

NEWS

USITT

LETTER

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PRESENTATION OF AWARDS TO PROF. STANLEY McCANDLESS

U.S.I.T.T.: STATE OF THE UNION

National and International Collaboration

One of the major events of the 4th Annual U.S.I.T.T. Conference, held April 25 and 26 of this year in New York, is pictured above: presentation of awards to Prof. Stanley McCandless upon his retirement from the teaching field. The occasion was a joint tribute, organized by the Institute in association with the American Educational Theatre Association, the Illuminating Engineering Society, the Institute of Electrical & Electronic Engineers, the United Scenic Artists, the Yale Drama Alumni and the School of Drama at Yale University.

The diversity in background of those attending, in large part due to Prof. McCandless's extensive interests, was also an illustration of the Institute's ability to cross conventional vocational lines in the investigation of any given problem. More than any other theatrically orientated organization, the Institute has received the active cooperation of architects, engineers, consultants, technicians, artists, manufacturers, users, etc. This has been illustrated in the Institute's conferences, its committee structure and its national and international affiliations. These further examples may suffice.

The Code-Committee of the Institute, started in 1960, prepared extensive material on fire and building codes. Symposiums between American experts in these areas and other specialists, particularly those in Italy, Germany, France and Britain, drew out the requirements of the architects and theatre designers for workable but safe codes which would allow the construction not only of the regular proscenium theatre but of the arena, open stage, platform and multiform theatre types. It was only with this background that the Institute has been able to play a decisive role during the past eighteen months in the rewriting of the theatrical sections of the New York Building Code. Here, the Institute, drawing upon the collective skills of its membership, has been able to provide authoritative studies in code problems such as fire containment, panic psychology, stage materials testing and construction methods. The Institute has also been able to gather the collaboration in these efforts of such organizations as the United Scenic Artists, the American Educational Theatre Association, the Speech Association of America, the Board of Standards and Planning, the National Automatic Sprinkler and Fire Control Association, etc. Invitations have recently been issued by U.S.I.T.T. to additional groups to join with the Institute in this endeavor. The revised New York City Building Code, when published, is expected to have a large influence upon similar code rewriting elsewhere in this country and abroad.

A second example of the Institute's collaboration with other organizations is the now well-established twice-annual breakfast or luncheon. Organized and paid for by the U.S.I.T.T., these informal meetings serve to acquaint leaders in the various organizations with progress and goals among themselves: AETA, ANTA, IAAM, NOA, SAA, USA, IES, AIA, NTC, NCAE, NCTC, IATSE, AE, ATPAM, NCAG, MRA.....those who have attended represent these and other service, professional and labor organizations.

During the past year, for a third example, the Executive Committee of U.S.I.T.T. has continued to serve as ANTA's coordinating panel for the U.S. Center of the A.I.T.T. (International Association of Theatre Technicians). In this connection the following services have been performed: regular exchange of publications and information has been maintained with AITT Centres in other countries; visiting personnel in the theatre technical fields have received a personal reception and guidance during their visits to this country; the U.S. Center has undertaken the preparation of material on American technical theatre for a complete issue of the ACTA Scaenographica (Prague); the Center continues to supply information and technical services as requested by the various U.S. Cultural Embassies and the U.S. Information Agencies.

Internal Affairs

If the Institute has served well in its collaborative role, how successful has it been in the day-to-day conduct of its own internal affairs? Here, the answer must be cautiously pessimistic - (the problems, says one Institute wag, are only "time, money and people"). Judged by the aims and purposes expressed in the Institute's Bylaws, progress has been slow. We may examine here the U.S.I.T.T. Newsletter, the proposed Journal of Theatre Design and Technology, the Theatre Survey, the Consultant's List, the work of the Institute's Research Committees, and that old bogey - the Institute as "New Yorkese".

(1) The U.S.I.T.T. Newsletter, from its inception, was essentially the work of one man, Dr. Henry Wells. As long as Dr. Wells was able to devote his time and talent to the Newsletter, it was regular in issue and illuminating in content. But other editorial and research chores, for a time put aside, forced Dr. Wells to relinquish editorship of the Newsletter in March. That gap, in spite of many attempts at successors, has not been filled until recently. Our new Newsletter Editor is Prof. Jay Keane, Dept. of Speech, Queens College, Flushing 67, New York. The content of the Newsletter is, of course, N-E-W-S. News of theatre openings and dedications, activities of our members, new publications and manufacturer's catalogs, dates of conferences of interest to U.S.I.T.T. members, squibs, short reports, intelligence information, and comments. This information must be supplied by our membership since our editor is not a diviner of news nor is he omnipresent. The Newsletter then, can be as newsy, as informative, and as interesting as the news you send to it.

(2) The Journal of Theatre Design and Technology is expected to be a quarterly journal of information and opinion. The Journal was last announced in our January Newsletter and an appeal was made for articles. Enough material has now been accumulated for one pilot issue and one succeeding issue of the Journal. Our Editor reports that a year's backlog is essential so that the quality of the material can be maintained. The Journal of Theatre Design and Technology will be well printed on good paper and replete with photographic and illustrative material. It may be expected to become the authoritative journal of research and communication in English in the areas it serves, providing a counterpart in the English-speaking countries for the similar journals now published in West Germany and Czechoslovakia. The Journal will be expensive. The Institute's Executive Committee is convinced that the Journal can be properly financed. The Journal's Editor, Dr. Ned Bowman, Dept. of Speech, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh 13, Pa. appeals to you for the necessary articles and research material.

