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THE BROOKLYN ACADEMY OF MUSIC: A CASE STUDY OF THE REBIRTH
OF AN URBAN CULTURAL CENTER

City University of New York

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THE BROOKLYN ACADEMY OF MUSIC:

A Case Study of the Rebirth of an Urban Cultural Center

by Marlyn V. Baum

A dissertation submitted to the
Graduate Faculty in Theatre in
partial fulfillment of the re-
quirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

The City University of New York

1983

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Theatre in satisfaction of this dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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ABSTRACT

THE BROOKLYN ACADEMY OF MUSIC:
A CASE STUDY OF THE REBIRTH OF AN URBAN CULTURAL CENTER
by MARLYN V. BAUM

ADVISER: PROFESSOR STANLEY A. WAREN

This study concerns the interrelationship between art and utility as reflected by the history of the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM). More precisely, it presents an analysis of the means by which a unique cultural center has survived, faced by fiscal, artistic, and environmental problems during a period when its role as artistic center of intrinsic merit as opposed to its use as a catalyst for urban renewal has become somewhat ambiguous.

To gain a clear understanding of what is basically an exercise in the politics of survival, the work takes a historical and analytical approach. That is, it sets forth a detailed history of the Academy from its incorporation in 1858 to its present-day artistic and fiscal condition. At the same time, however, the work goes beyond pure description to focus analytically on the role of a cultural center such as BAM in a changing urban environment.

The period chosen for closest analysis is 1966 to 1982, a time of virtual rebirth yet also a period of severe stress on the institution. It was a period marked by innovative programming, creative financing and dynamic administration under the aegis of Harvey Lichtenstein. Mr. Lichtenstein became administrator of BAM on February 15, 1967.

The result is a picture of a center whose successes and failures, near extinction and continued survival reflect in microcosm the issues faced by similar inner-city cultural institutions around the entire country.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are many people I wish to thank for their assistance, cooperation, and support, during the preparation of this study of the Brooklyn Academy of Music. Foremost of all, is my husband, Doctor Harry Baum, to whom this dissertation is dedicated in loving gratitude.

Next, I must thank Doctor Stanley A. Waren, Provost and Vice President of the Graduate School and University Center of the City University of New York, who inspired me to take on this task of research when he was Executive Officer of the Graduate School's Ph.D. Program in Theatre. As chairman of my dissertation committee, his knowledge, editorial skills, and encouragement have been of invaluable assistance in the completion of this work.

Indeed, I wish to thank the members of my dissertation committee, Professor Glenn Loney, for the style and sense of his editing, and the generosity and enthusiasm with which he shares his fund of knowledge about the theatre, and Professor Daniel Gerould, who has been an inspiration to me throughout the course of my doctoral studies.

I am indebted to several kind and generous people at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, whose advice and assistance made this study possible: Harvey Lichtenstein, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Academy, for making himself and the resources of the Academy available to me; Judith E. Daykin, Executive Vice

President and General Manager, for orienting me on the Academy and pointing me toward important sources of information; Sharon Rupert, then Vice President and Treasurer and Rima Corbin, the Senior Press Representative, for their invaluable aid; and members of the Administrative Office Staff for their patience and help.

No work of research is possible without the knowledge and assistance of librarians and desk clerks, and I have been helped by many kind and knowledgeable people at institutions, libraries, and offices around New York City and Brooklyn. I wish to thank: Gloria Grouse of the Landmarks Preservation Commission; Peggy Latimer and Bob Sink of Brooklyn Rediscovery; Russell Bastedo, the Executive Director, and the librarians and desk clerks of the Long Island Historical Society; Harry Veit, History Division Chief of the Brooklyn Public Library; Elizabeth White, Librarian for the Brooklyn Collection in the History Division of the Brooklyn Public Library; indeed, the whole staff of that grand institution on Grand Army Plaza.

Finally, I must thank those teachers, colleagues and friends whose sympathy and support during the past several years I could not have done without. Professor Vera M. Roberts, Executive Officer of the Ph.D. Program in Theatre of the Graduate School, who taught me about theatre history in her courses at Hunter College, has been extremely kind and helpful to me throughout the course of my graduate work. Professor Margaret Knapp has been a good friend and colleague. Ruth MacKenzie, a dear friend, faithfully worked

along with me on this dissertation, typing and proof-reading the manuscript, and adding her wit and wisdom to its preparation. Finally, I wish to thank Doctor Robert Kreisler, whose counsel and support, and whose lively and intelligent interest in my work, I will always remember with gratitude and love.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: Methodology and Background

This dissertation deals with the ongoing tensions between art and utility, tensions which exist in good and bad times and which have shaped the nature of cultural life in America. It is a work whose purpose is the analysis of the complex interrelationships between art and society. It looks at art as an instrument of cultural goals, as well as a tool for the achievement of other goals, not the least of which is urban redevelopment.

Indeed the focus of this effort is the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM) and this institution's impact, or lack thereof, on the revitalization of its economic, social and physical environment. But to a greater degree, it is a study of the fragile balance of often disparate interests which affect both the very existence of a cultural center such as BAM and set the limits of influence on its environment.

Before beginning the analysis, however, a few paragraphs concerning the choice of BAM as a paradigm are in order.

Clearly, BAM is unique in many ways. It has a rich history as a "focal point of the borough's unity"¹ dating

¹The New York Times, 7 September 1935.

from its incorporation in 1859. It has seen long periods of glory and worldwide renown. Yet BAM has undergone decades of somnolence bordering on decay, particularly in the early post World War II period.

Moreover, throughout its history BAM has been faced with an identity problem. Admittedly, it has functioned as "a rallying point, an agency of power"² for Brooklyn's civic and cultural elements, but it has done so in the shadow of its neighbor across the river: Manhattan, the recognized theatrical capital of the country. Thus, because of the "Brooklyn Prejudice,"³ BAM has had an almost continual struggle for artistic survival. In fact, to many New Yorkers BAM was redundant because of what was available in Manhattan, a view reinforced by the success of the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts.

Finally, by the 1960s, the Academy found itself abandoned to a wasteland of inner-city blight. Consequently, no matter how fine the quality or innovative the mounting of its presentations, issues of transportation, ancillary services, and even personal safety began to play a major role in the continued functioning of the center.

²Brooklyn Academy of Music: A Brief Address and Ten Plates, (Printed for the Committee, dated 1 September 1904.)

³Julius Bloom, as quoted by Lisa Coe in her article, "Impressario From Flatbush," "This Week Magazine," New York Herald-Tribune, Section 7, 27 November 1955, p. 20.

Yet this situation was two-edged, for, despite its considerable threat, it also opened opportunities. That is, through the use of its functioning, landmarked building, BAM could now become a catalyst and locus for the redevelopment of downtown Brooklyn; here certainly was a case where art and utility would function in cooperation rather than conflict.

It was during this period that one saw the coming together of the previously mentioned diverse interests ranging from the altruistically motivated National Endowment for the Arts and the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations, to businessmen and investment bankers, realtors and, of course, politicians, including the then Mayor Abraham Beame, a former resident of Brooklyn. It was, as Brendan Gill noted, "a community in process of civic symbiosis."⁴

It was also an era of bridge building between the Academy and its potentially huge but heterogeneous ethnic audience. Afro-Asian Festivals were just one means of reaching these groups. Another was the establishment of a Community Relations/Education Department to develop, among other things, programs for neighborhood schools and local youth groups at BAM. In an effort to improve the quality of life for residents in the vicinity, the Academy began to work in cooperation with minority organizations like the Bedford-Stuyvesant Redevelopment Corporation, on major redevelopment projects.

Of greatest interest to this study is the fact that, during

⁴Brendan Gill, "BAM Grows in Brooklyn," The New York Times Magazine, 24 October 1976, p. 82.

the years 1966 to 1982, the confluence of art and utility have been seen at their clearest through the "selling" of BAM symbolically as a beacon of structural revitalization and in real terms as a reborn cultural center. That the term "selling" is à propos can be seen by the fact that in 1979, the Academy's marketing department had grown to a staff of fifteen with a \$1,250,000 budget.⁵

Whether its influence has been real or symbolic, by the 120th year of its existence the Academy had once again become a major force in the life of Brooklyn.

An analysis of the dynamics of the period 1966 to 1982 comprises the core of this dissertation. It is this period when, with the arrival of Harvey Lichtenstein as administrator,⁶ the Academy assumed the dual role of urban cultural center and locus of neighborhood revitalization. Inner-city arts institutions must be concerned not only with the arts, Lichtenstein has said. They also have "a very real urban responsibility to their community, to their neighborhood, to their city. . . . The arts are going to become a vital and important force for the rebuilding and the revitalization of cities."⁷

⁵"Marketing at the Brooklyn Academy of Music," in-house publication, unpublished, The Marketing and Audience Development of the Brooklyn Academy of Music, 1980.

⁶Actually, Lichtenstein's appointment was formally announced on 15 February 1967, (p. 58 ff).

⁷Harvey Lichtenstein, interview, WNYC radio, 29 August 1980.

The organization of the work is chronological. Chapter II, "The Old Academy: 1858-1903," presents a history of the institution for this period. It is here that we see the Old Academy at its zenith as an independent cultural center in the City of Brooklyn. It was an institution whose eclectic programming covered a broad spectrum from the Gettysburg Address by Booker T. Washington to Edwin Booth's great Shakesperean performances.

After the original Academy was destroyed, a new BAM was constructed, but by that time conditions had changed somewhat. In 1898, Brooklyn had been incorporated as part of Greater New York; the socio-economic nature of the borough was changing, and from now on BAM would face cultural/economic competition from Manhattan. Yet despite these changes, the Academy remained, at least until the early 1930s, a major, internationally renowned artistic center (Chapter III).

The years following the Crash of 1929 were turbulent ones for the Academy (Chapter IV). Deficits were common; bankruptcy loomed; major demographic shifts occurred; the physical environment deteriorated, yet, simultaneously, BAM continued to function as a viable cultural center and escaped an often mentioned ball of the demolition crane.

The core of this dissertation is a study of the revitalization of the Academy and the effects of that renewal on its environment: Downtown Brooklyn. The analysis takes a dual path in tracing the artistic innovation which once again

shed attention and brought renown to BAM, while at the same time focusing on the steps taken to rebuild the area around the Academy; a project which ranged from the construction of a shopping mall to the "gentrification" of neighboring brownstones.

Thus, Chapters V and VI follow the measures taken by the newly-installed administrator Harvey Lichtenstein in his efforts to make the Academy a city-wide, recognized, cultural center, through aggressive fund-raising and avant-garde programming. The discussion and analysis found in these chapters also relate to the constant economic problems faced by the new administration and the ultimate recognition that the survival of BAM would have to be based at least in part on continued deficit spending.⁸ It is also during this period that environmental problems detrimental to luring the audience to the Academy become manifest. The response to both the economic and physical problems, and the resultant virtual "selling" of BAM during the period from 1973 to 1976 are analysed in Chapter VII.

Chapters VIII and IX are devoted to a characterization of the myth and reality of BAM as an "island of health" and an energizer of other enterprises in the community.⁹ These chapters

⁸The thesis that deficit spending was inevitable in the arts when government and business saw support of the arts as their "proper function" was initially expounded by William Baumol and William Bowen in 1966, (p. 46 ff).

⁹Brendan Gill, "BAM Grows in Brooklyn," The New York Times Magazine, 24 October 1976, p. 82.

appraise the limits of influence that such an institution can exert, no matter how dedicated its advocates or dynamic its leadership. Moreover, in this context, the issue of art and utility is once again raised, this time with respect to the detriments or benefits of attempting to establish questionable artistic ventures such as a Brooklyn-based regional theater: The BAM Theater Company.

Finally, Chapter X presents some concluding thoughts regarding many of the questions raised during the course of this dissertation. These include a brief discussion of what the future may hold for BAM in the present decade; the success or failure of BAM as a catalyst for urban redevelopment; the role of any individual such as Harvey Lichtenstein in making an outer-borough cultural institution a success in whatever its aspirations; and, finally, the limiting effects of the social and economic environment on the success of such a program.

The methodology employed in this work utilizes various sources. A number of unpublished documents have been used, such as Samuel Louis Leiter's Ph.D. dissertation, "The Legitimate Theatre in Brooklyn, 1871-1898," (New York University, 1968); Bill Bradley's "A Chronological History of BAM Programming;" and the Landmarks Preservation Commission file on the Brooklyn Academy which, in addition to letters and clippings, contain the "Report of the Landmarks Preservation Commission," which was given as testimony at the public hearing

for designation of BAM as a landmark building and the area around BAM as the BAM Historic District; an unpublished "Ten Year Report," of the Treasurer of the Academy, Sharon Rupert; other in-house publications, and BAM Annual Reports. In addition, excerpts have been incorporated from interviews with some of the principles involved in the rebirth of BAM, most notably, Harvey Lichtenstein. Finally, a number of secondary sources have been used.

This mix of data, ranging from purely descriptive material to critical analyses, and even the subjective perceptions of those directly involved in the operation of BAM, provides us with a characterization of the life of this very special cultural and civic institution.

Before beginning this history of the Brooklyn Academy of Music however, it may be useful to present here a brief characterization of the social history of Brooklyn and the changing environment in which the Academy has functioned from its inception to the present.

According to the historian Henry R. Stiles, 1824 was the "critical year" in Brooklyn's development.¹⁰ As he noted:

¹⁰Henry R. Stiles, A History of the City of Brooklyn Including the Old Towns and Villages of Brooklyn, the Town of Bushwick, and the Village and City of Williamsburg, 3 vols., (Brooklyn: by subscription, 1867-1870), 1:23, as quoted in Rita Seiden Miller, ed., Brooklyn USA: The Fourth Largest City in America, (New York: Brooklyn College Press, 1979), p. 17.

Awakening suddenly, as it were, to an appreciation of the resources and advantages which they possessed and flattered by the evidences of prosperity everywhere apparent, its inhabitants agitated great improvements. Streets and roads, hitherto considered as good enough were now voted to be insufficient, and nuisances . . . new avenues and streets, nearly all . . . paved, sprang into existence with the suddenness of magic. . . . A commodious market was built, a village watch was organized, a municipal court was established, and the efficient force of the fire department nearly doubled. . . . Everywhere the evidences abounded that the hitherto shiftless stand-still village was too near the heart of that leviathan metropolis, not to feel its throb, and be quickened by the rush of life current that circulated through its immense arteries.¹¹

Indeed Brooklyn grew into the third largest city in America by 1855 as a result of the immense growth of Manhattan as the heart-beat of New York City. The Ferry linking the borough of Brooklyn to Manhattan had spawned the great Brooklyn naval industry that would attract waves of European immigrants to its shores.

¹¹Stiles, A History of the City of Brooklyn Including the Old Towns and Villages of Brooklyn, the Town of Bushwick, and the Village and City of Williamsburg, as quoted in Rita Seiden Miller, Brooklyn USA, p. 17.

"It was the sea . . . the sea inspired business of the Ferry that was to expand into a large Brooklyn industry."¹² It was the sea and the Yankees that came to transform the five insular Dutch towns of Kings County after the Revolutionary War, and the waves of German and Irish immigrants who came in the 1840s who made Brooklyn the third largest city in America by January 1, 1855, when the towns were incorporated into the City of Brooklyn.¹³

While dynamic in its opportunities for speculation and growth, Brooklyn was also rigid in its social stratification system which protected the wealthiest one percent of the population (who by 1841 owned forty-two percent of the community's wealth) from the incursions of masses of German and Irish immigrants, who lived the life of "dirt, filth, and poverty."¹⁴

Indeed, as Rita Seiden Miller says, "The tragic essence of Brooklyn as a nineteenth century city was the contrast between poverty linked to ethnicity and the mushrooming opulence based

¹²Ralph Foster Weld, Brooklyn is America, (New York: AMS Press, first published 1967 by Columbia University Press, 1950), p. 6, as quoted in Rita Seiden Miller, Brooklyn USA, p. 15.

¹³Miller, Brooklyn USA, p. 18.

¹⁴Harold Coffin Syrett, The City of Brooklyn, 1865-1898: A Political History, (New York: AMS Press, 1968, first published in 1944 by Columbia University Press), p. 18-19, as quoted in Miller, Brooklyn USA, p. 19.

on commercial and industrial growth."¹⁵ However, it was this wealthy one percent that was instrumental in the formation of the first Brooklyn Academy of Music, as an expression of this society's social, cultural and economic aims.

Again, it was the sea that inspired the creation of yet another artery to Manhattan--the Brooklyn Bridge. However, while Brooklyn was in and of itself expanding as an independent entity, the Act incorporating the New York Bridge Co., which was passed on 16 April 1867, effectively marked the beginning of the end of the City of Brooklyn's independence. As noted by Miller, "Ironically, just as the bridge encouraged the City of Brooklyn to annex the small Kings County towns, so the bridge encouraged New York City to annex Brooklyn."¹⁶ On 1 January 1898, the City of Brooklyn ceased to exist, and the Borough of Brooklyn was born.¹⁷ The Brooklyn Bridge opened on 24 May 1883, "a symbol of American technology, an inspiring landmark for America's immigrant population," says Miller, whose "symbolic impact upon Brooklyn was astounding."¹⁸ With the bridge, Brooklyn's fame became universal.

As David Ment comments, "The forces that shaped Brooklyn in the period between consolidation and the Second World War

¹⁵Miller, Brooklyn USA, p. 19.

¹⁶ibid., p. 24.

¹⁷ibid., p. 25. ¹⁸ibid., p. 23.

were, in many cases, similar to those of earlier periods, although on an even grander scale. Immigration, industrial growth, the national supremacy of New York City--these themes of the nineteenth century continued as themes of the twentieth."¹⁹

The population of Brooklyn by the 1920s was larger than that of Manhattan as a result of the doubling of the population since the turn of the century. One-half of all adults in the borough were foreign born by 1940; "New York was an immigrant town."²⁰ These new immigrants were now mainly southern Europeans, Italians and Jews from Eastern Europe and Russia. Indeed, as Ralph Foster Weld says, "Brooklyn was the largest Jewish center in the world."²¹

Thus, by the period of the Depression, Brooklyn had become a completely urbanized bedroom borough, shuttling a vibrant immigrant society on the final artery to link it to Manhattan center, the New York City subway system, which was in operation by 1920.²² The Brooklyn Rapid Transit Company had already electrified their elevated steam railways connecting Downtown Brooklyn, where the commercial and manufacturing centers were, with Coney Island by 1900.²³

¹⁹David Ment, The Shaping of A City: A Brief History of Brooklyn, (Brooklyn, Brooklyn Rediscovery, 1979), p. 68.

²⁰Ment, (pp. 24-26 ff).

²¹Weld, Brooklyn is America, p. 242, (as quoted in Miller, Brooklyn USA, p. 27).

²²Ment, p. 75. ²³ibid., p. 73.

Indeed, the new Brooklyn Academy opened in 1908 at the conjunction of these great arteries in Downtown Brooklyn.²⁴ The Atlantic Avenue terminal also became the site of Brooklyn's only skyscraper, the Williamsburgh Savings Bank, in 1929.²⁵

As David Ment says, "Only a widespread calamity, like the Great Depression, could cause a general decline in industrial employment in Brooklyn."²⁶ Yet Brooklyn continued to be a major component in the industrial power of New York City in the post-Depression era. David Ment points out that manufacturing employment grew throughout the 1950s and jobs were maintained until the late 1960s. But the 1970s saw a sharp drop in manufacturing jobs, 112,000 in 1976 from 235,000 in 1954.²⁷ Just as suddenly and at the same time, Brooklyn's port shipping and dock services saw a large decline, reflecting the decline of the Port of New York which had once handled more than half of America's imports and exports.²⁸ Brooklyn lost two-thirds of its port related jobs by 1977 after an all time high in 1966.²⁹ Rita Seiden Miller says "The decade of the 1950s was a turning point in Brooklyn's sociological history and population dynamics."³⁰ "A new in-migration-out-migration

²⁴ See p. 29 ff.

²⁵ Ment, p. 80. ²⁶ Ibid. ²⁷ Ibid., p. 91.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 89. ²⁹ Ibid., p. 90.

³⁰ Miller, Brooklyn USA, p. 26.

pattern crystalized," says Miller in describing the borough's white exodus.³¹

Brooklyn, like many of the older cities of America, has experienced population redistribution as well as industrial decentralization in the years after the Second World War. As David Ment points out, these are the two "fundamental elements" in the changing picture of modern Brooklyn.³² Brooklyn's population, he points out, peaked around 1950 and has since declined.³³ And he notes, "The shift of white population to suburban areas has coincided with the rise of Brooklyn as a home of one of America's major black communities."³⁴ And, one of those black communities, Bedford-Stuyvesant, gave America, in the 1960s, "a new American symbol of black poverty due to racist discrimination."³⁵

Ment says that earlier ethnic groups were still a majority in 1970: blacks were one-quarter of Brooklyn's population, Puerto Ricans about one-tenth; and most recently, Brooklyn has begun to experience the newest group of immigrants to America from Asia, the Middle East, and the Americas.³⁶

These two "fundamental elements" have caused the decline of many neighborhoods into virtual wastelands."³⁷ As Rita

³¹Miller, Brooklyn USA, p. 27.

³²Ment, p. 87. ³³Ibid., p. 89. ³⁴Ibid., p. 87.

³⁵Henry Etzkowitz and Gerald M. Scaflander, Ghetto Crisis: Riots or Reconciliation? (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1969), as quoted in Miller, Brooklyn USA, p. 26.

³⁶Ment, p. 89. ³⁷Ibid., p. 93.

Seiden Miller points out, the old immigrants migrated to a booming Brooklyn; the new black and Hispanic migrants have moved to an economically-troubled borough.³⁸ And, she reports that Peter Salins predicts "the combined black and Puerto Rican percentage would be 47.6 in 1980, 58.8 in 1990, and 72.4 by 2000."³⁹

In 1971, when Brooklyn flung the Verrazano Bridge across the Hudson River to Staten Island, it had just been surpassed by Los Angeles as the third largest city in America.⁴⁰ Los Angeles had also taken their beloved Brooklyn Dodgers. Now fourth largest, Brooklyn has experienced great reversals and upheavals throughout its history. Rita Seiden Miller says that a "broad pattern of constant social change has been the central factor in the sociological history of Brooklyn."⁴¹

The borough began to experience a revitalization in the same decade: it saw the public sector's positive response to the restoration of Bedford-Stuyvesant; it experienced the new movement of middle-class restoration of nineteenth century brownstone rowhouses, and the conversion of abandoned loft buildings for "luxury" living quarters; and it saw the efforts made toward the commercial revitalization of the area of Downtown Brooklyn.

³⁸Miller, Brooklyn USA, p. 29.

³⁹Miller, Brooklyn USA, quoting Peter D. Salins, "New York in the Year 2000," New York Affairs, i (Spring 1974).

⁴⁰Miller, Brooklyn USA, pp. 3, 6.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 7.

This dissertation deals extensively with these areas of the social history of Brooklyn in the last fifteen years as they impact on the Brooklyn Academy of Music in its "rebirth" during this period.

CHAPTER II

THE OLD ACADEMY: 1858-1903

It takes every waking moment and
a fair share of mumbling in my
sleep to plot against the
Brooklyn Prejudice and think
of ways to bring people across
the river and into the arts.¹

Julius Bloom, 1955

By 1850 the island of Manhattan had become the theatrical capital of America.² The arts were developed and packaged by Manhattan's great culture industry for export to the rest of America, those "regionals" along "the road." America's talent traveled those roads back to Manhattan, joining a great work force of arts and professionals busy creating a national industry. It has been said that Manhattan had become America's main stage and national headquarters of its theatre. This not always accurate description has generally characterized the uneasy relationship between Manhattan and the rest of the nation, and may be said to exist to this day,

¹Lisa Coe, "Impressario From Flatbush," "This Week Magazine," New York Herald-Tribune, Section 7, 27 November 1955, p. 22.

²Garff B. Wilson, Three Hundred Years of American Drama and Theatre, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1973), p. 133.

say in Washington, Minneapolis, San Francisco, Denver, Dallas, and Louisville. Think, then, if the cities beyond the Lincoln Tunnel feel the sting of their position, how must Brooklyn feel, only a jog away across the Bridge. And though no longer a city (Brooklyn was the third largest city in America by 1860, with a population of 267,000), it is still a great Borough, one of five, of that huge metropolis known as Greater New York, consolidated in 1898, and centered politically, financially, and culturally on the island of Manhattan.

Carol Lopate sees this notion of cultural dependency as a "recurring theme" in the "complex relationship between Brooklyn and the great City of New York across the East River."

Although many Brooklynites like to imagine a time when the borough was independent of New York, Brooklyn has been a suburb for commuters to Manhattan since the early nineteenth century, and its culture has been largely derived from or dependent upon New York's culture. Brooklynites, however, have a strong sense of their independence, and as Brooklyn has moved from village to city to borough, its citizens have endeavored to develop and maintain a lively and autonomous cultural and educational life.³

Cultural independence was the rallying cry of the worthy citizens who built the first Brooklyn Academy of Music which opened on 22 January 1861; and, after a fire destroyed the old

³Carol Lopate, Education and Culture in Brooklyn: A History of Ten Institutions, (Brooklyn, BECA, Brooklyn Rediscovery, 1979), p. 7.

building on 30 November 1903, the cry was used again to interest subscribers for a new building, the present Brooklyn Academy of Music, which opened its doors on 16 September 1908.

Samuel Leiter has written a stage history of the old Academy of Music in his unpublished doctoral dissertation (1968), "The Legitimate Theatre in Brooklyn, 1871-1898."⁴ He reports that on 22 October 1858, a group of prominent citizens met at a public meeting held at the Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute to discuss the building of a concert hall for the Brooklyn Philharmonic Society which had been formed a year before. Everyone sensed that something more was needed by the community, a building that would serve broader cultural purposes. Chairman A. A. Low put it this way:

I hold that we often err in thinking and styling our city the third city of the Union. That the city contains a large number of men, women and children we are ready enough to admit; but until it possesses larger attractions to men of letters, men of science and culture, to men of intellect, in fact to men of every walk and condition of life . . . until it possesses these things in as large a measure as some other cities of the country . . . I would be slow for one, to style our city the third city in the Union.⁵

⁴Samuel Louis Leiter, "The Legitimate Theatre in Brooklyn, 1871-1898," (Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1968).

⁵Brooklyn Eagle, 23 October 1858, as quoted in Leiter, pp. 42-43.

Such civic fervor caused to be erected, on the corner of Montague and Clinton Streets in fashionable Brooklyn Heights, a great Victorian Gothic pile of brick containing a 2,250-seat auditorium, which could be converted, with temporary flooring, into a grand ballroom. Its stage is said to have compared in size to London's huge Drury Lane.⁶ Its heavy Gothic woodwork, murky Moorish decor, and ubiquitous red upholstery made it a properly resplendent setting for many of the great artists and personalities of the nineteenth century. Henry M. Stanley, after finding Dr. Livingston, first told the world how he did it at the Academy.⁷ Charles Kingsley, Henry Ward Beecher, Conan Doyle, Booker T. Washington and a host of world-renowned figures enthralled Brooklyn audiences with their speeches, lectures, addresses, orations, and inspirational messages. A summit of civic pride certainly was attained when the Academy welcomed President Chester Alan Arthur and Governor Grover Cleveland to a reception celebrating the opening of the Brooklyn Bridge on the memorable evening of 24 May 1883.⁸ The Brooklyn Academy could well be proud; by the time that Manhattan's Metropolitan Opera opened its doors in that same year as the bridge, the Brooklyn Academy had already presented some twenty-

⁶Complete dimensions given in Leiter, p. 65.

⁷Bill Bradley, "A Chronological History of BAM Programming," (unpublished manuscript at BAM offices), p. 3.

⁸Ibid., p. 4.

two seasons of superior lectures, operas, concerts and dramas.⁹ Mrs. Abraham Lincoln attended the Academy's first operatic production of that first season, Il Guiramento on 22 January (which had been hastily substituted for La Traviata because of the "public clamor"¹⁰ by the citizens of the "City of Churches") against Verdi's immoral piece. Verdi's work was subsequently performed, however, and La Traviata was used by citizens fighting the initial exclusion of the drama on moral grounds from the halls of the Academy by the Board of Directors. Major Brooklyn newspapers argued for the drama. Those against it said it was a question of Brooklyn's high moral tone; aspersions were cast on the morality of plays and players. Those in favor pointed out that a wild horse tamer by the name of Raney¹¹ had demonstrated his technique on the stage of the Academy the night after the opening of the morally-correct Il Guiramento. Certainly Shakespeare's Hamlet was moral enough for such an audience, and so Hamlet was the first play to be given at the Academy a year later on 23 December 1861, with E. L. Davenport in the title role.¹² Leiter contends that it

⁹Brooklyn Heights Press, 19 December 1965, (as quoted in Report of the Landmarks Preservation Commission, 26 September 1978, Designation List 118.LP-1003, hereafter known as LPC Report), p. 13.

¹⁰Bradley, p. 3.

¹¹Brooklyn Eagle, 21 January 1871, in Leiter, p. 49.

