a summer theatre & arts colony

BEING AN ARCHITECTURAL THESIS
EXECUTED AT THE
MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
BY FRANK R KRUEGER
A SUMMER THEATRE AND ARTS COLONY

Submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements
for the degree Master in Architecture
August 1957.

Frank R. Krueger
B.A., University of California, 1956

L. B. Anderson, Head
School of Architecture
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
August 7, 1957

Pietro Belluschi, Dean
School of Architecture and Planning
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Dear Dean Belluschi:

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree, Master in Architecture, I, herewith, respectfully submit a thesis entitled "A Summer Theatre and Arts Colony".

Sincerely yours,

Frank R. Krueger

6 Westgate
Cambridge, Massachusetts
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to give recognition to the following for their extensive help, guidance and encouragement:

John and Thelma Gilland for their association; and imparting some of their love for the theatre.

Alan Levitt for providing me with a very interesting and challenging program.

Professor Robert Newman for his valuable acoustical aid.

Dean Belluschi
Paul Rudolph
Minoru Yamasaki

The members of graduate class 1956-1957.

In addition I would like to acknowledge my debt in patience and support to my wife, Phyllis.
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ABSTRACT

A SUMMER THEATRE AND ARTS COLONY

Submitted by Frank R. Krueger in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master in Architecture.

School of Architecture and Planning, Massachusetts Institute of Technology. August 1957.

The summer theatre is becoming an important institution in furthering American culture. The theatre and the arts colony of this program are in anticipation of increasing need for such seasonal institutions that provide a cultural and creative outlet for the vacationing population. A review of contemporary trends within the theatre reveals a prevalence toward reevaluation of many facets of the theatre, i.e., production styles and techniques, and relationships that occur between performers and the audience. Such trends constitute definite criteria effecting the architectural solution to the designing of a theatre.
The physical meaning of the total project as a conditioning environment is evaluated, and a definition of objectives for the architectural forming of the environment is given. The report is concluded with evaluations of the various spaces required of this program.
INTRODUCTION

"The Theatre is the conscience of the World"..............Reinhardt

It is a redundancy to state the world's social values are in a state of flux; the excitement and anxiety stimulates the sensitive and creative, the resultant transformations are manifold. The contemporary theatre exemplifies these conditions, and adds a new dimension of challenge to the architectural design of such an edifice. Of the many architectural problems calling for new solutions, today, few contain the perplexities, variants, and possibilities as does that of the contemporary theatre.

I decided to make the theatre the subject of my graduate thesis, and fortunately for me, met Alan Levitt, an instructor at Boston University Dramatic Arts Department and part owner of the Actors Workshop in Boston, who willingly presented me with the problem as defined below. He had formed a partnership, the purpose of which was to begin staging productions this
summer (1957) on the site located outside Buzzard's Bay on the Cape Cod Canal.

I am utilizing their site, attempting to keep within realistic limitations, and the program of this thesis represents the total long range plan for the site.
summer theatres
SUMMER THEATRE

As the national socio-economic scene creates increased leisure time and the accompanying demand for cultural activities, the summer theatre consequently is finding incentive and encouragement in supplying these cultural demands, and simultaneously is providing a means of training new arrivals to the world of the theatre.

Generally speaking summer stock theatres and the houses of the straw hat circuit provide proven productions featuring renowned stars at prices lower than for the Broadway production. However, there also exist summer theatres that experiment with traditional plays as well as produce new plays that permit greater freedom in the staging, these experimental theatres usually being the gathering point of the more culturally sophisticated. On the other hand, the visual experiments on TV and in the movies have created a receptive climate for the efforts of the non-traditionalists, thus making possible a
continuing revitalization of the theatre as a whole.

The summer theatre originally grew out of the adding of short plays to vaudeville at the Elitch Gardens, an amusement park in Denver, Colorado, in 1890. Popularity of the endeavor called for the presentations to be given annually in the summer. The next marked addition was the play house Lakewood Theatre at Skowhegan, Maine; established as a point of interest at the end of a trolley line by the owner of the line as a means of encouraging more paid fares. The Lakewood Theatre is still a popular point of interest.

