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DRAFT

THE PERFORMING ARTS AT BENNINGTON

A statement of policy, curriculum and development,
particularly referent to space requirements and
the construction of a Performing Arts building.

The following report of policy and projection of the Performing Arts Divisions at Bennington College is in five sections.

1. A basic policy statement adopted by the Performing Arts Committee of the Faculty in 1965. (pages 1 - 4)
2. A review of the philosophy and curriculum of the Dance Division, problems and prospects, and a general description of space needs. (pages 5 - 11)
3. A position statement from the Drama Division describing the fresh purpose, the new curriculum and the space needs related to the program. (pages 12 - 18)
4. A review of the purpose and curriculum of the Music Division, suggestions for the future, and a limited description of space needs. (pages 19 - 23)
5. A brief statement of approach to architectural and site problems related to a new Performing Arts Building, followed by a moderately detailed listing of space needs in the order: Dance, Drama, Music, and Shared Space. (pages 24 - 26)
6. Addenda (page 32)

The Performing Arts at Bennington:

Dance, drama, and music have been powerful forces in the brief history of Bennington College. Their inclusion as legitimate areas of major concentration within a liberal arts curriculum drew early attention to the enlightened educational philosophy of the original planners. Over the years groups of touring student performers have been enthusiastically received by a wide and varied public; their programs have reflected the invention, rigor and confidence with which Bennington approaches these arts. Graduates in these fields remain remarkably committed as participants in community groups, as teachers, and in some instances as national figures of creative importance. The campus itself is always stirring with some new performance project.

This show of vitality may be due in part to the burgeoning promotion of the arts throughout the country, though it would appear that Bennington has given more than it has received. There is reason to expect that an expansion of the college will insure its making an even larger contribution to the substance of these fields as well as to their uses in the liberal education.

The conditions which have given strength to these performing arts at Bennington are several:

1. Faculty members are professional artists. Their mastery and freshness guarantee authenticity and contemporaneity in a measure quite beyond the common collegiate practice.
2. The classroom is a laboratory. Here the student learns the substance of what it means to be an artist, accepting the responsibility of search, demonstration, and criticism.

3. The modes of participation are contemporary. This commitment gives firm evidence of a belief in the art of the present. It demands the confronting of untested means and materials, and it proves to be the most viable way to gain an understanding of the art of other cultures and other times.

4. Students are expected to develop personal value judgments. The Bennington curriculum is distinctive in fostering initiative while emphasizing the basic demands of disciplined craftsmanship.

For the performing arts at Bennington to continue to possess urgency and reward, practice and planning must remain subject to the implications of these four conditions.

In the appointment of faculty a flexibility must be maintained so that timely securing of persons who are exploring new materials, idioms, and methods is possible; it is important that the environment be kept lively with the interplay of differing opinion, precise but not precious, daring but not divisive, authentic but not authoritarian.

For the performing arts to realize fully the classroom as laboratory and to keep process and materials up to date more suitable space and equipment are immediately necessary, and this whether the college expands or not. Indeed this need has admittedly been a pressing one for more than a score of years.

To what extent new facilities should be centralized, coordinated, or shared is a matter for discussion. Though guided by similar assumptions and willing to collaborate when significant reason for collaboration exists, the Divisions of dance, drama, and music should not submit to any artificial integration. (The tendency of late to speak of these three arts under the

unified heading of "performing arts" seems too often a stratagem for saving space, or for tightening administration.) Customary approaches to space planning and coordination will not suffice at Bennington. For example: in most institutions an auditorium (theatre, stage, hall) exists for the occasional public display which is minimally essential to the educational purpose. The performing arts as practiced at Bennington however are in a sense continually on stage so that facilities are not for occasions, but are the daily need and domain. If our teachers and students are to function in the forefront of artistic development the nature of space in which the three arts can best test new ideas will probably be different in size, shape, lighting, and (certainly for music) in acoustical properties. Wise assessment will of course be necessary to make certain that what is expansive is not pretentious, and that what is instrumental is not gadgetry.

The performing arts in and of themselves possess no mystic defence against the humdrum, the false, and the inhumane. Educational practices which encourage irresponsible imitation are as destructive of the arts as of other fields of endeavor. Bennington has been notably successful in devising curricula which widen the vision, engage the imagination, and test the attention and integrity of the student. These curricula try to make of the performing arts truly humane studies which can give meaning to each critical, though fumbling, effort and can also lay an incontrovertible base for possible future professional activity. The widening number of institutions which adopt our assumptions and borrow our practices attests to the strength of our program.