(3) The Theatre Survey (theatres constructed in the United States and Canada since 1960) was implemented as a direct result of the continual requests received by the Institute for information on new theatres; location, form, purpose, seating capacity, type of user, architect, consultant, etc. Each mail brings an additional request from an architect, an engineer, a prospective owner or user, who wants to examine the new theatre construction in his own area before setting out on his own commission. The Survey, which will be kept on key-sort cards, will ultimately provide a reference to all new theatres. This should be invaluable information to those inquiring about current trends in theatre building. Although the Theatre Survey card

will be widely distributed among the architectural profession, we must count on the continuous support of our members in locating the new theatres and in placing the Theatre Survey cards in the hands of those who can properly annotate them. The success of this project, that is its comprehensiveness, is dependent on the cooperation of all members of the Institute. A Theatre Survey card will be included in this and subsequent Newsletter mailings. Please consider each to be a personal invitation awaiting your response. Additional cards, in any quantity, can be obtained from USITT Theatre Survey, P.O. Box 866, Radio City Station, New York, New York, 10019.

(4) The Consultant's List is another product of necessity, since again, every mail brings requests for the Institute to recommend consultants for such - and - such a project. The Institute's Executive Committee has instructed that such requests be answered with the complete non-annotated membership list of the U.S.I.T.T. The recipient of such a list, has then to weed out of some 350 names the three or four persons he may really care to investigate. The list is consequently of little value in this regard. For some three years the Institute's Board of Directors and Executive Committee, in consultation with allied organizations, has considered the problems and dangers involved in the publication of any more selective listing.

The resultant Institute policy formulation is as follows:

- (a) The Institute will publish a list of those persons who signify their qualifications and interest in one or more areas of theatre consultation.
- (b) Such persons need not be members of the Institute.
- (c) The list will not become an instrument for selfish individual promotion and for unwarranted exclusiveness.
- (d) Those who wish to be listed as consultants shall supply information on their training and experience in their intended field of consultation, representative projects and clients, and other information designed to enable those seeking consultants to investigate and check upon the suitability of the listees for a particular project.
- (e) The Institute will assume no responsibility for the accuracy of the statements made by the listees, or for the actual ability of those who have chosen to seek listing to conduct a theatre design consultation.

The Executive Committee of the Institute will shortly pass upon the forms to be used in application for listing, and as soon thereafter as possible forms will be made available to both members and non-members of the Institute.

(5) The Institute's Technical Committees are, of course, the heart and purpose of U.S.I.T.T. Membership on the committees is unrestricted, and U.S.I.T.T. members receive minutes of committee meetings to the extent they desire. Committee reports and papers are distributed automatically to all Institute members. Of the four technical committees Theatre Architecture and Theatre Engineering meet monthly in New York City - Theatre Presentation

and Theatre Administration meet every second month in New York City. It has been suggested to the Committee Chairmen that each meeting have a paper or report by a speaker on some subject of committee interest, followed by old and new committee business.

Naturally, most Institute members cannot attend most committee meetings - this is a source of frustration not only to our members but to the committee chairmen as well. Correspondence is welcomed and encouraged, and correspondence as received is regularly discussed and reported upon in the meetings. Lacking the ability to bring together its entire membership each month, the Institute can only hope to establish a regular format whereby those members situated nearby or visiting can meet together for a regular discussion time and this discussion reported. The Institute encourages members who cannot meet monthly in New York City to seek out other Institute members in their own localities for regular discussions of mutual problems. Reports of such meetings if forwarded to the Institute's Technical Secretary will be introduced into the proper technical committee meeting by the Technical Secretary. Address: Dr. Donald Swinney, Technical Secretary USITT, % Dept. of Drama, Hofstra University, Hempstead, Long Island, New York.

Still another way by which all of our members can participate in the work of our technical committees is to join in the research on any announced committee activity, or to suggest and prepare any independent research activity, or to suggest and prepare any independent research activity. Committee papers go through an extensive process of several drafts, circulation for comments, annotation, etc., in which the member away from the regular committee meeting is at no loss whatsoever with respect to the member who can attend the meeting. Indeed, the authorship of papers is intended to be by as balanced a segment of membership as possible; balanced by geographical location, affiliation, background and conviction. The true committee report, represents then, the "state of the art" as seen by as wide as possible a segment of Institute membership.

Here again then, the work of the technical committees of USITT is dependent upon your regular contribution.

(6) Finally, the Institute as "New Yorkese". By its national and international affiliations the Institute is by nature far from being provincial, particularly New York provincial. The Newsletter, the Journal, and the committee structure of the Institute are designed to encourage participation of all Institute members. Slightly over half of those on the Institute's Board of Directors are not located in the New York area; over fifteen percent of the Institute's mail is addressed outside the continental United States. The Institute's Executive Committee has repeatedly discussed, as reported in its Minutes, the ways and means of insuring the collective efforts and collaboration of the widest possible membership. The Executive Committee of the Institute is anxious to hear from every member as to how the participation of all members can be expedited and further implemented. Your Board of Directors, your Executive Committee and your Officers believe that they have been responsive, indeed, extra-ordinarily responsive, to the suggestions you have expressed to them.

The following are three additional means now being implemented by the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee to insure the "national" direction of the Institute.

(1) Toronto Center of U.S.I.T.T. The Institute has just formalized a Toronto Center of USITT at the suggestion of our over twenty members there. This includes a certain independence of action, rebate of a proportion of Toronto area dues; and financial and technical assistance. It has been suggested that Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Chicago, Denver, Minneapolis, Detroit, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Dallas and Seattle, among other cities, are likely potentials as Institute Centers. Which Institute members in which cities are available to help establish further Institute Centers?

(2) The Institute will hold a meeting of its members in conjunction with the joint AETA - SIA convention to be held in Chicago, December 28 - 30 of this year. Details of time, place and tentative agenda will be in the mail soon.

(3) The Fifth Annual Conference of the U.S.I.T.T. will be held May 1st and 2nd, 1965 at Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, with a pre-convention tour of theatre structures in the area to be held on April 30th. Conference Chairman and Institute Vice-President Russell Johnson welcomes your ideas for conference program and your suggestions for papers, now. Address: Russell Johnson % Bolt, Beranek & Newman, 50 Moulton Street, Cambridge, Mass.