In 1917 the Pasadena Playhouse started producing, and by 1920 the idea of the summer theatre was widely accepted. Bucks County, Mount Gretna in Pennsylvania, Martha's Vineyard and Provincetown in Massachusetts, Ogunquit, Maine; Newport, Rhode Island all supported summer theatres.

By 1940 the number of summer theatres amounted
to over 80 companies and at present there are 400 or more professional companies operating during the summer.

Many of the facilities of the early theatres amounted to nothing more than the bare minimum; barns, dance halls, and even roller rinks were utilized for auditoriums, and while this did lend an air of adventure to those attending, many operating companies were unsuccessful through inadequacy of these facilities.

The most recent tendency of the summer theatres is the gradual rising of the "cultural level" of the productions in the theatres. Annual summer festivals of Shakespeare in many parts of the continent are but an indication. Seminars of the various arts combined with new experiments in the theatre are becoming one of the main stimulations in the advancement of our cultural activities. Summer schools are furthering the tendency by seeking locations within the resort areas and thereby capitalizing
on the presence of the relaxed summer citizen seeking creative outlets for his leisure, and concurrently producing an ever increasing potential audience that expects higher level "live" entertainment.

Clearly the summer theatre represents a valuable cultural contribution to the total picture, and remains an exciting event to the vacationer, where he can gregariously find intellectual stimulation and simultaneously participate (though passively) in one of man's greatest endeavors.
FESTIVE AIR—On the lawn outside the American Shakespeare Festival Theatre at Stratford, Conn., playgoers enjoy a picnic before the evening performance of "Othello."

BETWEEN THE ACTS—The crowds in the theatre's lobby during the intermission of "Othello" suggest that even Shakespearean tragedy can be popular in the summertime.
A PERFORMANCE OF BRECHT'S EPIC
"THE GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN" AT
THE TUFTS ARENA THEATRE
the contemporary theatre
Fig. 1.
At the Large Conventional Playhouse

Fig. 2.
At the Central or Flexible Theater

Fig. 3.
At the Motion-Picture Theater
The following sketches comprise a brief survey of central-flexible stages that preceded the contemporary schemes. The main objective of each is maximum flexibility of the acting area permitting the broadest range of productions while striving for unity between the actors and spectators.

Greek Theatre - 5th century B.C. still the classic form for central staging.

The Medievil Wagon Stage - Used following the eviction of drama from the medievil church. Wagon stage was part of procession of stages each depicting an episode of a long script. Costumes changing occurred in bottom floor and acting on top.

The Elizabethan Theatre - A conjectural reconstruction of the English stage of the 1600's. The many elements of the stage were freely utilized for the many scene requirements of the Shakespearian type play. Spectators surrounded stage on five of six sides.
The Grosses Schauspielhaus - Built by the phenomenal German producer Reinhardt in 1919. The stage was thrust into the large auditorium that seated 3500 spectators.

The Moscow Realistic Theatre - Built in 1932 it was first theatre-in-the-round. Okhlopkov was one of the many Russian directors experimenting in stage form following the revolution, his productions stressing intimate relations of actors with the audience.
The Greek Theater

The Medieval Wagon Stage
The Elizabethan Theater

The Théâtre du Vieux Colombier of Jacques Copeau
The Grosses Schauspielhaus

The Moscow Realistic Theatre
Okloupov's arrangement for *The Mother*.
THE CONTEMPORARY THEATRE

The theatre is the central focus of this problem. Comprehension of what "contemporary theatre" represents is primary to designing with substance.

To begin, the chief difficulty is that the essential spaces of stage and auditorium are no longer separate, but should be treated as a whole. The architect must be well versed in the shifting philosophies of the theatre. If he goes to the heart of the matter he meets many new techniques and requirements which force him to adopt an entirely new approach to problems of production, setting, staging, and some economy; all of which are bound up with our sense of life and apprehension of the world today, and with the incidence of presence and future.