Bennington College historically has assumed a unique and responsible position on the value and condition of the performing arts in society and especially in the education of the person. This responsibility must continue to be met.

September 30, 1965

The Performing Arts Committee

Bill Bales
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THE DANCE DIVISION

INTRODUCTION

In 1932 Bennington College made an historical innovation in liberal arts education when it included dance as a basic field of study. In the ensuing years the Dance Department has achieved a distinguished reputation among educators, dancers and critics for its outstanding work. A recent article in Dance Magazine, probing the question of "College or Career for Dancers? Bennington's Answer," describes Bennington as a college "...where some of the best dancing to be seen in America is being taught and performed."

More rewarding to the dance faculty is the knowledge gained from a recent survey of dance graduates, majors and "minors" since 1932. Over half are still continuing work in dance.

The faculty, anxious to sustain the quality of its work in an expanding college, has restudied its curriculum, concluding that the present approach to dance is germane to the liberal arts objectives of Bennington College. But development in new directions must be undertaken in order to explore changing philosophic and aesthetic values. Advantage must also be taken of new technological practices.

Questions have also been raised because of the emerging importance of the performing arts in the national scene. Are new challenges of leadership being imposed upon established performers and educators? Does Bennington College have a role in the future developments of the arts that extends beyond the limits of the college community?

THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

The weekly Dance Workshop, a choreography work-in-progress session, is the focal point of study at Bennington College. Here the first attempt of an elementary student, the finished work of a dance major, and works-in-progress by faculty are shown for diversified criticism. The workshop idea demonstrates the importance given to practice in performance and it is the unique conceptual basis upon which the dance curriculum is structured. All dance study is designed to enable the student to function in workshop activities to her fullest capacity as performer, director or choreographer. Her only limitations are her individual ability and her time, for a Bennington dancer pursues other disciplines in acquiring a rounded liberal arts education.

Dances successfully completed through the weekly sessions are selected for public performance. The dances are polished and mounted with as near a professional performance as the particular student group can give. Faculty works danced by undergraduates may also be included in the program. These public performances are viewed as the climax of the term's work, but the substance of the Dance Workshop is to be found in the weekly sessions of performance and criticism. (For many years the Fall Workshop has been presented in New York under the sponsorship of the YW-YMHA at Kaufmann Hall.) In alternate years during the Non-Resident Term a selected group of dancers further complement their curricular experience by presenting programs throughout the eastern section of the nation. Such a group may present as many as forty programs in schools, colleges, and other institutions.

BASIC COURSES

Preparatory work for Dance Workshop is taught in graded composition classes where the student explores the communicative elements of movement. She studies traditional forms, group choreography and learns the craft of dance structure. As her studies advance, the student develops her ability to use these resources expres-

sively and to work independently.

Graded technical classes in modern dance are offered daily, and in ballet technique four times a week.

A basic theory course, Structure and Style, underlies all other work in dance. This course introduces the student to the field from philosophic and historic view points. Dance is studied as ritual, social activity, spectacle and entertainment. Critical work is done through both reading and writing of papers and practical movement problems.

The educated dancer must be knowledgeable in the total production process. For this purpose classes in Dance Notation, Music for Dance, Stagecraft, Design and Acting technique are required, and for the dance major practice teaching is a required experience also.

It is important to point out that courses in the dance curriculum are open to all students whether they plan to major in dance or not.

For the non-major the dance faculty believes that the curriculum serves the following objectives:

- a. to educate an enlightened amateur in the field.
- b. to educate an enlightened dance audience.
- c. to provide educational disciplines that are acquired from the practice of movement as a communicative theatre art. These are especially useful to students in the related performing arts of drama and music.

SPECIAL STUDENTS

To enlarge the scope of creative work in dance, four fellowships are presently offered to men. These special students are chosen for their ability as dancers and their potential for making use of Bennington's educational opportunities. When their academic work is certified, they may be enrolled as regular students working for a degree.

There is also a Master's program in dance for a limited number of students with requisite qualifications.

PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

For years, the dance division at Bennington College has lacked adequate classroom and studio space. Since 1932 when the trustees decided to open the college in buildings hastily converted from farm house and barn, Bennington has improvised imaginative solutions to meet space needs each September, but in the past few years, finding answers is more difficult, more costly and more ineffectual.