I have the pleasure, as President of the U.S.I.T.T. to submit the foregoing report for your consideration, comment and action.

Sincerely,

Joel E. Rubin, President

A.E.T.A. Conference

Chicago, Illinois December 28th-30th, 1964 LaSalle Hotel

U.S.I.T.T. hopes that as many members as possible will be able to join with our colleagues in the American Educational Theatre Association during the latter's 28th Annual Conference.

As announced in the opening message of this Newsletter, U.S.I.T.T. will have an open meeting for members and non-members during the course of the Conference. The meeting will be announced in the supplemental meeting sheet to be distributed at the registration desk at the AETA Conference, however the time will be:

7:00 P.M. Tuesday evening, December 29th

As usual the AETA Conference has many programs of exceptional interest to USITT members. Here are just a few of them:

Monday December 28:

9:00 a.m. Project meetings of AETA Work Projects including: Theatre Architecture, Stage Design & Technical Developments, and Theatre Management

- 1:45 p.m. "How to Succeed in Theatre by Selling It to the Public"
Herman Kogan of Chicago Sun-Times and Danny Newman, PR man for the
Lyric Opera
- 10:00 p.m. Art Risser will lead a "Critique of the AETA-ATA Theatre
Architecture Exhibit"

Tuesday December 29th:

- 9:00 a.m. "What Have Appia & Craig Wrought?" - Ned Bowman, Don Murray, Paul
Gray, John Rothgeb, Oren Parker
- 10:40 a.m. "Where is Tomorrow's Theatre?" - Don Oenslager, Joan Rosenthal
- 7:00 p.m. USITT Open Meeting

Wednesday December 30th:

- 9:00 a.m. "The Right to Fail" - Alan Schneider, Robert Corrigan
- 10:40 a.m. "Directors on Directing" - Duncan Ross, Ed Levy, Rod Alexander,
Allen Fletcher
- 10:40 a.m. "Planning Responsibilities for the High School Performing Arts
Center" - Art Risser, Steffan Doerstling, LeRoy Knoeppel, Wallace Smith,
Spencer Cone
- 10:40 a.m. "The Challenge of Fund-Raising" - David Bryant, Sherwood Collins,
Frédéric Congdon, John Havens, Howard Orms, David Reed
- 2:00 p.m. "Technical Freedom" - Carol Gill, Robert Proper, John James

For registration information and full program on the AETA Conference write
immediately to:

Dr. Robert Schneideman, Exec. Sec'y. Treas.
American Educational Theatre Association
Northwestern University, 1925 Orrington Avenue
Evanston, Illinois, 60201

STATE THEATRE TOUR

The Executive Committee is pleased to announce that a special tour of
the new State Theatre at Lincoln Center has been arranged for the members
of the Institute and their friends for the night of November 16th. Those
individuals who were involved with the planning, design and operation of
this theatre will be present for the evening to discuss the project and
answer questions. Each member of the Institute will receive two invitations,
each of which will admit two persons. We feel that this will be an interest-
ing and significant occasion which we hope you will share with a friend by
passing one invitation to someone who is not a member of the USITT.

REQUEST FOR PHOTOS

We are preparing for publication two graphic surveys on recent theatre
buildings and new projects; one to commemorate the opening of the Lincoln
Center Repertory Theatre and Library; and another for the U.S.I.T.T. Journal
now in preparation. Photographs and line drawings are urgently needed, and
submissions may be sent to Ned Bowman, Editor, U.S.I.T.T. Journal, University
of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pa..

Report on the Fourth Annual Meeting of the USITT, April 24-26, 1964, Barbizon Plaza Hotel, New York

(by Ned A. Bowman and Thomas Watson)

The 1964 Conference was characterized by an unusually successful blending of influences from the New York-based theatre and from the nation at large.

The Friday field trip to theatre facilities was a memorable event for even the veteran New Yorker, of whom there were many present. Institute members joined the day-long inspection trip, which afforded detailed close-up visits backstage at Radio City Music Hall, the World's Fair A.T. and T. and General Electric buildings, ANTA Washington Square Theatre, and the New York State Theatre at Lincoln Center. Designer Jo Mielziner was present to answer questions at the ANTA Washington Square, and architect Philip Johnson commented on the New York State to those Institute stalwarts still able to keep the split-second pace set by tour manager Dick Thompson. General Electric's electronic eccentricities gave conventioners extra time for surveying the Fair from a fine vantage point, and the projection techniques employed at Bell Telephone's pavilion gave technicians a chance to see translucency effects from the hot and noisy side.

The ANTA-Washington Square gave many on the tour their first look at mirror-reflected beam lighting techniques, and was demonstrated proof as well that a temporary theatre need not be overly expensive, even on Manhattan.

Saturday evening's testimonial dinner for Stanley McCandless on the occasion of his retirement from Yale University was a second convention highlight. Perhaps never before had so many technicians and technically-minded theatre people gathered to pay honor to one of their own kind. Among the many who spoke in testimony were Donald Oenslager, Curtis Canfield, Edward Kook, Jean Rosenthal, and Toastmaster, Joel Rubin.

(The four regular sessions of the convention are reported as they occurred. Each afternoon session was followed by a committee meeting: Engineering on Saturday, Architecture on Sunday.)

Report on Saturday, April 25. (Opening Session)

Convention Chairman Donald Swinney called the convention to order, informing the membership that this was a practical working conference, and that there would be no theoretical discussion on the convention theme, "Today's Theatre - Yesterday's or Tomorrow's."