The theatre must be conceived as an artistic creation of many elements, each of which exists only in function of its association with others. The heart of the edifice, which is precisely this
association of stage and auditorium, must not only reflect the mobility of our behavior in life, but itself possess this mobility and assist in representation of this quality. Thus the essential principle guiding the theatre project must be the greatest possible transformability.

We are now passing beyond a period of theatre design in which the European social concepts of the 19th century were the determining force. The auditorium was arranged as a large drawing room with three solid walls and a fourth no less substantial, with a hole in it beyond which the other world began: the world of the stage. People of that period liked to view from a certain safe distance that exciting distraction which life within the scenes represented for them. What took place on the stage must create an illusion; it must remain an illusion and never grip the spectator too closely. The architects of the last century had an excellent understanding of the spirit of their time and transposed
it into a form of architecture which was emminently suitable.

The modern auditorium, on the other hand, is distinguished by the mobility and varying quality of its spaces. It ceases to be simply a solemn picture frame and becomes an expression of its own ever changing functions. It no longer offers aesthetic apathy of a purely contemplative nature, but tunes itself to the physical and spiritual instability of those who frequent it. Its form is thus conceived on a dynamic principle and must be evaluated from this angle.

The fact that the whole apparatus of our external life has become technical, that customs, ideas, psychological knowledge, the rhythm and nature of observation have all shifted; and that in short, life itself has changed integrally and also conditions the new dynamic view of space in which we are now required to live and to create. The mutation of our methods of apprehending life is discernible in every domain of
spiritual expression: faith in changeless laws has long since crumbled; thoughts and ideas are starkly functional in sober and direct expression, in the intuitive nature of communication, in the continually changing points of view, and in the dynamic quality of style with a marked emphasis on the time factor. Even science nowadays renounces the yardstick and enters into the realm of relativity.

Man himself has acquired a far greater degree of visual consciousness thanks to the more mobile and colorful rhythm of everyday life and to the modern visual media of communication such as films, television and picture magazines. The eye tends rather to pursue things than to retain them, the result of which is quicker perception and a greater susceptibility to boredom. Our nervous system has become more acute and our sensory perception has widened its horizon.

All this must necessarily influence new concepts of theatre construction. The problem remains to extract what is presently valid from the complex whole compounded of art and craftsmanship,
construction and purpose, history and science, 
theory and practice, scientific and artistic 
evolution and the deep trends and symbols of 
our time.

The present tendency in theatre production is 
to leave the human being in solitude on the 
playing space and allow the resulting tension 
to work on the spectators. The set therefore 
no longer represents a given time or subject, 
it is simplified and reduced to a single 
decorative accessory which, judiciously placed 
and skillfully lighted, may develop enormous 
power of suggestion. Consequently the use of 
space assumes far more importance than it had 
in the old decorative methods, space is now 
manipulated to create the illusion. The stage 
designer becomes by degrees a space creator, 
who no longer decorates plays, but sets the space 
in which the actor gravitates in direct relation 
to the audience. Certain plays are only wholly 
effective if a climate of tension can be induced 
in the audience.
This evolution profoundly effects the general concept of the theatre construction and particularly of the playing space. Since the present endeavor is to speak and divulge emotions most intimately to the spectator, the space devoted to the stage is to deeply invade the auditorium and the boundary between the two must therefore disappear. In order to effect transformations in front of the stage, the stage machinery and lighting apparatus must be brought forward beyond the orchestra. Yet it is still necessary to provide for the old fashioned stage frame which may be required for the presentation of certain plays.

Nor are these the only space considerations: further evolution will no doubt impose other unpredictable requirements on the playing space, and should be taken into account even now, and secure for the playing space the greatest degree of adaptability.
a program for design
PRESENTATION OF PROBLEM

Specifically the total conception presents an all too realistic design problem involving acoustic considerations, vehicular traffic control, and working in an area bounded by the most hideous examples of our contemporary commercialized culture. More important, though, is the necessity of designing a series of spaces, each of which possesses an essence particular only unto itself.