The problem in the performing arts fields has become so critical that the dance and drama departments run the risk of losing their effectiveness as teaching faculties unless a new theatre, rehearsal and classroom spaces are provided. Not only is the present curriculum compromised but any further developments must remain only notions until more and appropriate space is available. The gradual increase in student body compounds the difficulties.

Among the areas to which the dance division wishes to give early attention are the following:

Film and Video Tape

With sufficient space available, the dance faculty plans to incorporate work with film, to explore composing for a spatial medium and for the use of film as a

visual teaching aid. A dance film library has been started and it shall be enlarged as funds are made available. A library of recorded works by Bennington faculty will also be started. At present, the dance faculty is exploring the use of video-tape as a practical visual aid in the curriculum.

Teacher Training

Further possibilities for the gifted student teacher must be opened up. Time and suitable space is necessary to insure the preparation, training, and guidance involved in such a project. The recognized quality of the Bennington education in dance places a responsibility upon the Division to be able to respond positively to the many requests and needs of other dance departments and centers, as well as satisfying its own talented and interested students.

Artist in Residence

In an expanded college with an adequate theatre and sufficient rehearsal space, the division hopes to find means of establishing a resident professional dance company as an adjunct to existing dance activity.

The dance company would be a creative stimulation for faculty and student; in an expanding program it could provide performing experience for our students. It may provide a basis for a unique and larger program of graduate study in dance. It could be a service to the community at large, the town of Bennington and might eventually serve the cultural ends of the state of Vermont.

STUDIO AND SPACE NEEDS

Central to any consideration of space is the need for a theatre especially designed for dance and available to dance students daily. The stage is the performing laboratory integral to the dance curriculum. It should be a proscenium stage, large enough to permit broad, free, expanded movement, but small enough not to dilute the projective power of young and inexperienced

dancers, outfitted to the demands of a professional resident or touring company as well as to the demands of a thorough curriculum.

A small orchestra pit is essential. Despite the high quality of today's electronic equipment there is both aesthetic value and stimulation in the use of live musicians. It should be possible to offer a varied and balanced musical complement; this could also have educational value in furthering joint participation by music and dance students.

The auditorium should seat between 300-350; this size will make for intimacy and directness, and will encourage several performances of a single program to educational advantage.

The total theatre space should be a modern one, containing in a most practical way the best of today's light, sound, and stage equipment. It should be comfortable for the audience, exciting to the performer, with sufficient peripheral space to make up-keep simple and performance efficient. A first-class projection, sound and recording booth is, of course, essential.

Though the theatre represents the core facility, the extent and variety of daily activity requires additional facilities for class and rehearsal work. A facsimile stage space, less extensive off-stage, but with a modest viewing area and modestly equipped for light and sound is the first necessary support. In addition the division (even at present) requires two other large studios for teaching. These minimal space requirements are suggested as necessary to any new building; to assure productive teaching the division will still need to retain space in the old garage.

Further supporting areas may be shared with the drama division: green room, dressing rooms, costume construction and storage, design rooms, shop, lighting and property storage, film and music library, etc. It is of particular importance to note that dressing room space is a large daily demand since all classwork requires special dress; therefore an area suitable merely to performance needs would be inadequate. (For example: a dance concert could include as many as 30 or 35 participants; but in two concurrently scheduled classes and sometimes even three, as of the present schedule one would find perhaps 60-70 persons all needing change space. This aside was to suggest however, within rough estimates of space early concern for specific requirements is essential.)

In conclusion it is proper to note that there be sufficient office space for individual faculty members and secretarial staff.

THE DRAMA DIVISION

THE INTENT

The drama program seeks the artistic development of the individual performer, playwright, and designer within a cooperative producing ensemble. The process begins with individual work leading to group exercises and production in the second year. By design, the program is condensed and specific, with a commitment to an intensive experience in the research, rehearsal, and production of a few original works and traditional masterpieces selected for study culminating in performance.

The usual university program may produce Euripides, Moliere, Albee, Shakespeare, Puccini, and Kaufman and Hart in one school year---employing three or four different directors working with students who have studied with a like number of acting teachers. Occasionally, an original play will be produced or an experiment staged. At Bennington, an acting ensemble, trained according to a specific aesthetic, will be installed; the open stage will be the stage; experimental and original work will be the major occupation of the drama division.

The Bennington tradition of offering full college credit for artistic endeavor will be continued. There shall be no such thing as extracurricular dramatic activity. Included in the accredited activity will be student-initiated projects, which usually turn out to be among the most important experiences of a college career.