¹²*Ibid.*, in Leiter, p. 55.

was that performance which inaugurated the legitimate theatre in Brooklyn.¹³ Hamlet was to figure again in the history of the early Academy for it was in this role that Edwin Booth made his last public farewell appearance on the stage of the old Academy on the evening of 4 April 1891. An eyewitness recalled that Otis Skinner played Laertes and Modjeska was Ophelia to Booth's Hamlet in that last week of performances of his career.¹⁴ He performed many seasons of classical repertoire at the Academy. The winter season of 1877 at the Academy saw Booth do twelve plays in two weeks, including Hamlet, Othello, The Merchant of Venice, The Taming of the Shrew, Richard III and King Lear, as well as the popular favorites, The Fool's Revenge and The Lady of Lyons.¹⁵ Brooklyn Academy audiences loved Booth.

An unknown author, reporting in The World on Booth's farewell performance, described it thus:

Hamlet was the play and the big auditorium was packed to its utmost capacity, mainly by ladies. It was not only one of the finest gatherings that had ever assembled in the City of Homes, but one of the most demonstrative as well. When the curtain fell upon the last act there was a storm of applause. The green baize ascended and revealed the actor.

¹³Brooklyn Eagle, 21 January 1871, in Leiter, p. 54.

¹⁴William Sidney Hillyer, "Mr. Hillyer Tells More About Old Academy," Brooklyn Eagle, 27 June 1943, p. 8.

¹⁵George C. D. Odell, Annals of the New York Stage, (N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 1938), p. 324.

A second call was made accompanied by cheers and the waving of handkerchiefs.¹⁶

The World goes on to say that Booth was prevailed upon to make a speech after which about a thousand people were waiting for him outside the stage door to press his hand, wave, and cheer as his carriage drove off--presumably across the bridge to Manhattan.

The old Academy presented many of the great histrionic interpretations of nineteenth century theatre: Tomasso Salvini's Othello, Sarah Bernhardt's Camille and Madame Adelaide Ristori's Phedra. Of course, Academy audiences could also see Maggie Mitchell in Little Barefoot and Pearl of Savoy on other nights.

Undoubtedly one of the most ambitious projects the old Academy undertook was the presentation of the great Sanitary Fair, a fund-raising event to raise money for hospital supplies for the Union during the Civil War. (The Sanitary Commission was the antecedent of the Red Cross.) It opened at the Academy on 22 February 1864, and raised over \$300,000 for the charity.¹⁷ Some quite extravagant decorations and entertainments were created: three additional buildings were constructed and connected to the Academy by a wooden bridge; there was a skating pond, a hall of

¹⁶Robinson Locke Scrapbook 78, (Lincoln Center Library for Performing Arts).

¹⁷Bradley, p. 2.

mirrors, and a huge soda-fountain dispensing free drinks. On the great stage, an American Eagle spread its wings, surrounded by little gas jets that spelled out "In Union Is Strength."¹⁸

Except for the first years when, due to inexperienced and "non-theatrical" management, it did poor business, the Academy was even profitable for its stockholders. Stock had risen 300 percent by 1892. But the directors of the Academy realized that their function in the civic life of Brooklyn went beyond investment returns, and it pursued a "general policy of providing a cultural center, free from considerations involving the profit motive."¹⁹ Thus with enlightened capitalists and cash customers, Brooklyn was able to support a lively cultural scene centered in and around the Academy of Music on Montague Street.

It has been conceived as a locus for the city's cultural life, and indeed other cultural institutions, the library, art association, and historical society, followed it to Downtown Brooklyn.²⁰ These were the halcyon years of Brooklyn's autonomous cultural life. But events were happening that would profoundly affect its character and growth. The Brooklyn Bridge may symbolize

¹⁸ LPC Report, p. 13.

¹⁹ Leiter, pp. 61-63.

²⁰ David Ment, The Shaping of a City: A Brief History of Brooklyn, (Brooklyn: BECA, Brooklyn Rediscovery, 1979), p. 53.

Brooklyn's pride, but it also represents, like a Roman road, the takeover of the city of Brooklyn by Manhattan. New York's great network of elevated rail lines was being built in the same decade as the opening of the bridge; by the 1890s, it would have a most sophisticated inter-borough rapid transit system. In the first decade of the twentieth century, almost 9,000,000 immigrants would come through New York harbor, and many stayed to swell the expanding boroughs. By 1900 Brooklyn's population was 1,167,000; by 1940 it would be 2,498,000 and three-quarters of these were immigrants or children of immigrants. Over half the population of adults was foreign born.²¹

By the last decade of the century, political consolidation was inevitable. On 1 January 1898, Greater New York was created by the political consolidation of the other four boroughs with the City of New York. David Ment says of that period that the city's greatness "drew upon all the energies unleashed by capitalism at its height." All its major functions were centered in Manhattan and they "spilled over into Brooklyn and shaped the life of that city as well."²²

²¹Ment, pp. 68-70.

²²Ibid., p. 55.

CHAPTER III

THE NEW ACADEMY: 1903-1936

The old Academy burned down 30 November 1903, six years after the consolidation changing Brooklyn's status from City to Borough. This political change did not occur, however, without a big fight from Brooklyn's political bosses and cultural leaders, fearing loss of power. But the fight had already been lost when, in the 1890s, Brooklyn went into debt to pay for its expansion and had to borrow money from New York City.¹ That consolidation with Manhattan was felt to be a threat to Brooklyn's unique civic and cultural life can be seen in the words of Charles A. Schieren, President of the Board of Directors of the Brooklyn Academy of Music in 1905. In a prospectus calling for subscribers to finance the building of a new Academy, he wrote:

The consolidation with Manhattan had not alone destroyed our municipal independence, it threatened the very existence of our distinctive civic life. . . . These influences (education and cultural refinement) need a rallying point, an agency of power through which they may be

¹Ment, p. 66.

fostered and developed.²

Once again, the Academy of Music would function as a "rallying point" for Brooklyn's civic interests and autonomous cultural life.

The LPC Report says that within six months after the stockholders voted to sell the property on Montague Street for \$617,000,³ a new group of "business men, artists and socialites," led by Martin W. Littleton, then Borough President, formed a committee and raised over one million dollars for the new building.⁴ Bradley quotes in his Chronological History:

To Martin W. Littleton, then borough president of Brooklyn, credit for finally giving life to the successful completion of the magnificent building on Lafayette Avenue, is largely due. Mr. Littleton invited representatives of The Brooklyn League, the Manufacturers Association, and the Brooklyn Institute to meet with him in his office on March 14, 1904, to discuss the possibility of erecting the new Academy of Music.

On March 24, 1904, the appointment of a committee of 100 was authorized at a meeting of citizens at Historical Hall, and this committee was to raise \$1,000,000 by popular subscription to non-assessable stock. The committee was organized with former mayor

²Brooklyn Academy of Music: A Brief Address and Ten Plates, (printed for the Committee, dated 1 September 1904; in files of Landmarks Preservation Commission: Report on BAM Historic District).

³Tribune, 5 February 1904, (LIHS 124), also quoted in Bradley.

⁴LPC Report, p. 14.

Charles A. Schieren as President; with an executive committee of 20, of which Willie L. Ogden was Chairman. A charter of incorporation, operative when \$500,000 stock had been subscribed . . . became operative November 15, 1904. The site was selected on June 30, 1905, and on May 25, 1907 the cornerstone was laid. The building was complete and opened for inspection September 15, 1908.⁵

J. B. Davenport, a "prominent Brooklyn realtor,"⁶ secured a site for the Academy for \$239,000 on 11 July 1905, on Lafayette Avenue between Ashland Place and Saint Felix Street in the fashionable⁷ Fort Greene section. Indeed, when the neighborhood heard about the proposed site there were those who complained that the place would be a "distinct public nuisance."⁸ The Academy shared Saint Felix Street with a row of handsome Italianate brick and stone houses with classical facades built in the 1850s and '60s.⁹ (The neighborhood has recently been designated an historic

⁵Bradley, p. 39. The source of his information is listed Bulletin, vol. 1, 1908-09. Bradley later goes on to report (p. 41) that following the opening of the Academy "appeals for the completion of the subscription to the capital stock of BAM were sent out by the directors to a long list of Brooklynites. The capital stock of the corporation was \$1,300,000 of which \$1,022,000 had been subscribed by 272 persons."

⁶LPC Report, p. 14.

⁷LIHS, BAM Clipping Index, 88:41.

⁸Brooklyn Eagle, 25 July 1906, (quoted in Bradley, p. 21).

⁹LPC Files: research notes for proposed BAM Historic District, (Alan Burnham was director of research).

district.)¹⁰ However, change was in store for the neighborhood, as developers predicted "the expansion of the downtown commercial area."¹¹ The shops and stores of nearby Fulton Street and Atlantic Avenue would intersect with the greatest concentration of transportation lines in Brooklyn, the Academy only one block away from this great network. There the Long Island Railroad's Brooklyn Terminal would share a great underground system with the new subways which were opened by 1920. The Academy was also in a direct line with the Manhattan Bridge which opened in 1909, a year after the Academy did. In the same period, the Brooklyn Rapid Transit Company (BRT) was busy constructing new routes in the area. Apparently the BRT planned to lay down streetcar tracks on Lafayette Avenue and the directors of the Academy attempted to stop them on the grounds that there would be only six feet for carriages, causing a blockage.¹² By the time the Academy opened a year later, the Brooklyn Eagle was already talking about the new motor cars. "Many well-known people used machines in going to the Academy opening."¹³

¹⁰Report of the Landmarks Preservation Commission,
26 September 1978, Designation List 118.LP-1003.

¹¹Lopate, p. 45.

¹²Brooklyn Eagle, 24 August 1907, 14 October 1907,
19 November 1907, in Bradley, p. 24.

¹³Ibid., 15 November 1908, in Bradley, p. 25.

The next twenty years would see the continued growth of downtown Brooklyn culminating in the construction of Brooklyn's only skyscraper, right around the corner from the Academy: The Williamsburg Savings Bank, a neo-Romanesque tower was built at Hanson Place, corner of Ashland Place, in 1929. This building completed the triangle of properties and streets ultimately to be designated, on 26 September 1978, the Brooklyn Academy of Music Historic District (bounded by Lafayette Avenue, Fulton Street, Hanson Place and Ashland Place).¹⁴ Brooklyn's downtown skyscraper-bank opened just in time for the Crash and the ensuing years of the Depression. The next fifty years would see the industrial decentralization of the inner city, population shifts and suburbanization,¹⁵ making it necessary to endeavor to conserve and revive what was once the apogee of a thriving era.

But in 1904, who could foretell the future's socio-economic patterns? The new building¹⁶ would be twice as large as the old one; it was designed for a seating capacity of 5,000 persons. There would be two huge auditoriums--an Opera House seating 2,000 and a Concert Hall with a capacity of 1,400. (Originally the Opera

¹⁴Report of the Landmarks Preservation Commission,
26 September 1978, Designation List 118. LP-1003.

¹⁵Ment, p. 87.

¹⁶The informaton on the physical structure is from Bradley, pp. 39-41, his source of "Architectural Notes" is listed as Bulletin, vol. 1, 1908-09.

House was to have a capacity of 3,000.) A Banquet Hall seats 600 and the large Institute Lecture Hall, 400; there were four small lecture halls each with 100 seats. Support facilities included a studio with space for about fifty offices; another space that could contain about 100 lecturers and employees; a dressing room wing equipped for 250 people, as well as an orchestral room for about seventy-five musicians

. . . so that with the complete use of the building twice a day for 30 weeks in each year, as the projectors expect it will be used, it will reach 3,000,000 people annually.¹⁷

Those seem like extremely optimistic projections today, but not in 1908, apparently. The new building was planned to provide a variety of functions, "educational, musical, dramatic and social whose parts may be distinct or operated together."¹⁸ Indeed, the new Academy building is a most perfect example of how to design a multi-use cultural facility in one supremely elegant building.

The eminent architectural firm of Herts and Tallant was unanimously chosen to design the building, in a paid competition juried by Professor Laird of the University of Pennsylvania, John Carrere of Carrere and Hastings, and William Mead of McKim, Mead and White. Henry B. Herts and Hugh Tallant were noted theatre

¹⁷Bradley, p. 40.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 40.

architects around the turn of the century; they built some of the finest theatres in Manhattan--the New Amsterdam, the Lyceum (the oldest legitimate theatre still operating in New York), the Folies-Bergère (later the Helen Hayes), and the Liberty.

The Academy¹⁹ is a Renaissance eclectic building with a facade of cream-colored brick and polychrome glazed terra cotta tile. Based on the art of Lucca Della Robbia, the building is notable for its simplicity of line, proportion, and arrangement. The main facade is broken up by five entrance doors, over which are five double-height arched windows on the second floor. An elaborate terra cotta cornice set with twenty-two full-sized lions' heads complete with manes gave proportion and beauty to the structure. It was removed in 1953, initially causing the Landmarks Preservation Commission to deny the building its landmark status; it was felt that the removal had altered the "sense of scale." The request was reconsidered and later granted.²⁰ The building is divided into four principal parts: the Foyer, Opera House, Concert Hall, and the offices and lecture halls of the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences. The foyer, which provides access to both auditoriums and the other interior spaces, is an area of some 500 feet, extending along the Lafayette Avenue front of the building, and is approached

¹⁹Physical description of building taken from Bradley, pp. 39-41, as quoted from Bulletin, vol. 1, 1908; and the LPC Report, pp. 14-16.

²⁰Letter, dated 14 April 1975, from Beverly Moss Spratt, Chairman of the LPC, to Harvey Lichtenstein, Director of BAM.

through five front entrance doors, in addition to carriage entrances at either end. A main staircase, forty feet wide by 180 feet long, leads from both auditoriums to the upstairs banquet hall. The two main auditoriums are completely separated. "Each distinctive function of the building is completely isolated."²¹ The backstage sections are conveniently connected and offer ample room for scene vaults, stage equipment, property rooms, and green-room. Great care was taken with safety precautions, fireproofing, and acoustics. Marquees were added over the entrance doors in 1912.

The new Academy's first season, 1908-1909,²² was successful by any standards. On 1 October 1908, the first concert, a song recital in the new Opera House, was given by Madame Schmann-Heink in her only U. S. appearance that year. The great Caruso inaugurated the Opera season with Geraldine Farrar and the Metropolitan Opera Company in Faust on 14 November 1908. He returned in January to sing in Il Trovatore, (4 January), Tosca, (7 January) and Carmen, (14 January). He would sing from the new stage of the Music Hall many times in the next decade; and on 11 December 1920, on the stage of the Academy during a performance, Caruso collapsed of the illness that soon killed him. Arturo Toscanini directed the first Metropolitan Opera Company season at the Academy (Gustav Mahler would the

²¹ Bulletin, as quoted in Bradley, pp. 39-41.

²² Brooklyn Academy of Music, Chronological File: Productions, 1908-1926.

following year). The Academy presented the glittering international dance stars Isadora Duncan, (15 December), and Anna Pavlova, (5 April), in its inaugural season as well. Ignace Paderewski gave his Chopin Centennial Concert there 1 March. And the Boston Symphony Orchestra began a tradition of its Brooklyn Season at the Academy with five programs that first year. In that first season, David Belasco presented The Warrens of Virginia with Mary Pickford and Blanch Yurka (19-24 October), and Booker T. Washington gave an address commemorating the anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation on New Year's Day, 1909.

This partial list of attractions presented in the Academy's first season marks it as a major presenting house of international stature, and is typical of the quality of its offerings then. The first quarter century of its production history²³ is replete with seasons of great artists and personalities that are a mirror of the tastes and interests of the times. In 1910, Admiral Perry lectured on "The Discovery of the North Pole," Mahler conducted five New York Philharmonic concerts, and Caruso had police bodyguards backstage to protect him from the Black Hand's extortion demands of \$15,000. Of course, Helen Keller and Anne E. Sullivan appeared (1913). In 1916, Rabindranath Tagore read his poetry, and Madame Sarah Bernhardt, in an "Extraordinary Return Engagement" played six roles in three days (three matinées). They were

²³Brooklyn Academy of Music, Chronological File: Productions, 1908-1926.

Madame X, Camille, Hecube, Joan of Arc, Cleopatra and L'Aiglon. In the 1918-19 season, Yvette Guilbert gave a song recital and Ilya Tolstoy lectured on Bolshevism. In 1924-25 the Ballets Russes and Feodor Chaliapin appeared, and there were poetry recitals by Carl Sandburg and Edna St. Vincent Millay.

John D. Rockefeller gave \$20,000 to the Academy in 1905.²⁴ This donation is representative of the change in the Academy's financial picture since its fairly solvent Montague Street days. It would become increasingly necessary to seek outside sources of financial support to run the Academy.

The Academy may well have been the first performing arts center in America, and also the first to introduce the concept of deficit spending in the arts. A little more than half a century later, the Rockefeller Foundation (along with the Ford Foundation and others), seeded the somnolent Academy with a healthy sprinkling of cash, prompting a rebirth of activity in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

In an effort to allay some of its recurring financial problems, the Academy quite early entered into "cooperative arrangements"²⁵ with the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences. The Institute built and operates the Brooklyn Museum. (It also operates the Brooklyn Botanic Gardens and the Brooklyn

²⁴Bradley, p. 41, (quotes Brooklyn Daily Eagle, 26 December 1905, from the BAM Scrapbook 1, p. 87).

²⁵Lopate, p. 46.

Children's Museum.) The Institute's building burned down in 1890 and after selling the site, the trustees planned a museum of major proportions which was built with New York City funds. The Museum opened its first wing in 1897, but the project only reached completion in 1925, and then only after the plans were cut down to one-sixth of the original conception.²⁶ The Institute during these years found rooms for their exhibits and lectures at the old Academy among other places. The Institute was thus an interested party at that meeting, on 24 March 1904, at the offices of Brooklyn Borough President Littleton to discuss the building of a new Academy. As a result of rental agreements between the Institute and the Academy,²⁷ the Institute located its offices in the new building when the Academy opened in 1908, and used Academy lecture rooms for its programs and events.

In the years following the opening of the new Academy, the Institute assumed more and more of the Academy's financial responsibilities; in return, the Academy stockholders gradually donated up to forty percent of their corporation shares to the Institute.²⁸ But the Academy's annual deficits became increasingly larger. The reported deficit for 1935 was \$47,000, and the accumulated

²⁶Lopate, pp. 36-73.

²⁷The New York Herald Tribune, 28 June 1908, (LIHS 126:16).

²⁸"Drive is on to Save Academy of Music," The New York Times, 7 September 1935, (LIHS 20:101).

deficit was \$445,508.²⁹ "The building never has shown a profit," says The New York Times article on the drive to save the Academy.³⁰ The Academy went bankrupt in 1935 and had to be saved from foreclosure and possible demolition. At this point, Brooklyn Borough President Raymond V. Ingersoll stepped in with a plan to save the Academy, announcing the "urgent need to preserve and strengthen Brooklyn's great cultural center and the focal point of the borough's unity."³¹ The New York Times, reporting on the bankruptcy and new plans, noted that Van Sinderen, the President of the Academy's Board of Directors, and Edward C. Blum, the President of the Institute, were not as enthused as Ingersoll about the merger. However, Ingersoll got Dewitt Arthur Forward, a Vice-president of the National City Bank, to head a fund-raising committee to subscribe 5,000 new members to the Institute over the next year giving it additional income to allow the Institute to take over complete ownership of the Academy in 1936.³²

By 1951, the City of New York would acquire the Academy building from the Brooklyn Institute, for lack of sufficient funds to maintain the structure.³³ On 29 June 1951, the Board of Estimate

²⁹"Drive is on to Save Academy of Music," The New York Times, 7 September 1935, (LIHS 20:101).

³⁰ ibid. ³¹ ibid.

³² LPC Report, p. 14, and "Academy Title Finally Vested in the Institute," Brooklyn Daily Eagle, 2 September 1936.

³³ Brooklyn Eagle, 1 August 1954.

approved the take-over and agreed that the City would "turn it back for a period of ninety years to its present owners, the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences for one dollar a year."³⁴ In 1971, the Academy was legally separated from the Institute and the Saint Felix Street Corporation took over its management,³⁵ releasing the Institute from its last "cooperative arrangement" with the ever-needy Academy. The Institute then finally took residence in its Museum on Grand Army Plaza at Eastern Parkway and the City of New York acquired the property, an historic building, and, at the same time, a financial and civic responsibility in Downtown Brooklyn.

³⁴LPC Files, and Long Island Historical Society Clipping Index, 93:79.

³⁵LPC Report, p. 15.

CHAPTER IV

THE FIGHT FOR SURVIVAL: 1936-1966

Julius Bloom is credited with turning the fortunes of the Academy around when it was threatened with extinction during the Depression.¹ He began working for the Academy in 1936, as an editorial and program consultant with little administrative or financial expertise--his background being in music and the liberal arts. However, he soon took over as Director² of the Academy and presided over the next twenty years of continuing chronic insolvency and the "Brooklyn Prejudice."³ In 1955, in an interview with Lisa Coe for "This Week Magazine," Bloom identified that syndrome which may explain why the Academy has never broken even, in spite of it being what Variety called "The biggest show biz factory in the world."⁴ He told Coe that the greatest obstacle had always been what he called the "Brooklyn Prejudice."

¹ Lisa Coe, "Impressario from Flatbush," "This Week Magazine," New York Herald Tribune, Section 7, 27 November 1955, p. 20.

² The Daily News, 11 January 1957, Kings Section, late three-star edition, p. 1k. (He became Associate Director in 1938 and Director in 1940.)

³ Coe, New York Herald Tribune. ⁴ Ibid.

Why is it . . . that a New Yorker who will pay \$6.60 for a concert in Manhattan won't take a twenty-minute subway ride to see the same program in a better concert hall with better acoustics and at one-half the price? Because it's in Brooklyn; something about the mere mention of the name makes New Yorkers smirk.⁵

The feeling had become widespread that "the important musical events took place not at the Academy, but at the Metropolitan Opera House or Carnegie Hall in Manhattan."⁶ These statements pinpoint the cultural snobism and on-going competition that exists between Brooklyn and Manhattan. Bloom, however, gave both quality and value to his audiences, as the Academy had always done. He told Lisa Coe, "Only the unique will draw cash customers from the other boroughs." He offered his audiences "exclusive performances" of artists and personalities; in 1955 they could see some 300 events for a fifteen dollar subscription fee. Indeed, audience attendance was close to half a million in that year (which was far, however, from the 1908 projection⁷ of 3,000,000 people annually).

Despite its size, Brooklyn had become unable to support a major cultural institution without drawing on audiences from Greater New York, and, in particular, Manhattan. By 1934, Brooklyn's population had multiplied 128 times, while the nation

⁵Coe, New York Herald Tribune.

⁶Lopate, p. 46.

⁷Bulletin 1 (1908-09), in Bradley, p. 39.

as a whole grew at a ten to one ratio. It was the first most populous city in the State; second in the nation; and fifth in the world, with a population of 2,273,300.⁸ But more than one-half of all adults in Brooklyn were working-class immigrants⁹ who may not have had the leisure, language, culture, or money to pursue the "higher arts" at the Academy. Perhaps, too, the new Academy, because of its size, was unable to break even. Many of those 5,000 seats had to be filled by the educated middle-class of Manhattan and, to a lesser extent, the other boroughs, who have traditionally made up the serious theatre and concert-going audience of New York. Urban education and culture in Brooklyn was transformed, said David Ment, by "the need of ethnic and religious groups to maintain their traditional cultures and values even as they entered the mainstream of American life."¹⁰ The Academy has attempted to respond, through the decades of the twentieth century, to the changing demographics of its local community. Through its programming, community services, and hiring practices, particularly in the late 1960s and 1970s, the Academy hoped to develop potential local audiences. Transformation is a theme in the history of American cities and their cultural institutions, as new masses arrive from the black rural South, Latin America and Asia. The shift of white population to the suburbs coincided

⁸Brooklyn Eagle, 3 September 1934.

⁹Ment, p. 70. ¹⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 80-81.

with the rise of Brooklyn as the home of one of America's major black communities.¹¹ This move was concurrent with industrial redistribution of older cities like Brooklyn, which removed job opportunities from the new masses inhabiting the inner cities. These changing neighborhoods have had a great effect on the institutions which have remained in them, and this is in part the story of the Brooklyn Academy of Music in the twentieth century.

Julius Bloom unexpectedly resigned as Director of the Academy in January 1957, after twenty years of waging battles to save the Academy from extinction. He handed in his resignation Thursday, 10 January 1957, at 4:00 p.m., at the regular quarterly meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences.¹² The move "jolted the borough's cultural set,"¹³ said The Daily News. Many of those at the meeting were also surprised; Thomas A. Donnelly, the Treasurer, found out only a short time before the meeting. Borough President John Cashmore, who could not attend the meeting, had not known about it. Bloom said his reasons were "purely personal" and "bound up with plans for my future" which he could not yet divulge.¹⁴ The trustees appointed a search

¹¹Ment, p. 87.

¹²The Daily News, 11 January 1957, late three-star edition, p. 1k.

¹³Ibid. ¹⁴Ibid.

committee to find a new director. Bloom said that he would stay on until the end of the spring concert season, and he would plan the coming season 1957-1958.

Bloom had presided over the Academy's fight for survival, from bankruptcy to threatened demolition. In 1951, the Institute was thinking of selling¹⁵ the building for \$550,000 to Long Island University, who were going to convert part of it into a gymnasium.¹⁶ There was even talk of paving it over for a parking lot.¹⁷ It was at that point that the City of New York took over the property from the Institute, agreeing to turn it back for a dollar a year.¹⁸

The City take-over kept the Academy from going under, but by 1956, its situation was critical. The Academy's accumulated deficit was \$750,000.¹⁹ A campaign got underway to subscribe 5,000 new members to save the Academy. Fred Rider, the publicity and advertising manager of the Brooklyn Union Gas Co., was named regional chairman of the 1956-57 membership drive.²⁰

¹⁵LPC Clippings Files.

¹⁶The Daily News, 7 June 1951, (LIHS 93:65).

¹⁷Glenn Loney, "BAM--Awash, Afloat," New York, 26 September 1977, p. 52.

¹⁸The Daily News, 29 June 1951, (LIHS 93:79).

¹⁹New York Journal American, 31 July 1956.

²⁰New York World-Telegram, (Brooklyn edition), 1 August 1956.

(Brooklyn Union Gas Co. has participated in many projects through the years to preserve the Academy and surrounding neighborhood.)²¹ Editorials appeared in the New York newspapers regarding the Academy's value to Brooklyn. They urged Brooklynites to fight for their institution--which was "built at the cost of \$1,300,000 to give Brooklyn culture," as the Journal American put it.²² "How about you, Mr. and Mrs. Brooklyn? Are you going to help?" it demanded. They "must not permit one of their most notable landmarks to meet such a fate," it declared. Eluding that fate would not be easy. The Academy's deficit was more than \$44,000 for the fiscal year of 1956-57. By the time Bloom resigned in January 1957, the Academy's accumulated deficit since 1936 was more than \$800,000, according to Donnelly.²³ By the end of March 1957, the Journal American was able to report that "the appeal was answered and the threat was removed."²⁴ There would be, then, a season 1957-58. Julius Bloom, however, would not be with them, for he had resigned three months earlier on January 10.

Bloom had been an indefatigable champion for the Academy. A year before his resignation, he had told The Daily News "Some

²¹Brendan Gill, "BAM Grows in Brooklyn," The New York Times Magazine, 24 October 1976, p. 82.

²²New York Journal American, 31 July 1956.

²³The Daily News, 11 January 1957, Kings section, (late three-star edition), p. 1k.

²⁴New York Journal American, 28 March 1957.

people . . . would like to think of us as a country cousin. But there is no operation in Manhattan that has such a span of activity. I can't think of any type of program that is not represented here. . . . Just name it and we've got it," he said.²⁵ Indeed, Variety, in that same year, had called it "the biggest show biz factory in the world." The subject of that Daily News interview was, however, the proposed sports stadium which was to be built in the vicinity of the Academy, with a baseball stadium for the Brooklyn Dodgers. The News wanted to know how Bloom felt about that. He welcomed the idea, he said, and he hoped that it would lead some people to discover the Academy. He thought it might also help some music-lovers discover baseball.

Of course, the sports center was never built, and the Brooklyn Dodgers eventually went to Los Angeles. The Academy, unlike the Dodgers and Julius Bloom, remained, tied as it was to an historic landmark. The City spent about \$77,000 annually for its maintenance.²⁶ In September 1953, \$250,000 was designated for renovations.²⁷ The interior was re-done and the stage of the Concert Hall was enlarged; eighty seats were lost, bring the total down to 1,236. The LPC Report²⁸ says that the interior of the Concert

²⁵The Daily News, 4 May 1956, Kings section, p. k24.

²⁶ibid.

²⁷The Brooklyn Eagle, 20 September 1942, in LPC Clippings File.

²⁸LPC Report, p. 15.

Hall was remodeled to make it "more adaptable for drama, dance and musical performances." It reported that the exterior was cleaned and the terra cotta parapet was replaced by stone and brick for safety reasons. This was the first time that major alterations were made on the building.²⁹ Removing the cornice caused difficulties in 1976 when the Academy sought to have the Landmarks Preservation Commission designate it an historic building. A great deal more money would be spent on the building in the following years as the Academy increasingly modernized its facilities.

