

# Experiencing Technical Difficulties!

Harmony College Show, 2004

By Bill Rashleigh

*(Preset: The risers are set upstage center. HCC and cast are waiting in the wings. The cyclorama is up. The houselights are up full. Stage lights are at 75% full.)*

Three chairs are set in just downstage of the risers with two chairs facing one.

*(C1 - At 8:00 p.m., the main curtain opens)*

*to show the Director, Daryl (lighting chairman), Bill (sound chairman) seated.*

There is a sound of a skill saw on stage left.

*It stops and Clarke (stage manager) enters and sits.)*

## Scene 1

**Director:** “Ok, while the chorus is warming up, are we ready for the tech rehearsal?”

**Daryl:** “Well, the patch panel’s a bit antiquated, but I’ve interfaced a new computer control system into the board, so we should be able to just key in the sequences we need.”

**Bill:** *(from back at the sound board in the house)* “I’ve got some new equipment that should work well, but we’re working with it for the first time, so we might have a few bugs.”

**Clarke:** “We’ve a few more things to do on the sets, but they should be ready by Saturday.”

**Director:** “That’s good, but we open Friday.”

**Clarke:** *(not phased by this realization, he writes on the clipboard)* “Friday, right. I’ll make a note of that.”

Chorus and cast enter from wings and gather center.

**Director:** “Ok. Welcome to the tech rehearsal. Just to clarify, this rehearsal is dedicated to making all the technical elements, lights, sound, curtains, scene shifts, etc., flawless so as not to be a distraction to the cast, chorus or audience. We’ll run the first half before break. We may have to take things out of sequence or repeat some cues to get things right, so stay calm, keep focused, and it’ll be a great show. Any questions?”

**Bob:** “So, my entrance for the song I’m directing is through this trap door? I’ve never done that, so how much time should I allow.”

**Director:** “Shouldn’t be a problem, someone from the tech crew will help. Clarke? *(Clarke enters from stage left)* Bob will need some help with his trap door entrance before his song, can one of your crew help him with that?”

**Clarke:** *(writing on clipboard)* “Trap door, right. I’ll make a note of that.”

**Director:** “Ok, let’s take it from the top with the opening number. *(Sounding a bit more commanding, like he is the captain of a ship on the maiden voyage)*  
Chorus on risers, main in, –

***(C2 - Main curtain in)***

kill the work lights, standby lights, sound and curtains. Ok, houselights to half...*(no change. The Director speaks louder)* Houselights to half...*(no change, speaking still louder)* Houselights to half! *(L1 Houselights go full black quickly)* Ok, to full black, we’ll fix that later. Ok, standby curtain...and fly the curtain...*(no change, speaking louder)* Fly the curtain...*(no change, still louder)*

***(C3 - Main curtain flies)***

*(to reveal an empty stage with the work lights still on, the cyc still up and no one in sight)*  
Where’s the chorus? Why is the cyc still up? Why are the work lights on? Clarke? *(Clarke lumbers from stage left with clipboard in hand)* Preset for the show is cyc in, work lights out, and chorus on stage. Can we make that happen? Where is the crew??”

**Clarke:** “Their showing Bob how the trap door works, but I’ll make a note of it.”

**Director:** “Ok, get the chorus and we’ll do this again. *(Trying to remain calm, despite the set back.)*  
That’s all right, just a little communication glitch on the opening. It’ll be a great show. Go to preset and we’ll start again.”

***(C4 - Main curtain drops, Cyc in)***

*(Work lights go out, -L2 House stays black. )*

**Chorus quickly assembles on the risers.**

**Director:** “Ok. Chorus in position?”

**Chorus:** *(Everyone in the chorus answers)* “YES.”

**Director:** “Thank you. Standby curtain and...fly the curtain.”

***(C5 - Main curtain flies)***

*(Everything looks fine, HC Chorus starts first number)*

**HCC:**           **There's No Business Like Show Business (Stock #7724)**

*(During the song, every downbeat on the first phrase, - L3 the lights change color on the cyc, first red, then blue, then green, then white, but the lighting is black on the chorus. The Director stops the song.)*