Within the framework of a production course, the talent of all faculty and theatre majors will be brought to bear upon the research, rehearsal, and performance of a particular play.

All theory and research will be translated into the performance at hand, and classroom experiments will be directly related to activity on the main stage. There shall be no separation of the classroom from performance.

There must be an uncompromising commitment to new plays. But, because the large majority of new works are poor, we shall establish (through the creative collaboration of the playwright, the director, and the ensemble) the kind of theatre that will make imaginative playwriting more possible. Recognizing that contemporary drama is the experience of the poetry-of-total-theatre, we will work first to open up the theatrical depth-perception of the talented writer.

THE CURRICULUM IN GENERAL

The normal preparation for a major includes an introduction to literature, history, and theory, as well as theatre practice, and continuing course work during the second year in acting, playwriting, or design. Second-year acting students are introduced to techniques of ensemble performance. Additional study in voice and dance supplements the actor's training program each year. Once accepted as drama majors, students become members of the Bennington Drama Ensemble and take the production course each term, engaging in special research and technical projects related to rehearsals and preparations for performance. Other elective courses in drama each year complete division requirements. Drama majors also spend one Non-Resident Term working in a resident professional theatre and one as a member of the touring company.

All theatre courses are open to students outside the drama division. Non-majors can become members of the ensemble as actors or designers by electing freshman and sophomore courses and studios. Non-majors then elect the production course in any given term. Theatre electives not involving production are open to all students of the College.

Graduate work in drama, leading toward the master's degree, is offered in conjunction with graduate assistantships.

CURRICULUM IN DETAIL:

Actor Training

The Basic Techniques

The fundamentals of acting technique are studied by means of exercises and improvisations. The emphasis is upon the training of the performer as an individual theatre artist. Students learn to commit themselves to and justify larger-than-life imaginary circumstances and then to create vivid images. The exercises are designed not only to develop internal and external techniques but to free the imagination of the student actor.

The Acting Ensemble

The group is dedicated to the interpretation of important themes and to the communication of these themes to an audience, rather than to the glorification of the individual.

There should be total intellectual and spiritual commitment by all to the governing artistic principles of the group.

All members exist in a give-and-take-and-then-give-and-take-again relationship.

Actor training is consistent for all. Criticism or praise for one is heard and understood by all.

Individual talent is extended to its fullest in all give-and-take group relationships; impulses are fully energized; each individual continues to challenge the group to the absolute limit of his talent.

The Tutorial in Style

Despite the wide range of vocal and mimetic training given the American actor, there seems to be little or no reflection of this training in his work on the

stage at Bennington. The style of each particular production is taught by relating acting impulses to highly energized dramatic metaphors. Each student in a play is given this personal tutorial as part of the rehearsal process.

Dance and Vocal Studies

Drama students work in the dance department at strengthening their physical instrument and bringing their bodies under control so they can use them creatively in building physical characters and rhythms on the stage. Similarly they work in the music division to develop the voice as a flexible instrument of communication.

DESIGN

Designers are trained in an approach similar to that used to train actors. They learn to work in the ensemble, to build the scenic work of the play along with the actors as the script is interpreted and energized. They too learn to incorporate the same images that motivate the acting ensemble and transform them into the creative use of space through the rhythm of line and color.

Potential designers start with the basic scene design and stagecraft studio. In the first half of the sophomore year they begin to master the language of the ensemble and to incorporate images in the creation of a scenic world. In the second half of the sophomore year, the designers join with the actors and collaborate on a production. Design students then take a series of specialized design tutorials, creating sets, costumes, lighting, and properties for each production during their upper-class years.

THE NEW PLAY

This is solicited from Bennington students, known playwrights, agents, unknown playwrights--any source from which a good script might be obtained. Students

participate in the selection process. No subject matter is taboo. While American playwrights are given priority, premieres of foreign works in translation are also produced. The Drama Ensemble also experiments with new dramatic forms. Included in these experiments is work with non-verbal theatre. Attention is paid to current movements in other art forms, as well as new developments in the theatre.

FILM-MAKING

A new feature of the program will be the experimentation with film-making. Students will script, cinematograph, and edit their own films while engaged in a year-long study of the history and aesthetics of film-making.

The film will be treated as essentially a dramatic medium, though not directly related to theatre convention. The narrative documentary will also be studied. Students will be expected to have a background in visual arts, music, literature and theatre. Directorial solutions will be sought in resolving cinematic problems. In practicing principles of compositional unity, the student will consider the relationship of sound and the visual image as well as the use of typage or live actors.