The site must present to the visitor, whether he is a relatively permanent member of the colony staying for many weeks, or a transient spectator anticipating the many emotional and intellectual pleasures an environment of peace and serenity within which the human psyche can renew and replenish itself in active or passive creativeness. Furthermore, the site must be a continual unfolding visually stimulating series of spaces, natural textures and colors; and a haven from the shattering confusion of sea food shanties, amusement arcades, suntan oil
advertisements, and flag draped filling stations that in succeeding combinations constitute the summer resort scene on most of the New England seacoast.

The theatre must represent a further step in this environmental sequence: the spaces of the theatre should heighten and electrify those anticipations of the spectator while remaining but a foil for those who create and project for the spectator.

Accompanying the theatre, the restaurant must supplement the enchantment of the theatre yet not detract from it. The restaurant will serve others than those attending the theatre, and may even encourage them to delay their departure to attend the evening performance.

The arts colony would consist of a school which will have instruction in music, the dance, drama, and fine art, each coordinated with the other, and with the productions of the theatre. The classroom spaces of the school will be divided between being indoor and outdoor, however, still
providing them with the requisite of proper isolation, light and sound control.

Dormitories sufficient for quartering three-fourths of the students and the faculty are included in the program. These should be oriented for maximum relationship, visual and physical, with the canal, as the canal is the distinguishing feature of the site, and would be a great attraction to prospective students.

Permeating the considerations for the various spaces is the importance of economy of structure. Summer theatres and schools are not notorious money makers: the summer theatre today is enjoying its greatest success, but for each individual theatre the line separating success and failure is an extremely thin one; the difference often being decided by one production. The assumption is the manager and producer in this theatre will be the same, resulting in an overall need for low initial capitalization and minimum overhead. This factor imposes immediate restrictions on the materials of construction and the degree of
elaboration in obtaining the "feeling" of the various spaces.
the site
THE SITE

The location of the site was predetermined by the gentlemen for whom this theatre and accompanying arts colony is being designed.

There are several unique features, detrimental and beneficial of this site that provide for unusual considerations.

The site is located in one of the centers of high summer population and would draw from both the Cape Cod area and on the mainland.

The proximity to the Cape Cod Canal permits incorporation of waterscape into the total site such that water becomes an additional element to be fashioned in enhancing the various buildings and the total space.

Route U.S. 6 passes by the site providing direct accessibility to all of the major New England cities, with New York being within easy driving distance. Also, the New York New Haven and Hartford Railroad that serves Cape Cod runs through Buzzard's Bay. An additional trans-
portation feature to be encouraged is the opportunity of providing berths for those who would choose to boat to the site. This feature would also be a point of interest to those visitors who were subject to the fascination of boats but were not economically capable of active participation in the sport.

The site is located sufficiently near the various existing summer sport areas to eliminate the need of allocating space on the site for these functions.

The first serious detriment has been mentioned above, namely the adjacency of the many commercial eyesores, such that being tainted by mere association is chanced. Fortunately the acrage on the site permits withdrawal of the buildings from the existing built-up wall along the highway, and a cultural oasis can be created in the remaining portion.

Lastly, functions of most of the buildings of this problem, especially that of the theatre, call for acoustic isolation from the many noises
evident at the site. Chief noise contributors are the jet aircraft on Cape Cod, the heavy vehicular traffic on the highway, and the motor boats in the adjacent Bourne Pond and Canal. This point was discussed at length with Professor Newman. Sufficient acoustic isolation would be developed if the structures were designed to be "air tight", i.e., enclosed with the outer skin being rigid on the order of \( \frac{1}{4} \)" glass, and roofs of planking with 1" insulation material.

Physically the site offers a slightly sloping plane rising 8' from the canal to the highway. The soil is coarse sand bearing a hardy grass, scrub pitch pine, and a few large elms.

