asked to return their tickets to the Hinman Office so someone else could see the show. Anticipations ran high for the 1950's nostalgia trip that *Grease* would offer to so many people that would come before and after.⁸³

Grease did not disappoint. What ensued was a "fine collection of energy and exuberance contributing to a vibrant evening of entertainment."⁸⁴ The most fantastic part of the performance was undoubtedly the musical numbers. The audience cheered to hear the renditions of "Greased Lightnin'" and "Beauty School Dropout." Musical director Rich Ossias received well-deserved acclaim for his hard work. Debbie Suchoff was amazing as Sandy treating the audiences with the great musical number "Look At Me, I'm Sandra Dee." Yet it was Tony Salese's portrayal of Danny Zuko who typified the "half-cool, half-love crossed Danny to a tee."⁸⁵ It appeared as though *Grease* had exorcised any remaining demons from the previous semester and as one reviewer stated, "From start to finish, the show exuded only solid performances and excellent staging; what else could a theater frequenter desire?"⁸⁶ Sadly, as the coming months would show, *Grease* would be the swan song of HLT, never again living up to the reputation that it had won for itself so many years ago.

The 1977 Hinman Follies were announced in the same issue of *Halitosis* as the review of *Grease*. The theme for that year was "Hinman Through Television." Smith Hall would lampoon the popular television show *Welcome Back, Kotter* with their own "Welcome Back Taft." Hughes Hall would take a humorous slant on the still popular children's show *Sesame Street* with the wise cracking "Sinisi Street." Roosevelt Hall would take on the world of soap operas with "All My Students" and Lehman Hall would strike up controversy with their "Jappy Days" a

Jewish themed take-off of *Happy Days*. Cleveland would keep up a more wholesome image by using “The Waltons” as their theme. Interesting, the article also stressed that there after Follies there would be a gala at the on-campus pub named the Other Place or the O.P. as it was usually called with drinks starting at 60 cents and pitchers of beer at \$1.50. As one might expect, with that bit of advertising genius, the turnout for Hinman Follies was enormous.⁸⁷

That year saw the loss of many experienced cast members, including Paul Reiser, who would go on to fame and fortune greater than that of any other HLT member, Hinman College resident, or Binghamton University student in history. What was left of HLT dutifully carried on the traditions that were laid down by their forefathers and foremothers. In October of 1977, well into the fall semester, HLT announced auditions for the musical *Once Upon A Mattress*, the musical retelling of the classic “Princess and the Pea” fairy tale.⁸⁸ It became clear that there were internal problems with HLT when weeks later parts for the play were still being called for as well as stage and technical crew.⁸⁹ All that was written about the play was a small review by the Associate Vice President for Student Life and the Director of Campus Activities and University Union, very unusual reviewers for a Hinman play. In their letter they stated that they enjoyed the play tremendously and that the “show was lively and entertaining and it was obvious that a great deal of time and effort had gone into the entire production.”⁹⁰ Oddly though, there was not much interest on the part of either the *Halitosis* staff or by the members of HLT. Apathy is never a good sign, and this was one of the first harbingers of things to come.

Hinman Follies '78 was announced in early February and the theme for that year would return to the show's very first: Hinman at the Movies. Once again, anyone or anything associated with Hinman could be mocked and lampooned without fear of reprisal. Although

HLT may have been apathetic in the play arena, Hinman Follies appeared to be as popular as ever before.⁹¹

The skits of the individual halls were as unique and interesting as previous years. Cleveland Hall would put on “Damn Yankowitz” in honor of former head resident Gabe Yankowitz. Hughes Hall would present “All the Residents Men” mocking *All The President’s Men*. Lehman Hall would call their skit “That’s Entertainment” and Roosevelt would call theirs “One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest.” Smith Hall would take-off *The Invisible Man* and call their skit “Invisible Follies.” It was also announced that a happy hour would take place immediately after Follies, making it all the more appealing to a wider audience.⁹² However, the fact that they needed alcohol to entice people to participate began to show the chinks in the armor of the once mighty and ever popular Hinman Follies.

During this time HLT moved to create two new productions. The first would be the play *Godspell*. HLT asked for assistance with lighting, props, costumes, make-up and all other technical aspect of production.⁹³ It also announced the production of the comedy *The Impossible Years*, written by Arthur Marx, the son of Groucho Marx of Marx Brothers fame. The play was about growing up in the mid-1960’s and was set for release during the weekend of April 15.⁹⁴ The cast of *The Impossible Years* would include Mitch Kessler, Irene Siegal, Ron Wisla, and Allen (Alvo) Meglin, who had previous experience in HLT. Newcomers would include Mike Broderick, James Greenlees, Kathy Hughes, Howie Magliff, Pat Meinhold, Jodi Nussbaum, Frank Robbins, Mark Reisman, Jeff Schlossberg and Heidi Stern. There would also be a guest appearance by the beloved Bob Giomi.⁹⁵ With two productions simultaneously in the works, the ambition and unending drive of HLT appeared to have manifested itself in a new generation.