Units on film acting will be included in the actor training program.

THE DRAMA WORKSHOP

The workshop meets weekly, and student directors, actors, playwrights, designers, and film-makers as well as the graduate fellows and the playwright-in-resident show "works in progress" to the entire division. All theatre students and faculty are given the opportunity to comment and criticize. Students are encouraged to experiment with new scripts or with original ideas in the

production of known texts. Students producing quality scenes may apply for a production tutorial and produce the entire one-act play for the workshop. Successful workshop productions are shown to the college public and may be eligible for selection for the NRT tour repertory.

Student films in progress will be shown to the workshop and finished work to the college public.

The workshop sessions will also be used for guest speakers, film demonstrations and other matters of common interest to the entire division. The workshop will be the place where new ideas start and then find their way into the mainstream of the college theatre, where they belong.

THE NON-RESIDENT TERM TOUR

All Bennington students spend nine weeks each winter away from the college in non-resident activities. The ensemble will tour productions of original works during the NRT on alternate years. The ensemble will play in large communities, on college campuses, and at drama festivals. During the off-year NRT, it is hoped that, given the necessary financial aid, the students will hold general working positions at resident professional theatres. Bennington students have already held such positions at the APA-Phoenix Theatre, the Seattle Repertory Company, Lincoln Center, the McCarter Theatre at Princeton, and the American Place Theatre. Every drama major will have at least one experience of this kind.

SPACE

The activist and probing character of the drama program defines certain conditions of habitat. The learning process is a living one; on stage, on camera. Every sentence takes on movement, color, stance, shape. The total theatre space must

be able to accept a variety of styles and ideas. At the center, of course, the theatre proper, intimate but not preciously so. The scene, the audience (maximum about 200) may be any where. Consider the area needed as 4000 sq. ft., open to many shapes and arrangements. A well-equipped sound, light, and projection booth goes without saying.

Besides this central facility, there should be a space of half that dimension useable as a facsimile, for rehearsal and experiment when the main theatre is in use. A studio for filming and viewing, a seminar room, and faculty offices complete these specific demands of the division. All the other natural and necessary supporting elements may be shared spaces with dance or with music. Detailed description appears in a later part of the report.

THE MUSIC DIVISION

PHILOSOPHY AND PROGRAM

From the outset Bennington College has regarded the interpretation of musical literature, via performance, and the creation of original music not as activities peripheral to the liberal art concept, but as integral parts of the academic process.

Bennington's music program has been available to all students at whatever level they are prepared to participate; it has pioneered in the development of a pedagogy which interrelates musical creation and interpretative performance, viewing them as parts of a single process. So that our music students may actively study the contemporary musical scene as completely as possible, and at a time when the expansion of the College coincides with unprecedented new developments in musical materials and techniques, it is essential that the Music Division enlarge its responsibility toward contemporary musical practice while reinforcing its approaches to the study of earlier music.

The aim of Bennington's music program is a complete experience in active practice of music, both in its creation and in its performance. Listening to music is too often a passive process providing only a fugitive impression of musical subject-matter, premises and action. To comprehend realistically the essential character of musical procedures, direct experience is a requisite--it is important to participate in the performance of music in order to understand it; it is important to know the creative process at first hand through original composing if the meaning of musical structure is to be effectively grasped. These experiences both embody the listening process; they alone can give it direction, clarity and purpose.

In accordance with this view our music students, beginning at the elementary level, work at original composing and concurrently study some branch of performance. The broad term "composing" embodies the study of the technical disciplines ordinarily listed separately as harmony, counterpoint and orchestration. However, at Bennington composing is not limited to abstract exercises in these techniques; above all it is valued as a powerful vehicle both for individual expression and for providing vivid insights into the mind of the master composer. The music faculty makes every effort to ensure that all student work is properly rehearsed and, where appropriate, performed and recorded, whether the material is only a few phrases for limited instrumentation or an extended project for orchestra. The objective sought is the competent performance of student work, mainly by students and under student leadership. This responsibility for participation in the realization of the student's own composition is regarded as an integral part of the essential process of composing.

Training and performance, in both vocal and instrumental skills, are looked upon not as obstacle courses in musical gymnastics, but as immediate and concrete means of studying and analyzing musical literature, and of experiencing musical traditions at first hand. Here again, instruction is aimed towards developing the student's initiative and resources so that she can assume responsibility for organizing, rehearsing and directing performance.

