

## USITT THIRD ANNUAL CONFERENCE

March 22, 23, 1963  
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan

Theme: "Performing Arts Centers - U. S. A.  
Civic - Community - Academic"

USITT is grateful to the University of Michigan for its hospitality in enabling us to hold our Third Annual Conference on its campus. This location of the conference will permit our members to become more intimately acquainted with the progressive policies instigated in the State of Michigan on behalf of the performing arts.

Detailed program and registration information will be distributed to the membership in the near future.

## NATIONAL OPERA ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE

The National Opera Association (NOA) will hold its 8th Annual Conference at the Hotel Edison, New York, December 27, 28, and 29.

It has been generally acknowledged that the technical plight of the small opera workshop and touring group is considerable. Prompted by the increasing disparity between the quality of the aural and visual aspects of production, NOA, in collaboration with the U. S. Institute for Theatre Technology, has scheduled, "Opera Lighting - Theory - Equipment - Practice," for the second afternoon of the conference, on December 28. The complete session will consist of three consecutive one-hour panels, with half-hour breaks between.

"Opera Lighting - Theory," will present statements, discussion, and the answering of questions from the floor by three professional lighting designers.

"Opera Lighting - Equipment," is intended to demonstrate new developments in instruments and control equipment which are practical for the small opera group.

"Opera Lighting - Practice," will be a demonstration session in which a five-minute scene is lit in a number of ways, in an attempt to demonstrate how lighting design is motivated by operatic content.

The session will be chaired by Thomas DeGaetani, Director, Juilliard Stage Department. It is anticipated that pertinent free and purchasable literature and material will be available at the session.

For further information contact Constance Eberhart, Hotel Wellington, 55th St. and 7th Ave., N. Y. C.

#### THE COLLOQUY OF ATHENS

June 16-27, 1962

by Rosamond Gilder

(The following report originally appeared in the ANTA NEWSLETTER, No. 28, October, '62)

In June 1962 a group of leaders in the arts from a dozen countries met in Athens at the invitation of the Greek International Festival Committee and UNESCO to discuss the urgent question of "Theatre for Large Audiences" or, to give it its more precise French title, "Le Spectacle pour le Grand Public." The event was a happy combination of a number of converging forces. As early as 1956 UNESCO had called together the executives of its five non-governmental cultural agencies: the International Theatre Institute, the International Music Council, the International Association of Plastic Arts, the Federation of P. E. N. Clubs, and the International Union of Architects, for the purpose of coordinating their activities. At these first meetings in 1956, which I happened to chair, it was suggested that on some occasion it would be fruitful if a meeting were held where all these various aspects of the arts met together, where architects talked to musicians, painters and sculptors to theatre people, writers to directors and producers, instead of each type of artist talking exclusively to his fellows. The theatre is a natural framework for such a joint meeting and, when the Greek authorities planned an important international "Festival du Spectacle" for 1962, the two ideas happily combined. The Greek Government and the Greek Office of National Tourism were generous hosts to their some thirty international specialists.

No country in the world offers so perfect a setting for a serious discussion of the theatre as a means of mass entertainment. The ancient Greek theatres which were built to receive the entire population of a town, or to attract pilgrims from the length and breadth of the country, are not merely distant, historic myths. A number of them exist today in all their splendor and two are in regular use. The participants in the Colloquy had the supreme privilege of seeing theatre for large audiences in action, of testing ideas against facts, of seeing the glory of the theatre of Epidaurus where 12,000 people sat spellbound under a star-lit sky while an ancient tale of war and love and reunion was enacted in a silence broken only by spontaneous applause when lovers met or laughter at some comic-satiric line.

The Colloquy itself was held in Athens under the Presidency of Professor Kitsikis and a distinguished honorary committee including the President of the Government, M. Karamanlis, the Vice-President, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Education, M. Cassimatis who addressed the opening session, the director of the Academy of Athens, and a number of others. His Royal Highness, King Paul himself honored the opening exercises with his presence. Various important leaders in theatre, architecture, painting and literature formed a Greek advisory committee but it was Professor Kitsikis

for the Greek Government and M. Michel Dard for UNESCO, together with the representatives of the five affiliated organizations, who accomplished the difficult task of organizing the Colloquy and the Festival and drawing up a seven-point program for the six sessions of intensive debate which formed the core of the meeting.