Swinney then introduced Joel Rubin, President of USITT, who delivered a brief resume of the organization's history, noting its relationship and close contact with ten other groups including ANTA, AIA, IATSE, and others. Dr. Rubin pointed out that theatre consultation is a much maligned activity, due in part to consultants with very particular theatrical points of view, to others who are just not very good at their jobs, and to still others who are unknowing.

Swinney then introduced the keynote speaker, Mr. Michael Dewell, co-founder and co-producer of the National Repertory Theatre. Mr. Dewell stated

that he is not a technician, but that the remarks he was about to make were very passionately felt. He went on to say that he has come to the conclusion, after eight years of touring and taking productions in and out of over 300 different theatres, that the art of theatre architecture is a lost one. He stated, "We are not building buildings in which the theatrical experience can happen."

Mr. Dewell stated that new proscenium theatres were not places in which the theatre experience can happen: they do not permit audience-actor rapport, contact, or communication. He noted that the above is not true in every case, but that in many new theatres it is difficult if not well-nigh impossible to develop a sense of communication. He cited the new Clowes Hall in Indianapolis and its arrangement of balconies as one of the theatres in which audience-actor rapport is very difficult.

The National Repertory Theatre played Clowes Hall, and then went to Indiana University at Bloomington, where they played at the large auditorium (built in 1939) which seats 4,500 people. Mr. Dewell stated that the Bloomington hall, for all its size, produced better rapport because of the raked house. He stated that in theatre design, "We don't seem to go forward--we are going backward."

Dewell then discussed the conversion of an old Louisville, Kentucky, theatre similar to New York's Music Box in size, at a cost of \$50,000. This modernization produced an elegance which he feels the audience requires in order to make the theatre experience a viable one. He further stated that the old road houses are the most flexible theatres ever designed and that some of the new proscenium theatres just don't fill the needs of a touring company. Examples of the latter case are the Fisher Theatre in Detroit and McCormick Place Theatre in Chicago.

Dewell concluded by commenting on the increase in the number of open or thrust stage theatres that are being built, noting that, "We are raising the open stage to the state of "sacred cow-ness"--we stand to lose the know-how in handling the design of proscenium theatres."

The second speaker of the morning was Mr. Holge Westerman, architect, of New York City. Noting that he would discuss the methodology involved in theatre architecture rather than the specifics, he stated that "Planning a theatre is easy, provided you have the right people at the right time." Assuming that the right people are available, the time becomes the all important element. As a rule, the goals of the theatre dream are not clearly enough defined at the outset of the planning. "We must achieve a balanced program within a balanced budget--the two must work in an equilibrium which includes the goals, the equipment, and the money. The architect must be pulled into the planning from the outset (pick his brains from the start). The architect brings balance to the planning when he is on hand at the outset."

Mr. Westerman noted that he has seen building programs where lists of needs are worked up by either the client or a special consultant. He went on to say that such a program can only be written as a progressive procedure when the architect knows what specifics are involved.

In conclusion, Mr. Westerman pointed out that the best planning brings in all of the people involved at the very start; that this group

must state its goals; that is, must know what the needed facilities are; and that it must have the necessary funds to realize them. "Don't start anywhere but at the beginning."

The third speaker of the morning was Professor Henry Williams, of Dartmouth College. Mr. Williams, a member of the Dartmouth faculty and one of the planners of the new Hopkins Center, described the planning and use of the new theatres in that structure.

Williams began by pointing out that perhaps some architects know too much about the inside of the theatre. He commented that the educational theatre is (1) a teaching and performance center; (2) a sort of stock theatre; (3) a class and working space. As a result, "No two different departments of theatre ever operate on the same ground rules."

He noted that the theatre staff at Dartmouth, after 30 years of planning a new building, had a "fair idea" of the two types of theatre they wanted. When the two forms were decided upon, the size of the houses had to be determined. The decision produced plans for a proscenium theatre seating approximately 400 people and an arena-proscenium experimental house seating 150-200.

"Our theatre is cursed by individuality," Williams lamented. "Even the architect feels he must leave an impression." In the design of the larger proscenium theatre at Dartmouth, the architect wanted a balcony, whereas the client did not. Mr. Williams commented that the differences of opinion among the members of the planning team were very strong, but that common sense usually prevailed.

Williams offered the opinion that a flexible facility is a most desirable quality in any theatre and pointed out that the essential difference with an architect is that he is usually fascinated by mechanical devices for producing this flexibility. In reference to this idea, Mr. Williams stated that while it is very well for the architect to know the inside of a theatre at first hand, it is equally important for him to know the inside of his theatre client as well.

Mr. Williams pleaded that one who works in the theatre is a fair judge of the needs of any new theatre. He felt that this must be told to the administrator, who thinks he knows better what the theatre man's needs are.

The fourth speaker of the morning was Mr. Thomas Parkinson, Director of the Assembly Hall, University of Illinois, at Urbana. Mr. Parkinson opened his talk by stating that he was not in conflict with any of the previous comments. The new assembly hall at the University of Illinois is a multi-purpose building.

Parkinson noted that to combine functions reasonably means compromise, so that "we don't have a perfect ice rink, a perfect conference hall, a perfect Viennese opera house, or a perfect legitimate theatre."

Mr. Parkinson then described the design and building of the assembly hall and detailed the interesting use of a wire rim (which contained 614 miles of wire) around the junction of the dome and bowl which, when the dome was poured, contracted and raised it 2-1/2" off its form.

He then described the permanent grid over the center stage and the 85 foot drapery legs and valances used to produce a proscenium arch. The assembly hall seats 16,000 people. In the proscenium configuration, 4,200 upholstered seats can be used, and there are 124 locations for wheel chairs.

Stage draperies for this proscenium arrangement were designed by Feder, Dazian and Peter Albrecht. When this setup is erected, a velour stagehouse is produced measuring 90' x 85'. The proscenium opening is 30' x 66'. It takes a crew of 14 men one hour to hang this drapery. There was some question raised about wrinkles in the velour, since they have to be folded and packed in boxes when not used. Mr. Parkinson noted that the wrinkles fall out in about three hours' time after the drapes are hung.

