

Agnes J. Williams
Piano Course IV
May 1908.

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The principal drawings shall be ^{and the} the sections of the theater through the auditorium and foyer at $\frac{3}{16}$ " scale, and the general lay-out of the establishment at $\frac{1}{16}$ " scale. The section has been chosen for a principal drawing rather than the elevation, for, while the exterior should be studied with a view to giving an expression of the purpose of the building, in a theater, the interior is more important in its treatment of adaptable detail and its arrangement. A large plan of the opera house has been studied at $\frac{1}{16}$ " scale. The elevation is also studied at $\frac{1}{16}$ " scale.

Edgar J. Wilbur
May 26, 1908.

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A Large Establishment in
the Country for the Celebration of
Historic Festivals.

The spirit of advance which has characterised the past half century in this country has found its way into almost all the channels of human occupation. Organization and co-laboration have been the key notes of this advance, and the most salient result of this aggressive spirit has been the production of material benefits such as wealth and luxury.

Resting upon the solid base of material prosperity as did the Greeks in the Periclean Age, as did the Romans in the time of the Republic, and as the French in the times of Francis I and Napoleon I,

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and imbued with the spirit of power
after our intellectual and scientific
triumphs of the past century, we are
sure to advance in art as fast as our
predecessors.

As organization and co-operations
have been the powers which developed
the material resources so can these
combined efforts advance art. In
order to secure unity of expression, not
only of the idea but in the treatment,
it is necessary to avoid further
abstract reasoning as to broad and
to deal with the practical side of
a single art. With this aim in
view I have chosen the histrionic
art as an interesting subject for
consideration and architectural expression.

The purpose of my thesis has
been to design an establishment in
the country where people may gather
to enjoy the dramatic arts

Wagner's well-known theatre at Bayreuth is as nearly a precedent to the scheme as I could find. Since his plan, however, was merely to provide a place for the production of his own music-dramas, his architectural setting was limited to a theatre. Dependancies such as accommodations for guests and artists, and the general lay-out of the grounds, were not considered.

In my design I have incorporated these architectural dependancies and have provided for a broader field of dramatic enjoyment.

In order that collector's effort may be exercised, it is supposed that festivals will take place at a pleasant season of the year in a locality which will foster elevated sentiment and activity. These festivals are reminders of people with

common interests will be marked by the production of operas and of drama, together with such receptions and social activities as will contribute to the vitality and unity of the gathering.

The plan for the place of the festivals will be best understood by reference to the drawings.

The establishment occupies a location in a quiet yet accessible spot in a beautiful undulating country. It provides for the presentation of dramatic works of varied form, both on the most modest and on the largest scale.

It also offers accommodations for the many guests who gather to take part in the festivals.

The scheme comprises a large central theatre for the production of operas and the larger dramatic pieces.

This theatre faces an extensive court which has walks lawns and trees. The court is flanked on both sides by the buildings reserved for the accommodation of guests. The auditorium floor of the theatre is the main seating space: only one small balcony being provided. An attempt has been made to have each seat in the house equally good both as to comfort and position, and for that purpose the usual boxes were omitted. An arcade leading off the second floor passages is provided in the sides of the auditorium to permit a good view of the audience. The orchestra space has been lowered to a position which puts the musicians out of sight but which allows unimpeded ^{exposure of} sound to the audience.

A large foyer is provided on the second floor and approached by

monumental stairways at each end of the main lobby. The foyer is adapted to the purposes of ball-room and reception-hall.

In treatment the theatre is classic and restrained rather than ornate, for the architecture must express finer emotions than can be aroused through excessive richness of ornament.

Reaching out on each side of the theatre are wide avenues with lawns and walks adorned with trees and statues. The theatre marks the intersection of the large fore-court and the two avenues, and is clearly and rightly the dominant point of interest!

Alongside each lateral avenue is a small open-air theatre. One of these is covered and treated architecturally; the other is merely an open lawn surrounded by tall

hedges. Each is approached through a small semi-formal grove of shrub trees. Both stages give upon an interesting garden through a partially screened background. No scenery is to be used and the orchestra, if used, will be placed inconspicuously. The whole aspect of these small theatres is free and open as the air.

For the production of classic plays, an auditorium modelled after the Greek theatres is provided on the side of a hill off the main court. This element in the composition of the plan is balanced on the opposite side of the court by an open basin at the foot of a chateau d'Eau inspired by the one at the Villa Lorraine at Frascati in Italy.

Accommodations for artists are

closely associated with the theatres, but the service is provided for outside the immediate surroundings.

About this group of buildings extends a considerable park laid out in parterres, walks and all pertinent decorative features such as tea-houses, statuary and fountains.

The whole scheme is intended to unify and consolidate effort in dramatic progress by providing a fitting architectural setting where conditions may be to the highest extent attractive and stimulating.