As in all such meetings certain key people were unable to come at the last moment and other unexpected arrivals contributed to the interest of the occasion. Not unnaturally the French contingent was the largest - and most eloquent. The English came next in numbers with Allardyce Nicoll giving a masterly historic summary of the theatre for large audiences in the past and analyzing their basic ingredients. Sir Tyrone Guthrie, who might be said to represent the English, Irish, Canadian and American theatre and has himself created an important large theatre at Stratford, Ontario, was an important contributor to the discussions. The small United States delegation included the only playwright present who had actually written and produced modern plays for mass audiences. Paul Green, in his symphonic and other dramas such as The Lost Colony and The Common Glory had attacked the problems of writing for large audiences of anywhere from four to ten thousand people. When the discussions turned to technical problems, Thomas DeGaetani (Secretary-General of AITT and President of the USITT had much that was pertinent to contribute. He had also arranged for the collection and distribution of folders containing material on various American theatre projects, technical developments and special articles which each delegate was able to take home with him - an important item of U. S. cooperation.

The six meetings were conducted by three different chairmen. I chaired the first two, Michel Saint-Denis the third and fourth, and Professor Kitsikis the final sessions. The discussions were animated and varied, tending more toward the definition of an "ideal theatre" than toward the solution of the problems to be met in theatres of large capacity. Several of the directors present made passionate appeals for theatres of not more than 1200, preferably 800 to 900, seats with many repeated performances making up for a large single attendance. Roger Planchon, the combative young man of the French theatre who has actually been running a theatre for mass audiences in Lyons, is building a smaller theatre, demanding total government support and fighting, in general, for many theatres rather than the large festival-type theatres which are undoubtedly filling a need today and will be in increasing demand in the future. The reasons and advantages of the festival theatre were perhaps not sufficiently aired, though the American delegates rather insisted on this point as pertinent to the subject-matter of the Colloquy. The field trips so generously provided by our hosts fully sustained this argument, emphasizing as they did the special quality of festival performances.

Fortunately, the debates are to be edited and published as it is impossible here to do justice to the lively theatrical talk that went on, not only at the regular meetings which took place in the comfortable air-conditioned committee room supplied with simultaneous radiophonic interpretations, but also on the buses and boats that took the entire Colloquy - the thirty members with their wives and friends - twice to Epidaurus to see The Bacchae and The Helen of Euripides; to Hydra for a day of rest and continuous conversations; to Delphi with its heartshaking beauty of theatre and setting and, incidentally, the site of the projected International Cultural Centre of the Council of Europe; and to a succession of dinners and receptions. At the Odeon of Herodus Atticus in Athens itself the members of the Colloquy were regaled with concerts, opera and dance programs. Many members went to the Piraeus to see Dora Stratou's authentic Greek folk dances performed in the ancient theatre there which, thanks to her efforts, has been brought back to its original purposes. It has a very ancient circular dancing floor or orchestra, perhaps the oldest in the Athenian region, with rising levels of seats surrounding it on three-quarters of its circumference. The dancers, some of them from distant villages where their traditional steps, music and costumes are still untouched by modernization, were most moving and appropriate.

By way of national and international events, we saw in Athens itself an excellent production of The Birds, in an outdoor park theatre, which later went to Paris. Planchon's George Dandin, set onto the stage of the Herodus Atticus, managed by the brilliance of its production and its picturesque detail to overcome the problems of a play planned for a proscenium arch and presented on an open stage. Performances by the Rumanian and Greek symphony orchestras, the Greek National Opera's Nabucco and the Ballets of the Marquis de Cuevas were among the offerings during a crowded fortnight.

