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### In Other Words

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Doyle, Sharon Elizabeth. *In Other Words*. The Anchorage Press, Inc., 1979. \$20.00 for first performance, \$15 for following performances. 40 pp.

Reviewer: Jennifer Eskelsen

Reading Level: All

Rating: Dependable

Genre: Fantasy Plays; Plays; Humorous Plays; Historical Plays;

Subject: Drama--Reviews; Communication--Juvenile drama; Development--Juvenile drama; Evolution--Juvenile drama;

Theme: Communication is more than words.

Production Requirements: Simple props/costumes, use of large letters which can stand on their own to become part of the set; they spell out the title.

Acts: 1

Run Time: 120 min

Characters: 2 F, 4 M

Cast: All Adults

Time Period: Present Day

The actors come onstage, taking letters from the title and using them for various improvisational actions like selling things, using them as instruments etc. The Professor then comes onstage and the letters are returned. He explains that communication is more than just letters, emphasizing that animals communicate also. The actors imitate his examples of gestures, faces and sounds. He then goes on to explain that our ability to speak comes from mimicking speech from our parents when we are young. After this explanation, the Professor goes back to caveman times to illustrate how words and names were created within a tribe. The actors again play out what the Professor says while the Professor jumps in and out of the scene as needed. He then explains how technology has expanded communication through the telephone, telegraph etc. Next, the issue of showing feeling through communication is discussed using a story of contemporary school kids and how two of them developed the use of movement and words to explain exactly what they wanted. The whole company sings and dances to a song written by these two kids about communicating with each other, and the curtain closes.

The actors need to be very versatile in order to portray a variety of types of people. Each person that an actor is portrays is vastly different from the other characters. For example, an actor could be a prehistoric baby and then turn around and be a whimsical teenager. They also need to be able to manipulate their body to create very visual images because all props and scenes are done in pantomime. For instance, one of the characters is so rigid that he can't move and his friends need to carry him to school. The pace of this play is pretty fast because the characters are trying to get a large amount of information across to children about a topic that literally scopes human history. Nevertheless, content doesn't seem to be sacrificed for timing. The play is built on physical movement, which not only illustrates the intentions of the play, but also keeps the focus and interest on what is happening onstage. The theme is the basis of the play, which is written to teach kids that different forms of communication are great and shouldn't be looked down upon. This idea is brought to the forefront of everything that is done onstage. This play would be best in smaller (20-30) groups of kids rather than large groups because there is so much interplay between the actors and the audience. This would be great for a children's theatre or community theatre.