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THE VIVIAN BEAUMONT THEATRE TOUR

The first event the USITT sponsored for the approaching winter season was a tour of the Vivian Beaumont Theatre. The new Met was preparing for its opening that week and it was the first time that one could view the entire Lincoln Center plaza without boards. The large Chagall and Dufy murals revealed through the glass facade of the Met gave the only color to the vista, and one looked in expectation for a swarm of pigeons to interrupt the architectural complacency of all those creamy columns of travertine. But there is no clock tower to awaken the grey birds, and one walked on in the silence. The Repertory Theatre, recumbent behind the green lighted trees, purred a warmer welcome. Once inside, those carmine covered floors (which are persistantly typical of all the Center's buildings), jarred this ambulatory serenity loose, and the viewer moved into the auditorium with some expectancy. The bronze-black fins which radiate the ceiling and surround the room generated a feeling of turbine-like action, and indeed the building is a machine for theatre.

We were introduced to Jose Sevilla, the Technical Director of the Repertory Company, who lead the group of thirty throughout the structure with knowledgeable discussion and a perceptive wit concerning the many problems confronting the technician in that building. He first showed off the lighting control system which is a "C-Card" system with 180 dimmers. Some alteration has been made to the system to incorporate six manual submasters which operate independant from the preset. Any circuit can be switched into these submasters which allow for constant areas of light, such as the cyc, that do not have to change during each cue change on the preset fader. The number of cues varied last year from 60 to about 200 for the various productions.

There are 668 circuits available throughout the building connected to a

total of 647 lighting instruments by means of an immense patch panel. With the exception of 6 eight-inch Fresnels used as front stage work lights, every spotlight in the theatre is either a six- or eight-inch ellipsoidal spotlight. Striplights and floodlights are used only for lighting the high cyclorama now being installed. There are six 5KW. incandescent follow spots located in two booths in the back of the house. There are three rings of light hanging positions in the false ceiling of the house, and a horizontal slot at the very back of the auditorium in addition to two slots directly over the thrust stage down lights. Vertical side slots reach from the floor to the ceiling so that there is no lack of space for front lighting. Continuous catwalks make focusing relatively easy, but those afore mentioned ceiling fins offer unwanted obstructions to proper instrument placement. In addition to the usual onstage light pipes there are now being installed circular pipes that are rigged around the cyclorama and hung with short sections of strips for cyc-lighting.

The auditorium surrounds the thrust stage in semicircular fashion, and the steep angle of the seats gives a feeling of intimacy to the viewing. The front three rows of seats around the thrust stage and the thrust itself can be dropped on a lift to provide for an orchestra pit, and by means of a revolve below can be shifted to a seating arrangement for proscenium presentations. There are large plugs that roll through the two vomitories to provide still more seats when the front thrust is not used. The orchestra pit lift can operate separately from the seating lift. Seven large metal panels can completely seal off the proscenium or provide for any variety of opening up to 34 feet high and 56 feet wide. The center five panels are remotely controlled and can be preset as to height and speed of operation. The two side panels are motorized but not presetable. There is also an asbestos fire curtain, and there had been a fabric house curtain, but this has been removed, since it is anticipated that all the shows this season will play in front of the proscenium opening and it is felt that a curtain separates the thrust from the rest of the stage. The variable front panels of the proscenium are also felt to be restricting to the total visual effect, and due to their tendency to jam while operating, they are usually positioned for a given production and left stationary.

The stage itself has a 36-foot diameter turntable installed to the front edge of the proscenium and a 46-foot diameter ring table which can operate separately or together with the central table. The turntables ride on hard polyurethane tires mounted on steel wheels and tracks. The cable operated tables are variable speed and can be preset for position. The center table contains 8 electrical circuits. In addition to the turntables there is a self-propelled stage wagon that is stored up center and can travel downstage at the rate of 5 feet per second. There are 60 counterweighted battens, each 50 feet long but with extensions that can add an additional 20 feet. Surrounding these battens are four curved steel pipes that provide for the full cloth cyclorama, 45 feet tall, and a blue-grey scrim cyc in front of this as well as the two light pipes front and rear of these. The cyc battens do not interfere with the other battens. The counterweight system is off to one side and must be loaded at the stage floor level. A portable winch pulls the carriages down to the floor for loading. The stage area is 70 feet deep and at the rear, thirty feet off the floor, there is a booth for rear scenic projection.