Obviously, there was a commitment on the part of "Mr. and Mrs. Brooklyn" to preserve the Academy rather than abandon it to demolition. But by the end of the 1950s, it was becoming increasingly obvious that operating a cultural center the size of the Brooklyn Academy was impossible without government and business support. In the next decade, deficit spending would become acceptable in the arts. William Baumol and William Bowen's book,³⁰ for the Twentieth Century Fund in 1966, made income gaps acceptable in the arts, says Joseph Zeigler, by proving their inevitability.³¹

²⁹LPC Report, p. 15.

³⁰William Baumol and William Bowen, The Performing Arts: The Economic Dilemma, (N.Y.: Twentieth Century Fund, 1966).

³¹Joseph W. Zeigler, Regional Theatre: The Revolutionary Stage, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1973), p. 34.

When cultural institutions realized that government and business were ready to support the arts as their "proper function," they inevitably became non-profit cultural institutions.³² Zeigler cites the Arena Stage, which began as a profit-making entity, and through the "extraordinary administrative savvy" of Zelda Fichandler, was one of the earliest to benefit from foundation assistance.³³ "She was the best writer of grant proposals in the regional theatre. . . an acknowledged genius of theatrical subsidy on the East Coast."³⁴

Zeigler believes that another justification for deficit spending was the establishment in 1965 of the National Endowment for the Arts by the federal government.³⁵ An infusion of a great deal of money from government, business, and private foundations in the mid-sixties caused a growth in the arts throughout the country. And the Brooklyn Academy, along with other "regionals" such as the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, was given birth and re-birth. The phenomenon became known, under the Kennedy administration, as the "cultural explosion."

³²Zeigler, Regional Theatre: The Revolutionary Stage, p. 34.

³³ibid., p. 35.

³⁴ibid.

³⁵ibid., pp. 34-35.

The cultural explosion was actually a myth, says Zeigler,³⁶ promulgated by Alvin Toffler's The Culture Consumers (1964), and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund panel report The Performing Arts: Problems and Prospects (1965). Baumol's and Bowen's analysis in The Performing Arts: The Economic Dilemma, proved that

. . . the natural increase in population and per capita income had given the appearance in the early 1960s of increased interest in the arts, but the percentage of people interested in the arts had not grown significantly.³⁷

The important thing, said Baumol and Bowen, was that people acted as if there was a cultural explosion. The Ford Foundation began its operations in 1957, the Rockefeller Foundation in 1963, and the N. E. A. in 1966. The impact of this trend on the arts in America has been impossible to measure. For one thing, a network of new multi-million dollar arts complexes dot the country today--all seeking subsidies from a no-longer "Great Society." A string of very talented arts administration professionals, some of whom were trained through Ford and Rockefeller arts-management internships, also have been jarred by the bottoming-out of support for non-profit arts institutions.

Both the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations have played crucial roles in the revitalization of the Brooklyn Academy of Music. But

³⁶Zeigler, p. 63.

³⁷Ibid.

their influence would not be felt until a decade after Julius Bloom's departure in 1957, with the arrival of Harvey Lichtenstein as director in 1967. Lichtenstein had received an internship for cultural administrators sponsored by the Ford Foundation in 1964. He spent his internship at Lincoln Center where he "successfully initiated" the 1964-65 dance and opera subscription series³⁸ for the New York City Ballet and the New York City Opera at the New York State Theatre. He left Lincoln Center to join the Academy in 1967. In 1970 the Academy was the recipient of two "substantial grants" from the Rockefeller Foundation and the Ford Foundation.³⁹ These and other grants from corporation and private foundations, and city, state, and federal governments, generated at the Academy what Brendan Gill called by 1976, "a veritable Vesuvius of incessant cultural activity, lighting up the sky over Flatbush Avenue in a fashion readily visible even from myopic Manhattan."⁴⁰

By 1976, the Academy was described as "a house of smash hits."⁴¹ But about twenty years earlier, when William McKelvey Martin stepped

³⁸ Jack Robbins, New York Post, 4 August 1969, (in BAM Pamphlet File: 1960-69, at Brooklyn Public Library, Brooklyn Collection, History Division, Grand Army Plaza; hereafter referred to as BPL).

³⁹ "The Talk of the Town," The New Yorker, 14 November 1970, pp. 44-45.

⁴⁰ Brendan Gill, The New York Times Magazine, 24 October 1976, p. 69.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

in as director, the place was known as "a loser."⁴² Martin took office on 1 July 1957.⁴³ He was a former manager of the Cleveland Orchestra and the Pittsburgh Symphony Society. "The combination of physical deterioration, a paucity of funds, and lackadaisical audience response had turned BAM into a loser against the Manhattan-based, strongly-entrenched competition."⁴⁴ This was Lillie Rosen, writing in Cue about the problems the Academy had had since the Depression. "By the late fifties and early sixties, only its Opera House was being utilized--and that mainly on week-ends," she reported. It was operating at "less than thirty percent capacity a few years ago," Harvey Lichtenstein told Brendan Gill in 1976 in The New York Times Magazine.⁴⁵ When he first took over there were audiences of 500 in a 2,000-seat house, he told Glenn Loney in New York.⁴⁶ This was the situation during the difficult years of William McKelvey Martin's administration.

The Academy celebrated its Centennial year in March 1959,⁴⁷

⁴²Lillie F. Rosen, Cue, 6-19 August 1977.

⁴³The New York Times, 7 September 1958, (LIHS 115:58).

⁴⁴Rosen, Cue.

⁴⁵Gill, The New York Times Magazine.

⁴⁶Glenn Loney, "BAM--Awash, Afloat," New York, 26 September 1977, p. 54.

⁴⁷It was incorporated 15 March 1859, (Bradley, p. 1).

and, in 1960, it was giving away "house gifts" to members-- hair dryers and electric frying pans.⁴⁸ One still got more than 300 cultural events for fifteen dollars; travel and adventure films were the biggest draw.⁴⁹ Academy membership actually rose by 573 to 3,960.⁵⁰

An untitled newspaper clipping⁵¹ in the BAM Pamphlet File, 1960-69, at the Brooklyn Public Library says that membership climbed to 4,187 by the 1962-63 season. It reported that the Academy had "a rocky season" financially and ended up with a record deficit of \$52,000; the City paid \$120,000 toward maintenance costs, but the maintenance and administrative bill was \$285,000. The Academy was "forced to dip into a fast-shrinking reserve of one million dollars in unrestricted funds held by the Institute."⁵² Reporting on the 1964-65 season, The World Telegram⁵³ revealed that the Boston Symphony Orchestra threatened to cancel its concert series

⁴⁸The New York Times, 19 September 1960, (BPL/BAM File: 1960-1969).

⁴⁹The Daily News, 17 June 1960, (BPL/BAM File: 1960-1969).

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Untitled newspaper clipping, dated 1963, (BPL/BAM File: 1960-1969).

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³The World Telegram, no date, (BPL/BAM File: 1960-1969).

due to lack of attendance. The Boston Symphony had played at the Academy for the past seventy-five years it recalled. But the new Philharmonic Hall at Lincoln Center, was "drawing capacity audiences," it said. Oddly enough, the Metropolitan Opera considered reviving its performances at the Academy's Opera House in 1965, after almost thirty years' hiatus.⁵⁴ It had discontinued its traditional performances in 1936, the year after the bankruptcy and Julius Bloom's first year at the Academy. The World Telegram reported that "subscriptions for the 2,207-seat house were 1,200" for the 1964-65 season.⁵⁵ In 1964, the Academy was still offering gift premiums to subscribers: "a combination Chip & Dip Salad Set . . . a three-piece set of luggage . . . a wonder knife . . . an electric coffee maker."⁵⁶

And yet, 1964 also saw the start of a \$750,000 rehabilitation project which had been approved by Mayor Wagner on 25 February 1962 after public hearings by the Board of Estimate.⁵⁷ The project

⁵⁴The World-Telegram & Sun, 24 February 1965, (BPL/BAM File: 1960-1969). The Metropolitan Opera Company's last regular season at the Academy ended in 1936-37. The Met began playing at the Academy in 1884, and presented fifteen to twenty evenings a season. Its first performance was on 5 January 1884.

⁵⁵The World Telegram, no date, (BPL/BAM File: 1960-1969).

⁵⁶ibid.

⁵⁷Newspaper clipping, (no name), 30 January 1964, (BPL/BAM File: 1960-1969).

had been delayed so that a study of the Academy could be made by Robert W. Dowling, the City's cultural executive. "Two weeks ago," reported a clipping, dated 30 January 1964, in the Brooklyn Library's BAM File, "Mr. Dowling met with Borough President Abe Stark and they recommended to Mr. Morris that the start of the rehabilitation be expedited. The 1963-64 Capital Budget includes the necessary funds."⁵⁸ Newbold Morris, Commissioner of Parks, had announced the program of repairs that day. The Department of Parks had maintained the \$20 million cultural asset" since the City take-over in 1952.

By 28 August 1964 The World Telegram⁵⁹ was able to report that the first stage of the renovation was nearly completed. Two hundred forty-five thousand, six hundred eighty-nine dollars were spent on new oil heating and AC electrical equipment; a fireproof staircase was put in backstage, and the thirty-eight dressing rooms received a new paint job and new sinks and toilets. In the summer 1965, the City planned to put in new seating and carpeting in the Opera House and completely air-condition the building. The area surrounding the Academy was also to be beautified and illuminated, for it was "drab by day and dark by night."⁶⁰ Actually, audiences

⁵⁸Newspaper clipping, 30 January 1964, (BPL/BAM File: 1960-1969).

⁵⁹The World Telegram, 28 August 1974, (BPL/BAM File: 1960-1969).

⁶⁰ibid.

were afraid to travel to the Academy now, even if it was only twenty minutes from mid-Manhattan on the Seventh Avenue Express. People were afraid of encountering muggers, and there was no suitable restaurant to go to after the performance. The Academy stood all but abandoned in a wasteland of urban blight. What had been, at the turn of the century, an area fraught with the promise of growth, bustling with business and social activity, was now an inner-city in ruins, its buildings abandoned, vandalized, torched, its people suffering from poverty, unemployment, discrimination.⁶¹ But forces of artistic, social and economic change were in ferment in the sixties, and, as a result, a few trees were planted in the wasteland.

⁶¹Ment, pp. 93-94.

CHAPTER V

A RENEWED DYNAMISM: 1966-1969

After the "greening" of America came the "brownstoning."¹ Brownstoning was a movement back to the inner-cities by middle-class families "seeking the opportunity of home ownership within an urban milieu."² The nineteenth century rowhouses in many of Brooklyn's neighborhoods became desirable again--like those in Fort Greene where the Academy was built. The movement caused property values and rents to rise, and threatened to dislocate low-income tenants.³ However, the City and the business community saw the movement as a way to revitalize the languishing inner-cities; as money would be attracted to these areas, jobs and businesses would be generated, thereby helping the unemployed who lived there. The movement was aided in three ways: First the City's tax policies were "helpful" to the brownstoners; second the City's Landmarks Preservation Law was useful, "under which many brownstone neighbor-

¹The reader can refer to issues of Phoenix, a newspaper of Brooklyn communities in renewal, edited by Mike Armstrong, for documentation of the brownstone revival and urban revitalization in this period of Brooklyn's history, the late 1960s and the decade of the 1970s.

²Ment, p. 95. ³Ibid., p. 96.

hoods have obtained the benefits of designation as historic districts;" and third, businesses, "such as the Brooklyn Union Gas Company, have also encouraged renovation."⁴ The banks, though, needed to be encouraged to offer mortgage financing.⁵

At the same time, a movement of revitalization in Brooklyn's "slum" neighborhoods occurred. Bedford-Stuyvesant, an area of poor, black neighborhoods adjacent to the Academy, connected by Fulton Street, a major shopping artery, was marked for redevelopment in 1967. The struggle of blacks for political control of their communities produced in the 1970s leaders like Shirley Chisholm and organizations like the Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation,⁶ a coalition of community leaders and outside sponsors who sought funding from government and private sources for job creation and housing-improvement programs. "The experience of Bedford-Stuyvesant," says David Ment, "demonstrates the importance of public policy for the rejuvenation of Brooklyn's older neighborhoods."⁷ Apartments were renovated, brownstone fronts cleaned and painted, job training and employment were offered to local residents, businesses were encouraged, and home ownership was made attractive with mortgage and tax subsidies from the city and federal governments. Bedford-Stuyvesant's Restoration Plaza,⁸ a complex of old and new buildings housing stores, offices and a theatre, was an expression of the community's aspirations for a vital role in the City's life.

⁴Ment, p. 96. ⁵Ibid. ⁶Ibid., pp. 94-95.

⁷Ibid., p. 95. ⁸Ibid.

Seth S. Faison, of Brooklyn Heights, became Chairman of the Board of the Academy's governing committee in 1966.⁹ He saw that a "new potential audience" was out there among the brownstoners and the black middle-class in the surrounding neighborhoods, and he wanted to reach out to them in an effort to break "the Brooklyn Syndrome."¹⁰ The Brooklyn Syndrome, Faison told the New Yorker, was a feeling among the old Brooklyn families, the traditional supporters of the Academy, that "Brooklyn was dying and their job was to keep things going a little longer with a few Boston Symphony concerts, lectures, travelogues, and 'Tito Chico' evenings," (his description for ethnic song-and-dance ensembles).¹¹ Clive Barnes, then the dance critic for The New York Times, said Faison "was determined to make the Academy join both New York and the 20th century."¹²

As Clive Barnes remembers it, Lew Lloyd had shown him around the Brooklyn Academy's Opera House, and they had discussed "what a perfect theatre it would be for full-time resident dance companies."¹³ A year or so later over lunch, at a Wall Street club, he remembered "stressing" to Seth S. Faison, who had just been appointed to the Academy's governing committee, "that it was in the field of dance

⁹"The Talk of the Town," New Yorker, 14 November 1970, p. 44.

¹⁰ibid. ¹¹ibid.

¹²Clive Barnes, "Will Brooklyn Ever Be In?" The New York Times, 2 November 1969, Section 11, p. 2.

¹³ibid. He seems to be talking about the year 1965. Mr. Lloyd was the Academy's press officer.

that the Academy could first make an international reputation."¹⁴ Faison didn't seem to think that the possibility was at all "pie-in-the-sky." Indeed, he set about to do just that. "First," says Barnes, "the composition of the board subtly changed. Then they went out looking for a new director of the Academy."¹⁵ The Times reported on 4 December 1966, that William McKelvey Martin "submitted his resignation to the Academy's governing committee . . . [which] will become effective when the committee has found a successor."¹⁶ A couple of months later, on 15 February 1967, the Times reported that Harvey Lichtenstein had been named Director and would take office on 20 February as "the fifth director since 1900."¹⁷

Clive Barnes, for some reason, thought that the choice of Harvey Lichtenstein "was a little surprising."¹⁸ But, Barnes himself had pointed out that Lichtenstein "had made a name for

¹⁴Ruth Robinson, "Brooklyn Academy of Music Reawakens From Its Cultural Limbo," The New York Times, 8 February 1971, p. 29. Faison was a Vice-president of Johnson and Higgins, Insurance Brokers, and he lived in Brooklyn Heights. The meeting referred to would have taken place in 1966.

¹⁵Barnes, p. 2.

¹⁶The New York Times, 4 December 1966, p. 79.

¹⁷Ibid., 15 February 1967, p. 38.

¹⁸Barnes, p. 2.

himself by originating and organizing the subscription schemes for the New York City Ballet and the New York City Opera."¹⁹ "The Talk of the Town" said it was Lichtenstein's success with the New York City Ballet that "brought him to the attention of Seth S. Faison . . . [who was] instrumental in getting Lichtenstein appointed."²⁰ And, Lichtenstein had even been a modern dancer with a Black Mountain background²¹ before turning to arts administration and the Ford Foundation. Had not Barnes "stressed" the key role that dance could play in the Academy's programming? And, finally, Lichtenstein was a "native son, born in Bushwick in 1929, a product of the borough's schools, kindergarten through Brooklyn College."²²

Clive Barnes saw very clearly the problems that Harvey Lichtenstein had to solve. "The first has been funding, the second has been programming, and the third is quite simply that of making Brooklyn fashionable."²³ Lichtenstein went to work on all three "like a tornado," said Barnes.²⁴ With an enlightened board in his corner, he gathered about him a "keen and apparently gifted" crew: "a kind of artistic mafia, consisting of Lew Lloyd,

¹⁹Barnes, p. 2.

²⁰"The Talk of the Town," New Yorker, 2 November 1969, p. 44.

²¹Jack Robbins, New York Post, 4 August 1969, (BPL/BAM File: 1960-1969).

²²ibid.

²³Barnes, p. 2. ²⁴ibid.

Walter Price, Tom Kerrigan, Ron Christopher, Judith Blinken and one or two others."²⁵ In the following year, they put together the funding and the programming that made Brooklyn "fashionable" by 1968.

The two major sources of funding the Academy received were from the City, under the Lindsay administration, and from the Ford Foundation, under W. McNeill Lowry. They received \$786,000 from the City.²⁶ And they received a grant from the Ford Foundation for \$100,000, which Harvey Lichtenstein was going to use to "give modern dance a home."²⁷

Glenn Loney, in New York, called dance "a cornerstone of BAM's rebirth."²⁸ And indeed it has been, due to Lichtenstein's knowledge of the dance world combining with what turned out to be the propitious time in America for the growth of dance, America's latest entertainment growth industry. Lichtenstein told McCandlish Phillips, in The New York Times, that his dance program was designed to build a "unique identification" between the companies and the Academy.²⁹ Lichtenstein told Nancy Moran, in The New York Times

²⁵Barnes, The New York Times, p. 2.

²⁶Nancy Moran, The New York Times, 5 January 1969, Section II, p. 1.

²⁷*Ibid.*, p. 7.

²⁸Glenn Loney, "BAM--Awash, Afloat," New York, 26 September 1977, p. 53.

²⁹McCandlish Phillips, "Alvin Ailey Loses Base at Brooklyn Academy of Music," The New York Times, 28 July 1970, p. 21.

for Sunday, 5 January 1969,

I was aware that although most modern dance companies are based in New York, few of them have a permanent place to perform. So the first thought that sprang to my mind was, 'Let's give modern dance a home!' Then I thought 'Why stop there? Let's make the Academy the dance center of the city!'³⁰

Lichtenstein and his "artistic mafia" got the \$100,000 grant from the Ford Foundation, then proceeded to put together a season of dance for 1968-1969 which was to help to make its reputation as an important center for the dance.

In the spring of their 1967-1968 season,³¹ they presented a week of Merce Cunningham, and single performances by Paul Taylor and Glen Tetley. It would be the season of 1968-1969, however, that would bring the Academy an overnight reputation as an important dance center. As Lichtenstein told Moran, they "scheduled an eight-week fall season with Martha Graham, Paul Taylor, Anna Sokolow, Alwin Nikolias, and Jose Limon. Then we asked three dance companies to take up residence--Merce Cunningham, Alvin Ailey, and Eliot Feld."³² They had tried to get the American Ballet Theatre too, which, Lichtenstein pointed out, was "one of the finest companies in the world, and it didn't have a home in New York."³³ The American Ballet

³⁰ Moran, The New York Times, p. 7.

³¹ Chronological File: Productions 1966-1976, unpublished file, Office of the President, Brooklyn Academy of Music, (hereafter referred to as CF).

³² Moran, The New York Times, p. 7. ³³ *ibid.*

Theatre did not take up residence in Brooklyn. It did play the Academy however, with guest artists Carla Fracci and Erik Bruhn, from 10 December 1968 to 5 January 1969.³⁴ Lichtenstein had forgotten to mention another interesting dance company he booked for one performance on 1 March 1969--Twyla Tharp and Dancers.³⁵

"That was the first long run for modern dance here," Lichtenstein recalled to Glenn Loney.³⁶ The problems attendant upon housing not one, but three modern dance companies would manifest themselves a little later. By 1977, Lichtenstein would say to Lillie Rosen in Cue, "When I started out, in my eagerness I bit off more than I could chew. We committed ourselves to Merce Cunningham, Alvin Ailey, and Elliot Feld as resident companies in the 2,200-seat Opera House when we really didn't have the money or the audience to pull it off."³⁷ And, speaking of the Feld and Ailey companies, he said to Glenn Loney, "The audiences weren't there for a building of this size."³⁸ Lichtenstein may have "overreached" as he said of that period,³⁹ but the effort had its effect.

³⁴CF. ³⁵ibid.

³⁶Glenn Loney, New York, 26 September 1977, p. 54.

³⁷Lillie Rosen, Cue, 6-19 August 1977, p. 99.

³⁸Loney, New York, p. 55. ³⁹ibid.

The phenomenon across the East River was given great coverage in the press. Clive Barnes, in The New York Times, said of the Academy:

It has, in a remarkably short time, emerged from its honorable position as a cultural mausoleum and social dodo, to become one of the centers of the dance world, the founder of a new theater group, and the organization that has brought Grotowski to New York.⁴⁰

The avant-garde, it seems, had also found a home, and the excitement it engendered caused many a Manhattanite to re-discover Brooklyn. "Instant Publicity!" said Lichtenstein of the Living Theatre's engagement at the Academy in the fall of 1968.⁴¹ People came in droves hoping for tickets to long sold-out performances⁴² of Mysteries and Smaller Pieces, Antigone, Frankenstein, and Paradise Now.⁴³ That same fall, Julian Beck and Judith Malina and their troupe had caused Yale students to riot in the streets of New Haven, bringing down the police and fire departments upon them.⁴⁴ At the Academy, the Living Theatre caused a few "white-gloved hands" to be wrung by some of the

⁴⁰Clive Barnes, "Will Brooklyn Ever Be In?" The New York Times, 2 November 1969, Section 11, p. 2.

⁴¹Moran, The New York Times, p. 1. ⁴²Ibid.

⁴³CF: 1968-69. The Living Theatre played 2-21 October and returned in the spring to play four performances 25-29 March, of Frankenstein and Paradise Now.

⁴⁴Robert Brustein, Making Scenes: A Personal History of the Turbulent Years at Yale, 1966-1969, (New York: Random House, 1981), pp. 68-69.

older members.⁴⁵ But the avant-garde was ensconced at the Academy, and before the season was over, audiences would see a hefty dose of modern and even post-modern dance. As a matter of fact, the Academy had become a major venue for the post-modern movement.

In the spring of 1969, Robert Wilson's work was seen for the first time at the Academy. The Life and Times of Sigmund Freud,⁴⁶ by the post-modern director and designer of avant-garde operas and imagist theatre spectacles, was presented. Wilson produced several major works at the Academy in the following years; however, the American premiere of his acclaimed production of Einstein on the Beach, was actually presented at the Metropolitan Opera House at Lincoln Center.⁴⁷

An avant-garde theatre company had taken up residence at BAM as well. The Chelsea Theater Center was a non-profit professional theater that produced "unknown works."⁴⁸ They had produced some thirty-nine since 1965, presented with a no-admission policy at the Episcopal Church of the Holy Apostles on Ninth Avenue in Manhattan.⁴⁹ Robert Kalfin, the founder and artistic director of the Chelsea

⁴⁵Moran, The New York Times, p. 1. (See also Moran, p. 7.) There were 2,000 subscription members in 1968-1969.

⁴⁶CF: 1968-69.

⁴⁷Mel Gussow, "'Einstein' = Met x Avant-Garde²," The New York Times, 19 November 1976, p. C8. Einstein on the Beach opened Sunday evening, 21 November, 1976.

⁴⁸The New York Times, 23 October 1969, p. 54.

⁴⁹The New York Times, 6 November 1968, p. 34.

Theater Center, and Harvey Lichtenstein announced, on 6 November 1968 that the Center would 'make the Brooklyn Academy its home for the next two years.'⁵⁰ Chelsea was installed in the newly-redesigned Playhouse, previously the 400-seat Lecture Hall on the third floor. The new stage was designed by Robert Mitchell, in cooperation with MacFadyen & Knowles, architects.⁵¹

Theatre companies, like dance companies, have not had long residencies at the Academy. The Chelsea Theater Center's ten-year residency at the Academy, however, was unique. Rarely do artistic groups stay together as long as ten years in America; such groups do not easily become institutional. (Lichtenstein was eventually to turn to England in his effort, still unsuccessful, to establish a resident theatre company in the Academy.) The advantages of residency for both the Academy and the companies seem clear. The companies received rehearsal space, a rent and utility-free theatre, with spaces for costume and prop shops, office and storage space, all amounting to a large subsidy.⁵² As for the Academy, resident companies were a key to grant awards, and it was worth the risk that talent might attract critics and audiences.

Lichtenstein's plans for the Academy seem to have been based on the Lincoln Center model. Lloyd Hezekiah told *The New York Times* in the fall of 1967, 'We are making a definite attempt to make the Academy a performing arts center, like the Lincoln Center.'⁵³

⁵⁰The New York Times, 6 November 1968, p. 34. ⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Glenn Loney, New York, 26 September 1977.

⁵³ Edwin Bolwell, The New York Times, 11 September 1967, p. 28.

He said that their long-range plans saw resident performers attached to the Academy. Clive Barnes called the Academy, with its three theatres, "a Lincoln Center before Lincoln Center."⁵⁴ Lincoln Center's three halls of music, theatre, and dance, house resident companies: The Metropolitan Opera; the New York Philharmonic; the New York State Ballet; the New York State Opera; and the Vivian Beaumont Theater. Lincoln Center's success theoretically stems from its resident companies. Theatre at the Vivian Beaumont, however, remains a failure; theatre has just never taken root there.

At this time, the Ford Foundation and others were awarding grants for the establishment and operation of resident companies and resident artists. Reasonably, fiscal stability, albeit deficit-subsidized, might be possible through successful resident companies. Thus, Lichtenstein must have reasoned, a new image of the Academy as the home of exciting new companies could be developed--sparking subscription campaigns and, one would hope, a great increase in subscription sales to fill all those seats. It would not be easy, even with the unprecedented media coverage and critical acclaim. The reason was the old "Brooklyn Prejudice." Said Walter Terry, ". . . people from Manhattan don't want to go to Brooklyn even if it is to see some of the best dancing to be found in America, indeed, in the world."⁵⁵

⁵⁴Clive Barnes, "Dance Palace Brightens Peeling Brooklyn Area," The New York Times, 3 October 1971, p. 15.

⁵⁵Walter Terry, The Saturday Review, 4 January 1969.

Lichtenstein also hoped to "change the Academy's image" among its neighbors. "If the Academy is to have a meaningful role, it must adapt to serve this inner city," he told Kathleen Teltsch, in The New York Times on 18 August 1967.⁵⁶ Some of the ideas under consideration were:

Formation of interracial theater and dance companies. . . . Developing a state-financed project that will send professional players into neighborhood schools to dramatize lesson materials in history, literature and other subjects. . . . Making Academy facilities available to a local youth group for its productions. . . . Busing students from other communities to the Academy for special daytime shows that will reflect the interests of different ethnic groups.⁵⁷

The Academy made attempts to be responsive to the social and cultural needs of inner-city residents in the surrounding neighborhoods.

Lloyd Hezekiah, a former anti-poverty worker in Bedford-Stuyvesant, was appointed in September 1967 to the new post of Assistant Director. Hezekiah had been with the Cultural Arts Division of Bedford-Stuyvesant Youth in Action, Inc., an anti-poverty agency. Hezekiah told Edwin Bolwell of The New York Times, that his appointment was a "definite recognition of the realities of the mid-20th century. . . .It is a positive and visible

⁵⁶ Kathleen Teltsch, "Brooklyn Academy Changes Its Tune For Neighbors," The New York Times, 18 August 1967.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

sign of the new direction the Academy is taking for total involvement in the life of all Brooklyn."⁵⁸ Hezekiah was to work with "the blacks and Puerto Ricans from Fort Greene and Bedford-Stuyvesant," trying to show them, said Nancy Moran, also of The New York Times, how the Academy was "relevant to their lives."⁵⁹ Every week of the 1968-1969 season, 2,500 school children came to see the shows performed by black groups. Alvin Ailey, in residence that year, was to teach dance in the spring to young people in the neighborhood for twenty-five cents a lesson. Thousands of free tickets were distributed that season to anti-poverty program offices, tenant organizations, and schools.⁶⁰ "Black kids really turn on to Martha Graham," said Lichtenstein.⁶¹

It was Hezekiah's talents as financial manager and house manager, however, that were more in demand in the following year when Lichtenstein was trying to put the Academy on the map by "pleasing middle-class audiences."⁶² Nevertheless, the administration remained committed to forging links with the surrounding communities. In the following years, a busy Community Relations/

⁵⁸ Edwin Bolwell, "Assistant Director is Appointed by Brooklyn Academy of Music," The New York Times, 11 September 1967, p. 28.

⁵⁹ Nancy Moran, "Beethoven and Brahms--or Beck?" The New York Times, 5 January 1969, Section 11, p. 7.

⁶⁰ *ibid.* ⁶¹ *ibid.* ⁶² *ibid.*

Education Department developed within the organizational structure of the Academy, with its own director and staff.