The permanent grid was installed by J. R. Clancy and is 85' above the stage floor. The underside of the dome is 120' above stage floor. There are 40 battens that fly on a synchronous winch system invented by the Clancy firm and based on the designs of George Izenour. The winch system is used mainly as a movement apparatus. Only two battens can be brought in at a time, whereupon certain draperies are tied on, the battens raised, and then dead hung. The winch lines are then transferred to another two battens, and so on. Any one batten will carry a total weight of one ton. Four of the battens are combination pipes, holding legs, border and traveller track.

Electrical equipment was provided by the firms of Feder and Kliegl. The equipment includes five border light strips, 35 front spotlights, two Strong Super-Troupers, and other equipment. Two identical switchboards are employed, one at stage level and the other in a light booth. Power capacity is 3,000 amperes. Since the light battens must be raised all the way to the grid, the electrical firms worked out a system by which the associated cable could be flown out completely.

Mr. Parkinson noted that the acoustics are "good." The users of the building are delighted with them. For certain performance needs, a sound reinforcement system is utilized. There is also a demountable shell for concerts. The shell is made of plywood sections and can be flown. He noted that an "eyebrow" is planned for use with the orchestra shell and that this eyebrow will dissemble into 8' x 8' panels. Mr. Parkinson also stated that they had been asked many times if the building worked, and he emphatically stated that it does. "It accomplishes all the purposes that we set out for it. We have recommended the form to other clients of a similar nature."

The last speaker of the morning session was Robert Calhoun, Production Supervisor of the National Repertory Theatre. Mr. Calhoun stated that he had been trained as a stage manager and had been working in that capacity in the theatre for a number of years. He expressed an apprehension, similar to that voiced earlier by Dowell, of new plants which were characteristically not really equipped to handle a touring company.

Following the four speakers in the morning session, a number of questions were asked from the floor (the following to Parkinson of U. of Illinois, unless otherwise noted):

Question: What is the size of the custodial crew needed to hang the proscenium arch setting? (at U. of Ill. Assembly Hall)

Answer: "Fourteen men, but we still have problems. It takes 24 man-hours

to put in the basketball floor, 20 hours to take out the basketball floor, and 20 hours to set up the stage."

Question: Is the crew of 14 custodial staff or stage hands?

Answer: They are both -- in all, we have 22 men.

Question: Are there supplementary lines, winch or hemp?

Answer: Both, and additional rigging and pin and locking rails are to be worked out and added.

Question: Where was Gypsy rehearsed? (Student Production)

Answer: We guarantee some rehearsal time to all groups. This one had two weeks in the building.

Question: Where are the dressing rooms, and how close are they to the stage?

Answer: Some are close, and some a sleeper jump away.

Question: What size are the dressing rooms?

Answer: Ten star dressing rooms, 2 people each. Others for 4 people each, three for 14 people each, and chorus dressing rooms for 75 people.

Question: When set up for theatre, what is the distance to the furthest seat?

Answer: 200' from the furthest seat to center stage.

Question: Did the road company of My Fair Lady have any major problems using the building?

Answer: There was a stage hand problem, a lighting problem, and a problem involving the number of available battens.

Question: What is the maximum weight requirement for a balcony rail batten?

Answer: 1500 lbs. and a length of 30'.

Question: How do you handle loading in?

Answer: Trucks load straight in to the stage.

Question: What are the wing spaces in the proscenium stage set-up?

Answer: 16' off-stage on each side.

Question (to Mr. Calhoun): What are the glaring examples of trouble you find in touring houses?

Answer: Dressing rooms, -- no footlights.

Question (to Henry Williams): Would you re-do the switchboard arrangement in the Hopkins Center if you could? (One dimmer bank serves C-I boards in the main theatre and arena theatre.)

Answer: It is too complicated. We use our old resistance boards in the arena theatre.

Comment from Dick Land regarding Hopkins Center: "Storage space in the building is one thing that needs to be emphasized. The magic word called cubage -- cubage represents dollars -- cut down on storage -- save dollars. This is stupid! Any storage for costumes in the Hopkins Center is 3/4 of old space that was available." (Naturally, old space is still used.)

Question: What is the speed of travel on the winch-operated battens?

Answer: Not too good.

Question (to Mr. Calhoun): Will the North American touring concept give way to the European flexible concept (using the large amount of equipment in a permanent municipal or university plant)?

Answer: For us, time is money, and it takes too much time to change over to the permanent equipment.

Question (to Mr. Calhoun): Is a light bridge an asset or detriment to a road show?

Answer: I don't know -- there has never been occasion to use one.

Question (to Mr. Calhoun): If you could patch in your (touring) boards to the theatre's equipment, would you do it?

Answer: No, the lights in most theatres don't fill the needs of a touring production.

(Session Adjourned)

The Saturday afternoon session was chaired by Mr. Swinney.

The first speaker was architect Clinton Brush, AIA, from Nashville, Tennessee. Topic for discussion was The Theatre Specialist as a Contributing Consultant.

Speaking as an architect, Mr. Brush said first of all that he would not attempt a theatre without good consultation. He pointed out that if, as Mr. Dewell had remarked, no new theatre has been designed since 1890, then the fault is the consultant's. He then outlined what he felt was the order of responsibility for planning a good building: (1) the client (owner); (2) the users in the various performing arts; (3) the architect; (4) the consultants.

Mr. Brush then stated that he looks at a consultant ideally -- as an independent man in professional practice and further stated that the amount of the consultant's authority should be in direct ratio to the amount of responsibility that the consultant's part of the job entails.