**Director:**    **“Wait, wait, wait. (Toward the light booth) Daryl, we need to see the chorus, let's back that up, shall we...ok, from the top of the song.**

*(The chorus starts the song again, this time on every other downbeat on the first phrase, - L4 the lighting alternates between the colored effect on the cyc and full lighting on the chorus. They get two phrases into the piece.)*

**Director:**    **“Wait, wait, wait. Daryl, we need to see the chorus all the time AND have the special effects on the cyc. Can we make that happen?”**

**Daryl:**       **“The new interface is modifying the sequence, but I'll get it, don't worry about it, give me a song to work on it.”**

**Director:**    **“Ok. Kevin, take the chorus straight through the song and we'll solve this. Is Kirk ready on stage right for his entrance?”**

**Kirk:**         **“Ready...is the swinging door going to be there?”**

**Director:**    **“I'm sure it'll be ready, it's set on the blackout.”**

## **Scene 2**

*(The HCC chorus sings the song, There's No Business Like Show Business straight through and the lights - L5 seem to work appropriately.)*

**(C6 - During the applause, main curtain drops)**

**The crew sets a swinging door (WITH WET PAINT) on stage right downstage of main curtain.**

*(L6 Lights come up to 85% on stage right to center. Kirk enters and pushes on the door, which opens, but he had wet paint on his hands.)*

**Kirk:**         **“There's wet paint on this door!”**

**Director:**    **“Just go ahead, I'm sure it will dry by the performance.”**

**Kirk:**         **“Ok, fine. I can handle this. I am a professional. (He pauses to get into character. This takes a moment or two, then when it is clear that he is about to start his speech)**

The sound of a skill saw is heard upstage of the main. Kirk pauses, the saw stops. Kirk is about to start again, - the saw starts again.

Director: “Clarke? Clarke?? (Clarke steps through the main curtain with the skill saw in hand.) There’s wet paint on the door and can you hold off on the saw for a bit?”

Clarke: “It’s just wet on one side, and yeah, I can hold off.”

Director: “Thank you. Ok, Kirk, go on with your soliloquy.”

Kirk: (really into character) “How can I tell Maggie that I want to marry her? I just seem to freeze whenever I think about asking her. But I look in her eyes and just see our whole future together. I just have to get the nerve to tell her how I feel. I think I’ll try it tonight, I’ll sit her down on a bench, look into her eyes and say...”

The skill saw starts up louder than before.

(Kirk gets frustrated.) **Hey look, when he’s done with that I’ll do this scene.** (Kirk storms stage right pushes on the swinging door, which does not open and he falls from the recoil. He picks himself up and goes around the door grumbling to himself.)

Director: “Clarke? Clarke?? (Clarke enters from stage left with clipboard in hand.) **The door has to swing both ways, can we make that happen?**”

Clarke: “Both ways, right. I’ll make a note of that.”

Director: “We’re ready for the second chorus number. **On Kirk’s exit, the door is struck, curtain opens and chorus starts their song. No specials on this one, Daryl. OK, Kirk just exited, and fly the curtain.**”

Door is struck and moved to stage left for later placement on that side.

*(C7- Main curtain flies)*

*(Full stage lighting – L7 on the chorus sings flawlessly.)*

HCC: Dear Hearts And Gentle People (Stock #7709)

*(C-8 Main curtain drops)*

HHC exits stage right and NGC enters stage lefts. During the applause, a bench (WITH WET PAINT) and large trashcan are set on stage left, downstage of the main curtain.

*(After the bench is set, the lights come up on stage left – L8. Kirk enters from stage left, moves to the bench.)*

Scene 3

**Kirk:** “Ok, this is the spot. It’s shaded, remote; just perfect to propose to Maggie. I’ll ask her to sit. I’ll sit beside her like this, not too close, but close enough to show sincere and unrequited love. I will look her deeply in the eyes and say, *(changing expression from love to anger)*...there’s wet paint on this bench!” *(He gets up surveying the damage done by the bench.)*

**Director:** “Ok, Kirk, it’s all right, just a technical glitch. We’ll come back to that scene later, if we have time but let’s go on for now. The high school chorus should be on the risers by now, so the bench is struck and the curtain flies for their set. Standby curtain and chorus lights and...curtain.”