The Academy's budget for the fiscal year of 1969 was \$900,000.⁶³ Most of the money came from the substantially-increased grant from the City. The Lindsay administration gave \$785,000 to help pay the bills that year, representing a significant jump in City subsidy of the Academy. The City had always met the annual maintenance which, in the sixties, was \$100,000 to \$150,000. The Institute met the deficit in 1969,⁶⁴ as usual; it had been \$100,000, the year before.⁶⁵

The other major source of financial support at the outset of Lichtenstein's administration was the Ford Foundation, which would give increasingly larger grants to help establish resident companies at the Academy. Ford followed up its initial \$100,000 grant for the history-making 1968-1969 dance season with another grant of \$166,000 "for twelve weeks of performances by modern dance companies over a two-year period 1969-1970 and 1970-1971."⁶⁶ A decade later in 1979, Ford would give the Academy a \$400,000 matching grant to

⁶³Moran, The New York Times, p. 7. ⁶⁴ibid.

⁶⁵Kathleen Teltsch, The New York Times, 18 August 1967.

⁶⁶"Academy Gets Ford Grant," The Daily News, 27 August 1969, p. 2B.

establish a classical repertory company.⁶⁷ Corporate support for the Academy grew under Lichtenstein's tenure, though unhappily none of these companies funded by corporate, private and government agencies ever took firm root at Brooklyn's major arts center.

⁶⁷Richard E. Shepard, "New Troupe Will Stage Classics in Repertory at Brooklyn Academy," The New York Times, 6 February 1979, p. 1.

CHAPTER VI

ECONOMICS AND ENVIRONMENT: 1969-1973

In spite of the excitement generated by Lichtenstein's programming and publicity, it remained difficult to operate with low attendance and a fast-growing deficit. However, the Academy became the recipient of significant additional grants. The Rockefeller Foundation gave \$350,000 in 1969 to be equally shared by the four resident companies at the Academy--three dance and one theatre.¹

August Heckscher, the City's Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs Administrator announced the gift. Heckscher said at the news conference, on 22 October 1969, that the grant was "a vote of confidence not only in the merits of the institution and the artists involved, but also in the rebirth of Brooklyn as a community that could offer 'a good life to its residents.'"² The companies would receive \$150,000 in the first year and \$100,000 and \$150,000 a year for the next two years. The money would not be used for company operating expenses, Lichtenstein said,

¹Louis Calta, "Brooklyn Academy Given \$350,000," The New York Times, 23 October 1969, p. 54.

²Ibid.

but some of it, he said, would be used for "salaries, commissions for composing, for decor, scenery, costumes and rehearsals."³

The Academy's budget had doubled in two years, but Lichtenstein said at the news conference that the Academy's capacity to meet the deficit had also increased with grants from the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations, among others.⁴

Academy presentations for Season 1969-1970 would seem to justify any criterion of support for the arts. The Academy brought over the Polish Laboratory Theatre Institute of Actor's Research of Wrocław, under the leadership of Jerzy Grotowski, who had written Towards a Poor Theatre and whose experimental theatre was receiving considerable interest in America. Grotowski had given a four-week course at New York University's School of the Arts in the fall of 1967.⁵ But Harvey Lichtenstein was mostly responsible for the American debut of Grotowski's troupe.⁶ They were to perform The Constant Prince, Akropolis, and Apocalypse starting October 16 for a six-week engagement, "at the scene of The Living Theater's Sturm and Drang," Margaret Croyden said in

³Calta, The New York Times, 23 October 1969, p. 54.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Jerzy Grotowski, Towards a Poor Theatre, (N.Y.: Simon and Schuster, 1968), p. 243.

⁶Clive Barnes, "Theatre: Grotowski's View of Reality," The New York Times, 18 October 1969, p. 36.

the Sunday Times, October 5.⁷ Ironically, the event was not to happen at the Brooklyn Academy, but at another location, the Washington Square Methodist Church in Greenwich Village, New York City, albeit, under the auspices of the Brooklyn Academy of Music. Grotowski had limited the audience to "100 people at \$100 a throw," said Clive Barnes, reporting on the premiere.⁸ He was trying, said Barnes, to produce "a non-verbal theatre of the spirit," and had to be "uncompromising" even if he seemed unnecessarily "aloof" and perhaps even publicity-conscious in "attracting attention to himself."⁹ "Have you any idea how many people have suffered rebuff, if not insult, in their attempts to see the Polish Laboratory Theatre?" asked Eric Bentley, in an open letter to Grotowski in the Sunday Times on 30 November, 1969.¹⁰ "Church doors have not suffered such blows since Luther drove great nails into them," he said.¹¹ Left banging at the church doors was Harvey Lichtenstein himself. Clive Barnes described the happenings at the premiere, and disclosed some of the surrounding

⁷Margaret Croyden, "The Most Avant-Garde of Them All?" The New York Times, 5 October 1969, Section 2, p. 1.

⁸Clive Barnes, The New York Times, 18 October 1969, p. 36.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Eric Bentley, "Dear Grotowski: An Open Letter from Eric Bentley," The New York Times, 30 November 1969, p. 7.

¹¹Ibid.

publicity about the change of venue and the limiting of the audience, in his review of The Constant Prince in the Times, 18 October 1969:

Everyone, especially the Brooklyn Academy of Music, expected the performance to take place in Brooklyn. But the facilities of Brooklyn were not to Mr. Grotowski's liking, so there started a frantic search for a church, vacant, adaptable and amenable for Grotowski's purpose.

Eventually they found a suitable and very splendid venue, and built, very quickly indeed, Mr. Grotowski's beautiful theater. . . .

. . . Harvey Lichtenstein, director of the Academy, and the man most responsible for Grotowski's presence, naturally felt that he and his hard-pressed cohort, together with a couple of people who had actually paid for their tickets, might unobtrusively stand at the back. The feeling was misplaced. They were thrown out.¹²

Thus, another lesson in "poor theatre" was given Lichtenstein. At the same time, the Chelsea Theater Center back in Brooklyn had changed its admission policy. The Chelsea Theater Center's initial presentation of the 1969-1970 season was the highly-regarded environmental production of LeRoi Jones' Slave Ship. This production marked the first time that Chelsea charged admission, although free student tickets were made available. Chelsea had been dedicated to a free-admission policy from the outset of its

¹²Clive Barnes, "Theatre: Grotowski's View of Reality," The New York Times, 18 October 1969, p. 36.

existence.¹³ It was ironic that this production was so successful that a Broadway commercial run was being considered.

The Eliot Feld and Alvin Ailey companies each presented exclusive two-week seasons in the fall and spring; Merce Cunningham offered a two-week spring season.¹⁴ However, by the end of that season, one dance company would break away from the Academy, and a year later, another would leave. The New York Times reported, on 28 July 1970, that Alvin Ailey's company was departing by "mutual disagreement," citing lack of rehearsal space and the desire to appear in other venues in New York City.¹⁵ And Eliot Feld's American Ballet Company discontinued residency at the Academy after low attendances in Season 1970-1971.¹⁶ Feld had attracted only the "hard-core" dance audience. Clive Barnes conjectured of the Feld company's "disappointing" season that "you cannot build a theater on an elitist audience."¹⁷

¹³The New York Times, 6 November 1968, p. 34.

¹⁴CF: 1966-76.

¹⁵McCandlish Phillips, "Alvin Ailey Troupe Loses Base at Brooklyn Academy of Music," The New York Times, 28 July 1970, p. 21.

¹⁶Mel Gussow, "Ginsberg Play Gets Academy Booking," The New York Times, 12 September 1971, Section 1A, p. 19.

¹⁷Clive Barnes, "Feld is Fine, is Brooklyn Ailing?" The New York Times, 16 May 1971, Section 11, p. 23.

In addition to box-office support, Lichtenstein needed still more foundation support. Inflation, too, was a continuing problem. Recognizing this, the New York State Council on the Arts gave a sum of \$7 million in 1970 to 134 cultural organizations in the state which were in financial difficulties. "Unfortunately," said Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller, announcing the awards at a news conference in September 1970, "inflation has placed our cultural institutions under pressures that have been forcing some to the point of bankruptcy."¹⁸ He cited the Brooklyn Academy as one of the organizations that had been saved from "imminent collapse" by a grant of \$250,000 for an orchestral series, a dance festival, and programs for children and senior citizens.¹⁹

Lichtenstein applied for landmark status for the Academy building in 1970,²⁰ hoping perhaps to insure its survival. In addition, the Saint Felix Street Corporation was created in 1970, as a private, non-profit corporation which would operate the Academy independently of the Brooklyn Institute.²¹ Seth S. Faison

¹⁸"\$7 Million Given to Arts by State," The New York Times, 11 September 1970, p. 36. Lincoln Center received no more than \$250,000 but the Repertory Theater of Lincoln Center received a separate grant of \$133,500. The New York Shakespeare Festival received \$150,000.

¹⁹ *ibid.*

²⁰ George Gent, "Brooklyn Opera Gets a Face-lifting," The New York Times, 15 August 1970, p. 52.

²¹ Ruth Robinson, "Brooklyn Academy of Music Reawakens from its Cultural Limbo," The New York Times, 8 February 1971, p. 29.

was Chairman of the Saint Felix Street Corporation, which was named after the street of brownstone houses bordering the Academy--one of the triangle of streets in Fort Greene that would eventually be designated by the Landmarks Preservation Commission as the BAM Historic District. Donald Blinken was named President of the Saint Felix Street Corporation; other board members were Richard C. Sachs, Martin Carter, Richard M. Hexter, Gilbert Kaplan, Alan J. Patricoff, Peter C. R. Huang, and Lichtenstein.²² In the year following incorporation, the Academy and the Institute were officially separated, and the Academy became an independent cultural institution. New York City funds, which, until then had been channeled through the Institute, would now be transferred directly to the new parent body.²³ Anna Kisselgoff reported, in The New York Times on 14 October 1971, that the move was "expected to facilitate the Academy's own fund-raising efforts and also free the Institute of responsibility for the kind of performing arts deficits the Institute's trustees felt the parent group could no longer support."²⁴

The experience of the Academy in its efforts to fund its operations seemed to bear out the Baumol and Bowen thesis regarding the economic dilemma of the performing arts. Government and business did increasingly assume responsibility for meeting

²²Robinson, The New York Times, 8 February 1971, p. 29.

²³Anna Kisselgoff, "Brooklyn Academy to Sever its Link with Parent Body," The New York Times, 14 October 1971, p. 51.

²⁴ibid.

deficits that were growing ever larger with inflation. It also seemed to be true that the percentage of people who attended cultural events had not increased enough to offset the rising costs of operating large cultural institutions.²⁵ In addition, the Academy had to compete for the same people who made up the audience for cultural events in Manhattan. For instance, forty percent of subscribers to the Academy's dance festivals lived in Manhattan.²⁶

The Academy sought to encourage a similar Manhattan theatre-going audience with the help and interest of the leaders of Manhattan's social and business world. As Clive Barnes said two years earlier, the Academy would have to become fashionable if Lichtenstein were to succeed in creating his miracle of rebirth. As if in answer to Barnes, Joan K. Davidson, head of the New York State Council on the Arts and also the Welch Grape Juice Company heiress, pronounced Brooklyn "fashionable" at the 2 February 1971 American debut of Maurice Bejart's Ballet of the 20th Century.²⁷ The Brooklyn Academy of Music threatened to become chic. Alan J. Patricoff, President of New York magazine and a board member of the Saint Felix Street Corporation, told The New York Times at the opening that he liked to take his

²⁵see above, p. 48.

²⁶Kisselgoff, The New York Times, 14 October 1971, p. 51.

²⁷Robinson, The New York Times, 8 February 1971, p. 29.

friends to a soul-food luncheonette on Flatbush Avenue named "Little Bo Pig." Linda Fosburg, who had become manager of audience and community development, told the Times that she encouraged many of her friends to visit the Academy; among them, City Councilman Carter Burden and his "best-dressed" wife Amanda, and Mrs. Frederic Byers III, daughter of William S. Paley, Board Chairman of CBS. Ruth Robinson of The New York Times, said of the glittering opening, that it was "on a par with almost any at Lincoln Center or a Broadway first night."²⁸

Probably the most important event of the 1970-1971 season, however, was the appearance of The Royal Shakespeare Company in their production of A Midsummer Night's Dream, directed by Peter Brook, who was the first link in the Academy's British connection. The Brook production moved to the Academy after its Broadway run and played fifteen performances (16-27 March 1971).²⁹ The engagement was the occasion of much fanfare. Dan O'Malley reported in The New York Daily News on the many happenings that lit up the whole building.

²⁸Robinson, The New York Times, 8 February 1971, p. 29. (The Bejart season at the Academy was made possible by a \$50,000 grant from the International Telephone and Telegraph Co.)

²⁹New York Post, 1 March 1971, p. 14.

Following the performance, the Academy took on the air of a Mardi Gras. On the first floor a jazz combo entertained. . . . There was Southern-fried chicken, hot dogs and tastings of the grape. Also on the first floor were showings of musical comedy and monster films of the '30s. . . .³⁰

O'Malley noted that Borough President Sebastian Leone and State Controller Arthur Levitt were in attendance. Brook told the New York Post that he was planning to use Brooklyn, along with Paris and Iran, as a base for his international experimental theatre center.³¹ British theatre was to assume ever increasing importance in Lichtenstein's programming.

Unlike critical success in the theatre, revitalization of an area is not an overnight happening. The area surrounding the Academy was still desolate, and potential subscribers were still afraid to venture. With "muggers and marauders on the streets, regular attendants stay home," Lichtenstein explained to Polly Kline in the Sunday News, in 1973.³² Clive Barnes described the Academy in 1971 as standing "like an Emperor amid alien ruins."

The area is run down and the Academy is surrounded by odd hotels and strange cafes. It all looks slightly seedy, like a movie back-drop for a New

³⁰Dan O'Malley, The Sunday News, 28 March 1971, p. B46.

³¹New York Post, 1 March 1971, p. 14.

³²Polly Kline, The Sunday News, 7 January 1973. (BPL/BAM File: undated; contains clippings from 1969-76.)

York gangster film. Posters peel from walls and the bars look faintly menacing. It is not the kind of place where you would expect to find a great theatre.³³

However, revitalization projects were underway, and others would follow throughout the seventies. The Academy was "in the heart of the Downtown Brooklyn Redevelopment area," where new office and commercial buildings were to locate.³⁴ The areas surrounding the Academy were getting a "facelift" with two federal and private urban renewal projects.³⁵ The Saint Felix Street side of the Academy was safer and more attractive since the brownstone revival on that street. New sodium lights brilliantly lit the one-block walk from the subway, allaying "pedestrian fears."³⁶ Furthermore, a 200-space parking lot was under construction across the street from the Academy.³⁷ The parking lot was to become a welcome source of revenue.

Renovations on the Academy would also continue throughout the decade. Plans were made in 1970 to restore the building, and Edward F. Knowles, a Manhattan architect was "given the job of returning

³³Clive Barnes, "Palace of the Dance Lends Elegance to Peeling Section of Brooklyn," The New York Times, 3 October 1971, Section 1A, p. 1.

³⁴George Gent, The New York Times, 15 September 1970, p. 52.

³⁵Joseph Gale, "Future Looks Bright at Brooklyn Academy," The Sunday News, 18 February 1973, p. 36.

³⁶ibid. ³⁷ibid.

the building to its original state wherever possible."³⁸ The Opera House had been painted in 1970, and, in the next year, the exterior of the building was to be steam-cleaned, and the cornice that had been removed was to be replaced by one of fiber-glass.³⁹ The Academy would be ready for landmark status--finally granted in 1978.

Academy programming moved from "modernist" to "ethnic" in 1971. Lichtenstein presented a two-season Afro-Asian Festival of folk dance and other ethnic performing groups between 1971 and 1973. He told Mel Gussow, of The New York Times, that the festival represented a "more popular kind of performance" which he felt might relate much more to the Academy's "big black and Puerto Rican audience."⁴⁰ He was probably referring to a "potential" audience, for the Academy was not attracting such a group in any large numbers at that time. The audience had been drawn from the predominantly white middle-class living in Manhattan.

As far as Manhattan is concerned,
we may have had to aim at Man-
hattan at first in order to
gain a kind of prestige and
make companies want to play

³⁸Gent, The New York Times, 15 September 1970, p. 52.

³⁹*ibid.*

⁴⁰Mel Gussow, "Ginsberg Play Gets Academy Booking," The New York Times, 12 September 1971, Section II, p. 19.

here, to make Brooklynites sit up and take notice. It's almost as if we had to go 'abroad' to make our name, but our market, our audience and our loyalty is here in Brooklyn.⁴¹

Lichtenstein was talking about the "2.5 million residents in the Academy's back yard."⁴²

Lichtenstein told Joseph Gale, in The Sunday News 18 February 1973:

We need to build a relationship with the communities in Brooklyn . . . particularly those around us--Ft. Greene, Park Slope, Flatbush, Brooklyn Heights--and get to know key people there, go to official meetings, neighborhood task force meetings, coffee parties, and get them to talk about us.⁴³

Those particular communities also contained a considerable number of white middle-class brownstoners who, perversely, were still displaying the "Brooklyn Prejudice." "Mr. and Mrs. Brooklyn" were still "Manhattan-oriented."⁴⁴

Clive Barnes chided Brooklynites for not supporting one of its "most remarkable and valuable possessions." Artistically, the Academy was "a marvel," said Barnes. "But it had not been altogether successful in getting audiences."⁴⁵

⁴¹ Joseph Gale, "Future Looks Bright at Brooklyn Academy," The Sunday News, 18 February 1973, p. 36.

⁴² Ibid. ⁴³ Ibid. ⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Clive Barnes, "Dance Palace Brightens Peeling Brooklyn Area," The New York Times, 3 October 1971, Section 1A, p. 15.

The Afro-Asian Dance Series of Seasons 1971-1972 and 1972-1973, however, did offer a program for both elitist and minority audiences in either Manhattan or Brooklyn. Between 1971 and 1973 the Academy presented the national dance companies of Senegal, Morocco, Sierra Leone and Jamaica, the Classical Dancers of Mali, the Darpana Dance Company of India, the Khmer Dancers of Cambodia, the Ritual Acrobats of Persia, and the Whirling Dervishes of Turkey.⁴⁶ At the same time, contemporary dance remained highly visible. Merce Cunningham was still in residence, and one could have seen Martha Graham, Murray Louis and Alwin Nikolais, Paul Taylor and the Netherlands Dance Theatre.⁴⁷

Theatre also reflected the trend to some ethnic programming with the arrival of the Jewish State Theatre of Bucharest, playing The Dybbuk and The Pearl Necklace in repertory, and the Nuria Espert Company of Spain with Yerma. The Academy's own Chelsea Theater Center presented a new musical play by Archie Shepp about the black jazz singer Billie Holiday, called Lady Day,⁴⁸ another successful Chelsea production to be considered for Broadway.

The Academy inaugurated a season subscription to Chelsea productions in 1971. For \$10 or \$18 on week-ends, subscribers could see four major productions, like Allen Ginsberg's Kaddish

⁴⁶CF: 1966-76.

⁴⁷ibid. ⁴⁸ibid.

or Jean Genet's The Screens, as well as "Brown Bag" workshop productions that brought New York audiences such plays as Peter Handke's My Foot, My Tutor and Self-Accusation.⁴⁹ In the following year, Chelsea expanded its operations and opened another theatre space in Manhattan. Michael David, the Executive Director of the company said then that its roots were in Brooklyn--Manhattan was "an annex."⁵⁰

The Academy was still in trouble financially. Lichtenstein told Mel Gussow, in The New York Times on 12 September 1971, that the financial situation was "critical."⁵¹ In order to increase income, they were inaugurating a membership program; for \$25, or \$40 for two, one could buy a booklet of coupons for fourteen events (theatre, dance and music). Individual tickets were no higher than \$6.95. Gussow called the Brooklyn Academy "one of the best performing arts bargains in any borough."⁵²

A year-and-a-half later, Polly Kline in The Sunday News, reported that the number of subscribers rose from 3,000 to 5,000

⁴⁹ Mel Gussow, "Ginsberg Play Gets Academy Booking," The New York Times, 12 September 1971, p. 19.

⁵⁰ The New York Times, 4 November 1972, (BPL/BAM File: undated; contains clippings from 1969-1976.)

⁵¹ Gussow, The New York Times, 12 September 1971, p. 19.

⁵² *ibid.*

in 1972. The total attendance for the Season 1972-1973 was 420,000, and the Academy projected 520,000 for the year ending 30 June 1973.

The deficit for the fiscal year 1971-1972 was \$350,000 to \$400,000.⁵³ Lichtenstein told Kline that they had not paid off their previous deficit and "after a year or so it begins to strangle you. We're going to have to cut back next year."⁵⁴

The local political leaders, however, were "very much on our side," Lichtenstein told Kline.⁵⁵ They had encouraged the City to help. The Academy had, by then, a \$2,000,000 annual budget, and the New York City Parks, Recreational and Cultural Affairs administration paid \$300,000 to \$500,000.⁵⁶

The balance would have to be made up with government and private subsidy and at the box-office. The New York State Council on the Arts had also become a regular supporter of the Academy. It gave the Academy \$275,253 in 1970-1971; \$170,000 in 1971-1972; and \$132,000 in 1972-1973.⁵⁷ Public support from foundations, individuals, corporation and other sources came to \$373,773 in 1970-1971; \$143,778 in 1971-1972; and \$429,393 in 1972-1973.⁵⁸

⁵³Polly Kline, The Sunday News, 7 January 1972, (BPL/BAM File, undated; contains clippings from 1969-1976).

⁵⁴ibid. ⁵⁵ibid. ⁵⁶ibid.

⁵⁷"Ten Year Report," Brooklyn Academy of Music, Inc., 16 June 1980, p. 2. (See Appendix A for complete breakdown of revenues and expenses from 1970 to 1979.)

⁵⁸ibid.

CHAPTER VII

THE EXPANSION OF INTERESTS: 1973-1976

In the winter of 1973 a new 500-seat, flexible theatre space was dedicated, in the former ballroom on the second floor of the Academy.¹ Peter Brook, whose company, the International Center of Theater Research, was in residence in the new theatre that first season, spoke at the ceremonies on Thursday, 13 December. Brook said that he envisioned the space being used not only for theatre, but "as a meeting place for businessmen and public servants as well as for members of the art world."² His is a rather accurate description of the sort of interaction Lichtenstein was attempting to create at the Academy.

Called the Lepercq Space, the theatre was named in honor of Paul A. Lepercq, an investment banker, then Chairman of the Board of the Academy, and a most important new friend. The New York Times reported that Lepercq donated about \$200,000 over the previous thirteen months for the Academy's operating expenses, programming, and capital improvements.³

In an interview in 1980, Lichtenstein explained that Paul Lepercq was a very crucial part of the development of the

¹"New Theatre Unveiled at Brooklyn Academy," The New York Times, 15 December 1973, p. 21.

²ibid. ³ibid.

institution and a very crucial part of his own personal development.

Paul came in at a time when we were experiencing some severe financial difficulties over some important expansion. Paul was extremely useful and helpful to BAM and to me personally in several areas. One, he was a major contributor in terms of money. He had contributed the kind of money that as far as I know, no one had ever contributed to BAM before. Second of all, he is an extremely astute manager in terms of managing his own business and understanding management practice. He was very useful in helping formulate a better management team, a whole procedure of management, and in a way, was kind of a very useful teacher to me of management techniques, and just dealing⁴ with managing this facility.

Eventually the Academy, that is, the Brooklyn Academy of Music, Inc., revised its corporate structure "to make the structure of the corporation reflect more closely the operational responsibility of its officers."⁵ Paul Lepercq, Board Chairman, announced to The New York Times on Tuesday, 22 June 1976 that Harvey Lichtenstein had been elected president and chief executive officer of the Brooklyn Academy of Music, Inc. The Times explained that "Under the new structure . . . the president will be a full-time paid officer responsible directly to the board of directors. With the assistance of

⁴ Interview with Harvey Lichtenstein, 30 July 1980.

⁵ "Lichtenstein Chief of Music Academy," The New York Times, 22 June 1976, p. 32.

other officers, he will hold full-time executive responsibility for the operation of the institution."⁶ Lepercq announced at the same time the appointments of Judith Daykin as executive vice-president and general manager; Sharon Rupert as vice-president, and Charles Ziff as vice-president for promotion.

In the mid-seventies, the Academy experienced a continuing rise in audience attendance and subscription sales. Subscriptions went from 3,000 to 5,000 in 1972. In 1973, 6,000 were sold, and by 1976, more than 40,000 had been sold.⁷ Between 1967 and 1976, attendance had risen 600 percent.⁸ The operating budget, unfortunately, rose along with the increased business. When Lichtenstein arrived in 1967, the operating budget was about \$650,000; nine years later it was about \$2,500,000.⁹ But it was the phenomenal increase in attendance that was crucial in this period of the Academy's renaissance. A key figure in the success of the Academy's audience development campaign was Charles E. Ziff, who became press and marketing director in 1974. He is today marketing specialist for the Office of the Arts at the Ford Foundation. Judith Daykin, the vice-president and general manager of BAM, credits Ziff for coming to the rescue of the Academy when it was "on its way down for the

⁶The New York Times, 22 June 1976, p. 32.

⁷Brendan Gill, "BAM Grows in Brooklyn," The New York Times Magazine, 24 October 1976, p. 80.

⁸Lillie Rosen, "BAM: It Has Impact," Cue, 6-19 August, 1977, p. 12.

⁹*Ibid.*

third time."¹⁰ The Academy was simply not filling enough seats, and Ziff was greatly responsible for the big jump in subscription sales between 1973 and 1976. "In terms of getting people to cross the river and visit us and attend our productions, Charlie has been single-handedly instrumental in turning that whole picture around."¹¹ Ziff applied marketing technology to the Academy and its art products. He sold art as a consumer product via the successful ad. "I'm not afraid to admit that we sell culture through the mail and newspapers," said Lichtenstein of the Academy's new marketing approach.¹²

The success of the Academy's marketing techniques was recognized six years later, in January 1979, by the Wall Street Journal, in an article headlined "A Cultural Institute Succeeds by Marketing Its Wares Aggressively."¹³

Brendan Gill has explained that the Academy devised a marketing technique that "combined unusually low prices with subscriptions to several events in a single package."¹⁴ This

¹⁰Judith Daykin, introducing Keynote Speaker Charles Ziff at the League of Historical American Theatres 1980 Annual Meeting and Conference.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Lillie Rosen, "BAM: It Has Impact," Cue, 8 August 1977, p. 12.

¹³"Marketing at the Brooklyn Academy of Music," in-house publication, unpublished, of the Marketing and Audience Development Department of the Brooklyn Academy of Music, 1980.

¹⁴Brendan Gill, "BAM Grows in Brooklyn," The New York Times Magazine, 24 October 1976, p. 80.

encouraged people to attend "cross-over events," he said, wherein people who purchased a subscription mainly for a dance series, say, might be tempted to try another event, such as a play or movie.¹⁵ (Cross-over sales would help to increase capacity for all events.) The Academy, said Gill, also hoped that through these new marketing techniques, they could develop a loyal audience for the Academy, one that would stay with it "with or without the lure of smash hits."¹⁶ The hope, too, was "to build an audience with a substantial local base."¹⁷ The "strenuous effort" in this direction paid off, for Gill reported that the 6,000 subscriptions sold in 1973 were mostly purchased by Manhattanites, but in 1975, of the 40,000 subscriptions sold, "Brooklynites made up the majority of subscribers."¹⁸

Ziff left the Academy and went to the Ford Foundation in 1978, but the marketing department at the Academy has continued to play an important role as its "communications function."¹⁹ By the end of the decade, it had a staff of fifteen and a departmental and program marketing budget of over \$1,250,000.²⁰ The department is responsible for all publicity and advertising, the season subscription

¹⁵Gill, The New York Times Magazine, 24 October 1976, p. 80.

¹⁶ibid. ¹⁷ibid. ¹⁸ibid.

¹⁹"Marketing at the Brooklyn Academy of Music," in-house publication, unpublished, of the Marketing and Audience Development Department of the Brooklyn Academy of Music, 1980.

²⁰ibid.

campaign, group and corporate sales, public relations, promotions, and special events.²¹ It is the Academy's office of information, whose job it is to "foster and monitor the image of the institution in the community and conversely, work to keep informed of community needs."²²

The Academy had entered upon a period, in the mid-seventies, of renown even greater than that of its "golden age." Suddenly, the Academy was giving Greater New York a strong reason to come to Brooklyn, and Brooklynites an even stronger reason to stay at home.

Lichtenstein's faith and investment in the Chelsea Theater Center paid off with their production of Leonard Bernstein and Hugh Wheeler's musical Candide, which opened in the Academy's attic theatre in December 1973. The production was staged by Hal Prince on an environmental set by Fran and Eugene Lee, and there were additional lyrics by Steven Sondheim. Clive Barnes pronounced it "the best musical of the Broadway season."²³ Candide subsequently moved to Broadway, as did Yentl, first presented at the Academy in December 1974.²⁴ In May 1974, Chelsea produced

²¹"Marketing at the Brooklyn Academy of Music," in-house publication, unpublished, of the Marketing and Audience Development Department of the Brooklyn Academy of Music, 1980.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Clive Barnes; "Stage: 'Candide' Returns in Triumph," The New York Times, 21 December 1973, p. 47.