In their double role of composer-performer apprentices, students work in groups, from duos to large orchestral and choral ensembles, side-by-side with the performing faculty, as well as with the composing faculty whose new works each year are produced as integral parts of the Bennington musical scene.

All music students and faculty members meet in a weekly workshop and participate in the informal presentation of individual or group projects currently in hand. Beyond the weekly workshops the division sponsors a rich and varied series of public concerts. Faculty, students, visiting artists, community musicians all play a vital role in a score or more performances each year. The programs are selected to demonstrate as many different musical periods and skills as possible so as to stimulate exploration and enjoyment of all styles and media.

SPACE REQUIREMENTS

A curriculum designed for action makes large demands on space. The composition classrooms become performance spaces. The criticism of a compositional problem by the instructor can no longer be done merely at the piano, criticism is a joint effort of student, performer, and instructor after a composition has been performed in its correct instrumentation and in the class setting. Experimentation and improvement are done on the spot---it becomes an active learning situation for all those present.

Without denying the validity and need for individual study and performance, for the lonesome hours of the practice room, Bennington has long appreciated the special values of ensemble playing for the development of keen listening, understanding of musical structure, and suppleness in performance. Much practice therefore takes place in groups; stage and rehearsal areas take on prime and constant importance. All agree that the present facilities fail properly to meet today's requirements of our unique curriculum and philosophy; with increased enrolment this situation must deteriorate. But, and in addition, there are areas of musical theatre and choral study which must be opened up if the division is to meet its responsibility to larger segments of the student body as well as to decisive forms and directions of the contemporary scene. These are also

heavily demanding in space. It would be imperative therefore that not only more space, but several larger spaces be available to the division.

Despite the drawbacks of Jennings Hall, (the tempermental heating system, the spotty and only mediocre sound-conditioning, the lack, except for one room, of really satisfactory ensemble and classroom areas) the Division can, if economic factors weigh too heavily upon the College as a whole, foresee using the entire building in a way which would be modestly compatible with many of its needs. A new customed-tailored, completely modern plant, including auditorium and rehearsal areas, would unquestionably be the optimum recommendation. But falling short of this, Jennings can be made to work providing that a properly equipped auditorium with well-chosen supporting facilities is made available.

The auditorium should seat no more than 450 persons. It should be flexible in its performance and seating area. A place where an audience might be surrounded by musicians, musicians surrounded by audience, suited to a conventional setting, or to the interlacing of performers and listeners. Its acoustical characteristics would be of paramount importance. Supporting this central space would be a green room, and rehearsal area. Movement between these areas should be easy for persons, for instruments, equipment, and other properties. In addition a fully equipped sound studio would be coupled to all the areas within the building. Since it has been made clear that the auditorium complex would not be adjacent to Jennings it must be kept in mind that the complex be so equipped as to make unnecessary any habitual cartage between it and Jennings.

In conclusion it seems fitting to recapitulate in brief the objectives of the music division at Bennington as these determine educational policy.

1. To teach, via musical performance in action, and, where possible to illustrate through concert presentation, the widest possible spectrum of the musical literature from the 9th Century through the present.
2. To teach, via actual composing (not "exercises"), the workings of the creative process in the invention of original musical material, in 20th Century terms.
3. To provide opportunities for every music student to demonstrate her work before an audience.
4. To provide, for all members of the College community, active participation in the rehearsal and performance of chamber music, choral music, orchestral music and musical theatre--at whatever level each individual is fitted to contribute.
5. To provide an extensive and vigorous program of public concerts for the College and for the community, embracing the widest possible areas of the classical and contemporary repertoires, in chamber music, orchestral, choral and theatre music.

THE PERFORMING ARTS BUILDING

Before outlining the space requirements which appear essential to the fulfillment of the programs described by the several faculties of the performing arts, a number of general concerns need to be aired.

I. In the Bennington view a building should be an instrument, a tool for the process which will engage itself within and without its walls. Its integrity will begin with a clear acknowledgement of its purpose and its delight will not be a personal conceit but a maturely direct and simple relationship to its environment. Barns, for example, are among our most noble structures.

The public spaces should be comfortable. Conditions for sight and sound must be optimal to the needs of the production, of the act. Unoccupied areas should be neutral, inviting a modest measure of repose and of curiosity. Work and study spaces must be efficient without being hard; they must invite an easy care, not seem antiseptic. Every space should be attractive to human activity, allowing for shift in emphasis, for a person to feel uninhibited. Basically these are structures for working in. Their use as exhibition space is a part of this work; it is not a call to noisy flamboyance, pomp, or headline. A natural relationship to the morphological happening of the entire campus is important. It should be a building which itself could grow simply and effectively.

