

## NEW YORK THEATRE ADMINISTRATION CURRICULA - T. Bruce Birkenhead

Fully aware of the lack of information and communication concerning academic programs which deal with theatre and/or arts administration, The USITT brought together interested representatives from some of the colleges and universities in the NYC area on February 2, 1967. Two of the representative are able to boast existing courses of study, while the remainder either have plans under way, or came as interested individuals.

Columbia University and New York University are the two campuses which actually claim programs in theatre administration. Columbia's is only four months old, and is apparently a pilot project. Theatre administration is part of an overall arts program, with plans for other administrative areas to be explored in the future. The student works towards an MFA, and, at present, there are only two students enrolled in the project. Current "courses" are not of the usual semester type. Rather, three or four projects in separate areas of interest may be given to the student within the framework of the usual semester. Regular courses will be instituted next year, and the possible use of existing courses or material in the business school is being explored.

If the above sounds a little vague, it is only because we haven't addressed ourselves to the NYU program. Here, one encounters a minimum existing structure. Whereas Prof. Beckerman could speak of courses in some form at Columbia, and the Columbia program is geared to the eventual awarding of the MFA degree, Prof. Hoffman of NYU stressed the "non-program" of his university. When asked if the program is a degree-producing one, he replied that the course of study may lead to an MFA. Although 18 credits of academic work are required of the approximately ten students involved, the project approach of "doing" appears to be the goal, if not the realization, of the program. Given this, the students, themselves see great benefit in the possible development of a theatre which could serve as a realistic hot-house for producing theatre administrators.

The representatives of Hofstra University, and Hunter and Queens Colleges indicated that no plans exist at this time to develop or institute theatre or arts administration programs. Acting as a representative of some of the thinking being done at Brooklyn College, I was able to indicate that interest has been expressed in both the Department of Economics and the department of Speech and Theatre in a degree producing graduate program in arts administration. To the extent that the plans become a reality, maximum use would be made of existing courses and personnel. At Brooklyn College most of the "think" work is being done by Mr. Langley of Speech and Theatre.

The exchange of information was the beginning of a general discussion concerning the validity of academic programs in theatre administration, and the possible need to separate long-run programs from short-run projects aimed at filling existing (really past) deficiencies. The typical graduate program is obviously not suited to turning out administrators, or individuals for middle management positions, who will fill positions currently vacant. But, both Dom Degaetani and Ted Hoffman noted that this does not prevent universities from establishing separate institutions to deal with the question of short run programs.

As can be expected, the Ford Foundation's Administrative Internship program was cited in the discussion. Recognizing the excellent record of the program, criticism was voiced at the tendency for interns to be employed at lower level tasks by some of the participating arts organizations, with little or no opportunity afforded the interns to participate in decision making. The extreme short-run approach is represented by the course given under the auspices of the Musical Arena Theatre Association. There was general agreement that, given the limited objectives of the course, the equipping of fairly knowledgeable individuals with the tools necessary for middle management positions, the course is a good one.

The gathering was a "first." More informal contacts of this sort will follow. And future contact should prove to be more fruitful. Those engaging in new programs can only benefit from knowledge of the strong points and the weak points, the successes and the failures of existing programs. And knowledge is best shared through personal contact.

Before the New York oriented nature of the meeting is criticised, one must bear in mind that the Institute could not undertake a costly gathering on a regional, let alone national basis. In fact, I believe that local gatherings like the one undertaken in New York will be most valuable. They will not only bring together colleges and universities with at least similar problems, and serving the same area, but the meetings themselves will put more life into the Committee on Administration across the country. It is strongly urged that members try to organize similar symposiums in their areas. Whether programs exist on the campuses in your area is not important. The presence of faculty members interested in exploring the possibility of establishing theatre administration programs is all that is necessary.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY - Compiled by Esther Berger, Brooklyn College, New York.

BOOKS

Lutz, Edward O. and Herman, William, "Audit of a Summer Stock Theatre," Chapter 35, ENCYCLOPEDIA OF AUDITING TECHNIQUES, Prentice Hall. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey. pp. 1392-1419

A detailed report on the peculiarities of auditing and accounting used in summer stock operations, all based on an illustration relating to the Midwest Music Theatre, Inc.