The next speaker of the afternoon was Professor Edward C. Cole, of Yale University. Mr. Cole prefaced his comments with the observation that we need to think of the consultant as a theatre generalist rather than as a theatre specialist. In reinforcing this idea, he stated that there are some theatre clients who are not theatre people at all, and then asked this question: Have any of the specialists in the various areas of performing arts thought about or are they knowledgeable about all of the areas and parts of a theatre?

Cole then remarked that the generalist consultant should be able to supply all of the knowledge the client will need but does not have. As an example, he asked how many times do theatre planners consider stage crew circulation in the building that will keep them out of the audience area (when they have to gain access to ceiling lighting positions or switchboard booths located in the rear of a balcony)?

Cole stated that the theatre generalist can only contribute his knowledge (which this person must keep up to date) and his judgment in regard to any particular building problem. The theatre generalist serves both the client, the architect and the theatre in general or should.

The third speaker of the afternoon was John Knight, architect for the Los Angeles Music Center, and member of the architectural firm of Weldon Beckett & Associates.

Knight established the idea that the choice of theatre consultants should be left to the architect. Then he pointed out that there are many levels of consultation: specialists in stage lighting, theatre engineering, acoustics, and rigging. There are also those who are workers in the theatre -- stage hands, wardrobe personnel, stage managers, scene designers, directors, musical conductors, and finally, the theatre generalist.

He further stated that the style of the theatre is the result of the architect's pulling the consultant's work together. Only by working with the consultant "can the architect make the theatre (building) a logical area in which to live."

The last speaker of the afternoon session was Mr. Rex Henriot, Director of Theatre, St. Paul. Mr. Henriot remarked on his experience as a theatre user who is not the client of a new building. He described his position as one devoid of any authority in relationships with the building's architect.

Henriot gave a number of details regarding the new open stage theatre his group will occupy in St. Paul. He outlined a number of working difficulties with two different architectural firms and concluded by asserting that the theatre consultant must be an equal partner with the client in discussions with the architect. On many occasions, Henriot felt, he needs to act as a defense council for the client. The consultant can only be useful if he has some authority. Most mistakes in new buildings are caused by a lack of communication between the client, user, consultant, and architect.

Question (to Mr. Knight): Where and how much responsibility does the consultant have?

Answer: The consultant must answer to the architect.

Question (to Mr. Knight): What should a consultant do when he sees a mistake being made?

Answer: The consultant should yell when the architect makes an error.

Comment by John Rothgeb: Perhaps architects and consultants should form teams to build more than one theatre.

Comment by Nathan Sonnenfeld: Mr. Henriot was at fault in not getting the facts on the architectural planning and in not stating precisely for the architect what he (the user) wanted.

Comment by John Briggs of the AIA Theatre Architecture Committee: Mr. Henriot should have had the authority as the user to demand the proper specialists to advise him.

(At this point, a general discussion of the consultant's role took place.)

Dick Thompson: Consultation for the theatre today takes two forms. The first is the consultant as an advisor and defense council for the client. The second is the consulting firm that hires the special talents needed (engineering, lighting, acoustics, rigging, etc.).

Kelly Yeaton: We need consultants of such stature that they can relate to and arbitrate between the client and the architect. We need the consultant who can get through by the weight of his reputation to the architect. One specific technique that might be used is -- does a general consultant think of all the various jobs and their functions -- does he talk with the 1500 (sic) different people who are involved in producing a play?

Question (to Edward Cole): Do you as a consultant prefer to work for the client or the architect?

Answer: I prefer the client to pay. It works better that way, but ultimately I think the consultant should work for the good of the theatre. You might say that I am an advocate for theatre.

Within the concluding discussion, the following comments seemed indicative:

How can the consultant be trained -- be found?

Clients must be knowledgeable.

Architects must dig into the problems of theatre architecture very thoroughly.

Certain definitions needed to be established for the word consultant, as either a specialist or as a generalist.

(Sunday, April 26. Morning Session)

(Mr. Swinney again chaired the meeting.)

The first speaker was Delmar Solem, Chairman of the Drama Department at the University of Miami, Miami, Florida. Professor Solem discussed the building and planning of the University of Miami Ring Theatre. Among his comments were the following:

The theatre is used for musicals, and an orchestra pit which wasn't called for in the original planning has been devised. The theatre has a turntable that was built from surplus bomber parts.

Professor Solem also noted that a number of the published articles on this theatre are not accurate. In this respect it has been an extremely expensive plant to use and maintain. The theatre also has a number of built-in difficulties. For instance, the men's restroom has excellent acoustics.

Professor Solem then described the three-part layout of the theatre. The main auditorium block is circular and 90' in diameter. There is a front-of-house section with offices, and a workshop area on the opposite side of the ring block. The workshop structure is connected to the stage and auditorium space by a breezeway. This produces difficulty in communication between the stage offices and the backstage spaces. For example, the stage manager is concerned with communication between the stage-auditorium block and the workshops and dressing rooms. The house manager has the same problems in communication between the stage-auditorium block and the front of house area.

Solem noted that extraneous visitors wandered into performance spaces too frequently and that professional discipline is difficult to maintain in the acting company, because of the building arrangement.

The circular space does provide a good deal of artistic flexibility. The open area is a flexible one in which to work. This flexibility does, however, create certain problems. Lighting instrument positions are limited, since the lighting egg crate is located only over the center of the total space. Professor Solem noted that the theatre should have had an overall ceiling grid. The solid concrete dome produces unsatisfactory acoustics. However, there is one benefit in that the poor acoustics teaches the student actor to speak very clearly. During musical productions, the orchestra almost always drowns out the singers.