II. The College has long needed an auditorium for campus and public occasions beyond those offered by the performing arts. Lectures, student meetings, the showing of motion pictures, and formal ceremonies have had to use, to considerable disadvantage, the theatre in Commons or the pit of the Carriage Barn. What has been unsightly, hazardous, uncomfortable and difficult to schedule becomes even more so with the gradual increase of the student body.

The program of new construction contains plans for four areas suitable for gatherings: the auditorium in the new science building, seating 150; the

dance theatre, seating 325; the drama theatre, seating 200; and the music auditorium, seating 450.

A space necessary to the needs of a campus of 600, meeting together, is however incompatible with the requirements suggested by the educational and aesthetic needs of the specific divisions as far as seating capacity is concerned. A further auditorium would be necessary.

This could place an unrealistic financial burden upon the College, since there is doubt that the total community meets often enough to make the need a really pressing one. Only commencements, inaugurations, and similar events, need a very large space--but these are rare occasions; it may be that a tent or the auditorium of the Mt. Anthony Union High School, seating 750, is the practical accommodation. For the many less imposing events of the school year it should be possible to use one of the several facilities mentioned above which will become available as the building program advances. Each of these spaces will be primarily designed for the purposes of a particular division to be sure, but use and scheduling could be arranged and coordinated with the program of the division.

It would appear that the music auditorium would most satisfactorily serve the purpose of large gatherings. It could accommodate two-thirds of the combined student-faculty personnel when the enrolment reaches 600. That percentage can be realistically projected as a norm for a campus where attendance is never compulsory. And it is possible that the music auditorium would be less heavily scheduled than the other theatres. To build a music space seating 650-700 might seem a solution, but this would compromise the meaning of the area for musical purposes, and again would seem an extravagance since, as noted above, very rarely does the entire community attend a single event.

III. The performing arts complex should be related to the Visual Arts building; indeed since it functions primarily as teaching and learning space it should be as near other academic buildings as possible. The complex will probably draw more public audiences than other buildings however and should therefore be easily accessible to the public without bringing them too deeply onto the campus. (The notion of the building as being a meeting point of the three arts, freshly designed, and up-to-date in all its facilities seems automatically to reject a formerly held assumption that enlarging and remodeling the Carriage Barn would be a favorable step for the music division. Besides its traditions, the Carriage Barn has its positive acoustical values (though these might be lost in reconstruction); it is proximate to Jennings; and its remodeling might be more economical than new construction. On the other hand, its distance from the campus center would certainly limit its use as a community meeting place, its several utilities would have to be considerably redone, parking areas enlarged and added, and the kinds of support facilities natural to a stage and theatre event would have to be built into the Carriage Barn whereas these could be shared spaces in a related performing arts complex. At this juncture, modern space in a new building would seem to offer the happiest prospects for the future.)

IV. Although the purposes of the divisions of Dance, Drama, and Music are clearly held by their faculties, and although the general space, shape, and movement conditions are also clear, the necessarily precise and coordinate demands of a complex building are not within their group. But many architects are equally unfamiliar, or worse, hazily sympathetic to the meanings and needs of these lively arts. It is imperative, therefore, that consultants, highly experienced with these arts and with the designing of facilities necessary to these arts be retained to work with the faculties and with the architect. In the selection of consultants the faculties should play a positive role.

DANCE DIVISION

(The following tentative space definitions are those exclusively designed for the Dance Division. Supporting areas which could be shared space are listed later.)

A. Stage and auditorium

A proscenium stage (with some flexibility)	1800 sq. ft.
Floor must have spring. Soft wood but not splintery. (No floor screws must be used on it.)	(includes backstage)
General dimension 40 x 30. Proscenium 25 feet high.	
Seating 325.	
Floor sloped, unobstructed view of stage and stage floor.	2600 sq. ft.
Small orchestra pit to accommodate piano and instruments.	300 sq. ft.
Sound, light booth	
(Air-conditioning both auditorium and backstage)	200 sq. ft.
	<u>4900 sq. ft.</u>

B. Facsimile stage, rehearsal room (20 feet high)

Modest lighting facilities	
Viewing area	2000 sq. ft.

C. Two teaching studios, (plenty of windows) proportion 1 to 1 1/2 (18 feet high)

	3600 sq. ft.
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D. Faculty offices

	700 sq. ft.
TOTAL:	<u>11,200 sq. ft.</u>

(It is understood that with this limited space the Dance Division will continue its use of the Garage.)