The sound system comprises two stereo tape decks with 11 speaker channels with four grand masters for mixing. It had been anticipated that sound sources located throughout the theatre could be interchangeably used to vary direction and to create stereo effects, but the speakers are not well

matched acoustically and any switching is noticeable.

In the basement area the theatre maintains a very small shop used only for repairs, as it is believed to be more economical to have the scenery built by outside shops since there are only four new shows produced each year. In addition to the shop there are twenty 2-person dressing rooms and four large chorus dressing rooms, two of which are used by the ushers and the maintenance men. Also downstairs is a small theatre area, called the Forum, seating 299 which is used for producing experimental works and is classified as an Off-Broadway room for public assembly. It contains no permanent lighting or sound equipment and has no stage facilities other than a small plaster cyc. A simple thrust stage extends into the auditorium.

The group returned to the main auditorium where it asked a few more questions of the Technical Director and the Designer. The general feeling concerning the hall by these two was that the theatre was not very good for proscenium presentations, and that the scale of the stage in relation to the auditorium seemed awkward and cumbersome. Technical alterations were almost continuous, and there are many more planned. After the discussion the dedicated gathering of theatre watchers disbanded leaving the Vivian Beaumont humming softly to herself.

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THEATRES IN THE NEWS: WASHINGTON, D.C.

The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts is under construction in our nation's Capital. The structure, designed by Edward Durell Stone, should be open to the public by mid 1969, and will contain at least four facilities for performances. The largest, will be The Concert Hall, a 2700 seat house designed with acoustics as the vital element of concern. The architect has also made it possible to effect a more intimate atmosphere for the presentation of chamber music. The Opera, seating 2200, will be the central hall of the Center. Its stage will measure 65 feet in width by 100 feet in depth, with a special floor for ballet. It will have two side work areas and a back work area in a total of 8640 square feet. The Theatre will seat 1100 and will be used for plays and musicals. The orchestra pit, accomodating up to 40 musicians, will be convertable to an addition to the stage or to additional seating.

Perhaps the most unique facility of the Center will be the Studio Playhouse on the roof terrace level above the Theatre. It will have a capacity of 510 and accommodations for almost all of the performing arts. The Playhouse will have a regular proscenium arch, the side sections of which will be retractable so that a regulation wide-angle movie screen can be installed. A 15 foot deep forestage will be convertable into an orchestra pit for up to 36 musicians. The Playhouse will also be used for theatre-in-the-round by having part of the stage and roughly half the seats on a turntable, 56 feet in diameter, which will rotate 180 degrees so that the audiences will face each other.

MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN

The Fine Arts Center on the Kenwood campus of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee continues to grow. The first section of the center was dedicated

to music in 1963, and consisted of a 303 seat recital hall, a rehearsal hall, 20 studios, 34 practice rooms, 3 general classrooms and 3 lecture halls. The latest complex being constructed to the south of the music building will include a 350 seat lecture auditorium for art survey courses and cinema; a complete theatre seating 600 and providing rehearsal and study areas for drama, the dance and allied arts, and a four story building for the arts and crafts. The center was designed by John J. Flad & Associates of Madison. David Hays was the consulting designer on the project.

The Stage of the theatre is designed for both proscenium and thrust stage presentations. The area in front of the proscenium arch contains four hydraulically controlled sections which can extend the stage apron into the auditorium. When a thrust production is being performed, part of the proscenium arch is blocked by moving walls that slide away during a proscenium production.

KINGSTON, RHODE ISLAND

The first four units of a twelve-building Fine-Arts center at the University of Rhode Island opened recently in Kingston. The new buildings contain a 600-seat recital hall, two large studios for painting and sculpture and a multiple music facility for practice, teaching and office space. The Center will eventually include an 800-seat main theatre with a combined proscenium and thrust stage, and a 200-seat studio theatre. Jo Mielziner has been retained as consultant on the theatres.

Lester Millman of Millman & Sturges, Providence, said that in such a center, separate buildings are more efficient than one large one because the correct area and ceiling height can be designed to suit each activity. According to Mr. Millman, some university theatres have become so highly mechanical that they are merely training students which buttons to push. He hopes that his theatre will provide a learning area for the more basic and fundamental mechanics of the theatre.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

The restored Ford's Theatre in Washington is to be dedicated next April 14, the 102nd. anniversary of Lincoln's assassination there. Sixteen plays will be presented in the 600-seat theatre including "Our American Cousin", the last play to be seen by President Lincoln. He was assassinated during Act III, Scene 2. A reproduction of that scene is being designed by Sointu Syrjala. He is also designing the stage rigging. The restoration of the theatre to its original state was authorized by Congress and it will contain a Lincolnia museum, where a documentary on the significance of the theatre will be shown. Architects participating in the reconversion are William M. Haussmann, Charles W. Lessig and the Firm of Macomber and Peter.