²⁴ CF: 1966-1976, (original title: Yentyle the Yeshiva Boy).

the English playwright David Storey's The Contractor,²⁵ winning the New York Drama Critics award for best play. The Chelsea had become a distinguished theatrical presence of the New York theatre. The New York Times reported on 20 April 1975, however, that Chelsea's Westside Theater productions were financing their Brooklyn productions.²⁶

The Chelsea Theater Center's relations with their Manhattan theatre and with their Broadway productions sheds light on the nature of funding the arts in the 1970s, so necessary for theatres like BAM. A public debate about art and the market place took place the year Candide went to Broadway. Robert Brustein debated with some interested theatre professionals, among whom were Alexander Cohen, the Broadway producer, and the Chelsea Theater Center producers Robert Kalfin, Michael David and Burl Hash. The forum was the "Drama Mailbag" section of The New York Times.²⁷ Brustein's warning to non-profit theatres about corruption of purpose was answered by Cohen, who quipped "Broadway has its faults, but it's not Transylvania."²⁸ He felt that there was more reason to believe that the non-profit theatre would "use Broadway as it should be used, as a larger and financially-rewarding arena for plays of merit, than there is to think they will succumb to crass expediency."²⁹ The Chelsea group agreed with

²⁵CF: 1966-1976.

²⁶The New York Times, 20 April 1975, p. 110.

²⁷"Drama Mailbag," The New York Times, 25 August 1974.

²⁸ibid. ²⁹ibid.

Brustein that indeed, the "profit motive is insidious for an art."
 But what were artists to do when "funding sources" were "influenced
 by commercial symbols of success?"

The motivation for production must first and foremost be the joy of creating a work one believes in and feels compelled to see brought to life for its own sake. That is a different reason for putting on a play than dollars. But someone has to pay for what you do. And, to date, no one is funded in a way to insure either the survival of a play or even of their theater.

So where do you draw the line. This has something to do with being true to yourself. 'Candide' was a terrific 18-year-old score without a play. The fun for us was in the creative challenge of bringing new elements together to make it work. After an extended subsidized run at Chelsea, 'Candide' brought us to Broadway, but the Subsidized Heaven is not yet here. So now we sit on the fence with our integrity in our hands--and a sold-out hit that has to work very hard just to break even. It's called trying to play the game both ways.

The old game is still all around us; funding sources are still influenced by commercial symbols of success as a measure of worth--and so are we. (We ourselves are forced to promote those symbols to insure our survival.) Because we are still expected somewhere to 'make it' financially on our own, we are also forced to adopt the business practices of the commercial theater.

The legacy of the past is our greatest enemy. A whole way of thought has to change. Until then--we are jugglers.³⁰

³⁰"Drama Mailbag," The New York Times, 25 August 1974.

Juggling was fortunately one of Lichtenstein's talents, along with the tireless energy to pursue both money and art for the Academy. His "courtship" of the British theatre provides an example.³¹ Developing an Academy-based American classical repertory company from a British model may have been in Lichtenstein's mind as early as 1970, when he met Peter Brook. He admired the ability, the dynamism and energy of Britain's theatre and early on developed relationships with key people in it.³² Lichtenstein revealed that the British connection started with the engagement of Jerzy Grotowski's troupe from Poland. It was through this engagement, he said, "a major occasion in the theatre in New York," that he got to know Peter Brook--and through Brook, the Royal Shakespeare Company.³³ Lichtenstein went to England every year to see the Royal Shakespeare Company³⁴ productions and became convinced they had something New York didn't have, "classical theatre on an exciting and contemporary level."³⁵ Lichtenstein decided to bring the company to Brooklyn. As mentioned earlier, the first

³¹ Mel Gussow, "Brooklyn Stage Going British," The New York Times, 7 January 1974, p. 40.

³² Ibid.

³³ Interview with Harvey Lichtenstein, 30 July 1980.

³⁴ hereafter referred to as RSC

³⁵ Interview with Harvey Lichtenstein, 30 July 1980.

RSC production to come to the Academy was Peter Brook's experimental A Midsummer Night's Dream, in the spring of 1971, after it closed on Broadway.³⁶ A relationship was formed with the RSC through that engagement, said Lichtenstein.³⁷ Three years later, the newspapers were announcing "the British invasion of Brooklyn," as the Academy presented a three-and-a-half British Theatre Season in 1973-1974 that was "unmatched in New York's theatrical history."³⁸ The RSC and two other companies, the Young Vic and The Actors Company brought with them tons of scenery and costumes, 120 people, and a \$625,000 production bill.³⁹ Highlights of the season were the RSC's production of Richard II, with Ian Richardson and Richard Pasco alternating the lead roles of Richard II and Bolingbroke. Ian McKellen was featured in the Actors Company productions of The Wood Demon, The Way of the World, and a world premiere of a new production of King Lear. The Young Vic performed Frank Dunlop's Scapino, a version of Moliere's Les Fourberies des Scapin, starring Jim Dale who triumphed on Broadway when Scapino later moved there. Dale also played Petruchio in their The Taming of the Shrew and French with Tears. And finally, a second company of the Royal

³⁶New York Post, 1 March 1971, p. 14.

³⁷Interview with Harvey Lichtenstein, 30 July 1980.

³⁸Mel Gussow, "Brooklyn Stage Going British," The New York Times, 7 January 1974, p. 40.

³⁹Ibid.

Shakespeare Company performed two anthology evenings, The Hollow Crown and Pleasure and Repentance, starring Sir Michael Redgrave.⁴⁰

For the opening of the British theatre season, the City of New York gave "a royal welcome" in the County of Kings to the Royal Shakespeare Company. On 10 January 1974, the night after the opening performance of Richard II, the Academy hosted "politicians and movie-stars, community leaders and international celebrities."⁴¹ Senator Jacob K. Javits introduced Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., to Mayor Abe Beame. Barbaralee Diamondstein, the evening's hostess, and Chairman of the Landmarks Preservation Commission, was seen talking to Sir Donald Maitland, the British representative to the United Nations. Actor Robert Shaw declared that he would love to live in Brooklyn as he was making a film nearby, but it was so hard to get a taxi to come there from Manhattan.⁴² Brooklyn might well have been as far away as those other two outposts of the avant-garde, Paris and Iran. There remained some "reluctance on the part of people to travel from Manhattan to Brooklyn."⁴³ Harvey Lichtenstein had told Mel Gussow they were still having great difficulties attracting audiences from

⁴⁰ Mel Gussow, The New York Times, 7 January 1974, p. 40.

⁴¹ Steven R. Weisman, "Royal Party Attracts Notable Commoners," The New York Times, 10 January 1974, p. 44.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Gussow, The New York Times, 7 January 1974, p. 40.

Manhattan: "Being in New York City and not being in the center of Manhattan presents terrific problems. It's the psychological problem of coming to Brooklyn for culture more than the physical problem."⁴⁴

At the gala evening, Sam Levenson, Brooklyn-born humorist, saw the problem from a philosophical perspective. Of the Academy, he said, "This place is forever. It's not a matter of geography. It's for the nation."⁴⁵

Britain's Royal Shakespeare Company played three consecutive seasons at the Academy. Clive Barnes called Terry Hands' spring 1976 production of Henry V, starring Alan Howard: "a definitive Henry V on our shores."⁴⁶ Hands, a brilliant director and a principal assistant of Trevor Nunn, the RSC's head, referred to the Academy as "our American home."⁴⁷ The productions had been funded in part by the Mellon Foundation and the British Bicentennial Arts Committee.⁴⁸ During these British seasons, Lichtenstein got to know two RSC directors who were to play major roles in the attempt to develop

⁴⁴Gussow, The New York Times, 7 January 1974, p. 40.

⁴⁵Weisman, The New York Times, 10 January 1974, p. 44.

⁴⁶Glenn Loney, "BAM--Awash, Afloat," New York, 26 September 1977.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 54.

⁴⁸BAM: Annual Report, 1975-1976 Season.

his dream of a resident repertory company at the Academy. They were Frank Dunlop and David Jones. Jones had brought to the Academy in the 1974-1975 season his acclaimed production of Gorky's Summerfolk. Benedict Nightingale, in The New York Times, hailed it as an example of RSC ensemble work, the hallmark of RSC acting, achieved through intense work in the classroom as well as on the stage.⁴⁹ Jones would become Artistic Director of the BAM Theater Company in 1978. But it was Frank Dunlop, whose Young Vic production of Scapino had made such a sensation in the first British season, who would make the first attempt in 1976 to found a resident repertory company at the Academy.

Lichtenstein told Mel Gussow, in 1974 during the initial British season, that they were interested in the British companies, not their individual productions.⁵⁰ Obviously, the structure of the British repertory theatre system was to be the model for Lichtenstein's vision of a BAM Theater Company.

As if in preparation for a new resident repertory theatre, the Academy extensively renovated the Music Hall and renamed it the Playhouse. It was later to be called the Helen Carey Playhouse.⁵¹

⁴⁹Benedict Nightingale, "The Royal Risk-Taking Shakespeare Company," The New York Times, 2 February 1975, p. D5.

⁵⁰Gussow, The New York Times, 7 January 1974, p. 40.

⁵¹LPC Report, p. 15.

The Academy needed a medium-sized theatre, so with funds from the Booth Ferris Foundation and New York City capital funds,⁵² the "decrepit and dirty" auditorium, which had not been altered since 1907, was transformed into a 1,075-seat theatre with a new thrust stage.⁵³ The old music shell around the stage was removed and a lighting and scenic grid was installed.⁵⁴ Lichtenstein told Louis Calta, of The New York Times, that the old Music Hall had been badly in need of repairs and maintenance, and the auditorium was recarpeted and repainted, the wooden panel walls were re-finished and new seats were installed.⁵⁵ The project, under the direction of the architect James Polshek, cost \$312,000.⁵⁶ The Playhouse officially opened on 2 December 1975, with Tennessee Williams' Sweet Bird of Youth, starring Irene Worth and Christopher Walken. Worth won the Tony award as Best Actress for her performance in that production, which was part of the Kennedy Center-Xerox American Bicentennial Series.⁵⁷ The other plays in the series were Long Day's Journey Into Night, directed by and starring Jason Robards, and the Kaufman and Ferber classic, The Royal Family, starring Eva LeGallienne, Rosemary Harris, George Grizzard and Sam Levene. Ellis Rabb received a Tony award for Best Director.⁵⁸

⁵²Louis Calta, "Brooklyn Academy Updating a Theater," The New York Times, 4 November 1975, p. 30.

⁵³ibid. ⁵⁴ibid. ⁵⁵ibid. ⁵⁶ibid.

⁵⁷BAM Annual Report, 1975-1976 Season.

⁵⁸ibid.

The Academy's interest in dance and the avant-garde did not diminish with its increased interest in theatre. The Pennsylvania Ballet had been presenting yearly seasons with premieres of new works and guest stars like Mikhail Baryshnikov and Gelsey Kirkland.⁵⁹ A host of modern and post-modern dance companies played the Academy in the mid-seventies, including Paul Taylor, Merce Cunningham, Laura Dean, Pilobolus, and Twyla Tharp, whose company played to standing-room-only audiences in its six-week residency during the 1975-1976 season.⁶⁰ The avant-garde was represented with works by the Mabou Mines Company, Robert Wilson, and Steve Reich.⁶¹ The Academy presented popular film series, children's programs and a wide variety of musical events as usual, while maintaining popular prices.

Subscriptions were selling for \$5 and \$10 in 1975, and as stated, had risen to 40,000. The Academy was able to report a record eighty-five percent capacity attendance in its 1975-1976 Annual Report.⁶² Earned income was reported as \$1,106,932, which was forty-four percent of the operating budget of 2.5 million dollars.⁶³ (The Academy was operating in the black, the report said, for the second year, and they were able to reduce the

⁵⁹CF: 1966-76.

⁶⁰BAM Annual Report, 1975-1976 Season

⁶¹ibid. ⁶²ibid. ⁶³ibid.

accumulated deficit.) The rest of the money needed to balance the budget was met by ever-increasing contributions from government, public and private sources, which amounted to \$1.7 million in the fiscal year 1975-76.⁶⁴ The capital expenditure had been \$252,035 for the renovation of the Playhouse and third theatre; and the working capital deficit was reduced by \$35,626, making the total expenses for the 1975-76 fiscal year \$2,799,428.⁶⁵

Thus, in the mid-seventies, the Academy had appeared to have achieved fiscal stability, albeit in an arts-endowed era, and not in the commercial Broadway marketplace, where eighty-five percent capacity was most often needed to meet expenses.

⁶⁴BAM Annual Report, 1975-1976 Season. The report gives following breakdown of expenses: Program, Rental and Concessions, \$1,286,192; Stage and Production, \$226,665; Promotion and Audience Developemnt, \$133,906; House Management and Box Office, \$75,485; Building Maintenance and Operations, \$472,692; Administration/Development, \$251,252; Resident Company Support, \$65,575 (for Chelsea Theater Center, Brooklyn Philharmonia Orchestra, and Brooklyn Boys' Chorus).

⁶⁵ibid.

CHAPTER VIII

BICENTENNIAL RENAISSANCE: 1976-1978

BAM's renaissance seemed self-evident by the year of the American bicentennial. Newspaper headlines like "Boom at the BAM: A Cultural Heart is Resuscitated,"¹ attested to the revitalization of the old institution in the year of America's 200th birthday. The New York Times Magazine in 1976 featured the story of BAM's rebirth in an article by Brendan Gill, replete with photographs of the newly-restored and renovated building. Said Gill: "BAM is a well-nigh perfect example of how a failing cultural enterprise can be restored to life and, with energy and imagination, be made to prosper in its old age even more splendidly than it did in its youth."²

The bicentennial also marked the tenth year of Lichtenstein's tenure at the Academy. He was elected president and chief executive officer of the Academy in June 1976.³ It has not been "an elitist

¹"Boom at the BAM: A Cultural Heart is Resuscitated," Newsday, 8 February 1976.

²Brendan Gill, "BAM Grows in Brooklyn," The New York Times Magazine, 24 October 1976, p. 69.

³"Lichtenstein Chief of Music Academy," The New York Times, 22 June 1976, p. 32.

or ivory tower experience," Lichtenstein said in his "President's Report" for 1976-1977.

It has been a battle to develop our internal strength: the quality of our programming, the renovation of the performance and public spaces, a significant and responsive audience, a strong board, staff, and a varied bill of fare which is attentive to our different constituencies and to a spectrum of performing arts disciplines. The underpinning is there now, the structure is fairly solid. We now approach the future with a broader perspective, and with a greater understanding of an arts center's enlarged responsibilities.⁴

Those "enlarged responsibilities" were reflected in BAM's deep involvement in Brooklyn's own struggles to be born again. Lichtenstein's report states that they were "neck-deep in another important task--the rebuilding of neighborhoods, which is the survival of New York City."⁵ The Academy saw itself as "an established force for change in the community," and so it was proclaimed by New York City in 1977, when the week of 11-18 March was designated BAM Week.⁶ In addition to its "cultural contributions" and its "growth as an institution," the proclamation cited BAM's "importance to the revitalization of downtown Brooklyn."⁷

⁴"President's Report," BAM Annual Report, 1976-1977 Season.

⁵ibid. ⁶ibid.

⁷"Civic Garlands, Wine and Quiche," The New York Times, 15 March 1977, p. 36.

Brendan Gill's article in The New York Times Magazine had emphasized BAM's impact on Brooklyn's revitalization. BAM was, he said, like "an island of health," that energized other enterprises in the community in a "process of civic symbiosis."⁸ This was easy to document in BAM's case, said Gill. Some of the dozen or so new businesses that had opened up around BAM reported that they felt the economic stimulus of "a hit at BAM."⁹ Donald E. Moore, then president of the Downtown Brooklyn Development Association, gave Gill an example of this "civic symbiosis." The Brooklyn terminus of the Long Island Railroad which was practically next door to the Academy was in bad physical condition. Moore explained that the Metropolitan Transportation Authority was considering spending \$20 million on improvements that would greatly increase the number of people using the facility, people who were potential Academy audiences. "But if the Academy weren't already drawing crowds the MTA might be much less interested in saving the terminus and so upgrading the whole neighborhood. In the best possible way, one hand washes the other."¹⁰

Another such mutually beneficial relationship was one that Brendan Gill called "a classic example of how, given sufficient impetus, the fabric of a city reweaves itself."¹¹ The Brooklyn

⁸Brendan Gill, "BAM Grows in Brooklyn," The New York Times Magazine, 24 October 1976, p. 82.

⁹ibid. ¹⁰ibid. ¹¹ibid.

Union Gas Company's "Cinderella Project" was created to help potential brownstone owners acquire construction loans and mortgages from banks, who, Gill explained, might not have been so eager to extend financing without the involvement of a utility company. In the best hand-washing fashion, Brooklyn Union was developing new customers through its sponsorship of the brownstone revival. It had already aided Boerum Hill, Park Slope and several other old-new communities and it was considering developing the area around the Academy, between Fort Greene to the north and the downtown district of Brooklyn to the northwest. It was an area, said Gill, which, "except for the presence of the Academy, would have been an unlikely candidate for rehabilitation."¹²

The Brooklyn Union Gas Company arranged for the purchase of a number of dilapidated old houses on St. Felix Street, which runs along the east front of the Academy building, and they will be put back into apple-pie order. According to present plans, the houses will be opened to the public and will serve as models for further redevelopment in the neighborhood.¹³

Photographs of the St. Felix Street houses made in 1980, in the Appendix, attest to the happy fruition of this project.¹⁴

As the St. Felix Street restoration would serve as a model for neighborhood development, so would the beautifully-restored

¹²Gill, The New York Times Magazine, 24 October 1976, p. 82.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Photographs of BAM Historic District in Appendix E.

Academy building serve as a model of historic preservation for other communities around the city. Said Gill:

For never again in this century will we observe on the part of government agencies and private real-estate developers the wanton knocking down of individual buildings and whole neighborhoods that appear to have outlasted their prime. Instead, we will observe how those buildings and neighborhoods can be sympathetically re-used and given a second, third or fourth chance at life. Inevitably, neighborhoods will continue to change, for better or worse, but in future our efforts and our money will be spent on turning worse into better and not murderous obliteration.¹⁵

Gill, speaking from the optimistic and neo-patriotic perspective of America's bicentennial year, could not predict the falling away of commitment to restoration that would occur by the end of the decade, exemplified perhaps by the bitter fight over the fate of Broadway's historic Helen Hayes and Morosco theatres. As the theatre community battled the City's Times Square redevelopment scheme to build a hotel and pedestrian mall on the site of the razed theatres,¹⁶ it seemed that for a short time, at least, historic restoration might be a reasonable response to urban decay.

"Civic symbiosis" Gill had called the way commerce and culture interacted in Brooklyn to the betterment of both. The Brooklyn Educational and Cultural Alliance was organized in June 1975 to

¹⁵Gill, The New York Times Magazine, 24 October 1976, p. 82.

¹⁶The New York Times, 24 January 1982, Section 2, p. 1.

take advantage of this culture-commerce trend.¹⁷ A group of Brooklyn cultural and educational institutions, among them, of course, the Academy, formed a consortium which would attempt to "widen educational opportunities and spur the development of downtown Brooklyn."¹⁸ State Assembly Speaker Stanley Steingut announced, through an aide, Arnold Harris, at a meeting of the Downtown Brooklyn Development Association, that the New York State Board of Regents had granted a charter to BECA for this purpose.¹⁹ Of immediate benefit to the Academy was the approval by the State Dormitory Authority of BECA's sponsorship of renovation of the Granada Hotel, across the street from the Academy on the corner of Ashland Place and Lafayette Avenue, money for the project to come from the Authority's discretionary funds.²⁰ The Granada had been an elegant landmark in its time, but had become "a single-occupancy residence for the poor and for people on welfare."²¹ In addition to the rehabilitation of the Granada, the BECA plans called for a two-block triangular area next to the hotel

¹⁷hereafter known as BECA.

¹⁸Max H. Seigel, "Downtown Brooklyn Colleges Form a Consortium," The New York Times, 28 June 1975, p. 31. (The consortium consisted of St. Francis College, Pratt Institute, Long Island University, the Polytechnic Institute of New York, the Brooklyn Museum, and the Brooklyn Academy of Music.)

¹⁹ibid. ²⁰ibid. ²¹ibid.

to be converted into a park. At the time, the area contained "several vacant sites, a sixty-seven-room hotel, a gasoline station, twenty-four dwelling units and seven concerns employing fourteen people."²² The office of Downtown Brooklyn Development said that the City could acquire the land for \$1.5 million.²³

The Academy was also interested in the \$258 million Downtown Development plan that was under way, which included the Long Island Railroad Atlantic Avenue Terminal, the Albee Square Mall, the Fulton Street Mall, and new commercial development along Flatbush Avenue.²⁴ All the struggles of renewal seemed to be paying off in the spring of the bicentennial. It had been ten years since Brooklynites like Seth Faison dedicated themselves to community revitalization. The trees that had been planted a decade ago were grown. The wasteland's face had changed. And now peripatetic Manhattanites were discovering Brooklyn with the help of people like David Bird, whose "Metropolitan Baedaker" column in The New York Times of 21 May 1976 tells of a Brooklyn in blooming revival, a place of "Brownstones, Shops, Parks and Restaurants."²⁵ It was now time for Brooklyn to pay off the Academy for the inestimable part it played in the success of her revival. And

²² Seigel, The New York Times, 28 June 1975, p. 31.

²³ *ibid.*

²⁴ BAM Annual Report: 1976-1977 Season.

²⁵ David Bird, "Metropolitan Baedaker," The New York Times, 21 May 1976, p. C24.

during BAM Week in March 1977, the Academy began a corporate fund drive, "aimed at increasing the number of contributions from Brooklyn business and industry."²⁶ The Annual Report for the year explained that Eugene H. Luntley, a member of the Board of Directors and the President of Brooklyn Union Gas

. . . observed that only a modest amount of the Academy's total contributions emanated from Brooklyn commerce and industry, while over 38% of BAM's audience comes from the same borough. Mr. Luntley launched the 'Committee of 100 Corporate Campaign' with the strong leadership of important Brooklyn businessmen: Henry Bing, Jr., IBM Corporation; Theodore J. Federici, New York Telephone Company; Joseph T. Hydok, Consolidated Edison; I. Stanley Kriegel, I. Stanley Kriegel & Co.; Donald E. Moore, Downtown Brooklyn Development Association; Leonard Nadel, Abraham & Strauss; Theodore Notides, Manufacturers Hanover Trust Company; F. Peter O'Hara, Cullen & Dykman; Howard Smith, Virginia Dare Extract Company; Herbert Steiner, Steiner Manufacturing Company; and William Tobey, Federated Department Stores. The Committee, energized by the forty-four gifts of \$1,000 or more, is hopeful that next year will see an expansion of the Committee to a full 100 corporations.²⁷

Support for BAM came from Washington, too, in that bicentennial season. The Academy received a Challenge Grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to the amount of \$350,000. It was to be matched three-to-one over three years, and the matching funds had to be "over

²⁶BAM Annual Report: 1976-1977 Season.

²⁷ Ibid.

and above" what donors usually contributed.²⁸ The grant money was for "debt reduction, plant development and to assist in the expansion of the Academy's programs."²⁹ They would need the money to pay for, among other things, the new BAM Theatre Company, which they had launched in that year of the Great Ships.

The great event of the Bicentennial Season had been the inauguration of the BAM Theatre Company. In the spring of 1977, Frank Dunlop headed the company in its first series of productions. A strong company of actors included Rosemary Harris, Blythe Danner, Tovah Feldshuh, Rene Auberjonois, and Ellen Burstyn. The plays, The New York Idea, The Three Sisters, and Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat were much praised, and were awarded special citations for outstanding work from the Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle.³⁰ The annual report for the year called the inaugural season of the BAM Theatre Company "the first step in the formation of a classically-based resident company."³¹

Theatre was now seemingly supplanting the dance in importance at the Academy. In addition to the new "Brooklyn/British" theatre company, the Academy presented the Chelsea Theater Center's Brooklyn season (Frank Langella appeared in The Prince of Homberg), and the Abbey Theatre, which had not appeared in the United States since its American tour in 1938, performed The Plough and the Stars, with Siobhan McKenna and Cyril Cusack in the cast.³²

²⁸ BAM Annual Report: 1976-1977 Season.

²⁹ *ibid.* ³⁰ *ibid.* ³¹ *ibid.* ³² *ibid.*

There were high hopes after that first spring season that the Academy would become an important theatre center as it had been with the dance. In September, Lichtenstein was telling Glenn Loney:

We're talking about forming a major international company, composed of American and British actors, which could play a season here and in London, as well as touring America. Not a Young Vic to match Dunlop's London ensemble, but another Old Vic!³³

"Brave words," said Loney, and reported that "the BAM Theatre Company has committed itself to an East-West axis, with the Ahmanson Theater in Los Angeles as its other pole."³⁴

Actually, the BAM Theatre Company had a great deal more in common with American regional theatres than with either the Young or Old Vic. Like the Juilliard School of Drama, which at that time was training a growing number of professional regional actors, and like the Guthrie Theatre in Minnesota, the guiding hand and the structure were English, and the product was American. There was cross-fertilization of the theatrical talent pool, as the regionals began to tour their productions, and as they started to co-produce productions with other regionals. David Jones spent some time in the planning stages of the new company in visiting regional

³³ Glenn Loney, "BAM--Awash, Afloat," New York, 26 September 1977, p. 54.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

theatres throughout the United States.³⁵

However, the Academy failed to establish a theatre company as envisioned by Lichtenstein. Frank Dunlop was a brilliant and innovative director, and he had run a theater--The Young Vic. But, as Lichtenstein explained in an interview in 1980, Dunlop was not prepared to make the sort of full-time commitment that goes into running a classically-based, resident repertory company.³⁶ As for the actors, there was a nucleus of a company, Lichtenstein further explained. But the plays were not done in repertory and, moreover, "the other aspects of a company which are important, which is really working with a voice coach, really developing style, and stuff like that, were not taking place."³⁷

However, in the spring of 1978, Dunlop presented a second season of five plays, again with a nucleus of actors including Rene Auberjonois, Austin Pendleton, Carol Shelley, and George Rose. Richard Dreyfuss and Sam Waterston were in one play each. The group, however, was not being treated like a company, according to Lichtenstein.³⁸ He would dissolve the relationship with Frank Dunlop after the second season. Audience response varied. Julius Caesar was sold out, and financially the company was within budget, but the critics in that second year were "very rough" on them.³⁹ Mixed reviews were not the reason though that the Brooklyn/British partnership broke up.

³⁵ Mel Gussow, "Straightforward Director," The New York Times, 6 February 1979, p. C7.

³⁶ Interview with Harvey Lichtenstein, 30 July 1980.

³⁷ *ibid.* ³⁸ *ibid.* ³⁹ *ibid.*

However, what was happening was not what I wanted to happen. It looked like the third season with Frank would mean that decisions would be made at the last minute, that we would not know the company or the plays until a month or so before we opened--and subscription and audience-building was crucial.⁴⁰

Lichtenstein explained that his point of view had matured as to "what it is that we were after."⁴¹ He took a year, he said, to plan setting up a company such as he was after, and to head it, he turned to David Jones, who was then producing and directing for the BBC's serious play production unit. Jones was uncertain. He was planning to return to the RSC, but the two men discussed how it might be done and what would be involved in trying to establish a classically-based, resident repertory company in Brooklyn. When Lichtenstein told David Jones that the Ford Foundation, whose support he had successfully solicited for the project, was interested in helping launch the project with him, "then things began to get serious" in their discussions and eventual negotiations, and Jones was won.⁴²

That support for the BAM Theatre Company from the Ford Foundation amounted to \$400,000, the largest grant the foundation awarded that year in the arts.⁴³ In addition, the Robert Sterling Clark Foundation gave the Academy a three-year grant of \$150,000, "to enable the BAM Theatre Company to undertake a sophisticated marketing program to

⁴⁰ Interview with Harvey Lichtenstein, 30 July 1980.

⁴¹ Ibid. ⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ BAM Annual Report: 1978-1979 Season.

build its audience."⁴⁴

Would the second ship to be launched float? The first BAM Theatre Company was kept afloat for two years before it sank, but it had withstood a literal flood before going under when an old water main broke, causing a flood and caving in the pavement between the Academy and where the Independent, BMT and IRT subways converge.⁴⁵ The BAM Annual Report, 1977-1978 says of the event:

Labor Day, 1977. A day to remember. At approximately 6:00 a.m., a 30-inch water main broke on Ashland Place, sending thousands of gallons of water cascading into the Academy. The deluge flooded the stages and orchestra seats of the two main theaters. Sets, props, and costumes stored in sub-basement spaces were destroyed. Expensive electrical and mechanical equipment was ruined. Two boilers were submerged. A 15,000-gallon oil tank was overturned, spilling its contents. Outside, more than 100 feet of pavement on Ashland Place caved in. Mayor Beame immediately appointed an eleven-agency task force headed by City Director of Operations, Lee Oberst, to drain and dig out the Academy. More than 400 city workers were assigned the arduous task of off-setting the effects of the severe damage caused by the water and mud.⁴⁶

⁴⁴BAM Annual Report: 1978-1979 Season.