An Exposition of Architecture and Scene Design had some interesting material from Germany, Rumania and Greece, as well as a retrospective exhibit of the Greek scene and costume designer, Panos Aravantinos. In spite of efforts to collect material well in advance, the exhibit had to be set up in great haste and was uneven in quality as well as quantity. The U. S. was only slightly represented by material which the USIS received from another exhibit of a day or two before the opening. (This despite the noble efforts of Ned Bowman and the University of Pittsburgh who prepared and shipped six panels on American theatre architecture. The six panels were not included in the exhibit, and inquiries by USITT have to date received no reasonable explanation. USITT Ed.)

In summarizing at the last session their reactions and conclusions, it was notable that every one of the participants in the Colloquy emphasized the ineffaceable impression that Greece itself and the Greek theatres had made upon them. The possibility of building large theatres with perfect acoustics, had been proved. The ability of actors to project to distances which seem in our small, intimate theatres totally impossible, had been demonstrated. The attendance, attention and reaction of mass audiences to great drama even though it is no longer, as it was when these theatres were built, part of the religious and daily life of the people, was a fact. All these elements gave new importance to the subject of the debates, which will be reflected and made widely available by their publication. It was agreed that not only did every member of the group owe a debt of gratitude to the Greek Government and the organizers of the Colloquy for an illuminating experience, but that a significant exchange had taken place between leaders in the fields of theatre, architecture, music and the fine arts which will materially increase the knowledge and experience of practitioners of these arts in the various countries and regions represented at the Colloquy of Athens and its attendant International Festival.

#### ADAPTABLE THEATRES AT HALF-PRICE

ADAPTABLE THEATRES, a 100 pg. illustrated volume published by the Association of British Theatre Technicians, is a compilation and translation of the 23 papers, and a summary of the discussions at the Third Biennial Congress of the International Association of Theatre Technicians, London, June 25-30, 1961, on the theme, "The Planning of Adaptable Theatres."

Available to USITT members at half publication price, \$1.25, ADAPTABLE THEATRES may be ordered by writing to Thomas DeGaetani, Juilliard School, 120 Claremont Ave., New York 27, N. Y. We are forced to limit orders to one copy per member. Please make check or money order payable to USITT.

#### "BUHNENTECHNISCHE RUNDSCHAU (BTR) ON MICROFILM

USITT has not, as yet, received a sufficient number of responses to its April Announcement to permit placing a minimum order; we are reprinting the announcement hoping that additional requests will permit us to do so in the immediate future.

Professor Walther Unruh, Editor, BTR (Theatre Technology Review), has made the following offer to USITT members: 72 issues of BTR, 1950-61 inclusive, on microfilm, for \$20 plus postage. USITT must be able to indicate a minimum order of 25 copies in order to avail itself of this most generous offer; we therefore urge all interested parties to contact USITT immediately.

#### RECENT PUBLICATIONS AND MATERIAL AVAILABLE

The following is a listing of publications and materials recently received by USITT and available to its members. In some cases the material is directly available from USITT, where not, the address for direction of inquiries is listed:

CRISIS IN THE FREE WORLD THEATRE, by John Wharton (from material compiled by Professor O. Glenn Saxon). A 24 pp. documented statement on the economic plight of the Broadway theatre. Available free from The League of New York Theatres, Inc., 137 W. 48th St., New York City.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON THE ARTS AND GOVERNMENT: INTERIM REPORT, by Harold Weston, Chairman. A 4 pp. report on the accomplishments and failures relative to the arts, of the 87th Congress. Copies available, @ 10¢ each, from Thomas DeGaetani, Juilliard School, 120 Claremont Ave., New York 27, N. Y.

NIGHT & DAY, RICHMOND, VA., A REPORT UPON THE FEASIBILITY OF, AND A RECOMMENDED PROGRAM FOR A CULTURAL ACTIVITY CENTER WITHIN THE CIVIC CENTER, by William A. Briggs, AIA, ASCA. An 80 pp. documented and graphed report based on a survey of 70 existing or planned Civic Centers. Available @ \$1.00 per copy from John T. Hanna, Department of Public Safety, Room 301, City Hall Annex, Richmond, Va.