The Ring theatre is not air conditioned. The audience always request the seats nearest to the major entrance first. The sale of seats is a problem regardless of the stage-auditorium form used. In the summer, high temperatures pose a serious problem, and a rainy night is a noisy and drippy one. In the winter, the number of patrons in the auditorium is severely affected by problems of temperature change. For a 10-degree drop in temperature, cancellations run about 10%. For a 20-degree drop they run 25%, and for a 30-degree drop they run from 50% to 75%.

External sounds create very serious problems. The large number of sports cars on the campus and jet aircraft in the Miami Airport landing pattern can seriously disrupt a performance.

Professor Solem noted that their audiences have a preference for particular stage forms. Production in the complete round has dropped off considerably in the past five years, and their box office shows a reduction in the total intake of \$300 to \$400 whenever the complete round form is used. He noted, therefore, that plays are staged in an open or thrust form 90% of the time.

The theatre is an excellent one for Shakespearean and other presentational productions. It is a very difficult house in which to stage representational works.

The second speaker of the morning session was Richard Land, of the Loeb Drama Center, Harvard University. Mr. Land began by describing the history of theatrical activity at Harvard. He pointed out the variety of spaces that had been and are continuing to be used for dramatic production. These remarks were followed by a brief coverage of the statement of purpose worked out for the Loeb by Archibald McLeish, McGeorge Bundy and others in which they established a fundamental program for the structure.

Mr. Land then noted a number of pros and cons concerning the Loeb Drama Center and its use. The pros include the following:

Public areas are good. The three-position seating arrangement (proscenium, open and face-to-face theatre in the round) has seen experimentations, and six variations of seating are now used. The movable panels in the sides of the auditorium are utilized fully in these several forms. The arena form is used less frequently than others, and the practice of putting the seat wagons on stage has been discontinued. The elevator system has proved to be very flexible. The theatre also utilizes a black scrim in front of the canvas roll cyclorama. Sound locks between the workshop areas and the main stage and experimental stage function very well. Performances can be given in both spaces while construction takes place in the workshop. There is no sound problem.

Some of the difficulties that Mr. Land noted include the following:

Poor access to the control booths; the position of the cross-connecting panel in the auditorium ceiling spaces; the opulence of the auditorium; the jerky dimming of the fluorescent house lights; the aisle lights, which are positioned in the ceiling and which prevent a full blackout. These are some of the difficulties encountered in the auditorium itself. The tormentor towers are not mechanized. It takes three stage hands and a heavy crowbar to move them. There are serious difficulties in communication backstage. Stage managers have a problem in controlling actors in some of the open and arena forms. There is no cross-over behind the permanent roll cyclorama. There have been diode failures in the switchboard. The ceiling lighting positions do not work for all of the various performance forms. For example, side lighting for open stage productions is bad. There have been some difficulties with the winch system. The small dressing rooms are too small, and the theatre does have a serious parking problem.

In conclusion, Mr. Land stated that most of the time the building works well, and it does not present any large problems that cannot be solved in some way.

The third speaker of the morning was William A. Storrer, of Hofstra University. Mr. Storrer spoke also on the Loeb Drama Center. Storrer was a student at Harvard at the time the theatre opened, and was involved in a number of productions in its first year of use. He listed three different categories of faults:

1. Problems that never should have happened. For example, fluorescent lights in the dressing rooms.
2. Problems in use.
3. Problems in design.

Storrer pointed out that there was a serious problem in auditorium acoustics: Whenever the Harvard Gilbert and Sullivan group used the building, they could not permit the orchestra to play above a pianissimo, or the singers were drowned out.

Storrer then asked why a hydraulic lift orchestra pit had been provided if an orchestra could not use the theatre adequately. He also noted the presence of several acoustic dead spots in the auditorium.

He then noted that only one meeting had taken place between the student actors and the architect, Hugh Stubbins. At no other time were the student users consulted on the planning of the building.

The fourth speaker of the morning was Mr. John O'Shaughnessy. O'Shaughnessy pointed out that in looking at the various theatre forms used today, he would like to state personal point of view regarding the kind of theatre toward which we are working: He related that in his early work with the Six-O'Clock Theatre he came to the conclusion that simplicity was all-important. In this respect he felt that a close and intimate relationship between the actor and speaker is of the utmost importance. O'Shaughnessy feels that this is not always accomplished in the design and planning of new theatre buildings. For instance, the new Washington, D.C. Arena Stage doesn't have the intimacy the old one had.

Mr. O'Shaughnessy also noted that we are too mechanically concerned with gadgets and gadgetry. He concluded by saying, "Give to the actor and his work the simple means that he needs to achieve it."

The final speaker of the morning session was a professional actress, Miss Helen Marie Taylor. Miss Taylor began by noting that her speech consisted of impressions and facts gathered from a number of years of touring under widely varied circumstances. Noting a widespread inattention to dressing rooms, she pointed out that new theatre construction must give the actor privacy. "Don't ask him to change with 40 other people," she pleaded. The actor also needs a place backstage where he can sit down and compose himself before he goes on.

Miss Taylor then noted that the Frank Lloyd Wright Theatre in Dallas is one theatre which architects should study on how not to build a theatre. She stated that it was not a theatre uniquely planned for its location. Miss Taylor then described the operation of the electronic control board in the

Dallas theatre, stating that, "The one who operates the switchboard learns nothing about lighting. He is just a number setter or a crank puller."

Another fault of that theatre, according to Miss Taylor, is the color of the auditorium interior. It has been painted a light cream. She noted, "They are concerned with how the room looks, not with what it is for." Backstage there are only 12 dressing rooms for a 60-member company.

Miss Taylor then made a play for what she considers to be the most important thing in any theatre -- space. "Make it possible for good house-keeping to exist; provide large hallways that lead to the dressing rooms so that there is no crush between actors moving in opposite directions."

She then pointed out that the theatre should be handsome and beautiful not only in the auditorium but backstage and outside. "I want a clean building, one with harmony and balance." She concluded, "How can you have this with 40 different colors for the seats?"