⁴⁵David Bird, "Break Causes Flood in Brooklyn Center," The New York Times, 6 September 1977, p. 43.

⁴⁶BAM Annual Report: 1977-1978 Season.

A great many supporters of the Academy helped to bail them out, including Mrs. Joan Mondale, Congressman Ed Koch, Governor Hugh Carey (who provided a \$150,000 emergency grant to allow them to open on time), and Helen Hayes, who served as honorary chairperson for their Emergency Flood Fund.⁴⁷

The Academy undertook, at this time, an extensive renovation project, planned and supervised by the architectural firm of Hardy, Holtzman and Pfeiffer.⁴⁸ It was estimated the project would cost \$3.6 million, and that it could be completed by August 1979. The Federal Local Public Works granted them \$3 million, and the balance was met with city capital improvement funds and foundation grants.⁴⁹

The Annual Report for 1977-1978 tells of the plan:

A two-story roof addition that will house administrative offices, a major rehearsal hall, and a canteen for artists and staff; installation of new computerized lighting systems and new ventilation systems in the Opera House and Playhouse; complete renovation of the five floors of dressing rooms; a rolling gantry in the Lepercq Space grid; construction of access ramps for the handicapped; major renovation of the main lobby; renovation of public toilet facilities in the Opera House; exterior marquee repainting; exterior masonry repainting; and a refurbishing of the parking lot.⁵⁰

The Academy was given landmark status by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on 26 September 1978, when along with The Williamsburg Savings Bank skyscraper, the lovely Italianate

⁴⁷BAM Annual Report: 1977-1978 Season.

⁴⁸ibid. ⁴⁹ibid. ⁵⁰ibid.

rowhouses on St. Felix, Ft. Greene and South Elliot Streets, the area was designated Brooklyn Academy of Music Historic District, Borough of Brooklyn.⁵¹ Historic preservation went hand-in-hand with revitalization of the area, as the testimony of the Commission at the public hearing on that day attests:

The revival of St. Felix Street is symbolic of the regeneration taking place in so many of the city's historic neighborhoods. Meanwhile, the Brooklyn Academy of Music and the other institutions within the District continues to serve the community and give it vitality.⁵²

The "massive, glorious renovation" of St. Felix Street had been amde possible by Brooklyn Union Gas; and Williamsburg and Citibank made mortgages possible.⁵³ Again, "civic symbiosis" was responsible for the successful restoration and redevelopment of the area. Of the Academy's role in this rejuvenation, Mary Louise Bopp, an owner of one of these historic homes and a members of the Ft. Greene Landmarks Committee, had this to say to the Commission:

BAM is an integral part of the renaissance sweeping Downtown Brooklyn; it responds to the needs of the community, yet serves all of New York . . .⁵⁴

⁵¹Report of the Landmarks Preservation Commission, 26 September 1978, Designation List 118. LP-1003, p. 25. (About a year earlier it had been accepted as a charter member in the League of Historic American Theatres, as reported in the Queens Ledger of 1 December 1977.)

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Research note in BAM File at Landmarks Preservation Commission. Alan Burnham was director of research on proposed "BAM Historic District."

⁵⁴Ibid.

CHAPTER IX

SYMBOLISM AND REALITY: 1979-1982

With the close of the 1977-1978 season, the Chelsea Theater Company, after a decade of producing avant-garde theater in Brooklyn, detached itself from the Academy. In the following year, however, four members of the company organized a new group and called it The Dodger Theater. In their first season in Brooklyn, 1978-1979, the Dodger's production of Gimme Shelter was nominated for Best Play by the New York Drama Critics, and the play was chosen one of the Ten Best Plays of 1978-1979 by the Theater Yearbook.¹

The one organization to achieve a notable stability under the umbrella of the Academy was its resident orchestra, the Brooklyn Philharmonia, which, during the 1978-1979 season, celebrated its first twenty-five years there.² The Philharmonia was virtually an institution within an institution, with its own board of directors and separate fund-raising arm. Under the direction of Lukas Foss, who would observe his tenth anniversary as Music Director,³ the Philharmonia had become important in the contemporary music world. The 1978-1979 season saw a record-breaking

¹BAM Annual Report: 1978-1979 Season, p. 10.

²Ibid., p. 7.

³"Foss, 10 Years at the Helm, Sets Philharmonia Schedule," The New York Times, 26 June 1980.

audience attendance of 80,000 to its subscription series.⁴ In that year the orchestra received an ASCAP citation from the American Symphony Orchestra League for its much acclaimed "Meet the Moderns" series.⁵ The Philharmonia's Chamber Music Series, directed by Scott Nickrenz had also been playing in the Lepercq Space for seven years and Ian Strasfogel's New Opera Theater had its third season in 1978-1979.⁶

The rehabilitation of Downtown Brooklyn was making progress by the spring of 1979. The plans were extensive and would require several years to complete. The area would have to be rebuilt from the cellar up, so to speak, because the underground structures were giving out. The Fulton Mall project, which would revitalize the fifth largest shopping area in the country, was being paid for with \$20 million in federal funds. The Albee Square interior mall project was being built with sixty percent city funds and \$30 million from a private developer. Other projects included rebuilding the Long Island Railroad Terminal, and converting hotels and loft buildings into residential apartments and cooperatives. Eight hundred units of moderate and low income housing had already been completed.⁷ A New York Times report on the redevelop-

⁴BAM Annual Report: 1978-1979 Season, p. 10.

⁵ibid. ⁶ibid.

⁷"Academy's Downtown Brooklyn Neighborhood Also in Rebirth," The New York Times, 6 February 1979, p. C7.

ment projects suggested that the Brooklyn Academy was a "microcosm" of the blighted mile-square downtown commercial center in which it stood.⁸ They had both, Eleanor Blau pointed out, begun their "rejuvenation" about eleven years earlier, with "effective promotion" and financing from city and private sources. Richard M. Rosan, then the development director of the City's Office of Economic Development, told her, "In both cases, it's been a unique partnership between the private sector and the city."⁹ The city, he said, was simply responding to local initiative which was evolving into an "incredible renaissance." New stores, restaurants and boutiques had sprung up, and the brownstone revival suggested, he said, that "rebirth was contagious."¹⁰

The Academy can be seen, too, as a microcosm of opera house revivals across the country. In the 1970s, many entrepreneurs like Lichtenstein had worked to obtain historic landmark status, thus insuring the continuity of the institutions, whatever the social or economic climate in the years to come. Physical survival was not nearly enough, however, and, like the Academy, it was generally the old theatres that were able to show local business and government interests their importance to community revitalization that succeeded. Making historic opera house owners and administrators aware of this survival technique was the aim of the Fourth Annual Meeting and Conference of the League of Historic American Theaters held in the summer of 1980. The

⁸The New York Times, 6 February 1979, p. C7.

⁹Ibid. ¹⁰Ibid.

Academy and the Goodspeed Opera House of East Haddam, Connecticut, served as examples at the convention of how civic symbiosis works in the hands of enlightened administrations.¹¹ Michael Price, Goodspeed's director told Andree Brooks, who reported on the conference activities in The New York Times, that he believed "the cultural-commerce combination may provide the only means for some of the old opera houses to survive for long as live theaters."¹² Many historic opera houses failed, said Gene Chesley, the President of the League, to Brooks, because of a lack of understanding of "the need for a sustained economic base besides the entertainment."¹³

The keynote speaker for the conference was Charles Ziff, who, after his successful subscription campaigns for the Academy, had moved over to the Ford Foundation as its marketing specialist. He emphasized, said Brooks, the "importance of demonstrating wide economic goals when applying for capital from a foundation."¹⁴ He suggested that if cultural institutions could "demonstrate a greater social and economic benefit to community then they were on much stronger ground."¹⁵ He pointed out, Brooks said, how the Academy had "helped the brownstone revival in its area, which in turn, has helped sustain the Academy."¹⁶

¹¹"Recyclers Sing the Praises of Old Opera Houses," The New York Times, 13 July 1980, Section 8.

¹²ibid. ¹³ibid. ¹⁴ibid. ¹⁵ibid. ¹⁶ibid.

Indeed Lichtenstein had pulled together a powerful group of supporters of the Academy from among the local business community, real-estate developers and urban renewal city planners. The New York Times reported the announcement of the election of eight new members to the Academy's Board of Directors on 1 November 1980.¹⁷

Lichtenstein said as he made the announcement, "This is the most productive and supportive group of directors this Academy has had during my tenure."¹⁸

One of the new members was Richard M. Rosan, who was the development director of New York City's Office of Economic Development, the Chairman of the Mayor's Office of Downtown Brooklyn Development, and the President of the city's Real Estate Board--and he lived in Brooklyn, too.¹⁹

Another new member, Brooklynite John R. Price, Jr., had served at Cabinet level in Washington on committees such as Urban Growth Policy, Model Cities, and Welfare, when he was Special Assistant to the President and serving as Executive Secretary of the Urban Affairs and Rural Affairs Councils. He was a specialist in the "financing of new towns, developers, builders, and financial institutions."²⁰ The new board also boasted an ex-Assistant Secretary of Commerce under President Kennedy, William

¹⁷"Brooklyn Music Academy Names Eight New Directors," The New York Times, 1 November 1980. p. 50.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹"New Members Join Board of Directors of BAM," BAM Press Release, Fall 1980.

²⁰ Ibid.

Ruder, President of Ruder and Finn, Inc.²¹ Valuable new members were also Curtis A. Wood, who was President and Chief Executive Officer of the Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation, and Lasker M. Meyer, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Abraham and Strauss, downtown Brooklyn's major department store.²²

Commenting on the Academy's involvement in local revitalization a few months earlier, Lichtenstein had said that he was concentrating "rather heavily" in improving the area right around the Academy whose development had lagged behind that of the area of downtown Brooklyn on the other side of Flatbush Avenue.²³ An attack on the surrounding area was now in progress, he said. "The Granada Hotel, the Lafayette Hotel, Fulton Street, and all of that desperately need some attention and I think that's a phase that will come over the next five years."²⁴ An attempt was being made to form a local governing corporation and to undertake a planning study, and the Academy was also exploring a way to work with the Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation.²⁵ Two days after the announcement of the election of the new board members, the Academy held a press reception for the BAM Theater Company. Lichtenstein also announced that the city had awarded the Academy \$60,000 to do an area study of the immediate fifteen-block area and to develop a strategy to renew

²¹BAM Press Release, Fall 1980.

²²Ibid.

²³Interview with Harvey Lichtenstein, 30 July 1980.

²⁴Ibid. ²⁵Ibid.

it.²⁶ He said, echoing the recommendations of the League of Historic American Theaters Summer Conference, that cultural institutions were beginning to work with urban renewal developers because "in their interest to survive, the community must thrive."²⁷

No doubt, the Academy's new board of directors hoped to influence development in the immediate area over the next few years. The decade of the 1980s would acquaint Fort Greene with the benefits of "gentrification."²⁸ It was "the new frontier for 'brownstoners' with a pioneering spirit," said George Goodman, Jr., in December 1981 in his "About Real Estate" column in The New York Times.²⁹ "Underneath the urban decay," the area has "obvious attractions," he noted--"baronial three-story homes," "tree-lined boulevards," and "the proximity of important institutions [like] the Brooklyn Academy of Music," and "the convergence of eight subway lines" a couple of stations from Manhattan.³⁰ Goodman reported on the renewal of a blighted block of brownstones by the Seaboard Development Company which renovated fifteen buildings for rental by "young professionals, whites and blacks."³¹ It was a good arrangement for Seaboard; they paid about \$30,000 per house, and half the interest of the mortgage loans was paid by funds from the City's Department of

²⁶ Press Reception, BAM, 3 November 1980.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ George Goodman, Jr., "The Renewal of Brooklyn Brownstones," The New York Times, 1 December 1981, p. B13.

²⁹ Ibid. ³⁰ Ibid. ³¹ Ibid.

Housing and Preservation. Of course, not everyone benefits from gentrification, and residents of the area, many of whom were on public assistance, were forced to move. A resident acknowledged to Goodman that the buildings as they were had not been habitable since landlords had stopped giving services. The resident said that some old people had frozen to death during the winters. Displacement usually precedes improvement in many cases of urban renewal. Urban decay, according to Goodman, is "the result of the loss of a middle-class tax base."³²

The Academy has benefited from urban renewal. Whether it was really a catalyst for the economic revitalization of the area was disputed by Gerald Schoenfeld, Chairman of the Board of the Schubert Organization, Vice-president and member of the Board of Governors of the League of New York Theatres and Producers, and a member of the board of The 42nd Street Local Development Corporation, a Shubert Organization scheme to "save the Times Square area by Developing theater."³³ Of the Academy, however, he said, "BAM has not been a catalyst for the redevelopment of downtown Brooklyn. They did probably prevent the area from going down the sewer, though."³⁴

On the other hand, the Ford Foundation had believed that the Academy was a factor in the revitalization of downtown Brooklyn, when it committed itself two years earlier to aid the development of the

³²The New York Times, 1 December 1981, p. B13.

³³"Presidential Forum," The Graduate School and University Center, the City University of New York, 28 April 1981.

³⁴Ibid.

new BAM Theatre Company with a matching \$400,000 grant. Roger Kennedy, vice-president of the foundation's arts program, explained the connection to Richard F. Shepard of The New York Times in an article announcing the establishment of the new theatre company. Said Kennedy, "The Brooklyn Academy has been an instrument for urban renewal. . . . This ties in with other things such as the proposed 42nd Street renewal. Entertainment is not the sole consideration."³⁵ Leonard Garment, who was the Academy's acting chairman, rather enigmatically said, "Certain things will happen to the Academy as a result of its location in downtown Brooklyn, and they will reflect what is happening to a large part of New York."³⁶

What was happening was the "gentrification" of New York City, the Koch administration's answer to urban blight. Urban renewal means returning an area to a middle-class tax base by exploiting depressed real-estate more often than not. To achieve this, a consortium of government, business and civic interests must converge and cooperate, and not least among them, the community's cultural institutions. At these times, such cultural institutions are seen as a force for "neighborhood stability."³⁷ The arts appear to

³⁵Richard F. Shepard, "New Troupe Will Stage Classics in Repertory at Brooklyn Academy," The New York Times, 6 February 1979, p. C7.

³⁶ibid.

³⁷Gerald Schoenfeld, speaking at the Presidential Forum, the Graduate School and University Center, the City University of New York, 28 April 1981. (He was referring to 42nd Street's Theatre Row as an example of "an idea of use for neighborhood stability.")

flourish in the midst of middle-class prosperity. Whether the middle-class will return in sufficient number to "Brooklyn's heartland" as Richard Shepard calls it,³⁸ to really sustain the Academy in health, is something that awaits developments in the decade opening before us.

Unfortunately, urban renewal could not save the first BAM Theatre Company. It dissolved after two seasons, "economic reasons being given for its demise."³⁹ Lichtenstein had hoped to maintain the company for at least three years with sufficient financial "underpinning to sustain some initial adversity" while it attempted to develop and establish an identity.⁴⁰ Repertory is the most expensive kind of theatre there is, he told John Corry of The New York Times.⁴¹ It would cost "at least \$1 million a year for the next three years" and those figures might be "optimistic" if there were a rise in theatre costs.⁴² The Academy's total budget for the 1979-1980 season was \$4.8 million.⁴³ A year before, the Academy received Ford's \$400,000 matching grant, and Lichtenstein reported that the board members had raised the "requisite \$800,000."⁴⁴

³⁸Shepard, The New York Times, 6 February 1979, p. C7.

³⁹Press release, The Dena McConnell Clark Foundation, 14 November 1981.

⁴⁰John Corry, "BAM Repertory Troupe Ready for Upbeat Season," The New York Times, 21 January 1980.

⁴¹ibid. ⁴²ibid. ⁴³ibid. ⁴⁴ibid.

He thought that approximately one-third of the company's budget for the first year would be met by subscriptions, or about \$300,000 to \$350,000.⁴⁵ In the first season, between 7,000 and 8,000 subscriptions at \$25 to \$45 were sold, and it was hoped that they would double it in 1980-1981, David Jones told Richard Shepard of the Times that summer.⁴⁶ However, by November 1980, only 8,500 had subscribed.⁴⁷ Demographic figures on subscribers vary. According to David Jones in July 1980, forty-five percent were from Brooklyn, forty-five percent from Manhattan, ten percent from New Jersey.⁴⁸ At a Press Reception in November 1980, Lichtenstein reported that fifty percent of theatre company subscribers were from Brooklyn, twenty-five percent from Manhattan, sixteen percent from Queens and Long Island, and five percent from New Jersey.⁴⁹ However, the subscriptions never rose to the hoped-for levels. In the first year, audiences were at sixty percent of capacity, and by the start of the second season approximately 10,000 subscriptions had been sold.⁵⁰

⁴⁵Corry, The New York Times, 21 January 1980.

⁴⁶Richard F. Shepard, "Brooklyn Academy Plans Five Plays in '81," The New York Times, 24 July 1980.

⁴⁷Lichtenstein/Jones, at Press Reception with BAM, 3 November, 1980.

⁴⁸Shepard, The New York Times, 24 July 1980.

⁴⁹Lichtenstein/Jones, Press Reception at BAM, 3 November 1980.

⁵⁰Eleanor Blau, "Midsummer Night's Dream Opening BAM Rep Year," The New York Times, 9 January 1981, p. C13.

The first play to be performed by the company, on 12 February 1980, was Shakespeare's The Winter's Tale, with Brian Murray as Leontes and Marti Maraden as Hermione, and Sheila Allen, Patrick Hines, Joe Morton, and John Heffernan in featured roles. Charles MacArthur's Johnny on a Spot was next, featuring Roxanne Hart and Gary Bayer. These two plays were performed in rotating repertory with Maxim Gorky's Barbarians, an American premiere. He & She, by Rachel Crothers and two one-act farces by Brecht and Feydeau which played concurrently completed the offerings of the first season.⁵¹ While the lack of appeal of the plays presented may have had something to do with the light subscription sales, the company won an "Ovie" Award for "innovative programming" as a result of the season's choices by David Jones and Richard Nelson, the company's literary manager.⁵² The Off-Broadway theatre award was also given that year to Edward Cornell, the director of Johnny on a Spot, and to two company actors, Jon Polito and Boyd Gaines. The company in its second season offered Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream, which opened on 4 January 1981 and played in rotating repertory with Farquhar's The Recruiting Officer and Ibsen's The Wild Duck. Brecht's Jungle of Cities and Sophocles' Oedipus the King completed the second season.⁵³

⁵¹BAM Theatre Company Fact Sheet for 1980 Season.

⁵²BAM Theatre Company Publicity Release.

⁵³ibid.

The company performed ten major productions in fifteen months⁵⁴ but it never developed into an ensemble. It was also being judged by the standards of the commercial marketplace, that is, the box-office hit. As Robert Brustein said, in his autopsy on the still-warm body in his 20 June 1981 article in The New Republic, "The critics began calling for stars; the audiences began demanding hits."⁵⁵ It would only be a matter of time, he said, before the idea of operating a resident repertory so close to Broadway would be dropped by the Academy's Board of Directors.⁵⁶ As Robert Kalfin had said some years earlier, fund-raising in the non-profit theatre is dependent upon "symbols of commercial success." Brustein saw the possible death of the BAM Theatre Company as "ominous:"

It represents the fizzle of an ambitious American theatrical institution, one of the largest in the country and the only one of its kind in the New York area, and it is therefore the most significant local failure since the APA closed its doors in the early 1960s.⁵⁷

Brustein's criterion for the company's significance seems to be based on the breadth of the conception; for he recognized that the BAM Theatre Company was an artistic failure. He wrote that the company actors were unable to "play the great roles."⁵⁸

⁵⁴Gordon Rogoff, "The American Way of Theatre Death," The Village Voice, 10-16 June 1981.

⁵⁵Robert Brustein, "The Demise of BAM," The New Republic, 20 June 1981, p. 26.

⁵⁶ibid. ⁵⁷ibid. ⁵⁸ibid.

This was particularly true in the second season when many of the company's best actors did not return. Frank Rich said that they "replenished the decimated ranks with non-entities," as he wondered whether money, poor judgment or Jones' lack of familiarity with New York actors was the cause.⁵⁹ Gordon Rogoff saw the failed venture as "an explosion of seriousness--albeit fake, pompous, and unconvincing."⁶⁰ Indeed, BAM may have invited such critical reactions by announcing intentions of creating a company of "world caliber."⁶¹ Unfortunately, the productions had a "typical" regional theatre character; the company was hard-working, but lack-luster, uneven in talents, and unsteady in execution. Since regional theatre was actually the model for the Brooklyn-based company, the results are not surprising. Certainly, Lichtenstein and Jones had the Guthrie Theater in mind; they got something less.

To add to the artistic problems, the company went into their second season with greater than expected first season losses. An interim budget for the fiscal year 1979-1980 reported that the total expenses of the theater company were \$1,495,990; and the excess

⁵⁹Frank Rich, "Why Classical Theater Has Lost its Way," The New York Times, 8 March 1981, Section 2, p. D3.

⁶⁰Rogoff, The Village Voice, 10-16 June 1981.

⁶¹Eleanor Blau, "Midsummer Night's Dream Opening BAM Rep Year," The New York Times, 9 January 1981, p. C13.

(or loss), was \$775,000.⁶² In fact, the Academy's total budget for the fiscal year 1980-1981 was over \$5 million. This was a very large culture bill at any time, but particularly so coming as it did at the beginning of a new decade of Reaganomic budget cuts. Thus, two factors were simultaneously coming into play. The first was, as Robert Brustein believed, "the demise of the non-profit system" and "the passing of the institutional theater" when institutions like the BAM Theater Company, the Chelsea Theater, Playwrights Horizons in Queens were closing their doors, while several other not-for-profit theatres on the "much celebrated Theatre Row on 42nd Street," and the American Conservatory Theater in San Francisco were threatened by deficits.⁶³ And second, it would be more and more difficult to find someone to underwrite a large cultural budget. Indeed, it would appear that the end of a decade-and-a-half of tremendous growth in the arts had come to an end.

⁶²BAM, Inc., Budget Fiscal Year 1979-1980, 10 January 1979.

⁶³Brustein, The New Republic, 20 June 1981, p. 27.

CHAPTER X

RELECTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS: BAM in the 1980s

Minneapolis is a long way from Broadway; the Brooklyn Academy is not as fortunate as the regional Guthrie; it must suffer the scrutiny of the Manhattan media and court the Manhattan public. This was just one of the challenges faced by BAM at the onset of the new decade. Perhaps the situation of BAM at this time and its future was best summarized by the words of its administrator. As Harvey Lichtenstein noted, the Academy looked at itself as

. . . a local institution, a Brooklyn institution, a city institution, and a national institution. Because being in New York City, you can't really be on the top level of activity and be parochial. Wherever you're based, the ability of Brooklynites and anybody else to get to Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center or Broadway is there, and you're not going to come to the Brooklyn Academy unless the Brooklyn Academy gives them the kind of quality and excellence they¹ can get at those other places.

This realistic appraisal did not deter Lichtenstein's public optimism about the Academy's future. Asked by Matt Biberfeld, on WNYC radio in 1980, how he saw the next five years for the Brooklyn

¹Harvey Lichtenstein, interview with Matt Biberfeld, "Metropolitan Arts," weekly feature on WNYC radio, 29 August 1980.

Academy,² he replied that he was very optimistic about BAM in the future, but that he was less optimistic about other things that were happening in the arts. There would be a difficult "money squeeze" and many of the institutions and companies that had developed during the great flurry of activity in the 1960s, might go out of business. He thought, however, that the Academy was "in a fairly good situation." They had made "major jumps" in the past few years, and they would consolidate rather than expand further over the next five years. The other aspect of their work in the next few years would be the "crucial" work they were doing outside the Academy. They were getting involved, he said, with major redevelopment projects with the Bedford-Stuyvesant Redevelopment Corporation, and they were talking about the development of a first-class hotel across the way from them. (That was the Granada Hotel.) They knew, he said, that the area around them had to improve, and it had to have more services than it presently did, if they were going to attract the size of audience they needed. As a result, they were getting involved with redevelopment in the vicinity; they were just then setting up a not-for-profit development corporation in order to do that. They had to take the initiative, he said, because they were "the major institutional force in that area."³

He had talked earlier in the interview on the problem of the inner cities where the major arts institutions like the Academy

²Harvey Lichtenstein, interview, WNYC radio, 29 August 1980.

³Ibid.

have always been located. These arts institutions, he said, have not only to be concerned with the arts, but they have "a very real urban responsibility to their community, to their neighborhood, to their city."⁴

They have to get involved in those issues. They have to get involved in urban planning, they have to get involved in renewal, they have to get involved with their communities in whatever housing developments or other things are happening in that community. It's not a matter of lip service or saying that arts are good for the community. I think it's crucial . . . the arts are going to become a vital and important force for the rebuilding and the revitalization of cities.⁵

Lichtenstein also talked about the Academy's responsibility to the arts as it entered the new decade. They were dedicated, he said, to giving new composers and new artists an opportunity to show themselves. He cited the recent collaboration at BAM of Lucinda Childs, Phillip Glass and Sol Lewitt, three of America's most avant-garde artists working in three different media as an example of the sort of work they were committed to presenting. Lichtenstein noted in addition that such works were not only important to their responsibility to art but it was also important to "visibility" as it creates "public interest" and "media interest."⁶

The avant-garde had been good for Lichtenstein in the beginning of his career at BAM. Perhaps it would be the avant-garde again,

⁴Harvey Lichtenstein, interview, WNYC radio, 29 August 1980.

⁵Ibid. ⁶Ibid.

and not the classical arts that would keep audiences coming to BAM in the eighties. Certainly the highlight of the 1981-1982 season was Phillip Glass's opera Satyagraha, a sold-out event.

Ten thousand tickets to five performances were sold out and . . . no doubt, more could easily have been sold. The work drew loyal audiences when most contemporary operas languish in the dustbin; and the attendees, at the first Brooklyn showing at least, were anything but the typical opera audience.⁷

Also creating a great deal of interest was the modernist programming of the Brooklyn Philharmonia's Music Director, Lukas Foss. Of Foss, Harvey Lichtenstein said, "His ideas about music, his adventurousness, also his extraordinary talent, all of which combined fit in with what we do."⁸ The interviewer, Biberfeld, noted that the unusual programs such as Foss's Bach marathons or his "Meet the Moderns" series were "very brave kinds of things to do . . . maybe foolhardy."⁹ But such foolhardiness in its resident orchestra was drawing big crowds, as John Rockwell reported of the 1981-1982 seasonal opening of the "Meet the Moderns."¹⁰

⁷Edward Rothstein, "Glass Opera Accents Rights Struggle," The New York Times, 3 December 1981, p. C19.

⁸ibid.

⁹Harvey Lichtenstein, interview, WNYC radio, 29 August 1980.

¹⁰John Rockwell, "Music: Foss's Moderns," The New York Times, 31 October 1981.

The following season, 1982-1983, the 29th of the orchestra's residence at the Academy, would see the installation of a new acoustic shell in the Opera House. Designed by Christopher Knowles and named after Stanley H. Kaplan, who provided the funds and is also the orchestra's president, the Stanley H. Kaplan Educational Center Acoustic Shell is now considered "one of the finest acoustical spaces in the city . . . [and] will fill a unique role in New York's musical life," said John Rockwell in the Times.¹¹ Rockwell also noted that the Philharmonia, with the beginning of the 1982-1983 season had been renamed the Brooklyn Philharmonic, beginning "a new era" in the history of the orchestra.

But what of the rebirth and continued existence of BAM from an environmental perspective? Here, many questions are left unanswered. But some comments may be made. A new term has become current in Manhattan: "Sohoization," a term that refers to the "gentrification" (another current urban development term) of an area through colonization by avant-garde artists. The area of 19th-century iron factory lofts south of Houston Street in Manhattan was that which gave the phenomenon its name. Perhaps, if Lichtenstein and his board of directors have their way, their subsidiary, "the not-for-profit development corporation" will cause a BAM-ization of Brooklyn as they continue to "meet the moderns" in the eighties. It is clear from Lichtenstein's remarks above to Matt Biberfeld that he considers redevelopment of the area around the Academy

¹¹ John Rockwell, "Brooklyn Philharmonic: A New Sound to the Hall," The New York Times, 9 January 1983, p. 45.

"crucial" to its health, and plans to make community redevelopment projects a top priority at BAM in the 1980s.

