

THE DEATH OF CHARLEY NOBLE

conceived by Suzanne White

A Trial in Essential Theater-in three movements

The Lesson  
Sylvia's Dream  
The Rescue  
Epilogue

CAST

(in order of appearance)

Child	tentatively cast
Players	8 people
(Sylvia)	tentatively cast
Host	male voice
Man	
Attendants	4 from the "players"
Band 2 or 3	Woman tentatively cast
Rescue Party	Sylvia + Attendants
Figureheads	4 from the players or 1-4 different people

Total: 15-20

For: People unafraid to venture into a little movement, dance  
vocalizing and acting

The Following: Is an outline of what ultimately is a visual  
presentation.

THE DEATH OF CHARLEY NOBLE

## I. The Lesson

- A. Scene fades up to: 1) a child sitting on a beach watching an instructional swimming film and 2) two card tables in shadow in downstage corners with 4 "players" at each table waiting for their instructions in the game. They are dressed in attendants' uniforms and are dozing, spaced out etc.
- B. Scene proceeds with interruption of "game show" and players being engaged in a game of "rescue" by a host who is present only on audio tape. The game is projected on the side curtains. Child is alternately watching the screen and playing with a paper mache fish. Game show continues to go off and on. Fade out.

## II. Sylvia's Dream

- A. Scene fades up on 1) Sylvia, an older girl, swinging on a large life preserver. The movie screen is behind her. A giant life saver package is standing on end near her. She takes out a "life saver" (actually a standard size life preserver) and begins to play with it and 2) the players are still in the corners dozing, waiting. Sound undecided.
- B. A man in an overcoat enters and cries, "Oh miss, will you help me?" She attempts to throw the life preserver to him but gets caught up in it and begins choking-loud choking on tape. Four of the players have been aroused by the call for "help" and they rush to the rescue. Instead of aiding the man-who has fallen by this time-they go to the rescue of Sylvia.

C. The 4 players, now known as the Attendants, are saving Sylvia while the Man gets up and walks offstage. The other 4 Players are watching from their table and then watch a similiar scene on the movie screen (slide taken from my piece, done in the Duke Gardens, summer 1976). The attendents carry Sylvia upstage, again with slide accompaiment of a similiar scene (from the summer piece). The 4 Players get up and go offstage (possibly to become the Figureheads from this point on), leaving an abandoned Game Host who is trying to finish the game with projections on the curtain. The sound of choking has subsided and Sylvia and the attendents assume the identity of the Rescue Party, who are taking up their "watch". The "Watch" is a simple group dance. What they are watching for is not clear at this point, except that it seems to be the sea beyond. A Woman enters with a small band of instrumentalists—with a Salvation Army type sound and sings a song for the Rescue Party and Sylvia. Fade Out.

Epilogue: Short. Re-appearance of child. Content unclear.

III. The Rescue

A. Three pieces of flexible mirrors hang on stage. Movie screen is up. The Figureheads appear in the mirrors from the balcony to gossip about the Rescue Party and to give their own account of the "story"—which will be their story conjecture of what is going on onstage. (there is a set of Gemini twin Figureheads) Rescue Party continues in their "Watch". One Figurehead leaves the balcony and enters the audience and sits and watches (he will have a little light over his/her chair). Woman and Band enters once more and sings desparingly to Sylvia and the Rescue Party. Sylvia blindfolds the Rescue Party and they begin the blind-fold walk to off-stage, accompaigned by slides of the blindfold walk in my summer piece. Woman and Band are intruded upon by entrance of the 4 separate pieces of band shell brought in by the Figureheads. Movie screen is lowered.

B. Figureheads, wearing mics, move, vocalize while slides and movie of my summer piece are projected on shell and screen. At a particular point the action is halted while one of the Figureheads undresses to a beige leotard and walks off and disappears (some created elemental effect may work here). The other

Figureheads <sup>drage</sup> ~~drage~~ themselves in a large white or red cloth begin screaming/wailing