DRAMA DIVISION

(The following tentative space definitions are those exclusively designed for the Drama Division. Supporting areas which could be shared space are listed later.)

A. Stage and auditorium

An original 3-dimensional open design	
Seating for 225	
Sound, light, director's booths	4000 sq. ft.

B. Facsimile stage space, rehearsal area

Limited lighting and viewing	
Adjacent to shop	2000 sq. ft.

C. Film studio

Complete lighting facilities	
High ceiling	1800 sq. ft.

D. Acting Tutorial Studio	800 sq. ft.
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E. Seminar Room	600 sq. ft.
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F. Office space, faculty and assistants	1000 sq. ft.
TOTAL:	<u>10,200 sq. ft.</u>

MUSIC DIVISION

(The following tentative space definitions are those exclusively designed for the Music Division. Supporting areas which could be shared space are listed later.)

A. Stage and auditorium

Acoustically first-rate
Seating 450

5400 sq. ft.

B. Supporting rehearsal space

Adjoining the auditorium
Cabinets for instruments

1800 sq. ft.

C. Recording and playback center

	400 sq. ft.
TOTAL:	<u>7600 sq. ft.</u>

SHARED SPACE (Tentative)

A.	Dressing rooms: men 300 sq. ft. women 900 sq. ft. (Suited to approximately 60 persons at one time)	1200 sq. ft.
B.	Shop (20 feet high) Constructed so as to keep carpentry and painting areas somewhat separate. Cement floor and drains Sink, lumber storage	1200 sq. ft.
C.	Costume Execution Room Sewing machines, cutting tables Washing, dyeing, and drying facilities	1200 sq. ft.
D.	Design Studio (20 feet high) Sink, lighting facilities for demonstration	1200 sq. ft.
E.	Costume storage	750 sq. ft.
F.	Scenic storage	650 sq. ft.
G.	Properties and light storage	400 sq. ft.
H.	Green room (with kitchen) (Suitable as seminar and rehearsal space)	600 sq. ft.
I.	Library-reading room (film, music, journals)	400 sq. ft.
J.	Office space (secretary and assistant)	200 sq. ft.
TOTAL:		<u>7800 sq. ft.</u>

TOTAL SPACE REQUIRED

DANCE	11,200
DRAMA	10,200
MUSIC	7,600
SHARED SPACE	<u>7,800</u>
	36,800
50% unassigned	<u>18,400</u>
GRAND TOTAL	55,200

At an estimate of \$30 per square foot the building would come in at \$1,656,000. This is a figure \$156,000 above the planned budget. Rather than initiating any further diminution of space at this time, it would seem more practicable to allow theatre consultants to study the requirements, and on their advice, be ready to make realistic adjustment.

It is not inappropriate to note that the useable space figure of 36,800 sq. ft. is itself already a marked but (one hopes) not an irrational reduction from the figure of approximately 50,000 sq. ft. requested originally.

ADDENDA

I. Attention should be called to the fact that the space figures for the Music Division are only those thought of as being newly built space or related to a remodeling of the Carriage Barn. The major portion of music space for teaching, practice, rehearsal, office, library, and supporting equipment, will probably be a renovated Jennings Hall. The 20,000 sq. ft. requested by the music division for facilities other than those planned around the auditorium will therefore have to be reduced and readjusted to the approximately 14,000 sq.ft. available in Jennings.

The music faculty is willing to consider this kind of an adjustment; it will hardly be optimum but will result in more effectiveness than at present and could handle the increase in enrolment as well as the expansion of the curriculum. Space details to this purpose are not spelled out in this report, but will be prepared at the time that detailed planning for remodeling Jennings Hall is necessary.

II. The figures necessary to certain estimates were arrived at as follows:

Auditorium Seating

Music, Acoustics, and Architecture

Leo L. Beranek (1962)

A study of many halls showed a spread of from 5.1 to 8.5 sq. ft. per person, the average was 6.7 sq. ft. In this report we have used 8 sq. ft. as a safe figure.

Dressing Room Space

Theatres and auditoriums

Burris-Meyer and Edward C.

Cole (1964)

Suggested 16 sq. ft. per person. Because Dance may use more costumes per performance and need rapid change, the figure 20 sq. ft. per person has been used for this report.

Stage Area

(same source as above)

After the acting space on stage has been calculated, a 50% increment should be added to assure off-stage effectiveness.