BOCA RATON, FLORIDA

The Florida Atlantic University is proposing to do something that has never before been attempted: to create on the campus an exact reproduction of the Theatre of Dionysus at Athens as it was in 435 B.C. when the plays of Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides and Aristophanes were presented. The theatre, which will seat 1,800, was designed by Clinton Gamble, who used specifications taken from scholarly research done at the University and checked at the American Academy in Athens. The theatre will be used to house Greek Theatre Festivals at the University.

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

Theatre Atlanta, the oldest continuing theatre group in Atlanta, Georgia, opens the doors to its million dollar Repertory Theatre on October 26. The theatre contains a 775-seat auditorium, a 130 foot wing to wing, 68-foot thrust stage, a triple tier enclosed parking garage, a gourmet restaurant and cocktail lounge, as well as spacious rehearsal areas, set and costume shops, dressing rooms, green room, office for staff and classrooms. USITT members associated with the new building are Jay Broad and Vincent Piacentini.

NEW YORK

The Ziegfeld Theatre, one of New York City's most famous playhouses, will be demolished in a few weeks to make way for a 50-story office building unless John-Peter Hayden Jr. and his newly formed Ziegfeld Guild can prevent it by having the Landmarks Preservation Commission designate the famous playhouse a landmark. The theatre, which was built in 1927 for Florenz Ziegfeld with funds raised by William Randolph Hearst, was designed by Joseph Urban and is considered to be one of the best maintained legitimate houses in New York. It is unique as a legitimate theatre house in that everyone of the 1638 seats is within full view and sound of the stage.

NEW YORK

The Old Met Opera House Corporation started a campaign to raise \$10-million to save the old building on Broadway and 39th. Street. The Corporation said that the fund drive seeks \$8-million to buy the property and \$2-million to get it in working order. The trustees of the corporation are prepared to rename the Old Met building in the name of the major donor. It is believed that the old house could be put on a paying basis for at least 30 weeks a year by leasing the building to outside producing units. One such organization is the Vienna State Opera, one of the world's leading companies. In the meantime, the sidewalk shed, a metal framework protecting pedestrians during demolition, is being extended around the empty, dark shell of the old Met.

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MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

Harold Burris-Meyer has become the first regional director of ANTA for Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina. As such, he will aid in organizing and developing local support for the arts and will supply technical information on the theatre. Mr. Burris-Meyer was also selected recently to be one of the designers of the \$25 million civic center in Birmingham, Alabama.

Rudy Kuntner made the Sept. 19th issue of Newsweek where he was shown fondly admiring some of the 3,190 switches used to control the 3 million watts of power available for the new Metropolitan Opera stage lighting. His was one of many full color pictures used to publicize the opening of the new Met. Other notable full color spreads were found in the September issue of Architectural Record and number 2 issue volume 31 of the Opera News.

Carol Hoover, whose adventures last April were described in the last News-

letter, has recuperated enough to fly off to Taiwan, Republic of China, where she will do nothing but concentrate on walking practice with the cane and eventually without it. Since normal walking is a prerequisite for returning to her theatrical lighting work, she will stay in Taiwan until she can throw away the cane (at least two months) and plans to return via Europe to the U.S. at the end of the year. She looks forward to walking around to see everyone.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

A letter to the Editor was received round about from its actual recipient, and since it has such a simple moral I will reproduce it in its entirety:

Stage Decoration and Supply Co.
Greensboro, N.C.
Attention: Mr. W. R. Taylor, Jr.

Dear Mr. Taylor,

I just finished reading the latest USITT Newsletter and happened to notice your company named as a contributor. I always enjoy the newsletter because it makes me aware of things. I should like to thank you for your contribution. Furthermore I think it only fitting that I should do business with you. But I don't know what you handle. Please mail your catalogue so that I may throw some business your way.

Thanking you I am,
Larry Riddle,
Designer-T.D.
Little Theatre of Jacksonville, Fla.

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SEVENTH ANNUAL USITT CONFERENCE

The Seventh Annual conference of the U.S.I.T.T. will be held in New York City commencing the evening of Wednesday, May 31st, with cocktails! and registration, and continuing on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, June 1, 2,3. Location and date of the Conference have been fixed so as to be in conjunction with the Twelfth Congress of the International Theatre Institute meeting in New York the following week. Mark your calendars now!