The edge of the canal is an embankment formed of large stones to prevent tidal erosion. The tide changes registered at Buzzard's Bay are in the order of 3.5 feet, 5 feet being maximum.
SPACE REQUIREMENTS

Certain allowances must be made for the special characteristics of the summer theatre in establishing the square foot requirements.

The interior lounge space is reduced from that of the standard theatre, and this is compensated by providing generous outdoor terraces and gardens. These spaces should be reached quickly and conveniently so that they may be used during each intermission.

The striving for greater intimacy in the productions lends to the necessity of a larger wardrobe or more authentic and detailed costumes. Usually this is offset by a reduction in shop and general storage space as less actual sets are used. The theatre of this problem is an attempt at combining the features of the proscenium theatre with flexible central staging, and must therefore contain the auxiliary spaces required to serve both types.

For purposes of the drama and dance departments
of the arts school, I am providing for a separate practice stage equal in size to the main stage in the theatre; the practice stage being housed in an adjoining building.

Requirements for the theatre:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Space</th>
<th>Area square feet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Box office</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor foyer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lobby - Indoor lounge</td>
<td>750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor lounge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restrooms</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auditorium (750 seats x 7 sq.ft./seat) = 5,250</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage</td>
<td>600+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orchestra pit</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dressing rooms (with adjacent toilets and showers) 2 @ 80 = 160</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 @ 100 = 200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 @ 300 = 600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quick change on stage 2 @ 100 = 200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musicians room (with toilets)</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green room and kitchenette</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offices</td>
<td>2 @ 200 = 400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrical storage</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanical equipment</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[9,750\]
In the adjoining auxiliary building:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Practice stage (duplicate of main stage)</td>
<td>600+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work space</td>
<td>1,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpenter shop</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paint shop</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stock room</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wardrobe</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Store room</td>
<td>750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crate storage</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receiving and shipping</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loading dock (for two trucks, protected from weather)</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage hands locker room (with adjacent toilet and showers)</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vestibule</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doorman's booth</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanical equipment</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 14,110
Restaurant

Foyer, Coats, Restrooms  600
Dining area (2/3 indoors  5,000
  1/3 outdoors)
Kitchen and storage  2,000
Cocktail lounge  1,000
  8,600
Sheltered Outdoor Exhibition Space  2,000
Storage  100
  2,100

Arts School

Administration

Offices  5 @ 150  =  750
Conference  200
  950

Fine Arts Department

Studios  2 @ 600  =  1,200
Offices  2 @ 150  =  300
Outdoor studio (shaded and  600
  isolated)
Lockers, washrooms, storage  400
  2,500
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Drama Department</th>
<th>Dance Department</th>
<th>Music Department</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rehearsal rooms</td>
<td>2 @ 400 = 800</td>
<td>2 @ 400 = 800</td>
<td>2 @ 400 = 800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 @ 250 = 450</td>
<td>2 @ 200 = 400</td>
<td>2 @ 400 = 800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor spaces (shaded and isolated)</td>
<td>5 @ 225 = 1,225</td>
<td>2 @ 200 = 400</td>
<td>2 @ 200 = 400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dressing rooms</td>
<td>2 @ 150 = 300</td>
<td>2 @ 150 = 300</td>
<td>10 @ 75 = 750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offices</td>
<td>2 @ 150 = 300</td>
<td>2 @ 150 = 300</td>
<td>10 @ 75 = 750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restrooms, storage</td>
<td>300</td>
<td></td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Restrooms, storage = 300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2,950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dormitories

120 students @ 120 sq.ft./student  = 14,400
16 faculty @ 200 sq.ft./member    = 3,200

Lavatories

Parking

Calculations include space requirements for those attending theatre, restaurant, or just visiting site (which can be assumed)

The students and faculty will in all probability each possess a car

Or in terms of square feet:

680 x 320 sq.ft./car

217,600
BIBLIOGRAPHY

The books listed are predominately general in scope. The Gorelik contains an extraordinary bibliography covering every aspect of the theatre, and as a critical work, I strongly recommend it.