(End of Morning Session)

Following the morning session, the annual business meeting of the USITT took place. Dr. Joel Rubin, President of the USITT, presided. He presented the following facts for the membership in his annual report:

1. The USITT will establish a journal, and it is very likely that Ned Bowman will serve as editor.
2. He reported on the establishment of a Presidential Committee that is assisting in the revision of the New York City building code.
3. He presented to the membership ideas relating to a new survey of auditoria and theatre buildings that have been built since 1960.
4. He expressed a desire to see the organization establish a consultants list. This would list specialists as well as "theatre generalists."

Mr. James Jewell, Chairman of the Committee on Resolutions, was then introduced by the chair. Mr. Jewell read resolutions praising the work of the following individuals:

A resolution congratulating Mr. Barrie Stavis for his new play, Banners of Steel, chosen for this year's release in the American Playwrights Theatre Series, and for his profound interest in the work of the organization;

A resolution to Wallace Russell of Toronto, for the establishment of a regional chapter;

A resolution to Don Swinney and Dick Thompson for the excellent planning that produced this meeting;

A resolution to Ned Bowman for his Theatre Architecture Bibliography;

A resolution to ANTA for that organization's interest in good theatre planning and design;

A resolution to amend the bylaws to provide for regional chapters: These chapters to have no less than five members.

(Afternoon Session, Sunday, April 26.)

The first speaker of the afternoon was Mr. Clinton Brush, ATA. Mr. Brush had several suggestions for consideration by the membership:

1. That the USITT move for the adoption of some very firm design criteria;
2. That it publish and make available to architects a consultants list;
3. That it establish a system of professional ethics and rules for architects;
4. That it open meetings such as this one to the public.

(The regularly-scheduled program was then continued. The remaining speakers were all members of the staffs of various operating theatre plants, and their discussions were based on experiences in their own facilities.)

The first of these speakers was Vincent Piacentini, of the Washington D.C. Arena Stage. Mr. Piacentini began by noting that the Arena Stage, in its operation, is a professional stock company. Each production runs for six weeks, and its new theatre building, designed by Henry Weese, is one of the best structures of its type in this country. However, he felt, it is not a perfect plant.

Piacentini noted that some of the building's flaws were due to the problem of communication in the building's planning stages. The clients were, of course, located in Washington, while the architects's office was in Chicago. Some of the problems noted include the following:

The facade and lobby areas are successful, but they should be larger. The auditorium has no ambient light when the house lights are on. The removable tier of seats which had been planned for 3/4 arena has never been removed since these seats are a source of vital revenue.

One-half of the eight or nine designers who have worked in the place are unhappy about the corner entrances. These entrances produce design problems with certain elements of a setting. It is also difficult to bring certain large props on stage because of the height of the entrance doorways. It is sometimes difficult for actors to play intimate scenes at one edge of the stage and communicate adequately with the audience who may be 75 feet behind them.

The theatre works well for big, brash plays, farces, and other works of a similar nature, but it is a difficult house in which to produce smaller, more intimate works, like The Glass Menagerie. Acoustically, visually, and for the director, it is not an intimate theatre.

There are several serious errors in the technical setup. The client wanted good lighting and a trapped stage, but problems exist in the construction of traps, in the fly system, and in the lighting system.

There are also small problems, according to Piacentini: The shops are too small; it is difficult for actors in period costumes to manipulate circular stairways; there are dissimilar locks on several series of doors; the masonite stage floor is too noisy for girls in high heels; the lighting catwalks don't function very well; the lighting angle is not ideal; the ceiling slots house a number of 8" lekos with very long top hats -- the slots are too small for the instruments; the grid and rigging are not large enough -- there is not adequate space above the grid. At some points overhead, you can't

hang through the catwalk and/or the lights. "The rigging in the house is as rough to use as in any house that I know of." The space for lighting equipment is tight. Its placement above has not been worked out too well.

The next speaker was Mr. John Rothgeb. Mr. Rothgeb described the new Theatre Room recently opened by the Department of Theatre at the University of Texas. In his opening comments, he pointed out four reasons for interest in this building:

1. Not too many people have seen it.
2. The clients were their own consultants.
3. No particular code problems were faced in planning the building.
4. It is not a theatre in the usual sense.

Rothgeb then described and illustrated the movable floor modules of the performance area. He showed photographs which depicted the method by which these floor modules could be raised or lowered. He also distributed copies of the architect's drawings which show several plan views of the structure. The performance space or room is located at the center of the building, and workshops and other facilities surround this room.

Rothgeb noted that the Department of Drama at the University of Texas did not produce all of its work in the new space. He then described a beautifully equipped workshop and also showed photographs of tool bins, paint wagons, and other built-in equipment.

The next speaker was Melvin White, of Brooklyn College. Mr. White noted that architects, clients and consultants should always look at the theatre planning process with the eyes of an audience member. He stated that we need to "put ourselves in their place when we provide for them." He stated that he had seen a number of new theatres in the recent past and that in almost every case the audience has been somewhat neglected, particularly when it comes to lounges and lavatory facilities.

Mr. White concluded by saying that we need to look at the theatre plants that really work.

The final speaker of the afternoon was Mr. Gilbert Hemsley, stage manager of the McCarter Theatre at Princeton University. Mr. Hemsley described the production program at Princeton and the way that he handles the large variety of different producing groups that use that theatre. He showed a number of colored slides illustrating a number of the possible stage configurations that he and his crew deal with. These include provision for a permanent Shakespearean stage, various concert setups, and dance setup, and others.

He then described the working schedule with which he and his crew work. They sometimes handle as many as seven or eight different performing groups a week. This large number can be efficiently handled due to extraordinarily good advance planning and efficient operation. This was in every sense a multi-purpose operation which appears to be singularly successful.

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