

CALL & RESPONSE in the AUDITORIUM

With its emphasis on storytelling and without elaborate sets and the pretext of a barrier, or fourth wall, between the stage action and the audience, call and response is a natural occurrence in a Roadside Theater performance. Audience members sometimes join a song, testify with affirmation *Yes*, and banter with the actors. This verbatim exchange between Roadside actor Angie DeBord and an audience member was recorded in Cleveland, North Carolina in 1985.

Angie: I think I'll tell one (*a story*) about your Uncle John.

Tom: I got two Uncle Johns—one lives on one side of the mountain and the other lives on the other side. Which Uncle John are you talkin' about?

Angie: Honey, he's the one that lives on the outside of the mountain. Well, I figure it's better to tell it in front of you than to tell it behind your back. John lived in a little cabin there on the mountainside, and he was a bachelor feller. Poor old thing, bless his heart.

Tom: He was a bachelor by choice!

Angie: That's right—the ladies' choice. Well John had a little garden . . .

Audience Member calls out: *What did he grow?*

Angie (*taking a step toward the audience member*): He had three ol' spindly bean plants and a big 'mater plant . . .

Audience Member: *and I bet he had some corn!*

Angie: Well yes, he had a great big field of corn . . . Now I always wondered what he done with all that corn.

Audience Member: *He was making corn liquor.*

Angie (*to fellow actors on stage*): Why looky here boys—they done heard about your Uncle John all the way down here in North Carolina! . . . (*to audience member*) Now John wadn't no different than most—ever'body likes a little libation now and again . . .

Audience Member: *With all that corn, now and again must have been every day!*

Angie (*to audience member*): Are you one of them Mullinses from over around Skeet Rock? If you are, your Mommy told me to send you home if I run into you anywheres. She said the law was a lookin' for you, so not to take the turnpike.