Jones, Robert Edmond; The Dramatic Imagination. Duell Sloan and Pearce, New York, 1941.


---- To Architects: Stop! Look! Listen! Theatre Arts, January, 1939.
March 15, 1957

Mr. Frank R. Kruger
6 Westgate
Cambridge 38, Mass.

Dear Mr. Kruger:

Regarding your letter of March 7, I shall attempt to give you a brief summary of our reaction to a Ring Theatre.

The first point is that acoustics are dreadful. It is much easier to hear the actors outside the theatre than inside. I do not know the reverberation time, but I will estimate it is three seconds.

The size of our theatre is much too large. We seat 600 people, and this is 400 too many for our Ring Theatre productions. Almost all the intimacy is destroyed when the Ring Theatre gets beyond a seating capacity of 200. The novelty of the Ring when it was first built here did attract a considerable number of people. In checking audience response to Ring productions (and I've tried to check carefully through student reviews of our productions, interviews with our patrons and a local research consultant) people will choose proscenium productions if the alternative is present.

Our season subscriptions have decreased constantly since the completion of our Ring Theatre, and while it is not the only cause, I believe it is a contributing factor. This same trend is reflected in the Tenthouse Theatre in Highland Park, Illinois according to what I gathered last summer.

The only thing that saves the Ring Theatre at the University of Miami is its flexibility. Most of our shows are staged in manners other than Ring. Only one of our faculty members has a preference for ring productions, and he is the one who originally got the theatre built. The other faculty members dislike it in varying degrees from dissatisfaction to complete and utter loathing. My only suggestion about building a ring theatre for a professional dramatic group which will seat 750 people is don't! The present fad for ring theatre on the east coast arose after the war when there was a shortage of material needed by theatre workers. The Penthouse at the University of Washington is the model of this interest which has been known in the west and far west for about thirty years. With the exception of the eastern states the rest of the
nation has not flocked to the ring as the answer to theatre buildings. I would recommend a flexible theatre but not one that handicaps production personnel and actors as the ring form.

The ring form is quite unsuitable for modern plays and the response to comedy, which I'm assuming summer theatre would emphasize, suffers most. From having observed the same play done in proscenium and ring, I would estimate that overt audience response is diminished twenty per cent in a modern comedy. The ring has great value in handling classical plays, particularly Greek and Elizabethan plays. It is an interesting experience, but in my mind it is not the answer to the problem of theatre construction.

I recommend that you do not build a theatre in the round -- I recommend a flexible theatre which will not prove such a handicap to actors, designers, and directors.

Cordially yours,

Delmar E. Solem
Chairman, Drama Dept.

DES/bg
Mr. Frank R. Krueger
6 Westgate
Cambridge 38, Mass.

Dear Mr. Krueger:
The problem encountered with Ring Theatre was one of budget. I analyzed same to produce a building that would meet requirements resulting in using asphalt paving for floor, a ventilation and light grid 2'-0 deep over center ring which reduced echo from dome and circular side walls. Absorption from cloth camp chairs, floor, people and breaking up of sound by grid work has proven fair results economically.

Yours truly,

Robert M. Little

MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS AND FLORIDA ASSOCIATION OF ARCHITECTS
2180 BRICKELL AVENUE • MIAMI 36, FLORIDA • PHONE FR 1-2696
93 Yorkville Avenue,
Toronto 5, Ontario.

August 2nd, 1957

Mr. Frank R. Krueger,
6 Westgate,
Cambridge, 39, Mass.

Dear Mr. Krueger:

Please forgive my late reply to your letter of June 20th, concerning the Stratford Festival Theatre at Stratford, Ontario.

At the risk of appearing off-hand, I would sincerely suggest that you study of the open stage type of theatre would be best served by a personal visit to the theatre, where you could meet and talk with the people who are using the building.

