



2002

### This is Not a Pipe Dream

Rebecca Hixson

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Kornhauser, Barry. *This is Not a Pipe Dream*. Anchorage Press, 1992. ISBN 0876023162. \$50 for the first performance, and \$35 for each performance thereafter. 38 pp.

Reviewer: Rebecca Hixson

Reading Level: Intermediate; Young adult;

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Plays; Historical plays;

Subject: Determination (Character trait)--Juvenile drama; Dreams--Juvenile drama; Friendship--Juvenile drama; Magritte, René, 1898-1967--Juvenile drama;

Theme: Always follow your dreams.

Production Requirements: Elaborate set design: backdrop needed to represent a canvas with four to six panels. A large box (that hides the bottom central panel of the backdrop) has a lid for its top, and a false back so that entrances and exits can be made from there through the backdrop. The only other set piece at the top of the show is an easel holding a canvas. A projector is needed to project the images of paintings and photos so intimately related to the text.

Acts: 1 act, 20 scenes

Run Time: 30-35 min.

Characters: 1 female, 2 male. They each take different roles. Also, the stage manager is present on stage.

Cast: Performed by adults for children and young adults.

Time Period: Time of artist René Magritte.

*This is Not a Pipe Dream* is based both on the early life of the artist René Magritte and on the large body of his work. The play serves as a translation of his work from the language of paint on canvas to that of the stage. The play takes examples from René's life and parallels them to a certain painting. For example, during René's first kiss he is nervous, so he covers Georgette's head with a cloth as well as his own. After he does this, the projection of his painting of two people with cloth covering their heads is shown. The plot goes from René's discovery of his passion for painting to his fulfillment of his dream.

*This is Not a Pipe Dream* is a cornucopia of wordplays, wisecracks, and slapstick repetitions. Its style is theatrical. It has Brechtian elements, such as a narrator who interacts with the characters. The characters serve as "models" of real people. The play clearly distinguishes between theatre and real life.

One of the purposes of this play is to negate the traditional theatrical illusion of reality. The masking of the set is intended to heighten effect, not to conceal the workings of the piece. Thus, the character of the stage manager and his equipment are placed in clear sight of the audience.

Music underscores certain scenes. A sound that is clearly synthesized best serves the play. The scenes generally speak for themselves. Specific reference is made in only in a few special cases to the ambient mood the scoring must convey, and there are places where the music of vaudeville shows, silent film comedies, and carnivals is clearly appropriate.