Meanwhile, an update on the rehabilitation plans for Downtown Brooklyn appeared in *The New York Times*, Friday, 3 April 1982. Frank J. Prial reported that the Fulton Street Mall was the "only surviving remnant" of the "spectacular" and "heroic" redevelopment plans which originated in the campaign rhetoric of Mayor John V. Lindsay back in 1969.¹² The Mall had not brought the middle-class shopper back to Brooklyn, nor had it been an agent to "emancipate Brooklyn from its commercial bondage to Manhattan," as was anticipated.¹³

Even so, it has injected new life into a dying business area, and if its proponents are right, it may mean a renaissance for what was once one of the country's largest and most lucrative downtown shopping centers. . . .¹⁴

Mr. Prial said that the first phase, from Albee Square, including the Albee Mall, to Gallatin Place, was now complete at a cost of \$25 million. The second phase, which should expand at each end, from Gallatin Place to Adams Street and from Albee Square to Flatbush Avenue, was to begin in August 1982 and would cost \$15 million. It is expected to be completed by 1984. Urban developers will be watching to see if the plan has been able to bring the decayed inner-city shopping district back to life, said Prial. The comments

¹²Frank J. Prial, "Mall Stands Alone in Brooklyn 'Renaissance,'" *The New York Times*, 9 April 1982, p. B1.

¹³ibid. ¹⁴ibid.

he elicited from some local merchants were not optimistic. Arthur Roberts of Filmac Jewelers on Fulton Street didn't think revival was possible. The area, he pointed out, had improved physically, but that had not helped business. He believed the problem was that people would not use public transportation to get there. He also cited the high crime rate in the area. An employee from A & S Department Store told Prial, "We were supposed to get lots of Bloomingdale's customers. . . . All we got was their shoplifters."¹⁵ Accompanying Prial's article in the Times was a photograph of the Fulton Street Mall with the buildings of Borough Hall in the background--an interestingly varied cityscape of both history and promise.

Some concluding thoughts of a more general nature are now in order at this point in the work. In effect, this dissertation has been an exercise in defining the politics of cultural survival. That is, it has delineated, through description and analysis, the tools necessary for the continued viability of a cultural institution such as the Brooklyn Academy of Music. Moreover, the work has characterized the extent and limitations that such an institution can exert beyond its role as a purely artistic center. BAM has been shown in its role as a solely artistic institution and also as a symbol of urban revitalization. This study has also pinpointed the tools necessary for survival; methods which included diverse and innovative programming, creative administration and fund-

¹⁵Prial, The New York Times, 9 April 1982, p. B1.

raising, and even the conscious use of BAM by its advocates as a symbol for urban renewal.

Of course, one question which arises and which must be answered before concluding this study relates to the level of success of the administration of Harvey Lichtenstein. Clearly, it was during this incumbency that most of the major ingredients relative to the survival of BAM came into play. In addition, the tools necessary to meet the challenges were set in motion by Lichtenstein.

However, although a definitive judgment of Harvey Lichtenstein's effectiveness cannot be made in specifically positive or negative terms, certain assessments can be made.

From a positive perspective, Lichtenstein brought a new vitality to BAM as a producer of avant-garde programs such as *The Living Theatre*, Peter Brook, Robert Wilson, and Twyla Tharp.¹⁶ The success of avant-garde programming at BAM has been unique. John Rockwell, at the 1983 world premiere of performance artist Laurie Anderson's United States, described the "overflow audience" at the Brooklyn Academy, "as exotic a collection of international trend-setters as this town has seen in years."¹⁷ Nowhere, except in the concert halls

¹⁶"Lichtenstein to be Cited," The New York Times, 8 February 1983. Tharp will be able to repay Lichtenstein's interest when she presents him with the 1983 Copezio Award, a \$5,000 prize honoring "lifetime achievement in dance," on 25 April 1983.

¹⁷John Rockwell, "Performance Art: Premiere of 'United States,'" The New York Times, 6 February 1983, p. 50. "United States" premiered at the Academy two consecutive nights, February 3 and 4, 1983. See also Don Shewey, "The Performing Artistry of Laurie Anderson," The New York Times Magazine, 6 February 1983.

Europe have avant-garde and new wave artists had a venue such as BAM, with its Opera House, Playhouse, and Lepercq Space stages. Lichtenstein's familiarity with the avant-garde movement, and his ability to sell the avant-garde to a larger audience, have contributed to the overwhelming success of these works at the Academy.

Certainly, regional centers around the country were not producing these works, nor did Broadway beckon when Lichtenstein was previewing these artists in the early 1970s. Robert Wilson said in 1976 that his work was considered "too crazy for Minneapolis and San Francisco."¹⁸ Of course, Lichtenstein's problem is that once Lincoln Center or Broadway does recognize the commercial possibilities of a particular avant-garde artist, BAM loses that artist to them. Wilson may have had "some regrets" about not playing Minneapolis or San Francisco in 1976, but he had none about not playing Brooklyn. He was just then having his opera Einstein on the Beach performed at the Metropolitan Opera House, instead of at BAM.¹⁹ Nevertheless, BAM has gained a great deal through its association with the avant-garde, and Harvey Lichtenstein is responsible for this association.

In addition, Lichtenstein has had the singular ability to draw together powerful individuals of diverse interests and backgrounds, from leaders in government, real-estate and finance

¹⁸ Mel Gussow, "'Einstein' = Met X Avant-Garde²," The New York Times, 19 November 1976, p. C8.

¹⁹ *ibid.*

to business men, union officials and minority community workers. He has also had the wisdom to choose appropriate associates both in the art and administrative arenas. Lukas Foss, Music Director of the Brooklyn Philharmonic; Charles E. Ziff, marketing specialist; and Judith E. Daykin, Executive Vice-president and General Manager of BAM are the most prominent of these individuals. Lichtenstein has the minds of both the artist and the entrepreneur.

Certainly, the record is not unblemished. Lichtenstein was fiscally over-optimistic; the administrative bureaucracy may have grown too rapidly; and, from both artistic and financial perspectives, the BAM Theater Company was at all times less than successful. However, as noted above, his actions cannot be evaluated in positive and negative terms, since the products of his efforts are a function of both the limitations with which he was faced, and the overall limitations of an institution such as BAM in carrying out its real and symbolic mandates. Thus, it was beyond Lichtenstein's purview to overcome the "Brooklyn Prejudice," and it was beyond his power to prevent the drying up of funds as a result of economic downturns no matter what the goals of utility or of art of the cultural center. Therefore, Harvey Lichtenstein was, to an extent, circumscribed by factors beyond his control.

Certainly beyond his control is the reality of the socio-economic situation in which BAM finds itself. It is still, at the beginning of the 1980s, as it was at the beginning of the 1970s, "an Emperor amid alien ruins."²⁰ Of course, it will take

²⁰Clive Barnes, "Palace of the Dance Lends Elegance to Peeling Section of Brooklyn," The New York Times, 30 October 1971, Section 1A, p. 1.

some years before we will be able to assess the relative importance of BAM in the redevelopment of the area. That is, will the continued lack of success of such projects as the Fulton Street Mall in the end spell disaster for BAM? Or, will BAM be able to effect the necessary change upon its more immediate vicinity, through the efforts of Lichtenstein's redevelopment schemes to save it from the disasters which have plagued it throughout its history on Lafayette Avenue? Again, from a positive perspective, Lichtenstein has been swift to recognize the role that BAM could play in the shaping of the future of Brooklyn. He understood also how BAM might be advantageously used as a tool for the goals and aspirations of other forces to rehabilitate the area, like the real-estate interests, politicians, and the new urban gentry. The interplay between these groups has been one of almost an equilibrium reaction, whereby each has gained something from the other.

It must be mentioned at this point, however, that culture in Brooklyn has not depended solely upon the efforts of Lichtenstein and BAM. The recent expansion of activities at Brooklyn College Brooklyn Center, BCBC, as it is known, leave some questions to be asked about the failure of Lichtenstein to cultivate the still-relatively sizable audience for cultural events that exists in Brooklyn. While trying to create a new middle-class audience base in the vicinity, Lichtenstein might have lost touch with those neighborhoods on the other side of Prospect Park, like Flatbush and Brighton Beach, which have reacted to the presentations at BCBC with enthusiasm. It is significant that BCBC has managed to build a subscription list of 10,000, ninety-

four percent of whom are from Brooklyn, indeed, from "within a five-mile radius of Whitman Hall," its 2,500-seat auditorium.²¹ BCBC started in 1954, but it began to experience tremendous growth within the past three to four years, when new fund-raising activities and subscription campaigns reached this population.²² The center gives fifty-four performances a season, of music and dance, and three highly successful evenings of Yiddish theatre in its smaller Gershwin Theatre. The biggest success of the 1982 presentations was a concert by the violinist Itzhak Perlman, and other popular presentations were the Ballet Folklorico de Mexico, and the Ballet Rambert.²³

It may be that the Academy attracts the same population, but it needs even larger subscription numbers to survive. Of course, the Academy is so much larger than BCBC, too. When it was built, it was thought that the Academy would see three million people a year pass through its doors.²⁴ On the other hand, this population group from within a five-mile radius of BCBC might not be subscribers to events at BAM as well. If not, a comparison of subscription lists would be interesting in this regard. If it is so that BCBC subscribers do not subscribe in significant numbers to BAM as well, then this represents a loss for BAM. There may be reasons why this population does not come to BAM, if, indeed, it is so. The relative ease and safety of travel to BCBC as opposed

²¹ Lawson Tootle, Programming Assistant, BCBC, in interview, 11 April 1983.

²² *Ibid.* ²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Bradley, p. 39.

to the still rather unsafe and inhospitable surroundings of BAM may be one reason. Another might be that BAM programming is not appealing to the tastes of this population group.

It will be of great interest to see whether BAM survives the challenges of the future, and whether Harvey Lichtenstein will be able to bring to fruition the forces he set in motion during his incumbency.

In summary, to truly understand the failures, successes, and future of an arts institution such as the Brooklyn Academy of Music, one must look at intrinsic and external factors, and, in so doing, we may see a reflection of and gain answers to a much broader question: What are the objectives and interrelationships between art and utility in American cultural life? This dissertation has been one attempt to address this issue.

A. Ten Year Report

BROOKLYN ACADEMY OF MUSIC, INC.		10 YEAR REPORT										
		June 17, 1980										
		70-71	71-72	72-73	73-74	74-75	75-76	76-77	77-78	78-79	79-80	80-81
Revenue & Public Support												
Revenue	606,752	419,171	599,591	829,138	693,307	1,106,932	1,209,426	1,453,533	1,162,120			
Government Support	642,298	694,614	879,167	965,344	1,444,474	1,234,837	1,206,465	1,451,233	1,461,499			
Other Support	373,773	141,778	429,393	881,177	588,778	457,664	750,096	755,436	846,798			
TOTAL (See page 2)	1,622,823	1,255,563	1,908,151	2,675,659	2,726,559	2,799,428	3,165,987	3,660,202	3,472,607			
Expenses												
Program	1,041,536	588,477	909,125	1,247,592	1,086,501	1,139,351	1,111,422	718,277	1,164,294			
Theater Company	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	500,943	814,378			
Rentals	---	41,664	57,634	47,167	51,951	100,660	48,615	63,757	73,680			
Parking Lots	---	---	4,529	25,135	51,211	46,151	59,166	58,955	67,514			
SUBTOTAL	1,041,536	630,141	971,488	1,313,894	1,189,663	1,286,192	1,720,146	1,655,367	1,542,523			
Stage & Production	---	177,203	168,383	219,704	219,095	226,665	277,740	288,265	356,822			
Promotion & Audience	---	81,355	102,033	132,284	171,233	133,906	157,683	199,137	259,837			
House & Box Office	---	---	74,054	79,210	73,014	75,485	94,218	113,436	117,524			
Bldg. Maint./Oper.	330,545	226,376	442,030	443,220	498,968	472,692	539,773	562,231	591,684			
Administration	293,711	290,916	129,376	156,439	162,067	173,718	138,229	235,581	257,806			
Fundraising	---	---	31,425	58,101	66,848	77,534	111,305	125,703	216,129			
DEPT. TOTAL	624,256	775,830	947,301	1,998,958	1,143,125	1,160,900	1,160,448	1,524,253	1,729,202			
Resident Co. Support	134,500	70,000	75,000	120,200	73,600	65,575	26,500	---	---			
Construction	---	---	44,980	283,120	165,279	252,035	---	582,587	164,889			
Other	---	---	7,717	2,764	2,045	---	(11,784)	(7,756)	---			
TOTAL EXPENSES	1,666,292	1,476,021	2,046,486	2,908,936	2,571,713	2,763,202	3,114,310	3,754,351	3,477,214			
Current Excess	(177,469)	(220,250)	(138,335)	(133,077)	152,841	35,626	61,677	105,651	(24,607)			
Accumulated Current Excess	(176,927)	(416,153)	(559,505)	(692,582)	(539,741)	(504,115)	(442,438)	(336,787)	(361,391)			
Capitalization	---	---	44,930	45,000	165,279	252,035	---	104,182	33,661			
Depreciation	---	---	---	---	(12,818)	(30,720)	(30,720)	(30,720)	(30,720)			
Adjustments	---	---	(4,077)	---	(1,729)	---	---	---	---			
Accumulated Fund Equipt	(176,927)	(416,153)	(514,525)	(602,602)	(432,999)	(42,158)	(11,201)	46,712	746,246			

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June 16, 1980

COMPANY OF MUSIC, INC.

10 YEAR REPORT
REVENUE AND PUBLIC SUPPORT

	70-71	71-72	72-73	73-74	74-75	75-76	76-77	77-78	76-79	79-80	80-81
Revenue											
Program Receipts	453,454	289,449	355,573	586,457	365,970	779,277	581,797	372,854	823,196		
Theater Co. Receipts	---	---	---	---	---	---	242,697	383,711	---		
Rentals	85,717	97,493	113,752	118,131	123,720	171,333	102,188	95,398	122,996		
Parking Lots	0	0	9,537	106,902	112,583	133,687	144,606	120,529	145,727		
Fees	0	6,166	115,214	60,000	60,000	0	120,000	0	---		
Special	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	469,010	---		
Other	67,581	18,265	5,205	17,848	31,029	22,635	17,918	12,031	49,120		
TOTAL REVENUE	606,752	410,373	599,581	829,338	693,302	1,106,932	1,209,426	1,431,533	1,162,320		
Government											
N.Y.C. Approp.	330,545	359,581	688,700	775,000	759,398	760,213	737,012	721,012	780,909		
N.Y.C. Construction	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	109,305		
N.Y.C. Other	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	33,495	15,000		
N.Y.S.C.O.A.	275,253	170,000	132,000	142,764	368,409	407,886	310,000	284,000	247,101		
Special (State/Fed)	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	171,000	---		
M.E.A. Grants	36,500	155,033	58,467	47,580	41,667	66,733	64,833	80,423	121,200		
N.E.A. Challenge	---	---	---	---	---	---	94,620	140,626	114,754		
M.E.W. Grants	0	0	0	0	275,000	0	0	0	18,898		
Fed. CETA Funds	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	29,677	56,242		
TOTAL GOV'T SUPPORT	642,298	684,614	679,167	965,344	1,444,474	1,234,822	1,200,465	1,431,233	1,451,489		
Other (Public)											
Foundations	306,779	131,422	207,255	168,645	232,900	170,750	360,915	403,350	310,300		
Individuals	5,679	3,896	113,608	174,836	127,571	26,201	68,229	99,977	141,995		
Corporations	61,336	1,400	29,300	56,227	66,725	83,223	215,960	117,673	234,945		
Beneficia	---	0	79,230	48,515	34,536	4,265	105,432	4,628	68,508		
Special	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	136,803	---		
Construction	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	193,000	72,000		
TOTAL OTHER SUPPORT	373,773	143,778	429,393	891,177	588,778	457,664	757,246	955,436	846,798		
Total Revenue & Public Support	1,622,823	1,738,765	1,969,141	2,675,859	2,726,554	3,799,428	4,164,187	3,868,202	3,472,607		

TALENT

List of Artists and Personalities Who Have Appeared at the Brooklyn Academy of Music 1861 - present

John Wilkes Booth
 Edwin Booth
 President Arthur
 Grover Cleveland
 John Drew
 Joseph Jefferson
 DeWolf Hopper
 Ignace Jan Paderewski
 Nellie Melba
 Booker T. Washington
 Woodrow Wilson
 Fritz Kreisler
 Mary Garden
 David Belasco
 Otis Skinner
 Enrico Caruso
 Al Smith
 Franklin D. Roosevelt
 Adlai Stevenson
 William Jennings Bryant
 Sarah Bernhardt
 Katherine Cornell
 George and Ira Gershwin
 Pavlova
 Geraldine Farrar
 Sir Harry Lauder
 Walter Damrosch
 Mary Pickford
 Blanche Yerka
 Isadora Damrosch
 Arturo Toscanini
 J.P. Morgan
 Maude Adams
 Gustav Mahler
 Theodore Roosevelt
 Ellen Terry
 Mischa Elman
 Ruth St. Denis
 Rear Admiral Robert E. Perry
 Helen Keller
 Ann Sullivan
 Lillian Russell
 William H. Taft
 Lowell Thomas
 Ruth Draper
 Rockwell Kent
 John Charles Thomas
 Walter Hampden
 Captain Eddie Rickenbacker
 Sergei Rachmaninoff
 Rabindranath Tagore
 H.V. Kaitenborn
 Calvin Coolidge
 Sinclair Lewis
 Ted Shawn
 Percy Grainger
 Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo
 Carl Sandburg

Edna St. Vincent Millay
 Sherwood Anderson
 Lt. Commander Richard E.
 Byrd
 Rachel Crothers
 Pablo Casals
 Cornelia Otis Skinner
 Jascha Heifitz
 Serge Koussevitsky
 Charles Coburn
 Andras Segovia
 Sergeant Alvin C. York
 E.H. Southern
 Bertrand Russell
 Michael Strange
 Thornton Wilder
 Jose Iturbi
 Randolph Churchill
 Paul Robeson
 Budapest String Quartet
 J.P. Priestly
 Sinclair Lewis
 Winston Churchill
 Mary Wigman
 Walter Gieseking
 Fannie Hurst
 Dorothy Thompson
 Amelia Earhart
 Lily Pons
 John Massfield
 Robert Frost
 Martha Graham
 Frank Lloyd Wright
 Laurence Tibbett
 Lotte Lehman
 Edward Steichen
 Marc Blitzstein
 Rosa Ponselle
 Gertrude Stein
 Archibald MacLeish
 Theodore Dreiser
 Kirsten Flagstad
 Romola Nilinsky
 Joes European Ballet
 Pearl S. Buck
 Upton Sinclair
 Doris Humphrey
 Charles Weidman
 Jose Limon
 Laurits Melchior
 Igor Stravinsky
 Langston Hughes
 Aldous Huxley
 Lehman Engel
 Marian Anderson
 John Martin
 Hanya Holm
 Agnes de Mille

Myra Hess
 Eleanor Roosevelt
 Jussi Bjoerling
 Aaron Copland
 Clifton Fadiman
 Thomas Mann
 Fiorello H. LaGuardia
 Trapp Family Choir
 Faith Baldwin
 Vladimir Horowitz
 Artur Rubenstein
 Ruggiero Ricci
 Wendel L. Wilkie
 Milton Cross
 Peggy Wood
 Alec Templeton
 Frank Buck
 Jan Peerce
 Robert Edmond Jones
 Efram Zimbalist
 Rex Stout
 Lillian Gish
 Sir Thomas Beecham
 Rudolf Serkin
 Carmel Quinn
 Jennie Tourel
 National Ballet of Canada
 Elsa Maxwell
 Emily Kimbrough
 Iika Chase
 Will Rogers, Jr.
 Paul Draper
 Larry Adler
 Thomas E. Dewey
 Anna May Wong
 Richard Dyer-Bennett
 Alicia Markova
 Anton Dolin
 Leonard Bernstein
 Ptrice Munsel
 Bennett Cerf
 Ezio Pinza
 Benny Goodman
 Rise Stevens
 Isaac Stern
 Eva LeGallienne
 Anna Russell
 Richard Tucker
 Ogden Nash
 James Michener
 Charles Laughton
 Edward Everett Horton
 Charles Boyer
 Cedric Hardwicke
 Agnes Moorehead
 Basil Rathbone
 Merce Cunningham
 Erik Hawkins

Donald McKayle
 John Carradine
 Alistair Cooke
 Tyrone Power
 Judith Anderson
 Raymond Massey
 Helen Traubel
 Cleveland Amory
 Robert Peters
 American Ballet Theatre
 Vienna Boys Choir
 Jose Greco
 John Dos Passos
 Marge and Gower Champion
 Harry Belafonte
 Yma Sumac
 London Festival Ballet
 Bill and Cora Baird
 Lew Ayres
 Salzburg Marionettes
 Alexandra Danilova
 Dinah Shore
 Royal Danish Ballet
 Constance Bennett
 Frank McHugh
 Renata Tebaldi
 Duke Ellington
 Dave Brubeck
 Louis Armstrong
 Dizzy Gillespie
 Count Basie
 Glenn Miller
 Stan Kenton
 Victoria de los Angeles
 Teddy Wilson
 Faye Emerson
 Arthur Treacher
 Robert Joffrey Ballet
 Marian McPartland
 Zoot Sims
 Roger Williams
 Eugene List
 Donald Oenscager
 Victor Borge
 Bette Davis
 Gary Merrill
 Drew Pearson
 Moscow State Symphony
 Skitch Henderson
 Theodore Bikel
 Jose Ferrer
 Morton Gould
 Johnny Mathis
 Dancers of Ball
 Jack Gilford
 Rudolf Nureyev
 Hal Holbrook
 Van Cliburn
 National Ballet

Paul Taylor
 Ray Charles
 Walter Terry
 Marjorie Tallchief
 Les Grand Ballet Canadiens
 Pennsylvania Ballet
 Sarah Caldwell's American
 National Opera
 Boston Symphony
 Pittsburgh Symphony
 Vladimir Ashkenazy
 Alicia De La Rocha
 Itzhak Periman
 Andre Watts
 David Oistrakh
 Alvin Alley
 Glen Tetley
 Living Theatre Company
 Julian Beck/Judith Malina
 Alwin Nikolai
 Murray Louis
 ABT with Carla Fracci and
 Erik Bruhn
 Twyla Tharp and Dancers
 Matiaslav Rostropovitch
 Polish Theatre Lab
 Harkness Ballet
 Robert Wilson
 Maurice Bejart's Ballet of the
 Twentieth Century
 American Ballet - Elliot Feld
 Senegalese National
 Dance Co.
 Ritual Acrobats of Persia
 Steve Reich
 Symphony of the New World
 Netherlands Dance Theatre
 Jewish State Theatre
 of Bucharest
 Dancers of Mail
 Nuria Espert Company
 of Spain
 New York Pro Musica
 Jamaican National Dance
 Company
 Vermeer Quartet
 Royal Shakespeare Company
 Actors' Company of Great
 Britain
 Odetta
 Big Mama Thornton
 The Young Vic
 John Lee Hooker
 Sonny Terry and
 Brownie McGhee
 Tashi Quartet
 Mikhail Baryshnikov
 Geisey Kirkland
 Horacio Gutierrez

Laura Dean
 Jerusalem Symphony
 Neptune Theatre Company
 of Canada
 National Theatre of the Deaf
 Irene Worth
 Christopher Walken
 Rosemary Harris
 George Grizard
 Sam Levene
 Garrick Ohlsson
 Trisha Brown
 Lazar Berman
 Jason Robards
 Zoe Caldwell
 Michael Moriarty
 Kevin Conway
 James Levine
 Eugene Fodor
 Pilobolus
 Lar Lubovitch
 Fires of London
 Tokyo String Quartet
 Abbey Theatre of Dublin
 Cleavon Little
 Rene Auberjonois
 Blythe Danner
 Denholm Elliott
 Margaret Hamilton
 Ellen Burstyn
 Tovah Feldshuh
 Austin Pendleton
 Barnard Hughes
 Stephen Collins
 Lucinda Childs
 Annabelle Gamson
 Chris Sarandon
 George Rose
 Carolle Shelley
 Kurt Kazner
 Richard Dreyfuss
 Sam Waterston
 DanceAfrica
 San Francisco Ballet
 Preservation Hall Jazz Band
 Ballet Hispanico
 Bread and Puppet Theatre
 Billy Taylor Sextet
 National Youth Theatre of
 Great Britain
 Comedie Francaise
 Cleveland Quartet
 Bill Bolcom
 Joan Morris
 Euble Blake
 Max Merath
 Senta Driver
 Danny Grossman
 Harry James
 Lionel Hampton

C. Highlights of Events at BAM, 1967-Present

1967-1968:

Sarah Caldwell's American National Opera: Lulu, Falstaff, Tosca.

Dance: Paul Taylor, Merce Cunningham, Alvin Ailey.

Violin recitals: David Oistrakh. Itzhak Perlman.

1968-1969:

The Living Theatre. (Julian Beck and Judith Malina), in repertory:
Mysteries and Smaller Pieces, Antigone, Paradise Now,
Frankenstein.

Dance: American Ballet Theatre (guest artists Carla Fracci and Erik Bruhn), Martha Graham, Paul Taylor, Alwin Nikolais and Murray Louis, Merce Cunningham, Alvin Ailey, Twyla Tharp.

1969-1970:

The Polish Laboratory Theatre Institute of Actor's Research of Wrocław, Jerzy Grotowski, director: Constant Prince, Akropolis, Apocalypse. American premiere presented under the auspices of BAM; performed at the Washington Square Methodist Church, New York City.

Robert Wilson Opera: The Life and Times of Sigmund Freud.

Dance: American Ballet Company (Eliot Feld, director), Merce Cunningham, Alvin Ailey, Harkness Ballet.

1970-1971:

Royal Shakespeare Company in Peter Brook's production of
A Midsummer Night's Dream.

Dance: Martha Graham, Eliot Feld's American Ballet Company, the American debut of Maurice Bejart's Ballet of the 20th Century.

1971-1972:

Drumming, Steve Reich and Musicians.

National dance companies: Cambodia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Morocco, Persia, India.

The Vienna Symphony Orchestra.

1971-1972: cont'd.

Chelsea Theater Production of Allen Ginsberg's Kaddish.

Dance: Murray Louis Dance Company, Alwin Nikolais Dance Theatre,
Merce Cunningham and Dance Company, Netherlands Dance Theatre.

1972-1973:

Jewish State Theatre of Bucharest: The Dybbuk and The Pearl Necklace.

Chelsea Theater productions: Lady Day, Peter Handke's Kaspar.

Dance: Paul Taylor, Murray Louis, Alwin Nikolais, Merce Cunningham.

1973-1974:

Robert Wilson Opera: The Life and Times of Joseph Stalin.

Royal Shakespeare Company: Richard II, The Hollow Crown.

The Actors' Company of Great Britain: Wood Demon, King Lear.

The Young Vic: Taming of the Shrew, Scapino.

Chelsea Theater productions: Candide by High Wheeler, David
Storey's The Contractor.

Blues, Jazz: Thad Jones, Mel Lewis, Sonny Rollins, Odetta,
Big Mama Thornton, Screaming Jay Hawkins, John Lee Hooker.

1974-1975:

Robert Wilson Opera: The \$ Value of Man.

Royal Shakespeare Company: Lear: He That Plays the King,
Summerfolk, Love's Labor's Lost.

Brooklyn Philharmonia's "Meet the Moderns" Series.

Chelsea Theater Company: Yentyle the Yeshiva Boy.

Pennsylvania Ballet Company with Mikhail Baryshnikov and Gelsey
Kirkland.

Black Theatre Series: Black Theatre Alliance, Brownsville Lab,
New Federal Theatre, New Heritage Repertory.

Dance: Andy De Groat, Laura Dean.

1975-1976:

American Theatre Season: Sweet Bird of Youth, starring Irene Worth and Christopher Walken; The Royal Family, starring Eva LeGallienne, Rosemary Harris, George Grizzard and Sam Levene; and A Long Days Journey Into Night, starring Jason Robards, Zoe Caldwell, Michael Moriarty and Kevin Conway.

Lazar Berman, pianist, with the Brooklyn Philharmonia.

Royal Shakespeare Company: Henry V, starring Alan Howard.

Mabou Mines: Red Horse Animation.

Polish Theatre: Dante, Replika.

Dance: Trisha Brown, Pilobolus, Twyla Tharp, Laura Dean.

1976-1977:

BAM Theatre Company debut season, Frank Dunlop, director: The New York Idea; The Three Sisters with Ellen Burstyn, Blythe Danner, Denholm Elliott, Tovah Feldshuh, Rosemary Harris, Bernard Hughes, Austin Pendleton; Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, starring Cleavon Little.

Dance: Pennsylvania Ballet Company, Twyla Tharp Dancers.

1977-1978:

BAM Theatre Company: The Devil's Disciple, The Play's the Thing, and Julius Caesar, with Richard Dreyfuss, George Rose, Rene Auberjonois.

Dance: World premiere of Laura Dean's Spiral, Lucinda Child's premieres Plaza, Melody Excerpt, Interior Drama; Dance Africa.

The Abbey Theatre production: The Plough and the Stars, with Siobhan McKenna and Cyril Cusack.

The Chelsea Theater Center's The Prince of Homberg, starring Frank Langella.

1978-1979:

Comedia Francaise in Le Misanthrope and La Puce a l'Oreille.

Festividad '79: Ballet Hispanico of New York, Maria Benitez-Extampa Flamenca.

1978-1979: cont'd.

Dance Africa '79: Chuck Davis Dance Company, Dinizulu and African Dancers.

1979-1980:

The BAM Theatre Company, David Jones director: The Winter's Tale, Johnny On A Spot, Barbarians, He and She, with Brian Murray, Roxanne Hart, Joe Morton, John Heffernan.