*(C9 - Main curtain flies)*

Stage crew flips “Wet Paint” sign and strikes bench (wipe paint dry)

*(The lights are correct. The NGC is on the risers and sings their set)*

**NGC:** Bye Bye Blues (8401)  
Lazy River (Stock #8822)  
Please, Mr. Columbus (Stock #8812)

*(At the conclusion of the third song, the NGC strikes a very energetic pose and freezes, expecting a fast curtain.)*

**Director:** “And Curtain. *(Nothing happens, the chorus is in a freeze of energy, still holding.)* And Curtain. *(Still nothing.)* CURTAIN.

*(C10 - Main curtain drops very, very slowly, taking what seems to be an eternity)*

**Clarke.** Clarke!?! *(Clarke lumbers out on stage with the clipboard in hand.)* Can we get that curtain in faster, what is the problem?”

**Clarke:** *(Delivering the line slowly)* “Faster curtain, right. I’ll make a note of that.”

*(C-11 – Main curtain comes in faster)*

NGC exits stage right and HCC enters stage left taking their place on the risers.

The crew sets swinging door and vignette (WITH WET PAINT ON PHONE) on stage left during applause.

#### *Scene 4*

**Director:** “High school chorus exits, our chorus gets on the risers for the song that Bob directs. He makes his entrance through the trap door, and I assume he is ready. Kirk enters to the living room vignette for his phone call from Maggie to cover the exchange of the choruses. The vignette is set on stage left. Standby lights for vignette and lights go. *(Kirk enters stage left through the swinging door that looks like it is fixed, in darkness, -L9 the lights come up on stage right.)* Daryl? Daryl? The lights are supposed to be on the set on stage left, why are they up on stage right?”

**Daryl:** “The lighting is really better on stage right, I have more foot candles there. Move the set and it’ll look great.”

**Director:** “No, we’re not moving the set. Fix it please. In the mean time, get a spot on Kirk for this scene. *(L10 A spotlight picks up Kirk but doesn’t always stay with him during the scene.)* Go ahead with the scene, Kirk.”

**Kirk:** *(Nervous about talking to Maggie)* “Ok, I left her a message, I’m sure she’ll call any moment. What should I say? *(Trying to build his confidence.)* I should ask her to meet me at the park.

#### *The phone rings barely once and then stops.*

That’s her, I’m so nervous, I don’t think I can ask her now...I’m sure she didn’t hang up after one ring...I’m sure, if I keep talking like this, she’ll call right back and the phone will ring twice so I can answer it and ask Maggie to meet me, but only if the phone rings again and rings twice...*(trying to cover the technical problem, speaking out toward the sound board.)* Yes, I’m pretty sure that Maggie will call back and I can answer a ringing phone so it will present some realistic impression of a phone conversation...

#### *The phone rings twice, Kirk picks up the receiver, the phone rings a third time.*

*(Kirk gives a look of exasperation.)* Hello, Maggie, there is something I want to say to you...*(his expression changes from nervousness to anger.)* There’s wet paint on this phone!” *(He starts to exit stage left in anger and smacks into the swinging door that does not open, screams in frustration as he walks around to exit.)*

**Director:** “Sorry Kirk, we’ll come back to that...Clarke!” *(Clarke enters with clipboard)*

**Clarke:** “Yeah, I got it...two rings, no wet paint, swinging door. I’ll make a note of that.”

#### *The crew strikes swinging door and vignette.*

#### *Scene 5*

**Director:** “Chorus on the risers for the number Bob is directing?”

**Chorus:** "YES."

**Director:** "Ok. Standby lights and curtain and fly the curtain, go lights."

*(C12 Main curtain flies)*

*( L11 lights go up on chorus, we see a body begin to enter from the trap door, but he gets stuck half way up. It becomes apparent that he can't move up or down and is lodged in the opening.)*

**Bob:** "I'm stuck."

**Director:** "Come on Bob, this is no time to kid around, finish your entrance."

**Bob:** "Who's kidding around, I'm really stuck. I can't budge an inch."

**Director:** "Well, we'll get you out later, we have to go on or we'll never get out of here tonight. Just do your song from there. A couple of your chorus guys, help turn him around so we can continue."