A PRELIMINARY PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A PERFORMANCE ARTS RESEARCH LABORATORY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN, by Joseph Wehrer, AIA. An 11 pp. program outline, available free from Joseph Wehrer, Dept. of Architecture, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Mich.

SIMON'S DIRECTORY OF THEATRICAL MATERIALS, SERVICES AND INFORMATION. \$3.60 per copy. Simon's Directory, 247 W. 46th St., New York 36, N. Y.

#### MANUFACTURER'S LITERATURE

Requests for copies of these materials should be addressed directly to the manufacturer:

LIGHTING & ELECTRONICS: PRODUCT INDEX (Catalog AIA 31-F-2), Lighting & Electronics, Inc., 81 Prospect St., Brooklyn 1, N. Y.

STAGECRAFT: ENEOTEE STAGECRAFT: ACOUSTICAL SYMPHONIC SHELL, Stagecraft Manufacturing Corp., Route 202, Peekskill, N. Y.

THEATRE TECHNOLOGY, INC.: A NEW SYMBOL IN THE TECHNICAL THEATRE, Theatre Technology, Inc., 5826 S. Broadway, St. Louis 11, Mo.

WARD LEONARD: SOMETHING NEW IN DIMMERS, FOR THEATRE AND TELEVISION, PART II, by Stephen Skirpan. Reprinted from IATSE JOURNAL, Spring, 1962. Ward Leonard Electric Co., Mt. Vernon, N. Y.

## FUTURE EVENTS

1. November 24, 1962: AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR THEATRE RESEARCH ANNUAL CONFERENCE, Brander Matthews Dramatic Museum, Columbia University, 2 p.m. For further information contact Dr. Henry Wells, Box 73, Low Library, Columbia University, New York 27, N. Y.
2. November 29, 1962: AN AMERICAN PAGEANT OF THE ARTS, a two-hour nation-wide closed circuit TV broadcast on behalf of the National Cultural Center. Check with local newspaper for details of showing in your area, or contact: National Cultural Center, 718 Jackson Place, N. W., Washington 6, D. C.
3. December 27, 28, 29, 1962: NATIONAL OPERA ASSOCIATION 8th ANNUAL CONFERENCE, Hotel Edison, New York City. For further information contact, Constance Eberhart, Hotel Wellington, 55th St. and 7th Ave., New York City.
4. March 10-13, 1963: 5th ANTA ASSEMBLY, Washington, D. C. For further information contact American National Theatre and Academy, 1545 Broadway, New York 36, N. Y.

USITT members are invited to contribute listings under this heading for future issues of the NEWSLETTER. Address: Helen Marie Taylor, 315 Central Park West, Apt. 6N, New York 25, N. Y.

## NEW THEATRES AND AUDITORIA

With this issue of the NEWSLETTER, USITT inaugurates an informational service to inform members of theatres and auditoria recently opened.

1. PHILHARMONIC HALL, a 2600-seat concert hall, first of Lincoln Center constituents, opened September 23, 1962.

Architect: Max Abramovitz

Acoustical Consultant: Leo Beranek

Architectural Lighting Consultant: Richard Kelly

Interior Design and Stage Lighting Consultant: Donald Oenslager

For further information contact: Jack McNulty, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, 10 Columbus Circle, New York City.

2. HOPKINS CENTER, DARTMOUTH COLLEGE, containing a 900-seat auditorium, a 400-seat theatre, and a smaller experimental theatre. Dedicated November 8, 1962.

Architect: Wallace Harrison

Acoustical Consultant: Bolt, Beranek and Newman

Lighting Consultant: Stanley McCandlees

Stage Technical Consultant: Edward C. Cole

For further information contact: Warner Bentley, Director, Hopkins Center, Dartmouth College, Hanover, N. H.

3. DRAMA BUILDING, UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS, containing a flexible, experimental 300-seat theatre. Dedicated November 11, 1962.

Architect: Bartlett Cocke

Consulting Architects: Jesson, Jesson, Millhouse and Greeven

For further information contact: Loren Winship, Chairman, Dept. of Drama, University of Texas, Austin, Texas.

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