

M E R R Y - G O - R O U N D , 1 9 5 4



The Merry-Go-Round Orchestra hard at work.

When Mr. Pinkey, the bungling vacuum cleaner salesman, walked on stage the night of April 8th, Hughes students were viewing the most ambitious Merry-Go-Round yet produced. Titled "Shoppin' Around," the 1954 presentation illustrated with dances, songs, and madcap comedy—just what happens when a huge department store hilariously starts coming apart at the seams. For two and a half hours the audience followed the "crazy" adventures of Mister Pinckney and his apoplectic boss, Mr. Glotz. There was Mrs. Attwater, a poverty stricken old gal with only fifty million dollars, and Myrtle, the hep-cat cosmetics girl. There was a Madam Ci Bon, who ran the beauty shop, Mr. Grimjaw, the meanest credit manager in the country, and Maggie, the stupid shoplifter. Up and down the elevator scrambled a cast of characters, and what characters. Salesgirls and salesmen, and customers like Jane and May, who entangled men's ties in a garbage disposal—with the men still wearing them.

Purchasers of tickets for "Shoppin' Around" had an opportunity to see the mannikins of Merriwell's store come to life and dance, visited the toy department where electric trains had real whistles and one never knew when a company of toy soldiers would spring into action. And weaving a musical spell throughout the production was the Merry-Go-Round orchestra, supporting singers and dancers in thirty-five top musical numbers, seven of which were from Broadway, never before heard in Cincinnati. On stage the Merry-Go-Round singing chorus, composed of thirty members of the Hughes ensemble, had the department store, from the Main Floor to the Bridal Shop, ringing with song, while seven separate dance choruses set a lively pace in colorful costumes. Vocal and dance solists performed on every floor.

The Merry-Go-Round was built on good, solid musical accompaniment, thanks to the efforts of Mr. Slayman, who had the monumental task of acquiring and arranging every piece of music to be played,

as well as directing the orchestra. Almost every note sounded during the performance had been written by his hand on the music sheets of the orchestra, and the split second timing required for a production of this type was controlled by the wave of his baton. Nobody wanted to miss out on music boxes that played "Dragnet," and a guy disguised as a girl, getting trapped in a beauty parlor and forced to take a beauty treatment. Or, if one is interested in some other phase, we might add that there are a pair of sunglasses that turned everything into slow motion and also sixteen pairs of shoes that danced by themselves.

Mr. Robert Portune, Hughes graduate, performed a magnificent feat by directing and writing the outstanding presentation for the 1954 Merry-Go-Round, as he has done for the earlier production. Rita Fogel, Hughes senior, added much to the annual Musical Comedy with her superior talent, grace, and poise.

Mr. Portune spends many hours in perfecting the acts.