**Bob:** "OK, I'll try." *(Two chorus members get him turned around to face the chorus and motions for pitch.)*

**HCC:** Ain't Misbehavin' (Stock #7360)

*(The other director takes the second song. Bob still remains stuck.)*

Don't Tell Me The Same Things Over Again (Stock #7291)

*(C13 Main curtain drops after the song.)*

*The crew sets bench and large trash can stage left UPSTAGE of main curtain, a karaoke machine is placed at the stage left edge of the chorus.*

*Scene 6*

**Director:** "The quartet, where's the quartet? They're to enter from stage right on the close of the curtain. *(Three of the quartet members make an entrance, but they are missing a part.)* Wait, don't tell me, Bob's in your quartet, right?"

**Quartet:** "Yeah, we changed that part last week."

**Director:** "Ok, pull the curtain and just backup and sing. *(Doubtful and sarcastic)* This is going to be a great show."

***(C14 Main curtain pulls to 1/3 open)***

*(The trio backs up and turns Bob around and they sing.)*

**Quartet:** Ten Feet Off The Ground (Stock #7679)

**Scene 7**

**Director:** “Ok, the park bench is set upstage left for Kirk’s proposal. The chorus is standing by, and standby curtain and lights...and curtain go.”

***(C15 Main curtain opens full)***

*(The bench and trashcan is set - L12 the lights are correct, it looks like this scene may go smoothly. Kirk enters stage right and is followed by Maggie.)*

**Kirk:** “Ok, honey, come here and sit down, I have something I want to ask you. *(He checks the park bench to make sure the paint is dry, and assists her as she sits.)* Alright, sweetheart, angel, sweetie, dearie, *(running out of nicknames)* I have something very important to ask you.

**Maggie:** “Well, go ahead, honey.”

**Kirk:** “Maggie, will you... I mean, would you, ... uh, Maggie, will you...”

**Skill saw starts just off stage.**

*(Offstage to Clarke, in great anger)* **WILL YOU STOP WITH THE SAW!”**

**Clarke:** *(Fires back with equal strength)* “You want it for the show or not?”

**Director:** “Ok, Ok, Ok, relax. Back it up and ask your question Kirk, then the choruses will enter and you can do your solo, followed by the finale. We will get through this.”

**Bob:** *(irritated)* “Yeah Kirk, just relax and do the scene, I want to get out of here.”

*(Kirk, equally as irritated, takes a trashcan from the bench area and places it over the head of Bob. He continues the scene.)*

**Kirk:** “Maggie, will you marry me?”

**Maggie:** “Yes, my love.”

**Kirk:** “Great, hey guys, she said yes.

**NGC enters stage left with congratulations for Kirk and Maggie and joins HCC on the rises..**

**Oh, I have a surprise for you, a song just for you.”**

*(He goes to center grabs a microphone from one of the chorus members and gives the signal for the karaoke to start on the song. **S5** During the song the pitch is continually changed making it more difficult for him to sing the song. After the song, Kevin offers a song to the couple.)*

**HCC/NGC: I’m Sittin’ On Top Of The World (Stock #8627, combined choruses in song)**

*(As the song concludes, the lights go to black and do not come.)*

**Director: “Lights, can we get some lights for the notes.**

**Daryl: “No, you can’t, we blew a fuse.**

**Director “Ok, that’s it for tonight, see on you Friday at 5:30. Thanks. Man, this is going to be a great show.”**

**Chorus and all cast clear the stage.**

*(The lights are still on and we hear a voice from under the garbage can...Bob is still stuck.)*

**Bob: (from under the trash can) “Hey, hello. Anybody there, I’m still stuck in here. Come on guys, quick clowning around and get me out of here...”**

*(L13 Lights slowly fade on the stage and)*

***(C16 main curtain is closed)***

**The End.**

8/18/04 - BJR