With kindest regards,

R. C. Fairfield

RCF:hr

Dictated by Mr. Fairfield, and signed in his absence.
April 2, 1957

Frank R. Krueger
6 westgate
Cambridge 38, Mass.

Dear Mr. Krueger:

I am sorry for the delay in answering your letter of March 7th. The time consumed by allocating mail to be answered to the proper departments plus vacation between quarters has made this doubly hard on you.

I am enclosing a program from our Penthouse theatre with a few penciled notations on the floor plan appearing on the back.

Acoustically, the house is perfect with the exception of one seat marked with the X. For some reason, this particular seat receives an echo; the only one of a total of 184 seats.

The acoustic tile used in the places marked with pencil is perforated 1/8" fibre tile in 1' squares, totalling 7'x14' panels. The rest of the walls are finished in plaster, and the ceiling is 1" plywood. Seats are on 6" tiers, placing the stage floor 18" lower than the lobby. The stage floor is carpeted wall to wall, seats are upholstered.

I trust this will be of some value to you.

Sincerely,
A Note on the Play

A Roomful of Roses was first presented at the Playhouse, New York City, on October 17, 1955. It was staged by Guthrie McClain, with setting and lighting by Edward T. Gough. The cast was headed by Patricia Neal (Nancy), Russ Conway (Jay Fallon), and Betty Lou Egan (Edith). Designed by Donald Oenslager, the play achieved only a fair run of 88 performances. Brooks Atkinson, in the New York Times, devoted a full Sunday article to praise of the play, and remarked that Broadway is not more appreciative of its type.

Mr. Atkinson’s complaint is one with which we are in complete sympathy, as readers of our program notes know very well. On several occasions we have presented excellent plays which had been received coldly or in lukewarm fashion in the Metropolis, and have had our confidence in the taste and intelligence of local audiences fully justified. A Roomful of Roses is a warm and understanding piece. It was, incidentally, the basis of a recent motion picture entitled Teen-Age Rebel, starring Ginger Rogers.

CONCERNING THIS THEATRE

THE PENTHOUSE THEATRE is the first playhouse ever designed and built for the presentation of drawing room plays in circus style. And it is proper that it should be erected on the University of Washington Campus, for it was here that this style of production originated. Recently there has been a nation-wide imitation of our Penthouse Plays, but no one else has gone so far as to create a theatre for this special purpose.

Our theatre is the climax of eight years of successful experience. In the autumn of 1932 the School of Drama made its first production of this type in the drawing-room of Mr. and Mrs. T. F. Murphy's penthouse atop the Edmond Meany Hotel, where an audience of 40 was accommodated. After one season the plays were moved downstairs to the ballroom. Because of increasing popularity the productions were moved to a home of their own in April, 1933, when we opened an Olympic Theatre in leased quarters at University Way and East 42nd Place. This theatre had a capacity of 140, and it was equipped with sensational success for three years. When our lease on that property expired in 1936, plans were made for a permanent Penthouse Theatre on the Campus. Meanwhile, perform-
Preliminary plans for the present theatre were prepared by the staff of the School of Drama and were developed by the Department of Buildings and Grounds. The building is a beautiful example of functional architecture, and because of its perfect symmetry and simplicity, may well be described as classic.

Construction of the theatre began in September, 1939, and was a joint enterprise. Labor was furnished by Works Projects Administration of the Federal Government, materials and equipment by the School of Drama, heat, light, water and other services by the University. Supervision of construction and equipment by the Department of Buildings and Grounds.

The theatre was formally opened on May 16, 1940, and immediately assumed an important place in the social and artistic life of the city.

Performance Schedule

Private Preview on Thursday Evening.
Public Performances Every Friday and Saturday Evening.
Private Performances for Clubs and Other Organizations on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday by Arrangement with the Management.
Each Production Runs for Six Weeks.

PRODUCTIONS


University Playhouse: "Cicero and Cleopatra," Feb. 21 to March 16 (weekends only).