The program will cover the general topics of Stage Design, Theatre Architecture, Construction, Engineering and Administration. Panel and discussion programs will be held in significant theatre and auditorium facilities in the New York area. Further information may be obtained by writing: USITT CONFERENCE, 245 West 52nd. St., New York, N.Y. 10019.

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ATTENTION:

Note to members: If you don't always receive your USITT mail as soon as you

think you should, maybe it's because you haven't listed your ZIP Number. The Post Office is depending more and more on these little numbers particularly for third class mail, so see to it that your address includes it.

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BIOGRAPHIES

Each issue of the Newsletter features short biographies of members of the Board of Directors with the intention of increasing organizational unity through mutual interests. The four members noted in this issue are all concerned with stage lighting in one form or another.

J. HANS KLUGE, one of the organizers of the Toronto Section of the Institute, resides in the industrious city to our north where he serves as Vice-president and General Manager of Ward Leonard of Canada, Ltd. But Mr. Kluge is not Canadian by birth, being born in the town of Kladno, which, if you check your maps, is near Prague, Czechoslovakia. This is only a short distance from Vienna, where Hans attended the University of Vienna, studying Dentistry and Electrical Engineering. The latter field certainly lead him to his specialty instage lighting and control, and perhaps the dentistry comes in handy when working at his hobby of model railroading. In addition to the USITT Mr. Kluge is also a member of the boards of the Canadian Opera Company, and the Canadian Crest Players, two organizations which keep him active in the promotion of opera and theatre. Hans and his wife, Maria, have two children, Clara and Florian.

Another Canadian, WALLACE A. RUSSELL, unlike Mr. Kluge, was born, raised and educated in Toronto. It might be said of Wally that he is a home town boy who has made good, since after graduating from the University of Toronto with a degree in Math and Physics he joined the Canadian Opera Company as Stage Manager and then became its Technical Director, a position he still holds. Since 1963 Mr. Russell has also taken on the duties of Production Director of the National Ballet of Canada. Both of these organizations operate out of Toronto. Wally was the other member of the Institute along with Hans Kluge that worked to set up a special section of the Institute, and it was Mr. Russell's persistence and competence that secured the first such sectional membership group in our history. He is also a member of the Faculty of Music, University of Toronto, where he teaches courses in Stage Lighting and Technical Production. Wally lists no hobbies, and small wonder, since in addition to his other three positions he also served as Consultant to more than a dozen theatres located throughout Canada, including the National Arts Center in Ottawa, York University in Toronto and the Canadian Pavilion, EXPO 67 in Montreal. Mr. Russell lives in Toronto with his wife, Molly, and their children Brian, Glen, and Jennifer.

NATHAN J. ("SONNY") SONNENFELD is a native New Yorker who attended De Witt High School, Cooper Union, City College and N.Y.U. and currently resides on the west side with his wife, Irene ("Kelly"), and their son, Barry, who they steadily expose to the Theatre. This exposure of children to the theatre is necessary, Mr. Sonnenfeld believes, if the theatre is going to grow in general attendance. Mr. Sonnenfeld, who studied Engineering and Business Administration while at college, is Vice-president and Sales Manager of Lighting and Electronics, Inc., a firm recently relocated to Yonkers, N.Y. Prior to this position, Mr. Sonnenfeld was the N.Y. Sales Manager for Century Lighting during the years 1945-1962. His first job is listed as Combat Infantryman in the 1st. Battalion of the 163rd Infantry,

41st. Division. He served the entirety of World War II, during which time he earned the Silver Star. In addition to his active participation on the Engineering Committee of USITT, Sonny finds time to serve on the Building Committee of the Temple Beth Shalom. Mr. Sonnenfeld feels that while there are many people who go to the theatre there is only a small percentage of the nation in attendance, and if we as an organization are going to help to increase this growth of attendance, USITT must grow, and grow faster.