Dance: Laura Dean, Pennsylvania Ballet.

Country Music Series: Hazel Dickens, Red Clay Ramblers, The Ardoin Family, Chubby Anthony, John Graves, Wade Mainer and Family.

Dance, a collaboration by Lucinda Childs, Philip Glass and Sol Lewitt.

Tokyo Quartet.

Musical America Series: Bob Greene's The World of Jelly Roll Morton.

1980-1981:

BAM Theatre Company: A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Recruiting Officer, The Wild Duck, Jungle of Cities, Oedipus the King.

Ballet America: Cleveland Ballet, San Francisco Ballet in New York premieres Michael Smuin's "A Song for Dead Warriors," and Robert Gladstein's, "Psalms."

National Chinese Opera Theatre.

1981-1982:

Philip Glass Opera: Satyagraha.

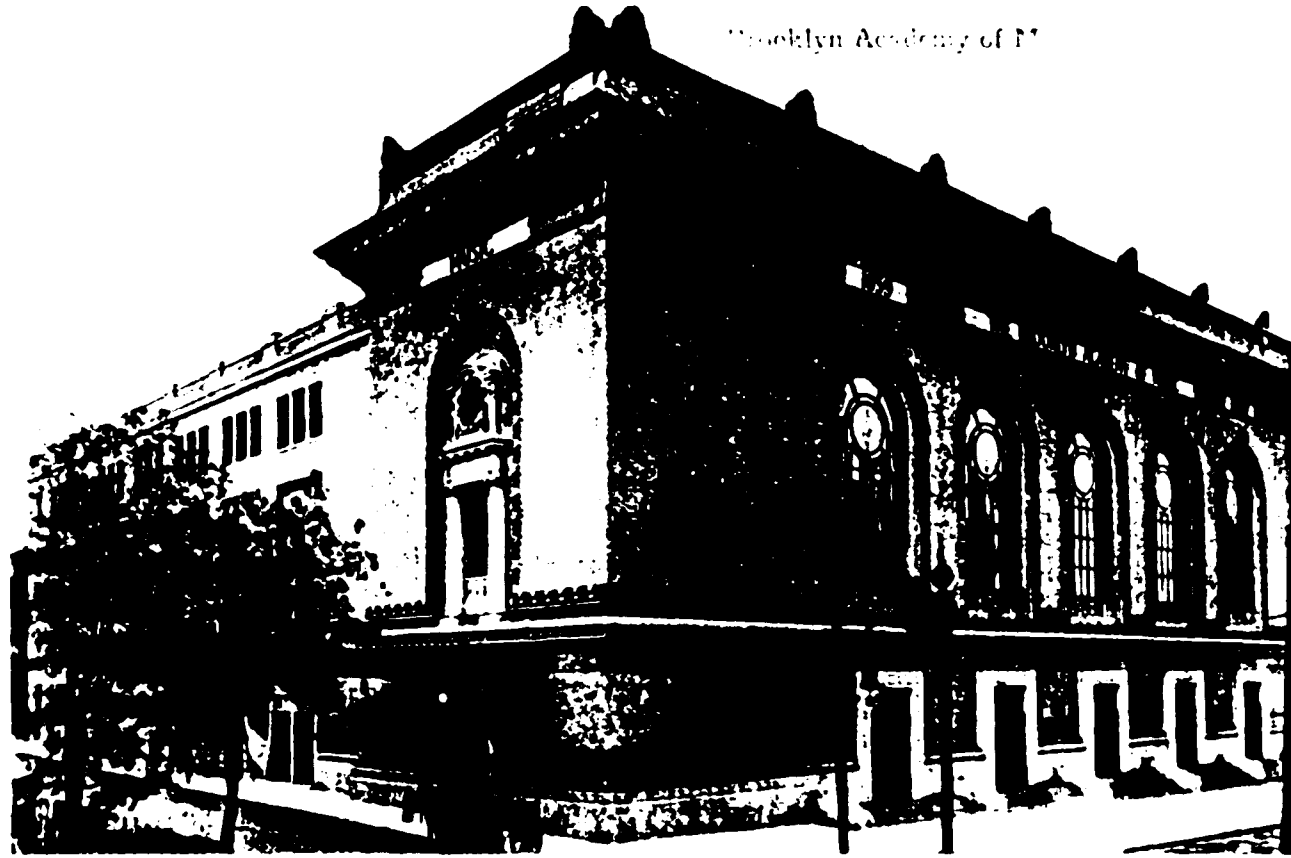
Next Wave Series: Brooklyn Philharmonia play Morris Cotel's "Yetzirah," Morton Subotnik, Vladimir Ussachevsky.

1982-1983:

Ballet International: Cullberg Ballet Company of Stockholm, "Miss Julie;" Dutch National Ballet.

Performance Art: Laurie Anderson, United States: Parts I-IV.
World premiere, 3-4 February 1983.

Brooklyn Academy of M



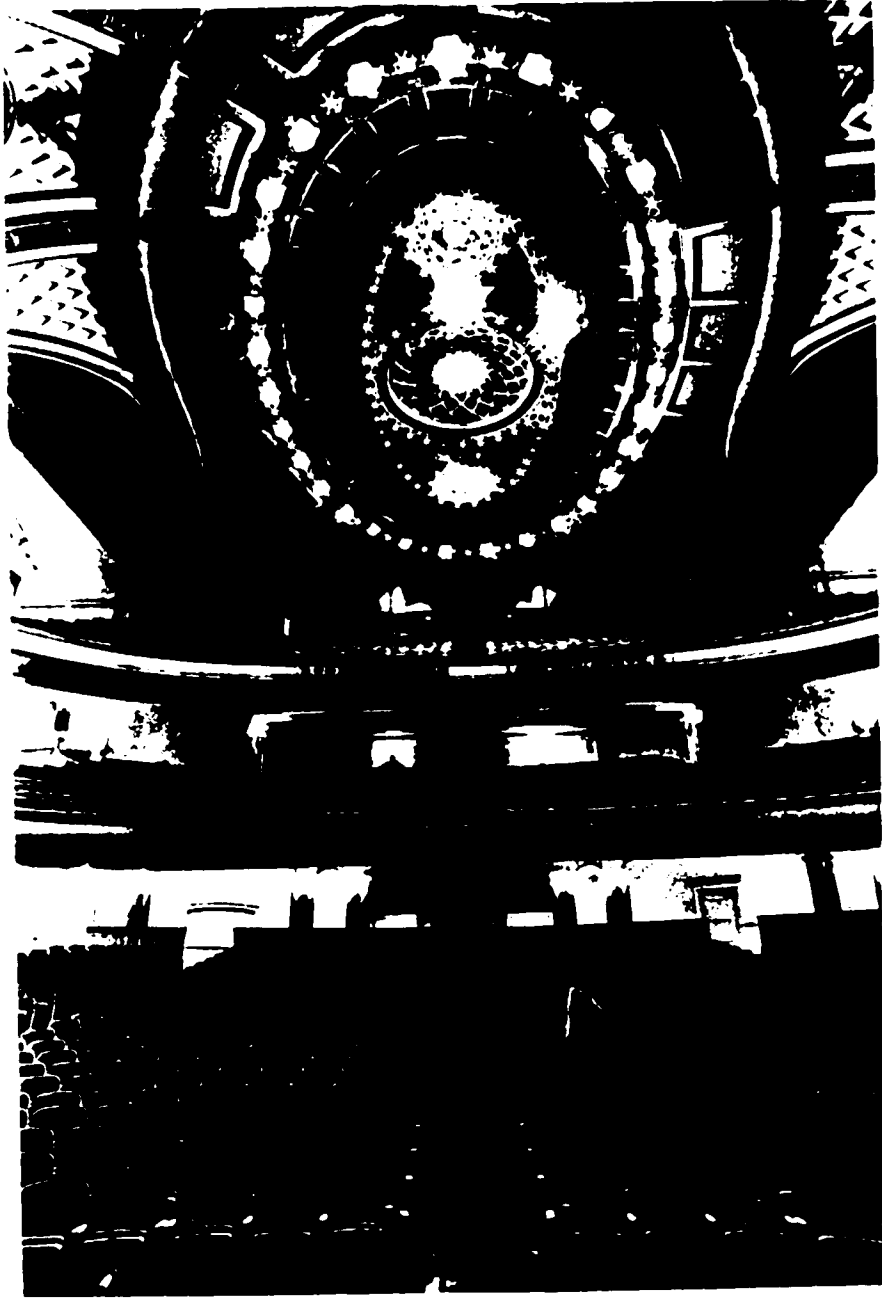
Present BAM with Original Cornice



BAM Exterior with Marquee



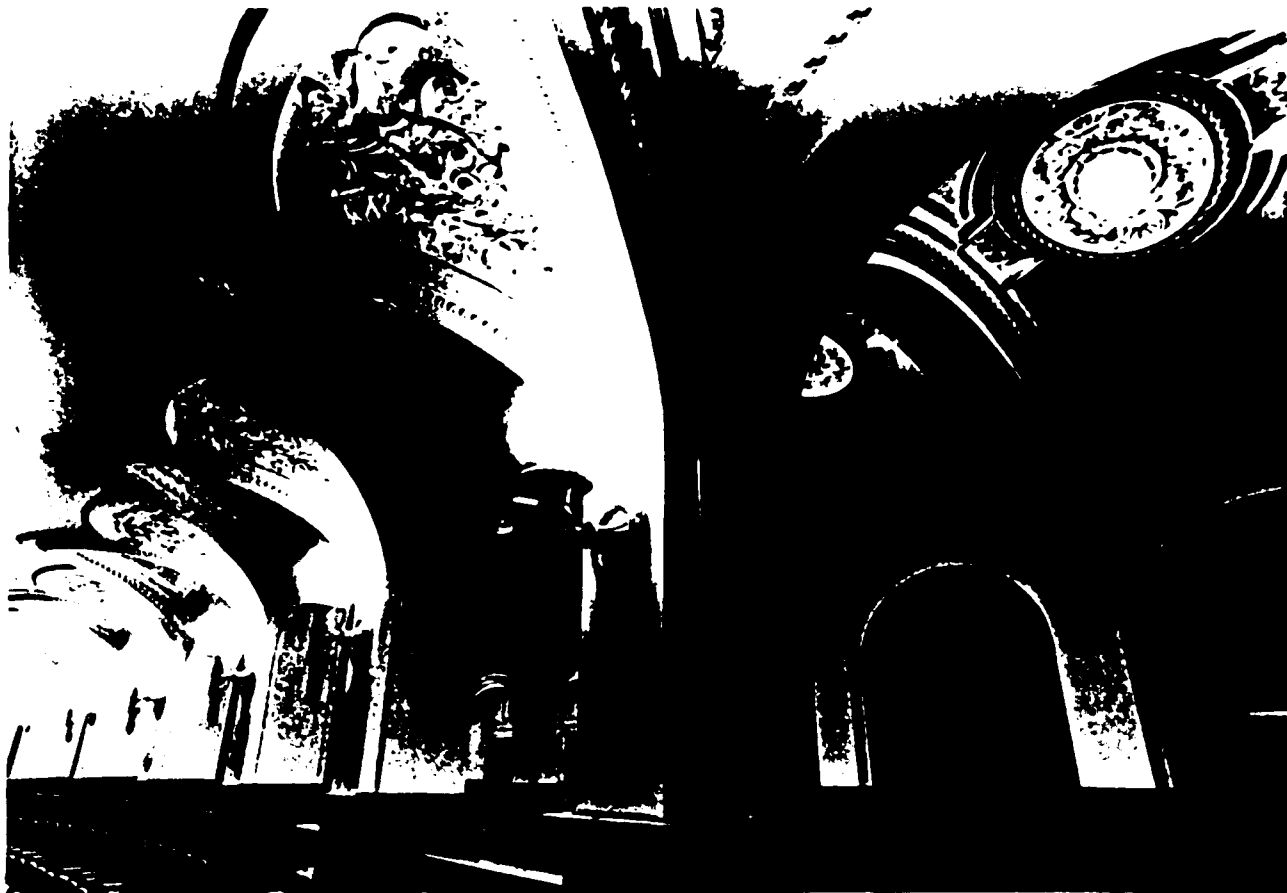
BAM Opera House Interior



BAM Opera House



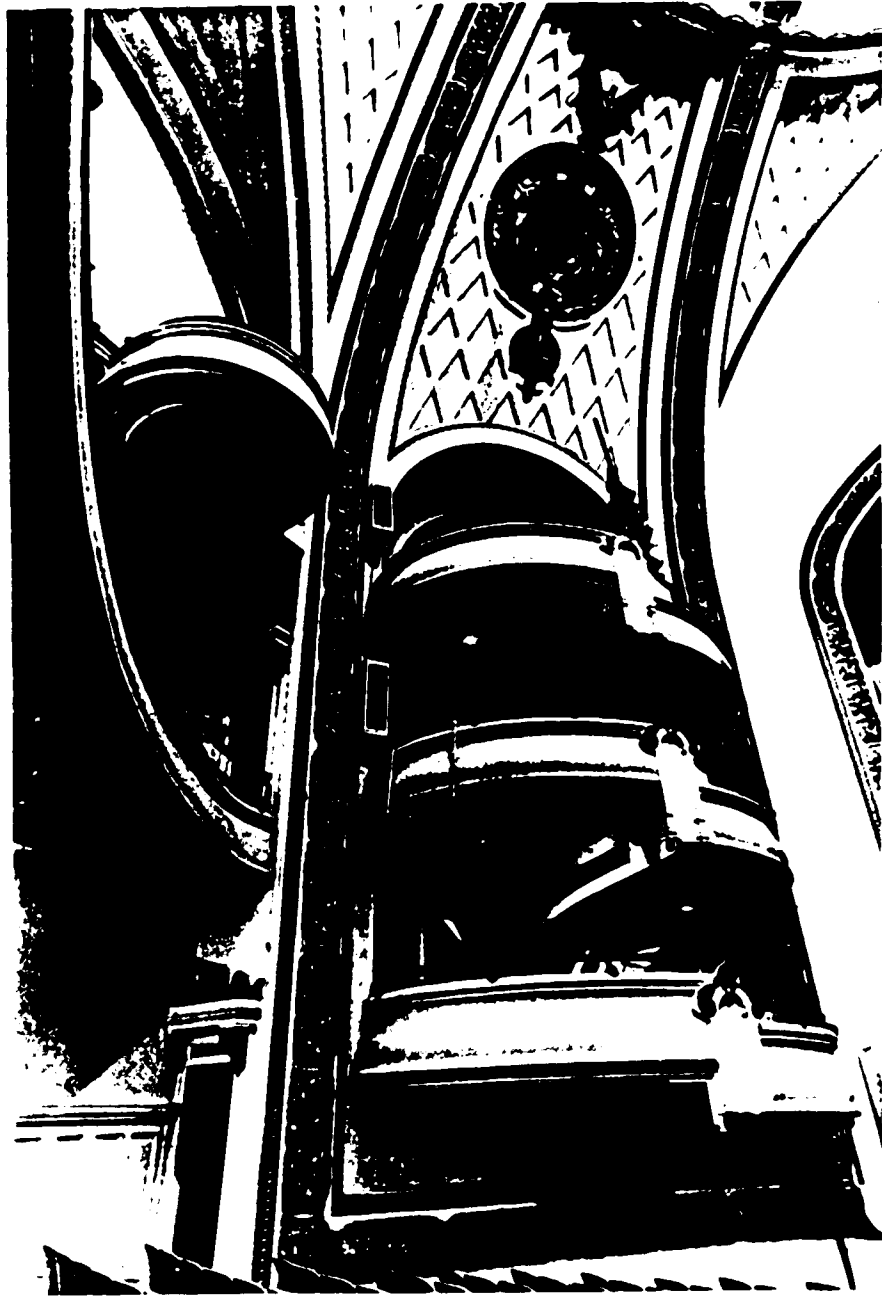
BAM Opera House Orchestra Level



BAM Playhouse Rear Orchestra



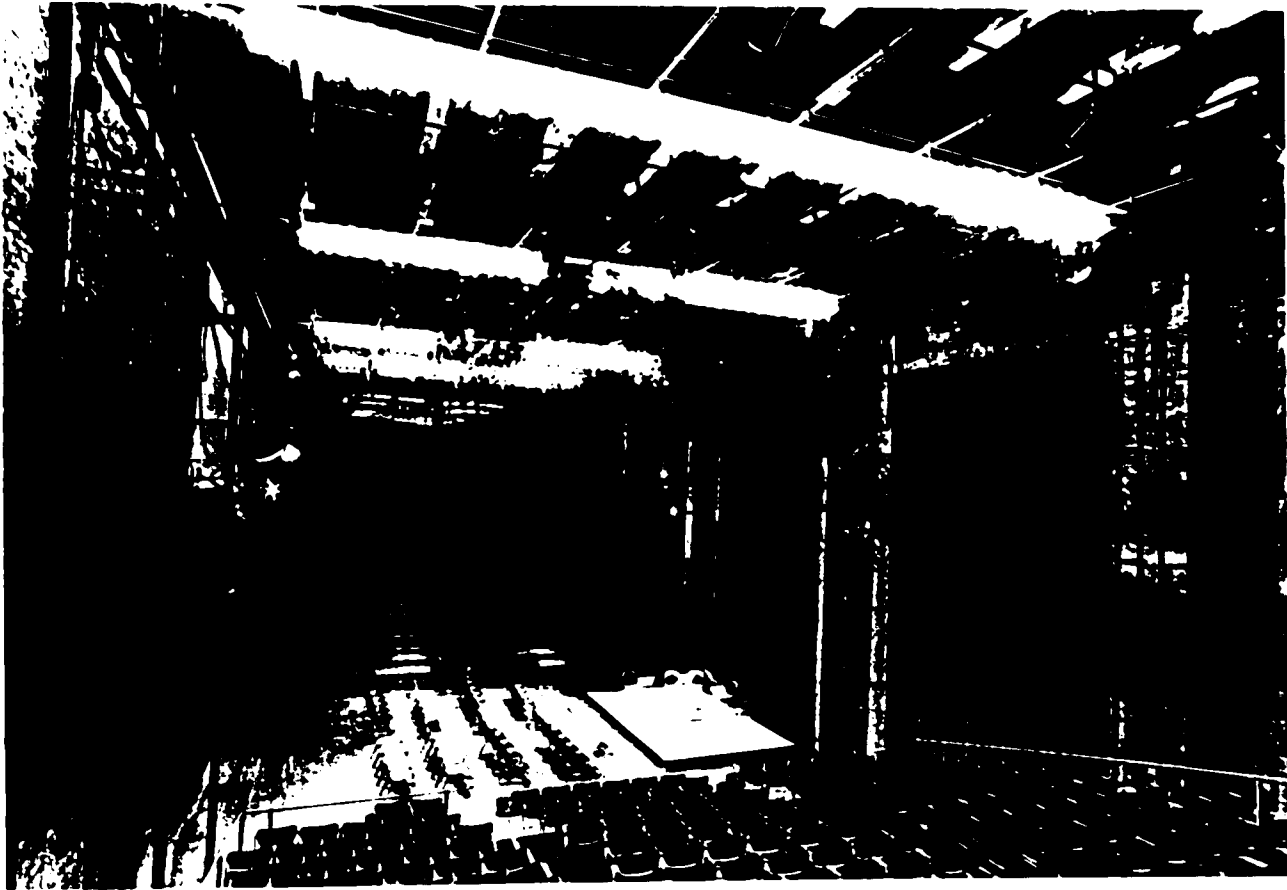
BAM Opera House Rear Orchestra



BAM Opera House Boxes



BAM's Helen Owen Carey Playhouse



BAM Lepercq Space

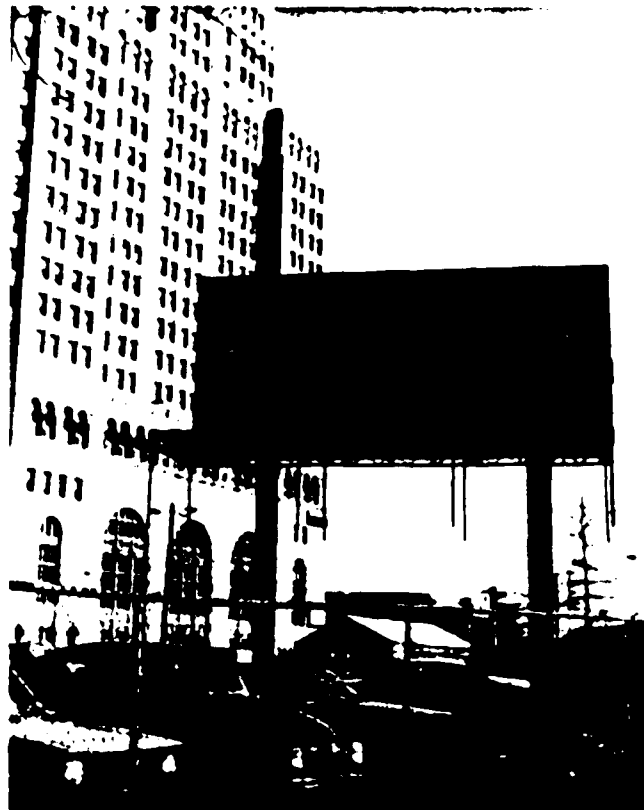


| BAM Exterior Cherub

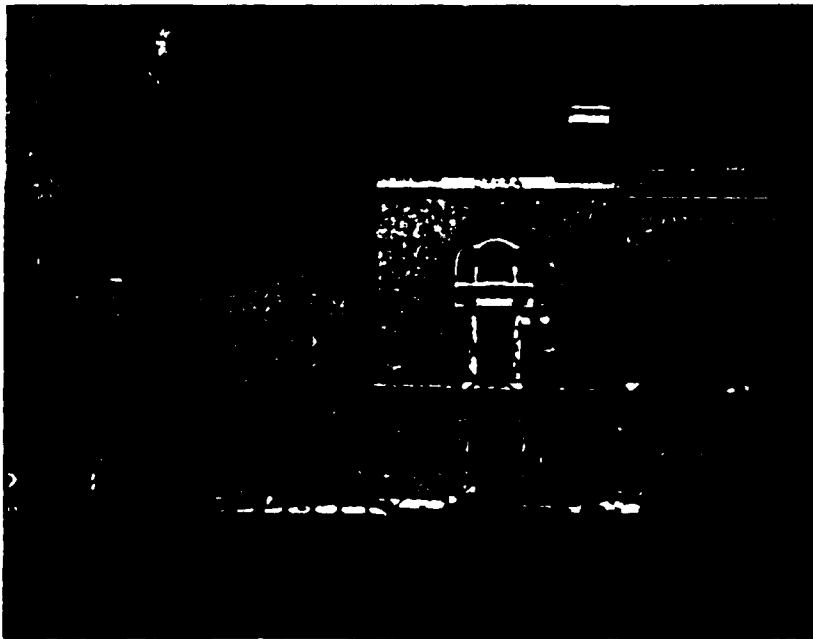
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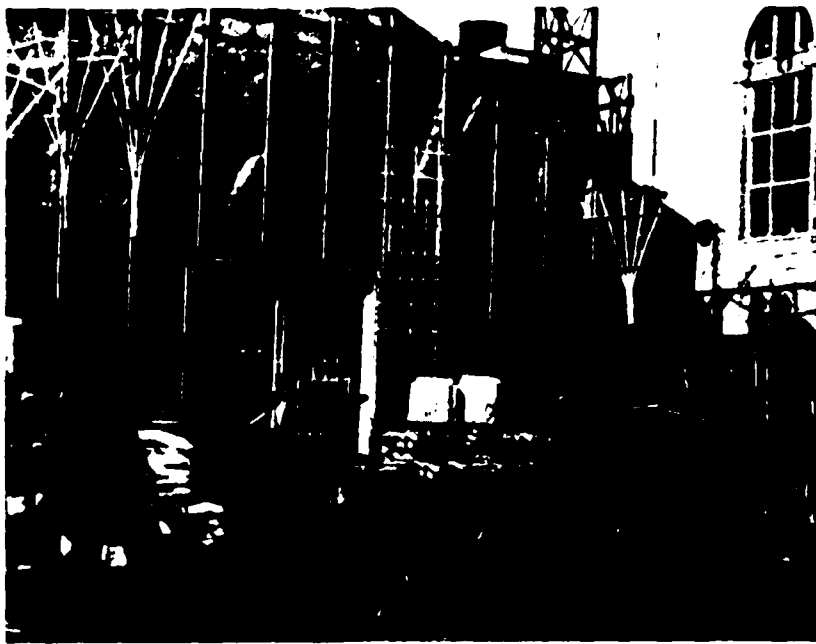
Williamsburg Savings Bank, Ashland Place and Hanson Place



BAM Parking Lot. Bounded by Ashland Place, Lafayette Avenue and Flatbush Avenue. Williamsburg Savings Bank in background.



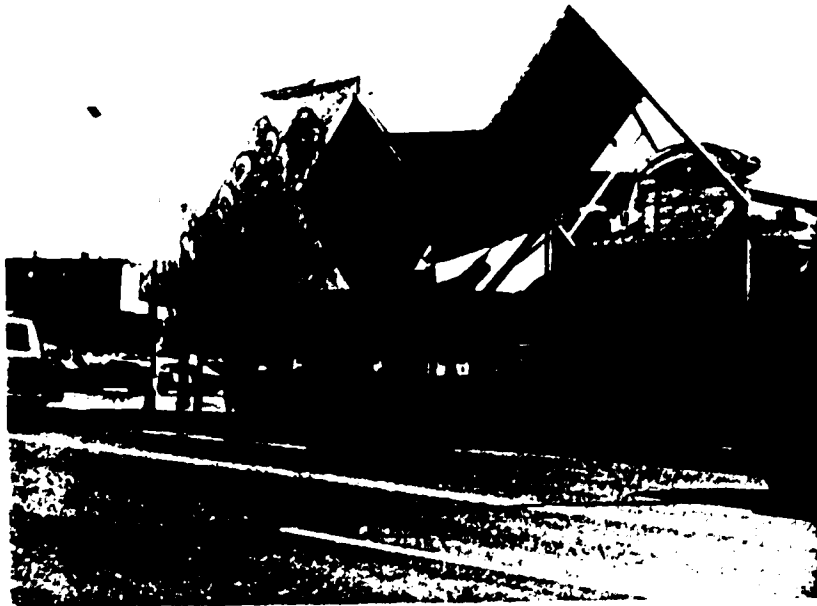
BAM Parking Lot showing Ashland Place side of BAM and Lafayette Avenue.



Plant nursery behind BAM Parking Lot, Ashland Place and Hanson Place.



Long Island Railroad Terminal, Flatbush Avenue and Hanson Place.



Times Plaza. Flatbush Avenue and Fourth Avenue



View from BAM, corner Lafayette Avenue and Ashland Place.
Granada Hotel on Ashland Place in background.



Buildings directly across from BAM on Lafayette Avenue



Lafayette Avenue, opposite BAM



Lafayette Avenue, opposite BAM



View from BAM, corner Lafayette Avenue and St. Felix Street



Neo-classical doorway, corner Lafayette Avenue and St. Felix Street



St. Felix Street Restoration. View from St. Felix Street side of BAM.



St. Felix Street Restoration. View from St. Felix Street side of BAM.



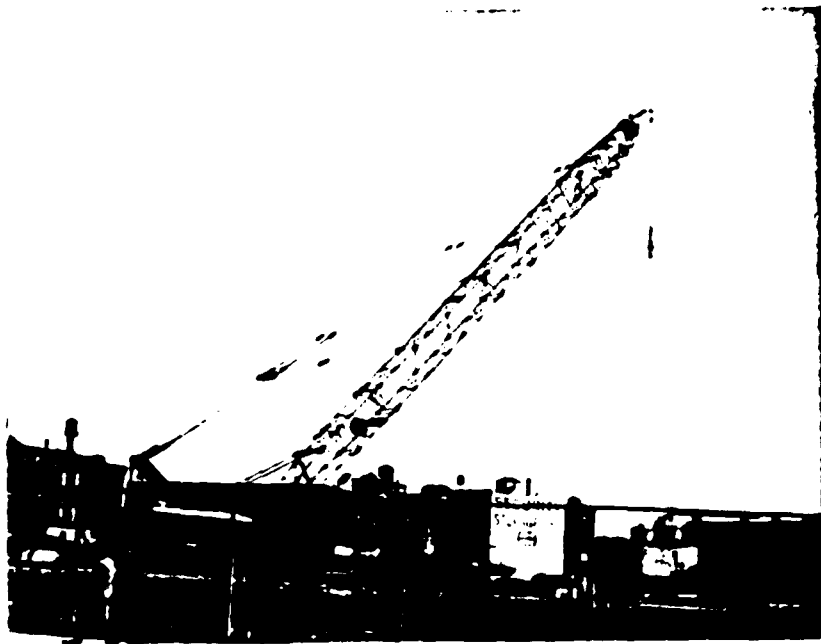
St. Felix Street Restoration. View from St. Felix Street side of BAM.



Storefront Restoration. Lafayette Avenue and Fulton Street.



Fulton Street, awaiting restoration.



Neighborhood construction

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