Regrettably this was not to be the case. *Godspell* hit a snag when its producer Helayne Lobman suddenly resigned. Citing other responsibilities, she felt that she could not devote the amount of time necessary to make *Godspell* a success. HLT promised that this would not halt production of the show and continued to reiterate that the show would open in early May. The members of HLT quickly scrambled to find a new producer for the show before it was too late.⁹⁶

The author of this history could find no review of either *The Impossible Years* or of *Godspell*. Whether HLT ever found a producer to replace Helayne Lobman is unknown or even if the show ever went back into production. In fact there is no extant record of whether either show was performed or even if they were successful or not. In fact in *Halitosis* there is only one mention of HLT in the entire 1978-1979 school year. That was a brief announcement in the spring semester that HLT was producing Jules Feiffer's *Little Murders*, a dark comedy set in New York City circa 1965. Also, there was a brief review of Hinman Follies in the very same issue. Not even the theme of Hinman Follies was mentioned though it can be assumed that it had something to do with different eras in history, citing that the article described Smith Hall as representing the 1950's and Lehman Hall performed a skit set in the 1920's. That is all that is mentioned.⁹⁷

This was a far cry from the detailed accounts and all the behind the scenes coverage that had been a part of virtually every *Hinman Halitosis* newsletter of previous years. In fact when one goes through the archives it becomes abundantly clear that each year less and less is written about HLT or Follies. This could be for a number of reasons. First, there could be a problem with the Halitosis staff. As in any organization, people devoted to the cause come and go, and are few and far between. In the summer of 1978, Bob Giomi, the true leader and managing editor of *Hinman Halitosis*, left Binghamton. The lack of coverage of many issues including

HLT and Hinman Follies could be a result of this. However, what is more likely, as will be seen shortly as the narrative continues, is that there was a deeper problem within HLT itself. What could be seen as early as the fall semester of 1976, the semester after the departure of the Stan Goldberg and Steve Young, was a slow decline into lackadaisical apathy within HLT and among many other campus organizations for that matter. Apathy alone does not kill an organization, especially one with so rich a tradition and history as HLT, but it certainly became less of a Hinman institution than what it was when Stan Goldberg organized it way back in 1971. The lack of enthusiasm as seen on the part of those involved in HLT in those years of the late 1970's would continue on to the following year. The Fall of 1979 was no different. What would become abundantly clear was that in order for HLT to survive, it needed to adapt and evolve. If it did not, then HLT would go the way of the dinosaur and the dodo, as would the rest of community-based theater in Hinman College. For whatever reason, acting in HLT was just not popular anymore in Hinman. The magic that HLT had brought to the Hinman Commons for the better part of a decade had worn off, as magic does sometimes.

The Fall of 1979 saw the complete decay of HLT. In earlier years, a large spread in *Halitosis* would call for new members to join the ranks of HLT. Instead, the October 4, 1979 issue of the *Hinman Halitosis* devotes only a single sentence on the very last page to informing readers that there would be interviews from 8:30 to 10:00 p.m. on October 8.⁹⁸ Only two people showed up to that meeting. To the casual observer of the era, it would appear that HLT was dead, and in many ways it was and would forever remain so. Yet no amount of apathy or disgruntlement could stop what was the most popular pastime in Hinman next to Co-Rec football. Like a phoenix rising from the ashes, HLT would be reborn-into something different

perhaps, but with a mission not dissimilar from the previous organization. It was the end of one era and the beginning of a new one.

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- ¹ Stan Goldberg, telephone conversation with author, September 28, 2006.
 - ² Steve Young, telephone conversation with author, September 29, 2006.
 - ³ Steve Young, e-mail message to Al Vos, March 14, 2000.
 - ⁴ Stan Goldberg, telephone conversation with author, September 28, 2006.
 - ⁵ Steve Young, e-mail to Al Vos, March 14, 2000.
 - ⁶ "Hinman Little Theatre," *Hinman Halitosis* 3, no. 8 (October 26, 1972) and Steve Hershkowitz, "Hinman Little Theatre is Back!" *Hinman Halitosis* 3, no. 14 (December 14, 1972).
 - ⁷ "Hinman Little Theater Re-Assembles," *Hinman Halitosis* 3, no. 16 (February 7, 1973).
 - ⁸ *Ibid.*
 - ⁹ "Hinman Little Theater Notes," *Hinman Halitosis* 3, no. 19 (February 22, 1973).
 - ¹⁰ "Important Little Theater News," *Hinman Halitosis* 3, no. 20 (March 1, 1973).
 - ¹¹ "Hinman Little Theater Tryouts," *Hinman Halitosis* 3, no. 21 (March 8, 1973).
 - ¹² "Little Theater News," *Hinman Halitosis* 3, no. 22 (March 15, 1973).
 - ¹³ Stan Goldberg, telephone conversation with author, September 28, 2006.
 - ¹⁴ *Ibid.*
 - ¹⁵ "Hinman Follies," *Hinman Halitosis* 3, no. 24 (April 5, 1973).
 - ¹⁶ *Ibid.*
 - ¹⁷ "First Annual Grubie Awards: Nominations," *Hinman Halitosis* 3, no. 25 (April 12, 1973).
 - ¹⁸ Stan Goldberg and Steve Young, "Follies Chairmen Sing Their Finale," *Hinman Halitosis* 3, no. 25 (April 12, 1973).
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