NEWSPAPERS

"Milw. Repertory Drive's 87G of 129G Goal; Draw at 1st. 11 Wks. 9% Higher," VARIETY (January 18, 1967), Vol. 245, No. 9:67.

This fund drive will end this spring when the theatre will join with several other Milwaukee fine arts groups in a United Performing Arts fund drive. (162)

"See Fantasticks' On Level of Title In Road-Show B.O.," VARIETY (January 18, 1967), Vol. 245, No. 9:67.

The 'Fantasticks' will bypass Phila, and Boston on tour of most major stands because of unions (musicians locals) insistence that the show use a full complement of 20 tooters. (163)

"Bev Hills Group Sets Workshop," VARIETY (January 18, 1967), Vol. 245, No. 9:67.

Actors' Theatre will set up an experimental theatre workshop to try out new plays. Also being formed in conjunction with the group is a committee of theatre-minded citizens to set up a subscriptions organization as well as to collect funds. (164)

"MacPunch & Judy 'MacBird' to Try B.O. Stance in MacBad Taste," VARIETY (January 18, 1967), Vol. 245, No. 9:67 & 72.

The controversial, political parody of Macbeth will be produced by impresarios Julia Curtis and David Dretzin. The play is viewed as a "potentially great money maker," despite predictions of "Establishment harassment." (165)

"Paris Theatre 100G," VARIETY (January 18, 1967), Vol 245, No. 9:70.

\$100,00 was voted for the creation of a popular priced permanent theatre company, (166)

"IATSE-ACT Pact Averts Threatened No-Go for Frisco Repertory Group," VARIETY (January 18, 1967), Vol. 245, No. 9:71 & 74.

"The American Conservatory Theatre signed far-reaching precedental agreements with the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees." (167)

"Costs & Critics: Frisco Vs. N.Y.," VARIETY (January 25, 1967), Vol. 245, No. 10:65.

A rising deficit may cause San Francisco's Opera to raise the ticket prices next season. Kurt Adler, general manager, said, "But I'd rather try new ways of raising money first." He has found that visitors to S. F. don't mind paying higher prices as do season patrons. (168)

"Actors and Managers Clubs Seem A Diehard Side-'Bar' to Show Biz," VARIETY (January 25, 1967), Vol 245, No. 10: 61&65.

"Rising costs and an apathy among young thespians have not done the London show biz club scene a power of good. But there are still a few who aim to keep up the standard of club life." (169)

"Solon to Submit Draft for New Law Aimed At Aiding Theatres in Spain," VARIETY (January 25, 1967), Vol. 245, No. 10:61.

The director general of cinema and theatre has submitted the draft of a comprehensive new law to improve theatrical facilities and production in Spain through government funds. (170)

"British Gov't May Share Edinburgh Center Cost," VARIETY (January 24, 1967), Vol. 245, No. 10:61.

"The British government has agreed to consider sharing the cost of redeveloping the Lyceum Theatre and Synod Hall site for the proposed new cultural center," (171)

"Plan 'Stephen D ' For Next Season; Buy Quaker Site," VARIETY (January 25, 1967), Vol. 245, No. 10:61.

- Thoughts of making the Old Friends Meeting House on East 20th. St., New York, into a theatre have been thwarted by agreement among all the Gramercy Park property owners. (173)

"N.Y.'s Show-Minded Mayor," VARIETY (February 1, 1967), Vol. 245, No. 11:71.

The need for public conveyance to New York's theatre district has been recognized by Mayor Lindsay. Starting March 29, buses will run from Times Square to the East Side (across 57th. St. and up to 96th St.) for a nominal fee of 30¢ each way. (174)

"Buffalo Drama Center Project of Pfeifer (Variety Vet) Foundation," VARIETY (February 1, 1967), Vol 245, No. 11:72.

A plan to establish and maintain a Center for Drama at the University of Buffalo has been filed with the New York Secretary of State. (176)