MARVIN GELMAN is another native New Yorker in the Institute who has never strayed far from home except for a stint in the U. S. Navy. He attended N.Y.U. and Columbia, studying Lighting and design. Mr. Gelman started his theatrical career as a lighting director and designer, and served in this capacity for many theatrical, commercial and industrial shows. In 1950 he joined N.B.C.-T.V. in New York where he was a lighting director until 1958. Since that time Mr. Gelman has organized his own consultant firm, Lighting Services, Inc., of which he is the President. Marvin commutes to the city from his home in Westport, Connecticut, where he enjoys the company of his wife, Barbara, and their two children, Daniel Harris, and Gretchen Deborah. He is very active in all sports activities and lists as his civic activity membership in the Presidents Club. Mr. Gelman has been a consistently active member of the Executive Committee of the USITT as well as the Engineering Committee.

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SIMON'S DIRECTORY OF THEATRICAL MATERIALS, SERVICES AND INFORMATION, 3rd Edition. Bernard Simon, Ed.; New York; Package Publicity Service, Inc.; 1966: pp. 240. \$3.60.

This latest edition of Bernard Simon's unique telephone book for the theatrical trade has been greatly expanded to include everything from Actors Agents to Zip Codes in its guide listing to the theatrical market place. As a where-to-find-it book for the whole gamut of theatrical supplies and materials anywhere in the north american continent it is certainly without peer. Everyone who is concerned with any aspect of theatrical production will find this a most valuable manual.

In addition, scholars, researchers and educators might peek inside this handy volume, as much of the expansion of pages has been taken up with lists of new theatres built or started since 1964, recipients of performing arts grants, films and film strips on theatre arts, periodicals, museums and libraries, as well as book stores who specialize in theatrical materials. In addition, lists for schools, unions, professional and non-professional organizations, conventions and conferences are included as well as a section on the Government and the Arts which lists the various Arts councils at all levels. Mr. Simon should be congratulated on his job as compiler.

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THE NEW METROPOLITAN: QUOTES FROM THE TIMES
ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

It was disconcerting in Antony and Cleopatra to find Zeffirelli fooling around with the most obvious and even cheapest kind of expressionistic devices.... Nothing fused, and the stage looked like a pipe-fitting factory rushing to fill a heavy order.... Harold Schonberg

LA TRAVIATA

The Act One setting is sumptuous, as befits the quarters of the most talented courtesan of the day.... The second act was all pastels, with flowers, a rustic house and a background of mountains and valleys. The Ballroom scene had a grand staircase only somewhat smaller than the one on the Paris Opera. But the last act saw Mr. Beaton going symbolic. It was Grand Guignol, inspired by Charles Addams. Cobwebs hung from the ceiling, and the very walls seemed rotting away. Everybody got the idea of decay.... Harold Schonberg

DIE FRAU OHNE SCHATTEN

The Metropolitan's new production of Richard Strauss's Die Frau ohne Schatten is the most elaborate production ever put on by the company.... the company that goes back to 1883. Everything is used. Sets come forward and went back; sets rose into the air or descended into the bowels of the earth. There was smoke; there was a fountain; they are still playing with their new toy, and one can get dizzy. But everything worked, and when I say worked I do not only mean mechanically. Robert O'Hearns sets and costumes, and Nathaniel Merrill's staging were a unity, and a more lavish approach to the stage has not been seen in our time.... Harold C. Schonberg.

TURANDOT

Turandot has been one of the Met's handsome productions.... The production held its own easily in its new surroundings.... The shabbiness that quickly set in on pre-1966 Met productions because of their constant exposure to the elements was more apparent than it used to be.... The excellent lighting at the new house is wonderful for defining action onstage, but it also shows up all the wrinkles in the backdrops.... When the full flood was beamed on it lit up the front of the house almost as brightly as the house lights do.... Raymond Erickson.

LINCOLN CENTER

With a totally new esthetic and technology, the 20th century is making dramatic contributions to the history of the art of building. But not here. The only place one senses the possibilities is standing in front of the Vivian Beaumont Theatre, a design of strong, structural good looks that offers, with its fronting pool and Henry Moore sculpture, the only honestly contemporary vista in the place.... Ada Louise Huxtable

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THIS NEWSLETTER POSSIBLE DUE TO THE GENEROSITY OF THE FOLLOWING
SUSTAINING MEMBERS:

Architects and Engineers

Harrison & Abramovitz

Ebner-Schmidt Associates

Manufacturers

Automatic Devices Co.

Century Lighting, Inc.

J. R. Clancy, Inc.

Janson Industries

Kliegl Brothers Lighting

Lighting and Electronics, Inc.

Little Stage Lighting Co.

Major Equipment Co.

Stage Decoration and Supply

Sylvania Electric Products, Inc.

Techlite Corp.

Tiffin Scenic Studios, Inc.

Ward Leonard Electric Co.